

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
55 BRIDGEWATER ROAD
BERKHAMSTED
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: SP 9887 0846

on behalf of Mr & Mrs Crosher



Jonathan R Hunn BA PhD MIFA

June 2010

ASC: 1309/BBR/2



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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	BBR	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1309
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	tbc	<i>Event/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 9887 0846		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.600 sq m		
<i>Present use:</i>	residential		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Two storey extensions with integral garage		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	4/00278/09		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Dacorum Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	June 9 th to 15 th 2010		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr & Mrs Crosher 55 Bridgewater Road Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 1JB		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Mr A Crosher		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	J. R. Hunn	<i>Date:</i>	June 17 th 2010
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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

Summary

A watching brief was undertaken on the construction of an extension of an existing dwelling at 55 Bridgewater Road, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire in June 2010. The work was required due to the proximity of a Roman kiln, and of late Iron Age industrial activity further to the north-west. Although survival of similar types of deposits was theoretically possible, none were found on this site. An original land surface did survive on the western side of the site, but no artefacts were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

1. Introduction

1.1 In June 2010 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at no. 55, Bridgewater Road, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Crosher and was carried out according to a standard brief issued by the *Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit*, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), *Dacorum Borough Council*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Fell 2010). The relevant planning application reference is 4/00278/09.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 *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 Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, 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 north of the town centre, on the south side of Bridgewater Road and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 9887 0846 (Fig. 2). The site comprises a rectangular plot of land of c.600sq m. Access is from the north, off Bridgewater Road.

1.4.2 *Geology & Topography*

The site slopes gently from north to south and has an average elevation of c.120m OD. Soils of the area belong to the Charity 2 association, described as flinty fine silty soils over chalk (Soil Survey, 1983, 571m). The underlying geology is characterised as recent and Pleistocene alluvium (BGS, Sheet 238).

1.4.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises the construction of two storey rear and side extensions with integral garage (Fig. 3).

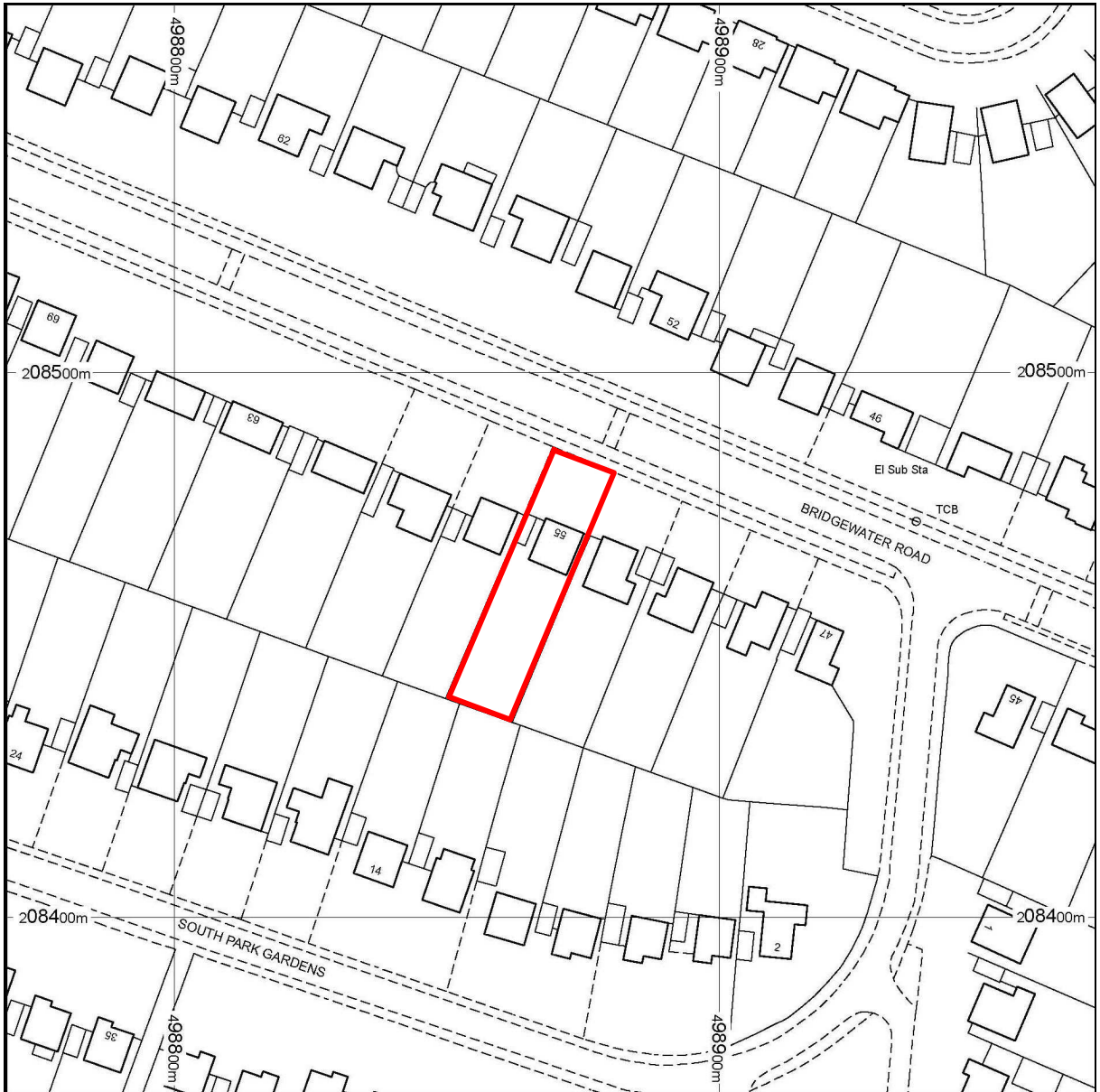


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1,250)

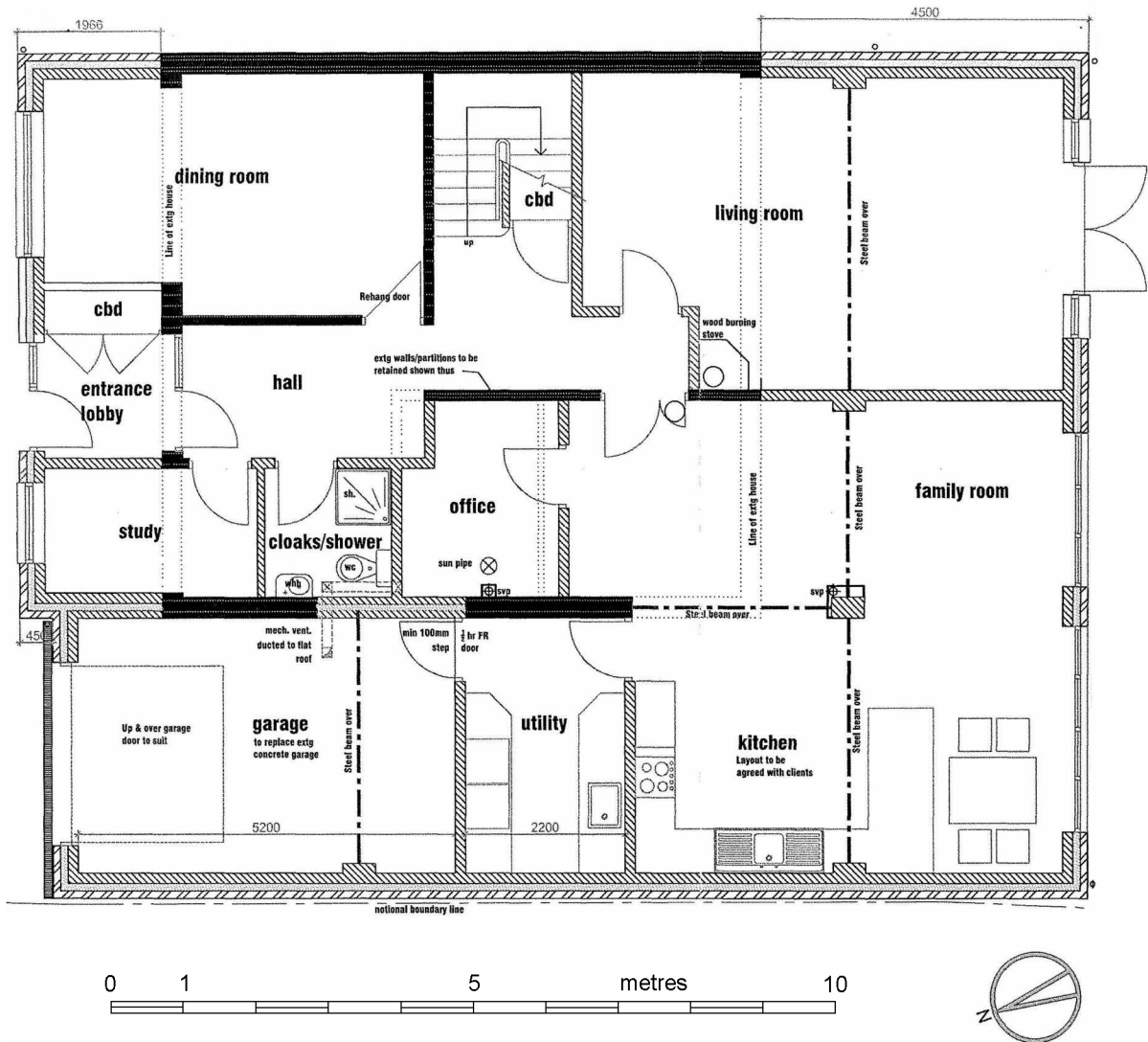


Figure 3: Plan of development (scale 1:100)
(original walls shown solid: new walls hatched)

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 have an impact upon archaeological deposits.
- 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.
- To provide an adequately detailed project report that will place the findings of the monitoring and recording of the development programme in their local and regional context, having made reference to the relevant regional research agendas, and through cartographic, documentary and other research.

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 (Section 3.3), which required:

- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision.
- The inspection of the subsoil for archaeological features, deposits, and artefacts.
- The rapid investigation and recording of archaeological features or deposits present, including adequate provision of both drawn and photographic records.
- Subsoil stripping under archaeological supervision.
- The examination of service and foundation trenches and the subsequent recording of any exposed archaeological remains, including adequate provision of both drawn and photographic records.
- Rapid examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material.
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving, and publication.

2.4 Constraints

There were no constraints on the implementation of this project.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 *Introduction*

Berkhamsted is an area of considerable archaeological and historical significance (Birtchnell 1960; HCC 2004; Page, 1908) and this has been recognised by the local planning authority in designating of much of the town as *Area of Archaeological Significance* (AAS 21). The site lies within this AAS, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a variety of periods, but the focus of interest is likely to lie in the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods.

HER = Historic Environment Record number.

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

Evidence for this period in the Berkhamsted area is limited to a small number of isolated finds. A Neolithic axe head was recovered on the northern side of the town on the edge of the plateau (HER 4252), and several unprovenanced early prehistoric flint artefacts have been found west of Berkhamstead, at Meadway in Northchurch and to the north, on Berkhamsted Common. At Oakwood a quantity of struck flint flakes were found (HER 11479) suggesting Neolithic/Bronze Age activity in that area.

A late Bronze Age brooch is recorded from Berkhamsted Castle (HER 4251). Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age activity was revealed at Oakwood, including two circular buildings, eight four-post structures and a fence line. A small quantity of pottery including a carinated bowl and flint tempered LBA/EIA pottery was found on the site, along with triangular loom weight fragments. At Pea Lane there was structural evidence and associated pottery of the later Bronze Age/Iron Age (McDonald 1995, 121-2).

A number of isolated artefacts of this period have also been recorded, notably a late Bronze Age brooch from Berkhamsted Castle and an iron sword and copper alloy sheath from Bourne End (HER 4097). A number of earthwork monuments, attributed to the 'prehistoric' period, are also present, but their precise date has yet to be established.

3.3 *Iron Age - Roman* (600BC-c.AD450)

The present town of Berkhamsted developed in the valley bottom along the line of a Roman road, now known as *Akeman Street* (Copeland 2009), which linked *Verulamium* (St Albans) with *Corinium* (Cirencester). The present High Street follows the approximate course of the Roman road, which was c.800m south of the site. The remains of a Roman building, now a Scheduled Ancient Monument, lie 500m northeast of the site.

The area now occupied by Castle Hill Avenue and Bridgewater Road was occupied during the Iron Age and Roman periods. Evidence of Roman occupation was revealed during the construction of the Castle Hill Avenue development northeast of the site (HER 12193). Roman pottery, dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD has been found on Bridgewater Road (HER 6071; HER 6803), and it is likely that a pottery kiln was situated in the area of Bridgewater Road.

3.4 **Saxon** (c.450-1066)

During the Saxon period a settlement developed along the former Roman road, probably centred on the church of St Peter. The area was of considerable importance during the medieval period, notably following the construction of the castle, which is situated to the east of the site.

3.5 **Medieval** (1066-1500)

In the medieval period the site lay within a hunting park belonging to the manor of Berkhamsted (Doggett & Hunn 1985). The origins of this park are not certain, but it is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 (Morris 1976). The subsequent history of the castle and Honour of Berkhamsted suggests it was a royal creation, sometime in the 12th or 13th century. In the early years of the reign of Edward I (c.1272) there was mention of a certain park with deer (Cobb 1883, 18), and it seems that the park was created out of the 'manorial waste'. In the late 19th century it was noted that 'the boundary fence of the castle park still exists on the common' (Cobb 1883, 19). The original extent of the hunting park was believed to extend across an area of 1,132 acres, or 458ha (Page 1908, 222).

3.6 **Post-Medieval & Modern** (1500-present)

In the early 17th century there was an attempt on the part of the Duchy of Cornwall to enclose part of the adjoining common (the 'Frith'), amounting to 300 acres. Despite local opposition this was successful, but a subsequent attempt by the Crown to enclose a further 400 acres failed in the face of rioting on the part of the Northchurch commoners (*ibid.*). By 1627 the park had shrunk to 376 acres (Birtchnell 1960, 20), and by 1650 was reduced to 255 acres (PRO E 317 Herts 7). By the 18th century much of the park had almost certainly become enclosed for agricultural purpose. The park was sold by the Duchy of Cornwall to the Brownlow estate in 1862, in whose hands it remained until 1924 (Birtchnell 1960, 20). The development of Bridgewater Road took place after the end of World War II. At the time of the sale of the last remaining portions of the Brownlow (Ashridge) estate, no. 55 lay in an area of smallholding allotments (Fig. 4). This area was not developed until the early 1960s (Hastie 1999, 73).

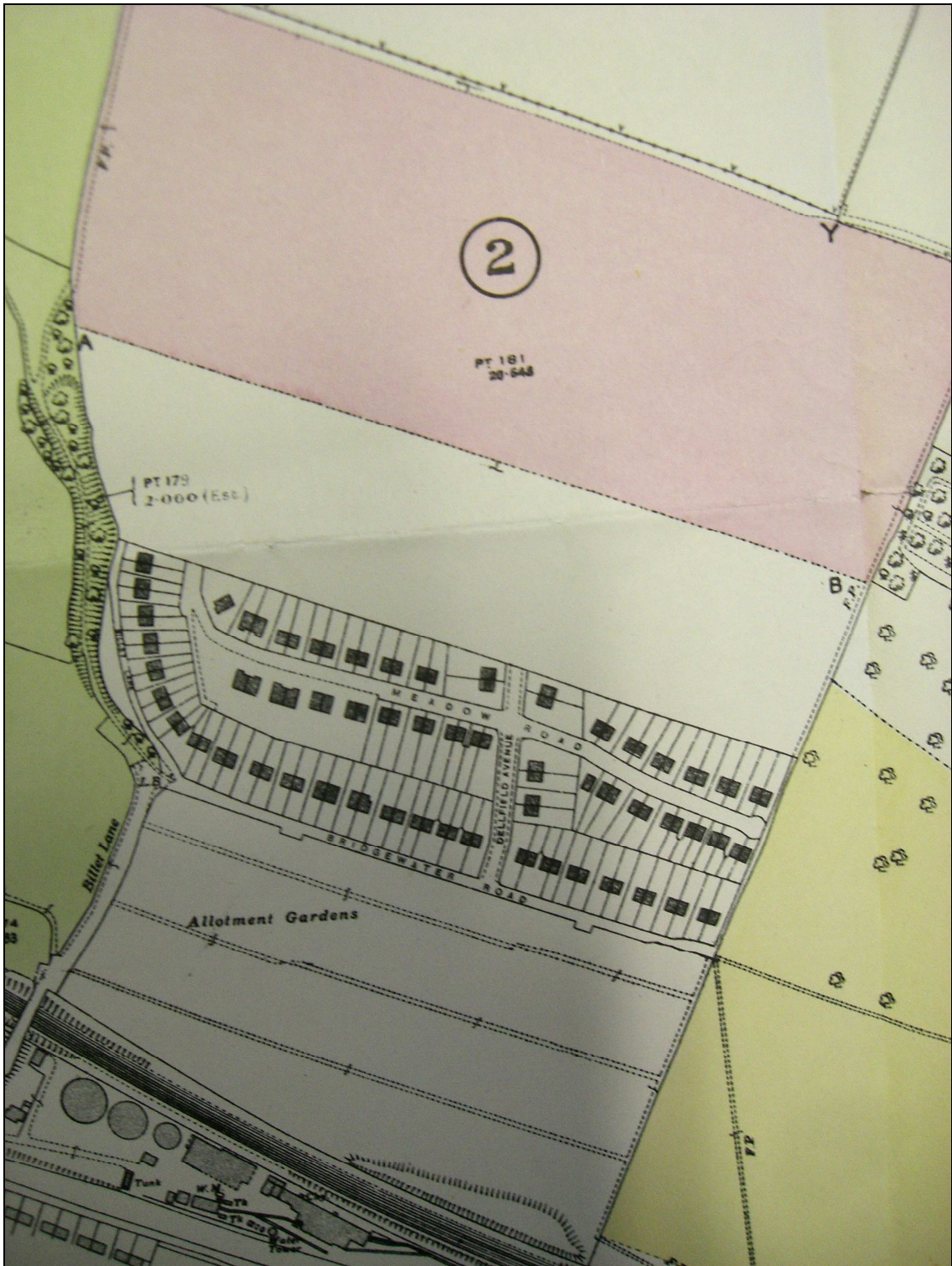


Figure 4: Area of Bridgewater Road in 1949 (HALS: D. 231. Z15)

4. Results

4.1 Three monitoring visits were made to the site during groundworks for the extensions (Appendix 1). Excavations for the footings of the foundations to the front, rear and sides of the house were observed, together with the footing trench for a retaining wall for the terrace. It was evident from the present aspect of the house that the terrain must have been reduced to the north (upslope) and built up on the south (downslope) side of the site.

4.2 On the south side of the existing house (Fig. 3) the foundation trenches for the extension were cut through an existing terraced area. Accordingly, depths varied. Those on the eastern side were *c.*1.4m deep and cut through a succession of re-deposited layers which were almost certainly contemporary with the construction phase of the present house (Plate 1). The external north-south profile on the east side had the following characteristics:

- Topsoil 360mm thick, above
- Chalky soil 320mm, above
- dark yellowish brown silty clay *c.*500mm thick, above natural chalk.

On the lower, south side, the foundation trench was not much more than 600mm deep. The central, internal north-south wall footing trenches were *c.*800mm deep, and were cut through mostly redeposited ground into the natural chalk. On the western side the foundation trench revealed a dark grey horizon. This was interpreted as the original land surface which had been buried during the course of the development of Bridgewater Road (Plate 3). The turf line (100mm thick) was buried to a maximum depth of 600mm; this overlay 400mm of yellowish brown subsoil, with *c.*300mm of chalk exposed in the bottom of the trench.

4.3 On the north side (front) of the house, excavation of a single east-west foundation trench was observed. This was 8m long and 0.5 - 0.6m deep; at either end the trench returned to the existing dwelling. All these trenches cut through a matrix of semi dissolved chalk (Plate 4).

4.4 On the north edge of the property, adjacent to Bridgewater Road, the ground was reduced by some 300mm in an area approximately 8m x 2m. This exposed a greyish brown, chalky soil. No pre-modern artefacts were observed.

4.5 To the rear of the property, on its south side a footing trench for a revetment wall for the new terrace was observed. It was only 1.2m south of the footings of the house extension. The trench was 0.5m wide and 0.7m deep. The top 0.5m was composed of brown, pebbly soil; the lower 0.2m was cut into a chalky horizon. No features or artefacts were observed.



Plate 1: South east footings looking north



Plate 2: Foundation trenches in front of house



Plate 3: Buried land surface in east facing western trench



Plate 4: Foundation trench looking west



Plate 5: Terrace foundation looking northwards



Plate 6: General view of site with completed footings looking north.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Apart from the existence of an old buried land surface that lay on the western side of the site, no pre-modern features or artefacts were noted within the development area during the watching brief.

- 5.2 Because of the pronounced slope on which the property is located, it was evident that the site had been terraced to the north of the house, and built up to the south. While the latter provides the potential for the preservation of archaeological features, it was evident from the evidence of the footing trenches that no archaeology was present in this area. This, however, does not preclude the possibility of survival of archaeological deposits on the relatively undisturbed ground to the rear of the house.

6. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Mr A. Crosher. The writer is grateful to Tony Cornelius the contractor for his cooperation and assistance. The project was monitored by Kate Batt (HEU) of Hertfordshire County Council, on behalf of the local planning authority.

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

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
3. Clients site plans
4. Site Monitoring Sheets
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 the 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).
- Fell D 2010 *55 Bridgewater Road, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire: Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief*. ASC doc. ref. 1309/BBR/1
- 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*.
- Birtchnell, PC 1960 *A Short History of Berkhamsted*. Clunbury Press
- Cobb, JW 1883 *Two Lectures on the History and Antiquities of Berkhamsted*. 2nd edition. Nicholas and Sons (London)
- Copeland T, 2009 *Akeman Street. Moving through Iron Age and Roman Landscapes*. The History Press
- Doggett, N and Hunn, J 1985: The Origins and Development of Medieval Berkhamsted, *Hertfordshire's Past* **18**, 18-36.
- Hastie, S. 1999: *Berkhamsted: an illustrated history*. Alpine Press & Berkhamsted and District Local History Society (Kings Langley).
- HCC 2004 *Berkhamsted Extensive Urban Survey*. Hertfordshire County Council
- McDonald, T. 1995 'The A41 project, Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust' in Holgate, R (ed) *Chiltern Archaeology: Recent Work A Handbook for the next Decade* The Book Castle
- Morris, J 1976: *Domesday Book vol 12 Hertfordshire*. Phillimore (Chichester).
- Page, W (ed.) 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* (Harpenden)

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project: 55 Bridgewater Rd Berkhamsted		Project No/Code: 1309 / BBR		Sheet: 1 of 5		
Client/Developer Joe Crocker		Date of visit: 9/6/10				
Contact: John E. Crocker (contractor)		Phone: 07971-106558				
Duration of Visit (inc. travel): 2 pm		Start:		Finish:		
Completed by: JRAA						
Development Type:						
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dull & damp						
Observations: Observed the start of the excavation of the footings of the South Side of the existing dwelling. Observed the SE corner of the new excavation and the central N-S wall. On the eastern side the ground has been reduced by 1.4m. The trenches are c. 5m long N-S and 3m E-W. The appears to cut through an existing terraced area (i.e. one that has been built up by successive layers of soil. The eastern N-S profile on the eastern side is composed as follows: (1) 360mm of topsoil (2) 320mm of chalky material (sandy deposit) (3) 500mm of dark yellowish brown silty clay (Mun 10yr 4/4) This overlies a mostly semi dissolved layer of chalk. On the South Side (lower side) the foundation trench is cut much more than 600mm deep (flush with external level surface. The central N-S trench is c. 800mm deep down onto chalky layer. No features or artefacts observed.						
Comments: The house is very extended on its southern, western and northern sides.						



A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: 55, Bridgewater Rd Berkhamsted		Project No/Code: 1309 1 BBR	Sheet: 2 of 5
Client/Developer Mr Brock		Date of visit: 10/6/10	
Contact: John McQuaidy		Phone: 07971-10658	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 2.45 am	Finish:	
Completed by: JRAH			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dull & damp			
Observations: Observed the remainder of the foundation on the South side of the house and 3' of those on the western side. The South side was much as I previously described. The foundation on the west side was c. 15m long and resembled the old land surface. At c. 2m north of the SW corner of the new extension the section revealed the old turf line. This was bound by 0.6m of overburden. The turf line/topsoil was 100mm thick and this overlaid a 100mm of yellowish brown Subsoil (foundation cut some 300mm into the chalk)			
Comments: No features or artefacts were observed. See sketch.			

For sketch plan, use separate sheet

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: 55, Bridgewater Rd Berkhamsted		Project No/Code: 1309 1 BBR	Sheet: 4 of 5
Client/Developer		Date of visit: 15/6/10	
Contact: Mr Croucher John McEvaddy		Phone: 07971-106558	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 2.55 am	Finish: 4.45	
Completed by: JRA			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry, breezy with occ sun.			
Observations: Observed the footings in the front of the development. This consisted of a single trench some 1.4m from the existing dwelling. It was c.8m long E-W with 2 x 2m N-S trenches at either end by 0.7m wide at between 0.5 and 0.6m deep cut mainly into a semi-oxidised chalky matrix. There was no sign of any pre-modern features or artefacts. At the very front of the property, adjacent to the footpath along Bridgewater Rd the ground had been cleared in an area 2.5m x 4m x 0.3m deep exposing a greyish-brown, chalky soil - no artefacts observed. In the rear of the property a revetment wall for the terrace was built along width of property. It was c.0.5m wide x 0.7m deep; some 0.5m was a brown pebbly soil & the lower 0.2m was a chalky horizon - No features observed.			
Comments: No further monitoring visits required.			

For sketch plan, use separate sheet

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Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 55, Bridgewater Rd, Berkhamsted, Herts			SITE NO/CODE: 1309/BBR
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		191	Rear elevation of existing dwelling looking north (cover)
2		192	Front elevation of existing dwelling looking south
3		205	View north of work proceeding
4	1	206	SE corner of rear extension looking NE
5		207	View north showing detail of SE footings (Plate 1)
6		208	Central N-S foundation on rear extension
7		209	Overall view of SW corner of rear extension
8		210	Detail of N-S foundation near service pit
9		212	View of westernmost foundation
10	2	213	Detail of buried land surface on east facing western trench (Plate 3)
11		286	General view of foundation in front of existing building (Plate 2)
12		287	Detail of foundation at NE corner of new extension
13		288	Front foundation trench looking west (Plate 4)
14		289	Foundation for terrace to rear of property looking north (Plate 5)
15		290	Foundation for terrace to rear of property looking east
16		291	Foundation for terrace on west side looking NW
17	3	292	General view of site with completed footings looking north (Plate 6)
18		293	Reduced ground on north end of property looking east

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	55, Bridgewater Road	OASIS reference:	
Short Description:	<i>A watching brief was undertaken on the construction of an extension of an existing dwelling at 55 Bridgewater Road, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire in June 2010. The work was required due to the proximity of a Roman kiln, and of late Iron Age industrial activity further to the north-west. Although survival of similar types of deposits was theoretically possible, none were found on this site. An original land surface did survive on the western side of the site, but no artefacts were recovered during the course of the watching brief.</i>		
Project Type:	Watching brief		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	none
Current land use:	Residential property	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	no
Monument type:	none	Monument period:	modern
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 9887 0846
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	55 Bridgewater Road Berkhamsted Herts, HP4 1JB		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	600 sq. m.	Height OD: (metres)	120m AOD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Kate Batt	Project design originator:	David Fell
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	Jonathan Hunn
Sponsor / funding body:	A. Crosher		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	June 9 th 2010	End date:	June 15 th 2010
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Dacorum Heritage Trust	none	
Paper:		Project design, site records, plans, photos, report	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief: 55 Bridgewater Road, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1309/BBR/2		
Author(s):	Jonathan R. Hunn BA PhD MIFA		
Page nos	20	Date: 18/6/10	21 st June 2010