

G.J.Stubbs

Upper Close Farm, Ledwell, Chipping Norton

NGR SP 4184 2815

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Planning Ref. No. w97/1201

Oxford Archaeological Unit

November 1999

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HEAD OF FIELDWORK

Date:

8/11/1999

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Summary

In April 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Upper Close Farm, Ledwell, Chipping Norton (NGR SP 4184 2815). Neither archaeological features nor finds were present.

1 Introduction

The development proposal (planning application no. W97/1201 comprised the construction of a sculpture and painting studio at Upper Close Farm, Ledwell. The watching brief was commissioned by G. J. Stubbs. It was undertaken to a brief set by and a WSI agreed with Oxfordshire County Council.

2 Background

A search of the SMR revealed prehistoric archaeology comprising scatters and concentrations of flint, flint arrowheads and scrapers, some Romano-British and Saxon sherds and several earthwork features and standing buildings associated with the shrunken medieval village.

Davis' 1797 map of Ledwell Park indicates both ridge and furrow and post-medieval structures; the development site is located here, within an area of earthworks which have been truncated. Ledwell Park formerly was the location of a mansion belonging to Francis Smith, Lord Carrington, in 1666. This building was demolished circa 1800, although its outbuildings survive as Upper Close Farm. The truncated earthworks would appear to relate to this structure.

The site lies on fine loams, overlying limestone at 168 m above OD; it is located on the west side of Ledwell, approximately 1.5 km north of Sandford St. Martin. Previously the area has been used as a paddock/garden.

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

A number of separate site visits were made by an archaeological supervisor to monitor the groundworks for any archaeological remains. The topsoil stripping and excavation of footings was carried out by JCB.

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

An area of development, c. 21 x 14.5 m was stripped of topsoil to a depth of between 0.2 – 0.3 m. This revealed mottled grey and brown silty clay with areas of limestone fragments (<0.25 m) overlain by dark greyish brown silty clay. Within this area a test pit (TP3), excavated by Crossfields Consulting Ltd in 1997, and a number of tree root holes from young trees removed by the contractor were the only features exposed. No archaeological features were identified.

Pad holes were excavated to natural bedrock, although the holes located on the east of the site were deeper due to the natural slope. The pad holes measured 2.7 m x 1.0 m to a depth of 1.05 – 1.25 m to the west and 1.40 – 1.55 m to the east. The stratigraphy observed within these pad holes comprised natural limestone overlain by a lens of cornbrash and light yellowish brown clay with mottled grey patches 0.2 – 0.5 m thick, sealed by 0.3 m of dark brown silty clay loam topsoil. No archaeological features were identified.

6 Finds

No finds were retrieved during the course of the watching brief.

7 Environmental results

Due to the absence of any archaeology, no environmental soil samples were taken.

8 Discussion

Although the site of development lies within an area of truncated earthworks, believed to be related to the large structure shown in the field on the Davis Map of 1797, no archaeological features were revealed during the ground works for the studio construction.

References.

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



Figure 1: site location



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