

Land at School Lane Itchen Abbas Hampshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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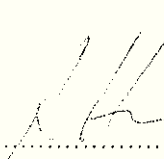
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Prepared by: James Mumford
Position: Project Officer
Date: 16th March 2006

Checked by: Dan Dodds
Position: Head of Small Works
Date: 16th March 2006

Approved by: Nick Shepherd
Position: Head of Fieldwork
Date: 16th March 2006

Signed: 

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Oxford Archaeology

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Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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Land at School Lane, Itchen Abbas, Hampshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Location and scope of work	1
1.2 Geology and topography	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	1
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	2
2.1 Aims	2
2.2 Methodology	2
3 Results	3
3.1 Description of deposits.....	3
3.2 Finds.....	3
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains	3
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	4
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	5
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References	5
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	5

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Location of test pits within area of development

SUMMARY

In July 2005 and March 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on Land at School Lane, Itchen Abbas, Hampshire (NGR SU 538 330). The work was commissioned by Banner Homes in advance of proposed development on the site and consisted of a number of test pits. The watching brief revealed topsoil overlying the natural chalk, except in the north-west corner of site where subsoil containing a sherd of medieval pottery had collected at the base of a slope.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In July 2005 and March 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Land at School Lane, Itchen Abbas, Hampshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Banner Homes in respect of a planning application for future development on the site for housing (Planning Application No. F/2005/6080).

1.1.2 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief. Oxford Archaeology have been required to monitor the groundworks, in line with PPG16 and Local Plan Policies.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies at *c* 60 m above OD and is situated on a south facing raised spur of free draining upper Cretaceous Chalk, which is the main underlying geology of the surrounding downland landscape. The topography falls away to the south for approximately 100 m, off the shallow valley side down to the flood plain of the River Itchen.

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 2006) and is reproduced below.

1.3.2 The potential for discovering archaeological remains dating to the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic period is low. The position of the site, close to the river, on a spur of chalk downlands, which is likely to have been wooded during this period, suggests that any archaeology discovered is likely to represent chance finds associated with hunting/gathering activities.

1.3.3 There is an uncertain, but possibly moderate potential for the discovery of archaeological remains dating to the Neolithic through to the Iron Age on the site. Evidence from the Neolithic includes a general scatter of flints having been recovered from various locations within the study area. More importantly a Neolithic

penannular ditch and a pit were discovered and excavated in 1994, c 85m from the proposed development site. The same excavations uncovered the remains of a possible Bronze Age structure. Although no *in situ* Iron Age remains have been discovered from within the direct study area, cropmarks including those of field systems attributed to the Iron Age, are present approximately 1km to the north west of the proposed development site. It is possible that this chalk spur with naturally occurring attractive settlement amenities, closely located on the River Itchen, saw scattered occupation throughout this extended period.

- 1.3.4 There is a higher potential for the discovery of archaeology dating to the Roman/Early Saxon period. This is particularly so as the site borders the known Late Roman/Early Saxon cemetery, which lies to its east (McCulloch 1999). The western extent of the cemetery has not been located and it is possible that it could extend into the proposed development site. However, archaeological investigation work carried out so far on the cemetery may indicate that the extent is not that large, with the greatest density of graves being uncovered c 50 m to the southeast. Investigations nearest to the proposed development site (c 20 m to the east on figure 2) revealed no features or graves associated with this cemetery. This evidence suggests that the western boundary of the cemetery may be situated outside the proposed development area, to the east. No evidence of a settlement associated with this cemetery has yet been found and may be located anywhere in this vicinity.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

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

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Nine test pits were excavated using a JCB with a toothless 0.5 m wide bucket at various points around the site (Fig. 2). This was carried out under archaeological supervision.
- 2.2.2 All excavated features 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* (OA 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

2005 Test Pit and Test Pit 1 (Fig. 2)

- 3.1.1 Natural chalk with flint (1) was reached at 1.4 m below current ground level and continued for another 1.5 m to the base of the excavation. Overlying this was a subsoil (2), a 0.35 m thick mid orange brown silt with occasional chalk fragments which produced a sherd of possibly medieval pottery, and one fragment of animal bone. Subsoil was overlain by the present garden soil (3), a dark grey brown silty clay loam 0.3 m thick.

Test Pit 2 (Fig. 2)

- 3.1.2 This was in the tarmac car parking area in front of The Paddock. The test pit measured 1.75 m x 0.5 m x 2.7 m and cut into the chalk (1), which was sealed below a 0.35 m thick garden topsoil of friable dark grey brown silty clay loam (3) with chalk flecks. This was sealed below a 0.3 m thick layer of hardcore rubble and chalk make up (5) forming a area of hard standing with a 0.50 m thick of asphalt and cinder surfacing (6). Overlying this was a 0.10 m thick layer of compact type 2 hardcore with a 0.08 m layer of present tarmac surface.

Test Pits 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9 (Fig. 2)

- 3.1.3 These test pits were between 1.8 m to 2.4 m long x 0.5 m wide and excavated to a depth of over 3 m into the natural chalk (1). Overlying this was a 0.3 m to 0.4 m thick garden topsoil of friable dark grey brown silty clay loam (3) with chalk flecks.

Test pits 6 and 7 (Fig. 2)

- 3.1.4 These two test pits were on front lawn of the Abbotsbury property and measured 2.5 m x 0.5 m x 3.5 m -3.9 m. They cut into the natural chalk (1), which was overlain by a 0.3 m to 0.4 m thick garden topsoil of friable dark grey brown silty clay loam (3) with chalk flecks. This was sealed below a 0.2 m- 0.5 m thick layer of made ground of light grey brown silty clay loam (4) with a lot of chalk fragments. This was material from the terracing and construction of the Abbotsbury property into the hillside. A 0.10 m thick layer of very dark grey black topsoil sealed layer 4.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 One sherd of residual medieval pottery was recovered along with a fragment of animal bone from the subsoil (2) from 2005 test pit.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Natural geology was overlain by subsoil, which produced one sherd of medieval pottery exposed only in the 2005 test pit and Test Pit 1, which was at the base of the natural slope. This in turn was overlain by modern garden soil and later garden landscaping for the two present standing buildings. No archaeological features were encountered during the excavation.
- 4.1.2 It is likely that the results from the location of the test pits suggest that the development is outside the boundary of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery, although due to the small size of the test pit this cannot be stated for certain.

APPENDICES**APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	Natural		Natural chalk with flint nodules
2	Layer	0.35 m	Subsoil
3	Layer	0.30 m - 0.42 m	Garden topsoil over the site
4	Layer	0.20 m - 0.50 m	20th century ground make up
5	Layer	0.50 m	20th century ground make up for hard standing
6	Layer	0.10 m	20th century surface
7	Layer	0.18 m	Tarmac driveway surface

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

McCulloch, P 1999 The Late Roman and Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Itchen Abbas, Hampshire, March 1999

OA 2006 Land at School Lane, Itchen Abbas, Hampshire Written Scheme of Investigation

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Land at School Lane, Itchen Abbas, Hampshire

Site code: ITABTP 06

Grid reference: NGR SU 538 330

Type of watching brief: A further nine test pits around the site following a single test pit in 2005.

Date and duration of project: Three site visits from the 4/7/2005 to 7/3/2006.

Area of site: 45 m x 70 m

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed topsoil overlying the natural chalk, except in the north-west corner of site were subsoil containing a sherd of medieval pottery had collected at base of slope.

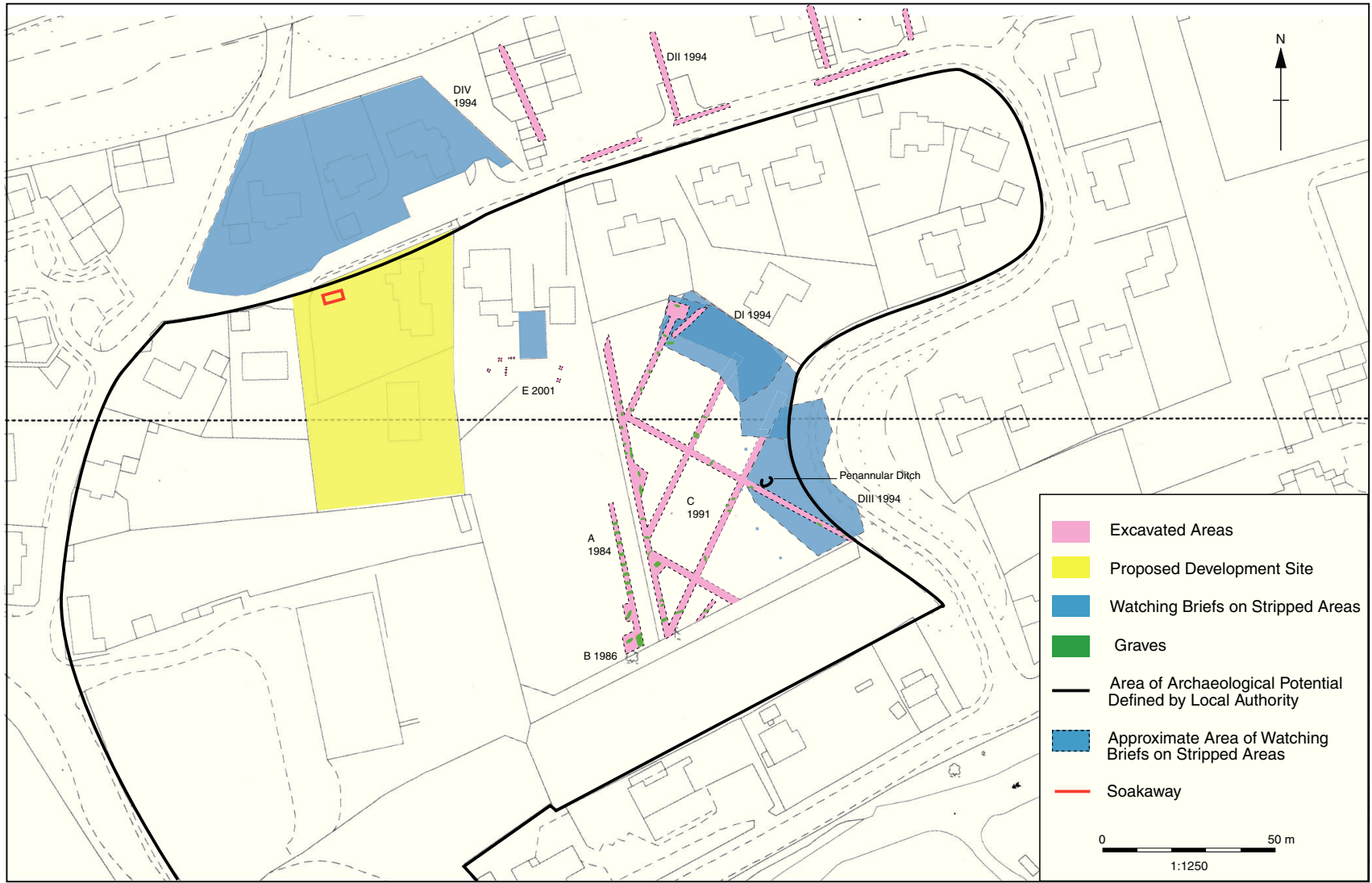
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Hampshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: WINCM AY 266



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location



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Figure 3: Details of Archaeological Work near Proposed Development Site

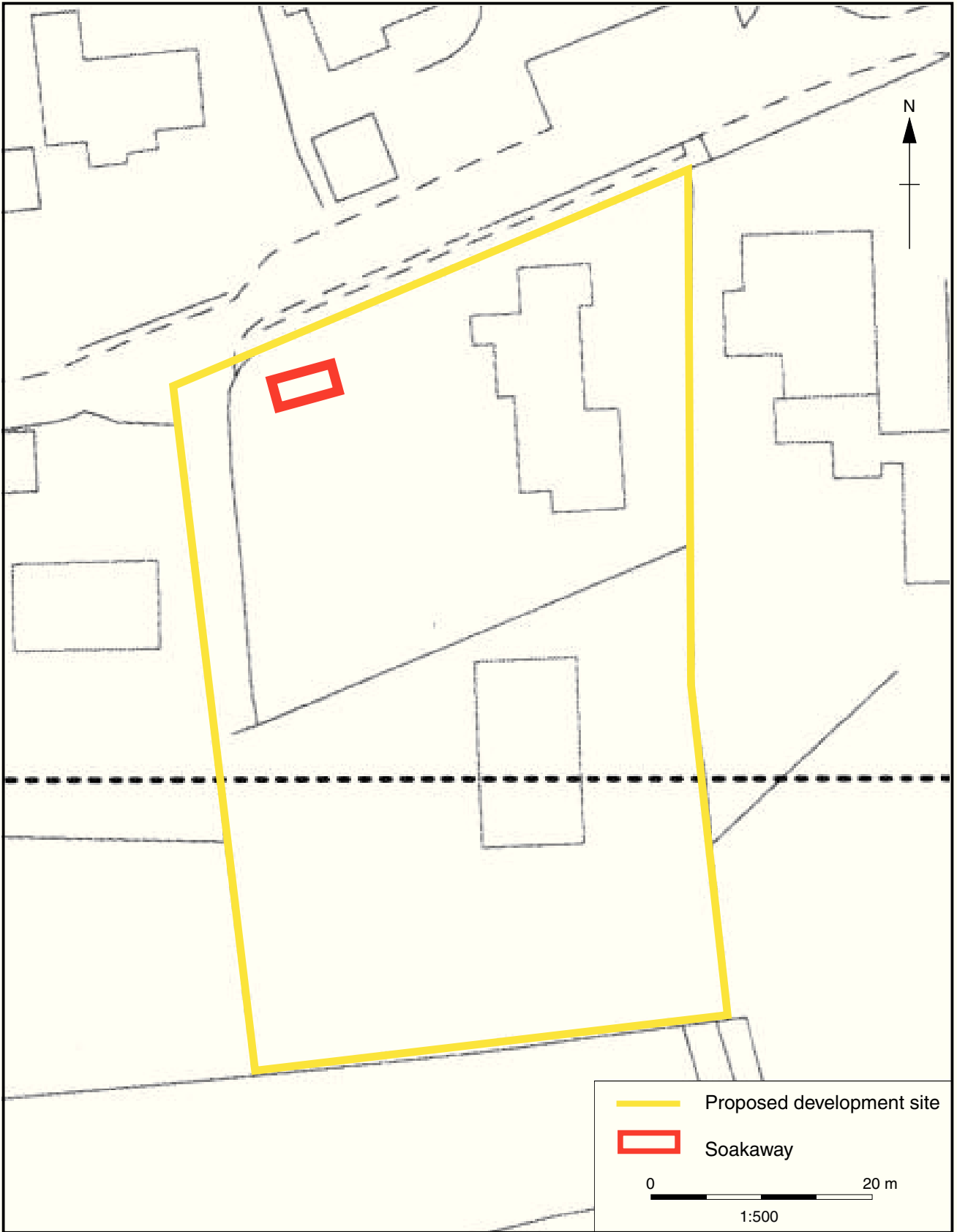


Figure 2: Detail of soakaway and proposed development site