



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench evaluation
of land at 85 High Street, Harrold
Bedfordshire



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BEDFM.2009.33



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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at 85 High Street, Harrold, Bedfordshire	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Eve Wheeler to carry out an archaeological evaluation, comprising trial trench excavation during May 2009 and November 2010 on land at 85 High Street, Harrold, Bedfordshire. The evaluation demonstrated survival of archaeological features of medieval date, though truncated by 19th-century domestic rubbish pits. The range of pottery recovered and the faunal remains is indicative of domestic settlement.	
Project type	Trench evaluation	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Garden	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Medieval, modern	
Significant finds	Medieval ditches and pits, 19th century rubbish pits	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Bedfordshire	
Site address	85 High Street, Harrold	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	28.8sqm	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 9481 5625	
Height OD	45m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Bedford County Council - BCCHEs	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Anne Foard-Colby, Yvonne Wolfram-Murray	
Project Manager	Joe Prentice	
Sponsor or funding body	Eve Wheller	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	May 2009	
End date	November 2010	
ARCHIVES	Location	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
	BDFM.2009.33	
Physical	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Pottery
Paper	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Record sheets, drawings
Digital	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Digital mapping, photos
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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION
OF LAND AT 85 HIGH STREET, HARROLD
BEDFORDSHIRE**

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Eve Wheeler to carry out an archaeological evaluation, comprising trial trench excavation, during May 2009 and November 2010 on land at 85 High Street, Harrold, Bedfordshire. The evaluation has demonstrated survival of archaeological features of medieval date, though truncated by 19th-century domestic rubbish pits. The range of pottery recovered and the faunal remains was indicative of domestic settlement.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Eve Wheeler to carry out an archaeological evaluation, comprising trial trench excavation during May 2009 and November 2010 on land at 85 High Street, Harrold, Bedfordshire (NGR SP 9481 5625; Fig 1). The aim of the fieldwork was to establish the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits present on the development site. The work was carried out in order to fulfil a planning application with regard to the erection of a single dwelling.

The trial trench evaluation has demonstrated survival of archaeological features of medieval date, from the 12th century onward, though these have been truncated in places by 19th-century domestic rubbish pits. Modern disturbance caused by tree-planting, a concrete feature and the remnants of a brick structure were also evident. The range of pottery recovered and the faunal remains was indicative of domestic settlement. The medieval dates of the features are in keeping with the nature of the surrounding area.

The evaluation has been assigned event number BEDFM 2009.33.

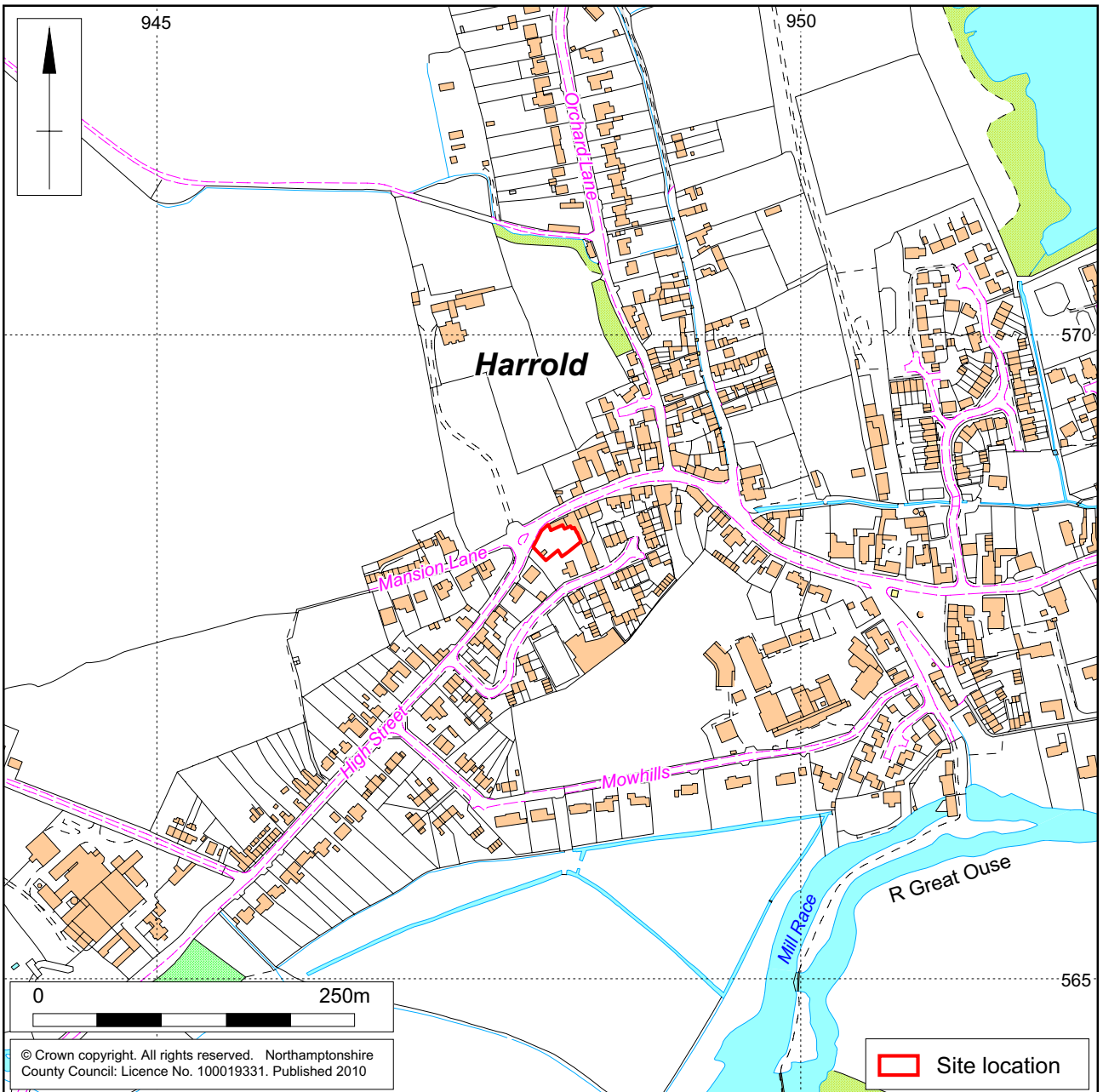
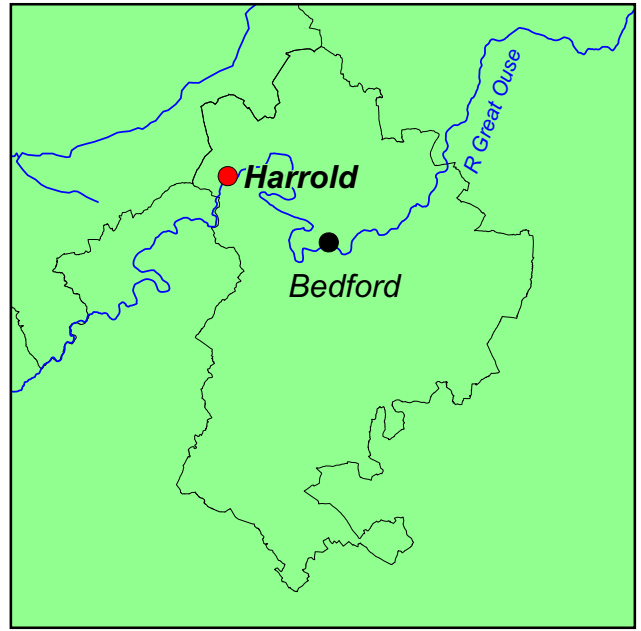
2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Archaeological background

The site lies adjacent to the High Street, Harrold within the core of the village and is within an area of archaeological sensitivity (HER 16942). The house, Nunswold, 85 High Street is Grade II listed and has a date stone of 1726, and was part of Priory Farm before being sold in 1925.

Harrold was an important market town in the medieval period and immediately south of the development site at Harrold Lower School significant and well-preserved archaeological remains dating to this period were discovered in 2002 and 2004 (NA 2009). These included building foundations that may be related to Harrold Manor (HER 6757).

Previous archaeological excavations within and around Harrold have demonstrated the existence of extensive archaeological deposits dating from the prehistoric through to



Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1

the medieval period. Excavations of note are those of medieval pottery kilns in Brook Lane (HER 1183) and in the grounds of Priory Middle School (HPM 874). An extensive summary of the archaeological and historical background of Harrold was compiled as part of the Extensive Urban Survey for Bedfordshire (Albion Archaeology 2005).

2.2 Topography and geology

The site lies within the valley of the River Great Ouse, which lies immediately south of the village. The development site is on largely level ground at a height of approximately 45m aOD. The underlying geology comprises Great Oolithic Limestone overlain in places with gravels.

The area is currently part of the garden to 85 High Street and comprises lawn, shrubs and mature trees with small areas of hard-standing associated with a garage and leant-to car-port. Some the trees have Tree Protection Orders which precludes their removal or the laying of trenches beneath their canopies which may impinge upon root systems.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The archaeological evaluation was carried out to establish the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present on the development site, recovering artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region and to recover any possible palaeoenvironmental deposits to determine local environmental conditions.

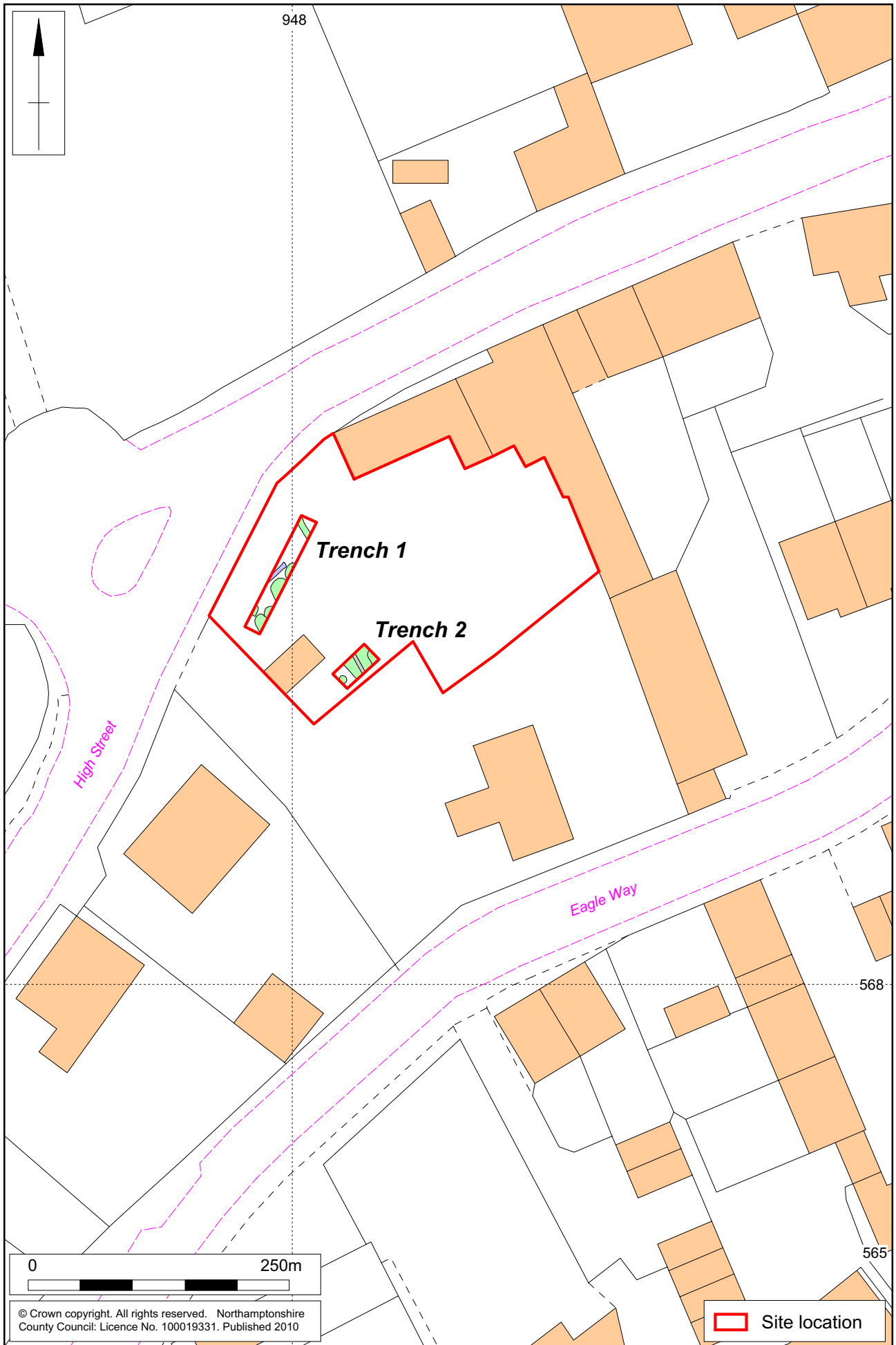
Additionally the aims were to place the archaeology of the site within its local, regional and national archaeological context and to define any potential constraints for further archaeological fieldwork including areas of disturbance, and service locations (NA 2009).

4 METHODOLOGY

An area of 28.80m² was subject to evaluation, which was divided between two trial trenches (Fig 2). Trench 1 measured 12m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned north-east to south-west. Trench 2 measured 4m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned north-east to south-west. The locations of the trenches were surveyed by hand within the confines of the garden, the use of GPS equipment was precluded due to the tree cover. The trenches have been related to Ordnance Survey National Grid.

Topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological supervision by a 5-tonne mini digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The surfaces of significant archaeological remains were exposed or, where absent, the natural substrate. The topsoil was stacked separately from the subsoil. After archaeological remains were encountered all subsequent examination and excavation was carried out by hand to determine their date and character.

All archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of excavation were recorded following standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures (NA 2006). All archaeological features will be given a separate context number. Deposits were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds.



Scale 1:5000

General plan showing the excavated trenches Fig 2

Trenches were planned at a scale of 1:50, the trench sections and profiles through features were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Levels were related to the Ordnance Datum.

Photographs were taken as 35mm monochrome images and colour transparencies of the principal archaeological features discovered. All trenches, including those containing no archaeological deposits were photographed. Supplementary digital photos were taken. Artefacts were collected from archaeological deposits. However, unstratified animal bone was recorded but not retained.

The evaluation conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised Oct 2008) and *Code of Conduct* (revised 2010). In addition, all works complied with the guidelines detailed in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003). The evaluation met the requirements of the specifications prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology dated 18 February 2009 and 19 October 2009 in response of a brief issued by Bedfordshire County Council Historic Environmental Services (BCCHES 2008). Monitoring of the programme of fieldwork was carried out by BCCHES.

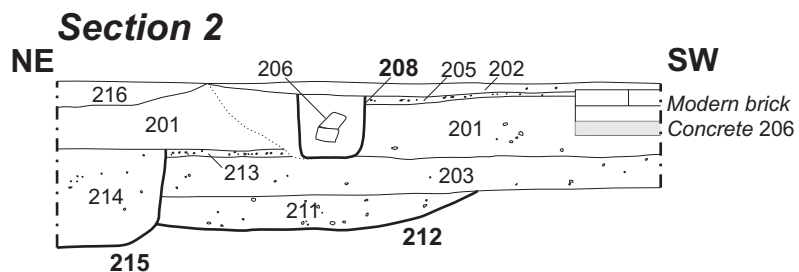
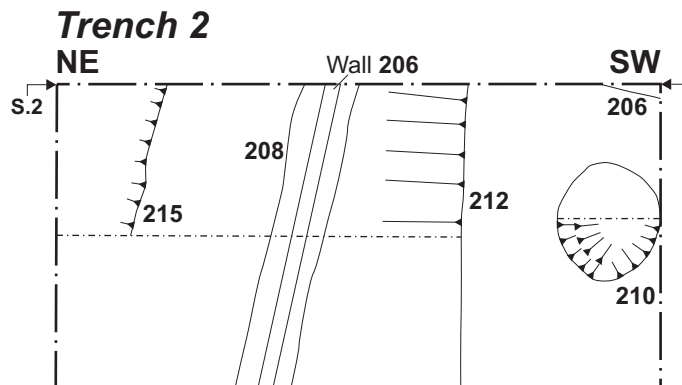
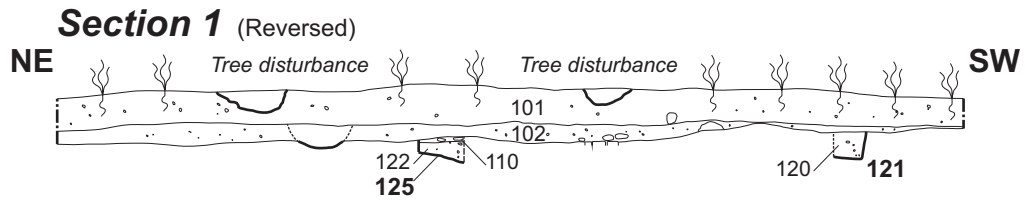
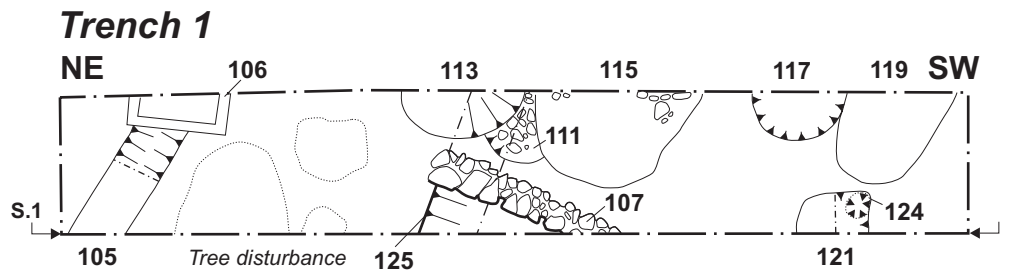
5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 General comments

Trench 1 and Trench 2 revealed medieval pits and ditches disturbed by 19th-century pits, 20th-century structures and tree roots (Fig 3). The natural comprised mid orange-brown sand and gravel.



General view of Trench 1, looking north-east (left), and Trench 2, looking south-west (right) Fig 3



5.2 Trench 1

The earliest feature, at the south-west end of the trench, was a small rectangular, steep-sided pit [121], 1.04m long and 0.35m deep (Fig 4, Section 1 and Fig 5). It had a fill of dark orange-brown silty loam (120) containing gravel, charcoal flecks and animal bone. A small assemblage of medieval shelly coarseware pottery, with no later types, date the pit to the 12th century. A posthole [124] in the south-west corner of the pit had a similar fill.

At the centre of Trench 1 there was a probable sub-rectangular pit, [125], with a stone lining or revetment [107] at its eastern end (Figs 4 and 5). The pit was more than 2.50m wide and 0.30m deep, with a near vertical edge and a base sloping down towards the centre of the pit. The stone lining or revetment was at least 2.60m long and up 0.5m deep. It was constructed of rough limestone rubble bonded with clay and mortar (108), with larger slabs forming the facing within the pit. The pit fill (122) was of mid grey-brown sandy-silty loam with gravel and limestone fragments and contained some shelly coarseware and a sherd of Potterspury ware of the mid 13th to 15th centuries. The thin upper fill of the pit, (110) comprised pieces of limestone and clay/mortar, possibly derived from levelling of the revetment wall. To the east of the wall there was a small patch of limestone rubble (111), filling a shallow circular hollow, which was probably contemporary with the stone-lined pit.

Also to the east of the wall, there were two rubbish pits, [113] and [115], which contained 19th-century pottery and glass. A further two 19th-century rubbish pits [117] and [119], lay at the southern end of the trench. Two of these pits contained residual mid 15th and 17th-century pottery (Fig 4).

At the north end of the trench a shallow gully [105], aligned north-west to south-east, was 0.50m wide and 0.12m deep. The fill (104) was pale yellow-brown sandy clay with gravel and charcoal inclusions and animal bone, but no dateable artefacts were recovered. The gully was partly overlain by a modern concrete footing (106), perhaps the base of an outside toilet or greenhouse.

The subsoil (102) overlay the medieval pit, and had a maximum thickness of 0.20m. The pits dated to the 19th century were cut into this subsoil. A layer of dark garden topsoil (101) had a maximum thickness of 0.47m (Fig 4, Section 1).



Pit [121] and posthole [124], looking south-west (left), and wall [107] and pit [125], looking south-west (right) Fig 5

5.3 Trench 2

The earliest features in the trench were pit [210] and the ditch [212], both cutting the natural geology (204). Pit [210] was sub-circular, 0.65m diameter and 0.19m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a slightly concave base (Fig 6). The fill (209) of dark grey-brown sandy silt contained sub-angular sandstone and flint inclusions. Seven pottery sherds of medieval shelly coarseware, and no later types, date the pit to the 12th century.

Ditch [212] was at least 2.10m wide and 0.25m deep, with a gently sloping side and a flat base (Fig 4, Section 2 and Fig 7). The fill (211) was mid grey-brown sandy silt with frequent sub-angular and rounded sandstone and flint inclusions. The pottery sherds date from the 12th to the mid-14th centuries. The full width of ditch [212] could not be established as the north-eastern side of it was cut by a 19th-century rubbish pit [215].

Subsoil (203), 0.25m deep, overlaying both medieval features, had been disturbed and contained pottery dating from the 12th to 16th centuries. This was cut by pit [215], probably a 19th-century rubbish pit, which contained a flower pot, a metal bucket and large limestone boulders in dark brown-grey loamy silt (214).

The subsoil and buried topsoil (201) were cut by a construction/robber trench [208] for a late 20th-century brick structure (206), which had been laid on a base of concrete as foundations. This was possibly associated with paving of which a gravel-sand layer remains with some concrete flagstone remaining (206). After the structure had been demolished, possibly in the mid 1980s and the paving taken up a thin layer of new topsoil (202) was re-instated. The area was disturbed by roots from nearby trees, especially the area around the trench [208].



Pit [210], looking south-west (left), and wall 206, looking south-west (right) Fig 6



Trench 2, section 2, looking south-east Fig 7

6 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

6.1 The pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 77 sherds with a total weight of 747g. It was all medieval apart from a single sherd of 17th-century date and a single sherd of 16th-century date. All the wares are types which are well-known in the region. Where appropriate, the codings and chronology of the Bedfordshire County type-series were used, as follows:

- B07: **Medieval Shelly Ware**: AD1100-1400
- C10: **Potterspury Ware**: mid13th – 15th centuries
- E01: **Late medieval reduced ware**, mid 14th – 16th centuries
- E02: **Late Medieval Oxidized Ware**, mid 14th – 16th centuries
- P01: **Glazed Red Earthenware**, 16th century
- P12: **Cistercian Ware**, c AD1470-1550
- P13: **Surrey 'Tudor Green' type ware**, AD1380 – 1550.
- P06: **Slip-decorated earthenware**. 17th century

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The assemblage comprises a range of wares which are typical of sites in the region, although the sherd of Surrey 'Tudor Green' is worthy of note, as such pottery is quite rare in the county other than in the larger towns. The shelly wares are almost certainly of local manufacture, and typical of the tradition. Overall, the sherds are generally fairly large and fresh. The large group from context 120 includes a handle from a jug and a decorated base from the same type of vessel. Shelly ware jugs were far more common in the 12th century than from the 13th century onwards, when they were replaced by glazed examples from the Brill and Potterspury industries.

The range of fabric types indicates that there has been more or less unbroken activity at the site from the 12th century to the present day.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Fabric	B07		C10		EO1		E02		P06		P12		PO1		P13		Date
Fill/cut	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
102	2	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	17thC
108/109	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12thC
110/111	8	180	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12thC
114/115	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M15thC
118/119	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M15thC
120/121	23	470	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12thC
122/125	2	19	1	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M13thC
203	1	25	1	34	-	-	2	47	-	-	1	4	1	3	-	-	U/S
209/210	7	43	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12thC
211/212	11	51	-	-	10	96	1	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	M14thC
Total	56	810	2	43	10	96	5	80	1	25	1	4	1	3	1	1	

6.2 Iron finds by Tora Hylton

There are three iron small finds (Table 2). Chronologically the earliest object is a nail heavily encrusted in corrosion products. It was recovered from the fill of a foundation trench together with sherds 13th-century pottery. The remaining finds were located within the fills of 19th-century rubbish pits. They include, a nail with a flat sub-circular head from Pit [115] and part of a pair of scissors from Pit [117]. The scissors stylistically date to the post-medieval period, the loop is oval and the arm has a rectangular cross-section; part of the upper section of the blade survives and it is furnished with a perforation for pivoting the blades and arms and a stop for preventing the blades overlapping.

Table 2: Catalogue of iron finds

Object	Fill/cut	Description
Nail, iron	114/114	Sub-circular head with tapered square-sectioned shank; terminal of shank missing. Length (incomplete): 51mm
Scissors, iron	116/117	Incomplete, loop with part of blade and arm. Oval loop with oval cross-section, rectangular-sectioned arm, upper section of blade perforated, with stop for preventing the blades overlapping. No measurements.
Square-sectioned rod fragment	122	Heavily encrusted in corrosion products. Possibly a nail? Length: 53mm

6.3 Post-medieval pottery and glass by Joe Prentice

Fills (116) and (118) of pits [117] and [119] produced copious amounts of domestic china, predominantly underglaze transfer decorated wares such as plates, cups, saucers, serving plates and at least one chamber pot. The majority of the decoration comprises typical late 19th-or early 20th-century designs such as the Willow Pattern in blue, though there are also examples of decoration in other colours (brown and black) which comprise birds, flowers and classical borders on some of the larger serving plates. Such china was widely produced in industrial quantities from potteries throughout the country, though predominantly the Midlands, but since none of the pieces found were marked it is almost impossible to attribute pieces to certain makers. None of the wares indicate anything more than middle-class domestic usage.

Flower pot

The lower portion of a terracotta flower with a single, central hole in the base came from fill (214) of pit [215]. Such flower pots were ubiquitous in the 19th and 20th centuries before the introduction of plastic pots, and unless marked (which this is not) is almost impossible to closely date.

Glass

A similar, though smaller, collection of glassware was recovered from the same context and includes cobalt blue bottles, one with 'GRANULAR CITRATE OF MAGNESIA' in raised letters on one side, another with 'MILK OF MAGNESIA' on it, perhaps suggesting that the owner of the property suffered from indigestion. A brown glass jar with 'VIROLAX' embossed on the side contained a patent laxative (and described in a nursing journal of 1923) which perhaps supports the theory that the property owner suffered with digestive problems.

6.3 The faunal remains by Karen Deighton

A total of 574g of animal bone was collected from four contexts during the course of excavation. This material was assessed to determine the level of preservation, the taxa present and to aid the understanding of the site.

Identifiable bones were noted. Ageable and measurable bones (after Von Den Driesch 1976) were also noted. Ageable elements included cheek tooth rows where tooth eruption and wear can be assessed, bones where the state of epiphyseal fusion is apparent and neonatal/juvenile bones (Amorosi 1989). Hand collected bones had previously been washed.

Results

The level of fragmentation was moderate to high and bone surfaces exhibited a low level of surface abrasion. Three instances of canid gnawing were noted. Knife marks were noted on ribs from subsoil (203).

Table 3: Taxa by context

Fill/cut	114/115	118/116	203	211/212	Total
Cattle	1	-	6	-	7
Sheep/goat	-	-	2	-	2
Chicken	-	2	-	-	2
Large ungulate	-	-	1	-	1
Small ungulate	-	-	3	1	4
Total	1	2	12	1	16

Table 4: Ageing and metrical data

Taxon	Tooth eruption and wear	Juvenile
Cattle	2	1

Little can be added to the understanding of the site due to the small size of the assemblage, however it can be said that a small range of common domesticates were associated with the site.

7 DISCUSSION

Two trial trenches were excavated as part of the evaluation at 85 High Street, Harrold. The excavation in the garden of the Grade II listed house has demonstrated survival of archaeological features of medieval date. Activity appears to start as early as the 12th century, and continues through to the end of the medieval period, perhaps as late as the 16th century. The partially stone-lined pit in Trench 2 is likely to have functioned in relation to some nearby domestic building, although its actual function is uncertain.

In the 19th-century domestic rubbish pits were dug in the garden, and these have truncated parts of the earlier deposits. Modern disturbance caused by tree-planting, a concrete base and remnants of a brick structure were present in both trenches. The overburden in the garden was variable, at the front towards the High Street the overburden measured 0.5m in Trench 2. This increased to a depth of 1.5m at the back of the garden in Trench 2.

The range of pottery recovered and the faunal remains was indicative of domestic settlement, and the medieval date of the features is in keeping with the medieval nature of the surrounding area.

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APPENDIX 1: Table of Contexts**Trench 1**

Context	Context type	Description	Finds/ comments
101	Topsoil	Dark rich garden soil	
102	Subsoil	Mid-dark brown sandy soil	
103	Geology	Gravel and sand bands with pockets of sandy soil	
104	Fill of [105]	Pale yellow-brown sandy clay with gravel and charcoal inclusions	
105	gully	Linear feature, NW-SE orientated	
106	Foundation	Concrete foundation	
107	Wall	Limestone wall/revetment in pit 125	
108	Wall matrix	Orange-yellow sandy clay mortar	
110	Fill of 125	Yellow-brown loam clay with stone inclusions (overlies 122, abuts 107)	
111	Fill/cut	Mid brown sandy loam with orange sand and limestone fragments	
112	Fill of [113]	Dark brown silty loam with gravel and charcoal inclusions	Pottery
113	pit	Sub circular pit	
114	Fill of [115]	Dark brown silty loam with gravel and charcoal inclusions	
115	pit	Irregular edged pit (not excavated)	Victorian rubbish pit
116	Fill of [117]	Dark black-brown silty loam	Victorian pottery and glass
117	pit	Sub-circular pit	
118	Fill of [119]	Dark black-brown silty loam	
119	pit	Irregular pit	
120	Fill of [121]	Dark orange-brown silty loam with gravel and charcoal flecks	Pottery and bone
121	pit	Rectangular pit	
122	Fill 125	Mid grey-brown sandy-silty loam with stone fragments, abuts wall/revetment 107	Pottery
123	Fill of [124]	Dark orange-brown silty loam with gravel and charcoal flecks	
124	posthole	Circular posthole	
125	Pit	filled by 122 & 110, revetment 107	

Trench 2

Context	Context type	Description	Finds/ comments
201	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey sandy loam with frequent small angular stone inclusions	
202	Buried topsoil	Dark brown-grey sandy loam with occasional small angular stone inclusions	New topsoil overlying modern paving (flagstones removed)
203	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy silt with frequent medium sized sub-angular and angular sandstone and flint, and some charcoal inclusions	Pottery and bone
204	Geology	Mid orange-brown silty sand at SW end and lighter yellow-brown silty sandstone gravel to NE end	
205	Layer	Mid brown-orange sandy gravel	Sand layer under modern paving
206	Structure	Remnants of demolished modern brick structure, two courses of bricks on concrete base	1986 expiry date on food wrapper found with it
207	Fill of [208]	Dark brown-grey sandy loam	Root disturbance
208	trench	Possible construction trench of brick structure	
209	Fill of [210]	Dark grey-brown sandy silt with frequent small to medium sized sub-angular and rounded pebbles, sandstone and flint	Pottery
210	pit	Circular pit	
211	Fill of [212]	Mid grey-brown sandy silt with frequent small to medium sub-angular to rounded sandstone, flint and pebbles	Pottery and bone
212	ditch	Linear ditch aligned NW-SE	
213	Layer	Light yellow-brown silty sand	
214	Fill of [215]	Dark brown-grey sandy silt with frequent small to large stones	Flower pot and metal bucket
215	Feature	Shape of feature not identifiable, possibly a 19th century rubbish pit	
216	Layer	Mid orange-brown sandy gravel	Root disturbance



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