

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: 32 MARKET PLACE OLNEY MILTON KEYNES

on behalf of the Hospice of Our Lady & St John



Nigel Wilson HND AIFA

March 2006

ASC: 771/OMP/1

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	OMP	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	771
<i>Event No:</i>	1044	<i>Accession No:</i>	n/a
<i>Unitary Authority</i>	Milton Keynes		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Olney		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Olney CP		
<i>NGR (to 10 figs):</i>	SP 88955 51263		
<i>Present use:</i>	Yard to rear of shop		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Erection of store		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	05/0064/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Milton Keynes Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	8 th March 2006		
<i>Client:</i>	The Hospice of Our Lady & St John c/o David Hobbs Chartered Architect Ltd 1 Edgecote Great Holm Milton Keynes MK8 6AR		
<i>Contact name:</i>	David Hobbs		
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Internal Quality Check

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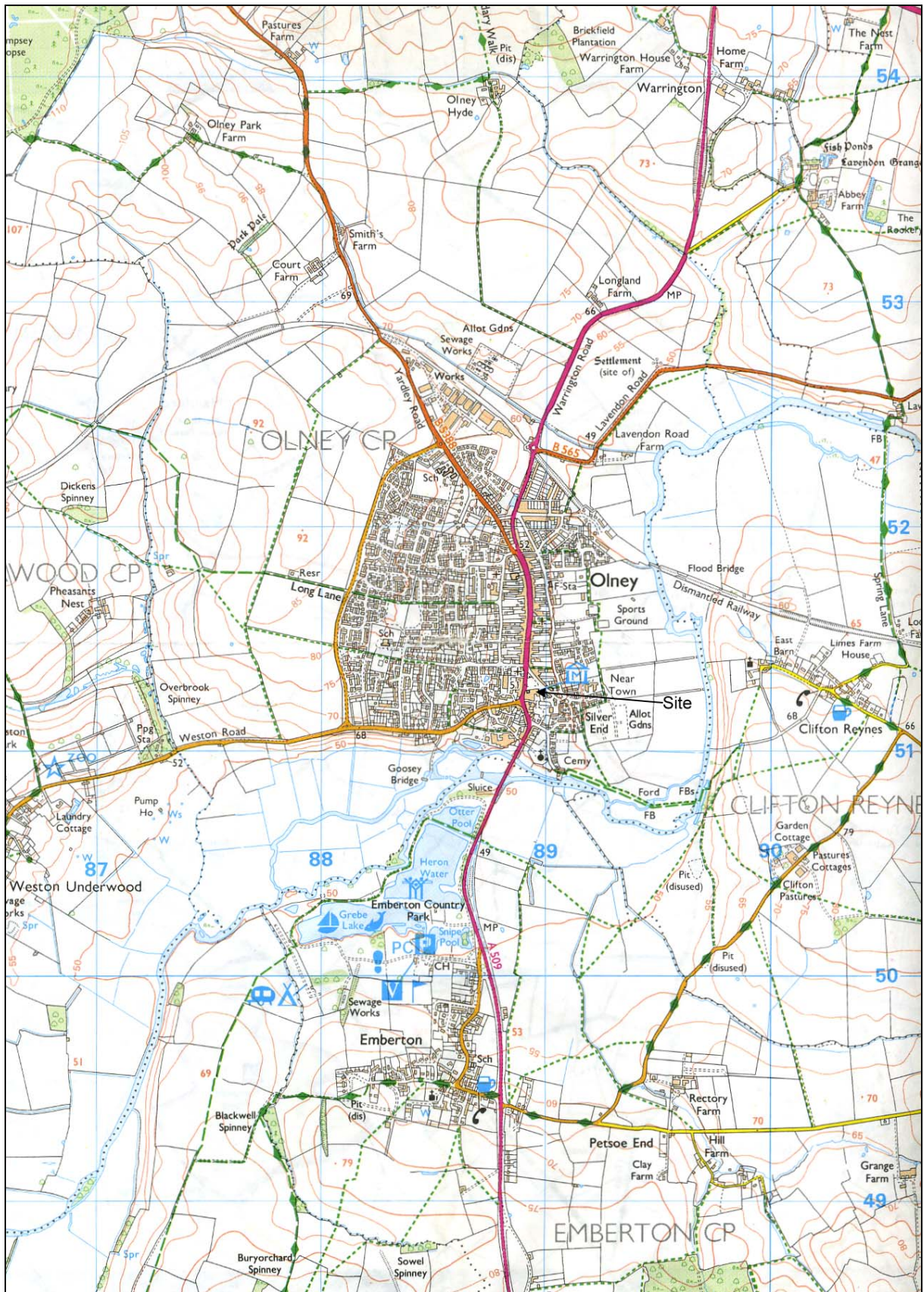


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During March 2006 a watching brief took place to the rear of 32 Market Place Olney, Milton Keynes. Two short footing trenches were excavated. Below the modern concrete surface natural gravel deposits extended down to the base of the trenches at c. 1.0m. No archaeology was seen in either trench.

1 Introduction

1.1 In March 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 32 Market, Place Olney (NGR SP 88955 51263: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by David Hobbs acting on behalf of The Hospice of Our Lady & St John, and was carried out according to a standard ASC method statement agreed with the Archaeological Officer, Milton Keynes Council. The relevant planning application reference is 05/00641/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 store.

1.3 *Location*

Olney lies towards the northern boundary of Milton Keynes Unitary Authority. The site is situated on the south side of Olney's market place (Fig 2). The new store is being constructed against the southern end of the existing west wall of number 32, Market Place. Access to the site is from the car park at the rear of the building.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area comprise the *Moreton Association*, namely well drained calcareous clayey soils, over Jurassic clay and limestone (Soil Survey 1983, 511b). The site is flat and lies at an elevation of c.50m OD.

1.6 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

Olney is an area of considerable archaeological and historical significance. Remains of a variety of periods have been found in the area but the focus of interest for the current project lies in the Roman and medieval periods.

Olney is situated in the valley of the river Great Ouse, which was an area of considerable importance during the prehistoric and Roman periods (*e.g.* Dawson (ed) 2000). Evidence for prehistoric activity in Olney is limited but during the Roman period a settlement developed north of the town at Ashfurlong. A sherd of Roman pottery has been recorded in a pre-medieval context at 106 High Street.

The town of Olney probably developed during the Saxon period but little is known of the early history of the town. Olney was mentioned in the Domesday survey (1086), where it is referred to as *Olnei*. The town was held directly by the *Bishop of Coutances* and was valued at £12 (Morris 1978, 145).

The medieval and modern town is dominated by the High Street, which runs north from the market place and the church of St Peter and St Paul, which dates from the 14th century (Pevsner and Williamson 2000, 587). East Street and West Street are aligned parallel to the High Street and form back lanes separated from the High Street by medieval tenement plots. This pattern of the tenements often survives as property boundaries to the present day.

A number of small watching briefs have been undertaken within the historic core of Olney, and the land is often disturbed. Only limited archaeological evidence from the medieval period has been gained to date.

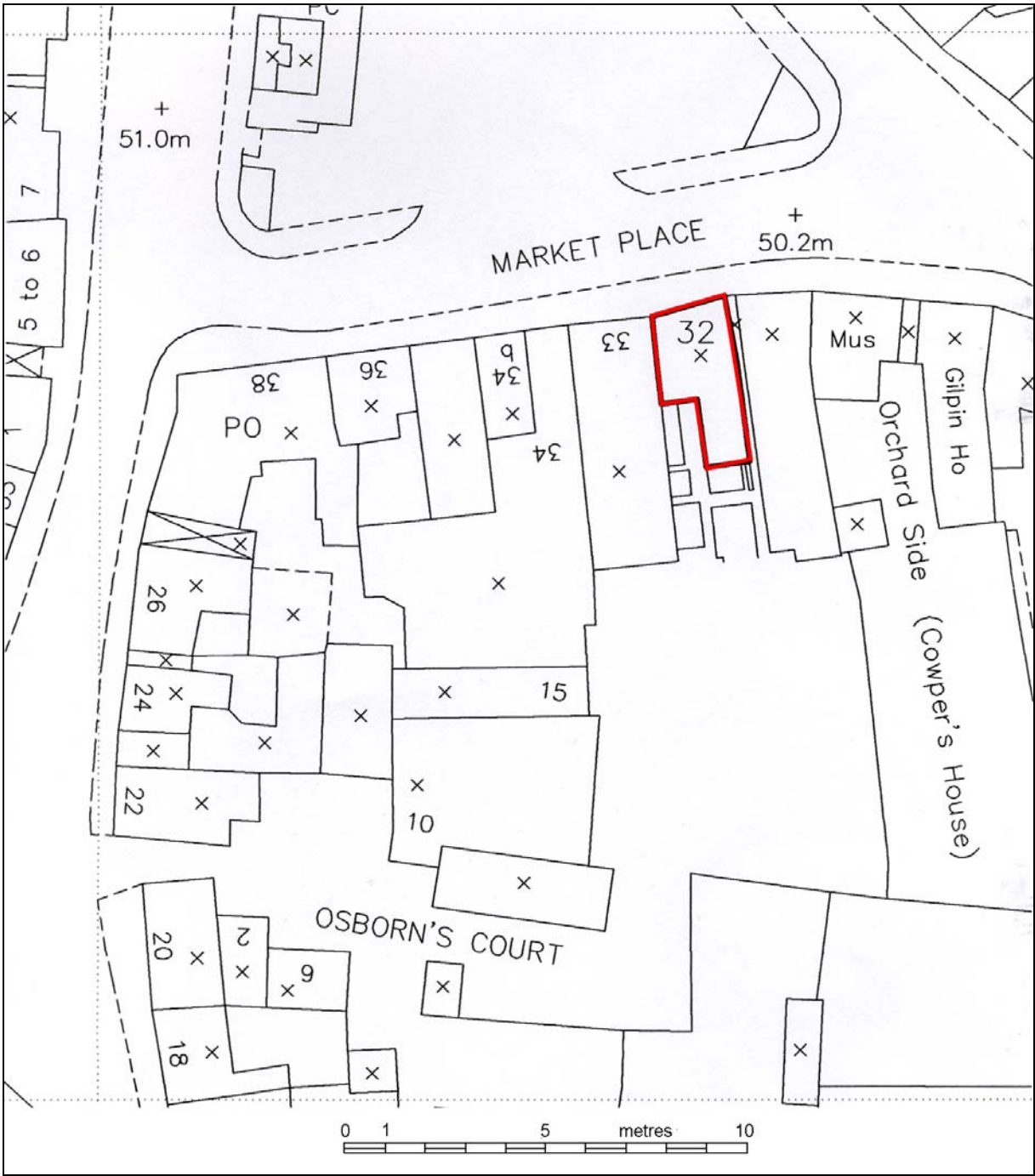


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:500)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were:

- To consider the location, extension, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains revealed by the development
- To produce an accurate and full record of any archaeological remains present, such that a permanent record will be made and the results presented in such a way that they can be re-examined and interpreted in the future

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 ASC's standard method statement for archaeological watching briefs, which required:

- Observation of soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision, on an intermittent basis;
- Inspection of sub-soil for archaeological features;
- The excavation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits;
- Sub-soil stripping under archaeological supervision;
- Examination of any service and foundation trenches and the subsequent recording of any exposed archaeological deposits;
- Rapid examination of spoil heaps for archaeological material.

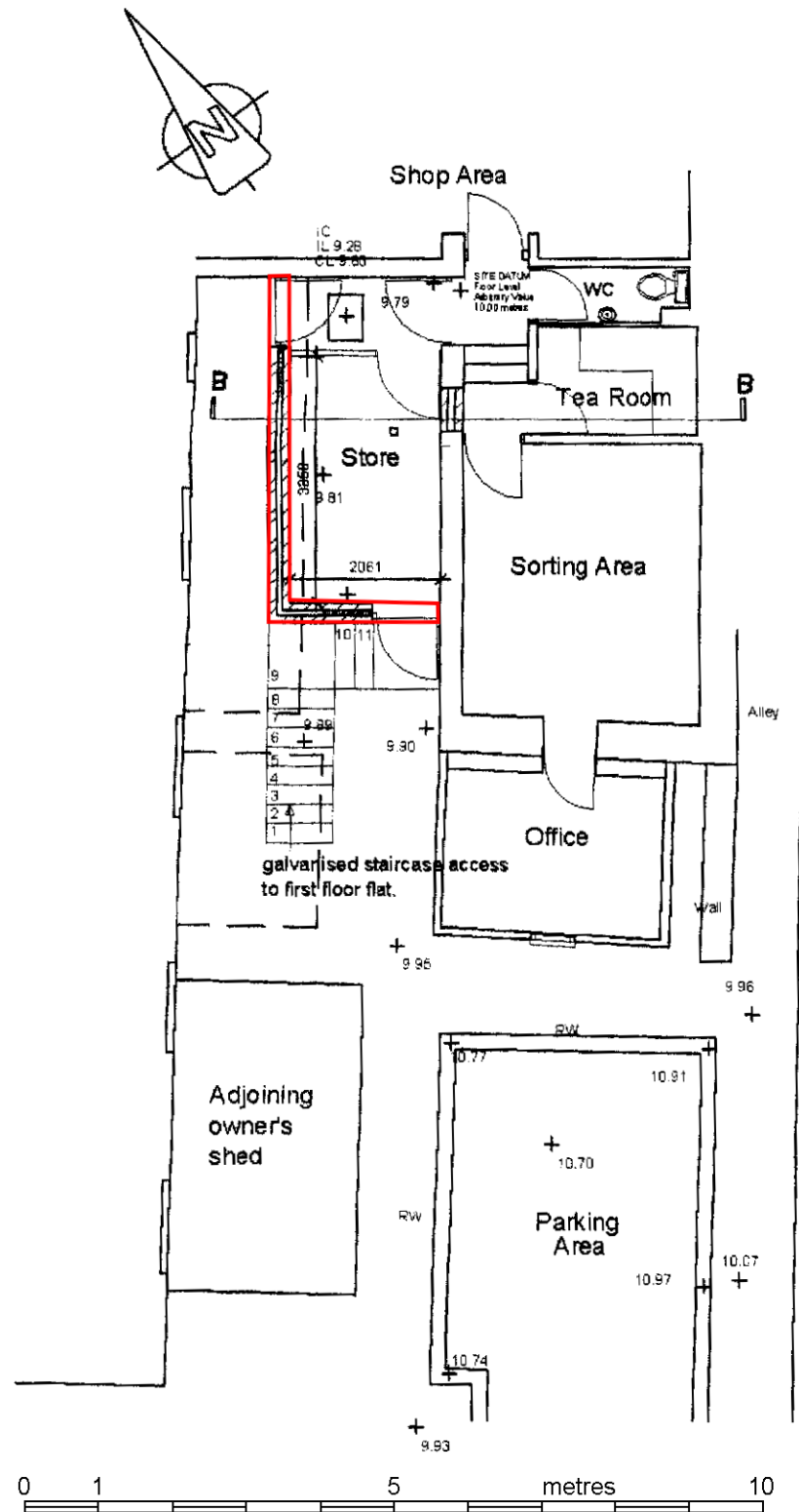


Figure 3: Development plan, footing outlined in red (scale 1:100)

3 Results

- 3.1 Two 0.4m wide footing trenches were mechanically excavated to a depth of c. 1.0m below the surrounding paved area. With the exception of a lump of concrete protruding from the north facing section of the south trench the sides and base of the footing trenches comprised yellowish sandy gravel. Due to the clean compacted nature and depth of this gravel it seems likely that it is a natural deposit.
- 3.2 No pottery or other artefacts were observed during the watching brief.



Plate 1: General view of the site looking north



Plate 2: The western footing trench looking north-west



Plate 3: The southern footing trench looking north-east

4. Conclusions

Despite being behind the Market Place the hub of the medieval town no evidence for earlier development of the site was observed during the watching brief.

5. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to David Hobbs for commissioning ASC Ltd to undertake the watching brief on behalf of The Hospice of Our Lady & St John. The writer would also like to thank Nick Crank at Milton Keynes Council for specifying the scope of the work required. The project was managed by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA who also undertook the field work assisted by Nigel Wilson.

6. Archive

Due to the negative nature and size of the project no formal archive will be prepared. However a CD will be deposited with the Milton Keynes SMR, containing a digital copy of the report and digital images taken during the watching brief.

7. References

Standards & Specifications

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

Dawson M (ed) 2000 *Prehistoric, Roman, and Post-Roman Landscapes of the Great Ouse Valley*. CBA Research Report **119**. Council for British Archaeology

Morris J (ed) 1978 *The Domesday Book. Buckinghamshire*. History from the Sources. Phillimore

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).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

**A.S.C. LTD****ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: 32 Market Place Olney		Project No/Code: 771/OMP		Sheet: 1 of 1	
		Date of visit: 8/3/2006			
Client/Developer The Hospice of Our Lady & St John					
Contact: David Hobbs (Architect)				Phone: 01908 260018	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 12.00			Finish: 1.15	
Completed by: NJW					
Development Type:					
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines
Other (specify):					
Site & weather conditions: Wet					
<p>Observations:</p> <p>Modern hard surface Clean compacted yellowish gravel >1.0m deep natural</p> <p>No archaeology only variation from gravel lump of concrete in north facing section of southern trench</p>					
<p>Comments:</p> <p>No further visits required</p>					

For sketch plan, use reverse

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Appendix 2: List of Photographs

[illegible]

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	32 Market Place, Olney					
Short Description:	<i>During March 2006 a watching brief took place to the rear of 32 Market Place Olney, Milton Keynes. Two short footing trenches were excavated. Below the modern concrete surface natural gravel deposits extended down to the base of the trenches at c. 1.0m. No archaeology was seen in either trench.</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)		n/a	
Current land use:	Yard		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		No	
Monument type:	n/a		Monument period:		n/a	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	n/a					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	n/a		OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)		SP 88955 51263	
District:	Milton Keynes		Parish:		Olney CP	
Site address: (with postcode if known)						
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	40 sq. m		Height OD: (metres)		50 aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	n/a		Project design originator:		ASC	
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat		Director/Supervisor:		Bob Zeepvat	
Sponsor / funding body:	Developer					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	8/3/2006		End date:		8/3/2006	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	n/a					
Paper:	n/a					
Digital:	Milton Keynes SMR		CD			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:	Serial title & volume:		Author(s):		Page nos	
Watching brief report			Nigel Wilson		3/2006	