

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: 200 HIGH STREET BERKHAMSTED HERTFORDSHIRE

on behalf of Clinton Cards



By
Jonathan R. Hunn BA PhD MIFA

March 2006

ASC: 778/BHS/02

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 site code:</i>	BHS	<i>Project no:</i>	778
<i>SMR Event No:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>County:</i>	Dacorum		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Berkhamsted		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 99169 07879		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Commercial/residential property		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of extension to rear of properties		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Hertfordshire County Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	4/02271/04/ful		
<i>Client:</i>	Clinton Cards Crystal Building Langston Road Loughton Essex IG10 3TH		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Darren Hartley		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	N/A

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Jonathan R Hunn	<i>Date:</i>	March 27 th 2006
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

© 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	6
1. Introduction	6
2. Aims & Methods	7
3. Archaeological & Historical Background	8
4. Results.	10
5. Conclusions	12
6. Acknowledgements	13
7. Archive	13
8. References	14

Appendices:

1. Monitoring sheets	15
2. SMR Summary Sheet	19
3. Oasis Form.....	20

Figures:

1. General location	3
2. Site location	4
3. Site plan	5

Plates:

Cover:

1. Overall view of the site looking westwards	11
2. West facing section in western foundation view south	11
3. North facing section in north foundation view east.....	11
4. Detail of north end of eastern foundation view east.....	11



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



Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:2500)

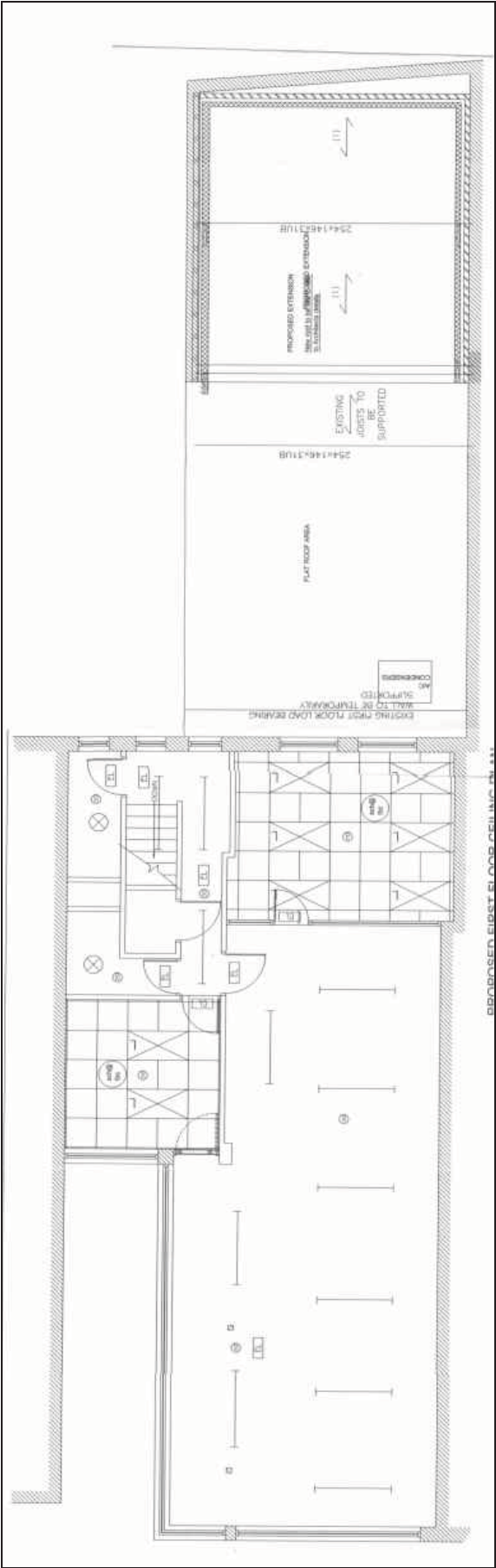


Figure 3: Proposed development (not to scale)

Summary

In the March 2006, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd undertook the monitoring and recording of the groundworks phase of a development at 200 High Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire on behalf of Clinton Cards. The site lies within the historic core of Berkhamsted on a small plot of ground to the rear of the High Street frontage that has not been built on in the past. Foundations were hand dug on three sides of the site through ground that had been built up in the last two centuries. Due to the comparative shallowness of the footings no features or deposits were observed that pre-dated the 19th century.

1 Introduction

1.1 During late March 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief on a site at 200 High Street, Berkhamsted (NGR SP 99169 07879; Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Darren Hartley on behalf of *Clinton Cards*, and was carried out according to a brief prepared by the Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (Dacorum District), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (ASC:778/BHS/01).

1.2 Reason for Work

The site lies in the historic core of Berkhamsted not far from the ancient thoroughfare of Akeman Street. In line with PPG16 guidelines there are potential archaeological deposits on the site that may be at risk of damage during the course of the development.

1.3 Setting

1.3.1 The site is situated in Berkhamsted in the administrative district of Dacorum, Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). It is located in the town centre, on the north side of the High Street (OS NGR SP 99169 07879). The area is 6.5m x 6m and bounded by building to the south and east. Its western and northern sides are defined by brick walls. The site consisted of overgrown waste ground.

1.3.2 The site is situated in the valley of the river Bulbourne, which flows from west to east c.200m northwest of the site. The site is in an urban area and the natural soils of the site have not been mapped in detail. If the soils survive, they are likely to comprise the *Charity 2 Association* (Soil Survey 1983, 571m) namely *well drained calcareous fine silty soils over chalk*. Berkhamsted town centre is in the river valley, but the site itself is flat and lies at an elevation of c.110m AOD.

1.3.3 The site is reached through a side passage into the shop premises and is surrounded by buildings and brick walls. There are several drainage runs across the site but otherwise it is overgrown with vegetation.

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 1), 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 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 3.1), which required:

- 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

2.3 Standards

The work conformed to the requirements of the *Brief*, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991), 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 own *Operations Manual*. Reference will be made to *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties, 1, Resource Assessment* (Glazebrook 1997) and to *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2, Research Agenda and Strategy* (Brown & Glazebrook 2000).

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

SMR = Sites and Monuments Record

3.1 Prehistoric (before 600BC)

The evidence for early prehistoric activity in the Berkhamsted area is not great. Until recently it consisted of only random finds, such as flint implements whose context and even their location is poorly understood. The picture has been considerably enhanced by the preliminary findings of sites along the route of the Berkhamsted by-pass. In particular, at Oakwood (NGR SP 974-072) there were 'a large number of dispersed features (pits, gullies, ditches)'; the associated finds dated to the Neolithic/Bronze Age and Iron Age (McDonald 1995, 122). At Pea Lane (NGR SP 964-083) there was structural evidence and associated pottery of the later Bronze Age/Iron Age (McDonald 1995, 121-2).

Apart from the Pea Lane site mentioned above the only evidence for late Bronze Age/Iron Age activity is derived from occasional find spots. Examples include a late Bronze Age brooch from Berkhamsted castle (Branigan 1977, 174-5) and iron sword and copper alloy sheath from the cress beds at Bourne End (SMR no. 4097). There are earthwork monuments around Berkhamsted attributed to the 'prehistoric' period, but their precise date has yet to be established.

3.2 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)

For the later prehistoric and Roman periods there is a considerable body of evidence that suggests that there was dispersed occupation dating from the late Iron Age and Romano-British period along the length of the upper Bulbourne valley (Morris and Wainwright 1995, 68-75). In the middle section of the Bulbourne valley the level of activity and/or settlement is equally high.

3.3 Roman (AD43-c.450)

There is evidence for dispersed occupation during this period along the length of the upper Bulbourne valley (Morris and Wainwright 1995, 68-75). Berkhamsted's principal thoroughfare follows the course of Akeman Street which was an important communication between the Roman towns of *Verulamium* (St Albans) and *Corinium Dubunnum* (Cirencester).

The closest Roman occupation site was situated 200m to the north west of the site (SMR 6421) and the second about 500m to the north west in the Billet Lane area (SMR 6437). There is evidence for industrial activity in the form of shaft furnaces at Dellfield (SMR 4904), a pottery kiln in Bridgewater Road (SMR 6083) and one other concentration of pottery further along the same road (SMR 6071) which may or may not be another kiln. The remaining evidence is all derived from random coin loss. For example, several Roman coins came from the castle (SMR 1336), a gold coin from Meadway (SMR 6070), one from Dellfield (SMR 6076), and one from Swingate Lane (SMR 6080).

3.4 Saxon (c.450-1066)

In the late Anglo-Saxon period Berkhamsted was held by Eadmer a thane of Earl Harold. It is probable that the settlement that we call Northchurch was, at that time, a precursor of Berkhamsted (Doggett and Hunn 1985). The evidence for this comes from the fabric of St Mary's Church, otherwise known as St Mary's Berkhamsted, which has pre-Conquest stonework in its nave walls on the western and southern sides (Taylor and Taylor 1980, 462-63; Smith 1973). With the construction of the castle in Berkhamsted some 2 kilometres to the WSW, there developed an alternative settlement focus to Northchurch.

3.5 Medieval (1066-1500)

The Domesday survey of 1086 mentions that *Berchehastede* was a *burbium* (borough) whose burgesses paid £4 from tolls and held half a hide of land. The number of burgesses was fifty two, although this has been questioned (Doggett and Hunn 1985, 22). However, if this was accurate then it would make the borough second only after Hertford with 146 burgesses but third after St Albans whose 46 burgesses paid £11.14s from tolls.

The precise limits of the Domesday borough have never been satisfactorily established and it is possible that the late Anglo-Saxon 'burgh' lay towards what is now called Northchurch. However, there is a mention of land called 'Oldeburgh' in the vicinity of the old Post Office on the High Street some 100m to the west which might also indicate an earlier settlement focus. Even if this is uncertain there is no question that the post-Conquest core of medieval Berkhamsted lay along the axis of the present day High Street.

3.6 Post-Medieval (1500-1900)

The earliest representation of the town is Norden's survey of the early 17th century (PRO MR 603). This shows that settlement was located along the High Street and Castle Street. The High Street has been continuously occupied from at least the 12th century and probably much earlier, to the present day. The only major alteration to the immediate area was the construction of Lower King's Road in 1885 (Hastie 1999, 94)

3.7 Modern (1900-present)

At the turn of the century the site of 200 High Street was occupied by a cottage (Alex Thompson *pers.comm.*). Its history thereafter is uncertain but it did become a café prior to the construction of the present building in the late 1960s (*ibid.*).

4 Results

- 4.1 The area of the extension was not large being just under 40 sq. metres (6.5m x 6m). The foundations ran round three sides of this area and amounted to 18m in length with a depth that varied between 1m on the north side to c.0.75m on the east and west sides, after allowing for reduction.
- 4.2 Three separate layers were identified. The upper 0.55m of the ground (1) comprised dark, humic soil that was rich in tile, bone, glass, iron, slate and occasional pottery. The pottery was mainly china (willow pattern), stone and red wares dating to the 19th and 20th centuries. Several intact glass vessels were present in this deposit and were mainly household items for domestic and medicinal purposes.
- 4.3 The underlying material comprised dark yellowish brown silty clay (2). This was 0.45m and contained fragments of modern tile, slate, glass, bone and willow pattern china.
- 4.4 A layer of dark yellowish brown clay (3) was present below layers (1) and (2). This extended across the entire footprint of the new extension and also contained quantities of modern artefacts.
- 4.5 No pre-19th century material or features were observed during the watching brief.



Plate 1: Overall view of the site looking westwards



Plate 2: West facing section in western foundation view south



Plate 3: North facing section in north foundation view east



Plate 4: Detail of north end of eastern foundation view east

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The foundation trenches cut through soils that were probably deposited during the late 19th / early 20th centuries. No features or artefacts predating the 19th century were observed and, should archaeological remains survive on the site, they are unlikely to have been disturbed during the works.
- 5.2 One of the interesting results of this watching brief was the depth of the soils in the area. Even at a depth of a metre there were no deposits that predated the 19th century and these modern soils may be masking earlier deposits. Accordingly, there is the potential for pre-modern occupation deposits to survive at a lower level on the site.
- 5.3 Those deposits that were visible fell into two distinct categories. The lower one (2) was probably a modern building horizon while the upper half metre was a rich organic deposit (1), possibly derived from domestic waste that was dumped from one or more of the adjoining cottages that formerly fronted onto the High Street.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Darren Hartley for commissioning the watching brief on behalf of *Clinton Cards* and to Mark Depaepe of *Shop Fitting Solutions*, for his co-operation on site. Mrs Kate Batt of the Historic and Built Environment Section of *Hertfordshire County Council* acted as curatorial monitor and Alex Thompson provided additional background information.

The fieldwork was undertaken for *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA, who also prepared this report. The report was edited for ASC by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA and David Fell BA MA MIFA.

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
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with the *Dacorum Heritage Trust*.

8. Bibliography

- Avery, B. W. 1964: *The Soils and Land Use of the District around Aylesbury and Hemel Hempstead*. HMSO (London).
- Branigan, K. 1977: A Prehistoric Brooch from Berkhamsted. *Hertfordshire Archaeology* **4**, 1974-76.
- Doggett, N and Hunn, J. 1985: The Origins and Development of Medieval Berkhamsted, in *Hertfordshire's Past* **18**, 18-36.
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
- Ferguson L.M. & Murray D.M. 1997 *Archaeological Documentary Archives: Preparation, Curation and Storage*. Institute of Field Archaeologists' Paper **1** (Manchester).
- Hastie, S. 199: *Berkhamsted : An illustrated History*. Alpine Press (Kings Langley)
- Hertfordshire Record Society 2004: Dury, A. & Andrews, J. 1768: *A Topographical map of Hartford-shire*. (Hertford)
- 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)*.
- McDonald, T. 1995: The A41 Project. Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust in Holgate (ed) *Chiltern Archaeology: Recent work*, 68-75. The Book Castle (Dunstable).
- Morris, M and Wainwright, A. 1995: Iron Age and Romano-British settlement, agriculture and industry in the upper Bulbourne valley, Hertfordshire: an interim interpretation, in Holgate (ed) *Chiltern Archaeology: Recent work*, 68-75. The Book Castle (Dunstable).
- Smith, T. P. 1973: *The Anglo-Saxon Churches of Hertfordshire*. Phillimore (Chichester).
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Taylor and Taylor 1980: *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*. **1**, Cambridge University Press, (Cambridge)

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD			
Project: 200, High Street Berkhamsted		Project No/Code: 778 1BHS		Sheet: 1 of 3	
Client/Developer Clinton Candy		Date of visit: 21/3/06			
Contact: Duncan Hartley		Phone:			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 9.50am	Finish: 10.45			
Completed by: SRAH.					
Development Type:					
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarrying	Pipelines
Other (specify):					
Site & weather conditions: Dull, cold & dry.					
Observations: The area of the extension had been cleared of vegetation and the ground beginning to be levelled. The intention is to remove the ground (dark organic soil) by 300mm. The footings are to be 600mm.					
Comments: Couldn't take photos as the extension area was locked up. Probably too shallow to have any significant impact on potential archaeology.					
For sketch plan, use reverse					

©ASC, 2003

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD	
Project: 200, High Street Berkhamsted		Project No/Code: 778 1 BHS	Sheet: 2 of 3
Client/Developer: Clinton Cards		Date of visit: 22/3/06	
Contact: Doreen Hartley		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 2.35 pm	Finish: 3.45 pm	
Completed by: JRH			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry, Some Sun, cold.			
Observations:			
<p>0.6m the footings on the western side of the site (0.75m wide x 0.9m deep below levelled ground) and the partly excavated footing on the northern side (east side unexcavated). The footing on the west side cut through three distinct layers as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ① 0.15 of gravelly boulder debris ② 0.35m of v. dark brown soil ③ Below 0.5m was a yellowish brown, mooring layer containing small fragments of brick, slate and one small flint. Beside the track was some waste from ③ which contained fragments of Victorian and later glass, late post-med pottery bone and overlying brick. <p>Total area is 6.5m (N-S) by about 6m (E-W).</p>			
Comments:			
Deposits look late possibly 20th century.			

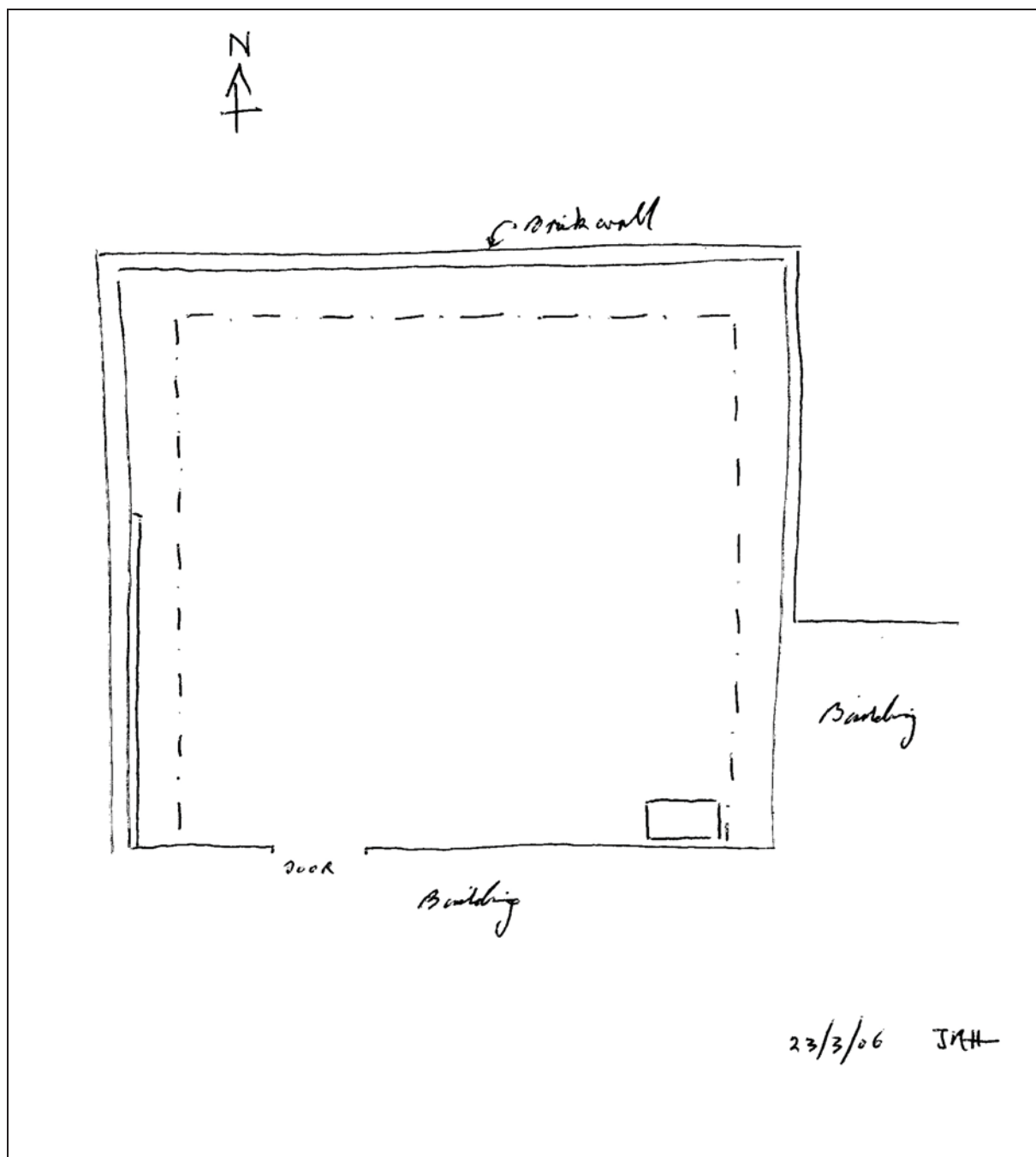
For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD	
Project: 200, High Street Berkhamsted		Project No/Code: 778 1BHS	Sheet: 3 of 3
Client/Developer Clinton Cards		Date of visit: 23/3/06	
Contact: Darren Hartley		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 10.10 am / 1.50 pm	Finish: 11.30 am and 2.45 pm	
Completed by: J R Hanna			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry, Sunny and cold			
Observations:			
<p>Observed footings on the eastern & northern side (the E side had steel frame inserted). The depth on the north side was greater being 1.0m deep and 0.75m on west side. The north facing section in the north footing was manually cleaned deep which then revealed the following deposits.</p> <p>0m - 0.55m: A dark organic soil containing fragments of tile, slate, glass, bone & pottery (willow pattern)</p> <p>0.55 - 1m: dark yellowish brown (Muns 10YR 4/4) clay containing small quantities of tile, chalk, flint pebbles & bricks. All this is re-deposited.</p> <p>The east facing section in east foundation trench is very much the same though with much larger fragments of roofing tile present.</p> <p>The footings of the existing brick wall are made up of flint & clay and the brick courses are 10 deep (0.8m approx).</p>			
Comments:			
No features or post-Victorian artefacts noted.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	200 High Street, Berkhamsted					
Short Description:	<i>In the March 2006, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd undertook the monitoring and recording of the groundworks phase of a development at 200 High Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire on behalf of Clinton Cards. The site lies within the historic core of Berkhamsted on a small plot of ground to the rear of the High Street frontage that has not been built on in the past. Foundations were hand dug on three sides of the site through ground that had been built up in the last two centuries. Due to the comparative shallowness of the footings no features or deposits were observed that pre-dated the 19th century.</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:	Commercial Premises		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		No	
Monument type:	N/a		Monument period:		N/a	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Hertfordshire		OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)		SP 99169 07879	
District:	Dacorum		Parish:		Berkhamsted	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	200 High Street, Berkhamsted					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	c.40 sq m		Height OD: (metres)		c.110m OD	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	Herc C C		Project design originator:		M Cuthbert	
Project Manager:	J R Hunn		Director/Supervisor:		J R Hunn	
Sponsor / funding body:	Clinton Cards					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	21 st March 2006		End date:		23 rd March 2006	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	Dacorum Heritage Trust		Paper Archive			
Paper:	Dacorum Heritage Trust					
Digital:	Dacorum Heritage Trust					

BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Hertfordshire Archaeology		
Serial title & volume:	forthcoming		
Author(s):	J R Hunn		
Page nos	TBA	Date:	

Appendix 2: SMR Summary Sheet

Site name and address: 200 High Street, Berkhamsted		
County: Herts		District: Dacorum
Village/Town: Berkhamsted		Parish: Berkhamsted
Planning application reference: 4/02271/04/ful		
Client name, address, and tel. no.: Clinton Cards 220 High Street Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 1AG		
Nature of application: shop extension		
Present land use: back yard/ waste		
Size of application area: 39 sq. m.		Size of area investigated: n/a
NGR (to 8 figures): SP 99169 07879		
Site code: 778/BHS		
Site director/Organization: Jonathan R. Hunn		
Type of work: Watching Brief		
Date of work:	Start: 21/3/06	Finish: 23/3/06
Location of finds/Curating museum: Dacorum Heritage Trust		
Related SMR Nos:		Periods represented: late post-medieval
Relevant previous summaries/reports		
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>In the March 2006, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd undertook the monitoring and recording of the groundworks phase of a development at 200 High Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire on behalf of Clinton Cards. The site lies within the historic core of Berkhamsted on a small plot of ground to the rear of the High Street frontage that has not been built on in the past. Foundations were hand dug on three sides of the site through ground that had been built up in the last two centuries. Due to the comparative shallowness of the footings no features or deposits were observed that pre-dated the 19th century.</i>		
Author of summary: J.R. Hunn		Date of summary: 24/3/06