

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
EVELYN HOUSE
15 HIGH STREET
OLNEY
MILTON KEYNES**

NGR: SP 8888 5126

on behalf of Mrs M Richards



Bob Zeepvat BA MifA

June 2012

ASC: 1513/OHS/2



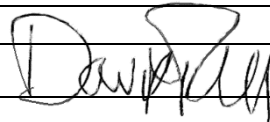
Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700
Email: office@archaeological-services.co.uk
Website: www.archaeological-services.co.uk



Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	OHS	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1513
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	Archaeol2-120350	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	1315
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire (historic county)		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Olney		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Olney		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 8888 5126		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.20 sq m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Rear yard/garden		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of rear extension		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Milton Keynes Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	11/02245/FUL		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	27 th June 2012		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Walker Associates Godfrey House 17 Church Street Weedon Northants NN7 4PL		
<i>Client:</i>	Mrs M Richards Evelyn House 15 High Street Olney MK46 4EB		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Lynne Walker		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Bob Zeepvat	<i>Date:</i>	29 th June 2012
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	29 th June 2012

© Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

No part of this document is to be copied in any way without prior written consent.

Every effort is made to provide detailed and accurate information. However, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd cannot be held responsible for errors or inaccuracies within this report.

© Ordnance Survey maps reproduced with the sanction of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
ASC Licence No. AL 100015154

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 Sheet	14
2. Photo List.....	15
3. ASC OASIS Form	16

Figures:

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

Plates:

Cover: General view of site, from west

1. Extension footings, looking north-east.....	11
2. Extension footings, looking north-west.....	11

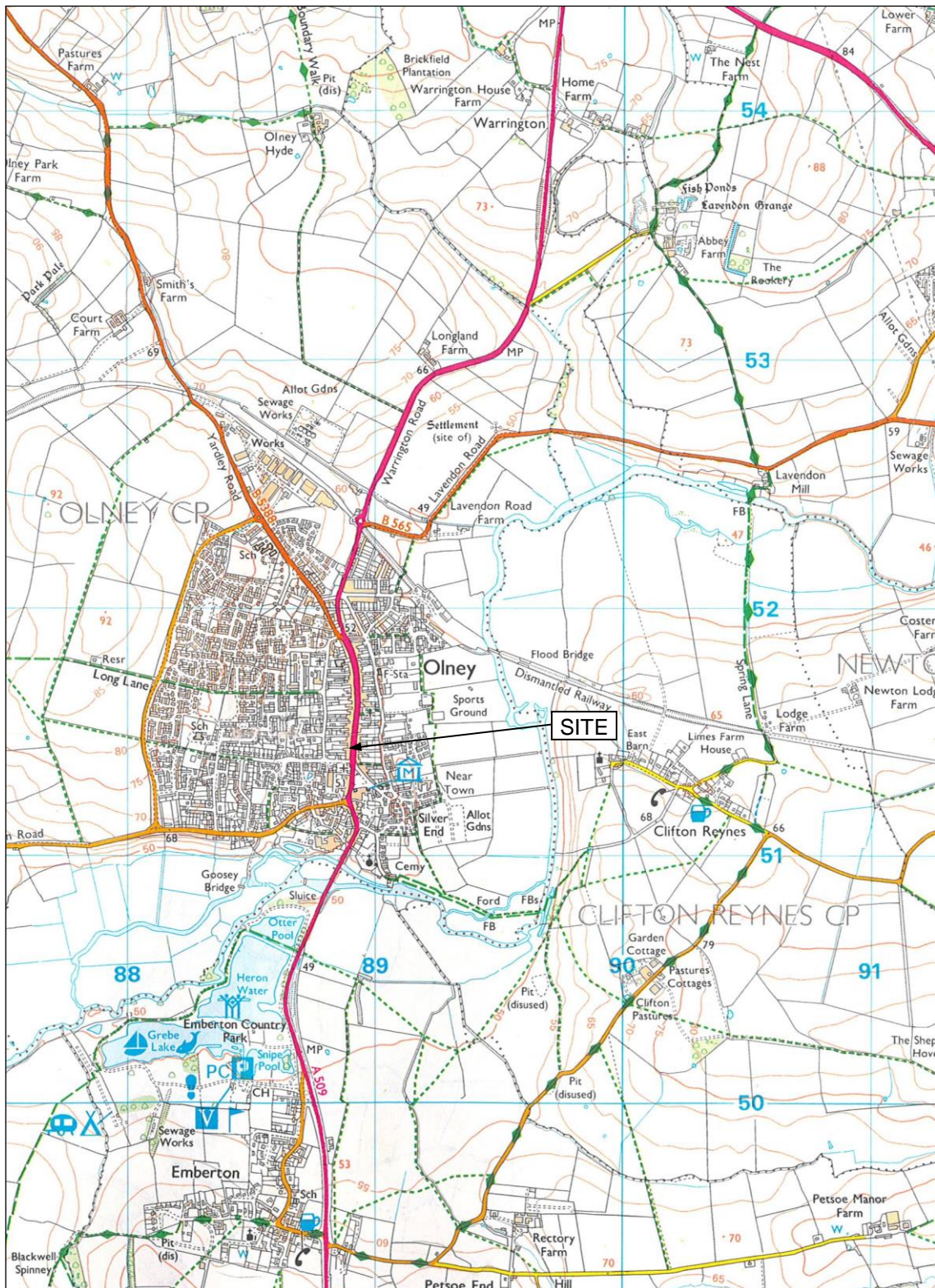


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In June 2012 a watching brief was maintained during excavations for the footings of an extension to the rear of 15 High Street, Olney. The site lies within the historic core of the town, and had the potential to reveal evidence of earlier activity, notably of medieval or earlier date.

The watching brief reveal nothing of archaeological interest in the area of the new extension, and no artefacts were recovered from site or the spoil removed from it. The site and adjoining areas were covered by a significant depth of modern made ground, and it is likely that levels have been modified and possibly truncated, though the survival of archaeological features elsewhere in the garden cannot be ruled out. Cartographic evidence suggests that the site has been occupied by a succession of outbuildings since the late 19th century, and it is likely that construction works connected with these outbuildings have already caused significant disturbance to the site area.

1. Introduction

1.1 In June 2012 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 15 High Street, Olney, Milton Keynes. The project was commissioned by *Walker Associates* on behalf of the client, *Mrs M Richards*, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Zeepvat 2012), and approved by the *Milton Keynes Council Senior Archaeological Officer*, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), *Milton Keynes Council*. The relevant planning application reference is 11/02245/FUL.

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 boundaries of the Milton Keynes Council unitary authority, in the village and parish of Olney, on the west side of the High Street, north of the market square, at National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 8888 5126 (Fig. 1). Evelyn House (15 High Street) fronts onto the High Street to the east, with a narrow garden/yard plot extending to the rear for c.120m, terminating c.60m short of West Street, from which there is a rear access (Fig. 2). Before the development commenced, the south end of the proposed new extension was covered by an existing structure, subsequently

demolished. To the north of the proposed extension, a patio extended *c.*6m west of the house. Beyond that was a raised lawn, *c.*0.4m higher than the patio.

1.4.2 Topography & Geology

The site is located in the floodplain of the Ouse valley, on more or less level ground at an elevation of *c.*50m AOD. Soils in the area belong to the Moreton association, described as ‘well drained calcareous clayey and fine loamy soils over limestone, in places shallow and brashy’ (Soil Survey 1983, 511b) The underlying geology comprises river terrace sands and gravels over Great Oolite limestone (BGS, Sheet 203).

1.4.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises construction of a single-storey rear extension, with a footprint of *c.*20 sq m (Fig. 3).

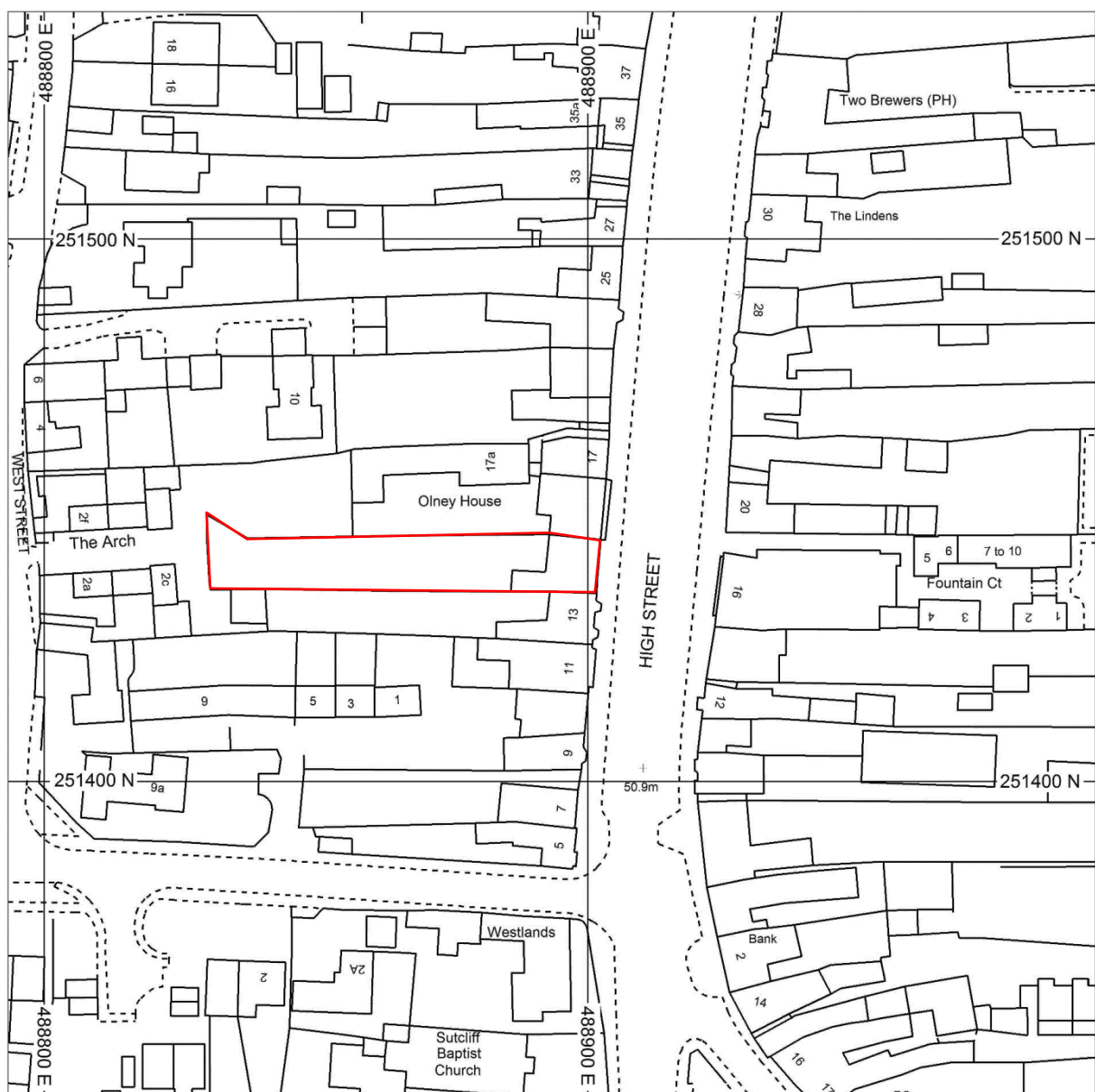


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

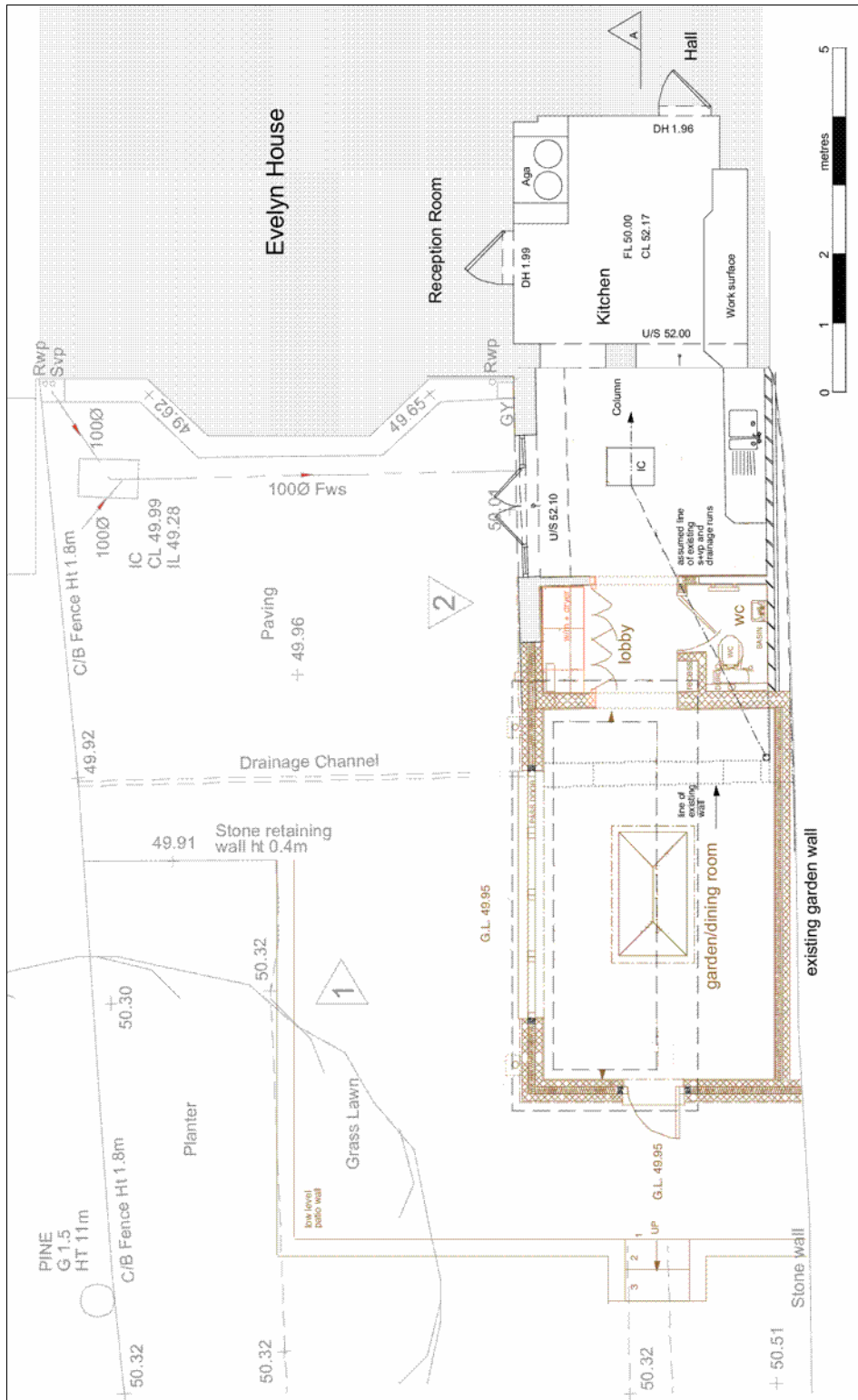


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:100)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the project design, the aims of the watching brief were:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect archaeological remains
- 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

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IfA 2008a & b) and *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991; EH 2006), and to the relevant sections of ASC's *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the project design, which described:

- The archaeological monitoring of footing trenches and associated services
- The rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits
- Examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material

2.4 Constraints

No constraints were encountered during the watching brief.

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.

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

Human activity in the Ouse valley during the earlier prehistoric periods is characterised mainly by the presence of worked flint, and flint and stone implements. A principal feature of the Bronze Age landscape is the presence of numerous 'ring ditches', ploughed-out burial monuments. Examples have been excavated in Milton Keynes (Green 1974) and more recently at Gayhurst (Chapman 2007). A number have been recorded by aerial photography in the Olney area (Field 1974, 65), the nearest being 200m north of the development site.

3.3 *Iron Age* (600BC-AD43)

Iron Age activity in the Ouse valley is represented primarily by farmsteads consisting of rectangular ditched enclosures with associated hut gullies, pits, ditches and field systems. Examples have been excavated at Gayhurst (Chapman 2007) and Biddenham (Dawson 2000, 118), but none are recorded in the immediate vicinity of the site.

3.4 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

During the Roman period the Olney area fell within the tribal territory of the *Catuvellauni*, with its capital at *Verulamium* (St Albans). A road linking the small Roman towns of *Magiovinium* (Fenny Stratford) and Irchester probably crossed the Ouse at Olney. Associated with the river crossing, on rising ground on the north bank of the Ouse and immediately north of the development site, is an extensive Roman site known as Ashfurlong. Significant amounts of Roman pottery, building materials and coins have been recovered over time from an area covering several hectares. Aerial photographs of the site, which is a scheduled ancient monument, have revealed circular features, enclosures and rectangular stone buildings (Zeepvat & Radford 2010, 80-81). Apart from this, little is known of Ashfurlong: it could be a settlement, a posting station, or possibly a large villa establishment.

3.5 *Saxon* (c.450-1066)

The town of Olney probably developed during the Saxon period. Following King Alfred's defeat of the Danes in c.879, the area north of the Ouse where Olney is located fell within the Danelaw (Markham 1973, 34), so it is possible that the town was founded as a Danish frontier post. In the reign of Ethelred (the Unready), further conflict between Danes and Saxons led to the massacre of Danes at Olney and other Ouse valley settlements (*ibid*, 36), in what has become known as the Massacre of St Brice. The name of the town probably derives from old English, meaning 'Olla's island'.

3.6 **Medieval** (1066-1500)

Olney is referred to in the *Domesday Survey* (1086) as *Olnei*. At that time it was held directly by the *Bishop of Coutances* and was valued at £12 (Williams & Martin 2002). During the medieval period Olney flourished as one of the principal market centres for north Buckinghamshire. The town is dominated by the High Street, which runs north from the market place, and the church of St Peter and St Paul, which dates from the 14th century (Pevsner & Williamson 2000). The town has a planned layout, with East Street and West Street aligned parallel to the High Street, forming back lanes enclosing medieval tenement plots. The tenement patterns often survive as property boundaries to the present day. One of the town's two annual fairs, on the festival of St Peter (29th June) was granted in 1315.

3.7 **Post-Medieval - Modern** (1500-present)

During the post medieval period Olney continued to flourish as a market town, and as the centre of the north Buckinghamshire lace making industry. Other rural industries, such as straw plaiting and tanning, were also common in the area.

The parish of Olney was inclosed by Act of Parliament in 1767. In 1786 there was a major fire in the town, which destroyed 43 houses. The town remained largely unaffected by canal and railway developments in the late 18th and 19th centuries, and thereby avoided much development during the Victorian period.

Much of the 19th-century development in Olney was focused at the north end of the town, where a shoe factory was established. In 1872 the Bedford & Northampton Railway was opened through Olney. The railway passed to the north of the town, crossing over the junction of the Wellingborough and Lavendon roads by a bridge and adjacent embankments (Davies & Grant 1984). The line closed to passengers in 1962, and to goods in 1964.

15 High Street, formerly one wing of the adjoining 18th-century Olney House, is Grade II listed (IoE ref. 45695). Examination of large-scale Ordnance Survey mapping from the late 19th-century onwards indicates that a range of outbuildings has occupied the location of the proposed extension to 15 High Street since that time.

4. Results & Conclusions

4.1 Results

A single visit was necessary for the watching brief: the record sheet is reproduced in Appendix 1.

Excavations for the footings of the new extension (6 × 4m overall) comprised four linked strip footing trenches, c.0.6m wide. The base of the footing trenches was c.0.85m below the patio, and c.1.25m below the raised lawn. The area encompassed by the trenches was reduced to c.0.35m below the patio.

The site stratigraphy below the patio (Plates 1, 2) comprised the following:

0.00 – 0.10m	Patio. Stone slabs and bedding layer
0.10 – 0.50m	Modern made ground. Loose mixed dark grey-brown soil containing frequent limestone rubble and occasional brick/tile/ceramic drain fragments
0.50 – 0.75m	Made ground? Sticky cream-buff sandy layer with frequent small limestone fragments
0.75m+	Natural. Orange-brown sandy clay.

The made ground was deeper beneath the truncated extension at the east end of the site. No cut features were noted in the footing trenches, and the only structural features present were the remains of the concrete footings of the demolished extension. Examination of the reduced areas, and the spoil extracted from the excavation, failed to reveal any finds of archaeological interest.

4.2 Conclusions

The watching brief did not reveal any features, deposits or structures of archaeological interest in the area of the new extension, and no artefacts were recovered from the reduced area or from the spoil removed from it. The development site and adjoining areas were covered by a significant depth of made ground, and it is likely that levels on the site and in the adjoining garden have been modified and possibly truncated, though the survival of archaeological features elsewhere in the garden cannot be ruled out. Cartographic evidence suggests that the site of the new extension has been occupied by a succession of outbuildings since the late 19th century at least: it is likely that construction works connected with these outbuildings have already caused significant disturbance to the site area.



Plate 1: Extension footings, looking north-east



Plate 2: Extension footings, looking north-west

5. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Walker Associates on behalf of Mrs Richards. The writer is grateful to Lynne Walker for her assistance. The project was monitored by Nick Crank on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to the groundworks contractor, Mark Leeding, for his assistance.

The project was managed for ASC by Bob Zeepvat BA MifA, who also undertook the watching brief and prepared the report. The report was edited by David Fell MA MifA.

6. Archive

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
3. Clients site plans
4. Site Monitoring Sheet
5. Site record drawings
6. List of photographs
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. 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).
- EH 2006 *The Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2010 Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2008 Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2008 *Standard & Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Institute for Archaeologists (Reading)
- Zeepvat B 2012 *Evelyn House, 15 High Street, Olney, Milton Keynes: Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief*. ASC doc. ref. 1513/OHS/1

Secondary Sources

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Chapman A 2007 'A Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery and Later Boundaries, Pit Alignments and Enclosures at Gayhurst Quarry, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire', *Recs Buckinghamshire* **47.2**, 81-211.
- Davies R & Grant MD 1984 *Forgotten Railways: Chilterns and Cotswolds*. David & Charles (Newton Abbott)
- Dawson M 2000 'Iron Age and Romano-British Period: a Landscape in Transition', in Dawson M (ed.) *Prehistoric, Roman and Post-Roman Landscapes in the Great Ouse Valley*. CBA Research Report **119**, 107-130 (York).
- Field K 1974 'Ring Ditches in the Upper and Middle Great Ouse Valley', *Archaeol. J.* **131**, 58-74.
- Green H S 1974 'Early Bronze Age Burial, Territory and Population in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire and the Great Ouse Valley', *Archaeol. J.* **131**, 75-139.
- Markham Sir F 1973 *A History of Milton Keynes and District: Volume 1 – to 1830*. White Crescent Press (Luton).
- Page W (ed) 1927 *The Victoria History of the County of Buckingham*, vol. **4** (London).
- Pevsner N & Williamson E 2002 *The Buildings of England. Buckinghamshire*. Penguin
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Williams A & Martin G H (eds) 2003 *Domesday Book: a Complete Translation*. Penguin Classics (London).
- Zeepvat B & Radford D 2010 'Roman Buckinghamshire, AD43-410', in M Farley (ed.) 2010 *An Illustrated History of Early Buckinghamshire*, 75-108. Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society (Aylesbury).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		WATCHING BRIEF RECORD				
Project: 15 HIGH ST OLNEY		Project No/Code: 1513 / OHS	Sheet: 1 of 1			
Client/Developer: MARK UEDINER		Date of visit:				
Contact: 07977 584057	Phone: →					
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 09.00.	Finish: 10.25.				
Completed by: R.						
Development Type:						
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: DM, OVERCAST						
Observations: GROUND REDUCTION / FOOTING TRENCHES AS PER FIG 3 OF WS1. EXC TO c 1250 BELOW LAMON, 850 BELOW PATIO. GEN REDUCTION TO 500 ABOVE FOOTING TRENCH BASE. STRAT (PATIO): TOPSOIL / MAKE GROUND 0 - 500 - DRAINS ETC. LAYER - ROTTED LST? 500 - 750 CURC FOOTINGS NATURAL - ORANGE-BROWN 750+ SANDY CLAY. <u>NO ARMY FUNDS</u> <u>NO REVERSAL PRJS.</u>						
Comments: EXCAVATION OF FOOTINGS COMPLETE. NO FURTHER VISITS.						

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 15 High Street, Olney			SITE NO/CODE:1513/OHS
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	31	2727	General view of site from west
2	30	2728	Footing trench, north-east corner
3	29	2729	Footing trench, south-east corner
4	28	2730	Footing trench, west end
5	27	2731	General view of site from north-east

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	15 High Street, Olney	OASIS reference:	Archaeol2-120350
Short Description:	<p>In June 2012 a watching brief was maintained during excavations for the footings of an extension to the rear of 15 High Street, Olney. The site lies within the historic core of the town, and had the potential to reveal evidence of earlier activity, notably of medieval or earlier date.</p> <p>The watching brief reveal nothing of archaeological interest in the area of the new extension, and no artefacts were recovered from site or the spoil removed from it. The site and adjoining areas were covered by a significant depth of made ground, and it is likely that levels have been modified and possibly truncated, though the survival of archaeological features elsewhere in the garden cannot be ruled out. Cartographic evidence suggests that the site has been occupied by a succession of outbuildings since the late 19th century, and it is likely that construction works connected with these outbuildings have already caused significant disturbance to the site area.</p>		
Project Type:	Watching brief		
Previous work:	none	Site status:	Adj. GII listed building, IoE ref. 15605
Current land use:	Disused workshop	Future work:	no
Monument type:	none	Monument period:	n/a
Significant finds:	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Buckinghamshire (historic)	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 8888 5126
Site address:	15 High Street, Olney, Milton Keynes MK46 4EB		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	24 sq m	Height OD: (metres)	c.50m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Nick Crank, MKC	Project design originator:	Bob Zeepvat BA MifA
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat BA MifA	Director/Supervisor:	Bob Zeepvat BA MifA
Sponsor / funding body:	Mrs M Richards		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	27 June 2012	End date:	27 June 2012
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Bucks County Museum	none	
Paper:		WSI, site records, photos, report	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief: Evelyn House, 15 High Street, Olney, Milton Keynes		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1513/OHS/2		
Author(s):	Bob Zeepvat BA MifA		
Page nos	16	Date:	29/06/12