#### MANOR FARM, 29 CHURCH ROAD BRAMPTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

#### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION**

Project ref: MFB 1238 CHER event no. ECB 2488

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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	30th March 2007	n/a

#### Structure of the report

After an introduction to the evaluation in section one, this report presents a summary of the results of the trial excavation in section two. A synthesis of the results and their significance is presented in section three. Summary details from the evaluation trenches are presented in Appendix 1.

### Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CAPCA	Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning & Countryside				
	Advice office				
CCC	Cambridgeshire County Council				
CHER	Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment				
	Record				
Client	Yelcon Ltd				
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists				
LPA	Local Planning Authority				



## Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Project and Total Management on behalf of Yelcon Ltd, and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Kasia Gdaniec of Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice office.

This report was prepared by Victoria Osborn, with contributions from Jackie Wells (finds), Joan Lightning (illustrations) and Mark Phillips (environmental).



## Non-Technical Summary

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Yelcon Ltd to carry out the archaeological evaluation of c.2754m<sup>2</sup> of land proposed as the site of a residential development at Manor Farm, Brampton Cambridgeshire. The site is located in the historic core of the village, 100m to the south of the medieval parish church of St Mary Magdalene, and adjacent to a series of ponds and water channels probably dating to the medieval period.

The results of the evaluation indicated the presence of past human activity of possible medieval or post-medieval date located towards the far north of the proposed development area. To the centre of the site, large, deep but undated features possibly representing further medieval ponds were found.

Subsoil ('B' horizon) deposits were found only in the north of the site, indicating the potential for good preservation of archaeological remains in this area. Elsewhere, overburden comprised levelling and demolition deposits of modern rubbish and building rubble up to 0.70m thick.

The greatest impact from any proposed construction works on archaeological remains was concluded to be most likely in the north of the development area, where remains associated with settlement activity was identified beneath intact protective subsoil deposits.

# 1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Introduction

Planning consent (0503875FUL) was granted by Huntingdon District Council for the construction of 14 dwellings on the site of Manor Farm, 29 Church Road, Brampton. Because of the archaeological potential of the site, the LPA attached a condition to the consent requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological works. The LPA's archaeological advisors, the CAPCA, issued a Design Brief (CAPCA 2007), outlining an initial phase of investigation that was to comprise evaluation by trial trenching.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Yelcon Ltd to carry out the evaluation, and in accordance with the CAPCA Brief, a Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2007) for the works was prepared and subsequently approved by CAPCA. The fieldwork was carried out between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 22nd February 2007.

### 1.2 Site Location and Description

Brampton lies approximately 2km to the south-west of Huntingdon (Fig. 1), with Manor Farm being situated to the east of Church Road, at its junction with Buckden Road and the High Street.

The site itself lies at a height of around 10m above Ordnance Datum and comprises  $c.2754m^2$  of land centred on Ordnance Survey grid co-ordinate TL21443 70604. To the east is open farmland and immediately to the south is Brampton Brook which flows into the River Great Ouse to the east.

The geology of the area is described as river terrace gravels. During the trial trenching, this material was found to comprise an orange brown sandy clay with pockets of fine sandy gravel.

At the time of the evaluation, the proposed development area was occupied by an assortment of redundant, standing farm buildings including barns, sheds and a house.

# 1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site lies within the historic core of Brampton village and there is evidence for its settlement in the medieval period both historically, with Brampton being mentioned in The Domesday survey of 1086, and in the landscape surrounding the village.

Approximately 100m to the north is the medieval parish church of St Mary (CHER 02706), the chancel of which is dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. To the east of the village are the remains of a fragmented agricultural medieval landscape of ridge and furrow (CHER 07690), strip lynchets (CHER 02746) and a windmill (CHER 02555).

Immediately to the east of the site, there is cartographic and topographic evidence for the presence of a series of ponds and related channels (CHER 02653) dating to

the medieval period. An archaeological evaluation, at St Mary's Church/ Black Bull pub (CHER CB14753), 100m to the north of the site, revealed further evidence of possible medieval occupation in the form of a number of pits.

Later medieval or post-medieval activity is substantial, and marks a period of growth in the village with the construction of a number of houses along the High Street which are still standing today. Most are dated to the mid  $17^{\text{th}} - 19^{\text{th}}$  centuries, however, a  $16^{\text{th}}$  century Grade II listed building is located immediately to the north of the site at 27 Church Road.

Archaeological evidence for human activity in the area before the medieval period is limited. A watching brief (CHER ECB1248) at the Old Rectory to the north west of the site produced pieces of flint, while a Roman quern fragment was found in Brampton High Street (CHER 00952).

## 1.4 Project Objectives

The principal objective of the evaluation was to determine whether archaeological remains were present at the site and, if so, to define their extent, condition, nature and significance.

Particular attention was paid to determining the amount of truncation that might affect any remains, and whether palaeosols or 'B' horizons were present.

The evaluation also aimed to determine what impact the proposed development would have on any remains present.

# 2. FIELDWORK

#### 2.1 Methodology

A total of 4 trial trenches (Fig. 1) were excavated and recorded. They varied in length from 10m to 34.25m and were located as far as possible to provide even coverage across the proposed development area. The results of the trenching are summarised below and full details are contained in Appendix 1.

Throughout the project the standards set out in the IFA's *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation* were adhered to as well as Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork and the Analysis of Fieldwork Records* (2001), and English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1992).

All archaeological and geological deposits (contexts) were assigned an individual number in a single sequence. Numbers in brackets within the text refer to the context numbers issued on site. Within this report context numbers referring to cut features are expressed as [\*\*], and layers or deposits within cut features are expressed as (\*\*). Each trench was assigned a block of numbers corresponding to the trench number it was from. For example, in Trench 1 the natural stratum was recorded as context (102) and in Trench 2 as (202) *etc.* Context [105] identifies a gully in Trench 1. All contexts assigned during the investigation are listed by trench in Appendix 1. The trenches were inspected by the CAPCA monitoring officer prior to being backfilled.

### 2.2 Results

#### 2.2.1 Overburden

Topsoil deposits were generally thin and uniform across the site consisting of a friable, dark brown, sandy clay between 0.08m and 0.16m thick.

Subsoil ('B' horizon) deposits comprised a friable, orange brown sandy clay between 0.26m and 0.40m thick. They were found only in the north of the site, in Trenches 1 (101), and 2 (202), and were thicker in Trench 1 (Fig. 2).

A 0.31m thick makeup/dumping layer was recorded in Trench 2 (201) between the topsoil and subsoil. It contained modern ceramics and is probably associated with modern building activity relating to the farm.

Trenches 3 and 4 did not contain any subsoil (Figs 3 and 4). In Trench 3 the overburden was 0.70m thick and made up of a series of layers of brick rubble (300), and gravels (301), acting as a farmyard surface and makeup layer respectively, below which was a consolidating layer of gravels and brick rubble (302). The northern extent of (302) was revealed in the southern end of Trench 2 as layer (205).

In Trench 4, beneath the topsoil, was a 0.15m thick levelling layer of gravel and brick rubble (401). Below this was a 0.07m layer of rubble (402) associated with the demolition of the brick wall described below.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3) contained a small brick covered drain [304] which was probably connected to the down pipe seen on the north-facing wall of the adjacent derelict farm building. To the west of the drain, modern metal pipes associated with the old farmhouse services were uncovered, along with a small pit containing refuse dating to the  $19^{\text{th}}/20^{\text{th}}$  centuries, and a partially rotten and truncated wooden post [314] which was also probably of a similar date.

In Trench 4 (Fig. 4) were the remains of a modern brick wall (405)/(408) which was on the same alignment with the nearby derelict outbuilding and possibly represents the remains of associated courtyard walls.

### 2.2.3 Archaeological Features

Trench 1 (Fig. 2) contained one pit [103], a ditch [105] and a gully [107]. The pit was asymmetrical in profile with an uneven base. It was substantial in size, measuring 1.35m wide and 0.66m deep and contained a friable orange brown sandy clay fill (104) in a series of lenses. Finds recovered from this feature include a small piece of brick or roof tile likely to date to the late medieval or post-medieval periods. To the east, aligned north – south, was a narrow gully [107]. It was 0.42m wide and 0.17m deep, and was filled with a similar fill to (104). No finds were recovered from this feature.

At the eastern end of the trench, a deeper ditch [105] was uncovered. The ditch was aligned north – south and had an asymmetrical profile with a concave base. It was 1.13m wide and 0.69m deep. It was filled with friable, sandy clay with frequent sand lensing, similar to the fills of features [103] and [107]. One piece of worked flint was recovered from the excavated portion of this feature.

Extending out of the western edge of Trench 2 (Fig. 2) was what appeared to be a partially exposed pit feature [206]. It was similar in profile to pit [103] in Trench 1, having an asymmetrical profile and concave base. It was 1.25m wide and excavated to a depth of 0.33m deep before it became impossible to dig. It was filled with friable orange brown sandy clay (207) which was similar to the fills in the features in trench one. No finds were recovered from the excavated portion of this feature.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3) contained two large features, [310] and [312], and a ditch [318]. Features [310] and [312] were cut into the natural sand (322) with their limits extending beyond the edge of the trench and therefore indeterminable. The sides of both these features were similarly irregular and the fills, (308), (309) and (313) were also comparable, comprising grey sandy silt, containing frequent small charcoal fragments and smelling strongly of decaying organic matter. Samples taken from these deposits yielded a variety of artefactual evidence indicative of waterlogged conditions within an agricultural environment. The excavated segment of feature [310] yielded an animal bone and one piece of worked flint. Two machine sondages were excavated through the fills of [312]. The deepest at the western end of the trench encountered undisturbed geological deposits at a depth of 1.50m below ground level. The second sondage was located towards the eastern edge of the feature and was halted at a depth of 1.20m below ground level. In this investigation a lower fill (311) comprising grey brown sand was uncovered below fill (309). No finds were recovered from of the fills of feature [312].

The ditch [318] is cut into the upper fill (313) of feature [312]. The ditch was aligned north – south and had an asymmetrical profile and flat base and was filled by two deposits. The primary fill (319) was dark brown sand containing frequent charcoal fragments. The upper fill (320) was dark grey sandy silt which also contained charcoal fragments. No finds were recovered from either fill.

No features of archaeological interest were found within Trench 4.

# 2.3 Artefact Assemblage

#### 2.3.1 Introduction

The evaluation produced a small finds assemblage comprising pottery, building material, worked flint and animal bone (Table 1). The material was scanned to ascertain its nature, condition and, where possible, date range. No artefacts were recovered from Trenches 2 or 4.

Trench	Feature	Туре	Context	Finds Summary	
01	103	Pit	104	Pottery (10g); animal bone (40g);	
				brick or tile fragment (28g); worked flint (2g)	
	105	Ditch	106	Worked flint (2g)	
03	310	Pond	308	Animal bone (5g); worked flint (4g)	

Table 1: Artefact summary by trench and feature

### 2.3.2 Ceramics

Two undiagnostic, unabraded pottery sherds (10g) were recovered from the main fill of pit [103]. One is a shell tempered sherd of developed St Neots ware and the second is a hard fired oxidised sand tempered sherd. Both are of probable local manufacture and are datable to the early medieval period (*c*. AD1150-1250). The feature also contained a small piece of brick or roof tile (28g), likely to date to the late medieval or post-medieval periods.

## 2.3.3 Worked flint

Three worked flint flakes weighing 8g were recovered. One has suffered extensive edge damage and is totally patinated. A second has a number of small flake or blade removals and is partially patinated. All occur as residual finds in features of later date.

### 2.3.4 Animal bone

Six animal bone fragments (45g) were recovered, the majority deriving from the fill of pit [103]. Although small, the pieces survive in good condition. Diagnostic elements are long bone, rib and tooth fragments, the latter deriving from a sheep or goat.

### 2.4 Environmental Samples

Two samples were taken for assessment of environmental potential. Each 10 litre sample was processed by bulk flotation in a peroxide solution, with flots taken on

a 300 micron meshed sieve. The residues were then passed through a 5.6mm, 2.0mm and 1.0mm sieve stack. The 5.6mm residues were sorted for artefacts and ecofacts, while the 2.0mm and 1.0mm residues were retained unsorted. The flot was scanned and the results summarised in Table 2.

Sample 1 contained a significant proportion of charred grain remains. The assemblage consists of mixture of different taxa, suggesting that it represents general waste rather than crop processing residue. The residue contains small amounts of occupation debris, e.g. animal bone and fired clay.

Sample 2 contained a small quantity of charred grain. The majority of the material collected with the flot consists of organic material preserved by anaerobic waterlogged conditions. However the majority of this comprises small wood fragments with a small amount of other plant macrofossils e.g. bramble stem and one seed. The material recovered from the residue again includes small amounts of occupation debris.

Sample	Context- Feature	Summary contents of flot	Summary of contents of 5.6mm residue
1	(308) [310]	Grain c.20, seeds 1, snails 5, wood charcoal c.10	Animal bone 5, wood charcoal 1, fired clay 1
2	(309) [312]	Grain 4, waterlogged wood fragments and occasional plant remains	Animal bone 3, wood charcoal 1, fired clay 2, cinder-fuel waste 5

 Table 2: Summary of Environmental Samples

# 3. SYNTHESIS

#### 3.1 Discussion

The group of features found to the north of the site in Trenches 1 and 2 share some characteristics. There was similarity in the profiles of pits [103] and [206] and the fills of all these features comprised a friable orange brown sandy clay fill deposited in a series of lenses. Although dating evidence was only recovered from one of these features, dating it to the medieval or post-medieval periods, the similarities and close grouping of these features suggests they probably all date to the same period.

The results of the evaluation indicate that the ground sloped down from the north of the site towards Trench 3 and rose up again in the vicinity of Trench 4. In this area there was evidence for considerable artificial infilling to raise the level of the ground in the years prior to the construction of the farm buildings. Within the central part of the site was evidence for very large features containing silty, homogenous deposits, rich in organic material indicative of the presence at some time in the past of standing or slow moving water. Given the closeness of the nearby Brampton Brook, it is possible that the material in these features represents the deposits of the natural flooding of low lying, undulating land. However, their proximity to known medieval ponds (see 1.3 above) suggests that they may also be artificial creations, possibly of medieval date, associated with farming and/or water management. It should be noted however that no dating evidence was recovered from their fills

### 3.2 Conclusion

The results of the evaluation indicate past human activity of possibly medieval or post-medieval date present towards the far north of the proposed development area. This may be a continuation of the activity identified during archaeological works carried out to the north of the site (see 1.3 above). Towards the centre of the site, large, deep but undated features possibly representing medieval ponds were found.

Overall, the archaeological remains found at the site appear to be of local interest rather than of regional or national significance.

Subsoil ('B' horizon) deposits were found only in the north of the site, indicating the potential for good preservation of archaeological remains in this area. Elsewhere, overburden comprised levelling and demolition deposits of modern rubbish and building rubble up to 0.70m thick.

The greatest impact from any proposed construction works on archaeological remains is therefore likely to be in the north of the development area, where remains associated with settlement activity was identified, beneath intact protective subsoil deposits.

CAPCA	2007	Brief for Archaeological Evaluation: Manor Farm, 29 Church Road, Brampton
Albion Archaeology	2007	Manor Farm, 29 Church Road, Brampton, Cambridgeshire: Project Design for Archaeological Field Evaluation

107

108

Gulley

Main fill

	-ordinates:	Length: 10.00 m. Width: 1.50 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.	0.38 m. Max: 0.64 m.	
Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds Presen	t:
100	Topsoil	Friable dark orange brown sandy clay Deposit is 0.16m thick.		
101	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown sandy clay occasional small-medium stones Deposit 0.40m thick, and contained frequent rooting.	t is 🔽	
102	Natural	Friable mid brown orange sandy clay		
103	Pit	Assymetrical N-S profile: concave base: uneven dimensions: max breadth 1.351 max depth 0.66m	m, 🔽	
104	Main fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy clay occasional small stones Deposit contained frequent rooting and moderate sand lenses.		
105	Ditch	Linear N-S profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.13m, ma depth 0.69m	ax 🗸	
106	Main fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy clay occasional small-medium stones		

Linear N-S profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.42m, max depth 0.17m

Friable mid orange brown sandy clay occasional small stones

 $\checkmark$ 

 $\checkmark$ 

 $\square$ 

Trench:2Max Dimensions:Length:21.00 m.Width:1.50 m.Depth to Archaeology Min:0.46 m.Max:0.52 m.OS Co-ordinates:Ref. 1:TL2146570334Ref. 2:TL2145870614Reason:To identify any archaeological features.To identify any archaeological features.

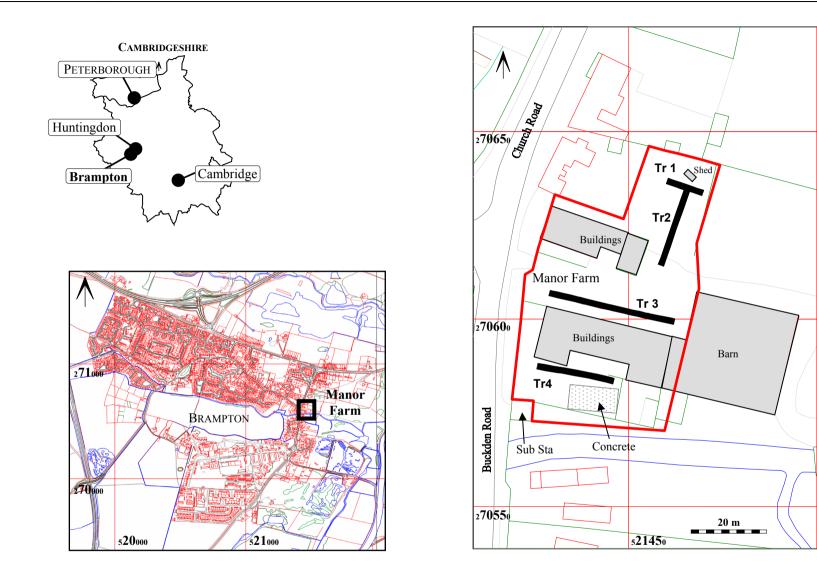
Context:	Туре:	Description:	Excavated: Fi	nds Present:
200	Topsoil	Friable dark orange brown sandy clay Deposit is 0.08m thick.	$\checkmark$	
201	Make up layer	Compact mid grey brown sandy rubble Deposit is 0.31m thick, and contained modern ceramics predominantly blue and white patterned.		
202	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown sandy clay occasional small stones Deposit is 0.26n thick, and contained a partial pig skeleton and modern blue and white pattern ceramics.		
203	Natural	Friable mid brown orange sandy clay		
204	Dump material	Compact mid grey brown sandy gravel Deposit is also seen to the south in Trench 3 as (302).		
205	Brick Rubble	Cemented mid brown red rubble Deposit seen in Trench 3 to the south as (3	02).	
206	Pit	Sub-circular E-W profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.25m, max depth 0.33m	$\checkmark$	
207	Main fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy clay	$\checkmark$	

Trench:3Max Dimensions:Length:34.25 m.Width:1.50 m.Depth to Archaeology Min:0.58 m.Max:1.5 m.OS Co-ordinates:Ref. 1:TL2142970606Ref. 2:TL2146270599Reason:To identify any archaeological features.

Context:	Туре:	Description: E	xcavated:	Finds Present:
300	External surface	Cemented mid brown red sandy rubble Deposit is 0.28m thick and had a 30m thick layer of Tarmac above it.	n 🗸	
301	Make up layer	Loose mid brown yellow sandy gravel Deposit was 0.20m thick. Contained occasional medium sized brick fragments from unfrogged bricks.	$\checkmark$	
302	Make up layer	Cemented mid red brown sandy rubble Deposit was 0.22m thick. Contained unfrogged brick fragments. Northern extent to deposit was seen in Trench 2 to the north as 205.		
303	Levelling layer	Loose dark black sandy silt frequent small stones Deposit was 0.10m thick and did not extend along the length of the trench, predominantly seen to the east in association with the brick culvert (305).		
304	Drain	Linear N-S dimensions: max breadth 0.35m		
305	Brickwork	Cemented mid brown yellow	$\checkmark$	
306	Backfill	Friable mid grey brown silty sand occasional small stones		
307	Drain			
310	Pond	Sub-circular dimensions: min length 5.8m, min breadth 1.5m, min depth 0.38m	ı 🗸	
308	Primary fill	Loose mid blue grey sandy silt frequent small charcoal, occasional small-medium stones Deposit also contained occasional peat lenses, and is similar to the deposits seen to the west (309) and 321.		$\checkmark$
312	Pond	Assymetrical dimensions: min length 1.5m, min breadth 6.m, min depth 0.6m	$\checkmark$	
309	Secondary fill	Loose mid blue grey sandy silt frequent small charcoal, occasional small stones Deposit contained occasional peat lenses, and is similar to the deposits found to the east (308) and west 321.	$\checkmark$	
311	Primary fill	Loose mid grey brown silty sand	$\checkmark$	
313	External surface	Compact mid orange brown silty sand moderate small charcoal, occasional sma stones Deposit was predominantly machined off, and in section was about 0.400 thick. It contained occasional small - medium unfrogged brick fragments and moderate mid brown green lenses of a cess like nature.		
314	Posthole	Circular profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max diameter 0.16m	$\checkmark$	
315	Primary fill	Spongy mid red brown peat	$\checkmark$	
316	Pit	Oval NE-SW dimensions: min length 0.24m, max breadth 0.34m		
317	Fill	Rubble Deposit consisted of glass bottles, ceramic jars and paraphenalia associated with a Victorian bottle dump.		
318	Ditch	Linear N-S profile: irregular base: flat dimensions: min length 1.5m, max breadth 1.3m, max depth 0.54m	$\checkmark$	
319	Primary fill	Loose mid grey brown silty sand frequent small charcoal	$\checkmark$	
320	Secondary fill	Friable mid brown grey sandy silt occasional small charcoal Deposit was 1.30m wid and 0.18m thick.	le 🗸	
321	Layer	Spongy dark blue grey sandy silt frequent small charcoal Deposit is similar to (308) and (309) found to the east.		
322	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sand		

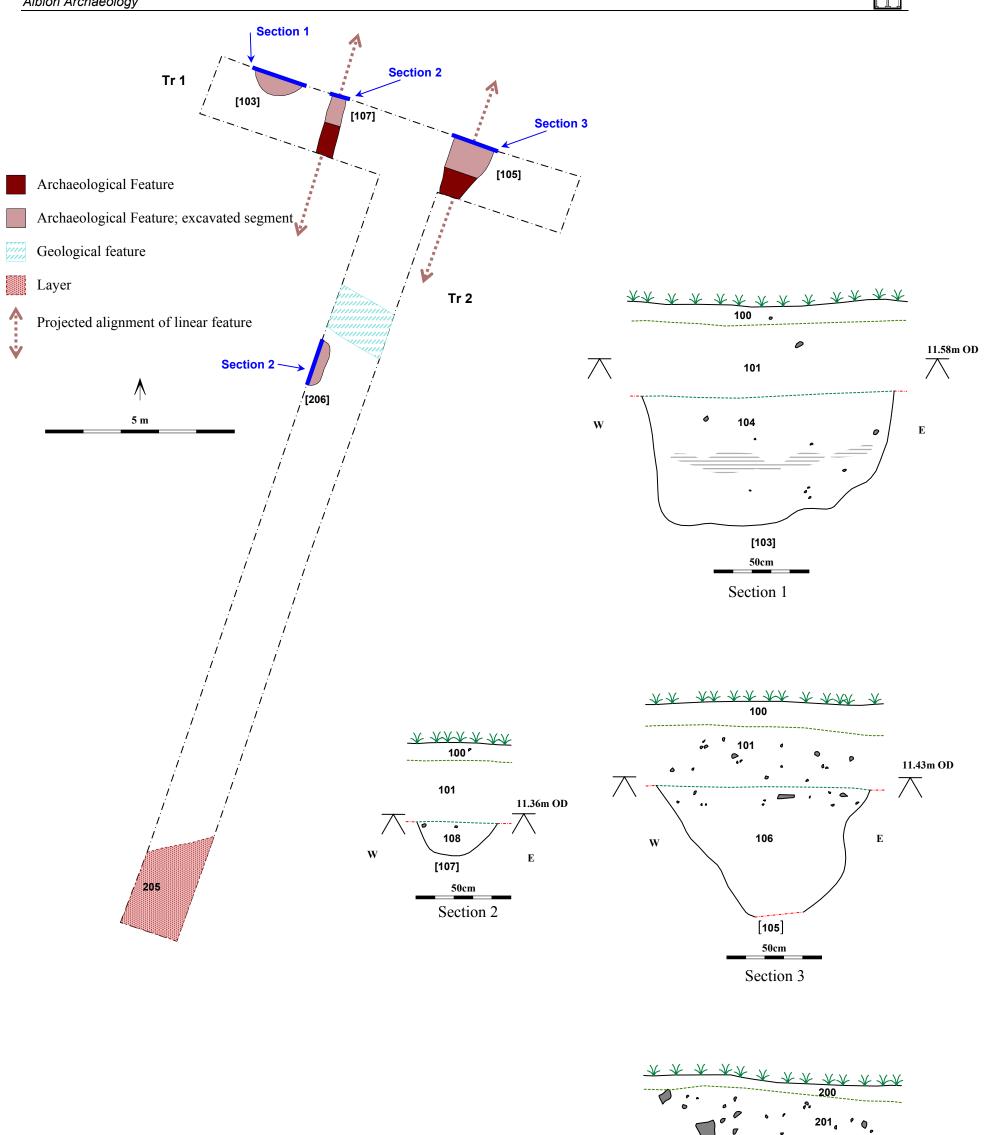
Trench:	4					
<b>Max Dimensions:</b>	Length:	20.00 m.	Width:	1.50 m.	Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.4 m.	Max: 0.6 m.
<b>OS Co-ordinates:</b>	Ref. 1:	TL214257	70587	<b>Ref. 2:</b>	TL2142570587	
Reason:	To identi	fy any arch	naeologic	al features	S.	

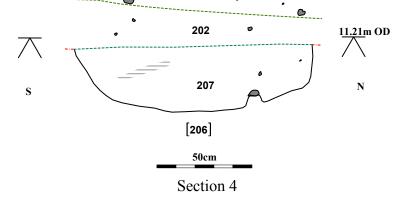
Context:	Туре:	Description:	<b>Excavated:</b> Finds Present:	
400	Topsoil	Friable dark brown black sandy clay Deposit was 0.16m thick.	$\checkmark$	
401	Make up layer	Cemented mid red orange rubble Deposit was 0.15m thick.	$\checkmark$	
402	Demolition layer	Cemented rubble Deposit was 0.70m thick.	$\checkmark$	
403	Natural	Loose light grey yellow sandy gravel		
404	Foundation trench	Linear NW-SE dimensions: min length 14.75m, max breadth 0.35m		
405	Foundation	Cemented mid brown red Foundations were 0.25m wide.		
406	Backfill	Friable dark brown black silty sand		
407	Foundation trench	Linear N-S dimensions: min length 1.5m, max breadth 0.5m		
408	Foundation	Cemented mid brown red Foundation was 0.40m thick.		
409	Backfill	Friable dark brown black silty sand		



#### Figure 1: Location of site

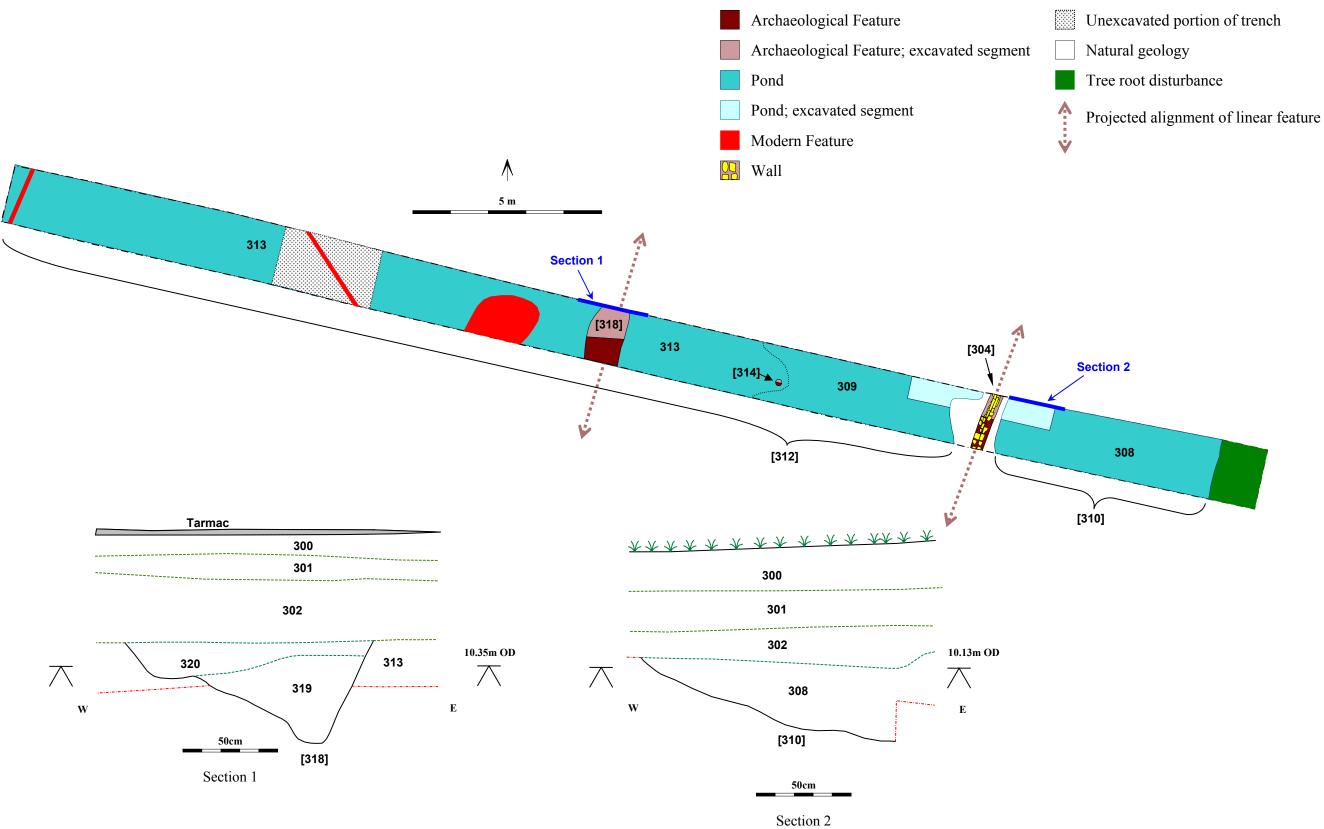
Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Land-line Map (2004), with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall, Bedford. OS Licence No. 100017358(LA). © Crown Copyright.



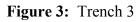


## Figure 2: Trenches 1 and 2

Manor Farm, 29 Church Road, Brampton, Cambridgeshire Archaeological Field Evaluation







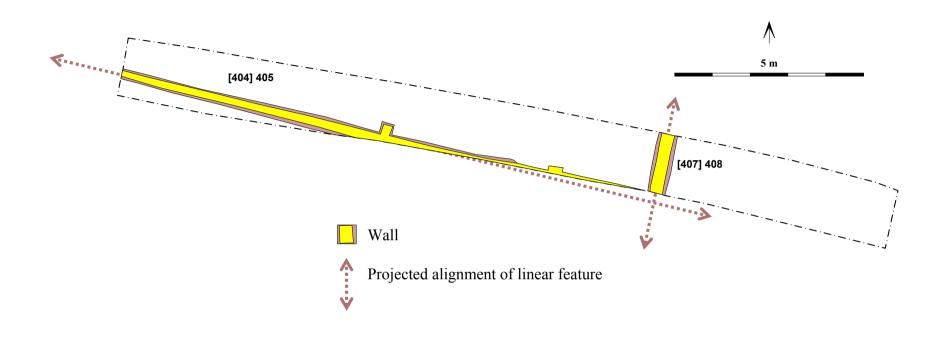


Figure 4: Trench 4