



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
LAND AT 3 NORTH STREET,
LEIGHTON BUZZARD,
BEDFORDSHIRE**

on behalf of Logan Construction



By

Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA

January 2005

ASC: 639/LNS/02

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



Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	LNS	<i>Project no:</i>	639
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>District:</i>	South Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Leighton Buzzard		
<i>Parish:</i>	Leighton Buzzard CP		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 9217 2515		
<i>Extent of development:</i>	c.32 sq m		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Commercial premises		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of an outbuilding as a storehouse		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	04/620/FUL		
<i>Client:</i>	Logan Construction Great Brickhill Lane Little Brickhill MK17 9NH		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Godfrey Logan		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Mobile</i>	

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Nicholas A Crank	<i>Date:</i>	19 th January 2005
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	19 th January 2005
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

© Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

No part of this document is to be copied in any way without prior written consent.

Every effort is made to provide detailed and accurate information. However, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd cannot be held responsible for errors or inaccuracies within this report.

© Ordnance Survey maps reproduced with the sanction of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

ASC Licence No. AL 100015154

CONTENTS

Summary 4

1. Introduction 4

2. Aims & Methods 6

3. Archaeological & Historical Background 7

4. Results 9

5. Acknowledgements 13

6. Archive 13

7. References 14

Appendices:

1. Site Monitoring Records..... 15

Figures:

1. General location 3

2. Site plan 5

3. Area of observation 10

Plates:

Cover: General view of site, looking north east

1. Western part of trench, facing south west 11

2. Northern part of trench, facing north west 11

3. Eastern part of trench showing modern soakaway, facing north east 12

4. Southern part of trench, facing south east 12

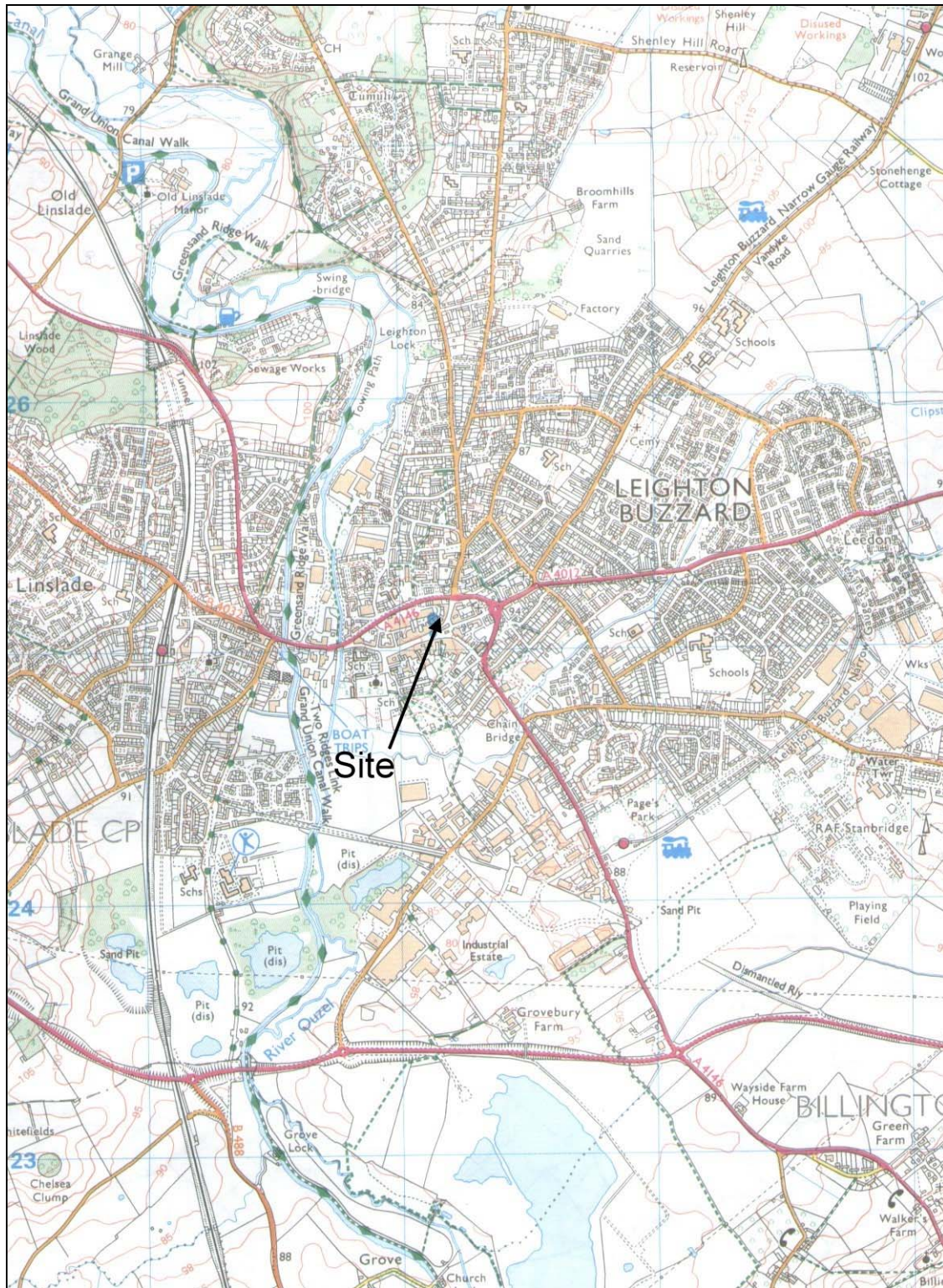


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During January 2005 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on a site at North Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. The project was undertaken during the excavation of foundations for an outbuilding forming a cold store and dry goods store. No archaeological remains were observed during the works.

1 Introduction

1.1 During January 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief on a site at 3 North Street, Leighton Buzzard (NGR SP 9217 2515: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Logan Construction, and was carried out according to a brief (Beds CC, 2004) prepared by the archaeological officer of *Bedfordshire County Council* (BCC), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (Crank & Fell, 2004).

1.2 Reason for Work

As the development is within an area of known archaeological potential, BCC acting as archaeological advisor to *South Bedfordshire District Council* recommended that a watching brief should be undertaken, to enable archaeological monitoring of the groundworks. This advice was accepted and a condition requiring a watching brief to be commissioned was placed on the development.

1.3 Setting

1.3.1 Site Location

The site is situated in Leighton Buzzard in the administrative district of South Bedfordshire (Fig. 1). It is close to the centre of the town, on the west side of North Street and is centred on Ordnance Survey national grid reference SP 9217 2515 (Fig. 2). It comprises an irregular plot of land, to the rear of numbers 3 to 9 North Street and east of a multi-storey car park access road.

1.3.2 Geology and Topography

The site is in an urban area and the natural soils have not been mapped. If the soils survive they are likely to comprise the *Evesham 3 Association*: namely calcareous clayey and fine loamy soils over Jurassic and Cretaceous clay (Soil Survey 1983, 411c). The underlying geology comprises the Lower Cretaceous *Woburn Sands Formation*, over Jurassic clay (Ordnance Survey 1992).

1.3.3 Nature of the proposed development

The development comprises the construction of a new outbuilding to the rear of the existing restaurant (Fig. 3).

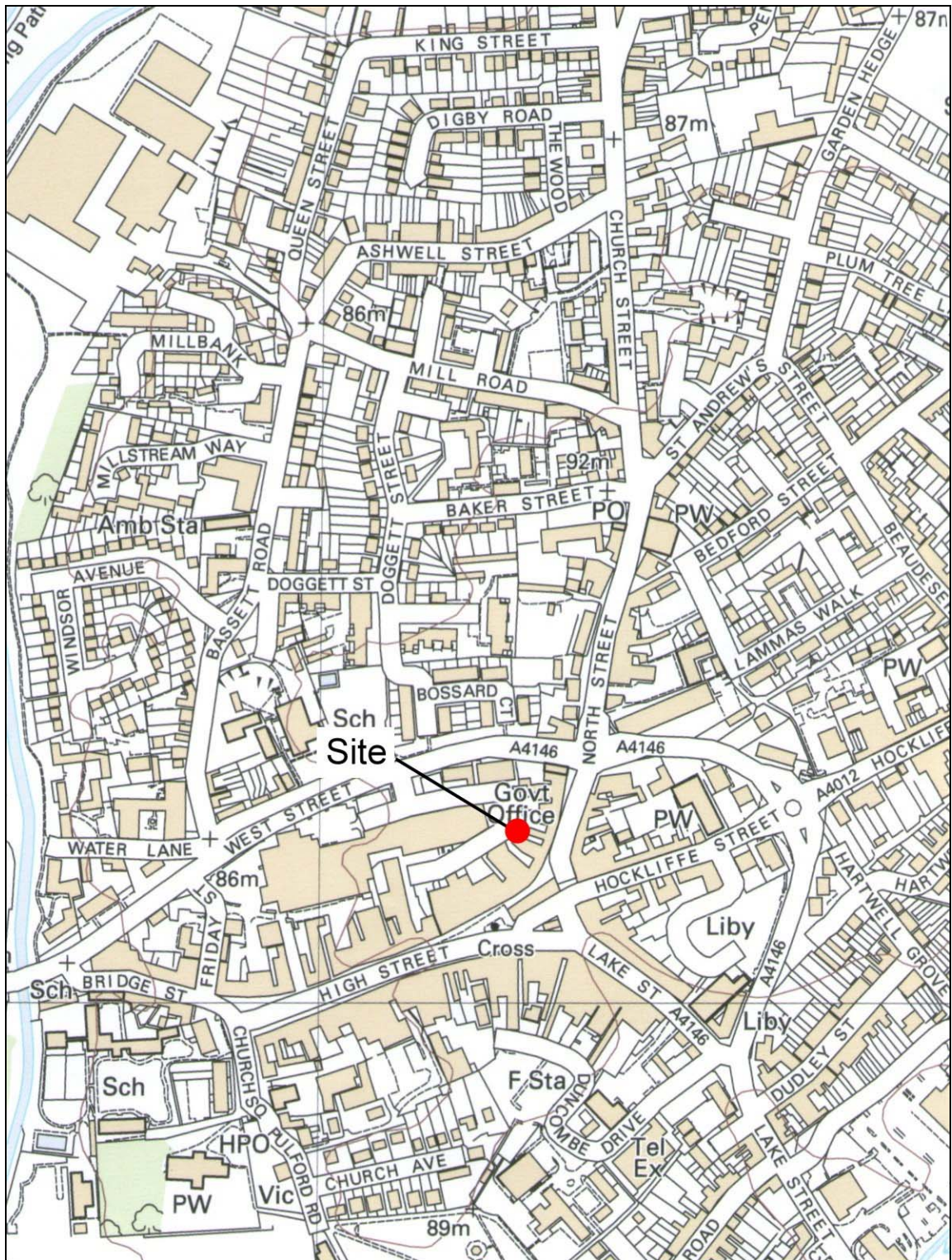


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:5000)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

In line with the requirements of the *brief* (Section 4.3), the aims of the watching brief were:

- to establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;
- to establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- to recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- to recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

2.2 Methods

In line with the requirements of the *brief* (Section 5), the methods to be adopted for this project were:

- a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording during the construction of the storehouse
- any ground disturbance likely to have an impact on archaeological deposits will be undertaken under the supervision of a competent archaeologist.

2.3 Standards

The work conforms to the project design, 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), *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003), *Procedure for Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedfordshire* (Bedford Museum 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 Leighton Buzzard is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest and this has been recognised by the designation of much of the town centre as a *Conservation Area* (Beds CC, 1996). The site is within the conservation area. It has the potential to reveal remains of a variety of periods but the focus of interest is likely to lie in the medieval period. Despite the historical significance of the town, very little archaeological work has taken place in the centre and the present development provides the first opportunity to observe an area in North Street.
- 3.2 The valley of the river Ouzel has attracted settlement since the prehistoric times, but little is known of the Leighton Buzzard area during these periods. Palaeolithic implements have been found during gravel working to the northwest of the site (HER 10722), but the prehistoric periods are in general under represented in the archaeological literature in this area.
- 3.3 During the Roman period Leighton Buzzard was away from the main centres of settlement and communication, although a settlement might be expected at the river crossing. Roman coins have been found in the churchyard (HER 9659) and Roman pottery has been found to the south of the High Street (HER 1464; Simco 1984, map F).
- 3.4 Little is known of the origins of Leighton Buzzard, but it may have originated during the Saxon period. The town was in existence by the time of the Domesday survey (1086), when the right to hold a market and to collect tolls belonged to the king. Remigius, the Bishop of Lincoln held the church and its lands.
- 3.5 The early layout of the town is not understood, but the settlement may have developed at the river crossing, and have included the site of the church. The present Bridge Street and Church Square may have early origins. The present church dates to the 13th century, but may occupy the site of an earlier building.
- 3.6 The present High Street was laid out as part of a planned extension to the town. The date of this expansion is not known, but may have taken place during the 12th century. The High Street was laid out extending from the east of the church, taking advantage of higher ground to the east. North Street and Lake Street probably also date to this period and may have been laid out to funnel traffic through the High Street towards the river crossing.
- 3.7 Properties on the High Street and parts of Lake Street and North Street were laid out with narrow street frontages and long narrow strips to the rear. These resemble medieval burgage plots, but burgage tenure or burgesses are not documented in the town. The plots and buildings on North Street are smaller and narrower than those on the High Street, possibly indicating that North Street was a lower status area. A back lane, known as Friday Street provided access to the rear of the plots in the High Street and North Street and is shown on the 1901 Ordnance Survey map (not illustrated).
- 3.8 North Street was probably a largely light industrial area during the later medieval and post-medieval periods. Gravel quarrying has been recorded to the northwest of North

Street from the 14th century (HER 1398; 10722) and small scale domestic industry may have taken place to the rear of the properties in North Street, perhaps within the present site. A smithy was situated adjacent to the northern boundary of the site (HER 11151), and a complex of buildings described as stables, workshops and warehouses was present c.100m to the north in 1862 (HER 3264), providing indications of the nature of activity in the area.

- 3.9 The present street frontage is dominated by 19th century brick built buildings, many of which are designated as *listed buildings*. The existing building at 3 North Street (HER 3258) benefits from listed status and along with neighbouring buildings is described *Nos 1-5 from a group. 18th century front in local bond of vitrified headers, old tile roof with red brick cornice* (HER sheet no. 3251). The building to the south comprises the Red Lion Inn, which was first licensed in 1843.

4 Results

- 4.1 The groundworks observed comprised the cutting of a rectangular trench to receive concrete foundations. The foundation trench measured c.8.0m x 4.0m and was c.0.5m in width, its depth was generally c.1.2m.
- 4.2 Sample sections were observed along the foundation trench revealing a general stratigraphy consisting of up to 0.4m of modern made ground and demolition rubble over a substantial (up to 0.55m thick) homogenous 'garden soil' layer which sealed the natural sand subsoil. The 'garden soil' layer was very disturbed by rooting and modern drainage cuts and no artefacts pre-dating the 19th century were recovered from it.
- 4.3 Observation of the foundation pits indicated that the area of the new building had been subject to moderate levelling with made ground deposits of up to 0.4m being present. However, the presence of the relatively intact 'garden soil' layer suggests that the area observed has been subject to little disturbance prior to the 19th century. One area of deep disturbance was identified, a modern rubble filled soakaway was located in the eastern section of the trench (Plate 3). This pit was cut to a depth of 1.8m below existing ground level.

4.4 *Archaeological impact of the development*

The watching brief revealed that the area of the new building had been subject to some moderate truncation and levelling in the recent past. The modern date of this activity was confirmed by the presence of large quantities of 19th century brick and tile in addition to transfer printed 'blue on white' pottery. No archaeological features were observed during the watching brief and no artefacts recovered. As a result it is considered unlikely that archaeological remains survive within the area of the new build and consequently the archaeological impact of the observed groundworks has been minimal.

4.5 *Confidence Rating*

Due to reasonable weather conditions combined with the full cooperation of the client, a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the watching brief.

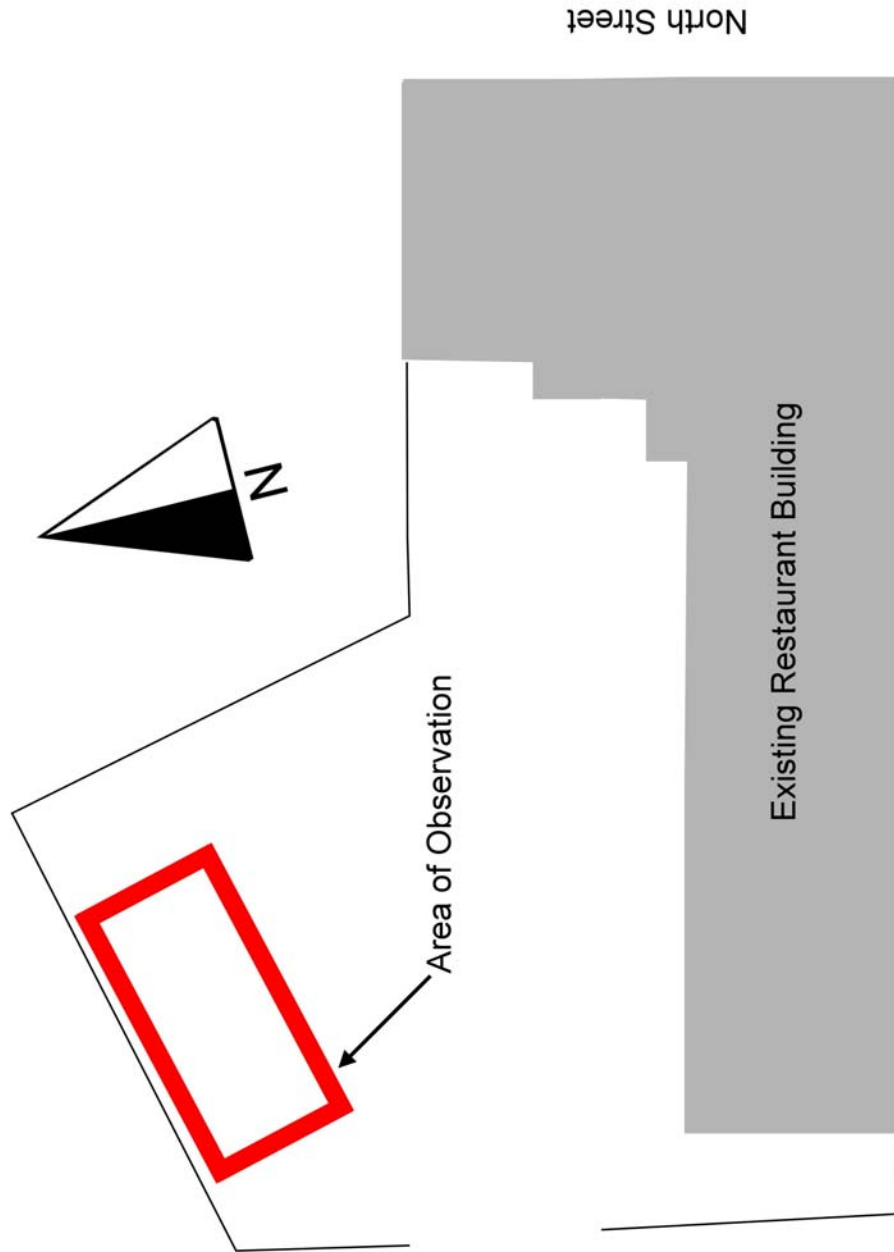


Figure 3: Area of Observation (Scale 1:200)



Plate 1: Western part of trench, facing south west



Plate 2: Northern part of trench, facing north west



Plate 3: Eastern part of trench showing modern soakaway, facing north east

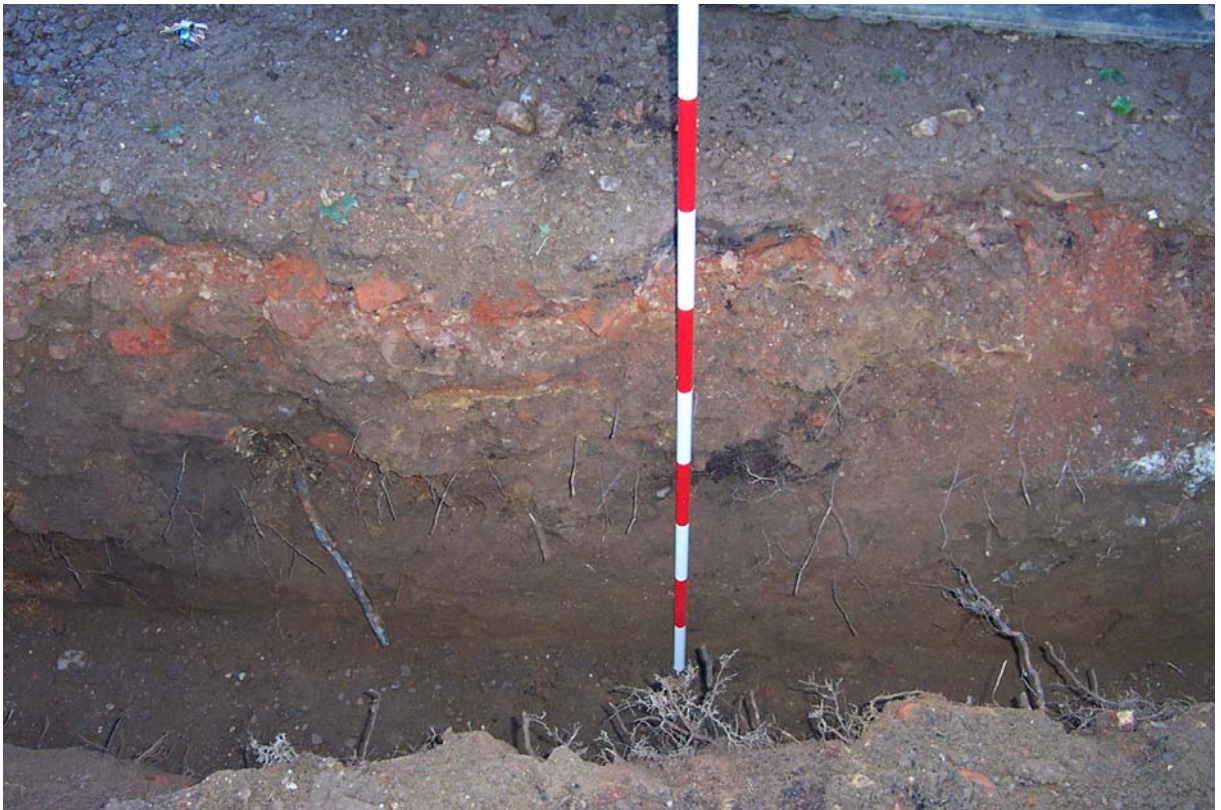


Plate 4: Southern part of trench, facing south east

5. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Godfrey Logan of Logan Construction for commissioning and funding the project. Thanks are also due to Ms Lesley-Anne Mather of BCC who acted as curatorial officer.

The fieldwork was undertaken for ASC Ltd by Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA. The report was prepared by Nicholas A Crank and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

6. Archive

6.1 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
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

6.2 The archive will be deposited with Luton Museum.

7. Bibliography

- Bedford Museum 2003 *Procedure for Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedfordshire* (Version 2.4)
- Beds CC, 1996 *Leighton Buzzard's Historic Environment*. Bedfordshire County Council, 1996
- Beds CC, 2004 *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Land at 3 North Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire*. Heritage and Environment Section, Bedfordshire County Council
- Crank, N.A. & Fell, D 2004 *Land at 3 North Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire: Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief on behalf of Logan Construction* (ASC: 639/LNS/1)
- Gurney D, 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**
- 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)*.
- Ordnance Survey 1992 *1:50,000 Series Geological Map*. British Geological Survey, sheet **220**
- Simco A, 1984 *Survey of Bedfordshire. The Roman Period*. Bedfordshire County Council/Royal Commission on Historical Monuments
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend*

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

 A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD	
Project: 3 NORTH ST, LEIGHTON BUZZARD		Project No/Code: 6391 LNS	Sheet: 1 of 1
Client/Developer: G. LOGAN		Date of visit: 17/1/05	
Contact: G. LOGAN		Phone: 07836 567528.	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 10.30	Finish: 4.00	
Completed by: NAC			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: OVERCAST, DRIZZLE - SOME RAIN.			
Observations: OBSERVED EXCAVATION OF 1/2 FOUNDATION TRENCHES FOR NEW OUTBUILDING. TRENCHES EXCAV. TO AVERAGE DEPTH OF c.1.0m AGAINST EXISTING SANDSTONE BOUNDARY WALL. TRENCH AT E. END DEEPER @ 1.8m DUE TO PRESENCE OF RUBBLE FILLED MODERN SOAKAWAY. SAMPLE SECTION 1: AGAINST EXISTING WALL NORTHERN TRENCH. 0.00 - 0.25m WALL FOOTING - SANDSTONE BRICKS 0.25 - 0.8m 'GARDEN SOIL' LAYER - HEAVILY ROOTED MID BROWN SOFT/LOOSE SANDY SILT. 0.8m - 1.0m+ NATURAL SAND - MID BROWNISH ORANGE COARSE SAND. SAMPLE SECTION 2 - EASTERN SECTION OF TRENCH. RANDOM DISTURBED TO DEPTH OF c.1.8m BY MODERN RUBBLE-FILLED SOAKAWAY.			
Comments: SPOIL SCANNED - NO. PRE-19th FINDS RECOVERED NO. FEATURES OBSERVED. REMAINDER TO BE CUT TOMORROW AM. DIGI. PHOTOS TAKEN.			



A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: 3 Nth St, LEIGHTON BUZZARD.		Project No/Code: 6391 LNS	Sheet: 1 of 1
Client/Developer: G. LOGAN		Date of visit: 18/1/05	
Contact: G. LOGAN		Phone: 07836 567528.	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 8.00 am	Finish: 10.00 am.	
Completed by: NAC			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services <input type="checkbox"/>	Roads <input type="checkbox"/>	Levelling <input type="checkbox"/>
			Quarrying <input type="checkbox"/>
			Pipelines <input type="checkbox"/>
			Other (specify): <input type="checkbox"/>
Site & weather conditions: CLEAR, DRY, BRIGHT.			
Observations: OBSERVED EXCAVATION OF REMAINING FOUNDATIONS - SOUTHERN & WESTERN SECTIONS. <u>SAMPLE SECTIONS:</u> SOUTHERN SECTION 0.00 - 0.40m HARDCORE SURFACE & BRICK RUBBLE BASE. 0.40 - 0.80m 'GARDEN SOIL' LAYER. V. ROOT DISTURBED. 0.80 - 1.2m+ NAT. SAND. <hr/> WESTERN SECTION. 0.00 - 0.20m HARDCORE YARD SURFACE OVER 'BUILDERS SAND' 0.20 - 0.40m MODERN BRICK RUBBLE & CRUSHED CHALK 0.40 - 0.85m 'GARDEN SOIL' AS ABOVE. 0.85 - 1.2m+ NAT. SAND.			
Comments: SPOIL SCANNED - NO. FINDS RECOVERED NO FEATURES OBSERVED. DIGI & B+W SHOTS TAKEN.			