

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:  
2 CRAFTON  
MENTMORE  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

*on behalf of Andrew Whitehouse*



**Karin Semmelmann MA PIFA**

**August 2005**

**ASC: 694/MTC/2**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	MTC	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	694
<i>Event No:</i>		<i>Accession No:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Mentmore		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Mentmore CP		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 8915 1965		
<i>Present use:</i>	Pasture		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Erection of stables, tack-room and hay-store		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	05/00716		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	25 <sup>th</sup> July 2005 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2005		
<i>Client:</i>	Andrew Whitehouse 2 Crafton Cottages Mentmore Bedfordshire LU7 0QL		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Andrew Whitehouse		
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## Internal Quality Check

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<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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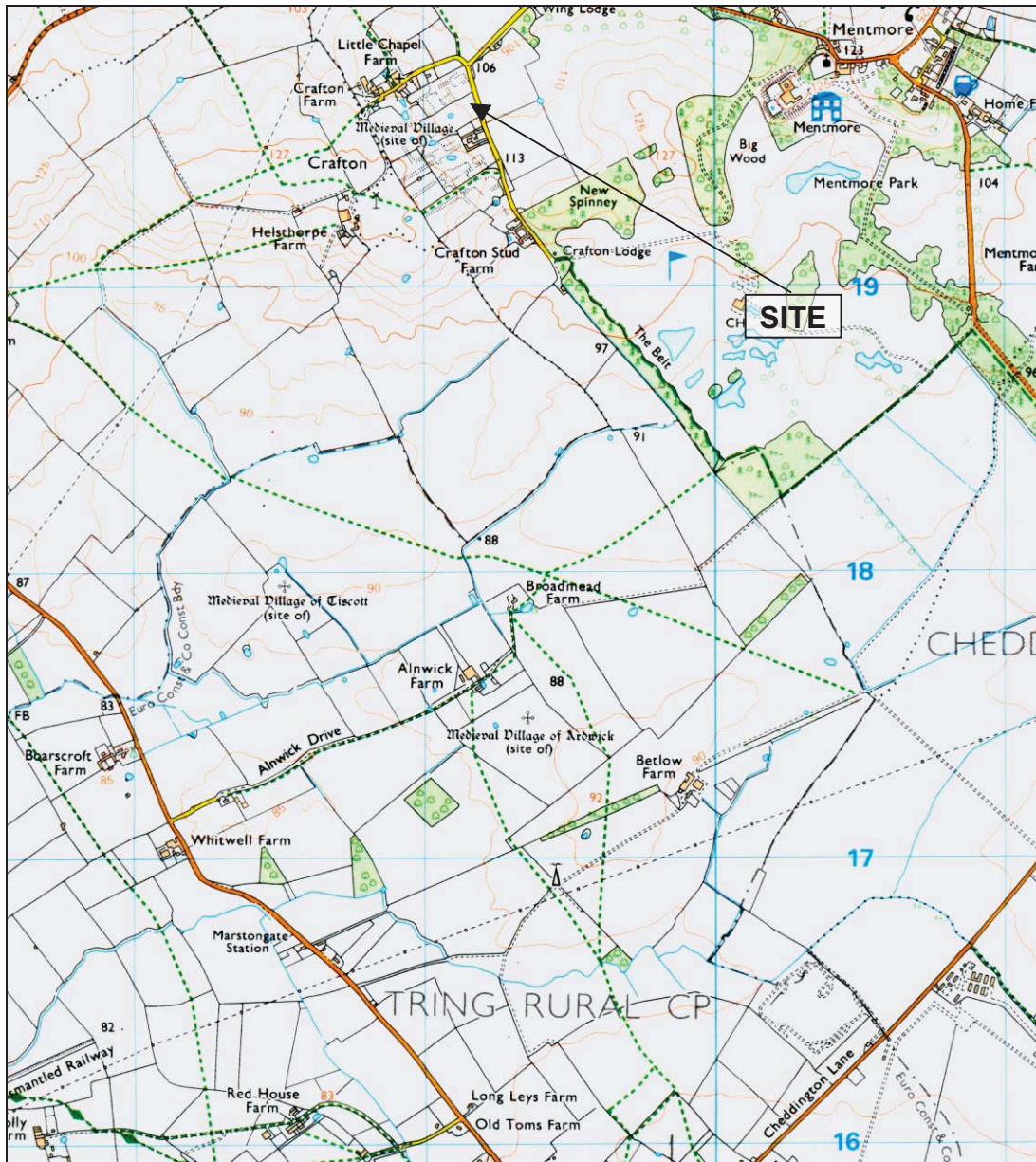


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*A watching brief was undertaken at 2 Crafton Mentmore, Buckinghamshire between 25<sup>th</sup> July and 4<sup>th</sup> August 2005, during ground reduction prior to the construction of stables, tack-room and a hay-store. Although the site lies within a complex of earthworks relating to the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Crafton, no archaeological features or finds were encountered.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In July and August 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 2 Crafton, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 8915 1965: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Andrew Whitehouse, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse, 2005), and a brief (Radford, 2005) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Aylesbury Vale District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service*. The relevant planning application reference is 05/00716.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief has been required as a planning condition under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of stables, tack-room and hay-store.

### 1.3 *Location*

The site of the proposed development is located *c.*250m to the southeast of the centre of Crafton village (Fig. 1).

### 1.4 *Description*

This site lies in the north-east corner of a field on the eastern edge of extensive earthworks that date from the medieval period. The site is bounded by a road to the east and otherwise by open land.

### 1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area are of the *Evesham 2 Association* (Soil Survey, 1983, 411b), consisting of *slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. Some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged non-calcareous clayey and fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils. Landslips and associated irregular terrain locally (ibid).* The underlying geology consists of Jurassic and Cretaceous clay. The site lies at an elevation of *c.*110m AOD.

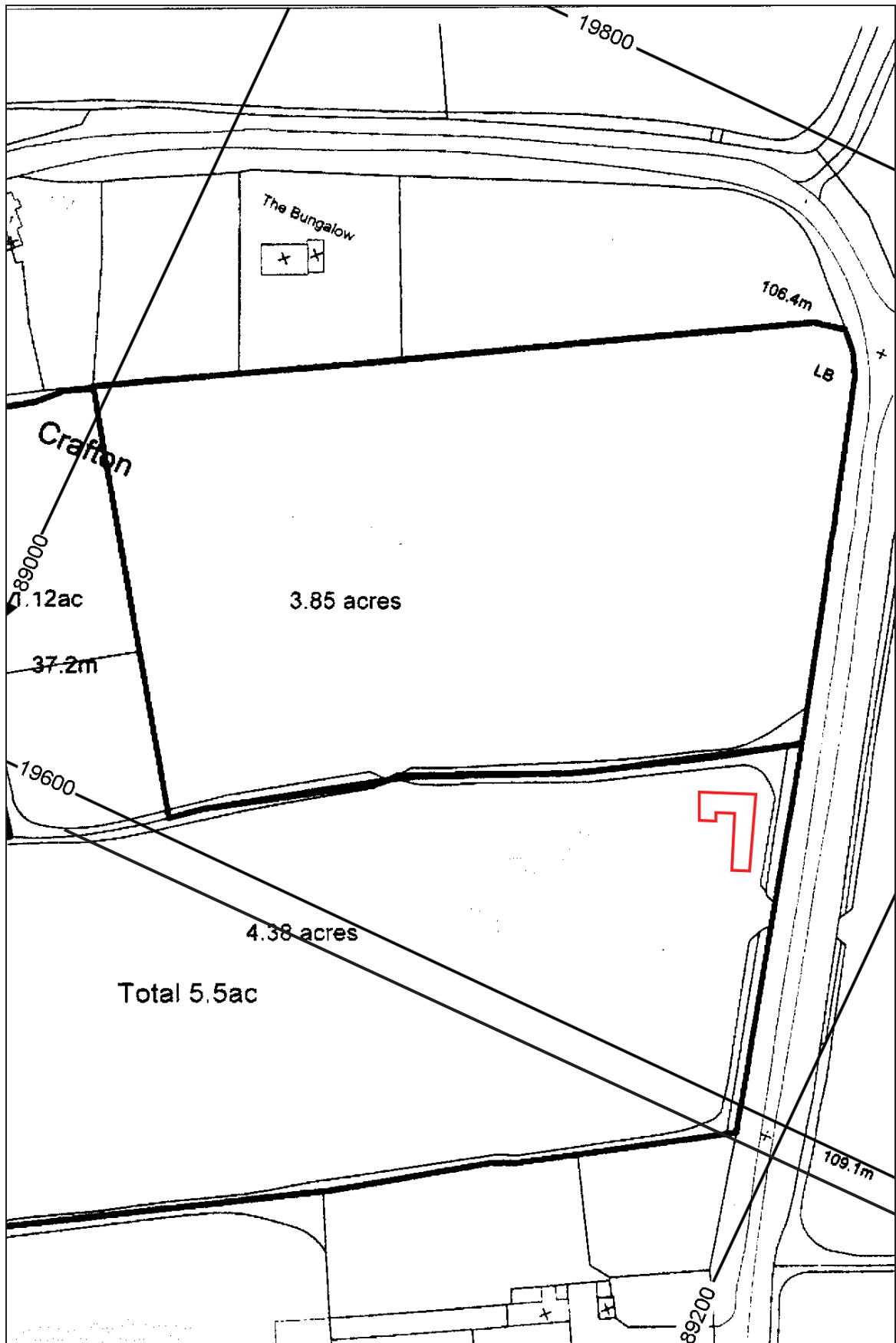
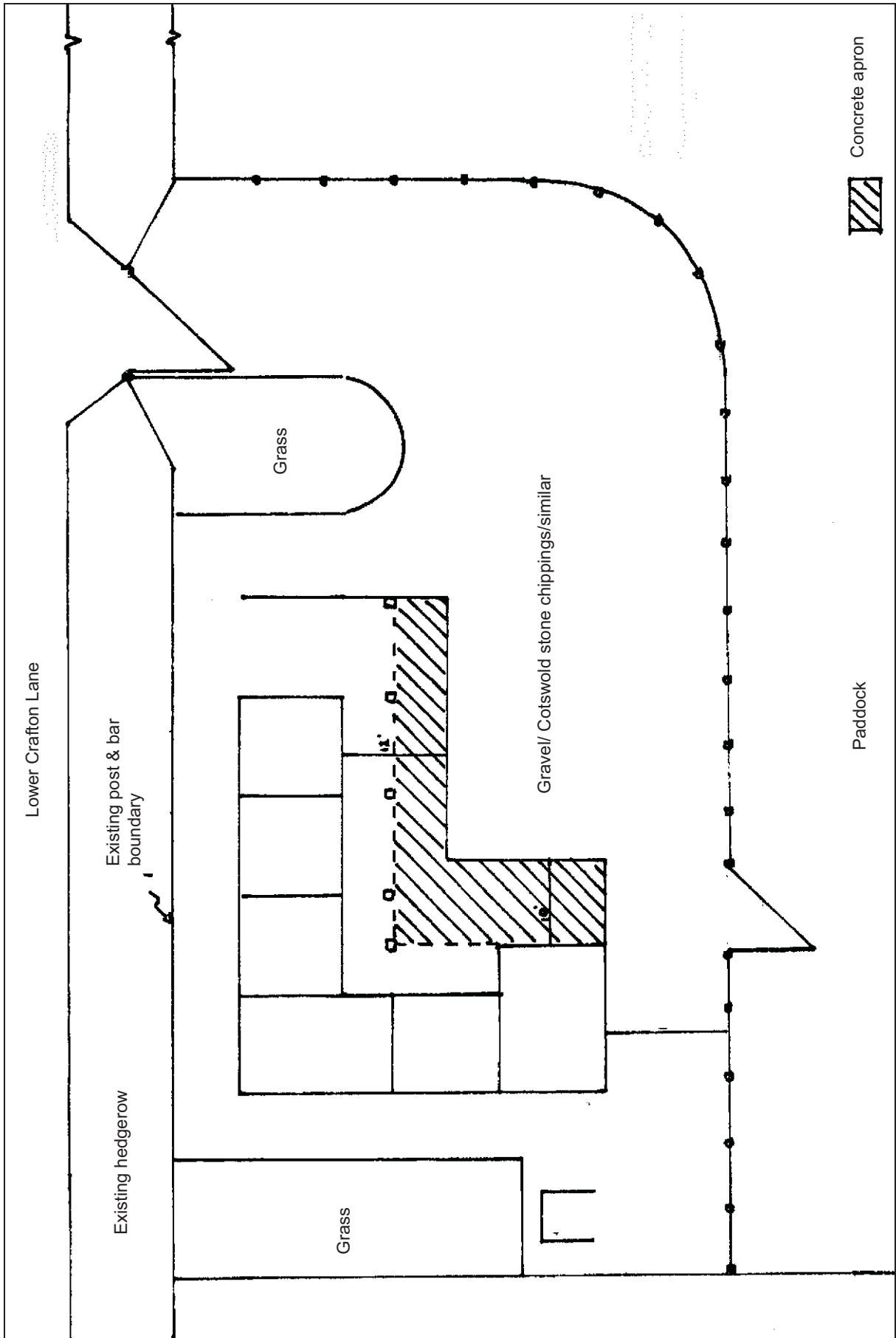


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)



**Figure 3:** Proposed development (*scale 1:200*)

## 2 Aims & Methods

### 2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 6), the 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 medieval and post medieval deposits.
- To determine whether this area lies within a toft or whether the hollow way to the west defines the edge of the settlement core.

### 2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

### 2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 8), which required:

- A continuous watching brief during the topsoil stripping for the stables, tack-room and hay-store and hard-standing and any associated groundworks.
- Noting the presence/absence of archaeological features and undertaking sufficient work to date, characterise and record any surviving archaeological remains in accordance with the project objectives.



### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

Little information is recorded in the Buckinghamshire Sites & Monuments Record for the area in the prehistoric and Roman periods.

The Domesday Survey of 1086 records two manors at Crafton, which was a hamlet in the parish of Wing. Wing with Crafton Manor was held by the Bishop of Lisieux and consisted on 4 villagers and 4 smallholders. Crafton Manor, which had been held by Blacheman, a man of Earl Tostig before the Conquest, was held by the monks of St Nicolas in 1086 (Morris, 1978, 145d, 146b; VCH, 1969, 452).

The main area of the medieval village, a well-preserved example of a medieval 'gridded cluster settlement' (CAS1009), lies southeast of the present hamlet and east of the road to Crafton Stud. Its primary elements appear to be a row of rectilinear closes aligned southwest to northeast continuing the alignment of the adjacent open field ridge and furrow and fronting on to a lane or narrow green a little way to the west of the present road to Crafton Stud. These closes seem to have been laid out within a pre-existing pattern of open field furlongs, suggesting that the settlement's origins post-date the laying out of the open fields, which is likely to have occurred in the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> centuries. Peasant houses would have fronted on to the old lane, and indeed cottages continued to do so up until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. To the east of the road to Crafton Stud are several fields of well-preserved ridge and furrow, which formed part of the open fields associated with the hamlet and are a valuable part of their setting. North of the present hamlet are further fields of ridge and furrow and a north-south aligned row of possible building platform earthworks.

About 500m southwest of the proposed development is the site of a chapel dedicated to the Holy Trinity, last recorded in 1388 (CASS2237). Helsthorpe Farm is the only remaining building in the area, but the Medieval Village Research Group maintain that Helsthorpe (formerly *Helpesthorp* or *Elstrop*) was 'evidently a substantial hamlet in medieval times' (Jenkins 1971).

In the post-medieval period the hamlet was held by the Theed family, who occupied a mansion here in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Extensive earthworks, thought to be the remains of the mansion built by John Theed c.1680, as well as the possible location for one of the medieval manors, lie at the northern end of the row, just to the south of the present hamlet. Theed's mansion was pulled down in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the earthworks are all that remain (CASS1009). The site is surrounded by ridge and furrow and on the west side tofts seem to have expanded over former arable land (Lewis *et al* 2001, 107, fig 44).

Mentmore Towers (CASS1067) is situated c.1km to the east of the proposed development site. The house was built 1852-54 by Sir Joseph Paxton and G.H. Stokes for Baron Mayer Amschel De Rothschild. It is currently a Grade I listed building. Many of the associated outbuildings are also listed.

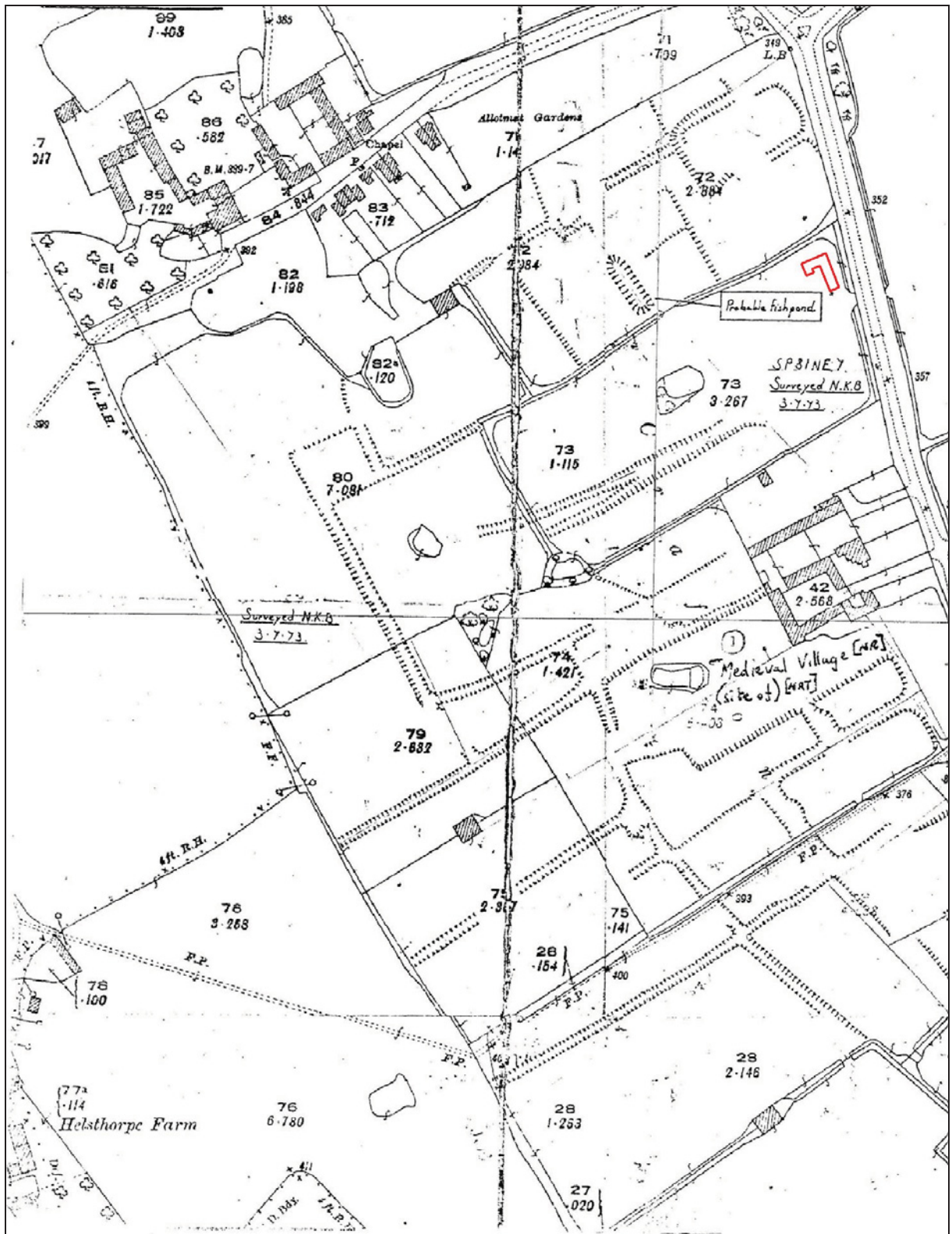


Figure 4: Plan of the earthworks (not to scale)

## 4 Results

- 4.1 Three site visits were made between 25<sup>th</sup> July and 4<sup>th</sup> August 2005 to monitor the ground reduction, which encompassed an area measuring approximately 12 × 18m (max). The depth of the reduction varied from *c.*100mm in the north-east corner of the site to *c.*450mm at the south. Where revealed, the subsoil was a greyish brown clay.
- 4.2 A single modern land drain, brick fragments and miscellaneous animal bones were discovered. No finds were retained.

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The earthworks survey suggests that the site lies within an area of relatively little archaeological activity. The watching brief indicates that this may well be the case. However, it is also possible that any surviving archaeological remains lie at a deeper level than that achieved by the ground reduction, and would thus remain undisturbed by the present building programme.
- 5.2 *Confidence Rating*

The watching brief was undertaken in generally acceptable weather conditions. Full co-operation was received from the contractors and a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the watching brief.



**Plate 1:** North eastern end of site looking north



**Plate 3:** South-east end of site, looking west



**Plate 6:** North west end of site, looking west

## **6. Acknowledgements**

The writer is grateful to Andrew Whitehouse for commissioning the watching brief, Mr. David Radford of Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service for curatorial monitoring and to the staff of the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

The fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by David Fell MA MIFA and Nicholas Crank BA AIFA. This report was prepared by Karin Semmelmann MA PIFA and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

## **7. Archive**

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site Monitoring Sheets
6. Finds records
7. Site record drawings
8. List of photographs
9. B/W prints & negatives
10. Original specialist reports and supporting information
11. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum. The accession number is 2005.71 06.185.

## 8. References


### *Standards & Specifications*

- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. English Heritage (London).
- EH 2002 *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation*. English Heritage (London).
- Ferguson L.M. & Murray D.M. 1997 *Archaeological Documentary Archives: Preparation, Curation and Storage*. Institute of Field Archaeologists' Paper 1 (Manchester).
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Radford, D. 2005. *2 Crafton, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire; a brief for an archaeological watching brief* BCAS
- Rouse, C. 2005 *2 Crafton, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire; an archaeological watching brief* ASC document, ref. 694/MTC/1.

### *Secondary Sources*

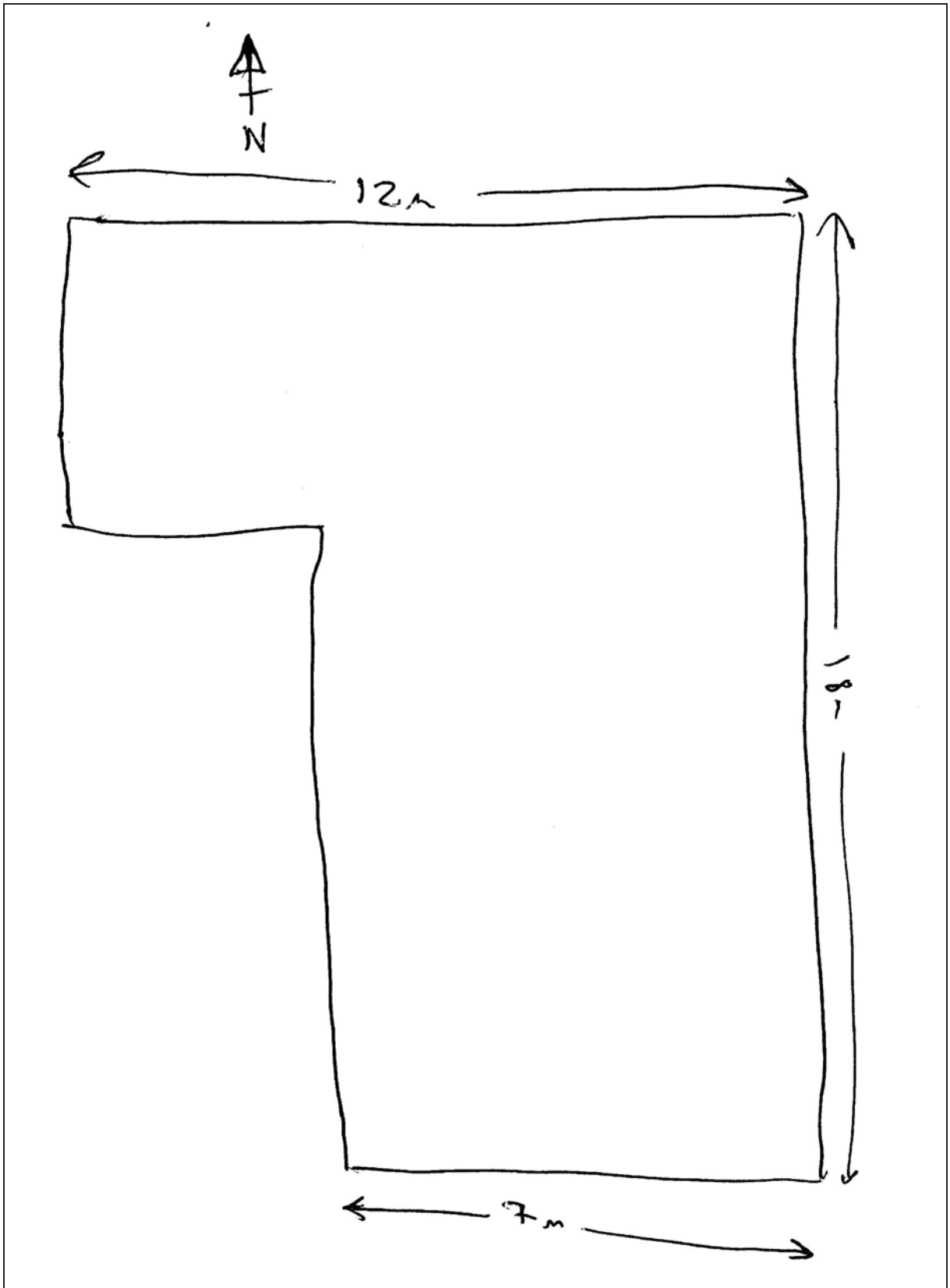
- Jenkins, J.G. 1971 *Medieval Village Research Group index*. 1971.
- Lewis, C., Mitchell-Fox, P. & Dyer, C. 2001. *Village, hamlet and field : changing medieval settlements in central England* Windgather (Macclesfield)
- Morris, J. 1978 *The Domesday Book: Buckinghamshire*. Phillimore (Chichester).
- Page, W. (ed) 1908 *Victoria County History: Buckinghamshire*. Dawsons of Pall Mall (London)
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

### Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets


 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>			
Project: <b>2 CRAFTON, MENTMORE</b>		Project No/Code: <b>694 / MTC</b>		Sheet: <b>1 of</b>	
		Date of visit: <b>25/07/05</b>			
Client/Developer <b>Mrs WHITEHOUSE</b>					
Contact:			Phone:		
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: <b>10:30</b>		Finish:	
Completed by: <b>DF</b>					
Development Type:					
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarrying	Pipelines
					Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <b>Dull &amp; slight drizzle.</b>					
Observations: Monitoring of soil stripping for new stables. Work to take place in 2 stages i) Several topsoil strip (today) ii) Excavation of shallow footings / max 250mm below ground surface - (later date)					
Continuous presence during excavation of topsoil. Top and topsoil distinct from lighter coloured & clayey subsoil.					
S.W. side excavated to depth of c. 450mm. This penetrated marginally into the subsoil					
NE side was shallower - approx 10cm and only cut into topsoil.					
Other than obviously modern ceramic field drain frags & clay pipe stems (not retained) no archaeological features or artefacts observed.					
Comments: <b>One further visit required to monitor footings</b>					


For sketch plan, use reverse

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 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>				
Project: <b>2 CRAFTON, MENTMORE</b>		Project No/Code: <b>6941 MTC</b>		Sheet: <b>2 of</b>		
		Date of visit:				
Client/Developer: <b>MR &amp; MRS WHITEHOUSE</b>						
Contact: <b>MR A. WHITEHOUSE</b>				Phone:		
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: <b>9:30</b>		Finish: <b>2:30</b>		
Completed by: <b>D Fell</b>						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify): <b>soil strip</b>
Site & weather conditions: <b>hot and sunny,</b>						
Observations:						
<p>Monitor excavation of an area for concrete and hard standing on south and west sides of the new stable building.</p> <p>Earth being stripped with a smooth bucket to create a flat clean surface for concrete and hard standing.</p> <p><del>Soil</del> Soil stripped to a depth of 17-20cm - not always penetrating below the topsoil. Where topsoil is removed greyish brown subsoil exposed below.</p> <p>No significant archaeological features or artefacts observed.</p> <p>Occasional misc animal bone &amp; modern debris in topsoil, not retained.</p>						
Comments: <b>further visit required on Wed 3rd Aug</b>						
For sketch plan, use reverse						
©ASC, 2003						

 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>	
Project: <b>2 Crafton, Mentmore, Bucks.</b>		Project No/Code: <b>6941 MTC</b>	Sheet: <b>3 of</b>
Client/Developer: <b>Mrs. Whitehouse</b>		Date of visit: <b>4/8/05</b>	
Contact: <b>n n</b>		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <b>10.15</b>	Finish: <b>13.00</b>	
Completed by: <b>NAC</b>			
Development Type:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Footings	<input type="checkbox"/> Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Roads	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Levelling
		<input type="checkbox"/> Quarrying	<input type="checkbox"/> Pipelines
Other (specify):			
Site & weather conditions: <b>Cloudy, Warm.</b>			
Observations:			
<p>                     STRIPPING OF FINAL c.5m of xc.10m                      of area of new stables.                      STRIP VERY SHALLOW 0.15 - 0.2m.                      NOT DEEP ENOUGH TO REVEAL NATURAL CLAY.                      JUST MIXED CLAYEY TOPSOIL BENEATH TURF.                      SOME MODERN BRICK FRAGS, GRAVEL AND SINGLE                      MODERN FIELD DRAIN REVEALED. NO FINDS                      RECOVERED OR RETAINED. NO MORE STRIPPING                      OR EXCAVATION TO TAKE PLACE - REMAINDER                      WILL BE 'BUILT UP'.                 </p> <p>                     No ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES REVEALED                      STRIP TOO SHALLOW.                 </p>			
Comments: <b>No further visits necessary.</b>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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