

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: 9A HIGH STREET WYMINGTON BEDFORDSHIRE

on behalf of Miss Michelle Moran and Mr Philip Sapwell



Nigel Wilson HND AIFA

December 2005

ASC: 743/WHS/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	WHS	<i>Project no:</i>	743
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Wymington		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Wymington		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 95530 64290		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.220m ²		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Overgrown garden		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of a detached house		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Bedford Borough Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	05/01753/FUL		
<i>Client:</i>	Miss M. Moran & Mr P. Sapwell 11 Woodley Headland Woughton Marina Milton Keynes MK6 3PA		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Michelle Moran & Phillip Sapwell		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	-

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Nigel Wilson	<i>Date:</i>	19 th December 2005
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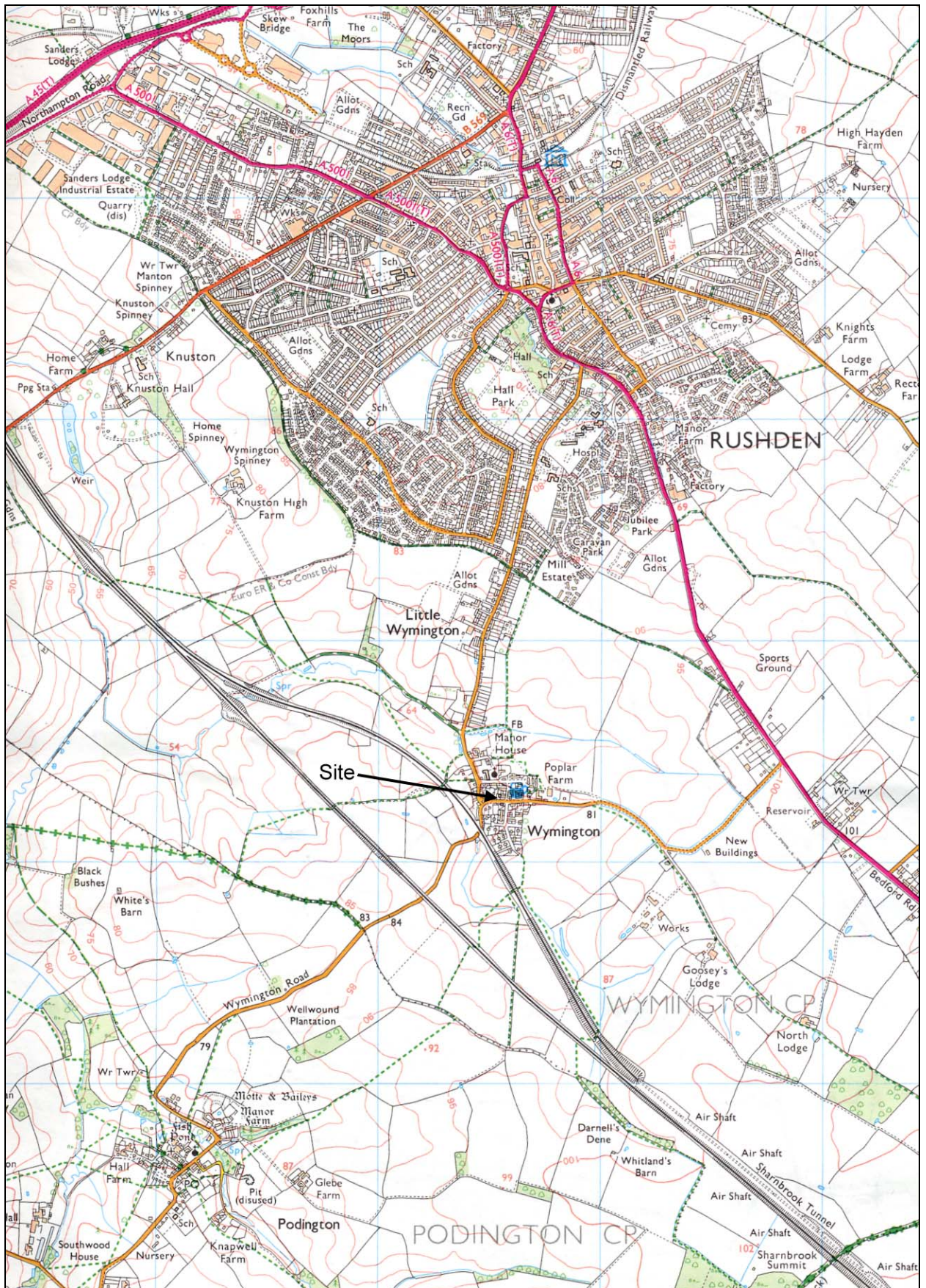


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During December 2005 ASC Ltd undertook a watching brief at 9a High Street, Wymington Bedfordshire, during the initial groundworks for the construction of a new house. The site rises northwards from the street. During the project it became clear that levelling for several earlier cottages had removed the natural land profile, and any archaeological deposits which may have been present. The most recent of these cottages was probably built during the mid 19th century and was constructed of brick and stone, with tile floors. Towards the rear of the site the original land profile survived with c.350mm of topsoil overlying the natural limestone bedrock. No finds or artefacts earlier than late 19th century bottles and white china were observed during the watching brief.

1 Introduction

1.1 In December 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 9a High Street, Wymington, Bedfordshire (NGR SP 9553 6429: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by the owners, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2005), and a brief (Beds CC 2005) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Bedford Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Bedfordshire County Archaeology Office*. The relevant planning application reference is 05/01753/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief has been required as a planning condition under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of a house.

1.3 **Setting**

1.3.1 *Location*

Wymington is located in north Bedfordshire, close to the border with Northamptonshire c.2km to the south of Rushden. The site is located on the northern side of Wymington High Street.

1.3.2 *Services, Buildings, Access, Etc*

Access to the site is from the High Street (Fig. 2), which runs on an east west alignment to the south of the site. There are no extant buildings on the site.

1.3.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area comprise part of the *Hanslope Association*, namely slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. Some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Soil Survey, 1983, 411d) overlying Oolite limestone. The site lies at an elevation of c.70m AOD.

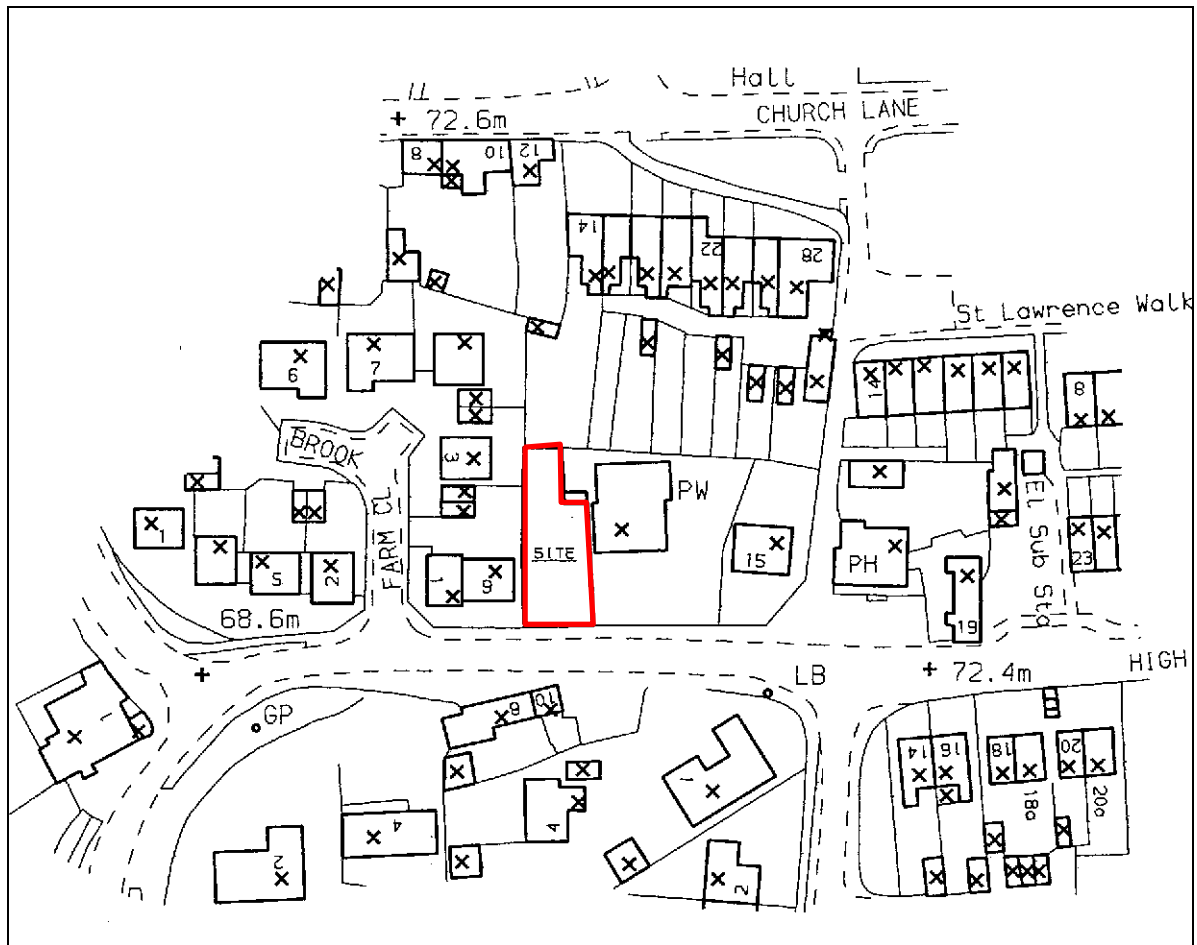


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

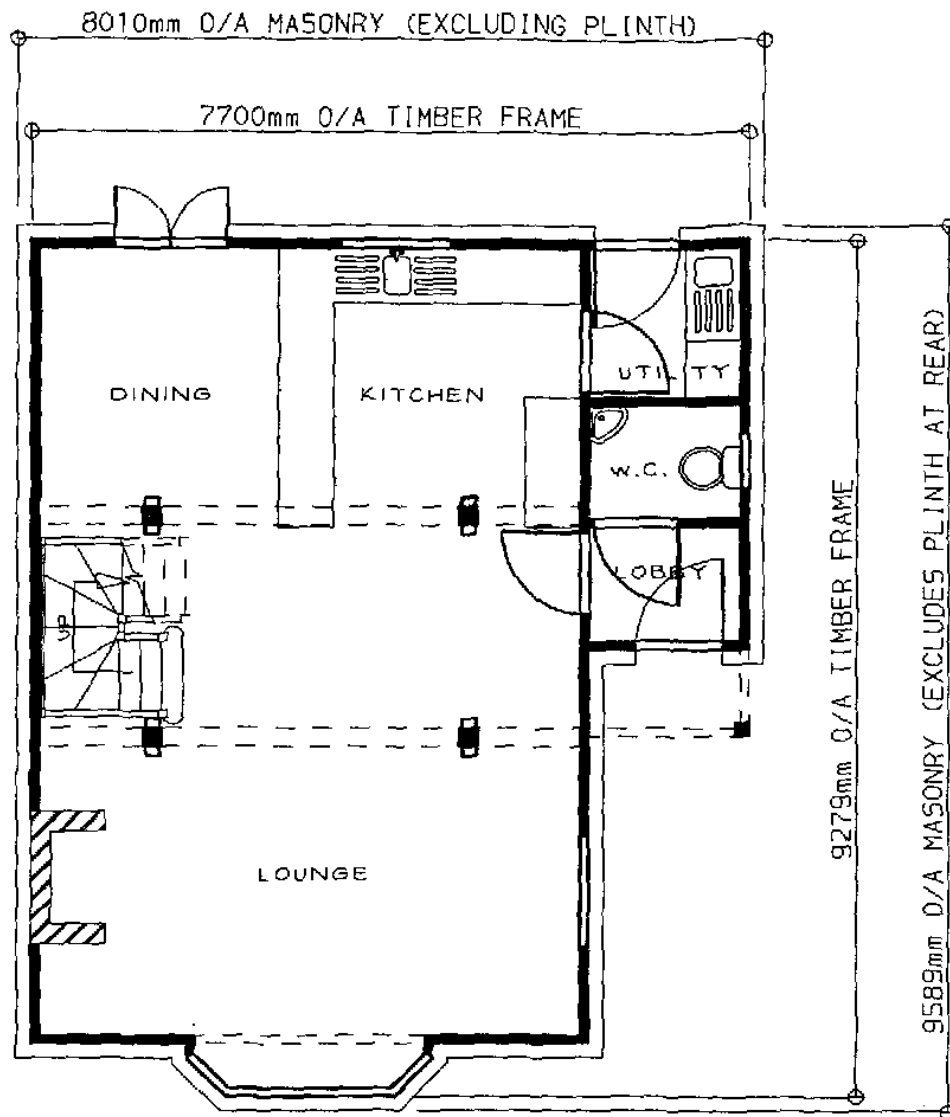


Figure 3: Proposed development (*not to scale*)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 4.1), the aims of the watching brief were:

- To establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site
- To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of a type series within the region
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGEO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 5), which required:

- A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording to be undertaken during any development works likely to affect archaeological remains
- Any ground disturbance associated with the development to be undertaken under the supervision of a competent archaeologist

2.4 Constraints

The watching brief conformed to the requirements of the brief and was undertaken as proposed in the project design. All the initial levelling/ groundworks were undertaken under archaeological supervision by an experienced archaeologist.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 Little is known of the area surrounding the development site in the prehistoric period. Two flint scrapers dating to the Neolithic period (HER2760) were recovered as surface finds from an area surrounding deep rabbit warrens c.1km to the west of the site.
- 3.2 There are several instances of Roman activity in the vicinity of Wymington. Fieldwalking to the east of the village revealed a concentration of stone, pebbles, stone tiles and a quern stone (HER2757) c.500m from the site, which has been interpreted as evidence for occupation in the area. Further evidence for occupation has been noted c.600m to the north of the site where a concentration of pottery and quern stone fragments were found during fieldwalking, in the vicinity of a possible enclosure cropmark (HER2756). Closer to the development site, a Roman coin (HER11394) was found c.100m to the south of the site. Fieldwalking to the west of the village, c.1km from the development site, highlighted a surface scatter of occupation debris dating to the Roman period, including stone, brick, quern stone fragments and 3rd century pottery (HER1916).
- 3.3 A recent evaluation on land immediately to the north of St Lawrence primary school revealed evidence for Saxo-Norman activity in the area (HER18028).
- 3.4 The development site falls within the bounds of the medieval village of Wymington (HER16957). Situated c.150m to the north of the development site is the 14th century church of St Lawrence (HER 944), which is a Grade I listed building, and its surrounding churchyard (HER9001).
- 3.5 There are a large number of listed buildings within the village of Wymington, but none of these share a border with the site, and so will be unaffected by the development. A lion headed standpipe (HER7795) is located across the road from the development site. The 1st edition large scale Ordnance Survey map of 1892 shows a building standing on the site.
- 3.6 There are several undated cropmarks in the area surrounding Wymington, including a group of possible small, irregular enclosure cropmarks (HER16484) located on a ridge/spur between two streams, which has been interpreted as a likely settlement location.

4 Results

- 4.1 The site rose gently northwards from the High Street with a step *c.* three quarters of the way along. The watching brief focused on the removal of the topsoil and levelling of the site using a JCB type excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.
- 4.2 The southern end of the site had a shallow covering of topsoil overlying the natural limestone bedrock (Plate 1). From about 8m north of the road the brick footings of a cottage were observed on the eastern side of the site. This cottage extended back to its extant northern wall (Plate 2). Most of the red quarry tile floors survived in this cottage. No finds were recovered from the area of the cottage earlier than late 19th or early 20th century. The western side of the site was covered by *c.*400mm of topsoil overlying the bedrock (Plate 3). No finds or archaeological features were observed in this area.
- 4.3 In line with the north wall of the cottage the land stepped up by *c.*1.5m to a relatively flat area probably retaining the original profile of the land (Plate 4). This area was covered by *c.*350mm of topsoil overlying the natural limestone.



Plate 1: The shallow overburden at the southern end of the site



Plate 2: The extant north wall of the cottage.



Plate 3: Natural limestone on the western side of the site



Plate 4: View northwards towards the stepped area, and the remains of the cottage.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The watching brief at 9a High Street successfully addressed the aims set out in the brief.
- 5.2 Other than the footings for the late Victorian cottage no archaeological evidence was observed during the watching brief. However it seems likely that several cottages pre-dating the brick one stood on the site. Each successive build would have entailed a certain amount of levelling to establish a flat platform to build upon.
- 5.3 The plot to the west of the site is *c.*0.5m lower than the site whilst the chapel site to the east is *c.*0.5m higher, thus clearly demonstrating that levelling has taken place prior to the start of the current construction. It was also observed that the raised ground at the northern end of the site was higher than both the surrounding plots. To the north of the site the ground remained at the same level as the site so it is possible that archaeological remains could survive to the north of the site but it is unlikely that any significant remains would survive to the immediate east or west of the site.
- 5.4 As the levelling was undertaken under archaeological supervision using a suitable machine a high level of confidence can be assigned to the findings.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Michelle and Philip for commissioning ASC to undertake the watching brief. We would also like to thank Steve Coleman at the HER in Bedford for his knowledgeable assistance in helping Calli Rouse collate the historical background. The brief was prepared by Lesley-Ann Mather at the County Archaeology Office. Finally we would like to thank the builders for their co-operation and interest during the fieldwork.

Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA managed the project and the field work was undertaken by Nigel Wilson HND AIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site Monitoring Sheets
6. List of photographs/slides
- 7.
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum, accession number BEDFM 2006.14.

8. 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).
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Mather 2005 *Brief for a programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication at 9 High Street, Wymington Bedfordshire*. Beds County Council
- Rouse C. 2005 *9a High Street, Wymington, Bedfordshire. Project Design for Watching Brief* ASC Ltd (Ref 743/WHS/1)

Secondary Sources

- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets



A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: 9a High Street, Wymington		Project No/Code: 743/WHS	Sheet: 1 of 2
		Date of visit: 15/12/05	
Client/Developer: M. Moran & P. Sapwell			
Contact: -		Phone: -	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 8.30	Finish: 10.00	
Completed by: NJW			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry			
Observations: Short visit, site overgrown and piles of recently dumped soil.			
Comments: Just clearing today. Will start levelling tomorrow.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: 9a High Street, Wymington		Project No/Code: 743/WHS	Sheet: 2 of 2
		Date of visit: 16/12/05	
Client/Developer: M. Moran & P. Sapwell			
Contact: -		Phone: -	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 8.30	Finish: 1.00	
Completed by: NJW			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Overcast			
Observations: Levelling underway. E side of site demolished brick/ stone cottage, late Victorian, Pushed in on its self. Plot levelled for build of cottage. Sits on natural limestone. W and N of site topsoil on to limestone. Slopes up to north from the road. Land to W lower land to E higher except a rear of plot where land to E is lower continues. Land to N continues at same level.			
No finds other than modern.			
Comments:			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 9a High Street, Wymington, Bedfordshire		743/WHS
Shot No.	View	Subject
1	N	General view of the front of the site
2	N	General view of the front of the site
3	E	General view of the cottage area
4	SE	General view of the cottage area
5	SE	General view of the cottage area
6	NW	Cottage area and step
7	N	General view of the site
8	N	Detail of the northern area reduced
9	SE	Cottage area reduced
10	NW	West side of the site reduced
11	N	Detail of the cottage north wall
12	NW	General view of the north end of the site

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	9a High Street, Wymington, Bedfordshire					
Short Description:	<i>During December 2005 ASC Ltd undertook a watching brief at 9a High Street, Wymington Bedfordshire, during the initial groundworks for the construction of a new house. The site rises northwards from the street. During the project it became clear that levelling for several earlier cottages had removed the natural land profile, and any archaeological deposits which may have been present. The most recent of these cottages was probably built during the mid 19th century and was constructed of brick and stone, with tile floors. Towards the rear of the site the original land profile survived with c.350mm of topsoil overlying the natural limestone bedrock. No finds or artefacts earlier than late 19th century bottles and white china were observed during the watching brief.</i>					
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	DBA	FW	Geophys	Survey	Bldg Rec	Post-Exc
	WB	Strip&Rec	Trenching	Test pits	Exc	Other
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	none		Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)		none	
Current land use:	derelict		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		no	
Monument type:	n/a		Monument period:		n/a	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	n/a					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Bedfordshire		OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)		SP 95530 64290	
District:	Bedford Borough		Parish:		Wymington	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	9a High Street, Wymington, NN10 9LS					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	220sq.m		Height OD: (metres)		70mOD	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	Beds County Council		Project design originator:		ASC Ltd	
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat		Director/Supervisor:		Nigel Wilson	
Sponsor / funding body:	Private developer					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	15/12/2005		End date:		16/12/2005	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						

	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	n/a		
Paper:	Bedford Museum	Report, monitoring sheets	
Digital:	Bedford Museum	CD all digital data, inc photos	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Serial title & volume:	Author(s):	Page nos
Archaeological Watching Brief (Ref 743/WHS/2)	Client report	Nigel Wilson	
Date:	12/2005		