

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: REAR OF 74 UNION STREET NEWPORT PAGNELL MILTON KEYNES

on behalf of Mr and Mrs Periclis



Alastair J Hancock BSc PgDip

August 2007

ASC: 945/NPU/01

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Site Data

ASC project code:	NPU		ASC Project No:	945	
Event No:	1124		Accession No:	Pending	
County:		Bucking	Buckinghamshire (Historic County)		
Village/Town:		Newport	Newport Pagnell		
Civil Parish:		Newport	Pagnell		
NGR (to 8 figs):		SP 8752	4394		
Present use:		Disused	Commercial		
Planning proposal:		Conversion to residential			
Planning application	ref/date:				
Local Planning Auth	ority:	Milton K	Leynes Council		
Date of fieldwork:		July 200	7		
Client:		Mr and Mrs Periclis			
		7 High Street			
		Stoke Goldington			
		Milton Keynes			
		MK16 8NP			
Contact name:		Mr Periclis			

Internal Quality Check

Primary Author:	A J Hancock	Date:	2 nd August 2007
Revisions:		Date:	
Edited/Checked By:		Date:	

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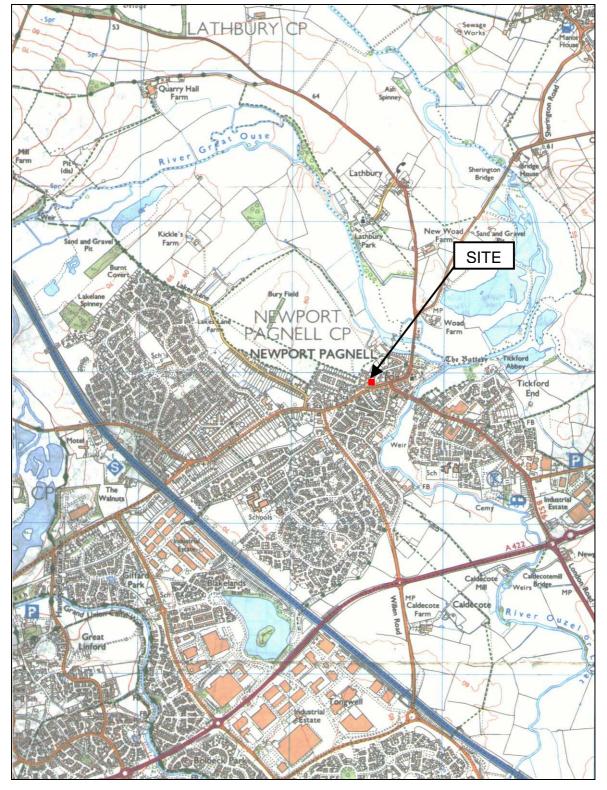


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During July 2007 ASC Ltd undertook a watching brief during conversion of a building at the rear of 74 Union Street, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes. The area lies within the centre of the town and is urban in character. The natural soil profile had been removed and the observed deposits consisted of relatively modern surfaces overlying redeposited material probably present as a consequence of past construction/demolition activity. Evidence dating any of the observed deposits to periods earlier than the late 18th century was not observed.

1. Introduction

1.1 In July 2007 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief at the rear of 74 Union Street, Newport Pagnell (NGR SP 8752 4394: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Periclis, and was carried out according to ASCs standard watching brief method statement and in accordance with IFA Guidelines.

1.2 *Planning Background*

The watching brief was required as a planning condition under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the conversion of a disused commercial building into housing. The relevant planning application reference is 07/00027/FUL.

1.3 Location

The site is located in the centre of Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes, at Ordnance Survey NGR SP 8752 4394 (Fig. 1). The site is situated c.30m north Newport Pagnell High Street at the western side of Union Street.

1.4 *Description*

The southern elevation of the building affected by the proposed conversion faces a small triangular courtyard surrounded by other buildings. The buildings appear to have been constructed during the $18^{th}/19^{th}$ centuries and are now in use as commercial premises. The northern elevation faces an area used as parking at the rear of a solicitors office and as vehicular access to a builders yard. Two large entrance arches in the southern elevation of the affected building suggest that it may have originally functioned as a stable block.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The site is situated c.500m west of the confluence of the river Great Ouse and the river Ouzel or Lovat. The site and its surrounds are urbanised and the soils have not been mapped. If extant, the soils would probably belong to the *Bishampton 2 Association*; and comprise fine loamy soils, over gravels of the river Great Ouse (Soil Survey 1983). The site is essentially flat and lies at an elevation of c. 60m OD.

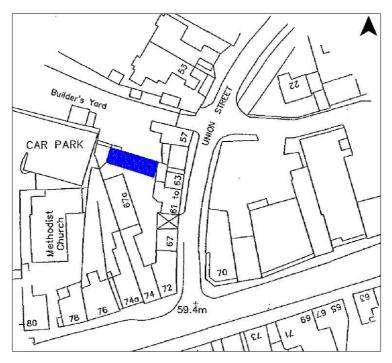


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1000)

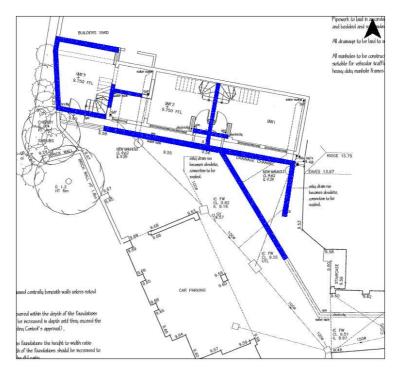


Figure 3: Areas monitored (scale 1:250)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were:

- archaeological monitoring of all excavations deeper than 300m below ground level.
- excavation and recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the brief, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 *Methods*

The work was carried out according to ASC's standard method statement for watching briefs, which specifies:

- The presence of a qualified and experienced archaeologist during all works which could affect buried archaeology
- The excavation, cleaning and sampling of significant archaeological features in order to demonstrate their general date and character
- Appropriate levels of recording of archaeological remains
- Recording the extent and depth of all intrusive groundworks
- Where any archaeological remains are found whose presence could not have been reasonably anticipated, and whose recording or preservation *in situ* is not possible within the resources available, all work will cease and the County Archaeologist and the Inspector of Ancient Monuments will be invited to meet to discuss how the matter might be resolved.

2.4 Constraints

No constraints were identified prior to or during the fieldwork and work was carried out according to the aims and methods detailed in the brief.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 Introduction

The town and environs of Newport Pagnell are of considerable archaeological and historical interest. The plan of the modern town centre owes much to the survival of burgage plots located along both sides of the High Street which were established during the medieval period. The evidence for human activity during this and other periods is summarised in the following paragraphs.

3.2 Prehistoric (*before 600BC*)

The gravel terraces of the river Ouse and its tributary the river Ouzel have revealed ample evidence of prehistoric activity and settlement dating back to c.2000BC at least. The most notable monuments of this period are the Bronze Age 'ring ditches' or burial mounds found throughout the rivers floodplains, and studied in depth by Green (1974). Discoveries of this period in the vicinity of Newport Pagnell are summarized elsewhere (Mynard & Hunt 1995, ix): to date, no prehistoric sites or finds have been identified within the town.

3.3 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)

Iron Age sites or finds have not been recovered within Newport Pagnell.

3.4 Roman (AD43-c.450)

Chance finds of Roman coins have been made in the High Street and Caldecote Street. Excavations in the gardens of Tickford Abbey, 1km west of the site, have revealed a 'minor Roman settlement', presumably a farmstead of 2^{nd} to 4^{th} -century date (Mynard & Hunt, *op. cit.*). A Roman road followed the Ouzel and Ouse valleys between the Roman towns at *Magiovinium* (Fenny Stratford) and Irchester (Zeepvat 1991, 18). The exact route of the road is unknown, but it almost certainly crossed the river Ouse east of Newport Pagnell at Ashfurlong near Olney, where traces of an extensive Roman settlement are known.

3.5 Saxon (*c.450-1066*)

Newport Pagnell was probably founded in the 8th or 9th centuries (Mynard & Hunt, *op. cit.*). The town is strategically located at crossing points of two rivers and is not far from *Watling Street*, which formed the boundary between Saxon Mercia and the Danish-held eastern part of the country. Following the capture of London by King Alfred in 885, Newport and surrounding settlements passed into Saxon hands. As a trading centre with a mint, the Saxon town, or Burgh, is thought to have been defended by a large earthwork (Pevsner and Williamson 2000; Robinson 1975). The site lies within the suggested area of the Burgh.

3.6 Medieval (1066-1500)

Newport Pagnell is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, where it is referred to as '*Newport*', (Morris 1978) and was one of only two boroughs in the county at that time (the other being Buckingham). The Survey entry makes it clear that Newport was a populous, thriving town. The name 'Newport Pagnell' derives from the Pagnell

family, who acquired the town by marriage in the late 11th century, and held it for some 150 years. In about 1100 Fulk Pagnell granted lands in Tickford, east of the town, to the French abbey of Marmoutier, whose monks built Tickford Priory. Newport remained a prosperous market town throughout the medieval period.

3.7 Post-Medieval (1500-1900)

The town's strategic location was recognized by both sides during the Civil War, and it was occupied first by royalist troops commanded by Prince Rupert and subsequently by parliamentary forces, who held the town until 1645. Both sides drew up plans for the construction of entrenchments and fortifications around the town although it is uncertain how many were built. Mapping dated to the 17th century shows the site within the area enclosed by the proposed defences.

Newport appears to have remained essentially the same size throughout much of this period with settlement centred on the High Street, St John Street, and the upper end of Silver Street. However, the establishment of Joseph Salmons' coach building works in 1820 (now Aston Martin), the opening of the railway works (1840) and other industries at nearby Wolverton, and the coming of the canals (1817) and the railways (1865) to Newport Pagnell resulted in a great demand for new housing in the town. One of the major areas of development was to the south-west of the town, between Silver Street, the High Street, and the terminal basin of the Newport Pagnell Canal, later the terminus of the Newport Pagnell Railway.

3.8 Modern (1900-present)

The plan of the town centre remained much the same, although the construction and opening of Britain's first motorway, the M1, in 1959 transformed the area around the town (Pevsner and Williamson 2000). More residential housing was built and the town, once its own borough, became part of the Milton Keynes borough in 1967 (*ibid*).

4. **Results**

- **4.1** Observation of the foundation and drainage trenches revealed that undisturbed natural deposits of clay were present at a depth of *c*.1m below the modern ground surface. The natural clay was heterogeneous; mid brownish grey clay was present at the centre and east of the site while mid blueish grey clay was observed at the west.
- **4.2** Uneven depths of up to *c*.0.7m of friable redeposited material, which consisted of heterogeneous sandy clays containing occasional fragments of ceramic building material (cbm) and flecks of charcoal, lay above the natural clay in all of the observed trenches.
- **4.3** A small, *c*.0.5m wide and *c*.0.05m deep, lens of dark grey organic clayey silt containing occasional sheep incisors, was present at the interface between natural and redeposited clays to the west of the junction of the "T" of the central internal foundation trench (Plate 3). Dating evidence was not recovered from the lens.
- 4.4 Remnants of a c.0.03m thick suggested mortar floor were noted sealing c.0.2m of mid brown clayey silt containing frequent charcoal flecks, which in turn sealed the redeposited clays within the central internal foundation trench (Plate 4). The remnants of mortar floor lay below a c.0.2m deep modern surface deposit consisting of mid brown sandy clay containing occasional fragment of cbm, charcoal and animal bone.
- **4.5** A few sections of a brick sett surface overlay *c*.0.2m of brownish yellow gravelly sand containing frequent cbm within the courtyard beyond the southern elevation of the building. The gravelly sand appeared to have been deposited to level the surface of the redeposited clays and one sherd of white glazed ceramic was noted within it (Plate 5).
- **4.6** Occasional areas of cobbles set in concrete were noted above the aforementioned gravelly sand beyond the western elevation of the building. A few sherds of willow pattern ceramic were observed in the gravelly sand at this location
- **4.7** The areas of setts, cobbles and exposed surface of the gravelly sand were sealed by a layer of modern asphalt.
- **4.8** Foundation courses of three brick walls were noted during the watching brief. One defined the position of an internal dividing wall on the eastern side of the entrance arches of the building (Plate 6), another located a wall extending into the courtyard from the southeast corner of the building, and the last located a wall extending west from the northwest corner of the building. All of these structural features appeared contemporary with, or later than, the affected building.

Rear of 74 Union Street, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes 945/NPU



Plate 1: Southern elevation of conversion, facing NNW



Plate 2: North and western elevations of conversion, facing SW



Plate 3: Lens of organic clayey silt at base of central foundation trench, facing W



Plate 4: Possible mortar floor in southern profile of central foundation trench , facing S



Plate 5: Drainage trench in courtyard, facing E



Plate 6: Internal wall foundation revealed at eastern side of entrance arches, facing E

5. Conclusions

- **5.1** The observed foundation and drainage trenches showed that the natural soil profile had suffered significant disturbance.
- **5.2** In fact, the natural soil succession appeared to have been totally removed to a depth of *c*.1m below the modern ground surface.
- **5.3** Sections of brick setts and cobbles illustrated that the remains of earlier metalled surfaces underlay the modern asphalt surface of the courtyard. The presence of remnants of a suggested mortar floor within compact silty deposits suggested the survival of internal floor surfaces. The inclusion of fragments of willow pattern ceramic in a sandy levelling deposit lying beneath the setts and cobbles could indicate that they were laid between the late 18th and early 20th centuries.
- **5.4** Other than occasional fragments of cbm, dating evidence was not observed in redeposited material underlying the levelling material beneath the relatively modern surfaces. The date of, and processes responsible for deposition of the redeposited material remain unclear although the foundations of the building were cut into it and it therefore predates the buildings construction.
- **5.5** Definitive evidence indicating the presence of archaeological deposits predating the late 18th century was not observed.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Mr and Mrs Periclis for commissioning ASC to undertake this project. Thanks are also offered to the Site Manager (Tom Hollingshead) of Newport Pagnell Construction for his cooperation, and to Nick Crank, who monitored the project on behalf of Milton Keynes Council.

The fieldwork was undertaken by the author and the report was edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

- 7.1 The project archive will comprise:
 - 1. Initial Report
 - 2. Clients site plans
 - 3. Site Monitoring Sheets
 - 4. List of photographs
 - 5. B/W prints & negatives
 - 6. CDROM with copies of all digital files.
- 7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum

8. References

Standards & Specifications

- 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).

Secondary Sources

- Green H S 1974 'Early Bronze Age Burial, Territory and Population in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, and the Great Ouse Valley' in *Archaeological Journal* 131, 58-139.
- Morris J 1978 (Ed) The Domesday Book. Buckinghamshire. Phillimore.
- Mynard D and Hunt J 1995 Newport Pagnell. A Pictorial History. Phillimore.
- Pevsner, N. and Williamson, E. 2000. *The Buildings of England. Buckinghamshire*. Penguin Books, (London).
- Robinson, J. 1975. *The Evolution of the Townscape of Medieval Newport Pagnell in Buckinghamshire*. Occasional Paper no. 2. Bradwell Abbey Field Centre for the Study of Archaeology, Natural History and Environmental Studies, Milton Keynes.
- Soil Survey 1983 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend (Harpenden).
- Zeepvat R J 1991 Roman Milton Keynes. Milton Keynes Development Corporation.

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD ARCHAEC	DLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD			
Project: 63a UNION ST	Project No/Code: Sheet: 445 / NPU of Z			
NEW PORT PAGENEL				
Client/Developer MR + MRS P	ERICLIS			
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For sketch plan, use reverse

Rear of 74 Union Street, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes 945/NPU

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Project: 6374 UNION STREET	Project No/Code: NPU Sheet: G45 I NPU Z of Z
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Client/Developer	
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For sketch plan, use reverse

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Completed by: ANH				
Developm	ent Type:			
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Site & weather conditions:				
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BREF.				

For sketch plan, use reverse

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Rear of 74 Union Street, Newport Pagnell			ion Street, Newport Pagnell	SITE NO/CODE: 945/NPU	
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject		
1	\checkmark	~	Southern elevation of conversion, facir	ng NNW	
2	~	~	North and western elevations of conve	rsion, facing SW	
3	~	~	Central footing trench, facing W		
4	√	√	Possible mortar floor in southern profile of central foundation trench, facing		
			S		
5	\checkmark	✓	Lens of organic clayey silt at base of central foundation trench, facing W		
6	\checkmark	✓	Internal wall foundation at eastern side of entrance arches, facing E		
7	✓	✓	Internal footing at west end of conversion, facing NE		
8	\checkmark	✓	Drainage trench in courtyard, facing E		
9	\checkmark	✓	Stratigraphy revealed by drainage trench in courtyard, facing S		
10	~	✓	Footings at west of conversion, facing SE		

	PROJEC	T DETAILS		
Project Name: Watching Brief: Rear of 74 Union St, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes				
Short Description:	Short Description: During July 2007 ASC Ltd undertook a watching brief during conversion of a building at the rear of 74 Union Street, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes. The area lies within the centre of the town and is urban in character. The natural soil profile had been removed and the observed deposits consisted of relatively modern surfaces overlying redeposited material probably present as a consequence of past construction/demolition activity. Evidence dating any of the observed deposits to periods earlier than the late 18 th century was not observed.			
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Watching Brief			
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None	
Current land use:	Urban	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	None	
Monument type:	None	Monument period:	None	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None			
	PROJECT	LOCATION		
County:	Buckinghamshire (Historic County)	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 8752 4394	
District:	Newport Pagnell	Parish:	Newport Pagnell	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Rear of 74 Union St, Newport I	Pagnell, Milton Keynes	1	
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	20 sq m	Height OD: (metres)	c.60m	
	PROJECT	CREATORS		
Organisation:	Archaeological Services	& Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	na	Project design originator:	na	
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	Alastair Hancock	
Sponsor / funding body:	Mr and Mrs Periclis			
	PROJE	CT DATE		
Start date:	July 2007	End date:	July 2007	
	PROJECT	ARCHIVES		
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal	l bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	na	na		
Paper:	Buck's County Museum	Report, site records		
Digital:	Buck's County Museum	Photos, reports, plans		
BIBLIOGRAF	PHY (Journal/monograph, publis	hed or forthcoming, or unpublis	hed client report)	
Title: Watching Brief: Rear of 74 Union St, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes				
Serial title & volume:				
Author(s):				
Page nos	1-19	Date:	2 nd August 2007	