

HERITAGE NETWORK



THE GABLES, FLITTON ROAD Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire

HN992

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

THE GABLES Flitton Road, Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire

Project ref.:HN992
LPA ref.: CB/12/00548/OUT
Accession Number: TBA

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of Mr C. Hawes

by

James Snee BSc AIFA

Report no. 720

May 2012

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The cover illustration shows the proposed development area looking north

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Robin Densem and James Snee. The report text and illustrations were prepared by James Snee and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to the owner of the site, Colin Hawes, and Martin Oake, Archaeology Team, Central Bedfordshire Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	The Gables, Flitton Road, Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire, MK45 5HW		
County:	Bedfordshire	District:	Central Bedfordshire
Village/town:	Pulloxhill	Parish:	Pulloxhill
Planning reference:	CB/12/00548/OUT	NGR:	TL 06498 34217
Client name and address:	Mr C. Hawes, The Gables, Flitton Road, Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire, MK45 5HW		
Nature of work:	Field evaluation	Current land use:	Domestic Garden
Site Status:	None	Reason for investigation:	Development
Position in planning process:	Pre-determination	Project brief originator:	Local authority
Size of affected area:	768m ²	Size of area investigated:	60m ²
Site code:	HN992	Other reference	/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Field evaluation	Archive Recipient:	Luton Museum
Start of work:	29/05/2012	Finish of work:	30/05/2012
Related HER nos:	17013, 10809	Periods represented	Romano-British
OASIS UID:	heritage1-120592	Significant finds:	BRICK, TILE, POT, BONE
Monument types:	DITCH		
Physical archive:	Brick, Tile, Pot, Bone		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In order to advise the determination of a planning application for the development of land at the rear of The Gables, Flitton Road, Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake an archaeological evaluation.

Two trenches were excavated across the site, each trench being located across the footprint of a proposed new building, these representing the areas of greatest impact.

An undated irregular feature recorded in the northeast corner of Trench 1 is likely to have been naturally formed. Cutting this feature was a ditch that contained fragments of Romano-British pottery, brick and tile, although these are well worn and are likely to be residual. This ditch is likely to have formed a post-medieval property boundary, and the presence of brick and tile could indicate a Roman building in the locality.

The presence of the boundary ditch is considered to be of *Low* significance, and the presence of Roman material is considered to be of *Moderate* significance. The impact of the development on the significance of these 'heritage assets' is considered to be *Low*.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Mr C. Hawes, to cover a programme of archaeological work required to advise the determination of a planning application for the development of land at the rear of The Gables, Flitton Road, Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire.

1.2 A planning application for the development (ref: CB/12/00548/OUT) has been submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC). On the advice of the Council's Archaeology Team (AT), and in line with Department of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), further information regarding the impact of the proposals on the historic environment has been requested. The AT indicated that the investigation should take the form of an evaluation by trial trenching within the proposed development area.

1.3 The property is located at the northern end of the village, on the east side of Flitton Road, approximately 65m north of the junction with High Street. The study area lies to the rear of The Gables, centred on NGR TL 06498 34217, and extends north to the rear of The Willows. The site is bounded to the north and east by open fields (Figure 1).

1.4 The site lies just outside the Pulloxhill conservation area, but within the boundary defining the historic core of the village, and a separately defined archaeological area which records a late 17th century 'gold mine'. The AT considers that the site has the potential to preserve archaeological deposits which relate to the origins and development of the village from the prehistoric period onwards.

1.5 The proposed development entails the construction of a new detached dwelling and detached garage, together with associated access, services and landscaping.

2. Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The proposed development lies on the northern end of the Harlington – Pulloxhill clay hills, on the outskirts of Pulloxhill village. The clay hills form an irregular ridge rising from the north-western edge of the Barton-le-Clay clay vale and are characterised by hill top settlement surrounded by open fields (Land Use Consultants 2009). The site lies on fairly level ground at approximately 90mOD.

2.2 Locally the soils belong to the Ashley Association (572q) which are described as “*Fine Loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging, associated with similar but wetter soils. Some calcareous and non-calcareous slowly permeable clayey soils*” (SSEW 1983).

2.3 The underlying geology consists of Gault Formation Mudstone overlain by Lowestoft formation glacial till and outwash (British Geological Society website).

METHODOLOGY

2.4 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and the appropriate IFA and ALGAO guidance documents.

2.5 The trenches were located by triangulation from known points using fibreglass tape measures. All trenches were opened using a tracked excavator fitted with a 0.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts. The trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon, or to the natural geological horizon, as appropriate.

2.6 The trenches were cleaned by hand, and any potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

2.7 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate proforma. Plans were drawn on drafting film at a scale of 1:20, and sections at a scale of 1:10.

RESULTS

2.8 Two trenches were excavated across the footprints of the proposed new buildings (Figure 2). Trench 1 measured approximately 20m long by 2m wide and Trench 2 was 10m long and 2m wide.

Trench 1

2.9 Trench 1 was located across the footprint of the proposed dwelling in the centre of the plot (Figure 2, Plates 1 & 2). It was orientated approximately north to south and measured 20.0m in length, 2.0m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.8m.

Trench 1 data:

Length (m):	20.0	Width (m):	2.0	Maximum Depth (m):	0.80	Orientation	N-S	
Level at N End of Trench (mOD)			Top	89.69	Level at S End of Trench (mOD)		Top	90.32
			Base	89.05			Base	89.84
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)					
			Length	Width	Depth			
-	Layer	10YR 4/1 Dark grey silty sand with frequent stones and rubble.	20	2	0.30			
-	Layer	10YR 2/1 Black sandy silt with moderate stones.	20	2	0.30			
100	Finds	Unstratified finds.	-	-	-			
101	Cut	Linear cut with concave stepped sides and a rounded base, oriented northeast-southwest.	> 2.0	1.60	0.40			
102	Fill	10YR 4/1 Dark grey firm clayey silt with occasional sub-angular flint pebbles.	>2.0	1.60	0.40			
103	Layer	10YR 5/6 Yellowish brown firm, clayey silt with occasional chalk flecks and rounded pebbles.	20	2	0.30			
104	Layer	10YR 5/8 Yellowish brown firm clayey silt with moderate chalk flecks.	20	2	> 0.15			
105	Cut	Irregular cut with gently sloping sides and a rounded base.	-	1.65	0.25			
106	Fill	10YR 5/4 Yellowish brown firm clayey silt with occasional chalk flecks and rounded pebbles.	-	1.65	0.25			

2.10 The stratigraphy in the trench consisted of two layers of yellowish brown subsoil (104) and (103), overlain by a 0.30m thick black sandy silt topsoil layer that had been buried by 0.30m of dark grey silty sand imported topsoil (Figure 3).

2.11 Observed in section at the north end of the trench was an irregular cut feature with sloping sides and a rounded base [105], filled with yellowish brown clayey silt (106). This feature was cut into the upper subsoil deposit (103) (Figure 3, Plate 3).

2.12 Cutting the southern edge of the irregular feature was an approximately northeast-southwest aligned linear cut with concave stepped sides and a rounded base [101]. The fill of the linear comprised dark grey clayey silt (102) and fragments of pottery, tile and brick were recovered during excavation (Figure 3, Plate 3)

Trench 2

2.13 Trench 2 was located in the southwest corner of the development site, across the footprint of the proposed detached garage (Figure 2, Plate 4). It was orientated northeast to southwest and measured 10m in length, 2m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.8m.

Trench 2 data:

Length (m):	10	Width (m):	2	Maximum Depth (m):	0.8	Orientation	NE-SW	
Level at NE End of Trench (mOD)			Top	90.17	Level at SW End of Trench (mOD)		Top	89.93
			Base	89.33			Base	89.14
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)					
			Length	Width	Depth			
-	Layer	10YR 4/1 Dark grey silty sand and rubble.	10	2	0.35			

-	Layer	10YR 2/1 Black sandy silt with occasional pebbles.	10	2	0.30
-	Layer	10YR 5/4 Yellowish brown clayey silt with frequent small chalk pebbles	10	2	0.45
-	Layer	10YR 5/6 Yellowish brown clayey silt with occasional pebbles, iron pan and localised gleying.	10	2	> 0.30

2.14 The stratigraphy in the trench comprised more than 0.30m of yellowish brown subsoil. A patch of localised gleying was observed in the southern corner of the trench, probably caused by a dip in the ground that had been filled with imported topsoil.

2.15 Overlying the subsoil was a further yellowish brown subsoil layer of variable thickness up to 0.45m. This was overlain by up to 0.30m of black sandy silt topsoil, and up to 0.35m of imported topsoil.

2.16 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present in this trench.

FINDS ASSESSMENT

Concordance

Context	Pottery		CBM		Stone		An bone		Flint	
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
100	3	10	10	110	-	-	-	-	2	10
102	2	10	5	240	1	1455	2	35	-	-
TOTAL	5	20	15	350	1	1455	2	35	2	10

Pottery

2.17 A total of 5 sherds of pottery, weighing 20g, were recovered from Trench 1. Two of these, a fragment of undiagnostic greyware, possibly Romano-British, and a small Samian fragment, were unstratified (100). Three undiagnostic greyware sherds of probable Romano-British date, weighing 10g, were recovered from ditch fill (102). All the pottery fragments were abraded with damaged surfaces that suggest that they were not in their primary place of deposition.

CBM

2.18 Fifteen fragments of brick and tile, weighing 350g, were recovered from Trench 1. Ten unstratified and abraded fragments (100) may represent field manuring scatter. Two of these could have been Romano-British in date.

2.19 Of the five pieces of CBM recovered from ditch fill (102), one was a Romano-British brick fragment and two were identified as Romano-British tile. The remaining two fragments were undiagnostic and, although they could be Romano-British in date, they could be later.

Stone

2.20 A single fragment of limestone, weighing 1455g, was collected from fill (102). Although irregular, it possessed a possible curved edge that may suggest that it is a fragment of quern.

Animal Bone

2.21 Two fragments of animal bone, weighing 35g, were recovered from fill (102). These were a fragment of a juvenile cow jaw and a fragment of cow fibula. Neither showed any signs of butchery.

Flint

2.22 Two unstratified flint fragments, weighing 10g, were collected from Trench 1. These were a naturally struck flake and a burnt flint. Neither of these are considered to be of significance.

3. Heritage Asset Assessment

Archaeological Background

3.1 The Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record (HER) lists all documented heritage assets within the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough administrative districts, including evidence of archaeological activity, ranging from chance finds to full-scale excavations. The HER was consulted on 9 May 2012, covering a 500m radius from the site centre.

- The site lies partly within the assumed medieval boundary of the village (HER17013), and to the south of a substantial area of linear and rectilinear earthworks which probably represent an area of shrunken medieval settlement (HER1825). It also lies within the boundary of an archaeological area that defines the general location of a shortlived 'gold mine' dating to 1680 (HER10809), which proved only to be a source 'gold quartz', described as 'flakes of mica in drifted stones in a bed of gravel'. A field c.100m to the north of the site is shown on the Pulloxhill enclosure plan as 'Gold Close'.
- Limited evidence for prehistoric activity has been recorded in the vicinity of the site. This includes a north-south aligned late Neolithic/early Bronze Age ditch investigated in a small-scale excavation at The Chalet, Flitton Road (HER17794), c.135m to the NNW, a probable Bronze Age ring ditch (HER18030) identified on aerial photographs, c.150m to the SSE, and an Iron Age inhumation burial (HER15854) found in fields to the east of Hilltop Cottage, c.360m to the SE.
- Limited evidence for Roman activity has been recorded from the vicinity of the site. The line of a possible Roman road (HER5020) (Viatores no.1706) follows a zig-zag route to the south and west of the village. This has subsequently been re-interpreted as a possible medieval lynchet or hollow way (HER5159).
- No archaeological evidence for Saxon activity has been found in the vicinity of the site. However, as a thriving manor is recorded at Pulloxhill in the Domesday Book of 1086, it is likely that a settlement was established by at least the 10th century AD.
- Areas of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation (HER3322) survive to the south of the village, which have been described as 'representing a sequence of landscape development of considerable interest' (Simco 2003).

3.2 A number of buildings in the village have been listed. Apart from the church, which is Grade II*, all are Grade II.

- The church of St James (HER3767; list no.1138002) was originally built in the early 13th century, but was largely rebuilt in the 1840s.
- The largest group of buildings are of 16th / 17th century date, including Rectory Farmhouse (HER3812; list no.1321706), College Farmhouse (HER3822; list no. 1137982), 5 High Street (HER3816; list no.1321707), 22 High Street (HER7339; list no.1138014), Anfield Cottage (HER4991; list no.1113938), The Grange (HER3814;

list no.1138009), Pond Farmhouse (HER3818; list no.1113939) and the Cross Keys Public House (HER3819; list no.1138022).

- Town Farmhouse (HER3821; list no. 1138056) is of 17th/18th century date and Vine Cottage (HER3820; list no.113908) is of 18th century date. The Chequers Public House is of late 18th century date (HER3813; list entry no. 1113937).

Research aims

3.3 The aims of the investigation have been to establish the location, depth, extent, date, character and condition of any remains that could be threatened by the development, to consider the local and regional archaeological and historical context of such remains, and their significance and quality, in relation to the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Oake et al 2007, Medlycott & Brown 2008, Medlycott 2011), and to provide sufficient information to ensure that an appropriate strategy for the mitigation of damage or destruction of such remains by the development could be adopted.

3.4 On the basis of the known archaeological potential of the site, as extrapolated from the HER, it was considered that archaeological investigation of the site had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of:

- the relationship between the location of Neolithic and early Bronze Age monuments and the landscape, the reconstruction of the environment and ecology of the period, the identification and investigation of settlement sites, and the closer dating of local ceramic series;
- use of the Iron Age landscape beyond the river valleys;
- early medieval settlement, the agrarian economy and land use changes;
- the origin and development of medieval villages in Bedfordshire;
- the development of rural settlement in the county in the post-medieval period.

Collected Data

3.5 An undated irregular feature was recorded in the northeast corner of Trench 1, which is likely to be a naturally formed feature. Cutting this feature was a ditch which contained fragments of Romano-British pottery brick and tile, although these are well worn and are likely to be residual. This ditch may represent a property boundary, and the presence of brick and tile could indicate a building in the vicinity.

3.6 No features, deposits or artefacts were identified in Trench 2.

Significance of Identified Heritage Assets

3.7 Despite the identified potential of the site, no evidence of prehistoric or medieval activity was revealed during the investigation.

3.8 Two potential archaeological features were identified and investigated in the course of the evaluation, both occurring in Trench 1. One of these was irregular and appeared to be natural in origin. Its significance is, therefore, considered to be *Negligible*. The other may

form a property boundary, which appears to align with buildings and boundaries shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1882 (Figure 2), though it included abraded material which is Roman in origin, but likely to originate elsewhere. Land divisions and boundary ditches are common features and this one is likely to be associated with the activity of College Farm, which, on the basis of the listing of the farmhouse, dates to at least the 16th century. It is considered to be of local interest only and hence its significance is *Low*.

3.9 The presence of Roman pottery and building material in the fill of the ditch may suggest Roman building activity in the vicinity. No definitive Roman activity has been recorded on the HER within a 1km radius of the site, although it is not uncommon over a wider area. The presence of this material is, therefore, of regional interest and its significance may be considered to be *Moderate*.

Impact of Development

3.10 The present development will involve the excavation of strip footings to a depth of c.1.00m, the excavation of services to a lesser depth, and surfacing works to provide access. On the basis of the results of the evaluation, and of the assessment of the significance of the recorded archaeological features and deposits, the impact of the development of the present site on the significance of the identified heritage assets is considered to be *Low*.

Confidence Rating

3.11 In the course of the fieldwork the weather, ground and light conditions were acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation.

3.12 There are no circumstances that would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than *High*.

4. Bibliography

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5. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Site Layout

Figure 3 Trench 1: Plan and Section

Plate 1 Trench 1, looking north

Plate 2 Trench 1, looking south

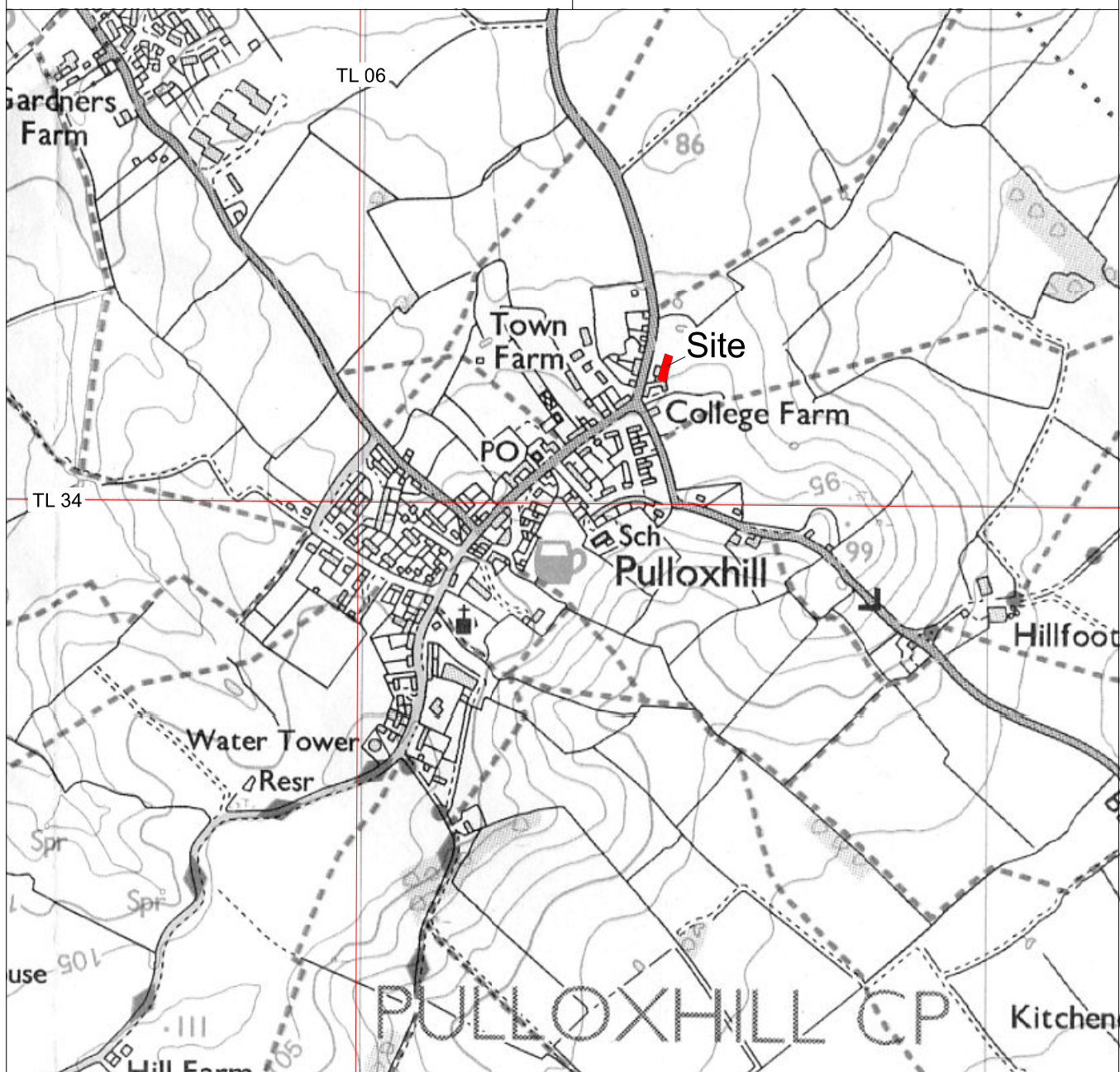
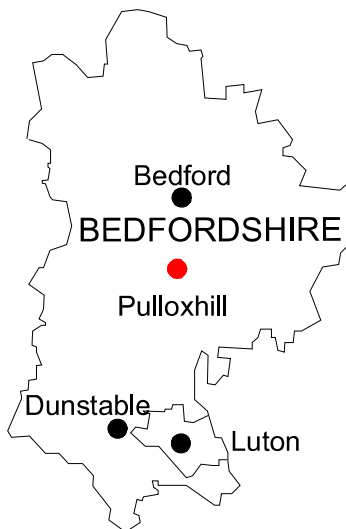
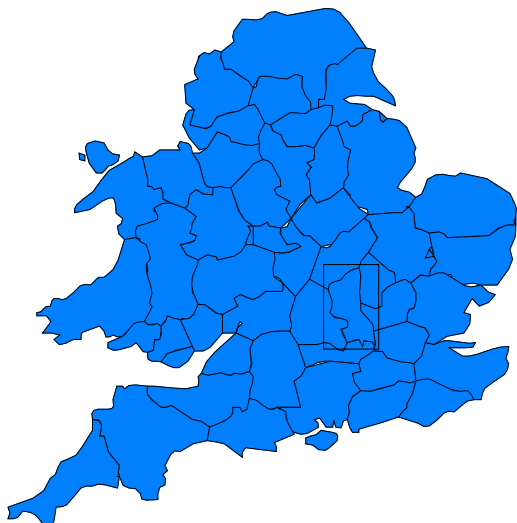
Plate 3 Ditch [101], looking northeast

Plate 4 Trench 2, looking southwest

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The Gables, Flitton Road,
Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire

HN992



Site Location

Scale 1:10000

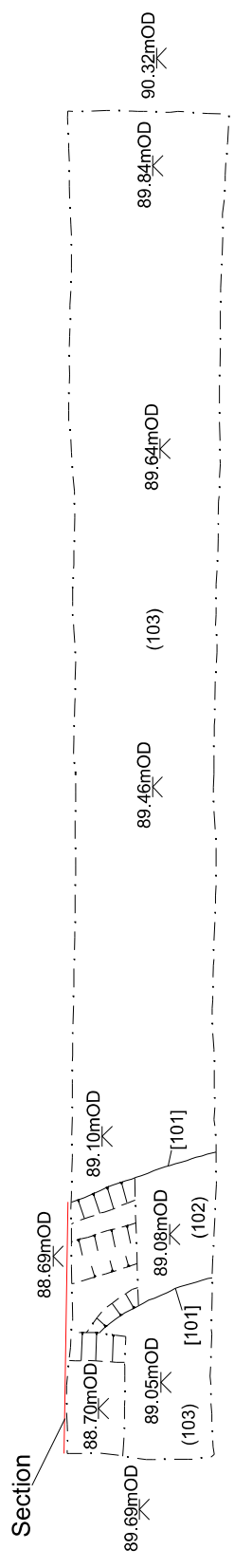


Site Layout

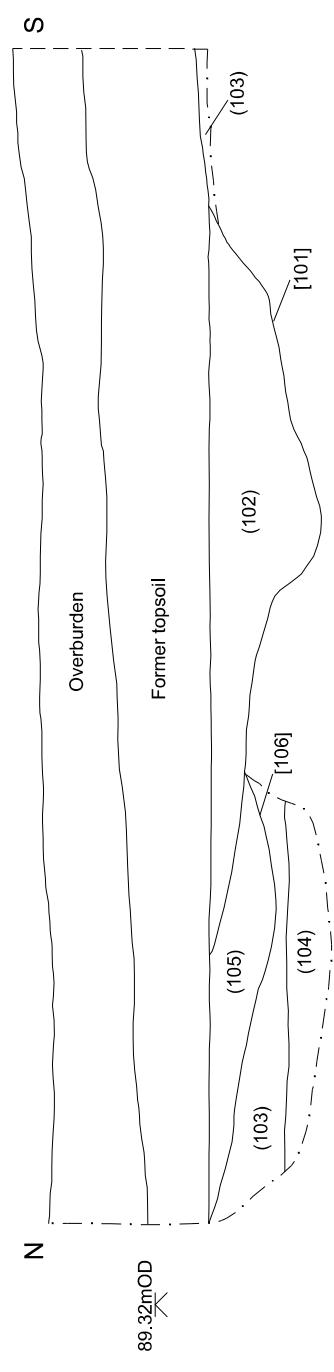
(Overlaid with tracing from OS 1st edition 1882)

Scale 1:500

Figure 2



Trench 1 (1:75)



Section (1:20)



The Gables, Flitton Road,
Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire

HN992 Figure 3

Trench 1: plan and section



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north.



Plate 2: Trench 1, looking south.



Plate 3: Ditch [101], looking northeast.



Plate 4: Trench 2, looking southwest.

Appendix 1

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

<i>OASIS ID: heritage1-124692</i>	
Project details	
Project name	Pulloxhill, The Gables, Flitton Road
Short description of the project	<p>In order to advise the determination of a planning application for the development of land at the rear of The Gables, Flitton Road, Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake an archaeological evaluation.</p> <p>Two trenches were excavated across the site, each trench being located across the footprint of a proposed new building, these representing the areas of greatest impact.</p> <p>An undated irregular feature recorded in the northeast corner of Trench 1 is likely to have been naturally formed. Cutting this feature was a ditch that contained fragments of Romano-British pottery, brick and tile, although these are well worn and are likely to be residual. This ditch is likely to have formed a post-medieval property boundary, but the presence of brick and tile could indicate a Roman building in the locality.</p> <p>The presence of the boundary ditch is considered to be of <u>Low</u> significance, and the presence of Roman material is considered to be of <u>Moderate</u> significance. The impact of the development on the significance of these 'heritage assets' is considered to be <u>Low</u>.</p>
Project dates	Start: 29-05-2012 End: 30-05-2012
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN992 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Monument type	DITCH Post-Medieval
Significant Finds	POT Roman
Significant Finds	BRICK Roman
Significant Finds	TILE Roman
Significant Finds	TILE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BONE Uncertain
Methods	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	Pre-application
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE MID BEDFORDSHIRE PULLOXHILL The Gables, Flitton Road
Postcode	MK45 5HW
Study area	768.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	L 06498 34217 51 0 51 59 44 N 000 26 55 W Point

Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Heritage Network
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	James Snee
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Diary","Drawing","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	THE GABLES Flitton Road, Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Snee, J.
Other bibliographic details	Heritage Network Report No: 716
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth Garden City
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 12 pages, 3 figures, 4 plates