Fleet Farm Barns, Aynho Road, Adderbury, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation

by Aiji Castle

Site Code: FFB14/107
( SP4776 3574)
Fleet Farm Barns, Aynho Rd, Adderbury, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr Raj Deb

by Aji Castle

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code FFB14/107

July 2014
Summary

Site name: Fleet Farm Barns, Aynho Road, Adderbury, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP4775 3575

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 22nd July 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Aiji Castle, Genni Elliott

Site code: FFB14/107

Summary of results: A single ditch dating to the early medieval or later was found. However, neither this feature nor any others were located on the footprint of the proposed new structure and the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

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Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Fleet Farm Barns, Aynho Road, Adderbury, Oxfordshire (SP 4775 3575) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Catherine Ham of LAPD Architects, Studio 24, Building C2, Culham Science Centre, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3DB on behalf of Mr Raj Deb of Fleet Farm Barns Ltd, Aynho Road, Adderbury, Oxfordshire.

Planning permission (12/01359/F) has been gained from Cherwell District Council for the construction of two new houses with access and parking, the conversion of a farmhouse to two houses following demolition of a garage, and construction of covered car parking at Fleet Farm Barns, Aynho Road, Adderbury, Oxfordshire (SP 4776 3574). Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, conditions (22 and 23) requiring a programme of archaeological investigation have been attached to the permission.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist, of Oxfordshire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team, and based on a brief supplied by him (Oram 2014). The fieldwork was undertaken by Aiji Castle, Tom Stewart and Genni Elliott on the 22nd July and 8th August 2014 and the site code is FFB14/107. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the eastern side of Adderbury, south of Aynho Road (SP 4775 3575). The site is currently in residential use and is bounded by stone walls (Figs 1 and 2). It lies at approximately 98m above Ordnance Datum. The geology is described (BGS 1968), as Marlstone Rock Beds and Clays, Silts and Siltstones, and this was encountered in the evaluation trenching.
Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in a brief prepared by Mr Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service. In summary, the site lies within the medieval core of the settlement east of post-medieval Adderbury House. The house is grade II listed, incorporating parts of a mansion built for the Earls of Rochester in the 17th century and remodelled in 1722. It was probably enlarged in 1731. Fieldwork to the north of the house in advance of redevelopment revealed contemporary deposits representing elements of the village recorded on 18th-century maps, namely houses and a metalled roadway. A cellar was also found relating to an earlier phase of the mansion. Medieval deposits including ditches, pits and postholes were also recorded on the site suggesting the presence of further remains in the vicinity (Weaver 2007). However fieldwork to the north revealed little of interest (Hammond 2006).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the evaluation are to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeo-environmental deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any prehistoric occupation or landscape features are present on the site; and
- to determine if there are later prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or medieval deposits present on the site.

It was proposed to dig two trenches, 10.0m long and 1.60m wide targeted to the outline of the development. Topsoil and any other overburden were to be removed by a JCB-type machine and a toothless ditching bucket used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and excavated. A further 10m of trench was included as contingency if required to clarify the initial findings.

Results

A total of four trenches were dug, two as intended and a further two to the north. They ranged in length from 10.20m to 12.80m in length and in depth from 0.50m to 1.05m and all were 1.6m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.
Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 3)
Trench 1 was aligned E-W and was 12.80m long and 0.83m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil over 0.39m mid brown-yellow sandy-silt subsoil. This overlay 0.11m of mid red-brown silty-sand. The natural geology was reached at a depth of 0.80m and consisted of a mix of light brown-grey silty-clay, sandy-clay and patches of siltstone and ironstone. A ditch (1) was excavated towards the eastern end of the trench. It was 1.10m wide and 0.49m deep, with a moderate concave profile and rounded base. It was orientated NE-SW and contained a single fill of mid grey-brown sandy clay (53). A single piece of early medieval pottery was recovered from this deposit, which can provide no more than the most general *terminus post quem* for the ditch fill. Deposit 53 was truncated by a much smaller re-cut of the ditch (2), displaying shallow concave sides and a flat base. This would have been dug once the original feature had fully silted up. It was 0.55m wide and 0.14m deep and was filled with a light blue-grey silty clay (54) that was devoid of finds.

Trench 2 (Fig 3; Pl 2)
Trench 2 was 10.80m long and a maximum of 1.05m deep. It was aligned N-S. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.35m of subsoil. Below this was 0.15m of a light red-brown sandy silt. The natural geology was reached at a depth of 0.80m and consisted of mid red-brown silty sand with patches of light blue-grey clay, siltstone and ironstone. No features were observed within the trench and no finds recovered.

Trench 3 (Fig 3; Pl 4)
Trench 3 was 11.0m long and a maximum of 1.00m deep. It was aligned E-W. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil overlying 0.08m of subsoil. The natural geology was reached at a depth of 0.24m and consisted of strong brown silty-sand with patches of light blue-grey clay, siltstone and ironstone. No features were observed within the trench and no finds recovered.

Trench 4 (Fig 3; Pl 5)
Trench 4 was 10.2m long and a maximum of 0.5m deep. It was aligned N-S. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil overlying 0.10m of subsoil. The natural geology was reached at a depth of 0.30m and consisted of strong brown silty-sand with patches of light blue-grey clay, siltstone and ironstone. A single modern, linear feature was present, cut through the subsoil and backfilled with stones; no finds were recovered.
Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

A single sherd of pottery weighing 2g occurred in context 53. It is Cotswolds type Ware, fabric OXAC in Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1994), and dates to the 11th – 12th century. Such pottery is a common find at sites in the region. The sherd is in fairly poor condition, with most of the calcareous inclusions in the surfaces leached out, and could easily be residual.

Animal bone by Genni Elliott

Five fragments of bone were recovered from fill (53) of ditch 1 weighing 194.5g. Two could not be identified to species, but were from a mammal. The three identifiable bones consisted of a cattle tooth, a pig tooth and a chopped head of the proximal end of a cattle femur.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A single prehistoric flint flake was recovered from ditch 1 (53). It is not chronologically distinctive and only a broad Neolithic or Bronze Age date can be suggested. It is clearly residual as it was accompanied by medieval pottery

Shell by Aiji Castle

A single fragment of oyster shell (Ostrea edulis) was recovered from deposit 53. It measured 65mm in length by 25mm wide and weighed 7g.

Fired Clay by Aiji Castle

A single piece of fired clay was recovered from the bulk sample of deposit 53. It measured 20mm x 15mm and weighed 2.5g.

Conclusion

A single ditch was observed and excavated during the evaluation, though it did not obviously continue into the area to be occupied by the proposed new building. A single sherd of pottery from the fill only tentatively suggests an early medieval date for this feature, with a re-cutting of the ditch at a later date. The ditch is
approximately on the same alignment as post-medieval features recorded at Adderbury House to the south-west (Weaver 2007). On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

References

Hammond, S, 2006, ‘Aynho Road, Adderbury, Oxfordshire, an archaeological evaluation’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 06/33, Reading
**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

0m at S and W end

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trench</th>
<th>Length (m)</th>
<th>Breadth (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.80</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.69m mid brown-yellow sandy-silt subsoil; 0.69-0.80m mid red-brown silty-sand; 0.80m+ natural light brown-grey silty-clay, sandy-clay, siltstone and ironstone geology. Ditch (1), Ditch re-cut (2) [Pls 1 and 3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.80</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.65m subsoil; 0.65-0.80m light red-brown sandy-silt; 0.80m+ natural mid red-brown silty-sand with light blue-grey clay, siltstone and ironstone patches [Pl. 2]</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16-0.24m dark greyish brown and dark yellowish brown sandy silt; 0.24m+ strong brown, sandy-clay, siltstone and ironstone geology. [Pl. 4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.30m greyish brown and dark yellowish brown sandy silt; 0.30m+ strong brown, sandy-clay, siltstone and ironstone geology [Pl. 5]</td>
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</table>
**APPENDIX 2: Feature details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trench</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Ditch</td>
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<td>Pottery</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Ditch re-cut</td>
<td>Later than 1</td>
<td>Stratigraphy</td>
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Fleet Farm Barns, Aynho Road, Adderbury, Oxfordshire, 2014
Archaeological Evaluation
Figure 1. Location of site within Adderbury and Oxfordshire

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Archaeological Evaluation
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Aynho Road.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

- Recently constructed boundary wall
- Footprint of proposed new building
- Trench 1 (2 recut)
- Trench 2
- Trench 3
- Trench 4

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Figure 4. Plan and section of features.

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Figure 4. Plan and section of features.
Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

Plate 3. Trench 1, ditches 1 and 2, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.
Plate 4. Trench 3, looking east north east,
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

Plate 5. Trench 4, looking north,
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
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