

**JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES**

**16 BISHAM VILLAGE,**

**BISHAM,**

**BERKSHIRE:**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**SU 8500 8505**

*On behalf of*

*Mr & Mrs D. Mckean*

**OCTOBER 2003**

<b>REPORT FOR</b>	Mr & Mrs D. McKean 16 Bisham Village Marlow Berkshire SL7 1RR
<b>PREPARED BY</b>	M Henderson
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<b>ENQUIRES TO</b>	John Moore Heritage Services Long White Cloud Waterperry Road Holton Oxfordshire OX33 1PW  <i>Tel. 01865 876637</i>

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Historical Background	1
<b>2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 STRATEGY</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1 Research Design	3
3.2 Methodology	3
<b>4 RESULTS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5 FINDS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6 OTHER FINDS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8 CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>10</b>
 <b>FIGURES</b>	
<b>Figure 1</b> Site Location	2
<b>Figure 2</b> Trench Plan Showing Location of Sections	4
<b>Figure 3</b> Sections	5

## *Summary*

*The site situated to the rear of 16 Bisham Village, a 17<sup>th</sup> Century timber framed building, comprised a series of pit features. These pits include the results of quarrying and disposal of domestic refuse. In addition to this a chalk-lined soakaway was visible, cut through the large quarry pit and filled with 19<sup>th</sup> century material. The soakaway remains in use as can be seen by the number of modern services culminating in a modern brick built addition situated on top of feature [04]. Two sherds of 15<sup>th</sup> century pottery were recovered from a made ground deposit. The pottery, although residual suggests medieval activity in the locality.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### 1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located at 16 Bisham Village, Bisham (NGR SU 8500 8505).

The property occupies a site on the western side of Marlow Road, set back from the street front. The geology is gravels, sands and clays deposited by the changes in the course of the River Thames over time. The solid geology is Middle Chalk and the site lies at c. 29.3 m OD.

### 1.2 Planning Background

The Royal Borough of Maidenhead and Windsor have granted planning permission for the construction of a two storey rear extension to the existing building (03/39939). Due to the potential presence of below ground archaeological deposits a condition was attached requiring that during the period of groundworks the applicant would be responsible for the undertaking of a programme of archaeological work. Babbie Group, on behalf of Royal Borough of Maidenhead and Windsor, prepared a *Brief* for the work.

John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* in agreement with Babbie Group carried out such a watching brief.

### 1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is situated close to Bisham Abbey, a hall house of 13th century date. The Abbey was built about 1260 as a preceptory for the Knights Templars who then owned the manor. The order was suppressed in 1307, when King Edward II took over the manor rights, granting them to various relatives.

Deposits and fills are referred to in the text and figures in brackets: (02), cut features are numbers in square brackets: [04]. Structures are referred to in bold print: **05**.

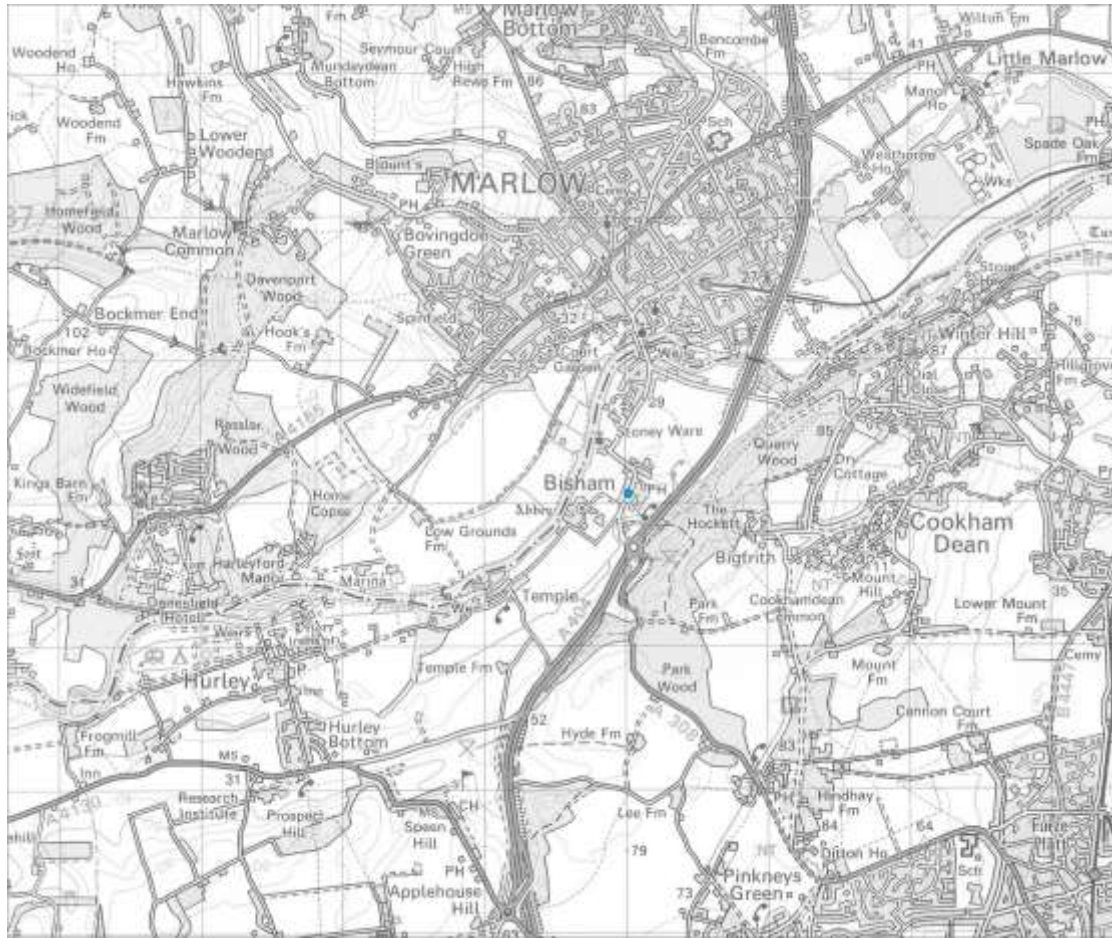


Figure 1: Site Location

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- 2.1 To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.
- 2.2 The results of the investigations will be made public.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Babbie Group Ltd, on behalf of the local planning authority. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate.

The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

### **3.2 Methodology**

The foundation trenches were U-shaped in plan: two roughly northwest-southeast orientated arms parallel to the ancillary building which housed the utility room and separated by a distance of c. 2.75 m (Trenches 1 and 2, for the purposes of this report). These arms were joined by a northeast-southwest oriented trench (Trench 3), at a distance of c. 5.5 m, from the main house building (Figure 2). The foundation trenches were excavated to an average depth of between 1.00 and 1.40 m. Due to the great number of modern services within the development area, Trench 1 had to be hand dug. Trenches 2 and 3 were excavated using a mechanical excavator as far as possible, allowing for further modern services, any excess was removed by hand. A professional archaeologist monitored all the groundworks.

## **4. RESULTS (Figures 2 and 3)**

### **TRENCHES 1 AND 2:**

The lowest recorded deposit in the U-shaped foundation trenches comprised a pale reddish-yellow sandy subsoil (13) with no finds. This deposit was visible for a maximum depth of 0.40 m.

Directly overlying (13) was deposit (12): a thick band of reddish yellow silty sand. This layer was 0.30 m to 0.90 m thick.

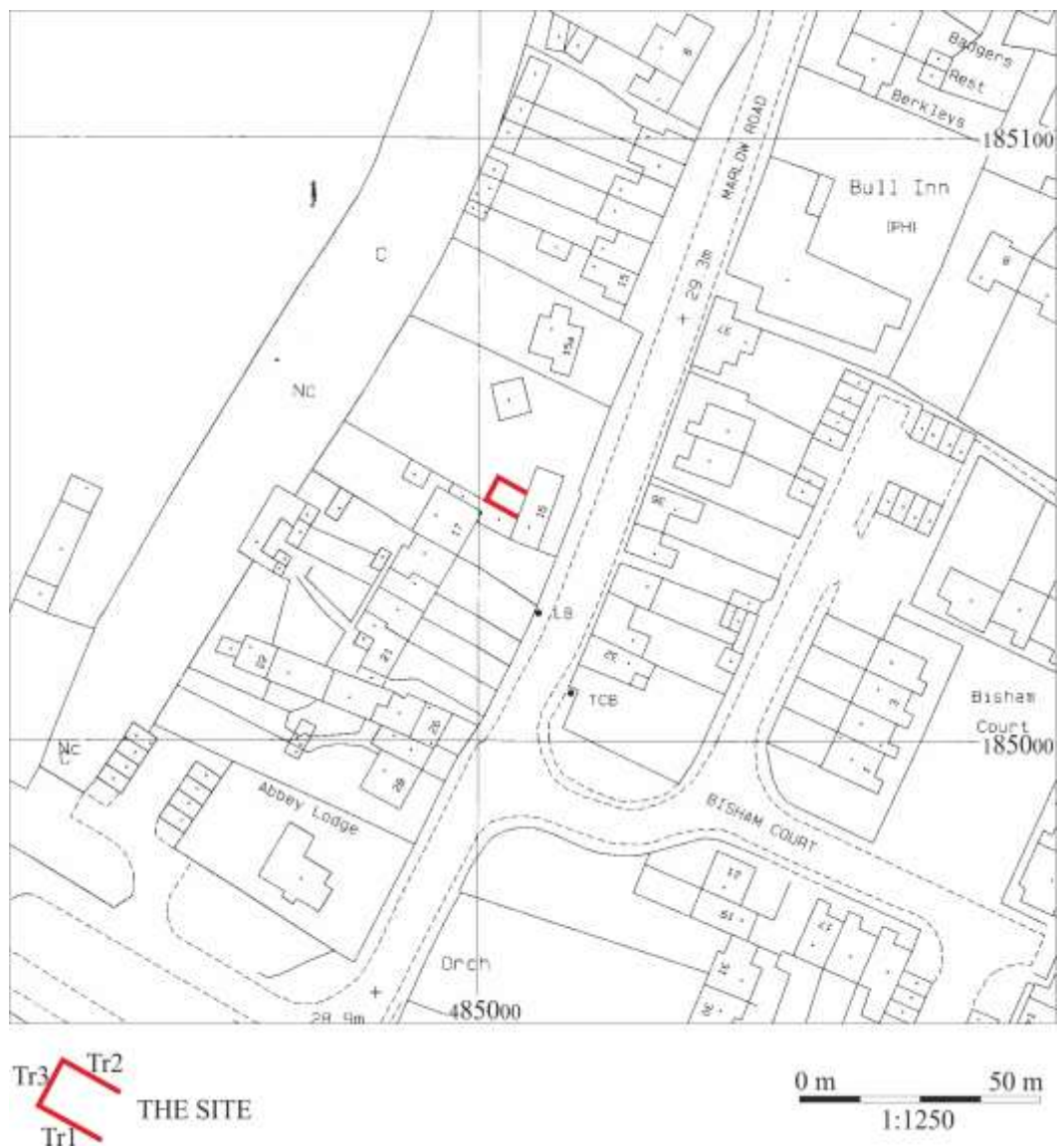


Figure 2: Trench Plan Showing Location of Sections

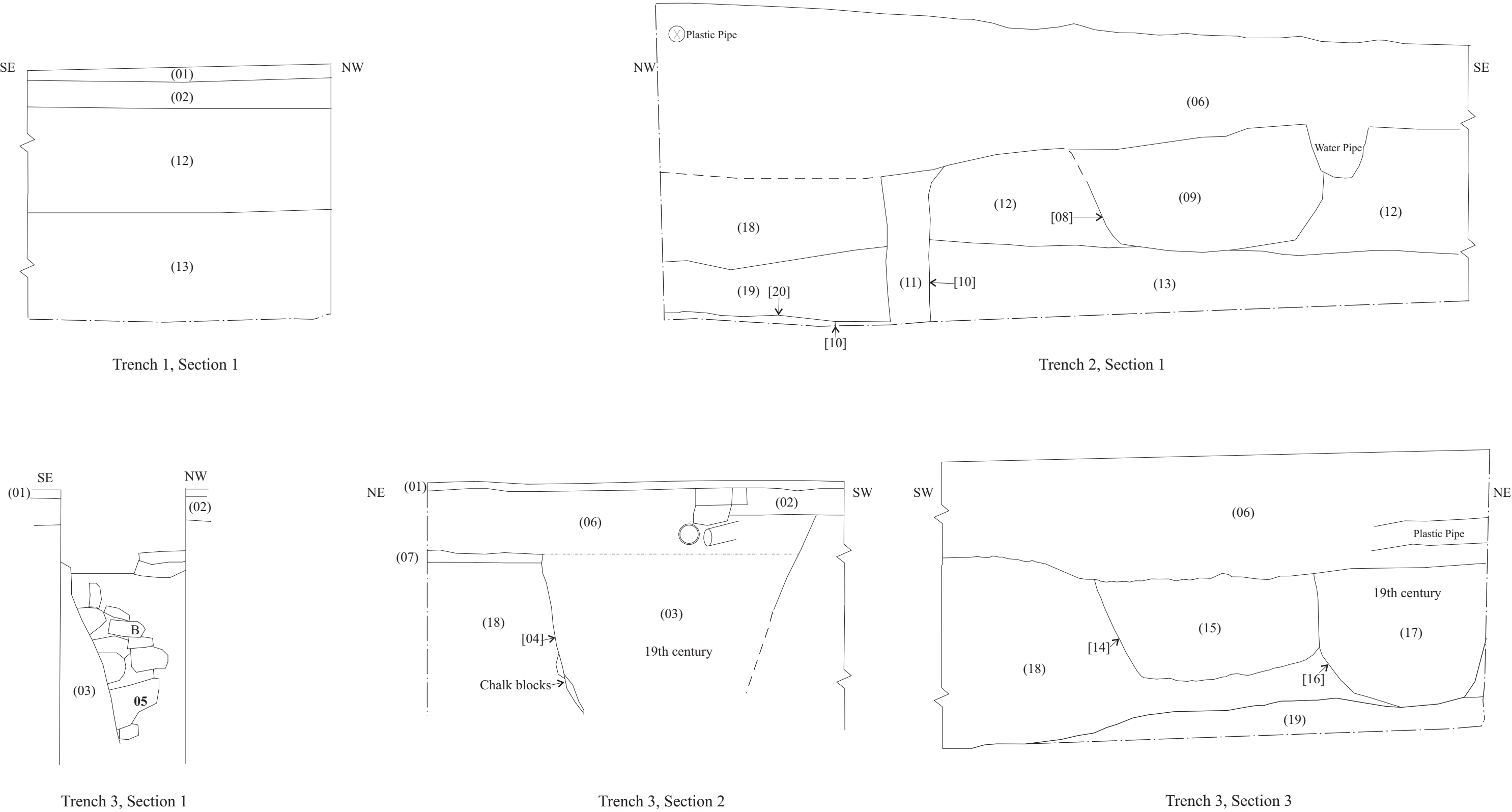


Figure 3: Sections



Cut into layers (12) and (13) was a pit [08], 1.20 m wide by 0.60 m deep. The sides were steeply sloping and had been truncated to the southeast by a modern service pipe. The feature had a sharp break of slope from the near vertical sides onto a flattish base. No finds were observed within this feature.

Also cut through layers (12) and (13) was a vertical sided feature [10], 0.50 m wide and 0.80 m deep. The feature was square in plan with slightly rounded corners. The cut [10] was filled with a dark clayey-silt containing frequent charcoal flecks and a single piece of roof tile.

Feature [10] was cut through by [20] which had straight, vertical sides with a flat base observed in section but not seen in plan. Only one cut side of the feature was visible, in Trench 2 where it cut through (11). Cut [20] had a primary fill comprising a pale dirty, reddish yellow sand (19) with a maximum depth of 0.4 m: no finds were observed within this deposit. Above (19) was deposit (18), a darker brownish clayey silty sand measuring up to 1.00 m in depth: this deposit contained frequent lenses of paler sand.

#### TRENCH 3:

The fills of cut [20]: deposits (18) and (19), extended into Trench 3 where two pits were seen to cut into deposit (18). Cut [14] had a steeply sloping side with a sharp break of slope onto an irregular, though roughly flat base. The fill (15) of cut [14] comprised reddish yellow silty sand to a depth of 0.5 m: no finds were recovered from this deposit.

A further pit [16] cut through (15), removing the northern side of cut [14], reducing the width of the pit to 1.10 m. Cut [16] had vertical sides with a rounded base: the break of slope at the base was not perceptible. The fill of this pit comprised a dark brown clayey silty sand (17) to a depth of 0.70 m by >0.80 m wide, containing abundant domestic refuse: broken bottles, iron ware, pot sherds and ceramic building material. The pottery recovered from this context comprised 19<sup>th</sup> century red earthenwares and miscellaneous 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century white earthenwares.

Also truncating deposit (18) was a cut feature [04]: steep almost vertical sides, base unseen. This cut was partially lined with irregular chalk blocks (Figure 3, Trench 3, Sections 1 and 2) with occasional brick inclusions. The fill of the feature, deposit (03), comprised mid brown silty sand to a minimum depth of 0.8 m and containing abundant CBM fragments, irregular chalk fragments and sherds of pottery. A sample of the pottery found within the fill was collected for analysis and found to be of 19<sup>th</sup> century origin. Cut [04] also truncates a thin deposit of chalk on the northern side (07): this deposit was 0.08 m thick and had no finds or inclusions.

#### TRENCHES 1-3:

All pit features were overlain by a thick deposit (06) up to 0.90 m, this deposit comprised dark brown clayey silty sand with abundant CBM inclusions and frequent pot sherds. The pottery from this deposit comprised frequent 19<sup>th</sup> century sherds, in addition to this two sherds of late medieval transitional redware were recovered: these sherds are of 15<sup>th</sup> century origin. This made ground deposit (06); effectively truncated

and sealed the underlying cut features. Within this layer were a number of modern services, causing further disturbance to the underlying deposits. The services terminated in a brick soakaway directly overlying feature [04].

Two further deposits were seen overlying layer (06). Deposit (02), a mid reddish yellow sandy layer 0.12 m thick visible in Trenches 1 and 2 and formed the levelling layer for (01): deposit (01) comprised a layer of thin concrete slab, presumably a modern patio feature.

## 5 FINDS

### Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 24 sherds with a total weight of 1221g. The entire assemblage was of post-medieval or modern date, although two sherds of a late medieval ware were present. The following fabrics were noted:

LMT: Late medieval transitional redware. Very hard, smooth fabric, glazed and unglazed, in a variety of late medieval vessel forms. 15<sup>th</sup> century? 2 sherds, 73g.

Red E: Red Earthenwares: Fine sandy earthenware, usually with a brown or green glaze, occurring in a range of utilitarian forms. Such 'country pottery' was first made in the 16th century, and in some areas continued in use until the 19th century. 8 sherds, 352g.

19<sup>th</sup>C: Miscellaneous 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century wares, mainly mass-produced white earthenwares, but also horticultural earthenwares. 14 sherds, 796g.

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

Context	LMT		Red E		19thC		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
3			5	260	2	381	19thC
6	2	73	2	63	2	32	19thC
17			1	29	10	383	19thC
Total	2	73	8	352	14	796	

## 6 OTHER FINDS

A quantity of bottles and ironwork were recovered from the deposits (06) and (17). Fill (17) contained several glass bottles of modern origin. Of the ironwork, a number of unidentifiable fragments were observed in addition to a broken saucepan and fragments of corroded gardening implements. As the material was modern in origin, the finds were not retained.

## 7 DISCUSSION

The lowest visible deposit was (13): sandy subsoil, overlain by a thick deposit (12) of silty sand. Neither of these deposits contained artefacts and are probably *in situ* strata derived from the natural geology.

A single large pit was cut into these layers [08], but no dating evidence was obtained, suggesting a quarry pit.

Pit [08] was truncated by the thick made ground deposit (06), a layer put down in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, comprising a large quantity of brick rubble and domestic debris. The two sherds of 15<sup>th</sup> century pottery incorporated in this deposit are thought to be residual: derived from earlier activity in the vicinity of the site disturbed perhaps by the many services in the area, or by the construction of the made ground.

Deposit (06) also truncates and seals pits [04], [14] and [16]. The material derived from the fills of cuts [04] and [16] was of 19<sup>th</sup> century origin. Pit [16] was a rubbish pit, used to bury the domestic waste from the property. Pit [04] however, appears to have been a soakaway, partially lined with irregular chalk blocks and brick fragments 05. The soakaway feature continues to be in use as can be seen from the siting of a brick structure above deposit (03) (Figure 3, Section 3). This brick structure comprised modern three-inch brick construction and is currently in use as the soakaway from the water pipes of this and the adjoining modern property.

Pit [14] is earlier in date than the refuse pit [16], as cut [16] truncates the feature at its northeastern side. No artefactual evidence was obtained from the fill of this pit.

Cut [04] truncates a thin chalk layer (07), which may have been an earlier levelling layer.

Cut [10] comprised a vertical sided, square plan, pit feature containing one fragment of CBM. This pit was truncated by deposit (06) and by cut [20]. Cut [20], also vertical sided, contained two fills (18) and (19). Only one side of the pit was visible in Trench 2, no opposite side was picked up in Trench 1, and there were no traces of the fill layers in Trench 1. The only visible layers in Trench 1 were the naturally derived deposits (12) and (13) through which the pit was cut as observed in Trench 2. This suggests that the pit terminated somewhere prior to Trench 1, giving an approximate maximum width of the pit as c. 5 m, and a minimum depth of 1.00 m. The purpose of this pit, through which the soakaway [04] was cut in addition to pits [14] and [16], may have been extraction, suggesting some degree of quarrying activity.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

The site situated to the rear of 16 Bisham Village, a 17<sup>th</sup> Century timber framed building, comprised a series of pit features. These pits include the results of quarrying (pit [20] and possibly pit [08]) and disposal of domestic refuse (pit [16]). In addition to this a chalk-lined soakaway [04] was visible, cut through the large quarry pit and filled with 19<sup>th</sup> century material. The soakaway remains in use as can be seen by the

number of modern services culminating in a modern brick built addition situated on top of feature [04].

Additional activity also in the form of cut features was represented by pits [08], [10] and [14]. The specific function of these features is unknown and no datable material was retrieved from their fills. Pit [14] was cut into the quarry pit [20] and was truncated in turn by 19<sup>th</sup> century rubbish pit [16], suggesting a date prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century but later than the quarrying activity on the site.

All the features were disturbed by the made ground deposit (06). The recovery of two sherds of 15<sup>th</sup> century pottery in this deposit indicates medieval activity in the vicinity, but it's residuality in the modern make-up layer can only imply local medieval activity rather than provide specific evidence.

## **9 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## APPENDIX 1

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
01	Slab	Concrete Paving	0.04	-	-	None	Modern
02	Layer	Sandy levelling layer for slab	0.12	0.80	6.25	None	Modern
03	Fill	Fill of Soakaway	>0.80	1.30	Not observed	Pot	19 <sup>th</sup> C
04	Cut	Cut of soakaway	>0.80	1.30	Not observed	-	-
05	Masonry	Chalk block lining of soakaway	>0.80	0.32	Not observed	-	-
06	Deposit	Made ground	0.90	>5.50	c. 4.00	Pot	19 <sup>th</sup> C
07	Deposit	Chalk layer	0.08	0.50	Not observed	None	-
08	Cut	Pit cut	0.60	1.20	Not observed	-	-
09	Fill	Pit [08] fill	0.60	1.20	Not observed	None	-
10	Cut	Straight sided pit	0.80	0.50	Not observed	-	-
11	Fill	Fill of [10]	0.80	0.50	Not observed	None	-
12	Deposit	Orange silty sand	0.30-0.90	>3.00	Not observed	None	-
13	Deposit	Subsoil	>0.40	>3.00	Not observed	None	-
14	Cut	Pit		>1.10	Not observed	None	-
15	Fill	Of pit [14]	0.50	>1.10	Not observed	None	-
16	Cut	Modern pit		>0.80	Not observed	None	-
17	Fill	Of pit [16]	0.70	>0.80	Not observed	None	19 <sup>th</sup> C
18	Fill	Upper fill of [20]	1.00	c. 5.00	Not observed	None	-
19	Fill	Primary fill of 20	0.40	c. 5.00	Not observed	None	-
20	Cut	Cut through feature 10/11	1.40	c. 5.00	Not observed	None	-