

**GROVE FARM  
IVINGHOE ASTON  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,  
INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS  
AND PUBLICATION**

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## **Preface**

*Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the Project Design. All statements and opinions contained herein are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.*

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## **Structure of the Report**

The project and its background are introduced in Section 1. This is followed by an outline of the methodology employed during the project in Section 2 with the results of the fieldwork presented in Section 3. Section 4 is a bibliography.

## **Key Terms**

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

|      |   |
|------|---|
| BCAS | Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service |
| IFA  | Institute of Field Archaeologists             |
| SMR  | Sites and Monuments Record                    |

## **Acknowledgements**

*The project was commissioned by Mr Ben Adams and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by David Radford of Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service.*

*This report was prepared by Lennard Anderson with illustrations by Joan Lightning.*



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*During April 2007, Albion Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication on development works at Grove Farm, Ivinghoe Aston, Buckinghamshire.*

*Ivinghoe Aston is located within an important archaeological landscape with Grove Farm itself being the presumed site of medieval fisheries and a watermill, as well as the location of possible Iron Age activity.*

*The archaeological works were occasioned by the construction of a stable block and ménage which involved the removal of an area of turf and topsoil, the excavation of a soakaway trench and pit, and augering for 94 large posts.*

*Observations of the groundworks revealed only disturbance, probably associated with cultivation activities such as ploughing. Some artefacts were recovered from the topsoil but none dated earlier than the 17<sup>th</sup> century.*

*Given the generally shallow and limited nature of the groundworks, the potential for finding significant archaeological remains was always likely to be low. Therefore, the results of the project do not rule out the possibility that significant archaeological remains may survive in the area.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Background*

The proposed development was located in an area of high archaeological potential. As a consequence, and in accordance with advice received from Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS), the Local Planning Authority attached a condition to the planning permission requiring that a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication be carried out at the site.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake this programme of work in accordance with a Brief (BCAS 2007) and subsequent Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2007) which was approved by BCAS prior to the commencement of construction works.

### 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The village of Ivinghoe Aston is located on the northern edge of the Chiltern scarp, in the Vale of Aylesbury, and within the catchment of the River Ouzel. Grove Farm lies to the south-west of the village at National Grid Reference SP 9440 1802 (Figure 1).

The proposed development was located on level, flat grassed land to the south-east of the farm complex and comprised the construction of a ménage and stable block. The associated groundworks included the stripping of turf and some topsoil from the area of the ménage and stable area, followed by the excavation of a drainage features and augering for a series of posts.

The site lies at a height of *c.*90m OD on a geology of Upper Greensand, Gault and Lower Chalk, and a subsoil of gleyic brown calcareous earths.

### 1.3 *Archaeological Background*

Ivinghoe Aston lies within a landscape of considerable archaeological importance. The Pitstone section of Grims Ditch lies to the south of the village. To the south-east are the Icknield Way and Ridgeway paths, and the Iron Age hill fort of Ivinghoe Beacon.

Grove Farm itself is believed to be the site of a medieval moat, fisheries and watermill (SMR 2902). Early mapping identifies the farm as Granges Farm which suggests a possible monastic connection to the site.

In fields immediately to the south of the farm, nineteen sherds of pottery and three flint artefacts were recovered from an area believed to measure approximately 30x 40ft. Six of the pottery sherds were dated to the late Iron Age period (SMR 6159).

Further to the south, cropmark enclosures have been identified on aerial photographs (SMR 4109). They appear to comprise two small square enclosures lying within a larger more irregular enclosure. These features remain undated.



West of the farm there is evidence that some of the land was quarried for coprolites in the post-medieval period (SMR 5829).

#### **1.4 Project Objectives**

Although the impact of the proposed stable block and ménage was likely to have been relatively light, the site clearly lay within an area of high archaeological potential. The work could potentially have impacted upon archaeological remains from at least the Iron Age and later. Evidence gathered from the site could address a number of regional research priorities and be used to complement the Buckinghamshire SMR.

The aims of the archaeological works were therefore as follows:

- Establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation located within the development area.
- Establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding landscape.
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of a ceramic type series within the region.
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine past local environmental conditions.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

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The programme of archaeological monitoring was undertaken between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April 2007. During this period all excavations which required monitoring were completed. A mechanical excavator was used for all excavations which were carried out under archaeological supervision

The archaeological works adhered to the methods set out in the Project Design (Albion Archaeology, 2007) and summarised below:

- All stripping of overburden or excavation of service trenches was monitored.
- All disturbed soil was scanned for artefacts.
- Any excavated deposits were recorded in accordance with Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* and the requirements detailed in Section 5 of the BCAS Brief.
- All archaeological observations were drawn at a suitable scale on base plans tied in to the OS national grid.
- A photographic record was made of all works and deposits.

Throughout the project, the standards set out in the IFA Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance documents (specifically *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, September 1999), and English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991), and in Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* were adhered to.

The project archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum under the accession number AYCBM:2007.93.



### 3. RESULTS

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#### 3.1 *Description of Groundworks*

The groundworks (Figures 2 and 3) for the proposed development comprised the following:

- Reduction of the existing ground surface by an average of 0.15m over an area of approximately 1,630m<sup>2</sup>.
- Excavation of a soakaway trench 21m long, 0.9m wide and 0.9m deep.
- Excavation of a soakaway pit 1.6m long, 1.4m wide and 0.9m deep.
- Augering of 94 holes, 0.3m diameter and 1m deep, to accommodate fence posts.

#### 3.2 *Fieldwork Results*

Turf and topsoil were excavated from the stable and ménage areas to a depth of c.0.15m. The excavated spoil and stripped ground was scanned for finds. Recovered artefacts included pottery and tile fragments dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. No artefacts of earlier date were recovered. No features were visible in the stripped surface and the excavations did not extend below the depth of the topsoil.

The excavation of the soakaway trench and pit revealed the topsoil to be 0.30m thick, overlying a light yellow clay silt subsoil, 0.20m thick. Geological strata were observed beneath the overburden, comprising a blue clay containing numerous chalk fragments.

The soakaway trench was located along the north-eastern side of the ménage area and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.90m. A total of twelve shallow features were visible beneath the subsoil in the north-eastern facing section of the excavation. They were filled by a soft dark grey clay silt and a very fine, white, chalky clay. Ten of these features were U-shaped extending to a maximum depth of around 0.45m and spaced at regular intervals of around 1m. The two others extended to a depth of 0.75m, were V-shaped in profile and grouped closer together. All of these features are likely to have been caused by ploughing, or other agricultural practice.

The soakaway pit was excavated to the south-west of the stable block area to a maximum depth of 0.90m. A further U-shaped feature, filled with grey white clay containing chalk fragments and extending to a maximum depth of 0.64m, was visible beneath the subsoil in the north-west facing section of the pit. Again, this appears to have been related to cultivation activities.

The augered post holes confirmed the depth of overburden and presence of agricultural disturbance as seen within the soakaway pit and trench.

No artefacts were found in the drainage or post hole excavations.





### **3.3 Conclusion**

Although the proposed development lay within an area of high archaeological potential, no deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were found during groundworks.

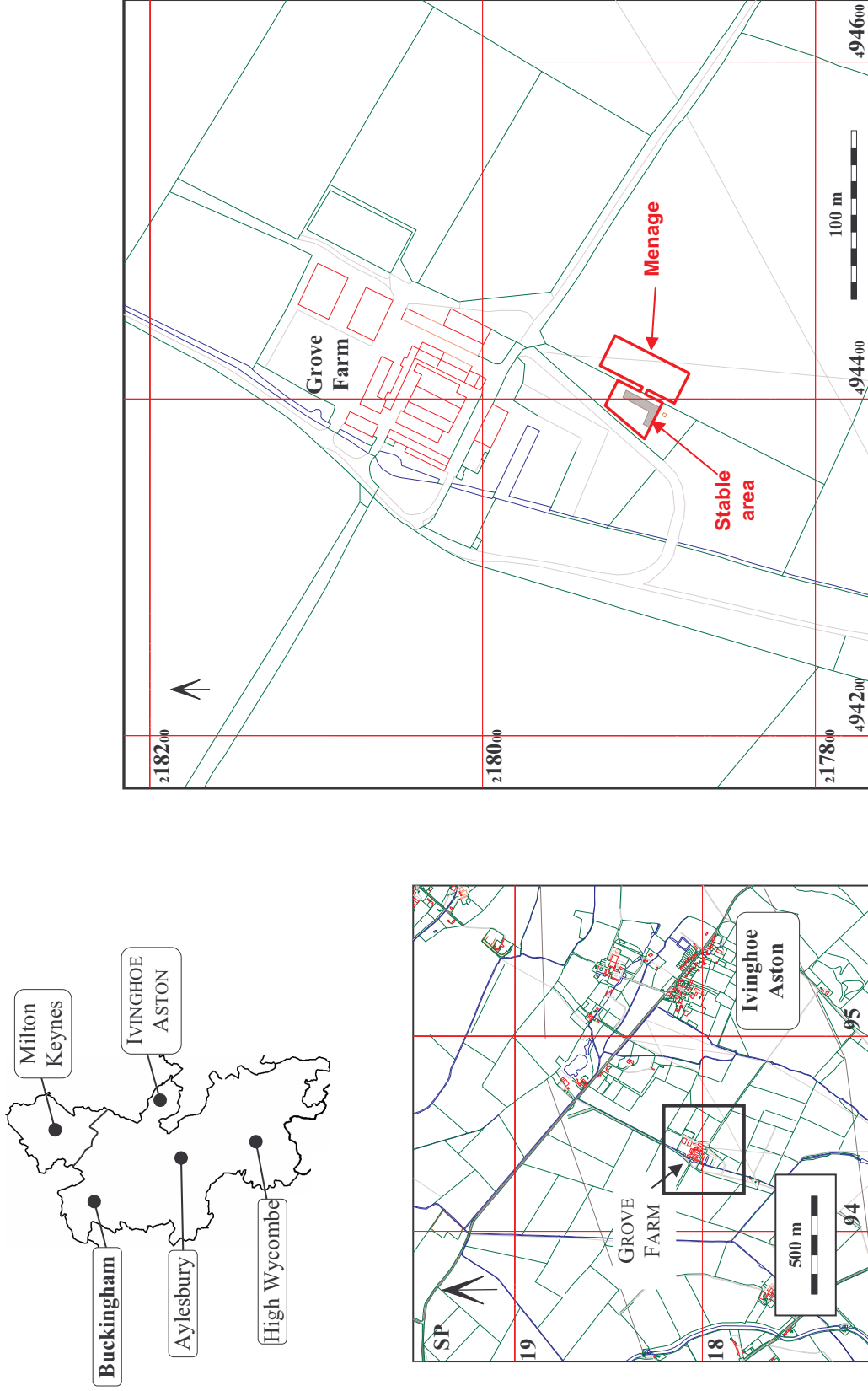
Given the limited nature of these groundworks the potential for finding such remains was always likely to be limited. Therefore, the results of the archaeological observations do not rule out the possibility that important archaeological remains are present in the area.



## 4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

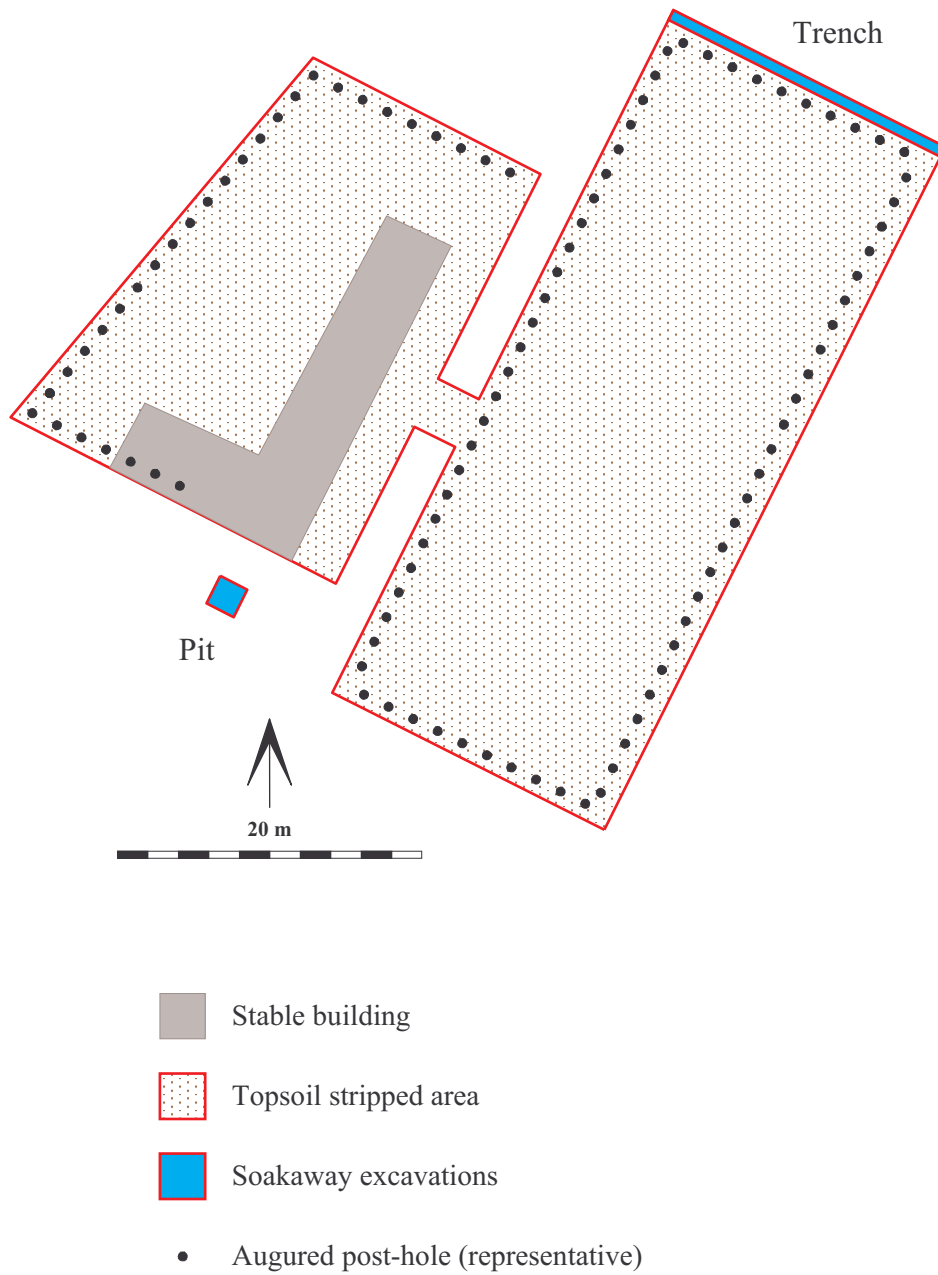
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| Albion<br>Archaeology | 2001 | <i>Procedures Manual, Volume 1: Fieldwork. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.</i>                |
| Albion<br>Archaeology | 2007 | <i>Project Design for a Programme of Archaeological Excavation. Document 2007/42.</i> |
| BCAS                  | 2007 | <i>Brief for an Archaeological Excavation Grove Farm, Ivinghoe Aston.</i>             |



**Figure 1: Site location map**

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**Figure 2: Location of groundworks**

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**Figure 3: Soakaway trench and topsoil stripping for ménage**

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