

Archaeological Site Watching Brief at Malthouse Yard Cottage, West Street, Farnham. Application No: WA /2010/1802

The footing trenches for an extension on the north side of Malthouse Yard Cottage, West Street, were inspected on 12 April 2011, for the presence of archaeological deposits. The present building is shown on a map of 1839, and is likely to be of late 18th or early 19th century date. The current ground surface in the area of the new extension, within the garden of the property, is at least 1m higher than the ground level outside the garden wall with the raised ground level consisting of redeposited soil.

In the north-west corner of the new extension the trenches had cut through two pits, one of which (pit 2) had cut through the other (pit 1). Pit 1 was filled with dark grey soil with no archaeological material and was only seen in the north face of the footing trench. The top of this feature lay c 1.3m below the modern ground surface and the surviving portion was 80cm wide. Pit 2 had cut through pit 1 and was filled with broken peg hole roof tile of post-medieval date together with a few fragments of brick (without frogs) and a small amount of animal bone (jaw and long bones from a horse or donkey; donkeys are known to have been used in the hop fields that once adjoined the site). The top of pit 2 was also at a depth of c 1.3m below the modern ground surface and was at least 2.8 long and 2m wide and extended beyond the trench edges. It was only seen in the north and west faces of the footing trench.

Following the discovery of these two features, the footing trenches for the new extension had been deepened until the bottom of the pits had been reached and natural clay exposed at c 2.3m.

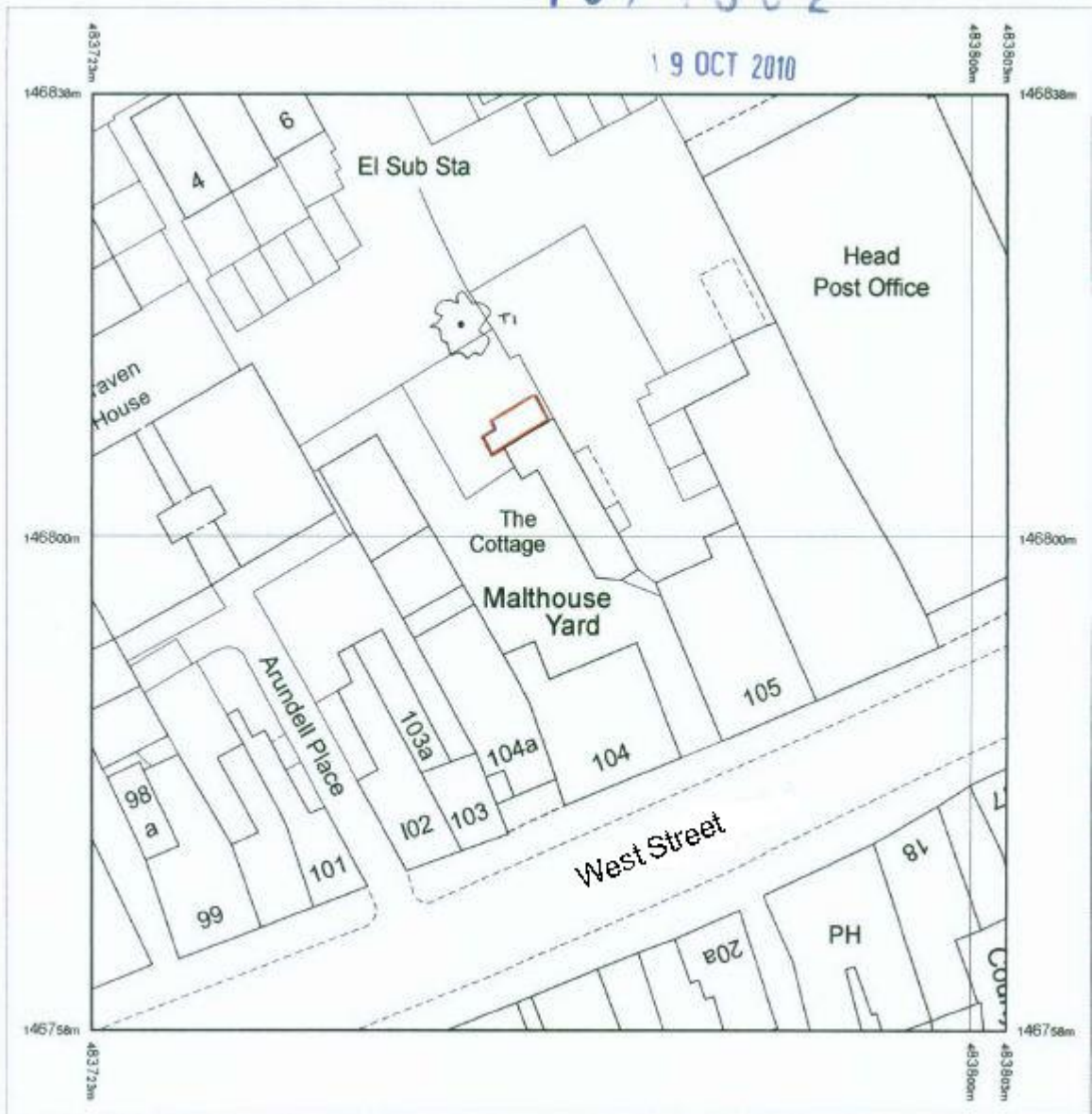
On the south side of the excavated area, the footings for the present building were exposed and rested on a layer of rammed chalk, c 30cm thick, with the base at 1.2m below the modern ground surface.

The purpose of the pits is not known, but they may have been dug to extract clay and then backfilled: in the case of pit 1 with soil and pit 2 in the main with building debris, which is probably of 18th/19th century date. No other features or finds of archaeological interest were noted.

Since no further excavation is planned, no further work is recommended and my thanks are due to Mr Saunders, the owner, for his help on site.

Audrey Graham

14 April 2011



Site location