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TOPLER'S HILL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION STAGE 2:
Trial excavation and synthesis of results

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Produced for:
Thorburn Colquhoun

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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the specification. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service (BCAS) cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

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This report has been prepared by Mike Luke (Project Officer), Rob Edwards (Project Supervisor) and Jackie Wells (Artefacts Supervisor). All BCAS projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Project Manager). Joan Lightning undertook digitisation of site plans and produced all illustrations in this report.

Trial excavation was supervised by Rob Edwards assisted by Matt Edgeworth. All artefacts were catalogued and analysed by Jackie Wells.

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Key terms

Throughout this project the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BCAS	Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service
BCC	Bedfordshire County Council
CAO	County Archaeological Officer (of BCC)
Client	Thorburn Colquhoun
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
The Brief	Document: *Brief for a programme of trial trenching on land at Toplers Hill, near Edworth, Bedfordshire.*

Structure of report

After the introductory Section 1 this report presents a summary (Section 2) of the non-intrusive stages as these provide the framework within which the trial excavation were undertaken. Section 3 presents the results of the trial excavation. The preservation and areas of archaeological remains are discussed in Section 4 with an overall chronological synthesis of the results are presented in Section 5. The final section of the report discusses the significance of the results in light of known national and regional criteria. The detailed trench descriptions are placed at the back of the textual section of the report (Appendix 1). All figures are bound at the very back of this report.

Non-Technical Summary

Prior to the recent evaluation the County Council's Historic Environment Record contained only one archaeological site within the proposed road area. This represents the Roman road from Baldock to Godmanchester. Remains are also recorded in the adjacent areas and recent aerial photographs have revealed cropmarks immediately east of the A1. The nature, date and extent of archaeological remains have been evaluated. The larger Stage 1 Study Area has been subjected to aerial photograph analysis, field artefact collection and geophysical survey. A smaller Study Area (Stage 2) corresponded with the proposed road corridor (excluding an area immediately to the east of the A1) and has been subject to trial excavation.

Although Prehistoric flint artefacts have been recovered from the ploughsoil, their nature and distribution indicates there is no permanent settlement of this period within the Study Area.

Trial excavation has located an area of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement in the vicinity of Trench 8. Due to the temporary nature of such settlements, sites of this type are underrepresented, nationally, in the archaeological record. The settlement therefore has the potential to address a number of national and regional research aims.

Aerial photograph analysis and geophysical survey has identified a complex of ditched enclosures, probably contemporary with the Roman road which underlies the modern A1. The enclosures contained settlement features including pits and buildings. Burials are recorded on the HER in the vicinity, but their precise location is uncertain. These may relate to the settlement.

Medieval and post-medieval activity within the area is indicated by the discovery of one furrow within a trial trench and the distribution of artefacts in the ploughsoil. These indicate agricultural activity rather than settlement.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the project

Thorburn Colquhoun (Consulting Engineers), on behalf of the Highways Agency, are developing a junction improvement scheme for the A1 Langford Turn at Topler's Hill, Bedfordshire.

The CAO of BCC has advised that the area under consideration is archaeologically sensitive and that a junction improvement scheme is likely to have a significant impact on archaeological deposits. In order to assess the archaeological implication of the proposed scheme and develop an appropriate mitigation strategy an evaluation of the land has been undertaken.

Stage 1 of this comprised air photograph analysis, geophysical survey and field artefact collection (BCAS 1998a). This was undertaken by BCAS during August and September 1998 (Fig. 1)

On 25th August 1999 Thorburn Colquhoun appointed BCAS to undertake the final stage of the evaluation (trial excavation) and this report presents the results.

1.2 Site location (Fig. 1)

Topler's Hill is located c. 3.5km south of Biggleswade and 500m west of the village of Edworth in south-east Bedfordshire. The Study Area for Stage One was 11ha and that for Stage Two 1.5ha in extent. These were centred on TL216405, but were bisected by the A1.

Topographically the site is on the eastern end of a low ridge overlooking a shallow dry valley to the north-east. The area west of the A1 is flat at around 75m OD but the eastern area slopes downwards from south-west (75m OD) to north-east (70m OD).

The geology of the area is Boulder Clay overlying Lower Chalk. Colluvial deposits (hillwash) is possible on the slope to the east.

1.3 Archaeological background (Fig. 1)

BCC has a catalogue of archaeological sites and historic buildings, the Historic Environment Record (HER), in which all known discoveries in Bedfordshire are recorded. Three HER sites are known within the Study Area from a variety of sources. A greater number of HER sites are known in the vicinity, some of which may be significant for the Study Area.

The Roman road between the major Roman settlement at Baldock (to the south), and Godmanchester (to the north), is believed to underlie the A1 within the Study Area (HER 505). The exact position of the Roman road is uncertain. It may be significant that Topler's Hill is situated halfway between the Roman town at Sandy (to the north) and Baldock (to the south).

During the construction of the Great North Road turnpike human remains accompanied with jewellery were reported from the Topler's Hill area (HER 524). No firmer locational details are known. The artefacts were ascribed to the Roman period during the 19th Century (due to their proximity to a known Roman road), but they may equally be of Saxon date.

Cropmarks in the vicinity of the water tower, adjacent to the western limit of the Study Area, have been interpreted as indicating rectangular enclosures (HER 3545).

To the north of Bleak Hall, outside the Study Area, a rectangular enclosure is visible as a cropmark (HER 3546). To the east a moat (HER 1484) and earthworks (HER 2580) probably associated with the medieval village of Edworth are known. Earthworks (HER 2848) to the immediate south-east of the Study Area have been interpreted as house platforms probably associated with Edworth. The Viatores (1964) proposed a Roman road branching from the Langford Turn and following a westward alignment (HER 3545).

The earlier stage of evaluations identified ditched enclosures containing roundhouses and pits on the east side of the A1. These are likely to be Iron Age or Roman in date.

1.4 Project objectives

Section 4.3 of the *Brief* stated that the following information was required.

- The location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that are present.

- The integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that are present.

These are the same as the original objectives for the non-intrusive stages of evaluation.

2. SUMMARY OF THE NON-INTRUSIVE STAGES OF EVALUATION

2.1 *Introduction*

A summary is presented here of the results of the Stage 1 evaluation. These provide the background to the trial excavation strategy. For detailed information on the results the Stage 1 report should be consulted (BCAS 1998a).

2.2 *Aerial photograph analysis* (Fig. 2)

Aerial photograph analysis was undertaken over the Study Area and its immediate environs.

Cropmarks indicated the presence of four ditched enclosures immediately east of the A1 (A, B and C). Although these differed in shape and size, they were probably part of the same system. No gaps in the cropmarks suitable for entrances were observed and it is possible these were located to the west (facing the Roman Road).

Two hundred metres to the west were two additional enclosures (D and E), each different in shape and size. These may not have been contemporary with those adjacent to the A1, but clearly demonstrate settlement activity in the vicinity.

A large number of linear cropmarks were observed, mainly in the field to the west of the A1. These correspond with former field boundaries visible on historical maps and early aerial photographs. A number of these also represent pipelines, the locations of which were confirmed by Anglian Water Services Ltd.

The darker areas of crop may represent lower lying land or different underlying geology.

2.3 *Geophysical survey* (Fig. 3)

The geophysical survey comprised an initial scan of the entire Study Area and then detailed survey of areas with suitable responses. The detailed survey identified ditch type and pit type anomalies, many of which are likely to be of human origin.

The majority of the anomalies were concentrated in the eastern field immediately east of the A1 (Area D). They comprised a series of linear cropmarks representing connected, but distinct enclosures. Within their interiors additional ditch-type and pit-type anomalies suggest settlement activity. At least three circular ditch-type anomalies may indicate the location of roundhouses.

Only a limited number of anomalies were identified outside this area and these

are interpreted as of geological or modern origin (Areas A, B, C and E).

2.4 Field artefact survey

Iron Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery, late medieval and post-medieval CBM, worked flint, a quernstone and slag were recovered from the ploughsoil during field artefact collection.

No significant concentrations of artefacts were identified from the prehistoric, Iron Age or Roman periods. Medieval pottery appears to be concentrated mainly to the south of the east field, possibly associated with house platforms situated 30m to the south (HER 2848). Despite the large quantity of late medieval/post-medieval pottery and CBM these do not form concentrations and are probably a result of manuring.

2.5 Summary of results of the non-intrusive survey

A number of interlinked ditched enclosures were identified immediately east of the A1. These contained settlement type activity including pits and possible roundhouses. Typological grounds suggest these may be Iron Age or Roman in date, but the artefacts recovered from the ploughsoil were inconclusive.

3. TRIAL EXCAVATION

3.1 Introduction

Trial excavation was undertaken between 6th and 10th September in warm, at times very hot dry weather. A total of 8 trenches were opened and investigated. Details of all trenches and the deposits/features they contained are recorded in Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

3.2 The trench strategy (Fig. 3)

The location of the 8 trenches was determined to investigate cropmarks and geophysical anomalies and to provide overall coverage of the Study Area (Table 1). The trench strategy was approved by the CAO prior to the commencement of fieldwork. Trenches were positioned for the following reasons:

Tr	Investigative reason	Field	Length
1	Investigate area of possible masking deposits	West	25m
2	Cropmark of probable geological origin	West	25m
3	Investigate area of possible masking deposits	West	25m
4	Linear and pit type geophysical anomalies	West	25m
5	Area immediately west of Roman road	East	30m
6	Linear geophysical anomaly	East	25m
7	Area to west of Roman road	East	25m
8	Area to west of Roman road	East	25m

Table 1: *Initial trench strategy*

3.3 Contingency trenches

The initial trial trenches provided sufficient information to address the project objectives. Therefore no contingency trenches were required by the CAO or the Client.

3.4 Method statement

- All aspects of trial excavation were carried out in accordance with the Brief issued for the evaluation.
- The trenches were opened with a mechanical JCB excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching blade, operating under archaeological supervision.
- Topsoil and overburden were removed by machine down to the top of any natural subsoil, or archaeological deposits, whichever was encountered first. The base of the majority of the trenches was therefore natural gravel.
- Topsoil was stockpiled on the opposite side of the trench to the subsoil (where present). Backfilling took place in reverse order with deposits being compacted with the bucket of the JCB.
- All trenches were either 20m or 30m in length, 1.6m wide, and of variable

depths (see Appendix 1).

- Archaeological features were investigated by cleaning the surface and recorded on pro-formae sheets.
- No human remains were encountered.
- All archaeological deposits were recorded using a unique recording number, commencing from 10.
- Generally the trenches were numbered in the order they were opened.
- Each trench was allocated a unique block of recording numbers (contexts) in a continuous sequence. Therefore topsoil (20) is located in Trench 2, ditch fill (64) is located in Trench 6, a posthole cut [80] was located in trench 8, etc. All context numbers in the 90's are also located in Trench 8.

3.5 *Results of the trial excavation*

In the following discussion the results of the trial excavation have been grouped by spatial location. Details of the context/features are to be found in Appendix 1 at the back of this report.

3.5.1 East of the A1

To the east of the A1 the topsoil was typically a hard dark brown silty clay, with moderate small to medium stones, for example (10). Its thickness varied only slightly within the field.

A subsoil was encountered in all trenches. It comprised clays with moderate small to medium stones between 0.1m and 0.5m thick, for example (11). These deposits probably represent a plough disturbed interface between the topsoil and natural deposits.

The natural strata comprised mixed banded natural clays, for example (12), containing more sand at the eastern end of trench 4. The banding appeared to be orientated north-east to south-west but did not reflect any obvious changes in the topography. These are glacial till deposits (boulder clay).

3.5.2 West of the A1

Topsoil west of the A1 comprised a hard dark grey brown clay silt, with moderate small to medium stones, for example (50). It varied between 0.25m and 0.42m thick, generally being thicker adjacent to the field boundaries, probably a result of ploughing.

Subsoil (61 and 71) was only evident in two trenches. It comprised a mid yellowish brown hard clay, with moderate small to medium stones. As in the field east of the A1 this probably represents a plough disturbed interface between the topsoil and natural deposits.

The natural strata comprised light reddish, for example (72) or yellowish

brown clays or silt clays with a high stone content, for example (73). These are similar to the natural deposits encountered to the east of the A1. They are interpreted as glacial till deposits (boulder clay). The natural (51) within the entire length of trench 5 was a sandy clay deposit, overlying a coarser clay deposit. This deposit was not encountered within any of the other trenches.

3.5.3 Archaeological features in trenches 5 and 6

A single south-west to north-east feature was recorded in trench 5. This [52] comprised a wide but shallow linear cut interpreted as a furrow. No other furrows were located within the Study Area.

The single feature identified in trench 6 comprised a curving ditch [63] with a steep U shaped profile (Fig. 5). It was filled (64) by a sterile bleached deposit, similar to the natural deposits. No artefacts were recovered although its fill was very similar to those features encountered within trench 8, which contained domestic debris.

3.5.4 Archaeological features in trench 8 (Fig. 4)

Four archaeological features were investigated within trench 8, three of a linear nature. The fills of three of the features contained artefacts.

To the west, ditch [92] was aligned north-east to south-west, with a slightly asymmetrical U shaped profile (Fig. 5). The primary fill (93) contained flecks of burnt clay, small burnt stones and tiny degraded pottery fragments (not retrievable). Mixed deposit (94) overlaid the primary fill and was concentrated to the south-east. The position of this deposit suggests it may have been derived from a bank situated to the east. The upper fill (95) was a bleached deposit which contained late Bronze Age/early-middle Iron Age pottery sherds and flecks of fired clay.

Situated centrally within the trench, ditch [84] was aligned north-west to south-east, with a U shaped profile (Fig. 5). It contained a single bleached fill (85), which produced pottery of late Bronze Age/early-middle Iron age date and flecks of fired clay.

A west to east aligned ditch [86] terminated 2m from [84]. This had a steep a-symmetrical U shaped profile (Fig. 5). The ditch was filled by a single deposit (87), which contained fired clay. The fill was truncated by a modern agricultural feature [88].

Approximately 2m west of ditch [84] was a post hole [90]. This was sub oval in shape with a concave profile (Fig. 5). Situated around the outside of the posthole cut was fill (91) which surrounded a central darker fill (83) interpreted as a postpipe. This contained occasional medium sized stones which were probably originally used for packing the post. Pottery of late Bronze Age/early-middle Iron Age date was recovered from the postpipe. An iron nail from the upper part of fill (91) is likely to be intrusive.

3.6 Artefact assemblage

3.6.1 Introduction

Evaluation produced an artefactual assemblage comprising pottery, ceramic building material and animal bone (Table 2). All artefacts collected were processed in accordance with the *Brief* and *Project Design*. The material was scanned to ascertain the nature, condition and, where possible, date range of the artefact types present.

Trench*	Context	Description	Feature	Pottery *sherd:wt***	CBM *frag:wt***	Other finds
01	12	natural	12		2:40	
02	20	ploughsoil	20		2:58	
	22	natural	22		2:33	
03	32	natural	32		1:31	
04	40	ploughsoil	40		1:42	
	42	natural	42		2:35	
06	60	ploughsoil	60		1:11	
07	70	ploughsoil	70		1:51	
08	80	ploughsoil	80		1:17	
	83	postpipe	82	3:7		
	85	ditch	84	12:35		
	87	ditch	86			fired clay (17g)
	91	posthole	90			fe horseshoe nail (5g)
	95	ditch	92	11:65		animal bone (5g)
Total				**26:107**	**13:318**	

* No artefacts were recovered from trench 5 / CBM = ceramic building material
** Weight in grammes

Table 2: Artefact Assemblage by trench and context

3.6.2 Pottery

A total of 26 sherds weighing 107g was recovered. The material was examined by context, and five fabric types identified using Type Codes and Common Names in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, held by BCAS. Fabrics are listed below in chronological order: bracketed figures represent sherd number. Quantification was carried out using minimum sherd count and weight.

Fabric Type	Context	Common name
Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age		*c.* **1000-650BC**
F01B (6)	**83** (2), **85** (4)	Fine flint
Early-middle Iron Age		*c.* **650-350BC**
F19 (3)	**85** (2), **95** (1)	Sand and Organic
F28 (3)	**95** (3)	Fine sand
F29 (1)	**95** (1)	Coarse Sand
F35 (13)	**83** (1), **85** (6), **95** (6)	Micaceous

Table 3: Pottery Type Series

Pottery was only recovered from the fills of three features in trench 8. The greatest quantity (65g) derived from the upper fill of ditch [92], while 35g and 7g were recovered from ditch [84] and post-pipe [82] respectively.

The pottery survives in fair condition, although the average sherd weight is only 4g and there are no diagnostic forms. A number of tiny pottery fragments were observed in deposits but it was not possible to recover these in a coherent form.

The assemblage is of particular interest, as evidence for late Bronze Age/early -middle Iron Age activity is previously unknown in the locality. The earliest pottery recovered during field artefact collection dated to the 'Belgic' Iron Age. It is interesting to note that despite the earlier sherds being as robust and well-fired as those of 'Belgic' date, they failed to survive in the ploughsoil.

The fabric types are likely to be of local manufacture, and are broadly consistent with those recovered from nearby contemporary settlements at Groveland Way, Stotfold (3km to the south), and Holwell Quarry, Hertfordshire (*c.* 7km to the south-west).

3.6.3 Ceramic Building Material

Thirteen fragments of sand tempered flat roof tiles of peg type, (total weight 318g) were recovered, the majority deriving from ploughsoil. The fragments are broadly datable to the late medieval/early post-medieval period and are consistent with examples recovered during the field artefact collection.

3.7 Summary

Eight trenches were opened and a total of 42 contexts were investigated and recorded. These comprised 24 features, 8 of which were of the archaeological "cut" type. Table 4 summarises the features by trench. Appendix 1 provides detailed descriptions of contexts arranged by trench.

Trench	Artefact	Ditch	Posthole	Furrow
1	*			
2	*			
3	*			
4	*			
5				1
6	*	1		
7	*			
8	*Y	3	1 (with postpipe)	

* Artefacts retrieved from topsoil

Table 4: Features by trench

4. AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND LEVEL OF PRESERVATION

The significance of the identified archaeological remains within the planning process is partly dependent on their distribution within the development area and their quality of preservation.

4.1 Areas of archaeological significance

The non intrusive evaluation (Stage 1) identified an area immediately east of the A1 that was archaeologically significant (BCAS 1998a). This comprised a series of interlinked ditched enclosures containing evidence of settlement activity including buildings. This area was excluded from the trial excavation stage of the evaluation.

Within the Stage 2 Study Area features of human origin were only encountered on the west side of the A1. Significantly, these were concentrated within Trench 8 and comprised small ditches and a posthole. The fills of these contained pottery, fired clay, animal bone and burnt stone suggesting they are either part of, or adjacent to settlement. The absence of features within Trench 7 to the north indicates this activity did not extend in that direction.

Trench 6 contained one ditch. This was similar in dimensions, profile and fill to those encountered to the south, although its fill did not contain any settlement evidence. The furrow in Trench 5 was the only feature of this type identified within the Study Area.

4.2 Preservation of the archaeological remains

The level of preservation can be assessed based on the nature of the survival of archaeological features and artefacts/ecofacts.

4.2.1 Archaeological features

The survival of archaeological features is dependent on the nature and intensity of previous landuse, especially ploughing. Although larger features such as ditches and pits often survive the most intensive-farming regime, it is the smaller and relatively more fragile features such as postholes and hearths, which are often truncated or destroyed completely. The presence and dimensions of these provide the best indication of the quality of archaeological survival.

Within the Study Area one posthole was located with a diameter of 0.44m and depth of 0.16m, alongside ditches. This suggests feature preservation in the vicinity of Trench 8 will be relatively good. However, the shallow depth of the furrow in Trench 5 suggests truncation (probably a result of ploughing) has occurred in this area. The latter may have destroyed smaller archaeological features if they had been present.

4.2.2 Artefact and ecofact assemblage

The survival of artefacts and ecofacts can also be affected by former landuse

and the nature of the soil (specifically acidity). Although less vulnerable material such as ceramics and stone frequently survive, animal bone and metal can easily be destroyed. Despite the limited range of artefacts recovered and the absence of metal objects, the presence of animal bone, all be it in small quantities, suggests preservation is fairly good.

5. CHRONOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS

The following chronological synthesis is structured around the range of diagnostic artefacts recovered from the Study Area. It incorporates the results of the non-intrusive fieldwork (Stage 1 evaluation), which provides a framework within which the results of the trial excavation (Stage 2 evaluation) can be place.

5.1 Prehistoric

The small quantities and dispersed nature of the flint artefacts of this period recovered from field artefact collection suggest there was no permanent settlement within the Study Area.

5.2 Late Bronze Age/early-middle Iron Age

No artefacts dated with certainty to this period were recovered from field artefact collection. However, three of the features in Trench 8 produced pottery in distinctive fabrics of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and early-middle Iron Age date. Fabrics containing flint are considered to be generally earlier in date (Knight 1984). Fabric F01b, which contained flint, has been assigned an earlier date in relation to the larger assemblage from the Biddenham Loop (Knight *pers comms*). Based on present evidence it is uncertain what significance can be attached to the presence of the earlier and later pottery fabrics within the same features. It is possible the earlier pottery is residual, although it shows no signs of abrasion, and indicates a settlement of this date in the vicinity. Alternatively the date of the later fabrics may require reviewing should more evidence be available.

The presence of ditches and a posthole indicate the presence of a settlement of this broad period in the vicinity of Trench 8. This is supported by the presence of pottery, fired clay, animal bone and burnt stones. Evidence for Bronze Age settlements frequently comprises a concentration of pits and postholes, for example Area III at the Reading Business Park (Moore and Jennings 1992). The ditches may represent boundary features and could therefore indicate a permanent settlement rather than the "short-term" dispersed occupation more frequently identified. Excavations at Roughground Farm, Gloucestershire (Allen *et al* 1993) indicate dispersed occupation gave way to permanent settlement in the middle Iron Age.

There is, however, a paucity of evidence for clearly dated settlements of this period, reflecting a national phenomenon. There is extremely limited evidence for settlement of this period generally and particularly in the vicinity of the Study Area. Recent evaluation at College Farm, Great Barford (BCAS 1998b) identified one such site.

5.3 Pre-"Belgic" Iron Age

Only five sherds of pottery were recovered of this period during field artefact collection. These were small and highly abraded, initially suggesting their numbers may be under-represented. However, within the area of the trial excavation no evidence for this period was encountered.

5.4 Roman

Eleven sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from field artefact collection. The Stage 1 evaluation report (BCAS 1998a) drew attention to the sometimes misleading picture that can emerge from ploughsoil artefact collection. The Roman road from Baldock to Sandy is believed to underlie the modern A1 in this area. Burials of presumed Roman date are known in the vicinity (HER 524).

The series of enclosures identified by geophysical survey in the eastern field appear to have entrances fronting this road, but are not as regular as those associated with the Roman settlement at Fenny Stratford, Buckinghamshire (Neal 1987). Roman roads frequently acted as a focus for settlement and the location of Topler's Hill, halfway between Sandy and Baldock, would be a desirable location.

The Stage 2 Study Area avoided the area of potential Roman settlement and no further evidence of this period was recovered.

5.5 Saxon

No Saxon artefacts were found during the field artefact collection. The burials mentioned above although originally believed to be Roman in date, could infact be of the Saxon period.

5.6 Medieval

The majority of the pottery sherds identified from field artefact collection were of this period. The distribution towards the south of the eastern field would be consistent with manuring from the settlement (HER 2848) situated to the south of the Study Area. No additional medieval artefacts were recovered from the trial excavation.

5.7 Post-medieval

The large quantities of pottery and tile recovered during field artefact collection is likely to be the result of the manuring of fields, an activity known to have continued into this period (Gaffney, Gaffney and Tingle 1985). No discrete concentrations were identified supporting the assumptions that no buildings of this period were constructed within the Study area. Tile fragments of this period recovered from the ploughsoil in the trial trenches supports this view.

6. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESULTS

6.1 *The assessment of archaeological remains within the planning process*

The CAO's *Brief* specifically forbids this report discussing the potential implications for the development of any archaeological remains discovered during the evaluation. However, a discussion of the significance of the remains in terms of their national and regional archaeological research frameworks is appropriate.

Although archaeological remains are now a material consideration in the planning process, there is no single, "easy-to-use" guide to assessing the importance of a particular archaeological site.

A limited number of nationally important archaeological sites have been given the status of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) to indicate their exceptional type, nature and state of preservation. The Study Area does not contain any SAMs.

With the issuing of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16; Archaeology and Planning (PPG16)* central government accepted the view that archaeological remains should be regarded as a finite, non-renewable resource, and that there should be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation of nationally important remains (whether Scheduled or not). The Mid Beds Local Plan policy BE18 adopted this view. The creation of an archaeological record, through the mechanism of archaeological fieldwork, was indicated to be the second best option and a similar view was adopted in Local Plan BE20.

Central government, though English Heritage, addressed the issue of national research needs with the publication of *Exploring our past* in 1991 and a draft Research Agenda in 1997. The latter contains a number of research agendas, against which the archaeological resource of an area may be assessed.

On a more regional level, the County Archaeologists of East Anglia have published the first volume in a research framework for the eastern counties (Glazebrook 1997). Although this document covers the adjacent counties of Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, it does not specifically consider Bedfordshire. Nevertheless, topographical and historical similarities (at regional level) between these counties make the document a useful tool for assessing the significance of the archaeological remains within the Study Area.

6.2 Assessment of the significance of the late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age archaeological remains

Potentially the most important archaeological remains within the Stage 2 Study Area are those indicating domestic activity of the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age periods. Their level of preservation, while good, is not exceptional; they are truncated to some degree by later agricultural activity. Based on the results of the evaluation, it would not be reasonable to consider them as the best of their site type. Accordingly, they should not be considered of national significance and therefore of schedulable quality.

However, they do appear to have the potential to address a number of national and regional research aims. Nationally, the change from the monument-dominated landscape of the Neolithic and Bronze Age to the more settlement-dominated landscape of the later prehistory has been identified as a major research aim by English Heritage (1991, 36). This aim was highlighted with regard changes in the landscape during this period associated with theories of population pressure (1997, 47). Regionally they are also important because the distribution of settlements of this period appears, at best, to be sporadic, with locally distinct clusters of activity and in some areas settlement (Glazebrook 1997, 25).

63 Assessment of the significance of the Roman archaeological remains

The Stage 1 non-intrusive survey identified a complex of ditched enclosures, probably adjoining the Godmanchester to Sandy Roman road. Although roadside settlements are not unique within the region, they often underlie modern buildings and have therefore only been examined on a small scale. The level of preservation, based purely on the geophysical survey results, appears to be good, with pits and buildings surviving. It is presumed the construction of the A1 has partly destroyed those parts of the settlement immediately adjacent to the Roman road. Based on the non-intrusive survey, it is unlikely the remains could be considered of sufficient national significance that they should be scheduled as an Ancient Monument.

Nationally English Heritage (1991, 36) have highlighted the need to examine the pre-conquest origins of Roman settlements, and the continuation of these into the Saxon period. Within the Study Area there is some evidence of pre-Roman occupation in terms of artefacts recovered from the ploughsoil, but it is more likely the settlement will be directly linked to the construction of the Roman road. Although no Saxon artefacts have been recovered from the Study Area, the possibility that the burials recorded in the HER might be of this date has been discussed above. At the regional level the limited knowledge of rural settlement during this period is still a recurring theme (Glazebrook 1997, 38).

7. REFERENCES

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8. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 25.00 m. **Width:** 1.60 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.32 m. **Max:** 0.32 m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL2168440795 **Ref. 2:** TL2069340772

Reason for trench: Investigate area of possible masking deposits.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
10	Ploughsoil	Hard dark brown silty clay moderate small stones, moderate medium stones.	☒	☐
11	Subsoil	Hard mid brown clay moderate small stones, moderate medium stones. Plough disturbed interface	☒	☐
12	Natural strata	. A hard banded natural comprising: light grey brown gravel clays, with frequent mangense stains; orange brown silt clays, with frequent mangense stains and moderterate small and occasional medium stones; mid brown silt clays, with moderate small to medium and occasional large stones.	☐	☒

Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 25.00 m. **Width:** 1.60 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.38 m. **Max:** 0.38 m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL2170740695 **Ref. 2:** TL2173040704

Reason for trench: Investigate cropmarks of probable geological origin.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
20	Topsoil	Hard dark brown silty clay moderate small stones, moderate medium stones.	☒	☒
21	Subsoil	Hard light brown grey clay frequent small stones, frequent medium stones. Plough disturbed interface	☒	☐
22	Natural strata	Hard light grey brown clay frequent small stones, frequent medium stones. frequent flecks mangenese	☐	☒

Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 25.00 m. **Width:** 1.60 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.4 m. **Max:** 0.4 m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL2175540607 **Ref. 2:** TL2176540584

Reason for trench: Investigate area of possible masking deposits

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
30	Topsoil	Hard dark brown silty clay moderate small stones, moderate medium stones.	☒	☐
31	Subsoil	Hard light brown grey clay moderate small stones. Plough disturbed interface	☒	☐
32	Natural strata	. A mixed banded natural comprising; hard orange brown silt clay with frequent flecks mangense; hard light brown grey clay with frequent small stones and frequent medium stones.	☐	☒

Trench: 4

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 25.00 m. **Width:** 1.60 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.4 m. **Max:** 0.4 m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL2177540510 **Ref. 2:** TL2179740521

Reason for trench: Investigate linear and pit type geophysical anomalies

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
40	Topsoil	Hard dark brown silty clay moderate small stones, moderate medium stones.	☒	☒
41	Subsoil	Hard mid brown clay moderate small stones, moderate medium stones. Plough disturbed interface	☒	☐
42	Natural strata	. A mixed banded natural comprising: hard banded natural comprising: light grey brown gravel clays, with frequent mangense stains; orange brown silt clays, with frequent mangense stains and moderate small and occasional medium stones; mid brown silt clays, with moderate small to medium and occasional large stones, and hard red brown sandy silt and loose sandy gravels at the eastern end of the trench.	☐	☒

Trench: 5

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 30.00 m. **Width:** 1.60 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.42 m. **Max:** 0.42 m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL2163740372 **Ref. 2:** TL2164940344

Reason for trench: Investigate area immediately west of Roman Road

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
50	Topsoil	Hard dark grey brown clay silt moderate small stones, moderate medium stones.	☒	☐
51	Natural strata	Friable light yellow brown sandy clay occasional small stones.	☒	☐
52	**Furrow**	**Straight linear E-W profile: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 1.2m, max depth 0.15m, max length 1.6m.**	☒	☐
53	Furrow	Friable mid brown sandy silt . Occasional orange flecks, occasional coke flecks	☒	☐
54	Natural strata	Hard red brown silty clay frequent medium stones, frequent large stones.	☐	☐

Trench: 6

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 25.00 m. **Width:** 1.60 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.32 m. **Max:** 0.32 m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL2159540335 **Ref. 2:** TL2161440351

Reason for trench: Investigate linear geophysical anomaly

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
60	Topsoil	Hard dark grey brown clay silt moderate small stones, moderate medium stones.	☒	☒
61	Subsoil	Hard mid yellow brown sandy clay moderate small stones, moderate medium stones. Plough disturbed interface	☐	☐
62	Natural strata	Hard light yellow brown silty clay moderate small stones, moderate medium stones. moderate gravel lenses	☐	☐
63	**Ditch**	**Curving linear NW-SE profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.55m, max depth 0.25m, max length 1.5m.**	☒	☐
64	Fill	Firm red brown silty clay occasional small stones.	☒	☐

Trench: 7

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 25.00 m. **Width:** 1.60 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.3 m. **Max:** 0.3 m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL2158840298 **Ref. 2:** TL2158740273

Reason for trench: Investigate area to west of Roman Road

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
70	Topsoil	Hard dark grey brown silty clay moderate small stones, moderate medium stones.	☒	☒
71	Subsoil	Hard mid yellow brown clay frequent small stones, frequent medium stones. With gravel and silt lenses	☒	☐
72	Natural strata	Hard light red brown clay moderate small stones, moderate medium stones. With silt and gravel lenses	☒	☐
73	Natural strata	Hard yellow brown clay frequent small stones, frequent medium stones, moderate large stones.	☐	☐

Trench: 8

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 25.00 m. **Width:** 1.60 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.4 m. **Max:** 0.4 m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL2158040237 **Ref. 2:** TL2160240248

Reason for trench: Area to west of Roman Road

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
80	Topsoil	Hard dark grey brown clay silt moderate small stones, moderate medium stones.	☒	☒
81	Natural strata	Hard light red brown clay frequent small stones. Becomes lighter to the NE	☐	☐
82	**Postpipe**	**Oval profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.15m, max depth 0.16m, max length 0.2m.**	☒	☐
83	Fill	Hard dark red grey clay occasional medium stones. Stones appear to be packing material	☒	☒
84	**Ditch**	**Straight linear NW-SE profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.79m, max depth 0.24m, max length 1.4m.**	☒	☐
85	Fill	Hard mid red brown clay moderate small stones, occasional flecks fired clay, occasional small fired clay.	☒	☒
86	**Ditch**	**Straight linear E-W profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.48m, max depth 0.15m, max length 3.5m.**	☒	☐
87	Fill	Hard mid red brown clay frequent small stones, occasional flecks fired clay, occasional small fired clay.	☒	☒
88	**Modern disturbance**	**Straight linear E-W profile: vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.15m, max depth 0.31m, min length 1.5m. Mole plough disturbance**	☒	☐
89	Modern disturbance	Firm dark green silty clay moderate small stones. Mole plough disturbance	☒	☐
90	**Posthole**	**Oval profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.44m, max depth 0.16m, max length 0.55m.**	☒	☐
91	Fill	Hard mid red brown silty clay moderate small stones.	☒	☒
92	**Ditch**	**Straight linear NE-SW profile: convex base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.45m, max depth 0.44m, min length 1.7m.**	☒	☐
93	Primary fill	Hard dark grey clay moderate small stones, occasional small burnt stones, occasional flecks fired clay. Occasional small degraded pot fragments, unrecoverable	☒	☐
94	Secondary fill	Hard mid red brown silty clay moderate small stones, occasional flecks fired clay, occasional small fired clay. Occasional small yellow brown clay lenses	☒	☐
95	Tertiary fill	Hard mid red brown clay moderate small stones, occasional flecks fired clay, occasional small fired clay.	☒	☒

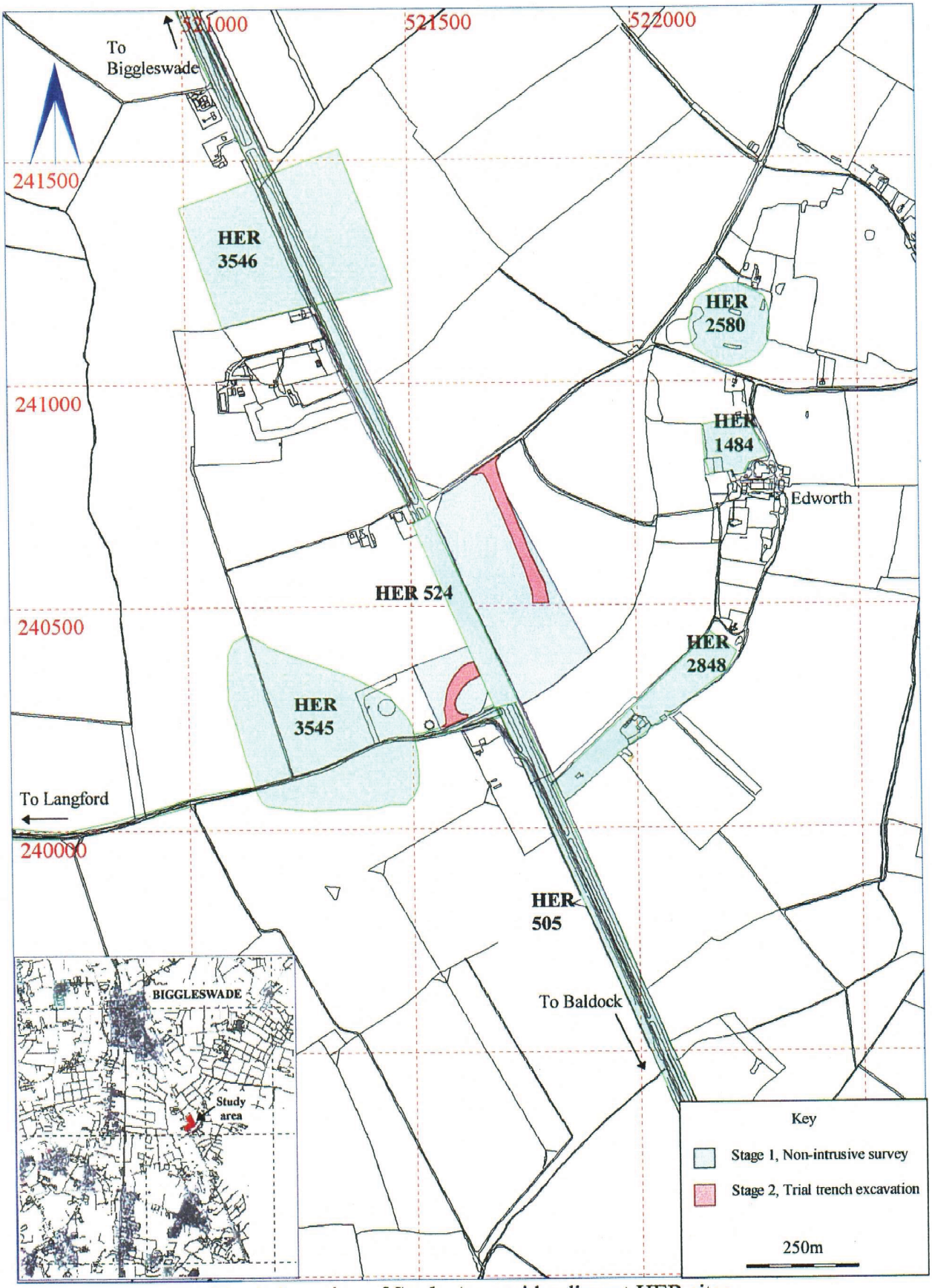


Fig. 1; Location of Study Area with adjacent HER sites.

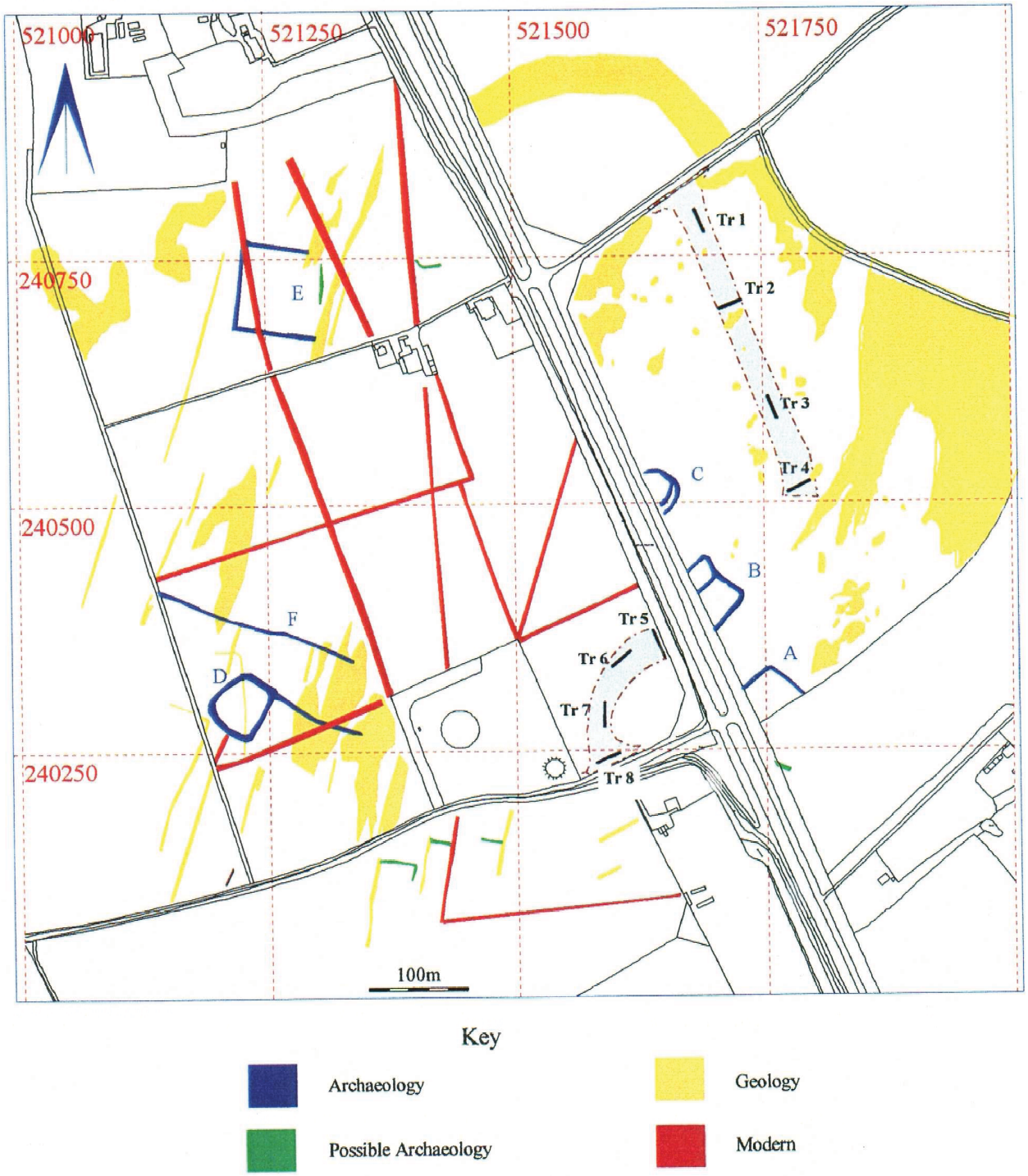


Fig.2; Aerial photograph interpretation plan, with trial trench location.

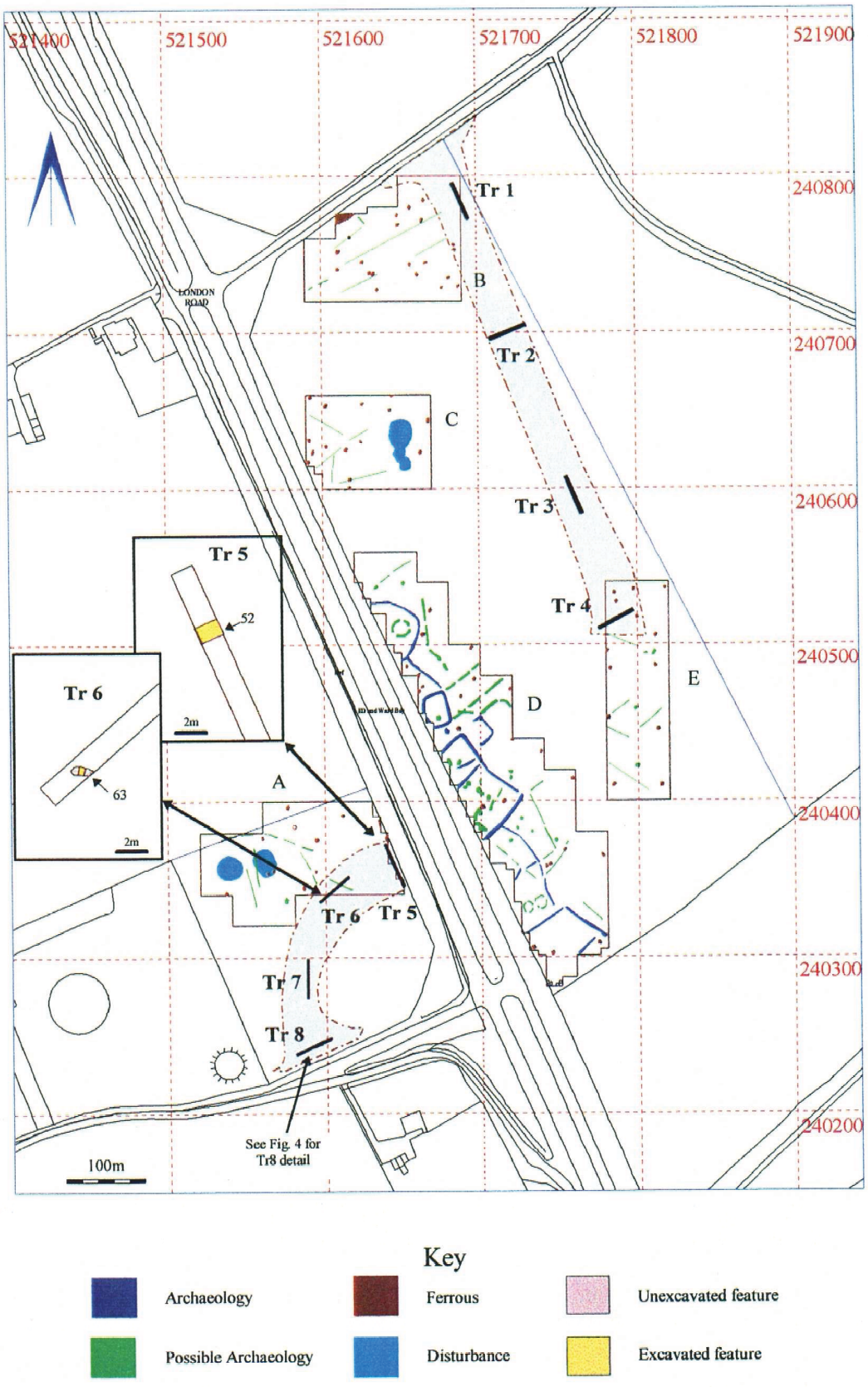


Fig. 3; Geophysical interpretation plan with trial trench location and feature detail of trenches 5 and 6.

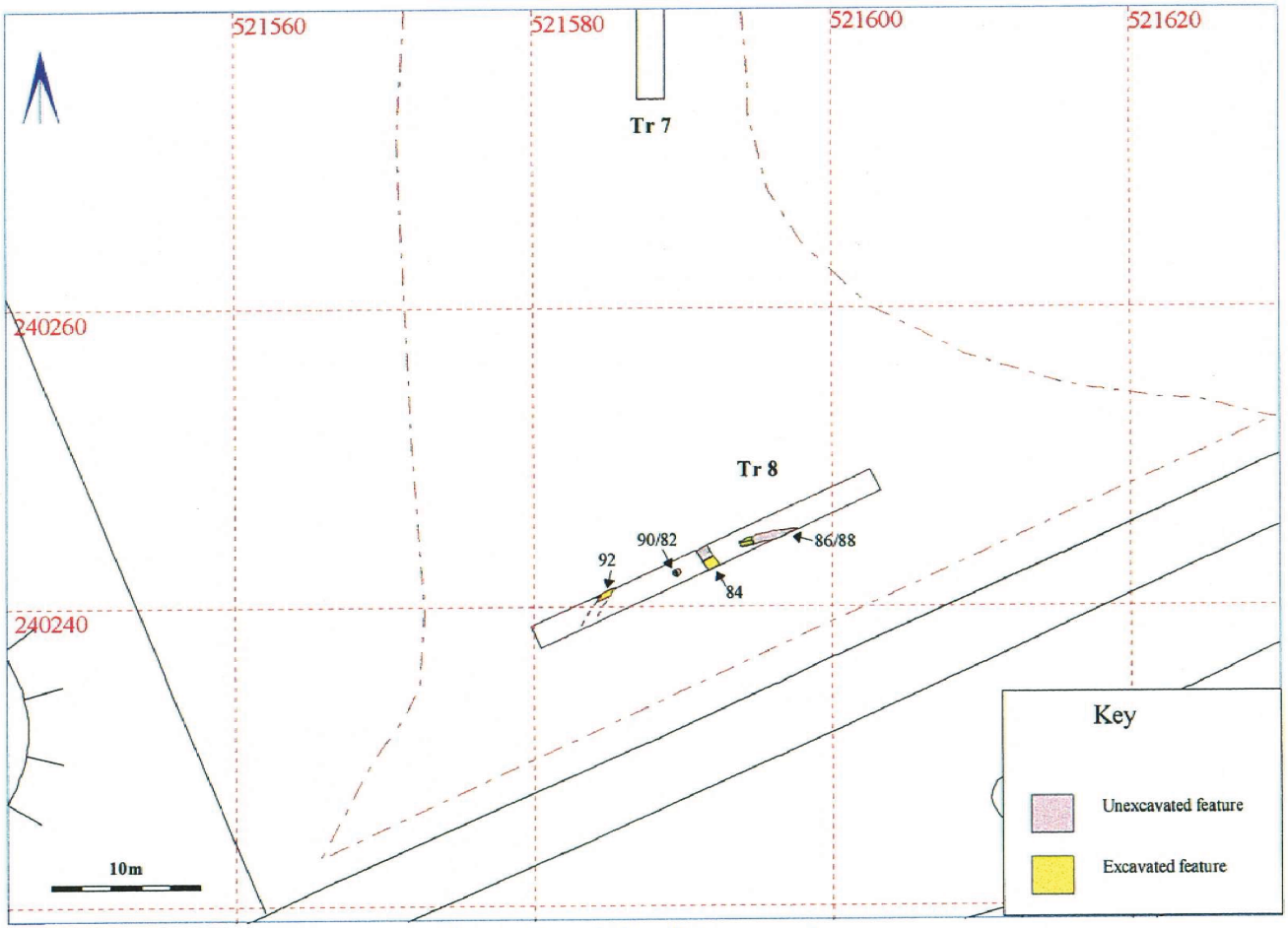
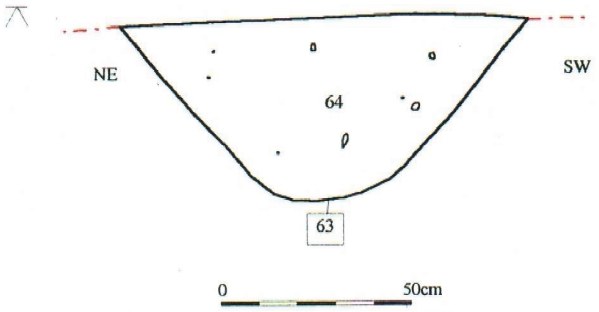
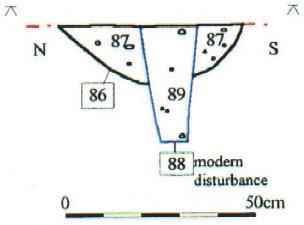


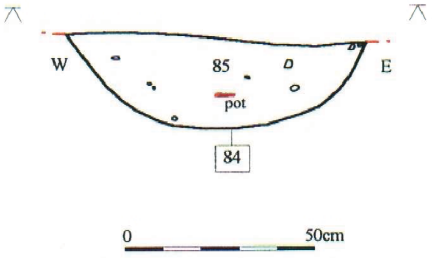
Fig. 4; Trench 8, all features plan.



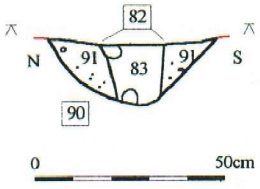
Section of ditch [63]



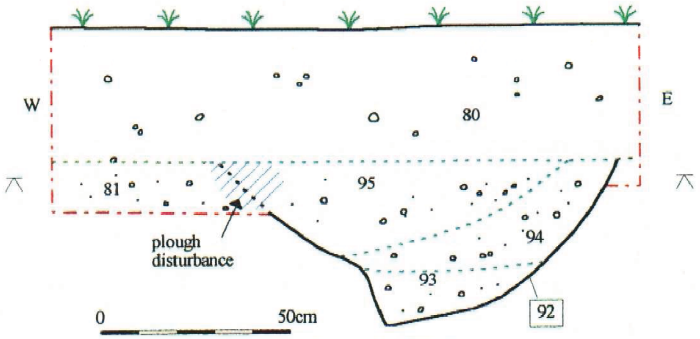
Section of ditch [86]



Section of ditch [84]



Section of post hole [90]/[82]



Section of ditch [92]

Fig. 5; Selective section drawings from trenches 6 and 8.