

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: 63-65 CASTLE STREET LUTON

NGR: TL 0915 2081

on behalf of Cranbourne Developments



J Richards BA PIFA

February 2008

ASC: 887/LCS/2

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Site Data

| ASC project code: | LCS | | ASC Project No: | 887 | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|---|-----------------------|-----|--|--|--|
| OASIS ref: | | | Event/Accession no: | | | | |
| County: | | Bedford | shire | | | | |
| Village/Town: | | Luton | Luton | | | | |
| Civil Parish: | | Unparish | ned | | | | |
| NGR (to 8 figs): | | TL 0915 | 2081 | | | | |
| Extent of site: | | 450 sq.m | 1. | | | | |
| Present use: | | Housing | Development | | | | |
| Planning proposal: | | Convers | ion of buildings | | | | |
| Planning application | ı ref/date: | 06/1370/ | 06/1370/FUL | | | | |
| Local Planning Auth | ority: | Luton B | Luton Borough Council | | | | |
| Date of fieldwork: | | 5^{th} March 2007 and $6^{\text{th}} - 20^{\text{th}}$ February 2008 | | | | | |
| Client: | | Cranbourne Developments | | | | | |
| | | c/o RDT Design | | | | | |
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| | | Southdown Road | | | | | |
| | | Harpenden | | | | | |
| | | Hertfordshire | | | | | |
| | | AL5 1TE | | | | | |
| Contact name: | | Lawrenc | e Freeman | | | | |

Internal Quality Check

| Primary Author: | J Richards BA PIFA | Date: | 28 th February 2008 |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| Revisions: | | Date: | |
| Edited/Checked By: | | Date: | |

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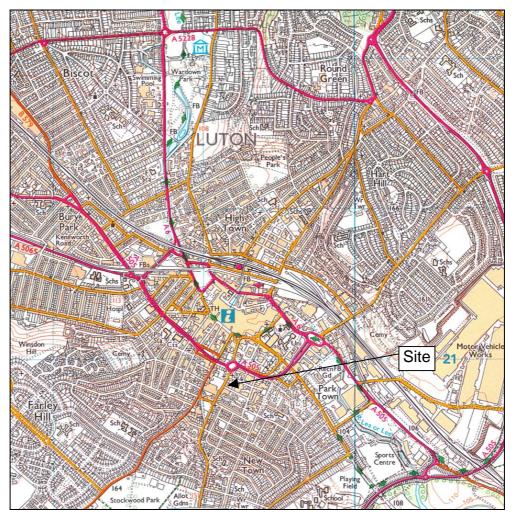


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

Between March 2007 and February 2008 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd carried out a watching brief at 63-65 Castle Street, Luton during groundworks for the conversion of the existing houses into flats and the construction of new dwellings. No significant archaeological finds or features were observed, and the site appears to have been heavily disturbed during the construction of the houses on Castle Street in the late 19^{th} to early 20^{th} century.

1. Introduction

1.1 Between March 2007 and February 2008 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 63-65 Castle Street, Luton. The project was commissioned by Cranbourne Developments, and was carried out according to a brief (Mather 2007) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), Luton Borough Council, by their archaeological advisor (AA), Heritage and Environment Section Bedfordshire County Council, and a project design prepared by ASC. The relevant planning application reference is 06/1370/FUL.

1.2 **Planning Background**

This watching brief was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd (ASC) is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Archaeological Organisation* by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 Management

The project was carried out under the overall direction of **Jonathan Hunn** BA PHD MIFA, an established archaeologist with extensive experience in managing archaeological projects in England. Jonathan holds a first degree in Archaeology and History from the University College of North Wales (Bangor), and a PhD from the University of Southampton (Dept of Geography). Jonathan has held managerial posts with *English Heritage, Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust, Oxford Archaeological Unit* and *Tempvs Reparatvm Ltd*, and has acted as archaeological consultant for *Hertfordshire County Council* and *English Heritage*.

1.5 The Site

1.5.1 Location & Description

The proposed development is within an existing housing development to the south of Luton town centre, and on the southern boundary of the town. It is

centred on OS Grid Reference TL 0915 2081 and has an approximate area of 450 square metres (Fig. 1).

The site is approximately rectangular in shape and located to the rear of 63-65 Castle Street and is bounded to the south by Holly Street, and to the east by a large industrial/commercial building. The site is accessed from Holly Street. (Fig. 2)

1.5.2 Geology & Topography

Topographically the application area is situated on a crest of higher land overlooking the valley of the River Lea. The average height is *c*.119.5m AOD. The area has been extensively disturbed and urbanised, and as a result of this the natural soils are unlikely to survive. In the event of some natural soils remaining, it seems likely that they would comprise the Batcombe Association, consisting of *"fine silty over clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils…some well drained clayey soils over chalk"*, as this is what the majority of the surrounding area comprises. The underlying geology comprises mainly of plateau drift and of clay with flints (Soil Survey 1983; 582a).

1.5.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development is for the conversion of buildings at 63-65 Castle Street, Luton and the construction of a new dwelling in the courtyard to the rear of 65 Castle Street (Fig. 3).

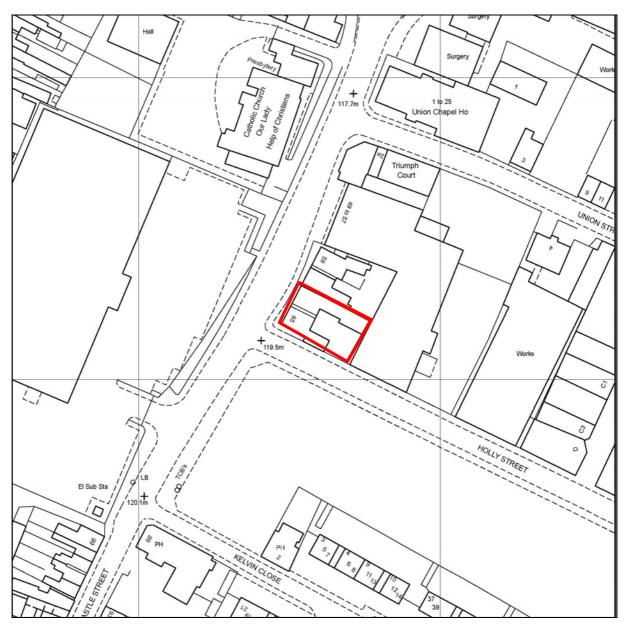
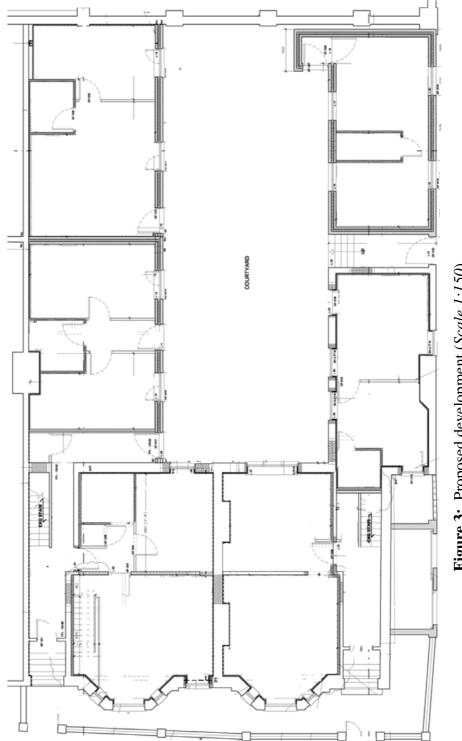


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)



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:

- The investigation and observation of the groundworks associated with the development followed by the investigation and recording any archaeological features revealed.
- When archaeological features were encountered they were to be investigated and recorded.
- The location of all deposits was to be planned at 1:20.

2.4 *Constraints*

The excavation of geotechnical pits and footing trenches was monitored. No factors hindered the watching brief.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from the Project Design (Barclay 2007).

3.2 Luton is an area of considerable archaeological and historical importance. This has been defined in the Luton Extensive Archaeological Urban Survey (Albion Archaeology 2004). Unlike the neighbouring town of Dunstable, there has been little archaeological investigation in Luton, and in consequence the archaeology of Luton is not well understood.

3.3 **Prehistoric** (before 600BC)

Luton is situated in the valley of the River Lea. River valleys in the prehistoric periods in this area are known to have attracted settlements, and a small number of occupation sites of this period are known in the Luton area (Holgate 1995).

Very little evidence of prehistoric activity has been found in the area. An important archaeological site, now known as Waulud's Bank, lies c.3km to the north of the site, where excavations showed evidence of Neolithic and Iron Age occupation (Dyer 1964). A further prehistoric site known as Galley Hill lies c.5km north of Luton town centre, where evidence for Neolithic occupation and round barrows (prehistoric burial mounds) has been recorded (Dyer 1974). A further group of barrows known as the Five Knolls lies c.7km to the west of the site, above the Icknield Way, which was a prehistoric trackway leading from southwest England to East Anglia.

3.3 *Iron Age* (600BC-AD43)

There are no known archaeological sites of Iron Age date from the immediate area of the development site.

3.4 **Roman** (AD43-c.450)

The extent of Roman activity in Luton has not been defined but settlement of this period was probably dominated by the small Roman town of Durocobrivis (Dunstable), which was situated c.5km west of the site (Matthews 1989). A number of scattered Roman finds have been recorded in Luton town centre, including a kiln (HER 205) on the site of the Arndale Centre, a quern (HER 1979) recorded c.1km southeast of the site, and a number of Roman coins and other artefacts (HER 1516, 1977, 15236, 1981, etc.) have been found around the site on the southwest of the town centre.

3.5 Saxon (c.450-1066)

The origin and early development of the Saxon and medieval settlement in Luton is not understood in detail. It is possible that a settlement developed adjacent to the river in the area of the present modern town centre during the Saxon period (HER 16993). The town was mentioned in the Domesday Survey (1086) and was held by the king (Williams & Martin 2003, 563).

3.6 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

The site is to the north of the castle built by Robert de Waudari, a foreign mercenary (HER 186). It is likely to have been a timber castle, built in AD 1139 and pulled down 15 years later. A second castle was then built in AD 1221 by Fulk de Breauté, to the north of the original castle (Coles 2004). Its memory has been perpetuated in the names Castle Street and Castle Close.

A recent excavation at the presumed site of the original wooden castle, c.50m to the south of the development site, revealed a substantial ditch, interpreted as being part of the ditch surrounding the bailey (Coles 2004). Further remains of the moat have been recently identified on the former University of Luton site to the south of the development site (Albion Archaeology 2005). This investigation indicated that the moat is likely to extend into the proposed development area.

3.7 **Post-Medieval** (1500-1900)

There are no known archaeological sites of post-medieval date from the immediate area of the development site.

3.8 Modern (1900-present)

Luton is extensively urbanised and is, in the main, an industrial town. The site lies to the south of the modern commercial centre and the present houses on the site probably date from the late 19^{th} or early 20^{th} centuries.

4. **Results**

4.1 Watching Brief on Geotechnical Pits

In March 2007 ASC Ltd monitored the excavation of four Geotechnical pits at 63-65 Castle Street, Luton. The locations of these are shown in Figure 4.

Test pit 1 was located in the eastern corner of the courtyard. It was 50cm by 50cm, excavated to a depth of 1m. It revealed a deposit of tarmac overlying a sandy levelling layer above a mid brown orange chalky clay with occasional flint nodules and gravel (Plate 1).

Test pit 2 was located inside the extension to the rear of 63 Castle Street. It was 1.50m by 1m in size and was excavated to a depth of 50cm. This comprised disturbed ground of grey brown silt (Plate 2).

Test pit 3 was located inside 63 Castle Street, it was 1m by 0.50m in size and was excavated to a depth of 50cm. This also comprised a disturbed ground of grey brown silt (Plate 3).

Test pit 4 was located in the basement of 63 Castle Street. It was 1.5m square and was excavated to a depth of 0.45m. This revealed the natural soil to be a mid brown orange clay with occasional flint nodules and frequent chalk inclusions (Plate 4).

No archaeological features or finds were observed during this stage of the watching brief.

4.2 Watching Brief on Footings

In February 2008 ASC Ltd made five monitoring visits during the excavation of new footings for the development to the rear of 63-65 Castle Street, Luton.

It was found that the courtyard area comprised a layer of dark orange brown sandy clay with frequent inclusions of subangular flint pebbles. This was found to be 1.20 to 1.60m thick and overlay an almost identical sandy soil with no inclusions. The footings trenches were excavated to a depth of 2m below ground level at the north of the site and 1.5m below ground level in the southeastern corner of the site (Plate 7). The ground level within the courtyard was much higher than on Holly Street or Castle Street (Plates 5-6 & 8).

The ground had been extensively built up in the late 19th to early 20th centuries and several services were also observed crossing the site. A drainage inspection chamber was also uncovered (Fig. 4). This was formed of frogged bricks and the cut for the drain contained sheet plastic and it is therefore of 20th century date (Plate 7).

No significant archaeological finds or features were observed during these groundworks.



Plate 1: Test pit 1 (Scale 1m and 0.60m)



Plate 2: Test pit 2 (Scale 1m)



Plate 3: Test pit 3 (Scale 1m and 0.80m)



Plate 4: Test pit 4 (*Scale 2x 0.80m*)



Plate 5: Site from south east



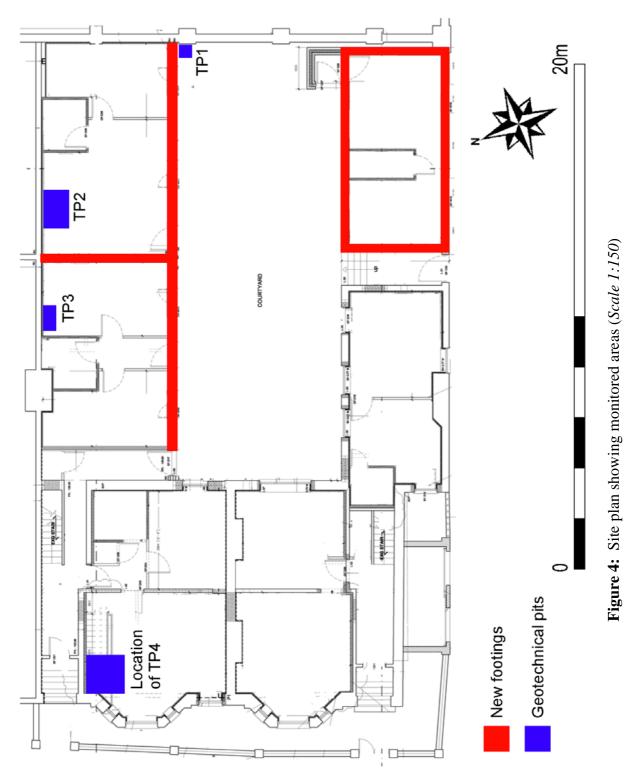
Plate 6: Site from south west



Plate 7: Drainage inspection chamber



Plate 8: Southeastern footing trench showing stratigraphy



5. Conclusions

- 5.1 No archaeological finds or features were observed during the watching brief. The ground level to the north of the site was found to be over 1m higher than to the south. This does not correspond with the ground levels to the front of the properties on Castle Street, and was due to a large quantity of made ground. This made ground may have been deposited at the time that 63-65 Castle Street were constructed in the late 19th to early 20th century as these existing houses have cellars.
- 5.2 The ground on the site had been extensively disturbed by services to depth of 0.50m below the existing ground level. A drainage inspection chamber formed of frogged bricks was also observed.
- 5.3 The footing trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 2m below ground level, 1.60m of which was made ground and the remainder comprised subsoil. The archaeological impact of this development is therefore considered to be negligible.

5.4 *Confidence Rating*

A high confidence rating is attached to the results of this watching brief.

6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by *Cranbourne Developments*. The writer is grateful to Lawrence Freeman for his assistance. The project was monitored by Lesley-Ann Mather on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to Edyta of *Derek Building* for her assistance.

The project was managed for ASC by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Theresa Hawtin BA MSc PIFA (geotechnical pits) and Jenny Richards BA PIFA and David Kaye BA PIFA (footings). The report was prepared by Jenny Richards and edited by Bob Zeepvat 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. B/W prints & negatives
 - 8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.
- 7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Luton Museum*.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

- ALGAO 2003 Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.
- Barclay, C. 2007 Project Design for Watching Brief at 63-65 Castle Street, Luton. Archaeological Services and Consultancy
- 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).
- Mather, L-A. 2007 Brief for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication at 63-65 Castle St, Luton. Bedfordshire County Council.

Secondary Sources

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- BGS British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology.
- Coles, S 2004 "Excavation at Castle Street Luton: The site of Robert de Waudari's castle?" Bedfordshire Archaeology 25 pp201-207
- Dyer, J F 1964 "A Secondary Neolithic Camp at Waulud's Bank, Leagrave" *Bedfordshire* Archaeological Journal 2 pp1-15
- Dyer J F 1974 "The excavation of two barrows on Galley Hill, Streatley" *Bedfordshire* Archaeological Journal **9** pp13-34
- Holgate, R (ed.) 1995 *Chiltern Archaeology Recent Work: A Handbook for the Next Decade* The Book Castle Dunstable
- Soil Survey 1983 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend (Harpenden).
- Matthews, C L 1989 Ancient Dunstable. A Prehistory of the District Manshead Archaeological Society
- Williams A & Martin G H (eds.) 2003 Domesday Book: A Complete Translation Penguin

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

| A.S.C. LTD ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD | |
|--|-------------|
| Project: 63-65 Castle Sr. , Luban Project No/Code: Sheet: 1 of |] |
| Date of visit: 5367 | - |
| Client/Developer Gambourne Developments | |
| Contact: Daniel Attin (engineer) Phone: 07947 366108 | - |
| Duration of Visit Start: 2-00 Finish: 4-15 | |
| Completed by: Teresa Haustin | |
| Development Type: | 1 |
| Footings Services Roads Levelling Quarrying Pipelines Other (specify): Ceotechnical pits | |
| Site & weather conditions: | 1 |
| Overcast + drizzly. Lighting inside building poor but torch provided | |
| | |
| Observations: 4 Geotechnical pits observed. All were | |
| excavated by clients to investigate building Founda | has |
| No archaeological features, deposits or finds observed. | |
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| the yard. c. SOcn x Socn x In deep. 7 | |
| Layers: Tannac + underlying bricks 954cm. | |
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| with occasional flint nodules and dravel. | Sbem, |
| | In x Sten |
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| Test pit 3 - Inside at rear of original building c. In x | |
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| Test pit 4 - In basement to right of window! | |
| C. 1. Sm x 1. Sm x 1. Sm deep. Soil similar to | 1. I |
| nahval outside (TPI) with nore chalk inclusions. Failur Comments: looking chalk nodules (prob. nat.) on NE+SE sidos of (pit. Kest mid brown-orange challey day with flint | solid- |
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| or two in the yard. Man Contract architect for | |
| hurther details and timescale. | |
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| Client/Developer | | | |
| Contact: GDITA | - mar cu | Phone: | +7628776 |
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Appendix 2: List of Photographs

| SITE NAME:63-65 Castle St, Luton SITE NO/CODE: 887/LCS | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Shot | B&W | Digital | Subject | | | |
| 1 | √ | ~ | Test pit 1 outside facing SE | | | |
| 2 | √ | ~ | Test pit 1 outside facing SE | | | |
| 3 | ✓ | ~ | Test pit 2 ground floor facing NE | | | |
| 4 | ✓ | ~ | Test pit 2 ground floor facing NE | | | |
| 5 | ~ | \checkmark | Test pit 3 ground floor facing NE | | | |
| 6 | \checkmark | ~ | Test pit 3 ground floor facing NE | | | |
| 7 | ✓ | ~ | Test pit 3 ground floor facing NE | | | |
| 8 | ✓ | ~ | Test pit 4 basement facing NE | | | |
| 9 | ✓ | ~ | Test pit 4 basement facing NE | | | |
| 10 | √ | ~ | Test pit 4 basement facing NE | | | |
| 11 | √ | ~ | Site from Holly St | | | |
| 12 | ✓ | ~ | Site from Holly St | | | |
| 13 | √ | ~ | Stratigraphy in footing trench | | | |
| 14 | √ | ~ | Site overview | | | |
| 15 | ✓ | ~ | Site overview | | | |
| 16 | √ | ~ | Site overview | | | |
| 17 | ✓ | ~ | SE footing trench facing S | | | |
| 18 | ✓ | ~ | SE footing trench facing S | | | |
| 19 | √ | ~ | Footing trench facing SW | | | |
| 20 | \checkmark | ~ | SE footing trench facing S | | | |
| 21 | \checkmark | ~ | Drainage inspection chamber | | | |
| 22 | \checkmark | ~ | Cut for drainage inspection chamber | | | |
| 23 | \checkmark | ~ | Cut for drainage inspection chamber | | | |
| 24 | ✓ | ~ | Site overview | | | |
| 25 | ~ | \checkmark | Site overview | | | |

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

| PROJECT DETAILS | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Project Name: | 63-65 Castle Street, Luton | | | | | | |
| Short Description: | Between March 2007 and February 2008 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd carried out a watching brief at 63-65 Castle Street, Luton during groundworks for the conversion of the existing houses into flats and the construction of new dwellings. No significant archaeological finds or features were observed, and the site appears to have been heavily disturbed during the construction of the houses on Castle Street in the late 19 th to early 20 th century. | | | | | | |
| 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 | Future work: (yes / no / unknown) | No | | | | |
| Monument type: | None | Monument period: | None | | | | |
| Significant finds: (artefact type & period) | None | | | | | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | | | | | | |
| County: | Bedfordshire | OS reference: (8 figs min) | TL 0915 2081 | | | | |
| District: | Luton | Parish: | Unparished | | | | |
| Site address: (with postcode if known) | 63-65 Castle St, Luton | | | | | | |
| Study area: (sq. m. or ha) | 450 sq.m. | Height OD: (metres) | <i>c.</i> 119.5m | | | | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | | | | | | |
| Organisation: Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd | | | | | | | |
| Project brief originator: | Bedfordshire CC | Project design originator: | C. Barclay | | | | |
| Project Manager: | J. Hunn | Director/Supervisor: | T. Hawtin and J. Richards | | | | |
| Sponsor / funding body: | Cranbourne Developments | | | | | | |
| PROJECT DATE | | | | | | | |
| Start date: | 5 th March 2007 | End date: | 20th February 2008 | | | | |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | | | | | | |
| | bone, files/sheets) | | | | | | |
| Physical: | N/A | None | | | | | |
| Paper: | Luton Museum | Report, site monitoring forms, Black & White photographs and negatives | | | | | |
| Digital: | Luton Museum | CD Rom with copies of all digital files | | | | | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report) | | | | | | | |
| Title: | Archaeological Watching Brief at 63-65 Castle St, Luton | | | | | | |
| Serial title & volume: | e & volume: ASC Ltd Report ref. 887/LCS/2 | | | | | | |
| Author(s): | J Richards BA PIFA | | | | | | |
| Page nos | 27 | Date: | 28 th February 2008 | | | | |
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