



Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Liscombe Park, Soulbury Buckinghamshire March 2017

Report No. 17/37

Accession No: AYBCM:2017.69

Author: Paul Clements

Illustrator: Joanne Clawley



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS molanort1-282848	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Liscombe Park, Soulbury, Buckinghamshire, March 2017		
Short description	In March 2017 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) for William Smalley at Liscombe Park, Soulbury. The works found medieval ditches and pits, probably dating to the 12th-14th centuries. Primary butchery waste was found in the ditches. Probable evidence for cereal processing or cereal storage was also found in a large pit. It is likely these features were agricultural and were located near a known DMV site. After a period of abandonment a large post-medieval boundary and recut was found. Neonate or juvenile cattle, sheep and pig bones suggest a range of animals were being utilised on site.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Previous work	Desk-based assessment (Crothers 2015)		
Current land use	Grass lawn/garden		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Medieval ditches and pits, and a post-medieval ditch.		
Significant finds	Medieval pottery and tile		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Buckinghamshire		
Site address	Liscombe Park		
Easting Northing	SP 8858 2565		
Area (sq m/ha)	0.1ha		
Height aOD	c 128m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Buckinghamshire County Council		
Project Design originator	Claire Finn (MOLA)		
Director/Supervisor	Paul Clements (MOLA)		
Project Managers	Ant Maull (MOLA)		
Sponsor or funding body	William Smalley		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	07/03/2017		
End date	08/03/2017		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	AYBCM:2017.69	Pottery, animal bone, tile	
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs	
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Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Liscombe Park, Soulbury Buckinghamshire March 2017

Abstract

In March 2017 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) for William Smalley at Liscombe Park, Soulbury. The works found medieval ditches and pits, probably dating to the 12th-14th centuries. Primary butchery waste was found in the ditches. Probable evidence for cereal processing or cereal storage was also found in a large pit. It is likely these features were agricultural and were located near a known DMV site. After a period of abandonment a large post-medieval boundary and recut was found. Neonate or juvenile cattle, sheep and pig bones suggest a range of animals were being utilised on site.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out in March 2017 by MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) on land at Liscombe Park, Soulbury, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SP 88610 25820; Fig 1) The work was commissioned by William Smalley on behalf of their clients. Archaeological evaluation was undertaken in advance of submission of a planning application for a proposed swimming pool and pool house to the south-west of the main house.

The Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) advised that archaeological evaluation and mitigation works should be undertaken to determine, record, and protect the nature and extent of any archaeological remains within the site, in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF; DCLG 2012).

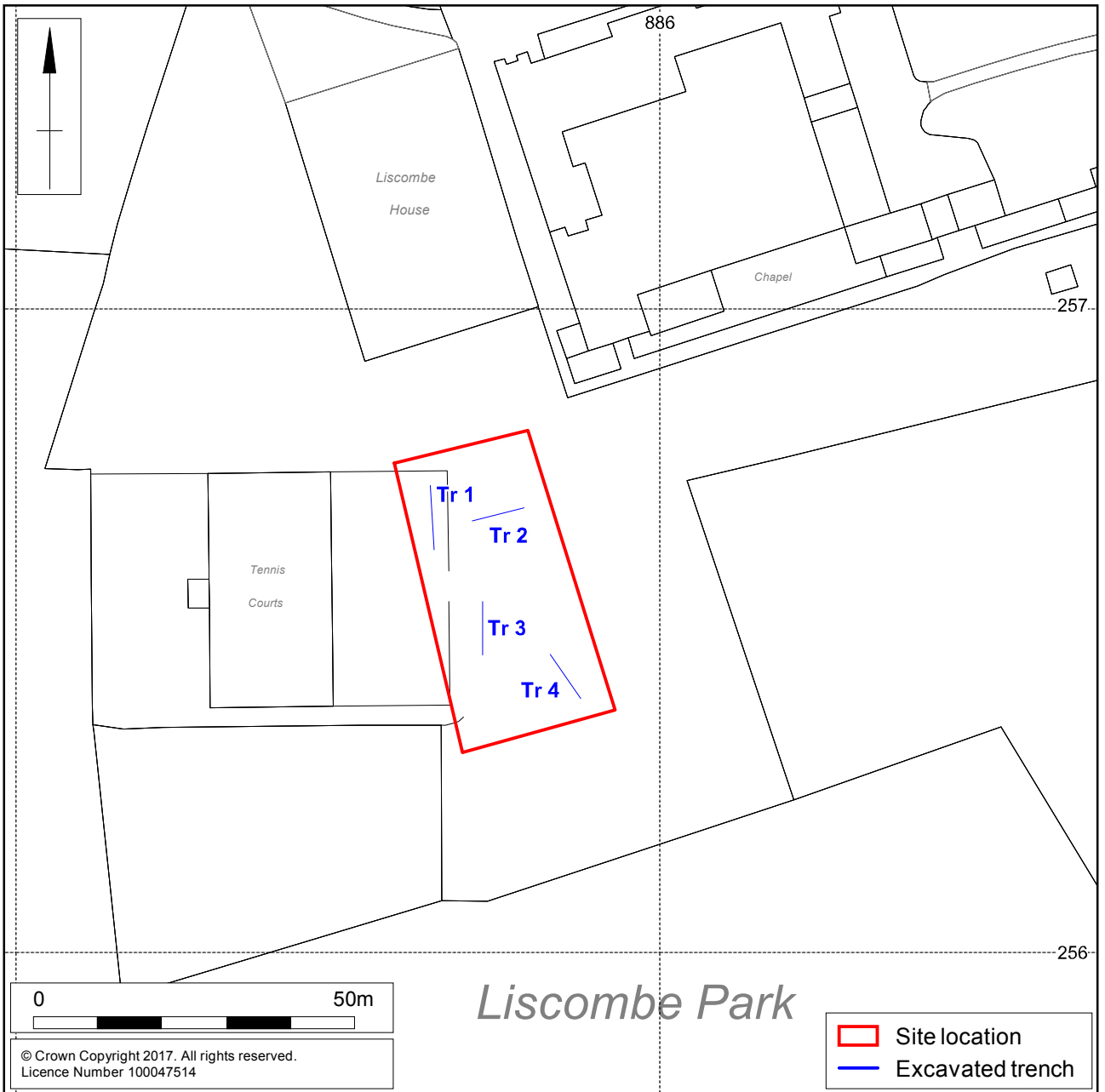
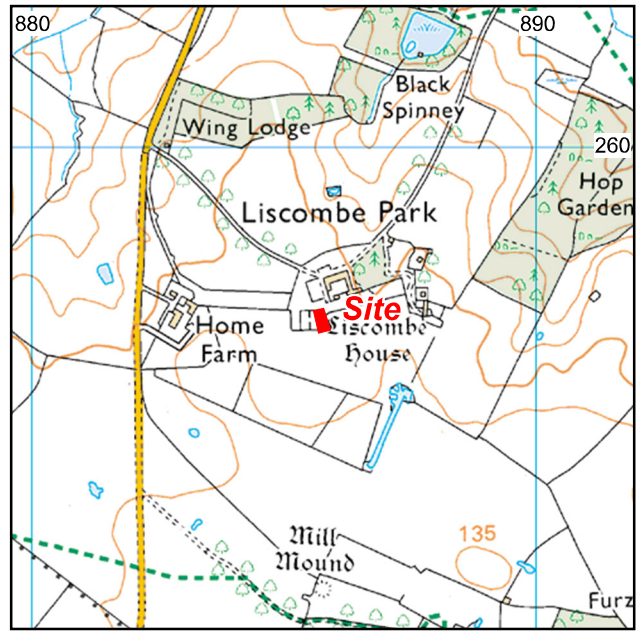
The scope of works was outlined and detailed in an approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by MOLA (2017). The document described the proposed methodology to be undertaken for the archaeological works.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

Liscombe House is located c1.5km south of Soulbury within the historic manorial parkland of Liscombe Park. The house was constructed on a hill within the park. The land surrounding the house is predominantly flat due to landscaping works when the gardens were created. Beyond the immediate surroundings the landscape is relatively hilly (Fig 1). The site lies at a height of c128m above Ordnance Datum, on relatively flat ground.

There are three Listed Buildings which form Liscombe House and its curtilage. Liscombe House, its wall and pavilion to the south of the west wing is a Grade II* Listed Building (1219372); the chapel immediately to the south of the house is Grade II (1219385) and the coach house on the corner of the house is also Grade II (1116012).



Scale 1:1000

Site location and excavated trenches Fig 1

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Site location
 Excavated trench

The development site is located to the south-west of Liscombe House, just east of the existing tennis court, within the surrounding gardens.

The site is underlain by mudstone of the West Walton Formation overlain by superficial deposits of sand and gravels (BGS 2017). Soils across the site are recorded as slightly acid loamy and clayey soils (Landis 2017).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

A summary of the historical background was included in the Written Scheme of Investigation (2017) and is reproduced here.

A Desk-Based Heritage Assessment (DBA) was undertaken in 2015 by MOLA in advance of works to alter the driveway and parking to the west of Liscombe House (Crothers 2015). The DBA examined the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (HER) for documented sites and monuments within the proposed development area and a nominal 1km radius surrounding it. The following historical background is drawn from that document.

Prehistoric

Six flint flakes and one flint core were found during works on the Linslade Western bypass in 1995 to the north-east of Liscombe House and a Mesolithic flint blade was found in the kitchen garden of the deserted medieval hamlet of Liscombe.

Roman

A single sherd of possible Roman grogged ware pottery was found during archaeological trial trenching at Butler's Cottage to the east of Liscombe House (Leigh 2011).

Saxon

No remains from the Saxon period have been recorded within the 1km search radius of Liscombe House.

Medieval

Soulbury is recorded in the Domesday Book as *Soleberie*. The manor of Soulbury was held before the Conquest by eleven sokemen who could sell. In 1086 Payn held it as 5 ½ hides and three quarters of a virgate of William son of Ansculf. The overlordship of the manor which formed part of the honour of Dudley, descended with that of Hoggston, of which Liscombe manor was directly held until 1594 at the last mention of the overlordship (RCHME 1969).

In 1192 Ralt Gibwin held a knight's fee in Liscombe and Soulbury and by the first half of the 13th century Walter Mounsel held a knight's fee in Liscombe (RCHME 1969). There was a capital messuage standing in Liscombe Park from 1250 and before that, the manor was in the possession of Geoffrey Maunsel. In 1250 Henry Maunsel forcibly ejected William Ingeram from it (RCHME 1969) although it had been demised to him by Geoffrey for an annual rent of a pair of gold spurs. The date at which the manor passed to the Lovett family is not apparent but by 1304 Robert Lovett was Lord of Liscombe, having acquired it through a fine (Lipscomb 1847). In that year a licence was granted to Robert Lovett to found a chantry in the chapel newly built at his manor house (RCHME 1969) with a grant from the Bishop of Lincoln in 1301 (Lipscomb 1847).

At Liscombe House a chapel was built in the 14th century (Grade II Listed Building, National Heritage List for England ID 1219385). It has since been used as a billiard room but is now disused. Services were performed in the chapel from the 18th century and marriages were celebrated in it before the alteration of the marriage laws. It was later used as a laundry and a store-house (RCHME 1969).

There is a considerable amount of surviving ridge and furrow earthworks surrounding Liscombe House, which are remnants of medieval agricultural practices. The best preserved can be seen to the north-west, north and east of the house apart from a blank strip to the north-east. There is sparse survival on the farmland to the west and south-west and there is a blank area immediately to the south of the house. There is a deserted medieval settlement in this area which is referred to as Liscombe hamlet and was probably contemporary with the first manor of Liscombe. There is also a body of water referred to as either a fish pond, a 'moat' or an ornamental pond to the south of the house. It is likely that the ridge and furrow earthworks and Liscombe hamlet were cleared at some time after the current Liscombe House was built in order to improve the southern vista, in keeping with landscaping fashions of the period.

Medieval pottery has been found during excavations at Butler's Cottage (Leigh 2011) and at Liscombe hamlet together with a medieval chape recorded in the HER as found during metal detecting.

Post-medieval

The current Liscombe House was built during the second half of the 16th century by the Lovetts, who also built a charity school in Soulbury in 1724 (RCHME 1969). Various additions to the house were built thereafter and included a service wing and stable in the 17th century. Further improvements were made in the 18th century and included a coach house and garden wall that were built on the south-east side of Liscombe House in the late 18th century. At Home Farm close to the west of the house, a barn was constructed, probably by Jonathan Lovett, in the late 18th or early 19th century. The house is a Grade II* Listed Building (National Heritage List for England ID 1219372).

An Inclosure Act was passed for Soulbury in 1772. The main manor of Soulbury was later known as *Liscombe, Lychescumbe* or *Lyscumb* (RCHME 1969).

A brickworks lies to the west of Liscombe House, an area of mineral extraction lies to the south-west and gravel pits are recorded both to the north-east and the south-west of the house.

Modern

A ha-ha was constructed at the front of Liscombe House in the early 20th century by the grandfather of the current owner (Crothers 2015). Historic Ordnance Survey maps from the late 1800s to 1926 show that the area of the proposed swimming pool lay within the parkland to the south of the house in an area marked with a few significant trees throughout this period. A former boundary, which edged the area of the house from the historic chapel due west to Home Farm, may lie just to the north of the proposed development area.

Previous archaeological work

In addition to the aforementioned Desk-Based Assessment (Crothers 2015), an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Butler's Cottage to the east of Liscombe House was undertaken in 2011 which revealed a modern ditch and a small pit containing medieval and Roman pottery (Leigh 2011). Historic building recording was carried out on a barn at Home Farm to the west of Liscombe House in 2012 (ASC 2012).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

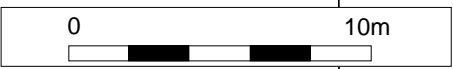
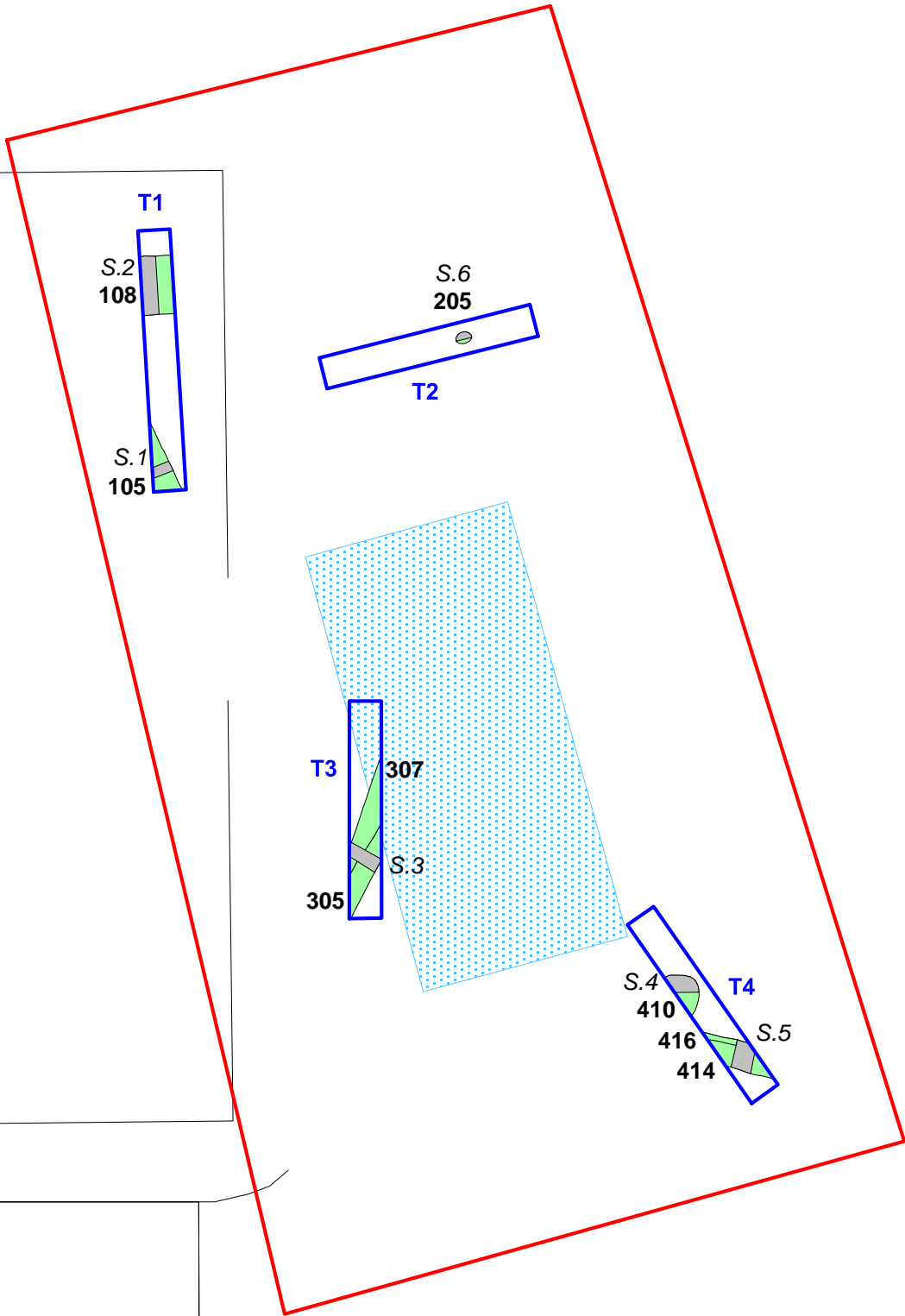
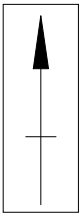
The overall objective of the investigation was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the evaluation were to:






- investigate the date, nature, significance and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;
- determine the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- examine the potential for palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions;
- inform any future excavation or mitigation strategy.

Specific research objectives were drawn from national and regional research frameworks (Hey and Hind 2014). Research objectives of relevance to the project include those relating to the medieval and post-medieval landscape and settlement:

- Village shrinkage and abandonment (16.6.8), the nature, origin, character and reasons for abandonment of manorial sites (16.6.10-12), and the implementation of environmental sampling to identify the use of different cereal grains (16.4.14) (Munby, in Hey and Hind 2014).
- Studies of gardens and parks (not on the Register of Parks and Gardens) to consider social issues, such as their roles as status symbols and in competition between members of the elite, as well as their design components (18.3.4) (Hind, in Hey and Hind 2014).



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-  Site Outline
-  Pool location
-  Excavated trench
-  Archaeological feature
-  Excavated section

4 METHODOLOGY

Four trial trenches were excavated in accordance with a trench plan prepared by MOLA and approved by Eliza Alqassar (Archaeology Officer, Buckinghamshire County Council). The trench plan was designed to provide a general coverage of the proposed development area (Fig 1). A total area of 72m² was excavated. All trenches were positioned using a Leica Viva RTK GPS.

A JCB 3CX mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.80m wide toothless ditching bucket was used under archaeological supervision to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features. Archaeological deposits were examined by hand excavation to determine their nature. Recording followed standard MOLA procedures as described in the Fieldwork Manual (MOLA 2014). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. A photographic record was compiled using digital images supplemented by 35mm black and white film.

All works undertaken by MOLA were done so in accordance with current best archaeological practice as defined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeology's *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (CIfA 2014b), and generic brief (BCAS 2015). The procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (HE 2015) was also adhered to.

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 General stratigraphy

The trench locations are shown in Figure 1 and an inventory of contexts is provided in the Appendix.

The underlying geology was encountered at an average of 0.35m below the modern ground surface. It comprised mid to light brown-yellow sandy-clay containing occasional mixed-sized gravels. The subsoil, 0.15-0.20m thick, was mid brown silty clay-sand. The topsoil, dark grey-brown loam, had an average depth of 0.25m across the site.

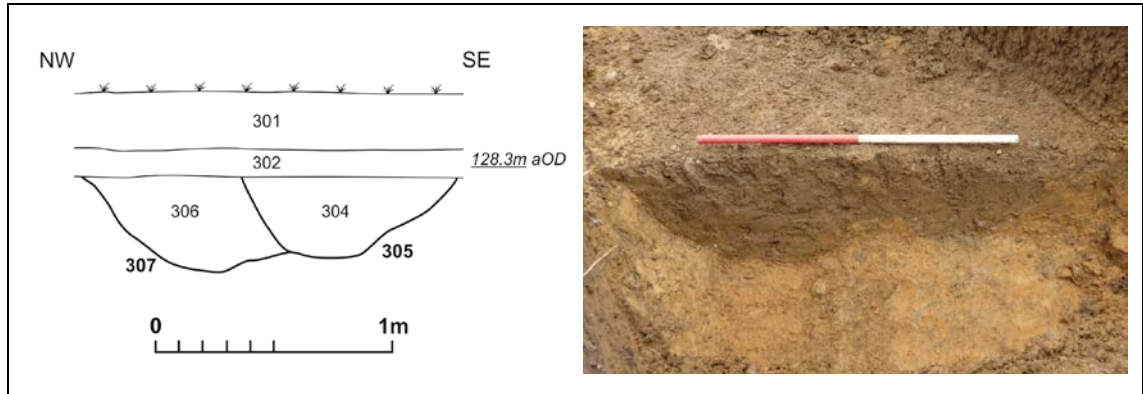
All four trenches identified archaeological remains, with features being of medieval and post-medieval date.

5.2 Medieval features

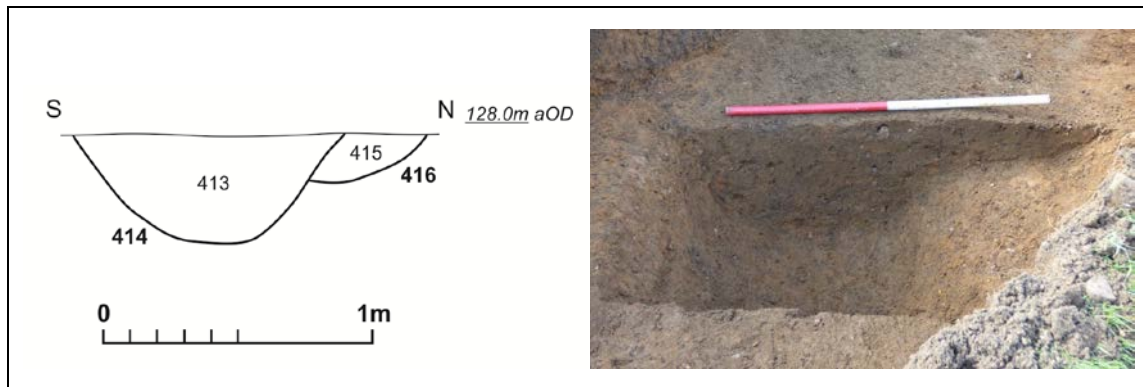
Ditches

The trenching identified medieval ditches in two trenches [305, 307, 414, 416]. The ditches were of similar size and were perpendicular to each other, but it is not known if there was a relationship between the features. Ditch [307], aligned north-east to south-west, survived to a width of 0.90m wide and 0.40m deep, with a U-shaped profile. It contained a naturally accumulated deposit of mid-grey brown silty clay. After a period of silting Ditch [307] was re-cut by Ditch [305] following the same north-east alignment, and indicating maintenance of the feature over time. The recut [305], 0.90m wide and 0.35m deep, had a similar U-shaped profile with natural silting of mid grey-brown silty clay (Fig 3).

Ditches [414] and [416] were aligned north-west to south-east. Ditch [416], 0.45m wide and 0.20m deep, had a bowl-shaped profile. The ditch was filled with a mid grey/orange-brown silty clay, and after this period of silting, the ditch was again re-cut into a more substantial ditch, [414] (Fig 4). This recut was 1.00m wide and 0.40m deep, with a wide U-shaped profile, and contained mid grey-brown silty clay (304).

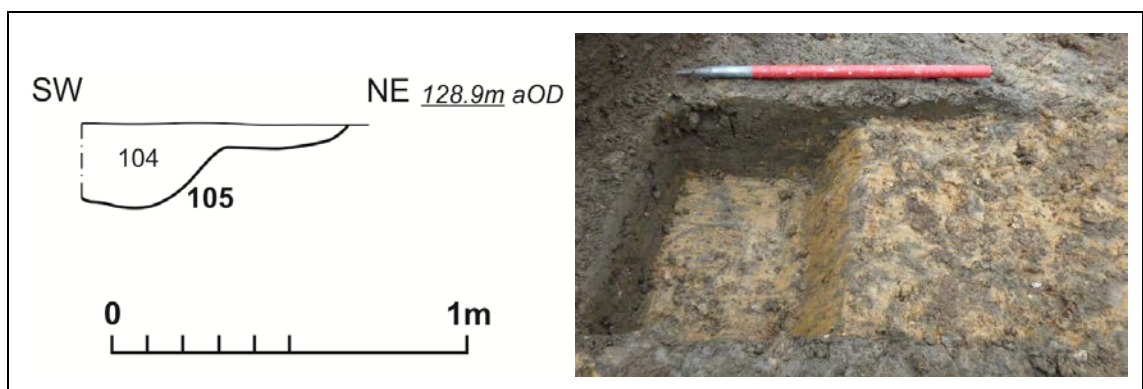


Trench 3, Ditches [305] and [307] Fig 3



Trench 4, Ditches [414] and [416] Fig 4

A linear feature with a stepped side and flat base, [105], was identified at the southern end of Trench 1. It was aligned north-west to south-east and had a maximum depth of 0.25m. The probable ditch contained a black-grey silty sandy-clay (104) from which several sherds of pottery dating from the mid-11th to mid-13th centuries were recovered (Fig 5).

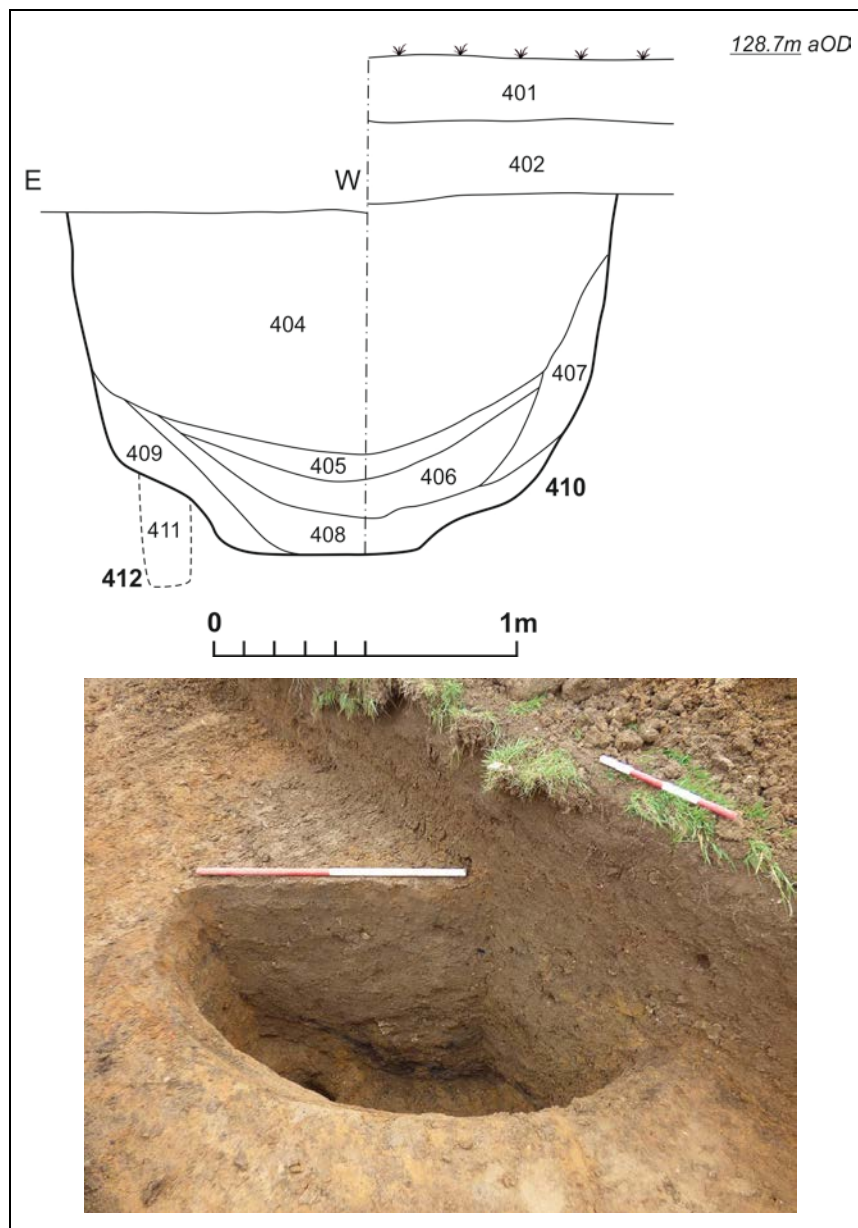


Trench 1, Ditch [105], looking north-west Fig 5

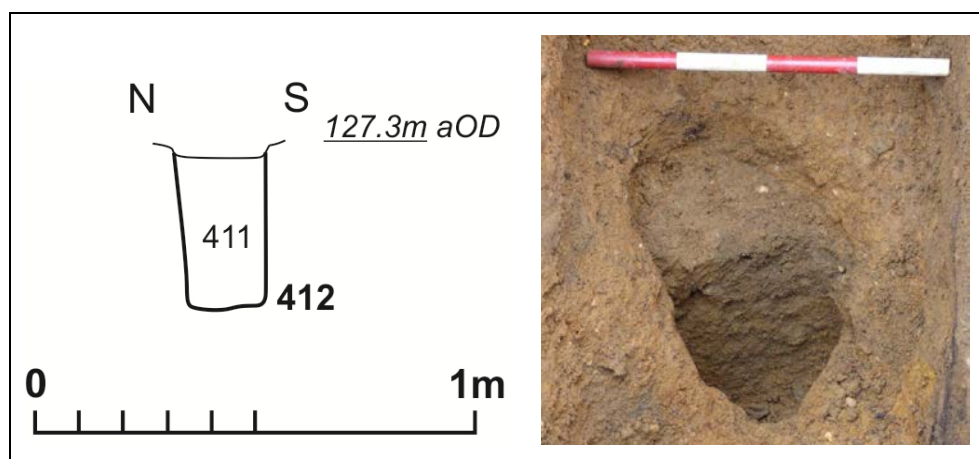
Pits

A large pit [410] was identified in Trench 4, extending beyond the western limit of the trench. It appeared roughly circular in plan, over 1.10m wide and 1.20m deep, with steep cut, almost vertical, sloping sides with a step on the eastern side towards the base. Cut into the step was a large posthole [412], which was 0.20m wide and 0.37m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. The post was removed before the pit was purposely infilled with a primary deposit of mid grey-brown silty clay which was tipped in from the eastern side and lay in the bottom of the pit on its eastern edge, (409; Fig 6) and infilling the posthole (411; Figs 6 and 7).

Black ashy sand (408), containing a quantity of charcoal, was tipped in before natural erosional material (407) accumulated from the northern edge. A sample taken from this fill suggested the fill comprised cereal processing/storage waste, with wheat being the predominant crop. Two further deliberately deposited layers comprised (406) orange-grey sandy clay, and (405) mid grey sandy clay, both of which contained several pieces of lime. The pit was finally infilled with a mass deposit of light grey-brown silty clay (404), 0.80m thick, containing frequent large pieces of charcoal (Fig 6).

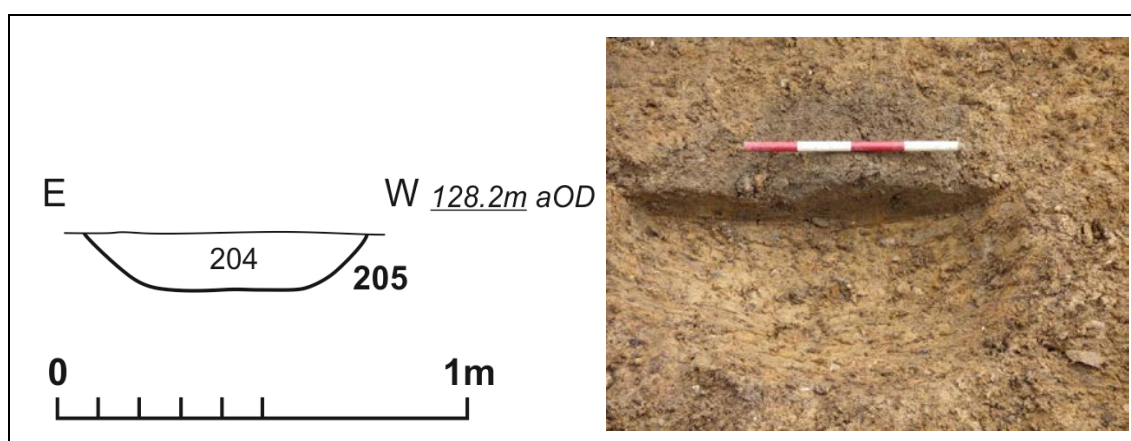


Trench 4, Pit [410], looking south Fig 6



Trench 4, Posthole [412] Fig 7

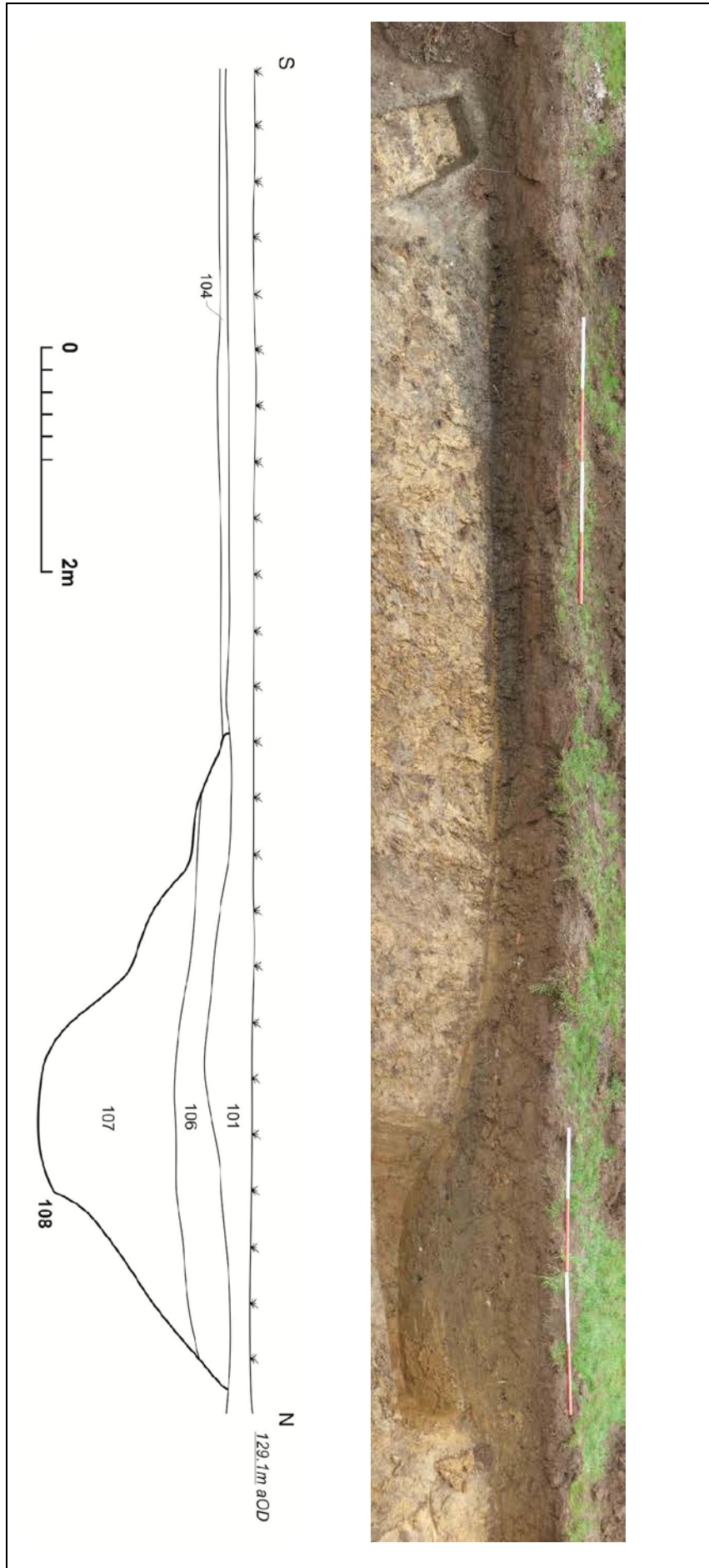
A small, shallow pit was located towards the eastern end of Trench 2. Pit [205] was 0.70m wide and 0.15m deep, and it was purposely infilled with dark grey silty clay (Fig 8). No finds were recovered.



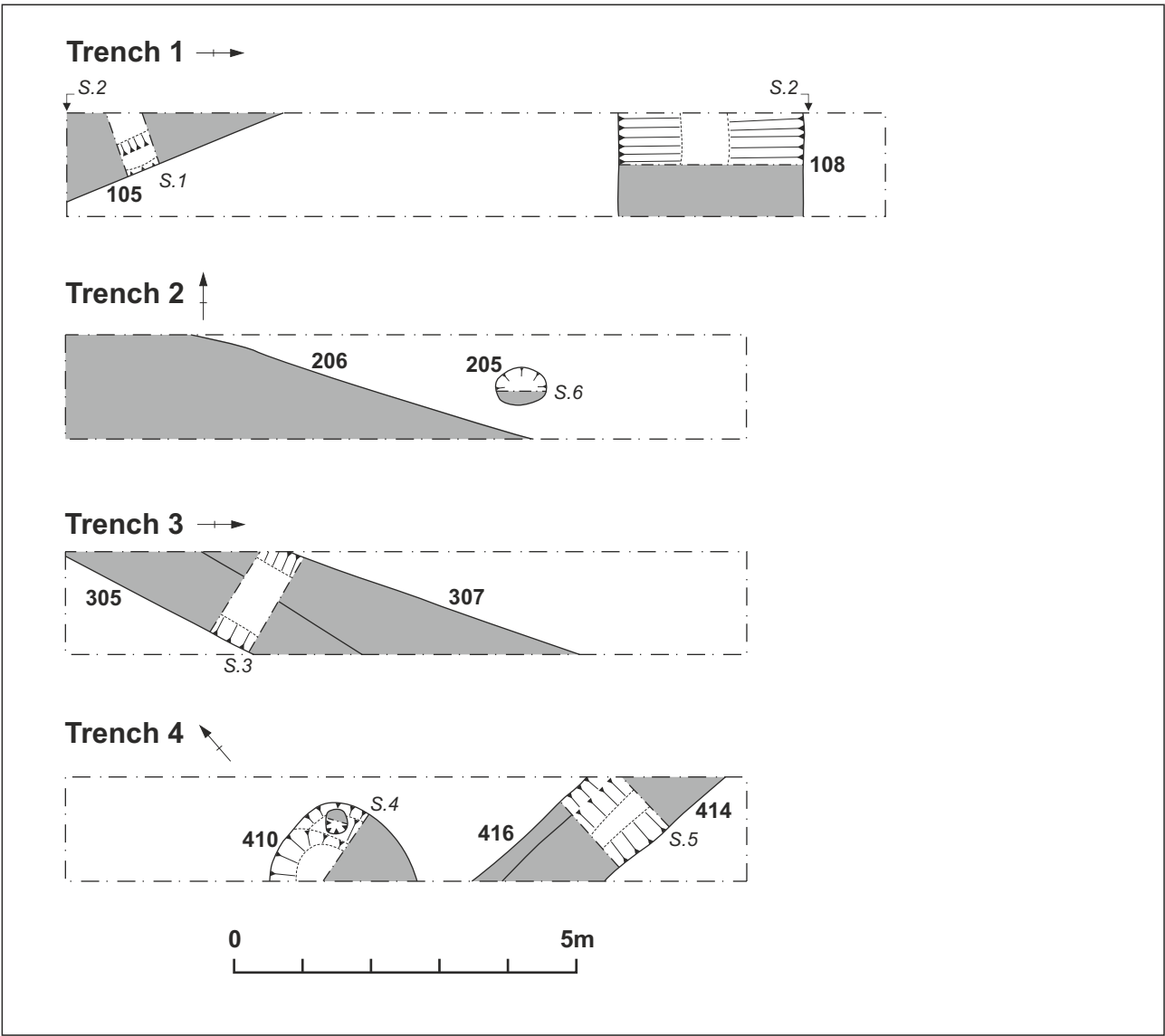
Trench 2, Pit [205], looking south Fig 8

5.3 Post-medieval ditch

At the north end of Trench 1 was a large ditch on an east-west alignment. Ditch [108] was 5.50m wide and 1.75m deep, with a wide V-shaped profile and an irregular, almost stepped, southern edge (Fig 9). A mass deposit was found to infill the ditch, comprising silty sandy-clay (107), containing pieces of 16th-17th-century tile and a single fragment of possible medieval tile. This was overlain by mid brown silty sandy clay (106) containing numerous post-medieval tile pieces. Ditch [108] continued into Trench 2 as ditch [206], but was not excavated.



Trench 1, Ditch [108], looking west Fig 9



Scale 1:100

Plans of the trenches Fig 10

6 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 The pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 28 sherds with a total weight of 326g. It can all be dated to the medieval period. Where possible, the assemblage was recorded using the conventions of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeevat 1992; Zeevat et al. 1994), as follows:

MS2: Medieval Sandy Ware, 12th – 14th century. 2 sherds, 18 g.

MS3: Medieval Grey Sandy Wares, mid 11th – late 14th century. 23 sherds, 284g.

MSC1: Sandy and Shelly Ware, late 11th – mid 13th century. 2 sherds, 19g.

In addition, the following ware, not included in the Milton Keynes type-series, was noted:

LON: London Ware, late 11th – 14th century (Pearce *et al* 1985). 1 sherd, 5g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is fairly typical of sites in the region. The assemblage comprised entirely plain bodysherds, other than the fragment of LON, which is from a jug with a green glaze, and a large Grey Sandy Ware jug handle. The assemblage is generally in good condition, and appears reliably stratified.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	MSC1		MS2		MS3		LON		Date
	No	Weight	No	Weight	No	Weight	No	Weight	
104	2	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	L11thC
306	-	-	-	-	2	30	-	-	12thC
404	-	-	-	-	7	156	-	-	12thC
408	-	-	2	18	13	97	-	-	12thC
413	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	5	12thC
Total	2	19	2	18	23	284	1	5	-

6.2 The tile by Rob Atkins

Four roof tile fragments (230g) were recovered from context (107). One fragment (105g) was an orange sandy tile with a grey core which contained some flint and ironstone inclusions up to 15mm in length. This may be medieval in date.

Three fragments (125g) was in a fully oxidised orange sandy fabric with a few small ironstone inclusions. One had a sub-rounded peg hole. These are likely to date from the 16th to 17th centuries.

6.3 The animal bone by Rebecca Gordon

There was a total of 581g of animal bone recovered from Soulbury, Liscombe Park. The animal bone was assessed using an all fragments method; however, fragments from the same individual were counted as one.

Twenty-two animal bones were recorded from the assemblage, most of which were in good condition. One sheep/goat humerus from fill (107) of ditch [108] exhibited carnivore gnawing around the trochlea.

Sheep/goat and a few cattle, pig and dog bones were recovered from the evaluation (Table 2). The majority of the sheep/goat remains came from fill (107) of ditch [108], which appeared to be from a neonate animal. The same feature also had a juvenile cattle metacarpal and pig second phalanx. It is possible that these remains represent stillborn or young mortalities associated with the post-medieval barn and farm located to the west of the site. Cattle skulls recovered from fills (404) and (306), probably represent primary butchery waste. Fill (306) also had a dog pelvis with two distinct cut marks on the medial side of the ilium. Although the consumption of dogs is not unusual, there is not enough evidence to determine whether this animal was exploited for its meat or fur.

Table 2: Number of hand-collected specimens by context

Fill/ cut/ type	Cattle	Sheep/ goat	Pig	Dog	Large mammal	Medium mammal	Total
107/ 108/ ditch	1	10	1	-	2	1	15
404/ 410/ ditch	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
306/ 305/ ditch	3	-	-	1	1	-	5
Total	6	10	1	1	3	1	22

6.4 The environmental evidence by Val Fryer

A single sample for the evaluation of the content and preservation of the plant macrofossil assemblage was taken from the charcoal rich fill of pit [410].

The sample was bulk floated by MOLA and the flot was collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flot was scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 3. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (2010). All plant remains were charred.

Results

Cereal grains, chaff and seeds of common weeds are present at varying densities within the assemblage. Preservation is moderately good, although some cereals and seeds are puffed and distorted, probably as a result of combustion at very high temperatures.

Oat (*Avena* sp.), barley (*Hordeum* sp.), rye (*Secale cereale*) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains are recorded, with wheat occurring most frequently. Chaff is relatively scarce, but rachis nodes of both bread wheat (*T. aestivum/compactum*) and rivet wheat (*T. turgidum*) types are noted along with cultivated oat (*A. sativa*) floret bases. A single, rounded cotyledon fragment of possible pea (*Pisum sativum*) type is also recorded. Seeds of a limited range of segetal weeds are present, with taxa noted including corn cockle (*Agrostemma githago*), stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*), brome (*Bromus*

sp.), small legumes (Fabaceae), corn gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*) and dock (*Rumex* sp.). A single sedge (*Carex* sp.) nutlet is also recorded. Comminuted charcoal/charred wood fragments are abundant along with small pieces of charred root/stem and indeterminate culm nodes. Other remains are very scarce, but black porous residues and siliceous globules (both of which are probably derived from the high temperature combustion of organic materials including straw/grass) are noted.

Conclusions and recommendations for further work

In summary, the composition of this assemblage would appear to suggest that the material is derived from cereal processing/storage waste, with wheat being the predominant crop. The presence of both stinking mayweed and sedge almost certainly indicates that some crops were being grown on the local heavy soils, which would certainly have been well suited to the production of wheat. It is currently unclear whether the other cereals are present as main crop contaminants or whether they, along with the small legume seeds, are indicative of a rotational cropping regime. Evidence for the latter practise has now come from numerous contemporary sites within southern and eastern Britain.

Although small (i.e. <0.1 litres in volume), this assemblage is relatively rich and varied and certainly contains sufficient material for quantification and further analysis/interpretation. As well-preserved plant macrofossils are present within the archaeological horizon at Liscombe Park, it is strongly recommended that if further interventions are planned within the immediate area, additional plant macrofossil samples of circa 20 – 40 litres in volume should be taken from all archaeological features recorded during excavation. Analysis of such samples could provide valuable data about the economic status of the area as well as the day to day life of the occupants of the hamlet of Liscombe during the medieval period.

Table 3: Charred plant macrofossils and other remains

x = 1 – 10 specimens xx = 11 – 50 specimens xxx = 51 – 100 specimens xxxx = 100+ specimens
cf = compare

Sample No.	1
Context No	408
Feature No.	410
Feature type	Pit
Cereals and other potential crop plants	
<i>Avena</i> sp. (grains)	xxx
<i>A. sativa</i> L. (floret bases)	x
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. (grains)	xx
<i>Hordeum/Secale cereale</i> type (rachis nodes)	x
<i>Secale cereale</i> L. (grain)	x
(rachis node)	xcf
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grains)	xxxx
<i>T. aestivum/compactum</i> type (rachis nodes)	x
<i>T. turgidum</i> type (rachis nodes)	x
Cereal indet. (grains)	xx
(basal rachis nodes)	x
(detached embryos)	x
<i>Pisum sativum</i> L.	xcf

Herbs	
<i>Agrostemma githago</i> L.	X
<i>Anthemis cotula</i> L.	XX
<i>Bromus</i> sp.	X
Fabaceae indet.	XX
<i>Lithospermum arvense</i> L.	X
<i>Ranunculus</i> sp.	X
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	X
Wetland plants	
<i>Carex</i> sp.	X
Other plant macrofossils	
Charcoal <2mm	XXXX
Charcoal >2mm	XXX
Charcoal >5mm	XX
Charcoal >10mm	XX
Charred root/stem	XX
Indet. bud	X
Indet culm nodes	XX
Other remains	
Black porous material	X
Siliceous globules	X
Sample volume (litres)	
Volume of flot (litres)	<0.1
% flot sorted	100%

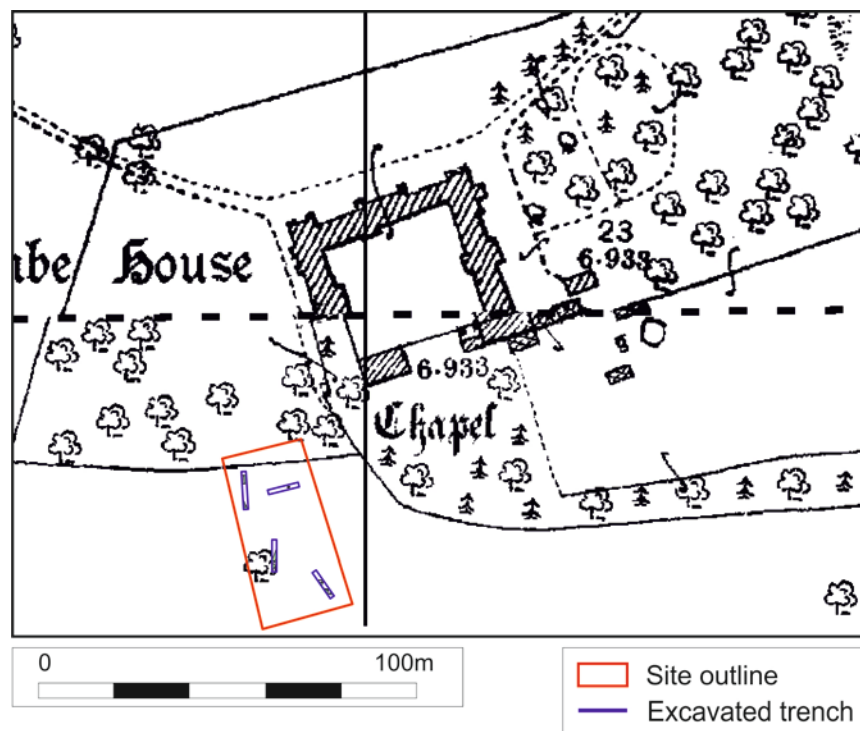
7 DISCUSSION

The evaluation has identified 11th-14th century ditches and recuts as well as a substantial pit [410] and a posthole. These ditches may represent boundaries although the relationship between them is not clear. Probable primary butchery waste was also found in ditches [307] and [405]. The large pit [410] contained black ashy-sand material, a quantity of charcoal and several pieces of lime supporting the indication of small scale industrial activity within the vicinity, if not within the pit itself. The environmental remains from this fill indicated a level of cereal processing or cereal storage was taking place on the site, with wheat being the predominant crop. The waste from this activity may also have been deposited into the pit.

The deserted hamlet of Liscombe is known to have been located to the east of the development area. The paucity of medieval pottery from these features suggests the ditches and pit were related to agriculture, associated with, but away from, the main settlement concentration.

The large post-medieval ditch [108] has the same alignment as an east-west aligned boundary, depicted from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey of 1881 map until 1978 (Fig 11). The lack of exact correlation may be due to slight inaccuracies in the mapping; however, the basal fill of the ditch contained tile dating to the 16th and 17th centuries, with a single fragment of possible medieval tile. This 16th-17th-century material correlates to the construction date of the current house and later additions. It is possible that ditch [108/ 206] was therefore earlier feature infilled at a similar time to the new construction as part of redesigning of the garden landscape. Neonate or juvenile cattle, sheep and pig bones from Ditch [108] may suggest that a variety of animals were being utilised on site.

No residual finds predating the medieval period were recovered during the evaluation suggesting no earlier activity took place within the vicinity of the development area. Despite the landscaping of the gardens the evaluation has shown that medieval and post-medieval features still survive beneath the modern ground surface.



Site outline laid on 1889 Ordnance Survey map Fig 11

Research agendas

Due to the small area of the evaluation, many of the research agendas specified in Section 3 relating to the deserted medieval village and manorial complex could not be addressed. A small number of medieval ditches and possible boundaries may be of use in identifying the pattern of the village shrinkage and abandonment (Munby, in Hey and Hind 2014 16.6.8) should further investigation be undertaken on the site of the DMV in the future. Environmental sampling was undertaken on a charcoal-rich pit fill which helped to identify that cereal processing was taking place on site, and highlighted the predominance of wheat being grown on local heavy soils. The presence of other cereal grains, along with small legume seeds, may well be considered indicative of planting regime of crop rotation, which address part of the research aims of 16.4.14, as well as potentially allowing the nature of the field systems to be characterised (16.4.1) (Munby, in Hey and Hind 2014). As the type of industrial activity indicated by pit [410] could not be identified, this hampers the usefulness of this feature to address specific research aims regarding trade and industry.

Research agenda 18.3.4 suggests that studies of gardens and parks not on the Register of Parks and Gardens, such as Liscombe Park, may help to identify their roles as status symbols and inter-elite competition, as well as design components (Hind, in Hey and Hind 2014). The large post-medieval ditch [108] appears to have been backfilled during the period that the house was constructed and the gardens being laid out. A boundary constructed on a similar alignment lay just to the north until the last quarter of the 20th century. The reason for the replacement of this former boundary with the latter is not known, but it is possible the later boundary was defined by a hedge rather than a ditch, which may be a design choice by the garden architect.

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18 April 2017

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INDEX

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	12m x 1.80m N-S	SP 88564 25667	129m aOD	128.60m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type Feature & type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loam.	0.25m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay-sand.	0.12m thick	-
103	Natural	Mid to light brown-yellow sandy clay	-	-
104	Fill	Dark black-grey silty sandy-clay	1.0>m wide 0.20m thick	Medieval pottery
105	Ditch?	Steep sides, flat base	1.00m wide 0.20m deep	-
106	Fill	Mid brown silty sand-clay.		Post-medieval tile
107	Fill	Mid brown-grey silty sandy-clay		Post-medieval tile, animal bone
108	Ditch	Aligned E-W, steep sides to slightly concave base.		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	10m x 1.80m ENE-WSW	SP 88575 25668	128.64m aOD	128.14m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type Feature & type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loam.	0.35m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay-sand.	0.15m thick	-
203	Natural	Mid to light brown-yellow sandy clay	-	-
204	Fill	Dark grey silty-clay	0.70m wide 0.0.14m thick	-
205	Pit	Moderate sloping sides, flat base	0.70m wide 0.14m deep	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	10m x 1.80m N-S	SP 88572 25650	128.80m aOD	128.40m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loam.	0.23m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay-sand.	0.12m thick	-
303	Natural	Mid to light brown-yellow sandy clay.	-	-
304	Fill	Mid grey-brown silty sandy-clay.	0.90m wide 0.35m thick	-
305	Ditch	Moderate cut sides, flattish base.	0.90m wide 0.35m deep	-
306	Fill	Mid brown-grey silty sand-clay.	0.90m wide 0.40m thick	Animal bone
307	Fill	Moderate sloping sides, slightly concave base.	0.90m wide 0.40m deep	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
4	10m x 1.80m NW-SE	SP 88584 25643	128.70m aOD	128.30m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
401	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loam.	0.20m thick	-
402	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay-sand.	0.20m thick	-
403	Natural	Mid to light brown-yellow sandy clay.	-	-
404	Fill	Light grey-brown silty-clay. Containing charcoal.	1.10m+ wide 0.80m thick	Medieval pottery, animal bone
405	Fill	Mid grey sandy-clay.	0.70m+ wide 0.10m thick	-
406	Fill	Orange-grey sandy-clay	0.60m+ wide 0.12m thick	-
407	Fill	Orange-brown silty clay, natural slumping.	0.20m wide 0.70m thick	-
408	Fill	Black ashy sand,	0.80m wide	Medieval

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		charcoal pieces.	0.15m thick	pottery
409	Fill	Mid grey-brown silty sand.	0.70m wide 0.20m thick	-
410	Pit	Steep cut sides, stepped towards base on eastern edge.	1.10m+ wide 1.15m deep	-
411	Fill	Mid grey-brown silty sand.	0.20m wide 0.40m thick	
412	Posthole	Vertical edges, flat base.	0.20m wide 0.40m deep	
413	Fill	Mid orange-grey silty clay.	1.00m wide 0.40m thick	
414	Ditch	U-shaped profile.	1.00m wide 0.40m deep	
415	Fill	Mid orange-grey silty clay.	0.40m+ wide 0.20m thick	
416	Ditch	Bowl-shaped profile.	0.40m+ wide 0.20m deep	