Ivol Buildings, Woodcote Road, South Stoke, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Christ Church, Oxford

by Pamela Jenkins
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code IBSS 04/03

March 2004
Summary

Site name: Ivol Barn, Woodcote Road, South Stoke, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 6162 8381

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 26th January to 1st March 2004

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Pamela Jenkins

Site code: IBSS 04/03

Area of site: c. 2100 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological features observed

Monuments identified: None

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 05.03.04
Steve Preston ✓ 04.03.04
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Ivol Buildings, Woodcote Road, South Stoke, Oxfordshire (SU 6162 8381)(Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr. Bob Shorter of Smith-Woolley of 8 Oxford Street, Woodstock, Oxford, OX20 1TP on behalf of Christ Church, Oxford.

Planning permission has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council under planning application PO2/W0931 for the construction of two buildings for grain storage and associated soakaways with extensions to service runs. This includes improvements to the existing farm road, hard standing and landscaped screening. The work is subject to a condition which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in the form of an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during the groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, Archaeology and Planning (PPG16 1990), and the District’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Paul Smith, County Archaeological Officer for Oxfordshire County Council, archaeological advisers to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sarah Coles, Andy Mundin and Pamela Jenkins between 26th January and 1st March 2004 and the site code is IBSS 04/03.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies approximately 1km to the east of South Stoke, to the east of the River Thames and west of the Icknield Way on the north side of Woodcote Road (Fig 2). The site is used for agricultural purposes and is situated on a flat piece of land surrounded by several hills. It lies at approximately 55m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is mapped as First (Flood Plain) Terrace deposits (BGS 1980), which were observed on site.
**Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief prepared by Mr Paul Smith of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Smith 2003). Evidence of earlier prehistoric activity is extensive in this area with large and dense occupation sites present on the surrounding hills (Ford 1987a). The site lies adjacent to a Bronze Age round barrow cemetery (now levelled) consisting of at least one double and four single ring ditches, and one pennaular enclosure. The site also lies to the east of an Iron Age and Roman site (Ford and Hazell 1989) which was partially examined recently during pipeline construction.

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by John Moore Heritage Services during the preliminary planning phases of the project but this revealed natural features and an undated possible ditch and a prehistoric flint flake date (Moore 2003).

**Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work. This involved repair of an access road, examination of topsoil stripping within the area of the two new buildings, concrete hard standing and french drains, and to the south and east of this area the excavation of seven soakaways and extension of services. All areas observed are shown in Figure 3. Spoil heaps were monitored for finds.

**Results**

Within the area to be stripped 0.30m of topsoil was removed (Fig. 3) revealing only an area of possible tree boles to the east and a narrow gully (probably a field drain) containing flecking and fragments of modern brick and tile running north-south along the eastern side of the site. The excavation of a service trench (Fig. 3) for a new underground HV electricity cable was observed to the south of the stripped area. The 1.12m deep trench revealed 0.28m of topsoil above 0.38m of a reddish brown clayey sand subsoil with frequent small and medium sized pieces of chalk. Below this 0.66m of natural chalk and gravels were observed. No archaeological deposits were noted in this section.

Ground reduction in 3mx3m squares to reveal the natural gravels was observed in the areas where the soakaways were to be excavated. The excavation of these pits (Fig. 3) took place after the preparation and importation of a layer of gravel across the entire site. The stratigraphy observed above the natural in these areas was therefore approximately 0.58m of made ground above 0.27m of subsoil. The entire excavation of soakaway
5 was observed to a depth of 3m revealing the same stratigraphy overlying 2.15m of natural gravel. No archaeological features or deposits were observed during any of the groundworks or access road repair and no finds were recovered.

**Finds**

No finds were recovered.

**Conclusion**

Despite the close proximity of the site to a Bronze Age barrow cemetery and other prehistoric activity, no archaeology was revealed during any of the groundworks and no finds were recovered. All features observed were either modern disturbance or natural features.

**References**

Smith, P, 2003, ‘Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief - Ivol Buildings, Woodcote Road, South Stoke’, Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services
Ivol Buildings, Woodcote Road, South Stoke, Oxfordshire, 2004
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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to South Stoke and Oxfordshire.

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Figure 2. Location of stripped area in relation to previous evaluation.

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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.