

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
CROMER WOOD COTTAGE
NETTLEDEN ROAD
LITTLE GADDESSEN
HERTFORDSHIRE**

on behalf of Mr & Mrs Duguid



**By
Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA**

August 2004

ASC: 596/GCW/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	GCW	<i>Project no:</i>	596
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>District:</i>	Dacorum BC		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Little Gaddesden		
<i>Parish:</i>	Little Gaddesden CP		
<i>NGR:</i>	TL 00139 12160		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Garden		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of rear single storey extension		
<i>Extent of development:</i>	c.54 sq. m.		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	4/2096/03		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr & Mrs Duguid Cromer Wood Cottage Nettleden Road Little Gaddesden Herts HP4 1PN		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Edward Hunt (architect)		
<i>Telephone</i>	01442 865011	<i>Fax:</i>	01442 870777

Internal Quality Check

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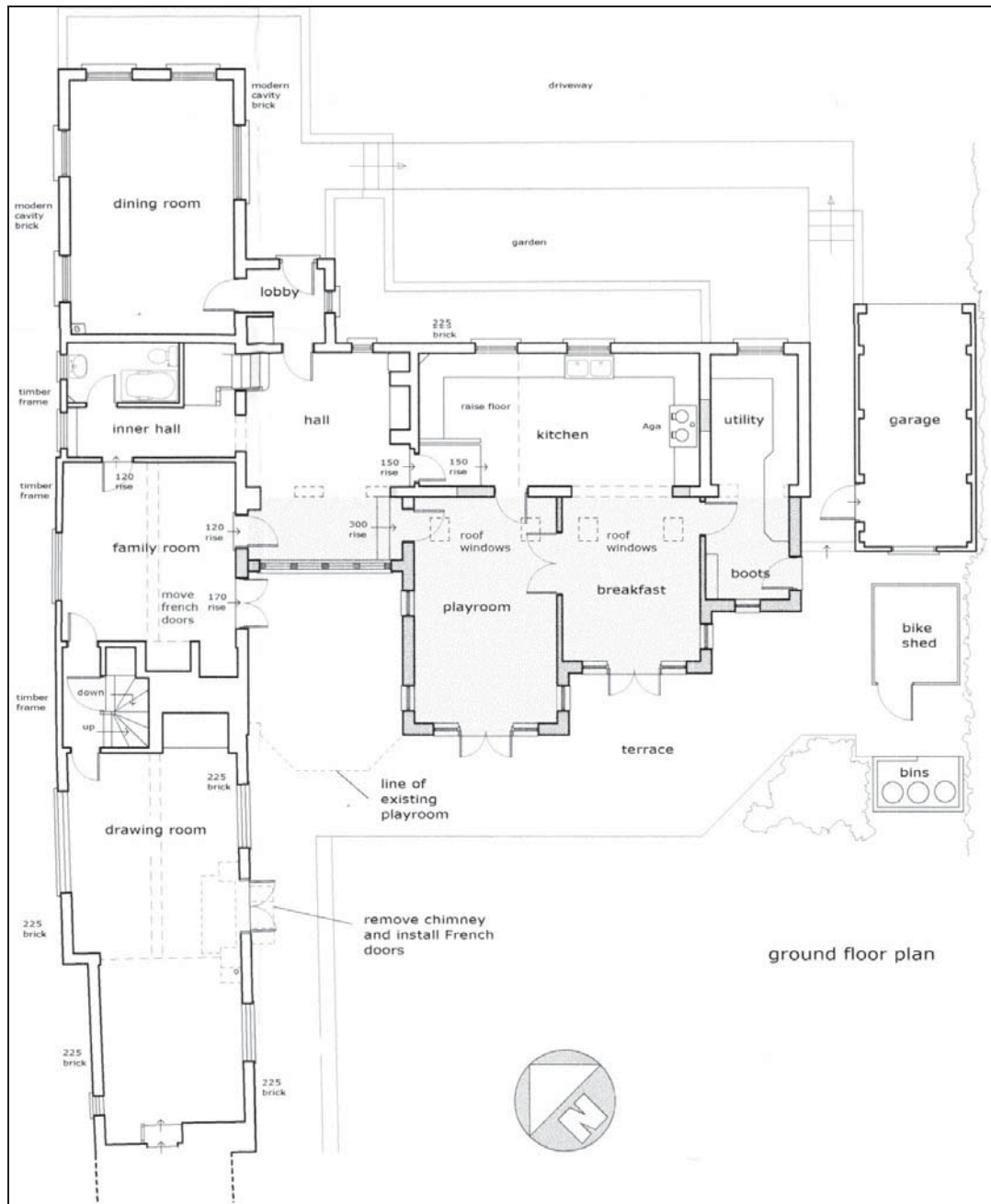


Figure 2: Plan of the development (scale 1:200)

Summary

In August 2004 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of the footprint of an extension of Cromer Wood Cottage, Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire. A number of Roman or later enclosures and ditches are known in the area and the development had to potential to disturb these remains. The excavation of the footprint of the extension was monitored, but no significant archaeological remains or artefacts were observed.

1 Introduction

1.1 Planning Background

Mr & Mrs Duguid are undertaking development at Cromer Wood Cottage, Nettleden Road, Little Gaddesden. The developer applied to *Dacorum Borough Council* for planning permission in support of the development (planning application no. 4/2096/03) and, in line with the guidance contained in the document PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning* the Historic Environment Officer of the County Archaeology Office (CAO) advised that the site may be archaeologically sensitive and required the developer to commission an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks.

1.2 The developer's architect *Edward Hunt & Co* commissioned *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) to undertake the watching brief and prepare a written scheme of investigation for the works (Zeeprat 2004). The present document presents the results of the watching brief.

1.3 Setting

1.3.1 Cromer Wood Cottage is located towards the south end of Little Gaddesden, at NGR TL 00139 12160 (Fig. 1). The property occupies an L-shaped plot of c.0.2ha on the south-west side of Nettleden Road. To the north-west and south-east are gardens of adjoining properties, and to the west is Cromer Wood, which is part of the National Trust Ashridge Estate (Fig. 3). Access is from Nettleden Road. Cromer Wood Cottage is a two-storey house of L-shaped plan, which has already been extended to the rear on at least four previous occasions.

1.3.2 The development site is located in an Area of Natural Beauty, near the crest of a NW-SE aligned ridge, along which Nettleden Road runs, at an elevation of c. 174m OD. Soils in the area of the site belong to the *Batcombe Association*, described as 'fine silty over clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some well-drained soils over chalk. Variably flinty' (Soil Survey 1983, 582a). The underlying geology comprises clay-with-flints.

1.3.3 The proposed development comprises the demolition of an existing conservatory, and construction of single-storey extensions to the house (Fig. 2).

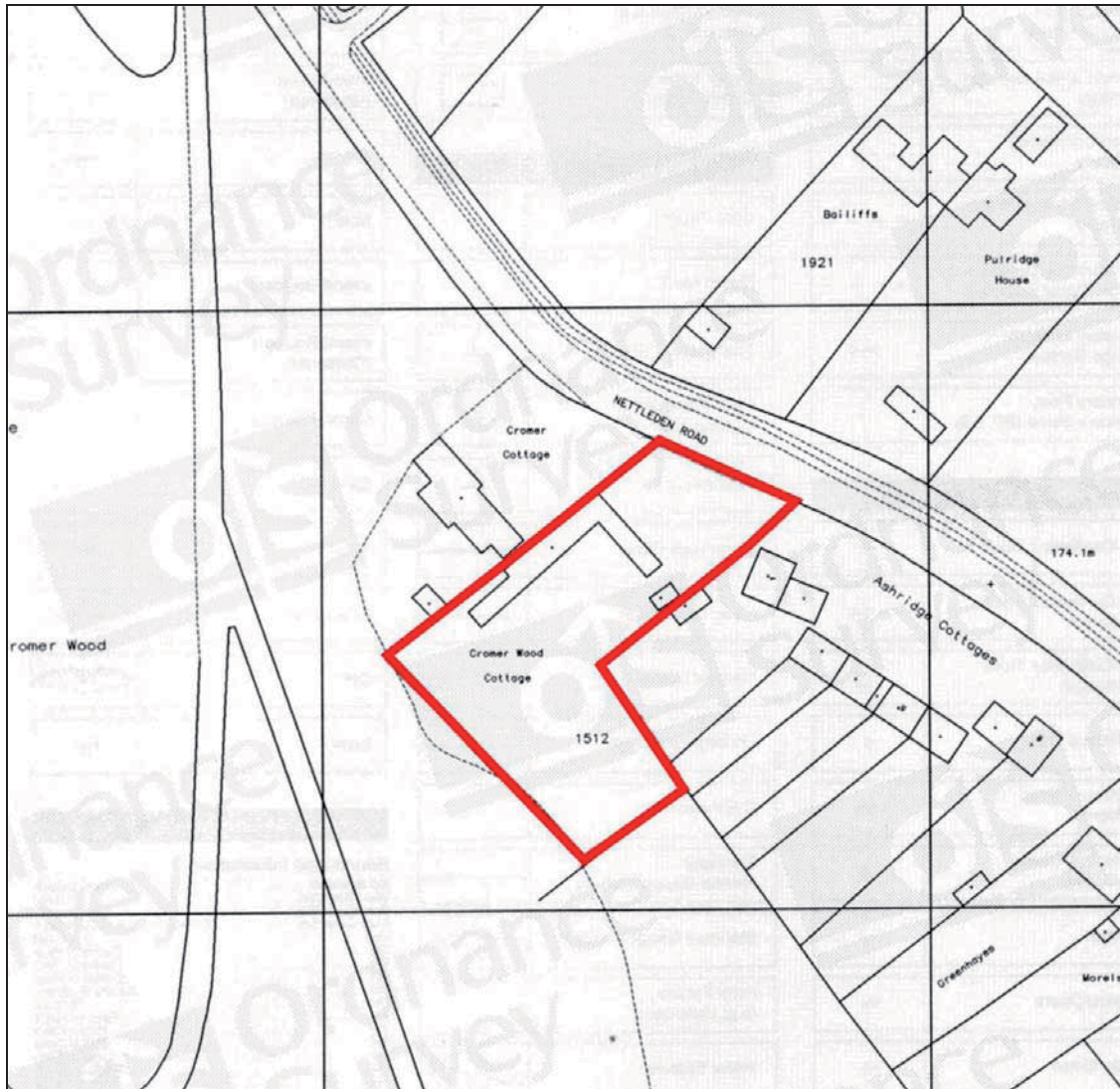


Figure 3: Site plan (scale 1:1,250)

2 Aims and Methods

2.1 Aims

In line with the requirements of the CAO, the aims of the watching brief were:

- 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.

2.2 Methods

In line with the requirements of the CAO, the methods to be adopted for this project were:

- An archaeological watching brief, involving monitoring soil and overburden stripping and rapid recording of any archaeological features or deposits;
- A contingency for the rapid archaeological investigation of any remains encountered during the watching brief;
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving and publication.

2.3 Standards

The work conformed 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 and Historical Background

- 3.1 Little Gaddesden is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest (Hastie and Spain 1996). A number of archaeological sites are known in the area and Cromer Wood Cottage is located within a short distance of an area designated by *Hertfordshire County Council* as an *Area of Archaeological Significance* (AAS DAC28).
- 3.2 Few prehistoric and Roman remains are known in the area but a number of enclosures and linear ditches of Roman and perhaps medieval date have been identified close to the site (AAS DAC28). They have been preserved within woodland of later date, and may have extended across the site.
- 3.3 Little is known of the early history of Little Gaddesden, but the settlement may have originated during the Saxon period. Prior to the Norman conquest the manor was held by *Eadmer*, a thegn of king Edward, but following the Norman conquest passed to *Robert Count of Mortain*. The location of the Saxon and medieval settlement is not known, but the parish church currently occupies an isolated position and may indicate the position of an early Anglo-Saxon hall.
- 3.4 The present manor house is situated midway between the site and the church and is a Tudor building. It consists of two projecting turrets with two main storeys, each topped by an attic and crow-stepped gables (Hastie & Spain 1996).
- 3.5 The later medieval and modern settlement developed to the north and south of the manor house. At the time of the compilation of Dury and Andrews map of Hertfordshire (1766; Fig 4) the site comprised open ground to the south of the village. Bryant's map, published in 1821 (Fig. 5) illustrates the linear nature of the post-medieval village and the site lies close to the southern edge of the settlement.
- 3.6 Cromer Wood Cottage is shown on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 6). The map shows the site and the surrounding area in detail and the modern layout of the area had largely been established by that date. The site of the house, in a clearing within Cromer Wood is illustrated, and two rows of trees are shown running southeast from the house.



Figure 4: Extract from Dury & Andrews map of Hertfordshire (1766)



Figure 5: Extract from Bryant's map of Hertfordshire (1821)

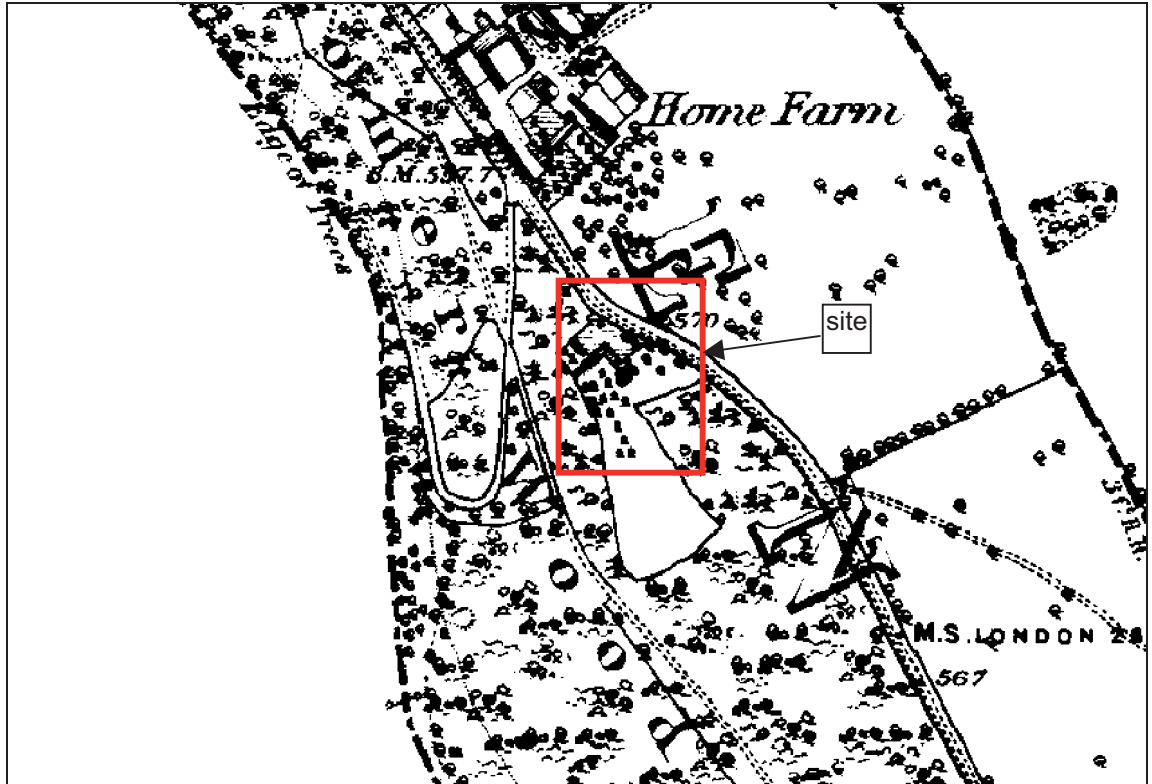


Figure 6: Extract from the 1884 Ordnance Survey map

4 Results

4.1 A single visit was made to the site on 19th August 2004 in cool, overcast weather conditions. The site conditions were good and full co-operation was received from the building contractors. A high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the watching brief.

4.2 *Results*

The excavation of the footprint of the extension was monitored. The ground was lowered by *c.* 0.2 to 0.25m and comprised largely of disturbed material, although occasional areas of undisturbed natural clay with flint were present. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed.

4.3 *Conclusions*

No significant archaeological remains or artefacts were observed during the excavation of the footprint of the extension. It is unlikely that archaeological remains are present on the site and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be low.

It is unlikely that large quantities of archaeological remains are present on the site and it was not possible to demonstrate that the Roman or later enclosures and ditches extended into the site. Any such remains on the southeast side of the house may have been disturbed by the trees shown in the 1884 plan.



Plate 1: The footprint of the new extension

5. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to *Edward Hunt and Co* for commissioning the watching brief on behalf of Mr & Mrs Duguid. Mrs Kate Batt, Historic Environment Advisor of the *Hertfordshire County Council* acted as curatorial monitor.

The fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA who also prepared this report. The report was edited by David Fell BA MA MIFA.

6. Archive

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

6.2 The archive will be deposited with *Dacorum Heritage Trust*.

7. Bibliography

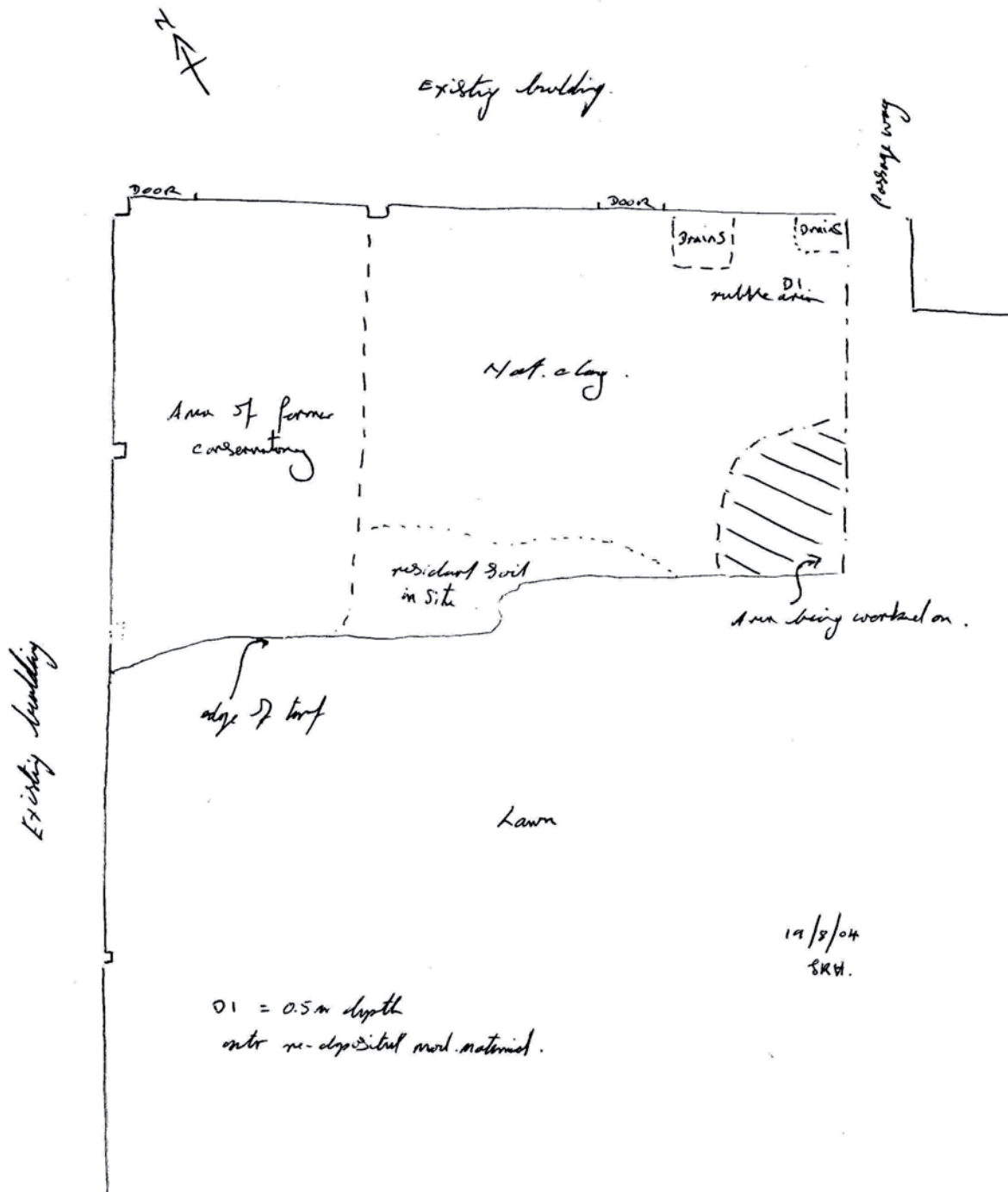
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- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
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Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD			
Project: Cromer Wood Cottage Little Gaddesden		Project No/Code: GCW 1596	Sheet: 1 of 1		
Client/Developer: Mr & Mrs Duguid		Date of visit:			
Contact: Eddy Hunt		Phone: 01442-865011			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 9.20	Finish:			
Completed by: SRH					
Development Type:					
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarrying	Pipelines
Other (specify):					
Site & weather conditions: Cool, clamps.					
Observations: Observed about all the footprint of the proposed extension (an area of approx 5m x 10m). The ground was lowered by about 0.2m, though extending to 0.25m in places. The area of the former conservatory was quite disturbed but even so looked quite blank. The remaining area was all the natural, flinty clay. Where the topsoil had been exposed and weathered by the rain the soil was rich in charcoal flecks and numerous small fragments of flint - almost certainly due to construction; also contained frags of slate, brick and flower pot. No sign of any pre-medieval features or artefacts.					
Comments: No further visits required					

For sketch plan, use reverse

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Appendix 2: SMR Summary Sheet

Site name and address: Cromer Wood Cottage, Nettleden Road Little Gaddesden		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Dacorum	
Village/Town: Little Gaddesden	Parish: Little Gaddesden	
Planning application reference: 4/2096/03		
Client name, address, & tel. no: Mr & Mrs Duguid, Cromer Wood Cottage, Nettleden Road, Little Gaddesden, Herts HP4 1PN		
Nature of application: Rear single storey extension		
Present land use: Domestic garden		
Size of application area: n/a	Size of area investigated: n/a	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 00139 12160	Site code: 596/GCW	
Site director/Organization: Jonathan Hunn / ASC Ltd		
Type of work: Watching brief		
Date of work:	Start: 19 August 2004	Finish: 19 August 2004
Curating museum: Dacorum		
Related SMR nos:	Periods represented:	
Relevant previous summaries/reports		
Summary of fieldwork results: In August 2004 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of the footprint of an extension of Cromer Wood Cottage, Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire. A number of Roman or later enclosures and ditches are known in the area and the development had to potential to disturb these remains. The excavation of the footprint of the extension was monitored, but no significant archaeological remains or artefacts were observed.		
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