



# **Trial trench evaluation on land off Hall End Road Wootton, Bedfordshire March 2015**

Report No. 15/61

Author: Yvonne Wolframm-Murray

Illustrator: James Ladocha



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on land off Hall End Road  
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Flint: Yvonne Wolframm-Murray

Tile: Pat Chapman BA CMS ACIfA

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>OASIS No: molarnort1- 207971</b>	
Project name	Trial trench evaluation on land off Hall End Road, Wootton, Bedfordshire		
Short description (250 words maximum)	MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Bovis Homes, to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land off Hall End Road, Wootton, Bedfordshire prior to the proposed development of the site. Five trenches were excavated, which confirmed the presence of remnant furrows of a former ridge and furrow field system, now levelled. Residual 11th and 14th century pottery was recovered from the furrows and a layer of variant subsoil or plough soil recorded in the south-eastern part of the development area.		
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Evaluation		
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None		
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	Geophysical survey		
Current Land use	Pasture		
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown		
Monument type/ period	Ridge and furrow		
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	Pottery, flint, tile		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Bedfordshire		
Site address (including postcode)	Hall End Road, Wootton		
Study area (sq.m or ha)	2.3ha		
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code)	TL 0018 4540		
Height OD	45-48m AOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Bedford Borough		
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting		
Director/Supervisor	Yvonne Wolfram-Murray		
Project Manager	Adam Yates MOLA; Simon Mortimer CgMs		
Sponsor or funding body	Bovis Homes		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date/End date	16/03/2015 - 18/03/2015		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>	
Physical	Bedford Museum BEDFM 2015.16	Pottery, flint, tile	
Paper		Site file, drawings, photographs	
Digital		Mapinfo plans, Word report, photographs, survey data	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)			
Title	Trial trench evaluation on land off Hall End Road, Wootton, Bedfordshire, March 2015		
Serial title & volume	15/61		
Author(s)	Yvonne Wolfram-Murray		
Page numbers	10		
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# **Trial trench evaluation on land off Hall End Road Wootton, Bedfordshire March 2015**

## **Abstract**

*MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Bovis Homes, to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land off Hall End Road, Wootton, Bedfordshire prior to the proposed development of the site. Five trenches were excavated, which confirmed the presence of remnant furrows of a former ridge and furrow field system, now levelled. Residual 11th and 14th century pottery was recovered from the furrows and a layer of variant subsoil or plough soil recorded in the south-eastern part of the development area.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

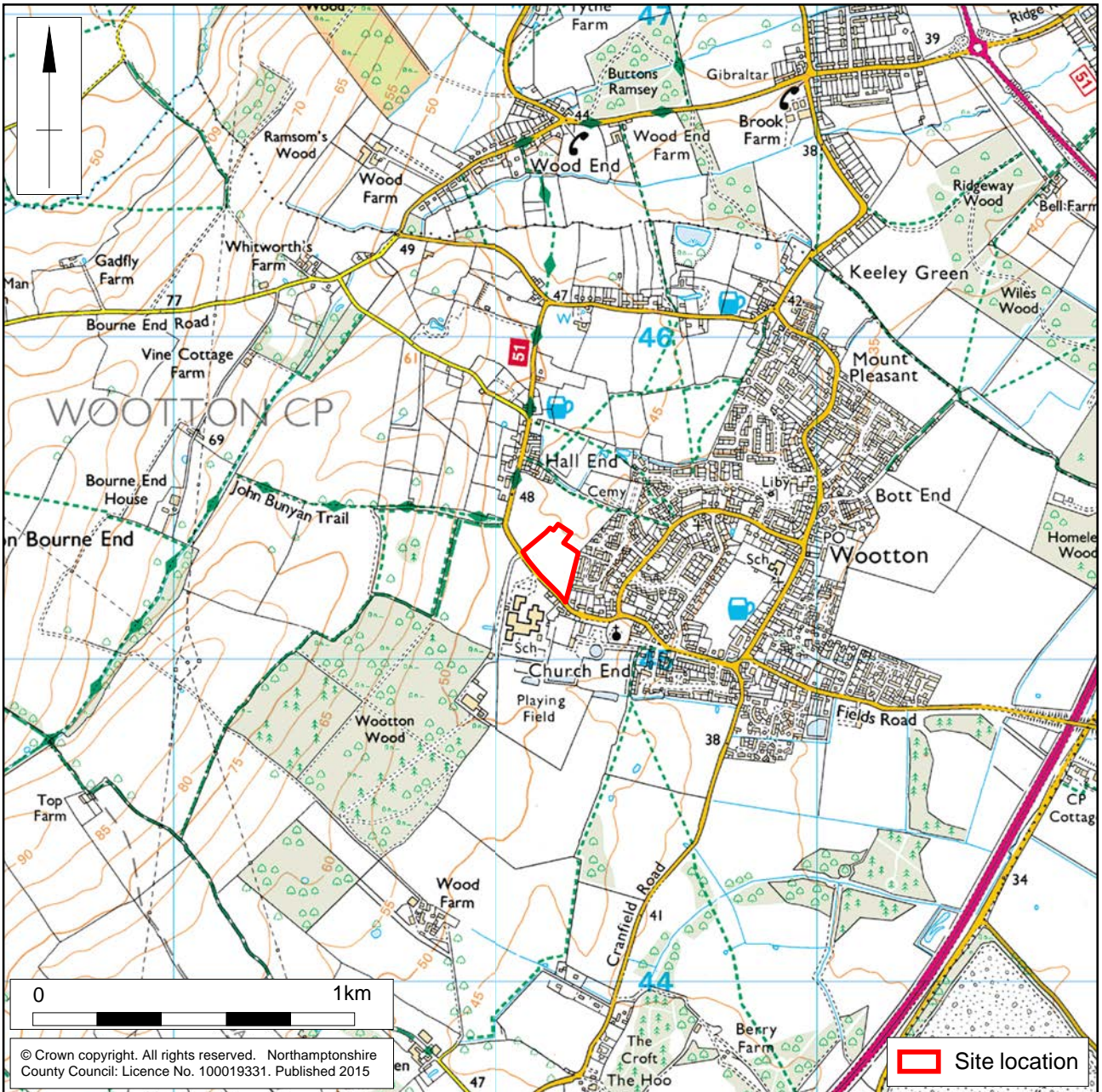
MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of their clients, to carry out a trial trench evaluation on land off Hall End Road, Wootton, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 0018 4540, Fig 1). Bovis Homes Limited has submitted a planning application (14/02939/MAF).

The works were required in line with *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012). The Archaeological Officer for Bedford Borough Council requested that a programme of archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to confirm the result of the geophysical survey within the development area. The requirements were outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by CgMs Consulting (Clark 2015).

MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) registered organisation. This document was prepared in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2014) and the procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (EH 2009).

The archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum, the Accession Number BEDFM 2015.16 has been assigned.





Scale 1:20,000

Site Location Fig 1

## 2 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Topography and geology

The site is located on the south-western side of the village of Wootton. It comprises approximately 2.3 hectares and is set to grass. The site is bounded on the south-west by Hall End Road, to the east by residential development and by fields. The field is relatively flat, rising from north to south from 45m to 48m (Fig 2).

The solid geology is recorded as Stewartby Member - Mudstone, superficial geology is recorded as gravel, sand, silt and clay (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk>).



General view of site, looking west Fig 2

### 2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The following summary of the historical and archaeological background is based on the heritage statement within the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by CgMs Consulting (Clark 2015). Trial trenching north-east of the site at Cannon' Close recorded struck lithics, un-provenanced Iron Age pottery and two Roman vessels. Late Iron Age coins have been found at Wootton Wood, 575m south-west of the site. Also, 175m south-east of the site is a possible Roman road.

Domesday Book (1086) records Wootton, but to date no Saxon finds have been recorded near to the site. The settlement, with a possible moated site, is located at Church End 345m to the east-south-east. The known medieval settlement extent does not reach the site at Hall End Road. The furrows identified during the geophysical survey suggest the site was part of the open field system.

Historic mapping consulted by CgMs Consulting (Clark 2015) did not identify anything of significance on the site.



### 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the evaluation were as follows:

- to ensure that the presence, extent, level of significance and degree of preservation of surviving buried archaeological remains within the development site were reliably established;
- to allow agreement upon the need for and scope of any further archaeological mitigation required within the development site;
- to seek to establish if surviving archaeological remains of any period were observed within the proposed trial trenches;
- to interpret the nature of human activity at the site and to place the site within its local, regional and national context as appropriate;
- to produce a site archive for deposition with Bedford Museum and to provide information for the local Historic Environment Record to ensure the long-term survival of the excavated data.

### 4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Five trial trenches were excavated, each 50m long and 1.6m wide, with a total length of 250m. An additional 6m of trenching was added to Trench 1, as part of the contingency. All areas of ground disturbance were accurately surveyed in using Leica Viva Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of  $\pm 0.05\text{m}$  (Fig 3).

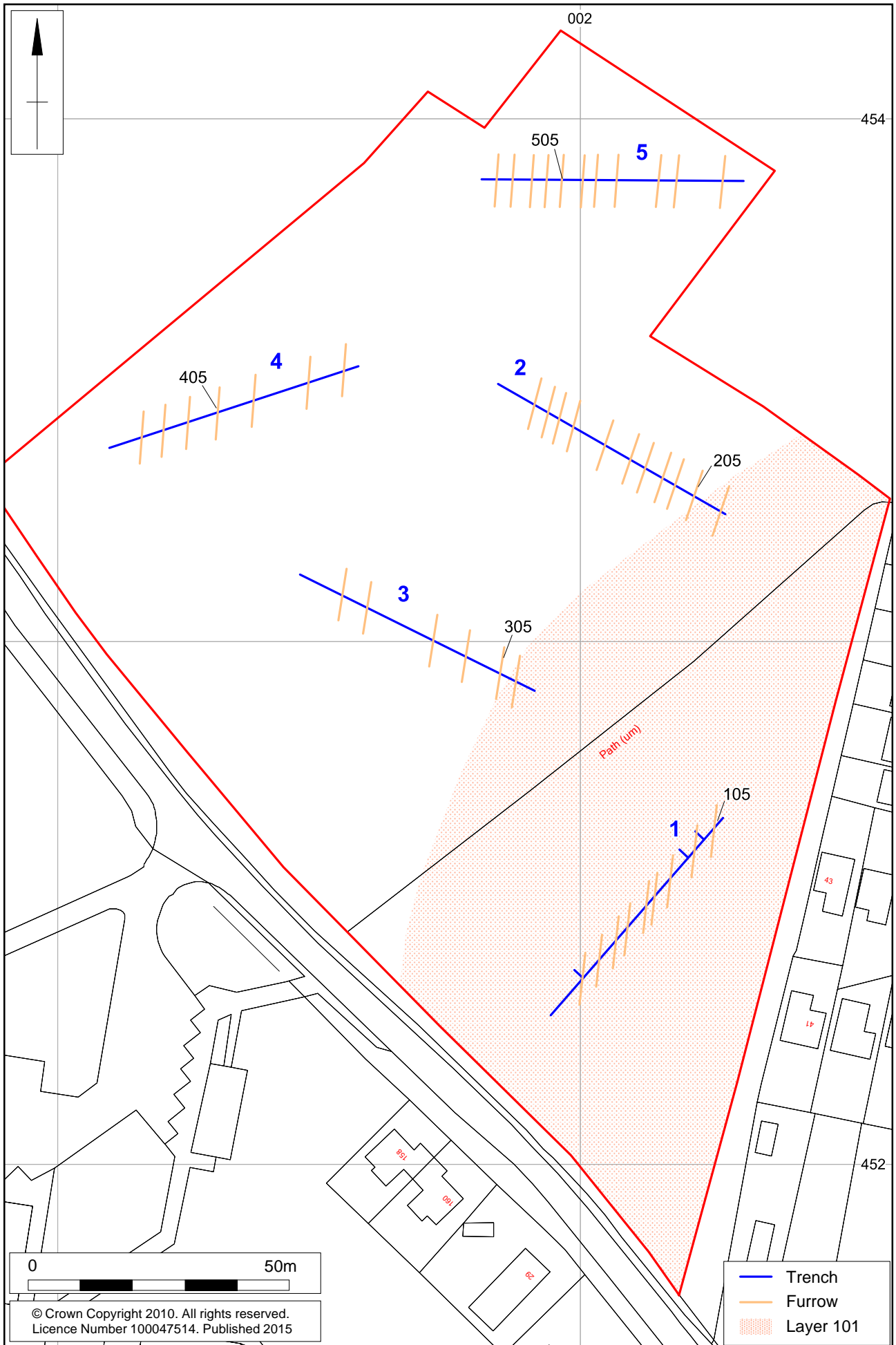
Machine excavation was undertaken under the direction of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Trenches were excavated by machine using a toothless ditching bucket to reveal archaeological remains or, where absent, undisturbed natural horizons. After archaeological remains were encountered all subsequent examination and excavation was carried out by hand to determine their date and character.

Each trench was cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features. All archaeological features were investigated. All archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of evaluation were fully recorded. Recording followed standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All archaeological features were given a separate context number. Deposits were described on pro-forma context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds.

Archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50. Sections through features were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. A photographic record was maintained using black and white film and digital photography. Photographic views of the site were taken prior to excavation and after backfilling.

Finds were collected from the individual deposits and appropriately packed and stored in stable conditions, by context. The field data was compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing. All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive.

All trenches were backfilled with their up-cast material and compacted by the mechanical excavator.



Scale 1: 1000

Excavated trenches Fig 3

**5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE**

**5.1 General comments**

The natural substrate consisted of light brown-blue and brown-orange clay. Subsoil in the northern part of the site comprised mid brown-grey silty clay, which was between 0.05m and 0.13m thick. The subsoil was absent in southern part. In the southern part, in Trench 1 and the southern edges of Trenches 2 and 3, a dark brown-grey clay silt layer was identified, which was between 0.10m and 0.17m thick. Abraded medieval pottery was recovered from this layer. The topsoil comprised dark grey-brown clay loam, which was between 0.09m and 0.14m thick (Figs 4 and 5).



Trench 5 with general stratigraphy, looking west Fig 4



Trench 5 showing the general stratigraphy, looking south Fig 5



## 5.2 Furrows

The geophysical survey identified anomalies interpreted as furrows, aligned approximately north to south (Clark 2015). In all five trenches furrows were present, typically 3m to 6m apart and aligned roughly north to south (Fig 3). The profile of the furrows was flat-based with shallow sides or broadly U-shaped, typically between 1.5m and 2.5m wide, occasionally up to 3m. The fill was dark grey-brown silty clay 0.12m deep (Figs 6 and 7). The pottery recovered from the furrows is dated to between the 11th and 14th centuries. One small sherd of ceramic roof tile came from the fill of a furrow in Trench 1.



Trench 2 with furrows, looking north-west Fig 6



Section of furrow [205], looking south-west Fig 7

### 5.3 The plough soil horizon

A dark grey-brown sandy clay layer (102) was present in the south-eastern area of the site, most notably over Trench 1, reaching as far as the south-eastern ends of Trenches 2 and 3 (Fig 3). In Trench 1 the depth of the layer ranged between 0.10m and 0.17m. In Trenches 1 and 3, pottery of 14th century date was recovered from the layer. The pottery sherds were residual, small and abraded. This layer was only present where the subsoil, identified in the north-western part of the site was absent.



The layer (102) in Trench 1, looking west Fig 8

## 6 THE FINDS

### 6.1 Flint by Yvonne Wolframm-Murray

Two pieces of worked flint were recovered as residual finds from the topsoil (301) and the Layer (102). Two waste flakes were recovered, one of which had only the proximal end surviving. A summary of the assemblage is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of flint

Context	Portion	Raw material	Cortex	Comments
102, layer	Proximal	Vitreous mid grey-brown flint	0	Heavy post-depositional edge damage
301, topsoil	Whole	Vitreous mid grey-brown flint	1	Cortical striking platform

The raw material comprises vitreous mid grey-brown flint, of good quality. One piece has a thick white cortex on its striking platform. The raw material is derived from local sources. The condition of the worked flint was moderate with post-depositional damage consisting of frequent nicks to the edges, especially on the flint from the topsoil. The technological characteristics are not diagnostic.



## 6.2 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprises 40 sherds with a total weight of 149g. It is all medieval. It was recorded using the conventions of the Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service type-series (eg Baker and Hassall 1977), as follows:

B01A:	T1 (2) type St. Neots Ware	(c AD1000-1200)	18 sherds, 39g
B07:	Medieval Shelly Ware	(AD1100-1400)	4 sherds, 22g
C09:	Brill/Boarstall Ware	(mid-13th – 15th century)	2 sherds, 18g
E01:	Late Medieval Reduced Ware	(mid-14th – 16th century)	16 sherds, 70g

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 2. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. Most, if not all the St Neots Ware assemblage consists of small and abraded sherds which are almost certainly residual. The stratified pottery, mainly E01 and B07, also consisted of fairly small sherds, and is highly likely to all be the product of secondary deposition.

Table 2: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Fill / cut	B01A		B07		C09		E01		Date
	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	
102, layer	15	35	2	9	2	18	13	55	mid 14th century
104/105 furrow	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	11th century
204/205 furrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9	mid 14th century
302, layer	-	-	2	13	-	-	1	2	mid 14th century
404/405 furrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	mid 14th century
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>70</b>	

## 6.3 Tile by Pat Chapman

One small sherd of ceramic roof tile, 12mm thick and weighing 38g, comes from the fill of a furrow in Trench 1. It is made from hard sandy orange clay with a medium grey core. It is typical of the roof tile from the medieval to the post-medieval periods.

## 7 DISCUSSION

The evaluation confirmed the presence of north to south oriented furrows, identified during the geophysical survey. The furrows survive from a former ridge and furrow cultivation system, indicating that this field was part of the medieval open field system. The shallowness of the furrows indicates that the field has been heavily truncated by ploughing. The furrow alignment matches the boundaries of remnant strip fields surviving immediately to the east of the development area on the 1883 OS map.

In the south-eastern part of the site there was a plough horizon containing pottery dating from between the 11th and 14th centuries. It overlay the natural geology and filled the furrows. The pottery recovered was small and abraded suggesting it was in a secondary deposit and probably derived from midden heap manuring. This layer is likely to be derived from ridge erosion through plough action, similar to the identified subsoil to the north-west but with a higher humic content. The known medieval settlement is south-east of the site around Church End and might explain the higher incidence of organic material included in the plough horizon in this part of the site.

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## **WEBSITES**

<http://bgs.ac.uk/>

MOLA  
2 April 2015

**APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<b>Trench No.</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>		<b>Surface height, N end (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>SW-NE 1.6m x 50m</b>		<b>47.64m</b>	<b>0.21m 47.43m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown clay loam	0.06 - 0.11m thick	-
102	Layer	Dark blue-grey gravelly clay	0.10 - 0.17m thick	Pottery, tile, flint
103	Natural	Mid grey-brown clay and gravel	-	
104	Fill of [105]	Dark blue-grey clay	-	pottery
105	Furrow	Shallow U-shaped	1.18m wide 0.12m deep	-

<b>Trench No.</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>		<b>Surface height, NW end (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>NW-SE 1.6m x 50m</b>		<b>46.26m</b>	<b>0.19m 46.07m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown clay loam	0.14 – 0.16m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silty clay	0.02 – 0.06m thick	-
203	Natural	Light brown-blue/orange clay	-	-
204	Fill of [205]	Mid grey-brown silty clay	-	pottery
205	Furrow	Flat base; 15° sloping sides	0.98m wide 0.14m deep	-

<b>Trench No.</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>		<b>Surface height, NW end (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>NW-SE 1.6m x 50m</b>		<b>47.00m</b>	<b>0.30m 46.80m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown clay loam	0.06m – 0.10m thick	flint
302	Layer	Dark blue-grey gravelly clay	0.10m – 0.13m thick	-
303	Natural	Light brown-blue/orange clay		
304	Fill of [305]	Dark blue-brown clay	-	pottery
305	Furrow	Shallow cut; flat base	1.20m wide 0.12m deep	-

<b>Trench No.</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>		<b>Surface height, SE end (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>NE-SW 1.6m x 50m</b>		<b>46.50m</b>	<b>0.24m 46.26m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
401	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown clay loam	0.09m – 0.12m thick	-
402	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silty clay	0.11m - 0.16m thick	-
403	Natural	Light brown-blue/orange clay	-	-
404	Fill of 405	Dark blue-brown clay	-	pottery
405	Furrow	U-shaped	1.0m wide 0.11m deep	-

<b>Trench No.</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>		<b>Surface height, NW end (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>E-W 1.6m x 50m</b>		<b>45.85m</b>	<b>1.10m 174.75m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
501	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown clay loam	0.20m thick	-
502	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silty clay	0.30 – 0.50m thick	-
503	Natural	Light brown-blue/orange clay	0.50m thick	-
504	Fill of [505]	Mid grey brown silty clay	-	pottery
505	Furrow	Flat base; shallow cut	1.66m wide 0.12m deep	-



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