



Wilton Autos,
West Street
Wilton
Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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West Street
Wilton
Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Report 60516.03

April 2008

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Cover: Working photograph of the Site
Figure 1: Location plan showing watching brief area and post-medieval features

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Summary

In February 2008 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Archstone Lifestyle Homes to undertake an archaeological watching brief, prior to a soak away emplacement, on land at Wilton Autos, West Street, Wilton, Wiltshire (hereafter the Site). The area inspected was located within the c. 0.2 ha development site and was centred on National Grid Reference 409420 131370.

The Site showed a stratigraphy, typical in this area of Wilton, consisting of demolition rubble overlying made ground to a depth of approximately 2.00m. The underlying natural geology (flood plain gravels) was encountered at this depth.

The features revealed comprised substantial refuse pits of late post-medieval date. The finds recovered included pieces of modern ceramic building material (CBM) and slate roof tile of modern derivation. Therefore, the artefacts were visually inspected but not retained. No archaeological features or deposits predating the late post-medieval period were revealed during the course of the watching brief.

The watching brief was carried out on the 19th and 20th February 2008.

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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Archstone Lifestyle Homes who commissioned the project. The assistance and co-operation of Mick Parrett and Ivan Dicks of Archstone Lifestyle Homes is gratefully acknowledged.

Rebecca Fitzpatrick carried out the fieldwork. Linda Coleman prepared the illustrations. Rebecca Fitzpatrick compiled this report and Caroline Budd managed the project on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.

Wilton Autos, Wilton Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Archstone Lifestyle Homes (hereafter 'the Client') to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundwork for a soakaway on the land at Wilton Autos, West Street, Wilton, Wiltshire (NGR) 409420 131370 (hereafter 'the Site') (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The Wiltshire County Council Assistant Archaeologist, Helena Cave-Penny, requested an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during the groundworks for the soak away. The proposed fieldwork methodology was submitted to and approved by the Client and Helena Cave-Penny prior to the commencement of works (WA, 2008).

1.1.3 The fieldwork was carried out on the 19th and 20th of February 2008.

1.2 Site location, description, topography and geology

1.2.1 The Site is rectangular in shape and occupies an area of c.0.2ha located to the south of Netherwells Lane. (**Figure 1**). The Site is bounded to the north and west by residential houses and associated gardens, to the east by West Street, and to the south by Salisbury Demolition. The Site's centre is located at National Grid Reference (NGR) 409420 131370.

1.2.2 The Site is generally flat, lying at c.55m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

1.2.3 The underlying geology of the Site comprises a spur of Valley Gravel overlying solid geology consisting of Cretaceous Upper Chalk (Ordnance Survey 1976).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The archaeological evidence from Wilton has recently been collated and synthesised as part of the extensive survey of Wiltshire's towns (Wiltshire County Council 2002) and will not be repeated here. The existence of activity on the gravel island which Wilton occupies dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods has been postulated (Andrews et al. 2000, 200). Haslam (1976) suggests that there may have been an early river crossing utilising the gravel island, but implies that a significant Romano-British settlement or presence is unlikely as the main road between Dorchester and Old Sarum crosses the Nadder approximately two kilometres east of Wilton.
- 2.1.2 A recent evaluation undertaken, adjacent to the Site, at Salisbury Demolition by Wessex Archaeology in January 2006, indicated the presence of well-preserved medieval archaeological remains sealed beneath approximately 1m of post-medieval / modern deposits. No Late Saxon deposits or finds were identified, although the Site lies within the area enclosed by the burgh defences.
- 2.1.3 Following the evaluation, an excavation was undertaken in January 2007 by Wessex Archaeology on the Salisbury Demolition Site. The excavation proved the absence of archaeological features within this area. Its results suggest that the area formed part of an uninhabited flood plain until the canalisation of the former stream south-west of the Site. The excavation area had also been subject to limited 19th century disturbance.
- 2.1.4 A watching brief at 35 West Street, carried out by Wessex Archaeology in May 2007, revealed human remains on the Site. The bones were derived from a lime-filled pit in the part of the site adjacent to St John's hospital/priory (of medieval origin). This, along with severe pathologies on the bones, suggested that they were of a medieval date (B.Buss *pers comm.*).
- 2.1.5 A further evaluation carried out on the site of the former Wilton Autos, by Wessex Archaeology during October 2007, revealed further evidence of Saxon and medieval features including ditches and post pits in conjunction with tentatively dated prehistoric features.
- 2.1.6 Following the evaluation an excavation was recently carried out by Wessex Archaeology during October, November and December 2007 which uncovered extensive archaeological remains on the Site dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval period (WA in progress).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The objective of the watching brief was to establish the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character and condition of any surviving remains during the groundworks of the soakaway and to investigate and record these within the new development.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1.1 The watching brief methodology, as well as the proposed finds and environmental sampling strategy, were set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2008) in agreement with the Client and Helena Cave-Penny, Wiltshire Council Council's Assistant Archaeologist, prior to the commencement of works and are not reiterated in full here.

- 4.1.2 The area of penetrative groundworks for the soakaway was located between previous excavation areas 1 and 2 (**Figure 1**). The ground in this zone was known to be very disturbed and unstable to at least a depth of 2.00m.

- 4.1.3 The watching brief area was approximately 6m by 6.5m and 2.10m in depth.

- 4.1.4 The area of soakaway watching brief was mechanically stripped of modern overburden to the underlying natural geology using a wheeled 360° excavator equipped with a 1.80m wide toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

- 4.1.5 The exposed base and sections of the watching brief area were examined for archaeological features and finds in conjunction with evidence of modern truncation.

- 4.1.6 All features encountered were surveyed using a Global Positioning System (1200), to an accuracy of ±100mm and tied into Ordnance Survey.

- 4.1.7 A full photographic record of the works was taken using a digital camera.

4.2 Health and Safety

- 4.2.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety regulations 1992 and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation and regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.

- 4.2.2 Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork a Risk Assessment was produced. All site staff involved in the works signed and complied with this document.

- 4.2.3 Due to the depth of the soakaway exceeding 1.2m the programme of work was observed from the present ground surface and no hand excavation was carried out within the base of the excavated area.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1.1 The absence of topsoil on the Site suggested that much of the area had been truncated. This was probably due to levelling the area prior to the construction of the former garage and associated development. Further truncation of the ground surface is likely to have occurred during demolition of the garage building.
- 5.1.2 The stratigraphic sequence observed revealed modern made ground overlying deposits of dark red brown silty clay with gravels located directly above the natural geology (**Appendix 1**).
- 5.1.3 A total of 7 substantial late post medieval refuse pits were identified during the watching brief within the footprint of the soakaway. The pits were sealed by the upper demolition / made ground deposit and were observed to cut through the underlying dark red brown silty clay with gravels.

6 FINDS

- 6.1.1 Fragments of modern CBM, slate roof tile etc were retrieved from the refuse pits and were recorded though not retained.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL

- 7.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present during the watching brief.

8 CONCLUSIONS

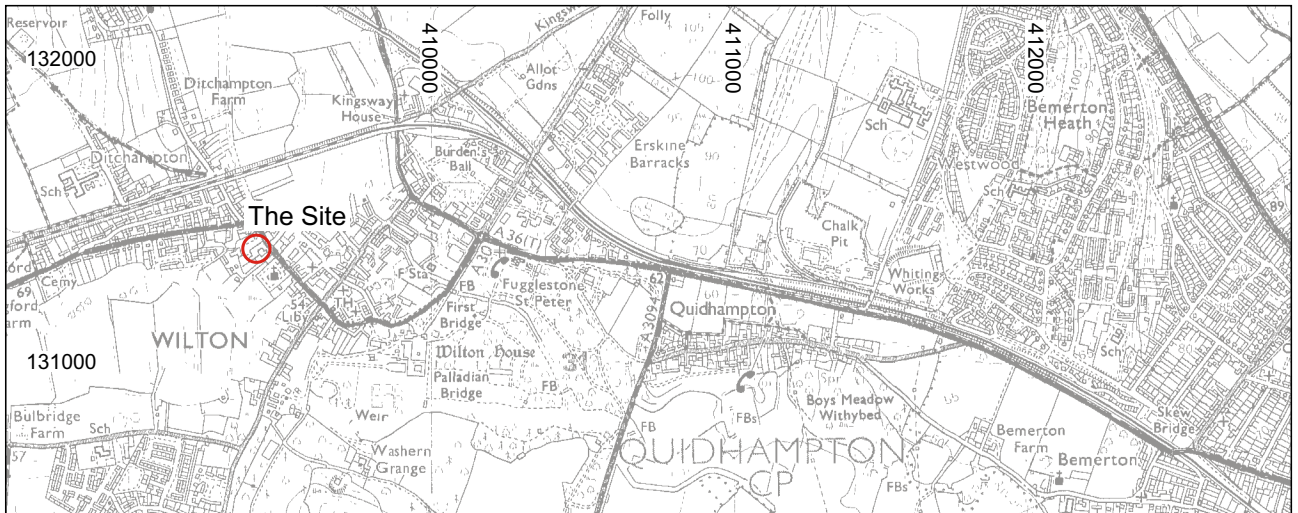
- 8.1.1 The archaeological watching brief investigation carried out on the soakaway area at Wilton Autos, West Street, Wilton uncovered evidence of late post-medieval residential activity, comprising domestic refuse pits. No features predating the late post-medieval period were identified and no artefactual or environmental evidence was collected from the Site.

9 ARCHIVE

- 9.1.1 The project archive, consisting of an A4 ringbinder and a collection of digital photographs is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire under the project code **60516**. It is anticipated that the archive will be deposited with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

10 APPENDIX 1: WATCHING BRIEF DEPOSIT SUMMARY

Depth Below Ground Level (BGL)	Description	Interpretation	M a OD
0-0-1.10m	Very disturbed and mixed material of dark grey brown silty clay with modern rubble, tarmac and chalk inclusions.	Modern overburden from Wilton Autos development and subsequent demolition.	54.465
1.10-1.80m	Dark red brown silty clay with abundant gravel inclusions.	Possible subsoil	53.365
1.80-2.00+m	Mid yellow brown silty clay with gravels.	Natural geology. Flood plain gravels.	52.554



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Date:	13/03/08	Revision Number:	0
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Location Plan showing Watching Brief area and post-medieval features

Figure 1