

**SUPPLEMENTARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION REPORT**

THE SOUTH PAVILION

WOTTON UNDERWOOD, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

SP 6856 1608

On behalf of

Mrs E Lecky

NOVEMBER 2007

REPORT FOR	Mrs. E Lecky C/o Martin Lane Fox Bloxworth House Bloxworth Dorset BH20 7EF
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FIELDWORK	15 th November 2007
REPORT ISSUED	23 rd November 2007
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JMHS PROJECT NO.	1795
SITE CODE	WUSP 07
ARCHIVE LOCATION	Buckinghamshire County Museum Services Accession number 2007.191

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Summary

Following an evaluation, carried out by John Moore Heritage Services on behalf of Mrs E Lecky, which identified medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains, further work was carried out on two of the five ponds within the kitchen garden which are within the footprint of the proposed new pond. These were shown to be later than the deposits associated with early modern landscaping carried out by Capability Brown, and most probably that these ponds, first shown on an estate map of 1789, post-date his work at Wotton Underwood.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located in the western part of Buckinghamshire, approximately 13 kilometres west-north-west of Aylesbury. The South Pavilion is situated in Aylesbury Vale District in the Civil Parish and village of Wotton Underwood. It is the detached south wing of Wotton House with a garden extending to the south and west centred on National Grid Reference SP 6856 1608. The South Pavilion and most of its garden is situated on the Oakley Member of the Corallian Formation, which is composed mainly of marl and limestone. This deposit is stratified above the West Walton formation, which may outcrop in the southern part of the garden. This is part of the Ancholme Group and is characterized by a dark grey silty mudstone.

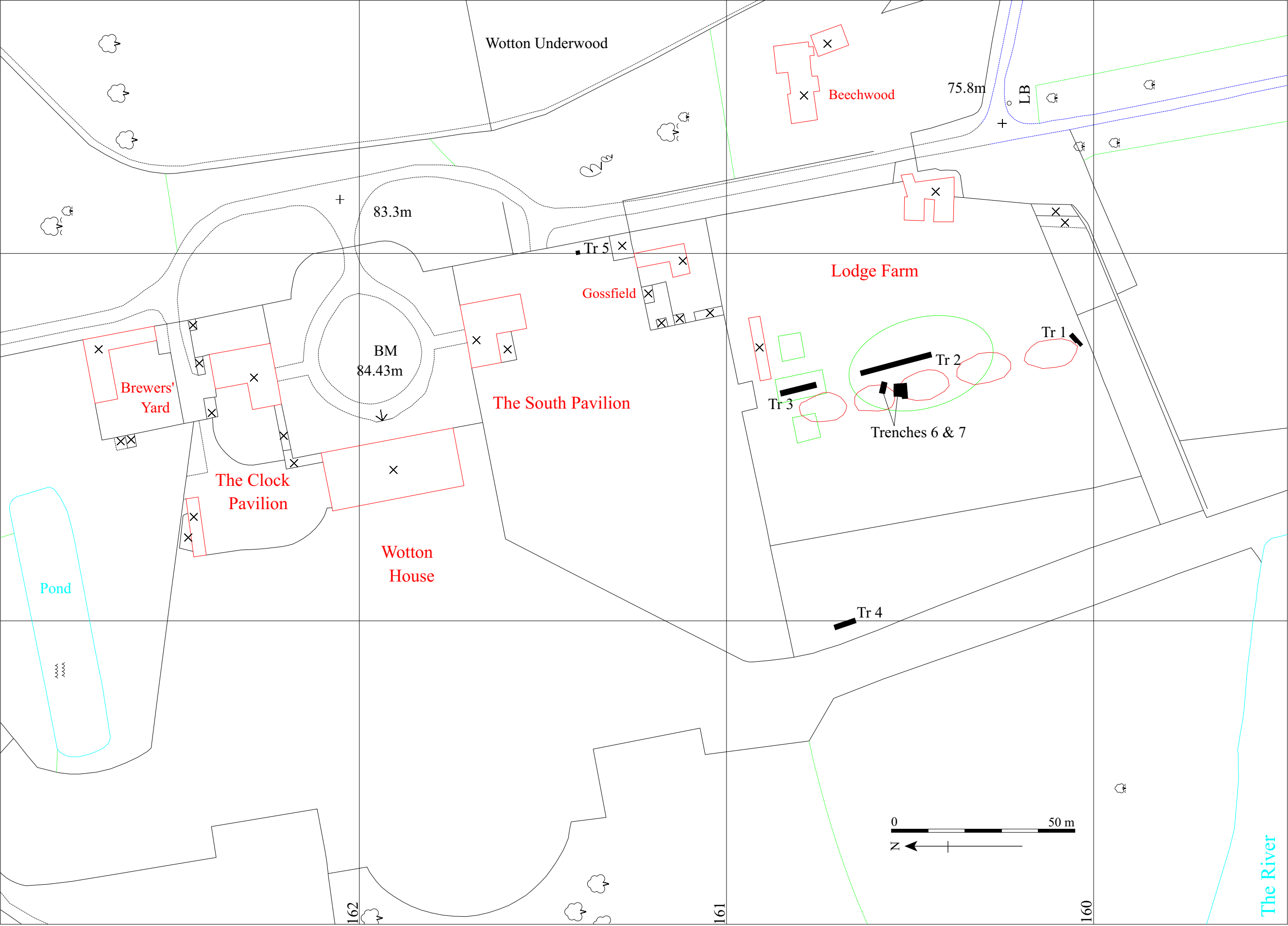
1.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

For a full archaeological and historical background see the original evaluation report. This report draws primarily on the archaeological statement produced for the client, which was a resume of the relevant evidence.

The South Pavilion garden has been the subject of archaeological fieldwork in 2007 (JMHS, 2007b), as well as a prior Desk-Based Assessment (JMHS, 2007a), which covered the gardens and hinterland of the site.

The site, referred to as Area 4 on the architectural drawings, was the subject of an archaeological evaluation in September 2007 (JMHS, 2007b). The evaluation trenches – Trenches 2 and 3 – were located within the footprints of proposed works. However, they were laid out as not to impact upon *in situ* remains of historical or archaeological significance, such as the ponds. Consequently, the trenches did not investigate the ponds, which were the object of this evaluation.

A plan of the Marquis of Buckingham's seat and pleasure grounds produced in AD 1789 (JMHS, 2007a; Fig. 12) shows that the current boundaries of Area 4, which was the kitchen garden, had been established. This was bisected by a row of five oval ponds on a north to south alignment flanked by trees. The area was further sub-divided by two additional rows of trees at right angles to the ponds on an east to west axis. A further pond is shown in the east wall and there is a building in the south-east corner in an area sub-divided into plots, which are not impacted upon by this work.



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Figure 1. Site and Trench Location (previous evaluation trenches also shown)

Several changes had taken place by AD 1847, when another estate map was produced (JMHS, 2007a: Fig. 13). A rectangular outbuilding had been constructed in the northern part of Area 4, and a circular central bed had also been created in this part of the garden, the remains of which were recorded in section in Trench 2.

By AD 1878 when the survey for the first edition Ordnance Survey map took place, further buildings had been constructed in the northern part of Area 4 alongside the north wall of the kitchen garden (JMHS, 2007a: Fig. 14). The lodge is shown for the first time in the south-eastern part of the kitchen garden. A regular grid of paths had been laid out across the kitchen garden sub-dividing a series of cultivated rectangular beds. This arrangement persisted largely unchanged when the estate and grounds were again planned in AD 1890 (JMHS, 2007a: Fig. 15). The only change mapped at this point had occurred in the kitchen garden, where another outbuilding had been constructed alongside the north wall of Area 4 (JMHS, 2007a: Fig. 15).

The 25 inch second edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed in AD 1898, which is the earliest of the large scale Ordnance Survey maps of Wotton in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, shows additional details (Figure 16). There were few changes to the layout apart from the removal of some of the paths in the kitchen garden (Area 4).

The latest of the detailed maps in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies is the revised edition of the Ordnance Survey map surveyed in AD 1919. A new outbuilding had been constructed in the north-eastern corner of the kitchen garden (Area 4) and the paths are no longer in evidence, but the layout appears otherwise to have been unchanged.

The archaeological fieldwork did not explicitly address the ponds, as these were *in situ* remains of potential significance and already flagged up in the Desk-Based Assessment (JMHS, 2007: 20; 23; 25-6). Nonetheless, the line of five ponds running north-south is also clearly indicative of a division within the walled garden. The difference in level between the west side of the archaeological trench, where the five ponds are located, and the east side where the raised bed is situated differs by approximately 0.15m at the north end and 0.9m at the south end of the proposed new pond.

The ponds themselves were only cursorily examined during the levelling of the garden, which was carried out to ascertain the relationship between the garden features east of the archaeological trenches and the ponds to the west. It was observed that the edges of the ponds where visible were rendered with concrete. This suggests that they had undergone some form of consolidation in the past 50 to 100 years, although as they are grassed over at present it was not possible to ascertain whether the original linings are *in situ* or whether the ponds have merely been upheld and maintained over the course of the 20th century.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- Establish whether original deposits associated with the ponds are present, including the edging wall, lining and fills.
- Also to establish the potential presence of a leat or similar water-channel between the ponds.
- Relate any identified deposits to the available map evidence.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to an oral request for supplementary investigation made by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) an addendum to the scheme of investigation was designed by John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) and agreed with BCAS and the applicants. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the mechanical excavation of two further trenches in Area 4. A trench was excavated into the second pond from the north wall of the walled garden, in addition to a second trench across the area between the second and third of the five ponds.

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

3.2 Methodology

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced. The trenches were backfilled after recording.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Field Results (Figure 2)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate cut features i.e. ditches; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. Trench numbers precede context numbers e.g. (1/4) is deposit 4 in Trench 1, and follow from the sequence started in the previous phase of the evaluation; viz Trenches 6 and 7. A general description of the feature fills is given. CBM refers to ceramic building material – brick and tile.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was located west of Trench 2, 38m south of the north wall of the walled garden on the east side of and into the second pond from the north. It was oriented northwest-southeast; and it measured c. 3.15m long, c. 1.60m wide and c. 1.3m deep. The top of the trench was between 77.34m OD (east) and 77.11m OD (west).

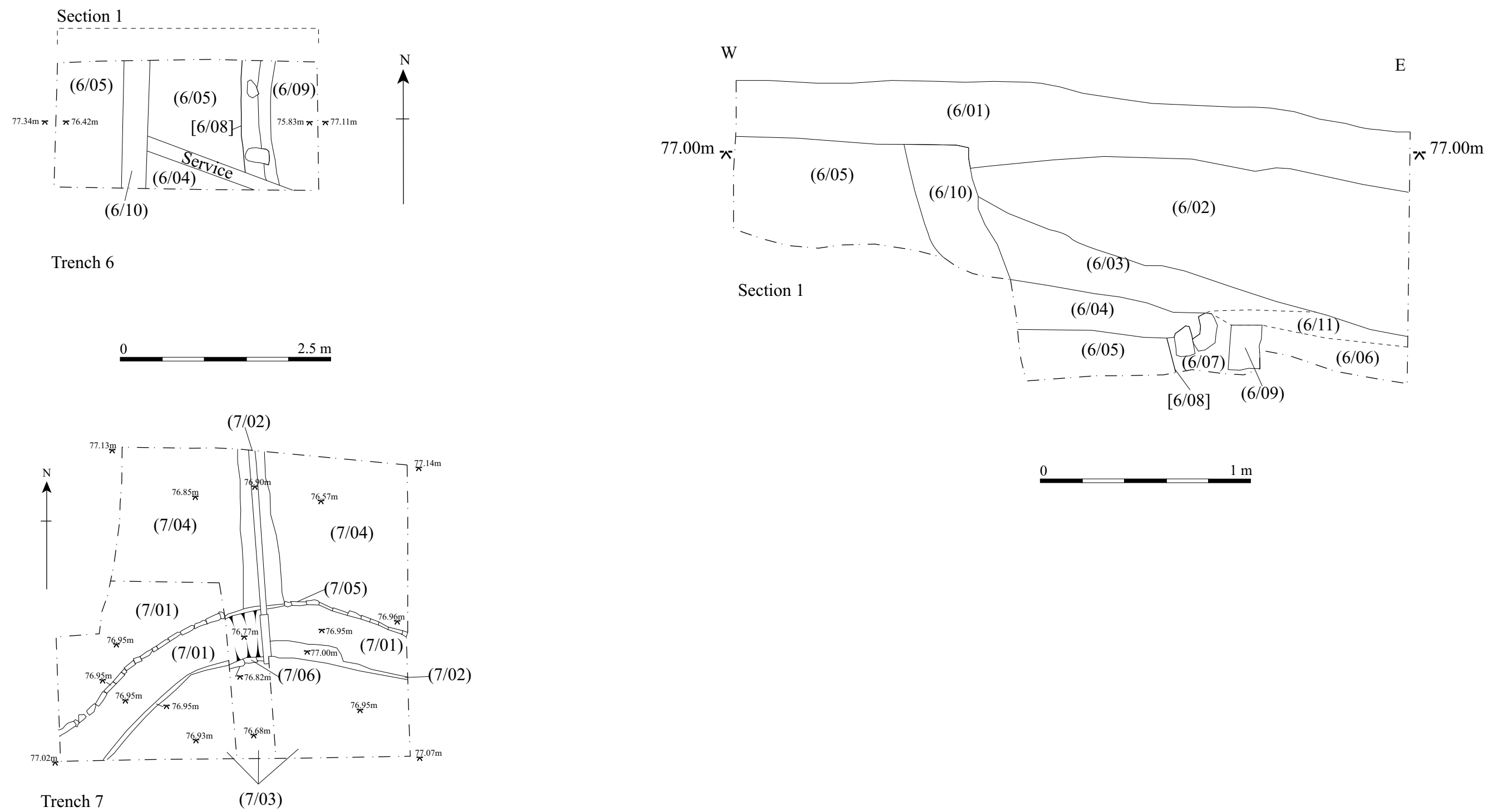


Figure 2. Trench 6 with section and trench 7

Deposits sampled were those associated with the mid 18th century landscaping and the late 18th century pond was observed; late 19th or early 20th century remains overlay the

later Georgian remains; these, in turn, were sealed with late 20th century rubbish and rubble. The trench was not excavated to the natural, nor to deposits preceding the landscaping of area of the former walled garden due to the watertable being encountered.

The trench was excavated to a landscaping deposit (6/05), which has previously been associated with Capability Brown (Heale & Williams, 2007:17), into which the ponds were excavated. The landscaping deposit was a mid orangey green clay silt with no apparent inclusions. This material can be identified with deposits such as (2/03), (2/04) and (2/05) as well as (3/04) and (3/05). It was not possible within the confines of such a small trench to assuredly identify the fine and small differences which were visible over the extended lengths of the earlier trenches (Heale & Williams, 2007:10); nonetheless, it is apparent that the 'Brownian' dumping was observed here, and that it was truncated by the later activity of the cutting of the pond.

It appeared during excavation that (6/05) had been terraced at the pond-side for a retaining wall, and that the layer (6/04), which sealed it, had been laid as a later dump to landscape the edge of the pond. The pond was excavated to the retaining wall (6/07)/(6/09), within the cut [6/08]. The retaining wall comprised a stone setting (6/07), which may have been decorative as well as functional, and a timber revetment (6/09).

The eastern side of the cut was exposed to reveal a straight-sided cut oriented north-south, which extended beyond the edges of excavation. The constraints of excavation meant that it was not possible to lift the timber revetment and examine the cut in detail. However, it was apparent that the cut [6/08] was more than 0.25m deep and cut into (6/05).

The fill was a bluish green clay silt, similar to (6/05) in composition, showing obvious traces of having been reworked. The fill (6/07) was packed in behind the timber revetment (6/09) with large stones also set into it on the landward side of the timber. These blocks of limestone were disturbed during machining, but it was observed that they were set square to the timber within the cut; the blocks measured c. 0.4x0.2x0.2m.

The timber measuring more than 1.6m long, 0.2m broad and 0.3m deep was laid along the edge of the pond. This timber was squared-off and lightly curved, and although it showed no evidence of toolmarks or jointing, it was believed to be a re-used roof-truss or other structural timber. Although nothing was found to point to how it was held in place, it can be envisaged that uprights at either end of the timber would have held it in place.

During the evaluation it was not possible to ascertain whether the stonework was an earlier phase than the timber revetment, or whether they were contemporary. Only further work would confirm their precise relationship.

The stone edging was overlain by a deposit of mid orangey green silty clay (6/04), c. 0.2m thick; it was less dense and 'silkier' than (6/05) which it sealed and which lay to the east. The layer (6/04) which sealed both (6/05) and the revetment [6/09] may have been deposited as landscaping or to consolidate the stone edging and revetment as the water-level of the pond rose. It is clear that the water-level rose, as the presence of peat (6/06) testifies. It was not clear whether the more 'silky' quality observed in (6/04) was due to immersion in water, or whether the clay had been drawn from a different source than that associated with the 'Brownian' landscaping.

The uppermost *in situ* archaeological deposit associated with the pond was peat (6/06). This deposit abutted the timber (6/09) and was a very dark brown or black spongy peat. It was more than 0.2m thick and extended toward the centre of the pond for at least 0.7m. No finds were recovered. The pond also evidences an unstable water level, which progressively rose.

The pond was reset toward the end of the 19th or beginning of the 20th century, as a concrete retaining wall (6/10) makes clear. At this time the pond – at least on the east side – may well have been expanded. This is evidenced by the yellow concrete and aggregate retaining wall (6/10), the cut for which truncated (6/05). This new retaining wall is most probably the same phase as the patches of concrete visible around all of the ponds. A precise date for this phase was not established, but it is likely towards the end of the latter half of the 19th century or early 20th century.

Where the peat abutted the revetment timber (6/09) both contexts were sealed by an interface of dark peaty material and grey brown silty clay (6/11). This deposit was poorly defined, but measured at least 0.1m thick and at least 1m east/west. It was sealed by the mid to dark grey brown silty clay (6/03), which also sealed the possibly late 19th, or more probably early 20th century retaining wall. This deposit was the final phase of the pond prior to back-filling (6/02) which occurred in the late 20th century. The dump (6/02) comprised thermalite brick, rubber-backed carpet, rusted ironwork and other building rubble, and measured at last 0.7m thick. It extended into the pond. All contexts were sealed with topsoil (6/01).

Trench 7

Trench 2 was rectangular and measured 3.4m long, between 4.2m wide (south side) and 3.4m (north side), and was 0.40m at its deepest; the top of the north end was between 77.13m and 77.14m OD, the south was at 77.07m and 77.02m OD. Landscaping associated with Capability Brown was cut by a stone-lined pond which was sealed with concrete and back-filled with top-soil. The concrete was edged with brick. The presence of a leat, which was the research aim for this trench, was not located.

The earliest layer observed was the 'Brownian' dumping (7/04), which was mid greenish grey clay silt. It was at least c. 0.3m thick, but was not excavated. The landscaping material (7/04) was cut by the concrete setting (7/02), which contained the overflow pipe and which also sealed the stone structure (7/06). This was a stone wall or lining to the middle pond. This was not examined in depth, but consisted of rough limestone blocks measuring not more than 0.2m long by not more than 0.1m deep. Insufficient of the structure's depth was exposed to characterise the wall

further; this was not considered a research priority, and it was only partially exposed to confirm that the middle pond was differently edged.

The grey, inclusion-poor concrete setting (7/02) comprised the bedding for the overflow pipe and a shallow V-shaped concrete-lined trench external to the stone structure (7/06). This measured 0.5m wide and was c. 0.2m deep. On the outside edge of this was a line of loose, unmortared brick and stony rubble (7/05). The deposit (7/03) back-filled the pond, and was largely the same as the topsoil, although more building rubble was apparent at c. 76.68m.

Both the concrete (7/02) and brick edging (7/05) were sealed by the topsoil (7/01).

4.2 Reliability of Results and Methods

The field evaluation was carried out in good conditions.

The trenches were initially laid out to measure 2m by 1.6m. During the evaluation it became apparent that in order to recover the data required to answer the research aims it was necessary to extend the area of investigation. To this end, Trench 6 was extended to the west; Trench 7 was extended both to the west as well as to the north and south.

The fill of the second pond was filled with rubble from within the past 30 years.

5 THE FINDS

5.1 Finds

No finds were recovered from any contexts revealed during the evaluation.

5.2 Environmental remains

No environmental samples were taken, as the remains observed did not warrant sampling.

6 DISCUSSION (Figure 6)

The previous phase of evaluation at Wotton House revealed extensive remains of the medieval and post-medieval landscape at Wotton Underwood. This subsequent work has confirmed that the ponds, which are first illustrated in 1789, do not appertain to the garden laid out in the 1750s by Launcelot ‘Capability’ Brown. This is, in itself, not unsurprising. Brown’s work tended to be carried out on a grander scale, and indeed the ponds seem to post-date his involvement at the house, which was between 1739-40 and 1757-60 (Pevsner, 1994:766). The backfilled oval ponds were first shown on an estate map from AD 1789 (JMHS, 2007a: Fig. 12). They are not illustrated on an earlier map, from between AD 1757 and 1760, when Brown was employed at Wotton House; currently, they are clearly visible as earthworks. Three of

these ponds lie along the western side of the proposed pond and part of a fourth lies on the west side of the proposed swimming pool.

The evaluation trenches aimed to investigate the structure of the second, from the north, of the five ponds and the relationship between the second and third ponds. It is clear following the evaluation that the level of the ponds of the 18th century was almost 1m below that which is visible today; indeed within the last thirty-odd years c. 0.3m of topsoil has been laid over the backfilling of the investigated pond. Visual examination of the fourth and fifth pond also showed pot-holing and subsidence of the topsoil, which is suggestive of similar conditions there. The relationship between the ponds was inconclusive prior to the late 19th century, but it is clear that the history of the ponds is complex and consists of at least two distinct periods of late 19th and/or early 20th century archaeology (one phase per pond), in addition to the earlier 18th and 19th century remains.

It was noticeable that the ponds show marked drops on their downslope sides. This was interpreted (Heale & Williams, 2007:17) as possible evidence for drainage from the most northerly to the south. Nonetheless, as can be seen on Figure 6 of that report, the drop from east to west is significant (*ibid*:18, Fig. 6). It has been suggested that the line of Trenches 2 and 3 follows the line of a path – or similarly flat surface – aligned on the entrance to the terrace; the 1898 Ordnance Survey appears to suggest so, though it is not easy to entirely rely on the map's accuracy. Certainly, a late feature, (3/10) a brick surface, was located just to the south of the gate into the terrace, although no evidence for a path was found during the evaluation. To the southwest of Trench 2, running east-west, is the earthwork of a raised path, which was not shown on any map, although it appeared to be in line with the path southeast of Trench 2 (Heale & Williams, 2007:17). The line of five ponds running north-south is also clearly indicative of a division within the walled garden.

The evaluation of the second pond demonstrated the *in situ* presence of a late 18th century pond. This comprised the timber and stone setting as well as an overlying deposit of silty clay, which formed the bank to the pond. The results of this investigation seemed to show that the historic pond may have been up to 2m narrower than that shown on the later OS maps of the late 19th and early 20th centuries; equally, the later retaining wall may not necessarily respect the emplacement of the 18th century revetment in its entirety. The 18th century revetment was composed of what strongly resembled a roof-truss – the limited width, 1.6m, of the evaluation trench does not permit an unequivocal identification of the timber as such. Although no significant tool-marking or jointing was observed within the constraints of the evaluation trench, the shape of the timber is strongly indicative of a re-used timber, such as a structural member of a roof or wall upright. Confirmation of its precise nature can only be assured by further more extensive investigation. The origin of such timbers may be local; whether this was from those properties shown on the AD 1649 estate map or elsewhere is impossible to say within the constraints of the evaluation.

The conclusion from the evaluation of the pond is that the pond was a sunken feature – c. 0.75m below the historic ground level. It is nonetheless apparent that silting caused the internal level of the pond to rise, and for it to be necessary to raise – and possible move – the edge of the pond. This is evidenced by the aggregate and yellow

concrete edging (6/10). Undated deposits overlay this late 19th or early 20th century feature, which in turn were sealed by building rubble and a deep layer of topsoil, which has raised the ground-level on the east side of the second pond.

Air photographic evidence from 2003 (Buckinghamshire County Council, 2003; vertical) showed a parchmark between the two ponds. This was felt to indicate a possible leat or similar structure linking the ponds; such water-channels linking ponds are not unusual. The evaluation failed to uncover evidence for a water channel; the parchmark was revealed to be a concrete setting for an iron overflow pipe. The concrete setting, however, may well be indicative of the presence of a former leat; the extreme depth and breadth of concrete around the iron pipe was necessitated by the possibility of subsidence of a pre-existing water-channel, although no evidence was recovered for such. At the south end of the overflow pipe, and sealed by the concrete (7/02) were blocks of stone indicative of an earlier edging to the pond, than the grey concrete edging currently. This demonstrated that the ponds were reset using different materials (yellow concrete and aggregate, in Trench 6, as well as a harder and grey, inclusion-poor concrete, in Trench 7): such a difference can only be indicative of temporal difference, even if relatively close in time. The evaluation Trench 7 did not extend into the second pond; consequently, the chronological relationship between the various late 19th and 20th century phases was not investigated; which, in any case, fell beyond the explicit remit of the evaluation.

Nonetheless, the grey concrete (7/02) appeared to be edged with half-bats and stretchers, as well as pieces of limestone on the western side, which were unmortared. It is interesting to note that Trench 3 revealed a brick footing or setting of similar brick (3/10). However, the precise nature of such features is unclear, and without opening up the full extent to reveal the concrete and subsequently breaking out the underlying concrete, a detailed description of the structures, and their function, is not possible. It might be envisaged that these are part of a late Victorian, Edwardian or indeed Georgian (1930s) garden pond, which reprises the form of an earlier late 18th century pond; the topsoil-like material within the shallow V-shaped area perhaps providing bedding for pond-side plants.

Further work would confirm such a hypothesis, as well as whether – once the upper and later infilling had been removed – a putative leat, for which the iron overflow pipe provides circumstantial evidence, existed c. 0.75m below the current ground level.

As only the very tops of some of the ponds are visible, and that c. 2m will be removed from within the proposal area (in addition, c. 0.75m landscaping will be moved from the east side and c. 0.1m from the west of the proposed pond), it is likely that the impact will be significant. The results from both this phase of evaluation and the previous demonstrate that the remains form a valuable contribution to late 18th and early 19th century garden archaeology.

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APPENDIX 1

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Interpretation
Trench 6							
6/01	Layer	Soft mid brown clay loam 2% Small Pebble	0.2-0.4m	1.6m	3.2m	-	Modern
6/02	Layer	Brick, asbestos, thermalite block, rusting ironwork	>0.7m	1.6m	>2.2m	-	Modern backfilling of pond
6/03	Layer	Mid-dark grey brown silty clay. 20% CBM, 10% Charcoal, 10% Gravel	0.25m	1.6m	c. 1.7m	-	Post late 19 th C back-filling of pond
6/04	Layer	Mid orangey green clay silt	c. 0.2m	1.6m	>0.8m	-	Terracing of pond bank associated with [6/8]
6/05	Layer	Mid orangey green clay silt; more dense and less 'silky' than (6/04)	>0.25m	1.6m	>2.05m	-	Dumping associated with Brown levelling up of Kitchen Garden area
6/06	Fill	Dark brown almost black silty clay moist peat	>0.2m	1.6m	>0.9m	-	Natural fill, accumulated peat within pond
6/07	Fill	mid orangey green (with bluish tone when cleaned), clay silt with large limestone blocks c.0.4x0.2x0.2m against (6/09)	>0.2m	0.3m	>1.60	-	Fill of revetment cut; fill of [6/08] and also filled with (6/0)
6/08	Cut	Linear; sharp break of slope at top straight sides at 80-90°; N/S oriented	>0.2m	0.3m	>1.60	-	Cut for revetment into 'Brownian' landscaping deposits; filled with retaining timber (6/09) and rubble
6/09	Timber	Strut, re-used as revetting; set in cut [6/08]; oriented N/S; no tool marks visible on revealed faces; no bark; no jointing, or fixings	0.2m	0.18m	>0.16m	-	Roof-truss? or similar reused as revetment to pond
6/10	Wall	Yellow grey concrete with significant proportion of mid to large aggregate	0.65m	0.3m	1.6m	-	Pond edging; early 20 th C?
6/11	Layer	Dark grey brown silty clay mixed with peaty material	0.15m	>0.95m	1.6m	-	Interface material between (6/03) and (6/06); v. poorly defined

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Interpretation
Trench 7							
7/01	Layer	Soft mid brown clay loam 2% Small Pebble	0.2-0.4m	3.4m	4.2m	-	Modern Layer
7/02	Layer	Overflow pipe and concrete setting; also concrete laid over brickwork and stonework	>0.3m	0.3m (N); 0.45m (S)*	>2.4m	-	Modern overflow pipe set in concrete, which also seals earlier structures
7/03	Layer	Mid brown clay loam; 5% CBM; charcoal, gravel	0.3m	1.2m	3.6m	-	Backfill of pond – no significant quantities of rubble visible
7/04	Layer	Mid Greenish Grey Clay. 5% Charcoal, 3% Chalk, 1% CBM	>0.2m	>1.6m	>3.40	-	‘Brownian’ landscaping
7/05	Wall	Unmortared brick: stretchers and half-bats; encased in (7/02); rubblely stone				-	Brick edging to pond; encased in (7/02); apparently 19 th C; brick strongly reminiscent of structure in Tr 3
7/06	Wall	Unworked stone.				-	Stone retaining wall to middle pond