

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

MILL FARM, GUARLFORD ROAD,

MALVERN, WORCESTERSHIRE

SO 7950 4532

On behalf of

Westbury Homes (Holding) Ltd

JULY 2005

REPORT FOR Westbury Homes (Holding) Ltd
Central Region
Sabre Close
Quedgeley
Glos GL2 4NZ

PREPARED BY John Moore

FIELDWORK 1-8 June 2005

REPORT ISSUED 8 July 2005

ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Long White Cloud
Waterperry Road
Holton
Oxfordshire OX33 1PW

*Telephone/Fax 01865 876637
Email: jmhs99@hotmail.com*

Site Code; GMMF 05
JMHS Project No: 1550

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Summary

The majority of the groundworks had been completed before an archaeological watching brief commenced. The footings for one dwelling were inspected and excavation of some service trench lengths was monitored. Nothing of significance was observed in the small area seen. A ploughsoil dated to 13th century was present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located and accessed off Guarlford Road, Malvern, Worcestershire, centred on National Grid Reference SO7950 4532. The site is approximately 0.80 hectares in area, irregular in shape and generally flat lying.

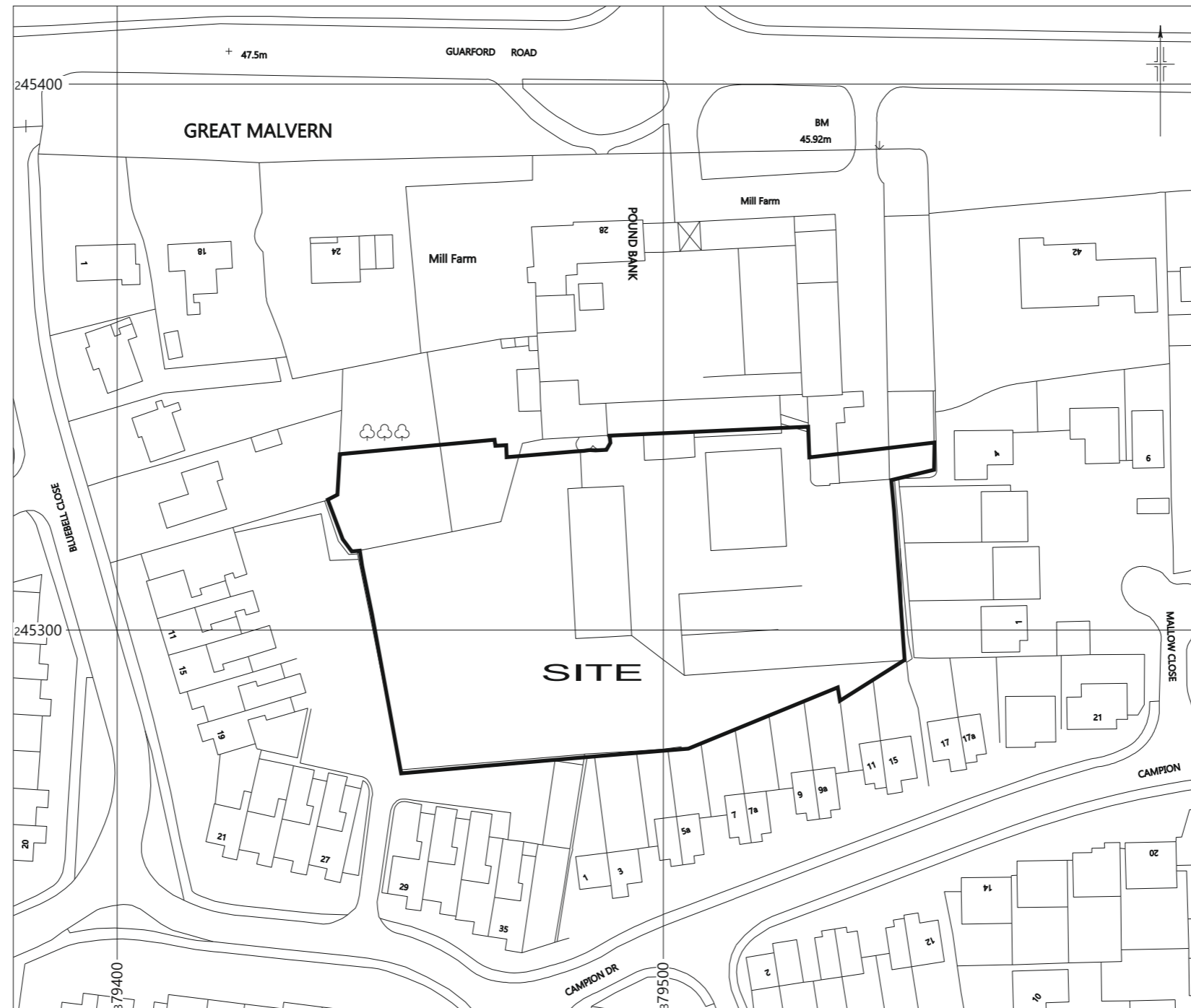
The northern part of the site is occupied by an old brick-built farmyard comprising a courtyard formed by the farmhouse and storage barns and a metal shed that was located along the eastern site boundary. Prior to commencement of development the southern part of the site comprised three modern storage sheds surrounded by concrete hardstanding and a small field (JPA 2003).

Guarlford Road forms the northern boundary of the site, beyond which are residential properties. The eastern and southern site boundaries are formed by garden fencing and hedges associated with the adjacent housing state. The south western boundary comprises chain link fencing, an access road and open space associated with the adjoining housing development. The private orchard and gardens of Mill Farm are located on the north western site boundary (JPA 2003).

The British Geological Survey Sheet 199 Worcester, Solid and Drift edition at 1:50 000 scale, indicates the site to be underlain by Head Deposits of Quaternary Age. These, in turn, are underlain by the Eldersfield Mudstone Formation with *skerries* (sandstone units within the Mudstone) that form part of the Mercia Mudstone Group which is Triassic in Age (JPA 2003).

1.2 Planning Background

Malvern Hills District Council granted planning consent for the construction of fourteen new dwellings and seven units in a listed barn conversion. Due to the potential presence of below ground archaeological deposits a condition was attached to the planning consent for the fourteen new dwellings that required the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during the course of the groundworks in order to preserve by record any archaeological remains of significance. Due to the purchase of the site by Westbury Homes (Holding) Ltd from the applicant Crest Nicholson the condition was not known about until after the construction of the road and bases to thirteen of the dwellings. As soon as the condition was known Westbury Homes (Holding) Ltd instructed John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) to inspect the site and discuss the matter with Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (WHEAS).



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Figure 1: Site location

It was agreed with WHEAS that further excavation of outstanding service trenches would be monitored by JMHS. It was felt that selected investigation, by trenching, of areas unaffected by the groundworks would be of limited value as a large percentage of the site had been disturbed and there was no known specific potential for archaeological remains on the site.

1.3 Archaeological Background

A windmill is known in the area from which presumably Mill Farm derives its name. Roman pottery kilns are known in the general area and a Bronze Age settlement has been found to the south (M Glyde *pers. com*).

As part of a Geo-Environmental Assessment of the site Joynes Pike & Associates Ltd undertook an examination of the following County Series and Ordnance Survey maps:

1887	Worcestershire	40.9	Scale 25" to 1 mile
1888	Worcestershire	40.13	Scale 25" to 1 mile
1905	Worcestershire	40SW	Scale 6" to 1 mile
1930	Worcestershire	40SW	Scale 6" to 1 mile
1938	Worcestershire	40SW	Scale 6" to 1 mile
1955	Ordnance Survey	SO 74 NE	Scale 1/10560
1964	Ordnance Survey	SO 79 45 SE	Scale 1/1250
1964-5	Ordnance Survey	SO 79 45	Scale 1/2500
1972	Ordnance Survey	SO 79 45 SW	Scale 1/1250
1975	Ordnance Survey	SO 74 NE	Scale 1/10000
1985	Ordnance Survey	SO 79 45 SW	Scale 1/1250
1990	Ordnance Survey	SO 74 NE	Scale 1/1250
1990	Ordnance Survey	SO74 45 SE	Scale 1/1250

The following is copied from their report (JPA 2003):

The earliest County Series plan inspected dated 1887-88 indicates the site to have comprised part of Mill Farm. The northern area of the site was occupied by the main farm buildings, which formed a rectangle with a central courtyard. The southern area of the site formed part of an open field. A pond is noted immediately adjacent to the southeast corner of the site beyond which is a woodland area which also contains a pond. Further ponds and an oval depression are located between 20m and 400m to the east and south of the site within open fields. A watercourse, running northwest/southeast is located approximately 280m to the south of the site. The site is bounded to the north by a tree-lined track and marshy ground. Three ponds located in depressions (possible old clay pits?) are located approximately 250m to the northwest of the site. Further woodland, marshy ground and small buildings were located to the west and south west of the site, together with a Smithy noted approximately 320m to the southwest. Approximately 400m to the south east, tanks and weighbridge are shown with associated buildings.

The 1905 plan shows the site itself to have remained relatively unchanged from previous plans. The pond within the woodland area to the south east is no longer depicted. The tanks previously noted to the south east formed part of a sewage farm adjacent to a disused corn mill. A second sewage farm is shown approximately

500m to the northeast. A disused brickworks and an electric light works are shown to have been located approximately 600m to the north west of the site.

The 1930-45 plan indicates a pump to have been located within the courtyard area of Mill Farm. Three further pumps are noted to the west and north west beyond the site boundaries. An additional building to the farm is now shown along the northern part of the eastern site boundary. A sheep wash is shown approximately 200m to the south of the site. Extensive residential development had occurred to the northwest of the site. The marshy areas to the north and west and the former brick works are no longer shown. The 1938 plan shows an expansion in the sewage works located to the southeast of the site.

The 1964 and 1965 plans show the site itself to have been relatively unchanged from previous plans. A driveway from Guarlford Road onto the site had developed from the northern boundary. The pumps are no longer annotated within the farm courtyard or to the west of the site. The pond 20m west of the site had by this time been infilled and the area developed with residential housing. A nursery is depicted east of the site with glass houses and a small tank. A series of drains are shown to the north of the site beyond Guarlford Road.

The 1985 and 1990 plans indicate the development of further buildings on site south of the main farm buildings. The nursery had been replaced with a residential development. Further residential development had occurred to the west and south of the site. The pond adjacent to the site's southeastern corner is no longer depicted by this time. Also, the pond approximately 120m to the southwest had also been infilled.

Anecdotal information indicates that the site has been a farm for the last 500 years.

2 STRATEGY

An archaeologist inspected the excavated foundation trenches for Dwelling 14 after they had been partly filled with concrete (Fig. 2). The concrete footings did not reach above the top of the geological deposits and therefore any archaeological remains present would have been visible. The excavation of lengths of service trenches to the front and rear of Dwellings 9-13 were monitored by the archaeologist (Fig. 2).

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.



Figure 2: Watching Brief Areas

From the areas inspected and the boreholes and trial pits (JPA 2003a) the site was underlain by Mercia Mudstone comprising firm red-brown mottled grey slightly sandy gravelly clay (05). This was overlain in the west part of the site by Head Deposits of firm grey-brown slightly sandy gravelly clay with occasional cobbles (08).

Prior to development commencing on the site the existing storage sheds had been demolished. In addition topsoil reported to depths of between 100mm and 200mm (JPA 2003a) was removed from the west part of the site. The resulting surface in the east part of the site where the sheds and hardstanding had been was a disturbed top of Head Deposits and Mercia Mudstone mixed with demolition debris overlaid by Type 1 roadstone (01). In the west part of the site a 300mm thick deposit of stiff pale grey-brown slightly friable clay with less than 1% small gravel (07) overlaid the natural ground. This is interpreted as a former ploughsoil.

The only made ground encountered apart from the recently formed made ground was a deposit seen across the eastern half of the footprint of Dwelling 14. This was a relatively modern farmyard disturbance with the top of the Mercia Mudstone mixed with pale red-brown grey clay, brick and stone (06). A cardboard cream carton was recovered from the material.

In places parts of concrete foundations were still present cut into the top of the geological deposits. Elsewhere the positions of former foundations of the storage sheds were apparent as cuts filled with Type 1 roadstone and other material. Former drains were also encountered.

4 FINDS

4.1 Pottery by *Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised three medieval sherds weighing 68g, all of which came from the ploughsoil horizon, context 7.

The material was recorded using conventions of the Worcestershire on-line ceramic database (<http://www.worcestershireceramics.org/hms/home>), as follows:

Fabric 53.1: *Malvernian glazed ware*, 13th century. Iron rich clay with abundant rounded quartz, sparse rounded chert and sandstone and occasional mudstone and Malvernian rock (acid igneous) inclusions. Usually orange brown surface with reduced grey core. Hand made, with a thin external yellow green glaze. 2 sherds, 64g.

Fabric 56: *Malvernian unglazed ware*, late 12th – 14th century. Iron rich clay with moderate quartz inclusions and moderate to abundant Malvernian rock (acid igneous) inclusions and occasional white mica flecks. Can be fired to a dark grey or a dark grey core with reddish brown surfaces. Hand-made. 1 sherd, 4g.

4.2 Other finds

The only other finds seen were bricks from the demolition of the sheds. These were not retained.

5 DISCUSSION

The investigation, although limited, appears to show little activity on the site other than the land being in cultivation in at least the 13th century and the former farm buildings that were demolished for this residential development. The lack of finds other than the three medieval sherds, which are presumed to have derived from manuring of the land during cultivation, and the occasional modern find appears to confirm the limited use of the site as shown through the absence of features other than those associated with the recently demolished farm buildings.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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