

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
6 QUEENS ROAD
BERKHAMSTED
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: SP 9841 0816

on behalf of Mr & Mrs P Beadle



Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA

OCTOBER 2009

ASC: 1228/BQR/2



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>	BQR	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1228
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	Archaeol2-66741	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	DACHT: 3910
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Berkhamsted		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Berkhamsted		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 9841 0816		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.200 sq m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Private house and garden		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Single storey side and rear extension		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	4/00754/09/FHA		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Dacorum Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	21 st October 2009		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr & Mrs Beadle 6 Queens Road Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 3HU		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Mrs N Beadle		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA	<i>Date:</i>	26 th October 2009
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>	David Fell	<i>Date:</i>	26 th October 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.	10
5. Conclusions	10
6. Acknowledgements	12
7. Archive	12
8. References	13

Appendices:

1. ASC Watching Brief Monitoring Sheets	14
2. Photo List.....	15
3. ASC OASIS Form	16

Figures:

1. General location	3
2. Site plan	5
3. Plan and elevations of the proposed development.....	6

Plates:

Cover: General view of development site, from east

1. Footing and blocked cellar window, from east.....	11
2. Stratigraphy in north side of trench, adjacent to house.....	11



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

Summary

In October 2009 a watching brief was undertaken at 6 Queens Road, Berkhamsted, during groundworks for a house extension. The Queens Road area of Berkhamsted was developed in the early 20th century. Part of the site of the new extension had previously been disturbed by the construction of a light well to the cellar of the house. No deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were revealed during the watching brief.

1. Introduction

1.1 In October 2009 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 6 Queen Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by the site owners, Mr & Mrs Beadle, and was carried out according to the requirements of the *Historic Environment Unit* (HEU) of *Hertfordshire County Council*, archaeological advisor to the local planning authority (LPA), *Dacorum Borough Council*. The relevant planning application reference is 4/00754/09/FHA.

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 *The Site*

1.4.1 *Location & Description*

The site is situated in Berkhamsted, in the administrative district of Dacorum, Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). It lies to the northwest of the town centre, on the east side of Queens Road and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 9841 0816 (Fig. 2).

The application area comprises a semidetached house and rear garden extending over an area of c.200 sq m. Access is from the west, off Queens Road.

1.4.2 *Geology & Topography*

The natural soils of the area comprise the *Charity 2 Association*, namely well drained fine silty soils over Middle Chalk (Soil Survey 1983, 571m; BGS, Sheet 238).

The natural drainage of the area is dominated by the river Bulbourne, which follows a modified course to the north of the site. The site is flat and lies at an elevation of c.111m.

1.4.3 Proposed Development

The development proposal comprises the construction of a single storey side and rear extension, on the north side of the existing house (Fig. 3).

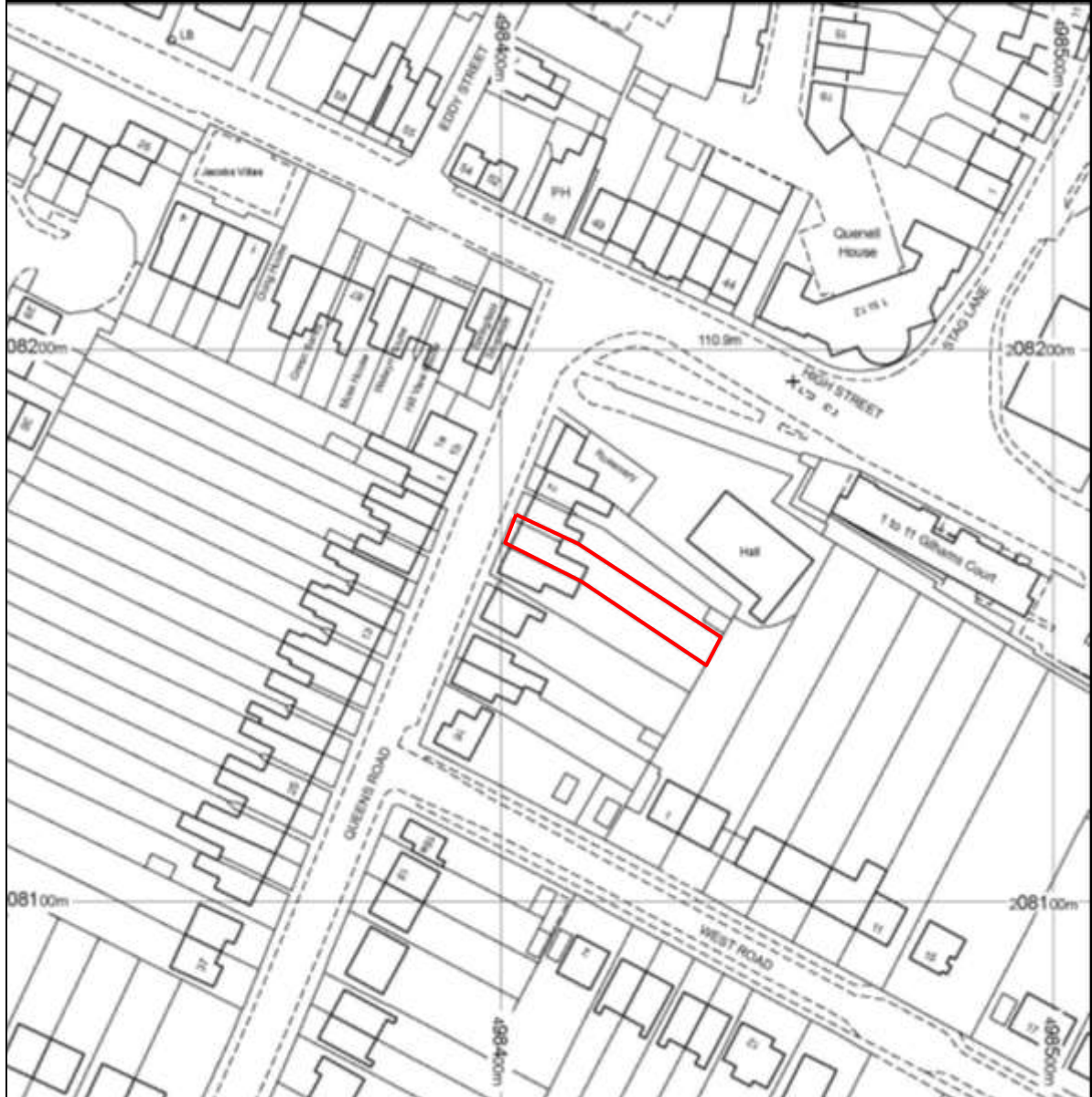


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1,250)

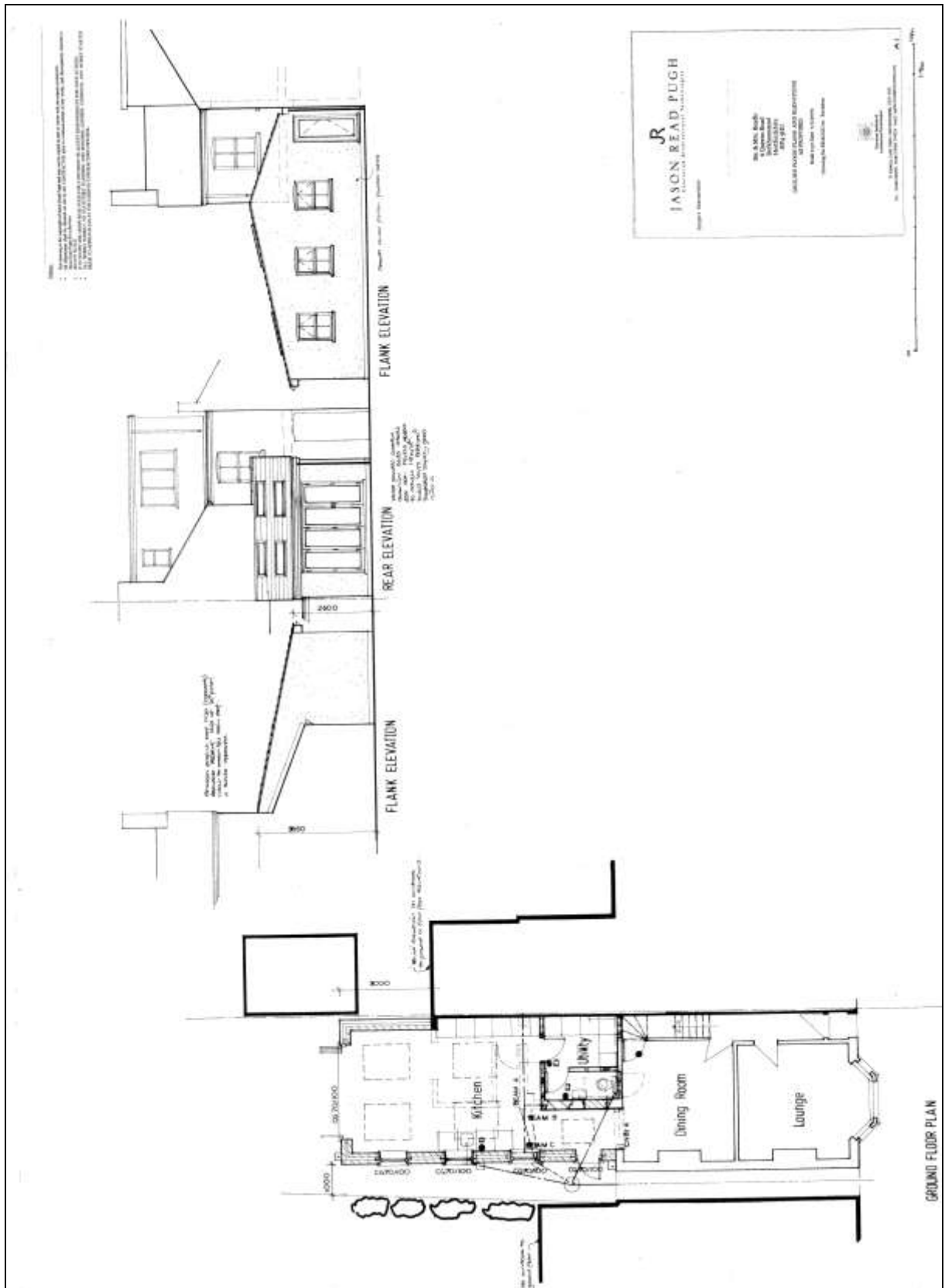


Figure 3: Plan and elevations of the proposed development (not to scale)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the project design, 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 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 project design, 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

No constraints were encountered during the watching brief.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 *Introduction*

Berkhamsted is in an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest (e.g. Page 1971; Birchnell 1960; Thompson 2004) and this has been recognised by the local authority by the designation of the town centre as an *Area of Archaeological Significance* (no. 21). The site has the potential to reveal evidence of a variety of periods but the focus of interest lies in the Roman and medieval periods.

HER = Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record.

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before AD43)

The nature and extent of early prehistoric settlement in the area is not well understood, but there is evidence to suggest that the area was occupied from the Neolithic period (McDonald 1995). A substantial earthwork known as *Grim's Ditch* was constructed along the south side of the river valley during the Iron Age (Bryant & Burleigh 1995). Its purpose is not fully understood, but it may have served as a boundary between tribal territories or differing land types (Thompson 2004, 2).

3.3 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

Berkhamsted High Street follows the approximate course of the Roman road now known as *Akeman Street*, which ran westwards from the Roman town of *Verulamium* (Copeland 2009). The Roman road followed the approximate route of Gossoms End and passed c.50m north of the development site. Roman occupation has been identified north of Gossoms End at Easts Timber Yard (HER 6421).

3.4 *Saxon* (c.450-1066)

The present settlement at Berkhamsted probably originated during the Saxon period, but little is known of its early development. Archaeological evidence is restricted to finds of residual 10th to 12th-century pottery sherds recovered from later medieval features at 3-4 Church Gates, to the east of the development site (Hunn 2006).

3.5 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

The development site is situated slightly west of the historic core of Berkhamsted (HER 10; Thompson 2004, fig. 3). Prior to the foundation of the castle and the construction of St Peter's Church (below), the focus of settlement was probably the church of St James which may have been the original church of the Saxon and early medieval town (Thompson 2004, 9). Little is known of St James's Church, and no evidence of it remains above ground.

Berkhamsted rose in importance following the construction of the castle during the late 11th century (Page 1971, 168-70). Situated c.1km east of the development site, the castle was probably originally constructed in timber and was later rebuilt in stone. It became an important influence in the development of the town, and the focus of settlement shifted to the closest point on the High Street to the Castle, where the market place was laid out and the church of St Peter was constructed (HER 10; Doggett & Hunn 1985).

3.6 ***Post-Medieval and Modern***

Gossams End remained undeveloped during the post-medieval period and the 1897 edition Ordnance Survey map shows the development site as open ground. Queens Road and West Road were laid out during the 20th century.

4. Results

- 4.1 A single site visit was made to observe the excavation of the footings for the extension. Its maximum dimensions were $9.4 \times 4.5\text{m}$, *c.*0.6m wide, and averaged 1.1m in depth, reaching a depth of 2m at the junction of the extension and the existing house. The west end of the extension had previously been disturbed by a light well serving a window at the east end of the cellar, which had been bricked up prior to the development (Plates 1 & 2).
- 4.2 The stratigraphy observed in the footing trenches comprised:
- 0.00 – 0.30m Topsoil and overburden
 - 0.30 – 0.90m Brown, slightly pebbly soil
 - 0.90m + Undisturbed flinty clay subsoil
- 4.3 No deposits, structures or finds of archaeological significance were observed in the watching brief.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Cartographic evidence has revealed that houses in Queens Road were constructed in the early 20th century. At this time, the construction of a light well at the west end of the house, within the present extension, would have truncated or removed any archaeological deposits in that area.
- 5.2 No archaeological deposits or artefacts were identified during the watching brief. Although nothing of archaeological significance was present within the area of the present extension, archaeological deposits could survive in relatively undisturbed areas to the west of the development.



Plate 1: Footing and blocked cellar window, from east



Plate 2: Stratigraphy in north side of trench, adjacent to house

6. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Beadle, and was monitored by Kate Batt of the HEU on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for ASC by David Fell BA MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Jonathan Hunn BA PHD MIFA. The report was prepared by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA and edited by David Fell.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
3. Clients site plans
4. Site Monitoring Sheet
5. List of photographs
6. B/W prints & negatives
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Dacorum Heritage Trust (Museum Accession No. DACHT: 3910).

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)*.
- Fell D 2009 *6 Queen Street, Berkhamsted: Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief*. ASC doc. 1228/BQR/1.

Secondary Sources

- Birtchnell P.C., 1960 *A Short History of Berkhamsted*. Clunbury Press.
- Bryant S. & Burleigh G., 1995 'Later prehistoric Dykes of the Eastern Chilterns' in *Holgate 1995*, 92-95.
- Copeland R., 2009 *Akeman Street Moving through Iron Age and Roman Landscapes*. The History Press.
- Doggett N. & Hunn J.R., 1985 'The Origins and Development of Medieval Berkhamsted' *Hertfordshire's Past*, **18**, 18-36.
- Holgate R. (ed.) 1995 *Chiltern Archaeology. Recent Work: A handbook for the Next Decade*. The Book Castle (Dunstable).
- Hunn J.R., 2002 *112-118 High Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. An Archaeological Watching Brief*. ASC report BHS02/1.
- Hunn J.R., 2006 *Archaeological Excavation: Land Adjacent to 3-4 Church Lane, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire*. ASC report 656/BHC/02.
- McDonald T., 1995 'The A41 By-Pass Project' in *Holgate 1995*, 120-123.
- Page W. (ed.) 1971 *The Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire 2*. Dawsons of Pall Mall (London).
- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Thompson I., 2004 *Berkhamsted Extensive Urban Survey*. Hertfordshire County Council.

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheet

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project: E, Queens Rd Berkhamsted		Project No/Code: 1228 BQR		Sheet: 1 of 2		
Client/Developer: Mr & Mrs P. Bendle		Date of visit: 21/10/09				
Contact: Daniel O'Neill		Phone: 07722300582				
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 12.00	Finish: 2.30pm.				
Completed by: JRH						
Development Type:						
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Overcast and damp midfoot.						
Observations: Observed the footings to the rear of the property. The extension is a maximum of 9.4m by c.4.5m wide (N-S). The western foundation is only c.3.5m long. The foundations are c.57m wide and on average 1.1m deep below current ground surface. The deepest section of the foundation trench was at its junction with the existing building. Here it was almost 2m deep and reached onto the foundations of a cellar (its windows had been blocked and sealed). There were only two horizons above the flinty clay sub-soil which lay at the base of the foundations except in its SW corner where it was only 0.9m below ground surface. The topsoil was c.0.3m thick which overlay a brown, slightly pebbly soil (Mug: 10 yr 4/3). No features or artefacts were observed. The area within the footprint of the ^{new} building was reduced but the ground too dark to observe anything.						
Comments: New pipe work to be linked into existing surface. The soil is being taken off site.						

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 6 Queens Road, Berkhamsted		SITE NO/CODE: 1228/BQR	
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		0175	General view of development site, from east
2		0176	Footing and blocked cellar window, from east
3		0177	Stratigraphy in north side of trench, adjacent to house
4		0178	South footing trench
5		0179	East footing trench
6		0180	North footing trench
7		0181	General view of site

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	6 Queens Road, Berkhamsted, Herts.		
Short Description:	In October 2009 a watching brief was undertaken at 6 Queens Road, Berkhamsted, during groundworks for a house extension. The Queens Road area of Berkhamsted was developed in the early 20 th century. Part of the site of the new extension had previously been disturbed by the construction of a light well to the cellar of the house. No deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were revealed during the watching brief.		
Project Type:	Watching Brief		
Site status:	none	Previous work:	none
Current land use:	garden	Future work:	none
Monument type:	n/a	Monument period:	n/a
Significant finds:	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 9841 0816
District:	Dacorum	Parish:	Berkhamsted
Site address:	6 Queens Road, Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 3HU		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	200 sq. m.	Height OD: (metres)	111m OD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Herts CC	Project design originator:	David Fell BA MA MIFA
Project Manager:	David Fell BA MA MIFA	Director/Supervisor:	Jonathan Hunn BA MIFA
Sponsor / funding body:	Mr & Mrs Beadle		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	21 st October 2009	End date:	21 st October 2009
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Dacorum Heritage Trust (DACHT: 3910)	none	
Paper:		Project design, plans, photos, site records	
Digital:		CD with copy of all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief: 6 Queens Road, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1228/BQR/2		
Author(s):	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA		
Page nos	16	Date:	26 th October 2009