

**LAND TO THE REAR OF
BROOK STREET/LONDON ROAD
ASTON CLINTON
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

For

WILBRAHAM ASSOCIATES LTD


CA PROJECT: 2987
CA REPORT: 09215

DECEMBER 2009

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date	16 December 2009
issue	01

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Land to the rear of Brook Street/London Road
Location: Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire
NGR: SP 8751 1234
Type: Evaluation
Date: 1-2 December 2009
Planning Reference: 08/02474/AOP
Location of Archive: Buckinghamshire County Museum
Accession Number: AYBCM: 2009.200
Site Code: BRO 09

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in December 2009 on land to the rear of Brook Street/London Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire. Four trenches were excavated.

One ditch dating to the Roman period was identified, together with two undated ditches and seven medieval/post-medieval furrows. Modern field drains were revealed throughout.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2009 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Wilbraham Associates Ltd on land to the rear of Brook Street/London Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire (centred on NGR: SP 8751 1234; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany a planning application for residential development of the site.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief for archaeological evaluation (BCC 2009) prepared by Eliza Alquassar, Archaeological Planning and Conservation Officer, Buckinghamshire County Council Planning and Environment Service, Countryside and Heritage Group (BCCPES), the archaeological advisors to Aylesbury Vale District Council, and with a subsequent detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2009) and approved by Ruth Beckley (BCCPES). The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991). It was monitored by Ruth Beckley, including a site visit on 2 December 2009.

The site

1.3 The proposed development area lies on the north-western edge of Aston Clinton, bounded to the north-west and north-east by fields, and to the south-east and south-west by residential properties fronting Brook Street and London Road (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 92m AOD and is generally flat.

1.4 The site is approximately 1.5ha and comprises a pasture field sub-divided by a footpath, and the grounds of 1b Brook Street.

1.5 The drift geology of the area is mapped as Upper Greensand and Gault of the Cretaceous era (BGS 1990). Flint rich chalky gravel was encountered across the site interspersed with grey clay patches that became more abundant to the north and east.

Archaeological background

- 1.6 Archaeological interest in the site arises principally from its proximity to London Road, which preserves the line of Akeman Street Roman Road (Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (BHER) 0105004). Iron Age pottery and remnants of a possible kiln were identified in 1990 during the excavation of a pond to the south of Akeman Street (BHER 05725). Further traces of Iron Age settlement were identified along the Aston Clinton Bypass in 2005 (BHER 08402). These included a roundhouse and a post-built structure, along with pits, one of which contained human remains. The site also included Late Bronze Age features. An amphora containing 'burnt wood and earth' and a hairpin, recovered during the 19th century 900m west of the site, represents a possible Late Iron Age Welwyn Style burial (BHER 00430).
- 1.7 Several medieval moated sites are present in the local area, the closest lying 170m south-east of the site (BHER 00131). The moated site at Vatches Farm, 900m north-west of the site is a Scheduled Monument (SM 29403). Medieval ridge and furrow survived on the site at least until the late 20th century and may still be present (BCC 2009). The Buckinghamshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project identified the site as lying within an area of pre 18th- century irregular enclosure.

Archaeological objectives

- 1.8 The objectives of the evaluation are to provide data on the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the site. This information will assist Aylesbury Vale District Council in making an informed judgement on the significance of the archaeological resource, and the likely impact upon it of the proposed development.
- 1.9 More specific objectives as laid out in the *brief* issued by BCCPES are to:
- establish whether Iron Age settlement remains are present;
 - establish whether Roman remains are present and consider their relationship to Akeman Street; and
 - establish whether medieval ridge and furrow survives on the site.

Methodology

- 1.10 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 4 trenches, all measuring 40m in length and 1.6m in width, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2).
- 1.11 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.12 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003), and *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to theory and practice of methods from sampling and recovery to post excavation* (EH 2002). No deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 3: *Treatment of Finds Immediately After Excavation* (1995).
- 1.13 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner, the artefacts will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum under accession number AYBCM: 2009.200, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-3)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.
- 2.2 In all of the trenches a broadly similar stratigraphic sequence was identified; undisturbed natural substrate comprising flint rich chalky gravel, interspersed with patches of clay, was revealed at depths of between 0.4 and 0.7m below present

ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by subsoil, up to 0.52m thick, which was in turn overlain by topsoil, up to 0.3m thick.

Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

- 2.3 In trench 1, five furrows orientated broadly north-east/south-west, were evident cutting the natural substrate. The furrows, typically measuring between 1m and 3m in width, truncated the subsoil 1002.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 -4)

- 2.4 North-west/south-east aligned ditch 2003 was identified towards the south-western end of the trench (Fig. 3, section AA and Fig. 4). No artefacts were retrieved from associated ditch fill 2004. Curving linear anomaly, 2005 (not illustrated), to the south-west of ditch 2003 was revealed upon excavation to be part of the natural substrate, overlain by natural chalky gravel 2006. All the above features and deposits were sealed by subsoil 2002, which was in turn overlain by topsoil 2001.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2)

- 2.5 Two furrows, orientated broadly east/west, were evident cutting the natural substrate. The furrows, measuring between 0.6m and 1.0m in width, truncated the subsoil 3002.

Trench 4 (Figs 2, 3 & 5)

- 2.6 A north-east/south-west orientated ditch, 4006, was identified towards the north-western end of the trench (Fig. 3, section BB). Associated ditch 4006 contained a single sherd of Roman pottery. Ditch 4004 identified to the north-east of ditch 4006, was aligned north/south and remains artefactually undated (Fig. 3, section CC and Fig. 5). Both of the ditches were sealed by subsoil 4002, which was in turn overlain by topsoil 4001.

The Finds and Palaeoenvironmental Evidence

- 2.7 One fragment of Roman pottery was recovered from ditch fill 4005. It consists of a bodysherd in a wheel-thrown, fine, oxidized fabric which is slightly micaceous. (Appendix B)

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 One ditch, 4006, of probable Roman date was identified during the evaluation. A further ditch, 2003 may be broadly contemporary as it had a very similar form with moderate sloping sides to a rounded base, similar fill characteristics and the fills were also sealed by the subsoil. These ditches probably represented field boundaries, delineating the land and acting as drainage channels. Ditch 4004 differed in form and probably function, with steep sloping sides to a wide flat base. However it may also be broadly contemporary with 2003 and 4006 as its fills were also sealed by the subsoil. None of the identified features are evident on the 1884 1st edition OS map, the land boundaries having remained consistent to the present day
- 3.2 It is probable that the furrows identified during the evaluation represent the remains of medieval/post-medieval agricultural activity identified on aerial photographs and in places still visible as ephemeral earthworks.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Ray Holt, assisted by Hazel O'Neill. The report was written by Ray Holt. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by Ray Holt, and prepared for deposition by Victoria Taylor. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman.

5. REFERENCES

BCC (Buckinghamshire County Council) 2009 *Land to the rear of Brook Street/London Road, Aston Clinton: Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation*

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1990 *Geological Survey of Britain (England and Wales)*
Drift. Sheet 238: Aylesbury

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2009 *Land to the rear of Brook Street/London Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
1001	Layer	Topsoil			0.15 to 0.23	
1002	Layer	Subsoil			0.2 to 0.32	
1003	Cut	Medieval furrow		1.1		medieval
1004	Fill	Fill of 1003		1.1		medieval
1005	Cut	Medieval furrow		2.4		medieval
1006	Fill	Fill of 1005		2.4		medieval
1007	Cut	Medieval furrow		1.0		medieval
1008	Fill	Fill of 1007		1.0		medieval
1009	Cut	Medieval furrow		1.9		medieval
1010	Fill	Fill of 1009		1.9		medieval
1011	Cut	Medieval furrow		3.0		medieval
1012	Fill	Fill of 1011		3.0		medieval
1013	Layer	Natural substrate				

Trench 2

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
2001	Layer	Topsoil			0.2 to 0.3	
2002	Layer	Subsoil			0.2 to 0.35	
2003	Cut	Ditch filled by 2004		0.9	0.35	
2004	Fill	Fill of 2003		0.9	0.35	
2005	Deposit	Curvilinear patch of clay natural		0.25		
2006	Layer	Natural substrate				

Trench 3

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
3001	Layer	Topsoil			0.2 to 0.3	
3002	Layer	Subsoil			0.1 to 0.25	
3003	Cut	Medieval furrow		1.0		medieval
3004	Fill	Fill of 3003		1.0		medieval
3005	Cut	Medieval furrow		0.6		medieval
3006	Fill	Fill of 3005		0.6		medieval
3007	Layer	Natural substrate				

Trench 4

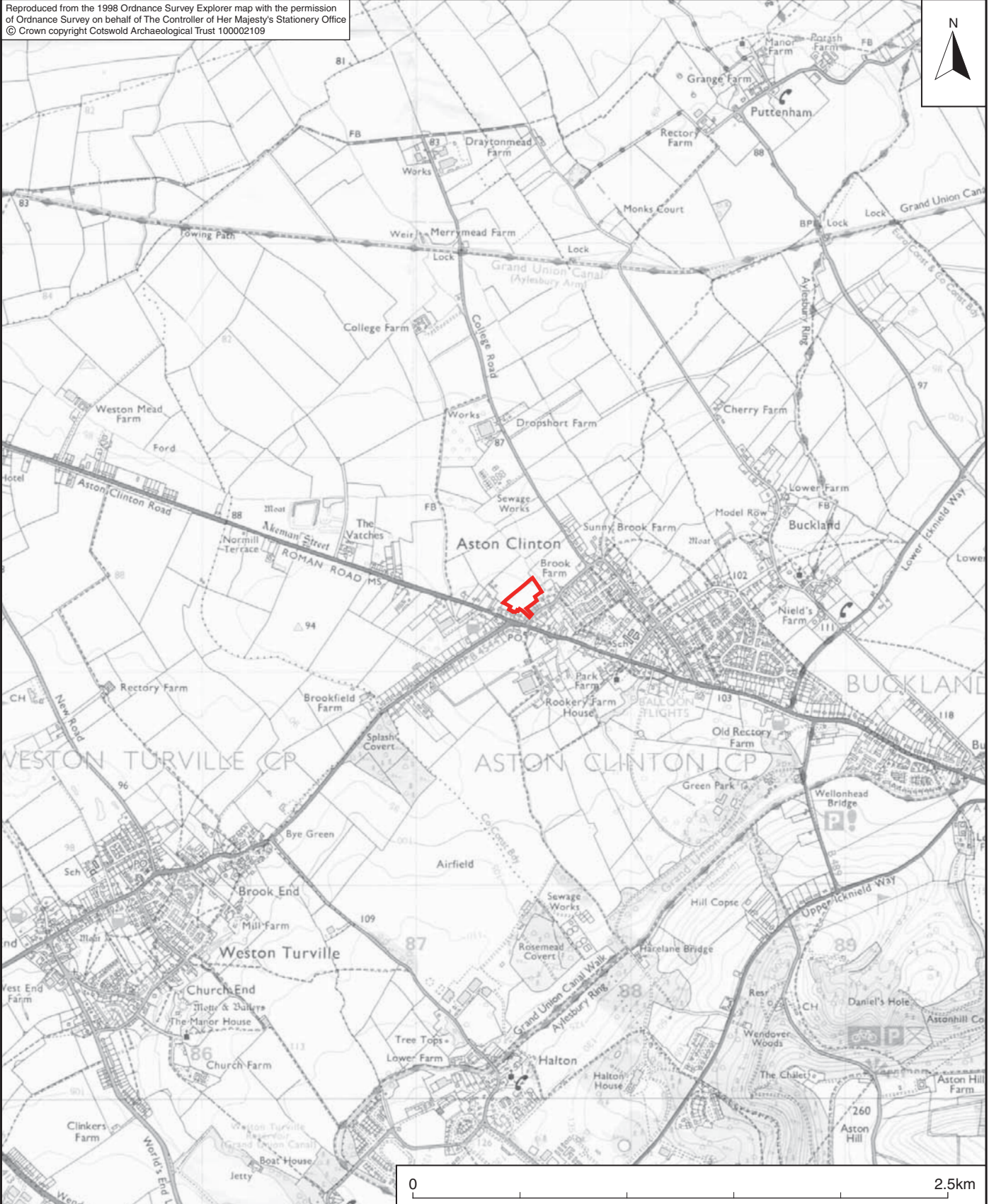
No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
4000	Layer	Topsoil			0.25 to 0.3	
4001	Layer	Subsoil			0.4 to 0.52	
4002	Layer	Natural substrate				
4003	Fill	Fill of 4004		3.57	0.23	
4004	Cut	Ditch filled by 4003		3.57	0.23	
4005	Fill	Fill of 4006		1.4	0.36	Roman
4006	Cut	Ditch filled by 4005		1.4	0.36	Roman


APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Description	Count	Weight(g)	Spot date
4005	Roman pottery: oxidized fabric	1	6	RB

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

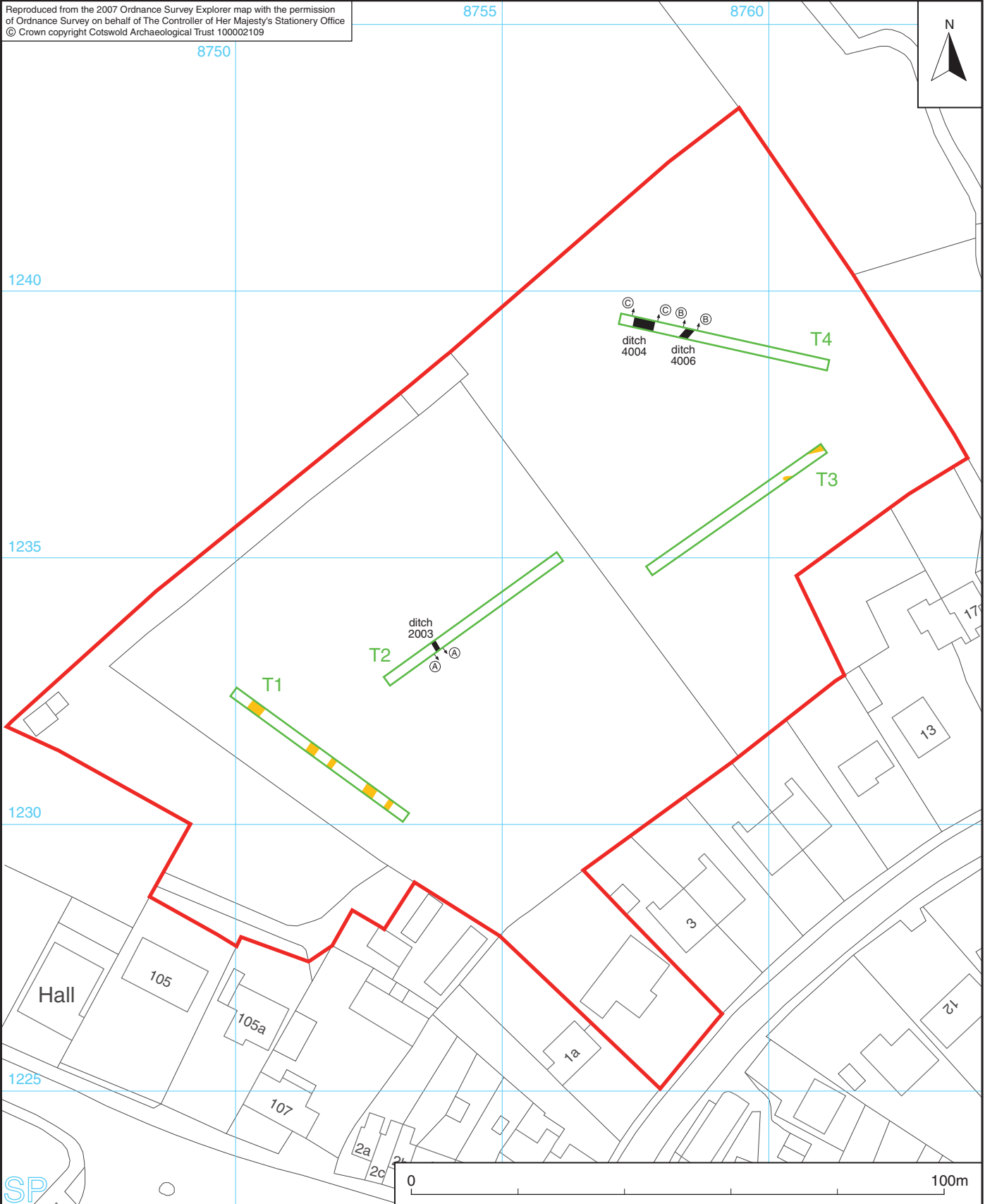
PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land to the rear of Brook Street/London Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in December 2009 at the request of Wilbraham Associates LTD on land to the rear of Brook Street/London Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire. Four trenches were excavated. One ditch dating to the Roman period was identified, together with two undated ditches and seven medieval furrows. Modern field drains were also identified.	
Project dates	1-2 December 2009	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	Not known	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Land to the rear of Brook Street/London Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	1.5ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SP 8751 1234	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Buckinghamshire County Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Ray Holt	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Buckinghamshire County Museum. AYBCM : 2009.200	Ceramics
Paper	Buckinghamshire County Museum. AYBCM : 2009.200	Context sheets, trench recording sheets, photographic register, permatrace drawings
Digital	Buckinghamshire County Museum. AYBCM : 2009.200	Digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2009 <i>Land to the rear of Brook Street/London Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 09215		



 COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY			
PROJECT TITLE Land to the rear of Brook St./London Rd. Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire			
FIGURE TITLE Site location plan			
DRAWN BY	SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
PJM	1:25,000@A4	2987	1



SP



- site
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- furrow



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Land to the rear of Brook St./London Rd.
Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench location plan

DRAWN BY

PJM

SCALE

1:1000@A4

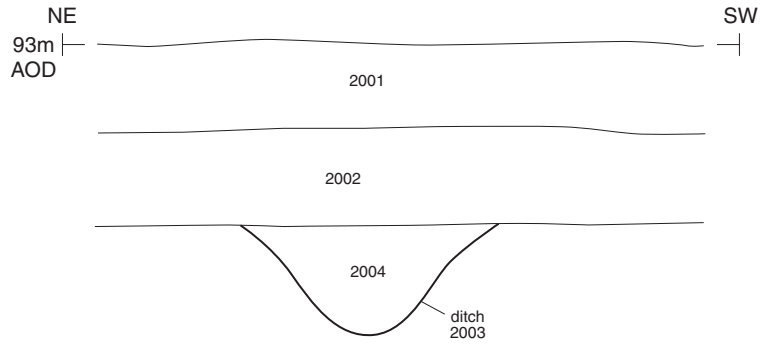
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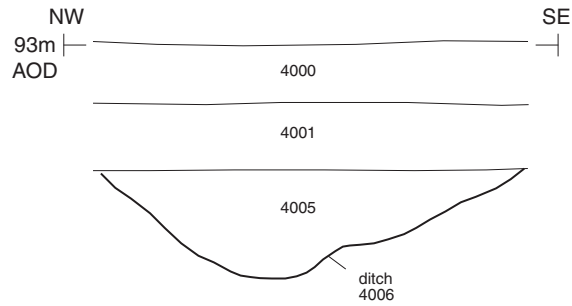
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2

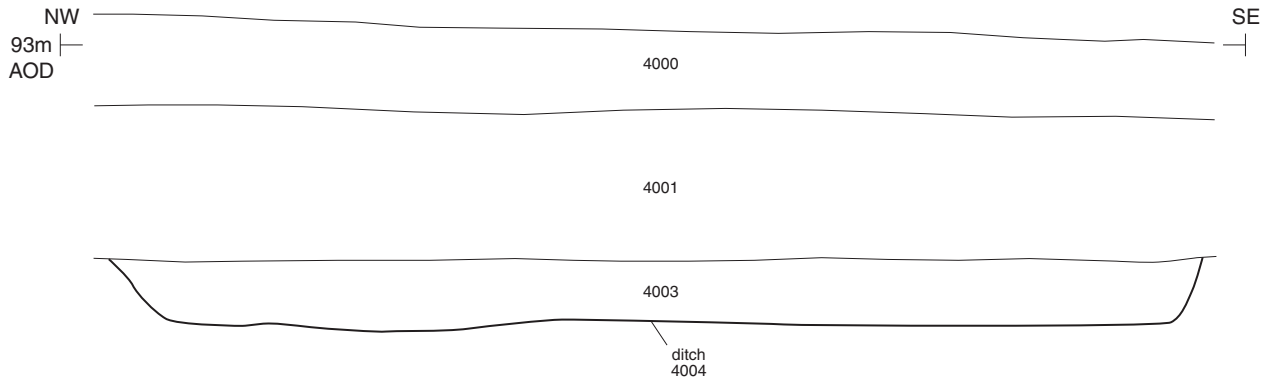
Section AA



Section BB



Section CC



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Land to the rear of Brook St./London Rd.
Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire

FIGURE TITLE

Sections

DRAWN BY

PJM

SCALE

1:25@A4

PROJECT NO.

2987

FIGURE NO.


3



4



5

<p>4 Photograph of ditch 2003, section AA</p> <p>5 Photograph of ditch 4004, section CC</p>	 COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY			
	<small>PROJECT TITLE</small> Land to the rear of Brook St./London Rd. Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire			
	<small>FIGURE TITLE</small> Photographs			
	<small>DRAWN BY</small> PJM	<small>SCALE</small> n/a	<small>PROJECT NO.</small> 2987	<small>FIGURE NO.</small> 4 & 5