Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
LAND TO THE REAR OF
76 WESTON ROAD
ASTON CLINTON
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

on behalf of Kavanagh Homes

Nigel Wilson HND AIFA

August 2005

ASC: 705/ACW/2

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Site Data

ASC site code:	ACW	*Project no:*	705
County:	Buckinghamshire		
Village/Town:	Aston Clinton		
Civil Parish:	Aston Clinton		
NGR (to 8 figs):	SP 8717 1216		
Extent of site:	*c*.60m x *c*.80m		
Present land use:	Vehicle storage/ overgrown land		
Planning proposal:	Residential development		
Local Planning Authority:	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
Planning application ref/date:	Not known		
Date of fieldwork	25/7/2005		
Client:	*Kavanagh Homes* Church House Church Square Leighton Buzzard LU7 1AE		
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Internal Quality Check

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Edited/Checked By:		*Date:*	
Revisions:		*Date:*	
Edited/Checked By:		*Date:*	

CONTENTS

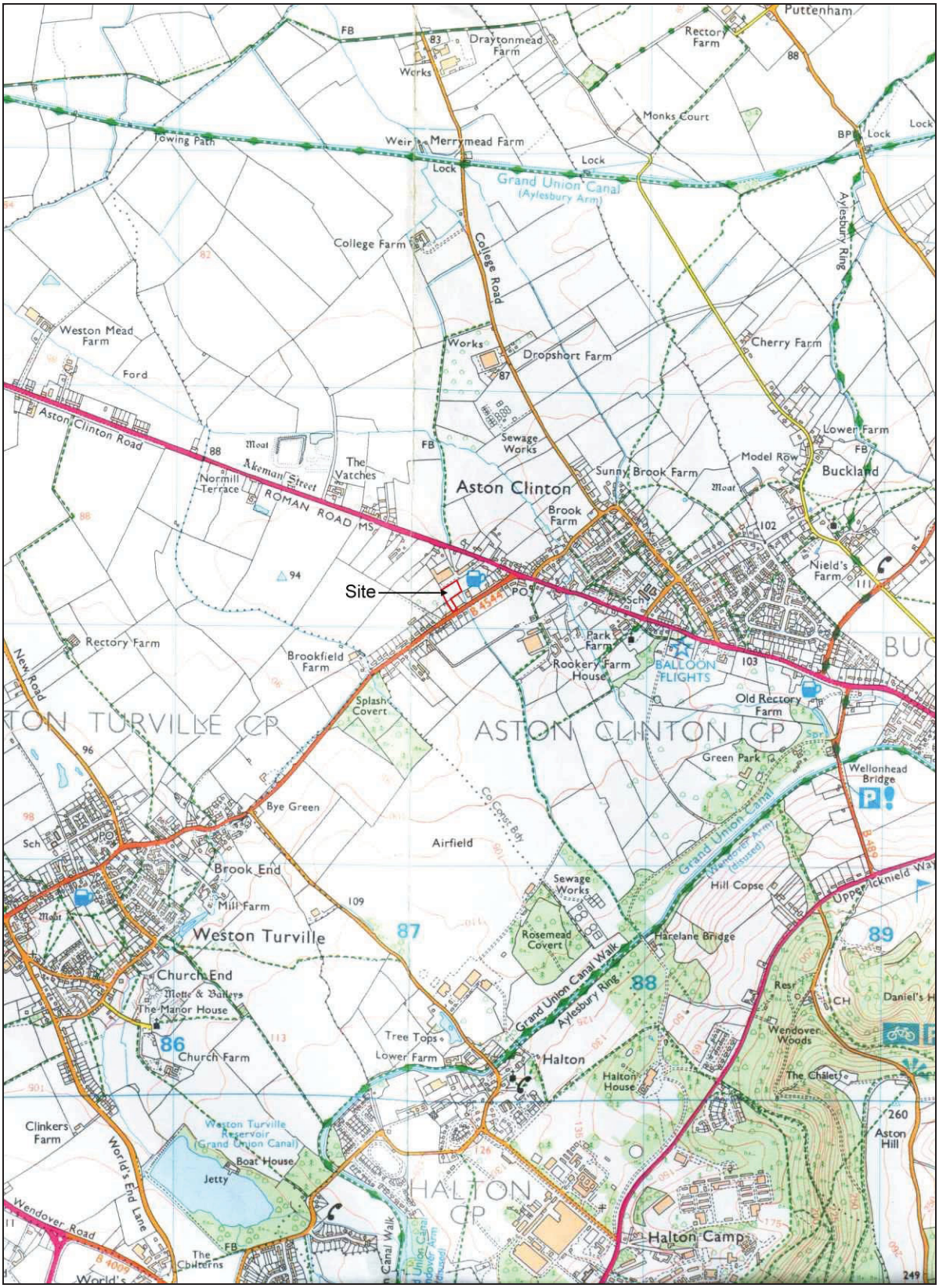


Figure 1: General location *(scale 1:25,000)*

Summary

During July 2005, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land to the rear of 76 Weston Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire. The work was required as a predetermination condition on a planning application to construct housing. Eight evaluation trenches were excavated. No archaeological features were identified, other than a series of narrow undated chalk filled drains

1 Introduction

1.1 In July 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation on land to the rear of 76 Weston Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire. SITE (NGR SP 8717 1216: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by *Kavanagh Homes*, 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 Archaeological Service.*

1.2 *Planning Background*

This predetermination evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of housing.

1.3 *Location*

The site is located on the northern side of Weston Road (the B 4544), to the west of the core of Aston Clinton. The area is currently overgrown, and has been used as a temporary storage site for cars and caravans.

1.3.2 *Services, Buildings, Access, Etc*

Access to the site is from Weston Road, along a tarmac track. Much of the site was covered with small scrubby trees and other vegetation especially around the periphery. There is a wooden shed on the site, as well as the remains of dismantled caravans and cars. .

1.3.3 *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*.95m AOD.

Figure 2: Site plan *(scale 1:1250)*

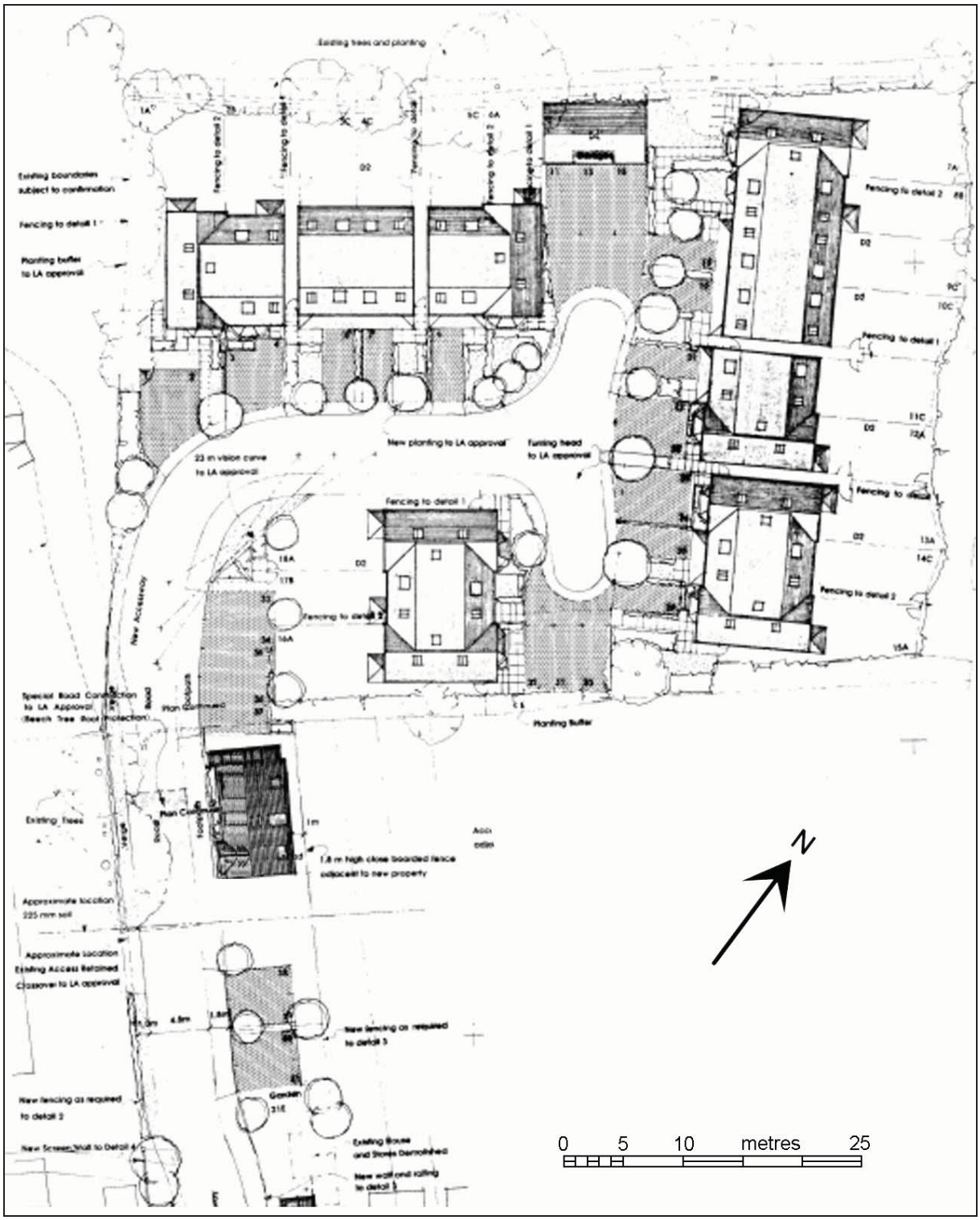


Figure 3: Development proposal *(scale 1:500)*

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

As described in the brief (Section 6), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To identify and record any significant archaeological remains revealed by the groundworks, paying particular regard to the potential for Iron Age, Roman and medieval deposits

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:

- The excavation of 120m of trial trenching on the footprint of the new buildings and access.

2.4 *Constraints*

Due to the overgrown nature of the site and the profusion of scrap cars the trench layout was revised on site with the agreement of the archaeological advisor.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 The proposed development site lies in an area of significant archaeological importance. The area was of considerable significance during the prehistoric periods a track, now known as the *Icknield Way*, runs *c*.1km to the southeast of the site (CASS4146).

3.2 The area surrounding Aston Clinton was occupied during the Iron Age, and a possible high status site was located *c*.400m to the west of the proposed development. An amphora containing burnt material, and associated pottery suggest a 'Welwyn' type burial of the Belgic period (CASS0043/5725). During the construction of the Aston Clinton Bypass, evidence for early Iron Age activity was uncovered at the Woodlands roundabout (CASS8402) *c*.1km west of the proposed development, where of a series of pits, a ditch and two structures were found. The structures were interpreted as possibly being associated with burial rites, as a human skull was found in a nearby pit. In addition to this, late Iron Age pottery has been discovered to the east of the site, towards the centre of Aston Clinton.

3.3 One of the most significant archaeological features in the area is *Akeman Street* (CAS 1626). This was a Roman road linking Verulamium (St Albans) with *Corinium* (Cirencester). It was constructed early in the Roman period and ran to the north of the site, along the course of the modern Aylesbury Road. In addition to this, Roman pottery has been discovered *c*.500m to the north west of the development site, at Vatches Farm (CASS2957).

3.4 A *Scheduled Ancient Monument* (SAM) is situated *c*.800m to the north west of the development site. It comprises a medieval moated site and a related group of fishponds (CASS0129) and is thought to be the remains of the early 13th century Vatche's Manor. Another moat, or possible stream diversion of medieval or post-medieval date is recorded *c*.500m to the north east of the site, at the Rose and Crown Inn (CASS0131).

3.5 The village of Aston Clinton probably originated during the Saxon period. It is recorded in the Domesday survey where it was referred to as *Estone*. The land was held by *Edward of Salisbury* and was worth £18 at the time of the survey (1086), but was worth £20 before the conquest (TRE, or 'in the time of King Edward') (Williams & Martin, 1992, 413).

3.6 The site is situated to the west of the centre of Aston Clinton. The village developed around the church of St Michael, which dates from the 13th century (Pevsner & Williamson 2000, 145). During the post-medieval period the village developed along the London Road and from the 19th century enjoyed the patronage of the Rothschild family. The Rothschild mansion was situated east of the village and several of the main buildings in the village were gifts of the Rothschild family.

3.7 There are several listed buildings within Aston Clinton. Located *c*.250m to the north west of the development site at 62 Aylesbury Road is a Grade II listed

17th century timber framed cottage (CASS1227). To the north west of the development site, *c*.750m away, is a Grade II listed 18th century barn (CASS1228). 32 London Road, also known as Moat Cottage, is located *c*.400m to the north east of the site, and is a Grade II listed 17th century timber framed house (CASS1238). Another Grade II listed 17th century timber framed house is located *c*.450m to the east of the development site, at 19 London Road (CASS1243). Rookery Park House is located *c*.550m to the east of the site, and is a Grade II listed country house, the majority of which dates to the 18th century, apart from the 17th century north wing (CASS1244). 21 London Road, also *c*.450m to the east of the site, is an 18th century Grade II listed house (CASS1245).

3.8 A recent desk based assessment carried out by Wessex Archaeology made reference to a World War II plane crash site at SP 87 12. However, without a more accurate grid reference, it is not possible to tell whether the development site was likely to have been affected by the crash.

4 Results

4.1 Eight trenches designated Trenches 1 –8 were excavated across the site (Fig 4 & Appendix 1). Each trench was accurately located using a *Thales* Mobile Mapper Pro GPS.

4.2 A similar soil profile was observed in each trench. The upper 250mm comprised dark topsoil covered by rough grass. Below the topsoil dirty natural clays were recoded ranging in colour from yellowish grey to grey. These clays were 50 – 450mm thick. The natural comprised greyish blue clay. A more detailed description of the strata is included in Appendix 1.

4.3 The only features identified were a number of narrow (150mm wide) chalk filled drains, cut into the natural deposits. Though no cut could be seen through the upper clay deposits it is likely that these drains were cut from the surface. Several sectional ceramic pipe drains were also recorded cut into the natural.

4.4 Only modern artefacts were recovered from the trenches.

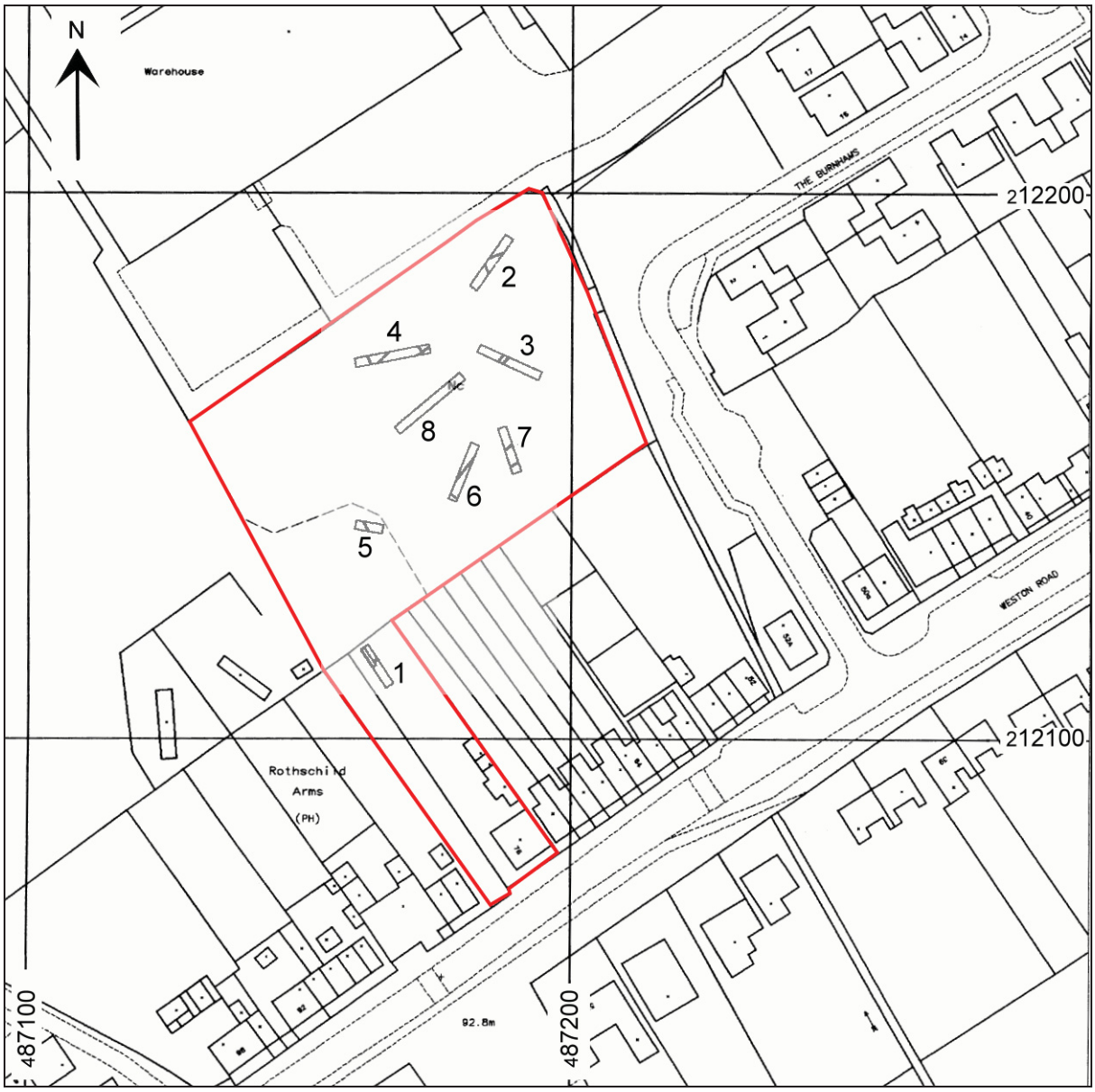


Figure 4: Trench layout plan *(Scale 1:1250)*

5. Conclusions

5.1 Previous work in and around Aston Clinton has produced occupational evidence from a number of periods, most notably Iron Age, Roman and Medieval. The first documentary evidence relating to Aston Clinton is a mention in the Domesday Survey of the late 11th century. By this time the village seems to have been well established. During the medieval period the village developed with the construction of the church and at least two moated sites.

5.2 The evaluation of the site to the rear of 76 Weston Road has enabled the archaeological potential of a significant parcel of land within Aston Clinton to be examined. The results of the trenching clearly show that there is no significant archaeology on the site. It is however possible that small isolated features may survive in untrenched parts of the site.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Keith Fisher of Kavanagh Homes for commissioning the evaluation. We would also like to thank David Radford for preparing the brief and monitoring the project on behalf of Aylesbury Vale District Council. The historical and archaeological background was researched by Calli Rouse assisted by Julia Wise the Buckinghamshire County Council SMR Officer. The project was managed by Bob Zeepvat BA, MIFA, and the fieldwork was undertaken by Nigel Wilson HND AIFA and Nick Crank BSc AIFA. M O'Brians of Luton supplied the JCB and driver.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with The Buckinghamshire County Museum. Accession number 2005.78 06.184.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

IFA 2000 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct.*

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 *Brief for an archaeological excavation at land to rear of 76 Weston Road, Aston Clinton.* (Bucks County Council)

Rouse C 2005 *Land to the rear of 76 Weston Road, Aston Clinton.* Project Design for Archaeological Excavation. (ASC Ltd) Document Ref: 705/ACW/1r

Secondary Sources

Pevsner N & Williamson E 2000. *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire.* Penguin

Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Williams, A & Martin, G.H. 1992. *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation.* (Penguin). 413

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

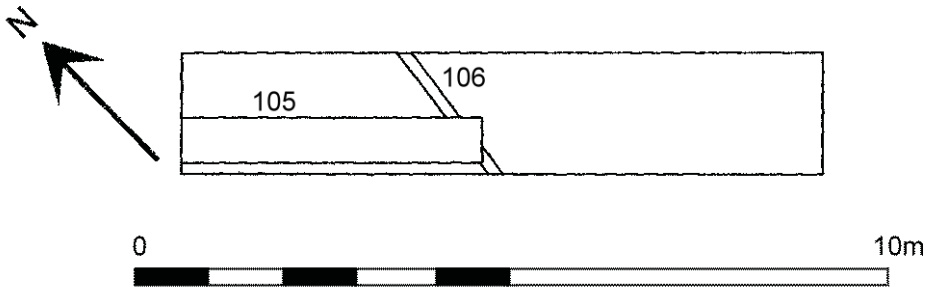
Trench 1

Max Dimensions					
Length	8.5	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.85

NGR Co-ordinates			
NNW	SP 87162 12116	**SSE**	SP 87166 12109

Orientation	NNW - SSE
Reason for Trench	General pattern of trenching

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
100	Layer	Dark topsoil	1600	200	0-200
102	Layer	Chalk fragments, runs out at 5.4m from SSE end of the trench	1600	150	200-350
103	Layer	Yellowish grey clay, frequent charcoal continues for full length of the trench	1600	150	350-500
104		Yellowish grey clay, no charcoal	1600	300	500-800
105	Cut	Modern machine cut trench	600	>800	0-
106	Cut	Chalk filled drain	150	150	700-850



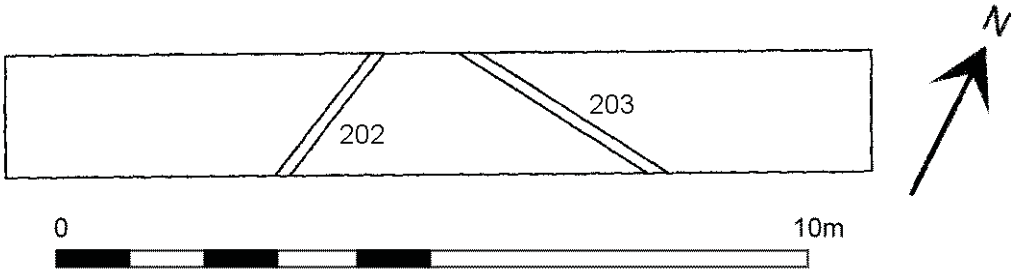
Trench 2

Max Dimensions					
Length	11.4	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.35

NGR Co-ordinates			
SSW	SP 87182 12182	**NNE**	SP 87189 12191

Orientation	SSW - NNE
Reason for Trench	General pattern of trenching

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
200	Layer	Dark topsoil	1600	250	0-250
201	Layer	Grey clay	1600	100	250-350
202	Cut	Drain, chalk filled	150	150	350-500
203	Cut	Drain, chalk filled	150	150	350-500

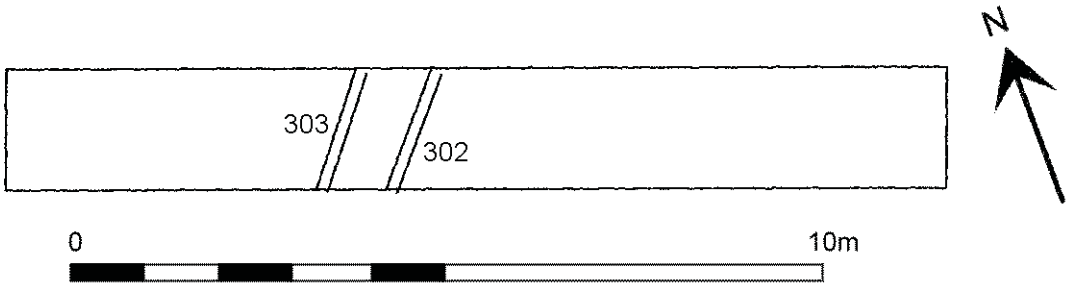


Trench 3

Max Dimensions					
Length	14.0	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.4

NGR Co-ordinates			
NW	SP 87183 12171	**SE**	SP 87194 12166
Orientation		NW –SE	
Reason for Trench		General pattern of trenching	

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
300	Layer	Dark topsoil	1600	200	0-200
301	Layer	Yellowish grey clay	1600	200	200-400
302	Cut	Drain, chalk filled	150	150	400-550
303	Cut	Drain, sectional ceramic pipe	150	150	400-550



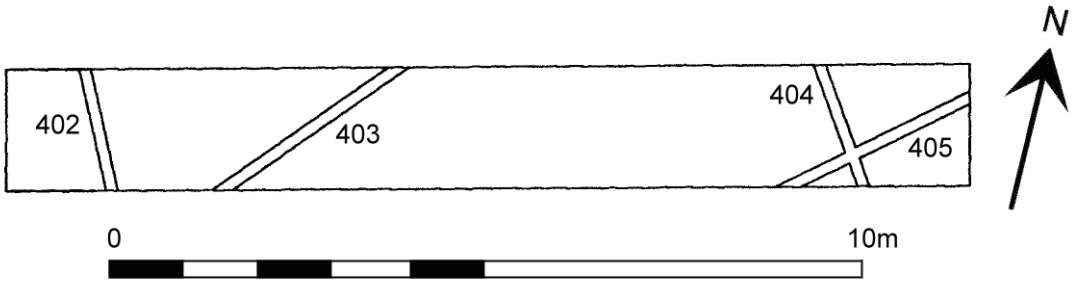
Trench 4

Max Dimensions					
Length	12.4	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.55

NGR Co-ordinates			
W	SP 87174 12171	**E**	SP 87160 12168

Orientation	W – E
Reason for Trench	General pattern of trenching

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
400	Layer	Dark topsoil	1600	250	0-250
401	Layer	Greyish yellow clay	1600	300	250-550
402	Cut	Drain, chalk filled	150	150	550-700
403	Cut	Drain, sectional ceramic pipe	150	150	550-700
404	Cut	Drain, chalk filled	150	150	550-700
405	Cut	Drain, chalk filled	150	150	550-700



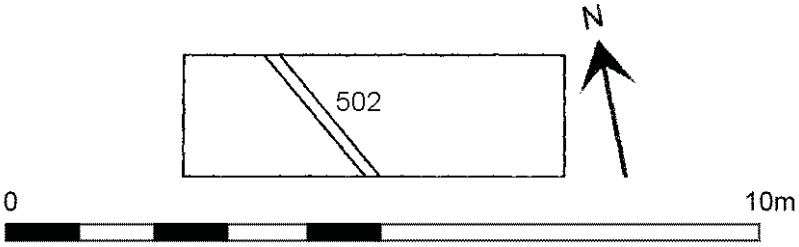
Trench 5

Max Dimensions					
Length	5.0	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.7

NGR Co-ordinates			
W	SP 87160 12139	**E**	SP 87165 12138

Orientation	W– E
Reason for Trench	General pattern of trenching

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
500	Layer	Dark topsoil	1600	250	0-250
501	Layer	Grey clay at W end, yellow at E	1600	450	250-700
502	Cut	Drain, chalk filled	150	150	700-850



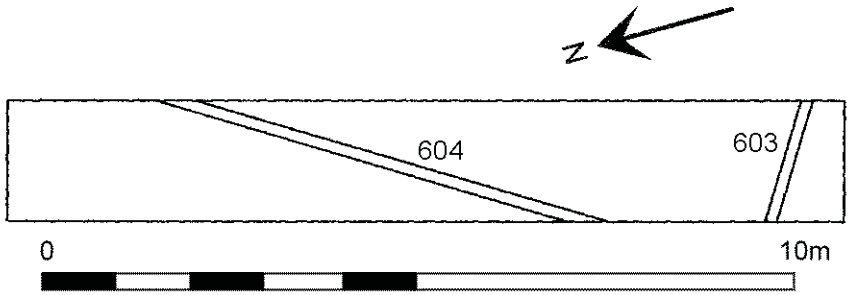
Trench 6

Max Dimensions					
Length	11.0	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.7

NGR Co-ordinates			
NE	SP 87182 12153	**SW**	SP 87178 12143

Orientation	NE - SW
Reason for Trench	General pattern of trenching

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
600	Layer	Dark topsoil some rubble	1600	250	0-250
601	Layer	Dark topsoil	1600	150	250-400
602	Layer	Yellowish clay	1600	300	400-700
603	Cut	Drain, chalk filled	150	150	700-850
604	Cut	Drain, chalk filled	150	150	700-850



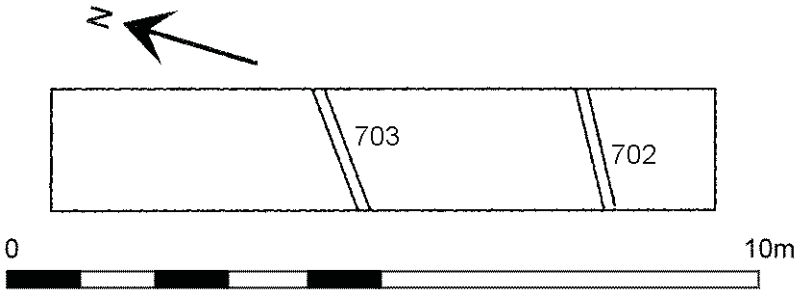
Trench 7

Max Dimensions					
Length	8.7	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.6

NGR Co-ordinates			
NW	SP 87187 12156	**SE**	SP 87190 12148

Orientation	NW - SE
Reason for Trench	General pattern of trenching

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
700	Layer	Dark topsoil	1600	250	0-250
701	Layer	Grey Clay	1600	350	250-600
702	Cut	Drain, chalk filled	150	150	600-750
703	Cut	Drain, sectional ceramic pipe	150	150	600-750



Trench 8

Max Dimensions					
Length		**Width**		**Depth**	

NGR Co-ordinates			
ENE	SP 87180 12166	**WSW**	87168 12156

Orientation	ENE – WSW
Reason for Trench	General pattern of trenching

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
800	Layer	Dark topsoil	1600	200	0-200
801	Layer	Grey clay	1600	50	200-250