

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
HOME FARM
BRITWELL SALOME
OXFORDSHIRE**

NGR: SU 6701 9293

on behalf of Simon Miller



Jonathan R Hunn BA PhD MIFA

May 2010

ASC: 1271/BSH/2



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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	BSH	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1271
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol-2 77150	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Oxfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Britwell Salome		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Britwell Salome CP		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SU 6701 9293		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c. 80 sq. m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Farmyard and buildings		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Re-development of existing buildings & construction of new stable		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	P09/E1320: P09/E0171		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	South Oxfordshire District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	April 24 th 2010		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Compton Lacey Architects 7 Grove Park White Waltham Maidenhead SL6 3LW		
<i>Client:</i>	Simon Miller Knowl Hill Farm Knowl Hill Reading RG10 9YE		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Tim Froise (architect): Simon Miller (client)		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Jonathan Hunn	<i>Date:</i>	May 12 th 2010
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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CONTENTS

Summary.....	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Aims & Methods	8
3. Archaeological & Historical Background.....	9
4. Results & Conclusions.	11
5. Acknowledgements	14
6. Archive	14
7. References	15

Appendices:

1. ASC Watching Brief Monitoring Sheet.....	16
2. Photo List.....	17
3. ASC OASIS Form	19

Figures:

1. General location.....	3
2. Site plan	6
3. Proposed development.....	7
4. Location of trial trenches and test pits in Barns 1 & 2	12

Plates:

Cover: Landscaping work in the foreground of Barn 2

1. Barn 1: location of trial trench, looking north	13
2. Barn 1: detail of trial trench, looking north	13
3. Barn 2: northernmost test trench & test pits	13
4. Barn 2: detail of test pit	13
5. Barn 2: close up of test pits, looking south.....	13
6. Barn 2: detail of southernmost test trench, looking south	13



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

Summary

In April 2010 investigations comprising a watching brief and evaluation were undertaken at Home Farm, Britwell Salome, Oxfordshire, in response to the conversion of a barn for residential use, and construction of a new stable block. Attention was focused on the interior floors of two barns of post-medieval date. In both instances neither barn was found to overlie any deposits of archaeological interest. The vicinity of the barns was also devoid of any material pre-dating the 19th century.

1. Introduction

1.1 In April 2010 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out investigations at Home Farm, Britwell Salome, Oxfordshire. The project was commissioned by *Compton Lacey Architects* on behalf of the client, *Simon Miller*, and was carried out according to a brief (Oram 2010) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *South Oxfordshire District Council*, by their archaeological advisors (AA), *Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Zeepvat 2010). The relevant planning application references are P09/E1320 & E0171.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief 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*

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 and is also accredited ISO 9001, 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 located in the village and civil parish of Britwell Salome, in the South Oxfordshire district, at NGR SU 6701 9293 (Fig. 1). Home Farm is located at the south end of the village, on the south side of an unnamed east-west lane linking the B4009 and the lane linking Britwell Salome and Pishill.

Home Farm occupies a total area of c.2000 sq. m, split more or less equally between the house and garden to the west, and the yard and farm buildings to the east (Fig. 2). Access from the lane is through a gate in the north-east corner of the farmyard.

The farmyard consists of a gravel area, with barns on its north and east sides, a tool-shed in the south-east corner (not shown in Fig. 2) and a stable block and granary in the south-west corner. The farmhouse, barns, stables and granary are all Grade II listed, along with the northern boundary wall between the house and adjoining barn (IoE refs 247481 – 247486).

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The site is on ground rising slowly to the south, at an elevation of c.125m AOD. Soils in the area belong to the Frilsham association (Soil Survey 1983, 571j), described as ‘well drained mainly fine loamy soils over chalk, some calcareous’. The underlying solid geology comprises Cretaceous chalk (BGS, Chiltern 1:250,000 sheet).

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises the following stages:

- a. Re-roofing the barns with reclaimed clay tiles to match the farmhouse
- b. Converting the north barn to ancillary accommodation, inc. services
- c. Demolishing the tool-shed
- d. Building a stables with bat roost over the site of the tool-shed

Stage (b) was of particular interest with respect to the watching brief.

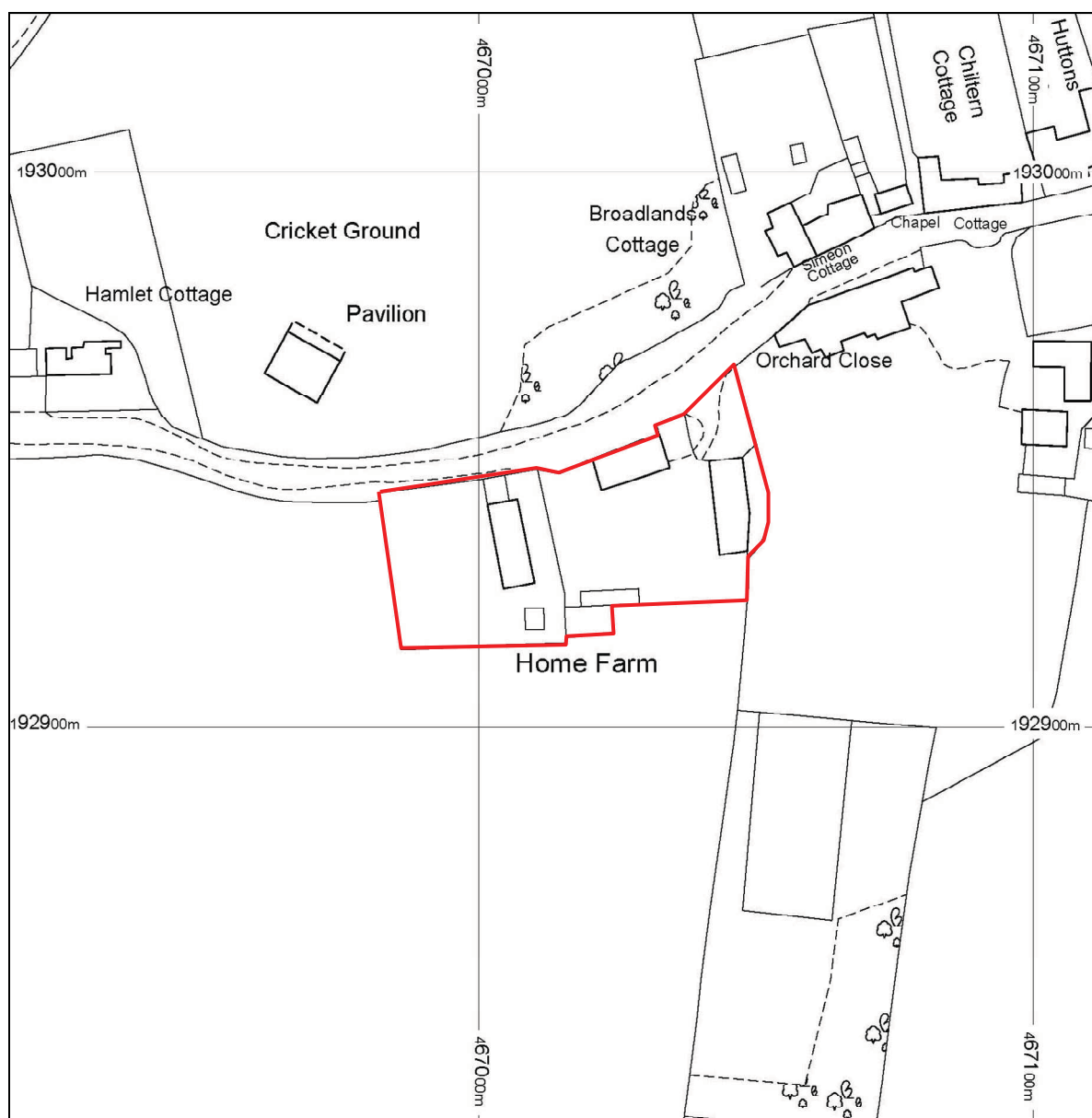


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1,250)

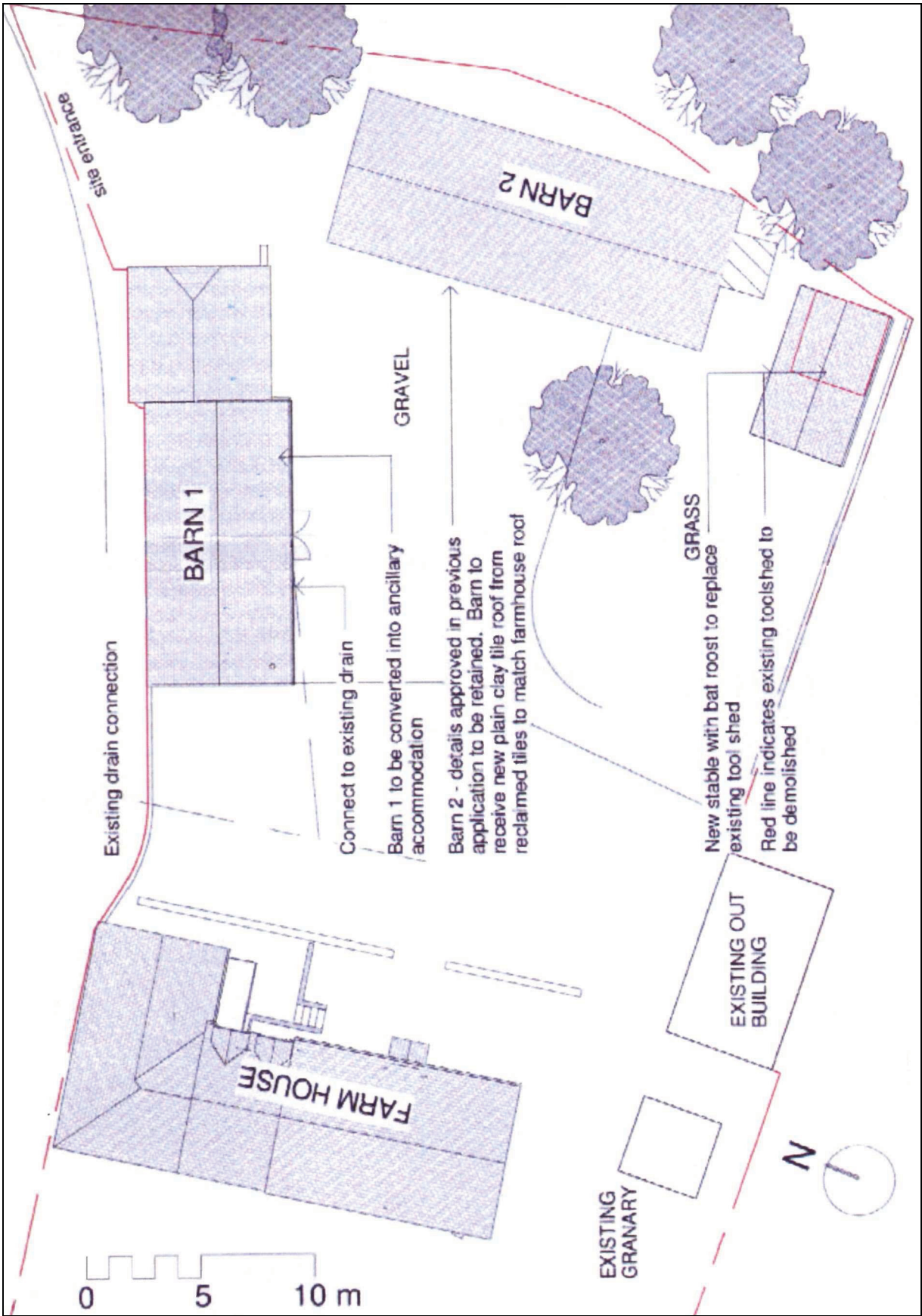


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:250)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the project design, the aims of the watching brief 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 for 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 project design which required:

- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision
- The rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits present
- 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

At the client's request, and by agreement with the AA, an evaluation trial trench was opened by machine in Barn 1 to determine the presence or absence of archaeological features or deposits, prior to excavations for an indoor swimming pool. This work was carried out instead of the watching brief originally proposed.

No other constraints were encountered during the watching brief.

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 brief, and ASC's library.

- 3.2 There is no evidence of any permanent settlement at Britwell in prehistoric or Roman times, although the Icknield Way crossed the parish, and Roman pottery has been found near the church (Lobel 1964, 43).
- 3.3 An early form of the village name is *Brutuwyllle* and the etymology *Bryttawella*, 'Briton's well', has been suggested, which would point to an early date for the settlement; on the other hand the name of the stream that flows near the church in the north-east of the parish may be contained in the first element (*ibid.*). The second part of the village name arises from a corruption of *de Sulham*: Aumary de Sulham and his successors held one of the principal manors in Britwell Salome from the 11th to the 13th centuries (*ibid.*).
- 3.4 The church of St Nicholas, most of which dates from 1867, is a building of flint and stone consisting of chancel, nave, vestry, south porch, and western bell gable. The old church was smaller and had a small wooden bellcot and no vestry. It dated from the 12th century at least, for it had a Romanesque chancel arch and south doorway to the nave. By the mid 19th century the old church was in a dilapidated condition, and in 1865 plans were drawn up by the architect Charles Buckridge for rebuilding the church. It was planned to keep only the doorway and 'the front' (presumably the west front) of the original church, to pull down Britwell Prior chapel and to use the materials in the rebuild. The new church was completed early in 1867. It was considerably larger than the old one, and also included the chancel arch, the south doorway, and the Norman font from the earlier building (*ibid.*).
- 3.5 Britwell's strategic position on the Watlington road led to its playing a prominent part in the strife of Stephen's reign and in the Civil Wars of the 17th century. When Henry Plantagenet (afterwards King Henry II) and his supporters were seeking to relieve Wallingford in 1153, the defenders of the castle at Britwell long opposed them. This castle was presumably destroyed when Henry became king, but Castle Hill remains a landmark beside the main road (*ibid.*). In the 17th century royalist troops were quartered in and about Britwell when Prince Rupert was concentrating troops round Henley in 1643. It was reported on 22 April that there were some 'straggling royalist companies that lye plundering about Britwell', and on 6 May that all the king's forces had left the neighbourhood of Britwell and Watlington; on 10 June parliamentary forces in Watlington Park had a skirmish with about 200 royalists, whom they pursued as far as Britwell (*ibid.*).
- 3.6 The first large-scale inclosures of Britwell were not made until the 19th century, although there had been considerable piecemeal inclosure, amounting to 424 acres. Parliamentary inclosure took place in 1845, when 1,125 acres (including 157 acres of common and waste land) were allotted (*ibid.*).

- 3.7 In 1912 Britwell Salome was merged with the adjoining, much smaller ecclesiastical parish of Britwell Prior. In 1921 the united parish was the fourth smallest in the Henley Union, with a population of only 156. In 1931 there were 110 people; in 1951 there were still only 165 people and 50 private houses. The economic basis of the parish has always been agriculture, mostly arable farming.
- 3.8 Home Farm appears to date from at least the 16th century. The listing description for the farmhouse describes it as being of 16th-century date, possibly with earlier origins, remodelled in the 18th century (IoE 247481), while the listed farm buildings are all assigned to the 18th century (IoE 247482, 247483, 247484, 247486). The brief (Oram 2010, 2.3.1) notes that the farm buildings may have replaced earlier structures, and that evidence for them may survive on the site.

4. Results & Conclusions

4.1 Results

On-site investigations were carried out during a single day (Appendix 1). The works undertaken, and the results, are described below.

4.1.1 *Barn 1* (Fig. 4)

An evaluation trench, 5 × 1m, was dug inside the barn, more or less opposite the entrance (Plates 1 & 2). The floor of the barn consisted of areas of brick, and occasional patches of pea gravel and granular asphalt in a brown, powdery layer, c.50mm thick. Beneath the upper surface at a depth of 150mm was natural chalk, with occasional patches of grey-brown soil. No features or artefacts of archaeological significance were observed.

4.1.2 *Barn 2* (Fig. 4)

Two narrow trenches and two test pits were dug through the concrete floor of this barn (Plate 3). In the southern trench and associated test-pits the concrete floor was 70mm thick. Beneath was a makeup layer of broken bricks and flint c.180mm thick, which in turn overlay a horizon of disturbed chalk, silt and occasional flints, c.170mm thick. This in turn overlay a deposit of dark brown silt and occasional chalk c.480mm thick (Plates 4-5). At the base of this, at a depth of 0.9m below the floor surface, was the natural chalk.

In the northernmost trench the floor was found to consist of 200mm of concrete over an ashy brown make-up some 200mm thick. This overlay natural chalky brown, loamy subsoil (Plate 6). There was no sign of any significant archaeological deposits, nor any evidence for artefacts.

4.2 Conclusions

No evidence was found for any structures predating the construction of either barn, or any earlier floor surfaces or structures within them. It is possible that the areas now occupied by the barns were cleared prior to their construction, and that any shallow or upstanding features would have been destroyed. It is still possible that archaeological features related to Home Farm, or to earlier activity, might survive elsewhere on the site.

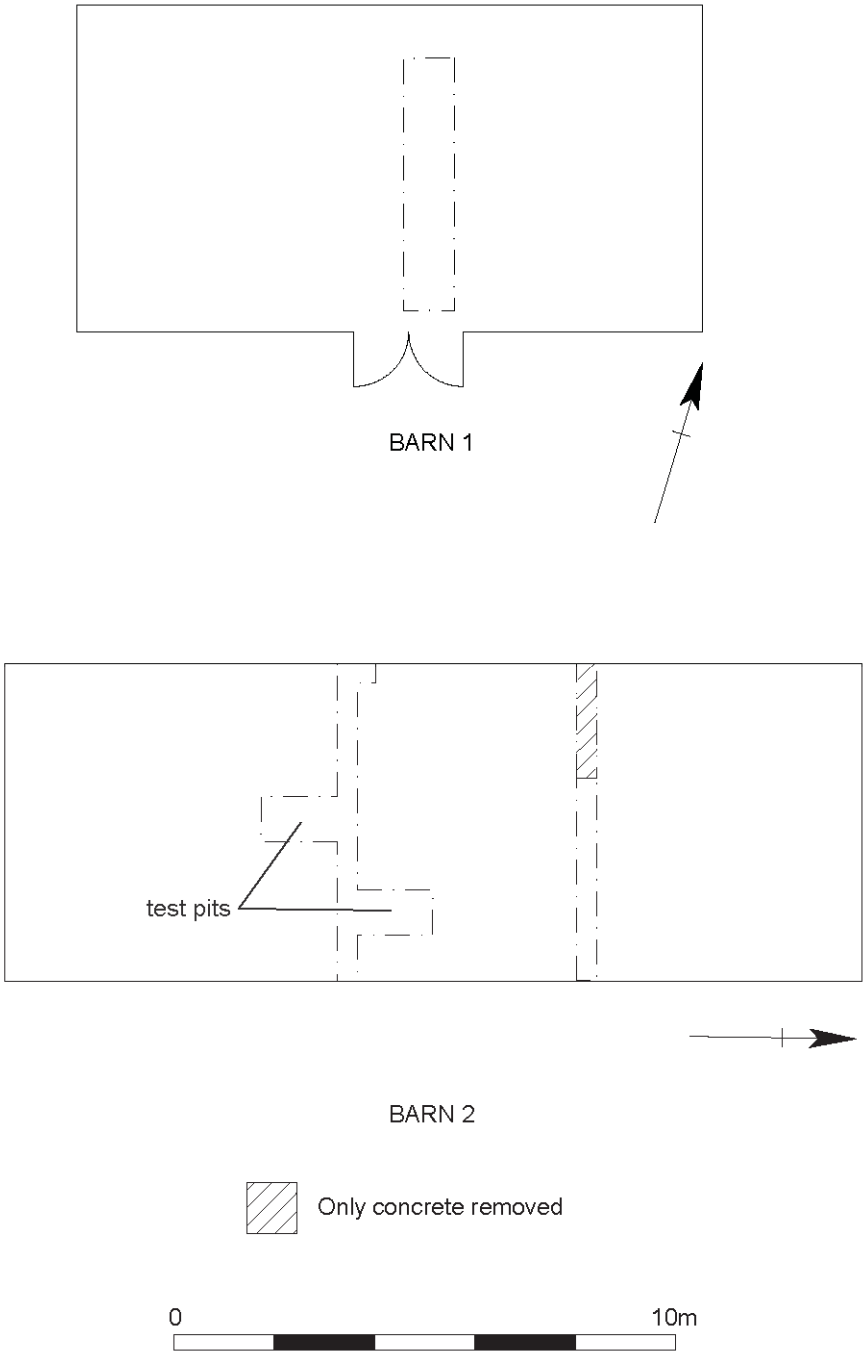


Figure 4: Location of trial trenches and test pits in Barns 1 & 2 (*scale as shown*)



Plate 1: Barn 1: location of trial trench, looking north



Plate 2: Barn 1: detail of trial trench, looking north



Plate 3: Barn 2: northernmost trench & test pits



Plate 4: Barn 2: Detail of test pit



Plate 5: Barn 2: close up of test pits, looking south



Plate 6: Barn 2: detail of southernmost trench, view south

6. Acknowledgements

The watching brief was commissioned by Tim Froise of Compton Lacey Architects on behalf of Simon Miller. The writer is grateful to the contractor, Bob Emmett, for his assistance. The project was monitored by Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelmann MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by the author and the report 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 Oxfordshire County Museums Service.

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)*.
- Oram R. 2010 *Home Farm, Britwell Salome: Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief*.
Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Services.
- Zeepvat B 2010 *Home Farm, Britwell Salome: Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.
ASC doc. ref. 1271/BSH/1

Secondary Sources

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:250,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Lobel D (ed.) 1964 *The Victoria History of the County of Oxfordshire*, vol. 8: *Lewknor & Pyrton Hundreds*.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheet

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD	
Project: <i>Home Farm</i>		Project No/Code: <i>1271 1 BSH</i>	Sheet: <i>1 of 3</i>
<i>Britwell Salome</i>		Date of visit: <i>27/4/10</i>	
Client/Developer <i>Mr S. Miller</i>			
Contact: <i>Bob Emmett (builder)</i>		Phone: <i>07802-738220</i>	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>7.58 am</i>	Finish: <i>13.05</i>	
Completed by: <i>JRA</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify): <i>✓</i>
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dry & Sunny</i>			
Observations:			
<p>Observed a single 'evolution break' 5m N-S by 1m wide. Located to the eastern side of the wide entrance. The ground is to be reduced by 300mm. In the event, the actual depth of the evolution break was shallower as only natural ground was encountered. The top 50mm consisted of a brown powdery layer (elsewhere the floor consisted of a layer of red bricks). The floor also had overlying patches of 10mm rubble and asphalt - granular. Beneath the floor was a hard chalky matrix with occasional patches of grey-brown soil. Natural soil fields (max depth 150mm). The test pits/tranches inside barn 2 revealed the following profile (from top to bottom 70mm concrete floor; 18cm of broken bricks & flint overlying c.200mm of a disturbed chalk, silt & ore flint matrix overlying 480mm of dark brown silt & ore chalk; at the base of this was the natural chalk).</p>			
Comments:			
<p>The northern most trench is shallower - 0.2m concrete over 0.2m of ashy brown make up over the natural chalky brown loam soil - soil quite different to the southern trench. The test pits had been excavated at an earlier date so only the base material was removed this time. Conditions v. dry and dusty. No sign of non-floor deposits nor any evidence for artefacts.</p>			

For sketch plan, use separate sheet

©ASC 2007

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Home Farm, Britwell Salome			SITE NO/CODE: 1271/BSH
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		3432	Exterior of Barn 2 view NW
2		3433	Exterior of Barn 1 looking north
3		3434	Exterior of farmhouse view west
4		3435	Interior of small annexe barn looking west
5		3436	Interior of small annexe barn looking west
6		3437	Interior of Large barn view SSE
7		3438	Interior of Large barn view south
8		3441	Detail of timber frame & blocked central access on east side
9		3442	Detail of blocked central access on west side
10		3443	External view of eastern end of small annexe barn
11		3444	Interior of view of Barn 1 looking west
12	yes	3445	Location of trial trench in Barn 1 looking north Plate 1
13	yes	3447	Detail of trial trench in Barn 1 looking north Plate 2
14		3448	Northernmost test trench & re-excavated foundations in Barn 2 Plate 3
15		3449	Detail of re-excavated foundation in Barn 2 Plate 4
16		3450	General view of test pits in Barn 2 view south
17		3451	Close up of test pits in Barn 2 view south Plate 5
18		3452	Detail of southernmost test trench in Barn 2 view south Plate 6
19		3453	Landscaping work in vicinity of new stable view east (cover)
20		3454	End of farmhouse & barns beyond looking east
21		3455	Detail of granary staddle stones

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Home Farm, Britwell Salome	OASIS reference:	archaeol-2 77150
Short Description:	<i>In April 2010 investigations comprising a watching brief and evaluation were undertaken at Home Farm, Britwell Salome, Oxfordshire, in response to the conversion of a barn for residential use, and construction of a new stable block. Attention was focused on the interior floors of two barns of post-medieval date. In both instances neither barn was found to overlie any deposits of archaeological interest. The vicinity of the barns was also devoid of any material pre-dating the 19th century.</i>		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Watching Brief		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	Listed	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None
Current land use:	Farm yard & buildings	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	Not known
Monument type:	Agricultural	Monument period:	Post-medieval
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Oxfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SU 6701 9293
District:	South Oxfordshire	Parish:	Britwell Salome CP
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Home Farm, Britwell Salome, Oxfordshire		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	80 sq. m.	Height OD: (metres)	125m AOD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Richard Oram (OCC)	Project design originator:	Bob Zeepvat (ASC)
Project Manager:	Karin Semmelmann	Director/Supervisor:	Jonathan Hunn
Sponsor / funding body:	Simon Miller		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	April 24th	End date:	April 24 th
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Oxfordshire County Museums Service	None	
Paper:		Brief, project design, report, site notes, photos, drawings	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief: Home Farm, Britwell Salome, Oxfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd report ref. 1271/BSH/2		
Author(s):	Jonathan R. Hunn		
Page nos	19	Date:	11.5.10