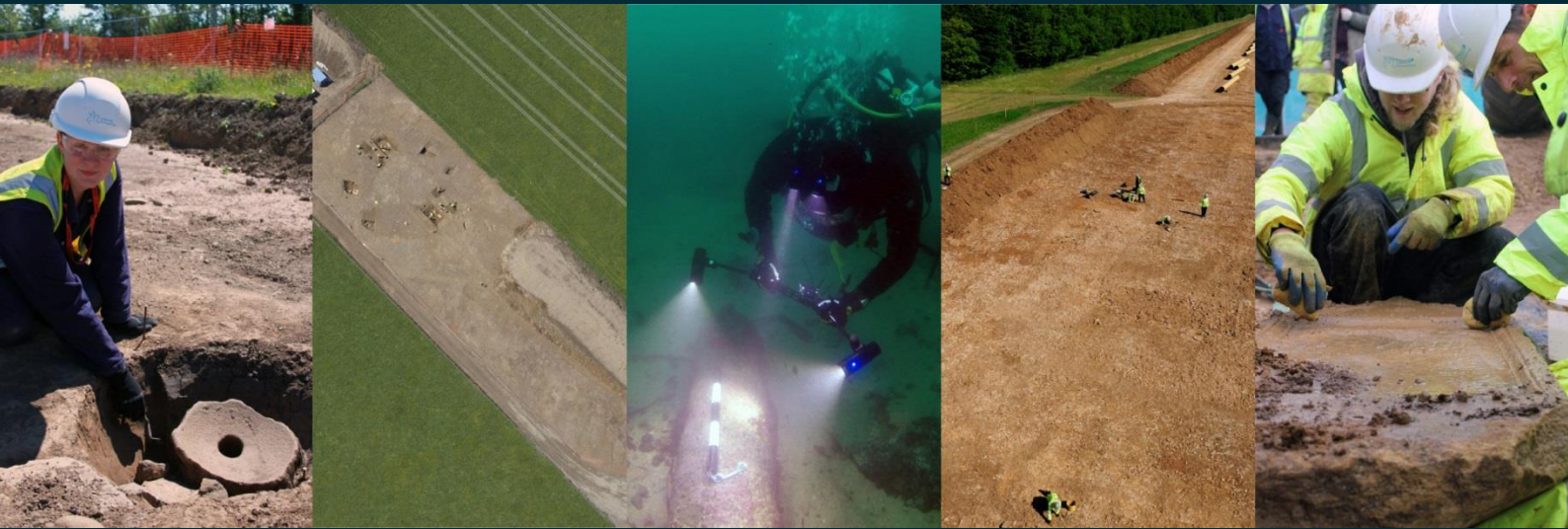


Swaynes Cottage
Fore Street
Weston
Hertfordshire



on behalf of
Mr Hall & Mrs Pateman-Hall

CA Project No: 660717
Site Code: SWAY 16
CA Report No: 17072

March 2017



Swaynes Cottage
Fore Street
Weston
Hertfordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project No: 660717
Site Code: SWAY 16
CA Report No: 17072



Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
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B	16/03/2017	TL	PB	Draft	QA	SRJ

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Swaynes Cottage
Location:	Swaynes Cottage, Fore Street, Weston, Hertfordshire
NGR:	TL 25938 30394
Type:	Watching Brief
Date:	2 February and 15 March 2017
Planning Reference:	North Hertfordshire District Council planning ref: 15/02573/1HH
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with North Hertfordshire Museum
Site Code:	SWAY 16

In February and March 2017, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Swaynes Cottage, Fore Street, Weston. The fieldwork was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning application for a part two storey and part single storey extension and the erection of a double garage and new access route at the site.

Archaeological interest in the site derives from its location within the grounds of Swaynes Cottage a Grade II listed 17th-century building.

The earliest feature identified within the site comprised a pit containing 14th to 16th-century pottery. No other features of 14th to 16th-century date were identified during the watching brief and no evidence of features, finds or deposits relating to medieval or post-medieval settlement were identified.

Evidence for modern landscaping and truncation, most probably associated with the occupation of Swaynes Cottage was revealed throughout the northern part of the site.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February and March 2017, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Swaynes Cottage, Fore Street, Weston (centred on NGR: TL 25938 30394; Fig. 1). This work was commissioned by Mr Hall & Mrs Pateman-Hall. The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent for a part two storey and part single storey extension and the erection of a double garage along with a new access route (Planning ref: 15/02573/1HH).
- 1.2 The scope of the works was defined during discussions between CA and Andy Instone, Hertfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist (HCCPA), the archaeological advisor to North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC; the local planning authority). The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016) and approved by NHDC acting on the advice of Andy Instone. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (HE 2015).

The site

- 1.3 The village of Weston is located c. 2.5km to the south-east of Letchworth Garden City and c. 2.5km north of Stevenage. The site is located within the northern part of the village off Fore Street. The proposed development area occupies a broadly rectangular plot of land measuring 0.2ha in area (Fig. 1). The site is currently occupied by Swaynes Cottage, a Grade II listed residential property. The site is bounded to the north and south by properties fronting onto Fore Street, to the east by Fore Street and to the west by agricultural land, currently utilised for pasture. Locally the ground is relatively flat and lies at c. 145m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation of the Cretaceous Period. This is overlain by superficial Quaternary deposits of Lowestoft Formation till with sand and gravel (BGS 2017).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric period (pre AD 43)

2.1 Evidence for prehistoric activity in the area is limited to findspots; 181 Mesolithic and Neolithic flint implements were collected by Marlborough Pryor within the vicinity of Weston (HER 647). These were subsequently donated to Letchworth Museum; however, the exact locations of these findspots were not recorded. Several Bronze Age tools have also been found in the Damask Green area of Weston approximately 150m to the south of the site (HER 11538).

2.2 In 2002 a small assemblage of Iron Age pottery was collected during the archaeological monitoring of ground works for new drainage at the Holy Trinity Church in Weston (Firth 2003).

Roman period (AD 43 – AD 410)

2.3 The findspots of a Roman coin and a bronze steelyard weight, recorded in a field to the south of Weston, are the only remains dating from the Roman period within the immediate vicinity of the site (Monument no's 365649 and 365650).

Early medieval and medieval periods (AD 410 – 1539)

2.4 The 12th-century Holy Trinity Church is situated approximately 250m to the east of site. To the south of the church, a large scatter of medieval building material and high status objects, were found in a ploughed field (HER 2639). The scatter, which covered an area of approximately 150m by 100m, contained pottery dating from the 12th to 14th century. It has been speculated that the pottery may indicate the site of an old manor house.

Post-medieval and modern periods (1540 – present)

2.5 Swaynes Cottage is recorded as a Grade II listed 17th-century building. However, an inspection by Hertfordshire County Councils Conservation Officer Mark Simmons suggests that parts of it may be of an earlier origin. In the 19th century an extension was added to the rear and a conservatory was further added in the 1980's. In addition to Swaynes Cottage, Weston contains 33 further post-medieval and modern Grade II listed buildings.



3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works, as detailed within the WSI (CA 2016) were:

- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
- at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2016). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising the excavation of foundation trenches for a rear extension to the property and a foundation trench for a garage to the south west of the property, along with ground reduction across the footprint of the garage (Fig. 2). All machining was carried out in spits down to foundation base or formation level and continuously archaeologically monitored.

4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.3 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Milton Keynes. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with North Hertfordshire Museum, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.



5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-6)

Trenches 1 and 3 (Figs 2 to 6)

- 5.1 Trenches 1 and 3 were located to the south-west of Swaynes Cottage (Figs 2 to 4). Ground reduction was carried out across an area measuring 6.5m by 6m and to a depth of approximately 0.65m below present ground level (bpgl; Fig. 5). The natural geological substrate (102/302) comprised an indurated mid orange brown clay with occasional sub-rounded, small to medium sized chalk and flint nodule inclusions. A single pit-like feature was identified at the southern edge of Trench 1, cutting into the natural substrate (Fig. 6; section AA). Ground reduction across the wider garage area (Trench 3) further revealed the pit, which was irregular in plan and extended for approximately 0.4m into the trench. The irregular edges may result from disturbance by root action from a mature Ash Tree located adjacent to the feature. The single, mid-grey silty clay fill 104, contained three sherds of 14th to 16th-century pottery and was directly overlain by friable, slightly yellow brown subsoil (101/301), which measured 0.45m thick. This was in turn sealed by friable, very dark greyish brown, sandy silt topsoil (100/300).

Trench 2 (Figs 2, 7 & 8)

- 5.2 Trench 2 was located immediately to the west of Swaynes Cottage (Figs 2, 7 & 8). The natural geological substrate (202), consisting of mid orange brown clay with frequent medium sub-rounded stone and flint nodules, was revealed at an average depth of 0.3m bpgl. This was overlain by mid grey silty clay (101), which measured c. 0.1m thick and contained small to medium sized sub-rounded stones. It was in turn sealed by 0.15m of loose very dark grey re-worked humic silt containing frequent evidence of modern disturbance (100). No archaeological finds or features were found associated with this trench, however, a modern cess tank and two modern drainage pipes were identified.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1 Artefactual material from the watching brief was hand recovered from one pit fill (104). The recovered material dates to the medieval period. Artefact quantities are given in Appendix B.



Pottery

- 6.2 Fill 104 of pit 103 produced three sherds of pottery. An unfeatured and abraded bodysherd in a shell-tempered fabric (SHL) is likely to date to the medieval period. However similar fabrics from both the Roman and medieval periods are known from the area. Likely sources are north Bedfordshire/Northamptonshire or Cambridgeshire. A bodysherd of Hertfordshire Greyware (HGW), in good condition, is dateable to the 14th to 16th centuries (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 436). Similar dating can be applied to a rimsherd from a large bowl with a flat rim, in an oxidised variant of Hertfordshire Greyware (HOW).

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 Prehistoric, Roman and medieval findspots are recorded within the vicinity of Weston, with the site itself situated within the grounds of the 17-century Swaynes Cottage. The watching brief was undertaken to determine if archaeological remains associated with Swaynes Cottage or the surrounding archaeological activity extended into the proposed development area.
- 7.2 However, very little evidence for activity pre-dating the modern period was identified and only a single pit containing three sherds of medieval pottery was identified within the site.
- 7.3 Evidence of modern landscaping and truncation within the northern part of the site, presumably associated with the occupation of Swaynes Cottage was evidenced by re-worked deposits and modern services within Trench 2.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 8.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Lewis and Peter Boyer. The report was written by Tim Lewis and Peter Boyer, with illustrations prepared by Esther Escudero. The finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The archive has been compiled by Emily Evans, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Stuart Joyce.

9. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2017 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 3 February 2017

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Firth, H. 2003 *Holy Trinity Church, Weston: Archaeological Assessment Report/Report No 188*. The Heritage Network

McCarthy, M. R. and Brooks, C. M. 1988 *Medieval Pottery in Britain AD 900-1600*.
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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

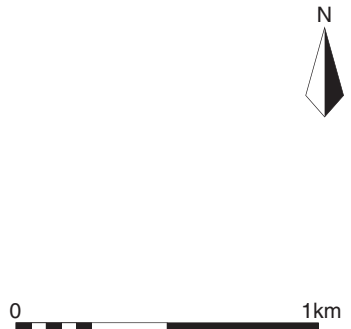
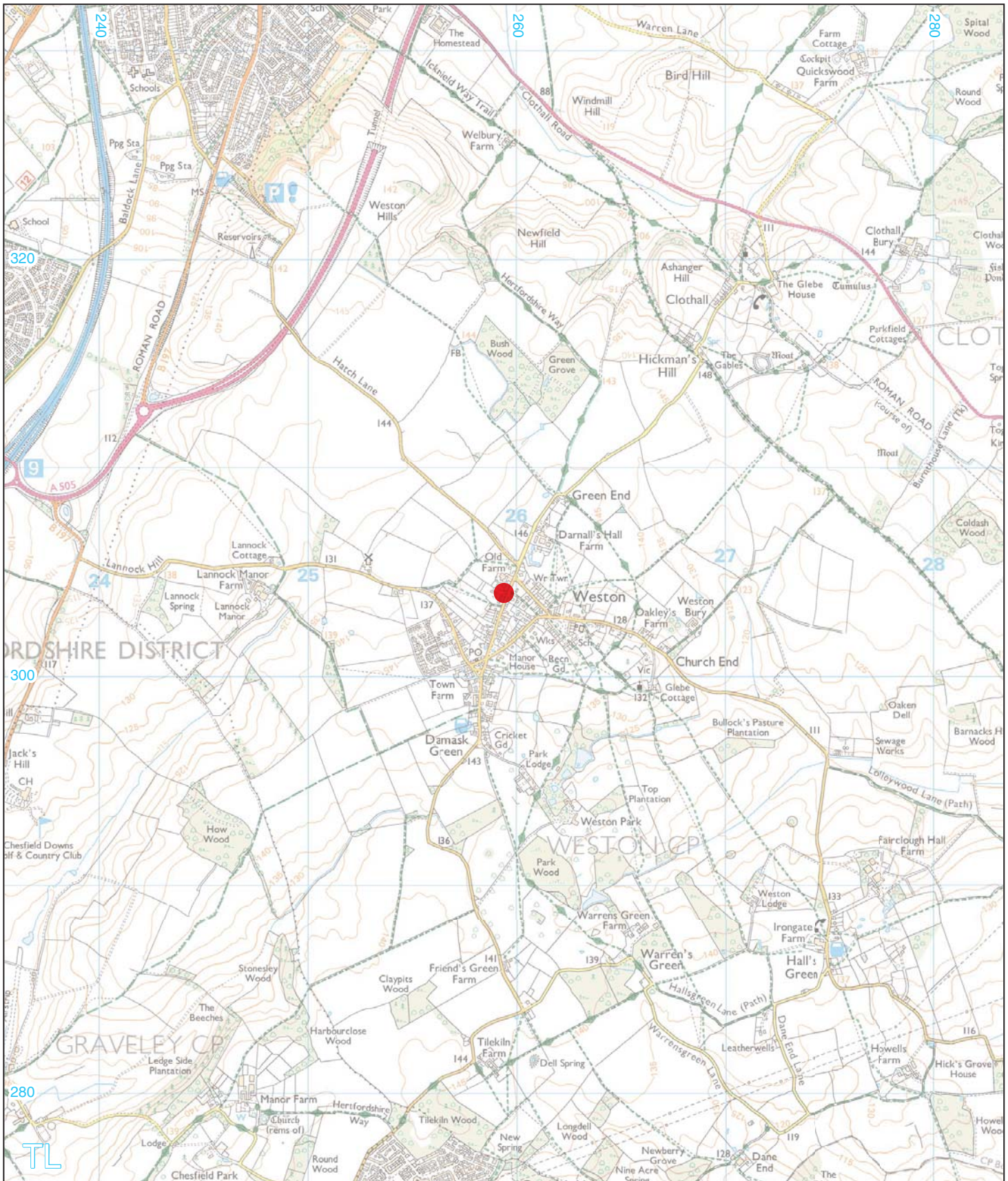
Tr No.	Cxt No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Loose very dark grey silt. Frequent modern disturbance	6	6	0.3	modern
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	mid grey silty clay. Occasional small-medium sub-round stones	6	6	0.15	
1	102	Layer		Natural	Mid Orangey brown clay, frequent medium sub-rounded stone and flint nodules	6	6	-	
1	103	Cut		Cut of pit	Steeply sloped, slightly concave sided. Same as 303	0.6m+	1m	01..3	
1	104	Fill	103	Fill of pit	Fairly loose mid grey silty clay, granular texture with occasional chalky nodules. Occasional small-medium, sub-rounded stone	0.6m+	1m	0..3	14th-16th century
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Loose very dark grey silt. Frequent modern disturbance	6	6	0.15	modern
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	mid grey silty clay. Occasional small-medium sub-round stones	6	6	0.10	
2	201	Layer		Natural	Mid Orangey brown clay, frequent medium sub-rounded stone and flint nodules	6	6	-	
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Friable, very dark greyish brown sandy silt with frequent roots	6.5	6	0.45	modern
3	301	Layer		Subsoil	Friable, mid yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional roots	6.5	6	0.25	
3	302	Layer		Natural	Stiff, mid, slightly yellowish brown silty clay	6.5	6	>0.2	
3	303	Cut		Cut of pit	Sub-rectangular to irregular in plan. Same as 103	>1.35	>0.4	-	
3	304	Fill	303	Fill of pit	Firm, mid yellowish brown silty clay	>1.35	>0.4	-	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Category	Description	Fabric Code	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
104	Medieval pottery	Hertfordshire Greyware	HGW	1	12	C14-C16
	Medieval pottery	Hertfordshire Oxidised fabric	HOW	1	40	
	?Medieval pottery	Shell-tempered fabric	SHL	1	3	

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Swaynes Cottage, Fore Street, Weston, Hitchin, Hertfordshire	
Short description	<p>In February and March 2017, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Swaynes Cottage, Fore Street, Weston. The fieldwork was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning application for a part two storey and part single storey extension and the erection of a double garage and new access route at the site.</p> <p>Archaeological interest in the site derives from its location within the grounds of Swaynes Cottage a Grade II listed 17th-century building.</p> <p>The earliest feature identified within the site comprised a pit containing 14th to 16th-century pottery. No other features of 14th to 16th-century date were identified during the watching brief and no evidence of features, finds or deposits relating to medieval or post-medieval settlement were identified.</p> <p>Evidence for modern landscaping and truncation, most probably associated with the occupation of Swaynes Cottage was revealed throughout the northern part of the site.</p>	
Project dates	02/02/2017 & 15/03/2017	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Swaynes Cottage, Fore Street, Weston, Hitchin, Hertfordshire	
Study area (M ² /ha)		
Site co-ordinates	TL 25938 30394	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Hertfordshire County Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Stuart Joyce	
Project Supervisor	Timothy Lewis	
MONUMENT TYPE	none	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	Pottery; Roman	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	North Hertfordshire Museum	Pottery
Paper	North Hertfordshire Museum	WSI, pro-forma recording sheets, registers
Digital	North Hertfordshire Museum	Digital Photos and survey
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017 Swaynes Cottage, Fore Street, Weston, Hitchin, Hertfordshire: <i>Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report 17072		



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

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

Reproduced from the digital Ordnance Survey Explorer map with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright
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DRAWN BY	EE	PROJECT NO.	660717	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	20/03/2017	
APPROVED BY	SJ	SCALE	@A4 1:25,000	1



TL

-  Evaluation trench
-  Archaeological feature
-  Modern feature
-  Section location



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PROJECT TITLE
 Swaynes Cottage, Fore Street, Weston Hitchin, Hertfordshire

FIGURE TITLE
 The site, showing area of monitored groundworks and archaeological features

DRAWN BY	EE	PROJECT NO.	660717	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	20/03/2017	2
APPROVED BY	SJ	SCALE@A3	1:250	

p:\660717 Swaynes Cottage, Weston, Hitchin, Herts WP\Illustration\Drawings\660717_2\DMaster_170315.dwg



Trench 2 area pre-excitation, looking south-east



Trench 1 and 3 area pre-excitation, looking south-west



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PROJECT TITLE

Swaynes Cottage, Fore Street, Weston Hitchin, Hertfordshire

FIGURE TITLE

Trenches 1, 2 and 3: photographs

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 CHECKED BY DJB DATE 20/03/2017
 APPROVED BY SJ SCALE@A4 NA

FIGURE NO.

3



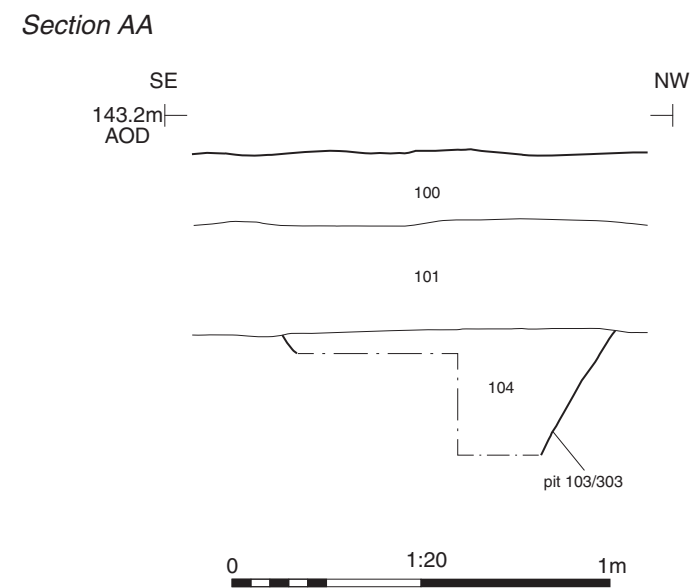
Trench 1, looking south-east (1m scale)



Trench 3, looking south-east (1m scales)



Pit 103/303 pre-excavation, looking south-west (0.5m scale)



Pit 103/303, looking south-east (0.2m scale)



Trench 2, looking south-east



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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 2: photograph

DRAWN BY EE PROJECT NO. 660717
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FIGURE NO.

6

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