



Vale Cottage  
Steeple Langford, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**VALE COTTAGE,  
STEEPLE LANGFORD, WILTSHIRE**

**Results of Archaeological Watching Brief**

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### QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE	<b>73470</b>	ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	<b>S/2009/1156/FUL</b>	NGR	<b>403700 137340</b>		

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**\* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL**

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### **Results of Archaeological Watching Brief**

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**Figure 1** Site location and watching brief area

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### **Results of Archaeological Watching Brief**

#### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Star Services to provide an archaeological watching brief during groundwork's located on land immediately adjacent to Vale Cottage, Duck Street, Steeple Langford, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 403700 137340.

The works were carried out from January to the end of late February 2010 and consisted of attendance during the initial topsoil strip and during the excavation of a number of foundation trenches and soak-aways.

The watching brief did not identify any archaeological features, deposits or finds. Two natural tree throws were noted as intersected by the foundation trenches, although these features were not associated with any pre-modern finds. The absence of any archaeological features or finds, together with the evidence for a high water table, strongly suggests that the Site lies outside the occupied area within the historic core of the village.

## **VALE COTTAGE, STEEPLE LANGFORD, WILTSHIRE**

### **Results of Archaeological Watching Brief**

#### **Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by Star Services and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Nick Yeomans in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger of Wiltshire Council who monitored the work on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

The fieldwork and reporting was undertaken by Catrin Matthews and Steve Thompson with illustrations by Linda Coleman and Kenneth Lymer. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Manning.

## **VALE COTTAGE, STEEPLE LANGFORD, WILTSHIRE**

### **Results of Archaeological Watching Brief**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

##### **1.1 Project Background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by Star Services to carry out an Archaeological Watching Brief during groundwork's on land immediately adjacent to Vale Cottage, Duck Street, Steeple Langford, Wiltshire, hereafter referred to as 'the Site', centred on National Grid Reference NGR 403700 137340 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The planning application for the proposed development (Planning application S/2009/1156/FUL) had been approved, subject to an archaeological condition (Number 7) requiring 'the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation in relation to an archaeological watching brief to take place during the initial stages of the construction'.
- 1.1.3 Prior to the commencement of works a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (2010) and agreed, in advance of any works, by Wiltshire Council. This document detailed how Wessex Archaeology would undertake the programme of archaeological work and was prepared in accordance with the Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (IfA 2008).
- 1.1.4 The watching brief comprised an archaeological attendance during soil and overburden stripping over an area of approximately 0.2 ha during the construction of a new dwelling, garage and access and during excavation of foundation and soak-aways. The archaeological watching brief was carried out between the 28<sup>th</sup> of January and the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2010.

##### **1.2 The Site, location and geology**

- 1.2.1 The Site is located on land immediately adjacent to Vale Cottage, Duck Street, Steeple Langford, Wiltshire and centred on 403690 137349. The underlying geology consists of alluvium (loam and marl) associated with the River Wylye over middle and upper chalk (upper Cretaceous) (BGS 2006)

#### **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1.1 The Wiltshire Site and Monuments Record lists widespread archaeological evidence for long term activity within the area around the village of Steeple Langford, which lies on the north bank of the River Wylye (Salisbury District Council 2008).

- 2.1.2 Prehistoric activity is demonstrated by numerous prehistoric findspots, together with Bronze Age barrows, field systems and the Iron Age site at Yarnbury Castle, which lies approximately 3km to the north of the village.
- 2.1.3 The earliest documentary reference to the present village of Steeple Langford dates to the early 10<sup>th</sup> century and the village appears to have been continually occupied to the present.
- 2.1.4 Although little modern archaeological work has been undertaken within Steeple Langford, the Site lies within the likely historic core of the village which has been designated by Wiltshire Council as an Area of Archaeological Potential. Thus there was deemed to be potential for the survival of archaeological remains within the Site, which would be of significance in the understanding of the development of the modern settlement.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Archaeological Watching Brief**

- 3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were:
- to locate, identify, investigate and record the presence/absence of archaeological features or deposits within the area affected by the groundworks, and
  - If significant archaeological features or deposits were located, then the watching brief would establish the initial extent, date, character, relationship, condition and significance of archaeological features, artefacts and deposits within the area impacted and inform the scope and nature of any potential future mitigation.

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

- 4.1.1 The WSI outlined the methodology proposed in order to meet the aims of the watching brief and all works were undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Client and Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service. All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the guidance and standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching brief (as amended 2008).

### **5 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS**

- 5.1.1 The removal of topsoil was undertaken by a 360° mechanical excavator with a 1m toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision within the limits of the footprint of the new garage, dwelling and access road.
- 5.1.2 The depth of the overall topsoil was generally 0.50m across the Site and consisted of a dark grey brown silty clay loam, with a moderate frequency of fairly well sorted flint inclusions. Tree roots were also abundant throughout the topsoil.
- 5.1.3 The removal of topsoil did not expose the natural geology, except to the north of the Site where the chalk appeared heavily weathered and disturbed



by roots. The maximum depth of the topsoil to the north was approximately 0.50m. The top of the natural geology was revealed at a height of 67.80m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at its highest point in the north east corner.

- 5.1.4 Following the partial removal of topsoil the excavation of the footings for the proposed development were monitored and this revealed that the topsoil became deeper (0.60m) towards the western limit of the Site where it overlay a subsoil layer 0.40m thick before the natural geology was revealed.
- 5.1.5 The natural geology was observed as very weathered chalk, the result of water action and a probable very high water table associated with the River Wylye.
- 5.1.6 Two tree throws were observed, containing modern finds of glass and brick and tile (not retained). The loose nature of the fills implied that the trees had been uprooted recently. Two soak-away trenches were excavated directly through the topsoil and revealed an identical sequence of topsoil overlying subsoil and ultimately weathered upper chalk (**Figure 1**).
- 5.1.7 No archaeological features or finds were observed in the excavated footings or soak-aways.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1.1 The watching brief undertaken during the initial stripping of the Site or during the excavation of foundation trenches or soakaways did not identify any archaeological features, deposits or finds. Two natural tree throws were noted as intersected by the foundation trenches, although these features were not associated with any pre-modern finds.
- 6.1.2 The initial Site stripping was relatively shallow and did not significantly expose large areas of the top of the natural chalk. However, the subsequent excavated footings covered a large proportion of the development area and the absence of any archaeological features or finds, together with the evidence for a high water table, does strongly suggest that the Site lies outside the occupied area within the historic core of the village.

## **7 ARCHIVE**

### **7.1 Preparation and Deposition**

- 7.1.1 The complete project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990)*.
- 7.1.2 The project archive, consists of:
- One A4 file containing the paper records and drawings
  - Digital data (site photographs, survey data, word and pdf files)
- 7.1.3 The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury under the site code **73470**. On completion of the project, the archive will be deposited, in due course, with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

## **8 COPYRIGHT**

- 8.1.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

## **9 REFERENCES**

- Geological Survey of Great Britain (England & Wales), 2006, *Salisbury*, 1:50,000, Sheet **298**, Solid and Drift
- Institute for Archaeologists, 2008, Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief.
- Salisbury District Council, 2008, Steeple Langford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, consultation draft, September 2008.
- Wessex Archaeology, 2010, Vale Cottage, Steeple Langford, Wiltshire, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief. Report Ref. 73470.01



Site location and watching brief area

Figure 1



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