

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: LAND AT 3 TO 5 MILL ROAD MARCHAM OXFORDSHIRE

on behalf of TRY Homes Ltd



Lizzie Gill BSc PgDip

March 2006

ASC: 766/MMR/2

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Site Data

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------|---------|
| <i>ASC project code:</i> | MMR | <i>ASC Project No:</i> | 766 |
| <i>Event No:</i> | - | <i>Accession No:</i> | Pending |
| <i>County:</i> | Oxfordshire | | |
| <i>Village/Town:</i> | Marcham | | |
| <i>Civil Parish:</i> | Marcham | | |
| <i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i> | SU 4553 9658 | | |
| <i>Present use:</i> | Residential | | |
| <i>Planning proposal:</i> | Construction of five houses and associated access | | |
| <i>Planning application ref/date:</i> | MAR/18842 | | |
| <i>Local Planning Authority:</i> | Vale of the White Horse District Council | | |
| <i>Date of fieldwork:</i> | 10 th February 2006-20 th February 2006 | | |
| <i>Client:</i> | TRY Homes Ltd Teal House Cowley Business Park Cowley Uxbridge Middlesex UB8 2AL | | |
| <i>Contact name:</i> | Lee Kenyon | | |
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Internal Quality Check

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| <i>Primary Author:</i> | Elizabeth Gill | <i>Date:</i> | 10 th march 2006 |
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| <i>Revisions:</i> | | <i>Date:</i> | |
|-------------------|--|--------------|--|

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| <i>Edited/Checked By:</i> | | <i>Date:</i> | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------|--|

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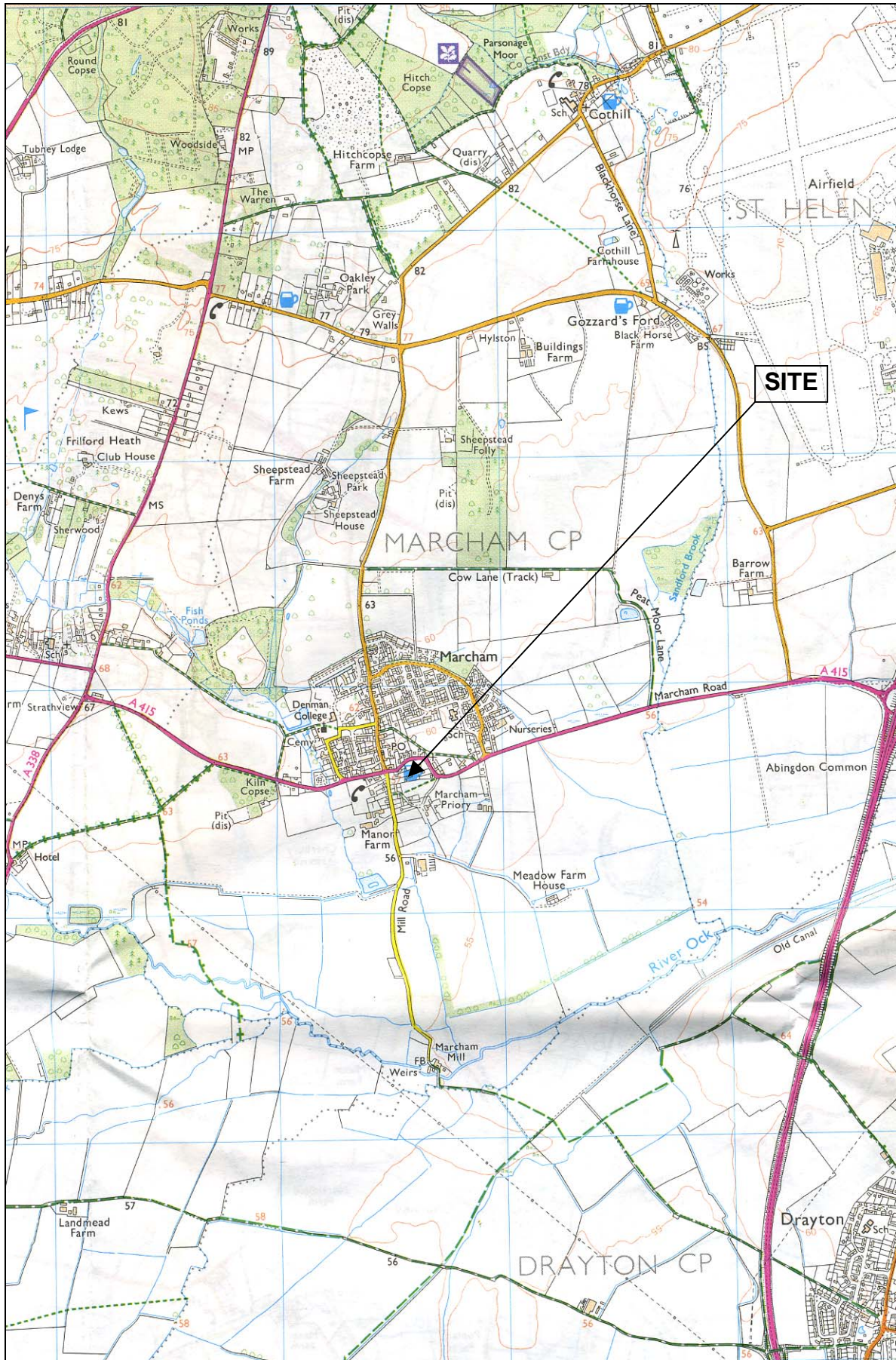


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In February 2006, Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd. (ASC) undertook a watching brief on land at 3-5 Mill Road, Marcham, Oxfordshire. The settlement of Marcham originated during the latter part of the Anglo Saxon period and the site exists within an area of historical and archaeological significance. Four sets of footing trenches were excavated on the site and three of these were monitored for the presence of archaeological deposits. These trenches were found to contain signs of recent human activity, but no archaeological deposits were seen. The unobserved trenches were in close proximity to those that were monitored, and are unlikely to have contained any deposits of a pre-modern date.

1 Introduction

1.1 In February 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 3-5 Mill Road, Marcham, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 4553 9658: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by TRY Homes Ltd., and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (766/MMR/1), and a brief (Coddington, 2006) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Oxfordshire County Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services*. The relevant planning application reference is MAR/18842.

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 five houses and associated access.

1.3 *Location and Description*

The site is located on the eastern side of Mill Road, in the southern part of the village of Marcham in Oxfordshire, at NGR SU 4553 9658 (Fig. 1).

1.4 *Geology & Topography*

The Soil Association for the site at Marcham is 343a or Elmton 1 which is derived from Jurassic limestone producing a 'shallow well drained brashy calcareous fine loamy soils over limestone. Some similar deeper soils and some non-calcareous and calcareous clayey soils' (Soil Survey etc 1983). The site is very close to another Soil Association designation 833 to the south called the Kelmscot which is a derived from river terrace gravel. The site lies at an elevation of *c.*57m AOD.

1.5 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

The development site is located within the historic core of the village of Marcham. Documentary evidence suggests that the settlement dates to at least the latter part of the Anglo Saxon Period (Williams & Martin, 1992, 142). A polished axe dating to the Neolithic period was found close to the development site (Coddington, 2006).

To the west of the village of Marcham is the Iron Age and Roman town of Frilford. The town has been extensively surveyed and selectively excavated over the past sixty years, and appears to have been a major tribal centre as it has an enclosed religious complex and is on the territorial boundary of three major British tribes, the *Atrebatas*,

Dobunii and *Catuvellauni* (thislimitededition.co.uk, berkshirehistory.com). Romano-British coins have also been found in the immediate vicinity of the development site (Coddington, 2006).

Marcham village began life as a Saxon settlement and its first residents may have been buried in the cemetery at Frilford. The name means 'Wild Celery covered Water Meadow' after the sea celery that still grows in the salt marshes between Marcham and the River Ock. It was one of the many places in this part of the county that belonged to the Abbey of Abingdon, being gift from King Edgar the Peacemaker in AD 965. The abbey held the manor of Marcham until 1538, when the abbot surrendered it, along with the manors of Frilford and Garford and the advowson of the church to the Crown (VCH Berks IX). The majority of Marcham All Saints' church, with the exception of the tower, was rebuilt in the Perpendicular style in 1837-38, but a certain amount of material was re-used (*ibid.*).

Marcham Mill is situated on the River Ock, c.1km directly to the south of the development site. Parts of the mill are said to be ancient, and documentary evidence records a mill on this site in the 11th century (VCH Berks IX).

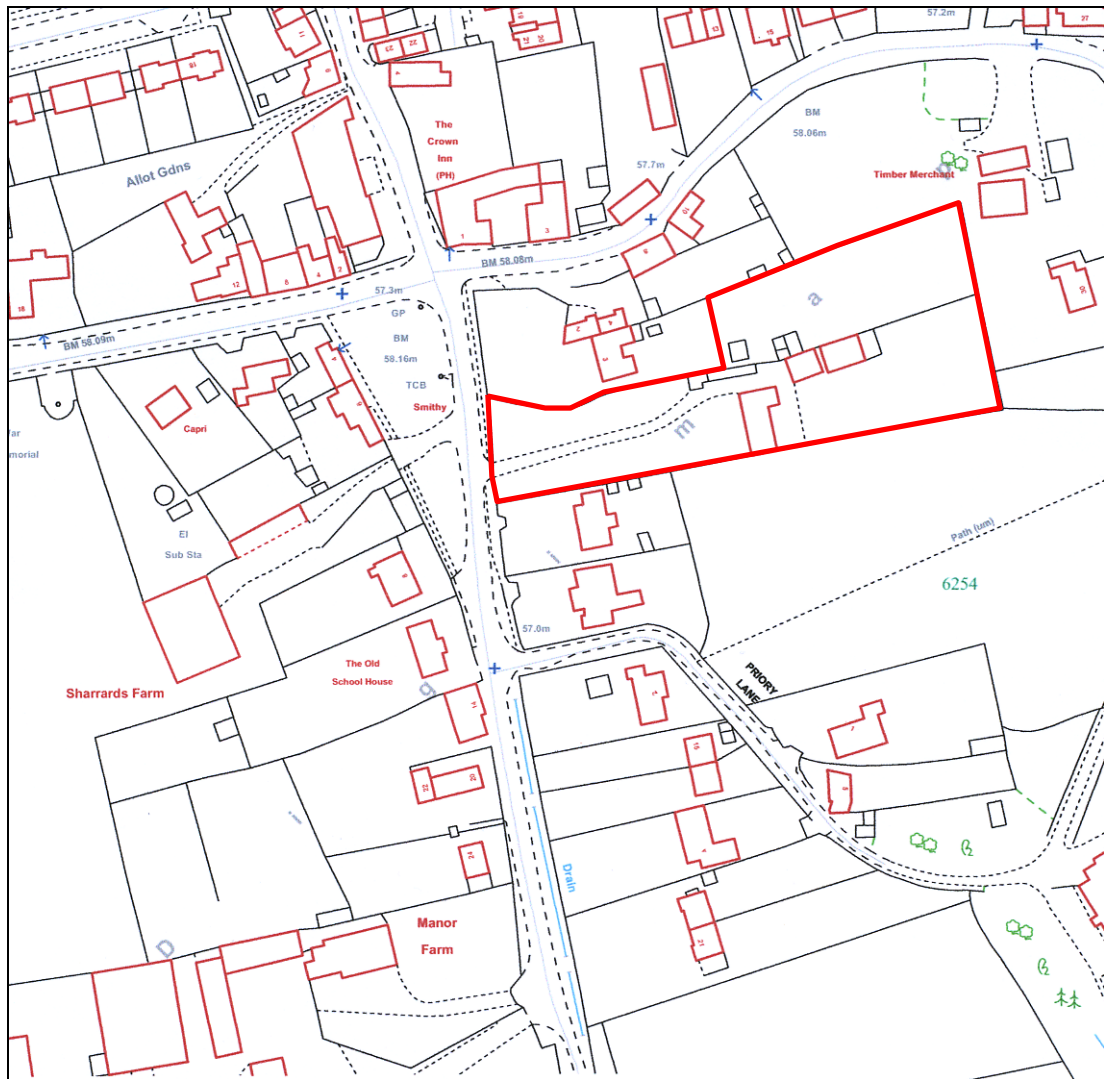


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1900)

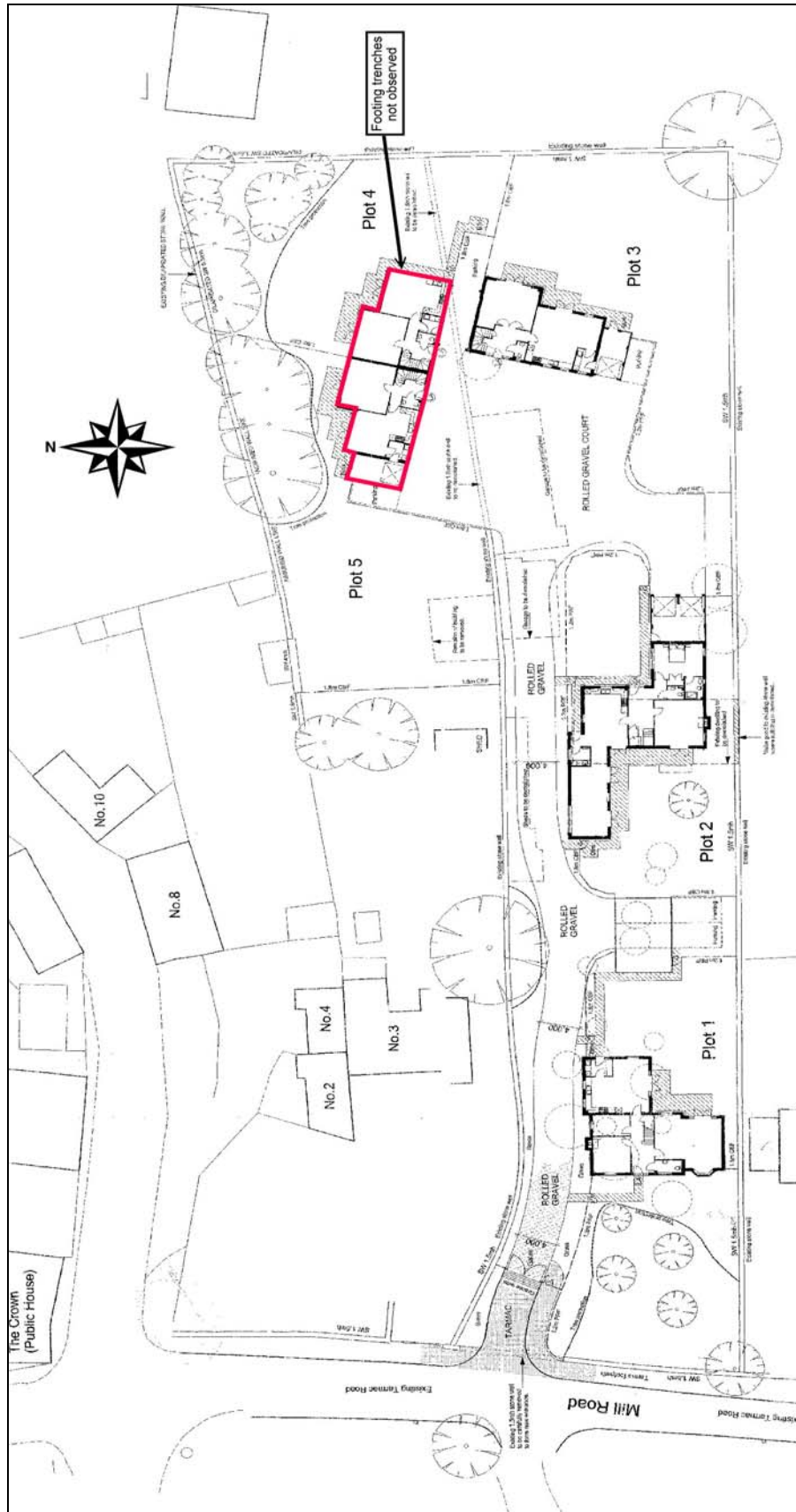


Figure 3: Plan of proposed development showing location of footing trenches not observed
(not to scale)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 3), the aims of the watching brief were:

- A formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operations on site that may disturb or destroy archaeological deposits.
- To allow (within the resources available) the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.

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 4), which required:

- Observation to be maintained during the period of groundworks including surface stripping, levelling, the excavation of foundations and service trenches and any other significant intrusive works. Provision made for taking environmental/organic samples.

2.4 Constraints

Due to a breakdown in communication with the developer and groundworks staff, the footing trenches for plots four and five were not observed.

3 Results and Conclusions

- 3.1 Four visits were made to the site in February 2006. No archaeological deposits were observed during any of these visits.
- 3.2 The footing trenches for plot 1 were excavated by machine into the natural limestone, to a maximum depth of c.0.7m. Deposits observed overlying the natural consisted of c.0.1m thickness of light brownish yellow clayey silt with frequent inclusions of limestone overlain by c.0.6m thickness of mid greyish brown loamy topsoil with occasional inclusions of modern brick fragments.
- 3.3 Plot 2 footing trenches were dug by machine to a maximum depth of 1.4m, into natural light yellowish brown silty sand with frequent inclusions of limestone. This was overlain by c.0.5m thickness of natural limestone and c.0.29m of dark brownish black loamy silt topsoil containing frequent inclusions of brick rubble. A large subcircular feature, measuring c.3.10m in diameter and c. 1.57m in depth was observed in a north facing section at the western end of the trenches. This was cut through the topsoil and filled with dark brownish black silty clay, with occasional inclusions of modern brick rubble and limestone fragments. It seems likely that this feature is a pond that was backfilled during the lifetime of the buildings that previously existed on the site.
- 3.4 The stratigraphy observed in plot 3 footing trenches was similar to that of plots 1 and 2. They were excavated down to the natural light yellowish brown silty sand, which was overlain by c.0.47m of natural limestone and c.0.31m of rubble filled topsoil. A large subcircular feature was observed at the western end of the plot, in a south facing section. This measured c.4.40m in diameter and c.1.40m in depth and was filled with dark brownish black loamy silt, very similar to the topsoil. No finds were observed in this feature but from the high level of roots present in the deposit, it is possible to conclude that it was probably the site of a tree, removed fairly recently.

3.5 *Archaeological Impact of the Development*

From the results obtained from the watching brief, it is possible to surmise that there is unlikely to have been a significant level of past human activity on the site, and that the archaeological impact of the development has been minimal.

3.6 *Confidence Rating*

The confidence rating for this watching brief is high. Although footing trenches for plots 4 and 5 were not observed, it is unlikely that significant amounts of archaeology would have been found to impact the overall result of the watching brief.



Plate 1: View of footing trenches for plot 1, looking northeast



Plate 2: South facing section in plot 1 trenches



Plate 3: View of footing trenches for plot 2, looking southwest



Plate 4: North facing section of plot 2 trenches showing a possible pond



Plate 5: View of plot 3 footing trenches, looking southwest



Plate 6: South facing section of plot 3 footing trenches, showing a modern, topsoil filled feature

4. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to TRY Homes Ltd. for commissioning ASC to undertake the watching brief on their behalf.

The input of Hugh Coddington, Deputy County Archaeological Officer for Oxfordshire county Archaeological Services is also gratefully acknowledged. The monitoring visits were carried out by Nigel Wilson HND AIFA and Lizzie Gill BSc Pg Dip. The project was managed by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA, who has also edited this report.

5. Archive

5.1 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. Colour slides
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

5.2 The archive will be deposited with County Museums Service (Oxfordshire Museums)

6. References

Standards & Specifications

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd 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

Rouse, C. 2006 *Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 3-5 Mill Road, Marcham, Oxfordshire* ASC (776/MMR/1)

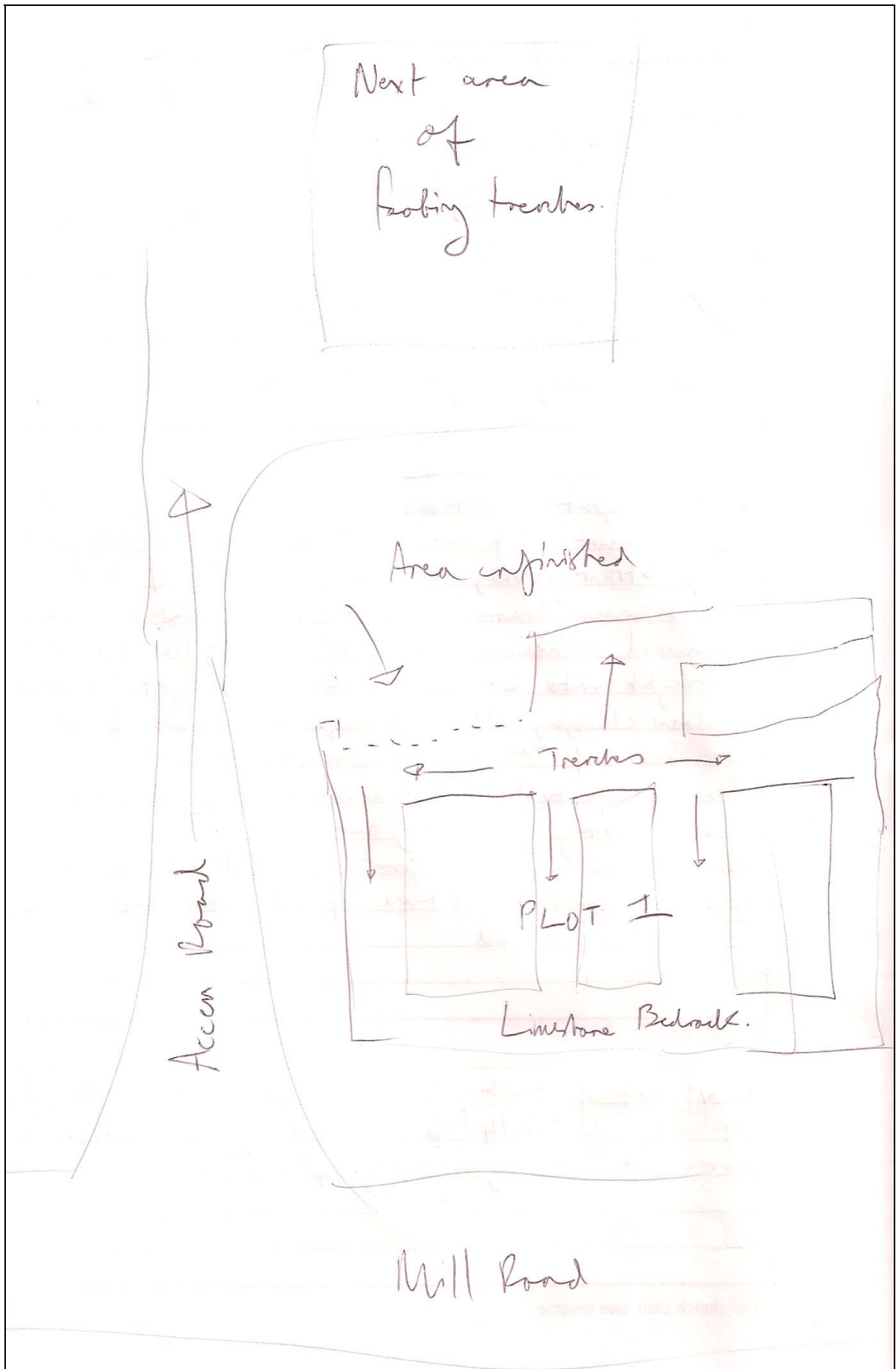
Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
|  A.S.C. LTD | | ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD | |
| Project: <u>Marcham, Mill Road</u> | | Project No/Code: <u>766 1 MMR</u> | Sheet: <u>1</u> of <u>1</u> |
| | | Date of visit: <u>10/02/2006</u> | |
| Client/Developer: <u>Troy Homes Ltd.</u> | | | |
| Contact: <u>Neil Wilson - groundworks</u> | | Phone: <u>07885 695316.</u> | |
| Duration of Visit (inc. travel): | Start: <u>10.05 am</u> | Finish: <u>14.00 pm</u> | |
| Completed by: <u>Lizzie Crill</u> | | | |
| 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: | | | |
| <u>Clear + Sunny, dry. Building site</u> | | | |
| Observations: | | | |
| <u>Plot 1.</u> | | | |
| 1 set of footing trenches for house nearest mill road, consisting of an area c. 15m ² with trenches c. 7m deep. Stratigraphy observed consisted of Mid greyish brown loamy topsoil c. 6m thickened with occasional inclusions of brick rubble + limestone → straight onto c. 0.1m thickened of light brownish yellow clayey silt with frequent inclusions of limestone. The base of the trenches consists of limestone bedrock. There seems to be a fair amount of groundwater accumulating since they were dug c. 3 hours ago. No archaeological deposits observed in these trenches. Trenches unfinished at time of this visit → approx. 2/3rds completed. | | | |
| Comments: | | | |
| Next set of trenches due to be excavated Monday/Tuesday of next week (13-14 Feb). Advised by Neil Wilson to come out Tuesday morning (14/02 Feb). | | | |

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003





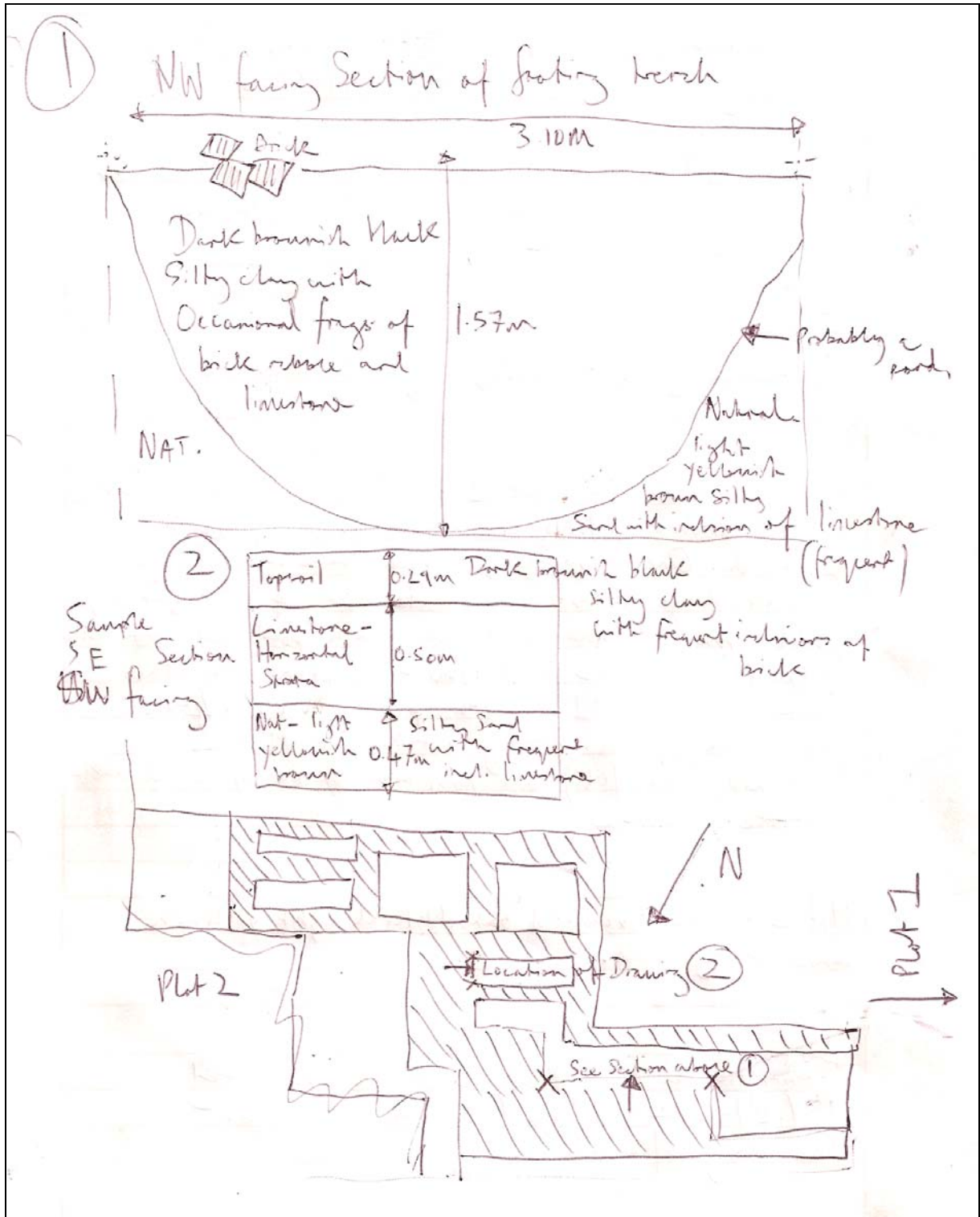
A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

| | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Project: Mill Road, Marcham | | Project No/Code: 766 / MMR | Sheet: 1 of 1 |
| | | Date of visit: 14/02/06 | |
| Client/Developer: Tony Homes | | | |
| Contact: Neil Wilson | | Phone: 07885 695316 | |
| Duration of Visit (inc. travel): | Start: 11.00 am | Finish: 15.30 pm | |
| Completed by: LIZZIE GILL | | | |
| 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: Sporadically bright/cloudy, dry. Building site | | | |
| Observations: | | | |
| Footing trenches for plot 2 observed (see overleaf for rough sketch plan). No archaeological deposits observed. One NW facing section contained a large area of dark deposit (see sketch overleaf) thought by Neil Wilson (groundworks) to have been a pond. It contained frequent inclusions of brick rubble + limestone. No other features observed. Max depth of trenches c. 1.2m. Min depth c. 1m. Footing trenches for plot 1 (observed 10/02/06) have now been partially filled with concrete. | | | |
| Plot 2 trenches excavated onto natural light yellowish brown silty sand. | | | |
| Comments: | | | |
| Footing trenches for Plot 3 to be excavated 15/02/06 - 16/02/06. Advised to visit Thursday 16/02/06. | | | |

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003





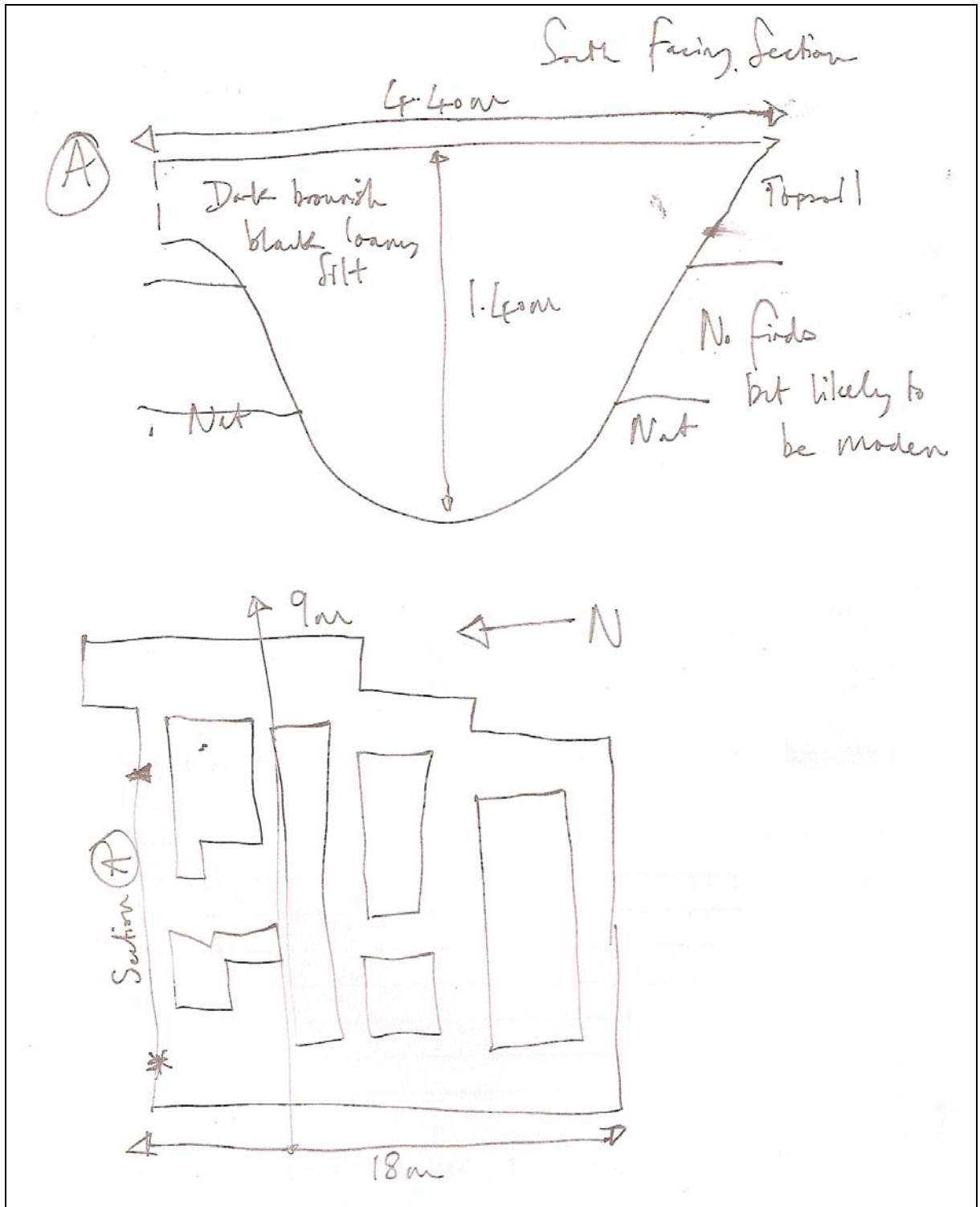
A.S.C. LTD


ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

| | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Project: Mill Road, Marcham | | Project No/Code: 766 1 MMR | Sheet: 1 of 1 |
| | | Date of visit: 16/02/06 | |
| Client/Developer: Troy Homes Ltd | | | |
| Contact: Neil Wilson | | Phone: 07885 695316 | |
| Duration of Visit (inc. travel): | Start: 11.30am | Finish: 14.45 | |
| Completed by: Lizzie Gill | | | |
| Development Type: | | | |
| Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Services | Roads | Levelling |
| | | | Quarrying |
| | | | Pipelines |
| | | | Other (specify): |
| Site & weather conditions: Very Wet, Overcast - Building Site | | | |
| Observations: Plot 3 footing trenches observed. Stratigraphy same as Plot 1 & 2. One large feature observed (see overleaf for sketch) appears to be cut through the topsoil + filled with dark brownish black loamy topsoil rich deposit. Lots of root action observed ^{seen} in this. No archaeological deposits present. | | | |
| Comments: Advised to re-visit site on Monday 20/02/06 for plot 4 + 5 footing trenches. | | | |

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



| | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
|  A.S.C. LTD | | ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD | | | | |
| Project: 3-5 Mill Road, Marcham | | Project No/Code: 776 1 MMR | | Sheet: 1 of 1 | | |
| | | Date of visit: 20/02/06. | | | | |
| Client/Developer: TRY Homes Ltd. | | | | | | |
| Contact: Neil Wilson | | | Phone: 07885 695 316 | | | |
| Duration of Visit (inc. travel): | | Start: 12.30am | | Finish: 15.30 | | |
| Completed by: LIZZIE GILL | | | | | | |
| Development Type: | | | | | | |
| Footings <input checked="" 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: Clear + Sunny - dry. | | | | | | |
| Observations: Came out to observe plots 4 + 5 trenches but there has been a delay in excavation which we were not informed about. | | | | | | |
| Comments: No time frame given for excavation of last two footing trenches - possibly Wednesday next week? | | | | | | |

Appendix 2 List of Photographs

| SITE NAME:3-5 Mill Road, Marcham, Oxfordshire | | | | SITE NO/CODE:766/MMR |
|---|-----|-------|---------|--|
| Shot | B&W | Slide | Digital | Subject |
| 1 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 1 10/02/06 |
| 2 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 1 10/02/06 |
| 3 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 1 10/02/06 |
| 4 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 1 10/02/06 |
| 5 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 1 10/02/06 |
| 6 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 1 10/02/06 |
| 7 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 1 10/02/06 |
| 8 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 2 14/02/06 |
| 9 | x | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 2 14/02/06 |
| 10 | x | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 2 14/02/06 |
| 11 | x | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 2 14/02/06 |
| 12 | x | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 2 14/02/06 |
| 13 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 2 14/02/06 |
| 14 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 2 14/02/06 |
| 15 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 2 14/02/06 |
| 16 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 2 14/02/06 |
| 17 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 2 14/02/06 |
| 18 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 2 14/02/06 |
| 19 | x | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 3 16/02/06 |
| 20 | x | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 3 16/02/06 |
| 21 | x | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 3 16/02/06 |
| 22 | x | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 3 16/02/06 |
| 23 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 3 16/02/06 |
| 24 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 3 16/02/06 |
| 25 | | | x | Monitoring of footing trenches for plot 3 16/02/06 |

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

| PROJECT DETAILS | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------|--|-----------|--------------------------------|----------|
| Project Name: | 3-5 Mill Road, Marcham, Oxfordshire | | | | | |
| Short Description: | <i>In February 2006, Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd. (ASC) undertook a watching brief on land at 3-5 Mill Road, Marcham, Oxfordshire. The settlement of Marcham originated during the latter part of the Anglo Saxon period and the site exists within an area of historical and archaeological significance. Four sets of footing trenches were excavated on the site and three of these were monitored for the presence of archaeological deposits. These trenches were found to contain signs of recent human activity, but no archaeological deposits were seen. The unobserved trenches were in close proximity to those that were monitored, and are unlikely to have contained any deposits of a pre-modern date.</i> | | | | | |
| Project Type: (indicate all that apply) | DBA | FW | Geophys | Survey | Bldg Rec | Post-Exc |
| | WB | Strip&Rec | Trenching | Test pits | Exc | Other |
| Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed) | none | | Previous work: (eg. SMR refs) | | - | |
| Current land use: | residential | | Future work: (yes / no / unknown) | | unknown | |
| Monument type: | - | | Monument period: | | - | |
| Significant finds: (artefact type & period) | - | | | | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | | | | | |
| County: | Oxfordshire | | OS reference: (to at least 8 figures) | | SU 4553 9658 | |
| District: | Marcham | | Parish: | | Marcham | |
| Site address: (with postcode if known) | 3-5 mill Road, Marcham, Oxfordshire | | | | | |
| Study area: (sq. m. or ha) | c.130m x c.60m | | Height OD: (metres) | | c.57m | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | | | | | |
| Organisation: | Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd | | | | | |
| Project brief originator: | Hugh Coddington | | Project design originator: | | Calli Rouse | |
| Project Manager: | Bob Zeepvat | | Director/Supervisor: | | Lizzie Gill | |
| Sponsor / funding body: | Try homes Ltd. | | | | | |
| PROJECT DATE | | | | | | |
| Start date: | 10 th February 2006 | | End date: | | 20 th February 2006 | |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | | | | | |
| | Location (Accession no.) | | Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets) | | | |
| Physical: | - | | - | | | |
| Paper: | County Museums Service (Oxfordshire Museums) | | Brief, Project Design and report, site records, photographs | | | |
| Digital: | County Museums Service (Oxfordshire Museums) | | Project Design and report, photographs | | | |

| BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report) | | | |
|---|--|-------|--|
| Title: | Archaeological Watching brief at 3-5 Mill Road, Marcham, Oxfordshire | | |
| Serial title & volume: | Archaeological Services and consultancy Report 766/MMR | | |
| Author(s): | Lizzie gill BSc PgDip | | |
| Page nos | | Date: | |