

## Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

### **WATCHING BRIEF: MANOR FARM SOUTH STOKE, OXFORDSHIRE**

*on behalf of*

*Bluestone Property Three Ltd*



by  
**David Fell BA MA MIFA**

**July 2004**

**ASC: 579/SSM/2**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	SSM	<i>Project no:</i>	579
<i>County:</i>	Oxfordshire		
<i>District:</i>	South Oxfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	South Stoke		
<i>Parish:</i>	South Stoke		
<i>NGR:</i>	SU 598 836		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	0.45 hectares		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Former agricultural buildings and yard		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Demolition and conversion of agricultural buildings		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	P01/W0791 & W0507		
<i>Client:</i>	Bluestone Property Three Ltd C/o Richard Clark Chartered Architect Bassetsbury Barn Bassetsbury Lane High Wycombe HP11 1QX		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Richard Clark		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	David Fell	<i>Date:</i>	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2004
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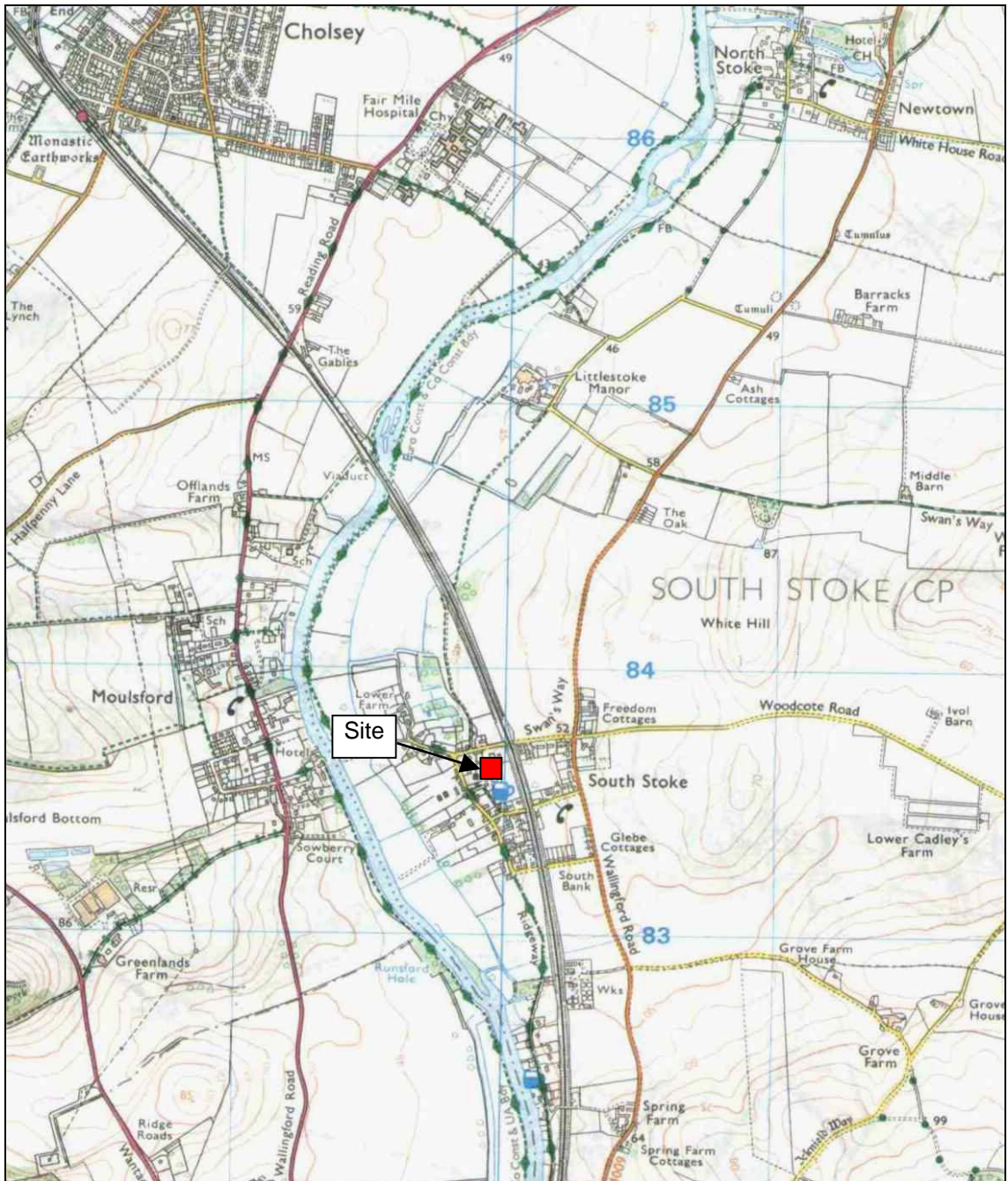


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*In June and July 2004 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Manor Farm, South Stoke during the construction of three new houses and the renovation of two listed barns. The site was close to Manor Farm, which was probably a manorial settlement the development had the potential to damage or destroy significant archaeological remains. No archaeological remains were observed and the manorial settlement was probably concentrated around the present Manor Farm and church.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 During the summer of 2004 *Bluestone Properties Three Ltd* undertook development at Manor Farm, South Stoke. The developer applied to *South Oxfordshire District Council* for planning permission in support of the development (planning application nos. P01/W0791 & P04/W0507) and, in line with the guidance contained in the document PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning* and policy CON18 of the *South Oxfordshire Local Plan* the Archaeological Officer of *Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Services (OCCAS)* advised that the site may be archaeologically sensitive, required the developer to commission an archaeological watching brief and prepared a brief for the work (Smith 2004).

1.2 The developers architect *Richard Clark Chartered Architects* appointed *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* to prepare a project design (Fell 2004) and undertake the work. This document presents the results of the work.

### 1.3 Reason for Work

The watching brief was necessary because the works, which comprised the demolition and conversion of existing agricultural buildings and the construction of three new houses (Fig. 2) had the potential to damage or destroy significant archaeological remains.

### 1.4 Setting

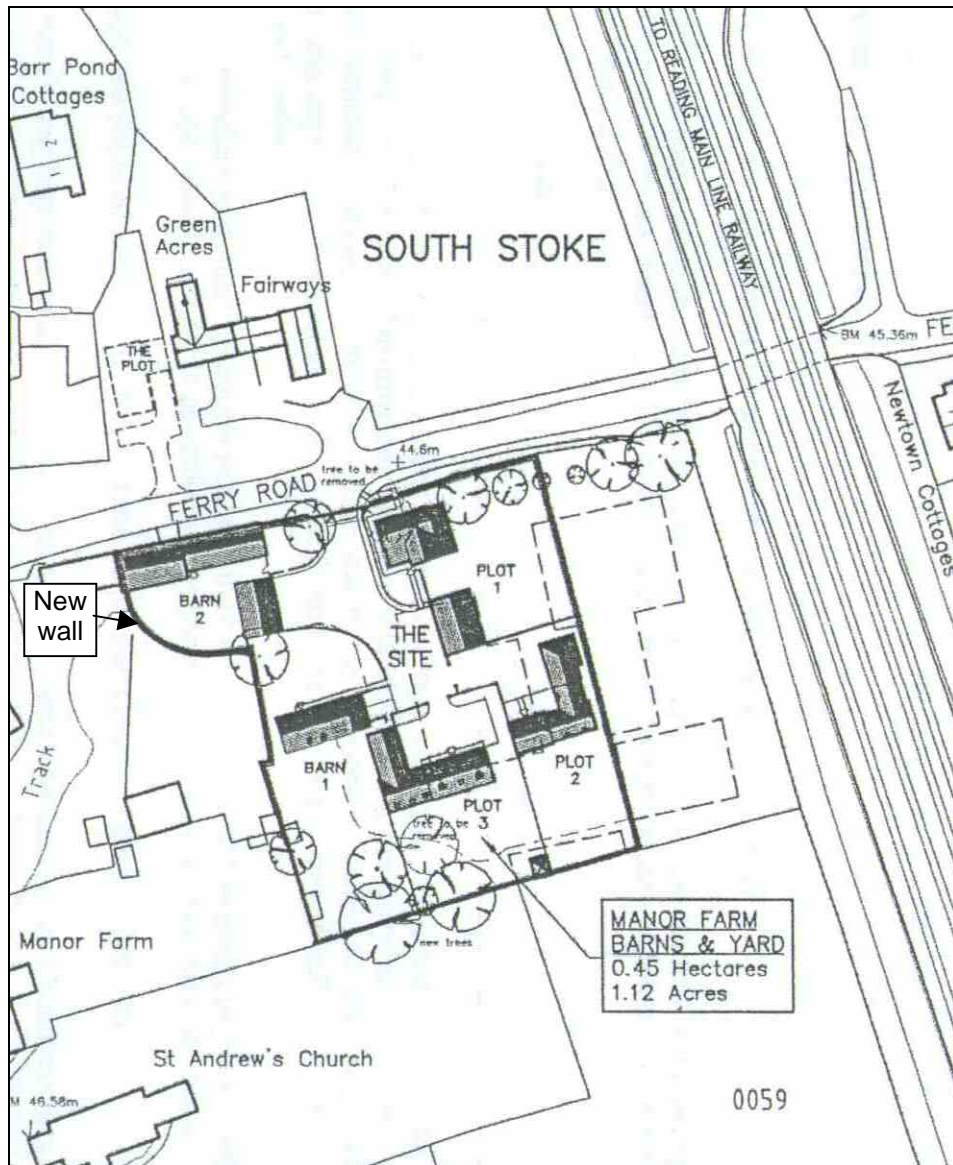
#### 1.4.1 Location, Description, Extent

The site is located in South Stoke in the administrative district of South Oxfordshire and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 598 836. It is situated close to the centre of the village, northeast of St Andrew's Church and comprises an area of 0.45 hectares (Fig. 2).

A number of steel framed and brick and timber agricultural buildings currently occupy the site, which fronts onto Ferry Road. The burial ground of St Andrew's Church is situated to the south and the farmhouse is to the west. The Didcot to Reading railway line is situated to the east.

#### 1.4.2 Geology, Topography, Elevation

The soils of the area comprise the *Sutton 2 Association* namely well drained fine and coarse loamy soils usually over the terrace gravel of the river Thames which flows c.800m west of the site. (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983, 571v). The site is flat and lies at an elevation of c.44.6m OD.



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

## **2 Aims and Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

As described in the *brief* (Sections 3.3 & 3.4), the aims of the watching brief was:

- to allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits

### **2.2 Methods**

The work was carried out according to the *brief* (Section 4), which required:

- A formal programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during any groundworks that have the potential to disturb, reveal or destroy archaeological features or deposits
- Particular attention was paid to the three new residential plots, but conversion work on existing buildings was also monitored
- New service runs were also examined

### **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 and Historical Background**

- 3.1 The middle Thames Valley is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest and a number of archaeological sites and monuments are known within and around South Stoke.
- 3.2 The gravel terraces of the river Thames have attracted settlement since prehistoric times and extensive areas of settlement in the region have been traced through aerial photography (*e.g.* Benson & Miles, 1974). A number of tumuli (burial mounds) are situated in the area, including a two at Barracks Farm on the north side of the parish. An ancient trackway, now known as the *Ickniold Way* runs east of the village, before crossing the river at Goring.
- 3.3 The area was also important during the Roman period and although the site is away from the main Roman roads and settlement at Dorchester-on-Thames (Henig and Booth, 2000, 58-63) a number of Roman villas are known in the area, including examples at Gatehampton Farm and Whitchurch (*ibid*, 92).
- 3.4 Little is known of the Saxon and medieval origins of the area but the land was divided into the two separate parishes of North and South Stoke. During the medieval period the village developed around the church of St Andrew, which is situated to the south of the site. The farmhouse is largely a 17<sup>th</sup> century building, but may have had earlier origins, possibly as a monastic grange. It is a Grade II listed building. The lower part of the southern external wall of the building forms the boundary with the churchyard, indicating the likely early origin of the building. Four further listed buildings are present on the site.



## 4 Results

- 4.1 Various works associated with the renovation and restoration of Barns 1 and 2 were observed (Plates 1 and 2). A new boundary wall was constructed to the west of Barn 2 (Figure 2). The excavation of the foundation trench for the wall was monitored, but archaeological remains were not observed. The trench was only 0.1-0.2m wide and the natural chalk strata was observed directly below the turf line. A number of minor test-pits and extensions to existing foundation trenches were excavated within the two barns. The barn walls had been set into foundation trenches but no other archaeological remains were observed.
- 4.2 In line with section 4.1 of the *brief* particular attention was paid to the excavation of the foundation trenches of the three new buildings (Figure 2; Plots 1-3). The topsoil/existing farmyard surface of the area was removed prior to the cutting of the trenches. The exposed natural surface and spoil heaps were visually inspected for archaeological remains and artefacts, but not were observed.
- 4.3 The foundation trenches were generally c.0.9m wide and 1.2m deep and were generally cut into undisturbed natural strata. The natural strata had been disturbed in a number of localised areas, notably on the east side of Plot 1 where the trench was 2.2m deep. A larger area of disturbance was observed in the central part of Plot 3 and the trenches were up to 2.1m deep in this area. This disturbance was the result of a modern cut feature, probably a cellar or sunken floored area of the former agricultural buildings. It had been backfilled with obviously modern unconsolidated rubble, including wire cables. A tree bole was observed in Plot 3, but no significant archaeological remains were observed in any of the three plots.
- 4.4 A hammered silver coin was found within the footprint of Plot 1 (Plates 5 and 6). It was a stray find, on the surface and not within an archaeological context and has been identified as a base silver penny of Edward VI (1547-1553).



**Plate 1: Barn 1**



**Plate 2: Barn 2**



**Plate 3:** Foundation trenches of Plot 1 after excavation



**Plate 4:** Foundation trenches of Plot 3 after excavation



**Plate 5:** Base silver penny of Edward VI (reverse)



**Plate 6:** Base silver penny of Edward VI (obverse)

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Five separate visits were made to the site between 14<sup>th</sup> June 2004 and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2004 in generally dry, sunny to slightly overcast conditions. Full co-operation was received from the building contractors and a high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the watching brief.
- 5.2 The excavation of the foundation trenches of Plots 1-3, the trench for a new wall, along with a number of minor below ground works in Barns 1 and 2 were monitored. No archaeological features were observed.
- 5.3 The topsoil was shallow and the trenches were cut into generally undisturbed natural strata. A number of areas of localised disturbance were noted which was the result of tree roots or modern features.
- 5.4 The ground and spoil heaps were visually scanned for artefacts and an unstratified silver base penny of Edward VI (1547-1553) was found. No other significant artefacts were observed.
- 5.5 The site is close to the church and manorial buildings of South Stoke. The coin provides a general indication of settlement, perhaps associated with the manor, but does not signify the presence of archaeological remains on the site. The lack of archaeological features indicates that the manorial settlement probably did not extend onto the site and was probably concentrated around the present Manor Farm. It is unlikely that significant archaeological remains were present on the site.

## **6. Acknowledgements**

The writer is grateful to Mr Richard Clark for commissioning the watching brief on behalf of *Bluestone Properties Three Ltd* and also to the site foreman Mr John Trulli for his assistance and co-operation during the work.

The work was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by David Fell BA MA MIFA and Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA. This report was prepared by David Fell and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

## **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 records
7. Finds
8. List of photographs/slides
9. Colour slides
10. B/W prints & negatives
11. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Service.

## **8. Bibliography**

Benson D & Miles D 1974 *The Upper Thames Valley. An Archaeological Survey of the River Gravels*. Oxford Archaeological Unit Survey 2.

Henig M & Booth P 2000 *Roman Oxfordshire*. Sutton

IFA 2000 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)*.

Smith P 2004 *Manor Farm, Ferry Lane, South Stoke. Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief*. Oxfordshire County Council Archaeology Service

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







A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project Name: SOUTH STOKES		Project Code: 574/SSM		Date of visit: 28/06/04		
Location: MANOR FARM, SOUTH STOKES VILLAGE CENTRE					275	
Client/Developer: Bluestone Property Three Ltd						
Architect: Richard Clark						
Site Manager/ Farmer: John Trulli				Phone:		
Development Type:						
Foundations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Hazy sunshine. Warm.						
Observations: Arrive on site 10.10 am. Work about to commence on excavation of first footings - building in north of the site. Natural strata only observed in building footings.  The area of the 3 new buildings was visually inspected for archaeological remains. Topsoil had been removed but no archaeological features revealed. A coin (currently unidentifiable) was found on the surface.						
Comments: Further visits required to monitor remaining plots. Informed this will take place over the next few days.						
Completed by: DF 28/6/04						

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2000

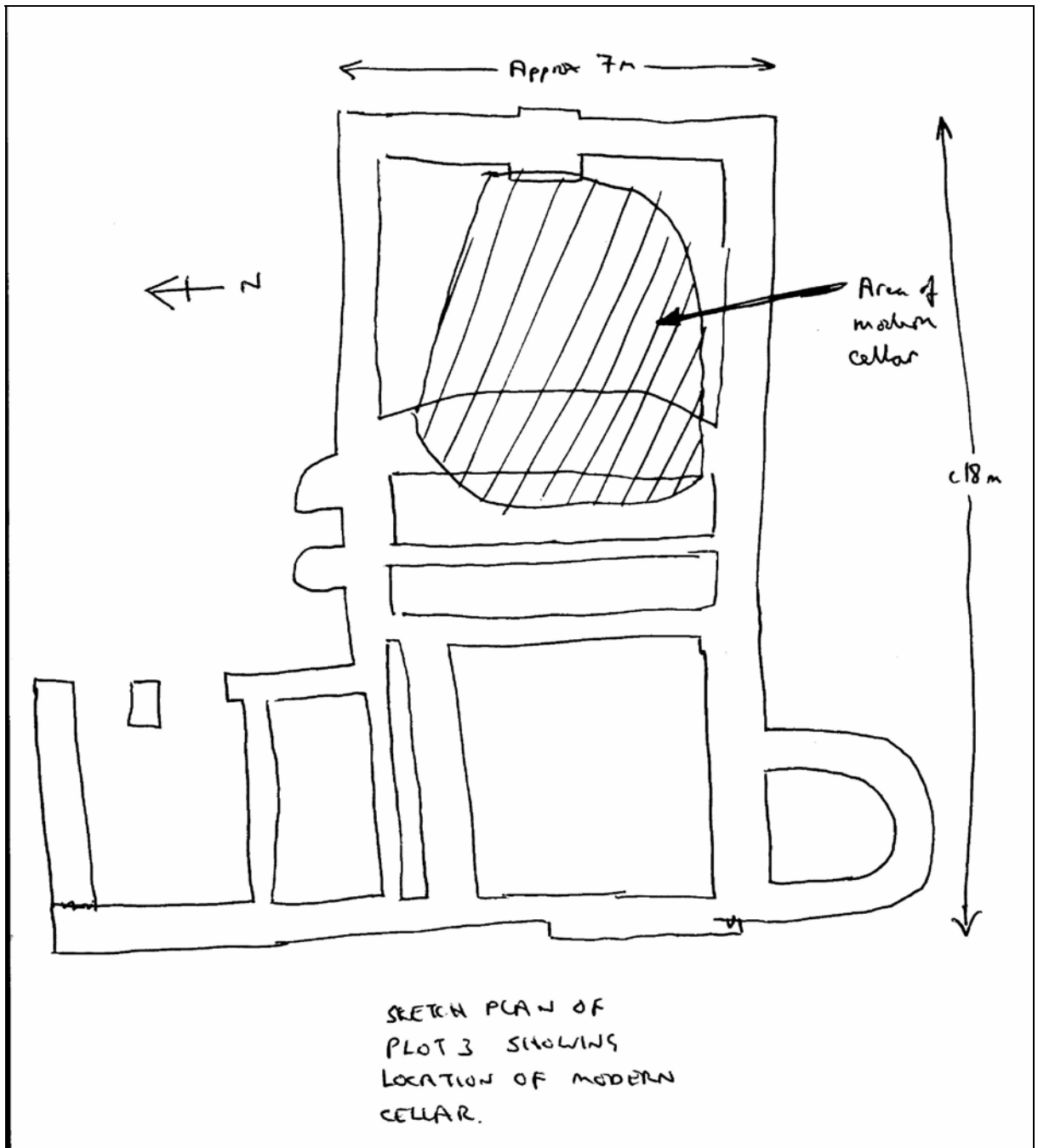
 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>			
Project Name: <i>Manor Farm</i>		Project Code: <i>SSM 04 579</i>		Date of visit: <i>30/6/04</i>	
Location: <i>South Stoke, Oxon</i>		<i>375</i>			
Client/Developer					
Architect:					
Site Manager/Farmer: <i>John Trulli</i>			Phone:		
Development Type:					
Foundations	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Other:
Site conditions (weather, ground condition, etc)					
<i>Dull, overcast &amp; dry.</i>					
Observations made: (e.g. length of trench/foundation; depth/width; soil descriptions, archaeological features)					
<p><i>Observed plot 1 (by the lane). The foundations vary from place to place from 1.1m to 1.65 below ground reduction. If one includes the retained, unexcavated ground, then the depth by a trench line is 2.2m. About 400mm has been removed from the footprint of the house. Topsoil c. 0.30m approx, below this the B horizon is about 0.6 thick but varies from place to place. Below this is a semi disturbed natural chalk becoming progressively chalkier at depth. No sign of any pre-modern activity.</i></p> <p><i>The plan is quite complex so see sketch made (see developer's plan)</i></p>					
Comments:					
<i>No archaeologist potential identified</i>					
<i>Arrived 8 am</i>					
<i>Depart 9.40 am</i>					
Completed by: <i>JTA</i>					
For sketch plan, use reverse					


ASACFM26, revised 1999

 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>				
Project: SOUTH STOKES, MANOR FARM		Project No/Code: 5991 SSM		Sheet: 4 of 5		
		Date of visit: 02/07/04		3		
Client/Developer: BLUESTONE PROPERTY TRUST LTD						
Contact: John Trulli			Phone:			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: 10:15 am		Finish: 13:00		
Completed by: David Fell						
Development Type:						
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Slightly overcast - but good conditions for observation						
Observations: Excavation of plot three completed. Footing trenches c.0.9m wide & c.1.2m deep on average. They cut through remnant gravelly clayey subsoil into the underlying natural strata which comprises pale orange sand. One or two modern tree roots present. The some of the eastern trenches are wider and deeper due to the presence of an obviously modern cut feature - probably a cellar or sunken area from the former agricultural buildings. This was c.2.1m deep and had been backfilled with mixed, <del>unconsolidated</del> unconsolidated rubble. Wire cables distributed throughout the fill, so there is no doubt that this is a modern feature. No archaeological deposits present.						
Comments: The archaeological potential of this site seems low, but a further visit required to monitor excavation of footings of last plot, in order to meet requirements of the brief						
DF 2/7/04						

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>			
Project Name: <i>Manor Farm</i>		Project Code: <i>SS1704</i>		Date of visit: <i>7/7/04</i>	
Location: <i>South Stoke</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>SFS</i></span>					
Client/Developer					
Architect:					
Site Manager/Farmer: <i>P. Trull</i>			Phone:		
Development Type:					
Foundations	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Other:
Site conditions (weather, ground condition, etc)					
<i>v. windy overcast &amp; dry</i>					
Observations made: (e.g. length of trench/foundation; depth/width; soil descriptions, archaeological features)					
<i>Observed the first plot (3) all open (approx. 2.20 pm)</i>					
<i>Average depth 0.8 m before bottom of curved concrete</i>					
<i>Subsoil similar to no. 1. That is about 0.25 of brown silt</i>					
<i>followed by natural ground - uneven</i>					
<i>Nothing of interest observed.</i>					
Comments:					
<i>First visit</i>					
Completed by: <i>JRH</i>					
For sketch plan, use reverse					
ASACFM26, revised 1999					