

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**  
**ON LAND AT ST PETER'S CHURCH**  
**PETER ST, MARLOW**  
**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**SU 8524 8633**

*On behalf of*

*Bond Davidson*

**SEPTEMBER 2007**

<b>REPORT FOR</b>	CM Haines Bond Davidson James House Dedmere Road Marlow Bucks SL7 1FJ
<b>PREPARED BY</b>	Gwilym Williams
<b>FIELDWORK</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> August 2007
<b>REPORT ISSUED</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2007
<b>ENQUIRES TO</b>	<i>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></i>
<b>JMHS PROJECT NO.</b>	1802
<b>SITE CODE</b>	MWPS07
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> <b>Accession Number</b>	Buckinghamshire Museums Applied for

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b><i>SUMMARY</i></b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
<b>2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 STRATEGY</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Research Design	5
3.2 Methodology	5
<b>4 RESULTS</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1 Field Results	5
4.2 Reliability of results and methodologies	7
<b>5 FINDS</b>	<b>8</b>
5.1 Pottery	8
5.2 Environmental Remains	8
<b>6 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY</b>	<b>10</b>
 <b>FIGURES</b>	
<b>Figure 1</b> Site location	2
<b>Figure 2</b> Trench plan and sections	6

## **SUMMARY**

*An evaluation was carried out by John Moore Heritage Services on behalf of St Peter's Church, Marlow as part of an application for redevelopment on the site. The archaeological remains observed were limited to 19th century gravel pits and made-up land.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The site is located in the centre of the town of Marlow, in the same parish, lying between St Peter Street and Mill Road at NGR SU 8524 8633, 150m north of the River Thames. The geology is Shepperton Gravel overlying an Upper Cretaceous deposit of New Pit Chalk Formation.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Wycombe District Council granted planning permission (06/6442) for the removal of an existing terraced building and the erection of single storey rear and single storey side extensions. Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site a condition was attached to the permission requiring the carrying out of an archaeological evaluation prior to groundworks associated with the new construction. Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) prepared a Brief for such work according to PPG16. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* submitted by John Moore Heritage Services detailed how the requirements of the *Brief* would be met.

### **1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

Marlow, meaning 'pool left-over' – apparently the land left after the draining of a pool from OE 'mere' and 'laf' – is first documented in 1015, although there is a small quantity of stray finds from the Saxon period, dredged from the Thames (BCAS). There are also traces of Roman activity in and around the town, with the West Street and Little Marlow Road being a minor Roman road (Brown & Hunt, 1994: 1). Too little work has been done to confirm or refute this supposition. Little evidence for prehistoric activity has been recovered although a wooden boat was dredged from the Thames at Bourne End in 1871 (Brown & Hunt, 1994: 1).

In Domesday the town is assessed for 107 taxable individuals and 35 hides, suggesting that during the late Saxon period the town was reasonably prosperous, when the manor was held by Earl Algar. Following the Conquest, the manor was held subsequently by Queen Maud, or Matilda, who left it to her son Henry. By 1183 burgage rights were obtained by grant as was the right to hold a market – although the earliest extant charter, in the Hundred Rolls, dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Brown & Hunt, 1994: 12). The rolls from 1278-9 names almost two hundred burgesses, indicating significant growth since the Saxon period. As early as 1299 (Sheahan, 1862: 893) and certainly between 1301 and 1307, the town returned two members to



Parliament (VCH, 1925). Along the line of Spittal Street, a hospital – or, more accurately an inn – dedicated to St Thomas existed during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Little is known of this foundation.

The Thames would already appear to have been bridged in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (CAS 0117900000; NGR SU 85210 86130). A mention exists in 1227 of a bridge warden (VCH, 1925) and repairs to the bridge in 1294 (Brown & Hunt, 1994: 10). The location of the medieval bridge was downstream of the current bridge, situated at the end of the present St Peter Street, formerly Duck Lane (VCH: 65). The bridge was possibly built by the Templars at Bisham (Sheahan, 1862: 894), and Leland refers to it in his itinerary of 1535, but by the mid-1640s it had been destroyed by the Parliamentarian Major-General Brown whose troops were billeted in All Saints, by the present bridge. They are believed to have raised earthworks round the church as defences (CAS 0466910000; NGR SU 85130 86170). The re-building of the bridge is not well-recorded, but it remained at the end of St Peter Street. In 1789 a subscription was raised to replace this structure. This new bridge was rebuilt in 1831-32, at which point the bridge was removed to its present location (VCH: 65).

St Peter Street (Duck Lane) and the parallel street, Mill Lane (now Mill Road) form a block which appear on the earliest maps of Jeffrey (1770) and Bryant (1825) at the point where the medieval bridge came to the Buckinghamshire bank. The Ordnance Survey of 1831 shows that St Peter Street was built up along most of its length opening up to a large area just to the south of Marlow Place (CAS 1304400000; NGR SU 85096 86395) – built 1720, where Station Street now runs east-west. This would, along with the High Street, appear to be within the core of the medieval town. To the southwest of the site, east of All Saints, as late as 1878 stood a 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century barn (CAS 0118000000; NGR SU 85190 86170). Known as the Conventual Barn of Bisham Abbey, it had been used as a prison for French Napoleonic prisoners, as well as a coal depot just prior to it being demolished. The timbers were reused in the new church at Lane End (VCH, 1925).

The church of All Saints, Marlow (CAS 0466900000; NGR SU 85130 86170) is hard by the bridge as one enters the town from the Berkshire side. As noted above this is only since the first third of the nineteenth century, when the bridge was moved upstream. The church has been the subject of much rebuilding since 1832, although its foundation may well date to the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> centuries (Brown & Hunt, 1994: 12). To the north of the church, where the war memorial is now located on a traffic island, is the original location of the stocks (CAS 0550300000) and prison (CAS 0550310000) both at NGR SU 85090 86230. Immediately to the east stands the George & Dragon Hotel (CAS 1302901000; NGR SU 85100 86276), a late 18<sup>th</sup> century structure.

To the northeast of All Saints, and adjacent to St Peter's Church on St Peter Street, is the complex of buildings comprising The Deanery (0115301000; NGR SU 85160 86362) and The Old Parsonage (0115300000; NGR SU 85149 86367). These were originally one, and The Old Parsonage is a largely 18<sup>th</sup> century refitting of a 14<sup>th</sup> century two-storied hall, the crown post roof of which is still intact; The Deanery is built onto the structure of the The Old Parsonage. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century a third storey, windows, mouldings and stairs were added to the original structure.

Subsequently it was split into two homes, The Deanery taking its name from the Deane family who formerly owned it. Original stonework – some of which is *in situ* – is present in the 14<sup>th</sup> century hall.

There are several other buildings on St Peter Street dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; No 7: (CAS 1304100000; NGR SU 85175 86320); Nos 9 & 11: (CAS 1304101000; NGR SU 85176 86312); Nos 13 & 15: (CAS 1304102000; NGR SU 85178 86306); No 17: (CAS 1304103000; NGR SU 85179 86301); The Minnows: (CAS 1304104000; NGR SU 85208 86242); Marlow Ferry: (CAS 1304105000; NGR SU 85210 86236); The Old Weir House (CAS 1304106000; NGR SU 85212 86232); The Two Brewers (CAS 1304107000; NGR SU 85215 86226); The Bothy: (CAS 1304108000; NGR SU 85221 86181); Old Bridge House; (CAS 1304203000; NGR SU 85177 86191); The Dial House: (CAS 1304200000; NGR SU 85160 86278). At least three are known to be earlier: No 17, Marlow Ferry and The Old Weir House.

The Catholic church of St Peter (CAS 0559500000; NGR SU 85207 86356) is a grade II listed building; it was commissioned by CR Scott Murray in 1845 and was completed in 1846. The church is a late work by Pugin, with some of the details having been completed by his son EW Pugin, who also carried out the design for the Sisters of Charity school and the Master's House (CAS 0559503000; NGR SU 85216 86326). Further elements of the complex are also on the building schedule: the graveyard (CAS 0559501000; NGR SU 85187 86346); the lych gate (CAS 0559502000; SU 85164 86332) and the church hall (CAS 0559504000; NGR SU 85132 86326). The site is located east of the Master's House and south of the church. South of the Pugin buildings was a convent (VCH, 1969: 66) of the Sisters of Charity who ran the school (Sheahan, 1862:896) – although there is no record of what became of the building, which does not feature on the county database of historic or archaeological features. It is visible on the 1882 Ordnance Survey map.

The Tithe Apportionment Map of 1843 and the Enclosures Award of 1855 show that St Peter Street was moderately built up, with some buildings in the vicinity of the proposed development site. No archaeological work has been undertaken in the environs of the proposal area.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The investigation was detailed to potentially comprise two phases. In the event, it became clear that a second phase of more detailed archaeological work would not need to be undertaken. The Stage 1 works consisted of a trial trench, the aims of which 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 important archaeological remains and associated palaeo-environmental deposits within the area of study.

Particular objectives were:

- to establish whether there is evidence for occupation, property boundaries, domestic, commercial or industrial activities associate with the Saxon, medieval and post-medieval town

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In response to a *Brief* issued by BCAS a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with BCAS. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the excavation of a single trench excavated parallel to the existing terrapin building (Fig. 1).

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in a *Written Scheme of Investigation* agreed with BCAS. 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). The Archaeological Officer David Radford made a site-visit to monitor the works.

#### **3.2 Methodology**

A trench 1.6m wide and 15m long was excavated within the footprint of the proposed new-build. The trench was excavated by a 3-ton mini-digger with a ditching bucket.

The trench was excavated to the top of the natural, through nineteenth century made-ground and quarry-fill. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand, where necessary, prior to limited hand excavation of identified 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 sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced.

### **4 RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Field Results**

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in square brackets - [ ] - indicate features i.e. cuts; while numbers in parentheses - ( ) - show feature fills or deposits of material. Land drains and some features were assigned a joint cut and fill number, which is indicated with square brackets. All measurements are given in metres. A general description of the feature fills is given.



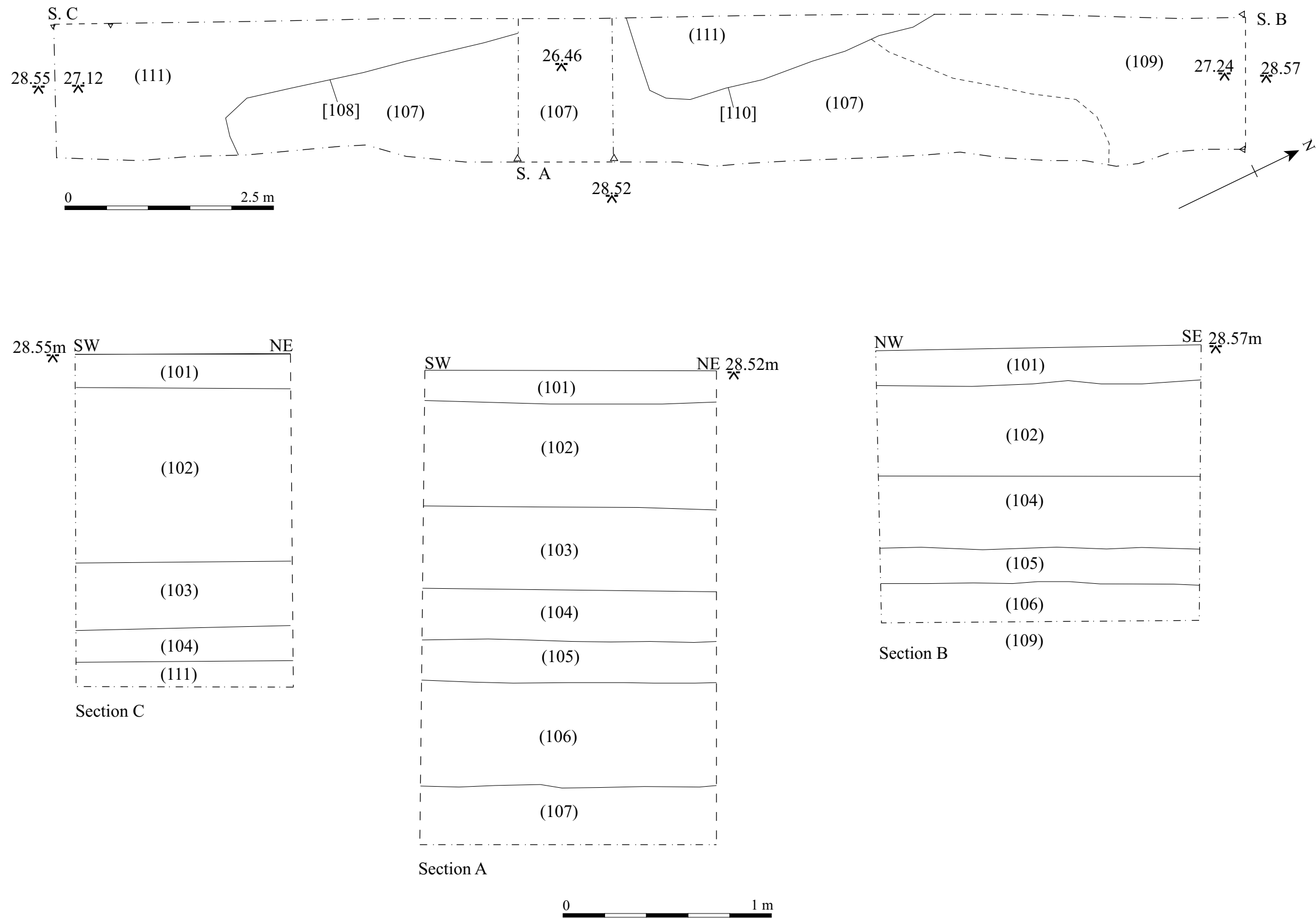


Figure 2. Trench and sections

The earliest deposit observed was the natural, (111). The Shepperton Gravels were present in the south end and central part of the trench; to the north they were truncated by quarrying.

The natural (111) was cut by a large feature, numbered [108] and [110]. This west edge of this feature was aligned north by northwest/south by southeast, and extended beyond the east, west and north edges of the trench. It had straight edges on the west side with an east-west dogleg into the centre of the trench at about 7m from the south.

Several deposits were present within the cut [110]. The earliest of these fills was a stiff dark greyish brown clay silt, (109), containing charcoal and CBM flecking, which was located at the north end of the trench. This was overlain by a sticky bluish grey clay (107) with lenses of organic debris; at the north end of the trench it became more gravelly. The date range for this deposit was late 17<sup>th</sup> century to 18<sup>th</sup> century. The layer (107) was sealed by a stiff pale greyish brown clay silt (106) with CBM flecking and charcoal, which thinned to the north. In the centre of the trench the base of the deposit measured 26.52m OD; at the north end of the trench it measured 27.24m OD – the top of the deposit (109).

A layer (105) of soft greyish brown clay silt – similar to (106) – overlay (106), which sealed the gravel quarry-pit. The base of this deposit fell from 27.47m OD at the north end of the trench to 27.04m OD in the centre. Pottery from this deposit was dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Sealing the gravel-pit was a dump (104) of firm grey brown silty clay, with 5% mixed gravels and CBM flecking, which sloped from the north to the south, measuring 27.63m OD to the north and 27.19m OD to the south. Pottery from this layer was dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A levelling layer (103) of firm orangey brown silty clay with rolled gravel and chalk flecking sealed (104) extending south c. 11m from the south end of the trench. In the centre of the trench the base of the deposit was at 27.48m OD falling to 27.35m OD at the south end.

Sealing all deposits was a black very humic clay loam (102) with irregular bands of mortar, varying in thickness between 0.04m and 0.2m. The bottom of this deposit fell from 28.01m OD at the north to 27.55m OD at the south. Hardcore and tarmac (101) sealed the trench.

## **4.2 Reliability of results and methodologies**

The evaluation was carried out in optimal conditions. The significant depth of unstable deposits precluded further investigation of the deposits observed, or any which underlay them. Nonetheless, the results can be assessed as representative of the buried archaeology, in this immediate area, at the site.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 13 sherds with a total weight of 527g. It was all post-medieval or modern. 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:

PM8: *Red Earthenware* 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century. 7 sherds, 414g.  
PM25: *White Earthenware*. Late 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century. 5 sherds, 107g.  
PM56: *Manganese Glazed Ware*. Late 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century. 1 sherd, 6g.

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*.

	PM8		PM56		PM25		
Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
104					2	40	19thC
105					3	67	19thC
106	1	63					17thC
107	6	351	1	6			L17thC
Total	7	414	1	6	5	107	

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

As the layer (106) overlies (107), which dated from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century or later, then (106) can be dated to the late 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century also.

### 5.2 Environmental Results

Due to the limited potential value of environmental sampling of the nineteenth century quarry fill or made-up ground, no environmental samples were taken.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation at St Peter's Church failed to reveal any archaeological traces of Saxon or medieval activity. This can in part be attributed to the extensive late 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century quarrying observed during the evaluation.

The trench was located between Peter Street (formerly Duck Lane) and Mill Road (formerly Mill Lane), which would place it at the rear of any putative medieval properties, which may have fronted onto these medieval streets. Consequently, the presence of medieval or significant post-medieval remains may well have already been low; the extensive quarrying, and the dumps of later 19<sup>th</sup> century material –

presumably associated with the construction of the church – would have removed any possible traces of earlier activity.

The gravel-pit appears to have extended from west to east, tipping gently to the south – the top of (106), which contained 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery, fell c. 0.4m from north to the centre of the trench; the base fell c. 0.7m. The base of the 19<sup>th</sup> century layers (104) and (105) also fell over 0.4m from north to south. This may well indicate that the gravel-pit was visible as a hollow at the time of the construction of St. Peter's, or the convent which formerly existed just to the south of the evaluation, and was consequently used as a convenient place to dispose of the building rubbish, seen within these upper fills of the trench.

Further levelling up of the ground-surface was observed – layer (103) – as well as probable garden soils (102), sealed by recent hardcore and tarmac.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brown R & Hunt J 1994 Marlow A Pictorial History Phillimore Chichester
- English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*
- Gurney D et al. 2003 Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14
- Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*
- Mynard, DC & Zeepvat RJ 1992 *Great Linford* Bucks Archaeol Soc Monog Ser 3
- Pevsner, N & Williamson E 1994 *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire* Penguin London (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)
- Sheahan JJ 1862 *History of Buckinghamshire* Longman London
- VCH 1969 *A History of the County of Buckingham* London
- Zeepvat, RJ 1994 *Caldecotte, Milton Keynes. Excavation and Fieldwork 1966-91* Bucks Archaeol Soc Monog Ser 4
- Roberts JS & King NA

**APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Length (m)</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
100	unstrat					Unstratified finds
101	Layer	Tarmac & hardcore	c.0.16m	>1.6m	>15m	Tarmac
102	Layer	Soft, black peaty clay loam with bands of mortar through it	≤0.84 – 0.34m (S/N)			Organic dump with gravel
103	Layer	Firm mid orange brown silty clay c. 1-3% mixed river-rolled gravels 15-35mm chalk-flecking	0.15-0.4m (S/N)			Levelling layer
104	Layer	Firm grey brown silty clay >5% mixed gravels frequent CBM flecking	0.2-0.28m (S/N)			Dump – probably fill of quarry pit, edges of which beyond excavation
105	Layer	Soft pale greyish brown clay silt 1% mixed gravel occ. CBM flecking	0.16-0.2m (S/N)			Dump – probably fill of quarry pit, edges of which beyond excavation
106	Fill	Stiff pale greyish brown clay silt 1-3% mixed gravel 1% charcoal CBM flecking	0.38-0.2m (S/N)			Dump – probably fill of quarry pit, edges of which beyond excavation
107	Fill	Sticky blue grey clay frequent peaty lensing	>0.15m			Fill of quarry pit
108	Cut	Squared sharpish corner, S end		>1.8	4.9m	Gravel quarry pit – same as [110]
109	Fill	Stiff dark greyish brown clay silt 1-3% mixed gravel charcoal CBM flecking				Fill of [110]
110	Cut	Unk. Proably square		>2m	>7m	Gravel quarry
111	Layer	Stiff brownish orange silty clay gravel	unk			Natural