



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING:  
WATLING STREET SERVICE STATION  
LITTLE BRICKHILL  
MILTON KEYNES**

*on behalf of Total Oil UK Ltd*



**Calli Rouse BA**

**December 2005**

**ASC: 744/BWS/1**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	BWS	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	744
<i>Event No:</i>	1034	<i>Accession No:</i>	2006.188
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire (historic county)		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Little Brickhill		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Little Brickhill CP		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 8943 3335		
<i>Present use:</i>	Service station		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Shop extension and jet wash bay		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	05/00817/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Milton Keynes Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	24 <sup>th</sup> & 29 <sup>th</sup> November 2005		
<i>Client:</i>	Total UK Ltd c/o Mr M Sullivan 3 Oakleafe Drive Pontprennau Cardiff CF23 8AL		
<i>Contact name:</i>	P Stanworth – Jennings Design Ltd		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Calli Rouse	<i>Date:</i>	5 <sup>th</sup> December 2005
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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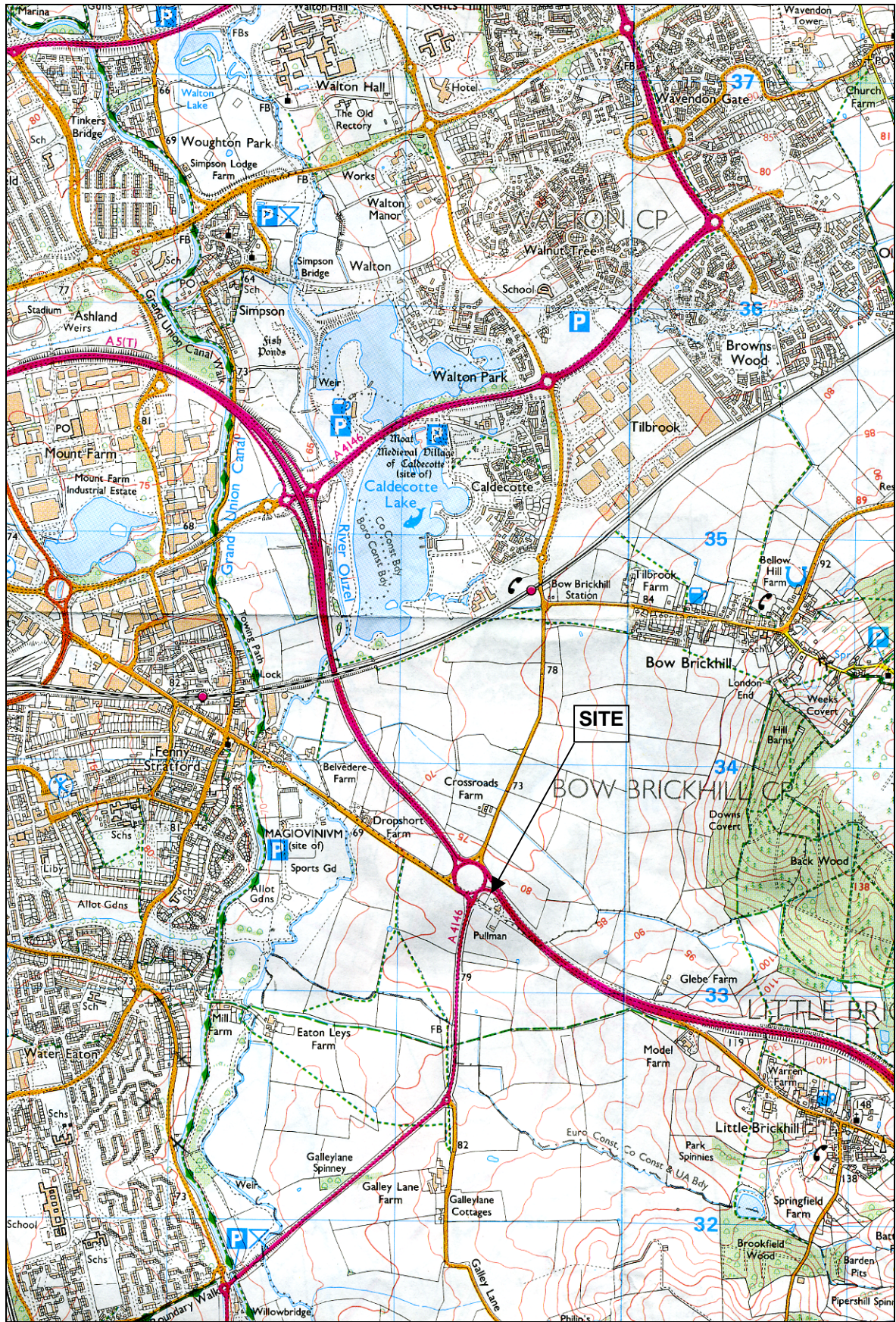


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)



## Summary

*In November 2005 a programme of archaeological recording was undertaken during the excavation of footing trenches for extensions to the Watling Street Service Station, Little Brickhill. Archaeological remains of the Roman period have been recorded in the area but on this occasion no archaeological remains or artefacts were observed. The archaeological impact of the development is considered to be negligible.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In November 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a programme of archaeological recording at Watling Street Service Station, Little Brickhill, Milton Keynes (NGR SP 8943 3335: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mr M Sullivan of Total UK Ltd, and was carried out according to a standard method statement prepared by ASC (Appendix 1) and agreed with the *Archaeological Officer* (MKCAO) for the local planning authority (LPA), *Milton Keynes Council*. The relevant planning application reference is 05/00817/FUL.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This work has been required as a planning condition under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the extension of the existing service station shop floor and the construction of a jet-wash bay.

### 1.3 *Location*

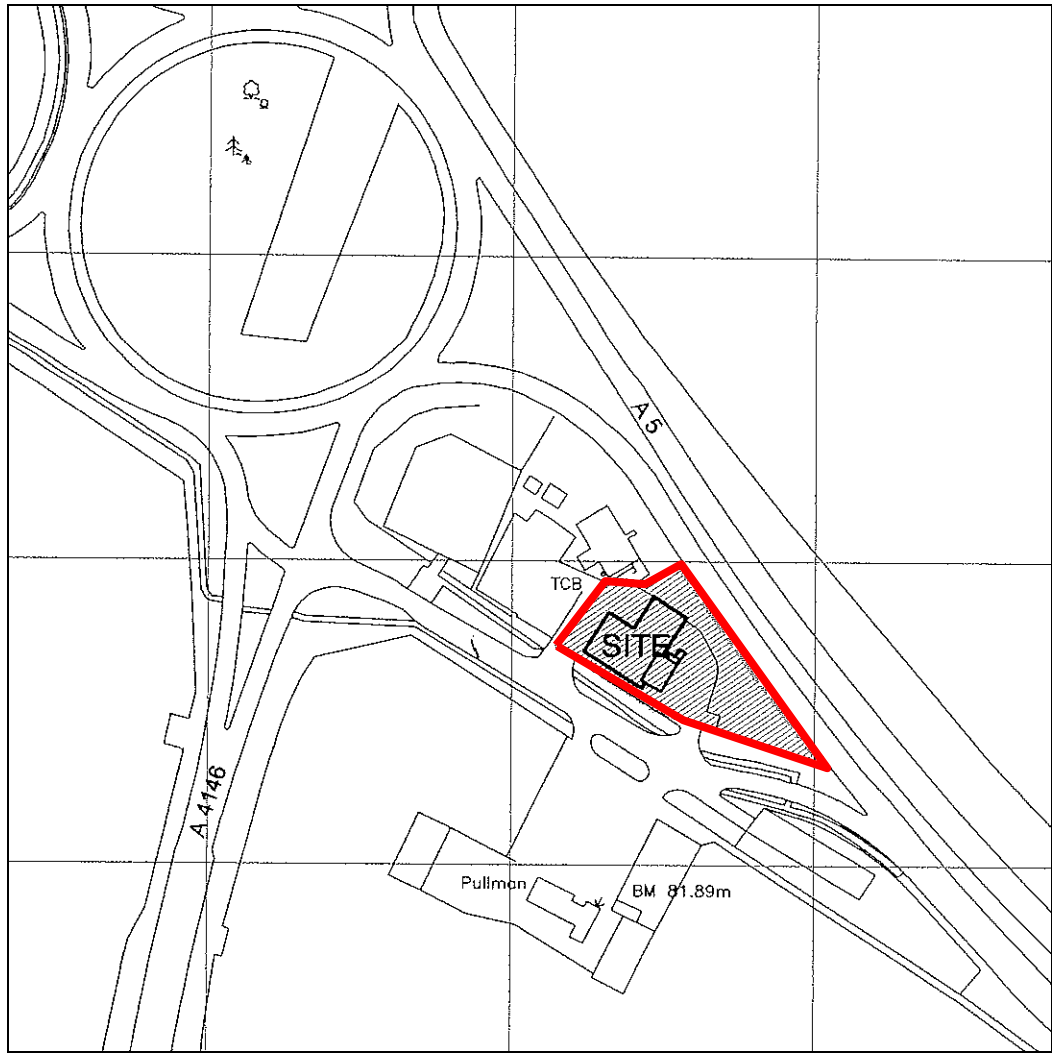
The site is located in the parish of Little Brickhill at NGR SP 8943 3335, on the south-western side of the A5(T), adjacent to its junction with the A4146 (Fig. 1).

### 1.4 *Description*

The site covers an area approximately 70m × 40m. A petrol station and its associated forecourt already occupy the site, and the proposed development comprises extensions to the garage.

### 1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the site are of the *Oxpasture Association*, characterised as ‘fine loamy over clayey and clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some slowly permeable seasonal waterlogged clayey soils’ (Soil Survey, 1983, 572h). The underlying geology is described as drift over Jurassic and Cretaceous clay shale. The site itself lies at an elevation of c.80m AOD.



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

## **2 Aims & Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

As described in the planning condition (Section 3), the aim of the recording exercise was:

- to ensure that a proper record is produced and maintained of any archaeology affected by the development.

### **2.2 Standards**

The work conformed 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 planning condition required an archaeological contractor to supervise the stripping of topsoil on the area of the proposed extensions, and to sample and record any archaeological features revealed (*i.e.* a strip & record excavation).

### **2.4 Constraints**

The client's contractors commenced groundworks on the site without notifying ASC or the MKCAO. Following an enforcement visit at the latter's request, work on site was halted, and ASC was informed. In view of the fact that groundworks had commenced, it was decided to continue the recording exercise as a watching brief (see Appendix 1 for watching brief method statement).

### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

#### 3.1 Prehistoric (before 600BC)

Relatively little is known of the area surrounding the site during the prehistoric period. Two Palaeolithic findspots are noted within the parish of Bletchley, less than 1km to the northwest of the site. In addition to this, three Neolithic/Mesolithic flint scatters have been identified, also within 1km of the development site (Croft & Mynard, 1993, fig. 3).

Several Bronze Age ring ditches have been excavated within the Ouzel valley to the north of the site, indicating activity during this period, but all are situated at least 6km distant.

#### 3.2 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)

There is a stark contrast between the earlier prehistoric periods and the Iron Age in Milton Keynes. Iron Age occupation in Milton Keynes provides the most complete example of prehistoric settlement distribution within the area (Croft & Mynard, 1993, 8). As in the earlier periods, the settlements show a correlation with the rivers of the area, but again, all are several kilometres from the site. Danesborough hillfort, thought to be the local tribal centre, is located c.3.5km to the northeast of the site.

#### 3.3 Roman (AD43-c.450)

The site falls within the extra-mural settlement area of the small Roman town of *Magiovinium*, located to the immediate north-west along the former line of the A5 to Fenny Stratford, which follows the line of the Roman *Watling Street*. During excavations in 1980 in advance of the construction of the present A5(T) dual carriageway and adjacent roundabout the site of the garage was trial trenched (Neal 1989, 5-23: Site 17). A series of ditched rectilinear plots were revealed (Fig. 3). These were interpreted as a field system associated with Watling Street.

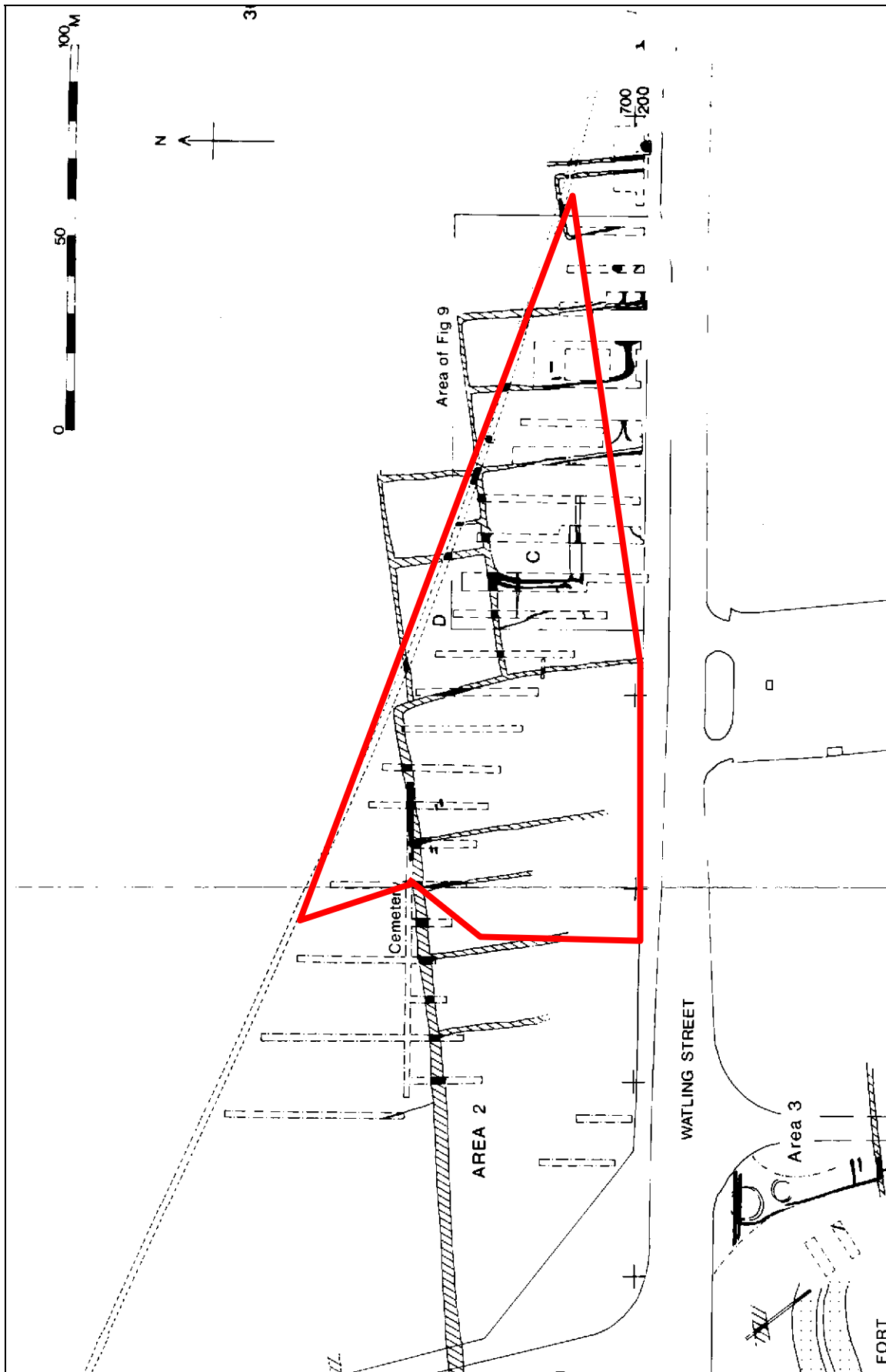
#### 3.4 Saxon & Medieval (c.450-1500)

There is little evidence for Saxon activity in the area of the site, and it is likely to have remained as open ground, probably uncultivated. The Domesday Survey of 1086 does not distinguish between Great and Little Brickhill, so it is likely that the two became separate villages within the medieval period. The prefix 'Great' or 'Little' almost certainly results from two individual manors within the parish acquiring either parish or village status during the twelfth or thirteenth century, resulting in both villages having the same name, but with the addition of a prefix (Croft & Mynard, 1993, 19). The development site itself is located c.1.5km to the northwest of the core of Little Brickhill, and therefore may have been utilised as farmland during the medieval period.

#### 3.6 Post-Medieval & Modern (1500-1980)

The site probably remained as open farmland until the construction of the A5(T) dual carriageway through Milton Keynes in the early 1980s.





**Figure 3:** The development site in relation to previous archaeological investigations  
(after Neal 1989, fig. 3)

## 4 Results and Conclusions

### 4.1 Results

- 4.1.1 Two visits were made on 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November 2005 when the excavation of strip foundations was monitored. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
- 4.1.2 The footing trenches were generally 0.6m wide and between 1m and 2m deep. The stratigraphy through which they were cut comprised an upper layer of crushed brick aggregate c.0.4m deep over a layer of dark brown clayey soil c.0.4m deep. The remaining c.0.2m comprised the natural yellowish brown clay.
- 4.1.3 There were signs that the dark brown clayey soil mentioned above was an old land surface, but it was too intermittent to be certain. There were several deep insertions where old oil tanks, soakaways and/or service pipes had been. There was no sign of pre-modern features or artefacts.

### 4.2 Conclusions

Archaeological remains were not observed during the watching brief and it is likely that any archaeological finds or features were truncated or removed by the construction of the present petrol station. The present development took place over a limited area and is unlikely to have had a significant impact on any existing archaeological remains.



**Plate 1:** East footing trench



**Plate 2:** North footing trench



**Plate 3:** North-east footing trench



**Plate 4:** South-west footing trench

## **5. Acknowledgements**

The writer is grateful to Total Oil UK Ltd for commissioning this work. The project was monitored for Milton Keynes Council by their Archaeological Officer, Brian Giggins. The fieldwork was undertaken for ASC by Dr Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA. This report was prepared by Calli Rouse BA, and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

## **6. Archive**

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

6.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum

## 7. References

### *Standards & Specifications*

ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.

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 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)*.

### *Secondary Sources*

Croft, RA and Mynard, DC 1993 *The changing landscape of Milton Keynes*. Buckinghamshire Archaeol. Soc. Monog. Ser. **5** (Aylesbury).

Neal, DS 1987 'Excavations at Magiovinium, Buckinghamshire, 1978-80, *Records of Buckinghamshire* **29**, 1-124.

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



## Appendix 1: Method Statement

### 1 *Definition*

An archaeological watching brief is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any earth-moving operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons (IFA 1999, 2). It normally involves the monitoring by an experienced archaeologist of ground disturbance on a development (eg. footing and service trenches, reduction of levels, landscaping).

### 2 *Standards*

All work will conform to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991), to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*, and to any specific requirements of the Planning Archaeologist (PA).

### 3 *General Methodology: Observation & Recording*

- 3.1 Archaeological observation and recording normally involves visits when groundworks are under way, and requires close co-operation and communication between contractor and archaeologist. In many cases only regular, relatively brief visits are required (an *intermittent* watching brief). In certain circumstances (e.g. where archaeological features are known or strongly suspected to exist), the archaeologist's continuous presence may be required (an *intensive* watching brief). In the absence of specific instruction, professional judgement will be exercised to determine the level of monitoring.
- 3.2 Each site visit will be recorded on ASC's *Site Monitoring Sheet* (example attached). These sheets should record what is observed, including sketches where appropriate. A photographic record (see 4.4, below) will also be maintained throughout the watching brief. Plans of the development provided by the client will normally form the basis for recording the location of archaeological features and finds.
- 3.3 If significant archaeological remains are identified during the watching brief, a meeting will be arranged between ASC, the client, and the PA in order to agree an appropriate investigation. Provision to cover this has been made in the project estimates. Detailed investigation will follow the methods set out in the following section.

### 4 *General Methodology: Investigation (if required)*

- 4.1 Excavation will be carried out by hand. Maximum depths of excavation will conform to current Health & Safety regulations.
- 4.2 At the start of fieldwork temporary bench marks will be established, to be tied in subsequently to an appropriate Ordnance Survey bench mark. All plans and section drawings will be annotated with relative heights derived from these benchmarks. Plans will be related to the OS National Grid. Overall site plans will normally be drawn to a scale of 1:100 or 1:50: detailed plans of specific areas or features may be drawn to 1:20 or 1:10: burials will always be drawn at the latter scale. Sections will be drawn at 1:20 or 1:10, depending upon size and complexity.
- 4.3 A detailed record of all archaeological contexts will be maintained on individual proforma record sheets, designed to meet current professional standards. Each context will be individually numbered in a single sequence, and will be described in terms of dimensions, shape, fill type and inclusions, artefact content, samples and

interpretation. A register of contexts will be maintained, and context records will be cross-referenced to all other records.

- 4.4 The primary photographic record will normally be compiled in 35mm black & white print format, supplemented by 35mm colour slide and/or digital photography, illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. A photographic register will be maintained on ASC's *Photographic Record Sheet*, fully cross-referenced. Digital photographs will be used to illustrate the report. Metric scales will be used in all photographs.
- 4.5 All finds relating to the archaeological record of the site will be collected with reference to context and location. Finds of particular significance (small finds) will be recorded three-dimensionally on site, and described on individual pro-forma record sheets. A register will be kept of all finds. Finds processing may take place during or after fieldwork, and will entail cleaning, marking, packaging, quantification and initial classification. Conservation of artefacts will normally take place after processing, but primary conservation of delicate artefacts may be required on site.
- 4.6 Provision will be made for the sampling and analysis of environmental data by appropriate specialists. Sampling will be carried out in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (EH 2002). All samples will be recorded on individual pro-forma record sheets, and a register of samples will be maintained. Specialists will be required to submit copies of the base data from environmental analysis for inclusion in the site archive.
- 4.7 Any human remains encountered will normally be recorded and left *in situ*. The removal of human remains in consecrated ground requires a Home Office licence, and investigation or removal of remains must be agreed between ASC, the client, and other appropriate authorities. For the excavation and recording of human remains, current IFA guidelines will be followed (McKinley & Roberts 1993). In general, due care and respect will be accorded to any human remains, and site staff are required not to discuss their discovery in public, so as not to attract undesirable interest.
- 4.8 Due concern will be given to the physical security of all archaeological features, deposits, artefacts and records, both on and off site. All reasonable measures will be taken to secure their protection before, during and after excavation.

## **5 Reporting**

- 5.1 Upon completion of the watching brief, an initial report on its findings will normally prepared within four weeks, subject to specialist input. This will typically include:
  - a concise non-technical summary of the results
  - information relating to the circumstances of the project
  - background information about the site
  - a summary of the aims of the project and the methods used
  - a description of the results, supported by appropriate illustrative material
  - a conclusion, summarising the results and examining their significance
  - a confidence rating
  - the contents and location of the archive
  - appendices (record sheets, specialist reports, reference works etc.)
  - an SMR summary sheet, if required
- 5.2 Copies of the report will be provided as required to the client, to the PA, and to other bodies as required. Eight copies are normally produced: a charge may be made for providing any additional copies. Interim reports will be submitted to the relevant period and/or regional journals within one year of the project's completion.

- 5.3 Once the final report has been accepted by the AA, an OASIS fieldwork summary form will be completed and submitted to the Archaeology Data Service.

## 6 *Archive*

- 6.1 All archaeological projects generate a quantity of records and related material. Together, these constitute the *project archive*. While the report may describe the project's findings in some detail, the archive contains the evidence on which the report is based, and its importance cannot be too highly stressed. By its nature, archaeological fieldwork cannot normally be repeated, so the archive often constitutes the only surviving evidence for past activity on a site, and arrangements must therefore be made for its deposition and long-term storage.
- 6.2 At the start of a project, ASC will initiate arrangements for archive deposition. On completion of the reporting stages of the project, the archive will be prepared for long-term storage. If arrangements for deposition cannot be concluded, ASC will store the archive until deposition can be arranged.


## 7 *Staffing*

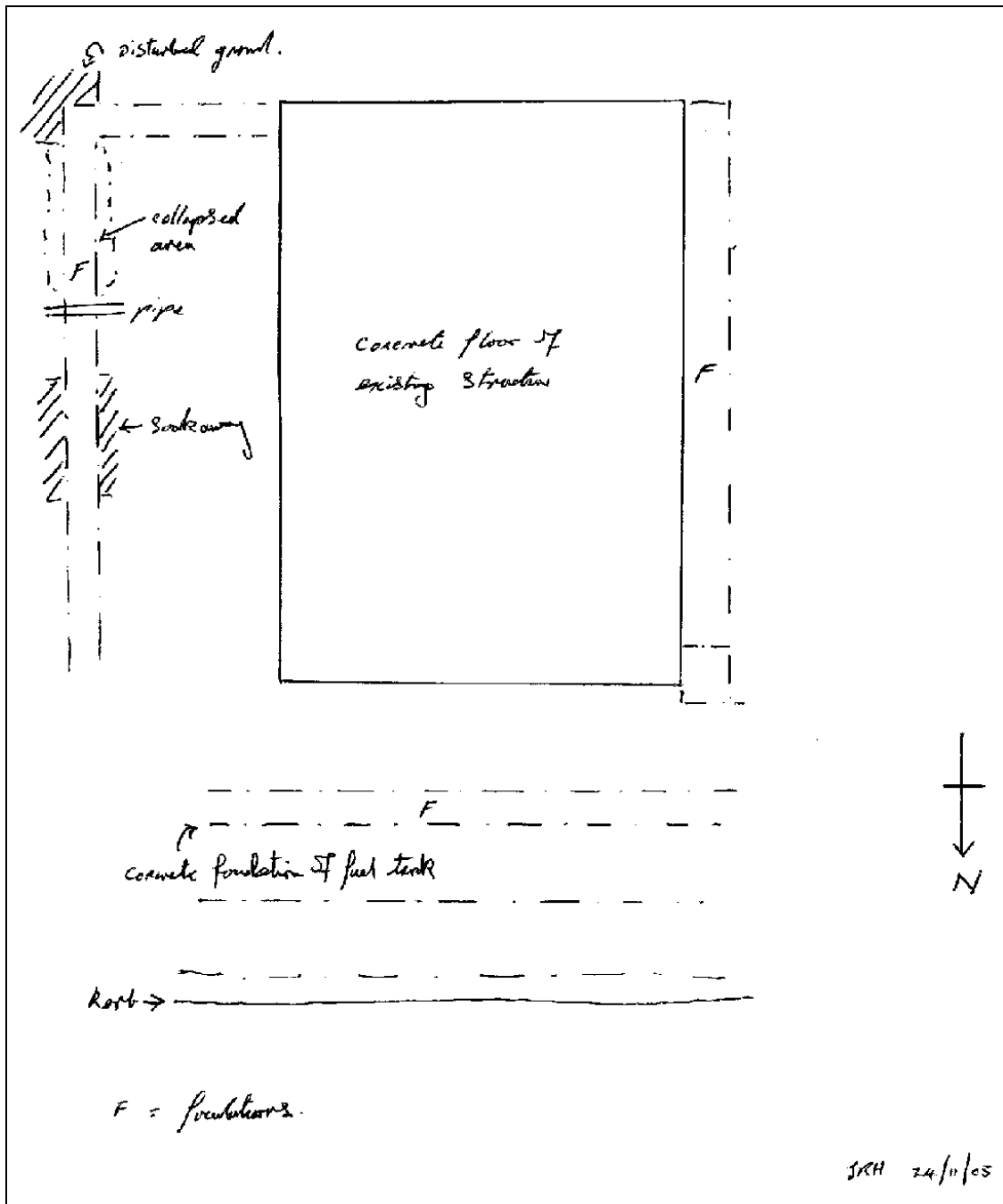
- 7.1 The project will be under the overall direction of **Bob Zeepvat** BA MIFA, an established archaeologist with extensive experience in managing archaeological projects, of a wide range of fieldwork in both rural and urban environments, of post-excavation, publication and presentation projects, and of work on a wide range of historic buildings and structures.
- 7.2 Staff undertaking watching briefs will all be experienced archaeologists, of at least Assistant Project Officer grade. Less experienced staff may assist with any detailed investigation, under supervision.

## References


- EH 1991 *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).
- IFA 1999a *Standards & Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Institute of Field Archaeologists (Reading).
- IFA 1999b *Code of Conduct*. Institute of Field Archaeologists (Reading).
- McKinley J.I. & Roberts C. 1993 *Excavation and Post-Excavation Treatment of Cremated and Inhumed Human Remains*. Institute of Field Archaeologists Technical Paper 13.

## Appendix 2: Monitoring Sheets

 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>	
Project: Watling Street Service Station T574 UK		Project No/Code: 744 1 BWS	Sheet: 1 of 2
Client/Developer: Jennings Design Ltd		Date of visit: 24/11/05	
Contact: Steve Jennings (John manager)		Phone: 07730-645687	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel): Start: 9.05		Finish:	
Completed by: JKJA			
Development Type:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Footings	<input type="checkbox"/> Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Roads	<input type="checkbox"/> Levelling
			<input type="checkbox"/> Quarrying
			<input type="checkbox"/> Pipelines
			<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dull, cold and damp.			
Observations: Observed most of the Strip's foundation on the South, east and northern sides of the extension to the Service Station. Straps only excavated was the NE corner. The Strip's foundations 0.6m wide and varied between 1m and 0.2m deep. The top surface/strata was made up of crushed brick aggregate 0.4m thick; beneath this was a v. dark brown clay soil c. 0.4m thick - the remaining 0.2m was natural yellowish brown clay. There were several deep indentations where old oil tanks, soakways and/or Service pipes had been. These are sketched overleaf.			
Comments: There were signs that the dark soil was old hard material but it was too disjuncted to be certain. No signs of pre-modern features or artefacts.			





 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>				
Project: <i>Watling Street Service Station</i>		Project No/Code: <i>7441 BWS</i>		Sheet: <i>2 of 2</i>		
Total UK		Date of visit: <i>29/11/05</i>				
Client/Developer <i>Jennings Design Ltd</i>						
Contact:				Phone: <i>07730-645687</i>		
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: <i>10.40</i>		Finish:		
Completed by: <i>SRA</i>						
<b>Development Type:</b>						
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dry, Sunny &amp; cool.</i>						
Observations:  <i>The foundations on the north side have been cleared to in excess of 2m. Nothing else visible. Clay and sandy deposits visible in the section.</i>						
Comments:  <i>Not worth continuing as v. little has survived from the impact of previous development.</i>						

### Appendix 3: List of Photographs

SITE NAME:				SITE NO/CODE:
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			✓	Detail of west footing trench
2			✓	Detail of east footing trench
3			✓	Detail of east footing trench from north
4			✓	Detail of east footing trench from south
5			✓	General view of site, looking north
6			✓	General view of site, looking NNE
7			✓	North footing trench
8			✓	North-east corner of footing trenches
9			✓	North-east corner of footing trenches
10			✓	North-east corner of footing trenches - detail
11			✓	South footing trench, view north-west
12			✓	South footing trench, view south
13			✓	General site view from north-west
14			✓	West footing trench, view south
15			✓	General shot