

**CHURCH FARM,
ASHTON KEYNES**

NGR: SU 0420 9424

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
CF97**

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December 1997
Report No. FOUND29



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Church Farm Barns, Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire: Archaeological Watching Brief

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out details of a watching brief undertaken at Church Farm Barns, Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire (NGR: SU0420 9424). The project was commissioned by Ranstead Limited on behalf of the owner of Church Farm. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994), and Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: *Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines)* issued by English Heritage (London Region); and the Project Design by Foundations Archaeology.

1.2 The watching brief was undertaken by Miss J. M. Williams BSc, under the direction of Mr. R. King BA, MIFA who has wide experience of performing, monitoring and managing field work projects of different periods throughout Britain, and is a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (AoC Excavation).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 An application was made for the excavation of service trenches. The site lies within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (County Monument No: 12065, a large rectangular moated site surrounding farm buildings. Consent (HSD9/2/3223 Pt 1) was granted for the works to go ahead subject to the archaeological observation of all groundwork's.

2.2 The archaeological condition was imposed as the groundwork's may have had an adverse impact on medieval settlement features relating to the moated site. Numerous finds of medieval ceramics have been made in the vicinity by the farmer (pers com).

3 AIMS

3.1 The aims of the watching brief were to gather high quality data from direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains.

3.2 These aims will be achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;

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ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;

iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Groundwork's were observed and appropriate levels of recording undertaken.

4.2 Trenches for the new services were thereafter excavated and these were monitored and recorded in order to attempt to identify archaeological deposits.

4.3 All artefactual and ecofactual remains, whether stratified or not (including material from spoil tips), were to be collected and subjected to preliminary study on site. Finds of early modern date were not subsequently retained.

5 RECORDING

5.1 All site recording was undertaken in accordance with Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3 (Excavation Manual). A full written, drawn and photographic record of the watching brief was compiled.

6 POST EXCAVATION

6.1 Arrangements have been made for the deposition of the site archive with the relevant museum.

6.2 A copy of this report has been forwarded to the County Archaeological Service.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

7.1 The topsoil (101) comprised of mid to dark brown sandy silty clay loam of a loose consistency and had a depth of 0.26m. It contained occasional small fragments of limestone.

7.2 The subsoil (102) was composed of mid orangy brown silty clay with a compact consistency

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7.3 A robbed wall cut [114]; 0.98m in width with a depth of 0.79m. The cut has sloping sides and a flat base. The fill (115) contained a frequent amount of flat angular limestone with the approximate dimensions of 0.25m by 0.15m, and occasional charcoal flecks. The find which was a fragment of tile was dated between the 13th and 14th century.

7.4 An east-west aligned wall cut [122] was identified with a width of 1.90m (including the rubble spread) and a height of 0.79m, with vertical sides and a flat base. The fill (123) consisted of mid brown compact silty clay and a frequent amount of flat angular limestone, which would have been part of the fabric of the structure. A sherd of pottery has dated the feature between the 16th to 17th century. [122] cuts a pit [124] 1.0m length, 1.40m diameter and a depth of 0.51m. Sub circular in plan with steep sides down to a rounded base. The fill (125) was mid brown soft silty clay containing occasional large angular limestone and cattle bone.

7.5 A pit [116] with a length of 0.50m, diameter 2.40m and a depth of 0.34m with very sloping sides down to a rounded base. The fill (117) contained mid to dark brown loose silty clay and a frequent amount of bone also a roof tile dated between the 17th and 18th century.

7.6 Two features were cut into the natural and covered by subsoil. A pit [108] length 0.86m, diameter 0.50m and depth of 0.30m was cut into a natural hollow. It was sub circular in plan with sloping sides down to a rounded base. The fill (109) was compact mid brown silty clay containing cattle bone and fired clay. A north west-south east aligned ditch [106] was identified with a width of 0.74m and a depth of 0.23m. It had short sloping sides and a flat base. The fill (107) was compact mid brown silty clay containing occasional medium limestone and small gravel inclusions.

7.7 There were several post-Medieval features. A gully cut [110] running roughly north south had a width of 1.43m and a depth of 0.44m. It had a straight south edge sloping down to a flat base, the north edge had been disturbed. The fill (111) was compact mid brown silty clay with fine inclusions of gravel and a small sherd of post Medieval pottery. A cobbled surface [118] with a depth of 0.15m. The surface (119) was made up of small to medium angular cobbles to create a very hard, well-made surface.

7.8 Three features [104] [112] and [120] were also identified during the course of the Watching Brief but did not produce any dating material.

7.9 The natural (103) comprised of mid yellow orange gravel with a compact consistency.

7.10 The location of Church Farm Barns within a Scheduled Ancient Monument and several Medieval features being identified during the course of the Watching Brief,

suggests that the remaining area of undisturbed ground at Church Farm Barns will also be archaeologically significant.

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[104] A post hole feature, length 0.38m, diameter 0.21m and depth 0.05m was cut into the natural. It was sub oval in plan with sloping sides down to a rounded base.

(105) The fill of [104] was loose mid brown gravel.

[112] A north west-south east aligned ditch, with a width of 0.75m and a depth of 0.56m. It had steep sides and a rounded base.

(113) The fill of [112] contained a frequent amount of gravel.

[120] An east west aligned robbed wall cut, 1.20m width and 0.85 depth, with vertical sides and a flat base.

(121) The fill of [120] was mid to dark brown compact silty clay, containing a frequent amount of flat angular stones of all sizes.