



Northamptonshire  
County Council

# Northamptonshire Archaeology

**Archaeological Investigation  
of Land Adjacent to 32 High Street,  
Flitton,  
Bedfordshire  
August 2007**



Emma Rae

September 2007

Report 07/142

Accession number BEDFM:2007.610

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**QUALITY CONTROL**

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Archaeological investigation of adjacent to 32 High Street Flitton, Bedfordshire	
Short description	An Archaeological investigation was undertaken on land adjacent to 32 High Street Flitton. One trial trench was excavated within the proposed house plot to investigate the presence of any archaeology. No significant archaeological remains were found although some modern features were revealed. These consisted of a layer of rubble foundation, a substantial brick built drain and a layer of sandstone rubble which appears to have been deposited to level the area.	
Project type	Trial trench evaluation	
Site status		
Previous work	No previous work on this land	
Current Land use	Vacant plot	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	-	
Significant finds	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Buckinghamshire	
Site address	32 High St Flitton	
Study area	20 square metres	
OS Easting & Northing(	505965, 235800	
Height OD	64.22 AOD – 62.76 AOD	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Leslie Anne Mather, Bedfordshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Emma Rae	
Project Manager	Adam Yates	
Sponsor or funding body	Prospective land owner	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	20 <sup>th</sup> August 2007	
End date	21 <sup>st</sup> August 2007	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location(</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical	BEDFM: 2007.610	None
Paper	BEDFM: 2007.610	Context file and site registers, 1 plan and section sheet
Digital	BEDFM: 2007.610	PDF of report and illustrations
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Archaeological Investigation of Land adjacent to 32 High Street, Flitton, Bedfordshire	
Serial title & volume	07/142	
Author(s)	Emma Rae	
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Date	September 2007	

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION  
OF LAND ADJACENT TO 32 HIGH STREET,  
FLITTON  
BEDFORDSHIRE  
AUGUST 2007**

***ABSTRACT***

*An archaeological investigation was undertaken on land adjacent to 32 High Street Flitton. One trial trench was excavated within the proposed house plot to investigate the presence of any archaeology. No significant archaeological remains were found although some modern features were revealed. These consisted of a layer of rubble foundation, a substantial brick- built drain and a layer of sandstone rubble which appears to have been deposited to level the area.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Archaeological investigation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology for Mr Steven Richards in August 2007 on land at 32 High Street Flitton, Bedfordshire (Fig 1).

The fieldwork was designed to meet the requirements of the project brief issued by Bedfordshire County Council (BCCHEs 2007), and provide the opportunity to add to our knowledge of the origins and development of Flitton and to further understand how the development of Flitton is linked with the development of the broader area (BCCHEs 2007). The site archive has been issued the accession code BEDFM: 2007.610 by Bedfordshire Museums.

**2 BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Archaeological background**

The south Bedfordshire region has an extensive archaeological background dating from the Roman period. The historic environment record has several listings for the immediate area surrounding Flitton, which include a Roman site at Ruxox (HER No: 918) as well as possible Roman roads (HER No: 3214, 10449) and some medieval and post-medieval sites (HER No: 1850, 3154, 3621, see Appendix 1 for full list).

The village of Flitton appears to have a rich history and has been present in some form for many hundreds of years. The village was recorded in the Domesday book in 1086 and has been associated with the De Grey family for over 700 years. The site is located in the historic centre of Flitton, opposite the medieval St. John the Baptist Church (HER No: 1059), which has 15<sup>th</sup>-century origins and was built at the instigation of Edmund Lord Grey of Ruthin.

There has been a limited amount of archaeological investigation carried out within the village, due largely to a lack of development and expansion. In July 2007 Albion Archaeology carried out an investigation of land on the other side of the vicarage (HER No: 3620) where a number of burials were uncovered (L A Mather pers comm). These are presumed to be associated with the old churchyard which has now been separated from the church by the High Street.

## **2.2 Topography and geology**

Topographically, the site lies at the centre of Flitton, with the River Flit to the north. The site is on a lower plateau than the adjacent Balliol House. The ground slopes to the south, the highest level being 64.22 going down to 62.76 AOD.

The geology in this area is of the Flitwick association, the dominant kind being gleyed brown earth over lower Greensand and Jurassic Clays (BCCHEs 2007).

## **3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Objectives**

The current objectives of the evaluation were defined in the project brief issued by Bedfordshire County Council (BCCHEs 2007):

- Establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site, recovering artifacts to assist in the development of type series within the region and to recover any possible palaeoenvironmental deposits to determine local environmental conditions
- Place the archaeology of the site within its local, regional and national archaeological context.
- To define any potential constraints for further archaeological fieldwork including areas of disturbance, service locations etc.

The national framework for research is set out by English Heritage (EH 1997). The broad research frameworks for the eastern counties of England are set out by Brown and Glazebrook (2000); this does not as yet include Bedfordshire, although it is envisaged it will be included in future revisions. A research framework for Bedfordshire currently exists in draft form (Oake in prep). The research aims set out in these documents have been addressed by this project.

### **3.2 Methodology**

The evaluation trench was located using fixed points on published Ordnance Survey base maps. The original location of the trench was altered to a slightly different angle to that proposed on the specification due to a large mound of concrete and other general rubble in the middle of the site (Fig 2). The topsoil and other overburden were removed by a mini-digger excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, operating under archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation proceeded as far as the natural substrate or the first significant archaeological horizons, whereupon excavation continued by hand. All potential archaeological features were investigated.

Standard Northamptonshire Archaeology recording procedures were employed (NA 2004). All works were conducted in accordance with the *IFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (1994, revised 2001) and the *Code of Conduct* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1985, revised 2000).

As all features uncovered were interpreted as modern none showed any potential for preservation of environmental data. The trial trench was mechanically backfilled once all the archaeology had been recorded.

## **4 EXCAVATED EVIDENCE**

### **4.1 General stratigraphic sequence**

The natural geology of the site was a clean Greensand (1009). This natural remained consistent throughout the extent of the trial trench. The subsoil (1002) was a mid to dark brown silty sand with inclusions of highly degraded sandstone, brick fragments, charcoal, modern pottery, flint fragments and some small cobbles. Although the subsoil was not compact it was much firmer than the topsoil which sealed it. The subsoil measured between 0.25m and 0.35m thick throughout the trench. The topsoil (1001) was very dark brown, almost black, loose silty sand measuring approximately 0.25m thick throughout the trench. A high degree of organic material was evident in the topsoil, being due to the overgrown nature of the site and the use of the area as a dump site for vegetation waste over a number of years.

### **4.2 Archaeological features**

The excavation of the trial trench revealed only a small number of post-medieval features (Fig 3), the most substantial of which was a brick-built post medieval drain (1006) (Plate 1) with two associated levelling deposits.

Overlying the natural (1009) was a layer of rubble (1005), 0.15-0.20m thick (Fig3, plan 1 and section 1). This layer appears to have been installed for the purposes of levelling the area and providing a solid platform upon which to install the drain. This rubble (1005) also extends on a north-west, south-east alignment and has a clear edge running diagonally through the trench (which appears to correspond with a dip in the level of the natural (1004)). As this was the same material as below the drain it demonstrates that areas outside the direct vicinity of the drain were also levelled or possibly built upon.

The brick-built drain (1006) ran on an approximate east-west alignment and was located 3.6m from the south end of the trench (Fig 3 plan1 and section 1). The drain measured 0.55m wide by 0.40m deep, had an edging of one brick width on both sides and a curved brick capping (Plate 1). A second layer of rubble (1003) 0.20-0.25m thick was largely comprised of sandstone rubble (Fig 3 plan 1 and section 2 sealed both the first rubble layer (1005) and the natural geology (1009). This overlying layer appears to have enveloped the drain and raised the ground level to a height equal with the brick edging of the drain. This would have left the curved capping of the drain visible on the ground surface, if the subsoil and topsoil were not replaced after the levelling.

The only other feature found within this trench was a land drain cut into the subsoil (1002), which ran on an east-west alignment which was interpreted as modern and was therefore left *in situ* and undamaged.

## **5 THE FINDS**

Some modern fragments of pottery and bricks were found whilst trenching, however, these were discarded on site.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

Archaeological investigation of land adjacent to 32 High Street Flitton has revealed no significant archaeology, although it is clear that this land has had some use in more recent history seen through the levelling of the area and installation of post-medieval brick-built drain. This activity is likely to be associated with construction of or additions to the Victorian Vicarage adjacent to the plot. This lack of significant archaeology, does, however, still prove useful to our interpretation and understanding of the archaeology and history of the village of Flitton as a whole. Archaeological evaluation in July 2007 revealed the burials of at least fifteen individuals to the east of the Old Vicarage. In view of these findings, Albion Archaeology (Albion Archaeology, 2007) have suggested that the site of the vicarage may have been the location for an early



medieval church in Flitton. If the vicarage site is in fact the original church location it is clear from the results presented in this report that the associated cemetery does not appear to extend at all to the west.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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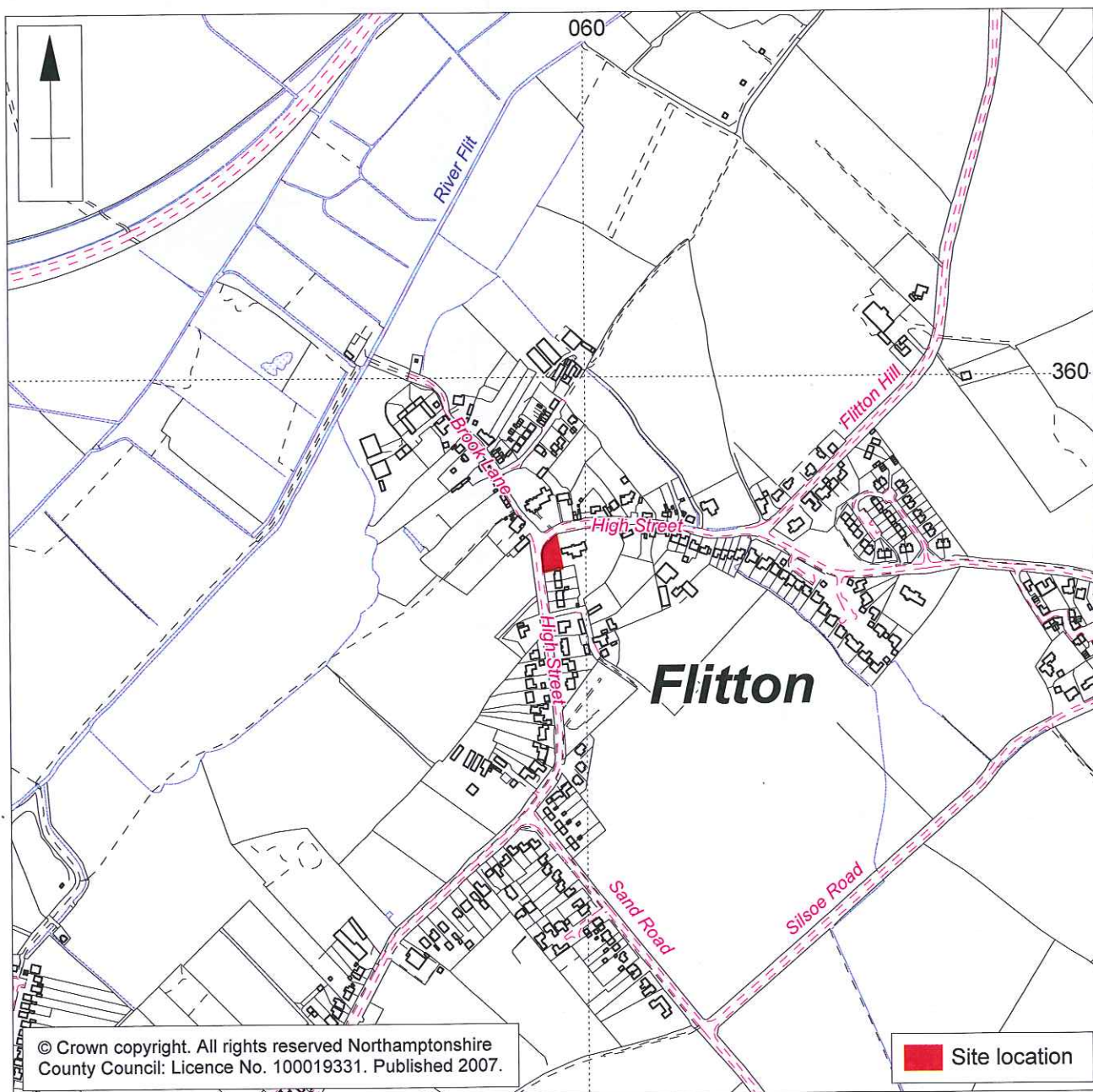
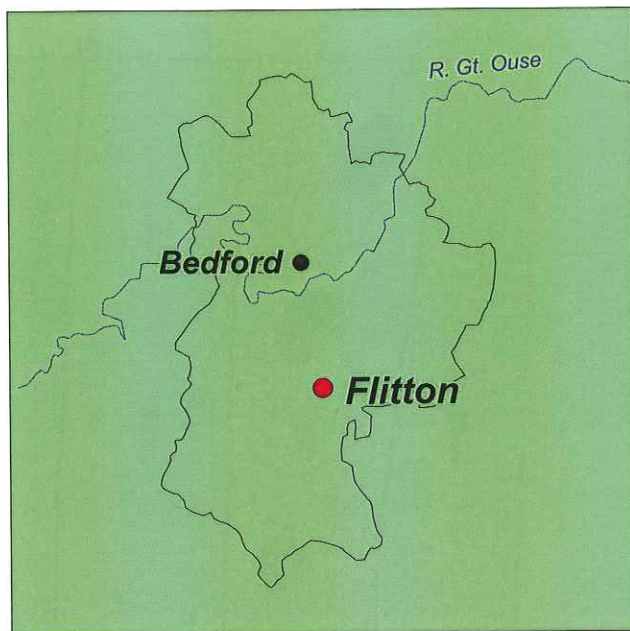
Oake, M, in prep *An Archaeological Research Framework for Bedfordshire*

## APPENDIX 1: HER RECORDS FOR AREA SURROUNDING 32 HIGH ST FLITTON

HER NO	NGR (TL)	DESCRIPTION
217	0764 3617	Moated site (remains of) situated at Newbury Farmhouse.
918	049 360	Group Number given to archaeological work around Ruxox where substantial Roman features, burials and artefacts have been investigated since 1957.
1059	0595 3588	Church of St Johns The Baptist, early 15 <sup>th</sup> century with Grey Mortuary Chapel of 1608. Church generally built of ironstone between 1440-1489 by De Grey, Earl of Bedford.
1850	030 043	Late medieval/early medieval mill at Hollington Farm.
2771	050 360	Find spot of worked flints dating from the Mesolithic to Neolithic.
2775	0530 3658	Extended burial with late pre-Roman Iron Age pottery.
3154	0698 3567	Post-medieval mill dated 1881, now demolished.
3213	058 366	Undated boundary ditch defined as a cropmark marked on 1821 Estate map.
3214		Course of Roman road, listed in <b>Viatore's</b> , SE Midlands 1964, but not proven.
3613	0599 3584	No 25-27 High Street, mid 19 <sup>th</sup> century 2 storey cottage.
3614	0602 3585	No 29 High Street, 19 <sup>th</sup> century brick building formerly the 'Old White Horse' public house.
3619	0605 3582	No 44 High Street, circa 17 <sup>th</sup> or 18 <sup>th</sup> century Grade 2 listed building.
3620	0599 3580	The 'Old vicarage' site of post-medieval building with 20 <sup>th</sup> additions.
3621	0601 3574	16 <sup>th</sup> to 17 <sup>th</sup> century timber framed building, Grade 2 listed with 20 <sup>th</sup> additions.
4326	063 362	Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead.
5020		Course of Roman road, listed in <b>Viatore's</b> , SE midlands 1964, but not proven.
7658	066 359	Described as 'Old Sand' visible on old map of 1757, now ploughed over.
7659	059 359 063 365	Road situated between Flitton Church and Hollington Farm visible on Jeffrey's map of Bedfordshire dated 1765.
7660	058 357	Remains of possible moated site (remains of). Possible site of Flitton vicarage farm or less possibly site of Greenfield Grange.
7661	062 362	Site of Quaker burial ground at Broomhill
7793	064 360 082 372	Trackway shown between Flitton and Clophill visible on Jeffrey's map of Bedfordshire dated 1765.
9836	0595 3588	Mausoleum, early 18 <sup>th</sup> century containing important series of monuments from 1680-1859
10123	056 364	3 buildings (undated) shown in small enclosure visible on 1797 enclosure map (CRO MA32).
10124	0502 3608	Isolated building shown in small enclosure visible on 1797 enclosure map (CRO MA32).
10125	056 366	Irregular shaped enclosure called 'Town Knowl' in area of unenclosed land visible on 1797 enclosure map (CRO MA32).
10449		Course of Roman road visible as metalling in hedgerow on 1826 enclosure map CRO MA 56. Listed in <b>Viatore's</b> , SE midlands 1964, but not proven.
13233	070 353	Ancient woodland listed as Thrift Wood.
16646	060 351	Curvilinear cropmarks (undated), with no obvious entrances.
16999	060 358	Area of medieval settlement core of Flitton. (Area of archaeological sensitivity).
17000	054 350	Area of medieval settlement core of Greenfield. (Area of archaeological sensitivity).

**APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
1001	Topsoil	Loose, very dark brown silty sand, highly organic	0.25
1002	Subsoil	Moderately loose dark brown silty sand, inclusions of sandstone, brick fragments, charcoal, modern pottery, flint fragments and some small cobbles	0.25 - 0.35
1003	Layer	Sandstone rubble make-up layer with high levels sandstone rubble. Orange-brown, quite loose	0.20 – 0.40
1004	Level change in natural	A change in the level of the natural geology which appears as a dip and has been infilled by (1005).	-
1005	Layer	Rubble layer installed directly below the brick built drain (1006), brick, sandstone and cobble inclusions	0.20
1006	Drain	Brick-built post-medieval drain, 0.40m high x 0.55m wide. Edging of one brick width on each side and curved brick capping.	0.4
1007	Cut	Cut of modern land drain, runs approximately east – west through trench	-
1008	Fill	Compact dark brown silty sand fill of land drain.	Unknown
1009	Natural	Mottle grey/yellow/brown/orange greensand	-



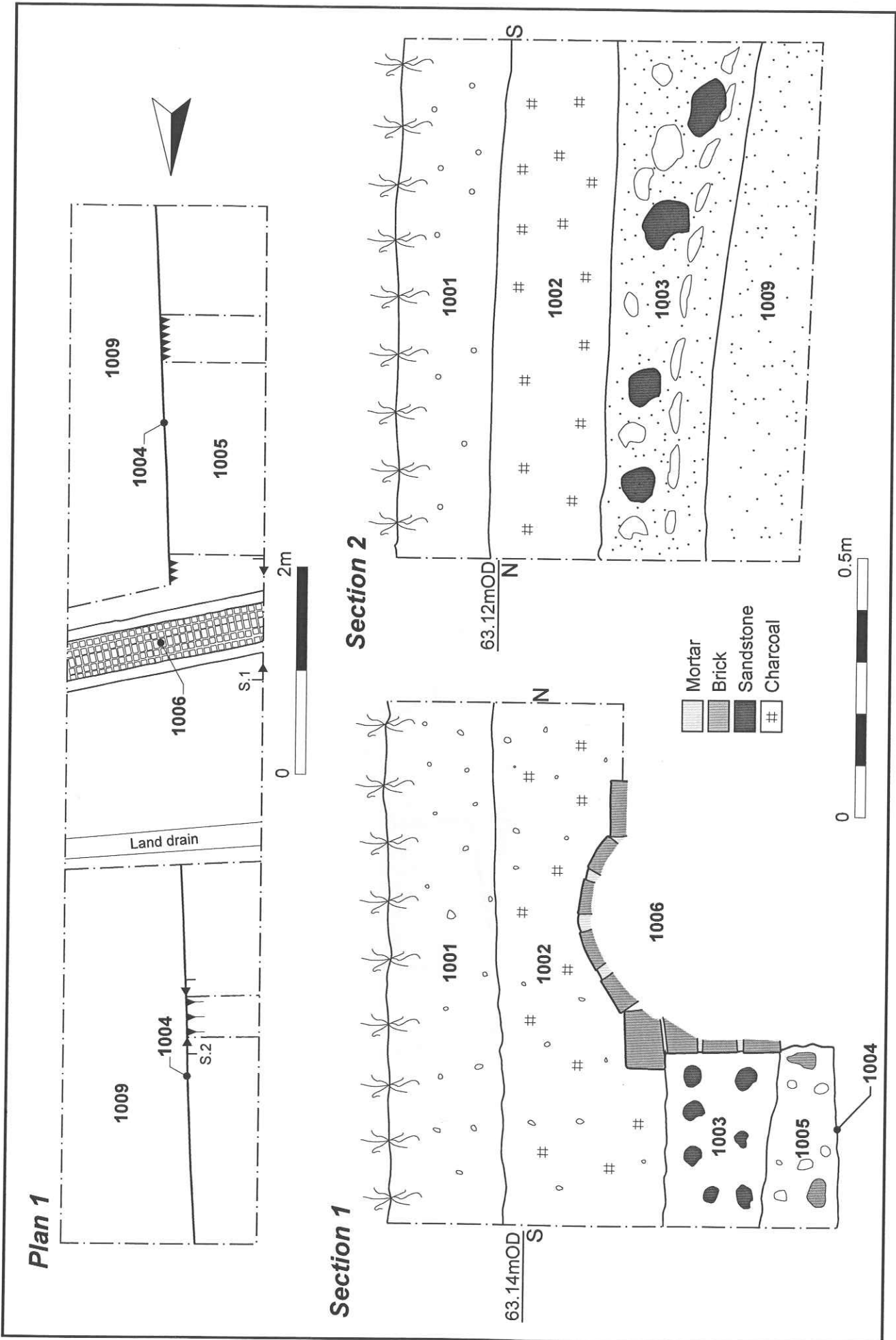
Scale 1:7500

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:250

Trench location Fig 2



Trench and section plans Fig 3



Plate 1: Post- medieval brick built drain showing underlying rubble layer and enveloping sandstone rubble layer