

# Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:  
GREENCROFT FARM  
LITTLE HEATH LANE  
POTTEN END  
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 0186 0837

*on behalf of Mr David Groom*



J Richards BA PIFA

February 2008

ASC: 1016/PEG/2

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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	PEG	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1016
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	tbc	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	N/A
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Potten End		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Nettleden with Potten End		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 0186 0837		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c. 6375m <sup>2</sup>		
<i>Present use:</i>	Agricultural		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of agricultural workers house and farm		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	4/02850/06/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Dacorum Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2008		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr David Groom Greencroft Farm Little Heath Lane Potten End Hertfordshire HP4 2RY		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Mr David Groom		

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	J Richards BA PIFA	<i>Date:</i>	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2008
<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 February 2008 ASC Ltd conducted an archaeological evaluation at Greencroft Farm, Little Heath Lane, Potten End, Hertfordshire, in advance of the construction of housing for agricultural workers. The foundations of an earlier building, formed of frogged bricks, were revealed, but no archaeological finds or features predating the later 20<sup>th</sup> century were observed.*

### 1. Introduction

1.1 In February 2008 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Green Croft Farm, Potten End, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by Mr David Groom, and was carried out according to a brief (Barclay 2007) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Dacorum Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Hertfordshire County Council*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Barclay 2007). The relevant planning application reference is 4/02850/06/FUL.

#### 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 **David Fell** MA MIFA. David is an experienced archaeologist with extensive fieldwork and post-excavation experience, and also of historical research and building recording. David holds a first degree from the University of York, and a master's degree from Birmingham University. He has held a range of supervisory appointments since 1990, including *Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit*, *Bucks County Archaeology Service*, *Beds County Archaeology Service*, *Archaeological Project Services*, *Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust* and the *Museum of London Archaeology Service*.

#### 1.5 *The Site*

##### 1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The site is located in Potten End, in the administrative district of Dacorum, Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). It lies south of Potten End, along Little Heath Lane, to the right of Little Heath Park, and is centred on Ordnance Survey National

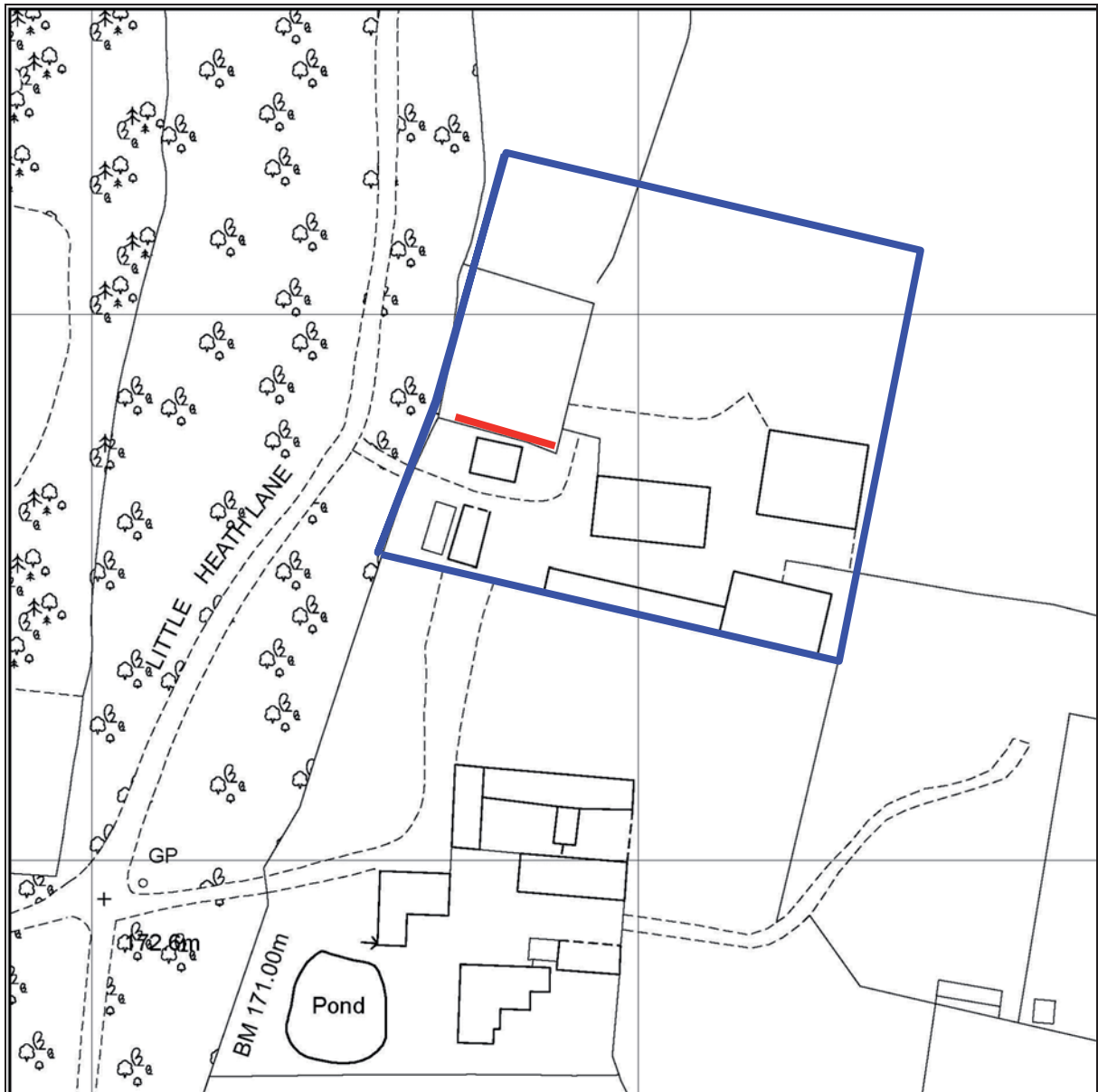
Grid Reference TL 0186 0837 (Fig. 2). The site is approximately square, covering c. 6375 square metres, and forms part of the existing farm complex.

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

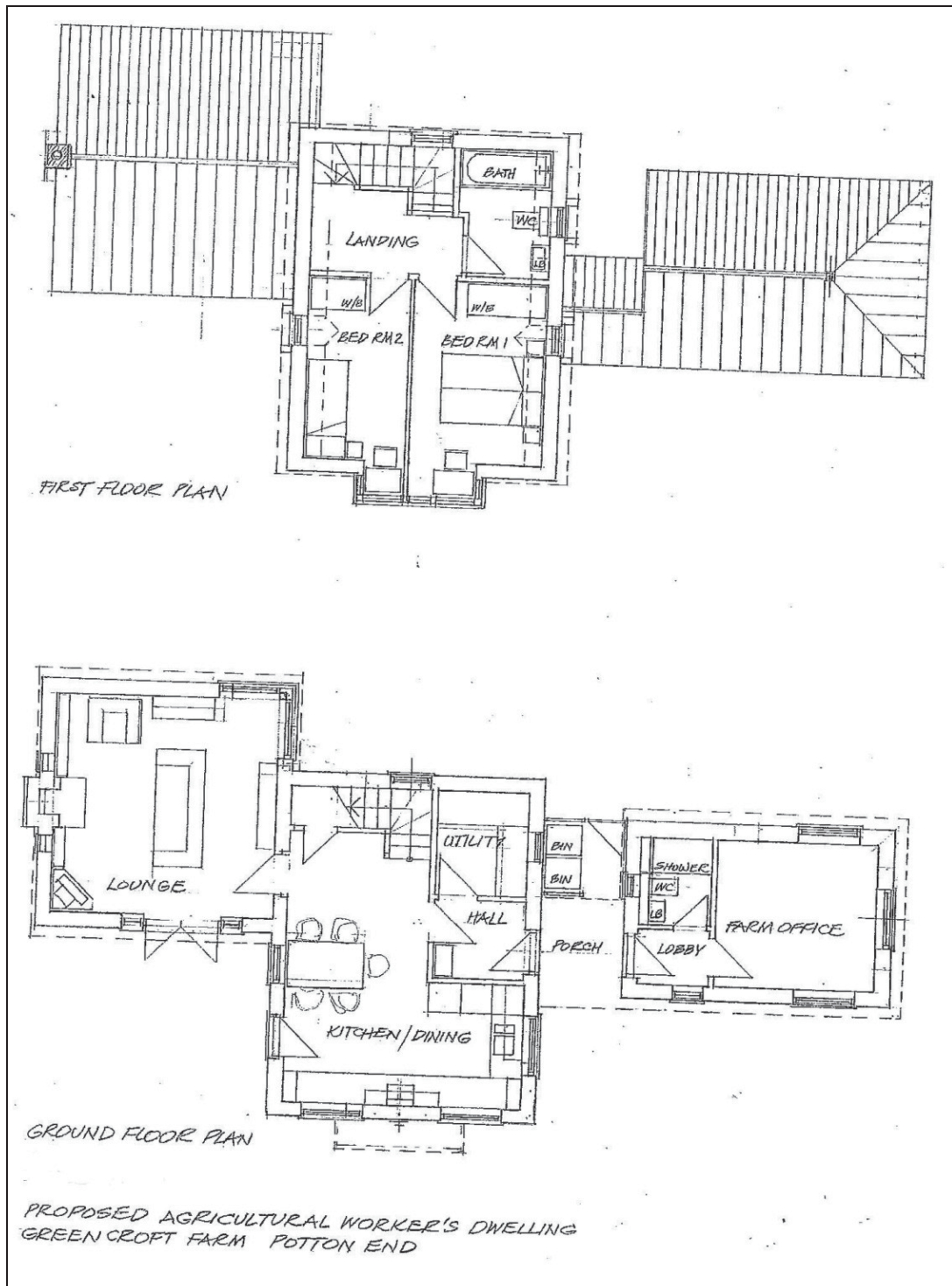
The soils around the proposed development area comprise the Hornbeam 2 Association, which consists of “Deep fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some well drained fine loamy and fine silty over clayey and clayey soils. Some soils very flinty.” This overlies a geology of plateau drift (Soil Survey 1983; 582c; BGS, Sheet 2). The site lies at an elevation of c.170m OD.

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposal is for the construction of agricultural workers accommodation and a farm office (Fig. 3).



**Figure 2:** Site plan with trench location shown in red (*Scale 1:1250*)



**Figure 3:** Proposed development (Scale 1:150)

## **2. Aims & Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

As described in the brief (Section 3), the aims of the evaluation were:

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

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

### **2.3 Methods**

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 4), which required:

- Excavation of a single 20m long trench, targeting the footprint of the proposed development (Fig. 2).

### 3. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from the project design (Barclay 2007).

- 3.2 Potten End is an area of considerable archaeological and historical importance and this has been recognised by the local authority by the designation of two separate areas in the parish as *Areas of Archaeological Significance* (AAS). ASS 33, which lies c.2.5km northwest of the site, recognises the importance of the Iron Age Grim's Ditch, while AAS 32 recognises a Roman villa and its associated field systems and is situated c.3.5km to the north of the site.
- 3.3 Potten End may have developed as a result of two factors: The presence of brickearth deposits in the vicinity and secondly, its proximity to the manorial waste of Berkhamsted common. This would have been an important source of fuel in terms of timber and gorse bushes. There is an early 13<sup>th</sup> century reference to the manufacture of 'tegula' at Berkhamsted (Doggett & Hunn 1985, 31). This could refer to bricks but more probably to tile production. More certain is the evidence for pottery production in the medieval period. Waste pottery has been found in two locations at Potten End, one at Bingham's Park and another near Potten End Farm suggesting the existence of a kiln in the vicinity. Medieval decorative tiles and tiles and bricks for buildings were produced.
- 3.4 During the 19<sup>th</sup> century brick production at Potten End was a flourishing industry and Potten End was mentioned in the 1874 Kelly's Directory as a village separate from Little Potten End. The name '*Pottern End*', meaning in old English a building used for storing pots and jars.
- 3.5 The proposed development area also lies just to the north of Little Heath Farm, which is the site of two listed buildings.
- 3.6 A watching brief was carried out at The Dells, Browns Spring, Potten End in 2006. No archaeological remains were observed during the course of the work (Gill 2006). Another watching brief was carried out in August 2007 at 1 Water End, Potten End, which was also negative (Hunn 2007).

## **4 Results**

### **4.1 General**

A single 20m long trench was excavated as shown in Fig. 2 above. The topsoil was a mid brown silty loam with frequent inclusions of pebbles and was 0.20m thick, this overlay a mid brown silty clay soil with frequent pebble and flint inclusions, excavated to a depth of 0.15m.

Detailed information regarding the trial trench and its contents appears in Appendix 1.

### **4.2 Trench 1** (Fig. 4: Plates 1-3)

The footings for an earlier building were observed on the ground surface. These comprised frogged bricks 250x150x100mm in size. The footings were between 0.20 and 0.40m in width and the building was 7.80m in length and extended beyond the excavated area by 1m to the south. It also extended further north, beneath the spoil heap. These footings were not removed during the evaluation.

The terminus of a small linear feature 0.15m wide and extending for 0.50m on a northeast-southwest alignment from the southern edge of the trench was found to be 0.10m deep and contained a dark brown pebbly fill. It has been interpreted as a modern plough scar.



**Plate 1:** Trench 1 from west



**Plate 2:** Foundation of brick building



**Plate 3:** Western end of trench showing plough scar

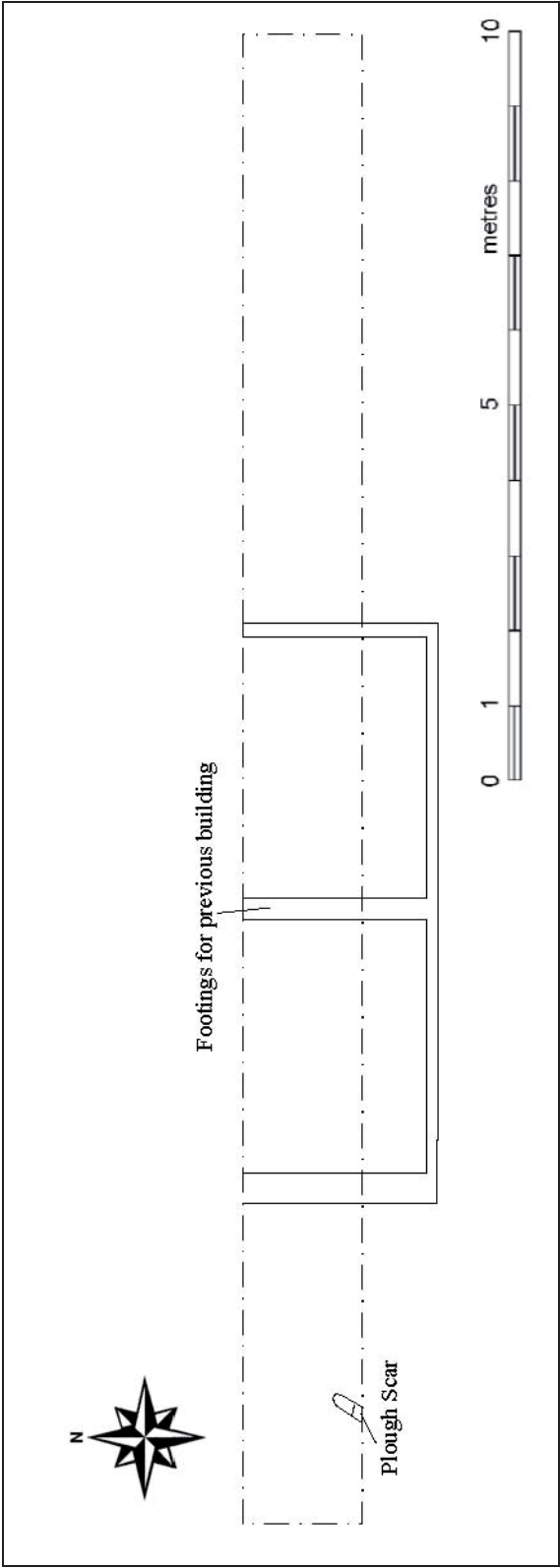


Figure 4: Plan of trench (Scale 1:100)

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 No archaeological features or finds predating the later 20<sup>th</sup> century were observed during this evaluation. Potten End village appears to have developed in the medieval period as a centre for tile production (Doggett & Hunn 1985, 31).
- 5.2 The two listed buildings at Greencroft Farm date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The development site appears to have been agricultural land until the construction of a small farm workers dwelling, the foundations of which were observed in the evaluation trench.
- 5.3 It appears that the site was not a focus for settlement before the 20<sup>th</sup> century and formed part of the field system associated with the village of Potten End.
- 5.4 *Confidence Rating*  
The archaeological evaluation fulfilled the aims set out in the project design. The fieldwork was carried out in favourable conditions and a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the evaluation.

## 6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by Mr David Groom. The writer is grateful to Mr Groom for his assistance. The project was monitored by Kate Batt of *Hertfordshire County Council's Historic Environment Unit* on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to Mick O'Connor of *M. J. O'Connor and Sons JCB Hire*.

The project was managed for ASC by David Fell MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA and Calli Rouse BA. The report was prepared by Jenny Richcards BA PIFA and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

## 7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. Site record drawings
7. List of photographs
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Dacorum Heritage Trust*.

## 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*, 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*

- Doggett N & Hunn JR, 1985 'The Origins of Medieval Berkhamsted' *Hertfordshire's Past* **18**, 18-36.
- Gill E, 2006 *Watching Brief: The Dell, Brown's Spring, Potten End, Hertfordshire* Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd report no. 772/PED/1
- Hunn J R, 2007 *Watching Brief: 1 Water End, Potten End, Hertfordshire* Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd report no. 933/PEW/01
- 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* (Harpenden).

## Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1							
		Max Dimensions (m)					
		Length	20m	Width	1.60m	Depth	0.35m
		Levels					
		Trench base west		172.63m OD			
		Trench top west		172.31m OD			
		Trench base east		171.85m OD			
		Trench top east		172.03m OD			
		NGR Co-ordinates					
		E	501865, 208378		W	501885, 208375	
		Orientation			E-W		
Reason for Trench			Planning condition				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
1	Layer	Dark brown silty loam. Topsoil		-	200	-	
2	Layer	mid brown silty clay with frequent pebbles. Natural		-	-	200	
3	Fill	Dark brown, pebbly. Fill of [4]		150	100	200	
4	Cut	Terminus of shallow linear. Probable plough scar		150	100	200	

## Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME:			SITE NO/CODE:
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	✓	✓	Trench from west
2	✓	✓	Trench from north east
3	✓	✓	West end of trench showing plough scar
4	✓	✓	East end of trench showing section
5	✓	✓	West end of trench
6	✓	✓	Trench from east
7	✓	✓	Brick foundation

## Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Greencroft Farm, Potten End		
Short Description:	In February 2008 ASC Ltd conducted an archaeological evaluation at Greencroft Farm, Little Heath Lane, Potten End, Hertfordshire, in advance of the construction of housing for agricultural workers. The foundations of an earlier building, formed of frogged bricks, were revealed, but no archaeological finds or features predating the later 20 <sup>th</sup> century were observed.		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Trial Trenching		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	Adjacent to listed buildings	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None
Current land use:	Agricultural	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	Unknown
Monument type:	None	Monument period:	None
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Greencroft Farm, Little Heath Lane, Potten End, Hertfordshire		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	c. 6375 sq. m.	Height OD: (metres)	170
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Andy Instone	Project design originator:	Caroline Barclay
Project Manager:	Jonathan Hunn	Director/Supervisor:	Jonathan Hunn
Sponsor / funding body:	Mr David Groom		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2008	End date:	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2008
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	N/a	None	
Paper:	Dacorum Museum	Brief, project design, report, black & white photos and negatives	
Digital:	Dacorum Museum	CD-ROM with copies of project design, report and digital photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation at Greencroft Farm, Little Heath Lane, Potten End		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1016/PEG/2		
Author(s):	Jenny Richards BA PIFA		
Page nos	18	Date:	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2008