



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation on  
Plot C, Fryer Herne, Orchard Road, Pulloxhill  
Bedfordshire  
December 2013



## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Northamptonshire  
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LUTNM: 2013/24

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**QUALITY CONTROL**

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>Oasis Number: 167256</b>	
Project title	Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation on Plot C, Fryer Herne, Orchard Road, Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire		
Short description	In December 2013, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on Plot C, Fryer Herne, Orchard Road, Pulloxhill, Bedford. Two trenches were excavated within the proposed development area. The trenches appear to lie across a medieval fish pond that extends beyond the trenches. One sherd of mid 13th -15th century pottery was retrieved from the alluvial layer and a 16th century sherd from the subsoil.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Previous work	Desk-based Heritage Assessment		
Current land use	Garden		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Medieval		
Significant finds	None		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Bedfordshire		
Site address	Plot C, Fryer Herne, Orchard Road, Pulloxhill		
Easting Northing	TL 06230 33868		
Area (sq m/ha)	1,200m <sup>2</sup>		
Height aOD	c 100m		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)		
Project brief originator	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists		
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)		
Director/Supervisor	Christopher Jones (NA)		
Project Manager	Ed Taylor (NA)		
Sponsor or funding body	Mr Gary Penning		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date	09/12/13		
End date	09/12/13		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Contents</b>	
Physical	NA Offices LUTNM 2013/24	Site records (1 archive box)	
Paper			
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			
Title	Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation on Plot C, Fryer Herne, Orchard Road, Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire		
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION ON PLOT C  
FRYER HERNE, ORCHARD ROAD, PULLOXHILL, BEDFORDSHIRE  
DECEMBER 2013  
LUTNM: 2013/24**

**Abstract**

*In December 2013, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on Plot C, Fryer Herne, Orchard Road, Pulloxhill. Two trenches were excavated within the proposed development area. The trenches appear to lie across a medieval fish pond that extends beyond the trenches. One sherd of mid 13th-15th century pottery was retrieved from the alluvial layer and a 16th century sherd from the subsoil.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

In December 2013, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) on Plot C, Fryer Herne, Orchard Road, Pulloxhill, Bedford (NGR: TL 06230 33868; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Gary Penning in advance of the proposed development of the land (planning application CB/13/01843/OUT). These works were carried out following a request for archaeological evaluation by Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists (CBCA) (900/HER/17013/HF) in accordance with *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (DCLG 2012).

The works were carried out in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (dated 02/12/13) prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2013). The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the presence of any archaeological features or deposits within the application area and to date and characterise their extent, depth of burial and state of preservation. In addition to the original scope of works a photographic record was made of a possible former moat ditch (see Appendix).

**2 BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Location and geology**

The village of Pulloxhill is located in southern Bedfordshire approximately mid-way between Bedford and Luton. The development area itself lies to the south-east of the village centre and is bounded by modern residential development to the north, west and south. To the north-east is a pasture field. It encompasses an area approximately 1,200m<sup>2</sup> and lies at c 100m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The site is currently an area of rough ground which has largely been cleared of vegetation. There is a slight fall from west to east. Large conifers border the western and northern edges of the site. The north-eastern edge of the site is bordered by a wide ditch, which still holds water. It is thought to be a former moat ditch, although its current depth (over 1m) suggests that it has been repeatedly cleaned since the medieval period.

The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising non calcareous Gley Soil over mainly Decalcified Boulder Clay.

## 2.2 Historical and archaeological background

A desk-based assessment of the site has been carried out (Walker 2013). This presents a full consideration of the site's heritage assets within the area's wider archaeological and historical context, a summary of which is included below.

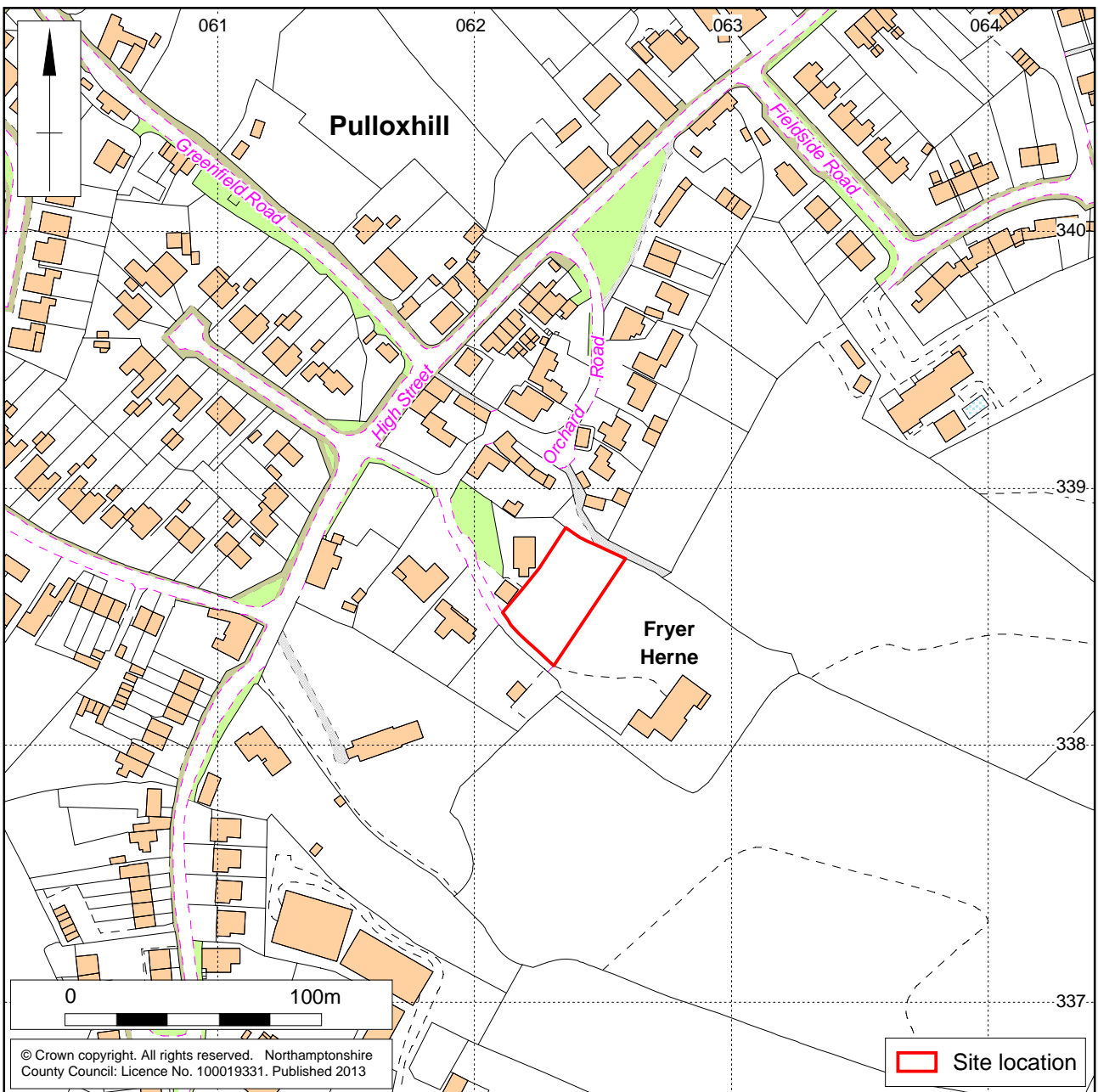
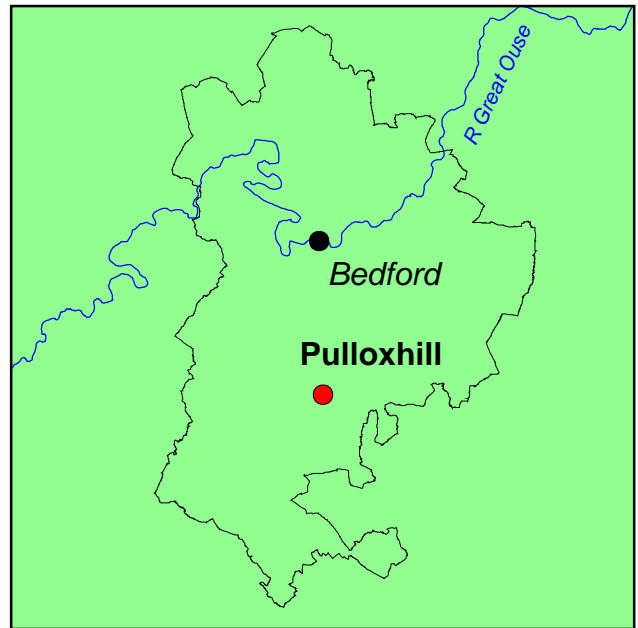
A number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken previously within the village, most as a response to minor development. The closest was a watching brief undertaken in advance of groundworks for the construction of a replacement swimming pool and extension at Fryer Herne immediately to the south-east of the current site (EBD212). No archaeological features or finds were present and undisturbed soils were encountered in both the test pit and trench (Leigh 2008).

Archaeological investigation at St James' Church, immediately to the south-west, has revealed evidence of its medieval fabric and subsequent modification, as well as the 1845-6 work (EBD685). Further investigation during the construction of a new drainage trench revealed evidence of at least ten graves, although detailed analysis of the remains was not possible (EBD495).

Elsewhere in the village, an archaeological investigation undertaken in advance of development revealed evidence of a north to south aligned ditch which contained sherds of pottery dating to the late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (EBD417). Archaeological evaluation of land to rear of The Gables revealed a ditch which contained fragments of Romano-British pottery, brick and tile. These finds were heavily abraded and considered to be residual, the ditch itself being a post-medieval boundary. However, the presence of this material indicates that there may be a Roman building in the vicinity (EBD1005).

Dunstable Priory built a new hall and solar at Pulloxhill in 1288, although there is no record of where this may have been. The present Rectory Farm is 17th century in date and actually a former vicarage, the present Grange, across the road from the church, is 17th or 18th century in date. Either or both may be the location of former manors, as may the moated site within which the site lies.

A rapid archaeological study of the area around the site has been undertaken (Simco 2003). The survey concluded that the south-eastern arm of the moat can be seen to continue to the south-west. A gap in the line of the moat was created by a diagonal access between two fields, but then continues, turning to the north-west as a substantial scarp leading into a linear hollow. This can then be traced as a drop in ground level between the churchyard and Rectory Farm. There were no signs of an earthwork along the High Street. Simco concluded that the resulting large enclosure may be site the of a magnate's enclosure (HER no 7662). The enclosure would have defined the headquarters of an early lord of the manor, who would have then built the parish church within it. She considered that the most likely place for the location of the manor house was within the square area marked on the 19th-century enclosure map, immediately to the south of the current site.



Scale 1:2500

Site Location Fig 1

### 3 METHODOLOGY

Two trial trenches were excavated in accordance with a trench plan prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) and approved by Central Bedfordshire Council's Archaeologist (Fig 3).

The two trenches measured 20m long and 8m long (shortened due to an active water pipe at the south end of the trench). The total length excavated was 28m.

A JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.80m-wide toothless ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features. Archaeological deposits were examined by hand excavation to determine their nature. Recording followed standard NA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (NA 2011). Photography was with 35mm black and white film and digital images. Sections were drawn at scale 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate and related to Ordnance Survey datum. Spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to maximise the recovery of metal objects.

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

### 4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

#### 4.1 General stratigraphy

The underlying geology of sand and gravel (105) was only encountered in Trench 1, at 0.50m below the modern ground surface at the south-west end and 1.0m below the modern ground surface at the north-east end. A layer of alluvium clay, overlying the natural, comprised dark blue-grey silt clay with gravel inclusions, and was seen in both trenches (layers 103 & 203). The subsoil (102 & 202) was grey-brown sandy clay loam with roots and mixed fragments of post-medieval brick, mortar, metal and tile. The topsoil (101 & 201) was dark grey-brown clay loam mixed with roots and modern materials.

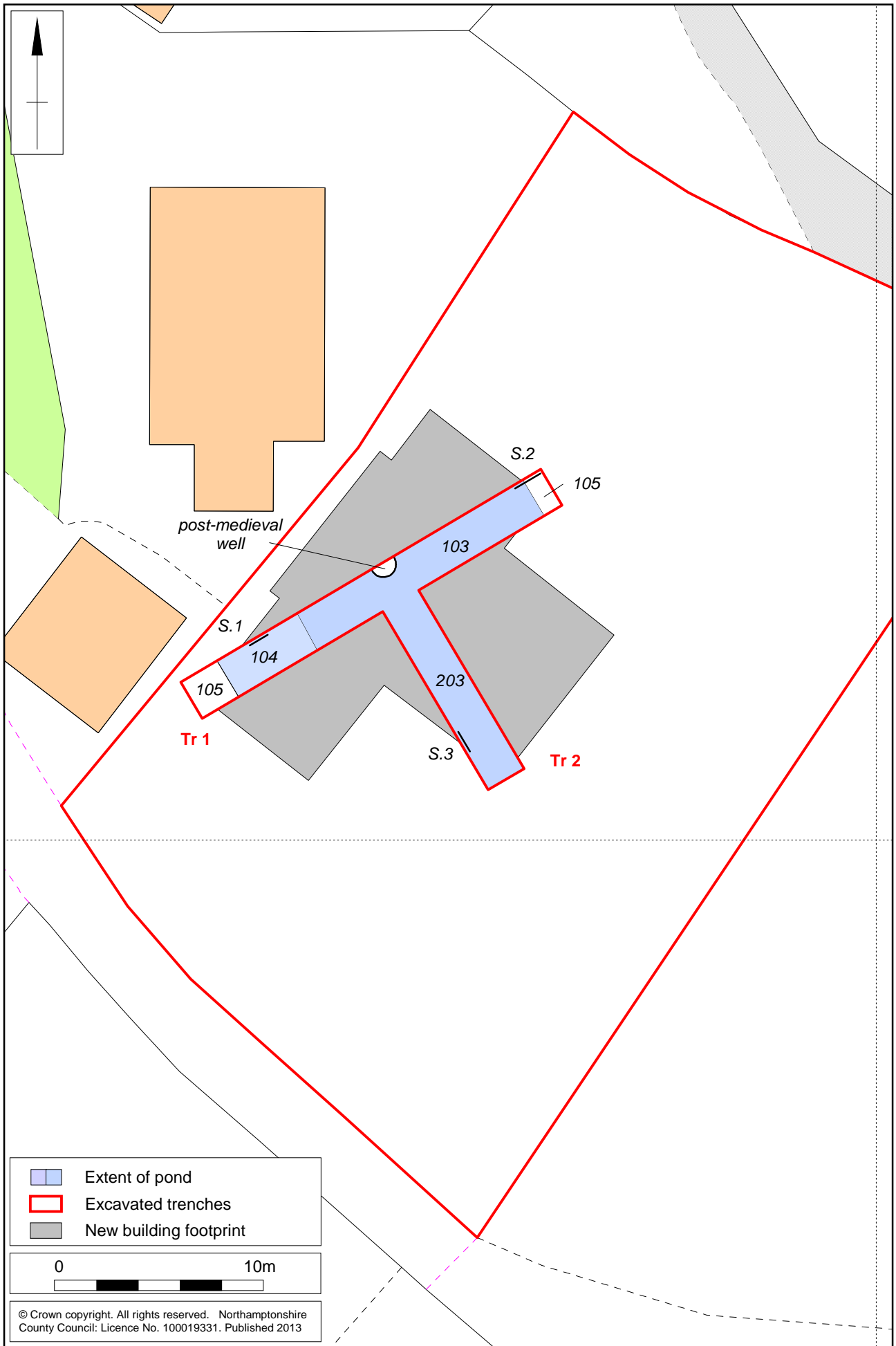
#### 4.2 The trial trenches

Trench 1, 19m long, was aligned south-west to north-east, and Trench 2, 9.5m long, ran southwards from the middle of Trench 1, forming a T-Shape spanning the footprint of the proposed new building (Fig 3).

The trenches appear to lie over the centre of a medieval pond, with the western edge visible at the south-west end of trench 1, while rising natural at the eastern end indicates that this edge of the pond lay only a little beyond the end of the trench. (Fig 3, Sections 1 & 2). Alluvial clays (103 & 203) ran the full length of Trench 2, and the pond is evidently at least 17-18m in diameter (Fig 4, Section 3).

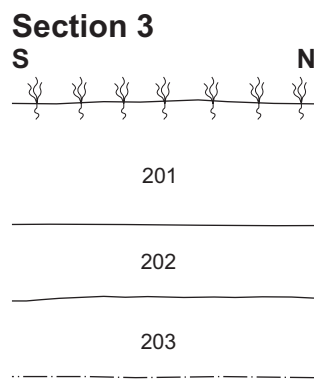
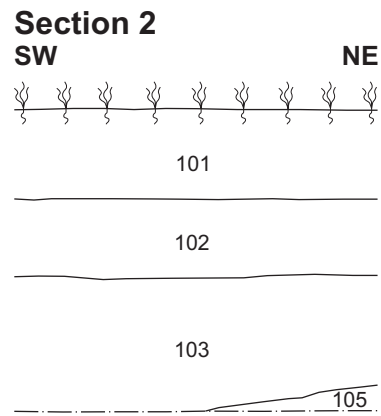
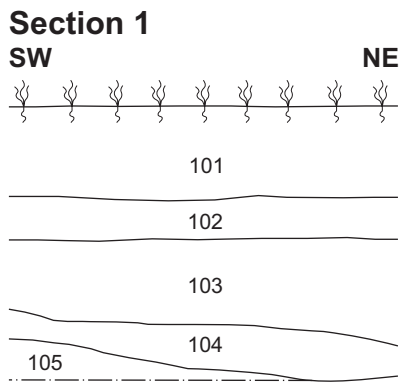
Where trenches 1 and 2 joined a post-medieval well was exposed. Only the top was uncovered which showed a brick lined well full of water, approximately 1.0m wide. The well was left unexcavated because of the unstable ground and the water.





Scale 1:250 (A4)

The excavated trenches Fig 2



Scale 1:25

Sections showing the stratigraphic sequence Fig 3



Trench 1, south-west end showing edge of pond Fig 4



Trench 2, looking north

Fig 5



Trench 1, looking south-west

Fig 6

## **5 THE POTTERY** by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised two sherds with a total weight of 121g. They were recorded using the codings and chronology of the Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service type-series (eg Baker and Hassall 1977) were used, as follows:

C09: Brill/Boarstall Ware (mid 13th – 15th century), 1 sherd, 88g  
P01: (16th century), 1 sherd, 33g

The sherd of Brill/Boarstall ware is a nearly complete rod handle from a glazed jug, and occurred in the alluvial layer (203). The sherd glazed red earthenware occurred in the subsoil (102), and is from the base of a bowl. Both sherds are common finds in the area, in good condition, and typical of their respective traditions.

## **6 THE FAUNAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

At the request of the Central Bedfordshire Archaeologist, two 40 litre bulk soil samples were taken from the alluvial layer of the probable pond feature from Trench 1 (103) and Trench 2 (203).

The samples were bulk floated and the flots collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. Both the dried flots and the dried non floating residue were macroscopically scanned for plant macrofossils and animal bone but none were present.

On the evidence from the environmental samples there is nothing to suggest that the pond feature was used as a fish pond. However, only a small sample was taken and the full extent of the feature was not excavated, so the possibility that it could be a fish pond remains.

## **7 DISCUSSION**

The trial trench evaluation successfully identified the remains of part of a possible fish pond which was previously unknown. Only the south-west edge of the pond was observed as the rest of the pond extended outside of the trenches. The only other feature was the remains of a post-medieval well at the north end of trench 2. The pond could be associated with the former manor house thought to be immediately to the south of the development area, and the possible moat ditch which survives on the north-eastern edge of the site.

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**APPENDIX: THE POSSIBLE FORMER MOAT DITCH**



The possible former moat ditch, looking south-east

Fig 7



The possible former moat ditch, looking north

Fig 8



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