

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
THE COURTYARD, CHURCH LANE
SARRATT
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 0446 9913

on behalf of Westfields Construction Ltd



Jonathan R Hunn BA PhD FSA MI/A

March 2013

ASC: 1470/SCL/2




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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	SCL	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1470
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	Archaeol2-145342	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	tbc
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Sarratt		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Sarratt		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 0446 9913		
<i>Extent of watching brief:</i>	c.1560 sq. m.		
<i>Present use:</i>	Former industrial/office complex		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Demolition of existing units and erection of two residential units with basements, associated works and detached garage		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Three Rivers District Council		
<i>Planning application ref:</i>	10/2169/FUL		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	March 1 st to March 11 th 2013		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Westfields Construction 1-3 Old Mill Road Hunton Bridge Hertfordshire WD4 8RD		
<i>Contact name:</i>	James Varley		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Jonathan Hunn	<i>Date:</i>	14 th March 2013
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	14 th March 2013

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

Summary

In March 2013 a watching brief was undertaken on a site situated some 50m from Church Lane, Sarratt, Hertfordshire, during topsoil stripping for the construction of two dwellings that will occupy the central portion of the plot. Apart from a single 20th century pit, no pre-modern features or artefacts were observed on the site.

1. Introduction

1.1 In March 2013 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at The Courtyard, Church Lane, Sarratt, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by James Varley of *Westfields Construction*, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Muldowney 2011), and approved by *Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit*, archaeological advisors (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), *Three Rivers District Council*. The relevant planning application reference is 10/2169/FUL

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*

Church Lane, Sarratt is located in the Three Rivers district of Hertfordshire, in the civil parish of Sarratt. The Courtyard is located in the central-southern area of the village, at TL 0446 9913 (Fig. 1).

The site is accessed along a track leading from the north end of Church Lane, and currently comprises two non-residential buildings set amongst some scrubby vegetation. It is roughly square in shape with a narrow linear section encompassing the track, leading north-west from the main area of the site, and covers an area of c.1560 sq m. Gardens and undeveloped land bound the site on all sides (Fig. 2). At the time of writing no information regarding services had been provided.

1.4.2 *Topography & Geology*

The site is located on predominantly flat ground at a height of c.115m AOD and overlies soils of Marlow association described as ‘*well drained fine loamy over clayey and clayey soils. Some coarse and fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging*’ (Soil Survey 1983 581e). The underlying geology comprises ‘*head gravel: clayey, pebbly*

gravel and sand. Lambeth Group (LMB), clay silt with beds of sand, gravel at base locally cemented' (BGS, Sheet 255).

1.4.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises the demolition of existing units and erection of two residential units with basements, associated works and detached garage (Fig. 3).

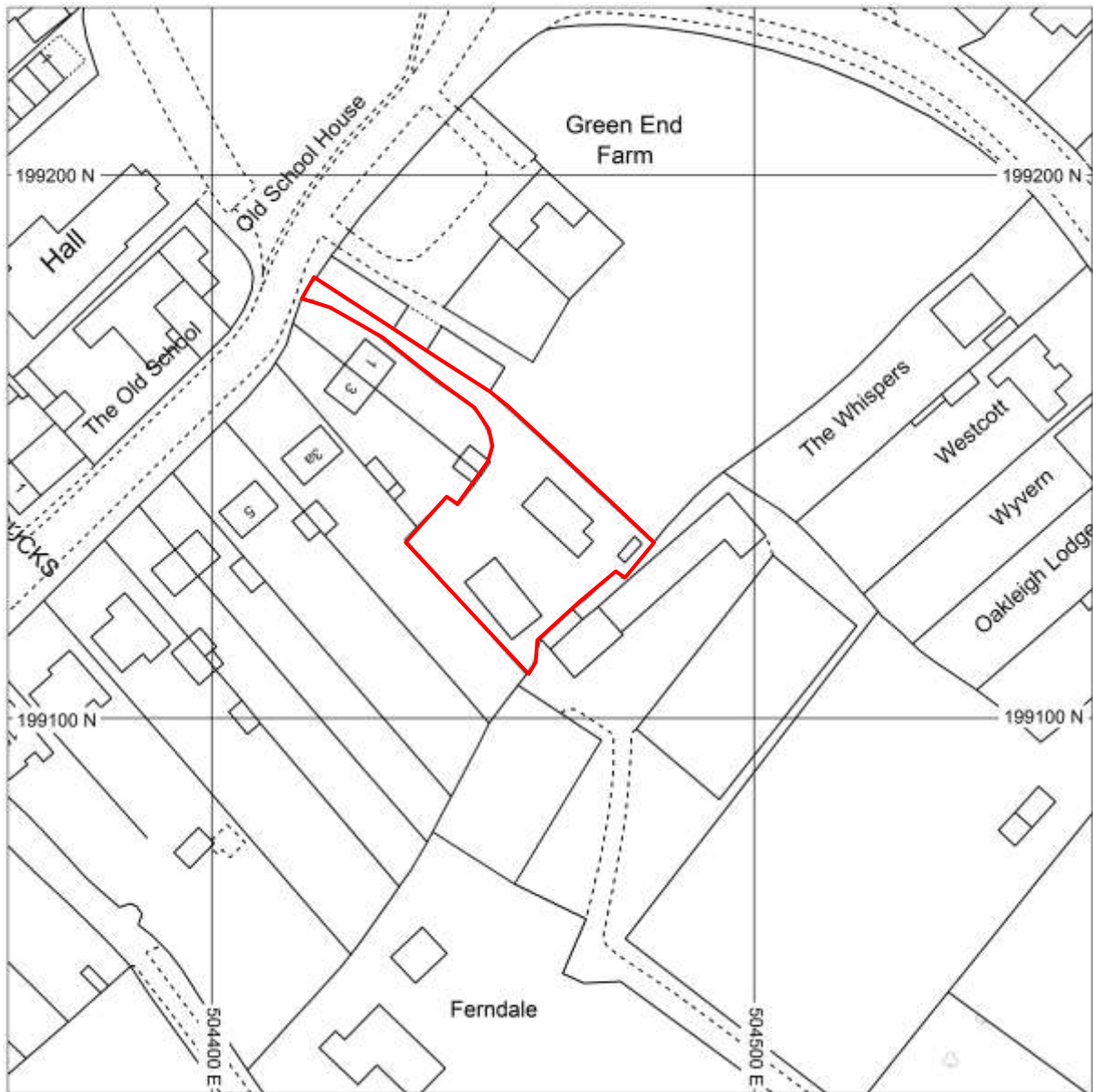


Figure 2: Site plan with development area (red) (scale 1:1250)

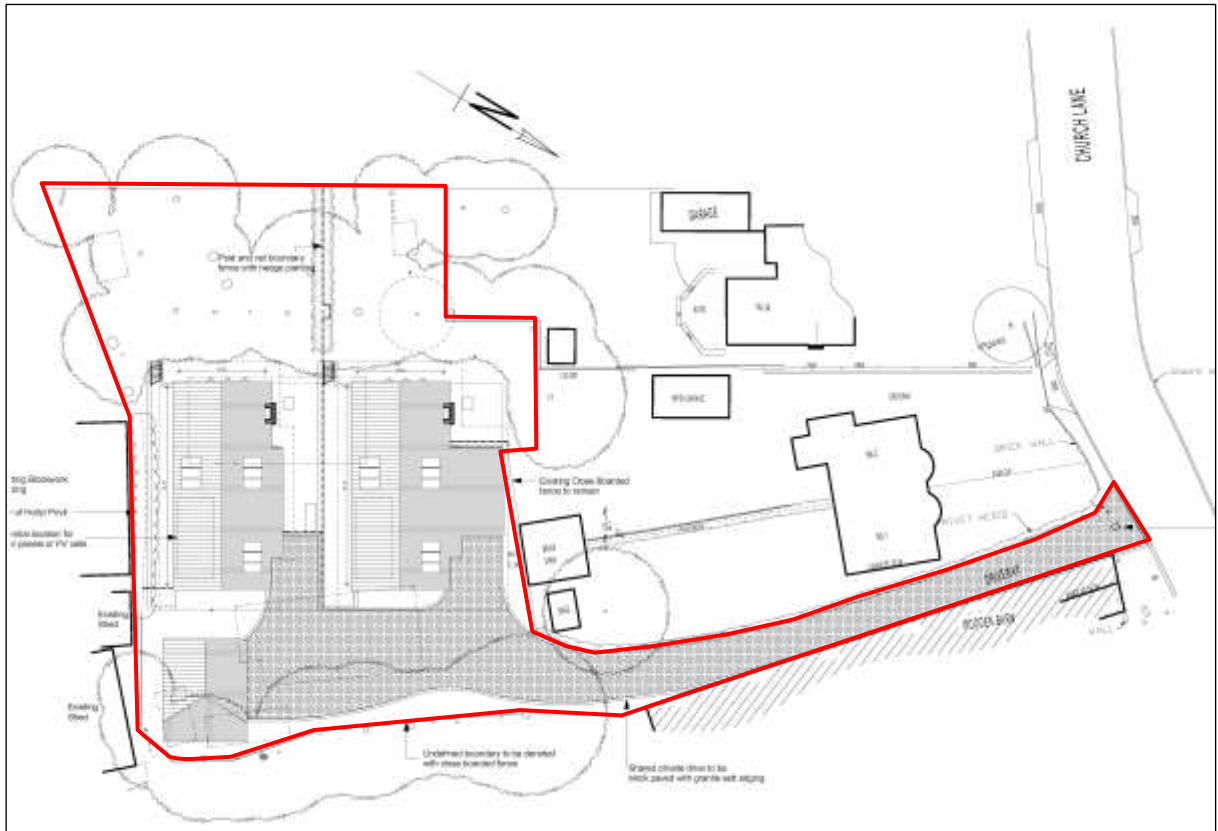


Figure 3: Proposed development, outlined red (*not to scale*)

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:

- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision
- Inspection of subsoil deposits for archaeological features
- The rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits
- Subsoil 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 only constraint on the project was the insertion of revetment piles which obscured the ground on the north, western and southern sides.

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: enquiry ref. 209/11) and other readily available sources.

3.2 *General*

A search of the Hertfordshire HER has shown that a moderate number of events and listed buildings lie within a 500m radius of the development area and that the site itself lies within the Sarratt *Conservation Area* and *Alert Area*. Most of the HER references are located to the north-west of the site, and those located in other directions lie some distance beyond the search area. No references to pre-Roman activity have been thus far identified.

3.3 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

Although located some distance (c.2km) from the development area, the River Chess valley is known to contain Roman remains such as a settlement at the south end of Limeshill Wood (HER 2718 & 2809).

3.4 *Saxon* (c.450-1066)

Little is known of the early history of the settlement of Sarratt, but the village was in existence by the 10th century, when it was referred to as *Syret* (Page 1971, 438). The place name 'Sarratt' may be derived from the Old English *sear*, meaning 'dry, withered or barren', perhaps reflecting the position of the village on the higher land, to the north of the river valley (Gover *et al*, 1970, 102).

3.5 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

By the 13th century the greater part of the arable land of the manor of Sarratt was properly enclosed and cultivated (Sarratt Parish History) and the main focus of settlement was clustered around the church, which now stands south-west of the modern village.

3.6 *Post-Medieval* (1500-1900)

Four listed buildings lie in the immediate vicinity of the development area and all are of later medieval and post-medieval date. To the north on Church Lane stands The Old School (HER16975) dating from the 19th century, and to the north-east stand Green End Cottage (LB158926) and Rose Cottage (LB158965), the former dating from the 16th century, the latter from the mid-late 18th century. Green End Farm stands immediately adjacent (north-east) to the development area and is a 17th century farmstead which has been the subject of a desk-based assessment, evaluation and monitoring in 2007 (HER 4159). All four buildings are listed Grade II. Additionally, there is an undated barn or cartshed (HER15223) standing parallel with the access track into the development area, which may belong to Green End Farm.

A further three post-medieval buildings lie within the search area, along the north-east side of The Green. They comprise The Boot Public House (HER17682), an 18th century beer house; a late 19th century Baptist Chapel (HER13517) and a 17th/18th century barn on Great Wheeler's Farm (HER13460).

On the Dury & Andrews survey of Hertfordshire (1766) there are indications of buildings in the vicinity of the site, but these are likely to have fronted onto Sarratt Green. Although undated, an earthwork marked on the 1840 Tithe map (HER11645), and located on the closest part of The Green to the development area may be quarrying of post-medieval date, possibly extracting gravel for local road-building.

3.8 **Modern** (1900-present)

The sole HER event for modern activity within the search radius records the presence of a WWII air raid siren at the village hall, adjacent to The Old School (see above).

4. Results & Conclusions

4.1 *Results*

The area that was observed was approximately 26 x 18m and was defined by a row of concrete piles on its northern, southern and western sides (Plate 1). Within this area the ground had been reduced to a depth of approximately 1m. Of this depth, approximately 0.5m was composed of made ground. This appears to have varied across the site, though the only remaining section of this lay on the eastern side (Plates 2, 3, 5 and 6). In the south-eastern corner the ground was comprised loose topsoil some 0.2m thick; overlying loose gravel 0.03m thick. Beneath this was a layer of dark, fibrous peaty soil 0.1m thick which overlay a spread of pale yellowish brown, weakly structured concrete about 0.12m thick (Plate 3). This overlay the 'natural' ground which consisted of a brown sandy gravel deposit. This varied in composition across the site but was characteristic of the plateau and river terrace drift of the Marlow Association.

The only feature observed was a segment of a pit situated in the south-west corner of the site. An area approximately 1.3m long by 1m wide was filled with broken glass and metal fragments (Plate 4). This was of probable mid-20th century date. Apart from the outlines of former 20th-century structures no other artefacts or features were observed on the site.

4.2 *Conclusions*

Although the timing of the observations was not ideal the results suggest that there was an absence of pre-modern activity on the site. There are indications of buildings in the vicinity of the site in the late 18th century, but these are likely to have fronted onto Sarratt Green. The present site is set back from Church Lane, and therefore is unlikely to have been close enough to identify contemporary activity.



Plate 1: General view northwards across the site



Plate 2: NE corner of the reduced area showing general stratigraphy



Plate 3: Detail of stratigraphy in the NE corner of the reduced area



Plate 4: SW corner of site showing dump of 20th century debris



Plate 5: Stratigraphy on eastern side of site



Plate 6: Detail of stratigraphy on eastern side of site

5. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by James Varley of Westfields Construction Ltd, and was monitored by Andy Instone of the HCC Historic Environment Unit on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for ASC by David Fell BA MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Ralph Brown BSc and Jonathan Hunn BA PhD FSA MIFA. The report was prepared by Jonathan Hunn and edited by Bob Zeepvat.

6. Archive

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
3. Client's 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 Three Rivers 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).
- 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*).
- Muldowney R 2011 *The Courtyard, Church Lane, Sarratt, Hertfordshire: Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief*. ASC doc ref 1470/SCL/1

Secondary Sources

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*
- Gover J, 2008 *Holoway Lane Chenies A Geophysical Survey*. Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society, Buckinghamshire, UK
- Sarratt Parish History, und. <http://www.sarrattvillage.co.uk/History.asp> Accessed: 10/11/2011
- Page W (ed) 1971 *The Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire*. 2. Dawsons of Pall Mall
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD						WATCHING BRIEF RECORD	
Project: THE COURTYARD CHURCH LANE			Project No/Code: 1470 / SCL		Sheet: 1 of 3		
SARRATT HERTFORDSHIRE			Date of visit: 01/03/13				
Client/Developer: GREEN HEART DEVELOPMENTS LTD							
Contact:				Phone:			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: 8.15		Finish: 1.15pm			
Completed by: RALPH BROWN							
Development Type:							
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify): AREA STRIP FOR PAVEMENT	
Site & weather conditions: SHOWERS							
Observations: SITE ALREADY HALF STRIPPED WHEN I ARRIVED BUT POORLY AND AT TOO HIGH A LEVEL TALK TO CLIENTS AND ASK TO RE STRIP LARGE AMOUNT OF SOIL IN CORNER OF EXCAVATED AREA 9x7m BUT CAN'T BE MOVED DUE TO NO LORRIES RUNNING TODAY. HAVEN'T SEEN UNDER IT. THE REST OF THE AREA TO BE STRIPPED (~230m ²) CANNOT BE DONE YET BECAUSE IT'S NEEDED FOR LORRIES TO TURN. WITHIN AREA WE DID STRIP NO ARCHAEOLOGY OBSERVED EXCAVATED THROUGH; (100) - MADE GROUND DUMPED FOR PILES, WOOD SAND DARK GRAY 70% SAND + RUBBLE NO. 50M THICK (101) - OLDER MADE GROUND CONSISTING OF REDPOSITED SUB 0.25m MID BROWN - GRAY SANDSILT 30% GRAVELS 0.01-0.05m (102) SUBSOIL - MID YELLOW BROWN SANDSILT SAT 30% GRAVELS 0.01-0.05m - 0.30m THICK AREA UNDER REMAINING SOIL HEAP BEING STRIPPED ON MONDAY. ASKED I WILL VISIT MONDAY AFTERNOON. REST OF SITE BEING STRIPPED IN APPROX 1 WEEKS TIME.							

For sketch plan, use separate sheet

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WATCHING BRIEF RECORD

Project: The Courtyard, Church Lane Sarratt		Project No/Code: 1470 1 SCL	Sheet: 3 of 3
Client/Developer Green Heart Devel. Ltd		Date of visit: 11/3/13	
Contact: Barry Eton		Phone: 07966184999	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 12.55	Finish: 3.45	
Completed by: JRH			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry, dull and cold (1c)			
Observations: 0.6m x 1.5m excavated area of ground reductor (c. 2.6m x 1.5m) down about 1m. Exposed gravelly sandy clay. All natural. In SW corner an old rubbish pit 1.3 x 1m filled with waste & glass. The south western & north eastern edges of this area are concrete piles. Only the west side is not piled. Here in the ground consists of as follows 1) 0.2m top soil 2) layer of gravel 0.03m thick 3) dark fibrous peaty soil 0.1m thick 4) red yellowish brown weak concrete - all over gravelly brown clay (natural). This is not northwards.			
Comments: No sign of any pre-medieval features or artifacts.			

For sketch plan, use separate sheet

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Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: The Courtyard, Church Lane, Sarratt, Herts			SITE NO/CODE: 1470/SCL
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		11.14.37	General view of site looking west
2		11.14.46	General view of site looking north east
3		11.16.04	General view of site looking to the north
4		11.16.08	General view of site looking south west
5		11.17.34	View north east across the remains of grubbed out footings
6		11.17.37	View west across the remains of grubbed out footings
7		11.17.41	View NNE across the remains of grubbed out footings
8		11.17.46	Ditto
9		11.31.11	Detail of make up of overburden on west side of site
10		2061	View NE across northern part of the site
11		2062	General view northwards across the site
12		2063	Detail of N edge of the reduced area obscured by modern piling
13		2064	NE corner of reduced area showing the make up of the stratigraphy
14		2065	Detail of stratigraphy in NE corner of the reduced area
15	Yes	2066	General view east across the partially reduced footprint.
16		2067	SW corner of the site showing dump of 20 th century debris
17		2068	General view of the site looking northwards
18		2069	Stratigraphy on eastern side of site
19		2070	Detail of stratigraphy on eastern side of site
20		2071	The entrance to the site in relation to Church Lane looking NW
21		2072	Access to the site looking SE from Church Lane
22		2073	View north across Sarratt Green from Church Lane
23		2061	View NE across northern part of the site

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	The Courtyard, Sarratt	OASIS reference:	Archaeol12-145342
Short Description:	In March 2013 a watching brief was undertaken on a site situated some 50m from Church Lane, Sarratt, Hertfordshire, during topsoil stripping for the construction of two dwellings that will occupy the central portion of the plot. Apart from a single 20 th century pit, no pre-modern features or artefacts were observed on the site.		
Project Type:	Watching brief		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	none
Current land use:	Industrial/office units	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	no
Monument type:	none	Monument period:	none
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 0446 9913
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	The Courtyard, Church Lane, Sarratt, Hertfordshire		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	c. 1560 sq. m.	Height OD: (metres)	115m AOD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Andy Instone	Project design originator:	Mo Muldowney
Project Manager:	David Fell	Director/Supervisor:	Brown R, & Hunn J
Sponsor / funding body:	Westfields Construction Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	March 1 st 2013	End date:	March 11 th 2013
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Three Rivers 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: The Courtyard, Church Lane, Sarratt, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1470/SCL/02		
Author(s):	Jonathan R Hunn BA PhD FSA MIfA		
Page nos	16	Date:	March 14 th 2013