

# THE KEEP, 50 HIGH STREET, WALLINGFORD WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

## Introduction

Planning permission for a two storey extension to the above property was granted subject to the implementation of a programme of archaeological recording action (Planning ref. P91/W0231). The above recording action was carried out on behalf of Mr BD Stone by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) during July 1992.

## Background

The archaeological potential of Wallingford is high. Evidence of Prehistoric settlement has been located in the vicinity of the town, including two Iron Age occupation sites to the south. Numerous Roman finds have been located in Wallingford and are particularly concentrated in the western half of the walled area of the town. Wallingford is mentioned in a late Saxon document and it is now known that the rampart which surrounds the town was erected in the late 9th century as part of King Alfred's system of defence against the Danes. The rectilinear street pattern of the town seems to have been laid out at the same time as the defences.

It was possible that the tail end of the town's Saxon rampart and possibly also an intra-mural street may be located during excavation of the foundations

## Strategy

The footing and service trenches were excavated by builders. The foundation trench and spoil heap were examined for archaeological traces and/or artefacts by the OAU. No finds were retrieved from the spoil heap.

The foundation trench, 1.05 m deep, showed a consistent section for its entire length. The first 20 cm comprises the patio flagstones and their underlying rubble make-up; the other 85 cms consist of a uniformly soft dark grey/brown slightly silty loam, with consistent inclusions of modern brick and glass from top to bottom.

## Results

The consistency of the deposit seen in the trench section appear to indicate the intentional dumping of garden soil, possibly for the purpose of building

up the ground level.

### **Conclusion**

Although the archaeological potential of the area is high it would appear that, in this instance, the archaeology, if present, has been either relatively recently dug away, or is located at a greater depth than the bottom of the foundation trenches.

OAU  
July 1992