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**MOCKBEGGAR LANE,
IBSLEY, HAMPSHIRE**

**PROGRAMME OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING
(INTERIM REPORT)**

For

SITA



**Cotswold
Archaeological
Trust**

MOCKBEGGAR LANE,
IBSLEY, HAMPSHIRE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cotswold Archaeological Trust was commissioned by Entec UK Ltd, on behalf of SITA, to undertake a programme of archaeological recording during mineral extraction at Mockbeggar Lane, Ibsley, Hampshire. The following account forms a brief, interim report of the works undertaken between September and November 2000. Upon completion of all phases of subsequent fieldwork, and if appropriate, a post-excavation assessment and a single final report will be prepared.

The site comprised an area of approximately 3.1ha of previously agricultural land, now within the confines of an operating gravel quarry. The quarry is situated on flat, level ground within the broad valley of the nearby River Avon, approximately 3km to the north of Ringwood (Fig.1).

The programme of archaeological recording was carried out in compliance with the *'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation'* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists; and *Management of Archaeological Projects* MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

2. BACKGROUND

Gravel extraction, for which permission was granted in 1990, is ongoing within the site. There is no planning condition making provision for the archaeological mitigation, but a commitment was made by a previous operator of the site for the appropriate treatment of any archaeological remains.

The presence of potential archaeological deposits was identified by a series of aerial photographs which intimated the presence of three ring ditches and two linear features in the western part of the quarry complex. An archaeological evaluation undertaken on land immediately to the north and north-west of the current site prior to previous phases of mineral extraction identified a medieval ditch terminal or pit and a late Bronze Age Jar (Fig.2).

3. METHODOLOGIES

The objectives of the recording were to identify any archaeological remains during all groundworks associated with the proposed development, to ensure the preservation by record of all archaeological remains revealed, and to prepare an archaeological archive of the site including the treatment and preservation of any finds.

The topsoil and subsoil were mechanically stripped under archaeological supervision. Selected areas were hand cleaned prior to detailed investigation of specific features. Discrete features such as pits and post holes were at a minimum half sectioned. Linear features were sampled by hand excavation at least once, with further excavations at intersections to provide stratigraphic relationships.

Onsite recording was undertaken in accordance with Technical Manual 1 *Excavation Recording Manual* (CAT 1996). Each context was recorded on a pro-forma context sheet by verbal and measured description; principal deposits were recorded by drawn plans (scale 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate) and sections (scale 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate). Photographs (monochrome print; colour transparencies) were taken as appropriate. All finds and samples were bagged separately with unique numbers related to the context record. All artefacts were recovered and retained for processing and analysis in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (CAT 1995).

The archive is currently held at the offices of Cotswold Archaeological Trust and will be deposited with Hampshire County Museum Service Council upon completion of all phases of mineral extraction.

4. RESULTS

The natural substrate, comprising coarse flint gravels, was revealed at a depth of between 0.90m and 1.45m below the present ground surface. All archaeological features were identified cutting the natural substrate and, with the exception of pit [218], were concentrated towards the southern extent of the extraction area.

Iron Age

Pit [142] was located close to the south-eastern corner of the site. It was oval in plan, 1m deep and steep-sided. It contained three separate fills, all of which produced a considerable amount of dating evidence, comprising early Iron age pottery, pieces of both struck and burnt flint and an iron blade.

Approximately 10m to the north-east was a further similarly dimensioned pit [134], which contained five differing fills from which an assemblage of 33 sherds of early-middle Iron Age pottery, struck and burnt flint pieces and fragments of burnt clay was recovered.

Romano-British

Ditches

The alignments of ditches [190] and [194] suggest that they are related, with the 1.3m gap between the respective termini representing an entranceway. The ditches measured 0.83m and 0.72m in width respectively, and were both 0.25m deep. The northern extent of ditch [194] was not fully established, and appeared to have been truncated. Eleven sherds of Roman pottery, in all probability from the same vessel, were retrieved from the terminus of ditch [194] together with a possible fragment worked stone.

Two parallel ditches [121] and [130] extended across the site on an east to west alignment. Ditch [121] measured 0.55m in width and typically 0.2m in depth, ditch [130] measured 0.85m in width and 0.25m in depth. It was apparent that ditch [130] terminated 1.2m east of ditch [190], whereas ditch [121] crossed ditch [194], although the similarity of the respective fills prevented the identification of any stratigraphic relationship between the features. Close to the western extent of ditch [130], a remnant length of earlier ditch [183] survived, evidently re-cut by [130]. Artefactual material, including an assemblage of Romano-British pottery was recovered from ditch [130].

A possible ditch terminus, [176] was identified along the central easternmost extent of the site. It measured at least 2.7m in length, 0.9m in width and was fully excavated to a depth of 0.55m. Although three pieces of worked flint were retrieved from the ditch, its east to west alignment, parallel to [121] and [130] may suggest that it is of Romano-British rather than prehistoric origin.

Pits and postholes

Pit [148] was identified close to the eastern limit of the site. It measured approximately 1m in diameter, and was fully excavated to a depth of 0.35m. Two sherds of Romano-British pottery were retrieved from the feature.

Three postholes (151), (179) and (181) were identified flanking ditch [130], and although no artefactual material was recovered from the features, they may tentatively be assigned to the Roman period.

Undated

Pits and postholes

Towards the central southern extent of the site pit [168] was identified. It was circular in plan, measuring 2.3m in diameter and 1.05m in depth. It was filled by four separate fills, the horizon of each mirroring the profile of the cut of the pit itself. No artefactual material was retrieved from the feature. Approximately 45m to the north, the remnant base of a further pit, [198], was identified. It measured 1.55m in diameter and survived to a depth of 0.16m.

Adjacent to the intersection of ditches [121] and [194], pit [209] was identified. Excavation of the pit failed to recover any dating evidence and the relationship between the pit and ditch [121] remained undetermined.

Pit [218] was identified in the northern part of the site. It was irregular in plan, measuring 2.45m in length, 1.8m in width and was fully excavated to a depth of 0.5m. It contained four separate fills, although no artefactual material was retrieved.

Two further shallow, less substantial pits [132] and [151] were excavated towards the south-eastern corner of the site. Neither of these produced any dating evidence, however pit [151] did contain a quantity of burnt material.

Four sub-circular postholes [146], [164], [179] and [181] were identified. None of these was more than 0.20m deep and all were found to contain a single fill, though none produced any dating evidence. [181] did however appear to have a sunken post setting in the base. The postholes were located in different areas of the site, the nearest together [179] and [181] were separated by a distance of 12m, therefore it is not possible to surmise that any of these features are related.

Natural features (not illustrated)

Over fifty further anomalies were rapidly investigated throughout the site, the majority could be divided into two specific categories; those that were semi-circular and those that were oblong in plan.

The semi-circular shaped features varied in size, however excavation demonstrated that they were all similar in profile, their straight edge dropping almost vertically, with the remaining curved edge angled at around 45 to 60 degrees from top to base. Invariably these anomalies contained a single mixed fill comprising mid brown and dark brown sandy silt. None of these features contained any dating evidence, however a few small fragments of burnt clay were recovered from [162]. These anomalies were interpreted as being of arboreal origin, representing infilled tree-bole pits.

The oblong-shaped anomalies were mostly found to have irregularly shaped sides and were generally filled by the same material found in the semi-circular shaped features, and as such were also interpreted as infilled tree-bole pits.

CONCLUSIONS

The programme of archaeological recording has identified a concentration of activity towards the southern part of the site, comprising in the main part of a number of pits dating to the early to middle Iron Age, Romano-British and undated features. In addition, three post-medieval ditches were identified towards the northern and western extents of the site.

The Iron Age deposits would appear to represent outlying features relating to possible settlement activity possibly to the south of the study area. Much of the ceramic material recovered from the pits represents domestic ware. It is also worth noting that the individual sherds themselves showed little evidence of abrasion, indicating that the material had not been transported any great distance.

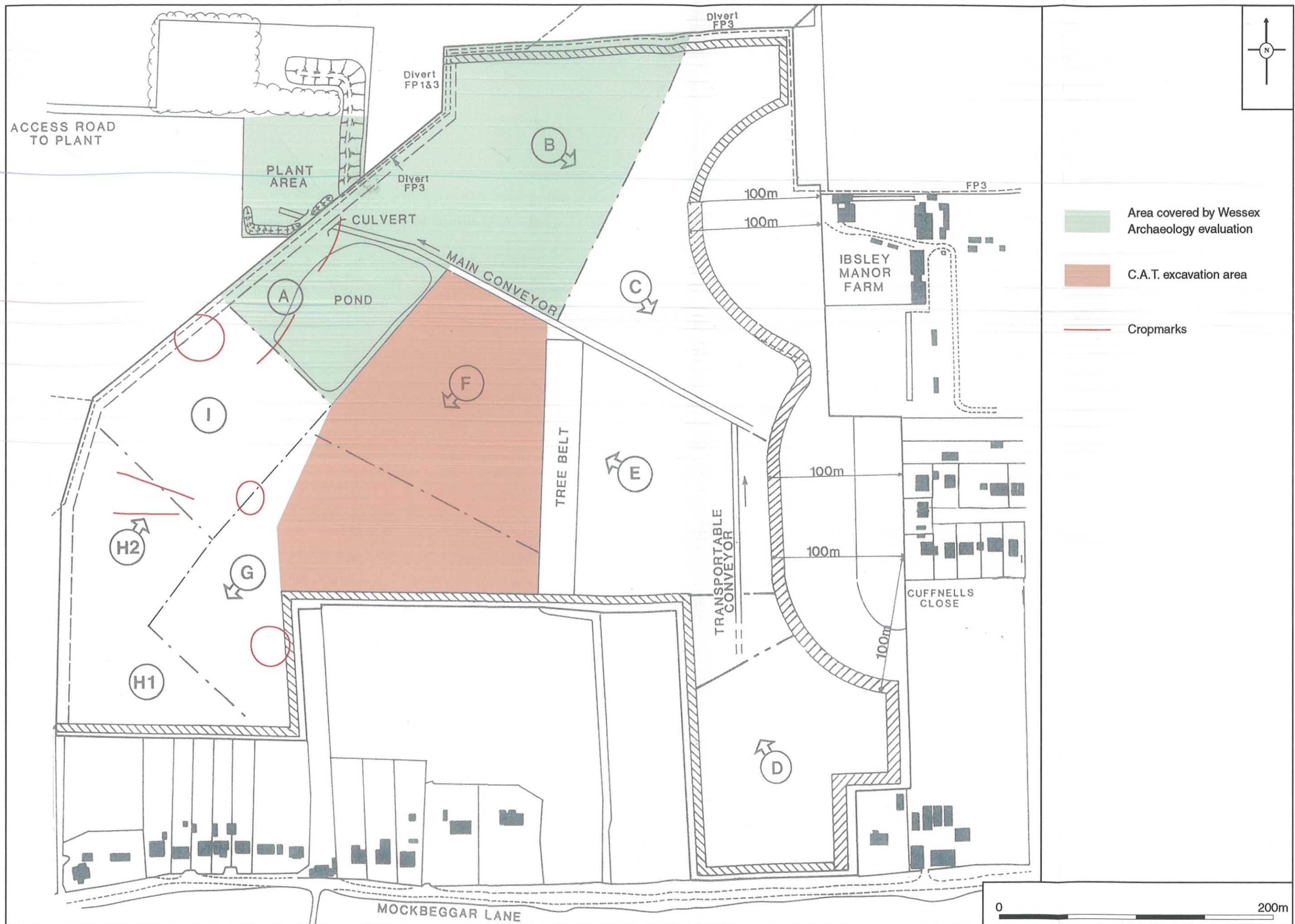
The Romano-British ditches appear to be broadly contemporary, forming part of a field system. No evidence of domestic structures was revealed within the study area. At this preliminary stage of analysis it remains undetermined where the settlement associated with such land holdings is sited.

It is noteworthy that the archaeological deposits encountered were sealed by upto 1.5m of post Roman overburden. The derivation of this deposit remains undetermined although episodic flooding from the River Avon may tentatively be suggested at this stage. No evidence for such deposits was encountered in the earlier evaluation to the north of the current site, where the natural gravels were typically identified 0.4m below the existing ground surface.

APPENDIX 1

Concordance of Finds

Mockbeggar Lane, Ibsley.										
Context		Spot Date	Pottery		Struck Flint		Burnt Flint		Other	
No.	Feature		Quantity	Wgt	Quantity	Wgt	Quantity	Wgt	Quantity	Wgt
1	Topsoil				7	56g				
109	Ditch 108	post-med	2	41g					3 roof tile	102g
113	Ditch 112	Roman	16	300g						
115	Ditch 114	Roman	14	123g						
120	Ditch 121								1 tile	15g
124	Ditch 121	post-med	2	5g	1	2g				
133	Pit 132								3 burnt clay	1g
135	Pit 134	EIA/MIA	33	352g	3	35g	3	153	3 burnt clay	28g
143	Pit 142	EIA	139	1121g	4	99g	6	83		
144	Pit 142	EIA	45	433g					1 Fe blade	
145	Pit 142	EIA	22	296g						
149	Pit 148	Roman	2	8g			1	16		
155	Pit 134	EIA	5	57	2	11	1	66		
156	Pit 134	EIA	6	115gg						
163	Pit 162								7 burnt clay	5g
172	Ditch 130	late Roman	27	142g	1	9g				
177	Ditch 176				3	22g				
186	Ditch 130	Roman	3	73g						
196	Ditch 194	Roman	11	202g					SF2: 1 stone	1480g
205	Ditch 130	Roman	2	9g						
206	Ditch 194	EIA	2	1g						
217	Feature 216				1	9g				



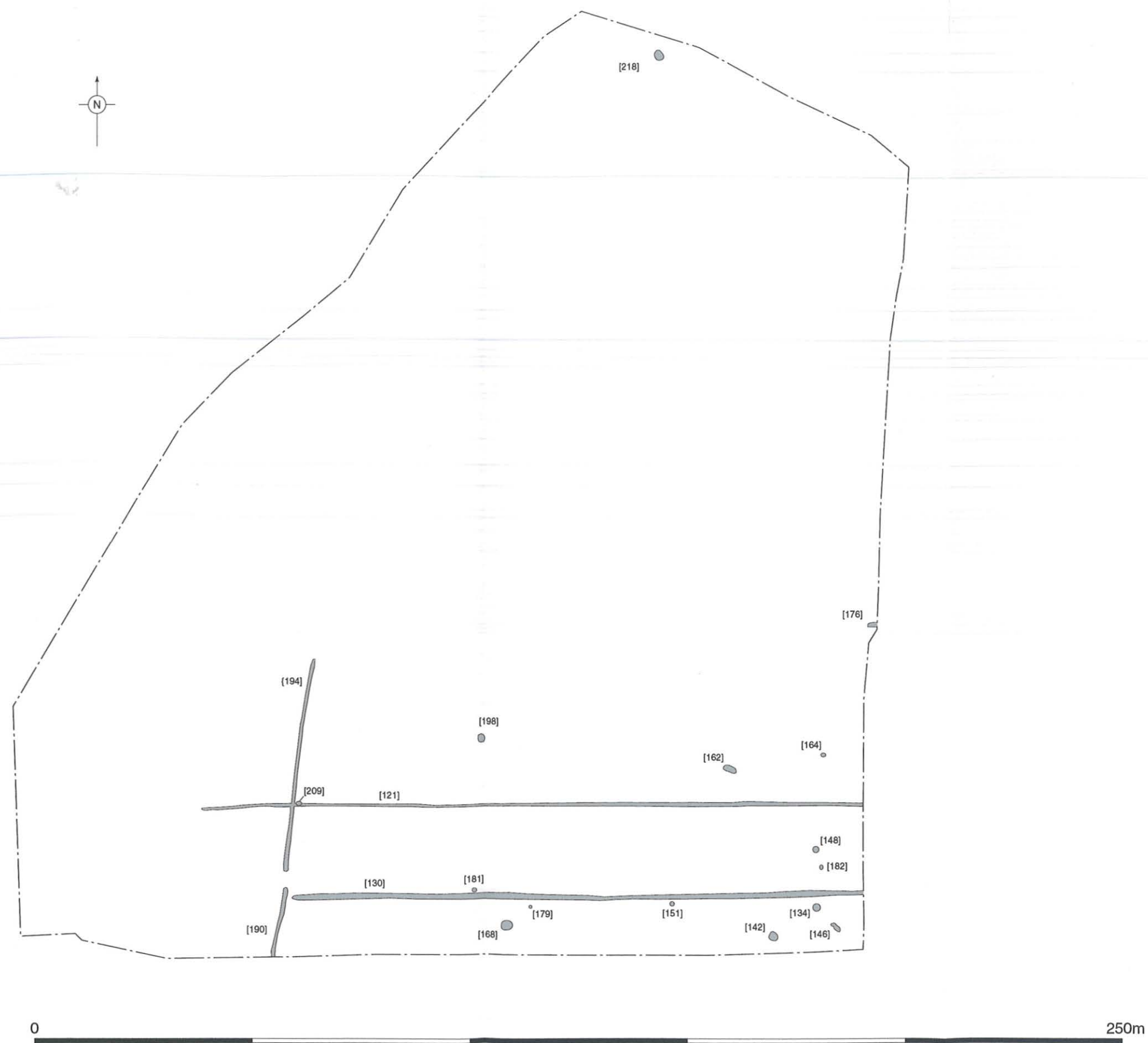


Fig. 3 All feature excavation plan