STANFORD IN THE VALE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Primary School Post-Survey Report

David Richard Ashby

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This report details the results and interpretation from the archaeological field work (resistivity survey) which was carried out on the Primary School playing field , Stanford in the Vale, Oxfordshire.

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Site: Primary School, Stanford in the Vale, Oxfordshire
Date: 2012
Project type: research project and geophysical survey
Museum accession No.: SF12.
NGR: SU 34328, 93394
Prepared by: David Richard Ashby

1. Introduction

1.1 This document discusses the results from the geophysical work carried out during 2012 within the playing field of the village Primary School, Stanford in the Vale Oxfordshire. This work is part of an on-going research project: The Stanford in the Vale Archaeological Research Project; examining in detail the archaeology, and in turn the heritage, of the village of Stanford in the Vale.

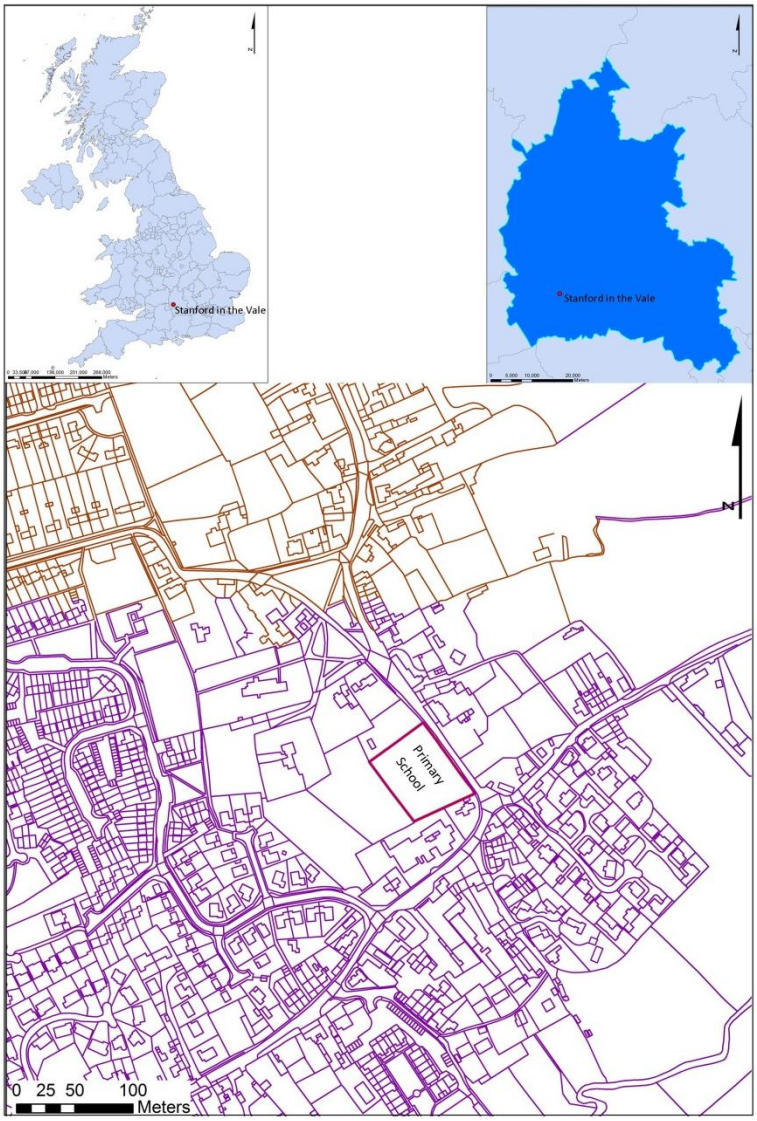
1.2 Within this document the following areas will be discussed: the aims and objectives of the project; the archaeological and historical background of the site, and of the area within the direct vicinity of the site; the methodology of the work carried out; the results; an interpretation of the results; lastly any further work which could be proposed to be carried out.

2. Site Location and Description

2.1 The site is located in the village of Stanford in the Vale, Oxfordshire on the High Street and adjacent to Church Green Road. The location of the site is at NGR SU 34328, 93394 (Centre), which is the field adjacent to the main school buildings.

2.2 The area of the site is about 70 m long NW-SE (longest Point) by 57 m wide SW-NE (widest point), so giving and area of 4,030.5 m². The location and area of the site can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. This map shows the location of the site at a national, county and local level.



3. Project Aims and Objectives

3.1 The aims and objectives of the project, which this work is undertaken within, are split into three main areas:

- To gain a further and greater understanding of the archaeology of Stanford in the Vale.
- To either prove or disprove the following hypothesis: Stanford in the Vale was planned as a 10 acre medieval market town which had failed by the end of the medieval period. At this point Stanford in the Vale formed into a village.
- To get the local community involved in their local heritage and archaeology.

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 The site is located in the centre of the historical village, on the corner of the High Street and Church Green Road and close to one of the two village greens (Church Green) and the village manor house. The geology underlying the site is Stanford Formation Limestone and it is approximately 71 m above sea level.

4.2 On the site itself no known archaeological and very little historical information is known. However, a large amount of archaeological remains have been found within close proximity to the school and its field so giving an idea of the possible buried remains beneath the survey area. The earliest known activity surrounding the site dates to the Mesolithic period, shown by large quantities of flint scatters found in the surrounding area (Stebbing, 1977, p. 8). Also, further prehistoric evidence has been found, that of both Neolithic and Bronze Age flint scatters (Stebbing, 1977, p. 8) (Ashby, 2010, p. 9) (HER 26340 - MOX23767). This evidence shows prehistoric activity in the direct area surrounding the site.

4.3 From the Roman period, a larger quantity of finds material has been found, both on the site and in the surrounding area. This includes artifacts, including: 3 pottery sherds found in the gardens of the Manor House 86 m to the W of the site (English Heritage , 2007a) (HER 7560 - MOX957); Roman pottery and a coin found 260 m to the SE of the site; and a spindle whorl found 385 m to the W of the site (English Heritage, 2007b) (HER 7986 - MOX960). In addition, excavations within the village have revealed Roman remains including: ditches, pits and gullies at Firtree Nurseries (NMR, English Heritage, 2007c), about 165 m to the SE (HER 15952 - MOX995); and ditches at both 27 High Street and on land to the rear of Wentworth Supermarket (now the Co-op), about 160 m to the S (Oxfordshire HER, 2012, p. 12) (HER 15888 - MOX993). Lastly, during work on the construction of a new rising main in 2009, two Roman cremation burials were found about 280 m to the S of the site (Cotswold Archaeology, 2009, p. 5) (HER 26470 - MOX23909). From this evidence it may be suggested that the Roman settlement of Stanford in the Vale was located in this area, as well as a possible Roman cemetery.

4.4 At present, from the Anglo Saxon periods there is only an extremely small amount of evidence, that of only 4 features dating from this period from across the whole village.

4.5 From the Medieval and early Post Medieval periods there is a vast increase in activity in the area surrounding the site. From the medieval period there is a large amount of evidence from finds spots, excavations and standing buildings, suggesting there is an abundance of activity occurring at this time surrounding the site. This includes artifacts found at the Manor House (45 m to the W), that of: a unique Bronze Skillet dating to the $13^{th} – 14^{th}$ C AD (Dunning, 1962); a bone spindle whorl; pottery; and bronze sheet (NMR, English Heritage, 2007c) (HER 7560 - MOX957). Furthermore during excavations medieval features have been found such as: pits at The Grange Nursing Home (200 m to the NW) (HER 16801 - MOX12566) and 27 High Street (160 m to the S) (NMR, English Heritage, 2007c); a ditch and pit on land to the rear of Wentworth Supermarket (now the Co-op) (145 m to the S) (Oxfordshire HER, 2012) (HER 15888 - MOX993); and a large quantity of medieval buildings and structures, including a possible water mill, during other excavation in the village (Ashby, 2010). Lastly, during resent archaeological geophysical work carried out in the adjacent fields of Ashdown House, directly to both the W and N of the survey area, a large quantity of possible medieval features has been identified. These possibly include:

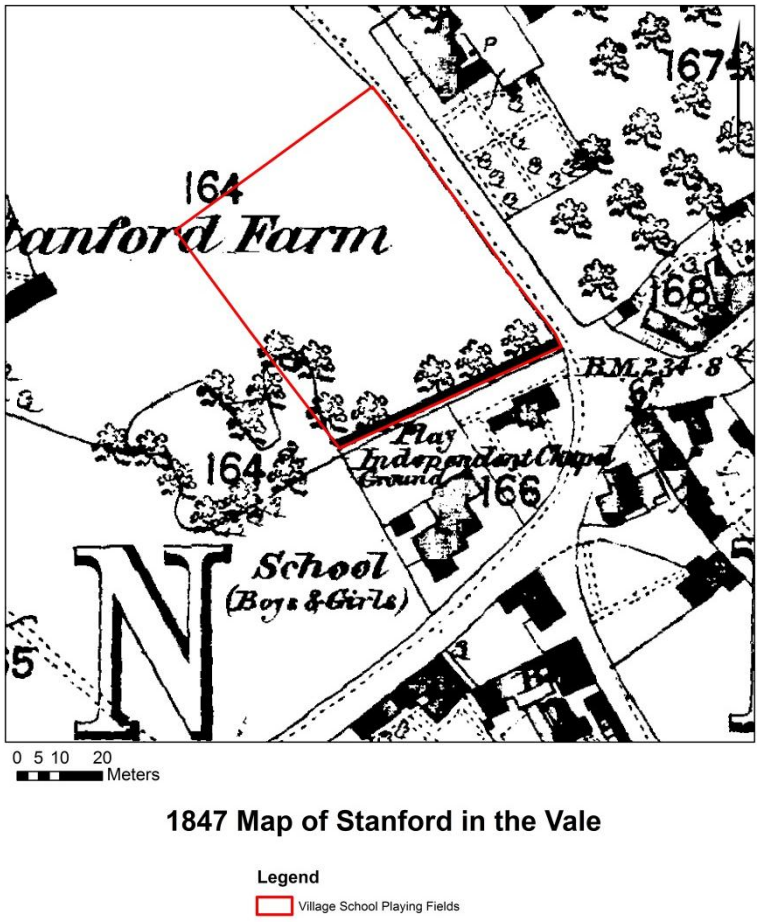
substantial structures; large wall features; ditches; and part of the village pond (Ashby, 2012, p.15). Some of these features are thought to possibly continue under the school playing field.

4.6 From the information detailed above it is presently thought that by the end of the 12th – 14th C AD Stanford in the Vale was a large medieval settlement, with the current theory of it being a medieval market town, which by the end of the 14th C had collapsed in to a much smaller village. This is further supported by documentary evidence that Stanford was granted a market in 1230, which possibly took place on Church Green (Maine, 1866, p. 19).

4.7 Lastly during the Post-Medieval period further information can be gained for the area surrounding the site. This includes the construction of the oldest part of the present School building, which was opened in 1873 (Cuff & Brooks, 2012). The building was built under the supervision of the local architect William Penstone and was designed by the nationally recognized architect George Edmund Street (Cuff & Brooks, 2012).

4.8 During the Post-Medieval period, historic maps of the site start to be produced. Such as seen in Figure 2, an 1874 map, all other historic maps both pre- and post-dating this one, dating back to 1760, show the area where the present site is as an open field or area of land. However the 1874 map does show that a small part of the village pond may have been contained within the western side of the survey area, as well as a possible, c.2 m wide, structure running just north of the Southern field boundary. Furthermore, from the map evidence, it can be seen that the field is located was owned by Stanford Farm, dating up until 1890. Also shown from the Tithe Award of 1846, the land was owned by John Morrison Esq and tenanted by William Tarrant and the land type was pasture (Howes, 1994, p. 102). From this map data, it may indicate that the archaeology within this area of the village will be well preserved, and date to many periods. Previous archaeological work that has been carried out in the area directly surrounding the site also shows that there is likely to be archaeological remains from multiple periods underlying the survey area.

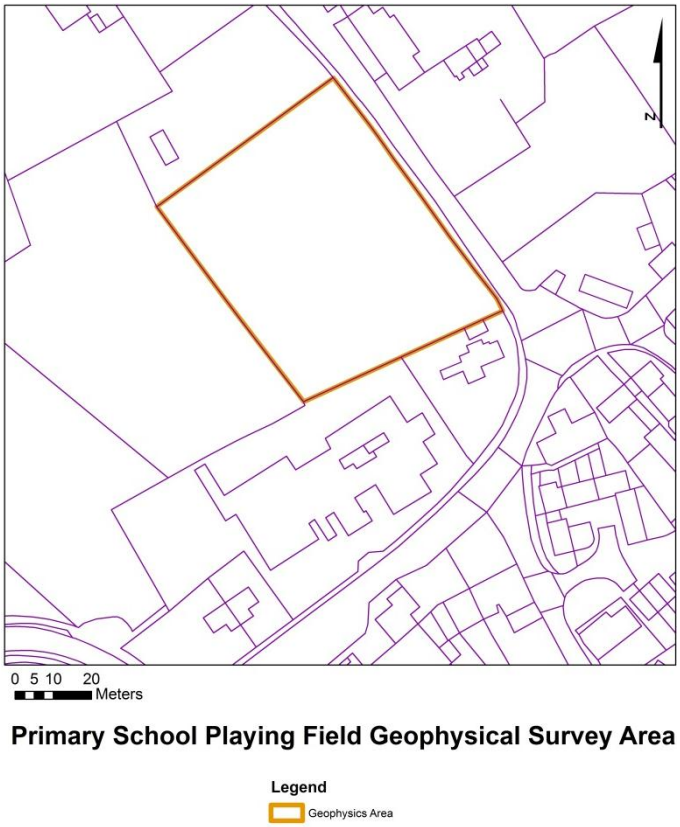
Figure 2. This map, from1874, shows that the area of the site, prior to the its use as the present Village Primary School Playing Field, was mainly farm land owned by Stanford Farm (EDINA, 2011).



5. Geophysical Survey (Resistivity)

5.1 Given the likely hood of the nature of the buried remains, a resistivity survey wasto be carried out to locate any buried archaeological features on the site. Due to the size of the site, and in turn, the close proximity of the edge of the grids to metal features such as fences, resistivity was used to survey the site, as magnetometry results were likely to become distorted by these modern structures. The location of the area within the site in which the resistivity survey was be carried out can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. This figure shows the location and area of the resistivity survey was carried out in School Playing Field.



5.2 The resistivity grids were laid out using tapes, in the usual method, in the size of 20 m by 20 m. Once this had occurred the NGRs for the four corners of the grid were recorded using a Builder R100M total station. These grids were then surveyed, using the resistivity meter as fully as possible, with dummy readings being inserted where it was not possible to survey a full grid square due to geographical, topographical or other unknown circumstances.

5.3 The resistivity survey was carried out using a Geoscan RM 15 with a twin electrode configuration (Geoscan Research, 2005, p. 2). Each grid was surveyed using a series of zigzag traverses spaced at 1m intervals. Mobile probes spaced at 0.5 m gave an effective sub-surface penetration of between 0.5 m and 1.0 m, with larger features showing at a greater depth. The readings were automatically logged at 1m intervals giving a resolution of 400 readings per 20 m x 20 m square.

5.4 Upon the completion of the survey, the geophysical data was transferred from the portable computer to a desktop PC for processing and interpretation using a combination of Geoplot 3.0 (Geoscan Research, 2010) and Arc GIS 9.3.1 (ESRI, 2009). Within Geoplot the data was passed through despike, low pass filter and a high pass filter. The survey was then geo-referenced onto an Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 base map, providing an orientation and scale.

6. Results

6.1 The results from the resistivity survey carried out during this season's work are seen in Figure 4. Also seen in Figure 5, are the separate features, outlined in red. Interpretations of the features which are shown on the plot are described below in Section 7 of this document.

Figure 4. This map shows the results from the resistivity survey carried out on the School Playing Field, Stanford in the Vale, Oxfordshire.

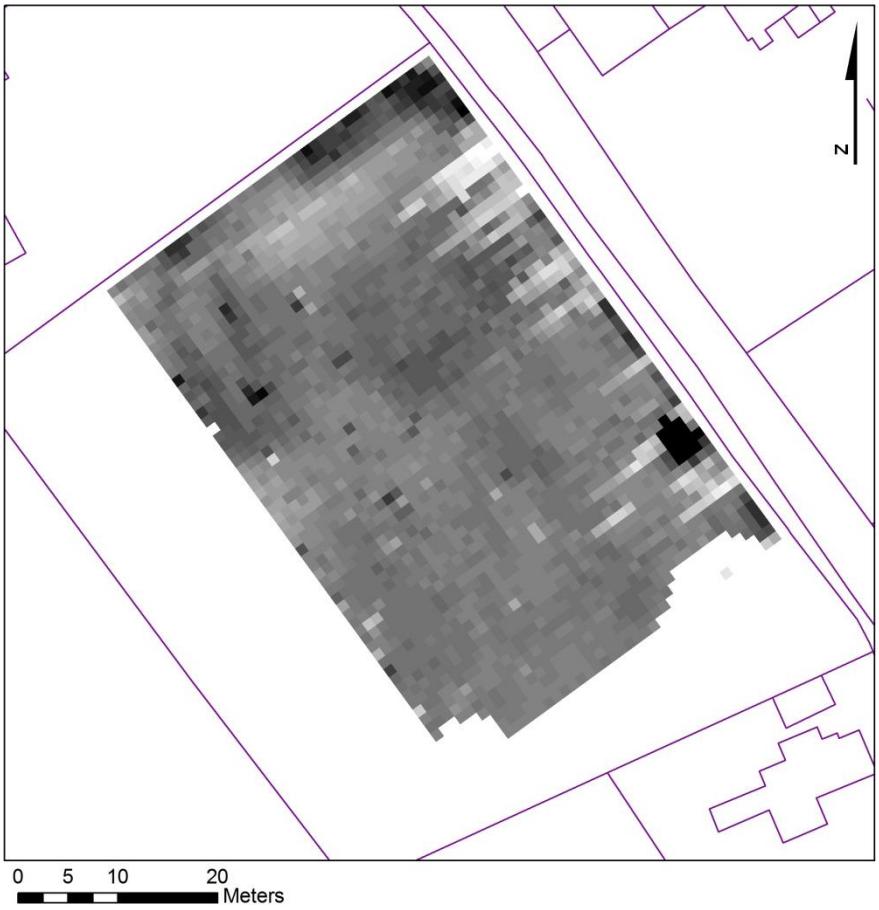
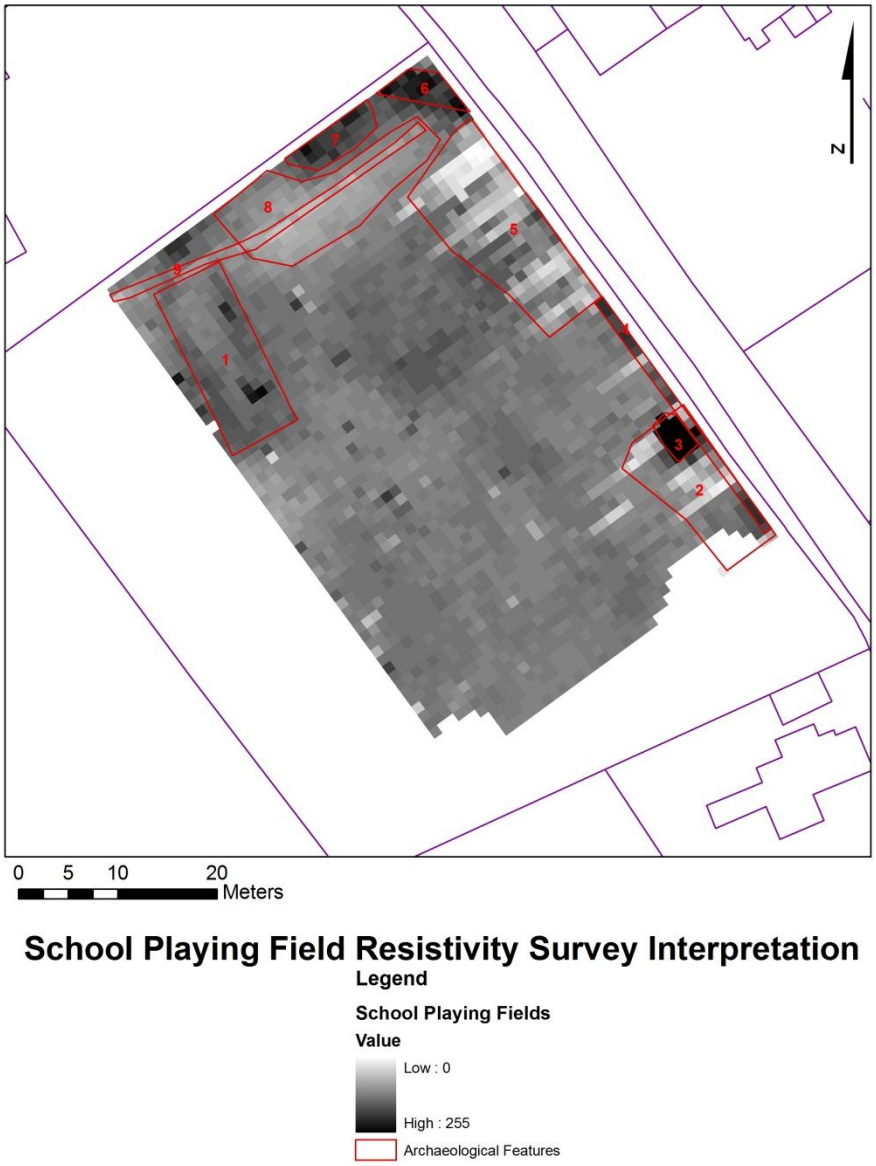


Figure 5. This map shows the location of features shown on the resistivity data (in red).



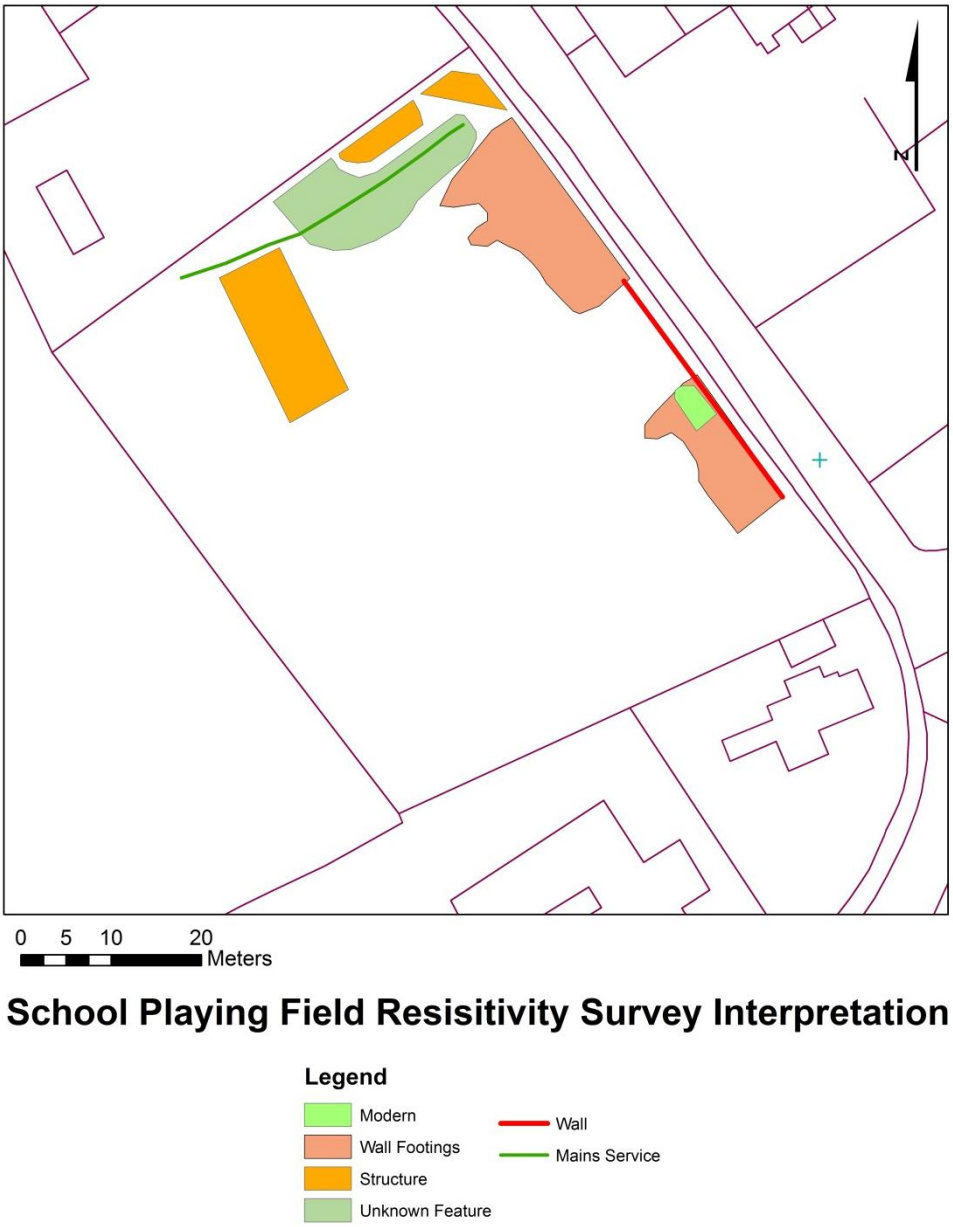
6.2 The results shown in Figure 5 show nine main features, of both high and low resistance, and some of which extend off the edge of the survey area. The first anomaly is that of a square feature which can be seen at point 1 on the plot. This is a high resistance (1 to 6 ohm's) feature measuring 17.9 m long by 7 m wide. The second anomaly is that of a sub-rectangular feature, which extends off the SE edge of the plot, and can be seen at point 2 on the plot. This is a low resistance (-7 to -4 ohm's) feature measuring 16 m long by 8.4 m wide. The third anomaly is that of a rectangular feature which can be seen at point 3 on the plot. This is a high resistance (11 to 45 ohm's) feature measuring 4.4 m long by 2.4 m wide. The fourth anomaly is that of a liner feature, which extends off the SE corner of the plot, and can be seen at point 4 on the plot. This is a high resistance (3 to 4 ohm's) feature measuring 30 m long by 1 m wide. The fifth anomaly is that of a sub-rectangular feature, which extends off the E edge of the plot, and can be seen at point 5 on the plot. This is a low resistance (-8

to -1 ohm's) feature measuring 22.4 m long by 9.5 m wide. The sixth anomaly is that of a liner feature, which extends off both the N and E edge of the plot, and can be seen at point 6 on the plot. This is a high resistance (3 to 6 ohm's) feature measuring 9.8 m long by 3.3 m wide. The seventh anomaly is that of a sub-rectangular feature, which extends off the N edge of the plot, and can be seen at point 7 on the plot. This is a high resistance (3 to 6 ohm's) feature measuring 10.1 m long by 3 m wide. The eighth anomaly is that of a sub-rectangular feature, which extends off the N edge of the plot, and can be seen at point 8 on the plot. This is a low resistance (-4 to -2 ohm's) feature measuring 22 m long by 9.5 m wide. The ninth anomaly is that of a liner feature, which extends off the W edge of the plot, and can be seen at point 9 on the plot. This is a low resistance (-4 to -2 ohm's) feature measuring 36 m long by 1 m wide.

7. Interpretation

7.1 From the results, explained above, and the nine features which have been identified on the results, an interpretation can be made about each of the features in turn. The interpretation of the features can be split into four main areas: Modern; Structures and Walls; and Unknown Feature. The current interpretation of all these features can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6. This map shows the location and interpretation of the features shown on the geophysical data.



7.2 Modern

7.2.1 The first type of feature which can be seen on the resistivity plot is that of a series of possible modern features which are located at anomalies, 2 to 5 and 9. These anomalies are thought to be modern in date due to them being observed to cut through other features, shown on the plot. The current interpretation for these features is: a modern lump of concert, possible related to play equipment within the school grounds; the footing for the boundary wall to the east of the current school playing field; and possible buried services.

7.3 Structures and Walls

7.3.1 The second type of feature which has been identified is that of a sieres of three anomalies, 1, 6 and 7, interpreted as possibly relating to medieval or post medieval structures underlying the field. However, two points should be noted when interpreting these features: 1. It was observed on the site that there is a high likelihood that the field has been levelled; 2. resent research has indicated that during WW II the playing field was occupied by a military installation. These points are important to note as the underlying archaeology may have been severally truncated or destroyed, meaning that all, the structures described above are then modern in date. The only way to date these features would be through further archaeological fieldwork.

7.4 Unknown features

7.4.1 The third type of feature identified on the plot, anomaly 8, currently has an unclear interpretation. Due to its size, shape and location, it current has two possible interpretations. The first, it being a main buried service and the second an ephemeral archaeological feature which has been truncated by later activities, see section above.

8. Conclusion

8.1 In conclusion, from the survey data recovered from the site, a series of features were identified. These are mainly thought to be modern in date, related to current structures adjacent to the site. The only archaeological features identified on the survey are three possible structures, which are likely to pre-date the current school on the site, and in turn date to either the medieval or post medieval periods. It is likely that these features have been truncated by either WW II installations, related to the adjacent Shellingford airfield, or due to the leveling of the school playing field. This may also explain the lack of archaeological evidence shown on the plot. The adjacent Ashdown house plot can be seen to show more evidence for medieval and post medieval remains within the center of the historic settlement.

9. Further Proposed Work

9.1 From the survey work undertaken on the site, one further technique could be utilized in the future to help ascertain and confirm the interpretation and dating for the archaeological features identified on the site, that of text pitting.

9.2 If any further work was to be undertaken, a pre-site report would be produced prior to landowner's consent being granted.

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