



**A programme of archaeological observation
investigation, recording, analysis and publication at
Whitsundoles Farm, Salford
Bedfordshire
March 2014- June 2015**

Report No. 15/117

BEDFM:2014.20

Author and Illustrator: Carol Simmonds



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Quality control and sign off:

Issue No.	Date approved:	Checked by:	Verified by:	Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1	22/6/15	Pat Chapman	Anthony Maul	Andy Chapman	Draft for client review
2	22/7/2015			Michael Dawson	Final

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		molanort1- 215100
Project title	A programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication at Whitsundoles Farm, Salford, Bedfordshire March 2014- June 2015	
Short description	<p>MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Hall Bros/ Smiths Construction, to carry out archaeological observation on the site of the former quarry at Whitsundoles Farm, Salford, Beds., during the restoration of the landfill site. The first stage of the archaeological observation and monitoring took place during the importation of inert material to raise existing ground levels across agricultural land to facilitate the establishment of woodland and associated habitat (CB/13/02450/MW). The second stage of works involved archaeological recording during the construction of a noise attenuation bund built around the landfill area.</p> <p>The archaeological observation works therefore comprised two distinct phases; the first stage was the observation of the vegetation strip across the proposed land fill area. The second phase comprised the monitoring and archaeological recording within an area from which the topsoil had been removed to provide the base of a clay bund in the northern part of the site.</p> <p>The site is situated within an extensive and rich archaeological landscape with evidence dating from the Mesolithic up to the present day. The archaeological works confirmed the presence of ditches which are assumed to be prehistoric in date although no dateable material was recovered. A posthole of unknown date and a probable hedgerow were also recorded.</p>	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	Heritage Assessment (Dawson 2012)	
Current land use	Former quarry and landfill	
Future work	None	
Monument type and period	Unknown ditches (presumed Iron Age date)	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Bedfordshire	
Site address	Whitsundoles Farm, Salford	
Easting Northing	SP 92230 40064	
Area	8234sq metres	
Height aOD	70m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA Northampton	
Project brief originator	-	
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton	
Director/Supervisor	Sam Egan, Carol Simmonds	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting on behalf of Hall Bros/ Smiths Construction	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	March 2014	
End date	June 2015	

ARCHIVES	Location	Contents
Physical	BEDFM:2014.20	None
Paper		1 archive box of site records
Digital		Digital photographs, pdf of report and dxf data
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	A programme of archaeological observation investigation, recording, analysis and publication at Whitsundoles Farm, Salford Bedfordshire March 2014- June 2015	
Serial title & volume	MOLA Northampton 15/117	
Author	Carol Simmonds	
Page numbers	23 pages text and illustrations	
Date	June 2015, revised July 2015	

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A programme of archaeological observation investigation, recording, analysis and publication at Whitsundoles Farm, Salford Bedfordshire March 2014- June 2015

Abstract

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Hall Bros/ Smiths Construction, to carry out archaeological observation on the site of the former quarry at Whitsundoles Farm, Salford, Beds., during the restoration of the landfill site. The first stage of the archaeological observation and monitoring took place during the importation of inert material to raise existing ground levels across agricultural land to facilitate the establishment of woodland and associated habitat (CB/13/02450/MW). The second stage of works involved archaeological recording during the construction of a noise attenuation bund built around the landfill area.

The archaeological observation works therefore comprised two distinct phases; the first stage was the observation of the vegetation strip across the proposed land fill area. The second phase comprised the monitoring and archaeological recording within an area from which the topsoil had been removed to provide the base of a clay bund in the northern part of the site.

The site is situated within an extensive and rich archaeological landscape with evidence dating from the Mesolithic up to the present day. The archaeological works confirmed the presence of ditches which are assumed to be prehistoric in date although no dateable material was recovered. A posthole of unknown date and a probable hedgerow were also recorded.

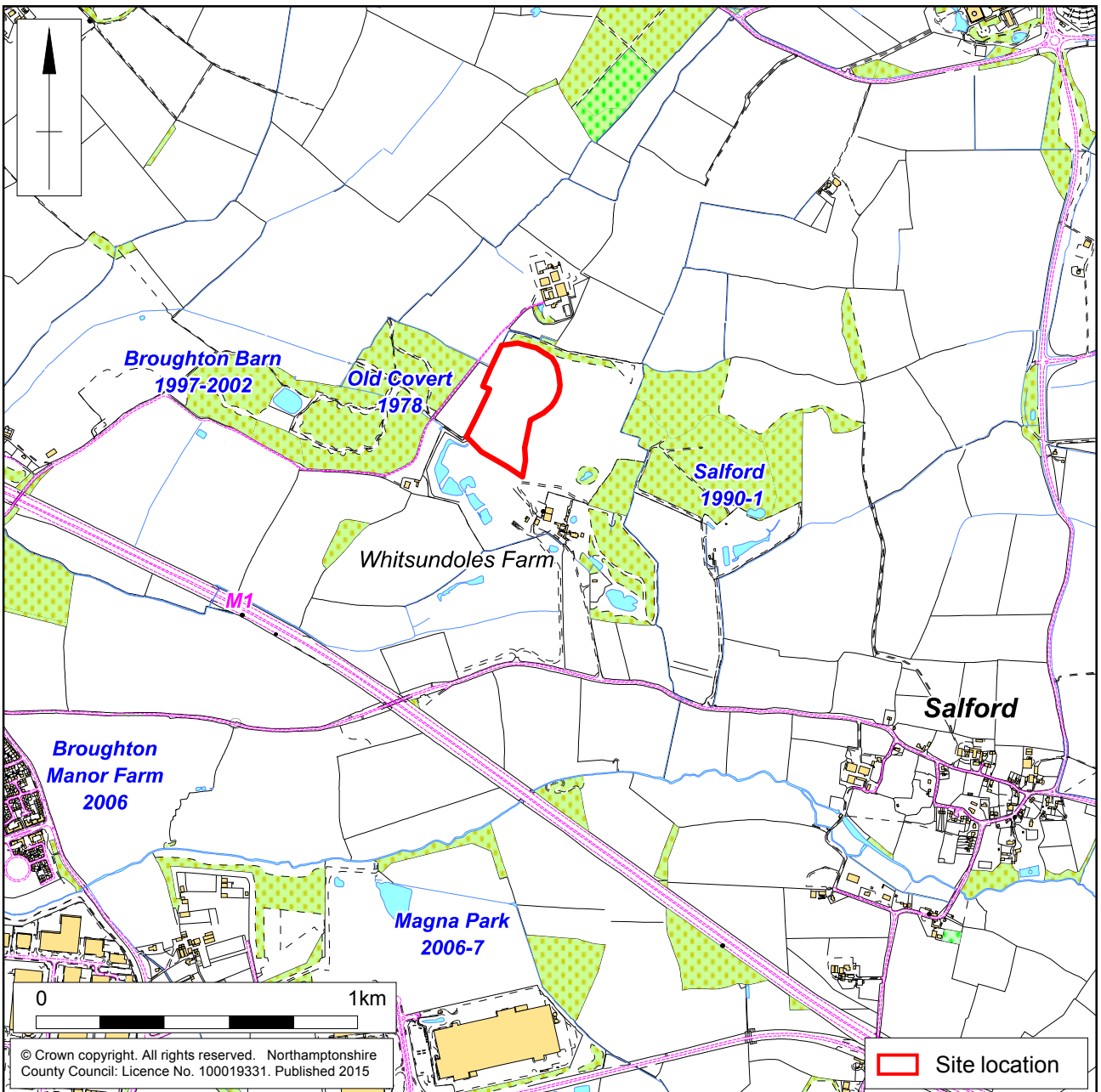
1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting and Hall Bros/ Smiths Construction to carry out an archaeological programme of observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication at Whitsundoles Farm, Salford, Bedfordshire (NGR: SP 92230 40064; Fig 1).

Planning permission had been granted to raise existing ground levels on the site of a former quarry at Whitsundoles Farm. The ground level would be increased by dumping imported inert waste on top of topsoil stripped of vegetation. The works were carried out following a request for observation of the vegetation strip by Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists (CBCA) in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DCLG 2012). The monitoring works were undertaken in accordance with a Mitigation Plan and Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by GP Planning (2013).

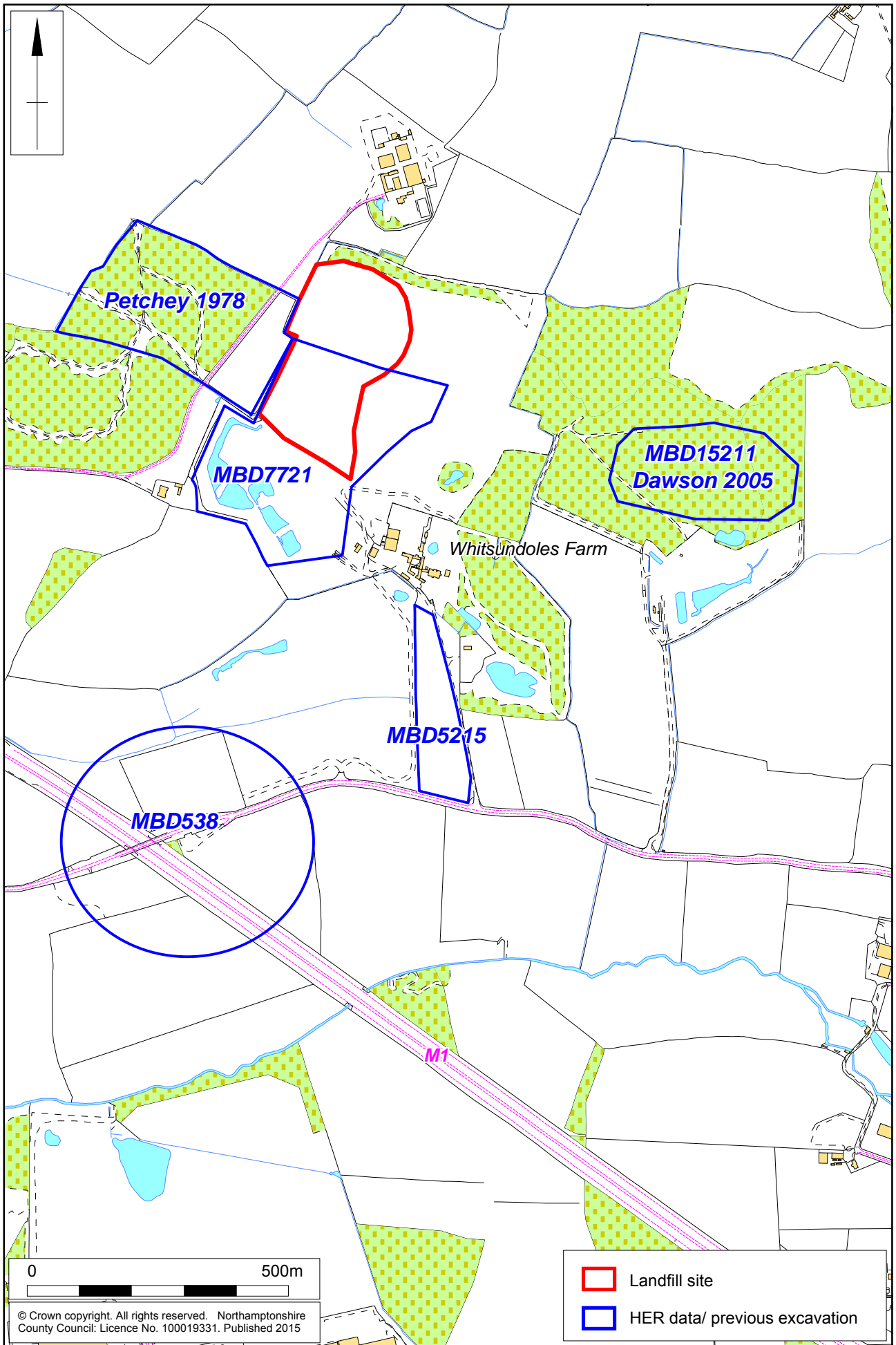
The second phase of works comprised the observation and recording of the soil strip to create a noise attenuation bund around the northern part of the landfill area. The archaeological mitigation works were undertaken in accordance with a WSI (Leigh 2014) prepared by MOLA.

Previous excavations in the vicinity have recorded a prehistoric landscape of occupation set within an extensive field system as well as later Saxon and medieval settlement.



Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:10,000 (A4)

Historic Environment Record (HER) data Fig 2

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

For the initial observation works was intended to ensure that no archaeology was disturbed during the dumping of inert waste on areas of hitherto undisturbed ground (GP Planning 2013).

The general aims of the later works observing the stripped area of the footing for the clay bund were to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the development, and to inform any mitigation decisions which might be required (Leigh 2014).

The specific objectives of the project are to provide further information on the following:

- The location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present at the proposed development site,
- The integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present at the proposed development site.

The results, if relevant will be considered in reference to the relevant regional and local research frameworks (Oake *et al* 2007 and Medlycott 2011).

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location and geology

Whitsundoles Farm is located c1.8km to the north-west of Salford on the northern edge of Milton Keynes. The former quarry workings, now a land fill site, are located to the west of the farm buildings and are bounded by fields to the north and south and by the Broughton Grounds Community Nature Reserve to the west. The area under archaeological observation and recording lay on the northern edge of the former quarry and encompassed a C-shaped area of 8,234 square metres. The site of the clay bund lay within and to the south of the stripped area (Fig 5).

The site lies on gently sloping ground at approximately 65-71m aOD above a small tributary stream of the River Great Ouse. The British Geological Survey indicates that the solid geology of the proposed development area comprises the Oxford Clay overlain with River Terrace Deposits.

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

A Heritage Assessment of the site (Dawson 2013) presented the site's heritage assets within the area's wider archaeological and historical context. The results of the heritage Assessment are summarised below.

Prehistoric and Roman

The site lies within an extensive prehistoric and Roman landscape recorded during excavations in advance of quarrying to the west at Old Covert (Petchey 1978) and Broughton Barn Quarry 1997-2002 (Chapman 2009) to the east at Salford Quarry 1990-91 (Dawson 2005; MBD 15211) and by Albion Archaeology to the south at Whitsundoles Farm (MBD 7721; Luke and Phillips 2002, Luke, Phillips and Preece 2003). The landscape north of the M1 is dominated by Bronze Age and Iron Age activity, although was early Roman settlement to the west at Broughton Barn Quarry.

South of the M1, there is further Bronze Age activity, but mainly isolated pits (Chapman 2012), while there is a dense palimpsest of Iron Age and Roman settlement at Broughton Manor Farm, excavated 2006 onward (Atkins *et al* 2014) and Magna Park (Chapman and Chapman 2014).

The excavations at Whitsundoles Farm (MBD 7721) recorded a palimpsest of prehistoric features and artefacts indicating a site that had been continuously transitory and sedentary occupied, and farmed for a sustained period of time. An assemblage of lithic material suggested transitory activity during the Mesolithic or Neolithic periods. Later prehistoric evidence comprised later Iron Age pits, water hollows and ditches defining a late Iron Age and early Roman field system which may extend into Buckinghamshire (Petchey 1978).

The field system in Buckinghamshire (Boughton, Old Covert) recorded a droveway aligned north-west to south-east with field boundaries perpendicular to it. Later Iron Age evidence has also been recovered from excavation to the north east of Whitsundoles Farm (MBD 15211, Dawson 2005) where a small settlement was revealed.

Saxon and later

The developing model of early medieval settlement in the Salford area suggest that during the 7th to 8th centuries there was small scale settlement within the parish. (Dawson 2013). One such example was found to the south during the works undertaken by Albion Archaeology MBD7721 and also south of Whitsundoles Farm where a further two sunken featured buildings (MBD5215) were found. Later the loose smaller areas of habitation developed to form the nucleated village settlements of Salford and Moulsoe. Salford is mentioned in the Domesday survey when in 1086 Hugh de Beauchamp held a 5-hide manor in Salford which included a mill and woodland for swine (Page 1912).

An extended pattern of open fields, evident in the surviving ridge and furrow (MBD538, 5215) occupied much of the parish. Ridge and furrow was visible on aerial photographs in the fields immediately to the east of the site, however visible remains did not continue into the site area indicating that they are likely to have been ploughed out.

The parish was Inclosed in 1807-9 (Page 1912) creating a landscape of smaller, individually owned, fields. The site has remained in agricultural use from until relatively recently. The aggregate resources were extracted from at least the 19th century, early Ordnance Survey maps record small gravel pits to the west of the site. From the later 20th century the resources were extensively quarried.

4 METHODOLOGY

Initial monitoring in advance of the build up of inert waste (GP Planning 2013) and its potential impact on buried archaeology took place between March and September 2014. During this phase of works only the vegetation was stripped with the topsoil remaining intact to provide a buffer between underlying deposits and the imported inert waste.

The later phase of works comprised the observation of a C-shaped footing strip in the northern part of the site. The overburden from this area was used to build a soil bund around the landfill area. The topsoil, subsoil and non-structural post-medieval and later deposits were removed by a mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, to reveal significant archaeological remains or, where these were absent, the natural substrate (Fig 3). At the western side of the stripped area vegetation had also been stripped off to reveal the topsoil, this was in preparation for any further requirement to strip. This work was carried out under archaeological supervision. Observation of topsoil and subsoil strip and investigation of archaeological features took place between March and April 2014, July and August 2014 and May and June 2015.

The character, composition and general depositional sequence of the site stratigraphy were recorded on pro-forma sheets, with a unique context number being allocated to each distinct deposit and feature. All recording followed the guidelines detailed in the MOLA Northampton *Archaeological fieldwork manual* (MOLA 2014).

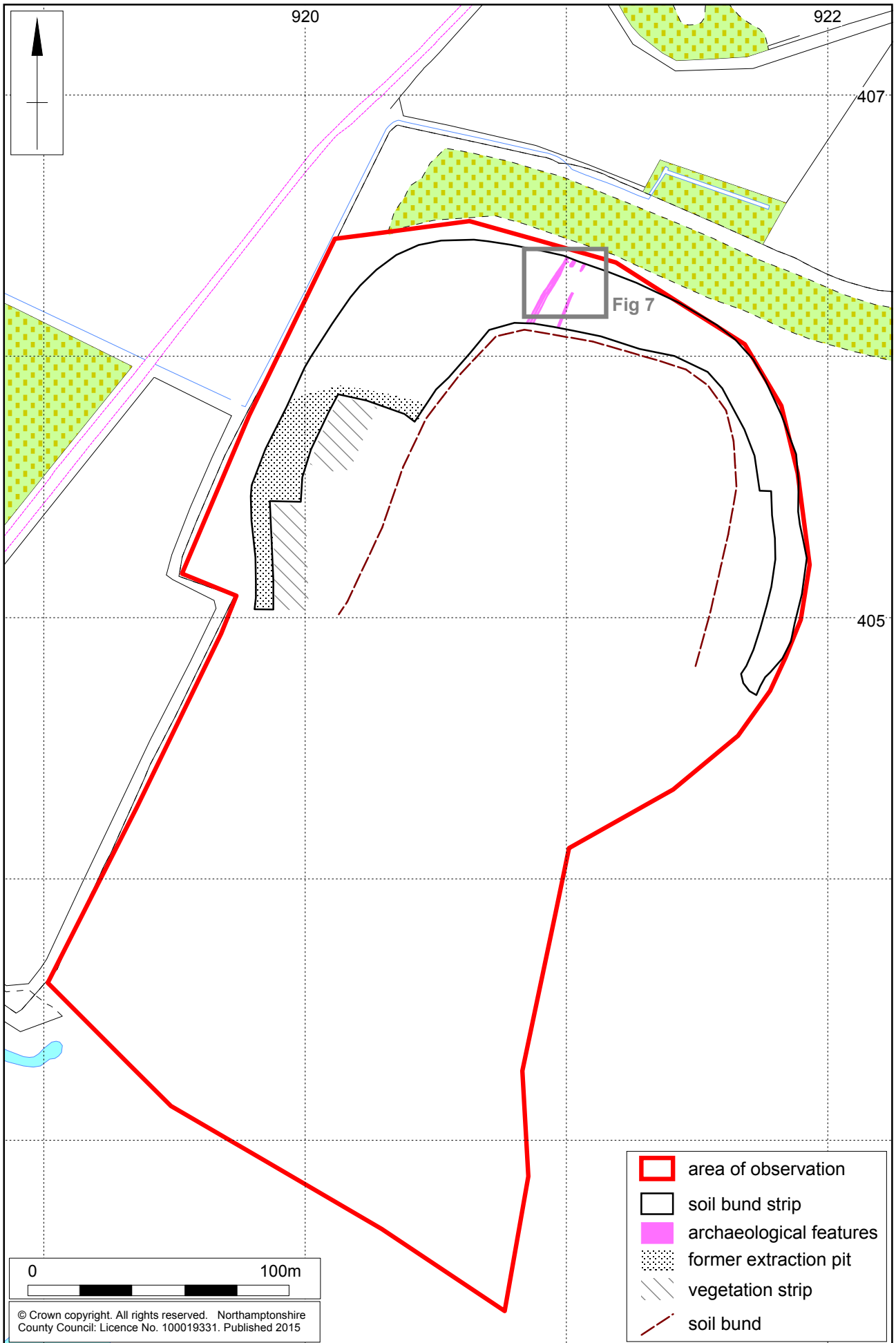
The area of investigation was surveyed using Leica System Viva Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment (Figs 4 & 5) using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$.



The western side of the stripped area, looking north-west Fig 3



GPS survey of the site in August 2014, looking west Fig 4



Scale 1:2,000 (A4)

The area of archaeological observation Fig 5

5 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

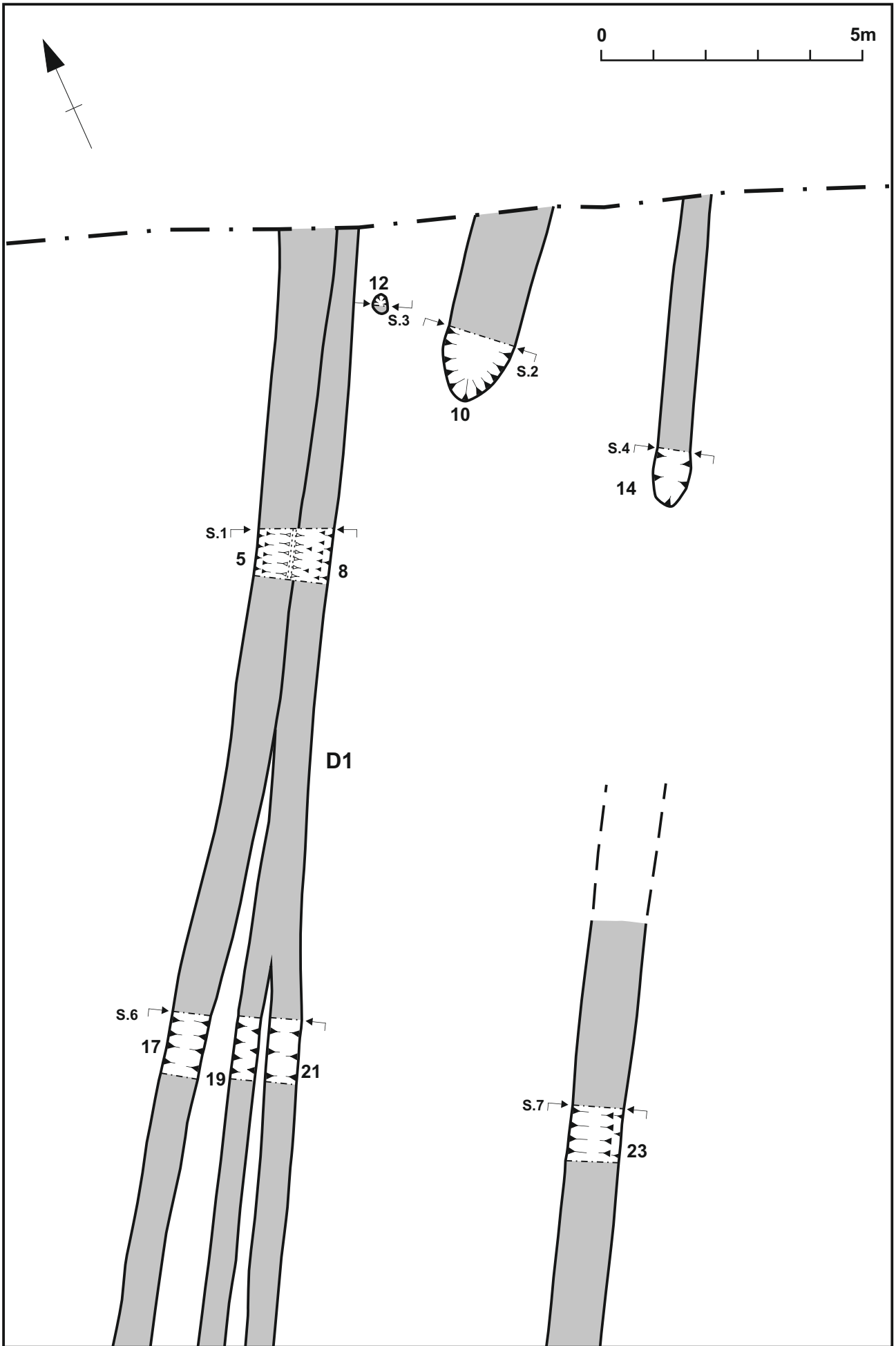
5.1 General stratigraphy

The initial archaeological monitoring works of the vegetation strip recorded that no archaeological features or deposits were present under the vegetation layer. The topsoil remained in situ.

Within the footing for the soil bund strip the stratigraphic sequence was as follows. Natural substrate (3) comprising compact yellow-brown silty clay and a light grey-blue clay was present between 0.45m and 0.60m below ground level. This was generally overlain with a thin, intermittent layer of subsoil (2) comprising mid orange-brown silty clay, between 0.05m and 0.10m thick. Topsoil (1), a firm mid grey-brown silty clay, 0.10m to 0.40m thick, overlay the subsoil (Fig 6).



The general stratigraphy, looking north Fig 6



1:100 (A4)

The archaeological features Fig 7

5.2 Field boundaries

Archaeological features were located in the northern arc of the strip and comprised ditches, a posthole and a probable hedgerow. The general alignment was roughly north-east to south-west. Unless otherwise stated the features were sealed with subsoil (2). No artefacts were recovered from any of the features.

A length of ditch (D1), visible for 25m, may have been recut on at least two occasions (Figs 7 & 8). In its earliest form [8] it was 0.80m wide and up to 0.30m deep with an asymmetrical, dish shaped profile (Fig 9, Section 1). The initial silting fill (7) at the north-western edge comprised light grey-brown sandy silt with occasional small, sub-angular flint nodules, probably formed as a result of water sediments. It was overlain by compact blue-grey silty clay with occasional sub rounded flint nodules (6). Approximately 7m to the south-west the ditch split into two gullies [19] and [21]. The easternmost gully [21] was 0.55m wide and 0.12m deep with a shallow bowl-shaped profile. Approximately 0.40m to the west was gully [19], 0.42m wide and 0.13m deep with a dish-shaped profile and eroded upper edges (Fig 9, Section 6). Both gullies had fills of (18) and (20) a friable dark blue-brown sandy clay, with few small flint gravel nodules.

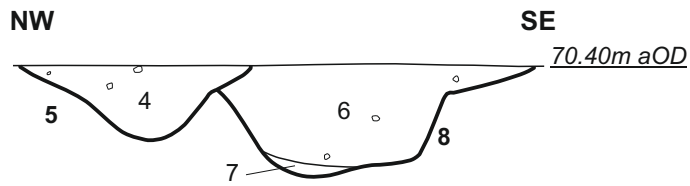


General view of the ditch D1, looking north-east Fig 8

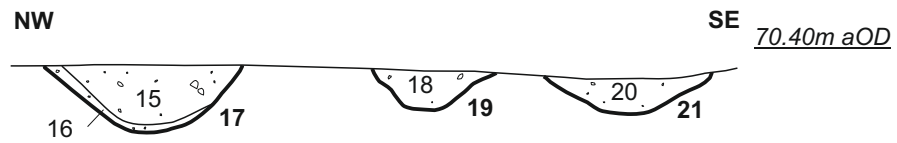
The principal recut of ditch D1 truncated the north-western edge of ditch [8]. The recut [5]/ [17] was between 0.56m and 0.70m wide, up to 0.26m deep with a bowl-shaped profile and eroded upper edges. A silting fill (16) was located on the north-western edge of [17], comprising a friable dark orange-brown clay sand with frequent coarse gravel. It was overlain by a fill (15) of the same character as (18) and (20).

Ditches

Section 1

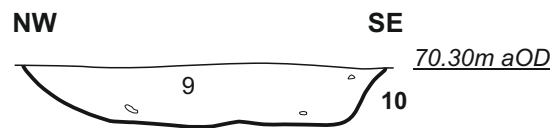


Section 6



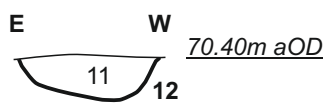
Ditch terminal

Section 2



Posthole

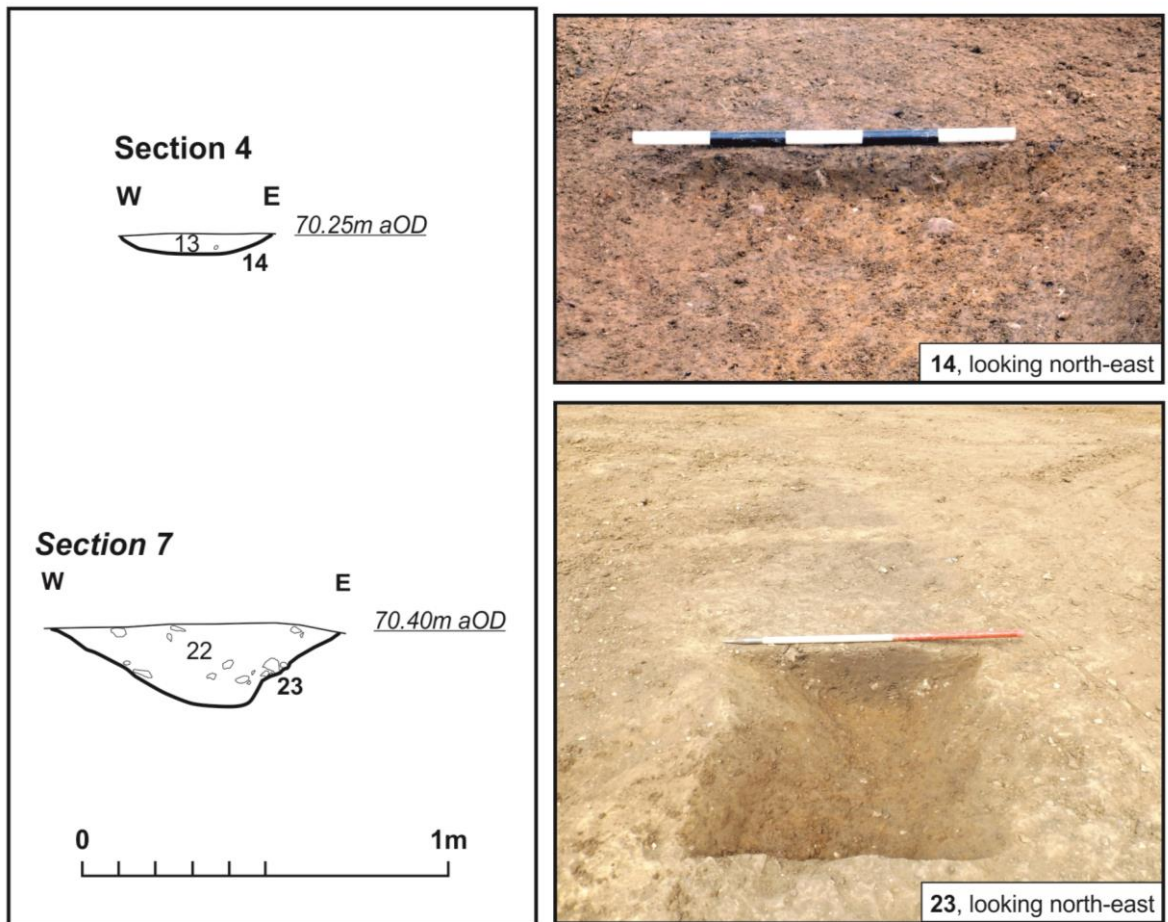
Section 3



A shallow ditch terminal [10] was located c1.5m to the east of ditch D1. The terminal was defined by a narrow tapering point, at least 4.0m long, 1.32m wide and 0.26m deep with a dish-shaped profile with a fill (9) of a firm grey-brown silty clay (Fig 9, Section 2).

The posthole [12] was less than 0.50m to the east of ditch [5]. It was 0.46m in diameter and up to 0.15m deep with an asymmetrical bowl-shaped profile (Fig 9, Section 3). Its fill was a firm mid grey-brown silty clay with occasional small sub rounded flint nodules.

A slightly sinuous feature [14/23] lay 5.80m east of ditches [8] D1 (Fig 7 & 10, Sections 4 & 7). The two recorded segments were between 0.50m and 0.95m wide and 0.06m to 0.29m deep. The rounded southern terminal [14] lay within the excavation area. This had a shallow dish-shaped profile with eroded base and sides and was filled (13) with a firm, mid grey-brown silty clay, occasional small to medium flint nodules. The terminal of the southern arm [23] was not as clearly defined in plan. It had an eroded bowl-shaped profile with a fill (22) of dark yellow-brown sandy clay. The sides were irregular and root disturbed perhaps suggesting it was a former field boundary or hedge row.



1:20

Sections 4 and 7 Fig 10

5.3 Extraction pit

The western side of the stripped area was dominated by a large disturbed area (Figs 5 and 11), measuring at least 80m north to south and 55m east to west. It had a clearly defined northern edge on the surface, emphasised by the dark blue-grey fill and modern debris.



The northern edge of the former extraction pit with the D6 Dozer forming the bund, looking west
Fig 11

It is likely that this area of disturbed ground represents the northern boundary of the backfilled quarry.

6 CONCLUSION

The archaeological observation and recording works at Salford, Whitsundoles Farm was successful in identifying ditches and other remains which may form part of the broader later prehistoric landscape recorded to the south and west. The ditches and the possible hedgerow boundary were demonstrably on the same alignment as the field boundaries recorded by Petchey in 1978, indicating that despite the lack of dating evidence they are likely to be contemporary. There was an obvious programme of recutting of the ditch system, indicating that the field boundaries were maintained and redefined. The single posthole may have formed part of a fence line augmenting the ditch system. The lack of datable artefacts and other features suggest that the site was located away from the principal occupation area suggesting the ditches formed part of the open fields.

The backfilled 20th century extraction pit found in the southern part of the stripped area would have destroyed any surviving archaeological deposits if they existed in this area.

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V1 June 2015

V2 22nd July 2015



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