

PLOT 5, THE CHESTNUTS, KIRTLINGTON. (CHS. 602/91)  
SP 5002/986

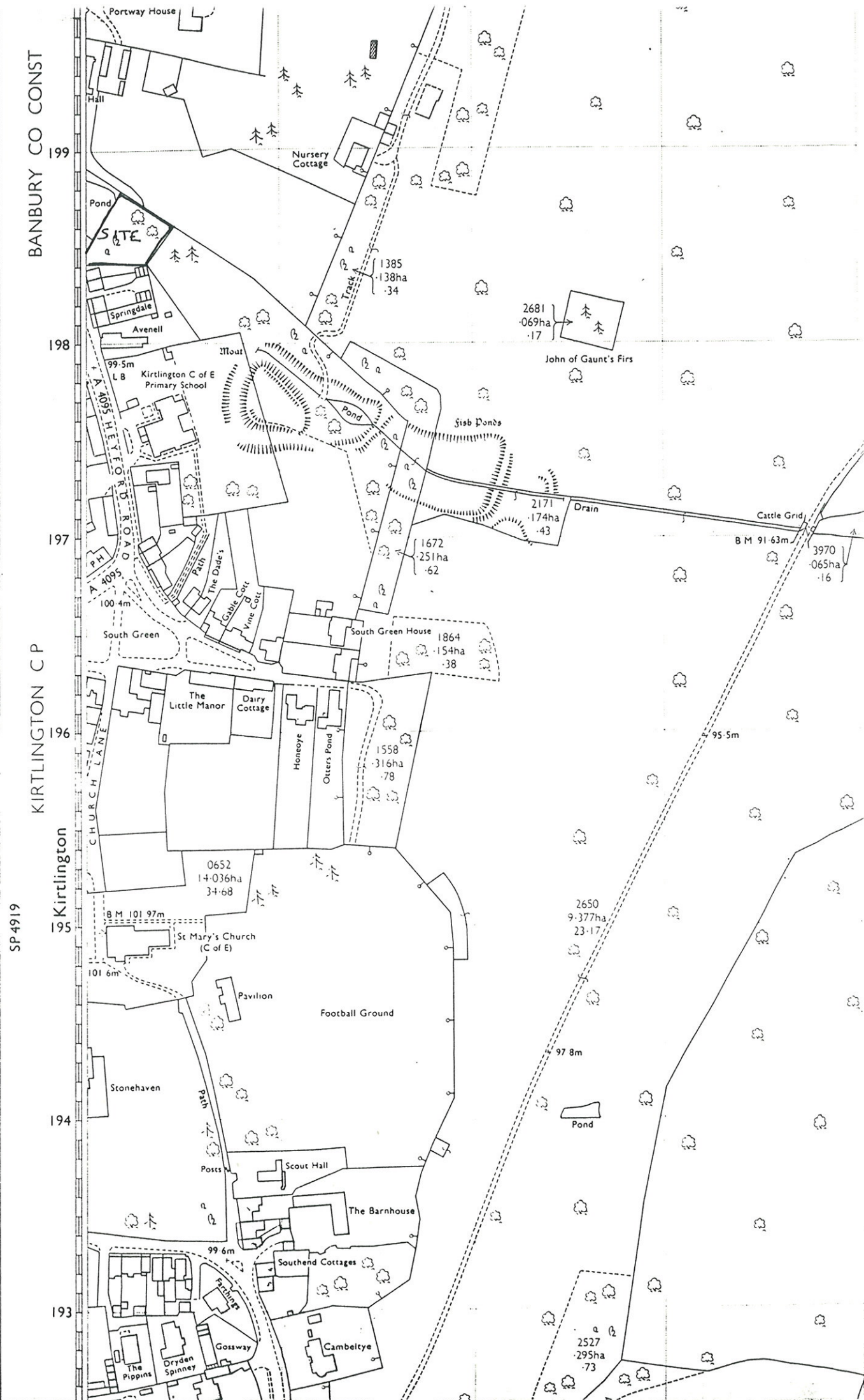
Groundworks and the digging of construction trenches using a 360° machine were monitored at the above location, prior to the construction of a house and garage with a landscaped pond. The work was commissioned by Dart Homes, and undertaken by contractors G.W. Millard, and S.G. Harris of Chesterton. The site lies to the north of an extensive medieval moated site reputed to be the residence of John of Gaunt (Oxon PRN 5358). The Roman road of Akeman Street lies c. 1 km to the north of the development; coins and pottery of Roman date have been located in the vicinity (Oxon PRNs 5513 and 5514).

The plot lies at the end of a cul-de-sac and has been waste ground for some time. Monitoring of topsoil stripping and general observation of the ground revealed mostly modern debris; brick, tile, glass, and broken drain pipes were mixed in with a reddish-brown loam. This layer sealed a light reddish brown clay silt, interpreted as natural subsoil, which in turn overlay a pale grey sandy clay, also natural. This soil profile was consistently present in all sections of the foundation trenches which were generally 1.20 m deep and c. 1.10 m wide.

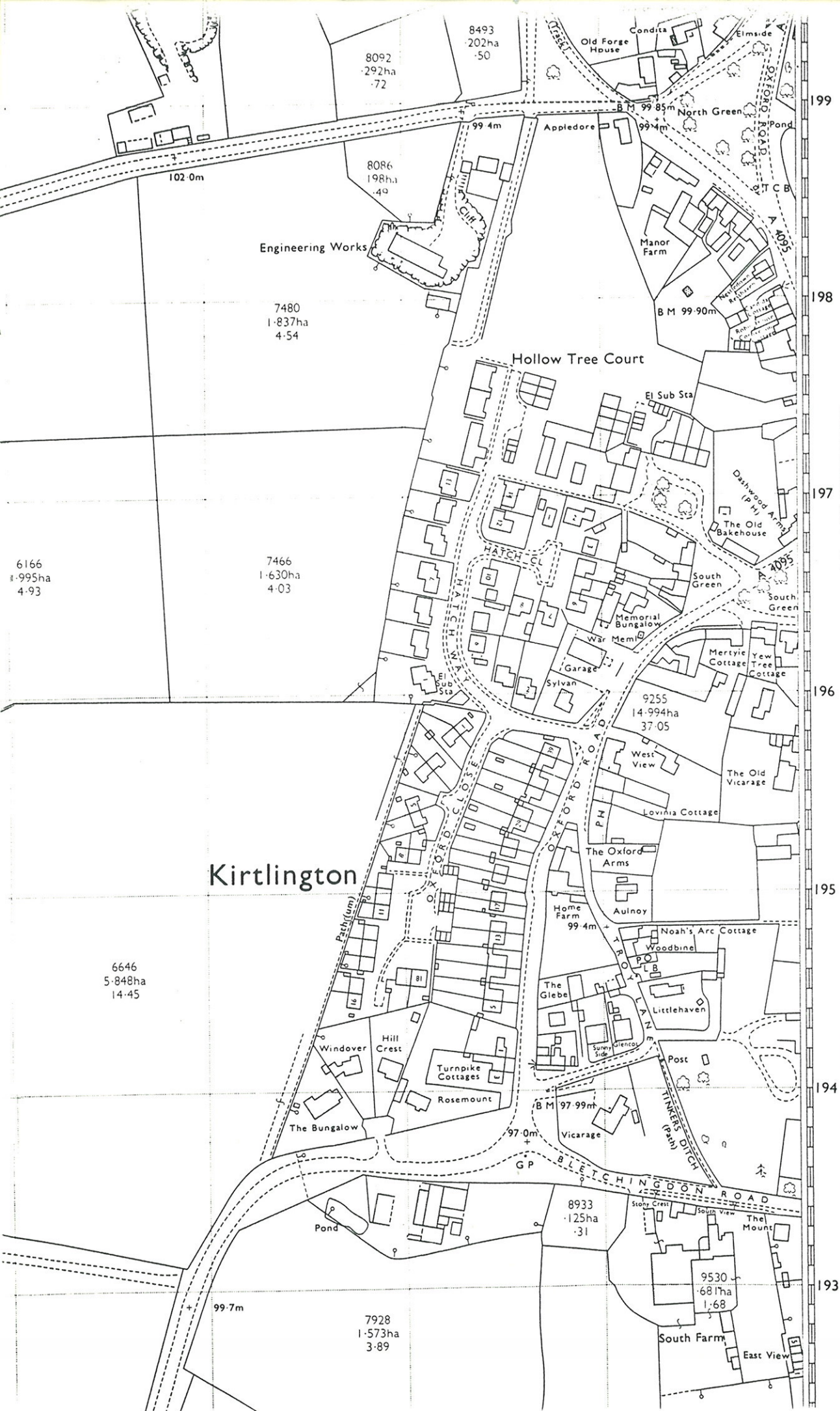
At the southern end of the plot the land slopes quite steeply to merge with a former pond, long since infilled. A trench cut through the fills of this pond for the construction of a new private pond revealed a drain constructed out of limestone blocks, which probably acted as an overflow for the pond. This drain was seen to be cut by a more recent drain, associated with the existing pond to the west. It is possible that at one time the two ponds were part of a larger pond feature. A tentative date for the disused pond comes from two sherds of Willow Pattern pottery located under the base course of the stone lined drain. This would suggest perhaps a nineteenth century date, although as the stone drain was seen to cut some of the pond silts, the earliest phase of the pond could be earlier. The latest fill of the pond contained glass bottles and jars of late Victorian or later date.

No archaeological features were observed on the ground or in the foundation trenches. Only modern artefacts and general debris were encountered, but these were not retained. The pond, as suggested, is probably of Victorian date but it is just possible that it is earlier.

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