



## Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:  
THE OLD FARM,  
141 WALTON END,  
WAVENDON GATE,  
MILTON KEYNES**

*on behalf of Biant Homes Limited*



**Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA**

**March 2005**

**ASC: 650/WGO/02**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	WGO	<i>Project no:</i>	650	<i>MKC Event no.</i>	963
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire				
<i>Town/District:</i>	Milton Keynes				
<i>Parish:</i>	Walton CP				
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 9037 3677				
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.0.16ha				
<i>Present land use:</i>	Residential				
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Demolition of existing and construction of 4 houses				
<i>Date of Fieldwork:</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2005				
<i>Planning application ref:</i>	04/01090/FUL				
<i>Client:</i>	Biant Homes Ltd 32 Noon Layer Drive Middleton Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK10 9FQ				
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## Internal Quality Check

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*Cover:* The Old Farm, looking north east

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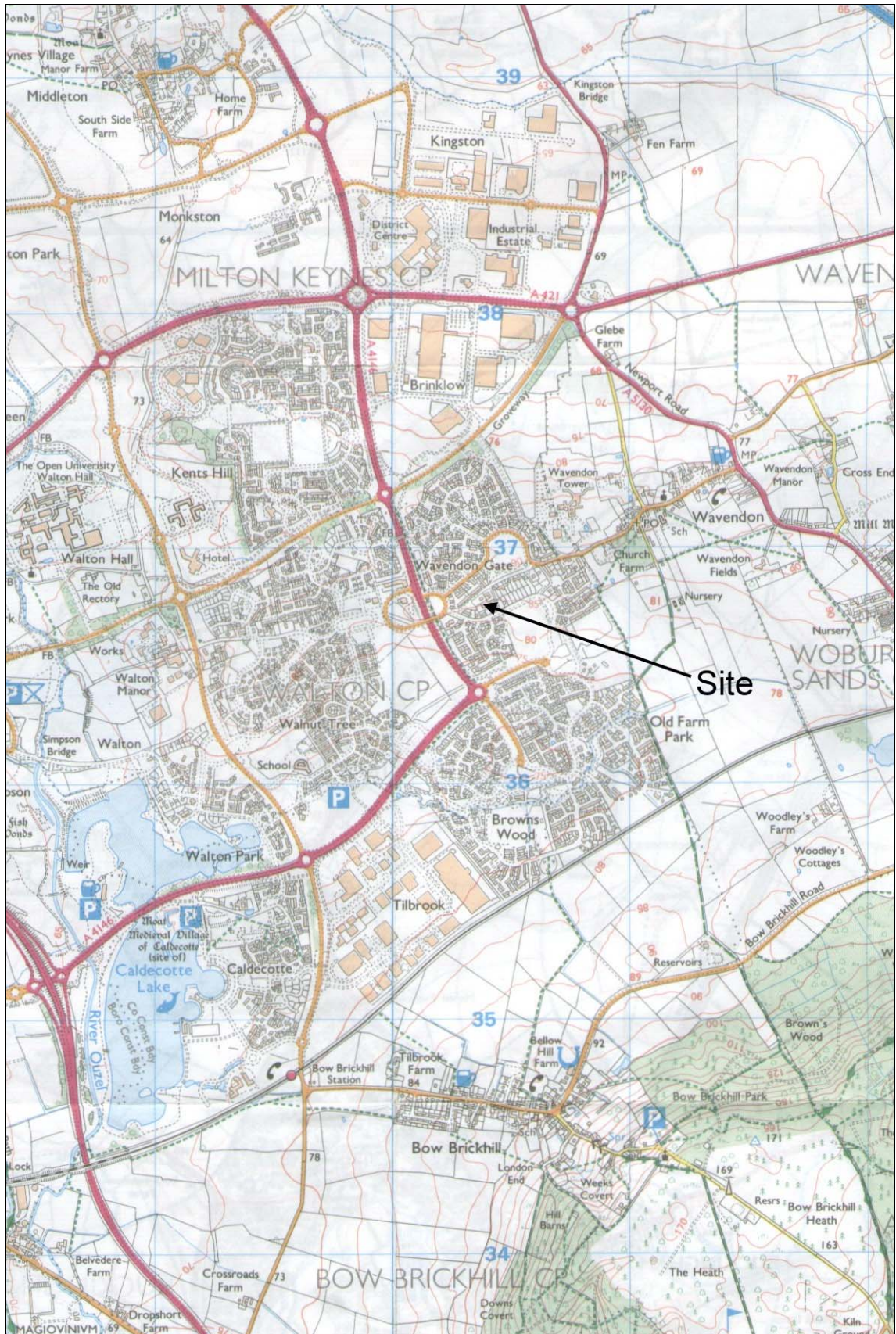


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*In February 2005 ASC undertook an archaeological evaluation on land at The Old Farm, 141 Walton End, Wavendon Gate. The work was undertaken in advance of proposed residential redevelopment of the site.*

*Four trenches were excavated. Trenches 1, 3 and 4 contained linear features, which in trenches 3 and 4 yielded a small amount of probable Romano-British pottery. In trench 2 an irregular linear feature was investigated and interpreted as a possible medieval or later hedge line. In conclusion, the paucity of finds and general lack of discrete features suggests that the immediate area was subject to relatively low level occupation from the Romano-British period onwards.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 During February 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out a trial trench evaluation on a site at The Old Farm, 141 Walton End, Wavendon Gate (NGR: SP 9037 3677, Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Biant Homes Limited, and was carried out according to a brief (dated 10/0/05), prepared by the Archaeological Officer Milton Keynes Council and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (Crank 2005).

### 1.2 Setting

1.2.1 The evaluation site is located in the Wavendon Gate area of Milton Keynes, at NGR SP 9037 3677 (Fig. 1). The site lies within the civil parish of Walton within the modern estate of Wavendon Gate and comprises a roughly rectangular parcel of land c.0.16ha in area.

1.2.2 The site is located on gentle south-facing slope, at an elevation of c.85m AOD. Soils in the area mostly belong to the Hanslope association (Soil Survey 1983, 411d), described as ‘slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. Some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils. Slight risk of water erosion’. The underlying geology probably comprises glacial sand and gravel and/or boulder clay (Williams *et al* 1996, 9).

1.2.3 The site is currently occupied by the modern house misleadingly known as *The Old Farm*. The house and its garage occupy the north east part of the plot and an outdoor swimming pool is located on the south west side of the house. The remainder of the plot is occupied by lawn and flowerbeds and enclosed by a 1.8m high boarded fence. The property is bounded to the north west by Walton End via which access is gained; residential properties and their gardens are found on the other three sides.

1.2.4 As noted in the brief (section 4) the development lies within a known settlement site with occupation spanning the Iron Age through to the early Saxon period. The site at Wavendon Gate was partially excavated by Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit between 1998 and 1990 and later published

(Williams *et al* 1996). The main phases of activity were during the later Iron Age and Roman periods.

The later Iron Age site initially resembled an 'open' lowland settlement, later taking the form of large sub-divided 'paddocked' enclosures with probable associated roundhouses *c.*100m to the north of the present site (Williams *et al* 1996, 23-25). Towards the middle of the first century AD the focus of activity shifted to the south and a large ditched enclosure formed the boundary of this new settlement (Williams *et al* 1996, 27). This enclosure remained in use until the early fourth century when the settlement appears to have declined. Excavation of the northern part of the enclosure revealed cremation and pottery kilns in addition to evidence of stock rearing and cereal cultivation (Williams *et al* 1996, 83-88).

The development site lies within the largely unexcavated southern part of this *Romano-British* enclosure, and may therefore be expected to yield significant archaeological remains. However, it should be noted that trenches excavated close to this area in 1990 located few features, suggesting either a lower level of past activity or more truncation due to later ploughing. A trench across the farmyard to the east of the present site was abandoned due to extensive disturbance of the area (Williams *et al* 1996, 5).

- 1.2.5 Planning permission has been granted for the demolition of The Old Farm and the construction of four houses (Fig. 3).

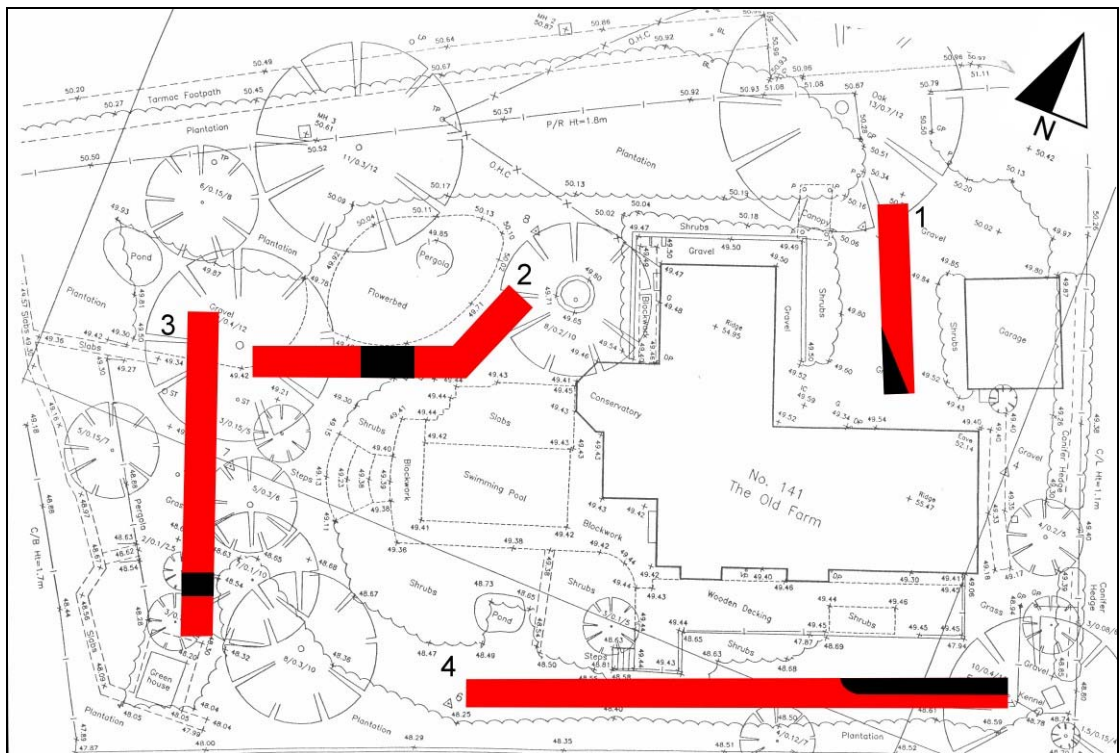
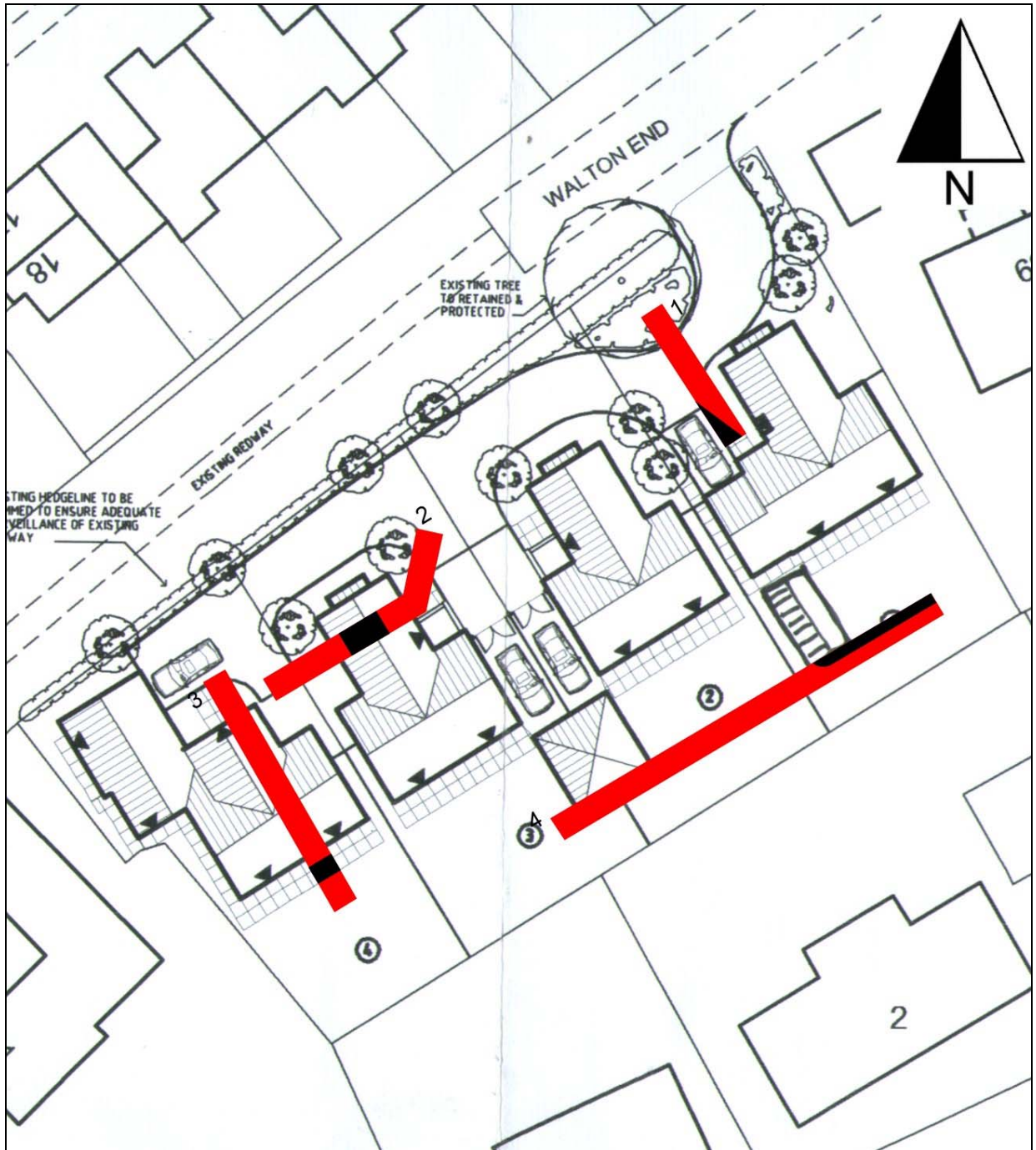


Figure 2: Site plan and trench locations (scale 1:400)



**Figure 3:** Proposed development (*scale 1:400*)



## **2 Aims & Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

In line with the requirements of the Brief (Section 5), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To obtain information on the extent and character of the potential archaeology of the development site, together with information on the state of preservation and relative quality, in order that an indication of importance can be obtained and potential options for minimising or avoiding damage can be stated.

### **2.2 Methods**

In line with the requirements of the Brief (Section 5), the methods adopted for this project were detailed in the project design (Section 2.2 *et seq.*). Some minor adjustments to trench locations and lengths were necessary due to on-site constraints, these are indicated in figure 2.

### **2.3 Standards**

The work conformed to the requirements of the *Brief*, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

### 3 Results

The following paragraphs provide a summary of the results of the trial trenches. A full description of the trenches with photographs, is provided in Appendix 1.

#### 3.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 4)

A northwest to southeast aligned ditch traversed the trench (F102) for a length of 3.0m. With a maximum depth of c.18m it was sealed by the topsoil and cut the natural clay. Two segments were excavated across the ditch and a single sherd of undiagnostic pottery and some animal bone was recovered from its upper fill (L104).

#### 3.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 5)

A modern pit containing a dog burial was located at the western end of the trench. A broad and ill-defined linear feature traversed the trench (F202). Aligned roughly north west to south east and with an uneven base it is interpreted as a probable grubbed out hedge line. A small quantity of abraded possible Romano-British and Medieval pottery and tile was recovered from its fill (L203).

#### 3.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 6)

Two modern pits were located at either end of the trench. A small south west to north east aligned ditch traversed the south east end of the trench (F302). Sealed by the topsoil and cutting the natural clay it was filled by L303 from which a small fragment of late 2<sup>nd</sup>C AD to late 3<sup>rd</sup>C AD pottery was recovered. The ditch was flanked on its north west side by a small possible stakehole (F304) from which no finds were recovered.

#### 3.4 Trench 4 (Fig. 7)

A single shallow north east to south west aligned ditch (F402) was revealed running along the north edge of the trench for a length of 5.6m before appearing to terminate. Sealed by the topsoil and cutting the natural clay it was filled by L403 from which a sherd of 1<sup>st</sup>C AD to mid 2<sup>nd</sup>C AD pottery was recovered.

3.5 The trenches revealed a fairly consistent pattern of soil formation. The topsoil comprised a soft dark brown clayey loam with very occasional chalk pebbles. No distinct subsoil layer was present and the soil was relatively deep. The depth of topsoil across the site was generally between 0.4 – 0.50m. In the area of trench 1 the construction layers for the existing driveway appear to have raised the ground level slightly.

3.6 The natural strata revealed was variously a firm light grey sandy clay with yellow mottling and occasional chalk pebbles (Trench 1); or a Light yellow clay with mottles of light grey and occasional chalk flecks and patches of light orange sandy clay (Trenches 2 – 4).



Plate 1: Trench 1 facing south east

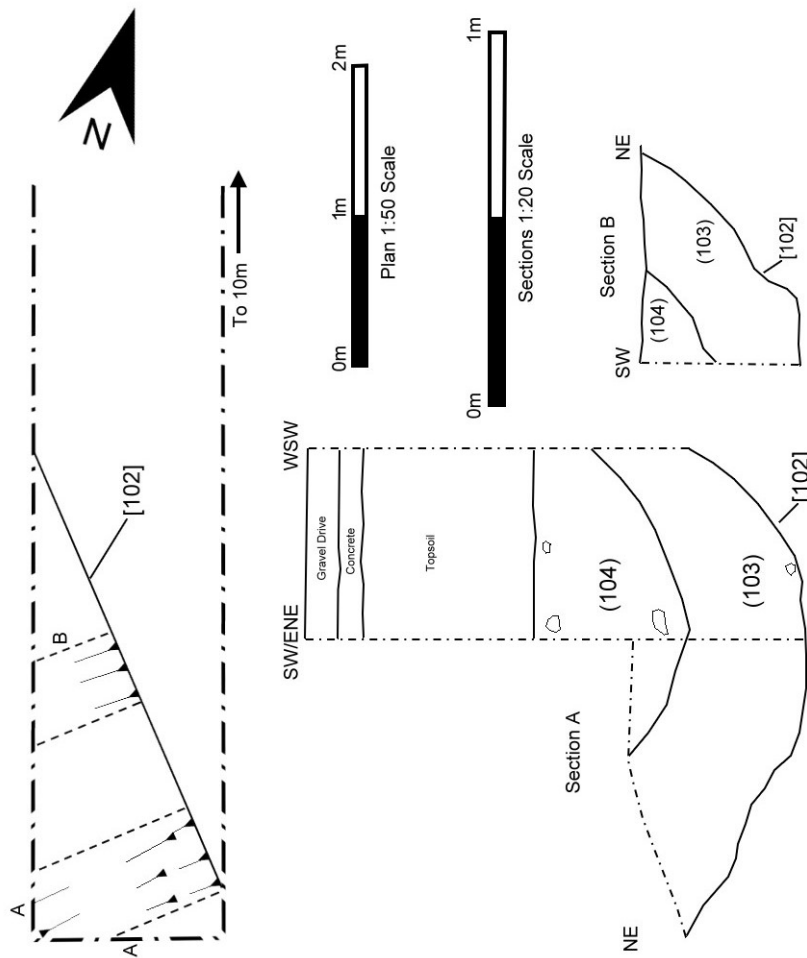
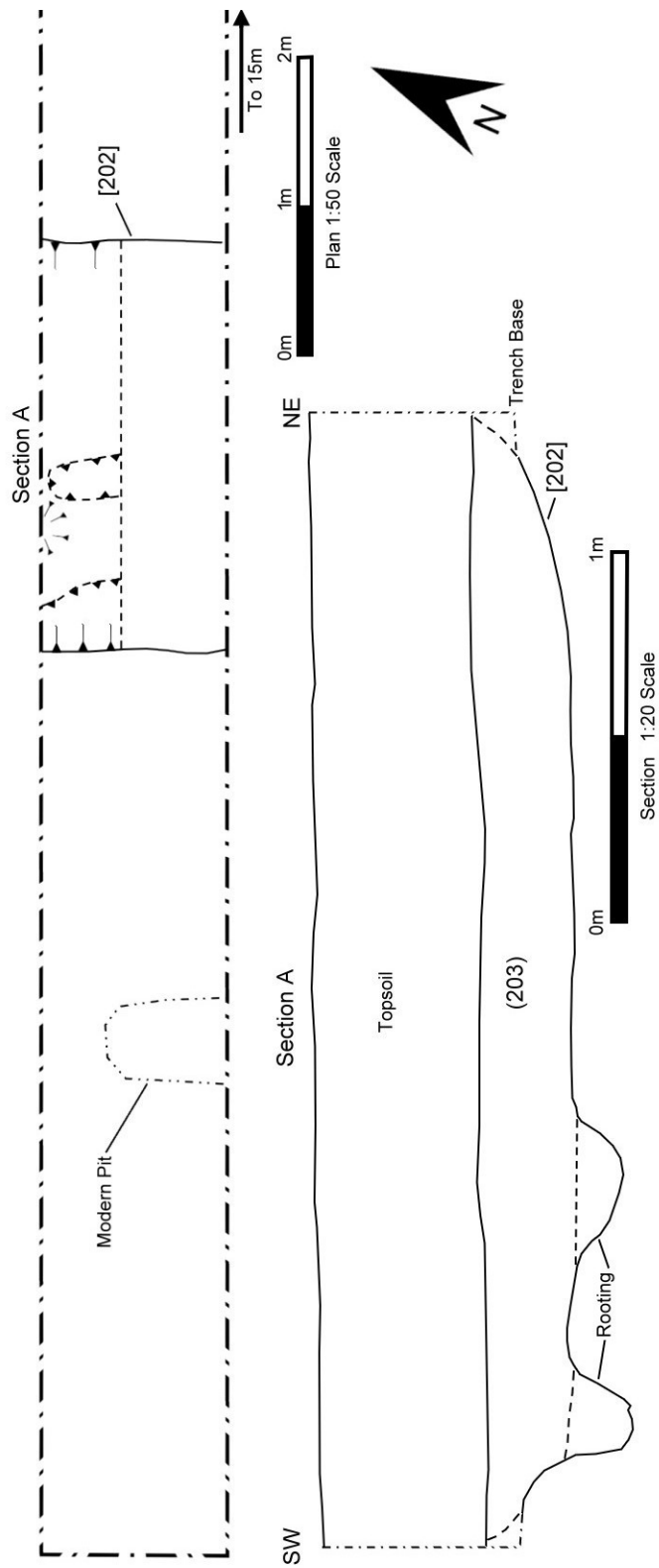


Figure 4: Trench 1, Plan and Sections



**Figure 5:** Trench 2, Plan and Section



Plate 2: Trench 3, F302 facing north east

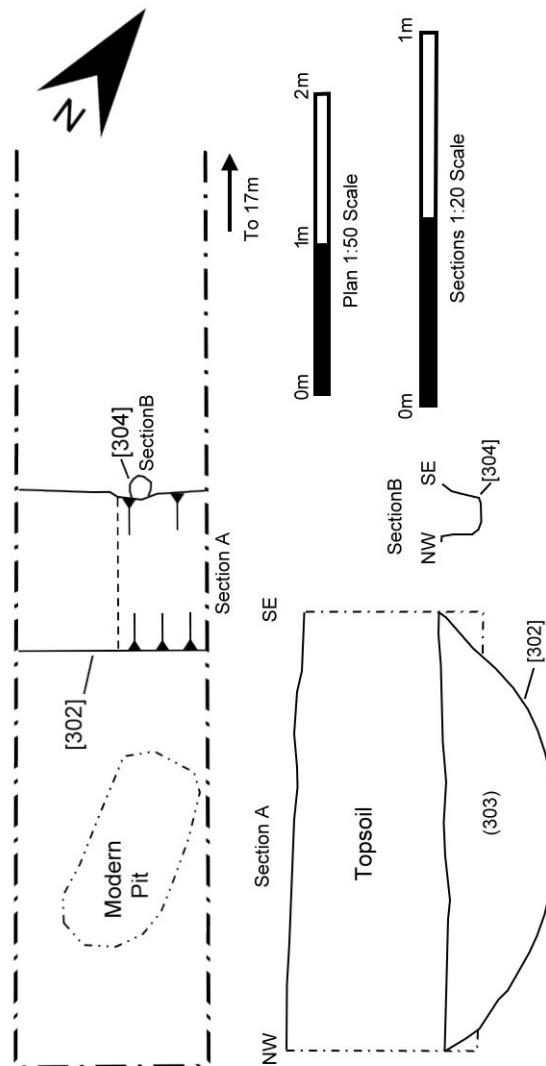
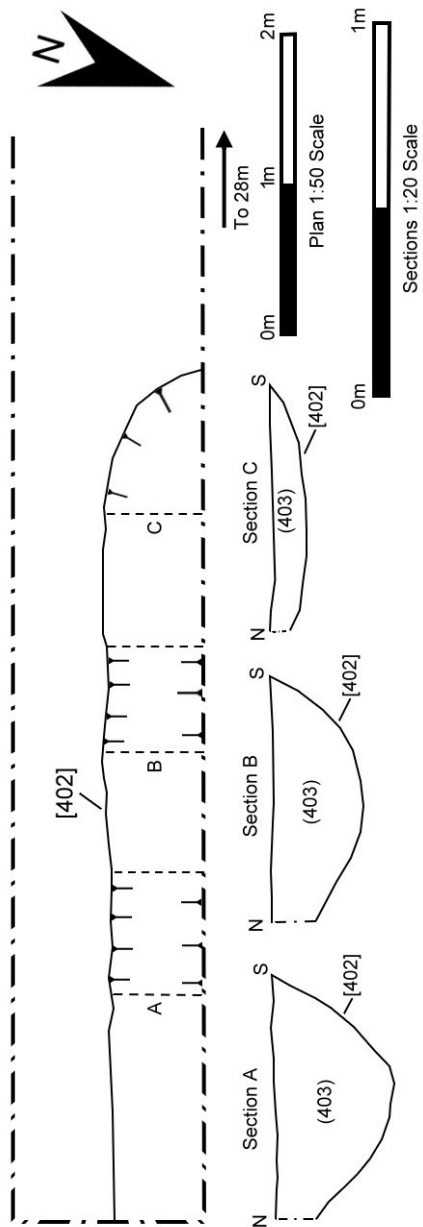


Figure 6: Trench 3, Plan and Sections



**Figure 7:** Trench 4, Plan and Sections

**Plate 3:** Trench 4, F402 facing north east

## 4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The evaluation revealed a number of features and recovered some sparse artefactual evidence largely suggestive of Romano-British and later occupation of the site. The few features revealed were principally linear in form and with the probable exception of F202 may comprise internal divisions of the enclosure identified during the earlier excavation to the north. The paucity of finds and general lack of discrete features is indicative that the immediate area was subject to relatively low level occupation during the Romano-British period.
- 4.2 Comparison of the relative alignments of the features in trenches 1, 3 and 4 to those revealed in the earlier excavations shows some correlation. In addition the fairly meagre archaeological remains revealed in this investigation corresponds well with the similarly light distribution of features previously revealed in this south eastern part of the Romano-British enclosure.
- 4.3 The quantity of archaeological features revealed in the trenches is probably representative as little truncation of deposits was apparent.
- 4.4 In conclusion it seems likely that the areas subject to investigation have remained largely undeveloped during the past with the exception of the possible Romano-British linear features observed in trenches 1, 3 and 4 and the probable medieval or later hedge line in trench 2.
- 4.5 While the linear features identified may continue, it is unlikely that further significant quantities of archaeological remains are present on the site, although the potential presence of occasional isolated remains away from the evaluation trenches should not be entirely excluded.

## **5. Acknowledgements**

ASC are grateful to Mr Inderjeet Biant of Biant Homes Ltd for commissioning and funding the evaluation. The input and advice of Brian Giggins of Milton Keynes Council is also acknowledged.

The fieldwork was supervised for ASC by Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA assisted by Cally Rouse BA and Nigel Williams HND AIFA. The report was written by Nicholas A Crank and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA, who also managed the project.

## **6. Archive**

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. Finds
7. Site record drawings
8. List of photographs/slides
9. B/W prints & negatives
10. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

6.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum. Accession number is 2006.189.



## 7. Bibliography

- Crank, N.A. 2005 *The Old Farm, 141 Walton End, Wavendon Gate, Milton Keynes: Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation* (ASC: 650/WGO/01)
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).
- Williams, R.J., Hart, P.J. & Williams, A.T.L. 1996 *Wavendon Gate: A Late Iron Age and Roman Settlement in Milton Keynes*. Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Monograph Series No. 10.

## Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables



<b>Trench 1</b>							
<b>Max Dimensions (metres)</b>					<b>Orientation</b>		
<b>Length</b>	10	<b>Width</b>	1.25	<b>Depth</b>	0.9	North west to south east	
<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>					<b>Reason for Trench</b>		
NW	SP90378 36782	SE	SP90382 36784	General evaluation			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>			<b>Max Width (mm)</b>	<b>Max Thckn (mm)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (mm)</b>
---	Layer	Gravel drive and brick base			--	160	
100	Layer	Topsoil – Dark brown clayey loam			--	450	160+
101	Layer	Natural strata – Firm light grey sandy clay with yellow mottling, occ. Chalk pebbles			--	---	610+
102	Cut	Ditch – Containing Fills: L103 & L104			1250+	700	600
103	Fill	Primary fill of F102 – Mid brownish orange sandy clay with mottles of mid grey silt, v. occ. Chalk pebbles			1250+	420	600+
104	Fill	Upper fill of F102 – Mid brownish grey sandy silt, slightly clayey			1250+	400	600+



<b>Trench 2</b>							
<b>Max Dimensions (metres)</b>					<b>Orientation</b>		
<b>Length</b>	15	<b>Width</b>	1.25	<b>Depth</b>	0.5m	North to south & East to west	
<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>					<b>Reason for Trench</b>		
NE	SP90365 36779		SW	SP90354 36769		General evaluation	
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>			<b>Max Width (mm)</b>	<b>Max Thckn (mm)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (mm)</b>
200	Layer	Topsoil – Dark brown clayey loam			--	450	--
201	Layer	Natural strata – Light yellow clay with mottles of light grey, occ. Chalk flecks and patches of light orange sandy clay			--	---	450+
202	Cut	Probable hedge line – filled by L203			3000	250	450
203	Fill	Natural strata – Mid orange sand and gravel			3000	250	450+



<b>Trench 3</b>							
<b>Max Dimensions</b>					<b>Orientation</b>		
<b>Length</b>	17m	<b>Width</b>	1.25m	<b>Depth</b>	0.5m	North west to south east	
<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>					<b>Reason for Trench</b>		
NW	SP90341 36768	SE	SP90360 36754	General evaluation			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>			<b>Max Width (mm)</b>	<b>Max Thckn (mm)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (mm)</b>
300	Layer	Topsoil – Dark brown clayey loam			--	400	--
301	Layer	Natural strata – Light yellow clay with mottles of light grey, occ. Chalk flecks and patches of light orange sandy clay			--	---	400+
302	Cut	Ditch – Filled by L303			1150	290	400
303	Fill	Fill of F302 – Mid yellowish brown clayey silt			1150	290	400+
304	Cut	Stakehole? – Filled by L305			130	110	400
305	Fill	Fill of F304 – Dark brown clayey loam			130	110	400+



<b>Trench 4</b>							
<b>Max Dimensions</b>					<b>Orientation</b>		
<b>Length</b>	28m	<b>Width</b>	1.25m	<b>Depth</b>	0.5m	North east to south west	
<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>					<b>Reason for Trench</b>		
NE	SP90396 36775		SW	SP90372 36760		General evaluation	
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>			<b>Max Width (mm)</b>	<b>Max Thckn (mm)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (mm)</b>
400	Layer	Topsoil – Dark brown clayey loam			--	450	--
401	Layer	Natural strata – Light yellow clay with mottles of light grey, occ. Chalk flecks and patches of light orange sandy clay			--	---	450
402	Cut	Ditch – Filled by L403			650	300	450
403	Fill	Fill of F402 - Mid to light yellowish brown clayey silt			650	300	450+

## Appendix 2: Finds Concordance

Context	Pottery		Bone	CBM	
	(no)	(g)	(g)	(no.)	(g)
104	1	<1	965		
203	2	35		3	55
303	1	5			
403	2	20		1	<1

## Appendix 3: Pottery Report by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA

### Context

- 104 Single sherd of undiagnostic grey shelly ware
- 203 a. Base and body sherd of orange gritty fabric with dark grey core – RB?  
b. Rim of yellow-green glazed bowl – Med?
- 303 Small fragment of mortarium base – prob. Fab 4d, Swanpool (Lincs.) – Late 2<sup>nd</sup>C – late 3<sup>rd</sup>C AD
- 403 a. Narrow-mouthed jar sherd, sand tempered ware, approximating to MK fabric 47 – 1<sup>st</sup>C – mid 2<sup>nd</sup>C  
b. Undiagnostic coarse greyware sherd