

## Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:  
RIVERSIDE NURSERIES  
TEMPLE LANE  
BISHAM  
BERKSHIRE**

NGR: SU 8467 8474

*for Bidwells LLP on behalf of Europlants (UK) Ltd*



Jonathan R Hunn BA PhD MIFA

February 2011

ASC: 1365/BRN/2




Letchworth House  
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall  
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE  
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700  
Email: [office@archaeological-services.co.uk](mailto:office@archaeological-services.co.uk)  
Website: [www.archaeological-services.co.uk](http://www.archaeological-services.co.uk)



## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	BRN	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1365
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2-94351	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	tbc
<i>County:</i>	Berkshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Bisham		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Bisham		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SU 8467 8474		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	82.2 sq m (floor area)		
<i>Present use:</i>	Car park and loading bay		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of office and storage building		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	10/01159		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	5 <sup>th</sup> to 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2011		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Bidwells LLP 49 High Street Kings Langley Hertfordshire WD4 9HU		
<i>Client:</i>	Europlants (UK) Ltd Great North Road Bell Bar A1000 Hatfield Hertfordshire AL9 6DA		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Lucie Stone (Bidwells)		

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Jonathan R Hunn	<i>Date:</i>	24 <sup>th</sup> February 2011
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<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	24 <sup>th</sup> February 2011

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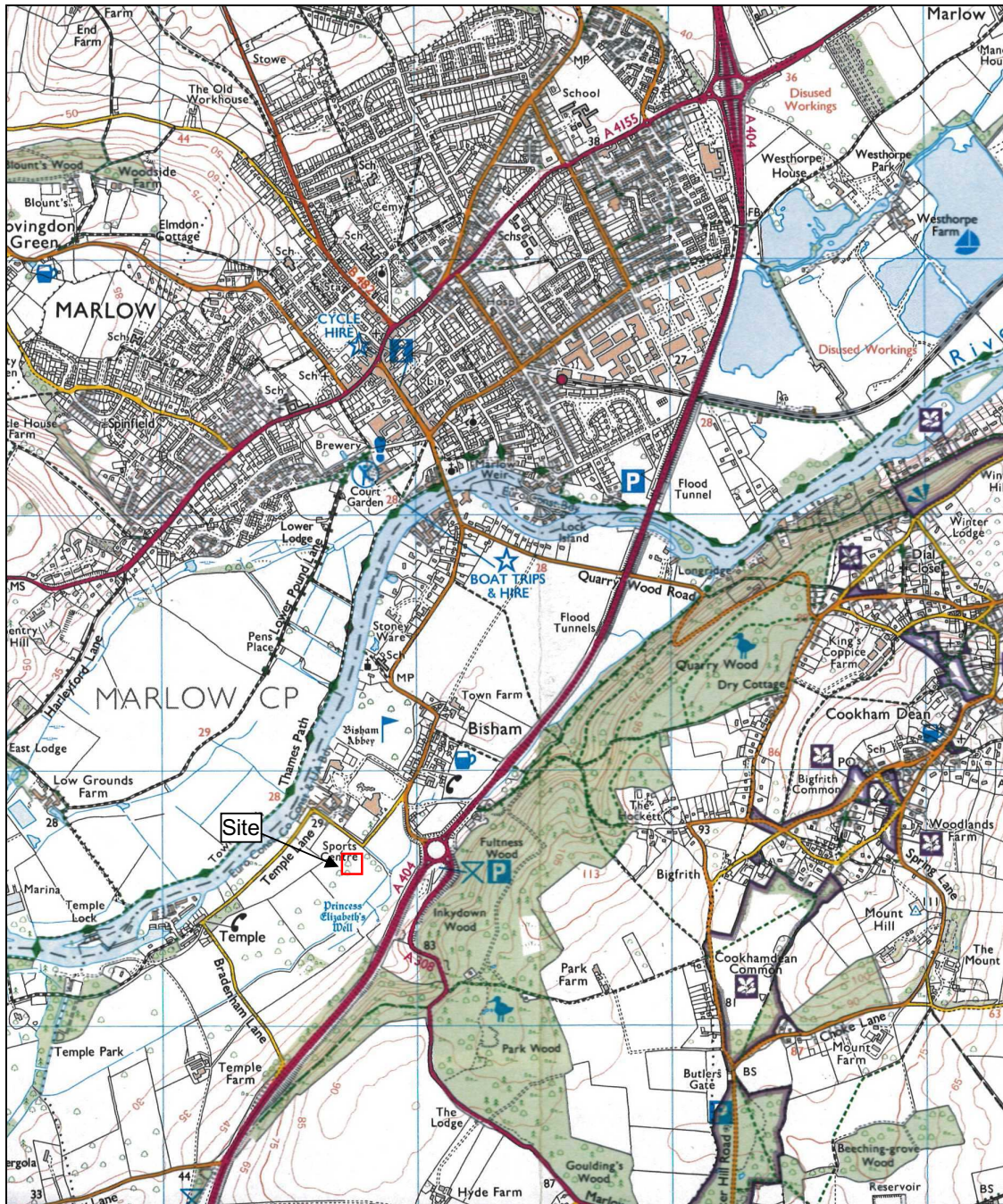


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken on a small development at Riverside Nursery, Bisham, Berkshire in January 2011. Observation of excavations for the foundations and service trenches established that the new development was built on river alluvium within the floodplain of the river Thames. There was no evidence of human activity or occupation before the modern period.*

## 1. Introduction

1.1 In January 2011 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Riverside Nursery, Bisham, Berkshire. The project was commissioned by Lucie Stone of Bidwells on behalf of Europlants (UK) Ltd). It was carried out according to a brief (MacDonald 2010) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead*, by their archaeological advisors (AA), *Berkshire Archaeology*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Fell 2010). The relevant planning application reference is 10/01159.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

### 1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

ASC is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

### 1.4 *The Site*

#### 1.4.1 *Location & Description*

The site is in Bisham, in the administrative district of Windsor and Maidenhead, Berkshire (Fig. 1). It lies on the south side of the village off Temple Lane, and is situated at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU 8467 8474 (Fig. 2).

The site comprises a sub-rectangular plot of land occupied by *Riverside Nursery*, and used as a garden centre. The site is bounded to the north-east by Temple Lane, from which the site is accessed, and on the remaining sides by open land.

#### 1.4.2 *Geology & Topography*

The natural soils of the site comprise the *Thames Association*; namely 'stoneless, mainly calcareous clayey soils affected by groundwater' (Soil Survey 1983, 814a) over 2<sup>nd</sup> terrace Shepperton Gravels. The underlying solid geology comprises Upper Cretaceous Chalk (BGS, Sheet 255). The site is flat and lies at an elevation of c.28m OD.

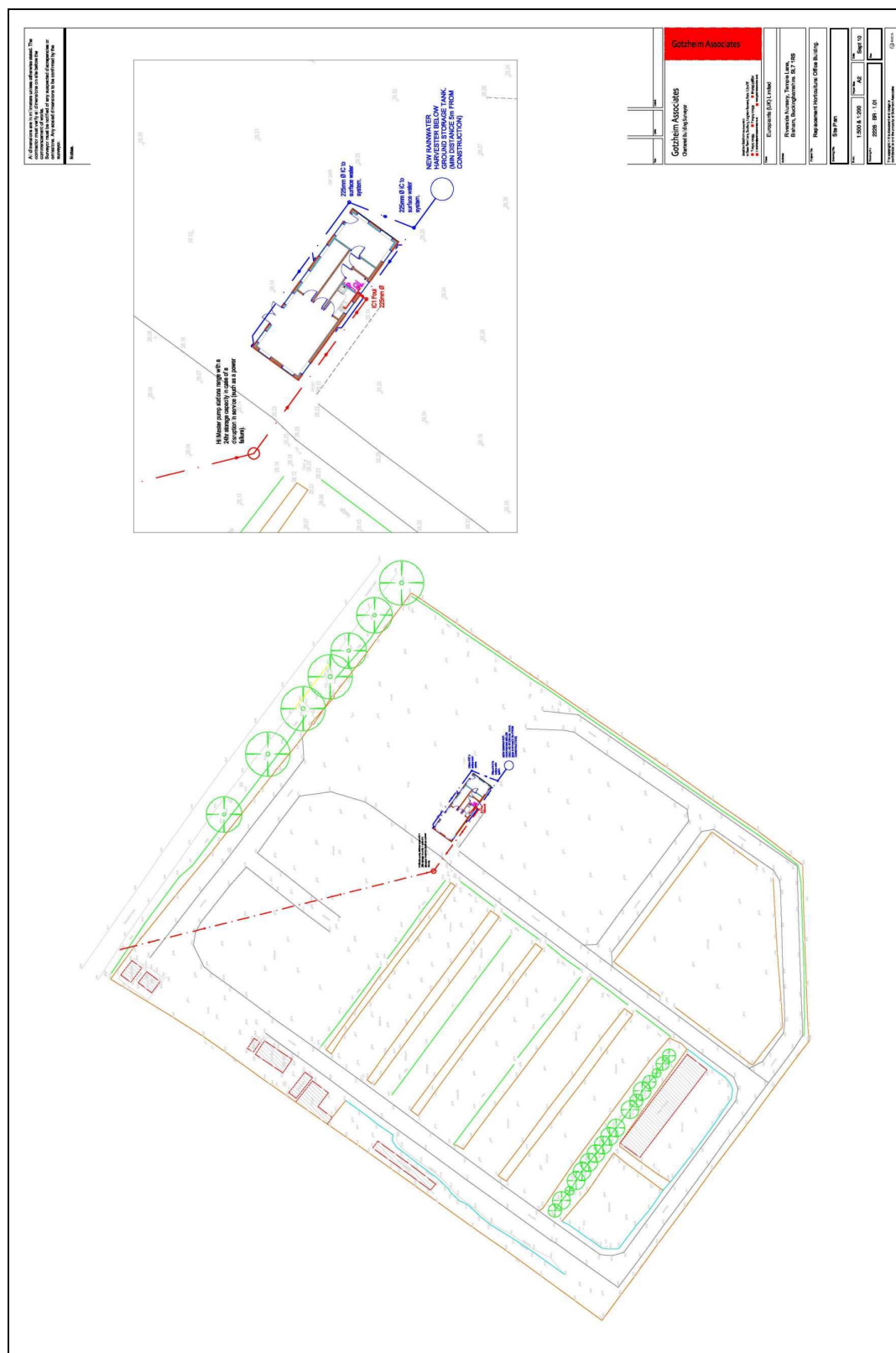
#### 1.4.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the construction of a single storey horticultural office and storage building. The new building will be situated in the north-east part of the site in an area currently used for car parking and loading. (Fig. 3).



**Figure 2:** Site plan (scale 1:1,250)





**Figure 3:** Proposed development (*not to scale*)

## **2. Aims & Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

As described in the project design (Section 3), the aims of the watching brief were:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to have an impact upon archaeological deposits.
- 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.
- To provide an adequately detailed project report that will place the findings of the monitoring and recording of the development programme in their local and regional context, having made reference to the relevant regional research agendas, and through cartographic, documentary and other research.

### **2.2 Standards**

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

### **2.3 Methods**

The work was carried out according to the project design (Section 3), which specified:

- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision
- Use of a toothless ditching blade for machine excavation;
- Inspection of subsoil deposits for archaeological features;
- Rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits including environmental;
- Subsoil stripping under archaeological supervision;
- Examination of any service and foundation trenches and the subsequent recording/investigation of any exposed archaeological deposits including environmental;
- Examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material;
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving, and publication.

### **2.4 Constraints**

Apart from poor weather there were no constraints on the implementation of the archaeological project.



### 3. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from the *brief* and ASC's in-house library.

- 3.2 The site is on second terrace gravel and the terraces of the river Thames are areas of known archaeological importance (Fulford & Nichols 1992). No large scale archaeological excavation has been undertaken in this area of Bisham but excavations elsewhere in the middle Thames Valley (eg Allen *et al* 2009, Foreman *et al*, 2002) highlight the archaeological potential of the area.
- 3.3 No archaeological remains are currently known from the site. A number have been recorded in the area including flint artefacts, a Saxon brooch and Roman and medieval pottery in adjacent fields (Macdonald 2010, 4.3). Several cropmarks, possibly indicating the presence of circular buildings or ploughed out burial mound have been identified on the opposite bank of the river (Gates 1975, map 25).
- 3.4 Little is known of the early history of Bisham but a settlement may have developed during the Saxon period. Bisham is referred to in the Domesday Survey (1086) where it is referred to as *Bistesham*. The survey records the presence of a church and the land, which was held by *Henry de Ferrers* was valued at twelve pounds (Williams & Martin 2003, 148). The place name is recorded as *Bustlesham* in 1196 and is probably derived from Old English *Byssel* (Ekwall 1977, 45).
- 3.5 The site is adjacent to Bisham Abbey which was founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and is a *Scheduled Ancient Monument* (no. 19021). It was a preceptory of the Knight's Templars but the order was suppressed in 1307 and in 1333 it became an Augustine Priory. The priory was later surrendered and was re-founded as a Benedictine Mitred Abbey. It was dissolved in 1538 and was settled on Anne of Cleves by Henry VIII though the grant was not confirmed until the reign of Queen Mary. It was then exchanged for a house in Kent, and became the property of Sir Philip Hoby (Ditchfield & Page 1907, 82-85).
- 3.6 The first edition one inch to the mile scale Ordnance Survey map was published in 1822 and shows the site as open land. The 1883 edition six inch to the mile scale map also shows the site as open land and the site probably remained undeveloped until it was laid out as a nursery in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 4. Results

- 4.1 Three site visits were made during groundworks for the development (Appendix 1), which consisted of excavations for the strip footings of the new building, and for a number of related service trenches (Fig. 4).

### 4.2 Footings

The foundation trenches for the new office block consisted of a single trench 0.7m wide and c. 1.5m deep, enclosing a rectangular area approximately 16m E-W by 6m N-S (Plates 1 & 2). The typical soil sequence revealed was as follows:

0.00 - 0.15m	Modern hardstanding
0.15 - 0.50m	Smooth, dark bluish silt
0.50 - 1.50m	Dark greyish brown silt (Mun 10YR 4/2)
1.50m+	Light yellowish brown sandy, silty gravel (Mun 10YR 6/4)

No archaeological features or artefacts were observed.

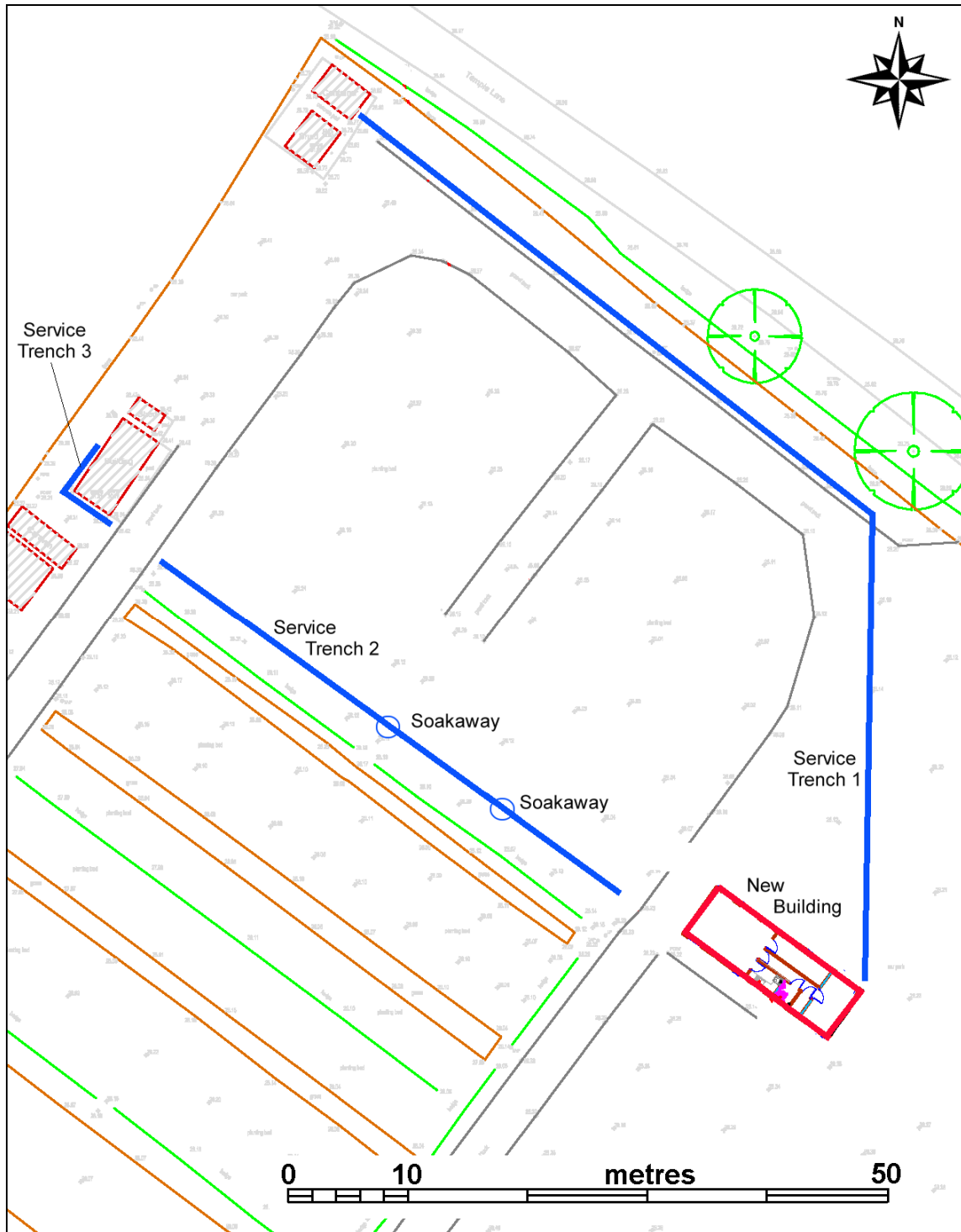
### 4.2 Service Trenches

Three service trenches were observed as follows:

**Trench 1** was c.90m in length. It was located c.3m from the perimeter fence and ran parallel with it until it passed in front of the present entrance. The trench was c.0.35m wide and 0.7m deep. Apart from a thin layer of hardstanding less than 80mm thick, the ground comprised dark greyish brown silt (Mun 10YR 4/2).

**Trench 2** connected the new office with an existing shed. It was c.50m long and was cut through similar ground to Trench 1. Apart from two brick-filled soakaways and water pipes the trench was cut through virgin ground.

**Trench 3** was an L-shaped trench at the NW end of the nursery. It was 8m long (0.6m deep and 0.35m wide). There was no overburden present and the ground appeared to be entirely undisturbed.



**Figure 4:** Location of observations (*scale 1:500*)



**Plate 1:** West facing soil profile in NW-SE trench section



**Plate 2:** Detail of the character of the underlying valley alluvium



**Plate 3:** View NW along eastern service trench



**Plate 4:** View NW along western service trench



**Plate 5:** Eastern end of northern service trench



**Plate 6:** Detail of northern service trench

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 The observations undertaken on this site confirm that the immediate area lay within the floodplain of the Thames. Although it is possible for there to have been prehistoric riverine activity within the floodplain, activity of later periods is less likely to be present, as the risk of flooding would have posed a continuing threat to any permanent settlement. Nevertheless, the nearby foundation of a preceptory of the Knight's Templars in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century suggests that the actual 'risk' was more apparent than real.
- 5.2 No artefacts recovered from either the foundations or the service trenches. The resulting spoil from both was examined but in neither case was anything of significance observed. In the author's view the present site has a low archaeological potential.



## **6. Acknowledgements**

The project was commissioned by Bidwells, on behalf of Europlants (UK) Ltd. The writer is grateful to Lucie Stone (Bidwells) and Greg Syms (groundworks contractor) for his assistance. The project was monitored by Fiona MacDonald of Berkshire Archaeology on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for ASC by David Fell MA MIFA. Fieldwork and report preparation was carried out by the author and the report was edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

## **7. Archive**

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Client's site plans
5. Site Monitoring Sheets
6. List of photographs
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Reading Museum.

## 8. References

### *Standards & Specifications*

- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. English Heritage (London).
- 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)*.
- Fell, D 2010 *Riverside Nursery, Temple Lane, Bisham, Berkshire: Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief*. ASC doc. ref. 1365/BRN/1.
- MacDonald, F 2010 *Riverside Nurseries, Temple Lane, Bisham: Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Berkshire Archaeology, Oct. 2010.

### *Secondary Sources*

- Allen T, Hayden C, Lamdin-Whymark H, 2009 *From Bronze Age enclosure to Anglo-Saxon settlement: Archaeological excavations at Taplow hillfort, Buckinghamshire*. Thames Valley Landscapes **30**. Oxford Archaeology
- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Ditchfield P H & Page W (eds), 1907 *The Victoria History of the County of Berkshire*. **2**
- Ekwall, E 1977 *English Place-Names*. Clarendon Press. (Oxford).
- Foreman S, Hiller J & Petts D, 2002 *Gathering the people, settling the land. The Archaeology of a Middle Thames Landscape: Anglo-Saxon to post-medieval*. Thames Valley Landscapes **14**. Oxford Archaeology
- Fulford M G & Nichols E, 1992 *Developing Landscapes of Lowland Britain. The Archaeology of the British Gravels: A Review*. Occasional Papers of the Society of Antiquaries of London **14**. Society of Antiquaries
- Gates T, 1975 *The Middle Thames Valley: An archaeological survey of the river gravels*. Berkshire Archaeological Committee Publication **1**.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).
- Williams A & Martin G H, 2003 *Domesday Book. A Complete Translation*. Penguin

## Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project: <i>Riverside Nursery</i> <i>Bisham</i>		Project No/Code: <i>1365 1BRN</i>		Sheet: <i>1</i> of <i>3</i>		
Client/Developer <i>Europoint (UK) Ltd</i>		Date of visit: <i>5/1/11</i>				
Contact: <i>Greg Syms</i>		Phone: <i>07774-456331</i>				
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>11.55am</i>	Finish: <i>3.30pm</i>				
Completed by: <i>JRH</i>						
Development Type:						
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dull, cold and damp.</i>						
Observations: <p><i>Observed the footings of the new office block. This had an overall dimension of c.16m x 6m. Its foundations were 700mm wide and c.1.5m deep. The average sequence of the ground was as follows</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1) c.150mm of hardstanding</i></li> <li><i>2) c.350mm of smooth dark-brown silt</i></li> <li><i>3) c.1000mm of dark greyish-brown silt (Mon: 10yr 4/2)</i></li> </ol> <p><i>This overlies the Thames gravel comprising a light yellowish-brown sandy, silty gravel (Mon: 10yr 6/4). There were no signs of any man-made features or artefacts.</i></p> <p><i>The full extent of the foundation was obtained.</i></p>						
Comments: <i>The Service trench remains to be seen (2 wks "time?")</i>						



A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: <i>Riverside Nursery</i>		Project No/Code: <i>1365 1 BRN</i>		Sheet: <i>2 of 3</i>	
<i>Bisham</i>		Date of visit: <i>14/1/11</i>			
Client/Developer <i>Europeants (UK) Ltd</i>					
Contact: <i>Greg Syme</i>			Phone: <i>07774 456331</i>		
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: <i>9.05 am</i>		Finish: <i>1 pm</i>	
Completed by: <i>JRH</i>					
Development Type:					
Footings	Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines
Other (specify):					
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dull &amp; wet (100)</i>					
Observations: <p>Observed three service runs. The first one by 3m from the northern perimeter (ie parallel to it). It was c.53m long by 0.7m deep and 0.35m wide. Apart from a relatively thin layer of topsoil (less than 80mm) the ground was composed of the dark greyish brown silt (10YR 4/2). This run was orientated roughly E-W. It will eventually join up with the new office block. Coming from the new building was another service trunk which is approximately in the centre of the nursery (E-W). At this point the run was approximately 48m long and more or less the same as the first being parallel to the perimeter fence. Apart from two modern drain filled soakaways and water pipes the trunk was cut through virgin ground. At the western end of this run (on the other side of the trunk) was a 3rd service trunk. This was L-shaped and approximately 8m long with no overflows (0.6m deep x 0.35m wide).</p>					
Comments: <p>None of these trunks contained any features or artefacts. The service runs have yet to be completed. See sketch sheet [3].</p>					



A.S.C. LTD

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: <i>Riverside Nursery</i>		Project No/Code: <i>1365 / BRN</i>	Sheet: <i>3 of 3</i>
<i>Bisham</i>		Date of visit:	
Client/Developer <i>Europlants (UK) Ltd</i>			
Contact: <i>Greg Syme</i>		Phone: <i>07774-456331</i>	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>10.30am</i>	Finish: <i>c. 3.00pm</i>	
Completed by: <i>GRA</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roads	Levelling
		Quarrying	Pipelines
		Other (specify):	
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dry, Sunny (2c)</i>			
Observations: <i>Observed another section of a service trench (water) Trench is 350mm wide by 1m deep. The upper 0.2m is hard standing followed by about 0.5m of dark greyish brown silt and then 0.3m of a dark yellowish brown, stoney silt (Mon 10 yr 4/4/). Length observed was c. 35m (See sketch on Sheet w.3)</i>			
Comments: <i>No features or artifacts observed. No further visits required.</i>			



## Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Riverside Nursery, Bisham			SITE NO/CODE: 1365/BRN
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		1058	Mechanical excavation of western foundation trench
2	1	1059	View SE along western side of new office building
3	2	1060	General view of new office building looking south
4		1061	View NNW across the site
5		1062	General view SE across the nursery
6		1063	West facing soil profile in NW-SE trench section
7		1064	Detail of the character of the underlying valley alluvium
8		1070	Service trench at the northern end of eastern water pipe
9		1071	View SE along eastern service trench
10		1072	View NW along eastern service trench
11		1073	View SE along western service trench
12		1074	Detail of one of the soakaways in the western service trench
13		1075	View NW along western service trench
14		1076	View of L-shaped service trench by shed at northern end of site
15		1077	Detail of L-shaped service trench by shed at northern end of site
16		1147	Setting of current development looking south west
17		1150	Location of northern end of service trench looking ESE
18		1152	Northern service trench looking north
19		1153	Detail of northern service trench
20		1155	View of machining underway
21		1156	Eastern end of northern service trench

### Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Riverside Nursery, Bisham	OASIS reference:	archaeol2-94351
Short Description:	A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken on a small development at Riverside Nursery, Bisham, Berkshire in January 2011. Observation of excavations for the foundations and service trenches established that the new development was built on river alluvium within the floodplain of the river Thames. There was no evidence of human activity or occupation before the modern period.		
Project Type:	Watching Brief		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	none
Current land use:	Plant nursery and retail	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	unknown
Monument type:	NA	Monument period:	NA
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Berkshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SU 8467 8474
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	Riverside Nursery, Temple Lane, Bisham, nr Marlow, Berkshire		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	82.2 sq m (floor area)	Height OD: (metres)	c.28m OD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Fiona MacDonald (Berks Arch)	Project design originator:	David Fell (ASC)
Project Manager:	D. Fell (ASC)	Director/Supervisor:	J.R. Hunn (ASC)
Sponsor / funding body:	Europlants (UK) Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	5 <sup>th</sup> January	End date:	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2011
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	West Berkshire Museum	None	
Paper:		Brief, proj. design, site records, plans, photos, report	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief: Riverside Nurseries, Temple Lane, Bisham, Marlow, Berkshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1365/BRN		
Author(s):	Jonathan R Hunn		
Page nos	19	Date:	24/2/11