

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION: LAND ADJACENT TO EAST COTTAGE FELMERSHAM BEDFORDSHIRE

on behalf of Mr Bennett



Ralph S Brown BSc Hons

June 2007

ASC: 943/FEC/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	FEC	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	943
<i>Event No:</i>	N/A	<i>Accession No:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Felmersham		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Felmersham CP		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 9907 5762		
<i>Present use:</i>	Residential		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Residential development		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	Not known		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Bedfordshire Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	19/06/07		
<i>Client:</i>	Kingscoat Ltd 26 Gun Lane Sherington Milton Keynes		
<i>Contact name:</i>	John Bennett		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Ralph S. Brown	<i>Date:</i>	22 June 2007
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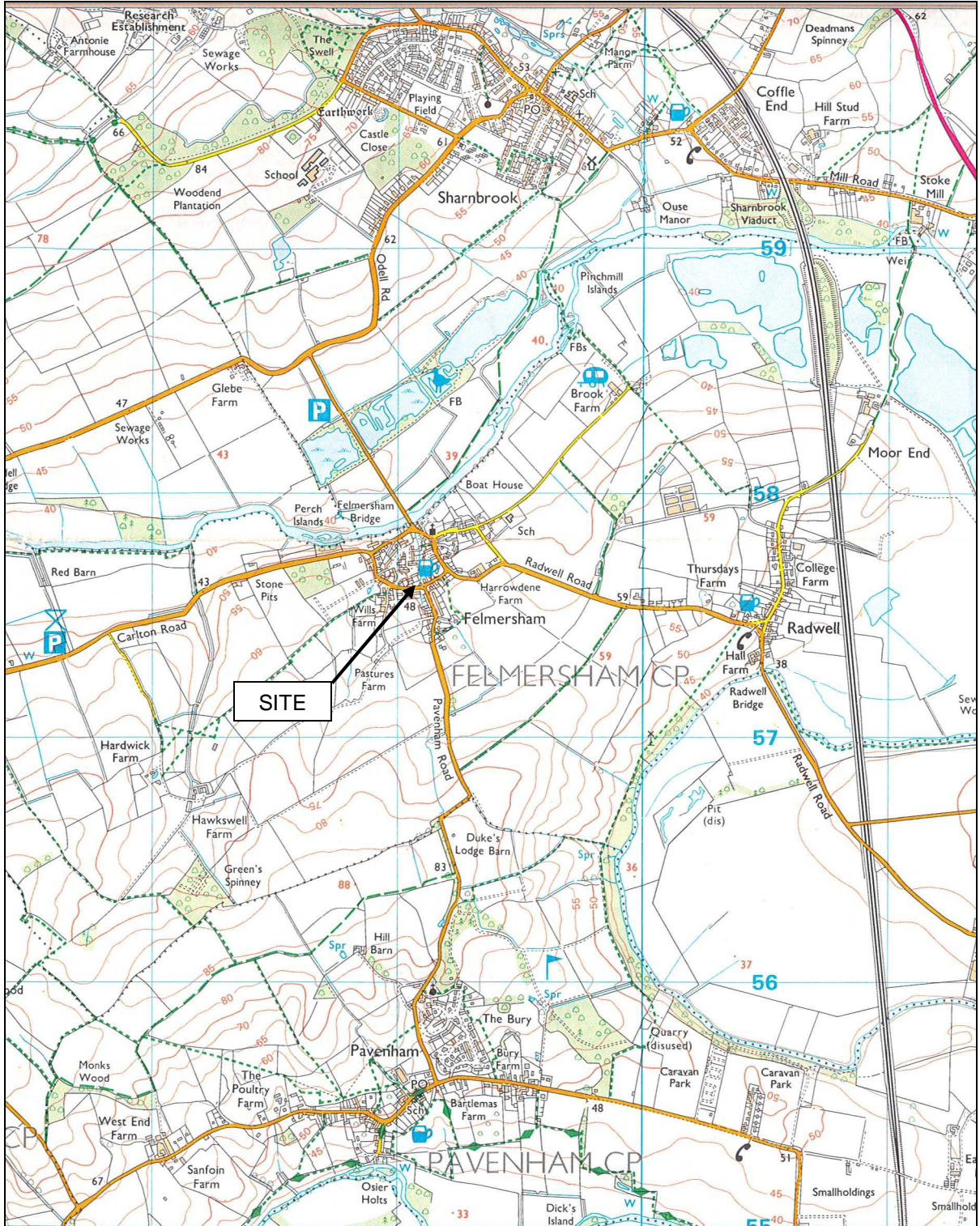


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

On June 19th 2007 a test pit evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to East Cottage in Felmersham in advance of the construction of a residential property. Two test pits were excavated one of which contained a large deposit modern infill levelling the ground or possibly filling a pit. The other test pit showed no signs of any archaeology.

1 Introduction

1.1 In June 2007 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation on land adjacent to East Cottage, Felmersham (NGR SP 9907 5762 Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by John Bennett, and was defined in discussion with *Bedfordshire County Council (BCC) Heritage and Environment Section*, archaeological advisors to the local planning authority (LPA), *Bedford Borough Council*, and in a project design (McLeish, 2007), prepared by ASC and approved by *BCC Heritage and Environment Section*.

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 a residential property.

1.3 *Location and Description*

The site is located in the historic village and civil parish of Felmersham, in the borough of Bedford (Fig. 1). The site lies close to the village core, c.200m south of the parish church, on the north side of Grange Road, at NGR SP 9907 5762. East Cottage lies to the west of the site, *The Sun* public house to the east, with modern housing to the north.

1.4 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area belong to the Moreton Association. These are described as well drained calcareous clayey and fine loamy soils over limestone, in places shallow and brashy with some deeper slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils (Soil Survey 1983, 511b).



Figure 2: Pre-development site plan (scale 1:1250)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

2.2 Standards

The work will conform to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH1991; 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 2.4), which required:

- excavation of two 4 × 4 metre test pits (Fig. 3).

2.4 Constraints

There were no major constraints to the evaluation. Test pit 2 was moved approximately 6m south east to avoid the sewer pipeline which runs through the middle of the site.

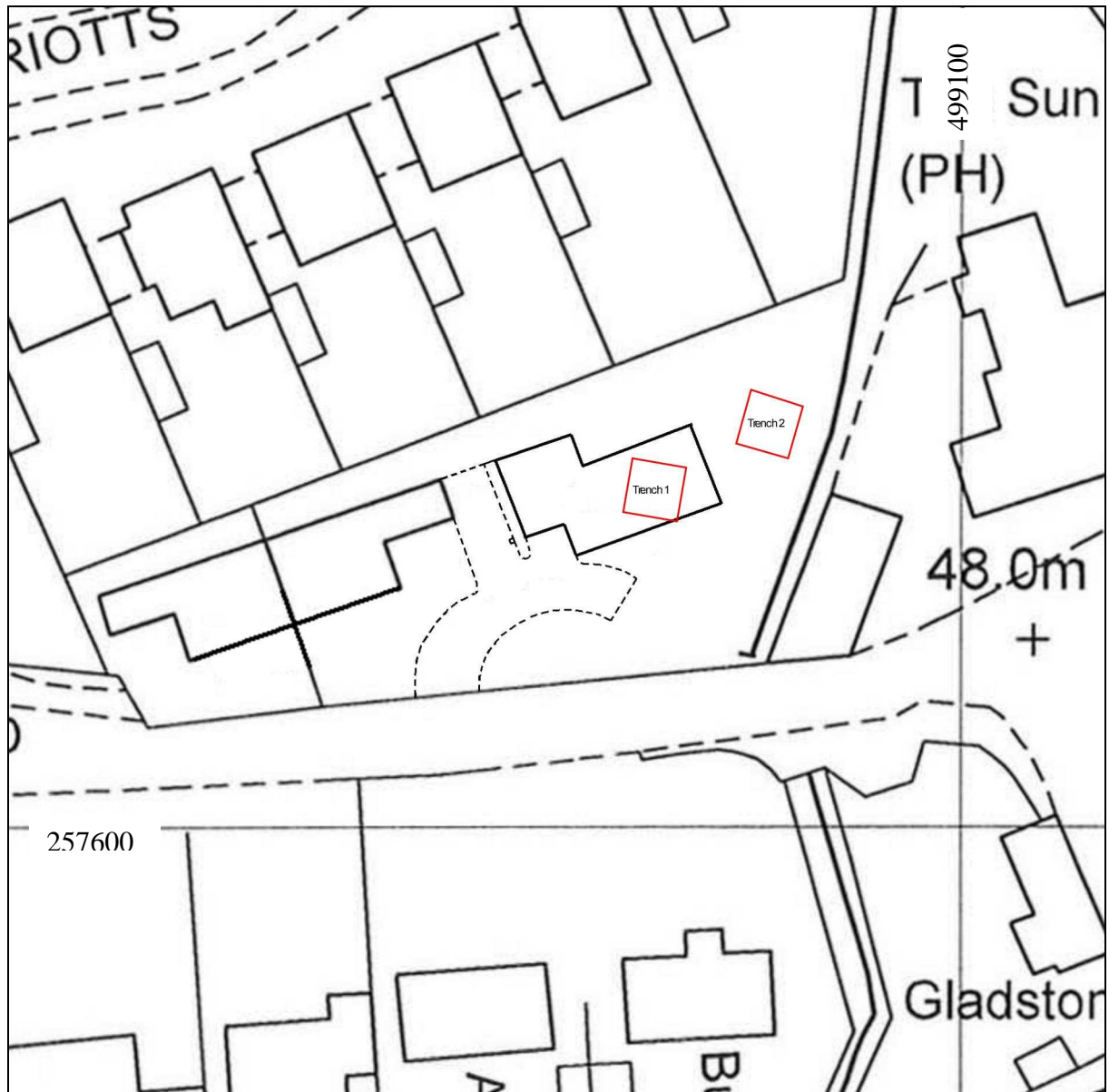


Figure 3: Trench location plan (scale 1:500)

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

HER=Historic Environment Record

3.1 Prehistoric (before 600BC)

There is no recorded archaeological activity dating from this period from within the immediate area of Felmersham.

3.2 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)

Iron Age finds have been uncovered on the northern side of the village Felmersham close the River Ouse. In 1942, when gravel was being extracted on the northern bank, workmen removed the contents of what they described as a barrow (HER. 67). An array of finds were uncovered within a cavity, which included Bronze bowls, Bronze bucket-escutcheons in the shape of cow heads, 30 pottery sherds, bones, and a bronze spout in the shape of a fish's head. These finds generally seem to be of a Belgic style dating to the early 1st century AD shortly before the Roman invasion. There is now conflicting thought as to whether the cavity that they uncovered was actually a burial or a hut. While some consider the finds to be a bronze workers hoard others interpret the objects as being connected with wine straining more commonly associated with burials.

Further evidence for Iron Age activity is recorded on the southern bank when St Mary's Church graveyard was getting extended in 1992. In an evaluation at "The Plough" in advance of this extension a small quantity of Iron Age pottery was discovered (HER. 15640).

3.3 Roman (AD43-c.450)

The Roman activity that has been found in the Felmersham area comes again from the gravel extraction mentioned above (HER. 67). Here Romano-British potsherds were found dating from the 2nd century AD. Potsherds have also been found within the churchyard where 43 pieces of grey ware were found (HER. 1345).

3.4 Saxon (c.450-1066)

The name Felmersham itself suggests that there was a settlement in this location in the Saxon period. The only visible evidence of this period comes from the evaluation mentioned above (HER. 15640) where two Anglo Saxon inhumations dated from the 6th-8th centuries were uncovered.

3.5 Medieval (1066-1500)

Felmersham is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 which reveals it was split into two manors held by Gislebertus fitz Solomon. The earliest surviving building in Felmersham is St Mary's Church in the northern end of the village, which was built between 1220 and 1240. This remains as one of the foremost examples of early English style architecture in Bedfordshire, and is unusually grand for a village of this size. Curiously at least four inhumations were found in the 1980's in the back garden of a house in Trinity Close (HER. 2688), some distance from the churchyard, c. 200m from the site.

3.6 Post-Medieval – Modern (1500-present)

The majority of the buildings in Felmersham consist of old stone cottages and Victorian brick cottages. Development has continued in the latter part of the 20th century, from the unsympathetic brick houses of the 60's and 70's to the improved planning of more recent times.

4 Results

4.1 General

Two test pits were excavated, one inside the proposed dwelling footprint, one to the outside (Fig. 3).

Detailed information regarding the trial trenches and their contents appears in Appendix 1.

Test Pit 1 (Plates 1-3)

Location: Test pit 1 was located within the footprint of the proposed dwelling and measured 4×4m.

Description: The upper fill of test pit 1 (101) comprised a dark grey brown clayey loam soil with frequent limestone and occasional brick up to 0.15m deep. This was immediately above the natural (102), a mid brown orange silty clay with occasional inclusion of manganese. Most of the test pit over cuts into the natural by 0.39m, however a slot was excavated along the eastern side of the trench at a depth of 1.30m in order to ascertain for certain that (102) was indeed natural.

Test Pit 2 (Fig. 4, Plates 4-6)

Location: Test pit 2 was located to the north east of the proposed dwelling footprint. It was positioned 6m to the southeast its initial location to avoid the line of a sewer running through the site.

Description: Natural (206) was reached only the western quadrant of the test pit (**see Plate 5**). A possible pit or trench [205] ran from the northern corner to the southern edge of the pit, filled with a dark brownish grey clayey silt (204). This contained finds of bottles, jars and an aluminium cooking pan. Deposits (203), a mixed dirty mid blueish grey clay and (202), a mix of coal and coke and mid green loamy clay overlie (204) and are probably also fills of feature [205].

Overlying these materials was (201), similar to (101) in test pit 1. This topsoil like material was c. 0.30m in the west thickening to about 0.80m in the east. This difference in depth is the result of it either being washed or dumped into the possible pit [205] that was only partially filled by (204), (203) and (202).



Plate 1: Test pit 1, from north



Plate 2: Test pit 1, from east



Plate 3: Test pit 1, west facing section



Plate 4: Test pit 2, from west



Plate 5: Test pit 2, from south



Plate 6: Test pit 2, south facing section

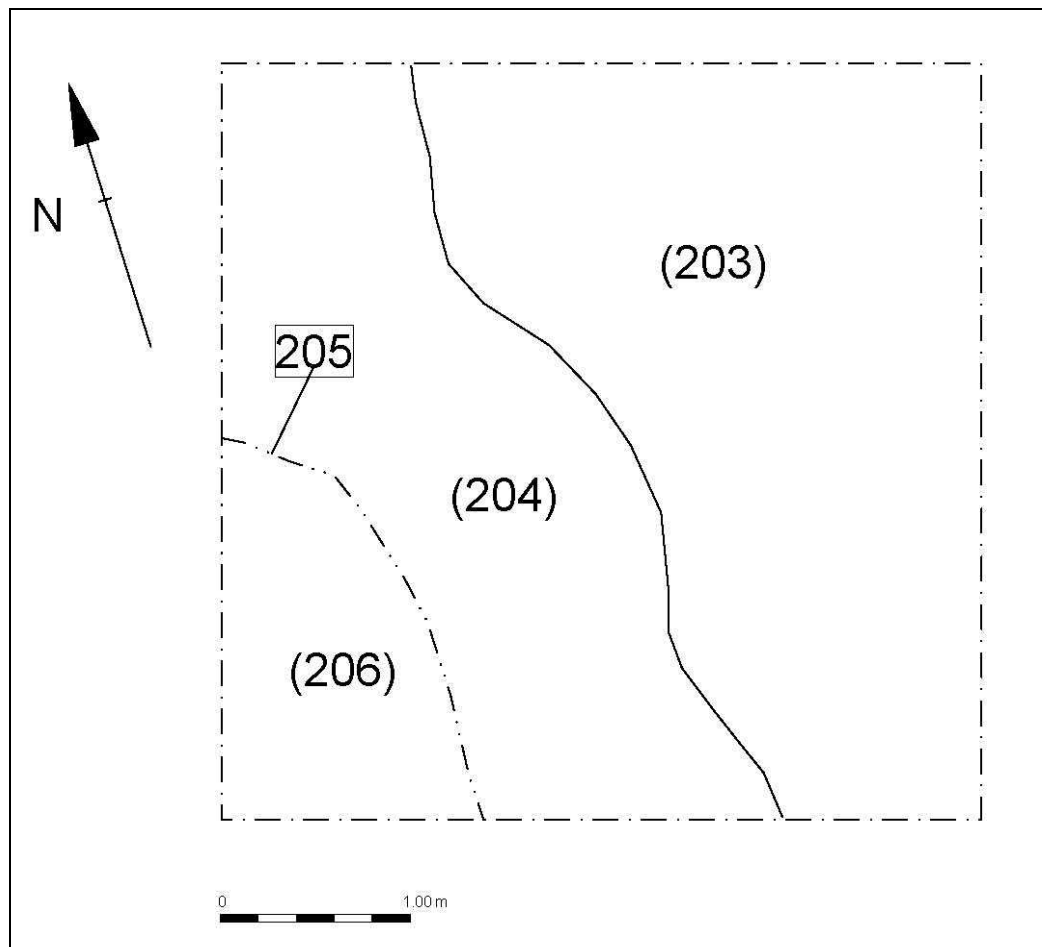
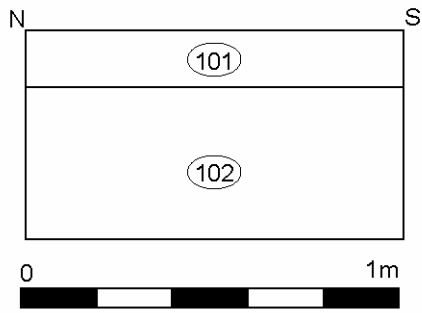
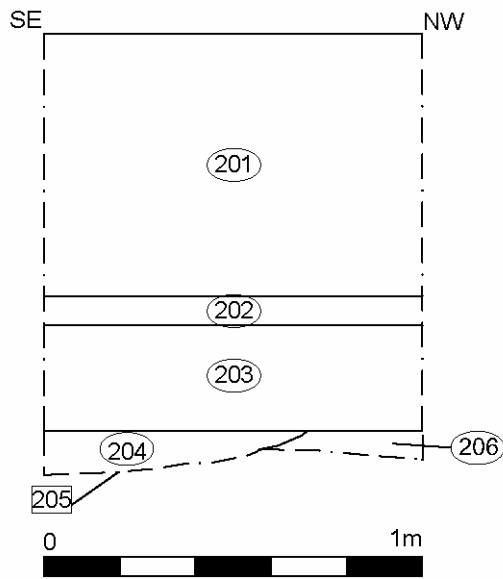


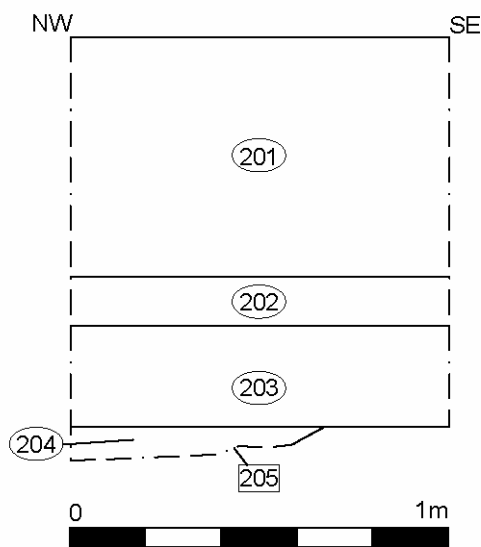
Figure 4: Test pit 2 plan (1:40)



Test pit 1 W facing section



Test pit 2 SW facing section



Test pit 2 NE facing section

Figure 5: Sample sections of test pits 1 and 2 (1:20)

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 No archaeological remains of any significance were observed in either of the test pits. Test pit 1 revealed only natural deposits immediately beneath the topsoil, while test pit 2 revealed a large dump of early 20th century material. It was not clear whether the material in test pit 2 was part of a rubbish pit or whether it was infill of a natural depression possibly to level the ground. This indecision is due to the fact that the full extent of the deposits was not found and the western edge of them was at quite a shallow angle.
- 5.2 The lack of significant archaeology could be an indication that the early development of the settlement of Felmersham was concentrated in the northern area of the village closer to the river. The archaeological background backs up this observation where most of the early evidence originates from the northern extents. As the area of the test pits was large in relation to the footprint of the building, it is likely that any archaeological deposits present on the site would have been uncovered. It is however possible that the 20th century deposits in test pit 2 may have obliterated any earlier archaeology that was there.
- 5.3 This evaluation was undertaken on a dry day with good lighting conditions and with full cooperation from the client. The results gained from this investigation can be stated with a high confidence rating.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to the client Mr J. Bennett for commissioning this evaluation and has continued support. Lesley-Ann Mather of BCAS monitored the project on behalf of Bedfordshire Borough Council. The fieldwork was carried out by Lizzie Gill BSc PgDip, assisted by the writer, and was managed by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
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 Bedford Museum.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).

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)*.


Mcleish, J. 2007 *Land Adjacent to East Cottage, Felmersham, Bedfordshire: Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation*. ASC report 943/FEC/1

Secondary Sources

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	4.00m	Width	4.00m	Depth	1.00m max
	Levels					
	Trench base			46.87m OD		
	Trench top			48.23m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SP	29907785	SP	25762570		
	Reason for Trench			evaluation		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
101	Layer	Topsoil-friable dark grey brown, clayey loam	-	0.15m	-	
102	Natural	Soft mid brown orange silty clay	-	-	0.15m	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	4.00m	Width	4.00m	Depth	1.54m max
	Levels					
	Trench base			46.37m OD		
	Trench top			47.76m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SP	29908607	SP	25762936		
	Reason for Trench			evaluation		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
201	Layer	Topsoil-friable dark grey brown, clayey loam	-	0.80m	-	
202	Fill	Plastic mid green brown loamy clay, frequent coke/coal inclusions	>4.00m	0.20m	0.30m	
203	Fill	Plastic mixed dirty blue grey clay	>4.00m	>0.25m	0.45m	
204	Fill	Soft dark brown grey clayey silt	>1.30m	>30m	0.75m	
205	Cut	Possible pit cut shape unknown, straight ~25° sides			0.30m	
206	Natural	Plastic mid yellow orange clay	-	-	1.20m	

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Land adjacent to East Cottage, Felmersham, Bedfordshire		SITE NO/CODE: 943/FEC/2	
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	✓		General shot of test pit 1 including section
2	✓		General shot of test pit 2 including section
3		✓	Test pit 2 during excavation from west
4		✓	Test pit 1 being machined taken from north
5		✓	Test pit 1 general shot from east
6		✓	East facing section in test pit 1
7		✓	Test pit 2 general shot from west
8		✓	Test pit 2 from south
9		✓	South facing section of test pit 2

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Land Adjacent to East Cottage		
Short Description:	On June 19 th 2007 a test pit evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to East Cottage in Felmersham in advance of the construction of a residential property. Two test pits were excavated one of which contained a large deposit modern infill levelling the ground or possibly filling a pit. The other test pit showed no signs of any archaeology.		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Test-pitting		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	none	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none
Current land use:	none	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	unknown
Monument type:	-	Monument period:	-
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Bedfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 9907 5762
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Grange Road, Felmersham, Bedfordshire		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	c. 612 square metres	Height OD: (metres)	48.23m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Beds. County Council	Project design originator:	Janice McLeish, ASC Ltd
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	Lizzie Gill
Sponsor / funding body:	Mr J. Bennett		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	19/06/07	End date:	19/06/07
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	-	none	
Paper:	Bedford Museum	Box file with site records, plans, photos	
Digital:	Bedford Museum	CD in box file	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation: Land Adjacent to East Cottage, Felmersham, Bedfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC report 943/FEC/2		
Author(s):	Ralph S. Brown		
Page nos	n/a	Date:22/06/07	