

1 SUMMARY

In December 2004, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group at the White Hart Public House in Welwyn, Hertfordshire. The watching brief involved monitoring the machine excavation of the foundation trench for a kitchen extension with hand excavation and recording of any archaeological features. Part of a 19th century culvert was recorded. No other features were identified in the trench.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 SITE LOCATION (Figure 1)

The White Hart Public House is situated in the southwest of Welwyn, Hertfordshire (TL 227 158). The site is on the west side of the White Hart Public House, set back from the High Street.

2.2 PLANNING BACKGROUND

2.2.1 The proposed scheme involves a kitchen/toilet extension, internal alterations to the public house, the conversion and alteration of the old court house and the conversion of the stable block to provide additional letting rooms.

2.2.2 Due to the archaeological potential for the site, the following condition was attached to the planning permission by the Welwyn Hatfield Council:

Condition: Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, an archaeological survey and methodology for an investigation of the presence of archaeological remains shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the County Archaeologist. The development shall then proceed in strict accordance with the methodology so agreed.

Reason: In order to establish whether there are any significant archaeological remains on site, to record their presence as appropriate and in order to comply with the requirements of Policy Bev 18, and Policy R27 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Review Revised Deposit Version June 2002.

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.3.1 The Area of Archaeological Significance No.7, as designated by the Local Plan, notes that there is evidence of a substantial Roman and medieval settlement.

2.3.2 A desk-based assessment produced by AOC Archaeology (August 2002) for the

Bessemer Road development, Welwyn Garden City (approximately 4km to the south east) shows that there are numerous entries within the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record (GLSMR) covering artefacts ranging from the Iron Age through to the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods.

3 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 To establish and record the presence/absence of any archaeological remains within the development site.
- 3.2 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features and to establish the depositional sequence. Any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site would be analysed, conserved and stored.
- 3.3 To place the site within a local, regional and national context.
- 3.4 The final aim will be to make public the results of the archaeological work.

4 WATCHING BRIEF STRATEGY

- 4.1 Prior to commencing works on site, a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by AOC Archaeology (AOC 2004) and a site code was assigned (WHP 04). Hertfordshire County Council was notified before the watching brief started. If significant archaeological remains were identified a revised scheme would be devised in consultation with Hertfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist, Mr J. Smith and the developer, Bayley Design Associates.
- 4.2 All machine stripping was carried out with a 360° excavator using a toothless bucket under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.
- 4.3 The investigation of any archaeological features revealed during the works would include recording their nature, location, extent, date, significance and quality.
- 4.4 During the watching brief regular examinations of the spoil heaps were made for any archaeological material.
- 4.5 All work was carried out in accordance with the site procedures specified in the WSI (AOC 2004), the standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the standards specified in 'Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork in the East of England (*East Anglian Archaeology, occasional paper 14, 2003*).

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The watching brief was undertaken over two days by Andy Leonard, Project Supervisor. The works comprised the excavation of a foundation trench along the outline of the proposed kitchen extension (Figure 2). The initial, east-west, part of the trench (recorded as Trench 1) was excavated on the first day; Trench 2 (aligned north-south) on the second.
- 5.2 The general stratigraphy on site comprised a thin layer (no more than 0.20m) of modern made ground (1001 and 2001) above a thick deposit of post-medieval made ground or backfill (0.60 - 0.90m) comprising sandy silty gravels, probably redeposited natural glacial gravels. This layer (1002 and 2002) contained occasional post-medieval pot sherds and lumps of red brick. Machining ceased before any natural deposits were encountered.
- 5.3 The only archaeological deposit uncovered was a 19th century brick culvert (2004) in the eastern, north-south part of the trench. This was 0.70m below ground level (65.85mOD), aligned northeast – southwest. (2004) comprised a shallow, arched brick structure bonded with yellow mortar, partially overlain by a small deposit (2003) of damp silty chalky lime. (2004) was not fully exposed due to the narrow nature of the trench and the height of the water within (2004). It was at least 1.26m long by 0.46m wide by 0.25m.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Despite the potential for earlier archaeological evidence on the site at the White Hart Public House, Welwyn, only one post-medieval culvert (c. mid 19th Century) was identified. As the excavations did not go below the extent of the post-medieval made ground (1002 and 2002) it should be noted that earlier archaeological deposits could remain deeper in the stratigraphy.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hertfordshire County Council Archaeology Office (2004). *Design Brief for Archaeological monitoring and recording.*

AOC Archaeology (2004). *A Written Scheme of Investigation for a Watching Brief at The White Hart Public House, Welwyn.*

East Anglian Archaeology, occasional paper 14, (2003). *Standards for Archaeological fieldwork in the East of England.*

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

APPENDIX A CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth
1001	Loose mid – light brown clayey silt. Frequent gravel and stone inclusions.	Trench	Trench	0.20m
1002	Loose light brown clayey silt. Frequent gravel and stone inclusions. Moderate chalk flecks. Occasional pieces of plastic and post-med. Pot.	Trench	Trench	0.90m
2001	Loose dark brown sandy gravel. Occasional lumps of tarmac.	Trench	Trench	0.20m
2002	Mid – dark brown sandy gravel. Occasional post-med. Pot and building material.	Trench	Trench	0.60m
2003	Loose, damp, white chalk/lime.	0.75m	0.18m	0.05m
2004	Brick culvert. C. 19 th century.	1.26m	0.46m	0.25m