RPS Planning, Transport and Environment

INDEX DATA	RPS INFORMATION
Scheme Title A6 Clapham Bypass	Details Archaeological Field Evaluation Stage 2: Trial Excavation
Road Number A6	Date 29th September 2000
Contractor Northern Archaeology	
County	
OS Reference	
Single sided ✓ Double sided A3 ✓ Colour B	

A6 CLAPHAM BYPASS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION
STAGE 2: TRIAL EXCAVATION

Document 2000/51
Project CBP638

29th September 2000

Produced for:
Thorburn Colquhoun
200 Harpur Centre
Horne Lane
Bedford
MK40 1TS

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Figures are bound at the back of this report

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.

This report has been prepared by Sean Steadman (Project Officer), Mark Phillips (Project Supervisor) and Jackie Wells (Artefacts Officer). All BCAS projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Project Manager). Joan Lightning (CAD technician) produced all illustrations in this report. Trial excavation and investigations were undertaken Mark Phillips, assisted by Jerry Stone, Matt Edgeworth and Pat Kent.

Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service would like to acknowledge the co-operation of all of the landowners, land agents and tenants along the route of the proposed bypass.

Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service
St Mary's Church Archaeology Centre
Bedford, MK42 OAS
☎: 01234 270002/6/9
Fax: 01234 359287
e-mail: bcas@dial.pipex.com

29th September 2000

Non-Technical Summary

Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service was commissioned by Thorburn Colquhoun, on behalf of the Highways Agency, to undertake trial trenching along the proposed route of the A6 Clapham Bypass. This is the second stage in the archaeological evaluation of the bypass route, following a non intrusive survey that comprised a desk-based assessment, surface artefact collection and geophysical survey. The trial trenching exercise sought to test areas identified in the first stage of evaluation as having potential for the survival of archaeological deposits and specifically to determine the character and extent of a possible Iron Age and Romano-British site centred on Oakley Road.

A total of twenty-one trenches were excavated along the line of the proposed bypass.

The location of an extensive Iron Age and Romano-British settlement over 1.5 hectares in extent has been confirmed to the north of the River in the area to the south of Oakley Road. Evidence for the recutting of boundary ditches and for the disposal of domestic refuse indicates settlement over a prolonged period. A single unurned cremation indicates ritual activity. No evidence for further settlement or ritual activity was discovered to the north of Oakley Road which suggests that the site does not extend beyond that boundary.

With the exception of a post-medieval trackway to the north of Oakley Road, no other archaeological features were identified along the proposed route.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Background

The Highways Agency plans to proceed with construction of the A6 Clapham Bypass, passing between Clapham and Oakley to the north-west of Bedford and rejoining the A6 to the south of Milton Ernest. This project was the subject of Public Inquiries in 1991 and 1994, the relevant Line and Side Roads Orders being made in 1992 and 1995.

It has been agreed that the Environmental Statement should be updated in line with Government Policy. The County Archaeological Officer (CAO) issued a *Brief for the Archaeological Field Evaluation of the Route of the A6 Clapham Bypass, Bedfordshire*. Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service was commissioned by Thorburn Colquhoun, acting on behalf of the Highways Agency to undertake an initial stage of field evaluation comprising a non-intrusive survey of the proposed route. A *Project Design For Archaeological Evaluation Stage 1: Non-Intrusive Survey* was prepared by BCAS. The results of the first stage of the evaluation were presented in BCAS document *A6 Clapham Bypass, Archaeological Field Evaluation. Stage 1: Non Intrusive Survey (BCAS 00-19)*.

Briefly, the Non-Intrusive Survey identified the site of an extensive Iron Age and Roman settlement in the vicinity of Oakley Road. Undated cropmark sites were identified close to the proposed route in the area of Judge's Spinney and in the fields between Highfield Road and Oakley Road. Iron Age and Romano-British settlements had previously been uncovered during gravel quarrying within the southern loop of the River. Antiquarian reports of a possible Romano-British cemetery around Cut Throat Lane were also noted.

1.2 Site Location and Description

The corridor for the proposed route is generally 50m wide although additional land will be taken for a roundabout at the southern end of the route and for access roads from Oakley Road and Highfield Road (Fig 1).

The proposed route crosses two distinct topographical areas. The southern section of the route traverses a loop in the River Ouse. This area is generally flat at around 34m OD. Between Cut Throat Lane and the river the area is mainly covered by rough scrub and there are numerous services, including electricity pylons. The underlying geology is gravel with outcrops of Cornbrash and Great Oolite Limestone, although extensive quarrying has occurred and much of the area within the loop of the river is now landfill which has been returned to pasture. Deep deposits of alluvium have previously been encountered closer to the river.

The northern section of the proposed route crosses arable fields rising from c.37m OD to 71m OD on the summit of Oakley Hill before falling again to nearer 40m OD to the south of Milton Ernest. The underlying geology is

predominantly Oxford Clay overlain by Boulder Clay. The proposed route will avoid Judge's Spinney on the south slope of Oakley Hill.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The archaeological background is included in the report on the Non-Intrusive Survey (BCAS 00-19) and is therefore not repeated here. Briefly, there are no known early prehistoric sites within the immediate vicinity of the proposed route. Flint implements ranging in date from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic periods (c.150,000bc – 1500bc) have been recovered from sites in Clapham and a cropmark ring ditch (HER16587) to the south may indicate the presence of a funerary monument of Neolithic or Bronze Age date. Two Iron Age sites, (HER 329 and HER 565) have been found within 250m of the proposed route where it crosses the southern loop of the river. A Belgic cremation burial (HER 9827) was found during gravel extraction to the north of Oakley Road. A Romano-British cremation cemetery (HER 5124) was reportedly found close to the southern end of the proposed route in the 19th century. Between Clapham and Oakley there are two sets of cropmarks (HER16560 and 16562), on or near the line of the proposed bypass, which have been interpreted as possible Iron Age enclosures. Extensive evidence of Iron Age and Roman settlement is known from Clapham less than 1km to the east but a possible Roman Road linking Clapham and Oakley (HER 10459) has been discounted by (Simco, 1984). There are no known sites of Saxon or medieval date within 250m of the proposed route.

2. TRIAL EXCAVATION

2.1 Introduction

The trial trench layout was based on the results of the Non-Intrusive Survey. A total of twenty-one trenches were excavated along the line of the proposed bypass between Judge's Spinney at the north and Cut Throat Lane to the south.

2.2 Method Statement

Throughout the project the standards set in the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation* have been adhered to. Also those standards outlined in the BCAS *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork and the Analysis of Fieldwork Records* (1996), the IFA Code of Conduct, English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991) and *Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedfordshire* (1993) were adhered to. The main points with regard to the trial excavation were carried out as follows:

- The location of all trenches was marked out on the ground in advance of machining, with the exception of the three trenches in the Cut Throat Lane area.
- All machine excavation was supervised by an archaeologist and was undertaken using a JCB fitted with a toothless bucket.
- Topsoil and modern overburden was removed by machine down to the top of archaeological deposits, or clean natural deposits, whichever was encountered first.
- Topsoil and subsoil were stockpiled separately beside the open trench. Backfilling took place in reverse order with deposits being compacted with the bucket of the JCB.
- Archaeological features/deposits were cleaned along at least one side of each trench.
- The spoil was scanned for artefacts. Artefacts recovered from spoil heaps, were assigned to the relevant context number for the trench.
- Recording took place on pro-forma sheets.
- All archaeological deposits were recorded using a unique recording number sequence commencing at 100.
- Each trench was issued a unique block of recording numbers in a continuous sequence. Therefore feature [105], a ditch, is located in Trench 1, context (607), a fill of a pit, is located in Trench 6, etc.
- A Home Office Licence was obtained prior to the removal of any human remains.
- Artefacts, including those recovered from spoil heaps, were assigned to the relevant context number for the trench.
- All trenches were inspected by the *CAO* prior to being backfilled.

2.3 Results of the Trial Excavation

The 21 trenches were numbered sequentially starting with 1 at the north end and finishing with 21 at the south end. The results of the trial excavation are described below, with the trenches grouped according to their location, starting with the northernmost group. Contextual information for each individual trench is tabulated in Appendix 2.

2.3.1 Area Adjacent to Judge's Spinney - Trenches 1 to 5.

These trenches were situated to the south of Highfield Road, close to the small wooded nature reserve called Judge's Spinney. Highfield Road follows the crest of an east-west ridge that lies at approximately 70m above O.D. at this point. Trenches 1, 2, and 4 were situated on the crest of the ridge whilst Trenches 3 and 5 lay on the south facing slope. The ridge consists of Oxford Clay overlain by Boulder Clay.

Topsoil consisted of mid grey silty clay containing fragments of chalk and small stones, mostly flint. It generally measured between 0.22m and 0.4m in depth, with the deepest soil found in Trenches 3 and 5.

The underlying geology consisted of Boulder Clay with lumps of chalk and nodules of flint. The underlying Oxford Clay was visible at the southern end of Trench 5. A patch of limestone found in Trench 4 appears to be the cause of a geophysical anomaly, interpreted as natural disturbance in the Non Intrusive Survey.

A single feature [205] was was located 9m from the western end of Trench 2 (Fig.3). It was irregular in plan with truncated sides and an uneven base. No finds were recovered from its silty clay fill (204). It seems likely that this feature was the result of natural disturbance and was not archaeological in origin.

2.3.2 Area North of the Oakley Road – trenches 6 to 11

These trenches were located below the slope of the clay ridge to the north. Although the ground appears level, it slopes imperceptibly towards the river to the south. The geological deposits consist of river gravels within the channel cut through the Oxford Clay by the River Great Ouse.

Trenches 6 and 7 were located approximately 450m to the north of the Oakley Road, just above the 40m OD contour.

The dark grey brown loam topsoil was between 260mm and 320mm deep with a moderate concentration of small stones. The underlying natural deposits consisted of mixed, patchy sands and gravels.

The remains of a trackway, aligned ENE-WSW were uncovered in Trench 7 (Fig.3 and Fig.5). The trackway consisted of a shallow hollow approximately 2m wide, extending below the level of the natural deposits. The surface of the track was initially metalled with a layer of small pebbles (711). Above the metalling was a layer of slightly brownish yellow clay (710), possibly trample

and silting within the hollow. The trackway evidently remained in use after the metalled surface had silted over because narrow drainage channels lined with large pebbles, [706] and [709], were cut through the clay layer (710) on either side of the track .

Trenches 8, 9, and 10 were located immediately to the north of Oakley Road in a large arable field. Dark grey brown sandy silt topsoil between 0.23m and 0.34m deep, directly overlay natural deposits of sand and gravel. No archaeological features were recorded

Trench 11 was located a short distance to the east in an area of former allotment gardens close to a disused gravel pit. Dark grey brown sandy silt topsoil directly overlay a thin subsoil (1102), comprising a layer of modified natural deposits at the interface between the gravel and the topsoil. The underlying natural deposits consisted of clean gravel with pockets of red-brown clay loam.

A sub square pit [1107] was partially uncovered at the northern end of the trench (not illustrated). Post-medieval pottery and clay pipe were recovered from its sandy silt infilling which indicates that it was a refuse deposit of post-medieval date.

2.3.3 Area South of the Oakley Road – Trenches 12 to 15 (Fig.4)

Four trenches were located in this area. Trench 12 lay on the 35m OD contour with the other trenches slightly lower as the ground slopes very gradually down towards the river.

The dark brown or grey brown sandy silt topsoil measured between 0.25m and 0.3m deep. The varied nature of the underlying natural deposits was probably a result of the proximity of the river. In Trench 12 to the north, the natural deposits comprised sandy gravel with patches of limestone and clay while in Trench 13 yellow brown silty sand deposits were uncovered. Limestone was encountered in Trench 14 and in the northern end of Trench 15. A slight terrace visible in the field, close to the northern end of Trench 15 may mark the limit of the limestone deposit. The majority of Trench 15 contained mid brown clay silt and gravel with a yellow brown silt matrix. Irregularly shaped depressions filled with dark silty material could have been natural hollows containing decayed organic material, possibly the result of marshy conditions close to the river.

Subsoil layers, derived from the underlying natural deposits, were recorded in all four of these trenches. In Trench 13, clearly defined archaeological features, particularly those containing charcoal, could be seen to cut the subsoil. Other, less well defined features, would have been difficult to locate without removing the subsoil layer. All features were cleaned and planned but with the agreement of the CAO only a sample of the exposed features was excavated.

2.3.3.1 Trench 12

This trench was located to test an area of weak geophysical anomalies. No archaeological features were recorded.

2.3.3.2 Trench 13

This trench was excavated to examine geophysical anomalies interpreted as possible field enclosure ditches and an associated trackway. Two of the features, ditches [1303] and [1309], correspond closely to the strong anomalies aligned NNE-SSW.

Ditch **[1315]** at the western end the trench was aligned NNE-SSW and may correspond to one of the weak geophysical anomalies. It was 1.1m wide with a rounded base 0.16m deep. Roman pottery was recovered from its single fill (1316).

Roman pottery was also recovered from the fill (1314) of a roughly circular pit [**1313**], c.0.12m in diameter with steep sides and a flattish base, 0.3m deep,

Two narrow ditches located to the east were not excavated. Ditch [**1318**] was c. 0.6m wide and orientated north-south. Ditch [**1311**] was c. 0.65m wide and orientated NNE-SSW. Roman pottery was recovered from the fill (1308) of a single, oval post hole [**1307**].

Ditch [**1309**] was c 2m wide and appears to correspond closely with a strong geophysical anomaly aligned NNE-SSW. Roman pottery was collected from the surface of this feature, which was probably a field boundary or an enclosure ditch.

Ditch **[1303]** was aligned NNE-SSW. It was 2.8m wide with sloping sides and a narrow concave base 0.6m deep (Fig 5). A step and change of angle on the western side suggest that the ditch was re-cut at least once, indicating an extended period of use. Roman pottery and animal bone were recovered from both the primary and secondary deposits (1317 and 1304, respectively). The larger quantities of charcoal, pottery and animal bone in the upper fill indicate that the ditch was used for the disposal of domestic refuse in its latter stages.

A possible pit [**1305**] proved to be a variation in the underlying natural deposits.

2.3.3.3 Trench 14

This trench was excavated to examine a possible double ditched rectilinear enclosure identified by the geophysical survey. The double enclosure ditch appears to have been masked by layer (1403). Following consultation with the CAO it was decided not to compromise the archaeology by excavating these features and the overlying layer "blind". Two ditches which roughly correspond to other geophysical anomalies [1406 and 1404] were uncovered in the northern half of the trench.

Layer [**1403**] occupied the southern half of the trench and consisted of a dark yellow brown clay loam containing frequent stones, including small angular

flint and fragments of limestone. Roman pottery was recovered from this layer which is almost certainly masking other archaeological features including the double ditched enclosure identified by the geophysical survey.

The southern ditch [**1406**] was 1.60m wide and orientated NE-SW. Ditch [**1404**] was 1.25m wide and orientated ENE-WSW. Roman pottery and animal bone were collected from the surface of the fills of these ditches, which were not excavated.

A narrow ditch [**1410**] c. 0.5m wide and orientated NNW-SSE appeared to intersect ditch [1404]. It was not possible to establish a relationship in the excavated segment, which was no more than 0.05m deep.

2.3.3.4 Trench 15

This trench was situated beyond the area of the detailed geophysical survey to try to determine the extent of the archaeological deposits. It was thought possible that the fall off in the number of magnetic responses in the south of the field could have been the result of alluvium masking archaeological deposits.

A cremation deposit (**1515**) consisting of calcined human bone was found within a small circular grave cut [1514] close to the northern end of the trench. The cremation was un-urned and there were no grave goods or other finds. Several possible features were examined but all proved to be geological in origin or modern disturbance.

2.3.4 Area South of the River Great Ouse – Trench 16

A single trench was excavated approximately 70m south of the River Great Ouse where it passes to the south side of Clapham. The trench was situated on level ground on river gravels, below the 35m OD contour. The contour marks a terrace that runs parallel to the river approximately 200m to the south.

Topsoil consisted of a mid grey brown sandy silt with a moderate concentration of small stones. A thin layer of sandy loam subsoil 0.1m deep occurred above the natural deposits which comprised gravel.

No archaeological features were found in the trench.

2.3.5 Area in the loop of the River Great Ouse – Trenches 17 and 18

Two trenches were excavated close together at the centre of a loop in the River Great Ouse, just north of Lower Farm Road. The trenches were on level ground, at approximately 35m OD. The underlying geology consists of river gravels. A hollow to the west of Trench 17 marks the southern extent of quarrying activity concentrated to the north of the trenches. No sign of quarrying disturbance or additional overburden was noted in the trenches. No archaeological features were identified in this area.

The mid grey brown sandy silt topsoil was between 0.25m and 0.28m deep. Mid yellow brown sandy silt subsoil no more than 0.15m deep overlay the natural deposits of silty sand and gravel.

2.3.6 Area adjacent to Cut Throat Lane - Trenches 19 to 21

Three trenches were excavated adjacent to Cut Throat Lane. The ground here is on a gentle slope down towards the River Great Ouse to the west, lying on a relatively narrow, c.250m wide, corridor of land between the river and an escarpment at the edge of the Oxford Clay to the east. The land at Cut Throat Lane was recently the site of a travellers caravan site. Some disturbance associated with the recent use was evident.

A single pit [**2103**] of recent post-medieval date was found in Trench 21. It was irregular in plan with a shallow concave base 0.15m deep. The fill contained a residual sherd of medieval pottery and late post-medieval debris including fragments of coal, animal bone, tile, and a piece from a Victorian shale or jet comb.

2.4 Artefact Assemblage

2.4.1 Introduction

Trial excavation produced an artefactual assemblage comprising mainly pottery and ceramic building material (Table 1). All artefacts 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.

Tr.*	Context	Feature	Type	Spotdate	Pottery	CBM	Other Finds
01	100	100	Topsoil	late medieval	1:5	4:57	
02	200	200	Topsoil	post-med/mod		2:69	
07	700	700	Topsoil	post-med/mod		1:79	
09	900	900	Topsoil	post-medieval	1:2		
10	1000	1000	Topsoil	post-med/mod		1:4	
11	1100	1100	Topsoil	post-medieval	3:15	1:15	
	1104	1103	?	post-medieval	1:12	1:3	Clay pipe (1g)
13	1300	1300	Topsoil	late/post-med		1:18	
	1301	1301	Subsoil	Roman	6:69		
	1304	1303	Ditch	Roman	28:243		Animal bone (23g)
	1308	1307	Posthole	Roman	4:8		
	1310	1309	Ditch	Roman	2:9		
	1314	1313	Pit	Roman	3:90		
	1316	1315	Ditch	Roman	8:136		
	1317	1303	Ditch	Roman	8:10		Animal bone (6g)
14	1403	1403	Layer	Roman	14:238		
	1405	1404	Ditch	Roman	1:6		
	1407	1406	Ditch	Roman	3:129		Animal bone (156g)
15	1515	1514	Cremation	-			Human bone (171g)
17	1700	1700	Topsoil	modern		1:58	
18	1800	1800	Topsoil	post-med/mod		1:23	
21	2104	2103	Pit	late/post-med	2:4	1:8	Animal bone (3g), jet/shale comb fragment (Victorian)
Total					**85:976**	**14:334**	

CBM – ceramic building material

* - No artefacts were recovered from trenches 2-6, 8, 12, 16, 19 or 20.

Table 1: Artefact assemblage by trench and context (sherd/frag count:weight in grammes)

2.4.2 Ceramics

Pottery

A total of 85 sherds, weighing 976g was recovered. These were examined by context and quantified using minimum sherd count and weight. Twenty fabric types were identified using common names and type codes in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, held by BCAS. Fabrics are listed below (Table 2) in approximate chronological order.

Pottery was recovered from Trenches 1, 9, 11, 13, 14 and 21, the majority (565g) deriving from Trench 13. Approximately 20% of all material derived

from topsoil. Sherds have an average weight of 12g, and are moderately abraded. Few vessels are represented by more than one sherd.

Fabric Type	Common name	Sherd no	Comments
Late Belgic Iron Age (c. 100BC-AD50)		**11**	
Type F05	Grog and shell	2	undiagnostic
Type F06B	Medium Grog	2	undiagnostic
Type F07	Shell	4	lid-seated jar
Type F09	Sand and Grog	3	lid-seated jar, sooted
Roman (c. AD50-350)		**65**	
Type R	Non-specific Roman	1	coarse sandy
Type R06B	Coarse greyware	7	undiagnostic
Type R06C	Fine greyware	11	triangular rim bowl, plain rim bowl with incised lattice decoration
Type R06E	Calcareous greyware	1	undiagnostic
Type R07B	Sandy blackware	2	undiagnostic
Type R13	Shelly	37	storage jar, lid-seated jar and everted rim jar, sooted
Type R01 *(C2-3)*	Samian ware(*c*)	4	undiagnostic bowl
Type R11C *(C3-4)*	Oxford Parchment ware (*r*)	1	undiagnostic
Type R22A *(C3-4)*	Hadham Oxidised ware (*r*)	1	flanged bowl
Medieval (1150-1500)		**2**	
Type B	Misc. shell tempered	2	Undiagnostic
Post-Medieval (1500-1750)		**4**	
Type P01	Glazed Red Earthenware	1	Undiagnostic
Type P11	Buff Earthenware	1	Undiagnostic
Type P33	Tin-glazed Ware	1	Undiagnostic
Type P48	English Stoneware	1	Undiagnostic
Modern (1750-onwards)		**1**	
Type P35	English Porcelain	1	Undiagnostic
Unknown		**2**	
UNID	Unidentified ware	2	coarse oxidised sandy

NB. Bracketed italics denote vessels of regional (*r*) and continental (*c*) origin.
See **Appendix 1** for details of pottery type by context

Table 2: Pottery Type Series

The pottery dates predominantly to the Roman period (79% of total assemblage), with smaller quantities of late Belgic Iron Age (13%) and post-Roman material (8%). The fabric types represented are comparable with those recovered from field artefact collection (BCAS 2000/19). Diagnostic Iron Age and Roman forms are indicative of a domestic assemblage, comprising tablewares, cooking pots and storage jars.

Late Iron Age

Locally produced late Belgic Iron Age vessels in grog tempered fabrics (types F05, F06 and F09) are most numerous. Shell tempered vessels in fabric F07 are likely to derive from one of a number of kiln sites known in the vicinity, such as Bromham and Stagsden (BCAS in prep).

Roman
Although the assemblage spans the entire Roman period, the majority is more closely dated to the earlier part of this period. Coarsewares are represented by local reduced wares (types R06 and R07). Diagnostic shell tempered forms (storage, lid-seated and everted rim jars) are comparable to vessels produced at the Lodge Farm kilns in Harrold (Brown 1994), and constitute 57% of the Roman assemblage. Regional imports are represented by single sherds of third-fourth century vessels from Oxfordshire (type R11C) and Hertfordshire (type R22A) and those of continental origin by samian ware (type R01) of early Roman date.

Ceramic Building Material
A total of fourteen brick and tile fragments, weighing 334g was recovered. All are unstratified, and comprise sand tempered flat roof tiles and brick fragments of post medieval/modern date.

2.5 *Ecofactual Evidence*

2.5.1 Animal Bone

Twenty-three fragments of animal bone, weighing 187g were recovered, the majority (156g) occurring in ditch [1406], trench 14. The bone survives in fair condition, with some surface erosion. Diagnostic material comprises long bone fragments of unknown species.

2.5.2 Human Bone

Burnt/calcined bone fragments (171g) representing the truncated remains of an unurned cremation were recovered from Trench 15. Bone pieces range between 35.0mm-5.0mm in size. Identifiable elements comprise long bone and skull fragments.

3. SYNTHESIS OF THE RESULTS

3.1 Summary of Site Location

The trial excavation largely confirmed the results of the non-intrusive survey. The route of the proposed bypass does not appear to intersect extensive archaeological deposits except in the vicinity of Oakley Road.

No evidence for settlement or other activity was discovered on Oakley Hill or the south facing slope below it. The post-medieval trackway uncovered to the south was clearly sufficiently long-lived for it to be maintained with the addition of drainage ditches. However, it was evidently not sufficiently important to be metalled in its later life, which suggests it may have been little more than a farm track.

The location of an extensive Iron Age and Romano-British settlement over 1.5 hectares in extent has been confirmed to the north of the River in the area to the south of Oakley Road. Evidence for the recutting of boundary ditches and for the disposal of domestic refuse in the top of partially silted ditches indicates settlement over a prolonged period. The unurned cremation from the south east of this site indicates ritual activity. This need not be a cemetery however, as isolated burials are not unusual on sites of this period. No evidence for further settlement or ritual activity was discovered to the north of Oakley Road which suggests that the site does not extend beyond that boundary.

No surviving archaeological deposits were uncovered within the southern loop of the river. It seems clear, therefore, that any sites on the line of the proposed bypass will have been quarried away.

Similarly, the Romano-British cemetery reportedly discovered close to the southern end of the route, was not identified in any of the trenches adjacent to Cut Throat Lane.

3.2 Assessment of the significance of the Oakley Road site

The extensive Iron Age and Romano-British settlement to the south of Oakley Road was unknown prior to the non-intrusive survey of the proposed route of the bypass (BCAS2000/19). Fieldwalking, geophysical survey and trial trenching indicate the presence of archaeological deposits extending over an area of at least 1.5 ha.

Unusually, the quantities of Iron Age and Roman pottery collected from the surface of the field, although sufficient to suggest the presence of a site, were small for such an extensive site of this period. This may be a reflection of the state of preservation of the archaeological deposits. Usually, where concentrations of surface artefacts are high in numbers, this is a result of deep truncation of archaeological features by ploughing.

The geophysical survey appeared to confirm this with strong linear anomalies providing the outline of double ditched enclosures with discrete anomalies suggesting the presence of internal features.

Trial trenching confirmed the presence of the majority of the enclosure ditches identified by the geophysical survey. Although the double ditched enclosure appeared

to be masked by a later layer it seems safe to assume that the geophysical survey results were accurate. The archaeological deposits were generally sealed beneath a topsoil layer up to 0.4m deep. Few discrete features were uncovered but the posthole [1313] in Trench 13 provides evidence of structures while the domestic debris from the top of ditch [1303] provides clear evidence for occupation from the same area.

It seems likely therefore that the site at Oakley Road represents an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement. Similar rural farmsteads occupying the gravel terrace have been excavated within the Biddenham Loop to the south (BCAS 98/8) and at Ursula Taylor School in Clapham itself. However, rural Romano-British farmsteads continue to be under represented in the archaeological record for this part of the county.

3.3 Impact of the proposed bypass on the Oakley Road site

The impact on the previously undetected site to the south of Oakley Road is likely to be considerable. At least half of the identified site coincides with a stretch of the route which will be at or near existing ground level. Trial trenching has confirmed that *in situ* archaeological remains survive from the base of the ploughsoil, less than 0.4m below the present ground level. The ploughsoil itself in this area should also be considered part of the archaeological resource, as it will contain considerable quantities of material brought up by the plough from the underlying archaeological deposits.

4. REFERENCES

BCAS, 1997, *Procedures Manual Vol. 1 Fieldwork*

BCAS, 1998, *Biddenham Loop; Post fieldwork Project Design* (Report No. 98/8)

BCAS, 2000, *A6 Clapham Bypass Archaeological Field Evaluation, Stage 1: Non-intrusive survey*. Document 2000/19.

BCAS, 2000, *A6 Clapham Bypass Archaeological Field Evaluation, Stage 2: Trial Excavation Project Design*. Document: 2000/37.

Brown, A., 1994, 'A Romano-British shell-gritted pottery and tile manufacturing site at Harrold' *Beds. Archaeology*, 21.

Simco, A, 1984, *Survey of Bedfordshire*; The Roman Period.

5. APPENDIX 1: POTTERY TYPE BY CONTEXT

Spot Date	Fabric	Common name	Context	Sherd No.	Wgt
Late Belgic Iron Age	F05	Grog and shell	1317	2	6
Late Belgic Iron Age	F06B	Medium Grog	1317	2	2
Late Belgic Iron Age	F07	Shell	1301	2	8
Late Belgic Iron Age	F07	Shell	1403	2	4
Late Belgic Iron Age	F09	Sand and Grog	1317	1	1
Late Belgic Iron Age	F09	Sand and Grog	1304	2	21
Roman	R	Non-specific Roman	1304	1	3
Roman	R06B	Coarse greyware	1304	2	25
Roman	R06B	Coarse greyware	1308	4	8
Roman	R06B	Coarse greyware	1310	1	4
Roman	R06C	Fine greyware	1403	1	6
Roman	R06C	Fine greyware	1407	1	41
Roman	R06C	Fine greyware	1301	2	6
Roman	R06C	Fine greyware	1310	1	5
Roman	R06C	Fine greyware	1304	6	34
Roman	R06E	Calcareous greyware	1314	1	3
Roman	R07B	Sandy blackware	1407	1	7
Roman	R07B	Sandy blackware	1314	1	6
Roman	R13	Shelly	1304	16	158
Roman	R13	Shelly	1407	1	81
Roman	R13	Shelly	1316	8	136
Roman	R13	Shelly	1403	9	172
Roman	R13	Shelly	1403	1	38
Roman	R13	Shelly	1301	2	55
Roman 2nd/3rd century	R01	Samian (source unknown)	1403	1	22
Roman 2nd/3rd century	R01	Samian (source unknown)	1317	3	1
Roman 3rd/4th century	R11C	Oxford Parchment ware	1304	1	2
Roman 3rd/4th century	R22A	Hadham Oxidised ware	1314	1	81
Post-Medieval (1500-1750)	P01	Glazed Red Earthenware	900	1	2
Post-Medieval (1500-1750)	P11	Buff Earthenware	1104	1	12
Post-Medieval (1500-1750)	P33	Tin-glazed Ware	1100	1	2
Post-Medieval (1500-1750)	P48	English Stoneware	1100	1	10
Modern (1750-onwards)	P35	English Porcelain	1100	1	3
Unknown	UNID	Unidentified ware	100	1	5
Unknown	UNID	Unidentified ware	1403	1	2
Unknown	UNID	Unidentified ware	2104	12	4

6. APPENDIX 2 TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0183054097 **Ref. 2:** TL0188054098

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Topsoil	Firm mid grey silty clay moderate flecks chalk, moderate small stones, occasional medium stones.	☐	☑
201	Subsoil	Dark brown clay moderate small-medium stones.	☐	☐
202	Natural strata	Firm light red brown clay moderate small-large chalk, occasional medium-large stones. Boulder Clay	☐	☐
203	Natural strata	Firm light grey clay moderate small-large chalk, moderate small-medium stones. Boulder Clay	☐	☐
205	**Pit**	**Sub-circular base, uneven dimensions: max depth 0.16m, max diameter 0.66m. Possible archaeological feature, undated.**	☐	☐
204	Fill	Dark brown silty clay occasional flecks stones.	☐	☐

Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0175054049 **Ref. 2:** TL0175153999

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
300	Topsoil	Firm mid grey silty clay moderate flecks chalk, occasional medium chalk, moderate small stones, occasional medium stones.	☐	☐
301	Natural strata	Firm light yellow brown clay moderate small-medium chalk, occasional medium stones. Boulder Clay	☐	☐

Trench: 4

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0165054094 **Ref. 2:** TL0170054094

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
400	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy clay .	☐	☐
401	Natural strata	Light brown clay moderate small stones.	☐	☐
402	Natural strata	Light grey clay moderate small-medium chalk. Boulder Clay	☐	☐
403	Natural strata	Light grey brown clay frequent medium-large stones. Localised band of broken, degraded sandstone fragments.	☐	☐
405	**Modern Intrusion**	**. Modern intrusion, possibly an engineering test pit.**	☐	☐
404	Fill	. Clean sand backfill.	☐	☐

Trench: 5

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0164153983 **Ref. 2:** TL0163953933

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
500	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay .	☐	☐
501	Subsoil	Mid red brown clay moderate small stones.	☐	☐
502	Natural strata	Mid grey clay moderate small-medium chalk. Boulder Clay	☐	☐
503	Natural strata	Dark grey clay . Oxford Clay.	☐	☐

Trench: 6

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0192553358 **Ref. 2:** TL0197453349

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
600	Topsoil	Loose dark blue brown loam moderate small stones.	☐	☐
601	Natural strata	. Mixed red brown sandy loam and patches of gravel.	☐	☐

Trench: 7

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0199553311 **Ref. 2:** TL0198853161

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
700	Topsoil	Loose dark grey brown loam moderate flecks stones.	☐	☑
701	Natural strata	. Mixed red brown sandy loam and patches of gravel.	☐	☐
706	**Culvert**	**Linear NW-SE profile: stepped base: flat . Drain at side of track.**	☐	☐
702	Fill	Mid yellow brown clay silt . Final silting of drain.	☐	☐
703	Fill	Mid yellow brown clay silt . silting of drain.	☐	☐
704	Fill	Mid yellow brown clay silt . Silting of drain.	☐	☐
705	Fill	Frequent large stones. Pebble lining of drain.	☐	☐
709	**Culvert**	**Linear NW-SE profile: concave base: concave . Drain at side of track.**	☐	☐
707	Fill	Dark brown silty silt . with orange / brown sand. Fill of drain.	☐	☐
708	Fill	Frequent medium stones. Pebble lining of drain.	☐	☐
710	External surface	Mid brown yellow clay . Tackway build-up.	☐	☐
711	External surface	. Small stones and large cobbles forming surface of trackway.	☐	☐

Trench: 8

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 25.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0207153032 **Ref. 2:** TL0209753035

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
800	Topsoil	Dark grey brown sandy silt moderate small stones.	☐	☐
801	Natural strata	Mid red brown silty sand moderate small stones. with patches of gravel.	☐	☐

Trench: 9

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 25.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0210153009 **Ref. 2:** TL0212653007

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
900	Topsoil	Dark grey brown sandy silt moderate small stones.	☐	☑
901	Natural strata	Mid red brown silty sand frequent small stones. with patches of gravel.	☐	☐

Trench: 10

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0204552947 **Ref. 2:** TL0209552947

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1000	Topsoil	Dark grey brown sandy silt moderate small stones.	☐	☑
1001	Natural strata	Mid red brown sandy sand moderate small stones. with patches of gravel.	☐	☐

Trench: 11

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0214852935 **Ref. 2:** TL0219852935

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1100	Topsoil	Dark grey brown sandy silt moderate small stones.	☐	☑
1101	Natural strata	Mid yellow brown sandy silt moderate small stones.	☐	☐
1102	Natural strata	Gravel . with patches of red brown clay loam.	☐	☐
1103	**Pit**	**Sub-square profile: near vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.64m, max depth 0.24m.**	☐	☐
1104	Fill	Dark grey brown sandy silt moderate small stones, moderate flecks charcoal. Possible refuse deposit.	☐	☑

Trench: 12

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0217052876 **Ref. 2:** TL0217052825

Reason for trench: Investigate geophysical anomalies found during Stage I.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1200	Topsoil	Firm mid grey silty clay moderate small-medium stones.	☐	☐
1201	Natural strata	Firm mid red yellow clay occasional flecks stones. with patches of gravel.	☐	☐

Trench: 13

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.4 m. **Max:** 0.5 m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0215852756 **Ref. 2:** TL0220752765

Reason for trench: Investigate geophysical anomalies found during Stage I.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1300	Topsoil	Dark grey brown sandy silt moderate small stones.	☐	☑
1301	Natural strata	Light yellow brown sandy silt frequent small stones.	☐	☑
1302	Natural strata	Light yellow brown silty sand frequent small stones, moderate medium stones, moderate large stones.	☐	☐
1303	**Ditch**	**Linear NNE-SSW profile: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: max depth 0.6m, max length 2.8m.**	☐	☐
1304	Fill	Mid grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones, moderate flecks charcoal.	☐	☑
1317	Fill	Firm dark brown sandy silt moderate small-medium stones. lower fill of ditch.	☐	☑
1305	**Natural strata**	**Irregular . Variation in the natural investigated as a possible feature.**	☐	☐
1306	Fill	Hard mid brown silty sand occasional small stones. Natural pocket of fine grained sand.	☐	☐
1307	**Posthole**	**Oval NE-SW profile: near vertical base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.37m, max diameter 0.2m, max length 0.47m.**	☐	☐
1308	Fill	Firm dark grey sandy silt moderate small manganese staining.	☐	☑
1309	**Ditch**	**Linear N-S dimensions: max breadth 2.m.**	☐	☐
1310	Fill	Firm dark brown sandy loam occasional small-medium manganese staining.	☐	☑
1311	**Ditch**	**Linear NNE-SSW dimensions: max breadth 0.65m.**	☐	☐
1312	Fill	Firm dark brown sandy silt moderate small-medium stones.	☐	☐
1313	**Pit**	**Sub-circular profile: near vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 1.2m, max depth 0.3m.**	☐	☐
1314	Fill	Firm mid brown sandy silt occasional small stones.	☐	☑
1315	**Ditch**	**Linear NNE-SSW base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.1m, max depth 0.16m.**	☐	☐
1316	Fill	Firm dark grey sandy loam moderate small stones, moderate flecks charcoal. Upper fill of ditch.	☐	☑
1318	**Ditch**	**Linear N-S dimensions: max breadth 0.6m.**	☐	☐
1319	Fill	Firm dark brown sandy silt moderate small stones.	☐	☐

Trench: 14

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology** **Min:** 0.3 m. **Max:** 0.5 m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0218252686 **Ref. 2:** TL0219952638

Reason for trench: Investigate geophysical anomalies found during Stage I.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1400	Topsoil	Dark green brown sandy silt moderate small stones.	☐	☐
1401	Subsoil	Mid yellow brown clay loam moderate small stones. including limestone fragments.	☐	☐
1402	Natural strata	. fragments of limestone in a matrix of degraded stone.	☐	☐
1403	Subsoil	Dark yellow brown clay frequent small-medium stones, occasional large stones. layer containing some occupation debris.	☐	☑
1404	**Ditch**	**Linear ENE-WSW dimensions: max breadth 1.25m.**	☐	☐
1405	Fill	Mid red brown sandy silt frequent small stones. with patch of dark grey sandy silt.	☐	☑
1406	**Ditch**	**Linear NE-SW dimensions: max breadth 1.6m.**	☐	☐
1407	Fill	Dark brown loam moderate small stones, occasional flecks charcoal.	☐	☑
1408	**Land drain**	**Linear NW-SE profile: vertical .**	☐	☐
1409	Land drain	. Drain fill of large limestone fragments.	☐	☐
1410	**Ditch**	**Linear NNW-SSE base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.5m, max depth 0.05m.**	☐	☐
1411	Fill	Mid yellow brown clay loam moderate small stones.	☐	☐

Trench: 15

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.4 m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0225052641 **Ref. 2:** TL0225052591

Reason for trench: Determine extent of site.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1500	Topsoil	Loose dark brown silt occastonal small-medium stones.	☐	☐
1501	Natural strata	Mid yellow brown silt occasional small stones.	☐	☐
1502	Natural strata	. Insitu limestone deposit, slabs in horizontal layers.	☐	☐
1503	Natural strata	Mid brown clay silt occasional small stones.	☐	☐
1504	Natural strata	. Mixed deposit consisting of (1503) and (1505) in patches.	☐	☐
1505	Natural strata	Light yellow brown silty gravel .	☐	☐
1506	Natural strata	Loose mid brown silt .	☐	☐
1507	Natural strata	Loose mid brown silt occasional small stones.	☐	☐
1508	Natural strata	Loose mid brown silt occasional small stones.	☐	☐
1510	**Land drain**	**Linear NNW-SSE profile: vertical .**	☐	☐
1509	Land drain	. Drain fill of large limestone fragments.	☐	☐
1512	**Land drain**	**Linear E-W profile: vertical .**	☐	☐
1511	Land drain	. Drain fill of large limestone fragments.	☐	☐
1514	**Grave**	**Sub-circular profile: vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.35m. Cut for cremation 1515.**	☐	☐
1513	Fill	Mid brown sand occasional small stones. Fill above cremation deposit.	☐	☐
1515	Cremation deposit	. Calcined human bone from unurned cremation.	☐	☑

Trench: 16

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 38.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0233552402 **Ref. 2:** TL0237352406

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1600	Topsoil	Mid grey brown sandy silt moderate small stones.	☐	☐
1601	Natural strata	Mid yellow brown sandy loam moderate small stones.	☐	☐
1602	Natural strata	. 50/50 mix of fine flint / limestone gravel with a mid yellow brown sandy silt.	☐	☐

Trench: 17

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0273051913 **Ref. 2:** TL0273251863

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1700	Topsoil	Mid grey brown sandy silt moderate small stones.	☐	☑
1701	Natural strata	Mid yellow brown sandy silt occasional small stones.	☐	☐
1702	Natural strata	Mid yellow brown silty sand occasional small stones.	☐	☐

Trench: 18

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 50.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0273651826 **Ref. 2:** TL0278651828

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1800	Topsoil	Mid green brown sandy silt moderate small stones.	☐	☑
1801	Natural strata	Mid yellow brown sandy silt moderate small-medium stones.	☐	☐
1802	Natural strata	. Miix of fine gravel with a mid yellow brown silty sand.	☐	☐
1803	Natural strata	. Limestone deposit, slabs in horizontal layers, with occasional patches of mid red brown silty clay.	☐	☐

Trench: 19

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 33.00 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0355951197 **Ref. 2:** TL0358551176

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1900	Topsoil	Dark grey loam occasional small stones.	☐	☐
1901	External surface	. Limestone hardcore, hardstanding for recent caravan site.	☐	☐
1902	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay occasional small stones, occasional flecks ceramic building material.	☐	☐
1903	Natural strata	. Mixed patchy deposit of mid grey clay, mid red brown sand and light grey sand and fine gravel.	☐	☐

Trench: 20

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 22.50 m. **Width:** 1.50 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** m. **Max:** m.

OS Co-ordinates: **Ref. 1:** TL0361651177 **Ref. 2:** TL0360751157

Reason for trench: General coverage of area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
2000	Topsoil	Dark green brown loam occasional small stones.	☐	☐
2001	Natural strata	. Mixed patchy deposit of mid grey clay, mid red brown sand and light grey sand and fine gravel.	☐	☐
2002	Natural strata	Dark grey clay . Dark grey clay. Oxford Clay.	☐	☐

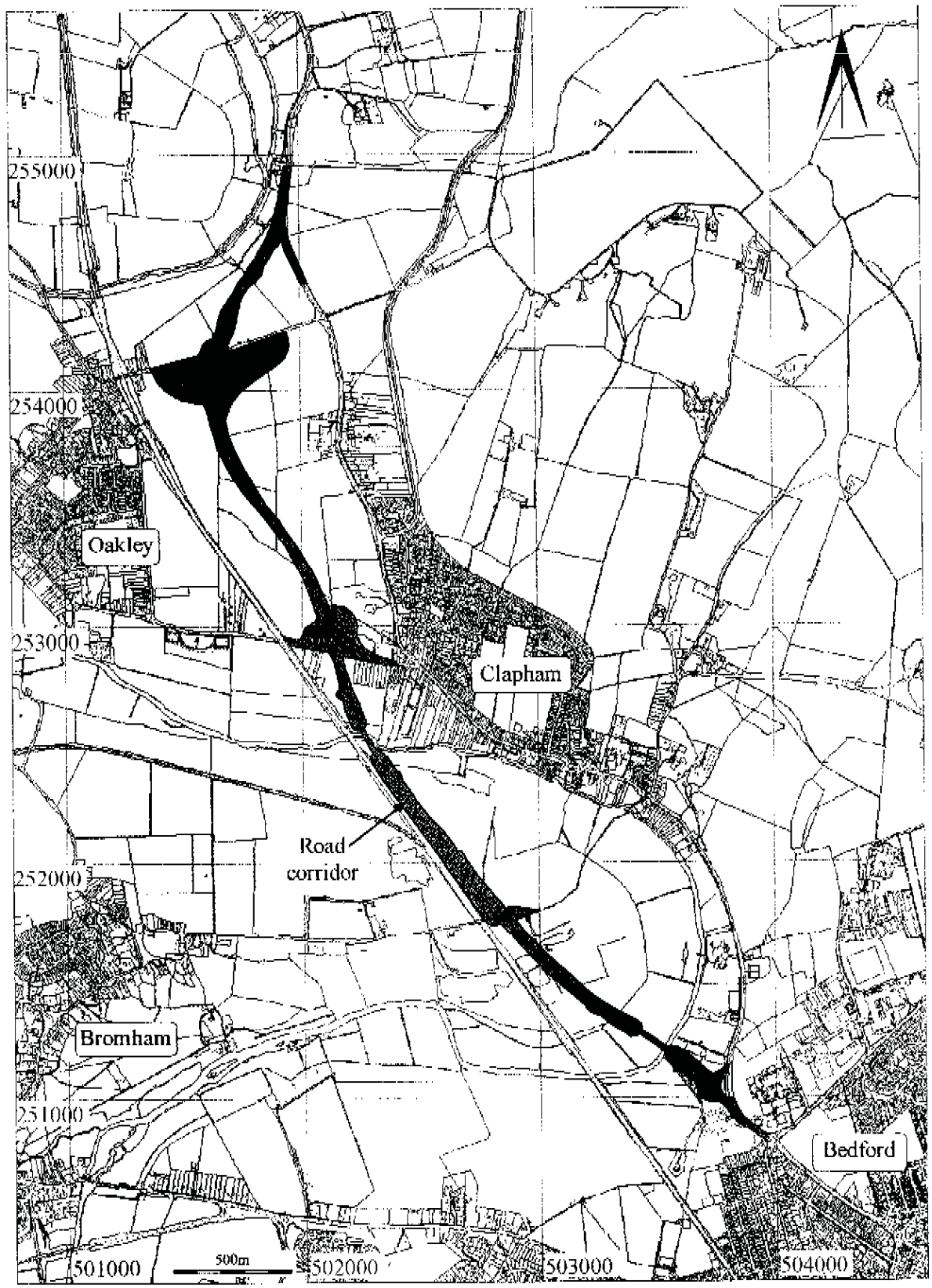


Fig. 1: Site location.

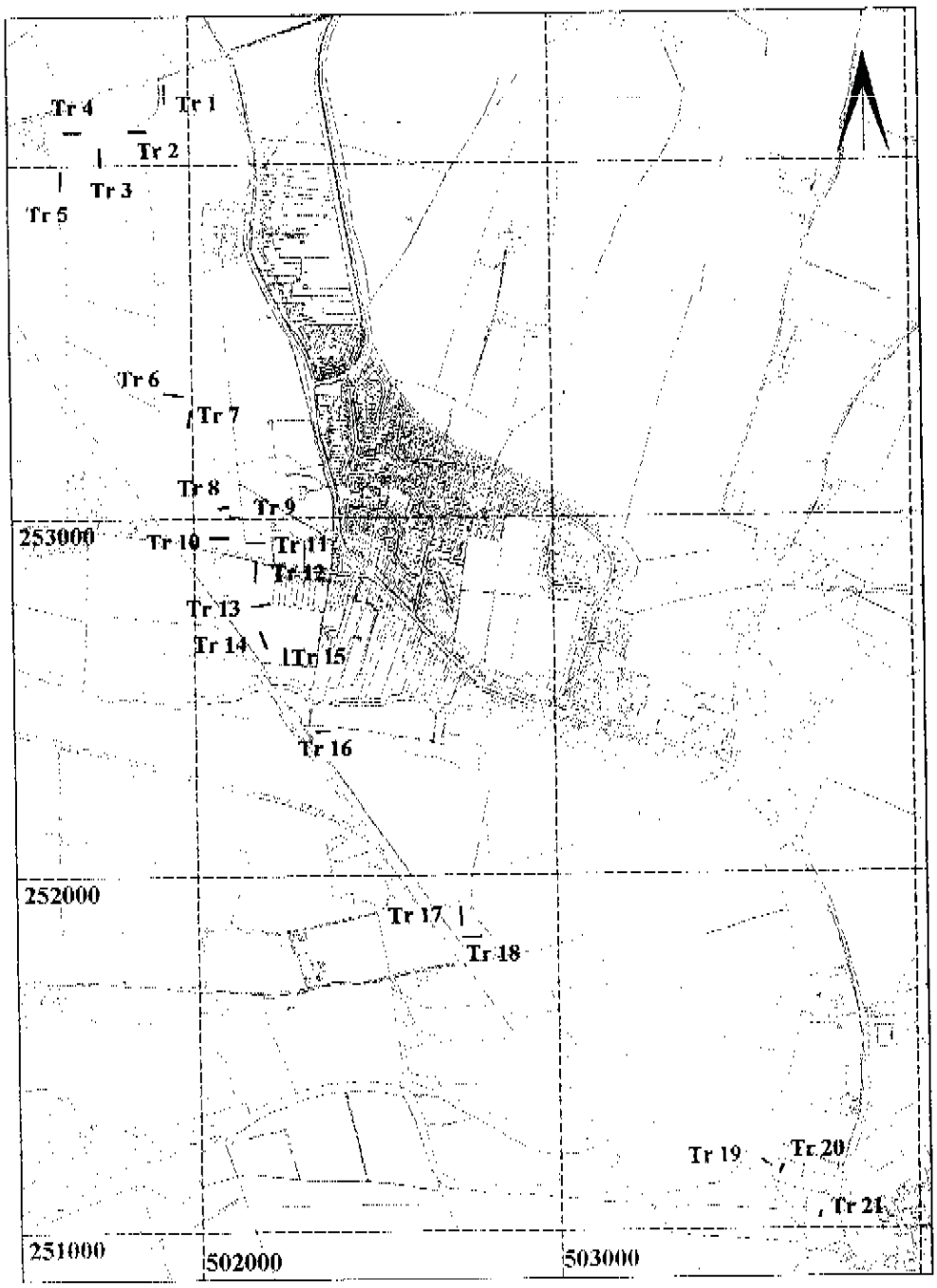
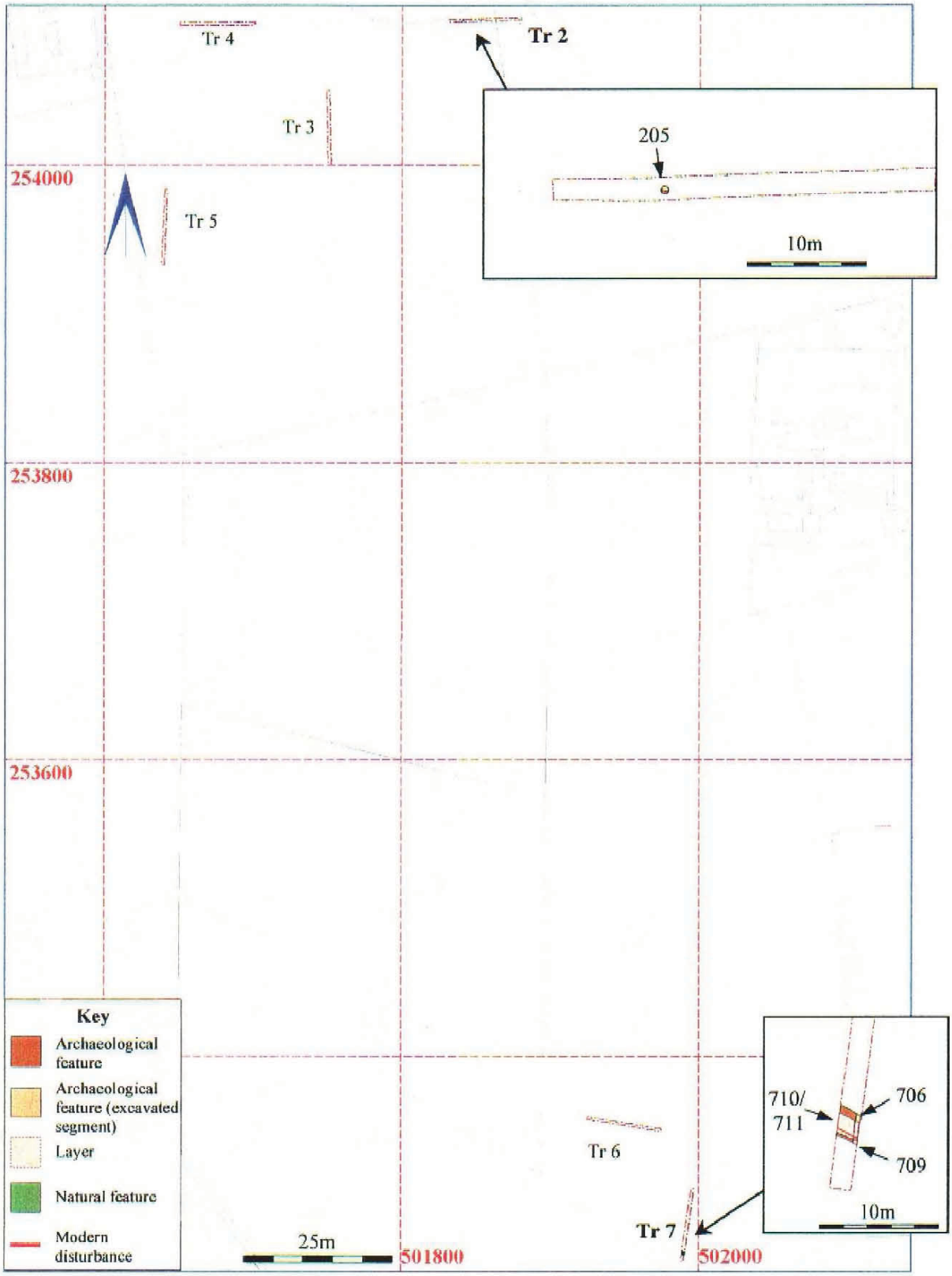


Fig. 2: Location of trial trenches.



ORIGINAL IN COLOUR

Fig. 3: Trenches 2 and 7, showing archaeological features.

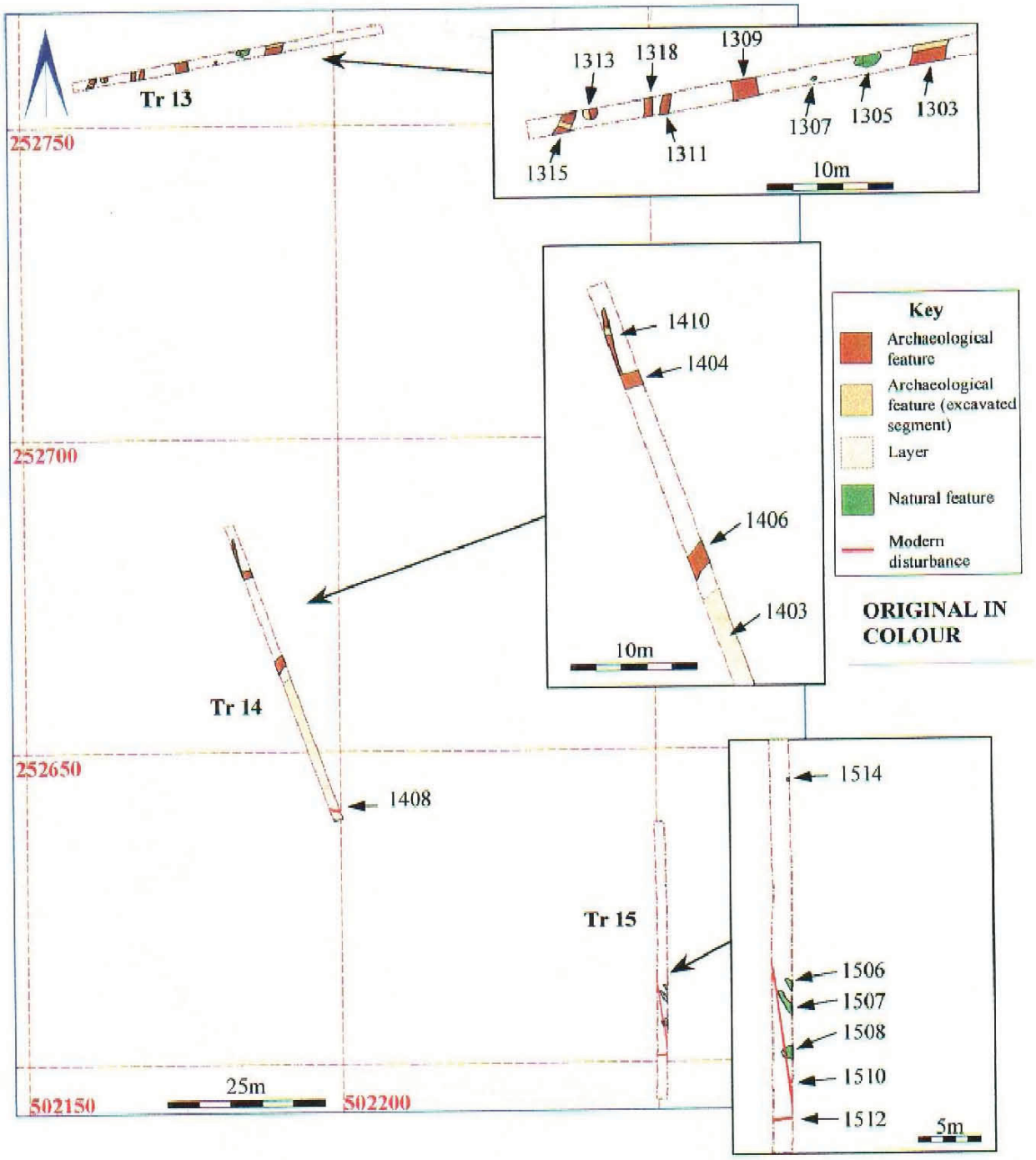


Fig. 4: Trenches 13, 14, and 15, showing archaeological features.

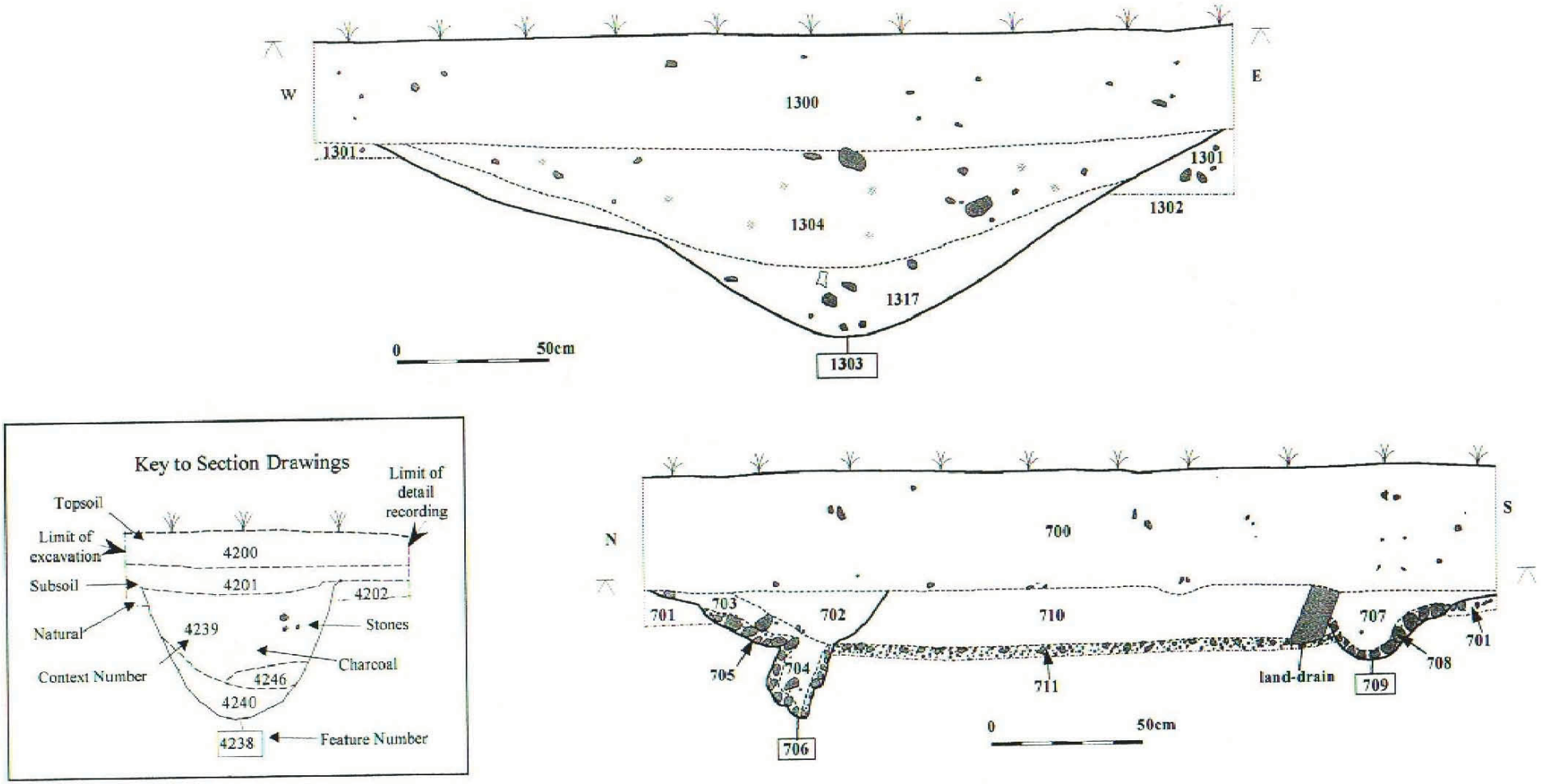


Fig. 5: Sections through ditch [1303], and track [706],[709], (710), (711).

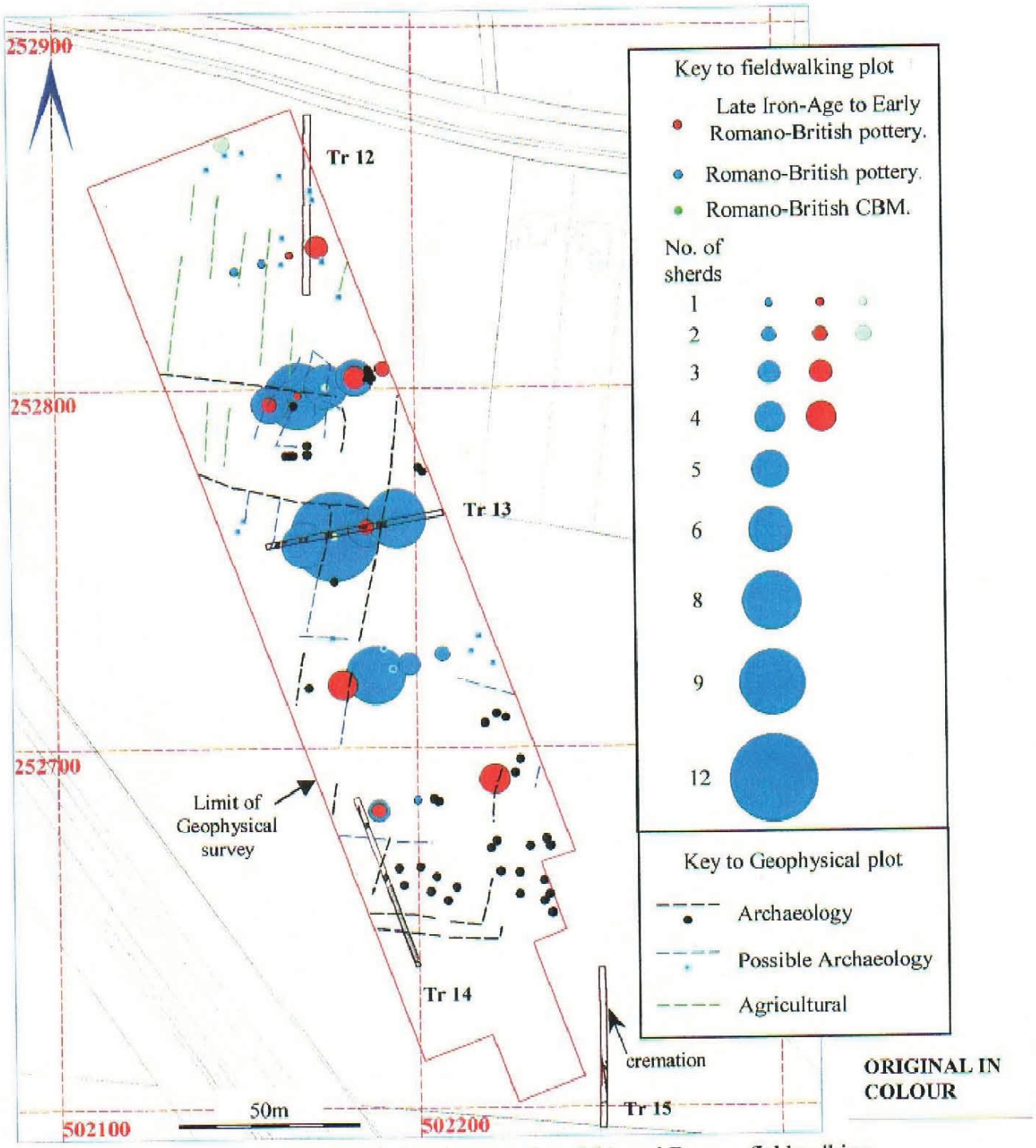


Fig. 6: Field south of Oakley Road showing trenches, LIA and Roman fieldwalking finds plot, and Geophysical anomolies identified as likely archaeology.