

Chase Midland PLC

**Landgate Yard, Stow-on-the-Wold,
Gloucestershire**

NGR SP 1938 2587

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Oxford Archaeological Unit

November 2000

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Gloucestershire**

NGR SP 1938 2587

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Planning Ref. No. CD.0751/X

Prepared by: Kayt Brown

Date: 22nd November 2000

Checked by:

JRS

Date:

23 November 2000

Approved by:

G. Pugh

Date:

24th November 2000

Oxford Archaeological Unit

November 2000

Summary

In March 2000 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Landgate Yard, Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 19382587). No archaeological features were revealed.

1 Introduction

The development proposal (planning application no.CD.0751/X) comprised the demolition of most of the existing buildings on the site and the conversion and extension of those remaining to form three new units, the construction of five new units and seven garages.

Chase Midland PLC commissioned the watching brief, which was undertaken to a brief set by and agreed with Gloucestershire County Council.

2 Background

Stow lies on the Jurassic Way, part of a prehistoric thoroughfare running from the Bristol Avon to the Humber. The only evidence for pre-Iron Age activity within the settlement is a Bronze Age ditch, discovered to the south of the hill fort, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). Evidence for Iron Age occupation is much more conclusive. The area defined as being within the boundary of the SAM marks the northern boundary of the hill fort 'Maethelgeres Byrig' (GSMR 239), mentioned in a Saxon charter of 949 AD; the place-name means 'Maelthgar's fortified place'. The scheduled area lies c.50 m to the north of the application area, however it is likely that the area formerly enclosed was much larger and may have included the Landgate Yard site.

Previous archaeological exercises at Maethelgeres Byrig, around 45 m to the north of the site have identified archaeology dating from the middle Bronze Age and Iron Ages. More recently five separate archaeological exercises, comprising archaeological evaluations and watching briefs, have been carried out in advance of and during development in close proximity to the prehistoric enclosure; all produced negative results.

An archaeological evaluation undertaken by the Archaeology Service, Gloucestershire County Council, (Nichols 1999), in advance of this development concluded that the area to the west of the standing buildings had been heavily truncated by quarrying to a minimum depth of 3.7 m below ground level; trenches to the east of the standing buildings appeared to be outside the quarried area; modern deposits were identified together with two fragments of medieval roof tile, found within a possible feature fill.

Stow is built on Middle Jurassic Limestone and lies 750 feet above sea level. It is slightly east of the Fosse Way, close to its intersection with the Cotswold Ridgeway and the Evesham to Burford road. Landgate Yard is located at the northern end of the village and lies at approximately 220 m OD; the site is centered on NGR SP 1938 2857 and the underlying geology is Oolitic Chipping Norton limestone. The site lies within the Stow-on-the-Wold conservation area.

3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to identify any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OAU standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record.

4 Methodology

Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets. Soil description utilises standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

5 Results

A number of site visits were made by an archaeological supervisor during the excavation of new drainage and service trenches. The trenches were dug to an average depth of 1.0 m; natural yellow-brown silty sand was observed to a depth of 0.05 – 0.10 m, overlain by 0.9 – 0.95 m of demolition rubble. Removal of modern overburden revealed no archaeological features; finds were limited to occasional fragments of post-medieval pottery within the demolition rubble.

6 Finds

Small quantities of post-medieval pottery were recovered from demolition rubble deposits but were not retained.

7 Environmental results

No environmental samples were taken

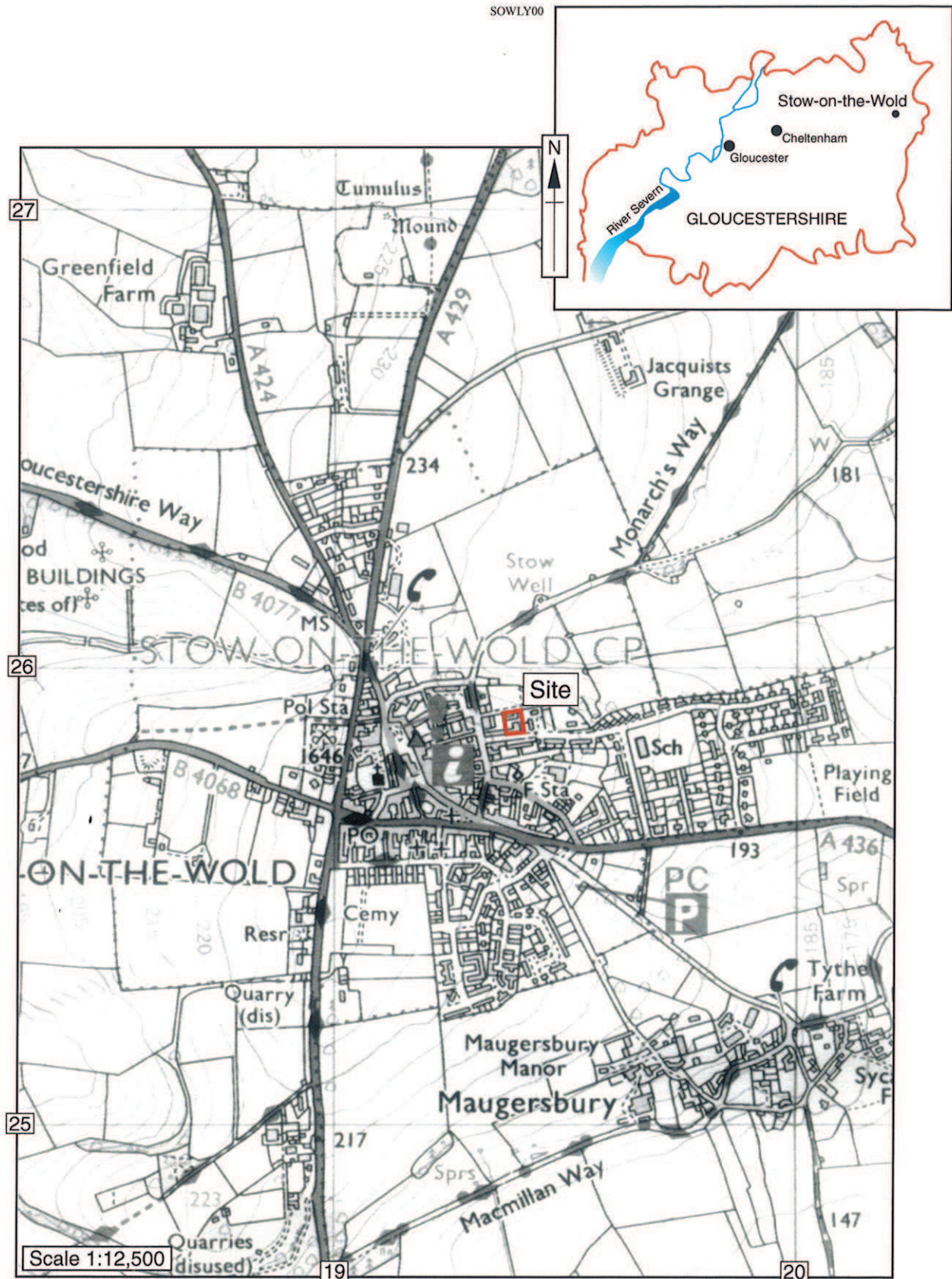
8 Discussion

No archaeological features were revealed during the watching brief. The presence of demolition rubble overlying natural corresponds with the findings in the previous evaluation of the site.

References.

Nichols, P 1999 An Archaeological Investigation at Landgate Yard, Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire County Council

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).



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Figure 1: Site location



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