

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: CRABTREE COTTAGE GOSSOMS END BERKHAMSTEAD HERTFORDSHIRE

on behalf of Leighton & Henley



J McLeish MA Hons

December 2007

ASC: 1013/BGE/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	BGE	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1013
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Berkhamsted		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Berkhamsted		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 9834 0821		
<i>Present use:</i>	Occupied land		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Demolition of existing dwelling and construction of four houses.		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	4/00456/07/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Dacorum Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	13 th & 15 th November 2007		
<i>Client:</i>	Leighton & Henley Chiltern House 184 High Street Berkhamsted HP4 3AP		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Alex Stocker		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Janice McLeish	<i>Date:</i>	4 th December 2007
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<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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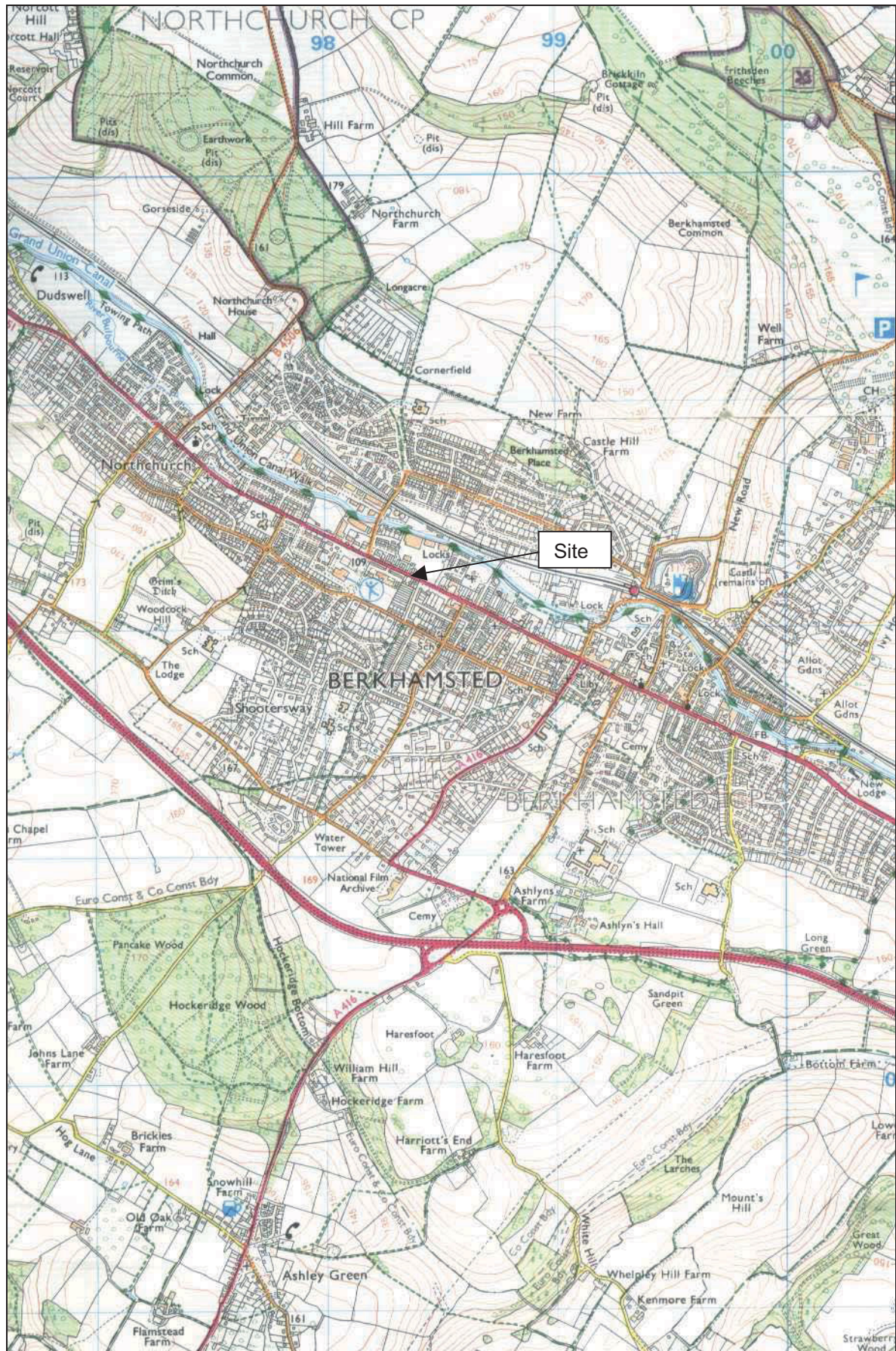


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During November 2007, a watching brief took place at Crabtree Cottage, Gossoms End, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire in advance of the construction of four houses. An area was stripped for the proposed development. The only deposits observed were overburden, above gravely flint subsoil. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed within the limits of this site.

1 Introduction

1.1 In November 2007 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Crabtree Cottage, Gossoms End, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by *Leighton & Henley*, and was carried out according to a standard ASC method statement (Appendix 1), and a project design prepared by ASC (Barclay 2007). The relevant planning application reference is 4/00456/07/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief has been required as a planning condition under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of four houses.

1.3 *Location*

The site is located in Berkhamsted, in the administrative district of Dacorum, at NGR SP 9834 0821. It lies on the south side of Akeman Street, surrounded to the east, west and south by residential development (Fig. 2). The development site comprises two plots, formerly occupied by two homes, Gossoms End and Mount Pleasant. The former was the subject of an earlier negative watching brief (ASC 2002).

1.4 *Geology & Topography*

The soils in 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 flinty and chalky drift over chalk. The site lies at a height of c.130m OD.

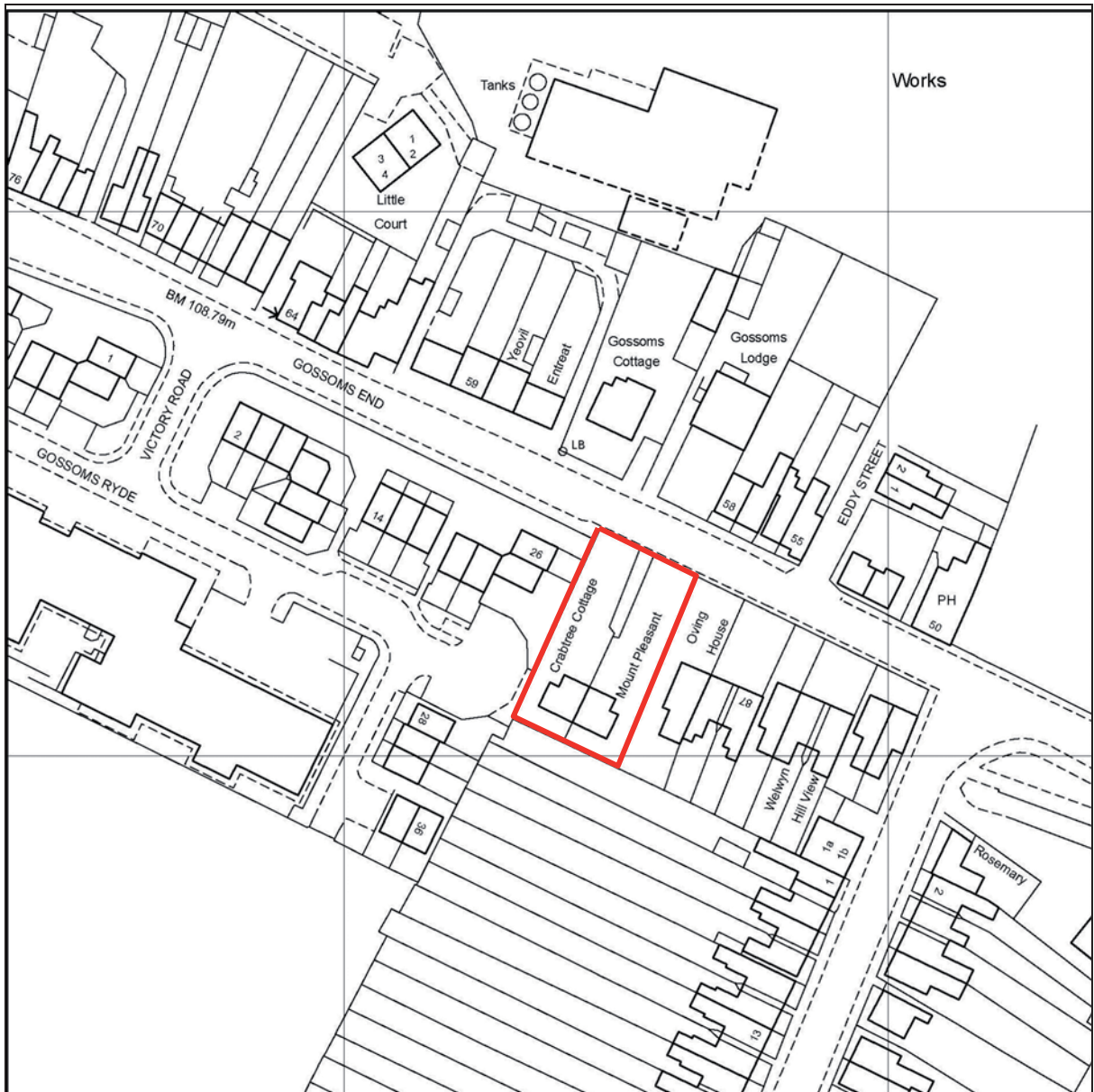


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of the evaluation 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.

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

2.3 Methods

The methods adopted for this project were:

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

2.4 Constraints

The work was not hindered by any factors, and all observations were made after the site had been stripped to the depth required for the development.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The site is located in an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest (Birtchnell 1960; HCC 2004; Page (ed), 1908). This is reflected in its designation as an Area of Archaeological Significance (No. 21), which covers an area containing a number of important prehistoric, Roman and medieval sites.
- 3.2 The Bulbourne valley was extensively settled during the prehistoric and Roman periods and the modern High Street follows the approximate line of a Roman road, known as *Akeman Street*, which linked *Verulamium* (St Albans) with *Corinium* (Cirencester). Roman remains have been found nearby off Stags Lane, Berkhamsted and a more extensive Roman settlement was situated at Cow Roast.
- 3.3 The modern town of Berkhamsted probably developed during the late Saxon period. Prior to the Norman conquest it was held by *Edmer*, a thane of Earl Harold and was valued at £24 (Morris 1976,136). It was mentioned in the Domesday survey (1086) when it was held by the *Count of Mortain* and was valued at £16 (*ibid*).
- 3.4 Berkhamsted was of considerable importance during the medieval period, notably due to the presence of the castle on the north side of the river, which was built during the 11th century and which remained a major defensive and political centre until the 16th century, and the medieval settlement on the south side of the river. The site is to the south-west of the castle, and also offers potential for the discovery of medieval remains.

4 Results

- 4.1.1 Two visits were made to the site on the 13th and 15th November 2007. They were recorded on monitoring sheets, supplemented by photographs and sketches where necessary.
- 4.2 Part of the southern end of the site was exposed but most was obscured by heaps of spoil. Only natural ground was observed consisting of gravely clay. Where the revetment is being constructed on the west side, chalk was observed at a depth of *c.*3m below ground surface. The western half of the site has been terraced away and the eastern side has been cleared of foundations but is still not visible.
- 4.3 To the eastern side of the site (the recently demolished Mount Pleasant house) probable overburden consisting of a dark brown pebbly loam was observed to a depth of *c.*0.4m. The ground level had also been reduced by *c.*0.7m, down onto unsorted and angular flinty gravel.
- 4.4 Traces of the former dwelling were still visible as patches of concrete and brick, but no evidence of any pre-modern material was observed.
- 4.5 No archaeological features or finds was observed, suggesting that the area had not been developed prior to the early 20th century.



Plate 1: Natural gravely clay at southern end of site



Plate 2: Character of ground looking north



Plate 3: Natural soil horizons on north side of site



Plate 4: View looking north to north end of site



Plate 5: Eastern side of site looking north



Plate 6: Entrance to site from Akeman St/HighSt

5. Conclusions

5.1 The site is located in an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest but does not appear to have been developed prior to the early 20th century. One possible reason for this is that the land abutting onto Akeman Street was relatively steep at that point (ASC 2002). These topographical limitations have meant that even the early growth of Gossoms End lay principally on the northern side of Akeman Street (*ibid*).

5.2 *Confidence Rating*

Due to the size of the site and the geographical location combined with no archaeological remains being observed, a fair degree of confidence can be assigned to the overall results of the watching brief.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Leighton & Henley for funding this project. Thanks are due to Alex Stocker for commissioning the project and for his assistance. The project was monitored on behalf of the local planning authority by Kate Batt of the Herts CC Historic Environment Unit.

The watching brief was carried out by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA. The report was written by Janice McLeish MA Hons and edited 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 Monitoring Sheets
5. 2 monitoring record sheets including 2 sketches
6. List of photographs
7. 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*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).

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)*.

Secondary Sources

ASC 2002 *Watching Brief: Crabtree Cottage, Gossoms End, Berkhamsted* ASC GEB01/2

Birtchnell P C., 1960 *A Short History of Berkhamsted*. Clunbury Press

Barclay C 2007 *Project Design for Watching Brief: Crabtree Cottage, Gossoms End, Berkhamsted*. ASC 1013/BGE/1

HCC 2004 *Berkhamsted: Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment*. Herts County Council

Morris J, 1976 *The Domesday Book*. Hertfordshire section. Phillimore

Page W., 1908 *The Victoria History of the County of Berkhamsted*. Dawsons of Pall Mall

Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Method Statement for Archaeological Watching

Brief

1 **Definition**

An archaeological watching brief is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any earth-moving operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons (IFA 1999, 2). It normally involves the monitoring by an experienced archaeologist of ground disturbance on a development (eg. footing and service trenches, reduction of levels, landscaping).

2 **Standards**

All work will conform to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991), to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*, and to any specific requirements of the Planning Archaeologist (PA).

3 **General Methodology: Observation & Recording**

- 3.1 Archaeological observation and recording normally involves visits when groundworks are under way, and requires close co-operation and communication between contractor and archaeologist. In many cases only regular, relatively brief visits are required (an *intermittent* watching brief). In certain circumstances (e.g. where archaeological features are known or strongly suspected to exist), the archaeologist's continuous presence may be required (an *intensive* watching brief). In the absence of specific instruction, professional judgement will be exercised to determine the level of monitoring.
- 3.2 Each site visit will be recorded on ASC's *Site Monitoring Sheet*. These sheets should record what is observed, including sketches where appropriate. A photographic record (see 4.4, below) will also be maintained throughout the watching brief. Plans of the development provided by the client will normally form the basis for recording the location of archaeological features and finds.
- 3.3 If significant archaeological remains are identified during the watching brief, a meeting will be arranged between ASC, the client, and the PA in order to agree an appropriate investigation. Provision to cover this has been made in the project estimates. Detailed investigation will follow the methods set out in the following section.

4 **General Methodology: Investigation (if required)**

- 4.1 Excavation will be carried out by hand. Maximum depths of excavation will conform to current Health & Safety regulations.
- 4.2 At the start of fieldwork temporary bench marks will be established, to be tied in subsequently to an appropriate Ordnance Survey bench mark. All plans and section drawings will be annotated with relative heights derived from these benchmarks. Plans will be related to the OS National Grid. Overall site plans will normally be drawn to a scale of 1:100 or 1:50; detailed plans of specific areas or features may be drawn to 1:20 or 1:10; burials will always be drawn at the latter scale. Sections will be drawn at 1:20 or 1:10, depending upon size and complexity.

- 4.3 A detailed record of all archaeological contexts will be maintained on individual pro-forma record sheets, designed to meet current professional standards. Each context will be individually numbered in a single sequence, and will be described in terms of dimensions, shape, fill type and inclusions, artefact content, samples and interpretation. A register of contexts will be maintained, and context records will be cross-referenced to all other records.
- 4.4 The primary photographic record will normally be compiled in 35mm black & white print format, supplemented by digital photography, illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. A photographic register will be maintained on ASC's *Photographic Record Sheet*, fully cross-referenced. Digital photographs will be used to illustrate the report. Metric scales will be used in all photographs.
- 4.5 All finds relating to the archaeological record of the site will be collected with reference to context and location. Finds of particular significance (small finds) will be recorded three-dimensionally on site, and described on individual pro-forma record sheets. A register will be kept of all finds. Finds processing may take place during or after fieldwork, and will entail cleaning, marking, packaging, quantification and initial classification. Conservation of artefacts will normally take place after processing, but primary conservation of delicate artefacts may be required on site.
- 4.6 Provision will be made for the sampling and analysis of environmental data by appropriate specialists. Sampling will be carried out in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (EH 2002). All samples will be recorded on individual pro-forma record sheets, and a register of samples will be maintained. Specialists will be required to submit copies of the base data from environmental analysis for inclusion in the site archive.
- 4.7 Any human remains encountered will normally be recorded and left *in situ*. The removal of human remains in consecrated ground requires a Home Office licence, and investigation or removal of remains must be agreed between ASC, the client, and other appropriate authorities. For the excavation and recording of human remains, current IFA guidelines will be followed (McKinley & Roberts 1993). In general, due care and respect will be accorded to any human remains, and site staff are required not to discuss their discovery in public, so as not to attract undesirable interest.
- 4.8 Due concern will be given to the physical security of all archaeological features, deposits, artefacts and records, both on and off site. All reasonable measures will be taken to secure their protection before, during and after excavation.

5 Reporting

- 5.1 Upon completion of the watching brief, an initial report on its findings will normally be prepared within four weeks, subject to specialist input. This will typically include:
- a concise non-technical summary of the results
 - information relating to the circumstances of the project
 - background information about the site
 - a summary of the aims of the project and the methods used
 - a description of the results, supported by appropriate illustrative material
 - a conclusion, summarising the results and examining their significance
 - a confidence rating
 - the contents and location of the archive
 - appendices (record sheets, specialist reports, reference works etc.)
 - an SMR summary sheet, if required

- 5.2 Copies of the report will be provided as required to the client, to the PA, and to other bodies as required. Eight copies are normally produced: a charge may be made for providing any additional copies. Interim reports will be submitted to the relevant period and/or regional journals within one year of the project's completion.
- 5.3 Once the final report has been accepted by the PA, an OASIS fieldwork summary form will be completed and submitted to the Archaeology Data Service.

6 *Archive*

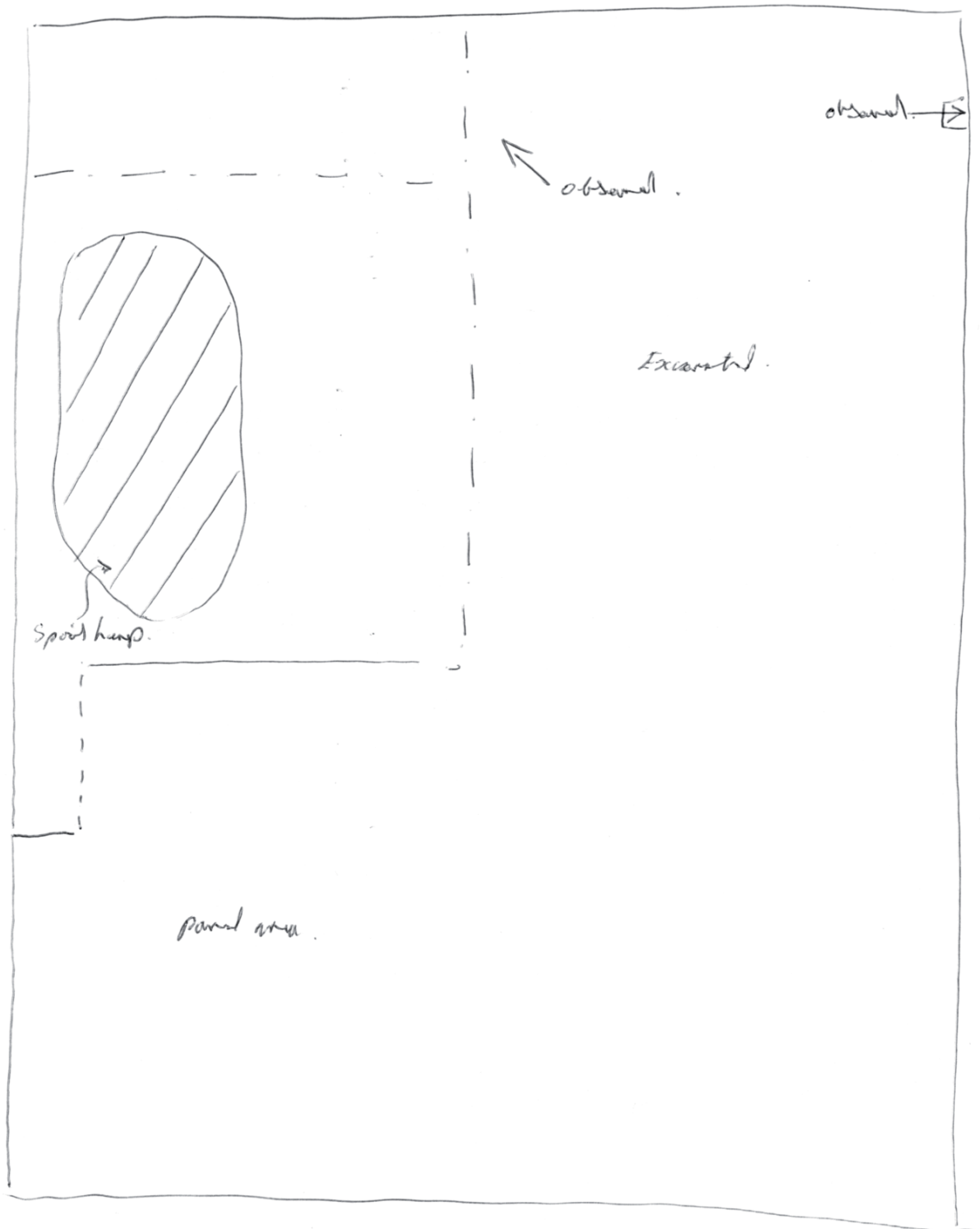
- 6.1 All archaeological projects generate a quantity of records and related material. Together, these constitute the *project archive*. While the report may describe the project's findings in some detail, the archive contains the evidence on which the report is based, and its importance cannot be too highly stressed. By its nature, archaeological fieldwork cannot normally be repeated, so the archive often constitutes the only surviving evidence for past activity on a site, and arrangements must therefore be made for its deposition and long-term storage.
- 6.2 At the start of a project, ASC will initiate arrangements for archive deposition. On completion of the reporting stages of the project, the archive will be prepared for long-term storage. If arrangements for deposition cannot be concluded, ASC will store the archive until deposition can be arranged.

7 **Staffing**

- 7.1 The project will be under the overall direction of **Bob Zeepvat** BA MIFA, an established archaeologist with extensive experience in managing archaeological projects, of a wide range of fieldwork in both rural and urban environments, of post-excavation, publication and presentation projects, and of work on a wide range of historic buildings and structures.
- 7.2 Staff undertaking watching briefs will all be experienced archaeologists, of at least Assistant Project Officer grade. Less experienced staff may assist with any detailed investigation, under supervision.

Appendix 2: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project: <i>1013/1013</i>		Project No/Code: <i>1013 1013</i>		Sheet: <i>1 of 2</i>		
Client/Developer: <i>Berkhamsted</i>		Date of visit:				
Contact: <i>4 Streets</i>		Phone: <i>01494 311500</i>				
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: <i>10.30 am</i>		Finish: <i>11.35</i>		
Completed by:						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarrying	Pipelines	
Other (specify):						
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dull overcast</i>						
Observations: <i>Part of the southern end of the site was excavated but most was abandoned by layers of gravel. The site was gravel covered as far as visible of gravelly soil. The method is being restricted on the west side. It will be found at a depth of 1m. Below the surface of the ground. The western half of the site has been excavated using a series of test pits. The eastern side has been covered by a building. It is still not visible.</i>						
Comments: <i>The archaeological remains observed.</i>						



Alkeman Street / High St.

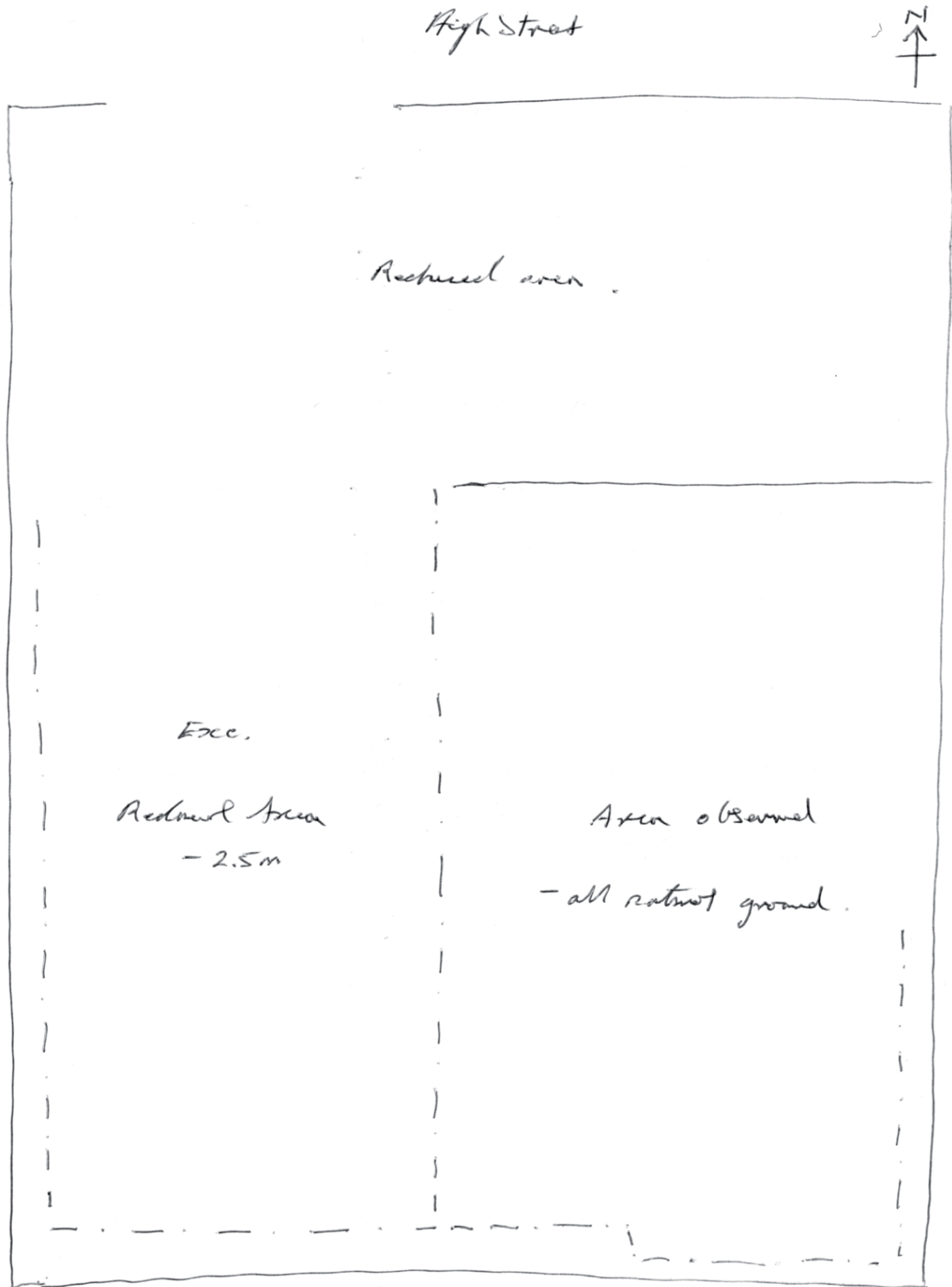
13/11/07 SGM



A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: Mt Pleasant, Gossoms End Berkhamsted		Project No/Code: 1013 ICEB	Sheet: 2 of 2
Client/Developer Leighton & Hensley		Date of visit: 15/11/07	
Contact: A. Stocker		Phone: 01442-569310	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 7.0 am	Finish: 10.55 am	
Completed by: TRH			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry, sunny & frosty			
Observations: Submerged section back of the site (of the recently demolished Mt Pleasant house) The ground level had been reduced by about 0.7m down into a very stony gravel (unsorted and angular) which was laterally contained around the back over the remains of a very high brick rubble tower c. 6.4m deep. Here and there could be seen traces of the former dwelling in the form of one patch of concrete & timber. No sign of any pre-war level remained.			
Comments: The results confirm the conclusion of the watching brief that the area had never been developed prior to the early 19th century. No further visits required.			



15/11/07 JRT.

Appendix 3: List of Photographs

SITE NO/CODE: 1013/BGE		
Shot	Digital	Subject
1	3054	Geology on western side of site
2	3055	Detail of western side of site
3	3056	Close up of western side of site
4	3057	State of northern end of site looking north
5	3058	Detail of ground
6	3089	Eastern side of site looking north
7	3090	Entrance to site off Akeman Street/High Street
8	3091	View south of machining under way
9	3092	Close up of ground- note gravely clay
10	3093	Detail of ditto
11	3094	Character of ground view north
12	3095	Natural soil horizons on north side of site

Appendix 4: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Crabtree Cottage, Gossoms End, Berkhamsted		
Short Description:	<i>During November 2007, a watching brief took place at Crabtree Cottage, Gossoms End, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire in advance of the construction of four houses. An area was stripped for the proposed development. The only deposits observed were overburden, above gravely flint subsoil. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed within the limits of this site.</i>		
Project Type:	Watching Brief		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	-	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	Watching brief 2002
Current land use:	Occupied land	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	no
Monument type:	n/a	Monument period:	n/a
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	n/a		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 9834 0821
District:	Dacorum	Parish:	Berkhamsted C P
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Crabtree Cottage, Gossoms End, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	80 square metres	Height OD: (metres)	c.110m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	n/a	Project design originator:	C. Barclay (ASC)
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	Dr Jonathan Hunn (ASC)
Sponsor / funding body:	Owner		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	13/11/2007	End date:	15/11/2007
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	none	none	
Paper:	Dacorum Heritage Trust	Report, site records, photos	
Digital:	Dacorum Heritage Trust	CD containing report and photos	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief Report, Crabtree Cottage, Gossoms End, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC report ASC/1013/BGE/2		
Author(s):	Janice McLeish		
Page nos	21	Date:	04/12/2007