



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:  
STRAWBERRY TREE COTTAGE  
MILTON ERNEST  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

*on behalf of Mr Jeff Knowles*



**Lizzie Gill BSc PgDip**

**March 2006**

**ASC: 780/STR/1**

Letchworth House  
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall,  
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE  
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700  
Email: [office@archaeological-services.co.uk](mailto:office@archaeological-services.co.uk)  
Website: [www.archaeological-services.co.uk](http://www.archaeological-services.co.uk)



## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	STR	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	780
<i>Event No:</i>		<i>Accession No:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Milton Ernest		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Milton Ernest		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 0172 5602		
<i>Present use:</i>	Garden		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of a bungalow and garden with associated access		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	03/01530/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Bedford Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> March 2006		
<i>Client:</i>	Petsoe Manor Farmhouse Petsoe End Emberton Olney MK46 5JN		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Jeff Knowles		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Elizabeth Gill	<i>Date:</i>	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2006
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

© Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

No part of this document is to be copied in any way without prior written consent.

Every effort is made to provide detailed and accurate information. However, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd cannot be held responsible for errors or inaccuracies within this report.

© Ordnance Survey maps reproduced with the sanction of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

ASC Licence No. AL 100015154

# CONTENTS

Summary .....	4
1. Introduction .....	4
2. Aims & Methods .....	6
3. Archaeological & Historical Background .....	7
4. Results & Conclusions. ....	9
5. Acknowledgements .....	11
6. Archive .....	11
7. References .....	12

## Appendices:

1. Site Monitoring Record Sheets.....	13
2. Photo List.....	15
3. ASC OASIS Form .....	16

## Figures:

1. General location .....	3
2. Site plan .....	5

## Plates:

*Cover:* View across the site towards Radwell Road

1. View of the site prior to excavation of footing trenches .....	10
2. View of the site during excavation of the footing trenches.....	10
3. NW facing section at the SW end of the site.....	10
4. NW facing section at the eastern edge of the site.....	10
5. Post excavation view of the post medieval well.....	10
6. SW facing section of well with footing trench running through the middle.....	10



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

## Summary

*During March 2006, ASC Ltd undertook a watching brief on land to the rear of The Strawberry Tree Restaurant, Radwell Road, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire. The work was commissioned in advance of residential development. The excavation of the footing trenches was observed, but no archaeological finds or features were noted.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In March 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Strawberry Tree Cottage, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire (NGR 03/01530/FUL: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mr Jeff Knowles, and was carried out according to a standard project design (Rouse 2005) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Bedford Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Bedfordshire County Archaeological Officer*. The relevant planning application reference is 03/01530/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 bungalow and garden with associated access. An archaeological evaluation of the site prior to development was carried out by ASC in 2005 (Wilson 2005). Its findings are summarised in para. 3.7 of this report.

### 1.3 *Location*

The development site is located in the centre of Milton Ernest, on the southern side of Radwell Road (Fig. 1), at NGR TL 0172 5602.

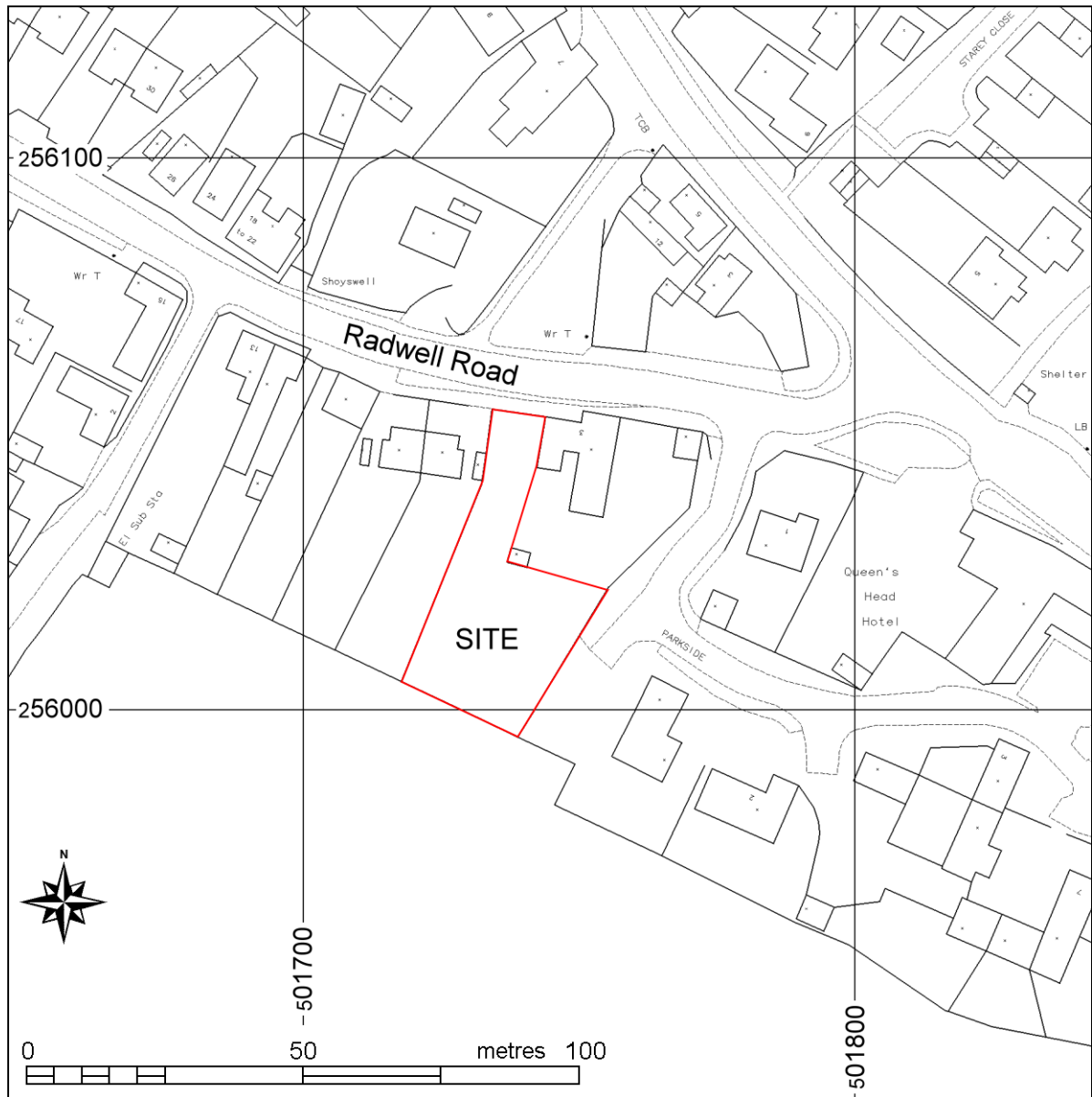
### 1.4 *Description*

The site is surrounded to the west and east by housing, and to the south by fields. Access to the site is from the north, from Radwell Road (Fig. 2). The site is within the bounds of the rear garden of 3 Radwell Road. There are no buildings within the boundaries of the garden.

### 1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area are of the *Moreton Association*, and the underlying geology consists of Jurassic clay and limestone. The underlying soils are characterised as *well drained calcareous clayey and fine loamy soils over limestone, in places shallow and brashy. Some deeper slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils* (Soil Survey, 1983, 511b). The site lies at an elevation of c.45m AOD.





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

## 2 Aims & Methods

### 2.1 Aims

As agreed with the AA, 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 of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- to recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- to recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

### 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), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

### 2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to a standard method statement, which required:

- a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording during groundworks.
- any ground disturbance likely to have an impact on archaeological deposits to be undertaken under the supervision of a competent archaeologist.
- The investigation and recording of encountered archaeological deposits and their relationships.

### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

The Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) maintains a listing of all the known archaeological and historical sites in Bedfordshire, and is used as the primary source for rapid historical research within the county.

#### 3.1 Prehistoric *(before 43 AD)*

There is no record of any human activity pre-dating the Roman period within the village of Milton Ernest and its surrounding area. The only possible exception is an undated cropmark *c.*700m to the north east of the site, possibly showing a large rectilinear enclosure (HER3309).

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

Less than 300m to the south west of the proposed development is the site of a possible Roman ford and associated Roman coins (HER1325), while *c.*300m to the east of the site, a dense scatter of Roman pottery was found on Bedford Road (HER1937): (Simco, 1984, 112). Approximately 400m further to the east of the proposed development is the site of a Roman ditch, within which Roman brick was found during the construction of the Milton Ernest Water Pipeline (HER16127) (BCCAS, 95/21).

#### 3.4 Saxon and Medieval *(c.450-1500)*

There is no evidence for Saxon activity within Milton Ernest and its surrounding area. There appears to have been a settlement in the area since the early medieval period, to the east and north east of the current village is the site of a Deserted Medieval Village (DMV), which is listed as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (HER1323). The development site itself falls within the bounds of the medieval village settlement of Milton Ernest (HER17057). To the east of the proposed development, *c.*600m away, pieces of slag (iron smelting debris) thought to date to the medieval period or earlier were dug out of a permanent ley (Hutching, 1969, 75). Closer to the site, at 42 Radwell Road, a medieval Papal Bull of Clement V (1305 – 1314) was found (HER16031) (Beds Arch, 1991,75).

#### 3.6 Post-Medieval *(1500-1900)*

The HER records several sites in the area surrounding Milton Ernest from the post-medieval period. *c.*400m to the north west of the proposed development is a clay pit, recorded in 1708 as 'Claypitt Furlong' (HER9891). Less than *c.*300m to the south of the proposed development is an area marked 'North Warren' and 'South Warren' on the 1803 Enclosure Map (HER9892). The 1803 Enclosure Award also mentions the Milton Ernest Work House (HER1884), which was located close to the proposed development. To the south east of the site, *c.*500m away, is the site of a sand pit, which was marked on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (HER2981). Post medieval features were also noted during the construction of the Milton Ernest Water Pipeline, which were deemed to be associated with demolished buildings and agricultural activity (HER16128) (BCCAS, 95/21).

There are a large number of listed buildings within the village of Milton Ernest. Milton Ernest Hall (HER1093) was built 1853-58 by William Butterfield, and is Grade I listed. There are also several listed buildings on Radwell Road. 25 Radwell



Road, known as Swan House (HER5783), is a Grade II listed C18 red brick house. 15 Radwell Road (HER5784) dates to the C17 – C18 and is Grade II listed. Most significantly, 3 Radwell Road (HER5785), the building attached to the plot of the proposed development, is also a C17 – C18 Grade II listed building.

### **3.7 Previous Archaeological Work**

During September 2005, ASC Ltd undertook an evaluation on the site (Wilson 2005). The work was requested by the AA to inform proposals for residential development. Four trenches were excavated. A small stone-built oven or kiln was revealed in one of the trenches. Despite total excavation no indication of its date or function was established but it probably pre-dates the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A second scooped area of burning and a shallow east – west ditch or gully were also exposed during the evaluation.

## 4 Results and Conclusions

- 4.1 A single monitoring visit was made to the site on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006.
- 4.2 The site had already been stripped of *c.*0.3m of dark brownish black silty loam topsoil prior to excavation of the footing trenches. The stratigraphy observed in the trench sections consisted of *c.*0.4m of topsoil and subsoil and *c.*1.6m of natural mid yellowish brown silty sand with patches of mid brownish grey silty clay (Plates 3 & 4). Some sections of the footing trenches were excavated down to the top of the natural limestone bedrock.
- 4.3 A well was observed towards the middle of the footing trenches, lined with Victorian red brick and filled with brick and porcelain tile rubble, petrol cans and plastic debris (Plates 5 & 6). No other archaeological features or deposits were observed on the stripped area or within the footing trenches.
- 4.4 No trace of the features noted in the evaluation was apparent during the watching brief, suggesting that they were perhaps less substantial than the evaluation report had indicated.
- 4.5 *Confidence Rating*  
The watching brief visit was made on a damp, overcast day. Full co-operation was received from the contractors on site. A high confidence rating is therefore given to the project.



**Plate 1:** View of the site prior to excavation of footing trenches



**Plate 2:** View of the site during excavation of the footing trenches



**Plate 3:** NW facing section at the SW end of the site



**Plate 4:** NW facing section at the eastern edge of the site



**Plate 5:** Post excavation view of the post medieval well



**Plate 6:** SW facing section of well with footing trench running through the middle

## **6. Acknowledgements**

The writer is grateful to Jeff Knowles for commissioning the watching brief. We would also like to thank Martin Oake, County Archaeological Officer, for monitoring the fieldwork on behalf of Bedford Borough Council. Steve Coleman at the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record assisted in the historic background search. The project was managed by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA, and the fieldwork was carried out by the writer.

## **7. Archive**

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Initial Report
2. Site Monitoring Sheets
3. Site record drawings
4. List of photographs/slides
5. Colour slides
6. B/W prints & negatives
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum

## 8. 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)*.
- Rouse C 2005 *9a High Street, Wymington: Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief, on behalf of Miss Michelle Moran & Mr Philip Sapwell*. ASC document 743/WHS/1.

### *Secondary Sources*

- BCCAS. 1995. *The Milton Ernest Water Pumping Main (Anglian Water): Archaeological Watching Brief*.
- Hutchings, J.B. 1969. *Milton Ernest – A Field Survey* in *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal* volume IV. 75
- Simco, A. 1984. *Survey of Bedfordshire: Roman Period*. 112
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Wilson N 2005 *Archaeological Evaluation: Land to the Rear of the Strawberry Tree Restaurant, Radwell Road, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire*. ASC report 720/STR/2.
- Wingfield, C & Holgate, R. 1991. *Acquisitions, Enquiries, Research on Collections and Fieldwork at Bedford and Luton Museums, 1988-89* in *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal* volume XIX. 75




# Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>	
Project: <u>Land to the rear of Strawberry Tree Restaurant, Milton Ernest</u>		Project No/Code: <u>780 / STR</u>	Sheet: <u>1</u> of <u>1</u>
Client/Developer: <u>/</u>		Date of visit: <u>20/03/06</u>	
Contact: <u>Jeff Kroules</u>		Phone: <u>07717835157</u>	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <u>7.30 am</u>	Finish: <u>3.40 pm</u>	
Completed by: <u>LIZZIE GILL</u>			
<b>Development Type:</b>			
<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>Showers + overcast - Cold</u>			
Observations:			
<p>Excavation of footing trenches observed. Stratigraphy throughout footing trenches uniform, consisting of c. 0.4m of topsoil and subsoil and c. 1.6m of natural mid yellowish brown silty sand with patches of mid brownish grey silty clay. Topsoil consists of dark brownish black silty loam and subsoil of dark brownish grey silty loam. Some sections of the footing trenches have been excavated down to the top of the natural limestone bedrock. A well of <del>modern</del> modern date was observed towards the middle of the footing trenches, lined in Victorian red brick and filled with brick and porcelain tile rubble, petrol cans and plastic debris. No archaeological deposits were observed.</p>			
B+W - 17+18 SW facing Section 19+20 - NW facing Section			
Comments:			
<p>Ground through which footing trenches were dug has already been stripped of c. 0.3m topsoil. Measurement recorded above includes this 0.3m of topsoil in the description of the strat.</p>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

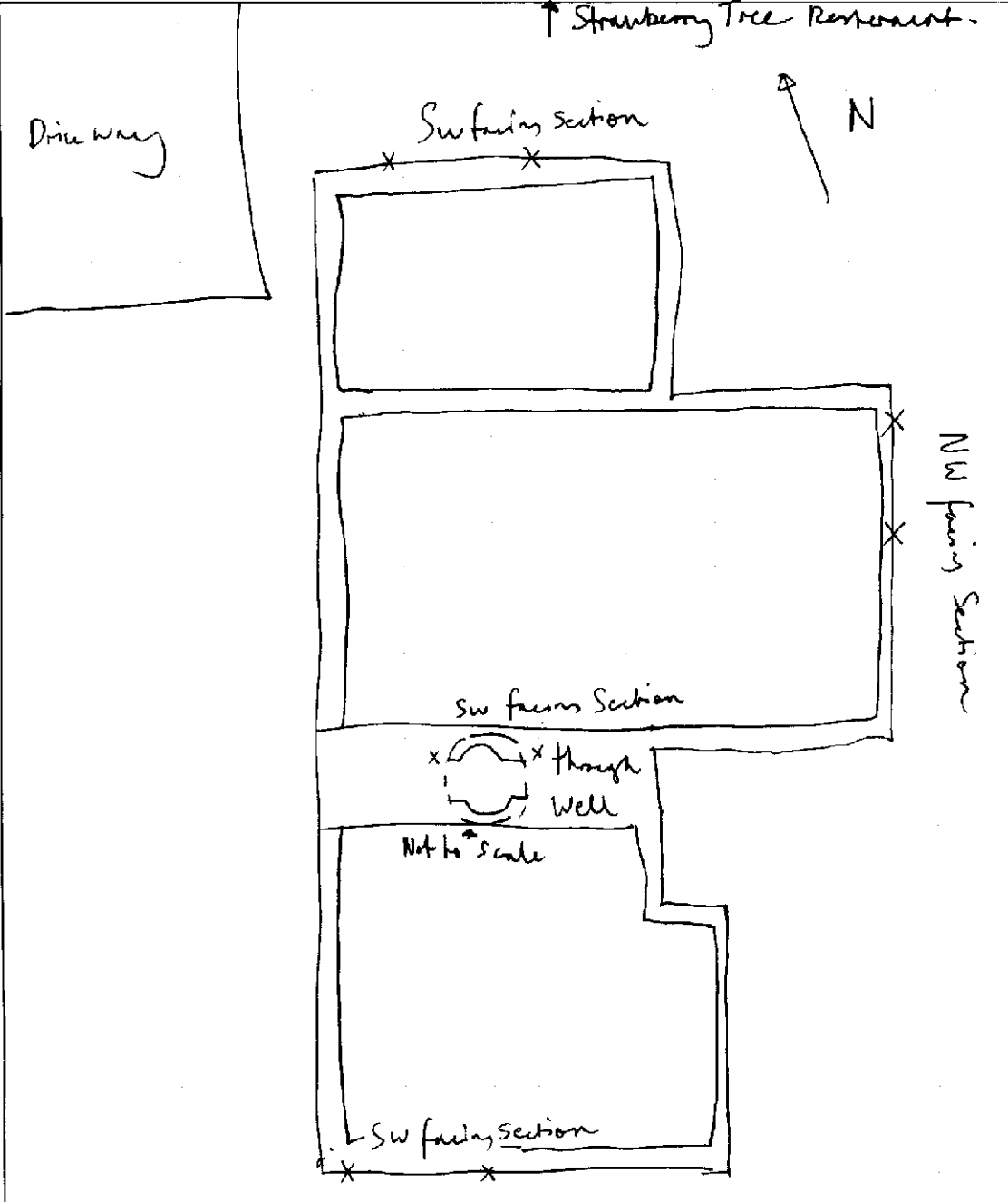
©ASC, 2003



 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>SKETCH SHEET</b>	
Site Name:	Site Code:	Orientation:	
Context:			

↑ Strawberry Tree Restaurant.



X    X = photographed.

RECORDING NOTES				
Recorded by:	Date:	Digitised by:	Date:	Sheet number:    of

## Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Strawberry Tree Cottage, Milton Ernest				SITE NO/CODE:780/STR
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			✓	General view of site
2			✓	General view of site
3			✓	General view of site
4			✓	General view of site
5			✓	General view of site
6			✓	Well – pre-excavation
7			✓	NW facing footing trench section
8			✓	General view of site
9			✓	SW facing footing trench section
10			✓	NW facing footing trench section
11			✓	Well – post-excavation
12			✓	General view of site
13				
14				
15				
16				
17	✓			SW facing section
18	✓			SW facing section
19	✓			NW facing section
20	✓			NW facing section

**Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form**

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	Strawberry Tree, Radwell Road, Milton Ernest, Beds					
Short Description:	During March 2006, ASC Ltd undertook a watching brief on land to the rear of The Strawberry Tree Restaurant, Radwell Road, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire. The work was commissioned in advance of developing the land. The excavation of the footing trenches was observed, but no archaeological finds or features were noted.					
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	DBA	FW	Geophys	Survey	Bldg Rec	Post-Exc
	<u>WB</u>	Strip&Rec	Trenching	Test pits	Exc	Other
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None		Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)		ASC/720/STR	
Current land use:	Residential		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		No	
Monument type:	-		Monument period:		-	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	-					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Bedfordshire		OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)		TL 0172 5602	
District:	-		Parish:		Milton Ernest	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Strawberry Tree Cottage, Radwell Road, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)			Height OD: (metres)		c.45m	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	-		Project design originator:		-	
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat		Director/Supervisor:		Lizzie Gill	
Sponsor / funding body:	Jeff Knowles					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	20/03/2006		End date:		20/03/2006	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	-		-			
Paper:	Bedford Museum		Report, site records			
Digital:	Bedford Museum		Report, site records			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Strawberry Tree Cottage, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire					

Serial title & volume:	Archaeological Services and Consultancy Report 780/STR		
Author(s):	Lizzie Gill BSc PgDip		
Page nos		Date:	29 <sup>th</sup> March 2006