

<u>Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd</u>

WATCHING BRIEF: MANOR FARM WOLVERTON MILTON KEYNES

NGR: SP 8072 4176

on behalf of City Estates



Nigel Wilson AIFA HND

December 2008

ASC: 1082/MFW/2

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Site Data

ASC project code:	MFW		ASC Project No:	1082						
OASIS ref:	archaeol2 49619		Event/Accession no:	1174/ AYBCM2008.192						
County:		Buckingl	namshire (historic cour	nty)						
Village/Town:		Wolverto	on							
Civil Parish:		Wolverto	on CP							
NGR (to 8 figs):		SP 8072	4176							
Extent of site:		c.3500 sc	ղ. m.							
Present use:		House, associated access, garden and yards								
Planning proposal:	roposal:		Provision of new services, landscaping, parking, etc			Provision of new services, landscaping, parking, etc				
Planning application	ref/date:	Milton K	eynes Council							
Local Planning Auth	ority:	01/02013	3/FUL							
Date of fieldwork:		07/08/20	08-29-11/2008							
Client:		City Esta	ites							
		10 Bond	Avenue							
		Bletchley								
		Milton Keynes								
		MK1 1SW								
Contact name:		Andy Gr	een							

Internal Quality Check

Primary Author:	Nigel Wilson	Date:	5 th December 2008
Revisions:		Date:	
Edited/Checked By:		Date:	

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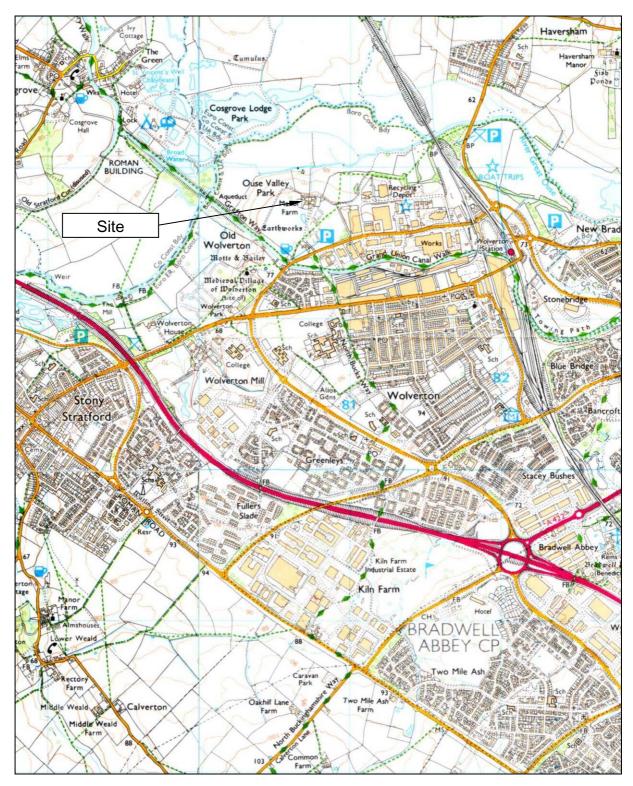


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During the late summer and autumn of 2008 a watching brief was undertaken at Manor Farm Wolverton, Milton Keynes, as a condition of scheduled monument consent during the excavation of a series of service trenches around the farmhouse whilst the house was being renovated. The soil profile observed was similar in all of the trenches with a modern highly disturbed soil overlying the natural limestone. No features or finds of archaeological significance were revealed during the watching brief. Where the trenches met the walls of the house it was found that the footings comprised four of five courses of stone sitting directly on the natural limestone.

1. Introduction

1.1 Between August and November 2008 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Manor Farm, Wolverton, Milton Keynes. The project was commissioned by City Estates, and was undertaken in accordance with a mitigation scheme (Zeepvat 2000) prepared for the site and approved on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), Milton Keynes Council, by their Archaeological Officer (MKCAO), and by English Heritage (EH). In line with the mitigation strategy a project design (Zeepvat 2008) was produced to define the precise aims of the watching brief and methods to be used. The relevant planning application reference is 01/02013/FUL.

1.2 Planning Background

This watching brief was required as a condition of scheduled monument consent, due to its location within the area defined as the deserted medieval village of Old Wolverton a scheduled ancient monument (SAM 13609).

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 managed by Karin Semmelmann BA MA MIFA, and was carried out under the overall direction of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

1.5 The Site

1.5.1 *Location & Description*

Manor Farm is located in the civil parish of Wolverton, within and close to the northern boundary of Milton Keynes (Fig. 1). The farmhouse and farm buildings, centred on NGR SP 8072 4176, lie at the centre of an area of some 25ha of agricultural land, bordered to the south and east by Old Wolverton Road and its associated industrial estate, to the south-west by the Grand Union Canal, and to the north-west and north by open pasture, and mostly used for

rough grazing, forming the flood plain of the river Ouse, which lies c.0.5km north of Manor Farm.

South-east of the house are the earthworks of the deserted village of Old Wolverton. Traces of the settlement extend for nearly 1.5km beyond the canal to the south-east, encompassing the parish church of All Saints and the adjacent motte-and-bailey castle, constructed in the 11th or 12th century. The village earthworks appear to comprise a series of crofts fronting a north-south street. The large pond south of the farmhouse may be a more recent creation. The present access to the farmhouse is by a roughly surfaced track running northwards from Old Wolverton Road, east of the canal bridge. This track follows the line of the former village street. East of the farm there are areas of surviving ridge and furrow.

The farmhouse and farm buildings at Manor Farm (Fig. 2) are Grade II listed. The site and surrounding area, comprising the earthworks of the deserted village of Old Wolverton, are a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 13609). The house has been unoccupied for some years, and has suffered damage through vandalism and theft of fixtures and fittings, but is currently undergoing renovation. The surrounding farm buildings were converted for use as offices in 2003/4, with associated car parking and a new vehicular access route off Old Wolverton Road.

1.5.2 Geology & Topography

Manor Farm stands on the edge of a prominent scarp, at an elevation of $c.75 \,\mathrm{m}$ OD, with commanding northward views across the floodplain of the Ouse towards Haversham, Castlethorpe and Cosgrove. To the north, the land falls sharply to the floodplain ($c.65 \,\mathrm{m}$ OD), which is bordered to the south by a tributary stream. To the south of the site lies a more or less level plateau, on which stands the Victorian town and railway works of Wolverton. Soils in the area 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 is Blisworth limestone (BGS, Sheet 203).

1.5.3 Proposed Development

This forms part of the renovation of the farmhouse, and comprises the provision of a full suite of services, along with associated landscaping, provision of access and parking, etc (Fig. 3).

1.5.4 Previous Archaeological Works

The earthworks of the deserted village were recorded by the former Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit in the 1980s (Croft & Mynard 1993, 183). In 1992, a desk-based assessment of the site was prepared by the Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT 1992). In 2000, following proposals by the Milton Keynes Parks Trust, who then owned the farm and surrounding area, for refurbishment of the farm house and buildings, and conversion of the latter for office use, ASC was commissioned to prepare an archaeological mitigation scheme for the site (Zeepvat 2000). This was accepted by the LPA, and has formed the basis for subsequent works, which have comprised historic building recording of the house and farm buildings (Zeepvat & King 2001), and a

watching brief on the new access road, car park and provision of services to the farm buildings (Wilson & Abrams 2003).

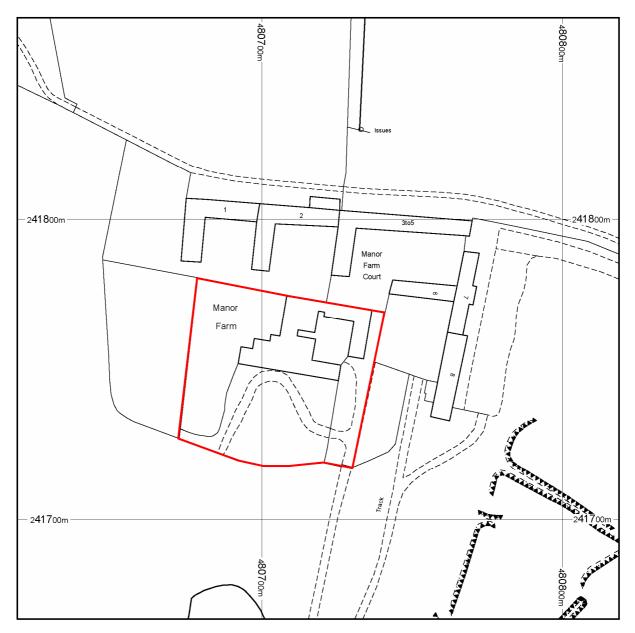


Figure 2: Site plan, showing area affected by present proposals (scale 1:1250)

Manor Farm, Wolverton, Milton Keynes
1082/MFW

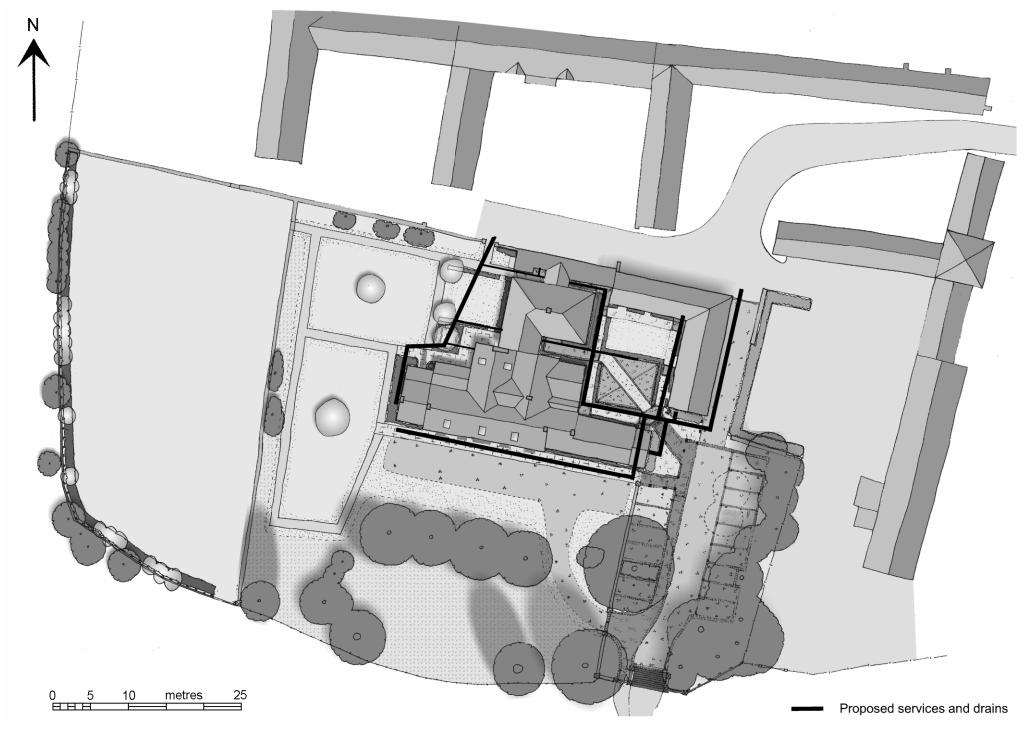


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:500)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

In line with the requirements of the mitigation strategy (Zeepvat 2000, 3.1) and the project design, the aims of the project were:

- to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains which were liable to be threatened by the development.
- 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 and historic fabric and/or features revealed by the development programme;
- to secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any archaeological records and artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site;
- to secure the appropriate reporting and publication of the results of the project;
- to satisfy the requirements of Scheduled Monument Consent and Listed Building Consent as defined by English Heritage and the Local Planning Authority.

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

In line with the requirements of the mitigation strategy (Zeepvat 2000, 4.1), the methods to be adopted for this project were:

- a watching brief on any groundworks within the curtilage of the farm house, with investigation and recording of any archaeological features or deposits revealed;
- the preparation of a report and ordered archive.

2.4 Constraints

The work was carried out according to the methods described above which enabled the aims of the project to be satisfactorily met.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been covered in detail in the mitigation strategy (Zeepvat 2000, Section 2). In brief, the site is considered archaeologically significant for the following reasons.
 - *Prehistoric:* prehistoric activity is well attested in the Ouse valley. Bronze Age ring ditches have been excavated at Warren Farm, about 1km SSW of Manor Farm, and late Bronze Age and Iron Age farmsteads were excavated at Blue Bridge, 2km to the south-east.
 - Roman: Roman villas have been identified at regular intervals on both sides of the Ouse valley. Those at Bancroft, 2km to the south-east, and at Cosgrove, 0.6km to the north, have been excavated. In the immediate vicinity, Roman finds and features were located 0.3km south of the farm, at Manor Farm Cottages, and Roman finds have been recovered to the immediate west of the scheduled monument.
 - Saxon: Evidence of Saxon settlement has been excavated at Warren Farm, and Saxon finds have been recovered to the immediate west of the scheduled monument. The village at Old Wolverton was probably founded in the late Saxon period.
 - Medieval: Manor Farm lies within the Old Wolverton village earthworks.
 Documentary evidence suggests that the farm occupies the site of an early medieval grange. The fields to the north and east of the farm contain surviving ridge and furrow.
 - *Post-Medieval:* The present Manor Farm was established in the 17th-century, and largely rebuilt as a 'model farm' in the 19th century. The building survey identified certain farm buildings that may have survived from before the rebuild, but there was insufficient evidence to determine the layout of the farm prior to the 19th-century rebuild.

4. Results

- 4.1 The proposed service plan was followed with minor amendments (Fig 4). As each trench was excavated an experienced archaeologist was in attendance to record the stratigraphy within the trench and plot its location. Nine visits were made between August and November 2008.
- 4.2 The service trenches were mechanically excavated and ranged in width from 0.3 to 0.6m with depths between 0.4 and 1.2m. Other than a pit containing modern bricks and other building material observed on the 17th November (Plate 1: Fig. 4) and a number of existing service runs (Plate 2) the only feature of archaeological significance observed was a robbed out brick footing at the eastern end of the trench observed on the 29th November to the south of the house (Fig. 5: Plate 3). The red bricks in this wall footing were similar to the bricks used in the construction of a lean-to building butted onto the eastern end of the house and it is likely that the footing and lean-to are contemporary. The bricks in this footing measured 220x110x70mm and were bonded with a sandy lime mortar. No finds earlier than modern were observed during the excavation of the trenches. Below the turf and humic topsoil layer there was a layer of yellowish clay covering the natural limestone, which was encountered at 0.3-0.5m below the existing ground surface (Plate 4).
- 4.3 Observations made on the footings of the farmhouse in the northwest corner of the building revealed that the limestone walls continue down a further four or five courses using smaller rougher limestone blocks than the exposed masonry above and sat on the natural limestone (Plate 5). The footings for the barn at the eastern end of the farm complex were constructed of rough limestone bonded with lime mortar and sat on the top of the natural limestone about 0.4m below the current ground surface (Plate 6).



Plate 1: Modern pit to NW of the house



Plate 2: Modern services, east barn south facing wall and general view into the courtyard



Plate 3: Robbed brick wall at the SE corner of the house



Plate 4: Typical soil profile in the deeper trenches to the NW of the house



Plate 5: House footings (NW corner)



Plate 6: Eastern barn south facing wall footings



Plate 7: Trench to the south of the house



Plate 8: Trench in the main courtyard



Plate 9: Old service pipe and trench in the courtyard



Plate 10: Old service trench on the west side of the courtyard



Plate 11: Trench to the east of the easternmost barn



Plate 12: Trench running from the NW corner of the house

Manor Farm, Wolverton, Milton Keynes
1082/MFW

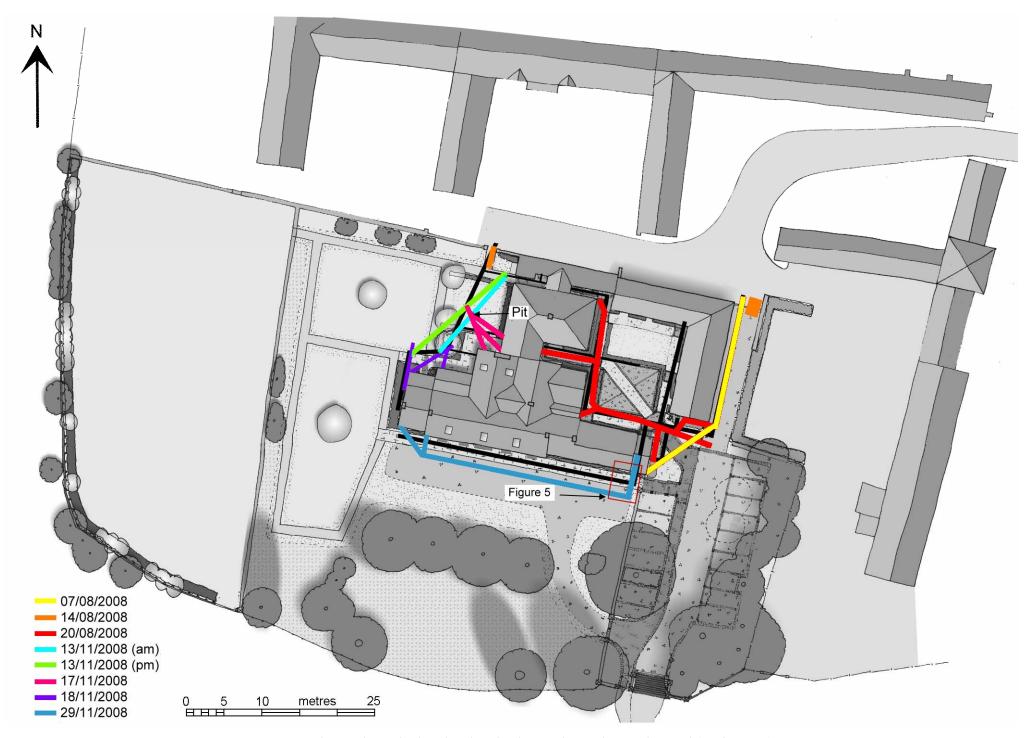


Figure 4: Observed trench plan showing the date each trench was observed (*scale 1:500*)

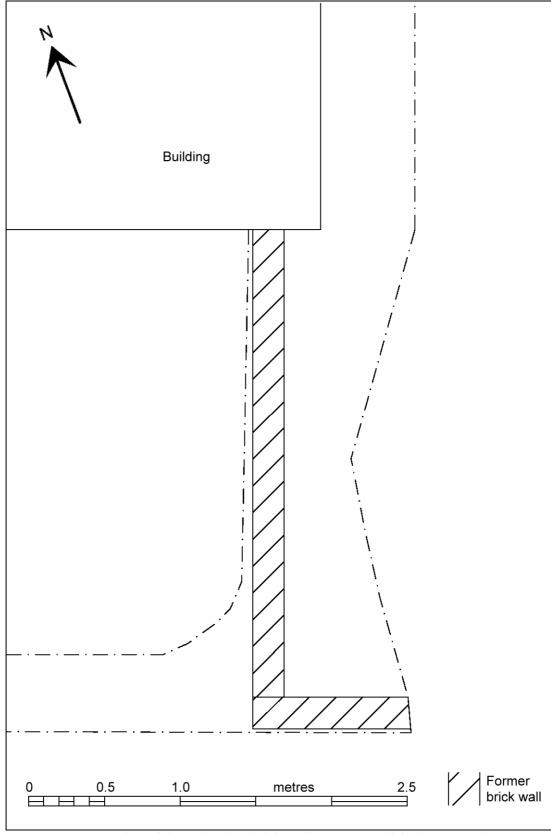


Figure 5: Location of the robbed out brick wall, SE corner of the house (Scale 1:25)

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The watching brief at Manor Farm has enabled a further area of the Old Wolverton scheduled site to the north of the earthworks to be examined. Previous work around Manor Farm over the past eight years by ASC has produced very limited results the only significant features being a few possibly medieval ditches to the west of the farm complex.
- 5.2 The current observation and recording programme has again demonstrated that the soils in the area immediately around the house are very shallow and disturbed, sitting directly on the natural limestone. From the amount of modern debris and lack of earlier material observed it is clear that the area surrounding the house is unlikely to contain significant remain from the medieval or early post medieval periods.
- 5.3 It is surmised that the current farmhouse is on the site of the former grange. However, from the evidence obtained during the watching briefs and historic building recording work on the site no evidence pre-dating the founding of the existing house, probably in the late 17th or early 18th centuries, has been revealed.

6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by Andy Green of City Estates. The project was monitored by Nick Crank, Archaeological Officer Milton Keynes, on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to all the onsite contractors for their co-operation during the watching brief.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelmann BA MA MIFA. The fieldwork was carried out by Nigel Wilson, Martin Cuthbert and Calli Rouse. Nigel Wilson prepared the report which was 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 Monitoring Sheets
 - 6. List of photographs
 - 7. B/W prints & negatives
 - 8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.
- 7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum under the Accession number AYBCM 2008.192.

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).
- Zeepvat B 2000 Manor Farm, Wolverton, Milton Keynes: an archaeological mitigation scheme relating to the proposed development of the site, on behalf of Milton Keynes Parks Trust Ltd. ASC doc. ASC/M/MFW99/1 (July 2000).
- Zeepvat B 2008 Manor Farm Wolverton, project design for archaeological watching brief. ASC doc. ASC/1082/MFW/1 (June 2008)

Secondary Sources

- BGS British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology.
- CAT 1992 Manor Farm, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire: Archaeological Assessment. Cotswold Archaeological Trust, Report No. 92100.
- Croft R.A. and Mynard D.C., 1993 *The changing landscape of Milton Keynes*. Buckinghamshire Archaeol. Soc. Monog. Ser. **5** (Aylesbury).
- Soil Survey 1983 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend (Harpenden).
- Wilson N & Abrams J 2003 Watching Brief: Manor Farm, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes. ASC report ref. ASC/MFW02/4
- Zeepvat B & King N 2001 Historic Building Survey of Manor Farm, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes. ASC Ltd, report ref ASC/M/MFW00/2

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD ARCHAE	OLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECOR
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J		J	
distribed areas = 500 Scetch	, the	et. (2)	
Brick wall at eastern end of the	ench e	see gratura	sheat (3)
Similar brides too lean too - red			
Time and and mostar.		70m - dage	
Bond= unknown.		110 mm - wid	
			•
Comments:			1.
possibly and of ony	200	e excava	ton.
They'll Fing if meres	ory 4	ting else.	
J J	<u> </u>	J	

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAM	/IE: Mano	r Farm, V	Volverton	SITE NO/CODE: 1082/MFW	Accession No. AYBCM 2008.192				
Shot	B&W	Digital		Subject					
1		$\sqrt{}$	East of east	barn					
2	\checkmark	\checkmark	East of east	barn					
3	\checkmark	\checkmark	South facing	g foundation east barn					
4	\checkmark	\checkmark		w looking west into the courtyard					
5	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$		f courtyard showing modern serv					
6	\checkmark	\checkmark		f courtyard showing modern serv	vice trench				
7	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$		of courtyard general soil profile					
8	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$		f courtyard general view of trenc	h				
9	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$	Detail of tre	nch NW of house					
10	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$	Detail of soi	I profile NW of house					
11	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$		w of trench NW of house part ba					
12	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$		w of trench NW of house part ba					
13	\checkmark	\checkmark		w of trench NW of house part ba					
14	\checkmark	\checkmark		w of trench NW of house part ba	ckfilled				
15	\checkmark	\checkmark		Detail of trench NW of house					
16		\checkmark	Detail of trench NW of house						
17	\checkmark	\checkmark		w of trench NW of house part ba					
18			General vie	w of trench NW of house part ba	ckfilled				
19		\checkmark	General vie	w of trench NW of house part ba	ckfilled				
20		\checkmark	General vie	w of trench NW of house part ba	ckfilled				
21	\checkmark	\checkmark	Detail of ho	use footing NW corner					
22	\checkmark	\checkmark	Modern pit l	NW of house					
23	\checkmark	\checkmark	General act	ion shot NW of house					
24			General vie	w of trenches NW of house					
25			General vie	w of trench SE of house					
26			General vie	w of trench S of house					
27				w of trench S of house					
28			General vie	w of trench S of house					
29				I profile S of house					
30	√			I profile SW of house and house					
31	\checkmark	\checkmark		I profile SW of house and house					
32	\checkmark	\checkmark	Detail of soi	I profile SE of house and house t	footing				
33	\checkmark	\checkmark	Detail of bri	ck wall SE of house					
34	\checkmark	\checkmark	General vie	w of brick wall SE of house					
35	\checkmark	\checkmark	Detail of tre	nch SE of house					
36			Detail of tre	nch SE of house					

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

archaeol2 49619

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form archaeol2 49619			
PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name: Short Description: Project Type:	Manor Farm Wolverton During the late summer and autumn of 2008 a watching brief was undertaken at Manor Farm Wolverton, Milton Keynes, as a condition of scheduled monument consen tduring the excavation of a series of service trenches around the farmhouse whilst the house was being renovated. The soil profile observed was similar in all of the trenches with a modern highly disturbed soil overlying the natural limestone. No features or finds of archaeological significance were revealed during the watching brief. Where the trenches met the walls of the house it was found that the footings comprised four of five courses of stone sitting directly on the natural limestone. Watching Brief		
Site status:	SAM 13609,	Previous work:	Bld recording
(eg. none, SAM, Listed)	Listed Bld.	(eg. SMR refs)	Desk-based assessment
Current land use:	Garden and yards	Future work: no	no
Monument type:	N/a	Monument period:	N/a
Significant finds: N/a (artefact type & period)			
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Buckinghamshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 8072 4176
District:	Milton Keynes	Parish:	Wolverton
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Manor Farm, Old Wolverton Rd. Old Wolverton Milton Keynes MK12 5NN.		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	3500 sq m	Height OD: (metres)	75.00
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation: Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd			
Project brief originator:	N/a	Project design originator:	ASC Ltd
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	Nigel Wilson
Sponsor / funding body:	City Estates		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	07-08-20008	End date:	29-11-2008
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	N/a		
Paper:	Bucks County Museum	Monitoring Sheets	
Digital:	Bucks County Museum	CD: Documents, Images	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title: Watching Brief: Manor Farm, Wolverton, Milton Keynes			
Serial title & volume:	'		
Author(s):	Wilson, N.	T	,
Page nos	1-31	Date:	05-12-2008