

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**A REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION
AND MONITORING AT
100-102 WALTON STREET, AYLESBURY,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**



by
**Martin Lightfoot BA, MA, AIFA
& Jonathan R. Hunn BA, PhD, MIFA**

**September 2002
ASC:AWS02/3**

© Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd.

Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall,
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700
Email: mka@archaeological-services.co.uk
Website: www.archaeological-services.co.uk



SITE DATA

ASC site code:	ASC02	Project No:	388
County:	Buckinghamshire		
District:	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
Village/Town:	Aylesbury		
Parish:	St Marys		
NGR:	SP 8232 1320		
Total extent of site:	0.42 ha approx		
Extent of development:	50% approx		
Present land use:	Club house and landscaped parking		
Planning proposal:	Car parking and driveway		
Planning application ref/date:	00/02899/APP		
Client:	Lambert Smith Hampton Aquila House St Giles Terrace Northants NN1 2BN		
Contact name:	Marcus Cookham		
Telephone	01604 230606	Fax:	01604 231549

CONTENTS

Summary	3
1. Introduction	3
2. Setting	4
3. Archaeological & Historical Background	8
4. Aims & Methods	11
5. Results	13
6. Conclusions	16
7. Acknowledgements	16
8. Bibliography	17
9. Archive	17

Figures:

1. General location	2
2. Site location	5
3. Existing site with excavation location.....	6
4. Plan of proposed driveway and additional parking.....	7
5. 1880 25'' map of Aylesbury	9
6. 1924 Ordnance survey map	10
7. Drawing showing depth of macadam drive.....	12
8. Site plan with NGR coordinates.....	15

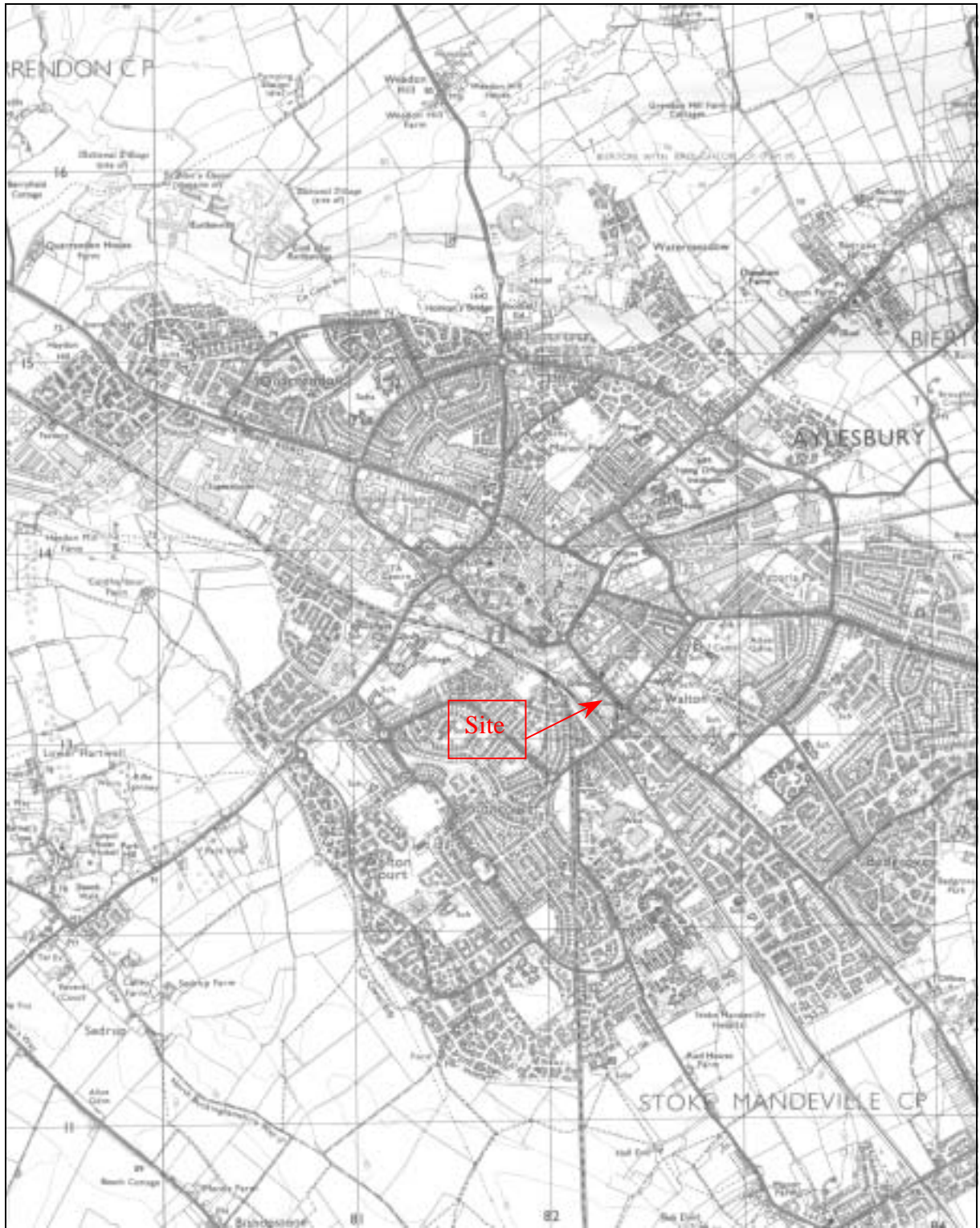
Plates:

Cover: The Conservative Club

1. Copy of drawing by W. Crouch August 1882.....	3
2. Overall view of the site	13
3. Test pit 1	14
4. Test pit 2	14

Apendices

1. Monitoring & Recording.....	18
2. Monitoring sheets.....	19



Based upon the 1994 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map, with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
© Crown Copyright ASC Ltd - Licence No. AL52133A0001

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

Summary

In mid-May 2002 an area 8 by 10 metres was excavated on a site at 100-102 Walton Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. This was followed up with a programme of monitoring and recording on the subsequent landscaping in August and September of the same year. Though adjacent to the Saxon settlement of Walton the excavation was not deep enough to encounter significant archaeological deposits. A layer of compacted stone ; presumably a farmyard surface, was encountered below made up ground and topsoil. Medieval sherds were recovered from just below the topsoil at the northern end of the site during the monitoring phase

1 Introduction

- 1.1 During May 2002 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an excavation on a site at 100-102 Walton Street, Aylesbury (NGR SP 8232 1320: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Lambert Smith Hampton, and was carried out according to a brief (planning ref: 00/02899/APP), issued 4th September 2001 prepared by Sandy Kidd on behalf of Aylesbury Vale District Council, and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (ASC:ASW02/1).
- 1.2 The work was carried out in advance of topsoil stripping, landscaping, and the laying of a new driveway (Fig 4).



Plate 1: Copy of drawing by W. Crouch August 1882 of Walton Court Farm, Aylesbury (Bucks photo archive)

2 Setting

- 2.1 The site is situated on the west side of Walton Street and to the south of Walton Terrace. The site is about 0.4 ha in extent and is presently occupied by several buildings situated in a relatively restricted landscaped car park.
- 2.2 The site is located on flat terrain on land roughly 82-83m AOD. The soils have been considerably modified by human action, but in their natural state would belong to the Wicken series. *'The Wicken soils are dark coloured clays and clay loams with very stiff, olive coloured sub-soils overlying pale grey, calcareous Gault clay..... the soils have formed in a clayey superficial layer, apparently re-worked by solifluxion or frost action, which rests on little disturbed Gault at depths ranging from 50 mm to 600mm or more. The re-worked layer usually contains scattered flints, accompanied in places by small chalk fragments*' (Avery 1964, 114-15).
- 2.3 Access to the site is off Walton Street to the east and the plot is mostly landscaped with two detached buildings present.



Based upon an Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
© Crown Copyright ASC Ltd - Licence No. AL52133A0001

Figure 2: Site location (*scale 1:1250*)

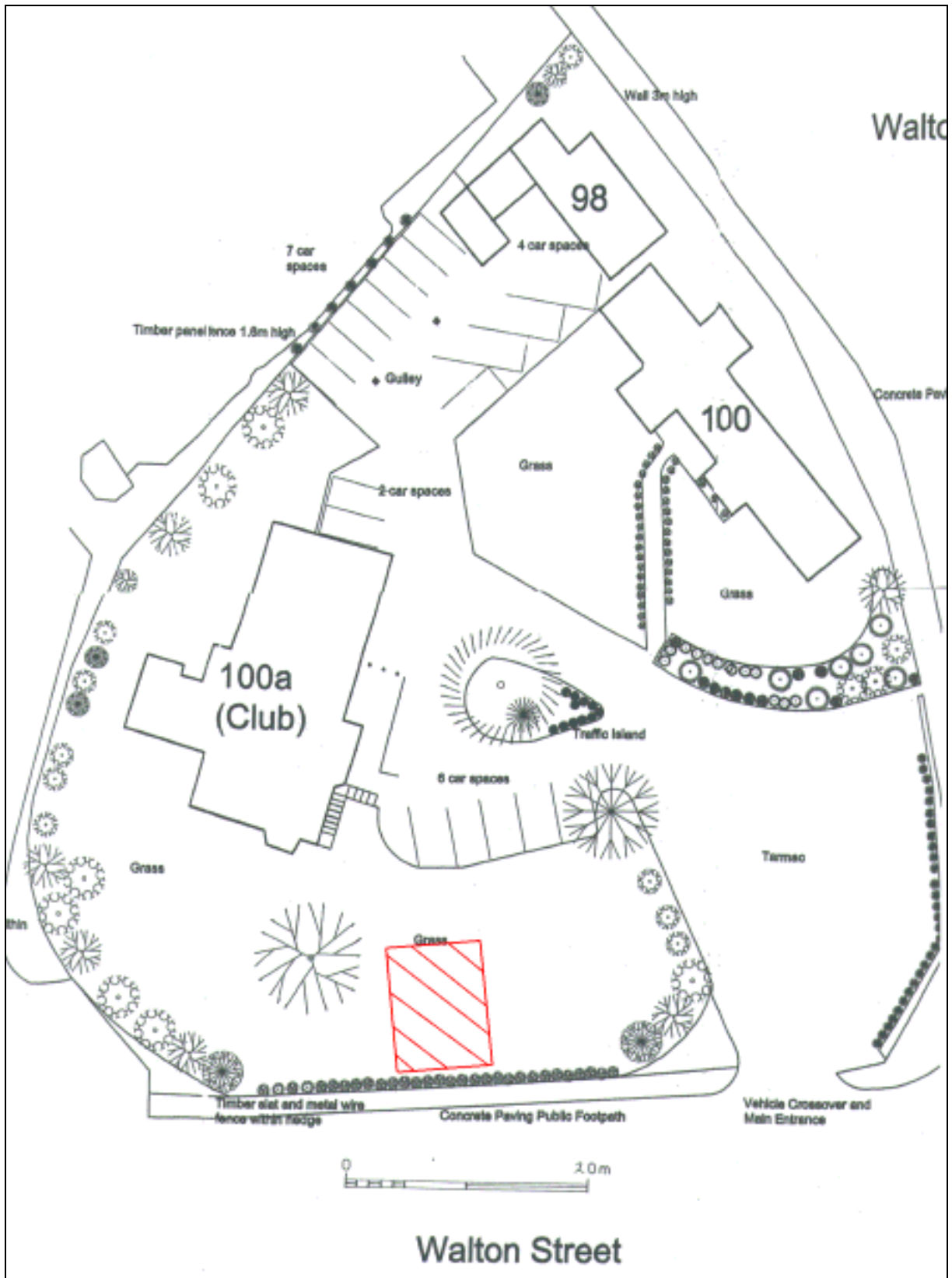


Figure 3: Existing site with excavation location

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 *'The oldest part of the town [Aylesbury] lies within an Iron Age hill-fort, and a small Roman settlement was found in Buckingham Street in 1979; it may have fronted Akeman Street. Early to mid-Saxon occupation was established not within the town but just outside it at the hamlet of Walton'* (Pevsner et al 1994, 149). It is probable that the area of Aylesbury was settled from at least the Iron Age. At Walton excavations in the mid-1980's revealed evidence for Bronze Age occupation (Dalwood *et al* 1989).
- 3.2 The documented history of Aylesbury dates from AD 571 when it is mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Excavations in the mid 1970s revealed the presence of five partly sunken, early post Roman house sites and several hall type structures (Farley 1976, 166).
- 3.3 Aylesbury has been the county town of Buckinghamshire since the 18th century. Its rise may be attributed to its superior strategic location within a comparatively rich agricultural region. Aylesbury did not absorb Walton until the 19th century. In the early 19th century, houses were built or refronted along Walton Street (Pevsner *et al* 1994, 149).
- 3.4 The area of the present study appears to have been the site of a modest Farmhouse and associated agricultural land. Indeed, the present Conservative Social Club building is late Victorian (Plate 1), and can be seen on the 1880 map, where it is referred to as Waltoncourt Farm (Fig 5). By the early 20th century the development of the railway has clearly had an effect on Aylesbury and on the character of the Farm, which is now simply known on the OS map as 'Walton Court'. It seems likely that the farm had scaled down or abandoned its agricultural activities by the time the railway had come into use, and the land immediately around the building may well have been landscaped around this time (Plate 2).
- 3.5 The 1880 and 1924 maps (Figs 5&6) show an earthwork feature called 'Intrenchments' to the North west of the site. According to the RCHM for Buckinghamshire this is possibly a fragment of a 'manorial work'.

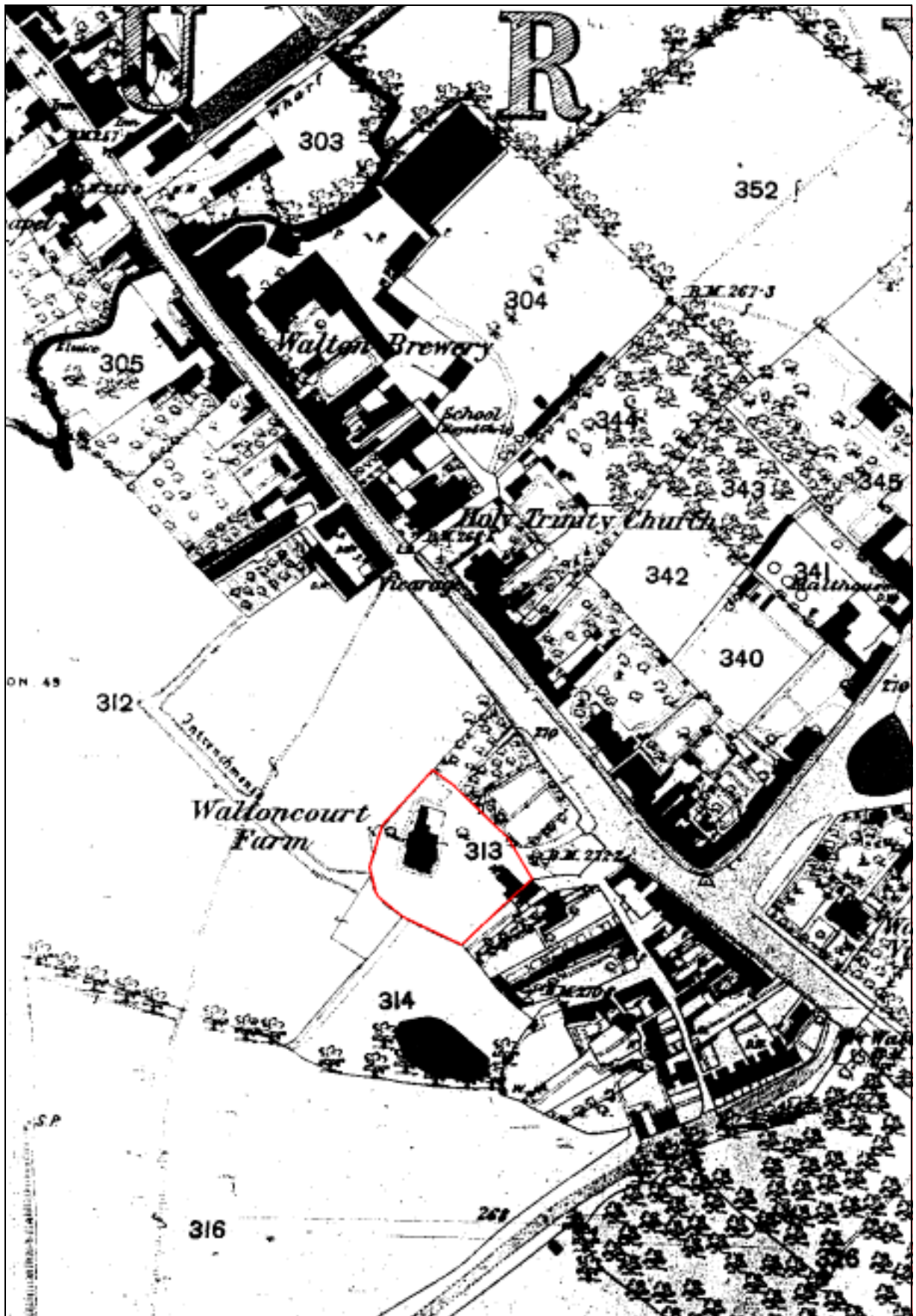


Figure 5: 1880 25'' to 1 mile (1st edition)

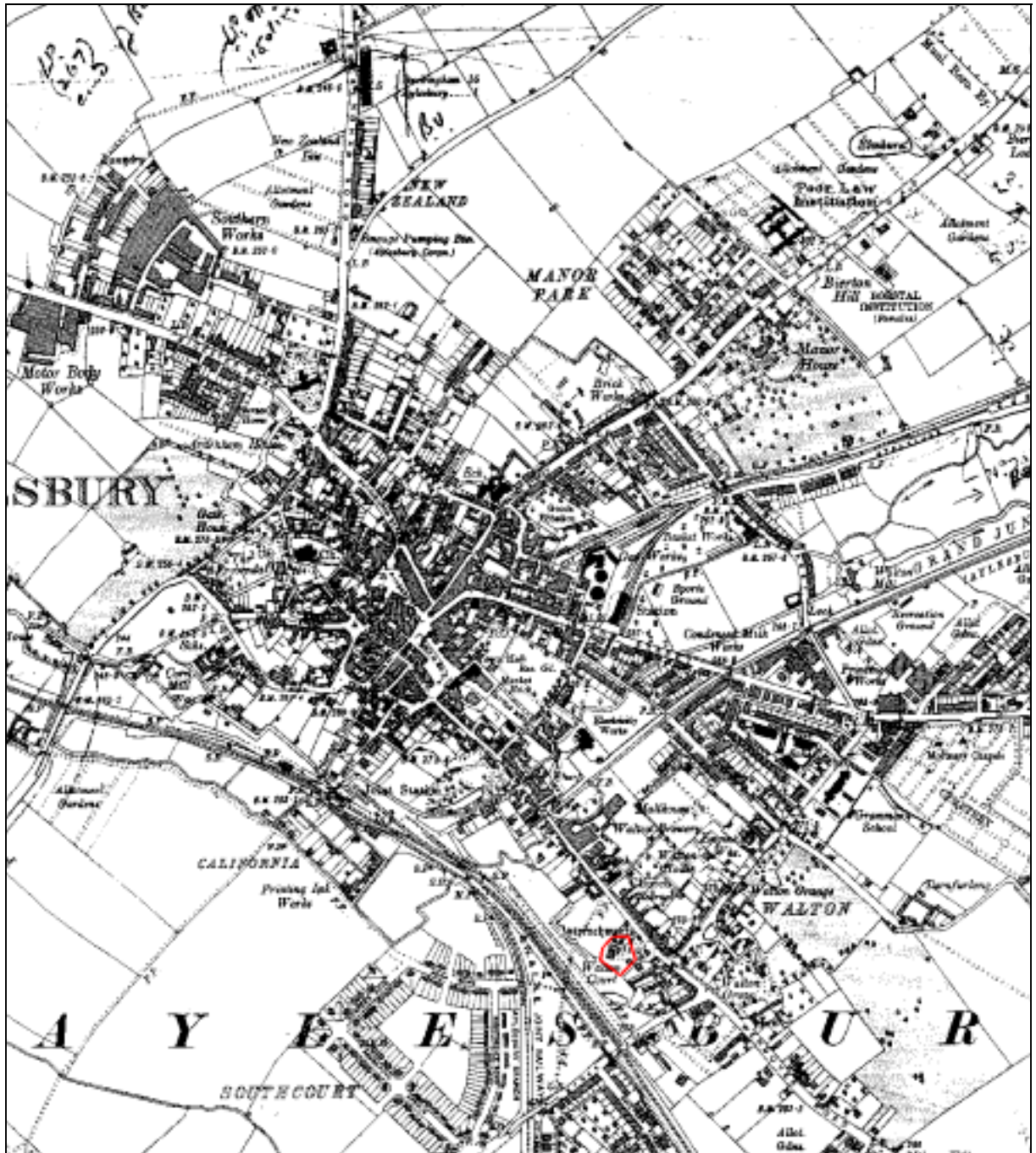


Fig 6: 1924 6'' to 1 mile OS map

4 Aims & Methods

4.1 The aim of the excavation was:

- To consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains which are liable to be threatened by the development.
- To produce an accurate and full record of the archaeology present, such that a permanent record will be made and the results presented in such a way that they may be re-examined and interpreted in the future.

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

- Mechanical reduction of an area 18m x 8m down to the top of significant deposits or the lowest level of the proposed access foundations, whichever comes first.
- Production of a plan with appropriate levels
- Select excavation of features and horizons that are potentially at risk from the development
- Monitoring and recording of the area that is to be converted into car parking and associated landscaping.
- Project report and archive.

4.3 The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Excavations* and the relevant section of ASC's *Operations Manual*.

4.4 The actual area to be excavated was reduced from 18m x 10m to 10m x 8m with the agreement of all parties.

4.5 The excavation area was stripped using a JCB with a toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil was removed along with the overburden to a depth of 450mm, which was below the lowest level of the proposed access foundation (Fig 7).

4.6 Subsequent to the area being thoroughly cleaned, two 'test pits' were excavated to determine the level of the overburden; these were 1m² and dug to a depth of 100-200mm (Fig 8).

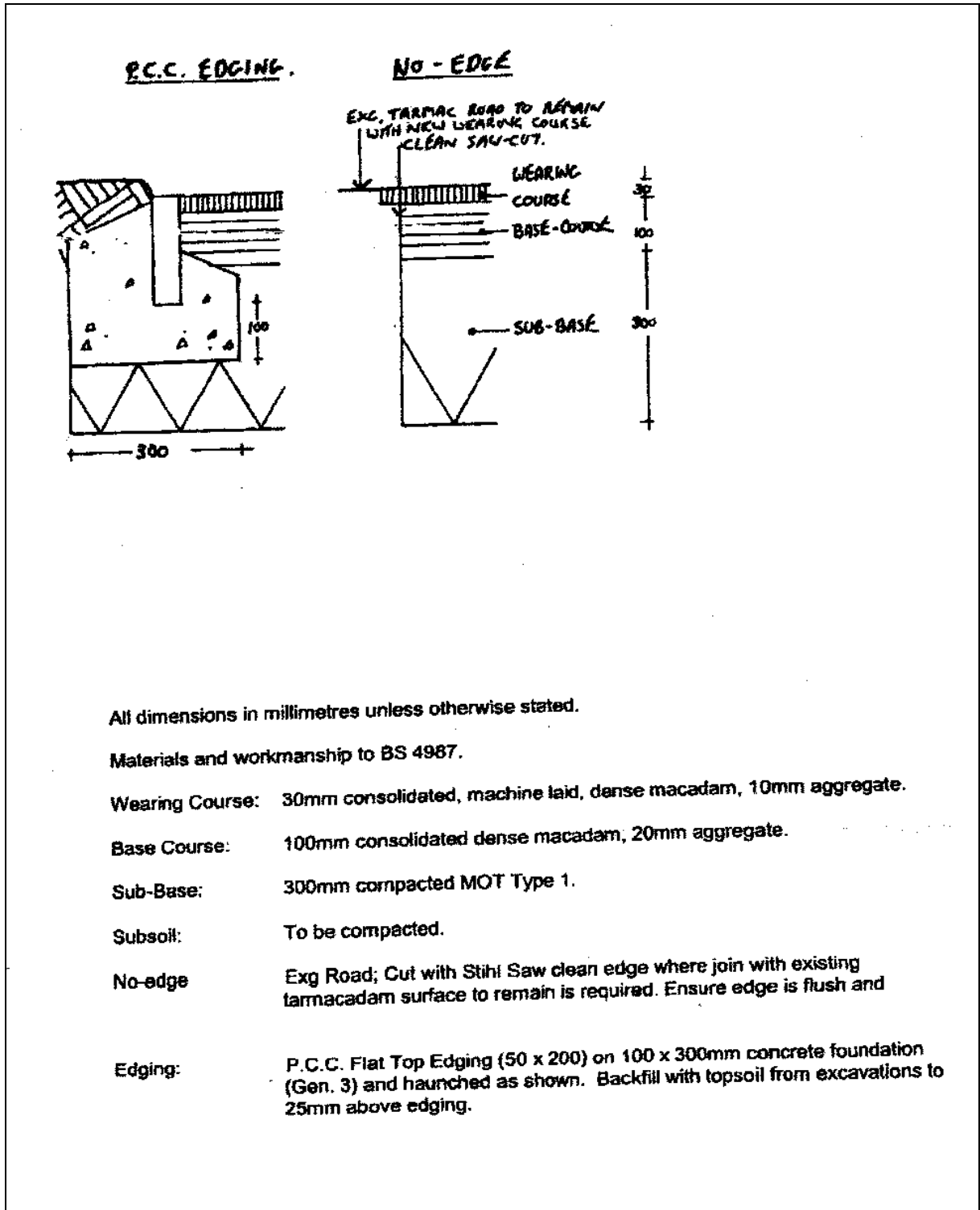


Figure 7: Drawing showing depth and constriction of macadam driveway.

5 Results



Plate 2: Overall shot of the site

- 5.1 It was immediately clear, subsequent to excavation to the required depth (430mm) that the ground had been deliberately made up, with topsoil placed on top (Plate 2).
- 5.2 The two test pits both revealed a compacted stone surface.
- 5.3 Context Summary:

Context	Description	Depth
1001	Friable, dark brown humic clay: Topsoil	0.0m
1002	Friable, mixed brown and yellowish grey gravelly clay: Made up layer	0.35m
1003	Grey limestone fragments: Stone surface (Farm yard) found in pit 1	0.55
1004	Same as 1003, found in pit 2	0.55



Plate 3: Test pit 1



Plate 4: Test pit 2

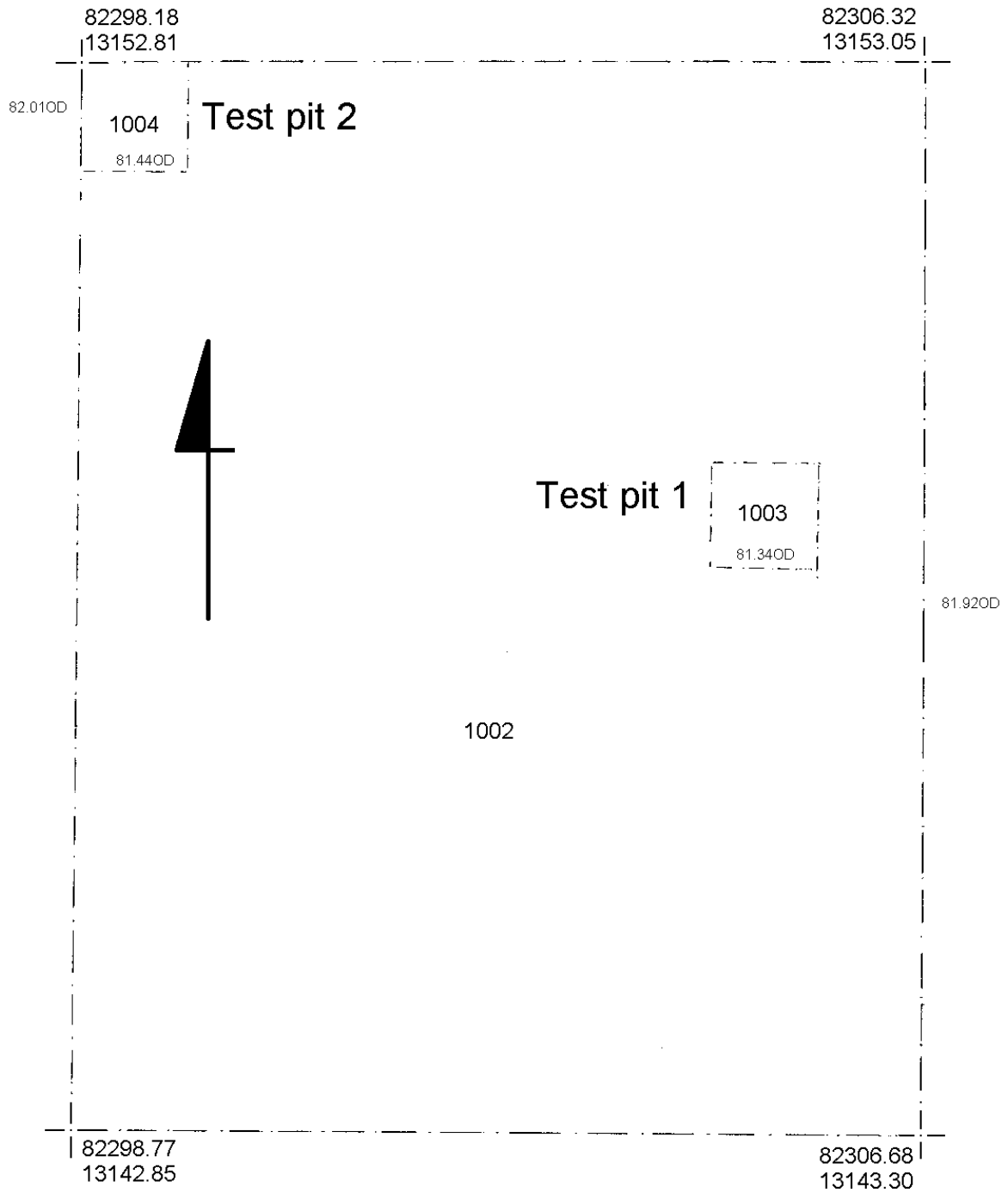


Figure 8: Site plan (*Scale 1:50*)

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 A very brief study of cartographic evidence shows that the area concerning this project was almost certainly part of a farm. It seems probable that the compacted stone surface encountered in both of the test pits was constructed sometime in the 19th century or perhaps earlier, when the farm was still functioning, and then later left *in situ* when the ground was landscaped, perhaps in the later 19th century (Plate 2), around the time of the construction of the railway line which passes close to the site and to the south west.
- 6.2 No significant archaeology was encountered during this excavation, which was limited by the terms of the brief to the topsoil and the made up ground. This does not mean that no archaeology is present at a lower level, and the potential remains that significant archaeology may be present, preserved beneath the stone surface.
- 6.3 More light would be thrown on the history of the building and the site from further documentary research. However, this is beyond the scope of the present study, the archaeological evidence resulting from the excavation does little more than confirm the previous status of the building as a farm.

7 Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Marcus Cookham who commissioned this project on behalf of Lambert Smith Hampton. Appreciation must also go to Alexander 'Sandy' Kidd, the CAO for Buckinghamshire, for his advice, and to the staff of the Buckinghamshire county Records for their assistance. The field work was undertaken by the author and Jon Bolderson, under the overall management of Dr J R Hunn.

8 Bibliography

Avery, B. W. 1964: *The Soils and Land Use of the District around Aylesbury and Hemel Hempstead*. HMSO (London).

Buckinghamshire photographs

http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/photo_database/photos/ayl0440.jpg

Accessed 22.05.02

Dalwood, C.H., Dillon, J., Evans, J. and Hawkins, J. 1989: Excavations in Walton, Aylesbury 1985-1986. *Records of Buckinghamshire* 31, 137-225.

Farley, M. 1976: Saxon & Medieval Walton, Aylesbury: Excavations 1973-4. *Records of Buckinghamshire* XX. 2, 153-290.

IFA 1999a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.

IFA 1999c Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings)*.

Pevsner, N., Williamson, E. and Brandwood, G.K., *Buckinghamshire: The buildings of England*. Penguin Books (London).

RCHM *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Buckinghamshire*, Vol I, 40.

9. Archive

The project archive will be deposited in the Buckinghamshire County Museum.

The project archive will comprise:

1. Copies of all reports
2. A copy of the project design
3. A copy of the brief
4. All photographs, in colour slide, blank & white print and digital formats
5. Original context and trench records
6. A CD containing digital images and the report

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Monitoring & Recording phase

The monitoring phase began on August 7th and terminated on September 3rd. During this time five visits were made to the site. All visits were recorded on the appropriate record sheets (Appendix 2).

With the exception of the immediate area of the access road off Court Close the landscaping involved only disturbance to the upper 200mm of the local terrain. This included tarmac areas of rubble, top-soil and vegetation. The only area that was of interest lay towards the northern end of the site. Here a crescent shaped area no more than 8 m long by 4 m wide at most had been stripped of its top-soil (see reverse of sheet for August 7th) (Plate 6). This revealed a fine, chalk flecked loam containing small sherds of pottery, tile, glass, bone and slag. The pottery amounted to 16 sherds (95 grammes) and comprised mostly grey coarse wares of post-Conquest date.

The boundary wall on the south side of the site was demolished. It was 0.47m wide and the surviving portion no more 1.5m high. It was composed of reddish brown, unfrogged bricks (220mm x 98mm x 64mm) bonded with a loose sandy lime mortar.

The remainder of the landscaped site consisted of former hard standing areas, with the exception of the entrance. Here, observations confirmed that the depth of the access road foundation did not exceed 0.6m, and thus confirmed the findings of the excavation.




Plate 5: View south-east across the site in early August



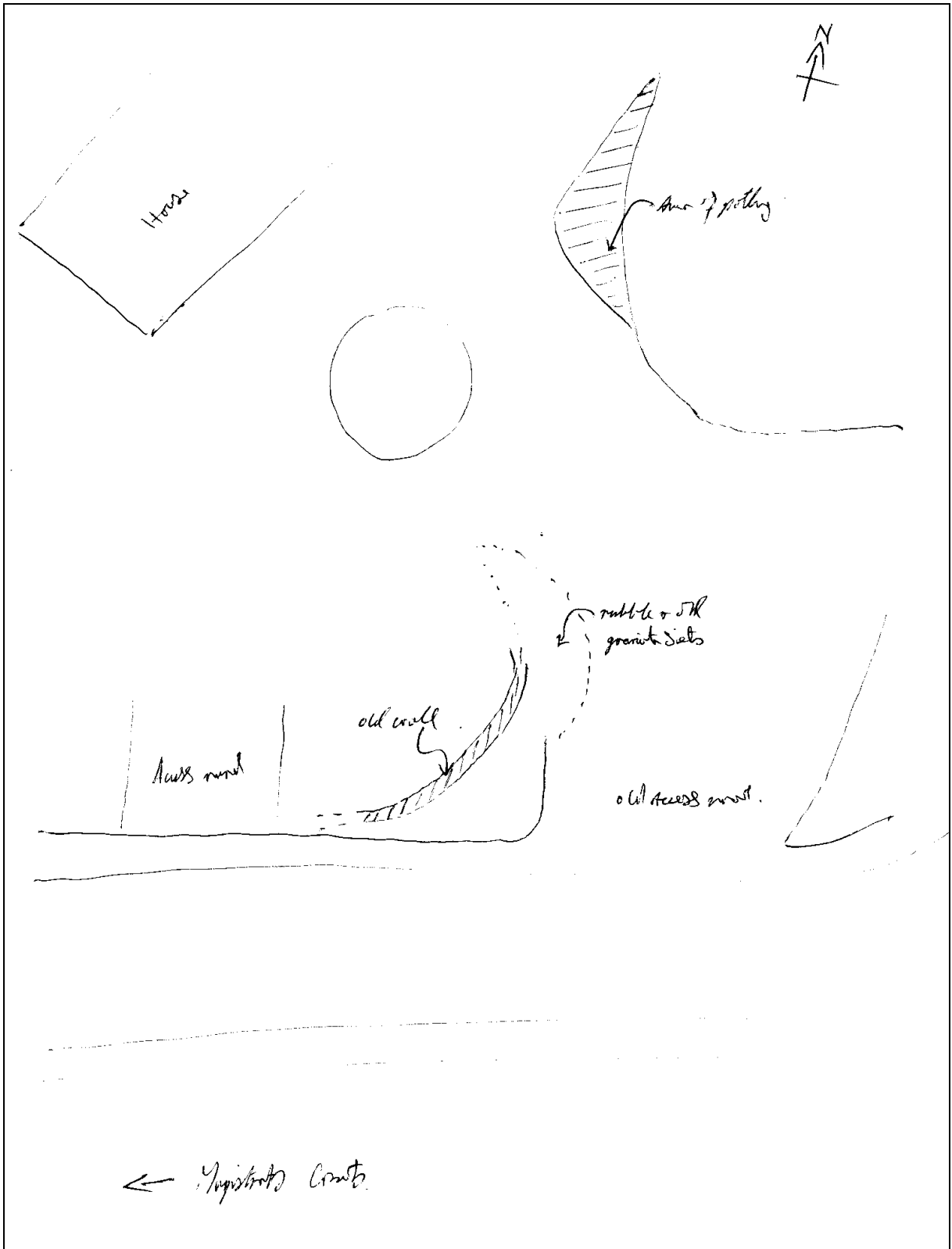
Plate 6: View looking south across area of medieval occupation material

Appendix 2: Monitoring & Recording sheets

 A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD			
Project Name: <i>120, Walton Street</i>		Project Code: <i>AWS02</i>		Date of visit: <i>7/8/02</i>	
Location: <i>Aylesbury</i>					
Client/Developer: <i>Construction Associates</i>					
Architect:					
Site Manager/Engineer: <i>James Corkham</i>			Phone:		
Development Type:					
Foundations	Services	Roads <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Levelling	Quarrying	Other: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Site conditions (weather, ground condition, etc) <i>Dry & Sunny</i>					
Observations made: (e.g. length of trench/foundation; depth/width; soil descriptions, archaeological features)					
<p><i>Most of the area has been cleared but not fully reduced yet. The access route has yet to be fully excavated.</i></p> <p><i>A CP9 wall has been found up (boundary) and will be demolished. It is 0.47m wide and only a small section rises to 1.5m high. There are vitreous bricks and the majority are made up of reddish brown, leafmould types (220mm x 98mm x 66mm). See sketch over.</i></p> <p><i>At the northern end of the site the ground has been cleared of topsoil (0.2m deep) and has much abundance of small shards of medieval pottery, slag, tile & glass.</i></p>					
Comments: <i>Nothing of major significance but main area yet to be reduced.</i>					
Completed by: <i>JM</i>					

For sketch plan, use reverse

ASACFM26, revised 1999





A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project Name: <i>122 Walton Street</i>		Project Code: <i>AWSO2</i>	Date of visit: <i>23/8/02</i>
Location: <i>Aylesbury</i>			
Client/Developer: <i>Conservative Association / Club</i>			
Architect:			
Site Manager/Farmer: <i>A. Lansbury</i>		Phone: <i>—</i>	
Development Type:			
Foundations	Services	Roads <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Other:
Site conditions (weather, ground condition, etc) <i>Dull & dry</i>			
Observations made: (e.g. length of trench/foundation; depth/width; soil descriptions, archaeological features)			
<i>Outside the front steps of the Lansbury project around the club house - driveway entrance. The boundary wall has been demolished but the footings are still in situ. The new access (8m x 6m) doesn't appear to have been marked in level and instead of which brick rubble and tarmac has been deposited on it. Top soil spread along boundary but too dry to see any artefacts etc.</i>			
Comments: <i>The whole operation is of a Superfund nature and as a consequence nothing of significance was observed.</i>			
<i>No further visits proposed.</i>			
Completed by: <i>JNH</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

ASACFM26, revised 1999



A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project Name: <i>122 Walton Street</i>		Project Code: <i>AWSO2</i>	Date of visit: <i>23/8/02</i>
Location: <i>Aylesbury</i>			
Client/Developer: <i>Conservative Association / Club</i>			
Architect:			
Site Manager/Farmer: <i>A. Lansbury</i>		Phone: <i>---</i>	
Development Type:			
Foundations	Services	Roads <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Other:
Site conditions (weather, ground condition, etc) <i>Dull & dry</i>			
Observations made: (e.g. length of trench/foundation; depth/width; soil descriptions, archaeological features)			
<i>Outward the front steps of the Lansbury project around the club house - driveway entrance. The boundary wall has been demolished but the footings are still in situ. The new access (8m x 6m) doesn't appear to have been marked in level and instead of which brick rubble and tarmac has been deposited on it. Top soil spread along boundary but too dry to see any artefacts etc.</i>			
Comments: <i>The whole operation is of a Superfund nature and as a consequence nothing of significance was observed.</i>			
<i>No further visits proposed.</i>			
Completed by: <i>JNH</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

ASACFM26, revised 1999

 **A.S.C. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project Name: 100-102 Walton St		Project Code: AWS02	Date of visit: 30.08.02				
Location: Aylesbury							
Client/Developer							
Architect:							
Site Manager/ Farmer: Gus		Phone: 01788 561706					
Development Type:							
Foundations	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):	
Site & weather conditions: Fine Day							
Observations: 8:15 - Arrived on site - no one around, took some general site photographs. 9:00 - Secretary for Conservation turned up, asked about the lack of labours. He talks me thru usually, then up about 9:30. He shows up the 'chairman' (she calls him and I speak to him) I have no pen or paper but his name might have been 'Richard Small' he gives though a number of people's names who are supposed to know something. Then asks about how much it's all going to cost. 9:40 - My time up on a white van I go out and introduce myself.							
Comments: He gives the site manager - says he will place the office in the relevant area to be surveyed will be stopped Monday							



A.S.C. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project Name: <i>Walton St,</i>		Project Code: <i>AWS02</i>	Date of visit: <i>03.09.02</i>				
Location: <i>Aylesbury</i>							
Client/Developer							
Architect:							
Site Manager/ Farmer: <i>Gus</i>		Phone: <i>01788561700</i>					
Development Type:							
Foundations	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):	
Site & weather conditions: <i>Fine / Dry</i>							
Observations: <i>12:30 - Arrived on site, photographed and recorded the relevant area, which was exactly the same as excavated by me some months ago except slightly smaller (see sketch plan), i.e. stone surface (Farm yard) c.600m² was beneath made up ground. 1:30 - Left site</i>							
Comments: <i>See over for sketch plan</i>							
Completed by: <i>[Signature]</i>							

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2000

