

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:  
80 OXFORD ROAD  
STONE  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

*on behalf of Crowndale Developments*



**Jessica Gooding BA &  
Karin Semmelmann MA PIFA**

**October 2005**

**ASC: 594/SOR/2**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	SOR	<i>Project no:</i>	594
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>District:</i>	Aylesbury Vale		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Stone		
<i>Parish:</i>	Stone		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 780 123		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.0.2 hectares		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of three houses		
<i>Extent of development:</i>	c.0.2 hectares		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	03/895		
<i>Client:</i>	Crowndale Developments The Old Bank Buckingham Street Aylesbury Buckinghamshire HP20 2LL		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Roy Crawford		
<i>Telephone</i>	07774 678145	<i>Fax:</i>	

## Internal Quality Check

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<i>Revisions:</i>	Teresa Hawtin	<i>Date:</i>	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2006
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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*Cover:* 80 Oxford Road

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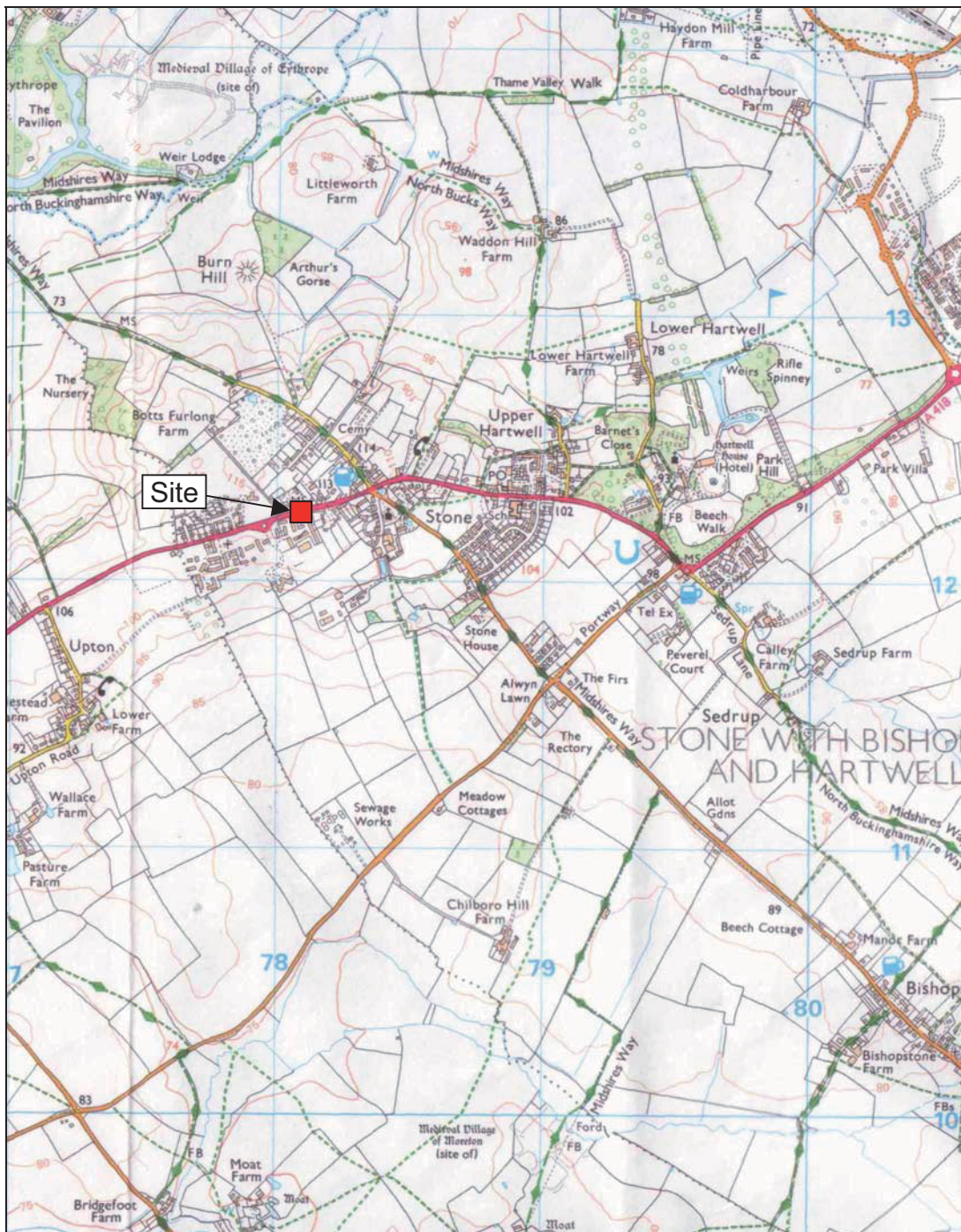


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*Between September 2004 and October 2005 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 80 Oxford Road, Stone, Buckinghamshire. Although Roman and Anglo-Saxon burials have been discovered to the north and the south of the site there was no evidence for any archaeological activity pre-dating the modern period on the site itself. The watching brief revealed evidence for small-scale sand extraction taking place in recent times, which may have destroyed any earlier archaeological remains.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Between September 2004 and October 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 80 Oxford Road, Stone, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 780 123: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Crowndale Developments, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Fell 2004), and a brief (Radford 2003) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Aylesbury Vale District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service*. The relevant planning application reference is 03/895.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

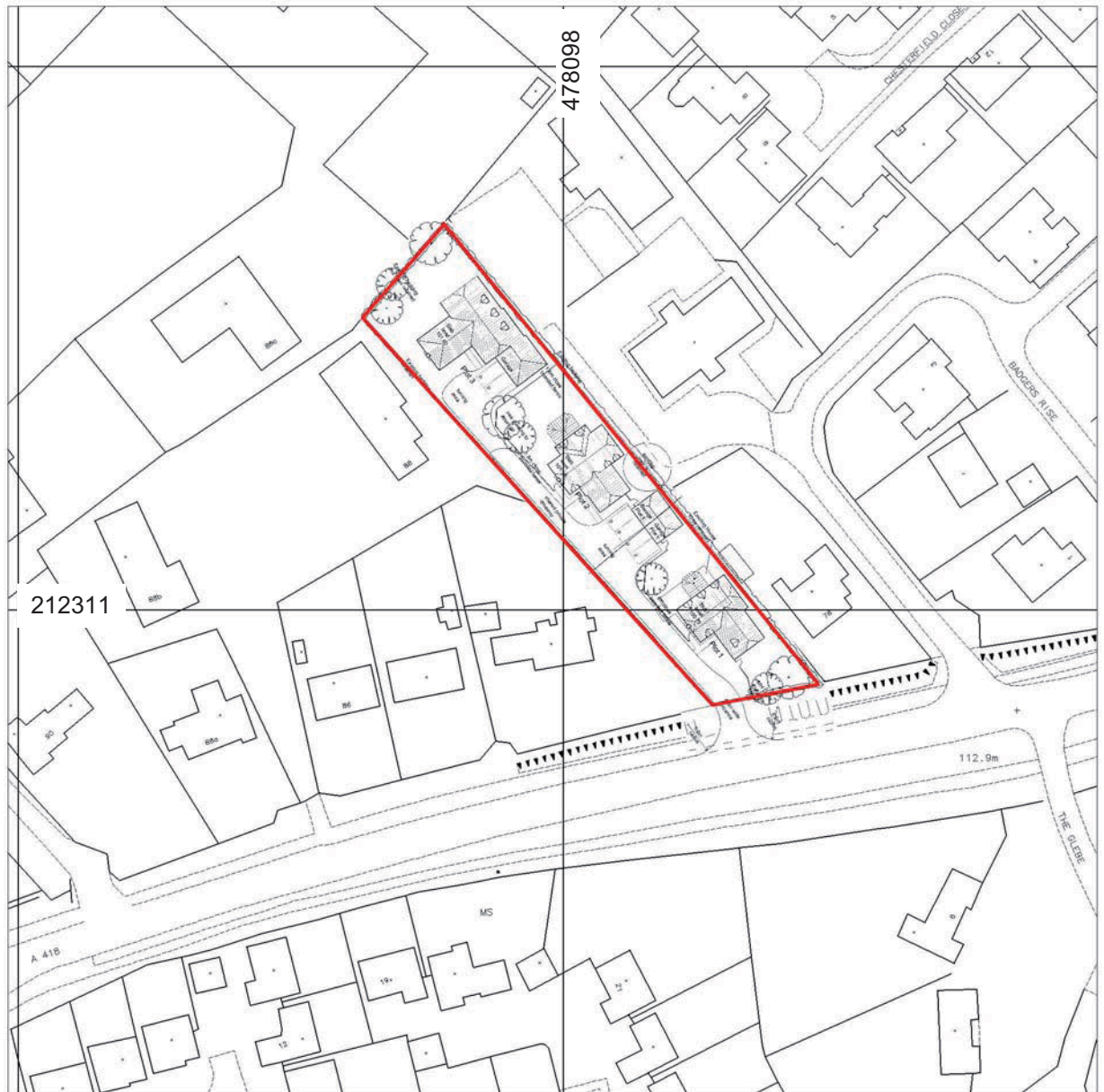
This watching brief has been required as a planning condition under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of three detached houses.

### 1.3 *Location and Description*

The site is situated in Stone, in the administrative district of Aylesbury Vale and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 780 123. It comprises a rectangular plot of land of *c.*0.2 hectares on the north side of the A418 Oxford Road.

### 1.4 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area comprise the *Aberford Association*, namely shallow well drained calcareous soils over limestone (Soil Survey 1983, 511a). The natural drainage of the area is dominated by the river Thame, which flows *c.*1km north of the site. Stone occupies a marginally elevated position south of the river and the site is essentially flat and has an elevation of 110mOD.



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

## **2 Aims & Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

As described in the brief, the aims of the watching brief were:

- To identify and record any archaeological features or finds revealed by the groundworks
- Particular attention will be paid to the possibility of remains relating to Roman occupation, Saxon burials and any medieval occupation along Oxford Road

### **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, which required:

- A comprehensive watching brief will be maintained during all groundworks
- The presence/absence of archaeological features will be noted. If features are identified sufficient work will be done to date, characterise and record them, in line with the project aims

### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 Stone is an area of considerable archaeological and historical importance (Page 1927). Much of the archaeological evidence comes from antiquarian finds, and detailed interpretation is often problematic. In recent years a number of controlled excavations have taken place in the area illustrating the varied nature of the archaeological evidence in the village. Accordingly, the site has the potential to reveal remains of a variety of different periods, but the focus of interest lies in the Roman to medieval periods.
- 3.2 Early prehistoric remains have been recorded at a number of locations in Stone. Bronze Age ditches and an unurned cremation were present at the former nurses home site c.500m west of the site (Gibson 2001) and a Neolithic or Bronze Age flint arrowhead was recorded c.300m east of the site (Sites and Monument Record no (SMR) 9).
- 3.3 Settlement may have intensified during the Iron Age. Part of a possible stock enclosure was found at the former nurses home site (Gibson 2001), while a further ditch and also pottery have been recorded immediately of the site (SMR 4753).
- 3.4 It is likely that a settlement existed in the area during the Roman period, but the location has not been established. No Roman buildings have been recorded, but an extensive area to the south of the site probably comprised a cemetery during Roman and succeeding Saxon periods. A number of burials and other remains of the period were recorded during the construction of the County Lunatic Asylum (SMR 5818) in 1852. Roman and Saxon burials and other finds have been found at a number of locations on the south side of Oxford Road, close to the site (e.g. SMR 679, 687, 688, 2462, 2960, etc). The extent of the cemetery is not known but the presence of Saxon burials on the north side of the site (SMR 680) indicates that burials may be present with the site and the burial ground may extend to the north.
- 3.5 The village probably developed during the later Saxon and early medieval periods. It was mentioned in the *Domesday Survey* (1086), where it is referred to as *Stanes*. The land was held by the Bishop of Bayeux and *Robert of Tosney* and was valued at 200 shillings (Morris 1978).
- 3.6 The medieval village was probably centred to the east of the site and was dominated by the church of St John, which dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Pevsner and Williamson 2000, 658). The site was probably beyond the limit of the medieval settlement and probably remained largely open ground during this period.
- 3.7 An open area archaeological excavation has recently been undertaken close to the site. The results of this are currently unavailable, but will be included in the final report on the present site, if they become known by then.



## 4 Results

### 4.1 Test pits

Four test pits were excavated on the east of the site. The dimensions of the test pits were as follows:

- Test Pit 1: 0.90 x 1.10 x 0.60m
- Test Pit 2: 1.60 x 0.90 x 1.20m
- Test Pit 3: 2.30 x 0.90 x 2.80m
- Test Pit 4: 2.20 x 0.90 x 2.70m

The stratigraphy of the test pits consisted of topsoil between 0.35m and 0.5m deep, overlying slightly earthy sand deposits. No archaeological features or finds were observed.

### 4.2 Footing Trenches

The footing trenches for Plot 1, which were 0.65 m wide and between 1.90 and 2.25m deep were monitored throughout and found to have variable stratigraphy. Dark organic sandy deposits with occasional charcoal flecks overlay pale brown sand at the eastern end of the site. The majority of the ground on the northern end of the site was made up of two distinct bands of deposits. The upper level consisted of yellowish brown and pale sandy clay. These overlay clean white sand. A one-metre deep deposit of brown sandy soil overlay brown 'banded' clay in southern trench. No archaeological features or finds were observed, other than possible extraction pits for sand.

### 4.3 Ground Reduction

Three areas of ground reduction were monitored; the access road, Plot 2 and Plot 3. The access road was reduced by c.1m revealing sandy subsoil with clay patches below the dark, sandy almost stoneless overburden. Some darker patches were observed, which appeared to be man-made but of recent date.

The area reduced for Plot 2 was approximately 10 x 15 x 1.4m (max). The south side had clearly been disturbed.

The ground for Plot 3, which lay beneath the footprint of the original building, was reduced by 1.9–2.0m. A pale cream sandy layer with occasional patches of yellow sand and occasional ironstone fragments, which lay below 0.4-0.5m of topsoil was revealed in the eastern section. No archaeological features or finds were observed.



**Plate 1:** General shot looking west



**Plate 2:** General shot looking east

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 Despite the discovery of Roman and Anglo-Saxon burials to the north and south of the site, no archaeological features or finds pre-dating the modern period were observed during the watching brief. The variable and, in some areas, disturbed stratigraphy suggests that small-scale sand extraction occurred on the site in recent times. It is possible that the quarrying destroyed earlier archaeological remains. It is however, equally probable that the site was never used for burials or any other human activity that would leave a more enduring entry in the archaeological record.
- 5.2 The conditions during the watching brief were generally favourable for the identification of archaeological remains and would result in a high confidence rating.

## **6. Acknowledgements**

The writer is grateful to Crowndale Developments for commissioning the project. David Radford of the County Archaeological Service acted as archaeological monitor.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Jonathan Hunn PhD MIFA and the report was written by Karin Semmelmann MA PIFA, assisted by Jessica Gooding. It was edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

## **7. Archive**

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum. The accession number is AYBCM 2005.15

## 8. References

### *Standards & Specifications*

- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. English Heritage (London).
- Fell, D. 2004. *80 Oxford Road, Stone, Buckinghamshire: Project Design for Watching Brief* (ASC:594/SOR/1)
- 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)*.
- Radford D, 2003 *Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief. 80 Oxford Road, Stone. Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service*

### *Secondary Sources*

- Morris J 1978 *The Domesday Book. Buckinghamshire. History from the Sources*. Phillimore
- Page W 1927 *The Victoria History of the County of Buckinghamshire 2*
- 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



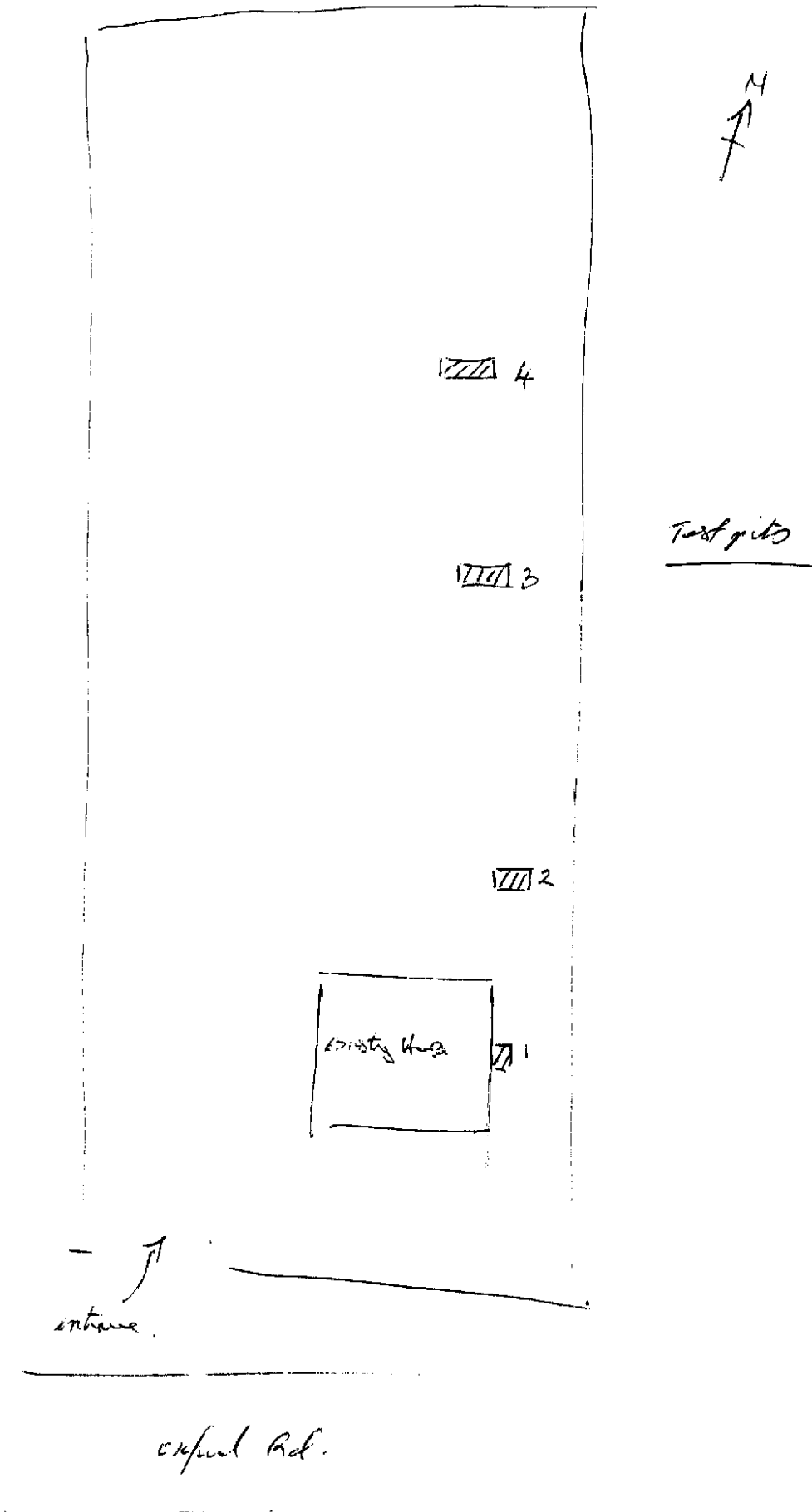
**A.S.C. LTD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: 80 Oxford Rd		Project No/Code: 594 1 SCR	Sheet: 1 of 7
Stone, Bucks		Date of visit: 9/9/04	
Client/Developer: Brownlow Developments			
Contact: Roy Crawford		Phone: 07774-678145	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 10.30	Finish:	
Completed by: J Pitt			
<b>Development Type:</b>			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify): Test pits
Site & weather conditions: Dry & Sunny			
<b>Observations:</b>			
<p>Excavated four test pits excavated on the east of the site. T1 was 2.6m from south boundary beside the existing fence. T2 was 3.2m; T3 6.0m away; T4 7.5m (all about 3-4m from east boundary)</p> <p>T1 0.9m x 1.1m x 0.6 of which 0.4 was topsoil.</p> <p>T2 1.6 x 0.9m x 2.8m deep. 0.35 - 0.5m topsoil.</p> <p>T3 2.3m x 0.9m x 1.7m " 0.45m topsoil</p> <p>T4 2.2m x 0.9m x 2.7m " 0.5m "</p> <p>The soil deposits were all slightly earthy and uneven in stratigraphy, presumably as a result of shifting soil and vegetation later modified by periglacial conditions? No signs of man made activity though there is a suspicion that there may have been modified NB the strata took the same throughout test pit so they may be purely a natural phenomenon</p>			
<b>Comments:</b>			
<p>No evidence of any archaeology on the site.</p> <p>Good resolution in this weather</p> <p>(Garden in charge on site)</p>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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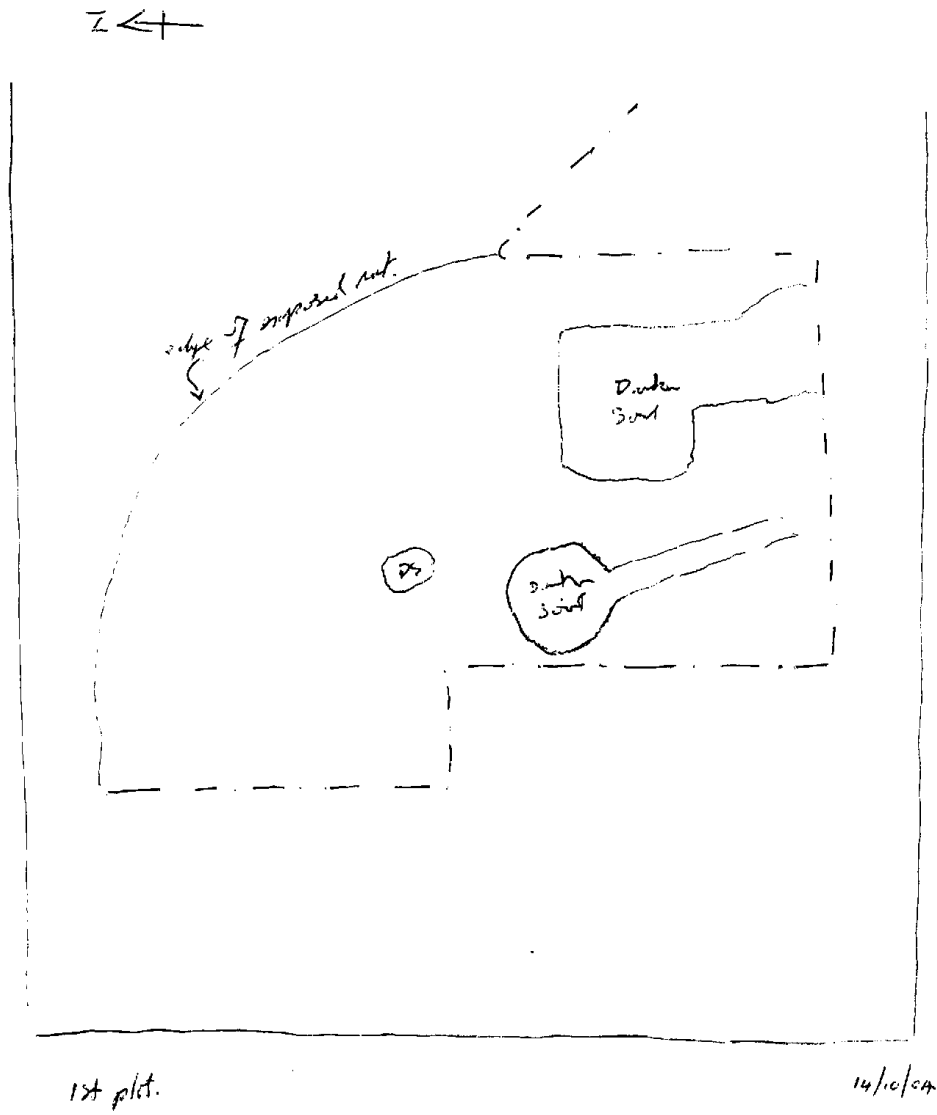
ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: 80, Oxford Rd Stone, Bucks		Project No/Code: 594 1 SOR	Sheet: 2 of 7
Client/Developer Granville Developments		Date of visit: October 14 <sup>th</sup> 2004	
Contact: Roy Crawford		Phone: 07774-678145	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 9.10 am	Finish:	
Completed by: J.Patt			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dull and v wet			
Observations: Observed soil plot which was terraced into the western slope of the site. The access road has been made up. The ground has been reduced by about 1m to reveal a sandy subsoil with occasional patches of clay. There are some irregular darker patches which are man made but they look quite late. No evidence was seen for pre-warfare artefacts.  Overburden is dark sandy soil about 1m deep.			
Comments: v. wet. See over for sketch.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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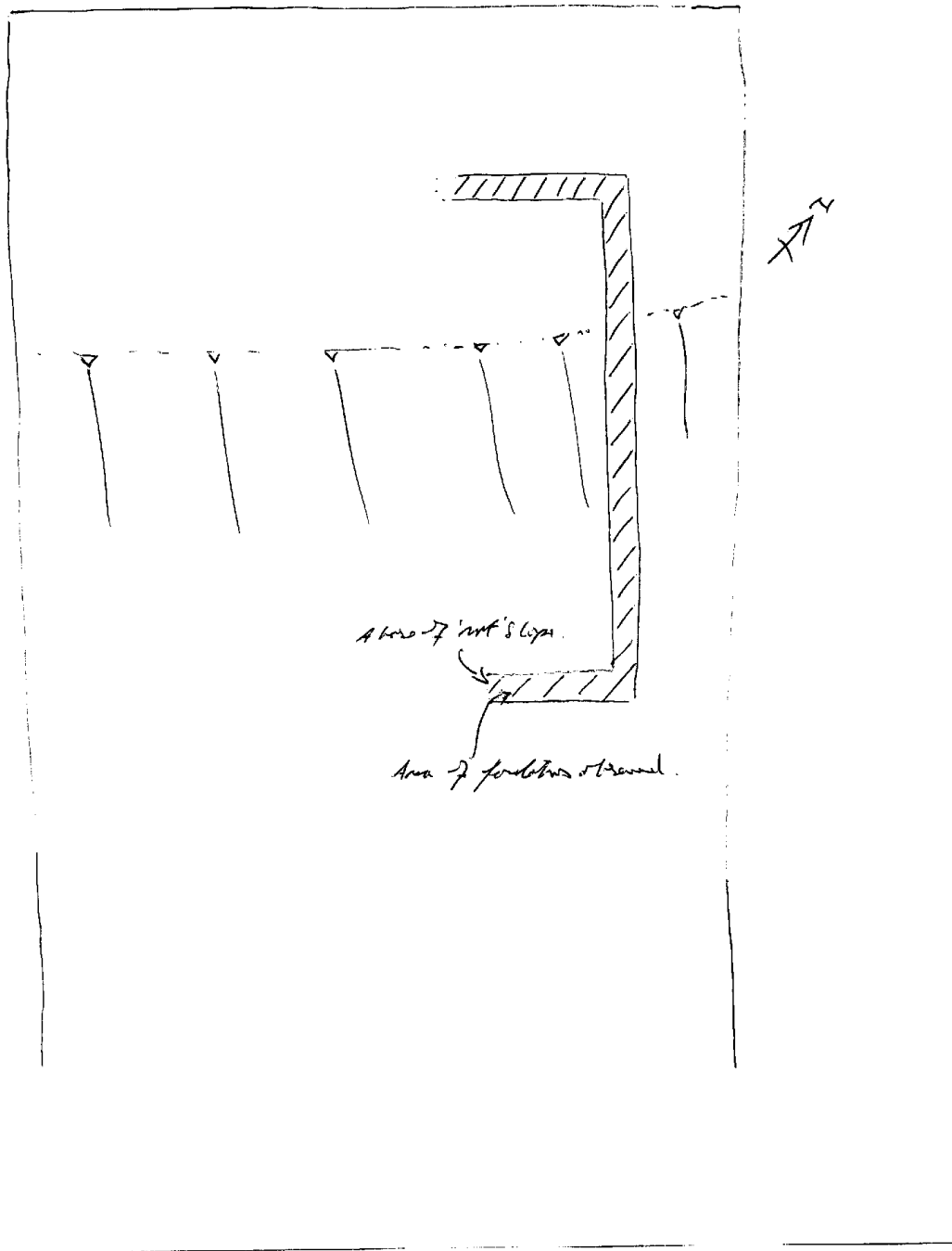




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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: 20 Oxford Rd Stone, Bucks		Project No/Code: 594 150R	Sheet: 3 of 7
Client/Developer Cromwell Developments		Date of visit: 15/10/04	
Contact: Roy Crawford		Phone: 07774-678145	
Duration of Visit (Inc. travel):	Start: 12.15	Finish:	
Completed by: JRA			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dull and wet			
Observations: Observed approx 25m of footings on the eastern side of the site (plot 1). The width is 0.65m and depth from unexcavated level is approx 1.93m. Further along the ditch is 1.3m. The sides are being to be shored up as the ground is v. soft & therefore unstable. The upper organic layer also varies from at the southern end where the disturbed ground is 1.2m deep to the middle area where it is about 0.4m deep; towards the northern end it is 0.75m deep. Upper level or horizon consists of a v. dark organic sandy deposit with occasional flints. Below this horizon the ground is a pale brown, almost creamy coloured sand.			
Comments: Part of the site looks as though it has been used as an extract pit for sand.			





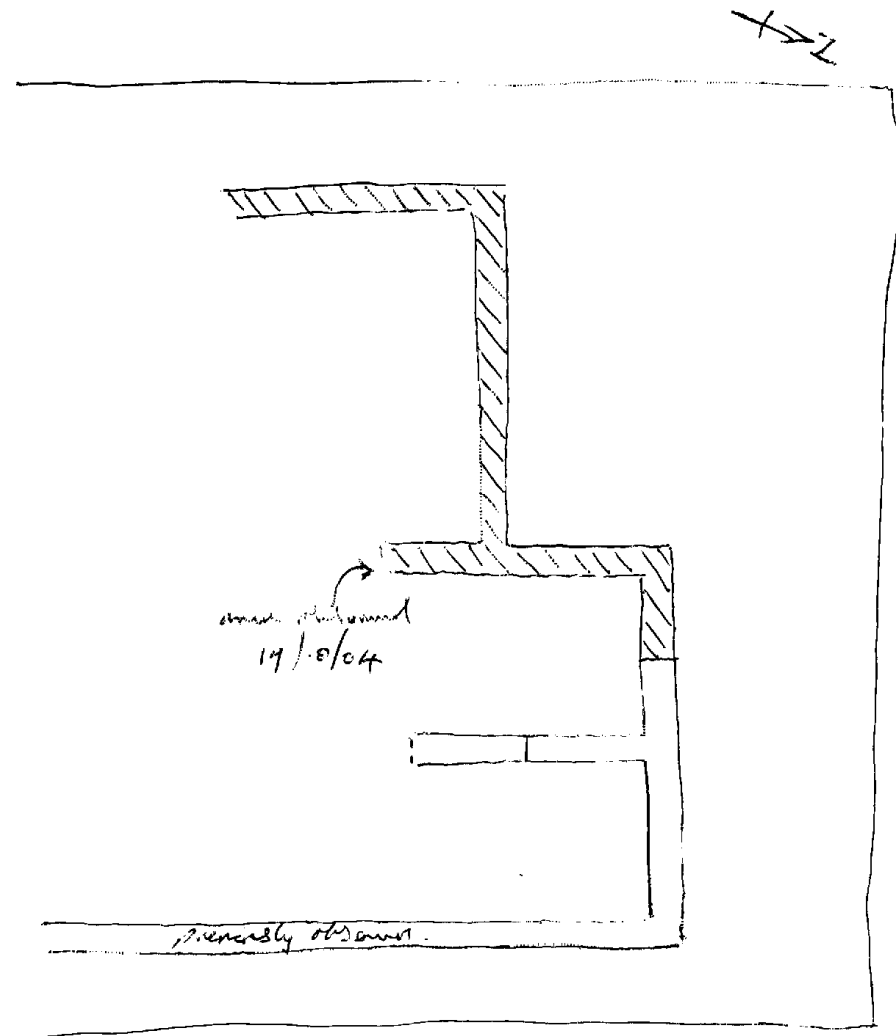
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: 80, Oxford Rd Stone		Project No/Code: 594 180R	Sheet: 4 of 7
Client/Developer Groundale Developments		Date of visit: 19/10/04	
Contact: Roy Crawford		Phone: 07774 - 678145	
Duration of Visit (Inc. travel):	Start: 1.25	Finish:	
Completed by: JRH			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dull and wet			
Observations: observed a further 2cm of footings depth at the northern end of the site is c. 1.9m x 0.65m (all shown every 0.8m or so). The majority of the ground is made up of two distinct bands of deposits. The upper is about 1.3m deep and consists of a yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) and pale yellow (2.5Y 7/3) sandy clay - quite stoney. This overlies a white (2.5 8/1) pure sand. This runs up towards the west where it is 0.9m down (below reduced level)			
Comments: No archaeological features noted. Though the disturbance noted previously on north side was only about 0.35m deep.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

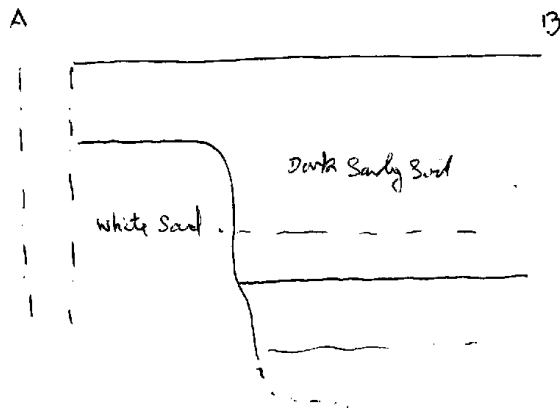
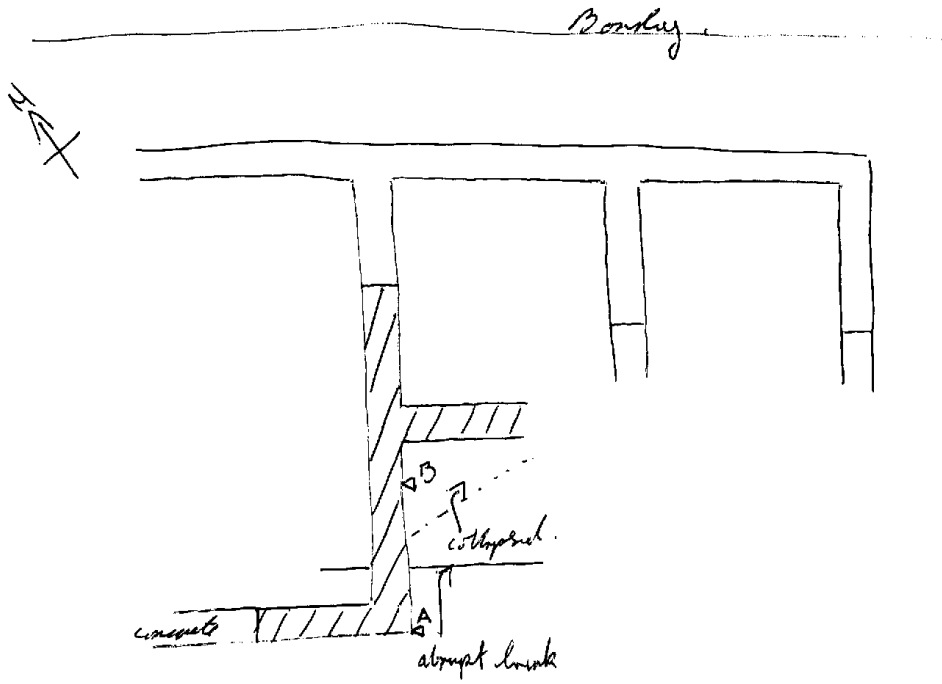
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 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>	
Project: 80 Oxford Rd Stone		Project No/Code: 594 ISCR	Sheet: 5 of 7
Client/Developer: Brownlale D developments		Date of visit: 26/10/04	
Contact: Ray Crawford		Phone: 07774-678145	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 1.45	Finish:	
Completed by: SRH			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry, over weak Sun & Showers			
Observations: Observed the South Side of the foot pit. That is the area of the garage. The footings were 0.65m wide where the ground hadn't collapsed, depth about 2.25m. To the South the ground was disturbed - the upper 1m was a brown sandy soil, followed by an orangey-brown clay which appeared to be 'banded'. On the western side the white sand stopped abruptly as though it had been cut away. See over.			
Comments: Observed sufficient to establish that the ground has been previously disturbed, most probably quarried away and then back-filled.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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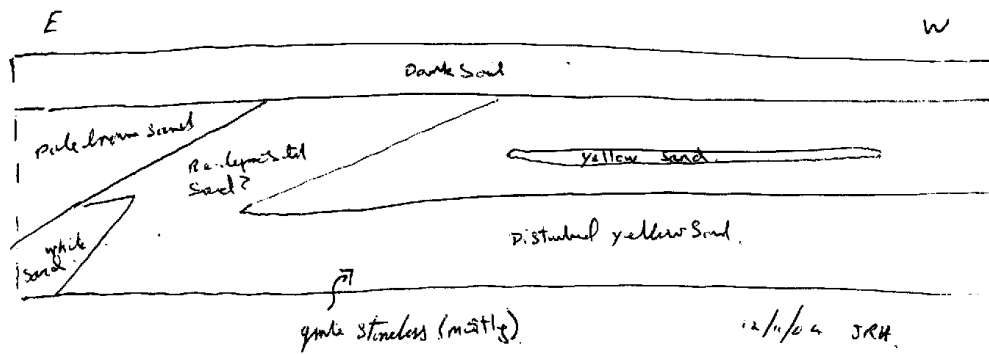
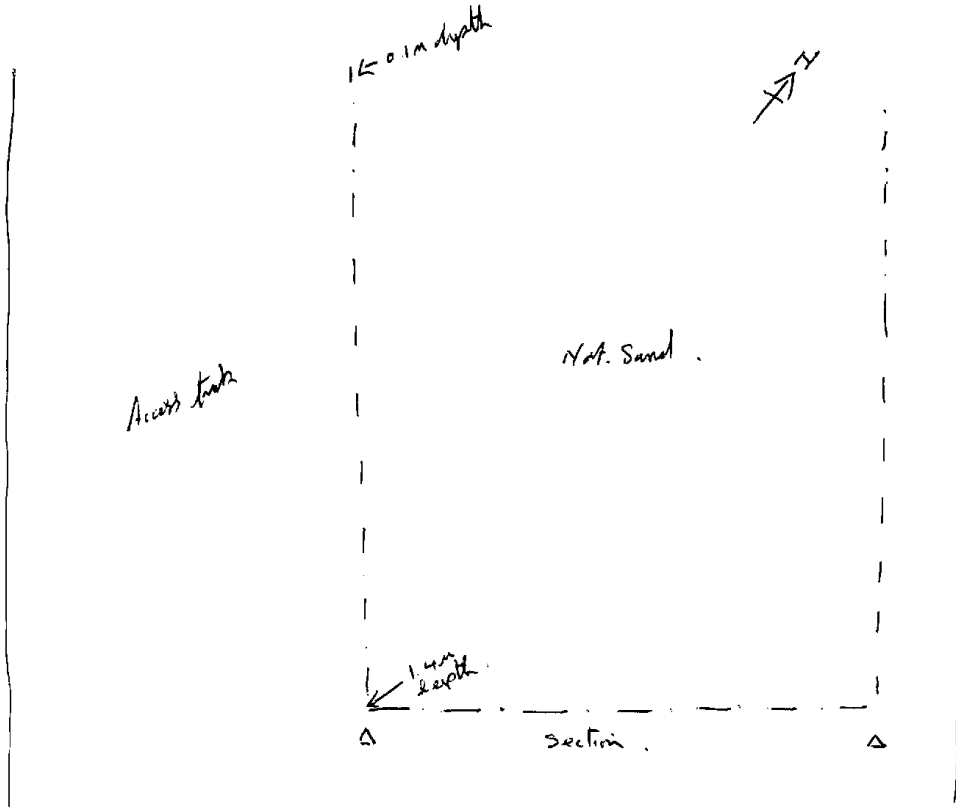
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**


Project: 80 Oxford Rd Stone		Project No/Code: 594 150R	Sheet: 6 of 7
Client/Developer Crowndale Developments		Date of visit: 12/11/04	
Contact: Ray Crawford		Phone: 07774-678145	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 10.15am	Finish:	
Completed by: JRH			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry and Sunny			
Observations: Observed the ground reduction of plot 2. This was a rectangular area approx 10x15m that was terraced back into the sloping terrain. Maximum depth of levelling was c. 1.4m deep. This exposed the natural sand across the area though in the SE corner there was another band of white sand. The section on the south side showed that the ground had been considerably disturbed with evidence for truncation and then redeposition - see over for sketch			
Comments: No further observation required in this area.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>	
Project: 80 Oxford Rd Stone		Project No/Code: 594 150R	Sheet: 7 of 7
		Date of visit: 4/10/05	
Client/Developer: Grandale Developments			
Contact: Roy Crawford		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: 9.35	Finish:
Completed by: JHAT			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry and Sunny			
Observations:			
Observed the area of plot 3. This had already been reduced. It lay immediately beneath the footprint of the original levelling. The area has been reduced by between 1.5m and 2m. On the eastern Sounding Section the thickness of topsoil varied between 0.5m and 0.5m. Below this was a pale cream sandy layer mixed with occasional patches of yellow sand; in this there were odd fragments of iron stone. No more visible features or artefacts observed.			
Comments:			
Although the area was not directly observed during ground reduction within the Sounding Section or Spirit levels suggest that there was nothing that precluded the met 020 cutting.			

For sketch plan use reverse

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