
**An archaeological watching brief at
the Old Castle Inn, Old Sarum,
near Salisbury, Wiltshire**

NGR: SU 14153260

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Report to Fine Line Design Associates on behalf of Bass Leisure Retail

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Summary statement

A Planning Application was submitted to Salisbury District Council for an extension to the Old Castle Inn, Old Castle Road, Old Sarum, near Salisbury, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 14153260). This was to build a cold store plus access on the side of the existing building. In view of the archaeological potential of the site the Wiltshire County Council Archaeology Service (Libraries and Heritage) advised that provision should be made for an archaeological watching brief. It is considered that the implementation of the specification issued by the County Archaeology Service would meet the concerns raised. The work was carried out by C K Currie for CKC Archaeology on 21st September 1999.

Excavations at the Old Castle Inn failed to recover any archaeological finds or features. Undisturbed chalk found immediately below the tarmac over most of the site suggested that any archaeology on the site was removed during leveling operations to make the Inn car park. Within the excavated trench itself a number of modern cuts were observed for the provision of services to the Inn as well as the cut for a set of steps leading into the present storage area.

An archaeological watching brief at the Old Castle Inn, Old Sarum, near Salisbury, Wiltshire

This report has been written based on the format suggested by the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (Birmingham, 1994). The ordering of information follows the guidelines given in this document, although alterations may have been made to fit in with the particular requirements of the work.

1.0 Introduction

A Planning Application was submitted to Salisbury District Council for an extension to the Old Castle Inn, Old Castle Road, Old Sarum, near Salisbury, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 14153260). This was to build a cold store plus access on the side of the existing building. In view of the archaeological potential of the site the Wiltshire County Council Archaeology Service (Libraries and Heritage) advised that provision should be made for an archaeological watching brief. It is considered that the implementation of the specification issued by the County Archaeology Service would meet the concerns raised. The work was carried out by C K Currie for CKC Archaeology on 21st September 1999.

2.0 Historical background

The Old Castle Inn lies about 100m SE of the main entrance to the earthworks of Old Sarum. This extensive site was originally an Iron Age hillfort, with ramparts enclosing 29.5 acres. It was thought to be the Roman town of *Sorviodunum*, and was later reused as an Anglo-Saxon burh. After the Norman Conquest it became the seat of the bishops of Salisbury. The Norman kings built a castle within a central ringwork. The cathedral and bishop's palace was built in the NW corner of the outer defensive ring, and a medieval town grew up within the original ramparts. The exposed site caused the clergy and townspeople a number of problems, and by 1220 the present town of Salisbury had come into being, with a new cathedral traditionally being started there in this year.

The old town at Old Sarum gradually became abandoned, although it continued to be inhabited after the departure of the cathedral clergy in 1220. It is generally thought that there were a number of suburbs outside the original Iron Age ramparts. However, by the 15th century the castle was largely ruinous, and Leland, writing in 1540, described the town as completely deserted. Nevertheless, the 'town' continued to be represented in Parliament as a 'rotten borough' until the Reform Act of 1832 (Shortt 1965, *passim*).

Medieval settlement has been identified to the east of the eastern entrance to the ramparts, a short distance to the north of the Old Castle Inn. This has included the remains of building, pits and a cemetery. The Inn itself is thought to be of 16th-century date.

3.0 Strategy

The extension works required the tarmac of the existing car park to be removed over an L-shaped area with maximum dimensions of 5m by 3.4m. It was proposed to build the new

cold room on a concrete base. To facilitate this, the soil needed to be removed within the excavated area to a depth of 175mm (six inches). The removal of tarmac and underlying soil was removed, and the underlying ground cleaned up and recorded.

4.0 Results

No archaeological features pre-dating the modern era were discovered. Once the tarmac (context 01) was removed, there remained only a very thin layer of clay (context 02; often less than 20mm deep) overlying undisturbed chalk. In places this intervening clay had been removed altogether. Four features were observed cut into this chalk (context 03). Three of these were linear features (contexts 04, 06 and 10), with the third being an irregular pit full of flint immediately adjoining a flight of steps leading down into the present store rooms of the Inn (context 08). Cut 04 was an extremely shallow gully, less than 5cms deep and about 0.2m wide. It was filled by brown clay (Munsell Colour 10YR 5/3), of the same type as context 02. Cut 06 was a modern service pipe containing a water pipe that ran alongside the outer wall of the Inn. Cut 10 was a gas service pipe trench that took a right-angled turn to enter the present gas junction box on the side of the Inn. Feature 08 was thought to be the cut made for the steps leading into the building. The original cut is thought to have been backfilled once the steps had been made. No finds, other than 19th-century or later ceramics were found during these works. These were not retained, but discarded on site.

5.0 Discussion

It would appear that the land containing the Inn was cut into an existing hillside. This policy was probably repeated in the making of the existing car park. The appearance of undisturbed chalk bedrock immediately beneath the tarmac over most of the excavated area suggests that any archaeology here had been removed during the making of the car park. The only feature that may have been ancient was the shallow gully (context 04). However, this led straight at the gas junction box, and may have been the remnant bottom of an old gas main trench that was diverted during the making of the car park. Alternatively, it may have been a wheel track made during the car park works. No finds were made to suggest it was anything other than modern.

6.0 Conclusions

Excavations at the Old Castle Inn failed to recover any archaeological finds or features. Undisturbed chalk found immediately below the tarmac over most of the site suggested that any archaeology on the site was removed during leveling operations to make the Inn car park. Within the excavated trench itself a number of modern cuts were observed for the provision of services to the Inn as well as the cut for a set of steps leading into the present storage area.

7.0 Archive

The archive for this work will be deposited with the Salisbury Museum Services. Copies of the report were lodged with the client, the Wiltshire County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), and the National Monuments Record in Swindon, Wiltshire.

8.0 Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are given to all those involved with this project. In particular, the groundworkers from ACG Ltd of Southampton involved in excavating the trench, Mr C A Jones of Fine Line Design Associates for liaison between the various parties involved, and Roy Canham and Helena Cave-Penney of the Archaeological Section of Wiltshire County Council for advice and monitoring the project.

9.0 References

Institute of Field Archaeologists, *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*, Birmingham, 1994

H de S Shortt, *Old Sarum. Illustrated Guide*, HMSO, London, 1965

Appendix 1: description of contexts excavated

- 01 Tarmac surface
 - 02 Clay soil (Munsell Colour 10YR 5/3)
 - 03 Chalk bedrock (Munsell Colour 10YR 7/2)
 - 04 Cut, shallow gully
 - 05 Clay fill of 04 (Munsell Colour 10YR 5/3)
 - 06 Cut, modern service trench (water)
 - 07 Clay fill of 07 (Munsell Colour 10YR 5/3)
 - 08 Irregular cut
 - 09 Loamy clay fill of cut 08 (Munsell Colour 10YR 5/2)
 - 10 Cut, modern service trench (gas)
 - 11 Clay fill of cut 10 (Munsell Colour 10YR 5/3)
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Appendix 2: glossary of archaeological terms

Archaeology: the study of man's past by means of the material relics he has left behind him. By material relics, this means both materials buried within the soil (artefacts and remains of structures), and those surviving above the surface such as buildings, structures (e.g. stone circles) and earthworks (e.g. hillforts, old field boundaries etc.). Even the study of old tree or shrub alignments, where they have been artificially planted in the past, can give vital information on past activity.

Artefacts: any object made by man that finds itself discarded (usually as a broken object) or lost in the soil. The most common finds are usually pottery sherds, or waste flint flakes from prehistoric stone tool making. Metal finds are generally rare except in specialist areas such as the site of an old forge. The absence of finds from the activity of metal detectorists is not usually given much credibility by professional archaeologists as a means of defining if archaeology is present

Baulk: an area of unexcavated soil on an archaeological site. It usually refers to the sides of the archaeological trench.

Context: a number given to a unit of archaeological recording. This can include a layer, a cut, a fill of a cut, a surface or a structure.

Cut: usually used to mean an excavation made in the past. The 'hole' or cut existed in time as a void, before later being backfilled with soil. Archaeologists give a context number to the empty hole, as well as the backfilled feature (called the 'fill').

Earthwork: bank of earth, hollow, or other earthen feature created by human activity.

Munsell colour: an objective method of defining soil colour using a specially designed colour chart for soils. The reading defines hue (an objective description of colour; eg YR means yellow-red), value (darkness or lightness of the colour) and chroma (the greyness or purity of the colour). For example 10YR 3/2 is a dark grey-brown.

Natural [layer]: in archaeological reports, this is a layer that has been formed by natural process, usually underlying man-made disturbance.

Period: time periods within British chronology are usually defined as Prehistoric (comprising the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age), Roman, Saxon, Medieval and Post-medieval. Although exact definitions are often challenged, the general date ranges are as given below.

Prehistoric c. 100,000 BC - AD 43. This is usually defined as the time before man began making written records of his activities.

Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age 100,000 - 8300 BC

Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age 8300 - 4000 BC

Neolithic or New Stone Age 4000 - 2500 BC

Bronze Age 2500 - 700 BC

Iron Age 700 BC - AD 43

Roman AD 43-410

Saxon AD 410-1066

Medieval AD 1066-1540

Post-medieval AD 1540-present

Pottery sherds: small pieces of broken baked clay vessels that find their way into ancient soils. These can be common in all periods from the Neolithic onwards. They often find their way into the soil by being dumped on the settlement rubbish tip, when broken, and subsequently taken out and scattered in fields with farmyard manure.

Project Design: a written statement on the project's objectives, methods, timetable and resources set out in sufficient detail to be quantifiable, implemented and monitored.

Settlement: usually defined as a site where human habitation in the form of permanent or temporary buildings or shelters in wood, stone, brick or any other building material has existed in the past.

Site: usually defined as an area where human activity has taken place in the past. It does not require the remains of buildings to be present. A scatter of prehistoric flint-working debris can be defined as a 'site', with or without evidence for permanent or temporary habitation.

Stratigraphy: sequence of man-made soils overlying undisturbed soils; the lowest layers generally represent the oldest periods of man's past, with successive layers reaching forwards to the present. It is within these soils that archaeological information is obtained.

Worked flint or stone: usually taken to mean pieces of chipped stone or flint used to make prehistoric stone tools. A worked flint can comprise the tools themselves (arrowheads, blades etc.), or the waste material produced in their making (often called flint flakes, cores etc.).

Appendix 3: Wiltshire County Council Specification

Wiltshire County Council

Libraries & Heritage

Bythesea Road

TROWBRIDGE

Wiltshire BA14 8BS

Watching Brief

Site:	The Old Castle Inn, Old Castle Road, Salisbury
Proposal:	External extension for cold room
Area:	New Room is 3000mm by 2400mm
Land use:	Tarmac surface
Geology/Topography:	Upper Chalk

Archaeological background:

The Old Castle Inn lies within the eastern suburbs of the medieval settlement of Old Sarum. The medieval settlement has been identified by numerous pits, a number of buildings and a cemetery. The Inn itself is probably of late 16th century date (RCHM 1980) and lies immediately south of the major medieval finds.

Methodology:

A professional archaeological contractor will:

- a. Maintain a presence during all groundworks on the site.
- b. Investigate and record all archaeological features and deposits revealed during excavations and groundworks.
- c. Produce and publish a full analysis and report on all works carried out on the site. Two copies of the report should be submitted to the County Archaeology Service.

In addition:

- d. The County archaeology service should be given a minimum of one working week's notice of the commencement of work.
- e. Provision should also be made to allow extra time for the archaeological contractor to examine any complex/important deposits revealed as a result of the construction works.
- f. The County Archaeology Service should be allowed access to the site to monitor the works.

2nd August 1999

Archive list for Old Castle Harvester, Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire

The archive contains:

1. Context sheets, numbers 01-09
2. Photographic recording sheets, total 1
3. Drawing record sheets, total 1
4. One pack of Black/White photographs with negatives.
5. One plastic sleeves containing colour slide film.
6. Original permatrace drawings, total 1 sheet.
7. Report with illustrations, and project brief as appendix, 13 sheets.
8. Correspondence and miscellaneous papers concerning site, total 2sheets A4 letter, plus one large drawing (No. 34.01).