

Mill Farm, Teffont Evias, Salisbury, Wiltshire:
Results of a Programme of Archaeological Investigations

NGR: 400042 130643

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AC archaeology

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Summary

Archaeological investigations were undertaken in October 2022 and intermittently between January and April 2023 in relation to development works associated with the demolition of a farm house and the erection of a new dwelling at Mill Farm, Teffont Evias, Salisbury, Wiltshire. Mill Farm comprises a range of historic buildings with many modern alterations. Prior to a major fire in 1904, it is believed that two mills were in operation at the farm.

To the immediate north of the current mill leat a small trial excavation provided evidence of structural remains of possible historic significance. These structural elements are of probable nineteenth or twentieth century origin and may have a historic association with the overall farm complex. All the finds recovered as a result of the small excavation were modern in origin and were not retained. A subsequent watching brief undertaken between January and April 2023 revealed no further evidence for archaeological deposits on the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of a programme of archaeological recording undertaken prior to and during the demolition of an existing dwelling and ancillary building and during the groundworks associated with the replacement dwelling, together with associated hard and soft landscaping at Mill Farm, Teffont Evias, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 5RP (centred on NGR 400042 130643). The site location is shown in Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The investigation was undertaken by AC archaeology Ltd. and was commissioned by the applicant, Mrs Camilla Woodward, in relation to the requirements of the planning consent for the development granted by Wiltshire Council (Ref. 2022/03969), subject to a number of conditions.
- 1.3 The overall scope of the work has been agreed in consultation with the Wiltshire Council Assistant County Archaeologist (WCACA) and took the form of the excavation of a single trial pit within part of the garden area. This preliminary stage of work was then followed by an archaeological watching brief undertaken during the groundworks associated with the demolition and remodelling of the ground surfaces.
- 1.4 At some stage further work will be undertaken to restore parts of the surviving mill leat. It is understood that this will be undertaken as a separate programme of works and it is anticipated that this restoration will also require archaeological monitoring.

- 1.5 The geology is recorded as Lulworth Formation, an interbedded sandstone and limestone sedimentary bedrock formed between 152 and 139 million years ago during the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. Due to the close proximity of the River Nadder, it is very likely that alluvial deposits also survive in this area.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of the planning application process, a Statement of Significance and Heritage report was prepared (JME Conservation Ltd. 2022), and as part of the preparation of this document, the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER) was also consulted.
- 2.2 The Statement of Significance and Heritage report assesses the significance of the building complex at Mill Farm and suggests that there may have been a mill on this site since the 11th century. This is based on Domesday records from c.1086. Two mills were recorded in 1579 (corn and grist mills). By 1692 there are references to the mills standing over a leat to the north of the River Nadder, with water from the leat also being used to manage the controlled flooding of the nearby water meadows. Historic maps from the 19th century show the layout of the mill buildings with varying levels of accuracy. The first map to accurately show the location of the mill buildings is the First Edition OS map dating to 1886 (see Fig. 40 of JME Conservation Ltd 2022).
- 2.3 The two mills remained on site until c.1904, when they were destroyed in a fire. By 1923, new buildings in the form of a farmhouse and outbuildings had been completed, but on a different footprint to the mill buildings. Based on this map evidence, it was considered likely that structural remains of the former mills may survive within the footprint of the new dwelling.
- 2.4 The Wiltshire HER records the mill as SU03SW458. Further records for the area include two Palaeolithic hand-axes found during the railway construction at Dinton, c.2km to the east of Mill Farm. Approximately 800m northwest of Mill Farm, an Iron Age spearhead was found in 1978. Other than references to a WWII ammunition storage site (RAF Dinton - which continued in use during the Cold War as RAF Chilmark), which included storage facilities in the woodland c. 500m to the south east of the site, there is little documented archaeological information in the immediate area of Mill Farm. There are, however, detailed records for prehistoric as well as Roman and medieval settlement within both Teffont Evias and Teffont Magna.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological investigation were:
- To record any structural or archaeological features and finds, particularly those relating to earlier buildings on the site, which may be revealed during the redevelopment works, and;
 - To provide an archive and interpretive report on the results of the investigation.
- 3.2 The site investigation was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by Wiltshire Council (Clark, 2022). All works were undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) standard for watching briefs (CIfA, 2014). Attendance by the site archaeologist was comprehensive: an archaeologist was *present during all relevant ground disturbance*.

- 3.3** The archaeological investigation commenced with the excavation of a trial pit measuring approximately 2m² which was located in the area of the proposed 'Drawing Room' for the new dwelling and is part of the garden area closest to the mill leat.
- 3.4** Site observations were recorded using the standard AC archaeology Ltd. *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.
- 3.5** The archive has been prepared using the unique site code ACW1476.

4. RESULTS

- 4.1** AC archaeology Ltd. staff attended the site in October 2022 and then again between January and April 2023.

Results of the Trial Pit (see Plates 1-4)

- 4.2** The initial programme of archaeological works comprised the excavation of a single trial pit in October 2022. The results are presented below. The stratigraphic sequence encountered during the investigation is described in Table 1, while a photographic record is included as a series of plates at the end of the report.

Context Number	Description	Depth	Interpretation
100	Turf and dark brown silty clay	0-300mm	Present turf-line and garden soil
101	Mixed soils with frequent large rubble stone and building debris	>800mm	Redeposited soil and debris (backfill from demolition?)
102	Off-white marly silt	-	Natural bedrock – alluvial deposit

Table 1: The general stratigraphic sequence

- 4.3** This investigation involved the excavation of a 2m² trial pit to identify any historic building remains or structures that may survive below current ground level. A maximum depth of 1.3m was reached before encountering the natural geology (**Plate 1**). A basic recording of the structural elements and their general characteristics was subsequently undertaken. However, additional recording was not possible due to the depth of the excavation (without shoring) and the instability of one of the exposed walls, preventing immediate access. Some metal fixings associated with the structure was noted and most likely relates to mechanical components.
- 4.4** The south facing section highlighted a 1.53m length of stone wall (S103) comprising randomly coursed limestone blocks, with no evident bonding material (**Plate 2**). The wall was east to west aligned with an overall height of 0.73m and appeared to abut a red-brick wall to the west. It continued to the east as a remaining part of a stepped garden wall, probably dating to the twentieth century.
- 4.5** The east facing section comprised a 1.25m length of red-brick walling (S104), which was 0.52m deep and had a height of 0.82m (**Plate 3**). Although fragmented, the bricks were laid head and stretcher followed by 3 courses of head (on end). This north to south aligned portion of wall was bonded by OPC (cement) and most likely continued to the north and west. A void to its immediate south comprised loosened rubble stone and metal fixings, including a thread that may have formed a mechanical element. These elements may have formed structural components relating to the final phase of the mill prior to its destruction in a fire in 1904.

4.6 To the south and southwest of S104 a stone base (S105) was also recorded in section. It comprised a series of large, rectangular limestone blocks up to 0.4m thick, with no apparent bonding material (**Plate 4**). While its relationship to S104 was not entirely clear, it may be contemporaneous and formed the primary element to additional structural or mechanical elements related to a late phase of the former mill. In the north facing section this stone base was overlaid by a backfill deposit comprising rubble stone (101), most likely formed as a result of destruction and subsequent infilling.

Results of the Archaeological Watching Brief (see Plates 5 - 7)

4.7 Archaeological monitoring of the site was undertaken between January and April 2023. This involved the monitoring of areas where the reduction of ground levels was taking place. With the exception of a feature representing a probable tree throw (revealed in section), only the natural sub-strata was revealed. No evidence for any structures associated with the former mills or any other archaeological deposits were present across the site. The stratigraphic sequence encountered during the monitoring is described in Table 2.

4.8 Intermittent monitoring also took place in the western portion of the site in relation to the drainage works and the installation of a new klargester (sewage tank). This primarily involved the excavation of a pit approximately 4m² to a depth of 2.8m. No archaeological features were encountered.

Context Number	Description	Depth	Interpretation
200	Mixed dark brown silty clay	0-100mm	Modern overburden / disturbed topsoil
201	Grey-brown loamy silty clay	100 - 300mm	Topsoil
202	Off-white 'marly' silt-clay	-	Natural sub-strata

Table 2: The general stratigraphic sequence

5. THE FINDS

5.1 All the observed finds came from deposit (101) and were modern in origin. As such, no finds or artefacts of significance were retained during the programme of works.

6. COMMENT

6.1 The archaeological investigation has allowed for the partial recording of structural elements with a probable association with Mill Farm and its history. These structural elements, particularly S104 and S105, may represent historic remnants of the mill and its workings prior to the fire in 1904.

6.2 The archaeological watching brief that were undertaken during the demolition, ground reduction and excavation of the sewage tank did not reveal anything of archaeological significance. No evidence for medieval mill buildings was recorded during the site investigations.

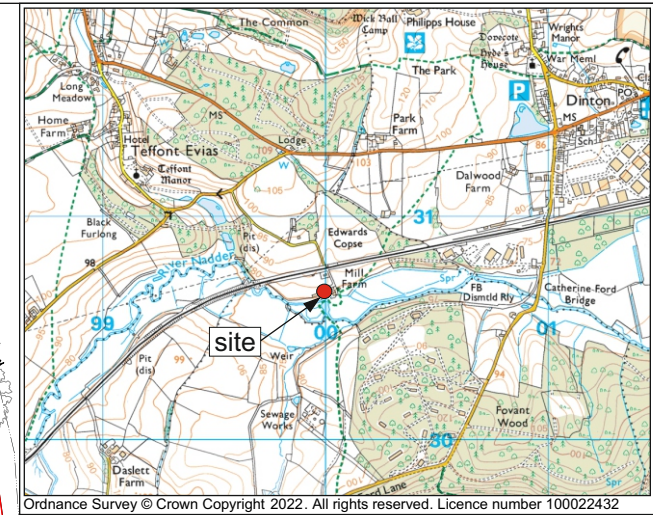
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Figure 1: Site Location and Details of Archaeological Investigations



Key:

- Watching brief area
- Footprint of new building
- Application boundary
- Position of trial pit



PROJECT



Mill Farm, Teffont Evias, Wiltshire

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location showing area of trial pit and watching brief



Plate 1: Oblique view of excavated trial pit. View from the south-west (scale 1m)



Plate 2: South facing section showing wall S103 (scale 1m)



Plate 3: Oblique view of east facing section showing wall S104 (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Oblique view of north facing section showing base S105 (scale 1m)



Plate 5: General view of site



Plate 6: Possible Feature F103 (scale 2m)



Plate 7: General view of stratigraphy (scale 1m)

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