



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
THE GOAT, SOPWELL LANE
ST ALBANS
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 14762 06878

on behalf of Enterprise Inns



Jonathan R. Hunn BA PhD MIFA

March 2009

ASC: 1171/SAG/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>	SAG	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1172
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2-62135	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	St Albans		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	St Albans		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 14762 06878		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.22 sq. m.		
<i>Present use:</i>	Public house kitchen		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Replacement of decayed floor		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	tba		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	St Albans District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	17/3/09		
<i>Client:</i>	Enterprise Inns PLC 3 Monkspath Hall Road Solihull West Midlands B90 4SJ		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Graham Bayfield		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Jonathan R. Hunn	<i>Date:</i>	26 th March 2009
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>	Bob Zeepvat	<i>Date:</i>	26 th March 2009

© 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	7
3. Archaeological & Historical Background.....	8
4. Results.	9
5. Conclusions	12
6. Acknowledgements	13
7. Archive	13
8. References	14

Appendices:

1. ASC Watching Brief Monitoring Sheets	15
2. Photo List.....	17
3. ASC OASIS Form	18

Figures:

1. General location	3
2. Site plan	6

Plates:

Cover: The Goat on Sopwell Lane, looking north east

1. Footings on the eastern side of kitchen.....	10
2. Footings on the south side of kitchen	10
3. Original ground beneath floor on west side of the southern end	11
4. Northern foundations looking north west.....	11

+



Figure 1: General location (scale 1:5,000)

Summary

A remedial watching brief was undertaken on a kitchen refurbishment at 'The Goat' public house, 37 Sopwell Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire in March 2009. The work was required due to the listed status of the building and the historical importance of the area. The ground level within the kitchen had already been lowered prior to commencement of the watching brief. However, from what were admittedly limited observations, it appeared that all but the north western side of the room consisted of made-up ground. A strata of chalk and occasional flint was observed on the north (uphill) side of the site. No dating evidence was retrieved.

1. Introduction

1.1 In March 2009 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 37 Sopwell Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by *Enterprise Inns*, and was carried out according to a standard watching brief method statement by agreement with the *St Albans District Archaeologist* (SADA), acting on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *St Albans District Council*. The planning application reference is not known.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), and listed building legislation.

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 managed by David Fell MA MIFA and executed by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA.

1.5 *The Site*

1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The site is located on the north side of Sopwell Lane, in the heart of the historic core of St Albans, at National Grid Reference TL 1472-0688 (Fig. 1). The area subject to the watching brief was limited to the kitchen area to the rear of The Goat public house, which amounted to about 22 square metres (Fig. 2).

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The site is in an urban area and the natural undisturbed soils do not survive. If soils were undisturbed they would comprise the *Hornbeam 3 Association*, mainly deep fine loams and clayey soils over chalky till (Soil Survey 1983, 582d). The site is on a slope that falls away to the south, and it lies at an elevation of *c.*95m OD.

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

Refurbishment of existing kitchen area, including relaying of the floor (Fig. 2).

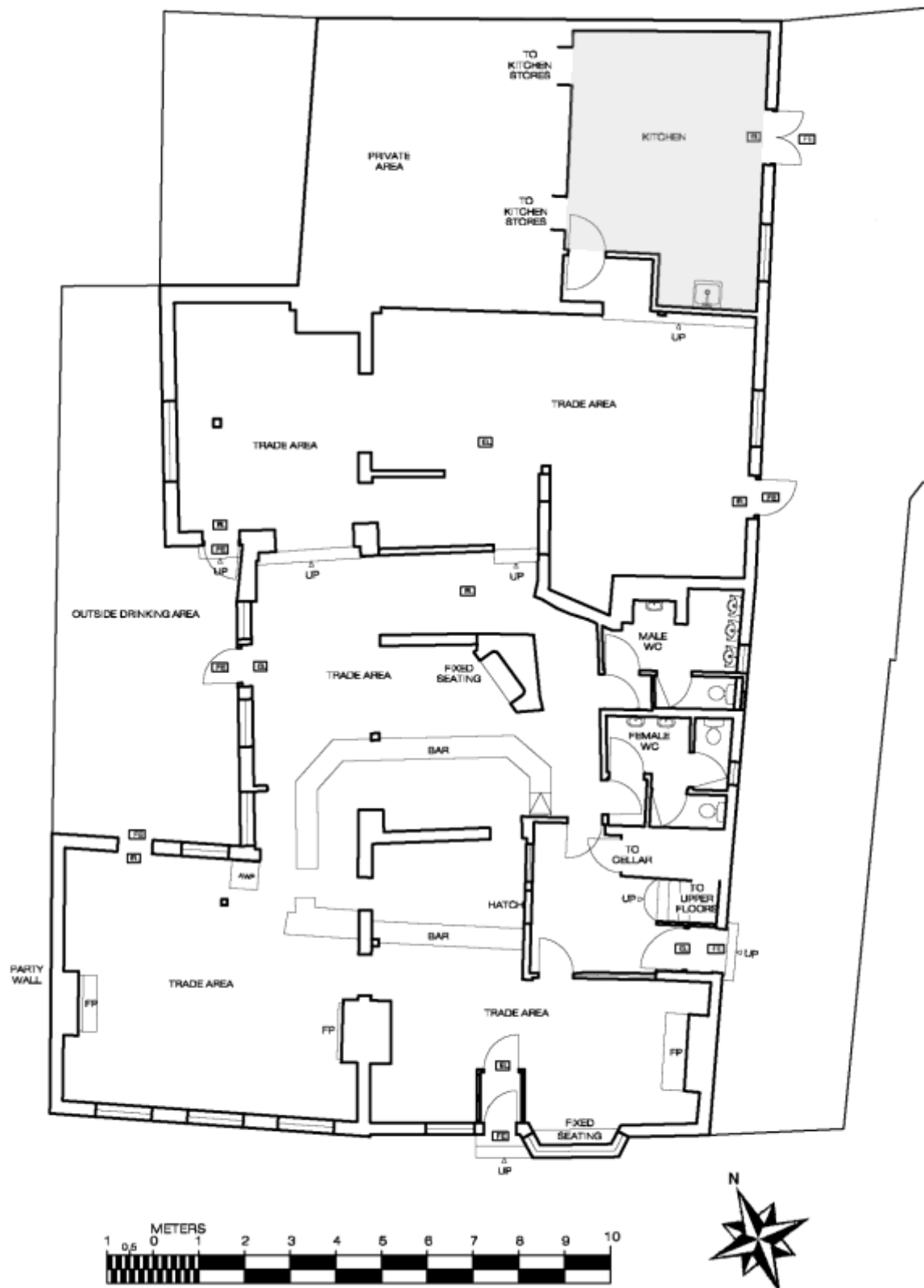


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:150)
Area of watching brief shaded

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were:

- To allow the ‘preservation by record’ of archaeological deposits
- To fully record archaeological deposits and all associated artefacts in the area affected by the development.
- To record and analyze evidence for the past environment of the site revealed during the investigation.
- To record and analyze any wall/walls as revealed during groundworks.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the method statement, to the relevant sections of the Institute for 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 method statement, which required:

- The full monitoring of groundworks.
- The full recording of any archaeological deposits uncovered with measured drawings, photographs (black and white print, colour transparency, or high resolution digital photography stored in tiff format) and written descriptions.
- Where appropriate, the recovery, conservation and storage of artefacts and ecofacts.
- The work will encompass both archaeological and environmental remains.

2.4 Constraints

Groundworks had advanced to the point where the wooden boards of the new floor were ready to be laid on the cross timbers. It was possible to observe most of the footings of the existing kitchen area, but none of the newly inserted floor pads were observable.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs, drawn from readily available published sources.
- 3.2 St Albans lies within an area of considerable archaeological and historical importance (Wheeler & Wheeler 1935, Niblett 1995, Niblett 1999, Niblett & Thompson 2005, Stead & Rigby 1989). The site is situated in the historic city centre and the focus of interest lies in the Saxon (6th – 10th centuries), medieval (11th – 15th centuries) and post-medieval (16th – 19th centuries) periods.
- 3.3 The area was of importance during the prehistoric periods, and a number of prehistoric artefacts have been recorded in the city centre. During the Iron Age, settlement was dominated by the *oppidum* at Prae Wood, c.2km west of the site (Wheeler & Wheeler 1935). A number of high-status burials of this period have been recorded in and around the present city, for example at Folly Lane (Niblett 1999).
- 3.4 The area immediately to the west of the present city was occupied during the Roman period. A Roman fort may have been present in the first century AD and a major Roman town known as *Verulamium* subsequently developed in the area (Niblett 1995). A cemetery of this period has been found within the Abbey grounds (HER 6744).
- 3.5 During the Saxon period, the focus of settlement shifted from the Roman city and development focussed on higher ground to the east of the Roman settlement. Little is known in detail of the early Saxon settlement, but an abbey is reputed to have been founded by *Offa* in c.793. The present building dates from the 11th century, as a Benedictine monastery. The town is mentioned in the Domesday Survey, referred to as *Villa Sancti Albani*.
- 3.6 It is not known whether Sopwell Lane was part of the 12th century town or a later addition (Niblett & Thompson 2005, 271). So far the apparent absence of the town's defences (Tonman Ditch) to the south of Sopwell Lane suggests the possibility that it may have turned westwards along parallel to the south of Sopwell Lane towards Holywell Hill. As for development along the lane itself, this is interpreted as being of late medieval if not 16th century date (Niblett & Thompson 2005, 310).

4. Results

- 4.1 Prior to the watching brief, the interior of the kitchen area (hereafter referred to as ‘the site’) had been cleared of all internal structures and divisions. In addition, the site footprint had been excavated to a depth of a little over 300mm. It was not possible to see the most of the excavated area as a plastic membrane had been laid and pinned down by the new floor joists. These joists rested on new concrete foundations which ran along much of the east and western walls. Those on the eastern side were 0.43m wide and those on the western side were sometimes 0.62m wide, but discontinuous in length. Beneath the plastic sheeting, two small triangular areas were exposed, revealing a chalky, clayey deposit containing flecks of charcoal. The only other elements within the room that were worthy of comment were two footings of the existing building.
- 4.2 The foundations for the eastern (*i.e.* external) wall were the most robust, comprising three courses of brick. Unfortunately these could not be examined in detail as they had all been given a coat of waterproofing material (Plate 1). Half the southern end was made up of two courses of bricks which were of modern date (Plate 2). The footings along the western half of the southern extremity consisted of a mix of clay, mortar and occasional bricks. These had supported the original wooden floor (Plate 3). The footings on the western side of the room appeared to consist of a single brick course over a mix of old, loose building rubble and soil. The foundations on the northern side consisted of a partial, discontinuous brick course over a chalky matrix of clay, broken brick, tile flecks, some green stained mortar and glass fragments. On the western half of this foundation the ground reduction had cut through a deposit of chalk and occasional flint (Plate 4). Although this could be regarded as ‘natural ground’ it is also possible that it is re-deposited fill.



Plate 1: Footings on the eastern side of the kitchen



Plate 2: Footings on the south side of the kitchen



Plate 3: Original ground beneath floor on the west side of the southern end



Plate 4: Northern foundations looking north west

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The evidence that has been recorded is derived from the ground that lay immediately beneath the foundations of the existing walls. There is no reason to suppose it was not representative of the material that was excavated for the new floor joists. This part of the pub is believed to have been built in the early 1900s (Mick Axford *pers. comm*). Only the external wall had much by way of foundation, and even this consisted of only three courses of brick. The remaining wall foundations are relatively poor except where they have been strengthened on the south side. To judge from the ground at the northern end of the kitchen it looks as though the foundations were placed on a chalk deposit which may, or may not, be an *in situ* natural deposit.
- 5.2 The presence of chalk is not surprising given the high probability that the terrain has been terraced in the past (Niblett & Thompson 2005, 270, 286, 310). No artefacts were noted from the site, though given the circumstances of the present development this cannot be considered significant. It is to be regretted that the foundations for the new floor joists were not inspected, although from what the author observed it is probable the natural clay and chalk subsurface was not far beneath.

6. Acknowledgements

The watching brief was commissioned by Graham Bayfield on behalf of Enterprise Inns. The writer is grateful to the landlord, Mick Axford, for his assistance. The project was monitored by Simon West on behalf of the local planning authority.

Fieldwork was carried out by the author and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Method statement
2. Initial Report
3. Clients site plans
4. Site Monitoring Sheets
5. B/W prints & negatives
6. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with St Albans Museum.

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


- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Niblett, R. 1995 *Roman Hertfordshire* Dovecote Press Dorset
- Niblett, R. 1999 *The Excavation of a Ceremonial Site at Folly Lane, Verulamium*. Britannia Monograph **14** Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies (London).
- Niblett, R & Thompson I, 2005: *Alban's Buried Town: an assessment of St Albans archaeology up to AD 1600*. Oxbow Books (Oxford).
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Stead, I. M. & Rigby, V. 1989 *Verulamium: The King Harry Site* English Heritage Archaeological Report **12** (London).
- Wheeler, R. E. M. & Wheeler, T. V. 1935 *Verulamium, a Belgic and Two Roman Cities* Research Report of the Society of Antiquaries of London **11** (London).

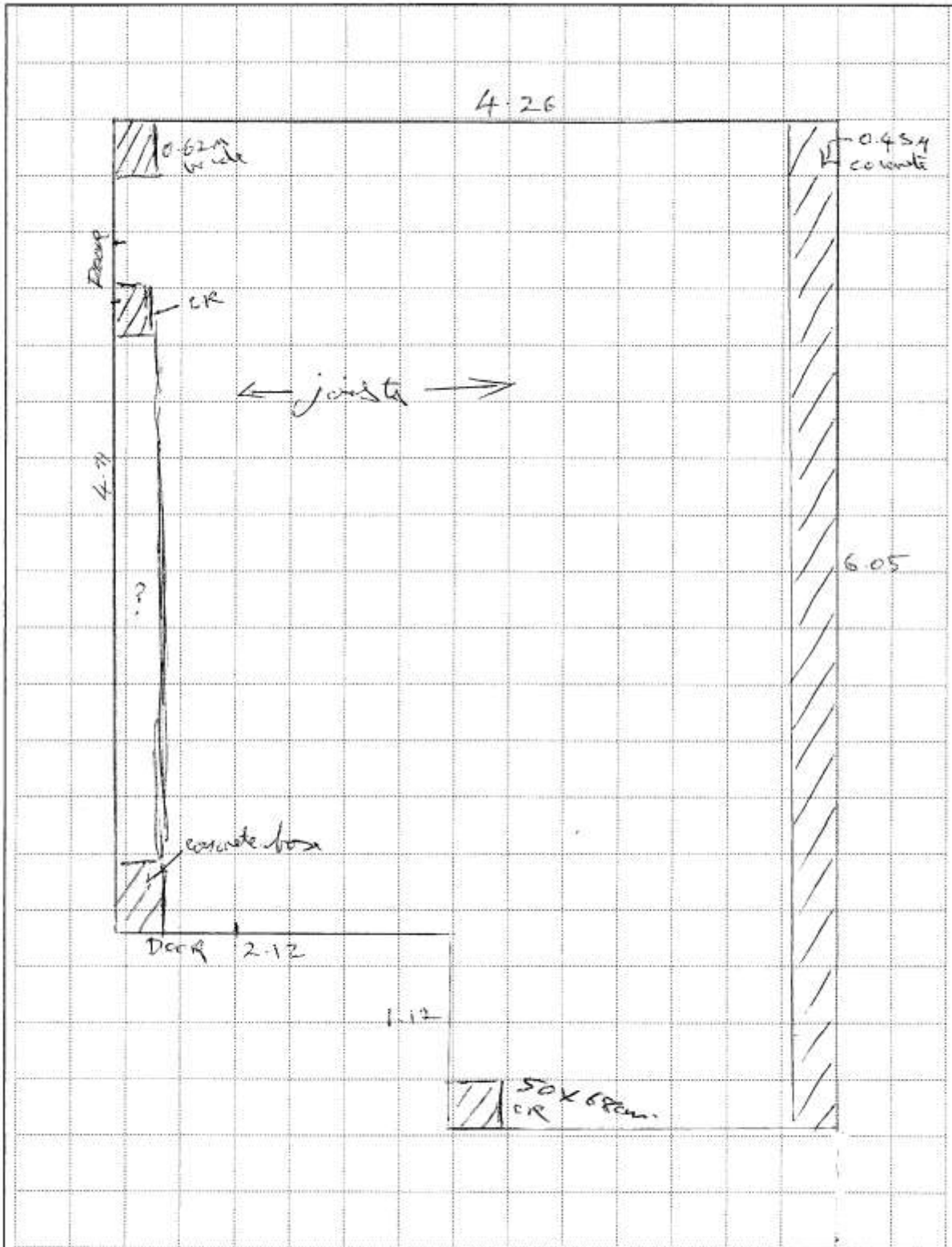
Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD	
Project: <i>The Grot, Sopwell Lane</i>		Project No/Code: <i>1171 1 SAG</i>	Sheet: <i>1</i> of <i>2</i>
Client/Developer: <i>Enterprise Inns</i>		Date of visit: <i>17/3/09</i>	
Contact: <i>Cratam Bayford</i>	Phone: <i>07990-550174</i>		
Duration of Visit (Inc. travel):	Start: <i>1.30</i>	Finish: <i>5.45</i>	
Completed by: <i>JRA</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions:			
<i>Inside kitchen area.</i>			
Observations:			
<p>The ground level has been reduced by approximately 300mm. Concrete slabs have been inserted into the ground though these were not observed (they have been sketched). The external brick wall foundation is 3 courses deep and 'tanked' to prevent water penetration on the south side.</p> <p>The Southern end consists of 2 courses of modern bricks for the SE side. Where the door is the old floor rested directly on a mass of old building rubble, mortar and clay. The western foundation was similar, consisting of a single brick course over what looks like old building rubble (the NW corner was obscured by modern floor). The northern end was the most interesting with only a partial, discontinuous brick course in place; the majority of the ground was made of a chalky material of flinty clay, chalk, brickbats and flakes of tile; some green stained mortar and glass fragments were also present.</p> <p>The floor of the kitchen was mostly obscured by black plastic sheeting beneath the floor joists. However where the sheets could be lifted it was shown that the ground was a predominantly chalky soil* of some made provenance. No artefacts were noted. No further observations justifiable.</p>			
Comments:			
<p>* plus flakes of charcoal</p>			

For sketch plan, use separate sheet

©ASC 2007

Site Name: <i>Reboot, Sopwell Lane</i>	Site Code: <i>1171/SAG</i>	Orientation: 
Context: <i>Dispersing of the kitchen area</i>		



RECORDING NOTES				
Recorded by: <i>JMA</i>	Date: <i>17/3/09</i>	Digitised by:	Date:	Sheet number: <i>2</i> of <i>2</i>

Appendix 1: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 37, Sopwell Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire			SITE NO/CODE: 1171/SAG
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		8068	Oblique view of north foundation
2		8069	Direct view of north foundation
3		8070	Looking north west to chalk beneath northern wall
4		8071	Foundations of west wall
5		8072	Foundations of southern wall
6		8073	Detail of southern wall
7		8074	Detail of western side of southern end
8		8075	Detail of southern end
9		8076	East side showing detail of footings after having been 'damp proofed'
10		8077	View NE of frontage of The Goat
11		8078	Entrance into the Goat's former back yard
12		8079	View NW of frontage of the 'The Goat'
13	1	No	General view of the kitchen looking north
14	2	No	General view of the kitchen looking south

Appendix 2: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	The Goat PH, 37 Sopwell Lane, St Albans, Herts		
Short Description:	A remedial watching brief was undertaken on a kitchen refurbishment at 'The Goat' public house, 37 Sopwell Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire in March 2009. The work was required due to the listed status of the building and the historical importance of the area. The ground level within the kitchen had already been lowered prior to commencement of the watching brief. However, from what were admittedly limited observations, it appeared that all but the north western side of the room consisted of made-up ground. A strata of chalk and occasional flint was observed on the north (uphill) side of the site. No dating evidence was retrieved.		
Project Type:	Watching Brief		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	listed	Previous work: (eg. HER refs)	E 492
Current land use:	Public house	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	no
Monument type:	Listed building	Monument period:	16 th century
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 14762 06878
District:	St Albans	Parish:	Ditto
Site address: (with postcode if known)	The Goat PH, 37 Sopwell Lane, St Albans, Herts		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	22 sq. m.	Height OD: (metres)	92m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Simon West	Project design originator:	none
Project Manager:	David Fell	Director/Supervisor:	J.R. Hunn
Sponsor / funding body:	Enterprise Inns		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	17/3/09	End date:	17/3/09
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	St Albans Museum	no	
Paper:		yes	
Digital:		yes	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief: The Goat, Sopwell lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1171/SAG		
Author(s):	Jonathan R. Hunn		
Page nos	18	Date:	26/3/9