

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

POULTRY FARM, TOWNSIDE, HADDENHAM, BUCKS

SP 7385 0827

On behalf of

Rempstone Homes

AUGUST 2006

REPORT FOR Rempstone Homes
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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Hall Needham Associates by John Moore Heritage Services as a condition of planning permission prior to the construction of a single dwelling. The site lay on the eastern side of Townside, an old road defining the western edge of the medieval settlement.

Two trenches were opened and excavated to natural. The site was heavily truncated by medieval quarry pits and ditches. There appears to be activity on the site, represented by gullies and a possible posthole, prior to 13th century cultivation. Quarrying for wychert also is undertaken during the same century before the land reverts to agricultural/horticultural use in the late 13th/early 14th century. The site is enclosed by a wall sometime after the 17th century when again the land is cultivated.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Origins of the Project

A planning application was submitted to Aylesbury Vale District Council for the demolition of an outbuilding and the erection of one new dwelling at Poultry Farm, Townside, Haddenham. Consequently, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) advised that a programme of archaeological works should be undertaken due to the site's potential for archaeological remains. BCAS prepared a *Brief* setting out the requirements for the first phase of archaeological work on the site, with contingency for second stage works covering the extent of the new building and areas of related disturbance. The work was carried out to a *Written Scheme of Investigation* that outlined the method by which the evaluation would be carried out in order to satisfy the requirements of the Brief and to assess the significance of the remains in relation to the development proposal. The *Written Scheme of Investigation* was approved by BCAS on behalf of Aylesbury Vale District Council.

1.2 The Site (Figure 1)

The site was located at Poultry Farm, Townside, Haddenham, centred on NGR SP 7385 0827). The underlying geology is considered to be Upper Jurassic Portlandian, Portland stone formation (mainly limestone).

1.3 Archaeological Background

An assessment of the site has been carried out through the examination of material held by the County Sites and Monuments Record and historic maps at the County Record Office.

There are modest quantities of prehistoric flintwork recovered from the north and west of Haddenham (SMR 4401, 4241). An Iron Age brooch fibulae (SMR 2551) was recovered from a garden off the High Street. These finds indicate prehistoric activity in the area, albeit at a low density.

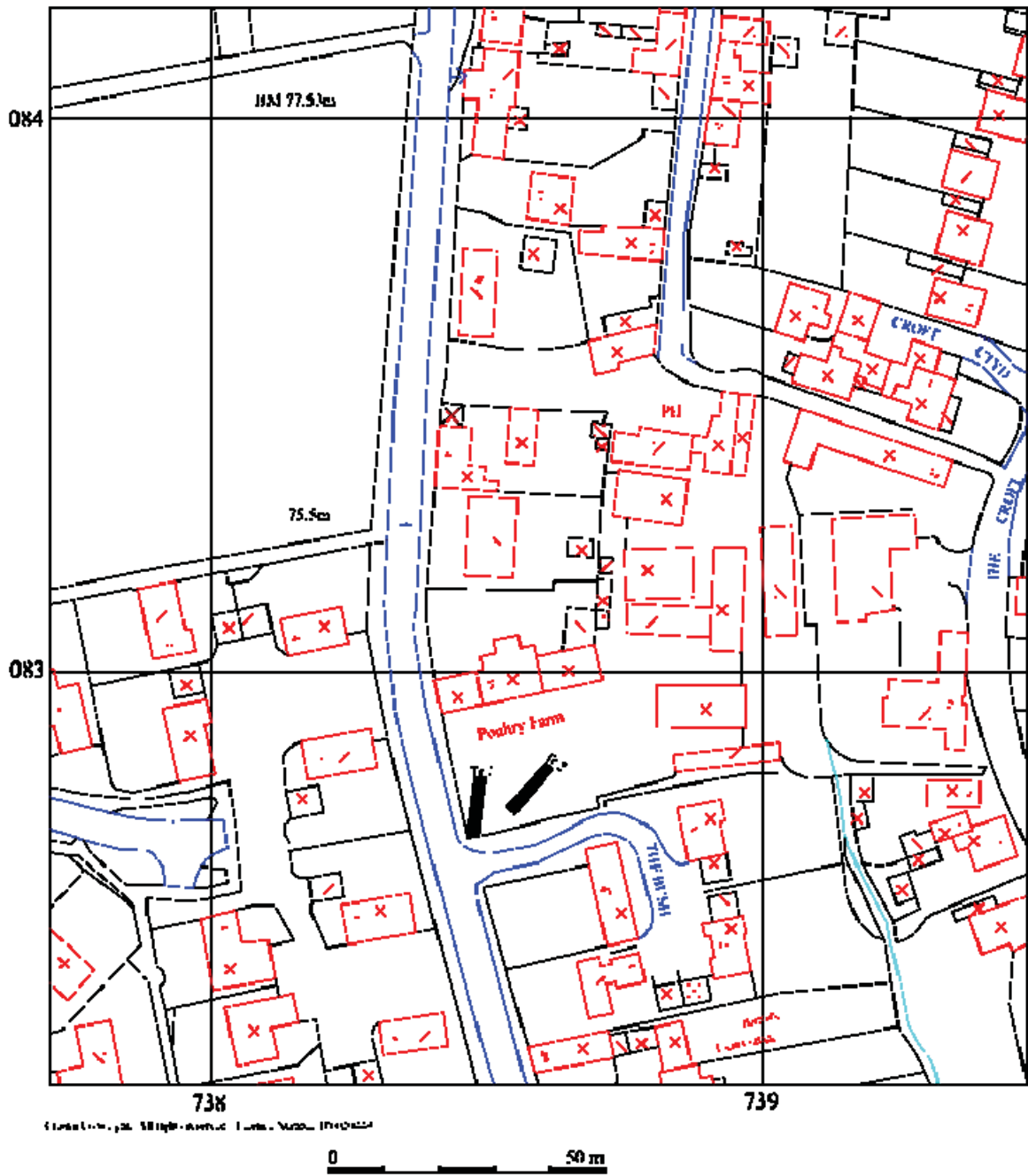


Figure 1. Site location

Roman material is also scattered to the north and west again in low densities. At least two excavations within Haddenham have uncovered pottery dated to the Saxon period (SMR 2311, 4572). These also recorded undated features, which may also be Saxon. Several inhumations in the area have also been dated to the Saxon period (SMR 2416, 2501).

Haddenham takes its name from the Anglo-Saxon *Haeda's Homestead*, and was listed in Domesday, 1086, as *Hedreham* and by 1142 had taken the form *Hedenham*.

During the reign of Edward the Confessor, Haddenham was held by Earl Tostig the brother of Harold. The Domesday Book records that in 1086 it was a settlement of 40 villagers with 16 smallholders and 15 slaves in the hands of Archbishop Lanfranc. At the request of Lanfranc William II Rufus gave the manor to the Priory of Rochester which held the village until the Dissolution when it passed to the Crown. Bishop Ernulph (d.1194) gave the monks of Rochester the church of Haddenham in addition to the village.

In 1294 Edward I granted a charter for a Thursday market and a 3 day fair for the festival of the Assumption; however in 1301 the right to hold a market was withdrawn as it was found to prejudice the market at Thame. Edward III obtained possession of the manor from Sir Edward North. It was then leased out from time to time by the Crown until the reign of James I who assigned Haddenham to Henry Prince of Wales in 1611, until his death. The rental income was then paid to Prince Charles from 1617.

The evolution of Haddenham is of particular interest as by the late medieval period Haddenham had developed into a poly-focal settlement with areas of nucleation around a series of 'ends' at Church End, Towns End, and Fort End (Chadwick 2002, Rouse 2005).

The Jeffrey's map of 1770 shows the site on the edge of the historic centre of the town, but in an area which is not heavily built up. The Biddle map of 1820 shows the area by the road built up with open ground to the rear and a small field next to the road. It is similarly shown on Byrant's map of 1825. The Inclosure map of 1834 shows the site divided into two distinct areas; of houses, cottages and garden plots against the road, with barns and closes to the rear.

2 AIMS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

The aims of the evaluation, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site
- To aim to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains within the study area.
- Particular objectives were:

- Establish whether there is evidence for Saxon activity in this area.
- Establish whether there is evidence for occupation, property boundaries, domestic, commercial or industrial activities associated with the medieval and post-medieval settlement.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

The investigation comprised a desktop assessment and the mechanical excavation of trial trenches supplemented by hand investigation of archaeological deposits. Basic research comprising examination of records held on the Buckinghamshire Sites and Monuments Record and maps held by the County Record Office was carried out. The results are included above.

The excavation of two trenches was carried out by an experienced and qualified archaeologist with the assistance of an experienced colleague, and a Project Manager.

3.2 Methodology

Initially three trenches were indicated in the BCAS Brief, however the presence of an access road to the north of the proposed current site meant that the area under investigation was reduced to the immediate footprint of the proposed dwelling. Two trenches totalling 20m in length and each 1.8m wide were excavated as close as possible to the positions as required in the BCAS Brief. Limited space meant that it was necessary to shift the trenches to accommodate the exigencies of the site layout. Dimensions are given in the Appendix.

Two trenches were excavated. These were located in the footprint of the proposed building and are numbered 1 and 2 (Fig 1). The trench excavation was carried out by a mini-digger using a toothless bucket. Mechanical excavation was taken down to the top of “natural” deposits under direct archaeological control. Cleaning was carried out by hand, followed by photographing of each trench and recording in plan and section of all observable data.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving a written record of each archaeological deposit encountered and scale drawings prepared

where appropriate. Other general methodologies for the work were in accordance with IFA guidelines and the requirements of BCAS.

4 RESULTS (Figures 2, 3, 4)

Deposits and fills are referred to in the text and figures in round brackets, i.e. (20); cut features are referred to in square, i.e. [21]. Where a feature and fill number are the same square brackets have been used. Trench numbers precede the deposit numbers.

4.1 Geological Deposits

Machine excavation was undertaken to the level of the limestone formation in which were observed 'pools' of slightly silty reddish brown clay (1/16). The limestone bedrock was observed in both trenches, at a height between 73.72m and 73.77m OD (Tr. 1) on the western side of the proposed development area and 73.54m OD (Tr. 2) on the north-east.

4.2 Trench 1 (Figures 2-3)

At the north end of the trench was a sub-rounded quarry pit [1/13] cut into the limestone natural (1/16). The quarry contained an orangey brown sandy clay fill (1/01) with charcoal flecking and bone distributed through the fill (Fig 3, Section 6). The pottery from this feature was dated to sometime from the late 11th century to the early 14th century, and some animal bone was also recovered. Due to later disturbance the level that this quarry pit was cut from could not be determined. However another quarry pit was cut from a cultivation soil (1/08) and it is likely that this quarry pit was also cut from the same horizon. The quarry pit was excavated to a depth of 73.10m OD. A geotechnical borehole (BH) cut through the feature on the north-east side.

The limestone was also cut by a shallow ditch [1/17] (Fig. 4) running east-west, which was filled by a reddish brown sandy clay (1/03), which resembled the majority of later fills. A single sherd of medieval pot, Brill/Boarstall Ware from the 13th century, was recovered from this gully. No relationship could be established with (1/08) due to disturbance.

The cultivation soil (1/08) overlay the natural (1/16); it was a mid orangey brown sandy silt with iron staining through it (Fig. 3, Section 5). A line of stone distinguished it from the overlying deposit (1/07). It had pottery dating from the 13th century. The top of it was located at a height of c.73.91m OD.

Cutting the pit [1/13] (Fig. 2) and the gully [1/17] and the cultivation soil (1/08) was the quarry pit [1/04] (Fig. 3, Sections 6 & &). This large irregularly shaped quarry pit was filled with orangey yellow to reddish brown silty clay which had sand, gravel, charcoal, distributed through it (1/02)(1/05)(1/06). This fill was assigned three different numbers across the surface to distinguish finds location from the pickup and the excavation of a slot through the deposit. The top of the feature's fills was at between 73.14m and 73.50m OD. The only context to yield up remains was (1/05) which produced pottery dating from the 13th century; excavation was carried out to a depth of 72.93m OD, although it

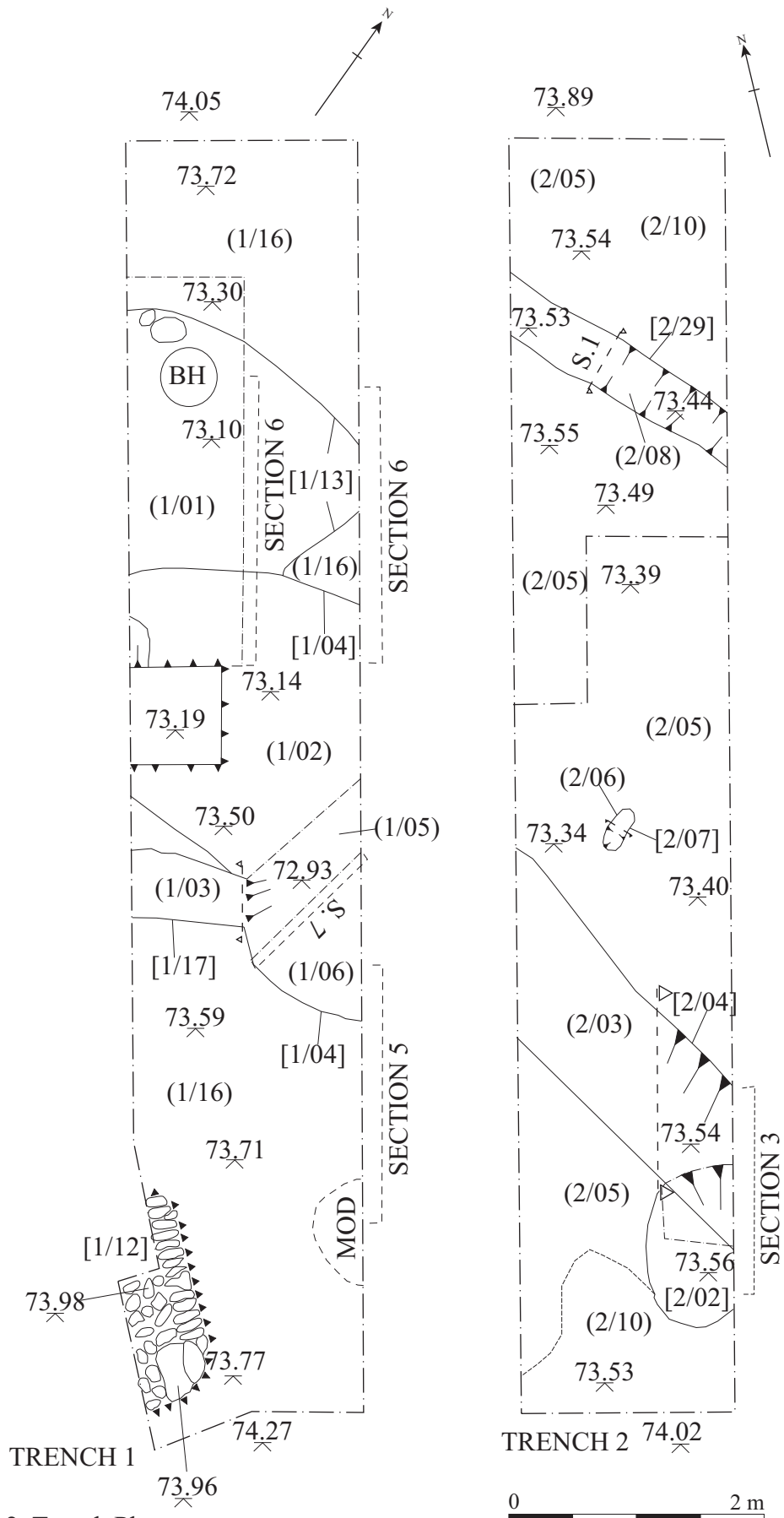


Figure 2. Trench Plans

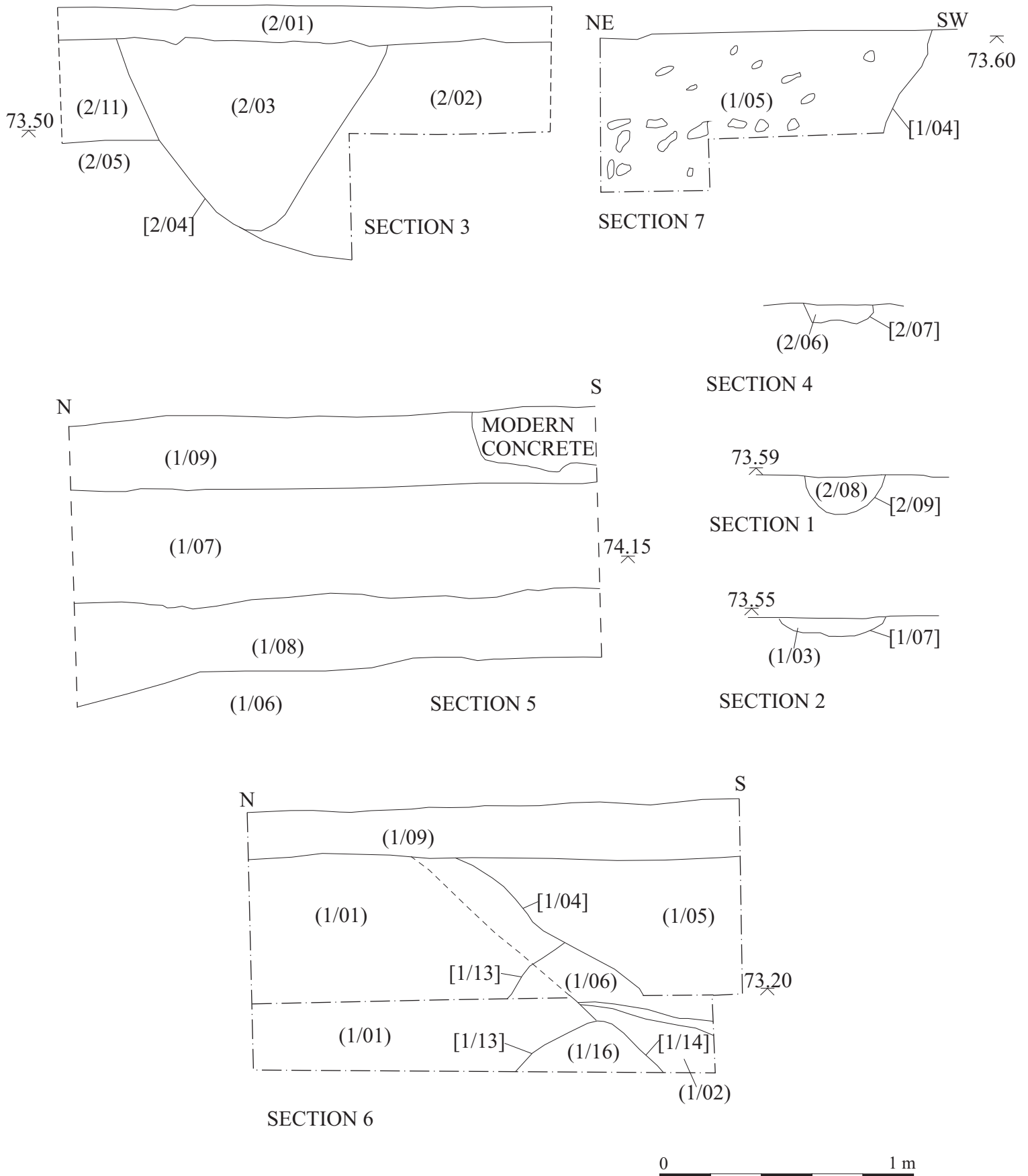


Figure 3. Sections

was clear that the feature continued down beneath the limits of excavation.

Sealing both the pit [1/13] and the deposit (1/08) was the cultivation soil (1/07) (Fig 6), a mid orangey brown sandy silt, with iron mottling and charcoal, chalk and gravel distributed through the layer, the top of which was located at a height of c.74.30m OD. The pottery recovered from the deposit was late 13th/early 14th century.

Cutting these cultivation soils was a layer of dense grey brown silty clay (1/15) with chalky lumps and gravel well mixed through it. The dump of clay seems to be associated with the construction of the wall base (1/12). A course of unfinished pitched limestone pieces measuring between 0.15x0.15x0.08m and 0.25x0.25x0.10m, formed the base to a wall (Fig 2). The top of this wall base was at c.73.96m OD. A few horizontal pieces were present, and by analogy with walls elsewhere in Haddenham, courses to the height of c.0.25m above street level should have been laid over the pitched stone, and above this the wychert slabs would have been placed. A sole potsherd from the wall gave a nineteenth century date. The wall base had a layer of reddish brown silty clay (1/11) perhaps used as a bonding material or as packing material overlying it with 17th century pot in it; pieces of brick were mixed in with this material. It did not appear to be the same deposit as (1/09), although disturbance was noted along the west edge of trench 1.

The latest deposit in the trench was the cultivation soil (1/09) (Fig 3, Section 5), a dark brownish black sandy clay. This deposit dated from the nineteenth century.

Trench 2 (Figures 2-3)

The natural was pale grey chalk (2/10) at a height of c.73.53m OD – it was observed at the northeast and southwest ends of the trench. A ‘pool’ of compact reddish brown silty clay (2/05) with some gravel was present in the middle of the trench, which sat into the top of (2/10) (Fig 2).

Cut into the natural were four features, two linear features, a pit and a possible postpad or posthole. At the northeast end of the trench was an east/west oriented gully [2/09] parallel to Townside (Fig. 3, Section 1). This gully measured 0.34m wide and was 0.08m deep and its observed length was 1.70m although it extended beyond the limits of excavation. The base of the gully was at 73.44m OD. It was filled with a compact dark pinkish grey silty clay (2/08) which contained gravel and small chalk lumps. No dating was recovered from the feature.

To the southwest of this gully was a small stained area (2/06) (Fig. 3, Section 4) measuring 0.30m by 0.22m of soft mottled grey brown and red clay silt and silty clay; when excavated it measured only 0.05m deep. The cut rendered a rectangular straight sided flat-bottomed feature [2/07] which may have been the bottom of a posthole, the staining of a postpad, or a natural anomaly in (2/05) into which it was cut. The top of this feature was at c.73.34m OD. No other postholes or features were observed so there is nothing to which it can be related.

Probably sealing this feature was a layer of cultivation soil (2/11) a compact dark grey

brown silty clay with gravel, CBM and charcoal spread through it. It was between 0.25m and 0.40m thick and directly overlay (2/05) – although as already noted it was not clear whether features were cut into it or whether it sealed the gulley [2/09] and the possible posthole [2/07]. The top of this layer was at c.73.70m OD. This deposit may be two cultivation soils that were not distinguishable from each other (see Trench 1 above).

Further to the southwest in the trench was a quarry pit and fill [2/02] which cut (2/11) (Fig. 3, Section 3). The pit was sub-rounded and extended beyond the edges of excavation. It measured more than 1m north-south and 0.7m east-west. It was greater than 0.5m deep and filled with compact pale grey reddish brown silty clay which contained gravel and small chalky lumps. No finds were recovered. The top of the pit was at 73.46m OD.

The pit [2/02] was cut by the large linear ditch [2/04] (Fig. 3, Section 3) which measured 1.10m wide at its top, was 0.75m deep and greater than 2m long – where it extended beyond the limits of excavation. The fill was a homogenous compact mid brown silty clay with gravel, small chalk lumps and charcoal present. It was the only fill of the ditch, yielding a 13th century date from the pottery. The base of the ditch was 73.04m OD.

The layer (2/01), which overlay (2/11) and sealed all the features in the trench, was a dark brown clay silt with a reasonable amount of gravel and CBM; it is the same as (1/09). It sealed the excavation area and can be characterised as a cultivation soil.

5 FINDS

5.1 The Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 35 sherds with a total weight of 268g. The assemblage was all medieval in date, except for seven sherds of post-medieval material.

Where possible, the pottery was recorded using the coding system and chronology employed by the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994). However, the group is more typical of pottery from contemporary sites in Oxfordshire, which is perhaps unsurprising due to the location of the site. Consequently, the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994) is used for the fabric types which are not present in the Bucks type-series. The Oxfordshire codes are prefixed 'OX'.

OXAC:	<i>Cotswold-type ware</i> , AD975-1350. 3 sherds, 15g.
OXBf:	<i>North-East Wiltshire Ware</i> , AD1050 – 1400. 7 sherds, 80g.
MS3:	<i>Medieval Grey Sandy Wares</i> . Mid 11 th – late 14 th century. 4 sherds, 8g.
OXY:	<i>Medieval Oxford ware</i> , AD1075 – 1350. 6 sherds, 43g
MC9:	<i>Brill/Boarstall Ware</i> . 1200-?1600. 8 sherds, 60g.
PM8:	<i>Red Earthenware</i> . 17 th – 19 th century. 3 sherds, 41g.
PM25:	<i>White Earthenware</i> . Late 18 th – 19 th century. 4 sherds, 21g.

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*.

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

Tr	Cntxt	OXAC		OXBF		MS3		OXY		MC9		PM8		PM25		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	1			3	17			2	13							L11thC
1	3									1	6					13thC
1	5	1	4					1	3	2	8					13thC
1	7			1	30			1	2							Late 13thC/ Early 14thC
1	8	1	5					1	9	1	35					13thC
1	9	1	6	2	21	1	3			2	8	1	4	1	2	19thC
1	10											1	10			17thC
1	11											1	27			17thC
1	12									1	2			3	19	19thC
2	3			1	12	3	5	1	16	1	1					13thC
	Total	3	15	7	80	4	8	6	43	8	60	3	41	4	21	

6 DISCUSSION

It appears that there was some sort of activity on the site before the 13th century cultivation. The gully [2/09] and the possible posthole/postpad [2/06] did not show through the cultivation layer. The gully [1/17] probably also is associated with this activity. There then follows a period of cultivation in the 13th century followed by quarrying probably in the same century. This quarrying was for wychert. The land then reverts to agricultural/horticultural land in the late 13th/early 14th century (1/07), (2/11). The ditch [2/03] may be a land division associated with this cultivation. The medieval cultivation appears to be short lived as there are no finds from after the early 14th century until the 17th – 19th century (1/09) by which time the site had been enclosed by the wall [1/12].

The land within the property area dropped c.0.20m away from the frontage onto Townside, which was reflected in the height of the natural in both trenches, and the height of the earlier cultivation soils (1/08), (2/11), which may represent the same phase of use, even if they differ in character from one another. The lack of pottery from (2/11) prevents an absolute comparison of the two layers. As stated above cultivation soil 92/110 may have incorporated two phases of cultivation.

The wall base observed at the southwest end of trench 1 was probably set in a trench and built from the limestone; the layers above the wall base were disturbed by the destruction of the wall and (1/09) was spread almost onto the top of it. The base of the trench was bedded with a dump of clay with the pitched stone set into it and a bonding material

similar to, though not the same as, (1/09) laid in the wall matrix. Pot from this wall dated from the 17th to the 19th century but is probably within the latter part of this period.

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APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
Trench 1				1.9	10		
1/01	Fill	Fill of 1/13	0.80+	Tr.	2m+	pottery	13 th C
1/02	Fill	Fill of 1/04	0.04-0.08	2m	1m	-	
1/03	Fill	Fill of 1/17	0.10	0.50	0.90	pottery	13 th C
1/04	Cut	Quarry	0.70+	1.80	3m		?Post-medieval
1/05	Fill	Fill of 1/04	0.70+	1.80	3m	pottery	13 th C
1/06	Fill	Fill of 1/04	-	Tr	Tr	-	
1/07	Deposit	Cultivation	0.40	Tr	Tr	pottery	Late 13 th /early 14 th C
1/08	Deposit	Cultivation	0.20	Tr	Tr	pottery	13 th C
1/09	Deposit	Overburden	0.30-0.50	Tr	Tr	pottery	19 th C
1/10	Deposit	Part of 1/09	0.50	-	-	-	
1/11	Deposit	Base to wall 1/12	0.04	0.60+	1.20+	-	
1/12	Structure	Wall	0.14	0.60+	1.20+	-	
1/13	Cut	Quarry	0.80+	Tr	2m+		13 th C
1/14	Cut	Same as 1/04				-	
1/15	Deposit	Part of 1/07					
1/16	Natural		-	Tr	Tr	-	-
1/17	Cut	Gully	0.10	0.50	0.90	-	13 th C
Trench 2				1.7	10		
2/01	Deposit	Overburden	0.15-0.20	Tr	Tr	-	
2/02	Fill and cut	Quarry	0.50	1.10+	0.70+	-	
2/03	Fill	Fill of 2/04	0.75	0.70	2m+	pottery	13 th C
2/04	Cut	Ditch	0.75	0.70	2m+	-	13 th C
2/05	Natural		-	Tr	8m	-	?C17th
2/06	Fill	Fill of 2/07	0.05	0.22	0.30	-	
2/07	Cut	Posthole	0.05	0.22	0.30	-	
2/08	Fill	Fill of 2/09	0.08	0.34	1.70+	-	
2/09	Cut	Gully	0.08	0.34	1.70+	-	
2/10	Natural			Tr			
2/11	Deposit	Cultivation	0.25 – 0.40	Tr	Tr	-	