

Date: December 2006
Client: George Wimpey East Scotland Ltd
Project Code: SDS06



St David's High School, Dalkeith **Results of an Archaeological Evaluation**

Colin Hewat

PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET (SDS06)

Client	George Wimpey East Scotland Ltd
National Grid Reference	NT 33083 66590 (site centred)
Project Manager	Andrea Smith
Text	Colin Hewat
Illustrations	Tom Small
Evaluation	Colin Hewat Kirsty Owen
Schedule	
Fieldwork	December 2006
Report	December 2006

Summary

This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation on the site of a proposed housing development at the former site of St David's High School, Dalkeith, Midlothian. The evaluation entailed 5% trial trenching of two grassed areas not previously disturbed by building or other works. A number of features were recorded that are representative of cultivation and field improvement. These took the form of rubble field drains, furrows and other possible cultivation beds. Several pits and postholes were also recorded. These features suggest a phase of medieval cultivation within the site. Numerous tree throw holes were encountered; these confirm the previous use of the area as woodland and help to explain the limited nature of the archaeology identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by George Wimpey East Scotland Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of a proposed housing development at the former site of St David's High School, Dalkeith. This report presents the results of a field evaluation that comprised a 5% sample of those areas within the development area not previously disturbed from building and other works.

The fieldwork was undertaken between the 11th and 14th December 2006 in wet and windy conditions.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION (FIGURE 1)

The site of the proposed housing development (centred on NGR NT 33083 66590) is found in the grounds of what was previously St David's Roman Catholic High School, Abbey Road, Eskbank, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 3AD. The site is bounded along its north-west side by Abbey Road and along its south-west side by Newbattle Road. The school has been demolished and 2.16 ha of the proposed development site, considered free from previous disturbance from building and other works, was available for evaluation. The areas evaluated were located to the north, east and west of the former school building. These areas were largely flat, grassed and open, with many mature trees sited around the margins of the areas.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A desk-based assessment undertaken by Headland Archaeology (Dawson 2002) identified some potential for buried archaeological remains to exist within the site.

The boundary wall running around the W corner of the site along Newbattle Road and Abbey Road is a Grade C(S) listed structure and the site falls within the Essential Setting of Newbattle Abbey Designed Landscape. Early Ordnance Survey maps show the proposed development area as an enclosed area of parkland incorporating both woodland and grassy areas. The detailed history of the landscape is uncertain but the wall piers were constructed between 1854 and 1861 (Dawson 2002).

The only known archaeological features in the area immediately surrounding the site are several excavated round houses of prehistoric date found at Lamb's Nursery, approximately 100 m to the south-east of the site. One structure, with associated pits and postholes, was dated to the Neolithic, and three roundhouses were dated to the middle Bronze Age (Cook 2000). It was possible that similar features may have been preserved in situ within the proposed development site.

4. AIMS AND METHODS

The primary objective of the field evaluation was to determine the presence or absence, quality, nature, extent and character of any buried archaeological remains. The results would be used to allow the client and the local authority to make an informed decision regarding further mitigation works.

A sample of the area comprising 1080 m² (540 linear metres with a 2m ditching bucket) was excavated, equivalent to 5% of the 2.16 ha of undisturbed ground within the development area. A 360° tracked excavator equipped with a 2m wide ditching bucket was used to excavate the trenches under direct archaeological supervision. The stratigraphy of the trenches was recorded using the Headland Archaeology Ltd standard method with all recording undertaken on *pro forma* record sheets. Colour transparencies and colour print photographs were taken. The layout of the trenches and any features within them was recorded using a Leica TCRA 805 total station.

5. RESULTS (FIGURE 2)

Six trenches of varying length were excavated across the site and several features were recorded. All the trenches were 2 wide. The topsoil [1] comprised dark grey-brown sandy silt with frequent rounded stones and had an average depth of 0.25 m. Below the topsoil across all areas of the site a levelling deposit [7] was encountered. This was made up of redeposited natural sands and gravels mixed with brown silty sand. It is reasonable to assume that this levelling occurred when the school was built, to provide well-drained and level grounds. The levelling deposit varied in depth from 0.5 – 0.8 m. Below this levelling deposit, in all trenches apart from Trench 1, a buried soil [57] was encountered. This would have been the ground surface at the time of the levelling. This buried soil was on average 0.2 m thick and was comprised of compact black/dark brown silty clay containing frequent small stones and gravels. The natural subsoil [2] was encountered below the buried soil at an average depth of 0.8 m; it comprised bright orange-brown sands and gravels with occasional patches of yellow and orange clays. The natural subsoil in Trench 6 contained much higher amounts of clays. Most of the trenches contained large tree throw holes; irregular circular pits containing a mix of the buried soil, the natural subsoil and wood fragments, that most likely represent trees felled and partly or wholly grubbed out at the time of the levelling or earlier. Numerous plastic, ceramic and rubble field drains were encountered in all trenches relating both to the current and previous land surfaces.

The following summarises the results of the trenching. Full descriptions of trenches and features can be found in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

Orientated NE-SW, the trench had a length of 50 m and an average depth of 0.65 m. A pit [5] and a small pit/posthole [3] were identified and recorded. One fragment of medieval pottery was recovered from pit [5]; this can be dated to between the 13th and 15th centuries. It is an abraded fragment of white gritty ware, a jug base sherd..

Trench 2

Orientated NE-SW, the trench had a length of 75 m and an average depth of 0.9 m. Seven features were identified and recorded, comprising of five ditches [8] [10] [12] [16] and [20], a pit [18] and a posthole [14]. No artefacts were recovered from any of these features.

Trench 3

Orientated NW-SE, the trench had a length of 100 m and an average depth of 0.77 m. One ditch [48] was identified and recorded. No artefacts were recovered from this feature.

Trench 4

Orientated NW-SE, the trench had a length of 135 m and an average depth of 0.8 m. Three ditches, [50], [52] and [54] were identified and recorded. No artefacts were recovered from any of these features.

Trench 5

Orientated NE-SW, the trench had a length of 75 m and an average depth of 0.8 m. Two ditches or furrows, [44] and [46], were identified and recorded. One fragment of medieval pottery was recovered from feature [46]; this can be dated to between the 13th and 15th centuries. It is an abraded fragment of white gritty ware.

Trench 6

Orientated NE-SW, the trench had a length of 105 m and an average depth of 0.7 m. Eleven furrows, [22] – [42], were identified and recorded. Several fragments of medieval pottery were recovered from various furrows. These can be dated to between the 13th and 17th centuries. The finds consist of redware and greyware and a fragment of roof tile. Two fragments of clay pipe stems were also recovered; these date to the post medieval period.

6. CONCLUSIONS

All six trenches excavated help to provide an approximate history for the landuse within the development area. The area to the north-west of where the school building was located, evaluated by Trench 6, does this most clearly. The earliest evidence for activity within the site is represented by cultivation furrows, features [22] – [42]; these can be dated by associated finds to between the 13th and 17th Centuries. It is possible that the earlier fragments of pottery are residual finds; the sherds are generally abraded, suggesting redeposition or damage in ploughsoil (Franklin, pers. com.). The furrows were most likely used until some time in the 17th to 18th Centuries. After some period of disuse, the land became incorporated into the grounds of Newbattle Abbey and comprised an enclosed area of parkland incorporating both woodland and grassy areas. The surrounding walls were constructed between 1854 and 1861 (Dawson 2002). Many of the tree holes encountered are likely to relate to trees from this phase of landuse. Between the time that cultivation of the area stopped and the building of the school, a soil developed, this is visible in Trenches 2-6 as context [57]. No artefacts were recovered from this deposit, suggesting limited activity within the area during this time. The school was built sometime between 1963 and 1975 (Dawson 2002), it is reasonable to assume that the levelling deposit [7], encountered above the buried soil [57] and below the current topsoil [1], was deposited at this time to provide well drained and level grounds for the school.

None of the features identified within Trench 2 produced any artefacts, but pit [5] in Trench 1, just to the south east of these features, produced a fragment of medieval pottery. This is an abraded base fragment from a white gritty ware jug, which can be dated to between the 13th and 15th centuries. This could possibly be a residual find, redeposited in pit [5] at a later time. None of the features within Trenches 3 or 4 produced any artefacts either, but feature [46] in Trench 5 produced a fragment of medieval pottery also dated to between the 13th and 15th centuries, and an abraded fragment of white gritty ware. All of the features within Trenches 1– 5 are likely to represent small-scale agricultural activity during the late medieval period. This area, to the north and east of the old school building, appears to have been less intensively used than the area to the west, around Trench 6, which was extensively

cultivated. Most of the features are likely to date to the post-medieval period, but the inclusion of late medieval finds within the features suggests cultivation activity across this area from the late medieval into the post-medieval periods.

There was no evidence for any activity within the proposed development area any earlier than the 13th century. There was a clear late medieval/post medieval presence within the development site. No further work is recommended.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation was commissioned and funded by George Wimpey East Scotland Ltd.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cook, M 2000 'Excavation of Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement features at Lamb's Nursery, Dalkeith, Midlothian', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 2000 (130), Edinburgh, 93-113.

Dawson, J (2002) *Desk-Based Assessment of St David's RC High School, Dalkeith*. Unpublished report by Headland Archaeology Ltd for Midlothian Council.



**HEADLAND
ARCHAEOLOGY Ltd**



Reproduced from 1976 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger Series no.66, with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown copyright. Headland Archaeology Ltd, licence no AL 100013329.

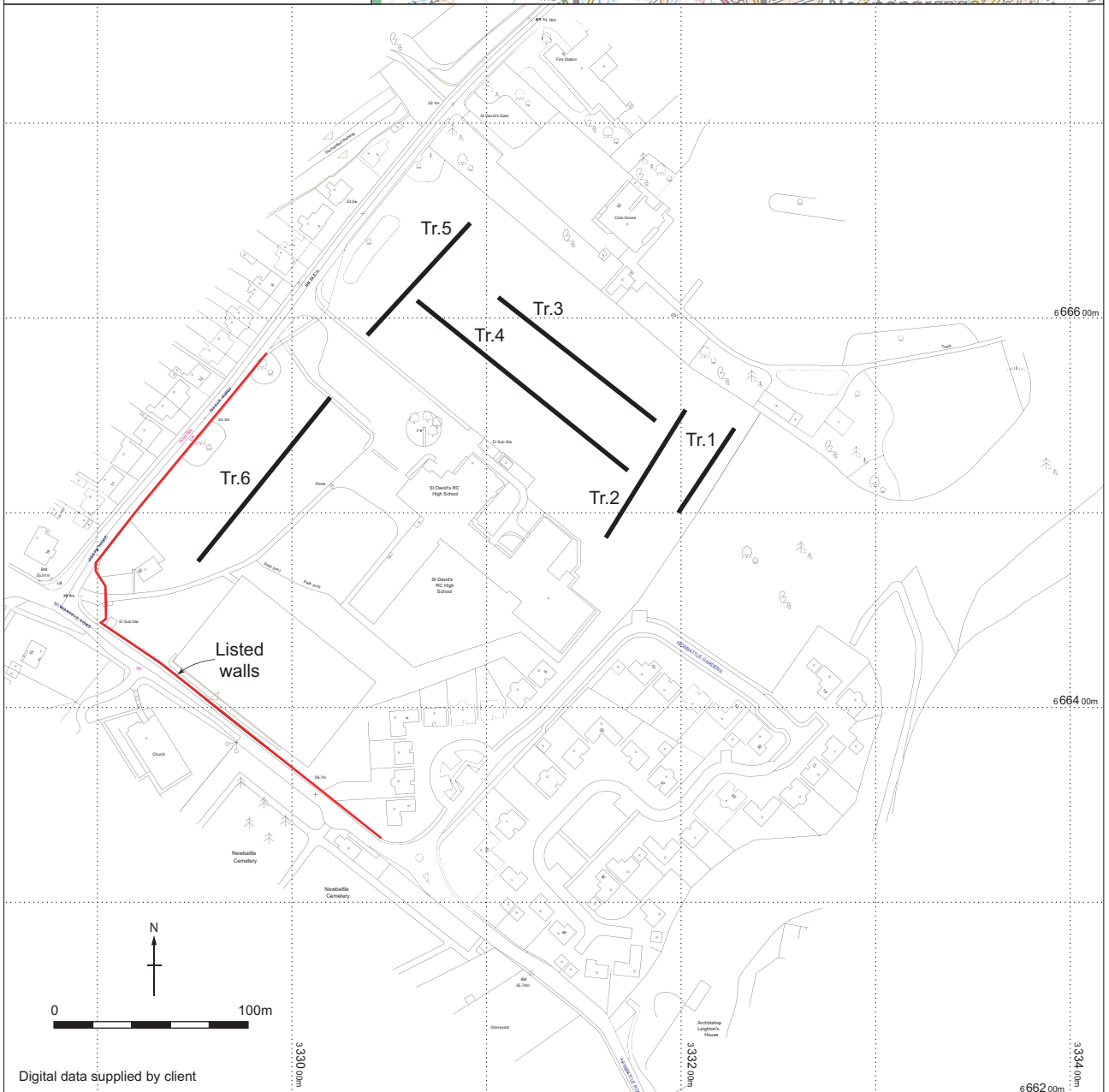


Figure 1 - St David's High School: Site location and trench plan.

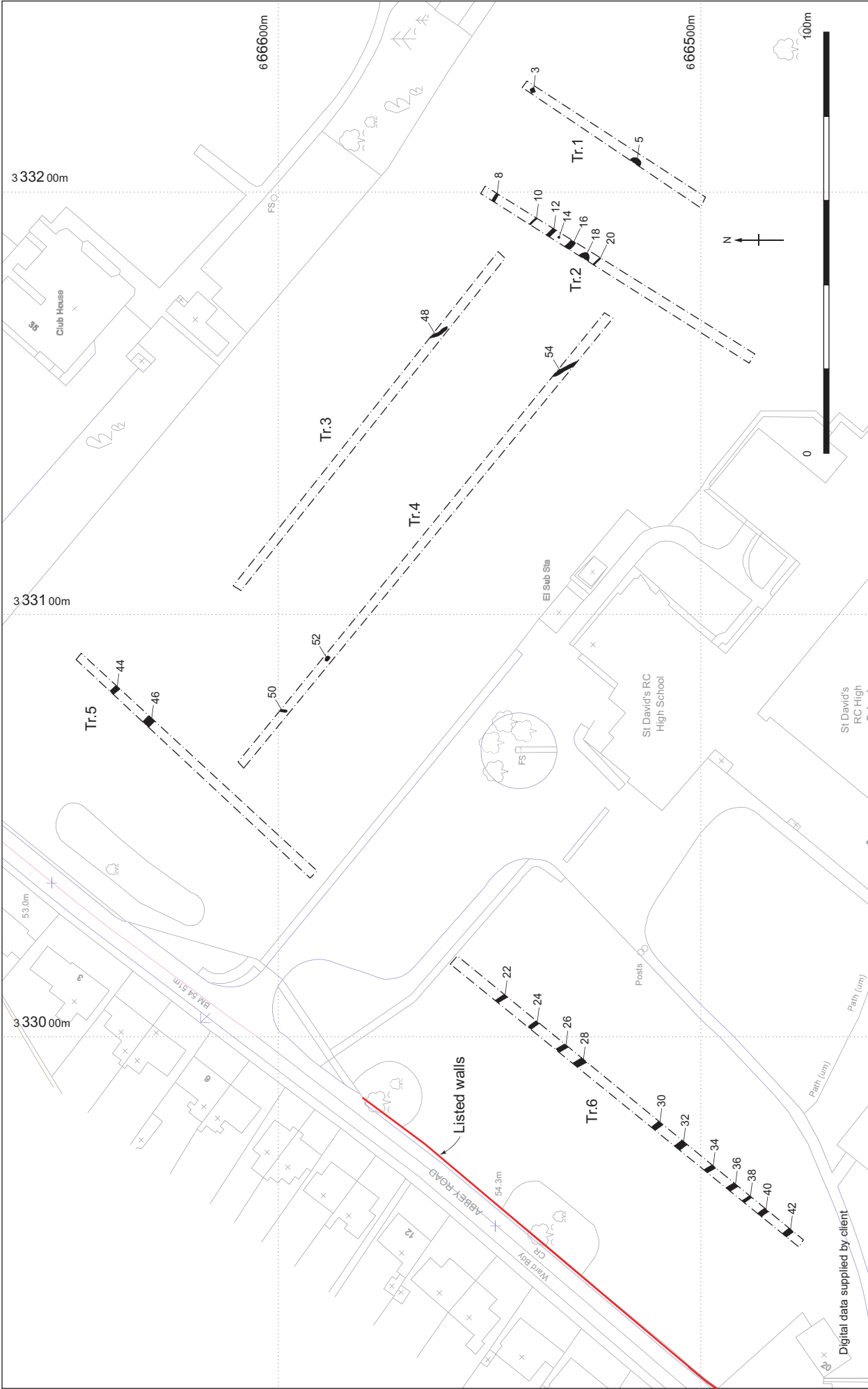


Figure 2 - St David's High school: Trench plan and recorded features.

APPENDIX 1: SITE REGISTERS

1.1 Trench Register

Trench No.	Description	Length (m)	Av. Depth (m)	Max. Depth (m)
1	Orientated NE-SW, this trench runs along the SE boundary of the site	50	0.65	0.9
2	Orientated NE-SW, this trench runs parallel to Trench 1, further NW	75	0.9	1.1
3	Orientated NW-SE, this trench runs along the NE boundary of the site	100	0.77	0.93
4	Orientated NW-SE, this trench runs parallel to Trench 3, further SW	135	0.8	0.91
5	Orientated NE-SW, this trench runs along the NW boundary of the site, to the north of the site entrance	75	0.8	1
6	Orientated NE-SW, this trench runs along the NW boundary of the site, to the south of the site entrance	105	0.7	0.85
Total	-	540	-	-

1.2 Context Register

Context No.	Trench No.	Description	Dimensions (m)
1	-	Topsoil	0.25
2	-	Subsoil/Natural, orange gravels, sands and clays	-
3	1	Cut of pit/posthole	0.43 x 0.34 x 0.12
4	1	Fill of pit/posthole [3]	0.43 x 0.34 x 0.12
5	1	Cut of pit	2.42 x 1.04 x 0.23
6	1	Fill of pit [5]	2.42 x 1.04 x 0.23
7	-	Levelling deposit, redeposited natural orange sands and gravels mixed with a brown silty sand	0.5 – 0.8
8	2	Cut of ditch	1.81 x 1.2 x 0.07
9	2	Fill of ditch [8]	1.81 x 1.2 x 0.07
10	2	Cut of ditch	1.82 x 0.5 x 0.03
11	2	Fill of ditch [10]	1.82 x 0.5 x 0.03
12	2	Cut of ditch	1.77 x 1.26 x 0.10
13	2	Fill of ditch [12]	1.77 x 1.26 x 0.10

14	2	Cut of pit	0.48 x 0.4 x 0.09
15	2	Fill of pit [14]	0.48 x 0.4 x 0.09
16	2	Cut of ditch	1.85 x 1.22 x 0.06
17	2	Fill of ditch [16]	1.85 x 1.22 x 0.06
18	2	Cut of ditch terminus	1.15 x 0.86 x 0.26
19	2	Fill of ditch terminus [18]	1.15 x 0.86 x 0.26
20	2	Cut of ditch	1.95 x 0.55 x 0.11
21	2	Fill of ditch [20]	1.95 x 0.55 x 0.11
22	6	Cut of furrow, shallow linear cut	Not excavated
23	6	Fill of furrow [22], mid-brown/grey silty sand	Not excavated
24	6	Cut of furrow, shallow linear cut	Not excavated
25	6	Fill of furrow [24], mid-brown/grey silty sand	Not excavated
26	6	Cut of furrow, shallow linear cut	Not excavated
27	6	Fill of furrow [26], mid-brown/grey silty sand	Not excavated
28	6	Cut of furrow, shallow linear cut	Not excavated
29	6	Fill of furrow [28], mid-brown/grey silty sand	Not excavated
30	6	Cut of furrow, shallow linear cut	Not excavated
31	6	Fill of furrow [30], mid-brown/grey silty sand	Not excavated
32	6	Cut of furrow, shallow linear cut	2 x 2.1 x 0.11
33	6	Fill of furrow [32], mid-brown/grey silty sand	2 x 2.1 x 0.11
34	6	Cut of furrow, shallow linear cut	Not excavated
35	6	Fill of furrow [34], mid-brown/grey silty sand	Not excavated
36	6	Cut of furrow, shallow linear cut	Not excavated
37	6	Fill of furrow [36], mid-brown/grey silty sand	Not excavated
38	6	Cut of furrow, shallow linear cut	Not excavated
39	6	Fill of furrow [38], mid-brown/grey silty sand	Not excavated
40	6	Cut of furrow, shallow linear cut	Not excavated
41	6	Fill of furrow [40], mid-brown/grey silty sand	Not excavated
42	6	Cut of furrow, shallow linear cut	Not excavated
43	6	Fill of furrow [42], mid-brown/grey silty sand	Not excavated
44	5	Cut of narrow linear ditch/cultivation furrow	2 x 1.2 x 0.06
45	5	Fill of narrow linear ditch/cultivation furrow [44], mid-brown/grey silty sand	2 x 1.2 x 0.06
46	5	Cut of wide linear ditch/cultivation furrow	2 x 2 x 0.13
47	5	Fill of wide linear ditch/cultivation furrow [46], mid-brown/grey silty sand	2 x 2 x 0.13
48	3	Cut of ditch	4 x 1.1 x 0.05
49	3	Fill of ditch [48]	4 x 1.1 x 0.05
50	4	Cut of ditch terminus	1.6 x 0.6 x 0.08
51	4	Fill of ditch terminus [50]	1.6 x 0.6 x 0.08
52	4	Cut of ditch	1.4 x 1 x 0.02
53	4	Fill of ditch [52]	1.4 x 1 x 0.02
54	4	Cut of ditch	4.5 x 1.2 x 0.05
55	4	Fill of ditch [54]	4.5 x 1.2 x 0.05
56	3	Levelling deposit	0.5 – 0.8
57	3	Buried soil	0.2
58	3	Deposit, buried soil mixed with natural	0.1
59	4	Deposit, buried soil mixed with natural	0.1

1.3 Sample Register

Sample No.	Context No.	Description
1	6	Fill of pit [5]
2	47	Fill of ditch/furrow [46]

1.4 Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Scale	Description
1	1:100	Plan of Trench 1 with features [3] and [5]
2	1:100	Plan of trench 2 with features [8] [10] [12] [14] [16] [18] and [20]
3	1:10	Profile through Trench 1
4	1:10	Profile through Trench 2
5	1:100	Plan of Trench 3 with feature [48]
6	1:10	South facing section through ditch [48]
7	1:10	Profile through Trench 3
8	1:100	Plan of Trench 4 with features [50] and [52]
9	1:100	Plan of Trench 4 with feature [54]
10	1:10	North facing section through ditch [50]
11	1:10	Profile through Trench 4
12	1:10	North west facing section through pit/posthole [3]
13	1:10	Section through pit [5]
14	1:10	Section through ditch [8]
15	1:10	Section through ditch [10]
16	1:10	Section through ditch [12]
17	1:10	Section through pit/posthole [14]
18	1:10	Section through ditch [16]
19	1:10	Section through pit [18]
20	1:10	Section through ditch [20]
21	1:100	Plan of Trench 6 with features [22] [24] [26] [28] [30] [32] [34] [36] [38] [40] and [42]
22	1:10	Profile through Trench 6
23	1:10	South facing section through furrow [32]
24	1:100	Plan of Trench 5 with features [44] and [46]
25	1:10	Profile through Trench 5
26	1:10	South facing section through ditch/furrow [46]
27	1:10	South facing section through ditch/furrow [44]

1.5 Photographic Register

Shot No.	Direction Facing	Colour Slide	Colour Print	Description
1	-	Yes	No	ID Shot
2	SW	Yes	No	Trench 1
3	SE	Yes	No	Trench 1, feature [3]
4	S	Yes	No	Trench 1, feature [5]
5	SW	Yes	No	Trench 2
6	SW	Yes	No	Trench 2, feature [8]
7	SW	Yes	No	Trench 2, feature [10]
8	SW	Yes	No	Trench 2, feature [12]
9	SW	Yes	No	Trench 2, feature [14]
10	SW	Yes	No	Trench 2, feature [16]
11	SW	Yes	No	Trench 2, feature [18]
12	SW	Yes	No	Trench 2, feature [20]
13	W	Yes	No	Trench 3
14	W	Yes	No	Trench 4
15	SW	Yes	No	Trench 6
16	NNW	Yes	Yes	Trench 5, south facing section through ditch [46]
17	NNW	Yes	Yes	Trench 5, south facing section through ditch [46]
18	ESE	Yes	Yes	Trench 4
19	ESE	Yes	Yes	Trench 3
20	SSW	Yes	Yes	Trench 6, backfilled
21	N	Yes	Yes	Trench 3, south facing section through ditch [48]
22	E	Yes	Yes	General shot of site
23	E	Yes	Yes	General shot of site
24	SE	Yes	Yes	General shot of site
25	S	Yes	Yes	Trench 4, ditch [50]
26	SW	Yes	Yes	Trench 4, ditch [54]

APPENDIX 2: FINDS ASSESSMENT

Julie Franklin

SUMMARY OF FINDS

The pottery is all of (?late) Medieval date. Sherds are generally abraded, suggesting redeposition or damage in ploughsoil. The roof tile may well be of similar date. The clay pipes (Ctxt 033) are the only post-medieval find.

Table 1. Finds List (hand collected & sample finds)

Trench	Context No.	Sample No.	Material	Qty	Description	Spot Date
1	006	1	Pottery	1	White gritty, jug base sherd, abraded	13 th /15 th
6	027		Pottery	1	Redware, thumbled base or handle terminal, internal olive glaze	14 th /16 th
6	029		CBM	1	Roof tile, edge sherd, red fabric, spots of brown glaze, possibly flat	Medi?
6	031		Pottery	1	Redware, orange, gritty, red-brown glaze, local?	13 th /15 th
6	033		Clay Pipe	2	Stems, wide bore	17 th
6	041		Bone	3	Animal tooth fragments	
6	043		Pottery	2	Greyware, joining sherds from same pot jug base	14 th /16 th
5	047		Pottery	1	White gritty, abraded sherd	13 th /15 th
5	047	2	Bone	1	Burnt fragment	