

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
BENSTEAD WOOD, CROMER HYDE
BISHOPS HATFIELD
HERTFORDSHIRE**

on behalf of CPM (T-Mobile)



Jonathan R Hunn BA PhD MIFA

August 2004

ASC: 555/LBW/1

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	LBW	<i>Project no:</i>	555
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>District:</i>	Welwyn and Hatfield		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	rural		
<i>Parish:</i>	Bishops Hatfield (ancient parish)		
<i>NGR:</i>	TL 2056-1206		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	3.5ha+		
<i>Present land use:</i>	woodland		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Electric cable route		
<i>Extent of development:</i>	130m x 0.5m		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	6/02/0844		
<i>Client:</i>	CPM Akeman Barns Coln St Aldwyns Cirencester Gloucester GL7 5AW		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Sally Randell		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	

Internal Quality Check

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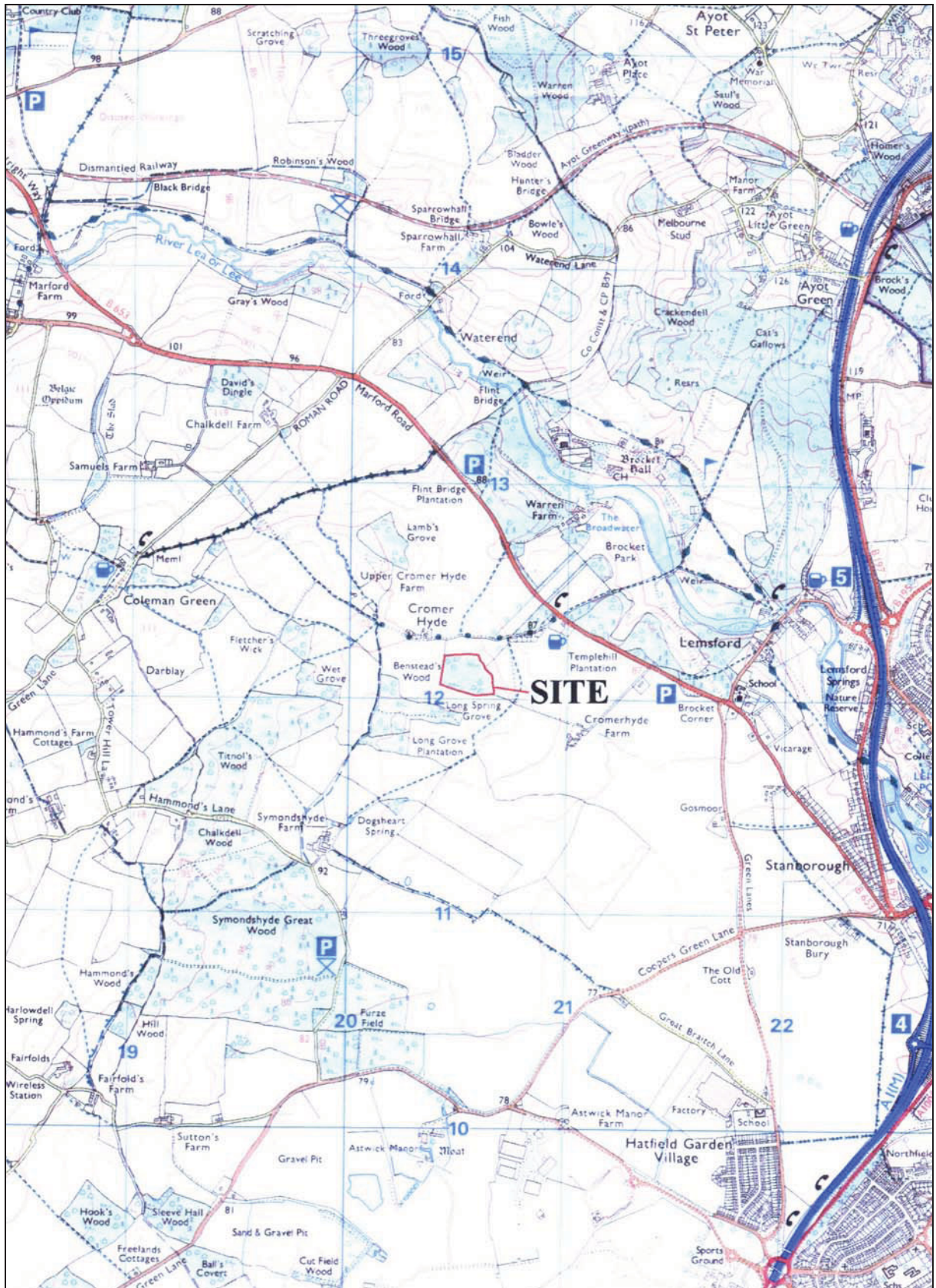


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In August 2004, ASC Ltd undertook an archaeological watching brief in Benstead Wood, near Lemsford, Hertfordshire on behalf of CPM who were the commissioning agents on behalf of T-Mobile. The work was focused on the construction of an electric cable route which ran a distance of 130m through the wood. To judge from the presence of nearby earthworks the woodland is probably post-medieval in date. No features or artefacts were identified along the route of the cable route.

1 Introduction

1.1 During early August 2004 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief on a site at Benstead Wood, Cromer Hyde Lane near Lemsford (NGR TL 2056-1206: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Sally Randell of CPM on behalf of T-Mobile, and was carried out according to a brief (15/8/03) prepared by the Jonathan Smith of the County Archaeology Office (CAO).

1.2 *Reason for Work*

The work was required due to the proximity of an ancient site and other ill-defined earthworks which might be damaged during the cable laying operation.

1.3 *Setting*

1.3.1 The site lies in deciduous woodland some 3.5 ha (8.6 acres) in extent and situated almost 800m to the south of Cromer Hyde Lane; it lies 1200m to the west of Lemsford and about 900m SW from the river Lea.

1.3.2 The site is situated on the plateau out of sight of the R. Lea to the north west on terrain that is flat to gently sloping between the 95m and 100m contours (AOD). The soil belongs to the Batcombe Association which is derived from Plateau Drift and Clay-with-flints (Soil Survey 1983).

1.3.3 Access is gained from the south east and there are no structures, apart from pheasant sheds and stores on the site.

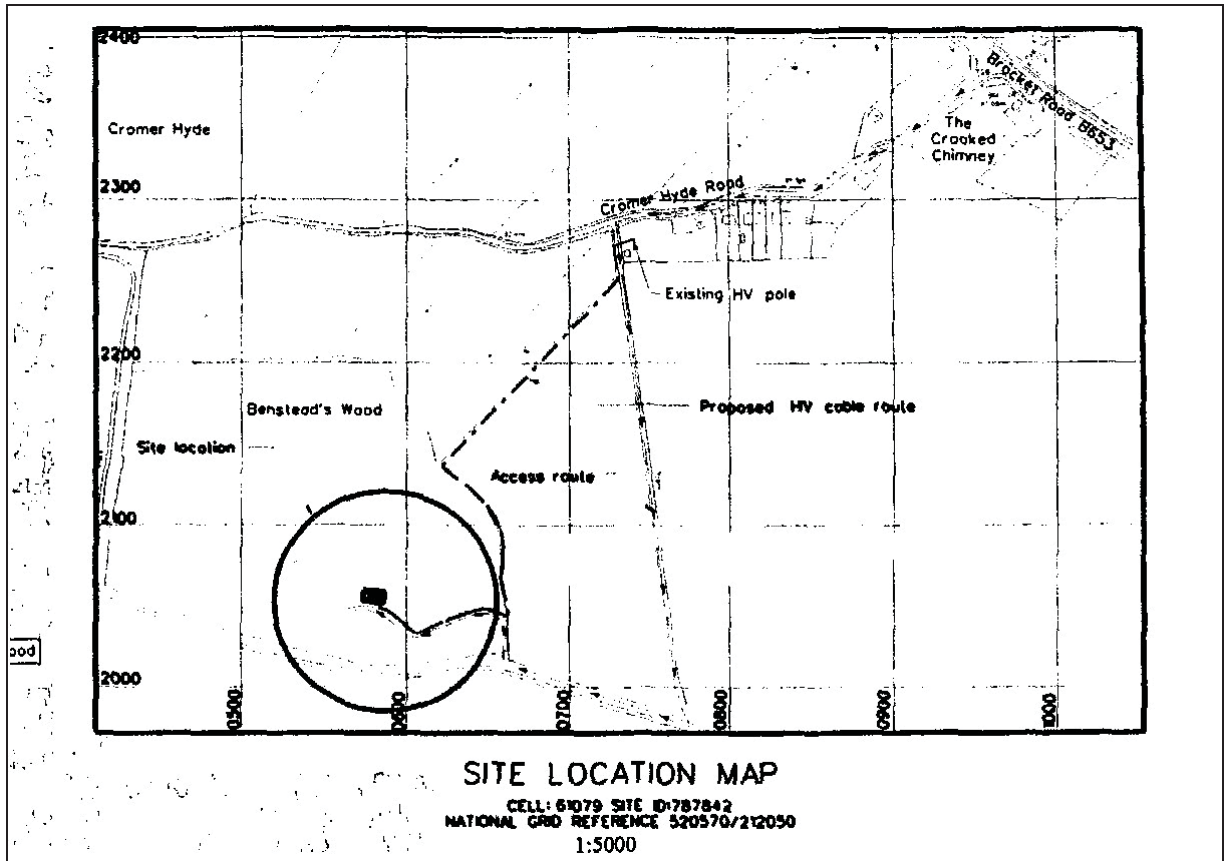


Figure 2: Site location plan

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect archaeological remains.
- To secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme.
- To secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.
- To attempt to place the project findings into their historical and geographical context, having made reference to the relevant regional research agendas (*East Anglian Archaeology Occasional paper 8, 2000*), through cartographic and documentary research.

2.2 Methods

- Monitoring soil and overburden stripping
- Inspection of sub-soil deposits for archaeological features
- The rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological feature/deposits
- Monitoring the stripping of sub-soil
- Examination of any service and foundation trenches and the subsequent recording of any exposed archaeological deposits
- The rapid examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving, and publication

2.3 Standards

The work conforms 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 Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (ALGAO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

There are no known prehistoric or Roman sites in the immediate vicinity of the new installation. Within Benstead Wood there is a medieval site consisting of a moat, a possible windmill mound, trackways and banks and ditches which may or may not be associated with one another.

The moated site lies about 110m to the north of the base of the communication mast (Fig. 2) though there are other, possibly related earthworks in the vicinity. For a description of the moat see Appendix 3.

According to the *Victoria County History* the moated site was the manor of Chewells which was first mentioned in 1277 (Page 1912,102). However, it was not referred to as a manor until the 15th century (*ibid.*). It is not known when the site was abandoned but to judge from the character of the vegetation a late 16th or 17th century date is quite possible.

4 Results

- 4.1 The cable trench was approximately 130m long and began a short distance to the south east of Benstead's Wood and proceeded in a curvilinear, southerly direction towards the base of the communications mast (Fig. 2). The trench was 0.6m deep and no more than 0.4m wide (Plates 1-6). It should be noted that there was some discrepancy between the route of the cable trench and the those of the actual field observations (see sheet for August 9th in Appendix 1) The topsoil was relatively thin, being no more than 0.15m thick; beneath this the remaining subsoil was a pebbly, yellowish brown clay (Mun 10 YR 5/4) (Plate 6). There were no features or finds recovered from the trench except for one small struck flint.

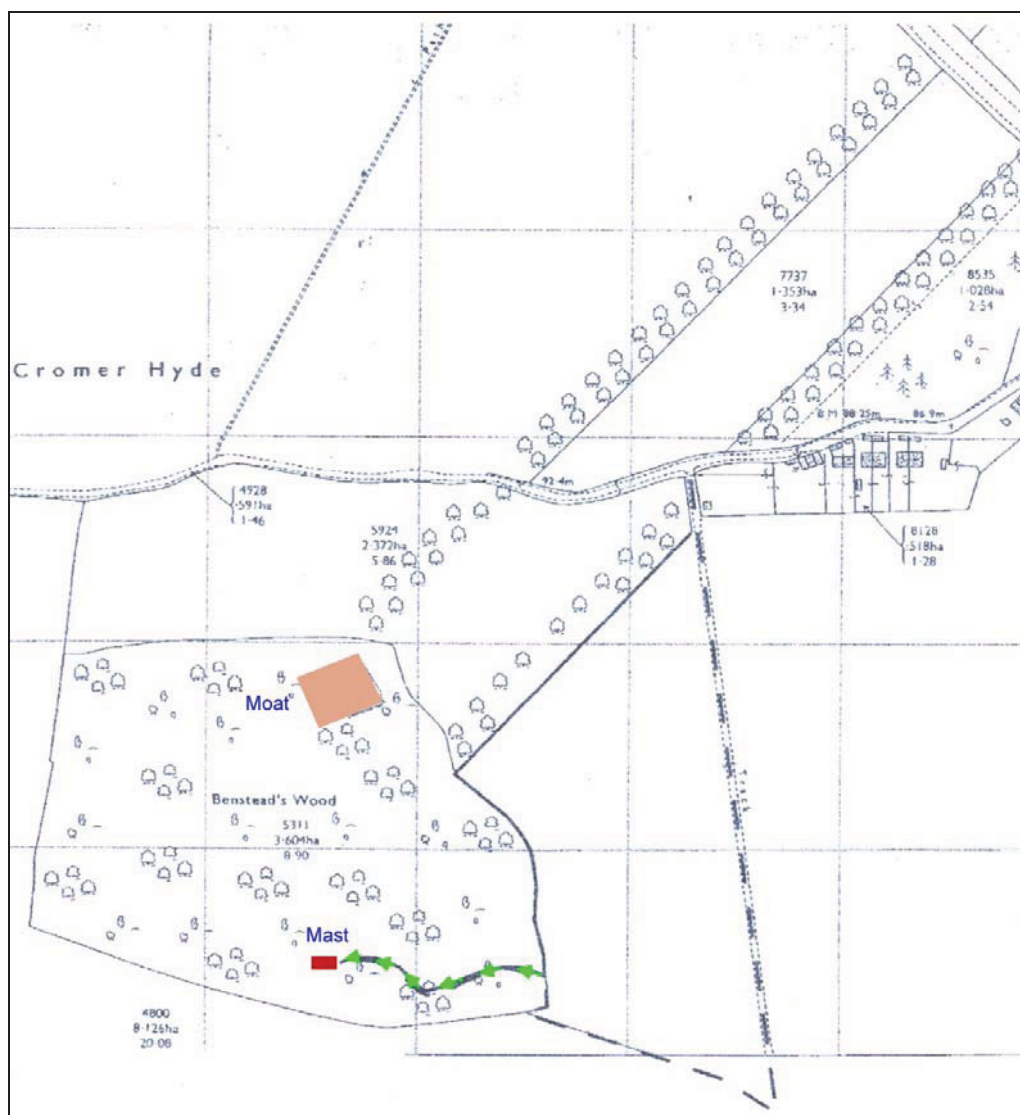


Figure 3: Location of moat in relation to the communication mast



Plate 1: On edge of wood looking south



Plate 2: View looking south along cable trench



Plate 3: View looking south along cable trench



Plate 4: Further along cable trench view south



Plate 5: Cable trench near base of communications mast



Plate 6: Example of soil profile in the wood

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 No man made features or artefacts were observed from the course of the electric cable. The light within the woodland was, on the whole, quite good and the ‘aspect’ generally open with good visibility beneath the tree canopy. In this part of the wood there was no sign of any Bluebells (*Endymion non-scriptus*) nor any other flora of note. Where the trench cut through the woodland boundary, in the form of a bank, it was quite hard to make out any distinguishing features (Plate 1).

- 5.2 In conclusion, the cable trench appears to have had only a slight impact on the local flora and almost negligible on the potential archaeology of the area.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Sally Randell of CPM for commissioning this project on behalf of the clients T-Mobile. The guidance of the County Archaeology Office is acknowledged and the co-operation of Graham Wilson of the contractors, Morrisons. Finally, my thanks to my colleague Bob Zeepvat for editing this report.

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/slides
7. Colour slides
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Welwyn Hatfield Museum.

8. Bibliography

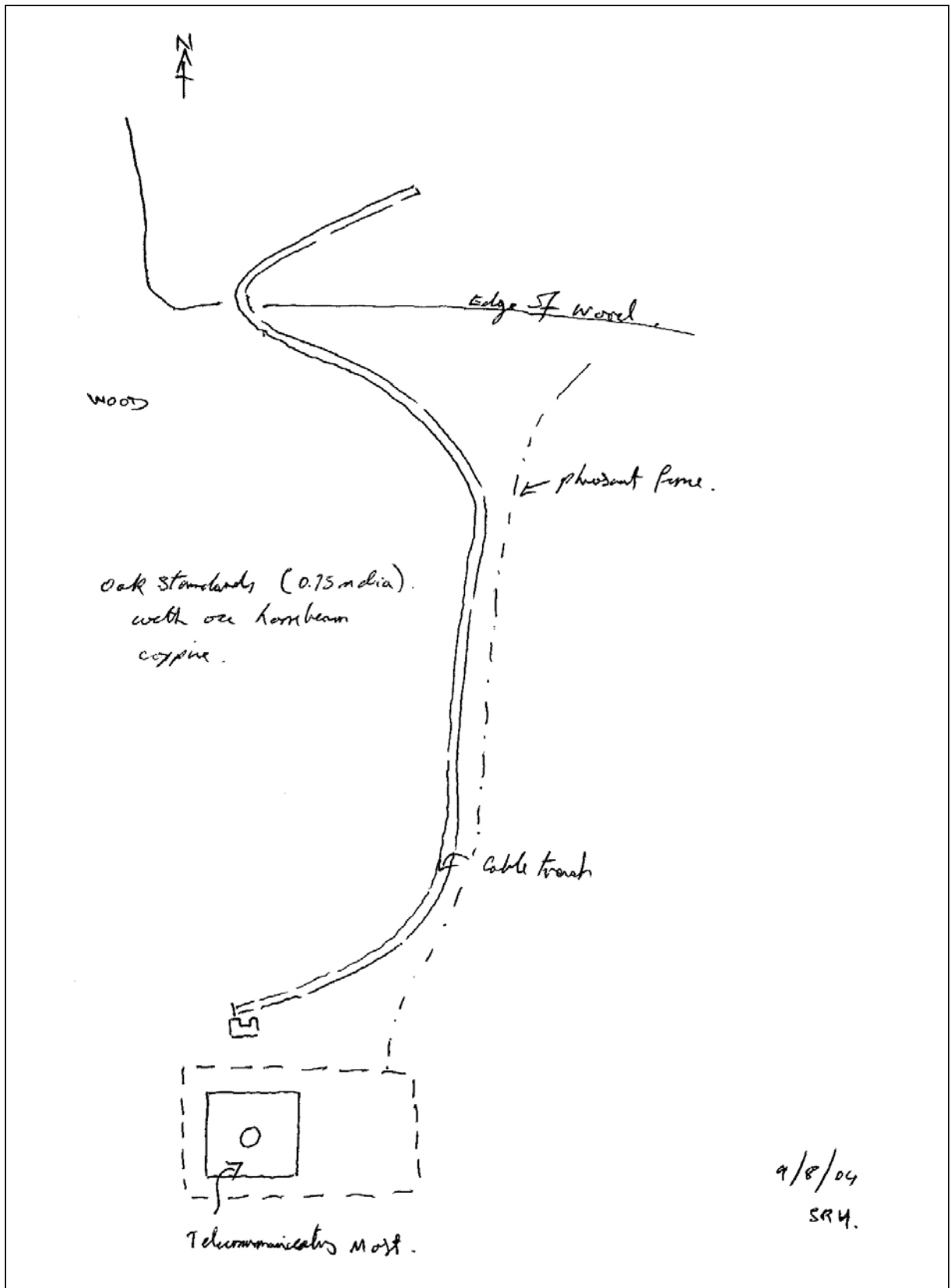
- Brown, I. & Glazebrook, J (eds) 2000: *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the eastern Counties, 2 research agenda and strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology, Occ. Paper no. 8 (Norwich).
- Gurney, D. (ed) 2003: *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occ Paper no, 14.
- 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)*.
- Page, W. (ed) 1912 (reprint 1971): *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Hertfordshire* vol III,. Dawsons of Pall Mall (London).
- 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: <i>Benstead Wood,</i>		Project No/Code: <i>5551 LBW</i>		Sheet: <i>1 of 2</i>		
Cromer Hyde		Date of visit: <i>9/8/04</i>				
Client/Developer: <i>C.P.M (Sally Rowhall)</i> <i>T. mobile</i>						
Contact: <i>Graham Wilson</i>				Phone: <i>0774358817</i>		
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: <i>1.30</i>		Finish: <i>4.30 pm.</i>		
Completed by: <i>SRA</i>						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Hot & humid</i>						
Observations: <i>Observed a 130m length trenching for an electric cable (0.4m wide x 0.6m deep). Dry, rocky topsoil 0.15m deep. The remaining 0.45m is a pebbly, yellowish brown clay (Mam 10 YR 5/4). Fairly uniform throughout</i>						
Comments: <i>No features or artefacts except for one small flint struck flake</i>						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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Appendix 2: Short note on the moated site and other features



The area of the moated site is predominantly Hornbeam coppice with tall Oak standards (average oak tree dimension is not more than 0.75m wide).

The moated site is rectangular in shape with an overall E-W dimension of 50m and a N-S dimension of 42.5m. The ditch is about 8m wide and there is a trace of an external bank on its northern side. The internal area is mostly flat and measures 26m E-W and 21.5m N-S. There is a suggestion of an access point from the south.

South south west of the moated site lies a possible windmill mound. It has an overall dimension of 22m (N-S); the mound, if that is what it is, is approximately 8m wide and no more than 0.5m high.

There are other linear features in the form of trackways and boundaries but these would require surveying in order to make sense of them.

Appendix 3: SMR Summary Sheet

HERTS

Site name and address: Benstead Wood, Cromer Hyde Lane, Lemsford		
County: Hertfordshire		District: Welwyn & Hatfield
Village/Town: n/a		Parish: Bishops Hatfield (ancient parish)
Planning application reference: 6/02/0844		
Client name, address, & tel. no: CPM Akeman Barns Coln St Aldwyns Cirencester Gloucester GL7 5AW		
Nature of application: electricity supply		
Present land use: woodland		
Size of application area: n/a		Size of area investigated: n/a
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 2056-1206		Site code: 555/LBW
Site director/Organization: Jonathan R. Hunn / ASC Ltd		
Type of work: watching brief		
Date of work:	Start:9/8/04	Finish: 10/8/04
Curating museum: Welwyn & Hatfield. Mill Green		
Related SMR nos: 11207		Periods represented: nil
Relevant previous summaries/reports Crank 2003		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>In August 2004, ASC Ltd undertook an archaeological watching brief in Benstead Wood, near Lemsford, Hertfordshire on behalf of CPM who were the commissioning agents on behalf of T-Mobile. The work was focused on the construction of an electric cable route which ran a distance of 130m through the wood. To judge from the presence of nearby earthworks the woodland is probably post-medieval in date. No features or artefacts were identified along the route of the cable route.</i></p>		
Author: J.R. Hunn		Date: 20/8/04