

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: THE OLD SCHOOL POTSGROVE BEDFORDSHIRE

NGR: SP 95079 29834

on behalf of Mr Kenneth Ochiltree



Jonathan R Hunn BA PhD MIFA

May 2010

ASC: 1257/POS/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>	POS	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1257
<i>OASIS ref:</i>		<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	LUTN 2010.23
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Potsgrove		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Potsgrove (Battlesden and Potsgrove EP)		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 95079 29834		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.40sq m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Garden		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of a barn/garage		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	MB/09/00046/FULL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Central Bedfordshire Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	19/5/10		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Mr Kenneth Ochiltree		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr Kenneth Ochiltree The Old School Potsgrove Bedfordshire MK17 9HG		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Mr Kenneth Ochiltree		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Jonathan R Hunn	<i>Date:</i>	May 28 th 2010
------------------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------------------

<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	7
3. Archaeological & Historical Background.....	9
4. Results.	11
5. Conclusions	13
6. Acknowledgements	14
7. Archive	14
8. References	15

Appendices:

1. ASC Watching Brief Monitoring Sheets	16
2. Photo List.....	18
3. ASC OASIS Form	19

Figures:

1. General location.....	3
2. Site plan	5
3. Proposed development.....	6
4. Potsgrove Manor (after Shepherd 1813).....	11

Plates:

Cover: Front elevation of the Old School looking south west

1. View NW across site of proposed new building	12
2. View north to the site in relation to the church and Manor Farm.....	12
3. Looking NNW across reduced ground level of new garage	12
4. Looking NE across reduced ground level of new garage	12
5. Looking NW across lightly cleared ground to side of the Old School	12
6. Detail of cleared ground looking NW showing building debris.....	12

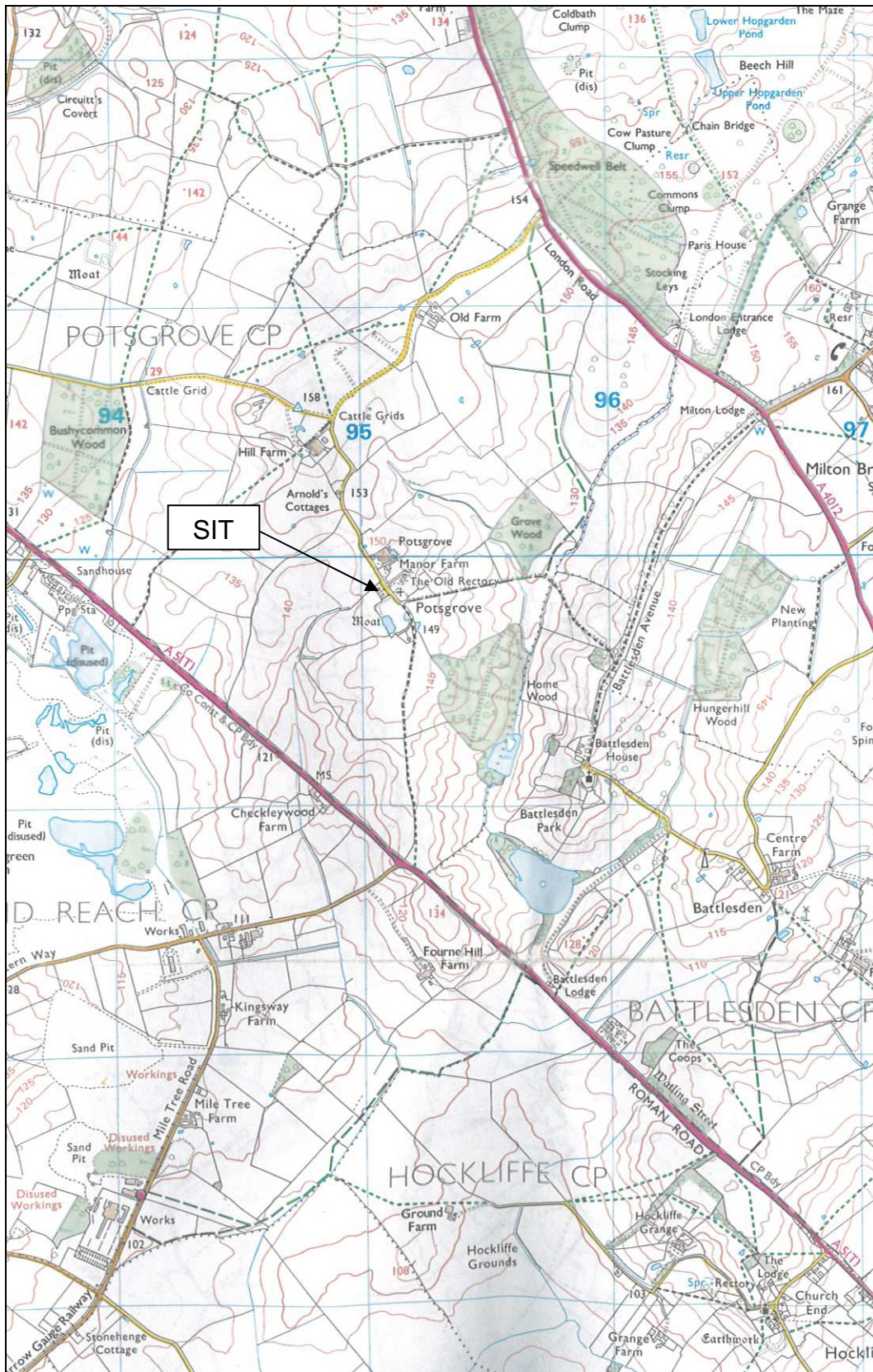


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In the spring of 2010 a watching brief was undertaken at the Old School, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire. The site lies at the north east corner of the remains of a moated site and opposite St Mary's church. Only a limited area of the sub-soil was exposed within the footprint of the new garage/barn. There was some building debris just below the ground surface on the western side of the new building which may have belonged to an old barn. The only material found within the new building's footprint belonged to the late 19th century. No pre-modern features or artefacts were noted.

1. Introduction

1.1 In mid-May 2010 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at the Old School, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire.. The project was commissioned by Ken Ochiltree, and was carried out according to a brief (CBC 2010) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), Central Bedfordshire Council, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Heritage and Environment Section, Conservation Design Team, Central Bedfordshire Council* and a project design prepared by ASC. The relevant planning application reference is MB/09/00046/FULL.

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*

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*

The site is situated in the village and civil parish of Potsgrove in the Central Bedfordshire district, at NGR SP 95079 29834 (Fig. 1).

The Old School is a 19th century building occupying a plot on the west side of the village street, west of the parish church. To the north of the site is a house and garden, to the west is open farmland. The southern boundary of the site is

formed by the north arm the adjoining moated site (HER 13). Site access is from the village street (Fig. 2)

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The development site is on more or less level ground, at an elevation of 148m AOD. Soils in the site area belong to the Hanslope association described as *slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. Some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils. Slight risk of water erosion* (Soil Survey 1983, Sheet 4, 411b). The underlying solid geology comprises Till (BGS, Sheet 220).

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The construction of a barn/garage to the south-east of the Old School (Fig. 3).

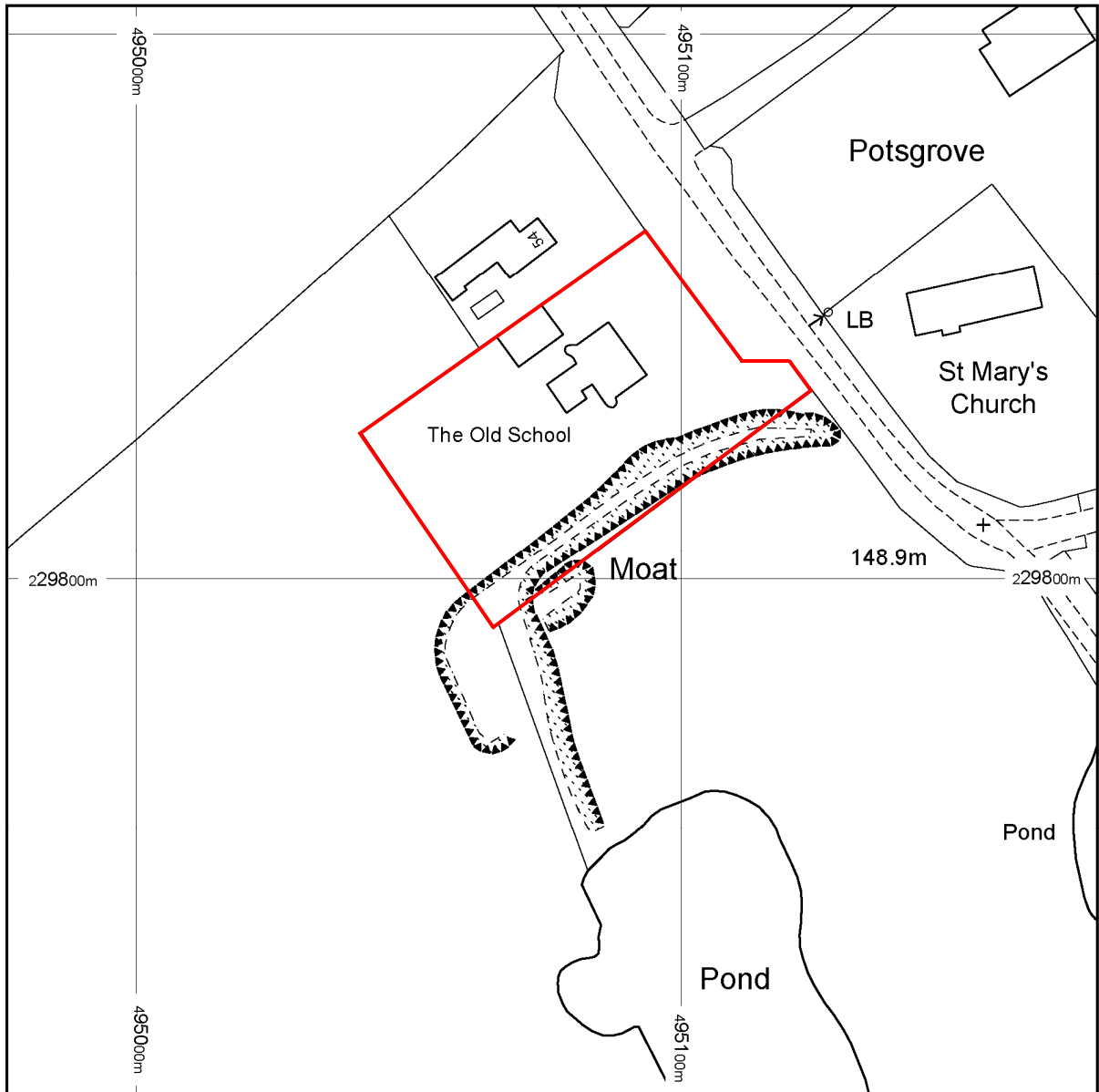


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

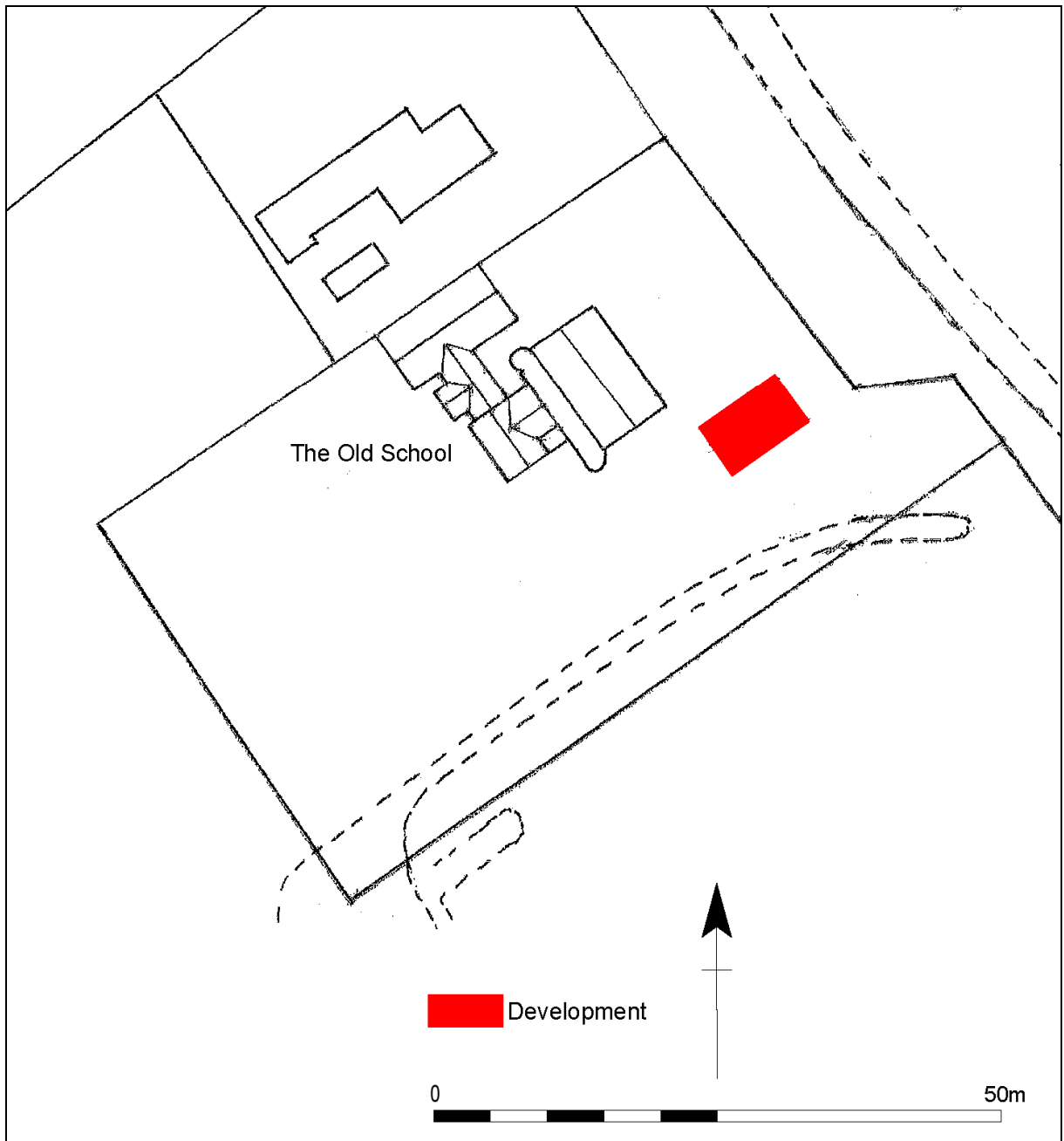


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:500)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

As described in the brief (Section 4), the aims of the watching brief were:

- To establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site
- To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes
- To recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region
- To recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions

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 brief (Section 5), which required:

- Any groundworks likely to have an impact on archaeological deposits will be undertaken under continuous archaeological supervision.

2.4 *Constraints*

No constraints were experienced during the execution of this project.

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. The likely focus of this watching brief is on evidence for the Saxon, medieval and later periods.

This section has been compiled with information from the HER – Bedfordshire Historical Environmental Record, the Brief (CBC 2010) and ASC's library.

3.2 *Prehistoric – Roman (before c.450)*

Evidence for Prehistoric-Iron Age activity is lacking in Potsgrove. Looking at the bigger picture prehistoric-Iron Age activity is visible within Bedfordshire, for example a number of earthen burial mounds have been found at Dunstable, c.10km south-east of Potsgrove, known as the Five Knolls. An ancient prehistoric trackway known as *Ickniel Way* that has been traced from Dorset to the Norfolk coast, likely follows the main road between Dunstable and Luton. Just to the west of Dunstable at Maiden Bower an Iron Age banked enclosure and a Neolithic causewayed camp is present (Bigmore, 1979:32-37).

Evidence for Roman activity is lacking in Potsgrove. However, the major Roman road *Watling Street* runs to the south of Potsgrove, and Dunstable was a small Roman town known as Durocobrivis, as well as Fenny Stratford known as Mogiovinium c.7km north-west of Potsgrove (Dawson 2007:71-73).

3.3 *Saxon - Medieval (c.450 -1500)*

It is likely that Potsgrove had its origins in the Saxon period as it is recorded in the Domesday survey (see below). However evidence is lacking.

The Domesday survey of 1086 records Potsgrove as being made up of 7 ½ hides being held by Gozelin the Breton (Page, 1912: 421-423).

The site is within the core of the rural medieval settlement of Church End, Potsgrove (HER 16881). It is adjacent to an upstanding earthwork medieval moat (HER 13), and opposite St Mary's Church (HER 1099). The church originally dates back to the 14th century, although 12th and 13th masonry has been found within the fabric of the current building possibly suggesting an earlier structure (Page, 1912: 421-423)

The moated site (HER 13) may be that of Potsgrove Manor, and consists of a rectangular moated site within which was a house. Today the site is only partially enclosed by water filled ditches to the south and west. The northern arm of the moat survives as an earthwork and extends into the development area, and is also partially filled with water. A large pond on the south-western side of the moat is unlikely to be part of the original earthworks.

Immediately to the south-west of the development site a series of soilmarks have been identified through aerial photography (HER 1822). The soilmarks form ridge and furrow cultivation marks and closes.

3.4 ***Post-Medieval - Modern*** (1500-Present)

In the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service (BLARS) is a watercolour print dating to 1813 entitled “*The remains of Potsgrove House, with pond and man fishing*” (BLARS Z102/57). The print depicts the moat and the house, showing the house to have been constructed from brick and roofed tile. A later reference, the 1845 Tithe Map (BLARS: MAT 36) depicts at least six buildings within the moat.

The 1889 Ordnance Survey map for Bedfordshire depicts the site area as agricultural fields adjacent to the moated site. The Old School was built in 1897 by the Duke of Bedford (Page 1912: 421-423), and is depicted on the 1902 Ordnance Survey map. Today Potsgrove remains a small village surrounded by agricultural fields.

4. Results

- 4.1 The area of the new garage/barn which is located on the south side of The Old School was observed during the initial ground clearance. This measured some 9 x 6m and was taken down to a depth of 0.3m. Due to the unevenness of the ground the south west corner was taken down slightly more, which exposed the surface of the natural sub-soil. The sub-soil consists of a stoneless, olive brown clay (Mun 2.5Y 5/3). Only about 30% of the footprint of the new building was exposed in the SW corner. The barn/garage will rest on a concrete slab, hence no footings would be required. The exposed sub-soil was entirely featureless. The remainder of the area was obscured by a thin veneer of topsoil. Amongst this soil were fragments of tile, bone, glass, pottery, ash, slate, bottles and other material. This looks to be late 19th early 20th century date.
- 4.2 Immediately to the south west of the new garage/barn footprint a small topsoil skim (70mm deep) exposed a 4m x 2.5m area of broken tile, brick and occasional slate and iron slag. The tiles are peg-tile type and bricks were hand made (see the sketch in Appendix 2). They look to have belonged to some 19th century structure, possibly an outhouse of some kind. It looks to have pre-dated the school (whose dedicatory stone and Bedford crest declares the school to have been built in 1897). It is possible that the present site was originally the location of one or more old cottages that fronted the lane to the north of the moated manor site (See Fig. 4)



Figure 4: Potsgrove Manor about 1813 by George Shepherd [Z102/57]



Plate 1: View NW across site of proposed new building



Plate 2: View north to the site in relation to the church and Manor Farm



Plate 3: Looking NNW across reduced ground level of new garage



Plate 4: Looking NE across reduced ground level of new garage



Plate 5: Looking NW across lightly cleared ground to side of the Old School



Plate 6: Detail of cleared ground looking NW showing building debris

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The observations of the foundation base of the new garage/barn were inclusive. This was principally due to the shallowness of the foundations. However, the area closer to The Old School, to the south west, had a scatter of tile and brick which hinted at the existence of a former building. It might be interpreted as having belonged to the building of the present structure. However, this is a stone built structure and the building debris looks earlier in date. Given the juxtaposition of the manor site and church it is not surprising that there were other buildings in the area. The village has undergone an 84% reduction in population since the mid-19th century (from 262 in 1851 to 42 in 2001) with a consequent decline in habitable buildings. It is likely that The Old School was built on the site of former building, though whether this was purely agricultural in character is impossible to say.

6. Acknowledgements

The watching brief was commissioned by Kenneth Ochiltree and the author is grateful for his cooperation and hospitality. The project was monitored by the *Heritage and Environment Section, Conservation Design Team, Central Bedfordshire Council* on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelmann. The fieldwork and report writing were undertaken by Jonathan Hunn and edited by Bob Zeepvat.

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 Bedford 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 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)*.

Secondary Sources

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Bigmore, P., 1979 *The Making of the English Landscape, The Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire Landscape*. Hodder and Stoughton Ltd (London).
- Brown, N and Glazebrook, J., 2000 *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties – 2 Research Agenda and Strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8.
- Medlycott, M and Brown, N., (2008) *Revision of the Regional Archaeological Framework for the Eastern Region*. ALGAO East of England.
- Oake, M, Luck, M, Dawson, M, Edgeworth, M, and Murphy, P., (2007) *Bedfordshire Archaeology – Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy*. Bedfordshire Archaeology Monograph 9.
- Page, W., 1912 'Parishes: Potsgrove', *A History of the County of Bedford: Volume 3*. Victoria County History, pp. 421-423.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

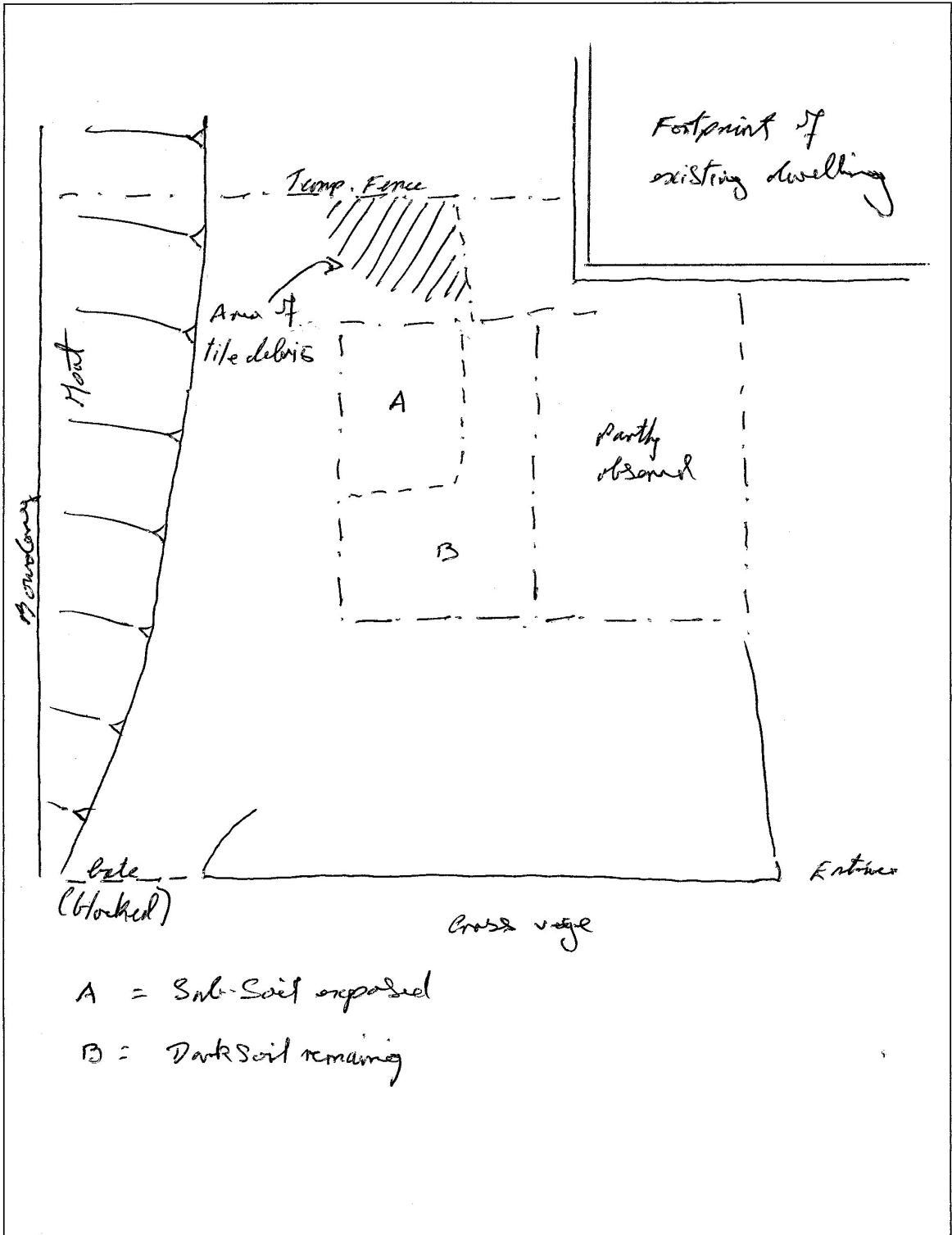
Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

 A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project: The Old School, Potsgrove Bedfordshire		Project No/Code: 1257 1 POS		Sheet: 1 of 2		
Client/Developer K. Ockiltree		Date of visit: 19/5/10				
Contact: Ken Ockiltree		Phone: 077783255514				
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 7.55 am	Finish: 13.45				
Completed by: JRAH						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry, Sunny						
Observations: <p>Observed an area 9m x 6m by 300mm on its SE side. This slopes to 150mm on its NW side. The topsoil is about 200mm thick. The subsoil, which is an olive-brown clay (Mun 2.5y 5/3), is only fully exposed some 30% at its southern corner. This was featureless.</p> <p>The remainder of the area was covered by the remains of the lower topsoil containing fragments of tile, bone, glass, pottery, ash, slate, bottles & other material. Looking late 19th early 20th century date.</p> <p>To the SW the topsoil 30cm (70mm deep) exposed a 4m x 2.5m area of broken tile, brick and one-sided slate & iron slag. The tiles are peg-tile type & bricks hand made but overall impression is that they are of 19th century date, possibly pre-dating the school where date stone declares that it was built in 1897 (Date of Bedford crest).</p>						
Comments: Part of the driveway to the new garage was also observed - nothing apparent. No further visits required.						



SKETCH SHEET

Site Name: <i>old School House, Potsgrove</i>	Site Code: <i>1257/POS</i>	Orientation:
Context:		



- A = Sub-soil exposed
- B = Dark Soil remaining

RECORDING NOTES

Recorded by: <i>JRH</i>	Date: <i>19/5/10</i>	Digitised by:	Date:	Sheet number: <i>2</i> of <i>2</i>
-------------------------	----------------------	---------------	-------	------------------------------------

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Old School, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire			SITE NO/CODE: 1257/POS
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		0002	Front elevation of the Old School looking south west (cover)
2	1	0003	View NW across site of proposed new building (Plate 1)
3		0007	View north to setting of the site in relation to church and Manor Farm
4		0008	View north to setting of the site in relation to the moat (Plate 2)
5		0010	View north across pond and setting of site
6		0013	St Mary's church looking north
7		0014	Looking NE with ground clearance underway
8		0016	Western elevation of St Mary's church
9		0017	Interior of St Mary's church
10		0018	Landscape to the west of the Old School
11		0019	Manor Farm looking NE
12		0020	Lane opposite Old School looking SE
13		0021	Looking NNW across reduced ground level of new garage
14	2	0022	Looking NE across reduced ground level of new garage
15		0023	Looking NW across lightly cleared ground to side of the Old School
16		0024	Detail of cleared ground looking NW showing building debris
17			
18			
19			
20			

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	The Old School, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire		
Short Description:	<i>A watching brief was undertaken at the Old School, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire. Only a limited area of the sub-soil was exposed within the foot-print of the new garage/barn. There was some building debris just below the ground surface on the western side of the new building which may have belonged to an old barn. No pre-modern features or artefacts were noted.</i>		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Watching Brief		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none
Current land use:	garden	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	none
Monument type:	none	Monument period:	Post-medieval
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Bedfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 95079 29834
District:	Central Bedfordshire	Parish:	Potsgrove
Site address: (with postcode if known)	The Old School, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	c. 60 sq. m	Height OD: (metres)	148m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	<i>HSE, Conservation Design Team, Central Bedfordshire Council</i>	Project design originator:	Summerfield-Hill C,
Project Manager:	K. Semmelmann	Director/Supervisor:	J.R. Hunn
Sponsor / funding body:	K. Ochiltree		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	19.5.10	End date:	19.5.10
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	none		
Paper:	Bedford Museum		
Digital:	yes		
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief: The Old School, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1256/POS		
Author(s):	Jonathan R. Hunn		
Page nos	20	Date:	28.5.10