



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench evaluation
on land at Millcote, Mill Corner
Soham, Cambridgeshire



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County Council**

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Millcote, Soham	
Short description	An archaeological trial trench evaluation comprising two 10m long trenches was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in May 2010 prior to the redevelopment of land at Millcote, Mill Corner, Soham, Cambridgeshire. The evaluation revealed the remains of the mill leet shown on the tithe map of 1841. The leet appeared to be parallel with Soham Lode and contained 18th and 19th-century pottery, brick and tile.	
Project type	Trial Trench Evaluation	
Site status	None	
Previous work	DBA (CgMs 2008)	
Current Land use	Derelict house and garden	
Future work	No	
Monument type/ period	Old mill leet	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Cambridgeshire	
Site address	Millcote, Mill Corner Soham Cambridgeshire	
Area	580m ²	
OS Easting & Northing	TL 5893 7294	
Height OD	4m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice	
Project Design originator	CgMs	
Director/Supervisor	Edmund Taylor	
Project Manager	Tony Walsh (NA) Sally Dicks (CgMs)	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	May 2010	
End date	May 2010	
ARCHIVES	Location	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	ECB3378	Post-med pottery, brick, tile
Paper	ECB3378	Pro-forma sheets, plans and sections, black and white contact sheets.
Digital	ECB3378	Report text and figures
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	An Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Millcote, Mill corner, Soham, Cambridgeshire	
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology Report 10/81	
Author(s)	Edmund Taylor	
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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION
ON LAND AT MILLCOTE, MILL CORNER
SOHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
May 2010**

Abstract

An archaeological trial trench evaluation comprising two 10m long trenches was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in May 2010 prior to the redevelopment of land at Millcote, Mill Corner, Soham, Cambridgeshire.

The evaluation revealed the remains of the mill leet shown on the tithe map of 1841. It was parallel to Soham Lode and contained 18th and 19th-century pottery, brick and tile.

1 INTRODUCTION

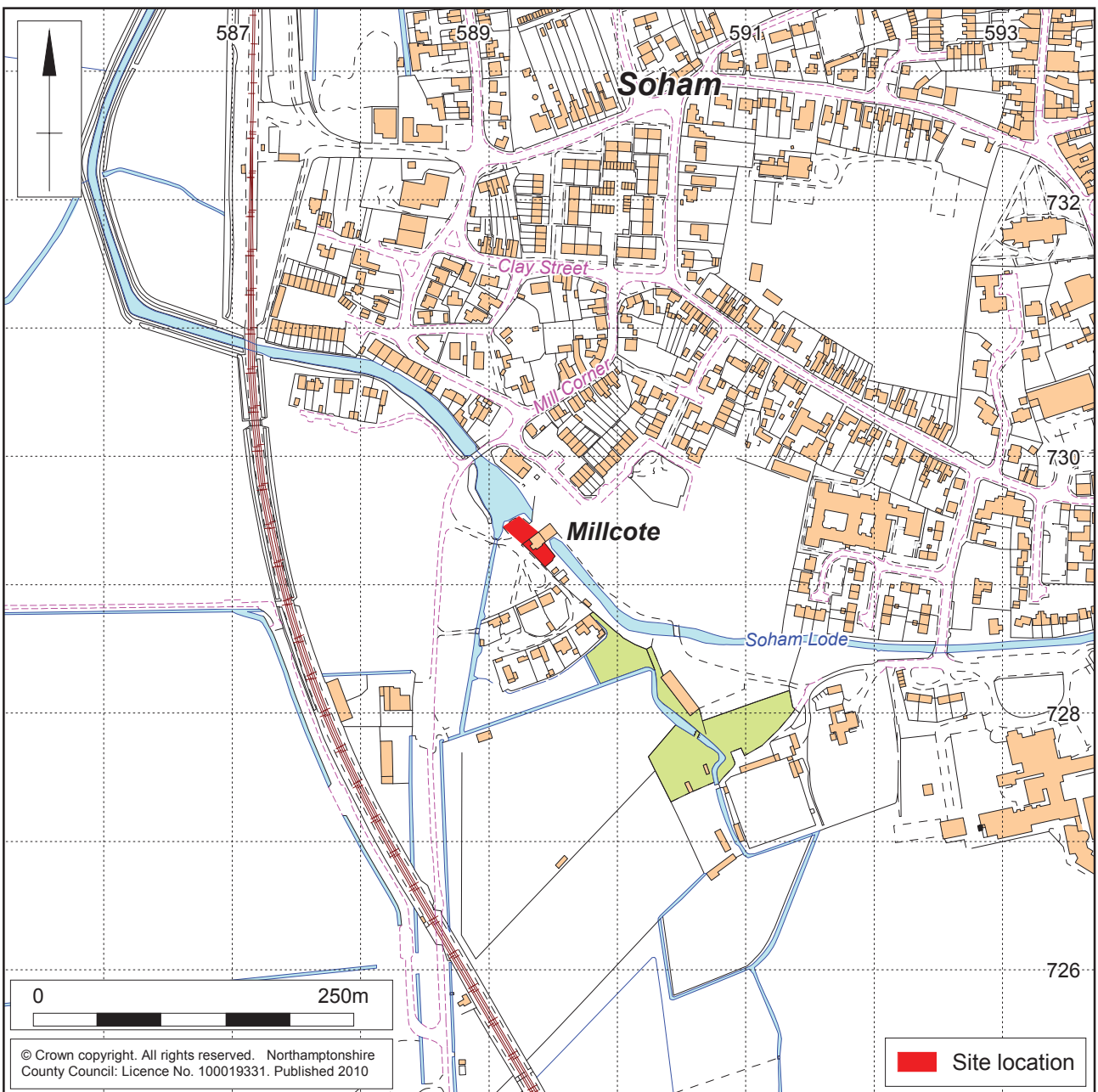
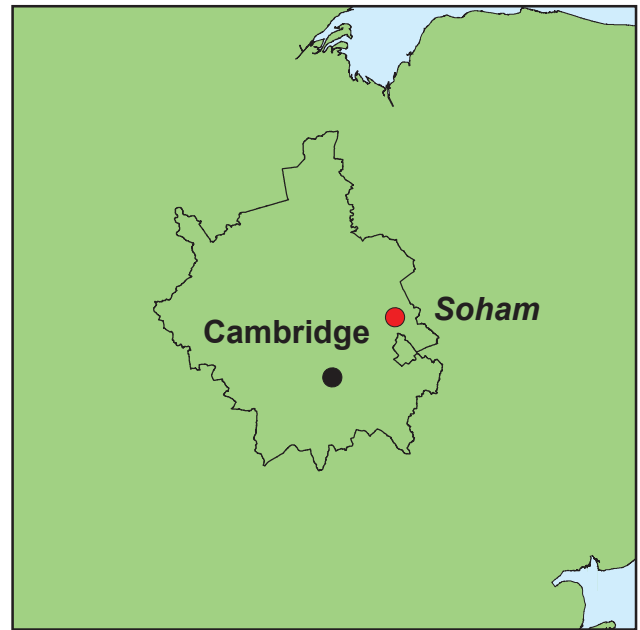
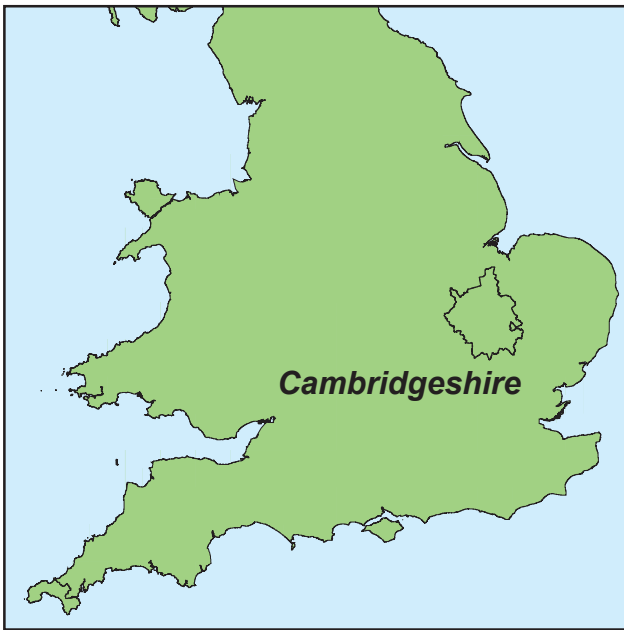
An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in May 2010 during groundworks undertaken prior to the construction of a new dwellings on land at Millcote, Mill Corner, Soham, Cambridgeshire (Planning Application: 09/0042/FUL, NGR TL 5893 7294 Fig 1). The work was carried out for CgMs Consulting Ltd, acting on behalf of their client Taylor Wimpey East Anglia, in response to a brief for archaeological evaluation issued by Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice (CAPCA 2010). It followed an approved project design produced by CgMs Consulting Ltd (2010).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The village of Soham is situated nineteen miles to the north-east of Cambridge in the eastern part of Cambridgeshire (Fig 1). The application area lies on the south-western edge of the village on land formerly occupied by Lion Mills. The name 'Millcote' refers to a two-story dwelling and associated garden to the rear which is attached to former mill buildings. It is immediately adjacent to Soham Lode, a redirected section of the River Snail, which bounds the site to the west. To the north the site is bounded by the former mill pond, to the east by open fields and to the south by residential dwellings.

The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Greensand and Gault Clay overlying chalk



Scale 1:5000

Site Location Fig 1

(www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm). The land is generally flat and lies at approximately 4m OD.

2.2 Historical background

The site lies within an area of archaeological interest, and was believed to have high archaeological potential.

The Soham Lode is thought to have been canalised in the medieval period and a probable moat of similar date is known to the south-east (HER 01068).

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in 2007 (Oxford Archaeology 2007a). The trenches nearest to the current application area identified deep alluvial deposits overlain by significant depths of made ground. Subsequent investigations within the area to the north-east of the river have revealed evidence for medieval and post-medieval activity adjacent to Clay Street (HER ECB2451, Oxford Archaeology 2007b).

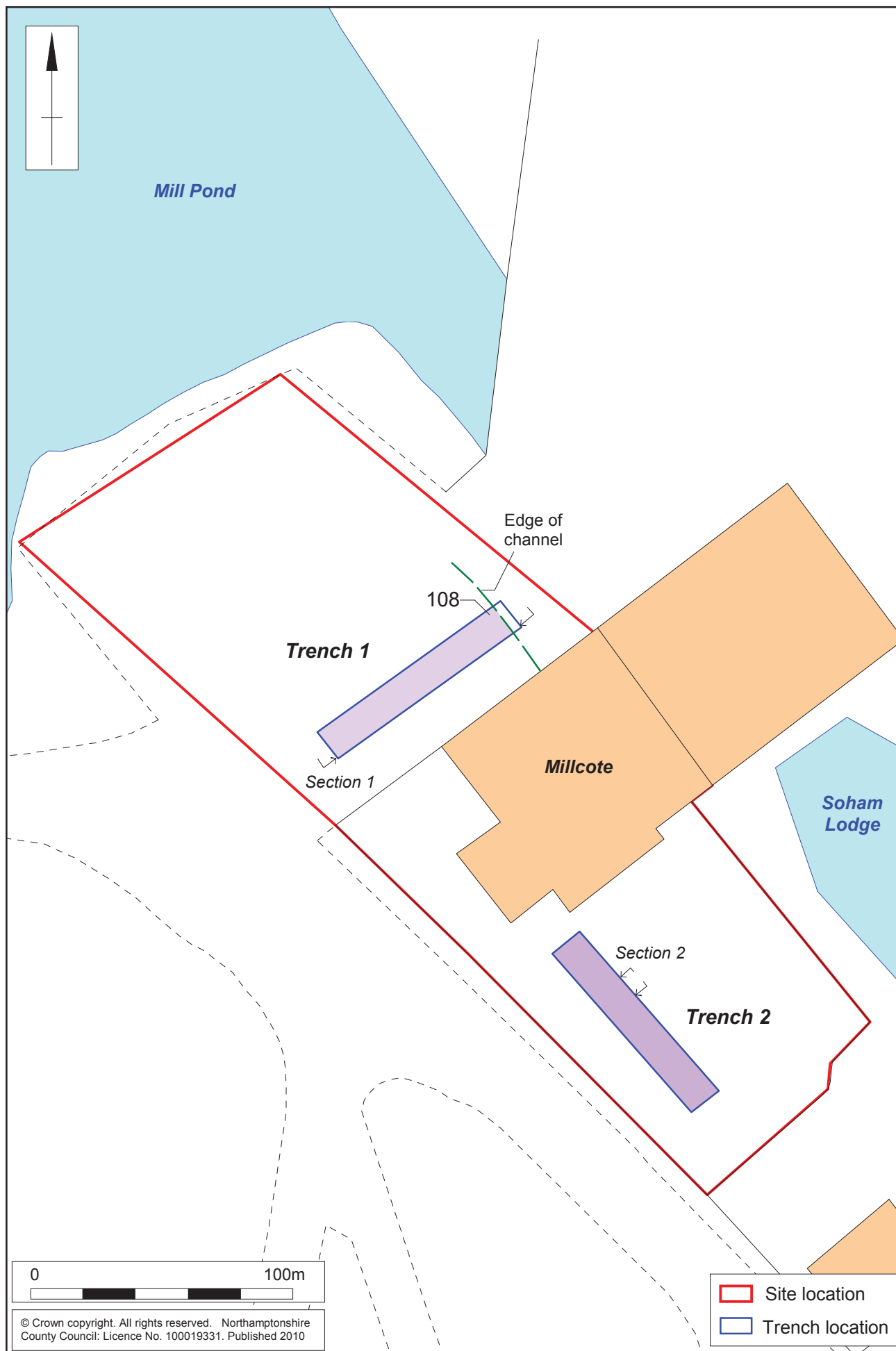
Geotechnical investigations were undertaken on the site during February 2010 (MLM Environmental 2010)). The investigations identified between 0.5m and 1.5m of made ground overlying alluvium which was between 1.2m and 1.7m thick. Below the alluvium was Gault clay.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed area of the objectives of the archaeological works were to:

- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits.
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

Two trenches measuring 10m long by 1.8m wide were excavated to the front and the rear of Millcote (Fig 2) using a JCB 3CX digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Initially it was proposed that Trench 1 would measure 15m but due to the presence of reinforced concrete at its north-eastern end, with the agreement of CAPCA, it was shortened to 10m. Mechanical excavation proceeded as far as the surface of the natural substrate or the first archaeologically significant layer. A total area of 36m² was excavated.



Scale 1:2,500

Trench locations Fig 2

All trenches were located in relation to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and levels were related to the Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological information was recorded on pro-forma sheets, with a unique context number being allocated to each distinct deposit and feature. Sections and plans were drawn at an appropriate scale. A photographic record comprising both 35mm monochrome negatives, with associated prints, and colour transparencies was maintained, with additional digital photographs. All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive. The archive will be deposited with the Cambridgeshire Archaeology Store (Historic Environment Team) under the accession number ECB3378

All works were in accordance with the IfA *Code of Conduct* (2009) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008), *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003) and the research frameworks detailed in Brown and Glazebrook (2000) and Glazebrook (1997). All procedures complied with the Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

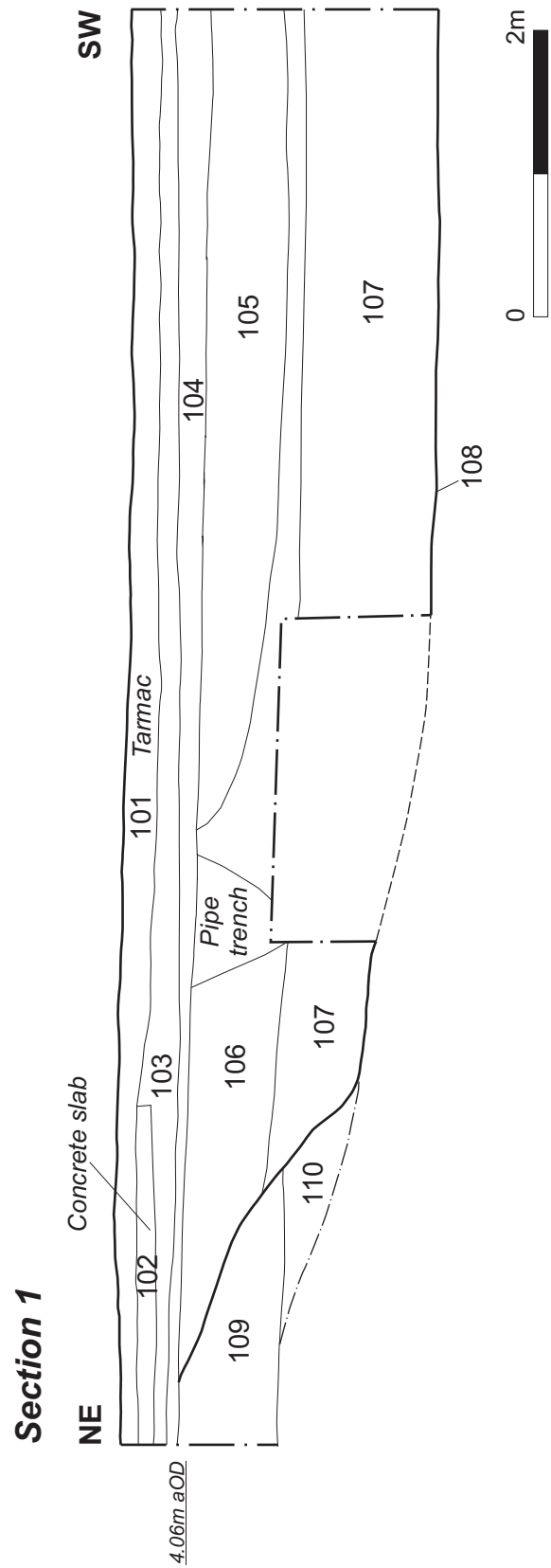
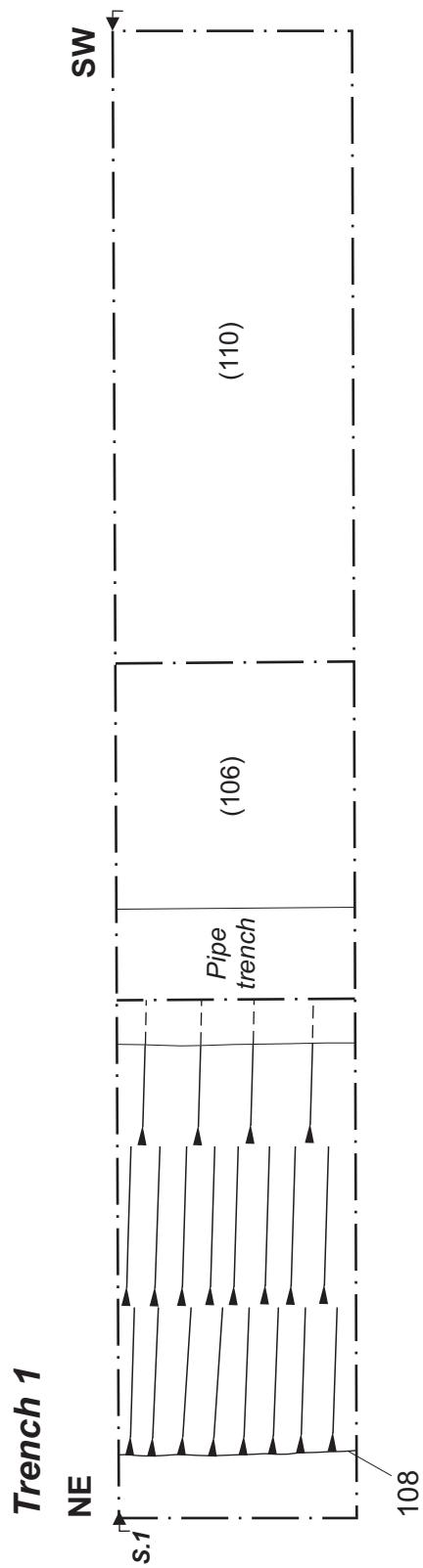
4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

4.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned north-east to south-west across the front of Millcote (Fig 2). This contained a wide ditch with alluvial fills which were overlain by levelling layers for the present concrete and tarmac surface

In the northern end of the trench a bluish-grey alluvial clay (110) was encountered at 1.20m below the current ground level (Figs 3 and 4). This was overlain by a mottled orange and blue silty clay (109) which was 0.70m thick and contained frequent charcoal flecking. Cutting this was a broad flat-bottomed ditch [108] which was over 9.50m wide and 1.60m deep. The north-western edge was slightly concave and sloped c 45 degrees, while the opposite edge was beyond the limit of the trench.

The ditch was filled with dark slightly humic alluvial silt (107) and (106) which both contained frequent charcoal flecking, red and yellow brick fragments and 17th to 18th-century pottery (see paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2). This was overlain by a layer of greyish-



blue silty clay (105), which was 0.60m thick and contained frequent charcoal flecking, occasional brick and stone fragments. This was overlain by layers of crushed stone and brick rubble, (103) and (104) which were between 0.08m and 0.20m thick. These were presumably levelling layers for the concrete (102) and tarmac (101) of the present ground surface.



Trench 1, ditch [108] looking east

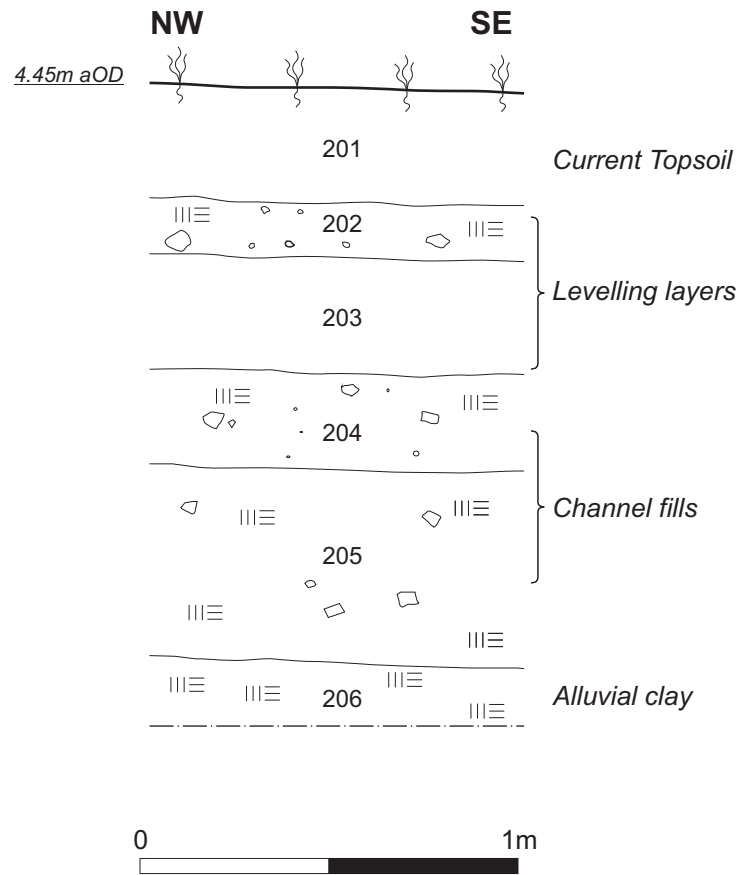
Fig 4

4.2 Trench 2

This was located in the garden to the rear of Millcote and was aligned north-west to south-east (Figs 2 and 6). No features were present within the trench but the alluvial deposits would suggest it was within the broad ditch seen in Trench 1.

A bluish-grey alluvial clay (206) was encountered at 1.65m below the current ground surface (Fig 5). This was overlain by a mid brown alluvial clay (205), 0.35m to 0.50m thick, with frequent chalk and charcoal flecking and occasional red brick fragments. This was overlain by a layer of similar slightly darker alluvium (204), 0.20m thick. This underlay a possible levelling layer (203) which comprised a mid brown silty clay loam 0.20m thick. This in turn was overlain by a layer of brick rubble, ash and clinker (202), 0.10m thick, which underlay the topsoil and turf of the current garden (201), 0.20m thick.

Section 2: Trench 2





Trench 2 during excavation, looking south-east Fig 6

5 THE FINDS

The evaluation produced a small assemblage of pottery, brick and ceramic roof tile, all of which was retrieved from the ditch [108] in Trench 1.

5.1 The pottery by Iain Soden

A total of 22 sherds of pottery were recovered from the fills of ditch 108 on the site, weighing 602g in total. These derive from five types or fabrics and date from the 17th and 18th centuries.

The pottery present was as follows:

Type	Diagnostic	Date	Sherd count	Weight (g)
Midland Blackware	Cup/beaker with bulbous body and footring	17 th century	8	134
Dutch-type red earthenwares	Jar with thumbled collar below rim	17 th century	1	68
Glazed red earthenwares	Bowl	16 th -17 th century	7	240
White salt-glazed earthenware	Platter	1720-80	1	20
Creamware	Bowl	1740-80	5	140
Totals			22	602

This small group is not atypical of the 17th and 18th centuries and exhibits both regional and wider characteristics.

On a regional note, imported red earthenwares and their local variants are well known from East Anglian excavations in towns like Norwich (Jennings 1981), while the importation of these types from Holland through, particularly Boston and Lynn was widespread, as described by the crate-load in the Boston Port Books (Hinton 1956).

While the Blackwares might be expected on all manner of sites at the average table, the occurrence of White Salt-glazed stoneware is a suggestion that nearby residents in Soham were relatively fashion-conscious in the 18th century and taking account of national trends. While this is an unprepossessing type, the ware was always well-executed and finely glazed. It is the one type, more than any other, which captured public imagination of the day and launched the careers of the greatest of the Staffordshire potters, such as Josiah Wedgwood.

The ditch from which the pottery derives should perhaps be considered open into the middle of the 18th-century, earlier material being residual.

5.2 The brick and tile by Pat Chapman

The yellow brick is probably made from hard, fine Gault clays, a local tradition where clays low in iron content are mixed with chalk to keep the bricks pale. Yellow bricks were introduced c 1750, probably imported from Holland before being made locally. It is

also possible that the brick could come from London, where yellow malm bricks were made by mixing fine yellow alluvial clay with chalk. However, this incomplete yellow brick, measuring 94mm wide and 45mm thick (3½ x 1¾ inches) is probably of late 18th or early 19th-century date, either as an import or of local manufacture, as it is smaller than usual and has an uneven top surface.

The tile sherd is from the corner of a roof tile made from fine red clay. It is c 12mm thick with a round peghole 12mm in diameter. This type of tile has a long history and could date from the 15th to early 19th centuries.

6 THE SITE ARCHIVE

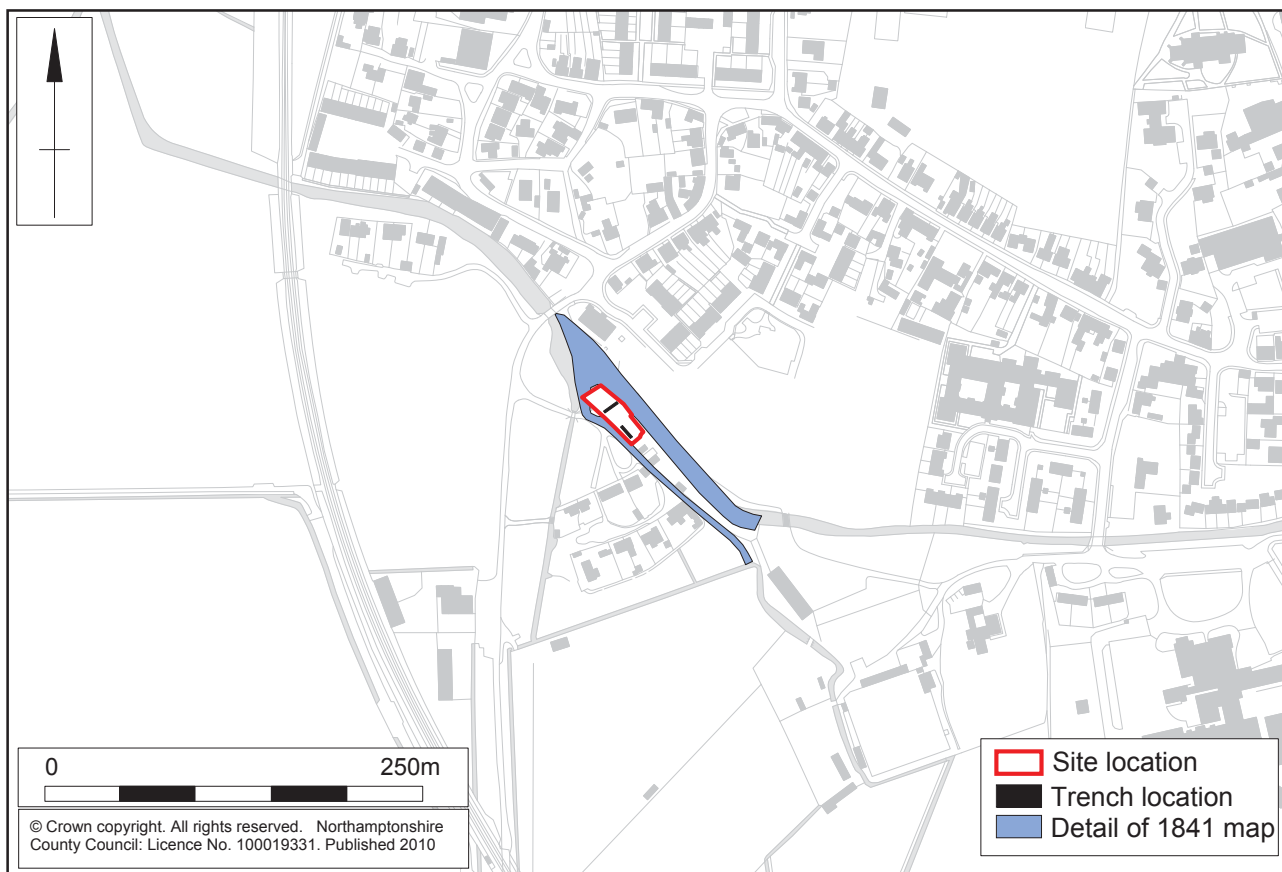
The project has generated a small archive comprising:

RECORD	NUMBER
Pro-forma sheets	8
Plans and sections (A2 sheets)	3
Colour slides	24
Black and white contacts and negatives	24
Digital photographs	30

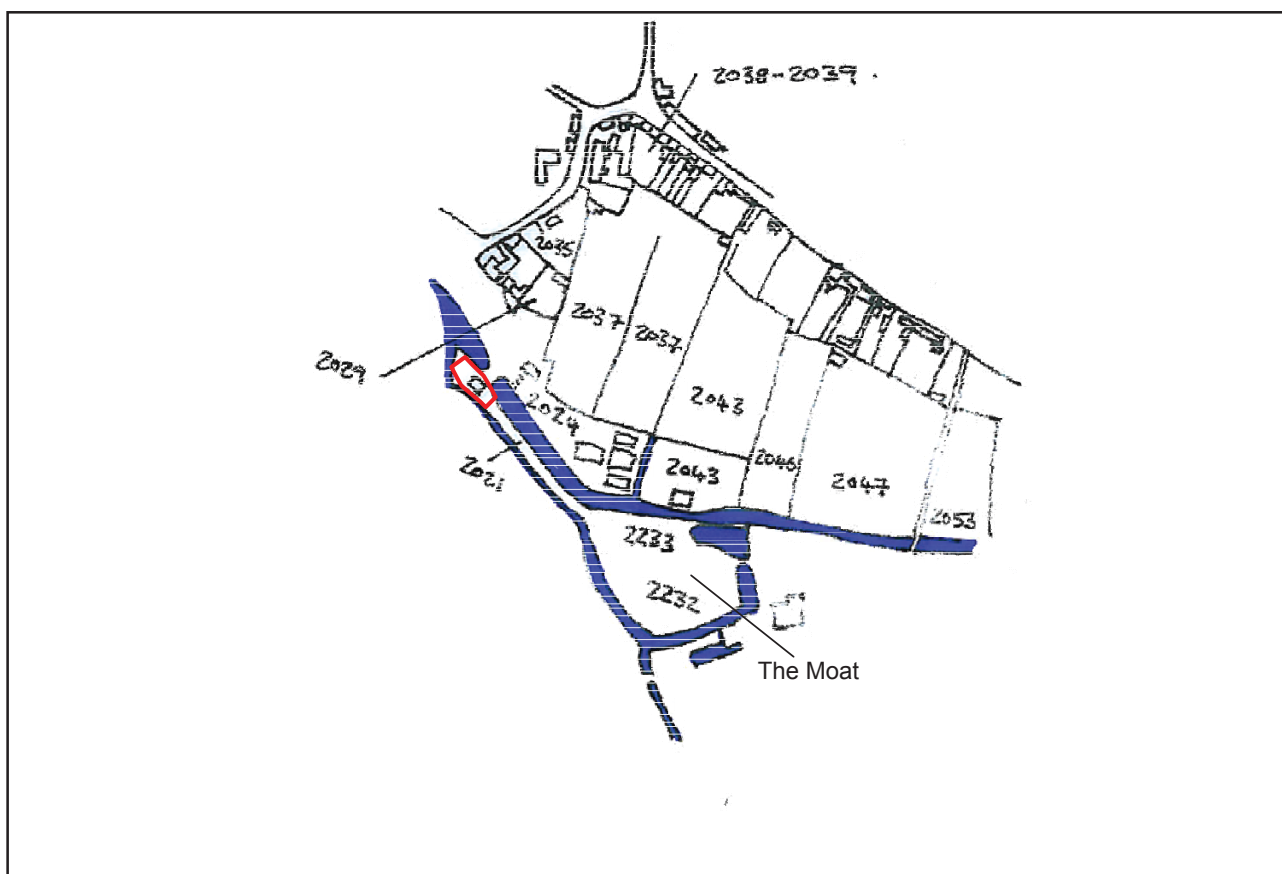
6 CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation revealed a substantial ditch which is likely to be that shown on the 1841 tithe map of Soham parish (Fig 7) which drained from the possible medieval moated site 'The Moat' (HER 1068) to the south east of the development area into the mill pond immediately north of the investigation area. The discrepancies between the 1841 map and the trench location plan when overlain (Fig 7) are probably due to the inaccuracy of the historic map compared to the current mapping. It is clear that a ditch ran parallel with Soham Lode in the approximate location of Trench 1. Alternatively, it is also possible that the ditch seen in Trench 1 may be an earlier alignment of that depicted on the tithe map.

The alluvial fills of the ditch suggest it was active for some time before being filled and levelled. This probably occurred sometime during the early 19th-century, as suggested by the pottery, and prior to the construction of Millcote. It is likely that it served as a leet for the mill buildings which formerly occupied the site.



1:5000



Not to scale

1841 Tithe map and overlay Fig 7

The similar sequence of alluvial deposits seen in both trenches suggests that Trench 2 may have been located within the edges of the ditch seen in Trench 1.

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