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SUMMARY

In May 1995 Cotswold Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological evaluation at Redhouse Farm, Westrip, Stroud. The work was a condition of the renewal of planning permission for the construction of two houses within the walled garden adjoining the farmhouse. The work was commissioned by Black Horse Agencies and followed a brief prepared by the Archaeology Section of Gloucestershire County Council.

Three 10m trenches were excavated by machine to the top of the natural substrate which was hand cleaned. Limited archaeological activity was observed, consisting of two gully features containing bone and 11th-15th century medieval pottery sherds and a single undated posthole. Wide-spread garden disturbance was noted, especially within the northern area of the garden.
1 INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out in May 1995 at Redhouse Farm, Westrip, Stroud, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: SO 8265 0560) (Fig 1).

1.1.2 The evaluation was required as a condition for the renewal of planning permission for the construction of two houses within the walled garden attached to Redhouse Farm. The work was commissioned by Black Horse Agencies.

1.1.3 The site is located within the former walled garden of Redhouse Farm at the junction of Westrip Lane and Foxmoor Lane and comprises c. 1600 m2 of disused land. The garden has been neglected for the past 12 years and is presently heavily overgrown with scrub. A significant amount of tree cover occupies the central and southern parts of the site.

1.2 Archaeological background

1.2.1 Prior to commencement of fieldwork a rapid desk-based study was undertaken (CAT 1995). The study confirmed the site lies within an area of archaeological potential. Prehistoric, Roman and medieval sites and finds have been recorded locally at Randwick, Townsend and Puckshole, all of which lie within c. 1 Km to the north and east of Redhouse Farm.

1.2.2 More significantly, prehistoric flintwork (Glos SMR 9706) and a large spread of medieval pottery (Glos SMR 9705) were recorded 50m northwest of the study area during development (Randell 1982). Coupled with this, 100m to the southwest, housing construction at Cashes Green uncovered a wide spread of Roman artefacts and building material (Glos SMR 3563) (Gracie 1968).
1.3 Site geology and topography

1.3.1 The site lies on the north side of the Golden Valley at approximately 90m OD, with a gentle downward slope, north to south, across the garden.

1.3.2 During the evaluation the natural substrate was encountered at a depth of between 0.40m and 0.90m from modern ground surface and consisted of Marlstone Rock and clay.

1.4 Project brief and methodology

1.4.1 The aim of the evaluation was to establish whether archaeological deposits lay within the study area; and to determine their extent, date, character and preservation.

1.4.2 Three trenches, 10m by 1.5m, were positioned within the study area to give a representative coverage of the site. These trenches were then machine excavated to the top of the natural substrate under archaeological supervision. Where archaeological deposits were encountered, they were sampled by hand to meet the aims of the excavation as stated within the brief.

1.4.3 In addition, samples of top/subsoils totalling 40 litres were dry-sieved from each trench to recover possible flint artefacts. Deposits from archaeological features were also sampled and dry-sieved.

1.4.4 Recording was undertaken in accordance with the CAT excavation manual.

1.4.5 Artefacts discovered during the course of the investigation were retrieved for cataloguing and analysis.

1.4.6 The finds and the site archive will, with the landowners consent, be deposited with Stroud Museum under accession number 1995/21.

2 EVALUATION RESULTS
2.1 General

2.1.2 Due to constraints imposed by the present tree cover, the evaluation trenches were placed in the following locations (Fig 2); trench 1 was situated within the north of the study area adjacent to the greenhouse. Trench 2 was situated with the eastern corner of the study area while trench 3 was situated within the south-western corner of the study area.

2.1.2 Dry-sieving of samples of topsoil and subsoil from each trench produced no flint artefacts.

2.1.3 The evaluation trenches showed the subsoil throughout the site to have suffered varying degrees of disturbance from garden cultivation. Comparisons of the depth of subsoil between the three trenches showed a relatively shallow depth within Trench 1 and Trench 3. Depth of subsoil within Trench 2 was greater, but changed little with the gardens gentle north to south slope. All three trenches contained a deep cultivated topsoil.

2.2 Trench 1.

2.2.1 The stratigraphy identified during the investigations consisted of a reddish-brown clay with sandstone natural substrate (103) at a depth of c 0.60m. This was overlain by 0.20m of disturbed brown clay subsoil (102) containing a small quantity of post-medieval sherds. The subsoil was sealed below a heavily mixed grey clay-loam topsoil (101), 0.40m in depth. The topsoil contained large amounts of charcoal spread evenly throughout.

2.2.2 Only one feature was observed, a modern gravel filled pipe trench [204] running N/S through the centre of the trench and cut into the natural substrate.

2.3 Trench 2. (Fig 3)
2.3.1 A similar stratigraphical sequence to trench 1 was encountered within trench 2. The natural substrate (204) was encountered at a depth of c. 0.90m. This was overlain by 0.42m of light brown clay subsoil (203) the top of which had been slightly disturbed. Two medieval coarse-ware sherds dating to the 11th-12th century were recovered from the subsoil. This was overlain in turn by a heavily mixed grey clay-loam deposit (202) 0.26m in depth with heavy traces of burning deposits. This was overlain by 0.22m of grey clay-loam topsoil (101). Further cleaning after the initial recording showed that (201) and (202) can be considered to be a single context.

2.3.2 Two archaeological features were observed within the northern end of the trench; a gully [205] running c E/W across the trench and measuring 0.61m wide and 0.24m in depth. The gully was filled by a light brown clay (206) containing animal bone fragments and an abraded medieval coarse-ware sherd dating to the late 12th-15th century. Located 1.60m to the south of the gully there was an undated stakehole [207] measuring 0.16m in diameter by 0.13m in depth with a light brown clay fill (208).

2.3.3 With both features, the level from which they had been cut was difficult to identify due to similarities between the fills and the overlying subsoil.

2.4 Trench 3. (Fig 3)

2.4.1 The stratigraphy consisted of the reddish clay natural substrate (303) encountered at a depth of c. 0.40m. This was overlain by a light brown subsoil (302) 0.22m in depth, the top of which appeared to be heavily disturbed. During machining, a small scatter of badly abraded medieval coarse-ware sherds were recovered with a small amount of post-medieval glass. The majority of these sherds dated between the 11th-12th centuries with a single sherd of late 12th-15th century date.

2.4.2 The subsoil was sealed by a grey clay loam topsoil (301) 0.20m in depth containing heavy burning. Isolated ash deposits (312) at the north-eastern end of the trench were, sealed between the subsoil and topsoil.
2.4.3 A number of features were observed; a gully [304] measuring 0.40m in width and 0.12m in depth running c northwest to southeast across the south-western end of the trench. The gully was filled by a light brown clay (305) containing animal bone fragments and two badly abraded medieval coarse ware-sherds of 11th-12th century date.

2.4.4 Two postholes were located within the north-eastern end of the trench. One posthole [308] measured 0.16m in diameter and 0.24m in depth with a mixed topsoil fill (309) and posthole [310] measured 0.30m in diameter and 0.18m in depth filled with mixed topsoil (311). Both postholes produced modern pottery and coke.

2.4.5 An irregular cut [306] measuring c 0.35m in diameter and 0.15m in depth was located in the central area of the trench with a brown clay fill. The feature appears to be of natural origin.

2.4.6 As with trench 2 features, the nature of the fill of the gully made it difficult to identify the level from which it was cut.

3 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Limited archaeological activity was observed within the study area. This was restricted to the east and south-west areas of the garden within trenches 2 and 3. This consisted of a
medieval gully with a pottery sherd dating to the late 12th-15th century within trench 2. The brown clay fill was indistinguishable from the subsoil, the gully cut being visible only when excavation had reached the top of the natural substrate.

3.2 This gully feature may possibly be associated with the adjacent stakehole. Although the stakehole produced no dating evidence, its clean brown clay fill is identical to that recorded within medieval features on the site. It also contained no traces of the modern topsoil or burning deposits common within modern postholes located elsewhere.

3.3 Trench 3 contained a medieval gully with bone fragments and pottery sherds dating to the 11th-12th century. Again this feature was only visible at the level of the natural substrate. A spread of badly abraded pottery sherds, of the same date as material from the gully, was recovered from subsoil within the area of the gully.

3.4 No direct structural evidence was found for occupation, medieval or otherwise, within the study area. From the condition of the sherds recovered, these may be interpreted as residual material from occupation in the vicinity of the study area. This may well be situated at the site of the dense medieval material scatter just 50m to the north-west, although no excavation has taken place to test this. The gully features observed, therefore, may be boundary or drainage features at the fringes of the occupation area.

3.5 Despite the sieving of samples from the topsoil, subsoil and fills of features no prehistoric material was recovered. It must be therefore be assumed that the spread of Neolithic and Bronze-age material located nearby either did not extend into the study area or modern activity has removed it.

3.6 The northern area of the garden seems have undergone a deep truncation of the subsoil perhaps as part of a scheme of garden landscaping. It may be assumed that any archaeological features which may be located within this area will have been deeply damaged and in a relatively poor condition to those expected elsewhere within the site. Although no deep truncation was noted within trenches 2 and 3, some limited intrusion due
to garden cultivation and modern structures was seen, with a high level of root penetration into the subsoil within trench 3.

3.7 It must be noted that due to the similarity of the fills of medieval features and the subsoil the level from which features were cut were impossible to identify. Features could only be identified by their cuts into the natural substrate, in combination with hand cleaning.

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**CAT staff involvement:**

Fieldwork: Andy Manning and Mark Brett
Text: Andy Manning  Illustrations: Pete Moore
Figure 3

Trenches 2 and 3: sections and plans