

**Thomas & Co.**

**Former Wesley Barrel Site, Park Street, Charlbury,  
Oxfordshire**

*NGR SP 3556 1932*

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

**Planning Ref. Nos. W99/0362 & W99/0207**

**Oxford Archaeological Unit**

**October 1999**

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**Planning Ref. Nos. W99/0362 & W99/0207**

Prepared by: *John Dalt*

Date: *19/10/99*

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Date: *19/10/99*

Approved by: *R. Williams* HEAD OF FIELDWORK

Date: *22/10/1999*

**Oxford Archaeological Unit**

**October 1999**

## *Summary*

*In October 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at the Former Wesley Barrel site, Park Street, Charlbury, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 3556 1932). No archaeological features were seen and no finds were retrieved.*

### **1 Introduction (Fig. 1)**

The development proposal comprised the conversion of a barn into a dwelling, the construction of a new garage, new vehicular access and demolition of a part of the industrial building (W99/0362) and the construction of an extension and new vehicle parking areas (W99/0207). An archaeological brief was set in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG 16) by the Deputy County Archaeologist for Oxfordshire (4<sup>th</sup> August 1999). This document highlighted the fact that the site lies within an area of archaeological potential. The brief required a formal programme of observation and investigation during any ground operations which may have disturbed or destroyed archaeological deposits.

The watching brief was commissioned by Thomas & Co. of Pangbourne, Reading. It was undertaken to a WSI agreed with the Deputy County Archaeologist.

### **2 Background**

The development site lies due south of the Parish church of St Mary, which dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and was extensively enlarged in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Limited documentary evidence suggests that there may have been an earlier Anglo-Saxon Minster on the site; the early 11<sup>th</sup> century list of English Saints' resting places mentions St Dioma (a 7<sup>th</sup> century Irish priest, according to Bede), whose relics were interred at Ceorlincbugh (Charlbury). There is therefore potential for evidence of Anglo-Saxon and early medieval settlement surviving near to or on the development site. Roman and medieval artefacts have been recovered from the gardens of properties on the east side of Park Street.

The site was previously utilised for light industrial purposes as a furniture factory; its underlying geology is a fine loam over limestone bedrock, with the site comprising 0.7 hectares of land, lying at approximately 95 m above Ordnance Datum.

### **3 Aims**

The aims of the watching brief were to identify any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OAU standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record.

### **4 Methodology**

The watching brief was undertaken by means of separate inspection visits; all digging was undertaken by mechanical excavator.

Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets. Soil description utilises standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

## **5 Results**

The watching brief monitored test-pitting and foundation excavation in the area of the new garages and the new two-storey terrace. In all excavations monitored substantial quantities of a light-mid gray reworked clay were seen sealing the natural limestone to a minimum depth of 1 m. This material had been highly compacted; spoil from foundations was hand sorted for finds, but none were retrieved.

## **6 Finds**

No finds were retrieved during the course of the watching brief.

## **7 Environmental results**

Due to the absence of any significant archaeology, no environmental soil samples were taken.

## **8 Discussion**

No archaeology was seen during the course of the watching brief. It is thought likely that the substantial amounts of reworked clay seen sealing natural deposits are the result of levelling/stabilisation works from the site's previous light industrial incarnation. It is probable that this activity has truncated the natural horizon sufficiently to remove any archaeological traces present.

## **References.**

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).









-  existing planted trees
-  new trees
-  new foundations
-  garden walls/ property boundaries
-  parking spaces
-  buildings

figure 1: site plan





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