



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: 10 CASTLE HILL AVENUE BERKHAMSTED HERTFORDSHIRE

on behalf of Mr & Mrs Rollit



J. Richards BA PIFA

July 2007

ASC: 909/BCH/01

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 project code:</i> | BCH | <i>ASC Project No:</i> | 909 |
| <i>Event No:</i> | N/A | <i>Accession No:</i> | N/A |
| <i>County:</i> | Hertfordshire | | |
| <i>Village/Town:</i> | Berkhamsted | | |
| <i>Civil Parish:</i> | Berkhamsted | | |
| <i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i> | SP 9935 0833 | | |
| <i>Present use:</i> | Residential | | |
| <i>Planning proposal:</i> | Two storey front extension | | |
| <i>Planning application ref/date:</i> | 4/02819/06/FHA | | |
| <i>Local Planning Authority:</i> | Dacorum Borough Council | | |
| <i>Date of fieldwork:</i> | 18 th July 2007 and 1 st August 2007 | | |
| <i>Client:</i> | Mr & Mrs Rollit 10 Castle Hill Avenue Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 1HJ | | |
| <i>Contact name:</i> | Mr Jon Rollit | | |

Internal Quality Check

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Primary Author:</i> | J Richards | <i>Date:</i> | 1 st August 2007 |
|------------------------|------------|--------------|-----------------------------|

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------|--|
| <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 | 4 |
| 1. Introduction | 4 |
| 2. Aims & Methods | 6 |
| 3. Archaeological & Historical Background | 7 |
| 4. Results. | 8 |
| 5. Conclusions | 10 |
| 6. Acknowledgements | 11 |
| 7. Archive | 11 |
| 8. References | 12 |

Appendices:

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| 1. Monitoring Sheets | 13 |
| 2. Photo List..... | 17 |
| 3. OASIS Form..... | 18 |

Figures:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. General location | 3 |
| 2. Site plan..... | 5 |
| 3. Plan of trenches | 8 |

Plates:

Cover: General view of the site from the north east

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. South West facing section of North East footing | 9 |
| 2. North West facing section of South East footing, showing possible wall..... | 9 |
| 3. Close up of possible wall..... | 9 |
| 4. South West facing section of West footing | 9 |
| 5. North West facing section of North West footing..... | 10 |

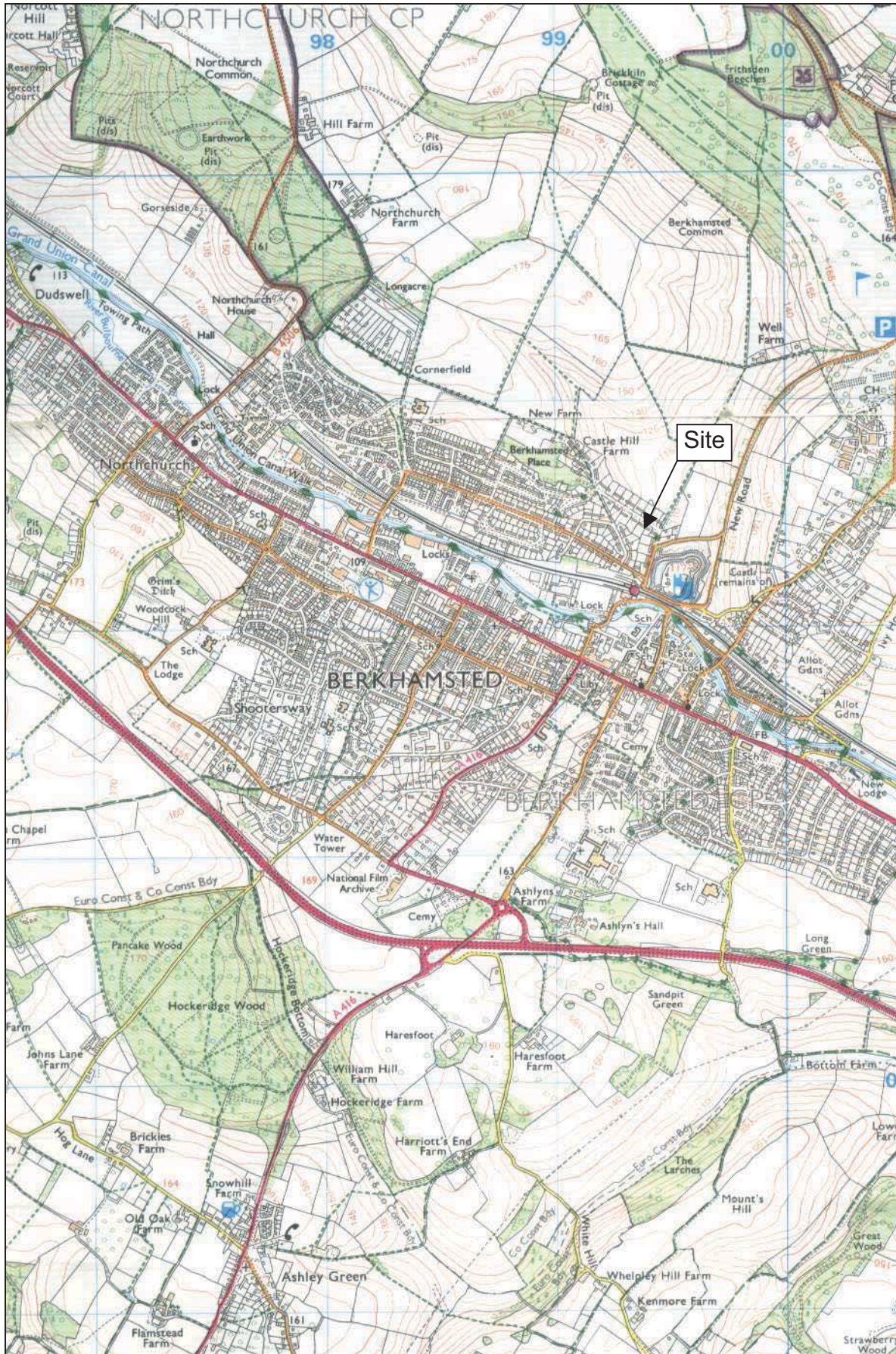


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During July and August 2007 Archaeological Services and Consultancy carried out a watching brief at 10 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted, during the initial groundworks for an extension. Archaeological remains of Iron Age, Roman and Medieval date have been recorded in the area, but on this occasion the only archaeological remains observed comprised a cut filled with modern bricks, interpreted as possible wall footings, dating from the early 20th century. The archaeological impact of the development is considered to be negligible.

1 Introduction

1.1 In July and August 2007 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 10 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted (NGR SP 9935 0833 Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Rollit, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC, and approved by Mrs Kate Batt of the *Heritage and Environment Section, Hertfordshire County Council* (HES). The relevant planning application reference is 4/02819/06/FHA.

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 two-storey extension to the house.

1.3 *Location*

The site is in Berkhamsted, in the administrative district of Dacorum, Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). It is on the northern side of the town, on the east side of Castle Hill Avenue and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 9935 0833.

1.4 *Description*

Access to the site is from Castle Hill Avenue, which runs to the southwest of the site (Fig. 2). The development site is surrounded on its remaining three sides by houses and their associated gardens. The site currently comprises part of the ground floor storey of the existing house, set within a large garden. A number of services cross the site, between the road and the existing building, outside the area of the new extension.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area comprise the *Charity 2 Association*: namely flinty fine silty soils over chalk (Soil Survey, 1983). The site is within the valley of the river Bulbourne on the north side of the valley, and lies at an elevation of c.112m OD.

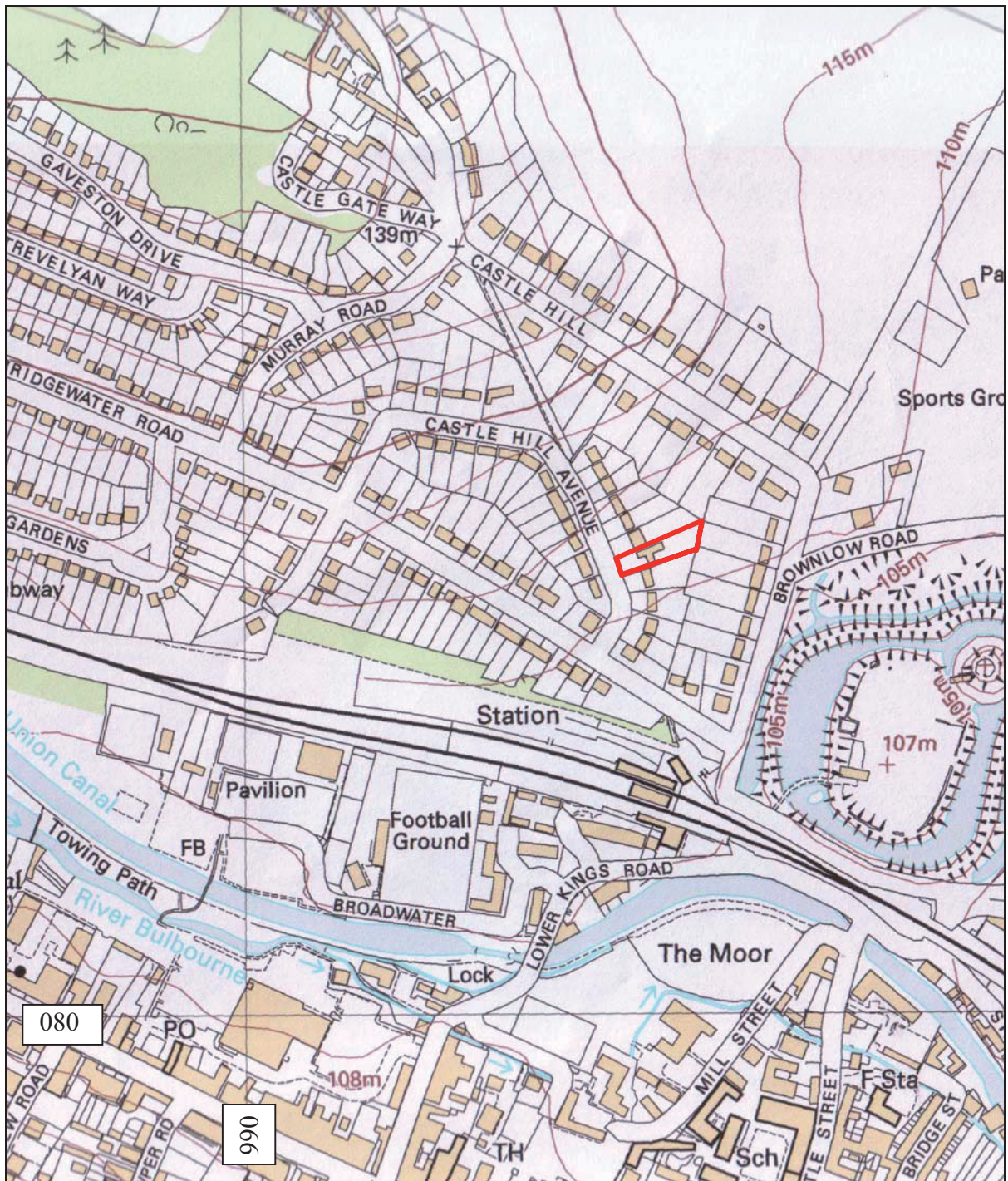


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:5000)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the project design (Section 2), 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 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 project design (Section 2), 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

2.4 Constraints

The new services for the extension reused the existing service trenches. It was therefore agreed, on consultation with Kate Batt of the HES, that these did not need to be monitored.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

SMR = Hertfordshire Sites and Monuments Record

3.1 General

Berkhamsted is an area of considerable archaeological and historical importance (Birtchneil 1960; HCC 2004; Page (ed), 1908) and this has been recognised by *Hertfordshire County Council* by the designation of much of the town as an *Area of Archaeological Importance*.

3.2 Prehistoric (before 600BC)

A large bank and ditch, known as Grim's Ditch, runs along the south side of the Bulbourne Valley. It may have been a boundary ditch between tribal territories. Settlements of Neolithic to Iron Age date were discovered south of this ditch during the construction of the A41. It is likely that there were other settlements in the area. (HCC 2004)

3.3 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)

Evidence of a settlement dating to the Late Iron Age, or early Roman period was found during the building of Bridgewater Middle School in 1974. This settlement included four iron working furnaces and several cremation burials. (HCC 2004).

3.4 Roman (AD43-c.450)

It is likely that the area of the modern Castle Hill Avenue and Bridgewater Road was occupied during the Roman period. Evidence of Roman occupation was revealed during the construction of the houses on Castle Hill Avenue during the 1930s (SMR 12193). Roman pottery dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD has been found on Bridgewater Road (SMR 6071 and 6803), and it is likely that a Roman pottery kiln was situated in the area west of Castle Hill Avenue.

3.5 Saxon (c.450-1066)

The manor at Northchurch, to the west of Berkhamsted, probably had Saxon origins, and the site lies within the extent of the estate of Northchurch (HCC 2004).

3.6 Medieval (1066-1500)

The site lies outside the medieval borough of Berkhamsted, but is situated c.200m west of Berkhamsted Castle, an earth and timber 'motte and bailey' castle built soon after the Norman conquest of 1066 (HCC 2004).

3.7 Post-Medieval (1500-1900)

There is no known evidence for post-medieval activity in the immediate vicinity of 10 Castle Hill Avenue. The focus of settlement remained south of the river until the 20th century.

3.8 Modern (1900-present)

A house built in the 1930s previously occupied the site. Much of this house has been demolished to allow the building of the extension.

4 Results

The excavation of foundation trenches on 18th July 2007, and on 1st August was monitored. The foundation trenches were excavated by mini-digger with a toothed bucket. The main external foundation trenches were 1m wide and between 0.6m and 1m in depth. The internal foundation trenches were 0.5m wide and 0.5m in depth.

A layer of topsoil of between 0.1m and 0.4m in thickness overlay a mid reddish brown flinty clay subsoil, which extended to 0.8m below the highest point of the existing ground level. This overlay the light greyish white chalk bedrock, which was excavated to a depth of 1m below the existing ground level.

The only archaeological feature noted was in the east section of the easternmost foundation trench, and did not extend into the trench. This was a 0.5m deep cut filled with modern bricks and a loose, crumbly dark brownish black soil. This may be the remains of a wall, or perhaps a disused drain.

Most of the foundation trenches followed the line of the foundations for the original 1930s house (Fig. 3), although some extended beyond this.

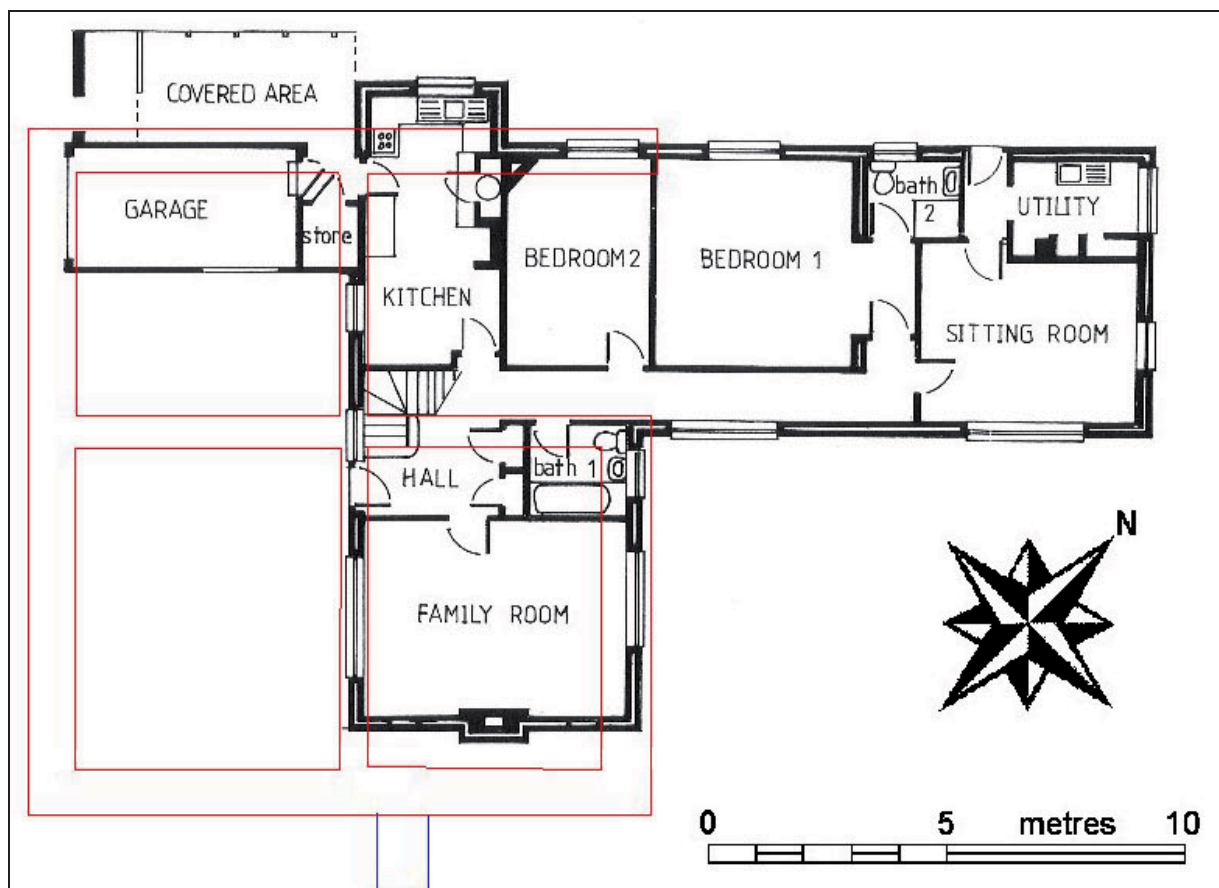


Figure 3: Plan of existing building, showing location of new footings (in red) and of possible wall (in blue).



Plate 1: Southwest facing section of northeast footing



Plate 2: Northwest facing section of southeast footing, showing possible wall



Plate 3: Close up of possible wall



Plate 4: Southwest facing section of west footing



Plate 5: Northwest facing section of northwest footing



Plate 6: Middle trench showing depth of subsoil

5. Conclusions

No archaeological remains earlier than AD1900 were observed. It is likely that the construction of the house in the 1930s would have impacted upon any features present. The foundation trenches were mostly excavated through disturbed ground, limiting the potential to observe archaeological remains. It is unlikely that large quantities of significant archaeological features or artefacts are present in this location, as the main focus of settlement in Berkhamsted remained south of the river until the late 19th century. The development took place over a limited area and is unlikely to have had a significant impact on any such archaeological remains.

The watching brief was undertaken in generally sunny weather and conditions for the watching brief were good. Full co-operation was received from the contractors and a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the watching brief.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Mr & Mrs Rollit and Paul Kvoch for their co-operation during this project. The writer would also like to thank Kate Batt of the HES, who monitored the project. Fieldwork was carried out by the author and the report was edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
3. Clients site plans
4. Site Monitoring Sheets
5. Site record drawings
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 Dacorum Heritage Trust.

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)*.

Secondary Sources


Birtchnell P C., 1960 *A Short History of Berkhamsted*. Clunbury Press

HCC 2004 *Berkhamsted: Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment*. Hertfordshire County Council

Page W., 1908 *The Victoria History of the County of Berkhamsted*. Dawsons of Pall Mall

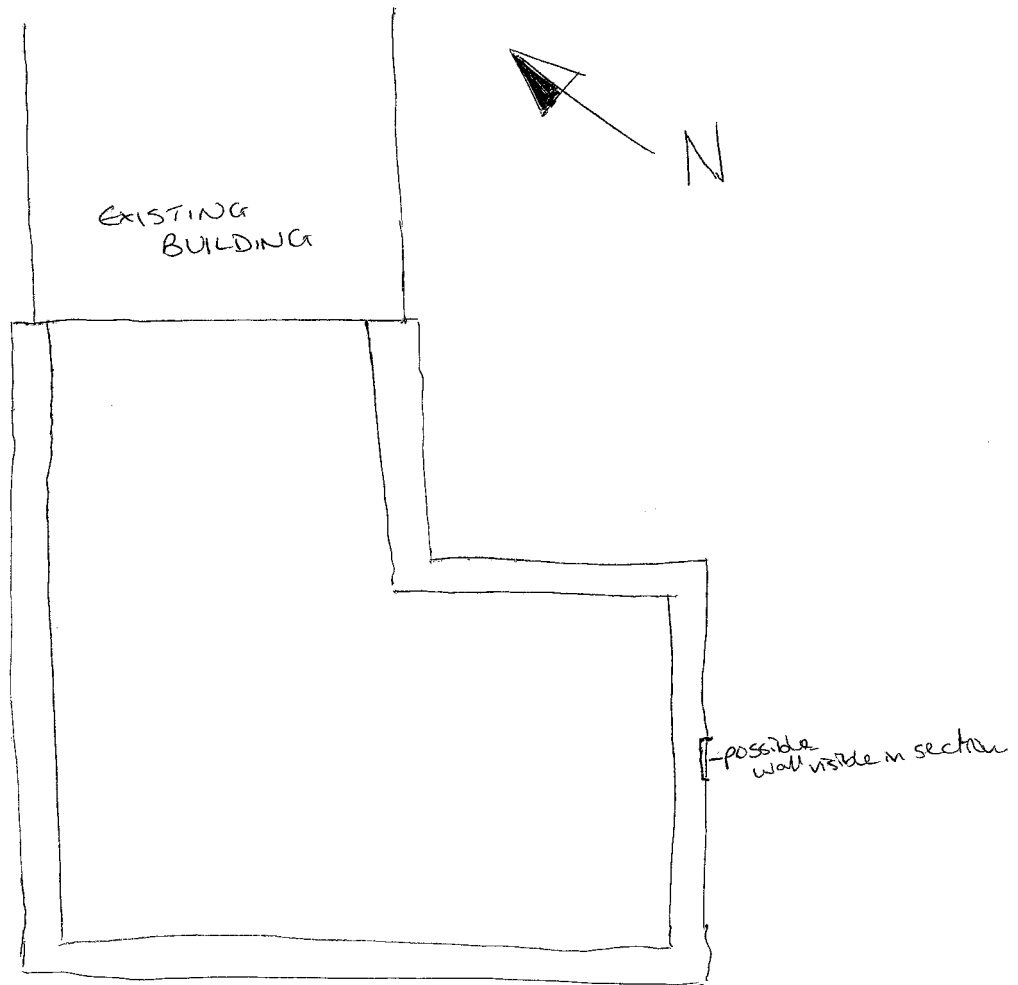
Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

| | | | | | | |
|---|----------|---|-----------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
|  A.S.C. LTD | | ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD | | | | |
| Project: 10 CASTLE HILL AVENUE, | | Project No/Code: 9091 BCH | | Sheet: 1 of 1 | | |
| WATCHING BRIEF. | | Date of visit: 18/07/07. | | | | |
| Client/Developer MR + MRS ROLLIT. | | | | | | |
| Contact: PAUL KVOCH | | | Phone: 07717175395 | | | |
| Duration of Visit (inc. travel): | | Start: 7:50 | | Finish: 4:30. | | |
| Completed by: JENNY RICHARDS | | | | | | |
| Development Type: | | | | | | |
| Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Services | Roads | Levelling | Quarrying | Pipelines | Other (specify): |
| Site & weather conditions: SUNNY, OCCASIONAL SHOWERS. | | | | | | |
| Observations: ABOVE GROUND DEMOLITION OF MUCH OF THE BUILDING HAD ALREADY OCCURRED. 1m WIDE TRENCHES FOR FOOTINGS EXCAVATED BY MINIDIGGER WITH TOOTHED BUCKET. MOST FOLLOWED THE LINE OF EXISTING FOOTINGS. BLACK TOPSOIL OVERLIES, DARK REDDISH BROWN FLINTY CLAY SUBSOIL OVER LIGHT GREY CHALK BEDROCK WITH LIGHT YELLOWISH BROWN BANDING. POSSIBLE MODERN WALL OBSERVED TO FAR EAST SIDE OF SITE WITHIN SECTION OF FOUNDATION TRENCH. | | | | | | |
| Comments: WILL ADVISE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST (KATE BATT) | | | | | | |
| MR ROLLIT POSTING ARCHITECTS PLAN OF FOOTINGS TWO JENNY. | | | | | | |

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003





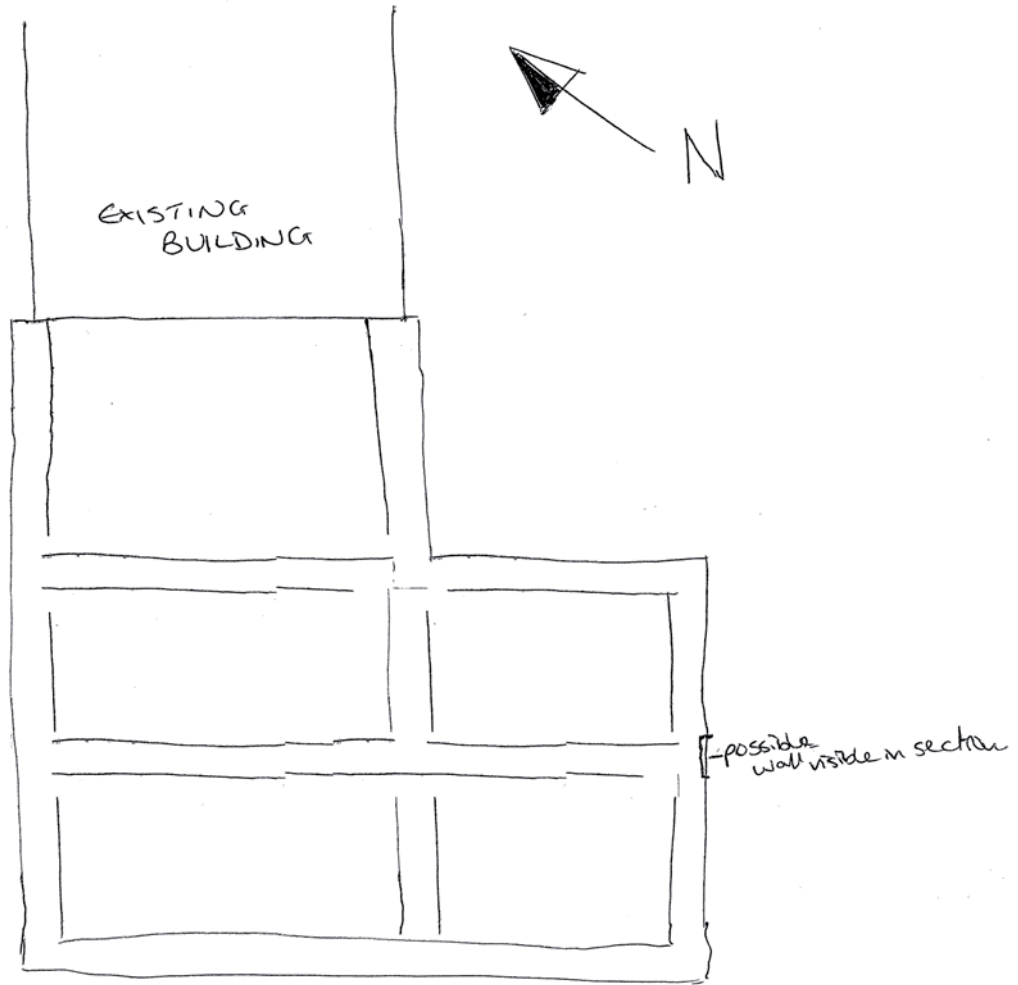
A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

| | | | |
|--|----------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Project: 10 CASTLEHILL AVENUE, BERKHAMSTED | | Project No/Code: 9091 BCH | Sheet: 2 of |
| Client/Developer JON ROLLIT | | Date of visit: 01/08/07 | |
| Contact: | | Phone: | |
| Duration of Visit (inc. travel): | Start: 8:30 | Finish: | |
| Completed by: JENNY RICHARDS. | | | |
| Development Type: | | | |
| Footings / | Services | Roads | Levelling |
| | | | Quarrying |
| | | | Pipelines |
| | | | Other (specify): |
| Site & weather conditions: DRY AND SUNNY. | | | |
| Observations: No features of archaeological significance were noted during excavation of footings within building footprint. Excavated to depth of 0.50m below current ground level. 0.20m of made ground overlying chalk bedrock. | | | |
| Comments: Service trenches will reuse old services. | | | |

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



Appendix 2: List of Photographs

| SITE NAME: 10 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted | | | SITE NO/CODE: 909/BCH |
|---|-----|---------|--|
| Shot | B&W | Digital | Subject |
| 1 | - | / | View of site from NE |
| 2 | / | / | SW facing section of trench |
| 3 | / | / | NW facing section of trench |
| 4 | / | / | Close up of possible wall |
| 5 | / | / | SW facing section of trench |
| 6 | / | / | NW facing section of trench |
| 7 | - | / | View of site from S |
| 8 | - | / | Working shot |
| 9 | - | / | Working shot |
| 10 | / | / | Middle trench from SW |
| 11 | / | / | Section of trench showing depth of made ground |

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

| PROJECT DETAILS | | | |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Project Name: | 10 Castle Hill Aveune, Berkhamsted | | |
| Short Description: | During July and August 2007 Archaeological Services and Consultancy carried out a watching brief at 10 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted, during the initial groundworks for an extension. Archaeological remains of Iron Age, Roman and Medieval date have been recorded in the area, but on this occasion the only archaeological remains observed comprised a cut filled with modern bricks, interpreted as possible wall footings, dating from the early 20 th century. The archaeological impact of the development is considered to be negligible. | | |
| Project Type: (indicate all that apply) | Watching Brief | | |
| Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed) | none | Previous work: (eg. SMR refs) | none |
| Current land use: | Residential and Garden | Future work: (yes / no / unknown) | no |
| Monument type: | none | Monument period: | n/a |
| Significant finds: (artefact type & period) | none | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | | |
| County: | Hertfordshire | OS reference: (8 figs min) | SP 9935 0833 |
| District: | Dacorum Borough | Parish: | |
| Site address: (with postcode if known) | 10 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 1HJ | | |
| Study area: (sq. m. or ha) | | Height OD: (metres) | c.112m |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | | |
| Organisation: | Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd | | |
| Project brief originator: | Hertfordshire CC | Project design originator: | ASC Ltd |
| Project Manager: | Bob Zeepvat | Director/Supervisor: | Jenny Richards |
| Sponsor / funding body: | Owner | | |
| PROJECT DATE | | | |
| Start date: | 18 th July 2007 | End date: | 1 st August 2007 |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | | |
| | Location (Accession no.) | Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets) | |
| Physical: | n/a | n/a | |
| Paper: | Dacorum Heritage Trust | Monitoring sheet, Project design, Report, B&W negatives and photographs | |
| Digital: | Dacorum Heritage Trust | CD: Digital images, MS Word documents | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report) | | | |
| Title: | Watching Brief Report (909/BCH) | | |
| Author(s): | Jenny Richards BA PIFA | | |
| Page nos | 18 | Date: | 3 rd September 2007 |