

Archaeological Field Unit

Early Medieval Structural Remains at
12 Hartford Road, Huntingdon.
An Archaeological Evaluation.

Aileen Connor

1996

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No.122

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Report No 122

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation in the gardens of 12, Hartford Road, Huntingdon (TL241718) was undertaken between the 9th and 16th of January 1996 by the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of Nene Housing Association.

The evaluation has proved conclusively that archaeological deposits and features dating to the medieval period or earlier survive at a depth of 0.70m and more below the current ground level at the front of the plot, and at a depth of 0.90m and more below the current ground level in areas of the rear of the plot. The evidence from trench 1 at the front of the plot suggests at least three phases of medieval activity from the 12th - mid 14th centuries, including clay extraction and structural evidence. The evidence from trench 2 at the rear of the plot also suggests the presence of several phases of structures, and a sequence of pitting possibly dating to as early as the 10th century and sealed by a deposit of mid 14th century date. Trench 3, also at the rear of the plot did not contain any evidence of medieval activity, but indicates the presence of a large water filled pit or pond which was levelled up in the 18th century or later.

The evidence from trenches 1 and 2 shows that archaeological remains dating to the early medieval period are present which are likely to need consideration before the site is developed. The evaluation has demonstrated that Hartford Road was part of the early medieval town which seems to have contracted during the 14th century confirming the accuracy of the 1572 Survey.

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Early Medieval Structural Remains at 12 Hartford Road, Huntingdon. An Archaeological Assessment.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological evaluation in the gardens of 12, Hartford Road, Huntingdon (TL241718) (fig.1) was undertaken between the 9th and 16th of January 1996 by the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of Nene Housing Association.

The aim of the evaluation was to fulfill the Brief provided by the County Archaeology Office,

The evaluation has proved conclusively, that archaeological deposits and features dating to the medieval period or earlier survive at a depth of more than 0.70m below the current ground level at both the front and rear of the plot, (fig.2).

All heights are above Ordnance Datum, taken from the 12m Bench Mark located at the corner of Hartford Road and Ingram Street.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Geology Map shows the site lying on 1st and 2nd terrace river gravels overlying Oxford Clay. The site lies on land which gently slopes down towards the north and east towards the river and a tributary Brook (later canalised as the medieval Town Ditch). It is located approximately 300m west of the river Great Ouse and 65m northeast of the High Street at a height of approximately 11m OD.

The main focus of the medieval town of Huntingdon is along the northwest/southeast High Street which occupies the edge of an area of higher land (up to 17m OD) in a bend in the river adjacent to a crossing point. On the site itself the geology in the excavated trenches is clay. A natural or man-made pond may have existed on the site prior to the 18th century.

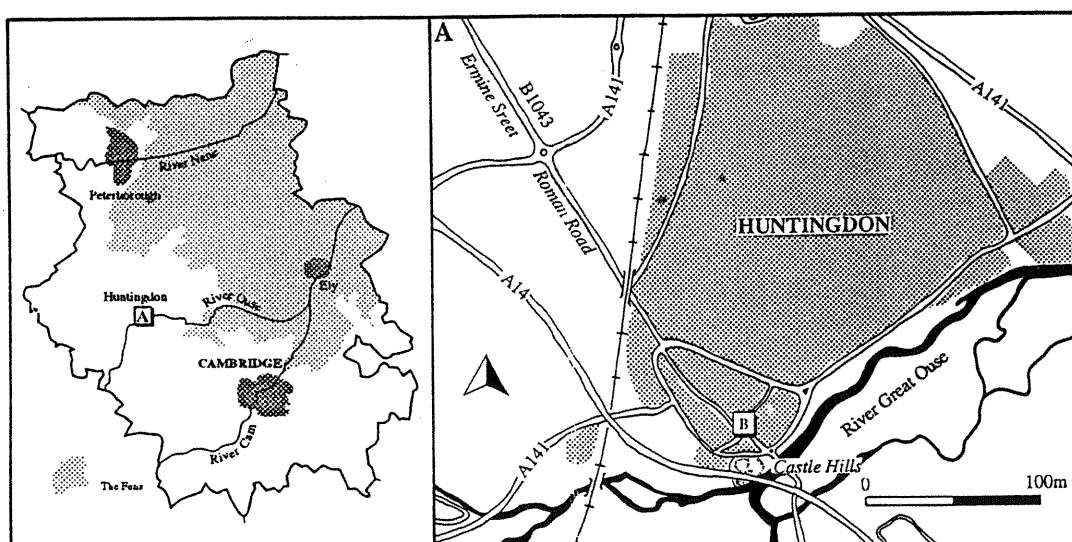


Figure 1 Location plan

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ermine Street, a major Roman Road passes through Huntingdon on the south side of the High Street. During the Roman period, however, the main Roman settlement was at Godmanchester to the south of the river.

Huntingdon probably originated during the Saxon period as it is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 656 AD as 'Huntedune -porte' (Welsh 1994). Huntingdon became a Danish 'burh' in the later 9th century until the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that Edward the Elder occupied the town in 961 AD and began to repair its defences. A mint was located in the town at least as early as the mid 10th century, the earliest known issue being from the reign of Eadwig (955-9 AD).

William the Conqueror is recorded as having visited the town and having the Castle built in 1068. According to the Domesday Book, Huntingdon had 256 burgesses, three moneyers, two churches and a mill at this time. The following two centuries saw a period of increasing prosperity for the town, and Huntingdon had sixteen churches and several other religious houses by the end of the 13th century.

By the time Speed mapped the town in 1610, however, it had experienced a substantial decline. Only four of the sixteen churches were standing by this point, and the area of the town shown as built up is very much smaller than that surrounded by the Town Ditch. Although possible locations have been provided for all of the medieval churches (Taylor 1982) only six are securely located to date.

The site of 12, Hartford Road is located within or close to the area of medieval occupation on the north side of the High Street. Hartford Road is shown by Speed to have been built up in the early 17th century. There is a question, however, as to the accuracy of Speed's representation of Hartford Road, known as Bear Lane on Speed's map (and variously as Swan Lane, St. Mary's Lane and Three Tuns Lane at other times). According to Speed, both sides of Bear Lane were built up along about half of its length, however, 18th century maps (Jeffery's 1768 Map and Thong's Plan of the Hospital Lands 1752) show the road to be undeveloped except close to the High Street, nor does it comply with the Survey of Huntingdon 1572, and it has been suggested (Dickinson, 1972) that Speed confused Hartford Road with the adjacent Germain Street which was one of the main routes into the town. The site of 12 Hartford Road apparently remained undeveloped until the current property was built in the 1930's.

4 METHODOLOGY AND CONSTRAINTS

The site is occupied by a detached house built in the 1930s within gardens totalling 0.25 hectares in size. Several large trees and bushes are growing in the gardens. It is situated at the corner of Hartford Road and Trinity Place and is surrounded by 6' high brick walls and wooden fencing. A narrow (6') gateway on Hartford Road is the only entrance into the property. Services were all still connected at the time of the evaluation.

The Brief provided by the County Archaeology Office required three trenches totalling 50m in length to be located in the gardens, two to the rear, and one at the front of the property (fig.2). The trenches were located in order to assess the archaeological potential of the whole property since detailed plans of the proposed development were not available at the time of the evaluation.

All three trenches were excavated by a JCB with a 1.60m wide flat bladed ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. The narrow access provided by the gateway into the property meant that the machine had some difficulty gaining access to the site.

The presence of service pipes, and the confined space at the front of the property meant that trench one had to be located slightly to the west of the proposed location and in order to gain a 10m length the trench had to be curved around the west side of the house. The presence of large trees in the rear of the property also meant that the trenches had to be relocated slightly, trench two was slightly shorter than planned at 16.50m and trench three slightly longer at 24m. Trenches one and two were excavated to the top of archaeological deposits, trench three was excavated to a depth of approximately 1.20m below the present ground level, with two deeper sondages at intervals to approximately 2m below the present ground level in an unsuccessful attempt to locate the top of archaeological deposits or natural geology.

After machining was completed, each trench was cleaned by hand, and photographed. Archaeological deposits and features were recorded, drawn and photographed using the Pro-Forma Recording sheets of the Archaeological Field Unit. A minimum of excavation was undertaken on certain features and deposits in order to retrieve dating evidence, evidence of character and to assess the depth of archaeological deposits. Vertical sections were drawn in each trench and a plan and location of the trenches was recorded using an Automated Theodolite with Electronic Distance Measurer. All site levels are above Ordnance Datum taken from the 12m Bench Mark at the corner of Hartford Road and Ingram Street, the site is located to the national grid.

Conditions for recording were good, although light conditions were occasionally poor due to shadows cast by overhanging trees and buildings.

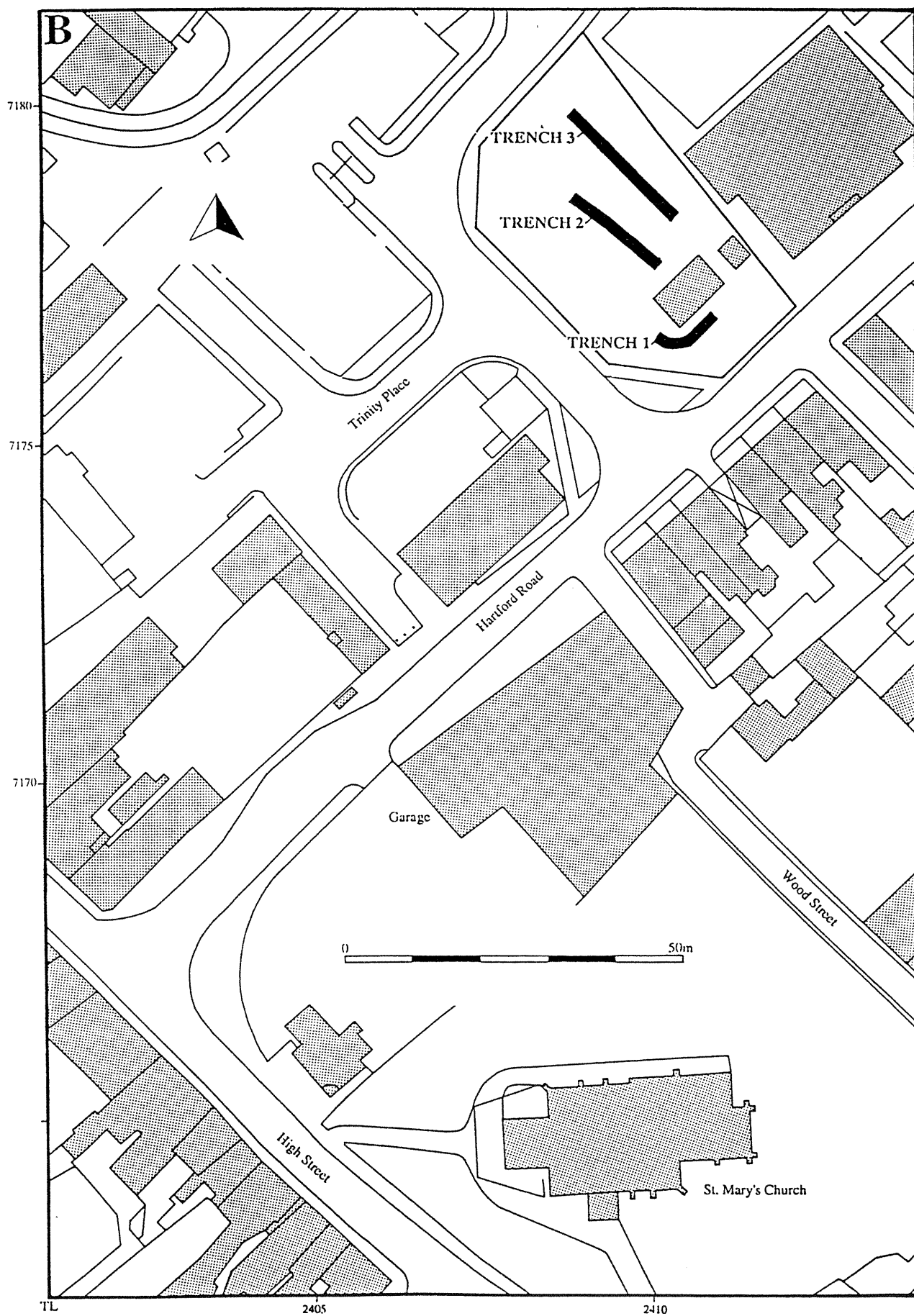


Figure 2 Trench Location Plan.

5 RESULTS

A full description of the trenches and archaeological deposits is contained in Appendix 1.

5.1 Trench 1 (figs. 3 and 5)

Trench 1 was located at the front of the property on a north-east/south-west alignment curving towards the north-west at its western end. It was 1.6m wide and 10m long (on the inner curve). Medieval deposits survive at 10m OD (over 0.70m below the present ground level).

This trench showed that at least three phases of medieval activity survive in the area to the front of the plot. The earliest activity appears to be characterised by pit digging 116, (120), possibly to quarry the local clay. Other pits, 109, (121), possibly for quarrying or some other purpose may have been backfilled at the same time. These were followed by a phase of rapid backfilling and reinstatement of the ground surface in the 12th-mid 14th century, using a combination of domestic rubbish, unused quarry material and crushed building materials (110-12), (114-15). The crushed building materials are likely to have derived from demolition or construction of nearby buildings. A daub filled posthole 105 cutting into the top of the filled pits and possibly dating to the mid 14th century suggests that a timber structure was then erected in the near vicinity. The building was then destroyed or abandoned, and subsequently the land appears to have remained undeveloped, allowing a soil horizon (102) to develop, pottery from which once again suggests a mid 14th century date.

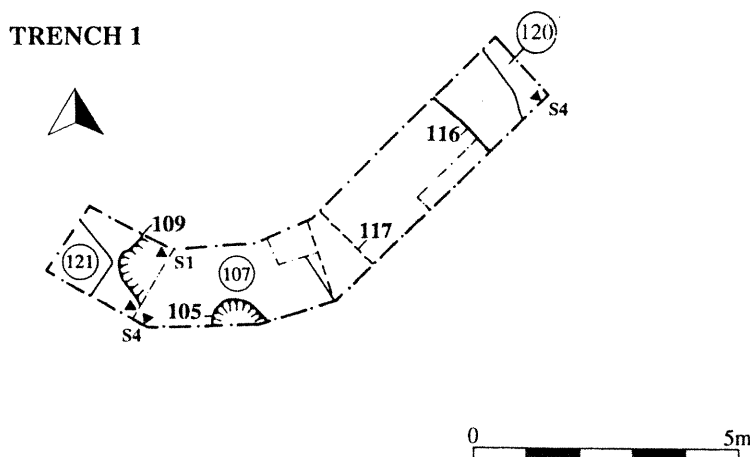


Figure 3 *Plan of Archaeological Features*

Trench 2 (figs. 4 and 6)

Trench two was located to the rear of the property on a north-west/south-east alignment. The trench contained archaeological deposits and features dating to the medieval period. In this trench the deposits survive at 9.80m OD (over 0.90m below the present ground level).

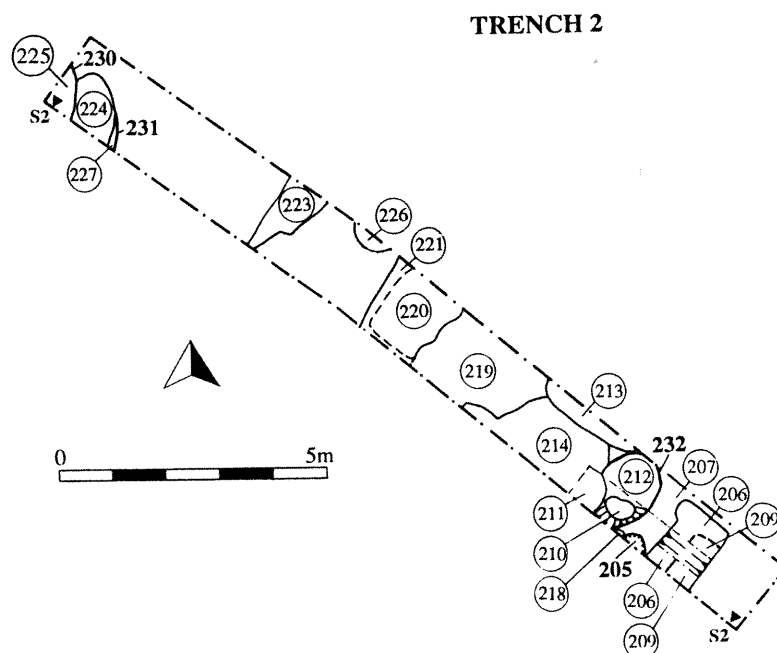


Figure 4 Plan of Archaeological Features

Evidence of possible structural activity was recorded at the southerly (Hartford Road) end of the trench. The evidence may represent three phases of structural activity, the earliest of which is a narrow linear feature (207), this was replaced by **222** dated as 10th-mid 12th century, a somewhat broader linear feature terminating within the limits of the trench and containing crushed daub and charcoal (206). The third and final phase of possible structural activity was indicated by another much narrower and more shallow linear feature **217** dated to 11th-late 14th century, also terminating within the confines of the trench. All three linear features followed an orientation approximately parallel with Hartford Road.

Immediately to the north of this possible structural evidence is an area of dense pitting approximately 5m across. These pits are later than (207) the earliest of the structural phases, but their relationship with the later structural phases is not known. Pottery from these features, however, suggests a date range broadly contemporary with **217**. The pits range from sub-circular to sub-rectangular in shape and are of varying sizes. Excavation of a small area of the pits demonstrated that some may be quite shallow, with further features surviving beneath them. Pottery and animal bone fragments from this pitted area were small and abraded, suggesting that the features probably do not contain primary rubbish deposits.

Two other isolated features, possibly a pit **231** and a posthole (226), are present to the north of this area of pitting, medieval pottery was recovered from the surface of both features.

The layer (208) overlying and sealing the medieval deposits in this trench contained pottery with a slightly later date range of Early 13th-mid 14th century.

5.3 Trench 3 (fig. 7)

Trench three was located to the rear of the plot on a similar orientation to Trench 2. It was 24m long x 1.6m wide and excavated to 1m below the present ground level with three deeper sondages excavated, one at each end and one in the centre of the trench.

No archaeological features or deposits were located within this trench. Levelling layers dating to the 18th century or later were present across the whole length of the trench to a minimum depth of 1.20m below the modern ground surface. These layers sealed an anaerobic clay (105) at least 0.70m deep which also contained pottery dating to the 18th century. Clay tobacco pipe and brick was found in the upper part of this clay suggesting it was still forming in the post-medieval period. It is not known whether this clay sealed any archaeological deposits at a deeper level, although this would seem unlikely.

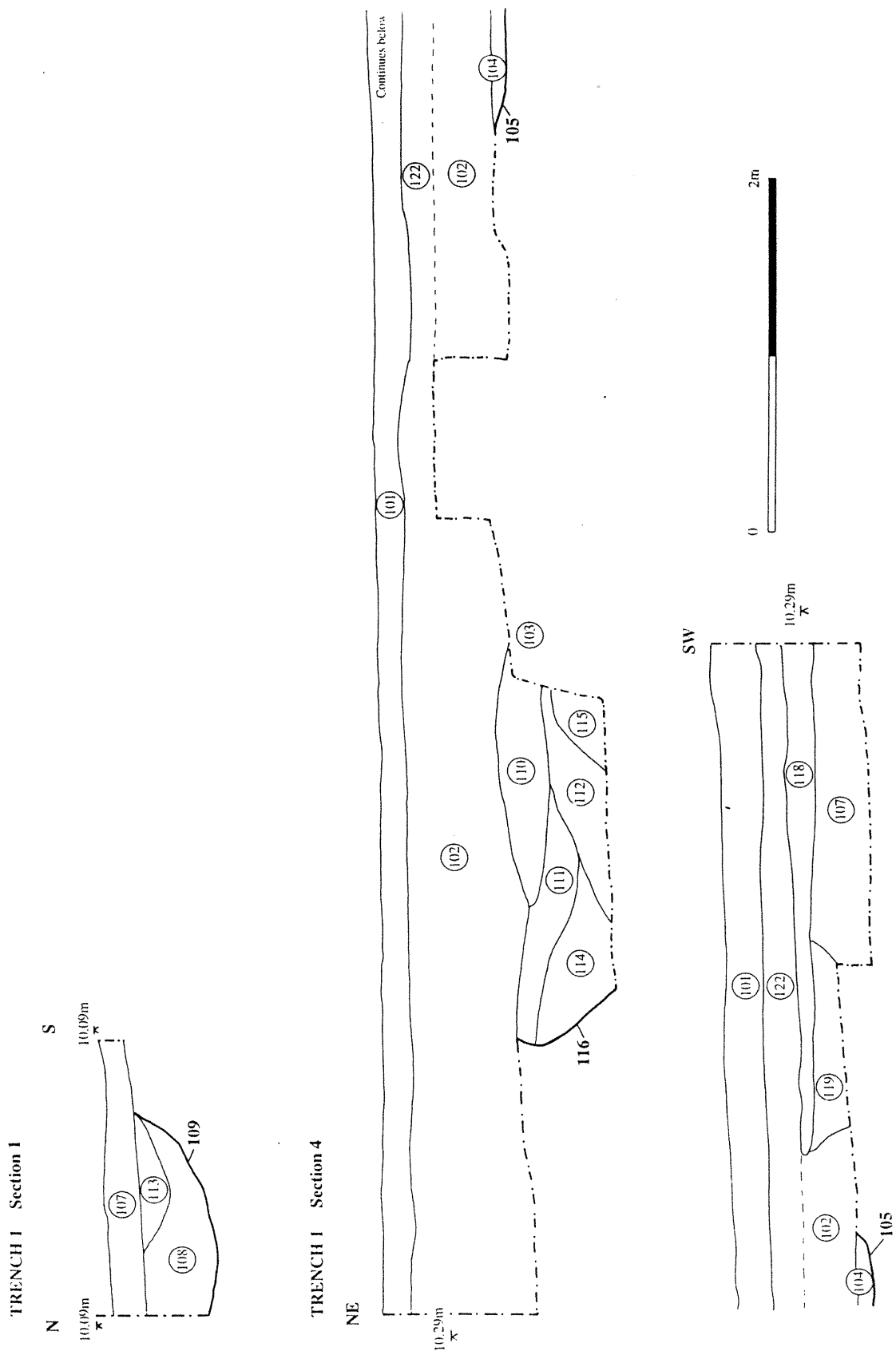


Figure 5 Trench 1 Sections 1 and 4

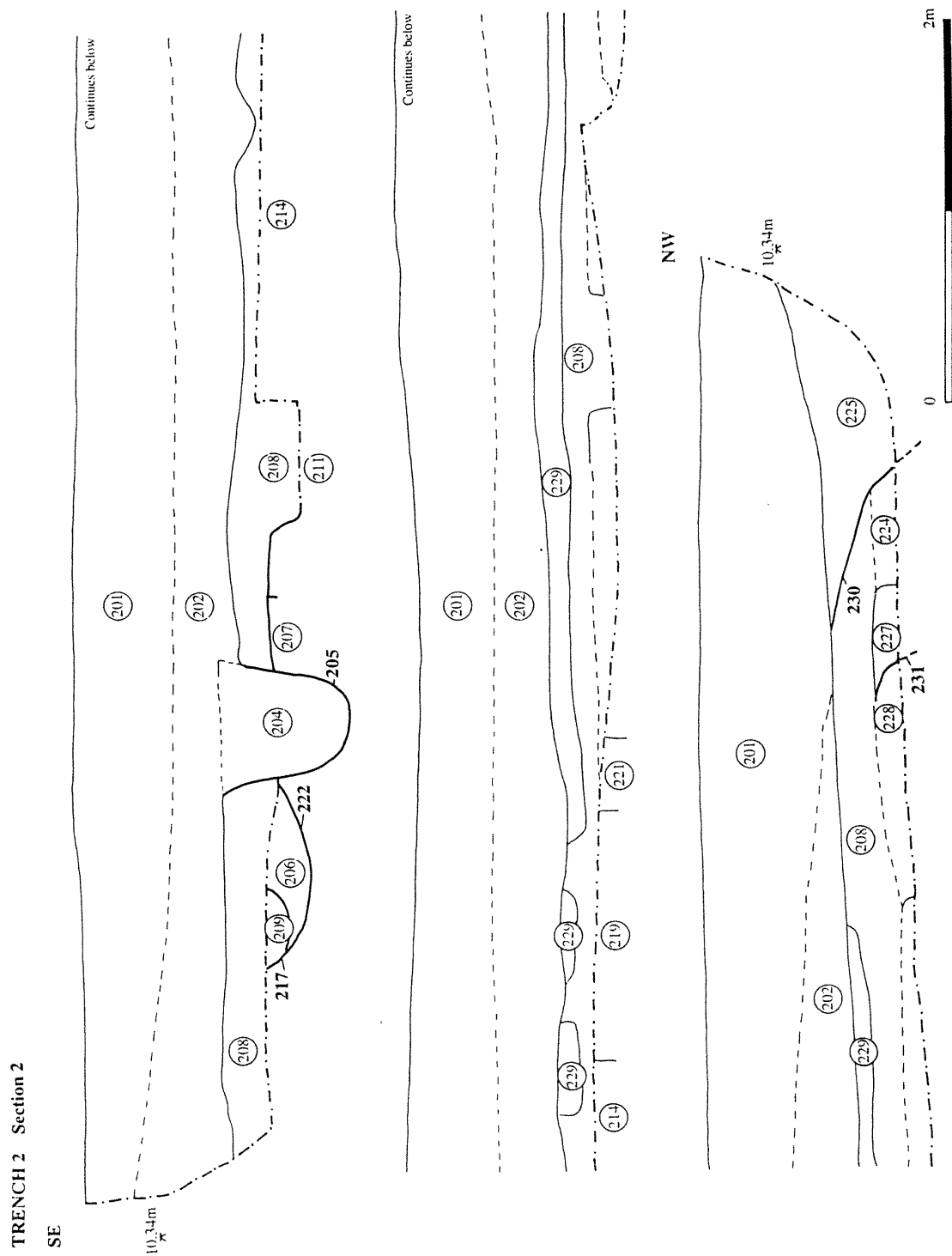


Figure 6 Trench 2 Section 2

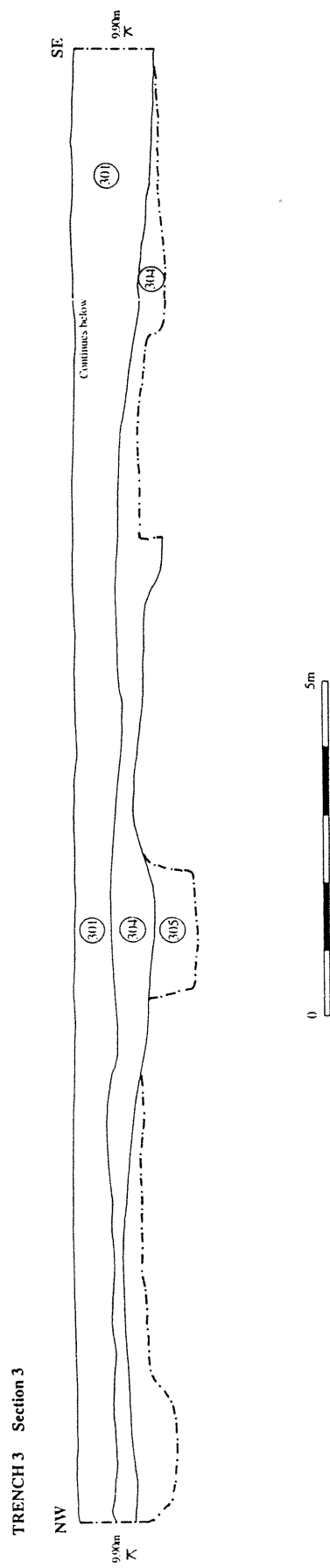


Figure 7 Trench 3 Section 3

6 POTTERY ASSESSMENT by Paul Spoerry

The full pottery assessment is contained in appendix 2.

A small group of late Saxon and medieval pottery was recovered from trenches 1 and 2. A few sherds of later 18th century material came from trench 3. This latter will not be discussed further.

6.1 Trench 1

This trench was located towards the Hartford Road frontage. 119 sherds were recovered from 8 contexts.

This assemblage is mostly late Saxon-Saxo-Norman, but with key groups containing some post-1200 sherds. Residuality is undoubtedly a problem, but the inadequate state of knowledge concerning the locally-made Sandy and Shelly-Sandy wares makes precise statements about this rather difficult.

6.2 Trench 2

This trench was located in the centre of the plot, perpendicular to Hartford Road. 53 sherds were recovered from seven contexts.

It is difficult to say a great deal that is constructive concerning these groups. Some of the material described as St Neots ware is probably a later 'developed' variant. Much of the material is very small and is likely to have experienced substantial re-working.

6.3 Conclusions

There is no doubt that pre-1200 and post-1200 medieval activity is represented on the site, however, residuality may be high and this suggests substantial re-working and inherent difficulties with analysis of such a small ceramic assemblage. If further work is carried out the emphasis should be directed to recovering larger and more secure groups of ceramics, if available, so that a firm basis for wider study is provided.

7 DISCUSSION

The evidence suggests that, although buildings probably occupied the Hartford Road frontage of this plot during the medieval period, they were probably abandoned before Speed drew up his map of Huntingdon in 1610. This suggests that Speed may well have placed houses along Hartford Road in error, perhaps mistaking it for the adjacent St. Germain Street. Despite this lack of later structures, the evidence certainly suggests that an earlier phase of building may have occupied this plot. Perhaps, and somewhat speculatively, coinciding with the expansion of Huntingdon in the 12th and 13th centuries.

Archaeological evidence from Trench 2 suggests that structures may also have been located some distance from the medieval street frontage of Hartford Road. Dating evidence from these features suggests that they may have been slightly earlier, or contemporary, in date, the latest of the structural phases having a date range of 11th-14th century. A distinctive change in the character of the deposits

to the north of the 'structure' suggests that most of the rear of the plot was given over to pitting or other 'backyard' activity, becoming less intense at a greater distance from the medieval frontage. The layers sealing this activity could have been deposited no earlier than the 13th-14th century and thus may be contemporary with the layers sealing activity in Trench 1.

- 7.3 Whether a pond or other large water filled feature existed on the north-east side of the plot (Trench 3) during the medieval period is unknown. The feature is unmapped and may therefore have been filled in before the earliest representations were drawn up of the area, alternatively the feature may not have been considered worth mapping. Whether it was cut in the post-medieval or an earlier period it is unlikely to be an area of medieval occupation. Although artefacts from its lowest fills may suggest an earlier date, the uppermost fills are dated to the 18th century or later.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Two of the three trenches showed the presence of medieval deposits and features surviving at lower than 0.70m and 0.90m below the current ground level. This suggests that medieval deposits are likely to survive at a similar level on the south and west area of the site, that is towards Hartford Road and Trinity Place. Trench 3 showed that archaeological features were not present at least 2m below the current ground level. The deposits in this trench suggest that a pond or wet area had existed over the north-eastern part of the site which had been filled in more recent times. This latter episode is unlikely to be earlier than the 18th century.

Features and deposits relating to a medieval structural phase were found in both Trenches 1 and 2 suggesting the presence of buildings on or close to the site. The presence of such features is significant to the study of the development of medieval Huntingdon. An earlier phase of quarry pitting at the front of the plot, and containing pottery and animal bone adds to the existing data concerning the economy of medieval Huntingdon. Pits of a different and undefined character occurred in Trench 2 at the rear of the plot, these contained much smaller sherds of pottery but are nonetheless likely to aid in the interpretation and characterisation of structural features elsewhere on the site.

Dating evidence suggests that the main period of activity was in the 12th-14th centuries although pottery dated as early as the 10th century has been recovered from the site.

Pottery recovered suggests a fairly high degree of residuality and reworking.

It is likely that significant archaeological deposits and features are located at between 0.70 and 0.90m and deeper on the south and west of the plot. Any development on the plot in these areas may therefore impact on the archaeological deposits. A mitigation strategy which minimises the impact of the development is therefore likely to be necessary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Nene Housing Association for funding this project; the County Archaeology Office for providing the project brief and advice; the Project Manager, Paul Spoerry for advice and the pottery analysis; Scott Kenney and Steve Membrey for their hard work on site. Thanks also to Bob Hatton and Melodie Paice for the illustrations.

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APPENDIX 1

Trench and layer descriptions

All fills and layers are shown in () brackets, all Cuts are shown in bold

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located at the front of the property on a north-east/south-west alignment curving towards the north-west at its western end. It was 1.6m wide and 10m long (on the inner curve). Medieval deposits and features survive at more than 0.70m (10.00m OD) below the present ground level. The following features and deposits were recorded in this trench:

Cut 109 fills (108), (113). Partially excavated by hand. Probably a subcircular pit 0.45m deep x 1.13m wide (min). Filled by dark grey silty clay (108) containing pottery (dated 1150-1400 AD) and bone, and a grey silty clay (113) containing no finds. Earlier than layer (107).

Fill? (121). Unexcavated. Dark grey clay probably filling a sub-rectangular cut. Earlier than layer (107)

Layer (107). Partially excavated by machine and hand. Very dark grey silty clay containing occasional daub fragments, pottery (dated 1400-1600? AD) and bone. 0.30m (min) thick x 7m (min) long x 1.6m (min) wide. Earlier than cuts 105 and 117

Cut 116 fills (110), (111), (112), (114), (115). Partially excavated by hand. Pottery and bone from (111), (112), (114) the pottery was dated to 1200-1350, 1000-1150 and 1050-1200 respectively. Pit cut with vertical edges. 0.50m (min) deep x 2.40m wide x 1.6m (min) wide. Filled with interleaving layers of light olive brown clay (110), very dark greyish brown silty clay (111), mixed olive brown, red and yellow clay (112), compacted light olive brown silty sand (114) containing crushed burnt daub, and mixed yellow, black and olive sandy clay (115). Earlier than Cut 117

Cut 105, fill (104). Partially excavated by hand. Pottery (dated 1100-1200 AD), bone and large fragments of burnt daub in (104). Subcircular ?posthole or shallow pit cut. 0.16m deep x 1.02m wide x 0.53m (min) long. Filled by very dark greyish brown sandy silty clay containing burnt daub and charcoal. Earlier than layer (102)

Cut 117, fill (103). Minimal excavation by hand. Pottery (dated to 1000-1400 AD) and bone from surface of (103). Subrectangular ?Pit cut filled with yellowish brown sandy clay. Earlier than layer (102).

Fill? (120). Not excavated. Dark grey clay probably filling a pit cut. Earlier than layer (102).

Layer (102). Excavated by machine and hand. Pottery (dated 1200-1350) and bone. Very dark greyish brown sandy clay. 0.40m thick x 1.6m (min) wide x 10m long (min). Earlier than Fill? (119).

Fill? (119). Excavated by machine, recorded in section. Dark grey clay possibly filling a steep sided cut. 0.20m deep x 1m wide. Earlier than layer (118).

Layer (118), same as (106). Excavated by machine. Light olive brown clay. 0.15m thick x 3m wide (min) x 1.6m long (min). Earlier than layer (122).

Layer (122). Excavated by machine. 0.20m thick x 1.6m wide (min) x 10m long (min) a very dark greyish brown sandy clay 'B' horizon below (101).

Layer (101). Excavated by machine. Black sandy clay topsoil. 0.16m thick x 1.6m wide (min) x 10m long (min).

Trench 2

Trench two was located to the rear of the property on a north-west/south-east alignment. The trench contained archaeological deposits and features dating to the medieval period. In this trench the deposits survive at over 0.90m below the present ground level (9.80m OD).

Layer (228). Brownish yellow mottled clay, probably a natural interface above the natural yellow clay. Earlier than cut 231.

Cut 231, fills (227), (224). Not excavated. Subcircular cut, possibly a pit. 1m wide (min) x 1m long (min). Filled with light yellowish brown clay (227) and very dark grey clay sand (224). Earlier than layer (208).

Fill? (207). Not excavated. Light olive brown sandy clay, possibly filling a linear cut on a south-west/north-east orientation. 1.55m long (min) x 0.55m wide. Earlier than cut 222.

Cut 222, fill (206). Pottery (dated to 900-1150 AD), bone, daub and iron in (206). Partially excavated by hand. Linear, south-west/north-east orientated cut with subcircular bulge at north-west corner. 0.20m deep x 1.40m long (min) x 1m wide. Filled by greyish brown clay flecked with large quantities of crushed daub and charcoal. Earlier than cut 217.

Cut 217, fill (209). Pottery (dated to 1000-1400 AD) in (209). Partially excavated by hand. Linear south-west/north-east orientated cut. 0.12m deep x 0.90m long (min) x 0.40m wide. Filled by dark greyish brown sandy clay. Earlier than (208).

Fill? (211). Same as (214) and (215). Pottery dated to 1200-1400 AD in (215). Partially excavated by hand. Dark greyish brown sandy clay. Earlier than fill? (213).

Fill? (226). Not excavated. Olive grey clay. Possibly filling a circular posthole or small pit, 0.70m wide x 0.22m long (min). Earlier than layer (208).

Layer (223). Not excavated. Mottled yellow brown clay, possibly the fill of an irregular feature but more likely 'dirty natural'. Earlier than layer (208).

Fill? (219). Not excavated. Pottery dated to 1150-1400 AD from surface of (219). Pale olive sandy clay. Fill of a feature of unknown shape, 2m long x 1.55m wide (min). Earlier than fill? (214) and fill? (220).

Fill? (213). Not excavated. Light olive brown clay sand, 2.30m long x 0.30m wide (min). Possibly filling of sub-circular pit. Earlier than cut 232.

Fill? (210). Not excavated. Olive brown sandy clay. Possibly filling a circular posthole or small pit 0.60m long x 0.40m wide. Earlier than cut 232.

Fill? (218). Not excavated. Greyish brown sandy clay, 0.28m long (min) x 0.17m (min). Earlier than cut 232.

Cut 232, fill (212). Partially excavated by hand. A ?shallow, flat bottomed, oval pit containing (212), a dark grey brown sandy clay. Earlier than layer (208).

Fill? (221). Not excavated. Olive silty clay. 1.55m long (min) x 1.20m wide (min). Possibly the fill of a subrectangular feature. Earlier than layer (208) and fill? (220).

Layer (208) same as (216). Pottery dated to 1200-1350 from (208). Olive brown sandy clay layer containing pottery and bone. 0.20m thick x 16.50m long (min) x 1.6m wide (min). Earlier than cut 205, cut 230 and layer (229).

Cut 205, fill (204). Partially excavated by hand. Pottery (dated to 1000-1400 AD), bone, bricks and iron nails in (204). Circular, posthole cut. 0.60m deep x 0.60m wide x 0.30m long (min). Filled with olive brown silty clay (204). Earlier than layer (202).

Cut 230, fill (225). Partially excavated by machine, remainder unexcavated. A subcircular cut, possibly a pit. Filled by (225) a light yellowish brown clay containing fragments of brick. Earlier than layer (201).

Fill? (220). Dark grey sandy clay, 1.30m long (min) x 1.20m wide (min). Possibly filling a subcircular pit. Earlier than layer (229).

Layer (229). Pale orange brown clay/gravel. Probably a modern makeup layer. A similar layer was recorded in trench 3 as (304). Earlier than layer (202).

Layer (202). Excavated by machine. Dark grey sandy clay with brick flecks. 'B' horizon. 0.40m thick x 14.50m long (min) x 1.55m wide (min). Earlier than layer (201).

Layer (201). Excavated by machine. Black sandy clay topsoil containing brick and mortar fragments, and ash lenses. 0.50m thick (max) x 17.5m long (min) x 1.6m wide (min).

Trench 3

Trench three was located in the rear of the plot on a similar orientation to trench two. It was 24m long x 1.60m wide and excavated to 1m below the present ground level. with three deeper sondages excavated at each end and in the centre of the trench. The trench revealed the following layers and deposits:

Layer (301). Excavated by machine. Very dark grey sandy silt clay. 24m long (min) x 1.6m wide (min) x 1.4m thick. Topsoil, similar to topsoil (201) recorded in trench 2.

Layer (304). Excavated by machine, sample excavated by hand. A mixed, strong brown, dark yellowish brown, and olive brown silty sand and gravel with brick fragments, pottery (dated to 1780 or later), animal bone, clay tobacco pipe and tile, 24m long (min) x 1.6m wide (min) x 0.65m deep (min). Probably a modern makeup deposit. Earlier than (301).

Layer (305). Sondage excavated by machine, sample excavated by hand. Dark grey silty clay containing pottery (dated to 1720-1800 AD), bone, waterlogged wood fragments, brick and tile, 24m long (min) x 1.60m wide (min) x 0.70m deep (min). Extensive water laid deposit, possibly filling an ancient pond or other large cut.

APPENDIX 2

Pottery Assessment by Paul Spoerry

A small group of late Saxon and medieval pottery was recovered from trenches 1 and 2. A few sherds of later 18th century material came from trench 3. This latter will not be discussed further.

Trench 1

This trench was located towards the Hartford Road frontage. 119 sherds were recovered from 8 contexts.

Contexts that are most likely to be pre 1200

(104) Spot date 1100-1200

5 sherds of differing fabric types. One St Neots ware sherd and one other Shelly Ware bowl fragment. One oolitic tempered sherd of unknown source, one Shelly Sandy Ware cooking pot base. One sherd of possible Lyveden-Stanion type ware, but with external stamped decoration not noted elsewhere, perhaps suggesting a pre-1200 date. None of these pieces is definitely later than the rest, but the group is too small and variable to be very informative.

(112) Spot date 1000-1150

3 St Neots Ware sherds including a fragment of a lid and a carinated bowl. One Shelly Ware and one Shelly Sandy Ware sherd. The St Neots ware seems to represent the best source of a date.

(114) Spot date 1050-1200

4 St Neots Ware sherds and one other Shelly Ware sherd. Two probable Thetford Ware sherds and nine sherds of other Sandy Wares. The dateable material from this context is essentially pre-1150, but the Sandy wares do suggest that the date may be a little later.

Medieval groups that could be pre, or post, 1200

(103) Spot date 1000-1400
1 sherd of Sandy Ware.

(108) Spot date 1150-1400
1 Sandy Ware sherd and one sherd of an unknown fineware, probably dating to the thirteenth-fourteenth century.

Contexts that are 1200-1350

(102) Spot date 1200-1350
8 St Neots Ware sherds, including, a cooking pot rim, some of which may be the 'Developed' variant. 5 sherds of Lyveden-Stanton finewares, including a jug handle, and one sherd of a glazed Brill jug with Fe-line decoration. 9 Sandy Ware, 5 Sandy Shelly Ware and 3 Shelly Ware sherds, the latter including a hard-fired cooking pot rim. One sherd of organic tempered early-middle Saxon pottery. This latter is obviously residual, whilst most of the rest may well represent a good thirteenth century group. If so, this again demonstrates the longevity of St Neots Ware variants in Huntingdon.

(111) Spot date 1200-1350
15 sherds of St Neots Ware, mostly cooking pots, two sherds of Thetford Ware. 8 sherds of Sandy Wares, five sherds of Sandy Shelly Ware, 1 sherd of Shelly Ware and 1 fragment of a glazed jug in an off-white fabric that is unknown (not Stamford or Brill). The St Neots Ware in this group does not look particularly late and it, along with the Thetford ware, may represent a substantial late Saxon residual component. The sandy wares and the glazed jug sherd are most likely to be from the 1200-1350 bracket.

(107) Spot date 1400-1600
9 St Neots Ware sherds, 11 Sandy Ware sherds, 4 Sandy Shelly Ware sherds and two sherds of a late medieval transitional hard sandy ware. This latter provides the date, but the rest of the group may well represent both pre, and post, -1200 residual components.

The Trench 1 Assemblage

This assemblage is mostly late Saxon-Saxo-Norman, but with key groups containing some post-1200 sherds. Residuality is undoubtedly a problem, but the inadequate state of knowledge concerning the locally-made Sandy and Shelly-Sandy wares makes precise statements about this rather difficult.

Trench 2

This trench was located in the centre of the plot, perpendicular to Hartford Road. 53 sherds were recovered from seven contexts.

Contexts that are likely to be pre-1200

(203) Spot date 1000-1150
6 St Neots ware sherds, including one unusual bowl rim. Four sherds of Sandy wares and one thumbled rim in Sandy Shelly ware. The St Neots ware provides the general date, the other material not being accurately identified to a production centre. All the material could represent one group, but it's rather fragmentary suggesting some re-working.

(206) Spot date 900-1150
1 St Neots ware sherd.

Medieval Groups that could be pre, or post, 1200

(204) Spot date 1000-1400

One Shelly ware sherd that could be a St Neots variant, and one residual Roman sherd.

(209) Spot date 1000-1400

One shelly ware, one sandy ware and one Sandy Shelly ware. Shelly ware sherd is not St Neots, is wheel made, and may be quite late (?Lyveden-Stanion).

(219) Spot date 1150-1400

One Ipswich ware sherd (residual), 4 St Neots ware body sherds, one externally glazed Sandy ware sherd of post-1200 date. 6 small sherds of Sandy Shelly ware and one sherd of Shelly ware, possibly Lyveden-Stanion.

Medieval Contexts that are post-1200

(208) Spot date 1200-1350

1 Lyveden-Stanion glazed/decorated jug sherd, 2 oolitic sherds that may be from the same source, 5 sandy ware and 6 Sandy Shelly ware sherds, including a bevelled cooking pot rim, plus one Shelly ware sherd. 13 sherds of St Neots ware including wheel-made body sherds suggesting 'Developed' St Neots ware and post-1150.

(215) Spot date 1200-1400

2 residual Roman sherds. One Sandy ware base angle, two small Sandy Shelly ware sherds and one large Shelly ware sherd with large fragments of shell temper, possibly Lyveden Stanion and post 1200.

The Trench 2 Assemblage

It is difficult to say a great deal that is constructive concerning these groups. Some of the material described as St Neots ware is probably a later 'developed' variant. Much of the material is very small and is likely to have experienced substantial re-working.

Conclusions

There is no doubt that pre-1200 and post-1200 medieval activity is represented on the site, however, residuality may be high and this suggests substantial re-working and inherent difficulties with analysis of such a small ceramic assemblage. If further work is carried out the emphasis should be directed to recovering larger and more secure groups of ceramics, if available, so that a firm basis for wider study is provided.

APPENDIX 3

Environmental Samples Assessment by Duncan Schlee

Three samples were taken for the recovery of charred plant remains and any other environmental artefacts. The samples were processed using a standard Siraff-type flotation tank.

sample no.	context no.	feature no.	context type	sample size	trench
1	104	105	Pit? fill	20L	1
2	108	109	Pit fill	20L	1
3	206	222	Fill of cut	10L	2

Sample 1 was taken from an apparently oval "scoop" of medieval date. The fill was believed to contain demolition debris, with flecks of burnt daub/fired clay and visible charcoal flecks, pot and bone fragments.

Sample 2 was taken from a large pit. In addition to pot and animal bone fragments, the fill contained visible charcoal flecks and a thin lens of charcoal.

Sample 3 was taken from the fill of a linear, possibly structural, feature that contained burnt daub and charcoal flecks.

RESULTS

Sample 1

Fragments of wood charcoal.
4 Barley grains (*Hordeum* sp.).
30+ Wheat grains (*Triticum* sp.).
4 Oat grains (*Avena* sp.).
2 Indeterminate cereal grains.
2 Cherry stones (*Prunus* sp.).
4 Goose Grass seed (*Galium* sp.).
6 Fat Hen seeds (*Chenopodium album*).
2 Curled Dock seeds (*Rumex crispus*).
3 Knotgrass seeds (*Polygonum aviculare*).
1 Black Bindweed seed (*Polygonum convolvulus*).
6 Indeterminate weed seeds (inc. *Compositae* and *Leguminosae*).

Sample 2

Fragments of wood charcoal.
10+ Barley grains (*Hordeum* sp.).
30+ Wheat grains (*Triticum* sp.).
10+ Oat grains (*Avena* sp.).
3 Indeterminate cereal grains.
10 Cereal straw nodes.
8 Cereal rachis fragments.
5 Fat Hen seeds (*Chenopodium album*).
3 Curled Dock seeds (*Rumex crispus*).
8 Indeterminate legumes.
6 Indeterminate *compositae*.
10+ indeterminate weed seeds.

Sample 3

Fragments of wood charcoal
4 Barley grains (*Hordeum* sp.).
10+ wheat grains (*Triticum* sp.).
3 Oat grains (*Avena* sp.).
1 *Prunus* cf. *domestica* (plum?) fruit.
3 Indeterminate legumes.
2 Fat Hen seeds (*Chenopodium album*).
7 Indeterminate weed seeds.

INTERPRETATION

All three samples were found to contain wood charcoal fragments, charred cereal grains and charred weed seeds. Samples 1 and 3 also contained fruit stones, while sample 2 contained cereal straw and chaff fragments.

The samples suggest that the deposits are derived from accumulation of domestic debris rather than from wholesale demolition and destruction of buildings. The charred material is derived from ash and charcoal cleaned out from hearths. Although the quality of preservation, and range of charred plant remains within these samples is reasonable, the contextual characteristics of the sampled deposits (rubbish dumped in pits), makes it difficult to know whether the charred assemblages represent one event or several different events that have become mixed when the context was deposited.

Generally, the plant material represented in hearths deposits is biased towards wild and domesticated food crops, weeds associated with agriculture, and plants used as fuel. These items can become charred either through use as fuel, through the disposal of food waste and domestic rubbish, or through food spillage and cooking accidents. Larger items tend to be trapped in the upper parts of the fire and get completely destroyed. Small but relatively dense items such as cereal grains, chaff, and fruit pips, are prone to fall through the flames into the underlying ash, where they become carbonised rather than being completely consumed.

Due to their relative density and similarity in size to standard cereal grains some plant components do not get separated from the grain by the usual processes of threshing, winnowing, and sieving. These inclusions are usually picked out by hand prior to cooking.

In the samples from Hartford road, these components may have been introduced separately or else they were mixed in with the grain when it became charred. The presence of the fruit pips in association with the charred grain, suggests that the assemblage is derived from more than one deposition event.

The absence of cereal chaff fragments in samples 1 and 3 suggest that the grain was fully cleaned and processed for domestic use. In addition to cereal grains, sample 2 also contains cereal straw nodes and rachis fragments. These items are most likely to be inclusions in a poorly cleaned batch of grain. Alternatively, they may represent the remains of straw used as fuel in the hearth.

The weed seeds that are also present in all the samples are generally fairly ubiquitous weeds and are not exclusively weeds of cereal crops. While some of these may have become charred along with the cereal grains (as weeds that were growing in amongst the crops in the field and which had not been separated during crop processing and cleaning), others may have become charred through the use of animal fodder or locally growing weeds as fuel.

APPENDIX 4

Finds Catalogue

Context	Pottery Weight	Pottery Sherds	Tile & Brick	Fired Clay & Daub	Clay Pipe	Animal Bone	Shell	Stone	Iron	Total Weight
102	487g	32				84g				571g
103	5g	1		14g		33g	2g	22g		76g
104	76g	7		752g		18g				846g
107	972g	57				40g				1012g
108	3g	2	7g			116g				126g
111	336g	34				300g			21g	657g
112	246g	5		16g		462g				724g
114	143g	16	18g			35g				196g
203	67g	11	116g			2g				185g
204	9g	3	3236g			78g		86g	24g	3433g
206	2g	1		166g		28g			9g	205g
208	143g	28				23g				166g
209	44g	3		6g		6g				56g
215	42g	6				3g				45g
219	72g	13				8g				80g
304	8g	2	4017g		12g		1g			4038g
305	69g	5	261g			32g				362g
Total	2724g	266	7655g	954g	12g	1268g	3g	108g	54g	12778g