



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

LAND AT THE REAR OF 44 ST JOHN'S ROAD,

WALLINGFORD, OXFORDSHIRE

SU 60325 89075

On behalf of

Mrs P. Strudwick

MAY 2008

REPORT FOR Mrs P Strudwick
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 44 St John's Road, Wallingford on the 12th May 2008. Oxfordshire County Archaeology Service (OCAS), the archaeological advisory body to South Oxfordshire District Council, called for an archaeological evaluation in response to an application for planning permission to construct a single bungalow dwelling (P07/W1062). Two trenches, totalling 27.5 metres in length, were excavated to the natural geology. Archaeological deposits were limited to late 19th-early 20th Century topsoil and subsoil deposits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located on the south-west side of Wallingford to the south of St John's Road behind Nos. 44-46 and immediately west of St John's Primary School (NGR SU 60325 89075). The 1100m² site is currently a garden. The site lies at approximately 47m OD and the underlying geology is Valley Gravel.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission is being sought from the South Oxfordshire District Council to construct a single bungalow dwelling (P07/W1062). The County Archaeological Services (OCAS) advised that an archaeological field evaluation should be carried out prior to determination and prepared a Design Brief for the work. This was in line with PPG16 and South Oxfordshire Local Plan policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located within an area of considerable archaeological potential just 100m south-west of the Saxon defences of the town (PRN 7797; NGR SU 6041 8913). An Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemetery is known to exist 90m to the east of the site (PRN 7791; NGR SU 6043 8908). This site was investigated by Snow where he recorded 24 burials dating to the 6th and 7th centuries. Grave goods included a silver tube bead, bronze annular and disc brooches, beads (including amber), iron pin, iron knife, cruciform brooch, bone comb, miniature shears and pottery vessels from both cremations and inhumations.

A further 11 burials were recorded during archaeological investigation during building work at St John's School in the 1910s, just 50m to the east of the site and an archaeological watching brief recorded a burial and an urned cremation during an extension to the school in 2005 (EOX 1803; NGR SU 6040 8907).

The information above was taken from the OCAS' Design Brief.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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



Figure 1. Site and trench location

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.
- In particular to determine whether burials associated with the known Anglo-Saxon cemetery extend this far west.

3 STRATEGY

In response to OCAS's Design Brief, a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS (2008) and agreed with OCAS. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the excavation of two trenches, one 20m long and the other 7.5m long. Both were 1.6m wide. (Fig. 1).

The excavation of the trenches was carried out using a mini-excavator equipped with a toothless bucket down onto the top of 'natural' deposits. The trenches were planned.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999), the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991) and the requirements of the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service's Brief. Full excavation of features would not be undertaken.

Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council monitored the work.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Natural

The natural for both trenches, (01/03) and (02/03) was a sub-rounded to rounded gravel in an orangey brown sandy silt matrix. The height above Ordnance Datum for natural in Trench 1 varied between 50.10 m O.D. and 50.06 m O.D. and in Trench 2 between 50.14 m O.D. and 49.96 m O.D.

4.2 Trenches 1 and 2

Both trenches displayed the same results, therefore they will be described together in this section. Archaeological deposits and features were absent from both trenches. Trench 1 aligned Northeast – Southwest, was 20.00m long and excavated to a depth of 0.65m to the top of natural. Trench 2 aligned Northwest – Southeast, was 7.50m

long and excavated to a depth of 0.84m to the top of natural. The height above Ordnance Datum in Trench 1 for the top of the trench varied between 50.75m O.D in the Northeast and 50.66 m O.D. in the Southwest. The height above Ordnance Datum in Trench 2 for the top of the trench varied between 50.81m O.D in the Northwest and 50.78 m O.D. in the Southeast. The natural gravel was overlain by (01/02) and (02/02) a friable to firm red to orangey brown sandy clay subsoil with flint gravel inclusions and had a uniform thickness of 0.25 m across the site. The layer was similar in colour to the natural but with less gravel inclusions. The uppermost deposit in both trenches was topsoil (01/01) and (02/01). The deposit was a friable greyish brown sandy clay with flint gravel inclusions; in Trench 1 the layer was 0.65 m thick and in Trench 2 varied in thickness between 0.60 m and 0.80 m.

5 FINDS

5.1 Post-Medieval Pottery

Late 19th/early 20th century Whiteware pottery was recovered from the topsoil in both trenches. After inspection by, and in agreement with the County Planning Archaeologist, the ceramic material was recorded on the pro-forma and then discarded.

6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological features were observed within the trenches and only late Post-medieval pottery was observed within the topsoil. The Anglo-Saxon cemetery does not appear to extend this far west.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

John Moore Heritage Services. 2008: *Land at the rear of 44 St. John's Road, Wallingford: Archaeological Evaluation – Written Scheme of Investigation*.

APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
Trench 1			0.65m	1.60m	20.00m		
(01/01)	Layer	Grey Brown silty clay	0.40m	1.60m	20.00m	-	19 th /20 th Century
(01/02)	Layer	Orangey brown silty clay	0.25m	1.60m	20.00m	-	19 th /20 th Century
(01/03)	Layer	Orange gravel	Unexcavated	1.60m	20.00m	-	Geological
Trench 2			0.80m	1.60m	7.50m		
(02/01)	Layer	Grey brown silty clay	0.55m	1.60m	7.50m	-	19 th /20 th Century
(02/02)	Layer	Orangey brown silty clay	0.25m	1.60m	7.50m	-	19 th /20 th Century
(02/03)	Layer	Orange gravel	Unexcavated	1.60m	7.50m	-	Geological