LAND AT HIGH STREET,  
WROUGHTON,  
WILTSHIRE  

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  

C.A.T JOB: 1045  
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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken of land at High Street, Wroughton, Wiltshire by Cotswold Archaeological Trust during June 2000. The site lies immediately south of the medieval and later historic core of Wroughton village.

Excavation of five evaluation trenches across an area of proposed residential development has revealed no archaeological features predating the early-modern period.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In June 2000 Cotswold Archaeological Trust was commissioned by Persimmon Homes (Wessex) Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at High Street, Wroughton, Wiltshire (centred on NGR: SU 1435 8025, Fig. 1).

1.1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in order to provide information on the archaeological implications of an application for residential development of the site. Planning consent has been granted subject to satisfactory resolution of issues relating to the archaeology of the site.

1.1.3 The archaeological evaluation followed procedures set out in an initial brief (WCC 2000) and within a subsequent detailed project design (CAT 2000) approved by Mr. Roy Canham, County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Council. The fieldwork also followed the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999) and the Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire (WCC 1995).

1.2 Landuse, geology and topography

1.2.1 The application area lies within the centre of Wroughton. The site is bordered to the north by properties and gardens along the southern frontage of the High Street, to the east and south by a meandering stream course and to the west by a caravan park.

1.2.2 The development area encompasses a series of NNW-SSE aligned linear plots extending south to the watercourse. The plots are predominantly under
pasture but also contain orchard, garden and yard areas. Several extant barns, greenhouses and other outbuildings lie within the site.

1.2.3 The underlying geology of the area is mapped as Gault Clay of the Upper Cretaceous period, with areas of Upper Greensand and Lower Chalk also recorded within the site vicinity (Geological Survey of England and Wales, 1974).

1.2.4 The application area itself has a pronounced slope from north to south. Existing ground levels vary from approximately 123m O.D at the northern end of the site to approximately 117m O.D at its southern periphery.

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The proposed development lies within an area of known archaeological interest (WCC 2000). The site lies to the south of the High Street within the area of the medieval village of Wroughton, but there are no known finds or archaeological remains previously recorded within the site. The study area encompasses a series of linear plots running back from the High Street frontage to the watercourse at the southern boundary. These plots may represent the remnants of a land tenure pattern associated with the medieval village. A pond of unknown date and origin also lies immediately west of the study area.

1.4 Archaeological objectives

1.4.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information on the date, character, quality, survival and extent of any archaeological deposits within the application area in order that an informed decision on their importance in a local, regional or national context could be made. The information would clarify whether remains were of sufficient importance to warrant
consideration for preservation in situ, or alternatively form the basis of mitigation measures that might seek to limit damage to significant remains.

1.5 **Methodology**

1.5.1 The locations and sizes of evaluation trenches as set out within the initial brief (WCC 2000) were altered so as not to disturb extant hedgelines and boundaries within the site. Several further amendments to trench positions as set out within the subsequent detailed project design (CAT 2000) also became necessary, with trenches 1 and 5 both being moved since machine access to their original locations was not possible (Fig. 2). All modifications to trench locations was agreed in advance with Mr. Canham of Wiltshire County Council Archaeology Service.

1.5.2 All trenches were excavated by a JCB equipped with a toothless grading-bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision and was halted at the top of the natural geological deposits. All recording was undertaken in accordance with the CAT Technical Manual 1: *Site Recording Manual*.

1.5.3 The site archive generated by the evaluation will be deposited with Swindon Museum Service.

2. **EVALUATION RESULTS**

2.1 The natural geological substrate was encountered within all five evaluation trenches, at an average depth of 0.60m below present ground level, and consisted of yellow-brown clays, chalky gravels and greensand. The natural substrate in each trench was overlain by approximately 0.30m of compact grey-brown silty-clay and by approximately 0.30m of silt-loam topsoil.
2.2 Several early-modern stone-built field drains were noted within trench 3 but no other archaeological features were encountered. Modern china and brick fragments were noted within topsoil horizons but not retained, and no earlier artefacts were encountered during trenching.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Although the study area lies immediately south of the historic core of Wroughton village the field evaluation has detected no evidence for medieval or later occupation within the areas sampled by trenching. Trial trenching has recorded only a small number of early-modern agricultural drainage features and unstratified modern pottery within topsoil horizons.

3.2 The evaluation results suggest that any medieval and post-medieval occupation on the High Street frontage does not extend as far south as the study area, although the long, parallel, plot boundaries do conceivably preserve a pattern of land tenure dating from the medieval period. The absence of evidence for domestic, commercial or industrial activity of medieval or later date within the plots examined may suggest that these areas were utilised less intensively as agricultural land or gardens. No evidence was encountered for an eastward continuation to the E-W aligned pond feature within the south-western part of the site, and its date and character remain uncertain.

4. PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork: Alistair Barber, Tim Havard, Sylvia Warman.
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Illustrations: Richard Morton.
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Fig. 1 Location plan
Fig. 2  Study area showing trench locations
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