Summary

Site name: Land at the Last Straw Public House, Collingbourne Ducis, Wiltshire

Area of site: 1320 sq m

Summary of results: A single trench was excavated. Three undated postholes, and a late post-Medieval pit were recorded. Single sherds of the late prehistoric?, Medieval and post-Medieval periods were recovered from the spoilheap.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading ,Berkshire, RG1 5 NR. It is anticipated that the archive will be deposited with Devizes Museum in due course.

Site code: LSC 00/19
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at the Last Straw public house, High Street, Collingbourne Ducis, Wiltshire (SU 24350 54030) (Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mike Fowler of Michael Fowler Architects, The Studio, West Grafton, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3BY on behalf of their client, Riverdale Homes. Planning permission (K/038433) has been granted by Kennet District Council for the construction of a single new dwelling and garage subject to a condition relating to archaeology. As the site has archaeological potential, a field evaluation was requested and this is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Policy and Planning Guidance Note, Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16 1990) and the District Policies on Archaeology. The project specification was approved by Mr Duncan Coe, Assistant Wiltshire County Archaeologist, who advises the Council on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Jo Pine assisted by Kate Taylor on the 23rd of March 2000 and the site code is LSC 00/19.

Location, Topography and Geology

The proposal site occupies a roughly rectangular piece of land of 1320 sq m on land adjacent to the upstanding Last Straw public house (Fig 1). It lies on the on the eastern side of the valley of the river Bourne some 300 m north-west of the church. The ground is level at approximately c.129 m above Ordnance Datum. The site lies at the boundary of Upper Chalk and river gravel (BGS 1975). River gravel was encountered in the evaluation trench along with Coombe rock.

Archaeological Background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in the brief provided by Wiltshire County Council Archaeology Section. The site lies in an area within the historic core the village. A recent excavation on land immediately to the east of the site located a middle Saxon occupation site comprising ten sunken-featured buildings and a possible post-built structure (Pine 2000). The limits of this settlement was not established and
there is a strong possibility that this settlement may extent onto the proposal site. Further, an early/middle Saxon cemetery was located to the north-east of the development area (Gingell 1978).

**Objectives and Methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. This was to be achieved by excavating a single trench 15 m long and at least 1.5 m wide to examine the footprint of the proposed new buildings. In the event a trench 19.30 m was excavated and the width extended at the southern end to reveal in plan two postholes (1 and 5) (Figs. 2 and 3).

The topsoil and overburden was removed using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The natural was truncated slightly to clarify and define the archaeological features. The machining was conducted under direct and continuous archaeological supervision and the spoil heaps were monitored for finds. Archaeological and potential archaeological deposits were hand cleaned and a full written, drawn and photographic record of the trenches and archaeological deposits was made.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

**Results**

**Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3)**

The sections of the trench showed made ground up to 0.20 m deep overlying a dark grey brown buried topsoil, up to 0.13 m deep, which in turn overlay the gravel and coombe rock. Four postholes were recorded. Posthole 1 was 0.31 m in diameter and 0.38 m deep. Its light grey fill (52) contained two pieces of brick/tile fragments and a single piece of burnt flint. Posthole 2 was 0.26 m in diameter and 0.13 m deep with a dark grey brown silty clay (53). No finds were recovered. Posthole 3 was 0.19 m in diameter and 0.10 m deep with a light grey silty clay fill (54). Again no finds were recovered. Posthole 5 was 0.21 in diameter and 0.19 m deep with a light grey silty clay fill (56). No finds were recovered. A small post-medieval pit (4) was partially exposed in the trench. It was 1.20 m long 0.60 m wide and 0.40 m wide. It contained eight sherds of post-Medieval pottery, clay pipe stems and clear window glass.

Three sherds of pottery were recovered from the spoil heap of the trench. These comprised a sherd of late prehistoric?, Medieval (12th-14th C) and post-Medieval date.
Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The evaluation resulted in the recovery of 12 sherds of pottery weighing 92 gm from the trench. The material includes pieces of Prehistoric, Medieval and Post-medieval/modern date. Despite the proximity to the Saxon domestic site, none of the material appears to be of Saxon date. The sherds were generally fairly abraded and well-broken suggesting considerable post-depositional disturbance. The data has been summarised in Table 1.

Description

The earliest sherd is a small, black, handmade body sherd with a calcined flint temper. The character of the paste suggests it is likely to be of Prehistoric date. A few odd Prehistoric sherds were amongst the material from the adjacent excavation indicating the presence of some early activity in the area.

Two sherds of Medieval date were present, one from the Kennet Valley area, the other with a limestone temper possibly from the Gloucestershire area. Both suggest activity in the later 12-14th centuries.

Amongst the remaining sherds is one internally glazed body sherd probably of late Medieval/early post-medieval date and eight pieces of more recent currency. These include a sherd from an English stoneware bottle, transfer decorated and plain ‘china’ and glazed red earthenware, mainly from pit [4].

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trench</th>
<th>Feat</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>?L Preh</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Pmed</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Wt</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12m</td>
<td>spoil</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16th-17th</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19m</td>
<td>spoilheap</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>?Lpreh/18th+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>19th+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92</td>
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</table>

Bone

Eight pieces of bone weighing 10 gms were recovered from Pit 4 (55).

Clay pipe

Five fragments of clay pipe were recovered from pit 4(55) and all were stem fragments.

Glass

Two pieces of clear window glass were recovered from pit 4 (55).

Tile

Two fragments of tile weighing 4 gms were recovered from posthole 1 (52).
**Burnt Flint**

One piece of burnt flint weighing 6 gms was retrieved from posthole 1 (52).

**Conclusion**

The single trench evaluation uncovered four undated postholes and a post-Medieval pit. Of the postholes, posthole 1 was the only one to contain finds, two pieces of brick and/or tile and a piece of burnt flint. From these results it appears the site has little archaeological potential.

**References**

Pine, J, 2000, The excavation of a Saxon settlement at Cadley Road, Collingbourne Ducis, Wiltshire, Draft publication report, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 98/9, Reading

**APPENDIX 1: Trench Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trench</th>
<th>Length (m)</th>
<th>Width (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>1.60-2.50</td>
<td>0.33-0.45</td>
<td>Made ground between 0.18-0.20 m deep over buried topsoil (51) 0.12-0.13 m deep onto coombe rock and river gravels. Postholes 1, 2, 3, 5 and pit 4. Two sherds of Saxon pottery and a sherd of post-Medieval pottery were recovered from the spoilheap</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Figure 1. Location of site within Collingbourne Ducis and Wiltshire.

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Land at the Last Straw, Collingbourne Ducis 2000

Proposed new house and garage

Cadley Road

The Last Straw

Figure 2. Trench Location
Land at The Last Straw Public House, Collingbourne Ducis, Wiltshire 2000

Figure 3. Plan of Trench LSC00/19
Figure 4: Sections.