

THE WHITE HART HOTEL, CASTLE SQUARE, BENSON  
APPLICATION NO. p93/W0114  
GRID REF. SU 6165 9172 DISTRICT. SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE.  
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

A watching brief was maintained by the OAU as a condition to the conversion of the existing building into flats and the proposed development of the car park for flats. Archaeological remains from the pre-historic to the Post-Medieval have been recorded in and around the historic town.

The digging of foundation trenches for buildings, service trenches and level reductions for access roads and car parking were monitored for the presence of features and artefacts.

The foundation trenches for the new buildings were generally 0.75 m wide and were cut to a depth of 1.55 m. The material removed beneath the tarmac was a consistent layer of dark grey sticky clay loam which contained frequent inclusions of brick, glass, tile, plastic etc which appeared to cover the extent of the working area. Gravel, thought to be natural, was exposed at a depth of 1.50 m. No former soil horizons were observed in any of the trench sections, and the debris removed by the machine was clearly of recent origin.

**The substantial depth of this deposit and its** homogeneity might suggest that either the current car park was a former land fill site, perhaps filled up after the extraction of gravel, or that a number of buildings were removed wholesale and debris brought in to form the make up for the car park. Neither explanation is wholly satisfactory, however it seems unlikely given the depth of recent deposition that any archaeological horizons would have survived.

Jonathan Hiller  
Oxford Archaeological Unit  
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