

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
LAND ADJACENT TO ABBEY COTTAGE
SINGLEBOROUGH
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

NGR: SP 7666 3182

on behalf of D.U. Badham



Jenny Richards BA PIFA & Calli Rouse BA PIFA

July 2008

ASC: 1087/SAC/2

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 project code:</i>	SAC	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1087
<i>OASIS ref:</i>		<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Singleborough		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Great Horwood		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 7666 3182		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.50m x c.90m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Gardens		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of a house, garage and associated access		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	07/02936/APP		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	23 rd June 2008		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	John Thornton Architect 4 Millfield Close Marsh Gibbon Bicester Oxon OX27 OHR		
<i>Client:</i>	D.U. Badham Abbey Cottage Singleborough MK17 0RF		
<i>Contact name:</i>	John Thornton		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	J. Richards	<i>Date:</i>	04/07/2008
------------------------	-------------	--------------	------------

<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
-------------------	--	--------------	--

<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
---------------------------	--	--------------	--

© 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	8
3. Archaeological & Historical Background.....	9
4. Results.	11
5. Conclusions	15
6. Acknowledgements	16
7. Archive	16
8. References	17

Appendices:

1 Trench Summary Tables	18
2 List of Photographs	20
3 Finds Concordance.....	20
4 ASC OASIS Form.....	21

Figures:

1. General location	3
2. Site plan	6
3. Proposed development.....	7
4. Plan of gully in Trench 2.....	14
5. Section through gully in Trench 2.....	14

Plates:

Cover: View east along proposed access route

1. Trench 1	12
2. Trench 2	12
3. Gully [2].....	13

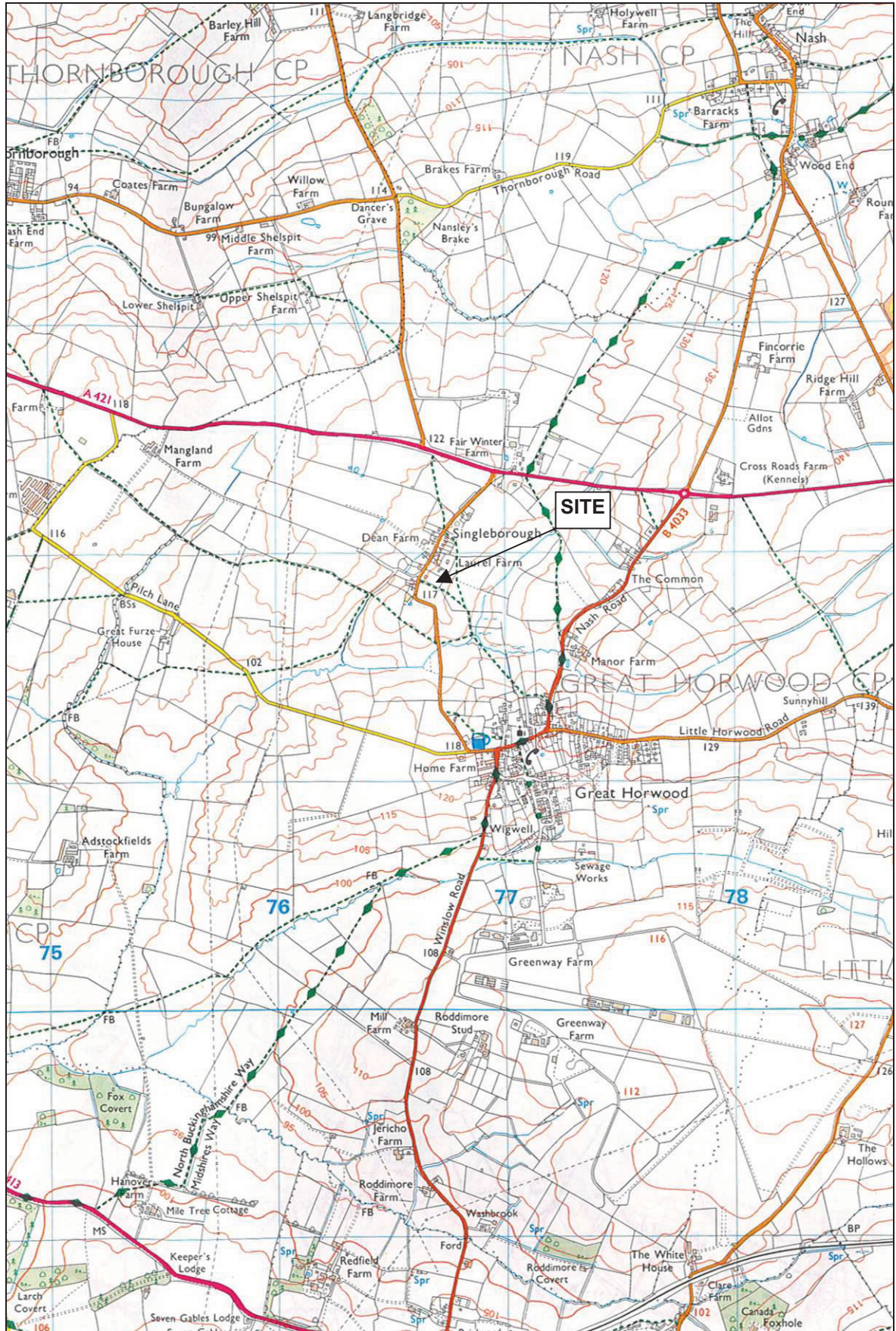


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In June 2008 ASC Ltd carried out an evaluation of a site adjacent to Abbey Cottage, Singleborough, Buckinghamshire prior to the construction of a new house and garage. Two trenches were excavated, one of which contained a north to south aligned gully, from which three sherds of medieval pottery were retrieved. No other archaeological features or artefacts were present in the trenches.

1. Introduction

1.1 In June 2008 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation of land adjacent to Abbey Cottage, Singleborough, Buckinghamshire. The project was commissioned by *John Thornton Architects* on behalf of Mr D. U. Badham, and was carried out according to a brief (Radford 2008) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Aylesbury Vale District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2008). The relevant planning application reference is 07/02936/APP.

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

1.5 *The Site*

1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The site is located on the south eastern side of the village of Singleborough, in the parish of Great Horwood, in the administrative district of Aylesbury Vale and is centred on NGR SP 7666 3182 (Fig. 1).

Access to the site is from the main road that runs through the centre of Singleborough, which also forms the north western border of the site. The plot is sub rectangular in shape, and is largely covered by grass, with several trees in the northern half (Fig. 2).

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the site are of the Hanslope Association, which comprise *slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils*. Some *slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils*. *Slight risk of water erosion*, over chalky till (Soil Survey, 1983, 411d). The underlying geology is characterised as Quaternary drift, which comprises stony clay generally with flint and chalk pebbles (BGS, Sheet 219). The site lies at an elevation of *c.120m AOD*.

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises the construction of a detached house with a garage and associated access (Fig. 3).

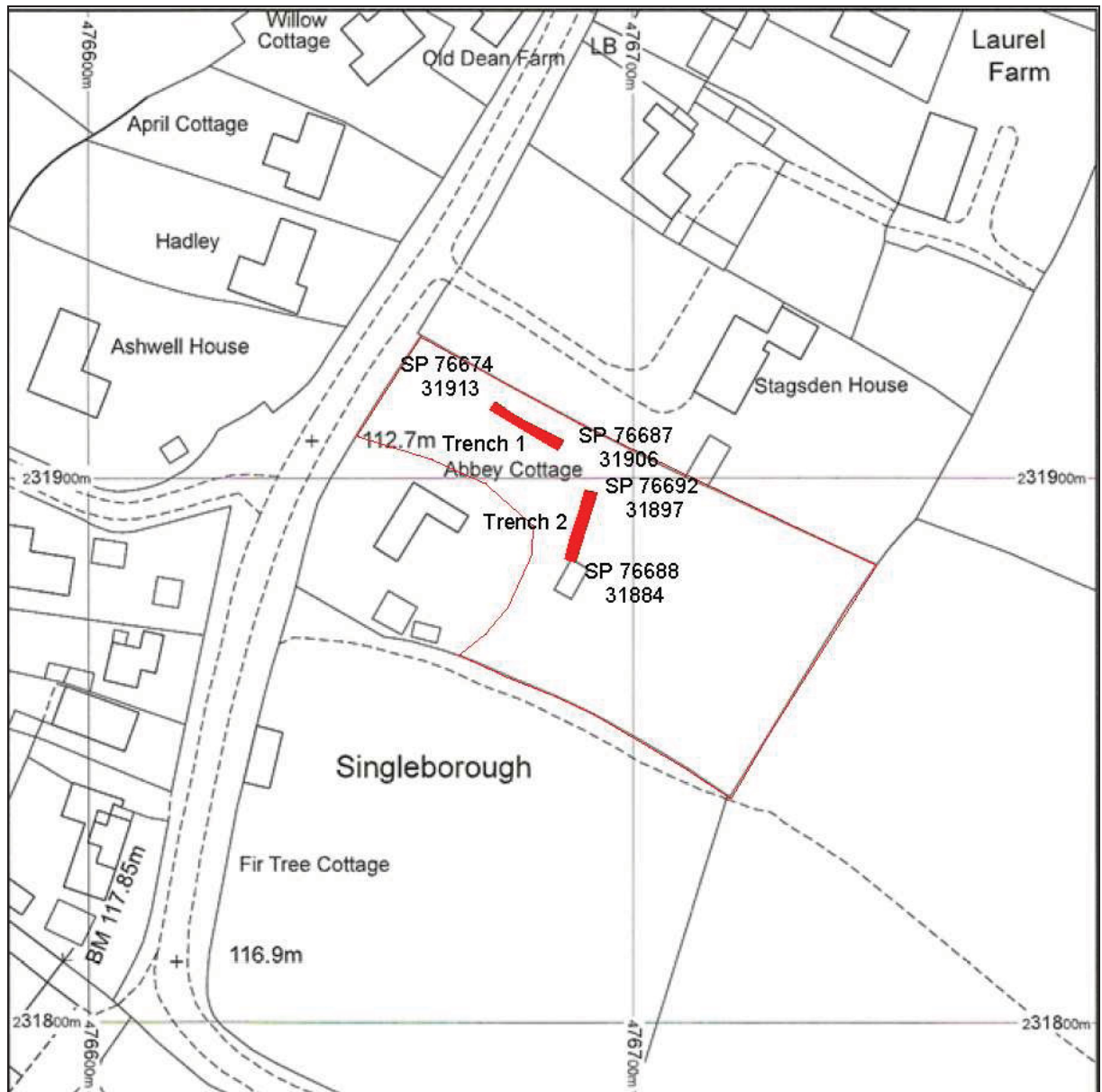


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

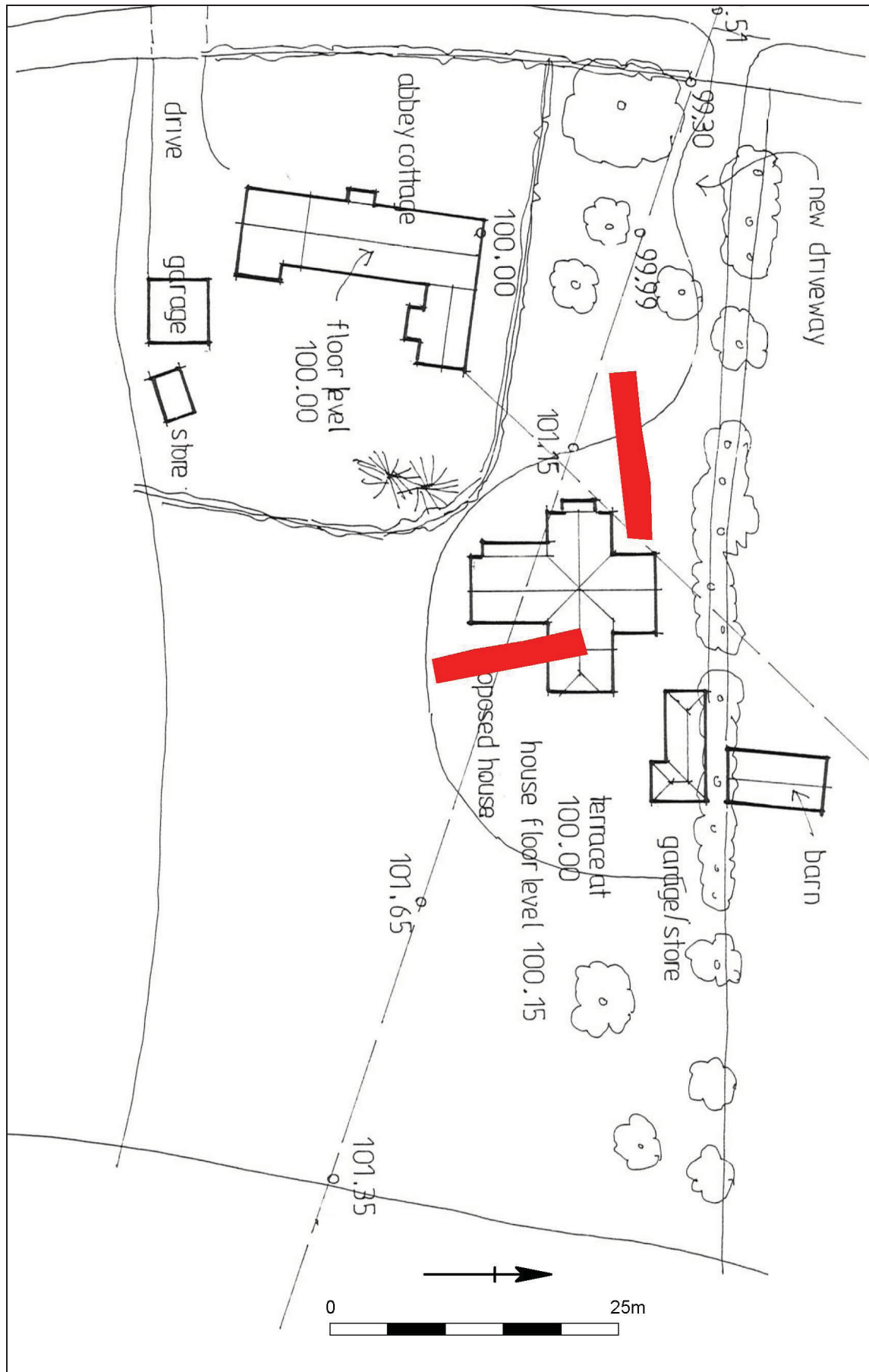


Figure 3: Proposed development, trench locations shown in red (scale 1:500)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

As described in the brief (Section 6a), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To establish whether there is evidence for occupation, property boundaries, domestic, commercial or industrial activities associated with the medieval and post medieval settlement (including burials relating to possible nearby chapel).

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 work was carried out according to the brief (Section 8), which required:

- 30m of trial trenching to be excavated on the footprint of the proposed dwellings and access. Trench locations are shown in Figs. 2 and 3.

2.4 *Constraints*

The presence of several mature trees on the site and access problems to the southern section of the site meant that only 28.5m of trenching could be opened. For the same reasons, Trench 1 was relocated slightly to the south of its intended location. Trench 2 was targeted on the footprint of the proposed house as pegged out by the client.

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 Buckinghamshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), and other readily available sources.

3.2 **Prehistoric** (before 600BC)

North Buckinghamshire was extensively settled during the prehistoric and Roman periods but to date large scale archaeological investigation has tended to concentrate in the river valleys, notably that of the Great Ouse, to the north of Singleborough (eg Woodfield & Johnson 1989). In contrast, the clayland villages of the area have received comparatively less attention and little is known of the pattern of prehistoric settlement in the Singleborough area.

The SMR records that a possible hand axe trimming flake was found in the garden of Fir Tree Cottage, c.100m to the southwest of the development site (SMR0127).

3.3 **Roman** (AD43-c.450)

There is limited evidence for Roman settlement in Singleborough, but it has been suggested that Great and Little Horwood are part of a land unit which may have Roman or earlier origins (Reed 1979, 72-74; fig. 6). The site lies c.600m south of a Roman road (SMR2979), which linked *Magiovinium* (Dropshort) with Thornborough. An important Roman temple and burial site was situated close to the road at Thornborough c.2km northwest of the site (Johnson 1975) and enclosures c.500m north of the site, near Fair Winter Farm, have been interpreted as Roman camps (CAS 2020).

Fieldwalking c.600m to the northwest of the site recorded several sherds of Roman pot (SMR0126). During improvements to the A421, c.500m to the north of the site, a 4th century Roman military coin marked 'GLORIA EXERCITUS' was recovered by metal detecting (SMR5929). A small vase or pot containing silver spoons, a fibula, a pin and a ring, all of which were dated to this period, were uncovered during ploughing c.900m to the southeast of the site (SMR0224).

3.4 **Saxon** (c.450-1066)

Singleborough is an outlying settlement within the parish of Great Horwood that is likely to have its origins in the later Saxon period. Although the earliest documentary reference to the place name of Singleborough or *Sinleberia* occurs at the Domesday Survey, it is likely that the place name may have had an earlier, late Anglo-Saxon origin from the suffix *burh* or "fortified place". The prefix – Single – may be derived from a variant of the word "shingle" or "gravel hill" as there are gravel deposits in Singleborough, which have been dug for in the past.

3.5 **Medieval** (1066-1500)

To the east of the Singleborough to Great Horwood road is the site of a medieval chapel (SMR0113). This site is marked on the ground by an “H”-shaped earthwork. A documentary reference of 1420 to a chapel at *Synkelburgh* when Bishop Fleming granted one John Horwood and his wife, Margaret, a licence to celebrate mass at this chapel. This documentary reference may refer to this site which is comprised of two shallow and parallel trenches *c.*40 yards apart, both of which are intersected by a third trench near the middle. There are also indications of stone foundations on the ground nearby. This site is also visible on aerial photographs. Slightly further to the east is another set of earthworks (SMR0112) identified during fieldwalking. This area of earthworks comprises a number of ‘hollow-ways’ and approximately nine house platforms.

The SMR also notes the site of a medieval house platform to the immediate south of the modern settlement of Singleborough. The boundary of this site is marked by a ditch, which forms an approximate right angle with smaller intersecting hollows and a pond within this enclosed area (SMR0028). This complex is visible on aerial photographs. These earthworks provide evidence of shrinkage of the medieval settlement of Singleborough.

3.6 **Post-Medieval** (1500-1900)

During the post medieval period the road from Singleborough to Great Horwood was part of the main road from Buckingham to London. This road also served, as a drove road along which cattle and other livestock were taken to local markets. The lands in Singleborough were enclosed under an Act of Parliament in 1799.

3.7 **Modern** (1900-present)

The settlement of Singleborough has changed very little during the modern period. The SMR records the existence of a winged field barn or farmhouse to the northeast of Dean Farm (SMR8004) on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map. The building is depicted within a rectangular enclosure, closely associated with three ponds. A clay extraction pit is also shown on the 1st Edition OS Map, *c.*500m to the southwest of the site (SMR6917).

4 Results

4.1 *General*

Two trenches were opened with a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.60m wide toothless bucket. The trenches were targeted on the footprint of the proposed new buildings and access.

The topsoil comprised dark brown clayey silt and was generally 0.4m deep. No distinct subsoil layer was observed and the topsoil directly overlay the underlying natural strata.

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

4.2 **Trench 1** (Plate 1)

This trench was located on the proposed new access route and had an east-west alignment. It was 14.80m in length and was excavated to a depth of 0.40m. Roots from the mature trees adjacent to this area had caused much ground disturbance in this trench and no archaeological finds or features were observed.

4.3 **Trench 2** (Fig. 4: Plates 2-3)

This trench was located within the footprint of the proposed new dwelling on a north-south alignment. It was 13.50m in length and excavated to a depth of 0.40m. A large amount of root disturbance was also present in this trench.

A linear gully [2] was present at the south end of the trench (Plate 3). It was observed for a distance of 2m and continued beyond the southern limit of the trench. Its northern terminus was rounded, and measured 0.6m wide by 0.2m deep, and contained a single deposit of mid grey silty clay (1).

Three sherds of pottery were recovered from this feature. One was an undiagnostic body sherd, one was a fragment of the base of a jar or cooking pot, while the other was a piece of 14th century green glazed Brill slip ware, and had a band of simple moulded decoration (*pers. comm. R. Zeepvat*).



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking east, 1m scale



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking north, 1m scale



Plate 3: Gully [1], looking south, 0.5m scale

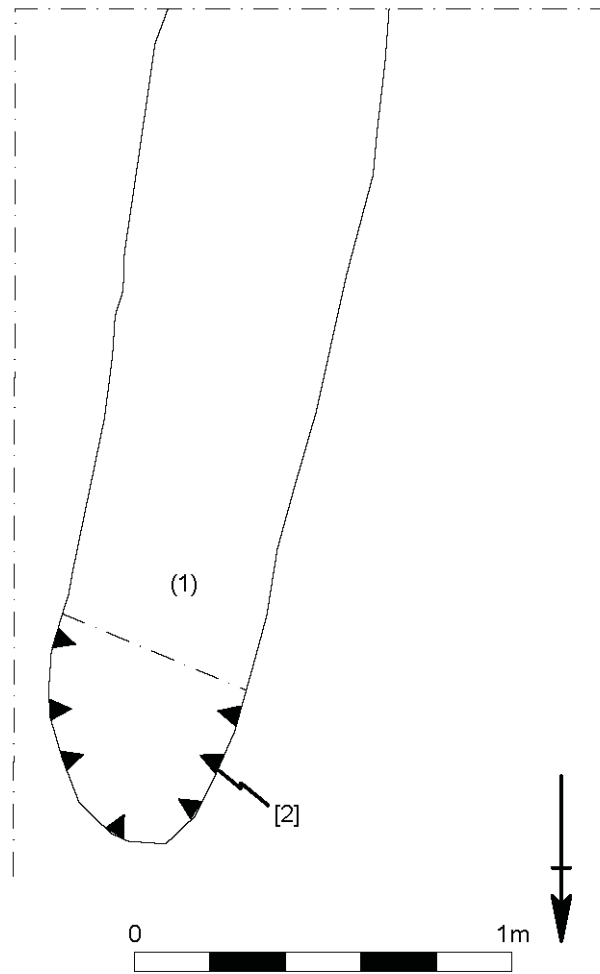


Figure 4: Plan of gully in Trench 2

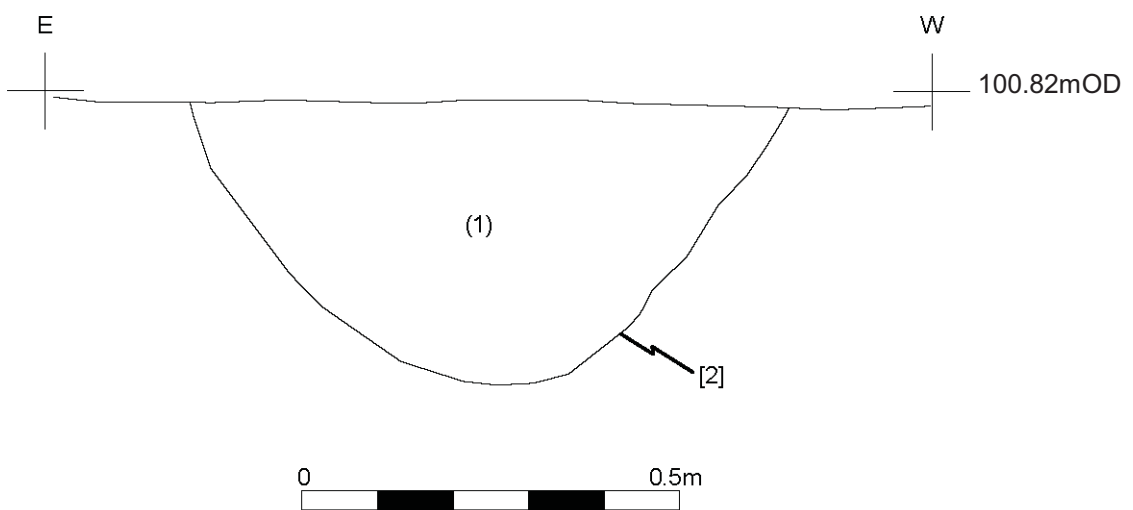


Figure 5: North facing section through gully in Trench 2

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The lack of subsoil in both trenches and the lack of modern debris within the topsoil suggests that the site has not been subjected to large scale modern disturbance. Therefore, the site has good potential for the survival of archaeological deposits.
- 5.2 The pottery recovered from the gully in Trench 2 [2] dates the feature to the medieval or later periods. In particular, the sherd of Brill pottery dates to the 14th century. It is possible that the gully represents a field or property boundary, associated with the medieval settlement of Singleborough, which was located to the south of the modern settlement.
- 5.3 The presence of a single archaeological feature [2] within the evaluation trenches suggests that the site is unlikely to have been in the centre of the medieval settlement, but is more likely to have been on the periphery. In conclusion, it is unlikely that a dense concentration of archaeological features is present on the site, but the presence of further archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be specifically excluded.
- 5.4 *Confidence Rating*
The evaluation was carried out in dry, sunny conditions, and full cooperation was received from all parties involved. Although some constraints were encountered (Section 2.4), a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the evaluation.

6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by John Thornton Architect, on behalf of their client, D.U. Badham. The writer is grateful to Mr. Badham for his assistance. The project was monitored by David Radford BA MIFA on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Jenny Richards BA PIFA and Calli Rouse BA PIFA. The report was prepared by Jenny Richards and Calli Rouse and edited by David Fell MA 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. Finds records
7. Finds
8. Site record drawings
9. List of photographs
10. B/W prints & negatives
11. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum.

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 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.

Radford D 2008 *Brief for an archaeological excavation at land adjacent to Abbey Cottage, Singleborough* Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service

Rouse C 2008 *Project Design for an Archaeological Evaluation at Land adjacent to Abbey Cottage, Singleborough, Buckinghamshire* ASC/1087/SAC/1

Secondary Sources

BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.


Johnson A E 1975 'Excavations at Bourton Grounds, Thornborough, 1972-3' in *Records of Buckinghamshire* **20.1**, 3-57.


Reed M 1979 *The Buckinghamshire Landscape*. Hodder and Stoughton

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

Woodfield C & Johnson C 1989 'A Roman Site at Stanton Low, on the Great Ouse, Buckinghamshire' *Archaeological Journal* **146**, 135-278

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	14.80	Width	1.60	Depth	0.40
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SP	76674 31913	SP	76687 31906		
	Orientation			E-W		
	Reason for Trench			To investigate the area of the proposed new access		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
Topsoil	Layer	Dark blackish brown, clay-silt, friable	-	400	-	
Natural	Layer	Light yellowish brown, clay, stiff, frequent inclusions of chalk fragments	-	-	400	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	13.50	Width	1.60	Depth	0.40
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SP	76692 31897	SP	76688 31884		
	Orientation			N-S		
	Reason for Trench			To investigate the area of the proposed new dwelling		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
Topsoil	Layer	Same as in Trench 1	-	400	-	
1	Fill	Mid grey, silty clay, firm, occasional inclusions of small pebbles and pottery sherds – fill of [2]	600	200	400	
2	Cut	Linear feature with rounded terminus, smooth, sloping sides and concave base – field boundary?	600	200	400	
Natural	Layer	Same as in Trench 1	-	-	400	

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Abbey Cottage, Singleborough, Buckinghamshire			SITE NO/CODE: 1087/SAC
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	✓	✓	Trench 1, looking east, 1m scale
2	✓	✓	Trench 1, looking east, 1m scale
3	✓	✓	Trench 1, looking west, 1m scale
4	✓	✓	Trench 1, looking west, 1m scale
5	✓	✓	Trench 2, looking north, 1m scale
6	✓	✓	Trench 2, looking north, 1m scale
7	✓	✓	Trench 2, looking south, 1m scale
8	✓	✓	Trench 2, looking south, 1m scale
9	✓	✓	Gully [2], looking south, 0.5m scale
10	✓	✓	Gully [2], looking south, 0.5m scale

Appendix 3: Finds Concordance

Context	Pottery	
	(no)	(g)
1	3	45

Appendix 4: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Abbey Cottage, Singleborough, Buckinghamshire		
Short Description:	<i>In June 2008 ASC Ltd carried out an evaluation of a site adjacent to Abbey Cottage, Singleborough, Buckinghamshire prior to the construction of a new house and garage. Two trenches were excavated, one of which contained a north to south aligned gully, from which 3 sherds of medieval pottery were retrieved. No other archaeological features or artefacts were present in the trenches.</i>		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Trial Trenching		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	-
Current land use:	Garden	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	No
Monument type:	-	Monument period:	-
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)			
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Buckinghamshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Abbey Cottage, Singleborough, Buckinghamshire, MK17 0RF		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)		Height OD: (metres)	
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	D. Radford	Project design originator:	C. Rouse
Project Manager:	K. Semmelmann	Director/Supervisor:	J. Richards
Sponsor / funding body:	Mr D.U. Badham		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	23/06/08	End date:	23/06/08
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Buckinghamshire County Museum	Finds	
Paper:		Archive Box	
Digital:		CD	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation at Abbey Cottage, Singleborough, Buckinghamshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1087/SAC/2		
Author(s):	Jenny Richards BA PIFA and Calli Rouse BA PIFA		
Page nos	20	Date:	04/07/08