

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
EBENEZER COTTAGE
BICESTER ROAD
KINGSWOOD
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

*on behalf of
Mr R Fowler*



by
Jonathan R. Hunn BA PhD MIFA

June 2007

ASC: 936/KBR/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>	KBR	<i>Project no:</i>	936
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Kingswood		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Grendon Underwood		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 6901 1905		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Garden of Ebenezer Cottage		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of two dwellings on land adjacent to Ebenezer Cottage		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	07/1010/AOP		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr Richard Fowler Ebenezer Cottage Biscester Road Kingswood Buckinghamshire HP18 0RA		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Mr Richard Fowler		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Jonathan R. Hunn	<i>Date:</i>	June 21 st 2007
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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

Summary

In June 2007 Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd undertook an evaluation at Ebenezer Cottage at Kingswood, Buckinghamshire. The work was undertaken in anticipation of a proposal to construct two detached houses. Two evaluation trenches were excavated at right angles to the alignment of the Roman Road (Akeman Street) but no archaeological features or artefacts were observed.

1 Introduction

1.1 In June 2007 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Ebenezer Cottage, Kingswood, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 6901 1905: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by *Richard Fowler*, and was carried out according to a brief (Radford 2007) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Aylesbury Vale District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Barclay & Fell 2007). The relevant planning application reference is 07/1010/AOP.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of two detached houses.

1.3 *Location*

The site is located in Kingswood, in the administrative district of Aylesbury Vale, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1). It lies close to the centre of the village, on the north side of the A41, close to its junction with Grendon Road and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 6901 1905 (Fig. 2).

1.4 *Description*

The site comprises a rectangular plot of land (26m x 34m), comprising Ebenezer Cottage and its garden. On its north, south and western sides it is defined by wooden fenced boundaries and on its eastern side it remains as yet undefined. A young cherry tree and an overgrown Cypress hedge were present and the remainder of the site comprises lawn.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the development area comprise the *Denchworth Association*, namely ‘*Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey soils with similar fine loamy over clayey soils*’, which overly Jurassic and Cretaceous clay (Soil Survey 1983; 712b). The site is essentially flat and lies at an elevation of *c.* 78m OD.

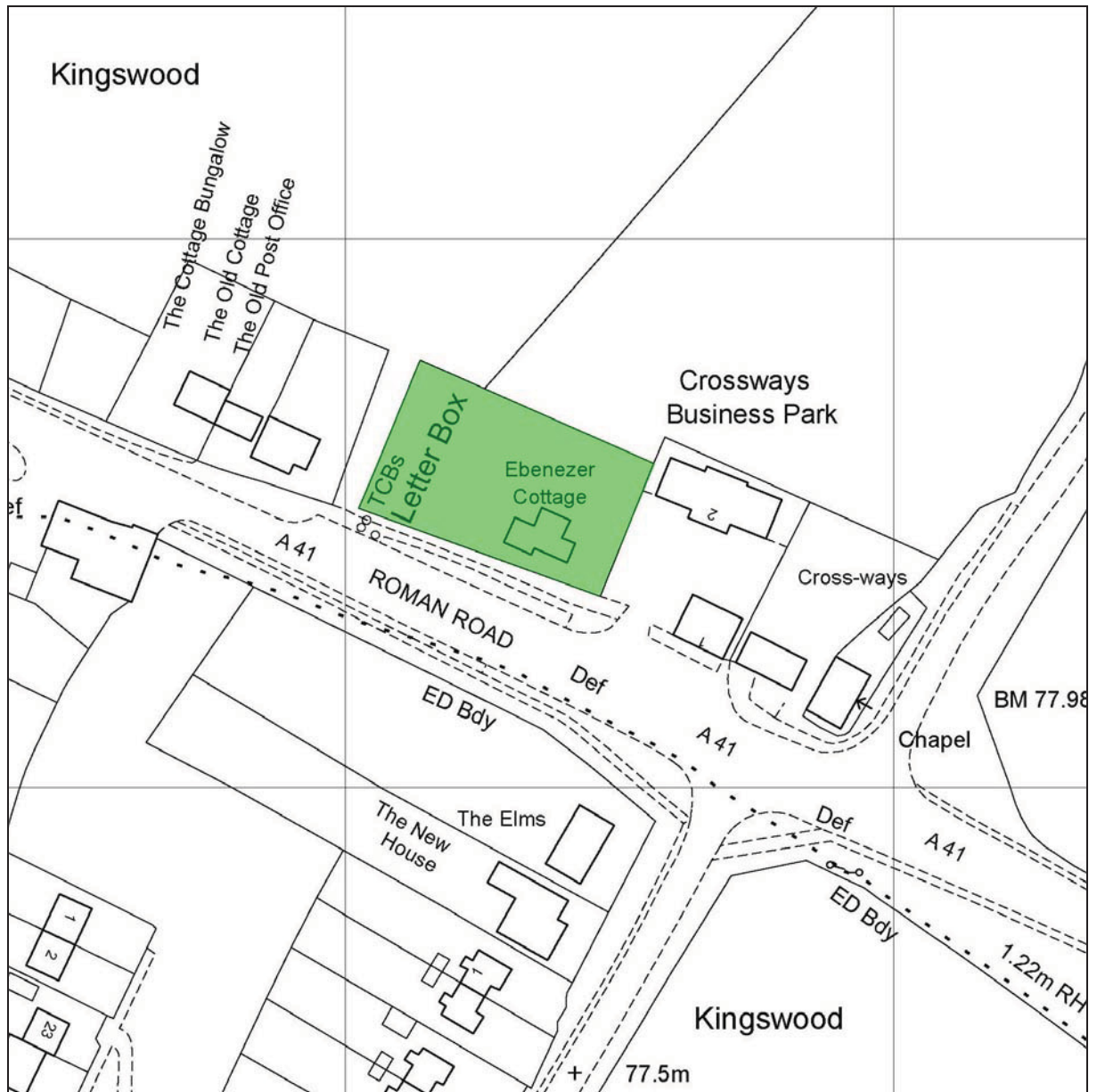


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

2 Aims and Methods

2.1 Aims

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

- To gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains within the area of study.
- To identify any evidence for Roman or Saxon/medieval activity
- To identify any features associated with the Roman road or roadside settlement

2.2 Standards

The work conform to the requirements of the *brief*, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *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:

- Two trenches, each 10m long, were excavated (Fig. 3). They were aligned perpendicular to the road and will be situated as close as possible to the south boundary of the site, in order to test for the presence of road side features.
- The north ends of the trenches were situated within the footprints of the proposed new houses.

2.4 Constraints

No major constraints were encountered. The only minor variation was the relocation of the Trench 1 a few metres to the west to avoid the site of an old tree stump.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Prehistoric (before AD 43)

No large scale archaeological work has taken place in Kingswood and little is known of the prehistoric periods in the Kingswood area. Relatively few prehistoric sites are known from the Oxford Clay, and archaeological research has tended to concentrate on the lower lying gravel terraces of the river Thames and its tributaries.

3.2 Roman (AD43-c.450)

During the Roman period, communications in the area were dominated by a major road, now known as *Akeman Street* (OS 1979; CAS 105). This linked the civitas capitals of *Verulamium* (St Albans) and *Corinium* (Cirencester). A significant small Roman town, known as *Alchester*, was situated c.10km west of Kingswood and a major military site, identified as a first century vexillation fortress, has also been identified at this location (Sauer 2000). The modern A41 road follows the approximate course of *Akeman Street*, which forms the southern boundary of the site.

A quantity of Roman period artefacts have been recorded in the centre of Kingswood and it is likely that the area was occupied during this period. The nature of the settlement is not known and the evidence comprises finds of Roman pottery, coins and other artefacts in the gardens and fields adjacent to the A41 and Grendon Road. A coin of the emperor Crispus has been found close to the east side of the site, at Crossways Garage (CAS 4132) and further coins, and also a variety of pottery sherds and metal fragments have been recorded at Ham Green, c.300m east of the site.

The importance of the area has recently been highlighted by the discovery of a major stone building, possibly a temple, at Grendon Underwood (Cambridgeshire Archaeology, *pers com*). In addition, archaeological monitoring during the construction of the Marsh Gibbon to Hardwick gas pipeline, has revealed evidence of an extensive Roman settlement c.900m north of Kingswood. A variety of further Roman sites are known elsewhere along *Akeman Street* (Finch-Smith 1987, 235).

3.3 Saxon (c.450-1066)

There is no evidence that Kingswood was settled in the post-Roman period. Indeed, with decline of population and breakdown of government it is highly probable that small settlement would have shunned old communication lines. After all there was no advantage in commercial terms and there was the potential danger of brigandage.

3.4 Medieval (1066-1500)

Little is known of Kingswood during the Saxon and medieval periods. The name Kingswood is not included in the Domesday survey (1086) and most probably would have included within the return for Grendon Underwood (Morris 1978, section 27.1). At that time there was land for 8 ploughs, meadow for 2 ploughs and woodland for 500 swine (*ibid.*). This is confirmation, if any were needed, that this area had a high ratio of swine to a ploughland. Indeed, the woodland/ploughland ratios are as high as those found in the Chilterns. The place name *Kingswood* is mentioned in a late 13th century document which indicates that it once formed an integral part of Bernwood Forest (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 104).

The Roman road probably remained a major feature of the landscape during this period, and forms the boundary of the present parishes of Kingswood and Grendon Underwood. During the medieval period the area was largely agricultural and extensive traces of ridge and furrow cultivation strips have been recorded in the surrounding fields. Faint traces of ridge and furrow remain in the field immediately north of the site.

3.5 Post-Medieval (1500-present)

The existing buildings date to the post-medieval and modern periods and the majority were constructed during the 19th and 20th centuries. Notable exceptions include Kingswood Lane Farm c.500m south of the site, which was built during the 17th century (RCHM 1912, 222). Primrose Cottage, c.200m northeast of the site dates from the early 18th century.

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the results of the trial trenches. A full description of all contexts, with illustrations of the trenches, is offered in Appendix 1.
- 4.1.2 Two trenches were excavated across the site. They were located within the footprint of the proposed new houses and extended as close as possible to the southwest boundary, in order to target archaeological features on the side of the Roman road (Fig 3).

4.2 Description

Trench 1 (Fig. 3: Plates 1-2)

Location: The eastern edge of the trench was situated 9.6m from the western side of Ebenezer Cottage and 0.6m from the southern boundary of the present property.

Description: The depth of turf and topsoil (101) is greater in the southern half of the trench being c.0.4m deep. There is an abrupt change demarcated by two parallel E-W drains (102) and (103). The first is situated 4.5 m from the fence and the second one is 6.2 m (centred) from the fence. To the north 6.7m from the fence the topsoil is only 0.15m thick. The natural ground (104) consists of a brown silty, stoneless clay (Mun 10 YR 4/3). There were no other features present nor any pre-modern finds observed. The topsoil (101) contained the occasional brick and fragment of chinaware.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3: Plates 3-4)

Location: The eastern edge of the trench was situated 22.7m from the western side of Ebenezer Cottage and 0.7m from the southern boundary of the present property .

Description: The trench was similar to Trench 1. The topsoil (201) in the southern half of the trench consists of a very dark grey, stoneless loam with many flecks of charcoal, and occasional fragments of glass, china and brick. The only features present were two parallel drains (202) and (203).

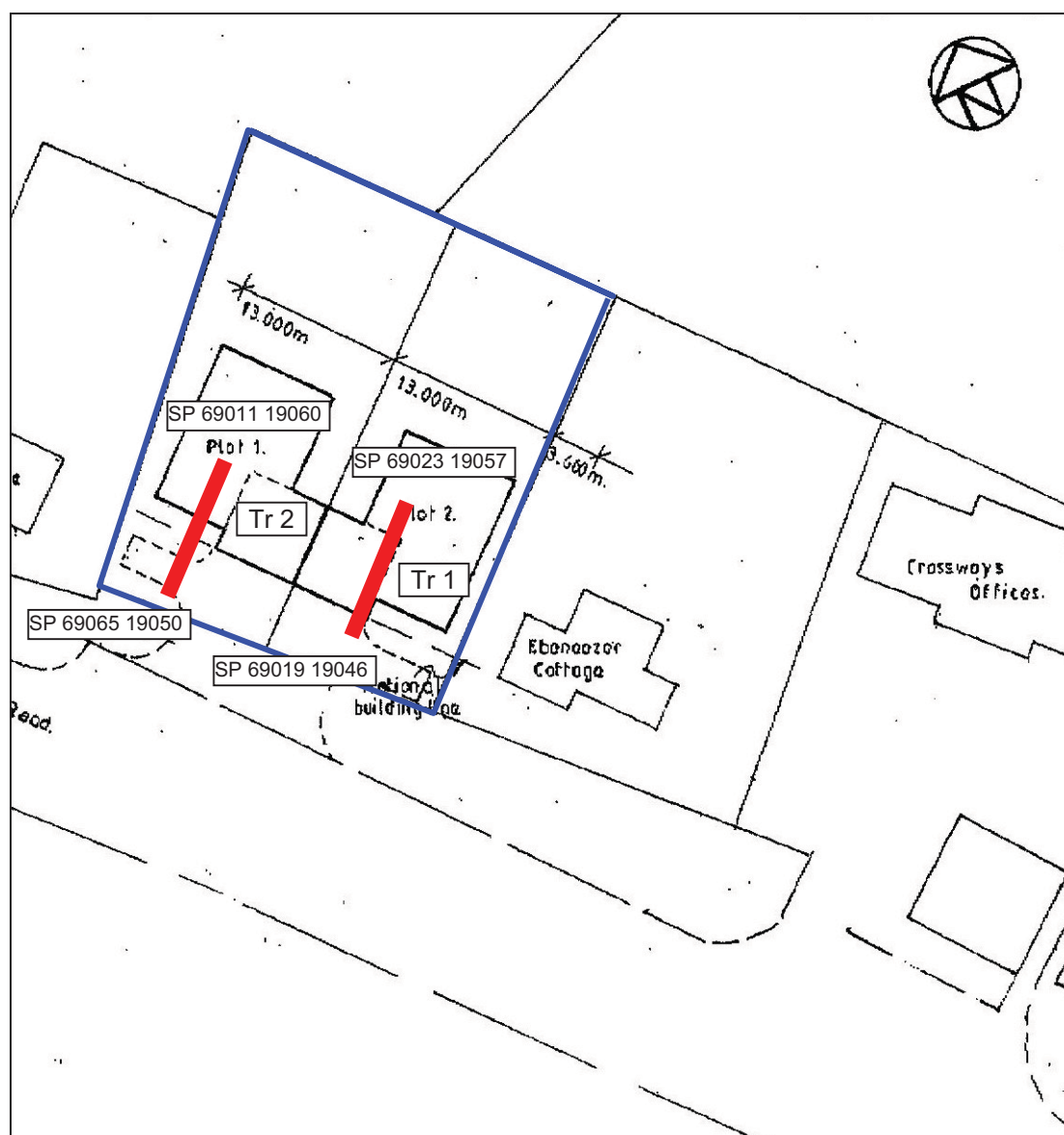


Figure 3: Trench location plan (scale 1: 500)



Plate 1: Overall view of Trench 1 looking south (*Scale = 1m*)



Plate 2: Detail of topsoil depth in Trench 1 looking west (*Scale = 1m*)



Plate 3: Overall view of Trench 2 looking south (*Scale = 1m*)



Plate 4:Detail of services drains in Trench 2 looking south (*Scale = 1m*)

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Two trial trenches were excavated, which were located in order to test the footprints of the proposed new houses and to target any archaeological remains on the northeast side of the former Roman road. No archaeological features were observed in either of the trenches. The topsoil in the east parts of the trenches was significantly thicker than that in the west. This presumably marked the boundary between the Edwardian garden and former arable fields.
- 5.2 The only features present were two service runs in each trench. These are modern and are not archaeologically significant. The absence of pre-modern artefacts in the soils is perhaps surprising given the proximity to the former Roman road and the presence of pottery and coins, etc., in the surrounding fields. The spoil heaps were examined for artefacts, but nothing earlier than the mid 20th century was present.
- 5.3 Archaeological features were not identified within the trenches. While the occasional survival of individual isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot entirely be excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological features or artefacts are present on the site.
- 5.4 *Confidence Rating*
- The fieldwork successfully addressed the project aims. The work took place in dry, generally slightly overcast conditions and a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the evaluation.

6. Acknowledgements

ASC is grateful to Richard Fowler for commissioning the evaluation and for his interest and assistance throughout the project. Ms Julia Wise, Sites and Monuments Record Officer provided access to the Sites and Monuments data. Mr David Radford, Archaeological Officer of *Buckinghamshire County Council* acted as curatorial monitor.

The fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA and David Fell BA MA MIFA. This report was prepared by Jonathan Hunn and edited by David Fell.

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*

8. References


Standards & Specifications

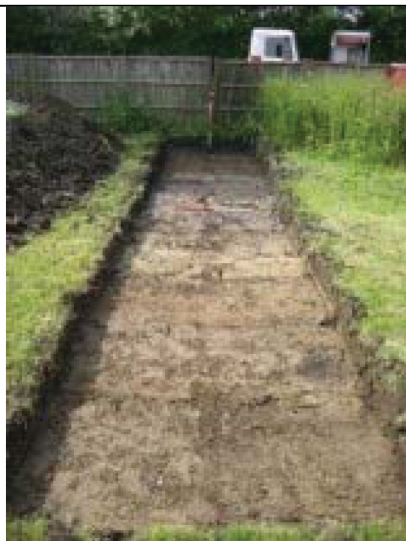
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Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	11m	Width	1.8m	Depth	0.2m – 0.4m
	Levels					
	Trench base north			77.27m OD		
	Trench top north			77.67m OD		
	Trench base south			77.27m OD		
	Trench top south			77.67m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	SP 69024-19058		SW	SP 69018-19046	
	Orientation			NE - SW		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
101	Layer	Mid-dark greyish brown silty clay. Topsoil and turf		-	c.0.4	-
102	Cut & Fills	E to W aligned service trench		300	unexc	c.200
103	Cut & Fills	E to W aligned service trench		800	unexc	c.200
104	Layer	Mid brown stoneless silty clay. Natural subsoil		-	unexc	c.200

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	10.8m	Width	1.8m	Depth	0.2m – 0.42m
	Levels					
	Trench base north			77.20m OD		
	Trench top north			77.40m OD		
	Trench base south			77.05m OD		
	Trench top south			77.47m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SW	SP 69007-19051		NE	SP 69012-19061	
	Orientation			NE - SW		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
201	Layer	Mid-dark greyish brown silty clay. Freq charcoal flecks. Topsoil and turf		-	c.400	-
202	Cut & Fills	E to W aligned service trench		c.300	unexc	c.200
203	Cut & Fills	E to W aligned service trench		c.700	unexc	c.200
204	Layer	Mid brown stoneless silty clay. Natural subsoil		-	unexc	c.200

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Ebenezer Cottage, Kingswood			SITE NO/CODE: 936/KBR
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		✓	Work commencing looking SW
2		✓	Locational view of site
3		✓	Landscape view NW
4	✓	✓	Overall view of trench 1
5		✓	Detail of service drains
6	✓	✓	View SW of work in progress
7		✓	Topsoil depth in T1 view west
8		✓	Closer detail of ditto
9	✓	✓	Overall view of trench 2
10		✓	Close up of service drains
11		✓	Oblique view of trench 2
12		✓	View NW across Akeman Street across the site

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Ebenezer Cottage, Kingswood, Buckinghamshire		
Short Description:	In June 2007 Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd undertook an evaluation at Ebenezer Cottage at Kingswood, Buckinghamshire. The work was undertaken in anticipation of a proposal to construct two detached houses. Two evaluation trenches were excavated at right angles to the alignment of the former Roman Road (Akeman Street) but no archaeological features or artefacts were observed.		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Trial Trenching		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	none	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none
Current land use:	garden	Future work:	tba
Monument type:	none	Monument period:	none
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Buckinghamshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 6901 1905
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Ebenezer Cottage Bicester Road Kingswood Buckinghamshire HP18 0RA		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	39.24 sq. m.	Height OD: (metres)	78m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	D. Fell	Project design originator:	Fell & Barclay 2007
Project Manager:	D. Fell	Director/Supervisor:	J.R. Hunn
Sponsor / funding body:	Richard Fowler		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	19/6/07	End date:	19/06/07
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	none	none	
Paper:	yes		
Digital:	yes		
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation: Ebenezer Cottage, Bicester Road, Kingswood, Buckinghamshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC: 936/KBR/2		
Author(s):	J R Hunn		
Page nos		Date:	

