



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation at 5 Church Street, Charwelton Northamptonshire



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Northamptonshire
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Report 12/15

February 2012



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QUALITY CONTROL

| | Print name | Signed | Date |
|-------------|--------------|--------|------|
| Checked by | Pat Chapman | | |
| Verified by | Adam Yates | | |
| Approved by | Andy Chapman | | |

OASIS REPORT FORM

| PROJECT DETAILS | | |
|---|---|--|
| Project name | Archaeological trial trench evaluation at 5 Church Street, Charwelton, Northamptonshire | |
| Short description (250 words maximum) | An archaeological trial trench excavation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology at 5 Church Street, Northamptonshire prior to the proposed construction of a proposed residential development on the site. Two trenches were excavated. Trench 1 on the driveway contained a gully and quarry pit and Trench 2, which was positioned over the footprint of the new dwelling, contained a single ditch. Apart from these features the development area is disturbed by a concrete platform for the standing garage and quarrying. | |
| Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc) | Evaluation | |
| Site status (none, NT, SAM etc) | None | |
| Previous work (SMR numbers etc) | None | |
| Current Land use | Garden land associated with number 5 | |
| Future work (yes, no, unknown) | No | |
| Monument type/ period | Post-medieval quarrying and undated ditches | |
| Significant finds (artefact type and period) | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | |
| County | | |
| Site address (including postcode) | 5 Church Street, Charwelton, Northamptonshire | |
| Study area (sq.m or ha) | | |
| OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code) | NGR 453482 255816 | |
| Height OD | 153m aOD | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | |
| Organisation | Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) | |
| Project brief originator | NA | |
| Project Design originator | NA | |
| Director/Supervisor | Christopher Jones | |
| Project Manager | Adam Yates | |
| Sponsor or funding body | Mr John Holman | |
| PROJECT DATE | | |
| Start date | 23/01/12 | |
| End date | 24/01/12 | |
| ARCHIVES | Location (Accession no.) | Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc) |
| Physical | Northamptonshire Archaeology | Pottery, tile |
| Paper | Northamptonshire Archaeology | Site file, plans, section |
| Digital | Northamptonshire Archaeology | Mapinfo plans, Word report |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | |
| | Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report) | |
| Title | Archaeological trial trench evaluation at 5 Church Street, Charwelton, Northamptonshire | |
| Serial title & volume | 12/15 | |
| Author(s) | Christopher Jones | |
| Page numbers | 9 | |
| Date | 8/2/12 | |

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Fig 2: The site, with the demolished garage in the foreground, looking north

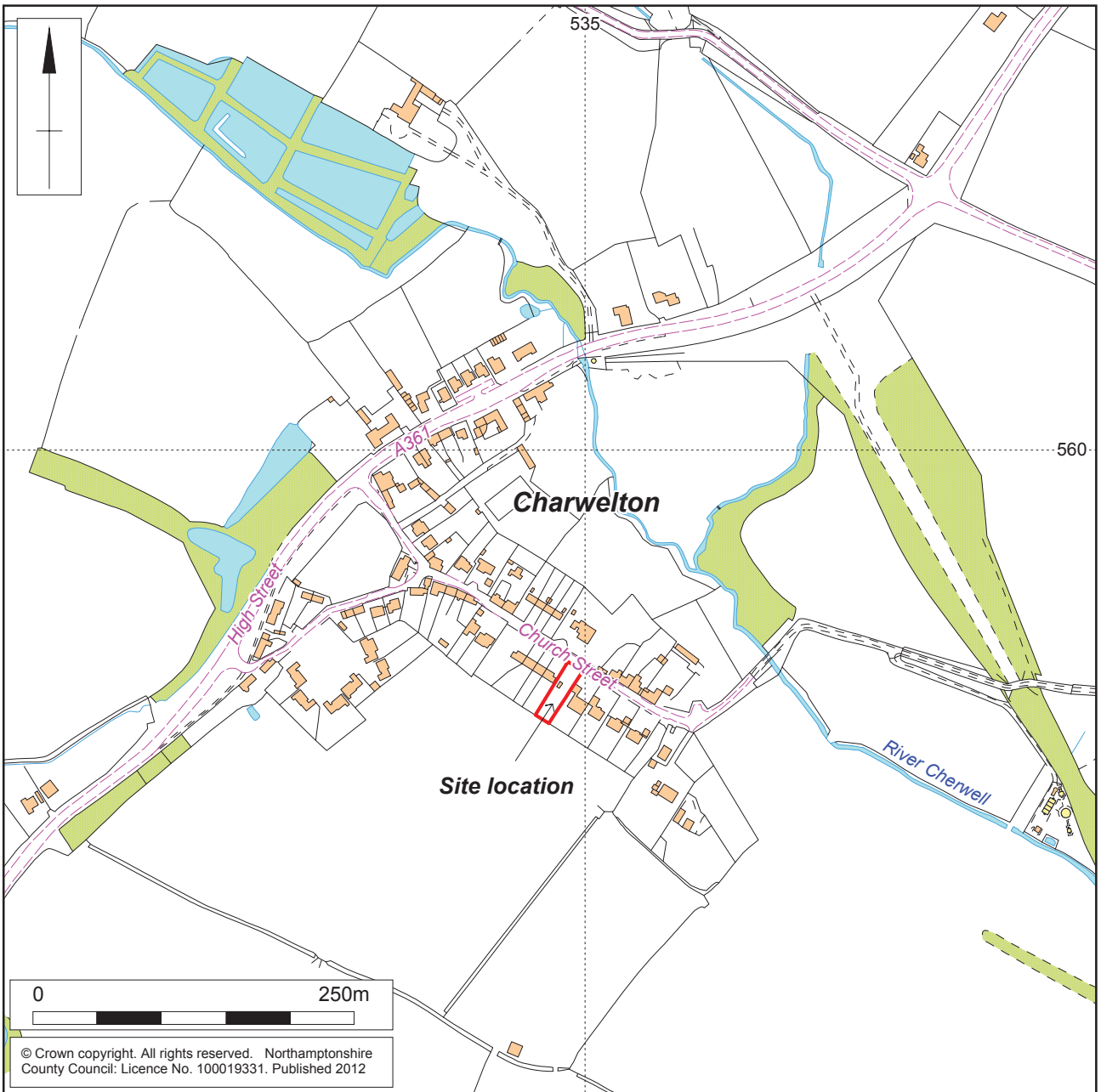
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Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION AT
5 CHURCH STREET, CHARWELTON
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JANUARY 2012**

Abstract

An archaeological trial trench excavation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology at 5 Church Street, Northamptonshire prior to the proposed construction of a proposed residential development on the site. Two trenches were excavated. Trench 1 on the driveway contained a gully and quarry pit and Trench 2, which was positioned over the footprint of the new dwelling, contained a single ditch. Apart from these features the development area is disturbed by a concrete platform for the standing garage and quarrying.

1 INTRODUCTION

In January 2012, an archaeological evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) at 5 Church Street, Northamptonshire (NGR 453482 255816; Fig 1). Planning permission has been granted for residential development on the site (DA/2011/0425). The works have been required in response to a reserved matter application submitted by Mr John Holman. The development comprises the erection of a single detached dwelling, associated infrastructure and driveway.

The site lies within an area of significant archaeological interest and sensitivity. Consequently a programme of archaeological evaluation within the footprint of the proposed building was implemented to meet the requirements of a brief issued by Assistant Archaeological Advisor Northamptonshire County Council (NCC 2011) and the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by NA (2011). This report considers evidence from the evaluation.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the investigation were to:

- Establish the date, nature and extent of the activity or occupation on the development site
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions

Specific research objectives will be drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (English Heritage 1991, Cooper 2006) as relevant depending upon the results of the evaluation.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Topography and geology

Charwelton lies just over 5km south of Daventry, in the west of Northamptonshire. The development site lies to the south of the A361 on the southern side of Church Street. The site formed part of the garden of an adjoining property. A garage within the plot has already been demolished (Fig 2).

The geology of the immediate area is recorded by the British Geological Survey as Glacial Sand and Gravels (bgs.ac.uk/). The site lies at c151m aOD.

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

There are a number of features of archaeological interest within and around the development area. The site lies with the historic core of the village of Upper Charwelton (MNN3469). The village is recorded in Domesday as being divided into four manors, with a population of 11. It is thought that the population declined in the 15th century probably as a result of enclosure of arable land for sheep and the village is recorded in the 18th century as largely depopulated. Earthworks associated with the medieval village are concentrated in an area south of Charwelton House and east of the current village (MNN125875). An apparent leat (MNN125870) leads southwards on the east side of the Cherwell river to Church Charwelton, where an

extensive and complex series of earthworks relate to a series of ponds (MNN125868) and the medieval village of Church Charwelton (MNN3471).



The site, with the demolished garage in the foreground, looking north Fig 2

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

The two trenches were excavated using a JCB fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. Trench 1 was 5m by 1.6m, and Trench 2 10m by 1.6m (Fig 3). The topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological supervision to reveal significant archaeological remains or, where these were absent, the natural substrate. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately at the side of the excavated area. All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

The excavated area was cleaned sufficiently to define any features and the features were then excavated by hand to determine their date and character. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were fully recorded, following standard NA procedures (NA 2006). All archaeological features and deposits were given a separate context number in a sequence continuing from those allocated during the evaluation. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. Artefacts

and ecofacts were collected by hand and retained, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from site (Watkinson and Neal 1998). Unstratified animal bones and modern material were not retained.

The site was planned at a scale of 1:50 and the location of the trench was surveyed and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Sections or profiles through features were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate, and related to Ordnance Datum. A full photographic record comprising both 35mm black and white negatives and colour transparencies was maintained, supplemented with digital images. The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

Both trenches were backfilled with their up-cast, lightly compacted by the mechanical digger.

5 EXCAVATION RESULTS

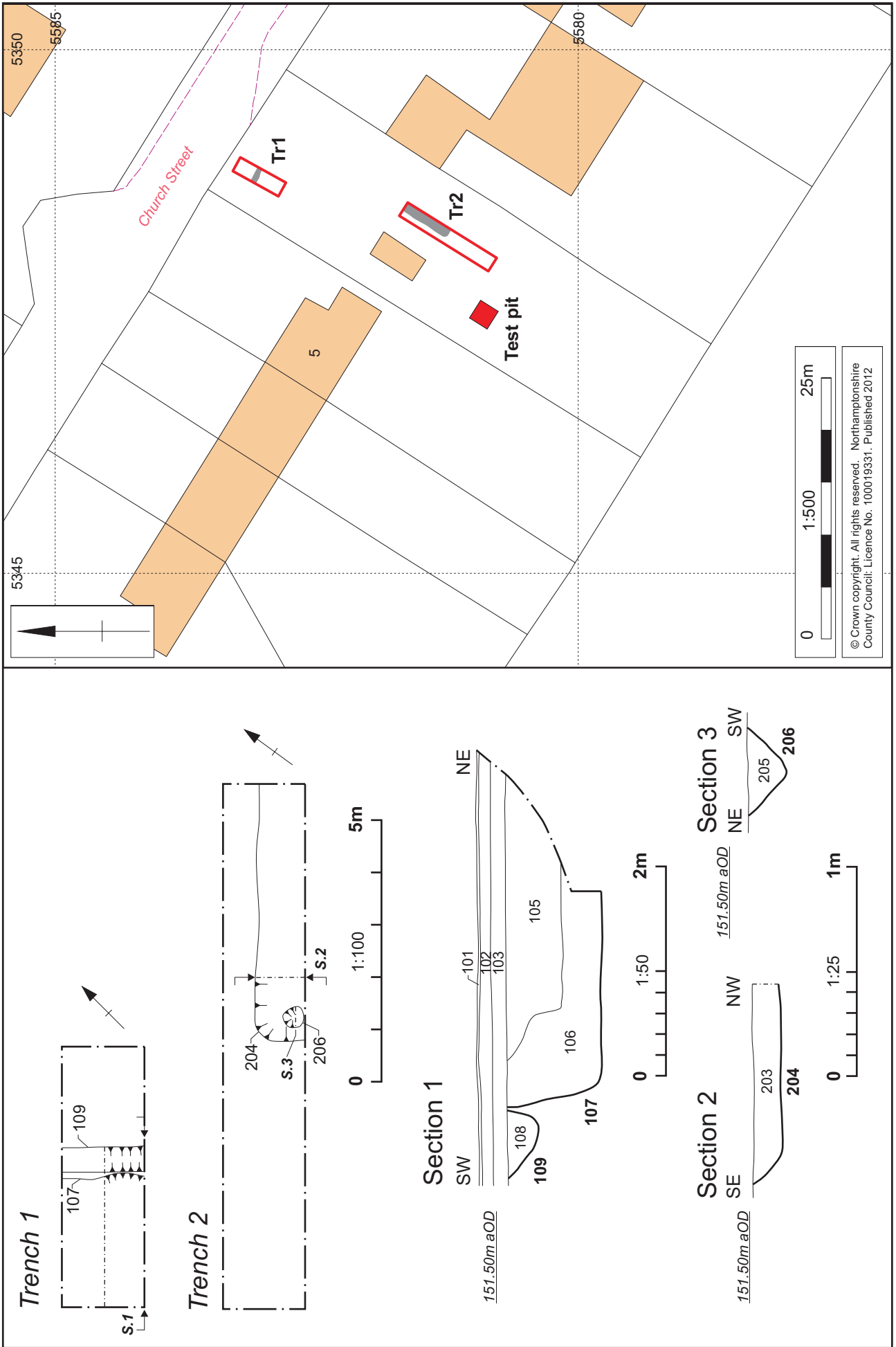
5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was positioned on the proposed driveway and Trench two was positioned over the area of the single dwelling.

It was 5m long by 1.6m wide and aligned north-east by south-west (Fig 3).

The natural substrate (104) was yellow sand gravel, occurring at approximately 0.33m below ground level. Differentiations in the height of the natural were noticed across the trench, probably due to disturbance by quarrying. The subsoil (103) was 0.14m thick and consisted of dark grey-brown sandy clay which was overlaid by a modern levelling layer (102) for the tarmac driveway above (101). No topsoil was present, having been removed when the driveway was laid.

A single gully [109], aligned north-west by south-east, 0.75m wide and 0.30m deep, was recorded at the north-east end of the trench (Fig 3, Section 1 and Fig 4). It had a V-shaped profile and the fill (108) was composed of brown silt clay mixed with occasional small stone.



Trench location, trench plans and sections Fig 3



Gully [109] and quarry pit [107], looking north-east Fig 4

The rest of the trench was disturbed by a large quarry pit [107] with vertical sides and a flat base, at least 2.70m wide and 0.90m deep (Fig 3, Section 1 and Fig 4). The lower fill was composed of dark brown silt clay (106). Pottery included Midlands purple ware which dates from the mid-15th century to the beginning of the 17th century, indicating the earliest date at which the pit was backfilled. The upper fill (105) was orange sand and gravel, probably redeposited natural.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 10m long by 1.6m wide and aligned north-east by south-west (Fig 3).

The natural substrate (202) was yellow sand gravel, occurring at approximately 0.25m below ground level. Directly above the natural was a topsoil layer of dark clay loam (201). There was a shallow ditch terminal [204], aligned north-east to south-west, 1.00m wide and 0.14m deep (Fig 3, Section 2 and Fig 5). It had steep sides and a broad flat base, and a posthole [206] set in its base. The ditch fill was dark brown silty sandy clay. The posthole [206] was 0.40m in diameter and 0.18m deep, with a fill of mid grey-brown silty sandy clay (Fig 3, Section 3 and Fig 5). There were no finds in either the posthole or ditch.



Ditch terminal [204] and posthole [206], looking north-east Fig 5

Just to the south-west of Trench 2, a test-pit, 2m square, was excavated (Fig 3). A sequence of fills similar to the quarry pit in Trench 1 was observed, suggesting the post-medieval quarrying extended to the south. Although the edges of the quarry pit were not observed the base was 1.50m below ground surface.

6 THE FINDS

6.1 The Pottery by Iain Soden

Six sherds of medieval pottery, weighing in total 44g, were recovered from the lower fill of the quarry pit, [107], as follows:

Two sherds of Shelly coarseware, Northants CTS Fabric 330 (c1100-1400), abraded

One sherd of misc sandy coarseware, Northants CTS Fabric 360 (c1100-1400), abraded

One sherd of late medieval reduced ware, Northants CTS Fabric 365 (c1400-1500)

Two sherds of Midland purple ware, Northants CTS Fabric 403 (c1450-1600)

The dating of the context, to the later 15th or 16th century, is best provided by the two sherds of cleanly-broken, un-abraded Midland Purple ware, which provide a *terminus post quem* for the backfilling of the pit. The pottery, which all comprises non-diagnostic body sherds, has no further significance.

6.2 Ceramic tile by Pat Chapman

The two tile sherds weigh 140g. One sherd is 15mm thick and made from a hard coarse sandy orange-brown fabric with occasional tiny inclusions of ironstone, shell and gravel. This sherd comes from a roof tile

The other sherd is 20mm thick, with one surface worn smooth, and made from a hard pale orange-brown fine sandy fabric with cream streaks and the same inclusions. This was probably a floor tile.

These roof and floor tile sherds could date from the 15th century to the early 19th century.

6.3 The animal bone

Three fragments of animal bone weighing 115g were retrieved. There were two fragments from the lower fill of the quarry pit [107] and one from [109]. All were from an unidentified large ungulate.

7 DISCUSSION

A small number of features were observed within the trenches. Quarry pits were noted in Trench 1 and a test-pit to the south. The latest pottery within the backfill dated to the early post-medieval period.

An undated gully aligned along the property frontage may be a former boundary. Similarly an undated ditch may have formed a boundary between two properties. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows that the site was not developed in the late 19th century, although parts of the area were divided into smaller land units (Fig 6). The features found in the trenches may well be associated with these 19th century boundaries. There is no indication of any quarrying in the area on this map.



First Edition Ordnance Survey 1880s,
showing the approximate position of the trial trenches Fig 6

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

| Trench No | Length, width & alignment | NGR | Surface height | Depth & height of natural |
|----------------|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 5m x 1.6m NE-SW | SP 5348 5583 | 151.67m aOD | 0.30m, 151.37m aOD |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Dimensions</i> | <i>Artefacts/Samples</i> |
| 101 | Surface | Mid orange-brown sandy gravel driveway surface | 0.02-0.04m thick | |
| 102 | Layer | Black levelling layer, composed of clinker | 0.12m thick | |
| 103 | Subsoil | Dark grey-brown silty clay, moderate stones | 0.09-0.14m thick | |
| 104 | Natural | Mid orange-yellow sandy gravel | — | |
| 105 | Fill of [107] | Loose mid orange-yellow sandy gravel | 0.54m thick | |
| 106 | Fill of [107] | Soft dark brown-grey silty clay with moderate ironstone | 0.90m thick | Pottery, bone, tile |
| 107 | Pit | Irregular in plan with near vertical sides with uneven base | 2.70m wide 0.90m deep | |
| 108 | Fill of [109] | Dark brown-grey silty clay | 0.30m thick | |
| 109 | Gully | Aligned NW-SE, V-shaped profile | 0.75m wide 0.30m deep | |

| Trench No | Length, width & alignment | NGR | Surface height | Depth & height of natural |
|----------------|---------------------------|---|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 | 40m x 2m E-W | SP 5348 5581 | 152.00m aOD | 0.25m, 151.75m aOD |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Dimensions</i> | <i>Artefacts/Samples</i> |
| 201 | Topsoil | Dark grey silty clay | 0.25m thick | |
| 202 | Natural | Mid orange-yellow sandy gravel | — | |
| 203 | Fill of [204] | Dark brown silty sandy clay | 0.14m thick | |
| 204 | Ditch terminal | Aligned NE-SW, fairly steep sides and uneven base. Posthole [206] in base | 1.00m wide 0.14m deep | |
| 205 | Fill of [206] | Mid dark grey-brown silty sandy clay | 0.18m thick | |
| 206 | Posthole | Oval in plan, V-shaped profile | 0.40m diameter 0.18m deep | |



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