

## Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

### **WATCHING BRIEF: THE HOOK, GOLF COURSE DRIVE, ASHRIDGE, HERTFORDSHIRE**

*on behalf of John Halliwell*



**Calli Rouse BA**

**March 2005**

**ASC: 663/ATH/2**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	ATH	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	663
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Ashridge		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Little Gaddesden CP		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 9868 1342		
<i>Present use:</i>	House and Garden		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Renovation of existing house and driveway		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	04/0092 & 04/2907		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Dacorum Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	15/03/05 and 21/03/05		
<i>Client:</i>	John Halliwell The Hook Golf Club Drive Ashridge Herts		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Dominic Naylor (builder)		
<i>Telephone</i>	07957 214306	<i>Fax:</i>	-

## Internal Quality Check

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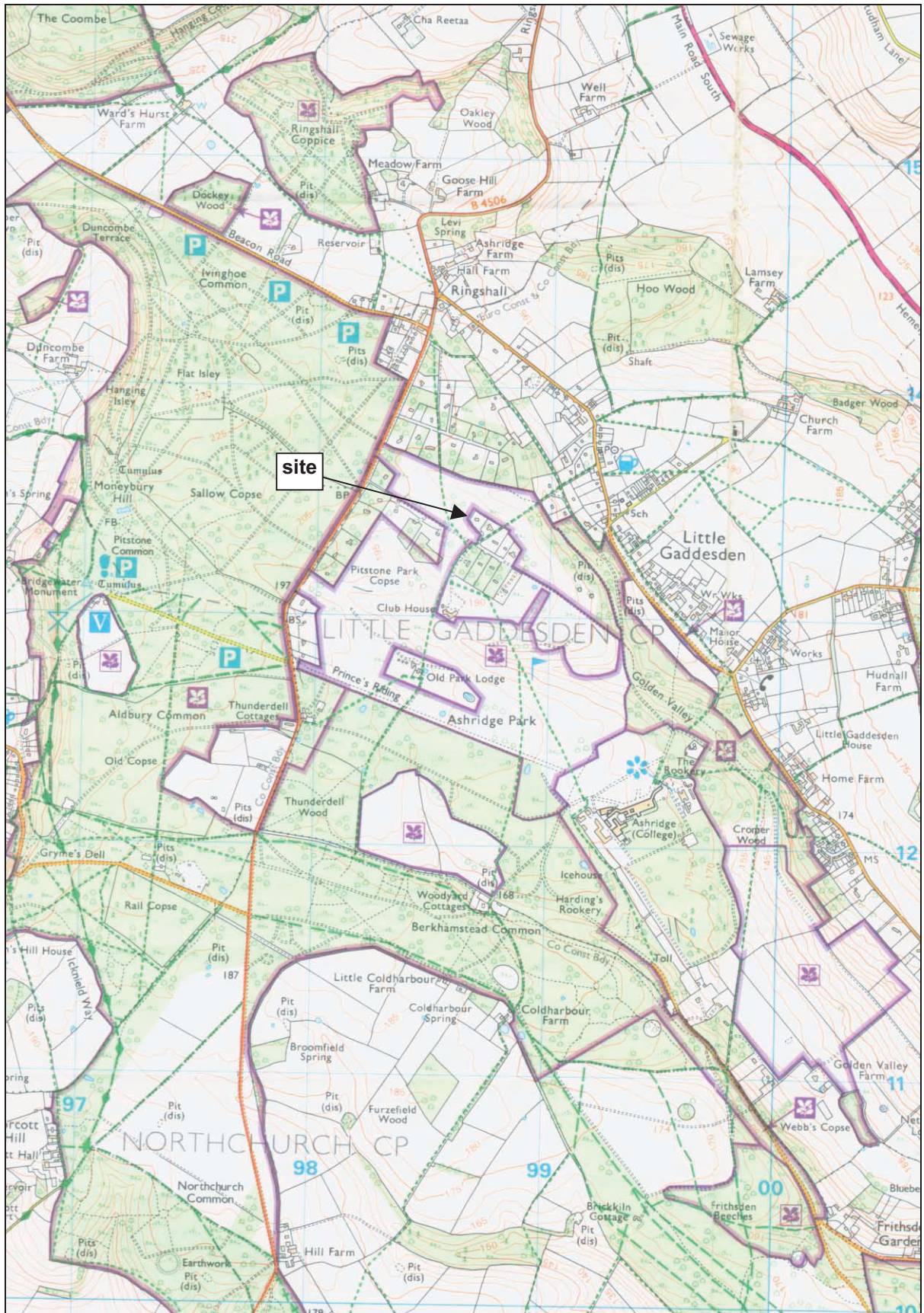


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)



## Summary

*During March 2005 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on a site at The Hook, Golf Course Drive, Ashridge, Hertfordshire. The excavation of foundations for renovation of the existing house and driveway was monitored but no archaeological remains were observed during the works.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In March 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at the Hook, Ashridge, Hertfordshire (NGR SP 98680 13423: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Dominic Naylor, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (663/ATH/01), and a standard brief prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Dacorum Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), the *Hertfordshire County Archaeological Office*. The relevant planning application reference is 04/0092 & 04/2907.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief has been required as a planning condition under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the renovation of existing house and driveway.

### 1.3 *Setting*

#### 1.3.1 *Location*

The site is located in Ashridge, in the parish of Little Gaddesden, at NGR SP 98680 13423 (Figure 1). It is situated on Golf Course Drive, in the vicinity of Ashridge Wood. The golf course is located c.600m to the south of the site, with its clubhouse only c.400m south of the development area.

#### 1.3.2 *Description*

The site is located at the northernmost point of Golf Course Drive. It is surrounded by open ground on three sides. The fourth side is bounded by an adjacent property. Access to the development site is from Golf Course Drive (Figure 2).

#### 1.3.3 *Nature of the proposed development*

The proposal is to renovate both the interior and exterior of the house, and to replace the existing tarmac drive with gravel, with additional parking spaces.

### 1.3.4 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

#### *Prehistoric (before 600BC)*

Round barrows and ring ditches are located at the head of the Bulbourne Valley at Ivinghoe, c.3km north of the site. Neolithic and Bronze Age activity has also been identified on the southwest side of the Bulbourne valley (Zeepvat 1999). Although this activity is some way from the site, it has been suggested that early prehistoric activity was more widespread than originally thought (McDonald 1995).

#### *Late Bronze Age - Iron Age (600BC-AD43)*

Settlements of this period have been revealed at Pea Lane, Crawleys Lane and Bottom House Lane, on the southwest side of the Bulbourne Valley (*ibid.*), and at Pitstone and Ivinghoe (Bryant 1995). At Ivinghoe Beacon, c.3km north of the site, is a hill-fort that is of late Bronze Age date in its earliest phases. Along the line of the Chiltern scarp the *Ickniel Way* passes c.2km to the west of the site. This prehistoric trackway of uncertain date runs from the Wash to Wessex and the south coast.

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

Extensive areas of earthworks have been identified in Ashridge Park by a landscape survey carried out for the National Trust between 1985 and 1989 (Morris & Wainwright 1995). These earthworks are believed to represent a series of field systems, enclosures and settlements, and a possible religious site, all of probable late Iron Age or Roman date. A Roman lead counter or amulet was recovered in 1937 from the golf course, c. 600m south of the site.

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

Little is known of the study area in the centuries following the Roman period. Gaddesden (originally with no distinction between 'Great' and 'Little') evidently existed by the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, as it appears in a Saxon charter of AD812. The name 'Gaddesden' derives from the Anglo-Saxon *gaete* (kid) and *den* (valley). The area now occupied by Ashridge House and part of the Ashridge Estate lies within Little Gaddesden parish, which was formerly a part of the Saxon *Hundred of Dacorun*.

#### *Medieval (1066-1500)*

The manor of Ashridge was one of the principal landholdings in Little Gaddesden. It is first mentioned in 1285, when the Earl of Cornwall granted the manor to the college of Ashridge (Page 1914, 219). The manor remained in the possession of the college until the Dissolution in 1538/39, after which it became annexed to the manor of Little Gaddesden, and thereafter descended with the latter. Ashridge Park was enclosed before 1285 (*ibid.*). In 1283 Edmund, Earl of Cornwall and a nephew of Henry III founded a monastery at Ashridge, in honour of a holy relic - a phial of the 'Precious Blood of Christ' - he had acquired whilst campaigning in Germany. The order of monks installed there was known as *Bonhommes* (literally, 'good men'): the *College de*

*Bonhommes*, as the foundation was known, was one of only two monastic establishments of this order in England.

*Post-Medieval (1500-1900)*

In 1539 the College was dissolved, and the remaining seventeen monks were pensioned off. Ashridge now became a royal residence, and was given to Princess Elizabeth by her brother Edward on his succession to the throne, though she never went there. In 1604 Ashridge was purchased by Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Ellesmere, later Viscount Brackley, and Lord Chancellor to James I. Egerton repaired the deserted monastic buildings, and added a domestic wing at each end of the Great Hall. The Egertons remained at Ashridge throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and continued to develop the estate. General John William Egerton, the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl, was responsible for the creation of the present Ashridge House. The architect from 1808-1813 was James Wyatt: after his death the work was completed by his son Benjamin and his nephew Jeffry Wyatville. The gardens were laid out by Humphrey Repton.

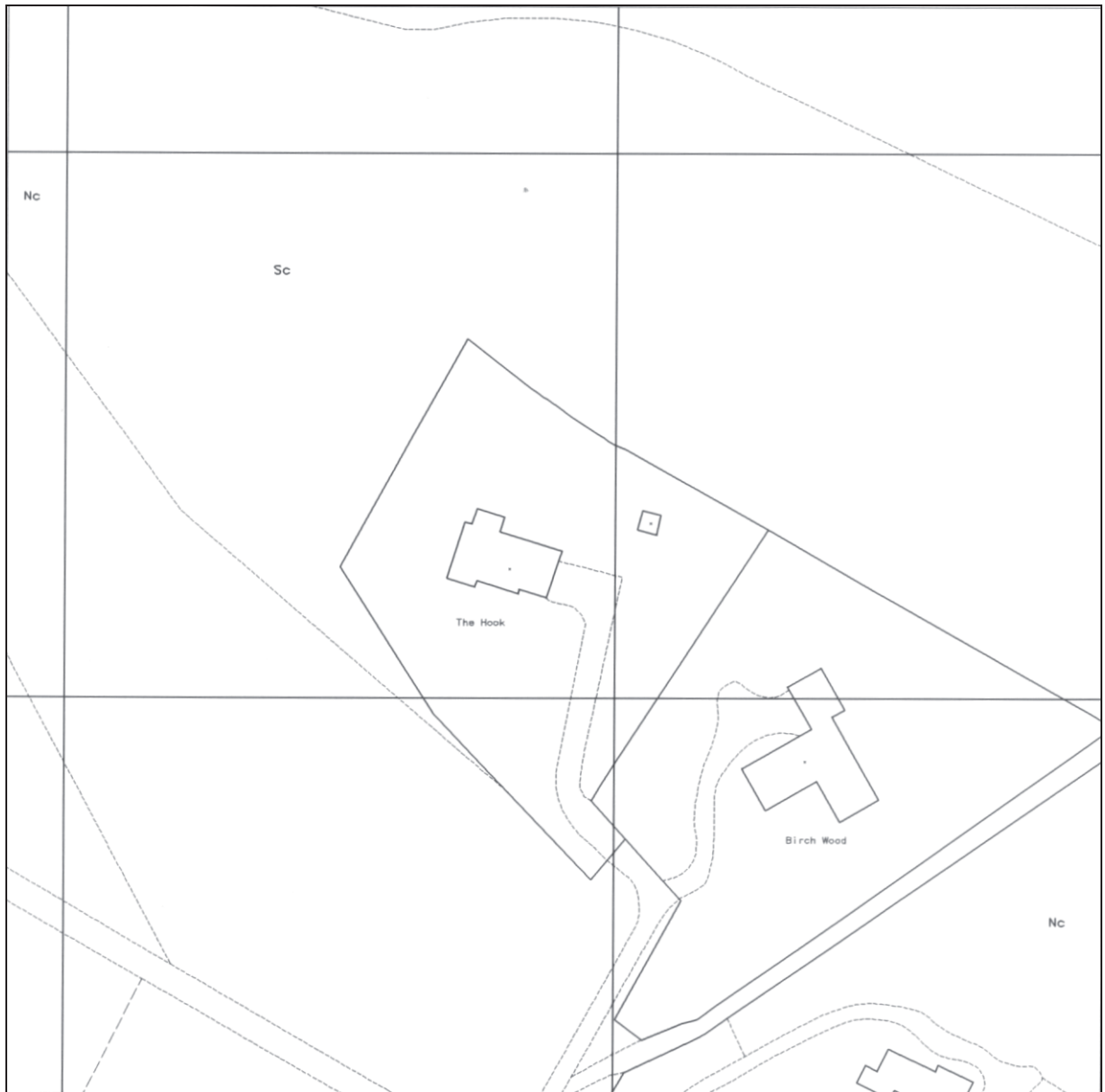
*Modern (1900-present)*

Following the death of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl in 1921, the estate was put on the market. Subsequent to a vigorous local and national campaign, funds were raised to allow the National Trust to purchase the parkland. The house and gardens were bought as a gift for the Conservative Party, and in 1929 Ashridge College was opened as a training centre for Conservative Party workers. During the Second World War the buildings were commandeered as a branch of Charing Cross Hospital, and additional concrete ward buildings were erected on parkland to the north of the house. After the war, the College became initially a finishing school for young ladies, and in 1959 turned to management training in industry, the role it continues to fulfil today.

1.3.5 *Geology & Topography*

Soils on the site are those of the *Batcombe Association*, defined as *Fine silty over clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal water logging. Some well drained clayey soils over chalk. Variably flinty.* The underlying drift geology is plateau drift and clay-with-flints. (Soil Survey 1983). The site is located at an elevation of between c.190 and c.195 OD.





**Figure 2:** Site plan (scale 1:1250)

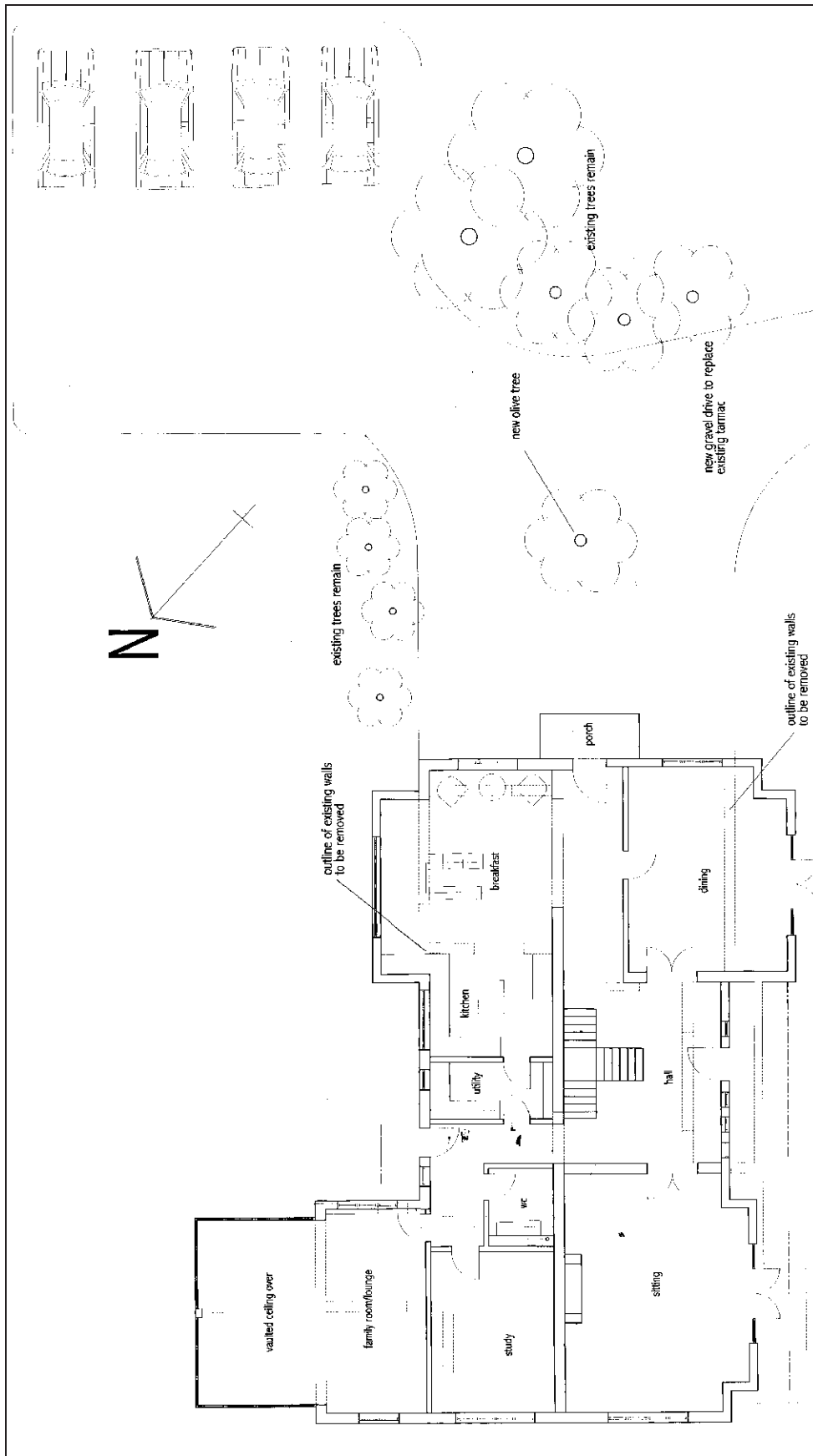


Figure 3: Plan of the proposed development (*not to scale*)

## 2 Aims & Methods

### 2.1 Aims

In line with the normal requirements of the County Archaeology Office, 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 of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

### 2.3 Methods

In line with the normal requirements of the County Archaeology Office, there was a programme of monitoring and recording during the stages of development that involved substantial ground disturbance. The methods adopted for this project were:

- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision
- Inspection of sub-soil deposits for archaeological features
- The rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits
- Sub-soil stripping under archaeological supervision
- 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



### **3 Results**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Two visits were made to the site on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2005 in overcast and sunny conditions respectively. Full cooperation was received from the building contractors and a high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the watching brief.

#### **2.2 Results**

Ground clearance was observed over an area 10m x 25m, and at a depth of between 0.1m and 0.15m. The soil was observed to be very thin.

The majority of the new building is being constructed in the footprint of the existing building. The excavation of the footing trenches for the new building was monitored. The trenches were typically 0.8m wide and between 2.7m and 3m deep.

The upper part of the trench profile comprised 0.1m - 0.15m of topsoil. The natural strata comprised clay with flints, which made up the remainder of the trench profile beneath the topsoil (Plate 1).

With the exception of a mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Soakaway filled with Fletton bricks (Plate 2), no archaeological features or artefacts were observed during the soil stripping operations and the excavations of the footing trenches.

#### **2.3 Conclusions**

No significant archaeological remains or artefacts were observed during the watching brief and the majority of ground disturbance took place within the footprint of the existing building. It is unlikely that archaeological remains were present on site, and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be minimal.



**Plate 1:** A typical section of footing trench



**Plate 2:** Mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Soakaway filled with Fletton bricks

## **4. Acknowledgements**

The writer is grateful to Mr John Halliwell for commissioning and funding the watching brief. Thanks are also due to Mrs Kate Batt of the County Archaeology Office who acted as curatorial monitor.

The fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by Jonathan R Hunn PhD MIFA. The report was prepared by Calli Rouse BA and edited by David Fell BA MA MIFA.

## **5. Archive**

5.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
3. Clients site plans
4. Site Monitoring Sheets
5. List of photographs
6. Photographs
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

5.2 The archive will be deposited with *Dacorum Heritage Trust*.



## 6. References

### *Standards & Specifications*

- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. English Heritage (London).
- EH 2002 *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation*. English Heritage (London).
- Ferguson L.M. & Murray D.M. 1997 *Archaeological Documentary Archives: Preparation, Curation and Storage*. Institute of Field Archaeologists' Paper **1** (Manchester).
- 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)*.
- McKinley J.I. & Roberts C. 1993 *Excavation and Post-Excavation Treatment of Cremated and Inhumed Human Remains*. Institute of Field Archaeologists Technical Paper **13**.

### *Secondary Sources*

- Bryant S.1995 'The Late Bronze Age of the North Chilterns' in Holgate (ed.) *Chiltern Archaeology, Recent Work. A Handbook for the Next Decade*. 17-27.
- McDonald T.1995 'The A41 Project, Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust' in Holgate 1995, 120-123.
- Page W. (ed.) 1914 *The Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire*, vol. ii. .
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Zeepvat, R. 1999. *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of Monks Barn and Land to the Southwest of Ashridge House, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire*. Archaeological Services and Consultancy.

### Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

 **A.S.C. LTD** **ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: <i>The Hook</i>		Project No/Code: <i>663 1 ATH</i>	Sheet: <i>1 of 2</i>
Client/Developer: <i>Ashridge</i> <i>John Hadfield</i>		Date of visit: <i>15/3/05</i>	
Contact:		Phone: <i>07981-731854</i>	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>9.05</i>	Finish:	
Completed by: <i>JRA</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dull &amp; overcast mild but with cold wind.</i>			
Observations: <i>Some ground clearance on the northern side of the property. Ground reduced by about 0.1 to 0.15m (vert v. horiz) in an area 10m x 25m, though there are heaps of soil etc. in centre areas. The underlying soils are typical of the Platten Drift - clay with an amount of flint. No definite features or artefacts noted.</i>			
Comments: <i>Most if not all the rebuild is beneath the existing footprint - chances of doing anything almost zero.</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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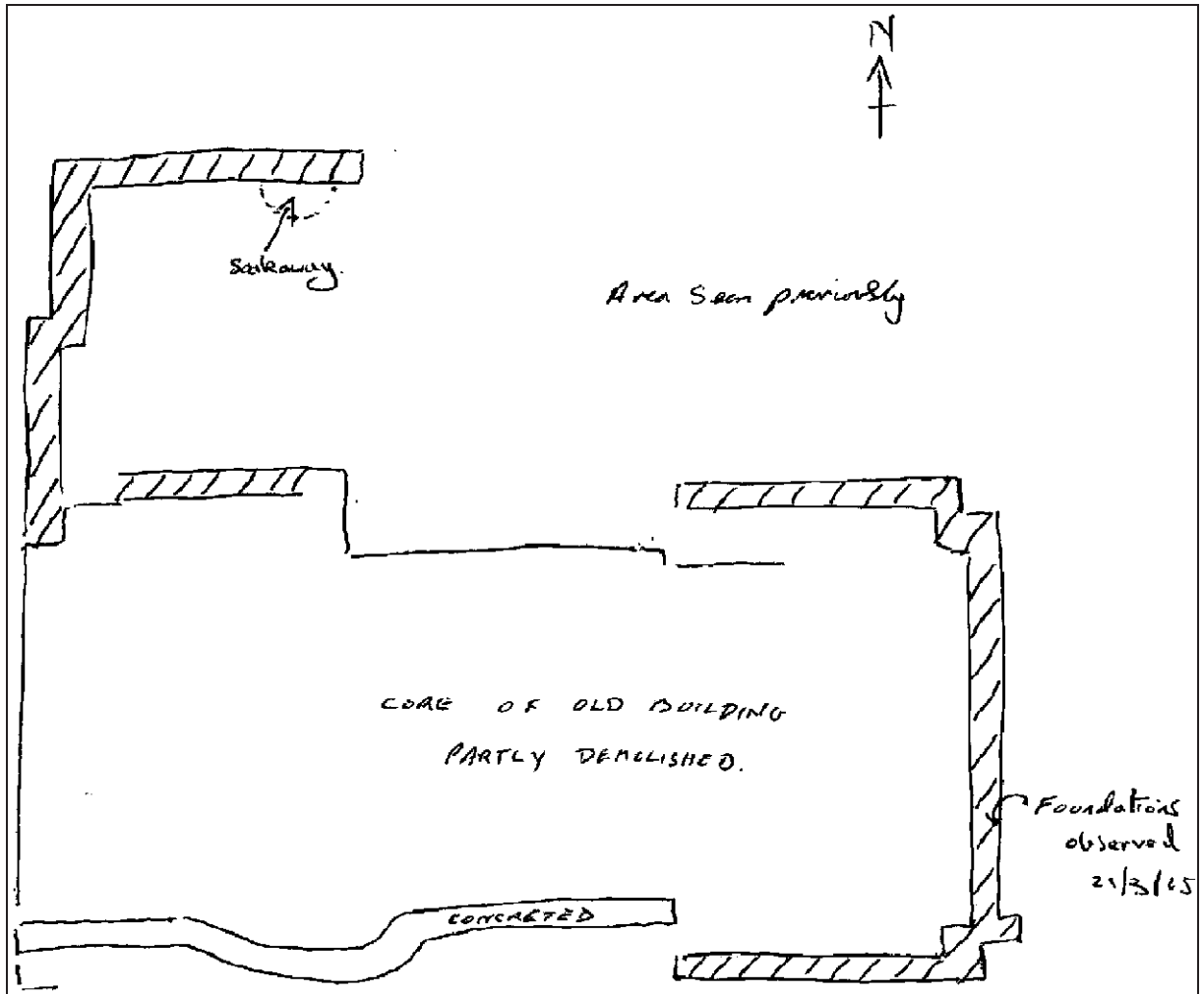
**A.S.C. LTD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: <i>The Hook</i>		Project No/Code: <i>663 14TH</i>	Sheet: <i>2 of 2</i>
Client/Developer: <i>Ashridge, Little Wood</i>		Date of visit: <i>21/3/05</i>	
Contact: <i>Domenico</i>		Phone: <i>07981-731854</i>	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>9.15</i>	Finish:	
Completed by: <i>JRA</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Leveling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dry, Sunny &amp; windy</i>			
Observations:			
<p><i>Saw deep excavations of extensions around the footprint of the existing house. At the NW corner the footings are 2.7m deep x 0.8m wide. At the NE corner the footings (same width) are 3m deep. With the exception of a med CD20 century soakaway (filled with Flinton bricks) the ground is all natural consistency of typical clay with flints.</i></p>			
Comments:			
<i>No features or artifacts seen</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003





## Appendix 2: SMR Summary Sheet

Site name and address: The Hook Golf Course Drive Ashridge		
County: Hertfordshire		District: Dacorum
Village/Town: Ashridge		Parish: Little Gaddesden
Planning application reference: 04/0092 & 04/2907		
Client name, address, & tel. no: John Halliwell The Hook Golf Club Drive Ashridge Herts		
Nature of application: Renovation of existing house and driveway		
Present land use: Residential		
Size of application area: n/a		Size of area investigated: n/a
NGR (to 8 figures): SP 9868 1342		Site code: 663/ATH
Site director/Organization: Bob Zeepvat / ASC Ltd		
Type of work: Watching Brief		
Date of work:	Start: 15/03/05	Finish: 21/03/05
Curating museum: Dacorum Heritage Trust		
Related SMR nos: --		Periods represented: None
Relevant previous summaries/reports: None		
Summary of fieldwork results: During March 2005 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on a site at The Hook, Golf Course Drive, Ashridge, Hertfordshire. The project was undertaken during the excavation of foundations for renovation of the existing house and driveway. No archaeological remains were observed during the works.		
Author: Calli Rouse		Date: 23/03/05

