

Fraser Hall,
Cathay Lane,
Cheddar,
Somerset

Archaeological Monitoring and
Recording

REPORT

October 2018



**Fraser Hall
Cathay Lane
Cheddar
Somerset**


for

C1 project code: C1/AMR/17/FCC

Mr & Mrs J Symons

REPORT

Prepared by	Dr Clare Randall, Archaeological Officer
Date	05/10/18

Approved by	Dr Cheryl Green, Post-Excavation Manager
Signed	
Date	18/10/18

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL DETAILS

Client project/scheme ref.	N/A
Planning Application ref.	17/17/00003
Local Planning Authority	Sedgemoor District Council
Scheduled Monument Consent ref.	N/A
Historic Environment Record ref.	37531
Collecting Museum	South West Heritage Trust
Museum accession code	TTNCM 31/2017
OASIS reference	contexto1-284548

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Summary

Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording as a condition of granting planning permission for the erection of two dwellings, access and parking, and the demolition of an existing building at Fraser Hall, Cathay Street, Cheddar, Somerset. The project was commissioned and funded by Mr & Mrs J Symons.

Cheddar has a well-known and documented heritage that spans the Roman period through to the post-medieval period. In relation to the Site, a Post-Roman ditch and the remains of a medieval settlement and Manor House have been identified in close proximity to the Site. Perhaps the most significant heritage asset, recorded just 114m from the Site is the medieval Royal and Episcopal Palace which existed in Cheddar from the mid-10th century.

Despite the considerable archaeological potential in this area, no features or deposits were observed. It may be that nearby activity did not extend into this area in the past, or that the ground has been disturbed in more recent centuries.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording as a condition of granting planning permission (planning reference: 17/17/00003) for the erection of two dwellings, access and parking, and the demolition of an existing building at Fraser Hall, Cathay Street, Cheddar, Somerset (the 'Site') (**Figure 1**). The project was commissioned and funded by Mr & Mrs J Symons.
- 1.2 The monitoring and recording was requested by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) on the advice of the county Historic Environment Service (HES), South West Heritage Trust (SWHT). Condition 10 of the planning permission granted by SDC states:

"No development hereby approved shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority.

Reason: The site lies within the Cheddar Area of High Archaeological Potential, some 100m to the north of the Scheduled Monument which includes a Roman settlement site, Anglo-Saxon and Norman royal palace, and St Columbanus' Chapel. Archaeological investigations in 2005 on the site of the Old Showground, which lies less than 50m to the southwest of the application have identified the remains of Romano-British and Medieval settlement activities. In the interests of recording and/or preserving any archaeological interest in the site."

- 1.3 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which sets out the project strategy (Milby 2017); archaeological monitoring and recording; post-excavation and report production (this document); and archive preparation and deposition.
- 1.4 The requirement follows advice by Central Government as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (DCLG 2012, revised 2018).

2. The Site

- 2.1 The Site (centred on NGR ST 45746 53336) covers 312 square metres and is located towards the centre of Cheddar, immediately south of Cathay Lane (**Figure 1**). The development area is surrounded by residential housing and is largely situated on level ground at an average height of c. 15m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The recorded (solid) geology for the Site is Mercia Mudstone Group - Mudstone and Halite-stone and the drift (superficial) geology is Head - Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel and the drift (superficial) geology is Head - Clay, Silt, Sand And Gravel. The soils for the Site are characterised as slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (CSAIS, 2017).
- 2.2 The county Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that a number of heritage assets have been recorded within a 200m radius of the Site. The table below provides brief details of these assets and are organised by period and their distance from the centre of the Site measured in radius bands.

HER ref.	Description	Period	Distance from Site
44783	Post-Roman ditch, Station Road, Cheddar	Post-Roman	c. 105m
18256	Medieval settlement remains, Old Showground, Cheddar	Medieval	c. 115m
30421	Hanham Manor, medieval Manor house	Medieval	c. 110m
11442	Medieval royal and episcopal palace, Cheddar	Medieval	c. 114m

- 2.3 Cheddar has a well-known and documented heritage that spans the Roman period through to the post-medieval period. In relation to the Site, a Post-Roman ditch was identified c. 105m away (**PRN 44783**). Further to this, the remains of a medieval settlement (**PRN 18256**) and a medieval Manor House (**PRN 30421**) were also identified just a little over 100m away from the Site.
- 2.4 Perhaps the most significant heritage asset, recorded just 114m from the Site, is the medieval Royal and Episcopal Palace which existed in Cheddar from the mid-10th century. Excavations of this undertaken between 1960 and 1962 (**PRN 11442**), revealed that the chapel of St Columbanus, which had origins in the

10th century, was predated by a substantial long hall and two other minor buildings. The Royal Palace continued to exist until 1230 when the estate was given to the Dean and Chapter of Wells. The estate passed out of ecclesiastical ownership in 1548 when Bishop Barlow sold it to Edward VI. In the 17th century the chapel was converted into a dwelling, which continued to be occupied until the early 20th century.

3. Archaeological aims and research objectives

3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological monitoring were to:

- identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the Site during groundworks;
- determine the character of the archaeological remains, where present;
- recover environmental information, which may have provided further information relating to the local historic environment of the area;
- provide sufficient information to enable further mitigation strategies to be determined, where appropriate

3.2 The research objectives were to:

- determine whether there was any evidence specifically relating to the medieval Royal and Episcopal Palace;
- determine whether there was any evidence specifically relating to the historic core of Cheddar.

4. Methodology

4.1 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (December 2014) and in accordance with the *Somerset County Council Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook* (2011). C1 adhered to the *Code of Conduct* of the CIfA (1985, rev. 2000, 2014), and *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (CIfA, 2014, rev. 2015) at all times. The fieldwork methodology is summarised below.

4.2 C1 gave notification of the commencement of the works to the HES, but it was not necessary for a representative to visit the Site and monitor archaeological fieldwork. Monitoring will continue until the deposition of the Site archive.

4.3 Prior to the commencement of Site works, the excavation methodology was agreed between those responsible for carrying out the groundworks and C1 to ensure that all parties were aware of the monitoring requirements.

4.4 An archaeologist was on Site to monitor all specified groundworks with the aim of identifying and recording any archaeological features/deposits present. All groundworks were carried out with a machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket.

4.5 By default, core details of the deposit sequence across the Site were recorded on C1 *pro-forma* profile forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. The frequency with which profiles were recorded was based on variations of the deposit sequence. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts. Manual excavation was not required. A photographic record of the monitoring and recording was carried out and involved the sole use of digital images. This included photographs illustrating more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

5. Results

5.1 The deposit sequence, seen in two profiles, was the same in both locations (**Plate 1**). Very dark greyish brown (10 YR 3/2) friable sandy silty clay with frequent rounded gravelly pebbles (<0.20m) measuring 0.50m deep,

contexts (100) and (200), overlay the natural deposits of red (2.5 YR 5/6) friable silty sandy gravel comprising frequent rounded to angular fragments (<0.20m), contexts (101) and (102) respectively. No archaeological features or deposits were noted.

6. The finds

- 6.1 No archaeological artefacts or ecofacts were observed or collected.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 Despite the considerable archaeological potential in this area, no archaeological features or deposits were observed. It may be that nearby activity did not extend into this area in the past, or that the ground has been disturbed in more recent centuries.

8. Archive and dissemination

- 8.1 The NPPF requires that an archaeological archive arising from development works is made publicly accessible (para. 141). The archive comprises two parts: the paper/digital archive including site records and images; and the artefact/ecofact assemblage.
- 8.2 If archaeological features/deposits have been recorded, the archive generated from this, consisting of born-digital data and digital copies of drawings produced during fieldwork, will be transferred into the care of a Trusted Digital Repository. The only suitable repository for digital archaeological archive is the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The digital archive will be compiled in accordance with the standards and requirements of the ADS, as set out on their website. A digital copy of the report will also be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>).
- 8.3 As no archaeological evidence was encountered, all relevant data has been incorporated into this report and the paper/digital archive will be stored on the C1 cloud storage server or discarded.
- 8.4 The artefact/ecofact assemblage is the legal property of the landowner (excluding any items that fall under The Treasure Act 1996). It is usual practice for the landowner to transfer ownership of this assemblage to a receiving institution (usually a museum) once it has been fully assessed and/or analysed. Receiving institutions store the assemblage and make it publicly accessible. Alternatively, the landowner can choose to keep the assemblage but arrangements must be made to ensure its long-term curation and public accessibility in accordance with NPPF.
- 8.5 As no archaeological finds or ecofacts were collected, there is in this case no physical archive.
- 8.6 Archive deposition will ordinarily be carried out within three months of final report completion.
- 8.7 A copy of this report will be provided to the client/agent and to the HES so that it can be included as part of the county Historic Environment Record.

9. Bibliography

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Plate 1. Excavated footings (facing NE)

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