19 Church View,
Ascott under Wychwood, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Charles Holden

by Pamela Jenkins
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CVA 05/71

August 2005
Summary

Site name: 19 Church View, Ascott under Wychwood, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP2997 1864

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 18th July – 3rd August 2005

Project manager: Jo Pine

Site supervisor: Pamela Jenkins

Site code: CVA 05/71

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were observed and no finds were recovered

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Jo Pine 18.08.05
                      Steve Preston 18.08.05
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 19 Church View, Ascott under Wychwood, Oxfordshire, OX7 6AA (SP2997 1864) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Charles Holden of 19 Church View, Ascott under Wychwood, Oxfordshire, OX7 6AA.

Planning consent (03/0889) has been granted by West Oxfordshire District Council for the demolition of an existing garage and the construction of a new dwelling and garage to the rear of the above premises. This is subject to a programme of archaeological work, in the form of an archaeological watching brief, being carried out during all groundworks, in particular any ground reduction, and the digging of foundation trenches and service runs.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District Council’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Hugh Coddington, Deputy County Archaeological Officer of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, advisers to the District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Pamela Jenkins and Sean Wallis between 18th July and 3rd August 2005 and the site code is CVA 05/71.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The village of Ascott under Wychwood is situated in the Cotswolds, to the north-east of Burford. The site lies south-east of the river Evenlode and is located to the rear of a property on the corner of Shipton Road and Church View, directly opposite the 12th-century Church of Holy Trinity. The land in question, which was previously used as a garden with (now demolished) outbuildings slopes downwards from the south-east towards Shipton Road and lies at approximately 94m above Ordnance Datum (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is 2nd Terrace river gravels (BGS 1982).
**Archaeological background**

The development site lies within the historic core of Ascott under Wychwood which is listed in Domesday Book of AD 1086, and during the medieval period was made up of two distinct settlements: Ascott d’Oyley to the east and Ascott Earl to the west. Ascott d’Oyley castle is approximately 300m to the north-west and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 21790) whilst a motte and bailey, dating from the 12th-century civil war between King Stephen and the Empress Maud, is to be found a similar distance to the south-west.

An evaluation of a nearby property fronting onto Shipton Road revealed deposits including small ditches, presumably for boundary purposes, of medieval date (Coles and Challis 2003). A subsequent watching brief on the site recorded further medieval activity in the form of ditches and pits and in addition two sherds of early-middle Saxon pottery was also retrieved suggesting the presence of early activity on or within close proximity to the site (Jenkins 2004). To the east of the site, at Corner Farm, an evaluation (Hammond 2003) and subsequent watching brief (Anthony 2003) found archaeological deposits including 13th- to 15th-century ditches, medieval gullies, postholes and stakeholes and some 11th-century features.

**Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any ground reduction, and the digging of foundation trenches and service runs.

**Results (Figs 3 and 4)**

Initial ground reduction on the site removed 0.20m of topsoil and 0.15m of subsoil from the south-east end of the garden, increasing to 0.85m of subsoil at the north-west end fronting onto Shipton Road. No archaeological deposits were observed and indeed in the majority of the area the natural geology was not exposed.

The foundation trenches excavated were dug c.1.80m deep in the area where the existing buildings had been demolished (Fig. 3). Approximately 0.30m of demolition rubble from the buildings was seen to lie directly above the natural geology. Several areas of modern truncation were noted including pipework and a large block of concrete visible in a section of the footings. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Excavation of service trenches was also observed. These were excavated to a depth of between 1.10m and 1.60m. The stratigraphy was topsoil onto subsoil which overlay a brownish orange silty clay natural or, at the frontage with Shipton Road, sand and gravel.
Finds

No finds were retained although modern material was noted.

Conclusion

Despite the rich history of the surrounding village and the discovery of archaeological deposits nearby, this particular parcel of land has revealed nothing of archaeological interest. It is noted that some areas have been heavily truncated by modern disturbance which could feasibly have removed isolated pockets of archaeology. Other areas were not excavated deep enough to encounter the relevant levels. The lack of any features elsewhere however indicates that this particular site is of no archaeological significance.

References

Anthony, S, 2003, ‘Corner Farm, Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire, An Archaeological Watching Brief’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 03/02b, Reading
Hammond, S, 2003, ‘Corner Farm, Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire, An Archaeological Evaluation’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 03/02a, Reading
Jenkins, P, 2004, 18 Shipton Road, Ascott-Under-Wychwood Oxfordshire, An Archaeological Watching Brief’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 03/37b, Reading
19 Church View, Ascott under Wychwood, Oxfordshire 2005, Archaeological Watching Brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Ascott under Wychwood and Oxfordshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site within Ascott under Wychwood, Oxfordshire. Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping at 1:2000. Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880
Figure 3. Location of foundations and services observed.
Scale 1:150
Figure 4: Representative Section

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