



The Old Surgery, South Street, Wilton, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**The Old Orchard Surgery, South Street
Wilton, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report.

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The Old Orchard Surgery, South Street Wilton, Wiltshire

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Figure 1 Site location plan

Plate 1 Excavation of site

Plate 2 Site fully excavated

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by John Coleman Architects on behalf of Dr A Hall & Partners (the Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at the Old Surgery, South Street, Wilton, Wiltshire (hereafter 'the Site') during groundworks for the proposed construction of an extension centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409493 130959 (**Figure 1**).

The watching brief was required as part of the planning permission granted to Dr A Hall & Partners by Salisbury District Council (Planning Reference S/2009/0159), for a two storey extension to the existing doctor's surgery.

The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of the foundation trenches and other groundworks associated with the two storey extension. This exposed an underlying layer of topsoil and made ground. Modern services and building waste were noted during the watching brief, however, given the shallow depth of excavation required, no archaeological features or artefacts were identified within the foundation trenches.

The watching brief was carried out on the 12th May 2009.

The Old Orchard Surgery, South Street Wilton, Wiltshire

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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by John Coleman Architects on behalf of Dr A Hall & Partners (the Client). Wessex Archaeology would like to thank them for their cooperation in the successful completion of the project.

The archaeological watching brief was carried out by Jonathan Smith and the report compiled by him. The illustrations were prepared by Elizabeth James and the project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.

The Old Orchard Surgery, South Street Wilton, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by John Coleman Architects on behalf of Dr A Hall & Partners (the Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at the Old Surgery, South Street, Wilton, Wiltshire (hereafter 'the Site) during groundworks for the proposed construction of an extension.

1.1.2 The work was carried out in support of planning application S/2009/0159, which granted conditional permission, for a two storey extension to the existing doctor's surgery.

1.1.3 A condition for an archaeological watching brief was attached to the planning permission (condition 4) and stated that;

No development shall take place within the area of the application until the applicant or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2009) was prepared in advance of the watching brief. It set out in detail the methodologies and standards proposed by Wessex Archaeology to undertake the archaeological works. The watching brief and this report on the results will complete the programme of archaeological work.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location, topography and geology.

2.1.1 The Site comprises an area of c. 0.1 hectares and is situated on the south-east side of South Street, less than 100m to the north-east of Bull Bridge and close to the site of St Michael's Church. It is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409493 130959 (**Figure 1**).

2.1.2 The proposed extension will be positioned on the northern side of the existing surgery and cover an area approximately 82 sq m.

2.1.3 The Site lies at approximately 53m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and is generally level.

2.1.4 The underlying geology comprises recent alluvial clays over Valley Gravels, and the Site is approximately 60m from the present course of the River Nadder.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 The Site lies within the area of the medieval town of Wilton, and almost certainly within the Saxon town, the southern boundary of which is believed to have been at Bull Bridge. The earliest documentary evidence for Wilton is AD 838, and in the 9th and 10th centuries the town became the defended capital of Saxon Wessex, with a royal residence and a mint. This rise to pre-eminence suggests that the town was well-established prior to this period and was already of economic significance within the region (Haslam 1976, V.C.H. 1962).
- 3.1.2 The original surgery was partially excavated prior to construction, following an initial field evaluation in 1995 (WA 1995).
- 3.1.3 The fieldwork exposed a sequence of late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval deposits, the majority of which are of 9th to 13th century date.
- 3.1.4 A considerable quantity of iron-working (smelting) slag was present especially in the south-eastern corner of the site, suggesting that it lay in close proximity to an iron-working complex probably involved in bloomery smelting.
- 3.1.5 Prior to the construction of the surgery, the Site was covered by overgrown gardens, the layout of which had remained unchanged since at least 1869. Topsoil and subsoil, up to 1m thick was recorded.

4 AIMS

4.1 Watching Brief

- 4.1.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2009) were to establish, within the constraints of the sampling strategy, the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains within the Site, and to mitigate any threat posed to them by the construction activity within the proposed footprint of the extension, through preservation by record.

5 METHOD

5.1 Fieldwork

- 5.1.1 The removal of part of the topsoil and some of the made ground was carried out by a mini digger using a 0.80m wide toothless trenching bucket.
- 5.1.2 The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of ground works made beneath the present ground surface, including ground clearance, and the excavation of a drainage trench. A continuous archaeological presence was maintained during groundworks undertaken within the area of the watching brief until such time that it was apparent that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed had been exhausted. All excavated material was routinely inspected for artefacts.
- 5.1.3 A photographic record, which included high resolution digital images, was maintained.

- 5.1.4 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute For Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (revised 2001).

6 RESULTS

- 6.1.1 Two small test pits were hand dug to expose modern services to a depth of approximately 0.40m. These both revealed made ground, which comprised a mixture of modern rubble and topsoil containing fragments of brick and concrete.
- 6.1.2 The remainder of the Site was excavated to a depth no greater than 0.20m below ground surface through topsoil.
- 6.1.3 No features or deposits of archaeological origin were identified during the watching brief.

7 FINDS

- 7.1.1 No artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL

- 8.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present within the foundation trenches.

9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1.1 Despite the high archaeological potential, the watching brief associated with the groundwork's did not identify any archaeological remains on the Site. This was due to the shallow depth of the excavations required for the footprint of the extension and the considerable depth of the topsoil overlying the Site.
- 9.1.2 Any archaeological remains within the Site will be preserved *in situ* beneath the extension to the surgery.

10 ARCHIVE

- 10.1.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990). It comprises a ring-bound file containing a site 'day book', photographic register and *Written Scheme of Investigation*. It is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office building under the site code 71690, but will ultimately be deposited for permanent storage with the relevant local museum

11 REFERENCES

Andrews P., Mephram L. & Seager-Smith R., *Excavations in Wilton, 1995-6: St John's Hospital and South Street* WAM 93, 181-204.

British Geological Survey, 1976, Sheet 298, Salisbury

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Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Excavation of site



Plate 2: Site fully excavated

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