



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

## Archaeological Observation and Recording Report

The Shrubbery Care Home  
66 College Street  
Higham Ferrers  
Northamptonshire



**Quality Check**

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## Summary

In July 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at The Shrubbery Care Home, 66 College Street, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire in order to fulfil Condition 4 of planning permission for the development of the site. Six footings trenches were excavated in order to construct two new extensions to the existing buildings. Several archaeological features were identified at the eastern side of the footprint for the south-eastern extension. These included the foundation of a stone wall, a large area of excavation possibly the result of land clearance or demolition, and a pit containing a bovine skeleton. The demolition of the wall foundation was dated to approximately the 11<sup>th</sup> century due to pottery directly overlying the stones. This indicates the presence of a stone structure that may have existed during the early life of the castle, or that possibly pre-dates the castle. The large excavation and the pit containing the animal skeleton both pre-dated this feature. Although the site has been truncated by modern activity, the medieval remains have been protected by their depth, so it is possible that other features survive in the immediate vicinity.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In July 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at The Shrubbery Care Home, 66 College Street, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire. The project was commissioned by the Adara Group Ltd, and was carried out at the request of Northamptonshire County Archaeology Team (NCAT), Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), East Northamptonshire Council. The relevant planning application reference is 19/01894/FUL.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This project has been required under the terms of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as Condition 4 of planning permission for the development of the site.

### 1.3 *The Site*

#### *Location*

The proposed development is located at 66 College Street, in the town and civil parish of Higham Ferrers, and the administrative district of the East Northamptonshire Council. The National Grid Reference of the site is SP 96027 68883 (Fig. 1). It is within the bounds of the Higham Ferrers Conservation Area.

#### *Description*

The site is an existing care home known as The Shrubbery, located north of the town centre, southeast of the intersection of College Street (A5028) and Kimbolton Road (B645). To the north, west and south are residential properties. To the east is Castle Park, the open space containing the remains of the Higham Ferrers Motte and Bailey Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (NHLE 13607) (Fig. 2).

#### *Geology & Topography*

Higham Ferrers is located in the Nene Valley, on the east side of the river at approximately 71m AOD. On the west side of the river a series of flooded gravel pits form the Nene Wetlands nature reserves. The underlying geology consists of the Blisworth Limestone Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 166 to 168 million years ago. No superficial deposits have been recorded (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).



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*Development*

The development comprised the addition of three single storey extensions to the existing care home (Fig. 3).



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

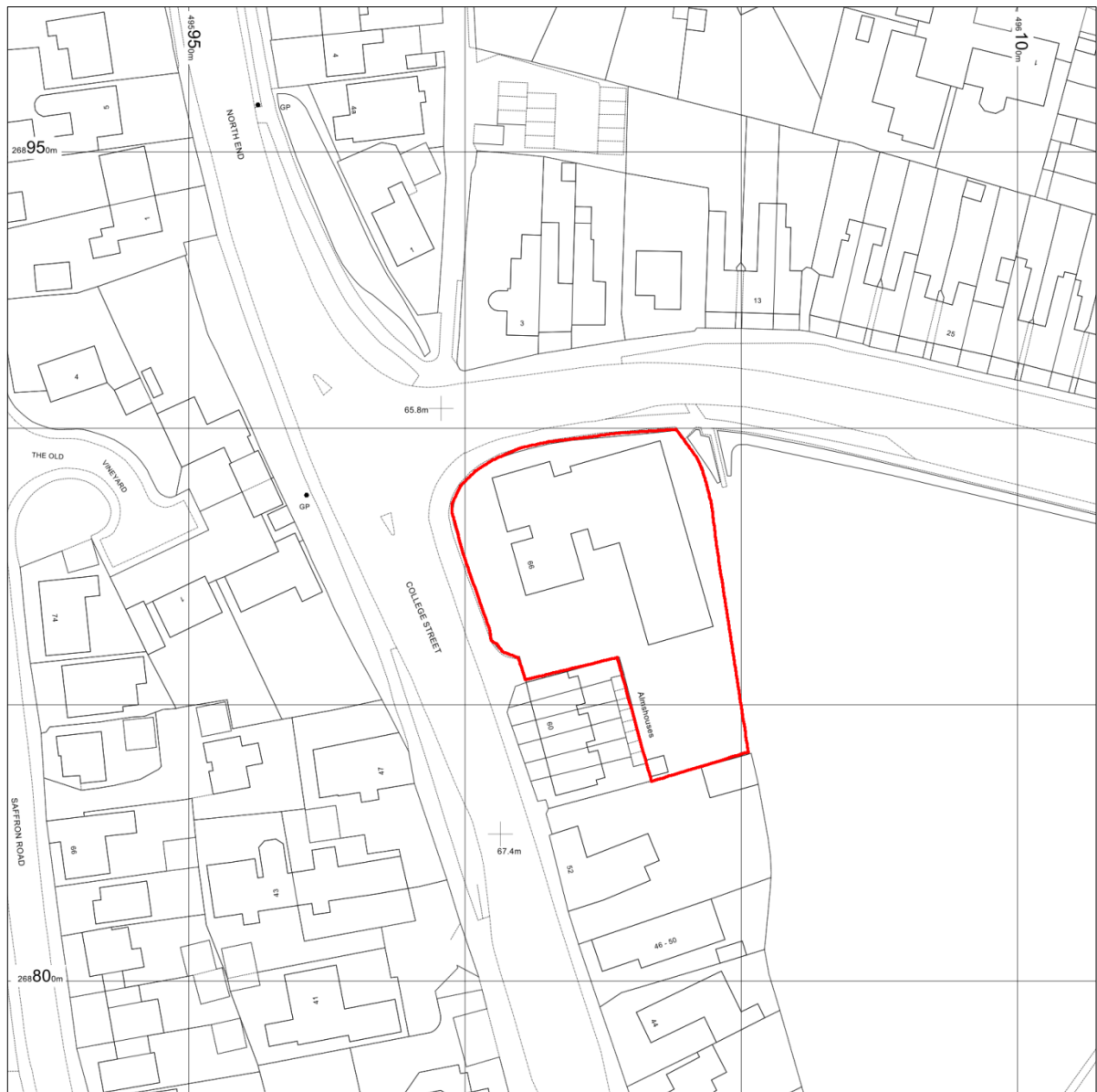


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1,250)

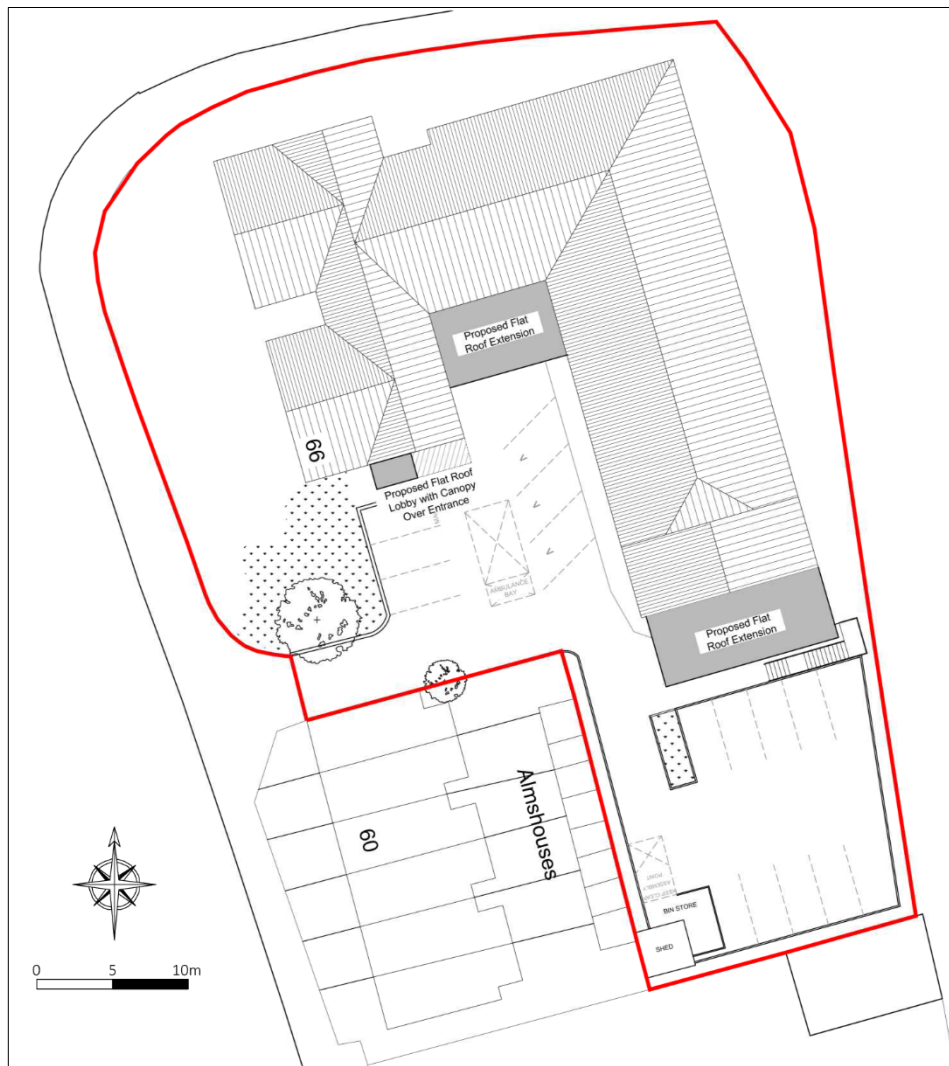


Figure 3: Proposed development plan (scale 1:500)





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## 2 Aims & Methods

### 2.1 *Aims*

The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Shlasko 2020) were:

- To establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation within the development area
- To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape
- To recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

### 2.2 *Methods*

In line with the requirements of the WSI, the methods used were as follows:

- All ground or other works likely to have an impact on archaeological deposits or remains were carried out under constant and continuous archaeological supervision.
- This included the monitoring of footings trenches and areas of ground reduction.
- All excavations were recorded using photography and sketches.
- All archaeological features were excavated and recorded, and all artefacts were recovered for analysis and archiving.

### 2.3 *Standards*

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The WSI (Shlasko 2020)
- The relevant sections of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2020)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2021)
- Current English Heritage guidelines (HE 2015, EH 2008)



### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The town of Higham Ferrers has a long and rich history, which begins long before the founding of the settlement. People have been exploiting the resources of the Nene valley since prehistory, and there are Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments within 500m of the proposed development site. Iron Age and Roman occupation has also been identified near the town and there is significant evidence that Higham Ferrers was a Saxon estate centre. In the medieval period the town had a castle, a college, a church, a hospital and a school (Foard & Ballinger 2000: 6) as well as a market and fairs. This history is recorded in a large number of surviving documents, which provide an unusually detailed view of the life of the town (*ibid*: 7).

This section has been compiled with information from the Northamptonshire HER (Fig. 4), the Higham Ferrers Extensive Urban Survey (Foard & Ballinger 2000), the Victoria County History (Page 1930) and other reliable online sources.

#### 3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

There was extensive occupation of the Nene valley throughout prehistory, which is only partially reflected in recorded archaeology of the study area encompassed in a 500m radius around the proposed development site. The earliest archaeological evidence for occupation within the study area is a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age round barrow excavated south of Kings Meadow Lane, approximately 420m northwest of the proposed development site (HER 7526/1). Not far from the barrow, a Middle-Late Bronze Age linear feature containing pottery and knapped flint indicated some early settlement (HER 8203/0/1). Other Neolithic and Bronze Age sites, including round barrows, a long barrow and enclosures, have been found along the river valley around Higham Ferrers (Foard & Ballinger 2000: 9).

#### 3.3 *Iron Age* (600BC - AD43)

The occupation of the valley continued into the Iron Age, and there is evidence for numerous small farmsteads as well as larger nucleated settlements (*ibid*: 9). The main settlement is the Irthlingborough hillfort, located on the west bank of the river about 2.5km north of Higham Ferrers. Within the study area there is limited excavated Iron Age evidence, but a survey of cropmarks in aerial photographs has identified a number of possible Iron Age enclosures north of the proposed development (for example HER 8262/0/35, HER 8262/0/34, and HER 3198/0/12).

#### 3.4 *Roman* (AD43 - c.450)

This pattern of dispersed settlement, punctuated by occasional larger occupations, appears to have continued into the Roman period. Excavations near Kings Meadow Lane revealed Middle-Late Iron Age enclosures that predated a substantial Roman settlement. At least 18 structures were found, including two possible temples or shrines, domestic buildings, and small cemeteries (HER 3200). This site, located approximately 380m northwest of the proposed development, may have been a substantial villa complex. Other Roman sites within the study area include a possible bathhouse found to the rear of the Green Dragon public house, approximately 340m southeast of the site (HER 3212). Finds of Roman coins and pottery have also been made in the study area (HER 3208/0/0, HER 3209/0/0, HER 1679/21 and HER 1679/0/64).

#### 3.5 *Saxon* (c.450 - 1066)

Archaeological evidence suggests that the main area of Saxon activity was, much as in the Iron Age and Roman periods, centred north of the modern town in the Kings Meadow Lane Area.



This settlement began in the early Saxon period and is represented archaeologically by several sunken feature buildings (SFBs) and other features (HER 7049). After a significant break in occupation, lasting as much as 50 years, the site was reoccupied at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century as a probable estate centre, with a horseshoe-shaped enclosure, malting oven and other features. This site was abandoned abruptly in the late 8<sup>th</sup> or early 9<sup>th</sup> century (*ibid*). Later Saxon material in Higham Ferrers indicates that settlement was subsequently re-established, albeit scattered sparsely across an open landscape rather than the nucleated estate of previous centuries (e.g. HER 1679/0/53, HER 6615/1, HER 1679/21).

Following the abandonment of the mid Saxon complex to the north of the town, the focus of settlement appears to have shifted further to the south, where further evidence of occupation was found to the south at Wharf Road and west of College Street. The excavations, although mostly characterised by medieval activity, did reveal some mid-late Saxon pottery, though no early Saxon material was found (Jones & Chapman 2003: 129). It is possible that the purpose of the Kings Meadow Lane complex was primarily administrative, and that the centre of Saxon residential occupation was always situated further to the south in areas that have not yet been excavated.

The discovery of a post-in-trench structure that pre-dates the medieval castle also indicates settlement to the east of College Street (HER 1679/0/58).

According to the Domesday Book, in 1066 the manor was held by *Gytha*, wife of the Earl of Hereford, a nephew of Edward the Confessor (Page 1930: 263-279; Foard & Ballinger 2000: 20). That it also had a priest and a market suggests that it was a well-established and significant settlement by the end of the Saxon period (Hardy et al. 2007: 210).

### 3.6 **Medieval** (1066 - 1500)

Following the Conquest, the manor of Higham was granted to William Peverel. This was a substantial holding, with 12.5 ploughs of arable land, 10 acres of meadow and a furlong of woodland ([www.opendomesday.org](http://www.opendomesday.org)). Domesday also records a mill and a market (Page 1930: 263-279). The population of the settlement included the households of 16 villagers, 9 smallholders, 4 slaves and a priest ([www.opendomesday.org](http://www.opendomesday.org)).

Soon after the Conquest, Peverel built a motte and bailey castle in Higham Ferrers (RCHME 1975). This is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument (NHLE 13607) and is located directly to the east of the proposed development site. The castle was of stone construction with an inner and outer bailey and had complex defences, including inner and outer gateways and a drawbridge. Fishponds and a walled rabbit warren were built on the northern part of the site. The early motte and bailey castle stood at the north end of this area, but no trace of a motte or its defending ditch having been found. The buildings mentioned in the bailiff's account of 1313–14 and in later 14<sup>th</sup> century manorial accounts, were at the south end of the site, but the location of the various places, other than the dovecote which stood at the southern end of the site, are uncertain. A chapel was recorded in 1375 and mention is also made at various times of the knights' chamber, the friars' chamber, the steward's, receiver's, and auditor's chambers, the treasury chamber, the kitchen, larder, buttery, pantry and other offices. The documented outbuildings included stables, the great barn, the granary, the hay-house, ox-house, cattle-sheds, sheep-house, and kiln-house (VCH online).

By the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the manor was held by Robert de Ferrers, Earl of Derby, who gave his name to the town (Page 1930: 263-279). In 1251, William de Ferrers, the Fifth Earl, recognized the town as an independent borough and granted 92 of its residents the status of burgess (*ibid*). His son, Robert, rebelled against the King and when his estates were



confiscated, the manor of Higham Ferrers became part of the lands of the Duchy of Lancaster (*ibid*).

The Grade I listed Church of St Mary (HER 1679/2/1) dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, although the mention of a priest in the Domesday Book suggests that there was an earlier church. There is an early 14<sup>th</sup> century cross in the churchyard, approximately 360m south of the proposed development site (HER 1679/2/3). The churchyard cross is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (NHLE 29716) as are the remains of the market cross (NHLE 29715), erected in the late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Around 1362, Henry Chichele, future Archbishop of Canterbury, was born in Higham Ferrers. In the 1420s, he built a chantry college for eight secular canons, four clerks and six choristers. The remains of Chichele College are yet another of Higham Ferrers' Scheduled Ancient Monuments (NHLE 22702). The fifth is the Saffron Moat, a moated fishpond, named for the saffron fields that provided funds for the College (NHLE 13645).

### 3.7 *Post-medieval* (1500 – 1900)

Despite its prosperity in the medieval period, during the post-medieval period Higham Ferrers suffered a period of decline, although it remained a market town and had its charter renewed several times, the last time in 1886 (Foard & Ballinger 2000: 15, 48). By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when a branch line of the railway opened between Higham Ferrers and Wellingborough, a small boot and shoe industry had developed in the town. Although never as large as the boot and shoe industries in neighbouring towns, these factories made a major contribution to the local economy through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

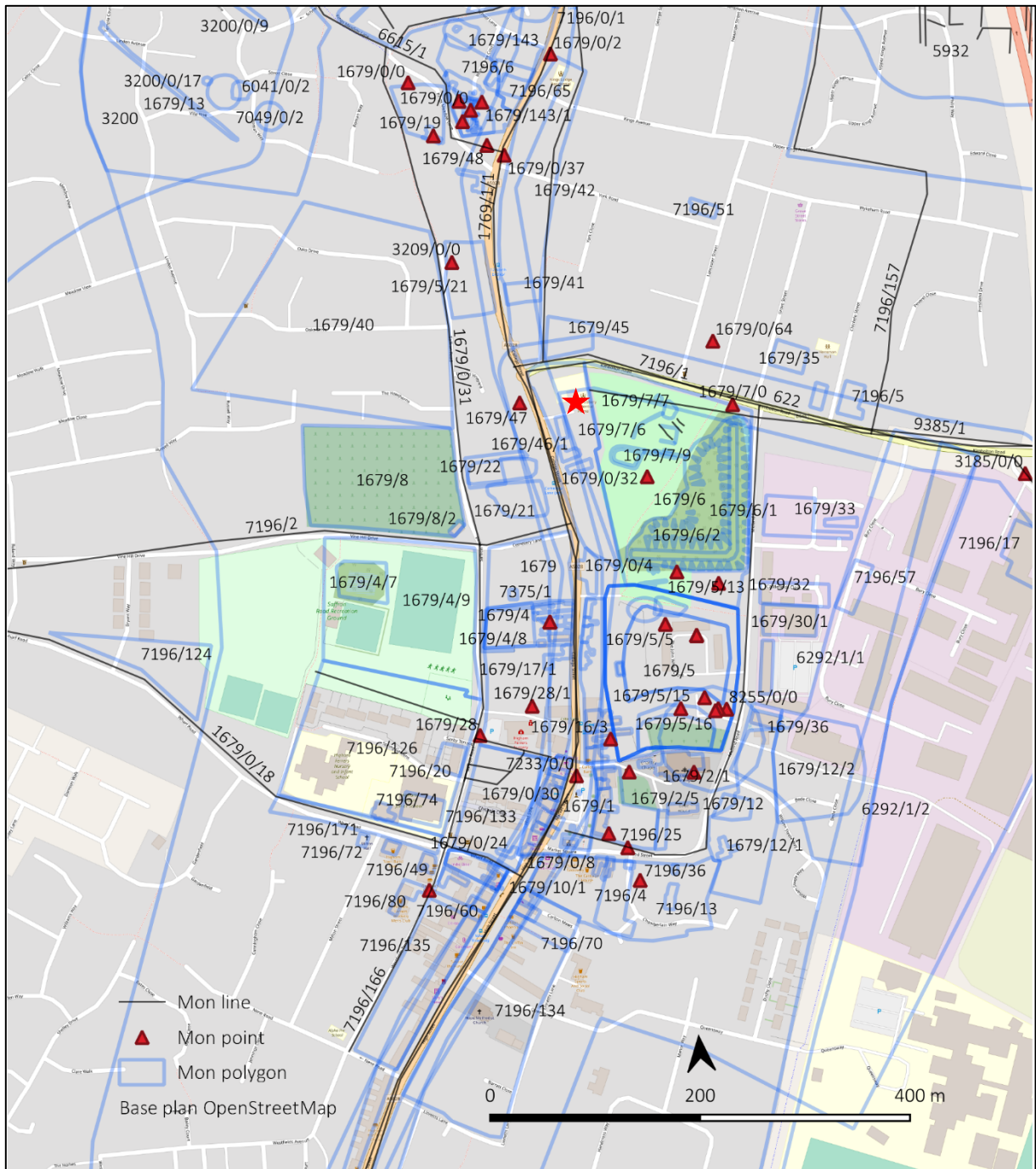


Figure 4: HER data plan, site marked with red star (scale 1: 10,000)



## 4 Results

### 4.1 Introduction

This project required the excavation of six footings trenches, five for an extension at the south end of the long east range of the building complex, and one trench for an extension to the main entrance. The work was carried out using a 3 tonne tracked excavator fitted with a 0.4m wide toothed bucket, as a toothless bucket was not capable of breaking the large amount of rubble encountered within the deep trenches. Trenches 1-5 occupied a footprint measuring 11.9m long by 4.9m wide, comprised of four short parallel trenches and one long trench (Trench 2) running ENE to WSW. Trench 6 was 8m in length. All trenches were 0.4m wide and up to 1m deep (Fig. 5, Plates 1-7).

### 4.2 Stratigraphy

The stratigraphy of the site varied slightly between the footings trenches and had been largely disturbed by modern activity. In Trenches 1-5 it primarily consisted of a 15cm thick modern concrete slab overlying at least 0.8m of sandy clay natural soil (003), suggesting that the ground has been heavily truncated. This varied at the ENE end of Trenches 1 and 2 where there was a 10cm layer of modern Type 1 aggregate and a 5cm layer of topsoil (001) making up the ground level). Trench 6 had 10cm of modern made ground overlying 0.8m of natural soil (003) (Fig. 8, Plates 14-15).

Context Table

Context Number	Type	Dimensions (max. in metres)			Description
		Width	Length	Depth	
001	Layer	>4	>5	0.12	Thin layer of topsoil
002	Fill	>0.5	>5	0.68	Demolition fill of large cut [009]
003	Layer	>20	>25	>1	Natural soil, greyish yellow sandy clay
004	Cut	1.42	>0.5	0.7	Construction cut of wall foundation [005]
005	Structure	1.42	>0.5	0.2	Limestone rubble wall foundation
006	Fill	1.42	>0.5	0.7	Silty fill over wall [005]
007	Cut	>0.19	1.3	0.38	Cut of pit containing cow skeleton
008	Fill	>0.19	1.3	0.38	Fill of pit (008)
009	Cut	>0.5	>5	0.68	Large cut feature, possibly a result of ground reduction or clearance

### 4.4 Description

Three archaeological features were identified in Trench 2, the most significant of these was an apparent stone wall foundation [005] running NNW-SSE and measuring 1.42m wide, with the topmost stones at a depth of 0.75m below modern ground level. The structure was built of roughly coursed limestone rubble that had been knapped or roughly broken into pieces varying between 5 and 20cm in size. There was no evidence of mortar of any kind. Wall [005] was contained within a barely perceptible construction cut [004] that crossed the trench, so that its length could not be ascertained. The base of the cut was 0.2m below the top of the wall [005]. The cut also contained a dark silty fill (006) that overlay and interspersed the stones of [005]. Within this fill and directly overlying the top of the stones were 27 sherds of St Neot's Ware T1 (2) pottery, all but three sherds coming from a single cooking vessel, and dating to the 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The fill was 0.7m deep and contained a large amount of loose stone rubble, probably demolition material (Fig. 6, Plates 8-10).



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The construction cut of the wall [004] cut through a deeply stratified sandy clay fill (002) belonging to a large cut [009] identified in Trench 2. The base of the trench extended below this feature so it was not visible in plan, but it appeared to end halfway along Trench 2. It truncated the natural soil, extending down 0.6m, and was also partly present in Trench 5 and the entirety of Trench 1. This suggests that the feature covered a large area and extended some distance towards the east. It contained no finds save for a large quantity of stone rubble, and may have been filled with re-deposited natural soil (Figs. 6-8, Plates 8-13).

Approximately 2.3m to the WSW of the wall foundation [005] was an irregularly shaped pit [007] containing a semi-articulated adult bovine skeleton. This pit was underlying the large feature [009] and had been partially truncated by its cut. Pit [007] was 1.3m long but was only partially visible in plan as it extended beyond the side of the trench to the SSE (Fig.7, Plates 12-13).



**Plate 1:** Trenches 1-5 overall, view NE



**Plate 2:** Trench 1, view NNW



**Plate 3:** Trench 2, view ENE



**Plate 4:** Trench 3, view NNW



**Plate 5:** Trench 4, view NNW



**Plate 6:** Trench 5, view NNW





**Plate 7:** Trench 6, view WSW



**Plate 8:** Cut [004] for wall foundation [005], view ENE



**Plate 9:** SSE facing section of wall foundation [005]



**Plate 10:** [005] wall foundation half-sectioned, view NNE



**Plate 11:** Stratigraphy 1 with cut [009], view SSW



**Plate 12:** NNW facing section of pit [007] with bovine skeleton



**Plate 13:** Plan shot of pit [007] with bovine skeleton, view SSE



**Plate 14:** Stratigraphy 2 in Trench 3, view ENE



**Plate 15:** Stratigraphy 3 in Trench 6, view SSE

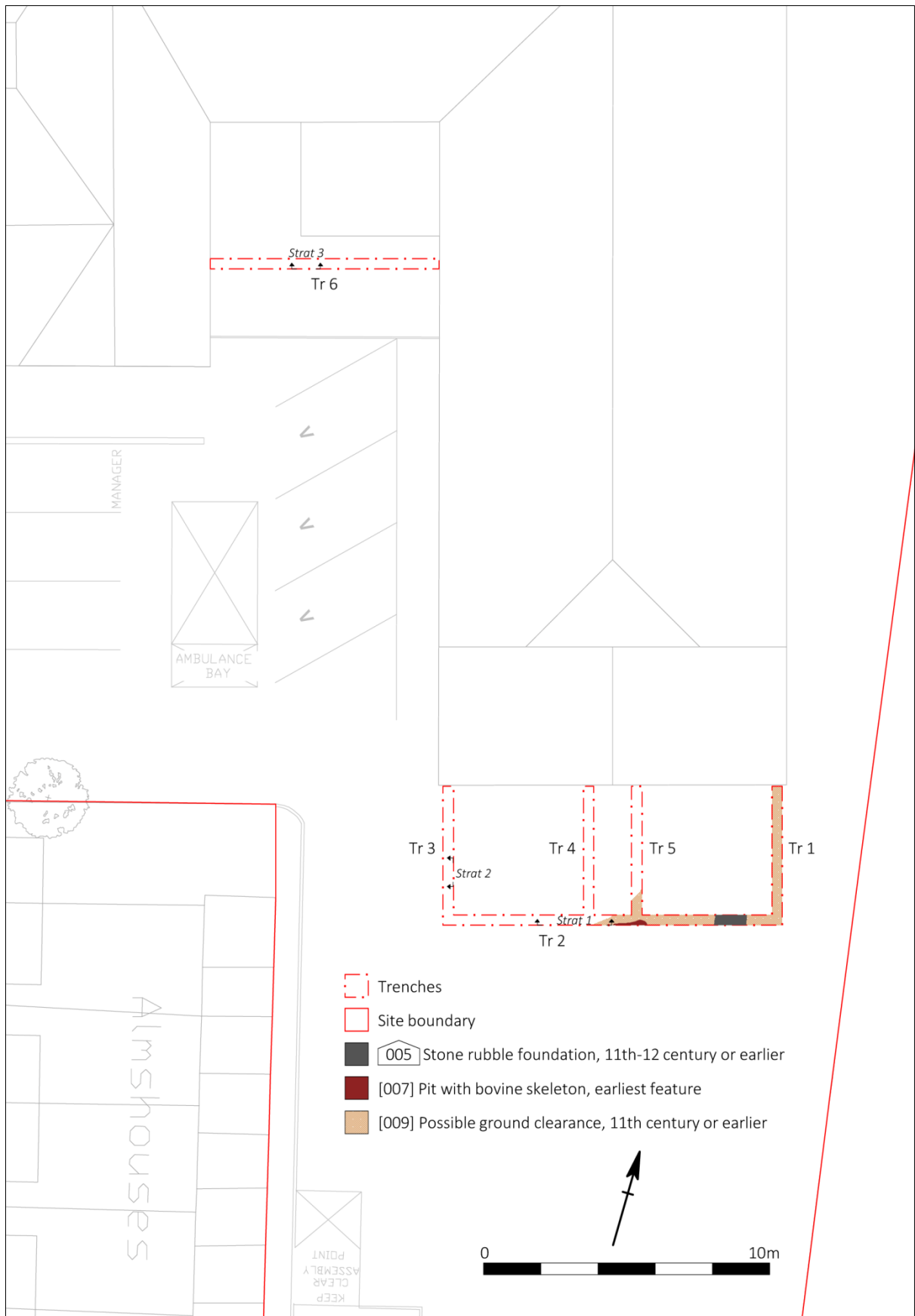


Figure 5: Overall trench plan with features (scale 1:200)

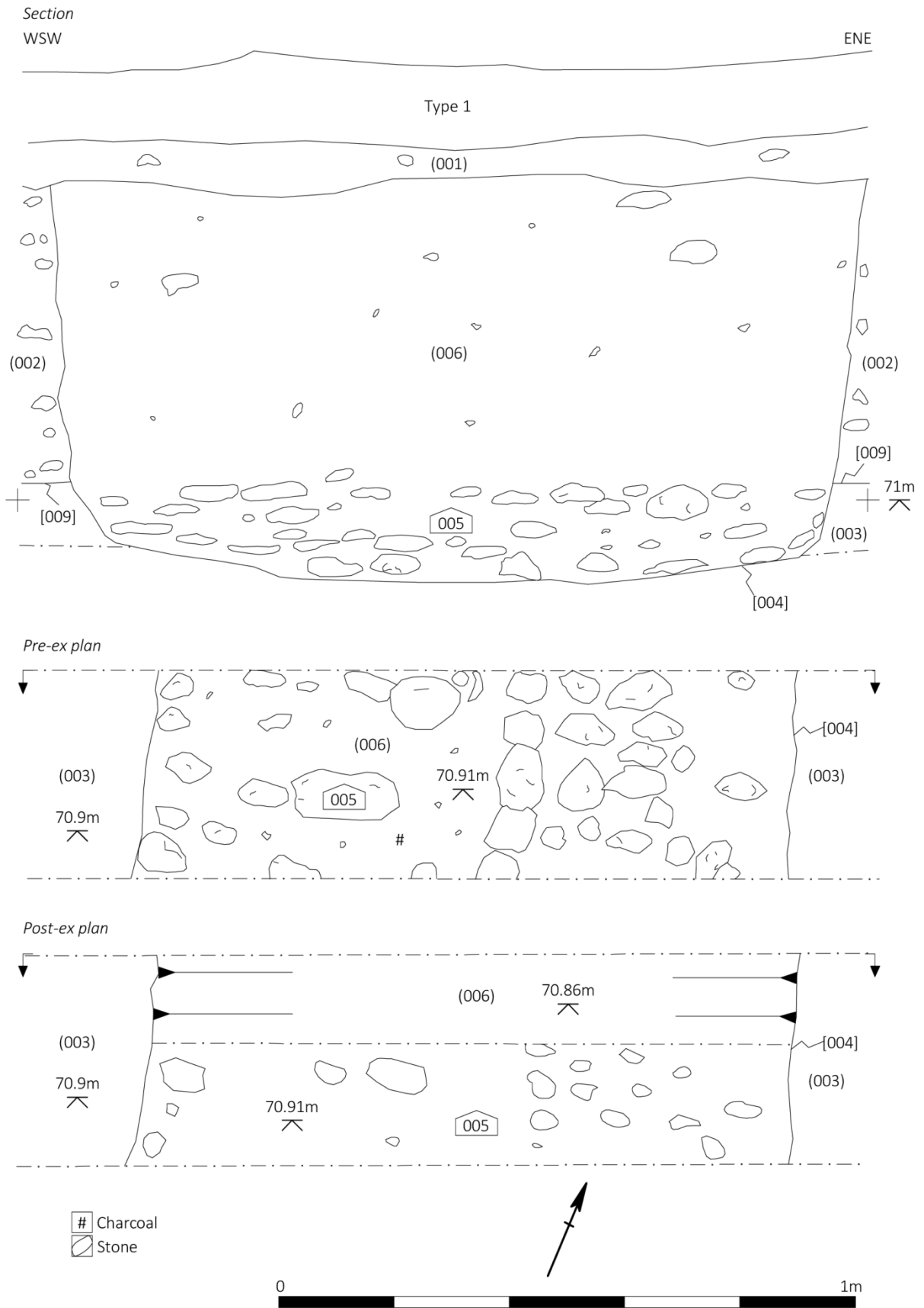


Figure 6: Wall foundation [005], SSE facing section and plans (scale 1:10)

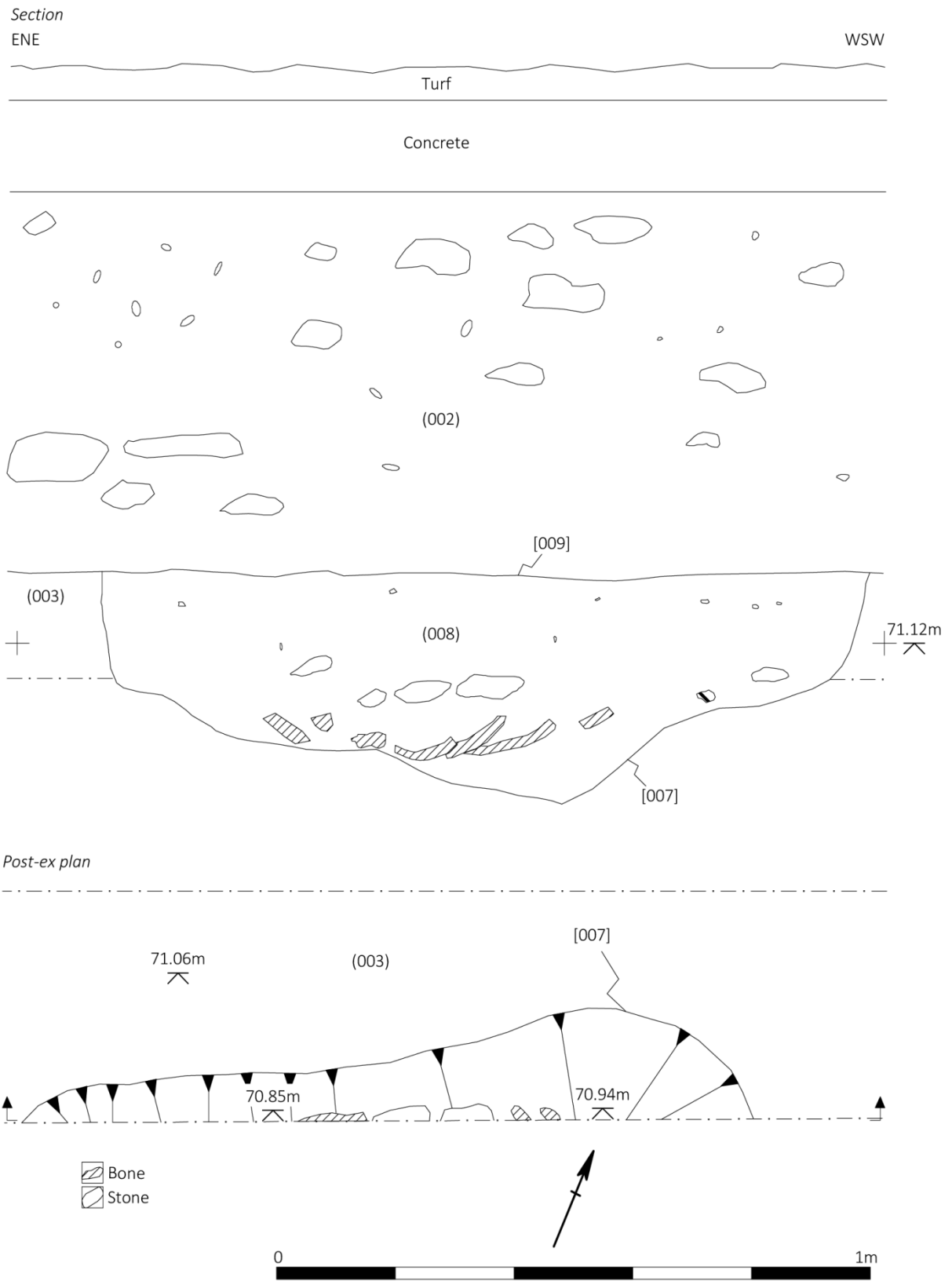


Figure 7: Pit containing bovine skeleton [007], NNW facing section and plans (scale 1:10)

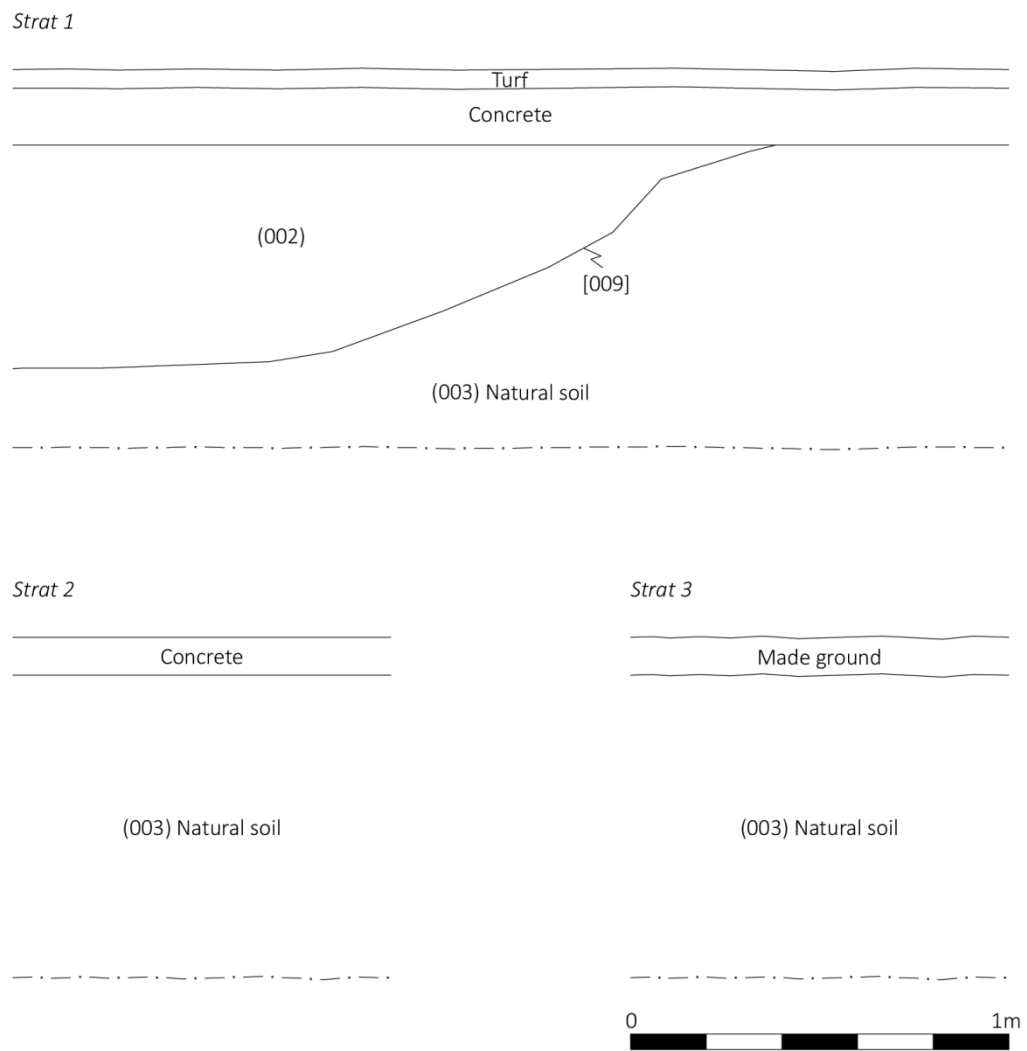


Figure 8: Site stratigraphy, (scale 1:20)



## 5 Conclusions

The archaeological features discovered during the monitoring of footings at the Shrubbery Care Home, Higham Ferrers consisted of a stone rubble wall foundation [005] and associated construction cut [004], contained within an area of wide excavation [009] that pre-dates the 11<sup>th</sup> century. A pit containing a bovine skeleton was also found underlying the larger excavation. These finds were concentrated at the ENE side of the footprint for a new extension to the eastern range of buildings on the site. The site borders the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Higham Ferrers motte and bailey castle to the east, constructed shortly after the Norman Conquest and demolished in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Cartographic and documentary evidence suggests that the features discovered during this project were within the original precinct of the castle.

The presence of almost an entire cooking vessel on top of the stone wall foundation suggests that this is a primary deposit, and that the wall must have been intentionally demolished before the pot was deposited. The lack of later common pottery types suggests that the fragments dated from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, which indicates a relatively early date for the stone building.

There is little evidence of the use of stone foundations in non-ecclesiastical English buildings prior to the Norman Conquest and the only stone feature found in the mid-Saxon estate at King's Meadow Lane, to the north of the town, was a malting oven. This consisted of a square stone lined pit and an adjoining linear flue, also of a stone construction (Hardy et al 2007: 48, 51). At almost 1.5m wide, the foundations found at the Shrubbery could have supported a fairly substantial building, although there is little to indicate its overall size or what its function may have been. It is possible that it formed part of a forgotten Saxon church or is even a rare example of a late Saxon vernacular building of stone construction. An alternative explanation could be that it is the remains of a minor intramural building constructed in the early decades of the Norman castle, but which was short-lived before its demolition. Whether the remains of the cooking vessels are indicative of its possible use as a kitchen could be debated, but the location of the structure within the precinct and the fact that the building would have been fireproof certainly lend the possibility some credence.

The area of ground reduction [009] pre-dated the wall foundation but it is not possible to tell by how long as it contained no finds. It was also difficult to judge its extent as it was not visible in plan, although it could be seen in the sections of the trenches. However, it must have been wide and of a moderate depth. It may represent a phase of site clearance in preparation for the construction of the castle, or the demolition and clearance of earlier occupation in order to build the surviving structure.

The earliest feature was the pit containing the cow skeleton, which pre-dated the large excavation. It appears to be the result of primary butchery and the pit may well have been dug for the specific purpose of disposal of the animal carcass. If this part of the town was occupied to some extent prior to the Conquest, as seems likely, the presence of an animal burial here is not wholly surprising, and it need not necessarily be associated with the castle.

The site appears to have been truncated in the modern period, most probably when the current buildings were constructed, as evidenced by the shallow depth of the natural soil. The survival of the archaeological features is due to their relative depth, however it is impossible to determine if other features of a shallower depth have been permanently lost due to the truncation. Given the proximity of such a large and significant ancient monument, this seems quite likely, and it is probable that further evidence of wall foundations and occupation lies in



the immediate surrounding area, particularly in areas where modern disturbance has been less severe.

The findings of this project provide a valuable addition to evidence previously uncovered in Higham Ferrers relating to the Norman period and before. The presence of 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century pottery in the vicinity of the motte and bailey castle is unsurprising, but its association with a demolished stone structure raises issues that cannot be adequately solved with the evidence at hand. Due to the limitations of an archaeological watching brief, not enough of the stone foundation could be uncovered to define its nature or extent. The date of the pottery raises the possibility of a late Saxon building and, although the use of stone makes this unlikely, it should perhaps not be wholly discounted unless further evidence to the contrary can be found during any future investigations in the town. The probability that this was an early Norman building that formed part of the castle complex is potentially more likely and future excavations in the locality may help elucidate these findings as well as supplement the general understanding of early medieval and post-Conquest Higham Ferrers.





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## 6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to the Adara Group Ltd for commissioning this report. Thanks are also due to Charlotte Walker of the West Northamptonshire Council for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents and to Liz Mordue of Northamptonshire County Archaeology Team (NCAT) for monitoring the project.

Special thanks go to the ground workers for their assistance during the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by Chris Martin-Taylor BSc The report was written by Chris Martin-Taylor, and edited by Karin Kaye MA MCifA.



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## 7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Written Scheme of Investigation
2. Initial report
3. Monitoring sheets
4. Site drawings
5. Client's site plans
6. List of photographs
7. Specialist reports
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre (NARC).



## 8 References

### *Standards & Specifications*

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## Appendix 1: Photograph List

SITE NO/CODE: 545/HFC			Site Name: The Shrubbery Care Home, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		x	Trench 1
2		x	Trench 1 stratigraphy
3		x	Trench 2: 004, 005
4		x	Trench 2: 004, 005
5	x	x	004/005 wall exposed
6		x	004/005 wall exposed
7	x	x	SSE facing section of wall 005
8		x	SSE facing section of wall 005
9		x	SSE facing section of wall 005
10	x	x	SSE facing section of wall 005
11		x	SSE facing section of wall 005
12		x	Post ex plan shot of 005
13	x	x	NNW facing section of pit [007]
14		x	Plan shot of pit [007]
15		x	NNW facing section of [009]
16		x	[009] change, oblique
17		x	[009] change, oblique
18		x	Trench 2
19		x	Trench 3
20		x	Trench 3 stratigraphy
21		x	Trench 4
22		x	Trench 5
23		x	Trench 1-5 overall
24		x	Trench 6
25		x	Trench 6
26		x	Trench 6 stratigraphy



## Appendix 2: Finds Concordance

Context Numbers		Pot		Bone		CBM	
Fill	Cut	No.	Gms	No.	Gms	No.	Gms
(006)	[004]	27	153				
(008)	[007]			110	1262		
(008)	[007]			22	1605		
<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>2867</b>		



## Appendix 3: Excavation Summary Tables

### Context Register

Context No	Area	Type	Description	Section no.	Plan no.
001	Trench 2	Layer	Thin layer of topsoil	1/2	
002	Trench 1 and 2	Deposit	Demolition fill of large cut [009]	1/2	
003	Trenches 1-6	Layer	Natural soil	1/2	
004	Trench 2	Cut	Construction cut of wall foundation [005]	1/2	1/1,3
005	Trench 2	Structure	Limestone rubble wall foundation	1/2	1/1,3
006	Trench 2	Fill	Silty fill over wall [005]	1/2	1/1,3
007	Trench 2	Cut	Cut of pit containing cow skeleton	1/4	1/5
008	Trench 2	Fill	Fill of pit (007)	1/4	1/5
009	Trench 1 and 2	Cut	Large feature, possibly moat or dyke	1/2	

### Drawing Register

Sheet No	Drawing No	Section/Plan	Scale	Details
1	1	P	1:10	Plan of wall [005]
1	2	S	1:10	SSE facing section of wall [005]
1	3	P	1:20	Post-ex plan of wall [005]
1	4	S	1:10	NNW facing section of pit [007]
1	5	P	1:20	Plan of pit [007]



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## Appendix 4: Specialist Reports

### Pottery from Higham Ferrers, Northants (Site 545/HFC)

*Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 27 sherds with a total weight of 153g. It all occurred in a single context, (006). It is all T1 (2) type St. Neots Ware, fabric F200 of the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (CTS), and broadly dateable to AD1000-1200. The ware is a common find on sites of the period in the area (eg. Blinkhorn 2010).

All but three of the sherds were from a single pot and many of them refitted. The vessel in question is a cylindrical jar, a type of cooking vessel which was a specialist product of the later St Neots Ware and early medieval shelly ware traditions of the East Midlands (Blinkhorn 2010). It was heavily sooted on the exterior. It had a typical lid-seated rim-form, with a diameter of 280mm, and 26% of the rim was present. The other fragments were a small bodysherd weighing 2g and two small rimsherds weighing 12g. Of the latter, one was from another cylindrical jar while the other had an everted form typical of the ordinary jars of the tradition (Denham 1985).

The condition indicates that the material is from a primary deposit, and that there was fairly significant activity within the immediate vicinity of these excavations. Given the lack of any later, common pottery types, it seems likely to date to the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

### Bibliography

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## Animal bone from Higham Ferrers, Northants (Site 545/HFC)

*Derek Watson PhD*

Archaeological Observation, Investigation & Recording at The Shrubbery Care Home, 66 College Street, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire, generated an animal bone assemblage of 132 fragments (2.867kg dry weight) from a single context (008), the fill of a pit [007].

All of the elements recovered belonged to a single animal: cattle (*Bos taurus*). The remains were quantified by a fragment count that grouped the fragments when they could be conjoined (Number of Identified Specimens; NISP=117 specimens; Table 1). The remains were those of a mature adult animal (all of the vertebral epiphyses were fused) and no surface modification (e.g., burning, butchery) was observed in the assemblage.

The body parts represented in the assemblage (Table 1) correspond to a pattern of carcass disposal generated by primary butchery. This generally involves the removal and discard of the least meaty bones/portions (e.g. mandibles/teeth, vertebrae) during initial disarticulation of an animal carcass.

Context	008	Total
<b>Elements</b>	<b># (%)</b>	<b># (%)</b>
Horn core	1 (0.85)	1 (0.85)
Mandible + teeth	2 (1.71)	2 (1.71)
Mandibular tooth	1 (0.85)	1 (0.85)
Maxilla + tooth	1 (0.85)	1 (0.85)
Vertabrae	11 (9.40)	11 (9.40)
Ribs	5 (4.27)	5 (4.27)
Indeterminate	96 (82.05)	96 (82.05)
<b>Total</b>	<b>117 (100)</b>	<b>117 (100)</b>

Table 1: Animal bone from 545HFC



## Appendix 5: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	The Shrubbery Care Home, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire	Project Site Code	545/HFC
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-402015	Event/Accession no	ENN109963
OS reference	SP 96027 68883	Study area size	13.6m <sup>2</sup>
Project Type	Archaeological Observation and Recording	Height (mAOD)	71m
Short Description	<p>In July 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at The Shrubbery Care Home, 66 College Street, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire in order to fulfil Condition 4 of planning permission for the development of the site. Six footings trenches were excavated in order to construct two new extensions to the existing buildings. Several archaeological features were identified at the eastern side of the footprint for the south-eastern extension. These included the foundation of a stone wall, a large area of excavation possibly the result of land clearance or demolition, and a pit containing a bovine skeleton. The demolition of the wall foundation was dated to approximately the 11th century due to pottery directly overlying the stones. This indicates the presence of a stone structure that may have existed during the early life of the castle, or that possibly pre-dates the castle. The large excavation and the pit containing the animal skeleton both pre-dated this feature. Although the site has been truncated by modern activity, the medieval remains have been protected by their depth, so it is possible that other features survive in the immediate vicinity.</p>		
Previous work	None	Site status	Conservation Area
Planning proposal	Three single storey extensions to existing care home	Current land use	Care home
Local Planning Authority	North Northamptonshire Council-East Northamptonshire Area	Planning application ref.	19/01894/FUL
Monument type	Masonry structure	Monument period	Medieval
Significant finds	Early medieval wall foundation and animal burial	Future work	Unknown
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	Liz Mordue	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	Karin Kaye MA MCifA	Director/Supervisor	Chris Martin-Taylor BSc
Sponsor/funding body	Adara Group Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	23.07.2021	End date	27.07.2021
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Northamptonshire Archaeological Resources Centre	Pottery, animal bone	
Paper		WSI, report, B&W photographs	
Digital		Report, digital photographs, fieldwork sheets	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Observation & Recording: The Shrubbery Care Home, 66 College Street, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire		
Serial title & volume	545/HFC/2		
Author(s)	Chris Martin-Taylor BSc		
Page no's	31	Date	21.02.2022