



## Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:  
THE SWAN PUBLIC HOUSE  
BOXMOOR  
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD  
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: 0383 0589

*on behalf of Wensley Contracts Ltd*



**Martin Cuthbert BA**

February 2008

ASC: 1046/BSP/2

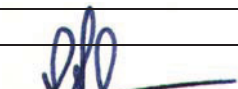
Letchworth House  
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall,  
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE  
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700  
Email: [office@archaeological-services.co.uk](mailto:office@archaeological-services.co.uk)  
Website: [www.archaeological-services.co.uk](http://www.archaeological-services.co.uk)



## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	BSP	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1046
<i>OASIS ref:</i>		<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	N/a
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Boxmoor		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Hemel Hempstead		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 0383 0589		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	Approx. 50 x 30 sq. m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Public House		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Landscaping and paving of garden area		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	Unknown		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Dacorum Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	13/02/08		
<i>Client:</i>	Wensley Contracts Ltd 100 Manor Road Farm Tysley West Midlands B11 2HX		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Mr Maurice Powell		

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Martin Cuthbert	<i>Date:</i>	25/02/2008
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	25/02/2008

© Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

No part of this document is to be copied in any way without prior written consent.

Every effort is made to provide detailed and accurate information. However, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd cannot be held responsible for errors or inaccuracies within this report.

© Ordnance Survey maps reproduced with the sanction of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.  
ASC Licence No. AL 100015154

## CONTENTS

Summary .....	4
1. Introduction .....	4
2. Aims & Methods .....	7
3. Archaeological & Historical Background .....	8
4. Results. ....	12
5. Conclusions .....	15
6. Acknowledgements .....	16
7. Archive .....	16
8. References .....	17

### Appendices:

1. Trench Summary Tables.....	18
2. List of Photographs.....	18
3. ASC OASIS Form .....	19

### Figures:

1. General location .....	3
2. Site plan .....	6
3. Estate Map of 1835.....	11
4. Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1898 .....	11
5. Trench location .....	13

### Plates:

*Cover:* Rear of the Swan Public House, facing north

1. The Swan Public House, facing South-West.....	14
2. Rear Garden, Trench located in far corner, facing South-East.....	14
3. Proposed Trench Location and size, facing South .....	14
4. Trench 1 General, facing East .....	14
5. Trench 1 Section, facing South .....	14
6. Trench 1 Section close up, facing South .....	14





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

## Summary

*In February 2008 ASC Ltd undertook an evaluation at The Swan Public House, Boxmoor near Hemel Hempstead. The site lies 200m north of the scheduled area of the Boxmoor Roman villa. Due to the proximity to the villa the area was perceived to have some archaeological potential. A single evaluation trench was excavated and no artefacts or features were noted.*

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In February 2008 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at The Swan Public House, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by *Wensley Contracts Ltd*, and was carried out according to a project design (1046/BSP/1) prepared by ASC (*Barclay 2008*) and approved by the *Historic Environment Unit, Herts County Council*, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), *Dacorum District Council*.

1.2 ***Planning Background***

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 ***Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd***

*Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Archaeological Organisation* by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 ***Management***

The project was carried out under the overall direction of **Jonathan Hunn** BA PHD MIFA, an established archaeologist with extensive experience in managing archaeological projects in England. Jonathan holds a first degree in Archaeology and History from the University College of North Wales (Bangor), and a PhD from the University of Southampton (Dept of Geography). Jonathan has held managerial posts with *English Heritage*, *Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust*, *Oxford Archaeological Unit* and *Tempvs Reparatvm Ltd*, and has acted as archaeological consultant for *Hertfordshire County Council* and *English Heritage*.

## 1.5 *The Site*

### 1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The site is situated in Boxmoor, in the administrative district of Dacorum, Hertfordshire, and it is centred on NGR TL 0383 0589 (Fig. 1). It is located in the valley of the river Bulbourne, and comprises a roughly rectangular area of ground (Fig. 2). Access to the site was from the car park of the public house. Service plans have not been provided

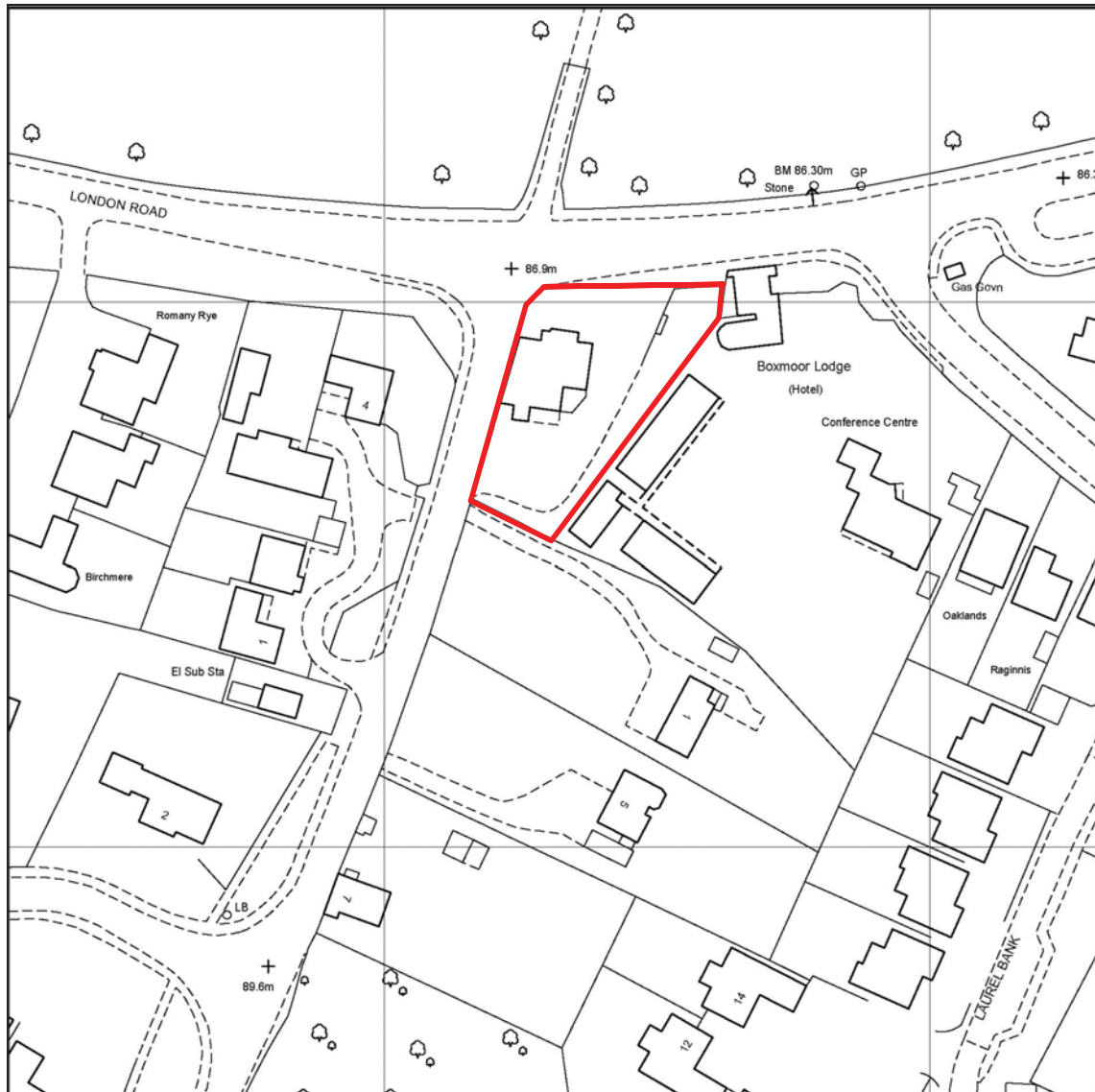
### 1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area comprise the Charity 2 Association, which consists of “Well drained flinty fine silty soils in valley bottoms. Calcareous fine silty soils over chalk or chalk rubble on valley sides, sometimes shallow” (Soil Survey 1983, 571m). This overlies a geological base of river gravels (British Geological Survey; 238). The site lies at a height of *c.* 90m OD.

### 1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The development area was landscaped and paved prior to the evaluation.





**Figure 2:** Site plan (scale 1:1250)

## **2. Aims & Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

As described in the project design (Section 3.1), the aims of the evaluation were:

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

### **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, 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 (EH 1991), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

### **2.3 Methods**

The work was carried out according to the Project Design (Section 3.3), which required:

- Excavation of one 2 x 1m test pit

### **2.4 Constraints**

Positioning of the trench (Fig 5) was limited by the recent construction of a paved patio across most of the site. The trench was therefore located in the southwest corner of the site, within one of the plant beds surrounding the patio. Root disturbance was frequent throughout the trench due to its close proximity to a well-established tree line.



### 3. Archaeological & Historical Background

The local and regional settings of archaeological sites are factors that are taken into consideration when assessing the planning implications of development proposals. The following sections provide a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs.

Information used to compile this section is based on an ASC desk-based assessment, relating to Boxmoor House, Boxmoor. (Semmelmann 2005).

#### 3.1 *Archaeological & Historical Background*

##### 3.1.1 *Prehistoric (before 600BC)*

There is little archaeological evidence for prehistoric activity in the area other than the presence of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age artefacts at Laurel Bank, Felden Lane, which lies approximately 150m south east of the site.

##### 3.1.2 *Roman (AD43-c.450)*

The same site also produced evidence for Roman occupation, which was interpreted as being part of the Roman Villa at Boxmoor House School. Four archaeological investigations took place at Laurel Bank in the 1990s (West 1995a & b, Ford & Hull 1997 Pollinger 1997), during which two parallel ditches associated with a trackway and containing mid-late 1<sup>st</sup> century pottery, a further ditch, a large lynchet bank, two flint wall foundations, a chalk layer, several pits and a circular Roman oven were discovered. Demolition deposits containing 2-3<sup>rd</sup> century pottery sealed the oven and one of the wall foundations

Archaeological excavations to the north of Hemel Hempstead station in the 19<sup>th</sup> century revealed a Roman well and building. This building, which was located approximately 600m north east of the site, was made of flint and rendered internally with red plaster. It has been proposed that this building may also have been a villa.

Several ditches and beam slots were found at The Spinney approximately 200m south west of the site in 2003. Although there was no dating evidence it was thought that these features could have been part of a Roman timber building that could have been associated with the villa at Boxmoor House School (Askew 2003).

Cremation burials were found in 1837 during grave digging in the graveyard of the Independent Chapel, which was located on the opposite side of Box Lane. The artefacts accompanying the burials included a bronze lamp stand, a square glass bottle and bronze fragments, which are now in the British Museum. A single outlying cremation burial was recently discovered during an evaluation c.30m east of The Spinney (Saunders 2005). A Romano-British key was found approximately 400m south west of the site in 1903.

All of the Roman features and finds were located south of the River Bulbourne apart from a length of the Roman road identified as Viatores 16A, which lies approximately 400 north of the Swan Public House on the northern side of the Bulbourne.

Although the origins of the settlement at Hemel Hempstead is unclear, the earliest indication is that the area may have once been a Roman administrative unit or 'pagus' (Bailey 1989, 111).

3.1.3 *Saxon* (c.450-1066)

The name '*Haemele*' is of Saxon origin (Gover et al 1970, 41). It was granted Wealdhere, Bishop of London by Offa, King of the East Saxons in AD 705 (Sawyer 1968, 471, no. 1784; Williamson 2000, 121). The only archaeological evidence for the Saxon period, however, is a chance find of a disc brooch approximately 400m south of the site.

3.1.4 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

At the time of the Domesday Survey Hemel Hempstead was the most valuable estate that belonged to the Count of Mortain. (Morris 1976, 15/10). By 1334 the Lay Subsidy it would appear that Hemel Hempstead (which also included Gaddesden) was in the top five most wealthy settlements (P.R.O. E. 179 120/14). However, it never attained borough status in the medieval period and it was not until 1539 when the town received a charter of incorporation (Page 1908, 217).

3.1.5 *Post-Medieval* (1500-1900)

The pastoral resources of the manor of Hemel Hempstead would have been concentrated along the margins of the Bulbourne and Gade. It was also these rivers that supplied the necessary water power to drive the various corn and fulling mills that existed up to the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the medieval period common pastures existed at Shothanger, Dow Green, Rough Down, Howgrove, Water Moor, Spencer's Field, and Little Spencer's Field, Ashridge and at Flaunden by Church Path (Page 1908, 216). Other pastures also existed such as Castlemead, Bayliemead, Felden Heath and Bovingdon Green (Yaxley 1973, 28). In 1650 Two Waters Moor and Box Moor were estimated at 120 acres, though by 1806 Boxmoor contained 159 acres (*ibid.*). Doubtless this included Two Waters and other adjacent parcels of land.

In the late 15<sup>th</sup> century there was mention of a dispute concerning rights of pasture in Castlemead (later Boxmoor), Balimede, Rowdown, Felden Heath and Twowaters More (Yaxley 1973, 217). The inhabitants of Hemel Hempstead secured their rights of pasture and fishing on payment half a mark (6/8) to the Rector of Ashridge (*ibid.*). However, actual possession was not secured until the later part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century when three individuals were instrumental in securing these rights by secret subscription (Hunn 2002, 7).

The earliest reference to the name *Boxmoor* occurs in 1638 (Gover et al 1938, 41). It is believed that this name replaced the name Castlemead. Why this should be so is not certain but name changes are not unusual.

The socio-economic effects of the construction of the Grand Union Canal in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the railway in 1837 were similar to other towns in Hertfordshire, including a considerable expansion of the population in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hunn 2002, 8; Munby 1977, 208 & 212).

Amongst the post-medieval features lying within 1km of the site is a former chalk mine on Roughdown Common, two bridges over the Grand Union Canal.

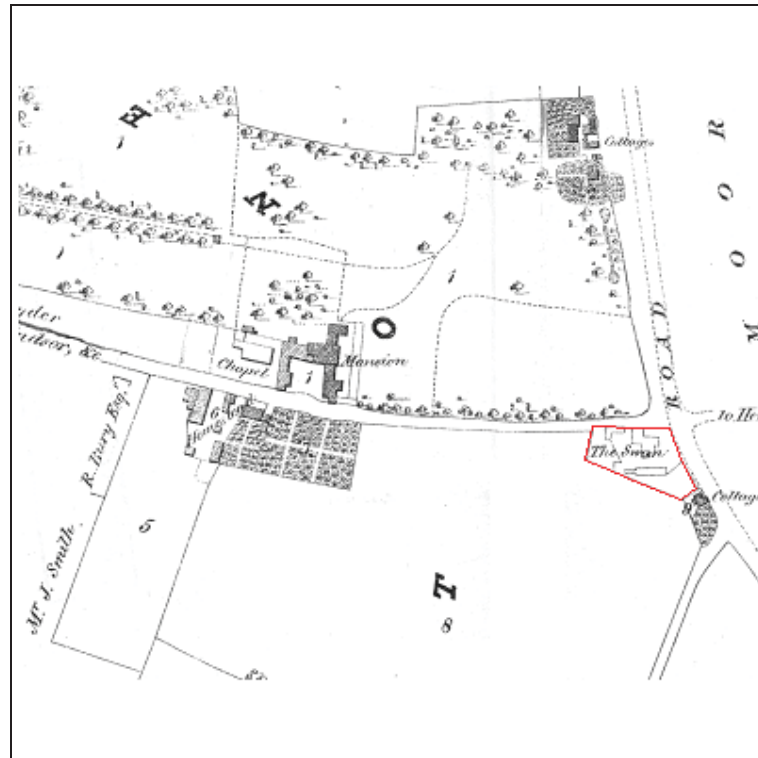
Two brick pillar wall boxes, three railway bridges two canal locks, a milepost, three former industrial sites, a possible model farm and the grave of highwayman Robert Snooks.

3.1.6 *Modern (1900-present)*

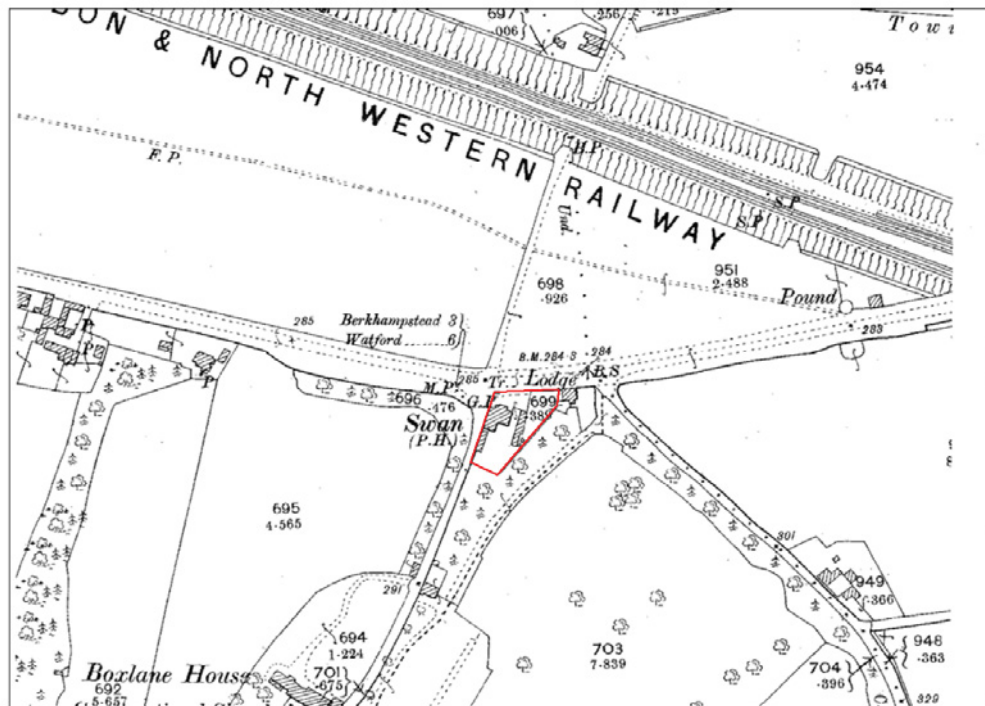
Of the four modern features listed, three are residential or associated outbuildings and the fourth is a former WWII German prisoner of war camp.

3.2 ***The Known Archaeology & History of the Site***

Nothing is currently known of any archaeological remains that may be situated within the site. The first detailed maps of the area were compiled in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (*e.g.* Fig. 3) and indicate that the area to the rear of the Swan comprised open land. The earliest written sources relating to the Swan Public House include an entry in the 1963 edition of the “Hertfordshire Inns pt II”. This information includes details on the owners of the Swan Public House and condition and extent of the buildings dating from 1756-1839.



**Figure 3:** Estate Map of 1835 (*not to scale*)



**Figure 4:** 1898 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Map (*not to scale*)

## 4 Results

### 4.1 *General*

A single trench was hand dug and at the rear of the Swan Public House. Position of the trench was determined by paving slabs covering a vast quantity of the site; therefore it was decided to place the trench in the southwest corner of the site, within one of the plant beds surrounding the patio. (Fig. 5)

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

### 4.2 **Trench 1** (Plates 3-6)

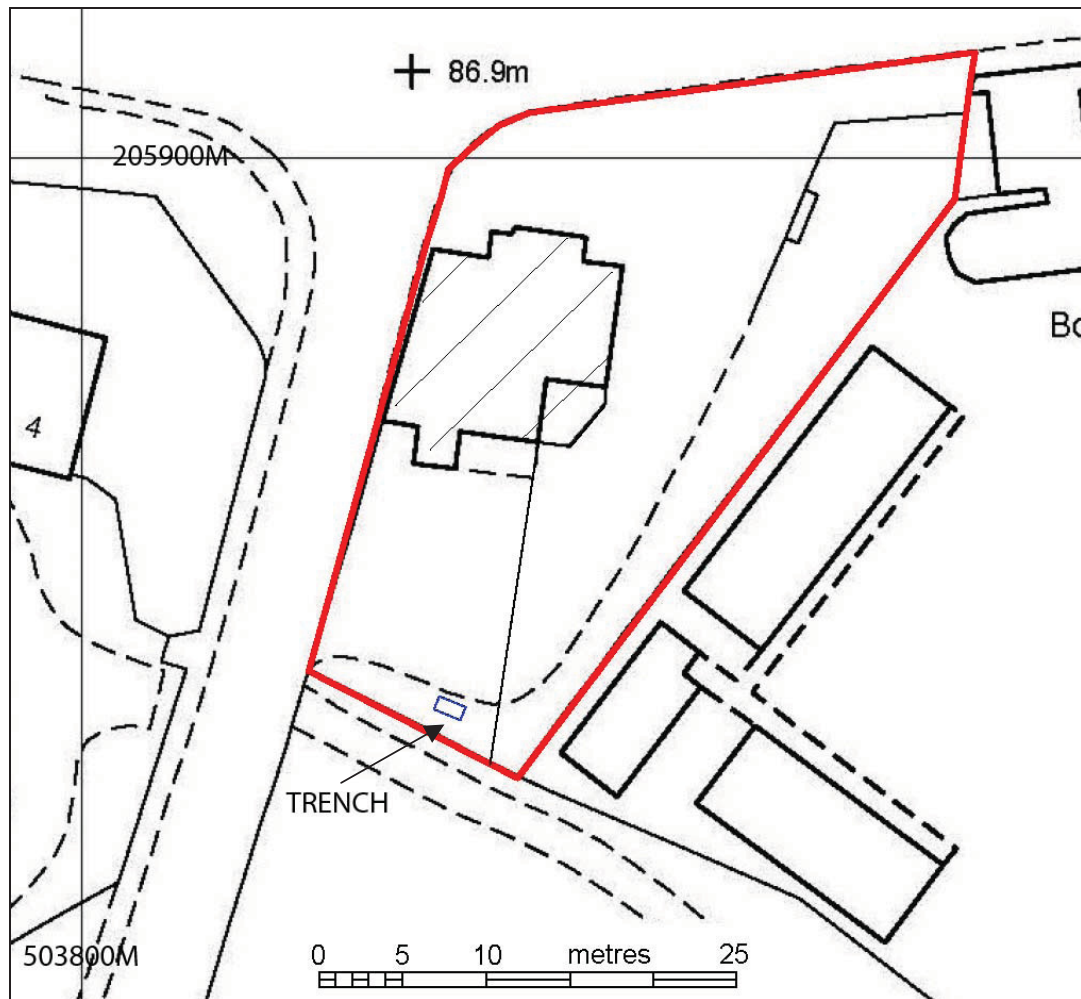
Trench 1 was *c.*2m x 1m across and *c.* 0.8m deep (Fig. 5).

A modern layer of garden peat and a spread of sandy gravel were removed to reveal 600mm of topsoil. This topsoil appeared to comprise two layers, both very dark brown in colour. The upper layer was *c.*400mm in depth, at the base of which was a layer of pebbly gravel, possibly a build up over a plough horizon. The lower topsoil layer, *c.*200mm in depth, comprised dark brown silty loam with occasional sub-angular flint nodules. The natural stratum was reached at a depth of 600mm, and comprised flinty gravely, compacted, mid brown clay.

The close proximity of the trench to trees resulted in a large amount of root disturbance.

No archaeological features were observed in the trench. Only a few fragments of 19<sup>th</sup> century redware pottery and clay pipe stems were observed in the topsoil during excavation.





**Figure 5:** Trench location (scale 1:500)



**Plate 1:** The Swan Public House, facing South-West



**Plate 2:** Rear garden, trench located in far corner, facing South-East.



**Plate 3:** Proposed trench location and size, facing South



**Plate 4:** Trench, facing East



**Plate 5:** Trench 1 section, facing South



**Plate 6:** Trench 1 section close up, facing South

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 No significant archaeological features were observed in the trenches. While the existence of individual isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological features were present on the site. It is unlikely that the development has had a significant impact on archaeological remains.
- 5.2 The conditions for the evaluation were good and the work took place in dry and sunny weather conditions. Full co-operation was received from the contractors and a high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the evaluation.

## **6. Acknowledgements**

The evaluation was commissioned by Wensley Contracts Ltd. The writer is grateful to the landlady of the Swan Public House for her assistance. The project was monitored by Kate Batt of Herts Historic Environment Unit on behalf of the local planning authority.

Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA managed the project for ASC and Jonathan Hunn and Martin Cuthbert BA carried out the fieldwork. The report was prepared by Martin Cuthbert and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MA MIFA.

## **7. Archive**

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
3. List of photographs
4. B/W prints & negatives
5. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Dacorum Heritage Trust.

## 8. References

### *Standards & Specifications*


- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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)*.

### *Secondary Sources*

- Askew, P. 2003. *The Spinney, London Road, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead: an archaeological evaluation* MOLAS
- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpden).
- Ford, A & Hull, G. 1997. *Land off Laurel Bank, Felden Lane, Hemel Hempstead: an archaeological evaluation* TVAS
- Gover, J.E.B., Mawer, A. and Stenton, F. M. 1970: *The Place-Names of Hertfordshire*. English Place-Name Society vol XV. Cambridge University Press. (Cambridge)
- Hunn, J. 2002. *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of 1-2 Fishery Lane, Boxmoor, Hertfordshire* ASC
- Morris, J. 1976: *Domesday Book Vol 12 Hertfordshire*. Phillimore. Chichester
- Munby, L. 1977. *The Hertfordshire Landscape* Hodder & Stoughton (London)
- Page, W. 1908: *The Victoria County History of Hertfordshire*. Dawsons of Pall Mall. (Folkestone & London.)
- Pollinger, L. 1998. *Land off Laurel Bank, Felden Lane, Hemel Hempstead: watching brief* Thames Valley Archaeological Services.
- Saunders, G. 2005 *Romany Rye, London Road, Boxmoor, Herts: an evaluation report* Heritage Network
- West, S. 1995a. *Felden Lane, Hemel Hempstead: an archaeological evaluation* St. Alban's Museum Service
- West, S. 1995b. *Felden Lane, Hemel Hempstead: an archaeological evaluation Phase 2* St. Albans Museum Service
- Yaxley, S (ed) 1973 *History Of Hemel Hempstead*. Hemel Hempstead .



## Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1					
		Max Dimensions (m)			
		Width	2m	Length	1m
		Depth	0.8m	Level (top)	87.51m
		NGR Coordinates			
		Orientation:		East-West	
Reason for Trench:					
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)
Topsoil	N/a	Original Topsoil below modern Garden Build up, dark brown silty Loam		600mm	
Natural	N/a	Flinty, gravely mid brown clay		-	600mm

## Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: The Swan, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead			SITE NO/CODE:1046/BSP
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		✓	General Shot Of the Swan Public House, facing SW
2		✓	General Shot Of the Swan Public House, facing SW
3		✓	Back Garden, facing SW
4		✓	Back Garden, facing SW
5		✓	Back Garden, facing S
6		✓	Rear of the Swan, facing N
7		✓	Trench Location, facing S
8		✓	Working Shot, facing E
9		✓	Working Shot, facing E
10		✓	Working Shot, facing E
11	✓	✓	General shot of Trench, facing E
12	✓	✓	General shot of Trench, facing E
13	✓	✓	Section of Trench, facing S
14	✓	✓	Section of Trench, facing S
15		✓	General shot post-excavation, facing W

### Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Swan Public House, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead		
Short Description:	In February 2008 ASC Ltd undertook an evaluation at The Swan Public House, Boxmoor near Hemel Hempstead. The site lay 200m north of the Scheduled area of the Boxmoor Roman villa. Due to the proximity to the villa the area was perceived to have some archaeological potential. A single evaluation trench was excavated and no artefacts or features were noted.		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Evaluation Trench		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	N/a	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	
Current land use:	Public House garden and patio	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	unknown
Monument type:	N/a	Monument period:	N/a
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	N/a		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	0383 0589
Site address: (with postcode if known)	The Swan Public House, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	1x2m	Height OD: (metres)	87.51m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	N/a	Project design originator:	ASC Ltd
Project Manager:	Jonathan Hunn	Director/Supervisor:	Martin Cuthbert
Sponsor / funding body:	Dacorum Heritage Trust		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	13/02/2008	End date:	25/02/2008
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	N/a	N/a	
Paper:	Dacorum Heritage Trust	Report	
Digital:	Dacorum Heritage Trust	CD Containing photos and report	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation, The Swan Public House, BOXMOOR, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HERTFORDSHIRE		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1046/BSP/2		
Author(s):	Martin Cuthbert BA		
Page nos		Date:	25/02/2008