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**Assessment of an Archaeological Excavation at the School Playing
Fields, Dagenham Heathway, London Borough of Barking and
Dagenham**

Site Code: DMH 03

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 4905 8610

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, May 2005**

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the working methods and results of an archaeological evaluation and excavation on the school playing fields on Dagenham Heathway, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (DMH 03). These were conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology between 3rd and 9th April 2003 and 9th February and 20th March 2004 respectively in advance of the redevelopment of the site for residential accommodation by Bellway Homes (Essex). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting and supervised by Fiona Keith-Lucas with the project management of David Divers.
- 1.2 The site was centred on National Grid Reference TQ 4905 8610. It had seen little recent disturbance save for isolated bomb damage in WWII. The fifteen trench evaluation revealed Bronze Age and later cut features, necessitating a full archaeological excavation.
- 1.3 A roughly triangular area, c. 6000m², was machined to the level of the Hackney gravels. Natural features thought to have formed through periglacial processes covered the site. Also, a fairly dense cover of tree throws suggested prehistoric woodland clearance.
- 1.4 There was evidence of Neolithic activity in the area, but it was not until the Late Bronze Age that the site was permanently occupied. The near entirety of a defended enclosure and settlement was revealed, showing two broad phases. It was initially delineated by shallow gullies with a formalised entrance to the northwest and a series of linear features to the southeast marking a further boundary zone or entrance. Posthole arrangements show the settlement to have comprised roundhouses and four-post structures. Subsequently, a large defensive enclosure ditch was dug around the settlement, again with a formal approach from southeast and northwest entrances.
- 1.5 A period of Saxon activity was recognised, taking the form of a field system and a few pits. Roman material was often found residually in these contexts
- 1.6 This report outlines the results of the excavation and assesses their importance. Recommendations for further analysis are also made, along with proposals for the publication of the results.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation and excavation were undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd on the school playing fields, Dagenham Heathway, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (Figure 1), in advance of proposed residential development. The evaluation, conducted between 3rd and 9th April 2003, revealed archaeological deposits and necessitated the excavation of the area, conducted between 9th February and 20th March 2004. The work was commissioned by CgMs consulting on behalf of Bellway Homes (Essex).
- 2.2 The site, centred on National Grid Reference TQ 4905 8610, was bounded by The Heathway to the west, residential housing to the north and east, and by the Heathlands Day Centre to the south. At the time of the evaluation, the site stood as an open, disused playing field.
- 2.3 The site does not lie within an area of archaeological significance as defined by the Borough's Unitary Development Plan (UDP). However, due to the large area of the development, Nick Truckle of GLAAS recommended that proper provision be made for the archaeological implications of any proposed development to the site. As such, an archaeological evaluation with possible subsequent excavation was a condition attached to the granting of planning permission.
- 2.4 Both the evaluation and the excavation were carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd under the supervision of Fiona Keith-Lucas and the project management of David Divers. Nick Truckle monitored the site for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.
- 2.5 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records and artefactual material from the evaluation and excavation will be deposited with the Museum of London under the site code DMH 03.

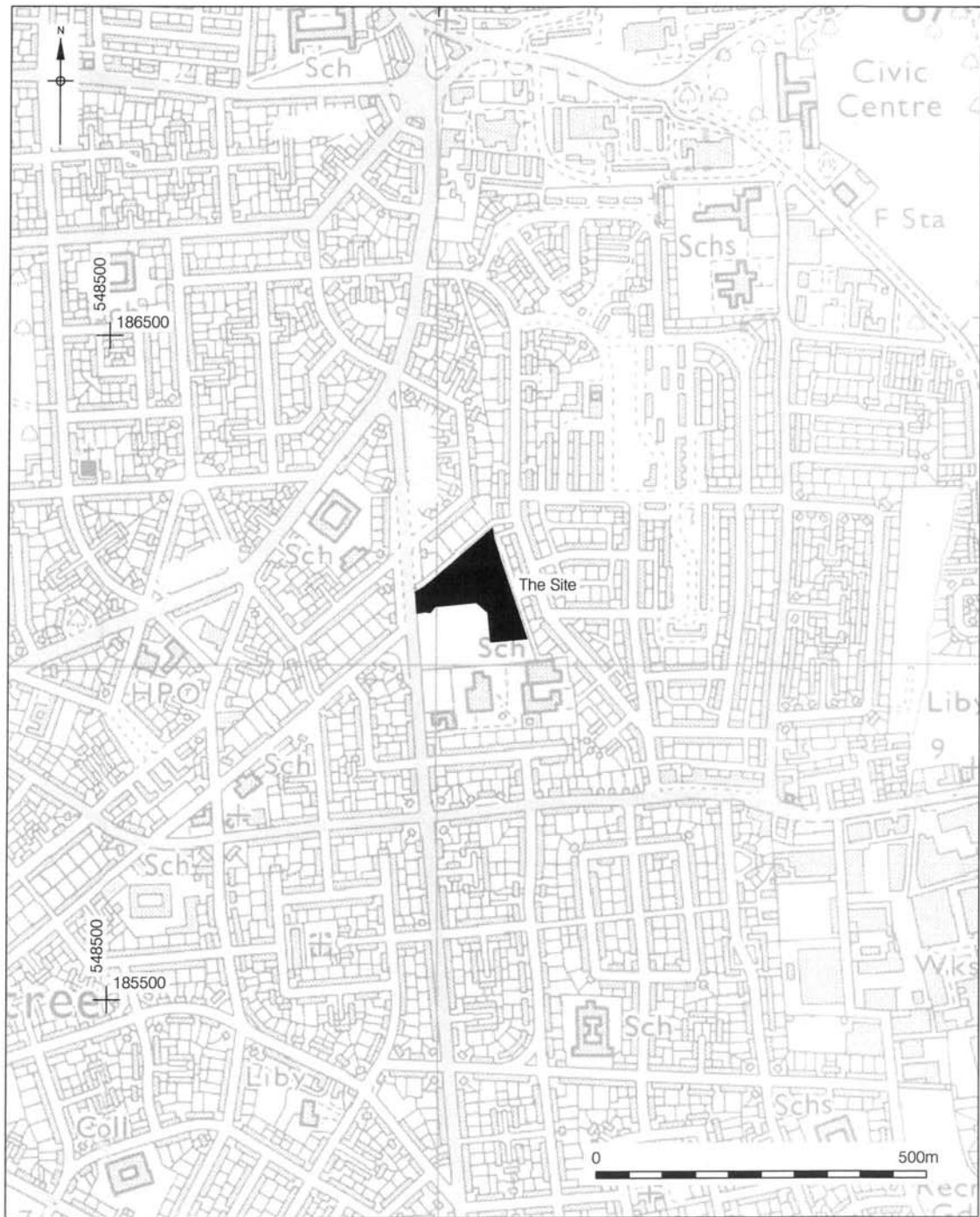


Figure 1
Site Location
1:10,000



Figure 2
 Location of Evaluation Trenches
 and Excavation Trench
 1:1000

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM

- 3.1.1 The study aims to satisfy the objectives of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Council, which fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken to cover a building regulation submission in order to redevelop the site for housing.
- 3.1.2 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority is bound by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPG16, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.
- 3.1.3 The relevant Development Plan framework is provided by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in October 1995. The plan contains the following policy, which provides a framework for the consideration of development proposals affecting archaeological and heritage features.

POLICY DE36

When any development is proposed on sites of archaeological significance or for any sites identified by English Heritage the council will seek to ensure that an early evaluation is carried out, and that the preservation in situ is given first consideration. However, if preservation in situ is not possible and the nature of the remains does not warrant a planning refusal, the council will require that adequate time, funding and resources are provided to enable archaeological investigation by an acceptable agent to take place during the process of development.

POLICY DE37

The council will seek to ensure that the most important archaeological remains and their setting are preserved in situ (if possible for public access and display) and that where appropriate they are given statutory protection.

POLICY DE38

The council will promote cooperation between landowners, developers and archaeological organisations in accordance with the British Archaeologists and

Developers Liaison Group Code of Practice and the Confederation of British Industry Code of Practice on archaeological investigations.

POLICY DE39

The council will notify English Heritage of planning applications found to correlate with sites as shown on the archaeological constraints map, as early as possible.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey Map 1:50,000 series (sheet 257) shows the underlying geology to be of Hackney Terrace gravels. On excavation, the natural was found to vary slightly, being more gravel-rich to the southeast and predominantly of coarse sand to the northwest of the site. Thin patches of brickearth capping were encountered, particularly on the higher ground and to the north of the site. Features thought to have been formed through periglacial process were also in evidence.
- 4.2 The site lies on land rising from the River Thames, approximately 5km to the south. The surrounding area is relatively level, although the site does occupy the highest point within it, with ground level at 16.15mOD. The surface of the natural was highest central to the excavated area at 15.69mOD, sloping down to 15.37mOD to the northwest, and 14.62mOD to the south.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The site is located on the gravel terraces that bank the course of the Thames. As such, it will have been prime land for agriculture and settlement from the prehistoric to the post medieval periods.
- 5.2 At the same time as the excavations at Dagenham Heathway, Pre-Construct Archaeology conducted a site (DBG 04, Haslam, 2004) some 2km to the South that revealed three prehistoric (probably Bronze Age) ditches. Further south still, on the lower-lying peats, excavations in 1993 (DAHS 93, Meddens, 1996) revealed a Bronze Age metalled causeway. These represent the more proximate examples of a growing corpus of Bronze Age sites along the Thames estuary (see Yates, 2001). These sites cluster in certain areas, one of which is the confluence of the River Ingrebourne with the Thames at Hornchurch. Within this concentration, and approximately 4km to the south east of the Dagenham Heathway site, stood a Late Bronze Age ringwork with associated field systems and droveway, comparable to the enclosure and complex at Mucking, Essex. The prehistoric exploitation of the gravel terrace is by no means restricted to the Bronze Age, as exemplified by excavations at Uphall Camp in Ilford (Greenwood, 2001), c.5km west of the Heathway site, which demonstrated a remarkable sequence from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age.
- 5.3 The excavation was situated approximately mid-way between the Thames and the A12; the Roman Road from London to Colchester. A Roman cremation cemetery has been identified at Manser St, South Hornchurch.
- 5.4 The A12 was also used during the Saxon period, forming part of the network connecting *Lundenwic* to centres such as Barking Abbey and Ipswich. Nearby Barking Abbey was one of the richest and oldest abbeys in England, founded in AD 666, and had a wide reaching sphere of influence. The place name Dagenham is of Saxon origin but there is no recorded Saxon archaeology in the vicinity.
- 5.5 As far as map regressions and archives infer, the site remained as open pasture to the South of Epping Forest through the medieval to post medieval period.
- 5.6 The school playing fields are known to have stood as open ground within living memory and post medieval map regressions. The field boundaries of Mr. Charles Clarke's arable land shown on the 1844 Tithe Map may be in evidence on the site. Also features such as postholes for goalposts can be expected, but of nominal importance and impact. Local oral history has it that a VI missile fell in the field during World War II.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The evaluation strategy was designed to sample a representative portion of the area threatened by severe impact from redevelopment. Fifteen evaluation trenches, 20m in length and 1.80m wide, were arranged across site. These were opened under archaeological supervision using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Undifferentiated topsoil was removed in successive spits until significant archaeological deposits or natural gravel was reached.
- 6.2 Having found archaeological features at the evaluation (recorded as described in 6.4) the site was taken to excavation¹, for which a roughly triangular area, c. 6000m² was opened using 360° mechanical excavators as described above. The proposed trench outline was extended into an agreed contingency area to expose as much of an emerging ditched enclosure as possible.
- 6.3 A temporary benchmark (16.47mOD) was transferred from a spot height on Marston Avenue, value 16.20mOD. The site was cleaned and all features were planned at a scale of 1:20 off a 5m grid. All contexts were assigned sequential numbers, shown in this report within square brackets. The excavation of pits and postholes was targeted towards those that could provide dating evidence or confirm suspected structural arrangements. All excavated contexts were recorded onto *pro-forma* context record sheets, whereas those that remained unexcavated were assigned one of seven generic fill types observed on site. Slots were excavated through linear features to provide a 10% sample, and all ditch termini were excavated. A general photographic survey of the site and working conditions was also undertaken.
- 6.4 Bulk environmental samples were taken from those features that appeared to contain significant quantities of charcoal or that were considered to be worthy of further analysis. Column samples were also taken through the fills of a massive Late Bronze Age pit and the enclosure ditch.
- 6.5 A site matrix will be incorporated into the archive and is available from Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.

¹ Divers, 2004

7 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Phase 1: Geology

7.1.1 The underlying geology of the site was of Hackney Gravels, part of the sequence of sand and gravel sediments deposited by the Thames during the Pleistocene. The natural varied slightly, being more gravel-rich to the southeast and predominantly of coarse sand to the northwest of the site. Thin patches of brickearth capping were encountered, predominantly to the northeast and in the center of the site where the natural was highest, at 15.69m OD. The ground was fairly level but it did slope down gently to the edges of the excavated area. To the South it was seen at 15.14m OD but beyond the excavated trench the evaluation showed the level of the natural to drop to 14.62m OD, indicating a modest plateau central to the excavated area.

7.2 Phase 2: Early Holocene; Naturally formed features & woodland clearance (Figure 4)

7.2.1 It can be seen from Figure 4 that the site was covered with a plethora of naturally formed features. Some may have been formed through periglacial processes. A pattern akin to a ring ditch was seen on the surface, as illustrated by context [1539] to the northwest of Figure 4. Towards the southeast of the site, feature [292] initially looked similar, although more anthropogenic. On excavation, however, the mid brown sandy silt that formed a quite uniform ring-shape transpired to be the top fill of a 5m diameter pit-like feature with near vertical sides cutting to a depth of c.1.50m and otherwise filled with re-deposited natural. All those features thought to have been formed through periglacial processes are listed in Table 1, which also includes shallow features thought to result from localized undulations filled with natural material.

7.2.2 A large number of tree throws and areas of prehistoric root disturbance covered the site, as shown in Figure 4. These indicate fairly large-scale woodland clearance likely to date from the Neolithic period. A small number of the more proficiently struck flints dated from the late Mesolithic to Neolithic but were nearly all residual. Particularly noteworthy was the unusual Neolithic symmetrical hollow based arrowhead that was recovered from a Phase 4 (Late Bronze Age) enclosure ditch. The only pre-Middle Bronze Age pottery, a piece of Late Neolithic Grooved Ware, was unfortunately also residual. There was, however, one tree throw that did contain *in situ* dating evidence, in the northeast of the trench, [1043] contained a Mesolithic to Early Neolithic thinning flake. This, and the residual Neolithic material found elsewhere support the suggestion that there was a phase of woodland clearance during this period.

126	486	630	719	902	1083	1231	1281	1461	1633
292	494	632	721	908	1085	1233	1283	1463	1639
328	518	642	724	945	1103	1241	1287	1499	1730
332	526	646	771	950	1117	1243	1289	1529	1804

384	560	660	778	954	1131	1251	1291	1539	1901
404	562	662	780	1012	1135	1253	1295	1564	1903
433	586	665	810	1022	1141	1257	1303	1592	1907
435	606	667	831	1026	1143	1263	1373	1594	1909
452	622	671	868	1028	1219	1265	1449	1596	1911
476	626	673	883	1057	1225	1271	1451	1600	2019
484	628	679	900	1063	1227	1273	1457	1608	2023

Table 1: Natural undulations and periglacial features

5	271	728	835	1018	1165	1345	1483	1552	1617
16	446	730	846	1020	1169	1349	1515	1558	1621
18	454	732	916	1030	1203	1351	1519	1562	1734
87	492	736	920	1036	1247	1353	1521	1568	1800
103	588	752	922	1043	1249	1357	1525	1574	1802
150	598	754	926	1045	1259	1387	1527	1580	1856
175	602	762	947	1047	1307	1389	1535	1598	1899
204	640	769	994	1051	1331	1391	1541	1604	1905
216	644	796	1014	1075	1337	1453	1545	1610	1913
218	658	806	1016	1123	1339	1481	1550	1612	

Table 2: Tree throws and root disturbance – Woodland clearance.

7.3 Phase 3: Late Bronze Age settlement (Figure 5)

7.3.1 The main phase of activity on the site on Dagenham Heathway was characterised by Late Bronze Age settlement. Initially, this appears not to have been very well defended. Two perpendicular ditches [894] (= [877] & [906]) and [1139] marked the northern and western limits of the settlement. These ditches were 0.80m wide and c.0.40m deep on average, so apparently not very substantial but perhaps eroded, but it may be that the boundaries were reinforced by a fence-line or other timber stake structure [2029] externally to the ditches². This was seen to the northeast of the excavation where a patch of natural brickearth still remained (possibly indicating less horizontal truncation). The ditch fills contained residual struck flint but were datable from an assemblage of Late Bronze Age pottery, including good examples of lugged handles for suspension of a pot during cooking, from [894]. Ditch [1139] also included the corner of a ceramic block, further examples of which were found elsewhere on site and are discussed below.

7.3.2 Linear features [1501] and [1359] (with its terminus [1415]) may well have continued the line of the enclosure ditches to form a west facing entrance, although their fills were sterile and cuts shallower and less convincing than the enclosure ditches. If these are to be considered as an extension of the entrance, they must represent the earliest form of this approach as they are truncated by other patterns of formalisation.

² The stakeholes given structure number [2029] are as follows; [1173], [1175], [1177], [1179], [1181], [1183], [1185], [1187], [1189], [1191], [1193], [1195], [1197], [1199] and [1201].

- 7.3.3 A very large pit [1862] (= [1864]) was found centred before the northwest entrance to the settlement. It was 5m in diameter and 1.80m deep, filled with various tipped deposits including [1992] a coarse reddish sandy fill that contained Late Bronze Age pottery. Towards the base of the pit were the *in situ* hollow remains of a burnt timber [1963]. This seems to have been the tip of a substantial timber stake that had been burnt, possibly to harden it for driving into the ground. At this depth and without a discernible cut, it was most likely erected as the pit was partially filled, marking the entrance.
- 7.3.4 An oval feature [1473] was cut directly between the enclosure ditches marking the centre of an open entrance. It was 2.5m long and silted with a fine-clay rich sediment. Two probable postholes [1570] and [1572] are likely to have been associated with this feature, none of which were found to contain any cultural material. Together these features would have limited access into the enclosure. This access was controlled by the introduction of linear [1315], situated about the same central axis. This 15.2m feature (which truncated [1473]) was seen to neatly block the gap between the enclosure ditch termini and was striking in its uniformity. Its sides cut at 45° to a depth of 0.70m and it was filled with pale silty deposits slumped in from the southeast. Late Bronze Age pottery, fired clay, burnt flint and another ceramic block fragment were retrieved from the fills, specifically [1637].
- 7.3.5 Short linear features [1055], [1279] and [1343] were found externally to the enclosure and respecting the line of the ditches and linear [1315]. Such cigar-shaped features are not uncommon on Bronze Age sites and may be related to a small system of ditches and banks, and / or the formal approach to the settlement. [1055] and [1279] were particularly uniform, being 3.0m and 3.7m long respectively, c.0.60m wide, c.0.35m deep, and equally spaced either side of linear [1315]. An arrangement of postholes and stakeholes comprising [1309], [1311], [1313], [1319], [1459], [1465], [1467], [1469] and [1471] appeared to continue the line of the southerly cigar feature [1279]. It is unclear whether they give controlled access through or block this approach. A sequence to the reworking of this entrance can therefore be seen but it was not considered that any benefit would be achieved through the separate phasing of these few features, especially as they remain stratigraphically isolated from the rest of the settlement.
- 7.3.6 No equivalent ditches or entrance were evident to the southeast of the settlement, although such an arrangement may have been beyond the limits of excavation. Towards the southeast, however, were a series of parallel cigar-shaped features that appeared to mark a boundary zone. This formation (Group 16) included linears [466], [546] (= [30]), [612], [618] (= [62] & [64]) and [2025] that effectively formed a triangle, broadening to the west. Linear [546] was 5.65m long, and to the west, features [466] and [612] may well have been one continuous feature measuring 9.55m in length, c.1.25m in width and c.0.30m deep. These features were all filled with a mid brown sand-rich fill. Datable finds were only retrieved from [618] in the form of Late Bronze Age pottery and four block fragments, as

found in the enclosure ditches. It is thought that posthole [1121] and pit [1115] may have also formed a part of Group 16. It is only their position that suggests this, and neither produced datable material.

- 7.3.7 Two cigar-shaped features [406] and [1854] appear to continue the line of [618] and [612] from Group 16. [406] measured 3.20m in length, 1.20m in width and was 0.30m deep, while [1854] was 2.75m long, 0.85m wide and 0.28m deep. Of the two, only [1854] produced datable material, in the form of LBA pottery. It is thought that pit [410] may also be a part of this alignment. It was 1.50m by 0.95m and 0.30m deep and producing no cultural material. It is possible that these marked a boundary within the enclosure.
- 7.3.8 Also possibly associated with Group 16 were two substantial pits [512] and [552]. Both were almost perfectly circular in plan with a diameter of 2.25m and regular concave cuts that were 0.90m and 0.87m deep respectively. Neither pit produced datable material from their mid brown sandy silt fills. The environmental sample from [511] (the top fill of [512]) contained no cultural material although burnt flint was recovered during the excavation. Just to the north of these, 5.90m long gully [604] was found to be very shallow at only 0.10m maximum depth. No cultural material was recovered from this feature but it may be associated with, or even define the northern limit of, the arrangement of features in the vicinity that appear to form a boundary.
- 7.3.9 Towards the centre of Group 16 was a pit [616] that contained a remarkable concentration of loomweights. The pit was only 0.90 x 0.75m and 0.35m deep but it held 5.7kg of typically Middle-Late Bronze Age cylindrical loomweights, thought to be the remains of 7 more or less complete examples. Burnt flint was also recovered from the fill [615] along with pottery that was dated LBA/EIA.
- 7.3.10 Of four pits or postholes from Phase 3 that are noteworthy for their concentrations of unusual ceramic objects, it so happens that [615] and two others were aligned directly between the northwest entrance and the linear features of Group 16. Posthole [1692] was also in this alignment and contained ceramic block fragments, just not in the same high quantity. Context [462] was a posthole with a wide lip that measured 1.20 x 0.70m and was 0.37m deep. It contained eight fragments from blocks and slabs with one almost complete block. Burnt flint and LBA pottery were also found in its fill [461], and the concentration of charcoal in the sample was enough to suggest that the fill contained dumped fuel debris or was hearth waste. Also in the alignment was posthole [1688], c.0.50m in diameter and 0.23m deep. The upper of its two fills, [1686], contained the fragments of at least four ceramic blocks. It may or may not be coincidence that each of these features was next to and seemed paired with a fairly substantial posthole to its southwest. These associated postholes were [464], [924] and [1695], none of which produced datable material although [464] was recorded as containing a high proportion of degraded fired clay.

- 7.3.11 It is possible that a further row of post pits and postholes may align from the northwest entrance to Group 16. Starting from the southern approach to the entrance, the line follows the truncated pit [1401], then [1301], [1748], [1297], [2009], [620], [582], [576] and [738]. Posthole [1748] was the only feature apart from [616] to contain a cylindrical loomweight fragment, but unfortunately it was the only piece of cultural material retrieved from these features.
- 7.3.12 A more complete posthole alignment, Group 10, was seen towards the south of the site running east-west. Table 3 lists those contexts thought to be a part of this double posthole alignment. Between the two lines of postholes, feature [1726] (=408) was of interest. This was a 0.30m by 0.40m cut, only 0.10m deep, that contained the intentionally placed pot [1724]. The pit had been horizontally truncated by ploughing and only the base of the pot remained, but it was found to date to the Mid-Late Bronze Age. Additional pottery fragments from the pit fill [1725] were dated as LBA. It has been observed elsewhere on site (and on other sites including the nearby LBA enclosure at South Hornchurch) that intentionally placed pots are found at intersecting boundaries. This is most likely where a later boundary is constructed across a pre-existing one and a structured deposit is set in respect of it. As [1724] was placed in line with Group 10 and also with [406], [410] and [1854], it supports the suggestion that the latter features mark an internal boundary.

183	265	340	1715
185	269	342	1719
187	273	354	1721
189	330	1703	1726
227	336	1705	2003

Table 3: The postholes of Group 10; a double posthole alignment.

- 7.3.13 In the centre of the north part of the excavated area, Group 3 clearly showed the position of a 6.7m wide roundhouse with an east facing entrance marked by postholes [1812] and [1814]. These, and the eleven postholes that constituted the rest of the structure are listed in Table 4. These averaged around 0.30m in diameter and were c.0.20-0.30m deep, filled with a greyish brown sandy deposit. Posthole [1818] was similar in character and was thought to have been an internal, although not central part of the structure. No datable material was recovered from the fills of the postholes, but two internal pits contained a wealth of finds.

802	898	1814	1891
804	942	1816	2001
808	1787	1818	
812	1812	1889	

Table 4: The postholes of Group 3; a Late Bronze Age roundhouse.

The earlier of the two pits was [1728]; a sub-circular pit 1.60 x 1.30m and 0.63m deep. It held two fills, [1751] and [1727], both of which contained a number of ceramic block fragments, with Late Bronze Age pottery and burnt flint also recovered. Truncating this pit was [944], a roughly circular pit c.1.0m across and 0.38m deep. Its three fills, [943], [1692] and [1699] were of interest. The primary fill of this pit [1699] contained charcoal flecking but was otherwise similar to the natural brickearth found on site. It appeared to form a lining for the pit and may have given some stability to the sides which cut through coarse loose sand. The secondary fill was dark and charcoal rich and contained M-LBA pottery. The top fill, [943], contained nearly 3kg of ceramic block fragments representing two different sizes of block. The environmental sample provided occasional charred bedstraw seeds (*Galium* sp.) with reasonable preservation. LBA pottery was also found, with burnt and struck flint. A simple interpretation of fire pits is plausible but the brickearthy pit lining was not burnt and the concentration of ceramic blocks here may have other specific implications.

- 7.3.14 An arrangement of postholes, Group 12, were seen to the north of the roundhouse (Group 3). Postholes [800], [814], [1071], [1073], [1806], [1822] and [1981] formed an arc, 13.7m wide, which appears to have formed a semi-circular enclosure around the house. No datable material was found from any of these features.
- 7.3.15 To the northeast of the roundhouse and semi-circular enclosure (Groups 3 and 12) was evidence for two four-post structures. Group 14 comprised postholes [823], [1877], [1893] and [1895], which were all c.0.30m in diameter but varied in depth from 0.15 to 0.31m. These formed a square 1.8m across. All four postholes were found to contain Late Bronze Age pottery. Three postholes forming a right-angle postholes [938], [940] and [1808] are likely to have been a part of a four-post structure. The supposed position of the fourth post was truncated by ditch [556] from Phase 5. Two further groups of postholes may indicate the locations of four-post structures. Three postholes [596], [600] and [1945] located to the north of gully [604] lie at right-angles to one-another at a 2m spacing, although evidently the fourth posthole was not in evidence during the excavation. Similarly, postholes [378], [382] and [1966] to the north of the east-west aligned Group 10 would fit the pattern and typical dimensions of a four-poster if it were not for a missing corner.
- 7.3.16 In the southwest of the enclosure there are a number of postholes that are thought to have formed another roundhouse. Group 2 includes postholes [1129], [1217], [1219], [1229], [1970], [1972] and [1975], which together form the majority of what would have been a ten-post structure, 6.0m across. Context [1125] is thought to show the location of a central post, while posthole [1742] is in a similar position to the internal post seen in Group 3. There is no evidence for an entrance to this roundhouse, but several other postholes,

[1127], [1213], [1215], [1983], [1985], [1133], [1987] and [1989], seem as though they may be related in some way.

7.3.17 Two further concentrations of postholes suggest that a structure should be recognisable, although as yet no pattern has been recognised. To the west of the linear features of Group 16 a number of postholes seem paired together, a phenomenon not really seen elsewhere on site. Also, to the far southeast of the excavated area there was a cluster of postholes isolated from the rest of the features from this phase. Unfortunately neither group forms a comprehensible structural arrangement. One may find all number of patterns amongst the pits and postholes of this phase, but beyond those arrangements mentioned above, they are considered too tenuous for serious discussion. There were a large number of pits and postholes most of which contained no dating evidence, these are tabulated below.

24	263	614	934	1119	1335	1465	1773
47	283	675	936	1125	1361	1467	1781
49	287	681	978	1139	1377	1501	1796
68	294	722	980	1153	1401	1723	1798
70	316	742	992	1155	1407	1724	1881
72	320	760	1004	1205	1417	1726	1963
74	472	776	1034	1209	1427	1753	1964
78	530	858	1038	1223	1429	1757	1999
163	564	870	1055	1285	1431	1759	2009
248	592	872	1061	1297	1455	1771	2028

Table 5: Phase 3 features other than postholes not mentioned in the text.

51	208	312	424	542	774	854	962	1099	1399	1756	1875
66	210	334	426	574	782	856	964	1105	1459	1761	1879
89	212	344	430	582	788	860	970	1107	1509	1763	1922
106	223	362	440	590	790	866	972	1111	1511	1769	1924
118	225	364	444	594	792	876	974	1113	1554	1775	1951
120	231	366	458	636	794	888	982	1207	1556	1777	1953
122	235	368	474	638	798	890	986	1211	1695	1789	1955
124	237	370	488	650	814	892	988	1293	1707	1791	1957
138	239	372	496	691	816	896	1024	1301	1709	1806	1959
140	243	374	498	738	818	912	1032	1371	1711	1824	1968
142	277	376	516	748	827	914	1067	1375	1713	1826	1991
144	289	386	520	750	833	928	1069	1379	1732	1848	1997
146	300	392	524	756	840	930	1071	1381	1736	1852	2015
148	302	402	528	758	842	932	1073	1383	1738	1858	2017
152	304	412	532	764	848	942	1077	1385	1740	1866	2021
200	308	414	536	766	850	956	1079	1393	1742	1871	
206	310	416	540	768	852	960	1081	1397	1748	1873	

Table 6: Phase 3 postholes not mentioned in the text.

7.4 Phase 4: Late Bronze Age defensive enclosure (Figure 7)

7.4.1 Phase 4 saw the introduction of a substantial defensive ditch around the enclosure, contrasting with Phase 3 where the emphasis seemed to be more on the controlled passage into and through the settlement than on defence. The ditch restricted the settlement to within a sub-square enclosure 75m across, centred on the higher land. The entrance from the northwest was significantly narrowed although the point of access remained the same from Phase 3. The full extent of the enclosure to the southeast was seen for the first time, showing a monumental posthole alignment marking an entrance from the east. An isolated patch of natural brickearth to the north of the trench preserved a number of stakeholes [2042]³ that may indicate a fence-line or other structure marking the edge of the perimeter ditch.

7.4.2 Slots were excavated through the enclosure ditch in 18 locations, shown on Figure 7. An extract from the matrix has been included (Table 7) to show the fills of these slots concisely and to allow them to be compared.

³ This was a structure number given to stakeholes [1433], [1435], [1437], [1439], [1441], [1443] and [1445].

- 7.4.3 The ditch (recorded as [157], [348], [1137] and [1305] during the excavation) was relatively uniform, with sides cutting at c.40° to form a 'V' profile with a concave base. On average it was found to be c.0.90m deep and between 2.25m to 3.00m wide. The only significant variations to the ditch cut were seen in Slots 5, 17 and 18 where it was up to 1.3m deep and over 3m wide.
- 7.4.4 Generally the sequence of fills was of redeposited sand and gravel sealed by natural silting and finally the dumped backfilling of the ditch. The north facing Section 20, Slot 18, shown in Figure 8, showed further fills that indicated a period of stabilisation marked by [1668], a turf line between the initial silting and the backfill. Slot 15 also recorded additional stratigraphy but in the form [1641], a charcoal-rich dumped fill between the silting and backfill. This was seen in other slots towards the bottom of the backfilled material, but was very thin and recorded as a lens where seen. The other section in Figure 8 is considered to show a typical profile of the ditch and illustrate the way in which the fills tended to slump from the interior of the ditch, suggesting that there was a bank internal to the ditch.
- 7.4.5 Datable material was recovered from most fills, but ditch [1305] was also machine excavated for finds retrieval at the end of the excavation (backfill [1960] and silting [1962]). Undecorated coarse ware jars typical of the Late Bronze Age predominated the pottery assemblage from the ditch. Forms with fingertip decoration were also found along with examples of a fine ware bowl, jars and cups, discussed in Appendix 3. Vessel fragments typical of the mid to late 2nd millennium BC were found throughout the fills, however the overall assemblage was suggestive of a date in the early 1st millennium BC, possibly 10th-9th century. At this stage, it would appear that the ditch was initially dug at the turn of the 1st millennium BC, and that the final backfilling took place possibly into the Early Iron Age.
- 7.4.6 In addition to the large pottery assemblage, several interesting finds were recovered from the ditch fills, including a residual Neolithic arrow head discussed by B. Bishop below. The primary fill excavated in Slot 5 contained a large iron conglomerate, clearly of interest if it is slag rather than a naturally formed material. The secondary fill of Slot 3 produced a quern rubber, not often identified on site. Further fragments of the ceramic brick-like blocks were found throughout the ditch fills, and a fragmentary but complete perforated slab from the backfill [1640] of Slot 15 was also recovered, in close association to a spindlewhorl.
- 7.4.7 Externally to the enclosure, posthole [324] appears to mark one side of the East facing entrance. It was 0.70 x 0.56m in plan and 0.36m deep, with near vertical sides and a flat base. Unfortunately any equivalent posthole to the north side would have been truncated by the Phase 6 Post medieval ditch [109]. Passage through the entrance was then guided by a monumental avenue of posts, as seen by postholes [394], [396], [398], [400], [1937], [1939], [1941], [1943], and [1947]. These substantial postholes were either c.0.60m or

c.0.80m in diameter (see Figure 7 for their arrangement), and were c.0.25-0.35m deep. They were half-sectioned but unfortunately no cultural material was recovered from their sand-rich fills. Three further postholes [380], [388] and [390] ran to the south, perpendicular to the avenue. These seemed to define the internal edge of the ditch, but only along this short span. Elsewhere it would appear that there was an internal bank to the ditch (see 7.4.4), but at this point the ditch fills showed no sign of slumping and it would seem that posts marked the edge instead.

- 7.4.8 A line of postholes (Group 9, listed in Table 8) branched away to the southwest from the avenue at the east facing entrance. The postholes were generally 0.30 x 0.30m in diameter and 0.30m deep, and spaced at 3.0m intervals. To the southwest, postholes [257], [259] and [261] were aligned northeast-southwest. Only one of the postholes [306] produced any cultural material, but the Late Bronze Age pottery recovered was in keeping with the avenue and entrance to which the alignment seemed associated.

- 7.4.9 To the northwest of the enclosure, [1477], [1509], [1511], [1517], [1523], [1543], [1554], [1556] and [1560] formed a possible posthole arrangement that looks convincing in plan as marking an approach to the entrance, but it remained unexcavated so cannot be confirmed. Possible postholes [1501], [1503] and [1566] might be considered to extend this pattern.
- 7.4.10 A double post alignment (Group 4) extended from the northwest entrance into the settlement, the postholes of which are shown in Table 9. No dating was found in the postholes, but included in this group is context [1674], a small cut which was the setting for pot [1672]. The complete profile of this bipartite coarse ware bowl was recovered, with the fragmentary remains of a second vessel with decorated cordon at the neck and the same impressed slash decoration on the rim. It was thought that this may have been a cremation but no burnt bone was recovered from the environmental sample. As the local natural is so sandy and acidic this may not disprove it having been a cremation, after all no other bone was recovered from the prehistoric phases of this site, but there was only occasional charcoal in the fill of the pot. The pot was placed directly between the two rows of postholes at the point where this alignment crossed the enclosure ditch of Phase 3 [894], such that cut [1672] truncated the top fill of the enclosure ditch.

76	1006	1053	1834
1000	1008	1245	1977
1002	1010	1674	1979

Table 9: The postholes of Group 4, a double alignment.

- 7.4.11 Pot [1698] was also found to have been intentionally placed in a cut, [1101]. The coiled pot was dated to the Late Bronze Age (or possibly MBA-LBA) and was also reminiscent of a cremation, but no burnt material was found in the fill of the pot. It was assigned to Phase 4 as it truncated an earlier posthole [1756] of Phase 3, however it is possible that it served some sort of storage function in which case it is likely to have been internal to a structure not clearly apparent from the postholes grouped together into Phase 3.
- 7.4.12 Truncating the Phase 3 enclosure ditch [894] was one of four postholes forming a four-post structure. Group 13 comprised postholes [885], [879], [881] that cut into the natural, and posthole [1949] that truncated [1929], the upper fill of [894] at this point. No dating evidence further than the established stratigraphy was found.
- 7.4.13 Fairly central to the enclosure was a clearly defined roundhouse (Group 1, Table 10). It was c.7m across and appears to have originally had 14 posts, from which 11 postholes were in evidence. Some of these were no more than 0.10m deep so horizontal truncation may have removed evidence of the remaining posts. Posthole [570] is thought to have

positioned a central support for the structure, while several features extending to the east of the roundhouse may be part of an east facing entrance, as seen in the roundhouse of Phase 3 (see 7.3.13) and in the enclosure itself. It is by association with these features that this structure has been put into Phase 4. Two of the possible postholes, [784] and [786] were found to contain pottery, with that recovered from [784] appearing to be of a slightly later date, extending into the EIA. Feature [786] was found to contain more fragments of the ceramic blocks; an increasingly familiar sight on this excavation.

7.5 Phase 5: Saxon (Figure 9)

- 7.5.1 Several features on site are datable to the Saxon period. The most obvious of the features from this phase are the series of north – south aligned linear features, almost certainly part of a field system. To the west of the excavation ditch [1413] was found to contain cultural material, while [1409] was phased with it on the basis of a shared alignment and similar fill. The datable material, however, was a single piece of Roman brick and some burnt flint, assumed to be prehistoric. Further association was made across the site to ditch [556], on the same alignment and with a similar loose, mid-brown sandy silt fill. Dating for this ditch was from Saxon pottery with a provisional date of 400-700 AD. Moving further east, and north-south ditch [101] was also found to contain Saxon pottery, adding to the picture of a Saxon field system. Several other non-dated shallow linear features were seen on site, namely [181], [214], [254], [360], [437], [554], [1347], [456] and [1369]. Interpretation of these features remains tentative, but it is possible that they are further remnants of the field system.
- 7.5.2 It can be seen from Figure 9 that there is a concentration of features to the west of the site. It must be highlighted that this may give a false impression of the distribution of Saxon features. Internally to the LBA enclosure, all non-dated features were assigned to Phase 3, as the likelihood was that they were associated with the LBA settlement. There were no features outside the enclosure that contained LBA material. There were, however Saxon features evident, thus the likelihood for the undated features to be Saxon increased externally to the LBA enclosures.
- 7.5.3 To the northwest of the excavation, a small group of postholes [1615], [1619], [1623], [1625], [1627] and [1629] appeared to show some sort of structural relationship. A house plan was far from evident and none produced datable material, but they are worth further consideration.
- 7.5.4 Fairly central to the excavated area was a pit [1670] that was 2.80m x 2.55m in plan but only 0.16m at its maximum depth. It was excavated at the evaluation as [83] and also separately planned as [820], so its single fill has resulted in being [82], [819] and [1669]. It has been interpreted as a fire pit from the large quantities of charcoal and domestic debris.

A medium sized assemblage of Saxon pottery was found, including a noteworthy chaff-tempered plate, dating the feature to 600-750 AD. 1.7kg of residual Roman brick and tile fragments were also retrieved, mostly tegula. The environmental sample contained frequent charred grains probably of barley, possibly indicating the crop of the field seen here. A smaller fire pit [1419] was seen directly west from the large fire pit [1670]. It was 1.0m in diameter and only 0.13m deep, filled with hearth waste including Saxon pottery and charred cereal grains.

7.5.5 Three large pits were thought to result from quarrying, but within an agricultural landscape it is possible that they were watering holes. Pits [198], [202] and [838] were all over 2.5m in diameter and were found to contain Saxon pottery with residual Roman material

7.5.6 Layer [468], thought to be no more than a slight undulation in the ground level contained Saxon pottery. Residual pottery collected from the plough-soil which was the machined off contained a fair percentage of Saxon pottery.

7.6 Phase 6: Post-medieval (Figure 10).

7.6.1 Two ditches visible to the far west and east of the excavated area were dated as post medieval, with ditch [109] containing 19th century clay pipe and pottery. It is striking, particularly on Figure 3, how the alignment of these respected the line of the Saxon ditches. This is particularly remarkable as there was no suggestion of a medieval phase to indicate continuous landuse. The fills and dating were quite different. Just to the east of ditch [109], pit [285] was also found to be 18th-19th century. Aside from these, the other features assigned to this phase were done so on the basis of their very loose fills or flecking of recent looking material such as clinker.

7.7 Phase 7: Modern (Figure 11)

7.7.1 This phase has partially been isolated to demonstrate the effect and extent of the bomb damage central to the site. A local resident saw a VI missile fall in the field during WWII and it was quite clear to see the damage caused. Large pieces of rusting sheet metal could be seen at peculiar angles in most of the dashed areas in Figure 11.



Notes:


 Areas damaged by bombing from World War II

Figure 3
Features in the Excavation Area
1:625

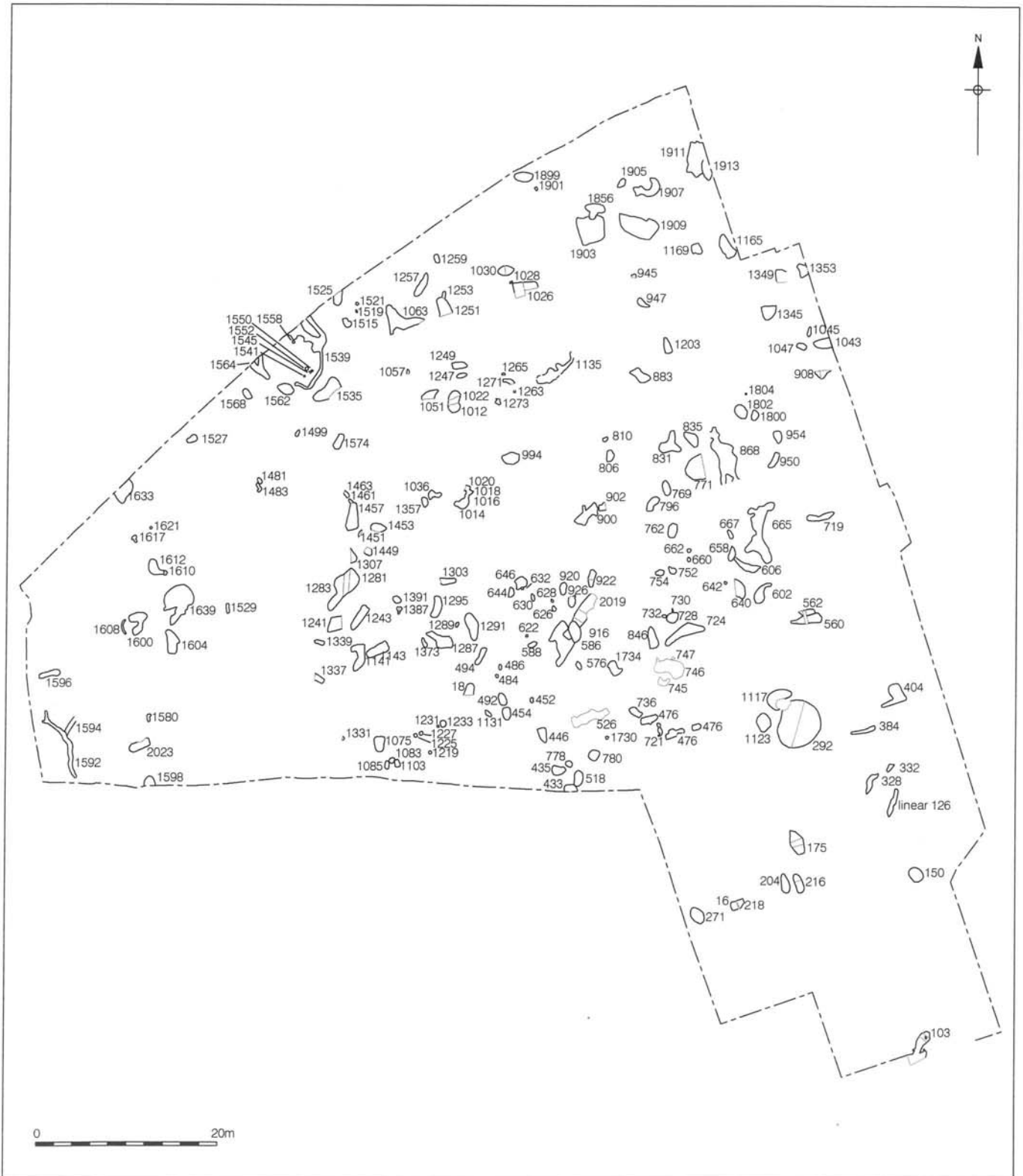


Figure 4
 Phase 2 Early Holocene:
 Naturally formed features
 and woodland clearance
 1:625