



Archaeological Evaluation Report

Land Adjacent to 279 Quemerford

Calne

Wiltshire

SN11 8LA

Report number 278

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Summary

Groundworks Archaeology undertook an archaeological investigation on land adjacent to 279 Quemerford, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 8LA on the 30th June 2025. The investigation was undertaken in response to a planning condition and comprised of a single trench targeted on the footprint of the proposed development area.

The evaluation revealed a stratigraphy of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a variable geology of clay and brash. No archaeological features were present within the evaluation trench.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Groundworks Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Julian Miller to undertake an archaeological investigation on land adjacent to 279 Quemerford, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 8LA. The work was carried out at the proposed development site on the 30th June 2025.
- 1.2 The work was carried out according to the requirements of an archaeological condition, which was attached to the granting of planning consent for this development by Wiltshire Council (PL/2024/09508). This is in accordance with the principles established in *NPPF: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, revised 2021), and *Standard for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA, 2023).

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site is located on land to the rear of 279 Quemerford Road approximately 1.8km south-east of Calne town centre in Wiltshire. The site comprised an open field with a tree lined driveway to the east, open to the north and modern dwelling constructed to the west. The southern boundary is formed by a road accessing the recently constructed dwellings to the west. The site is centred on NGR SU 01253 69788 at an approximate height of 84m AOD (see figure 1).

Geology

- 2.2 The British Geological Survey website identifies the bedrock geology as the Lower Greensand Group, a sandstone sedimentary bedrock formed between 126.3 and 100.5 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. No superficial deposits are recorded.

3. Planning Background

- 3.1 Planning consent was granted by Wiltshire Council (PL/2024/09508) for the “*Proposed erection of two detached dwellings and associated works on Land to the east/adjacent to 279 Quemerford, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 8LA*”.
- 3.2 Condition 7 stated that:

“No development shall commence within the area indicated by application PL/2024/09508 until:

 - a) A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing

and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and

- b) The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological Interest”.

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 A search of the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER) within an 800m radius of the site identified 27 monuments and 14 events. There are 17 listed buildings and one scheduled monument in the study area but no registered parks and gardens or battlefields

Prehistoric

- 4.2 Scatters of flint are the most common evidence of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic activity, likely representing camps, either temporary or permanent in forest clearings. As farming developed in the Neolithic the forest was cleared. Settlements of this period tend to be located in close proximity to sources of fresh water. The Bronze Age saw further development of farming communities with the establishment of field systems and more organised communities. The late Bronze Age witnessed a change in climate with warmer and wetter conditions which continued into the early Iron Age.
- 4.3 Although Wiltshire is rich in Prehistoric monuments only a single Neolithic axe (MWI8163) and a Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead (MWI8185) have been identified within the study area, both located approximately 789m south of the site.

Romano-British

- 4.4 The Roman period introduced the concept of urbanisation which was linked with the establishment of a comprehensive road system. This increased the opportunities for movement of people and trade.
- 4.5 Within the study area only a single Romano-British brooch (MWI8235) has been identified 775m south-south-east of the site.

Early-medieval and Medieval

- 4.6 The Medieval development of Quemerford was extensively analysed by English Heritage (Field, 2000) and is summarised below. Ribbon development alongside the A4 London to Bath road, a relatively recent turnpiking, has obscured the nature of early settlement of Quemerford and,

lacking a parish church and obvious focus, its original position is by no means clear. Latterly, at least, it appears to have been a tithing of Calne, although the south-easterly orientation of the track leading from Quemerford Farm hints that the parish church of St Peter at nearby Blacklands formerly had a more important role to play. The unusual place-name of Quemerford was felt by Gover et al (1939, 258) to refer to a confluence (cymmer-confluence), although Aubrey thought that the term was a personal one and referred to 'Cynemaer's Ford' (Jackson 1862, 37), which allowed him to link the site with a battle mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a view which Ekwall (1974, 377) subsequently accepted. The event is now thought to have taken place at Kempsford in Gloucestershire (Garmonsway 1975, 55). Whichever interpretation one adopts it points to the importance of the stream to early occupation, and that natural features such as fordable positions or well-drained or prominent vantagepoints might be considered to be foci around which settlement might develop. The preponderance of Celtic place-names in the vicinity (e.g. Smith 1884, 58-60) might indicate that the area retained British influence until relatively late, while other names infer a wooded environment and it has been suggested that the area lay within the bounds of the Forest of Selwood, and subsequently Brayden, during the Early-medieval period (Grant 1959, 407).

- 4.7 Quemerford is first mentioned in documents in 1199 and 1204 as Camerford, 1226-8 as Kemerford, and in 1240-5 for the first time as Quemerford (Gover et al 1939, 258; Ekwall 1974, 377). Despite the suggested early association of 'Nigrarve' mentioned in the Domesday Book (Jackson 1862, 31) with nearby Blacklands (there are a number of other Blacklands names around the foot of the chalk scarp), Blacklands itself is not mentioned until 1194 (Ekwall 1974, 47). Its riverside church incorporates architectural features said to be of 13th century date (unpublished parish church leaflet), and it may be that conditions were right for expansion of settlement into the wetlands at that time. Certainly, assarting of the forest waste was taking place by the late 13th century (Grant 1959).

- 4.8 There is evidence for extensive settlement activity in the wider area including the proposed development site itself. The HER records potential features within the site boundary (MWI8250) with scheduled elements of the settlement located only 212m west of the site (NHLE 1017056). Elements of ridge and furrow are also present within the wider study area.

Post-medieval

- 4.9 The influence of the early road pattern on the later development of Quemerford is significant. Diversion of the London to Bath road through Calne had clearly become commonplace by 1675 when Ogilby published his road maps. Quemerford, however, is neither named or depicted on these; the only feature mentioned is 'Gurnarvate Bridge' which lay

approximately in the position of the present bridge across the River Marden, 620m west of the site.

- 4.10 The importance of wool to the Wiltshire economy is apparent here too. Reference to the presence of wealthy clothiers at Quemerford (in 1598 Roger Vince, clothier to Yatesbury; in 1680 Chivers, a clothier had an estate at Quemerford worth £1000 a year) (Jackson 1862, 58; Mann 1959, 149) perhaps indicates industrial activity focused on the use of mills. Certainly Lower (MWI36392) and Upper (MWI36306) Mills were present at Quemerford in the early 19th century and it is likely that both had a firm pedigree.

5 Aims and objectives of the project

- 5.1 The aim of the project was to determine the presence or otherwise of archaeological features within the application site, knowledge of which could be used to inform further mitigation.

- 5.2 The objectives of the project were:

To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the area of the development site.

To determine the type, extent, condition, nature, character, quality, function, and date, of any archaeological remains encountered.

To gain information about heritage assets identified within the area of the proposed development site.

To mitigate potential threats.

To interpret the archaeology of the site within its local, regional and national context.

To provide sufficient data to formulate a suitable archaeological mitigation plan.

6. Methodology

- 6.1 The archaeological evaluation was carried out on the 30th June 2025. This involved the mechanical excavation under archaeological supervision of one 28.8m x 1.60m trial trench targeted on the footprint of the proposed dwellings (figure 2). The trench length was extended slightly from the proposed 25m to account for a narrower width than the proposed 1.8m.

- 6.2 Where necessary, surfaces were hand cleaned for examination and recording. All deposits observed were recorded on standard pro-forma recording sheets.
- 6.3 Full context descriptions are provided in the trench summary which is presented in Appendix 1.
- 6.4 A digital colour photographic record was also maintained, some of which is reproduced in this report as plates 1-4 Appendix 2.
- 6.5 All work was carried out by Michael Blake according to the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation and in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) standards and guidance for archaeological evaluations.

7. Results

Trench 1

- 7.1 Trench 1 was excavated to a length of 28.8m and average depth of 0.32m. The north-west end was sondaged to a depth of 0.50m BGL to prove the natural geology (103). The upper most context was a topsoil (101), this overlay a subsoil (102) which was present from the approximate centre of the trench and extending to the south-east end where it sealed a natural brash (104) and an orangey-brown clay (105). At the north-eastern end of the trench the topsoil directly overlay a geology of stiff grey clay.
- 7.2 No archaeological features were present within the trench and despite visual scanning of the topsoil and subsoil, no artefactual material was recovered.

8. Discussion and Conclusions

- 8.1 The evaluation revealed a stratigraphy of topsoil overlying a partial subsoil which in turn overlay a variable natural geology. which varied from a stiff clay to brash.
- 8.2 No archaeological features were present within the evaluation trench and the results are presented with a very high confidence rating.

9. Archive

- 9.1 In line with ClfA guidance on negative projects the site will be archived via publication to OASIS only.

10. Acknowledgements

- 10.1 Groundworks Archaeology would like to thank Mr Julian Miller for commissioning this work. Grateful thanks are also extended to Mr Tim Harvard and the Wiltshire HER for their kind assistance.

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Appendix 1: Trench Summary

Trench 1			
Dimensions 28.8m x 1.6m		Ground level 84.74m AOD	
Orientation NW-SE		Max. Depth 0.50m	
Context	Type	Description	Depth
101	Layer	Topsoil – dark brown friable silt-clay	0.23m
102	Layer	Subsoil – mottled mid brown and mid brownish-orange firm silt-clay	0.12m
103	Layer	Natural – dark grey compact clay	
104	Layer	Natural – 50% mid grey decomposed angular stone and gravel and 50% mid orangey-brown firm silty-clay	
105	Layer	Natural – mid orangey-brown compact clay	

Appendix 2: Plates



Plate.7;Trench.7.looking.north_west



Plate.8;Trench.7.looking.south_east

Appendix 2: Plates



Plate.9;North_east.facing.sample.section.showing.(767).(768).(769)



Plate.0;North_east.facing.sample.section.showing.(767).(769).(north.arrow.incorrect)

Appendix 3:OASIS Summary for groundwo2-533215

OASIS ID (UID)	groundwo2-533215
Project Name	Evaluation at Land Adjacent to 279 Quemerford, Calne
Sitename	Land Adjacent to 279 Quemerford, Calne
Sitecode	QCW25
Project Identifier(s)	
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	PL/2024/09508
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Groundworks Archaeology
Project Dates	30-Jun-2025 - 30-Jun-2025
Location	Land Adjacent to 279 Quemerford, Calne NGR : SU 01253 69788 LL : 51.42709747333103, -1.983367207463475 12 Fig : 401253,169788
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Wiltshire Local Authority District : Wiltshire Parish : Calne
Project Methodology	The evaluation involved the mechanical excavation under archaeological supervision of one 28.8m x 1.60m trial trench targeted on the footprint of the proposed dwellings. The trench length was extended slightly from the proposed 25m to account for a narrower width than the proposed 1.8m. Where necessary, surfaces were hand cleaned for examination and recording. All deposits observed were recorded on standard pro-forma recording sheets. Full context descriptions are provided in the trench summary which is presented in Appendix 1 of the report. A digital colour photographic record was maintained, some of which is reproduced in the report as plates 1-4 Appendix 2. All work was carried out by Michael Blake according to the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation and in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) standards and guidance for archaeological evaluations.
Project Results	The evaluation revealed a stratigraphy of topsoil overlying a partial subsoil which in turn overlay a variable natural geology. which varied from a stiff clay to brash. No archaeological features were present within the evaluation trench and the results are presented with a very high confidence rating.
Keywords	
Funder	Private individual
HER	Wiltshire and Swindon HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	James Roberts
HER Identifiers	
Archives	

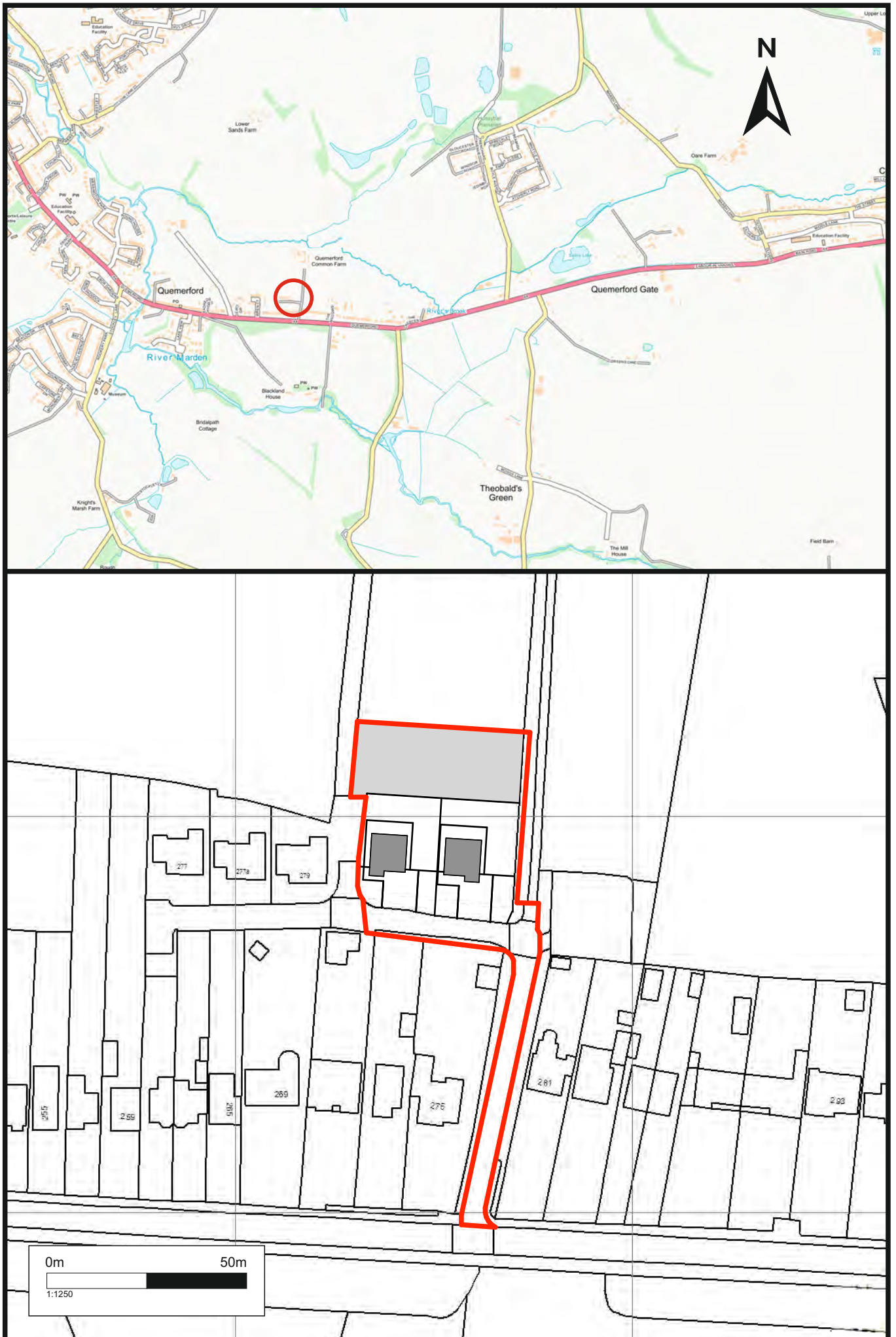




Figure 2: Trench Location Plan