

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**AT**

**17 – 19 BICESTER ROAD, LONG CRENDON,**

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**NGR SP 6925 0877**

*On behalf of*

*DW Contractors*

**APRIL 2014**

<b>REPORT FOR</b>	DW Contractors Unit 5 Ashville Road Oxford OX4 6TU
<b>PREPARED BY</b>	Andrej Čelovský with contributions by David Gilbert
<b>EDITED BY</b>	John Moore
<b>ILLUSTRATION BY</b>	Andrej Čelovský
<b>FIELDWORK</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2014 Emily Buma Andrej Čelovský Tom Rose-Jones
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<b>ENQUIRES TO</b>	John Moore Heritage Services Hill View Woodperry Road Beckley Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ  Tel/Fax 01865 358300 Email: <a href="mailto:info@jmheritageservices.co.uk">info@jmheritageservices.co.uk</a>
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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation at 17 – 19 Bicester Road, Long Crendon, Buckinghamshire. Four machine-dug trenches 36m long in total were excavated across the site. Archaeological features (two ditches and one posthole) found were related to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century activities on site. No other archaeological feature or finds related to medieval and/or early post-medieval settlement elements including the buildings shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map were revealed during evaluation.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The development site is located on the southwest side of Bicester Road, Long Crendon (NGR SP 6925 0877 centred). The site lies at approximately 105m above OD. The underlying geology is Portland Stone close to the junction with Kimmeridge Clay sands and silts. The development area is approximately 0.13ha in size and it was in residential use until recently.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Aylesbury Vale District Council granted planning permission for demolition of existing dwelling and bungalow (17 and 19 Bicester Road) and replacement with two four-bedroom dwellings and one five-bedroom dwelling with associated carport structures, landscaping and new vehicular access (13/01219/APP).

Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site an archaeological evaluation was required to be carried out. This was advised by the Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service (BCAS).

John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) were commissioned to undertake this work, and a Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2014) was prepared to satisfy the requirements outlined in the BCAS advice. The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) proposed the methodology by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out.

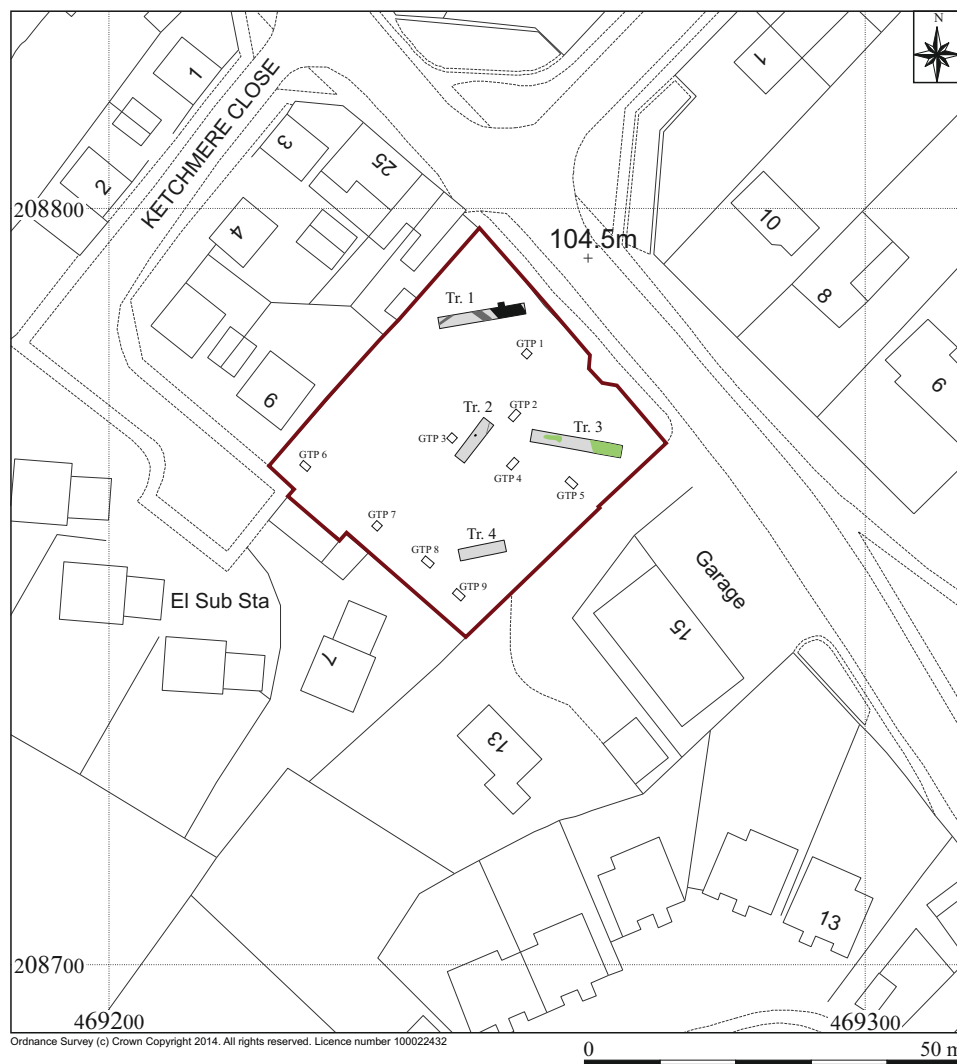
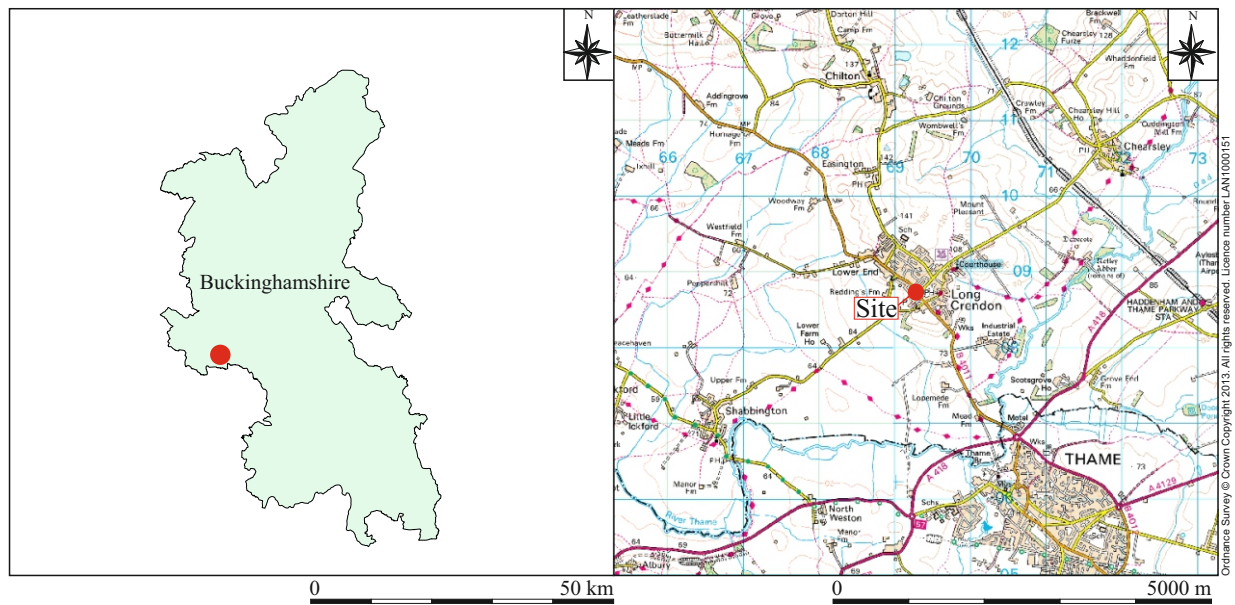
### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The following section is based on information presented in the Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2014, section 1.3 – 1.11).

No formal archaeological work has been carried out in this part of Long Crendon.

There is no evidence of prehistoric activities from the vicinity of the site.

The village was listed in the Domesday Book as *Credendone*, a Saxon name that is commonly taken to mean *Creoda's Hill*. The 'Long' prefix was added later to



**Key**   Site boundary   Evaluation trenches   Archaeological features  
  Modern services   20th century landscaping and tree hole

Figure 1: Site location

distinguish it from the neighbouring village of Grendon Underwood. The earliest reference to this form comes from a 1675 map of neighbouring Oxfordshire where it is listed as 'Lo Crendon' (Cartographer: Plot) and from then on the suffix appears sporadically until the mid 18th century when it seems to have become a permanent fixture.

The Domesday entry for Crendon gives no indication of urban status at that time although the manor certainly possessed significant status in its own right, if only at a local level. Prior to the Conquest the manor at Crendon was held by Seric, son of Aelfeva but in 1086 it became one of the many estates given to Walter Giffard, later the first Earl of Buckingham. The manor at that time was assessed at 20 hides of land (c. 2400 acres) comprising arable, meadows and woodland as well as a park for 'woodland beasts'. Domesday mentions some 31 parks for the whole of England, just two of which – Long Crendon and Oakley – were in Buckinghamshire. Both parks in Buckinghamshire originally fell within the bounds of the Royal Forest of Bernwood. The recorded population was large; comprising 52 villagers and 10 small-holder households with ten slaves. There was also a mill.

By the start of the medieval period, Crendon was already a village of some substance. Church End and the High Street composed one settlement focus around the Church and the Giffard residence while The Square formed a second focus at the junction between the Bicester Road and Chearsley Road. A short distance to the north, Lower End composed several farmsteads and associated cottages centred around a large green.

The site lies within the extent of the medieval settlement and it lies in the Bicester Road Zone which is comprised of historic and modern ribbon development along the Bicester Road joining the main village area with Lower End. This zone links the Lower End to the main part of the village through the gradual development of houses along the Bicester Road. The zone comprises of large areas of pre-enclosure fields with narrow winding lanes. Historic settlement patterns indicate a dispersed rural settlement with a degree of modern infill, particularly near the Square. Settlement occurred along this road probably in the late medieval to post-medieval period within the pre-existing medieval field boundaries.

Various buildings along Bicester Road are listed. These include a medieval cruck-built timber-framed house with 17th & 18th century alterations (No. 9), a timber-framed house of 15-17<sup>th</sup> centuries (31), a 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century building (4), a 17-18<sup>th</sup> century building (29), and a 19<sup>th</sup> century house (16).

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows a line of buildings along the street frontage, including across this site.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- To gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of any important archaeological remains and any possible associated palaeo-environmental deposits within the application area.

And in particular:

- To record any medieval and/or post-medieval settlement elements including the buildings shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map.

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In accordance with Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) issued by JMHS (2014), JMHS carried out the work, which initially comprised a proposed scheme for the mechanical excavation of three 12m long and 1.6m wide trial trenches across the northeast part of the site. Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the WSI (Sections 3.1 – 3.6).

#### **3.2 Methodology**

Due to the new circumstances on site, trenches were relocated from their proposed positions and one of the 12m trenches was split into two 6m long trenches.

A five tonne excavator fitted with a toothless 1.5m wide ditching bucket was used to excavate four trenches; two each 12m long (Trenches 1 & 3) which were located at north and northeast part of the site and two each 6m long (Trenches 2 & 4) located approximately in the middle and south part of the site. All trenches were 1.5m wide.

Archaeological deposits and features revealed were then cleaned by hand and recorded at an appropriate level. Archaeological features had written, drawn and photographic records made of them, and all deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers.

All artefacts recovered from archaeological features were collected, analysed and retained. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991)

### **4 RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Field Results**

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context number without brackets indicate feature cut; while number in brackets ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material.

The trenches and their contexts are listed in Appendix 1.

## **4.2 Trench 1 (Figures 1 and 2)**

Trench 1 was 11.5m long and 1.5m wide, and was aligned east-northeast to west-southwest (Fig. 1 & 2a & d). It was relocated from the proposed original location, because of the presence of a driveway in the area.

The lowest deposit identified within Trench 1 was a compact mixture of sand, clay and frequent limestone (1/03), which represent natural geology in area. Overlaying the natural was 0.20 – 0.40m thick deposit of mid reddish brown silty clay (1/02) (Fig. 2b & c).

Two parallel ditches were located at the east-northeast end of the Trench 1 (Fig. 2a). Unfortunately, both ditches were excavated by excavator and only identified in the section of trench. Following the advice of Buckinghamshire County Archaeologist Service Ms Eliza Alqassar an additional slot was hand excavated through the ditch 1/04 in order to obtain dating evidence.

Cut into deposit (1/02) was a ditch 1/04 that was aligned northwest to southeast. It was 2.5m wide, 1.75m long (as excavated) and up to 0.5m deep. The southwest side of ditch 1/04 was relatively steep and concave in profile (Fig. 2a, b & e). The ditch was filled with a mid greenish brown silty clay (1/05) flecked with charcoal that contained three fragments of tobacco clay pipes (15g) and small fragments of bricks or tiles (75g), late 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. The northeast side of this ditch was cut by later ditch 1/06.

Ditch 1/06 was located at the east-northeast end of the trench and was on the same alignment as ditch 1/04. It was 1.2m wide, 1.75m long (as excavated) and 0.5m deep. Ditch 1/06 was backfilled with soft mid greyish brown clayey silt (1/07) flecked with charcoal and contained occasional small well-rounded stones. One fragment of animal bone (22g) was recovered from the fill (1/07) (Fig. 2 & b).

Approximately in the middle of trench was a linear cut of modern sewerage pipe and at the west-southwest end of the trench was located a ceramic drain pipe (Fig. 2a).

Overlaying archaeological features and the modern services was 0.04 to 0.14m thick, friable dark grey sandy loam (1/01) topsoil. The uppermost layer was fine sand, which was originally the bedding for the 20<sup>th</sup> century driveway (Fig. 2b & c).

## **4.3 Trench 2 (Figures 1 and 3)**

Trench 2 was 6.3m long and 1.5m wide orientated northeast to southwest. It was located approximately in the middle of the site (Fig. 1 & 3a). Initially the trench was excavated down to the top of subsoil (2/02); 0.21m thick firm mid greenish grey clayey loam, which was overlain by 0.48m thick topsoil (Fig. 3a,b,d,e).

Cut into the subsoil (2/02) was small sub-circular posthole (2/05). It was 0.35m in diameter and 0.21m deep, with vertical sides and a concave base. The fill of the



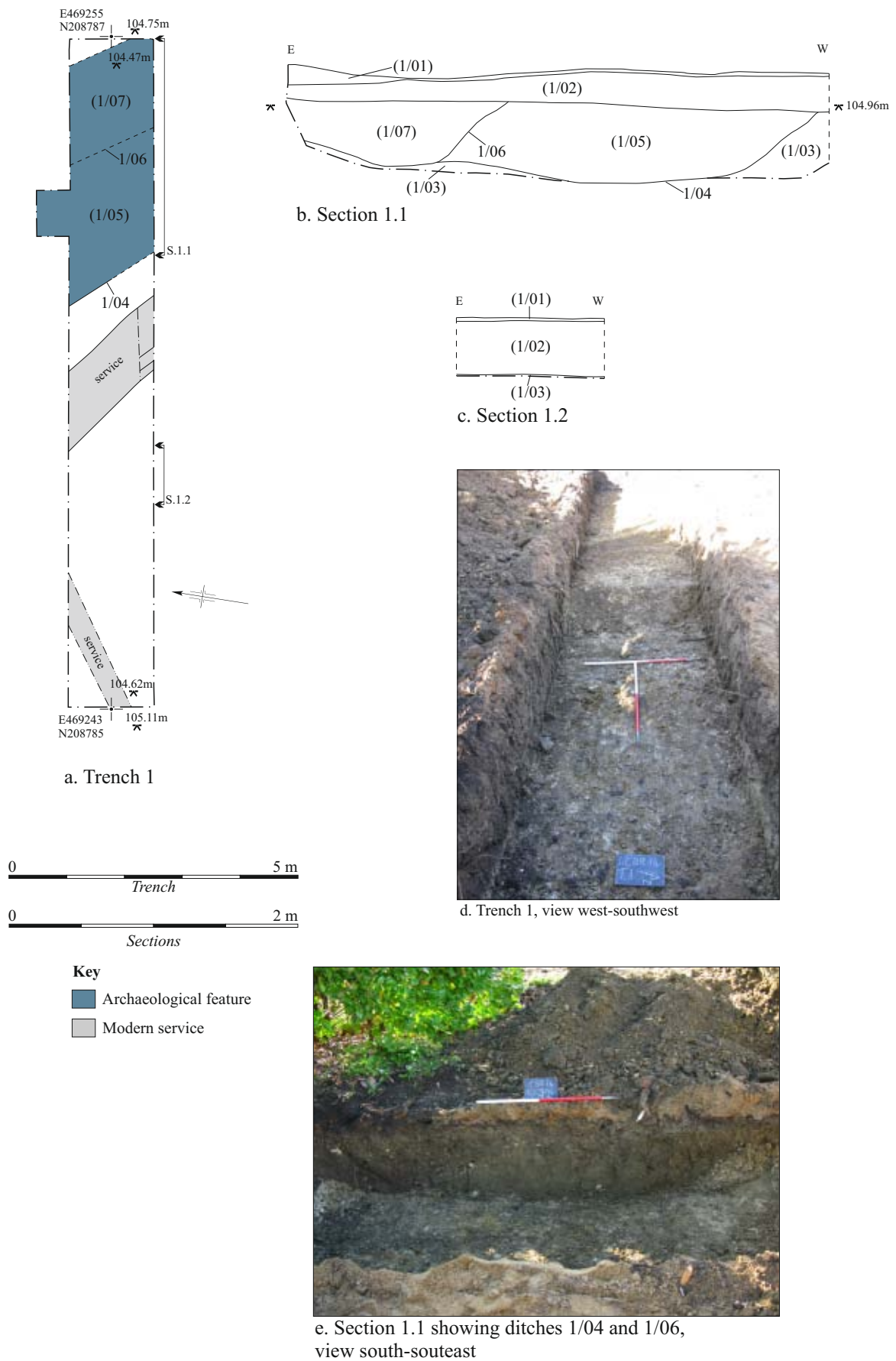
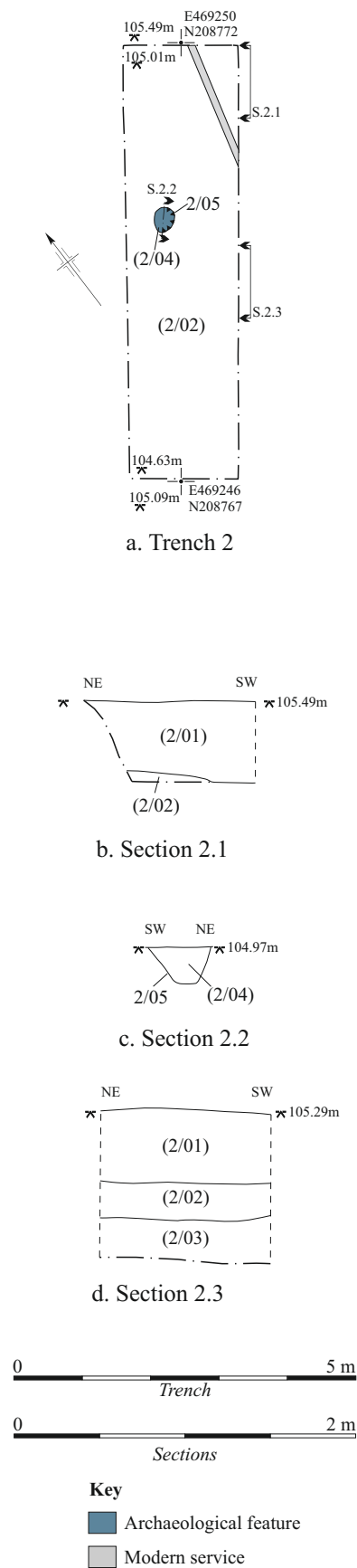


Figure 2: Trench 1



e. Trench 2 excavate to the top of (2/02), view southwest



f. Trench 2 excavated down to the natural (2/03), view southwest



g. Posthole 2/05, view northwest

Figure 3: Trench 2

posthole was dark greyish brown clayey loam, containing one pottery sherd (See 5.1) and two small pieces of coal (10g) (Fig. 3a, c & g)

Located at the northeast end of the trench was modern ceramic drainpipe, cut in to the deposit (2/02) (Fig. 3a).

In order to establish presence or absence of archaeological features underneath subsoil (2/02) the trench was excavated down to the natural deposit (2/03) (Fig. 3f). No additional archaeological features were revealed within the trench.

#### **4.4 Trench 3 (Figures 1 & 4)**

Trench 3 was located in the southeast part of the site. It was 11.95m long and 1.50m wide. In order to establish if the ditch 1/04 continuing in this part of site Trench 3 was slightly relocated from its proposed location and was aligned east-southeast to west-northwest (Fig. 1 & 4a & e).

The lowest deposit was the natural mixture of sand, clay and frequent limestone (3/03) (Fig. 4a & d).

To the west-northwest of the trench was sub-oval cut 3/04. It was 2.03m long, 0.98m wide and 0.25m deep (Fig. 4a). The east side of feature 3/04 was shallow and slightly concave gradually continuing to a flattish base, which was stepped down in the west part of the feature. The west side was relatively steep and reached a maximum depth of 0.25m (Fig. 4c). Feature 3/04 was filled with firm orange brown silty sand (3/05) with occasional charcoal. The nature of this feature suggests that it represents a tree hole.

Overlaying tree hole 3/04 was 0.34m thick greenish grey clayey loam (3/02) which was a subsoil (Fig. 4d).

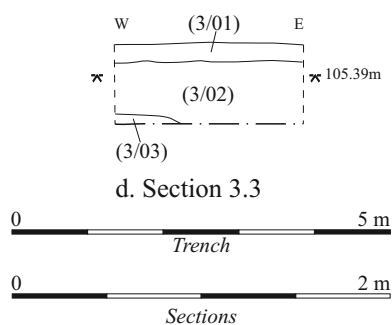
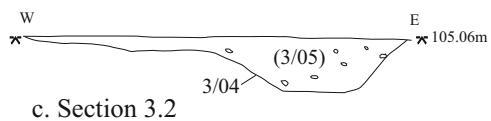
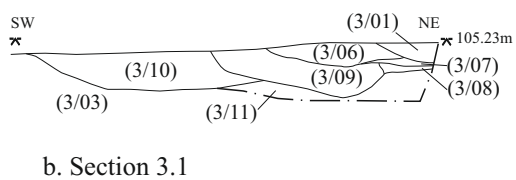
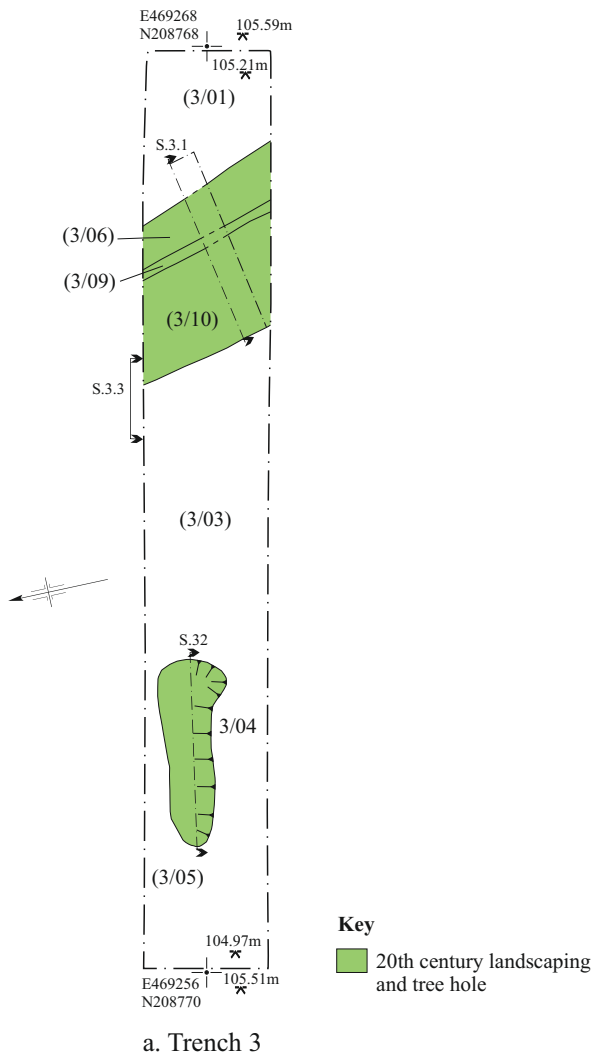
To the east-southeast of trench were recorded six successive deposits (3/06), (3/07), (3/08), (3/08), (3/09), (3/10) and (3/11) (Fig. 4a, b & f). From deposit (3/06) and (3/11) were recovered fragments of 20<sup>th</sup> century bricks, which were not retained. Those deposits represent 20<sup>th</sup> century landscaping related to the previous development of the site, which formed a slope towards the road.

Trench 3 was sealed by topsoil (3/01), of maximum thickness 0.40m (Fig. 4b, d & f)

#### **4.5 Trench 4 (Figures 1 and 2))**

Trench 4 was 6.15m long and 1.55m wide and was aligned east-northeast to west-southwest, located at south part of the site (Fig. 1 & 5a & c)

Within Trench 4 were recorded three successive deposits; natural (4/03), subsoil (4/02) and topsoil (4/01) (Fig. 5b & d). No archaeological features were present in this trench.



e. Trench 3, view south



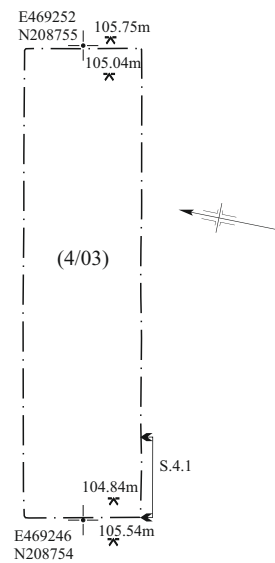
f. Section 3.1, view north-northwest



g. Tree hole 3/04, view north

Figure 4: Trench 3

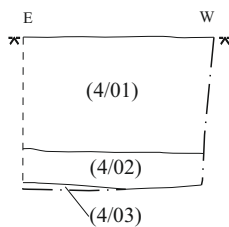




a. Trench 4



c. Trench 4, view west



b. Section 4.1



d. Section 4.1, view south

Figure 5: Trench 4

#### **4.6 Geo-technical pits (Figure 1)**

Prior to the archaeological evaluation nine geo-technical pits (GTP) were excavated across the site (Fig. 1). At the time of fieldwork all pits were still open. Dimensions of GTPs on average were 1m x 1.3m with a depth of 0.5m to 1.6m. Within all GTPs were observe natural geology, subsoil and topsoil. In GTPs 1, 3 and 7 an electric cable was unearthed. No archaeological features were present within GTPs.

#### **4.7 Reliability of Techniques and Results**

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place in generally clement conditions with average light and visibility.

### **5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS**

#### **5.1 Pottery By David Gilbert**

The pottery assemblage comprised a single sherd weighing 2g from context (2/04) the fill of posthole 2/05. It was not retained after identification. It was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

(2/04) PM 25 *White Earthenware*. Late 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century 1 sherd 2g

#### **5.2 Palaeo-environmental Remains**

No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental analysis were identified, and no samples were taken.

### **6 DISCUSSION**

The archaeological evaluation was successful in meeting the aims, which were set up in the WSI.

No archaeological feature or find related to medieval and/or post-medieval settlement elements including the buildings shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map were revealed during the evaluation.

Two ditches 1/04 and 1/06 recorded in Trench 1 were late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century in date and might be related to activities after demolition of the buildings shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map.

Small posthole 2/05 excavated in Trench 2 containing late 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery could be related to the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century settlement activities within the site. It is hard to say, if the posthole was a part of a fence line or some structure standing on site during the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Six deposits recorded in the Trench 3 were related with landscaping activities dating to the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Given the results of the evaluation, it is not considered likely that the proposed groundwork will impact upon any significant archaeological remains.

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**Appendix 1: Trench Context Inventory**

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>								
1/01	Deposit	Friable very dark grey sandy loam	0.04 – 0.14m	1.50m	11.50m	-	Topsoil	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay	0.20 – 0.40m	1.50m	11.50m	-	Subsoil	-
1/03	Deposit	Compact light brown mixture of sand and clay with frequent limestone	N/A	1.50m	11.50m	-	Natural	-
1/04	Cut	Linear cut with concave side and flattish concave base, orientated NW - SE	0.50m	2.50m	1.75m	-	Ditch	Late post-medieval
1/05	Fill	Firm mid greenish grey silty clay with occasional charcoal and small well rounded stones	0.50m	2.50m	1.75m	Tobacco clay pipes CBM	Fill of ditch 1/04	Late post-medieval
1/06	Cut	Linear cut with concave side and concave base, orientated NW - SE	0.50m	1.20m	1.75m	-	Ditch	Late post-medieval
1/07	Fill	Soft mid greyish brown clayey silt with charcoal flacks and occasional well rounded stones	0.50m	1.20m	1.75m	Bone	Fill of ditch 1/06	Late post-medieval
<b>Trench 2</b>								
2/01	Deposit	Friable very dark grey sandy loam	0.48m	1.50m	6.30m	-	Topsoil	Modern
2/02	Deposit	Firm mid greenish grey clayey loam	0.21m	1.5m	6.30m	-	Subsoil	-
2/03	Deposit	Compact light brown mixture of sand and clay with frequent limestone	0.26m as exca.	1.5m	6.30m	-	Natural	-
2/04	Fill	Dark greyish brown clayey loam	0.21m	0.35m	0.35m	Pottery sherd	Fill of posthole 2/05	Late post-medieval
2/05	Cut	Small sub-circular cut	0.21m	0.35m	0.35m	-	Posthole	Late post-medieval
<b>Trench 3</b>								
3/01	Deposit	Friable very dark grey sandy loam	0.09 – 0.40m	1.50m	11.95m	-	Topsoil	Modern
3/02	Deposit	Firm mid greenish grey clayey loam	0.34m	1.50m	9.20m	-	Subsoil	-
3/03	Deposit	Compact light brown mixture of sand and clay with frequent limestone	N/A	1.50m	8.35m	-	Natural	-
3/04	Cut	Sub-oval cut with E concave side and W flattish convex side, orientated E-W	0.25m	0.98m	2.03m	-	Tree hole	-
3/05	Fill	Firm orange brown silty sand with occasional charcoal	0.25m	0.98m	2.03	-	Fill of tree hole	-
3/06	Deposit	Firm mid brownish yellow silty sand	0.10m	0.40m	1.80m	Small fragments of CBM	Landscaping layer	Modern
3/07	Deposit	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay	0.04m	0.30m	0.35m as exca.	-	Landscaping layer	Modern



3/08	Deposit	Firm mid whitish yellow sandy silt	0.08m	0.30m	0.35m as exca.	-	Landscaping layer	Modern
3/09	Deposit	Firm dark bluish grey with occasional charcoal	0.20m	1m	1.80m	-	Landscaping layer	Modern
3/10	Deposit	Firm mid greenish grey clayey loam	0.20m	1.40m	1.80m	-	Landscaping layer	Modern
3/11	Deposit	Firm mid brown silty clay with occasional charcoal	0.20m	1.20m	0.35as exca.	Small fragments of CBM	Landscaping layer	Modern
<b>Trench 4</b>								
3/01	Deposit	Friable very dark grey sandy loam	0.21 – 0.60m	1.55m	6.15m	-	Topsoil	Modern
3/02	Deposit	Firm mid greenish grey clayey loam	0.20m	1.55m	6.15m	-	Subsoil	-
3/03	Deposit	Compact light brown mixture of sand and clay with frequent limestone	0.10m as exca.	1.55m	6.15m	-	Natural	-