

DOVE HOUSE, BISHOPSTONE,  
STONE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

*Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*

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HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST  
Report No. 982

DOVE HOUSE, BISHOPSTONE,  
STONE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

Site Code: HAT 570  
NGR: SP 8060 1005

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# **DOVE HOUSE, BISHOPSTONE, STONE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING**

### **SUMMARY**

*In late October and early November 2001, Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (HAT) undertook a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at Dove House, Bishopstone, Stone, Buckinghamshire.*

*Though the site is located close to the site of an early Saxon cemetery discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century no archaeological features or finds were recorded during this programme of monitoring. The site was recently levelled following the removal of an orchard. A uniform depth of topsoil and subsoil was observed throughout the site overlying natural sand deposits.*

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In late October/early November 2001 Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (HAT) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at Dove House, Bishopstone, Stone, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 8060 1005) (Figs.1-2). The work was commissioned by Mr Murray of Dove House in advance of the construction of oak-framed outbuildings on the site. This programme of monitoring and recording was undertaken as part of a planning condition required by the local planning authority (based on advice from Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCC AS) (Planning Application No. A/99/1792/APP)).

1.2 The monitoring was conducted in accordance with a brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief prepared by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (J Wise, dated 06/10/99), and a specification prepared by HAT (19/10/01). It also complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* (1994, revised 1999).

### **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE (Figs. 1 & 2)**

2.1 The site lies near to the southern edge of the village of Bishopstone, close to the Church. It is bounded to the north and east by the main NW-SE road through the village and to the south and west by open farmland. The site lies on generally level ground at c. 80m AOD.

2.2 The site lies at the confluence of three soil types. Those of the Fladbury 1 association, described as stoneless clayey soils overlying river alluvium, prevail toward the southern edge of the village. Those of the Evesham 2 association, described as slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils overlying Jurassic and Cretaceous clay lie immediately to the west of the village. Those of the Denchworth association, described as slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey soils (again overlying Jurassic and Cretaceous clays) prevail to the north in the area of the village core (Ordnance Survey, 1983). The local drift geology is sand.

### 3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The site lies close to Bishopstone church where, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, remains of an early Saxon cemetery were uncovered. The principal archaeological potential of the site therefore lies in the early Saxon period, remains of which are nationally rare. The Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan ('A Future for Our Past', BCC Environmental Services, 2000) underlines the importance of remains of this period within the county. It was therefore important to ascertain whether the cemetery site extended to within the Dove House site or if indeed any contemporary settlement remains were present. Saxon occupation in the area is also known from Stone, to the north. Further Saxon cemetery remains have also been identified at Dinton, and the area surrounding the site was clearly of considerable importance during the Saxon period. The importance of Stone, at least by the later Saxon period, is attested to by the fact that it was head of an administrative hundred and recorded in the Domesday survey. Following the Conquest the Stone estate was divided between two individuals. The southern part (comprising Bishopstone parish) was granted to Odo, Bishop of Bayeux.

3.2 The fertile soils of the Vale of Aylesbury have long been settled. Consequently, an important aim of the project was to characterise any earlier remains (prehistoric through to Romano-British) that may have been present within the area of proposed development. Similarly, any evidence which could have shed further light on the medieval development of the settlement of Bishopstone was a research aim.

### 4 METHOD OF WORK

4.1 This programme of monitoring and recording was conducted in accordance with the brief and specification, and conformed to IFA guidelines.

4.2 All ground reduction and the mechanical excavation of the foundation trenches was carried out under close archaeological supervision. Two visits were made (on 30/10/01 and 1/11/01). Deposits were recorded using *pro-forma* context sheets.

### 5 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

A common stratigraphy was observed throughout the area of the archaeological monitoring and recording:

0.00 – 0.25m	L1000. Topsoil. Friable, dark greyish brown, clayey silt (up to 0.50m where tree hollows were present).
0.25 – 0.55m	L1001. Subsoil. Soft, mid greyish brown, clayey sand.
0.55 – 1.30m+	L1002. Natural drift. Soft, mid reddish brown, slightly clayey sand.

*Description* No archaeological features or finds were observed during the excavation of the groundworks. Evidence for tree hollows was widespread, supporting anecdotal evidence (from the current occupiers of Dove House) that an orchard has recently been cleared in the area of proposed development.

All the foundations trenches for the proposed new building were observed (see Fig. 3).

## 6 CONFIDENCE RATING

6.1 It was not felt that any factors hindered the recognition of archaeological features or finds during this programme of monitoring.

## 7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Despite the potential for Saxon remains at this site, no archaeological features or finds were encountered. Natural deposits were revealed uniformly at a depth of 0.55 m below the existing ground surface. Within the foundation trenches the deposits were mechanically-excavated to a depth of 1.30m below existing ground level.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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