



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
CHURCH FARM, WESTON UNDERWOOD
MILTON KEYNES**

on behalf of Mr J. Howson



Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA

August 2006

ASC: 791/WCF/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	WCF	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	791
<i>Event No:</i>	1063	<i>Accession No:</i>	2007.5
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire (historic county)		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Weston Underwood		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Weston Underwood		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 8638 5048		
<i>Present use:</i>	Disused farm buildings		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Conversion of existing farm buildings for mixed use, and construction of new dwelling and garages		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	05/01318/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Milton Keynes Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	25 th July 2006		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr J. Howson c/o R. Carlisle – Architectural Services 64 Wolverton Road Newport Pagnell MK16 8JG		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Roger Carlisle		
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Internal Quality Check

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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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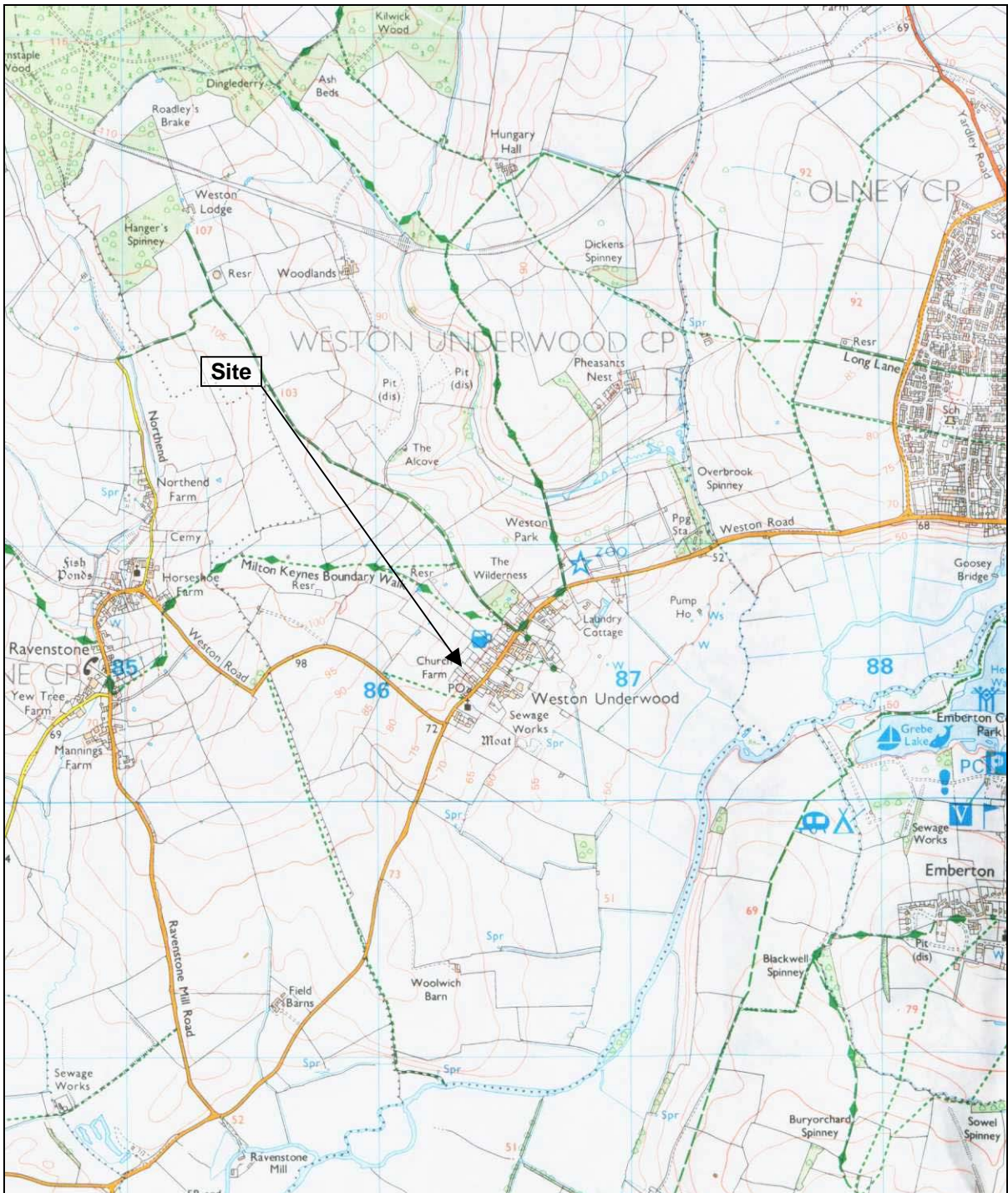


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In July 2005 trial trenching was undertaken at Church Farm, Weston Underwood in advance of the conversion of adjoining farm buildings for residential and office use, and the construction of a new dwelling and garage block. Three trenches opened on the site of former farm buildings revealed only 19th and 20th-century structural evidence relating to various phases of those buildings. No evidence for any earlier phases of occupation or activity were present.

1 Introduction

1.1 In July 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Church Farm, Weston Underwood (NGR SP 8638 5048: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by the project architect, Roger Carlisle, on behalf of the client, Mr J. Howson, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2006), and a brief (Crank 2006) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Milton Keynes Council*, by their archaeological advisor. The relevant planning application reference is 05/01318/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of a new dwelling and garage block. The farm buildings on the site, which are of late 18th century date and are to be converted for a mixture of office and residential use, were the subject of an historic building assessment carried out by ASC (Crank 2005).

1.3 *Services, Buildings, Access, Etc*

Access to the site is via the High Street, through a gate leading to the yards around which most of the buildings are located. The farmhouse to the right of the entrance is a Grade II listed building. To the north-west of the house, and across the yard to the west, are two ranges of 'barns'. The yard is partly concrete, partly 'rough ground', separated by block and stone walls. To the northwest lies a smaller concrete yard, with a dilapidated range of buildings. To the north-east of the farmhouse is a rectangular dovecote and wash-house / brew-house.

1.4 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area are of the *Hanslope Association*, which are characterised as *slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. Some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils. Slight risk of water erosion.* The underlying geology is described as *chalky till* (Soil Survey, 1983, 411d). The site lies at an elevation of c.75m AOD.

1.5 *Historical & Archaeological Background*

The village of Weston Underwood is mentioned in *Domesday* and probably has its origins in the Saxon period. The place-name contains the Old English elements *west + tun* meaning the west farmstead or village, the affix of Underwood most likely referring to its position in relation to Yardley Chase (Mawer & Stenton 1925). The

moated medieval manorial earthwork of *Pevers* is located some 300m south-east of the site (Crank 2005).

The village is best known for its association with the 18th-century poet William Cowper who made the village his home, living in *Cowper's House* between 1786 and 1795. The village boasts a numbers of fine Georgian and other 18th-century houses on the High Street, in addition to two examples of 17th-century architecture (Pevsner 1960). The farmhouse of Church Farm is also 18th century and is a Grade II listed building (Crank 2005).

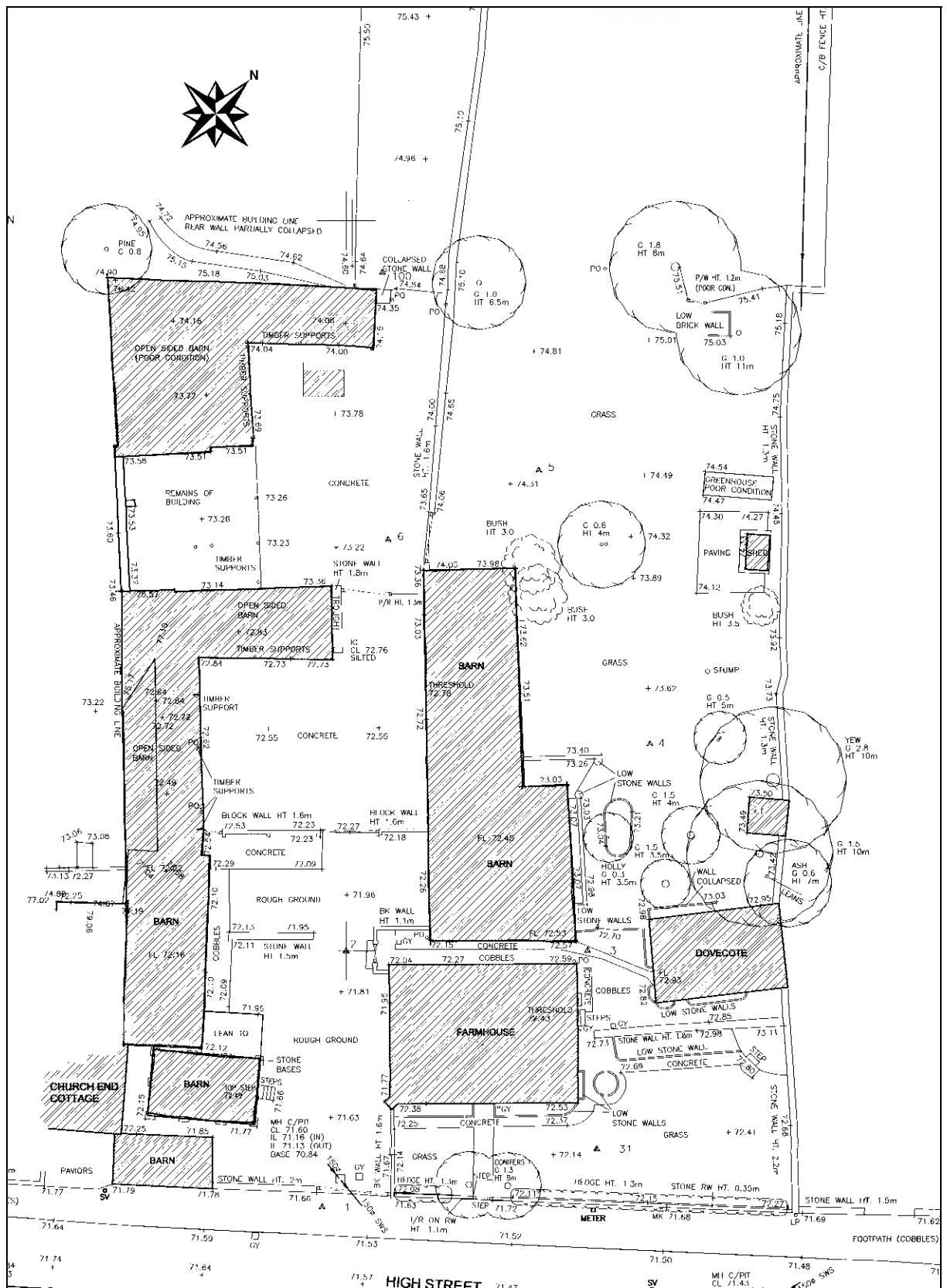


Figure 2: Pre-development site plan (scale 1:400)

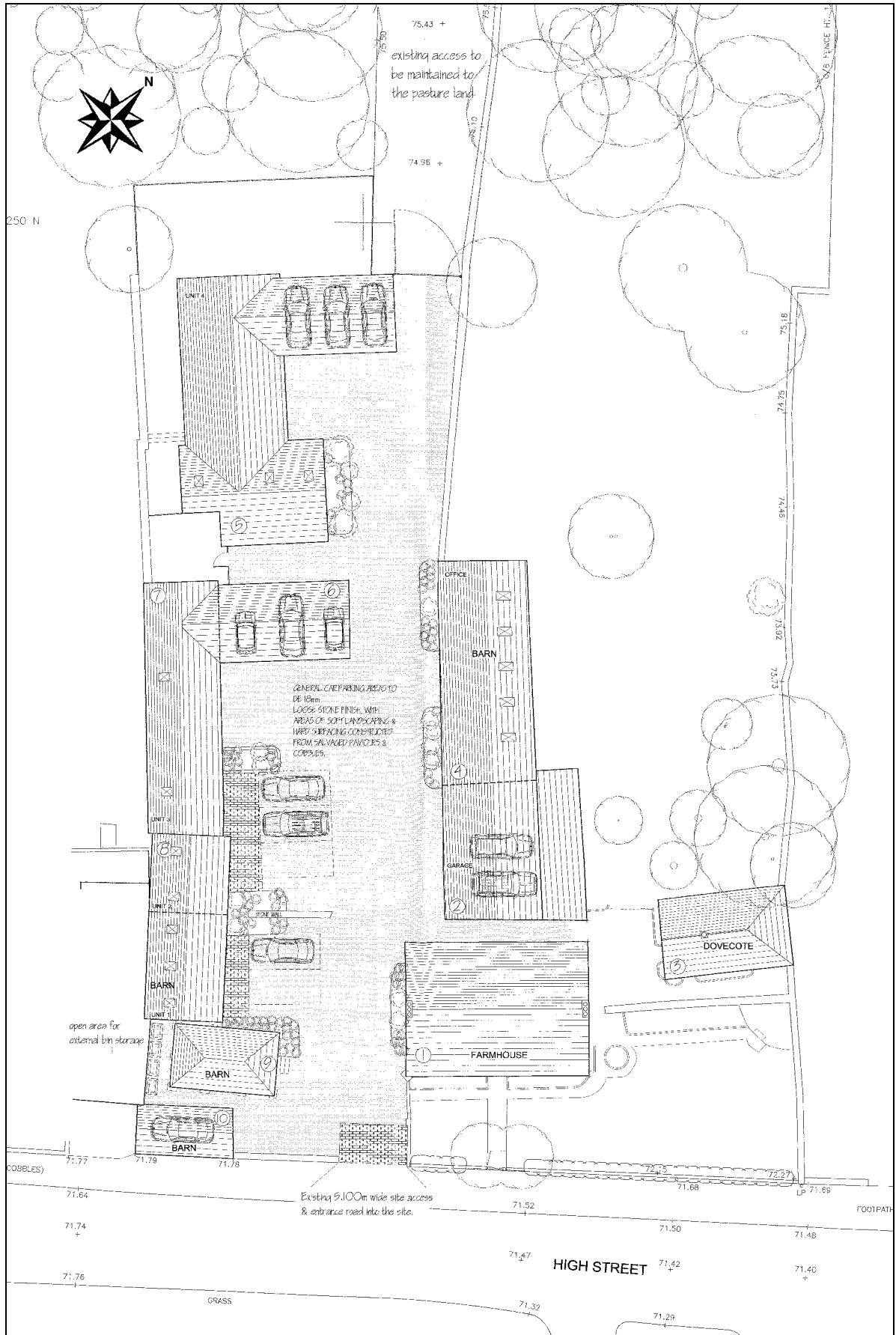


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:400)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 5), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To obtain information on the extent and character of the potential archaeology of the development site, together with information on the state of preservation and relative quality, in order that an indication of importance can be obtained.
- To indicate any potential options for minimising or avoiding damage as a result of the development.

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 5), which required:

- Machine based trial trenching within the footprint of the proposed new buildings comprising a minimum of 30 linear metres of trenching not less than 1.6m wide, with hand-cleaning and appropriate recording of any archaeological features revealed. Trench locations are shown in Fig. 4.

2.4 Constraints

There were no major constraints to the evaluation, other than the excessive temperature (*c.*30°C) and humidity in which the work was carried out. Excavation of Trench 1 was hindered by the presence of the timbers that had supported the front of the bundle-thatched barn, and had been left in situ at the request of the MKC Conservation Officer.

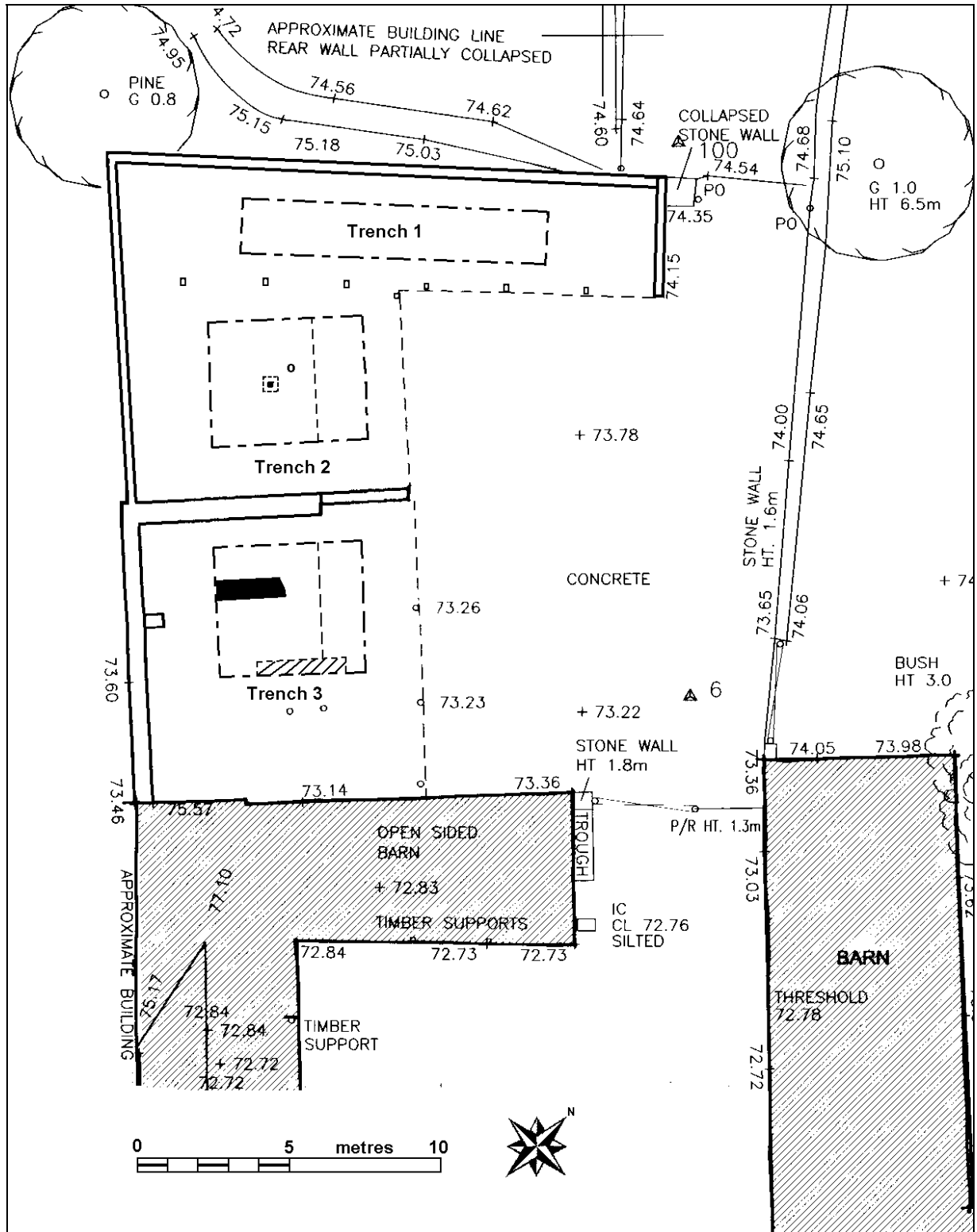


Figure 4: Trench location plan (scale 1:200)

3 Results

3.1 General

Three trenches were excavated as shown in the project design (Fig. 4). Detailed information relating to the trenches appears in the trench tables (Appendix 1).

For descriptive purposes, Church Farm is assumed to lie on a north-south axis, so that the High Street is to the south, and Trench 1 at the north end of the site.

3.2 Trench 1 (Plate 1)

Trench 1 was located within the former bundle-thatched building on the north side of the farmyard, Building 7 in the assessment report (Crank 2005, 14, fig. 2 & plate 14). It measured *c.* 10 × 1.6 metres, aligned roughly east-west.

The upper fill of the trench [11] comprised a mixture of dark brown/black loamy soil with brick and stone fragments, up to 0.35m deep. Beneath this was undisturbed subsoil [12], comprised of predominantly grey clay, with patches of yellow-brown clay.

A possible feature at the east end of the trench was subject to more detailed examination. It proved to be a deposit of slightly wetter, darker grey clay than the surrounding subsoil, with no defined edges and containing no archaeological finds.

3.3 Trench 2 (Plate 2)

Trench 2 was located to the south of Trench 1, within the site of a former modern lean-to shed, Building 6 in the assessment report (Crank 2005, 14, fig. 2 & plate 13). It measured *c.* 4 × 5 metres, aligned east-west.

The upper fill of the trench [21] was similar to Trench 1, comprising a mixture of dark brown/black loamy soil with brick and stone fragments, up to 0.3m deep. Partly covered by the above layer, the remains of a cobbled surface ran across the east end of the trench. The west edge of the cobbles was bounded by edge-set limestone blocks. Beneath the cobbles and loamy soil was clay subsoil [22], predominantly grey with patches of yellow-brown clay.

Two postholes had been cut into the natural clay, close to the centre of Trench 2. Posthole [23] was modern, with the remains of the post set in concrete. This posthole aligned with extant modern timber supports on the west and south sides of the lean-to, and was evidently part of its construction. Posthole [24], *c.* 0.6m to the north-east, was evidently earlier, being earth-fast and containing the carbonised remains of the post.

3.4 Trench 3 (Fig. 5, Plates 3 & 4)

Trench 3 (Fig. 5) was located in the roofless structure to the south of Trench 2, Building 5 in the assessment report (Crank 2005, 14, fig. 2 & plate 12). It measured *c.* 4.2 × 5.0m, aligned east-west.

The interior of this structure had evidently been used for some time as a store for surplus building materials, and the upper fill [31] of Trench 3 therefore comprised limestone rubble, with occasional inclusions of brick and concrete debris, and some dark brown/black loamy soil. On the south side of the trench was a modern geotechnical test pit [33], backfilled with limestone rubble and clay. The cobbled surface and edging noted in Trench 2 extended across the eastern side of Trench 3. Subsoil in the remainder of the trench [32] was similar to that in Trenches 1 and 2.

In the western half of the trench a wall [34] was revealed. It followed an east-west alignment, parallel to the standing stone wall to the north. It was c.0.6m wide, comprising a single course of limestone rubble set in an orange-brown clay matrix. No dating evidence for this feature was recovered.

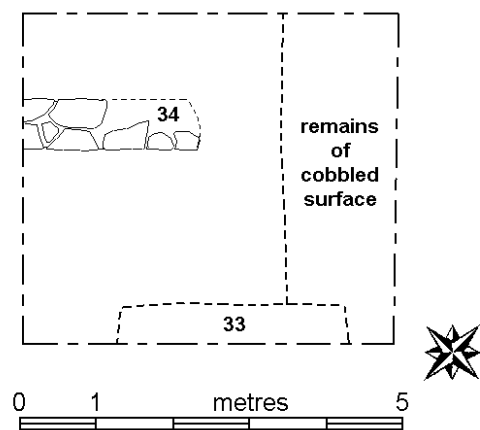


Figure 5: Trench 3 (scale 1:100)

3.5 Additional Information

During the excavation, the site was visited by the client and his uncle, whose family have owned Church Farm for many years. They confirmed that the wet area in Trench 1 is related to a naturally boggy area to the north of the farmyard. They also confirmed that the concrete-set post in Trench 2 was related to the former lean-to on the site, and that the cobbled surface on the west side of Trenches 2 and 3 lay at the front of the lean-to and a similar structure in the area of Trench 3. Unfortunately neither of them could throw any light on the function of the wall in Trench 3, which had not stood during their lifetimes.



Plate 1: Trench 1, from east



Plate 2: Trench 2, from south-west



Plate 3: Trench 3, from east



Plate 4: Trench 3, from south

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 Trenches 1 and 2 failed to reveal any features or finds of archaeological significance. The concrete lined post setting in Trench 2 was obviously of modern date. It is possible that it replaced the nearby earth-fast post when the structure was rebuilt in its final form, sometime in the 20th century. From its location, it is evident that the cobbled path on the east side of Trench 2 fronted the former Buildings 5 and 6 in their original form. It is possible that this surface is all that remains of the original farmyard surface, prior to its being relaid in concrete during the 20th century.
- 4.2 Apart from the cobbled path extending southwards from Trench 2, the principal feature of interest in Trench 3 was the section of wall [34] on the west side of the trench. From its construction and alignment this structure was probably related in some way to the wall to the north, which separated Buildings 5 and 6. However, there was no evidence to show whether it formed an internal division of Building 5, or part of an earlier structure on the same alignment. From discussion with the clients it is apparent that they were not aware of its existence, indicating that it must have been demolished at least 80 years ago. The available map evidence (Crank 2005, figs 3-5) suggests that any structure in this part of the farm is probably no earlier than 19th-century date.
- 4.3 No evidence for activity earlier than the 19th century was revealed in the evaluation. This accords with the findings of the historic building assessment, which suggested that this part of the farm complex was probably developed in the early years of the 19th century.

5 Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to the client, Mr J Howson, for commissioning this evaluation, and for his continued interest and support. Thanks are also due to the architect, Roger Carlisle. The project was monitored on behalf of Milton Keynes Council by Nick Crank. The evaluation was carried out by the writer, assisted by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA.

6 Archive

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. Site record drawings
7. List of photographs
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

6.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum, accession number 2007.5.

7 References

Standards & Specifications

Crank N 2006 *Church Farm, Weston Underwood: Brief for Archaeological Evaluation*
Milton Keynes Council, ref. PS/537/2/A/C1512.

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition.* English Heritage
(London).

IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct.*

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 2006 *Church Farm, Weston Underwood, Milton Keynes: Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation.* ASC doc. ref. 791/WCF/1.

Secondary Sources


Crank N 2005 *Historic Building Assessment: Church Farm, Weston Underwood, Olney, Milton Keynes.* ASC report 700/WCF/02.


Mawer, A & Stenton, F.M. 1925 *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire*


Pevsner, N 1960 *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire*

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

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	c.10m	Width	1.6m	Depth	c.0.35m
	Levels					
	Trench base west			73.81m OD		
	Trench top west			74.15m OD		
	Trench base east			73.73m OD		
	Trench top east			74.08m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	W	SP 86346 50476		E	SP 86353 50481	
	Orientation			West - east		
Reason for Trench			evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (m)	Max Thckn (m)	Depth BGL (m)	
11	layer	Mixture of dark grey-brown loamy soil with inclusions of building debris (brick, limestone)	-	0.35m		
12	natural	Mixed grey and orange-brown clay – natural subsoil	-	-	0.35	

Trench 2					
	Max Dimensions				
	Width	4.0m	Length	5.0m	
	Depth	c.0.25m	Level (top)	73.77m OD	
	NGR Co-ordinates				
	W: SP 86348 50472			E: SP 86355 50473	
Orientation					
Reason for Trench					
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (m)	Max Thckn (m)	Depth BGL (m)
21	layer	Mixture of dark grey-brown loamy soil with inclusions of building debris (brick, limestone)	-	0.25m	-
22	natural	Mixed grey and orange-brown clay – natural subsoil	-	-	0.25m
23	feature	Modern post set in concrete	0.34m square	-	0.25m
24	feature	Posthole containing decayed remains of earth-fast post			

Trench 3					
		Max Dimensions			
		Width	4.2m	Length	5.0m
		Depth	c.0.2m	Level (top)	73.26m OD
		NGR Co-ordinates			
		W: SP 86355 50466	E: SP 86362 50467		
Orientation					
Reason for Trench					
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (m)	Max Thckn (m)	Depth BGL (m)
31	layer	Building rubble, mostly limestone with some brick and concrete fragments, and dark brown/black loamy soil	-	0.2m	-
32	natural	Mixed grey and orange-brown clay – natural subsoil	-	-	0.2m
33	feature	Modern geotechnical test pit, backfilled with rubble and clay	3.0m	-	-
34	wall	W-E aligned wall, comprising a single course of limestone rubble set in a matrix of orange-brown clay. Similar to and on same alignment as standing wall to north	0.6m	c.0.15m	0.15m

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Church Farm, Weston Underwood				SITE NO/CODE: 791/WCF
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1	✓	○	✓	Trench 1 from east
2	✓	○	✓	Trenches 1 & 2 from east
3	✓	○	✓	Trench 2 from east
4	✓	○	✓	Trench 2 from south-west
5	✓	○	✓	Trench 2 – postholes from south
6	✓	○	✓	Trench 2 – postholes from south
7	✓	○	✓	Trench 3 from east
8	✓	○	✓	Trench 3 from east
9	✓	○	✓	Trench 3 from south

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Church Farm, Weston Underwood		
Short Description:	In July 2005 trial trenching was undertaken at Church Farm, Weston Underwood in advance of the conversion of adjoining farm buildings for residential and office use, and the construction of a new dwelling and garage block. Three trenches opened on the site of former farm buildings revealed only 19 th and 20 th -century structural evidence relating to various phases of those buildings. No evidence for any earlier phases of occupation or activity were present.		
Project Type:	Trenching		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	none	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	Building recording: MKC Event no. 983
Current land use:	Farmyard (disused)	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	unknown
Monument type:	-	Monument period:	-
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	Evidence for early C19 structure.		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Buckinghamshire	OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)	SP 8638 5048
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Church Farm, High Street, Weston Underwood, Olney		
Study area (sq. m. or ha)	c.0.25ha	Height OD (metres):	c.74m OD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Nick Crank, MKC	Project design originator:	Calli Rouse, ASC Ltd
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA	Director/Supervisor:	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA
Sponsor / funding body:	Mr J. Howson		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	25/07/2006	End date:	25/07/2006
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	-	none	
Paper:	Bucks County Museum	Box file with site records, plans, photos	
Digital:	Bucks County Museum	CD in box file	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation: Church Farm, Weston Underwood, Milton Keynes		
Serial title & volume:	ASC report 791/WCF/02		
Author(s):	Bob Zeepvat		
Page nos	n/a	Date:	10/08/2006