

Hazelwood, Bakery Lane, Pilton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

An Archaeological Evaluation.



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An Archaeological Evaluation

for

Dunford Builders

by



Brickfield Offices, Maperton, Wincanton, Somerset. BA9 8EG.

T: 01963 824696

E: mail@contextone.co.uk

W: www.contextone.co.uk

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COAS project team:

Project Director: Richard McConnell

Fieldwork Manager: Stuart Milby

Post-excavation Manager: Dr Cheryl Green

Fieldwork: Peter Fairclough

Report: Richard McConnell

Illustration: Tara Fairclough

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Front cover image: The Site prior to evaluation, from the south-east. © Context One Archaeological Services 2016

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Non-technical summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation through trial trenching at Hazelwood, Bakery Lane, Pilton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, on 19 February 2016. The project was commissioned by Matthew Cornish of Dunford Builders.

The evaluation, comprising 1 no. 4m long x 1m wide trial trench, was carried out in support of a planning application (Mendip District Council planning application ref. 2016/0320/FUL) to convert a redundant garage and add a single storey extension to form a holiday let.

Despite the potential for the discovery of archaeological evidence relating to early settlement activity, the evaluation demonstrated that in this location at least, no such evidence was encountered. The trench revealed a natural deposit sequence and was archaeologically sterile.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation through trial trenching at Hazelwood, Bakery Lane, Pilton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset (the ‘Site’), on 19 February 2016. The project was commissioned by Matthew Cornish of Dunford Builders.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out to support a planning application (Mendip District Council planning application ref. 2016/0320/FUL) to convert a redundant garage and add a single storey extension to form a holiday let. The requirement followed advice by Central Government as set out in paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).
- 1.3 Mendip District Council originally requested that an archaeological assessment should accompany the application. In a letter from Mr Nicholas Batten (Planning Officer, Mendip District Council) to Mr Cornish on 15 February 2016, Mr Batten stated:
- “This is required because the development involves ground disturbance within an area of high archaeological potential/within/adjacent to a scheduled ancient monument.”*
- 1.4 Pilton is believed to have been founded from a collection of neighbouring hamlets in the late Anglo-Saxon period and may explain why the present village demonstrates a dispersed pattern with no obvious foci (Mendip District Council 2014, 8). Pilton is recorded at Domesday in AD1086 and was under the ownership of Glastonbury Abbey until the Dissolution in AD 1539 (*ibid.*, 8). A reliance on agriculture throughout the medieval period is well-documented and was supplemented by the woollen sock industry during the post-medieval period (*ibid.*, 8). The Tithe Barn (now a Scheduled Monument), c. 325m to the south-west of the Site is testament to its former agricultural past. Pilton was also known for small-scale industries such as cider and cheese making from the latter part of the 19th century (*ibid.*, 9). A number of artefacts relating to earlier periods have also been recorded and these include Iron Age and Roman pottery finds c. 235m north-east of the Site (Somerset Historic Environment Record (SHER) no. 25443) and also adjacent to the Site at Old Worthy (SHER no. 34786).
- 1.5 Given the suggested archaeological potential, COAS proposed that an evaluation through trial trenching should be carried out instead of an assessment so that it could be determined conclusively whether any archaeological activity was present on the Site. This approach was discussed and approved by Mr Steven Membery (Senior Historic Environment Officer, South West Heritage Trust) on 16 February 2016.
- 1.6 The evaluation comprised four elements: the production of a trench plan which showed the proposed location of the works; trial trenching; post-excavation and report production; and project archiving. The trench plan was pre-approved by Mr Membery on 16 February 2016 and prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

2. Site location and topography

- 2.1 The Site (centred on NGR ST 59215 40729) covers c. 51 square metres and is located immediately adjacent to a redundant garage on its northern flank. The garage is part of a residential property known as ‘Hazelwood’. The property itself lies c. 375m south-east of Pilton village centre and is bounded to the south and eastern side by Bakery Lane and to the west by a residential property known as ‘Old Worthy’ (**Figure 1**). The proposed development area is located at c. 53.42m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), on ground that falls sharply from south to north down to a tributary of the River Whitelake which runs through the village from west to east. The Site had recently been cleared of mature vegetation. The Site is within the Pilton Conservation Area.

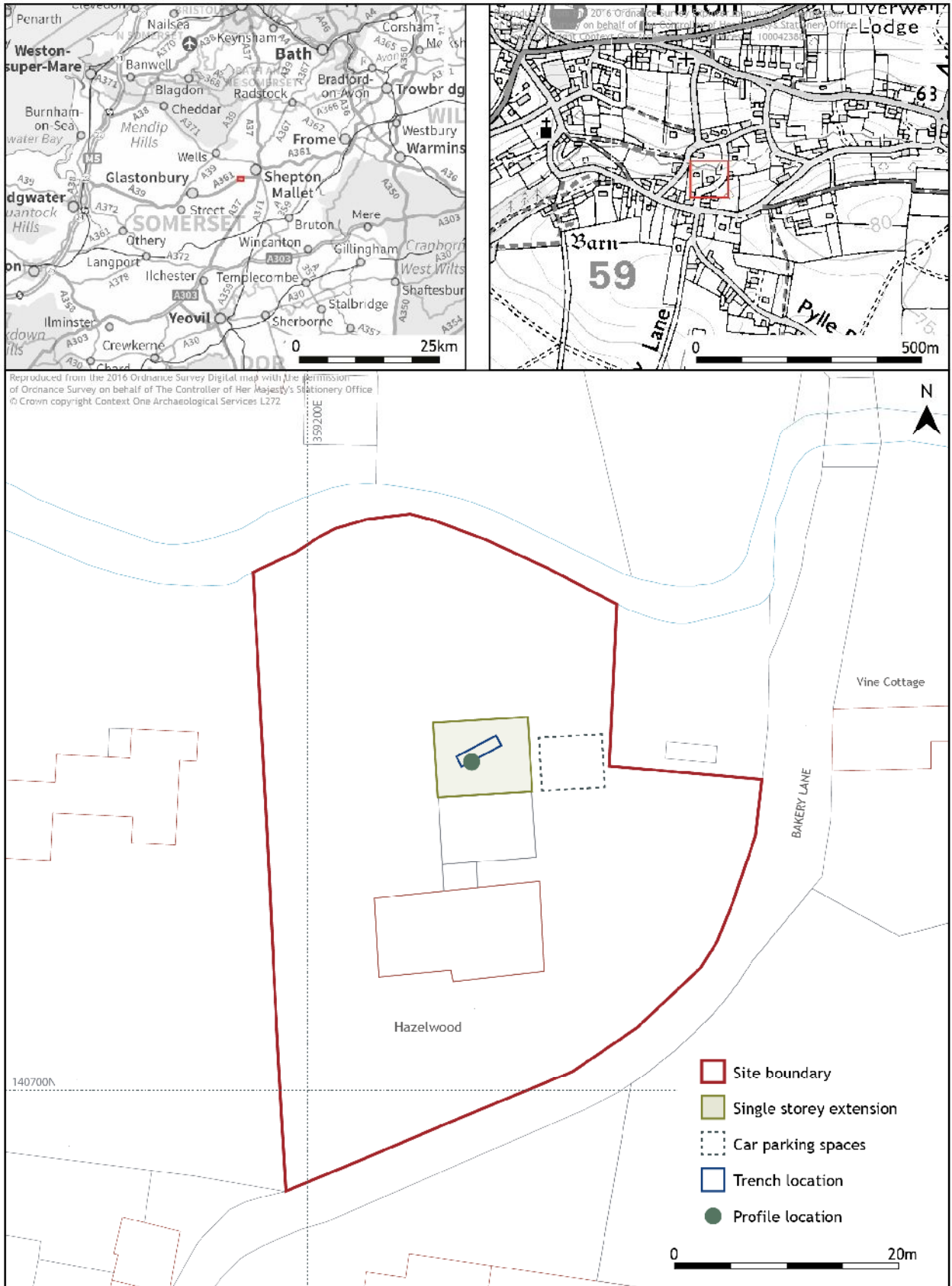


Figure 1. Site setting, proposed development and evaluation trench location

3. Methodology

- 3.1 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook* issued by Somerset County Council in 2011, and the codes, standards and guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), formerly the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) (December 2014). Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.
- 3.2 The evaluation comprised a single trial trench measuring 4m long x 1m wide positioned within the proposed footprint of the single storey extension. This equated to a c. 8% sample of the application area. The location of the trench was mapped relative to the National Grid and Ordnance Datum using a TopCon GRS-1 Global Positioning System, producing an accuracy of 1-2cm.
- 3.3 A tracked excavator fitted with a 1m wide toothless grading bucket was used to remove topsoil and continued in shallow horizontal spits (in the absence of archaeological features/deposits) until natural geology was encountered. Once machine work had been completed, one long face of the trench was cleaned by hand to allow an understanding of the deposit sequence.
- 3.4 A representative 1m wide profile section of the trench was recorded using a COAS *pro forma* evaluation trench sheet to document the sequence of deposits.
- 3.5 All deposits were recorded as individual contexts and ascribed a unique number. Contexts referenced in section 4 are presented in standard terms, e.g. (100), (203).
- 3.6 A photographic record of the fieldwork was carried out and this comprised digital images captured in .jpg format. A digital photograph was also taken of the representative profile section as well as the long axis of the trench in plan. All photographs included an appropriate scale. Photographs were also taken of the Site setting as well as working shots of the archaeological operation.

4. Results

- 4.1 No visible features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during the evaluation.
- 4.2 The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.55m and this demonstrated a simple horizontal deposit sequence to natural geology. The sequence comprised a black (10YR 2/1) silt/clay topsoil (100) measuring 0.20m-0.28m thick, above a yellowish brown (10YR 5/8) silt/clay sub-soil (101) measuring 0.10m-0.20m thick, resting on natural very pale brown (10YR 7/4) compacted clay (102). Excavation of the natural clay exposed the first 0.15m of the deposit to confirm its geological origin. All three deposits included varying degrees of lias limestone fragments and gravel.



Plate 1. Excavated trench (from W; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 2. Excavated trench (from SW; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 3. Trench deposit sequence (from S; 20cm & 1m scales)

5. The finds

5.1 No finds were observed or collected during the evaluation.

6. Discussion

6.1 Despite the potential for the discovery of archaeological evidence relating to early settlement activity, the evaluation has demonstrated that in this location at least, no such evidence was encountered. The trench revealed a natural deposit sequence and was archaeologically sterile.

7. Archive

7.1 An ordered and integrated site archive has been prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992) / *Management of Archaeological Projects in the Historic Environment* (English Heritage 2006).

7.2 The project archive is currently held by COAS and consists of the following:

Item	Number	Format
Profile record sheets	1	.PDF
Digital images	20	.JPG

- 7.3 The Site records were generated electronically and there is no physical site archive to deposit with South West Heritage Trust. All the relevant information from the evaluation has been presented in this report.
- 7.4 A copy of this report will be deposited with the client to support the planning application and further copies in printed and electronic format (.pdf) will be submitted for inclusion into the Somerset Historic Environment Record.

8. COAS acknowledgements

- 8.1 We would like to thank the following for their contribution to the successful completion of this project:

Matthew Cornish, Dunford Builders
 Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer, South West Heritage Trust

9. Bibliography

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