

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
OAKVIEW (FORMERLY LACEY HEY)
ALDERTON DRIVE, ASHRIDGE PARK
LITTLE GADDESSEN
HERTFORDSHIRE**

on behalf of Mr & Mrs Doney



Calli Rouse BA

March 2005

ASC: 619/APL/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	APL	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	619
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Little Gaddesden		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Little Gaddesden (CP)		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 9848 1373		
<i>Present use:</i>	House and gardens		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of a new house		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	4/2529/04		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Dacorum BC		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	07/03/05, 10/03/05, 15/03/05 & 18/03/05		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr & Mrs P.R. Doney Drystone Hill House Enstone Oxfordshire OX7 4HT		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Peter Doney		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	

Internal Quality Check

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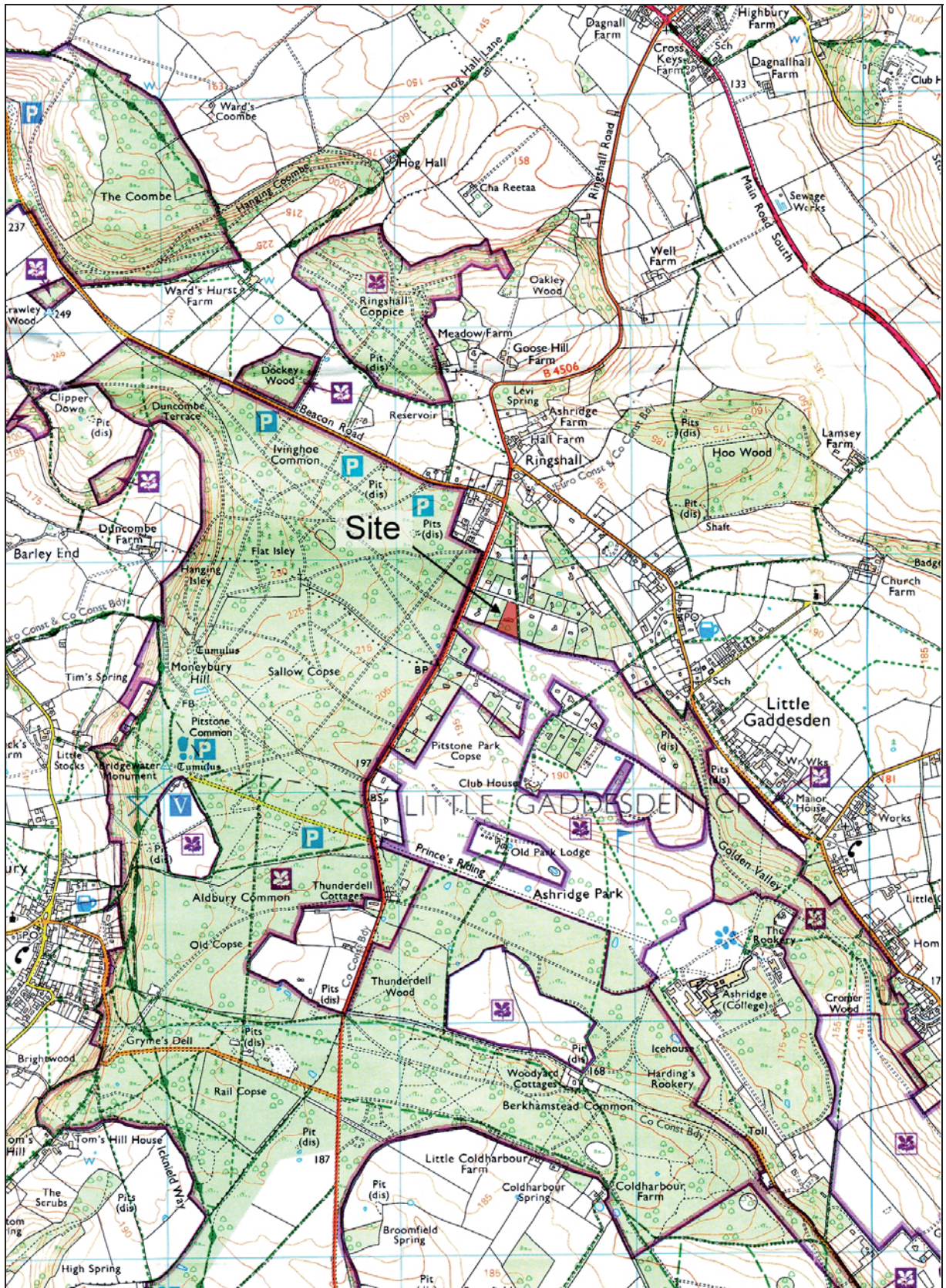


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During March 2005 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on a site at Oakview (formerly Lacey Hey), Ashridge Park, Little Gaddesden, 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.

1 Introduction

1.1 In March 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Oakview (formerly Lacey Hey), Ashridge Park, Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire (NGR SP 9848 1373: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by *Mr & Mrs Doney*, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (619/APL/01), and a brief (Batt 2004) 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 4/2529/04.

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 construction of a replacement dwelling.

1.3 *Setting*

1.3.1 *Location*

The site is situated at the north end of Ashridge Park, to the north-west of Little Gaddesden, centred on National Grid Reference SP 9848 1373 (Fig. 1). Oakview is one of a number of large properties, each with in its own extensive grounds, located along the south side of Alderton Drive.

1.3.2 *Description*

The present house stands at the centre of the plot with woodland to the south, bound to the east by a public footpath and to the north by Alderton Drive. Access to the site is from Alderton Drive.

1.3.3 *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 south-west 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 south-west 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 9th 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 Dacorum*.

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 were 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 17th and 18th centuries, and continued to develop the estate. General John William Egerton, the 7th 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 Jeffrey Wyatville. The gardens were laid out by Humphrey Repton.

Modern (1900-present)

Following the death of the 3rd 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.

1.4 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area are plateau drift and clay with flints, belonging to the Batcombe association (Soil Survey 1983 582a). They are described 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 site lies at c.195m AOD.



Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 1), 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

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 3), which required:

- 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

3.1 Introduction

Four visits were made to the site between the 7th and 14th of March 2005 in dull, overcast conditions. Full cooperation was received from the building contractors and a high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the watching brief.

3.2 Results

The excavation of the topsoil was observed. This was typically 0.15m thick and was observed at a number of areas within the site.

The extent of the new building measured 25m x 15m and it was situated on the north side 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 1.2m and 2.5m deep, and were cut into the natural strata.

The upper part of the trench profile comprised 0.15m – 0.2m of topsoil. The natural strata comprised clay with flints which made up the remainder of the trench profile beneath the topsoil (Plate 1).

No archaeological features or artefacts were observed during the soil stripping operations and the excavations of the footing trenches.

3.3 Conclusions

No significant archaeological remains or artefacts were observed during the watching brief. It is unlikely that archaeological remains were present on the site and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be minimal.



Plate 1: A typical section of the footing trench



Plate 2: General view of the site during excavations

4. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Mr and Mrs P. Doney for commissioning and funding the watching brief. Thanks are also due to Mrs Kate Batt of the *Hertfordshire County Archaeology Office* who acted as curatorial officer.

The fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by Jonathan R Hunn BA 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. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Site Monitoring Sheets
5. List of photographs/slides
6. Colour slides
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. 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**.
- Batt 2004, *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*. Lacey Hey, Alderton Drive, Lt. Gaddesden. Hertfordshire County Council
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd 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).
- Griffiths C, 2004. *Lacey Hey, Alderton Drive, Ashridge Park, Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire. Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief*. ASC Ltd
- 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 South-West of Ashridge House, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire*. Archaeological Services and Consultancy.

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

 A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD			
Project: <i>Oak View, Alderton Drive</i>		Project No/Code: <i>619 1A PL</i>		Sheet: <i>1 of 4</i>	
Client/Developer: <i>John Doe</i>		Date of visit: <i>7/3/05</i>			
Contact: <i>ditto</i>		Phone: <i>842 813 842 809</i>			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>11.15</i>	Finish:			
Completed by: <i>JRH</i>					
Development Type:					
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarrying	Pipelines
Other (specify):					
Site & weather conditions: <i>Cold, overcast & wet.</i>					
Observations: <i>Visited the site after the topsoil & down had been removed but prior to the excavation of the footings. The area at the front is about 25m x 15m and reduced by about 0.2m. Some material, gravelly clay present but too damp to excavate. To the rear of the house landscaping has begun but this consists of only the removal of the topsoil (0.15m thick) in an area about 14m x 20m. The ground slopes down to the west to the golf course.</i>					
Comments: <i>Excavation to be done Tuesday / Wednesday</i>					

For sketch plan, use reverse

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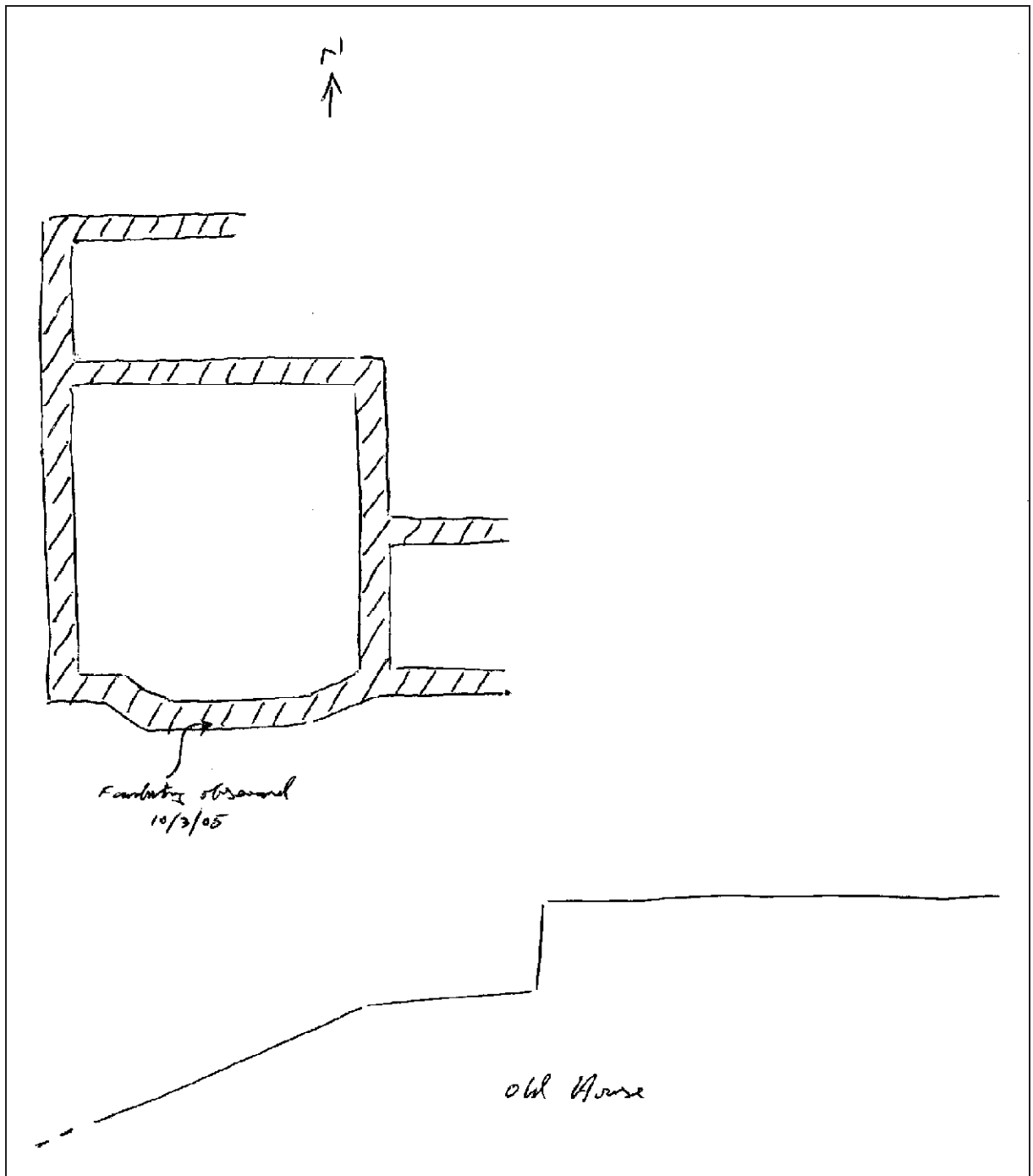
A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: <i>Oak View, Aldentan Drive</i>		Project No/Code: <i>619 1 APL</i>	Sheet: <i>2 of 4</i>
<i>Ashridge, Little Gaddesden</i>		Date of visit: <i>10/3/05</i>	
Client/Developer <i>Peter Doran</i>			
Contact:		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>7.50</i>	Finish:	
Completed by: <i>JRH</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Leveling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Mostly dry; dull overcast.</i>			
Observations: <i>Observed the footings on the western side of the new development. Have the footings were 0.8m wide and varied between 1.2m (below reduced level) to about 2.5m at the north west corner. 1.5m with about 0.15m of lower topsoil the ground was all clay with flints typical of the locality. No features or artefacts observed.</i>			
Comments: <i>Concrete tomorrow. Next visit: Tuesday am next.</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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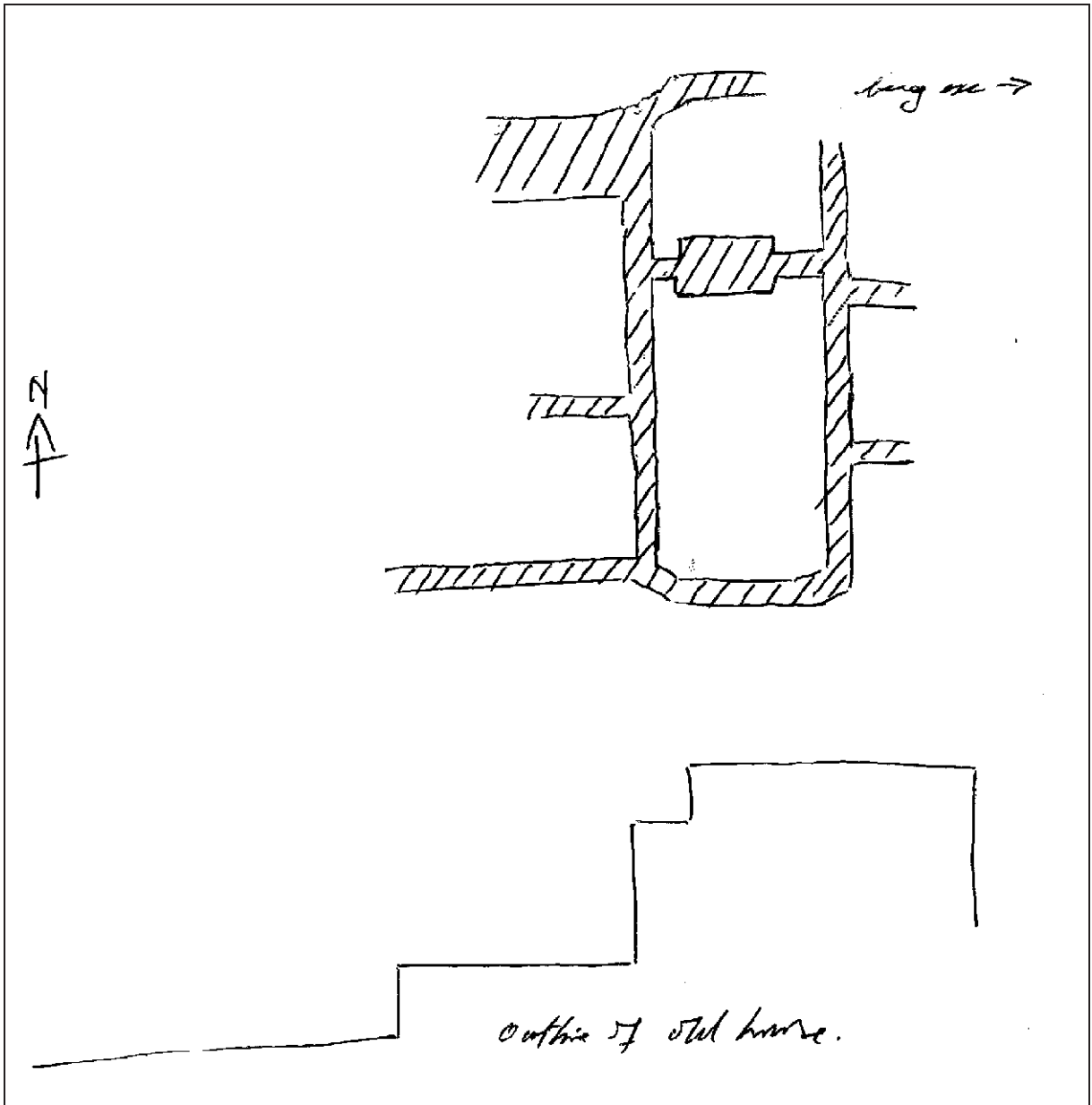
A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: <i>Oak Views, Aldenham Drive Little Gaddesden</i>		Project No/Code: <i>619 1 APL</i>	Sheet: <i>3 of 4</i>
Client/Developer: <i>P. Dorry</i>		Date of visit: <i>15/3/05</i>	
Contact: <i>ditto</i>		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>10.45</i>	Finish:	
Completed by: <i>SRA</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dull + occ weak rain</i>			
Observations: <i>Central area of the footings observed. There were, as before, c. 0.8m wide and 1.2m deep. The ground was all clay with flints with the top in a darker clay soil.</i>			
Comments: <i>No flints or artefacts observed. Had a cup of tea.</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003





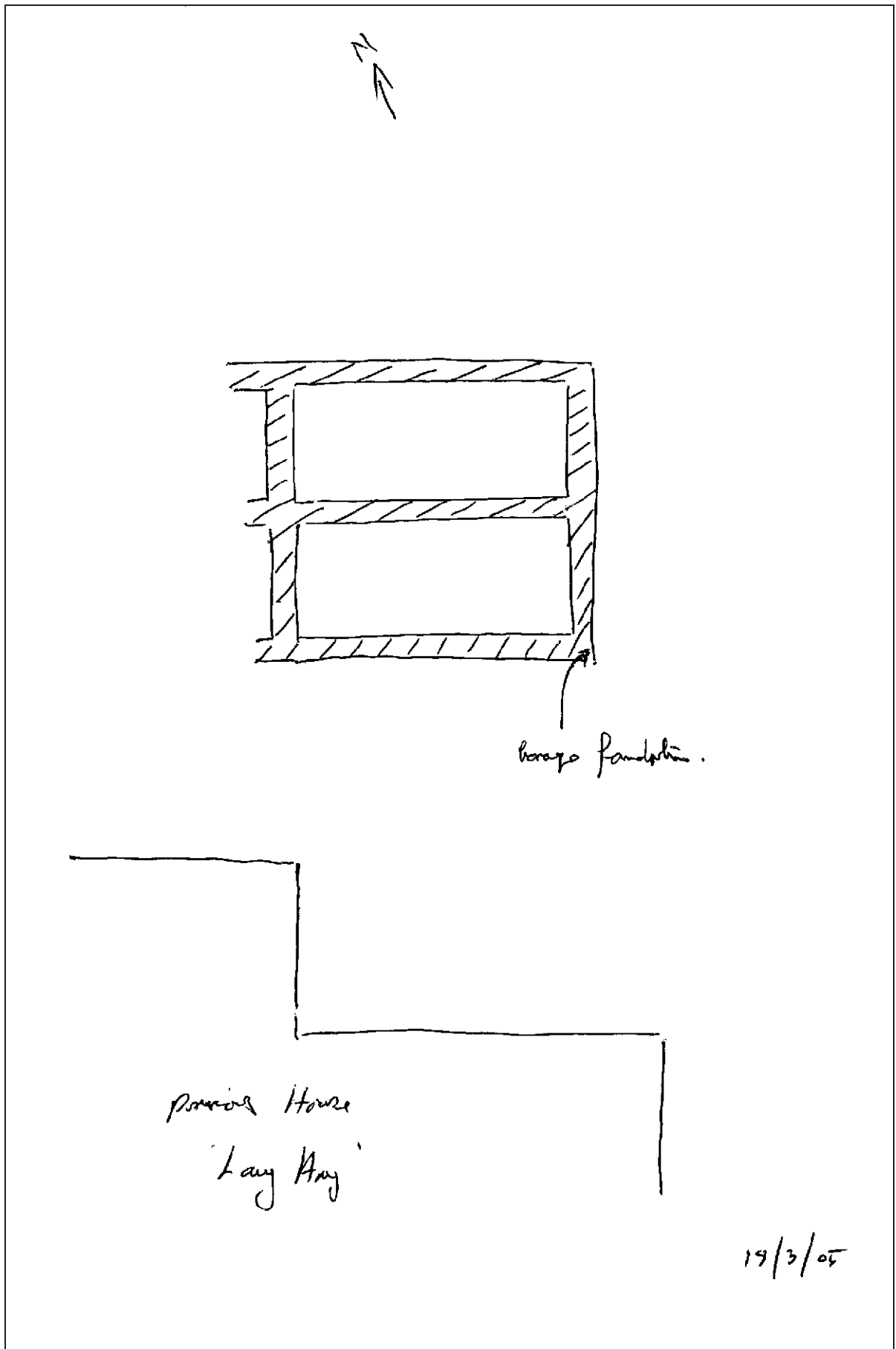
A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: <i>Oak Views, Alderton Drive Ashmidge, Little Gaddesden</i>		Project No/Code: <i>619 1 APL</i>	Sheet: <i>4 of 4</i>
Client/Developer <i>Peter Dwyer</i>		Date of visit: <i>18/3/05</i>	
Contact: <i>ditto</i>		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>9.20</i>	Finish:	
Completed by: <i>JAA</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dull & dring. cool.</i>			
Observations: <i>Observed the eastern end of the footings. These were the same as previously - no features observed though some of the foundations were observed by the trenching. Depth 2.20 at NE end. Some signs of natural chalk at bottom of foundations but otherwise along with blocks.</i>			
Comments: <i>No features or artefacts. The material from the trench is being dropped to the south in a long narrow hollow.</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



Appendix 2: SMR Summary Sheet

Site name and address: Oakview (formerly Lacey Hey) Alderton Drive, Ashridge Park Little Gaddesden		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Dacorum	
Village/Town: Little Gaddesden	Parish: Little Gaddesden CP	
Planning application reference: 4/2529/04		
Client name, address, & tel. no: Mr & Mrs P.R. Doney Drystone Hill House Enstone Oxfordshire OX7 4HT		
Nature of application: Construction of a new house		
Present land use: House and garden		
Size of application area: n/a	Size of area investigated: n/a	
NGR (to 8 figures): SP 9848 1373	Site code: 619/APL	
Site director/Organization: Bob Zeepvat / ASC Ltd		
Type of work: Watching Brief		
Date of work:	Start: 07/03/05	Finish: 18/03/05
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 Oakview (formerly Lacey Hey), Ashridge Park, Little Gaddesden, 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: 22/03/05	