



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: LAND TO THE REAR OF 37 HIGH STREET, KIMPTON, HERTFORDSHIRE

on behalf of R. Andrews Esq



Jonathan R Hunn BA, Ph.D, MIFA

September 2004

ASC: 256/KHS/02

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Site Data

County:	Hertfordshire		
District:	North Herts District Council		
Village/Town:	Kimpton		
Parish:	St Peter and St Paul		
NGR:	TL 17593-18293		
Total extent of site:	44m x 16m		
Extent of development:	c. 56 sq.m		
Present land use:	Property curtilage, garages etc.		
Planning proposal:	Construction of detached dwelling and garage block		
Planning application ref/date:	1/97/0960		
ASC site code:	KHS00	No:	256
Desk-based assessment?:	Not applicable		
Client:	Bob Andrews, The Cross Keys, Gustard Wood, Herts, AL4 8LA		
Contact name:	As above		
Telephone	01582-832165	Fax:	

Internal Quality Check

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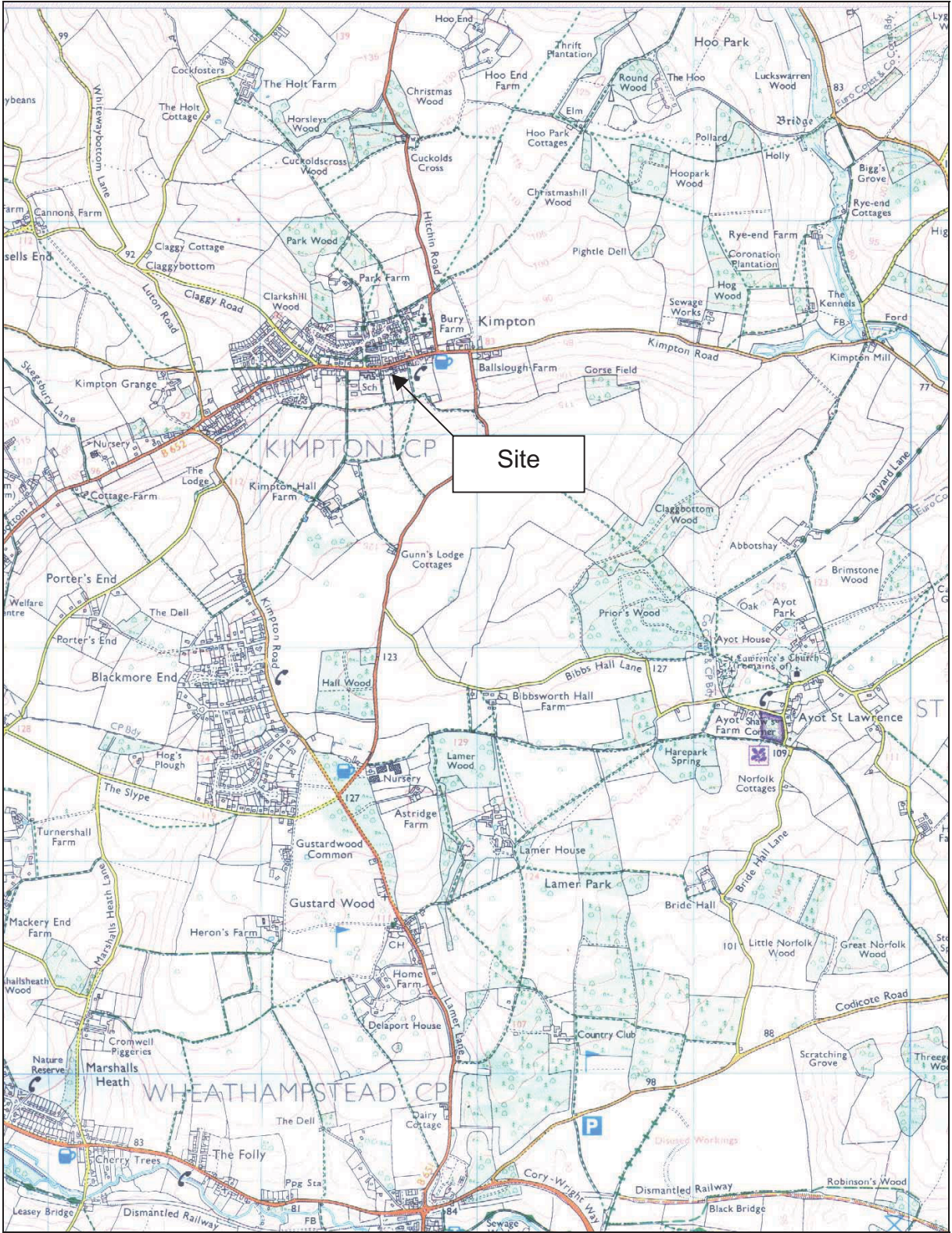


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In late September 2004 archaeological watching brief was undertaken on a service trench to a new dwelling to the rear of 37 High Street, Kimpton, Hertfordshire. The results were fairly inconclusive owing to comparative shallowness of the trench and the depth of the built up ground. This revealed that most of soil horizons were of comparatively recent origin though there was one feature which might conceivably have been the upper fill of a well. The artefactual evidence suggests a date not earlier than the mid 19th century.

1 Introduction

1.1 During late September 2004 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief on a service trench (NGR TL 17593-18293 : Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mr R. Andrews, and was carried out according to a brief (9/8/00) prepared by the County Archaeology Office (CAO) on behalf of the local planning authority (North Hertfordshire District Council), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (1/97/0960).

1.2 *Reason for Work*

The work was required to the location of the site within the historic core of Kimpton and the potential that archaeological deposits could be present on the site.

1.3 *Setting*

1.3.1 The site is situated about 200m to the south west of the medieval church of St Peter and St Pauls on the south side of the High Street. The site is not much more than 710 sq m (excluding the access road) on land which would have formed part of the original curtilage of numbers 37-47 on the High Street.

1.3.2 The site lies within a dry valley at an elevation of about 85m above OD. The natural soils are derived from plateau drift which give rise to the Hornbeam 2 Association. These are described as follows: *'The flinty red and grey mottled clays are, in turn, overlain by thin loamy drift. The principal soil, fine loamy over clayey Hornbeam series is a stagnogleyic paleo-argillic brown earth* (Hodge et al 1984, 220).

1.3.3 Access is gained directly from the High Street along a concrete surfaced track.

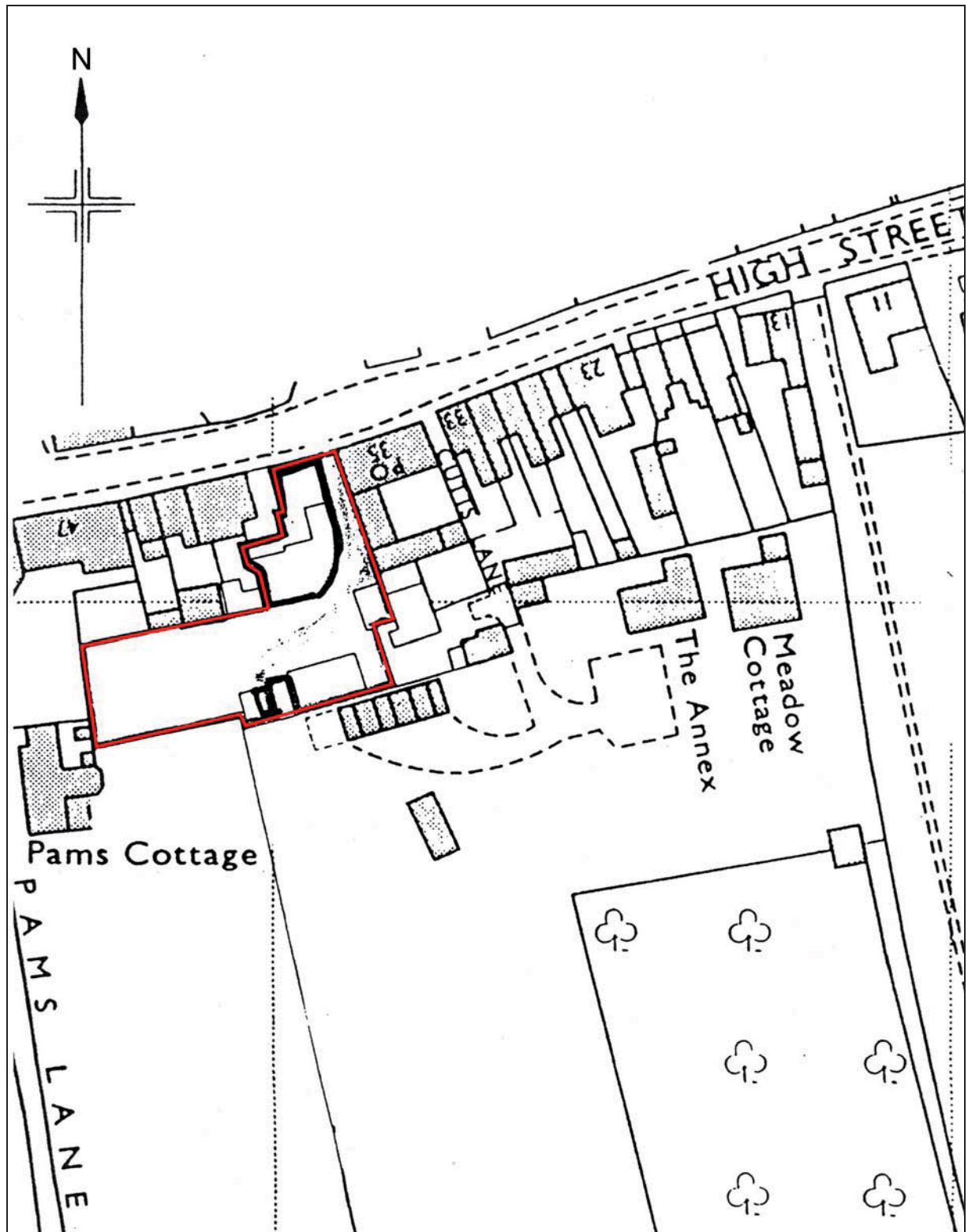


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1000)

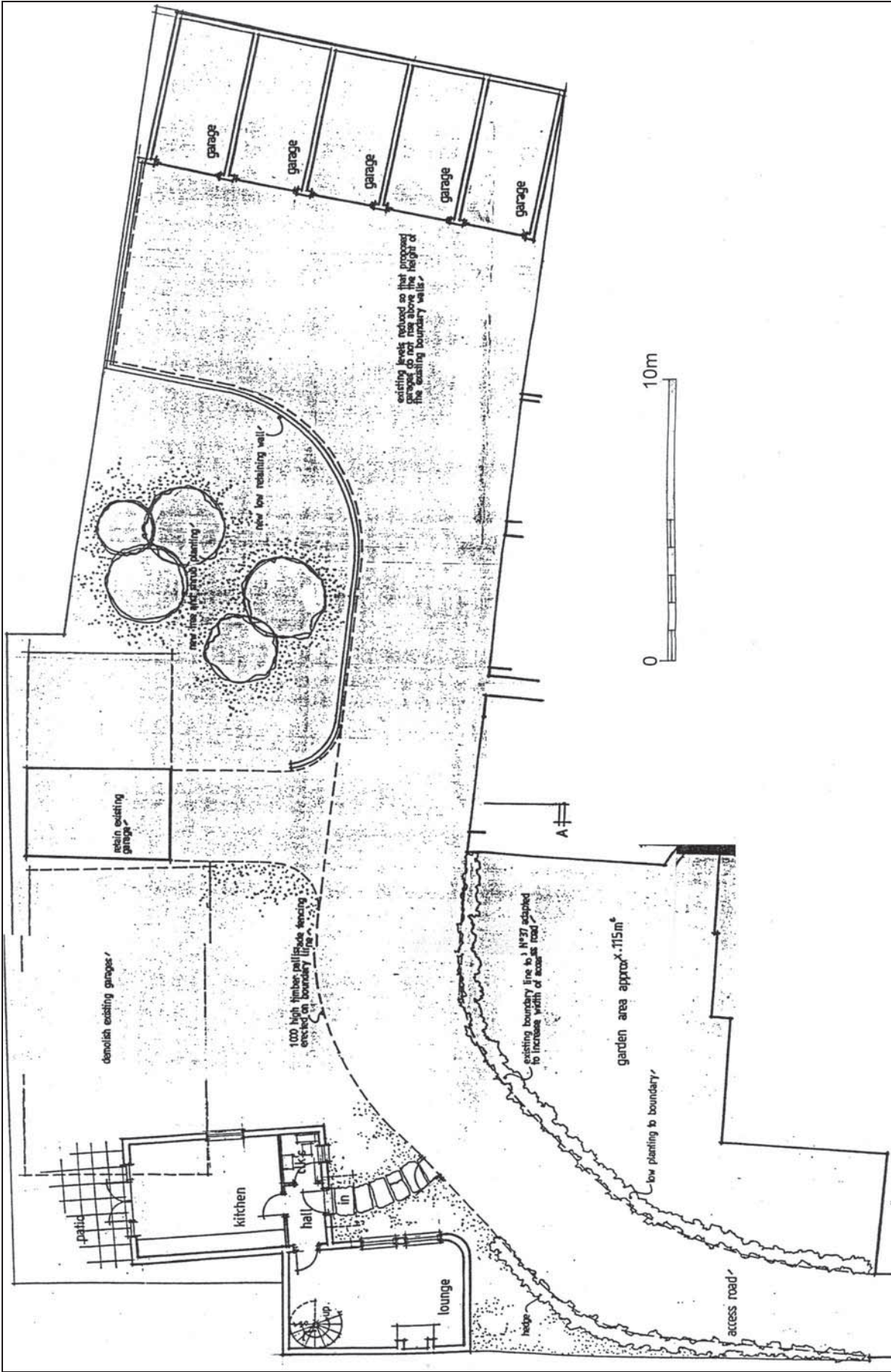


Figure 3: Plan of new house plan excluding development of garages (not to scale)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief, the aims of the watching brief were:

- to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains which are liable to be threatened by the development.
- to produce an accurate and full record of the archaeology present, such that a permanent record will be made and the results presented in such a way that they may be re-examined and interpreted in the future.

2.2 Methods

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

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development 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 and ecofactual material recovered from the site.

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 Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (ALGAO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

The earliest recorded entry for the name occurs in Domesday Book when it appears as *Kamintone* (Gover et al 1970, 15). The name derives from an Anglo-Saxon reference to a personal name, that is, 'Farm of *Cyma*' (*ibid.*). The name implies that the village grew from a single homestead farm but when this occurred is not known for certain, though an Anglo-Saxon date would seem the most probable.

The Domesday Book entry of 1086 (Morris 1974) suggests that there was still a relatively high proportion of wood land surviving with an average swine population of 80 pigs per ploughland (there were 10 'ploughlands' all told in a township of 3677.16 acres). The taxation lists for the late 13th and early 14th centuries suggest that there was a taxable population that varied between 18 and 45 (average of 32.5) which puts Kimpton in the middle rank of settlements within the county.

In the late Anglo-Saxon period Kimpton was held by Aelveva, mother of Earl Morcar and by 1086 it was in the hands of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (Page 1912, 29-31). The manor was held from Odo, by Robert de Curbesspine from who it passed to the family of Geoffrey de Say (*ibid.*). Under the de Sais family Kimpton was held by three tenants as the manors of Hockinghanger, Parkbury and Leggatts (*ibid.*). The last two manors eventually descended with Hockinghanger from the second half of the 17th century (*ibid.*). There were several other manors (Bibbesworth and Little Bibbesworth) which seem to have belonged to the manor of Pirton and were formed by sub-infeudation and other reputed manors such as Plummers and Leigh which were probably of similar derivation (*ibid.*).

In 1563 there were 56 families recorded in the parish of Kimpton (Munby 1964). In the early 17th century there were 234 communicants (*ibid.*) and by 1663 there were 45 dwellings (PRO E 179 248/23). At the beginning of the 19th century the census records a population of 644 living in 142 dwellings; by the middle of the century the population had risen to 992 though by the end of the century there had been a slight decline to 944 individuals. According to the Ordnance Survey 1st Series map (c.1878) the site of no. 37 High Street was unoccupied. This also appears to be the pattern in the mid 18th century when the south side was virtually undeveloped (Andrew & Dury's Survey of Hertfordshire 1766).

4 Results

- 4.1 The trench proceeded from the High Street on the left side of the access road (Plate 1) It measured about 30m in length and was 0.5m wide and no more than 0.65m deep. No sign of any natural ground was identified with any certainty (Plates 2-3). The soil profile was as follows:

0m to 0.1m: concrete slab

0.1m to 0.3m: was a pebbly brown clay, brick fragments, tile, occasional slate, iron and glass.

0.3m to 0.65m: the ground was a dark brown, pebbly clay with occasional tile fragments, oyster shells, clay pipe stem fragments, glass, bone and nearer the new house, china ware, glass, occasional nails and a few sherds of late 19th century ceramics.

- 4.2 Near the house a patch of chalk was noted some 1.4m in extent and about 0.35m down. On closer examination, it looked more like the upper part of a pit or possibly a well (See sketch on reverse of monitoring sheet for September 28th; Plate 4).



Plate 1: Location of trench in relation to the new dwelling.

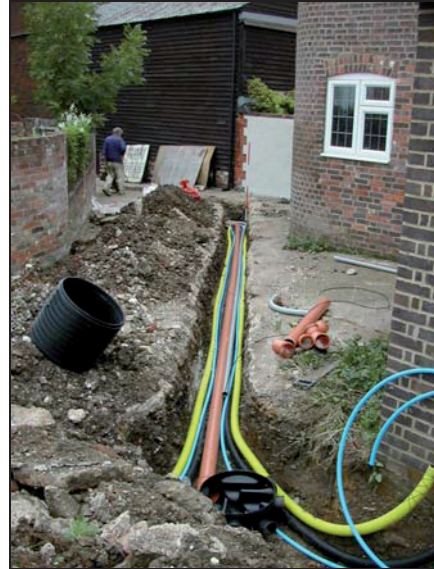


Plate 2: Section of trench looking NE.



Plate 3: Section of trench looking SW.



Plate 4: Detail of chalk feature in trench.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The observations undertaken on the line of the service trench were insufficient to reach a definite conclusion due to the shallowness of the excavation. The only certainty was that the area had been disturbed, most probably by activities associated with the houses on the High Street. A single pit, or possibly the top of an infilled well was seen but otherwise the trenches revealed nothing that would pre-date the mid-19th century.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Mr R. Andrews for commissioning this report and to the County Archaeology Office for their advice. Also to the ground contractor, Vincent Gifford, for his co-operation. Finally the author would like to thank my colleague, Bob Zeepvat for editing this report.

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/slides
7. Colour slides
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. Original specialist reports and supporting information
10. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Letchworth Museum.

8. Bibliography

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- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
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- Youngs, F. A. 1979: *Guide to the Administrative units of England. Volume I: Southern England*. Offices of the Royal Historical Society. London.

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD			
Project: 37, High St Kimpton		Project No/Code: 256 / KHS		Sheet: 1 of 2	
Client/Developer: R. Andrews		Date of visit:			
Contact: V. Gilford		Phone: 01582-833342			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 3.45	Finish:			
Completed by: JAH on behalf of D. Fall.					
Development Type:					
Footings	Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines
Other (specify):					
Site & weather conditions: Dry, overcast					
Observations:					
<p>The first 20m section was observed from the High Street to the rear house (c.5m wide and c.0.65). All the ground was made-up and consisted of a dark brown pebbly clay that contained fragments of brick/tile and other late post-medieval debris.</p>					
Comments:					
No finds or features noted within the service trench					

For sketch plan, use reverse

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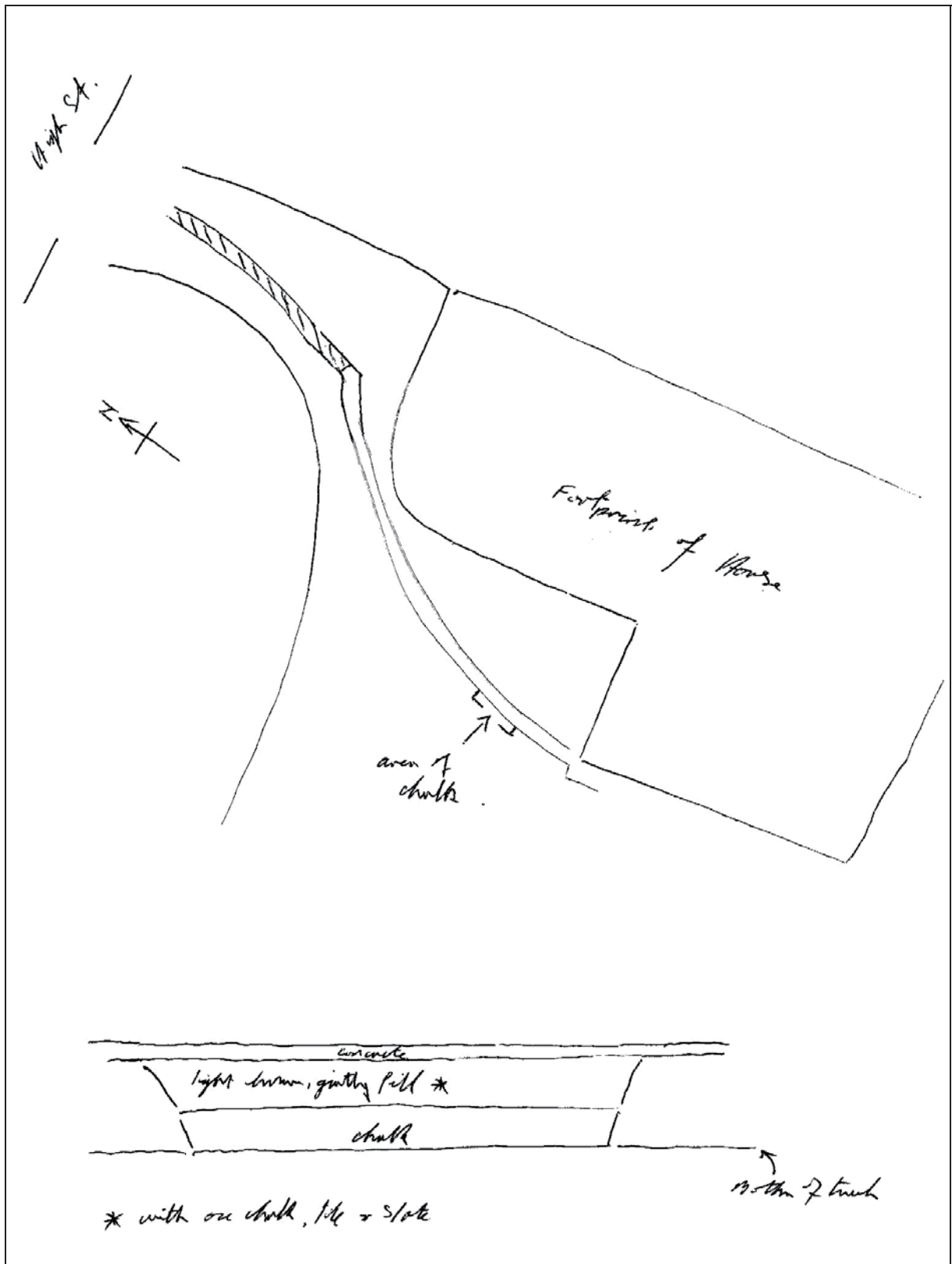
A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: 37, High Street Kimpton		Project No/Code: 256 I KHS	Sheet: 2 of 2
Client/Developer		Date of visit: 28/9/04	
Contact: Vincent Clifford		Phone: 01582-833342	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 11.45 am	Finish: 1.15 pm	
Completed by: GRAA			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services ✓	Roads	Levelling
		Quarrying	Pipelines
Other (specify):			
Site & weather conditions: Dry & overcast			
Observations: <p>Observed about 15m of Service trench; this being the second half of the trench that connects the new chertling with the Services in the High Street. The trench is 0.5m wide x 0.65m deep. No natural ground was observed; the upper 0.1m is the concrete downpipe, below this is 0.2m of a make-up of pebbly brown clay, brick fragments, tile, one slate, iron, glass; below this the ground is a dark brown pebbly clay with one tile fragment, an asphalt shelled clay pipe stem & glass, bone; several large china ware frags, glass one small - very little pottery noted. A patch of chalk 14m wide and 0.35m deep. It looks as though it is filling a cut/pit (See over for sketch)</p> <p>* A few shreds of late C19 ceramic only; old bit of china as flint work noted</p>			
Comments: <p>Last visit - observations complete. Possible evidence for pre-modern activity.</p>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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Appendix 2: SMR Summary Sheet

HERTS

Site name and address: 37a, High Street, Kimpton, Herts		
County: Herts		District: North Herts
Village/Town: Kimpton		Parish:
Planning application reference:		
Client name, address, & tel. no: Bob Andrews, The Cross Keys, Gustard Wood, Herts, AL4 8LA		
Tel: 01582-832165		
Nature of application: Service trench		
Present land use: drive way		
Size of application area: n/a		Size of area investigated: n/a
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 17593-18293		Site code: 256/KHS
Site director/Organization: J.R. Hunn / ASC Ltd		
Type of work: watching brief		
Date of work:	Start: Sept 27 th 2004	Finish: Sept 28 th 2004
Curating museum: Letchworth		
Related SMR nos:		Periods represented: mid-19 th century
Relevant previous summaries/reports n/a		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p><i>In late September 2004 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken on a service trench to a new dwelling to the rear of 37 High Street, Kimpton, Hertfordshire. The results were fairly inconclusive owing to comparative shallowness of the trench and the depth of the built up ground. This revealed that most of soil horizons were of comparatively recent origin though there was one feature which might conceivably have been the upper fill of a well. The artefactual evidence suggests a date not earlier than the mid 19th century.</i></p>		
Author:		Date: