



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
LAND OFF TOWCESTER ROAD
OLD STRATFORD
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

on behalf of Grantmaster Developments



Nigel Wilson HND AIFA

May 2004

ASC: 558/OST03/02

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	OST	<i>Project no:</i>	558
<i>County:</i>	Northamptonshire		
<i>District:</i>	South Northants		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Old Stratford		
<i>Parish:</i>	Old Stratford CP		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 7776 4142		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.2.5 ha		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Former Anglian Water depot & pumping station		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Mixed development: 74 dwellings, retail and commercial units		
<i>Extent of development:</i>	c. 2.0 ha		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	S/2001/0317/PO		
<i>Client:</i>	Grantmaster Developments Orchard House Bellamy Road Mansfield Notts NG18 4LJ		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Jon Edward (Development Manager)		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Nigel Wilson	<i>Date:</i>	24/5/2004
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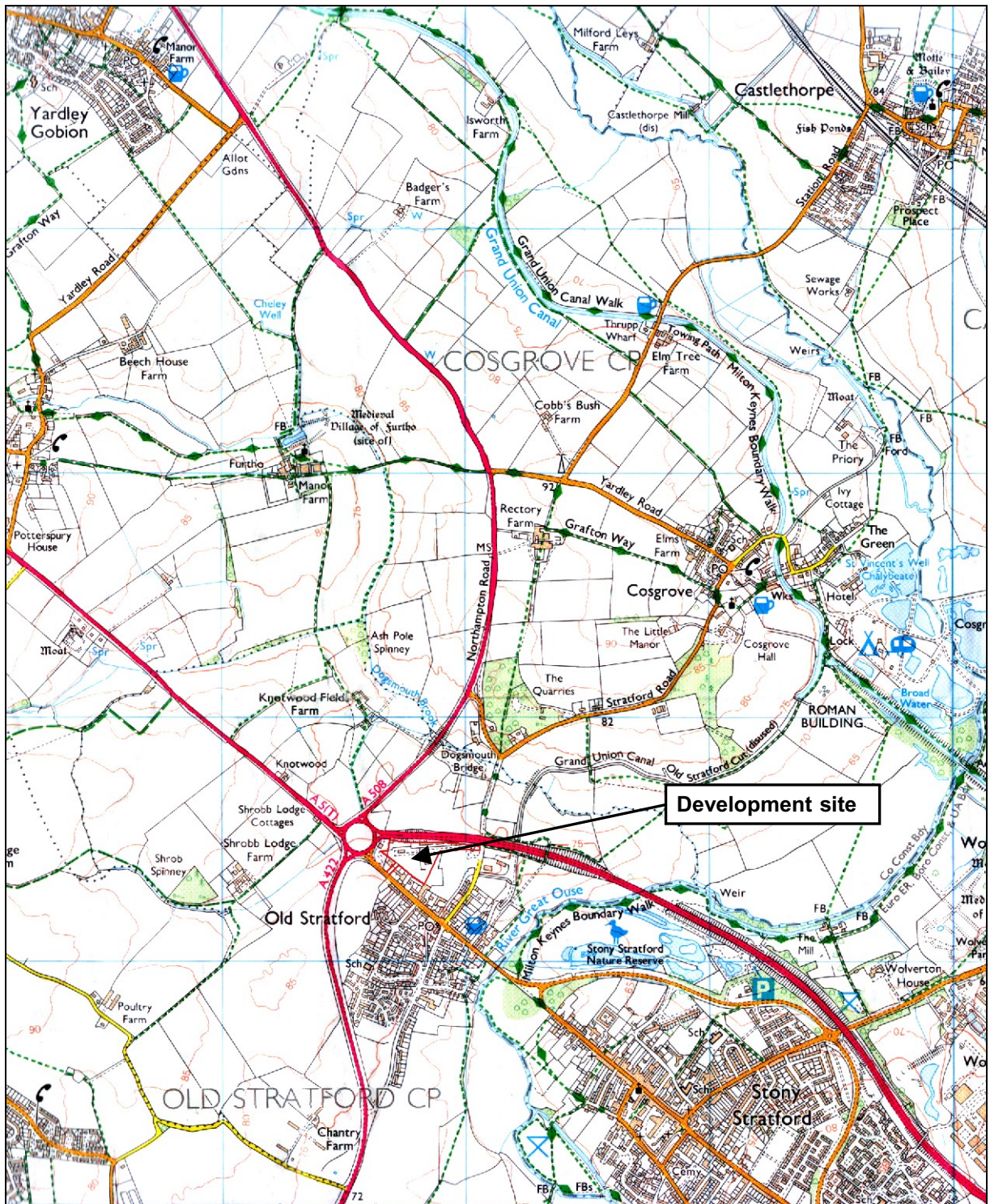


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During March to April 2004 Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd undertook a watching brief on the construction of a new access road and associated drainage on a site to the north of Old Stratford, and to the east of Towcester Road. The site had previously been used as an Anglian Water depot. The work was required to fulfil a planning condition imposed by South Northamptonshire District Council. The watching brief was able to demonstrate that the depot had truncated all the upper soil deposits. No archaeological features other than 20th century deposits associated with the depot were identified.

1 Introduction

1.1 During March to April 2004 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief on a site at Land off Towcester Road, Old Stratford (NGR SP 7776 4142: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Grantmaster Developments, and was carried out according to a brief (Flitcroft 2002) prepared by the Historic Environment Team at Northamptonshire County Council (HET), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (Zeepvat 2004).

1.2 Reason for Work

Under current planning legislation archaeology can be a material factor in planning decisions. Planning Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) deals specifically with archaeology. When plans were submitted to South Northamptonshire District Council for a new housing estate on the former Anglian Water Depot, Old Stratford. The HET recommended that a watching brief condition should be imposed. This recommendation was accepted and a condition requiring a watching brief was included in the granting of the planning permission. This report focuses on the construction of the spur road leading off Towcester Road. The housing development has been sold on to another developer, and will be undertaken separately.

1.3 Setting

1.3.1 Site Location

The development site is located on the north side of Old Stratford, at SP 7776 4142 (Figs 1 & 2). It occupies a triangular area of *c.*2.5ha, bordered to the north by the A5 dual carriageway, to the south-east by recent development along Cosgrove Road, and to the south-west by the rear of properties fronting Towcester Road. From the east corner of the site, a narrow strip of land runs eastward alongside the A5 as far as Cosgrove Road.

1.3.2 Geology & Topography

The site is located on more or less level ground, at an elevation of *c.*75m AOD. Soils on the site belong to the Hanslope association (Soil Survey 1987, 411d), described as 'slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. Some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils. Slight risk of water erosion'. The underlying geology comprises boulder clay. The river Great Ouse lies 400m south-east of the site, flowing to the north-east.

1.3.3 *Site Description*

Prior to this development, the site was a depot and pumping station belonging to the Anglian Water Group. The pumping station itself is being retained within the proposed development. The site is traversed from east to west by a major water main, and will have had internal water piping as well as the normal range of other services. Details of these, and of any of the depot buildings other than the pumping station, are not presently available. Access to the site is from Towcester Road.

1.4 *Historical & Archaeological Background*

1.4.1 Towcester Road, on the south-west side of the site, follows the line of the Roman Watling Street, and the area around Old Stratford is relatively rich in Roman sites. On the opposite side of the A5, 200m north of the site, quarrying activities have revealed extensive spreads of Roman material, and finds of this date have been made elsewhere in Old Stratford. About 1.5km south of the site, a concentration of Roman metalwork finds made by metal detectorists in recent years is thought to mark the location of a Romano-Celtic religious site. A hoard of votive offerings, including two elaborate bronze head-dresses, now in the British Museum, is thought to have been found on this site in 1789. This part of the upper Great Ouse valley is particularly rich in Roman villa sites, with examples at Deanshanger, Cosgrove and Haversham on the north bank, and Bancroft, Stantonbury and Stanton Low to the south.

1.4.2 The present village of Old Stratford has developed from a hamlet of that name, related to the Watling Street crossing of the Ouse. The origins and date of this settlement are not known: the earliest surviving buildings along Towcester Road appear to be of 17th or 18th-century date. The Northamptonshire Sites & Monuments Record notes the discovery of early to middle Saxon pottery during the laying of a water pipe on land to the south of Towcester Road, 100m south-west of the site.

No archaeological finds have been reported from the development site itself.

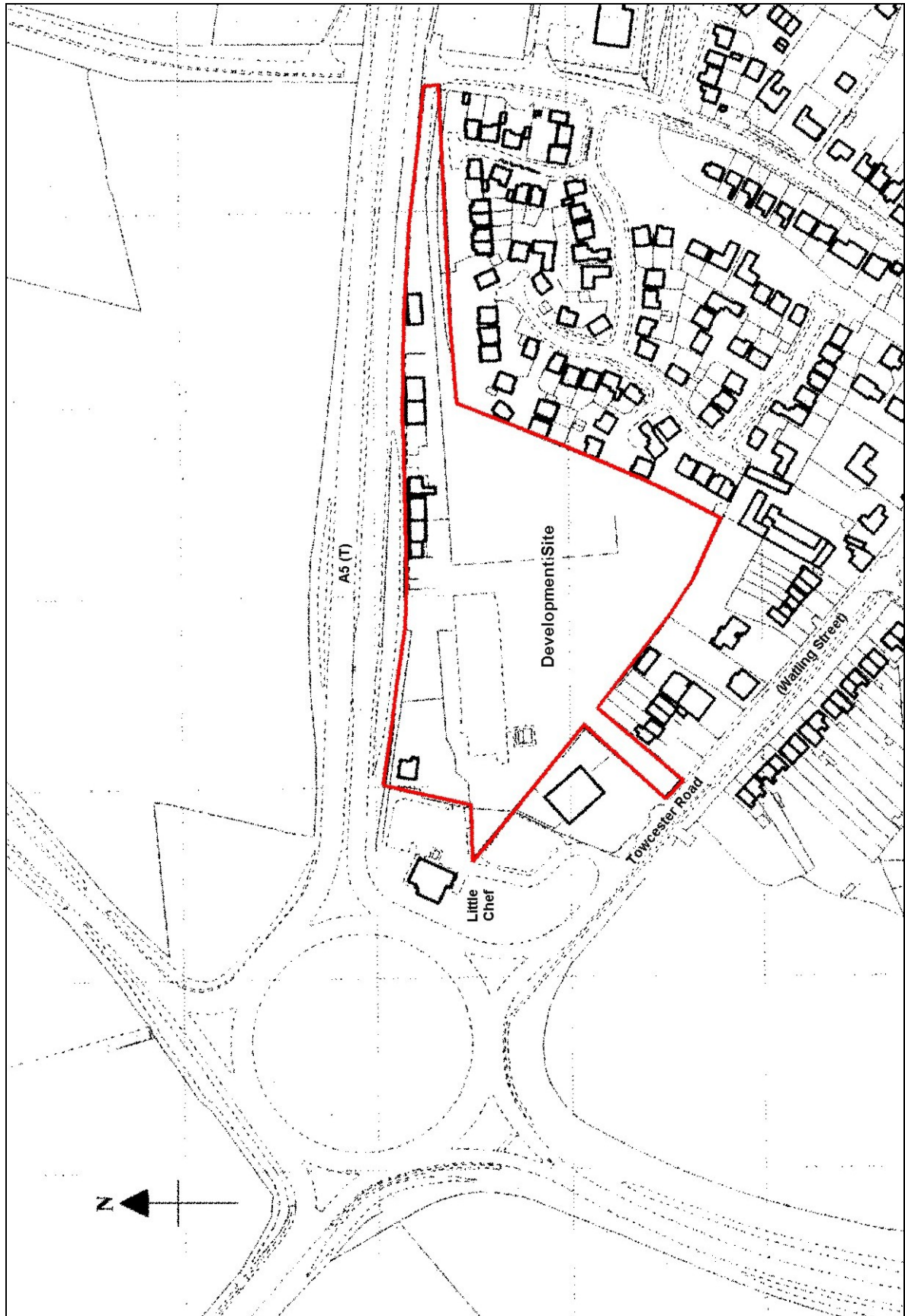


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:3,000)

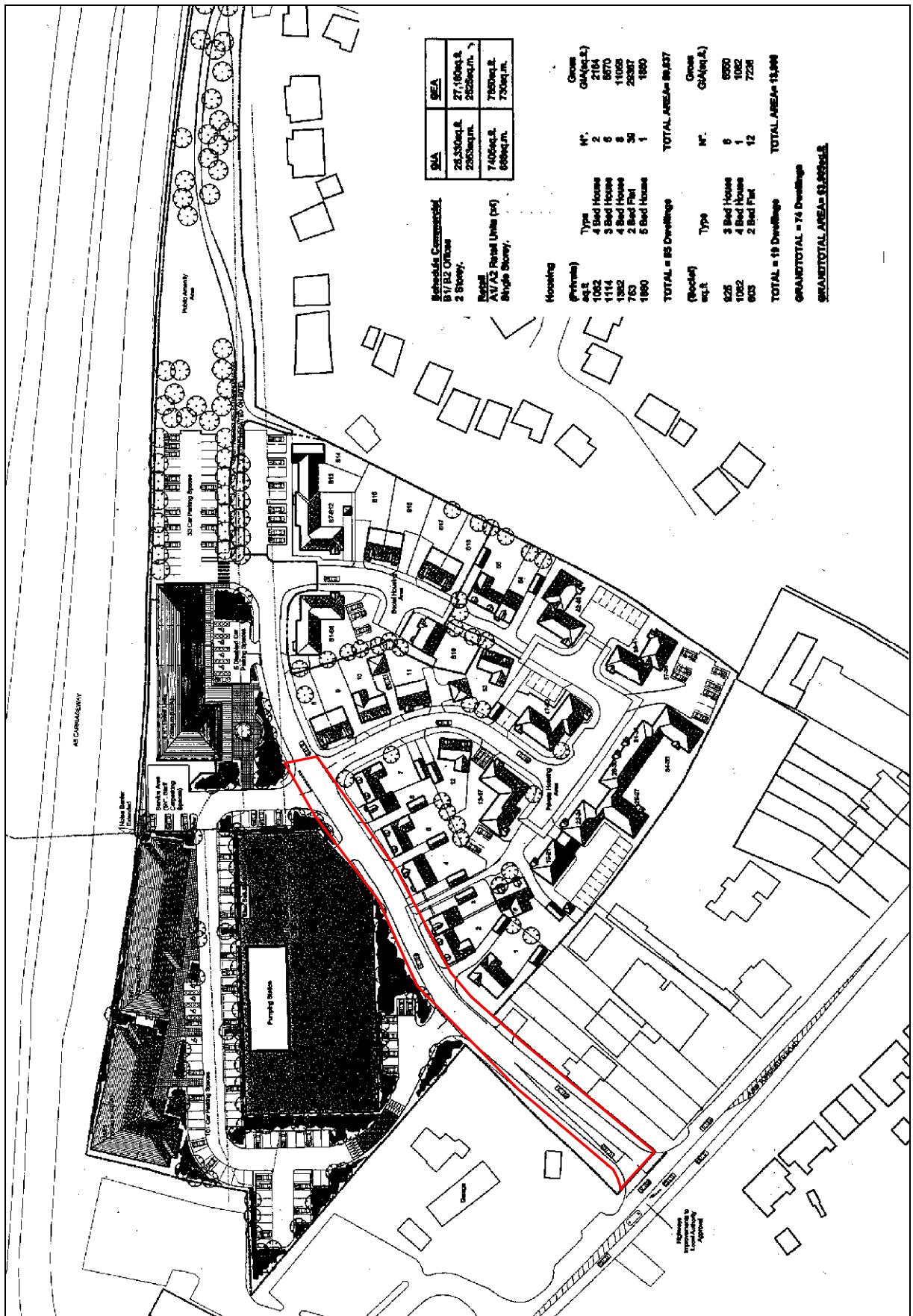


Figure 3: Proposed development and area of the watching brief (not to scale)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 2), the aims of the watching brief were:

- To identify and make a basic record of any archaeological remains revealed by development

2.2 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 3), which required:

- An archaeological watching brief to be maintained during the main phase(s) of groundworks for the development. This included groundworks for access roads, substantial landscaping, etc.
- If significant archaeology was revealed, further recording or observation to be undertaken as appropriate.
- Any archaeological features revealed to be cleaned and sampled sufficiently to demonstrate their general date and character, and recorded and planned appropriately
- Stratified and unstratified finds of pre-modern date to be collected and examined, to provide information on the chronological development of Old Stratford.
- A record to be made of the extent and depth of previous ground disturbance

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 Results

- 3.1 The current report records the observations made on the ground works associated with the access road off Towcester Road (Fig 3), and its associated drainage.
- 3.2 Five visits were made to the site during the groundworks. Each visit was recorded on ASC's standard monitoring sheets, accompanied by a photographic record.
- 3.3 Groundworks observed included the removing of disturbed deposits above the natural subsoil, and the deeper trenches for the drains. The disturbed deposits were up to 0.4m deep and contained modern building debris, and re-deposited 19th century porcelain and brick/ tile. Shallow brick footings for a possible late 19th or early 20th century building or wall were observed towards Towcester Road where a series of buildings are depicted on the 1892 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 4). No structural or artefactual evidence was observed to suggest that the site had been occupied prior to the 19th century.

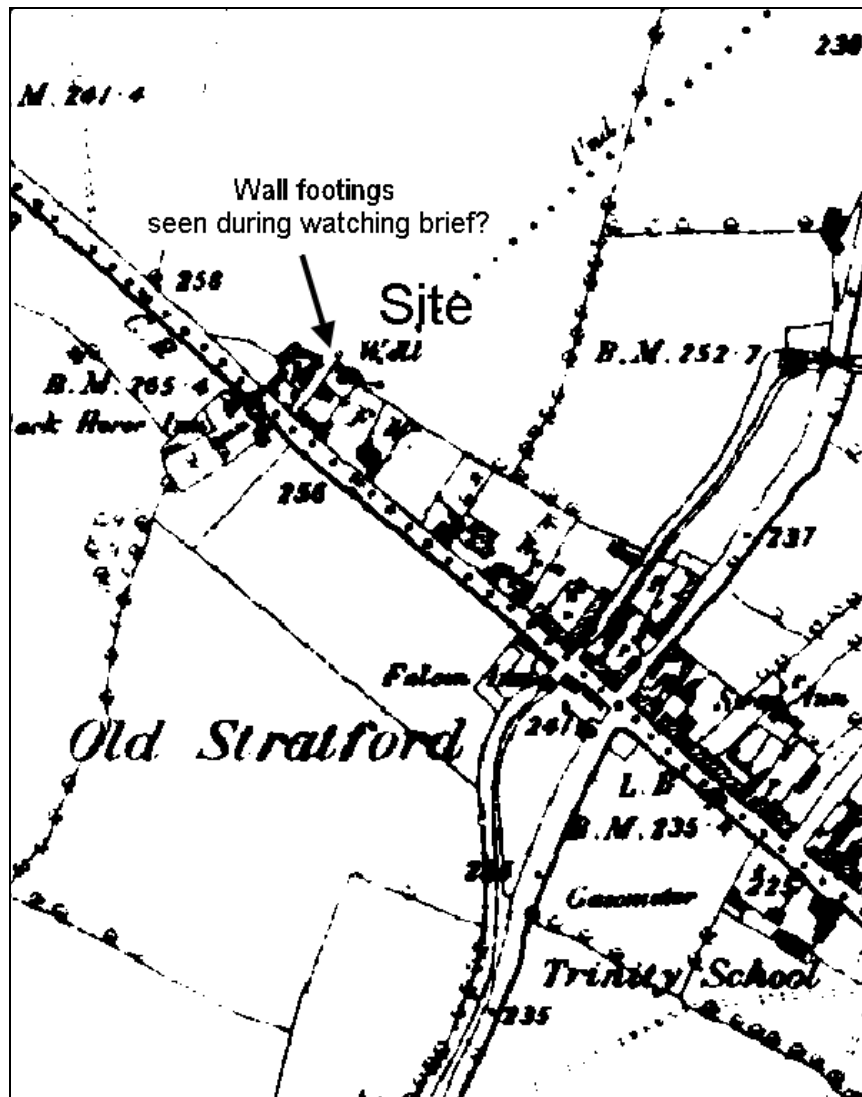


Figure 4: Extract from the 1892 Ordnance Survey 6" map
Indicating the location of the wall seen during the watching brief



Plate 1: Typical view of the section



Plate 2: Area stripped of contaminated soil



Plate 3: General view of the drainage trench



Plate 4: General view of the drainage trench



Plate 5: Looking west towards Stratford Road

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The brief states that “in view of the previous use of the site, extensive areas of well preserved archaeological remains are not anticipated to survive; however more localised survival of important remains within this relatively large site are possible.” In view of the density of known sites in this area of South Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes it was considered possible that limited evidence to indicate Roman or Saxon use of the site might have survived. It was also possible that remains from other periods could survive. Initially it was envisaged that the whole site would proceed as a single development rather than the current two-stage development. The watching brief on the road area has been able to demonstrate that the site has seen two phases of modern disturbance. During the 19th century, housing development along the small lane leading off Towcester Road will have destroyed any archaeology that might have survived in that area. When the Anglian water depot and pumping station was constructed a considerable amount of landscaping seems to have taken place, including the removal of the upper soil deposits.
- 5.2 With this much disturbance to the site it seems highly unlikely that any archaeological remains survive though it is still possible that some deeper features such as pits and major ditches may be exposed in footing and drainage trenches when the second phase of the development goes ahead.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Jon Edward of Grantmaster Developments for Commissionin the watching brief. We would also like to thank Mick MacNamara, Carey's site manager for his assistance during the project. Myk Flitcroft and his team at the HET prepared the brief and generally assisted in the smooth running of the project. The fieldwork was carried out by Nigel Wilson and Bob Zeepvat.

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. List of photographs/slides
7. Colour slides
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be stored at ASC's Milton Keynes office until such time as a suitable depository is available in Northamptonshire.

References

Flytcroft M 2002 *Former Anglian Water Group Site, Cosgrove Road/ Towcester Road Old Stratford Brief for Archaeological watching brief.* (Northants CC unpublished)

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).*

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

Zeepvat B. 2004 *Land of Towcester Road, Old Stratford, Northampton shire. Project Design for Watching Brief* (ASC Ltd unpublished)

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets



A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: Land of Towcester Road		Project No/Code: 558/OST		Sheet: 1 of 6		
		Date of visit: 5/3/04				
Client/Developer: Grantmaster Developments (Jon Edward)						
Contact: Mick MacNamara			Phone: 07771 812731			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: 11.30		Finish: 12.30		
Completed by: Nigel Wilson						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry, Overcast						
Observations: About 5m of drainage trench open. No features Also an area of contaminated soil removed down to natural clay on the new road line c.10.0 x 10.0m. Again no features						
Comments: Work will continue in short sections expected time to finish 4-5 days						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: Land of Towcester Road		Project No/Code: 558/OST	Sheet: 2 of 6
		Date of visit: 8/3/2004	
Client/Developer: Grantmaster Developments (Jon Edward)			
Contact: Mick MacNamara		Phone: 07771 812731	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 12.30	Finish: 1.30	
Completed by: Nigel Wilson			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry overcast			
Observations: Trenching continued 0.2 - 0.3m of modern disturbed deposits above natural clay. No archaeological features.			
Comments: Will go back Tuesday 9/3 late afternoon.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: Land of Towcester Road		Project No/Code: 558/OST	Sheet: 3 of 6			
		Date of visit: 9/3/2004				
Client/Developer: Grantmaster Developments (Jon Edward)						
Contact: Mick MacNamara		Phone: 07771 812731				
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 3.30	Finish: 4.30				
Completed by: Nigel Wilson						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry overcast						
Observations: Working on drains towards Towcester Road. Disturbed deposits overlying clean clay. Possible brick built wall footing (building shown on old OS map?). No pre modern archaeological deposits						
Comments: Will visit next on Thursday						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: Land of Towcester Road		Project No/Code: 558/OST		Sheet: 4 of 6		
		Date of visit: 11/03/2004				
Client/Developer: Grantmaster Developments (Jon Edward)						
Contact: Mick MacNamara			Phone: 07771 812731			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start:		Finish:		
Completed by: Bob Zeepvat						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Cold Dry						
Observations: Stripping/reducing level for road formation from Towcester Road to footings of former houses. Clean orange-brown clay: No features or finds.						
Comments: Will visit again tomorrow PM most of road should be stripped.						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: Land of Towcester Road		Project No/Code: 558/OST	Sheet: 5 of 6
		Date of visit: 12/3/2004	
Client/Developer: Grantmaster Developments (Jon Edward)			
Contact: Mick MacNamara		Phone: 07771 812731	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 2.30	Finish: 3.30	
Completed by: Bob Zeepvat			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Cold, wet (melting snow)			
Observations: Road stripped from houses to pumping station. Mixed overburden (including clinker building debris etc) above clean orange-brown clay. No features or finds.			
Comments: Will be working on surfacing, kerbs, drains etc and junction with Towcester Road for next week or so. Will let us know when stripping the final section			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: Land of Towcester Road		Project No/Code: 558/OST		Sheet: 6 of 6		
		Date of visit: 21/4/2004				
Client/Developer: Grantmaster Developments (Jon Edward)						
Contact: Mick MacNamara			Phone: 07771 812731			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: 3.30		Finish: 4.30		
Completed by: Bob Zeepvat						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Cloudy, wet						
Observations: Visited in response to call from site manager 'Digging drains on eastern part of main access road'. Most of the drains completed by visit. Part still open revealed c300-400mm of modern rubble and overburden, above 300mm of firm green-grey clay, above sand (depth 3m+) No archaeological features or finds revealed.						
Comments:						

For sketch plan, use reverse ©ASC, 2003

Appendix 2: SMR Summary Sheet

SMR Record Number	Parish Old Stratford	Site Name Land off Towcester Road
Date of Fieldwork March/ April 2004	Grid ref. SP 7776 4142	Fieldworker Bob Zeepvat
Sponsor Grantmaster Developments	Activity Watching Brief	
Landowner name/address: Grantmaster Developments Orchard House Bellamy Road Mansfield Notts NG18 4LJ		
Finds location N/a	Finds Destination N/a	
Records location ASC Ltd Milton Keynes Office	Records Destination Northamptonshire Depository when available	
Finds Quantity N/a	Records Quantity 1 box file	
<p>Summary of Results</p> <p><i>During March to April 2004 Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd undertook a watching brief on the construction of a new access road and drainage on a site to the north of Old Stratford, and to the east of Towcester Road. The site had previously been used as an Anglian Water depot. The work was required to fulfil a planning condition imposed by South Northamptonshire District Council. The watching brief was able to demonstrate that the depot had truncated all the upper soil deposits. No archaeological features other than 20th century deposits associated with the depot were identified.</i></p>		