



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at  
Green Acres, Colmworth Road, Little Staughton  
Bedfordshire



## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Northamptonshire  
County Council

Edmund Taylor

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The pottery Iain Soden BA, MIfA

**QUALITY CONTROL**

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	P. Chapman		
Verified by	A. Walsh		
Approved by	A. Chapman		

**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Green Acres, Little Staughton	
Short description	<p>An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during April 2010 prior to construction of two dwellings on land at Green Acres, Colmworth Road, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire.</p> <p>Two intercutting ditches aligned north-west to south-east were revealed on the eastern edge of the development area. The latest of these produced pottery dating to the mid 19th century.</p>	
Project type	Trial Trenching	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Pasture	
Future work	No	
Monument type/ period	19th century ditch	
Significant finds	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Bedfordshire	
Site address	Green Acres Colmworth Road Little Staughton Bedfordshire	
Area	0.38ha	
OS Easting & Northing	TL 106 623	
Height OD	65m	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Planning Services	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Edmund Taylor	
Project Manager	Steve Parry	
Sponsor or funding body	Sycamore Homes (Bedford) Ltd	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	April 2010	
End date	April 2010	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical		Pottery (2 bags)
Paper	BEDFM2010.27	Pro-forma sheets (9) Colour slides (16) black and white contact prints (16)
Digital	BEDFM2010.27	Report text and figures, Digital photos (18)
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	An archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Green Acres, Colmworth Road, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire	
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology Report 10/97	
Author(s)	Edmund Taylor	
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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION  
ON LAND AT GREEN ACRES  
COLMWORTH ROAD, LITTLE STAUGHTON  
BEDFORDSHIRE  
APRIL 2010**

*Abstract*

*An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during April 2010 prior to the construction of two dwellings on land at Green Acres, Colmworth Road, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire.*

*Two intercutting ditches aligned north-west to south-east were revealed on the eastern edge of the development area. The latest of these produced pottery dating to the mid 19th century.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

An archaeological trial trench evaluation comprising four trenches was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during April 2010 prior to the construction of two dwellings on land adjacent to Green Acres, Colmworth Road, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire (Planning Ref: 09/02901/FUL, NGR TL 106 623, Fig 1). The work was carried out on behalf of Sycamore Homes (Bedford) Ltd, in response to a brief issued by Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Planning Services (BBCHEPS 2010). It followed an approved project design produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2010).

## **2 BACKGROUND**

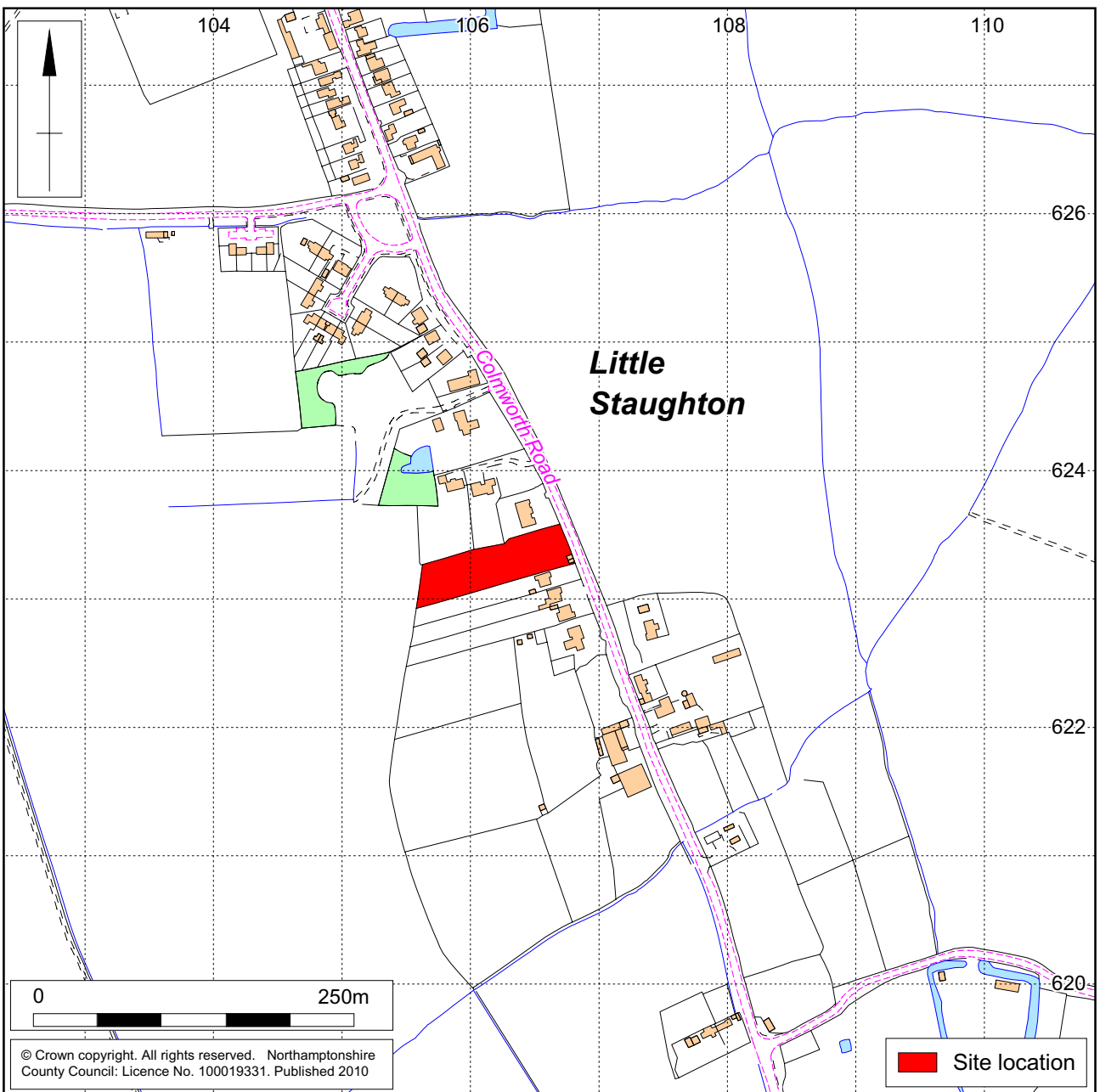
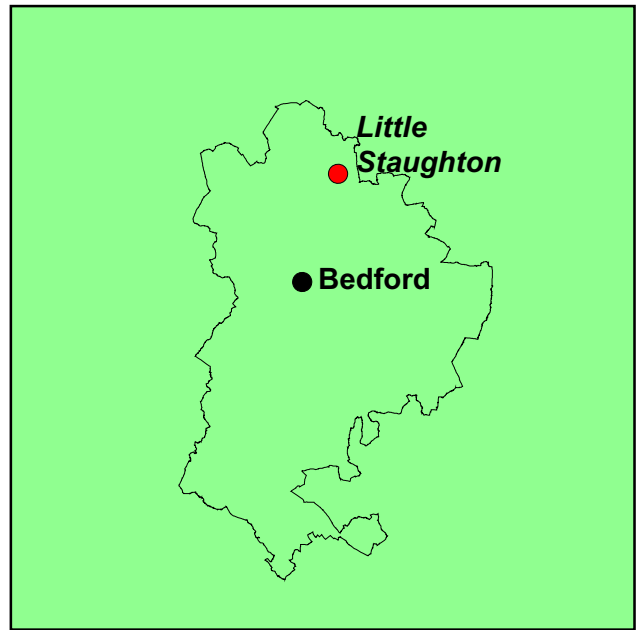
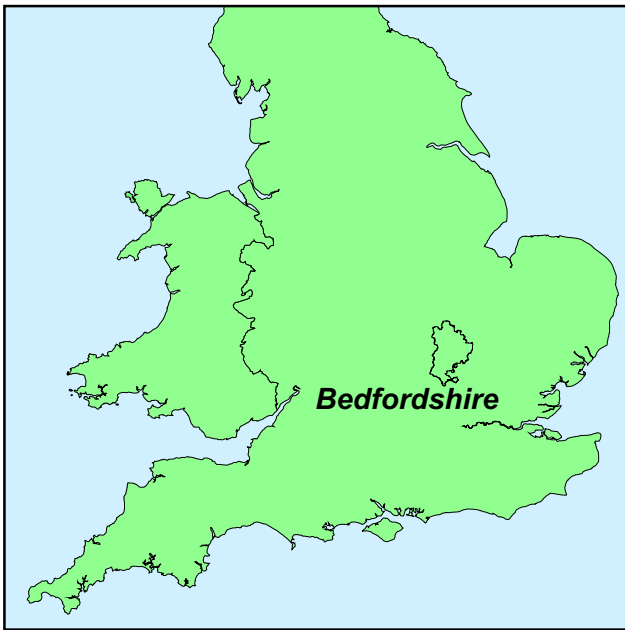
### **2.1 Location and topography**

The area of proposed development is situated to the south of Green Acres on the western side of Colmworth Road, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire at a height of 64.5m AOD. At the time of the evaluation the plot was undeveloped and was formerly part of the gardens of Green Acres to the north. At the western end of the plot there is a small copse of trees. The underlying geology is mapped as Oxford clay and Kellaways Beds ([bgs.ac.uk/geoindex](http://bgs.ac.uk/geoindex)).

### **2.2 Archaeological and historical background**

The site is located within the historic medieval core of the village in an area of significant archaeological sensitivity (HER 17157). The village has a long history, although it was not recorded in Domesday. There is mention of it in a document dated 1207 involving a land transaction between John de Stockton and the Templars. This was the first of a series of property transactions involving the Templars who, throughout the 13th century, increased their land holding in Little Staughton.

A search of the Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record (HER) lists a number of sites within a 1km radius of the site dating from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods. The majority of these relate to 17th and 18th-century listed buildings and demolished post-medieval buildings.



Scale 1:5000

Site Location Fig 1

A sub-rectangular enclosure cropmark (HER 16740), probably prehistoric in origin is located 40m west of the proposed development site. Other cropmarks of likely prehistoric origin are a double-ditched trackway and attached rectilinear enclosure (HER 16737), a possible Bronze Age ring ditch (HER 16738) and a rectangular enclosure (HER 16739).

The medieval period is well represented by the core of the village (HER 17157), the partial remains of the medieval village green (HER 7938), and earthworks associated with a deserted medieval settlement to the south of Green End (HER 1808, 1809) which itself is a shrunken medieval village to the north of the application area (HER 17093). To the south there is the deserted medieval settlement of Top End (HER 17158).

There are four moated sites in the vicinity of the development area (HER, 3901, 7939, 7940 and 7945). The closest of these (HER 7939) lies 70m to the north of the site. The moat is still partially visible as surviving earthworks. An early post-medieval structure (HER 7960) is recorded as having been located within an enclosure immediately to the north of the site. The structure, which was demolished at an unrecorded date, suggests that activity from the medieval period continued into the early post-medieval period.

### 3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

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

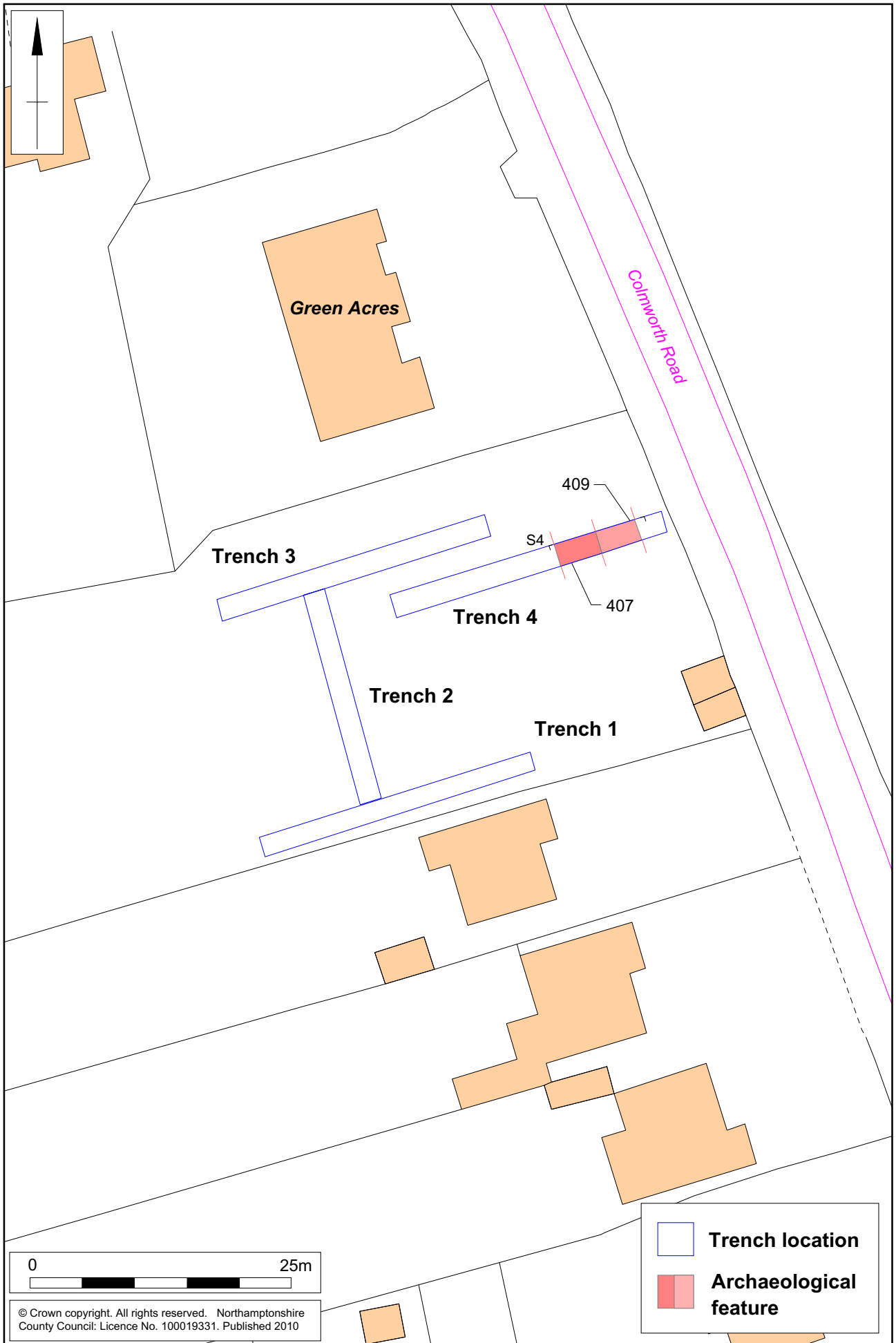
- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits.
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

The fieldwork comprised the excavation of four trenches (three measuring 27m long and one measuring 20m long) within the footprint of the new dwellings and access. This produced a trench area of approximately 162m<sup>2</sup> (Fig 2).

Topsoil and subsoil were removed using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Excavation continued to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or where these were absent, the natural substrate. The topsoil was stacked separately from the subsoil and other deposits. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to define features where necessary and planned at a scale of 1:50. Sections were drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate and related to Ordnance Datum.

A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, with supplementary photographs in digital format. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008) and *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010).



1:500

Trench locations Fig 2



## 4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

### 4.1 General comments and Trenches 1-3

Prior to the evaluation and in breach of the archaeological condition on the planning permission, topsoil and in some places, subsoil had been removed from the development area.

The natural substrate, which comprised a mottled orange and grey clay with frequent chalk flecking was overlain by a mid-brown silty clay subsoil, which was between 0.20m and 0.30m thick where remaining. The topsoil comprised a dark greyish-brown silty loam and where surviving, it was up to 0.30m thick.

In Trench 1 the natural substrate was overlain by 0.20m of subsoil and 0.30m of topsoil. In Trenches 2 and 3 the topsoil had been completely removed and the natural substrate was overlain by up to 0.20m of subsoil. No archaeological remains were encountered in these trenches.

### 4.2 Trench 4

Archaeological remains were only encountered in Trench 4 in the eastern part of the development area.

In the north-eastern end of the trench there were two intercutting ditches [407] and [409] which were aligned north-west to south-east (Figs 2, 3 and 4). The earliest of these [407], which cut the subsoil (402), was at least 3.70m wide, 0.60m deep with a steeply sloping side and a broad flat base. The fill (408) comprised a dark grey-brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecking and small red brick fragments.

This was cut to the south-west by ditch [407], 3.50m wide and 1.20m deep. The north-east edge sloped steeply to a narrow flat base while the south-west edge was less steep with a 'stepped' profile. The primary fill (406) comprised an orange-brown sandy clay, 0.15m thick. This was overlain by mottled dark orange and brown silty clay (405), which was 0.35m thick. The upper fill (404), a firm grey-brown silt clay, 0.75m thick, with occasional charcoal flecks and small red brick fragment was overlain by the topsoil (401). Pottery dating to the 18th and 19th centuries was retrieved from this feature (see section 5).

## 5 THE POTTERY by Iain Soden

A total of six sherds of late post-medieval/modern pottery were recovered in the evaluation, from contexts (405) and (406), ditch [407], weighing a total of 191g.

The pottery present was as follows:

Type	Date	(405)	(406)	Total
Midland Black	19th century	1/5g	2/154g	3/159g
Creamware	18th-19th century		2/2g	2/2g
Mocha ware	c1830-50	1/24g		1/24g
Total		2/29g	4/156g	6/191g

They have no intrinsic value or interest but date the deposition of (406) to the 19th century generally and that of (405) to a period between 1830-50 or later. This means that with stratification taken into account the whole ditch [407] was probably dug and filled in after c1850, and certainly after c1830.



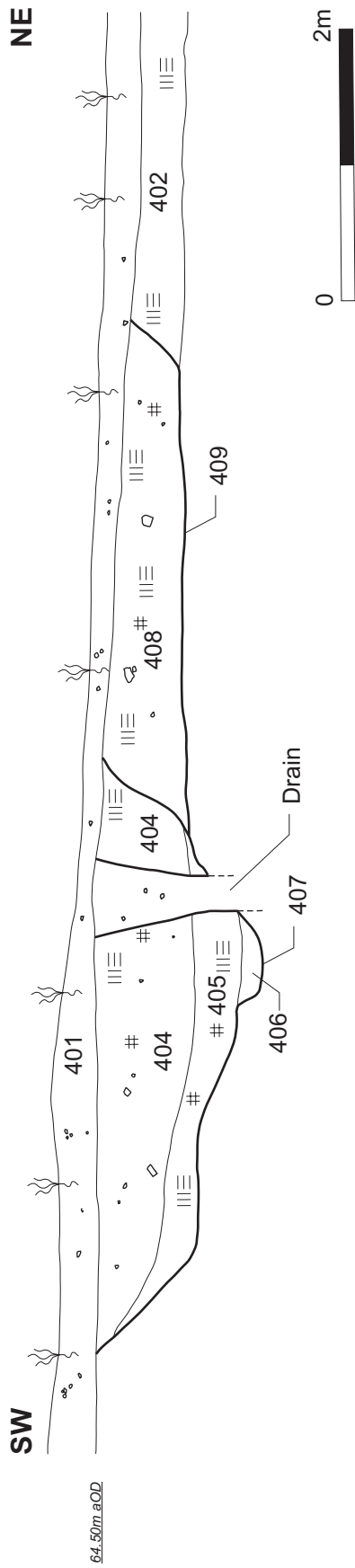
Trench 4, ditches [407] and [409], looking north-east Fig 3

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation revealed two intercutting ditches on the eastern edge of the development area, aligned parallel to Colmworth road. Their stratigraphic position (cutting the subsoil and overlain by topsoil) and the pottery retrieved from the later ditch would suggest a 19th century origin. They are likely to have served the dual purposes of plot boundary and drainage.

The removal of topsoil and subsoil prior to the evaluation does not appear to have impacted the site's archaeological resource.

**Section 1, Trench 4**



## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

BBCHEPS 2010 *Brief for a programme of archaeological field evaluation at land adjacent to Green Acres, Colmworth Road, Little Staughton*, Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Planning Services

IfA 2008 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Institute for Archaeologists

IfA 2010 *Code of Conduct*, Institute for Archaeologists

NA 2010 *Land adjacent to Green Acres, Colmworth Road, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire, written scheme of investigation for an archaeological trial trench evaluation*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

## **Websites**

British Geological Survey website: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm>



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