Dene House
Yarnells Hill
North Hinksey
Oxfordshire

Archaeological
Watching Brief Report

January 2006

Client: J A Pye Estates Ltd

Issue No: 1
OA Job No: TN 5907
Planning Ref No: NHI 3126/1 and
NHI 3126/2
NGR: SU 4880 0497
Client Name: J A Pye Estates Ltd

Document Title: Dene House, Yarnells Hill, North Hinksey, Oxfordshire

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SU 4880 0497
Planning Reference: NHI 3126/1 and NHI 3126/2

OA Job Number: TN 5907
Site Code: OXYADH 05
Invoice Code: OXYADHWB
Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire County Museum Service
Museum Accession No: OCMS.2005.73

Prepared by: Mike Sims
Position: Project Supervisor
Date: 6th January 2006

Checked by: Dan Dodds
Position: Head of Small Works
Date: 10th January 2006

Approved by: Nick Shepherd
Position: Head of Field Work
Date: 11th January 2006

Document File Location: Projects\Oxfordshire OX\Vale of White Horse VWH\5907 Dene House, Yarnells Hill WB\wbREP.doc
Graphics File Location: Server\goaupubs\_ithruq\OXYADH05*OXYADHWB
*Dene House* North Hinkley*HRB*06.01.06

Illustrated by: Hannah Brown

Disclaimer:
This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology
© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2006
JANUS House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES
t: (0044) 01865 263800
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
f: (0044) 01865 793496
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627
Dene House, Yarnells Hill, North Hinksey, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary .......................................................................................................................... 1
1 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
  1.1 Scope of work ......................................................................................................... 1
  1.2 Location, geology and topography ...................................................................... 1
  1.3 Archaeological and historical background ......................................................... 1
2 Project Aims and Methodology .............................................................................. 2
  2.1 Aims ..................................................................................................................... 2
  2.2 Methodology ....................................................................................................... 2
3 Results ...................................................................................................................... 2
  3.1 Description of deposits ...................................................................................... 2
  3.2 Finds .................................................................................................................. 2
  3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains ......................................................................... 2
4 Discussion and Conclusions ................................................................................. 3
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory ....................................................... 4
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References ................................................................. 4
Appendix 3 Summary of site details ........................................................................... 4

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Area of watching brief
Fig. 3 Section 1
SUMMARY

On 8th September 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Dene House, Yarnells Hill, North Hinksey, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU4880 0497). The work was commissioned by J A Pye Estates in advance of the demolition of an existing building and the construction of 4 new dwellings. The watching brief revealed that the area had been truncated down to undisturbed natural during the construction of the original building and that no archaeological potential remained.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 On 8th September 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Dene House, Yarnells Hill, North Hinksey, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU4880 0497). The work was commissioned by J A Pye Estates in respect of a planning application for the demolition of an existing dwelling and the construction of 4 new dwellings (Planning Application No. NHI/3126/1 and NHI/3126/2).

1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hugh Coddington, the Deputy County Archaeological Officer representing the Vale of White Horse District Council (OCAS, 2005).

1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2005).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The development site is located approximately 2 km to the south-west of Oxford (Fig. 1). The site itself is located to the south of the junction between Yarnells Hill and Lime Road in North Hinksey. The site is terraced into a south-east facing hill and lies at approximately 112 m OD and occupies an area of 0.48 hectares. The underlying geology is loam overlying Kimmeridge clay and limestone brash (British Geological survey sheet no. 236).

1.2.2 The site originally contained a single domestic dwelling within a landscaped garden setting.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2005) and is reproduced below.

1.3.2 A survey of crop marks on the Thames River Gravels by the then Air Photographic Unit of the RCHME (Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, England) identified a circular enclosure on the south-eastern boundary of the application site.
This has been identified as a Bronze Age ring ditch although there has been no fieldwork to verify this.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.

2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological deposits or features that the works may disturb or destroy.

2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a single site visit immediately after demolition of the existing house and the clearance of the site.

2.2.2 A plan of the area observed was drawn at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2) and sample sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 (Fig. 3). The site was photographed using a colour digital camera. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the OA Field Manual (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

3.1.1 The underlying natural, a limestone brash within a yellow-brown clay matrix (2) was encountered at a depth of 0.3 m below the current ground level. In the areas where the original garden had been terraced, this could be seen to be in excess of 1.8 m deep. A number of tree root hollows could be observed within the surface of this deposit along the northern edge of the site.

3.1.2 This had been sealed by a 0.3 m deep layer of dark grey-brown clay loam (1) throughout the garden area of the site.

3.2 Finds

3.2.1 No dating evidence was recovered during the course of the watching brief.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the watching brief.
4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 The watching brief showed that the area had been substantially truncated during earlier landscaping of the site. This depth of reduction was such that any stratigraphy with archaeological potential had been removed completely, with only deeper natural intrusions such as the tree root hollows previously noted surviving. These probably date from clearance of the site for the original construction. No evidence for the continuation of the circular enclosure observed on the aerial photographs was encountered.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1  ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Depth</th>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Finds</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>0.3 m</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Modern garden soil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>C20th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Layer</td>
<td>&gt; 1.8 m</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Natural clay and combrash</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX 2  BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs

OA, 2005 Dene House, Yarnells Hill, North Hinksey, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief


OCAS, 2005 Dene House, Yarnells Hill, North Hinksey: Design Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief

APPENDIX 3  SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Dene House, Yarnells Hill, North Hinksey, Oxfordshire
Site code: OXYADH05
Grid reference: SU 4880 0497
Type of watching brief: Machine stripping of development site
Date and duration of project: 8/9/05, 1 day
Area of site: 0.48 hectares
Summary of results: Area of site had been completely truncated by earlier landscaping, no archaeological potential left
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OCMS.2005.73
Figure 2: Area of watching brief

Figure 3: Section 1