



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

CASTLE HOUSE, 5 NORTH STREET,

CASTLETHORPE, MILTON KEYNES

MK19 7EW

NGR: SP 7977 4451

HER EVENT NUMBER: EMK1441

FEBRUARY 2021

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation at Castle House, North Street, Castlethorpe MK19 7EW. The archaeological excavations identified a stone wall orientated NNE to SSW towards the westerly end of the evaluation trench. The wall was at right angles to the current building and may relate to the original 16th century structure or to a later phase, as part of the current extant building is recorded as being occupied in the 18th century. The wall was abutted by a made ground deposit and overlain by stone demolition deposits. The demolition deposits were concentrated in the area of the wall. The deposits were overlain by more made ground which was cut by a post-medieval/modern ditch backfilled with garden soil. The later demolition deposits were dated no earlier than the post-medieval period and overlying made ground no earlier the 18th century. Earlier demolition deposits and made ground were broadly dated by the presence of ceramic tile from medieval to post-medieval periods but were probably post medieval in date. The presence of a fragment of glazed roof tile of Potterspury type would suggest that a building of higher than normal status stood on or near to the site in the medieval period.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

Castle House is located on the northern side of North Street, Castlethorpe at approximately 84m AOD (NGR SP 7977 4451). The underlying geology is Blisworth Limestone Formation, with superficial deposits of Oadby Member Diamicton, a glacial till deposit. The site currently forms part of the garden of Castle House.

1.2 Planning Background

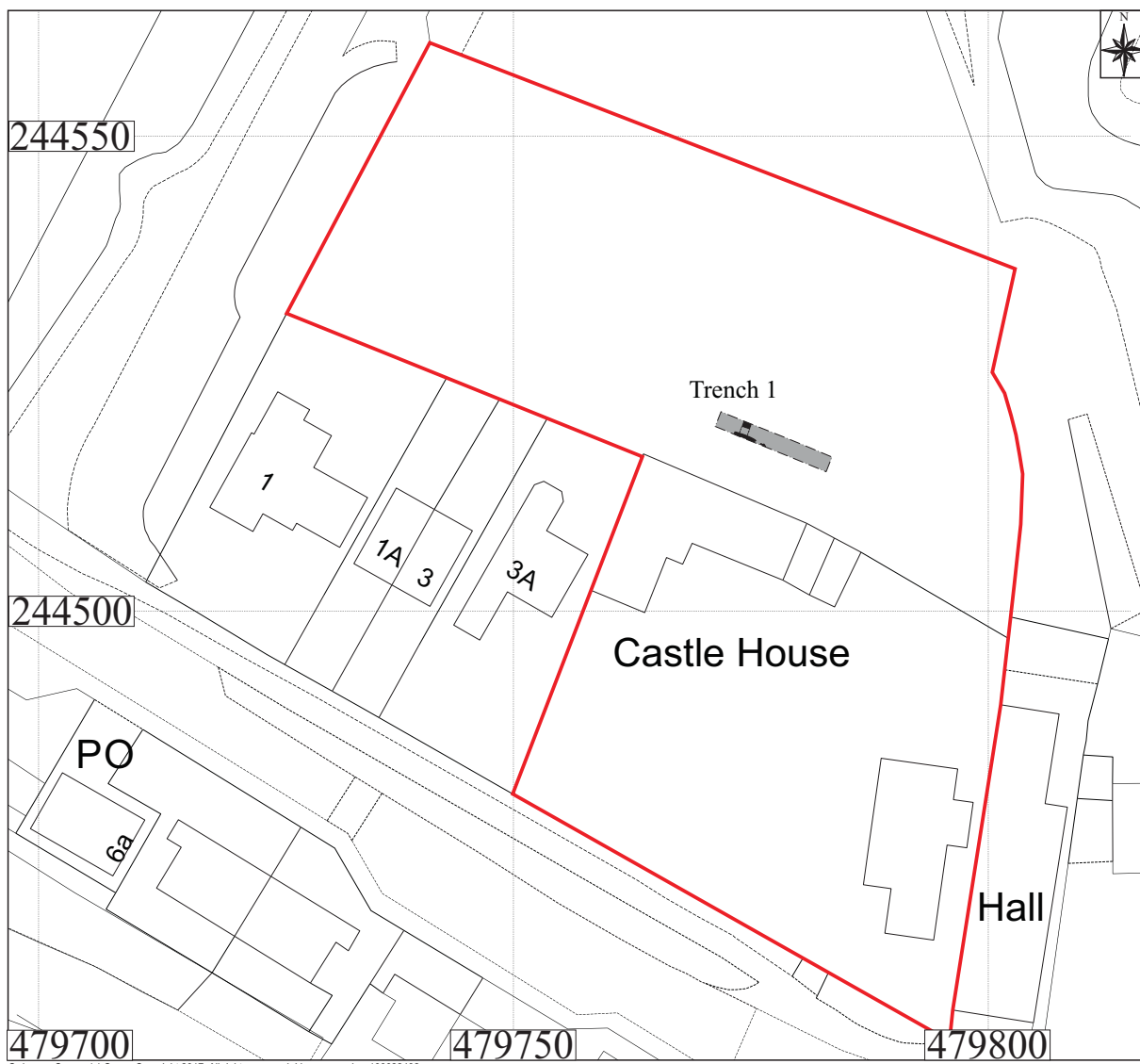
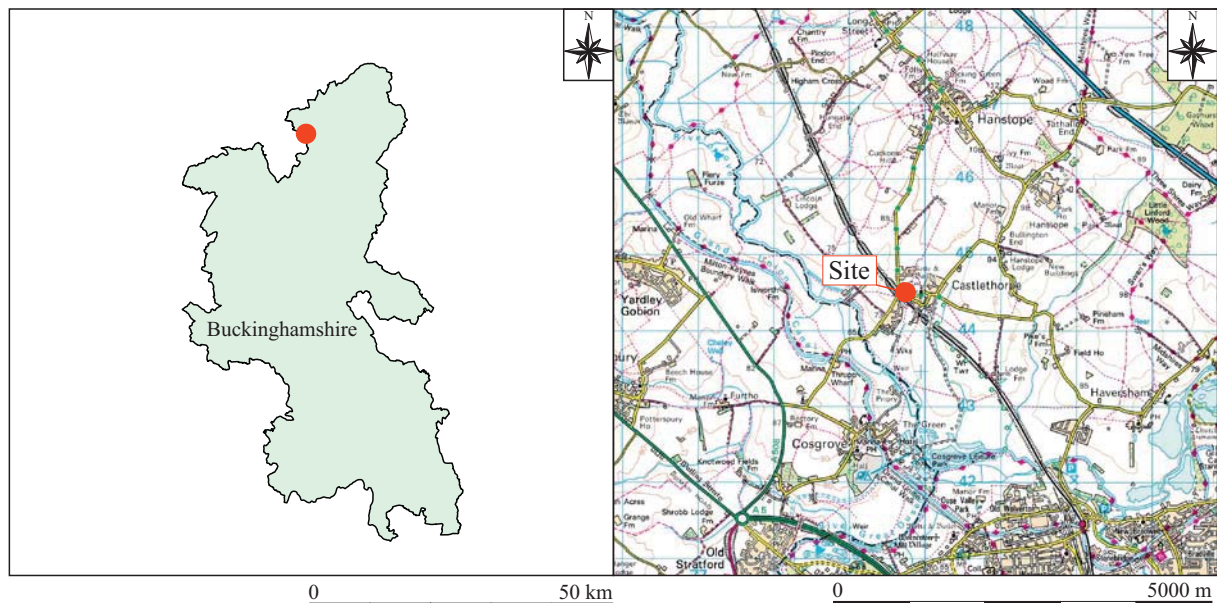
A planning application is proposed for the construction of a glazed traditional style orangery to the rear of Castle House, 5 North Street, Castlethorpe. Due to the archaeological potential of the site the Senior Archaeological Officer for Milton Keynes has stipulated that a trial trench evaluation should be undertaken prior to submission of the application.

1.3 Archaeological Background

A search of the Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record (MMK, EMK) and Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) was undertaken with a radius of 250m from the site; the resulting information is listed below in chronological order, forming the archaeological context of the proposal site.

The first evidence for human activity within the area of the site dates to the Romano-British period. Archaeological investigations 180m south of the site recorded a pit containing late Iron Age or Roman pottery (EMK166: SP 79713 44327). Sherds of Romano-British pottery have been found in the area of Castlethorpe, though the exact location is uncertain (MMK334: SP 79600 44500).

The site is located in the core of the medieval settlement of Castlethorpe, immediately south west of Castlethorpe Castle (MMK653: centred SP 79887 44530). The castle was initially constructed as a motte and bailey though there is evidence for later



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Key Site boundary Evaluation trench
 Archaeological features

Figure 1: Site location

remodelling, perhaps undertaken after 1292 when a licence to crenellate was granted. The castle, a scheduled monument, survives as a series of earthworks that cover an area of approximately 10 hectares. The remains of a possible stone curtain wall were recorded during a watching brief at the north-east corner of the inner bailey (MMK5534: SP 79944 44545), while investigations elsewhere have recorded evidence of the castle motte (EMK492) and the fire damaged foundations of a medieval stone building (EMK493).

Castle House itself is a historic structure, dating to the 16th century (MMK80: SP 79776 44507). The current building, grade II listed, is partly formed from the cross wing of Castlethorpe manor house, occupied in 1703 by Sir Peter Tyrell and later partly demolished and converted into a farm house. A large stone trough, perhaps associated with the manorial fish ponds located approximately 150m south west of the site, is situated adjacent to the building (MMK5398: SP 79767 44506).

Approximately 50m west of the motte and bailey castle is a linear earthwork orientated north east – south west that runs for a total length of 220m; this has been interpreted as an outer line of defence. At the southern end of the bank there is a stone revetment (MMK5402: SP 79737 44517) which may have been a later reworking of the bank in order to form a terrace associated with the garden of Castlethorpe manor.

A series of rectangular earthworks, possibly fish ponds associated with the castle, are located 150m south west of the site (MMK658: SP 79699 44357). Archaeological investigation indicates that they are of at least two phases (EMK166); these have been truncated on their northern side by construction of the railway.

The church of Saints Simon and Jude, located 130m east of the site, has its origins in the early medieval period though the majority of the fabric dates to the 12th, 14th and 15th centuries (MMK3357: SP 79910 44500).

Finds dating to the medieval period include pottery, found immediately east of the site (PAS 227747: SP 798 445); sherds of medieval pottery dating to the 13th century, found in the area of the castle mound (MMK654: SP 79850 44580) and a pit containing medieval pottery and animal bone, found during excavation of a sewer trench on the eastern side of the castle, approximately 200m east of the site (MMK3859: SP 79980 44480).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.
- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site and the depth of soil deposits that overlie these remains.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.

- To determine the degree of complexity of any horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.

In Particular

- To determine whether the site contains medieval and post-medieval remains associated with the former configuration of Castle House.
- To inform the need for, and scope of, further phases of work to mitigate the impact of the development under consideration.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Senior Archaeological Officer for Milton Keynes.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020).

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of a trench 12.5m in length and 1.65m wide (Fig. 2) within the footprint of the proposed new build.

Excavation was taken down to the top of “natural” deposits or any higher archaeological horizon by an 8t mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket under archaeological supervision.

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 also produced.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

All features were assigned with individual context number. Context numbers with no brackets indicate feature cuts, numbers in the round brackets () show feature fills or deposits of material and numbers in bold indicate any form of masonry.

The lowest deposit was mid reddish/orange brown clay with moderate to frequent angular stone inclusions (Fig. 2, Section 1.01, 1.02, Plan 1.01; Plate 1). The deposit was identified as a natural geological deposit (1/06). The deposit was only identified in the easterly half of the evaluation trench and in a small test pit in the westerly part of the trench. This was due to presence of potentially important overlying archaeological deposits in the west of the excavation which prevented machine excavation down to the natural in the west of the trench.

Overlying the natural was a 0.35m thick deposit of very firm, mid-reddish brown clay with occasional grey patches and with frequent to dominant angular limestone fragments and moderate inclusions of charcoal (1/05) (Fig. 2, Section 1.01). The lower horizon of the deposit displayed a diffuse transition with the underlying geology, suggesting that the deposit contained a high proportion of re-deposited geological material that was only slightly modified. The deposit may have been the same as one identified towards the westerly end of the trench, which was 0.2m thick, of a similar colour and consistency and contained moderate to frequent angular and platy limestone inclusions and moderate charcoal flecks (1/12) (Fig. 2, Section, 1.02; Plate 2).



Plate 1. Trench 1.

No dating evidence was recovered from deposit (1/12) but the possibly related deposit (1/05) contained ceramic roof tile broadly dated from the medieval to the post-medieval period. It was uncertain if deposit (1/12) had been truncated by the foundation cut 1/10 for Wall **1/09**, or if it was a later deposit made up against the wall **1/09**. However, the latter was considered more likely as no clear foundation cut through (1/12) was identified and so deposits (1/05) and (1/12) are considered to postdate construction of Wall **1/09**.

Wall **1/09** was orientated SSE to NNW; it was greater than 1.6m in length and measured 0.9m wide (Fig. 2, Section 1.02, Plan 1.01; Plate 2). The surviving height of the wall foundation was between 0.26m and 0.37m. The wall was constructed of large squared stones on the outer faces, at the base of the foundations, with more roughly cut angular pieces for the higher surviving courses. The higher courses were set with the flat face flush with the face of the wall. The core of the wall featured more roughly squared angular pieces. The easterly face of the wall featured a large flat slab set on its narrow edge with the large face of the slab set against the wall face.

Overlying the wall and immediately to the edges of the wall was a deposit of limestone rubble (1/04) (Fig. 2, Section 1.02, Plan 1.01; Plates 2 and 3). The rubble was well cemented in a deposit of mid to light grey sandy clay loam, which was around 0.35m thick. The deposit contained ceramic roof tile that was broadly dated from the medieval to the post-medieval period.



Plate 2. Wall 1/09. NNE view.



Plate 3. Demolition rubble 1/04 overlying Wall 1/09. North-East view

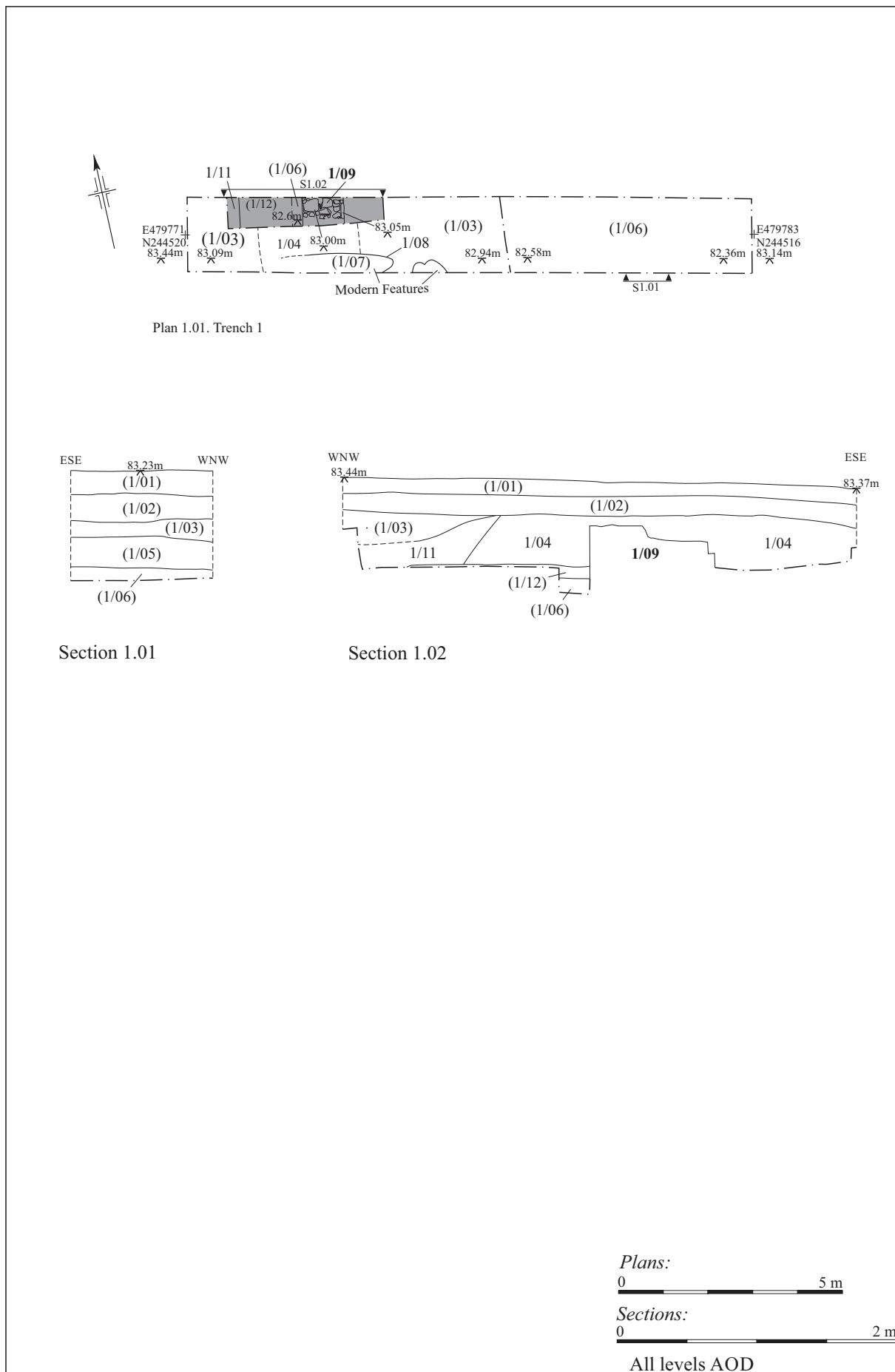


Figure 2: Plan and Sections

Overlying this deposit was a further deposit of rubble (1/11) (Fig. 2, Section 1.02, Plan 1.01). The deposit had a looser compaction than (1/04) and consisted of a mid-grey sandy loam with frequent limestone rubble which was concentrated more towards the east of the deposit. The presence of windowpane glass dated this deposit as no earlier than the post-medieval period. However, the presence of a fragment of medieval glazed roof tile recovered from deposit (1/11) indicated that a medieval building had stood on or near to the site. Deposit (1/11) was 0.3m deep and greater than 0.13m towards the west, where it continued beyond the lower limit of excavation. The deposit was present to the west of the wall and did not continue towards the east.

Deposit (1/11) was overlain by a further made ground deposit (1/03) (Fig. 2, Section 1.01, 1.02, Plan 1.01; Plates 1 and 3). The deposit was between 0.16m and 0.25m thick and consisted of firm, mid to light grey and reddish brown mixed sandy loam to sandy clay loam, with frequent small to medium angular stones and small platy limestone inclusions. The deposit contained pottery which indicated a date of no earlier than the 18th century. Deposit (1/03) was observed throughout the trench and was only imperceptible in the raised area of rubble (1/04) which appeared to rise above it at its highest point.

Cut into deposit (1/03) was a narrow ditch 1/08, which was c. 2.44m in length and greater than 0.44m wide (Fig. 2, Plan 1.01). The ditch contained a very dark brown blackish sandy loam with very rare, very small stone inclusions (1/07). The deposit was very similar to the overlying garden soils which might suggest that it had been cut from higher in the soil profile. Deposit (1/07) was not further excavated but a fragment of bottle glass and a sherd of white earthenware pottery suggested that the deposit was no earlier than the late 18th century and may have been 20th century in date.

The uppermost deposits were a 0.1m to 0.2m thick, friable to firm, very dark brown/black sandy loam (1/02) which was identified as the lower topsoil and a 0.1m thick deposit of friable, very dark brown/black sandy loam which was identified as the upper topsoil beneath the current turf line (Fig. 2, section 1.01, 1/02).

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 4 sherds with a total weight of 50g. It was all post-medieval or modern. It was recorded using the conventions of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992), as follows:

PM16: Black-glazed Coarsewares, 17th – 18th century. 2 sherds, 38g.

PM22: Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware, AD1730 – 1800. 1 sherd, 9g.

PM25: White Earthenware, late 18th – 20th century. 1 sherd, 3g.

The sherds of PM16 and PM22 occurred in deposit (1/03), while the sherd of PM25 came from context (1/07). All the fabrics are common finds in the region.

It is not recommended to retain the post-medieval to modern pottery fragments due to their very limited potential for further analysis.

5.2 Ceramic Building Material by *Simona Denis*

An assemblage of 12 ceramic building material fragments, of a total weight of 888.3g, was hand-collected during the archaeological works. Although extremely fragmentary, the state of preservation of the material was good and allowed the identification of the type for all of the fragments.

Table 1: Ceramic building material occurrence by type and context

Type	Context	No. of Items	Weight (g)	Fabric	Complete Thickness (mm)	Comments	Date Range	
Roof tile	1/03	1	107	Pink-orange, sandy with rare small inclusions	17	Corner	Medieval to Post-Medieval	
		2	52.4	Pink-orange, sandy with rare small inclusions	11	One edge Traces of mortar	Medieval to Post-Medieval	
		1	39.9	Dark pink, sandy with rare small inclusions	14		?Medieval	
		1	90.4	Pink-orange, sandy with grey core	10	Thicker edge, measuring 13mm	?Medieval	
		1	36.6	Dark pink, gritty with frequent small inclusions	16	Edge Traces of mortar	Medieval to Post-Medieval	
	1/04	1	139	Pink-orange, sandy with grey core	Irregular, 5-9	Traces of mortar Line marks	?Medieval	
		1	113.1	Pink-orange, sandy with grey core	10	Corner Traces of mortar Thicker edge, measuring 15mm	Medieval to Post-Medieval	
	1/05	1	189.6	Dark pink, gritty with partially grey core and very frequent inclusions on the surface	12	Corner Slightly thicker edge, measuring 14mm	Medieval to Post-Medieval	
	1/11	2	51.7	Pink-orange, sandy with rare small inclusions	15	One corner	Medieval to Post-Medieval	
		1	68.6	Dark red, gritty with rare small to medium inclusions	17	Edge	Medieval to Post-Medieval	
	Total		12	888.3				

All of the ceramic building material fragments were positively identified as originating from roof tiles; however, the absence of peg holes or nibs prevented the identification of the specific type.

Roof tiles are almost totally functional and their characteristics change very little over time; also, good quality roof tiles were often reused. Hand-made peg tiles were also commonly used until the 19th C, when machine-made tiles became popular.

Consequently, the potential for dating evidence of plain roof tiles remains limited, and only a broad date from the Medieval to the Post-Medieval period can be suggested.

It is not recommended to retain the fragmentary plain tile examples due to their very limited potential for further analysis.

5.3 Glazed Ceramic Tile by Paul Blinkhorn

A single fragment of medieval roof-tile weighing 29g occurred in deposit (1/11). It is unusually thin, at just 8mm thick, and is of Potterspury type, with a bright green copper-speckled glaze on the upper surface. Such tiles are a reasonably common find in the region, and it is probably of 14th – 15th century date. Its presence suggests a building of slightly higher than normal status may have stood near the site in the medieval period, as such tiles are rarely found in association with peasant housing (eg. Zeepvat *et al.* 1994).

5.4 Animal Bone by Simona Denis

A small collection of 3 animal bone fragments, weighing 126.3g in total, was recovered from three deposits. The state of preservation of the material is generally fair, although extremely fragmentary; no complete examples were recorded.

Table 2: Animal bone occurrence by context and type

Context	Species	Type	Weight (g)	Comments
1/04	Horse	Proximal femur	79.2	
1/05	Mammal	Rib	33.6	
1/12	Sheep/Goat	Distal tibia	13.5	?Chop mark
Total			126.3	

Two the fragments were identified on the basis of the observation of *Genus*-specific characteristics. The remaining item was attributed to a ‘mammal’ of undetermined species (O’Connor 2003). Due to the variable sizes and robustness of animal bones taphonomic factors may favour preservation of certain species, resulting in the under-representation of other, smaller animals (Kasumally 2002).

Horse and Sheep/Goat were equally represented by a single fragment. One possible chop mark was also recorded; however, the fragmentation of the item prevented from a positive identification.

It is not recommended to retain the animal bone due to its very limited potential for further analysis.

5.5 Other Finds by Simona Denis

Shell

Three oyster shells, of a combined weight of 61.1g, were found during the excavations. The items were positively identified as valves of British Native Oyster or European Flat Oyster (Winder 2011); the example from rubble deposit (1/11) was a left valve fragment, while the two items collected from buried deposit (1/03), almost complete, were found to belong to a single individual.

It is not recommended to retain the oyster shell fragments due to their small quantity and very limited potential for further analysis.

Glass

Two fragments of post-medieval glass, of a combined weight of 4.7g, were recovered from two deposits.

The item collected from (1/07), the fill of ditch 1/08, weighed 2.2g and had a curved cross-section; it was tentatively identified as originating from a vessel or bottle. The flat fragment found in rubble deposit (1/11) was identified as windowpane.

The glass items are not recommended for retention due to their very limited potential for further analysis.

6 DISCUSSION

The excavations revealed the remains of a wall that represents part of a building on the site. The wall was at right angles to the current building and may relate to the original 16th century structure or to a later construction. The current extant structure is partly formed from the cross wing of the original Castlethorpe manor house which is recorded as being occupied in 18th century. The presence of glazed ceramic roof-tile of the Potterspurty type suggests that a higher than normal status building stood on or near to the site in the medieval period, however, there is no evidence that this fragment relates to the date of the construction of this wall. It is also possible that earlier medieval material may have been reused in a later structure. The deposits overlying the wall could only be broadly dated from the medieval to the post-medieval period. The upper demolition layer contained windowpane glass dating that deposit to no earlier than the post-medieval period, how early in the post-medieval period is however uncertain due to the small size of the fragment. Later material would have been added to an earlier building at any point during its life and would be present in the later demolition of that building which is recorded as taking place sometime after 1703. In short, the wall likely relates to the extant surviving building of Castle House and may relate to its construction in the 16th century or to later construction of the building occupied in the early 18th century and recorded as being partially demolished after that date. The wall is abutted by deposits which are broadly dated but are considered to be post-medieval. The demolition of the wall would also be broadly dated to the post-medieval period. These demolition deposits are overlain by made ground that is no earlier than the 18th century.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site record

Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Milton Keynes Museum in due course.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Findings	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1								
1/01	Deposit	Friable, very dark brown/black sandy loam with very rare, very small angular stone inclusions	0.1m	>1.6m	>12.5m	None	Upper Topsoil	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Friable to firm, very dark brown/black sandy loam with very rare, very small angular stone inclusions	0.1m to 0.2m	>1.6m	>12.5m	None	Lower topsoil	Modern
1/03	Deposit	Firm, mid to light grey and red brown mixed sandy loam- sandy clay loam with frequent small to medium angular stone and small platy limestone inclusions.	0.16m to 0.25m	>1.6m	>12.5m	Pottery, Roof tile, Oyster shell	Buried made ground/disturbed layer with redeposited natural geological material	18 th Century>
1/04	Deposit	Well cemented, mid to light grey sandy clay. Dominated by limestone rubble	0.35m	c.2.25 m to 2.85m	>1.6m	Ceramic roof tile, bone	Heavy concentration of limestone rubble overlying wall 1/09 and deposit 1/12. Rubble demolition from the wall overlain by 1/11	Post-medieval >
1/05	Deposit	Very firm-cemented mid-red-brown clay with occasional grey clay. Very frequent angular limestone with moderate inclusions of charcoal	0.35m	>1.6m	>4.5m	Ceramic roof tile	Made ground with abundant redeposited natural geological material. Underlying 1/03. Possibly the same as Deposit 1/12	Medieval-post-medieval >
1/06	Deposit	Very firm, mid-reddish/orange brown clay	0.2m	>1.6m	12.5m	-	Oadby Member - Diamicton. Superficial Deposits	Formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period.
1/07	Deposit	Friable, very dark brown/blackish sandy loam with very rare, very small stone inclusions	-	>0.44 m	c. 2.44m	Pottery, Glass bottle fragment	Fill of narrow ditch 1/08	Late 18 th C to Modern
1/08	Cut	Narrow linear cut	-	>0.44 m	c. 2.44m	-	Narrow ditch filled by 1/07	Late 18th C to Modern
1/09	Masonry	Constructed of large squared stones on the outer faces at the base of the foundations, with more roughly cut angular pieces for the higher surviving courses and within the core	0.26m to 0.37m	0.9m	> 1.6m	None	Wall foundation. Part of former building	Post-medieval
1/10	Cut	Linear cut with vertical sides	0.26m to 0.37m	0.9m	> 1.6m	-	Proposed wall cut. Not perceptible	Post-medieval
1/11	Deposit	A firm, mid-grey sandy loam with frequent limestone rubble.	>0.13 m	>1.6m	? > 1.9m to	Ceramic roof tile, Glazed	Later demolition deposit overlying 1/04	Post-medieval

			0.3m		the west	Ceramic Roof tile, glass, oyster shell		
1/12	Deposit	mid-red/orange brown clay with occasional grey clay, moderate to frequent angular and platy limestone inclusions and moderate charcoal flecks	c. 0.2m	>1.6m	1.3m >1.3m	Animal bone	Made ground deposit. Possibly cut by wall foundation cut 1/10 but probably later. Possibly the same as deposit 1/05	Medieval to post-medieval >

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OASIS ID: johnmoor1-415432

Project details

Project name	Castle House, 5 North Street, Castlethorpe
Short description of the project	John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation at Castle House, North Street, Castlethorpe MK19 7EW. The archaeological excavations identified a stone wall orientated NNE to SSW towards the westerly end of the evaluation trench. The wall was at right angles to the current building and may relate to the original 16th century structure or to a later phase, as part of the current extant building is recorded as being occupied in the 18th century. The wall was abutted by a made ground deposit and overlain by stone demolition deposits. The demolition deposits were concentrated in the area of the wall. The deposits were overlain by more made ground which was cut by a post-medieval/modern ditch backfilled with garden soil. The later demolition deposits were dated no earlier than the post-medieval period and overlying made ground no earlier the 18th century. Earlier demolition deposits and made ground were broadly dated by the presence of ceramic tile from medieval to post-medieval periods but were probably post medieval in date. The presence of a fragment of glazed roof tile of Potterspury type would suggest that a building of higher than normal status stood on or near to the site in the medieval period.
Project dates	Start: 03-02-2021 End: 03-02-2021
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	CTNS 21 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	4408 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	EMK1441 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CERAMIC ROOF TILE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CERAMIC ROOF TILE Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Modern
Methods &	""Targeted Trenches""

techniques

Development type Small-scale extensions (e.g. garages, porches, etc.)

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Position in the planning process Pre-application

Project location

Country England

Site location BUCKINGHAMSHIRE MILTON KEYNES CASTLETHORPE Castle House, 5 North Street, Castlethorpe

Postcode MK19 7EW

Study area 0 Square metres

Site coordinates SP 79770 44510 52.092761471562 -0.835488238161 52 05 33 N 000 50 07 W Point

Lat/Long Datum Unknown

Height OD / Depth Min: 82.36m Max: 83.44m

Project creators

Name of Organisation John Moore Heritage Services

Project brief originator Milton Keynes Council

Project design originator John Moore

Project director/manager John Moore

Project supervisor Gavin Davis

Type of sponsor/funding body Client

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Milton Keynes Museum

Physical Contents "Ceramics"

Paper Archive recipient Milton Keynes Museum

Paper Contents "Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Stratigraphic", "other"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

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