

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

THE STABLES, BERKELEY CLOSE,

WOOTTON-UNDER-EDGE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ST 7565 9334

On behalf of

Mrs C. Stone

APRIL 2004

REPORT FOR

Mrs C. Stone
The Stables
Berkeley Close
Wootton-under Edge
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological watching brief on 22 March 2004 during the excavation of foundation trenches for an extension to the property. This trenching revealed two property boundaries and a sequence of deposits showing different uses of the plots.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located to the rear of 41 Long Street (NGR ST 7565 9334). Access is from Old Town near its junction with Bear Street, via what is now Berkeley Close. The present building is an inverted L-shape with the southern arm added c. 20 years ago. The area of the extension was until recently hard standing.

1.2 Planning Background

Stroud District Council granted planning permission for the construction of a single-storey extension to the southern part of the building. Due to the potential presence of below ground archaeological deposits a condition was attached to the planning consent 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.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The development site lies within the area of the medieval settlement of Wootton-under-Edge. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1889 shows a building immediately to the north of the present The Stables with an extension to the rear through the east half of the present building with a further building abutting the south end and lying across the area of the extension being built at the time of this investigation.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.
- In particular to record any evidence for medieval and/or later occupation or activity.
- To make public the results of the investigations.



Ordnance Survey

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3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service, on behalf of the Stroud District Council.

An archaeologist was present on site during the excavation of the trenches for the new foundations.

3.2 Methodology

The hard standing had been removed prior to the arrival of the archaeologist. Foundation trenches were then excavated to *c.* 1.5m depth and were generally 600mm wide.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services recording 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).

4 RESULTS

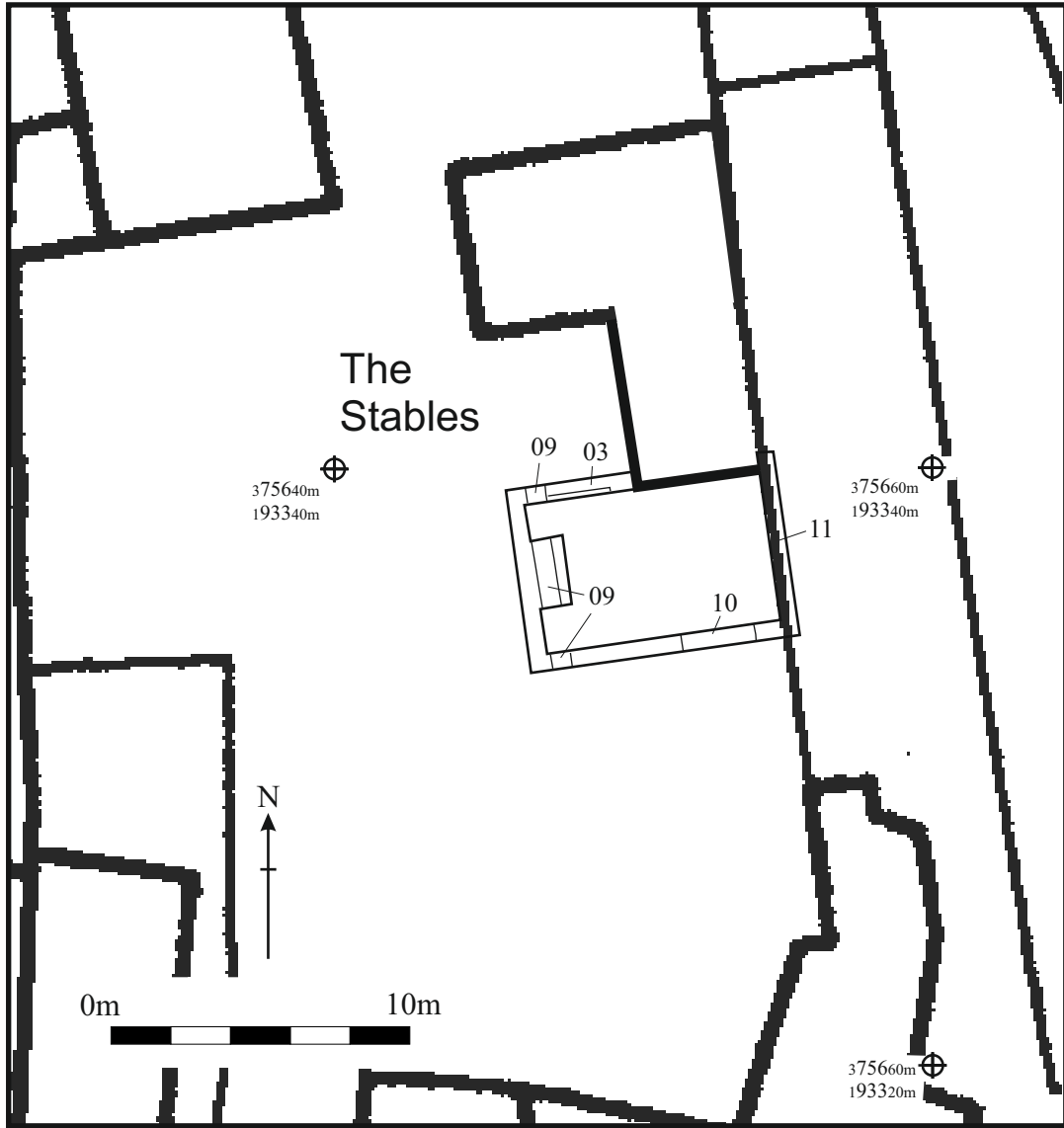
All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. walls, pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

The lowest deposit encountered was a natural deposit of mid orange clay containing lenses of dense small stone (08). This was seen at the base of all trenches excavated for the new foundations.

Two property boundary walls [09 and 10] orientated north south were encountered (Fig. 2). For ease the following results are presented according to the three plots: middle occupying most of the new extension; west plot; and east plot that was only really seen in the extreme east section of the extension.

4.1 Middle plot

Overlying the natural (08) was a deposit of moderately compact pale grey-brown slightly silty clay containing very occasional small stone (07), which was 350 mm thick. A piece of clay tobacco pipe stem was seen in the upper part of this deposit. It was not possible to retrieve this item. Sealing this material was a 250-280 mm thick layer of dark grey-brown slightly clayey silt with 1% small stone and moderate amounts of charcoal flecks and very occasional tile fragments (06). This in turn was overlain by a hard layer of cream and yellow mortar (05), some 50-70 mm thick,



which only existed east of the culvert [19]. The mortar surface extended into the west plot. Above the mortar surface to the west of the culvert was a 150 mm thick deposit of moderately compact pale brown-yellow-grey sandy silt with abundant charcoal flecks, small brick and tile fragments (04) that was a make-up layer for surface (03). Its extent was the same as the surface. Surface (03) comprised large slabs of limestone of average size 300x100x150 mm well laid to form a flat surface. The surface was seen along the north side of the northern trench extending up to the west plot boundary wall [09]. However along the south side of the same footing trench the surface only extended 850 mm from the west side of the existing building (Fig. 2). It was not seen elsewhere in the excavations. Overlying surface (03) was a further surface (02) of cinders some 40 mm thick. Again this was not seen to the east of the culvert but continued southwards beyond the limit of earlier surface. To the east of the culvert and overlying deposit (06) was a 350 mm thick deposit of mid grey-brown silty clay containing moderate amounts of brick and small stone and lenses of yellow clay (13).

The last deposit (13) and the cinder surface (02) were covered by a succession of recent surfaces (01) formed from brick rubble, then roadstone, then two layers of gravel. These were a total of 450 mm thick. The last surfaces (01) extended across the west plot as well.

A large cut 2.5 m wide was filled by a north south orientated brick-built culvert some 1.9 m wide. The top of the culvert was rounded. The lower fill of the cut, as seen, was filled by concrete supporting the lower outer sides of the culvert. The upper fill was of gravel. Sealing the culvert were the surfaces (01). The culvert was cut from layer (13).

4.2 Plot boundaries

The boundary between the middle and west plots was formed by wall [09], which had been rebuilt. The original foundation was formed on the top of the natural clay (08). It was 650 mm wide and built with two interlocking faces of rough stone with average sizes of 300x250x150 mm. The original five surviving courses were set in a matrix of hard and soft pale yellow-grey sandy clay. The five courses existed up to just below the level of the mortar surface (05). Above this level and cutting the mortar surface the wall was of similar build but the stones were set in a matrix of soft mid orange sandy silt. This rebuild only survived for two courses before being truncated by surfaces (01). The total height of the wall foundation was 1100 mm.

The boundary between the middle and east plots still exists as a wall, although part was dismantled in order to build the new east wall of the extension. Again this wall [11] was founded on the natural clay (08). The width of the wall varied from 450 mm in the northern part to 400 mm in the south. The point of change was not discernible. At the north end the wall foundation was 1150 mm deep while at the south end it was 1250 mm deep. The wall was built of two faces of stone 200x100x70 to 300x200x100 mm in size with a rubble core. At the north end the wall survives 650mm high (seven courses) above present ground level but was composed of much smaller stone. To the south, the wall has six courses of limestone on the east side and

four courses on the west side above which the wall has been rebuilt in brick. The matrix that the limestone is set in is pale grey-brown sandy clay.

4.3 West plot

In the west plot, above the natural clay (08), was a 630 mm thick deposit of moderately compact pale grey-brown slightly silty clay with occasional to moderate fragments of brick and tile (10). Above this was the mortar surface (05), described above, which in turn was overlain by a deposit of mid grey clay (12) some 260 mm thick. This in turn was covered by the surfaces (01).

4.4 East plot

The lowest deposit lying above the natural clay (08) was a pale grey-brown slightly silty clay containing very occasional small stone some 250 mm thick (18). A post-medieval pit (not numbered) containing virtually only window glass was cut from the top of this deposit. Sealing the pit was a 280 mm thick deposit of dark to mid grey-brown and pale grey-brown silty clay with 2% by content of small stone (17). Above the last was a layer of brick, roof tile and small limestone fragments possibly forming a surface (16) 80-120mm thick. This possible surface was overlain by 250 mm of dark black sandy silt with 1% small stone (15), which in turn was covered by roadstone as a base for a tarmac surface (14) for the access to the rear of 37 Long Street. This surface was 300 mm lower than the level of the middle plot.

5 FINDS

The site was surprising devoid of artefacts. Other than small pieces of tile and brick the only other finds seen were a piece of clay tobacco pipe stem in the top of the lowest deposit (07) in the middle plot and an oyster shell in deposit (10) in the west plot.

6 DISCUSSION

The investigation area appears to cover parts of the rear area of three plots fronting onto Long Street. The middle and east plot boundary is still in use while the boundary between the middle and west plots has not been in constant use and today is not respected by the use of the area to the rear of 39-45 Long Street.

The middle plot appears to have been used for horticultural practises in two different periods represented by deposits (07) and (06). These are both post-medieval deposits as indicated by the piece of clay tobacco pipe in the top of (07). To the west the single deposit (10) again appears to have been a horticultural deposit with fragments of brick and tile incorporated into it.

The boundary [09] between the middle and west plots was demolished and mortar surface (05) was laid down in both plots although it did not extend the full width of the middle plot. The surface is of a type that is used within a building and may have

been for the south building shown on the 1889 OS map. This surface and presumed building went out of use and the boundary wall was rebuilt with a stone-paved surface (03) laid in the middle plot. The paving probably respected the southern end of the inverted L-shape building shown on the same map. This surface was replaced by a cinder surface (03) after which the boundary wall was demolished and later surfaces covered both the middle and west plots.

The east plot again appears to have had a horticultural use with deposit (18), which was cut by a post-medieval pit. After that further deposits (17 and 15) and surfaces (16 and 14) were laid down.

The culvert that was found is still active. Whether it is just taking rainwater downhill from the roads to the north or whether a small stream has been culverted is unknown.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*