

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**BUTLERS MANOR COTTAGE
NORTHALL
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

on behalf of Tony Witchell



by Jonathan R. Hunn BA PhD MIFA

February 2007

ASC: 867/NBM/2

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



Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	NBM	<i>Project no:</i>	867
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Northall		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Edlesborough		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 9547 1909		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Residential		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Two storey extension		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	Planning application 06/01912; scheduled monument consent application HSD/9/2/8511		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr Tony Witchell Butlers Manor Cottage South End Lane Northall Buckinghamshire		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Tony Witchell		
<i>Telephone</i>	01525 222156	<i>Fax:</i>	

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Jonathan R. Hunn	<i>Date:</i>	16/02/07
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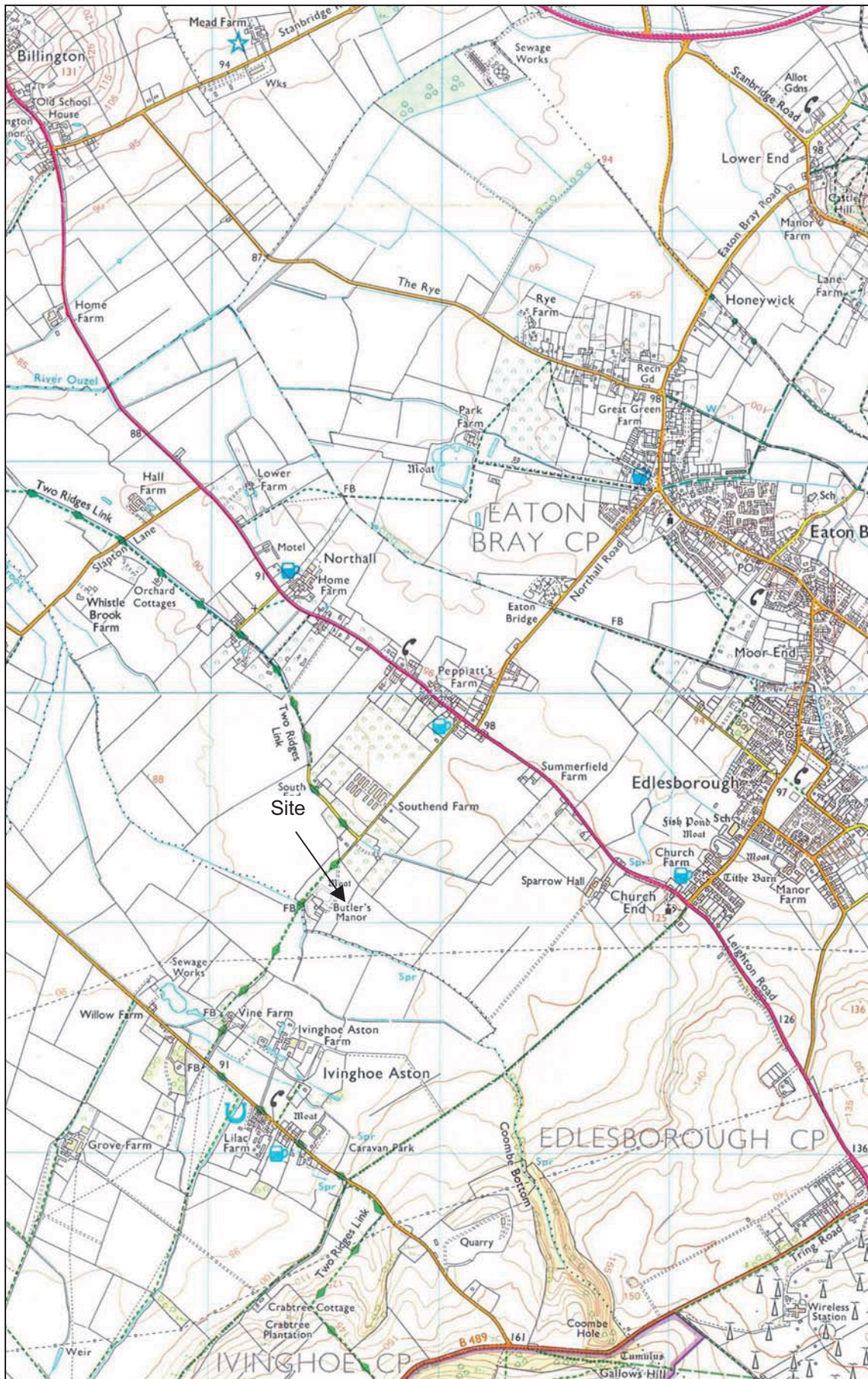


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on a part of the site of Butler's Manor, Northall, Buckinghamshire on 14th February 2007. Two trial trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed extension to Butler's Manor Cottage. Beneath a dark organic topsoil lay the chalky drift of the Pleistocene era. No evidence for any man made features or artefacts was recorded from the evaluation.

1 Introduction

1.1 In February 2007 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Butler's Manor Cottage (NGR SP 9547 1909: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by the client, Tony Witchell, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (867/BMN/1), 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 Archaeology Service*. The relevant planning application reference was 06/01912, and the scheduled monument consent application HSD/9/2/8511.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), and as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent, in response to proposals for the construction of a two-storey office and garage.

1.3 *Location*

The site is located in the civil parish of Edlesborough, in the administrative district of Aylesbury Vale, Buckinghamshire. Northall is a small village and the site is situated about 1 km to the south east of the village centre at NGR SP 9547 1909.

1.4 *Description*

The site comprises a medieval moated site (Monument No. 27144) consisting of a double island and a Grade II listed building. The moated site is divided into three occupancies: Butler's Manor Cottage, Butlers Manor, (formerly known as Pratt's Farm) and an area of unimproved pasture. Butler's Manor Cottage is L-shaped, set around a gravelled courtyard. There are some mature ash trees set around the periphery of the site. The boundaries are mainly defined by a mix of wooden panelled fencing and clipped conifers.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The site lies on level ground at an elevation of c.94m OD. The underlying geology of the site is chalky drift, overlaid by '*moderately permeable fine loamy calcareous soils over chalky gravel affected by groundwater*', making up the Grove Association (Soil Survey 1983).



Figure 2: Site plan showing area of proposed development (scale 1:2500)

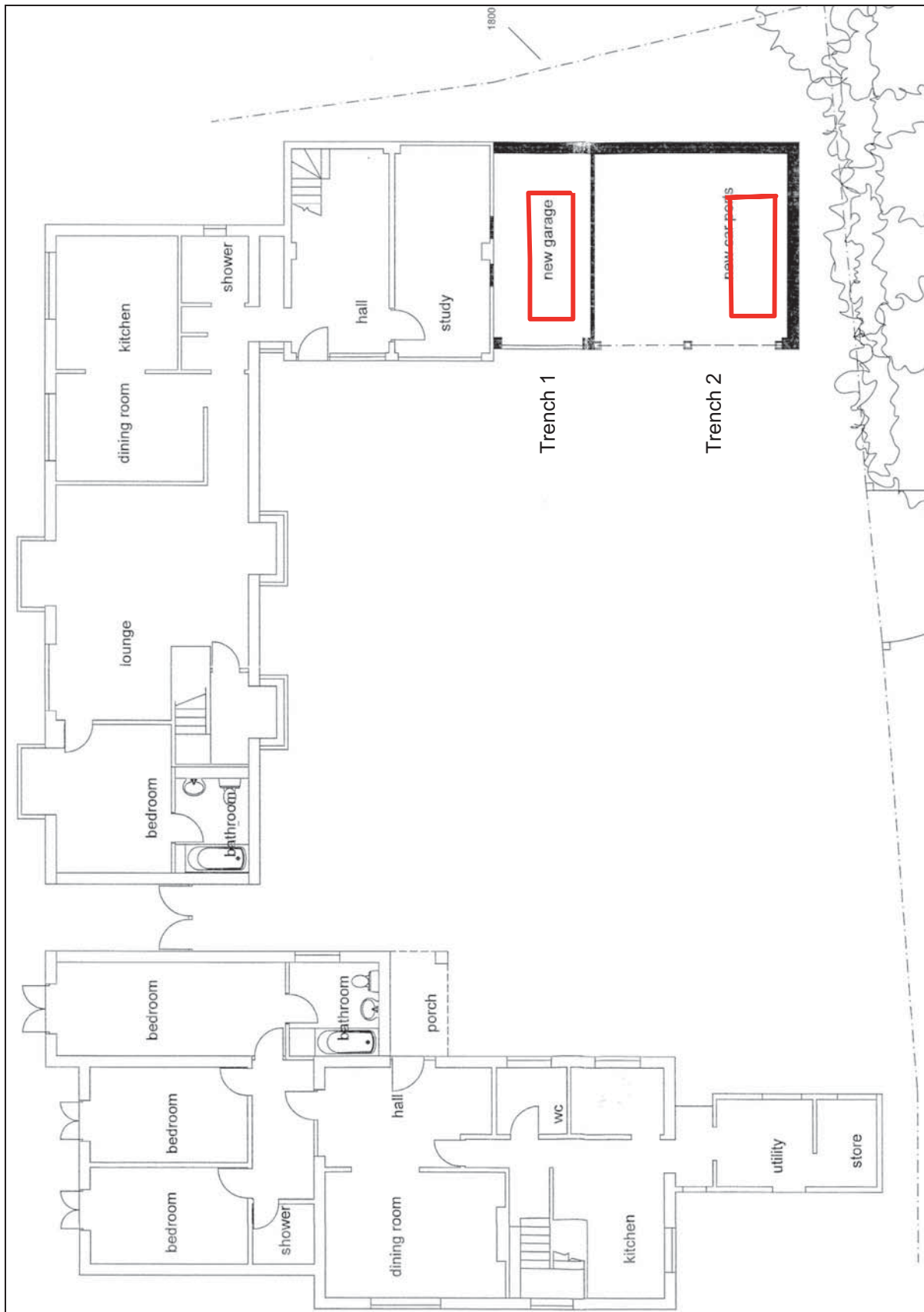


Figure 3: Proposed development, with trench locations (scale approx. 1:160)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

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

- To establish the presence or otherwise of medieval or post-medieval structures through the use of trial trenches
- To look for potential evidence of an earlier manorial building, related structures and refuse pits

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 *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991; EH 1995), 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:

- Removal of the topsoil and overburden down to the natural subsoil or archaeological deposit, whichever is encountered first, by suitable excavating plant fitted with a toothless bucket, working under close archaeological supervision.
- Sampling and recording of any archaeological features present, in accordance with the project objectives (see above).
- Two evaluation trenches amounting to 25% of the footprint of the development were excavated (Fig. 3).

2.4 Constraints

There were no constraints encountered during the course of the fieldwork.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The site of Butlers Manor Cottage is a Grade II Listed Building situated within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Monument No. 27144). It is considered to have the potential to reveal evidence for earlier stages of occupation.
- 3.2 The site comprises a rectangular moated enclosure containing two square-shaped islands, separated by a ditch (Fig. 2). A more detailed description of the site is contained in the Schedule of Monuments (File AA 64068/1). The L-shaped manor house is believed to date from the early 17th century, with extensions in the early 18th and 19th centuries (RCHM 1913: 109). The house, along with an 18th century stable block and more recent outbuildings, is located on the southern island. A more modern house is on the northern corner of the same island, and areas of its grounds, such as tennis courts, cover the earlier 19th century buildings. The northern island has no standing buildings, but both islands show evidence of possible buried structural remains. In the case of the southern island, this may represent building platforms related to the original medieval occupation of the site.
- 3.3 The manor was first mentioned in 1302, as being held in tenancy by *Philip le Botiller*. It is from this tenant that the modern name of the site is thought to derive. He was probably a tenant of the Rector of Ashridge College, who is known to have owned the house from the 14th century (Sheahan 1862).
- 3.4 Although there are several moated houses in the area (Page 1925), Butlers Manor is thought to be a particularly good example of a double island moated site. As a scheduled medieval site, standing remains are not included in the scheduling. The archaeological significance of the site lies in the fact that the remains may demonstrate a continuity of occupation from the medieval and early post-medieval periods onwards. As well as residential structures, it is also thought that other features may have survived, such as wells and refuse pits. With the evidence from this site as well as other moated sites in the area, it may be possible to expand our knowledge of the development of medieval settlement in the region.

4 Results

General

Two trenches were excavated as required in the brief. Detailed information regarding the trenches and their contents appears in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3: Plate 3)

Location: 2m from the southeastern end of the present building and within the footprint of the proposed extension.

Dimensions: 1m × 5m (with a 1.2m extension NE of the northern end of the trench).

Description: There was c. 0.4m of overburden lying above the natural chalky drift. The overburden comprised a 0.05m thick layer of gravel [1] lying on a compacted topsoil [2] (Plate 4). There were no cut features observed in the natural ground, nor any artefacts observed.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3: Plate 4)

Location: This lay 1m from the north easterly boundary of the property and 3.7m from the northern wooden fence.

Dimensions: It was 6.3m x 1.5m at its northern end and 1.2m wide at its southern end

Description: The nature of this trench was identical to T1 (above) except there were more roots present from the adjacent hedge and trees. No features or artefacts were noted.



Plate 1: General setting of evaluation in relation to the moat



Plate 2: Evaluation trenching in progress



Plate 3: Detail of Trench 1



Plate 4: Detail of Trench 2



Plate 5: Detail of soil horizon in T1 looking SW



Plate 6: The site after completion of trial trenches

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 A total of 14.7 sq. metres of the proposed new building was trial trenched. This amounted to approximately 25% of the proposed extension area. No features or artefacts were noted within the trenches.
- 5.2 The presence of a good horizon of topsoil and an absence of any evidence associated with the occupation of the moated site raises certain questions. A complete absence of 'background data' in the form of artefacts suggests that this area was never occupied in the past. While it would be dangerous to over-generalise from such a limited evaluation it does at least hint at certain possibilities for this area of the moated site. It would seem that this area was more likely to have been used either as a garden or paddock for stock such as horses.
- 5.3 This part of the double moated site measures approximately 75m sq. (0.56 ha) in contrast to the northern moated area which measures *c.* 40m x 60m (0.24 ha). It seems likely, therefore, that the northern enclosure was the site of the manorial buildings while the southern area was the 'annexe' and used as an orchard or garden.
- 5.4 The evaluation was carried out in generally good weather conditions, and full co-operation was received from the site owner. A high confidence rating is therefore assigned to this evaluation.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer, on behalf of ASC, is grateful to Tony Witchell for commissioning this evaluation. Thanks are also due to Paul Hayers, the machine driver, for his patience during the project, and to David Radford (BCAS) for his advice and site visit. Finally my thanks to my colleagues: Nigel Wilson for his assistance and to Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA for editing this report.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum. An accession number has been requested.

8. References


Standards & Specifications


- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
- Ferguson L.M. & Murray D.M. 1997 *Archaeological Documentary Archives: Preparation, Curation and Storage*. Institute of Field Archaeologists' Paper 1 (Manchester).
- 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. 2006 *Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation (Trial trenching)*; Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service
- SMA 1995 *Towards an accessible archaeological archive - the transfer of archaeological archives to museums: guidelines for use in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales*. Society for Museum Archaeologists (London).

Secondary Sources

- Page, W 1925 *Victoria County History: Buckinghamshire (Vol. 3)*
- RCHM 1913 *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Buckinghamshire (North)* Blackwells
Schedule of Monuments; File AA 64068/1
- Sheahan, J. 1862 *History and topography of Buckinghamshire* (Chicheley)
- 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	5m	Width	1m	Depth	0.4
	Levels					
	Trench base north east		91.06m OD			
	Trench top north east		91.46m OD			
	Trench base south west		91.18m OD			
	Trench top south west		91.58m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SP	95466-21105	SP	95463-21102		
	Orientation		SW-NE			
Reason for Trench		evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1	layer	gravel	all	50m	0mm	
2	layer	A horizon - topsoil	all	350	50mm	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	6.3m	Width	1.35m	Depth	0.35m
	Levels					
	Trench base north east		91.20m OD			
	Trench top north east		91.55m OD			
	Trench base south west		91.15m OD			
	Trench top south west		91.50m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SP	95467-21097	SP	95470-21100		
	Orientation		SW-NE			
Reason for Trench		evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1	layer	gravel	all	50m	0mm	
2	layer	A horizon - topsoil	all	350	50mm	

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Butler's Manor Cottage				SITE NO/CODE: 867/BMN
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			0115	View WNW along metalled track towards the site
2			0116	Looking south across the moated site (frontspiece)
3			0117	View south across present boundary of the site
4			0118	General setting of present evaluation in relation to moat. Plate 1
5			0119	View south showing detail of the moat
6			0120	Evaluation trenching underway. Plate 2
7			0121	Trench 1 looking NE
8			0122	Detail of Trench 1 looking NE. Plate 3
9			0123	Trench 2 looking NE
10			0124	Detail of Trench 2 looking NE. Plate 4
11			0125	Detail of excavated ground in T.1 looking SW. Plate 5
12			0126	The site after completion of trial trenching. Plate 6
13			0127	Landscape setting of the moat looking east
14	1			Overall view of site looking NE
15	2			Detail of Trench 1 looking NE
16	3			Detail of Trench 2 looking NE
17				
18				
19				
20				

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	Butler's Manor Cottage, Northall, Buckinghamshire					
Short Description:	<i>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on a part of the site of Butler's Manor, Northall, Buckinghamshire on St Valentine's day 2007. The trial trenches consisted of two excavated machine cut slots within the footprint of the proposed extension to Butler's Manor Cottage which lies on the north western corner of the southerly most moated site. Beneath a dark organic topsoil lay the chalky drift of the Pleistocene era. There was no evidence for any man made features or artefacts from this area.</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)	SAM HSD/9/2/8511		Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)		None	
Current land use:	Residential dwelling		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		unknown	
Monument type:	Moated site		Monument period:		medieval	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Buckinghamshire		OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 9547 1909		
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Butlers Manor Cottage South End Lane Northall Buckinghamshire					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	40 sq.m		Height OD: (metres)	91.45m		
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	BCAS		Project design originator:	ASC Ltd		
Project Manager:	J.R. Hunn		Director/Supervisor:	J.R. Hunn		
Sponsor / funding body:	Mr A. Witchell					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	14/2/07		End date:	15/2/07		
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:			none			
Paper:	Bucks County Museum		Plans, lists, site records, B/W photographs			
Digital:	Bucks County Museum		Plans, lists, site records, images			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:						
Author(s):						