

# May Cottage Earlydene Ascot Berkshire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



November 2005

**Client: Mr John Jager**

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## May Cottage, Earlydene, Ascot, Berkshire

### *ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*

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## SUMMARY

*On November 14th 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at May Cottage, Earlydene, Ascot, Berkshire (NGR: SU 9269 6619). The work was commissioned by Mr John Jager in advance of the construction of a double garage. The watching brief revealed worked soil directly overlying natural clay and no significant archaeology.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 On November 14th 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at May Cottage, Earlydene, Ascot, Berkshire (NGR: SU 9269 6619). The work was commissioned by Mr John Jager in respect of a planning application for the construction of a double garage (Planning Application No. 05/01816).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Fiona Macdonald, the principle Archaeologist of Berkshire Archaeology (BA) on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (BA 2005).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA 2005).

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is located on level ground to the north-west of May Cottage (Fig. 1). The site is bounded to the west by the B3020, to the north by an unclassified lane, Earlydene and to the south and east by residential properties. The development occupies an area of 50 m<sup>2</sup> and lies at approximately 63 m above OD. The underlying geology is Bracklesham Beds overlaid by alluvium (British Geological Survey, Sheet no. 269).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2005) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The site is identified as being of archaeological potential, due to a number of sites noted on the Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record for this area. A Roman building was identified on a nearby plot, although very few details are now available on this find. The Roman road between London and Silchester, known locally as the Devil's Highway, runs nearby to the south, and associated settlement is anticipated.

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any features or deposits (if present) that the development may disturb or destroy, in particular any associated with the Devil's Highway Roman Road and any associated settlement evidence.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a continuous archaeological presence during the excavation of the buildings foundation comprising approximately 17 m length of 1.2 m deep by 0.5 m wide trenching, and associated ground reduction.
- 2.2.2 This work was accomplished using a "mini-digger" fitted with a 0.6 m wide toothless bucket.
- 2.2.3 A plan of the excavations was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2, plan) and a sample section was drawn at a scale of 1:20 (Fig. 2, section). The site and the section was photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 A light green-grey sandy clay (2) was reached at a depth of 0.25 m below the current ground level. This was visible in section for a depth in excess of 0.95 m, with the percentage of clay and incidence of iron panning increasing with depth. This deposit was cut by a series of ceramic land drains all aligned north-west to south-east.
- 3.1.2 This was overlaid by a 0.25 m thick deposit of very dark grey-brown silt loam (1). This contained fragments of brick and tile, pottery and clay pipe stem.

### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 The finds recovered were all post-medieval in date, and included fragments of 18th century clay pipe stem and 19th/20th glazed creamware, while the fragments of bricks and tiles probably date to 19th century. The clay pipe and pottery were retained while the fragments of brick and tile were evaluated on site, but were not retained.

### 3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for Paleo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The results of the watching brief suggest that the site is composed of a post-medieval worked soil directly overlying the natural alluvial clay.
- 4.1.2 The presence of the land-drains suggests that this area was agricultural or horticultural in nature prior to the construction of the standing property.
- 4.1.3 No evidence for earlier deposits or features, particularly of those associated with the Devil's Highway Roman Road was encountered.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.25 m	Worked topsoil/ ploughsoil	Clay pipe, pottery, brick and tile	C19th
2	Layer	> 0.95 m	Natural, alluvial clay	-	-

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

BA 2005 *May Cottage, Earleydene, Ascot: Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief*

IFA 2001 *Institute of Field Archaeologists, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson)

OA 2005 *May Cottage, Earlydene, Ascot, Berkshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** May Cottage, Earlydene, Ascot, Berkshire

**Site code:** ASMAYC 05

**Grid reference:** NGR: SU 9269 6619

**Type of watching brief:** Machine excavation of building foundations

**Date and duration of project:** 14th of November 2005, half day

**Area of site:** 50 m<sup>2</sup>

**Summary of results:** Post-medieval worked soil directly overlying natural alluvium. No significant archaeology was observed.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course, under the following accession number: REDMG.2005.133





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Figure 1: Site location



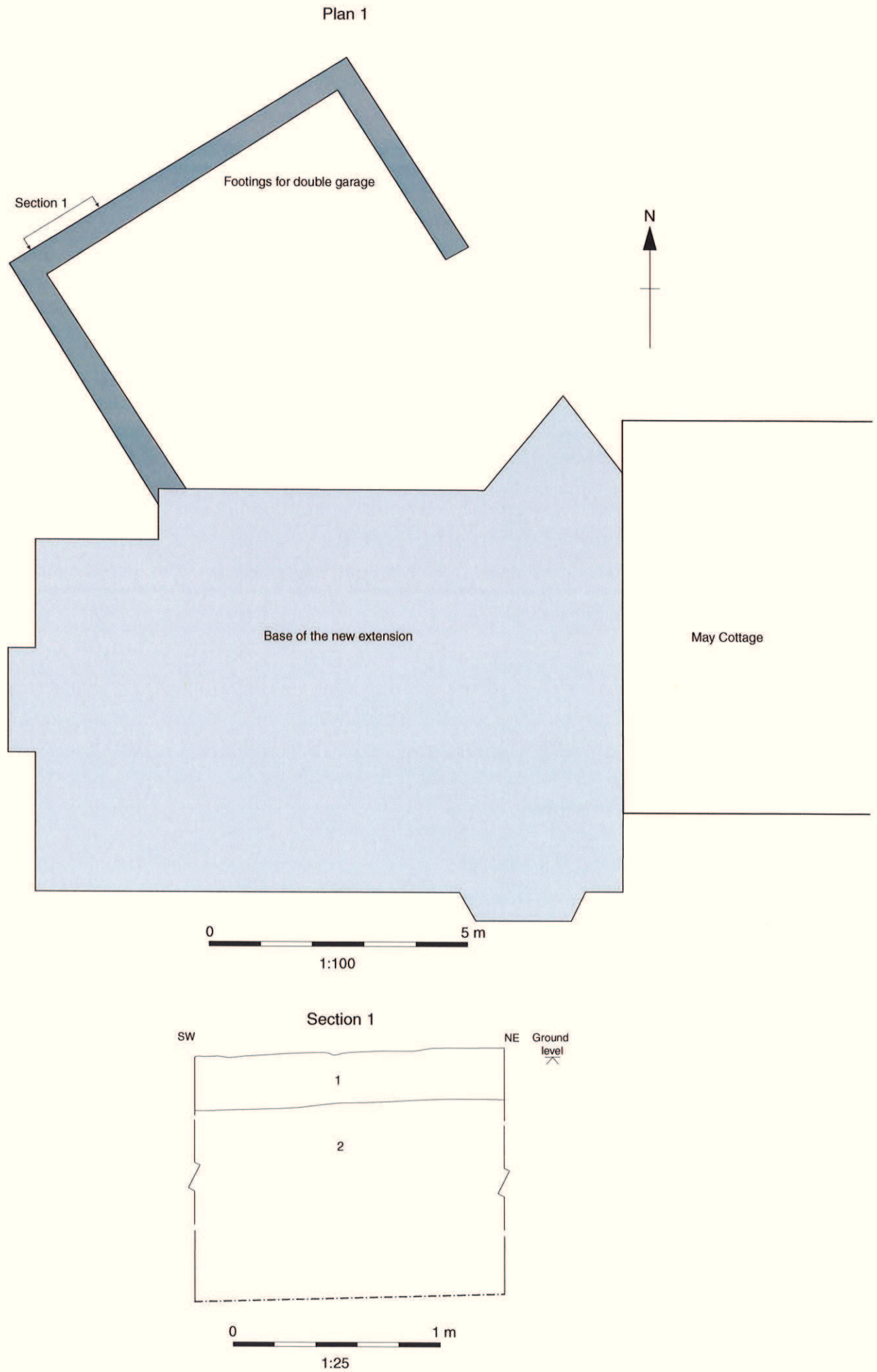


Figure 2: Plan of Watching brief area and Section 1.



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