

Prehistoric, Medieval and Post-Medieval Remains at Merton Park, to the rear of No. 30 High Street, Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire

Rachel Clarke

May 2006

Cover Images

Machine stripping, Soham	On-site surveying
Roman corn dryer, Duxford	Guided walk along Devil's Dyke
Bronze Age shaft, Fordham Bypass	Medieval well, Soham
Human burial, Barrington Anglo-Saxon Cemetery	Timbers from a medieval well, Soham
Blue enamelled bead, Barrington	Bed burial reconstruction, Barrington Anglo-Saxon Cemetery
Aethusa cynapium 'Fool's parsley'	Medieval tanning pits, Huntington Town Centre
Digging in the snow, Huntingdon Town Centre	Beaker vessel
Face painting at Hinchingbrooke Iron Age Farm	Environmental analysis
Research and publication	Monument Management, Bartlow Hills

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CCC AFU Report Number 867

Prehistoric, Medieval and Post-Medieval Remains at Merton Park to the rear of No. 30 High Street, Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire

Evaluation Report

Rachel Clarke BA AIFA

With contributions by Chris Faine MA, Carole Fletcher BA and Rachel Fosberry HNC

Site Code: WAT HIS 06
CHER Event Number: ECB 2210
Date of works: 4th-5th April 2006
Grid Ref: TL 4966 6582

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Summary

Between the 4th and 5th April 2006, the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU) conducted an archaeological evaluation to the rear of No. 30 High Street, Waterbeach (TL 4966 6582). A single 11m-long trench was excavated in order to evaluate a small plot of land in advance of the proposed construction of two residential dwellings. The work was commissioned by Merton Park Ltd.

A buried soil/layer of probable prehistoric date was the earliest deposit encountered; this produced a small quantity of calcined bone, three conjoining sherds of Bronze Age or Early Iron Age pottery and a few charred seeds. Medieval activity was represented by a pit of 12th-14th century date; the remaining features and deposits comprise 16th-20th century pits and layers located across the trench. The interpretation of these features is not clear, although a 19th-century pit identified at the western end of the trench may have been a cesspit or well. A sample from one of the earlier post-medieval pits was largely composed of humic matter, including leaves, twigs and roots, indicative of pit composting.

The medieval and post-medieval finds assemblage was generally quite small and comprises animal bone, pottery, glass, tile and brick. Environmental samples indicate good potential for preservation of organic remains by waterlogging and possibly charring.

Relatively few archaeological investigations have been undertaken within Waterbeach, and these results, although fairly typical of medieval and post-medieval backyard features and garden soils, are therefore of some importance for informing predictive deposit models for the immediate area.

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

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Drawing Conventions

Sections

Limit of Excavation	
Cut	
Cut-Conjectured	
Soil Horizon	
Soil Horizon - Conjectured	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Top of Natural	
Top Surface	
Break in Section	
Cut Number	
Deposit Number	117
Ordinance Datum	 18.45m ODN

Plans

Limit of Excavation	
Deposit - Conjectured	
Natural Features	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Sondages/Machine Strip	
Illustrated Section	
Excavated Slot	
Archaeological Deposit	
Modern Deposit	
Cut Number	118

1 Introduction

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application (S/1162/05/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU). The proposed development includes the construction of two dwellings on rafted foundations located to the rear of existing buildings.

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by CAPCA, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by CCC AFU and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

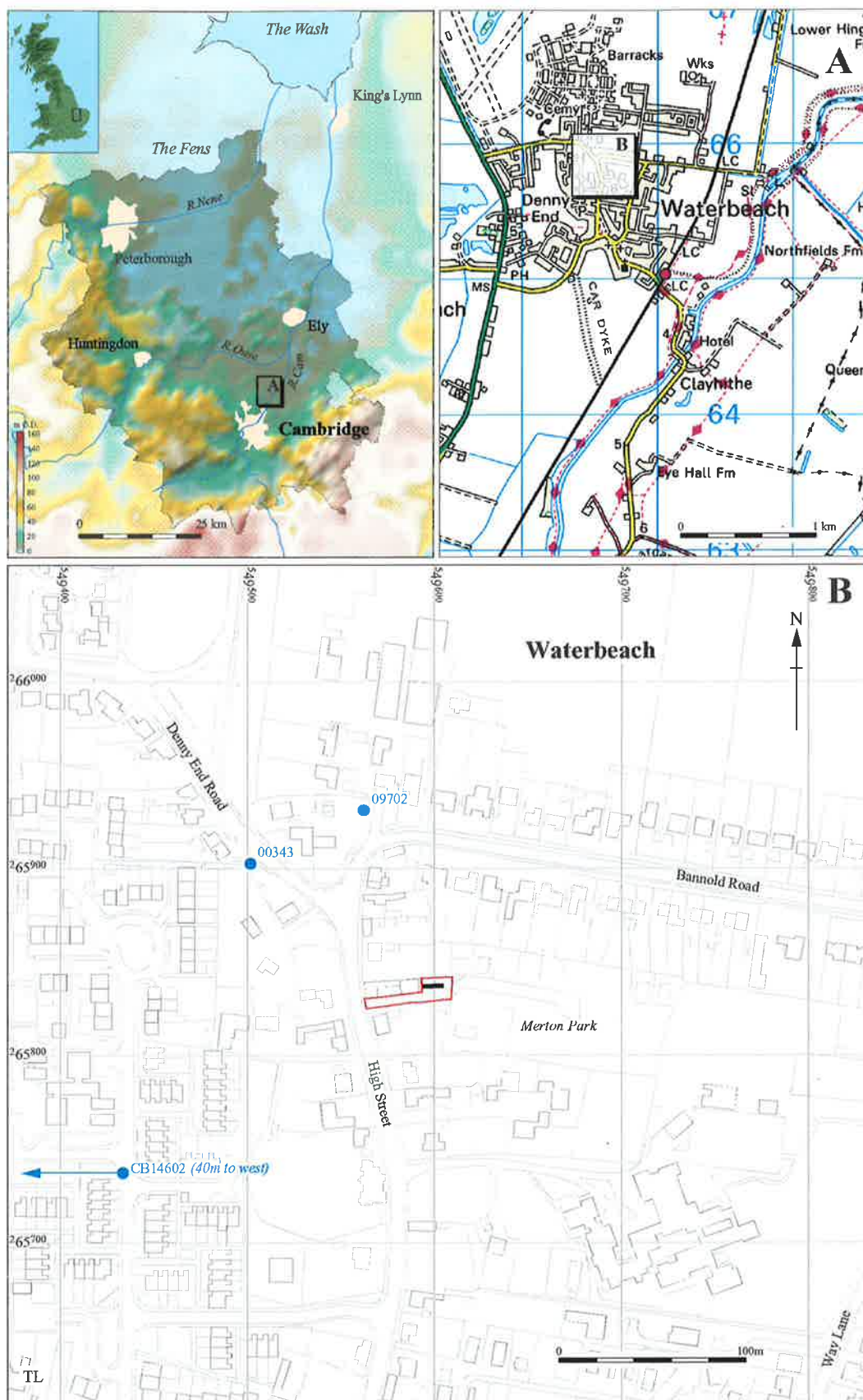
2 Geology and Topography

The development area is situated on Second River Terrace deposits overlying Gault clay (British Geological Survey 1981), and is located towards the northern edge of the village, c.1.2km to the west of the River Cam. This small parcel of land is generally flat, at around 5.95m OD, and is positioned c.35m back from the High Street to the rear of 18th-19th century and later buildings (Fig. 1). The water table was encountered at c.1.2m below ground level (c.4.75m OD).

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Prehistoric and Roman

No definitive evidence for prehistoric or Roman settlement has been found at Waterbeach, despite occasional finds from these periods in the vicinity of the site. The latter include Neolithic axe heads (CHER 00343; MCB450) found c.100m to the north-west of the site and a Roman brooch c.100m to the north (CHER 09702; MCB11528). Cropmarks identified by aerial photography, in fields c.1km to the west of site (e.g. MCB10304-6), indicate Iron Age and Roman activity in this area.



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Figure 1: Site location showing trench (black) and development area (red). HER points in blue.

Other known Roman features include the Car Dyke, interpreted as a Roman canal (CHER 05405; SAM3) which lies to the south of the village, and Akeman Street (A10) which runs to the west.

3.1 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

Perhaps the most significant Anglo-Saxon remains discovered to date were found in advance of redevelopment at Denny End (CHER14602) c. 270m to the south-west of the site. Here an evaluation revealed part of a *grubenhaus* and a number of pits, partially sealed beneath remnant ridge and furrow. A number of Anglo-Saxon huts and associated remains were also discovered further to the south, at The Lodge, during investigations across the Car Dyke (CHER 05312).

Waterbeach Abbey (CHER 05309; SAM 52) was founded to the south of the village in AD1281, although it was abandoned within 50 years due to flooding, and the community was moved to Denny Abbey to the north of Waterbeach (Atkins 2005). The church of St John the Evangelist (CHER 05560) contains architectural remnants datable to c. AD 1200.

Waterbeach was certainly a medieval if not Anglo-Saxon foundation and the probability of occupation adjacent to the High Street, the main route through the settlement, is likely to be high.

4 Methodology

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief (Gdaniec 2006) required that a programme of linear trial trenching and/or test-pitting be undertaken to provide a minimum 5% sample of the area of threatened archaeological remains. A single trench, measuring c.11m long and 1.6m wide and orientated east-to-west, was excavated along the length of the main area (Figs 1 and 2). This provided a 5% sample of the entire proposed development area (0.04ha), although this also included an existing access road, which is not subject to redevelopment. Post-medieval and earlier features were encountered at a depth of between 0.3m and 0.68m below modern ground level, sealed beneath layers of garden soil and rubble.

Machine excavation was carried out during sunny, dry weather under constant archaeological supervision with a mini-excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. No metal finds were recovered, other than obviously modern objects that were not retained.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using CCC AFU's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs, supplemented by digital images, were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

Environmental samples were taken from both feature-fills and a layer; the former include organic deposits that were encountered below the modern water table.

The site had been cleared by the contractor prior to the evaluation, although evidence of former buildings including bricks and other modern debris was present in the topsoil.

5 Results (Figs 1 and 2; Plates 1-3)

Post-medieval and modern garden soils were removed by machine to a maximum depth of 0.7m, revealing a number of post-medieval features and a single medieval pit and a buried soil. The following section provides a summary of the results; this is supplemented by a tabulated list with context descriptions presented as Appendix 1.



Plate 1: General view of Trench 1, looking west towards the High Street

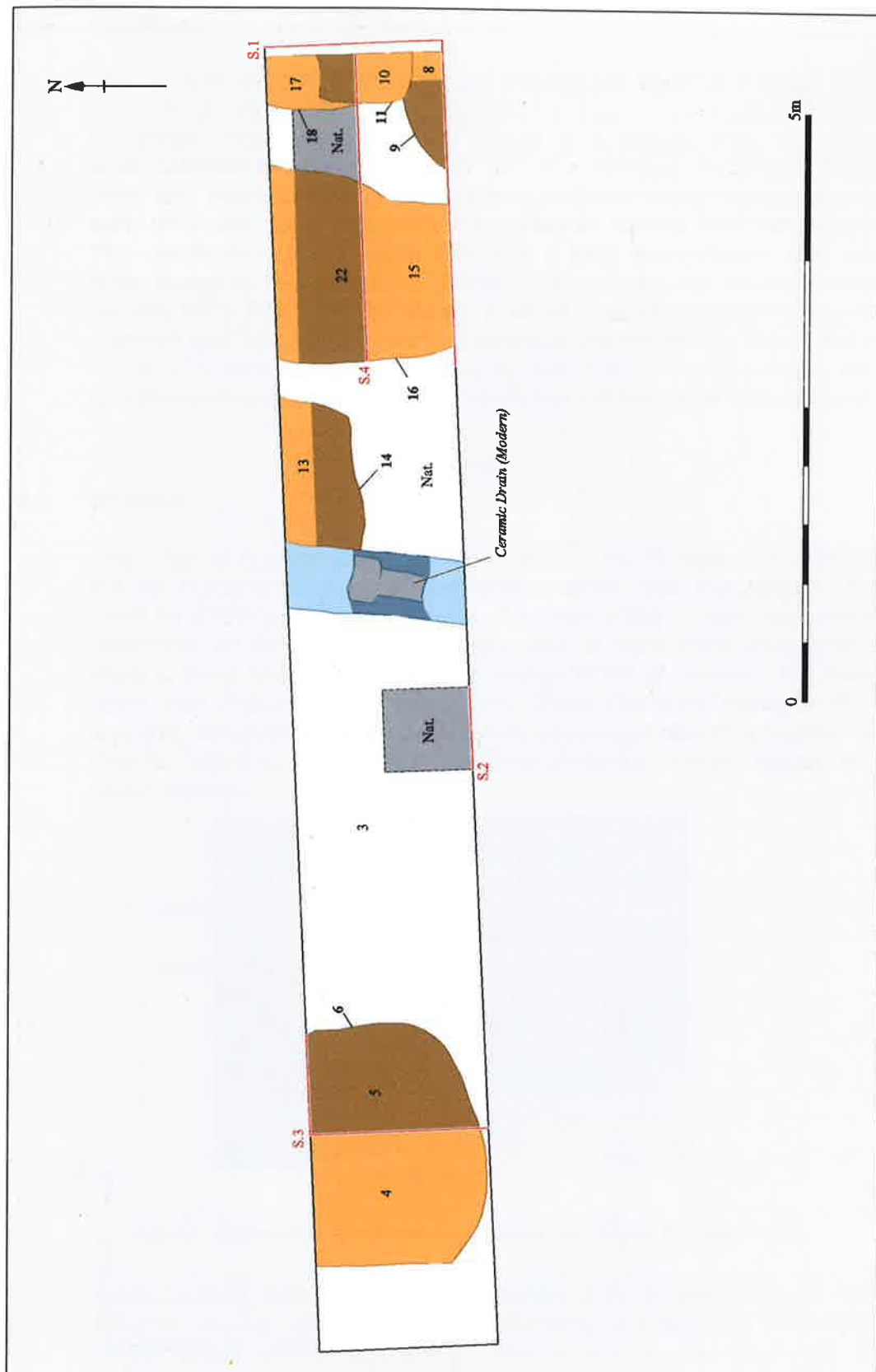


Figure 2: Trench plan

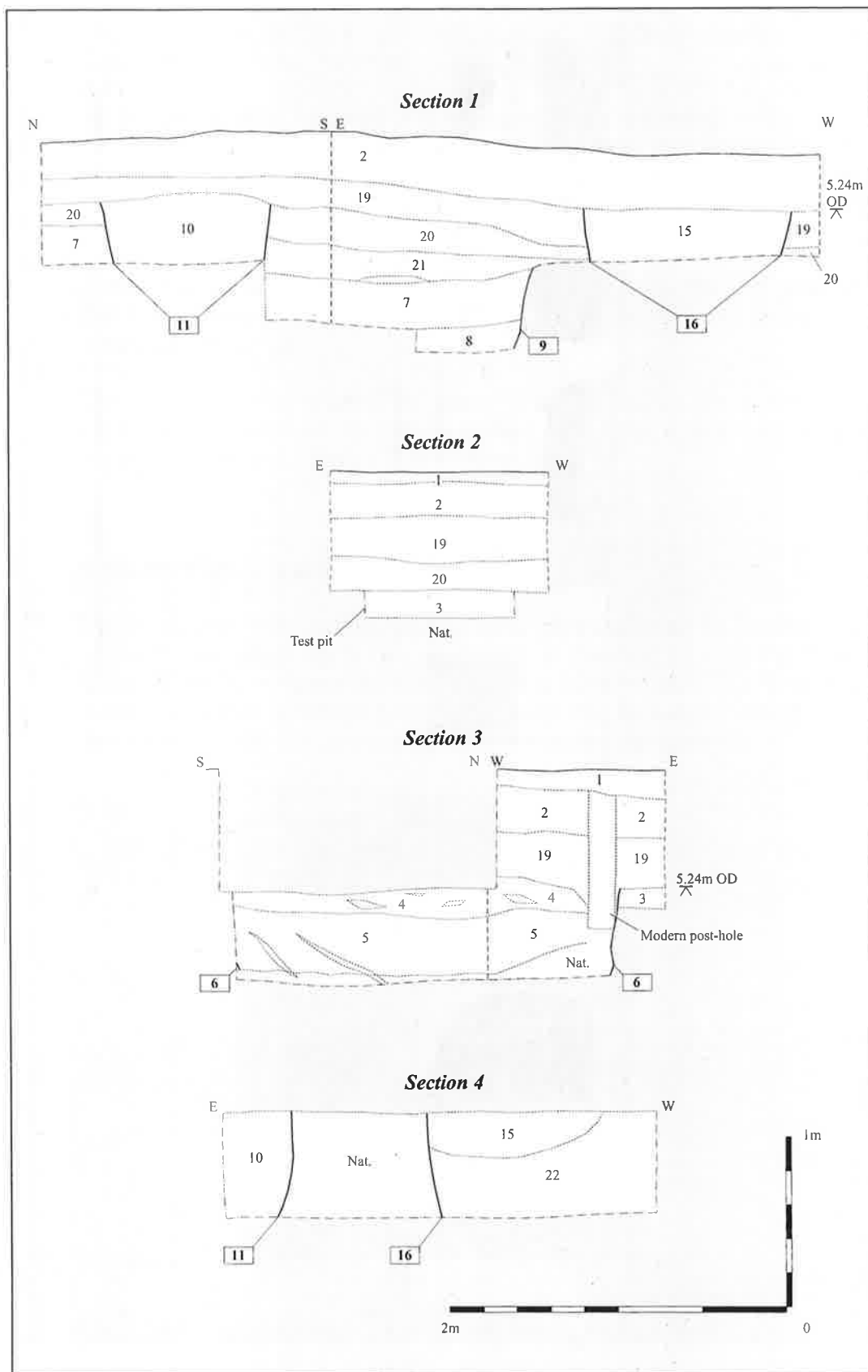


Figure 3: Section drawings

5.1 Prehistoric

The earliest deposit, a 0.12m-thick (maximum) layer of mottled grey and orange sandy silt clay (3) revealed in plan in the western half of the trench, was investigated by means of a test-pit. Very few finds were noted in the layer, although part of a calcified, butchered cattle bone and three small conjoining sherds of hand-made Bronze Age or early Iron Age pottery possibly from a lug or handle were recovered. The calcification of the bone indicates a local environment that was quite boggy in this period (C. Faine pers. comm.). An environmental sample from this layer produced a small quantity of charred cereal remains and fragments of vitrified charcoal (Appendix 5). Very little of this layer survived due to truncation by later pits; it overlay a mixed silty gravel/weathered chalk natural, revealed at c.0.9m below ground level.

5.2 Medieval

The edge of a steep-sided, possibly circular, pit (9) was uncovered in the south-eastern corner of the trench, which was truncated to the north by a later pit (11, see below). Too little of the pit was exposed to determine its dimensions, although it was at least 0.6m deep and is likely to have had a diameter in the region of 2m (if circular); the steep sides may indicate that it was a well. Three fills were recorded (8, 7 and 21), although the pit was not fully excavated due to a number of factors including the cumulative section-depth, limited space and water-ingress.



Plate 2: Medieval pit 9, with overlying layers (20, 19 and 2) looking south

Finds include several unbraded sherds from a medieval jar with external sooting, datable to c. AD1200-1400, although the grey wares in this group are reminiscent of Roman fabrics (see Appendix 3). Animal bone (cattle and sheep; both with evidence of butchery – Appendix 4) and mussel shells, indicative of domestic waste were also recovered.

Two of the fills were sampled; the lowest (8) was quite organic in nature and rapidly became water-logged once exposed. The upper fill (7) contained uncharred remains of bramble and thistle, whilst the lower fill produced uncharred seeds of elder and a small piece of laminated bone. These may be the result of wind-blown debris rather than the deliberate deposition of food waste, although the presence of mussel shell fragments and bone does indicate some rubbish disposal. Upper fill (21), a mid yellowish brown silty clay, was recorded in section only

5.3 Post-Medieval to Modern

A number of post-medieval layers and features were investigated across the trench.

The earliest post-medieval deposit identified was a 0.20m-thick layer (20) of mixed yellowish grey brown silty clay that overlay medieval pit 9 and was cut by later features 6, 11 and 16. This produced two sherds of internally-glazed post-medieval red ware (probably 16th century; see Appendix 3) and a sherd of residual medieval pottery.

Four of the five post-medieval features were located in the eastern half of the trench. Two of these (11 and 16; partly machine excavated and part by hand) contained very similar mixed fills comprising light grey chalky clay (redeposited natural) and dark greyish brown silty clay. The nature of these deposits suggests that the features were probably infilled relatively quickly. The similarity of the main fills indicates that they might be contemporary, although in section feature 16 was overlain by layer 19, whilst pit 11 cut this layer (Fig. 3, S. 1). Both cuts were at least 0.9m deep, steep-sided and fairly regular in shape; neither was fully-excavated to base due to rapidly encroaching water.

Pit 11 truncated medieval pit 9 to the south and an undated feature of unknown dimensions (18) that was only partially exposed to the north-east corner of the trench. Very few finds were recovered from these features, although pit 16 did produce a small quantity of post-medieval red ware and a fragment of over-fired brick, indicating a possible 17th or 18th century date for these features. The lower fill in pit 16 contained recognisable organic matter (straw/vegetation) and cess-like lumps/green patches, and became waterlogged once exposed. A sample from this fill was almost entirely made up of humic material including twigs, leaves and roots; small amounts of bone and pottery were also present (see Appendix 5).

A shallow (0.35m), sub-rectangular cut (14) was recorded to the immediate west of these features. No finds were recovered, although a sherd of white porcelain was noted in the main section, indicating a fairly modern date.

Located at the western end of the trench was a large, deep sub-circular pit (6), at least 1.6m wide and over 0.6m deep with steep and slightly undercutting sides. The mixed clay and silt fills produced relatively large quantities of 19th-century pottery, glass, bone and other finds, of which a sample was retained (Appendix 3). As with feature 16 to the east, the lower fill in this pit contained organic matter and cess-like staining; this quickly became waterlogged/boggy and generally unworkable.



Plate 3: Post-medieval pit 6, looking west

The features were sealed by a 0.3m-thick layer of topsoil (2), which in turn was overlain by an intermittent spread of building rubble (1). A modern ceramic drain was encountered towards the middle of the trench and was left *in situ*.

6 Discussion

The evaluation has revealed a relatively deep sequence of mostly post-medieval, and medieval, features and deposits representing back-yard activity to the rear of High Street properties. The trench was located at some distance (c. 35m) from the frontage, and it is not unexpected that few medieval features were revealed, although the identification of a pit of 12th-14th century date and a buried layer (of possible prehistoric date) is of particular interest. Environmental samples and finds evidence from these indicate a fairly boggy local environment in the prehistoric period (although the calcification of the bone could be a result of later waterlogging/rising water table). Preserved plant remains from the medieval pit suggest that the immediate area of the site was disturbed ground during this period.

The post-medieval features are likely to be the remains of 17th-19th century pits of uncertain function, although the pit identified at the

western end of the trench may have been a cesspit or well. The presence of large quantities of humic matter in at least one of the pits may suggest that pit composting was being undertaken in this period. The various layers identified are likely to be former garden soils dating to the post-medieval and modern periods. The evaluation area had previously been an orchard, with a small outbuilding/barn to the north (T. Rinnicles pers. comm.), which might account for some of the more recent accumulation of soil and rubble.

Relatively small quantities of finds were recovered, other than 19th-century pottery and glass, possibly reflecting the fairly distant location of the trench in relation to the frontage buildings. The potential for survival of organic remains, however, appears to be relatively good in some of the lower feature fills, possibly due to the high level of the water table.

7 Conclusions

The results of the evaluation, although predominantly post-medieval in date, are important as relatively few archaeological investigations have been undertaken in this part of Waterbeach, and within the village as a whole. The earliest evidence of activity is represented by a possible prehistoric buried soil or land surface, which partially survived truncation by later features. No evidence for Saxon occupation was uncovered; the earliest settlement-related feature appears to date to the post-Conquest period (12th-14th century). This suggests that the early settlement focus would have been to the west, perhaps in the vicinity of Denny End, with subsequent development along the High Street.

The presence of several fairly thick post-medieval and modern layers has ensured the good preservation of the earlier deposits within the area of development. The latter were encountered at over 0.6m below the current ground surface and should not be affected by the raft-foundations proposed for this development.

Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Merton Park Ltd who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. Particular thanks are due to Tim and Dave for their assistance and interest on site. The author undertook the fieldwork and the project was managed by James Drummond-Murray; the report was edited by Elizabeth Popescu. Thanks are also due to Carole Fletcher and Paul Spoerry for identifying the pottery, Chris Faine for assessing the animal bone and Rachel Fosberry for appraising the environmental remains.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec; Andy Thomas visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

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- | | | |
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| Gdaniec, K. | 2006 | <i>Brief for Archaeological Evaluation: Land at Merton Park, High Street, Waterbeach. CAPCA</i> |

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context No.	Cut No.	Type	Description/Comments	Date
1	-	Layer	Intermittent layer of brick rubble, 0.08m thick	Modern
2	-	Layer (Topsoil)	Mid yellowish brown silty clay silt. Frequent small stones, chalk and coal fragments, modern pottery, tile etc. 0.3m thick. No finds retained	Modern
3	-	Layer	Mottled grey/orange sandy silt clay with frequent small gravel, rare mineralised bone and pottery. Fairly alluvial in appearance, overlies natural gravel, 0.16m thick. Sampled <3>.	Uncertain BA/EIA?
4	6	Pit fill	Mixed brown and pale yellow silty clay, upper fill/capping in pit. No finds	19thC
5	6	Pit fill	Number assigned to several dumped fills (mostly dark grey clay silt, becoming more organic/odorous towards base where waterlogged. Contained frequent large pottery sherds, glass and nails (sample kept)	19thC
6		Pit/well	Large pit over 1.6m wide and 0.6m deep located at W end of trench. Possible well, but not brick-lined	19thC
7	9	Pit	Mid grey brown silt clay, occasional stones and pottery. Mid fill. Sample <1>	12th-14thC
8	9	Pit	Very dark greyish brown silt (organic), soft fill with few inclusions and finds. Lower fill, became waterlogged. Sample <2>	12th-14thC
9		Pit	Medieval pit, unknown shape, probably circular, exposed against S edge of trench. Steep sides, unknown base; at least 0.6m deep. Truncated by 11.	12th-14thC
10	11	Pit fill	Mottled light grey and chalky clay (nat) with dark greyish brown silty clay, occ small to medium sub-angular stones. Single fill, no finds	?18thC +
11		Pit	Post-medieval pit, possibly rectangular, at least 0.3m wide and 0.25m long and 0.9m deep. Located at E end of trench, unknown function	?18thC +
12		Layer	See 20	Post-medieval
13	14	Pit fill	Dark grey silty clay, similar to topsoil, fill of shallow pit, no finds but white china in section	Modern
14		Pit	Shallow pit, possibly sub-rectangular, c. 1.1m wide.	Modern
15	16	Pit fill	As 10, few finds retrieved. Upper fill.	?18thC +
17	18	?Pit fill	Mid yellowish brown silt clay with occasional charcoal, no finds	Undated
18		Pit?	Possible pit of unknown shape and date as exposed in NE corner of trench and truncated by 11.	Undated
19		Layer	Mid yellowish grey brown sandy clay silt (loam), occ coal/coke/chalk, occ stones. No finds. Garden soil, 0.2m thick	Post-medieval
20		Layer	Mid yellowish grey brown silty clay, with few inclusions, 0.25m thick.	
21	9	Pit fill	Similar to 20 above, no finds, recorded in section only	?Medieval
22	16	Pit fill	Organic fill below 15, became waterlogged. Pottery	?18thC+

			and brick recovered	
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Appendix 2: Finds Summary

The evaluation produced a fairly small assemblage (1.522kg) comprising pottery, glass, animal bone, mussel shell, brick and tile, recovered from seven contexts. The glass is the base of a wine bottle of 19th-century date found in pit 6, the single brick fragment (0.18kg) from pit 16 is small and shows signs of over-firing, it is likely to date to the 17th century or later. A very small amount of mussel shell (0.002kg) was also found in medieval pit 9. The remaining finds are discussed below.

No further work is required on this material.

Appendix 3: The Pottery

By Carole Fletcher, with a contribution by Paul Spoerry

Introduction

The fieldwork generated a small assemblage of 52 sherds of pottery, weighing 0.861kg from six contexts. The majority of this is post-medieval (0.809kg), of which over half (0.479kg) is early 19th century and the remainder is 16th century or later. One context (pit 9) is medieval, and produced several sherds of a sooted jar of 12th-14th date. Three conjoining sherds of hand-made pottery possibly from a lug or handle attachment from layer 3 are likely to be of Bronze Age or Early Iron Age date (identified by Paul Spoerry).

Methodology

The basic guidance in the Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2) has been adhered to (English Heritage 1991). In addition, the following documents act as a standard: Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG) documents 'Guidance for the processing and publication of medieval pottery from excavations' (Blake and Davey 1983); 'A guide to the classification of medieval ceramic forms' (MPRG 1998) and 'Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics' (MPRG 2001).

Spot dating was carried out using the Archaeological Field Unit's (CCC AFU) in-house system based on that used at the Museum of London. All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed.

All the pottery has been quantified and spot dated on a context-by-context basis (see Table 1 below). The pottery and archive are curated by the CCC AFU until formal deposition.

Provenance and Contamination

This is a very small assemblage and is predominantly post-medieval, with context 5 (pit 6) being very obviously 19th century. The pottery from layer 20 suggests a 16th-century date, whilst that from feature 16 (which cut 20), produced 18th-century pottery from its upper fill (15) and earlier post-medieval pottery from its lower fill (22). Several sherds of pottery from the same vessel were recovered from a pit; this appears to be the only medieval feature on the site. The sherds are generally of moderate size, although this situation is slightly skewed by the relatively large 19th-century pottery sherds. The earliest pottery identified (from layer 3) is of likely prehistoric date (Bronze Age or Early Iron Age); the conjoining sherds are in a hard and predominantly sand-tempered fabric and probably represent part of a lug or handle attachment.

There is little obvious indication of residuality, although a small sherd of abraded medieval sandy ware was recovered from context 22, the fill of a post-medieval feature (16).

Sampling bias

The excavation was carried out by hand and selection made through standard sampling procedures on a feature-by-feature basis. There are not expected to be any inherent biases. Where bulk samples have been processed for environmental remains, there has also been some recovery of pottery. These are however only very small amounts and serious bias is not expected to result.

Condition

No preservation bias has been recognised and no long-term storage problems are likely. This assemblage has no complete or near complete profiles for illustration.

Research Potential

Definition and dating of settlement phases on the site is difficult to achieve given the small size of the assemblage. The assemblage is broadly post-medieval and domestic in nature; little information can be retrieved on settlement function. On its own, the assemblage offers little potential to aid local, regional and national priorities.

Stratified pottery from all phases of the evaluation has been quantified to a basic level, and it is not proposed that any further work be undertaken on this assemblage.

The early-mid 19th-century ceramics and glass have been recorded and distributed for educational purposes.

Conclusions

The character of the assemblage suggests that it derives from domestic activities, possibly dating from the 12th-13th century onwards, associated with the property on the High Street frontage to the west. The small size of the assemblage, however, offers little potential for further study if looked at in isolation and will only add to current knowledge of medieval and post-medieval Waterbeach if seen as part of a wider study.

Context	Total Number of Sherds	Total Weight in kg	Spot dating Date Range
3	3 conjoining sherds hand-made vessel, predominantly sand-tempered with some iron oxide. Probably a handle or lug attachment to a body sherd	0.017	Bronze Age to Early Iron Age
5	2 sherds Pearlware plate edged in cobalt blue 1 sherd PMR 3 sherds blue and white transfer printed from a saucer, bowl and platter 2 sherds Mocha Ware 9 sherds Annular ware jar 3 sherds yellow ware bowl 1 sherd refined white earthenware bowl	0.204 0.003 0.042 0.022 0.120 0.028 0.043	1770-1820 early-mid 19thC early-mid 19thC 1820-1900 1790-1820 early-mid 19thC early-mid 19thC Context date: 1st quarter of 19thC
8	1 sherd medieval Ely ware 1 base sherd medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy greyware jar - sooted 9 sherds reduced sandy greyware (possibly Colne) sooted jar, similar to Roman wares?	0.002 0.005 0.053	1150-1500 12thC-14thC 12thC-14thC Context date: 12th-14thC
15	3 sherds (base, rim and body) PMR	0.085	1500-1800 Context date: ?late 18thC
20	1 sherd PMR bowl internally glazed and externally sooted 1 large sherd early Bourn D, internally glazed large bowl (pancheon?) 1 base sherd unglazed medieval sandy ware	0.020 0.166 0.006	1500-1800 1450-1650 ?1350-1500 Context date: 15thC
22	1 sherd PMR bowl 1 small abraded sherd medieval sandy ware	0.051 0.004	1500-1800 12thC-14thC Context date: early post-medieval

Table 1: Spot Dating

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Appendix 4: The Animal Bone

By Chris Faine

The assemblage is very small, consisting of 5 elements, with all but one identifiable to species. The assemblage is comprised of butchered cattle remains with one sheep/goat vertebra. All elements are from adult animals. Layer 3 contains a portion of proximal cattle radius showing evidence of butchery, erosion/gnawing and calcined deposits on the internal surfaces.

No.	Context	Element	Species	Side	Fused?	Butchered?	Burnt?	Gnawed?
1	3	Radius	Cattle	L	Y	Y	N	Y
2	22	Rib	Cattle	L	Y	Y	N	N
3	7	Metatarsal	Cattle	/	Y	Y	N	N
4	8	Vertebra	S/G	/	Y	Y	N	N

Table 1: Summary of animal bone

Appendix 5: Environmental Remains

By Rachel Fosberry

1 Introduction and Methods

Four bulk samples were taken from features within the evaluated areas of the site in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

Ten litres of each sample were processed by bucket flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 1mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification and the presence of any plant remains or other artefacts is noted in Table 1.

2 Results

Sample Number	Context Number	Cut Number	Context Type	Flot contents	Residue contents
1	7	9	Pit fill	Roots, <i>Rubus</i> sp (uncharred), <i>Carduus</i> sp	Mussel
2	8	9	Pit fill	<i>Sambucus nigra</i> (uncharred) seeds	Bone
3	3		Layer	Cereal grains, culm node, charcoal	No finds
4	22	16	Pit fill	Organic matter, <i>Urtica</i> sp seeds	Bone, pottery

Table 1: Summary results

All four samples contain substantial amounts of rootlets and other plant material that has either been preserved by waterlogging or are relatively modern. The flot from Sample 4 is entirely comprised of humic material including twigs, leaves and roots. The only sample containing charred material is Sample 3, which contains three cereal grains, a single culm node and a few fragments of vitrified charcoal.

A few artefacts were recovered from the residues of all samples except Sample 3. Sample 2 contained an extremely thin piece of bone.

3 Conclusions

Sample 3 is the only sample that contained any evidence of domestic activity in the form of charred plant remains however three cereal grains cannot provide any significant interpretation of the deposit. Other evidence of domestic and culinary waste is a single mussel shell and a few fragments of bone. The piece of bone from Sample 2 is quite interesting as it is in the form of a thin sheet (4cm x 1cm) that has probably resulted from lamination of a long bone possibly as a result of the bone being waterlogged (C. Faine pers. com.).

The paucity of charred plant remains suggests that they were not deliberately dumped as food refuse but probably represent debris blowing around the site. The uncharred seeds indicate that elder (*Sambucus nigra*), bramble (*Rubus* sp.) and nettles (*Urtica* sp.) were growing in the vicinity but the date of these seeds is unknown. Elder and bramble seeds are particularly robust and can survive in archaeological deposits from medieval features. A single charred thistle (*Carduus* sp) seed from Sample 1 contributes to the general interpretation of a site environment of disturbed ground.

In conclusion, the assemblage appears to represent mainly a natural accumulation of plant remains from local vegetation along with a small quantity of domestic waste. No further work on these samples is required.



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