



PHOENIX CONSULTING

Archaeology Limited

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

In connection with planning permission for development

Hampden Row Cottages
Main Street
Charndon
Buckinghamshire

PC287b

On behalf of:

ELMTREE CONSTRUCTION LTD.

28th September 2006



independent advice
planning applications
project management
fieldwork



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PHOENIX CONSULTING ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

by

Andy Richmond BA, PhD, MIFA

28th September 2006

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Site Data

<i>Site code:</i>	PC287	<i>Project No:</i>	287
		<i>Accession No.</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>District:</i>	Aylesbury Vale		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Charndon		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP67012418		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Residential property and gardens		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Demolition of two dwellings and erection of three new dwellings with associated parking and access.		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	06/00307/APP		
<i>Client:</i>	Elmtree Construction Ltd		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Mr B Clark		
<i>Telephone</i>	-	<i>Fax:</i>	-



Plate 1 Site of Hampden Row Cottages, Charndon at the commencement of works

Non-Technical Summary

Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Elmtree Construction Ltd. during the excavation of foundation trenches for the construction of three new residential properties on north side of Main Street, Charndon. The watching brief was required in line with the guidelines of PPG16 because the development took place within the historic core of the settlement which, according to the Domesday Survey, was held by Eingar, one of King Harold's men before the conquest. The development entailed the reduction of soils across the site followed by the excavation of a series of both independent and interconnecting foundation trenches in an area where up until recently two 1960's cottages stood. The watching brief identified c. 0.45m of modern and disturbed 19th Century overburden across the site. On the south-eastern frontage of the site, this material sealed a truncated irregular stone surface [002] containing pottery dating to the late 15th Century. Whilst no further features of archaeological interest were identified, a number of residual sherds of pottery dating from the 12th through to the 16th century were found, suggesting activity dating to these periods in the general vicinity.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The commission

- 1.1.1 Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd were commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Elmtree Construction Ltd. during the excavation of foundation trenches for the construction of three new residential properties on north side of Main Street, Charndon, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP67012418, Figure 1).

1.2 In connection with the commission

- 1.2.1 The development entailed the reduction of soils across the site followed by the excavation of a series of both independent and interconnecting foundation trenches immediately to the north of Main Street in an area where two 1960's Cottages, known as Hampden Row Cottages, once stood.
- 1.2.2 An archaeological watching brief was required in line with the guidelines of PPG16 because the development was to take place within the known historic core of Charndon. By the late 12th century, Charndon had been incorporated into Bernwood Forest by Henry II, although subsequent

kings were forced to reduce the scale of the forest. An 18th century map shows that Chardon consisted of two principal streets arranged around a village green, with a large common to the north. After the parliamentary enclosures of 1774 the village was reduced to a single street. The development site lies at the Southern end of the village, in an area that may have lain on the eastern edge of the former green.

- 1.2.3 The present document details the results of the archaeological watching brief which took place during June and July 2006.

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 The site

- 2.1.1 The development site covers c. 2,000 square meters on the north side of Main Street. Up until recently the plot was occupied by two 1960's houses, known as Hampden Row Cottages. These properties were set back c. 20m from the road, on a slightly elevated area of ground at c. 91.5m AOD. The properties had garden plots to the front and rear.

2.2 Archaeological and historical background

- 2.2.1 Charndon was a Saxon settlement which according to the Domesday Survey was held by Eingar, one of King Harold's men before the conquest. At Domesday the settlement is recorded as having 18 villagers and 4 slaves. The name of the settlement derives from Old English, being a person's name + *dun*, and means 'Cærda's hill'. By the late 12th century Charndon had been incorporated into Bernwood Forest by Henry II. In his reign the area was the property of Ralph Fitz-Nicholas, who had a grant of a fair at Twyford, in 1251.
- 2.2.2 Charndon, and nearby Poundon, are hamlets of the Parish of Twyford which was in the hundred and deanery of Buckingham. Both Twyford and Charndon were inclosed by an Act of Parliament, passed in 1774; when an allotment was assigned to the rector in lieu of tithes. A map of 1770 actually shows that Chardon consisted of two principal streets arranged around a village green with a large common to the north. However after the Parliamentary enclosures of 1774 the village was reduced to a single street. The development site lies at the southern end of the village, in an area that may have lain on the eastern edge of the green.
- 2.2.3 There are extensive settlement earthworks around the modern village, which may have resulted from the depopulation and/or re-planning of the village in the early post-Medieval period (see figure 1). Preliminary assessment of

these remains for English Heritage's Monuments Protection Programme indicates that they may be of national importance.

2.2.4

J J Sheahan, in his *History and Topography of Buckinghamshire*, 1862, described Charndon as 'a hamlet, situated 1 ¼ miles N.W. [should be S.W.] of Twyford, consisting of two farm-houses, an inn and about twenty cottages. It covers an area of 710 acres with a population of 95 and a rateable value at £1171. The place is the property of the Baroness Wenman.'

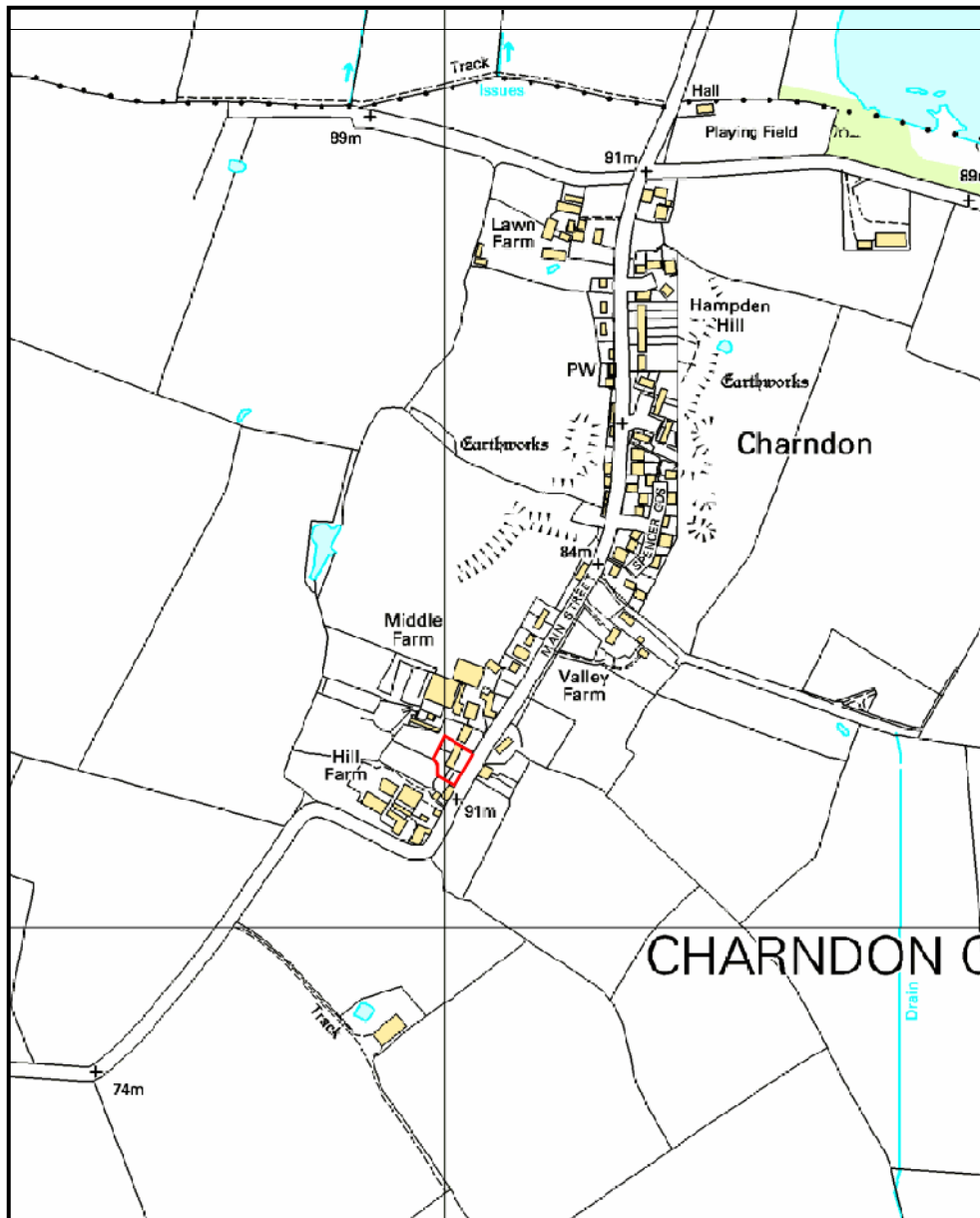


Figure 1 Site Location, also detailing earthworks to north of site
Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office: Licence AL 100030371

2.3 Maps of the site

- 2.3.1 A map of 1770 (unavailable for copying) shows that Chardon consisted of two principal streets arranged around a village green, with a large common to the north. However, after the Parliamentary enclosures of 1774 the village was reduced to a single street. The development site lies at the southern end of the village, in an area that may have lain on the eastern edge of the former green.
- 2.3.2 The earliest Ordnance Survey edition of 1885 shows the development site as an open plot of land between Lilac Cottage to the south and what appears to be an orchard associated with Middle Farm to the north (Figure 2). A small outhouse associated with Lilac Cottage appears to exist in the south-eastern corner of the site.

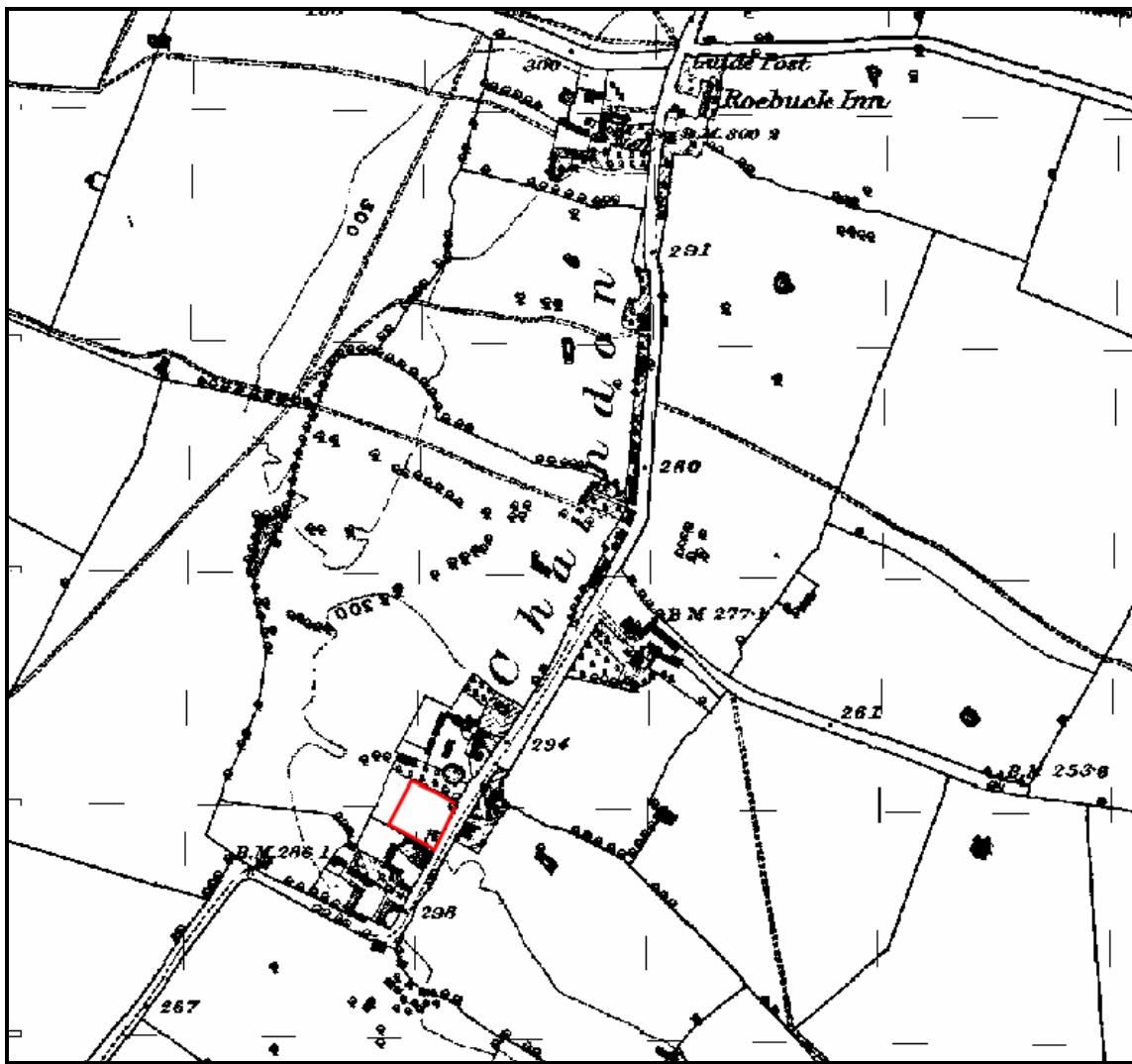


Figure 2: Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1885, 1:10,560

- 2.3.3 Later editions of the Ordnance Survey maps show little change to the site or its immediate surrounds. Indeed the 1899, 1938, 1952 and 1958 editions all show the site as it was on the first edition map of 1885. It was only in the 1960's that a change to the character of the plot took place with the building of the two cottages.

2.4 Planning background

- 2.4.1 The development consisted of the levelling of the site and the excavation of a series of foundation trenches immediately to the north of Main Street. A watching brief was required during all phases of intrusive ground disturbance and was requested as a Planning Condition attached to the permission for development (Reference: 06/00307/APP). This involved monitoring visits carried out by suitably qualified archaeologists.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 The watching brief

- 3.1.1 The principal objective of the archaeological watching brief was to characterise and record archaeological features or deposits exposed during groundworks.
- 3.1.2 Aims of the watching brief were to identify and record any significant archaeological remains revealed by the groundworks, paying particular regard to the potential for Saxon and Medieval deposits and the need to consider any remains in relation to what they might tell us about the origins and development of the village (Radford 2006).
- 3.1.3 To achieve these aims all groundwork operations were monitored archaeologically allowing all exposed features and deposits to be recorded. The recording action took place according to the standards set out in English Heritage's' MAP 3, Appendix 1 and the IFA's Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.
- 3.1.4 Archaeological monitoring took place during the initial ground levelling of the site and during the machining of the foundation trenches. Where necessary, trenches were cleaned and archaeologically recorded. A photographic record was maintained throughout.
- 3.1.5 All features and deposits were plotted on copies of the developer's site plans which were thereafter related to the National Grid.

- 3.1.6 All contexts and features were recorded, described and individually numbered on pro-forma context sheets. These together with the finds will be deposited at the Buckinghamshire County Museum Archives (Halton, Aylesbury) and their Conditions of Acceptance will be adhered to.



Plate 2 Looking to the east during construction work, with Lilac Cottage to the right.

4.0 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Results

- 4.1.1 The investigations at Hampden Row Cottages identified very little in the way of archaeology. Indeed the only archaeological evidence encountered was during the monitoring of the initial soil reduction across the site, when a truncated stone surface was uncovered (002). This feature was made up of angular fragments of sandstone together with occasional large stone pebbles. The matrix was merely a dark brown silty clay with no evidence of mortar. The feature was not contained within a cut.

- 4.1.2 Excavation of the feature showed it to be only one course in depth, laying on the natural silt-clay. From the bonding matrix came two sherds of pottery, one being from a Brill/Boarstall Ware vessel of the 13th to 17th century and the other being a sherd of Cistercian Ware of the late 15th/early 16th century. Due to the truncated nature of the feature no particular form could be ascertained and its function remains unknown. However, it was likely an external surface such as a path.



Plate 3 Truncated stone surface (002) uncovered close to Main Street.

- 4.1.3 No other archaeological features were identified either during the soil reduction across the site or during the excavation of the footings trenches for the three new properties. At the southern end of the site, however, close to the boundary with Lilac Cottage, a number of unstratified residual pottery sherds were recovered from the garden soil horizon (001). Twenty-eight sherds were recovered which emanated from a range of wares dating from between the 12th and 17th centuries. The pottery represented was typical of other sites in the area (see pottery report below). The presence of this assemblage suggests Medieval activity in the general vicinity of the site.

4.2 The Pottery (reporting by Paul Blinkhorn)

4.2.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 30 sherds with a total weight of 110g. It was all medieval or later, with the range of fabrics typical of sites in the area. All the medieval material was fragments of unglazed jars and glazed jugs, which is typical of the various represented pottery traditions. Despite the fact that most of the material was unstratified, it appears that there was activity at the site more or less throughout the medieval period, from the 12th – 16th century.

4.2.2 It was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

MC1: *Shelly Coarseware* AD1100-1400. 3 sherds, 23g.

MC6: *Potterspury Ware*. AD1250 - 1600. 1 sherd, 11g.

MC9: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. 1200-?1600. 4 sherds, 27g..

MS3: *Medieval Grey Sandy Wares*, Mid 11th – late 14th century. 12 sherd, 94g.

PM8: *Red Earthenware*. 17th century. 3 sherd, 199g.

PM15: *Cistercian ware*, AD1470-1550. 1 sherd, 1g.

4.2.3 In addition, the following wares, not covered by the type-series, were also noted:

Oxford ware. Oxfordshire fabric OXY (Mellor 1994). *c* late 11th – 14th century. Abundant sub-angular quartz with some rounded clay pellets and occasional polycrystalline quartz. Handmade and wheel-thrown vessels. 5 sherds, 52 g.

4.2.4 The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

4.2.5 The presence of Oxford ware is not unusual, despite it not being covered by the Milton Keynes type-series. More recent work has shown that it is often occurs in small quantities at sites in the west of the county.

	MS3		Oxford		MC1		MC9		MC6		PM15		PM8		
Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
1	12	94	5	52	4	23	3	21	1	11			3	199	U/S
2							1	6			1	1			L15thC
Total	12	94	5	52	4	23	4	27	1	11	1	1	3	199	

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type



Plate 4: 12th to 17th Century pottery from the garden soil close to Lilac Cottage. Scale 30cm.

4.3 Concluding remarks

- 4.2.1 The watching brief was required in line with the guidelines of PPG16 because the development took place within the historic core of the settlement which, according to the Domesday Survey, was held by Eingar, one of King Harold's men before the conquest. The development entailed the reduction of soils across the site followed by the excavation of a series of foundation trenches in an area where up until recently two 1960's cottages stood.
- 4.2.2 The watching brief identified c. 0.45m of modern and disturbed 19th Century overburden across the site. On the south-eastern frontage of the site, this material sealed a truncated irregular stone surface [002] containing pottery dating to the late 15th Century. Whilst no further features of archaeological interest were identified, a number of residual sherds of pottery dating from the 12th through to the 16th century were found, suggesting activity dating to these periods in the general vicinity.

4.2.3

At the time this investigation took place a further archaeological watching brief was being carried out at Hill Farm, only 100m to the south-west (John Moore Heritage Services). Footings trenches at that site also recovered little in the way of archaeological evidence, although a possible pond feature was noted. Hill Farm is shown on the 1st edition OS map of 1885.

Acknowledgements

The watching brief was carried out by Gary Coates and Andy Richmond of Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd. The work was commissioned by Elmtree Construction Ltd. The work was monitored by David Radford (Archaeological Officer) of Buckinghamshire County Council. We are grateful to the site construction team for their cooperation and assistance during the project.

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