

**LAND 19 WALNUT TREE ROAD,
PIRTON, HERTFORDSHIRE: AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY: NORTH
HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

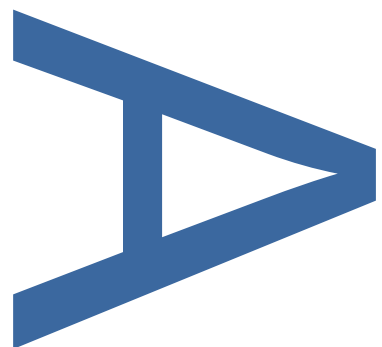
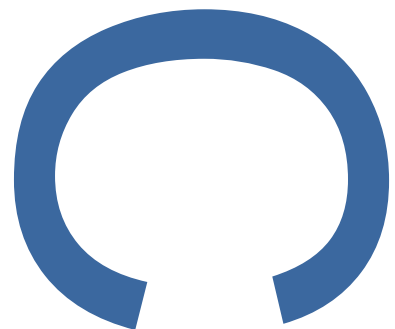
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PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

Land at 19 Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire: An Archaeological Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

A programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. (PCA) on Land at 19 Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire, SG5 3PX (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 14952 31501) from the 9th to the 11th of June 2026. The archaeological work was commissioned Abrams Archaeology Ltd on behalf of Paul Shadbolt in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to the erection of four detached dwellings and a detached garage to serve plot 4, including hard and soft landscaping, parking and the creation of vehicular access (Planning Reference: 26/00116/FP).

The evaluation consisted of five trenches totalling 90m of trenching placed to obtain an even sample across the site whilst avoiding any constraints. The evaluation identified ditches and pits dated to the 11th-12th century AD that likely represented backyard activity or field systems peripheral to the core of the settlement to the west. In Trenches 2 and 4 these features were sealed by layers containing broken roof tile and handmade bricks that likely dated to the late Medieval period and were associated with the demolition of buildings that are present on the 1812 Enclosure map but were demolished prior to the 1899 OS map. Two ditches and two pits in Trench 2 contained material from the 17th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. (PCA) on Land at 19 Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire, SG5 3PX (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 14952 31501) from the 9th to the 11th of June 2026 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Abrams Archaeology Ltd on behalf of Paul Shadbolt in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to the erection of four detached dwellings and a detached garage to serve plot 4, including hard and soft landscaping, parking and the creation of vehicular access (Planning Reference: 26/00116/FP). This was due to high archaeological significance of the proposed development area (PDA), and in line with *National Planning Policy Framework 2025*, Section 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'.
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Thomas Revell of PCA (Revell 2026) in response to an Archaeological Advice Notice for an archaeological evaluation issued by Andy Instone (Instone 2026) of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Team (HCC HET).
- 1.4 The aim of the evaluation was to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition and quality of any archaeological remains on the site, to assess the significance of any such remains in a local, regional, or national context, as appropriate, and to assess the potential impact of the development proposals on the site's archaeology.
- 1.5 A total of five evaluation trenches totalling 90m of trenches were excavated and recorded (Figure 3). The original trench locations had to be shortened or moved quite considerably due to the presence of previously unknown services (Figure 3). Further descriptions of the trench locations can be found in Section 4.1.1 as well as Appendix 1.
- 1.6 This report describes the results of the evaluation and aims to inform the design of an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy. Following Transfer of Title,

the site archive will be deposited at the North Hertfordshire District Council Museum located in Hitchin, meanwhile a digital copy of the archive and report will be uploaded to the Archaeological Data Service.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Site Location

- 2.1.1 The site was located on the south-eastern edge of the village of Pirton. The PDA covers an area of c. 0.69ha and is accessed via Cotman End to the north, which forms the northern boundary. The site is bounded by Walnut Tree Road to the west, Pirton Recreation Ground to the east and an area of open ground (under grass) to the south. A single dwelling currently lies in the northern part of the PDA, while the remainder of the land comprises its gardens and driveway.

2.2 Geology

- 2.2.1 The British Geological Survey identified the underlying solid geology across the PDA as West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation - Chalk. Sedimentary bedrock formed between 100.5 and 93.9 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. Superficial deposits are not recorded for this location (BGS 2026).
- 2.2.2 A borehole c. 150m southwest of the PDA, at Walnut Tree Farm recorded no deposits of topsoil. Instead, it recorded Chalk Marl geology overlying blue clay. However, an evaluation immediately adjacent to the north of the PDA at 17 Walnut Tree Road, recorded topsoil deposits of 450mm thickness and subsoil deposits of 180mm thickness.

2.3 Topography

- 2.3.1 The PDA lies at c. 70m OD. The land is broadly level with the exception of an earthwork and drainage ditch, which cross the southern half of the PDA. Fed from a drainage ditch running south along Walnut Tree Road, a pipe crosses the site and discharges into a ditch running between the site and the Pirton Recreation Ground. The drainage ditch formerly drained into a pond, now infilled, on the eastern boundary of the PDA.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 A desk-based assessment was prepared by Abrams Archaeology Ltd in December 2025 (Abrams 2025). The following archaeological background is taken from this desk-based assessment. Numbers in brackets refer to HHER asset numbers.
- 3.1.2 The PDA lies within the Pirton Conservation Area and a specific 'Archaeological Alert Area' of which there are eight within Pirton. The PDA lies within DHT1069 which is described as covering the putative extent of "Pirton historic village area and surrounds, including Prehistoric and Roman cropmarks to the south of the village and Medieval ridge and furrow earthworks by Rectory Manor Farm".

3.2 Prehistoric

- 3.2.1 An evaluation at Shillington Road, c. 670m to the north-west of the PDA identified an Early Neolithic pit and a Late Bronze Age enclosure (MHT31580)
- 3.2.2 Four pits were excavated in advance of the Petrofina pipeline in Dane Field, c. 1km to the north-west of the PDA, one of which contained a sherd of late Neolithic Peterborough Ware pottery (9780).
- 3.2.3 The Icknield Way (4182) is considered to be a routeway of Neolithic date and it passes a short distance southeast of the study area.
- 3.2.4 A series of evaluations and an excavation at Holwell Road, c. 190m to the north-east of the PDA identified part of a late Bronze Age-early Iron Age settlement comprising a potential roundhouse, pits, ditches and postholes (31348).
- 3.2.5 Numerous Bronze Age axe heads have also been identified around Pirton (553, 554, 1716, 6341).
- 3.2.6 Geophysical survey, evaluation and excavation at Priors Hill, c. 560m north-west of the PDA, identified two ring ditches, a Middle Bronze Age cow burial and part of a Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age settlement with cremation burials (31109, MHT40380). Late Mesolithic-Early Neolithic and Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flints were also recovered from the site. Further Late Bronze Age-Early Iron settlement was also identified at the adjacent Pollards Way

excavation (31515).

3.3 Roman

- 3.3.1 The floor of a Roman building was excavated in Bury Field adjacent to the west of the site across Walnut Tree Road (1478), with sherds of Roman pottery also recovered from the earthworks of the adjacent Motte and Bailey castle (1477).
- 3.3.2 Pirton was subject to several seasons of test-pitting, conducted as a community project (EHT8473, EHT8474, EHT8476). This recorded sherds of Roman pottery on land to the immediate north and south of the PDA.
- 3.3.3 A Roman pit was identified during a watching brief at the primary school, c. 370m to the north-west (17170), with further sherds of Roman pottery recovered from the school playground (1475).
- 3.3.4 At Pollards Way, c. 475m to the north-west of the PDA, a large Roman quarry pit was identified (18649). A Late Iron Age-Early Roman inhumation burial was identified during excavations at Priors Hill adjacent to Pollards Way, with further Roman pottery recovered from later features (MHT40380). A Romano-British spindle whorl was also recovered as a findspot in the vicinity of Prior Hill (1480).
- 3.3.5 Excavation on Dane Field, c. 1km to the north-west of the PDA, identified part of a settlement beginning in the 1st century BC and spanning the Roman period (6978).

3.4 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

- 3.4.1 The manor of Pirton is recorded in Domesday as the property of Ralph de Limsey. The number of households is recorded as twenty-five villagers, twenty-nine smallholders, twelve cottagers, ten slaves and one priest. The land and resources included twenty ploughlands, six lord's plough teams, twelve men's plough teams. Other resources included two lord's lands, Meadow, ten ploughs, Woodland, 500 pigs, four mills. It was within the largest 20% of settlements recorded in Domesday¹. Before the Norman conquest, the land was held by

¹ <https://opendomesday.org/place/TL1431/pirton/>

Archbishop Stigand.

- 3.4.2 Excavations at Priors Hill, c. 490m north-west of the PDA, identified part of an Early Anglo-Saxon settlement that continued into the Middle Saxon period (MHT40380).
- 3.4.3 At The Coach House, Shillington Road, c. 680m north-west of the PDA, a series of pits and numerous artefacts including pottery, animal bone, a knife blade and a piece of quernstone dated to the early to middle Anglo-Saxon period were found. The majority of the features, which included ditches and over twenty pits, were late Anglo-Saxon in date (Dodd 2023, 18–33; MHT31645).
- 3.4.4 Excavations to the rear of The Fox Public House, c. 350m north-west of the PDA, identified a settlement and a cemetery (9676 and 9677). The main period of occupation was represented by twenty early medieval buildings and a field system. Forty inhumations, many with blade injuries, appear to be Christian but to pre-date the excavated buildings and nearby twelfth-century St Mary's Church (4315), itself located c. 225m north-west of the PDA, possibly indicating the presence of an Anglo-Saxon church nearby. A separate grave, containing remnants of a coffin and shroud, is believed to be late medieval/early post-medieval (Turner 2003, 22–25, 55, 61). Much of the pottery from The Fox was later reassessed as seventh to ninth century in date, considerably earlier than originally thought. It was found to include both early to middle Anglo-Saxon organic-tempered wares and higher status middle Anglo-Saxon continental imports (Blinkhorn in Wroe-Brown 2017, 13; HHER 9676).
- 3.4.5 Evaluation at 17 Walnut Tree Road, adjacent to the north of the PDA, identified four pits and two ditches, all dated by pottery finds to the 9-12th centuries (EHT8630).
- 3.4.6 Features excavated at Pirton Primary School, c. 370m to the north-west of the PDA, included a pit containing a sherd of Maxey-type Ware pottery dating to AD 650-850; a ditch containing two sherds of St Neots Ware (AD 900-1150), cut by another ditch containing three sherds of medieval Hertfordshire Grey Ware; a gully containing one sherd of Shelly Coarseware (AD 1100-1400);

undated features (a ditch, two post holes) which appeared likely to be contemporary (31388).

- 3.4.7 Test pitting across the village has identified Anglo-Saxon and Medieval pottery (13757).
- 3.4.8 An early twelfth-century motte-and-bailey castle, known as Toot Hill, and shrunken medieval village to its south in a field known as The Bury, are adjacent to the west of the PDA across Walnut Tree Road (HHER 32, 746). A medieval moated site lies c. 815m to the north-west of the PDA, at Rectory Farm (2221).
- 3.4.9 Evaluation in advance of residential development at Elm Tree Farm, c. 160m north of the PDA, uncovered several ditches, of which three contained medieval pottery and building materials. The finds were scanty but include handmade sherds of possible 10th century (or somewhat later) date, and Herts Grey Wares (13th-14th century). The ceramic building materials consisted of tile and a brick, all probably 12th-15th century (12824).

3.5 Post-medieval and Modern

- 3.5.1 The 1818 Enclosure Map shows two buildings within the PDA located either side of a length of former road, probably a hollow-way, now marked by the drainage ditch, though these buildings are no longer present on the 1881-1882 OS Map (see DBA, Abrams Archaeology 2025, 74).
- 3.5.2 The oldest part of the farmhouse at Walnut Tree Farm, located c. 50m south-west of the PDA, is a late medieval timber-framed house which underwent modifications in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries (15907).
- 3.5.3 The later 19th century OS maps show two greens, Great and Little Green, south-west and north-east of the castle and the parish church. These were two of the focal points of the post-medieval village. Great Green is still lined with 15th to 17th century buildings, some of comparatively high status (12427). Little Green, at the end of what in the 19th century was known as Town Street, is smaller and different in character but also has 16th to 17th century houses scattered around it (16620). The PDA lay to the south of the village core at this time.

- 3.5.4 There are fifty-one listed buildings within the 1km of the PDA, with many of these lying within the Medieval and Post-Medieval core of Pirton village to the northwest of the PDA.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The archaeological evaluation comprised a total of 90m of trenching and was situated within the garden of 19 Walnut Tree Road, Pirton (Plates 1-2). The initial trench layout was revised on site to accommodate previously unidentified constraints. These included a service running between the house and the summerhouse, a smaller than anticipated PDA which resulted in Trench 3 being shortened and a substantial flower bed that required the re-positioning of Trench 2. Where practicable, the remaining trenches were extended to compensate for these alterations.
- 4.1.2 The trenches were distributed across the site in order to provide a representative sample of the PDA whilst avoiding the site constraints. These comprised the two service cuts running northwest-southeast between the house and the summerhouse, together with a water pipe located within the culvert at the centre of the site (Plate 3).
- 4.1.3 The evaluation was undertaken according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2023a), *Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2023b), and the *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2020).

4.2 Excavation methodology

- 4.2.1 Ground reduction during the evaluation was carried out using a 9-ton JCB wheeled mechanical excavator to strip the trenches. Topsoil and other overburden of low archaeological value was removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded.
- 4.2.2 Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and hoe as appropriate, and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools.

4.3 Recording and Finds Recovery

- 4.3.1 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) and the

locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Geomax GPS rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.

- 4.3.2 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as 'context numbers') and recorded with PCA's bespoke digital recording system using terminology defined in PCA's excavation manual (Taylor and Brown 2018) and linked to a Geographical Information System (QGIS) used to interrogate the data.
- 4.3.3 Archaeological processes recognised by the deposition of material are signified in this report by round brackets (thus), while events constituting the removal of deposits are referred to here as 'cuts' and signified by square brackets [thus]. Where more than one slot was excavated through an individual feature, each intervention was assigned additional numbers for the cutting event and for the deposits it contained (these deposits within cut features being referred to here as 'fills'). The record numbers assigned to cuts, deposits and groups are entirely arbitrary and in no way reflect the chronological order in which events took place. All features and deposits excavated during the evaluation and excavation are listed in Appendix 1. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.
- 4.3.4 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process. Archaeological features and spoil heaps were scanned by metal-detector periodically. Only objects of modern date were found and were not retained for accession.
- 4.3.5 Cameras with an APS-C or larger sensor and with a resolution of no less than 10 megapixels were used. Images are of archival quality, non-proprietary RAW (.DNG) or .TIFF files. Suitable horizontal and vertical scales were used as appropriate. Digital photographs were taken of all trenches, archaeological features, and deposits.

4.4 Sampling Strategy

- 4.4.1 Discrete features were half-sectioned, photographed and recorded by a cross-section scaled drawing at an appropriate scale (either 1:10 or 1:20). Where large or significant finds assemblages were present, features were subsequently 100% excavated for finds recovery.
- 4.4.2 Linear features were investigated by means of regularly spaced slots with a minimum of 1m width.
- 4.4.3 Where stratigraphic relationships between features could not be discerned in plan, relationship slots were also excavated, and these were recorded as part of the GPS survey and noted on the relevant context record.

4.5 Environmental Sampling

- 4.5.1 A total of 3 bulk samples (generally 20-40 litres in volume) were taken to extract and identify micro- and macro-botanical remains. The aim of this sampling was to investigate the past environment and economy of the site, the diet of the ancient inhabitants and the agricultural basis of the settlement. An additional aim of the sampling was to recover small objects that are not readily recovered by hand-collection, such as metalworking debris and bones of fish and small animals. These samples were taken from sealed deposits.

5 QUANTIFICATION OF ARCHIVE

5.1 Paper Archive

Context register sheets	4
Context sheets	60
Section register sheets	1
Sections at 1:10 & 1:20	14
Trench record sheets	5
Photo register sheets	1
Environmental register sheets	1

5.2 Digital Archive

Digital photos	143
GPS survey files	2
Digital plans	1
GIS project inc all context and trench data	1
Access database	1

5.3 Physical Archive

Pottery	23/320g
Ceramic building material (CBM)	62/4589g
Flint	2
Metal finds	10
Animal bone	31
Environmental bulk samples	3

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS BY TRENCH

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The trenches are described below in numerical order, with technical data tabulated in Appendix 1. Features and deposits are first split into feature type and then described in numerical cut order. Archaeological features and deposits were sealed by the topsoil and subsoil unless otherwise stated. The principal result of the fieldwork was the identification of a series of ditches and pits, the full extents of which could not be defined within the excavated area. Datable material was recovered from a series of ditches, pits and a pond, with the majority of the material dating to the 11th-12th century AD, the late Medieval period and post-medieval period.

6.2 Overburden and Natural Geological Deposits

- 6.2.1 The natural geological substrate (102) consisted of a firm, light whiteish grey marl. This was overlain by a thin layer of subsoil (101) consisting of a light brownish grey sandy silt. The trenches contained varying layers of made ground that had been installed to level the garden in places, however these will be discussed in more detail below with the relevant trench information. Overlaying these made ground layers was a layer of firm, dark brownish grey silty clay topsoil (100), and on top of this was a darker layer of firm, dark-brownish grey silty clay associated with the laying of the turf for the garden (131). This was clearly different from the remainder of the topsoil.

6.3 Trench 1 (Plates 4-5)

- 6.3.1 Trench 1 was 7m long and was orientated northeast-southwest. It was shortened due to the presence of two service cuts through the garden on a northwest-southeast alignment and could not be extended any further to the north due to the trees bordering the garden. No archaeological finds or features were identified.

6.4 Trench 2 (Plate 6)

- 6.4.1 Trench 2 was 28m long and was aligned northwest-southeast. It had to be moved slightly to the southwest due to the position of a substantial flower bed within the PDA, however it was able to be extended by 10m due to the new

position of the trench. It contained a large discrete feature as well as the (post)medieval pond identified on the 1888 OS map and a group of three pits.

Pits [134], [136], [148]

- 6.4.2 A group of three undated pits were excavated within Trench 2. They were all located partially underneath the baulk, however they appeared to be sub-circular in plan with moderately sloping sides and concave bases, measuring between 0.3m-1m long, 1.12m-2.6m wide and 0.36m-0.42m deep. The each comprised one firm, mid-brownish grey clayey silt which contained no finds.

Pit [140] (Plate 7)

- 6.4.3 Pit [140] was located in the centre of Trench 2 and was only partially visible as it extended under the baulk to the northwest. It was sub-rectangular in plan with moderately sloping sides and an irregular base measuring 4.6m wide and 0.54m deep. It contained one firm, greyish brown silty clay fill (139) which contained one sherd of Stamford Ware pottery (14g), one sherd of St Neots Ware pottery and one sherd of Sandy Coarseware pottery (5g), indicating a likely 11th century date for the pit. Three fragments of cattle bone, an undiagnostic iron nail and two struck flint flakes (7g) were also recovered from the pit. An environmental sample from the pit identified frequently occurring charcoal, as well as occasional indeterminate charred grain, amorphous charred material and vitrified material. Though it must be noted that the presence of uncharred seeds, modern plant material and insect eggs/worm cases, as well as frequent roots/tubers and abundant terrestrial molluscs would indicate a degree of bioturbation.

- 6.4.4 Pit [140] was truncated by Ditches [138] and [142]. Fill (141) of ditch [142]

Pond [119] (Plate 8)

- 6.4.5 Pond [119] was located in the southeastern end of the trench and extended beyond the baulk to the southeast, southwest and northeast. A 1x2m test pit was dug into the edge of the pond to obtain the profile and the depth at the edge. The test pit was 0.5m deep at the deepest point, however it is highly likely that it was deeper towards the middle of the feature. The pond had been filled with a firm, mid-brownish grey silty clay which contained one sherd (6g) of St.

Neots Ware pottery and three sherds (21g) of Hertfordshire Grey Ware, along with three fragments of cattle/cattle-sized animal bone and a fragment of mussel shell. An environmental sample taken from the pond identified fairly frequent charcoal, occasional Fabaceae sp. (legumes) and occasional indeterminate charred grain. The sample also contained fairly frequent uncharred seeds and modern plant material, occasional insect remains and insect eggs/worm cases, as well as abundant roots/tubers and terrestrial molluscs. This would indicate that the fill has been subject to extensive post-depositional disturbance.

Ditches [138] and [142] (Plate 9)

- 6.4.6 Ditches [138] and [142] truncated Pit [140]. They were linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and concave bases, measuring between 0.53m-1.57m wide and 0.18m-0.23m deep. Ditch [138] was the earlier of the two ditches and comprised one firm mid-brownish grey silty clay which contained no finds. Ditch [140] appeared to be deliberately backfilled as the fill was much darker, a firm, dark greyish brown silty clay which contained ceramic building material (CBM).

Layer (132) (Plate 9)

- 6.4.7 Layer (132) was a layer of made ground present throughout much of Trench 2 and would appear to represent an attempt at levelling the ground (Fig.4). It overlaid all the features in Trench 2. It was a compact, dark brownish grey layer with frequent large chalk nodules and pieces of late Medieval roof tile and hand-made unfrogged brick, measuring between 0.15m-0.2m throughout the trench. This layer was stratigraphically beneath layer (159) which also contained quantities of roof tile dated to the 14th-15th centuries. It is likely that both layers represent demolition and levelling of buildings present on the 1800 pre-enclosure map and the 1818 Enclosure Map², which had been demolished by the time of the 1899 OS map (Fig. 7), though no foundations or other structural remains were identified.

² <https://pirtonhistory.org.uk/about-the-village/maps/>

Layer (159) (Plate 9)

- 6.4.8 Layer (159) was present in the northwestern end of Trench 2 and overlaid part of Ditches [138], [142] and Layer (132) (Fig. 4). It was a loose, dark brownish grey silty clay with very frequent pieces of roof tile dated to 14-15th centuries. These may be associated with the demolition of the former buildings that can be seen on the 1818 Enclosure Map.

6.5 Trench 3 (Plates 10-12)

- 6.5.1 Trench 3 was 11m long and was orientated east-west. It had to be shortened due to the proposed development area being smaller than originally planned. It could not be extended any further to the east due to the culvert containing the large water pipe running through the garden. No archaeological finds or features were identified.

6.6 Trench 4 (Plate 13)

- 6.6.1 Trench 4 was 18m long and was orientated northwest-southeast. It could not be extended any further due to the edge of the garden to the southeast and the culvert with the water pipe to the northwest. It contained five pits and two ditches as well as one posthole and some post-medieval or modern disturbance.

Pits [110], [146]

- 6.6.2 Two pits were located against the northwestern edge of the baulk in Trench 4. Pit [110] truncated pit [146] (Fig. 5). They were sub-circular in plan with near vertical sides and flat bases, measuring between 0.45m-0.62m wide and both measuring 0.42m deep. They both contained two fills, the earliest of which were a friable mid-orangish brown silty clay and the latest fills being a soft, mid-brownish grey silty clay fill. Upper fill (112) of pit [110] contained a small quantity of daub and upper fill (144) of pit [146] contained a square headed iron nail and a sherd of 17th-18th century Metropolitan Slipware. This would suggest both pits are post-medieval or later.

Pit [124] (Plates 14-15)

- 6.6.3 Pit [124] was truncated by Ditch [123] and was extended beyond the baulk to the southwest. It was sub-circular in plan with vertical sides and a flat base, measuring 0.95m wide and 1.17m deep. It consisted of 6 fills which were either

soft mid-greyish brown, mid-brownish grey or mid-orangish brown silty clays. There were very frequent pieces of charcoal in the uppermost fill (130), along with pottery ranging from 12th-14th century Hertfordshire Greyware, 15th-16th century Late Medieval Transitional Ware and 17th-18th century Tin-Glazed Earthenware, as well as late medieval roof tile. Occasional fragments of daub were identified in fill (129), however no further finds were recovered from the four lower fills. This would perhaps indicate a later medieval date for the pit, though it may have remained partially open into the early post-medieval period. The later pottery in the uppermost fill may be explained by disturbance from the pit being truncated by ditch [123], which also contained post-medieval pottery.

Pit [152] (Plates 16-17)

- 6.6.4 Pit [152] truncated Ditches [150] and [154] and extended beyond the limit of excavation (LOE) of the trench. It was sub-circular in plan with vertical sides measuring 1.6m wide, however the base was not reached due to hitting the water table at 0.7m from the top of the feature. It comprised one hard, mid-greyish brown silty clay fill which contained late medieval roof tile and fragments of handmade brick.

Pit [158]

- 6.6.5 Pit [158] truncated Ditch [150] and extended under the baulk to the southwest. It was sub-circular in plan with steep sides and a concave base, measuring 0.66m wide and 0.27m deep. The pit contained three fills which were either firm mid-brownish grey, mid-greyish brown and dark greyish brown silty clays and contained no finds.

Ditches [121], [123]

- 6.6.6 Ditches [121] and [123] were aligned north to south and truncated Pit [124], potentially aligning with Ditch [109] in Trench 5. Ditch [121] truncated Ditch [123] and was likely a re-establishment of the earlier ditch. They were linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and concave bases, measuring between 0.66m-0.76m wide and 0.25m-0.3m deep. They contained post-medieval Glazed Red Earthenware and Tin-Glazed Earthenware, animal bone, hand-made brick, late Medieval roof tile and two small undiagnostic iron nails. This indicates a likely 17th century date for the ditches.

Ditch [150] (Plates 16-17)

- 6.6.7 Ditch [150] was aligned northeast-southwest, truncated Ditch [154] and was truncated by Pit [158]. It was linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and a concave base, measuring 0.29m wide and 0.11m deep and contained no finds. While ditch [150] contained no finds it truncated Ditch [154] which was dated to the 12th century AD and it was truncated by Pit [152] which dated to the late medieval, so it is likely that Ditch [150] dated between the late 12th-15th centuries AD.

Ditch [154]

- 6.6.8 Ditch [154] was aligned northeast-southwest and was truncated by Pit [152] and Ditch [150]. It was linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and a concave base, measuring 1.63m wide and 0.63m deep. It contained one firm, dark brownish grey silty clay fill which contained St Neots Ware pottery and Hertfordshire Grey Ware indicating a likely 12th century AD date for the ditch. Fragments of ovicaprid bone were also recovered from the ditch.

6.7 Trench 5 (Plate 18)

- 6.7.1 Trench 5 was 26m long and was orientated east-west. It contained 5 ditches, most of which did not contain any datable material. It could not be extended any further at either end due to its location in the corner of the garden. A layer of made ground was consistent throughout the trench that had been used to level out the garden.

Ditch Terminus [105] (Plate 19)

- 6.7.2 Ditch Terminus [105] was aligned north-south and terminated within the LOE of the trench. It was linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and a concave base, measuring 0.75m wide and 0.28m deep. It comprised one firm, mid-greyish brown silty clay fill which contained frequent signs of rooting and bioturbation with no finds.

Ditch [107]

- 6.7.3 Ditch [107] was aligned north-south, was linear in plan and had moderately sloping sides and a flat base, measuring 1.7m wide and only 0.15m deep. It contained one firm, dark greyish brown silty clay fill, however there were no

finds.

Ditch [109] (Plate 20)

- 6.7.4 Ditch [109] was aligned northeast-southwest and potentially was the same feature as one of Ditches [121] and [123]. The ditch was linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and a concave base, measuring 1.1m wide and 0.37m deep. It comprised one soft, mid-greyish brown clayey silt fill which contained no finds.

Ditches [115], [117]

- 6.7.5 Ditches [115] and [117] were aligned northeast-southwest, however they do not continue into Trench 4 which suggests they either turn or terminate before Trench 4. Ditch [117] truncated ditch [115] and was likely a re-establishment of the earlier ditch. They were linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and concave bases, measuring between 0.47m-0.98m wide and 0.26m-0.4m deep. They both consisted of the same firm, mid-greyish brown silty clay. St Neots Type Ware and Hertfordshire Grey Ware was recovered from fill (116) of ditch [117], suggesting a 12th century date for the ditch. St Neots Type Ware pottery was recovered from upper fill (113) of Ditch [115], with Sandy Coarseware pottery recovered from lower fill (114). This would indicate a 10th-12th century date for Ditch [115].

Layer (103)

- 6.7.6 Layer (103) was a layer of made ground, similar to Layer (132) in Trench 2, which had been used to level the modern garden. It was between 0.15m-0.2m thick and consisted of a firm, dark brownish grey silty clay fill which contained moderate amounts of CBM.

7 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Lithic Assessment

Laura Desrosiers-Whalley

- 7.1.1 Two struck flint flakes were recovered during the evaluation at Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, both from environmental sample <2>, of fill (139), from feature [140].
- 7.1.2 The first piece was a fairly thin decortication flake, weighing 4.5g, and was struck from the high quality 'glassy' translucent brownish grey raw material. The striking platform was completely cortical, as was almost 100% of the dorsal face save a single small dorsal scar and exhibited minimal post-depositional chipping. This piece was a primary or secondary knapping flake, representative of generic knapping debitage. Such flakes are generated throughout all flintworking periods, making it difficult to ascribe a specific date to this piece beyond generally prehistoric; however, the thin, gracile proportions may indicate a Neolithic date, as later examples tend to be larger or more clumsily struck.
- 7.1.3 The second flake was smaller than the first, weighing only 2.5g. The raw material was similar in hue and quality, though no cortex was present, and post-depositional damage was more substantial- it is likely that this piece was struck by a plough or similarly damaged. The striking platform was small and chipped, and thermal scarring was present on the dorsal face. The date of this small piece of knapping debitage is unclear, beyond generally prehistoric.
- 7.1.4 Little can be understood with regards to prehistoric activity or knapping practices at the site based on these two flakes. Both were likely incidentally discarded on the surface, and were subsequently disturbed by later activity, resulting in their incorporation into a later feature as residual finds.
- 7.1.5 No further work is required on this assemblage.

7.2 Pottery

Paul Blinkhorn

- 7.2.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 23 sherds with a total weight of 320g. It was

all Saxo-Norman or later. The following fabric types were noted:

- F200: St. Neots Ware type T1(2), AD1000-1200 (Denham 1985). 6 sherds, 118g.
- F205: Stamford Ware, AD850-1200 (Kilmurry 1980). 1 sherd, 14g.
- F333: Hertfordshire Grey Ware, mid 12th – 14th century (Turner-Rugg 1993). 6 sherds, 77g.
- F360: Sandy Coarseware, mid 10th – late 12th century (Borrill 2008, 10). 2 sherds, 30g.
- F401: Late Medieval Transitional Ware, 15th – 16th century (ibid. 63). 1 sherd, 3g.
- F410: Tin-Glazed Earthenware, 17th – 18th century (Orton 1988). 4 sherds, 18g.
- F412: Metropolitan Slipware, 17th – 18th century (Davey and Walker 2008). 1 sherd, 18g.
- F425: Glazed Red Earthenware, 16th – 19th century (Brears 1969). 2 sherds, 42g.

7.2.2 The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. Each date should be regarded as a terminus post quem. The range of fabrics is typical of sites in the region (eg. Borrill 2008) and suggests that activity at the site was largely limited to the 11th and 12th centuries, with later medieval pottery almost entirely absent apart from a single small residual sherd.

7.2.3 The fragment of F200 from context 153 was from the rim of a cylindrical jar, a type of specialist cooking vessel which was produced by the shelly ware industries of the south-east Midlands during the Saxo-Norman and earlier medieval periods (Blinkhorn 2010, 276). One of the sherds of F200 from context 113 was from the rim of another vessel of the same type.

7.2.4 The sherd of F360 from context 114 was from the rim of a jar, as was the fragment of Stamford Ware from context 139. The latter was in a fine white fabric typical of the later products of the tradition (Kilmurry 1980) and was fairly noticeably burnt. The rest of the late Saxon and medieval material consisted of undecorated bodysherds.

7.2.5 The post-medieval material largely dates to the 17th century and includes some reasonably good quality tin-glazed earthenware as well as more mundane utilitarian glazed earthenwares.

7.3 CBM

Paul Blinkhorn

7.3.1 An assemblage of 62 fragments of fired clay building material was noted. Their

occurrence by number and weight of fragments per context by type is shown in Table 1. The environmental sample from context 130 produced a large number of very small and somewhat abraded fragments of mortar (total weight = 69g). They are undatable.

7.3.2 The roof-tile was all in a hard, red sandy fabric with rare iron and calcareous inclusions, and generally between 14-16mm thick. Most of it had mortar attached, and some pieces had round peg-holes. Such tiles are typical of the medieval sites of the region and are very similar to examples from Hertford Castle which were generally of 14th – 15th century date (Zeepvat 1996).

7.3.3 The brick generally comprised small fragments which were hand-made and sand-moulded, in a hard, red, sandy fabric with rare flint and calcareous material. None of their original dimensions survived, but the fabric and method of manufacture suggest they are of late medieval date (McComish 2015, 25).

7.3.4 The daub was very low-fired and friable and has no obvious 'finished' surfaces. It is undatable.

Tr	Context	Roof Tile		Brick		Daub	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
2	139	5	171				
2	141	25	1897				
4	112					4	204
4	122	17	1431	2	257		
4	130	5	202				
4	151	2	275	2	152		
	Total	54	3976	4	409	4	204

Table 1: CBM occurrence by number and weight of fragments per context by type

7.4 Metalwork

Thomas Lucking

7.4.1 A total of ten metal objects of various materials were recovered from archaeological contexts during trial-trench investigation of the site. Eight of the

objects are currently undated while two sewing pins are of medieval to post-medieval date. The objects are catalogued in Appendix 3 and summarised below.

Metal Finds by Trench

Trench 2

- 7.4.2 A single iron nail was recovered from (139) of [140]. It is not closely datable and dating of this object is reliant on other finds recovered from the same context.

Trench 4

- 7.4.3 Two iron nails were recovered from (122) of [123]. They are not closely datable and dating of these is reliant on other finds recovered from the same context.
- 7.4.4 Two copper alloy wire sewing pins (SF 1), two iron nails and two small sheet iron fragments were recovered from Sample <1> taken from (130) of [124]. The nails and sheet fragments are not closely datable but the two sewing pins are of a form that begins in the later medieval period and continues through the post-medieval.
- 7.4.5 A single iron nail was recovered from (144) of [146]. It is not closely datable and dating of this object is reliant on other finds recovered from the same context.

Discussion

- 7.4.6 This small assemblage principally consists of iron nails and fragments of sheet, objects which are commonly found across a range of sites of various periods. At this stage, they provide only limited insight into historic activities on site. The two copper alloy sewing pins are objects that would be expected in a medieval to post-medieval domestic context where sewing is taking place. As such, they are not unexpected on a site in the vicinity of a historic village but do aid in dating the context from which they were recovered.

Recommendations

- 7.4.7 Should further work be undertaken, this assemblage should be reassessed alongside any further metalwork found.

7.5 Animal bone

Tess Townend

Introduction

- 7.5.1 Trial trenching at Walnut Tree Road produced an assemblage of 49 animal bone and tooth fragments (54 prior to refitting) recovered from three trenches. Material was retrieved from a range of features, including ditches, a pond, and a pit, with the majority originating from Trenches 2 and 4. The assemblage is dominated by domestic taxa, with cattle being the most abundant species, followed by equal numbers of sheep/goat and pig/boar. A single equid specimen was also identified. Overall preservation is good. This section details the assessment of these faunal remains, their analytical potential, and presents any recommendations.

Methodology

- 7.5.2 Animal bone and tooth material was identified and recorded to species level where possible, using Hillson (2016) for mammals and Johnson (2016) for small mammals, in addition to an in-house comparative skeletal reference collection. Sheep/goat differentiation followed Prummel & Frisch (1986), although no species differentiation was positively identified.
- 7.5.3 Attempts were made to refit elements within contexts, and the total number of fragments were documented. Articulating fragments were recorded as one specimen, with the total number of bones having been recorded separately to reduce inflation. The number of identified specimens was then calculated from these data (NISP).
- 7.5.4 Unidentifiable fragments, in addition to ribs and undiagnostic vertebrae, were classified by size (e.g., cattle-sized, sheep-sized, or small mammal). The recorded attributes included species, bone portion, fusion, condition, taphonomy, pathology, sex, tooth wear, fracture type, and anthropogenic modifications.
- 7.5.5 Owing to the small size of the assemblage, only a limited range of attributes was recorded. A zonal method was used to record the various skeletal parts based on Davis (1992). Analysis of epiphyseal fusion was based on Silver

(1969). Non-oral pathology was described after Baker and Brothwell (1980). When permitting, fracture type on identifiable long bones was described after Outram (2001). Biometrical analysis followed von den Driesch (1976) for mammals and birds, using digital callipers.

- 7.5.6 Approximately, 32.7% of the assemblage was collected by hand, while the remainder was recovered from environmental samples subjected to flotation processing and sieved using a >2mm mesh.

Assemblage preservation

- 7.5.7 Prior to refitting, the assemblage comprised 54 bone fragments recovered from six contexts. Following refitting, this total was reduced to 49 fragments. Preservation was generally very good, with most specimens exhibiting well-preserved surfaces and minimal root etching. Poor preservation was observed only in material from Pond (118)/(119), where water abrasion was evident. Despite the overall good preservation, the small assemblage yielded only three measurable specimens, limiting biometric analysis.
- 7.5.8 Aside from two burnt fragments, no evidence of anthropogenic modification was observed. Dry fractures were the predominant fracture type, suggesting a degree of post-depositional disturbance (Outram 2001). The limited evidence of canid gnawing, together with the low incidence of weathering, suggests that deposition within the excavated features occurred relatively rapidly.

Trench	Context	Cattle	Equid	Cattle-sized	Sheep/goat	Pig/boar	Sheep-sized	Microfauna	Unidentifiable	Total NISP
2	118	1		2	1	2				6
	139	3								3
4	122	1	1				1			3
	130	1				1		4	27	33
	153				1					1
5	113				1		2			3
Total NISP		6	2	1	4	3	3	3	27	49

Table 2: Refitted specimens (NISP) from Walnut Tree Lane by Trench,

context, and species.

Assemblage description

- 7.5.9 Domestic taxa dominate the assemblage (Table 2). Cattle are the most abundant species, followed by sheep/goat and pig/boar, with a single equid specimen also represented. No wild taxa were positively identified, although four rib fragments were assigned to microfauna.
- 7.5.10 Interpretation of the recorded attributes is constrained by the small size of the assemblage, although further excavation has the potential to increase the available dataset. The domestic assemblage includes a broad range of skeletal elements, consistent with the disposal of both food waste and general domestic refuse. However, the limited sample size precludes meaningful preliminary analysis of age-at-death profiles, pathology, or butchery practices.

Spatial Distribution

- 7.5.11 Material was recovered from three of the five excavated trenches. No meaningful spatial patterning was identified due to the small scale of the excavation and the proximity of the trenches. Nevertheless, most of the material originated from Trenches 2 and 4.

Conclusion

- 7.5.12 The faunal assemblage from Walnut Tree Road demonstrates low analytical potential due to its small size and the restricted number of observable attributes. Despite this, the good taphonomic condition suggests that further excavation will possibly yield additional data of moderate quantity. Should site phasing be revised in the future, both the assemblage and this assessment should be reviewed accordingly.

7.6 Marine Shell

Sophie Pallett

- 7.6.1 The shell sample set from Walnut Road Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire, was recovered from a pond: (119) [118], and a Pit (139) [140]. The assemblage consisted of 5g of oyster shell and 2g of Mussel shell. Due to the small and fragmentary nature of the shell there is no need for further analysis, and the sample is recommended for discard before archiving.

Cut	Context	Sample number	Feature type	Oyster fragments (abundance)	Mussel fragments (abundance)	Weight (g)
119	118	<3>	Pond		Occasional	2
140	139	<2>	Pit	Occasional		1
140	139		Pit	Occasional		4
Total						7

Table 3: Marine shell

7.7 Environmental Archaeology

Sophie Pallett

Introduction

- 7.7.1 This report presents the environmental findings from an archaeological evaluation at Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire. Three samples of under 40L were taken from a series of pits, and a pond.

Aims

- 7.7.2 The aims of this assessment are threefold: to give an overview of the contents and abundances of the assessed samples, to determine the environmental potential of the assessed samples, and to recommend further analysis of the assessed samples, if necessary.

Methodology

- 7.7.3 Three samples of under 40L were processed through floatation; material was collected using a 300 µm mesh for the flot and a 1mm mesh for the heavy residue. The heavy residue was dried and sieved through 10mm, 5mm, and 2mm fractions before being sorted. Archaeological material was extracted, labelled and recorded from these residues. The abundance of each material type was recorded using a non-linear scale: "1" showing occasional occurrence (1-10 items found), "2" showing fairly frequent occurrence (11-30 items found), "3" showing frequent occurrence (31-100 items found), and "4" showing an abundant presence of material (>100 items found).

The flot was dried, labelled and scanned under a low power binocular microscope in order to identify the presence and quality of environmental

material, such as seeds, chaff, grain, molluscs, charcoal and modern material. It was separated into sieve fractions of >4mm, 2-4mm and <2mm. Abundances of material were recorded in the same manner as detailed above within the heavy residue. Seed and cereal identifications were made using standard reference materials (Jacomet, Greig 2006; and Cappers et al., 2012).

Results

Sample <1>, Pit (130), [124]

- 7.7.4 Sample <1> contained frequent charcoal >4mm, fairly frequent 2-4mm, abundant <2mm, as well as two pieces of charcoal of potentially identifiable size (hereby meaning exceeding 4mm in all directions). The sample also contained occasional *Fabaceae* sp. (legumes), indeterminate charred seeds, charred nutshell, charred cereal waste material and *Hordeum vulgare* (barley), fairly frequent *Triticum* sp. (wheat) and abundant indeterminate charred grain. Pit [124] also contained occasional amorphous charred material and vitrified material. The sample further contained fairly frequent uncharred seeds, occasional modern plant material and insect eggs/worm cases, as well as frequent roots/tubers and insect remains, and abundant terrestrial molluscs. Also present were small amounts of burnt clay, animal bone, mortar, CBM, pottery and metal.

Sample <2>, Pit (139), [140]

- 7.7.5 Sample <2> contained occasional charcoal >4mm, and frequent instances 2-4mm and <2mm. The sample also included occasional indeterminate charred grain, amorphous charred material and vitrified material. Pit [140] further contained occasional uncharred seeds, modern plant material and insect eggs/worm cases, as well as frequent roots/tubers and abundant terrestrial molluscs. Also noted were small quantities of metal and struck flint.

Sample <3>, Pond (118), [119]

- 7.7.6 Sample [119] contained fairly frequent charcoal 2-4mm and abundant <2mm. Additionally, sample <3> contained occasional *Fabaceae* sp. (legumes) and occasional indeterminate charred grain. The sample also contained fairly frequent uncharred seeds and modern plant material, occasional insect

remains and insect eggs/worm cases, as well as abundant roots/tubers and terrestrial molluscs. Also noted was a small amount of burnt clay and animal bone.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Work

- 7.7.7 The preservation in the sample set recovered from Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire, is extremely poor. The vast majority of the cereal assemblage was unable to be identified to species. There was also significant evidence of bioturbation throughout the sample in the form of modern plant material, roots/tubers, burrowing terrestrial molluscs, insect remains, insect eggs/worm cases and uncharred seeds. Should further work be undertaken on the site an effort should be taken to take samples from sealed contexts.
- 7.7.8 The preservation in the sample set recovered from Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire, is extremely poor. The vast majority of the cereal assemblage was unable to be identified to species. There was also significant evidence of bioturbation throughout the sample in the form of modern plant material, roots/tubers, burrowing terrestrial molluscs, insect remains, insect eggs/worm cases and uncharred seeds.

8 DISCUSSION

- 8.1.1 The evaluation identified a series of pits and ditches dating between the 11th century AD and the 17th century AD.
- 8.1.2 Three ditches, a pond and a pit were dated to the 11th-12th century AD based on pottery assemblages, Pond [119] and Pit [140] in Trench 2, Ditch [154] in Trench 4 and Ditches [115] and [117] in Trench 5. Given the relatively limited finds assemblage, the ditches and pit likely represent enclosures associated with backyard activity or agricultural fields adjacent to the west of the shrunken medieval village known as 'The Bury' and the associated Toot Hill motte and bailey castle (SM1012325; Fig. 2), but away from the core of the village.
- 8.1.3 Pond [119] is present on the 1899 OS map (Fig. 7), though is not present on the earlier 1812 enclosure map or the 1800 pre-enclosure map³, perhaps indicating that the pond is 19th century in date and that the medieval pottery within it is redeposited as a result of truncating earlier features. Much of the pond was cleaned out, deepened and re-lined by the present owner in the early 21st century, before being infilled and levelled to make way for a summer house. This would be supported by the fact that the east to west culvert that drained into the former pond, appears to be marked as a road on both the 1800 pre-enclosure map and the 1812 enclosure map bordering 'The Bury', but no longer by the time the pond appears on the 1899 OS map (Fig.7). The culvert is still extant (Plate 3), but no trenches were placed across it, as it still plays an active role in draining the surrounding land and preventing flooding on Walnut Tree Road itself. So, while it is likely that the culvert may mark the route of a Medieval or early post-medieval routeway, this could not be confirmed during the evaluation.
- 8.1.4 Quantities of late Medieval roof tile and fragments of handmade unfrosted bricks were recovered from levelling layers that sealed the earlier features beneath them in Trenches 2 and 4, as well as pressed into the tops of earlier features. Buildings are visible on both the 1800 pre-enclosure map and the

³ <https://pirtonhistory.org.uk/about-the-village/maps/>

1812 enclosure map, either side of the former road marked by the current culvert. This corresponds to the position of Trenches 2 and 4 either side of the culvert, though no foundations or structural remains of these buildings were identified. The buildings are no longer present on the 1899 OS map (Fig. 7), indicating that they had been demolished by this time. This would suggest that the levelling layers in Trenches 2 and 4 constitute material resulting from the demolition of these building and the subsequent levelling of the land. This would indicate that the buildings shown on the 1800 pre-enclosure map and 1812 enclosure map likely had late Medieval origins.

- 8.1.5 Two ditches [121] and [123] and two pits [110] and [146] all in Trench 4 contained post-medieval pottery indicating a likely 17th century date for the features. These would likely have been associated with buildings present on the 1800 pre-enclosure map, as the CBM evidence discussed above indicates that there were likely structures on the site from the late Medieval period.

9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1.1 The evaluation has identified evidence of ditched enclosures and pits dating to the 11-12th century AD likely representative of backyard activity or field systems, adjacent to, but peripheral to the core of the contemporary settlement, which was located with the scheduled monument to the west. Roof tile and handmade bricks present in demolition and levelling layers within Trenches 2 and 4 indicate that buildings present on the pre-enclosure map of 1800 may have had late Medieval origins, prior to being demolished during the 19th century.
- 9.1.2 As such the site has good potential for the preservation of locally and regionally significant archaeological remains, with the potential to contribute to regional research frameworks regarding medieval settlement morphology and relationships (Med (Rural) 09)⁴, medieval rural settlement change, evolution and abandonment with Pirton (Med (Rural) 14) and potentially how medieval communication routes were established and maintained (Med (Rural) 05).

⁴ <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/research-agenda/medieval-rural/>

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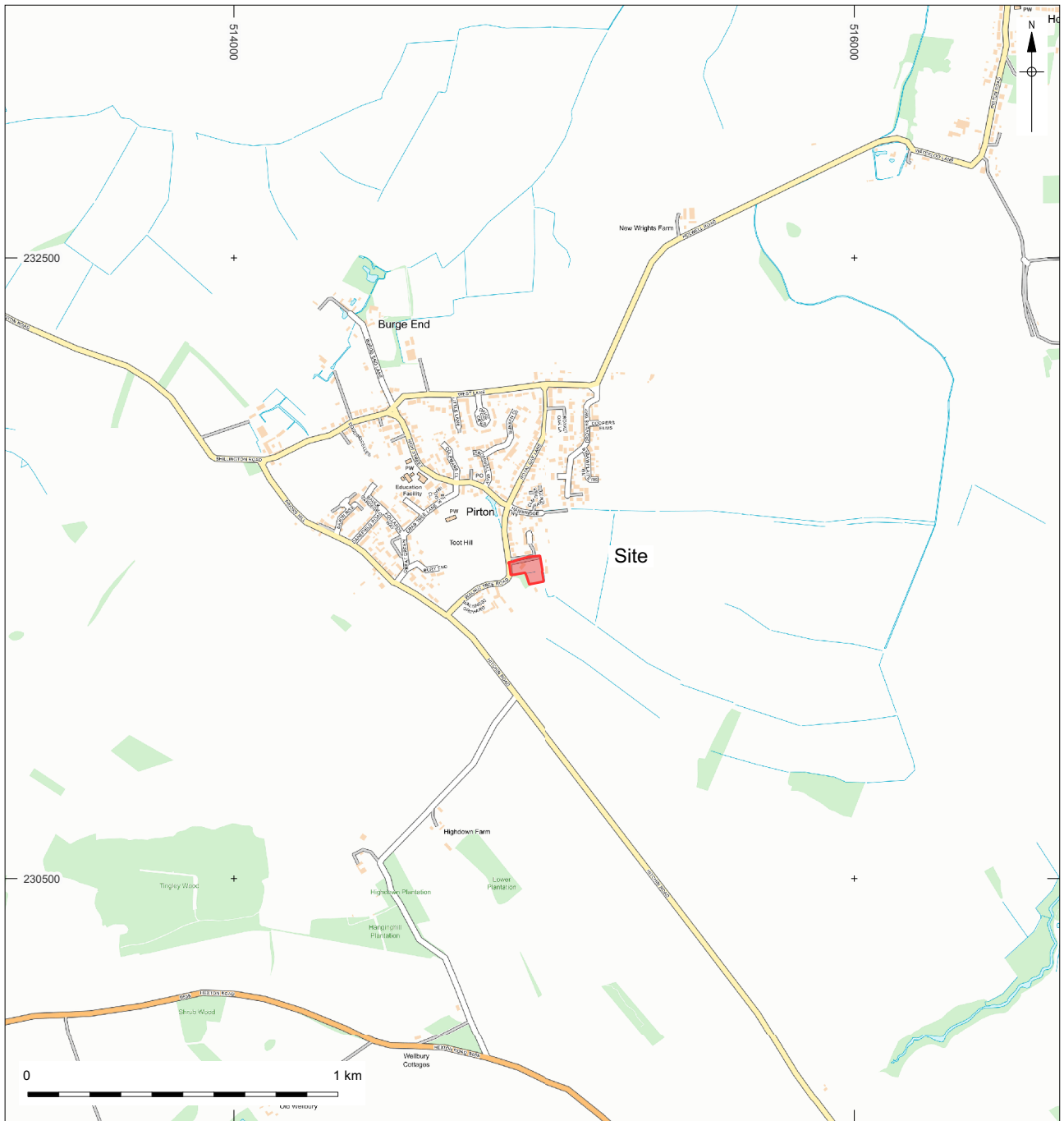
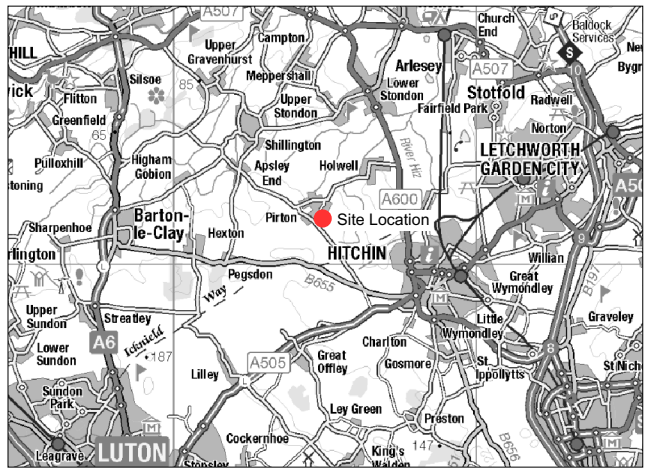
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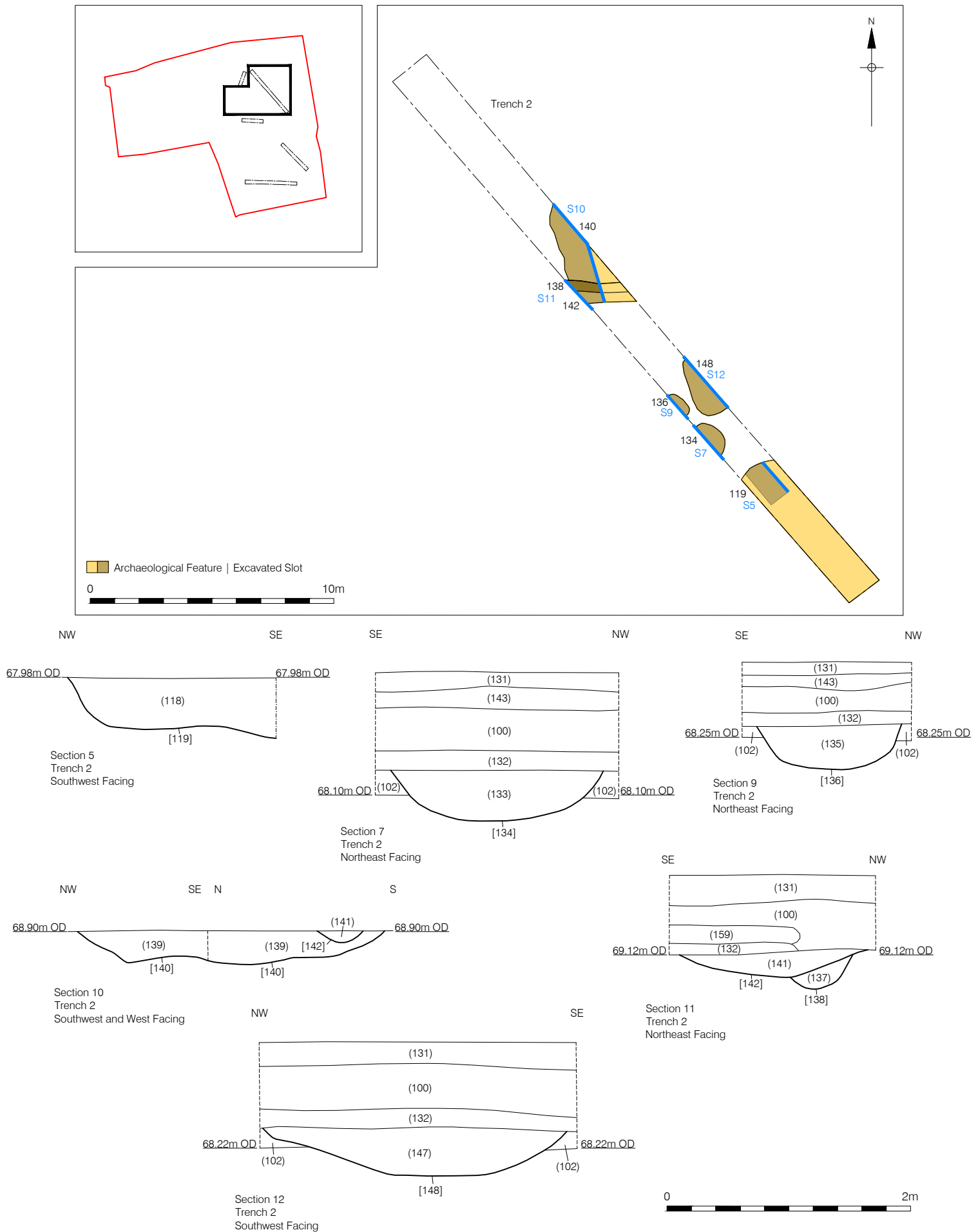
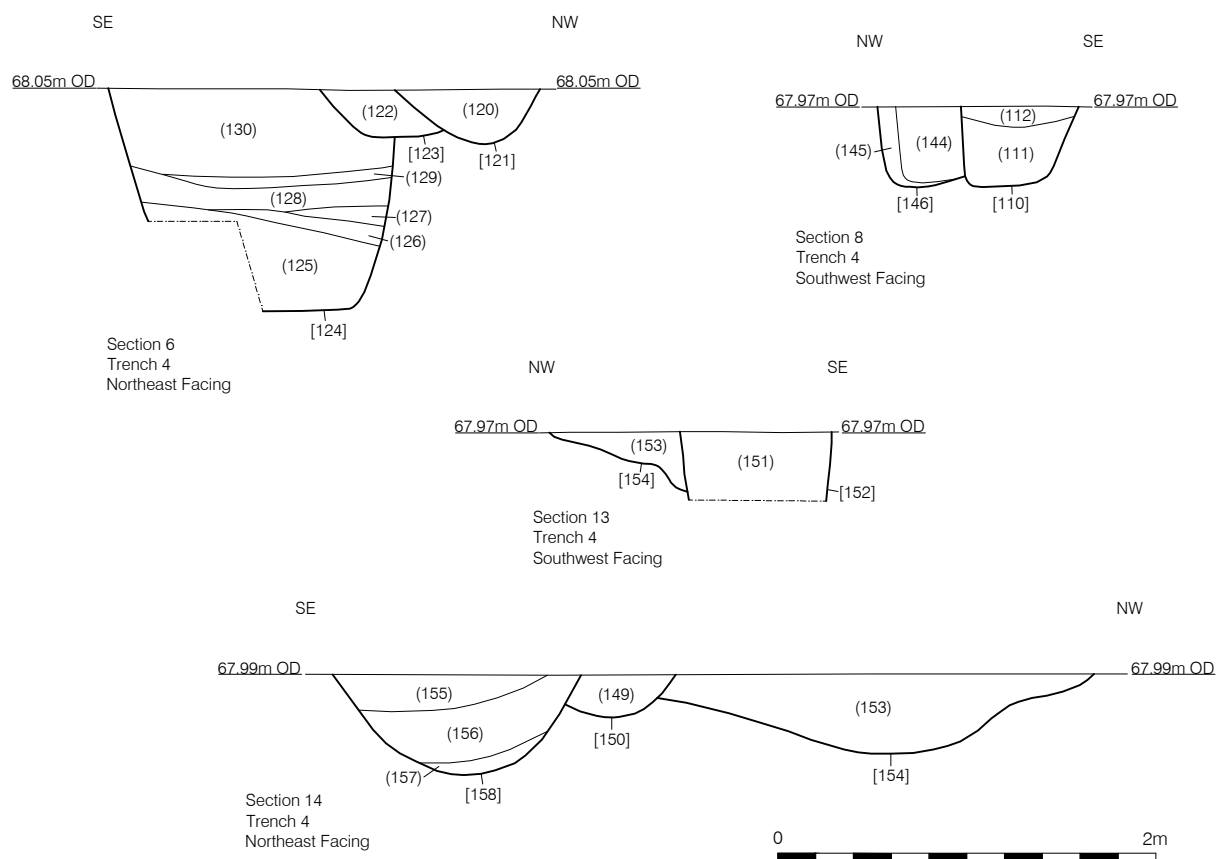
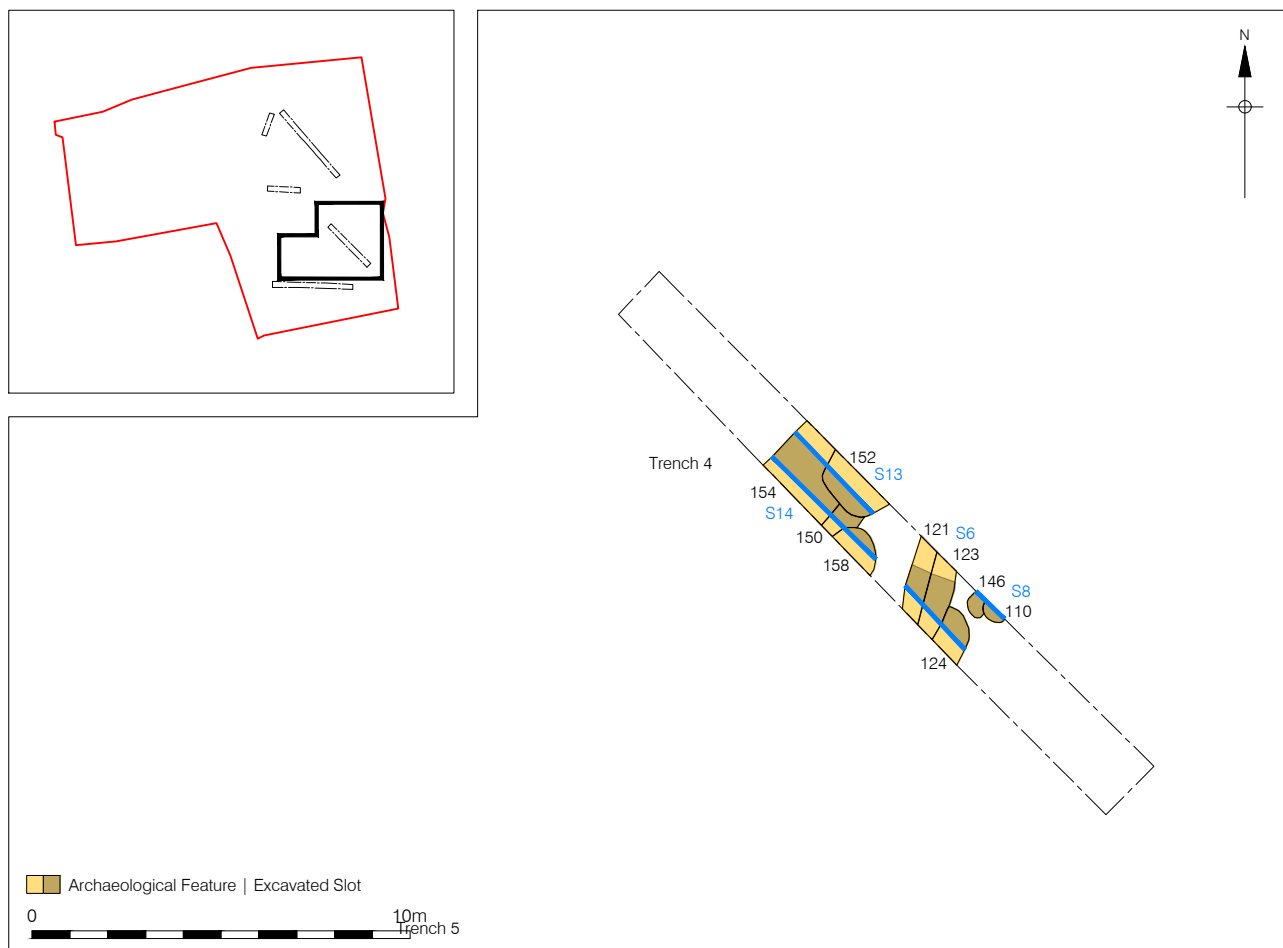
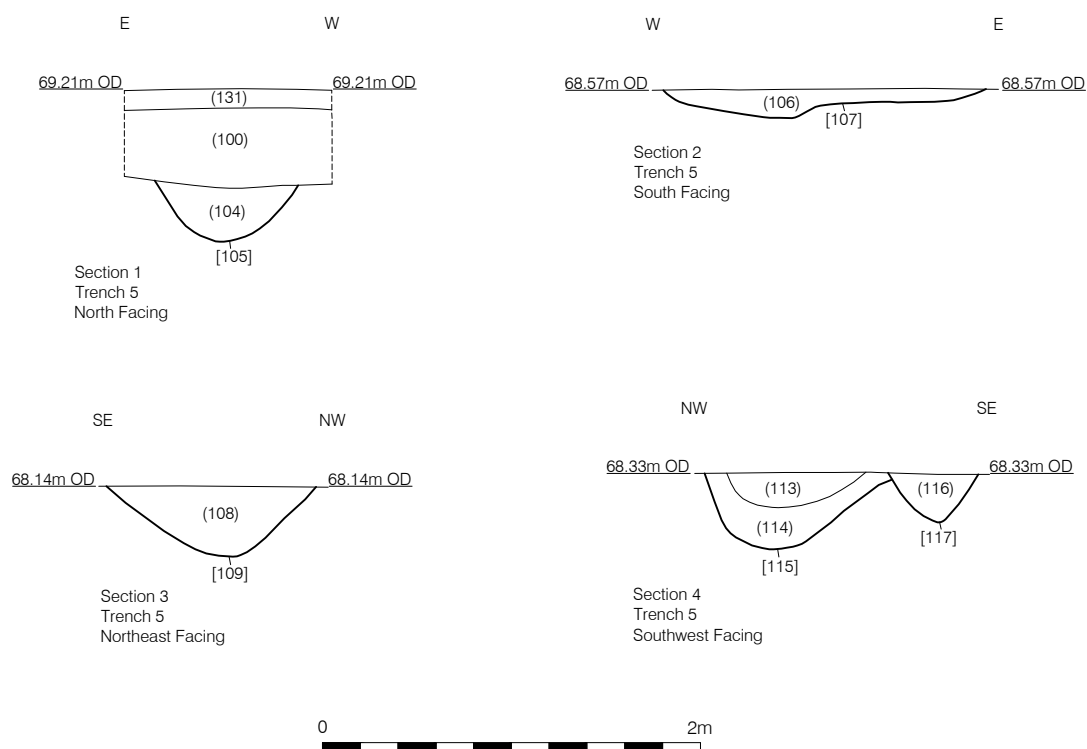
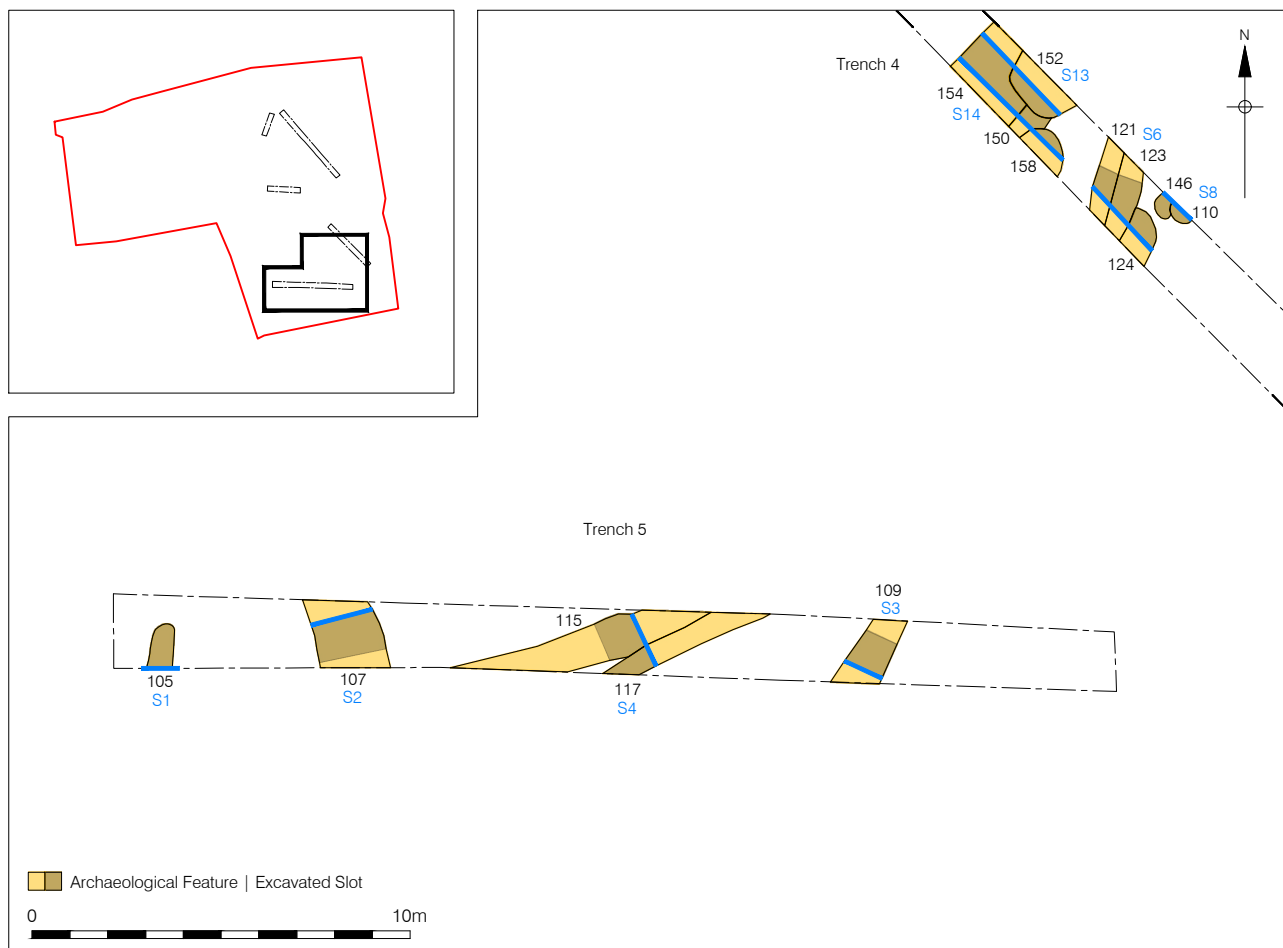
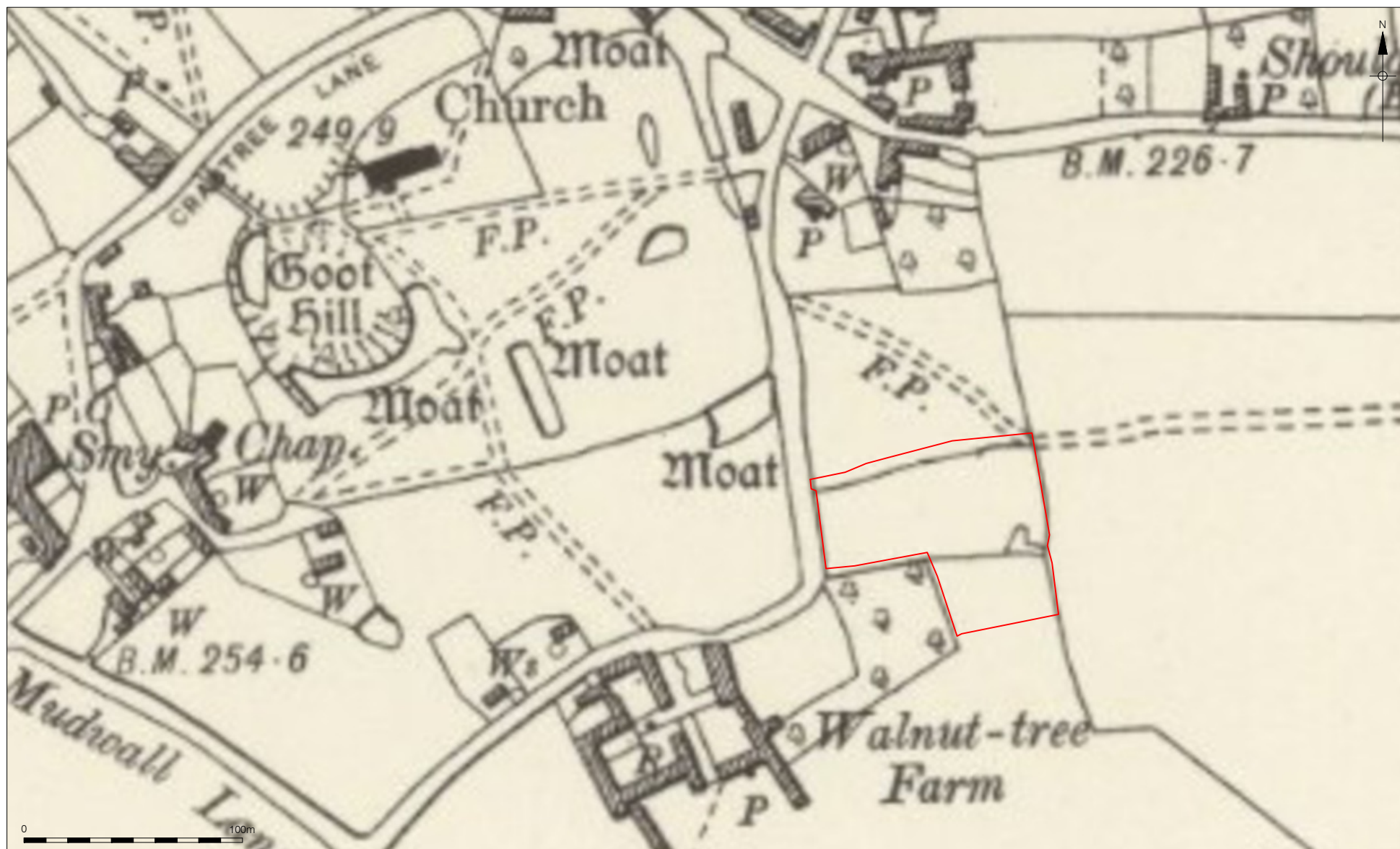


Figure 4
Trench 2 Plan and Sections
Inset 1:2,500, Plan 1:200, Sections 1:40 at A4







13 PLATES



Plate 1. Pre-excitation of the trenches. View: Southeast.



Plate 2. Pre-excitation of the trenches. View: North.



Plate 3. Water pipe and culvert running through the garden. View: East.



Plate 4. Trench 1. View: Northeast.



Plate 5. Trench 1 representative section. View: Northwest.



Plate 6. Trench 2. View: Northwest.



Plate 7. Pit [140] and Ditch [142] in Trench 2. View: North.



Plate 8. Pond [119]. View: East.



Plate 9. Ditches [138], [142] and Made Ground (159). View: Southwest.



Plate 10. Machine excavation of Trench 3. View: Northwest.



Plate 11. Trench 3. View: East.



Plate 12. Trench 3 representative section. View: North.



Plate 13. Trench 4. View: Northwest.



Plate 14. Working shot mid-excavation of Pit [124], Trench 4. View: Northwest.



Plate 15. Pit [124] and Ditches [121] and [123], Trench 4. View: Southwest.



Plate 16. Working shot mid-excavation of Pit [152] and Ditch [154], Trench 4. View: Northwest.



Plate 17. Pit [152] and Ditch [154], Trench 4. View: North.



Plate 18. Trench 5 after excavation of features. View: East.



Plate 19. Trench 5 representative section and Ditch [105]. View: South.



Plate 20. Ditch [109], Trench 5. View: Northeast.

14 APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DETAILS AND CONTENTS INDEX

Trench	Length (m)	Max. Depth (m)	Orientation	Archaeology Present?
1	7	0.58	NE-SW	No
2	28	0.65	NW-SE	Yes
3	11	0.48	E-W	No
4	18	0.46	NW-SE	Yes
5	26	0.56	E-W	Yes

Table 4: Trench Details

Context No	Cut	Trench	Type	Category	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Section	Description
100	100		Layer	Layer	0	0	0.3	0	Firm dark brownish grey silty clay.
101	101		Layer	Layer	0	0	0.15	0	Firm mid yellowish grey silty sand.
102	102		Layer	Layer	0	0	0	0	Firm light yellowish grey marl.
103	103	5	Layer	Layer	0	0	0.2	0	
104	105	5	Fill	Ditch	1.15	0.75	0.28	1	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay.
105	105	5	Cut	Ditch	1.15	0.75	0.28	1	Linear, moderate sides, concave base, N-S aligned.
106	107	5	Fill	Ditch	1	1.7	0.15	2	Firm dark greyish brown silty clay.
107	107	5	Cut	Ditch	1	1.7	0.15	2	Linear, gradual sides, irregular base, NW-SE aligned.
108	109	5	Fill	Ditch	1	1.1	0.37	3	Soft mid greyish brown clayey silt.

Context No	Cut	Trench	Type	Category	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Section	Description
109	109	5	Cut	Ditch	1	1.1	0.37	3	Linear, moderate sides, concave base, N-S aligned.
110	110	4	Cut	Pit	0.62	0.35	0.42	8	Circular, vertical / near vertical sides, flat base.
111	110	4	Fill	Pit	0	0.59	0.37	8	Friable mid greyish brown silty clay with moderate daub.
112	110	4	Fill	Pit	0	0.62	0.11	8	Soft mid brownish grey clayey silt.
113	115	5	Fill	Ditch	1	0.73	0.18	4	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional small-medium charcoal.
114	115	5	Fill	Ditch	1	0.98	0.3	4	Firm light yellowish brown silty clay with occasional small sub roundee chalk.
115	115	5	Cut	Ditch	1	0.98	0.4	4	Linear, moderate sides, concave base, NW-SE aligned.
116	117	5	Fill	Ditch	1	0.47	0.26	4	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay.
117	117	5	Cut	Ditch	1	0.47	0.26	4	Linear, moderate sides, concave base, NE-SW aligned.
118	119	2	Fill	Pond	1	1.7	0.5	5	Firm dark brownish grey silty clay.
119	119	2	Cut	Pond	1	1.7	0.5	5	Sub-circular, steep sides, irregular base.
120	121	4	Fill	Ditch	0.7	0.76	0.3	6	Soft mid greyish brown silty clay.
121	121	4	Cut	Ditch	0.7	0.76	0.3	6	Linear, moderate sides, concave base, N-S aligned.
122	123	4	Fill	Ditch	1	0.66	0.25	6	Soft mid greyish brown silty clay.
123	123	4	Cut	Ditch	1	0.66	0.25	6	Linear, moderate sides, irregular base, N-S aligned.
124	124	4	Cut	Pit	0.95	0	1.17	6	Circular, vertical / near vertical sides, flat base.
125	124	4	Fill	Pit	0	1.26	0.58	6	Soft mid greyish brown silty clay.
126	124	4	Fill	Pit	0	0.98	0.24	6	Soft dark brownish grey clayey silt.
127	124	4	Fill	Pit	0	0.57	0.1	6	Soft mid orangish brown silty clay.
128	124	4	Fill	Pit	0	1.37	0.12	6	Soft mid brownish grey silty clay.
129	124	4	Fill	Pit	0	1.22	0.12	6	Soft light greyish brown silty clay with occasional daub fragments.

Context No	Cut	Trench	Type	Category	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Section	Description
130	124	4	Fill	Pit	0.95	1.5	0.47	6	Soft - - black clayey silt with very frequent charcoal.
131	131	2	Layer	Layer	0	0	0.1	7	Soft dark greyish brown sandy silt.
132	132	2	Layer	Layer	0	0	0.16	7	Compact dark brownish grey made ground.
133	134	2	Fill	Pit	0.8	1.68	0.42	7	Hard mid brownish grey clayey silt.
134	134	2	Cut	Pit	0.8	1.68	0.42	7	Sub-circular, steep sides, concave base.
135	136	2	Fill	Pit	0.3	1.12	0.36	9	Hard mid brownish grey clayey silt.
136	136	2	Cut	Pit	0.3	1.12	0.36	9	Sub-circular, moderate sides, concave base.
137	138	2	Fill	Ditch	1.2	0.51	0.19	11	Firm mid brownish grey silty clay.
138	138	2	Cut	Ditch	1.2	0.53	0.18	11	Linear, moderate sides, concave base, E-W aligned.
139	140	2	Fill	Pit	2.9	1.6	0.54	10	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay.
140	140	4	Cut	Pit	2.9	1.6	0.54	10	Sub-rectangular, moderate sides, irregular base.
141	142	2	Fill	Ditch	0.8	1.56	0.22	10	Firm dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent small to large cbm.
142	142	2	Cut	Ditch	0.8	1.57	0.23	10	Linear, gradual sides, concave base, E-W aligned.
143	143	2	Layer	Layer	0	0	0.2	7	Loose mid - brown sandy silt.
144	146	4	Fill	Pit	0	0.35	0.4	8	Friable mid greyish brown silty clay.
145	146	4	Fill	Pit	0	0.46	0.42	8	Friable mid orangish brown silty clay with frequent daub/fired clay.
146	146	4	Cut	Pit	0.45	0.45	0.42	8	Circular, vertical / near vertical sides, irregular base.
147	148	2	Fill	Pit	1	2.6	0.4	12	Firm mid brownish grey clayey silt.
148	148	2	Cut	Pit	1	2.6	0.4	12	Sub-circular, moderate sides, concave base.
149	150	4	Fill	Pit	1	0.28	0.11	14	Firm light brownish grey silty clay.
150	150	4	Cut	Pit	1	0.29	0.11	14	Not visible, moderate sides, concave base.

Context No	Cut	Trench	Type	Category	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Section	Description
151	152	4	Fill	Pit	1.2	1.6	1.74	13	Hard mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent medium to large chalk.
152	152	4	Cut	Pit	1.2	1.6	0.74	13	Circular, vertical / near vertical sides, not reached base.
153	154	4	Fill	Ditch	1	1.48	0.7	13	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay.
154	154	4	Cut	Ditch	1	1.63	0.64	13	Linear, complex sides, concave base, NE-SW aligned.
155	158	4	Fill	Pit	0.8	0.57	0.1	14	Firm mid brownish grey silty clay.
156	158	4	Fill	Pit	0	0.58	0.15	14	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay.
157	158	4	Fill	Pit	0	0.33	0.05	14	Firm dark greyish brown silty clay.
158	158	4	Cut	Pit	0.8	0.66	0.27	14	Not visible, moderate sides, concave base.
159	159	2	Layer	Layer	1.22	0	0.16	11	Soft mid brownish grey silty clay with very frequent cbm slabs.

15 APPENDIX 2: POTTERY CATALOGUE

		F205		F200		F360		F333		F401		F425		F410		F412		
Tr	Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
2	118			1	6			3	21									M12thC
2	139*	1	14	1	11	1	5											11thC*
4	122											2	42	3	17			17thC
4	130							1	28	1	3			1	1			17thC
4	144															1	18	17thC
4	153			1	77			1	6									M12thC
5	113			2	18													11thC
5	114					1	25											M10thC
5	116			1	6			1	22									M12thC
	Total	1	14	6	118	2	30	6	77	1	3	2	42	4	18	1	18	

Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type. *Context also produced CBM of 14th – 15th century date

16 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS Summary for preconst1-542910

OASIS ID (UID)	preconst1-542910
Project Name	Evaluation at Land at 19 Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire
Sitename	Land at 19 Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire
Sitecode	PIR/19WTR '26
Project Identifier(s)	PIR/19WTR '26
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	26/00116/FP
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project Dates	15-Jun-2026 - 16-Jun-2026
Location	Land at 19 Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire NGR : TL 14952 31501 LL : 51.970103993118585, -0.328064702955237 12 Fig : 514952,231501
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Hertfordshire Local Authority District : North Hertfordshire Parish : Pirton
Project Methodology	The evaluation consisted of 90m of trenching across the clients garden, distributed in order to provide a representative sample of the PDA whilst avoiding the site constraints. Ground reduction was carried out using a 9-ton JCB wheeled mechanical excavator. Topsoil and other overburden of low archaeological value was removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded. All further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools.
Project Results	The evaluation identified ditches and pits dated to the 11th-12th century AD that likely represented backyard activity or field systems peripheral to the core of the settlement to the west. In Trenches 2 and 4 these features were sealed by layers containing broken roof tile and handmade bricks that likely dated to the late Medieval period and were associated with the demolition of buildings that are present on the 1812 Enclosure map but were demolished prior to the 1899 OS map. Two ditches and two pits in Trench 2 contained material from the 17th century.
Keywords	Ditch - Medieval - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Pit - Medieval - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Ditch - Post Medieval - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Pit - Post Medieval - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private individual
HER	Hertfordshire HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Thomas Revell
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - PIR/19WTR '26

17 APPENDIX 4: HERTS HER SUMMARY FORM

Site name and address: 19 Walnut Tree Road, Pirton		
County: Hertfordshire	District: North Hertfordshire	
Village/Town: Pirton	Parish: Pirton	
Planning application reference: 26/00116/FP		
HER Enquiry reference: N/A		
Client name, address, and tel. no.:		
Paul Shadbolt		07900 055544
19 Walnut Tree Road, Pirton		
Hertfordshire		
SG5 3PX		
Nature of application: Pre-consent for 4 residential dwellings		
Present land use: Residential garden of client		
Size of application area: 0.316ha	Size of area investigated: 90m of trenching	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 14952 31501		
Site code (if applicable): PIR/19WTR '26		
Site director/Organisation: Pre-Construct Archaeology		
Type of work: Evaluation		
Dates of work:	Start: 9th June 2026	Finish: 11th June 2026
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: North Hertfordshire District Council Museum		
Related HER Nos: N/A	Periods represented: Late Iron Age, Post-medieval	
Relevant previous summaries/reports:		
Late Anglo-Saxon/Early Medieval		
Post-medieval		
Summary of fieldwork results:		
The evaluation identified ditches and pits dated to the 11th-12th century AD that likely represented backyard activity or field systems peripheral to the core of the settlement to the west. In Trenches 2 and 4 these features were sealed by layers containing broken roof tile and handmade bricks that likely dated to the late Medieval period and were associated with the demolition of buildings that are present on the 1812 Enclosure map but were demolished prior to the 1899 OS map. Two ditches and two pits in Trench 2 contained material from the 17th century.		
Author of summary: C Winnard		Date of summary: 10/07/2026



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