

Report on a Watching Brief at Pennys, 88B West Street, Farnham, Surrey GU9 7EN

Background: The site of building works (WA/2016/2024; SU 8363 4680) to construct extensions on the south-west and north-east corners of the existing building, which lies to the rear of the garden of Bethune House. At the request of Mr N Truckle, Archaeological Officer, Surrey County Council, the footing trenches for the above works were inspected on 27 January 2017. Prior to the visit, the trenches had been excavated and the topsoil removed from the site.

The footing trenches: The footing trenches for the larger of the two extensions lay on the north-east side of the existing building and formed three sides of an approximate rectangle. The trenches were cut to a depth of 1.1m below the ground surface and the section consisted of upper layers of garden topsoil to a depth of about 60cm on average. Showing in parts of the section were the remains of a relatively recent garden path consisting of a layer of hardcore overlain by a band of gravel. No other features were observed and no finds were recovered other than pieces of modern roof tile. Below the garden soil level the trenches were cut into Gault clay to an overall depth of 1.1m. The smaller south-western extension showed similar stratigraphy.

Conclusion: The site is well back from West Street and is likely to have been fields until relatively recently, and certainly was at the time of the 1843 tithe map, after which it presumably became an extension of the garden to the rear of Bethune House, 88 West Street (ca. 1780) or a separate property. In any event, there is no evidence of any occupation of the site earlier than the existing house, which is relatively modern and is not shown on the 1936 OS map, but is there by 1959.

No further work is recommended.

David Graham FSA

Vice President, Surrey Archaeological Society.

28 January 2017



Extract from the Tithe Map 1843. The red star shows the approximate position of 88B West Street.



Pennys, 88B West Street, showing the north-east extension footing trench.



View of the section in the north-east footing trench showing Gault clay overlain by garden soils and the corner of a gravel path. The footing trench was difficult to access – hence the lack of a scale and oblique angle of view.