

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
LAND BETWEEN 18B & 20 KINGS ROAD
ST ALBANS
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 1402 0747

on behalf of Kathryn Rathouse



Calli Rouse BA PIFA

June 2011

ASC: 1308/SKR/2



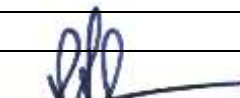
Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700
Email: office@archaeological-services.co.uk
Website: www.archaeological-services.co.uk



Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	SKR	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1308
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	Archaeol2-102189	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	tbc
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	St Albans		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	St. Albans		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 1402 0747		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.145 sq m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Garden and garage (disused)		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of a three-storey dwelling		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	5/10/0073		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	St Albans District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	14 th & 18 th April 2011		
<i>Client:</i>	Kathryn Rathouse 22 Mount Pleasant St Albans AL3 4QJ		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Kathryn Rathouse		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Calli Rouse	<i>Date:</i>	6 th June 2011
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	6 th June 2011

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CONTENTS

Summary.....	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Aims & Methods	7
3. Archaeological & Historical Background	8
4. Results & Conclusions.....	10
5. Acknowledgements	12
6. Archive.....	12
7. References.....	13

Appendices:

1. ASC Watching Brief Monitoring Sheets.....	14
2. Photo List.....	16
3. ASC OASIS Form.....	17

Figures:

1. General location	3
2. Site plan	5
3. Proposed development plan	6

Plates:

Cover: Site from Kings Road

1. View of southern foundation trench.....	11
2. Detail of southern foundation trench.....	11
3. Detail of northern foundation trench	11



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

Summary

During April 2011, an archaeological watching brief was carried out at land between 18b and 20 Kings Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, during the groundworks for a three-storey dwelling. No significant archaeological finds or features were observed during the watching brief, supporting cartographic evidence that the site had been undeveloped until the residential development of the area in the early 20th century.

1. Introduction

1.1 In April 2011 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at land between 18b and 20 Kings Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by *Kathryn Rathouse*, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2010), following discussions with the *District Archaeological Officer* (DAO) of the local planning authority (LPA), *St. Albans District Council*. The relevant planning application reference is 5/10/0073.

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 district, parish and town of St Albans, to the west of the modern town centre at NGR TL 1402 0747 (Fig. 1)

The site comprises a narrow, rectangular piece of land with a disused garage at its northern end, bounded to the east and west by housing. Access to the site is from Kings Road, which forms the northern boundary of the site. To the south are residential gardens (Fig. 2).

1.4.2 *Geology & Topography*

The natural soils of the site comprise the *Charity Association*, namely well drained flinty fine silty soils over chalky drift (Soil Survey 1983, 571m). The underlying geology comprises alluvial deposits of the river Ver, over Upper Chalk (BGS, Sheet 239). The site lies at an elevation of c.85mAOD.

1.4.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises the demolition of the garage and the construction of a three-storey dwelling (Fig. 3).

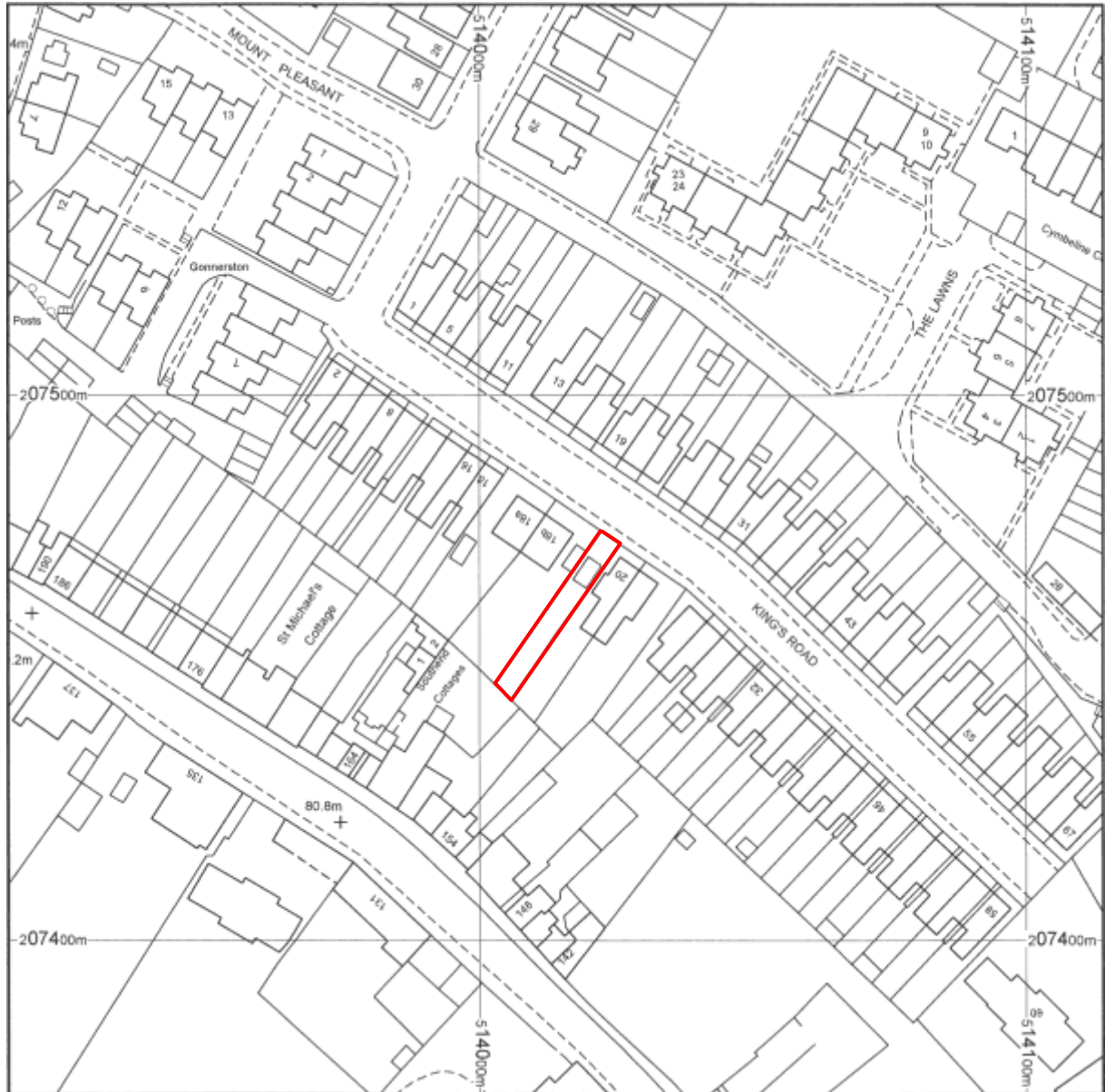


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

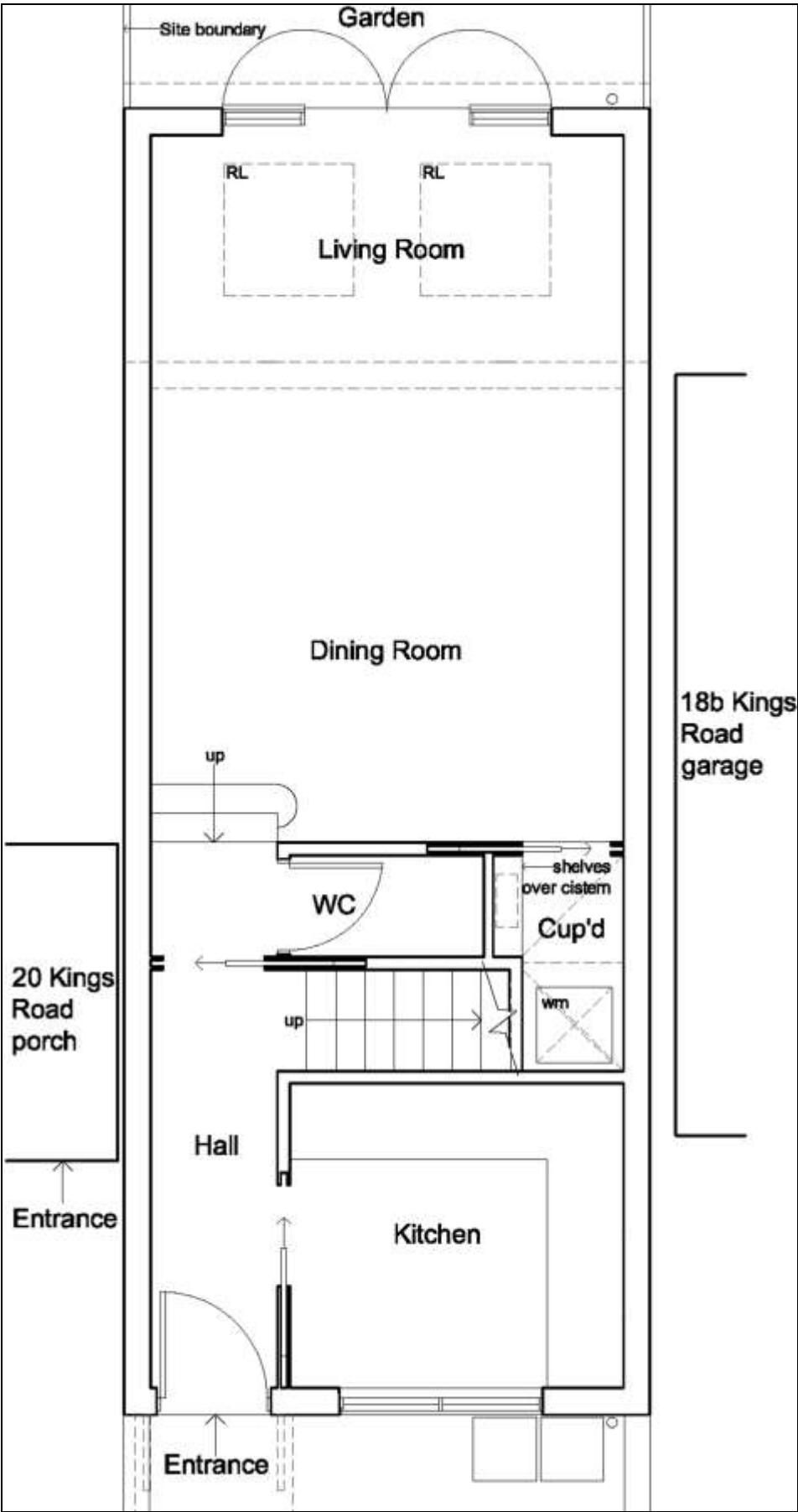


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:50)

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), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), 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 described:

- Removal of existing surfaces under archaeological supervision.
- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision.
- The inspection of the subsoil for archaeological features, deposits, and artefacts.
- The rapid investigation and recording of archaeological features or deposits present, including adequate provision of both drawn and photographic records.
- Subsoil stripping under archaeological supervision.
- The examination of service and foundation trenches and the subsequent recording of any exposed archaeological remains, including adequate provision of both drawn and photographic records.
- Rapid examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material.
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving, and publication.

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. This section has been compiled with information from ASC's own library, and other readily available sources.

3.2 The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest commonly known as 'Kingsbury', and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods. In the 19th century it was decided that this was the site of the Royal Saxon *burh* or defended place. Evidence for the Saxon period on this hilltop is minimal although there is evidence for a Roman cremation cemetery, which would have overlooked the Roman town of *Verulamium* on the opposite slope of the river Ver.

3.3 *Prehistoric* (before AD43)

The nature and extent of prehistoric remains in the immediate vicinity of the development site is not understood in detail, but a variety of flint artefacts have been found in the valley of the river Ver in the St Albans area. The area was of considerable importance during the late Iron Age and a number of major sites of this period are located in the area. Late Iron Age settlement was dominated by a settlement at Prae Wood c. 2km west of the site (Wheeler & Wheeler 1936). Settlement of this period has been found at a variety of locations in this area for example at Gorhambury (Neal *et al*, 1990). Further evidence of this period has been found north of the river, notably at Folly Lane, where an important Late Iron Age high status burial has been recorded (Niblett 1999).

3.4 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

Following the Roman conquest there was a shift in settlement and an important Roman city, known as *Verulamium*, was laid out on the south side of the river Ver. It developed into the third largest city in Roman Britain and is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Niblett 2001; Wheeler & Wheeler 1936). The development site is located c.0.5km to the east of the Roman city. Communications in the area were dominated by a major Roman road, now known as *Watling Street*, which led from *Londinium* (London) to the south gate of the Roman city, and on to Wroxeter.

The early phase of buildings in the town was constructed of timber, and many were destroyed during the Boudiccan Revolt in AD 60-61 (Frere 1972). The town was subsequently rebuilt and expanded and was later encircled by gated walls (Niblett 2001). St Alban, the first British Christian martyr, was executed in AD 209 within the city walls (Niblett 2001, 137-139).

A number of cemeteries are recorded outside the city walls notably on King Harry Lane to the south west of the city (Stead & Rigby 1989). Further burials are recorded on the east side of the city c. 400-500m southeast of the development site (Anthony 1968).

St Albans began to decline after the departure of the Roman Army with many of its buildings falling into disuse, and by the 5th century much of the population had relocated (Niblett 2001, 127-146).

A 1st or 2nd-century Roman pot thought to represent a cremation was discovered outside 21 Kings Road, complete apart from its ploughed off rim (Niblett & Thompson 2005).

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

The focus of settlement shifted to the north side of the river during the Saxon period, where a new site known as *Kingsbury* developed (Niblett 2001, Fig. 75). King Offa of Mercia founded an Abbey dedicated to the martyred Christian St Alban and the present cathedral, which lies c.500m southeast of the development site, occupies the site of the Saxon abbey. A market was established in the town during the 10th century.

3.6 ***Medieval*** (1066-1500)

St Albans is mentioned in the Domesday Survey (1086) when the abbot was the principal landholder (Williams & Martin 2002). The town developed considerably during the medieval period, when settlement became focused around the abbey and its precinct. The site is located to the west of this area, close to the line of the Tonman ditch which defined the medieval town.

3.7 ***Post-Medieval & Modern*** (after 1500)

Antiquarian maps of the area (eg Hare 1634; Godman 1822) show the area as open land, as does the first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1879. This appears to have been the case until Kings Road was constructed in the early 20th century.

4. Results & Conclusions

4.1 Results

The excavation of all the footing trenches for the new development was observed in two site visits (Appendix 1). The stratigraphy across the site comprised between 0.5m and 0.9m of grey, homogenous loamy soil, overlying the natural chalk (Plates 1-3). There was no subsoil present across the site.

The homogenous soil was noted to contain pieces of tile and occasional fragments of 19th century ceramic. No archaeological features were observed during the watching brief.

4.2 Conclusions

The watching brief did not reveal any finds or features. This suggests that, as was suggested by the cartographic evidence discussed in section 3.7, the site remained an undeveloped area of St Albans until the early 20th century. Before this, it was perhaps just too far outside of the main settlement of St Albans to have been utilised as anything other than a green space. It was not until the town began to expand further that the area was filled in with residential development. The lack of subsoil across the site suggests that the area was disturbed during the construction of the surrounding buildings.

4.3 Confidence Rating

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



Plate 1: View of southern foundation trench looking south west (*2m scale*)



Plate 2: Detail of southern foundation trench looking east (*2m scale*)



Plate 3: Detail of northern foundation trench looking north-east (*2m scale*)

5. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by *Kathryn Rathouse*. The writer is grateful to Ms Rathouse for her assistance. The project was monitored by Simon West, the St Albans District Archaeological Officer.

The project was managed for ASC by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Dr Jonathan Hunn PhD MIFA. The report was prepared by Calli Rouse BA PIFA 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 St Albans Museum.

7. References

Standards & Specifications

- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.
- 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 2010 *Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief at land between 18b and 20 Kings Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire* ASC/1308/SKR/1

Secondary Sources

- Anthony I E 1968 'Excavations in Verulam Hills Field, St Albans 1963-4'. *Hertfordshire Archaeology* **1**, 9-50.
- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Frere S 1972 *Verulamium Excavations Vol 1*. Report of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquities of London **28**.
- Neal D S, Wardle A and Hunn J 1990 *Excavation of the Iron Age, Roman and Medieval Settlement at Gorhambury, St Albans*. English Heritage Archaeological Report **14**
- Niblett R. 1999 *The Excavation of a ceremonial Site at Folly Lane, Verulamium*. Britannia Monograph Series **14**
- Niblett R 2001 *Verulamium. The Roman City of St Albans*. Tempus
- Niblett R & Thompson I 2005 *Alban's Buried Towns. An Assessment of St Albans Archaeology up to AD1600*. Oxbow Books
- Saunders C & Havercroft A B 1978 'Excavations in the City and District of St Albans 1974-76' *Hertfordshire Archaeology* **6**, 1-77
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Stead I M & Rigby V 1989 *Verulamium The King Harry Lane Site*. English Heritage Archaeological Report **12**.
- Wheeler R E M & Wheeler T V 1936 *Verulamium A Belgic and Two Roman Cities*. Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquities (London).

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD			
Project: <u>Land between Rb & 20 Kugel Rd</u>		Project No/Code: <u>13081SKR</u>		Sheet: <u>1</u> of <u>3</u>	
St Albans		Date of visit: <u>14/4/11</u>			
Client/Developer: <u>Kathryn Rathbone</u>					
Contact: <u>Steve Chaston (cline)</u>			Phone: <u>07710 314475</u>		
Duration of Visit (Inc. travel):		Start: <u>7.15</u>		Finish: <u>9.30</u>	
Completed by: <u>JRH</u>					
Development Type:					
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines
Other (specify):					
Site & weather conditions: <u>Dull & dry</u> <u>7.5c</u>					
Observations: <u>0.6m x 1.0m L-shaped footing c.10m from Street frontage</u> <u>These were 0.7m wide x 1.05m deep and down to</u> <u>a chalk horizon which is c. 0.9m down. The top</u> <u>material is a homogeneous dark greyish soil with very</u> <u>little organic debris other than the on small bits of</u> <u>leaf. No features or artefacts observed.</u>					
Comments:					

Page 15

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 18b & 20 Kings Road, St Albans			SITE NO/CODE: 1308/SKR
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		✓	View of site from King's Road looking SW
2	✓	✓	General view of development plot looking SW
3	✓	✓	View of southern foundation trench looking SW
4		✓	Detail of southern foundation trench looking north
5		✓	Detail of southern foundation trench looking east
6		✓	General view of foundation trenches looking SW
7		✓	View of northern foundation looking NE
8		✓	Closer view of northern foundation looking NE
9		✓	Detail of northern foundations looking NE

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Land between 18b and 20 Kings Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire	OASIS reference:	Archaeol2-102189
Short Description:	During April 2011, an archaeological watching brief was carried out at land between 18b and 20 Kings Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, during groundworks for a three-storey dwelling. No significant archaeological finds or features were observed during the watching brief, supporting cartographic evidence that the site had been undeveloped until the residential development of the area in the early 20 th century.		
Project Type:	Watching brief		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	none
Current land use:	Disused garden & garage	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	No
Monument type:	n/a	Monument period:	n/a
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 1402 0747
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	18b and 20 Kings Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 4TG		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	c.145sqm	Height OD: (metres)	c.85
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	S. West (SADC)	Project design originator:	C. Rouse (ASC)
Project Manager:	B. Zeepvat (ASC)	Director/Supervisor:	J. Hunn (ASC)
Sponsor / funding body:	K. Rathouse		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	14/04/2011	End date:	18/04/2011
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	St Albans Museum	none	
Paper:		Brief, proj. des, site records, photos, report	
Digital:		CD	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Watching Brief: Land between 18b and 20 Kings Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1308/SKR/2		
Author(s):	Calli Rouse BA PIFA		
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