

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
CRAFTON STUD FARM
CRAFTON
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

on behalf of Derek Mills Esq



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& Jonathan R Hunn BA PhD MIFA**

November 2006

ASC: 832/CSF/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	CSF	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	832
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Crafton		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Mentmore		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 89295 19090		
<i>Present use:</i>	Paddock		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Manege (equestrian training area)		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	06/2222		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	November 17 th 2006		
<i>Client:</i>	Derek Mills Crafton Stud Farm Crafton Mentmore LU7 0QJ		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Derek Mills		
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Internal Quality Check

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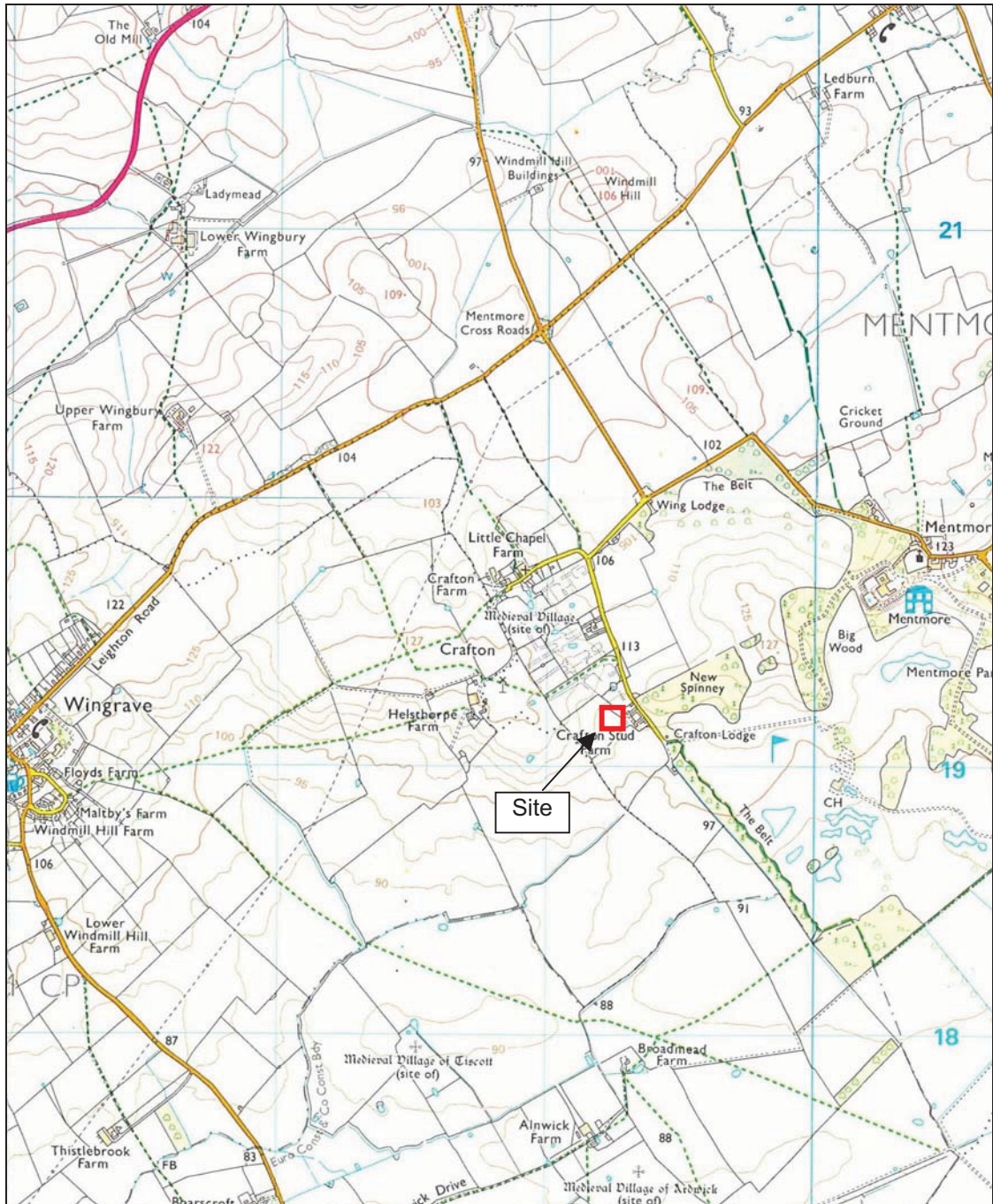


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In mid November 2006, Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd. (ASC) undertook an archaeological evaluation on the site of a proposed manege at Crafton Stud Farm, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire. The site lay in the vicinity of a Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement and the proposed development had the potential to disturb or destroy significant archaeological remains. Two trial trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development, but no archaeological remains were present in the trenches. The occasional presence of isolated archaeological remains, away from the trenches, cannot be entirely discounted, but it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological remains or artefacts are present on the site.

1 Introduction

1.1 In November 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out an evaluation at Crafton Stud Farm, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire (Figure 1). The project was commissioned by Derek Mills, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Hunn 2006), and a *brief* (Radford 2006) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Aylesbury Vale District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service*. The relevant planning application reference is 06/2222.

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 manege for the exercise and training of horses.

1.3 *Location*

The site is situated in the parish of Mentmore, in the administrative district of Aylesbury Vale, Buckinghamshire and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 89295 19090 (Figure 1). Crafton is a small hamlet within the parish of Mentmore and site is located *c.*650m to the southeast of the centre of Crafton village.

1.4 *Description*

The site lies in a pastoral setting surrounded by wooden post and rail fencing (Plate 1). Crafton Stud Farm lies to the east of the site, with wooded belt of Mentmore golf course beyond (see front cover). Access to the site is from Lower Crafton Lane, which runs to the east of the site (Figure 2).

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The site lies in a fold in the landscape at an elevation of *c.*110m OD. The terrain rises to the north and west and falls gently away to the south east. The soils belong to the *Evesham 2 Association* (Soil Survey, 1983, 411b), consisting of *slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils*. The underlying geology comprises Jurassic and Cretaceous clay.

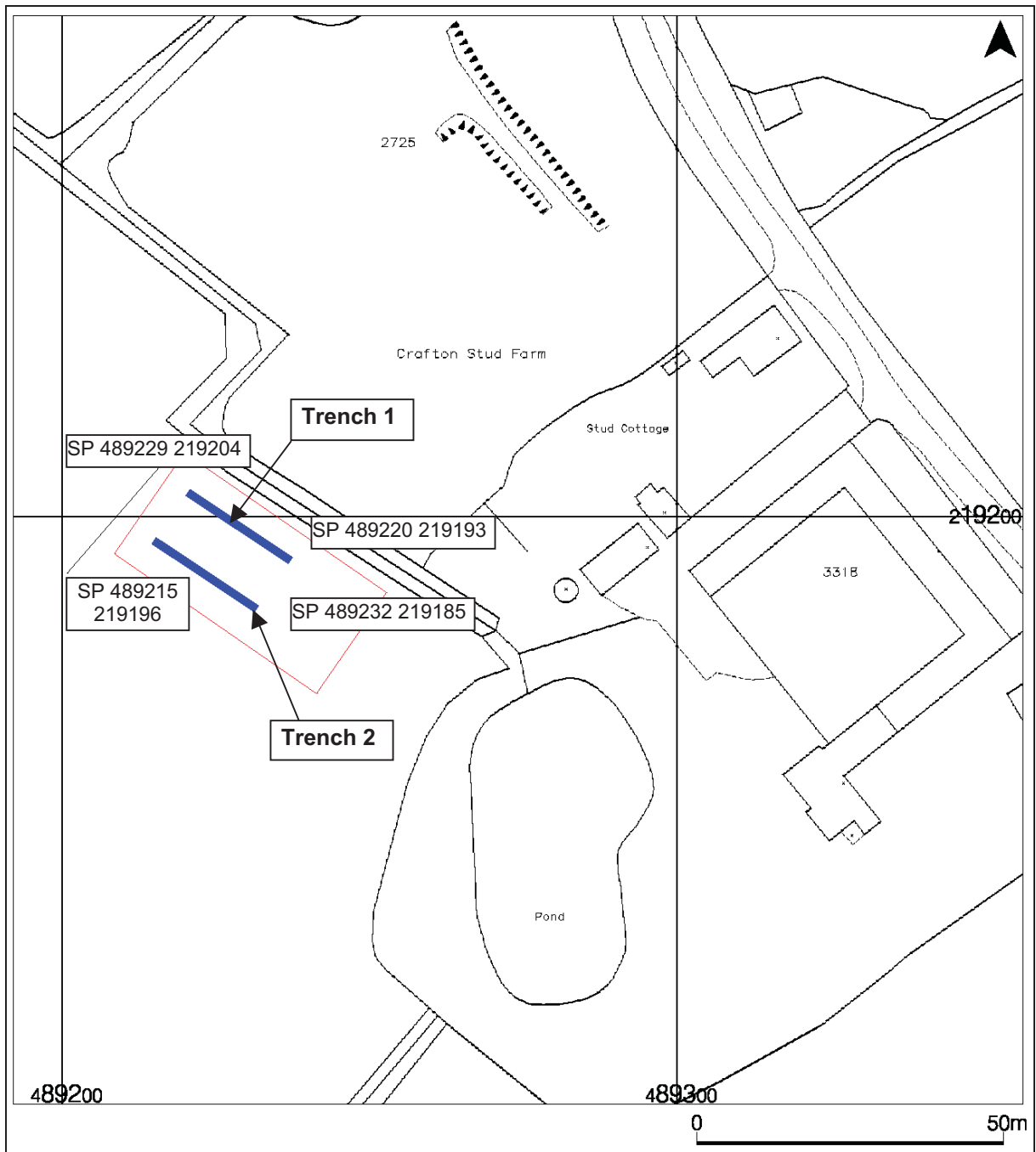


Figure 2: Site plan showing trench locations in blue (Scale 1:1000)

2 Aims and Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the *brief* (section 6), the aims of the evaluation were:

- to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains within the area of study.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the *brief* and project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to the and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the *brief* (section 8), which required:

- Machine excavation of two 20m trial trenches, each at least 1.6m wide, within the development area (locations shown in Figure 2)
- Preparation of a report (this document)
- Deposition of the project archive.

2.4 Constraints

No constraints were encountered. Visibility was variable in the changing light and conditions mostly dry until the early afternoon, when it began to rain heavily.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

CAS = County Archaeological Service reference number

- 3.1 Crafton is an area of considerable archaeological and historical importance (RCHM 1913). The focus of interest lies in a former medieval village which survives, in the form of an extensive area earthworks, to the north of the site. An assessment of the surviving earthworks has recently been prepared by the *Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service* (Kidd 2005).
- 3.2 Little is known of the area prior to the development of the village. The *Buckinghamshire Sites and Monuments Record* (SMR) does not record the presence of prehistoric or Roman sites and artefacts in the area, although little large scale archaeological work has taken place in the area. In comparison with the river valleys of north and south Buckinghamshire, the claylands of Aylesbury Vale have received relatively archaeological attention and the earlier settlement history of Crafton and the surrounding area is currently undefined.
- 3.3 The village of Crafton is probably of mid to late Saxon date, though the extent to which it was a nucleated settlement is not known. It is mentioned in the *Domesday Survey* (1086) when the land was divided equally between the *Bishop of Lisieux* and the *monks of Saint Nicholas* (Morris, 1978, sections 6.1, 12.8). There was land for 10 ploughs and 5 plough lands of meadow, which indicates a relatively high ratio of pasture (*ibid.*). Significantly, there was no mention of woodland (*ibid.*).
- 3.4 The extensive earthworks at Crafton largely lie north of the site and are said to be the remains of a mansion, built by John Theed, c.1680. The building itself was demolished in the early 19th century, and the earthworks are all that remain (CASS1009). A number of small scale archaeological watching briefs have recently been undertaken within the earthwork complex and the earthworks in one field, east of the site if the mansion has been surveyed (Rouse & Hancock 2006; Semmelmann 2005). The site of the proposed development is devoid of visible earthworks.
- 3.5 A chapel dedicated to the Holy Trinity (CASS2237), last recorded in 1388, was situated c. 500m west of the site. Helsthorpe Farm is the only remaining building in the area, but the *Medieval Village Research Group* maintain that Helsthorpe (formerly *Helpesthorp* or *Elstrop*), was ‘evidently a substantial hamlet in medieval times’ (Jenkins 1971).
- 3.6 Mentmore Towers (CASS1067) is situated c.1km to the east of the site. The house was built 1852-54 by Sir Joseph Paxton and G.H. Stokes for Baron Mayer Amschel De Rothschild. It is currently a Grade I listed building and many of the associated outbuildings are also listed.
- 3.7 Recent work in the vicinity of the proposed development has not detected any signs of previous settlement (Rouse 2005). This may suggest that the creation of the Stud Farm in the late 19th century was merely a continuation of the traditional land use of the area, which was predominantly pastoral in character.

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Two trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed ménage (Figure 2.). They measured *c.*20m by 1.2m and were orientated approximately east to west along the axis of the ménage.

4.1.2 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the results of the trenches. Detailed information, in tabulated form, is provided in Appendix 1.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Trench 1 (Figure 2: Plate 2)

The topsoil in Trench 1 comprised dark greyish brown silty clay (101). It was *c.*0.25m deep and overlay the subsoil which comprised mid greyish brown clay (102). No archaeological remains were observed in this trench.

4.2.2 Trench 2 (Figure 2: Plate 3)

Trench 2 was similar to Trench 1. The dark grey brown silty clay topsoil (201) was slightly thicker than in Trench 1 and was 0.3m deep. The underlying subsoil (202) also comprised mid greyish brown clay and no archaeological remains were observed in Trench 2.

4.2.3 A visual inspection was made of the excavated spoil from both trenches but no significant artefacts were observed within the excavated spoil.



Plate 1: Setting of Crafton Stud Farm looking south east



Plate 2: General view of Trench 1 looking north east (*Scale = 1m*)



Plate 3: General view of Trench 2 looking north east (*Scale = 1m*)

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Two archaeological trenches were excavated on the site, but neither produced evidence for archaeological features or artefacts. The natural soils were undisturbed and no evidence for past human activity was found on the site.
- 5.2 Crafton Stud Farm is situated south of the main concentration of earthworks (above, section 3.4), which lie on higher ground. The lack of archaeological evidence from the stud farm indicates that the farm probably lies beyond the southern limit of the earthworks, the southern boundary of which may be indicated by the limit of the surviving earthworks. The stud farm probably comprised arable land or pasture during the medieval period and largely remains so.
- 5.3 Alongside Tiscott, Ardwick and the polyfocal settlement of Puttenham, Crafton is one of several known or suspected deserted or, more appropriately termed, ‘shrunk medieval villages’ in the area. One of the shared characteristics of these sites is that they all lie on the heavy gault clays of the Wicken Series (now termed the Evesham 2 Association). Their seasonal wetness and the difficulty of producing a suitable tilth for sowing make them difficult to cultivate (Avery 1964, 186). Even the cultivation of grass can be problematical for, without adequate drainage, lime and phosphate, the ground gives way to bent, tufted hair-grass and other damp-loving species (*ibid.*). Accordingly, it is perhaps not surprising that earthwork features have tended to survive in such conditions. It is only in the later 20th century that advances in technology and financial subsidies have led to an increase in arable cultivation in this area. To what extent the surviving pattern of earthworks reflects a significant aspect of human settlement is debateable. Nevertheless, what seems most probable is that they were the products of relatively short-term responses to land shortage in the 13th and 14th centuries.
- 5.4 *Confidence Rating*
The conditions for the evaluation were good and the work took place in generally dry but overcast weather conditions. The soil was undisturbed and the layers were simple and well-defined. Full co-operation was received from the machine contractor and a high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the evaluation.
- 5.5 *Conclusion*
- 5.5.1 The overall results of the evaluation indicate that the proposed area of development is unlikely to have been settled in the past, or to have been the focus of any activity other than for pastoral purposes.
- 5.5.2 It is unlikely that archaeological remains are present on the site although the occasional survival of isolated archaeological remains, away from the trenches, cannot be entirely discounted. It is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains.

6. Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to Derek Mills for commissioning this evaluation. David Radford of the *Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service* acted as curatorial monitor.

The fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA. The report was prepared by Jonathan Hunn and Lizzie Gill BSc PgDip and edited by David Fell BA MA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs/slides
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Buckinghamshire County Museum*. Accession number 2006.217.

8. References


Standards & Specifications


- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition*. English Heritage (London).
- Hunn J R 2006 *Stud Farm, Crafton, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire: Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation*. ASC document ref. 832/CSF/1.
- 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)*.
- Radford D 2006 *Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation (Trial Trenching): Crafton Stud Farm, Crafton, Mentmore*. Bucks County Archaeological Service brief, issued 10/10/06.

Secondary Sources

- Avery, B.W. 1964: *The Soils and Land Use of the District around Aylesbury and Hemel Hempstead*. HMSO (London).
- Jenkins, J.G. 1971. *Medieval Village Research Group index*. 1971.
- Kidd A M 2005 *Crafton Conservation Area* Buckinghamshire County Council
- Morris J, 1978: *The Domesday Book*. Buckinghamshire section. Phillimore (Chichester).
- RCHM 1913 *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Buckinghamshire (North)*. Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
- Rouse, C 2005: *Archaeological evaluation: Garden Cottage and Stud Cottage, Crafton*. ASC: 735/CSF/2 (*client report*)
- Semmelmann K, 2005 *Watching Brief at 2 Crafton, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire* ASC 694/MTC/2
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	20	Width	1.2	Depth	0.25
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	SP489229 219204		SE	SP489220 219193	
	Orientation			WNW-ESE		
	Trench Top northwest			106.09m OD		
	Trench Base northwest			105.58m OD		
	Trench Top southeast			106.79m OD		
	Trench Base southeast			106.59m OD		
	Reason for Trench			General Evaluation		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
101	Layer	Dark greyish brown silty clay. Topsoil	-	250	-	
102	Layer	Mid greyish brown clay. Subsoil	-	-	250	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	20	Width	1.2	Depth	0.3 Max
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	SP 489215 219196		SE	SP 489232 219185	
	Orientation			WNW-ESE		
	Trench Top northwest			106.89m OD		
	Trench Base northwest			106.78m OD		
	Trench Top southeast			106.40m OD		
	Trench Base southeast			106.17m OD		
	Reason for Trench			General Evaluation		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
201	Layer	Dark greyish brown silty clay. Topsoil	-	300	-	
202	Layer	Mid greyish brown clay. Subsoil	-	-	300	

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Crafton Stud Farm, manege				SITE NO/CODE: 832/CSF
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			8045	General view of site across site looking northwards
2			8046	General view across site looking north east
3			8047	General view to south of site looking ENE
4			8048	View north adjacent to manege area
5			8049	View north on edge of fenced area by manege
6			8050	View looking east towards the Chiltern escarpment
7			8051	Start of work on Trench 1 looking ESE
8			8052	Working shot of Trench 1 looking ESE
9			8053	Detail of machining operation
10			8054	General view in the gloom looking north west
11			8055	Setting of Crafton Stud Farm looking south east (<i>front cover</i>)
12			8056	Detail of setting of Crafton Stud Farm
13			8057	Working shot of Trench 1 looking ESE
14			8058	Location of proposed manege looking north east (<i>Plate 1</i>)
15			8059	Area to the east of manege
16			8060	General view of Trench 1 looking WNW (<i>Plate 2</i>)
17			8061	Site of proposed manege looking eastwards
18			8062	Detail of proposed site of manege looking eastwards
19			8063	General view of trench 2 looking WNW
20	1			General view of Trench 1 looking WNW
21	2			General view of Trench 2 looking WNW
22	3			General view of site looking north

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	Crafton Stud Farm (manege), Mentmore, Buckinghamshire					
Short Description:	<i>In mid November 2006, Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd. (ASC) undertook an archaeological evaluation on the site of a proposed manege at Crafton Stud Farm, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire. The site lay in the vicinity of a Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement and the proposed development had the potential to disturb or destroy significant archaeological remains. Two trial trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development, but no archaeological remains were present in the trenches. The occasional presence of isolated archaeological remains, away from the trenches, cannot be entirely discounted, but it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological remains or artefacts are present on the site.</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)		Rouse 2005	
Current land use:	pasture		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		unknown	
Monument type:	earthworks		Monument period:		medieval	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Buckinghamshire		OS reference: (8 figures)		SP 89295 19090	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Derek Mills. Crafton Stud Farm, Crafton, Mentmore, Bucks LU7 0QJ					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	20m x 65m		Height OD: (metres)		110m AOD	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	David Radford		Project design originator:		Rouse 2006	
Project Manager:	Jonathan R Hunn		Director/Supervisor:		Jonathan R Hunn	
Sponsor / funding body:	Derek Mills					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	November 17 th 2006		End date:		November 17 th 2006	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location : County Museum		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	No					
Paper:	Yes					
Digital:	Yes					
BIBLIOGRAPHY (unpublished client report)						
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation: Crafton Stud Farm, Crafton, Bucks					
Serial title & volume:	832/CSF/2					
Author(s):	E Gill & J R Hunn					
Page nos	16		Date:		30/11/06	

