

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
2 CHURCH LANE
SHARNBROOK
BEDFORDSHIRE**

on behalf of Mrs K Hayes



Nigel Wilson HND AIFA

March 2004

ASC: 560/SCS/02

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	560/SCS	<i>Project no:</i>	560
<i>SMR reference / Event No:</i>			
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>District:</i>	Bedford Borough Council		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Sharnbrook		
<i>Parish:</i>	Sharnbrook CP		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 9953 5961		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.120 sq.m		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Former Post Office: now residential		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of extension		
<i>Extent of development:</i>	c.30 sq.m		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	03/0057FUL		
<i>Client:</i>	Mrs K Hayes 2 Church Lane Sharnbrook Beds MK44 1HR		
<i>Contact name:</i>	As above		
<i>Telephone</i>	-	<i>Fax:</i>	-

Internal Quality Check

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

Summary

On the 23rd March 2004, a watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks phase of an extension to 2 Church Lane, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire. The work was carried out as a planning condition imposed by Bedford Borough Council. The trenches were excavated using a mini digger to a maximum depth of about 0.45m. The only deposits identified to this depth were relatively modern disturbance layers, which were not individually recorded. Natural subsoil was not encountered during the watching brief.

1 Introduction

1.1 During March 2003 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief on a site at 2 Church Lane, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire (NGR SP 9953 5961: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mrs K Hayes, and was carried out according to a brief prepared by the Bedfordshire County Council *Heritage and Environment Section* (HES), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (Zeepvat 2004).

1.2 Reason for Work

No. 2 Church Lane lies in the historic core of Sharnbrook village, a designated conservation area. Under current planning guidance rules archaeology can be considered as material factor in deciding the outcome of a planning application. Planning Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) specifically deals with archaeology. When plans were submitted to Bedford Borough Council to build an extension to 2 Church Lane (planning ref. 03/0057/FUL) their archaeological advisors HES recommended that a programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication should be implemented. A condition to this effect was included in the planning permission. This report details the findings of that archaeological intervention.

1.3 Setting

1.3.1 The village of Sharnbrook is located in the valley of the river Great Ouse, about 11km north-west of the centre of Bedford. The centre of the village lies about 0.6km north of the river, close to its confluence with a stream which skirts the north side of the village. The site, 2 Church Street, formerly the village post office, stands on the south side of the crossroads at the centre of the village, at NGR SP 9953 5961.

1.3.2 The site is on a north-east facing slope, at an elevation of c.52m OD. Soils of the area belong to the Moreton association, described as 'well drained calcareous soils and fine loamy soils over limestone' (Soil Survey 1983, 511b)

1.3.3 No. 2 Church Street occupies a roughly triangular site (total area c.120 sq. m.) at the junction of the High Street and Church Street. The present building on the site is L-shaped, filling the north and west sides of the site. A lane bounding the east side of the site provides access to the location of the proposed extension.

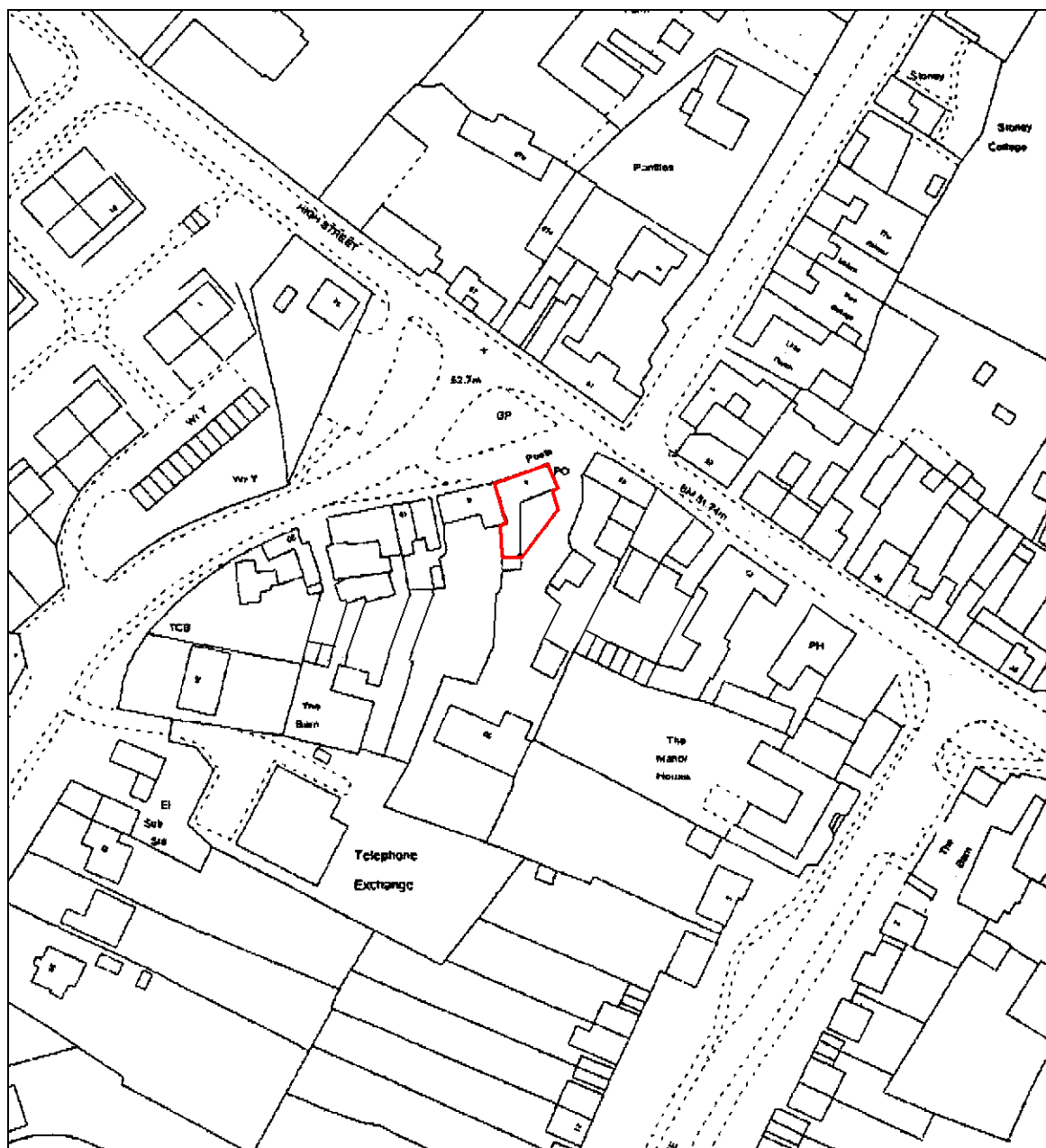


Figure 2: Site plan (*scale 1:1250*)

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 on 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 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 5), which required:

- Observation, by a competent archaeologist, of any ground disturbance likely to have an impact on archaeological deposits;
- Investigation and recording of any archaeological deposits encountered;
- Provision for more detailed recording of any exceptional finds;
- Preparation of a report detailing the results of the above; (this document)
- Deposition of the project archive (records, finds) with the appropriate museum. (Bedford Museum Accession No BEDFM 2004.52)

2.3 Standards

The work conforms to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The village and its immediate vicinity contain a number of significant archaeological sites dating from the prehistoric to the post medieval periods.
- 3.2 To the south of the village a series of cropmarks representing three ring ditches (HER 15048) have been identified on aerial photographs. These are thought to be prehistoric in date (BCC 2002). A late Iron Age occupation site was recorded during quarrying immediately north of Felmersham Bridge, c.1.5km south of the village in the Great Ouse floodplain (Pevsner 1968). Fieldwalking immediately south of the village core resulted in the recovery of pottery sherds dating to the early Roman period (Simco 1984).
- 3.3 The name Sharnbrook derives from the Old English *Serneburg* meaning 'Dung-brook', presumably a reference to the effects of fouling by cattle (Mawer & Stenton 1926).
- 3.4 In fields south of Sharnbrook Middle School a feature described as a slag patch has been identified (BCC 2002). Such slag patches are known to date to either the Saxon or Medieval periods, and represent evidence of iron working within very close proximity. However, recent evaluation of this field in advance of housing development (Lightfoot 2003) revealed nothing of archaeological significance in this area.
- 3.5 Several sites dating to the medieval period are documented in the environs of Sharnbrook. The most important of these is the moated manor at Castle Close, c.0.6km west of the site, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The parish church of St Peter, c.0.2km south-west of the site, contains structural elements dating to the 13th century AD, as well as from later in the medieval and post medieval periods (Pevsner 1968). Further afield, Temple Spinney and Temple Wood, c.2km north-east of the village core, once formed part of the lands given to the Knights Templar in 1199 AD.
- 3.6 The site itself lies within an area of the village that has a number of listed buildings. No. 48 High Street, to the immediate east of the site, has 17th-century origins.

4 Results

- 4.1 The ground works associated with the extension were relatively shallow having a maximum depth of c.550mm below the existing ground surface. All the deposits identified in the excavated trenches were of relatively modern origin containing 19th and 20th century brick tile and porcelain. These deposits were not specifically recorded. Natural undisturbed subsoil was not encountered during the watching brief.
- 4.2 A rapid visual scan of the spoil heaps did not reveal any indications of earlier occupation of the site.

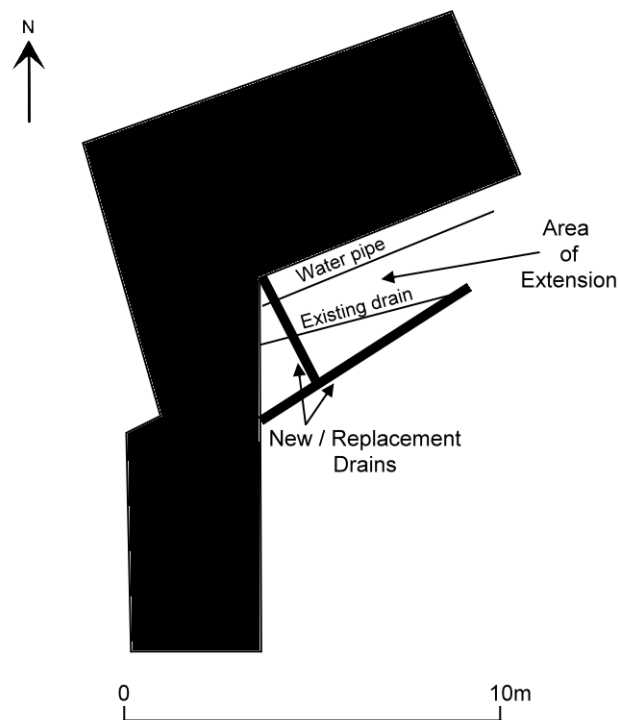


Figure 3: Service trench location plan



Plate 1:General view of the site showing the depth of the trench



Plate 2:General view of the site showing the depth of the trench

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The watching brief at 2 Church Lane has allowed a brief examination of the upper deposits to the rear of the house. Though no archaeologically significant deposits were found it is possible that earlier remains survive at a lower level and could be disturbed if deeper groundworks were to take place.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Mrs K Hayes and her contractor Mr Ferris for commissioning and funding the watching brief. Lesley-Ann Mather at Bedfordshire County Council prepared the brief and approved the project design. The project was under the overall management of Bob Zeepvat, and Nigel Wilson carried out the monitoring visit and prepared this report.

7. Archive

- 7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Site Monitoring Sheets
5. List of photographs/slides
6. Colour slides
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

- 7.2 The archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum with Accession No BEDFM 2004.52.

8. Bibliography

Brown N & Glazebrook J 2000 *Research & Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties – 2 Research Agenda & Strategy* (East Anglian Archaeol. Occ Paper 8).

EH 1991a *Exploring Our Past*.

Glazebrook J 1997 *Research & Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties – 1 Resource Assessment* (East Anglian Archaeol. Occ Paper 3).

IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance* documents (*Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds*).

Lightfoot M 2000 Land Adjacent to Sharnbrook Upper School, Odel Road, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire. Evaluation Report (ASC Ltd unpublished)

Mawer & Stenton 1926 *The Place-Names of Bedfordshire & Huntingdonshire* Cambridge University Press (Cambridge)

Pevsner 1998 *The Buildings of England. Bedfordshire, Huntingdon and Peterborough* Penguin.

Simco 1984 *Survey of Bedfordshire: The Roman Period*. Bedfordshire County Council & The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments

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

Zeepvat B 2004 *2 Church Street, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire*. Project Design for a Watching Brief (ASC Ltd unpublished)

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

**A.S.C. LTD****ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: 2 Church Lane, Sharnbrook		Project No/Code: 560/SCS /		Sheet: 1 of 1		
		Date of visit: 23/3/2004				
Client/Developer Mrs K Hayes						
Contact:				Phone:		
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: 3.00		Finish: 4.00		
Completed by: Nigel Wilson						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Overcast						
Observations: Shallow drain trenches have been cut across the site. Maximum depth 550mm below the original ground surface. All observed deposits C19/20 th No natural						
Comments: Footings will be even shallower, informed HES who are satisfied that there is no point continuing and have therefore said get on with the report.						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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