

<u>Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd</u>

WATCHING BRIEF: 27 CASTLE STREET BERKHAMSTED HERTFORDSHIRE

NGR: SP 9947 0791

on behalf of Paul McCarthy



Bob Zeepvat BA MIfA

May 2012

ASC: 1525/BCS/2



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Site Data

ASC project code:	BCS		ASC Project No:	1525		
OASIS ref:	Archaeol2-124573		Event/Accession no:	tbc		
County:		Hertfordshire				
Village/Town:		Berkhamsted				
Civil Parish:		Berkhamsted				
NGR (to 8 figs):		SP 9947 0791				
Extent of site:		c.200sqm				
Present use:		Residential				
Planning proposal:		Conversion from offices to dwelling, with single storey				
Local Planning Author	ority:	Dacorum Borough Council				
Planning application	Planning application ref/date:		4/00058/11/FUL			
Date of fieldwork:		2/05/12 - 3/05/12				
Client:	Client:		Paul McCarthy			
			17 Manor Street			
			Berkhamsted			
		Hertfordshire				
		HP4 2BN				
Contact name:		Paul McCarthy				

Internal Quality Check

Primary Author:	Bob Zeepvat	Date:	17/05/12
Revisions:		Date:	
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	Joseph PW		

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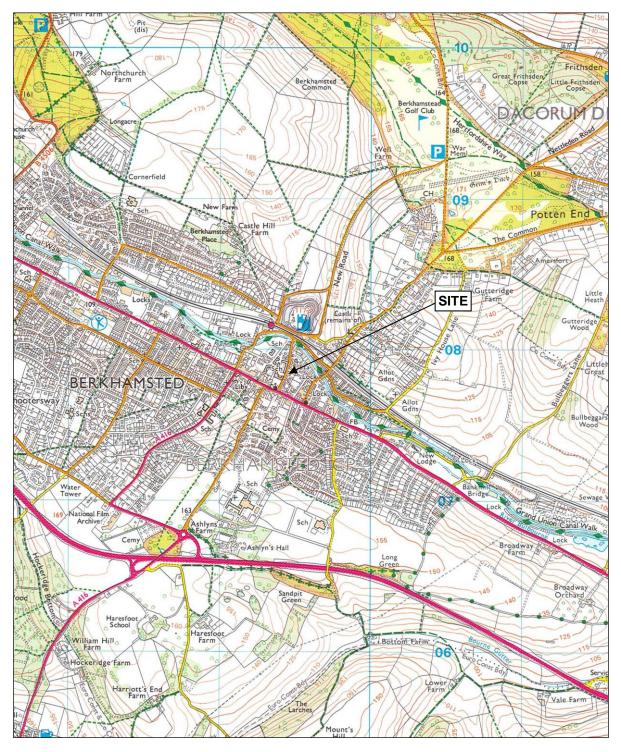


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In May 2012 a watching brief was maintained on the construction of a single-storey extension to the rear of 27 Castle Street, Berkhamsted. The watching brief revealed that the area had been heavily disturbed, probably in the 19th and 20th centuries. Medieval activity on the site was attested by the presence of residual Hertfordshire Greyware sherds amongst 19th-century deposits. Based on the observations made, it appears unlikely that the development will have any significant impact on features, finds or deposits of earlier periods.

1. Introduction

1.1 In May 2012 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 27 Castle Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by the client, Paul McCarthy, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2012), and approved by the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), Dacorum Borough Council. The relevant planning application reference is 4/00058/11/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 site is located in the town and civil parish of Berkhamsted, in the borough of Dacorum, Hertfordshire. It lies on the east side of Castle Street, centred at NGR SP 9947 0791 (Fig. 1).

The site comprises a rectangular area with buildings at its east and west ends. It is surrounded by residential development on its north, east and south sides, and access is from Castle Street, to the west (Fig. 2).

1.4.2 Topography & Geology

The site lies at an elevation of c.108m AOD. Soils of the area comprise the *Charity 2 Association*: namely flinty fine silty soils over chalk (Soil Survey, 1983, 571m). The underlying geology is characterised as recent and Pleistocene alluvium (BGS, Sheet 238).

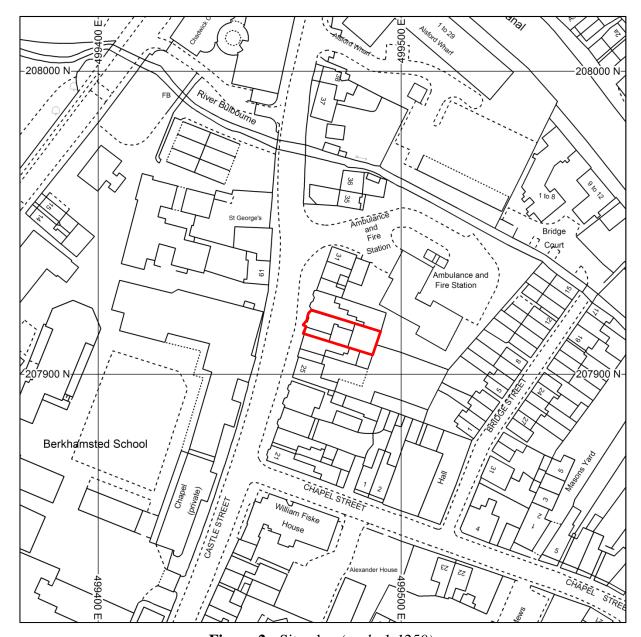


Figure 2: Site plan (*scale 1:1250*)

1.4.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the conversion of the building from offices to a family dwelling, with a single storey extension to the rear (Fig. 3).

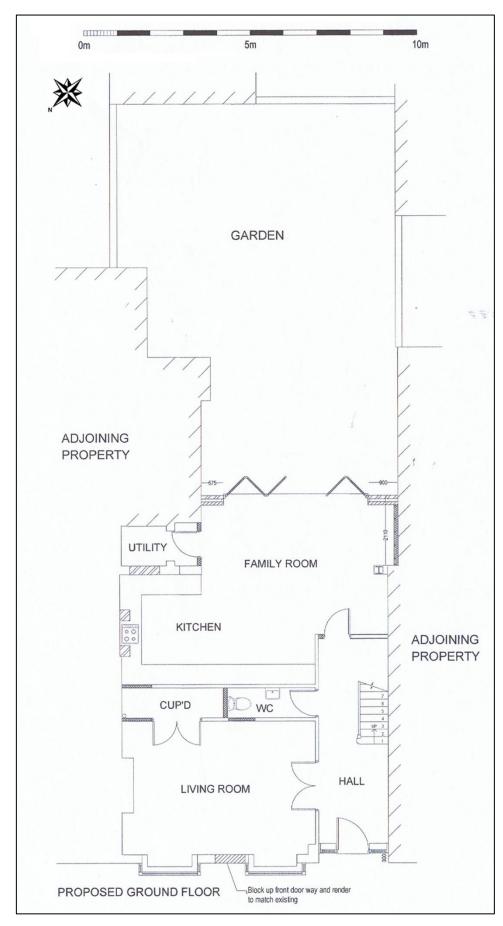


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale as shown)

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), 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 *Operations Manual*.

2.3 *Methods*

The work was carried out according to the project design, which described a watching brief, comprising:

- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision
- Inspection of sub-soil deposits for archaeological features
- The rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits
- Sub-soil stripping under archaeological supervision
- Examination of any service and foundation trenches and the subsequent recording of any exposed archaeological deposits
- Rapid examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving and publication

2.4 Constraints

The watching brief was carried out in generally mild but overcast conditions. Full cooperation was received from the client and his contractors, and no constraints were encountered.

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 the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER, search no: 38/12) and other readily available sources, including ASC's own library.

3.2 **Prehistoric** (before AD43)

The nature and extent of prehistoric settlement in the Bulbourne valley is not well understood, but there is evidence to suggest that the area was occupied from the Neolithic period (McDonald 1995). A substantial earthwork, now known as Grim's Ditch was constructed along the south side of the river valley during the Iron Age (Bryant & Burleigh 1995). Its purpose is not understood in detail, but it may have served as a boundary between tribal territories or differing land types (Thompson & Bryant 2005: 2).

An Iron Age bronze coin issued by Addedomaros of the Trinovantes was found in 1976 in the garden behind a shop in Lower Kings Road. In the late Iron Age, the valley appears to have become a major iron production centre. Shaft furnaces were found at Bridgewater School, close to four late Iron Age cremation burials, and contemporary pits and ditches (Thompson & Bryant 2005, 3).

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

Little is known in detail of Berkhamsted during Roman period, but it is known that this area of the Bulbourne valley was of considerable importance. A major Roman road, now known as Akeman Street, followed the valley bottom and linked *Verulamium* (St Albans) with *Corinium* (Cirencester). The route has not been explored in detail but the line of the present Berkhamsted High Street probably follows the approximate course of the Roman road (Copeland 2009).

No Roman sites or artefacts are known in the vicinity of the site, but this may be due to the fact that any remains of the Roman road or associated roadside activity may have been truncated by subsequent settlement. Evidence of Roman occupation has been revealed elsewhere in Berkhamsted, including along Castle Hill Avenue and Bridgewater Road (eg. HER 6071, 6803, etc) where it has been suggested that Roman pottery kilns were situated.

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

The earliest documentary reference to Berkhamsted is in the Will of Aelfgifu in the 10th century (Sawyer 1968: 415, no. 1484) and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that the English submitted to their Norman conquerors at Berkhamsted (Thompson & Bryant 2005: 6-7; Page 1908: 162). The location and nature of the Saxon settlement has never been defined, but it is thought that its focus was St Mary's church in Northchurch (Thompson & Bryant 2005: 5; Doggett & Hunn 1985: 22).

3.5 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

The post-conquest development of the town was based on a new administrative focus both in terms of geographical location and political authority, which was manifested in the castle (Doggett & Hunn 1985: 18 & 28-30). The castle has been associated with various national figures, such as Thomas à Becket in the 12th century, and Geoffrey Chaucer in the 14th century when it was a royal palace and held dignitaries like King John of France prisoner. It was a favourite residence of the Edward the Black Prince (1330-1376) who enjoyed hunting in the adjoining deer park. The castle remained a royal residence up until the end of the 15th century when the Countess Cecily died there in 1495.

Berkhamsted or *Berchehastede* is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 (Morris 1976: 15.1) as a *burbium* (borough) whose 52 burgesses paid £4 from tolls and held half a hide of land. The number of burgesses has been questioned (Doggett and Hunn 1985: 22). However, if this was accurate then Berkhamsted was one of the most important boroughs in the county along with Hertford and St Albans. By 1301 it had a separate court, the portmoot, which was held fortnightly, and its status in the 14th century is further indicated by its representation in parliament at Westminster in 1337 and 1341 (*ibid*: 30). The market place was first recorded in the early 13th century (HER 9188) and was a prominent feature of the town into the 20th century.

Evidence for medieval settlement was found to the rear of the Kings Arms Hotel, consisting of a large pit which was backfilled in the mid-late 12th century. Further medieval activity, thought to be industrial, was found to the south east of the site at Manor Street (HER 16203).

Medieval waterlogged deposits have also been recovered to the rear of 256 High Street (HER 9957) and further occupation evidence was revealed beneath the Waitrose site to the north of the High Street (HER 7366). Medieval buildings survive on the High Street, including one that dates from the late 13th century and is the earliest known jettied building in an urban context (Dunn *et al* 2007).

The core of the present town was in existence by the 12th/13th century and appears to have comprised the High Street, a market place (now occupied by development backing onto Back Lane), Castle Street, Water Lane and Mill Street, which linked the market place and the castle, Raven's Lane and Chesham Road, formerly Elvenway (Doggett and Hunn 1985: 32). The layout of the town during this period is not known in detail, but the pattern of tenement boundaries has been partially reconstructed in the Berkhamsted Extensive Urban Survey (Thompson & Bryant 2005: fig. 4).

The church of St Peter dates from the 13th century but may have earlier origins. It was extensively restored by Wyatville and Butterfield in the 19th century (Pevsner & Cherry 2002: 95-97). The principal burial ground is to the north of the building but burials have been recorded to the west, adjacent to Church Lane (HER 12198), which suggests that the burial ground may once have been more extensive and could have extended into the area that later became the market.

3.6 *Post-Medieval* (1500-1900)

Berkhamsted became an important staging post on the London to Aylesbury road during the 17th and 18th centuries, resulting in the construction of a number of inns and a remission from the post-medieval economic slump that had dogged the town. Maltings and breweries were located to the east and southeast of the site (HER 7092,

7090). The Royal Oak (HER 9296) was located at the western end of the High Street, next to Sayers Almshouses, built by Mary Sayer in 1682 (HER 9292).

The Grand Junction Canal (now the Grand Union) was completed in 1805, and its construction provided a further economic boost, both in the transportation of bulk goods and in the construction of canal barges (Thompson & Bryant 1005: 22). The transport system was further improved with the opening of the London to Birmingham Railway in 1838. As a result the town expanded considerably in the first half of the 19th century, with a population of 1690 in 1801 increasing to 3395 in 1851 (*ibid*: 23).

The oldest readily available map to show the site is the 1877-8 Berkhamsted Town Plan, which shows that the eastern side of Castle Street was already well established, and appears to show the site layout to be similar to that of today.

3.7 *Modern* (1900-present)

From at least the early 20th century, 27 Castle Street has been a shop, with first-floor accommodation above and a yard to the rear, entered by a gated ginnell from Castle Street (Plate 1).



Plate 1: 27 Castle Street, *c*.1920

4. Results & Conclusions

4.1 *Results* (Fig. 4)

Two watching brief visits were made to the site: the record sheets are reproduced in Appendix 1.

By the time of the first visit, existing structures and concrete surfaces had been cleared from the site to a depth of c.0.25m (Plate 2). This revealed disturbed ground, containing much building debris, including 19^{th} and 20^{th} -century pottery and glass bottles, also fragments of bone and oyster shells (Plate 3). Some residual sherds of medieval Hertfordshire greyware were also present. A number of service runs were also noted crossing the development area.

North of the centre of the site was a circular brick-lined feature 0.8m dia. and 1.3m deep, capped by a rectangle of modern brickwork which had supported a manhole cover (Plate 4). A plastic pipe carrying rainwater runoff from an adjacent roof was cut through the wall of the feature. The floor of the feature was covered by building debris and dark soil. The feature was identified as a 19th-century soakaway.

Two footing trenches were excavated across the site, both to a depth of c.1m, revealing the following stratigraphy (Plate 5):

- 0.00 0.20m rubble base for concrete surface (previously removed)
- 0.20-0.50m Redeposited layer, comprising greyish brown sandy clay containing building rubble, flints and charcoal flecks.
- 0.50 0.76m Dark grey flinty layer
- 0.76m+ Natural. Pale yellowish brown flinty gravel.

At its south end, the easternmost trench encountered a pit, 1.1m wide and 0.8m deep, apparently flint lined. Its fill comprised dark grey soil containing 18th/19th-century pottery, clay pipe stems and bone. On the west side of the westernmost footing trench a possible pit was revealed. Its extent and fill were not recorded.

A block of worked Totternhoe clunch excavated on the site was recorded (Plate 6). It measured $420 \times 313 \times 240$ mm, with a slot 45mm wide and deep and a hole 45mm in diameter in one face. Its date and function remain uncertain.

4.2 Conclusions

The watching brief revealed that the area to the rear of 27 Castle Street had been heavily disturbed, probably in the 19th and 20th centuries, by the installation of a number of buried services including the brick soakaway, and by a number of possible pits of undetermined function. Earlier activity on the site was attested by the presence of residual medieval Hertfordshire Greyware sherds amongst 19th-century deposits. Based on the observations made, it appears unlikely that the development will have any significant impact on features, finds or deposits of earlier periods.

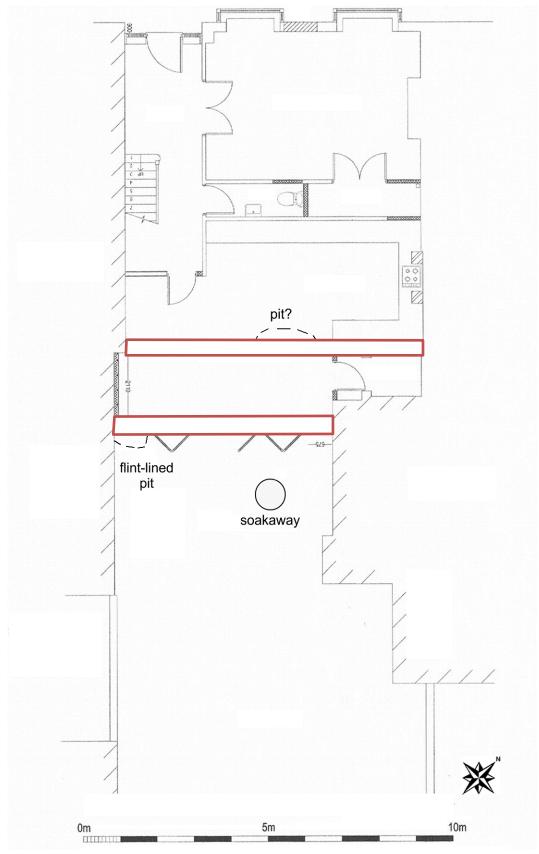


Figure 4: Watching brief observations (scale 1:100) (footing trenches in red)



Plate 2: Site at start of watching brief, looking west



Plate 3: Selection of finds from watching brief



Plate 4: Brick soakaway



Plate 5: Stratigraphy revealed in footing trench



Plate 6: Block of worked Totternhoe clunch

5. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Paul McCarthy, whose assistance is gratefully acknowledged. The project was monitored by Kate Batt of the Herts CC Historic Environment Unit on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for ASC by Bob Zeepvat BA MIfA. Fieldwork was carried out by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIfA. The report was prepared by Bob Zeepvat and 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 Sheets
 - 5. List of photographs
 - 6. B/W prints & negatives
 - 7. Original specialist reports and supporting information
 - 8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.
- 6.2 The archive will be deposited with Dacorum Heritage Trust

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).
- 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 (various dates) Institute for Archaeologists' Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments 2011, Watching Briefs 2008, Evaluations 2009, Excavations 2008, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings 2008, Finds 2008, Archiving 2009).
- Rouse C 2012 27 Castle Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire: Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief. ASC doc. ref. 1525/BCS/1.

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- Soil Survey 1983 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend. Harpenden
- Thompson, I & Bryant, S. 2005 *Berkhamsted: Extensive Urban Survey* Hertford: Hertfordshire County Council

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		WATC	HING BRIEF RECORD			
Project: 27 Castle Street		/Code: 5 / BCS	Sheet: of Z			
Bevkhamistel	Date of visit:	2/5/12				
Client/Developer Paul Mc Carthy						
Contact: Dave Macin		Phone: 077383	273348			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel): Start: 2.20 pm		Finish: 4.30 pm	n			
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Project: 27, Costk Street	Project No		Sheet: 2 of 2
Beckhamster	Date of visit:	3/5/12	
Client/Developer Por Maclarthy			
Contact: Steve Morein		Phone: 0773827	3348
Duration of Visit Start:	2.20	Finish: 11.25 ; 5.0	Sec
Completed by:		11.20 1	- /// -
Developme	ent Type:		
Footings Services Roads Levelling Qua	rrying P	ipelines Other (spe	ecify):
Site & weather conditions:			
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Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAM	ME: 27 Ca	stle Stree	et, Berkhamsted SITE NO/CODE:1525/BCS		
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject		
1		427	Oblique view of frontage of no. 27 looking NNE		
2	Yes	428	Frontage of no.27 view ENE		
3		429	Rear elevation looking WNW		
4		430	Eastern end of rear yard of no. 27		
5		431	Detail of end of rear yard		
6		432	Plan of present development		
7		433	NE side of current development		
8		434	Internal view of timber work taken from ground level		
9		435	View ENE of old dairy and west side of rear yard of no. 27		
10		436	Rear elevation and yard looking WNW		
11		437	View of building on east side of yard looking north		
12		438	View NNE of building on east side of yard		
13		439	Service pipes in centre of site view NNE		
14		440	Modern brick built service hatch over old well		
15		441	Interior of brick lined 'well'		
16		442	Interior of brick lined 'well' with ranging rod		
17	Yes	443	Location of rectangular well cover with 1m ranging rod		
18		444	Block of ashlar clunch in skip		
19		445	Block of ashlar clunch in skip		
20		446	Block of ashlar clunch in skip		
21		447	Machine digging underway (2 nd foundation trench)		
22		448	Eastern end of south facing foundation trench looking west		
23		449	2 nd foundation trench in relation to existing house looking WNW		
24		450	1st foundation trench looking west		
25		451	Western end of foundation trenches looking SSW		
26	Yes	452	Detail of flint lined feature (well?) looking SSE		
27		453	South facing section of 2 nd foundation trench		
28	Yes	454	South facing section of 1st foundation trench		
29		455	Depth of original foundation looking NNE		
30		456	Current state of development looking WNW		

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

	PROJECT	DETAILS	3			
Project Name:	27 Castle Street, Berkhamsted		OASIS reference:	Archaeol2-124573		
Short Description:	In May 2012 a watching brief was maintained on the construction of a single-storey extension to the rear of 27 Castle Street, Berkhamsted. The watching brief revealed that the area had been heavily disturbed, probably in the 19th and 20th centuries. Medieval activity on the site was attested by the presence of residual Hertfordshire Greyware sherds amongst 19th-century deposits. Based on the observations made, it appears unlikely that the development will have any significant impact on features, finds or deposits of earlier periods.					
Project Type:	Watching Brief					
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none		Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	none		
Current land use:	rear		Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	no		
Monument type:	none		Monument period:	19 th /20 th century		
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none					
(,	PROJECT	LOCATIO	N			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS refe	rence: (8 figs min)	SP 9947 0791		
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	27 Castle Street, Berkhamsted, H	ertfordshi	re			
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	c.200 sq m	Height (DD: (metres)	108		
	PROJECT (CREATOR	RS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consu	Itancy Ltd				
Project brief originator:	n/a	Project of	design originator:	C Rouse, BA PIFA, ASC		
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA, ASC	Director/Supervisor: Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA		Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA		
Sponsor / funding body:	Paul McCarthy					
		PROJECT DATE				
Start date:				1 - 1 - 1 - 1		
	2/05/12	End dat		3/05/12		
	PROJECT	ARCHIVE	:S			
		ARCHIVE Content				
Physical:	PROJECT Location (Accession no.)	ARCHIVE Content none	(eg. pottery, anima	I bone, files/sheets)		
	PROJECT	ARCHIVE Content none WSI, site	e records, photos, re	I bone, files/sheets)		
Physical:	PROJECT Location (Accession no.)	ARCHIVE Content none WSI, site	(eg. pottery, anima	I bone, files/sheets)		
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