

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:  
FENDLEY BARN  
COW ROAST  
HERTFORDSHIRE**

*on behalf of Guy Masters Esq*



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**June 2004**

**ASC: 571/CRF/02**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	CRF	<i>Project no:</i>	571
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>District:</i>	Dacorum		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Cow Roast		
<i>Parish:</i>	Berkhamsted St Marys (Northchurch)		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 95743-10188		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	6m x 12m approx.		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Old shed		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	New garage		
<i>Extent of development:</i>	c. 72 sq. m.		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	4/0071/04		
<i>Client:</i>	Guy Masters Esq Fendley Barn Cow Roast Herts HP23 5RG		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Guy Masters		
<i>Telephone</i>	01442-825065	<i>Fax:</i>	

## Internal Quality Check

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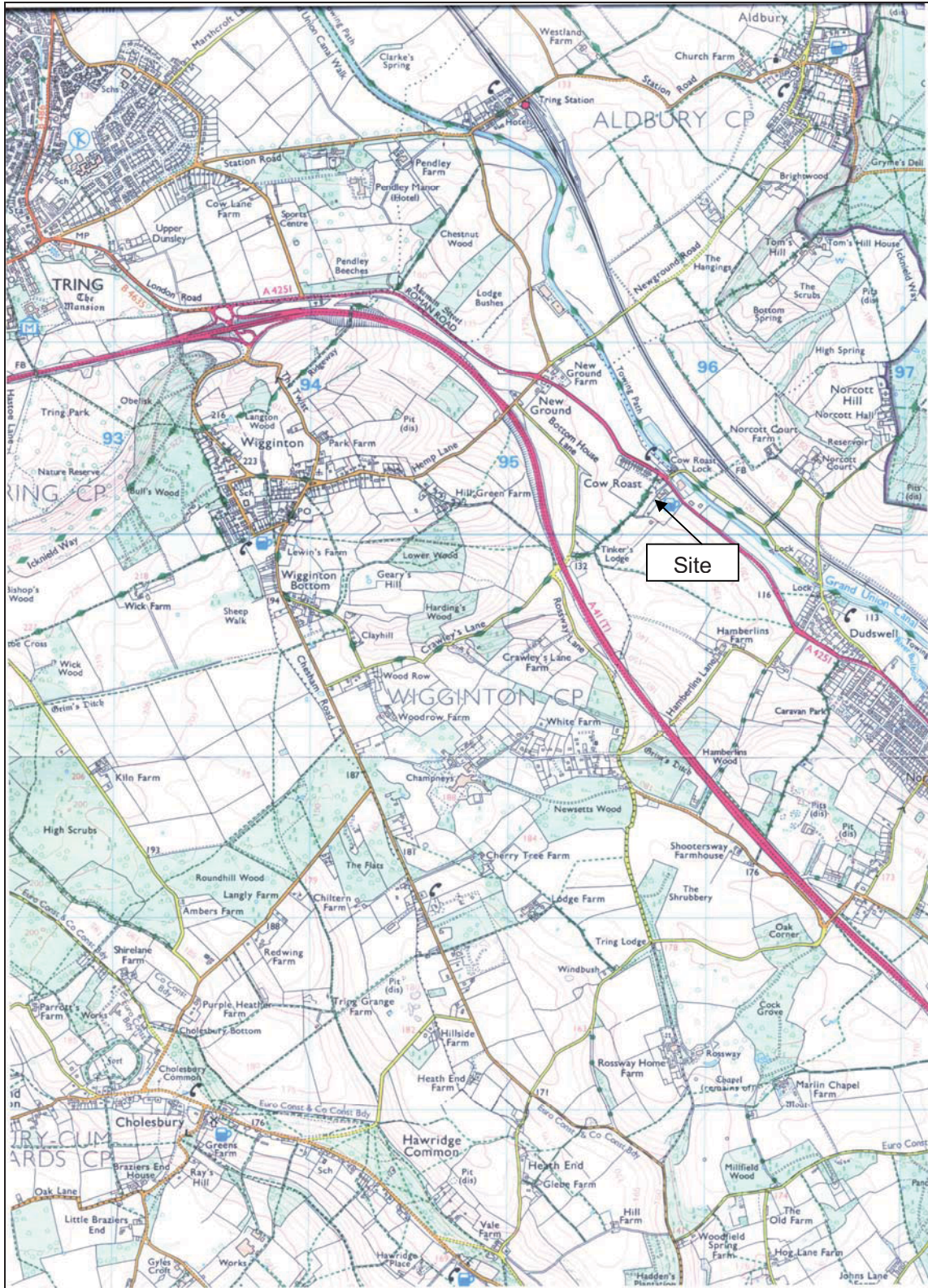


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*In the spring of 2004 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the foundations of a new garage and associated services at Fendley Barn, Cow Roast near Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. The site lies within the Romano-British settlement and the foundations cut through several associated features. These consisted of one possibly two pits and a layer of chalk which may have been a floor surface. The pottery suggests a date range of between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 During late May 2004 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief on a site at Fendley Barn, Cow Roast near Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire (NGR SP 95743-10188: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Guy Masters, and was carried out according to a brief prepared by the County Archaeology Office (CAO), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (ASC: 571/CRF/1).

### 1.2 Reason for Work

The work was required in response to a planning application (FUL/4/0071/04) which proposed a new three-bay garage and associated services.

### 1.3 Setting

1.3.1 The site is in the hamlet of Cow Roast, near Northchurch, Hertfordshire, and is centred on Ordnance Survey national grid reference (NGR) SP 95743-10188. It lies within a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is about 100m south west of the A4251 trunk road and about 180m to the south west of the former course of the river Bulbourne now occupied by the Grand Union Canal. The site comprises the garden of Fendley Barn and associated structures which lie within the AONB Bulbourne Valley zone (Woolerton Truscott 1993, 130).

1.3.2 The natural soils of the area comprise the *Charity 2 Association*, namely well drained fine flinty soil over chalk (Soil Survey 1983, 571m). The site lies in the valley of the river Bulbourne. This formed a northwest to southeast valley through the Cow Roast area, but was modified during the construction of the Grand Union Canal, which is situated to the east. The site is essentially flat and lies just above the 120m contour (AOD).

1.3.3 Access is obtained from the north side of the site, off the A4251. There is an existing dilapidated barn on the site. It is not known what other services are within the vicinity of the development.

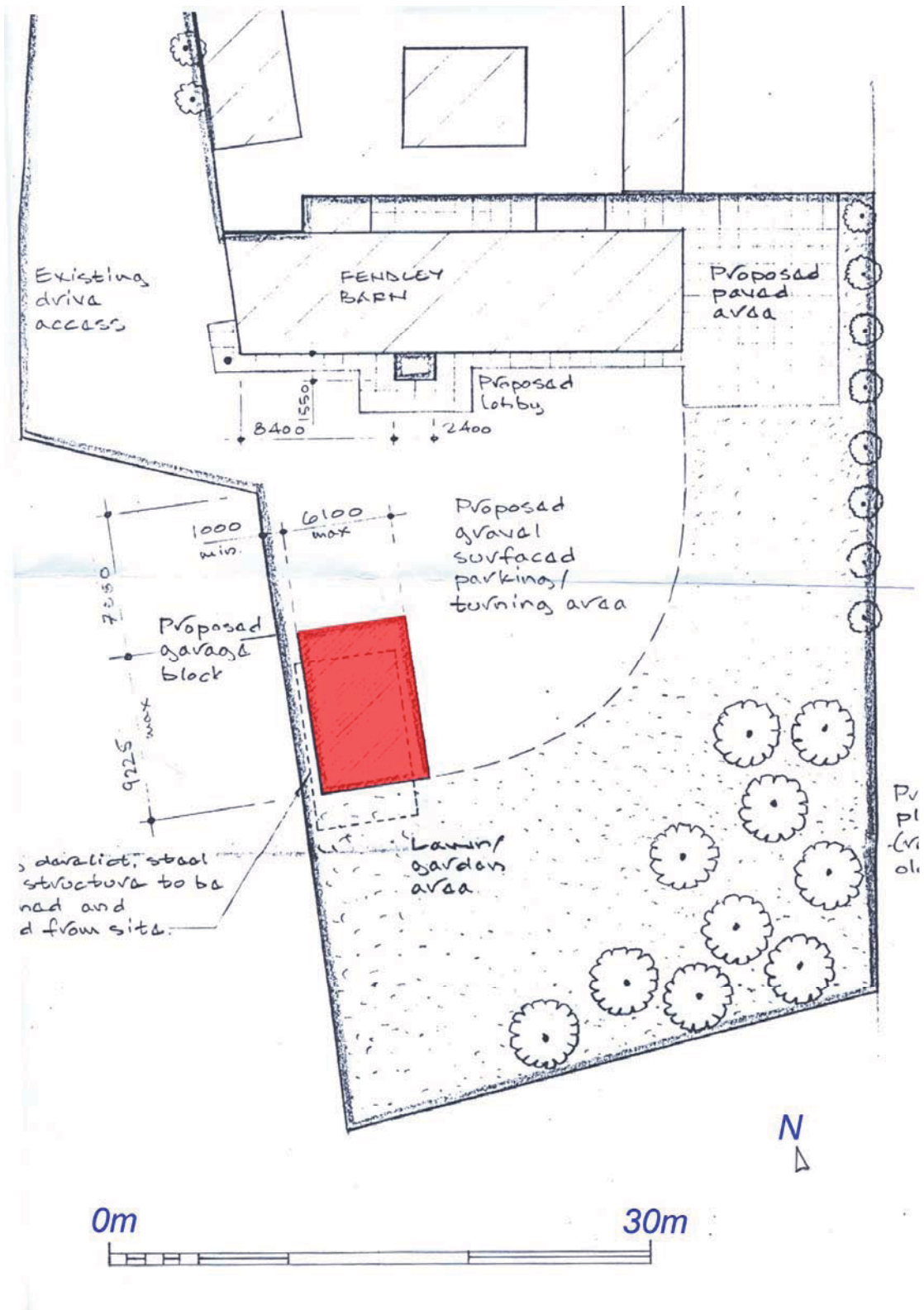


Figure 2: Location of proposed development

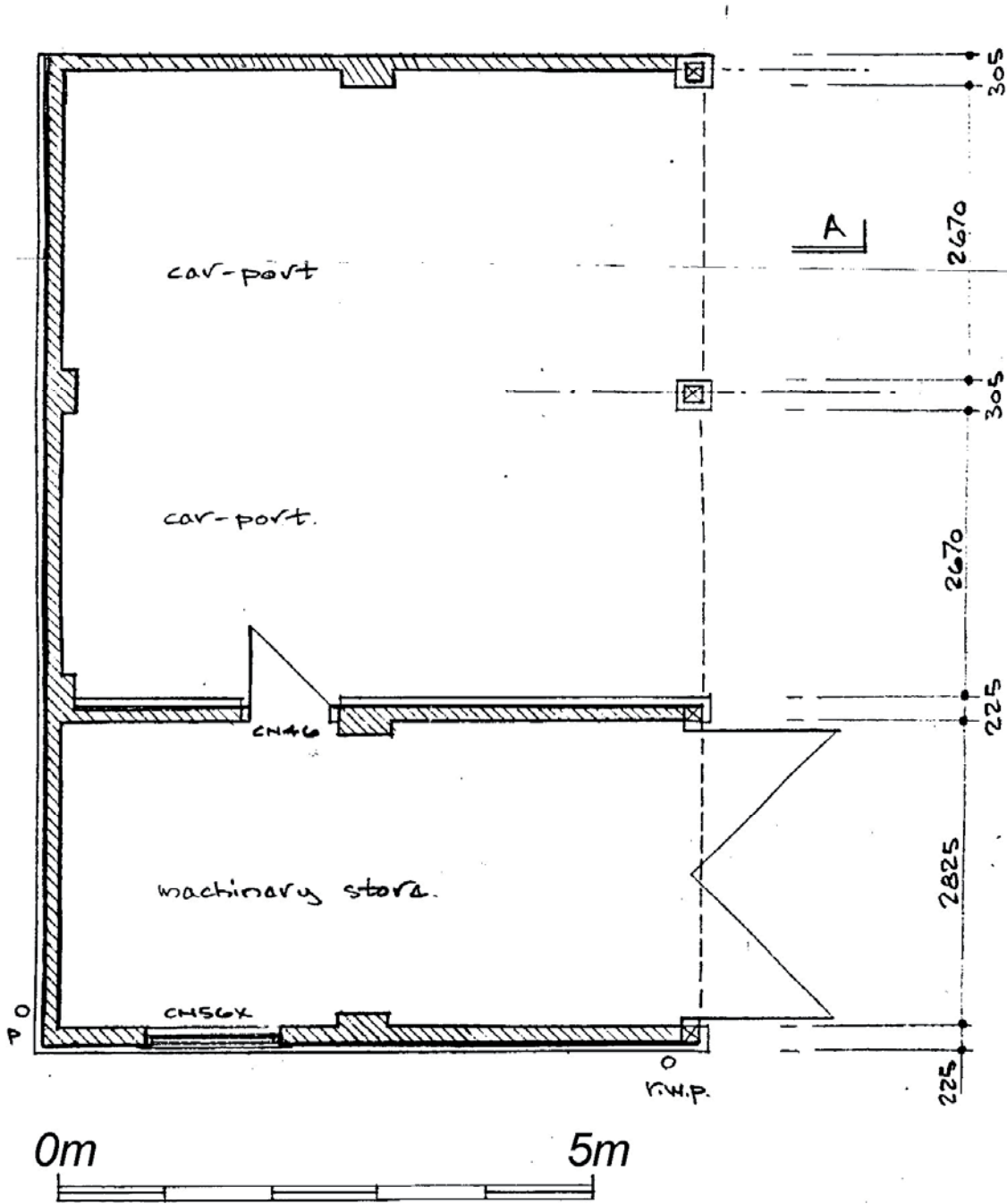


Fig 3: Detail of foundations of development

## **2 Aims & Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

As described in the brief, 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 Methods**

The work was carried out according to the brief, which required:

- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision;
- Inspection of sub-soil for archaeological features;
- The excavation 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.

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



### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The Cow Roast area has been known as the location of a late Iron Age and Romano British settlement since the mid-1970's. The site lies within an area designated as a *Scheduled Ancient Monument* (SAM no. 91) and is in an *Area of Archaeological Importance* (Dacorum no. 23). Cow Roast has been comprehensively reviewed by Zeepvat (1995 & 1997) and a proposed assessment submitted to English Heritage.
- 3.2 The archaeological evidence has been reviewed by Morris and Wainwright (1995) and Thompson (2002). They identified five centres of activity within the Cow Roast area (to the south and north of the old A41 road), which were characterised by well shafts, pits, construction slots and industrial activity consisting of hearths and smithing waste (*ibid.*). One of the sites (just to the north of the railway line) consists of a spread of Romano-British building debris.
- 3.3 The richest concentration of archaeological data has been derived from the Fendley House orchard site which lay immediately to the west of the present development (Thompson 2002, 4). This consisted of some late Iron Age material, Roman ditches, timber buildings, eleven wells, two bowl furnaces and an inhumation (*ibid.*)

## 4 Results

- 4.1 The foundations of the garage were about 0.5m wide and between 1.2m and 1.35m deep. Archaeological deposits were observed in the western, middle and southern foundations. The most extensive deposit was a layer of crushed chalk and flints [2] which lay 0.5m beneath a dark loam deposit [1]. It varied between 0.05m and 0.35m thick and was observed in the western section and extended about 3.6m across the middle foundation trench. A layer of pea-grit lay immediately on top of the chalky spread (*c.* 0.01m thick at maximum). It sealed a pit [7] which was 2.6m wide at the top and narrowed to about 1m at the base of the trench foundation. Three stratified horizons were observed: The upper fill [4] comprised a light brown gravelly clay, 0.08m thick This was followed by a dark grey silt [5] some 0.24m thick. The third horizon [6] was more chalk flecked but otherwise similar to [5] (see plates 3, 5, 6 & 8). The pit cut a light yellowish brown, chalky clay horizon (Mun: 10YR 6/4).
- 4.2 In the southern most foundation trench another possible pit was observed. This was *c.* 2.2m wide and had a darker fill than the surrounding natural soil. A piece of thin Roman brick/tile was observed together with a 2<sup>nd</sup> century coarse, reddish brown ware beaker (Plate 10).
- 4.3 The soakaway pit (Plate 1) was 1.8m x 1m x 2.4m deep and situated about 4m to the south east of the corner of the garage (see sketch on the reverse of the monitoring sheet). The upper 1 m was made up ground consisting of a combination of the original A-horizon and dumped material (dark ashy soil, brick fragments, polythene, flint, slate, iron nails and occasional glass frags. Beneath this was a very dark, yellowish brown clay (Mun: 10YR 4/6). At depth of 2m the ground turned to a light, yellowish brown chalky clay (Mun: 10YR 6/4).
- 4.4 The service trench was 0.4m wide by about 0.6m deep. It was cut into dark soil but nowhere were any archaeological horizons identified (Plate 9).
- 4.5 Fragments of pottery, including Samian and amphora, bone, fragments of building material were recovered and a small piece of iron slag was noted but not retrieved. See appendix 1 for a more detailed description.



**Plate 1:** Section of the soakaway looking south west



**Plate 2:** The northern part of the garage site



**Plate 3:** Section above pit [7]



**Plate 4:** Southern E-W foundation



**Plate 5:** Western N-S foundation



**Plate 6:** detail of western N-S foundation



**Plate 7:** Northern E-W foundation



**Plate 8:** East facing section of N-S foundation with pot sherd in situ



**Plate 9:** Service trench looking south



**Plate 10:** The finds

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The garage foundations have almost certainly exposed a further extent of the Fendley House Orchard site. The two pits were probably wells. One of these was sealed beneath a layer of crushed chalk and flint. This horizon could simply be a result of spreading material extracted from later pits across the site. However, the pea-grit could indicate the presence of a floor surface. It is not possible to be certain on this point. However, the presence of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century pottery confirms an easterly continuation of the Romano-British settlement into the area of the Fendley Barn message.

## 6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Guy Masters for commissioning this work and for his hospitality during the course of the project. Thanks are also due to the staff at the County Archaeology Office at Hertford and to 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. Finds
7. List of photographs/slides
8. Colour slides
9. B/W prints & negatives
10. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

- 7.2 The archive will be deposited with the Dacorum Heritage Trust.

## 8. Bibliography

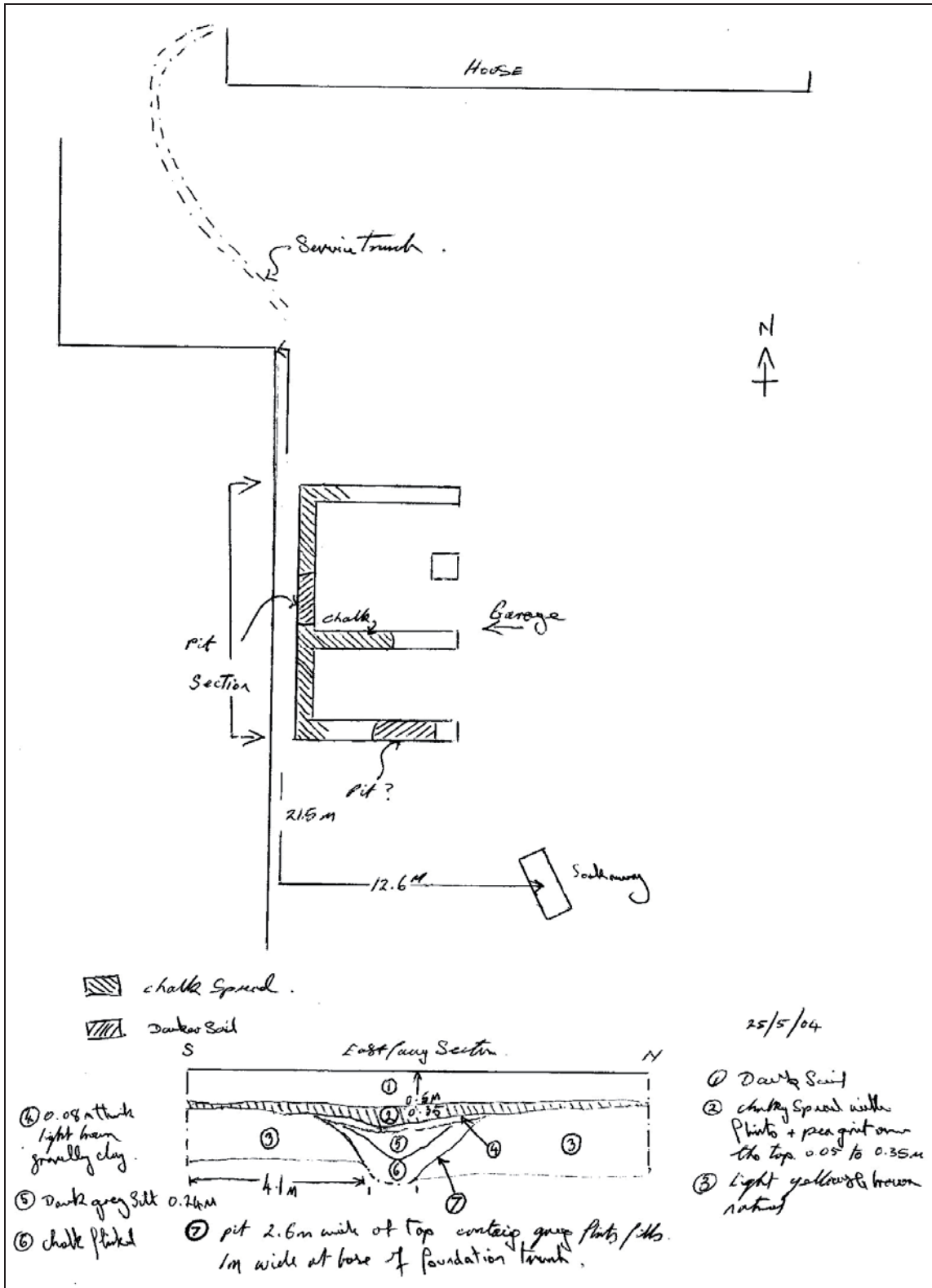
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- Thompson, I. 2002: *The Roman Settlement at Cow Roast, Northchurch: Extensive urban survey project assessment report*. Archaeology Office, Hertfordshire County Council.
- Woolerton Truscott, E.A.U 1993: *The Chilterns AONB (Draft Management Plan)*. Prepared for the Chilterns Standing Conference (Kendal).
- Zeepvat, R. J. 1995: Cow Roast Sites: Review of Site Records & Proposals for Archive and assessment. HAT unpublished report (Hertford).
- Zeepvat R. J. 1997: *The Roman Settlement at Cow Roast, Hertfordshire: Updated project design & assessment report* HAT unpublished report (Hertford).

# Appendix 1: The Monitoring Sheets

 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>			
Project Name: <i>Fendley Barn</i>		Project Code: <i>CRF</i>		Date of visit: <i>25/5/04</i>	
Location: <i>Cow Roast</i>					
Client/Developer: <i>Buy Tosters</i>					
Architect:					
Site Manager/Farmer:			Phone:		
Development Type:					
Foundations	Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Other:
Site conditions (weather, ground condition, etc) <i>Dry &amp; Sunny</i>					
Observations made: (e.g. length of trench/foundation; depth/width; soil descriptions, archaeological features)					
<p><i>Soakaway pit 1.8m x 1m x 2.4m deep. The upper 1m is made up gravel consisting of what was probably the original A horizon overlain by a variety of dump material - dark, ash rich, soil with oak bark frags, polythene, flint; slate, iron nails, oak plank frags. Beneath this was a very dark yellowish brown clay (14m 10 yr 4/6), relatively stony. At a depth of about 2m the ground is a light yellowish-brown chalky clay (17m 10 yr 6/4). The soakaway pit lies 12.6m to the east from the wooden fence, roughly at 2.5m South of corner of building (see one for sketch).</i></p> <p><i>The garage footings have revealed the presence of a chalk spread (floor?) &amp; two probable pits or wells. The chalk spread varied between 0.05 and 0.35m and lies at a depth of 0.5m below ground surface (some where 0.2m thick!). Pea grit above it. It extends ~ 3.6m east across middle track (tracks are 0.5m wide x 1.2m deep; 1.35m deep by pit) if the pits are part of the same made up then could extend up to 4.5m N-S. See one for sketched section. Certainly seals the pit in the N-S section. Pit appears to be 1m wide but not certain - could be large. There is a similar dark area on the southern west E-W foundation, possibly c. 2.7m in extent. Fragments of pottery (including Samian and amphora) here, building material and roof tiles removed + iron slag site of RB construction - certain!</i></p> <p><i>note: (c) photographed dark entire type pit. NB: Pea grit on upper surface of chalky spread</i></p>					
<p><i>Semi-trench is 0.4m wide x 0.65m deep. Cut into dark soil.</i></p>					
Completed by: <i>MAA</i>					

For sketch plan, use reverse

ASACFM26, revised 1999





## Appendix 2: The Finds

Type	Category	Fabric	Weight (grammes)	Date
pottery	Body sherd	Shell tempered	56	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> C
Pottery	Amphora sherd	Hard buff ext.	96	1 <sup>st</sup> C?
Pottery	Bowl	Samian	6	1 <sup>st</sup> C
Pottery	Bowl ?	Samian	2	1 <sup>st</sup> C
Pottery	Jar?	Dark grey micaceous	8	1 <sup>st</sup> C
Pottery	Jar	Grog tempered	4	1 <sup>st</sup> C
Pottery	Jar	Grog tempered	12	1 <sup>st</sup> C
pottery	Beaker	Coarse, reddish brown	32	mid-late 2 <sup>nd</sup> C.
Building material	Brick/tile		486	RB

### Appendix 3: SMR Summary Sheet

#### HERTS

<b>Site name and address:</b> Fendley Barn Cow Roast Herts HP23 5RG		
County: Herts		District: Dacorum
Village/Town:		Parish: St Marys, Berkhamsted
Planning application reference: 4/0071/04		
<b>Client name, address, &amp; tel. no:</b> Guy Masters, Fendley Barn Cow Roast Herts HP23 5RG		
Nature of application: New garage block		
Present land use: garden and drive		
Size of application area: n/a		Size of area investigated: n/a
NGR (to 8 figures): SP 95743-10188		Site code: CWF
Site director/Organization: JRH/ ASC Ltd		
Type of work: evaluation		
Date of work:	Start: May 27 <sup>th</sup> 2004	Finish: May 27 <sup>th</sup> 2004
Curating museum: Dacorum Heritage Trust		
Related SMR nos: 1874		Periods represented: AD 1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> centuries
Relevant previous summaries/reports Thompson 2003		
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>In the spring of 2004 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the foundations of a new garage and associated services at Fendley Barn, Cow Roast near Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. The site lies within the Romano-British settlement and the foundations cut through several associated features. These consisted of one possibly two pits and a layer of chalk which may have been a floor surface. The pottery suggests a date range of between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries.</i>		
Author: J. R. Hunn		Date: 1/6/04