

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:  
GARDEN COTTAGE AND STUD COTTAGE  
CRAFTON  
MENTMORE  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

*on behalf of Derek Mills*



**Calli Rouse BA**

**November 2005**

**ASC: 735/CSF/2**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	CSF	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	735
<i>Event No:</i>	N/a	<i>Accession No:</i>	2005.141
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Crafton		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Mentmore		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 8936 1916 and SP 8931 1922		
<i>Present use:</i>	Garden		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Erection of two detached dwellings		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	04/0344/APP and 04/2055/APP		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	21/11/2005		
<i>Client:</i>	Derek Mills Crafton Stud Farm Crafton Mentmore LU7 0QJ		
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## Internal Quality Check

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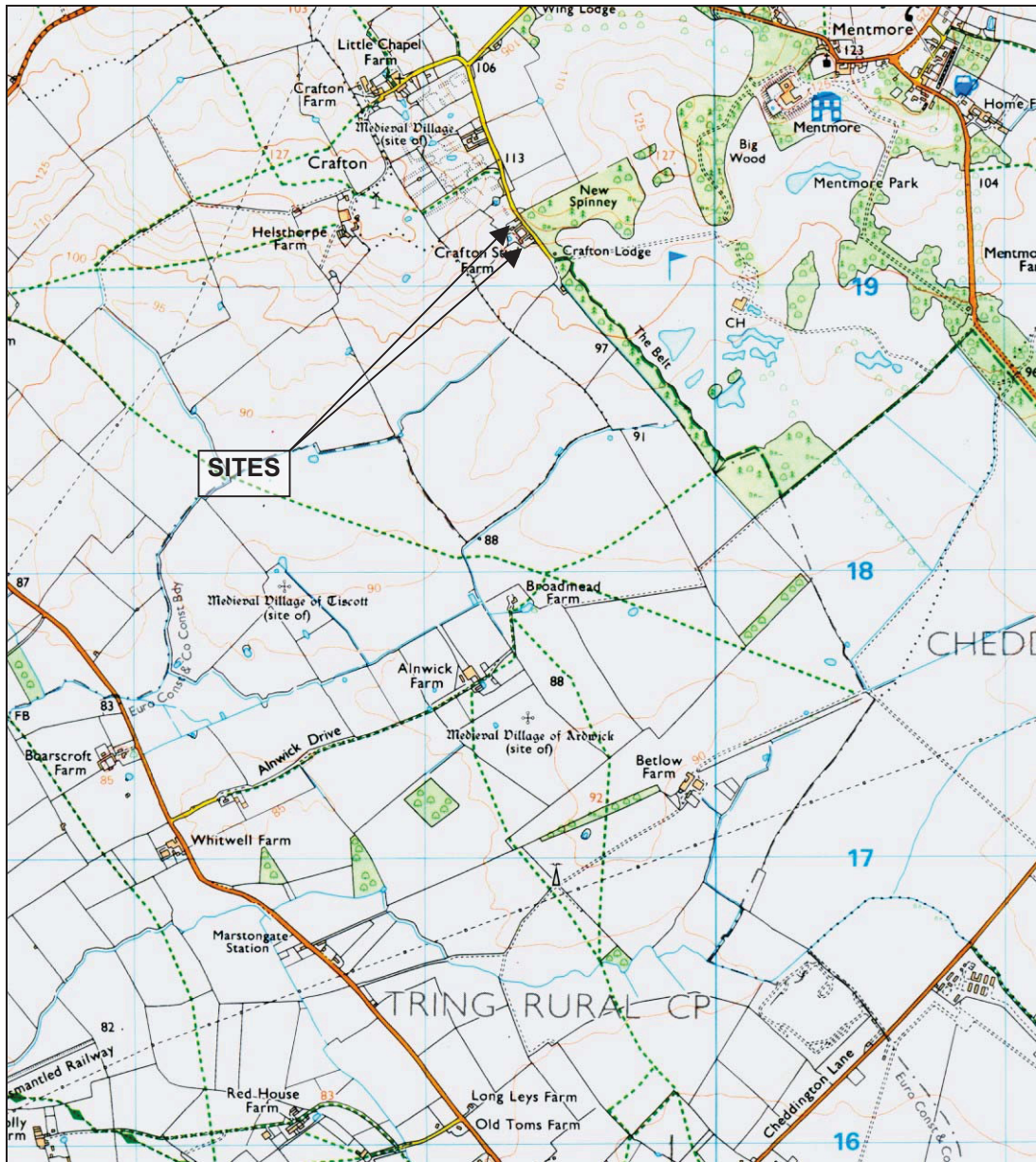


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*On November 21<sup>st</sup> 2005 an evaluation was carried out on two sites adjacent to Crafton Stud Farm, Crafton, Buckinghamshire. The work was required on the Garden Cottage site in advance of the construction of a new house on the site, while the work at the Stud Cottage site was required following a breach of a previous archaeological condition. The trenches at Garden Cottage revealed a disturbed layer of topsoil on top of the natural clay. At Stud Cottage, the evaluation trench revealed a modern wall footing, below very disturbed topsoil and subsoil. No archaeological finds or features were observed at either site.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In November 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out an evaluation at Garden Cottage and Stud Cottage, Crafton, Mentmore (NGR SP 8936 1916 and SP 8931 1922: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Derek Mills, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse, 2005), and 2 separate briefs (Radford, 2005a & Radford 2005b) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Aylesbury Vale District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service*. The relevant planning application references are 04/0344/APP and 04/2055/APP.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

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

### 1.3 *Location*

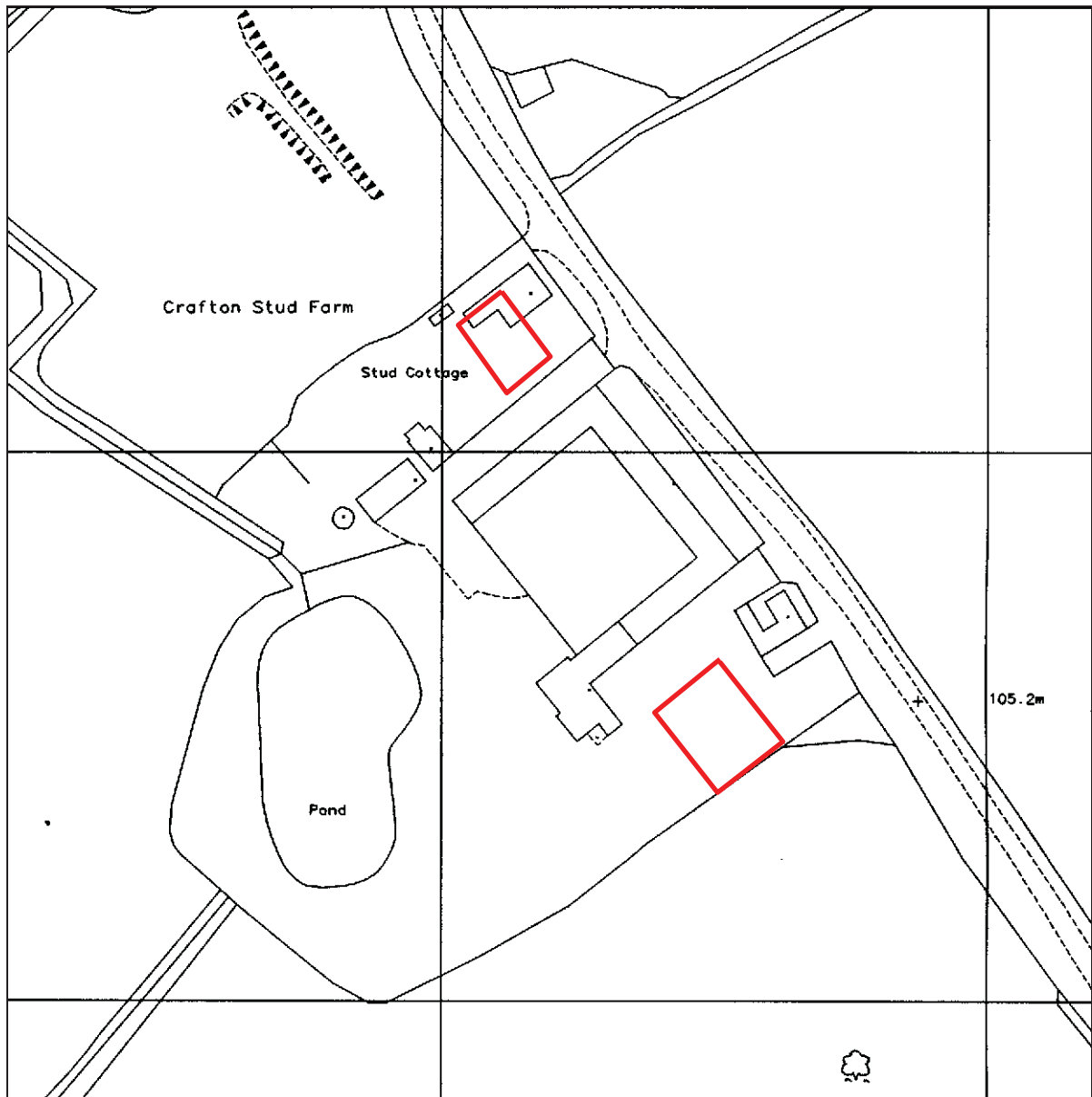
The site of the proposed development is located *c.*650m to the southeast of the centre of Crafton village (Fig. 1), on the eastern edge of the earthworks discussed below (Section 3.3).

### 1.4 *Description*

Access to both sites is from Lower Crafton Lane, which runs to the east of the sites (Fig. 2). Both sites were open grass covered areas before the onset of development or trenching.

### 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)

## 2 Aims & Methods

### 2.1 Aims

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

- To establish the presence/absence of Saxon/medieval/post medieval occupation on this site and, if present, determine the date and character of that occupation with particular reference to the origins of Crafton hamlet and any planned layout.

### 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:

- In the case of Garden Cottage, the excavation of 20m of trial trenching targeted on the footprint of the proposed building.
- In the case of Stud Cottage, the excavation of 10m of trial trenching as close to the house footprint as practical.

### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

#### 3.1 Prehistoric - Roman *(before 600BC-c.AD450)*

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

#### 3.2 Saxon - Medieval *(c.450-1500)*

The village of Crafton is likely to have its origins in the Saxon period. It is mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Survey as being divided equally between the Bishop of Lisieux and the monks of Saint Nicholas (Morris, 1978). About 500m west of the proposed development site, 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).

#### 3.3 Post-Medieval - Modern *(1500-present)*

Extensive earthworks are recorded at Crafton, and are said to be the remains of the Theed family mansion, built by John Theed, c.1680. The building itself was pulled down in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the earthworks are all that remain (CASS1009). The site of the proposed development is located in a part of the area seemingly devoid of earthworks.

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.



## 4 Results

- 4.1 The evaluation comprised a total of three trenches. Trenches 1 and 2 were situated within the footprint of Garden Cottage (Fig. 3, Plate 1), the southernmost area of development, while Trench 3 was positioned to the west of the Stud Cottage development (Fig. 4, Plate 2).
- 4.2 A similar soil profile was observed in Trenches 1 and 2 (Plates 3 & 4). The topsoil in both trenches consisted of a dark, disturbed layer with modern burning and dumping layers. In both trenches, the topsoil comes straight down onto the natural soil, which comprises a grey, stoneless, fine silty clay. In Trench 1, the topsoil was *c.*0.4m deep, while in Trench 2 the topsoil was a 0.6m deep at its maximum depth. Trench 3 revealed a 0.4m deep layer of redeposited clay over the topsoil (Plate 5). The topsoil itself consisted of a disturbed black layer, full of roots and modern debris, *c.*0.15m deep. Below this was a layer of subsoil, *c.*0.45m deep, which consisted of a disturbed, dark brown horizon with pockets of glass, tile and building debris. The natural soil comprised similar clay to that found in Trenches 1 and 2, but with stone inclusions.
- 4.3 No archaeological finds or features were observed in Trench 1. Trench 2 contained a land drain running at right angles to the trench, *c.*7m from the eastern edge of the trench, but no other archaeological finds or features. Trench 3 revealed a wall footing at the halfway point of the trench, again running at right angles to the trench. The footing was made of unfroged bricks, and was *c.*0.3m wide.



**Plate 1:** Garden Cottage site, view north



**Plate 2:** Stud Cottage site, view south east



**Plate 3:** Trench 1, view north



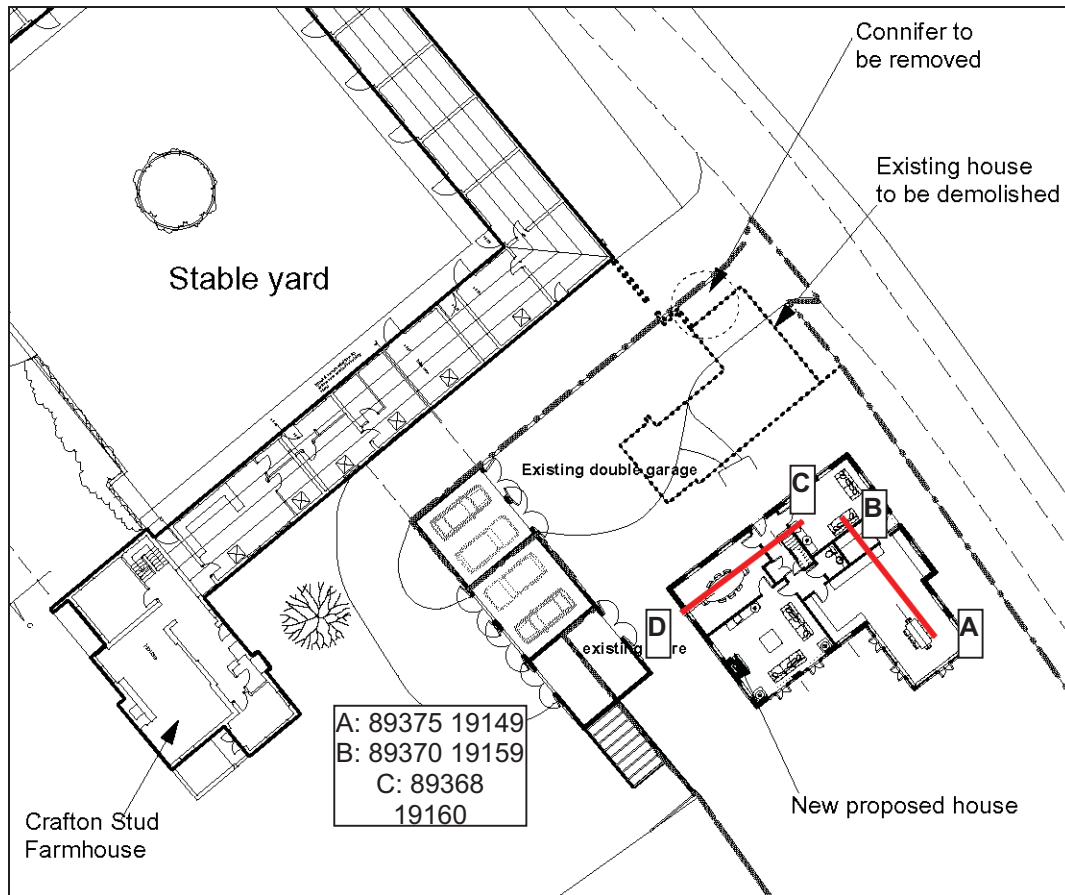
**Plate 4:** Trench 2, view east



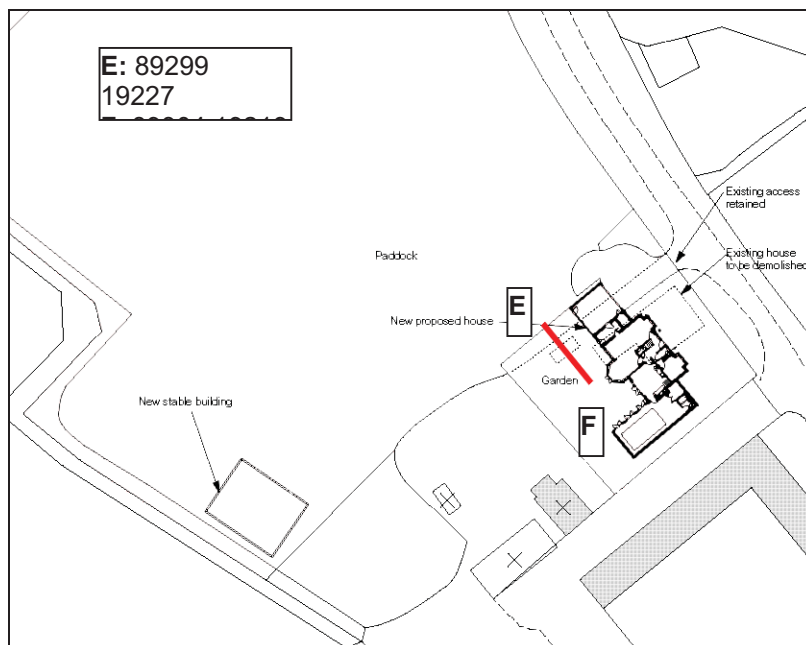
**Plate 5:** Trench 3, view north west



**Plate 6:** Footing trench for Stud Cottage, view east 09/09/05



**Figure 3:** Garden Cottage proposed development with trench locations (scale 1:500)



**Figure 4:** Stud Cottage proposed development with trench locations (scale 1:1000)

## 5. Conclusions

5.1 As mentioned in section 3 above, there is little evidence for occupation in the area before the Saxon and medieval periods. The main focus of the village seems to have always been to the north of the evaluation sites, where it is situated today. The sites themselves are located on the eastern edge of a large area of earthworks, thought to be associated with the Theed family estate. The earthworks do not appear to extend to the east of the sites, but no work appears to have been done to prove this.

5.2 The evaluation at the sites of Stud and Garden Cottages revealed no archaeological finds or features. The wall footing observed in Trench 3 is likely to be associated with the building that formerly occupied the site. As stated above, the sites are located on a blank area within the vicinity of the earthworks, and the results are supportive of that. A previous visit to the site of Stud Cottage on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2005, when the footing trenches were open to a depth of *c.*2m, also revealed a lack of archaeological features (Plate 6).

### 5.3 *Confidence Rating*

Due to the favourable weather conditions and lighting combined with the full cooperation of the client and contractors a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the evaluation.

## 6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Derek Mills 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 the author 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 Dr Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA and the author. Geo. Cheshire 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/slides
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum, accession number 2005.141.

## 8. References

### *Standards & Specifications*

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. English Heritage (London).

IFA 2000a 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 2005a: *Brief for an Archaeological excavation: Stud Cottage, Crafton*. Bucks County Archaeological Service (Planning Appl. 04/2055/APP).

Radford, D 2005a: *Brief for an Archaeological excavation: Garden Cottage, Crafton*. Bucks County Archaeological Service (Planning Appl. 04/0344/APP).

Rouse, C 2005: *Project Design for archaeological evaluation at Garden Cottage and Stud Cottage, Crafton, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire* (ASC:735/CSF/1)


### *Secondary Sources*


Jenkins, J.G. 1971 *Medieval Village Research Group index*. 1971.


Morris, J. 1978 *The Domesday Book: Buckinghamshire*. Phillimore (Chichester).

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

## Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

<b>Trench 1</b>					
		<b>Max Dimensions</b>			
		<b>Length (m)</b>		10	
		<b>Width (m)</b>		1.55	
		<b>Depth (m)</b>		0.4	
		<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>			
		<b>N</b>	89370 19159	<b>S</b>	89375 19149
		<b>Orientation</b>		Northwest-Southeast	
<b>Reason for Trench</b>		General evaluation			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>	<b>Max Width (mm)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (mm)</b>	
111	Layer	Disturbed topsoil layer with modern dumping/burning	1055+	400	
112	Layer	Natural stoneless fine silty clay	1055+	-	

<b>Trench 2</b>					
		<b>Max Dimensions</b>			
		<b>Length (m)</b>		10	
		<b>Width (m)</b>		1.55	
		<b>Depth (m)</b>		0.6 (max)	
		<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>			
		<b>N</b>	89368 19160	<b>S</b>	89360 19154
		<b>Orientation</b>		East-West	
<b>Reason for Trench</b>		General evaluation			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>	<b>Max Width (mm)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (mm)</b>	
211	Layer	Disturbed topsoil layer with modern dumping/burning	1055+	400	
212	Layer	Natural stoneless fine silty clay	1055+	-	

<b>Trench 3</b>					
		Max Dimensions			
		<b>Length (m)</b>		10	
		<b>Width (m)</b>		1.55	
		<b>Depth (m)</b>		1	
		NGR Co-ordinates			
		<b>N</b>	89299 19227	<b>S</b>	89304 19219
		<b>Orientation</b>		Northwest-southeast	
<b>Reason for Trench</b>		Response to breach of condition			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>	<b>Max Width (mm)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (mm)</b>	
311	Layer	Redeposited clay	1055+	400	
312	Layer	Topsoil, full of roots and modern debris	1055+	150	
313	Layer	Disturbed subsoil with pockets of modern building debris	1055+	450	
314	Layer	Natural dark grey stoney clay	1055+	-	