

SLCP/02



# LAND AT STANTON LOW COUNTRY PARK, STANTONBURY, MILTON KEYNES

## Archaeological Evaluation

commissioned by Urban Design and Landscape Architecture,  
Milton Keynes Council

v2 February 2015



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project info

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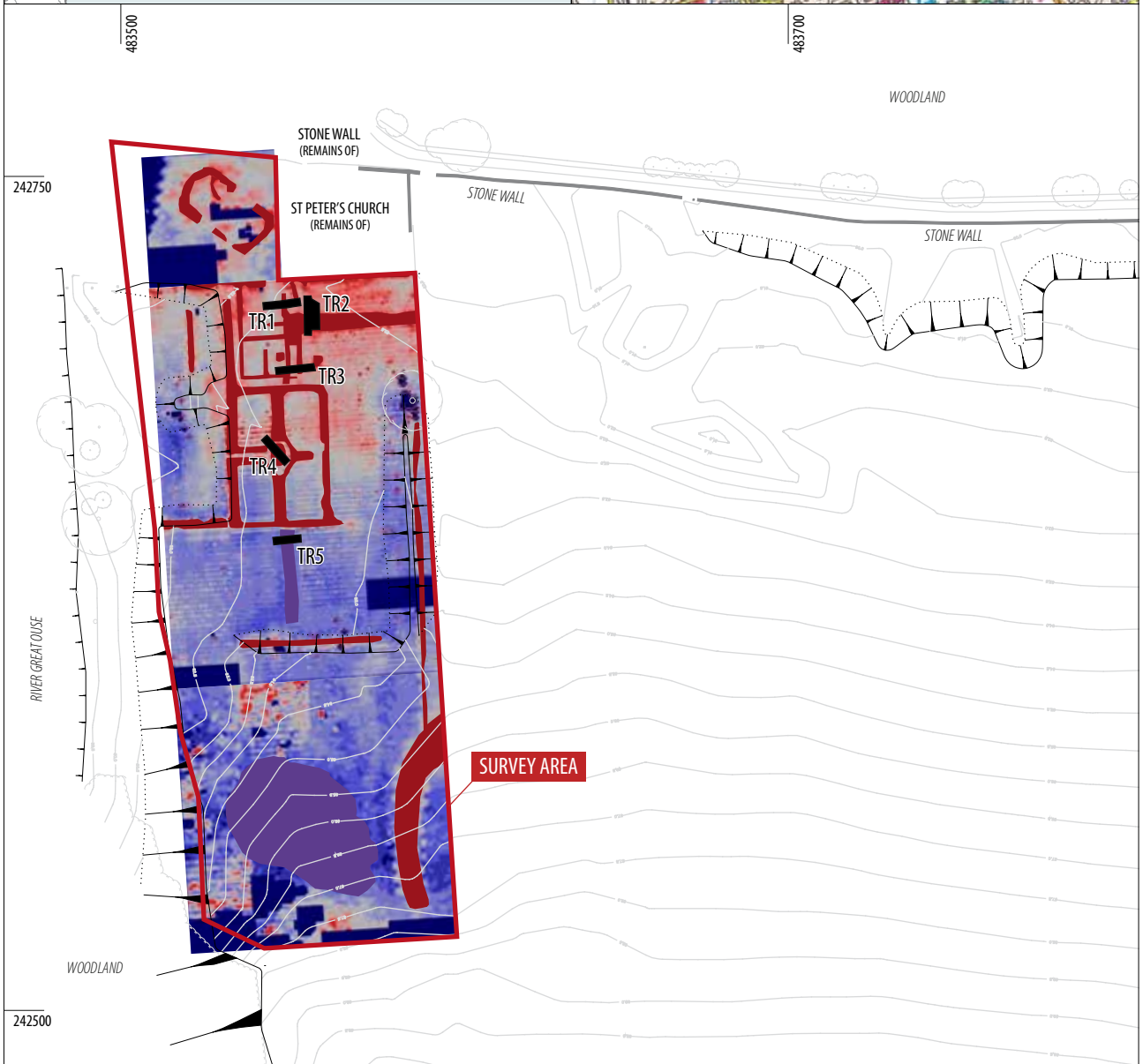
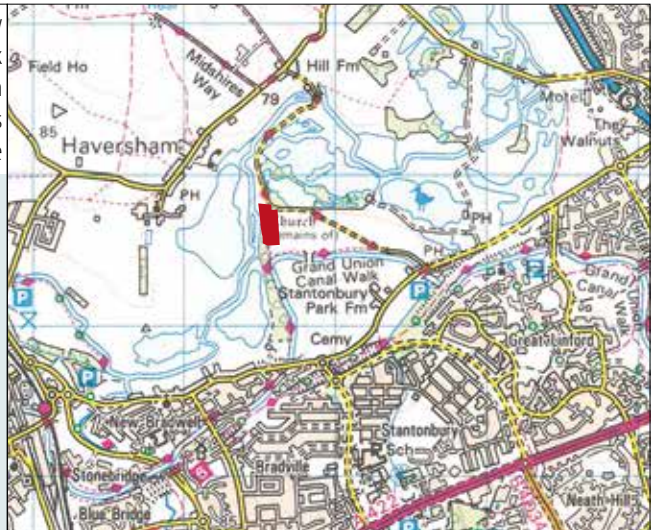
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land at Stanton Low  
Country Park  
Haversham  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire



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0 100m

ILLUS 1  
Site location

# LAND AT STANTON LOW COUNTRY PARK, STANTONBURY, MILTON KEYNES

## Archaeological Evaluation

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd conducted an archaeological evaluation on land at Stanton Low Country Park, Stantonbury, Milton Keynes. This was in response to a requirement for archaeological investigation identified by Milton Keynes Council, to inform and enhance the interpretation and presentation of the earthworks and associated archaeological remains at Stanton Low Country Park. This evaluation consisted of an archaeological geophysical survey, which identified the 17th century manor house and the layout of the associated gardens. This indicated that the potential for archaeological survival of the house and gardens was extremely high, and was subsequently tested by a trial-trench evaluation. This trial-trench evaluation uncovered structural remains of the 17th century manor house and designed garden features associated with the house (fitting with the results from the geophysical survey), evidence for the demolition of the house and gardens, and evidence for earlier activity in this area. The trial-trench evaluation therefore demonstrates that survival of the 17th century manor house and associated formal gardens is very good.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by Sue Brown of Milton Keynes Council (MKC) to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation at Stanton Low Country Park, Stantonbury, Milton Keynes.

1.1.2 A brief (MKAO 2013) was written by the Senior Archaeological Officer of MKC Nick Crank. This archaeological investigation comprised a combination of resistivity-based geophysical survey (Phase 1), followed by a trial trenching scheme (Phase 2) informed by the results from the Phase 1 works. The brief also included an open day when the public was invited to visit the site while the archaeological trenches were available for viewing. Headland Archaeology produced a Written Scheme of Investigation for both of these phases of work (Headland Archaeology 2014a), and carried out the geophysical survey in June 2014 (Headland Archaeology 2014b).

1.1.3 The trial trenching evaluation was carried out in order to assess the extent, nature and survival of archaeological features within the site. The ultimate purpose was to

inform and enhance the interpretation and presentation of the earthworks and associated archaeological remains at the Country Park. This particularly relates to the late medieval and 17th century manor house and designed garden.

1.1.4 The trial trenching was carried out between the 9th and 12th September 2014, and the results of it are presented in this document. The site is located in a public park and was undertaken during a week of heritage events organised by MKC. The open day took place on Saturday 13th September with members of staff from MKC and Headland Archaeology being present to explain the council's intentions to develop the park, show the results of the archaeological investigations, and explain how archaeological investigations work in practice. This was a great success with constant interaction with groups and individuals who ranged in age from four to their seventies.

### 1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

1.2.1 The investigation site comprised an area of rough former pasture containing the earthworks of the formal gardens of a medieval and later-17th century manor house (centred at NGR SP 835 426). It lies to the south and west



of the former village of Stanton and the ruinous parish church and church yard of St Peters (**Illus 1**).

1.2.2 The site lies at an elevation of approximately 75m AOD, with a spot height of 72 metres to the south west. It is situated on the south bank of the River Great Ouse, adjacent to an area which has previously been the site of large scale sand and gravel extraction.

1.2.3 The geology beneath the site consists of Argillaceous Rocks with Subordinate Sandstone and Limestone of the Rutland Formation (a sedimentary bedrock formed 165–172 million years ago in a local environment dominated by shallow seas). The superficial deposits are recorded as sand and gravel, glaciofluvial deposits, originating from the Mid Pleistocene period and formed up to 2 million years ago (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>). These deposits were the source of buildings materials for the medieval village and manor house in the medieval period.

### 1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.3.1 The earliest evidence for activity in this area consists of a small Romano British settlement, recorded during two seasons of excavation to the east of the present site. The settlement (HER 345100) consisted of four buildings including a bathhouse with a hypocaust channel. The ceramic assemblage dated the site to a period between the second and fourth centuries AD. The presence of a possible Roman villa within the Great Ouse valley suggests the potential for other, or similar, forms of Roman activity.

1.3.2 The site includes the southern edge of the deserted medieval village of Stanton, subject of excavations in the early 1970s (Mynard, 1971). The only extant part of the village is St Peter's Church which retains a Grade II listing. 140m to the west of the church are the ruins of a medieval watermill set into the bank of the Great Ouse (HER1409257). A rescue excavation was undertaken in 1966 at the southern part of this settlement, as quarrying reached the area to the north of the church. Substantial amounts of pottery were recovered associated with house platforms that ranged from the 10th-14th centuries probably extending into the 15th. A few sherds of Saxon pottery dating to the 8th or 9th centuries were also recovered during this works, indicating a slightly earlier date for the origins of the settlement.

1.3.3 There is also documentary evidence for the medieval village of Stanton. The name means "stone settlement" and is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 (indicating that the settlement was in existence from Saxon times). At this time, the population was said to include seven villeins and three bordars, and the area was said to be used for meadow and arable farming.

Throughout the medieval and early post-medieval period, Stanton was controlled as a single manor and consisted of a small linear parish. In the early 13th century, the manor passed to Simon de Stanton, whose descendants retained the manor until the 14th century. It then passed through various owners until 1653 when it was sold to Sir John Wittewronge (Bamford et al, 2005).

1.3.4 Sir John Wittewronge commissioned work on a new manor house in 1664 for his eldest son John who was married Clare Alston in the same year. The deed of settlement for the marriage describe the demesne in the following manner: 'all that capital mesuage or Mansion House of and in the said manor now or late in the possession of the said Sir John Wittewronge. . . and all singular House, Edifices, Buildings, Barnes, Stables, Dove houses, Courts, Yards, Orchards, Gardens and Backside thereunto belonging, also all those three Water Milles under one roof, and the Millhouses thereunto belonging ...'(Bamford et al, 2005, p.174). The documentary evidence from this site clearly reminds us that Stanton Low was once part of a living and complex demesne landscape.

1.3.5 Some of the accounts for the building of the manor house survive, as does Sir John Wittewronge's account book for the period. Bamford states that it is 'clear from the documentary record that the building work . . . was a remodelling and extension of the existing manor house'.

1.3.6 Bamford describes in detail the house and its construction, utilising the accounts and account book: "The house 'was built of brick with stone dressing, and references to work on 'ye greate building' and 'ye returning building' suggest that it consisted of a central block with at least one wing. At least two halls are mentioned in different entries: 'ye greate hall', which was wainscoted and paved, with some steps at the entrance, and 'ye Old hall' with a chimney, passage and buttery. Payments were made for the construction of six cantilevers in the Great Hall, presumably to support the gallery. Other entries refer to arches, pillars and wainscoting in 'ye hall', which might be the Great Hall or another. A separate entry in Sir John's personal account book refers to the 'new leser hall' at Stanton, in connection with the provision of locks for two doors . . . There are also references to 'ye folks hall' (presumably the servant's hall)" (Bamford et al, 2005, p.175). There is further detail about the number and types of rooms with pillars, two parlours, chamber over the parlour and a vaulted cellar.

1.3.7 Site preparation works began in 1664 with the digging of clay for brick in February, and the making of bricks and tiles. The architect and master builder was Mr. Macklyne who was paid in October 'for drawing the plott of my intended building' (Bamford et al, 2005, p.175). Full work began in February 1665 with payments being recorded for building a limekiln and making wheelbarrows, hods and ladders. Sand and stone were sourced locally so that, for instance, between 'April and November a total



of 219 cartloads of sand were dug, and a payment for the digging of a further 27 loads was made in the following May, followed by payments for a further four and eight loads in July and September respectively' (Bamford et al, 2005, p.175). The records show work proceeding into 1666 with quarried stone being delivered for garden walls and for making lime which was then used for plaster. One gets a sense of a busy building site, something that is hard to evoke when archaeologists work on the remains of the final product after 250 years of demolition, clearance and decay. For instance, there is evidence that 23,250 bricks were made on site in 1666 (Bamford et al, 2005, p.175). Compare this figure with the amount of brick recovered during the trial trenching outlined below.

- 1.3.8 Also of relevance to the results of our excavation is a reference in May 1665 to workmen 'throwing earth into the new building' and 'carrying earth into ye house' which Bamford says was possibly used to make up the ground that the house was built on. The shell of the building was in place by late summer and the roof was being put on by November. The cellar was begun in January. Payments are noted for dressed stone, onsite stone masons, timber, nails, tile pins, iron and lead (Bamford et al, 2005, p.176) with sawn boards being purchased in March and June of that year. Lead was delivered for roofing and guttering in September and it is clear that work moved to the interior of the building by 1666 with the glazing being complete or at least paid for in October 1666. The interior was still being worked on in the autumn of 1668 after the great hall was paved in April and the steps into the hall were built that September. In total, the house took four years to build.
- 1.3.9 Less documentary evidence exists for the formal gardens associated with the manor house. They are, however, visible as earthworks (HER345086).
- 1.3.10 The house was damaged by fire in 1743 and demolished in 1791.

## 1.4 2002 EARTHWORK SURVEY

- 1.4.1 An earthwork survey was undertaken in 2002 (Bamford et al, 2005) surveying the area commonly identified as the likely position for the 17th century manor. Two flat areas were identified at the location of the manor house to the south and west of the church. However, the recent geophysical survey has shown that the house was actually slightly further to the west than suggested by the earthwork survey.
- 1.4.2 The gardens were also recorded as part of the earthwork survey and were separated into two main areas. An embankment along the eastern boundary was interpreted as a viewing area overlooking formal gardens to the south of the manor house that were laid out on a north-south axis. To the west an additional formal 'sunken garden' was recorded with the primary

feature of interest being a prospect mound at its centre recorded as being built with construction debris. South of the formal gardens were vegetable gardens, trees and other features.

## 1.5 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

- 1.5.1 The geophysical survey clearly showed the layout of the gardens and house, and indicated that archaeological remains of the house and gardens were likely to be very well-preserved (Illus.1). This included features which were already known about (based on documentary evidence and the earthwork survey), alongside previously unknown features (such as the potential building to the north of the manor house and the track way to the south of the gardens). Evidence from the geophysical survey could also be combined with the documentary sources to, for example, illuminate the layout of the interior of the house (see discussion below). The results were particularly strong in the area of the possible manor house location and the associated formal gardens to the south, although less so beyond the formal garden. This can be explained by the nature of the gardens to the south that would have been laid out in a way and using materials that would not necessarily caught by geophysical survey techniques.
- 1.5.2 The manor house was clearly visible to the south-west of St Peters Church. The results from the geophysical survey have enabled an incredibly clear understanding of the size and layout of the house to be gained. It measured 28m in length and 15m in width. Internal divisions indicated three room spaces with the walls being over 1m thick. The southern part of the structure is divided into two areas with similar dimensions, 10.36 m by 5.9m, and 10.49m by 5.4m respectively. These are probably the parlours mentioned in the documentary evidence, while the northern section has no internal divisions and so is probably the great hall. Trenches 1 and 3 were positioned over the remains of the walls of the manor house.
- 1.5.3 A structure was identified to the north of the manor house and directly west of St. Peters Church. This may be one of the ancillary buildings associated with the manor house, such as one of the barns or stables mentioned in the deed of settlement for the marriage of John Wittewronge to Clare Alstone (see section 1.3.4).
- 1.5.4 The layout of the formal gardens, to the south of the manor house, were also very clear. This covered a rectangular area 42m in length by 30m in width, and was divided into four distinct rectangular quarters. At the centre of this was a circular feature, c.4m in diameter, which may have been a pond. This was also noted in the earthwork survey. Trench 4 was targeted to investigate the possible pond.
- 1.5.5 The probable formal approach to the manor house was observed to the east of the house. This measured 4.5m



## ILLUS 2

### Site plan

in width, with a visible length of 35m. Trench 2 was targeted to investigate this formal approach.

- 1.5.6 An additional linear feature was noted directly south of the formal garden area and interpreted as a trackway running south towards the Upper Gardens. Trench 5 was located here to test this interpretation.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1.1 The general aim of the trenching evaluation was to obtain useful information regarding the presence, character, date, status and level of preservation of surviving archaeological remains.

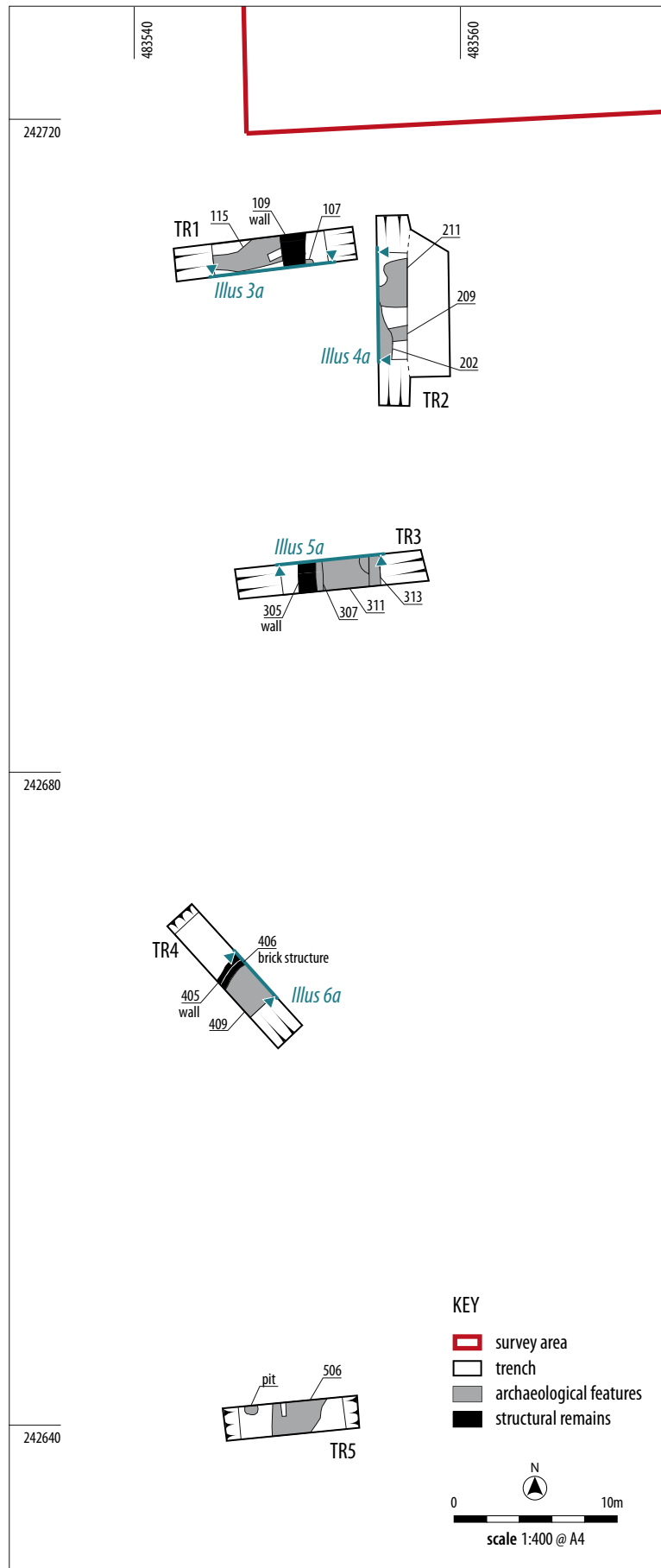
- 2.1.2 The archaeological investigations were carried out in order to:

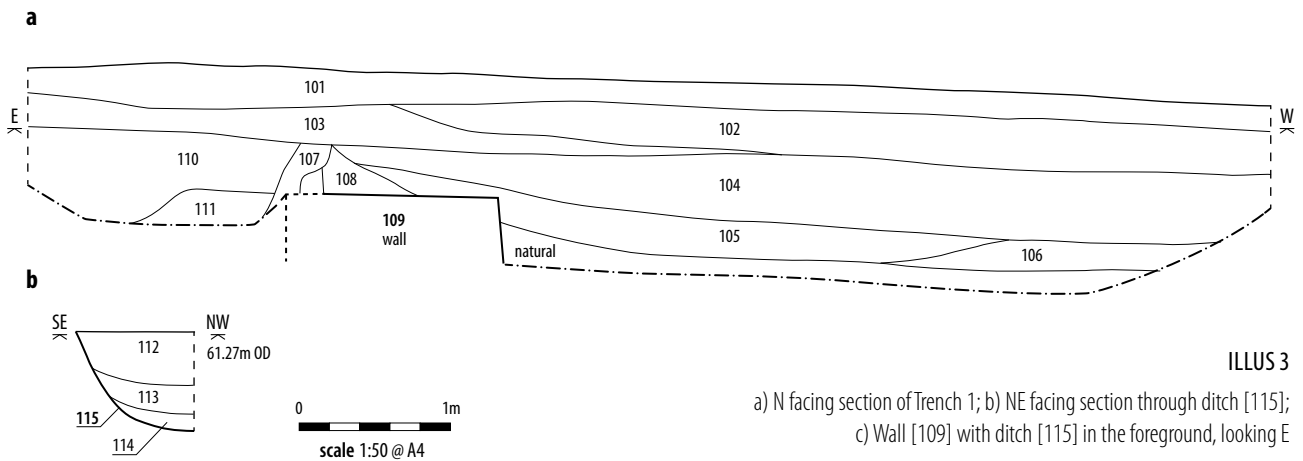
- assess extent, layout, structure and date of features and deposits of archaeological interest;
- place, where possible, the identified features within their local and regional context;
- place the findings in the context of the results of earlier work in the surrounding area.

- 2.1.3 The local and regional research contexts are provided by the Solent Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment (Hey and Hind 2014).

- 2.1.4 The following areas of research were considered of particular relevance for this project:

- Further defining the layout of the formal gardens, including the location and form of the beds, parterres, paths and walling.
- Defining the layout of the 17th century manor house, yards, and outbuildings.
- Confirming the existence of the additional garden structures, such as the possible ornamental pool in area C and/or the possible 'eyecatcher' structure.





ILLUS 3

a) N facing section of Trench 1; b) NE facing section through ditch [115];  
c) Wall [109] with ditch [115] in the foreground, looking E



2.2.3 A 360° tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket was used to remove topsoil under direct archaeological control. Excavation continued until clean geological sediments or archaeological deposits were encountered.

2.2.4 Further excavation required to satisfy the objectives of the investigation was continued by hand. A representative sample identified features was investigated by hand and all features were recorded. The stratigraphy of each trench was recorded in full.

## 2.3 RECORDING

2.3.1 All recording was in accordance with the code of practice of the Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and in line with the approved WSI (Headland Archaeology 2014). All trenches and contexts were given unique numbers. All recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards that conform to accepted archaeological standards. All stratigraphic relationships were recorded.

2.3.2 An overall site plan at an appropriate scale and relative to the National Grid was recorded by digital survey using a differential GPS.

2.3.3 A full photographic record comprising colour slide, black and white print and digital photograph was taken. A metric scale was clearly visible in record photographs.

## 2.2 METHODOLOGY

2.2.1 Trial trenching was carried between the 9th and 12th September 2014. Five trenches each at least 6m in length were excavated across the site, all 1.9m in width. Due to the depth of the overburden the trench ends were battered to allow safe access into the deeper trenches.

2.2.2 The remit of the archaeological trial trenching programme was outlined by Headland Archaeology in Written Scheme of Investigation (Headland Archaeology 2014a), and agreed with the Senior Archaeological Officer at Milton Keynes Council. The trench layout was designed to further understand the site by positioning trenches on features identified by the geophysical survey.

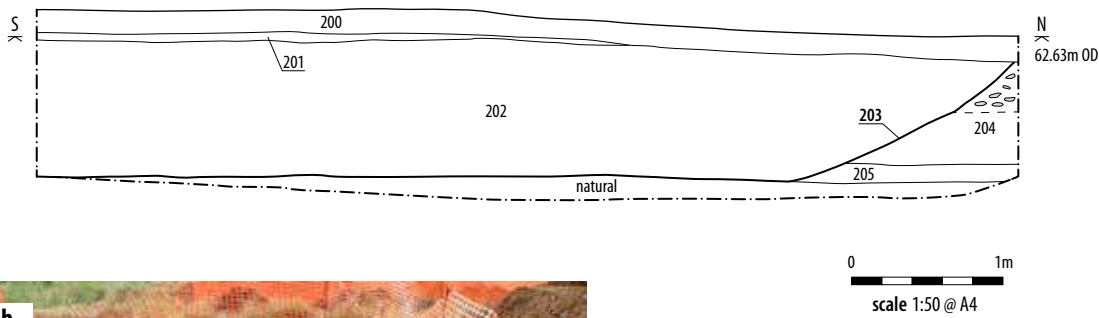
## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Full trench descriptions, including orientation, length, and depth are presented in Appendix 1. Technical details of individual contexts are presented in Appendix 1. Contexts are numbered by trench number: i.e. Trench 1 (101), Trench 2 (201). Cut features are shown as [101] whilst their fills are expressed as (102), for example.



a



ILLUS 4

a) E facing section of Trench 2; b) General shot of Trench 2, looking S, showing the pits in the base of the trench

century formal gardens were also uncovered, including ditch [1115]; pits, [207], [209], and [211]; ditch [313]. This demonstrates the idea that there was some activity on this site before the construction of the manor house in the 17th century, potentially associated with the possible earlier building identified in the geophysical survey to the north of the manor house.

### 3.2 FEATURES PRE-DATING 17TH CENTURY MANOR / GARDEN LAYOUT

3.2.1 Archaeology was found in Trenches 1-3 that pre-dated the 17th century manor house. Ditch [115] and spread (311) were both cut by the construction of the manor wall foundations (109) and (305), which means that they are earlier than the foundation. Spread (311) was also truncated by N-S ditch line [313]. Both of these deposits were sealed by buried topsoil layers (309) and (310), which were truncated by the construction cut [307] for wall (305). In Trench 2 three probable pits [208], [209] and [2011] were found (ILLUS 4), which were sealed by the same buried topsoil layer found in Trench 3.

3.2.2 These features show a concentration of settlement-related activity that pre-dates the 17th century manor house. The majority of the finds collected, although of a residual nature, indicate that the activity relating to the manor was of the mid-15th to late 17th century. A few sherds of an earlier date, 10th to mid-11th century, were also recovered (Appendix 4).

### 3.3 FEATURES WHICH FORMED PART OF 17TH CENTURY MANOR AND GARDEN

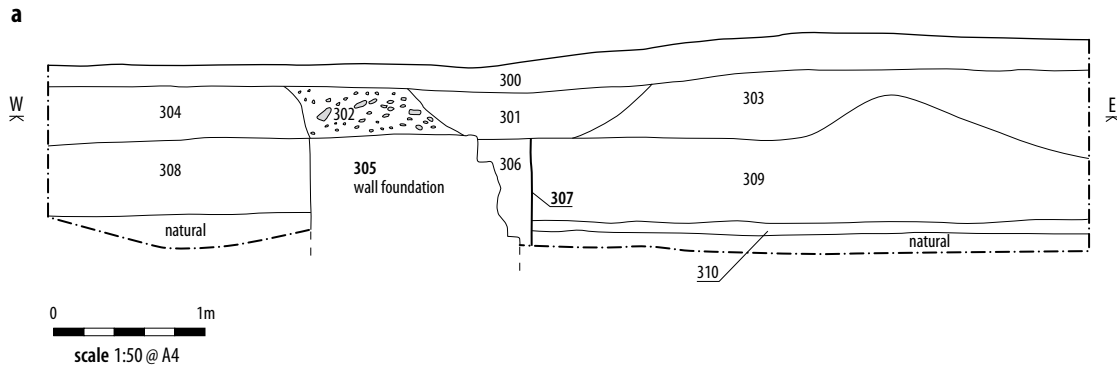
#### *North-south orientated wall*

3.3.1 The primary evidence for the manor structure survived was the foundation wall (109) and (305). This formed part of the eastern exterior wall of the main building, and

3.1.2 Undisturbed natural deposits generally comprised a compact mid brown-orange silt-sand, with moderate frequency of small gravel inclusions. This was observed at a depth of between 0.4-0.68m (beneath the present ground-surface) in Trenches 4 and 5, and at a depth of 1.3m in Trenches 1-3.

3.1.3 The modern topsoil, a loose light brown-grey silt-sand with occasional small stone inclusions and rooting, was observed in all trenches across the site and was between 0.3 and 0.35m thick. This overlay subsoil (502) at the southern extent of the site and archaeological deposits in Trenches 1-4.

3.1.4 Archaeological remains were uncovered in all five trenches (ILLUS 2). This consisted of remains related to the 17th century manor and formal gardens, including one of the walls of the 17th century manor house [109] and [305]; the pond at the centre of the formal gardens [406]; the remains of a north-south track to the south of the formal gardens (506); and deposits related to the disuse of the manor. Remains thought to pre-date the 17th



## ILLUS 5

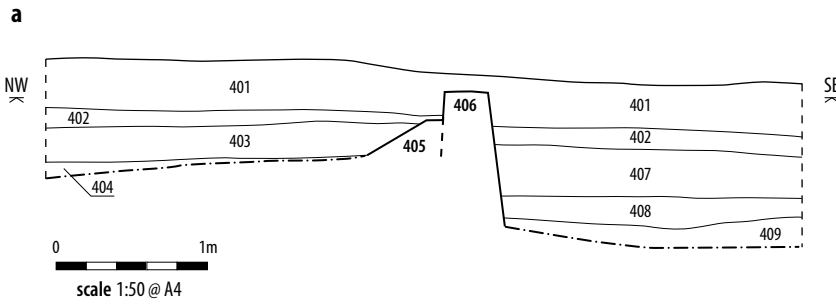
a) S facing section of Trench 3; b) Wall [305], looking W; c) Wall [305], looking E

was identified on the geophysical survey (Illus 3 and 5). This therefore confirms the results from the geophysical survey regarding the location of the manor house.

- 3.3.2 Both walls were cut from the level of buried topsoil layer (309). They were constructed of roughly hewn limestone and sandstone in a lime mortar with rough faces, in a trench built construction cut. This accords with the documentary evidence that the manor was built of dressed stone and brick (Bamford 2005). Wall (109) consisted of three rough courses all of which were part of the foundation. The upper three courses in (309) were the bottom layer of the wall proper consisting of larger rectangular stone (see Illus 5) which were markedly different from the coarser lower courses. Both of these foundation walls, at 1.4m wide and over 0.8m in depth, would provide a base for a substantial wall, as would be expected for the exterior wall of a manor house.
- 3.3.3 The remaining heights of the foundation walls were arbitrary due to manor demolition. (109) survived to a height of 61.8 AOD; which was the same as the bottom of the three stepped courses of (305).
- 3.3.4 A second N-S linear anomaly indicated in the geophysics report (HA 2014), targeted in Trench 3 to the west of the manor house, did not show up in the trench section (Illus 5). The geophysics indicated that this was a substantial construction of 1.4m in width, larger than the width of the manor foundation wall. A feature of this size would have shown in some form if it was present within the trench. Therefore, it is likely that the possible wall identified by geophysics terminated just to the north of the trench.
- 3.3.5 Clay deposit (107) was built up against the eastern edge of wall (109) and in the section shown (Illus 3) projected to a greater height than the wall. While the function of this clay deposit is not clear, and what remains of this is probably in a disturbed state, it is significant as it is very different to the local soils and was brought from elsewhere. The same type of clay was found as a deposit (405) as a sealing or bonding material in the pond feature.



ILLUS 6



a) SW facing section of Trench 4; b) Pond [411] and surrounding wall [406], looking NW; c) Wall surrounding pond [406] and packing [405]



3.3.6 The level of the natural geology uncovered in Trenches 1-5 indicates that the ground level slopes off down to the north (Trench 5 62.2m AOD; Trench 1 61.3m AOD). The archaeology related to the manor in the southern trenches ((406) and (506)) cuts through the level of the subsoil, whereas the manor structure is cut through a buried topsoil layer (309). This was an attempt to level the natural surface prior to construction, a fact that is supported by the documentary evidence where payments are recorded for bringing clay into the site.

### 3.4 POND FEATURE

3.4.1 Trench 4 was targeted on a large sub-circular geophysical anomaly interpreted as a pond structure at the centre of the formal gardens (Illus 6). The pond structure was constructed of brick (average 211 x 98 x 58mm) set in an 'English brick bond'. Thirteen courses were visible and it was oval in shape. The internal face of the wall was plastered, presumably for waterproofing the structure. On this surface there was a difference in colour 0.48m down from the existing level that indicated the average water level inside the pond. Against the external face of the pond wall (406), a packed clay deposit (405) was present that must have had some kind of sealing or bonding function. This deposit was not seen in the local geology indicating it was brought in from the surrounding area.

3.4.2 The function of the pond is not clear from the testing, although it is likely a fish pond or some other kind of

ornamental pond, constructed with brick which dates to the 18th century (Appendix 4), and was in very good condition. It survived into the modern topsoil level, indicating it has not suffered greatly from natural collapse or the demolition of the manor. It is likely that the backfilling of the pond occurred in 1791 with the demolition of the manor building.

### 3.5 EXTERNAL TO THE MANOR BUILDING

3.5.1 Trenches 2 and 5 targeted geophysical anomalies identified respectively as a formal approach to the house from the east and a track way from the south. Trench 2 revealed a large area of disturbance [203], over 6.65m in width to a depth of 1m. This was of uncertain shape and alignment and does not match up with the feature shown on geophysics, as was larger and more irregular. This does not support its proposed interpretation of a formal entrance. It also cuts layers produced after the demolition of the manor house and therefore cannot be associated with this phase of activity at the site.

3.5.2 Interestingly, this area was identified as the location for the 1664 manor in the earthworks survey. No structural remains or demolition debris were identified by trial trenching that would suggest a building in this location.

3.5.3 The evaluation of a possible N-S track way leading up to the south of the gardens in Trench 5 revealed a rubble filled ditch [506] (Illus 7). At a depth of 0.55m, this is unlikely



## ILLUS 7

Ditch [506] in Trench 5, photo facing E

### *Post-manor activity*

to have been the base for a track way. The material used to fill this feature may indicate that its infilling relates to the demolition of the manor but no dateable material was recovered to prove this. The original function of this ditch line is unclear, although it obviously relates to the formal gardens within which it is enclosed. Both the earthwork survey and the geophysics show a series of linear features on the N-S orientation that align with the formal gardens as a whole.

3.5.4 The lack of any standing structural remains above ground level for the manor indicate a near complete demolition of the structure. (301), (302), (303) and (304) probably represent a layer of levelled demolition material which was sealed by the modern topsoil (301). These are mirrored by deposits (102), (103), (104) and (110) in Trench 1 which seal stone rubble layer (105) (**Illus 3**). (105) contained a substantial amount of stone inclusions which have slumped westwards from wall (109). Given the lack of any sizeable or worked stone in this deposit it is probably a deposit of smaller stones from the wall that were left behind when it was being robbed out because they were of no use.

3.5.5 The documentary evidence recorded by Bamford (2005) indicates a large sum of money spent of producing bricks for the manor construction. None of these were seen in any of the deposits relating to the manor. The demolition of the house was very thorough.

3.5.6 A layer of pea gravel (402) at the base of the modern topsoil level sealed the deposits backfilling pond (406). This layer was also seen in Trench 2 (201) sealing the backfill of pit [203]. It is unlikely that this layer was brought onto the site during this phase of activity, it more likely represents a re-deposition of layers from the formal gardens associated with the 1791 demolition of the manor building. Pond (406) was filled by backfill deposits (407), (408) and (409) which produced a broad range of dating material indicating their re-deposited nature (see **Table 1** and **Illus 6**). This event is contemporary with the demolition levelling layers seen in Trenches 1 and 3.



Trench	Pottery (Medi)		Pottery (PM)		Clay pipe	Glass	Metal	CBM	Dating	
	sherds	wgt	sherds	wgt	sherds	sherds	finds	sherds		wgt
1	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	5	881g	L.17th/e.18th
3	–	–	–	–	–	–	1 knife	–	–	PM
4	7	209g	21	733g	4	14	1 came	11	10725g	L.Med/EPM
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>209g</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>733g</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11606g</b>	–

TABLE 1

Quantification of finds by trench, with spot dating

## 4 FINDS

JULIE FRANKLIN, PAUL BLINKHORN

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The finds assemblage was small, amounting to 28 sherds (942g) of pottery, 16 sherds of glass, with further finds of clay pipe, metalwork and ceramic building material. Finds predominantly dated to the late medieval and early post-medieval period, though there were also residual sherds of earlier medieval and Saxon pottery. A summary of the assemblage is shown in **Table 1**. A complete catalogue of all the finds is in the Appendix 2.

### 4.2 MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY

4.2.1 The pottery assemblage comprised a range of late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval wares. It was recorded using the conventions of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (eg. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994). The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in **Table 2**.

4.2.2 The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region. The presence of residual St Neots Ware and Medieval Grey Sandy Ware show that there was activity at the site during the 10th and 11th centuries, but the bulk of the

Fabric code	Fabric name	Dating	Sherds	Wgt
SNC1	St Neots Ware	c 900–1100	1	19g
MS3	Medieval Grey Sandy Wares	Mid 11th–late 14th century	2	7g
TLMS18	Late Medieval Oxidized Ware	1450–?1500	4	183g
PM8	Red Earthenware	16th–19th century	2	236g
PM13	Midland Blackware	late 16th–17th century	16	439g
PM14	Midland Purple Ware	1450–1600	1	13g
PM16	Black-glazed Coarsewares	late 17th–18th century	2	55g

TABLE 2

Pottery fabrics

assemblage dates from the mid-15th to 17th centuries. Most of the assemblage consists of fairly large sherds from utilitarian vessels. They are generally all in good condition, and appear reliably stratified. All the Midland Blackware is from a single vessel, a large handled jar typical of the tradition (eg. Brears 1969). The assemblage appears entirely of a domestic nature.

### 4.3 CLAY PIPE

4.3.1 The four sherds of clay pipe included part of a bowl. The base, which might have allowed more accurate dating, is missing, but its form suggests a late 17th or early 18th century date (Oswald 1975). The three stem sherds recovered are not inconsistent with this date.

### 4.4 GLASS

4.4.1 There were ten sherds of green bottle glass and six of window glass. The bottles included base and wall sherds, though no vessel profiles could be reconstructed. All appeared to be parts of 'onion' wine bottles and can be dated to the period 1680–1720 (Dumbrell 1983).

4.4.2 The window sherds are all plain. They are in reasonable condition, but are starting to laminate. One sherd appears to have a right angled corner but is cut rather than grozed. This and the general condition of the glass suggests an early post-medieval date.

### 4.5 METALWORK

4.5.1 Two metal finds were recovered. The first is a lead window came (408). It was associated with a sherd of window glass and it is likely that both are contemporary. The second is a knife, complete with ivory handle (302). The blade tip is broken, but the general form of the knife is consistent with a 17th or 18th century date.

### 4.6 CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

4.6.1 There were 16 sherds (11.6kg) of ceramic building material. The bulk of this was made up by a sample of five complete bricks taken from the fish pond structure (406). All were stock-moulded of the same size (211 x 98



x 58mm), a standard 18th century size and are likely to be of that date. A further four brick sherds were more fragmentary and abraded with no complete dimensions and cannot be accurately dated. Three of these (103) are in a soft red fabric, similar to the complete bricks. The other (Trench 4, spoil heap) is semi-vitrified and may possibly relate to some sort of industrial activity.

4.6.2 There were also seven sherds of flat roof tile, one showing part of a peg hole. All are in the same fabric, with calcareous inclusions. They are of late medieval to post-medieval date.

## 4.7 DISCUSSION

4.7.1 The finds were concentrated in Trench 4 in three contexts (407, 408, and 409). Three residual sherds of pottery show there was earlier medieval activity in the area, at least as far back as the 11th century. More intensive activity in the area is shown from the late 15th to the late 17th or later, though again the earlier finds in this range are residual in the contexts in which they were found. Contexts (407) and (409) could not have been deposited until the late 17th century. Context (408) could have been deposited earlier, from the late 16th century. The finds show the general domestic paraphernalia of the day, with pottery, glassware, clay pipes and cutlery. The fabric of nearby structures is represented by brick, roof tile and window glass.

# 5 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

LAURA BAILEY, TIM HOLDEN

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 The animal bone assemblage comprises three small bags of hand recovered specimens from three contexts. Results of the assessment are provided in **Table 3**.

Context	Weight (g)	Cow	Pig	Condition	Comments
103	26	-	-	Fair	IM- long bone fragment
311	6	-	-	Fair	IM- medium sized mammal
409	194	+	+	Fair	Cow proximal radius, Cow pelvis. IM- large mammal rib fragments. Pig tooth

Key: + = species present, IM = indeterminate mammal

**TABLE 3**

Results of the animal bone assessment

## 5.2 METHODOLOGY

5.2.1 The aims of the assessment were to provide a basic quantification of the available data and to characterize

the assemblage as far as possible. Identifiable fragments were recorded, together with the preservation and any signs of modification of the bone in order to assess the quality, quantity and potential of the assemblage. Where possible fragments were identified to species level using Schmid 1972.

## 5.3 CONDITION

5.3.1 Generally the bone was in poor condition and heavily fragmented, no whole bones were recovered. The surface condition was good and butchery marks (knife cuts and chop marks) are visible on some of the bones. The cow radius was medially and longitudinally split, possibly for marrow extraction.

## 5.4 SPECIES PRESENT

5.4.1 Many of the bones were heavily fragmented and were therefore recorded as Indeterminate Mammal (IM). However elements of cow, including radius and pelvis fragments were recovered from deposit 409. A single pig canine was also recovered from deposit 409.

## 5.5 DISCUSSION

5.5.1 The animal bone was restricted to a single pig canine and a few identifiable elements of cow in deposit 409. Given the small amount of material recovered, it is unlikely that any meaningful analyses could be undertaken and no more could be said regarding relative abundance of species due to the limited size of the assemblage.

# 6 DISCUSSION

6.5.1 The earliest recovered finds from this evaluation were residual sherds of St Neots Ware and Medieval Grey Sandy Ware from the 10th-11th centuries. This shows that there was activity at the site at this time, probably associated with the deserted medieval village.

6.5.2 Significant evidence for activity pre-dating the 17th century manor was uncovered during this evaluation. This consisted of ditches and pits, alongside 15th-17th century pottery. These may be related to the earlier incarnations of the manor house in this area.

6.5.3 The geophysical survey and trial-trenching evaluation has provided a clear indication of the form and layout of the 17th century manor house and formal gardens. Trial-trenching has supported the picture gained of the good survival of archaeological remains relating to this, with the remains of part of one of the external walls of the house, the pond at the centre of the formal gardens, and a pathway thought to have formed part of the gardens, being excavated. Indications about the construction of the house and gardens, such as the importing of clay for use in the pond structure and the levelling of the land



prior to construction of the house, have been gained through these investigation.

- 6.5.4 The remains of demolition deposits associated with the collapse of the manor following the 1743 fire and the subsequent demolition of the manor house in 1791 were also uncovered across the site

## 6.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 The archaeological investigations at Stanton Low successfully established the location of the 17th century manor house and the layout of the formal gardens associated with it. This has provided further information on many aspects of the history of the house including the construction of the house and gardens, their layout and size, and the demolition of the manor. This has elaborated on and substantiated the information from documentary sources and has also provided new information about certain features such as the potential pathway to the south of the formal gardens. It is clear that the remains of the manor house and gardens are well preserved, and that further archaeological excavation would uncover other features associated with the manor, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of its construction and the nature of daily life in the 17th century.
- 6.1.2 Traces of earlier activity were also found during the trial-trenching. This includes evidence for early (10th-11th century) medieval activity (three sherds of pottery), presumably associated with the deserted medieval village of Stantone. There was also evidence for a potential earlier manor house, reflected in the discovery of 15th-17th century pottery, and ditches and pits clearly pre-dating the 17th century manor house. Further archaeological work would clarify this issue.
- 6.1.3 This archaeological investigation has been successful in gaining a far clearer understanding of the 17th century manor house and gardens at Stanton Low. It has also demonstrated that further remains associated with it, and with earlier activity on the site are well preserved and worthy of further investigation

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## 8 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

#### Trench register

Trench	Orientation	Length (m)	Description	Max depth of trench (m)
1	E-W	10	Topsoil (101) over collapse / demolition deposits (102), (103), (104), (105), (106), (110) and (111). Wall foundation [109] and collapsed wall (108) and single ditch [115].	1.3
2	N-S	6.5	Topsoil (200) over gravel layer (201). Large pit [203] and fill (202) seal pit [207], ditch [209] and possible pit [211].	1.3
3	E-W	11.25	Topsoil (300) sealing post wall layers (301) – (304), wall construction layers [305], (306) and [307] truncating deposits (308) – [313].	1.3
4	NW-SE	10	Topsoil (401) over pea grit (402) over subsoil (403) with curvilinear wall [406] forming interior of pond filled with backfill layers (407) – (409).	0.68
5	E-W	8	Topsoil (501) over subsoil (502) over natural (503). Subsoil cut by ditch [506].	0.4

#### Context register

Context	Trench	Description	Interpretation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
101	1	Dark black grey silty topsoil with frequent rooting.	Topsoil	10+	1.9+	0.32
102	1	Moderately compact light grey white chalk with mid orange brown leaching.	Demolition / levelling layer	5.5+	1.9+	0.28
103	1	Mid grey orange silty sand with occasional chalk lumps.	Demolition / levelling layer	5+	1.9+	0.3
104	1	Dark orange grey sandy silt with moderate CBM and chalk lumps.	Demolition / levelling layer	6+	1.9+	0.4
105	1	Mid orange white sandy mortar and stone (limestone) forming degraded material from collapsed wall.	Collapse or demolition of wall	4.2	1.9+	0.35
106	1	Dark orange brown sandy silt.	Demolition / levelling layer	2.1+	1.9+	0.2
107	1	Compact mid orange blue clay abutting eastern edge of wall [109], not fully excavated.	Construction dump, structural clay?	0.55	0.45	0.56
108	1	Mid blue orange brown sandy silt. loose with occasional root disturbance.	Infill of collapsed wall	0.5	1.9+	0.33
109	1	North-South aligned wall. Three courses surviving. Upper course loose broken mortar and worked limestone, middle course solid mid white yellow limestone, lower course roughhewn limestone.	Wall foundation for building	1.90+	1.4	0.7
110	1	Mid brown orange silty sand with moderate chalk, CBM and charcoal lumps. Formed by demolition of wall. lies outside the footprint of the former building.	Demolition layer	1.8	1.9+	0.65
111	1	Mid brown silty-sand with chalk, CBM, and charcoal. Make-up deposit on interior of wall.	Demolition layer	0	1.9+	0.25
112	1	Dark orange brown sandy silt, loose.	Upper fill of ditch [115]	4.1+	1.9+	0.36
113	1	Light brown orange, silty sand, loose.	Middle fill of ditch [115]	4.1+	1.9+	0.3
114	1	Light orange brown, silty sand, loose.	Lower fill of ditch [115]	4.1+	1.9+	0.24
115	1	NE-SW orientated ditch, underlying [109].	Ditch pre-dating 17th Century building	4.1+	1.9+	0.77
116	1	Mid orange yellow sand, loose.	Natural geology	–	–	–
200	2	Dark brown grey silty sand, loose.	Topsoil	6.5+	1.9+	0.16



Context	Trench	Description	Interpretation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
201	2	Pea gravel band in topsoil matrix. Thinner to north, thicker to south. May be feature showing on geophysical survey. Too thin/loose to be a path but may be a layer around path or plants for decoration or weed control. Seals backfill deposit (202).	Levelling layer?	3.9+	1.9+	0.08
202	2	Mid grey brown silty sand. Loose with frequent mixed small stones throughout. Backfill of a large pit [203].	Fill of pit [203]	6.45+	1.9+	0.9
203	2	Large pit filled with a generally sterile material. At its east end it cuts through the demolition stone rubble which is missed in with the buried topsoil. Probably not a quarry pit as it does not cut down to natural, most likely relates to robbing of part of the manor house or related structures.	Robber pit?	6.45+	1.9+	0.9
204	2	Light grey brown with occasional small stones.	Buried topsoil	1.1+	1.9+	0.67
205	2	Light creamy grey silty alluvial layer or subsoil.	Possible alluvium or subsoil	1.5+	1.9+	0.12
206	2	Light brown grey silty sand. Fill of pit [207] not excavated.	Fill of [207]	3.2+	0.9+	Unexc
207	2	Sub-circular in plan. Not excavated.	Cut for pit	3.2+	0.9+	Unexc
208	2	Mid grey brown sandy silt fill of ditch [209] not excavated.	Fill of [209]	1+	0.8	Unexc
209	2	E-W aligned linear not excavated.	Cut for ditch	1+	0.8	Unexc
210	2	Light brown grey silty sand, occasional small gravel and flint. Unexcavated.	Fill of pit [211]	1.9+	2.9	Unexc
211	2	Irregular-shaped feature, possible pit and ditch intercutting or irregular quarry pit?	Cut for pit	1.9+	2.9	Unexc
300	3	Dark brown grey silty sand with frequent pea gravel and occasional demolition debris.	Topsoil	11.25	1.9+	0.36
301	3	Mid brown grey silty sand with moderate pea gravel and occasional small stone.	Demolition deposit or robbing refuse?	1.6	1.9+	0.37
302	3	High frequency of small irregular stone with occasional CBM inclusions in a light grey silty sand matrix directly above wall foundation [305]. Size of stone too small to be part of the wall, may represent the fill of a robbing cut - similar to layer in Trench 1 which was clearly demolition.	Demolition deposit or robbing refuse?	1.38	1.9+	0.37
303	3	Mid brown yellow silty sand with frequent small gravel. Possible levelling layer related to the construction of the manor. Same as (304).	Construction deposit	5.5+	1.9+	0.6
304	3	Mid brown yellow silty sand with frequent small gravel. Possible levelling layer related to the construction of the manor house. Same as (303).	Construction deposit	2.5+	1.9+	0.36
305	3	Cut or worked stone structure set in a sandy lime mortar. West face is vertical, east face has three different faces. Constructed of a mix of limestone, sandstone and a soft stone (mudstone?) All the faces are rough indicating that this is a foundation rather than a wall. Not bottomed. Mix of stone sized forming 5 rough courses with smaller stones filling the gaps between irregular stones. Top course is set back from east edge possibly representing the primary course of the wall.	Wall foundation	1.4	1.9+	0.7+
306	3	Dark brown yellow silty sand with moderate small stones and CBM.	Fill of construction cut for foundation	1.4	1.9+	0.7+
307	3	Vertical cut seen only on east side of wall. Not bottomed. Cut from the top of (308) and (309).	Construction cut for [305]	1.4	1.9+	0.7+
308	3	Light brown grey silty sand with moderate small stones. Same as (309).	Buried topsoil	2+	1.9+	0.55
309	3	Light brown grey silty sand with moderate small stones. Same as (308).	Buried topsoil	3.75+	1.9+	0.82
310	3	Light brown sandy silt very occasional small stones.	Buried subsoil	3.75+	1.9+	0.1
311	3	Mid grey brown sandy-silt. Spread on top of natural. Truncated by [307] and [313].	Undated spread	2.8	1.9+	Unexc
312	3	Mid brown grey silty sand with moderate pea gravel and occasional small stone.	Fill of ditch [313]	1.9+	0.67	Unexc
313	3	N-S orientated ditch. Unexcavated.	Ditch	1.9+	0.67	Unexc
401	4	Dark orange grey silt with frequent root disturbance and occasional small stones.	Topsoil	10+	1.9+	0.34
402	4	Loose light orange grey pea grit forming disuse layer.	Levelling layer?	10+	1.9+	0.06

Context	Trench	Description	Interpretation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
403	4	Mid orange grey silty sand with moderate rooting and occasional small stones. Cut by [411].	Subsoil	4.25+	1.9+	0.23
404	4	Mid grey orange sand with occasional small stones.	Natural geology			
405	4	Compact dark bluish grey clay consolidation deposit to seal in and support outer wall of [406].	Construction packing for pond	1.9+	0.44	0.28
406	4	Curvilinear brick wall forming artificial pond structure. Interlacing brickwork of headers and stretchers. 14 courses visible. outer edge supported by (405), inner faced with lime mortar - partially crumbled half way down.	Wall of fish pond	1.9+	0.32	0.9+
407	4	Loose mid orange brown silty sand with moderate limestone chunks and CBM chunks and occasional small stones. Infills pond.	Backfill material inside pond	2+	1.9+	0.34
408	4	Mid orange brown sandy silt with CBM and limestone chunks and moderate small stones.	Backfill material inside pond	2+	1.9+	0.07
409	4	Dark orange brown clay silt.	Backfill material inside pond	2+	1.9+	0.37
410	4	Mid grey yellow clay sand.	Natural	-	-	-
411	4	Construction cut for pond, not fully exposed.	Construction cut for pond	5+	1.9+	0.9+
501	5	Light brown grey silty sand with very occasional small stones.	Topsoil	8+	1.9+	0.15
502	5	Light brown grey silty sand with moderate small stones and lenses of natural.	Subsoil	8+	1.9+	0.25
503	5	Mid brown orange silty sand with moderate gravel inclusions.	Natural	-	-	-
504	5	Light greyish brown, silty sand, loose with frequent stone and chalk inclusions. Backfill deposit.	Fill of ditch [506]	1.9+	3.75	0.44
505	5	Mid greyish brown, silty sand, loose, disuse deposit.	Fill of ditch [506]	1.9+	2	0.2
506	5	Substantial ditch filled with rubble stone demolition material. Cut from top of subsoil.	Cut of ditch	1.9+	3.75	0.55

## Photographic register

Frame	B&W	Digital	Direction	Description	Frame	B&W	Digital	Direction	Description
1	1/4	-	-	ID shot	15	-	49	S	Trench 3 wall detail - overhead
2	1/3	-	SW	general oblique shot of Trench 1 baulk section	16	-	50	S	Trench 3 wall detail - overhead
3	1/2	-	SE	general oblique shot of Trench 1 baulk section	17	2/32	51	W	Trench 3 looking east with wall
4	1/1	-	-	general shot of central stone wall in Trench 1	18	2/31	52	W	Trench 3 wall detail - east facing
5	2/36	39	-	ID shot	19	-	53	W	Trench 3 wall detail - east facing
6	2/35	40	E	Trench 3 looking east with wall	20	-	54	W	Trench 3 wall detail - east facing
7	-	41	E	Trench 3 looking east with wall	21	-	55	NW	Trench 3 wall detail
8	2/34	42	E	Trench 3 wall detail - west facing	22	-	56	N	Trench 3 wall detail - east facing
9	-	43	E	Trench 3 wall detail - west facing	23	2/30	57	W	Trench 3 wall detail - east facing
10	-	44	E	Trench 3 wall detail - west facing	24	-	58	W	Trench 3 wall detail - east facing
11	2/33	45	S	Trench 3 wall detail - overhead	25	-	59	N	Trench 3 section, south facing, west end
12	-	46	S	Trench 3 wall detail - overhead	26	-	60	N	Trench 3 section south facing east end
13	-	47	S	Trench 3 wall detail - overhead	27	-	61	NW	Trench 3 section
14	-	48	S	Trench 3 wall detail - overhead	28	2/29	62	S	north facing baulk section of trench showing central wall



Frame	B&W	Digital	Direction	Description
29	2/28	63	S	north facing baulk section of trench showing central wall
30	2/27	64	S	north facing baulk section of trench showing central wall
31	—	65	S	north facing baulk section of trench showing central wall
32	2/25	66	W	Trench 1 general shot
33	2/24	67	E	Trench 1 general shot
34	2/23	68	—	Trench 1 general shot of wall
35	—	69	SW	NE facing section of ditch in Trench 1
36	—	70	SW	Trench 2 east facing section
37	—	71	W	Trench 2 section north end
38	—	72	W	Trench 2 section south end
39	—	73	S	Trench 2 general shot

Frame	B&W	Digital	Direction	Description
40	2/22	74	NE	Southwest baulk section of Trench 4
41	2/21	75	NE	Southwest baulk section of Trench 4
42	2/20	76	SE	General shots of Trench 4
43	2/19	77	SE	General shots of Trench 4
44	—	78	NW	close up of interior pond wall
45	—	79	NW	close up of interior pond wall
46	—	80	NW	close up of interior pond wall
47	—	81	—	Trench 5 general shot
48	—	82	—	Ditch across Trench 5
49	—	83	—	Ditch across Trench 5 - section
50	—	84	—	Ditch across Trench 5 - section, oblique angle shot

## APPENDIX 2 FINDS CATALOGUE

Trench	Context	Qty	Weight (g)	Material	Object	Description	Spot Date
1	103	2	34	Glass	Bottle	green wine bottle body sherds, onion bottle	1680–1720
1	103	3	770	CBM	Brick	large sherds, stock moulded, soft red fabric	PM
1	103	2	111	CBM	Roof tile	red fabric sandy with calcaerous inclusions	Medi/PM
3	302	1	85	Iron & Bone	Knife	Near complete knife, missing only its tip. Angle-backed blade, round collar, and whittle tang, hafted into one piece pistol grip ivory handle	17th/18th
4	spoil heap	1	6	Clay Pipe	Bowl	part of bowl, missing base	1690–1750
4	spoil heap	1	46	CBM	Brick	?firebrick, semi-vitrified	PM
4	spoil heap	8	226	Pottery (PM)	PM13	Midland Blackware, one vessel	L16th–17th
4	spoil heap	2	236	Pottery (PM)	PM8	Red Earthenware	M16th–19th
4	spoil heap	2	160	Pottery (Medi)	TLMS18	Late Med Oxidized	M–L15thC
4	spoil heap	1	1	Glass	Window	laminating	PM
4	406	5	10409	CBM	Brick	Sample of five identical complete stock moulded bricks taken from fishpond structure. All within 2mm of the same size, average 211 x 98 x 58mm, average weight 2082g. Red sandy fabric. Two bricks retained for archive.	18th
4	407	2	46	Glass	Bottle	green wine bottle base sherds, onion bottle	1680–1720
4	407	2	55	Pottery (PM)	PM16	Black-glazed Coarseware	L17th–18th
4	408	1	3	Lead	Came	H-shaped profile, used	Medi/PM
4	408	1	13	Pottery (PM)	PM14	Midland Purple	M15th–16th
4	408	3	16	Clay Pipe	Stems	plain stems, wide bore	L.16th/18th
4	408	1	10	Pottery (Medi)	TLMS18	Late Med Oxidized	M–L15thC
4	408	1	4	Glass	Window	laminating	PM
4	409	6	144	Glass	Bottle	green wine bottle base sherds, onion bottle	1690–1720
4	409	2	7	Pottery (Medi)	MS3	Grey Sandy Ware	M11th–L14th
4	409	8	203	Pottery (PM)	PM13	Midland Blackware, one vessel	L16th–17th
4	409	5	270	CBM	Roof tile	peg tiles, red fabric sandy with calcaerous inclusions	Medi/PM
4	409	1	19	Pottery (Medi)	SNC1	St Neots Ware, bowl rim	10th–11th
4	409	1	13	Pottery (Medi)	TLMS18	Late Med Oxidized	M–L15thC
4	409	4	5	Glass	Window	laminating, one right angled corner sherd, cut edges	PM









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