

9A Wood Street Calne Wiltshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



November 2006

Client: Averies Construction Ltd

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SUMMARY

In March and November 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 9A Wood Street, Calne, Wiltshire (NGR ST 997 712). The work was commissioned by Averies Construction Ltd in advance of alterations to the existing building to provide three 1 bedroom flats and a refurbished shop unit, in addition to the erection of a new range of five residential units. The watching brief revealed a number of graves and charnel pits of the Quakers burial ground dating to the 17th - 19th centuries.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In March and November 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 9A Wood Street, Calne, Wiltshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Averies Construction Ltd in respect of a planning application for alterations to the existing building to provide three 1 bedroom flats and a refurbished shop unit, in addition to the erection of a new range of five residential units (Planning Application No. 04/02209/FUL). The works were subject to a condition for an archaeological watching brief during any works of earthmoving and trenching. This is in accordance with PPG16 and Local Plan Policies RB3, RH8, RB10 and RB11.
- 1.1.2 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies within the historic core of Calne, immediately to the north of the High Street. The oldest part of the town lies on Coral Rag, a sandy limestone of the Jurassic which is bordered on the north and east by Kimmeridge clay, on the south by Gault clay and on the west by lower calcareous grit. Calne occupies a peninsula created by the River Marden. This slight spur lies between 225 and 250 feet above sea level; the land slopes down to the east of the old town. Another spur rises to the north west on the opposite side of the river.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2006) and is reproduced below.

Prehistoric and Roman Periods

- 1.3.2 There is a major pre-historic landscape to the south of Calne, centered around Avebury c 5-6 miles to the east. Individual finds from the immediate vicinity of Calne include a Bronze Age inhumation burial and Romano-British pottery (from

Haslam, 1976, no further details given). Numerous prehistoric and Roman spot finds have been recovered from Spray's Farm, Calstone to the south east of Calne (ref. WANH Magazine, Vol 83, 1990).

- 1.3.3 An archaeological evaluation on Oxford Road was undertaken by Oxford Archaeological Unit in 1994 which revealed 2 shallow ditches, one of which produced Roman tile and pottery(OAU, 1994).
- 1.3.4 The Roman Road from Bath runs to the south of the town.

Saxon Period

- 1.3.5 There is some evidence to suggest that Calne was of considerable significance in the later Saxon period. Haslam gives a date of 997 for the first mention of "Calnae". However, he also suggests that it is mentioned in the will of Eadred (d. 955) and was given to the Church at Winchester on his death.
- 1.3.6 It is also mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 978: "In this year all the chief councillors of the English people fell from an upper storey at Calne, except that Archbishop Dunstan alone remained standing upon a beam: and some were very severely injured there, and some did not survive it" (Whitelock (Ed.), 1961). This episode is also referred to by Haslam, who suggests that it implies at least one significant structure of more than one storey at this time. The fact that "all the chief councillors of the English people" were gathered here would also suggest a place of some significance, and by 1086 (Domesday) it was certainly a Witan meeting place.
- 1.3.7 Haslam also suggests that the place name Kingsbury, at present referring to a street south of the church, may be near the land on which the "King's house" stood. He postulates that the earliest Saxon presence, royal and common, would therefore lie in the area bounded by New Road and the river on the east of the church. It is also possible that this area could have had turf bank defences cutting off the end of the spur on which the church stands, dating from the later Saxon period. There is little indication of their supposed position from the detailed topography of the site, and the town does not appear in the burghal hidage.
- 1.3.8 Calne was back in the hands of the King by 997 when it was held by Ethelred as a demesne of the crown. By Domesday, Calne was a Borough.

Medieval Period

(largely reproduced from "Wiltshire Towns: The Archaeological Potential", Haslam, 1976)

- 1.3.9 Calne was one of ten Domesday boroughs in Wiltshire, but there is no indication that it had a mint either in the Saxon or medieval periods (although the name Silver Street is still preserved, immediately to the south west of the Green). At Domesday the borough was in part the possession of the King, in part that of the church. St Mary's Church was in existence then, and some of the fabric is said to date from this period. There were 45 burgesses and 9 mills recorded (one presumably in Mill Street and

another at the south end of the Strand). Wood Street is first mentioned in the Borough Records in 1232 (Rathbone, 1951).

- 1.3.10 It is stated by Marsh (1904), that the Green appears to have belonged to the church in the Saxon period, “and it formed one of the appurtenances which, with the church itself, were in 1115 granted by Henry I in prebendum to the cathedral church of Sarum’ (no reference given). He continues to say that the Green was probably the site of a religious building, for Early English arches were found when St Mary’s school was built. (This could possibly be the site of the hospital of St John). He suggests it was the vanished St Andrew’s chapel, on ‘the north side of which, according to the cartulary of Stanley Abbey, stood the house of William the Weaver’. (According to Marsh, this side of the Green, presumably the south side, was composed of weaving shops).
- 1.3.11 The King’s manor was granted in the reign of John to the Canteloupe family, together with the Hundred of Calne and the manor of Calstone. Before this, however, Calne may have already possessed a castle. There are many references to the castle in the street names in the immediate vicinity (Castle Street, Castle Hill, Castle Fields, Castle House). In the *Gesta Stephani*, it is stated that Stephen blockaded Wallingford, marched towards Trowbridge and on his way took by assault the castle of Cerne, which Milo of Gloucester and the Earl of Hereford had built to encourage the insurrection in favour of the Empress Matilda. If this can be identified with Calne, it is one of the few direct documentary references to its existence. A large stone wall discovered in 1972 near the site of Castle House might well indicate its presence there (W.A.M. 68 (1973), 138).
- 1.3.12 This would put it on the end of a relatively steep-sided spur overlooking the earliest town on the other side of the river to the east. A residence of some kind is suggested by the visit of King John in 1215, and of Henry III in 1223.
- 1.3.13 In 1295 Calne was summoned to send two members to Parliament. A borough charter is said to have been given by Stephen and another by James II. A hospital of St John was founded, according to Brakspear (no date given in the VCH), before the days of King John. It was given new lands in 1336, but was dying out by the reign of Henry VIII. This was said to be by the Eldebrook (Old Brook), but this could be Abbard Brook or Horsebrook, or near the Green, as suggested above.
- 1.3.14 At what period the Strand came into use as a market place is not clear. Calne probably expanded in the medieval period north and westwards across the river. At the south end of the Strand stood the water mill which according to Marsh belonged to the Lord of the Hundred. The site is now occupied by the Town Hall. The first use of the Strand as a market place would thus date from the time of the expansion of the town from its Saxon nucleus on the east bank of the river, around St Mary’s church and the Green, to the other, western bank, soon before or soon after the building of a castle there.

- 1.3.15 The deserted medieval village of Beversbrook lies immediately to the north of Calne. Evidence for medieval ridge and furrow associated with the outlying fields of the settlement was revealed during the evaluation referred to above (OAU, 1994).

Post medieval Period

- 1.3.16 In this period the town developed into a small flourishing market town with an increase in building of new commercial and domestic buildings in the town. The main economic focus in the town was the Thomas Harris Bacon Factory, which dates from the late 18th century. The site of the development to the north of the town centre and was owned by the Quakers who bought the plot in 1672 and between then and 1696 had built a meeting house. The land at the rear was used as a burial ground and the meeting house was rebuilt in 1851. The site was then sold to the Methodists in 1903 and used by them until 1962 when it was sold and became a shop with an above flat.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was to monitor the excavation of the foundations for the new extension to the rear of the property (Fig. 2). The ground works were carried out with a mini excavator with a ditching bucket to reduce ground level and a 0.7 m wide toothless bucket to excavate the trenches. This was carried out under archaeological supervision.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits (*Figs 2 and 3*)

- 3.1.1 The new foundation trench for the extension on the rear of the property was 0.7 m wide and excavated to a depth of 1.2 m below ground level. This cut into the natural (12) of light yellowish brown sand overlying sandstone. This had been overlain by a 0.6 m thick layer of dark brown sandy clay (4) loam cultivated soil. This had been cut by a number of features. In the north-east corner was a large sub-circular charnel pit

(10) with near vertical sides; its base was below the impact level of the trench. It measured 1.9 m x 1.45 m x 0.9 m and was filled by a dark brown silty clay (11) with charnel remains and assorted coffin fittings. To the west of this was a rectangular grave cut (8) with vertical sides. Its base was below the impact level of the trench and measured 2.1 m x 0.4 m x 0.9 m and was filled by a dark grey brown silty clay loam (9). The remains of an adult skeleton were revealed in the base of the trench cut, but these were not uncovered or removed. A coffin handle was recovered from the fill and dated to the late 18th to early 19th century. In the east facing section of the west foundation trench, a second charnel pit (13) was exposed. It was 1.1 m wide and 1 m in depth with very steep sloping sides and narrow base and was filled by a dark brown silty clay loam (14) with assorted human bones in the base.

- 3.1.2 A second grave (6) was cut across by the west foundation trench and was partly exposed. It measured 0.7 m x 0.28 m x 0.82 m and was filled by a dark grey brown silty clay loam (7) with remains of a skeleton in the base. This had been cut by a large soak away (1) to the property in the south-west corner of the new foundation trench. It had very steep sloping sides and flat base, only 0.7 m x 1.9 m x 1.7 m was exposed in the trench with a number of fills. The primary fill, a 0.10 m thick dark grey clay (3), was overlain by a 0.7 m thick layer of stained very dark grey brown silty clay loam (2). This was sealed below a back fill of re-deposited cultivated garden-graveyard soil (15) of dark brown sandy clay. Sealing all these was a 0.1 m - 0.30 m thick layer of very dark grey brown silty sand loam (5) topsoil.

3.2 Finds

Coffin Fitting by Ceridwen Boston (OA)

- 3.2.1 A single grip and grip plate were recovered from context 9, the fill of a burial. The grip plate comprised a solid unadorned plate of copper alloy (probably brass) in good condition, to which the grip was attached by means of two grip bolts (also of brass). The grip plate had a curved symmetrical outline. The style of this plate could not be matched to the coffin fitting taphonomies compiled from coffins within Christ Church, Spitalfields (Reeves and Adams 1993), the type site of this period, and other Church of England burial grounds, such as St Bartholomew's church, Penn (Boyle 2004), St Luke's church, Islington (Boston 2005) and St George's crypt, Bloomsbury, London (Boston 2006). The style has been identified on an undated coffin from the Quaker burial ground in Kings Lynn, Norfolk (Mahoney 2003). Meeting house records indicate that these interments dated from 1779 to 1835, and hence, are broadly contemporary with the Calne Quaker burials. The style is also known from another Quaker burial ground in Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, which dated between 1664 and 1814 (Stock 1998). Whether this style was specifically produced for the burial of Friends is as yet uncertain but to date it has not recorded in burials of other denominations.
- 3.2.2 The grip is also of copper alloy, probably brass. The style was identified as Christ Church, Spitalfields Type 1 (dated 1747-1847) (Reeves and Adam 1993). Ostentation

in funerary display was at its height in the late Georgian/ early Victorian period, with all but the most indigent spending considerable sums on funerary processions, mourning dress, keepsakes and of course, the coffin itself (Rugg 1999). Such ostentation was a powerful vehicle for the public display of wealth and social position, and was particularly evident in the socially mobile middle classes of the period. Although the Society of Friends traditionally comprised these classes, it differed in its approach to funerary ritual in that it often opted for simple funerary rites. This is illustrated by the reaction of George Fox (one of the founding fathers) to mainstream criticism of this simplicity (1682): *'All that you say, That we bury like Dogs, because we have not superfluous and needless things upon our Coffin, and white and black Cloth with Scutcheons, and do not go in Black, and hang scarves upon our Hats, and white Scarves over our Shoulders, and give Gold Rings, and have Sprigs of Rosemary in our Hands, and Ring Bells. How dare you say we bury like dogs, because we cannot bury them after the vain Pomp and Glory of the World?'* (quoted in Stock 1998, 135). The plainness of the coffin fittings from Calne is thus keeping with these views, and reflects the Friends' wider ideology of material simplicity and avoidance of material display.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief revealed the location of two burials and two charnel pits from the Quakers Burial ground at the rear of the property. One of the graves was dated to the late 18th to early 19th century, when the property was used as a meeting house. This was dated from a coffin fitting, which was similar to one recovered from Kings Lynn, showing that similar burial practices were being carried out in the property as at other Quaker sites in that period. A large soak away was also uncovered in the south-west corner of the site and possibly dates to when the meeting house was rebuilt in 1851 or during later works to rear of the property. No other archaeological features or deposits pre-dating the burial ground were exposed.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1	Cut	1.70 m	1.90 m	0.70 m	Soak away	
2	Fill	0.10 m			Fill of Soak away	
3	Fill	0.70 m			Fill of Soak away	
4	Layer	0.60 m			Cultivated graveyard/garden soil	
5	Layer	0.30 m			Topsoil	
6	Cut	0.82 m	0.28 m	0.70 m	Grave cut	
7	Fill				Fill of grave	
8	Cut	0.90 m	0.40 m	2.10 m	Grave cut	
9	Fill				Fill of grave	Coffin Handle
10	Cut	0.90 m	1.45 m	1.90 m	Charnel pit	
11	Fill				Fill of pit	
12	Natural				Natural	
13	Cut	1 m	1.10 m		Charnel pit	
14	Fill				Fill of pit	
15	Fill	0.60 m			Fill of Soak away	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 9A Wood Street, Calne, Wiltshire

Site code: CALWS 06

Grid reference: NGR ST 997 712

Type of watching brief: Ground works prior to construction and redevelopment.

Date and duration of project: Two site visits on the 26th March 2006 and 9th November 2006.

Area of site: 5 m x 4.5 m

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed a number of graves and charnel pits of the Quakers burial ground.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Wiltshire Heritage Museum in due course.



Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location

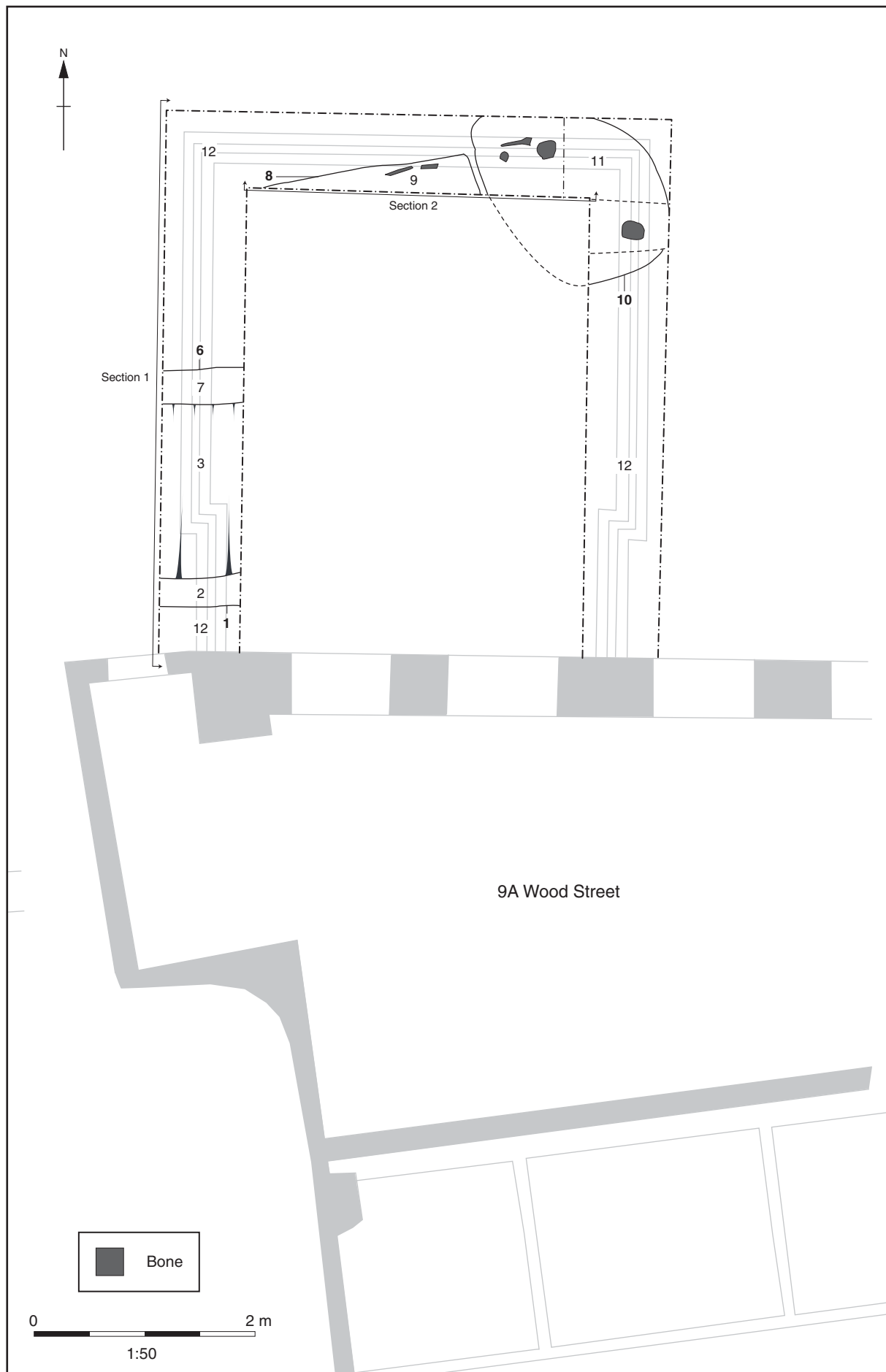


Figure 2: Site plan



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