

Yew Tree Farm
144 Main Street
Walton
Somerset

An Archaeological Evaluation

REPORT

January 2018



**Yew Tree Farm
144 Main Street
Walton
Somerset**


for

C1 project code: C1/EVA/17/YWS

Walton Properties Glastonbury Ltd

REPORT

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Date	10/01/18

Approved by	Dr Cheryl Green, Post-excavation Manager
Signed	
Date	12/01/18

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PROJECT DETAILS

Client project/scheme ref.	N/A
Planning Application ref.	2014/1943/OTS
Local Planning Authority	Mendip District Council
Scheduled Monument Consent ref.	N/A
Historic Environment Record ref.	37705
Collecting Museum	South West Heritage Trust
Museum accession code	TTNCM 75/2017
OASIS reference	Contexto1-298049

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Summary

Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out an archaeological field evaluation through trial trenching as a condition (7) of granting planning permission (planning reference: 2014/1943/OTS) for the ‘demolition of agricultural buildings, alterations to access, and the erection of 14 dwellings with garaging, parking, and domestic curtilages’ at Yew Tree Farm, 144 Main Street, Walton, Somerset. The project was commissioned by Walton Properties Glastonbury Ltd.

The Site, a former farmyard and buildings, is situated in an area of High Archaeological Potential, and evaluation was requested as evidence of the medieval settlement has been shown to be preserved under areas of modern development nearby. However, the evaluation revealed that, on the Site, there has been considerable reworking of the ground levels in the modern period. In Tr1 and Tr2, the yard had effectively been established directly over the natural substrate, whilst in Tr4, Tr5 and Tr6, a modern deposit of demolition rubble up to 1.4m thick created a levelling layer across a large portion of the northern part of the Site. No archaeological features were seen which could relate to the medieval settlement, and there were no finds. This may indicate that this area was not utilised intensively during the medieval period, but equally, given the clear alterations in the ground surface across the Site, it may be that any features or deposits relating to the medieval settlement have been already removed or buried beneath make up layers.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out an archaeological field evaluation through trial trenching as a condition (number 7) of granting planning permission (planning reference: 2014/1943/OTS) for the ‘demolition of agricultural buildings, alterations to access, and the erection of 14 dwellings with garaging, parking, and domestic curtilages’ at Yew Tree Farm, 144 Main Street, Walton, Somerset (the ‘Site’) (**Figure 1**). The project was commissioned by Walton Properties Glastonbury Ltd.

1.2 The evaluation was requested by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Mendip District Council (MDC) on the advice of the county Historic Environment Service (HES), South West Heritage Trust (SWHT). In a reply to an email consultation request from Mr Daniel Foster, Case Officer, MDC on 15 October 2014, Mr Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer, South West Heritage Trust stated:

“Thank you for consulting on this application. The site lies within the Area of High Archaeological Potential and earlier investigation in Walton have shown that remains of medieval settlement survive under modern development. Normally, evaluation prior to determination should take place but in this case due to the nature of the site the archaeology should be dealt with through the imposition of a condition.

For this reason I recommend that the developer be required to archaeologically excavate the heritage asset and provide a report on any discoveries made as indicated in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 141). This should be secured by the use of model condition 55 attached to any permission granted.”

1.3 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy; trial trenching; 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).

2. The Site

2.1 The Site (centred on NGR ST 45766 36373) covers c. 6,500 square metres and is located towards the western edge of Walton village occupying the former site of Yew Tree Farm (**Figure 1**). It fronts directly onto Main Street (A39) to the south, the primary route through the village leading eastwards to the adjacent town of Street, and is bound on the western and eastern sides by the neighbouring properties numbered 146 and 130/128 respectively. The northern aspect is open and faces Small Moor. The Site is largely situated on level ground at an average height of c. 21m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The recorded geology is Langport Member, Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (undifferentiated) - Mudstone and Limestone, Interbedded. (BGS 2017). There is no recorded superficial (drift) geology. The soils are characterised as shallow and lime-rich over chalk or limestone (CSAIS, 2017).

2.2 There are no records of any previous archaeological activity on the Site although it is within an Area of High Archaeological Potential and part of the area defined as the medieval settlement. Historic maps of the Site show it as being occupied by a farm from at least the end of the 19th century.

3. Archaeological aims and research objectives

3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological evaluation were to:

- identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits encountered;
- determine the character of the archaeological remains, where present;
- recover environmental information, which may provide 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 settlement of Walton

4. Methodology

- 4.1 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 1994, rev. 2001, 2008, 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. Monitoring will continue until the deposition of the Site archive.
- 4.3 The archaeological evaluation consisted of 6 trenches, each measuring 15m long x 1.6m wide representing 2% of the development area. The trenches were laid out according to a pre-defined trench plan (see **Figure 1**) using Ordnance Survey (OS) co-ordinates with a TopCon GRS1 GPS unit.
- 4.4 A 360-degree tracked or 3CX type machine equipped with a toothless (grading) bucket was used to remove topsoil/overburden under the constant supervision of C1 archaeological staff. Machine excavation continued until archaeological features or natural geology was encountered. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts.
- 4.5 Once machine work was completed, the trenches were examined and, where necessary, cleaned using hand tools. Core details of each trench were recorded on C1 *pro-forma* evaluation trench forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. This included logging a representative section of the trench to allow an understanding of the stratigraphy. A digital photograph of each trench in plan and representative section was taken in .jpg format. The photographic record also included working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted. Manual excavation was not in this case needed. Stratigraphic relationships were recorded using a "Harris-Winchester matrix" diagram and soil colours logged using a Munsell soil colour chart.

5. Results

- 5.1 The topsoil in Trenches 1, 2 and 3 (**Plates 1, 2, & 3**) was very dark grey (10YR 3/1) or greyish brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay with frequent angular lias fragments, generally 0.20m deep. In Tr1 this topsoil overlay a subsoil (101) of grey (10YR 6/1) silty clay with frequent angular lias fragments, 0.20m thick, and in Tr2 light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4) silty clay with frequent blocky lias fragments (201), 0.30m thick. In both cases these subsoils overlay the natural, solid lias in Tr1 (102), and light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4) silty clay with frequent blocky lias fragments in Tr2 (202). In Tr3 the topsoil directly overlay the natural (301), a compacted greyish brown (10YR 5/2) silty clay with frequent blocky lias fragments. Trench 1 contained two field drains, and in both Tr1 and Tr2 the existing yard had been constructed onto natural.
- 5.2 In Tr4, Tr5 and Tr6 (**Plates 4, 5, & 6**) there was no topsoil, but in each case a deep upper deposit of friable greyish brown (10YR 4/1) silty clay with frequent and very frequent angular lias blocks of various sizes, a few up to c. 0.50m. In Tr4 this deposit (400) contained occasional brick, and there was more brick and obvious building rubble in Tr6 (600). This deposit was between 1.10m and 1.40m deep and comprised a dump of demolition rubble making up the ground surface. In all cases these deposits overlay natural, in Tr4 and Tr5 a compacted dark grey (10YR 4/2) clay with silt (401) (501) with frequent large lias blocks and in Tr6 dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/6) clay with silt (601) containing frequent large blocky lias fragments.
- 5.3 No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

6. The finds

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

7. Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 The Site comprises a former farmyard, and it appears that there has been considerable reworking of the ground levels during the modern period. In Tr1 and Tr2, the yard had effectively been established directly over the natural substrate, whilst in Tr4, Tr5 and Tr6, a modern deposit of demolition rubble up to 1.4m thick created a levelling layer across a large portion of the northern part of the Site. No archaeological features were seen on the Site which could relate to the medieval settlement known in the area, and there were no finds. This may indicate that this location was not utilised intensively during the medieval period, but equally, given the clear alterations in the ground surface across the Site, it may be that any features or deposits relating to the medieval settlement have been already removed or buried beneath make up layers.

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.

Paper/digital archive

- 8.2 Where archaeological features/deposits are recorded, the archive generated from this usually comprises site records, drawings and photographs either in paper format or born-digital data. Within three months of the conclusion of a project this is normally transferred into the care of a Trusted Digital Repository such as the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) as scanned paper records or native born-digital data. The digital archive will be compiled in accordance with the standards and requirements of the ADS, as set out on their website.
- 8.3 As no archaeological evidence was encountered, all relevant data has been incorporated into the assessment report and the paper/digital archive will be stored on the C1 cloud storage server or discarded.

Physical archive

- 8.4 The artefact/ecofact assemblage is the legal property of the landowner (excluding any items that fall under The Treasure Act 1996). However, 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 In this case there were no artefacts observed or collected and there is therefore no physical archive.

Dissemination: report

- 8.6 Copies of the report will be submitted to the following:
- client and/or agent
 - the HES so that it can be included as part of the county Historic Environment Record (HER)
 - the ADS, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>)

Dissemination: publication

- 8.7 By default, a short entry will be prepared for publication in the summary section of the next county archaeological journal the *Proceedings of the Somerset Natural History and Archaeological Society*.

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Figure 1. Site setting, trench and profile locations



Plate 1. Trench 1, facing NE (2 x 1m scales)



Plate 2. Trench 2, facing SE (2 x 1m scales)



Plate 3. Trench 3, facing SW (2 x 1m scales)

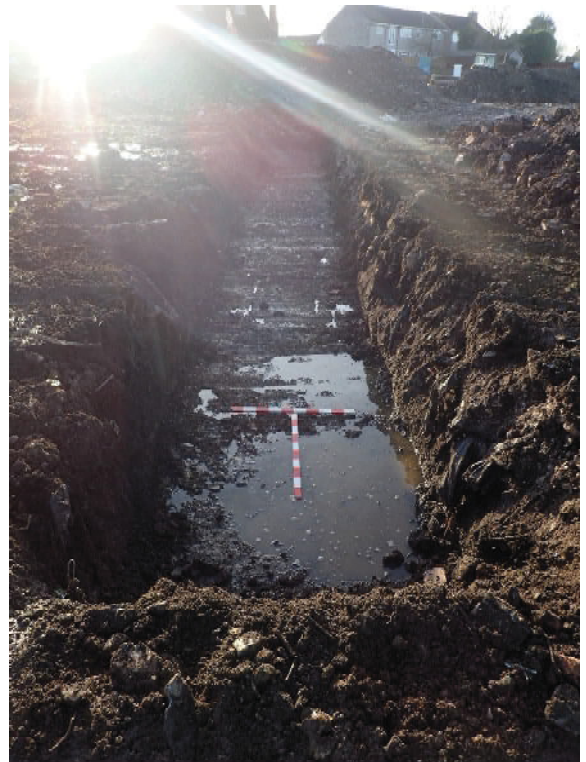


Plate 4. Trench 4, facing NW (2 x 1m scales)



Plate 5. Trench 4, facing SW (2 x 1m scales)



Plate 6. Trench 4, facing SE (2 x 1m scales)



Appendix 1: Context summary

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EARLIER THAN	CONTEMP. WITH	LATER THAN	LENGTH	WIDTH/DIAMETER	THICKNESS/DEPTH (m)
Trench 1									
100	Modern	Layer	Firm very dark grey (10 YR 3/1) silty clay with frequent angular lias fragments <0.02m	NA		101	15.0m	1.8m	0.20m
101	Subsoil	Layer	Firm grey (10 YR 6/1) silty clay with frequent angular lias fragments <0.02m	100		102	15.0m	1.8m	0.20m
102	Geological	Layer	Cemented light grey (10 YR 7/1) lias	102		NA	15.0m	1.8m	>0.10m
Trench 2									
200	Modern	Layer	Friable very dark greyish brown (10 YR 3/2) silty clay with moderate blocky lias fragments	NA		201	15.0m	1.9m	0.20m
201	Subsoil	Layer	Firm light yellowish brown (10 YR 6/4) silty clay with frequent blocky lias fragments <0.02m	200		202	15.0m	1.9m	0.30m
202	Geological	Layer	Firm light yellowish brown (10 YR 6/4) silty clay with frequent blocky lias fragments <0.02m	201		NA	15.0m	1.9m	>0.20m
Trench 3									
300	Modern	Layer	Friable very dark greyish brown (10 YR 3/2) silty clay with frequent angular to blocky lias fragments <0.01m	NA		301	15.0m	1.9m	0.20m
301	Geological	Layer	Compacted greyish brown (10 YR 5/2) silty clay with frequent blocky lias fragments <0.01m	301		NA	15.0m	1.9m	>0.10m
Trench 4									
400	Modern	Layer	Friable greyish brown (10 YR 4/1) silty clay with frequent angular lias blocks <0.50m and occasional brick	NA		401	15.0m	1.9m	1.40m
401	Geological	Layer	Compacted dark grey (10 YR 4/2) clay with silt with frequent large lias blocks <0.30m	401		NA	15.0m	1.9m	>0.10m
Trench 5									
500	Modern	Layer	Friable greyish brown (10 YR 4/1) silty clay with frequent large lias blocks <0.50m, demolition rubble, brick	NA		501	15.0m	1.9m	1.10m
501	Geological	Layer	Compacted dark grey (10 YR 4/2) silt clay with frequent large lias blocks <0.30m	501		NA	15.0m	1.9m	>0.10m
Trench 6									
600	Modern	Layer	Friable greyish brown (10 YR 4/1) silty clay with frequent angular lias blocks <0.50m	NA		601	15.0m	1.9m	1.20m
601	Geological	Layer	Compacted dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6) with frequent large blocky lias fragments <0.30m	601		NA	15.0m	1.9m	>0.10m

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