

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
THE OLD RECTORY
AKELEY
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

NGR: SP 7066 3747

on behalf of Lord Calum Graham



Calli Rouse BA PIFA

May 2011

ASC: 1417/AOR/2



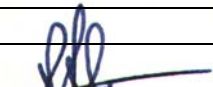
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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	AOR	<i>Project no:</i>	1417
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	Archaeol2-100900	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	TBC
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Akeley		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Akeley		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 7066 3747		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.2000sqm		
<i>Present use:</i>	Garage and gardens		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Extension to existing building		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	10/00458/APP		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	10/05/2011		
<i>Client:</i>	Lord Calum Graham The Old Rectory Buckingham Road Akeley MK18 5HJ		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Shannon Thewlis		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Calli Rouse	<i>Date:</i>	17/05/2011
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	17/05/11

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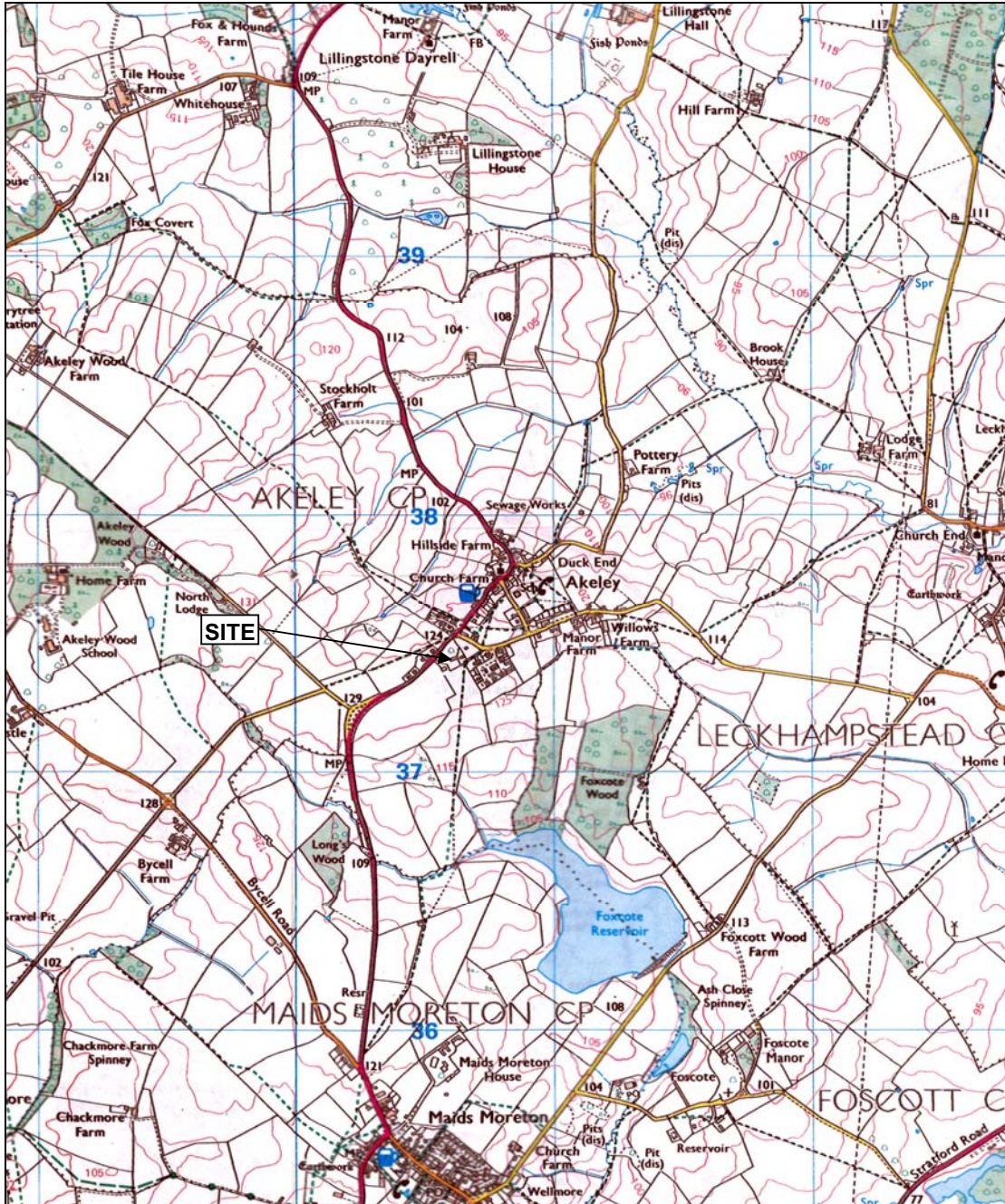


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During May 2011, Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Old Rectory, Akeley, Buckinghamshire, during groundworks for an extension to the east of the existing building. A limestone and brick footing for the south wall of a recently demolished outbuilding, which was contemporary with the Old Rectory. A cast iron drainage pipe was also observed during the watching brief. No further significant finds or features were observed during the watching brief.

1. Introduction

1.1 In May 2011 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at The Old Rectory, Buckingham Road, Akeley, Buckinghamshire. The project was commissioned by *Lord Calum Graham*, and was carried out according to a standard brief prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Aylesbury Vale District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service*, and a project design prepared by ASC. The relevant planning application reference is 10/00458/APP.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

ASC is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *The Site*

1.4.1 *Location & Description*

The development site is located within the administrative district of Aylesbury Vale, within the parish and village of Akeley, at NGR SP 7066 3747 (Fig. 1).

The site comprises a roughly square area of ground, located on the southern side of the Buckingham Road, from which the site is accessed. It is surrounded to the north and west by residential development, and to the east and south by woodland (Fig. 2).

1.4.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area belong to the Ashley Association, which are characterised as *fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging, associated with similar but wetter soils. Some calcareous and non-calcareous slowly permeable clayey soils* (Soil Survey 1983, 572q). The underlying geology comprises Quaternary till: stony clay, generally with flint and chalk pebbles (BGS, Sheet 219). The site lies at an elevation of *c.125mAOD*.

1.4.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the extension of the existing building, and the construction of a swimming pool (Fig. 3).

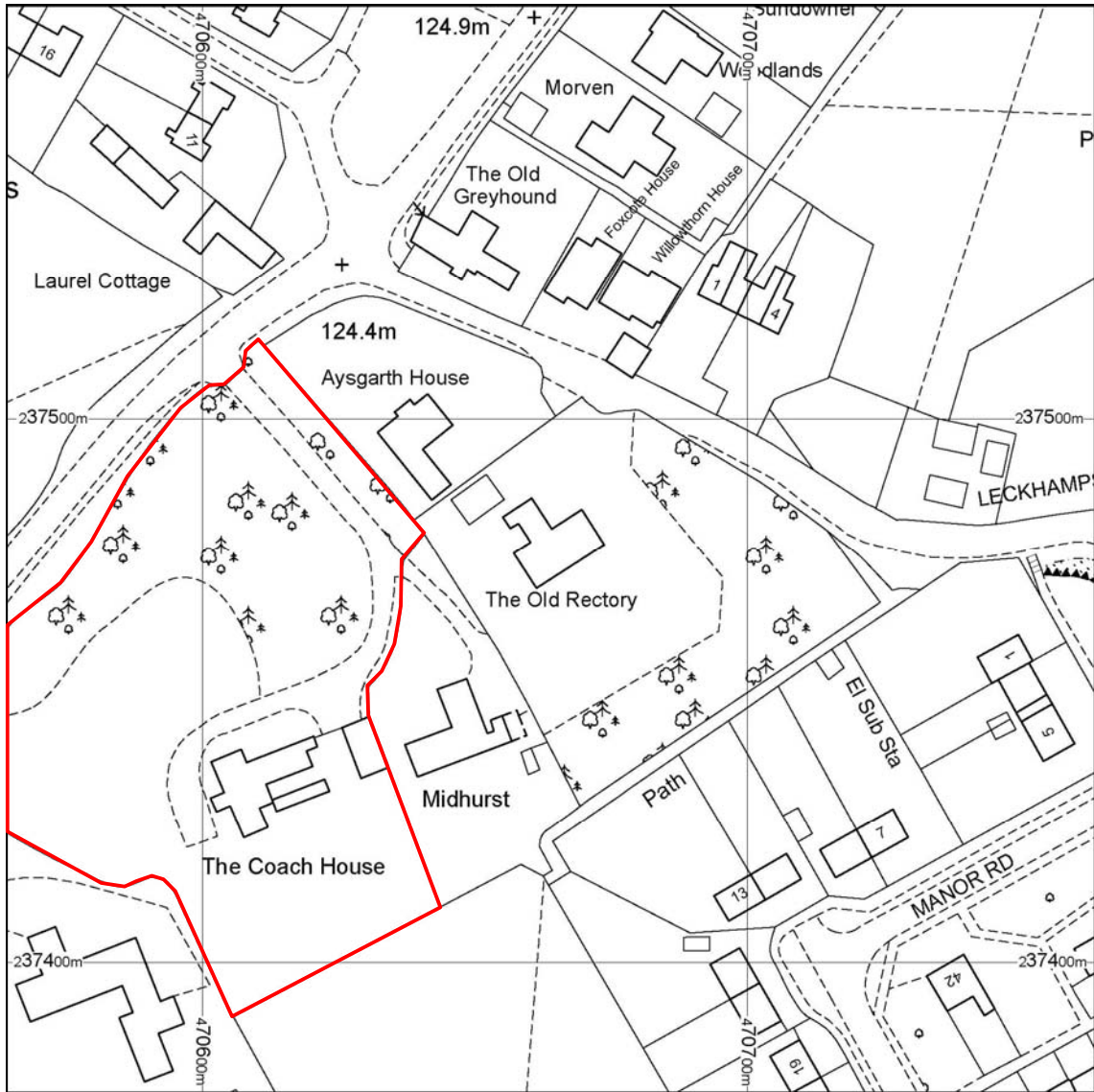


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the project design (Section 3.1), the aims of the watching brief were:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to have an impact upon archaeological deposits.
- To secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme.
- To secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.
- To provide an adequately detailed project report that will place the findings of the monitoring and recording of the development programme in their local and regional context, having made reference to the relevant regional research agendas, and through cartographic, documentary and other research.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the project design (Section 3.3), which required:

- Subject to site constraints, a continuous watching brief (*i.e.* archaeologist present during all works which may affect archaeological remains) will be undertaken during groundworks (footing and service trenches, reduction of levels, landscaping).

2.4 Constraints

No groundworks associated with the swimming pool were observed, as the swimming pool is not being constructed at this time.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods. It is located outside of the Akeley Conservation Area, but is located within one of three medieval settlement foci.

This section has been compiled with information from the Buckinghamshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) and other, readily available sources.

A series of test pits were excavated around the village of Akeley in 2001, to establish the development of the settlement. These test pits revealed evidence from a variety of periods, and are addressed in the relevant sections below.

- 3.2 **Prehistoric** (before 600BC – AD43)

The early development of Akeley and its surrounding area is not well understood. Two Bronze Age spearheads and a small socketed axe were found in unspecified locations in the 19th century (Ivens 2003).

Four test pits were excavated at Manor Farm, c.0.5km to the east of the development site. A single sherd of Iron Age pottery was recovered, which may suggest prehistoric activity in the area, on a very small scale (HER09712). A further single sherd was recovered from a test pit excavated at Duck End, c.0.45km to the north east of the Old rectory (HER09717). Late Iron Age metalwork has also been recovered during metal detecting in the area surrounding the village (HER31651, 31652).

- 3.4 **Roman** (AD43-c.450)

A test pit excavated at the foot of the churchyard bank, c.0.4km to the north of the Old Rectory, revealed evidence for a timber revetted stone bank, which delineated the extent of the churchyard. A post hole was discovered within the test pit, which was taken as evidence for the timber revetment. The bank has eroded, possibly due to the removal or collapse of the retaining timbers. Grogged pottery was found at the base of the posthole. The results of this test pit have been interpreted as suggesting a Roman or early medieval construction date for the bank, which outlined an oval enclosure with views to the west north and east, suggestive of a defensive location. The possibility has been raised that there may have been a pre-Christian site here, which was later Christianised by the establishment of a church within the boundaries of the enclosure, and that the early enclosure may act as the focus for the later village (HER09708).

Roman pottery was recovered from a test pit excavated at The Nursery, c.0.5km to the north east of the development site, which also contained almost no intrusive modern material, suggesting the deposit containing the pottery was *in situ* (HER09710).

3.5 **Saxon** (c.450-1066)

Test pits excavated at The Leys, c.0.2km to the east of the Old Rectory, revealed two sherds of Early-Middle Saxon handmade wares (AD400-800) (HER09715). Pre-Conquest material has been discovered from elsewhere in the village, at Hillberry and the school (see below), suggesting a very dispersed settlement pattern, now subsumed beneath the modern settlement.

3.6 **Medieval** (1066-1500)

There has been a settlement at Akeley since at least the time of the Domesday survey (1086), when it is recorded as being held by Robert from Walter Giffard. The settlement had land for up to 6 ploughs, and woodland for 800 pigs (HER08527).

Aerial photography has recorded earthworks that probably represent medieval house platforms within the fields surrounding the village of Akeley (HER02595, 02816).

A test pit excavated to the rear of The Roses, c.0.3km to the north east of the Old Rectory, revealed a large amount of medieval pottery, more than any other test pit excavated within the village. This suggested intensive occupation on or near the site during the middle ages (HER09711). An archaeological evaluation undertaken to the rear of The Roses in 2003 revealed a number of 11-12th century medieval features, including a north-south aligned boundary ditch that may have delimited village from fields. In addition features indicative of backyard activity within 13th -14th century tenement plots fronting Main Street were discovered (Ivens 2003). Further excavation carried out at the site by ASC in 2005 confirmed the presence of 11th century archaeological features noted in a prior evaluation (*ibid*). The discovery of two sherds of early/mid Saxon pottery extends the known spatial extent of activity of this date northwards from a single findspot c.2.5km to the south. Features verifying the presence of 13th – 14th century tenement plots fronting Main Street were not revealed (Hancock 2005, HER08042).

Further evaluation within Akeley has revealed traces of possible late 12th or 13th century settlement remains at Broadlands, c.0.4km to the north east of the development site, comprising a wall footing, an area of stone paving and a cobbled surface overlain by stone paving with three possible post-settings (HER08061).

A test pit excavated within the grounds of Akeley Primary School recovered a single sherd of early medieval pottery. This was interpreted as showing that the area may have been part of the Akeley field system (HER09698). A further test pit was excavated at The Leys, on the north side of Leckhampstead Road, c.0.1km to the east of the development site. Thirty four sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the test pit, indicating either occupation along the Leckhampstead Road, or proximity to occupation. Further work is recommended to establish which interpretation is correct (HER09700). Four further test pits were excavated at The Leys, each positioned further from the road. All four contained medieval pottery, but it is interesting to note that the quantity of pottery declined as the distance from the road increased (HER09701-09704).

A test pit excavated in the garden of Artwood, c.0.35km to the north east of the Old Rectory contained pottery suggestive of medieval ploughsoil (HER09705), while a test pit at Verandale, c.0.35km to the NNE of the development site revealed medieval pottery suggesting the test pit was in the proximity of occupation (HER09706).

A test pit located close to the church at Hillberry, c.0.4km to the north of the development site, was found to contain early medieval pottery. This may suggest activity in this area well before the Norman Conquest, but it is impossible to say how the material arrived in the area. However, the proximity of the test pit to the churchyard boundary may have some significance (HER09707).

HER09710 contained medieval pottery, as well as the Roman sherds mentioned above. The test pit was excavated at the bottom of a slight slope, which retained the remnants of ridge and furrow. It is thought that this test pit was located on the medieval headland. It has been suggested that the headland was here, and not on the road line because there was occupation along the Lillingstone Road when the field was established (Jones 2001).

Perhaps surprisingly, test pits excavated at Manor Farm, thought to be the site of the original Akeley manor house (see below) revealed only moderate levels of medieval pottery (28 sherds in total). This suggested that the test pits were located in an area away from the focus of occupation. The assemblage did not contain any types of pottery that suggested any particular importance or social elevation of the occupation in the area (HER09712). To the west of Manor Farm, c.0.2km to the east of the development site, five test pits excavated at The Leys revealed significant quantities of medieval material. Three of the test pits revealed evidence for short-lived occupation, spanning 100-150 years, along this part of the Leckhampstead Road (HER09714).

It is also interesting to note the absence of medieval pottery from a test pit excavated at Rose Cottage, Duck End, suggesting that this part of the village was outside of the medieval settlement (HER09717).

3.7 **Post-Medieval** (1500-1900)

Akeley parish church was built in the 17th century. It was entirely rebuilt in local stone in 1854, on the site of the previous church. It was restored in 1901, before becoming redundant and being demolished in the early 1980s. The surrounding churchyard is still in use as a burial ground (HER01243).

Manor Farmhouse is located c.0.4km to the east of the development site, and is a Grade II Listed Building, comprising a late 15th or early 16th timber framed building, with 18th to 19th century alterations. It was probably the original Akeley manor house (HER04921).

The HER records documentary evidence for a 17th century vicarage on the development site, the predecessor to the existing 19th century vicarage. The evidence dates to 1639, and records a house consisting of 2 bays with 'an homestall' of 2 acres. The 19th century Old Rectory was built c.1850, and is a Grade II Listed Building (HER04922). Local tradition has it that it was designed and constructed by George

Gilbert Scott (*pers. comm.*, Lord Calum Graham), who went on to build the Midland Grand Hotel at St Pancras Station, and the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park.

During the excavation of footings for an extension to a cottage, *c.*0.2km to the northeast of the development site, a quantity of 19th century earthenware pottery sherds was recovered. According to the owner of the cottage, broken sherds were brought from Akeley potteries to place under walls to prevent rising damp (HER04571).

A watching brief carried out during groundworks for the new village hall identified an undated round bottomed ditch that was interpreted as a field boundary recorded on the 1794 Enclosure Map as an area called 'New Close'. Evidence for ridge and furrow was also recorded on the site (HER09435).

The Bull and Butcher public house is located *c.*0.2km to the north of the development site. The pub itself dates to the 18th19th centuries, but incorporates the remains of a late 16th or early 17th century timber framed house (HER09667). A test pit was excavated within the pub beer garden. It was found to contain a high level of 19th century material, including slag, metalwork, bone, glass, slate and post-medieval pottery sherds) and has been interpreted as indicating the presence of a domestic dump, probably associated with the pub or one of the neighbouring buildings (HER09699). Adjacent to the pub is No.2 The Square, a former 17th century agricultural building which has been converted in to a house. It has been recognised as an important and visually prominent historic building within Akeley (HER09668). There are a number of further significant historic buildings within the village, including Church Farmhouse (HER09669), the Old Greyhound (HER09670) and Old Century Cottage (HER10713).

3.8 **Modern** (1900-present)

Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping of the area shows that at the end of the 19th century, the village was still a relatively dispersed settlement, with a considerable amount of woodland. It is not until the late 20th century that development within the village begins to take on the form that is evident today.

4. Results & Conclusions

4.1 Results

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the excavation of the footing trenches for the extension to the east of the Old Rectory (Fig 3). The trenches were all *c.*0.6m wide, and *c.*1m deep. The extension was situated within the footprint of two former buildings, and the area was covered in rubble from the demolition of these buildings (Plate 1).

The stratigraphy within the footing trenches comprised *c.*0.2-0.5m of mixed subsoil and made ground, over mixed orange and blue sandy clay. The footing for one of the demolished buildings was exposed in the easternmost footing trench. The footing comprised *c.*0.4m of rough limestone blocks, underlying red brick (Plate 3). Also observed in the same footing trench was a cast iron pipe (Plate 2).

4.2 Conclusions

The Old Rectory was constructed in the mid 19th century, the first readily available map of the house being the 1881 OS map. This shows that the building whose foundation was exposed within the new footing trench had been constructed by this point, and is likely to have been contemporary with the Old Rectory. The diameter of the cast iron pipe suggests that it was used for drainage. That it is constructed from cast iron suggests it could date to as early as the 19th century. It appears to be aligned with an existing drain on the eastern side of the Old Rectory. The pipe had been patched with Portland cement, which came into use in the latter part of the 19th century. It is unclear when the pipe was first put into service.

No further significant archaeological finds or features were observed during the watching brief. This does not preclude other, isolated features, possibly associated with the Old Rectory, being present away from the proposed development.

4.3 Confidence Rating

The watching brief was carried out in good conditions, and full cooperation was received from all parties involved. As a result, a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the watching brief.



Plate 1: General shot of southern footing trench, looking east, 2m scale



Plate 2: Eastern footing trench, showing cast iron pipe, 2m scale



Plate 3: Wall footing in east footing trench, looking west, 2m scale

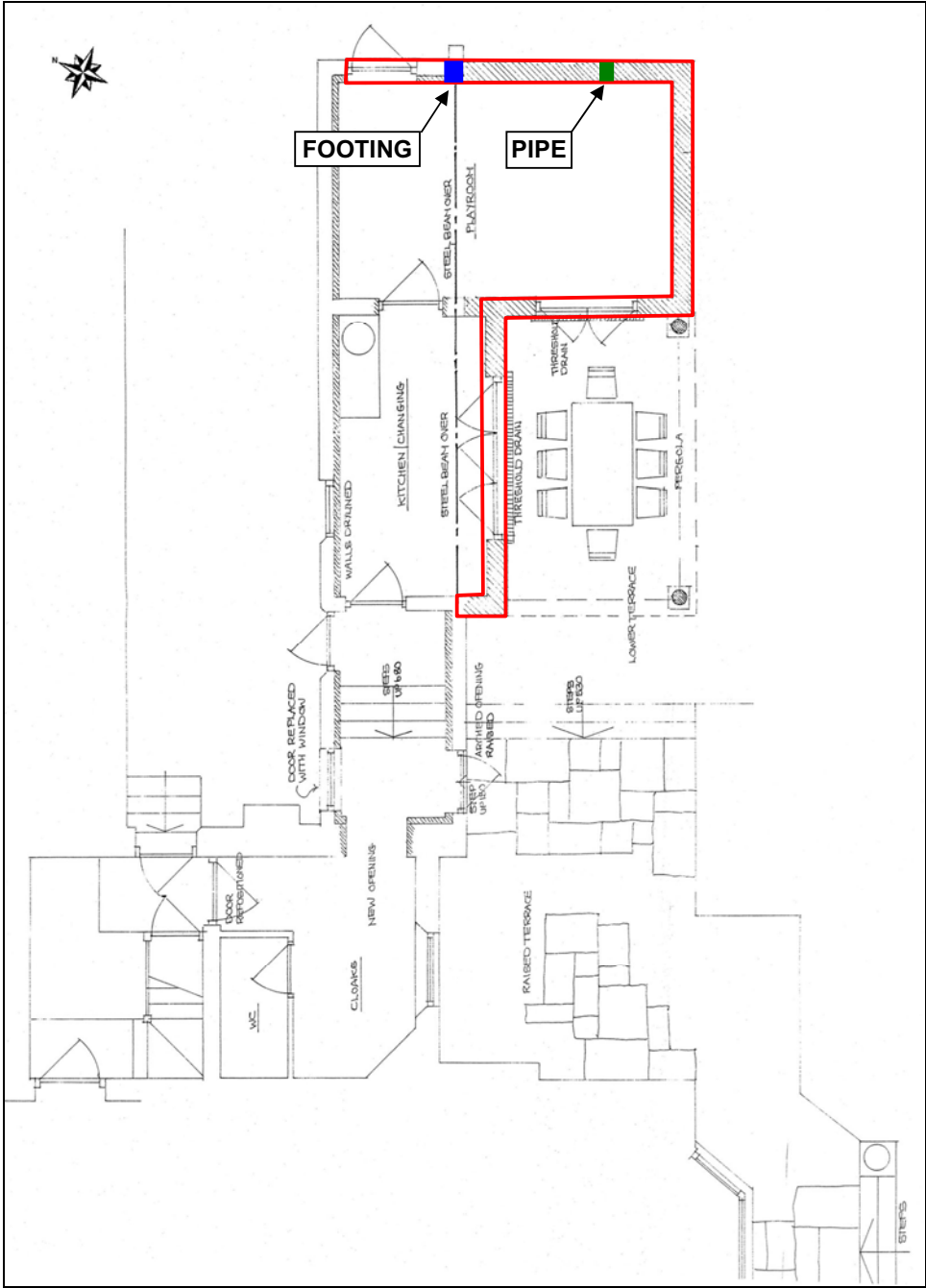


Figure 3: Proposed development plan, with footing trench outlined in red (scale 1:100)

5. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by *Lord Calum Graham*. The writer is grateful to Lord Graham and Shannon Thewlis for their assistance. The project was monitored by Eliza Alqassar of the *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service* on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to Chris Cheshire and his team.

The project was managed for ASC by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Calli Rouse BA PIFA. The report was prepared by Calli Rouse and edited by Bob Zeepvat.

6. Archive

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site Monitoring Sheets
6. Site record drawings
7. List of photographs
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

6.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum.

7. References

Standards & Specifications

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).

IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.

IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.

IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.

Rouse, C 2011 *Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief at The Old Rectory, Akeley, Buckinghamshire* ASC/1417/AOR/1

Secondary Sources

BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.

Hancock, A 2005 *Archaeological Excavation: The Roses, Chapel Lane, Akeley, Buckinghamshire* ASC/693/ACL/2

Ivens R.J. 2003 *Archaeological Evaluation of The Roses, Chapel lane, Akeley, Buckinghamshire*. Unpublished Report.

Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project: THE OLD RECTORY		Project No/Code: 1417 1 AOR		Sheet: 1 of		
Akeley		Date of visit: 10/5/11				
Client/Developer: LORD CALUM GRAHAM						
Contact:			Phone:			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: 10 AM		Finish: 16.10 PM		
Completed by: CR						
Development Type:						
Footings ✓	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: CLEAR, SUNNY						
Observations:						
OBSERVED EXCAVATION OF FOOTINGS FOR NEW EXTENSION.						
FOOTINGS 0.6m WIDE x c.1m DEEP.						
STRAT 0.2-0.5m SUBSOIL / MADE GROUND -						
GROUND COVERED IN DEBRIS FROM DEMOLITION OF						
FORMER BUILDING.						
LIMESTONE & RED BRICK FOOTING FOR RECENTLY						
DEMOLISHED WALL OBSERVED IN E FOOTING TRENCH.						
c. 0.6m of LIMESTONE BENEATH RED BRICK.						
CAST IRON PIPE ALSO OBSERVED IN E FOOTING						
TRENCH - POSS ALIGNED WITH EXISTING GUTTERING						
ON HOUSE?						
NO FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS / FEATURES						
OBSERVED.						
Comments:						
SWIMMING POOL NOT TO BE EXCAVATED AT						
THIS TIME.						

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: The Old Rectory, Akeley, Buckinghamshire			SITE NO/CODE: 1417/AOR
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	✓	✓	Eastern footing trench, looking north north east, 2m scale
2	✓	✓	Eastern footing trench, looking west south west, showing wall footing for demolished wall, 2m scale
3	✓	✓	Southern footing trench, looking east north east, 2m scale
4	✓	✓	Western footing, showing existing footing, looking north north west, 2m scale
5		✓	General working shot, looking west
6		✓	General working shot, looking west
7	✓	✓	General shot of footings, looking west
8	✓	✓	General shot of footings, looking west
9	✓	✓	Central footing trench, looking north north west, 2m scale

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	The Old Rectory, Akeley, Buckinghamshire	OASIS reference:	Archaeol2-100900
Short Description:	During May 2011, Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Old Rectory, Akeley, Buckinghamshire, during groundworks for an extension to the east of the existing building. A limestone and brick footing for the south wall of a recently demolished outbuilding, which was contemporary with the Old Rectory. A cast iron drainage pipe was also observed during the watching brief. No further significant finds or features were observed during the watching brief.		
Project Type:	Watching Brief		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	-	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	-
Current land use:	Garden	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	Unknown
Monument type:	-	Monument period:	-
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	-		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Buckinghamshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 7066 3747
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	The Old Rectory, Akeley, Buckinghamshire		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)		Height OD: (metres)	c.125
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	E.Alqassar	Project design originator:	C.Rouse
Project Manager:	B.Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	B.Zeepvat
Sponsor / funding body:	Lord Calum Graham		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	10/05/2011	End date:	10/05/2011
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Buckinghamshire County Museum	-	
Paper:		Archive Box	
Digital:		CD	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief at The Old Rectory, Akeley, Buckinghamshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1417/AOR/2		
Author(s):	Calli Rouse BA PIFA		
Page nos		Date:	