

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT
ON LAND TO THE NORTHEAST OF THE PRESENT
BURIAL GROUND OF THE CHURCH OF THE
ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
TWYFORD, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

NGR SP 6659 2666

On behalf of

Twyford Parish Council

APRIL 2013

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation comprising two trenches on land to the north-east of the present burial ground of the church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Twyford. Trenches excavated through previously recorded earthworks confirmed them to be part of an early high medieval manorial complex. Ditches formed an enclosure round a raised platform. Pottery from the abandonment phase dated from the 11th to 13th centuries. The former vicarage, which was probably the former manor house, located 40m to the west was built in the 15th century, and appears to have replaced the former structure located in the vicinity of the evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

This site is located on land adjacent to and north-east of the present cemetery of the church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Twyford (SP 6659 2666 centred). The drift geology is undifferentiated River Terrace Deposits (BGS 219), overlying Oxford Clay. The current land use is pastoral and the site is approximately 0.03ha in area.

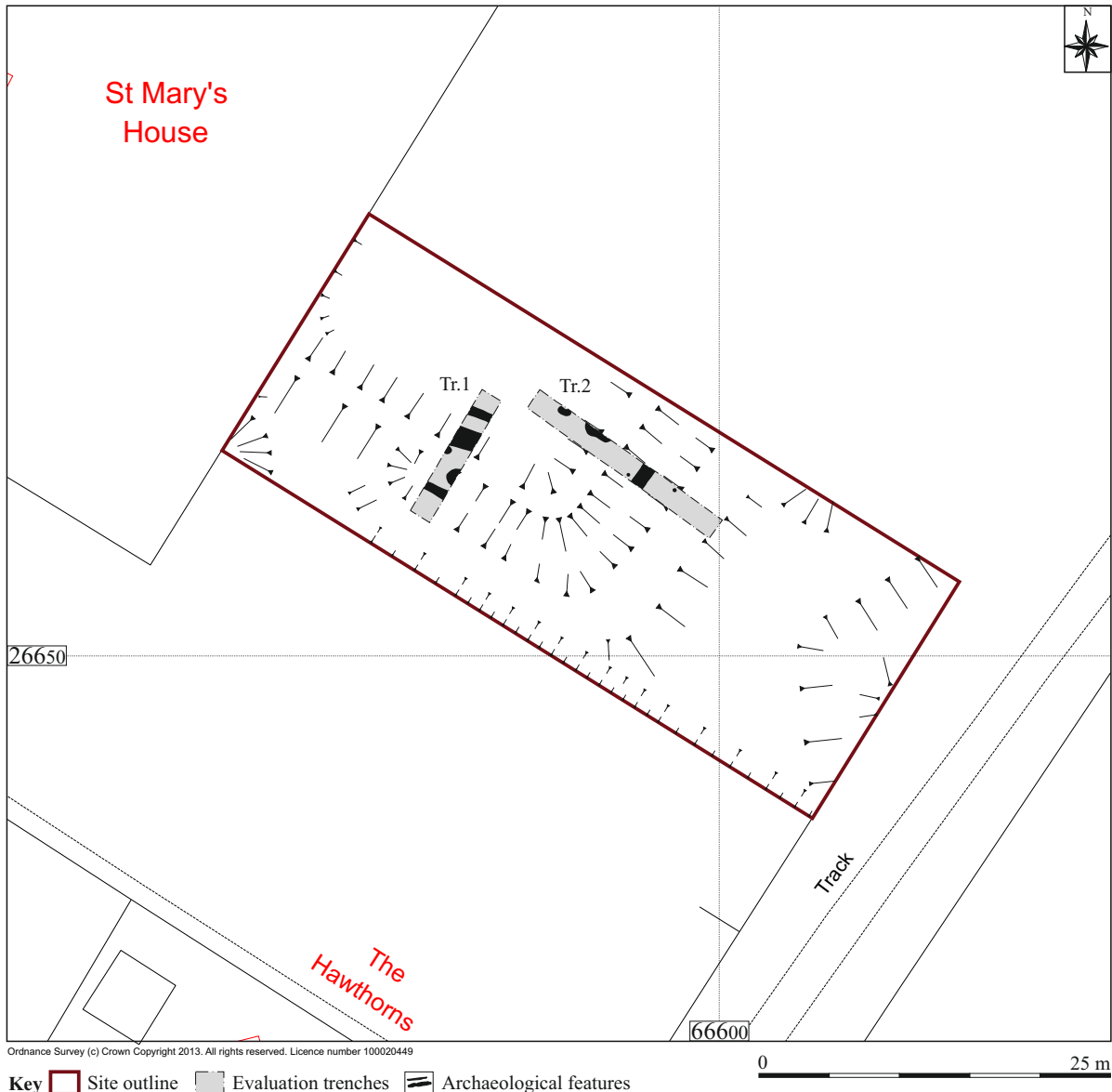
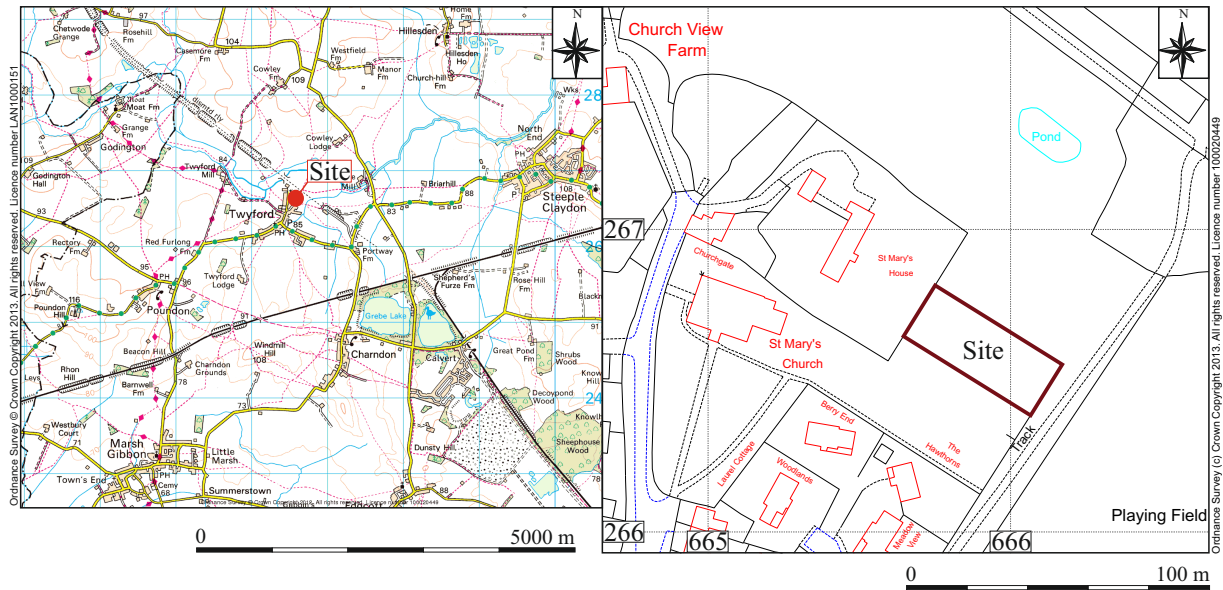
1.2 Planning Background

It is proposed to extend the cemetery of the church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Twyford. Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) has recommended that a pre-determination archaeological evaluation be carried out to confirm the absence/presence of any significant remains. This is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. BCAS prepared a Brief for the work.

A Written Scheme of Investigation, which proposed a suitable methodology to satisfy the requirements of the Brief, was submitted to and accepted by BCAS.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Twyford is in Domesday as both ‘Tueverde’ and ‘Tuiforde’ where it was one of the estates of Ralph of Fuegeres (or Ralph de Fougeres). It was in Mow hundred and Ralph was both tenant-in-chief and lord. The manor comprised 34 households of 15 villagers with 10 smallholders and 9 slaves. The manor was assessed at 17 hides; of which the lord of the manor held 6. There was land for 18 ploughs. and 11 ploughs were held by tenants, with 3 by Ralph, who could have had a further two ploughs. There was meadow for 3 ploughs and woodland for 100 pigs. The value at Domesday was £10; although when acquired had dropped to £8 from £12 before 1066. before the Conquest, the Countess Goda held this land; there a man of Earl Harold’s had 3 hides as one manor; which he could sell; the manor also held a wall-house in Oxford (Williams & Martin, 1992).



Key Site outline Evaluation trenches Archaeological features

Figure 1. Site location

In the 12th century Twyford was one of the fifty parishes in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire included within the boundaries of the Bernwood Forest, this status was repealed in 1632 (BAS 2011).

The church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a grade I listed building (MBC3001) dating from the 12th century and lies 60m to the west of the proposed site. Its present churchyard borders the site on the western edge. A grade II listed 14th century preaching cross (MBC3002) is situated within the churchyard. The 15th century grade II listed St Mary's House (MBC720) lies adjacent to the site to the north and is currently the parish vicarage. A number of listed buildings are present in the current village these date from the 17th century onwards.

The site lies with an area of known earthworks that possibly date to the medieval period (MBC7965). These earthworks include house platforms, hollow ways and a pond representing remains of a shrunken village. A large platform to the north of the site may represent the site of the former manor house (MBC7966). This may be more than just a large house platform as limited survey work in 1977 and 1981 noted it as a rectangular enclosure with a well-defined ditch and traces of an internal bank (MBC7967). A curving hollow way or ditch (MBC7968) is located within 100m northeast of the site. Fishponds are noted 200m to the north (MBC7969). A hollow way and hut platforms are located 400m to the south (MBC11748, MBC11749 and MBC11750). Within 150m to the west of the site are further earthworks (MBC22490). Ridge and furrow is recorded to the southwest, south, southeast and northeast of the site

The earthwork in the area are not depicted on any of the following maps consulted; Jeffrey's map of 1760, Bryant's map of 1820, the first edition OS map, the 1910 valuation map and the OS map of 1923.

An earthwork survey defining the extent of remains potentially impacted by the proposal was carried out by JMHS previously. Trench locations were laid out according to the survey.

Much of the above information is derived from BAS 2011 Twyford Village Buckinghamshire. Historic Environment Appraisal. Unpublished BAS Report 2011-06

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site

In particular

- To identify and characterise any evidence for medieval occupation and identify the potential for deposits to contribute to our understanding of how Twyford developed

- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Brief* from BCAS a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by John Moore Heritage Services and submitted to and accepted by BCAS.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The evaluation involved the mechanical excavation of two trenches, one 15m long, the other 10m and each 1.6m wide, across the site. Investigation was supplemented by limited hand investigation of archaeological deposits. Excavation of the trenches was carried out by a 7-tonne excavator with a toothless bucket under archaeological control (Fig. 1).

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers indicate features i.e. cuts that were investigated during the evaluation; while numbers in parentheses - () - show feature fills or deposits of material, some of which were investigated, while others were characterised by analogy with previously excavated deposits.

All measurements are given in metres. A general description of the features and, where necessary, fills or deposits, observed is given in the text; a more detailed description is given in the Appendix: Context Description at the rear of the report.

4.1 Fieldwork (Figures 1-6)

Trench 1

Trench 1, which was 10m long and oriented northeast/southwest, was excavated to the natural river terrace gravel (1/03), which was between 0.5m (at the south end) and 0.7m (at the north end) below modern ground level. The south end of the trench was between 85.46m AOD (top) and 84.97m AOD (base) and the north end was between 85.66m AOD (top) and 84.96m (base), indicating the slightly greater build-up of material within the enclosure.

At the south end of the trench the natural gravel was overlain by grey brown sandy loam (1/16), a potentially relict cultivation horizon. A deposit of red brown sandy clay (1/15) was dumped in the top of it. No finds were recovered from either deposit.



Figure 3. Trench 1 looking northeast.

The gravel (1/03) was cut by the parallel ditches 1/09 and 1/11, which were located in the northern half of the trench at approximately 30° to the orientation of the enclosure ditch 1/05. A single sherd of Sandy & Shelly ware, dating from after the 11th century was recovered from the light grey loam fill (1/08) of ditch 1/09 (Fig. 4); no finds were recovered from the fill of 1/11. They are associated by virtue of having the same alignment, therefore appearing to be coeval.



Figure 4. Ditch 1/09.

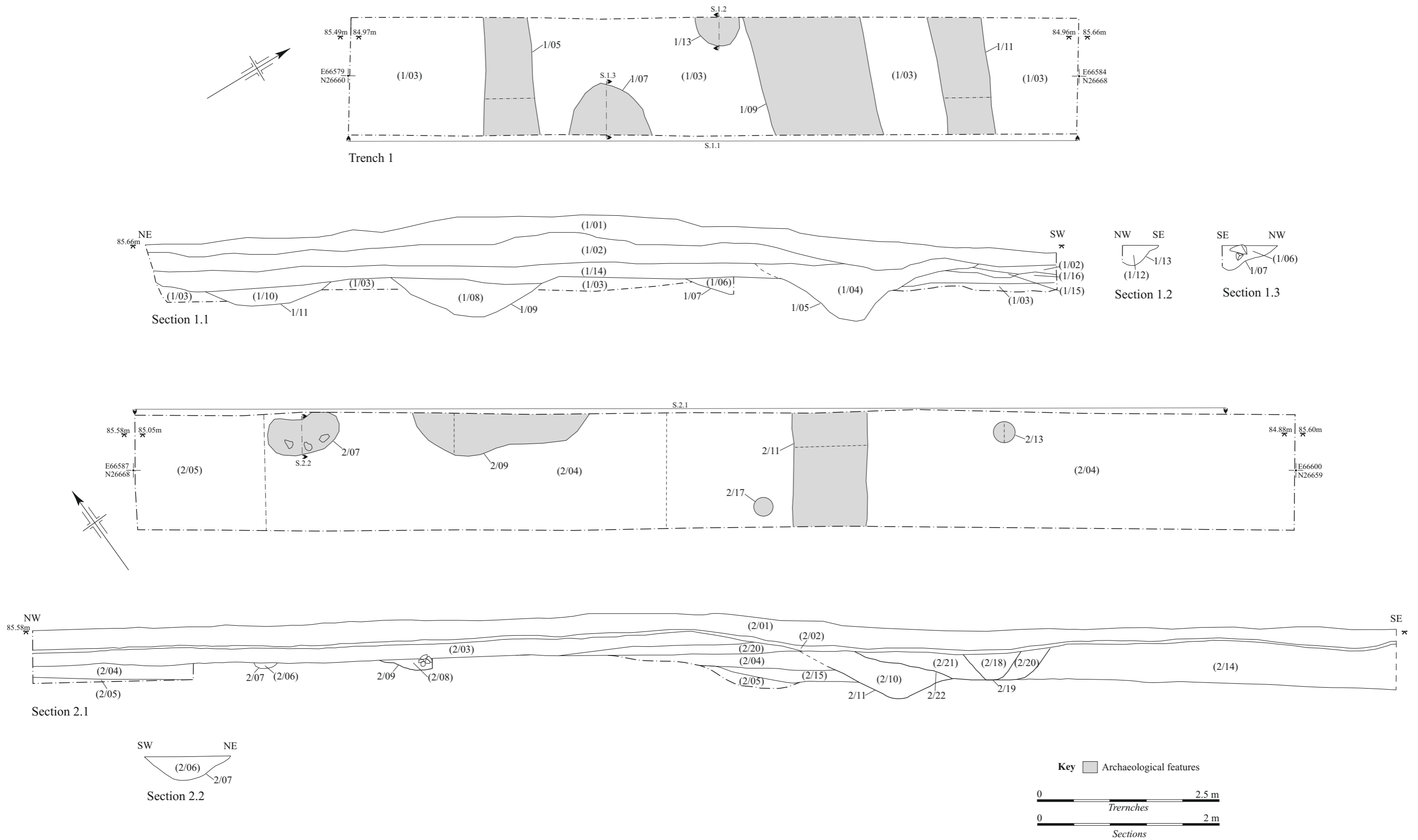


Figure 2. Trenches 1 and 2; plans and sections

To the south of the ditch 1/09, the small pit 1/07 appeared to be cut by the north edge of the enclosure ditch 1/05; no dating was recovered from the pit, which may well be contemporary with the ditches to the north, but this cannot be asserted unequivocally.

The ditches 1/11 and 1/09 and pit 1/07 were clearly sealed by the layer of gravelly grey brown sandy loam (1/14), which yielded significant quantities of pottery and roof tile, as well as burnt stone. This layer might represent an occupation layer or perhaps more likely the abandonment of this part of the enclosure.

The relationship between the small pit or posthole 1/13 and the ditch 1/09 was not clear; it was not recorded whether the pit 1/13 was also sealed by (1/14) or was cut through it.



Figure 5. Ditch 1/05.

The ditch 1/05, which was visible on the surface as an earthwork, cut through the southern edge of the pit 1/07, although its relationship with the layer (1/14) was more ambiguous, which is probably a consequence of the fill being derived in part from the inner bank material.

Trench 2

Trench 2, which was 15m long and oriented northwest/southeast, was excavated to the natural river terrace gravel (2/05), which was between 0.5m (at the north end) and 0.7m (at the south end) below modern ground level. The north end of the trench was between 85.58m AOD (top) and 85.05m AOD (base) and the south end was between 85.60m AOD (top) and 84.88m (base). The greater depth outside the enclosure is in part a consequence of earthworks outside the ditched enclosure. The reduced depth of overlying deposits within the enclosure in Trench 2 is due to there being less potential internal bank material overlying the gravel at the north end of the trench. Where the bank was still visible the depth of overlying deposits is 0.75m.

The natural gravel (2/05) was overlain by an undated layer of dark brown gravelly loam (2/15), which may represent a relict soil horizon, and the slightly gleyed clay sand loam layer (2/14), which may represent a cultivation horizon. Cut into the natural gravel (2/05) were two postholes 2/13 and 2/17; unfortunately the relationship

between the postholes and the layers (2/15) and (2/14) was not recovered during the evaluation. No dating was recovered from either posthole.



Figure 6. Trench 2, looking north.

Overlying the relict soil horizon (2/15) was a layer of compacted gravelly loam (2/04), which seemed to represent an occupation horizon. Tile and pottery – recorded in the sealing layer (2/03) – were recovered from the surface of this layer; cut into the deposit (2/03) were a posthole 2/07 and a sub-oval ?pit 2/09. Pottery recovered from the posthole 2/07 indicated a date after the 12th century, which the associated roof-tile pushes to after the late 12th or 13th centuries.



Figure 7. Ditch 2/11

The enclosure ditch 2/11 (Figure 7) cut through the lower part of the layer (2/04), although the relationship was more ambiguous higher up; this too may well be a consequence of bank material slumping into the ditch and taphonomic issues such as worm sorting (see below) blurring the edges of contexts. The ditch was filled with grey brown gravelly loam (2/10). The layer (2/04) was overlain by the relict bank material (2/20), which was very similar to the fill of the ditch 2/11. Any relationship was obfuscated however by the later layer of worm-sorted stone (2/02) (see below).

Overlying the occupation horizon (2/04) was an abandonment layer of moderately gravelly loam (2/03), which yielded significant quantities of pottery, tile and burnt stone. This layer dates from after the late 12th century.

Cutting the enclosure ditch 2/11 were two later ditches, which may well be associated with medieval occupation of the area, although the later ditch may be post-medieval. The earlier ditch 2/22 cut the south edge of the ditch 2/11; no dating was recovered from the recut. The narrower almost V-shaped ditch 2/19 cut through the fill of ditch 2/22 and may have functioned for drainage. It too was undated.

Sealing these features and the layers (2/03) and (2/14) was a c 50-60mm thick layer of sorted gravel and small stone; this deposit was not present in Trench 1, but extended throughout Trench 2. It was sealed by the topsoil (2/01) which was stone-free..

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The evaluation took place during clement conditions on 18th April. The work was monitored by Bill Boismeir of BCAS for Aylesbury Vale District Council, and Michael Farley visited on behalf of the Twyford PC, whom he has been advising on how to proceed.

I should like to add my thanks to both for their discussions with me on site. I have undoubtedly included suggestions from both in the interpretation which are the fruits of the site visit.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 51 sherds with a total weight of 945g. It was all earlier medieval in date, and indicates that there was activity at the site from the around the time of the Norman Conquest to the 13th/14th century.

Where appropriate, the assemblage was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), although due to the location of the site, much of the pottery is from sources in Oxfordshire which are not included in the Milton Keynes type-series, were noted. These were given the codings of the Oxfordshire County Type-Series (Mellor 1994), prefixed 'OX': The following fabric types were noted:

MC1: Shelly Coarseware. AD1100-1400. 6 sherds, 107g.

MS9: Brill/Boarstall Ware. 1200-?1600. 3 sherds, 98g.

MSC1: Sandy and Shelly ware, late 11th – mid 13th century. 1 sherd, 3g.

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975-1350. 1 sherd, 8g.

OXY: Oxford ware: Late 11th – 14th century. 39 sherds, 676g.

OXAW: Early Brill Coarseware, late 12th – mid 13th century. 1 sherds, 53g.

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*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the area in the earlier medieval period, as was the

range of vessel forms, which comprised largely unglazed jars, along with a few sherds of Shelly Ware bowls, and fragments of a glazed Brill/Boarstall jug and an Oxford Ware tripod pitcher.

The assemblage, in the main, consisted of large, fresh sherds in unabraded condition, other than the shelly wares, whose calcareous inclusions had largely dissolved. The otherwise unabraded nature of the sherds indicates that this is likely to be due to burial conditions rather than redeposition, and there seems very little doubt that there was settlement activity in the immediate vicinity of these excavations in the earlier medieval period.

Tr	Cntxt	OXAC		OXY		MSC1		MC1		OXAW		MS9		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	8					1	3							L11thC
1	14			18	328			2	28	1	53	3	98	13thC
2	3			17	268			1	22					12thC
2	6			2	22			3	57					12thC
2	10	1	8	1	4									L11thC
2	14			1	54									L11thC
	Total	1	8	39	676	1	3	6	107	1	53	3	98	

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

5.2 Ceramic building materials by Gwilym Williams

A total of 28 fragments of peg hole roof-tile, weighing 2058g, (Table 1) and comprising five fabric-types (Table 2) was recovered during the evaluation at Assumption of the BVM proposed new burial ground, Twyford.

Context	Frag s	Wt (g)	Fabric	Dims (th: mm)	Comments
1/14	2	268	M1	18	reduced core; sandy bottom - upper face wiped smooth
1/14	1	102	M2	15	evenly fired - no reduction; sandy bottom - upper face wiped smooth; thinner at edges
1/14	1	116	M3	19	evenly fired - no reduction; thicker than usual; sandy bottom - upper face wiped smooth
2/03	4	338	M1	15	some reduction
2/03	3	181	M2	13	
2/03	5	310	M4	18	mixed bag - some reduction some even firing; occ pegholes
2/03	7	386	M5	16	mixed bag - some reduction some even firing; occ pegholes
2/06	3	185	M1	18	reduced core; sandy bottom - upper face wiped smooth
2/10	1	71	M1	18	evenly fired - no reduction; thicker than usual; sandy bottom - upper face wiped smooth
2/14	1	101	M1	18	reduced core; spalled; sandy bottom - upper face wiped smooth
total	28	2058			

Table 1. Context by fragment count by weight

The four fragments of tile, weighing 486g, recovered from Trench 1 were recovered from the layer (1/14). The majority of the tile from Trench 2 was recovered from the layer (2/03) – 19 fragments, weighing 1215g. Both of these layers were identified as potentially occupation deposits. Some tile was recovered from the fills of features – three fragments, weighing 185g, from the fill (2/06) of posthole 2/07; and one fragment, weighing 71g, from fill (2/10), fill of the enclosure ditch 2/11. A further single fragment, weighing 101g, was recovered from the external soil horizon (2/14). The tile is small to medium fragments with only sporadic evidence of peg holes.

Fabrics	Description	No	Wt (g)
M1	pink orange in colour; well mixed - v few inclusions; 'silty' fabric	11	963
M2	red; possible haematite inclusions & small stone, large grit	4	283
M3	similar to M1 but more yellow in colour	1	116
M4	orange red granular fabric, marling and small stone/large grit	5	310
M5	orange buff silty fabric; occ reduction	7	386
total		28	2058

Table 2. Fabric description by fragment count by weight

The most common fabric was M1, which yielded 11 fragments, weighing 963g. this fabric was slightly unusual for the greater than normal thickness – a regular 18mm – on all examples encountered.

All the fragments seemed reasonably freshly broken, with only fabric M3, from layer (12/14) seeming in any way abraded. The fabrics are all medieval with the possible exception of M2, which is quite hard fired and looks like later medieval or post-medieval tile fragments. As this was recovered during machining through a layer of potential occupation or abandonment material, it is possibly 'intrusive'.

It is not proposed to retain these pieces of tile.

5.3 Environmental Remains

No palaeoenvironmental samples were taken, as the potential was not felt to be sufficient.

5.4 Animal Bone

Two fragments of animal bone, weighing 53g, were recovered from the layer (2/03). Both were in a rather poor state of preservation.

6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation carried out on land to the east of the present burial ground for the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Twyford confirmed that the visible earthworks comprise part of an enclosure with associated internal platform. These are undoubtedly part of the manorial enclosure. The date-range for the investigation was from the 11th until after the 13th centuries; the former vicarage to the west was built during the 15th century.

It would appear that the most likely explanation for the earthworks is that the original manor – presumably that held by Ralph – was located here immediately adjacent to the church of the Assumption of the BVM, whereas the other manor in Domesday – which was not necessarily the same as that also noted in the VCH (1927) – was located elsewhere in the village.

The two parallel ditches in Trench 1 indicate an earlier phase than the visible earthworks. The full understanding of these two parallel ditches is unclear, although they would appear to be medieval. It is even possible that these are associated with the late Saxon manor.

The rest of the activity revealed in the evaluation trenches suggests the potential for structures to be present within the platform of the enclosure. Four postholes – two in each trench – may evidence the presence of buildings or indeed fencing round the enclosure perimeter.

There is a strong potential for further remains to subsist across the proposed area for the new burial ground.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Ctx	Type	Description	L (m)	B (m)	D (m)	Finds/ Date	Interpretation
Trench 1							
(1/01)	Layer	Dark grey brown sandy humus	>10	>1.6	0.15	-	Topsoil
(1/02)	Layer	Grey brown sandy loam	>10	>1.6	0.2	-	Subsoil
(1/03)	Layer	Bright yellow gravel	>10	>1.6	Unk.	-	Natural
(1/04)	Fill	Mid grey brown loamy sand and mod. gravel	>1.6	1.5	0.4	-	Fill of enclosure ditch 105
1/05	Cut	Linear, gentle BoS @ top & base, concave sides rounded base	>1.6	1.5	0.4	-	Enclosure ditch (south side) of 'moated' site
(1/06)	Fill	Light grey brown sand loam; mod. gravel	1.4	>0.75	0.25	Daub: n.d.	Fill of pit under possible bank material (1/14)
1/07	Cut	Sub-rounded, sharp BoS @ top, gradual @ base, concave sides	1.4	>0.75	0.25	-	Rubbish pit, under possible bank (1/14)
(1/08)	Fill	Light grey brown sand loam; mod. gravel	>1.6	1.65	0.4	Pot: L11 th C+	Fill of ditch of uncertain function
1/09	Cut	Linear, gentle BoS @ top & base, concave sides, rounded base	>1.6	1.65	0.4	-	Ditch 1/09 was oriented at c 45° to trench alignment
(1/10)	Fill	Light yellow brown loamy sand; occ gravel	>1.6	1.25	0.1	-	Fill of ditch 1/11
1/11	Cut	Linear, gentle BoS @ top & base, concave sides, flat base	>1.6	1.25	0.1.	-	V. shallow ditch parallel with 1/11; poss. earlier Saxo-Norman activity
(1/12)	Fill	Dark brown loamy sand; freq gravel	0.7	>0.4	0.22	-	Fill of pit or poss ?posthole
1/13	Cut	Sharp BoS @ top, gradual @ base	0.7	>0.4	0.22	-	Small pit or possible posthole
(1/14)	Layer	Grey brown sandy loam; mod. gravel	>6	>1.6	0.2	Pot: 13 th C+; tile: L12 th C+; much burnt stone	Possible bank material or occupation related deposit
(1/15)	Layer	Red brown clay sand	0.9	>0.4	0.1	-	Patch of burning apparently cut by ditch 1/05
(1/16)	Layer	Grey brown sandy loam; mod. gravel	>1.6	>1.6	0.15	-	Early ?subsoil
Trench 2							
(2/01)	Layer	Dark grey brown sandy humus	>15	>1.6	0.25	-	Topsoil
(2/02)	Layer	Small stone in grey brown humus	>15	>1.6	0.1	-	Layer of ?worm-sorted stone
(2/03)	Layer	Mid brown gravelly loam	>8	>1.6	0.2	Pot: 12 th C+; tile: L12 th C+; bone: n.d.; burnt stone	Spread of loamy occupation horizon
(2/04)	Layer	Dark brown compacted gravelly loam	>8	>1.6	0.15	-	Compacted layer associated with occupation
(2/05)	Layer	Bright yellow gravel	0.54	0.54	0.14	-	Natural

Ctx	Type	Description	L (m)	B (m)	D (m)	Finds/ Date	Interpretation
(2/06)	Fill	Dark brown, sandy loam freq. burnt stone	1	0.5	0.23	Pot: 12 th C+; tile: L12th C+	Fill of small pit or poss posthole
2/07	Cut	Bean-shaped, gentle BoS @ top and base	1	0.5	0.23	-	Small pit or poss posthole
(2/08)	Fill	Dark brown, sandy loam freq. burnt stone	2.5	>0.5	0.16	-	Fill of pit/group of pits
2/09	Cut	Sub-oval; sharp BoS @ top, gradual @ base; not fully excavated.	2.5	>0.5	0.16	-	Pit/group of pits only partly investigated
(2/10)	Fill	Grey brown gravelly sandy loam	>1.6	1.4+	0.5+	Pot: L11 th C+; tile: L12th C+	Fill of enclosure ditch
2/11	Cut	Linear, uncertain BoS @ top, gradual @ base E truncated by 2/22	>1.6	1.4+	0.5+	-	Eastern enclosure ditch
(2/12)	Fill	Mid brown sandy loam	0.4	0.4	0.25	-	Fill of posthole
2/13	Cut	Round; sharp BoS @ top & base, straight sides	0.4	0.4	0.25	-	Posthole
(2/14)	Layer	Green brown slightly clay silty sand	>5	>1.6	0.4	Pot: L11 th C+; tile: L12th C+	Relict ?slightly gleyed ploughsoil
(2/15)	Layer	Dark brown gravelly loam	1.4	>1.6	0.2	-	Soil horizon
(2/16)	Fill	Mid brown sandy loam	0.4	0.4	0.25	-	Fill of posthole
2/17	Cut	Round; unexcavated	0.4	0.4	0.25	-	Posthole
(2/18)	Fill	Grey brown sandy loam	>1.6	0.6	0.032	-	Fill of later ?drainage ditch
2/19	Cut	Linear, sharp BoS @ top & base; straight sides @ 45° flat base	>1.6	0.6	0.032	-	Later ?drainage ditch
(2/20)	Layer	Grey brown sandy loam; gravelly	>1.6	1.3	0.15	-	Bank material
(2/21)	Fill	Light grey brown sandy loam; some gravel	>1.6	1.4	0.3	-	Fill of 2/22; apparent recut of 2/11
2/22	Cut	Linear, gentle BoS W top, sharp E top and base; flat base	>1.6	1.4	0.3	-	Apparent recut of enclosure ditch 2/11