

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:  
54 MILL ROAD  
THURLEIGH, BEDFORDSHIRE**

*on behalf of  
Mr Reg Towler*



By  
David Fell BA MA MIFA

**April 2006**

**ASC: 762/TMR/2**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	TMR	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	762
<i>Event No:</i>	N/a	<i>Accession No:</i>	TBA
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Thurleigh		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Thurleigh		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 0490 5745		
<i>Present use:</i>	Agricultural		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	New vehicular access		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	05/1455/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Bedford Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	29 <sup>th</sup> March 2006		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr Reg Towler Scald End Farm Mill Road Thurleigh Bedfordshire MK44 2DP		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Reg Towler		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	David Fell	<i>Date:</i>	10 <sup>th</sup> April 2006
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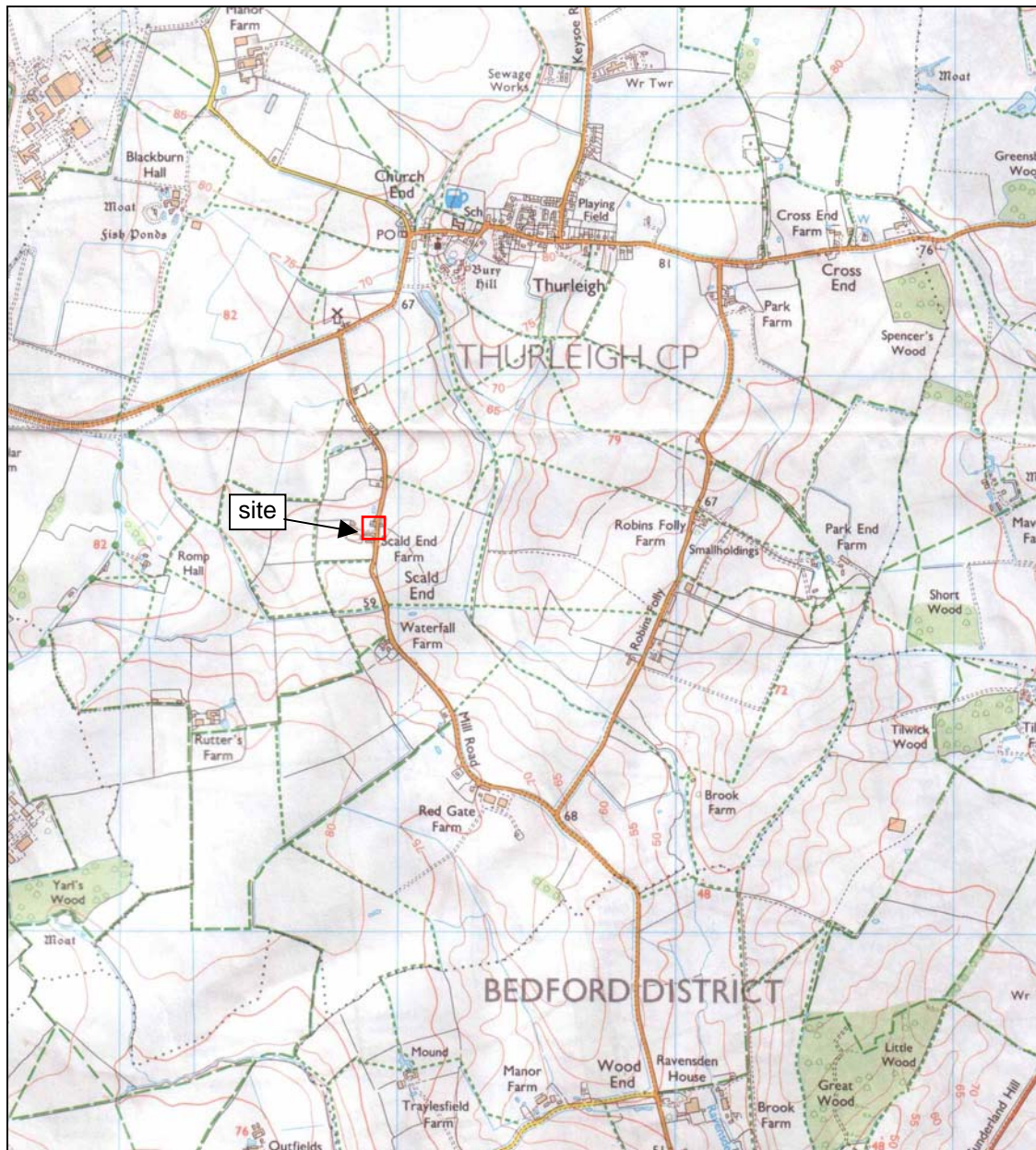
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*Cover: View of the cottages of 54 and 56 Mill Road, Thurleigh*

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

## Summary

*In March 2006 a watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a new parking area at 54 Mill Road, Thurleigh, Bedfordshire. A cobbled external farmyard surface was revealed during the fieldwork and no other remains were observed. The surface is modern and of marginal archaeological significance. It is unlikely that significant remains were present on the site and the archaeological impact of the development is deemed to have been negligible.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In March 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 54 Mill Road, Thurleigh, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 0490 5745; Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mr Reg Towler, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Gill, 2006), and a *brief* (Mather 2006) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Bedford Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Heritage and Environment Section, Bedfordshire County Council*. The relevant planning application reference is 05/1455/FUL.

### 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 a parking area and access.

### 1.3 *Location*

The site is situated at Scald End Farm, south of the village of Thurleigh in the administrative district of Bedford Borough. It lies at the south end of 54 Mill Road, which is a semi-detached cottage, on the west side of Mill Road, north of the centre of the farm and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference TL 0490 5745.

### 1.4 *Description*

The development site comprised an area of c.70sq m immediately south of the existing cottage. Access is from Mill Road, adjacent to the cottage and the site is situated at the northeast corner of a field formerly used for grazing farm animals.

### 1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The site is situated to the south of Thurleigh village, on a slight south-facing slope with an average elevation of 73m AOD. The soils of the area comprise the *Hanslope Association*, namely calcareous clayey soils over clay (Soil Survey, 1983, 411d).

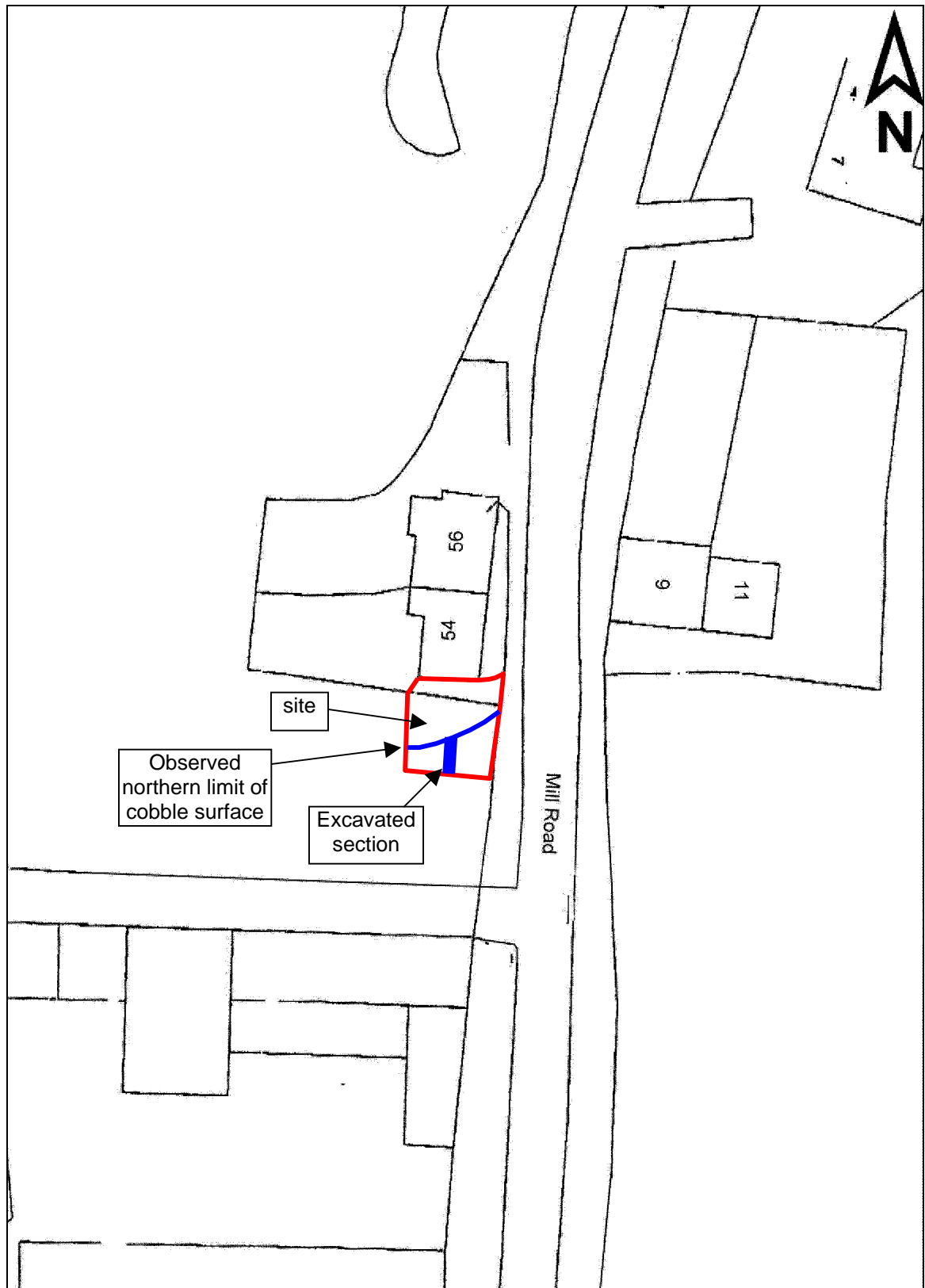


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:500)

## **2 Aims and Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

As described in the *brief* (Section 4.3), the aims of the watching brief were:

- To establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development site
- To establish the relationship to recover artefacts to assist in the development of the type series within the region
- To recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes

### **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), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), to *Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedfordshire* (1998) and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

### **2.3 Methods**

The work was carried out according to the *brief* (Section 5), which required:

- Archaeological investigation and recording undertaken during the removal of topsoil and subsoil for the creation of an off road parking area and associated access

### **2.4 Constraints**

No constraints were noted and the work took place in accordance with the *brief* and project design.

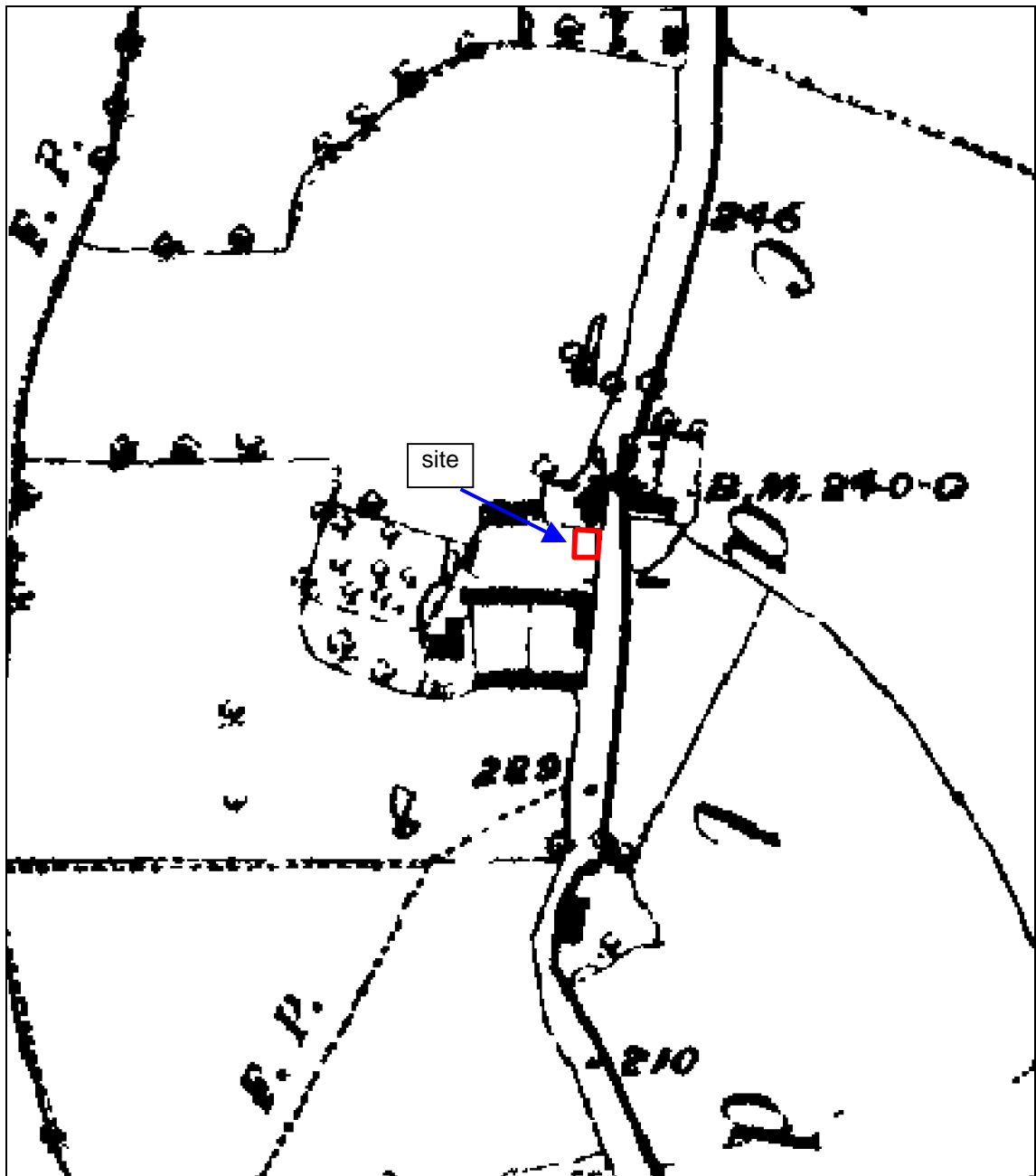
### 3 Archaeological and Historical Background

HER = Historic Environment Record

Thurleigh is an area of considerable archaeological and historical importance. The site offered the potential to reveal evidence for a variety of periods, but the focus of interest was judged to lie in the medieval period.

- 3.4.1 Evidence for prehistoric activity in the vicinity of Scald End Farm is sparse but a number of sites, identified by cropmarks of curvilinear and rectilinear enclosures are present in the area and may be late Iron Age in origin. The closest example (HER 16614) is located *c.*125m northwest of the site with further examples *c.*200m to the north east (HER 5139), and *c.*150m to the south (HER 2039). Scatters of late Iron Age-early Roman bloomery slag and pottery (HER 2732, 2734, 2735, 2738, 2745, 2743) have been found *c.*60m south of the farm. Further Roman slag and ceramics were present and a possible Roman track (HER 728) traversed the area *c.*100m to the south of the site, although the track is not firmly dated and may belong to a later period.
- 3.4.2 The early medieval landscape of the area comprised dispersed settlement and Scald End (HER 1849) probably developed as a separate 'end', possibly as a result of forest clearance with the establishment of dwellings along the forest road (Brown and Taylor 1981). It was certainly established by 1279 as the Hundred Rolls show the Grey family as principal landowner, represented by a member of the de la Leye family who had previously unified land ownership in the area.
- 3.4.3 Scald End Farm is one of three dispersed farmsteads in the area and occupies the site of a medieval moated settlement. The surviving earthworks, though affected by later activity, are visible as banks and ditches around the later farm buildings. A further earthwork, perhaps a pond, is situated west of the development site.
- 3.4.4 The present farmhouse (HER 7233), situated south of the development area is a 17<sup>th</sup> century house with 19<sup>th</sup> century additions. The cottages comprising 54 and 56 Mill Road (HER 7231) date to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and are shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map *c.*1880 (Fig. 3). The map shows that the modern layout of the area had been established and the cottages on either side of Mill Road are illustrated. An east to west aligned boundary is shown, following the south wall of the cottage at no. 54, approximately at the north side of the development area and a further rectangular building to the west was also in existence.





**Figure 3:** Extract from the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map (c.1880)  
(*Not to Scale*)

## 4 Results and Conclusions

### 4.1 Results

A single visit was made to the site on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2006 (Appendix 1) in order to monitor topsoil stripping and record any underlying remains. The site comprised an area c.10.5m north to south and c.5.6m east to west and was situated immediately south of the existing cottage (Plate 1).

4.1.1 The topsoil was c.0.3m deep and comprised mid greyish brown silty clay. No archaeological remains were observed during the stripping operation, but the soil had clearly been disturbed in the recent past, as it was mixed with quantities of modern rubble and brick fragments, etc. A 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century cobbled surface was present below the topsoil in the south part of the stripped area (section 4.1.2, below), overlying the natural clay strata.

#### 4.1.2 *The Cobbled Surface* (Figure 2; Plate 2)

The cobbled surface was observed in the south part of the site and extended to the south, west and east beyond the stripped area. It comprised water rounded stones, set into the natural clay. A section measuring c.3.6m by c.1.5m was excavated, in order to characterise and define the cobbles and obtain dating evidence (Plate 2).

The surface was rough in appearance and was almost certainly an external yard surface, probably laid to provide a stable surface and prevent rutting, at the entrance to the field. The stones were uneven and varied in size between c.0.1m and c.0.2m. Areas of tree root and other disturbances were observed in places.

Two sherds of 20<sup>th</sup> century blue and white transfer ware pottery, in willow pattern style were present on the surface, indicating that it is likely to have been laid down in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The pottery was not archaeologically significant and was not retained. No other artefacts or remains were observed.

#### 4.1.3 *Preservation*

The development did not involve further groundworks and, following completion of the recording, a secondary makeup layer was deposited across the site by hand, prior to the laying of the upper gravel car park surface. Accordingly, the cobble surface has been preserved *in-situ*.

### 4.2 *Confidence Rating*

The fieldwork took place in bright sunlight and conditions for the work were good. Full co-operation was received from the developer and a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the watching brief.

### 4.3 *Conclusions*

A cobbled external farmyard surface was revealed during the fieldwork and no other remains were observed. The surface is modern and of marginal archaeological significance. It is unlikely that significant remains were present on the site and the archaeological impact of the development is deemed to have been negligible.



**Plate 1:** General view of the stripped area



**Plate 2:** The cobbled surface

## **5. Acknowledgements**

The writer is grateful to Mr Reg Towler for commissioning the watching brief and for his practical assistance on site. Ms Lesley-Ann Mather, of the Heritage and Environment Section, *Bedfordshire County Council* acted as curatorial monitor.

The fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by David Fell BA MA MIFA. The report was prepared by David Fell and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

## **6. Archive**

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

6.2 The archive will be deposited with *Bedford Museum*.

## 7. References


### *Standards & Specifications*

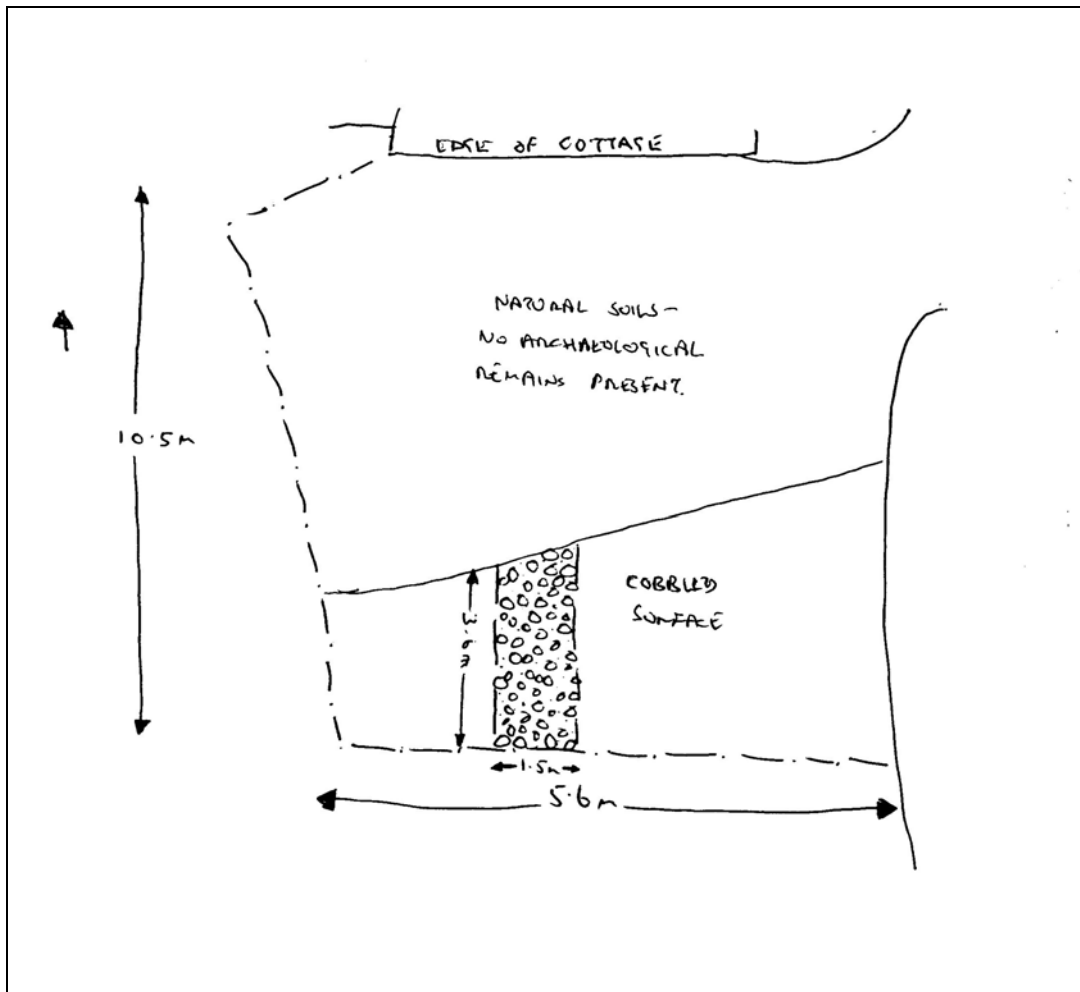
- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.
- Beds CC, 1998. *Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedfordshire*. Bedfordshire County Council
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. English Heritage (London).
- Gill E, 2006 *54 Mill Road, Thurleigh, Bedfordshire. Project Design for Watching Brief*. Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd. 762/TMR/1
- 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*

- Brown A E & Taylor C C, 1981 *Scald End, Thurleigh*. Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (unpublished)
- Soil Survey, 1983 *The Soil Maps of England and Wales and accompanying legend*. Soil Survey of England and Wales. Harpenden

### Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>	
Project: <b>SALD END FARM, THURLEIGH</b>		Project No/Code: <b>762 / TMR</b>	Sheet: <b>1</b> of <b>1</b>
No. <b>54</b>		Date of visit: <b>29 MARCH 2006</b>	
Client/Developer: <b>REG TOWLER</b>			
Contact: <b>REG TOWLER</b>		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <b>8:30</b>	Finish:	
Completed by:			
<b>Development Type:</b>			
<input 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>BRIGHT AND SUNNY</b>			
Observations: ARRIVE SITE AND MONITOR EXCAVATION OF TOPSOIL FOR PARKING AREA. AREA ON SOUTH SIDE OF THE COTTAGE STRIPPED TO DEPTH OF 103M. MID GREY BROWN TOPSOIL WITH FREQUENT MODERN RUBBLE, BRICK FRAGMENTS ETC. AN AREA OF ROUGH COBBLES PRESENT ON SOUTH SIDE OF STRIPPED AREA - INTERPRETED AS A COBBLE SURFACE. IT CONTINUES BEYOND THE STRIPPED AREA TO E.S.W. BUT NO SURVIVING POSE WAS DEFINED AND A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE CLEANED AND PHOTOGRAPHED. THE SURFACE WAS ROUGH AND UNEVEN AND DISTURBED BY TREE ROOTS, ETC. <del>AND</del> OBVIOUSLY MODERN (19/20 <sup>th</sup> ) POTTERY AND CRM DEBRIS FOUND ON THE SURFACE. SURFACE IS LIKELY TO BE A 19 <sup>th</sup> OR 20 <sup>th</sup> CENTURY HARD SURFACE AND OF MARGINAL SIGNIFICANCE.			
Comments: <b>NO FURTHER VISITS NECESSARY</b>			
For sketch plan, use reverse			
©ASC, 2003			



**Appendix 2: ASC OASIS Form**

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	54 Mill Road, Thurleigh, Bedfordshire					
Short Description:	In March 2006 a watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a new parking area at 54 Mill Road, Thurleigh, Bedfordshire. A cobbled external farmyard surface was revealed during the fieldwork and no other remains were observed. The surface is modern and of marginal archaeological significance. It is unlikely that significant remains were present on the site and the archaeological impact of the development is deemed to have been negligible.					
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	DBA	FW	Geophys	Survey	Bldg Rec	Post-Exc
	<b>WB</b>	Strip&Rec	Trenching	Test pits	Exc	Other
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	none		Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)		HER 7231	
Current land use:	agricultural		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		None	
Monument type:	N/A		Monument period:		N/A	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Bedfordshire		OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)		TL 0490 5745	
District:	Bedford Borough		Parish:		Thurleigh	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	54 Mill Road, Thurleigh, Bedfordshire MK44 2DP					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	c.70 sq m		Height OD: (metres)		c.73m OD	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	Bedfordshire CC		Project design originator:		E. Gill, ASC Ltd	
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA, ASC Ltd		Director/Supervisor:		D Fell, BA MA MIFA, ASC Ltd	
Sponsor / funding body:	Mr R Towler					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	29 March 2006		End date:		29 March 2006	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:						
Paper:	Bedford Museum		Paper archive only			
Digital:	Bedford Museum		Compact Disk x 1			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:	Watching Brief: 54 Mil Road, Thurleigh, Bedfordshire					
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd rep 762/TMR/2					
Author(s):	D Fell BA MA MIFA					