



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation
at land off Harpley Road, Defford
Worcestershire
WSM57448**

Planning reference: W/14/0711

Report number: 14/134

Author and Illustrator: Carol Simmonds



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Animal bone Adam Reid BSc MSc

OASIS REPORT

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. Molanort1-187674
Project name	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at land off Harpley Road, Defford Worcestershire	
Short description	<p>MOLA were commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd, on behalf of Banner Homes, to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land to the south of Harpley Road, Defford, Worcestershire. There is evidence for prehistoric and Roman occupation in the surrounding area, and Defford is thought to have Saxon origins but principally developed in the medieval period. The site lies on the periphery of medieval occupation and is recorded as orchard and farmland from the late 19th century.</p> <p>The evaluation recorded two post-medieval ditches. One in Trench 2 was evident as an earthwork and matched the position of a field boundary recorded on the first edition Ordnance Survey. The second ditch, in Trench 1, did not match any known features and is thought to be earlier. Fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material and animal bone were recovered from the ditch in Trench 1 and a sherd of 15th/16th-century pottery was recovered from the topsoil in Trench 8.</p>	
Project type	Evaluation (trial trenching)	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Pasture	
Future work	Not known	
Monument type/ period	Post medieval field boundaries	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Worcestershire	
Site address	Harpley Road, Defford	
Study area	0.8ha	
OS Easting & Northing	391620 243090	
Height OD	30m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA Northampton	
Project brief originator	WCC Planning Officer	
Project design originator	MOLA Northampton	
Director/Supervisor	Carol Simmonds	
Project Managers	Adam Yates	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting for Banner Homes	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	June 2014	
End date	July 2014	
ARCHIVES	Location	Content
Physical	WSM57448	1 small box of pottery, ceramic building material and animal bone
Paper		Site survey records
Digital		GIS data
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report	
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at land off Harpley Road, Defford Worcestershire. June 2014	
Serial title & volume	MOLA Northampton Reports 14/134	
Author(s)	Carol Simmonds	
Page numbers	21 pages text and illustrations	
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Archaeological trial trench evaluation at land off Harpley Road, Defford Worcestershire June 2014

ABSTRACT

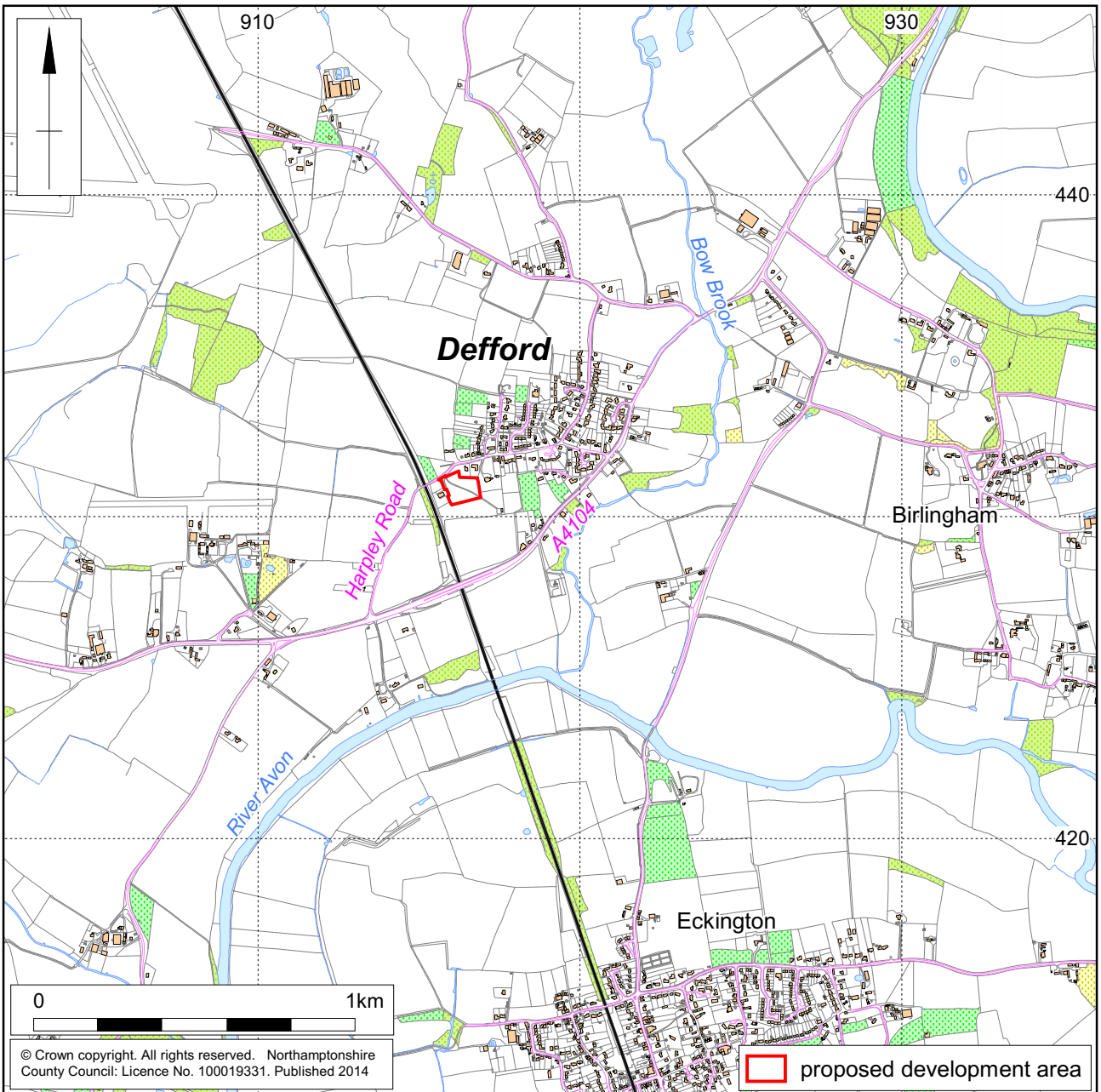
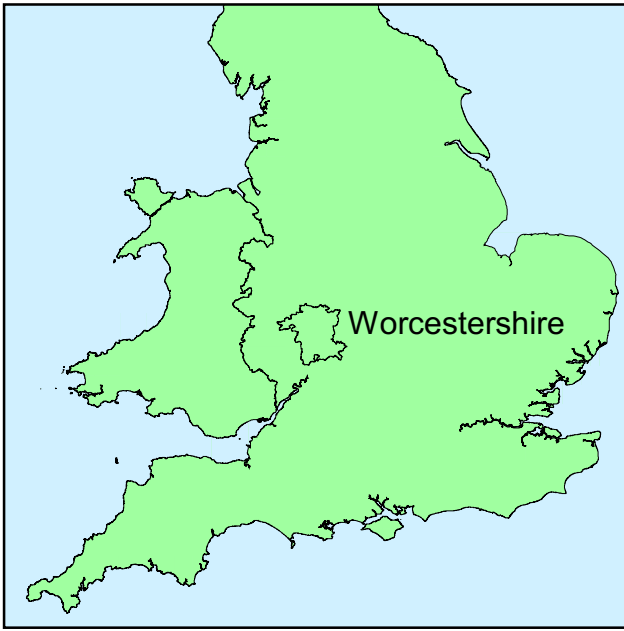
MOLA were commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd, on behalf of Banner Homes, to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land to the south of Harpley Road, Defford, Worcestershire. There is evidence for prehistoric and Roman occupation in the surrounding area and Defford is thought to have Saxon origins but principally developed in the medieval period. The site lies on the periphery of medieval occupation and is recorded as orchard and farmland from the late 19th century.

The evaluation recorded two post-medieval ditches. One in Trench 2 was evident as an earthwork and matched the position of a field boundary recorded on the first edition Ordnance Survey. The second ditch, in Trench 1, did not match any known features and is thought to be earlier. Fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material and animal bone were recovered from the ditch in Trench 1 and a sherd of 15th/16th-century pottery was recovered from the topsoil in Trench 8.

1 INTRODUCTION

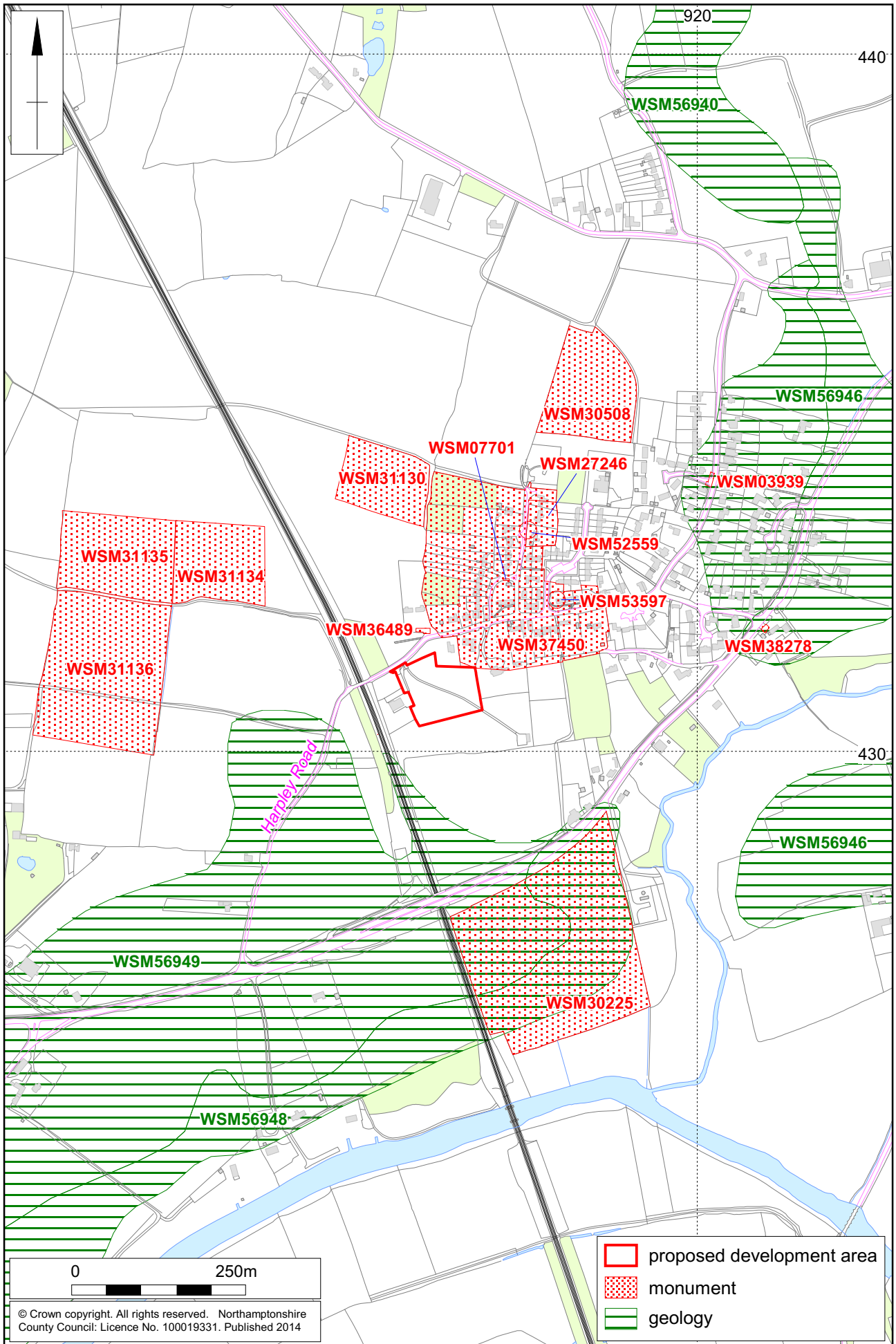
Planning permission is being sought for residential development on land off Harpley Road, Defford, Worcestershire (Fig 1, NGR 391620 243090). Banner Homes are seeking planning permission from Wychavon District Council to construct 20 dwellings with roads and landscaping on 0.8ha of land. The Historic Environment Planning Officer for Worcestershire County Council (WCC) advised that a programme of archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to determine the nature and extent of any archaeological remains within the Development Area (Glyde 2014). MOLA was commissioned by Dr Michael Dawson, CgMs Consulting Ltd acting on behalf of Banner Homes to undertake a programme of trial trenching within the proposed Development Area.

This document has been prepared by MOLA on behalf of the clients. It describes the proposed methodology undertaken for trial trench evaluation and includes up to date Historic Environment Record (HER) data (Cornah 2014).



1:20,000

Site Location Fig 1



Scale 1:7,500

Historic Environment Record (HER) data

Fig 2

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2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

The site lies on the eastern edge of the village of Defford on gradual sloping ground to the north of River Avon. The northern boundary is defined by Harpley Road, the modern extent of Defford lies to the east and the village hall is to the west (Front and Back Covers). To the south lies pasture and farmland. The site, covering the northern 0.8ha of a pasture field is divided by a track leading to a stable building to the south-east. It lies at approximately 30m above Ordnance Datum, on ground that gently slopes down from the north-east to the basin of the Avon valley.

The geology has been mapped as Charnmouth Mudstone formation (BGS GeoIndex). Prior to the archaeological works taking place, a geotechnical survey had been undertaken. The backfilled test pits were clearly visible in June 2014 and the positions surveyed (Fig 5).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

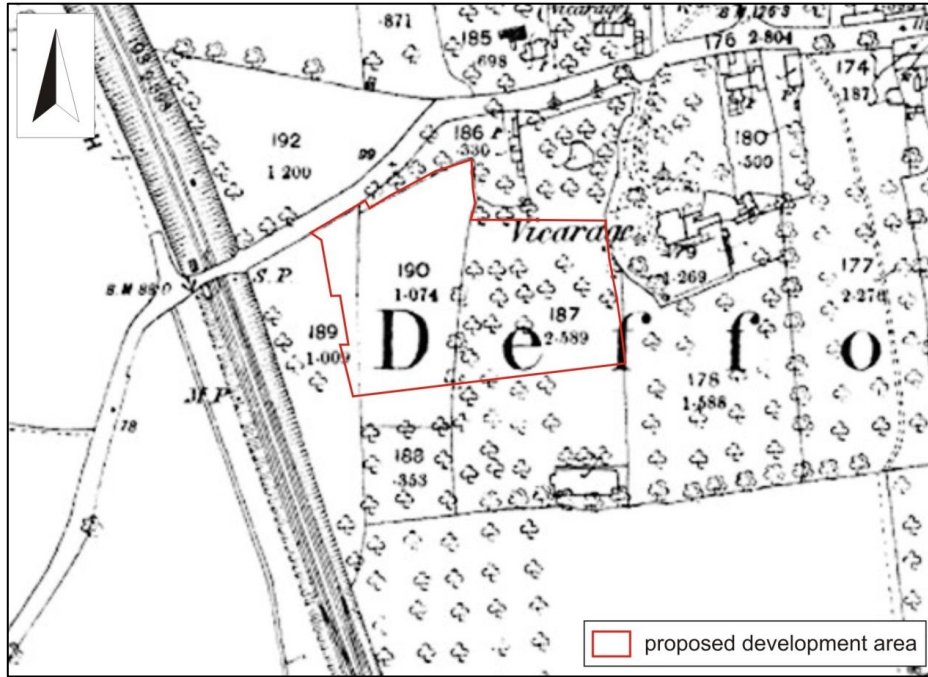
The archaeological background draws on information provided by Worcestershire County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) as well as available on line resources such as the digitised Victoria County History (Page 1924). A total of 15 monuments (Fig 2) dating from prehistory to the present day, 36 historic buildings (not shown on plan) of which six are Listed Buildings, and recorded geological areas of interest (Fig 2) formed part of the HER report (Cornah 2014). No monuments, buildings or other designations fall within the proposed development area.

The area to the east and south of Defford is known to have sand and gravel deposits of the New Inn and Wasperton formations (WSM56940, 56946, 56948 and 56949). It is thought that the deposits may have potential to provide information about the Palaeolithic landscape.

Aside from the scant artefacts very little is recorded or known about the prehistoric landscape until the Iron Age. The artefacts include Neolithic worked flint which were found during railway works (WSM07728); a Bronze Age worked stone object and a copper alloy object (WSM32183) were found in the parish. To the south of the site are records for an Iron Age and Roman settlement (WSM30225) mapped from aerial cropmarks and from geophysical survey. To the north-east of the site is an undated settlement (WSM30508) visible in cropmark data.

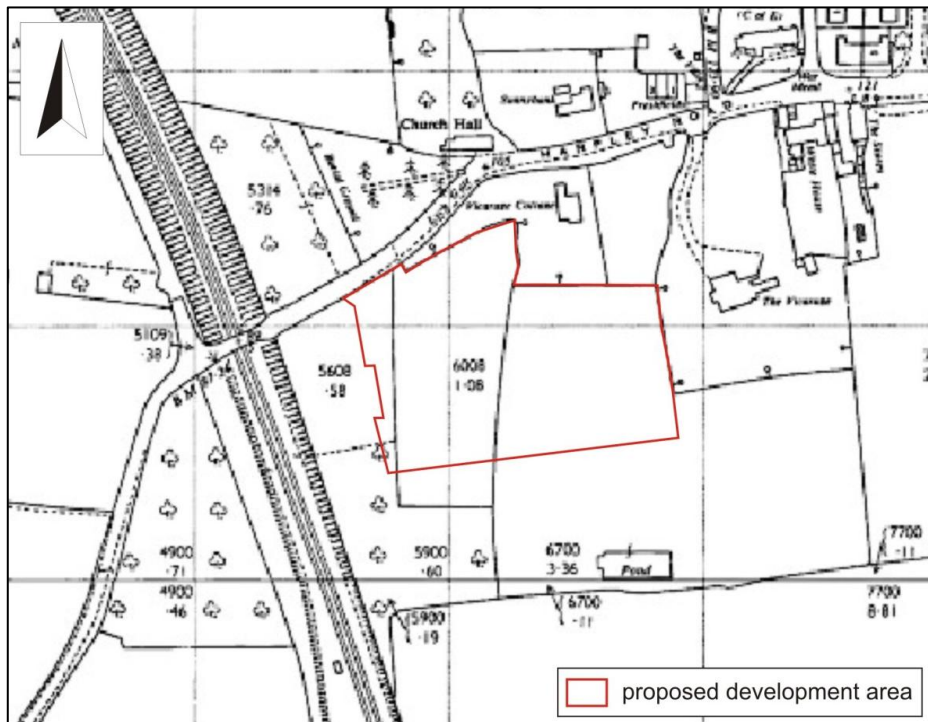
The precise origin and development of Defford (WSM37350) are unclear, but it is thought to have Saxon origins when it is mentioned in an endowment to Pershore Abbey by King Edgar in 992AD. The medieval village core was centred on St James's Church (WSM07717) and a set of punishment stocks (WSM07701) lay to the north of the church. There are records for medieval buildings including a cruck framed structure at the eastern end of the village (WSM03939). The site lies on the periphery of the medieval settlement but it is unclear whether it originally fell within it or was under ridge and furrow cultivation like areas to the west (WSM3114-6) and north (WSM31130).

The parish was enclosed in 1775 when it appears that the site was owned by Sir John Seabright (1775 Defford Inclosure map; Cornah 2014). By the time of the production of the 1885 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 3) the proposed development area had been divided into two narrow, rectangular fields which may have been orchards (Historic Landscape Characterisation HWR11572) or arable fields.



Excerpt of the first edition Ordnance Survey (1885, Worcestershire, 1:2,500) Fig 3

This field arrangement is visible on successive Ordnance Survey maps including 1968-70 1:2,500 editions (Fig 4). It is also visible on aerial photographs dating from 1940s (GoogleEarth).



Excerpt of the 1968-70 edition Ordnance Survey (Worcestershire 1:2,500) Fig 4

Between 1970 and the present day the two fields were merged to form a single unit. The new village hall, to the west of the site was constructed in the early 21st century.

Much of the archaeological record relates to post-medieval buildings including 17th to 19th farmsteads (WSM27246, 38278, 53597 and 52559) which no longer survive. Although there are buildings with 17th century parts, many of the upstanding buildings including Cannon House (WSM38370), located immediately east of the site are 19th century in origin.

3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims

It is the principal aim of the archaeological evaluation was to quantify the quality and extent of the archaeological resource. The trial trench evaluation was designed to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of important archaeological remains within the application area. Specifically this will be through the listed aims and objectives, which were as follows:

- To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present;
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains;
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of any artefactual evidence present;
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

3.2 Methodology

A total of 160 linear metres comprising eight trenches, 20m long and 2m wide, were excavated within the development area (Fig 5). Trenches 7 and 8 were repositioned on site due to the presence of a stock proof electric fence. The client and Historic Environment Planning Officer were informed of the change. A contingency of 12.50 linear metres (or 25m²) of trenching was not used. The trenches were positioned using Leica Viva Global Positioning System survey equipment operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$.

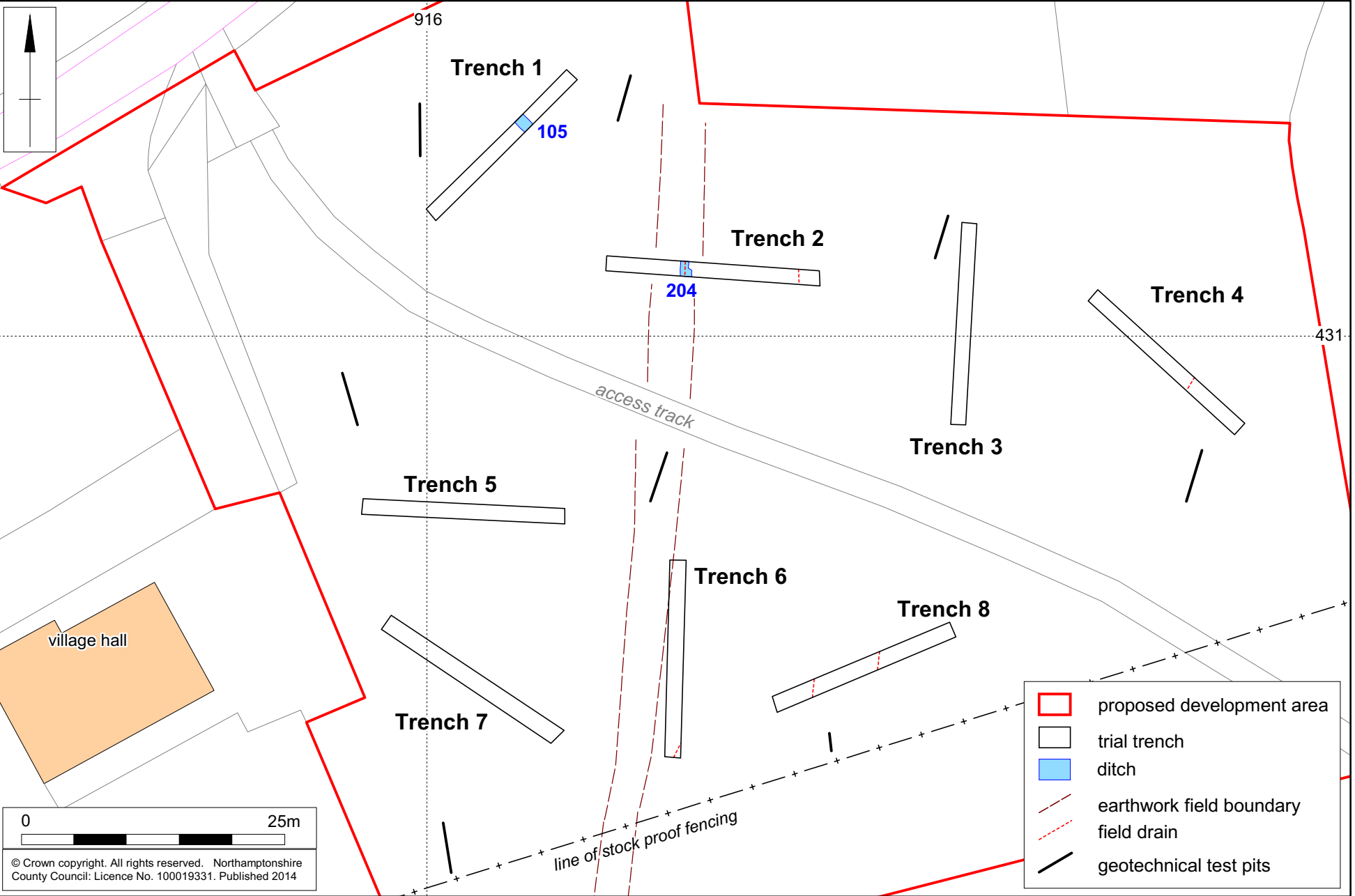
Excavation was carried out under continuous archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat toothless bucket. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately and adjacent to the trenches. Mechanical excavation proceeded to the top of the archaeological deposits or to the natural substrate where no archaeology was encountered. Machine excavated sondages were excavated at the southern end of Trench 3 and the eastern end of Trench 5 to test the depth of deposits.

Trenches containing possible archaeological remains were cleaned by hand, sufficient to define the features. Each feature or deposit was given a unique number consisting of the trench number and an individual context number (eg 402, Trench 4, context 2). The details of each context were recorded on pro-forma sheets. The trenches were planned (scale 1:50) and section drawings were made at an appropriate scale (1:10 or 1:20) where necessary. Levels, which were related to Ordnance Datum, were taken on the trenches at appropriate points, on section datum and on all major features. Trench locations were related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record was made of the evaluation, using 35mm black and white negative and digital images.

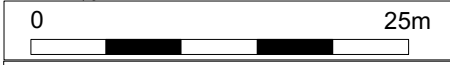
The Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment fieldwork code was WSM5744. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC 1992). Museums Worcestershire has adopted Archaeological Data Service (ADS) as the repository for digital material. ADS will advise WCC and MOLA and other relevant bodies as to the processes and likely charges for deposition of the site archive.

MOLA is an Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) registered organisation. The fieldwork and reporting is in accordance with a Brief (Glyde 2014). Archaeological excavation and recording followed the guidelines outlined in MOLA's *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual* (2014). All works were carried out in accordance with the WSI prepared by MOLA (Simmonds 2014), the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008).

Scale 1:500 (A4)



Excavated features Fig 5



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- proposed development area
- trial trench
- ditch
- earthwork field boundary
- field drain
- geotechnical test pits

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

4.1 General comments

The natural substrate generally comprised firm orange-brown sandy clays compact, mottled dark orange and grey clays at a generally consistent depth of 0.40m- 0.50m across the field (Fig 6; Appendix 1). The natural was sealed with a layer of subsoil, comprising compact light yellow-grey clays, red-brown or orange-brown sandy clays of a variable thickness across the site (0.08m- 0.25m). The boundary between natural substrate and subsoil was clear. The topsoil, overlying the subsoil, comprised a layer of compact/firm very dark brown clays or clayey sands and was of a consistent thickness (0.20-0.25m) across the field. A sherd of 15th /16th century iron glazed red earthenware pottery was recovered from the topsoil (801) in Trench 8.

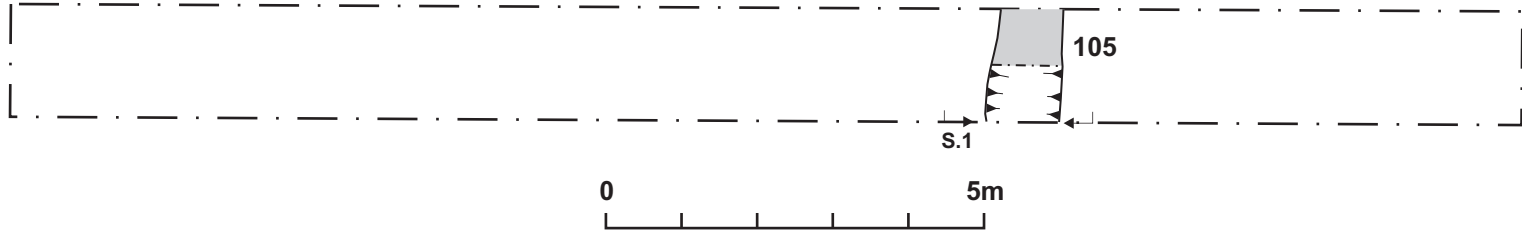


Composition of the deposits, Trench 3, looking west Fig 6

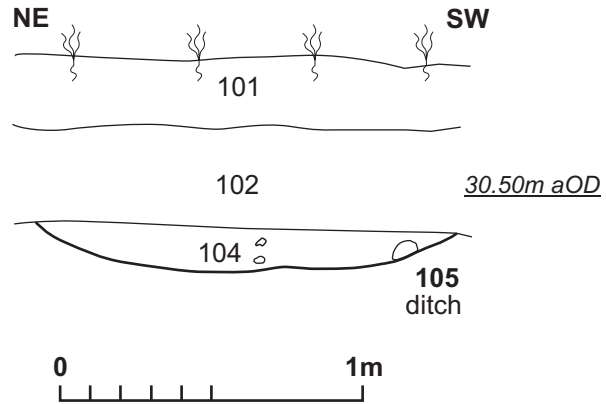
The archaeological features consisted entirely of ditches (Trenches 1 and 2; Figs 5 and 7), with the ditch in the vicinity of Trench 2 surviving as an earthwork (205) corresponding with the field boundary visible on the historic maps (Section 2.2; Figs 5 and 8).

4.2 Trench 1

In the centre of the trench was a ditch [105] (Figs 5 and 7), south-east – north-west aligned, 1.38m wide and 0.16m deep with a shallow bowl shaped profile. Its fill (104) was a firm orange-grey silty clay. Fragments of post-medieval brick and animal bone were recovered.



Section 1



Trench 1, plan and section, ditch 105 Fig 7

4.3 The former field boundary and Trench 2

In the centre of the proposed development area the remnants of a shallow earthwork ditch (205) were observed (Figs 5 and 8). It was clearly defined south of the farm track becoming discrete to the north near the northern boundary of the site. It was 127m long (north north-east – south south-west), 4m wide and up to 0.20m deep with a bowl shaped profile.

In Trench 2, no definite cut for the ditch was found but it was visible as a layer, 1.5m wide and 0.45m thick (Fig 8) heavily disturbed by root disturbance perhaps indicative of a hedge line. A large (6 inch bore) ceramic field drain lay at the base of the layer.



Field boundary (204) and 205, looking south Fig 8

5 THE FINDS

5.1 The pottery by Tora Hylton

An undiagnostic bodysherd in iron glazed red earthenware weighing 3.4g was recovered from topsoil deposits overlying Trench 8. The sherd is thin walled and the interior and exterior surfaces are coated in a very dark brown/black glaze. The fabric is hard and smooth, brick red in colour and there are few visible inclusions. The sherd is 19th century (pers com Paul Blinkhorn).

5.2 Ceramic building material by Pat Chapman

The three fragments of brick, weighing 285g, each in a different fabric come from trenches 1 and 2. The only fragment from fill (104), feature [105], is made with a fine, slightly soft, orange-brown silty clay. Two fragments come from layer (204); one is made with a hard fine orange-brown silty clay and the other is made in a similar clay with frequent tiny gravel, shell and other calcareous inclusions.

The tile sherd from fill (104) feature [105] is 20mm thick, weighs 165g, and is made with a slightly coarse sandy silty dark orange-brown clay. There is a large thumb print on the underside of the tile.

These small pieces of brick and tile are post-medieval in date, but not modern machine-made artefacts.

5.3 The animal bone by Adam Reid

A total of 140g of bone was recovered from the single fill (104) of ditch [105], which provided no clear dating evidence. The material consists of 11 long bone and rib fragments of indeterminate medium/large mammal and a fragment of cattle mandible. There are no clear signs of butchery or gnawing on any of the fragments and the small assemblage tells us little about the human activity at the site. However, the good quality of preservation of the material suggests the potential for additional faunal analysis, should any further work take place.

7 CONCLUSION

The results of the archaeological trial trench evaluation suggest that the proposed development area had been farmland on the periphery of settlement since at the least the medieval period. The evaluation recorded features which relate to the post-medieval enclosure of the parish which took place from the 1775.

Two post-medieval ditches, one of which (in Trench 2) matches the position of a field boundary recorded on the 1:2,500 editions of the Ordnance Survey mapping (1885 to 1970). Originally the boundary is likely to have been defined by a hedge; later a 6-inch bore land drain truncated the boundary. The earthwork ditch is on the position as the field drain. The second ditch, in Trench 1, is likely to be post medieval in date although it is on a different alignment to the mapped field boundaries. The ceramic building material recovered from ditch [105] is likely to have been manufactured prior to the 19th century. Modern machine made bricks started to be manufactured from the mid 19th century as the demand for bricks increased (Brunskill 1990).

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	20m, 1.8m &	391607 243118	31.00m	0.40m & 30.60m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
101	Topsoil	Compact, very dark brown clay, occasional medium rounded cobbles and occasional small sub angular stones	0.20m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Compact, light yellow-grey clays, occasional small sub angular pebbles. Clear with natural 103	0.20m thick	-
103	Natural	Compact, mottled dark orange and grey clays, few small to medium rounded pebbles	-	-
104	Fill Ditch [105]	Firm, orange-grey silty clay, rare small-medium rounded chert	1.38m wide 0.16m thick	Ceramic building material Animal bone
105	Cut of Ditch Fill 104	South-east to north-west aligned, shallow bowl shaped profile comprising slightly rounded base and gradual sloping sides	1.38m wide 0.16m deep	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	20m, 1.8m &	391627 243106	31.00m	0.50m & 30.50m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
201	Topsoil	Same as 101	0.17- 0.25m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Same as 102	0.18m-0.25m thick	-
203	Natural	Same as 103	-	-
204	Deposit	Compact, mid grey clay. 6" bore ceramic pipe at base (field drain)	1.5m wide 0.45m thick	-
205	Earthwork – ditch Historic field boundary	Aligned NNE-SSW, visible to south of farm track as a clearly defined linear hollow. Shallow bowl shaped profile with rounded base rising to concave, gradual sloping sides	127m long 4m wide 0.20m deep	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	20m, 1.8m &	391651 243101	31.50m	0.40m & 31.10m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
301	Topsoil	Same as 101	0.20m-0.25m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Firm, red- brown sandy clays, occasional small sub angular pebbles	0.08m-0.15m thick	-
303	Natural	Coarse gravels in orange clay matrix at northern end. Compact grey clays at south	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
4	20m, 1.8m &	391670 243097	31.70m	0.40m & 31.30m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
401	Topsoil	Same as 101	0.20m thick	-
402	Subsoil	Firm, mid orange-brown sandy clays, occasional small pebbles, thicker at eastern end	0.08m-0.20m thick	-
403	Natural	Firm orange-brown sandy clays with bands of coarse gravel and water rolled cobbles	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
5	20m, 1.8m & E-W	391602 243083	28.50m	0.43m & 28.07m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
501	Topsoil	Same as 101	0.25m thick	-
502	Subsoil	Same as 102	0.18m thick	-
503	Natural	Same as 103	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
6	20m, 1.8m &	391623 243068	28.00m	0.43m & 28.67m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
601	Topsoil	Same as 101	0.23m thick	-
602	Subsoil	Same as 102	0.20m thick	-
603	Natural	Same as 103	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
7	20m, 1.8m &	391603 243067	28.00m	0.45m & 27.55m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
701	Topsoil	Same as 101	0.25m thick	-
702	Subsoil	Same as 102	0.20m thick	-
703	Natural	Same as 103	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
8	20m, 1.8m &	391641 243068	29.00m	0.47m & 28.53m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
801	Topsoil	Same as 101	0.22m- 0.27m thick	Sherd of 19th century pottery
802	Subsoil	Firm, dark red-brown clay sands with occasional rounded coarse gravel, poorly sorted. Merging with 803	0.20m thick	-
803	Natural	Same as 103	-	-



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