

HEATHERSIDE COTTAGE/ROUNDBARROW HOUSE/DOONE

RIDGEMOUNT ROAD, SUNNINGDALE, BERKSHIRE

NGR SU 952 662

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

JANUARY 1998

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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Date: *10/2/98*

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Summary

In June and September 1997 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief during groundworks at Heatherside Cottage, Roundbarrow House and Doone, Ridgemount Road, Sunningdale, Berkshire (NGR SU 952 662). The watching brief identified a large amount of modern disturbance, to an average depth of 0.70m, spread across the sites, associated with the structures demolished prior to the commencement of groundworks, and other modern disturbance.

1. Introduction

The watching brief was undertaken for JMB Associates, Chartered Architects, on behalf of their clients Mr & Mrs D Y Davies. The main contractor was CDS Construction. It was proposed to demolish the existing house and erect a detached house with garage at Heatherside Cottage, to erect a new detached garage at Roundbarrow House immediately adjacent to the north-east, and to construct a new garage with living space above at Doone, immediately adjacent to the south-west. An archaeological watching brief was required, in accordance with the planning consent (Planning Application No. 96/74608) granted under PPG 16, on the advice of the County Archaeological Officer.

2. Background

The underlying geology of the site is a pebble band of Barton Beds. Roundbarrow House takes its name from the Bronze Age barrow, located to the rear of the property, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 23004). Two further barrows are located less than 200 metres to the north-east of the site, within the boundaries of Sunningdale golf course. A Neolithic axe and a quantity of flint arrowheads have been recorded 400 metres to the north. Consequently, the application sites were considered to have the potential to contain prehistoric archaeological deposits associated with the round barrows. The current land uses are as a garden, garage and front driveway/paved area surrounding a swimming pool.

3. Aims

To record any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the proposed works to previously established standards (Wilkinson, 1992). The ultimate goal being the preservation by record of any archaeology, the presence and nature of which could not be established in advance.

4. Methodology

A phased programme of separate inspection visits were made to the site by prior arrangement with the main contractor and the County's Archaeological Representative. The major phase of the work commenced at Heatherside Cottage, and then transferred to Roundbarrow House and Doone simultaneously. Within the

constraints imposed by Health and Safety considerations the deposits exposed in plan and section were cleaned, inspected and recorded in scale plans and section drawings, and by colour 35mm transparency and black and white print photography. Written records were also made on proforma context sheets.

5. Results

Three main phases of ground disturbance occurred and were monitored; general ground reduction, the excavation of foundation trenches for internal and external walls and the excavation of soakaways.

Heatherside Cottage

The ground level across the site was reduced by an average of 0.10 m using a JCB with a toothed bucket. In practice, this mainly involved the removal of the concrete floor of the demolished garage, revealing brick built foundations and made ground.

The deepest excavation at Heatherside Cottage comprised the soakaway pit. The earliest deposit seen here was the natural subsoil (3), a clean sand measuring 0.16 m to the base of the cut. This was sealed by (2), 0.40 m of mottled yellow/white sandy loam with 15% clay, very mixed and repeatedly cut by modern services. This was sealed by (1), 0.24 m of mid gray silty, stony clay loam with 10% silt and 20% mixed fine and medium gravels. This sequence was repeated across the site at Heatherside Cottage with very little variation.

Roundbarrow House

The section of the soakaway excavation here revealed 1.30 m of olive/brown slightly sandy clay (102), sealed by 0.26 m of brown/pink pebbly gravel (101), sealed by tarmac (100), 0.06 m thick. The foundation trenches revealed (100), (101) and a thin band of (102), to the base of the cut, with no cut features seen. This sequence was repeated across the site at Roundbarrow House, with very little variation.

Doone

The foundations were inspected after excavation. The earliest deposit seen was (203), a mid brown slightly silty clay 0.34 m thick. This was sealed by (202), 0.15 m of assorted brick rubble with occasional concrete lumps. This was sealed by (201), 0.10 m of a slightly silty gravel sealed by 0.10 m of mid gray silty clay loam, (200). No cut features were revealed.

6. Discussion

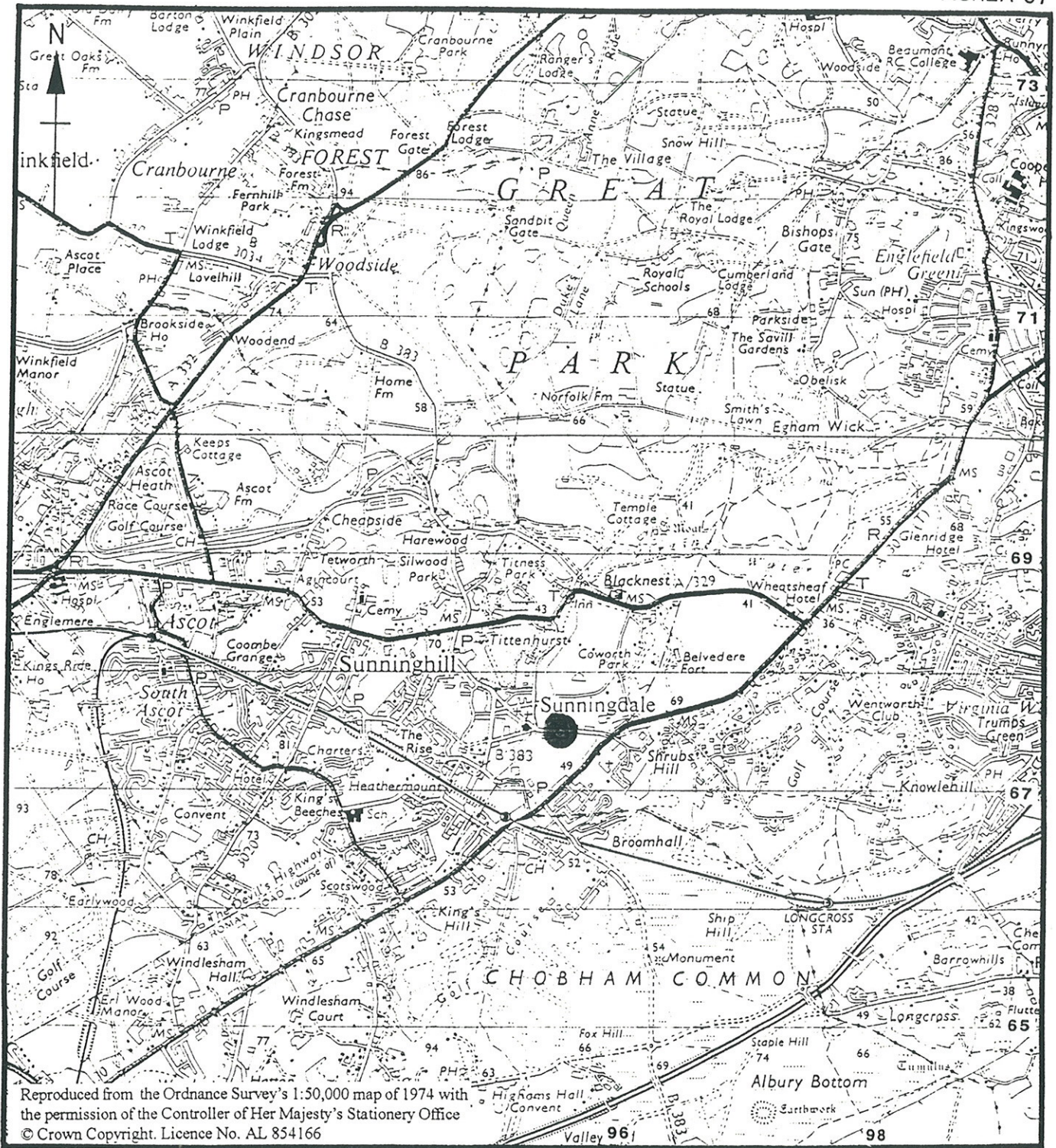
The provenance of all the deposits seen across the three sites examined would appear to be contemporary with the construction and periodic refurbishment and alterations to the three houses. Prehistoric archaeological remains are often very tenuous and it is possible that, if they were present here at all, they have been removed by subsequent activity on the sites.

Modern ground disturbance at Heatherside Cottage extended to a depth of 0.24 m, and natural deposits below this level were heavily disturbed by modern services. It was clear that the construction of the garage that occupied this site produced disturbance, to a sufficient depth, to remove prehistoric deposits if present. The natural deposits were examined across all three sites and cut features would have been seen, if present. There was no good evidence for truncation of the natural on such a large scale and on balance it seems probable that if any features associated with the round barrows are present, they are located elsewhere in the vicinity.

John Dalton
OAU
January 1998.

References.

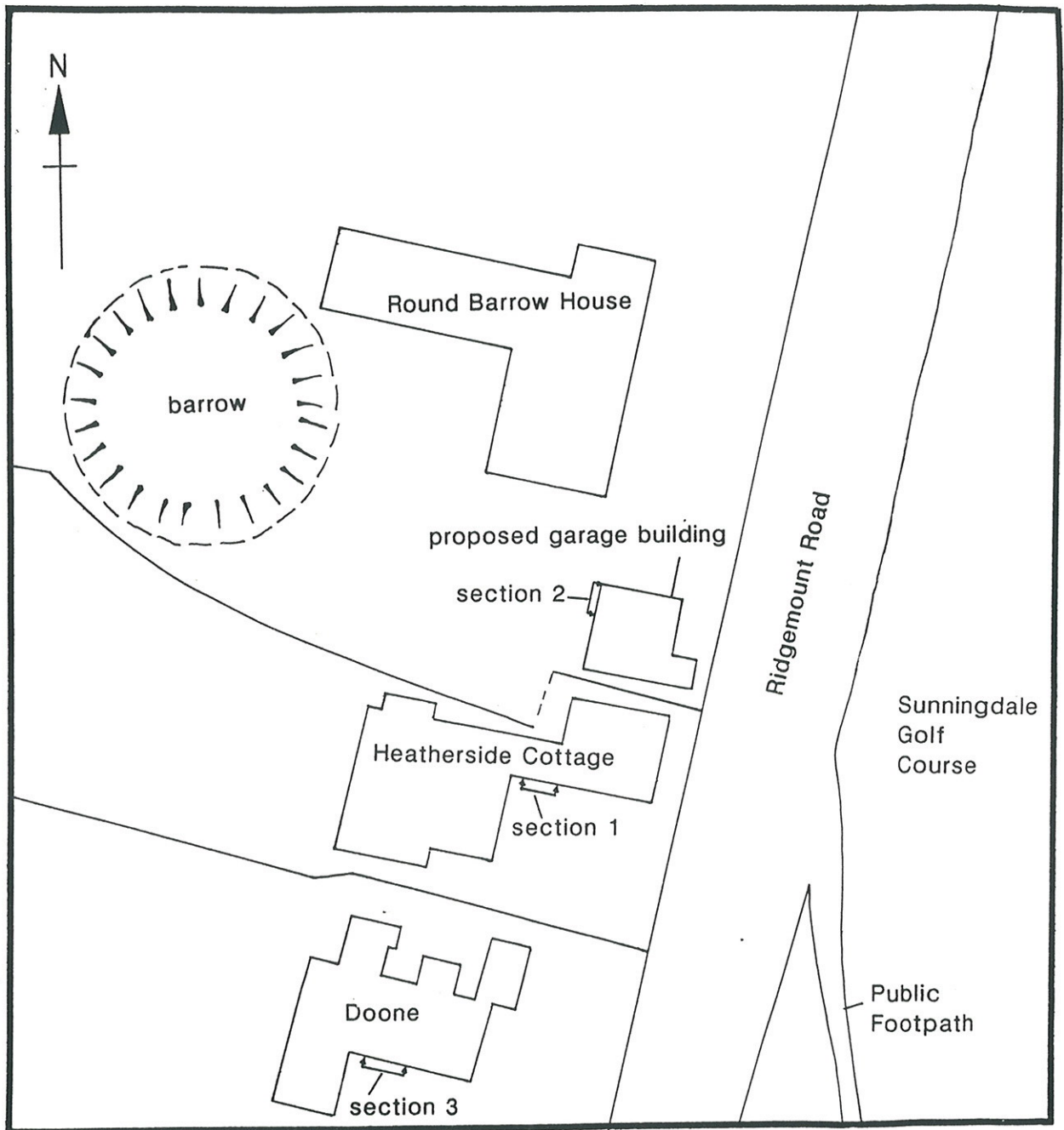
Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Fieldwork Manual, First Edition (OAU).



scale 1:50,000



figure 1

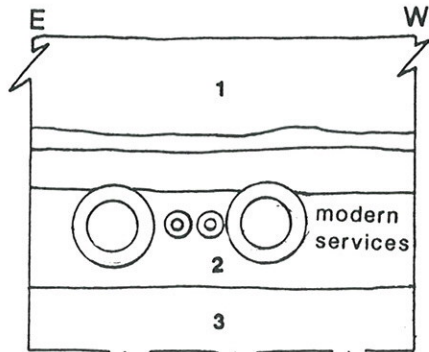


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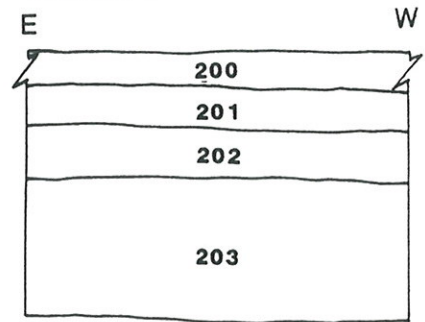


figure 2

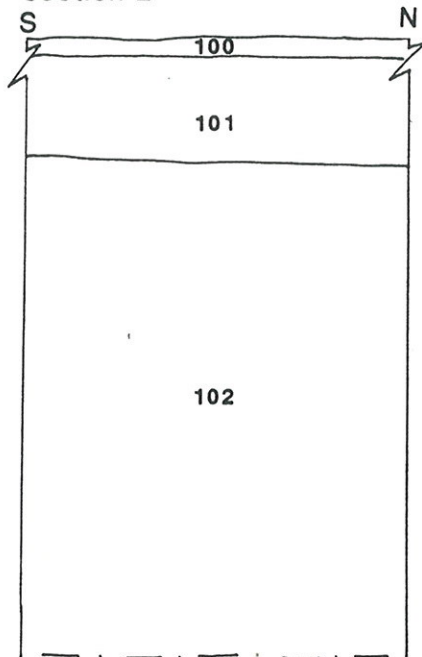
Heatherside Cottage
section 1



Doone
section 3



Roundbarrow House
section 2



Scale 1:20

Figure 3

