

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF:
THE OLD FARM,
141 WALTON END,
WAVENDON GATE,
MILTON KEYNES**

on behalf of Biant Homes Limited



Nigel Wilson HND AIFA

June 2005

ASC: 675/WGO/03

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>	WGO	<i>Project no:</i>	675	<i>MKC Event no.</i>	963
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire				
<i>Town/District:</i>	Milton Keynes				
<i>Parish:</i>	Walton CP				
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 9037 3677				
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.0.16ha				
<i>Present land use:</i>	Residential				
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Demolition of existing and construction of 4 houses				
<i>Date of Fieldwork:</i>	8/06/2005				
<i>Planning application ref:</i>	04/01090/FUL				
<i>Client:</i>	Biant Homes Ltd 32 Noon Layer Drive Middleton Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK10 9FQ				
<i>Contact name:</i>	Inderjeet Biant				
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>			

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Nigel Wilson	<i>Date:</i>	17 th June 2005
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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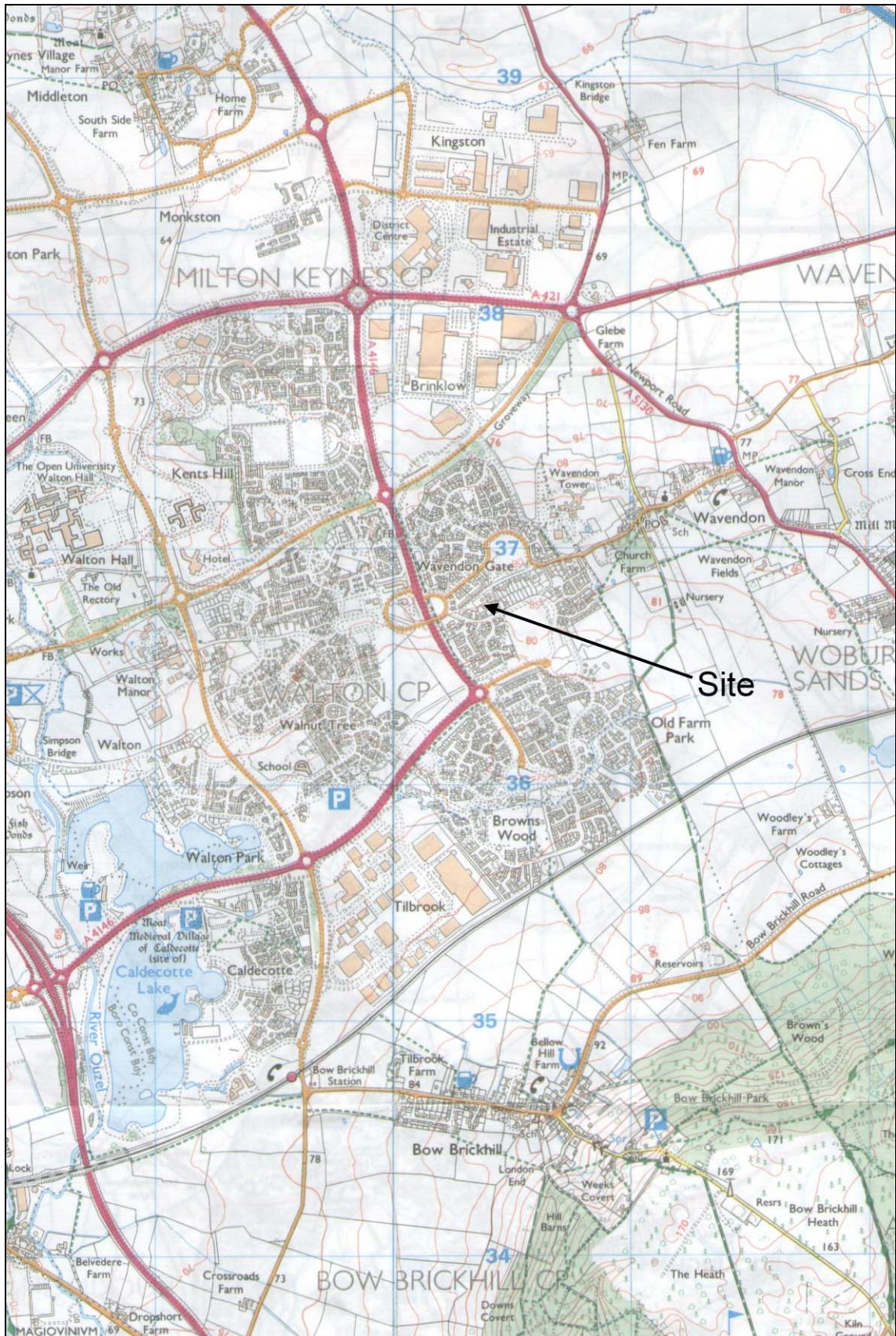


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

Following on from an archaeological evaluation on land at The Old Farm, 141 Walton End, Wavendon Gate, in February 2005, ASC undertook a watching brief in June 2005.

The evaluation had identified a number of ditches probably of later Iron Age or Roman date. The work was undertaken during the redevelopment of the site. Demolition of the existing bungalow and subsequent clearing of the site had reduced the ground level significantly over much of the site and little or no archaeology survived.

1 Introduction

1.1 During February 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out an archaeological evaluation at The Old Farm, 141 Walton End, Wavendon Gate (NGR: SP 9037 3677, Fig. 1). As a result of the evaluation a second stage of work a watching brief was required during the cutting of the footing trenches for the new development. The project was commissioned by Biant Homes Limited, and was carried out according to a standard ASC method statement, approved by the Archaeological Officer Milton Keynes Council

1.2 Setting

1.2.1 The site is located in the Wavendon Gate area of Milton Keynes, at NGR SP 9037 3677 (Fig. 1). The site lies within the civil parish of Walton within the modern estate of Wavendon Gate and comprises a roughly rectangular parcel of land c.0.16ha in area.

1.2.2 The site is located on a gentle south-facing slope, at an elevation of c.85m AOD. Soils in the area mostly belong to the Hanslope association (Soil Survey 1983, 411d), described as 'slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. Some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils. Slight risk of water erosion'. The underlying geology probably comprises glacial sand and gravel and/or boulder clay (Williams *et al* 1996, 9).

1.2.3 Prior to the watching brief the site had been cleared and levelled. The plot is bounded to the NW by Walton End via which access is gained; residential properties and their gardens are found on the other three sides.

1.2.4 The development lies within a known settlement site with occupation spanning the Iron Age through to the early Saxon period. The site at Wavendon Gate was partially excavated by Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit between 1998 and 1990 and later published (Williams *et al* 1996). The main phases of activity were during the later Iron Age and Roman periods.

The later Iron Age site initially resembled an 'open' lowland settlement, later taking the form of large sub-divided 'paddocked' enclosures with probable associated roundhouses c.100m to the north of the present site (Williams *et al* 1996, 23-25). Towards the middle of the first century AD the focus of activity shifted to the south and a large ditched enclosure formed the boundary of this new settlement (Williams *et al* 1996, 27). This enclosure remained in use until

the early fourth century when the settlement appears to have declined. Excavation of the northern part of the enclosure revealed cremation and pottery kilns in addition to evidence of stock rearing and cereal cultivation (Williams *et al* 1996, 83-88).

The development site lies within the largely unexcavated southern part of this *Romano-British* enclosure, and may therefore be expected to yield significant archaeological remains. However, it should be noted that trenches excavated close to this area in 1990 located few features, suggesting either a lower level of past activity or more truncation due to later ploughing. A trench across the farmyard to the east of the present site was abandoned due to extensive disturbance of the area (Williams *et al* 1996, 5).

- 1.2.5 Planning permission has been granted for the demolition of The Old Farm and the construction of four houses (Fig. 3).

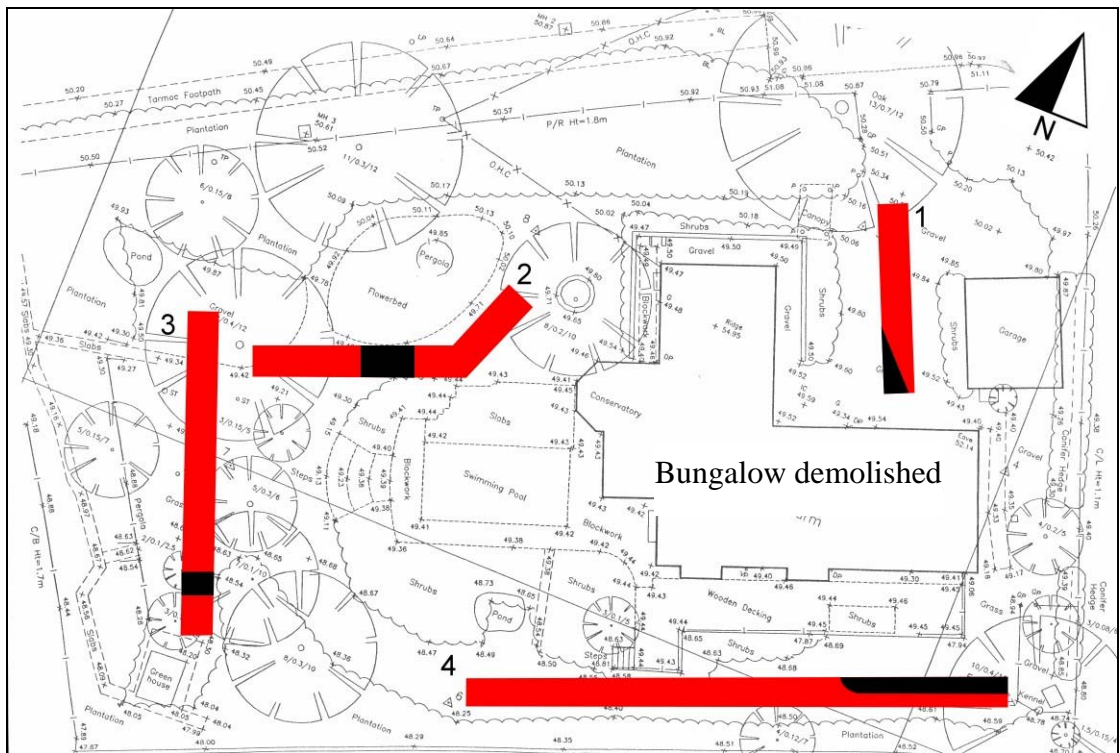


Figure 2: Site plan (as was) and evaluation trench locations (scale 1:400)

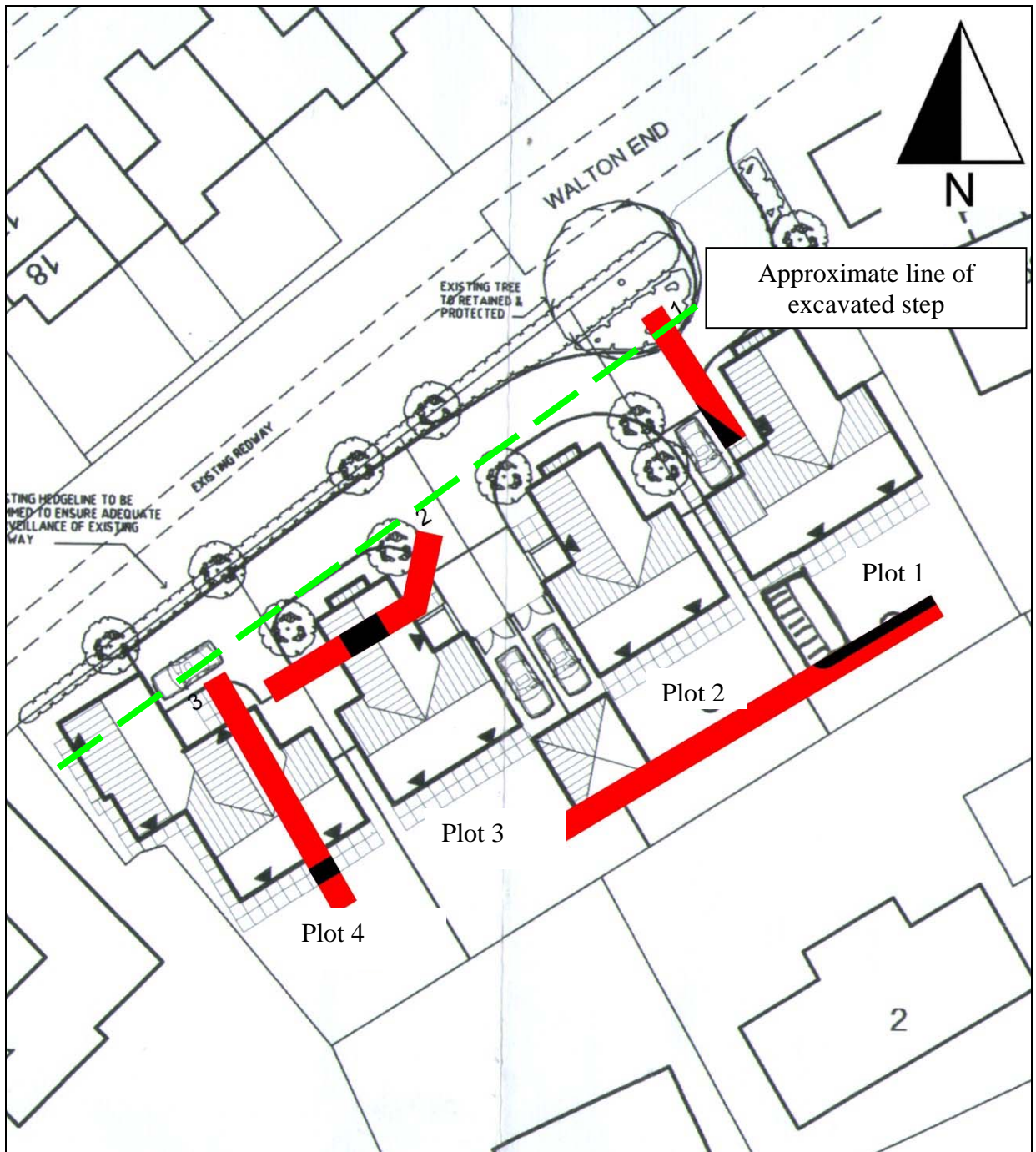


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:400)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

In line with the method statement, the aims of the watching brief were:

- To obtain further information on the extent and character of the features identified during the evaluation.

2.2 Methods

In line with the method statement, an intermittent watching brief was maintained during the groundworks associated with the development. The demolishing of the existing bungalow and subsequent clearing of the site was not observed.

2.3 Standards

The work conformed to the method statement, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

3 Results

- 3.1 The existing bungalow had been demolished and the site cleared and levelled prior to the cutting of the footing trenches for the new houses. Up to 1.1m of soil had been removed from the NW side of the site reducing to c.0.3m along the SE side (Plates 1 & 2). The cut footings for Plot 1 (Fig 3) were fully observed. Due to the degree of levelling that had taken place during the clearing of the site none of the features seen during the evaluation survived in plan. However in the NW section it was possible to identify the continuation of the ditch recorded in evaluation Trench 1 (Figs 2 & 3). No additional features were identified during the watching brief., and no artefacts were recovered.
- 3.2 Footings for Plot 2 were also observed and no archaeological features were observed in this area. Though the footings for Plots 3 & 4 were not observed it was clear from observation of the reduced level surface that no archaeology was present.



Plate 1: Detail of the section left by the levelling



Plate 2: General view of the footing trench Plot 1

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The site is in a known area of archaeological interest and within the evaluation trenches a number of features were revealed, along with a few sherds of pottery. As expected the recovered pottery dated to the later Iron Age or Romano-British period. The few ditches revealed during the evaluation were probably internal divisions of the enclosure identified during the earlier excavation to the north. The paucity of finds and general lack of discrete features is indicative that the immediate area was subject to relatively low level occupation during the Romano-British period.
- 4.2 As a result of the site clearance no significant additional information was gained during the watching brief. However the watching brief has been able to demonstrate that no major features survived under the bungalow.

5. Acknowledgements

ASC are grateful to Mr Inderjeet Biant of Biant Homes Ltd for commissioning and funding the evaluation. We would also like to thank Bill Looney the site manager and his team for their help and co-operation on site. The input and advice of Brian Giggins of Milton Keynes Council is also acknowledged.

The fieldwork was carried out for ASC by Nigel Wilson HND AIFA. The report was written by Nigel Wilson and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA, who also managed the project.

6. Archive

- 6.1 The project archive comprises::
1. Initial Report
 2. Site records
 3. List of photographs/slides
 4. B/W prints & negatives
 5. CDRom with copies of all digital files.

And will be combined with the archive from the evaluation

- 6.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum. Accession number is 2006.189.

7. Bibliography

- Crank, N.A. 2005 Archaeological Evaluation, *The Old Farm, 141 Walton End, Wavendon Gate, Milton Keynes* (ASC: 650/WGO/02)
- 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)*.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).
- Williams, R.J., Hart, P.J. & Williams, A.T.L. 1996 *Wavendon Gate: A Late Iron Age and Roman Settlement in Milton Keynes*. Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Monograph Series No. 10.

