



Clifford Lodge, 17 Sheet Street, Windsor

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

In August 2019 Oxford Archaeology conducted an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a proposed replacement two-storey extension and a single storey infill extension at Clifford lodge, 17 Sheet Street, Windsor (NGR: SU 96921 76629). No significant archaeological features or deposits were present.

The watching brief observed that a significant reduction of the ground levels had been undertaken during the construction of the former extension, truncating any potential archaeological horizons. It is probable given the topology of the site, that in order to maintain a constant floor level during the construction of the former buildings, that the plot was terraced into the slope.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Alasdair Browne for commissioning this project.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Gerry Thacker. The fieldwork was directed by Mike Sims. Survey and digitizing was carried out by Charles Rousseaux. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the supervision of Leigh Allen, and prepared the archive under the supervision of Nicky Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Alasdair Browne to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the site of a proposed two storey rear extension and single storey infill extension at Clifford Lodge, 17 Sheet Street, Windsor.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref: 18/01046/FULL).
- 1.1.3 A specification for watching brief was set by Berkshire Archaeology and a written scheme of investigation was produced by OA detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to discharge the planning condition (OA, 2019). This document describes how the condition was fulfilled.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies on the eastern edge of Windsor, Berkshire, at NGR SU 96921 76629, and is located on the eastern side of Sheet Street. The site is bounded to the north by number 15, to the south by Hadleigh House and to the east by the house's garden, car parking and The Long Walk (Fig. 1).
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development encompasses a previous extension and part of the rear garden of the property (Fig. 2). Although the surrounding area has been intensively developed the underlying ground could be seen to slope significantly down to the south and east.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as the Lambeth Group Clay, Silt and Sand formed 48-59 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period. To the south this is overlain by superficial Head Deposits of Clay, Silt and Gravel formed 3 million years ago. To the north the Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation formed 72 to 90 million years ago are mapped (BGS website).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following, unless otherwise referenced, is derived from project reports held on the Archaeology Data Service.
- 1.3.2 The site is located in the medieval heart of the town of Windsor, near the southern edge of the Conservation Area, and there has been a moderate amount of archaeological investigation in the area. An archaeological evaluation to the north-west at 55-57 High Street by Thames Valley Archaeological Services revealed medieval pits and truncated burials. An excavation a further 50m to the north-west at 7 Church Lane revealed thirty-seven inhumations, possibly medieval but likely of post-medieval date, in varying states of completeness. Medieval floor layers and pits were found 500m away at 29 Thames Street and the conservation area appraisal cites that the excavations at 19-23 High St revealed prehistoric and Roman activity as well as a significant depth of Medieval occupation.
- 1.3.3 Windsor's history is largely dominated by the castle from its construction in the 12th century. It acted as a focal point, with the original timber buildings of the town

developing around it. By the 16th century a street pattern had been established. Medieval Windsor was defined by Sheet Street to one end and Windsor Bridge to the other and Norden's survey in 1607 shows the street pattern has changed little since (Planning Policy, 2009). The town declined in the Civil War years but had a resurgence in importance in the Victorian era with the queen choosing Windsor Castle as her permanent residence.

- 1.3.4 Clifford Lodge, Number 17 Sheet Street is a Grade II Listed Building (ref: 1117702), and has a long history which is detailed in the Design, Access and Heritage Statement (Garrett and McKee, 2018.) Some former occupants have had connections with the royal household at Windsor Castle as well as other significant establishments in the town. The house was constructed in 1783 as a single freehold with its southern neighbour Hadleigh House. It was still attached to Hadleigh House in 1868 when it was sold to Henry Brown. The properties were split in 1914 and there were other alterations to the building and its outhouses between 1900 and 1918.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The specific aims and objectives of the watching brief were:

- i. To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development.
- ii. To make an appropriate record of any remains present through sample excavation and recording.
- iii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- iv. To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence.
- v. To disseminate the results through the production of a site report and archive for deposition with an appropriate museum, and to provide information for accession to the Berkshire Historic Environment Record.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The watching brief was undertaken using OA's general approach to excavation and recording as outlined within the WSI.

2.2.2 The excavation of the foundation trenches and any other intrusive groundworks were undertaken under the supervision of the attending archaeologist. These works were excavated using a nine-tonne mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.6m wide toothless trenching bucket.

2.2.3 Observations arising from these works were recorded using written records, digital photography and measured drawings. Because of the depth of some areas of the excavations, recording was achieved from the top of the sections and finds were recovered from the spoil, provided that their provenance could be accurately attributed.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below. The full details of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. Finds data and spot dates are tabulated in Appendix B.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The underlying natural geology of stiff clay was exposed within all the excavations. The boundaries of any overlying deposits could be clearly discerned.

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the site remained dry throughout.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Parts of the standing building had been demolished and the floor levels removed prior to the start of excavation, exposing associated construction levels. A significant downwards step of between 0.6m and 0.8m could be observed between the undisturbed garden deposits and the building footprint up to which they previously abutted.

3.3.2 Earlier deposits were observed only along the western edge of the site below the floor level of the standing building. Elsewhere significant truncation had taken place leaving only post-medieval deposits in situ.

3.4 Sections 1 and 2 (Figs 2 and 3; Plates 1 and 2)

3.4.1 These two sections display similar stratigraphy and will be considered together. The western ends of both these foundations trenches started within the footprint of the existing buildings (Fig. 2). These ran parallel east to west for approximately 10m in length, a return trench was dug between their eastern ends.

3.4.2 The underlying natural, a greyish yellow clay (3), was encountered at a depth of between 0.1m and 1.2m below the present day ground and floor levels.

3.4.3 Towards the western ends of the trenches the surface of this deposit tipped down towards the west at an approximate 20% slope. Elsewhere the surface was roughly level.

3.4.4 Where the natural geology sloped down it was overlain by a friable dark grey-brown silty clay loam (2; Fig. 3). Numerous chalk flecks and flint fragments together with many fragments of red clay roofing tile were observed within this deposit. The depth of this deposit lessened towards the east leaving the surface flush with the top of the natural.

3.4.5 Directly overlying the natural at the eastern end of the trenches and partially covering the eastern extent of (2) was a mixed layer of brick fragments, lime mortar and soils (1). The depth of this deposit was roughly even, measuring between 0.1m and 0.15m in depth. Numerous fragments of pottery dating to the latter part of the 18th century and 19th century were recorded within this deposit.

3.4.6 Within the footprint of the former extension, construction cuts for the foundations were observed cutting through the surface of this deposit, with the associated construction debris overlying the layer.

3.5 Section 3 (Figs 2 and 3)

3.5.1 This was a representative section located within the footprint of the demolished extension (Fig. 2). The natural clay, (3), was recorded at a depth of approximately 0.12m below the current ground level. This was overlain by a continuation of layer 1, 0.12m in depth.

3.6 Finds summary

3.6.1 Finds were recovered from layers 1 and 2. Fragments of transfer printed pottery dating from the latter part of the 18th century and the 19th century were collected from layer 1. Fragments of plain red clay roof tiles of 18th to 19th century date were collected from layer 2, but no other dating evidence.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The underlying natural was exposed within all the excavations. The spatial distribution and length of the trenches would suggest that the observations can be applied throughout the site.

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

4.2.1 Stratigraphic sequences were recorded throughout the site. These records show the presence or otherwise of archaeological remains within the development. Dating evidence sufficient to allow interpretation of activities within the site were recovered.

4.2.2 No deposits suitable for palaeoenvironmental sampling were observed, similarly no deposits containing any economic evidence were encountered.

4.2.3 Copies of this report will be provided for the client and Berkshire Archaeology and it will be deposited with the Berkshire Historic Environment Record. In due course the report will be publicly available on the OA digital library at <https://library.thehumanjourney.net/>.

4.3 Interpretation

4.3.1 No evidence for surviving deposits of topsoil, recognisable occupation layers or features were observed within the footprint of the proposed development. The absence of these deposits together with the presence of a post-medieval construction deposit directly overlying the natural geology across the majority of the site suggests a high degree of truncation has taken place, presumably relating to the construction of the previous extension.

4.3.2 The composition of layer 2 together with the lack of evidence for domestic activity recovered within it, suggests that it may be redeposited material rather than an in-situ accumulation. It is possible that it represents a levelling deposit associated with an earlier phase of the building.

4.3.3 The westward facing slope noted in the western extent of the natural geology may be indicative of the underlying topology, but the absence of any occupation layers, topsoil or subsoil above this slope would indicate truncation.

4.4 Significance

4.4.1 It is probable that in order to facilitate maintaining the floor levels within the original building and subsequent extensions the site has been terraced, completely truncating any potential archaeological deposits or features.

4.4.2 The presence of 18th and 19th century material within the construction debris directly overlying the natural geology is contemporary with the known history of the building, reinforcing this premise.

4.4.3 The observations from the watching brief suggest that there is little archaeological potential surviving within the footprint of the existing buildings.

4.4.4 The difference in height between the garden and the building footprint may suggest that there is potential for archaeological deposits or features to have survived within the garden area.

APPENDIX A CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1	Layer	> 4m	0.15m	Construction debris	Brick, pottery	C18th – C19th
2	Layer	> 4m	0.15	Levelling deposit	Clay tile	C18th- C19th
3	Layer	> 4m	> 2m	Natural clay	-	-

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery and ceramic building material

Identified by John Cotter.

Context	Description	Date
1	Pottery: Five sherds from three vessels. Four transfer printed ware (TPW) sherds including two willow pattern and one landscape. A single sherd of cream ware (CREADEV). 80g	1830 – 1850 1760 – 1830
2	CBM: Seven fragments of post-medieval peg-tile/flat roof tile in hard, smooth red post-medieval fabric, some sherds are fresh and some abraded. 254g	18 th – 19 th century

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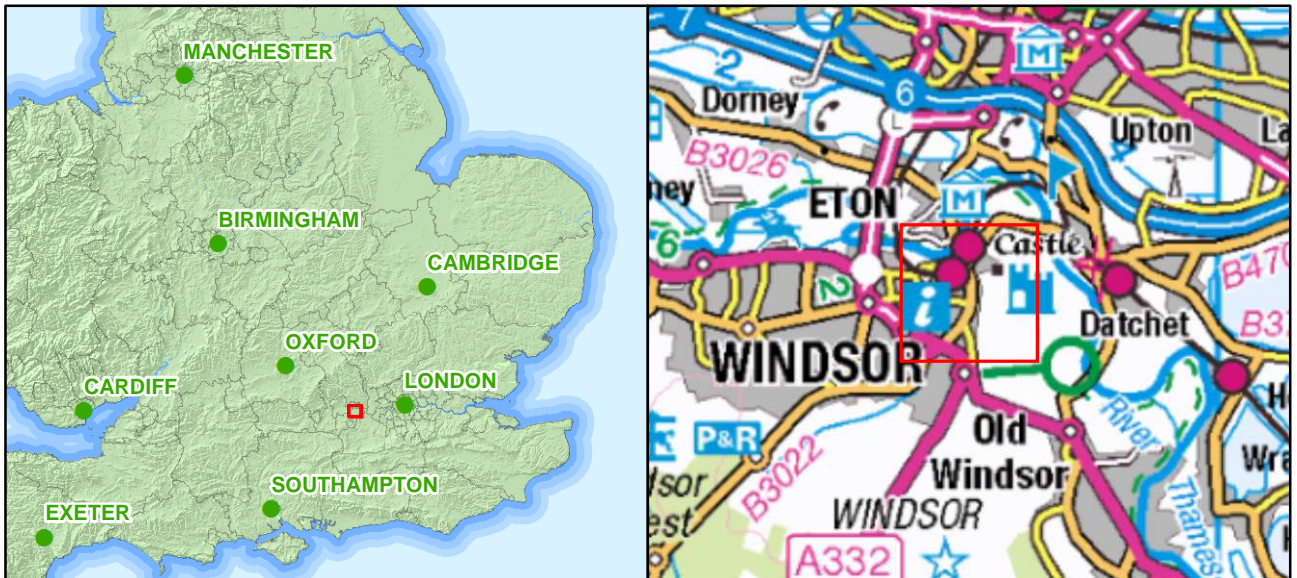
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OA 2019. Clifford Lodge, 17 Sheet Street, Windsor; Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief

APPENDIX D

SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

Site name:	Clifford Lodge, Sheet Street Windsor
Site code:	WICL0D 19
Grid Reference	SU 96921 76629
Type:	Watching brief
Date and duration:	Two days
Area of Site	110m ²
Location of archive:	There is currently no receiving museum available to take the archive. The archive will be held held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES. Deposition will be kept under review.
Summary of Results:	<p>In August 2019 Oxford Archaeology conducted an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a proposed replacement two-storey extension and a single storey infill extension at Clifford lodge, 17 Sheet Street, Windsor (NGR: SU 96921 76629). No significant archaeological features or deposits were present.</p> <p>The watching brief observed that a significant reduction of the ground levels had been undertaken during the construction of the former extension, truncating any potential archaeological horizons. It is probable given the topology of the site, that in order to maintain a constant floor level during the construction of the former buildings, that the plot was terraced into the slope.</p>



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Site plan showing location of sections

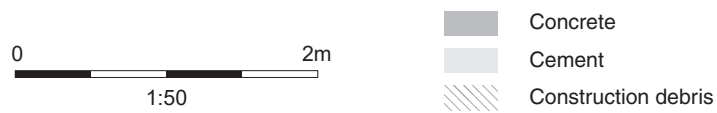
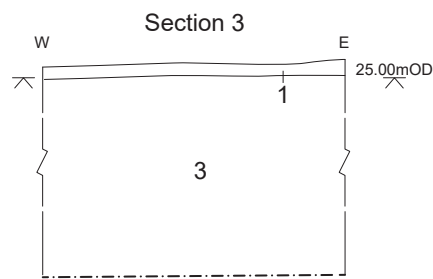
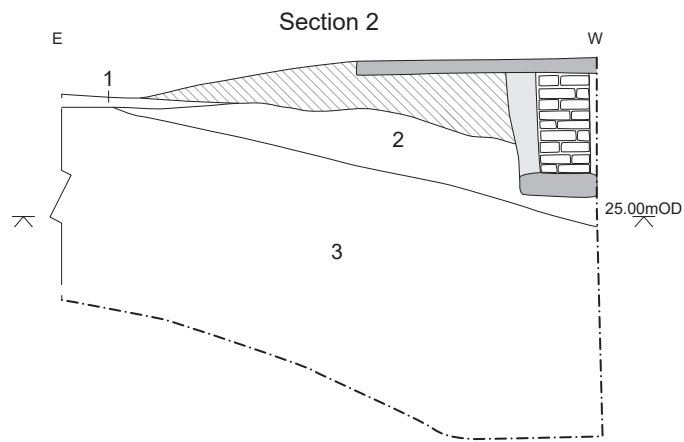
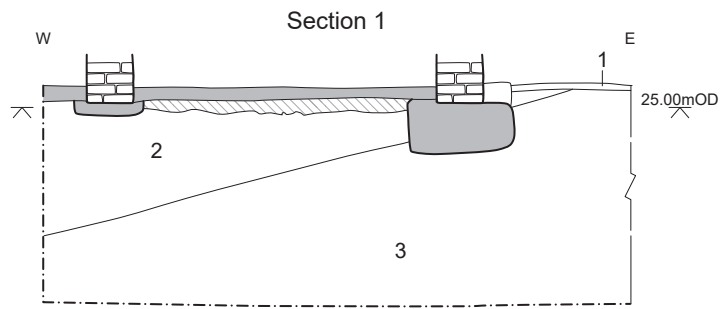


Figure 3: Sections 1, 2 and 3



Plate 1: Section 1



Plate 2: Section 2



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