

# MEDIEVAL ACTIVITY AT LAND ADJACENT TO MORAY HOUSE, 44 CAMP ROAD, GERRARDS CROSS

*In July 2009, Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted an archaeological excavation on land adjacent to Moray House, 44 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross. This work, which followed an evaluation of the site completed by AS in 2005, was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to permission for the construction of a two-storey detached house and a detached triple garage with a driveway. The excavation revealed evidence dating to the early medieval period (pits, ditches and a posthole), and modern features.*

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

During July 2009, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an excavation on land adjacent to Moray House, 44 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross (NGR SP 9941 8779; Figs.1-2). A full description of the excavation is contained in the Research Archive Report (Stone & Pozorski 2009). The site lies south of Gerrards Cross in the grounds of Bulstrode Manor, which dates from the medieval period, and immediately south of the large Iron Age hillfort of Bulstrode Camp (Bucks Scheduled Ancient Monument 11).

The site itself is on high ground which slopes gently down to the south between the valleys of the Alder Bourne and Misbourne. The solid geology is Woolwich and Reading Beds, with London Clay close by to the east and Upper Chalk to the west. The drift geology comprises plateau and river terrace sands and gravels, and soils are of Essendon and Sonning 2 associations (SSEW 1983).

## RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The excavation revealed archaeological features dating to two phases; early medieval (11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century AD) and modern (Fig. 2).

Medieval activity was represented by five pits, a posthole and a ditch. Pits F2005, F2014, F1013 and F1011 were located in Area 1 of the excavation. Pit F1013 contained by far the largest assemblage, comprising 447g (53 sherds) of 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>-century pottery from a large handmade cooking pot (Thompson 2009) and 312g (10 pieces) of daub. A fragment of the latter displayed patterns of wattle framing, possibly indicative of wattle and daub construction (Peachey 2009). The remaining pits contained small amounts of 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>-century pottery (4g, 44g and 98g respectively). Similar to the fills of Pit F1013, the fill of Pit F2005 (L2006) contained burnt material. At 2.10m in diameter, Pit F1011 was considerably larger than the other two features, and contained two fills as opposed to one. It also contained evidence of burning within its upper fill (L1012). Posthole F2007 contained just one sherd (14g) of daub (Peachey, 2009). Pit F1007 was in Area 2 of the excavation. It was originally excavated in 2005 when one sherd (9g) of 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>-century pottery was recovered. Ditch F1005, located in Area 2, was orientated north to south. It contained just one sherd (10g) of 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>-century pottery.

## CONCLUSIONS

The small number of archaeological features, and the small scale of the excavation, are insufficient to elucidate the medieval use of the land adjacent to Moray House and its surroundings. The presence of daub with wattle impressions is suggestive of a building of wattle and daub construction, but the evidence is very limited.

The pottery assemblage, though small, provides more information. The majority of the assemblage was derived from Pit F1013, which has been dated to between c.1170 AD and c.1200–1250 AD, based on the presence of Hertfordshire Grey Ware and the absence of glazed ware. A similar date has been assigned to Pit F1011, based on a similar combina-

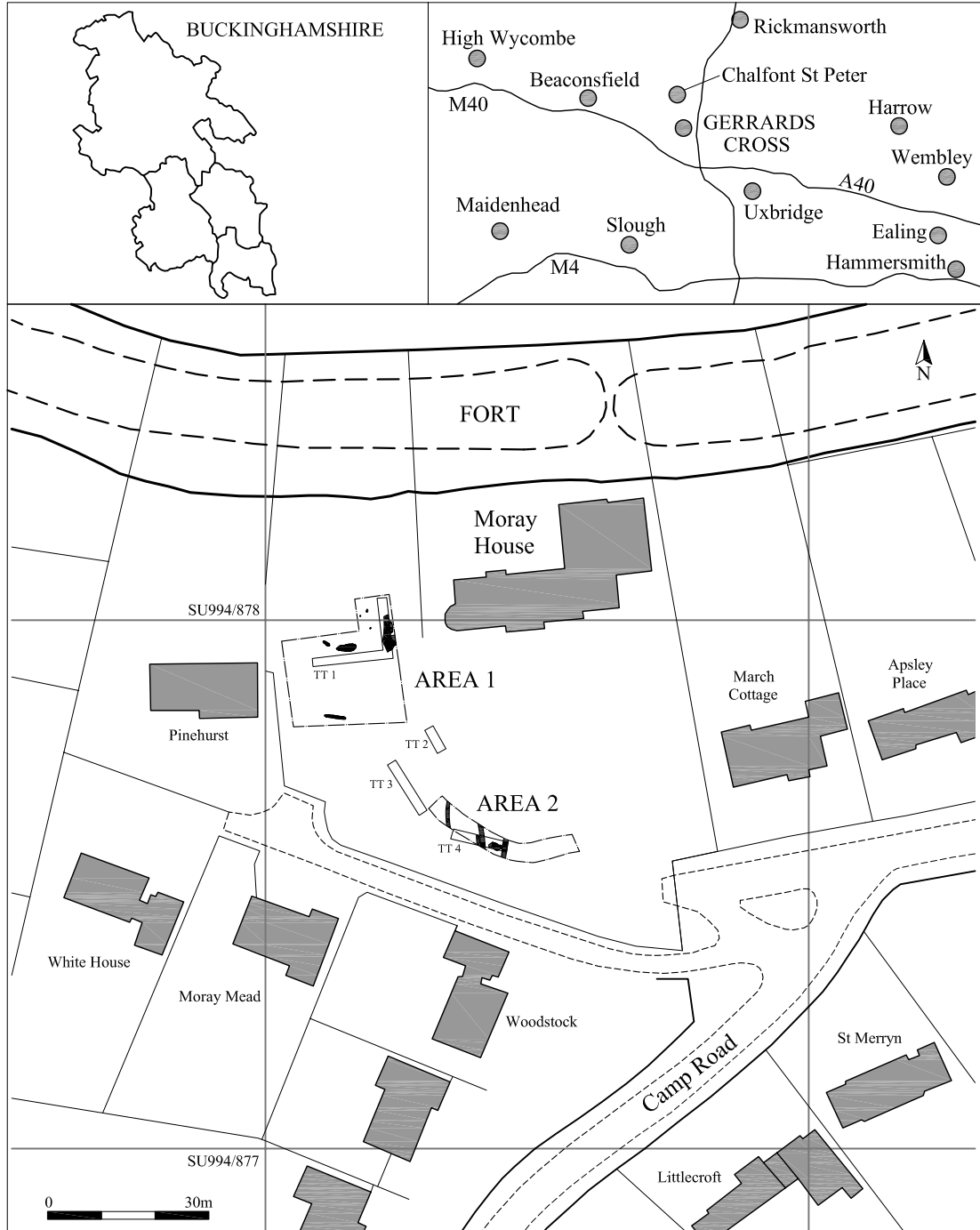


FIGURE 1 Site location plan

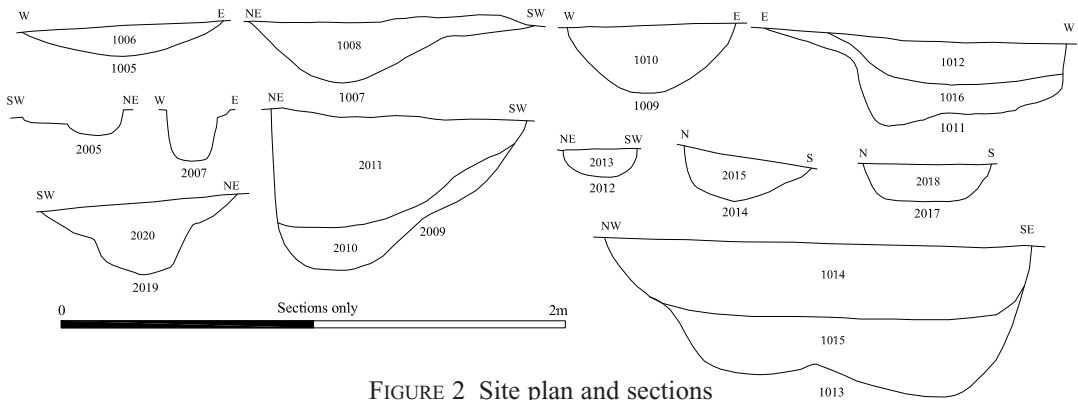
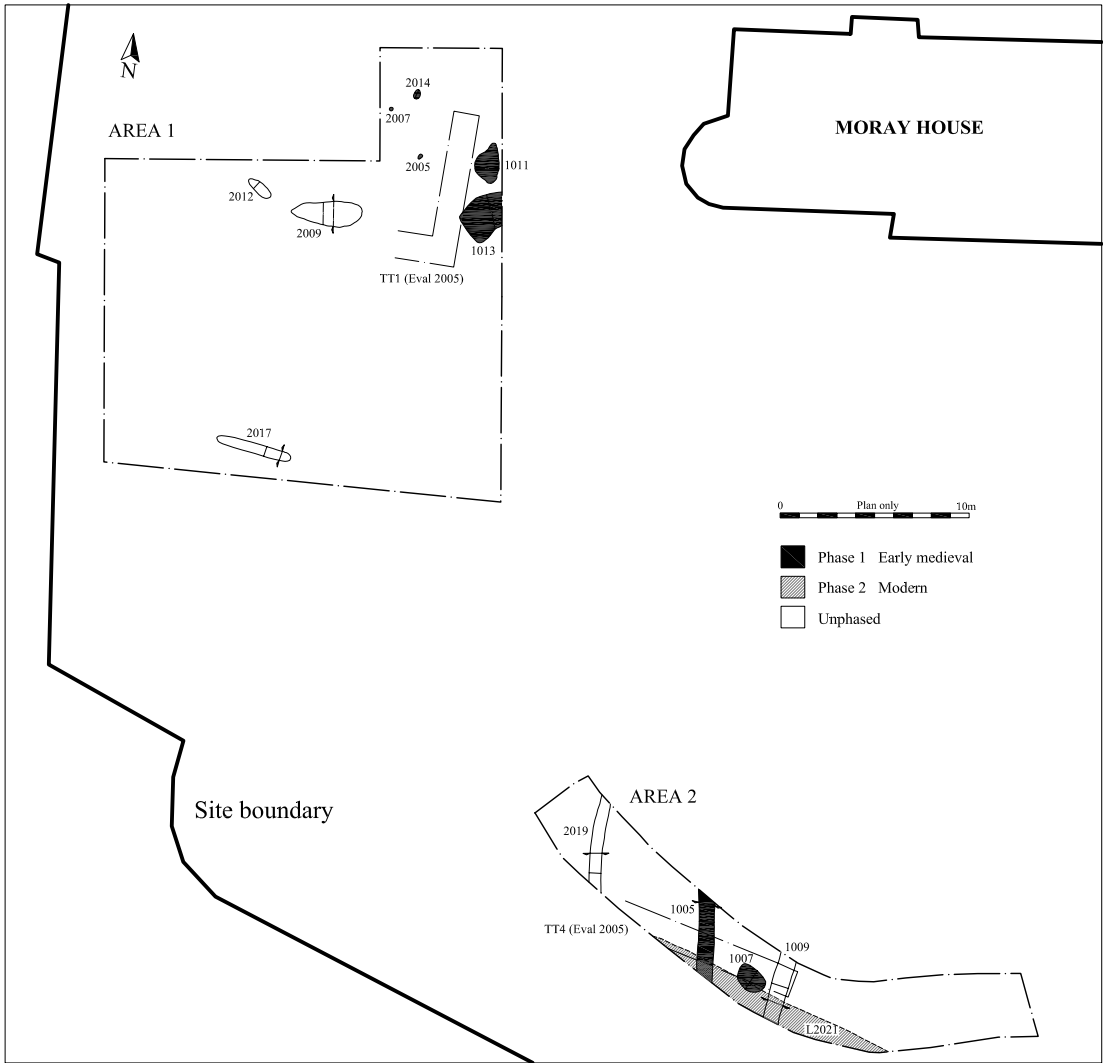


FIGURE 2 Site plan and sections

tion of fabrics. The entire pottery assemblage comprises locally-made pottery, likely from within c.10 miles of the site. The Cotswold Ware and a small amount of Oxford Ware may have been imported from further west.

Given the proximity of the site to Bulstrode Camp, the presence of medieval activity and absence of Iron Age activity was unexpected. There is little historic or cartographic evidence for occupation or settlement prior to the construction of Camp Road in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; post-medieval estate maps of Bulstrode Park indicate that this area was wooded and undeveloped. First identified during the 2005 trial trench evaluation, the medieval archaeology comprises previously unknown activity dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. While the evidence is small scale, it is indicative of early medieval occupation. Whether early medieval activity was influenced by the location of the adjacent Iron Age hill fort, Bulstrode Camp is unknown, but the camp would certainly have been visible. Similarly the excavated evidence cannot be directly related to Bulstrode Manor. Medieval settlement and agricultural patterns in south Buckinghamshire are not as well understood as they are for the north of the county, which was more densely populated and where open field farming and nucleated settlement appear to have become the norm. It is understood that the Chilterns and the south of the county were areas displaying dispersed settlement (Taylor-Moore and Dyer 2006); the evidence from this site, and similar sites, goes some way to helping to confirm this.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Pip Stone  
with Peter Thompson and Andrew Peachey  
Illustration by Kath Henry*

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