

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

BURY COURT, CHURCH LANE, LUDGERSHALL,

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

SP 6629 1733

*On behalf of
Anexa Property Limited*

JULY 2007

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REPORT FOR

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Summary

An excavation on this site was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services on 3rd July 2007. Two trenches, totalling 20.0 meters in length were excavated to reveal the underlying Oxford Clay geology at a maximum height of 74.48 metres OD on the ground.

Archaeological deposits were minimal. Within Trench 1 a post hole containing one sherd of Oxford Ware pottery, was uncovered. In Trench 2 a shallow pit feature was uncovered with some finds of predominantly 19th century pottery within.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site of Bury Court is located at the east end of Church Lane, on the south side at NGR SP 6629 1733. The property consists of a dwelling and garden, which are currently serving as a let residence whilst planning permission is being sought by the owner. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay, close to the junction with the Middle Oxford Clay, and the site lies at approximately 72.8m OD.

1.2 Planning Background

Outline planning permission has been refused for the demolition of the existing property, and a building program for the erection of four new dwellings in this area. Reasons for this refusal included a non-compliance of policy GP.59 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan, which refers to the need to establish the archaeological impact of the proposed development. The Archaeological Officer of Buckinghamshire County Council has recommended that the site should be evaluated by trial trenching. This is also in line with PPG16, as well as the aforementioned Local Plan Policy.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site of proposed development lies within an area of considerable archaeological potential. The medieval landscape of Ludgershall is considered to be a national importance because of the exceptional survival of the village's open field systems and the important settlement earthworks within the village. These comprise of a scheduled moated site (CAS0033), the site of a post medieval mansion and fishponds (CAS2134) and the areas of shrunken settlement earthworks (CAS2332 & 2366) To the North of Ludgershall Farm are more earthworks and a possible house platform (CAS2331)

Ludgershall is first recorded in the doomsday Book when it comprised two manors (Morris, 1976) There is documentary evidence for the second manor and possibly a medieval hospital in the village (Page, 1927) The regionally important Brill/Boarstall pottery industry was also practiced in Ludgershall (Saunders, 2000) Recent work in the area to the south of Ludgershall Farm produced quantities of 13th-14th century pottery and evidence for two phases of ridge and furrow cultivation (JMHS, 2004) Additional

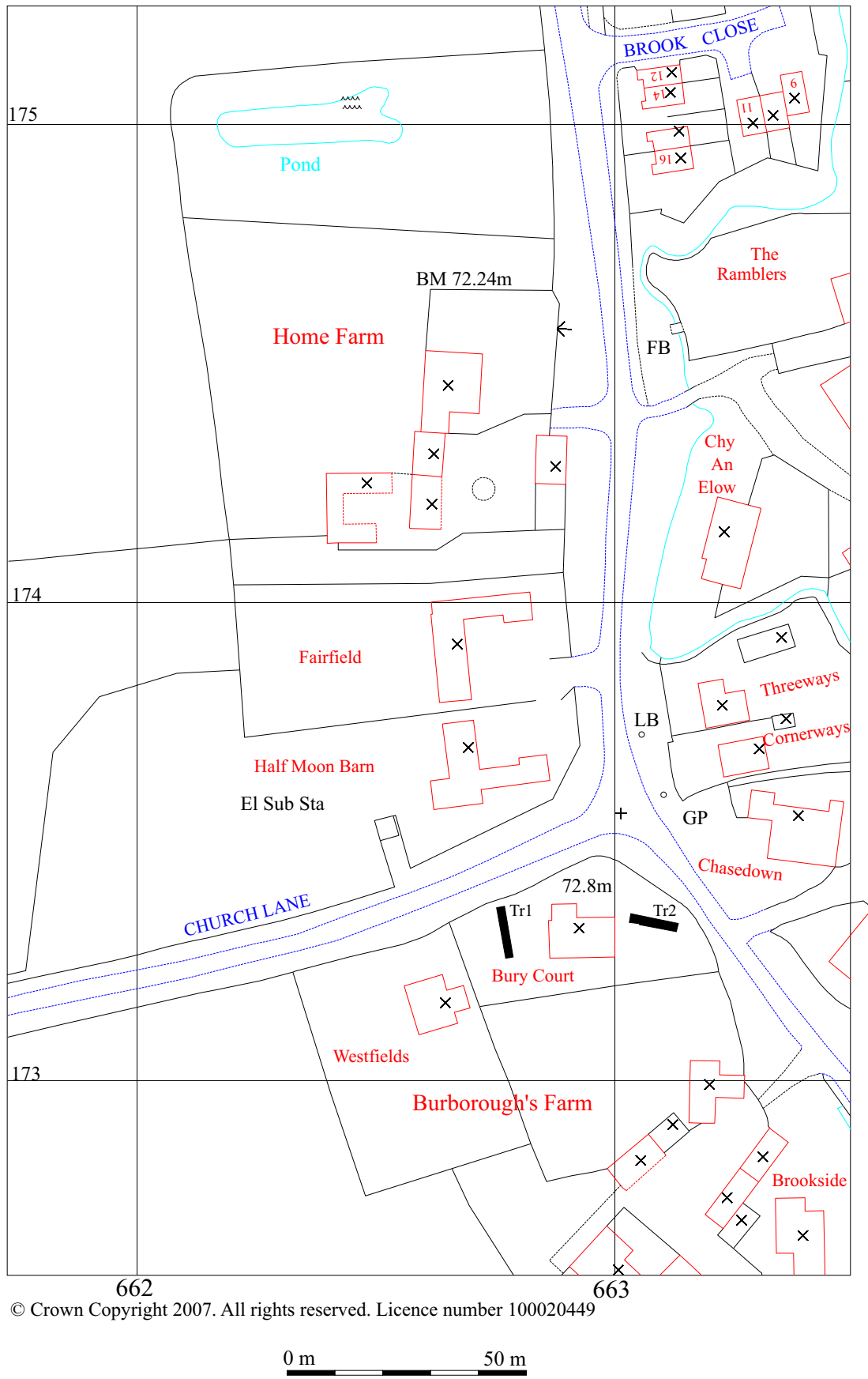


Figure 1. Site and trench location

examination of ridge and furrow earthworks to the south of the village has shown that in places the layout of cultivation strips was altered more than once (JMHS, 2006)

A review of the local historic maps suggest that the medieval village had a green-based plan form with the church-manor core in its south-western corner and peasant tenements on both sides of a U-shaped linear green. A pre-1600 (1564-1586) right of commons lawsuit map appears to confirm this linear structure. The Inclosure map of 1780 shows a structure on the site, which is located at a road junction and is part of a cluster of structures forming a distinct 'end', separate from a series of north-south rows, with one to the west running north from the manor/church core, this perhaps originally fronting onto a now partially infilled village green. This is thought to be plot 194 belonging to 'illegible' Wards house and garden. The Ordnance Survey 2" surveyors' map of 1813-1814 shows the dwelling at an angle to the road junction as on the Inclosure map. The property occupies a small plot parallel to Church Lane, which is still shown on the 1885 and 1900 1:10,560 OS plans.

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.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered. Specifically to establish whether late Saxon and/or Medieval occupation or boundary features are present and to assess their relationship to the village plan. Also to establish any evidence for pottery production in the area.
- 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

In response to a *Brief* issued by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with the Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the excavation of two trenches across the site (Fig. 1) as part of the first

stage of investigations. A contingency plan for an additional 10m of trenching was also allocated.

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 of Field Archaeologists (1994)

3.2 Methodology

The trenching sample specified within the brief was achieved through the excavation of two 10.0m long trenches (Fig. 1). Trench one was located 10m from the west corner of the property, in an area previously used for growing vegetables. Trench two was located 3m from the north-eastern corner of the property, within the front garden.

Both trenches were 1.60m wide and were excavated by a mechanical mini-excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand, prior to hand excavation of any archaeological features.

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. A photographic record was produced. Both trenches were backfilled by the machine after recording, which occurred on the same day.

4 RESULTS.

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Contexts within [] indicate features, i.e. pit cuts; whilst numbers within () show feature fills or deposits of materials.

The lowest recorded deposit in both trenches comprised natural Oxford Clay (1/03), (2/03). This natural geology on the site was lower in Trench 2 than in Trench 1, mainly following the natural topography (a maximum height of 73.58m OD in Trench 2, and 74.59m OD in Trench 1).

Trench 1 (Figure 2)

Trench 1 had a topsoil of dark blackish-brown, silty -clay soil on average 0.25m deep, and covering the entire area (1/01) at a height of 75.10m OD. Below this was light-greyish-brown, silty clay subsoil (1/02) which was 0.33m thick. Directly below this layer was the natural mottled orangey-grey Oxford Clay (1/03) at a height of 74.59 OD. This trench contained a small post hole [1/05] which contained one sherd of Oxford Ware, and a possible support stake hole [1/08]. These cuts were filled with loosely compacted, dark greyish-brown, silty-clay (1/04) and (1/07). The post-hole was seen to cut through at least

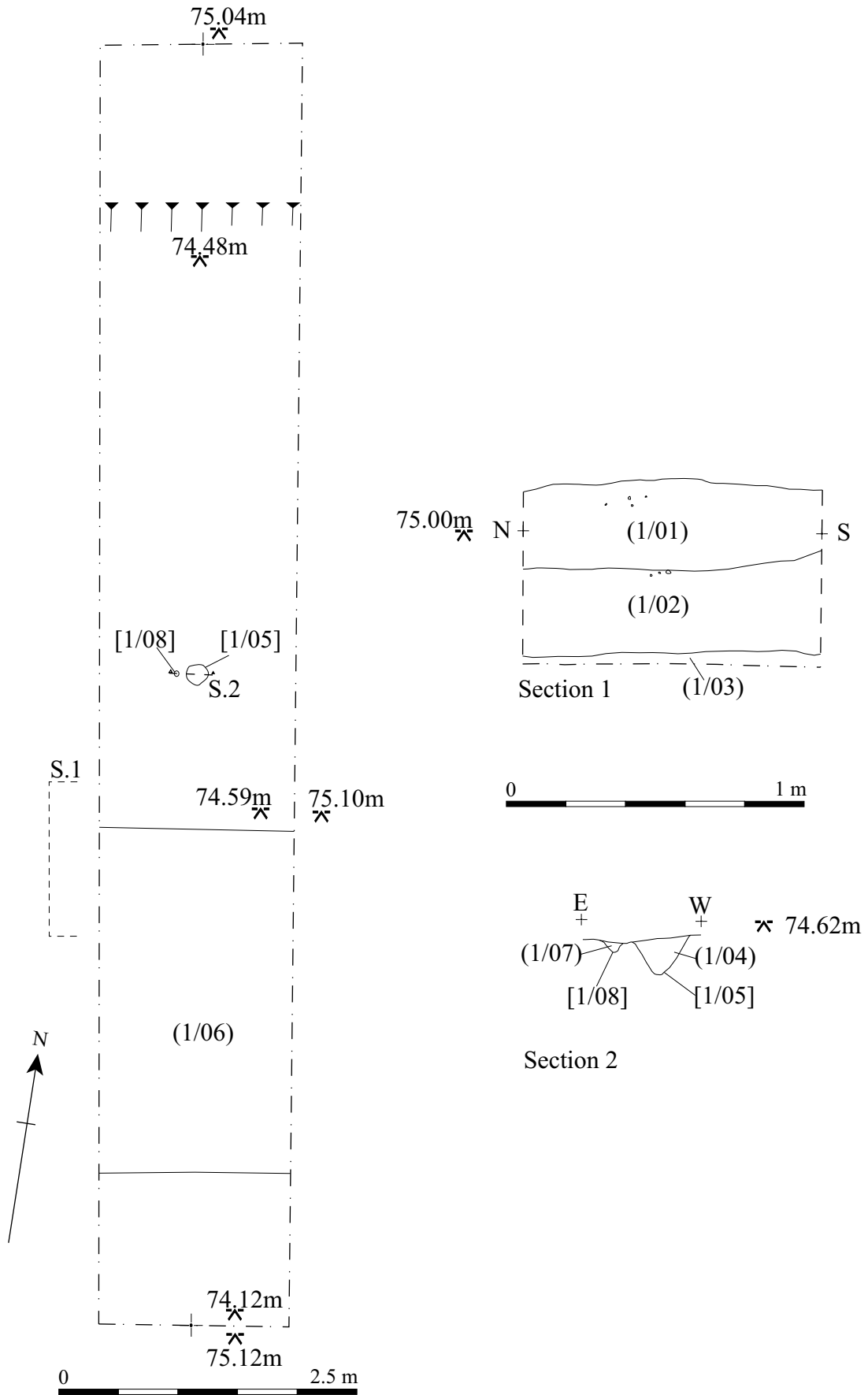


Figure 2. Sample sections and plan of Trench 1

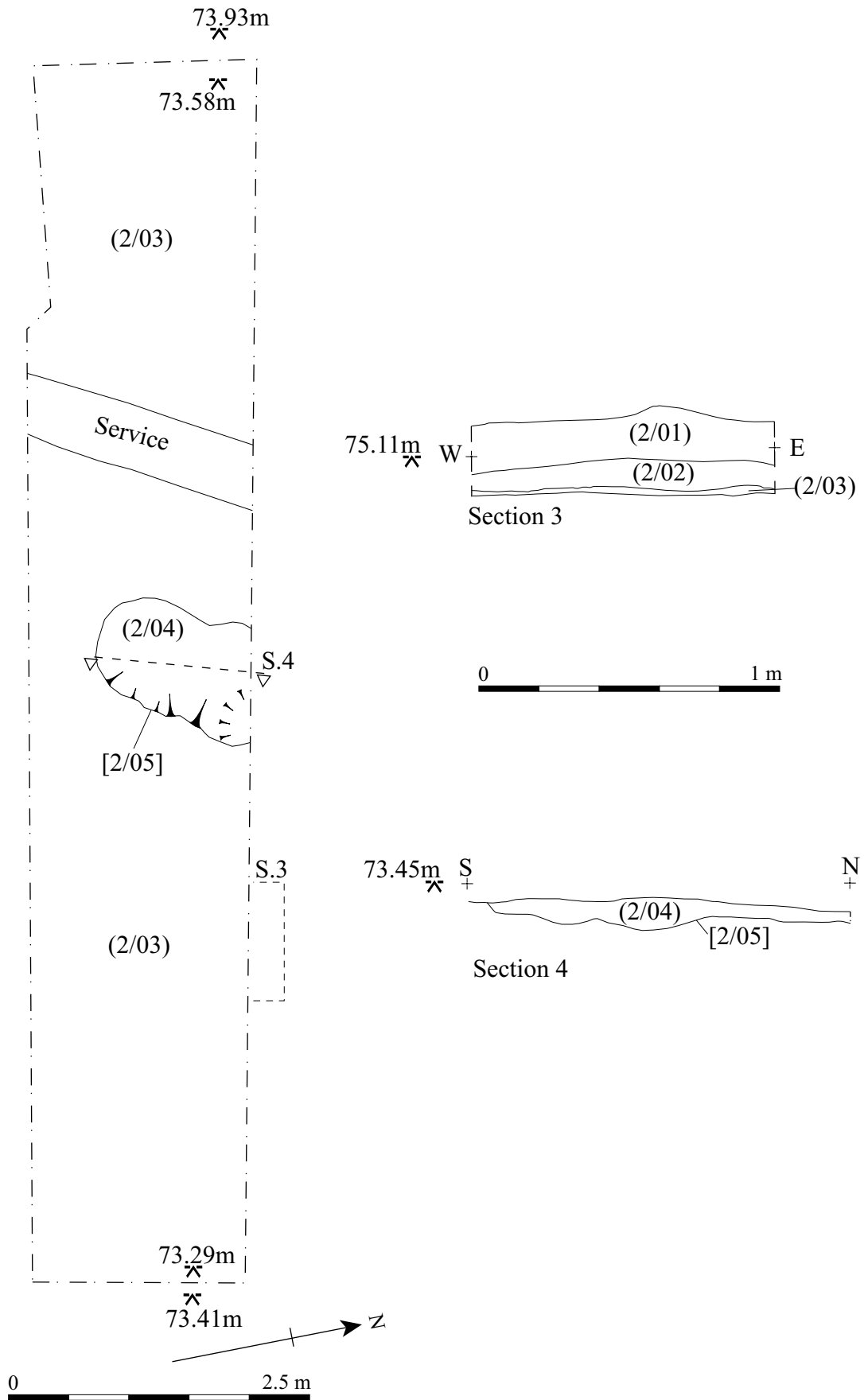


Figure 3. Sample sections and plan of Trench 2

part of deposit (1/02). A probable furrow, related to ridge and furrow agricultural practices was also present (1/06) but did not yield any finds.

Trench 2 (Figure 3)

Trench 2 sloped down from north-west to south-east and had a topsoil of brown-grey loamy clay, on average 0.16m deep, covering the whole area (2/01) at a height of 73.41m – 73.93m OD. The base of this deposit at the north western end was observed to contain demolition from the previous cottage, which extended 0.08m in the trench. This demolition material was in the base of the topsoil deposit at the interface with the underlying layer.

Below (2/01) was a brown-grey clay, 0.08m thick, with directly beneath this the natural Oxford Clay, (2/03) at a height of 73.29m – 73.58m OD. Features located within this trench comprise a small, irregular and shallow probable planting pit (2/05), which had pottery within its deposit, (2/04) and a service trench to the western end of the trench (2/06).

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery (By Paul Blinkhorn)

The pottery assemblage comprised 24 sherds with a total weight of 371g. It comprised a mixture of medieval and post-medieval wares which are all typical of sites in the region. The material was mainly 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:

MC9: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. 1200-?1600. 10 sherds, 190g.

PM5: *Trailed slip-ware* 17th century. 4 sherds, 34g

PM8: *Red Earthenware*. 17th century. 3 sherds, 42g.

PM25: *White Earthenware*. Late 18th – 20th century. 5 sherds, 71g.

In addition, two sherds of medieval Oxford Ware were present. This is not included in the Milton Keynes type-series, but is common in Oxfordshire, where it is defined in the type-series (Mellor 1994) as follows:

OXY: *Oxford ware*. c. L 11th – 14th century. 2 sherds, 34g.

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 waste from a late 15th century Brill/Boarstall manufactory is known from Ludgershall (Blinkhorn and Saunders 2004), but no obvious wasters were noted from this excavation, although most of the Brill/Boarstall wares from this site are broadly of the

same date and forms, particularly a jar rim with a bifid profile from Trench 2 context 6. Two rims of this type were noted amongst the kiln waste from the earlier excavation.

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

Tr	Context	OXY		MC9		PM8		PM5		PM25		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	2	1	24									L11thC
1	4	1	10									L11thC
2	1					1	8			1	34	19thC
2	2			1	17	1	3			3	17	19thC
2	4			6	74			4	34	1	20	19thC
2	6			3	99	1	31					M16thC
	Total	2	34	10	190	3	42	4	34	5	71	

6 DISCUSSION

Trench 1 and 2 showed minimal archaeological deposits; both prominent features within these trenches are likely to have been the product of disturbance caused by more recent activity on the site. Finds within these features are prominently 19th century pottery; in Trench 2 the probable planting pit contained 6 sherds of Brill/Boarstall Ware, but the overall dating scheme given was the 19th century or later. Within Trench 1, a similar picture is apparent for the post hole (1/04) and the subsoil (1/02) both of which contained only one sherd of pottery of medieval date. The subsoil (1/02) is probably a ploughsoil associated with ridge and furrow agriculture as evidenced by the furrow (1/06) and dating sometime after the late 11th century.

Within Trench 2 it was also noted that it was probable that the garden area was lowered in order to raise a level platform for the present bungalow, which also offers an explanation for the apparent height difference between the two trenches.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The investigation of these two trenches provided only limited archaeological evidence, with evidence for agricultural land use in western part of the area being found. There was no evidence for Saxon or medieval boundaries. Remains of the known earlier cottage were only represented by demolition rubble. Landscaping during the construction of the 1950's bungalow appears to have removed all evidence of the cottage plan.

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APPENDIX A- ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
Trench 1			0.62	1.60	10.0		
1/01	Deposit	Dark blackish-brown, silty clay	0.25	Tr	Tr	-	Modern Topsoil
1/02	Deposit	Light greyish-brown, silty clay	0.33	Tr	Tr	pot	L11th C
1/03	Natural	Light Orangey-brown, clay	0.04	Tr	Tr	-	-
1/04	Fill	Dark greyish-brown, silty clay	0.09	0.20	0.18	pot	L11th C
1/05	Cut	Circular, tapering stake hole	0.09	0.20	0.18	-	-
1/06	Deposit	Dark-greyish-orange, Silty clay	-	1.60	2.90	Pot	-
1/07	Fill	Dark blackish-grey, silty clay	0.04	0.06	0.06	-	-
1/08	Cut	Circular, shallow stake hole	0.04	0.06	0.06	-	-

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
Trench 2			0.25	1.60	10.0		
2/01	Deposit	Brownish-grey, Loamy Clay	0.16	1.60	10.0	Pot	19 th Century
2/02	Deposit	Brownish-grey, Clay	0.08	Tr	Tr	Pot	19 th Century
2/03	Natural	Brown-Orange, Clay	0.02	Tr	Tr	-	-
2/04	Fill	Pale Grey, Clay	0.06-0.13	0.075-0.11	1.20	Pot Animal Bone	19 th Century
2/05	Cut	Irregularly shaped	0.13	0.11	1.20	-	-
2/06	Feature	Trench and fill of water pipe.	-	-	-	Pot	16 th Century