

## Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Bardon Road Coalville, Leicestershire May 2015

Report No. 15/95

Authors: Chris Chinnock, Mo Muldowney

Illustrator: James Ladocha



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Accession Number: X.A21.2015

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#### OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	OASIS No: molarnort1 -	212396	
Project name	Trial trench evaluation or	land at Bardon Road, Coalville, Leicestershire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	During May 2015 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by MOLA Northampton, for Keepmoat Homes. The works identified a truncated urned cremation burial, possibly dating to the middle Bronze Age and a curvilinear gully, possibly part of a roundhouse ring-gully of the middle-late Iron Age, and a modern boundary ditch.		
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Trial trench evaluation		
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None		
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	Desk-Based Assessment	(Thomas 2013), Geophysical survey (Fisher 2015)	
Current Land use	Pasture		
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown		
Monument type/ period		rial, undated ring ditch, modern boundary ditch	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	Bronze Age pottery		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Leicestershire		
Site address (including postcode)	Bardon Road, Coalville		
Study area (sq.m or ha)	c. 6.2ha		
OS Easting & Northing	SK 4383 1326		
(use grid sq. letter code)	31( 4303 1320		
Height OD	150m - 160m above Ord	nance Datum	
PROJECT CREATORS	·		
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Richard Clark, Principal F Council	Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County	
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	James Fairclough		
Project Manager	Mo Muldowney		
Sponsor or funding body	Keepmoat Homes		
PROJECT DATE	05/05/0045 00/05/0045		
Start date/End date ARCHIVES	05/05/2015 - 08/05/2015 Location	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)	
ARCHIVES	(Accession no.)	content (eg pottery, annal bone etc)	
Physical	X.A21.2015	Pottery human bone and other finds	
Paper	-	Site file	
Digital	Mapinfo plans, Word report		
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)		
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Bardon Road, Coalville, Leicestershire May 2015		
Serial title & volume	15/95		
Author(s)	Mo Muldowney, Chris Chinnock		
Page numbers	26		
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### Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Bardon Road Coalville, Leicestershire May 2015

#### Abstract

During May 2015 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by MOLA Northampton, for Keepmoat Homes. The works identified a truncated urned cremation burial, possibly dating to the middle Bronze Age and a curvilinear gully, possibly part of a roundhouse ring-gully of the middle-late Iron Age, and a modern boundary ditch.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out in May 2015 by MOLA Northampton on land off Bardon Road, Coalville, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 4383 1326; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Keepmoat Homes.

The scope of works was outlined and detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by MOLA Northampton (Finn 2015) following advice from Richard Clark, Leicestershire County Council Principal Planning Archaeologist (LCCPPA). The works were carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; DCLG 2012).

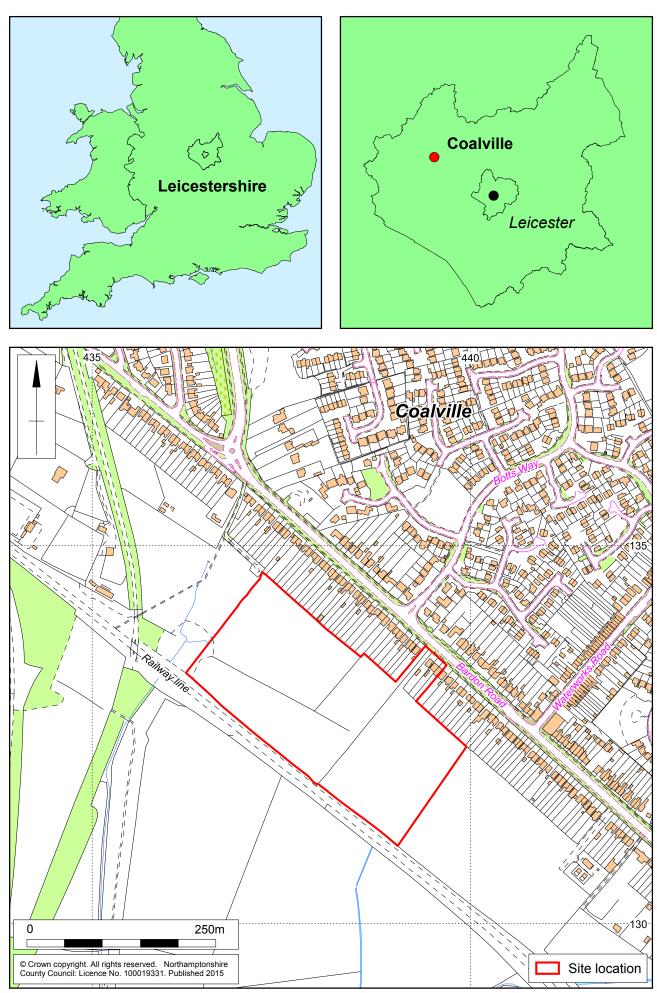
The evaluation conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and guidance for Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with Historic England, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (HE 2009).

#### 2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the work was to determine if archaeological remains were extant within the proposed development area, and if present, to determine the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting. This will inform further decisions regarding the suitability of the site for development.

The general aims of the investigation were to:

- Determine the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the proposed application area;
- Determine the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- Identify occupation and exploitation of the valley environment from the prehistoric through to the post-medieval period;
- Assess the cultivation features identified within the desk based assessment;
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine past local environmental conditions.



Scale 1:5000

Site Location Fig 1

Specific research objectives will be drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (EH 1991a; Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012) as relevant depending upon the results of the evaluation.

#### 3 BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Location and geology

The proposed development occupies an area of c6.18ha and is located on the southern edge of the town of Coalville in Leicestershire, and to the south-west of Bardon Road. The proposed development area comprises four fields lying to the rear of the houses facing onto A511 Bardon Road, and will be bounded to the north-east by the back gardens of those properties. Aligned parallel to Bardon Road, and bounding the site to the south-west, is a freight railway line. To the south-east and north-west, the site is bounded by agricultural fields, hedgerows, and a field drain. The development comprises the demolition of numbers 138, 140 and 142 Bardon Road, and the construction of up to 135 homes along with access roads, open space and landscaping.

The site straddles a low south-west to north-east aligned ridge at c. 155-160m aOD with shallow valleys to east and west. The lowest ground is at the south-east and west corners.

The superficial geology of the site is formed of Gunthorpe Member sedimentary mudstone as the solid geology, overlaid by superficial deposits of Oadby Diamiction Member. This latter type contains Cretaceous and Jurassic rock fragments, subordinate lenses of sand and gravel, clay and silt. A narrow band of alluvial deposits can be found down the west hand side of the site associated with a small watercourse (BGS 2015).

#### 3.2 Historical and archaeological background

An Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Desk Based Assessment (henceforth the DBA), utilising the resources of the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire, was prepared by the Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP) (Thomas 2013). Its findings are summarised here. No designated heritage assets are known to exist within the proposed development area. One spot find is recorded in the HER from within the site, a Neolithic flint knife blade (HER MLE7288). Significant archaeological and historic activity is known from the vicinity of the site, with eight listed buildings and forty HER points to be found within and around a 1km radius of the proposed development site. The closest designated heritage asset is the Grade II listed Christ Church, *c*750m to the north-west (MLE14487).

According to Richard Clark, Principal Planning Archaeologist, the evidence suggests that "the site has a moderate to high potential to contain significant buried archaeological remains", particularly from the Neolithic to Bronze Age period. The following summary of archaeological and historical features is drawn from the pre-existing DBA (Thomas 2013).

#### Prehistoric

The single findspot from within the proposed development site comprises a planoconvex flint knife of late Neolithic date (MLE7288). The exact find location is not precisely known. Other prehistoric activity is known from the vicinity, with Mesolithic flints found to the south-west of the site, and Neolithic axes to the east and to the north. Previous archaeological fieldwalking surveys around half a kilometre to the south of the site have also produced large quantities of Neolithic/Bronze Age flints. This corresponds with a general trend of extensive prehistoric activity in Leicestershire from the 5th to 2nd millennium BC.

#### Romano-British

Romano-British activity is known to have been reasonably extensive in the East Midlands area. Bardon Road may have its origins as a Roman road, with possible patches of the Roman surface surviving. Settlement evidence is suggested by the reported discovery of mosaic flooring c1km to the north-west of Bardon Road. Some Roman coins have been found in the Coalville region.

#### Saxon and medieval

No evidence of Anglo-Saxon and medieval activity is known from the development site. Some medieval settlement is known from the vicinity, including the medieval village of Hugglescote about a kilometre to the south. Associated with the village is the demolished church of St James, and Hugglescote. A medieval deer park can be found *c*1.5km to the east, and medieval ceramics were recovered from archaeological excavation just over half a kilometre to the south. It seems likely that the fields were part of the open field system in the medieval period, probably belonging to Hugglescote village. Ridge and furrow, aligned east to west, could be identified from aerial photographs in fields to the south-west of the site.

#### Post-medieval and modern

There are no post-medieval, Victorian or modern heritage assets known from within the application site. The village of Coalville, around 1km to the north-west of the site, has mid-19th-century origins and began to develop along with its coal industry after 1824. Two collieries were operated in the near vicinity. The area to the south and west of the site is also crossed by railway works. The former Leicester to Swannington railway and the Ashby & Nuneaton Joint Railway both run along the boundaries of the site. The former of these is still in operation as a freight line for the nearby granite quarry.

During these periods, the site is considered to have been likely to have retained its agricultural function. Historic mapping and aerial photographs show that the easternmost field of the site was under allotments by 1903. The row of houses along Bardon Road were completed by 1948, and the fell out of use sometime before 1963.

#### Previous work

Several programmes of archaeological work have previously been undertaken in the near vicinity of the site. A scatter of pits, ditches, field boundaries and other features were identified to the south of the development site by geophysical surveys in 2000, 2010 and 2012. In 2011 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out up to the southern boundary of the current proposed development site. Medieval or later plough furrows were identified, along with an earlier ditch and three probable post-medieval field boundaries.

A small archaeological evaluation near Hugglescote identified an undated posthole and feature, and a few sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery. To the north of the

application site, *c*8ha were examined by geophysical survey (Simmonds 2009). One possible ditch and evidence for ridge and furrow were identified. However, the large-scale dumping of coal waste on the site prevented further survey.

Fieldwalking events around the area have recovered material from most periods between the Neolithic and the 18th century.

#### 4 METHODOLOGY

Fifteen trenches were excavated across the development area, sited to target a small number of linear anomalies identified in the preceding geophysical survey (Fisher 2015). Originally, fourteen trenches were agreed but an extra trench was excavated after consultation with the LCCPA in order to further characterise the south-central part of the site.

The trenches were excavated using a 360 tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological direction to reveal natural substrate and were stacked separately at the side of the trench. All procedures complied with MOLA Health and Safety provisions and MOLA Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were fully recorded, following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All deposits were given a separate context number in a sequence assigned to each trench. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation.

All trench locations were set-out using Leica Viva Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of  $\pm$  0.05m. A full digital photographic record was maintained. The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

All trenches were backfilled with their up-cast material and compacted by the mechanical excavator.

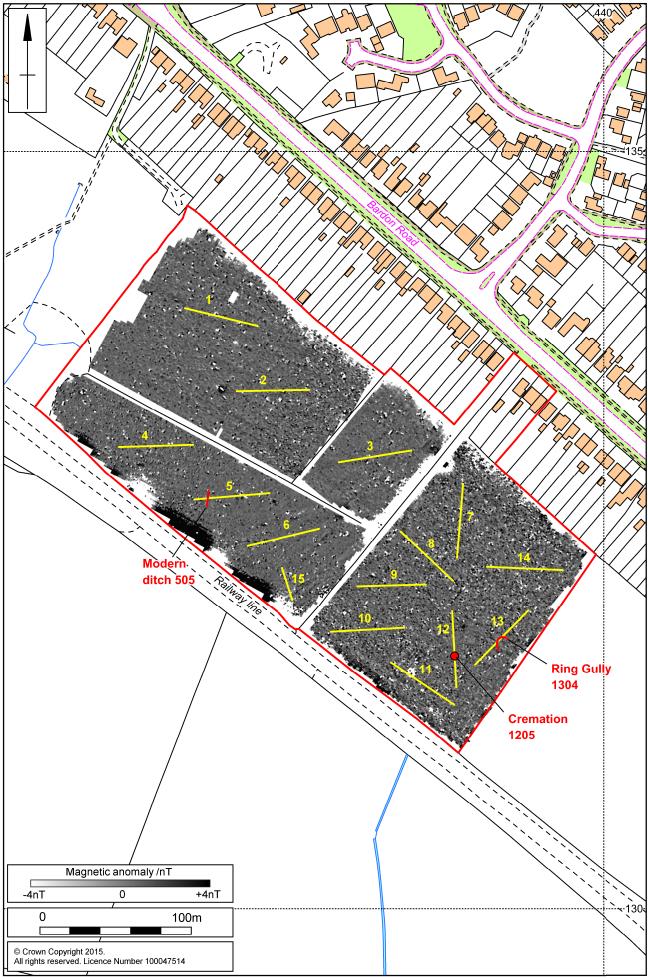
All works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (ClfA 2014b).

#### 5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

#### 5.1 General stratigraphy

Archaeological features were identified in trenches 5, 12 and 13. All other trenches contained land drains, but no other archaeological remains. The natural horizon across the site was light orange-brown clay. It was overlain by topsoil, dark brownish-grey clay silt only. No subsoil was present. Unless otherwise stated all recorded features cut the natural horizon and were sealed by topsoil.

A detailed context description is included in the Appendix.



No trace of the ridge and furrow indicated by the geophysical survey (Fisher 2015) was present in the trenches. The potential archaeological feature in the south-east field did not appear in either Trench 8 or 9, although there was a corresponding feature in Trench 13.

#### 5.2 Trench 5

This trench was located midway along the south-western edge of the development area, aligned east to west. It was 50m long and 0.58m deep. A single ditch [505] was identified (Fig 2).

Ditch 505, aligned south-west to north-east, was 0.60m wide and 0.30m deep with a steep-sided U-shaped profile and flat base (Fig 5, Section 1). The lower fill (504), comprised compact light orange-brown clay with occasional charcoal flecks throughout. The upper fill, (503), comprised firm mid brown-grey sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout. A fragment of modern bottle glass was recovered from the base.

#### 5.3 Trench 12

This trench was located in the south-eastern corner of the site, aligned north to south. It was 50m long and 0.28m deep. A cremation burial within a pottery vessel was excavated in the central part of the trench, *c*21m from the southern end (Fig 2).

The cremation deposit was set into a small circular pit 0.05m deep and 0.15m wide. Only the base of the cremation urn, (1204), remained, the upper part having been truncated by the plough (Fig 3). The urn was filled with a friable mid brown-grey sandy silt with occasional fragments of the charcoal and cremated human bone (1203).



Trench 12, cremation burial [1205], plan view Fig 3

#### 5.4 Trench 13

This trench was located roughly parallel to the south-eastern edge of the development area, aligned south-west to north-east. It was 50m long and 0.29m deep. The north-west side of a curvilinear ditch was present in the central part of the trench (Figs 2 and 5).

Curvilinear ditch [1304] was 0.31m wide by 0.12m deep with a steep, U-shaped profile and concave base (Figs 4 and 5, Section 2). The fill (1303) comprised friable mid brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout. No finds were recovered.



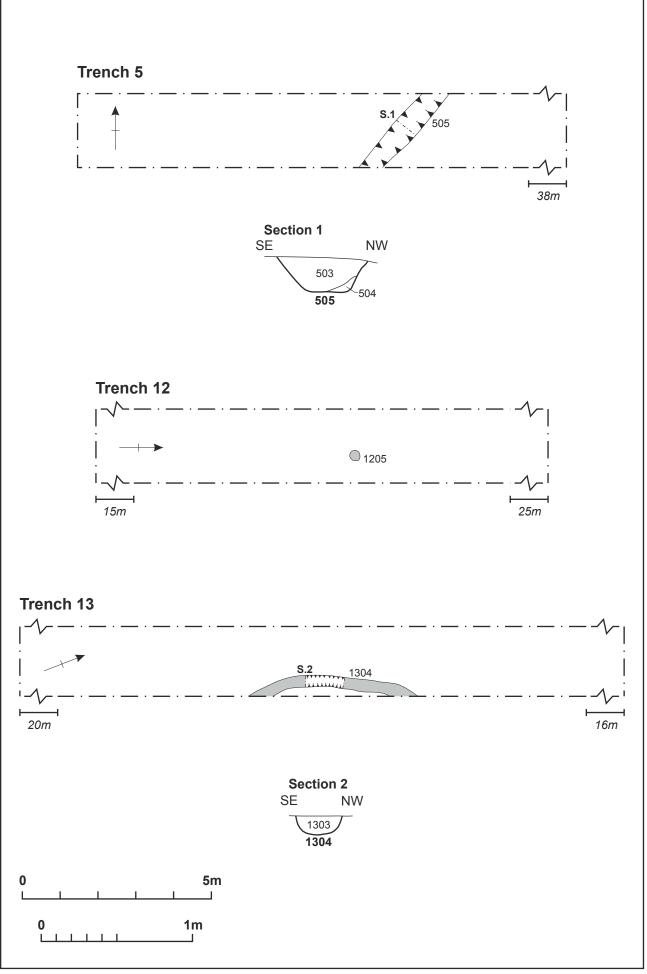
Trench 13, curvilinear ditch [1304], looking south-west Fig 4

#### 6 THE CREMATION DEPOSIT by Andy Chapman

The truncated base of an urn [1204] contained a remnant of a cremation deposit (1203) comprising white calcined bone and charcoal in friable grey-brown soil, suggesting that a mixed deposit of bone and pyre debris had been deposited in the urn. The recovered material comprises 1.9g of bone and 0.6g of wood charcoal.

The flat base of the urn is 160m in diameter and 19mm thick, with the lower walls of a similar thickness. The fabric contains frequent angular flint inclusions and has a dark grey core and inner surface, and an orange-brown external surface. The vessel was poorly fired, with the base fragmenting on lifting.

It is most likely that this was an urned cremation burial dating to the middle Bronze Age.



#### 7 DISCUSSION

The trial trench evaluation identified two features of archaeological interest, located in the south-eastern corner of the development area. Only one geophysical anomaly was identified (Trench 13).

The small curvilinear ditch could be part of an eaves drip gully surrounding a roundhouse, or a small stock enclosure and is likely to date to the late prehistoric period although no dateable evidence was recovered from this feature. The nearby cremation deposit contains only a small amount of cremated human bone and much of the pottery urn has been truncated. Given the small amount of human bone present, it is likely that this deposit is a token burial of pyre debris mixed with human remains. Based on the pottery form and fabric this deposit is most likely to date to the Bronze Age period. This correlates well with the recorded Neolithic and Bronze Ages flint found in the surrounding area.

A ditch aligned north to south, containing modern bottle glass, was located in the south-western field and is likely to have been a relict field boundary which at least predates the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map for the area. The furrows, from medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, present in the geophysical data for the northernmost field, were not identified in the excavated trenches.

The identified archaeological remains have the potential to contribute to further understanding of the middle and later prehistoric periods, namely the Bronze Age and Iron Age and could contribute to the following research agendas:

- Refining the ceramic chronology for the 1st millennium BC,
- The morphology of Iron Age settlements, and
- The nature of the transition from the Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age.

The potential for further (mitigation) work has been indicated by the LCCPPA, based on the identification of prehistoric remains in Trenches 12 and 13, and a possible second ring ditch anomaly in the centre of the south-east field near Trenches 8, 9 and 12. He will determine the extent of the investigation in due course.

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#### **APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY**

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NW end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
1	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		152.94m	0.30 152.64m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.30m thick	-
102	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, E end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
2	50m x 1.8m E-W		156.49m	0.30m 156.19m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.30m thick	-
202	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
3	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		159.02m	0.28m 158.74m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
301	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.28m thick	-
302	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, E end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
4	50m x 1.8m E-W		154.91m	0.32 154.59m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
401	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.32m thick	-
402	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout. Occasional patches of gravel throughout.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, W end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
5	50m x 1.8m E-W		156.28m	0.28m 156.00m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
501	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.28m thick	-
502	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-
503	Fill of [505]	Firm mid brown-grey sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.60m wide, 0.24m thick	Glass
504	Fill of [505]	Compact light orange-brown clay with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.09m wide, 0.06m thick	-
505	Ditch	Linear ditch with steep-sided U- shaped profile and flat base.	0.60m wide, 0.24m deep	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
6	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		158.23m	0.34m 157.89m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
601	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.34m thick	-
602	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout. Occasional patches of gravel throughout.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, N end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
7	50m x 1.8m N-S		158.82m	0.30m 158.52m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
701	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.30m thick	-
702	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NW end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
8	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		157.89m	0.27m 157.62m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
801	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.27m thick	-
802	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, W end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
9	50m x 1.8m E-W		157.10m	0.36m 156.74m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
901	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.36m thick	-
902	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, W end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
10	50m x 1.8m E-W		156.34m	0.36m 155.98m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1001	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.36m thick	-
1002	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout. Patches of light grey clay with flint throughout.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, SE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
11	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		153.64m	0.37m 153.27m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1101	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.37m thick	-
1102	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, N end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
12	50m x 1.8m N-S		154.68m	0.28m 154.40
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1201	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.28m thick	-
1202	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-
1203	Fill of (1204)	Friable mid brown-grey sandy silt with occasional pieces of charcoal and cremated human bone throughout.	0.13m wide, 0.04m thick	Cremated human bone, Sample 1
1204	Pot in [1205]	Truncated base of pottery urn	0.15m wide, 0.05m deep	Pottery
1205	Pit	Shallow sub-circular pit.	0.15m wide, 0.05m deep	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
13	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		154.82m	0.29m 154.53m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1301	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.29m thick	-
1302	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-
1303	Fill of [1304]	Friable mid brown-grey clay silt with charcoal flecks and occasional small sub-rounded stones throughout.	0.31m wide, 0.12m thick	-
1304	Ditch	Curvilinear ditch with steep-sided U-shaped profile and concave base.	0.31m wide, 0.12m thick	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, E end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
14	50m x 1.8m E-W		156.44m	0.32m 156.16m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1401	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.32m thick	-
1402	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NW end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
15	22m x 1.8m NW-SE		157.58m	0.34m 157.24m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1501	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks throughout.	0.34m thick	-
1502	Natural	Hard, light orange-brown clay with moderate amount of medium to large sub-rounded and sub- angular stones throughout.	-	-











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