

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:  
HOLY TRINITY CHURCH  
OLD WOLVERTON  
MILTON KEYNES**

NGR: SP 8042 4121

*on behalf of Old Wolverton Parochial Church Council*



Calli Rouse BA PIFA

February 2008

ASC: 1027/OWH/2

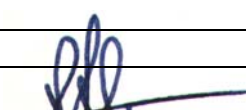
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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	1027	<i>ASC project no:</i>	OWH
<i>OASIS ref:</i>		<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	1157
<i>County:</i>	Milton Keynes Unitary Authority		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Wolverton		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Wolverton		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 8042 4121		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	14m x 7m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Grassland		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Additional car parking		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	-		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Milton Keynes Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2008		
<i>Client:</i>	The PCC Holy Trinity Church C/o The Reverend Jeremy Trigg The Parsonage House 28 Harvester Close Greenleys MK12 6LE		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Michael Poteliakoff – Shenstone & Partners		

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Calli Rouse	<i>Date:</i>	28/02/08
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2008

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*Cover:* General view of trench

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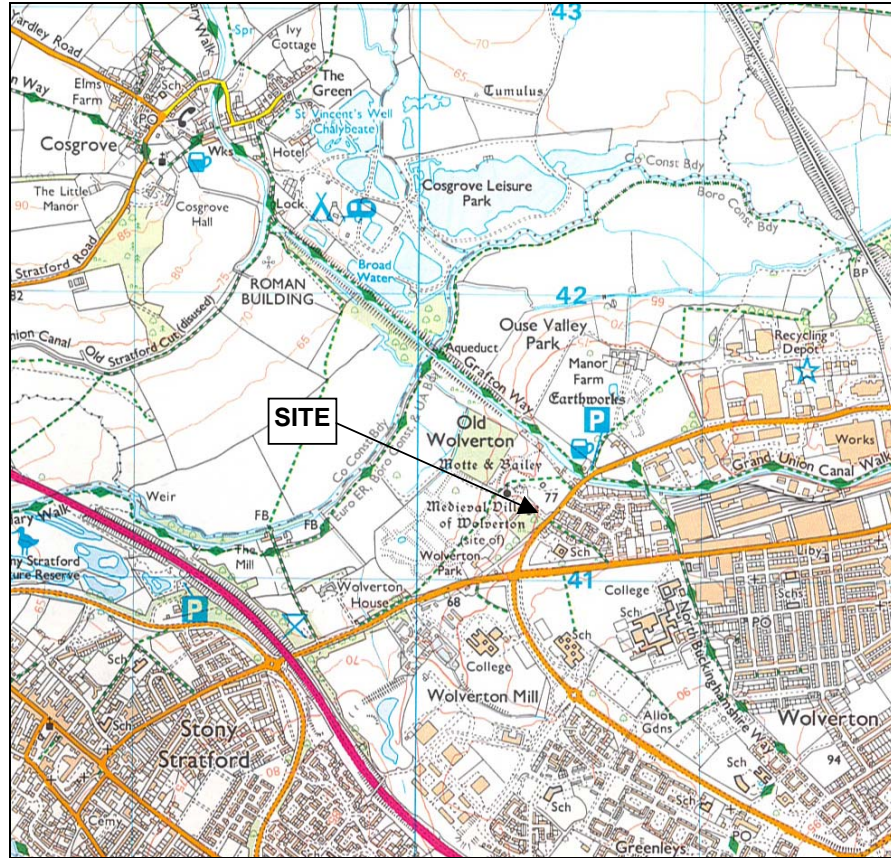


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*In February 2008 ASC carried out an archaeological evaluation at Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes, in advance of the creation of an additional parking area. The site falls within the boundaries of Old Wolverton Medieval Village (DMV), which is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). The evaluation uncovered a post-medieval ditch which is unlikely to be impacted upon by the proposed development.*

### 1. Introduction

1.1 In February 2008 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes. The project was commissioned by *Shenstone & Partners*, acting on behalf of *Old Wolverton Parochial Church Council*. The work was required by *English Heritage* as the site falls within the bounds of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). A project design was prepared by ASC (Rouse 2008).

#### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), The work was required by *English Heritage* as the site falls within the bounds of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).

#### 1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

*Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Archaeological Organisation* by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

#### 1.4 *Management*

The project was carried out under the overall direction of **Bob Zeepvat** BA MIFA. Bob is an established archaeologist with extensive experience in managing archaeological projects, of a wide range of fieldwork in both rural and urban environments, of post-excavation, publication and presentation projects, and of work on a wide range of historic buildings and structures. He holds a first degree from the University of Leicester, and has been a validated Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists since 1986. He has been involved in the management of archaeological projects since the late 1970s, formerly as Senior Field Archaeologist for the *Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit*, and as Project Manager for the *Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust*.

#### 1.5 *The Site*

##### 1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The site is located to the northwest of the main settlement of Wolverton, within the boundaries of Old Wolverton Medieval Village (DMV) (Fig. 1), at NGR SP 8042 4121. The new car parking area will be located to the south east of

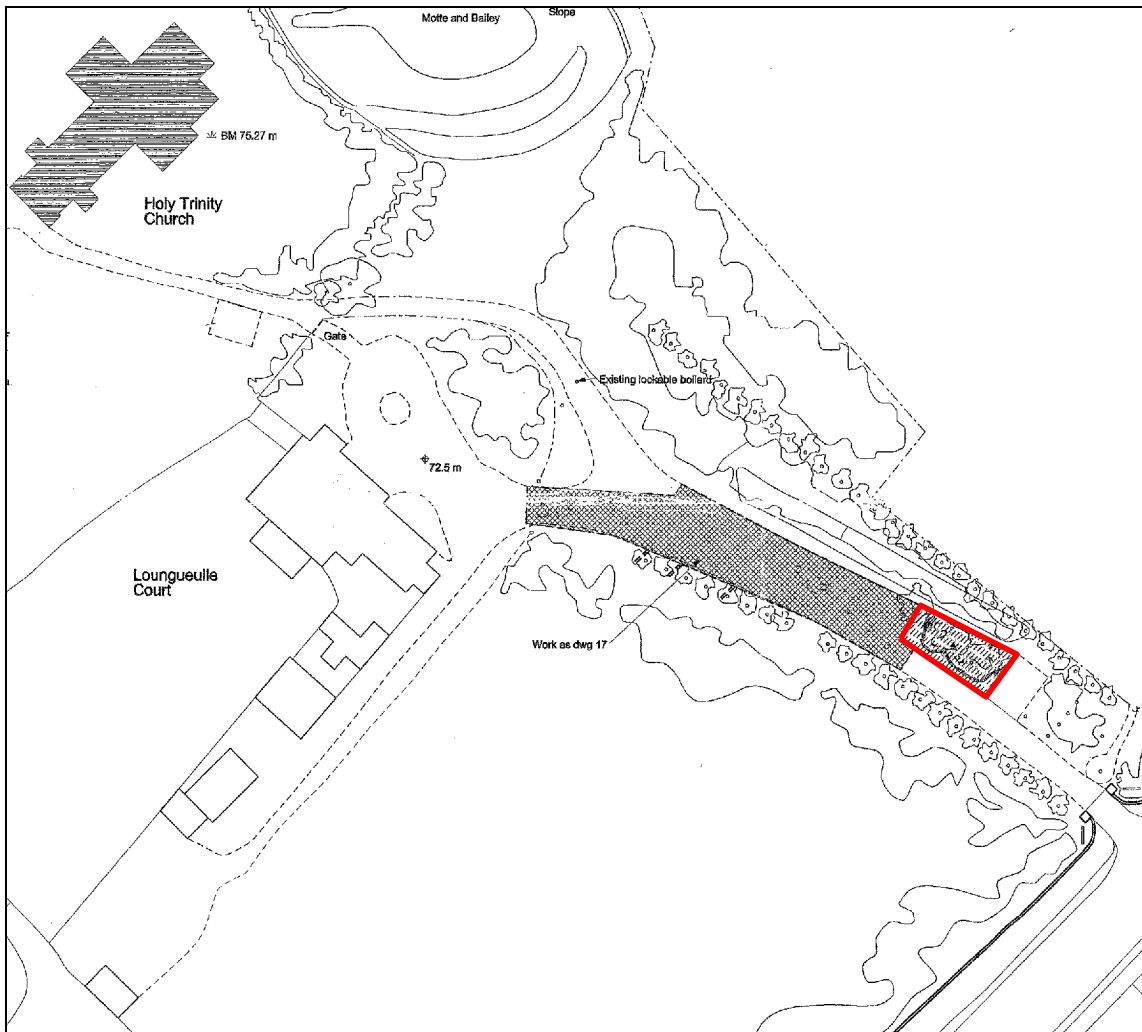
the Holy Trinity Church, along the approach road leading to the Church (Fig. 2). Access to the site is from Old Wolverton Road, which runs to the southeast of the site (Fig. 2). The site is currently covered by grass.

#### 1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area belong to the *Badsey I Association*, which are characterised as *well drained calcareous and non-calcareous fine loamy soils over limestone gravel. Some deep fine loamy soils and fine loamy soils over gravel, and similar but shallower soils affected by groundwater* (Soil Survey, 1983, 511h). The underlying geology comprises *Upper Estuarine Great Oolite Series limestone* (Geological Survey, 1969, Sheet 202). The site lies on the south side of the Great Ouse valley, c.1.5km south of the river, at an elevation of c.75m AOD, on ground steadily rising from north-west to south-east.

#### 1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises the creation of additional car parking for the church (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2:** Site plan, with car parking area outlined in red (*not to scale*)

## **2. Aims & Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

In line with The project design, the aims of the evaluation were:

- To locate, define and characterise any archaeological remains that existed.
- To undertake an appraisal of the results of the field evaluation leading to, if required, the definition of a programme of investigation and recording of archaeological remains that would have been unavoidably destroyed by the development.

### **2.2 Standards**

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

### **2.3 Methods**

In line with the project design, the methods to be adopted for this project were:

- One machine cut 12m trench was excavated down the centre of the proposed car parking area on a northwest-southeast alignment (Fig. 3).

### **2.4 Constraints**

Due to spatial constraints, the trench was 12m long, as opposed to the 14m outlined in the project design. The presence of a large tree stump towards the southern end of the site after recent tree felling resulted in the last 4m of the trench being excavated at a slight angle (Fig. 3).



### 3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

3.2 The Wolverton area is one of considerable archaeological and historical importance, and a variety of archaeological sites are situated in the area. The archaeology and history of the parish are summarised in *The Changing Landscape of Milton Keynes* (Croft & Mynard 1993, 179-193).

#### 3.3 *Prehistoric - Iron Age (before AD43)*

The earliest evidence of human activity in the Wolverton area is provided by a scatter of Mesolithic flints found in the Bradwell Brook valley at Bancroft Park, c.2km southeast of the site. A late Neolithic to early Bronze Age settlement was excavated at Stacey Bushes, c.2.5km southeast of the site (Green & Sofranoff 1985). Evidence of possible Bronze Age settlement was also located in excavations at the Wolverton Mill Training College, c.0.5km to the south of the site (Preston 2007), and a late Bronze Age/early Iron Age farmstead was excavated at Blue Bridge, c.2.5km east of the development site (Williams & Zeepvat 1994).

A common feature of the prehistoric landscape of the Ouse valley are ring ditches, the ploughed out remains of burial mounds. This class of monument has been the subject of detailed study (Field 1974; Green 1974). Three are recorded in the surrounding area, at Moon Street School, 1km west of the site, at the Training College, and at Warren Farm, 0.5km to the west. All have been excavated.

Occupation continued on the Blue Bridge site into the Iron Age. Excavations revealed a farmstead comprised of a large number of penannular hut gullies, suggesting buildings with a relatively short lifespan, associated with other features including pits, gullies and boundary ditches. In the late pre-Roman Iron Age a cremation cemetery was established on the south side of the site, containing at least eighteen burials. This is the only significant Iron Age site recorded to date in the area.

#### 3.4 *Roman (AD43-c.450)*

During the Roman period the Milton Keynes area fell within the *civitas* (tribal area) of the *Catuvellauni*. The nearest towns to the development site were *Magiovinium* (Dropshort Farm, Fenny Stratford), 10km to the south-east, and *Lactodorum* (Towcester), 13km to the north-west. These were linked by the major Roman road, latterly known as *Watling Street*, which lies c.2km south-west of the site. The Roman landscape of the Milton Keynes area has been the subject of detailed study (Zeepvat 1987; Zeepvat 1991).

The most significant site of this period in the parish of Wolverton was the extensive villa at Bancroft (Williams & Zeepvat 1994), c.2.5km east of the evaluation site. This was linked with an impressive 2<sup>nd</sup>-century temple-mausoleum (*ibid*), located on the adjoining Blue Bridge site. Both sites remained in use throughout the Roman period, and Bancroft villa presumably formed the centre of a farming estate covering at least part of the later parish of Wolverton.

A number of native occupation sites are also known in the area, with examples at Kiln Farm, 2km southeast of the site, and near Stonebridge Farm, c.1.5km to the east. Evidence of a possible Roman building was also recovered from service trenches at Manor Farm Cottages, 0.5km northeast of the site, where Roman pottery and box tile was found in association with a stone wall. A small amount of Roman material, possibly originating from manure scatters, has also been found in recent excavations at the Training College (Thorne 2005), c.0.5km to the south of the site.

### 3.5 *Saxon (c.450-1066)*

Evidence of low-level early Saxon activity has been found at Bancroft and Blue Bridge, but little has been recorded elsewhere in the parish. Several burials, thought to be of Saxon date, were found c.0.75km to the southeast of the site in 1956, when the McCorquodale factory at the east end of Wolverton was extended (Green 1957). It is worth noting that a recent evaluation, undertaken by ASC in advance of the housing development at the north-west corner of the site, did not reveal any archaeological features (Fell 2000). A watching brief on services in the same area was also negative (Crank 2005).

In 1969, aerial photography revealed the existence of a rectangular enclosure in the area now occupied by the Wolverton Mill Training College. Excavations by the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit in 1971 revealed the east corner of the enclosure (Preston 2007). Other areas of the enclosure were examined by excavation in 1992 and 1994 (*ibid*), confirming it to be of middle Saxon date. Recent excavations (Thorne 2005) revealed two early to middle Saxon grübenhauser predating the enclosure, and late Saxon plots containing timber buildings with associated pits, a well, cess pits and a malting/drying oven. One pit contained a smith's hoard of iron spears, nails and some slag, as well as the remains of three lava querns and two bone combs. Late Saxon finds, including coins and metalwork, have been found near the Holy Trinity church itself. It is therefore suggested (Croft & Mynard 1993, 181) that mid to late Saxon settlement in the parish was centred on and to the north of the Training College enclosure.

Wolverton is mentioned in the Domesday Survey (1086), where it appears as *Wlverintone*. This place-name may be of 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>-century origin, and translates as 'Wulfhere's Tun', or 'Wulfhere's estate' (Croft & Mynard 1993, 191). At the time of the Domesday Survey, Wolverton was held by Mainou the Breton, along with Little Loughton, which lies to the south of Wolverton parish. It has been suggested (*ibid*) that this represents a survival of a Roman estate, which had Bancroft villa as its centre, and a satellite farm at Wymbush, which is in Little Loughton.

### 3.6 *Medieval (1066-1500)*

The medieval village of Wolverton is perhaps the best-preserved medieval village in Milton Keynes, and is a scheduled ancient monument. It lies to the north of the site and stretches for c.1.2km along the north side of Old Wolverton Road. It is centred on the parish church and adjacent motte-and-bailey castle, built by *Meinfelin*, baron of Wolverton, in the late 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> century. The site of the medieval manor house is thought to be to the south of the motte. At the east end of the village is Manor Farm, believed from documentary evidence to be the site of a monastic grange, though

a recent watching brief by ASC (Wilson & Abrams 2003) failed to reveal any evidence of medieval activity in the farmyard and adjoining areas.

In the west corner of the parish, where the road from Newport Pagnell and Wolverton meets Watling Street, the settlement of Stony Stratford grew up during the medieval period to service traffic and travellers using the latter road (Brown 1987). At this time the settlement was divided between the parishes of Wolverton and Calverton, the boundary between them passing up the centre of the High Street.

### 3.7 *Post-Medieval (1500-1900)*

During the post-medieval period the village of Wolverton declined, partly as a result of the continuing prosperity of Stony Stratford and partly as a result of piecemeal land enclosure by the Longville family, who held the manor. During the late 16<sup>th</sup> century a succession of complaints were made against the Longvilles for this, and for related reasons. It has been suggested (Croft & Mynard 1993, 191) that, as most of these complaints came from residents of Stony Stratford, Wolverton village must have been depopulated by this time. By the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century the Longvilles had taken the site of the village for parkland adjoining their manor house, which had been built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the Longville family were in financial difficulties, and in 1713 the manor of Wolverton was sold to Dr John Radcliffe of Oxford (CAT 1992, 8). He died the following year, and his Wolverton estate was put at the disposal of his executors to use as they thought best (Markham 1975, 28). Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the Wolverton estate was administered by the Radcliffe Trust, and its income was used in building the Radcliffe Observatory and Library at Oxford, enlarging St Bartholemews Hospital in London, and supporting various medical scholarships.

Holy Trinity Church itself was rebuilt in 1809-14 by Henry Hakewill, and is said to incorporate an earlier west tower (Pevsner & Williamson, 2000). It is Neo-Norman in style, and is a very early example of that particular revival, which did not take hold until the early Victorian period (*ibid*).

The establishment of the modern town of Wolverton was brought about by the construction of the London to Birmingham Railway in the 1830s. At the time it was felt that engines and passengers could not survive the journey without a rest stop. As Wolverton lay about half way between the two termini, it was chosen as the site for a station and locomotive works, land being purchased from the Radcliffe Trust for this, and for railway workers' housing. Wolverton Works and the first Wolverton station opened in 1838. As the works expanded during the mid and late 19<sup>th</sup> century the Trust sold more of the estate to the railway for the expansion of Wolverton. In 1878 George McCorquodale opened a stationery and printing works in Wolverton to employ the wives and daughters of railway employees.

3.8 *Modern* (1900-present)

The railway works, McCorquodales and Wolverton continued to expand during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the Edwardian period, housing on the south side of Stratford Road had reached the east boundary of the assessment site. After the 1940s Wolverton appears to have changed little until the advent of Milton Keynes in the early 1970s, when Great Monks Street was built to the south of the site.

## **4 Results**

### **4.1 General**

The entire development area was covered by a 0.5m thick layer of vegetation and bark, as the site was recently cleared of trees, as mentioned above (Section 2.4). Below this was a 0.5m thick layer of made ground, (101), which comprised brownish grey mottled clay with occasional areas of orange sand. Below (101) was a 0.2m thick layer of dark black silty sand (102), which was present throughout the trench, and was interpreted as a buried topsoil. This overlay 0.6m of mid grey brown silty clay subsoil with occasional stone inclusions (103). The natural subsoil comprised a light yellow clay.

Detailed information regarding the trial trenches and their contents appears in Appendix 1.

### **4.2 Trench 1** (Figs. 3 & 4: Plates 1 & 2)

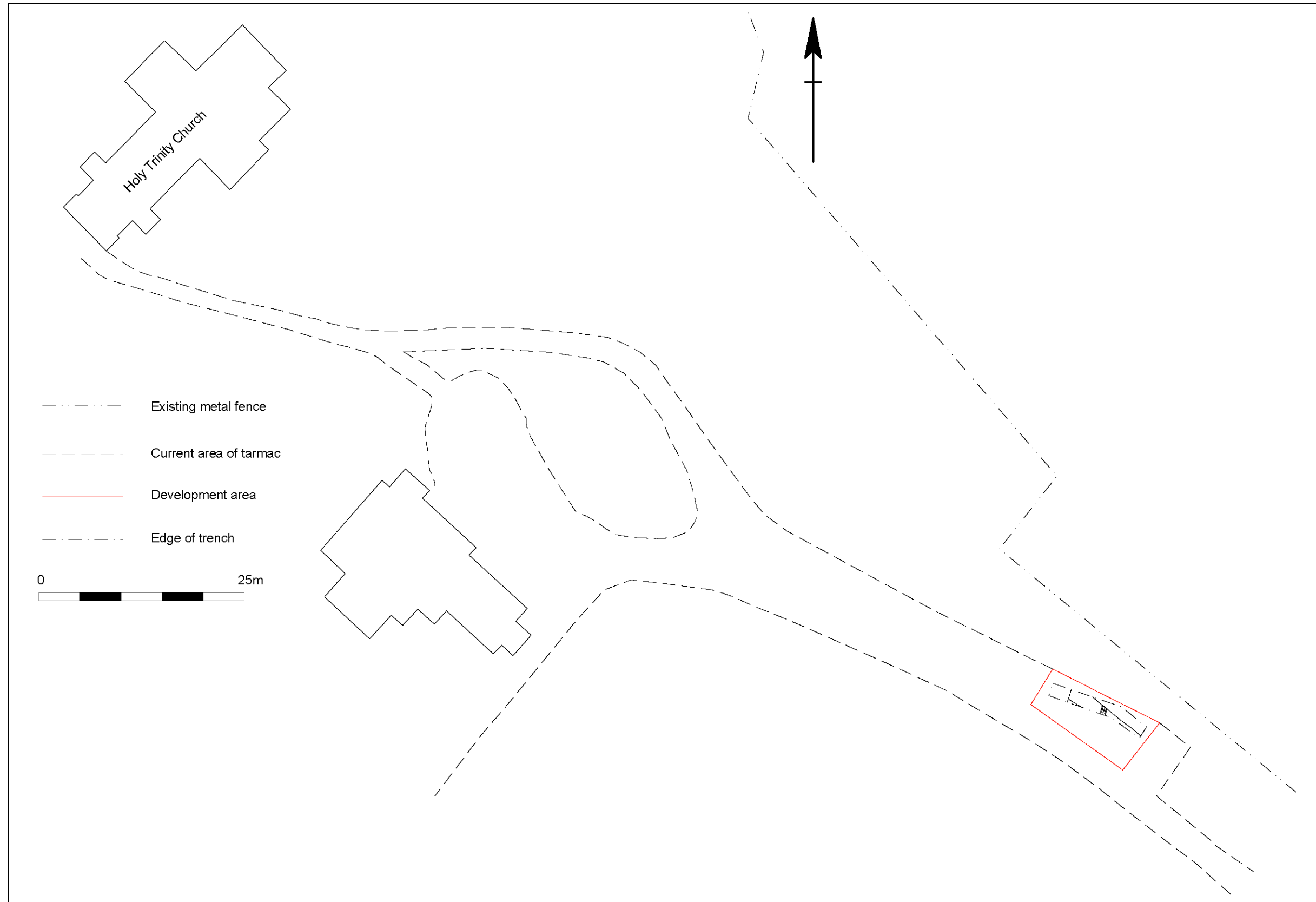
One feature, a ditch [105], was identified within Trench 1. It was on a northwest-southeast alignment, and was c.1.8m wide and 0.2m deep. The ditch was filled by a mid brown grey silty clay (104), from which several fragments of tile, animal bone and an iron nail were recovered.



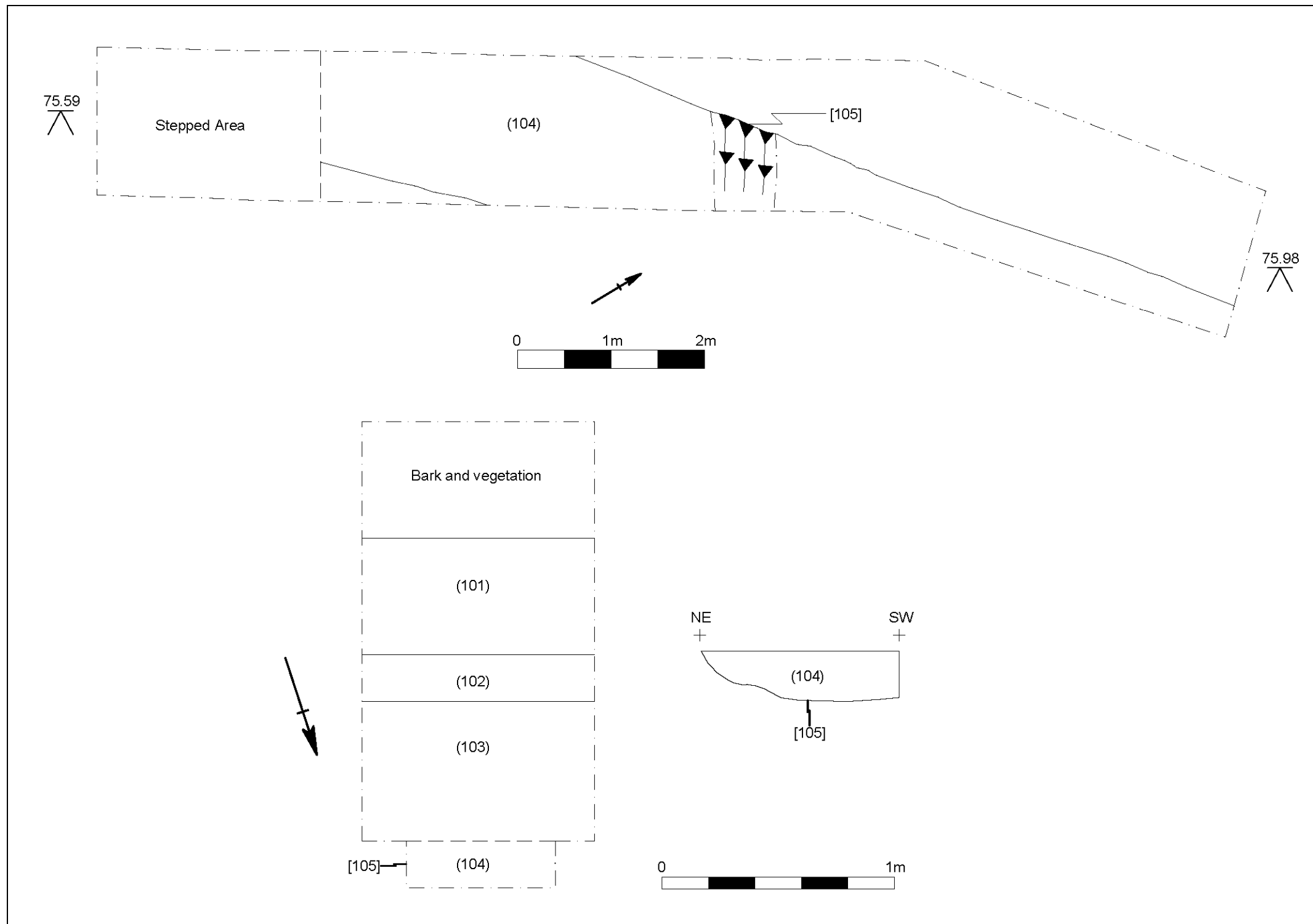
**Plate 1:** General view of trench, looking south east, 2x 1m scales



**Plate 2:** Section through ditch [105], looking south south east, 1m scale



**Figure 3:** Site plan showing trench location (scale 1:500)



**Figure 4:** Trench plan and sections (*scales as shown*)



## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The development site is approximately 1.1m above the level of the existing car parking area, and is a similar height to the land to the north of the site. Before the trench was excavated, it was assumed that the existing car parking area had been reduced during its construction. However, the presence of the made ground (101), and the buried topsoil (102), indicates that the entire area may have been lower than the adjacent higher ground, and that (101) was probably created during the groundworks for the existing car park.
- 5.2 The finds recovered from the fill of ditch [105] comprised fragments of tile and roof tile, which are likely to be from the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (*pers. comm. Bob Zeepvat*). It has been suggested that the ditch may indicate the alignment of a former approach to the church (*pers. comm. Rev. Jeremy Trigg*), but the earliest readily available maps did not provide any evidence of this.
- 5.3 The depth of the ditch below the level of the existing car park (*c.*0.9m) is such that the implementation of the new car parking area is unlikely to have any impact on the ditch itself.

## 6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by *Shenstone & Partners*, acting on behalf of *Old Wolverton Parochial Church Council*. The writer is grateful to Michael Poteliakoff (*Shenstone & Partners*) and Chris Welch (*English Heritage*) for their assistance. The project was monitored by Nick Crank on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to *JRS Contracting* for providing the plant.

The project was managed for ASC by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Jennifer Richards BA PIFA and Calli Rouse BA PIFA. The report was prepared by Calli Rouse and edited by Bob Zeepvat.

## 7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum.

## 8. References

### *Standards & Specifications*

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. English Heritage (London).

IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.

IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.

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Wilson, N and Abrams, J 2003 *Watching brief: Manor Farm, Old Wolverton*, Archaeological Services & Consultancy report, MFW02/4.

Zeepvat, R J 1987 'Romano-British settlement in the upper Ouse and Ouzel valleys' in Mynard (ed) 1987, *Roman Milton Keynes*, 6-18, Buckinghamshire Arch. Soc. Monograph Series **1** (Aylesbury)

Zeepvat, R J 1991 *Roman Milton Keynes*. Milton Keynes Archaeol. Unit (Milton Keynes).

## Appendix 1: Trench Summary Table

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	12	Width	1.6	Depth	1.2
	Levels					
	Trench base north			74.35m OD		
	Trench top north			75.59m OD		
	Trench base south			74.66m OD		
	Trench top south			75.98m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SP	8042			4121	
	Orientation			NW-SE		
Reason for Trench			Scheduled Ancient Monument			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
101	Layer	Brownish grey clay with orange sand – Made ground	1600	500	-	
102	Layer	Dark black silty sand - Topsoil	1600	200	500	
103	Layer	Mid grey brown silty clay with occasional stone inclusions – Subsoil	1600	600	700	
(104) [105]	Fill	Mid brown grey silty clay with occasional stone, tile and animal bone inclusions – Fill of [105]	-	200	1200	
	Cut	Cut of ditch	-	-	1400	

## Appendix 2: Finds Concordance

Context	Pottery		Bone		Flint (no)	Shell (g)	Stone (no)	Other Finds	
	(no)	(g)	(no)	(g)				Type	(no)
(104)			3	506				CBM	8
(104)								Fe	1

## Appendix 3: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes			SITE NO/CODE: 1027/OWH
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	✓	✓	Trench 1, looking southeast, 2x 1m scale
2	✓	✓	Trench 1, looking southeast, 2x 1m scale
3	✓	✓	Section through ditch, looking south south east, 1m scale

## Appendix 4: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes		
Short Description:	In February 2008 ASC carried out an archaeological evaluation at Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes, in advance of the creation of an additional parking area. The site falls within the boundaries of Old Wolverton Medieval Village (DMV), which is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). The evaluation uncovered a post-medieval ditch which is unlikely to be impacted upon by the proposed development.		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Trial Trenching		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	SAM	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	-
Current land use:	Grassland	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	No
Monument type:	Settlement	Monument period:	Medieval
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	Tile and roof tile, Post-medieval		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Milton Keynes Unitary Authority	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 8042 4121
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	98 sq. m.	Height OD: (metres)	75
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	-	Project design originator:	C.Rouse
Project Manager:	R.Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	R.Zeepvat
Sponsor / funding body:	Old Wolverton Parochial Church Council		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	18/02/08	End date:	09/02/08
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Buckinghamshire County Museum	Finds	
Paper:		Archive box	
Digital:		CD	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluatio: Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1027/OWH/2		
Author(s):	Calli Rouse BA PIFA		
Page nos	1-22	Date:	28/02/08