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Old Pollard
Lodge Road
Whistley Green
Reading
Berkshire



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



Oxford Archaeology

September 2004

Client: Mr. Ian Jones

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 2417

Planning Ref N^o: F/2003/8841

NGR: SU 7925 7430

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In August and September 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Old Pollard, Lodge Road, Whistley Green, Reading, Berkshire (NGR: SU 7925 7430). The work was commissioned by Mr. Jones in advance of excavation of foundations for a new dwelling. The watching brief revealed extensive deposits of post-medieval garden soils overlying alluvial deposits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In August and September 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Old Pollard, Lodge Road, Whistley Green, Reading, Berkshire (NGR: SU 7925 7430)(Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr. Ian Jones in respect of a planning application for the demolition of an existing garage and erection of a new dwelling (Planning Application No. F/2003/8841).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Fiona Macdonald, the Principal Archaeologist for Wokingham District Council (WDC).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The development site is situated close to the centre of the village of Whistley Green. It is bounded to the north, south and east by residential buildings and to the west by the B 3030. The site itself was a garden partially disturbed during the demolition of the garage. The site occupies an area of 280 m² at a level of approximately 40 m OD. The underlying geology is alluvium over flood plain gravels.

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 2004) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The site is located to the north of the medieval centre of Whistley Green and is itself in an area particularly rich in medieval archaeology.
- 1.3.3 It is possible that the intrusive groundwork associated with the construction of the new dwelling could potentially disturb medieval and earlier period features and deposits.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To identify and record the extent, quality, condition and date of any archaeological remains in the area affected by the development.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The groundwork consisted of two phases of excavation. The foundation trenches along the north and east sides of the dwelling were excavated first, with the excavation of the foundation trenches for the central east-west wall and the south and west sides of the building afterwards (Fig. 2 and Fig.3).
- 2.2.2 Site visits were made after both of these phases of work by an archaeological supervisor in order to record the stratigraphy exposed.
- 2.2.3 All exposed sections were examined for archaeological features and for dating evidence, with sample sections cleaned prior to photographing and recording. The sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and a site plan recorded at a scale of 1:50. The sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The natural gravel (5) was reached in the base of all the foundation trenches, encountered at 0.8 m below ground level at the north-west corner of the site dropping to 1.9 m below ground level at the south-east corner of the site (Fig. 3, Sections 1-4). At the lower south-east corner (Fig. 3, Section 4) this was overlaid by a 0.18 m thick deposit of a mixed, organic tinged, tenacious dark greyish brown silt clay (6), an alluvial deposit. This was sealed by a tenacious dark olive green silt clay (4), 0.5 m deep at this point tapering off towards the north, measuring 0.12 m deep in section 2 before finally running out. This layer is an alluvium that has accumulated in a possible palaeo-channel.
- 3.1.2 Overlying this alluvium and running partially over the natural gravel was a layer of a friable dark greyish brown silt loam (3), up to 0.4 m deep in the south-east corner of the foundations tapering off towards the north-west. The presence of ceramic roof tile and charcoal flecking within this context suggests a worked soil, possibly an earlier garden soil or plough soil.

3.1.3 Sealing this layer and the gravel in the remainder of the foundations was a 0.4 m thick layer of a friable dark grey silt loam (2), which contained many brick and tile fragments, transfer printed pottery and fragments of 19th century clay pipe stem. This is a layer of garden soil probably associated with the standing dwelling immediately to the east of the site. In the southern half of the site this was sealed by a blue plastic membrane. This membrane and layer 2 in the remainder of the site was overlaid by a 0.45 m thick layer of a dark greyish brown silt loam (1), containing many fragments of demolition debris such as brick, concrete, plastic piping and wood and which represents a layer of modern, made ground.

3.2 Finds

3.2.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the watching brief. All the finds recovered were of 19th or 20th century origin and were evaluated on site, but were not retained.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.3.1 Contexts 4 and 5 were suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling, however the instability of the trench sides precluded any sampling *in situ*, while the material produced during excavation of the foundations was considered too contaminated.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 The watching brief showed that the underlying natural gravel and any alluvial deposits were sealed by substantial deposits of post-medieval garden soils throughout the area of the site. While the nature of the origin of these deposits may have destroyed any shallow earlier archaeological remains, the absence of residual earlier finds, or of deeper, earlier features cutting into the gravel or alluvium suggests that this site has always been horticultural or agricultural in nature and outside the medieval limits of Whistley Green. The alluvial deposits 4 and 5 probably indicate the presence of a palaeo-channel running south-west to north-east across the southern half of the site.

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	0.0 m - 0.45 m	Modern made ground	Plastic, Brick, Wood	C20th
2	Layer	0.45 m - 0.8 m	Buried garden soil	Brick, Tile, Pottery, Clay pipe stem	C19th/C20th
3	Layer	0.8 m - 1.2 m	Earlier garden soil, possible plough soil?	Tile	C18th/C19th
4	Layer	1.2 m - 1.8 m	Alluvium	-	-
5	Layer	0.7 m - >2.0 m	Natural Gravel	-	-
6	Layer	1.8 m - 1.9 m	Organic rich alluvium	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 1992 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OAU, 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson)

OA, 2004 *Old Pollard, Lodge Road, Whistley Green, Reading, Berkshire - Written Scheme of Investigation*

WDC, 2004 *Old Pollard, Lodge Road, Whistley Green, Reading - Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Old Pollard, Lodge Road, Whistley Green, Reading, Berkshire

Site code: HUOPL 04

Grid reference: SU 7925 7430

Type of watching brief: Excavation off foundations for a new dwelling

Date and duration of project: 2 site visits, 16.08.04 and 01.09.04

Area of site: 280 m²

Summary of results: Substantial deposits of post-medieval garden soil overlying alluvial deposits.

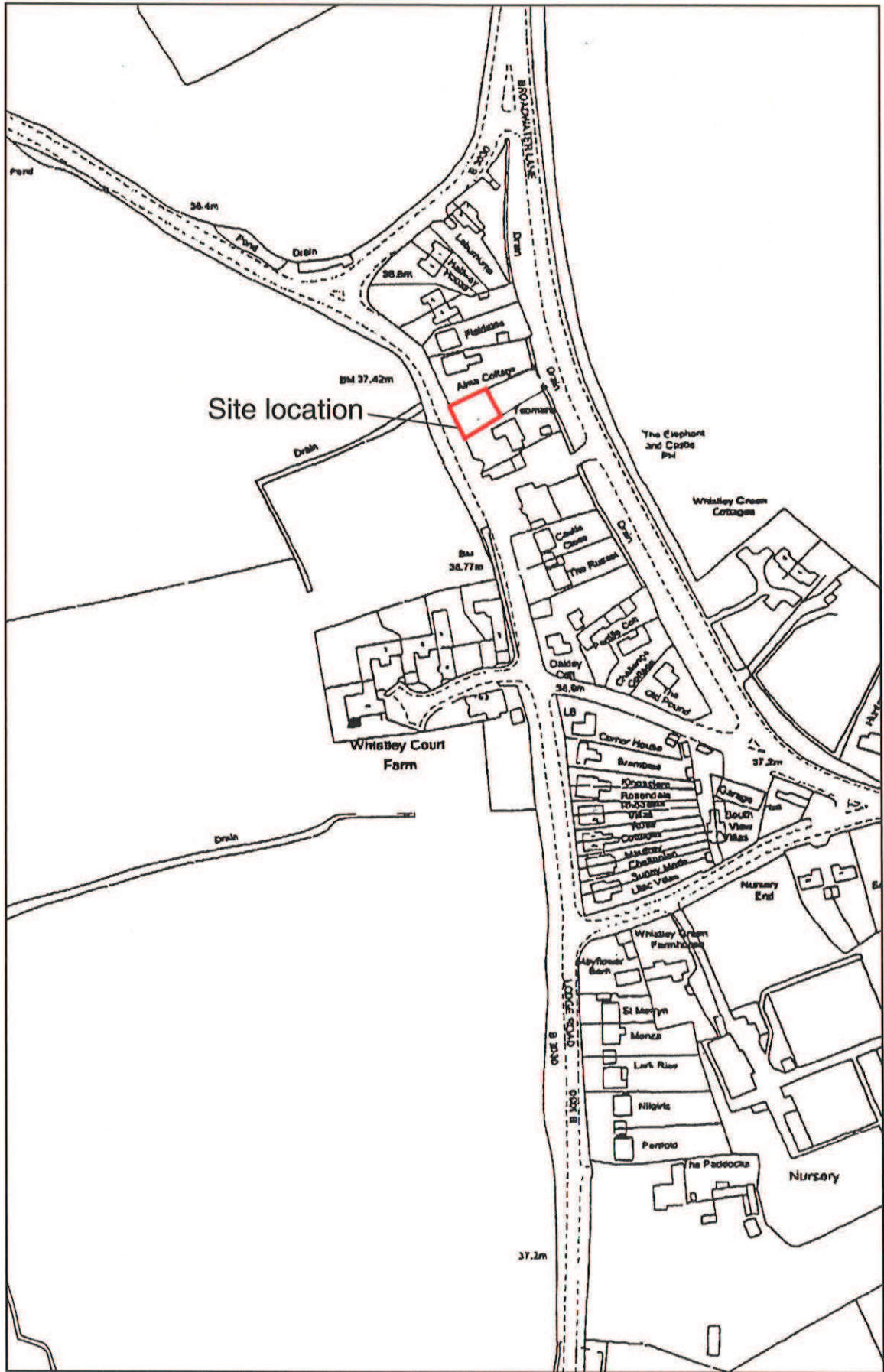
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Reading Museums Service in due course.

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Figure 1: Site location



0 100 m

1:2500

Figure 2: Site plan

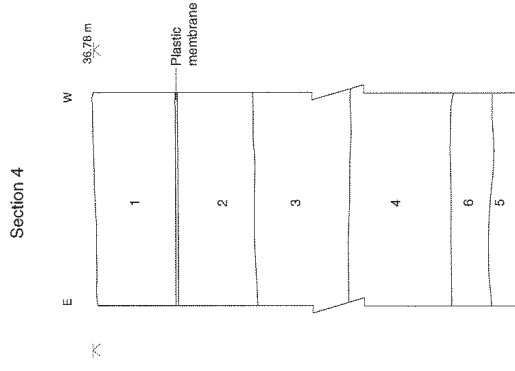
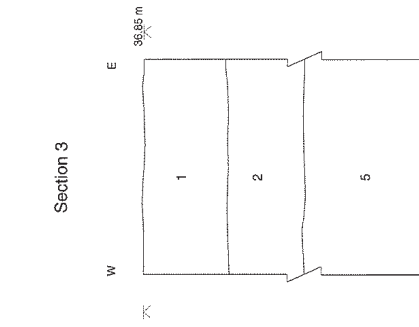
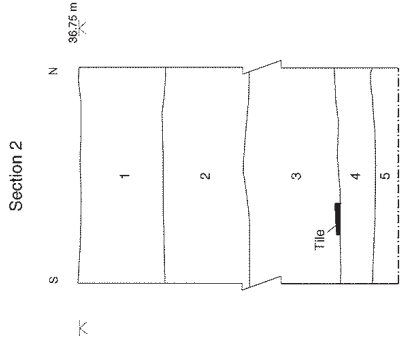
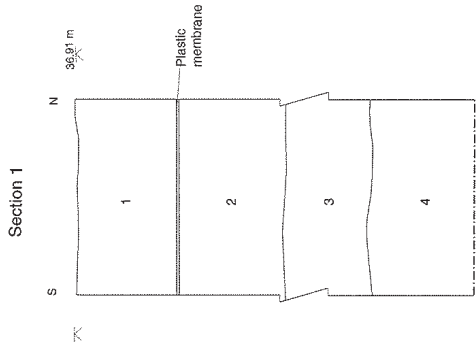
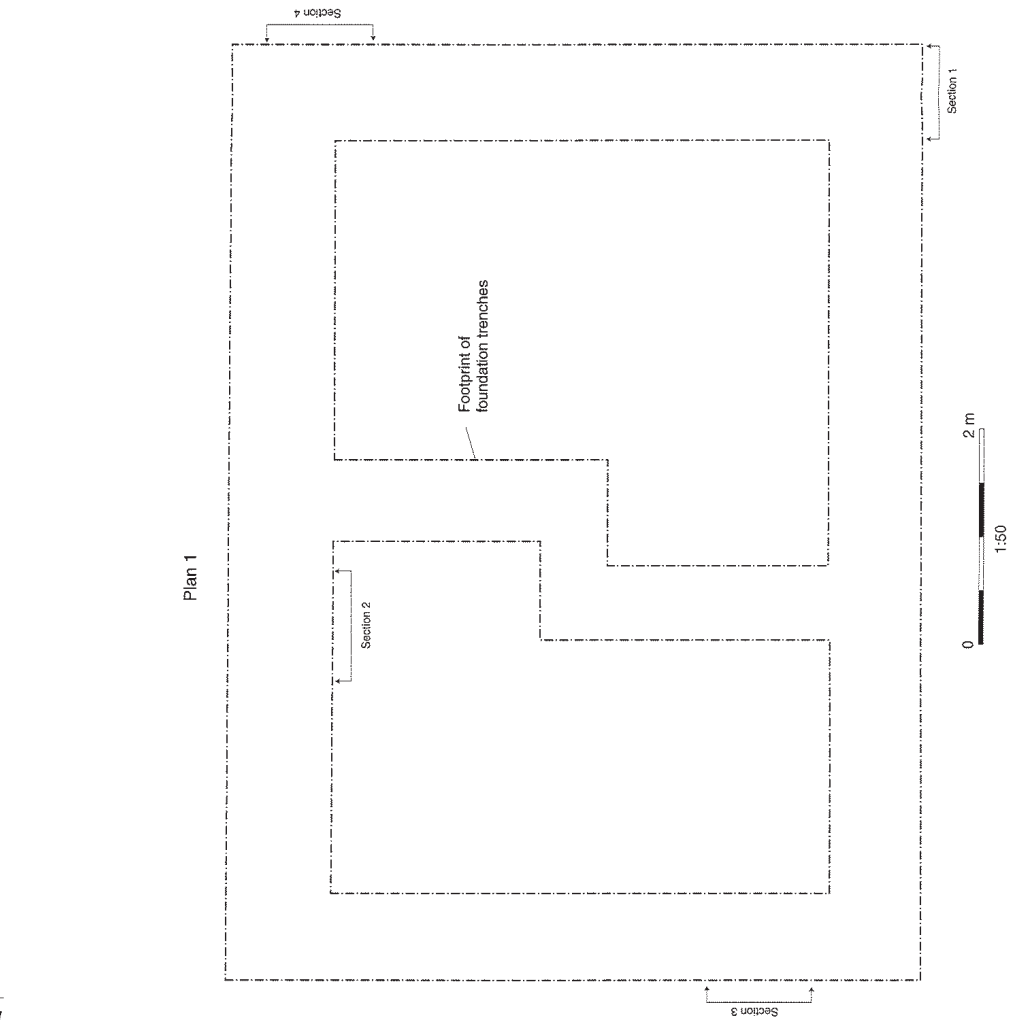


Figure 3: Foundation footprint and sections



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