

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: 2 HIGH STREET, GREAT BARFORD, BEDFORDSHIRE

on behalf of Mr Matthew Evans



Nigel Wilson HND AIFA

April 2007

ASC: 910/GBH/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	GBH	<i>Project no:</i>	910
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Great Barford		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Great Barford CP		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 1276 5234		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.190 sq. m.		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Residential garden		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	2 storey extension to rear and side of existing house		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Bedford Borough Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	06/1273		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr Matthew Evans C/o Peter J Farmer – Chartered Architect 80 High Road Shillington Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 3LL		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Peter J Farmer		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Nigel Wilson	<i>Date:</i>	30 th April 2007
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<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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

Summary

During April, 2007 Archaeological Services and Consultancy carried out a watching brief at 2 High Street Great Barford, during the initial groundworks for an extension. Observation revealed that about 500mm of topsoil overlay the natural undisturbed yellowish brown clay. No archaeological features were identified and the few sherds of Blue and White china observed in the topsoil could be dated to the mid 19th century. From the observations made during the watching brief it was concluded that the site had almost certainly not been developed prior to the construction of the existing cottage.

1 Introduction

1.1 In April 2007 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 2 High Street, Great Barford (NGR TL 1276 5234 Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Peter J Farmer (architect) acting upon behalf of the owner Mr Matthew Evans, and was carried out according to a brief (BCC 2006) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Bedford Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Bedfordshire County Council, Heritage and Environment Section*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Hawtin 2007). The relevant planning application reference is 06/1273.

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 an extension to the rear of the existing house.

1.3 *Location*

The site is located in the centre of Great Barford, near the crossroads formed by High Street and Bedford Road, to the east of Bedford (Figs 1 & 2; NGR TL 1276 5234). The River Great Ouse flows around the southern and eastern sides of Great Barford, c.100 – 150m from the site.

1.4 *Description*

Access to the site is via the High Street. The site currently comprises the existing house, a separate garage/games room to the southeast and a swimming pool, all set within a large garden.

A number of existing services lie between the house and the garage, and the garage and the swimming pool.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The site lies on relatively level ground at an elevation of c.22 – 23m AOD. The soils of the area comprise the *Efford 1 Association*, which is described as *well drained fine loamy soils often over gravel, associated with similar permeable soils variably affected by groundwater* (Soil Survey 1983: 571s). The underlying strata consist of marine and river terrace gravel (*ibid.*) overlying cornbrash on either side of the River Great Ouse.

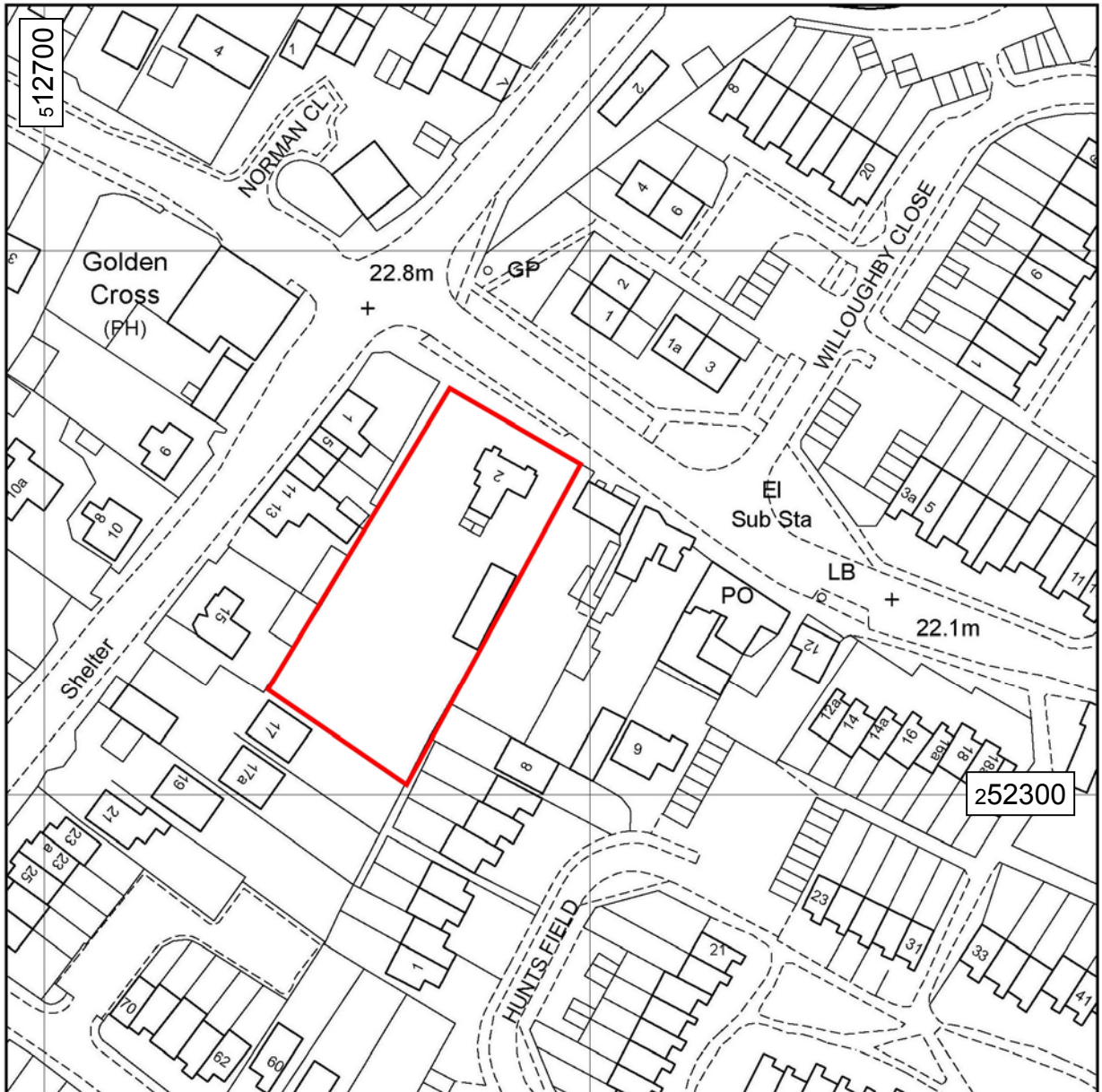


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

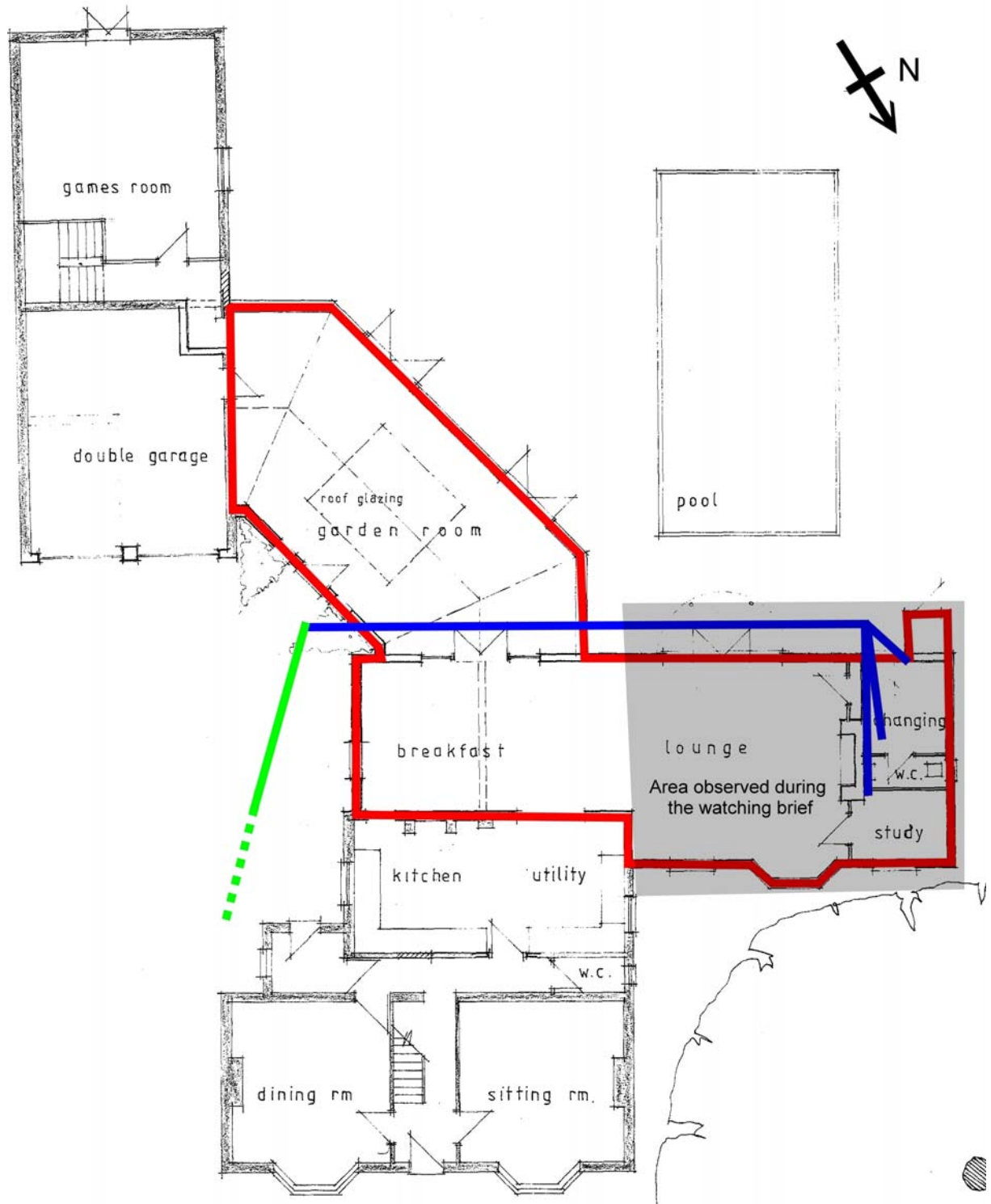


Figure 3: Proposed development plan (scale 1:200)
(Extension outlined in red, new foul drains in blue and existing foul drain in green)

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 type series within the region
- To 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* (ALGAO 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:

- All ground disturbance associated with the development to be undertaken under the supervision of a competent archaeologist
- When archaeological deposits were encountered to be investigated and recorded
- All relationships between features or deposits to be investigated and recorded
- All deposits to be investigated to obtain material for dating and in order to determine function
- A sampling procedure for the retrieval of environmental, organic and artefactual material to be instituted during the excavation
- All finds and other relevant material to be retained and removed from the site for cataloguing and analysis

2.4 Constraints

Due to the negative observations on the northern half of the strip and the mass of existing services on the southern half of the development it was decided after consultation with the AA that this area did not require observing.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 Prehistoric (before AD43)

Numerous cropmarks, plotted from aerial photographs, have been recorded to the northeast of Great Barford (HER 604; centred on NGR TL 1250 5250 and extending c.400m to the north and south of this point and c.200m to the east and west). These include a scatter of ring ditches and a group of rectilinear enclosures. Fieldwork conducted at College Farm (south of this area of cropmarks and c.700m southeast of the site) has revealed evidence of Bronze occupation and an Iron Age pit alignment with 3 parallel ditches (Albion 2005a).

An agglomeration of small sub-rectangular enclosures, represented by cropmarks identified from aerial photographs, are located c.400m north of the site (HER 16750; TL 128 528).

Cropmarks have also been recorded to the south of the village, c.600m southwest of the site, consisting of a ring ditch, a double-ditched sub-rectangular enclosure and an *agglomeration of enclosures* (HER 600; NGR TL 1220 5195 - TL 1224 5185).

Extensive cropmarks are located further south, towards the River Great Ouse, consisting of ring ditches, circular enclosures, rectangular enclosures, linear features and a large area of pits, which have been interpreted as Iron Age or Romano-British settlement features (HER 596, centred on NGR TL 1250 5130 and HER 594, centred on TL 1175 5070). These cropmarks also include a block of very regular rectangular enclosures, which probably date to the Roman period.

3.3 Roman (AD43-c.450)

Archaeological remains dating to the Roman period are common in this region. In addition to the cropmarks mentioned previously, cropmarks interpreted as evidence of Roman occupation have been identified c.1150m northwest of the site (HER 9833; NGR TL 1177 5296).

A possible Roman Road was identified by the Viatores in their *Roman Roads in the South-East Midlands* (1964) following the course of the current Bedford Road, c.400m southwest of the site (HER 728). However, this is conjectural and currently unproven.

3.4 Saxon (c.450-1066)

The settlement at Great Barford may have originated during the Saxon period and evidence of this period has been identified c.350m north of the site, to the northeast of Peashill Lane (HER 13358; NGR TL 1269 5273; Albion 2005b).

3.5 Medieval (1066-1500)

Great Barford was included in the *Domesday Survey* (1086) where it was recorded as *Bereford*. The proposed development lies within the medieval core of Great Barford (HER 17150) and c.450m from a separate area of medieval settlement identified at the northwest end of the village (HER 17151).

East End Deserted Medieval Village (DMV) has been identified c.950m northwest of the site (HER 9916; NGR TL 123 532). It is described as an *area of old enclosures with small closes or pightles and 2 small greens (ibid.)*

3.6 Post-Medieval (1500-1900)

The first edition Ordnance Survey map (1884) shows a gravel pit (HER 9913) c.400m east-northeast of the site and an *Old Clay Pit* (HER 9912) c.350m east-southeast of the site.

The nearby *Golden Cross* public house, c.60m east of the site along Green End Road, was first licensed in 1836 but the building is much older (HER 16408). *The Beehive*, adjacent to the western limit of the site, was established c.1850 (HER 16406).

4 Results

- 4.1 The watching brief focused on the mechanical reduction of the ground level over the footprint of the extension. A tracked mini digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was used. Observations were made over an area of approximately 60m²(Fig 4).
- 4.2 As a precautionary measure the northern brick-built boundary wall was removed prior to the commencement of the reduced level dig. Several larger conifer trees were also removed.
- 4.3 Where the wall had been removed it was clear the ground level of the property to the north was about 300-400mm higher than the level in number 2's garden. This difference in level would indicate that some previous landscaping work had been undertaken in the past.
- 4.4 About 500mm of dark topsoil was removed onto the yellowish brown silty clay. An engineers test pit dug during the design of the extension had exposed river gravels below this silty clay.
- 4.5 During the watching brief it was noted that extensive modern tree root disturbance and Blue and White mid 19th century china were present in the topsoil overlying the undisturbed natural. No evidence to indicate that the site had ever been developed prior to the building of the present house was identified during the watching brief.
- 4.6 With the agreement of the AA the reduced level strip was not watched beyond *c.*10m south-east of the north western property boundary due to the numerous services running between the existing buildings and swimming pool.



Plate 1: Showing the raised land to the NW where the boundary wall was demolished



Plate 2: Typical depth of overburden removed on to the natural subsoil

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The watching brief at 2 High Street, Great Barford was required by the AA as little is known about the development of this part of the village, in an otherwise rich landscape with frequent finds dating back to at least the Bronze Age. During the watching brief no significant archaeological remains were revealed though a few sherds of 19th century pottery probably associated with the cottage were found. With the evidence obtained during the watching brief it is now possible to say that this area to the rear of the High Street has been extensively landscaped during the 19th and 20th centuries hence the difference in height between the two gardens. It also seems likely due to the lack of any finds dated earlier than the building of the cottage now known as 2 High Street that this part of Barford village remained lightly or possibly even undeveloped until the erection of the cottage.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Peter Farmer for commissioning ASC on behalf of Matthew Evans. We would also like to thank the AA Lesley-Ann Mather who monitored the project for the local authority. Finally we would like acknowledge the help and enthusiasm shown by Martin Smith, the on site contractor.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site Monitoring Sheet
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 Bedford Museum.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.

Bedfordshire County Council 2006 *Brief for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication of land at 2 High Street, Great Barford, Bedfordshire*. (Bedford)

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).

Hawtin T. 2007 *2 High Street, Great Barford, Bedfordshire. Project Design for Watching Brief*. ASC Ltd (Ref 910/GBH/2)

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)*.

Secondary Sources

Albion Archaeology 2005a *Annual Review 2004* (Bedford).

Albion Archaeology 2005b *Great Barford Flood Alleviation Scheme, Bedfordshire – Archaeological Field Evaluation Report 2005/17* (Bedford).

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

Viatores, 1964 *Roman roads in the south east Midlands* (London).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheet

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project: 2 HIGH STREET GT BARFORD		Project No/Code: 910/GBH		Sheet: 1 of 1		
Client/Developer: PETER FARMER (ARCHITECT)		Date of visit: 23/4/2007				
Contact:		Phone:				
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 8.00	Finish: 1.00				
Completed by: NSW						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: OVERCAST						
Observations:						
WORKING AT N. END OF SITE						
0-500mm Dark TOPSOIL HIGHLY DISTURBED BY TREE ROOTS C9TH BLUE & WHITE CHINA + COAL						
7500mm YELLOWISH BROWN SILTY CLAY VERY FINE FEW STONES EMBROIDERS P17 FOUND FAVOR BELOW						
BRICK WALL DETRUISSED LAND TO N c. 250mm HIGHER THAN SURFACE LEVEL IN N. 2 GARDEN						
Comments:						
AREA TO S. HIGHLY TRUNCATED BY SERVICES CAO CONFIRMED NOT WORTH LOOKING AT						

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 2 High Street, Great Barford		SITE NO/CODE: 910/GBH	
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	√	√	General view looking NE
2	√	√	General view looking NE
3	√	√	General view looking SW
4		√	General view looking E
5	√	√	Detail of ground level to NW
6	√	√	General view looking SE

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	2 High Street, Great Barford, Bedfordshire		
Short Description:	<i>During April, 2007 Archaeological Services and Consultancy carried out a watching brief at 2 High Street Great Barford, during the initial groundworks for an extension. Observation revealed that about 500mm of topsoil overlay the natural undisturbed yellowish brown clay. No archaeological features were identified and the few sherds of Blue and White china observed in the topsoil could be dated to the mid 19th century. From the observations made during the watching brief it was concluded that the site had almost certainly not been developed prior to the construction of the existing cottage.</i>		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Watching Brief		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	none	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none
Current land use:	Garden	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	no
Monument type:	none	Monument period:	n/a
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Bedfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 1276 5234
District:	Bedford Borough	Parish:	Great Barford
Site address: (with postcode if known)	2 High Street, Great Barford, Bedfordshire MK44 3LE		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	c.1900 sq. m	Height OD: (metres)	22m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Bedfordshire CC	Project design originator:	ASC Ltd
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	Nigel Wilson
Sponsor / funding body:	Owner		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	23 rd April 2007	End date:	23 rd April 2007
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	n/a		
Paper:	Bedford Museum	Monitoring sheet, Project design, Report	
Digital:	Bedford Museum	CD: Digital images, MS Word documents	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief Report (910/GBH)		
Author(s):	Nigel Wilson HND AIFA		
Page nos	17	Date:	30 th April 2007