

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

WATCHING BRIEF: 8 DELLFIELD CLOSE BERKHAMSTED HERTFORDSHIRE

NGR: SP 9841 0883

on behalf of Paula Campbell-Balcombe



Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc AIFA

September 2013

ASC: 1589/BDC/2

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Site Data

ASC project code:	BDC		ASC Project No:	1589		
OASIS ref:	archaeol2-141172		Event/Accession no:	tbc		
County:		Hertfordshire				
Village/Town:		Berkhamsted				
Civil Parish:		Berkham	sted			
NGR (to 8 figs):		SP 9841	0883			
Extent of watching br	rief:	c.60.5 sq	. m			
Present use:		Resident	ial			
Planning proposal:		Extension to property				
Local Planning Author	ority:	Dacorum Borough Council				
Planning application	ref:	4/01917/10/FHA				
Date of fieldwork:		16/09/13-26/09/13				
Client:		Paula Campbell-Balcombe 8 Dellfield Close Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 1DS				
Contact name:		Paula Campbell-Balcombe				

Internal Quality Check

Primary Author:	Carina Summerfield-Hill	Date:	27/09/13
Revisions:		Date:	
Edited/Checked By:	Downald	Date:	30 Sept 2013

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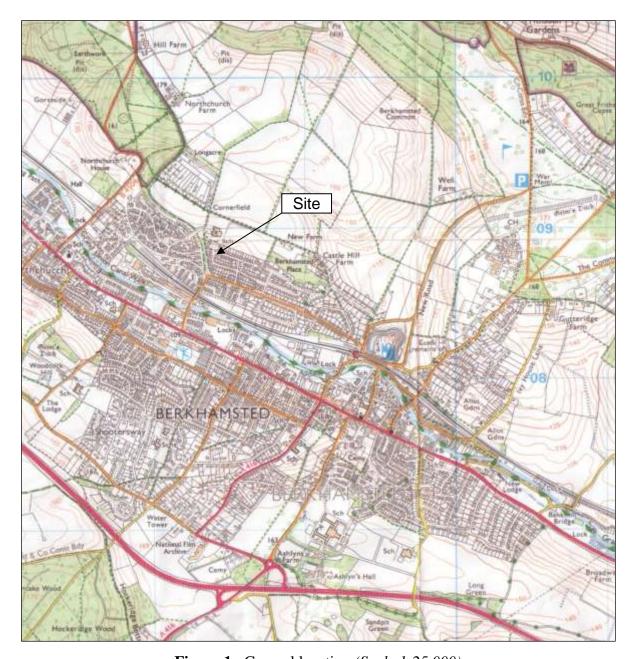


Figure 1: General location (Scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In September 2013 a watching brief was maintained at 8 Dellfield Close, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire during the construction of a two storey side extension. The excavation area consisted of a bank sloping upwards from the house to the road. The stratigraphy consisted of turf overlying modern made-ground comprising redeposited clay and chalk. The underlying natural strata comprised chalk. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed, and the development is considered to have had a low impact on archaeological remains.

1. Introduction

1.1 In September 2013 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 8 Dellfield Close, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by client Paula Campbell-Balcombe, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Brown 2013), and approved by the Historic Environment Unit (HEU) of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), Dacorum Borough Council. The relevant planning application reference is 4/01917/10/FHA.

1.2 Planning Background

This watching brief was required under the terms of the *National Planning Policy Frameworks* (NPPF), 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 Dellfield Close at its junction with Egerton Road and is centred on Ordnance Survey national grid reference SP 9841 0883 (Fig. 1). 8 Dellfield Close comprises a rectangular plot with a semi-detached house centred on the southern edge of the property boundary. Access is from Dellfield close via the northwest corner (Fig. 2).

1.4.2 Topography & Geology

The site lies at an elevation of c.145m 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).

1.4.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the construction of a new two storey extension on the north side of the existing building (Fig. 3).

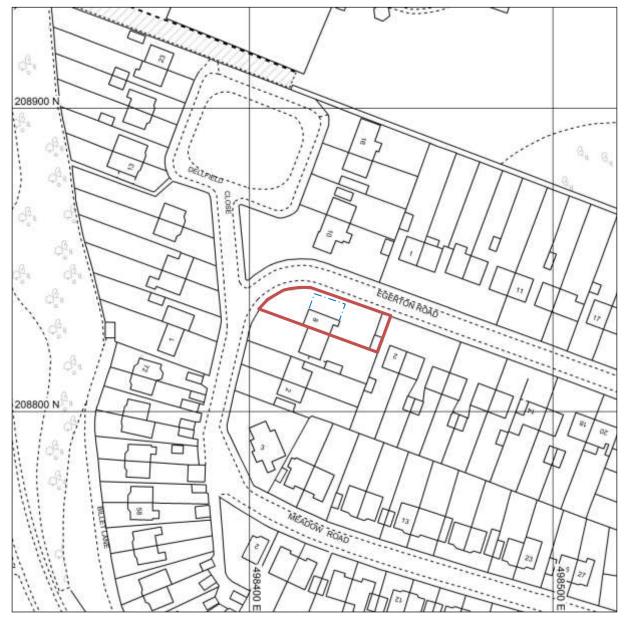


Figure 2: Site plan, extension highlighted in blue (Scale 1: 1250)

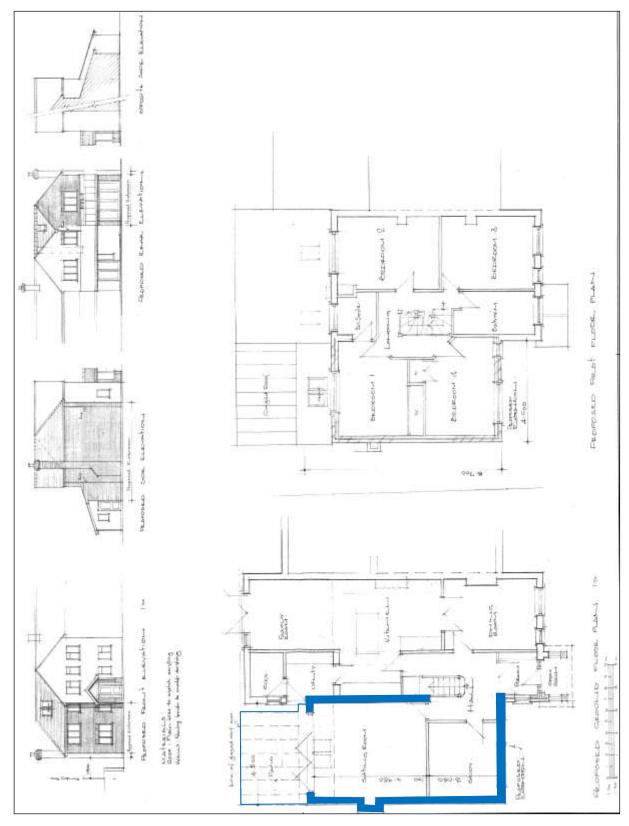


Figure 3: Proposed development, ground floor of extension highlighted (not to scale)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

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

- the archaeological monitoring of all groundworks associated with the proposed development-including foundations and service trenches
- a contingency for the rapid archaeological investigation of any remains encountered during the monitoring programme was in place
- the analysis of the results of the archaeological work and the production of a report

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 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:

- Soil and overburden stripping monitored under archaeological supervision
- Subsoil deposits stripped and inspected for archaeological features
- Monitoring of foundation trenches deemed to be unnecessary as site stripping was into the undisturbed natural stratum
- Examination of soakaway deemed to be unnecessary as main development area revealed nothing of archaeological significance
- Spoil-heaps rapidly examined for archaeological material
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis and archiving established

2.4 Constraints

The works were carried out in good site conditions with full co-operation of the contractors and client, 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 designated by the local authority as an *Area of Archaeological Significance* (no.21). It had the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods but the focus of interest was considered to lie in the Iron Age and Roman periods.

This section has been compiled with information from the *Berkhamsted Extensive Urban Survey* (Thompson & Bryant 2005), the Hertfordshire *Historic Environment Record* (HER) and including ASC's in-house collection.

3.2 Prehistoric & Iron Age (before 600BC-AD43)

The nature and extent of the prehistoric settlement pattern 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).

The archaeological significance of Dellfield Close is defined by its proximity to Bridgewater School, c.100m to the north. During the schools construction four ironworking furnaces and a number of cremation burials were found (HER 13059; Thompson & Holland 1977). It is likely that these remains were part of a larger site extending beyond the school boundary forming part of a major iron production centre based in the Bulbourne valley (Morris & Wainwright 1995).

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

Little is known in detail of the Berkhamsted area during Roman period, but it is apparent that this part of the Bulbourne valley was of considerable importance. A major Roman road now known as Akeman Street followed the valley bottom, linking *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). The nearest settlement was at Cow Roast, 3km to the north-west, where evidence for industrial activity, notably ironworking, has been recorded (Thompson 2002).

A number of Roman artefacts have been found in the area, notably along Castle Hill and Bridgewater Road where Roman pottery sherds have been recorded at a number of locations (*e.g.* HER 6071, 6803, etc.).

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

The earliest documentary references to Berkhamsted are in the Will of *Aelfgifu* in the 10th century (Sawyer 1968, 415, no. 1484), and in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which 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 not been defined, but it is thought that its focus was St Mary's

church in Northchurch, to the west of the development site (Thompson & Bryant 2005, 5; Doggett & Hunn 1985, 22).

3.5 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

The medieval period was a time of considerable expansion at Berkhamsted and following the Norman Conquest (1066) the castle was constructed c.1km east of the development site (Doggett & Hunn 1985, 18 & 28-30). The castle has been associated with various national figures, including Thomas à Becket and Geoffrey Chaucer. King John of France was held prisoner at the castle during the 14th century and it remained a royal residence until the late 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 fifty two burgesses paid £4 from tolls and held half a hide of land. 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. 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).

3.6 **Post-Medieval and modern** (1500-present)

Berkhamsted developed during the 19th and 20th centuries. The development site is shown on the 1881 edition 1:10,560 scale Ordnance Survey map as open ground and it probably remained undeveloped until the mid 20th century. Meadow Road and Egerton Road are shown on the 1939 edition Ordnance Survey 1: 2500 scale map and the surrounding area, including Dellfield Avenue were developed during the following years.

4. Results

An area of c.60.5 sq.m was mechanically excavated, under archaeological supervision, at the northern end of the site in order to accommodate the new side extension (Fig. 2; Plate 1). The natural topography of the area slopes down from north to south and the land dropped c.2m between Egerton Road and the north wall of the existing house.

The site stratigraphy comprised 0.25m of turf (Plate 2) over a c.0.45m thick layer of modern made-up ground consisting of mottled chalk and brownish orange clay with chalk nodules and flint. The underlying natural strata comprised chalk at a maximum depth of c.0.70m below ground level. No archaeological features, deposited or artefacts were observed.

The footing trenches for the extension were to be excavated into the undisturbed natural chalk. Following consultation with the AA it was agreed that monitoring the excavation of the footing trenches was not necessary. Due to the absence of archaeological remains within the footprint of the extension, it was agreed that the remaining area offered low archaeological potential and it was decided that monitoring of the soakaway need not be undertaken.



Plate 1: Ground reduction for the new extension, looking NW



Plate 2: Site stratigraphy, looking NW (Scale = 2m)

5. Conclusions

No archaeological features or artefacts were observed during the fieldwork. The site stratigraphy comprised turf, overlying modern clay and chalk made-ground. The underlying natural stratum comprised chalk.

The archaeological significance of the area is defined by its proximity to Bridgewater School, c.100m to the north, where a number of Iron Age ironworking furnaces and cremation burials have been found (HER 13059; Thompson & Holland 1977). They may have formed part of a larger site extending to the south beyond the school boundary towards Egerton Road and Dellfield Close.

No archaeological features or artefacts were observed during the watching brief and the impact of the development on significant archaeological remains is considered to have been low.

Confidence Rating

The project was carried out in good conditions and with full co-operation of the client and building contractor. A high confidence rating is applied to the results of the watching brief.

6. Acknowledgements

ASC Ltd is grateful to Paula Campbell-Balcombe for commissioning the project and thanks are also due to site contractors Aspin Foundations for their co-operation during the works. Kate Batt of the Historic Environment Unit of Hertfordshire County Council monitored the project on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for *ASC Ltd* by David Fell BA MA MIFA and the fieldwork was carried out by Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc AIFA. The report was prepared by Carina Summerfield-Hill and edited by David Fell.

7. Archive

- 7.1 The project archive will comprise:
 - 1. Project Design
 - 2. Initial Report
 - 3. Clients site plans
 - 4. Site Monitoring Sheets
 - 5. Site record drawings
 - 6. List of photographs
 - 7. B/W prints & negatives
 - 8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.
- 7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Dacorum Heritage Trust*.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

- ALGAO 2003 Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.
- Brown R 2013 Project Design: 8 Dellfield Close, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd document no **1589/BDC/1**.
- EH 2006 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).

Secondary Sources

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- Bryant S & Burleigh G 1995 'Later Prehistoric Dykes of the Eastern Chilterns' in R Holgate, 92-95.
- Copeland R 2009 Akeman Street Moving through Iron Age and Roman Landscapes. The History Press.
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- Soil Survey 1983 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend (Harpenden).
- Thompson A & Holland E, 1977 'Excavation of an Iron Age site at Dellfield, Berkhamsted' in *Hertfordshire Archaeology* **4**, 137-49.
- Thompson I & Bryant S 2005 *Berkhamsted: Extensive Urban Survey.* Hertfordshire County Council (Hertford).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

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Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAM	SITE NAME: 8 Dellfield Close, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire SITE NO/CODE: 1589/BDC					
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject			
1		√	General site shot, front of house, looking SE			
2		$\sqrt{}$	Ground reduction of development area, looking SE			
3		√	Ground reduction of development area, looking SE (scale 2m)			
4			Site stratigraphy, looking NE (scale 2n	1)		
5		$\sqrt{}$	Site stratigraphy, looking NW (scale 2m)			
6		$\sqrt{}$	Ground reduction of development area, looking NW (scale 2m)			
7		$\sqrt{}$	Site stratigraphy, looking SE (scale 1m	Site stratigraphy, looking SE (scale 1m)		
8		$\sqrt{}$	Ground reduction of development area	, looking NE <i>(scale 1m)</i>		
9		$\sqrt{}$	Ground reduction of development area	, looking NW		
10			New Extension area fully ground reduc	ced, looking SE		
11		√	New Extension area fully ground reduced, looking SE			
12		√	New Extension area fully ground reduced, looking NW			
13		√	New Extension area fully ground reduc	ced, looking NW		

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS							
Project Name:	8 Dellfield Close, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire		OASIS reference:	archaeol2-141172			
Short Description:	In September 2013 a watching brief was maintained at 8 Dellfield Close, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire during the construction of a two storey side extension. The excavation area consisted of a bank sloping upwards from the house to the road. The stratigraphy consisted of turf overlying modern made-ground comprising redeposited clay and chalk. The underlying natural strata comprised chalk. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed, and the development is considered to have had a low impact on archaeological remains.						
Project Type:	Watching Brief						
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None		Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	None			
Current land use:	House and garden		Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	Unknown			
Monument type:	N/a		Monument period:	N/a			
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None						
	PROJECT	LOCATIO	N				
County:	Hertfordshire	OS refe	rence: (8 figs min)	SP 9841 0883			
Site address: (+ postcode if known)							
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	60.5 sq. m Height OD: (metres)		DD: (metres)	c.145m AOD			
	PROJECT	CREATO	RS				
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consu	ıltancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	HCC Historic Environment Unit	Project	design originator:	Ralf Brown BSc (ASC)			
Project Manager:	David Fell BA MA MIFA (ASC)	Supervisor:		Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc AIFA (ASC)			
Sponsor / funding body:	Paula Campbell-Balcombe						
		CT DATE					
Start date:	16/09/13	End dat	e:	26/09/13			
	PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)					
Physical:	Dacorum Heritage Trust	None None					
Paper:	Dacorum Hemage Trust	Pd, report, site records, b&w photographs and negatives					
Digital:		CD with all digital files					
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)							
Title:	Watching Brief: 8 Dellfield Close,	Berkhams	sted, Hertfordshire				
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1589/BDC/2						
Author(s):	Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc	AIFA					
Page nos	19	Date: 30/09/13					