

## Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:  
LODGE FARM  
SANDY LANE  
CHICKSANDS  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

*on behalf of* **Parripak Foods Ltd**



**Nigel Wilson HND AIFA**

**January 2005**

**ASC: 641/CLF/2**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	CLF	<i>Project no:</i>	641
<i>Date of fieldwork</i>	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2005		
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>District:</i>	Mid Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Chicksands		
<i>Parish:</i>	Campton and Chicksands CP		
<i>NGR:</i>	TL 1235 4001		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Car park		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	04/1105		
<i>Client:</i>	Parrapak Foods Ltd Lodge Farm Sandy Lane Chicksands Shefford Bedfordshire SG17 5QB		
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## Internal Quality Check

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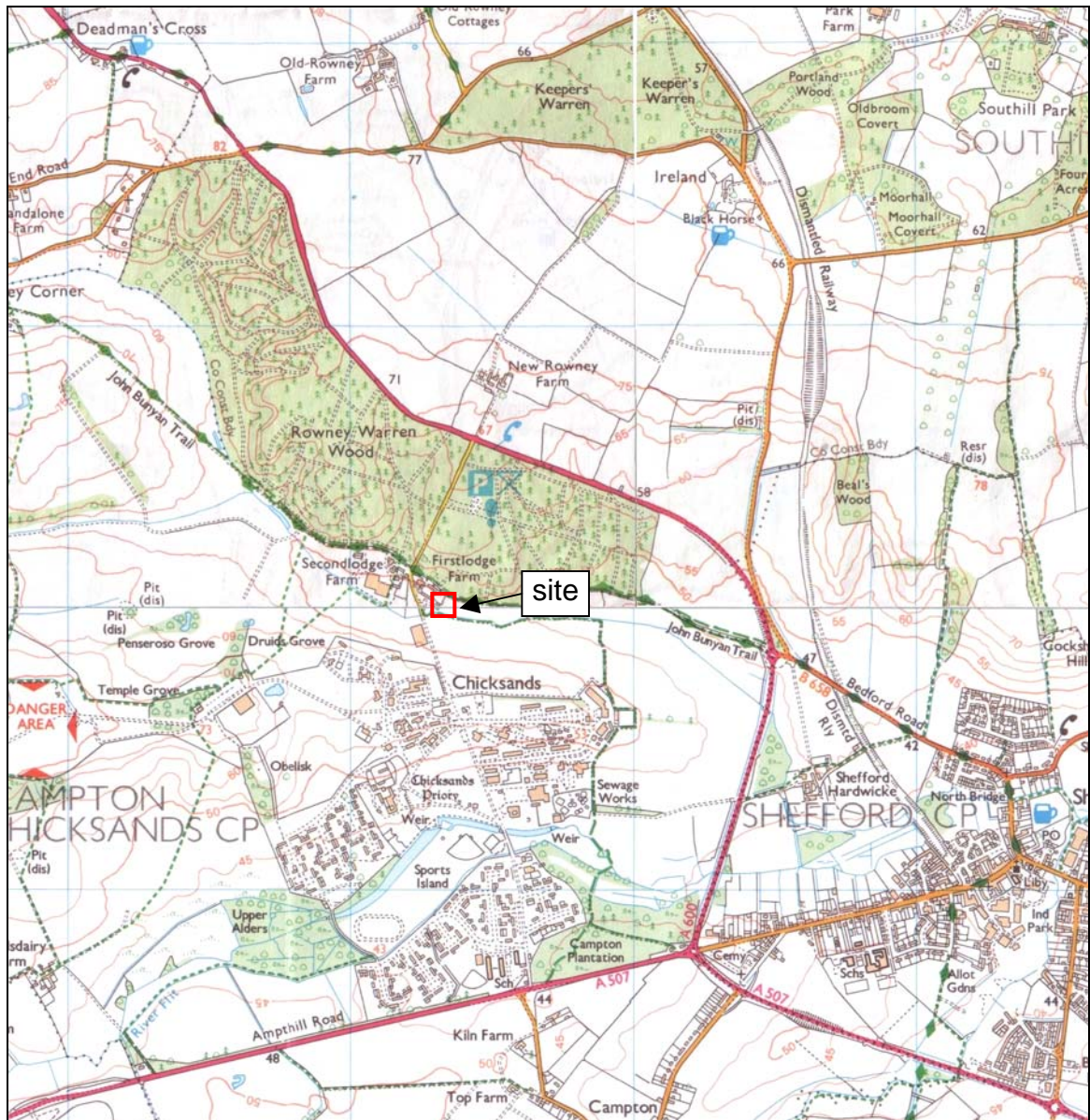


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*During January 2005, ASC Ltd undertook a field evaluation at Lodge Farm Chicksands, Bedfordshire. It was considered possible that remains from a variety of historical periods could be present on the site, specifically the prehistoric and medieval periods. Four trenches totalling seventy-five linear metres were excavated. No finds or significant archaeological deposits were observed. Two irregular shaped pits were identified in one of the trenches, probably tree throw holes on the line of a field boundary shown on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map. In the trench at the northern end of the site two narrow parallel linear features filled with dark loamy soil were identified running the length of the trench. These features have been interpreted as modern deep ploughing furrows. Possible alluvial flood deposits associated with a stream were identified in the southern trench close to a stream.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 During January 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a field evaluation on a site at Lodge Farm, Chicksands, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 1235 4001: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Parripak Foods Ltd, and was carried out according to a brief (Oake 2004) prepared by the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) of *Bedfordshire County Council*, and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (Fell 2005).

### 1.2 *Reason for Work*

Under current planning guidance legislation archaeology can be a material factor in the deciding of planning applications. Planning Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) specifically deals with archaeology. When Parripak Foods Ltd submitted plans to Mid Bedfordshires Council (04/1105) to construct additional car parking to the east of Lodge Farm, the CAO advised the planning department that the area was archaeologically sensitive. In line with the guidance given in PPG16 the CAO recommended that an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to assess the likely impact the development was going to have on the archaeological resource. This advice was accepted and Parripak Foods were requested to commission an evaluation. This report details the results of the evaluation.

### 1.3 *Setting*

#### 1.3.1 *Location*

The site is situated in Chicksands Civil Parish, in the administrative district of Mid Bedfordshire. It is situated c.0.6km to the north of Chicksands Priory, on the east side of Lodge Farm and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference TL 1235 4001 (Fig. 2).

#### 1.3.2 *Geology and topography*

The soils of the site comprise the *Bearsted 1 Association*, namely well drained coarse loamy and sandy soils over cretaceous sand and sandstone (Soil Survey 1983, 541a). The site lies on almost level ground at an elevation of c.50m OD. The rising ground of Rowney Warren Wood forms the northern boundary of

the site, whilst the southern boundary is defined by a deep cut c.3m deep which contains a small stream, a tributary of the river Flit, marks.

### 1.3.3 *Nature of the proposed development*

The development proposal comprises the development of a new car parking area (Fig. 3).



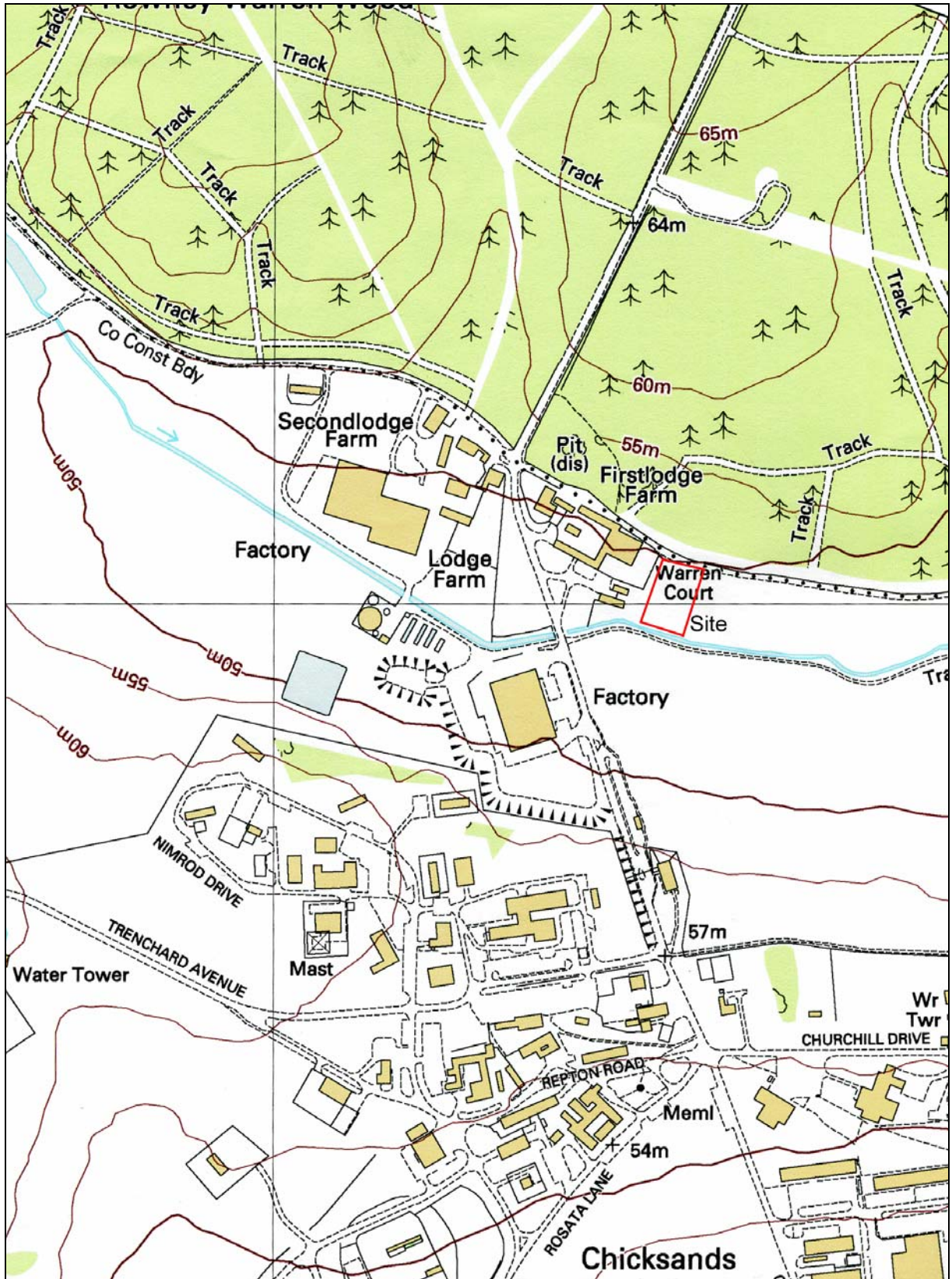


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:5000)

## 2 Aims & Methods

### 2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 2.2), the aims of the evaluation were:

- to assess the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present
- to assess the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present

### 2.2 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 3.7), which required:

- trial trenching up to 5% sample of the development area.
- A contingency provision for a further 0.5% of trenching is available.

An additional 15m trench was excavated and recorded to the west of the development area at the request of the client (Fig 4). This additional trench was outside the area governed by the by the planning condition.

### 2.3 Standards

The work conforms to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.



### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

HER = Bedfordshire County Council *Historic Environment Record*.

- 2.1 Chicksands is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest. The site has the potential to reveal remains of a variety of periods, but the focus of attention is in the medieval period.
- 2.2 A variety of archaeological sites are known at and adjacent to Lodge Farm, dating from the prehistoric periods onwards. Evidence of prehistoric activity in the area is provided by two groups of cropmarks, interpreted as 'ring ditches' (ploughed out burial mounds). Two ring ditches are present c.500m east of the site (HER 13995), while a third possible example (HER 14776) is present 600m to the northeast. Further cropmarks, described as 'dark circles' are present in the grounds of Chicksands Priory (HER 14766).
- 2.3 The origin of Lodge Farm is not fully understood, but a settlement has existed on the site since the medieval period (HER 17102). Pottery was being produced during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries and a kiln and remains of late medieval buildings have been recorded 300m west of the site (HER458; Percival Westell 1934). The farm developed during the later medieval period, probably as part of the estate of Chicksands Priory (section 3.4, below). The farm is situated to the north of the priory and the main buildings, Firstlodge Farmhouse (HER 5638) and Secondlodge Farmhouse (HER 5637), may have monastic origins. The present buildings date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but may occupy the site of earlier structures. Both farmhouses are Grade II Listed Buildings (HBMC 1986).
- 2.4 Chicksands Priory (HER 375) is situated south of the site. The priory was founded by *Pain De Beauchamp* for the Gilbertine order in c.1150 and was dissolved on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1538. The present main building is a later construction, but incorporates a 13<sup>th</sup> century cloister and central quadrangle. The present landscaped grounds date from the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (HER 6992). They are classified as a registered park, covering an area of c.400 ha (RCHME 1986). A folly was constructed in the grounds by Sir George Osborne during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, using material from the earlier buildings (HER 374). The park was later used by the Ministry of Defence and became known as *RAF Chicksands* (HER 9273). It later passed to the United States Air Force.
- 2.5 A number of gravel and sand extraction pits were situated in the area: one is located 100m northwest of the site (HER 3059). Further extraction pits (HER 2518 & 2514) were situated south and west of the priory.
- 2.6 Little is currently known about the evaluation site, which has been open ground since at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The layout in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century is illustrated on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 3). It is situated immediately south of Rowney Warren Wood (HER 17793), which may be ancient woodland and originally may have extended further to the south, towards the priory, incorporating the site.

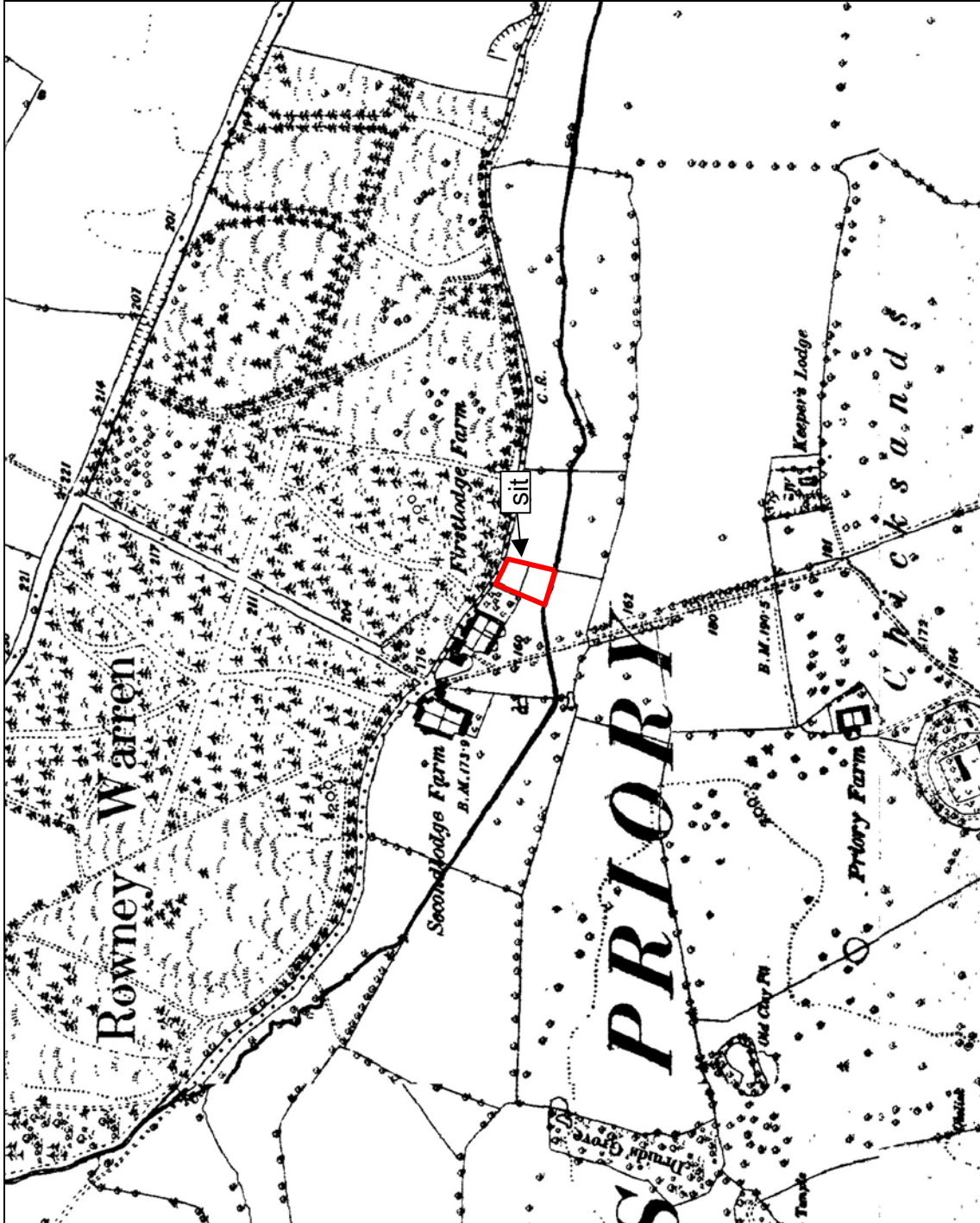
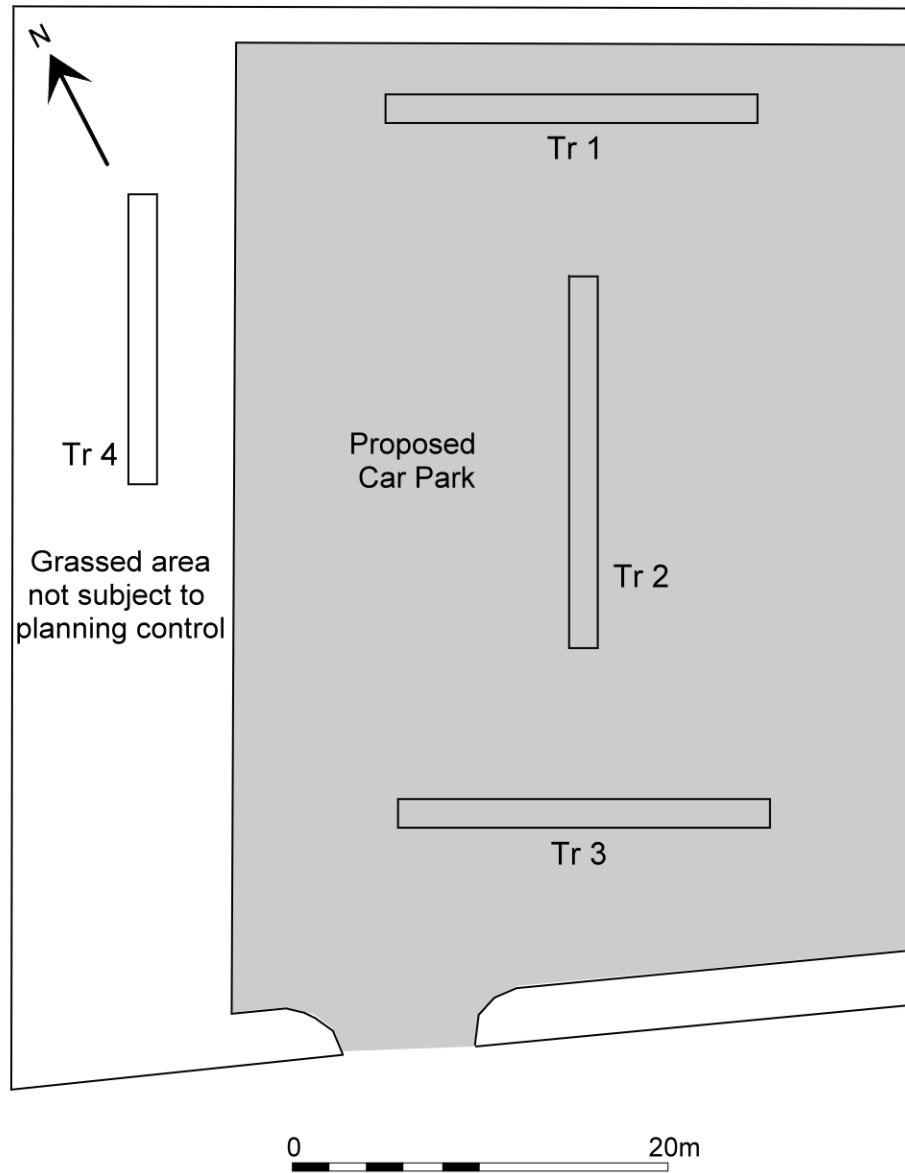


Figure 3: Extract from the first edition Ordnance Survey map c. 1885 (not to scale)

## 4 Results

- 4.1 A J mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m toothless bucket was employed to open three 20m trenches in the area of the proposed car parking area. An additional 15m trench (Trench 4) was opened to the west of the development area (Fig 4).
- 4.2 The natural strata across the site comprised sands ranging in colour from a pale orange sand in Trench 1 to a grey sandy silt in Trench 3. A considerable quantity of iron staining was observed in this grey deposit, possibly indicating that it had been laid down during occasional episodes of flooding or waterlogging. Below about 500mm the grey gave way to the natural pale orange sand observed in the other trenches.
- 4.3 The spoil, trench sections and bases were scanned for finds, but no pottery or other artefacts were observed during the evaluation.
- 4.4 Trench 1 was orientated NNW – SSE. On opening this trench a surprising depth of plough soil was encountered 400-450mm. The bases of two parallel features [102] and [103] running the length of the trench went down a further 80mm (see Appendix 1 for plan). These features have been interpreted as the bases of deep plough furrows.
- 4.5 Trench 2 was orientated NNE – SSW. The dark yellowish brown sandy loam plough soil was c.400mm deep and covered the natural greyish buff sand, over the next 10mm this sand became a pale orange. Two irregular hollows [202] and [203] (see Appendix 1 for plan) c.2.5m diameter were cut into the natural to a depth of 350mm below the base of the plough soil. The irregular nature of these features are typical of that formed when trees are uprooted.
- 4.6 Trench 3 was orientated NNW – SSE the plough soil covering in this area was only c.300mm, below which a 200mm layer of grey sandy silt was recorded. As stated above this layer contained a considerable mineral content probably due to waterlogging. No cut features were seen in this trench.
- 4.7 Trench 4 was to the west of the development area and was excavated as an addition to the work required by the planning condition. The trench was orientated NNE – SSW. About 300mm of plough soil overlay the clean natural sand. A few cobbles about 5m from the NNE end of the trench might mark the line of a former field boundary but no definite conclusions could be drawn as they were on the base of the plough soil and might have been dragged some distance by the plough.



**Figure 4:** Trench layout plan (scale 1:250)





**Plate 1:** Furrow [102]



**Plate 2:** Tree hole [202] partially excavated by machine



## 5. Conclusions

5.1 The evaluation at Lodge Farm, Chicksands was required as the site lies in an area of considerable archaeological interest. With prehistoric ring ditches c.500m to the east of the site, medieval Chicksands Priory to the south, and the probability that Lodge Farm itself dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, when pottery was being produced in the area, it was considered possible that archaeological remains could be disturbed during the construction of the car park. Evaluation by trenching was considered the most appropriate method to determine if buried remains lay beneath the plough soil. The four trenches opened conclusively prove that no major deposits are likely to be disturbed by the development. The two probable tree holes in Trench 2 are likely to be associated with the boundary shown on the 1885 map and are of little archaeological significance.

5.2 Despite the negative results of the evaluation it must be remembered that the trenching only examined a small percentage of the site and isolated features could be present in the areas not investigated.

### 5.3 *Confidence Rating*

The evaluation was done in a single day supervised by an archaeologist highly experienced in this type of work. The machine used was suitable for the job, and the driver was able to leave the trenches in a clean condition ideal for recognising changes in soil colour and texture which if present could have indicated the presence of archaeological features.

With these conditions a high confidence rating can be given to the result of the evaluation.

## **6. Acknowledgements**

The writer is grateful to Nick Parrish for commissioning ASC to carry out the evaluation at Lodge Farm. Nick also arranged for Angus Lammie to have his JCB on site to excavate the trenches. We would also like to acknowledge Martin Oake the CAO who prepared the brief and monitored the fieldwork. Steve Coleman at the Historic Environment Record provided David Fell the historical data relating to the site and its environs. The project was under the overall management of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA and Nigel Wilson HND AIFA undertook the fieldwork.

## **7. Archive**

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs/slides
7. Colour slides
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum, accession number 2005.14.

## 8. Bibliography

Fell D 2005 *Lodge Farm Sandy Lane Chicksands Bedfordshire*, Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation. (ASC document reference 641/CLF)

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*).

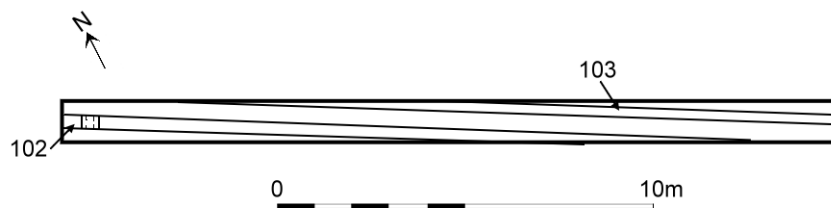
Oake M 2004 *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological investigation at Lodge Farm, Sandy Lane, Chicksands, Bedfordshire*. Beds C.C.

RCHM 1986 *Register of Parks & Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England*. RCHM


Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

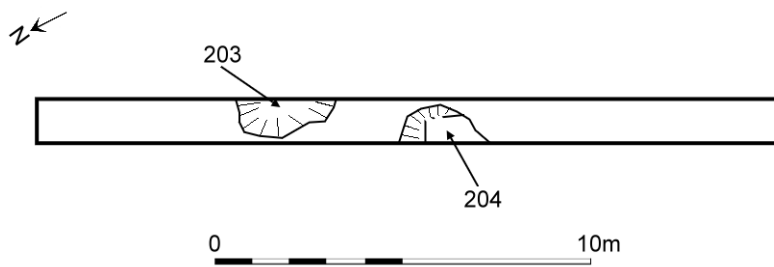
## Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

<b>Trench 1</b>						
	<b>Max Dimensions (m)</b>					
	<b>Length</b>	20.7	<b>Width</b>	1.6	<b>Depth</b>	0.65
	<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>					
	<b>NNW</b>	12368 40029		<b>SSE</b>	12387 40022	
	<b>Orientation</b>			NNW - SSE		
	<b>Reason for Trench</b>			Pattern of evaluation trenches		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
100	Layer	Dark yellowish brown sandy loam plough soil.	1600	300	0-300	
101	Layer	Natural. Pale orange sand	1600			
102	Cut	Base of modern deep plough furrow. Filled with dark yellowish brown sand loam	1600	100	300-400	
103	Cut	Base of modern deep plough furrow. Filled with dark yellowish brown sand loam	1600	100	300-400	




Plan of Trench 1 (scale 1:200)


<b>Trench 2</b>						
	<b>Max Dimensions (m)</b>					
	<b>Length</b>	19.8	<b>Width</b>	1.6	<b>Depth</b>	0.6
	<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>					
	<b>NNE</b>	12374 40017	<b>SSW</b>	12363 39990		
	<b>Orientation</b>		NNE - SSW			
	<b>Reason for Trench</b>		Pattern of evaluation trenches			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>	<b>Max Width (mm)</b>	<b>Max Thckn (mm)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (mm)</b>	
200	Layer	Dark yellowish brown sandy loam plough soil.	1600	400	0-400	
201	Layer	Greyish buff sand becomes more pale orange with depth	1600		400-	
202	Cut	Irregular hollow c.2.3m diam. Fill buff sandy silt.	2300	350	400-750	
201	Cut	Irregular hollow c.2.75m diam. Fill buff sandy silt.	2750	350	350-700	



Plan of Trench 2 (scale 1:200)



<b>Trench 3</b>						
	<b>Max Dimensions (m)</b>					
	<b>Length</b>	20.3	<b>Width</b>	1.6	<b>Depth</b>	0.75
	<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>					
	<b>NNW</b>	12354 39983	<b>SSE</b>	12373 39986		
	<b>Orientation</b>		NNW - SSE			
	<b>Reason for Trench</b>		Pattern of evaluation trenches			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>	<b>Max Width (mm)</b>	<b>Max Thckn (mm)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (mm)</b>	
300	Layer	Dark yellowish brown sandy loam plough soil.	1600	300	0-300	
301	Layer	Grey sandy silt some mineral staining, Natural.	1600	200	300-500	
302	Layer	Pale orange sand with mineral staining, Natural	1600		500-	

<b>Trench 4</b>						
	<b>Max Dimensions (m)</b>					
	<b>Length</b>	15.4	<b>Width</b>	1.6	<b>Depth</b>	0.4
	<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>					
	<b>NNW</b>	12349 40030	<b>SSW</b>	12344 40015		
	<b>Orientation</b>			NNE - SSW		
<b>Reason for Trench</b>			Additional trench outside development area			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>	<b>Max Width (mm)</b>	<b>Max Thckn (mm)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (mm)</b>	
400	Layer	Dark yellowish brown sandy loam plough soil.	1600	300	0-300	
401	Layer	Pale orange sand	1600		300-	