

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
CHESTNUTS FARM
WEEDON
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

NGR: SP 8161 1805

on behalf of Jonothan Holmes



Gareth Shane BSc

May 2011

ASC: 1372/WCF/2



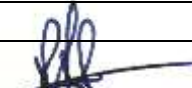
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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	WCF	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1372
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2-100981	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	AYBCM:2012.76
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Weedon		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Weedon		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 8161 1805		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.342sqm		
<i>Present use:</i>	Garden		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of a new tennis court		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	10/01593/APP		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	15/04/2011- 18/04/2011		
<i>Client:</i>	Jonothan Holmes Chestnuts Farm Aston Abbotts Road Weedon HP22 4NH		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Jonothan Holmes		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Gareth Shane	<i>Date:</i>	17/05/11
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	18/05/2011

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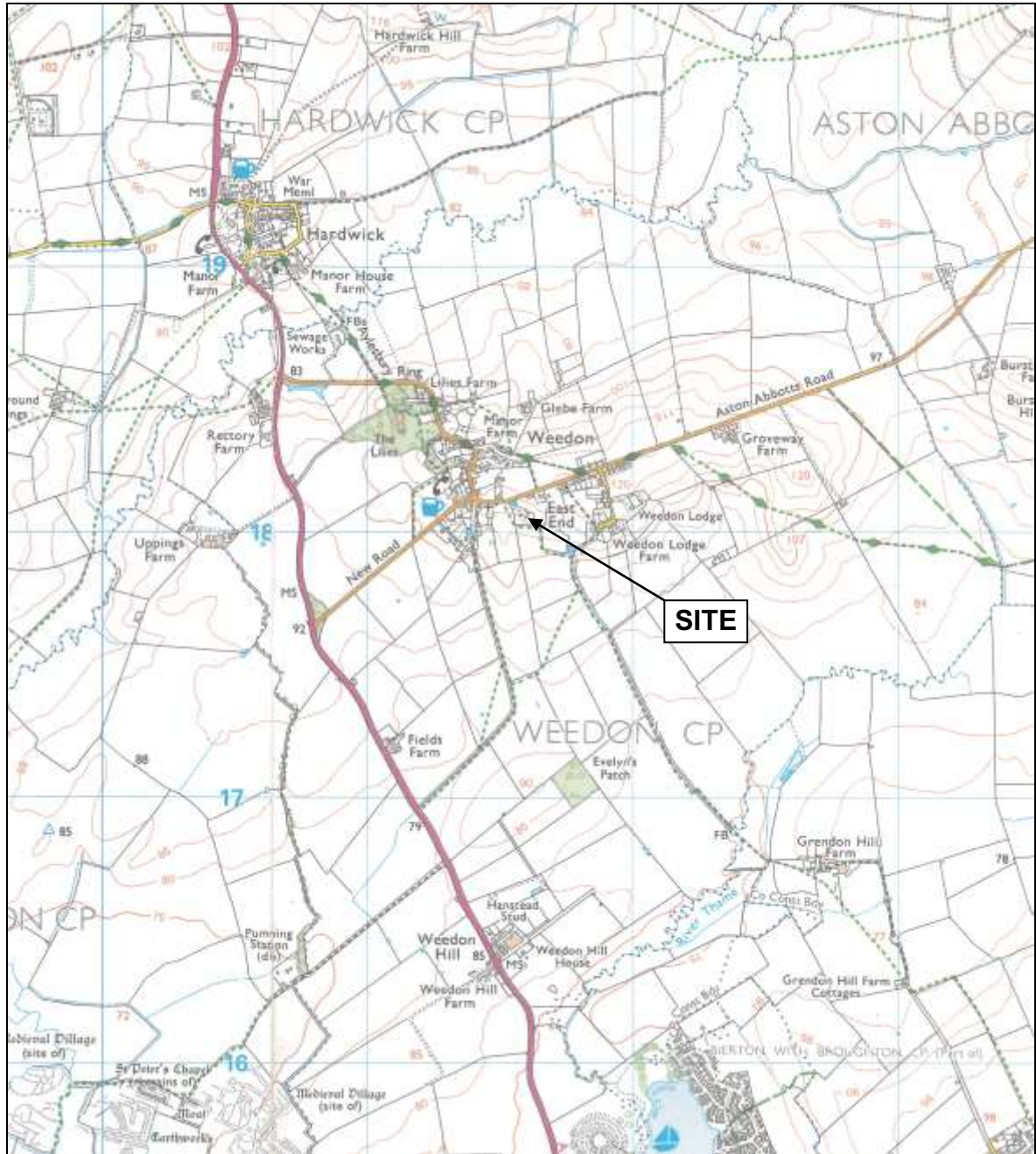


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In April 2011 a watching brief was undertaken at Chestnuts Farm, Weedon, Buckinghamshire. The investigation was required in advance of construction of a tennis court. No significant archaeological features or artefacts were observed. The gardens of Chestnut Farm showed significant signs of landscaping which could go some way to explain the absence of archaeology on this site.

1. Introduction

1.1 In April 2011 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Chestnuts Farm, Weedon, Buckinghamshire. The project was commissioned by Jonothan Holmes, and was carried out according to a brief (Rouse 2010) 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 (Rouse 2010) prepared by ASC. The relevant planning application reference is 10/01593/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 in the district of Aylesbury Vale, within the parish and village of Weedon, at NGR SP 8161 1805 (Fig. 1).

The site comprises a roughly rectangular area of garden, accessed by a driveway on the southern side of Aston Abbots Road. Chestnuts Farm is located to the west of the development site (Fig. 2).

1.4.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area are likely to belong to the Aberford Association, which are characterised as *Shallow, locally brashy, well drained calcareous reddish clayey soils over mudstone, shallow on steeper slopes. Associated with similar non-calcareous fine loamy over clayey soils. Slight risk of water erosion* (Soil Survey 1983, 511a). The underlying geology is likely to comprise Quaternary Princes Risborough sand and gravel (BGS, Sheet 237).

1.4.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises construction of a tennis court (Fig. 3).

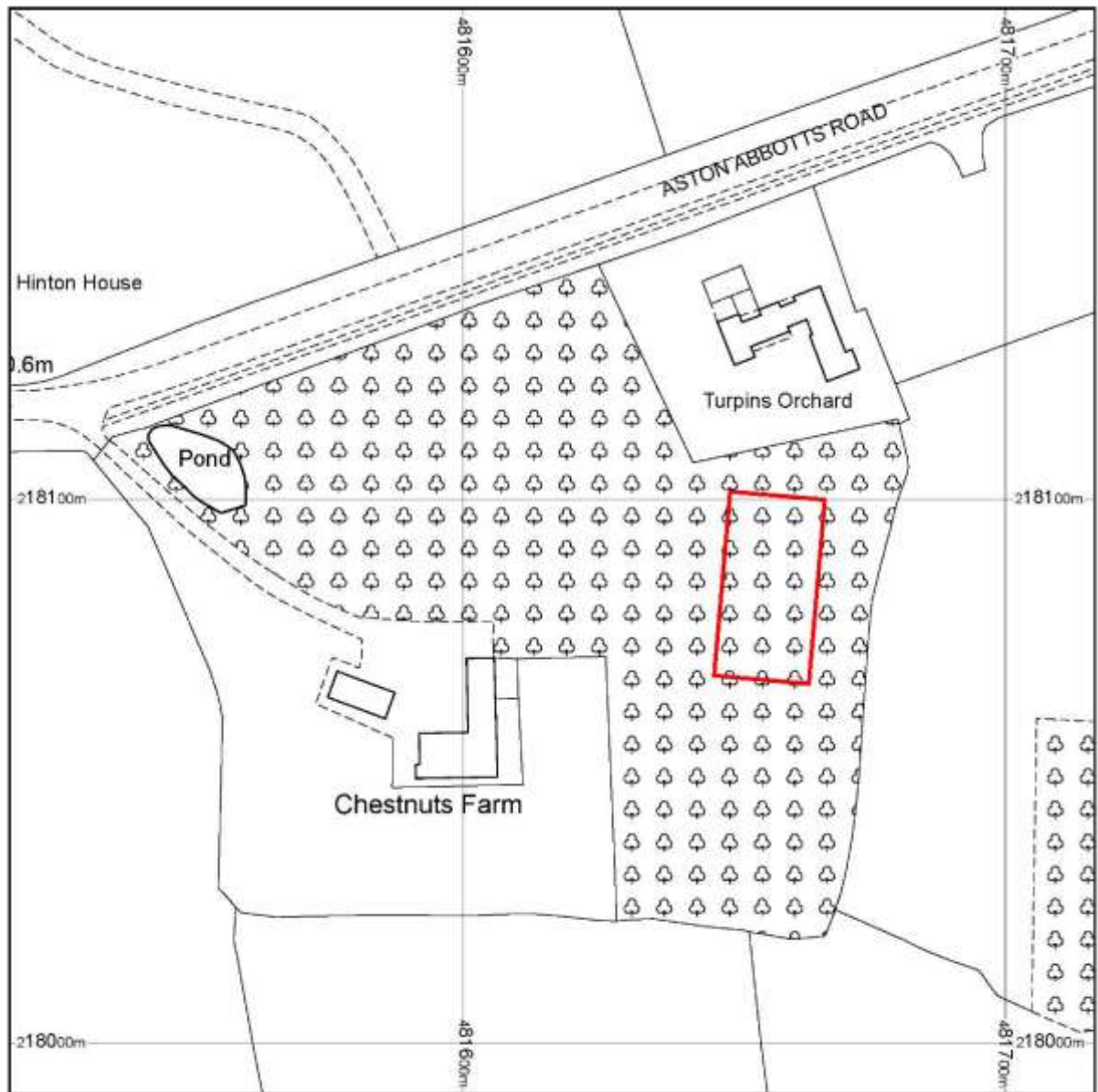


Figure 2: Site plan, watching brief area outlined in red (scale 1:1250)

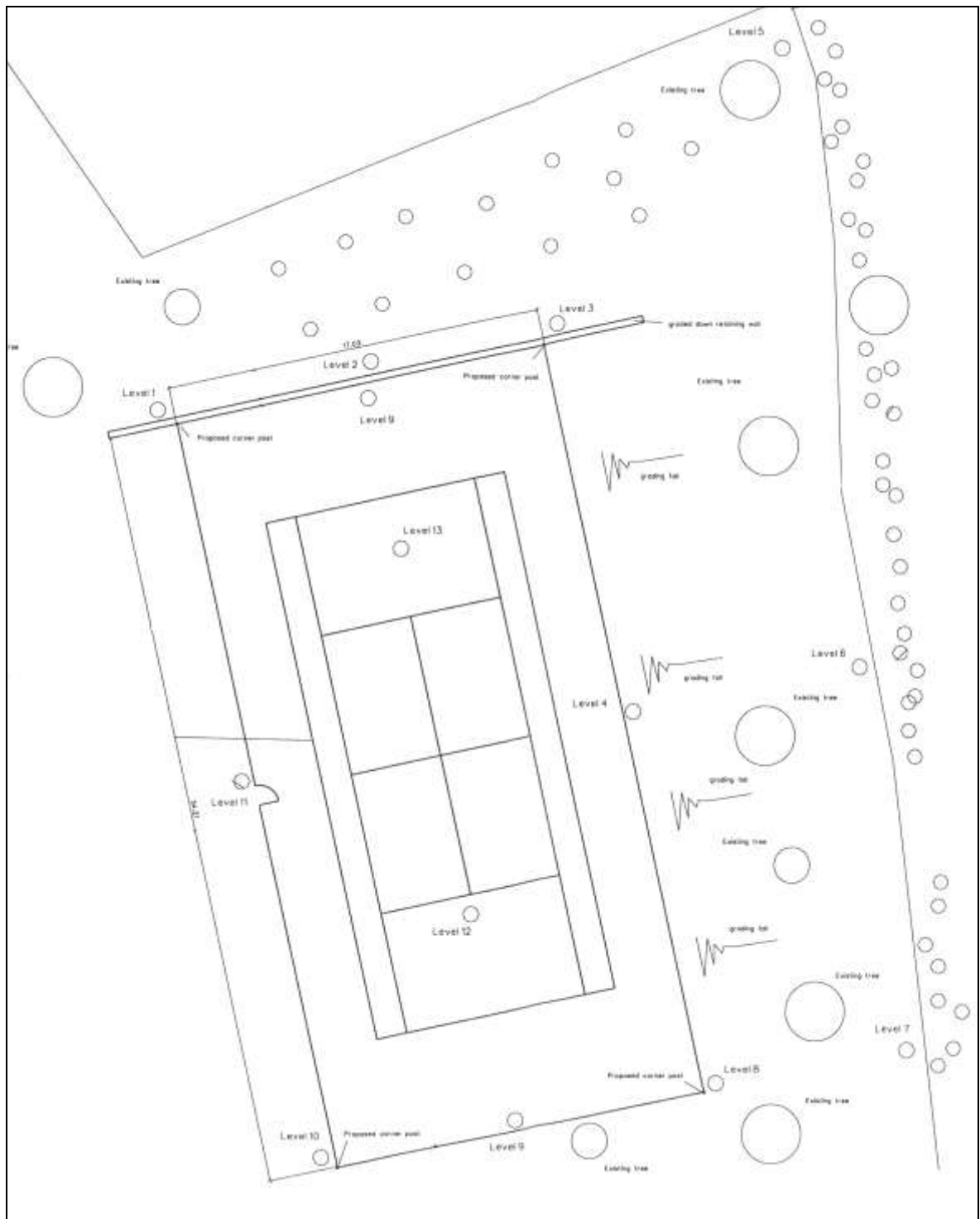


Figure 3: Proposed development (*not to scale*)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

As described in the project design (Section 3), 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 requirements of the brief, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a), to English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991), 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), which required:

A continuous watching brief (*i.e.* archaeologist present during all works which may affect archaeological remains) was undertaken during groundworks (footing and service trenches, reduction of levels, landscaping).

2.4 *Constraints*

This watching brief was carried out without deviation from the agreed methodology.

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.

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

3.2 ***Prehistoric- Roman*** (before 600BC-c.450AD)

The early history of Weedon is not well understood, although this may be due to a lack of fieldwork in the area, rather than a lack of activity. Fieldwalking to the south east of the village recovered worked flints dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age, although the assemblage was not deemed to be significant (HER6128). Roman pottery was also recovered during fieldwalking surveys (HER5040, 6128), but not in large enough quantities to suggest occupation, although an additional find of Roman metalwork within the village, dating to the late 3rd century, suggests at least some activity in the area (HER1921).

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

There is no direct evidence for Saxon activity within the village, but it has been suggested that the name Weedon suggests a sacred Saxon site, probably a temple (HER1764).

3.4 ***Medieval & Post-Medieval*** (1066-1900)

There are a number of earthworks within the village which are interpreted as house platforms, house closes and hollow ways which may date to the medieval or post medieval period (HER0370, 4071), some of which are located close within the boundaries of Chestnuts Farm (HER5041). It is likely that these represent the former extents of the settlement at Weedon.

Historical records suggest there was a medieval-post medieval manor known as Wedon or Wedon-in-the-Vale from as early as the 14th century, probably on the site of the Lilies, c.0.6km to the north west of the development site. A further manor house and dovecote are recorded c.0.5km to the south of Chestnuts Farm (HER1763).

Located c.0.7km to the north west of the development site, to the north west of the main village, is an area of earthworks which are thought to be an enclosure bank and ditch, with other less distinct features in adjacent fields. This area of earthworks has been interpreted as a Civil War fort (HER2375).

The Historic Landscape Characterisation survey of Weedon records the historic core of the settlement to the northwest of the development site, centred on the High Street and Stockaway. The area of Chestnuts Farm, and the fields to the east are characterised as pre 18th – 19th century irregular enclosures.

3.5 ***Modern*** (1900-present)

During the modern period the layout of Weedon has remained largely unchanged, with just a few extra dwellings constructed within the core of the village.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction

The ground was reduced in the area of the proposed tennis court over two days, using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless bucket under continuous archaeological monitoring (Appendix 1).

The uppermost soil horizon was removed first, following the slope of the field (Plate 1); two fragments of medieval pottery were recovered from this layer (Plate 2). In the underlying subsoil; no archaeological features or finds were noted. The natural clay was exposed directly below this and no archaeological features or artefacts were observed or recovered. The spoil heaps were visually inspected for finds and scanned with a metal detector, but no artefacts were recovered.

In order to create a level area for the tennis court, the site was to be terraced into the slope at the north end, and built up at the south end. Once it was established that no archaeological features were cutting the natural strata this process of levelling was able to commence.

4.2 Stratigraphy

- 0-450mm Topsoil and turf (100): Dark grey-brown friable clay silt with moderate small sub-angular stones and chalk fragments.
- 450-800mm Subsoil (101): Dark-greenish-brown friable clay silt.
- 800-1300mm Natural (102): Mid yellow- grey, consisting of firm clay.

4.3 The Pottery (Plate 2)

Bob Zeepvat

<i>Cont</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	1	16g	Base sherd in MSC1 sandy and shelly ware, probably 12 th /13 th century.
100	1	48g	Jug handle in SNC1 St Neots Type Ware, random stabbed decoration made with a point, probably 12 th /13 th century

Fabrics & forms from Milton Keynes Medieval Type Series (Mynard & Zeepvat 1992, 245ff).

4.4 Earthworks

The site (Plate 3) and its surroundings (Plate 4) displayed clear signs of past landscaping and levelling. A hollow-way transverses the site from southwest to northeast (Plate 5), and a possible house platform is visible in the foreground of Plate 4. It is possible that these features relate to former settlement, or to landscaping.



Plate 1: The site after machining



Plate 2: Medieval pottery fragments (5cm scale)



Plate 3: The site before start of works



Plate 4: Field directly east of the site.



Plate 5: Hollow way

5. Conclusions

The watching brief did not reveal any archaeological features or artefacts on the stripped areas: the soil profile encountered on the site is typical of an undeveloped rural site, and suggests that little or no disturbance has taken place prior to the present development. From the presence of possible earthworks in the vicinity, including a hollow way, and the recovery of medieval pottery from topsoil on the development site, it is possible that archaeological evidence, notably of medieval date, could survive in the surrounding area.

Confidence Rating

The work was undertaken in dry weather with good light conditions, and full cooperation was received from the client and machining contractor. Accordingly, a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the watching brief.

6. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Jonathon Holmes. The writer is grateful to the contractors, Tennis Court Builders, for their assistance. The project was monitored by *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service* on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to Bob Zeepvat BA MifA for identifying the pottery.

The project was managed for ASC by Bob Zeepvat. Fieldwork was carried out by Gareth Shane BSc. The report was prepared by Gareth Shane and edited by Bob Zeepvat.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

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

EH 2002 *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation*. English Heritage (London).

IFA 2000 Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.

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

Rouse, C. 2010 Chestnuts Farm, Weedon, Buckinghamshire: *Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief*. ASC doc. no. 1372/WCF/1

Secondary Sources

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

Mynard DC & Zeepvat RJ 1994 *Great Linford*. Bucks Archaeol. Soc. Monog. 3 (Aylesbury)

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

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets



WATCHING BRIEF RECORD

Project: 1372 / WCF		Project No/Code: 1372 1 WCF		Sheet: 1 of	
Client/Developer: CHESTNUTS FARM WEEDON		Date of visit: 30/3/2011			
Contact: Jonathon Holmes		Phone: -			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 8:15 am	Finish: 9:30 am.			
Completed by: Gareth Shone					
Development Type:					
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarrying	Pipelines
Other (specify):					
Site & weather conditions: Overcast / Damp					
Observations: Arrived at site at 8:45 am. No contractors present spoke to Mrs Holmes who informed me the contractors were not coming today. Was shown the area to be reduced for the proposed development. Left details with Mrs Holmes to contact us when due to start.					
Comments: As of 2:22pm not heard from client.					



A.S.C. LTD

WATCHING BRIEF RECORD

Project: Weedon		Project No/Code: 13721 wcr	Sheet: 1 of 2
Chestnuts Farm.		Date of visit: 15/04/2011	
Client/Developer: Jonathon Holmes			
Contact: Jonathon Holmes		Phone: —	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 9:30	Finish: 4:15	
Completed by: Gareth Shane			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Sunny day DRYCAST IN AFTERNOON			
Observations: machine turned up at 10am Machine through to 12:45pm Removed Topsoil few bits of residual & abandoned pot noted. 2 pieces of unbranded med pot in Topsoil Stopped working at 3:45pm.			
Comments: No significant ordnance noted or observed			

For sketch plan, use separate sheet

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WATCHING BRIEF RECORD

Project: Weedon Chestnuts Farm		Project No/Code: 1392 1 WCF		Sheet: 2 of 2	
Client/Developer		Date of visit: 18/04/2011			
Contact: Jonathan Holmes		Phone:			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 8:30	Finish: 10:48am			
Completed by: G. Shane					
Development Type:					
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling ✓	Quarrying	Pipelines
Other (specify):					
Site & weather conditions: Cold, Damp					
Observations: Machined down to natural ground exposed in NE area of site. No archaeology in depth North corner 1.25m ground reduced at North end to 1.25m max hgt. and made up at South end.					
Comments: No more archaeology to be expected by ground works excavation finished.					

For sketch plan, use separate sheet

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Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Chestnuts farm, Weedon			SITE NO/CODE: 1372/ WCF
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		√	SW view Site after machining
2		√	N view Site after machining
3		√	N view Site after machining
4		√	N view Site after machining
5		√	N view Site after machining
6		√	E view stratigraphy
7		√	W view stratigraphy
8		√	SW view stratigraphy
9		√	N view stratigraphy
10		√	NE view general shot
11		√	S view general shot
12		√	SE view general shot
13		√	SE view general shot nr entrance to farm
14		√	NW view general shot
15		√	SW view removing the top soil
16		√	E view general shot adjacent field and traces of medieval house platforms
17		√	E view general shot adjacent field and traces of medieval house platforms
18		√	E view general shot adjacent field and traces of medieval house platforms
19		√	E view general shot adjacent field and traces of medieval house platforms
20		√	S view adjacent field
21		√	S view adjacent field
22		√	SW view site prior to machining
23		√	W view of hollow way
24		√	NE view of hollow way
25		√	S view during ground reduction
26		√	SW view of hollow way
27		√	N view of hollow way
28		√	SW view ground reduction
29		√	E view adjacent field and medieval house platforms
30		√	E view adjacent field and medieval house platforms
31		√	E view adjacent field and medieval house platforms
32		√	E view adjacent field and medieval house platforms
33		√	S view adjacent field
34		√	SW view site entrance
35		√	SE view dip in fence line in location of hollow way
36		√	NE view traces of hollow way in 'Turpins Orchard'
37		√	Pottery from topsoil

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Chestnuts Farm, Weedon	OASIS reference:	archaeol2-100981
Short Description:	<i>In April 2011 a watching brief was undertaken at Chestnuts Farm, Weedon, Buckinghamshire. The investigation was required in advance of construction of a new tennis court. No significant archaeological features or artefacts were observed. The gardens of Chestnut Farm showed significant signs of landscaping which could go some way to explain the absence of archaeology on this site.</i>		
Project Type:	Watching Brief		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	None
Current land use:	Private residence	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	Unknown
Monument type:	N/a	Monument period:	N/a
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Buckinghamshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 8161 1805
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	Chestnuts Farm, Weedon, Buckinghamshire.		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	595 sq. m	Height OD: (metres)	C.115mOD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	BCAS	Project design originator:	Calli Rouse
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	Gareth Shane
Sponsor / funding body:	Jonothan Holmes		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	15/04/2011	End date:	18/04/2011
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Buckinghamshire County Museum	2 pot sherds	
Paper:		Project design, project report, clients plans etc.	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching brief, Chestnuts Farm, Weedon, Buckinghamshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1372/WCF/2		
Author(s):	Gareth Shane		
Page nos	18	Date:	17/05/11