



**Gavray Drive,
Bicester**

**Specification for
Archaeological
Mitigation**

Prepared by:
**The Environmental
Dimension
Partnership Ltd**

On behalf of:
L&Q Estates

June 2021
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Annex EDP 3	Cotswold Archaeology Evaluation Report (2005)
Annex EDP 4	Oxford Archaeology Evaluation Report (2013)

Plan

Plan EDP 1	Archaeology Mitigation Strategy (edp0124_d160b 07 June 2021 GY/MM)
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Section 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Specification for Archaeological Mitigation has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) and sets out the scope of a programme of works intended to preserve by record those significant archaeological remains that have been found within the site by past investigation. This report has been prepared on behalf of the landowners of the site, namely: L&Q Estates ('the Applicant'); Charles Brown & Simon Digby; and London & Metropolitan International Developments.
- 1.2 It builds upon a previous specification for archaeological works at the Gavray Drive site, which was first prepared by EDP for the client and then agreed with the archaeological advisor to Cherwell District Council (CDC) in 2006. This was confirmed by the Council's advisor as still presenting a robust and appropriate approach to archaeological mitigation (in respect of residential development) through a process of subsequent consultation with the advisor to CDC in 2011 and 2013 (the latter for the western part of the site only). Most recently in 2021 it was again confirmed by the advisor as a suitable basis for a mitigation strategy and has therefore been updated in-line with the current development proposals.
- 1.3 The original Specification (referenced here as EDP 2006) addressed the whole of the site (see **Plan EDP 1**) for which outline planning permission was granted for residential development on 12 July 2006 [04/02797/OUT]. EDP 2006 specifically responded to Condition 13, which was worded as follows:
- "No development shall take place within the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a staged programme of archaeological investigation measures in accordance with a written scheme of investigations which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The programme of work shall include all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and full report for publication. The work shall be carried out by a professional archaeological organisation acceptable to the local authority."*
- 1.4 This updated Specification addresses the same site, which is now subject to an outline planning application, albeit with a markedly reduced amount of proposed development in the south-east (see **Annex EDP 1**). The Specification follows the approach to archaeological mitigation that was previously presented in EDP 2006 and agreed as being robust by the Council's advisor in 2011 and 2013. This includes two areas of archaeological recording within the footprint of the proposed development in the parcel to the north-west of the brook (i.e. Area A and Area B); a single 50m trial trench and a strip and record investigation in the south-eastern parcel (i.e. Area C), and controlled archaeological strips for a limited number of small ecology ponds (see the *Ecological Management Plan* for further information on these proposed features).
- 1.5 The Specification forms the basis for archaeological contractors to cost the necessary fieldwork and to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) with information regarding research strategy, staffing levels, etc. The appointed contractor would have to produce a WSI for approval by the Council's advisor prior to the start of any fieldwork.

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Section 2

The Site

- 2.1 The following paragraphs identify the location of the site and its boundaries, and presents additional information in respect of topography and geology.

Location and Boundaries

- 2.2 The site is located on the eastern edge of the town of Bicester, Oxfordshire. It comprises an area of agricultural farmland arranged in a roughly wedge shape and oriented broadly north-east - south-west and is transected by a brook. The total size amounts to c.24.5 hectares (ha).
- 2.3 It is bounded to the north-east by the Birmingham to London railway line, to the north-west by the Brackley to Oxford railway line, to the south-west by Gavray Drive and to the south-east by Charbridge Lane.
- 2.4 The site area is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 459446, 222460, and its location and layout are shown on **Plan EDP 1**.

Geology and Topography

- 2.5 With regard to the underlying solid geology, the site is located on deposits of sandstone and siltstone of the Kellaways Sand Member, which are overlain along the line of the brook and its immediate vicinity by alluvium.
- 2.6 The site is roughly flat and situated at a height of c.68m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

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Section 3 Archaeological Background

- 3.1 The site has been subject to a desk-based assessment (EDP 2021), as well as previous field investigation in the form of hedgerow survey, geophysical survey and trial trench evaluations. The trial trench evaluation reports and hedgerow survey are included here as **Annexes EDP 2** and **3**. A trial trench evaluation was also undertaken immediately to the north-west of the site and is included as **Annex EDP 4**. The following paragraphs summarise the site's archaeological interest/potential.

Archaeology in the Surrounding Area

- 3.2 The earliest datable archaeology in the area around the site comprises a large assemblage of Mesolithic flintwork, which was identified during an evaluation c.900m to the south-west of the site. Further evidence of activity in this location was recorded, including Bronze Age to Iron Age pits, ditches and a possible ditched rectilinear enclosure.
- 3.3 Further Bronze Age activity is represented by the find of a collared urn and flints c.845m to the north-east and a possible barrow cemetery c.950m to the north-west.
- 3.4 Archaeological investigations at Bicester Fields Farm to the south of the site revealed evidence of later prehistoric settlement in the form of a substantial rectilinear ditched enclosure of Middle to Late Iron Age date occupying around a hectare, with a possible causeway formed from a dump of burnt stone (OAU November 1998). A central building was indicated by a group of stone-packed postholes and curvilinear gullies. There was also evidence of animal and human burial.
- 3.5 Bicester is located approximately 2km north of the Roman town of Alcester, which was built near the crossroads of Akeman Street and the Alcester to Towcester Roman Road. Late Iron Age and early Roman settlement is known in the area from an investigation on the A421 main road and an excavation to the south-west of the site at the Bicester Village shopping centre.
- 3.6 To the north of Gavray Drive and the railway that forms the site's northern boundary, archaeological excavations undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2004 revealed evidence for Roman activity. Other than some Neolithic/Bronze Age unstratified flints, the earliest features consisted primarily of a Late Iron Age/Early Roman field system and a small group of pits (NA 2004).
- 3.7 By the 2nd century, the exploitation of the land had intensified, including the establishment of a trackway, two groups of pits and two wells. This was understood to represent remains related to a small Roman rural settlement, although no *in situ* evidence for occupation was identified. A further intensification of activity was recorded at the southern end, where the earlier field system was replaced by a series of enclosures (*ibid.*).

- 3.8 A lack of archaeological evidence for the period after the 3rd century indicates that the site was probably then abandoned. Although a small scatter of Anglo-Saxon pottery dating from the 6th/7th to 10th centuries was recorded from the overlying subsoils, no *in situ* features were attributed to this period (ibid.).
- 3.9 Northamptonshire Archaeology concluded that the main focus of archaeological settlement was probably located further to the south under the railway embankment (ibid.).
- 3.10 A trial trench evaluation by Oxford Archaeology in 2017 identified a similar lattice work of largely undated ditches as those found in the south-east of the site and may represent Roman or later field systems. Where these ditches could be dated, they were identified as deriving from the 2nd/3rd century AD. This investigation also identified a Middle Iron Age enclosure c.800m to the south-east of the site, and two areas of Roman settlement c.700m to the south-east (OA 2017).
- 3.11 The site was located outside of known areas of settlement during the medieval to modern periods, such as Bicester, Wretchwick and Launton, and was most likely located within the farmed hinterland throughout these periods.

Archaeology within the Site Area

- 3.12 The site has previously been evaluated using both geophysical survey and trial trenching techniques.
- 3.13 In the area approximately 100m to the south of the Northamptonshire Archaeology excavations, the (then) Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out archaeological evaluation in the eastern part of the site. Nineteen trenches were excavated in 1996. The evaluation report is included as **Annex EDP 2**.
- 3.14 The main concentration of archaeological deposits was located in the most northern trench excavated adjacent to the railway line (Trench 16). This produced evidence for a Roman ditch, which appeared to enclose an area that extended under the railway embankment – reminiscent of the features found to the north of the railway line by Northamptonshire Archaeology.
- 3.15 Two lengths of curving gullies were also recorded, together with a series of irregular shaped features that contained Roman finds, as well as three sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery (see pages 15 and 16 of **Annex EDP 2**). The deposits in Trench 16 contained nineteen sherds of Roman pottery, three fragments of Roman tile, as well as the Anglo-Saxon pottery. There were no other Roman finds or any animal bones – indicating that the soils/fills are quite acidic.
- 3.16 Trench 17, also immediately to the south of the railway, contained a single archaeological feature – a possible pit or ditch terminal. Trenches 14 and 15 – to the south of Trenches 16 and 17 - were empty of archaeological features. This evidence strongly suggests that the main focus of Roman settlement was located to the north- under the railway – a conclusion also reached by Northamptonshire Archaeology (S Parry pers comm.).

- 3.17 The trial trenches to the south of Trenches 14 and 15 produced lower levels of archaeological deposits. These related largely to linear features of which some have been interpreted as field boundary ditches relating to the Romano-British settlement, although very few contemporary finds were found within the deposits excavated. This supports the interpretation that the main focus of settlement was located to the north.
- 3.18 One shallow feature in Trench 2 produced a single sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery. The investigators identified the possibility that there are two alignments of field systems within the site. Alignment 1, which is roughly east-north-east – west-south-west (or right angles to it), may be of Roman date, as it is on the same orientation as the Roman enclosure ditch in Trench 16. Alignment 2 is roughly north-east – south-west (or at right angles to it) and appears parallel or perpendicular to the ridge and furrow, and may therefore be of a later date. Alternatively, the field systems may both date to the Roman period.
- 3.19 The OAU report provides useful information with regard to depths of topsoil/subsoil and at what level archaeological features were encountered.
- 3.20 The north-western area of the site has been evaluated subject to both geophysical survey (gradiometry) and trial trenching (**Annex EDP 3**). The geophysical survey did not produce any archaeological anomalies, and because of these inconclusive results, a programme of trial trenching was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology (see **Annex EDP 3** for full report).
- 3.21 Ten 15m by 4m trial trenches were excavated. Deposits were limited to a pit of possible Iron Age date (in Trench 3 – where pottery was found in the upper fill) and two undated gullies in Trenches 1 and 2. All these features were heavily truncated by ridge and furrow and more recent cultivation. The results of the field evaluation indicate that this area of Gavray Drive does not contain the same density of archaeological deposits as the area to the east.
- 3.22 Indeed, an archaeological evaluation in 2013 immediately to the north-west end of the site also did not identify any significant archaeological remains (OA 2013; **Annex EDP 4**), which further underlines the low density of features in this general area.

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Section 4

Aims of the Investigation

- 4.1 The fieldwork will investigate and record significant archaeological deposits that are to be impacted by development.
- 4.2 As part of this process, it will be necessary for the appointed archaeological contractor to demonstrate a research approach to the excavation/post-excavation programme that will address how the site fits into the broader late prehistoric, Romano British and medieval historic landscape around Bicester.
- 4.3 The general aims of the investigation are to:
- Record the nature of the main stratigraphic units encountered in terms of their physical composition (stone, sand, gravel, organic materials, etc.) and their archaeological formation (primary deposits, secondary deposits, etc.);
 - Assess the overall presence and survival of structural remains relating to the main periods of occupation revealed and the potential for the recovery of additional structural information given the nature of the features/deposits encountered (e.g. extent of later disturbance – which will include later cultivation activity);
 - Assess the overall presence and survival of the main kinds of artefactual evidence (including pottery, brick, tile, stone, glass, metal, bone, small finds, industrial residues, etc.), and its condition, given the nature of the deposits encountered; and
 - Assess the overall presence and survival of the main kinds of ecofactual and environmental evidence (including animal bone, human bone, plant remains, pollen, charcoal, molluscs, soils, etc.), its condition and potential, given the nature of the deposits encountered.
- 4.4 Furthermore, the specific aims are to:
- Record any evidence of prehistoric, Roman or medieval settlement or other forms of land use; and
 - Sample and analyse any preserved environmental remains to create a better understanding of past land use.
- 4.5 The appointed contractor's WSI will contain specific research objectives selected from the Solent-Thames Research Framework, which the fieldwork will intend to address.

- 4.6 The project will be managed by a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), and the following guidelines and standards for archaeological fieldwork will be adhered to during the execution of the investigation:
- CIfA – *Code of Conduct* (2019);
 - CIfA – *Standard and guidance documents for archaeological field evaluation* (December 2020);
 - CIfA – *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (2020);
 - CIfA – *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (2020); and
 - Historic England – *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (April 2015).

Section 5 Fieldwork Methodology

- 5.1 The areas of the site that will be subject to investigation are depicted on **Plan EDP 1**. Due to the varying densities of archaeology across the site area, the fieldwork methods will range from full open area archaeological excavation, to 'strip and record' programmes over areas with less dense archaeological deposits and controlled archaeological strip over the small number of areas where new ponds will be dug. A single trial trench is also proposed, to better define one of the areas of investigation.
- 5.2 The majority of the south-east of the site will be preserved as open space, with minimal alterations related to ground clearance of scrub vegetation and ephemeral construction activity, such as new footpaths. As such, it is not proposed to undertake any mitigation within these areas. Details of this ground clearance will be shared with the Council's advisor in due course to confirm no mitigation is required.

Western End of Site

Areas A and B

- 5.3 Two 50m² 'strip and record' areas will be excavated in order to clarify the nature of the archaeological deposits located in the evaluation. These included an undated gully (Area A on **Plan EDP 1**) and a possible Iron Age pit (Area B on **Plan EDP 1**). The combined results of the trial trench evaluation in this part of the site and its immediate area identified only limited areas of potential. As a result, fieldwork will be limited to the 50m² areas.

Eastern Part of Site

Area C – Trial Trenching/Strip and Record

- 5.4 The south-eastern end of Area C has not been subject to trial trenching due to lack of access. Trial trenches in the central part of Area C did not produce any archaeological deposits (Trenches 10 and 11 in **Annex EDP 2**). It is therefore planned, in the first instance, to excavate a further 50m trial trench in the southern part of Area C. If this fails to produce any archaeological deposits, it may then be considered appropriate to limit the strip and record to the north-western part of Area C (see **Plan EDP 1** for the location of the trial trench).
- 5.5 The 'maximum extent of 'strip and record' fieldwork' on **Plan EDP 1** is based on the footprint of development in this area. As discussed above, this may be reduced, in agreement with the Council's advisor, dependant on the results of the trial trench.

Controlled Archaeological Strip

- 5.6 Controlled archaeological strips will be required during the excavation of the limited number of small ponds in the south-east of the site. The provisional location of the ponds is given in

the *Ecological Management Plan* accompanying the planning application. An appropriately qualified archaeologist will oversee the excavation of the ponds to either their full depth or natural geology, whichever is encountered first.

Site Preparation

- 5.7 Where necessary, ecological mitigation and ground clearance of scrub and foliage may be required to enable access to the investigation areas in the south-east of the site. It is not envisaged that such work will have any notable ground impacts, limited as they are to the removal of undergrowth.
- 5.8 Within each area, any topsoil proposed for removal will be mechanically stripped under archaeological supervision. Wherever necessary and appropriate, any subsoil will be mechanically removed, in successive spits of appropriate depth, to either the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural geology, whichever is reached first. This will be completed using a machine with a toothless ditching bucket.
- 5.9 All machine work will be completed under archaeological supervision and will cease immediately if significant evidence is revealed. Care will be taken to ensure that plant and machines do not damage underlying remains, particularly in soft conditions.
- 5.10 The machine used will be powerful enough for a clean job of work and, given the distances involved, it is likely that dumpers will need to be provided to allow spoil to be mounded at a safe distance from excavation edges or to remove the spoil from the site. If feasible, all spoil will be observed and metal detected for any archaeological finds.
- 5.11 The stripped topsoil and any overburden will be removed from the excavation area using suitable plant, i.e. tracked mechanical excavators and dumpers, etc.
- 5.12 Once the topsoil/subsoil has been stripped, the ground will be hand-cleaned and a site plan, showing any exposed archaeological remains, prepared. The Council's advisor will be notified in writing within one week of the completion of stripping operations.
- 5.13 The topsoil strip will be followed by the mapping, investigation, sampling and recording of all significant archaeological features and/or deposits. Prior to the commencement of the archaeological fieldwork, the Council's advisor will be notified in writing, no less than two weeks in advance.

Excavation Procedures

- 5.14 Any significant archaeological deposits or features exposed by the strip will be subject to an appropriate level of excavation. In summary, this will equate to the following:
 - Any deposits relating to funerary/ritual activity (e.g. burials, cremations) and domestic/industrial activity (e.g. walls, post-holes, hearths, floor surfaces/floor make-up)

deposits) will be investigated by removing a 100% sample of the deposit from each feature; and

- Features relating to agricultural and other activities will be subject to the following sampling levels. Pits will require a minimum of a 50% sample of the deposits from each feature; linear features (e.g. ditches/gullies, paths/tracks) will require a minimum of a 20% sample of the deposits from each feature.

- 5.15 However, it is recognised that there may be cases when individual features do not merit these levels of sampling. Nonetheless, any variation to these levels will need to be approved by the Council's advisor following on-site discussion.
- 5.16 In the case of the trial trench in Area C, a 1m wide slot should be excavated through any linear features, and 50% of any pits, post holes or similar features should be excavated. It is not intended that any complex archaeology would be fully investigated in the confines of the trial trench, but would be undertaken as part of the wider strip and record of Area C. As mentioned above, if no archaeological remains are found within the trench, it is expected that the strip and record can be limited accordingly to the north-west of Area C.
- 5.17 Any human remains that are encountered will initially be left *in situ* and reported to the appropriate authorities. Subsequent removal will comply with the relevant Home Office regulations and current archaeological best-practice.
- 5.18 All finds of gold and silver or hoards of prehistoric metals will be moved away from the site to a safe place of storage and reported to the coroner's office according to the procedures set out in the Treasure Act 1996. Where removal cannot be completed on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures will be implemented to protect the artefacts from either theft or damage.
- 5.19 Suitable contexts will be subjected to environmental sampling at an appropriate scale. This work will meet the minimum standards recommended by the Council's advisor. Decisions regarding which contexts are suitable for environmental sampling will be made on site in consultation with the Council's advisor and the Historic England regional scientific advisor.
- 5.20 All artefactual and ecofactual remains, whether stratified or not, and including material from spoil tips, will be collected, bagged and labelled. Artefacts will be subject to preliminary study on site in order to help date excavation contents.
- 5.21 Spoil generated by hand-cleaning of excavated areas, or the hand-excavation of features and deposits will be stockpiled beyond the limits of the excavated area, or where that is impractical, on areas of the stripped surface free from archaeological features or deposits.
- 5.22 No areas of archaeological investigation will be released for construction without the Council's advisor confirming that this is acceptable and that the required fieldwork for an area is completed to a satisfactory standard.

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Section 6 Recording Systems

- 6.1 The recording system will be compatible with the most widely used in Oxfordshire. Pro-forma context sheets will include all relevant stratigraphic relationships and, for complex stratigraphy, a separate matrix diagram will be employed.
- 6.2 The following plans and sections are required:
- An overall site plan of the excavated area will be prepared detailing archaeological deposits, as well as the extent of the area relative to the National Grid on a 1:2500 plan. An overall excavation plan will be prepared at a 1:100 scale;
 - Sections containing significant deposits, including half sections, will be drawn as appropriate. Section drawing will include heights aOD;
 - All archaeological plans and sections will be on drawing film and at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 and will include context numbers and aOD spot heights for all principal strata and features; and
 - An appropriately detailed photographic record of any significant archaeological remains will be maintained, in both plan and section.
- 6.3 Confirmation of the approach to be followed, in respect of the on-site recording, will be identified in the appointed contractor's WSI.

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Section 7

Finds and Samples

- 7.1 A high priority will be given to dating any archaeological remains and so all artefacts and finds will be retained. Consideration will also be given to the recovery of specialist samples for scientific analysis, particularly samples for absolute dating, structural materials and cultural/environmental evidence. Environmental samples will be taken from suitable deposits and examined for carbonised remains, macroscopic plant remains, pollen, seeds, insects, molluscs, etc.
- 7.2 All finds and samples will be treated in a proper manner to prevent deterioration. This will involve cleaning and conservation, where necessary, and labelling, cataloguing and secure storage in appropriate containers.
- 7.3 The fieldwork contractor will include a strategy for palaeo-environmental sampling on the site and for processing and analysis of samples in their WSI. This work will accord with the minimum standard and guidance provided by the Council's advisor and the Historic England regional scientific advisor (as needs be).
- 7.4 The appointed contractor will carry out an assessment of the palaeo-environmental potential of the site and submit this in concise form in writing within the full post-excavation assessment report. The appointed fieldwork contractor will seek the advice of a palaeo-environmental specialist in this regard.
- 7.5 The appointed fieldwork contractor will demonstrate that appropriate arrangements are in hand to cover all processing, conservation and specialist analysis of finds and samples, including (if necessary) for any organic and composite materials and for dendro-chronological and environmental analysis of samples.
- 7.6 Every effort will be made, by the appointed fieldwork contractor, to ensure that any analysis of artefacts, which is required, is consistent with existing local systems.

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Section 8

Monitoring and Access

- 8.1 The Council's advisor will monitor the archaeological works (either remotely or through site visits) to ensure that they are being conducted to the proper professional standards and in accordance with this Specification and the appointed contractor's WSI. To facilitate this, a projected timetable for site work will be agreed in advance between the Council's advisor, the client, and the appointed archaeological organisation.
- 8.2 As a result, appropriate access to the site will be granted, by the appointed archaeological contractor, to the client, their representative and the Council's advisor.
- 8.3 The Council's advisor will be notified of the start of the works, giving at least two weeks' notice in writing.
- 8.4 A first review meeting will be held between the appointed fieldwork contractor, the client and the Council's advisor once any archaeological deposits have been identified and characterised, in order to consider the preliminary results and to progress the required works to a satisfactory standard. A plan of the archaeological features will be forwarded to the Council's advisor one week in advance of the site meeting.
- 8.5 No areas of archaeological investigation will be released for construction without the Council's advisor confirming that this is acceptable and that the required fieldwork for an area is completed to a satisfactory standard.
- 8.6 The archaeological programme, comprising the on-site fieldwork and the subsequent post-excavation and reporting phases, will be monitored by the Council's advisor by means of regular meetings and site visits, and/or email updates accompanied by plans and photographs (as appropriate).

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Section 9 Health and Safety

- 9.1 All relevant health and safety legislation and regulations will be followed. In particular, machines will be kept away from unsupported excavation edges and public access will be prevented. Barriers, hoardings and warning notices will be installed as appropriate.
- 9.2 High visibility jackets, safety helmets and protective footwear will be used by all personnel operating at or visiting the site. Other items of PPE - such as dust masks, goggles and gloves - will need to be worn as appropriate. The appointed archaeological contractor will provide a full risk assessment and their health and safety manual for the approval of the client prior to fieldwork commencing.
- 9.3 The appointed archaeological contractor must be satisfied that they are in receipt of all information reasonably obtainable on contamination and the location of live services before any site work takes place. Excavations will be checked using a CAT scanner.
- 9.4 The presence of the relevant utilities must be accounted for in the contractor's risk assessment and in addition appropriate consultation must be carried out with the relevant utility providers in that connection.
- 9.5 No trees or protected species are to be harmed by site works. Adjacent public roads will be kept free of mud and spoil.

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Section 10

Post-excavation

- 10.1 The archive will be prepared, and a preliminary post-excavation assessment undertaken, immediately after site works are completed. This will be prepared in accordance with the specification given in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE; HE 2015) and will be completed within a period of six months.
- 10.2 Full details of the approach to be followed, and the specialist staff that will be engaged, will be presented in the appointed contractor's WSI.
- 10.3 Each category of finds will be assessed by specialist staff and recommendations prepared for further study, where appropriate. Funds will be made available by the client for any additional works required and for conservation purposes where applicable.
- 10.4 All artefacts and ecofacts will be processed in accordance with professional best practice. In common with the environmental samples, none of them will be discarded without prior written permission from the Council's advisor.
- 10.5 Draft copies of the report(s) will be supplied to the Council's advisor for their review and comment, as well as the client's representative, prior to finalising. Through this process, the report(s) will be evaluated and recommendations then made for improvement, where appropriate.
- 10.6 Following approval by the Council's advisor and the client, the recommendations of the intermediate assessment (if required), in terms of the need for and scope of further analysis and the publication format, will be undertaken. In that regard, the guidelines set out in MoRPHE (HE 2015) will form a framework for the completion of the post-excavation investigation and publication.
- 10.7 Suitable provision should be made for an appropriate level of academic publication of the results of the excavation (if required) and will reflect the results of the intermediate assessment. The fieldwork report should include:
 - A review of the aims and methods employed;
 - A table summarising the descriptive text showing the features, classes and numbers of artefacts and their interpretation, with reference to the county artefacts type series where it is available;
 - Artefact analysis to include the production of a descriptive catalogue, with finds critical for dating and interpretation illustrated;
 - Appropriate illustrative materials, including site and excavation area plans, relevant sections (1:10), plans of any archaeological features (1:20) and general and detailed photographs;

- Information on the nature, extent, date, condition and significance of the archaeological and environmental material uncovered with specialist opinions and parallels from other sites in the area;
 - An interpretation of the results, with attention given to the significance of the remains in local, regional and national terms, if appropriate; and
 - A reconsideration of the methodology used, including a confidence rating of the strategy and the results.
- 10.8 The full programme of post-excavation assessment, analysis and publication will be completed within two years from the cessation of archaeological site works.
- 10.9 Copies of any reports and/or publication texts arising from fieldwork will be deposited in digital form with the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 10.10 The above strategy assumes that assessment and analysis reports and full publication will be required. However, a simpler approach (e.g. a grey literature report) may be appropriate, dependant on the fieldwork results. Regardless, the approach will be agreed in advance with the Council's advisor and will be proportionate to the significance of the remains identified.

Section 11

Archiving

- 11.1 At the outset, the site archive, which will comprise records of the archaeological excavations and any materials recovered, including written elements, plans and drawings, digital photographs, photographic prints and transparencies (where appropriate) and other primary data recovered during the investigation, will be quantified, ordered, indexed and made internally consistent. It will also contain as a minimum requirement a site matrix, site summary (a short report giving a preliminary account of the discoveries) and brief written observations on the artefactual and environmental data.
- 11.2 All artefacts (e.g. pottery, metalwork, objects in worked flint and stone, wood, bone, horn, leather and slag) and ecofacts (e.g. organic finds such as bones, preserved ancient plant remains, seeds, pollen, charcoal and soil samples) recovered during the excavation will be made available to the appointed contractor pending completion of the report, to be stored during the course of the archaeological investigation at the contractor's secure offices or usual place of secure storage of archaeological finds.
- 11.3 All artefacts recovered during the archaeological investigation will be suitably washed (where the condition of the artefacts allows) and marked by the contractor and all artefacts and ecofacts bagged and boxed by the contractor, in accordance with current United Kingdom Institute for Conservation/RESCUE publication First Aid for Finds. All 'small finds' will be boxed together, separate from bulk finds.
- 11.4 In preparing cost estimates for the archaeological investigation, the contractor will include provision for at least a basic minimum level of conservation of finds liable to deterioration after excavation.
- 11.5 Within 12 months of completion of the written and drawn site archive, a microfiched security copy of these elements of the archive will be deposited by the contractor in the National Monuments Record (Historic England) and confirmed in writing to the council and the Council's advisor, except where further excavation/post-excavation work is required, when, by agreement, the period may be extended.
- 11.6 Subject to the legislation of the Treasure Act 1996, all artefacts and ecofacts unearthed from the investigation and all other elements of the site archive (as defined in MoRPHE [2015]) will be deposited by the contractor at the recipient museum. No artefacts or ecofacts from the site shall be deposited without the prior written consent of the landowner.
- 11.7 Prior to the deposition of finds at the recipient museum, the contractor will agree with them the sample or quantity of bulk finds (i.e. pottery, animal and, if appropriate, human bone, other ecofactual material, building material, burnt flint, worked flint and stone), to be deposited. Details are to be set out in the contractor's WSI.
- 11.8 All excavated artefacts and ecofacts and all other elements of the site archive will be delivered by the contractor to the recipient museum as one deposit. Where this arrangement is not practicable, lists will be submitted by the contractor of any objects that are not

deposited, together with information as to the quantity involved and their current location, reasons for non-deposition and a timetable for their ultimate deposition.

- 11.9 The contractor will contact the recipient museum prior to preparing cost estimates for the work in order to discuss any special requirements for the deposition of finds.
- 11.10 All articles needing conservation will be properly stabilised by the appointed contractor prior to their deposition at the recipient museum and records of their treatment lodged with the museum. Those items for which available resources do not permit stabilisation will be separately packed and listed by the appointed fieldwork contractor.
- 11.11 Prior to commencement of the archaeological excavation, the appointed fieldwork contractor will obtain from the recipient museum an accession number for excavated artefacts and ecofacts from the project and any guidelines regarding deposition of such artefacts and ecofacts.
- 11.12 All finds, save those specifically excluded by the recipient museum or excluded on grounds of size/material, will also be marked by the appointed fieldwork contractor with the recipient museum's accession number.
- 11.13 Artefacts and ecofacts deposited by the appointed contractor in the recipient museum will be accompanied by the remainder of the original site archive or by a complete duplicate record thereof. A microfiched security copy of the site archive will also be supplied by the contractor to the recipient museum.
- 11.14 Subject to the agreement of the landowner, all artefacts and ecofacts recovered from the archaeological investigation will be deposited by the appointed contractor at the recipient museum within five years from the date of the investigation's completion.
- 11.15 Work on the site archive will be completed within 12 calendar months of completion of the archaeological field investigation. Upon completion of the site archive, the contractor will, if appropriate, arrange a meeting with the Council's advisor to present the archive for inspection prior to its deposition in the recipient museum.
- 11.16 Copyright of the written, drawn and photographic elements of the site archive will be vested jointly with the appointed contractor and the recipient museum.
- 11.17 The following documents will be adhered to:
- Museum and Galleries Commission - Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (1992); and
 - Historic England – *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (April 2015).

Section 12

Requirements of the Archaeological Contractor

- 12.1 The appointed archaeological contractor will provide a WSI setting out how it will undertake the investigation in accordance with the requirements of the Council's advisor, for approval prior to the start of any fieldwork. This WSI will include details of all field and post-excavation work, including project archiving.
- 12.2 The contractor's WSI will summarise resourcing levels and will include a risk assessment, programme/schedule and a brief career profile of the site director, which demonstrates their suitability for undertaking the archaeological work.

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Section 13

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Annex EDP 1
Illustrative Masterplan
(Edge Urban Design, Drawing Number: P15, April 2021)

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PLANNING

— Site boundary (22.7ha)

Rev.	Date	Description
		Land north of Gavray Drive BICESTER
		Illustrative Masterplan
Job ref: 239	Drawing number: P15	Revision: -
Scale: 1:3,500 @ A3	Date: April 2021	



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Annex EDP 2
Oxford Archaeology Evaluation Report and Hedgerow Survey (1997)

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Unipart

**Bicester Park: Land South of
London - Banbury Railway Line,
Bicester**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

NGR SP 599 222

96/00255/F and 96/00321/F



Oxford Archaeological Unit

August 1997

Bicester Park, Land South of London-Banbury Railway Line,
Bicester

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Bicester Park, Bicester, Oxon on behalf of Unipart. The evaluation revealed a generally low density of archaeological features, mostly undated ditches, across the proposed development area. In the north-west corner of the site a probable enclosure ditch and other features were found. These were associated with Roman pottery and probably indicate a low-status settlement of 2nd century AD date. Such sites are still relatively scarce in the Bicester area. A small number of sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery are also important in indicating activity of that date in the vicinity. The upstanding traces of medieval fields were also recorded.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

In March and April 1996 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation at Bicester Park, Bicester, Oxon on behalf of Unipart in respect of a planning application for a car body (Body in White) plant (Planning Application Nos. 96/00255/F and 96/00321/F) and a brief set by and a WSI agreed with the County Archaeologist for Oxfordshire. The development site lay on land south of the London-Banbury railway line in Bicester Park South (Fig. 1), on the east side of Bicester (centre SP 599222) and is c 6.7 hectares in area. The site code for the fieldwork component of the project was BIUNI 96 and the archive resulting from the evaluation will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service under the accession number 1996.28.

1.2 Geology and topography

The site is located in the Oxford Clay Vale, south of its junction with the East Cherwell Uplands and lies on superficial deposits above Oxford Clay. The superficial deposits encountered across the site were slightly silty orange-brown to blue-grey clays. The site is generally flat, at about 65 m OD. The site consists of well-established pasture, divided into fairly small fields by a rectilinear pattern of hedged field boundaries and narrow lanes, overlaid on well-preserved ridge and furrow on the same general alignment.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The archaeological background to the evaluation was the subject of a separate preliminary study (OAU 1996), prepared as part of a wider survey of the environmental aspects of the development impact, compiled by EPCAD (Environmental Planning Coordination and Design) Consultants. This has been expanded and is incorporated in the summary presented below.

Prior to the evaluation the site itself had produced no archaeological evidence, with the exception of the extant remains of ridge and furrow. There are no known archaeological finds from the immediate surroundings, but it lies in an area of considerable interest. Evidence for

4.2.2 The parish boundary, which runs in a straight line (roughly north-west - south-east) through the southern part of the site and partly forms its southern edge, consists of a slight bank topped with a hedge to the south-west with a ditch on its north-eastern side. The ditch was partly examined in evaluation Trench 4 (see below). Both bank and ditch were partly overgrown and difficult to examine in detail.

4.2.3 The ridge and furrow itself was relatively uncomplicated. It was on the same alignment as the parish boundary and appeared to respect that feature, though definition of the ridge and furrow at the south end of Field 1 adjacent to the boundary was poor. There is some uncertainty about the alignment of the most southerly recorded furrow in that field, and the corresponding alignments in Field 2 suggest that there should have been a further furrow in Field 1 closer to the boundary feature. This may have become obscured by material derived from cleaning out of the boundary ditch.

4.2.4 The ridge and furrow formed part of two groups of furlongs, presumably lying within a single open field, divided by a slight north-east - south-west aligned headland subsequently followed by one of the hedges of the rectilinear field system. Fields 1-4 lay within the western group and Fields 5-7 in the eastern group. In the western group some variation was noted in the spacing of ridges, particularly in the southern half of the site. Most commonly the ridges were some 8-9 m apart, a spacing which was observed across Fields 3 and 4, but in Fields 1 and 2 to the south this spacing was interrupted by groups of more closely set furrows, between 5 and 6 m apart. The significance of this variation is uncertain. It was also observable, though to a lesser extent, in the eastern group of furlongs, particularly at the southern end of Field 6, where three quite closely-spaced furrows corresponded with similar ones to the west. Elsewhere in the eastern group the average furrow spacing was slightly wider than to the west, generally in a range from 8 m up to 11 m. As far as could be detected on the ground there were slight traces of the classic 'reverse-S' furrow shape on both sides of the headland running through the centre of the site. This has been represented slightly schematically on the ridge and furrow plan - precise rendering would have required either an impracticably large number of measurements or more detailed aerial photographic evidence than is available.

4.2.5 The earthworks associated with the rectilinear field system were not examined in detail. Where present, slight hedge banks were clearly later than the ridge and furrow and in places, for example on the hedge lines dividing Fields 1 and 2 and at the south-eastern margin of Field 2, these were associated with shallow ditches which cut the ridge and furrow. The system of trackways associated with the rectilinear field system, which now survive as green lanes, may have utilised furrows and headlands where possible. This appears clear in the case of the trackway along the headland dividing the eastern and western groups of furlongs. In the case of the north-west - south-east aligned trackway dividing Fields 3 and 4 the spacing of the adjacent furrows would suggest that the trackway itself originally occupied the site of a furrow, but the present profile of the trackway is level. This probably resulted from erosion of the furrow over time, but it is just possible that the trackway originated earlier as part of an arrangement of accesses to the open field system. The north-east - south-west aligned trackway forming part of the north-western boundary of the site appears to have been laid out over the ridge and furrow, however.

4.3 Hedgerow Survey by Dominic Woodfield

4.3.1 A standard sample of two 30 yard stretches was taken for each hedgerow on the site. The number of species was then totalled and divided by two. Each hedgerow is discussed below using the numbering shown on Figure 2.

H1 Double hedge and ditch along ancient Parish Boundary. Structurally rather gappy which may be a result of competitive overshadowing by the nine mature Oaks along its length. It contains Midland Hawthorn which is indicative of more ancient hedgerows. **Average number of species in a 30 yard stretch: 4.5**

H2 Locally dense hedge along green lane with ditch and some rather large gaps and few mature trees. Elm has invaded some sections reducing species diversity. **Average number of species: 4.5**

H3 Similar to H2 and also running along green lane. Again locally dominated by suckering Elm with few mature trees. Hooper's rule gives an estimated age of approximately contemporary with enclosure; the actual age is likely to be significantly older due to the suppressing effect of the Elm on other species. The age of this hedge should also be similar to that of H2. **Average number of species: 3**

H4 Locally quite dense hedgerow with mature Oaks. It also contains Blackthorn, Elm, Hawthorn and Dog Rose. The structure deteriorates towards the Bicester Eastern Perimeter Road. **Average number of species: 3.**

H5 Dense hedgerow with one mature Ash and semi-mature Field Maple. Other species include Elm, Hawthorn and Dog Rose. **Average number of species: 3**

H6 Northern hedgerow of two which make up an attractive shaded greenway. Essentially a double hedgerow on banks either side of a shallow ditch. The structure is poor with most woody species tall but flimsy. There are numerous mature or semi-mature trees of Ash and Oak, some Field Maple and Hawthorn are also fairly large. The hedge also contains Midland Hawthorn which is indicative of more ancient hedgerows. Some sections support Elm. Other species present include Holly saplings and Goat Willow. **Average number of species: 4**

H7 Very similar to H6 but rather more dense in places. **Average number of species: 5**

H8 Fairly dense with a good complement of species including Crack Willow. Elm becomes locally dominant. **Average number of species: 4.5**

H9 Locally dense hedge with two fine Ash in its northern section. Blackthorn and Elm are locally prevalent. **Average number of species: 4**

H10 Structurally defunct hedgerow with extensive gaps which make survey of a defined length difficult. **Average number of species: 3**

H11 Fairly dense at eastern end with Blackthorn prevalent. **Average number of species: 4**

4.3.2 Hedgerow survey data

Species		H1	H1	H2	H2	H3	H3
<i>Acer Campestre</i>	Field maple	*			*	*	
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Crataegus laevigata</i>	Midland Hawthorn		*		*		*
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash		*				
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly						
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab Apple						
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	*	*		*		
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Oak	*					
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	Field Rose	*					
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog Rose						
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat Willow			*	*		*
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder						
<i>Ulmus procera</i>	Elm				*	*	*

	H4	H4	H5	H5	H6	H6	H7	H7
<i>Acer Campestre</i>		*		*	*	*	*	*
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Crataegus laevigata</i>					*	*	*	*
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>		*		*		*	*	*
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>						*	*	*
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>						*		
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>								
<i>Quercus robur</i>								
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>								*
<i>Rosa canina</i>								*
<i>Salix caprea</i>								*
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>						*		
<i>Ulmus procera</i>	*	*	*	*			*	

	H8	H8	H9	H9	H10	H10	H11	H11
<i>Acer campestre</i>	*	*						
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Crataegus laevigata</i>				*		*	*	*
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	*		*					*
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>								
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>								
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>		*	*	*		*	*	*
<i>Quercus robur</i>						*	*	*
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>						*		
<i>Rosa canina</i>	*			*				
<i>Salix caprea</i>				*			*	*
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>				*		*		
<i>Ulmus procera</i>	*	*			*	*		

4.3.3 Sources of bias: Structurally the hedges on the site vary greatly. While obvious gaps (e.g. H2, H4, H10) were ignored (30 yards of actual hedgerow vegetation was surveyed), rather sparse or thinning hedgerows (e.g. H1, H6, H7) may produce less species than structurally dense ones. This is obviously more reflective of management and possibly other factors such as stress from changes in soil conditions (e.g. waterlogging) or competitive overshadowing, than it is of age. A number of hedges have also been invaded by suckering Elm, or regenerating Elm spreading from where a mature Elm has been lost. The vigorous and sometimes dense growth appears to have reduced diversity in some sections (notably western end of hedge H8).

4.3.4 Overall Conclusions: In conjunction with documentary evidence this survey serves to confirm that the majority of the hedges are at least of Tudor or late medieval age. Those which more obviously overlie the remnant open strip fields of medieval agriculture appear to be younger than those which are more harmonious with it. For example hedgerows H6 and H7 which enclose a shaded greenway, run parallel to the strip field pattern and are bordered by a double bank and ditch system which appears to be contemporary with the strip farming as it fits in with it quite neatly. Together with the presence of mature trees and woodland species such as Midland Hawthorn and Honeysuckle (although the latter is not a species used in the dating survey) this implies a hedgerow of considerable antiquity.

In conclusion the oldest hedgerows on the site most obviously appear to be H1 and H6/H7 with the remainder probably of slightly less antiquity. The age of hedgerows such as H1 and H2, which enclose a green lane, and H8 which is quite species rich, is difficult to determine. H1 and H2 are possibly later than the underlying field system (although this is by no means certain). In addition all three have been affected by Elm regenerating from mature trees killed by Dutch Elm Disease which is spreading along some sections and may be suppressing other species.

Overall, the dating exercise does no more than support the documentary evidence uncovered in the initial archaeological assessment - namely that the hedgerows on the site date at least to the late 16th/early 17th century, with some evidence that at least some may be significantly older. Following the species/age correlation strictly, much of the hedgerow system on the site may actually date from the Tudor or late Medieval period, although a more precise estimation than this cannot realistically be attempted.

4.4 Excavated Trenches: General

4.4.1 Soils and ground conditions

The general soil type was a silty clay which was slightly acidic, contributing to poor bone survival. The orange-brown to blue-grey subsoil was generally overlaid by a bluish-grey silty clay with orange mottles which was up to 0.4 m deep. This deposit, sealed by the present topsoil, is interpreted as a medieval ploughsoil. Unless specifically mentioned otherwise, all trenches had this sequence. Ground conditions at the time of the evaluation were quite wet, with a high water table and areas of standing surface water in places. Most features filled with water upon excavation. Despite the low-lying nature of the site and the wet conditions no waterlogged deposits were encountered.

4.4.2 Distribution of Archaeological Deposits

Relatively few archaeological features were revealed in the trenches. Those that were found were mainly linear features, ditches or gullies, which were for the most part undated. The only significant concentration of features associated with dating material was in Trench 16 in the north-western corner of the site.

4.4.3 Presentation of Results

A summary description of the evaluation is presented in Trench sequence and is then discussed in wider terms, relating it to the other types of evidence considered in the evaluation. Trenches 10, 11, 14 and 15, containing no archaeological features, are not described in detail below. Trench orientations and maximum depth of machining are given in the trench headings. All features were sealed beneath the probable medieval ploughsoil unless specified otherwise. Only trenches containing significant features are illustrated here.

4.5 Excavated Trenches: Description of deposits

4.5.1 Trench 1: aligned SW-NE, maximum depth c 0.75 m

A layer of light brown silty clay with orange mottling (1/3) up to 0.10 m thick overlay the natural subsoil (1/4) and was cut towards the north-east end of the trench by a rounded feature (1/5). This was up to 1.2 m across and 0.25 m deep, with a shallow, slightly irregular profile. The single fill (1/5), of clay very similar to layer 1/3, contained no finds. The feature could have been a shallow pit or ditch terminal. The fill of 1/6 was sealed by the probable medieval ploughsoil 1/2. At the extreme south-west end of the trench this deposit was cut by a recent north-west - south-east aligned drainage ditch c 0.5 m deep with 45° sloping sides (1/8). The fill of this feature (1/7) was effectively indistinguishable from the topsoil.

A flint flake was recovered from layer 1/3. Other finds from the trench were from the topsoil. These were mainly post-medieval brick/tile, pottery and glass, but one probable Anglo-Saxon sherd and one possible medieval sherd also came from this layer.

4.5.2 Trench 2: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth c 0.4 m (Fig. 4)

Four discrete, shallow anomalies may have been features cutting the natural subsoil 2/3). From south-east to north-west these were 2/4, 2/6, 2/9 and 2/7. 2/4 was c 0.13 m deep, 1.65 m wide and 1.6 m + in length, with very shallow sides. The fill (2/5) was a grey, charcoal flecked, silty clay which produced a single pottery sherd probably of Anglo-Saxon date. Adjacent to 2/4 was a 0.02 m thick spread (2/6) of very similar material. An irregular shaped cut 2/9, with one straight north-east - south-west aligned edge, running across the trench, was interpreted as a possible tree disturbance. At the extreme north-west end of the trench a better-defined feature, 2/7, appeared to be a ditch turning, within the end of the trench. This feature was up to c 0.85 m across and 0.24 m deep, with fairly steep sloping sides and a flat base. The single fill (2/8) was of grey silty clay which contained some burnt stone but no other finds.

There were no finds from this trench apart from the sherd in 2/5.

4.5.3 Trench 3: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth c 0.45 m (Fig. 4)

Two probable features were examined in this trench. A probable ditch 3/6, with a total width of 1.42 m ran across the centre of the trench at right angles to its alignment. The south-east edge of this ditch was well-defined and sloped at c 45° to a flat base, the feature having its maximum depth of 0.36 m here. The bottom was then stepped, the north-western side of the feature being only c 0.16-0.18 m deep. Only a single fill (3/5), of mottled silty clay (3/5) was noted. This was overlaid by a similar deposit up to 0.12 m thick (3/4) which extended beyond the confines of the ditch. South-east of the ditch was a discrete feature (3/7) c 1.56 m long, 0.82 m wide and 0.10 m deep with rounded ends and a shallow profile aligned roughly east-west. The fill (3/7) contained two small fragments of brick or tile of uncertain date. The feature could have been an isolated ditch fragment or possibly even a grave, but there was no evidence beyond the plan that the latter was the case.

The only finds from this trench were the tile fragments from 3/7 noted above.

4.5.4 Trench 4: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth c 0.7 m (Fig. 4)

This trench was positioned so that its south-west end cut the line of the present boundary between Launton and Ambrosden and Bicester parishes, which forms the southern boundary of much of the site.

A layer of yellowish orange silty clay some 0.15-0.2 m thick (4/3) lay immediately above the natural subsoil. The extent to which this deposit was genuinely distinct from the subsoil is uncertain. A small circular feature (4/5), possibly a pit, 0.7 m across and 0.06 m deep, was located at the extreme north-east end of the trench. The fill (4/6) may have been sealed by 4/3, but this was not certain. Further south-west a round-ended feature (4/7), up to 1.6 m across and 0.3 m deep, extended c 1 m from the south-east side of the trench. This could have been a pit or a ditch terminal. The single fill was of orange brown silty clay with no finds.

The line of the parish boundary was marked by an extant ditch and hedge. The ditch (4/9) was c 2.2 m wide and 0.75 m deep with a gently rounded profile. Only a single modern fill (4/10) was observed in the base of the cut. Extensive root disturbance made it impossible to be certain if earlier cuts were present on the same alignment, but this seems unlikely.

There were no finds from this trench.

4.5.5 Trench 5: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.65 m

A very shallow and rather irregular hollow (5/6) up to 0.58 m across may have been a natural feature. It was truncated by 5/4, one of a pair of close set field drains aligned roughly ENE-WSW. These cut the medieval ploughsoil (5/2) and were sealed by topsoil. No other features were observed and no finds were recovered.

4.5.6 Trench 6: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.53 m

The sole feature observed in this trench was a roughly north-east - south-west aligned ditch

(6/5) 0.9 m wide and 0.35 m deep with an asymmetrical profile. The single fill (6/4), of grey clay with orange mottling and very small charcoal flecks, was sealed by the probable medieval ploughsoil 6/2.

There were no finds from this trench.

4.5.7 Trench 7: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.53 m (Fig. 5)

Three possible features were found in this trench. At the north-east end a circular feature (7/9) projected from the north-west baulk. It was c 1 m across and 0.3 m deep and had a brownish grey silty clay fill (7/8) with no finds. Some 16 m distant was a less regular feature, up to 1.35 m by 1 m and 0.35 m deep (7/5). This also had a single fill (7/4) very similar to 7/8; from which came a very abraded tiny fragment of medieval pottery. Further south still was a narrow linear feature (7/7), c 0.3 m across and up to 0.18 m deep with an irregular profile. While the interpretation of this feature is uncertain it was thought that the other two features could have been of natural origin.

The only finds were the abraded medieval sherd from 7/4 and a single post-medieval pottery sherd from the topsoil.

4.5.8 Trench 8: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.7 m

This trench produced a single linear feature (8/5), some 0.7 m wide and 0.15 m deep, running c north-east - south-west across the trench. The single mid grey sandy clay fill (8/4) contained no finds. Three post-medieval pottery sherds were recovered from the topsoil.

4.5.9 Trench 9: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.55 m

Only one definite feature was identified in this trench. This was a narrow V-shaped gully (9/4), 0.36 m wide and 0.39 m deep, running at right angles across the trench towards its south-eastern end. The fill, of grey silty clay (9/5) contained no finds. A number of less regular anomalies (9/6, 9/8 and 9/10) were filled with orange-brown sandy clay which also formed localised patches on the surface of the natural orange-grey clay subsoil (9/3). These were all interpreted as natural features.

There were no finds from this trench.

4.5.10 Trench 10: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.8 m

No archaeological features were present in this trench. One pottery sherd, possibly of medieval date, came from the medieval ploughsoil 10/2.

4.5.11 Trench 11: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 1 m

No archaeological features or finds were recovered from this trench.

4.5.12. Trench 12: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.8 m

The natural subsoil (12/4), a yellowish brown silty clay, was cut by a V-shaped ditch (12/6) 0.61 m wide and 0.36 m deep, filled with a homogeneous grey clay (12/5). The ditch fill was overlaid by a substantial layer of yellowish-grey silty clay (12/3) ranging from c 0.15-0.4 m in thickness. This in turn was overlaid by the probable medieval ploughsoil (12/2) and topsoil (12/1). It may itself have been a further ploughsoil, but this is not certain.

A possible medieval pottery sherd and a post-medieval sherd were recovered from the topsoil.

4.5.13 Trench 13: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.7 m (Fig. 5)

At the north-west end of the trench was the terminus of a slightly curvilinear ditch (13/4) some 1.12 m wide and 0.32 m deep. Both sides of this feature were shallow with a break in slope steepening to a rounded base. The cut was quite heavily disturbed by probable root action. Its fill (13/5) was of grey to orange-grey silty clay. Roughly in the centre of the trench was a smaller ditch or gully 0.5 m wide and 0.32 m deep (13/8) with a similar profile to 13/4, filled with dark greyish brown silty clay (13/9). Close to the north-west side of 13/8 was a shallow oval pit 0.66 by 0.56 m in plan and 0.12 m deep (13/6), with a light orange-grey sandy clay fill. A comparable but larger feature (13/10) projected from the south-west baulk of the trench near its south-east end. This was up to 1.7 m across and 0.15 m deep and was filled with orange silty clay.

No finds were recovered from this trench.

4.5.14 Trench 14: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.6 m

No archaeological features or finds were recorded in this trench.

4.5.15 Trench 15: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.75 m

There were no archaeological features in this trench. A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the topsoil.

4.5.16 Trench 16: aligned NW-SE, maximum depth 0.6 m (Fig. 6)

This was the only trench to produce a significant concentration of dated archaeological features. It was extended at the south-eastern end to recover more evidence for a Roman ditch and therefore had a total length of 37 m. At the north-west end of the trench was a group of features apparently of very irregular plan, extending under both baulks of the trench, the understanding of which was hampered by the very wet conditions of the excavation. These were features 16/13, 16/7, 16/9 and 16/11, respectively 0.30, 0.21, 0.12 and 0.1 m deep with varying profiles. Fills 16/6 and 16/12, of features 16/13 and 16/7 respectively, were very similar, of light blueish grey silty clay with orange brown mottling; both contained 2nd century pottery. The fill of 16/9 (16/8) was a very heavily mottled blueish grey silty clay and that of 16/11 (16/10) an orange brown silty clay with mottling, both containing high proportions of iron panning. It was uncertain if these features were of anthropomorphic or natural origin, but a Roman sherd and tile fragment and three sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery

were recovered from the surface of 16/8.

Further south-east were two lengths of curving gully both projecting from the north-east baulk of the trench and returning towards it. The first, (16/23), was 3.25 m long, c 0.65 m wide and 0.28 m deep with a U-shaped profile. The second, (16/25), was 2.1 m long, 0.5 m wide and 0.15 m deep. Both had similar fills of blueish-grey silty clay, neither of which produced finds. Further south-east were more irregular features, 16/15 (a possible pit or even a length of ditch 0.18 m deep), 16/17 and 16/21 (possible pits or hollows) and an adjacent probable post hole (16/19), the relationship of which to 16/20 was unclear. The fills of 16/15, 16/17 and 16/21, as well as that of the smaller curving gully 16/25, were all cut by the principal Roman feature in the trench, a ditch (16/5) which ran from about the midpoint of the trench roughly south-eastwards along its alignment before turning to the north-east. Ditch 16/5 had an average width of c 1 m and was up to 0.35 m deep with a roughly rounded profile. Its single fill (16/4) was of mid to dark blueish grey silty clay and contained pottery of 2nd century or perhaps slightly later date.

All the feature fills were overlaid by the probable medieval ploughsoil (16/2), here ranging from 0.26 to 0.4 m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by the topsoil.

The finds from this trench consisted of 19 sherds of Roman pottery and three fragments of Roman tile, plus the three Anglo-Saxon sherds from 16/8. There were no other Roman finds and no animal bone.

4.5.17 Trench 17: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.6 m

A single feature was seen towards the north-east end of the trench. This was a possible pit or ditch terminal (17/6) projecting up to c 1.5 m into the trench from the north-west baulk. The feature was up to 1.3 m across but only 0.15 m deep. Its fill was of grey sandy clay (17/5). There were no finds from this trench.

4.5.18 Trench 18: aligned NE-SW, maximum depth 0.7 m

A well-defined small ditch or gully 0.55 m wide and 0.2 m deep (18/8) ran across the north-east end of the trench on a roughly north-west - south-east alignment. It was filled with dark grey-brown silty clay loam (18/7). Towards the south-west end of the trench was a probable shallow pit (18/6), 1 m across and 0.25 m deep with a gently rounded profile. Its fill (18/5) was identical to 18/7.

The natural grey clay subsoil (18/4) was overlaid by a blue grey silty clay with orange mottles (18/3) up to 0.15 m thick. There was some uncertainty as to whether this deposit overlay or was cut by features 18/8 and 18/6. Although the former relationship was recorded in the section it was subsequently thought that this was mistaken and that the features were more likely to have cut 18/3.

Two medieval pottery sherds dated to the 14th-15th centuries came from the ploughsoil layer 18/2.

M22, Oxford white ware mortarium fabric, 1 sherd.
O20, coarse sandy oxidised ware (local?), 1 sherd.
O81, pink grogged ware (Northants/Bucks), 1 sherd.
O/R, indeterminate coarse ware (local?), 1 sherd.
R10, fine reduced ware (local/Oxford), 1 sherd.
R30, moderately sandy reduced ware (local/Oxford), 10 sherds.
R37, moderately sandy reduced ware, source uncertain but north-west of Oxford, 4 sherds.
B11, black-burnished ware (BB1, Dorset), 1 sherd.

The range of material and sources is unremarkable. Only two rim sherds were present, of a flanged bowl in fabric R30 and a jar in fabric R37. Neither of these is closely datable but both are more likely to be of the 2nd century than later. This could apply to the Roman material as a whole, though fabric O81 is more common in the 3rd-4th centuries than earlier, and might possibly indicate a later Roman date for context 16/4 in which it occurred. A 2nd century date even for this feature is still most likely, however. All the Roman material could fall in a late 1st-2nd century date range, but none of the fabrics is necessarily very chronologically specific, and in an assemblage of this size arguments based on the absence of diagnostic late Roman material are meaningless.

The five sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery are of interest since such material is generally rare in the area. All were in sand and organic tempered fabric, which contrasts with the early Saxon material recovered from the A421 sites, which was entirely sand tempered. It is possible that the presence of organic tempering indicates a slightly later date in the Saxon period (perhaps not before the 6th century, whereas the A421 material may be of 5th century date), but this is speculative.

The medieval pottery consisted of two small fragments of a sandy coarse ware (see above), a tiny fragments in a fabric containing sand, flint and occasional irregular voids, probably originating in North Wiltshire/West Oxfordshire and of 10th-12th century date, and three sherds probably from the Brill/Boarstall industry of 13th-15th century date. None of these sherds occurred in significant features dated to the period.

Three fragments of Roman tile, one a tegula flange, came from contexts in Trench 16.

4.7 Environmental data

Four samples, from ditch contexts in Trenches 3, 7 and 8 and from a pit/posthole in Trench 16, were taken to assess the potential of deposits on the site to contain carbonised plant remains. These were examined using standard procedures but none contained suitable material. Sample 1, from Trench 8 feature 4, was slightly waterlogged, but this had not preserved any ancient environmental material.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Prehistoric and Roman

There was almost no direct evidence for prehistoric activity of any kind on the site. A single undiagnostic flint flake from layer 3 in Trench 1 was the only indicator. It is always possible that some of the undated linear and other features were prehistoric, but this seems unlikely.

A number of trenches contained undated shallow hollows and other irregular features which may have been of natural rather than human origin - for example tree holes. In some trenches a 'subsoil' layer of uncertain date was detected. This was generally cut by archaeological features but in a few cases was thought to overlie cut features. The latter were always undated and these relationships do not appear to have been secure.

The first certainly dated activity which is archaeologically detectable was of the Roman period. This consisted principally of a number of rather amorphous features located in Trench 16 in the north-west corner of the site, some of which were cut by a fairly substantial Roman ditch. The associated pottery was sufficient in quantity to indicate that these features belonged to a closely adjacent settlement, with the bulk of the material consistent with a 2nd century AD date. The evidence is insufficient to demonstrate if the ditch was later than all the other features in the trench, but this is possible. The curving corner of the ditch located within Trench 16 suggests that this was an enclosure feature. Again there is insufficient evidence to show that a phase of unenclosed settlement was succeeded by an enclosed settlement, but this is one possible model for the development of this part of the site. Local rural settlement in the Roman period (see section 1.3 above) includes two sites which were apparently abandoned in the first half of the 2nd century AD. The present site appears to be complementary to this pattern in that the late Iron Age and early Roman pottery characteristic of the early settlements is absent here. While the bulk of the present material may be of 2nd century date there are hints that some of it could be later, and there are very few if any rural settlements in the region originating in the 2nd century which did not then continue to be occupied up to the late Roman period. That this may have been the pattern here is supported by the presence of a small number of Anglo-Saxon sherds in Trench 16. While Saxon settlement in the region is not unknown on previously unoccupied sites, many such sites appear initially to be associated with Roman settlement, as is the case with the nearest known Anglo-Saxon material, from the margins of the Roman extra-mural settlement at Alchester.

5.2 Linear features of uncertain date

The linear features (See Fig. 7), which are effectively undated, are perhaps best considered here since it is possible and perhaps likely that some of them were contemporary with the Roman settlement. Most of not all the linear features observed were recorded as underlying deposits interpreted as medieval ploughsoil. Only some 13 features, including the probable enclosure ditch in Trench 16, were considered reasonably certain to be linear man-made features. For the most part it was assumed that features which terminated within the trenches were discrete features such as pits, even though some were recorded as possible ditch terminals. Two principal ditch alignments were observed:

Alignment 1 was roughly ENE-WSW or at right angles to it. The possible enclosure ditch

16/5 was on this alignment, as were features 6/5, 8/5 and 12/6. The possible ditch angle 2/7 could also have been on this alignment, but this is uncertain.

Alignment 2 was roughly north-east - south-west, at right angles to the alignment of the trenches in which it was observed, and was represented by features 3/6, 9/4, 13/8, 19/7, 19/9 and perhaps also by the terminal 19/5. Feature 7/7, a very small gully, was the only one at right angles to this alignment and thus parallel with the orientation of the ridge and furrow.

The only feature which did not readily conform to either of these alignments was gully 18/8, aligned almost exactly east-west.

Evidence from the A421 (1991) excavations north of Alchester suggested that a fairly regular pattern of rectilinear field boundaries was established there in the 2nd century AD. The extent of such an arrangement is unknown, but it is at least possible that extensive reorganisation was taking place in other parts of the regional landscape at about the same time, and that this might have been connected with the demise of some settlement sites in the early 2nd century, as already discussed. If this is accepted it could follow that one or even both the principal ditch alignments observed on the present site was of Roman date. In view of its correspondence with the orientation of the probable enclosure ditch 16/5 it is suggested that alignment 1 was probably of this date. There is no evidence for the relative sequence of alignments 1 and 2, always assuming that all the features sharing these alignments were broadly contemporary with each other, which cannot be demonstrated conclusively on present evidence. The correspondence of alignment 2 with the axis of the ridge and furrow might suggest an association between the two, although as already noted the features on this alignment appear to predate the medieval ploughsoils.

5.3 Anglo-Saxon and medieval

Anglo-Saxon activity in the area is indicated by small quantities of pottery from Trenches 1, 2 and 16, though only in the last of these is the material likely to be reliably stratified. The sherds in Trench 1 were from topsoil and that in Trench 2, a very abraded fragment from the fill of a shallow hollow, may have been residual or, perhaps more likely, have been introduced as a result of plough disturbance. Feature 16/9 in Trench 16 was in fact a rather similar context to 2/4, but the sherds were in better condition and even if they were redeposited here had probably not travelled far. Early or early-middle Saxon settlement in the area seems certain, and as already mentioned it is quite likely to have originated in the vicinity of the Roman settlement in the north-west corner of the site. All the Saxon sherds may have derived from such a settlement, but Trench 1 was some 250 m distant from Trench 16, so it is possible that more than one focus of settlement is indicated in this period.

The origins of the parish boundary which forms the southern margin of most of the site may lie in the late Saxon period and therefore presumably predated the establishment of the ridge and furrow. Examination of the associated ditch produced no useful evidence. The ditch fills were heavily root disturbed but in any case appeared to be of relatively recent date. The obscurity of the ridge and furrow at the south end of Field 1 suggested that material derived from cleaning out the ditch may have been dumped here. If so, this activity was presumably later than the medieval period. The hedge dating survey indicated that the hedge associated with the parish boundary was one of the oldest on the site, and potentially as early as the late

medieval period, but precise dating was not possible. It is unlikely, however, that this indicates the date of the establishment of the boundary, and the physical form now evident, of bank and ditch, may itself have been in place for some centuries before the development of a hedge upon it.

The medieval earthworks formed part of a much more widespread arrangement of ridge and furrow evident on aerial photographs, much of which has now disappeared under the rapidly developing eastern side of Bicester. The physical characteristics of the ridge and furrow have been described above and are consistent with other observations from the region (Sutton 1966). A probable headland came to be utilised as an access, apparently the principal one in this area, to the village of Launton. This access was retained when the railway embankment, now forming the northern boundary of the site, was built. A further green lane, running at right angles to the headland, is bordered by two of the oldest hedgerows on the site, which may mean no more than that it was established early in the post-medieval period but may also indicate that this access was contemporary with at least some of the use of the fields, as was suggested above (section 5.2.5).

A layer interpreted as the medieval ploughsoil was encountered throughout the site in the evaluation trenches, in which it was usually layer 2. Where the trenches were cut across the line of the ridge and furrow the layer varied in thickness corresponding to the positions of the ridges and furrows. It consistently sealed other archaeological features. In Trenches 10 and 18 the layer contained medieval pottery sherds and in Trenches 1 and 12 such sherds occurred in the topsoil. The only other medieval sherd was a very small fragment from 7/4, the fill of a possible natural feature directly underlying the ploughsoil layer. No other features were assigned to the medieval period. The medieval ploughing appears to have caused some truncation of underlying features, judging by the general depth of these.

5.4 Post-medieval

Hedgerow elements of the rectilinear field system apart from those already discussed were of lesser antiquity, but even these were probably at least of late 16th-early 17th century date. These elements probably indicate the date of the establishment of the rectilinear field pattern in the early post-medieval period, incorporating elements (such as some of the green lanes) which may already have been in existence for some time.

There is little direct evidence for more recent use of the site. Agricultural use may have been of relatively low intensity and in the recent survey the grassland is categorised as 'semi-improved'. There was no indication of extensive campaigns of drainage, for example. The only land drain trenches noted, in Trench 5, were curiously at right angles to the ridge and furrow and might have related to drainage adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the field in which this trench was located.

Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory

Trench	Ctxt	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
001								
	1/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil	pottery pottery pottery tile/brick clay pipe coal animal bone	1 1 21 19 5 2 2	Saxon medieval post-med. ?post-med.
	1/2	layer		0.2	?medieval ploughsoil			
	1/3	layer		0.1	subsoil	flint flake	1	Neo/BA
	1/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	1/5	fill		0.3	fill of 1/6			
	1/6	cut	1.1	0.3	possible ditch terminal			
	1/7	fill		0.5	fill of 1/8			
	1/8	cut	1.3	0.5	recent drainage ditch			
002								
	2/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil			
	2/2	layer		0.22	?medieval ploughsoil			
	2/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	2/4	cut	1.65	0.13	hollow/?truncated pit			
	2/5	fill		0.13	fill of 2/4	pottery	1	Saxon
	2/6	?layer	0.8	0.02	?fill of natural hollow			
	2/7	cut	0.85	0.24	corner of ditch			
	2/8	fill		0.24	fill of 2/7			
	2/9	?cut	2.4	0.1	possible tree disturbance			
	2/10	fill		0.1	fill of 2/9			
003								
	3/1	layer		0.22	modern topsoil			
	3/2	layer		0.2	?medieval ploughsoil			
	3/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	3/4	fill		0.13	upper fill of 3/6			
	3/5	fill		0.37	lower fill of 3/6			
	3/6	cut	1.4	0.5	ditch			

	3/7	fill		0.1	fill of 3/8	?brick/tile	2	uncertain
	3/8	cut	0.4	0.1	elongated pit 1.5 m long			
004								
	4/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil			
	4/2	layer		0.3	?medieval ploughsoil			
	4/3	layer		0.2	?subsoil			
	4/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	4/5	cut	0.7	0.06	shallow pit			
	4/6	fill		0.06	fill of 4/5			
	4/7	cut	1.7	0.3	?pit or ditch terminal			
	4/8	fill		0.3	fill of 4/7			
	4/9	cut	3.0	1.0	modern ditch on line of parish boundary			
	4/10	fill		0.25	base fill of 4/9			
005								
	5/1	layer		0.25	modern topsoil			
	5/2	layer		0.3	?medieval ploughsoil			
	5/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	5/4	cut	0.1	?	field drain not fully excavated			
	5/5	fill		?	fill of 5/5			
	5/6	?cut	0.58	0.05	hollow or truncated feature			
	5/7	fill		0.05	fill of 5/6			
006								
	6/1	layer		0.25	modern topsoil			
	6/2	layer		0.2	?medieval ploughsoil			
	6/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	6/4	fill		0.25	fill of 6/5			
	6/5	cut	0.9	0.25	ditch/gully			
007								
	7/1	layer		0.23	modern topsoil	pottery	1	post-med.
	7/2	layer		0.4	?medieval ploughsoil			
	7/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			

	7/4	fill		0.23	fill of 7/5	pottery	1	medieval
	7/5	?cut	0.7	0.23	irregular pit or ?natural feature			
	7/6	fill		0.18	fill of 7/7			
	7/7	cut	0.3	0.18	small gully			
	7/8	fill		0.15	fill of 7/9			
	7/9	cut	1.0	0.15	possible pit			
008								
	8/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil	pottery	3	post-med.
	8/2	layer		0.4	?medieval ploughsoil			
	8/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	8/4	fill		0.15	fill of 8/5			
	8/5	cut	0.75	0.15	ditch/gully			
009								
	9/1	layer		0.23	modern topsoil			
	9/2	layer		0.3	?medieval ploughsoil			
	9/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	9/4	cut	0.36	0.39	gully			
	9/5	fill		0.39	fill of 9/4			
	9/6	?cut	1.25	0.21	possible natural feature			
	9/7	fill		0.21	fill of 9/6			
	9/8	?cut	1.03	0.16	possible natural feature			
	9/9	fill		0.16	fill of 9/8			
	9/10	?cut	0.3	0.18	possible natural feature			
	9/11	?fill		0.18	'fill' of 9/10, possible variation in subsoil strata			
010								
	10/1	layer		0.26	modern topsoil			
	10/2	layer		0.3	?medieval ploughsoil	pottery	1	?medieval
	10/3	layer		0.28	?natural subsoil			
	10/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
011								
	11/1	layer		0.27	modern topsoil			

	11/2	layer		0.35	?medieval ploughsoil			
	11/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
012								
	12/1	layer		0.25	modern topsoil	pottery pottery	I I	?medieval post-med.
	12/2	layer		0.28	?medieval ploughsoil			
	12/3	layer		0.16	possibly natural subsoil			
	12/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	12/5	fill		0.36	fill of 12/6			
	12/6	cut	0.61	0.36	ditch/gully			
013								
	13/1	layer		0.22	modern topsoil			
	13/2	layer		0.58	?medieval ploughsoil			
	13/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	13/4	cut	1.12	0.32	curving ?ditch terminal			
	13/5	fill		0.32	fill of 13/4			
	13/6	cut	0.66	0.12	shallow pit			
	13/7	fill		0.12	fill of 13/6			
	13/8	cut	0.5	0.32	ditch/gully			
	13/9	fill		0.32	fill of 13/8			
	13/10	?cut	1.7	0.15	?natural hollow			
	13/11	fill		0.15	fill of 13/10			
014								
	14/1	layer		0.32	modern topsoil			
	14/2	layer		0.28	?medieval ploughsoil			
	14/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
015								
	15/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil	pottery	1	Roman
	15/2	layer		0.35	?medieval ploughsoil			
	15/3	layer		?	natural subsoil			
016								
	16/1	layer		0.13	modern topsoil			
	16/2	layer		0.4	?medieval ploughsoil			

	16/3	layer		?	natural subsoil	pottery	1	Roman
	16/4	fill		0.35	fill of 16/5	pottery tile	7 2	Roman Roman
	16/5	cut	1.0	0.35	ditch			
	16/6	fill		0.15	fill of 16/7	pottery	1	Roman
	16/7	?cut	?3.75	0.15	irregular pit(s) or hollow			
	16/8	fill		0.08	fill of 16/9	pottery pottery tile	1 3 1	Roman Saxon Roman
	16/9	?cut	1.05 +	0.08	irregular feature			
	16/10	fill		0.12	fill of 16/11			
	16/11	cut	1.1+	0.12	irregular ?pit			
	16/12	fill		0.35	fill of 16/13	pottery	7	Roman
	16/13	cut	3.7	0.35	pit or pits			
	16/14	fill		0.18	fill of 16/15			
	16/15	cut	?2.5	0.18	?shallow pit or hollow			
	16/16	fill		0.16	fill of 16/17			
	16/17	cut	0.8	0.16	?shallow pit			
	16/18	fill		0.1	fill of 16/19			
	16/19	cut	0.2	0.1	?posthole			
	16/20	fill		0.08	fill of 16/21			
	16/21	?cut	0.9	0.08	shallow pit or hollow			
	16/22	fill		0.28	fill of 16/23			
	16/23	cut	0.65	0.28	curving gully			
	16/24	fill		0.15	fill of 16/25			
	16/25	cut	0.5	0.15	curving gully			
017								
	17/1	layer		0.25	modern topsoil			
	17/2	layer		0.25	?medieval ploughsoil			
	17/3	layer		0.4	?natural subsoil			
	17/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	17/5	fill		0.15	fill of 17/6			
	17/6	cut	1.5	0.15	shallow pit or ditch/gully terminal			

018								
	18/1	layer		0.2	modern topsoil			
	18/2	layer		0.32	?medieval ploughsoil	pottery	2	medieval
	18/3	layer		0.2	?subsoil			
	18/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	18/5	fill		0.2	fill of 18/6, ?sealed by 18/3			
	18/6	cut	1.0	0.2	possible pit			
	18/7	fill		0.2	fill of 18/8			
	18/8	cut	0.55	0.2	gully			
019								
	19/1	layer		0.3	modern topsoil			
	19/2	layer		0.2	?medieval ploughsoil	pottery brick/tile	2 1	post-med. ?post-med.
	19/3	layer		0.25	?subsoil			
	19/4	layer		?	natural subsoil			
	19/5	fill		0.1	fill of 19/6			
	19/6	cut	0.95	0.1	?ditch/gully terminal			
	19/7	cut	0.76	0.45	ditch/gully with asymmetrical profile			
	19/8	fill		0.45	fill of 19/7			
	19/9	cut	0.4	0.25	gully with asymmetrical profile			
	19/10	fill		0.25	fill of 19/9			
	19/11	?cut	1.8+	0.2	shallow hollow, ?natural			
	19/12	fill		0.2	fill of 19/11			

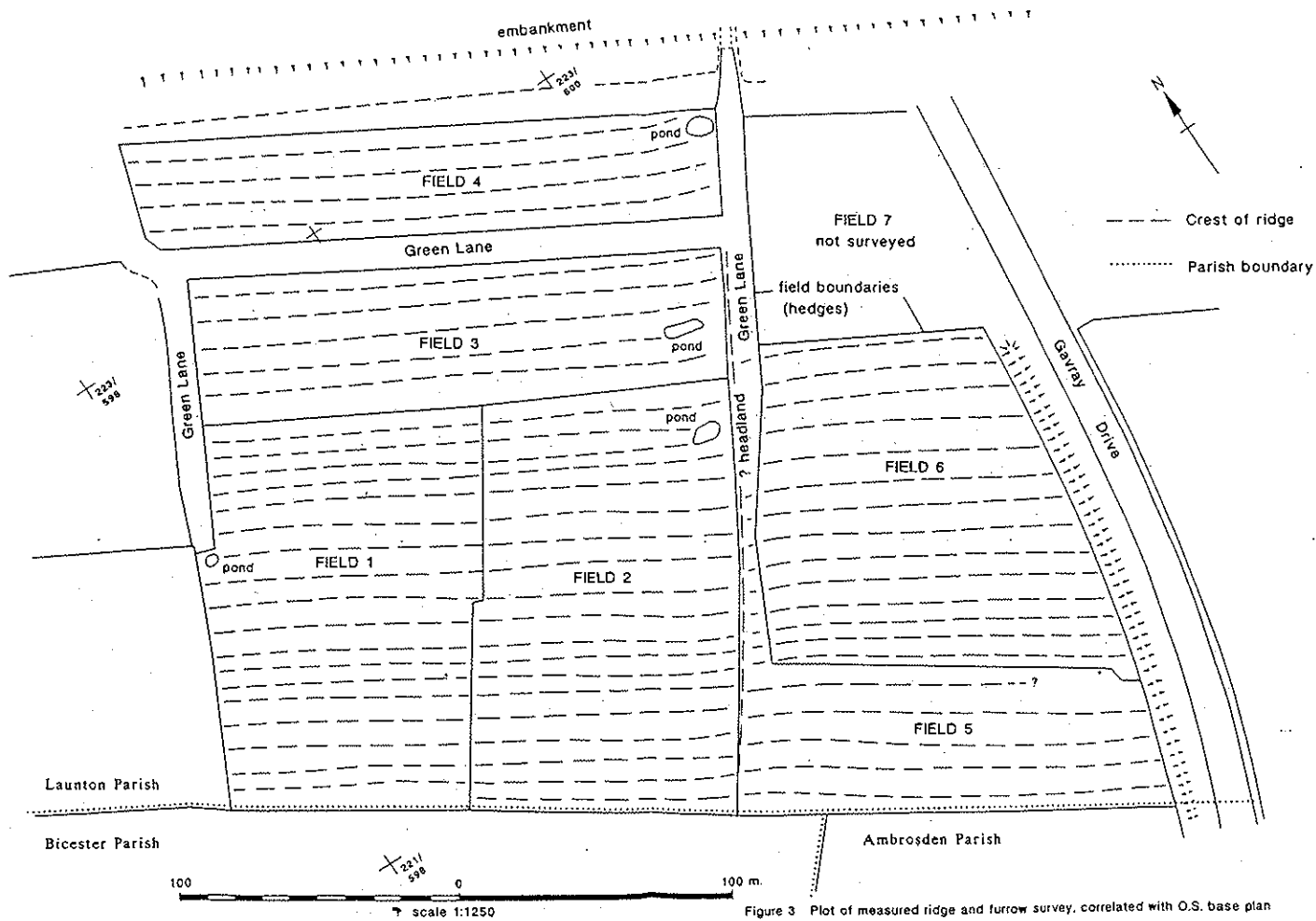


Figure 3 Plot of measured ridge and furrow survey, correlated with O.S. base plan

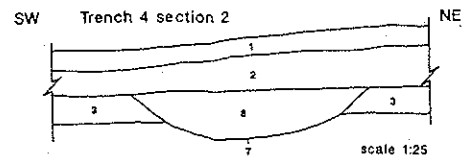
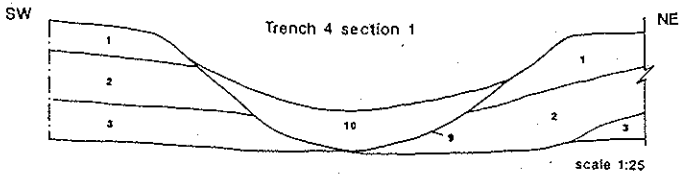
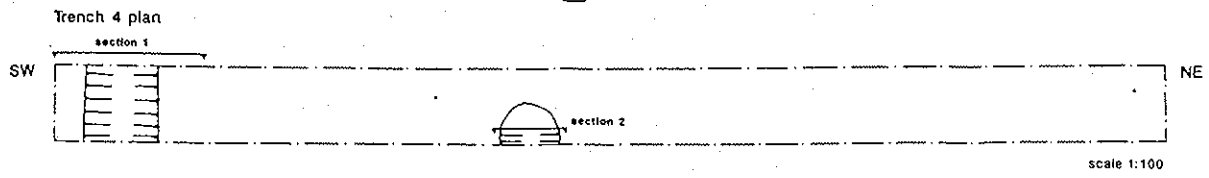
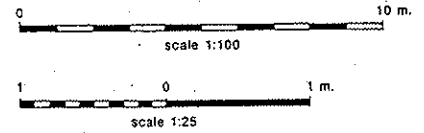
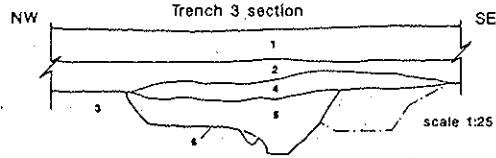
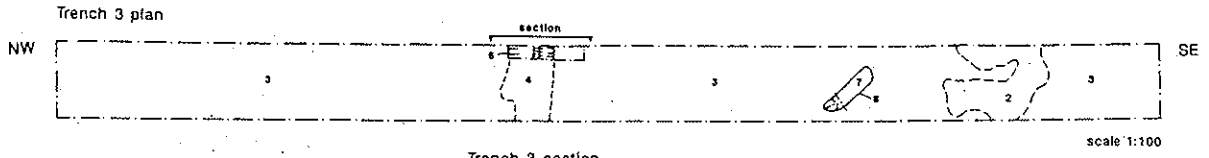
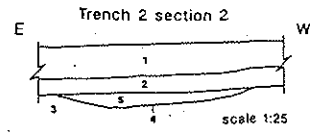
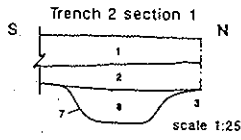
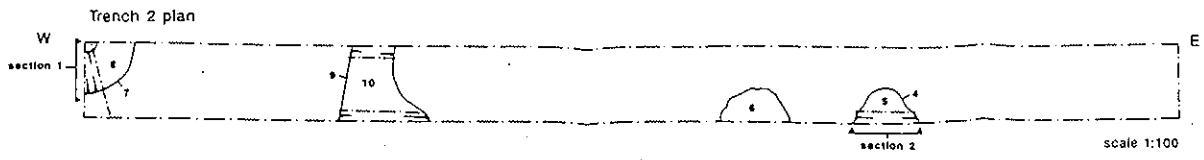
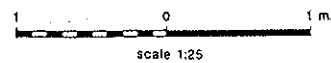
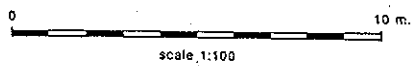
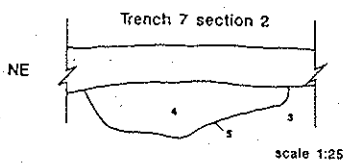
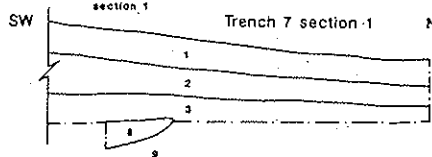
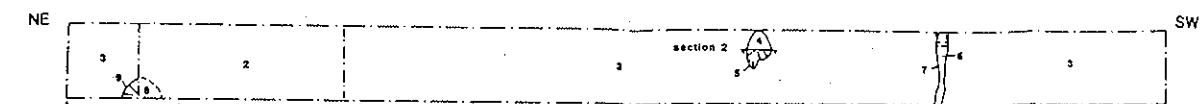
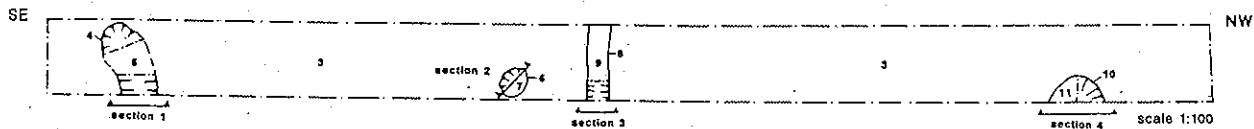


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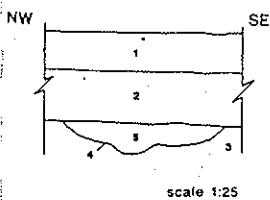
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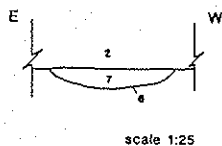
Trench 13



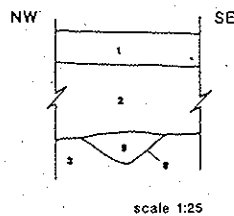
Trench 13 section 1



Trench 13 section 2



Trench 13 section 3



Trench 13 section 4

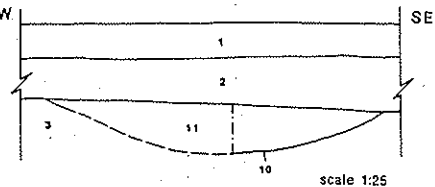


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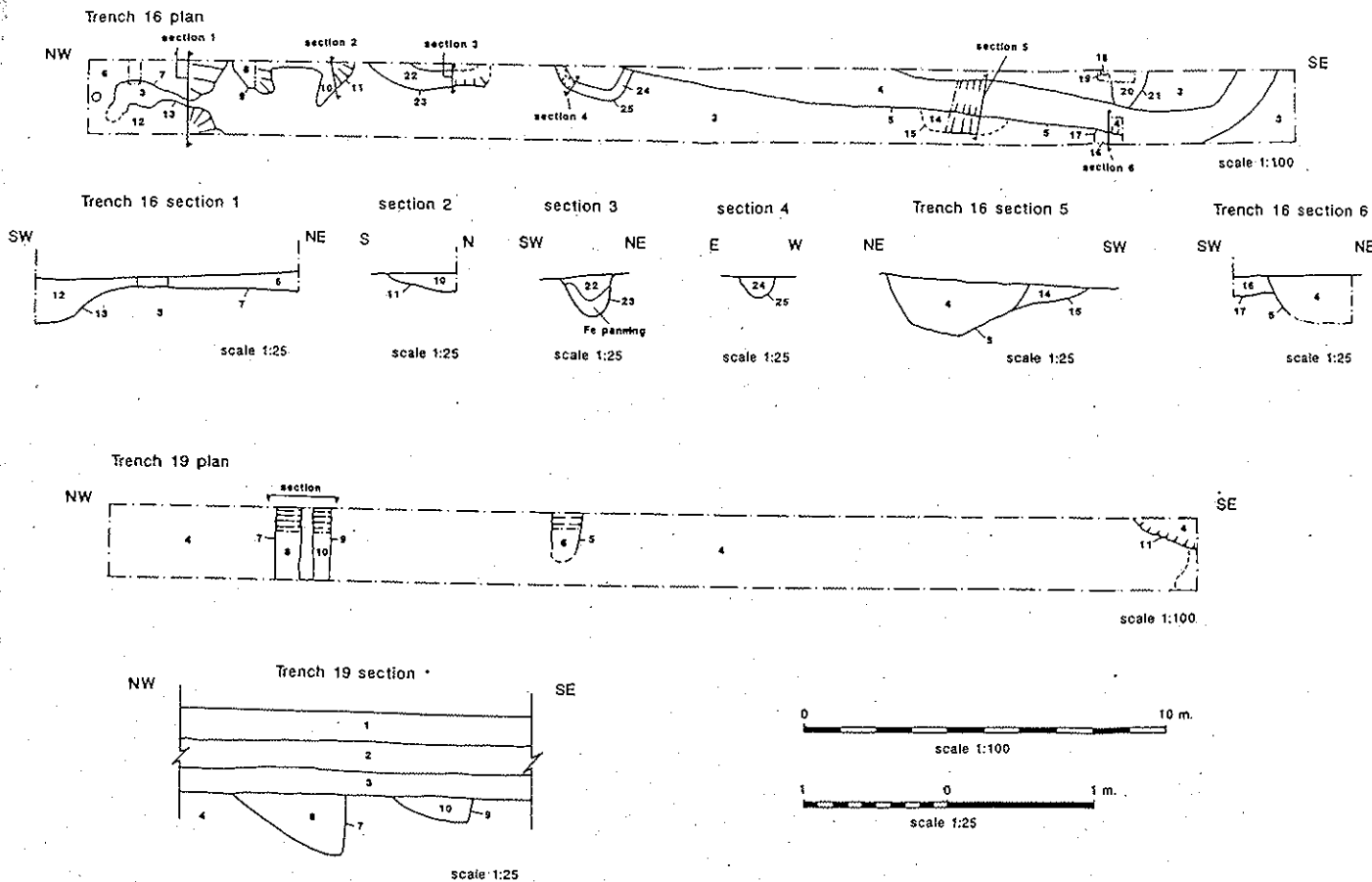
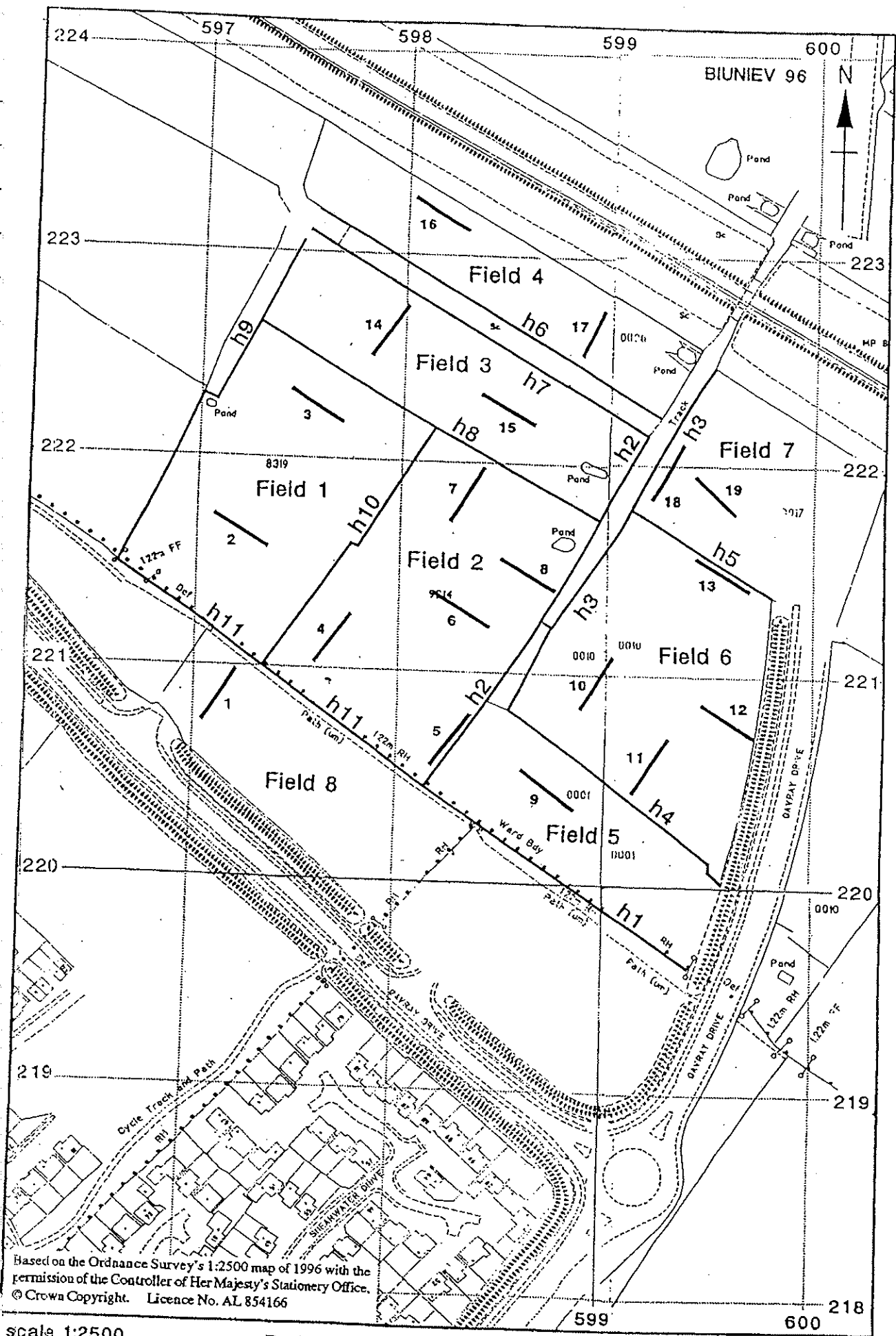


Figure 6

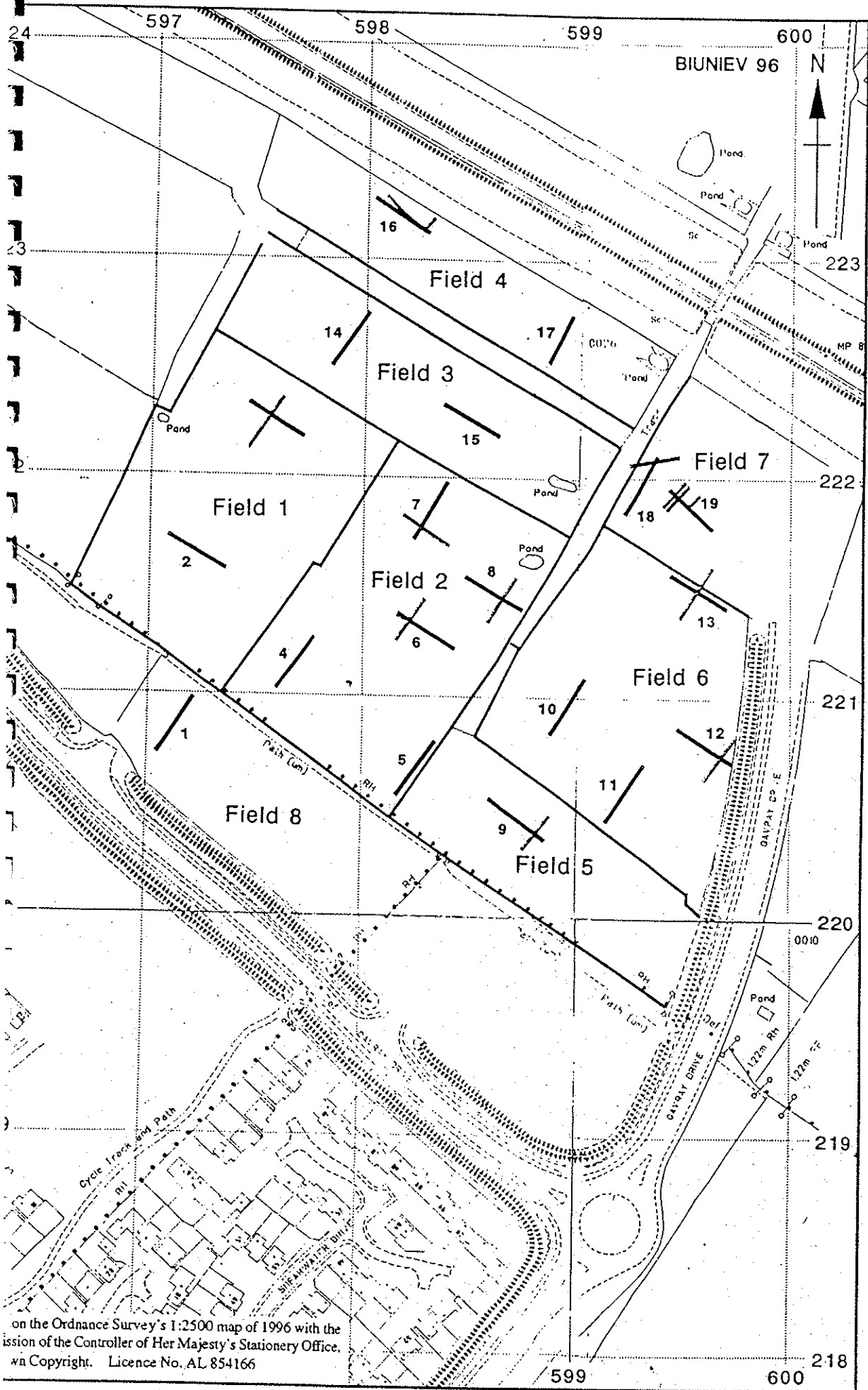


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scale 1:2500

Evaluation trench and hedgerow location

Figure 2



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Scale 1:2500

Linear feature alignment

Figure 7

Annex EDP 3
Cotswold Archaeology Evaluation Report (2005)

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124

**LAND NORTH OF GAVRAY DRIVE
BICESTER
OXFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

For

**CPM ENVIRONMENTAL
PLANNING AND DESIGN**

on behalf of

GALLAGHER ESTATES LTD

CA REPORT: 05102

JUNE 2005

COTSWOLD



LAND NORTH OF GAVRAY DRIVE
BICESTER
OXFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CA PROJECT: 1963
CA REPORT: 05102

Author:	Tim Havard
Approved:	Mary Alexander
Signed: <i>MA</i>
Issue: 01	Date: 14 JUNE 2005

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SUMMARY

Site Name: Land north of Gavray Drive
Location: Bicester, Oxfordshire
NGR: SP 5941 2249
Type: Evaluation
Date: 26 May – 7 June 2005
Planning Reference: 04/02797/OUT
Location of Archive: Oxfordshire County Museum Service
Accession no. OXCMS 2005.75.
Site Code: GLB 05

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in May and June 2005 at the request of CPM Environmental Planning and Design (on the behalf of Gallagher Estates Limited) on land north of Gavray Drive, Bicester, Oxfordshire. In compliance with an approved WSI (CA 2005), ten trenches were excavated across the development area.

A pit of possible Iron Age date, two undated gullies and a post-medieval stone spread were identified. The pit and two gullies were heavily truncated by later ploughing which could be seen in the furrows which were encountered in several trenches. No other remains of archaeological significance were identified.

The evaluation has demonstrated that the study area has low archaeological potential.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In May and June 2005 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for CPM Environmental Planning and Design (on behalf of Gallagher Estates Limited) on land north of Gavray Drive, Bicester, Oxfordshire (centred on NGR: SP 5941 2249; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken prior to the determination of an outline planning consent application for residential development.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a *Specification for Archaeological Field Evaluation* prepared by CPM and approved by Hannah Fluck of Oxfordshire County Council, archaeological advisor to Cherwell District Council, and with a subsequent detailed WSI (Written Scheme of Investigation) produced by CA (2005). The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects II* (EH 1991). It was monitored by Hannah Fluck, including a site visit on 7th June 2005.

The site

1.3 The site is currently set aside grassland, lies at approximately 68m AOD and is generally flat. The underlying geology of the area is mapped as Kellaways Clay Member (BGS 2002).

Archaeological background

1.4 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. Previous evaluation of the south eastern part of the development site by OAU (now Oxford Archaeology) uncovered archaeological features of the Roman period, indicative of a low status settlement. Excavations to the north in 2004 by Northamptonshire Archaeology, as yet unpublished, showed that Roman activity (field boundaries and settlement) also extended beyond the modern railway line. Iron Age settlement was recorded during investigations by OAU to the south of the site in 1997 and 1998. Geophysical survey of the area which is the subject of this evaluation did not locate any areas of archaeological potential.

Archaeological objectives

- 1.7 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the character, quality, date, significance and extent of any archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site. This information will assist the Local Planning Authority in making an informed judgement on the likely impact upon the archaeological resource by the proposed development.

Methodology

- 1.8 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of ten trenches each measuring 15m in length and 4m in width (Fig. 2).
- 1.9 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 1: *Excavation Recording Manual* (1996).
- 1.10 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential and, where appropriate, sampled and processed in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003). In the event no samples were taken. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 3: *Treatment of Finds Immediately After Excavation* (1995).
- 1.11 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive (including artefacts) will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service under accession number OXCMS 2005.75.

2. RESULTS

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

- 2.2 The south-western extent of a shallow gully 106 lay at the western end of trench one. It contained a single sandy clay fill 105 from which no finds were recovered. It was unresolved whether this was the terminus of the feature or if it had simply been totally truncated beyond here. A further section of this gully was excavated at the northern edge of the trench but revealed no new information.
- 2.3 The gully was sealed by up to 0.7m of sandy clay subsoil 102 which was noticeably deeper towards the western end of the trench. Two sherds of post-medieval pottery and a knife handle were recovered from this deposit.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

- 2.4 A shallow gully 208 lay towards the centre of trench two and contained a single sandy silt fill 209 from which no finds were recovered.
- 2.5 Furrow 206 lay towards the south-eastern extent of trench two and was aligned north-east to south west. It contained a single fill 207 from which two sherds of medieval pottery of 13th to 14th-century date were recovered.
- 2.6 The south-western extent of both features was sealed by subsoil 203 and then by a stone spread 202. Although quite a dense concentration of stone, the feature did not appear to have been laid as a surface and there was no hint of metalling. Flat roof tile and a single piece of clay pipe of 18th to 19th-century date were recovered from 202.

Trench 3 (Fig. 4)

- 2.5 Pit 304 lay towards the south-eastern end of trench three. Although its full extent lay beyond the trench it appeared circular in plan, measured 0.08m in depth and contained a single blue grey clay fill 305. Three sherds of Iron Age limestone tempered pottery were recovered from the top of this fill.
- 2.6 Furrow 306 ran the length of trench three and contained a single fill 307 from which a sherd of post-medieval pottery was recovered.

General

- 2.7 Furrows were identified, but not excavated, in trenches 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 respectively. No other features were identified in the evaluation trenches.

The Finds

- 2.6 Small quantities of pottery, ceramic building material, clay pipe and metalwork were recovered (appendix 2).

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Pit 304 may be of Iron Age date though this remains tentative as the pottery was recovered from the top of the fill 305 and may represent intrusion from the overlying ploughsoil.
- 3.2 No further interpretation can be offered for gullies 104/106 and 208 given their extensive truncation and lack of dating evidence recovered.
- 3.3 The truncation of the above features revealed was likely to have been caused by ploughing. This was evidenced by the presence of furrows in several trenches, some of which were still visible in relief through differential rates of vegetation growth. The composition of subsoil which sealed all features was suggestive of a ploughsoil. This was significantly deeper in trenches 1 and 10 compared to other trenches. A

headland was visible in relief towards the western extent of trench 1 and as such may have continued through into trench 10 though it was not visible in relief here.

Conclusions

- 3.4 The evaluation strategy was successful in that it provided a broad coverage of the development area, successfully identified archaeological features where they were present and showed that they had been subject to truncation. The trenching also identified archaeologically sterile areas.
- 3.5 The evaluation uncovered a pit of possible Iron Age date, two undated gullies and evidence for ridge and furrow cultivation. Truncation may account for the limited presence of archaeological features on site. However the total lack of artefactual recovered from the topsoil of all trenches, other than trenches 1, 2 and 3, is suggestive of an absence of archaeological features on the site.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Havard, assisted by Dave Cudlip, Jon Hart, Emily King, Darran Muddiman and Jon Webster. The report was written by Tim Havard. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by Tim Havard, and prepared for deposition by Ed McSloy. The project was managed for CA by Mary Alexander and Mark Collard.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2002 Sheet 219

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2005 *Land to the North of Gavray Drive, Bicester, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

CPM 2005 Land North of Gavray Drive, Bicester, Oxfordshire: Specification for Archaeological Field Evaluation

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1 Existing ground level: 69.09m to 69.21m AOD

101	Topsoil: grey brown humic clay silt, 0.15m to 0.25m depth.
102	Subsoil: mid brown sandy clay, 0.5m to 0.7m depth.
103	Single fill of 104: light grey brown sandy clay.
104	Cut for gully: linear in plan aligned NE-SW, shallow sides with flat base, 0.1m depth, 1.05m width, at least 1m length. Same as 106.
105	Single fill of 106: as 103.
106	Cut for gully: linear in plan aligned NE-SW, shallow sides with flat base, 0.1m maximum depth, 0.6m width, at least 1m width.
107	Natural substrate: mid reddish brown sandy clay with frequent patches of blue grey clay.

Trench 2 Existing ground level: 68.74m to 68.80m AOD

201	Topsoil: dark grey brown humic clay silt, 0.3m depth.
202	Stone spread, irregular limestone fragments, not metalled, 0.2m maximum depth, 5.4m length, at least 2.7m width. Overlies 203.
203	Subsoil: mid brown sandy clay, 0.2m to 0.25m depth.
204	Void
205	Void
206	Cut for furrow: linear in plan, aligned NE-SW, 0.33m maximum depth, 2.2m width, at least 2m length.
207	Single fill of 206: dark yellow brown sandy silt.
208	Cut for gully: linear in plan aligned NE-SW, 0.05m depth, 0.5m width, at least 2m length.
209	Single fill of 208: dark yellow brown sandy silt.
210	Natural substrate: dark orange brown slightly gravelly sand with frequent patches of blue grey clay.

Trench 3 Existing ground surface: 68.27m to 68.40m AOD

301	Topsoil: as 201, 0.25m to 0.35m depth.
302	Subsoil: as 203, 0.15m maximum depth.
303	Natural substrate: light to mid yellow brown silty clay with occasional patches of sandy gravel and blue/grey clay patches.
304	Cut for pit: circular in plan, shallow sides with flat bottom, 0.08m depth, 0.5m diameter.
305	Single fill of 304: light to mid blue grey clay.
306	Cut for furrow: moderately sloped sides with flat base aligned NW-SE, 0.16m depth, 1.4m width, at least 15m length.
307	Single fill of 306: light to mid brown clay silt.

Trench 4 Existing ground level: 67.54m to 67.66m AOD

401	Topsoil: mid grey brown humic clay silt, 0.25m to 0.35m depth.
402	Subsoil: mid brown sandy clay, 0.25m to 0.35m depth.
403	Natural substrate: mixed 50% brown orange silty clay with very occasional gravel 50% patches of blue grey clay.

Trench 5 Existing ground level: 66.95m to 67.11m AOD

501	Topsoil: mid grey brown humic clay silt with occasional irregular stone inclusions, 0.25m to 0.35m depth.
502	Subsoil: light brown slightly orange silty clay, 0.2m to 0.3m depth.
503	Natural substrate: 80% light orange brown slightly silty clay with occasional gravels, 20% patches of blue grey clay.

Trench 6 Existing ground level: 67.44m to 67.46m AOD

601	Topsoil: mid grey brown humic clay silt with occasional irregular stone inclusions, 0.25m to 0.3m depth.
602	Subsoil: mid brown sandy clay, 0.1m to 0.2m depth.

APPENDIX 2: THE FINDS

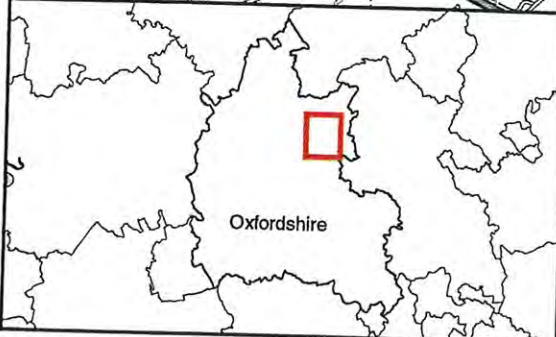
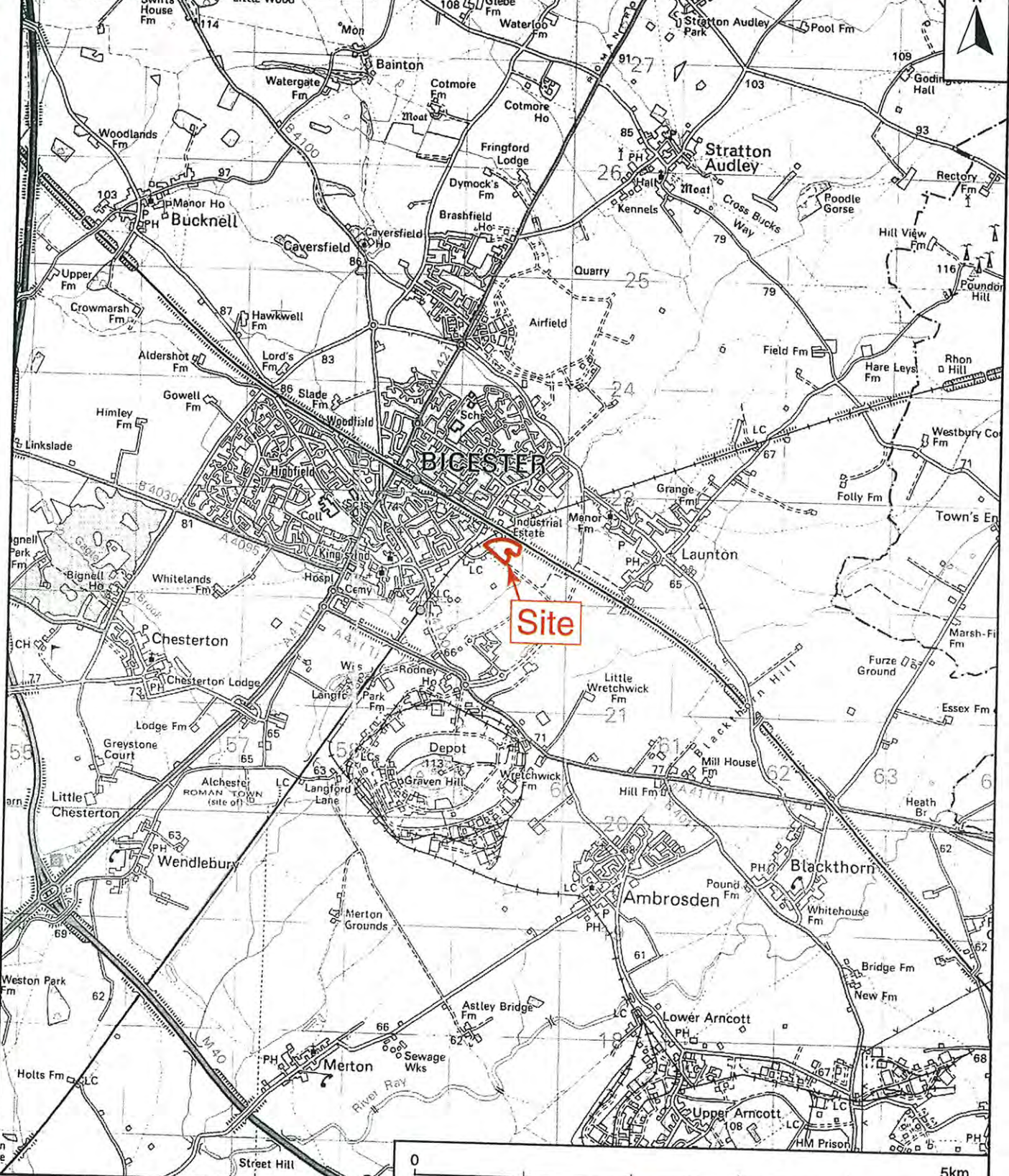
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102	Roman pottery: shell-tempered	1	7	C18+
	Post-medieval pottery: glazed red earthenware, iron-glazed earthenware	2	10	
	CBM: flat roof tile	2	60	
	bottle glass	1	19	
	clay pipe	1	1	
	fe/cua knife handle	1	-	
201	Post-medieval pottery: glazed earthenware ?Brill	1	50	-
202	CBM: flat roof tile	2	30	C18-19
	Clay pipe	1	1	
	Fe strip	2	-	
	slate	1	15	
203	medieval pottery: Brill/Boarstall	1	4	C13-C14
207	medieval pottery: Brill/Boarstall	2	15	C13-C14
	oyster shell	1	2	
302	medieval pottery: Brill/Boarstall	1	4	-
305	Iron Age pottery: limestone-tempered	3	10	IA
307	Post-medieval pottery: tin-glazed earthenware	1	2	C18+
	CBM: flat roof tile	1	31	

Small quantities of pottery, ceramic building material, clay pipe and metalwork were recovered.

Three sherds of handmade, limestone-tempered pottery are typical of the Middle or later Iron Age and represent the earliest material recovered. A single shell-tempered sherd from 102 is probably Roman in date but is residual in its context. Several abraded sherds of medieval Brill/Boarstall pottery, including the simple pulled spout from a jug, originate from the kiln sites less than 5km to the south-east. Post-medieval pottery of likely 17th to 18th date includes glazed earthenwares from Brill-Boarstall and Staffordshire and a tin-glazed sherd from Bristol or London.

Of interest from subsoil context 102 is a scale tang knife handle with decorative copper alloy pommel and hilt guard. The wooden handle plates are affixed by a series of copper-alloy rivets. The pommel is cast in the form of a helmeted human head surmounted by a crest. The date of this object is uncertain, however the survival of portions of the wooden handle may suggest it is of no great antiquity and a most likely an example of 17th/18th classical revival.

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COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE
Land north of Gavray Drive, Bicester, Oxfordshire

FIGURE TITLE
Site location plan

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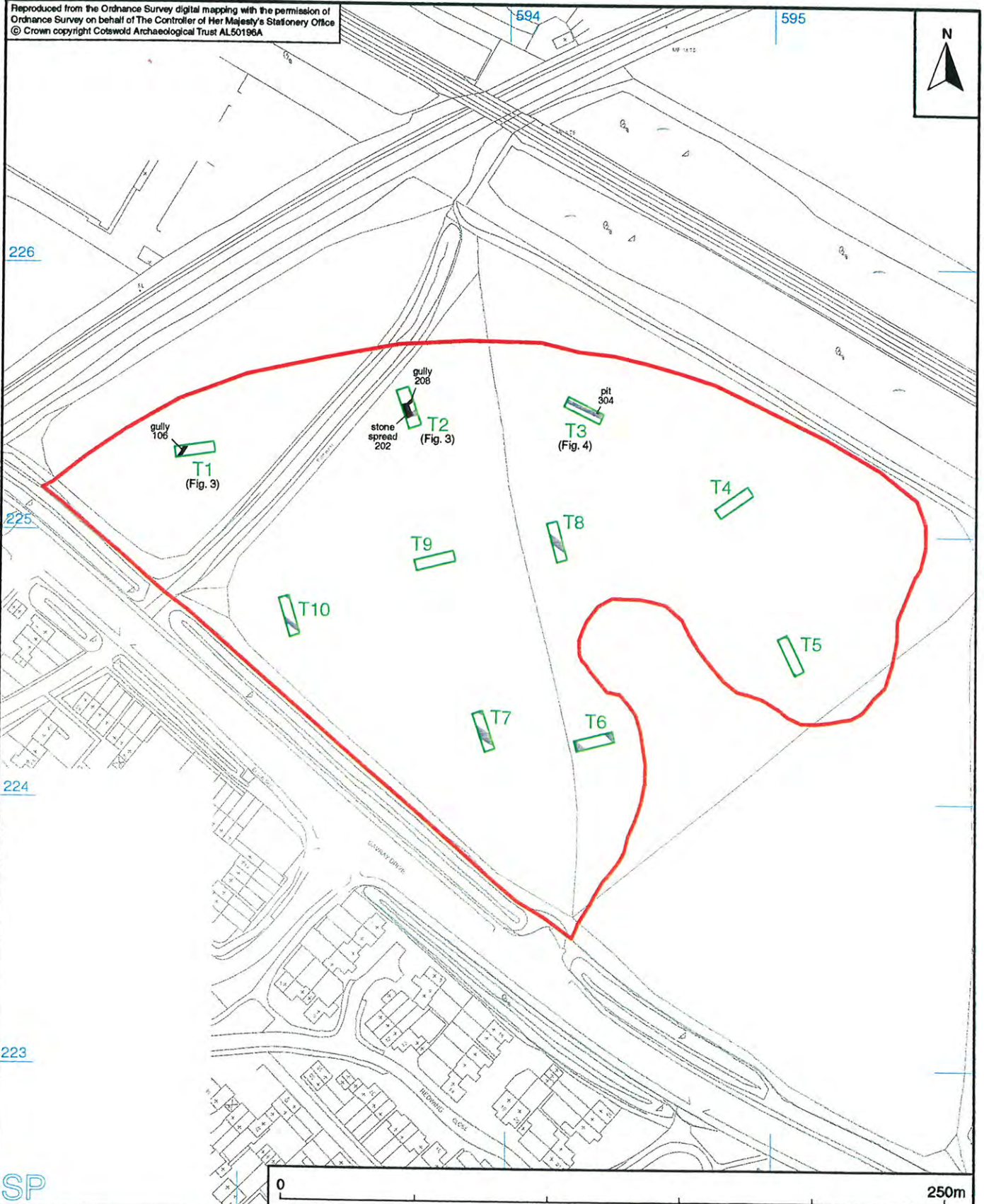
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223

SP



-  site
-  evaluation trench
-  archaeological feature
-  furrow



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Land north of Gavray Drive, Bicester, Oxfordshire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench location plan

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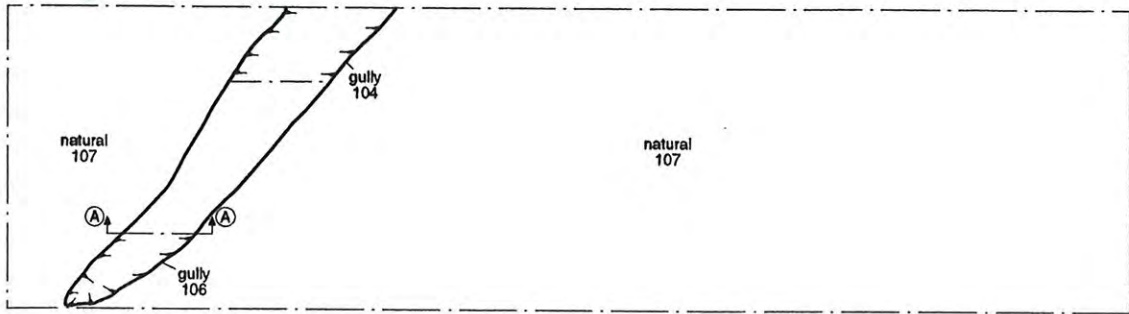
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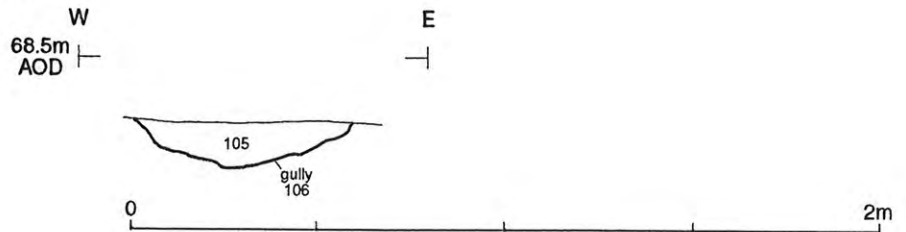
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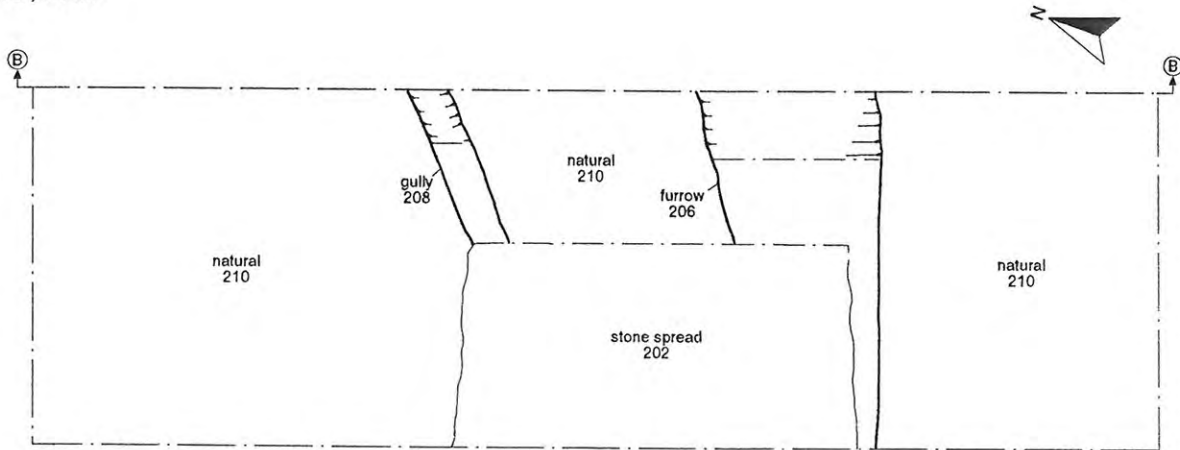


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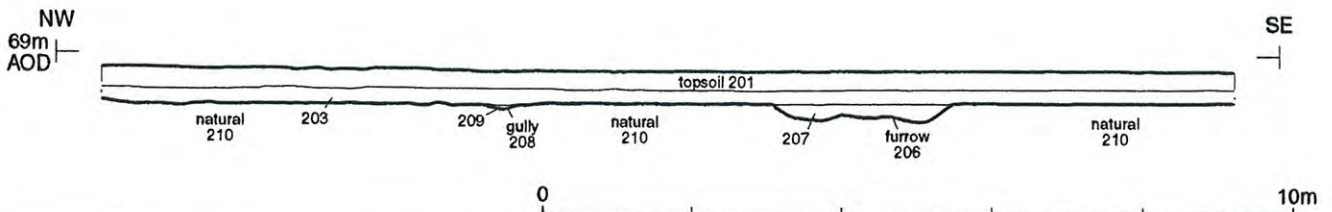
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Trench 2; Plan



Trench 2; Section BB



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Land north of Gavray Drive, Bicester, Oxfordshire

FIGURE TITLE

Trenches 1 and 2;
Plans and sections

SCALE @ A4

1:100 and 1:20

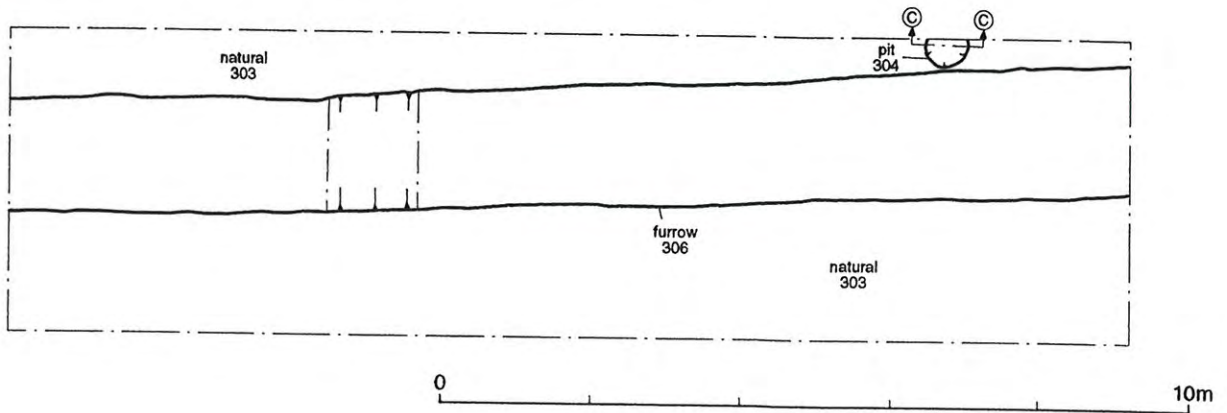
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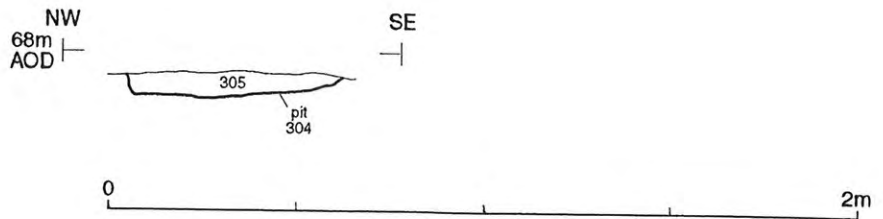
FIGURE NO.

3

Trench 3; Plan



Trench 3; Section CC



 COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE
Land north of Gavray Drive, Bicester,
Oxfordshire

FIGURE TITLE
Trench 3; Plan and section

SCALE @ A4
1:100 and 1:20

PROJECT NO.
1963

FIGURE NO.
4

Annex EDP 4
Oxford Archaeology Evaluation Report (2013)

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Site 37, Gavray Drive Bicester Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

oxfordarchaeology



southsouthsouth

September 2013

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Issue No: 1

OA Job No: 5679

NGR: SP 59300 22575



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Site Code: BIGL 13
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Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire County Museum Service
Museum Accession No: OXCMS:2013.91

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1	Kate Woodley Project Officer	Steve Lawrence Senior Project Manager	Paul Booth Senior Project Manager	

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Graphics File Location \invoice codes a thru h\B_invoice codes\BIGLEV\
Illustrated by Georgina Slater

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The Chiltern Railways (Bicester to Oxford Improvements) Order 2012

Site 37, Gavray Drive, Bicester, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

Between the 10th and 12th of June 2013 Oxford Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation of land off Gavray Drive, Bicester on behalf of Chiltern Railways. The evaluation comprised six trenches identifying ridge and furrow and a later field ditch. No significant archaeological features or finds were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project details and background

- 1.1.1 In October 2012, the Secretary of State made the Chiltern Railways (Bicester to Oxford Improvements) Order 2012 (the Order). This Transport and Works Act (TWA) Order authorises the construction and operation of an improved railway between Bicester and Oxford along the line of the existing operation. The Order is being implemented by the Chiltern Railway Company Ltd. (Chiltern Railways) and subsequently by Network Rail and is accompanied by a planning direction granted by the Secretary of State, which is subject to a number of conditions. Condition 9 of the deemed planning permission refers to the provision of archaeological investigations along the route in advance of the construction.
- 1.1.2 Oxford Archaeology (OA), was commissioned by Chiltern Railways through ERM to design and undertake the archaeological investigations required along the route. To facilitate this OA proposed and discussed a scheme-wide archaeological design to Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for the Cherwell District at Oxfordshire County Council and David Radford, Oxford City Archaeologist at Oxford City Council. In May 2013 OA produced and issued the final version of the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) that outlined the approach for all archaeological works and potential variations to these along the scheme which was approved by both Planning Archaeologists (OA 2013). The design includes walkover survey, earthworks survey, trial trench evaluation and excavation methods.
- 1.1.3 As part of the archaeological design an evaluation is required on land situated to the north of Gavray Drive, Bicester (Site 37) which is located at the northern limit of the scheme (Fig. 1). The fieldwork for this evaluation comprised six trenches representing an approximate 4% sample of the site by area which was undertaken between 10th and 12th June 2013.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 Site 37 is located at the northern end of the project TWA boundary where the Oxford to Bicester rail line will connect to the Birmingham to London track within the eastern part of Bicester. The site boundary subject to the evaluation requirement encloses an area of approximately 0.94 hectares centred on National Grid Reference SU 5933 2259 (Fig. 2). The western boundary is defined by the existing freight line which leads to the north out of Bicester with the northern boundary marked by the Birmingham to London line. Gavray Drive defines the southern boundary with the eastern limit crossing open fields. Mature hedgerows line the established boundaries with the eastern side crossing the existing rough grassland.
- 1.2.2 The site is located on relatively flat land at c 69m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying solid geology of the site is Kellaways Clay Member - Mudstone.



1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 A detailed study of the known cultural and archaeological heritage resource within a 1km boundary to either side of the entire scheme route has been completed by OA as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Statement (ES) undertaken in 2009 (ERM 2009a and 2009b). Reference should be made to the ES for detailed background information and the findings from previous desk studies (ERM 2009b).
- 1.3.2 With regard to this specific location, the fields immediately to the east have been subject to an evaluation in 2005 (CA 2005). This produced limited evidence of Iron Age activity within the vicinity. Perhaps the focus for this activity was a small multi-phase settlement located approximately 350m to the south at Fields Farm which was excavated by OA in 1998 (Cromarty *et al.* 1999). This defined a small enclosed settlement spanning the Middle-Late Iron Age periods. Another possible settlement of Iron Age origin which may have extended in use until the post-conquest period is present 650m to the south-east. Combined with a number of known Iron Age and Roman sites to the north and south, these suggest that the low lying land to either side of Langford Brook was relatively densely settled during these periods.

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The general aims for all evaluations as defined within the WSI are as follows:
- (i) establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains,
 - (ii) determine and confirm the character of any remains present, without compromising any deposits that may merit detailed investigation under more detailed open area excavation or Strip, Map and Sample recording,
 - (iii) determine or estimate the date range of any remains from artefacts or otherwise,
 - (iv) characterise any underlying archaeological strata down to undisturbed geology without significantly impacting upon significant younger (overlying) deposits where possible,
 - (v) determine the geo-archaeological and palaeo-environmental potential of any archaeological deposits encountered,
 - (vi) establish what archaeological remains/deposits may be affected by any proposed development,
 - (vii) make available the results of the investigation to inform subsequent mitigation strategies,
 - (viii) produce reports and full archive or summary reports where these will facilitate a rolling programme of investigation, and
 - (ix) disseminate the results of the investigation at a level appropriate to their importance.

2.2 Scope of works

- 2.2.1 The evaluation comprised an approximate 4% sample of the development area. This translated as 6 x 30m trenches each at approximately 2m wide for which the layout was agreed within the WSI prior to commencing the fieldwork (Fig. 2). The trenches were



arranged to provide a best coverage of the site and the associated construction impacts.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 Each trench was mechanically excavated to the first archaeological horizon or the surface of the underlying silt clay natural geology depending upon which was encountered first. During machine excavation particular care was taken to ensure any archaeological deposits above the natural geology could be identified. In the event none were encountered and machine excavation proceeded to the surface of the underlying geological deposits. Trench views and sample sections were photographed digitally and levels of the exposed geological surface were recorded for each trench prior to backfilling (Figs 3-4 and Plates 1-2). The spoil generated from each trench was scanned for artefacts during the course of the evaluation. Ricahrd Oram was informed of the results and visited the site prior to the backfilling of the trenches.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are summarised below followed by individual trench descriptions where features were recorded. Trench plans and sections are illustrated in Figures 2, 3 and 4 with excavated sections also presented in Plates 1 and 2. A full context inventory of all deposits is tabulated in Appendix A. This should be referred to for information such as dimensions which are not otherwise included within the descriptive text unless pertinent to the description. Finds identification and quantification is tabulated in Appendix B. No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered.

3.1.2 Individual contexts have been uniquely numbered by trench starting at the relevant hundred numeral and then being followed by the individual context (e.g. The first context used for Trench 1 would be 100 followed by 101, Trench 2 starts at 200 etc).

3.2 Trenches and deposit sequence

3.2.1 No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered within the evaluation. However, several shallow features, mostly deriving from the historical agricultural use of the land, were recorded along with the recovery of a small amount of finds that date from the post-medieval period. No features were present within Trench 3. Each trench contained a ploughsoil sequence overlying the natural clay silt geology. This consisted of a buried ploughsoil probably associated with the former ridge and furrow cultivation of this field overlain by the current dark brown humic ploughsoil / topsoil and turf.

3.3 Trench 1

3.3.1 Two shallow features were encountered cut into the natural geology within Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3). These comprised a NW-SE aligned ditch or furrow (105) containing a single fill (106) and a roughly circular treehole (103) that contained a similar fill (104). Neither feature produce any artefacts and the fills were sealed under the buried ploughsoil.



3.4 Trench 2

3.4.1 Two shallow N-S aligned probable linear furrows (203 and 205) cut into the natural geology were recorded within the eastern part of Trench 2 (Fig. 2). Both were filled with a yellowish brown clay silt fill (204 and 206) of similar appearance to the buried ploughsoil horizon (Fig. 3). Neither produce any artefactual material.

3.5 Trench 4

3.5.1 Two ditches were recorded in Trench 4 (Fig. 2). The earliest comprised a NE-SW aligned ditch (403) within the western part of the trench and cut into the natural geology. This was well defined with a rounded base and in excess of 0.2m deep containing a single sterile fill (404) (Fig. 3).

3.5.2 A NW-SE aligned ditch (405) was recorded to the east of 403 and displayed a similar profile. However, this ditch was cut through the buried ploughsoil horizon (401) and contained a single fill (406) that produced two small sherds of post-medieval pottery. The overlying modern plough / topsoil (400) also filled the upper part of this ditch profile (Fig. 3 and Plate 1).

3.6 Trench 5

3.6.1 A possible ditch or furrow (503) aligned NE-SW and cut into the natural geology was recorded within the northern end of the trench (Fig. 2). The was relatively well defined suggesting that it was a ditch rather than a furrow, although the single fill (504) contained within it was comparable to that of the furrows recorded within Trenches 1 and 2 (Fig. 4 and Plate 2). Several small fragments of artefacts were recovered from the fill. These comprised a single fragment of post-medieval roofing peg tile, an iron nail, a fragment of oyster shell and a fragment of animal bone. The fill was sealed by the buried ploughsoil horizon (501).

3.7 Trench 6

3.7.1 A N-S aligned ditch or furrow (603) cut into the natural geology was excavated within the western end of the trench (Fig. 2). This was relatively well defined along its western edge suggesting that it was a ditch, although its eastern edge was much more shallow and suggestive of it being a furrow. The feature was infilled with a single sterile silt clay fill typical of the other features encountered within the evaluation. This was overlain by the buried ploughsoil layer (601).



4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1.1 The evaluation was undertaken during good ground and weather conditions ensuring that these results are truly representative of the site potential. No significant archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were encountered.
- 4.1.2 The features recorded appear to largely comprise furrows representing the historic farming arable use of the land around the historic core of Bicester. However, these features do not conform to a regular alignment as would be expected for a ridge and furrow system covering a relatively localised area. Observation of the ridge and furrow arrangement clearly indicated as crop / parch marks by the current satellite images of the site show that the main alignment is NE-SW reflected by the existing hedge boundary east of Trenches 1-4 with a NW-SE arrangement to the east of this. Within the evaluation it is probable that the furrows are partly truncated by later ploughing and that their true alignment is not clear within the limits of these trenches. It is also clear that features 405 and 105 are at right angles to the furrow arrangement and that these are likely to be related to other factors. Certainly the later date of ditch 405 is demonstrated by the fact that this is cut through a later ploughsoil horizon. This may be a later field boundary ditch or drainage feature.
- 4.1.3 Although a definitive origin for all of the features can not be provided, the lack of any significant artefactual material suggests that these are field boundaries or otherwise related to agricultural activities. More detailed investigation of these features is unlikely to yield further information and they do not appear to be archaeologically significant.



APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation	NE-SW	
Trench contained one small NE-SW aligned linear that is probably a furrow and one treehole. Deposit sequence comprised topsoil and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay.				Avg. depth (m)	0.48	
				Width (m)	2	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil / buried ploughsoil	-	-
102	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
103	Cut	1.5	0.2	Treehole	-	-
104	Fill	1.5	0.2	Mid yellowish brown silty clay fill of 103	-	-
105	Cut	1.5	0.1	Furrow	-	-
106	Fill	1.5	0.1	Mid yellowish brown sandy silt clay	-	-

Trench 2						
General description				Orientation	WNW-ESE	
Trench contained two N-S aligned furrows. Deposit sequence comprised topsoil and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay.				Avg. depth (m)	0.52	
				Width (m)	2	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
200	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
201	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil / buried ploughsoil	-	-
202	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
203	Cut	1.7	0.15	Furrow	-	-
204	Fill	1.7	0.15	Mid yellowish brown silty clay fill of 203	-	-
205	Cut	1.9	0.15	Furrow	-	-
206	Fill	1.9	0.15	Mid yellowish brown silty clay fill of 205	-	-



Trench 3						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
No archaeology. Deposit sequence comprised topsoil and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.45
				Width (m)		2
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
300	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
301	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil / buried ploughsoil	-	-
302	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 4						
General description				Orientation		E-W
Trench contained one NE-SW ditch and one NW-SE ditch. Deposit sequence comprised topsoil and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.45
				Width (m)		2
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
400	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
401	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil / buried ploughsoil	-	-
402	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
403	Cut	1.08	0.23	Ditch / furrow	-	-
404	Fill	1.08	0.23	Dark orange brown silty clay fill of 403.	-	-
405	Cut	1.2	0.2	Ditch	-	-
406	Fill	1.2	0.2	Dark greyish brown silty clay fill of 405	Y	Post-medieval

Trench 5						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
Trench contained one NE-SW probable furrow. Deposit sequence comprised topsoil and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.44
				Width (m)		2.10
				Length (m)		37.70
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
500	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
501	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil / buried ploughsoil	-	-
502	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
503	Cut	1.6	0.2	Furrow	-	-
504	Fill	1.6	0.2	Silty clay fill of 503	Y	Post-medieval



Trench 6						
General description				Orientation	WNW-ESE	
Trench contained one N-S probable furrow or ditch. Deposit sequence comprised topsoil and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy clay.				Avg. depth (m)	0.44	
				Width (m)	2.10	
				Length (m)	37.70	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
600	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
601	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil / buried ploughsoil	-	-
602	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
603	Cut	1.3	0.15	Ditch / furrow	-	-
604	Fill	1.3	0.15	Dark orange brown silty clay fill of 603	-	-



APPENDIX B. FINDS

B.1 Finds quantification

Context	Description	Date
406	CBM, x1 fragment, peg tile, 54g	Medieval / post-medieval
406	1 sherd transfer printed ware (TPW), 1 cream ware dish rim sherd, 9g	1770-1830
504	Bone – 1 cow tooth, 16g	
504	CBM - 1 fragment over-fired late medieval peg tile, 78g	15th - 17th century
504	Iron – 1 nail, 3g	
504	Shell – 1 oyster shell, 8g	
504	Stone - 1 fragment burnt, 42g	



APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

CA, 2005 Land North of Gavray Drive, Bicester, Oxfordshire. Archaeological Evaluation Report. Unpublished client report by Cotswold Archaeology

Cromarty, A M, Foreman, S, and Murray, P, 1999 The excavation of a late Iron Age enclosed settlement at Bicester Fields Farm, Bicester, Oxon, *Oxoniensia* 64, 153-233

ERM, 2009a Evergreen 3 Project: The Chiltern Railways (Oxford to Bicester) Improvements: EIA Scoping Report. Client report issued April 2009

ERM, 2009b Evergreen 3 Project: The Chiltern Railways (Oxford to Bicester Improvements) Order Environmental Statement: Volumes 1-4. Client report issued December 2009

OA, 2013 The Chiltern Railways (Bicester to Oxford Improvements) Order 2012. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Works. Unpublished client document



APPENDIX D. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Site 37, Gavray Drive, Bicester, Oxfordshire
Site code:	BIGL 13
Grid reference:	SP 5930 2257
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	10th to 12th June 2013
Area of site:	0.94 ha

Summary of results:

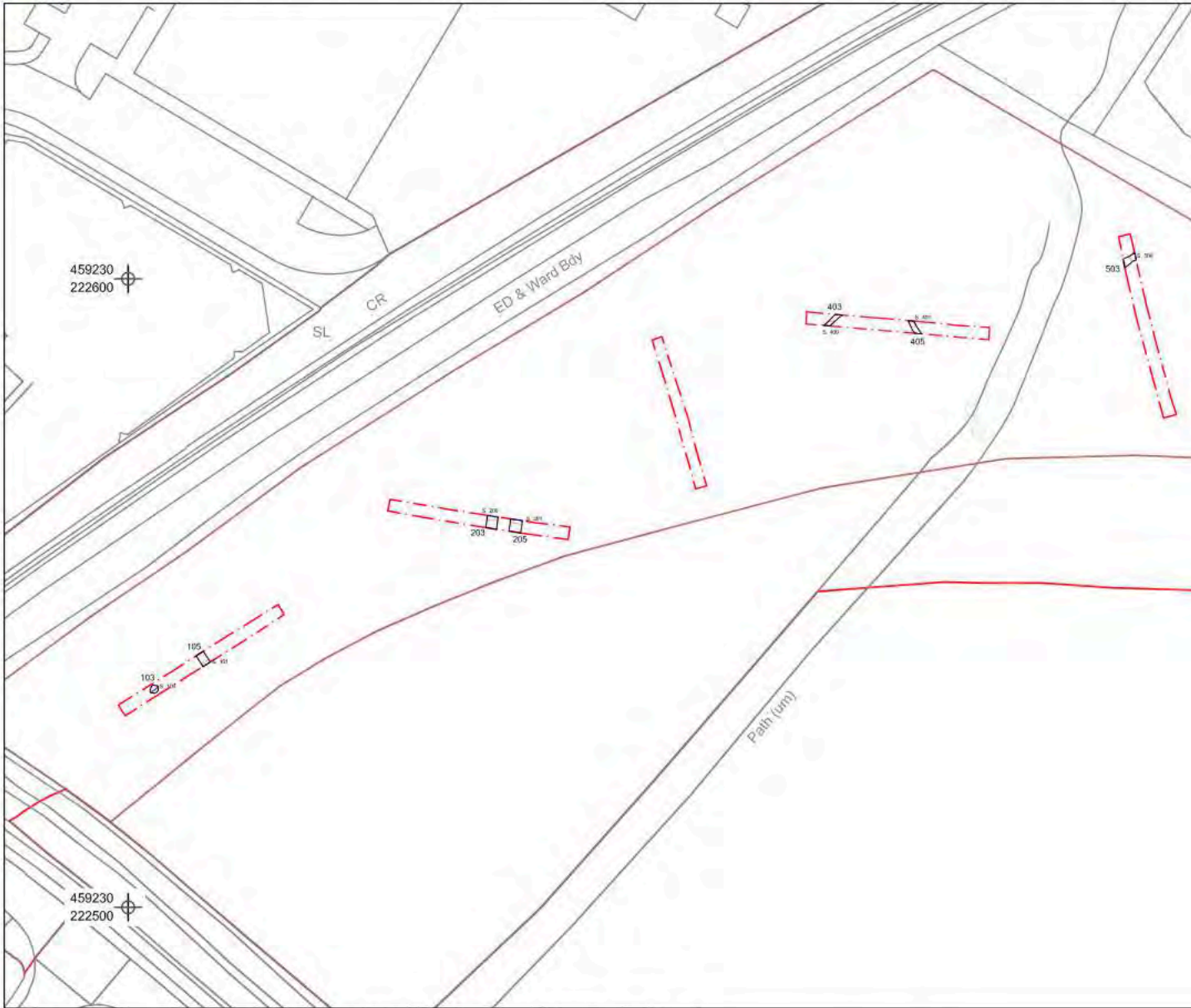
Between the 10th and the 12th of June 2013 Oxford Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation of land off Gavray Drive, Bicester on behalf of Chiltern Railways. The evaluation comprised six trenches identifying ridge and furrow and a later field ditch. No significant archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Location of archive:

The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course, under the accession number OXCMS: 2013.91.



Figure 1: Site location



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0 50 m

Scale at A4 1:1000

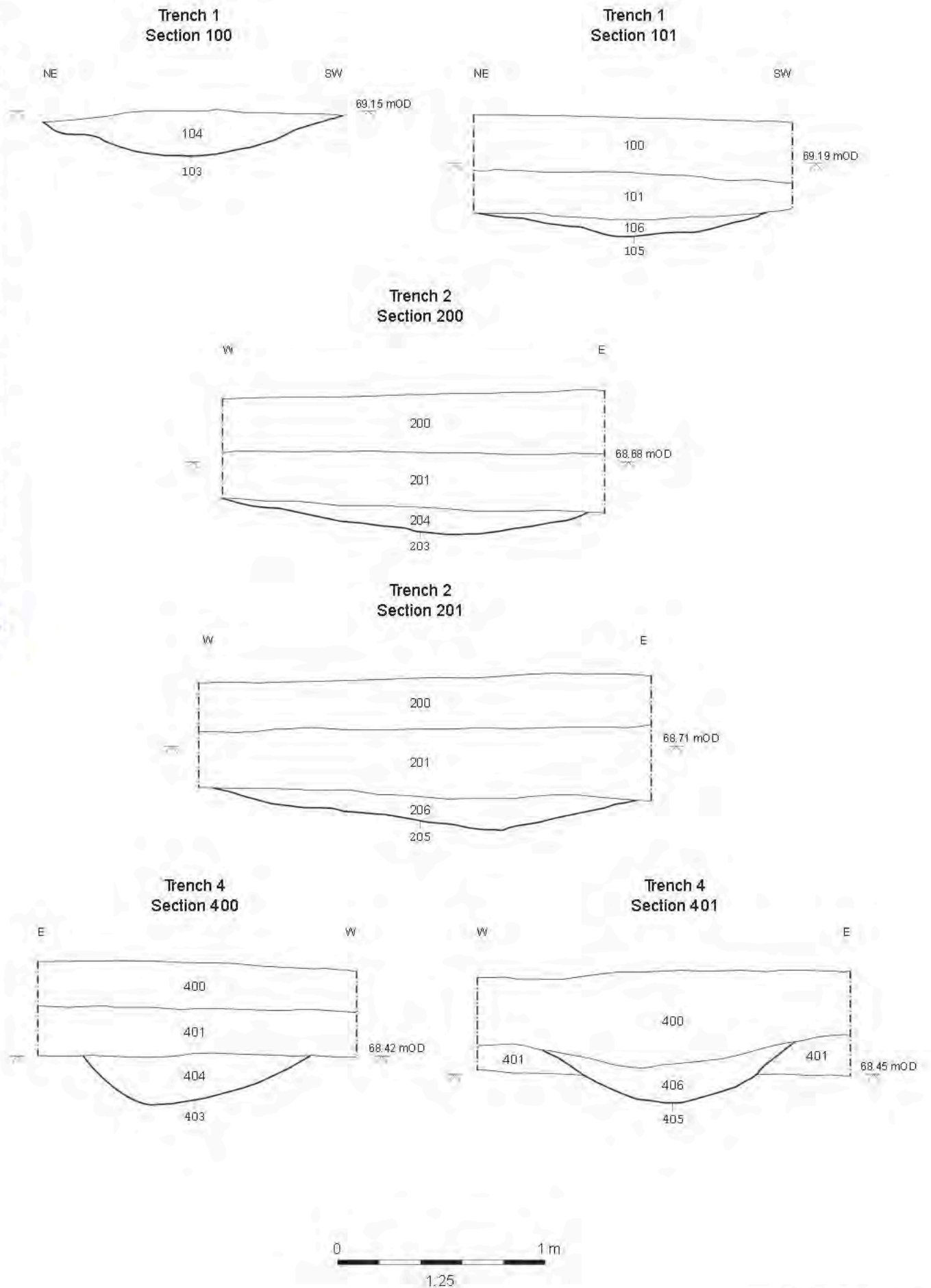


Figure 3: Sections

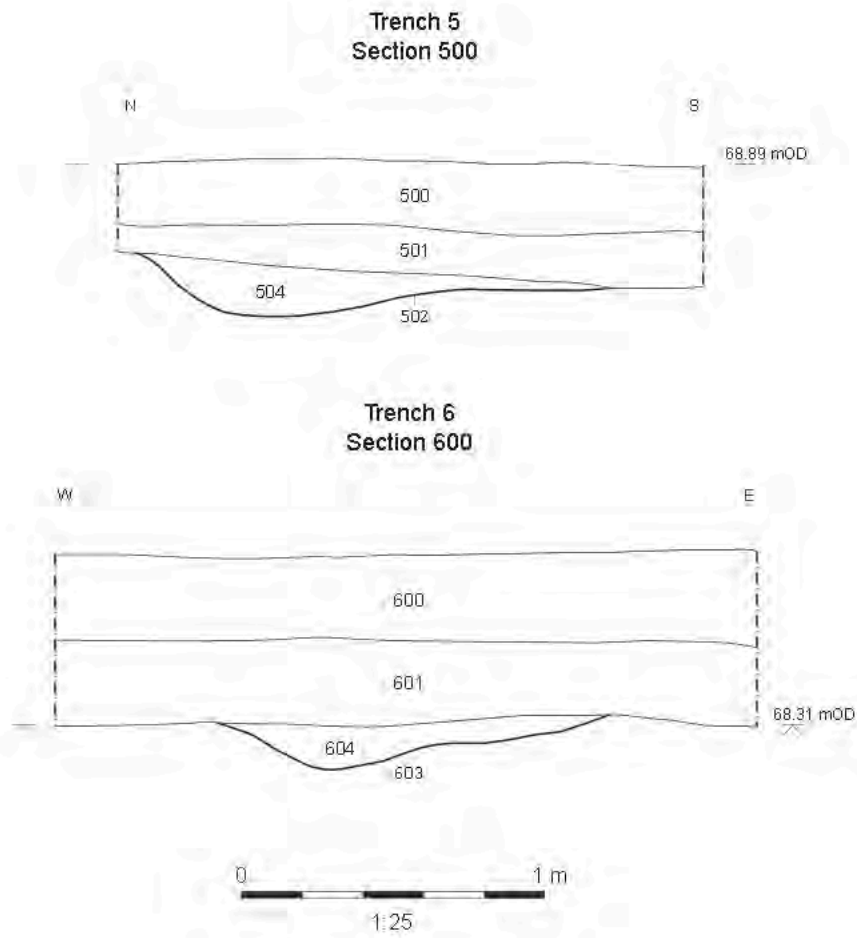


Figure 4: Sections



Plate 1: Ditch 405



Plate 2: Ditch 503



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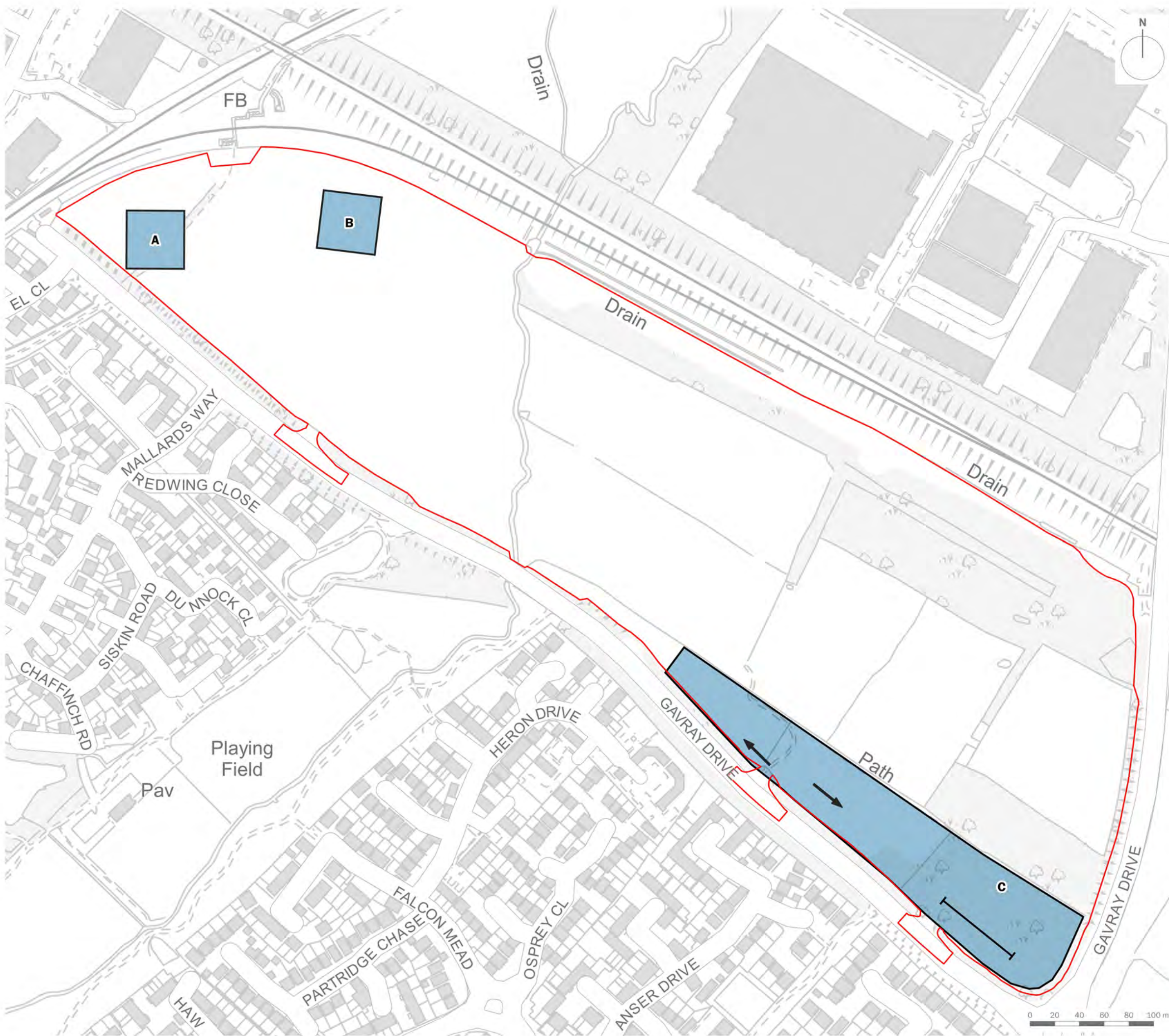
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Plan

Plan EDP 1

Archaeology Mitigation Strategy
(edp0124_d160b 07 June 2021 GY/MM)

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- Site Boundary
- A-C Areas Referred to in Specification
- Direction of 'Strip and Record' Fieldwork
- Maximum Extent of 'Strip and Record' Fieldwork
- Trial Trench



client
L&Q Estates

project title
Gavray Drive, Bicester

drawing title
Plan EDP 1: Archaeology Mitigation Strategy

date	07 JUNE 2021	drawn by	GY
drawing number	edp0124_d160b	checked	MM
scale	1:3,000 @ A3	QA	RB





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