

**Land adjacent to the Royal Oak, 23 Bridgend, Carlton,  
Bedfordshire, MK43 7LP**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT**

Approx. central NGR: SP 95702 55861  
Planning Authority: Bedford Borough Council  
Planning app.: 14/02044/FUL  
Acc. No: BEDFM 2015.05  
PCAS Site code: ROCE 15  
PCAS Job No.: 1376

Prepared for

APC Ltd. Northampton

On behalf of Mr. S. Nichols

by

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**Fig. 2:** Trench plan (1:50) and sections (1:20)

## **Summary**

*Bedford Borough Council conditionally approved a planning application for the construction of two new houses at the Royal Oak public House, 23 Bridgend, Chellington, Carlton, subject to the excavation of an archaeological trial trench within the footprint of the new buildings to assess archaeological potential and inform the need for any further archaeological mitigation associated with development.*

*The evidence for Prehistoric activity in this area is considerable: to the north of Chellington there is extensive cropmark evidence dating from the Bronze Age and Iron Age. Iron Age activity appears to have been concentrated to the east of the neighbouring village of Harrold, where excavations have revealed a 1<sup>st</sup> century farmstead with occupation continuing throughout the Roman period. Roman occupation is recorded on the north bank of the Great Ouse, which runs c.700m north of the site, although a Roman hollow way to the southeast of Chellington may indicate the 14<sup>th</sup> century Harrold Bridge and Causeway follows the line of an earlier track across the river, perhaps extending through Chellington on the approximate line of Bridgend.*

*Chellington was a large Domesday village which developed into a tri-focal settlement in the medieval period following the amalgamation of the parish with neighbouring Carlton. The original village around St. Nicholas' church was gradually deserted in the late medieval/early post-medieval period, surviving as earthworks, with the village growing around a third focal point closer to Carlton. The villages eventually merged in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, forming the settlement pattern seen today. The Royal Oak dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with historic mapping confirming the site of the new houses has remained undeveloped as access to the rear of the pub, possibly to a stable block.*

*The evaluation encountered three cut features. Two intercutting probable rubbish pits on the north side of the trench contained medieval pottery dating to around the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century. Just south of these features was a smaller cut feature.*

## 1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was commissioned by APC Ltd. Northampton on behalf of Mr. S. Nichols to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to the Royal Oak, 23 Bridgend, Chellington with Carlton, Bedfordshire.

Conditional planning permission for two new detached three bedroom dwellings was granted by Bedford Borough Council. As the site lies within an archaeologically sensitive area, a scheme of archaeological trial trenching was required prior to the start of any development to investigate the archaeological potential of the site and advise if any further archaeological mitigation is necessary.

## 2.0 Location and Description (Fig. 1)

Chellington with Carlton is a village and parish in the Borough of Bedford. The village lies between Harrold and Pavenham, on the south bank of the Great Ouse River. The village is almost equidistant between the A6 and the A509, with the A428 lying to the south linking Northampton (c.18km northwest) to Bedford (c.10km southeast).

Bridgend forms part of the main road running through Chellington, the northern half of the village; the Royal Oak pub lies on the northeast side of the road, close to the junction with Felmersham Road. Bridgend forms the northeast end of the historic core of the village. The development plot lies to the north of the pub, with access directly from Bridgend, in two small enclosed plots.

The central NGR of the site is SP 95702 55861.

## 3.0 Topography and Geology

The bedrock geology of the site is parent group Great Ollite Group, with the bedrock of the eastern side of the site recorded as Blisworth Limestone, and to the west Rutland Formation Mudstone. Overlying drift geology is recorded as Felmersham Member sand and gravel; alluvium marks the course of the Great Ouse to the north of the site. (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

The site is reasonably level at approximately 44.50m AOD. The closest known benchmark is a rivet on the southwest side of The Causeway c.380m southwest from the site, recorded as 47.348m OD.

## 4.0 Planning Background

A planning application for the erection of two new houses with associated access and parking was submitted to Bedford Borough Council in August 2014 (**14/02044/FUL**). Planning consent was conditionally granted; the Historic Environment Team for Bedford Borough Council advised that, as the proposed development lies within the historic core of the village, it was necessary to investigate archaeological potential:

**Condition 13:** *No development shall take place until an archaeological strategy for evaluation and if necessary, a further mitigation strategy based on the outcome of the evaluation, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

*The archaeological mitigation strategy shall include a timetable and the following components (the completion of each to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority will result in a separate confirmation of compliance for each component):-.*

(i) fieldwork and/ or preservation in situ of archaeological remains;

(ii) a post-excavation assessment report (to be submitted within six months of the completion of fieldwork);

(iii) a post-excavation analysis report, preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store approved by the Local Planning Authority, completion of an archive report, and submission of a publication report (to be completed within two years of the completion of fieldwork).

The archaeological mitigation strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings.

**REASON:** To safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to any groundworks associated with the development scheme and to ensure the proper and timely preservation and/or investigation, recording, reporting and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this development, in accordance with Saved Policies BE24 & BE25 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002, Policy CP23 of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008) and according to national policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

## 5.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

There is a dense concentration of cropmarks to the north of Carlton, which suggest the presence of multiple enclosures of various sizes, including at least one ring ditch and a pit alignment. No archaeological investigation has been completed on these cropmarks, although the enclosures are thought to be Bronze Age in date, while the pit alignment may be Mesolithic or Neolithic, indicating potentially protracted activity in this area (BHER ref: 540). A rectangular cropmark enclosure, also undated, lies c. 600m south of the site on the periphery of Carlton (BHER ref: 16494).

A large site was fully excavated on the east side of Harrold, c.1km north of the Royal Oak, ahead of quarrying in the 1970s. The earliest archaeology investigated on the site was a Bronze Age ring ditch with an internal burial; a possible barrow monument. Early Iron Age enclosures gave way to a 1<sup>st</sup> century BC farmstead, with occupation continuing throughout the Roman period. Features included field systems, animal enclosures, wells and drying ovens, as well as Iron Age roundhouses in the early occupation phase and succeeding rectangular timber framed Roman buildings. A number of wicker lined Roman wells confirmed that occupation continued beyond the end of the Roman period (BHER ref: 543). It is possible that some of the cropmarks on the south side of Harrold and in closer proximity to the Royal Oak may relate to the Bronze Age monument or the later farmstead.

Roman occupation in the area appears to have been concentrated around this farmstead, although evidence of contemporary occupation has been identified at sites across the village of Harrold and the north bank of the Great Ouse. A single Roman coin dating from the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century has been found near Harrold Bridge (BHER ref: 15890), which may indicate the presence of a ford or bridge close to this location. This is supported by the presence of a possible hollow way, a former road tentatively dated to the Roman period, extending from the southeast side of Carlton along what is now a public footpath in a south-easterly direction towards Bedford (BHER ref: 5154). This may also suggest the presence of a Roman road in the vicinity of Bridgend - modern mapping records the road from Harrold Bridge towards Carlton as a medieval causeway, but may follow the line of an ancient road through the floodplain of the river.

There is limited evidence of continued occupation into the Saxon period, however both Carlton and Harold, and the neighbouring deserted village of Chellington are all recorded in the Domesday Book, confirming the presence of settlements in the late Saxon period. All three lay in the Hundred of Willey. Charlton and Chellington were the largest, having 21 and

23 households respectively, although Chellington appeared in a single entry, suggesting a condensed settlement. Carlton appeared in five entries with separate overlords and tenants-in-chief, which would indicate a more dispersed settlement pattern. Harrold was a smaller village, but still substantial for the time with 10 households, and in addition to the ploughland and meadow across this area, woodland for 200 pigs was also recorded, which may account for the high tax assessment of the manor (<http://domesdaymap.co.uk/>).

Carlton developed as a linear settlement along the main roads of the village including Bridgend, The Moor, and the High Street to the southwest, expanding in the post-medieval and modern periods (BHER ref: 16941). Harrold was also continuously occupied throughout this period (BHER ref: 16942); however the large village of Chellington, which had been the largest of the Domesday settlements in the area, was gradually deserted over the medieval and post-medieval period. Previously separate parishes, Chellington and Carlton, were amalgamated in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century to form a single parish.

Early medieval Chellington developed as a tri-focal settlement, with three areas of enclosures and house platforms linked by hollow ways. The earliest parts of the settlement developed around the church of St. Nicholas (Grade I Listed, List entry ID: 1114239), which dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. With the amalgamation of the parish with Carlton, a new village developed on the former boundary between the two, giving the village its tri-focal pattern. Over the next 450 years the old parts of the village around St. Nicholas were gradually abandoned, and by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century only a few houses remained in this area while the new village of Chellington thrived and grew.

Harrold Bridge and the associated causeway across the Great Ouse both date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, although the structure has been intensively improved and repaired throughout the medieval and post-medieval period. The bridge and causeway are both Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments. Historic gazetteers recorded Bridge End as a hamlet on the north side of Chellington, the hamlet becoming merged with the village in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century prior to early OS mapping, by which time, although the place name was given there was no distinction between the two.

The deserted medieval village of Chellington consists of ill-defined streets with irregular enclosures on which houses once stood (SAM no: 1013277). There is also a good strip of ridge and furrow agriculture south of the church outside the scheduled area. The survival of well-preserved earthworks over much of its original area is important, since the majority of comparable sites have been lost or damaged due to advances in agricultural improvements. The visible surviving features include hollow ways, crofts and tofts, greens, house platforms, clay quarries and fishponds, and it is the large range of features which highlight this site. In addition, there may be buried remains preserved throughout the site. The site is well documented from the medieval period by surviving texts and maps, so what really makes the deserted village important is the combination of archaeological and historical resources available, which together have provided important material for research on the development and evolution of medieval nucleated settlements, especially in Bedfordshire.

There are two Conservation Areas in Carlton with Chellington. The first of these is the Carlton Conservation Area (DBD3270), which comprises two separate elements. The southernmost element identifies the core of the historic village of Carlton around High Street, and in part of Chellington known as The Marsh. There are twelve Listed Buildings on Carlton High Street, and another three in The Marsh, all of which date from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition, there are seven other structures of historical interest (termed as monuments) on the High Street, two in The Marsh and one each in The Causeway and Carlton Road.

The northernmost element lies around the historic core of Chellington and Bridge End, that part of the village that survived and expanded following the amalgamation of the two villages. The Royal Oak lies within this northern Conservation Area, but is not registered as either a

Listed Building or a building of significant historic interest. Immediately surrounding the site there are a number of Listed Buildings including no.10 Bridgend, a late 17<sup>th</sup> century house and no.12 Bridgend, formerly two houses with date stone 1624, now linked and the village post office (both opposite the site entrance) and Laburnum House, another 17<sup>th</sup> century house which lies to the south beyond no.25 Bridgend, which is recorded as a historic building on the Bedford HER (respectively List entry id: 1114238; 1311212; 1114237; BHER ref: 5542).

The Harrold Conservation Area (DBD3278) is located on the north side of the River Great Ouse; the southern part is within 1,000 metres of the Royal Oak. Three Listed Buildings are situated in the southern part, in Church Walk: Pointers Lodge (BHER ref: 1114266) is a 19<sup>th</sup> century house, with its associated barn (BHER ref: 1321536), and the Parish Church of St Peter (BHER ref: 1321537) which dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Royal Oak appears on the first edition OS maps, showing the area of the proposed new houses as undeveloped access to the rear of the building, perhaps to a stable block as there appears to be a smaller building at the rear of the plot. Carlton and Chellington did not finally merge into one town until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the two remaining distinct villages until the 1950's (<https://www.old-maps.co.uk/>).

## **6.0 Methodology**

The evaluation consisted of one 15m x 2m trench on land at the Royal Oak public house, Carlton within the footprint of the proposed new buildings.

The trench was located by triangulation and, after cutting the carpark surface, it was machine excavated under archaeological supervision, using a 180° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand, and features were sample excavated.

The evaluation trench was drawn in plan at a scale of 1:50; excavated features were drawn in section at scale 1:20, and sample sections of the trench baulks were also drawn. The section drawings were located on the base plans; Ordnance Datum levels were taken using a Global Positioning System. Deposits were recorded on standard PCAS record sheets, and an excavation site diary was also kept. A digital photographic record, supplemented by colour slide photography, was made, and extracts from this are reproduced in Appendix 1. Finds were stored in labelled bags prior to their removal to the offices of PCAS for initial processing.

Following fieldwork completion, finds were taken to PCAS to be washed, marked and sorted. The finds were subsequently dispatched to specialists for assessment, and the specialists' findings are attached as appendices.

The fieldwork was carried out by Leigh Brocklehurst and took place on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015. Weather conditions were overcast and rainy.

## **7.0 Results**

### **7.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 2)**

The trench was positioned within the footprint of the proposed new dwellings and orientated east to west. The natural substrate of sand and gravel was exposed 0.5m below existing ground level. Overlying the natural geology (102) was a light brown sandy gravel silt layer (101). This layer was sealed by the modern carpark surface, constructed of gravel, cobble and brick (100).

Three cut features were exposed in the evaluation trench: two steep side pits on the north edge and a shallow posthole-type feature just to the south of these.

Stratigraphically, pit [103] was the earlier of the two; cut by later pit [105]. Both features had steep sides and flat bases. Each contained a single fill, from which two types of medieval pottery typical of the area (Medieval Shelly Ware and Late Medieval Reduced Ware) were retrieved; [103] contained five sherds and [105] yielded three which provide *terminus post quem* dates of the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century for both pits.

The smaller feature [107] was filled with a single humic deposit of sandy silt incorporating rare charcoal flecks.

## **8.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

As described above, medieval Carlton was a linear settlement which formed alongside the major roads including Bridgend. The archaeology encountered concurs with this understanding of the medieval settlement.

The silty humic fills within all three pits and the pottery sherds recovered would suggest these were plausibly rubbish pits used for the disposal of domestic refuse during the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century.

## **9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology**

Trial trench evaluation was effective in demonstrating the presence of archaeological remains on the site, and was able to provide a date for two of the pits encountered. The body of data thus produced will be sufficient to inform the planning and development process.

## **10.0 Project Archive**

The project archive, consisting of the site recording and the finds, will be deposited with printed copies of this report at The Higgins Art Gallery and Museum, Bedford; following deposition, the archive will be available for consultation under the accession number BEDFM 2015.05. A copy of the full report will also be uploaded to the Archaeology Data Service OASIS (Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigationS) database, where it will be publicly accessible online.

## **11.0 Acknowledgements**

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services would like to thank APC Ltd. Northampton and behalf of Mr. S. Nichols for this commission.

## **12.0 References**

<http://domesdaymap.co.uk/>

<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/BDF/Chellington/index.html#Gazetteers>

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/>

<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/mapsearch.aspx>



*The Royal Oak, Carlton, Bedfordshire*  
*Archaeological Evaluation*

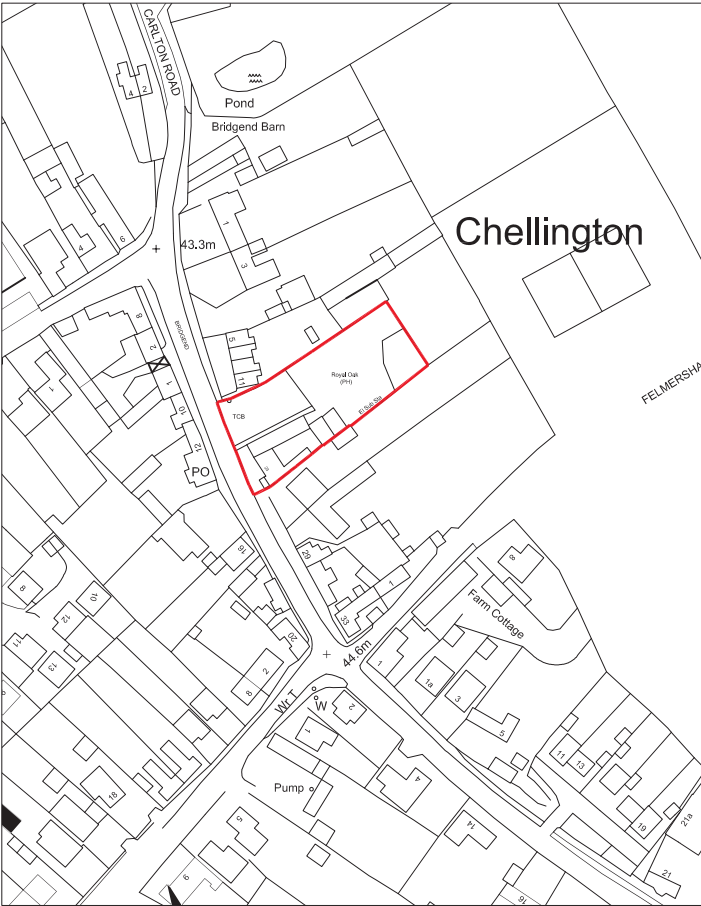
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

<https://www.old-maps.co.uk/>

<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/place/5733/writing>

planning documents accessed online 29/1/15 at:

<http://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/SearchResults.aspx?appNumber=14/02044/FUL>

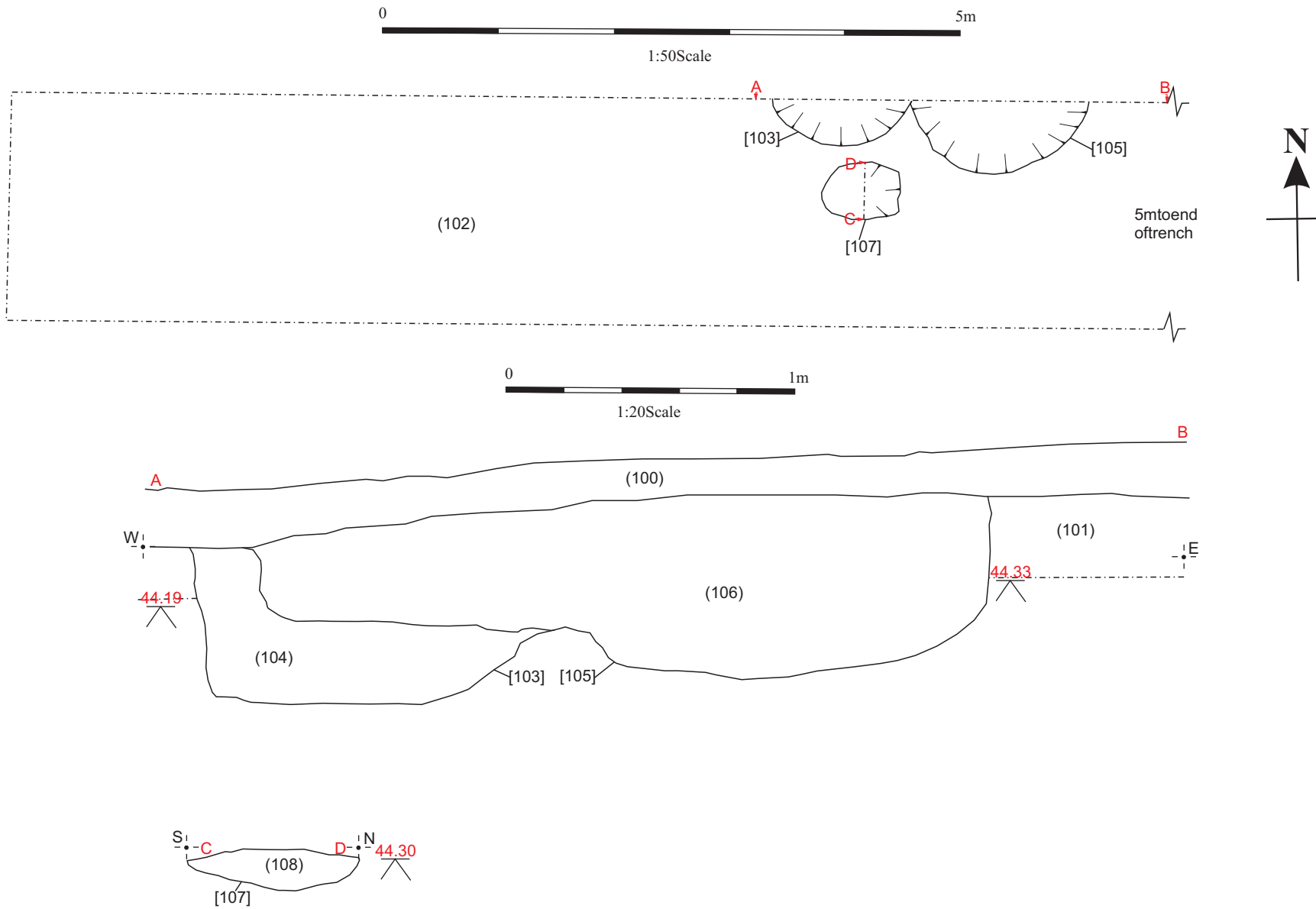


0/0 15m/150m  
 1:250/1:2500scale



Figure 1: Site location plan (top) @ 1:2500, with proposed site layout (right) @ 1:250 showing position of trench (red). Plans supplied by developer.

Figure2: Trenchplanat1:50andsectionsat1:20





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## Pottery from Carlton, Bedfordshire (Site ROCE15)

*Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprises 8 sherds with a total weight of 49g. It is all medieval. It was recorded using the conventions of the Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service type-series (eg Baker and Hassall 1977), as follows:

**B07:** Medieval Shelly Ware, AD1100-1400. 3 sherds, 15g.

**E01:** Late Medieval Reduced Ware, mid 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century. 5 sherds, 34g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. Both the wares are very typical finds in the region. All the sherds are in good condition, and appear reliably stratified.

*Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type*

Cntxt	B07		E01		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	
104	2	11	3	29	M14thC
106	1	4	2	5	M14thC
Total	3	15	5	34	

## Bibliography

Baker, E and Hassall, E, 1979 The Pottery in D Baker, E Baker, J Hassall and A Simco  
Excavations in Bedford 1967-1977 *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal* 13, 147 - 239