

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: 8 HOLTS GREEN GREAT BRICKHILL BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

*on behalf of
Gotzheim Associates*



A J Hancock BSc PgDip

January 2007

ASC: 874/GBH/02

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<i>ASC site code:</i>	GBH	<i>Project no:</i>	874
<i>SMR Event No:</i>			
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Great Brickhill		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Great Brickhill		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 90370 29980		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.30 sq m		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Rear gardens of house		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Conservatory extension		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	06/2526		
<i>Client:</i>	Gotzheim Associates 11 Dean Farm Lane Soulbury Leighton Buzzard LU7 0DE		
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Internal Quality Check

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

Summary

A watching brief was carried out by ASC Ltd during groundwork prior to construction of a conservatory at the rear of 8 Holts Green, Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire. Two shallow modern features and three drainage runs were revealed but no archaeological finds or features were observed. It is suggested that a focus of Romano-British funerary activity may lie on the northern side of the house in the vicinity of earlier finds made during the 1970's.

1 Introduction

1.1 In January 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 8 Holts Green, Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 90370 29980: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by *Gotzheim Associates*, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Hancock 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*.

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 ground reduction and excavation of foundation trenches prior to the construction of a conservatory at the rear of 8 Holts Green. The relevant planning application reference is 06/2526.

1.3 *Location*

The site is located at the southern side of the village of Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire at NGR SP 90370 29980.

1.4 *Description*

The groundwork for the conservatory was located in the rear garden of the extant house and the majority of its footprint covered an area previously paved and in use as a patio

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the Great Brickhill area are of the *Frilford Association* and are described as “*deep well drained sandy and coarse loamy soils. Some ferruginous sandy and some coarse loamy soils affected by groundwater. Risk of water erosion.*” (Soil Survey 1983 554a). The underlying geologies are Mesozoic and Tertiary sands. The site lies at an elevation of *c.* 145m AOD.

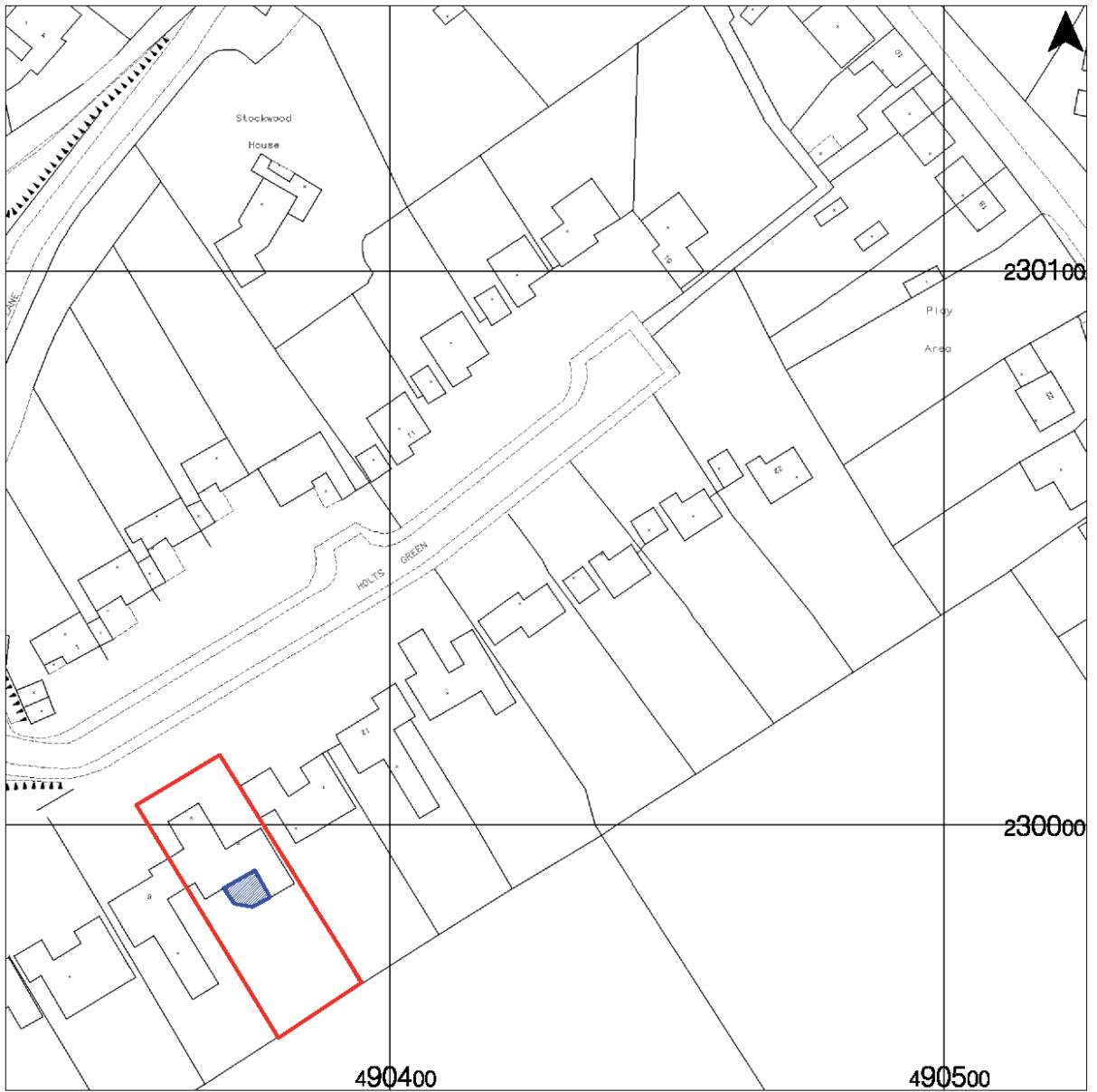


Figure 2: Site plan showing location of extension (*scale 1:1250*)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

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

- Identify and record any significant archaeological remains revealed by the groundworks, paying particular regard to the potential for Roman burials.

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 8a), which required:

- A detailed watching brief requiring the presence of an archaeologist during all works that may affect archaeological remains

2.4 Constraints

No constraints were identified prior to the watching brief fieldwork and none were encountered during the monitoring visit.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 Introduction

The local and regional settings of archaeological sites are factors that are taken into consideration when assessing the implications of development proposals. The following sections provide a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the site and its environs. Two Romano-British cremation burials were revealed in the 1970's during groundworks for an earlier extension at 8 Holts Green and the focus of interest of this project was likely to lie in this period.

3.2 Prehistoric (before 600BC)

The SMR contains a reference to possible Bronze Age burials from 'Brickhill' (CASS 2075: whether *Bow*, *Great* or *Little* is not specified), consisting of a bronze rapier and dirk each found in association with skulls. There is also a published reference to the discovery of a 'bronze socketed celt' in Jack Ironcap's Lane, Great Brickhill, by boys from Bletchley Council School (*Recs Buckinghamshire* **11**, 221).

3.3 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)

Sites of Iron Age date are sparse in the area of Great Brickhill. About 0.7km to the north of Stoke Hammond, on high ground, is a possible late Iron Age or early Roman square enclosure (CASS 5608), identified from aerial photographs. No other sites or finds of this period are identified.

3.4 Romano-British (AD43-c.450)

At 8 Holts Green, two Romano-British urned cremation burials of 2nd century date were located during the construction of a porch extension (CASS 4395: Allen 1979). The site lies c.2km west of the Roman road now known as Watling Street and the road running north-south through the village, c.100m to the west of 8 Holts Green is the route suggested by the *Viatores* (1964 278) for the minor Roman road from Fleet Marston to Little Brickhill.

3.5 Saxon (c.450-1066)

No sites or finds of Saxon date are recorded in the immediate area. During this period the villages of Great Brickhill was probably established. The name *Brickhill* probably originates from the British *brik*, meaning 'top' or 'summit' (Mawer & Stenton 1925).

3.6 Medieval (1066-1500)

In the Domesday Survey of 1086, it is recorded that the manor of Great Brickhill was held by the Earl of Tosti before the Norman Conquest, subsequently passing to Hugh, Earl of Chester, and was assessed at 9 hides. In 1284 the manor passed into the ownership of the Crown and during the 11th to 13th centuries Great Brickhill Manor was held by the Malbank family. After 1265 the manorial rights passed to John Grey (de Grey), who also held the manor of Bletchley. By 1506 Great Brickhill descended, along with the manors of Simpson and Stoke Hammond, to Richard, Earl of Kent. In 1549 the manor was sold to the Duncombe family, who have held it ever since (Page 1927, 293-297).

The site of a medieval watermill, first recorded in 1251, has been tentatively identified as Paper Mill Farm (CASS 2335).

3.7 Post-Medieval (1500-1900)

A later watermill in Great Brickhill, first mentioned in 1610, is thought to have been on the site of the present Orchard Mill, 1.5km north of Stoke Hammond (CASS 2001).

The earliest available cartographic evidence for Great Brickhill can be found in the 1772 Inclosure Map for the parish. The field boundaries are noticeably different to the modern layout, but the basic pattern is visible.

3.8 Modern (1900-present)

The Ordnance Survey 25" maps of 1899 and 1900 provide the first really detailed picture. In Great Brickhill the picture is not much different to the present day, save for infill development along Ivy Lane and Stoke Lane. The pace of change in this parish has evidently been slow: the Ordnance Survey 6" sheets of 1926 and subsequent maps up to the present day provide a similar picture.

4. Results

- 4.1 Patio paving and *c.*0.2m of underlying mid yellow clayey sand levelling material were removed, then foundation trenches were subsequently excavated with a tracked mini digger on the footprint of the conservatory (Plate 1).
- 4.2 Two dark brown ashy/sandy silt filled sub-circular features were revealed by removal of the levelling material (Plate 2). The smaller of the two features had a diameter of *c.*0.8m and the larger a diameter of *c.*2.0m. Investigation of the features proved that both were *c.*0.06m deep and showed that fragments of 20th century tile/brick and glazed earthenware were contained within their fills. The base of the smaller feature had been heated and the underlying clayey sand was oxidised and concreted. No archaeological finds pre-dating the 20th century were recovered from these features.
- 4.3 The foundation trenches were *c.*0.6m wide by *c.*1.0m deep and ran along the perimeter of the proposed conservatory (Fig 3, Plate 3). The revealed soil profile consisted of:
- *c.*0.1m of dark brown sandy organic topsoil
 - *c.*0.2m of mid greyish brown sandy silt subsoil
 - *c.*0.7m of natural mid reddish orange clayey sand, containing thin lenses of mid yellow sand toward the base
 - unknown depth of mixed natural red/yellow sand (revealed at base of foundation)

No archaeological finds or features were observed during excavation of the foundation trenches.

- 4.4 The pipes of three drainage runs extended from the house under the footprint of the conservatory and were exposed where they crossed the foundation trenches (*e.g.* Plate 3). The fills of the pipe trenches were not visible in the stripped surface, which suggests that they were immediately backfilled with the natural sandy deposits excavated from them.

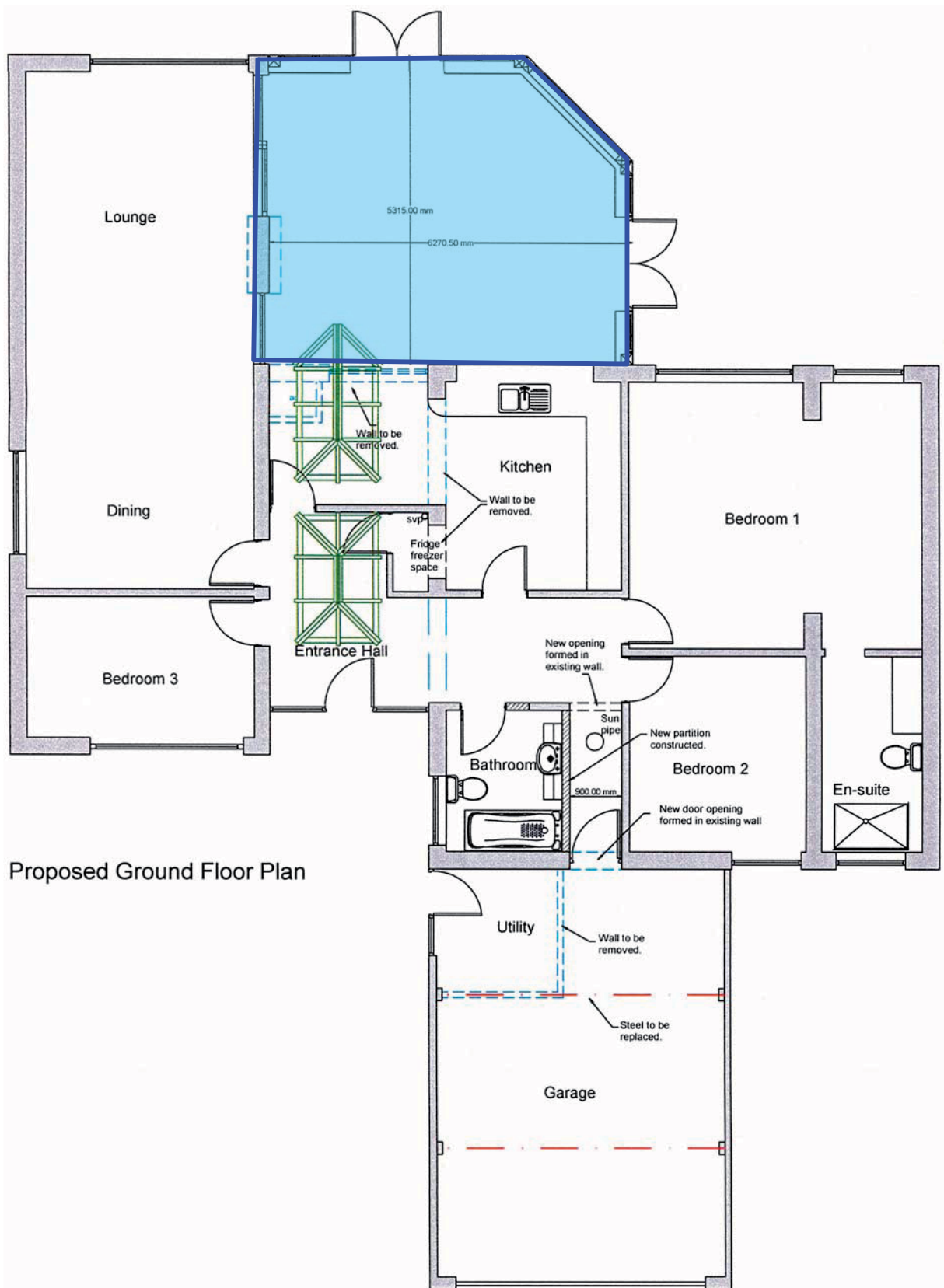


Figure 3: Development plan, conservatory in blue (scale 1:100)



Plate 1: Excavation of foundation trenches, facing NW



Plate 2: Shallow modern features revealed by removal of patio, facing NE



Plate 3: Foundation trench, facing NW



Plate 4: Groundwork completed, facing NNW

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The confidence rating attributed to the observations made during fieldwork and the following conclusions is high.
- 5.2 During the 1970's two 2nd century, urned Romano-British cremation burials were recovered during construction of a porch extension at the front of 8 Holts Green. The cremations suggest that a settlement of this period was located somewhere nearby. It appears unlikely that the recovered cremations were isolated examples of this funerary practice and it is probable that they form part of a larger group of undiscovered burials.
- 5.3 Archaeological finds or features were not observed at the rear of the house during the watching brief and it is tentatively suggested that the focus of any undisturbed cremation burials may lie in the vicinity of the earlier findspot at the front (north) of the house. However, the uniform sandy nature of the natural deposit is noted and it is suggested that small features excavated into the sand then immediately backfilled with it would be extremely difficult to detect.
- 5.4 The topsoil and the majority of the subsoil in the area of the monitored groundworks appear to have been removed and levelling material deposited during construction of the patio in the late 20th century.
- 5.5 Further evidence of significant modern disturbance of the monitored area is illustrated by the discovery of two shallow features containing 20th century tile/brick and pot sherds, plus the presence of three drainage runs.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to *Johnathan Gotzheim* of *Gotzheim Associates* for commissioning this project and to *Aylesbury Mini Diggers* for their cooperation during the fieldwork and to *David Radford* of *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service* for monitoring the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by the author and the report 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 photographs
7. 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).

Hancock A 2006 Project Design for a Watching Brief: 8 Holts Green, Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire. ASC Ref: 874/GBH/01.

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 Watching Brief: 8 Holts Green, Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service.

Secondary Sources

Allen, D. 1979 'Two Roman Cremation Burials from Great Brickhill', *Recs Buckinghamshire* **21**, 29-34.


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

Page, W (ed.) 1927 *The Victoria History of the County of Buckingham*, vol. **4** (London).

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

Viatore 1964 *Roman Roads in the South East Midlands*. (London).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

 A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD	
Project: 8 HOLTS GREEN GREAT BRICKHILL		Project No/Code: 874 1 GBH	Sheet: 1 of 1
Client/Developer: GOTZHEIM ASSOC.		Date of visit: 12 01 07	
Contact: JONATHAN GOTZHEIM		Phone: 01525 270393	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 10.20	Finish: 14.25	
Completed by: AJH			
Development Type:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Footings	<input type="checkbox"/> Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Roads	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Levelling
		<input type="checkbox"/> Quarrying	<input type="checkbox"/> Pipelines
Other (specify):			
Site & weather conditions: REAR GARDEN. OVERCAST AND WINDY			
Observations: AREA OF CONSERVATORY EXTENSION STRIPPED OF SURFACE DEPOSITS TO A DEPTH OF C.0.2M. TWO DARK BROWN ASHY CLAY SILT FILLED SUB-CIRCULAR FEATURES EVIDENT IN SURFACE OF NATURAL ORANGE CLAYEY SAND DEPOSIT. INVESTIGATION PROVED BOTH WERE SHALLOW (> C.0.2M) AND INCLUDED WITHIN THE FILLS WERE FRAGMENTS OF MODERN TILE/BRICK AND (20 POT SHEETS. BASE OF THE SMALLER FEATURE HAD BEEN SUBJECT TO HEAT - SAND WAS REDDENED AND V. FIRM: - MODERN FEATURES - PROBABLY RESULTING FROM CONSTRUCTION OF EXISTANT HOUSE. FOUNDATION TRENCHES WERE C.0.6M WIDE AND EXCAVATED THEN C.0.25M OF SANDY ORGANIC TOPSOIL C.1.0M OF REDDISH ORANGESAND (MHT) THE SAND BECAME YELLOWED TOWARD THE BASE OF TRENCHES NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS OR FEATURES OBSERVED			
Comments: GROUNDWORK COMPLETED. NO FURTHER VISITS NECESSARY.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 8 Holts Green, Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire				SITE NO/CODE: 874/GBH
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			✓	General site
2			✓	Excavation of foundation trenches, facing NW
3			✓	Shallow modern features revealed by removal of patio, facing NE
4			✓	Foundation trench, facing NW
5			✓	Groundwork completed, facing NNW

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	8 Holts Green, Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire					
Short Description:	A watching brief was carried out during groundwork prior to construction of a conservatory. Two shallow modern features were present but no archaeological finds or features were revealed by the groundwork.					
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)		Allen, D. 1979 'Two Roman Cremation Burials from Great Brickhill', <i>Recs Buckinghamshire</i> 21, 29-34.	
Current land use:	Residential gardens		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		Unknown	
Monument type:	None		Monument period:		None	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Buckinghamshire		OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 90370 29980		
District:	Great Brickhill		Parish:	Great Brickhill		
Site address: (with postcode if known)	8 Holts Green, Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	25 sq m		Height OD: (metres)	c.145m AOD		
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	David Radford		Project design originator:	A J Hancock		
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat		Director/Supervisor:	A J Hancock		
Sponsor / funding body:	Gotzheim Associates					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	12 th January 2007		End date:	12 th January 2007		
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	n/a		n/a			
Paper:	Buck's County Museum		Monitoring sheet, report, brief			
Digital:	Buck's County Museum		Report, illustrations, photographs			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:	Watching Brief: 8 Holts Green, Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire					
Serial title & volume:	Unpublished client report					
Author(s):	A J Hancock					
Page nos	1 -18		Date:	17 th January 2007		