

# Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

## WATCHING BRIEF: CLIPSTONE COTTAGES BEDFORD ROAD BARTON-LE-CLAY BEDFORDSHIRE

on behalf of Hearne Holmes Developments Ltd



A. J. Hancock BSc PgDip

November 2006

ASC: 785/BCC/2

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## **Site Data**

ASC project code:	BCC		ASC Project No:	785		
Event No:			Accession No:	N/A		
County:	•	Bedfords	dshire			
Village/Town:		Barton-le	e-Clay			
Civil Parish:		Barton-le	e-Clay			
NGR (to 8 figs):		TL 0810	3095			
Present use:		Waste gr	ound			
Planning proposal:		Resident	al development			
Planning application	ning application ref/date: 05/836			6		
Local Planning Auth	ority:	South Be	edfordshire District C	Council		
Date of fieldwork:		28 <sup>th</sup> Sept – 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2006				
Client:  Hearne Holmes Developments 494 Midsummer Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 2EA			s Ltd			
Contact name: David			earne			
Telephone			Fax:			

## **Internal Quality Check**

Primary Author:	A. J. Hancock	Date:	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2006
Revisions:		Date:	
Edited/Checked By:		Date:	

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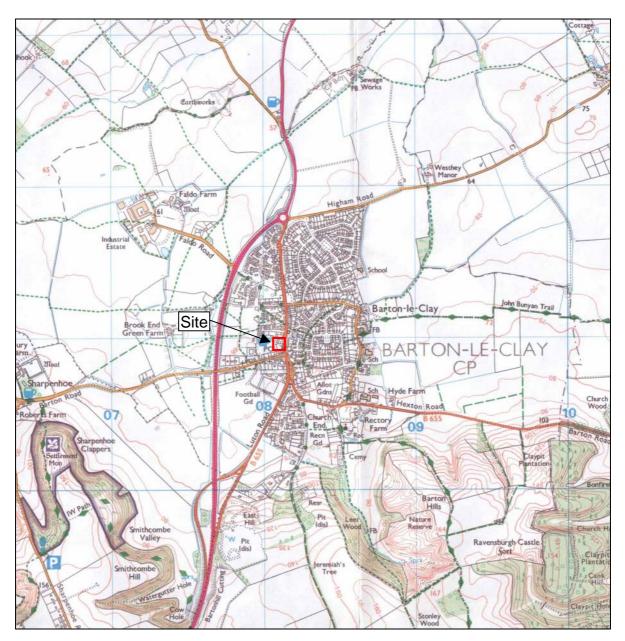


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## **Summary**

During September and October 2006 ASC Ltd carried out a watching brief at a site adjacent to Clipstone Cottages, Barton-le-Clay, Bedfordshire. Development of the part of the site fronting Bedford Road occurred before the involvement of ASC and its archaeological potential remains unclear. Excavation of the footings of houses were monitored at the western part of the development and no archaeological finds or features were observed.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 In September and October 2006 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Clipstone Cottages, Barton-le-Clay, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 0810 3095: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Hearne Holmes Developments Ltd, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Fell 2006), and a brief (BCC 2006) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), South Bedfordshire District Council, by their archaeological advisor (AA), Bedfordshire County Council (BCC). The relevant planning application reference is 05/836.

### 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 six terraced houses with associated parking (Fig. 3).

#### 1.3 Location

The site is situated in Barton-le-Clay, in the administrative district of South Bedfordshire (Fig. 1). It comprises an irregular shaped parcel of land in the centre of the village, on the west side of Bedford Road, and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference TL 0810 3095 (Fig. 2).

### 1.4 Description

The site was an irregularly shaped, vacant and largely overgrown plot of land with an area of c.0.126 hectares located at the centre of the village. An area of hardstanding was present at the north of the site.

#### 1.5 Geology & Topography

The soils in the centre of the village overly Jurassic and Cretaceous clays and are of the *Evesham 3 Association*, which are described as 'slowly permeable calcareous clay, and fine loamy over clayey soils. Some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged non-calcareous clayey soils' (Soil Survey 1983, 411c). The site is essentially flat and lies at an elevation of *c*.67m AOD.



**Figure 2:** Site plan (*scale 1:1,250*)

## 2. Aims & Methods

#### 2.1 *Aims*

As described in the brief (Section 4), the aims of the watching brief were:

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

#### 2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the requirements of the *brief*, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a) and also to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991) and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

#### 2.3 Methods

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

- Continuous observation of topsoil stripping
- Investigation and recording of any archaeological features revealed
- Investigation of the pits for building supports

#### 2.4 Constraints

Topsoil and subsoil was stripped from the entire site and aggregate laid to form hardstanding at the area fronting Bedford Road before ASC Ltd was notified that the watching brief should commence. The unmonitored groundwork meant that it was impossible to fulfil the scope of archaeological work required by the *brief* and meant that it was only possible to examine the surface of the natural deposit in the area of the new builds and their footing trenches for the presence/absence of archaeological finds or features.

## 3. Archaeological & Historical Background

#### 2.1 Introduction

Barton-le-Clay is an area of archaeological and historical importance (Jones 1983). Little archaeological work has been undertaken in the centre of the village and while the site has the potential to reveal evidence of a variety of periods, the focus of interest is likely to lie in the medieval period. HER = Historic Environment Record

### 3.2 Prehistoric and Iron Age (before AD43)

There is little evidence of prehistoric activity in the area, although the Bedfordshire claylands were settled during the Iron Age (Dawson 2000). The chalk ridge, which rises south of the village was of strategic importance during this period and a major Iron Age hillfort known as *Ravensburgh Castle* was situated *c*.2km southeast of the site. A site known as *Sharpenhoe Clappers c*.2km to the southwest may have had a similar function, although the surviving earthwork is of medieval date (Dix 1983). Excavations at Barton Hill Farm have revealed evidence for Neolithic and Bronze Age activity (Jones 1983, 2).

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

During the Roman period the area lay within the tribal group of the *Catuvellauni* (Branigan 1985). Little is known of this period in the immediate vicinity of the village and the only evidence comprises chance finds of pottery and coins.

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

The village probably developed during the Saxon period, although little is known in detail of this period in Barton-le-Clay.

#### **3.5 Medieval** (1066-1500)

The settlement was in existence by the time of the Domesday survey (1086) when it was referred to as *Bertone*. The land was held by the Abbey of St Benedict of Ramsey and was valued at £10 (Williams & Martin 2003, 566).

The medieval village probably developed around, and to the north of, the church of St Nicholas, which dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and is situated *c*.0.5km southeast of the site (Pevsner 1968, 44-45). The *Historic Environment Record* defines the medieval settlement as the present Manor Road, Mill Lane and Bedford Road (HER 17012). Little detailed archaeological excavation has taken place in this area but assemblages of medieval pottery have been recorded to the west of Bedford Road, close to the proposed development (HER 16084, 16166 and 17788).

The medieval manor probably occupied the site of the present Manor Farm (HER 16387). This is situated c.300m east of the site and includes a late  $18^{th}$  or  $19^{th}$  century farmhouse (HER 10239), a watercress bed (HER 15544) and granary.

The development of the medieval village was probably constrained by the chalk ridge, which rises south of the church, but settlement expanded into the surrounding area. A number of medieval moated sites are known in the parish, elements of which survive

as modern farms and they may have formed individual 'ends' on the periphery of the village. One such site is situated at Brook End Green Farm (HER 3447) c.0.5m west of the site, where a hollow way (sunken track), building platforms and a moat are present.

#### **3.6 Post-Medieval** (1500-1900)

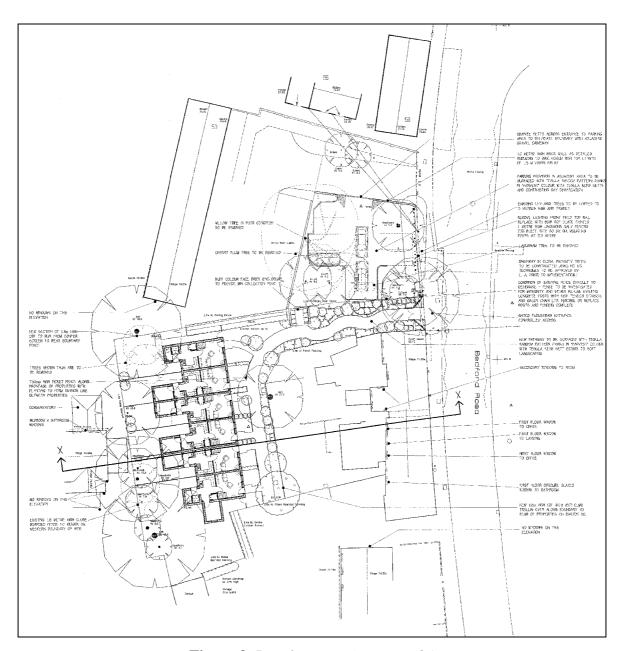
Little of the architecture of the medieval village survives but a late 18<sup>th</sup> century weatherboarded watermill (HER 1015) survives c.300m northwest of Clipstone Cottages and a number of 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings front onto Bedford Road, adjacent to the site. These include the Old School (HER 9302) located northwest of the site, on the east side of Bedford Road and the house at 69 Bedford Road (HER 4765) which is situated c.200m north of the site, on the west side of Bedford Road. Numerous post medieval buildings are situated to the south of the site, and notably include a Wesleyan Chapel (HER 4783), which is situated on the south side of Sharpenhoe Road.

The layout of the village in the late  $18^{th}$  century is shown on the *pre-enclosure map*, which was compiled in 1778. This shows the site as part of a larger area referred to as *The Town Common*. Buildings are shown fronting onto Bedford Road and the area to the rear, which encompasses the majority of the site, is shown as open land. The village was enclosed in c.1814 and the enclosure map shows that the former *Town Common* had been divided into a number of smaller land parcels, the majority aligned east to west and fronting onto Bedford Road.

The first edition large scale Ordnance Survey map was published in 1890 and shows the site in detail. Clipstone Cottages had been constructed and the modern (2006) boundaries had been established although the site remained as open ground.

#### **3.7 Modern** (1900-present)

The site appears to have changed little during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and remained as open ground.



**Figure 3:** Development (not to scale)

## 4. Results

- 4.1 Prior to ASC's initial monitoring visit the area of the site fronting Bedford Road had been stripped of surface deposits and aggregate subsequently laid to form a car parking area (Plates 1 and 2). Determination of the presence or absence of archaeological finds or feature in this part of the site was therefore impossible.
- 4.2 The topsoil and much of the subsoil had been stripped from the area of the site where the houses were to be constructed and piles to support the foundations had been driven into the ground before ASC's first monitoring visit (Plates 3 and 4). Examination of the stripped surface showed that excavating plant had tracked across it and had intermixed top and subsoil with the natural. The condition of the stripped surface meant that visual determination of the presence or absence of archaeological features was impossible and the above ground sections of the piles prevented further machine cleaning to aid visual examination.
- 4.3 Fragments of willow pattern ceramic and other types of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century pottery, ceramic building material and glass were noted on the stripped surface and showed a greater prevalence near the extant cottages located beyond the northern boundary of this part of the site. No archaeological features and no finds predating the 19<sup>th</sup> century were observed.
- 4.4 The footing trenches of the houses were machine excavated to a depth of c.0.8m and a natural stratigraphic succession was present across the site (Plate 5). The observed stratigraphy consisted of :
  - (100) *c*.0.3m of dark brown organic topsoil (visible in section at limit of stripped area)
  - (101) c.0.2m of mid brown clayey silt subsoil (visible in section at limit of stripped area)
  - (102) c.0.2m of light brown clayey silt with small flint nodules and flint gravel (natural)
  - (103) c.0.6m of light grey silty clay (natural, extending to unknown depth below base of footings)

No archaeological finds or features were observed in the footing trenches.

- 4.5 The upcast from some of the piles revealed that stratum (103) overlay a mid grey clay and the groundworkers suggested that the drilling for the piles reached chalk at a depth of c.7m below ground level.
- 4.6 An area of ground disturbance (Plate 6) containing sherds of 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery, pieces of ceramic building material, fragments of glass, and a layer of corroded iron was revealed at the northwest of the footing trenches. The observed artefacts identified the disturbance as resulting from late post medieval or modern human activity.



Plate 1: Area fronting Bedford Road, facing S



**Plate 2:** Access to area of house construction, facing W



Plate 3: Site of house construction, facing SW



Plate 4: Site of house construction, facing NE



**Plate 5:** Southern end of footing trench, facing NE



**Plate 6:** Modern disturbance at northwest of footings, facing W

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Topsoil and some subsoil was stripped from the part of the development fronting Bedford Road and its surface was covered with gravel before ASC's first monitoring visit. The archaeological potential of this part of the site remains unclear, although the depth of surface deposit removed is unknown and it is possible that archaeological features, if present, could survive below the gravel.
- 5.2 The topsoil and much of the subsoil had been removed from the area of the footing trenches prior to ASC's initial monitoring visit and it was not possible to examine these strata for archaeological artefacts.
- 5.3 The footing trenches were excavated into natural strata to a depth of c.0.8m and no archaeological finds or features were revealed. The absence of archaeology shows that the  $18^{th}$  century and later mapping is accurate and confirm that this area remained open ground as the village infilled around it.
- 5.4 The only evidence for past human use of the part of the site containing the footings was a spread of late post-medieval/modern disturbance located at the northwest of the site adjacent to Clipstone Cottages. It is suggested that household waste was dumped in this area during the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 5.5 The negative results of the watching brief indicate that the unstripped borders of the site at the East, West and South of the footings have limited archaeological potential.

## 6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Hearne Holmes Developments Ltd for commissioning and funding this project. The assistance of Lesley-Ann Mather of Bedfordshire County Council is gratefully acknowledged.

Monitoring visits were carried out by David Fell BA MA MIFA, Karin Semmelmann, BA MA AIFA and the author. The report was edited by Bob Zeepvat BA 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/slides
  - 7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.
- 7.2 The archive will be prepared and held by ASC Ltd until it can be deposited with Luton Museum.

## 8. References

## Standards & Specifications

- BCC 2006 Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication at Clipstone Cottages, Bedford Road, Barton-le-Clay, Bedfordshire. Bedfordshire County Council
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.* English Heritage (London).
- Fell D 2006 Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief: Clipstone Cottages, Bedford Road, Barton-le-Clay, Bedfordshire. ASC Ref: 785/BCC/1
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds).

### **Secondary Sources**

- Branigan K 1985 Peoples of Roman Britain. The Catuvellauni. Alan Sutton
- Dawson M 2000 'The Ouse Valley in the Iron Age and Roman periods: a landscape in transition' in *Prehistoric, Roman, and Post-Roman Landscapes of the Great Ouse Valley*. CBA Research Report **119**.
- Dix B 1983 'An Excavation at Sharpenhoe Clappers, Streatley, Bedfordshire' in *Bedfordshire Archaeology* **16**, 65-74
- Jones C 1983 Parish Survey of Barton-in-the-Clay. Bedfordshire County Council. Unpublished
- Pevsner N 1968 The Buildings of England. Bedfordshire, Huntingdon and Peterborough. Penguin
- Soil Survey 1983 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend (Harpenden).
- Williams A & Martin G H (eds) 2003 Domesday Book. A Complete Translation. Penguin

# **Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets**

A.S.C. LTD AR	CHAE	OLOGI	CAL FIEL	D MONI	TORING	G RECORD
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Completed by:			<u>-</u> -			
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# **Appendix 2: List of Photographs**

SITE NAME: Clipstone Cottages, Barton-le-Clay, Bedfordshire					SITE NO/CODE: 785 BCC		
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital		Subject		
1			✓	Area fronting Bedford Road, facing S			
2			✓	Access to area of house construction, facing W			
3			✓	Site of house construction, facing SW			
4			✓	Site of house construction, facing NE			
5			✓	Southern end of footing trench, facing NE			
6			✓	Modern disturbance at northwe	est of footings, facing W		

# **Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form**

		PROJEC <sup>*</sup>	T DETAILS			
Project Name:	Clipstone Cott	ages, Barton-le-0	Clay, Bedfordshir	re		
Short Description:	Cottages. The archaeological	part of the site f	ronting Bedford its archaeologica	Road was deve al potential rem	s on land adjacent eloped in the abse ains unclear. No	ence of
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	DBA	FW	Geophys	Survey	Bldg Rec	Post-Exc
(a.cate all that apply)	WB	Strip&Rec	Trenching	Test pits	Exc	Other
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None		Previous work (eg. SMR refs		None	
Current land use:	Waste ground		Future work: (yes / no / unk	nown)	Unknown	
Monument type:	N/A		Monument per		N/A	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None					
	•	PROJECT	LOCATION			
County:	Bedfordshire		OS reference: TL 0810 3095 (to at least 8 figures)			
District:	South Bedfor	dshire	Parish: Barton-le-Clay			У
Site address: (with postcode if known)						
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	0.126 ha		Height OD: c.67m (metres)			
		PROJECT	CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeolog	gical Service	s & Consulta	ancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Bedfordshire (	County Council	Project design	originator:	David Fell	
Project Manager:	David Fell		Director/Super	rvisor:	A J Hancock	
Sponsor / funding body:	Hearne Holme	s Developments	Ltd			
	<del></del>	PROJE	CT DATE			
Start date:	28/09/06		End date:		31/11/06	
		PROJECT	ARCHIVES			
	Location (Ad	cession no.)	Content (eg	. pottery, anima	al bone, files/shee	ets)
Physical:						
Paper:	ASC Ltd					
Digital:	ASC Ltd					
BIBLIOGR <i>I</i>	APHY (Journal/n	nonograph, publi	shed or forthcom	ning, or unpubli	shed client report	)
Title:	Unpublished					
Serial title & volume:						
Author(s):	A J Hancock					
Page nos	1 - 22		Date:17/11/0	6		