

**PARK FARM, THE RYE
EATON BRAY, BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING

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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible within the terms of the specification. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

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1.0	12 April 2007	n/a

Structure of the report

After an introduction to the project in Section 1, the results of the trial trenching are presented in Section 2 followed by a summary in Section 3. Section 4 comprises a bibliography. Detailed context descriptions for the trial trenches are included in Section 5 as an appendix.

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BCC	Bedfordshire County Council
CAO	County Archaeological Officer
HER	Historic Environment Record
HES	Bedfordshire County Council Heritage and Environment Service
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority



Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by E. M. French and Son and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Lesley-Ann Mather and Martin Oake of Bedfordshire County Council Heritage and Environment Service.

This report was prepared by Robert Wardill with illustrations by Joan Lightning.



Non-Technical Summary

The excavation of two archaeological trial trenches was carried out by Albion Archaeology at the site of a proposed extension to an existing fishpond at Park Farm, The Rye, Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire.

The results of the trenching demonstrated that there were archaeological remains present within the proposed development area. However, these remains appear to comprise agricultural features of post-medieval date and therefore likely to be of limited archaeological significance.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Planning permission was granted by Bedford Borough Council for the extension of an existing fishing lake at Park Farm, The Rye, Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire (Planning application no. 03/1006). Because the site of the proposed development lay close to known important archaeological remains, the LPA's archaeological advisors, the HES, recommended a condition be attached to the planning permission requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation.

The HES issued a brief (BCC 2006a), outlining the following staged approach to the archaeological work:

- Stage I – field evaluation.
- Stage II – appraisal of the results of the field evaluation.
- Stage III – further archaeological investigation and recording (if required as a result of Stages I and II).

The HES issued a further brief for the Stage I field evaluation (BCC 2006b) and this document confirmed the requirement for trial trenching at the site.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by E. M. French & Son to undertake the trial trenching and this was carried out during February 2007.

1.2 Site Location and Description

Park Farm lies approximately 0.8km east of the village of Eaton Bray, on the southern side of the River Ouzel valley (Fig. 1). The proposed fishing lake extension comprises approximately 2000m² of land located to the south-east of the farm house and outbuildings (centred on OS Grid Ref. SP96252/21034) and abutting the eastern side of the existing fishing lake.

The geology of the area comprises Gault Clay with the landscape of the area being essentially flat at a height of around 90m OD.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The land around Park Farm contains a number of medieval settlement and landscape features. These include a moated site set in the eastern part of a contemporary Deer Park and some fishponds (HER 531). The moat, parts of the Deer Park and ponds are Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SM24418).

The moated site was constructed in 1221 by William de Cantilowe. It was a manorial settlement and an Inquisition of 1274 provides evidence of the extensive range of buildings the site contained at that time. A significant amount of rebuilding took place in the 17th century and the island was still occupied in the 18th century. However the site was deserted by the 19th century.



Previous archaeological work at Park Farm includes two watching briefs that were carried out during the construction of a ménage, and the extension of another fishpond to the south of the present proposed development area. No archaeological deposits were found during either of these investigations.

1.4 Project Objectives

The primary aim of the trial trenching was to establish whether archaeological deposits were present at the site. If deposits were found then the trial trenching would endeavour to determine the following:

- their position, extent, nature, date and significance
- their integrity and state of preservation.

This data would be used to formulate an appropriate mitigation strategy, if necessary.



2 TRIAL TRENCHING

2.1 Methodology

In accordance with the requirements of the HES brief, a Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2006) was prepared for the works and subsequently approved by the HES. This document detailed the methodologies and procedures that would be followed during the course of the project.

The works comprised the excavation of two trenches, each measuring 30m x 1.6m (Fig. 1). This equated to 93m² of excavation area which amounted to approximately 4.5% of the proposed development area.

Topsoil and overburden were removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged ditching bucket, operated by an experienced driver under the supervision of an archaeologist. All subsequent archaeological excavation and recording was carried out by Albion Archaeology staff.

Throughout the project the standards set out in the following were adhered to:

- IFA *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation*
- IFA Code of Conduct
- Albion Archaeology *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork and the Analysis of Fieldwork Records* (2001)
- English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991)

All archaeological deposits and features were assigned an individual number (context). Within this report, numbers in brackets refer to these contexts. Cut features (*i.e.* pits, ditches *etc.*) are expressed [**], layers and deposits within cut features are expressed (**).

2.2 Results

The depth and nature of overburden was consistent across the site. It comprised a layer of topsoil and turf around 0.20m thick overlying a mixed deposit of grey clay and topsoil, 0.20m-0.30m thick, which in turn sealed a layer of buried topsoil 0.15m-0.20m thick. No subsoil ('B' horizon) was present.

It is understood that this sequence of layers is the result of the excavation / enlargement of the nearby fishpond in recent times, with the middle mixed deposit being the dumped excavated material (P. French pers. comm.).

The natural geology of the area was found to comprise yellow/grey clay interspersed with patches of gravel.

A single narrow ditch [105/107] measuring around 0.50m wide was found running along most of the length of Trench 1 (Fig. 2). It was investigated in two locations and found to be approximately 0.10m deep. The fill (106/108) comprised pale brown silty clay within which were found several large fragments of red brick.



At the north-western end of Trench 2 a large feature [207] was encountered, partially exposed within the trench and extending beyond its limits. Its upper fill (204) comprised a mix of light grey clay and brick and tile rubble. The layers beneath (204) comprised grey/blue silty clays with a distinctive odour indicative of waterlogged decaying organic matter. Brick and tile pieces were also found in the uppermost (205) of these clay layers. An attempt was made to establish the depth of this feature by machine excavation but at around 1.5m below surface level the excavation was halted due to flooding.



3 CONCLUSION

The linear feature found in Trench 1 appears likely to have been a small drainage ditch and/or boundary feature probably of post-medieval date. The large feature in Trench 2 contained deposits that appear to have been laid down naturally, within a watery environment. This together with the size of the feature suggests that it is likely to represent part of a large pond. Finds evidence from its silty clay fills suggests it was still in existence in some form in the post-medieval period, with its final upper fill representing a deliberate episode of infilling and levelling.

The results of the trial trenching demonstrate that there are archaeological remains present within the proposed development area. However, these remains appear to comprise agricultural features of post-medieval date and are therefore likely to be of limited archaeological significance.



4 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albion Archaeology 2006 *Park Farm, Northall Road, Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire
Project Design for Archaeological Field Evaluation*
- Bedfordshire 2006a *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological
County Council Investigation on Land at Park Farm, Northall Road,
(BCC) Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire.*
- Bedfordshire 2006b *Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation of Land
County Council at Park Farm, Northall Road, Eaton Bray,
(BCC) Bedfordshire.*



5 APPENDIX: TRENCH SUMMARY



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.6 m. Max: 0.6 m.

OS Co-ordinates:

OS Ref.:	Easting:	Northing:
	49622676	22102418
	49625682	22102418

Reason: Evaluate archaeological potential of area

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
101	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Dump material	Plastic light grey clay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Buried topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Natural	Firm light yellow grey clay occasional small chalk, moderate small stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Ditch	Linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.5m, max depth 0.1m, min length 1.1m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Fill	Firm light brown silty clay occasional large ceramic building material, occasional small chalk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Ditch	Linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.6m, max depth 0.1m, min length 1.05m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108	Fill	Firm light brown silty clay occasional large ceramic building material, occasional small chalk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.68 m. Max: 0.68 m.

OS Co-ordinates:

OS Ref.:	Easting:	Northing:
	49624406	22106546
	49625702	22103841

Reason: Evaluate archaeological potential of area

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
201	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Dump material	Plastic light grey clay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
203	Buried topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
207	Pond	Linear NW-SE profile: concave dimensions: min breadth 1.6m, min depth 0.7m, min length 5.7m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
204	Upper fill	Plastic mid grey clay frequent large ceramic building material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
205	Fill	Firm dark grey blue silty clay occasional large ceramic building material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
206	Lower fill	Firm light blue silty clay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
208	Natural	Firm light yellow grey clay occasional small chalk, moderate small stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

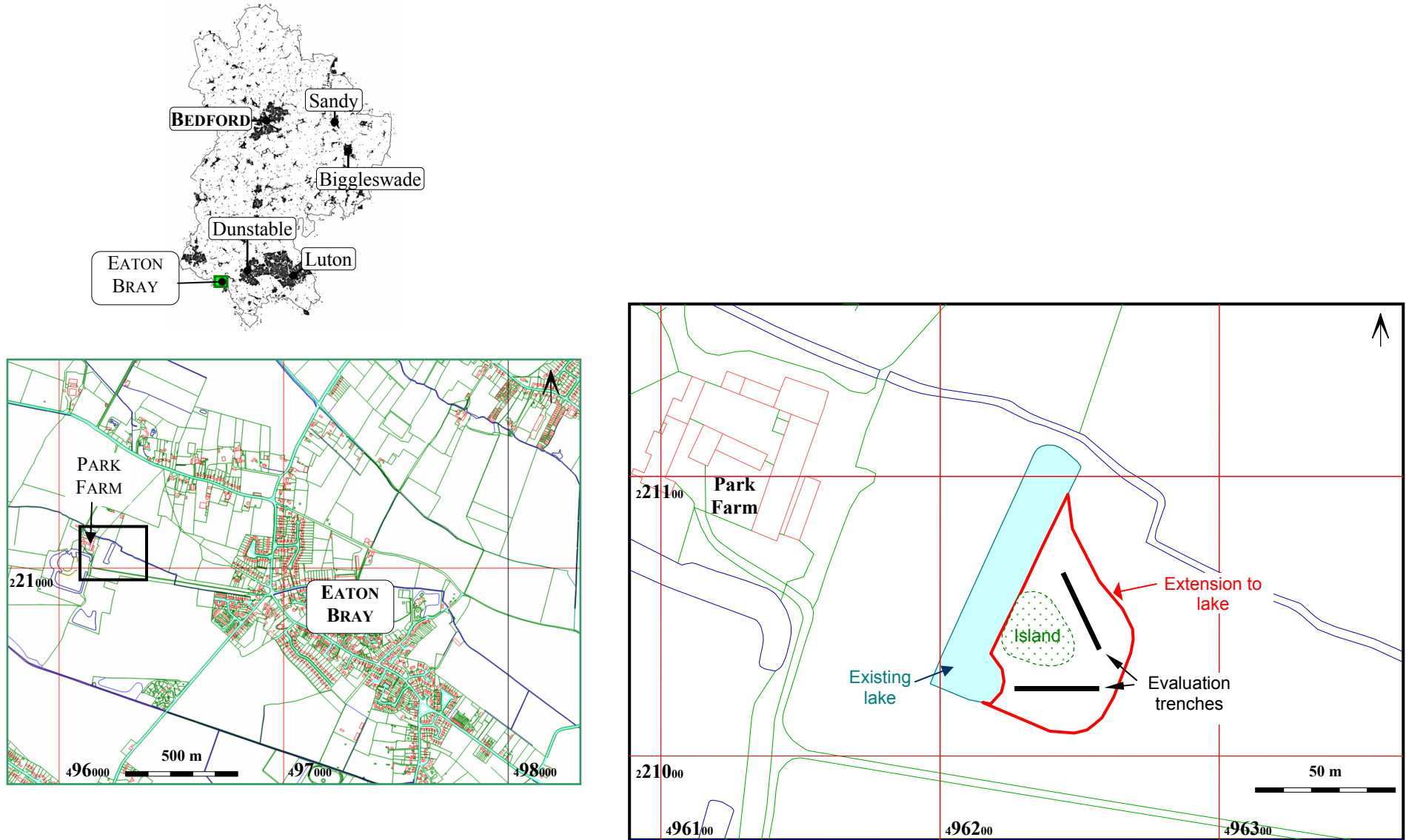


Figure 1: Location of site

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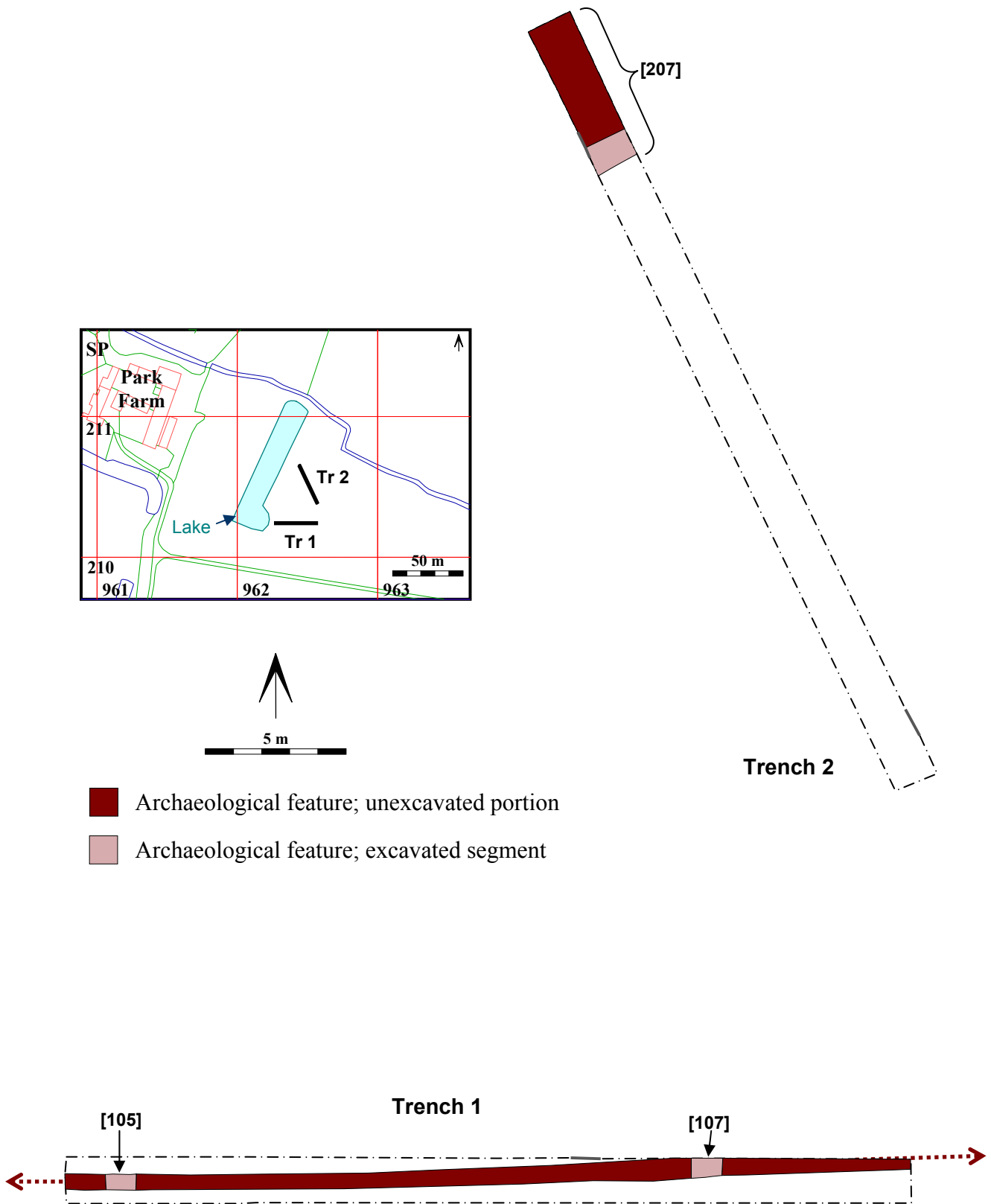


Figure 2: Plan of trial trenches