



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF SITES 3A, 3B AND 3C MIDDLEMORE DAVENTRY NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

*on behalf of
Bovis Homes Ltd.*



Alastair Hancock BSc PgDip

March 2005

ASC: 642/DMM/02

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	DMM	<i>Project no:</i>	642
<i>County:</i>	Northamptonshire		
<i>District:</i>	Daventry		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Daventry		
<i>Parish:</i>	Daventry CP		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 56700 65000		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.2ha		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Pasture		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Residential		
<i>Extent of development:</i>	c.1.9ha		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	N/A		
<i>Client:</i>	Bovis Homes Limited Central Region Bromwich Court Highway Point Gorsey Lane Coleshill B46 1JU		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Rob Earley		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	

Internal Quality Check

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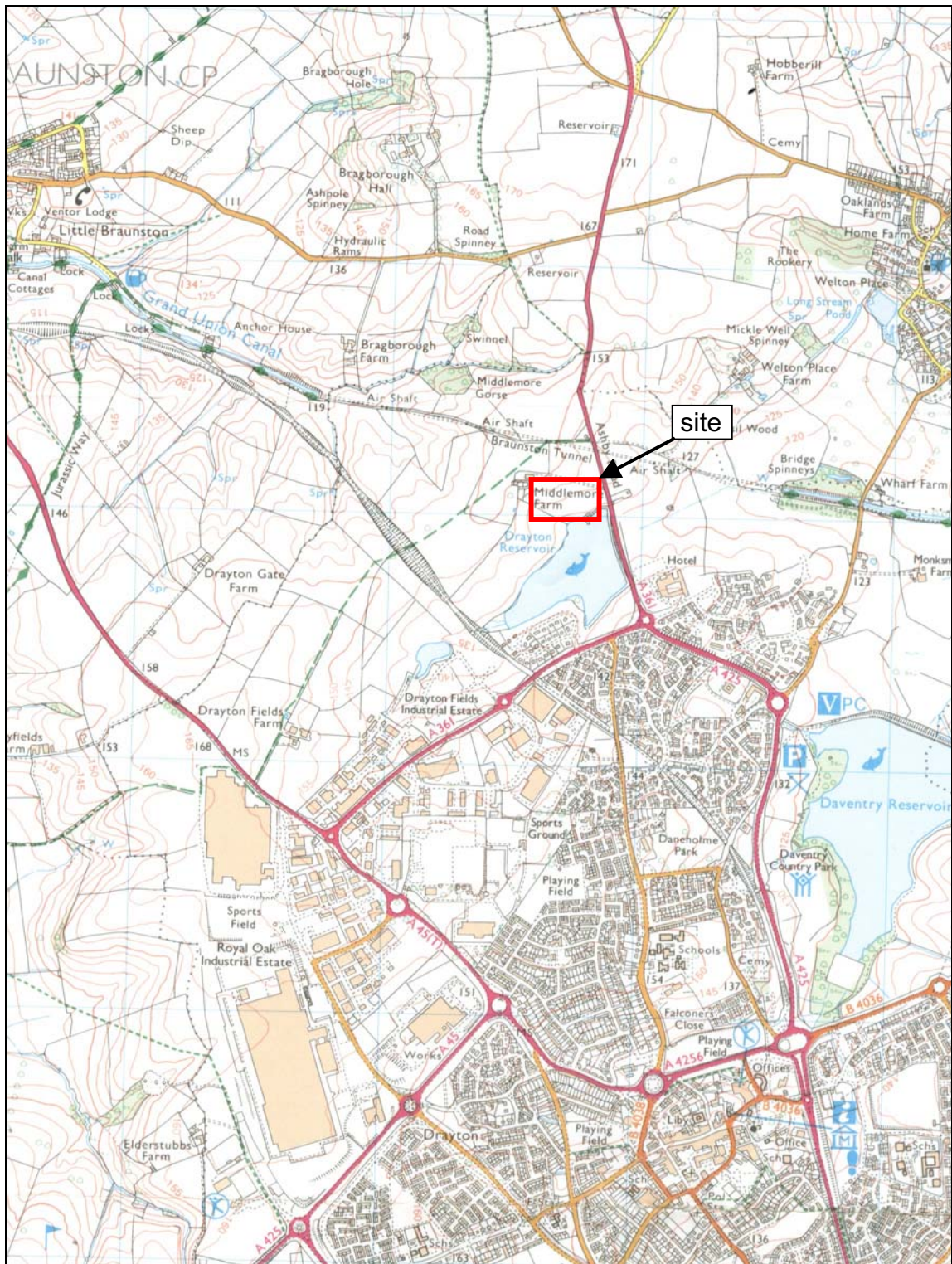


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During January and February 2005 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd. (ASC) undertook an archaeological watching brief during residential development at Sites 3A, 3B and 3C, Middlemore, Daventry, Northamptonshire. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed during monitoring of the groundwork.

1 Introduction

1.1 During January and February 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an archaeological watching brief during construction of housing and installation of associated infrastructure at Sites 3A, 3B and 3C, Middlemore, Daventry, Northamptonshire. The project was commissioned by *Bovis Homes Ltd*, and was carried out according to a brief (Flitcroft, 2005), prepared by the Archaeological Advisor (AA) of *Northamptonshire County Council* on behalf of Daventry District Council (DDC), and a written specification prepared by ASC (Crank, 2005).

1.2 Reason for Work

Outline planning permission for the development was granted in 1999. The archaeological work was undertaken to “*identify and make a record of archaeological remains revealed by development*” (Flitcroft, 2005), thus satisfying the preservation by record of archaeological deposits where disturbance or destruction is unavoidable (DOE, 1990).

1.3 Setting

1.3.1 Location and Extent

The c.2ha site is situated on the northern periphery of Daventry, Northamptonshire (Fig. 1), with its centre at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 56700 65000. It is bounded to the south by Drayton Reservoir, to the east by the A361 Ashby Road, to the west by a disused railway line and to the north by the line of the Grand Union Canal’s Braunston Tunnel. The site comprised one field arbitrarily divided into separate development plots (Fig. 2) and the planned development involved the construction of housing (Fig. 3).

1.3.2 Geology and Topography

The soils of the site overly glacial till and comprise the *Ragdale Association*, which are described as “*slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils with some slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils especially on slopes*” (Soil Survey 1983, 712g). The site lies within the area affected by the glacial Lake Harrison and the complex history of this lake is attested by the heterogeneous nature of the underlying till (Unpublished geotechnical report, DCC, 2000). The eastern part of the site (3A) exhibited a gradual northwest-southeast trending slope, which descended from c.145m AOD to c.135m AOD. The western part of the site was generally flatter and lay at an elevation of c.140m AOD.

1.3.3 Access

Sites 3A, 3B and 3C are accessed via a newly constructed network of roads leading westwards off the A361.

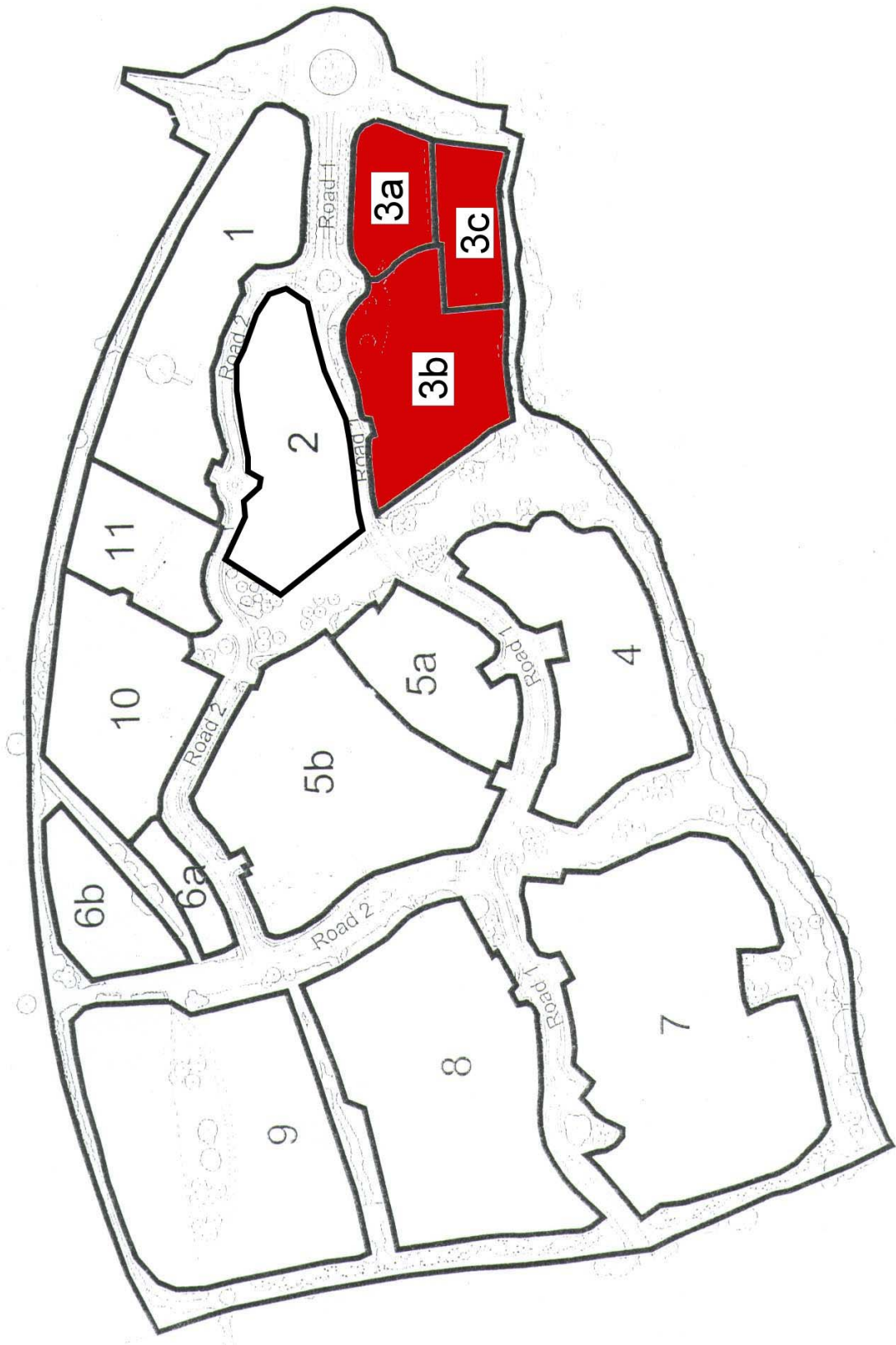


Figure 2. Location of monitored plots (not to scale)



Figure 3. Site plan showing proposed development (not to scale)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 In line with the requirements of the brief (Section 3), the aims of the watching brief were:

- To observe all groundwork for access and estate roads, excavation for principal services, and all other major earthmoving operations.
- To record the extent and depth of previous ground disturbance.
- To record and sample any archaeological features present to a sufficient degree to demonstrate their general date and character.
- To collect stratified and unstratified archaeological finds to provide additional information on the chronological development of the area

2.2 *Methods*

In line with the requirements of the brief, the methods adopted for this project were:

- The presence on site of a suitably qualified archaeologist during major groundwork.
- Intermittent site visits by a suitably qualified archaeologist to monitor the progress of work and examine the site for archaeological finds or features.
- Preparation of a report detailing the results of the watching brief

2.3 *Standards*

The work conformed to the requirements of the *Brief*, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a) to English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (EH 1991), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

8.1 Introduction

In 1999 Northamptonshire Archaeology prepared a desk based assessment (DBA) examining the Middlemore Development Area on behalf of DDC (Soden, 1999). This assessment examined records held by the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), the County Record Office and included a site walk over.

3.2 Prehistoric (before AD43)

The remains of a hillfort are located on Borough Hill c. 2.5km to the southeast. A note held by the SMR showed that a fieldwalking programme on land at Middlemore during 1973 (Brown, 1991) found worked flints of prehistoric date.

3.4 Romano-British (AD43-c.450)

The 1973 fieldwalking programme also noted two small concentrations of Romano-British (RB) pottery (ibid). Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned to undertake a watching brief on the first phase of groundwork in Plot 1 and this work revealed a number of RB ditches that suggested a RB occupation site could be located immediately west of Sites 1 and 2. Subsequent excavations in the western part of Site 2 by ASC (Wilson, 2004) exposed the remains of a small mixed RB farmstead and recovered pottery ranging in date from the 1st – 3rd centuries AD.

3.5 Medieval (c. AD450-1500)

Although Middlemore is not specifically mentioned, The Domesday Survey shows that Countess Judith held 8 hides in Daventry which had land for 16 ploughs. Aerial photographs taken by the RAF in 1947 showed well defined areas of ridge and furrow surviving over much of the Middlemore Development Area.

3.6 Post-Medieval (AD1500-1900)

The earliest buildings of Middlemore Farm probably date to the 18th century and continued in use until the start of construction within the development area. Modern deep ploughing had levelled the ridge and furrow to the east of the farm prior to the start of construction.

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

Regular monitoring visits commenced the week beginning 10/01/05 and terminated the week beginning 28/02/05. Although a modern metalled surface and short length of modern masonry foundation (Plate 2), were revealed in the northern part of Site 3A no other finds or features were noted during the topsoil strip of Sites 3A, 3B and 3C (Plate 1). The observations made during further monitoring visits are detailed by site subdivision in the following sections.

4.2 Site 3A

This part of the site had a moderate north-south slope. The developer created two east-west aligned terraces through excavation and deposition of material thus establishing flat surfaces in which to dig footings (Plate 4). The strata revealed in the northernmost terrace (Plate 3), were (depths from surface at highest point of slope):

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| • Topsoil | mid brown organic silt | c. 0 - 0.2m |
| • Subsoil | orangeish brown sandy clay | c. 0.2 - 0.4m |
| • Natural | brownish yellow clayey sand | c. 0.4 – 2.4m |
| • Natural | light grey clay | c. 2.4m + |

The profile revealed after excavation of the more southerly, downslope, terrace (Plate 5) was c. 1.2m deep and exhibited only the first three of the strata listed above.

No archaeological finds or features were revealed during monitoring of the groundwork to create the terraces.

4.3 Site 3B

This part of the site was flatter, although still exhibiting a gradual north-south slope, than both 3A and 3C. Topsoil stripped during the initial groundwork was stored in a large spoil heap adjacent to the southern perimeter fencing, and the site office and stores were positioned along the northern boundary (Plate 6). Levelling material was deposited on the subsoil in the central part of the site (Plate 7), to reduce the slope gradient and make its height equivalent to that of the levelling material deposited at Site 3C.

Archaeological finds or features were not apparent in the top / subsoil and it was impossible to determine the presence or absence of archaeological finds or features in underlying strata due to the presence of the topsoil store and deposition of the levelling material.

4.4 Site 3C

This part of the site was located at the base of the slope noted in Section 4.2. Brownish yellow clayey sand removed from the terraces excavated in Site 3A was deposited onto the exposed subsoil to level the slight north-south gradient (Plate 8).

Archaeological finds or features were not revealed in the top / subsoil and it was impossible to determine the presence or absence of archaeological finds or features in underlying strata due to the deposition of the levelling material.



Plate 1. General site shot during topsoil strip, looking east



Plate 2. Site 3A; modern metallised surface, looking south



Plate 3. Site 3A; northern terrace being excavated, looking east



Plate 4. Site 3A; footings in northern terrace, looking west



Plate 5. Site 3A; southern terrace, looking west



Plate 6. Site 3B showing topsoil store and site cabins, looking west



Plate 7. Site 3B; deposition of levelling material, looking southwest



Plate 8. Site 3C; deposition of levelling material, looking east

5. Conclusions

5.1 Confidence rating

The confidence rating for the recognition of archaeological deposits was moderate. The differing strata were easily distinguished in the profiles revealed by the terracing; however, topsoil was incompletely removed in some areas and the surface of the site was quickly churned up by tracked site machinery.

5.2 Conclusions

The absence of archaeological finds and features supports the conclusions reached after ASC's excavation of RB features at Site 2 (Wilson, 2004). The negative watching brief confirms that Sites 3A-C were peripheral to the RB settlement activity c. 200m to the northwest of site 3B, and that this sloping area may have been used as pasture for livestock during this period.

The ridge and furrow visible on aerial photos taken by the RAF in the late 1940's shows that this land was under the plough during the Medieval period and the archaeological evidence lends weight to the conclusion that past landuse has always been agricultural.

It is suggested that, if present, further RB features may be located to the north and west of the western part of Site 2.

6. Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to Rob Earley of Bovis Homes Ltd for commissioning this work. Site monitoring visits were carried out by Nigel Wilson HND AIFA and the author. Thanks are also due to Myk Flitcroft from the Northamptonshire HET for preparing the brief. Cordial thanks are also offered to Bob Zeepvat for editing this document.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. 4 Trench record sheets
6. List of photographs
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Buckinghamshire County Museum*. The Accession Number for the site is 2004.162

7.3 Details of the excavation will be entered in the on-line "OASIS" database maintained by ADS at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>

8. Bibliography

- Atkins R. and Hindmarsh E., 2000 *Archaeological Evaluation of land at Middlemore Farm, Daventry. Stage 2: Archaeological Geophysical and Fieldwalking surveys*. Northamptonshire Archaeology
- Brown A.E., 1991 *Early Daventry*
- DOE 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning*. HMSO
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition*. English Heritage (London).
- Flitcroft. M, 2005 *Sites 3A-C Middlemore Development Area, Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief*. Northamptonshire County Council (Historic Environment Team)
- Crank, N *Sites 3A-C, Middlemore, Daventry, Northamptonshire; Project Design for Watching Brief on behalf of Bovis Homes Ltd*. ASC: 642/DMM/01
- 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)*.
- Leigh D., 2002 *Middlemore Farm Daventry, Northamptonshire: Archaeological watching brief, May-September 2002*. Northamptonshire Archaeology
- Soden I., 1999 *Archaeological desk-based assessment of land at Middlemore Farm, Daventry*. Northamptonshire Archaeology
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Unpublished Geotechnical Report for Daventry District Council, March 2000. Ref: LWO/12480
- Wilson N., 2004 *Archaeological Excavation: Site 2, Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire* (ASC: 509/DMF/2)

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD		
Project: SITES 3 A-C MIDDLEMORE		Project No/Code: 6421 DMF1	Sheet: 1 of 1	
DAVENTRY, NORTHANTS		Date of visit: 21/1/05		
Client/Developer BOVIS HOMES LTD				
Contact: ROB EARLEY			Phone: 01675 437090	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 1.45	Finish: 15.45		
Completed by: AJH				
Development Type:				
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roads <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Levelling <input type="checkbox"/>	Quarrying <input type="checkbox"/>
				Pipelines <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify): RESIDENTIAL				
Site & weather conditions: OVERCAST, DRY, OTHERWISE OK				
Observations: TOPSOIL STRIP NOT YET UNDERWAY, 360 ON SITE AND DUMPER - IN THE PROCESS OF STRIPPING VEGETATION FROM SURFACE OF SITE. SITE MANAGER INDICATED TOPSOIL STRIP TO COMMENCE ON AREA 3A ON 26/1/05. NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS OR FEATURES VISIBLE DURING SITE INSPECTION.				
Comments: REPEAT VISIT NECESSARY 27 th or 28 th OF JANUARY TO OBSERVE PROGRESS AND MONITOR TOPSOIL STRIP				

For sketch plan, use reverse

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A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD	
Project: SITES 3a-c MIDDLEMORE DAVENTRY		Project No/Code: 642 1 DMM	Sheet: 1 of 1
		Date of visit: 2/2/05	
Client/Developer BOVIS HOMES LTD.			
Contact: ROB EARLEY		Phone: 01675 437090	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel): Start: 1.55		Finish: 15.30	
Completed by: KJH			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Leveling
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quarrying			
Pipelines			
Other (specify):			
Site & weather conditions: OVERCAST, DRY OTHERWISE etc			
Observations: WORK CONCENTRATED ON 3A TOPSOIL STRIPPED BUT SURFACE V. DIRTY - STILL ca. 0.10M OF TOPSOIL REMAINING. NO ARCHAEOLOGY VISIBLE ON INSPECTION OF SURFACE DUE TO AMOUNT OF TOPSOIL. DEVELOPERS HAD STARTED TO LEVEL SITE - STRIPPING YELLOW GRAVELLY TILL FROM NW AND DEPOSITING AT SE NEAR DRAYTON RESERVOIR. NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES VISIBLE IN SECTION IN PROFILES IN YELLOW BROWN CLAY (NATURAL) OR TOP/SUB SOIL MODERN METALLED ROAD AND WALL VISIBLE ON SURFACE IN NE CORNER - FARM BUILDING? TOPSOIL - ORANGESH BROWN CLAYEY SILT c. 0-0.2m SUBSOIL - ORANGE SANDY CLAY c. 0.2-0.4m NATURAL - YELLOW TILL VARIES (slope) 2m deep NW 0.4m deep SE BELOW YELLOW TILL IS GREY CLAY			
Comments: RETURN VISIT ON 04/02/05 TO INSPECT PROGRESS AND EXAMINE FOR ARCH. FEATURES			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project: SITES 3A-C, MIDDLEMORE		Project No/Code: 642 1 DMM		Sheet: 1 of 1		
DAVENTRY, NORTHANTS		Date of visit: 14/2/05				
Client/Developer: BONIS HOMES LTD						
Contact: ROB EARLEY			Phone: 01675 437090			
Duration of visit (inc. travel):		Start: 10.00		Finish: 11.00		
Completed by: AJH						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify): RESIDENTIAL
Site & weather conditions: COLD AND SUNNY, SURFACE OF SITE VERY WET CHURNED UP CLAY						
Observations: TERRACING OF 3A CONTINUING. SUBSOIL AND CLAY REMOVED FROM TOP PLACES TOWARDS TOP OF SLOPE(N) IN 3A AND REDEPOSITED AT BASE OF SLOPE IN 3C NO ARCH FEATURES VISIBLE IN TERRACE PROFILES TWO SPOIL HEAPS IN 3B AT SOUTH ADJACENT TO RESERVOIR. SOME TERRACING ESTABLISHED IN 3b TOWARDS NW OF SITE THROUGH DEPOSITION OF CLAY/HARDWARE TOP/SUBSOIL STRIP OCCURRING IN 3B - OBSERVED FOR 0.30 HRS. NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS OR FEATURES OBSERVED. SOME FOOTINGS EXCAVATED INTO THE GREY CLAY AT TOP TERRACE NORTH OF 3A.						
Comments: SITE APPEARS ARCH STERILE :- ONE FURTHER VISIT SUGGESTED TO EXAMINE WORK IN FLATTER AREA (3b) WHICH HAS RECENTLY COMMENCED. POSSIBLE CONTACT TO CAD AFTER VISIT IF CONVINCED NO ARCH PRESENT						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD	
Project: SITES 3A - C, MIDDLEMORE		Project No/Code: 642 / DMM	Sheet: 1 of 1
DAVENTRY, NORTHANTS		Date of visit: 25/2/05	
Client/Developer: BOVIS HOMES LTD			
Contact: ROB EARLEY		Phone: 01675 437090	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel): Start: 11.30		Finish: 12.30	
Completed by: AJH			
Disposal Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roads <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Landings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Pipelines <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify): RESIDENTIAL			
Site & weather conditions:			
COLD AND SUNNY SURFACE OF SITE V. WET CLAY SLUDGE SOME SNOW COVER REMAINING. PARTS OF SITE AFTER FALL PAST 2 DAYS			
Observations:			
FOOTINGS WELL ADVANCED AT TOP OF SLOPE			
3A. NO FURTHER WORK CARRIED OUT ON TERRACING			
IN 3C THE HARDWARE AND CAPPING CONTINUING TO BE DEPOSITED IN 3B TO LANDSCAPE.			
NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS OR FEATURES VISIBLE			
Comments:			
WORK AT STAGE WHERE FURTHER VISITS CONSIDERED UNNECESSARY. NO ARCHAEOLOGY (IS PRESENT) WILL BE REVEALED BY THE FURTHER WORKS WHICH CONSIST OF REPOSITION OF MATERIAL TO LANDSCAPE AND LEVEL SITE.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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