



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological evaluation of land at Thistledome Charwelton, Northamptonshire December 2012



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Report 13/04

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: 140018
Project name	Archaeological evaluation of land at Thistledome, Charwelton, Northamptonshire, December 2012	
Short description	In December 2012, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of Browns Developments Ltd, on land at 'Thistledome' Charwelton, Northamptonshire. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed or recovered during the evaluation.	
Project type	Evaluation	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Derelict plot	
Future work	unknown	
Monument type/ period	Modern	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Thistledome, Charwelton	
Study area	0.22ha	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 53448 56075	
Height OD	c 153 m AOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Liz Mordue Northamptonshire County Council Planning	
Project Design originator	Jim Brown Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Tim Upson-Smith Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Jim Brown Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	Browns Developments Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	12/2012	
End date	12/2012	
ARCHIVES	Location	Content
Physical		
Paper		Evaluation pro forma sheets, context sheets, colour slides, black and white contact prints, digital photographs
Digital		Report text and figures
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Archaeological evaluation of land at Thistledome, Charwelton, Northamptonshire, December 2012	
Serial title & volume	13/04	
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF LAND AT THISTLEDOME
CHARWELTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
DECEMBER 2012**

Abstract

In December 2012, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of Browns Developments Ltd, on land at 'Thistledome' Charwelton, Northamptonshire. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed or recovered during the evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Browns Developments Ltd to carry out archaeological trial trenching on a proposed development site at 'Thistledome', Charwelton, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 53448 56075, Fig 1). The works were undertaken in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) and in accordance with the brief (Mordue 2012) and the Written Scheme of Investigation (Brown 2012).

The proposed development area comprises a compact block of land, approximately 0.22ha in extent, located on the eastern edge of the village of Charwelton.

The programme of archaeological investigation involved the excavation of three trenches across the development area, the results of which are presented in this report.

The works were conducted in accordance with the specification, *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008) and the *Code of Conduct* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, revised 2010). The written scheme of investigation was approved in advance of a start on site by the Northamptonshire County Council Assistant Archaeological Advisor who also monitored the completion of the work on site.

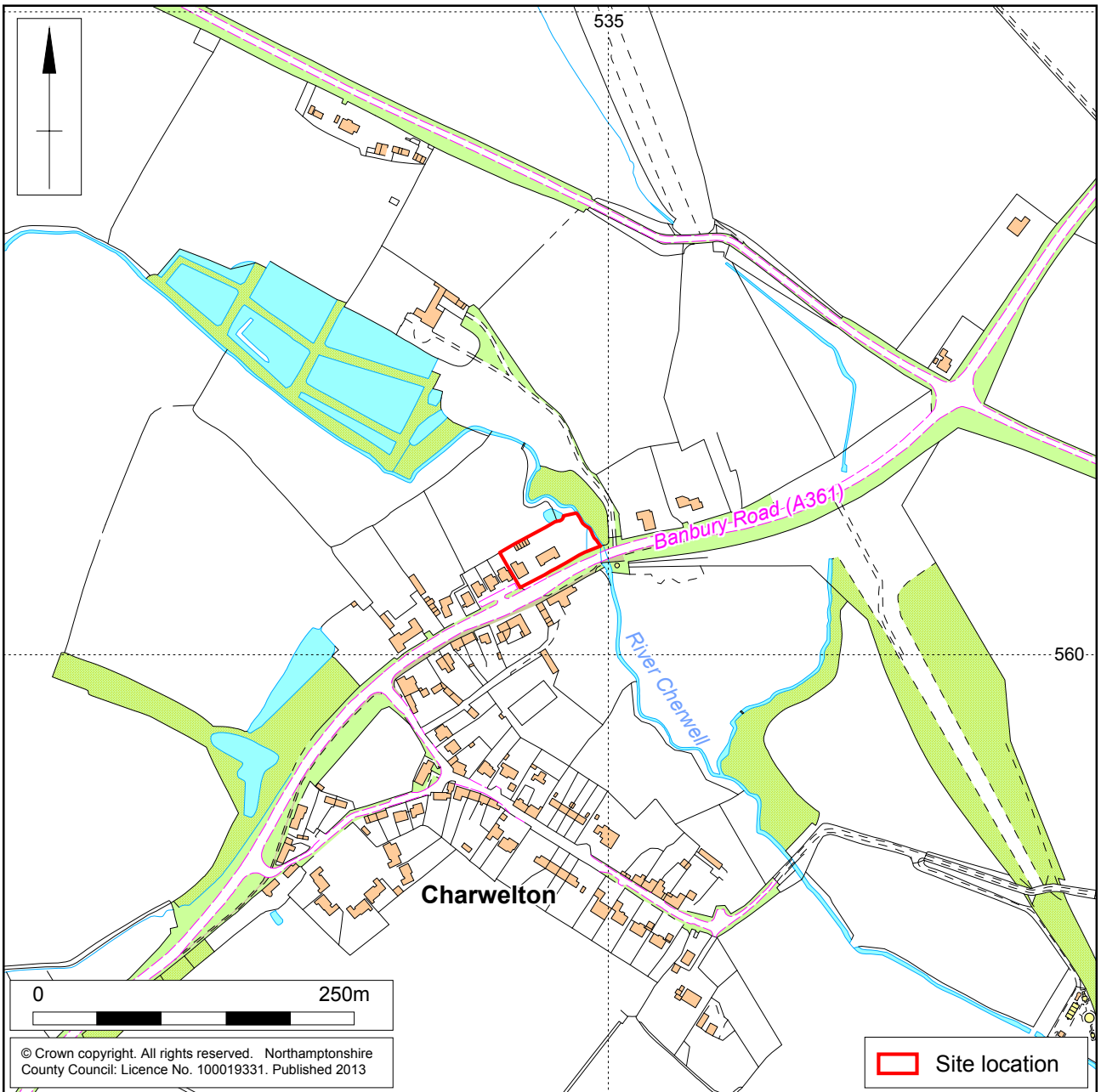
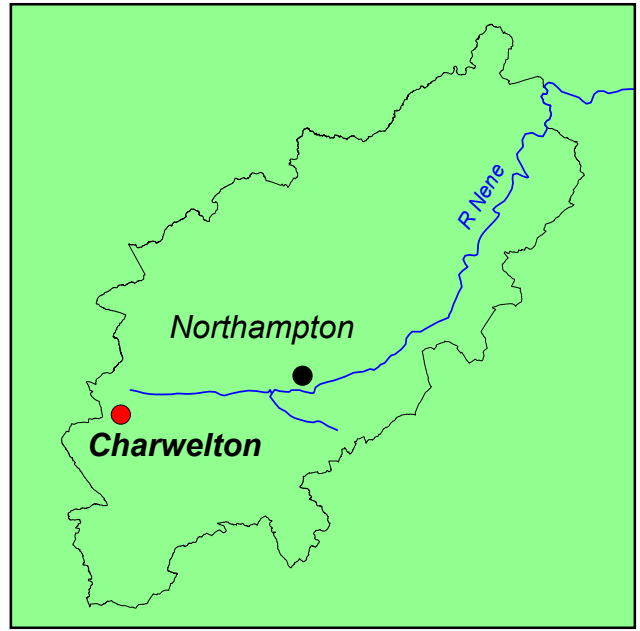
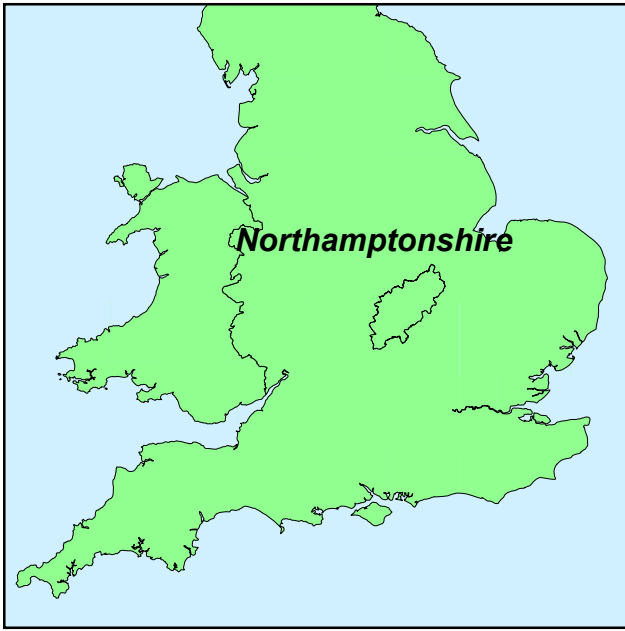
Northamptonshire archaeology is an Institute for Archaeologists Registered Organisation No 48.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, geology and topography

The development area is located on the north-eastern side of the modern village of Charwelton comprising an area of approximately 0.22ha. The site is occupied by one detached and a pair of semi-detached houses and a block of five garages with associated gardens, all of which at the time of the evaluation were in a semi-derelict and overgrown state. The land is bounded by residential properties to the west, grassland to the north, the River Cherwell to the east and fronts onto the Banbury Road (A361) to the south, which is the former Banbury to Lutterworth turnpike road.

The solid geology of the area comprises mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone of the Lias group (<http://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html>).



Scale 1:5,000

Site location Fig 1

2.2 Archaeological background

At the time of the Royal Commission, published in 1981, nothing of prehistoric or Roman date was known from the area and the research focused on the deserted village of Church Charwelton, south-east of the modern village, and Upper Charwelton, the earthworks immediately to the east of the site (RCHME 1981, 43-47).

Historically the two villages have been recorded as a single settlement, making specific observations about the divisions of the manors and settlement difficult to identify. In 1086 Charwelton was divided into four manors, at least one of which belonged to Thorney Abbey. From 1417 onwards the abbey of Thorney and Bittlesden were leasing their land for sheep farming and it was reported by John Rous in 1491 that the larger portion of the settlement at Church Charwelton was in danger of depopulation. By 1547 over 2,000 head of sheep were being kept in the parish and the village had been greatly reduced in population.

The medieval settlement around Charwelton Hall, the original Upper Charwelton, is thought to have been completely cleared by the 16th century and was largely resettled on the west bank of the river from the late 17th century onwards, and which developed into its modern form.

The earthworks beside the Banbury Road, east of the river, have been damaged by quarrying materials to build the old station yard associated with the railway. A large pond which is known to have occupied the development area may either be an original medieval manorial element, a post-medieval stock-rearing element or a flooded quarry. Land immediately to the north of the development contained ridge and furrow earthworks (RCHME 1981, fig 41, 46).

One of the other important aspects of Charwelton are the many elements of its manorial estates that survive, comprising a landscape of former house platforms and holloways, numerous fish ponds, waterways and ditch systems, together with an extensive open field system and at least three windmill mounds.

Historic Environment Record data search

The Historic Environment Record was consulted for an inventory of all recorded events and monuments within 250m radius of the proposed development site. The following inventory of sites excludes standing buildings and Listed Buildings.

Table 1: Inventory of Historic Environment Record data

Period	HER Ref.	Event or monument
undated	6704	linear features on aerial photographs, ?trackways/boundaries
prehistoric	367	possible prehistoric activity, fieldwalking, flint finds
medieval	383	evidence of industrial activity, site of windmill
	384	Upper Charwelton, settlement earthworks, closes, fishponds and probable site of former manor, Charwelton Hall, packhorse bridge over the River Cherwell
	387	Church Charwelton, settlement earthworks, closes, fishponds, grange and probable site of former manor, Charwelton House
	9874	ridge and furrow cultivation earthworks
post-medieval	386	fishpond
	408	Great Central Railway
	9401	Banbury to Lutterworth turnpike toll road

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The aims of the archaeological evaluation are specified in the Written Scheme of Investigation (NA 2012).

The general purpose was to understand the nature, function and character of the site in its cultural and environmental setting, specifically:

- *establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site;*
- *recover artefacts to assist in development of the type series within the region;*
- *and to recover palaeo-environmental remains where they are encountered.*

The excavation was carried out within the parameters suggested by the published research priorities set out for the East Midlands (EH 1997; Cooper 2006; Knight *et al* 2012).

3.2 Methodology

Three trial trenches were excavated, two were 20m long by 1.8m wide, and one was 15m long by 1.8m wide (Figs 1 and 2).

The trial trenches were accurately measured in and marked out prior to the commencement of work using known points mapped by the Ordnance Survey.

Machine excavation was under the direction of an experienced archaeologist. Trenches were excavated by machine using a toothless bucket to reveal undisturbed natural horizons.

Recording followed standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures (NA 2011). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* trench sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation.

Digital photographs formed the principal photographic record for report purposes; these were supplemented with 35mm monochrome negatives, and colour transparencies.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Three trenches were excavated within the proposed development area. The trenches were placed to give a broad coverage of the development area (Fig 2).

The modern infill of the former pond was located within the north-eastern end of Trench 1. The fill contained modern brick and concrete and appears to be have been broadly contemporary with the construction of the now semi-derelict properties on the site, probably c1970s. The cut for the pond was a 45° slope, the former pond was machine excavated to a depth of 1.2m, at this point excavation ceased due to health and safety constraints.

A modern driveway surface, service trench and drain were exposed in Trench 2. The driveway surface and a second modern drain were also exposed within Trench 3. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed or recovered during the course of the evaluation.



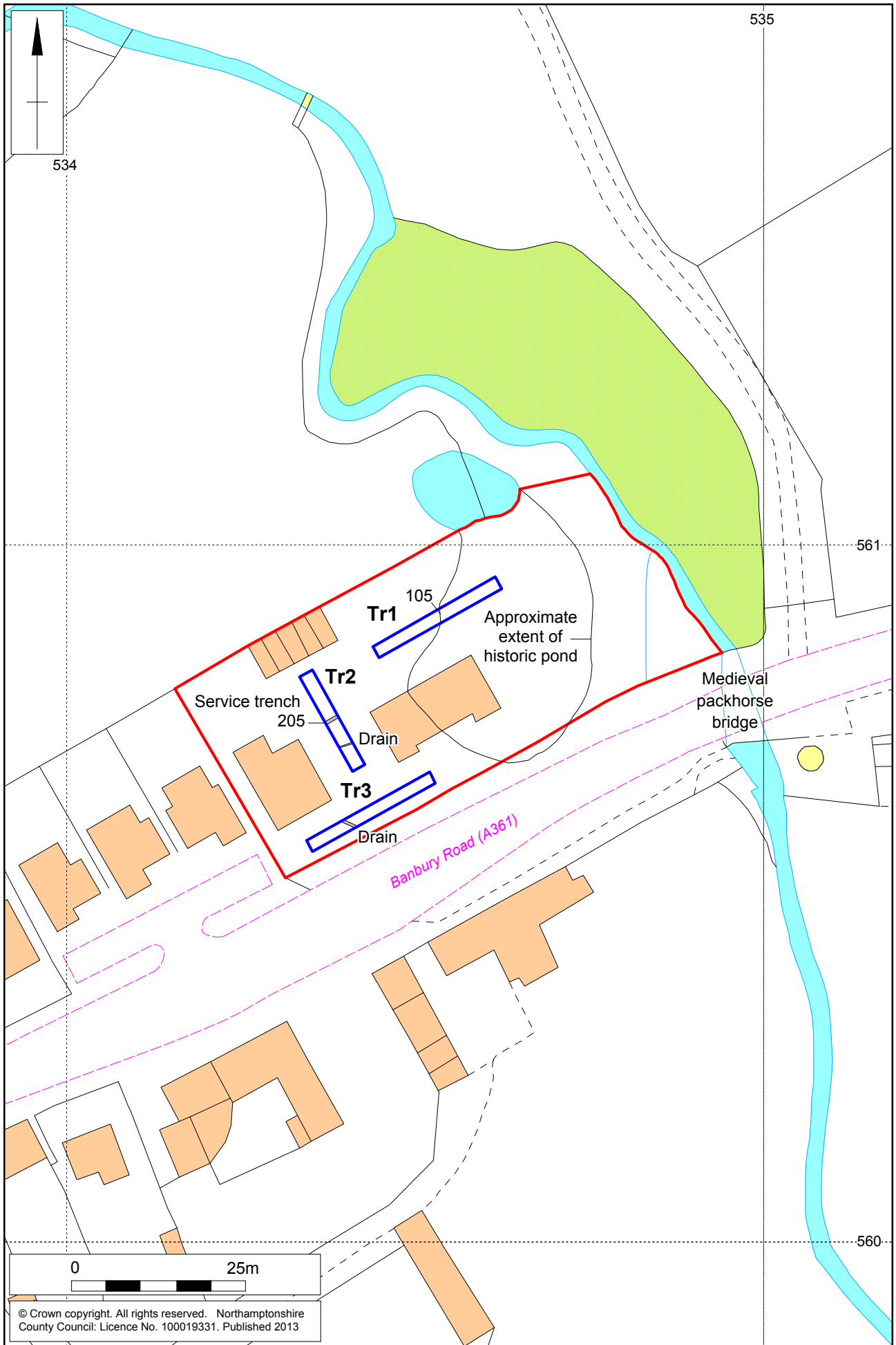
Trench 1, looking north-east

Fig 2



Trench 1, typical section

Fig 3



Scale 1:750 (A4)

Trench location Fig 4

5 DISCUSSION

The trial trenching has demonstrated that no archaeological features survive within the evaluated areas. It was not possible to discern the original purpose of the now partially in-filled pond, whether it was a quarry or always had been intended to be a pond was not clear. The pond, however, had been partially backfilled in more recent years perhaps as late as the 1970s.

No features of archaeological interest or artefacts were recovered or observed during the evaluation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Web sites

<http://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/geindex/home.html>

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT TABLES

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
1	20m x 1.8m NE-SW	SP 53448 56075	153m aOD	0.48m,
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy loam	0.12m thick	—
102	Subsoil	Orange-brown sandy clay	0.36m thick	—
103	Natural	Mottled orange-grey sandy clay	—	—
104	Pond fill	Brown/black clay loam, with modern inclusions		—
105	Pond cut	c45° cut not bottomed	Extent see Fig 2-1.20m + deep	—

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
2	15m x 1.8m NNW-SSE	SP 53448 56075	153m a OD	0.6m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
201	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey sandy loam	0.16m thick	—
202	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay	0.44m thick	—
203	Natural	Mottled orange-brown sandy clay, with grey clay pockets	—	—
204	Surface	Broken up concrete surface		—
205	Service trench cut	Vertical cut of modern service trench	0.5m wide	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
3	20m x 1.8m NE-SW	SP 53448 56075	153m aOD	1.03m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
301	Topsoil	Dark grey sandy loam	0.23m thick	—
302	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay	0.80m thick	—
303	Natural	Mottled grey-orange-brown sandy clay	—	—



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