

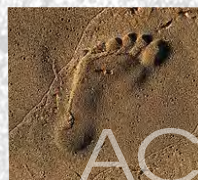
Vine Cottage, Swallowcliffe, Wiltshire, SP3 5NX:

Results of an archaeological watching brief

By
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AC archaeology

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NGR ST 96573 26931

Summary

Archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of a new extension to Vine Cottage, Swallowcliffe, Wiltshire was undertaken during May and June 2018. The excavation of new foundation trenches relating to the rebuilding of part of Vine Cottage itself, were also monitored. Apart from remnants of the foundations of a barn that had been previously demolished to make way for the new dwelling, and an existing well that was located between the cottage and the barn, no archaeological features of significance were present on the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report sets out the results of archaeological monitoring undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches and associated groundworks at Vine Cottage, Swallowcliffe, Wiltshire (centred on NGR ST 96573 26931).

1.2 The development involved the demolition of a barn which was attached to Vine Cottage and to construct an extension with a sheltered walkway linking the new building with the cottage. The new building is on a slightly different alignment to the earlier barn, which was off-set from the cottage (see Fig 1 for details). Parts of Vine Cottage itself were rebuilt and the works involved the excavation of new foundation trenches for the northern walls of the building. The groundworks were considered to have the potential to impact on archaeological deposits, particularly during the intrusive works associated with the excavation of the foundations and associated ground releveling.

1.3 Wiltshire Council has granted planning permission (17/04951/FUL), subject to a number of conditions. The Wiltshire Council Assistant County Archaeologist (WCACA) recommended that intrusive groundworks be monitored under an archaeological watching brief, with Condition 6 of the consent stating that:

No development shall commence within the area indicated (proposed development site) until:

- A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and*
- The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.*

REASON: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest

1.4 The site lies in the south-western part of village of Swallowcliffe, and is situated on a lane that links Rookery Lane with Loders Lane to the south and lies at around 114m OD. The underlying geology comprises Cann Sand Member sandstone, a sedimentary bedrock that was formed approximately 101 to 113 million years ago. The overlying superficial deposits comprise alluvial clay, sands and gravels formed up to 2 million years ago.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site area is located within an area of archaeological interest as recorded within the Wiltshire Council Historic Environment Record (HER). Some small-scale investigations were carried out at Vine Cottage in the late 1960s that produced evidence of archaeological interest. Although no archaeological features or deposits were found, artefacts ranging in date from the Mesolithic through to the medieval period were found. The Mesolithic flint consisted of cores, blades and flakes, three scrapers, a graver, five microliths and a micro burin. Such Mesolithic material is quite unusual to find in such quantities (ST92NE051). Fragments of grass tempered Saxon pottery and a medieval spur were also recovered (ST92NE400). Vine Cottage itself is described in the HER as a partially extant 19th century farmstead linear in plan, with the barn being attached to the thatched cottage (MWI65341).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological watching brief were:

- To record any archaeological features and finds which may be revealed or disturbed by the groundworks for the new construction on the site, and;
- To provide an interpretive report on the results of the monitoring that may provide additional information regarding the archaeological and historical development of the area.

3.2 The site works were undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (Clark 2018) which was approved by the WCACA on behalf of Wiltshire Council prior to groundworks commencing. Attendance by the site archaeologist was comprehensive, i.e. *present during all relevant ground disturbance*.

3.3 Site observations were recorded using the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system, comprising written and graphic records and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*. A digital photographic record was also made.

3.4 The archive has been prepared using the unique site code ACW1075.

RESULTS

4.1 Two stages of archaeological monitoring were undertaken during May and June 2018. The initial stage involved the excavation of new foundations for the north-eastern part of the existing Vine Cottage (Plate 1). The ground floor walling was removed and new foundations excavated. The second stage involved monitoring the foundation groundworks for the new single-storey extension. This work was undertaken following the demolition of an early barn structure, whose position was slightly off-set to the north-east compared to the building that will replace it.

4.2 The initial stage of watching brief involved monitoring the excavation of two foundation trenches associated with the rebuilding of the northern part of Vine Cottage. This work involved the demolition of the northern and eastern walls and the removal of part of a concrete plinth that the building rested on. Foundation trenches for the new walling were then excavated.

- 4.3** Below a concrete floor plinth (context 100), measuring 0.1m in thickness, a dark grey / brown silty loam was exposed to a depth of over 0.8m. This material had a high humic content and represents a deep deposit of buried topsoil (context 101). No artefacts of pre-modern date were present within this layer
- 4.4** Within the bottom of the foundation trench, at a depth of approximately 0.9m below ground level, a thin horizon of subsoil comprising light brown / green clayey material was recorded (context 102). This sealed the natural sub-strata (context 104) which was only partially visible at the base of the foundation trenches.
- 4.5** The northern foundation trench cut through a well, which was located between Vine Cottage and its associated barn, with the cottage foundations, unusually, extending around the well (Fig.1a and Plate 1). It is assumed that the well was positioned so that it could be used either from within the cottage, or from the barn. Prior to the groundworks, the well was still partially in use with pipes linking with the utility room in the cottage. The outer edge of the well was located c.2.5m from the north-west end of the foundation trench. The well was constructed from green sandstone blocks that were roughly cut, but with curved inner facing forming a circular internal diameter of 0.7m. The overall external diameter of the well was between 0.95 and 1.1m. There was no apparent construction cut for the well visible within the topsoil. One fill was recorded (context 106). This consisted of a very mixed deposit of green sandstone fragments, clay and mortar fragments. No finds were recovered from this deposit.
- 4.6** The excavation of the foundation trench resulted in the complete removal of the upper levels of the well to a depth of 1m. An iron water pipe, that was removed from the fill of the well, indicated that it reached a depth exceeding 3m.
- 4.7** At a later date during June the foundation trenches for a new single-storey dwelling that extends to the north of the main cottage were monitored. This building replaces an earlier barn whose ground-plan was off-set to the north-east from the main Vine Cottage building (Fig.1).
- 4.8** Prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches, the ground surface within the footprint of the new building was partially remodelled to form a more level platform for the new building. Only topsoil material was disturbed and nothing of archaeological significance was found. The trenching itself revealed similar topsoil material (context 202) to that noted in Section 4.3 above. This reached a depth of over 1m and contained a small quantity of post medieval finds. The topsoil in this area was slightly deeper than in the area of the cottage itself. A subsoil comprising light brown / green clay was recorded within these trenches at a depth of approximately 1m (context 201). The natural clay sub-strata was not revealed.
- 4.9** Part of the foundations to the earlier barn were exposed and removed during the excavation of the foundation trench. These consisted of rough blocks of green sand and a clayey mortar that extended for approximately 2m along the projected line of the old barn (Fig.1b and Plate 3). This evidence indicates that the barn foundations extended below the ground level where there were originally two double-door accesses to the building, as well as a fifth door that provided access to the utility room in the main cottage. Presumably these foundations were needed to hold upright posts that would have held hinges in place for the large barn doors, as well as supporting the roof structure itself.
- 4.10** Within the north facing trench for the new extension were further pieces of sandstone. These appeared as a concentration of large rubble fragments bonded with clayey mortar material and occasional fragments of roof tile (context 203). The concentration of rubble was visible in both sides

of the foundation trench and measured approximately 0.8m in width, reaching a depth of c. 0.7m. It is very likely that this material represents parts of the foundation to the barn – probably part of the same foundation wall as described in paragraph 4.9 (see Fig.1c and Plate 4).

5. FINDS

- 5.1** Apart from several fragments of post medieval roof tile and two sherds of post medieval pottery found in topsoil, context 202, no further artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.

6. COMMENT

- 6.1** All groundworks associated with the excavation of the foundation trenches for both the partial rebuild of Vine Cottage, and the single storey extension, were monitored. Apart from structural evidence represented by stone rubble foundations associated with the barn, along with a stone constructed well, no archaeological features or deposits of significance were present.
- 6.2** Two areas of foundations are likely to represent part of the north-west facing wall of the earlier barn, whose ground-plan was off-set from the main Vine Cottage buildings. In addition to the foundation walling, a well that was still in use during the occupation of the barn, and probably used as a drain from the utility room in the cottage, was recorded.

7. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey online viewer, accessed September 2017.

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Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*. Professional guidance

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English Heritage, 1991. *The Management of Archaeological Projects. Second Edition (MAP2)*. Historic England: professional guidance



Plate 1: General view of groundworks



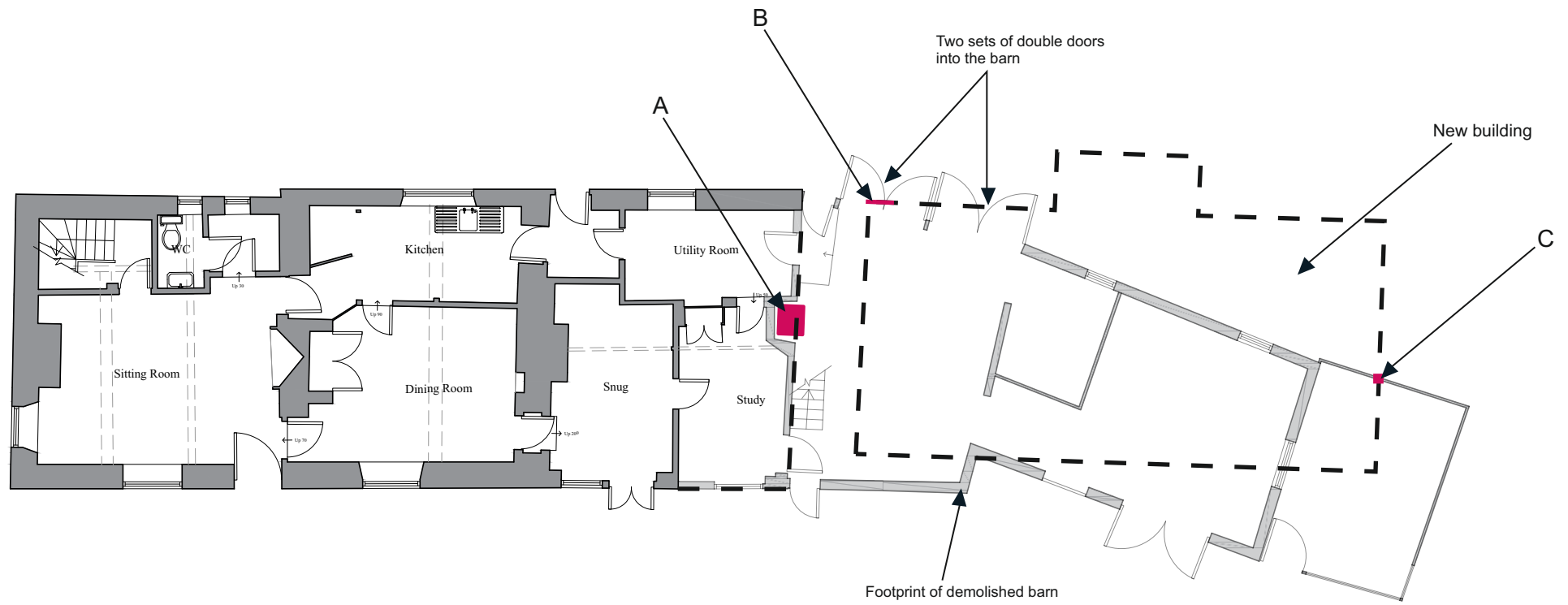
Plate 2: Well prior to foundation trench excavation



**Plate 3: Foundations of demolished barn
(wall of cottage in background)**



Plate 4: Foundations of demolished barn (north-western wall)

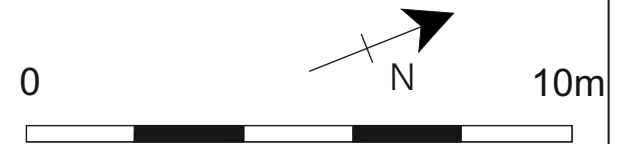


Key

- Vine Cottage surviving structural elements
- Demolished structures including barn
- Foundation trenches monitored as part of watching brief

Archaeological Features

- A Well
- B Barn foundations found during watching brief
- C Barn foundations found during watching brief



PROJECT

Vine Cottage, Swallowcliffe, Wiltshire

TITLE

Fig. 1: Results of an archaeological watching brief

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