

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation at Rickfield Farm, Milcombe, Bloxham Oxfordshire February 2014

Accession number: OXCMS:2014.8

Report No. 14/50

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Illustrator: James Lodocha





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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	OASIS No: molanort1-1	72696				
Project name	Archaeological trial trend Oxfordshire	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Rickfield Farm, Milcombe, Bloxham, Oxfordshire				
Short description (250 words maximum)	MOLA (Museum Of London Archaeology) (formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology), was commissioned by ABDS on behalf of Powersun to undertake a trial trench evaluation at Rickfield Farm, Milcombe, Bloxham, Oxfordshire. The trenching identified linear gullies and possible pits or terminals of ditches. Roman pottery was recovered from two of the features. Pottery of post-medieval was recovered from the subsoil layers					
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Trial Trench					
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None					
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	None					
Current Land use	Arable					
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown					
Monument type/ period	None					
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	None)					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County	Oxfordshire					
Site address (including postcode)		ewington Road, Milcombe, Bloxham OX15 4RZ				
Study area (sq.m or ha)	2.2 ha					
OS Easting & Northing	SP 4051 3401					
(use grid sq. letter code)	140m aOD					
Height OD PROJECT CREATORS	140m aOD					
Organisation	MOLA (formerly Northan	intonshire Archaeology)				
Project brief originator	Oxfordshire County Cou					
Project Design originator	MOLA (formerly Northam					
Director/Supervisor	Jim Burke	iptoriarine 7 trendeology)				
Project Manager	Ed Taylor					
Sponsor or funding body	Powersun					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date	03/02/14					
End date	07/02/14					
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)				
Physical	Oxford Museum (OXCMS:2014.8)	pottery				
Paper	Oxford Museum (OXCMS:2014.8)	Site file				
Digital	Oxford Museum Mapinfo plans, Word report (OXCMS:2014.8)					
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)					
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Rickfield Farm, Milcombe, Bloxham, Oxfordshire					
Serial title & volume	14/50					
Author(s)	Jim Burke					
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION AT RICKFIELD FARM, MILCOMBE, BLOXHAM OXFORDSHIRE FEBRUARY 2014

Abstract

MOLA (Museum Of London Archaeology) (formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology), was commissioned by ABDS on behalf of Powersun to undertake a trial trench evaluation at Rickfield Farm, Milcombe, Bloxham, Oxfordshire. The trenching identified linear gullies and possible pits or terminals of ditches. Roman pottery was recovered from two of the features. Pottery of post-medieval was recovered from the subsoil layers.

1 INTRODUCTION

In February 2014, MOLA (formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology) was commissioned by ABDS on behalf of Powersun to carry out archaeological trial trenching on land at Rickfield Farm, South Newington Road, Milcombe, Bloxham, Oxfordshire (SP 4051 3401). The works were undertaken to inform a planning application for the construction of a solar farm (planning reference 13/01197/F). The works were undertaken in response to a brief for archaeological field evaluation issued by Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist (Oram 2014) in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

All works were undertaken in accordance with *the National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) and followed consultation with Richard Oram (Oxfordshire County Council Planning Archaeologist), and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2014).

2 BACKGROUND

The following presents a brief summary of the topographic, geological and historical background to the site.

2.1 Topography and geology

The site is located to the south of South Newington Road, 3km to the south-west of the village of Bloxham and 1km to the south-west of the village of Milcombe in northern Oxfordshire. It is bounded to the north and east by arable fields, by woodland to the south and by farm buildings to the west.

The site lies at approximately 140m aOD and the ground slopes gradually east to west. The underlying geology is mapped as Marlstone Rock Formation

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The site is located in an area of archaeological potential (Oram 2014). Oxfordshire's Historic Environment Record lists a number of entries in the vicinity of the site but none within its bounds.

Aerial photographs have revealed a rectangular enclosure of probable late prehistoric or Roman date 120m to the south-east of the site (PRN 27999). Roman coins have also been found nearby (PRN 2419). Semicircular and rectilinear enclosures have also been identified by aerial photographs 1.9km to the south of the site (PRN13751).

The scheduled site of Wigginton Roman Villa (SM 28898) and an extensive Roman settlement (PRN 16175) lie 1.3km to the north-east and 1.3km to the north-west of the site respectively.

3 OBJECTIVES

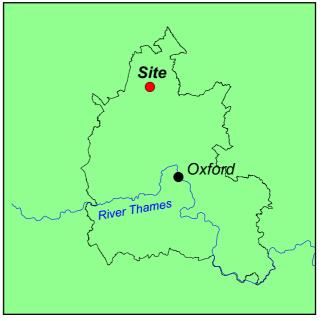
The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting. This was achieved through trial trench evaluation.

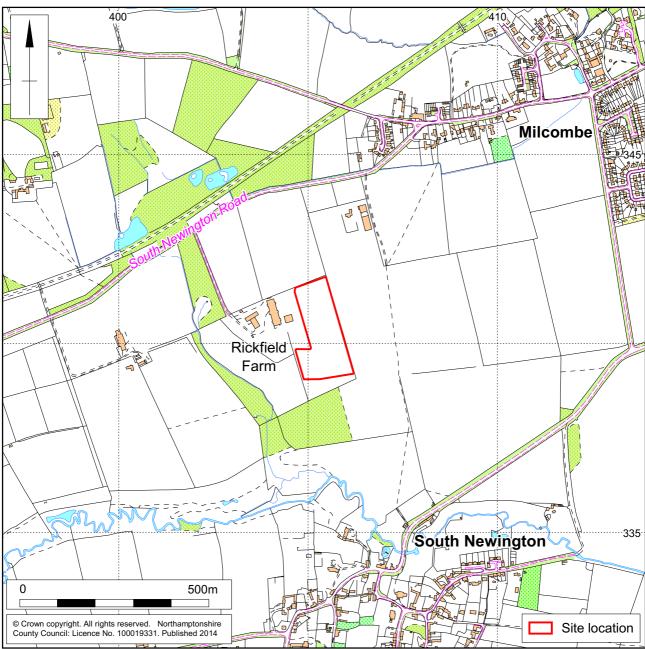
The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to:

- determine and understand the nature, function, and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting;
- determine the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- ascertain the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region.

Specific research objectives will be drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (English Heritage 1997; Solent Thames Research Frameworks 2010) as relevant depending upon the results of the evaluation. The evaluation was carried out following the guidelines suggested by the IfA Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation (IfA 2008), and the MOLA Archaeological fieldwork manual (MOLA 2014).







Scale 1:10,000 Site Location Fig 1

4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A total of 22 trial trenches, each measuring 30m long and 1.8m wide, were excavated using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m-wide toothless ditching bucket.

Trenches were positioned using Leica System 1200 Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of ± 0.05 m.

Trenches were excavated to reveal archaeological remains or, where these were absent, undisturbed natural horizons. All works were monitored by an archaeologist. The topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological direction to reveal natural substrate. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately at the side of the excavated area. Each trench was hand cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features, unless it was certain that there were no archaeological remains present. Excavation did not compromise the integrity of the archaeological record.

Recording followed standard MOLA Northampton procedures (MOLA 2014). Trenches with archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50, the trench sections and profiles through features were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Levels were related to the Ordnance Datum.

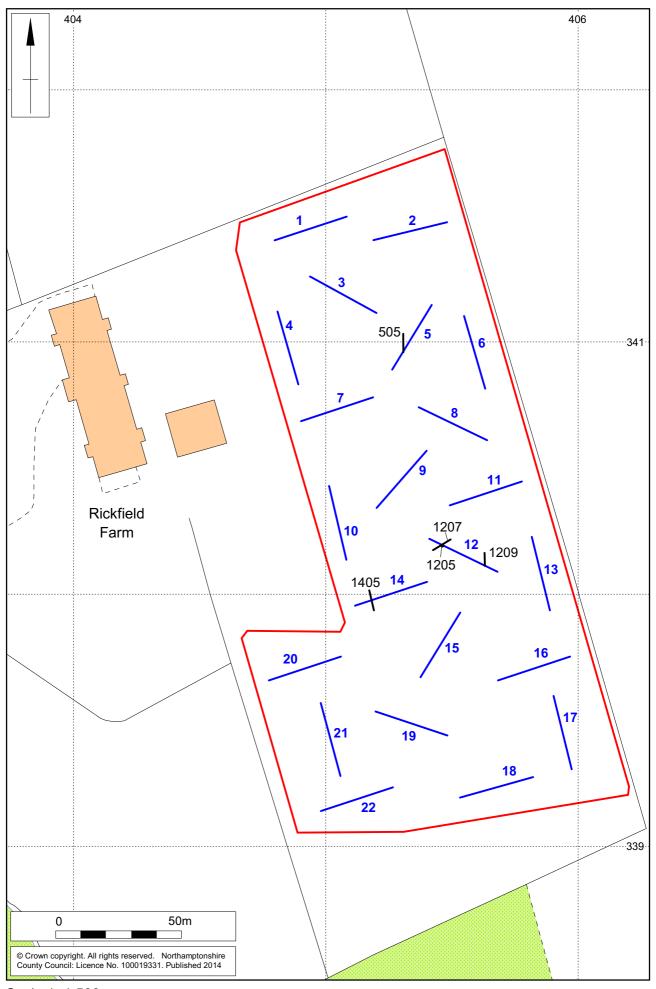
Artefacts were collected from archaeological deposits but unstratified bone and modern material were not retained. Photographs were taken as 35mm monochrome negatives and digital photos. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned by metal detector.

The evaluation conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation (2008). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with English Heritage, Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (EH 2006). All procedures complied with MOLA Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.



General view of site, looking south-west

Fig 2



Scale 1: 1,500 Trench locations Fig 3

5 EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 General Comments

Within trenches 3 and 5 remains of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation could be seen against the natural within these trenches. Remains of a hedgeline were noted within trenches 14, 15 and 18, this was sampled in trench 14. Trenches 20, 21 and 22 were located on a downward slope and had been levelled with extra topsoil by the current farmer.

5.2 Trench 5

Between the furrows there was a possible terminal of a gully [505], aligned north-south, 0.30m wide by 0.13m deep, with a silty clay fill containing frequent ironstone fragments. This feature this was on the similar alignment to the ridge and furrow (Fig 4 and 11). No dateable material was recovered.



Gully [505], looking north

Fig 4

5.3 Trench 12

At the north-west end of the trench a pit [1205], 0.40m wide by 0.20m deep, with a fill of silty dark reddish brown sandy clay, produced a single sherd of Roman pottery (Fig 5 and 11).

The pit was truncated by a furrow [1207], 1.00m wide by 0.20m deep, with a fill of reddish brown silty sandy clay containing frequent ironstone fragments.

To the south there was a pit or gully terminal [1209], aligned north-south, U-shaped, 0.45m wide by 0.38m deep, with a fill of brown silty sandy clay (Fig 11). No dateable material was recovered.



Pit [1205], looking north-east

Fig 5

5.4 Trench 13

Near the centre of the trench there was a gully [1305], aligned east-west, 0.65m wide by 0.50m deep, with a fill of brown silty sandy clay containing frequent ironstone fragments, and Roman pottery (Fig 6 and 13). This gully was also seen in trench 15, where it had been truncated and only survived as a shallow feature (Fig 12).



Gully [1305] looking west

Fig 6

5.5 Trench 14

Remains of a hedgeline, [1405] (Figs 7 and 11) aligned north-west to south-east, 1.70m wide 0.30m deep, with irregular sides and base and irregular root channels leading away from the hedgeline. The fill was reddish-brown silty sandy clay with frequent ironstone pieces. The same hedgeline was seen in trenches 15 and 18. Modern plastics were noted within the fill (not retained).



Hedgeline [1405], looking north

Fig 7

5.6 Trench 16

A V-shaped ditch [1605] (Fig 8 and 12), aligned north–south, 0.40m wide 0.20m deep, the fill a reddish-brown silty sandy clay with frequent ironstone fragments, no dating was recovered from this ditch.



Ditch [1605], looking north

Fig 8

The base an ironstone feature [1608]. Two lines of ironstone blocks (1607) each roughly 0.15m wide 0.20m deep, laid directly onto the natural ironstone base, aligned north-west to south-east, 0.70m at its widest point 0.10m deep. The base at the south-east had some evidence of burning but this could be related to a shallow hollow [1610] (Fig 12) close to the terminal of this feature.



Ironstone feature [1608], looking south-west

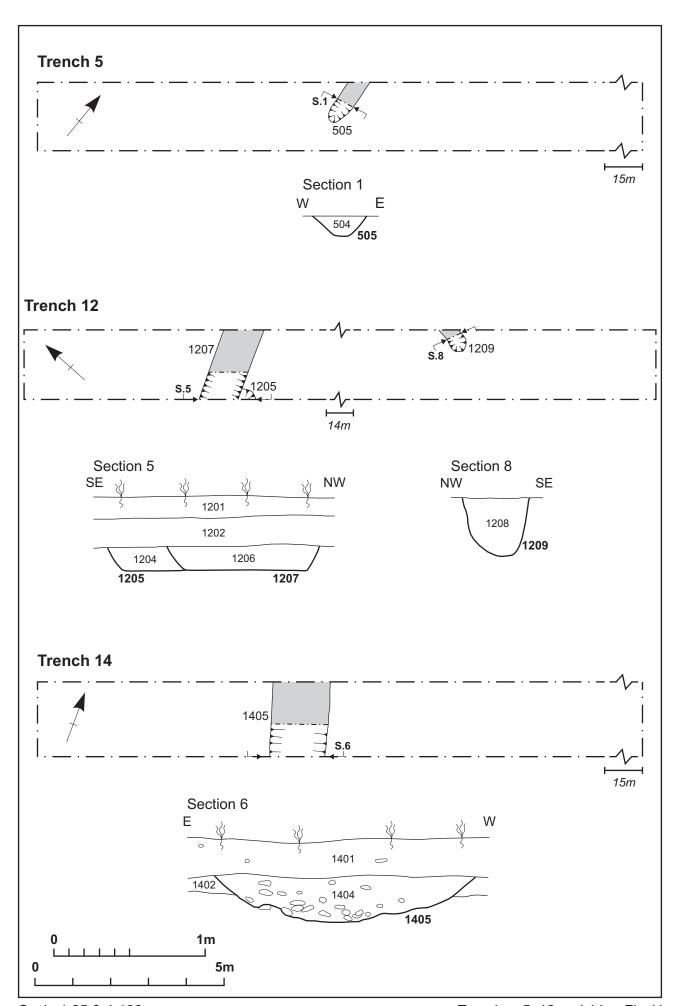
There was a shallow circular hollow [1610], by the south-east terminal of the ironstone feature [1608]. This was 0.54m wide by 0.09m deep, with gradual sloping eastern sides and a steep sloping western side (Figs 10 and 12). The fill comprised a black-brown silty sandy clay, no evidence of burning was observed on the natural horizon or immediately around this feature.

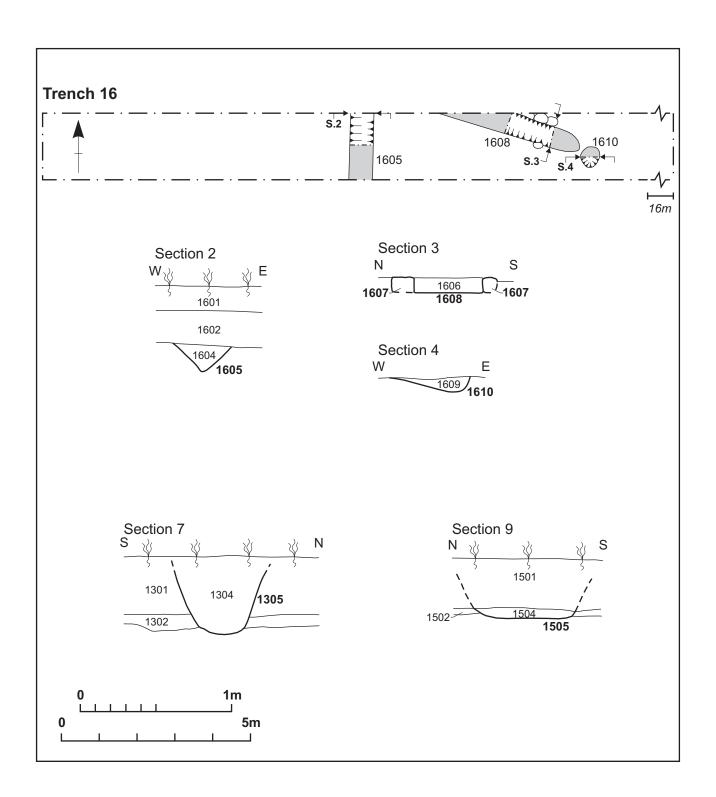


Hollow [1610], looking east

Fig 10

Fig 9





6 THE POTTERY by Tora Hylton

There are six sherds of pottery, weighing 58g. Three sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from features in Trenches 12 and 13. Two fragments from storage jar in a soft-pink-grog type fabric were recovered from the fill (1204) of pit [1205] in Trench 12. The form of the vessel suggests a late 2nd-3rd century date. A Greyware bodysherd from a necked jar was located in the fill (1304) of a gully [1305].

Three sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from topsoil deposits overlying Trenches 1, 3 and 8. They include a handle fragment of a cup in glazed white earthenware, an undiagnostic sherd of stoneware and a base from a red earthenware flowerpot.

Table 1: Quantification of pottery

Trench/context Fabric type		nch 1 Vt (g)		nch 3 Vt (g)		ich 8 Vt (g)	1204/1 No/W		1304/ No/W	
Roman pottery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grog tempered ware (SPG)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1 4	-	-
Greyware	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9
Post-medieval pottery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Glazed white Earthenware	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Stoneware	1	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Red earthenware (flower pot)	-	-	1	23	-	-	-	-	-	-

7 DISCUSSION

The trial trench evaluation has suggested that few archaeological remains survive within the development area. Those present were shallow and truncated by medieval ridge and furrow cultivation and post medieval ploughing. Given the level of disturbance across the site it is likely that the three sherds of Roman pottery recovered from features in Trenches 12 and 13 are residual in nature.

Modern plastic recovered from the former hedgeline present in Trenches 15 and 18 could indicate that the field has recently been enlarged.

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MOLA 27 February 2014

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
1	30m x 2m, wsw-ene			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
101	Topsoil	Reddish-brown plough soil, freq ironstone	0.20m	Modern pottery
102	Subsoil	Red sandy clay, freq ironstone	0.15m	
103	Natural	Reddish-brown ironstone	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
2	30m x 2m, wsw-ese			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
201	Topsoil	Reddish-brown, plough soil, freq ironstone	0.20m	
202	Subsoil	Reddish-brown sandy clay, freq ironstone	0.10m	
203	Natural	Brown red cornbrash ironstone	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
3	30m x 2m, Nw-se			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
301	Topsoil	Reddish brown, silty clay plough soil, freq ironstone	0.24m	Modern pottery
302	Subsoil	Red brown silty clay	0.15m	
303	Natural	Reddish brown ironstone	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
4	30m x 2m, s-n			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
401	Topsoil	Reddish-brown, silty clay plough soil, freq ironstone	0.12m	
402	Subsoil	Reddish-brown silty sandy clay, freq ironstone	0.04m	
403	Natural	Yellow/reddish-brown ironstone	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
5	30m x 2m, sw- ne			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
501	Topsoil	Reddish-brown, silty clay plough soil, freq ironstones	0.20m	
502	Subsoil	Red-brown silty sandy clay, freq ironstone	0.10m	
503	Natural	Reddish-brown ironstone, cornbrash	-	
504	fill	Light brown-red silty sand, <2% ironstone	0.35m	
505	cut	Linear V-shaped ditch, with wide rounded base	0.35m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
6	30m x 2m, n-s			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
601	Topsoil	Reddish-brown plough soil, freq ironstone	0.20m	
602	Subsoil	Reddish-brown, sandy silty clay, freq iron stone	0.12m	
603	Natural	Reddish-brown, cornbrash ironstone	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
7	30m x 2m, wsw-ene			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
701	Topsoil	Reddish-brown plough soil, freq ironstone	0.18m	
702	Subsoil	-	-	
703	Natural	Reddish-brown cornbrash/ironstone	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
8	30m x 2m, nw- se			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
801	Topsoil	Reddish-brown plough soil, freq ironstone	0.25m	Modern pottery
802	Subsoil	Red-brown, sandy sitly clay, freq ironstone	0.12m	
803	Natural	Red-brown cornbrash/ ironstone	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
9	30m x 2m, sw- ne			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
901	Topsoil	Brown silty clay, plough soil	0.22m	
902	Subsoil	Yellow-brown, sandy clay, freq ironstone	0.03m	
903	Natural	Yellow-brown-reddish brown cornbrash ironstone, yellow clay patches	-	

MOLA 14/50 Appendix

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
10	30m x 2m,			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1001	Topsoil	Dark brown, silty clay plough soil, freq ironstones	0.20	
1002	Subsoil	Reddish-brown, sandy clay	0.03m	
1003	Natural	Reddish-brown cornbrash/iron stone	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
11	30m x 2m, wsw-ene			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1101	Topsoil	Reddish brown, silty clay plough soil, freq ironstone, occ flint	0.22m	
1102	Subsoil	Red brown, silty sandy clay, freq ironstone, occ flint.	0.10m	
1103	Natural	Reddish brown, sandy cornbrash/ironstone	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
12	30m x 2m, nw- se			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1201	Topsoil	Brown silty clay, plough soil, freq ironstone	0.22m	
1202	Subsoil	Yellow-brown silty clay, freq ironstone	0.12m	
1203	Natural	Yellow-brown sandy patches, with yellow brown	-	
1204	Fill	Mid browny-red, silty sand <5% ironstone	0.20m	Roman pottery sherd
1205	Cut	Circular pit, bowl shaped with a even round base	0.20m	
1206	fill	Reddy-brown, silty sand <5% ironstone	0.20m	
1207	cut	Linear furrow, shallow dish shape, with flat uneven base	0.20m	
1208	fill	Light brown, silty clay, <5% ironstone	0.40m	
1209	cut	Linear ditch, gentle sloping sides with a rounded base	0.40m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
13	30m x 2m, s-n			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1301	Topsoil	Reddish-brown, clay silt, freq ironstone, occ small stones	0.28m	
1302	Subsoil	Reddish-brown silty sandy clay, freq ironstones	0.18m	
1303	Natural	Red brown sandy ironstone cornbrash	-	
1304	fill	Mid-dark brown, silty clay, <5% ironstone	0.50m	Roman pottery
1305	cut	Linear ditch, bowl shaped with a rounded base	0.50m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
14	30m x 2m, wsw-ese			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1401	Topsoil	Mid brown, sandy clay plough soil, freq ironstone	0.20m	
1402	Subsoil	Yellow-brown, sandy silty clay, freq ironstone	0.12m	
1403	Natural	Yellow-brown, sandy clay, irostone	-	
1404	fill	Reddish-brown, silty sandy clay <5% ironstone	0.30m	
1405	cut	Linear ditch, irregular sides and base	0.30m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
15	30m x 2m, sw- ne			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1501	Topsoil	Mid brown, silty clay, plough soil, freq ironstone	0.20m	
1502	Subsoil	Yellow brown clay, freq ironstone	0.12m	
1503	Natural	Yellow brown, sandy clay ironstone	-	
1504	fill	Mid –dark brown, silty clay, <5% ironstone	0.10m	
1505	cut	Linear gully, very gentle sloping sides with a flat base	0.10m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
16	30m x 2m, E-W			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1601	Topsoil	Reddish-brown, silty clay, mod ironstone	0.24m	
1602	Subsoil	Reddish-brown, silty sandy clay, freq ironstone	0.14m	
1603	Natural	Brown-red cornbrash/ironstone	-	
1604	Fill	Red-brown, silty sand <2% small ironstones	0.20m	Bone
1605	Cut	Linear V-shaped ditch, with narrow flat base	0.20m	
1606	Fill	Mid browny-red, silty sand <5% small ironstones	0.10m	
1607	stones	Cut ironstones forming a line/single course of wall?	0.10m	
1608	Cut	Linear ditch/drain? Vertical sides with a board flat uneven base	0.10m	
1609	Fill	Black-brown, silty sand, <2% small ironstones	0.10m	
1610	cut	Circular bowl-shaped pit with rounded uneven base	0.10m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
17	30m x 2m, n-s			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1701	Topsoil	Brown, silty clay, freq ironstones, occ flint	0.22m	
1702	Subsoil	Reddish-brown, silty sandy clay, freq ironstones	0.13m	
1703	Natural	Reddish-brown sandy, ironstone cornbrash	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
18	30m x 2m, w-e			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1801	Topsoil	Brown silty clay, plough soil, freq ironstone	0.26m	
1802	Subsoil	Reddish-brown, sandy silty clay, freq ironstone	0.14m	
1803	Natural	Red, sandy ironstone, brownsandy ironstone	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
19	30m x 2m, nw- se			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1901	Topsoil	Reddish-brown, silty clay, plough soil, freq ironstone	0.30m	
1902	Subsoil	-	-	
1903	Natural	Reddish-brown, sandy clay ironstone, with yellow brown clay patches	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
20	30m x 2m, w-e			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
2001	Topsoil	Mid brown, silty clay plough soil, freq ironstone	0.15m	
2002	Subsoil	Yellow-brown, silty clay, freq ironstone	0.10m	
2003	Natural	Yellow-brown, sandy clay ironstone	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
21	30m x 2m, n-s			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
2101	Topsoil	Mid brown, silty clay, plough soil, freq ironstone and dumping	0.30m	
2102	Subsoil	Reddish-brown, silty sandy clay, freq iron stone	0.12m	
2103	Natural	Yellow-brown cornbrash/ironstone	-	
2104	layer	Levelling layer	0.38m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
22	30m x 2m, w-e			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
2201	Topsoil	Mid-dark brown, silty clay, plough soil, some Morden dumping	0.25m	
2202	Subsoil	Yellow brown silty sandy clay, ironstone	0.18m	
2203	Natural	Yellow brown ironstone/cornbrash	-	
2204	layer	Tipping layer, modern dumping	0.20m	







