

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
THE OLD COACH HOUSE
PITCHER LANE
LOUGHTON
MILTON KEYNES**

on behalf of

Stern Thom Fehler Architects Ltd for L & M Featherstone



A J Hancock BSc PgDip

January 2006

ASC: 864/LPL/01

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	864	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	LPL
<i>Event No:</i>	1093	<i>Accession No:</i>	Pending
<i>County:</i>	Milton Keynes Unitary Authority		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Loughton		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Loughton		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 8380 3790		
<i>Present use:</i>	Driveway and rear gardens		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Extension to existing house		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	04/01977/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Milton Keynes		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	14/12/06 – 03/01/07		
<i>Client:</i>	L and M Featherstone c/o Stern Thom Fehler Architects Ltd 7 Lucy Lane Loughton Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK5 8EP		
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Internal Quality Check

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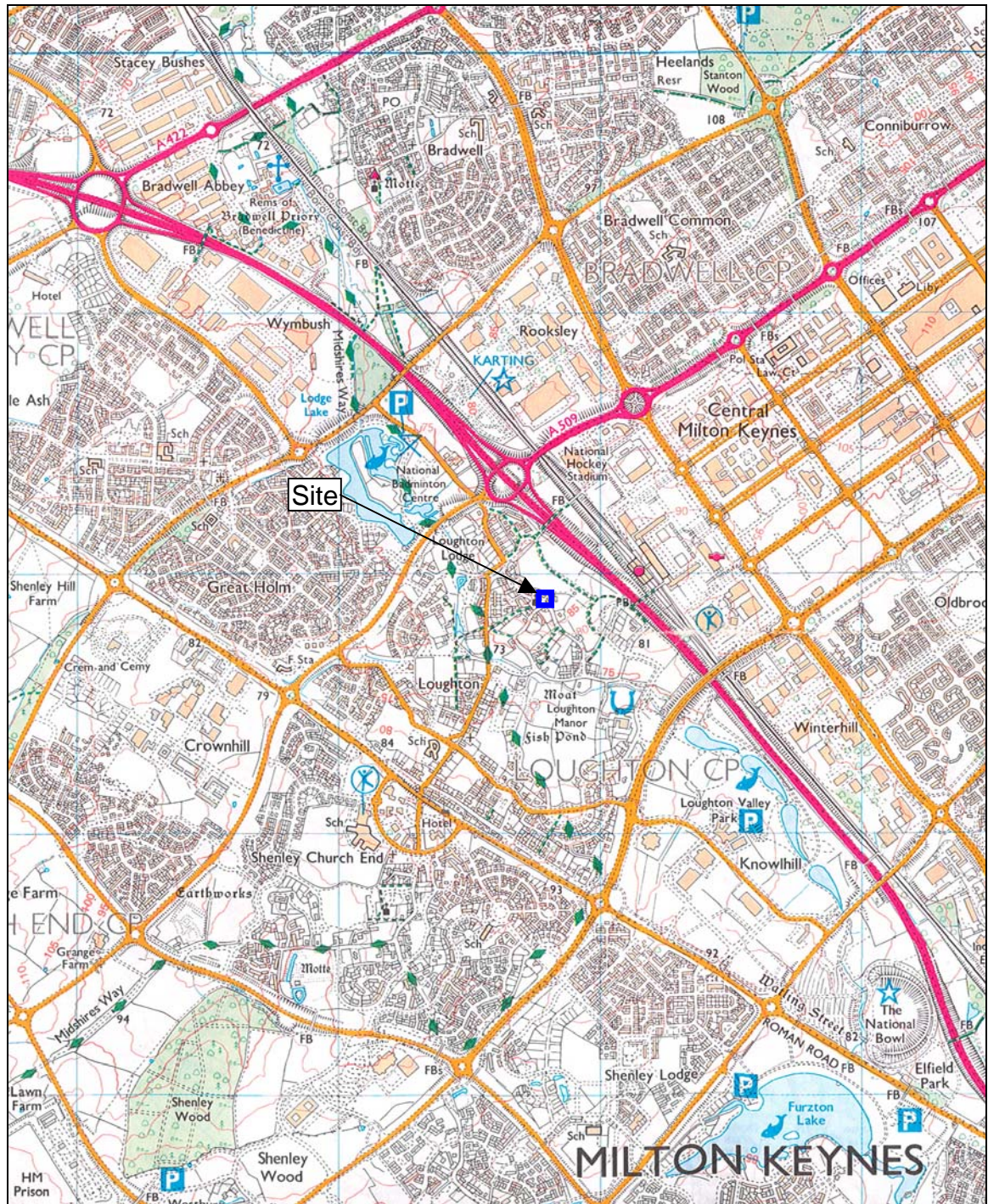


Figure 1: General location (*scale 1:25,000*)

Summary

A watching brief was undertaken by ASC in December 2006 and January 2007 during groundworks for an extension to the Old Coach House, Pitcher Lane, Loughton, Milton Keynes. Stratigraphy suggesting the infilling of a hollow in the natural deposit was observed, although it is believed that this was a gradual natural process. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

1. Introduction

1.1 In December 2006 and January 2007 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at The Old Coach House, Pitcher Lane, Loughton, Milton Keynes (NGR SP 8380 3790: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Stern Thom Fehler Architects Ltd on behalf of L & M Featherstone, and was carried out according to ASC's standard watching brief methodology and in adherence with *Institute of Field Archaeologists* standards (IFA 2001).

1.2 *Planning Background*

A watching brief was required by the Planning Archaeologist of Milton Keynes Council under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (DOE 1990), in response to proposals for the construction of an extension to the Old Coach House. The relevant planning application reference is 04/01977/FUL.

1.3 *Location*

The site is located in the city of Milton Keynes at the northern side of the parish of Loughton c.30m west-northwest of Loughton Parish Church.

1.4 *Description*

The area affected by the groundworks consisted of a paved/gravel driveway and a paved rear patio at the northeast of the existing house (Fig 2).

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the site are of the Wickham 2 association, described as “*slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey, fine silty over clayey and clayey soils, small areas of slowly permeable calcareous soils on steeper slopes*” (Soil Survey, 1983 711f) the underlying geology is “*drift over Jurassic and Cretaceous clay or mudstone*” (*ibid*). The site of the extension showed little variation in topography and was located at c.87m AOD.

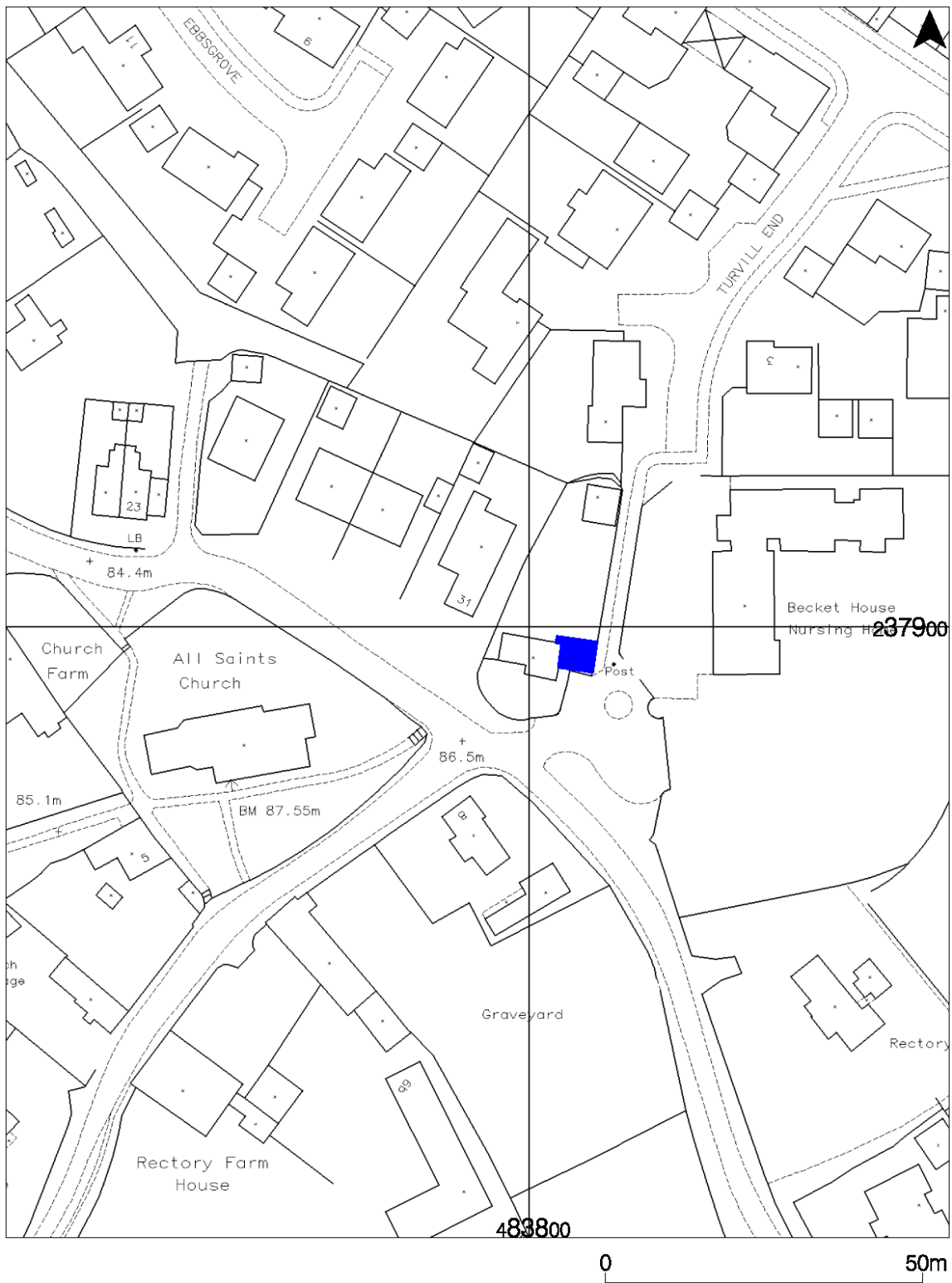


Figure 2: Site plan showing location of extension (*scale 1:1000*)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in ASC's standard method statement, the aims of the watching brief were:

- to establish whether there were archaeological features or finds present at the site.
- to carry out appropriate levels of investigation, recording and sampling of any discovered archaeological features in the attempt to characterise date, form and function.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed 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* and standard watching brief methodology.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the planning condition and ASC's standard watching brief methodology (Section 1), which required:

- monitoring by an experienced archaeologist of all ground disturbance deeper than 300mm.

2.4 Constraints

No constraints were anticipated and none were encountered during the fieldwork.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 Prehistoric (before 600BC)

Scattered flint tools of the Mesolithic/Neolithic periods have been recovered from the area surrounding the development but no sites of the prehistoric period are known in Milton Keynes.

3.2 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)

Sites of this period are recorded in the wider area although nothing is recorded in the immediate vicinity of the current development.

3.3 Romano-British (AD43-c.450)

Two Roman roads ran through Loughton; one, now known as Watling Street, ran from London to Wroxeter and is located c.1km southeast of the development, the other section of road probably ran from the Shenleys through Loughton and on to Willen (Mynard 1987). A stone built Roman farmstead was excavated by Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit in 1979 (*ibid*) at Wymbush (MK211) c.1.3km north-northeast of the current site.

3.4 Saxon (c.450-1066)

The name Loughton probably derives from the old English *Luhingtun*, which means Luha's farm (Mawer and Stenton 1925). The origins of the modern village may lie in this period.

3.5 Medieval (1066-1500)

Loughton is recorded in the Domesday Survey within the Secklow Hundred. During this period Loughton was made up of two parishes, Great Loughton and Little Loughton although the separate identities of the parishes may have begun to blur as early as the 15th century. The current development lies within the boundaries the former parish of Great Loughton opposite All Saints Church, parts of which may date to the 13th or 14th centuries (Pevsner and Williamson 2000).

All that now remains of the greater part of Little Loughton are earthworks on the Green south of Leys Road. The earthworks define the location of three closes and five crofts, one containing a moat and fishpond (MK628). Archaeological rescue excavations carried out in 1975 (Croft and Mynard 1993) during drainage works recorded a stone founded house in one of the closes and recovered associated artefactual material dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Remnants of a ridge and furrow field system are also visible on the green.

Documentary evidence shows that a watermill was present in Loughton in the early 13th century and a windmill in Little Loughton in the late 14th century (*ibid*).

Loughton Manor (Manor Farm) is located c.500m south of the development and is the only medieval manor house surviving within the city of Milton Keynes. The earliest timber framed sections of the building date from the late 15th century.

Medieval earthworks survive c.50m north and c.100m east of the current development (Fig 3) and suggest the presence of sunken trackways, ponds/pits, ditches, close boundaries and a house platform.

3.6 Post-Medieval (1500-1900)

It is recorded that several of the house plots at Little Loughton were still in use in 1769 although the village appears to have been abandoned by the middle of the 19th century (Croft and Mynard 1993). The London to Birmingham Railway, now part of the West Coast main line, was constructed in 1838 and runs c.500m northeast of the site.

3.7 Modern (1900-present)

The village retained its rural character until incorporated into the growing city of Milton Keynes in the latter part of the 20th century. The surrounding areas and many of the open fields of the village have since been infilled with housing developments.

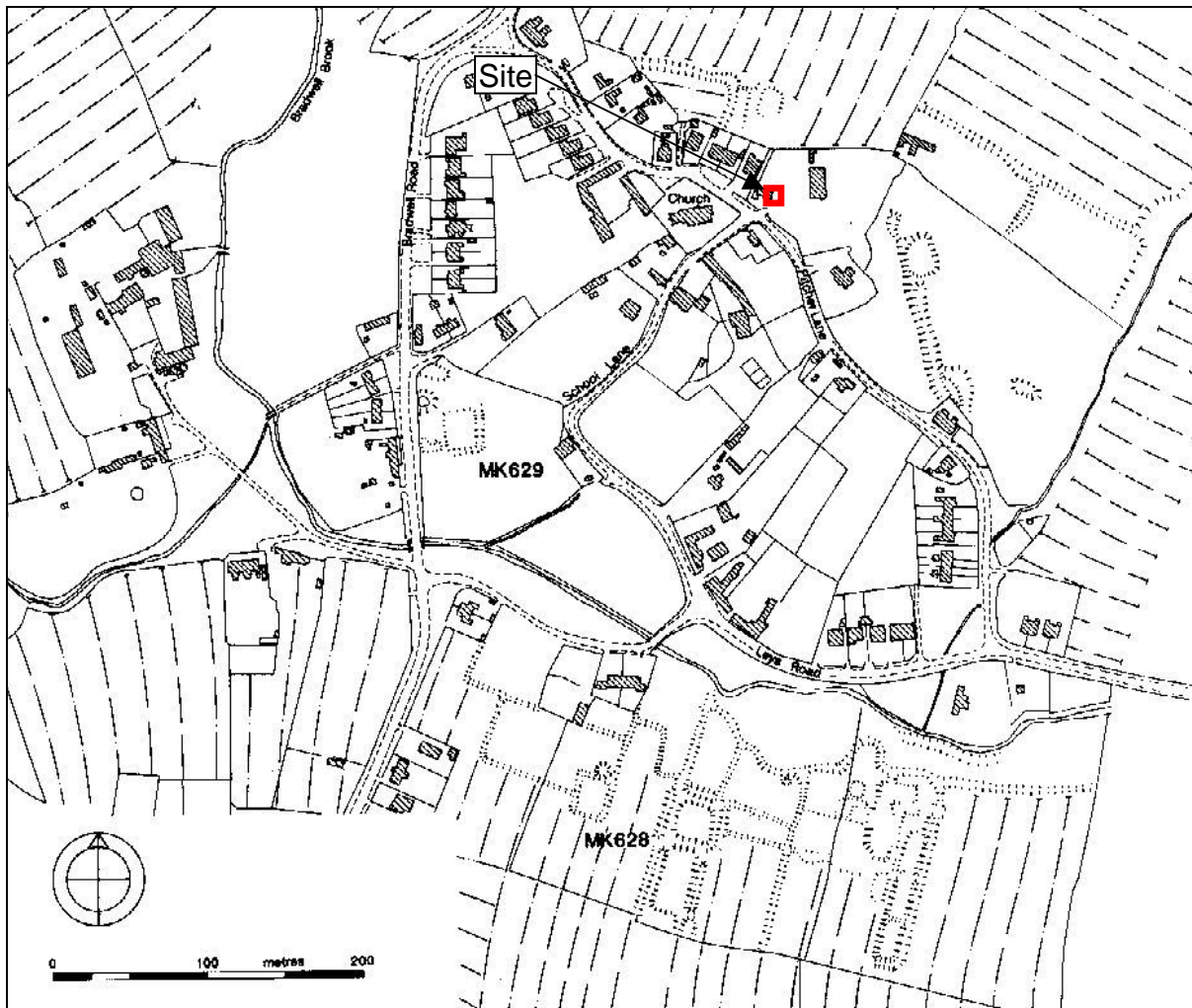


Figure 3: Loughton village earthworks and archaeological sites MK628 and MK629 (after Croft and Mynard 1993, Fig 40)

4. Results

- 4.1 A total of three watching brief visits were made to observe the relevant groundwork which consisted of excavation of three geotechnical test pits and three foundation trenches.
- 4.2 The 0.5m x 0.5m test pits were machine excavated to a depth of *c.*2.0m (see Appendix 1 for sketch location plan), all showed that the area of the extension had been affected by relatively recent ground disturbance. The observed stratigraphy consisted of:
- Test pit 1 (Plate 1) was adjacent to the eastern elevation of the house and illustrated that the organic soil of a flowerbed directly overlay the underlying mid brown natural sandy clay which contained small nodules of chalk.
 - Test pit 2 (Plate 2) was located at the northeast corner of the footprint of the extension. A *c.*0.4m deep layer of organic ashy soil containing frequent charcoal overlay a *c.*0.07m deep layer of brick rubble. The brick rubble sealed the underlying mid brown natural sandy clay which contained small nodules of chalk.
 - Test pit 3 (Plate 3) was located at the southeast corner of the footprint of the extension at the entrance to the driveway of the Old Coach House. A *c.*0.3m deep deposit of mid greyish brown organic sandy silt overlay an undetermined depth of natural mid reddish orange clayey sand.
- 4.3 The foundation trenches were *c.*0.6m wide and machine excavated to a depth of *c.*2.0m (Plate 4). The southern ends of the NNE-SSW aligned sections of the foundation trenches exposed a natural deposit of mid reddish orange sandy clay (Plate 5) and revealed that the surface of this deposit sloped down with a south-north strike. The northern two thirds of the foundation trenches illustrated that the reddish orange sandy clay was overlain by interleaved grey clayey and red sandy deposits (Plate 6) that dipped downwards with a similar south-north strike.
- 4.4 The foundation trenches contained two drainage runs and a number of other services had been inserted through the area of the extension.
- 4.5 Archaeological finds or features predating the late 19th century were not observed during the watching brief monitoring visits.

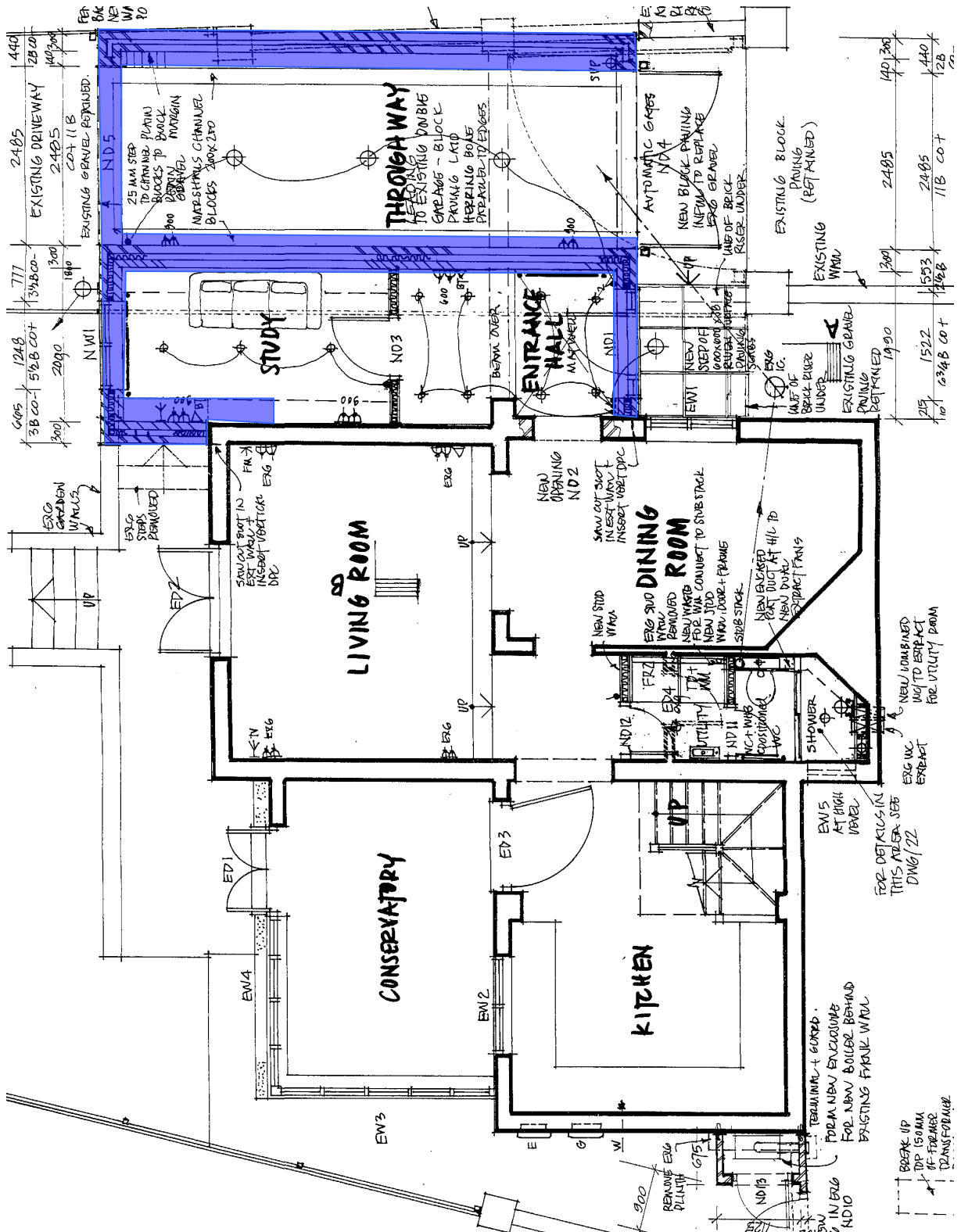


Figure 4. Development plan showing areas monitored (*not to scale*)



Plate 1: Test Pit 1, facing NNE



Plate 2: Test Pit 2, facing NNE



Plate 3: Test Pit 3, facing SE



Plate 4: Central foundation trench, facing SW



Plate 5: Natural at south of foundation trench, facing WNW



Plate 6: Deposits of clay and sand at north of foundation trench, facing SE

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The stratigraphy observed during the watching brief suggested that the natural soils in the area of the driveway were removed during or after the late 19th century construction of the house. The top and subsoil were likely stripped to provide a firmer surface on which to lay metalling of some description. The layer of brick rubble exposed in test pit 2 could be the remnants of this surface or hardcore for it.
- 5.2 The foundation trenches of the extension revealed a number of relatively modern services which attest that this area was frequently disturbed by intrusive groundworks during the 20th century.
- 5.3 The reddish orange sandy clay at the south of the foundation trenches is an undisturbed natural deposit.
- 5.4 The origins of the interleaved clays and sands in the northern two thirds of the foundation trenches remain unclear. Organic deposits and archaeological finds suggesting deliberate infilling of a landscape feature were not observed within them and a natural origin is tentatively suggested. The dipping south-north strike of the clays and sands and the inclusion of small chalk nodules suggests that reworked minerogenic deposits may have gradually accumulated in a natural hollow.
- 5.5 The relatively recent truncation of the natural soil profile could have removed shallow archaeological features although the site of the Old Coach House may have seen limited use during the growth of Great Loughton until it was developed in the late 19th century.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to *David Thom* of *Stern Thom Fehler Architects Ltd* who commissioned this project on behalf of *L and M Featherstone*. Thanks are also due to Alex Gerra of the builders (*G T Homes*) for his cooperation during the groundworks.

The fieldwork was carried out by the author and J R Hunn BA PhD MIFA and the report was edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum

8. References

Standards & Specifications

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd 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)*.

Secondary Sources

Croft, R.A. and Mynard, D C, 1993 *The changing landscape of Milton Keynes*. Buckinghamshire Archaeol. Soc. Monog. Ser. **5** (Aylesbury).

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

Pevsner N and Williamson E 2000 *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire*. London

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

Zeepvat R J, Williams R J and Mynard D C 1987 *Roman Milton Keynes: Excavations and Fieldwork 1971-1982*. Buckinghamshire Archaeol. Soc. Monog. Ser. **1** (Aylesbury).

Zeepvat R J 1993 'The Geology and Topography' in Croft, R.A. and Mynard, D.C., 1993 *The changing landscape of Milton Keynes*. Buckinghamshire Archaeol. Soc. Monog. Ser. **5** (Aylesbury).

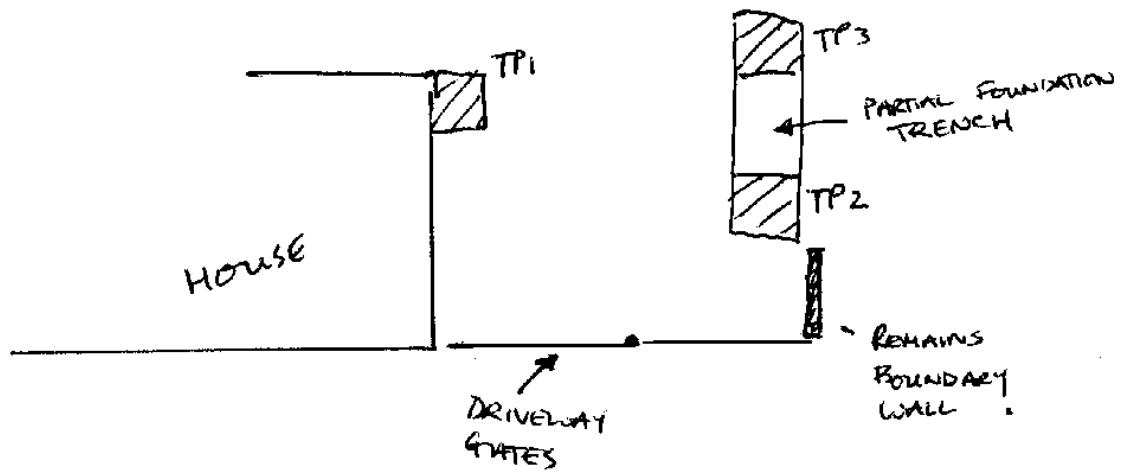
Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD			
Project: THE OLD COACH HOUSE LOUGHTON		Project No/Code: 864 / LPL		Sheet: 1 of 3	
Client/Developer: L + M FEATHERSTONE		Date of visit: 14 / 12 / 06			
Contact: ALEX GERRA (GT HOMES)		Phone: 01908 691099			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 10.20	Finish: 11.40			
Completed by: AJH					
Development Type:					
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines
Other (specify): TEST PITS					
Site & weather conditions:					
DRIVEWAY AND REAR GARDEN OF HOUSE.					
OVERCAST AND MILD					
Observations:					
INITIAL LWB VISIT. THREE TEST PITS AND SMALL SECTION OF FOUNDATION TRENCH EXCAVATED.					
ALL TEST PITS AND FOUNDATION TRENCH SHOW c. 0.3M OF MODERN DISTURBED/MADE GROUND, ALTHOUGH BRICK RUBBLE LAYER (SURFACE?) EVIDENT IN NORTHERN PROFILE OF TP3 - LIKELY EARLIER SURFACE ASSOCIATED WITH (19) HOUSE.					
DISTURBED DEPOSIT OVERLIES c1.5M OF NATURAL MATERIAL.					
TP1 AND TP2 SHOW MID YELLOWISH BROWN SANDY SILT WITH CALCAREOUS INCLUSIONS (NATURAL)					
TP3 SHOWS MID DISH ORANGE SILTY SAND (NATURAL)					
NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS OR FEATURES OBSERVED					
Comments:					
FURTHER FOOTING TRENCHES TO BE EXCAVATED WEEK COMMENCING 18/12/06.					
CONTRACTOR WILL PHONE TO ARRANGE DATE OF NEXT LWB VISIT					

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003

LOCATION OF AREAS OBSERVED 14/12/06





A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: <i>The Old Coach House</i> <i>Loughton</i>		Project No/Code: <i>864 1 LPL</i>	Sheet: <i>2</i> of <i>3</i>
Client/Developer <i>Mr & Mrs Featherstone</i>		Date of visit: <i>21/12/06</i>	
Contact: <i>Mr. Gano (GT/Hous)</i>		Phone: <i>01908 - 691099</i>	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>9.45am</i>	Finish: <i>10.50am</i>	
Completed by: <i>SRH</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Leveling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Cold and foggy</i>			
Observations: <i>Observed L-shaped footings approx. 7m x 4m by 0.6m wide and c 2.20m deep. The sides of the trunks had been boarded up and concrete freshly poured. Only a small portion was visible which indicated a make-up layer of 0.5m make up of an advertisement of building debris, irregular and soil. Beneath this was the natural ground - a sandy silt & gravel mixed with chalk at depth - but this was not verified by SRH. No sign of any pre-modern material present.</i>			
Comments: <i>The sides of the trunks were too obscured to be able to make a realistic assessment.</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



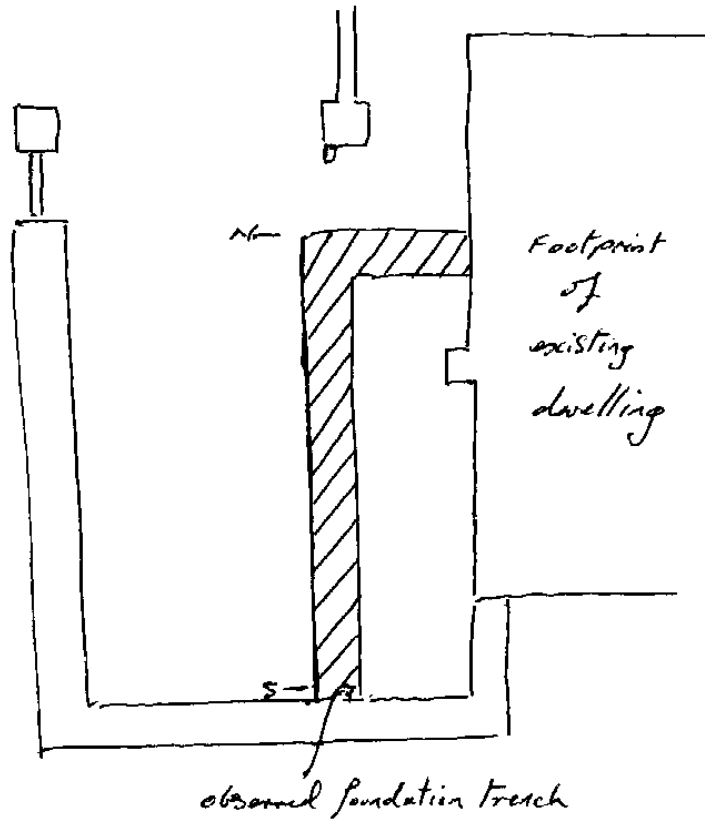
A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

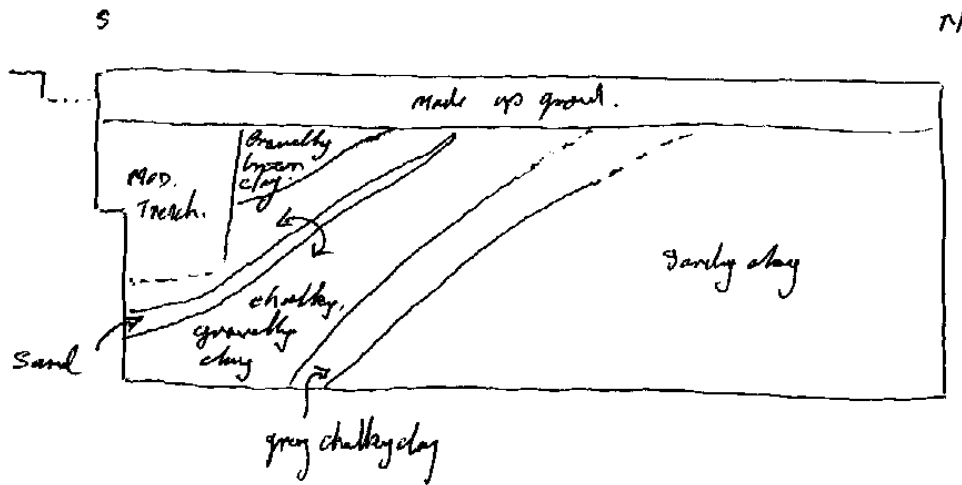
Project: <i>The Old Coach House</i>		Project No/Code: <i>864 1 LPL</i>	Sheet: <i>3 of 3</i>
<i>Loughton</i>		Date of visit: <i>3/1/07</i>	
Client/Developer <i>Mr & Mrs Featherstone</i>			
Contact: <i>Alex Ferns (G.T. Homes)</i>		Phone: <i>07802-774167</i> <i>01908-691099</i>	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>11.10 am</i>	Finish: <i>12.45</i>	
Completed by: <i>JPAH</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Cold and wet.</i>			
Observations: <i>Observed the central N-S footing which was 2.0m deep and c. 0.7m wide. It was cut through the top of brickearth deposits. About four modern Sarnie runs or man-made features were observed. There was a pocket of sand at the southern end of the trench. See over for sketch.</i>			
Comments: <i>No features or artefacts identified. No further visits proposed.</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



3/1/07 SRH



Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: The Old Coach House, Pitcher Lane, Loughton				SITE NO/CODE: 864/LPL
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			✓	General site shot
2			✓	Test Pit 1, facing NNE
3			✓	Test Pit 2, facing SE
4			✓	Test Pit 3, facing NNE
5			✓	Central foundation trench, facing SW
6			✓	Natural at south of foundation trench, facing WNW
7			✓	Reworked natural at north of foundation trench, facing SE

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	Watching Brief: The Old Coach House, Pitcher Lane, Loughton, Milton Keynes					
Short Description:	A Watching Brief was carried out during groundworks for an extension to the Old Coach House, Pitcher Lane, Loughton, Milton Keynes. Three test pits and three foundation trenches were monitored. No archaeological finds or features were observed.					
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)		None	
Current land use:	Residential		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		Unknown	
Monument type:	None		Monument period:		None	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Milton Keynes		OS reference: (8 figs min)			
District:	Loughton		Parish:		Loughton	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	The Old Coach House, Pitcher Lane, Loughton, Milton Keynes, MK5 8AS					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	50 sq m		Height OD: (metres)		c.87m	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	na		Project design originator:		na	
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat		Director/Supervisor:		A J Hancock	
Sponsor / funding body:	Mr and Mrs Featherstone					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	14/12/06		End date:		03/01/07	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	na		na			
Paper:	Buck's County Museum		Monitoring sheets, report			
Digital:	Buck's County Museum		Monitoring sheets, report, illustrations, photos			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:	Watching Brief: The Old Coach House, Pitcher Lane, Loughton, Milton Keynes					
Serial title & volume:	Unpublished client report					
Author(s):	A J Hancock					
Page nos	1-21		Date:		11 th January 2007	