

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
CHURCH FARM HOUSE
CHURCH LANE
SAUNDERTON
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

NGR: SP 7948 0182

on behalf of Mr & Mrs J.M. Berman



Martin Cuthbert BA

November 2008

ASC: 1122/SCF/2



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Site Data

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>ASC project code:</i> | SCF | <i>ASC project no:</i> | 1122 |
| <i>OASIS ref:</i> | archaeol2-49718 | <i>Event/Accession no:</i> | AYBCM: 2008.197 |
| <i>County:</i> | Buckinghamshire | | |
| <i>Village/Town:</i> | Saunderton | | |
| <i>Civil Parish:</i> | Bledlow-cum-Saunderton | | |
| <i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i> | SP 7948 0182 | | |
| <i>Extent of site:</i> | Approx. 96 sq. m | | |
| <i>Present use:</i> | Domestic house and garden | | |
| <i>Planning proposal:</i> | Construction of a new music room and alterations to existing annex | | |
| <i>Planning application ref/date:</i> | 08/06773/FUL | | |
| <i>Local Planning Authority:</i> | Aylesbury Vale District Council | | |
| <i>Date of fieldwork:</i> | 12/11/2008 | | |
| <i>Commissioned by:</i> | P. Syborn Syborn + Atkinson Chartered Architects 4 Pratt Walk Lambeth London SE11 6AS | | |
| <i>Client:</i> | Mr & Mrs J.M. Berman 14 Caroline Terrace London SW1W 8JS | | |
| <i>Contact name:</i> | Philip Syborn - Syborn + Atkinson Chartered Architects | | |

Internal Quality Check

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|------------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------|
| <i>Primary Author:</i> | Martin Cuthbert BA | <i>Date:</i> | 28/11/2008 |
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| <i>Revisions:</i> | | <i>Date:</i> | |
|-------------------|--|--------------|--|

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|---------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| <i>Edited/Checked By:</i> | David Fell | <i>Date:</i> | 28/11/2008 |
|---------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|

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Cover: River and Pond north of house and annexe, looking west

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

Summary

In November 2008 an evaluation was carried out at Church Farm House, Church Lane, Saunderton, Buckinghamshire, Due to the proximity to a scheduled ancient monument the area was considered to be archaeologically sensitive. Two trenches were excavated both revealing modern features containing brick, tile and other waste material. No other archaeological features or artefacts were noted, and it is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on buried archaeological remains.

1. Introduction

1.1 In November 2008 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Church Farm House, Church Lane, Saunderton, Buckinghamshire. The project was commissioned by *Syborn Atkinson Chartered Architects*, on behalf of the client, Mr & Mrs J.M. Berman. It was carried out according to a generic brief (Kidd 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 08/06773/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 Organisation* by the Institute for 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*

The site is situated in Saunderton, in the administrative district of Aylesbury Vale, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1). It comprises a subrectangular plot of c. 1ha within the historic core of the village, at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 7948 0182 (Fig. 2). It is located on the eastern side of Bledlow Road, to the south of Church Lane and is bounded to the southeast by farmland. The house and annex are located at the northern most end of the site.

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area are of the *Coombe 2 Association*, which are defined as *well drained calcareous fine silty soils over chalk or chalk rubble. Shallow soils in places especially on brows and steeper slopes, over chalky drift and chalk* (Soil Survey 1983, 511g). The underlying geology comprises Upper Cretaceous Cenomanian chalk marl (BGS, Sheet 237).

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises alterations to the annex to the north of the house and the construction of a new music room to the south of the existing house (Fig.3).

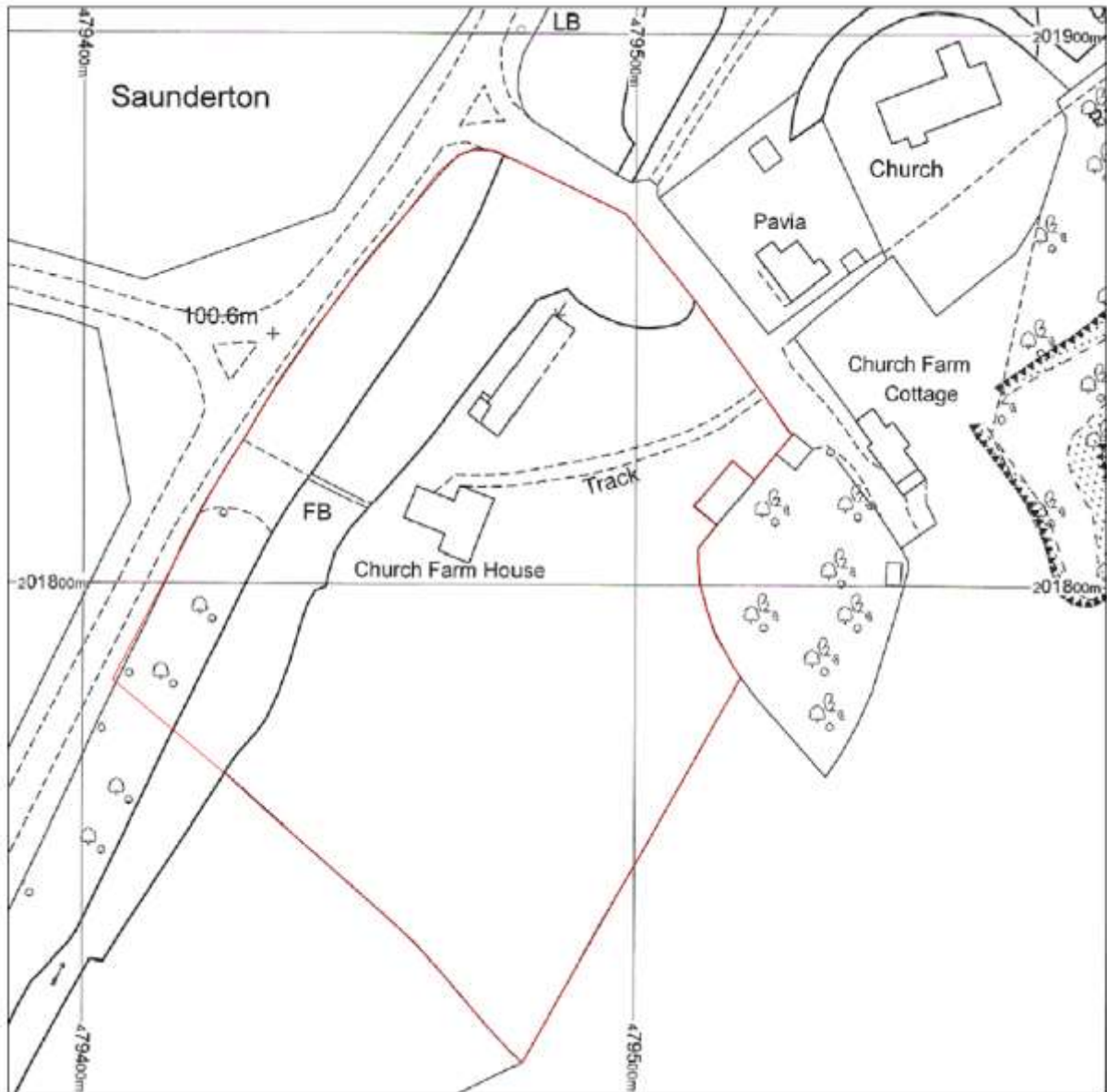


Figure 2: Site plan (Scale 1:1250)

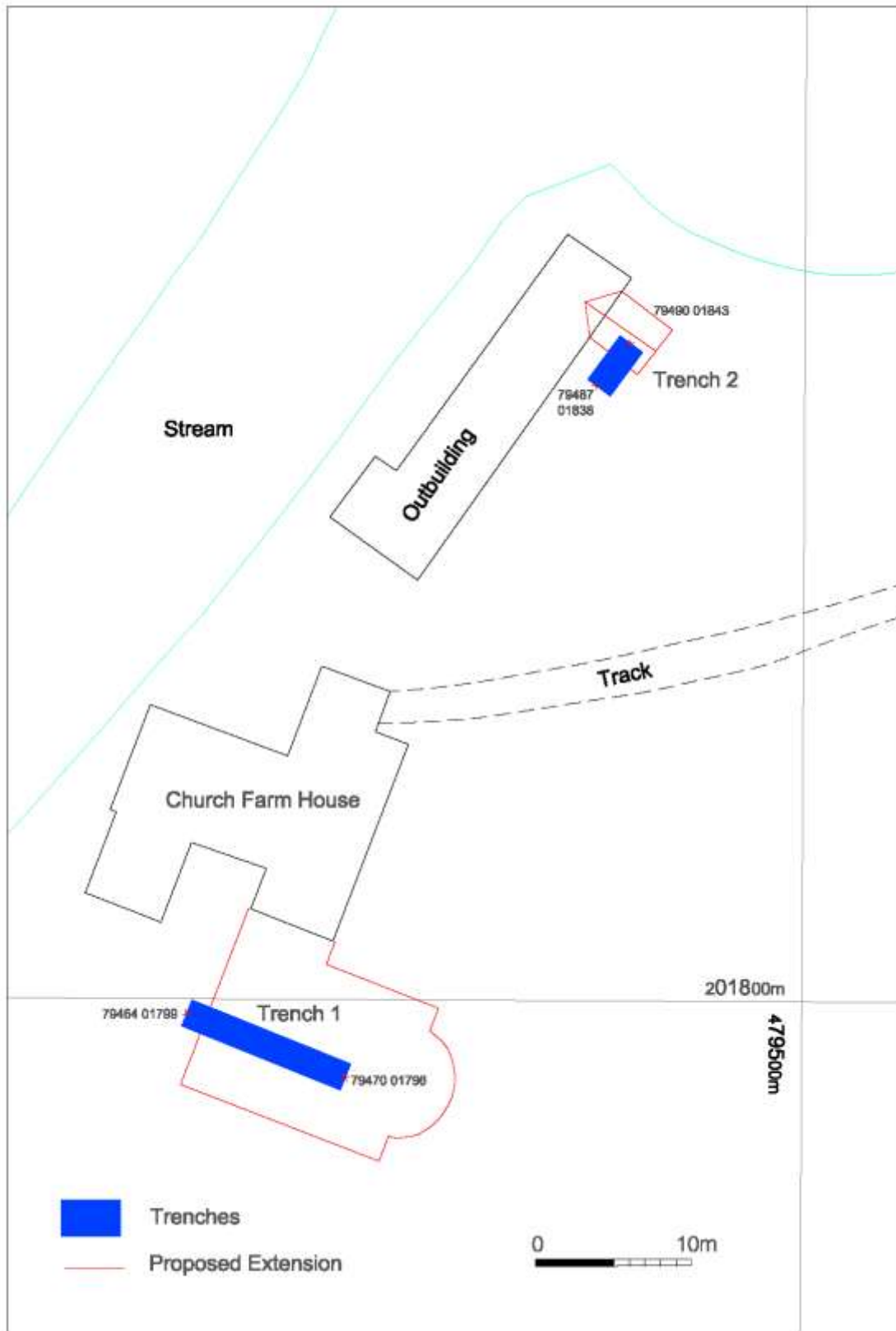


Figure 3: Site Plan showing Trench Locations and Proposed Development (Scale 1:400)

2. Aims and Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the generic brief (Section 5), the aims of the evaluation were:

- to gather sufficient information to generate a predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the requirements of the generic brief, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a), to English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991, EH 2006), 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:

- 10m of trial trenching excavated on the footprint of the proposed new music room and a small trench located within the footprint of the addition to the annexe. Trench locations are shown in figure. 3.
- If the evaluation indicated that significant archaeological remains were present, a further stage of archaeological work would be required, in order to mitigate the effects of the proposed development. Any such works would be subject to the preparation of an additional *brief* and project design.

2.4 Constraints

The location of Trench One was shifted five metres south, due to access problems. The new location is still well within the proposed development plan.

3. Archaeological and 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, but the focus of interest is likely to lie in the Saxon and medieval periods.

This section has been compiled from information held in the Buckinghamshire *Sites and Monuments Record* (SMR), and other readily available sources.

SAM = Scheduled Ancient Monument

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before AD43)

- 3.2.1 The prehistoric background to Buckinghamshire has recently been reviewed in the *Thames Solent Regional Research Framework* and the early development of settlement in the Chilterns area is increasingly being recognised.

3.2.2 Relatively little archaeological work has been undertaken in Saunderton, but fieldwalking, c.1km to the southeast of the site, identified a thin spread of Neolithic and Bronze Age artefacts (SMR5428). An evaluation of the gardens to the rear of 46-52 Picts Lane, c.0.6km to the northeast of the site, uncovered two possible prehistoric ditches, one of which contained two probable Bronze Age flint flakes (SMR9580). A possible prehistoric ring ditch (ploughed out burial mound) has been identified c.0.9km to the south of the site (SMR5199) and the tip of a bronze spearhead, dating to the mid to late Bronze Age has been found in a garden c.0.4km to the northeast of the site (SMR0650).

3.3 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

- 3.3.1 During the Roman period, Saunderton was within the tribal territory of the Catuvellauni (Branigan 1987). Settlement in the area was probably dominated by a substantial villa c.250m northeast of the site, which was excavated during the 1930s (SMR 366; Ashcroft 1940; Branigan 1969). The site is now a *Scheduled Ancient Monument* (SAM 29436).

3.3.2 An area of Iron Age and Roman settlement is located c.100m to the east of the site (SMR 366). Ploughing has revealed considerable quantities of both Iron Age and Roman pottery and building material. The nature and extent of Roman settlement in the area is not understood in detail but several Roman coins have been recorded in the vicinity (SMR 0642). In addition a spread of Roman brick and pottery with fragments of miscellaneous metalwork has been identified c.0.4km southwest of the site, suggesting the likely presence of a Roman building (SMR 6632).

3.4 *Saxon* (c.450-1066)

- 3.4.1 Little is known of Saunderton during the Saxon period but a significant cemetery of this period is situated at Hemley Hill c.0.5km to the north of the site (SMR2513; SAM 29435). An iron shield boss and a gilt square headed brooch have been collected and a geophysical survey identified possible grave-like features, along with pits and ditches. This cemetery is of particular interest

due to its proximity to the Roman villa (above, section 2.3.1), and may indicate some degree of continuity of settlement between the Roman and Saxon periods.

- 3.4.2 Further Saxon material has been recorded *c.*0.8km to the southeast of the site, where Saxon period pottery has been recorded (SMR 5878) and a 10th century strap end has been recorded *c.*0.7km to the southwest of the site (SMR 6135).

3.5 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

- 3.5.1 Saunderton was included in the Domesday survey (1086), where it is referred to a *Santesdone* (Morris 1976). The land was held by the *Bishop of Bayeux* and *Miles Crispin*.

- 3.5.2 The site is situated in the historic core of Saunderton and is close to the village church. (SMR 4632). The building was founded during the 14th century but was largely rebuilt in the 19th century (Pevsner & Williamson 2000, 615). There was formerly a second church in the area, dedicated to St Nicholas, but the two parishes were united *c.*1457-59, and the location of St Nicholas is now no longer known.

- 3.5.3 The site is located close to a complex of moated enclosures, which may indicate the presence of the manor. One moated enclosure is situated *c.*100m east of the site (SAM 29425; SMR 367) and comprises a rectangular enclosure raised slightly above the level of the surrounding area. Excavations during the 1950s revealed the corner foundations of a flint and mortar building with a sarsen quoin in the western quarter. A second moated site (SMR 307; SAM 27159), is located *c.*0.5km to the north of the site, at Roundabout Wood. This site survives in very good condition, and is surrounded by fishponds and an extensive water management system. Church farm itself was possibly once moated and according to sources was filled in, in the late 19th century (SAM 29425; SMR 367).

- 3.5.4 Further evidence for medieval settlement has been recorded at Picts Lane, *c.*0.6km northeast of the site where two possible ditch terminals or pits and a posthole containing medieval pottery and smithing debris have been identified (SMR 9581). In addition two series of former terraces and lynchets have been identified *c.*1km southeast of the site (SMR 5689).

3.6 *Post-Medieval - Modern* (1500-present)

- 3.6.1 The first edition one inch scale Ordnance Survey map was published in 1822 and shows the site occupied by a number of buildings. The scale is insufficient to show the detailed layout, but almost certainly includes Church Farm Cottage, which is situated *c.*100m east of Church Farm House. The cottage is a Grade II Listed Building, constructed in the 17th or early 18th century. The modern settlement of Saunderton is spread out along the line of Bledlow Road, east of the site (Fig. 1).

4 Results

4.1 General

4.1.1 This section provides a summary of the results of the evaluation. Full trench descriptions, in tabular form, appear in Appendix One and conclusions appear in Section Five.

4.1.2 Trench One measured 11m by 1.6m, and was excavated within the footprint of the proposed new music room, to the south of the house. Trench Two measured 3.5m by 1.6 and was located within the footprint of the addition to the annexe. Trench locations are shown in figure. 3. A visual inspection was made of the excavated spoil from the trenches but no significant artefacts were observed.

4.2 Trench One (Fig. 3 & 4: Plates 1, and 3-5)

4.2.1 The stratigraphy of Trench One comprised topsoil and turf comprising dark brown silty loam (101), to a depth of 200mm. This overlay the subsoil (102) which comprised grey brown chalky silt c. 200mm deep. In turn this covered the natural strata (103) which was light grey chalk (Plate 4).

4.2.2 A 19th or 20th century soakaway (Plate 5) was present at the east end of the trench, containing large quantities of tile and brick. This is modern and is not archaeologically significant. No other archaeological remains were observed in this trench.

4.3 Trench Two (Fig. 3 & 4: Plates 2 and 6)

4.3.1 The stratigraphy of Trench Two comprised a layer of modern made up ground (201) which consisted of bricks sand and gravel, to a depth of 480mm. This overlay the natural strata (205) which was light grey chalk (Plate 6).

4.3.2 A single feature [204] was present in Trench Two. It comprised a linear construction cut, aligned northwest–southeast and was 1.5m wide and 260mm deep. It is probably a modern ditch or drainage channel.

4.3.3 A deposit of light grey clay (203) was present at the base of the ditch, which contained a quantity of modern brick fragments. In turn this was overlain by a deposit of mixed clay silt and natural chalk fragments (202).

Ditch [204] is a modern feature and is not archaeologically significant.

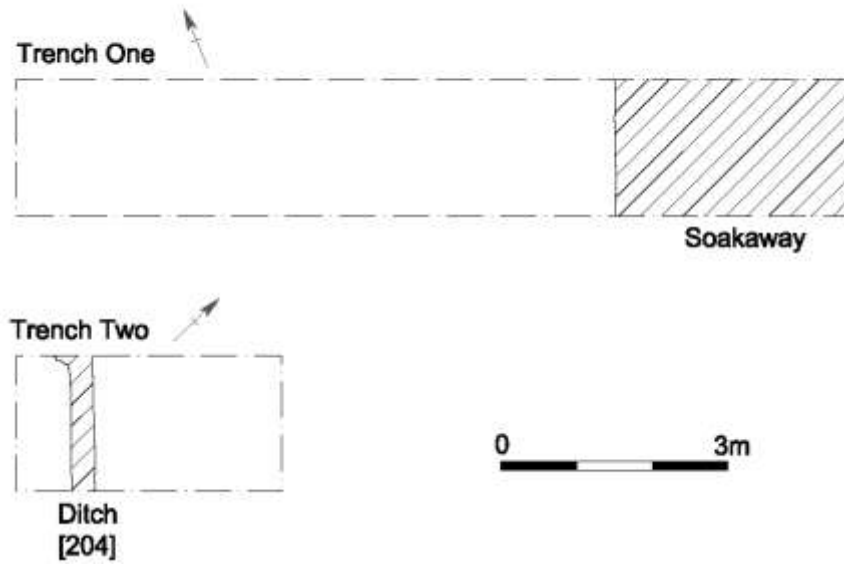


Figure 4: Trench Plans (Scale 1:100)

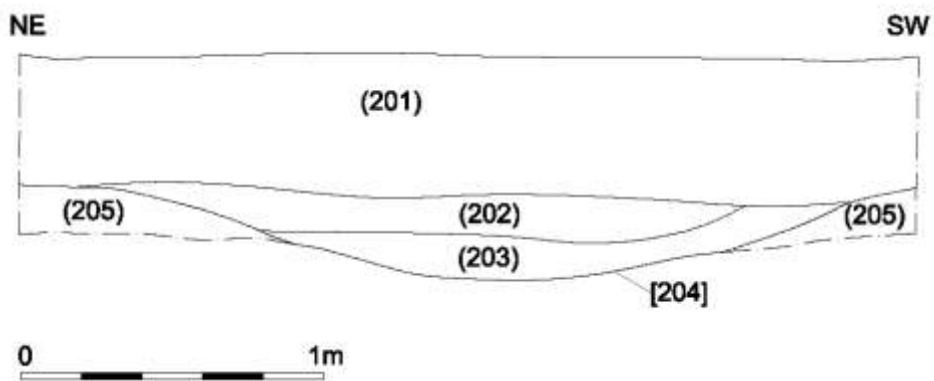


Figure 5: Section of Trench Two (Scale 1:25)



Plate 1: Position of Trench One, pre excavation, looking west. (Note depression in ground surface)



Plate 2: Position of Trench Two, pre excavation, looking southwest



Plate 3: Trench One, looking east south-east



Plate 4: Section of Trench One, looking north



Plate 5: Soak away at Eastern end of Trench One, looking northeast



Plate 6: Section of Trench Two, showing ditch [204], looking northwest

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 Significant archaeological features were not observed in the trenches, and the only features were a modern soakaway in Trench One and a modern linear feature [204] in Trench Two. While the occasional survival of isolated archaeological features, away from the trenches, cannot be entirely excluded, it is unlikely that the site contains large quantities of significant archaeological features or artefacts.

5.1.2 A small stream flows along the west side of the house, and a distinct depression on the south side of the house, may mark the position of a backfilled moat (Plate 1).

5.2 Confidence rating

5.2.1 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 *Syborn Atkinson Chartered Architects*, on behalf of the client, Mr & Mrs J.M. Berman. The writer is grateful to Mrs Berman for her assistance. The project was monitored by *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service* on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Martin Cuthbert BA. The report was prepared by Martin Cuthbert and edited by David Fell BA 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. 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 *Buckinghamshire County Museum* (AYBCM: 2008.197).

8. References

Standards & Specifications

- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.
- Allen J L & Holt A St J, 1986 (with later updates) *Health & Safety in Field Archaeology*. Standing Conference of Unit Managers (London).
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Secondary Sources

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Morris, J. (ed) *Domesday Book. Buckinghamshire.* History from the Sources. Phillimore

Pevsner, N and Williamson, E 2000 *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire* Penguin

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 | 11m | Width | 1.8m | Depth | c. 0.5m |
| | Levels | | | | | |
| | Trench base west northwest | | 105.56m OD | | | |
| | Trench top west northwest | | 106.15m OD | | | |
| | Trench base centre | | 105.57m OD | | | |
| | Trench base east northeast | | 105.74m OD | | | |
| | Trench top south east northeast | | 106.31m OD | | | |
| | NGR Co-ordinates | | | | | |
| | ESE | 79470 01796 | WNW | 79464 01799 | | |
| Orientation | | ESE-WNW | | | | |
| Reason for Trench | | Within footprint of proposed development | | | | |
| Context | Type | Description and Interpretation | Width (max: mm) | Thickness (max: mm) | Depth (BGL: mm) | |
| 101 | Layer | Dark Brown silty loam. Topsoil and turf | N/a | 200mm | 0mm | |
| 102 | Layer | Grey Brown silty Chalk. Subsoil | N/a | 200mm | c.200mm | |
| 103 | Layer | Greyish white Chalk. Natural Strata | N/a | N/a | c.400mm | |

| Trench 2 | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------|
|  | Max Dimensions (m) | | | | | |
| | Length | 3.5m | Width | 1.8m | Depth | 0.74m |
| | Levels | | | | | |
| | Trench base northeast | | 105.56m OD | | | |
| | Trench top northeast | | 105.94m OD | | | |
| | Trench base centre | | 105.37m OD | | | |
| | Trench base southwest | | 105.49m OD | | | |
| | Trench top southwest | | 105.96m OD | | | |
| | NGR Co-ordinates | | | | | |
| | NE | 79490 01843 | SW | 79487 01838 | | |
| Orientation | | NE-SW | | | | |
| Reason for Trench | | Within footprint of proposed development | | | | |
| Context | Type | Description and Interpretation | Width (max: mm) | Thickness (max: mm) | Depth (BGL: mm) | |
| 201 | Layer | Modern brick and gravel. Made up ground, | N/a | 480mm | 0mm | |
| 202 | Fill | Fill of Ditch - Modern mixed chalk, clay and silt. | N/a | 120mm | 480mm | |
| 203 | Fill | Fill of ditch - Light grey clay, containing modern brick | 1.5m | 140mm | 480mm | |
| 204 | Cut | Shallow U shaped cut. Construction cut of modern ditch | 1.5m | N/a | 480mm | |
| 205 | Layer | Greyish white Chalk. Natural Strata | N/a | N/a | 420mm | |

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

| SITE NAME: Church Farm House, Church Lane, Saunderton | | | SITE NO/CODE: 1122/SCF |
|---|-----|---------|--|
| Shot | B&W | Digital | Subject |
| 1 | | ✓ | Location of Trench One, looking west |
| 2 | | ✓ | General shot, looking west |
| 3 | | ✓ | General shot of house, looking west |
| 4 | | ✓ | General shot of annexe, looking north. |
| 5 | | ✓ | General shot showing location of Trench Two, looking northwest |
| 6 | | ✓ | General shot showing location of Trench Two, looking southwest |
| 7 | | ✓ | General shot, looking northwest |
| 8 | | ✓ | General shot, looking northwest |
| 9 | | ✓ | General shot, looking south |
| 10 | | ✓ | Section of Trench Two, looking northwest |
| 11 | | ✓ | Section of Trench Two, looking northwest |
| 12 | ✓ | ✓ | Section of Trench One, looking north-northeast |
| 13 | ✓ | ✓ | Section of Trench One, looking north-northeast |
| 14 | | ✓ | General shot, looking southeast |
| 15 | ✓ | ✓ | General shot of Trench One, looking east-southeast |
| 16 | ✓ | ✓ | General shot of Trench One, looking east-southeast |
| 17 | ✓ | ✓ | Soak away at Eastern end of Trench One, looking northeast |
| 18 | | ✓ | Soak away at Eastern end of Trench One, looking northeast |

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

| PROJECT DETAILS | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------|
| Project Name: | Church Farm House, Church Lane, Saunderton, Buckinghamshire | | |
| Short Description: | In November 2008 an evaluation was carried out at Church Farm House, Church Lane, Saunderton, Buckinghamshire. Due to the proximity to a scheduled ancient monument the area was considered to be archaeologically sensitive. Two trenches were excavated both revealing modern features containing brick tile and other waste material. No other archaeological features or artefacts were noted, and it is unlikely that the proposed development will have significant impact on buried archaeological remains. | | |
| Project Type: (indicate all that apply) | Trial Trenching | | |
| Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed) | None | Previous work: (eg. SMR refs) | N/a |
| Current land use: | House and Garden | Future work: (yes / no / unknown) | unknown |
| Monument type: | N/a | Monument period: | N/a |
| Significant finds: (artefact type & period) | N/a | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | | |
| County: | Buckinghamshire | OS reference: (8 figs min) | SP 7948 0182 |
| Site address: (with postcode if known) | Church Farm House, Church Lane, Saunderton, Buckinghamshire | | |
| Study area: (sq. m. or ha) | 96 sq m | Height OD: (metres) | c. 105.50m |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | | |
| Organisation: | Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd | | |
| Project brief originator: | Aylesbury Vale District Council | Project design originator: | ASC Ltd |
| Project Manager: | Karin Semmelmann | Director/Supervisor: | Martin Cuthbert |
| Sponsor / funding body: | Mr & Mrs J.M. Berman | | |
| PROJECT DATE | | | |
| Start date: | 12\11\08 | End date: | 12\11\08 |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | | |
| | Location (Accession no.) | Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets) | |
| Physical: | N/a | N/a | |
| Paper: | Buckinghamshire County Museum (AYBCM: 2008.197) | Report | |
| Digital: | | CD Containing photos and report | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report) | | | |
| Title: | Church Farm House, Church Lane, Saunderton, Buckinghamshire | | |
| Serial title & volume: | ASC Ltd Report ref. 1122/SCF/2 | | |
| Author(s): | Martin Cuthbert BA | | |
| Page nos | 20 | Date: | 26\11\2008 |