

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
LAND TO THE REAR OF 185 WATLING STREET
TOWCESTER
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

NGR: SP 69264 48655

on behalf of Oastlodge Ltd



Calli Rouse BA PIFA

November 2011

ASC: 1398/TWS/2




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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	TWS	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1398
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	Archaeol2-113311	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Northamptonshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Towcester		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Towcester		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 6926 4866		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.250sqm		
<i>Present use:</i>	Garden and patio		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Rear extension to and conversion of existing property		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	S/2009/0109/P		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	South Northamptonshire District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	24/10/2011		
<i>Client:</i>	Oastlodge Ltd East Haddon Hall East Haddon Northampton NN6 8BU		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Tom Beynon		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Calli Rouse	<i>Date:</i>	08/11/2011
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	09/11/2011

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

Summary

In October 2011, ASC carried out an archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 185 Watling Street, Towcester, Northamptonshire, in advance of the construction of an extension to the existing building. One trench and one test pit were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development. The trench was within the existing lawn area, and the test pit within the existing patio area. The trench cut through several layers of made ground before reaching the natural strata. The test pit was excavated to below the maximum depth of the proposed footings, and did not breach the level of made ground. It was decided that significant archaeological remains were unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development.

1. Introduction

1.1 In October 2011 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at 185 Watling Street, Towcester, Northamptonshire. The project was commissioned by *Oastlodge Ltd*, and was carried out according to a brief (Giggins 2009) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *South Northamptonshire District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), the Planning Department of *Northamptonshire County Council*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2011). The relevant planning application reference is S/2009/0109/P.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation 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 of South Northamptonshire, within the parish and town of Towcester, at NGR SP 6926 4865 (Fig. 1)

The development site comprises an irregular plot of land to the rear of 185 Watling Street. Access to the site is from Richmond Road, to the rear of the site, and it is surrounded by houses and gardens (Fig. 2).

1.4.2 *Geology & Topography*

The site comprises level stone flagged patio and adjoining lawn c.0.7m higher, separated by a brick retaining wall. The soils of the area are of the *Fladbury 1 Association*. They are defined as *stoneless clayey soils, in places calcareous, variably affected by groundwater. Flat land. Risk of flooding over river*

alluvium (Soil Survey, 1983, 813b). The underlying geology comprises mainly Jurassic clay (BGS, Sheet 202).

1.4.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the change of use of the existing building to a restaurant, and the construction of a rear extension (Fig. 3).

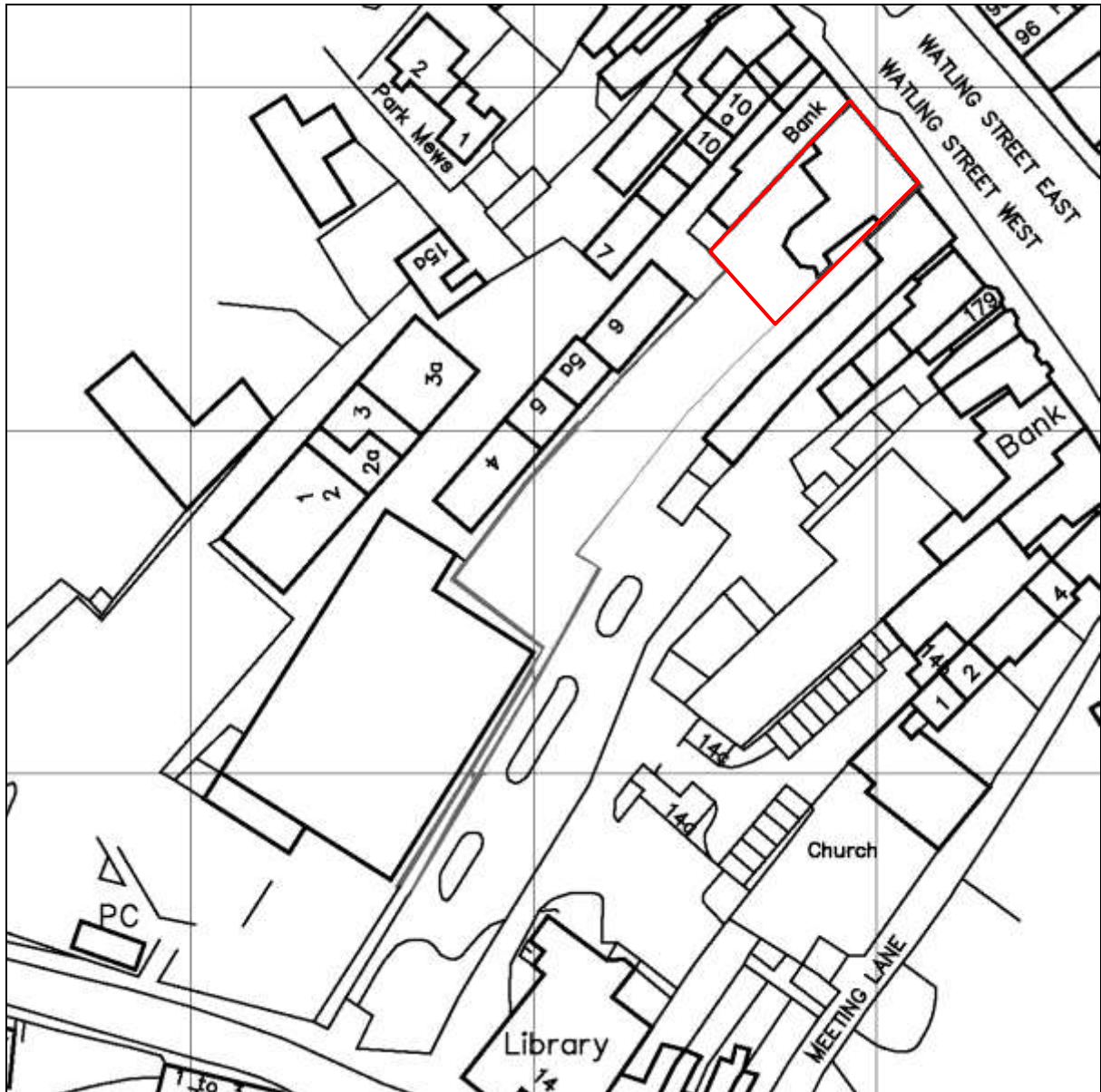


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1000)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

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

- To obtain sufficient information to establish the extent, character, quality, date and condition of any archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts and ecofacts within the area affected by the proposed development.

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:

- Hand excavation of two 2x2m test pits in the present patio area
- Machine excavation of one 6x2m trial trench in the present lawn area to archaeological/formation depth, followed by hand excavation of any archaeological deposits encountered.

2.4 Constraints

The proposed development plan included in the project design had been superseded, meaning that there was not enough room to excavate the required 6x2m trial trench within the lawn area. A smaller trench was excavated instead (Fig.4). One of the hand dug test pits was excavated within the patio area, to a depth of 0.6m, below the maximum depth of the raft footings for the proposed extension. The test pit had not reached the natural strata, so it was agreed with the AA that the second test pit was not required.

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 readily available sources, including ASC's own library.

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC- AD43)

An abundance of prehistoric finds have been discovered in the area of Towcester. Notably, hand axes dated to the Palaeolithic and Neolithic have been discovered in the surrounding area (RCHME 1982), and a barbed and tanged flint arrowhead from the area has been on display at the Ashmolean Museum. Several coins have been discovered as scattered finds, mainly Iron Age bronze coins from the North Thames Group (*ibid*). A Neolithic flint working site, including scrapers, points and cores was discovered beneath a Roman villa at Burcote, 2km south of the town.

3.3 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

With Towcester being located on the site of a previous Roman town, which lay on the Roman road now known as Watling Street, the major archaeological monument of the area is the Roman town of *Lactodorum*. Like most Roman towns, *Lactodorum* had extensive extra-mural settlements or suburbs on the roads leading from it.

3.4 *Saxon - Medieval* (c.450-1500)

During much of the Saxon period Towcester was held by the kingdom of Wessex, and was made a royal *burgh* in the early 10th century by Edward the Elder (Page 1930). The town retained this status beyond the Norman Conquest (1066) until the 12th century, when it passed to the earls of Arundel (Baker 1836). Its location at the junction of Watling Street and the Oxford - Northampton Road made it an ideal place for a market, and as such it prospered throughout the medieval period. To the north-west of the site is the motte of Bury Mount, probably constructed by the Crown in the 11th-12th century (RCHM(E) 1982). The only notable finds of Saxon date have been a long-cross brooch, from the former station site (TDHLS 1995), and a silver sword mount from the Hawkesmoor School area of the town. The current Ordnance Survey map (Explorer 207) records the presence of a mill mound, presumably of medieval date, adjoining to the racecourse buildings.

185 Watling Street is located on the site of, and incorporates elements of the 15th century inn known as The Angel. It is possible that the building is the oldest in Towcester, and may be of regional or national significance (Giggins 2010).

3.7 *Post-Medieval* (1500-1900)

Documentary evidence suggests that the building was an inn until 1825. It was probably re-faced sometime after this, and by the beginning of the 20th century it was recorded as a house.

4 Results

4.1 General

The patio area of the development site was *c.*0.5m lower than the lawn area.

Detailed information regarding the trial trenches and their contents appears in Appendix

4.2 Trench 1 (Figs. 3-4: Plates 1-2)

Trench 1 was located within the lawn area of the proposed development, and measured 2.7x1.8m, and had a maximum depth of 1.15m. The stratigraphy within the trench comprised 0.25m of topsoil (100), which overlay 0.3m of mid brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of modern debris, pieces of rubble and post medieval tile fragments (101). Below this was a further 0.15m thick layer of made ground (102) with a higher concentration of rubble than (101). Underlying this was a 0.15m thick red layer that probably represented brick rubble (103), and a 0.05m thick layer of beige sand (104) that was not present through the entire trench. Below this was a 0.2m thick layer of orangey brown/beige silty sandy clay (105), which overlay 0.1m of dark grey silty clay with occasional charcoal inclusions (106), which was visible in patches throughout the trench. Below this was the natural mid brown/beige clay subsoil (107). One possible feature was identified on the north eastern side of the trench, but upon investigation, this proved to be a layer of different coloured natural. The south western end of the trench section was disrupted by the removal of a large piece of limestone.

No archaeological finds or features were observed within the trench.

4.3 Test Pit 1 (Fig. 4: Plate 3)

Test Pit 1 was located within the patio area, close to the existing conservatory. The pit was hand excavated, and the stratigraphy comprised *c.*0.15m of sand directly below the paving slabs (200) which overlay *c.*0.45m of reddy orange sandy made ground (201). Excavation of the test pit was stopped at 0.6m, as this was below the impact level of the footings for the proposed development.

No archaeological finds or features were observed within the test pit.



Plate 1: General view of Trench 1, looking south east, 2x1m scale



Plate 2: Trench section, looking south west, 1m scale



Plate 3: Test Pit, looking north east, 1m scale

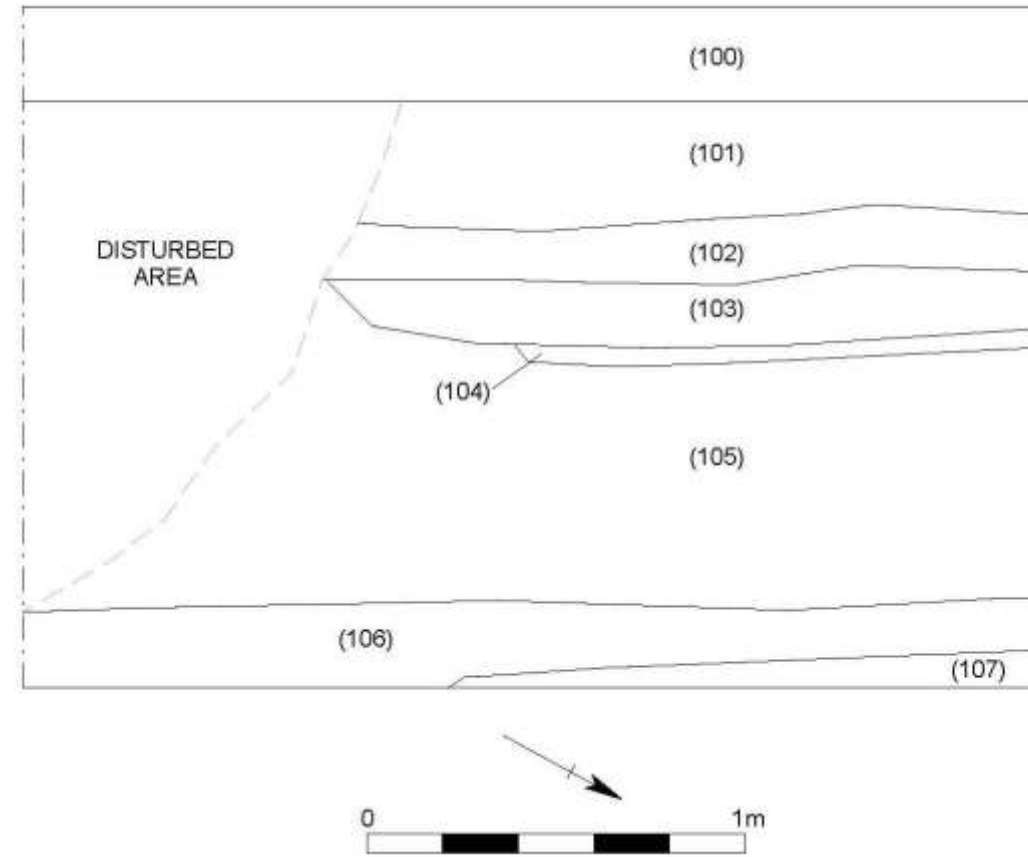


Figure 3: Trench 1, north east facing section (scale: 1:20)

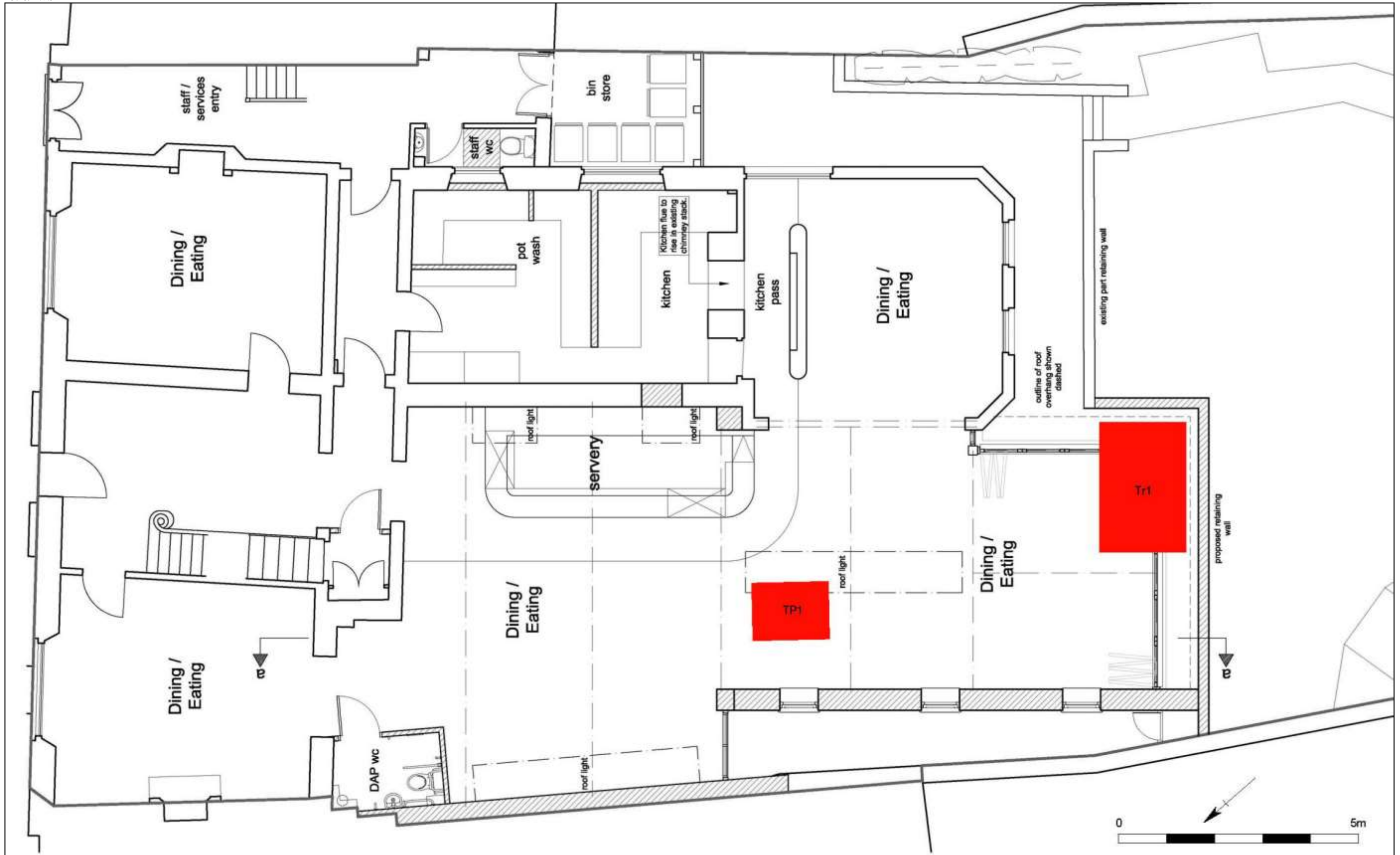


Figure 4: Trench location plan (scale: 1:75)

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The proposed development was considered to have the potential to impact on archaeological remains relating to Watling Street, and The Angel Inn (Section 3), and the trench and test pit were targeted accordingly.
- 5.2 Trench 1 revealed no archaeological features, but several layers of made ground were noted within the trench section, suggesting that the area had been subject to disturbance at some point in the past. Fragments of modern debris and post medieval tile were noted within the layers, suggesting a relatively recent date for their deposition. Following discussions with the tenant of 185 Watling Street, it was noted that the street level was lower than the lawn at the back, and that a slope existed within the house at the point where the former carriageway would have reached the road. This could imply that the lawn area was built up over time, as opposed to the lower area being terraced during the construction of the building.
- 5.3 The test pit excavated within the patio area did not penetrate the made ground, leading to the conclusion that any surviving archaeological remains are below the impact level of the proposed development.
- 5.4 Significant archaeological features were not observed in the trench. While the existence of individual isolated archaeological features away from the trench cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological features were present on the site. It is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains. The lack of features and artefacts relating to the Roman period may also imply that the construction of the inn during the 15th century removed any traces of earlier activity.
- 5.5 *Confidence Rating*
The evaluation was carried out in good conditions, and full cooperation was received from all parties involved. As a result, a high level of confidence is attached to the results of the fieldwork.

6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by *Oastlodge Ltd.* The writer is grateful to Tom Beynon for his assistance. The project was monitored by Lesley-Ann Mather of the Planning Department of *Northamptonshire County Council*, on behalf of the local planning authority.

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

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

7.2 The archive will be stored by ASC until deposition is possible.

8. References


Standards & Specifications


- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition*. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000a 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)*.

Secondary Sources

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Baker, G 1836 *History and Antiquities of the County of Northamptonshire*, viii, 312-339.
- Giggins, B 2009 *185 Watling Street, Towcester, Northamptonshire: Brief for Archaeological Evaluation*
- Giggins, B 2010 *Historic Building Assessment: 185 Watling Street, Towcester*
- Page, W (ed.) 1930 *The Victoria History of the County of Northamptonshire* (London).
- RCHM 1982 *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Northampton. Vol. iv: South West Northants* (London).
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- TDLHS 1995 *Towcester: the Story of an English Country Town*. Towcester & District Local History Society (Towcester).

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	2.7m	Width	1.8m	Depth	1.15m
	Levels					
	Trench top					
	Trench base					
	Trench top					
	Trench base					
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	SP 69786 48719		SE	SP 69804 48698	
	Orientation			NW-SE		
Reason for Trench			Within footprint of proposed development			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
100	Layer	Mid brown silty loam – Topsoil	1800	250	-	
101	Layer	Mid brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of modern debris, pieces of rubble and post medieval tile fragments – Made ground	1800	300	250	
102	Layer	Mid brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of modern debris, pieces of rubble and post medieval tile fragments – Made ground	1800	150	550	
103	Layer	Red sand and brick fragments – Brick rubble	1800	150	700	
104	Layer	Beige sand	?	50	850	
105	Layer	Orangey brown/beige silty sandy clay – subsoil	1800	200	900	
106	Layer	Dark grey silty clay with occasional charcoal inclusions	1800	100	1100	
107	Layer	Mid brown/beige clay - Natural	1800			

Test Pit 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	1.6	Width	1.2	Depth	0.6
	Trench top					
	Trench base					
	Trench top					
	Trench base					
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SW	SP 698270 47714		NE	SP 698394 487821	
	Orientation:			SW-NE		
	Reason for Trench:			Within footprint of proposed development		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
200	Layer	Orangey beige sand – base for paving slabs	1200	150	-	
201	Layer	Reddish orange sandy clay – Made ground	1200	450	150	

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 185 Watling Street, Towcester, Northamptonshire		SITE NO/CODE: 1398/TWS	
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	x	x	Trench 1, looking south east, 2x1m scale
2	x	x	Trench 1 section, looking north east, 2x1m scale
3	x	x	Trench 1 section, looking south west, 2x1m scale
4		x	Cover shot, looking north east
5	x	x	Test pit 1, looking north east, 1m scale

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Land to the rear of 185 Watling Street, Towcester, Northamptonshire	OASIS reference:	Archaeol2-113311
Short Description:	In October 2011, ASC carried out an archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 185 Watling Street, Towcester, Northamptonshire, in advance of the construction of an extension to the existing building. One trench and one test pit were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development. The trench was within the existing lawn area, and the test pit within the existing patio area. The trench cut through several layers of made ground before reaching the natural strata. The test pit was excavated to below the maximum depth of the proposed footings, and did not breach the level of made ground. It was decided that significant archaeological remains were unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development.		
Project Type:	Evaluation		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	-	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	None
Current land use:	Garden	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	No
Monument type:	-	Monument period:	-
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	-		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Northamptonshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 6926 4866
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	185 Watling Street, Towcester, Northamptonshire		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	250sqm	Height OD: (metres)	c.87
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	B.Giggins	Project design originator:	C.Rouse
Project Manager:	B.Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	B.Zeepvat
Sponsor / funding body:	Oastlodge Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	24/10/2011	End date:	24/10/2011
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	To Be Arranged	-	
Paper:		Archive box	
Digital:		CD	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological evaluation at 185 Watling Street, Towcester, Northamptonshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1398/TWS/2		
Author(s):	Calli Rouse		
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