



**Archaeological observation, investigation
recording and analysis of land east of
Walker Avenue, Wolverton
Milton Keynes
April, June and October 2015**

Report No 15/200

Author: Tim Sharman

Illustrator: Amir Bassir



**Archaeological observation, investigation,
recording and analysis of land east of
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Worked flint: Andy Chapman BSc MCifA FSA

The pottery: Andy Chapman

OASIS REPORT FORM

| PROJECT DETAILS | | OASIS No: molanort1-230765 | |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| Project title | Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis of land east of Walker Avenue, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, April, June and October 2015 | | |
| Short description | An archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was carried out by MOLA Northampton, during construction work on land east of Walker Avenue, Wolverton, Milton Keynes. Three gullies, three postholes and seventeen other features of possibly Prehistoric date were present within the development area. | | |
| Project type | Watching Brief | | |
| Previous work | None | | |
| Current land use | Building plot on former green field site | | |
| Future work | None | | |
| Monument type and period | Prehistoric | | |
| Significant finds | Four struck flints, 1 sherd of Roman pot | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | | |
| County | Milton Keynes | | |
| Site address | Walker Avenue, Wolverton, Milton Keynes | | |
| Easting Northing | SP 80355 40800 | | |
| Area (sq m/ha) | 0.1 ha | | |
| Height aOD | c 80m aOD | | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | | |
| Organisation | MOLA Northampton | | |
| Project brief originator | N Crank, Milton Keynes Senior Archaeological Officer | | |
| Project Design originator | MOLA Northampton | | |
| Director/Supervisor | Tim Sharman (MOLA Northampton) | | |
| Project Manager | Mo Muldowney (MOLA Northampton) | | |
| Sponsor or funding body | Budget Base | | |
| PROJECT DATE | | | |
| Start date | 13/04/2015 | | |
| End date | 26/10/2015 | | |
| ARCHIVES | Location (Accession no.) | Contents | |
| Physical | EMK 1256 | 4 flints, 1 sherd of pot, 1 fragment of burnt clay | |
| Paper | | Watching brief forms, permatrace plans | |
| Digital | | Client report PDF | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | | |
| Unpublished client report | | | |
| Title | Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis of land east of Walker Avenue, Wolverton, Milton Keynes April, June and October 2015 | | |
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Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis of land east of Walker Avenue, Wolverton, Milton Keynes April, June and October 2015

Abstract

An archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was carried out by MOLA Northampton, during construction work on land east of Walker Avenue, Wolverton, Milton Keynes. Three gullies, three postholes and seventeen other features of possibly prehistoric date were present within the development area.

1 INTRODUCTION

Budgetbase Ltd commissioned MOLA Northampton to carry out archaeological observation, investigation, recording during groundworks for the construction of four new houses on land to the east of Walker Avenue, Wolverton, Milton Keynes (NGR SP 80355 40800 (Fig 1) (Planning reference 12/00257/FUL).

MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) registered organisation. This report has been prepared in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance: archaeological watching briefs* (CIfA 2014a), the *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014b) and the Historic England (HE) procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (HE 2015a).

2 BACKGROUND

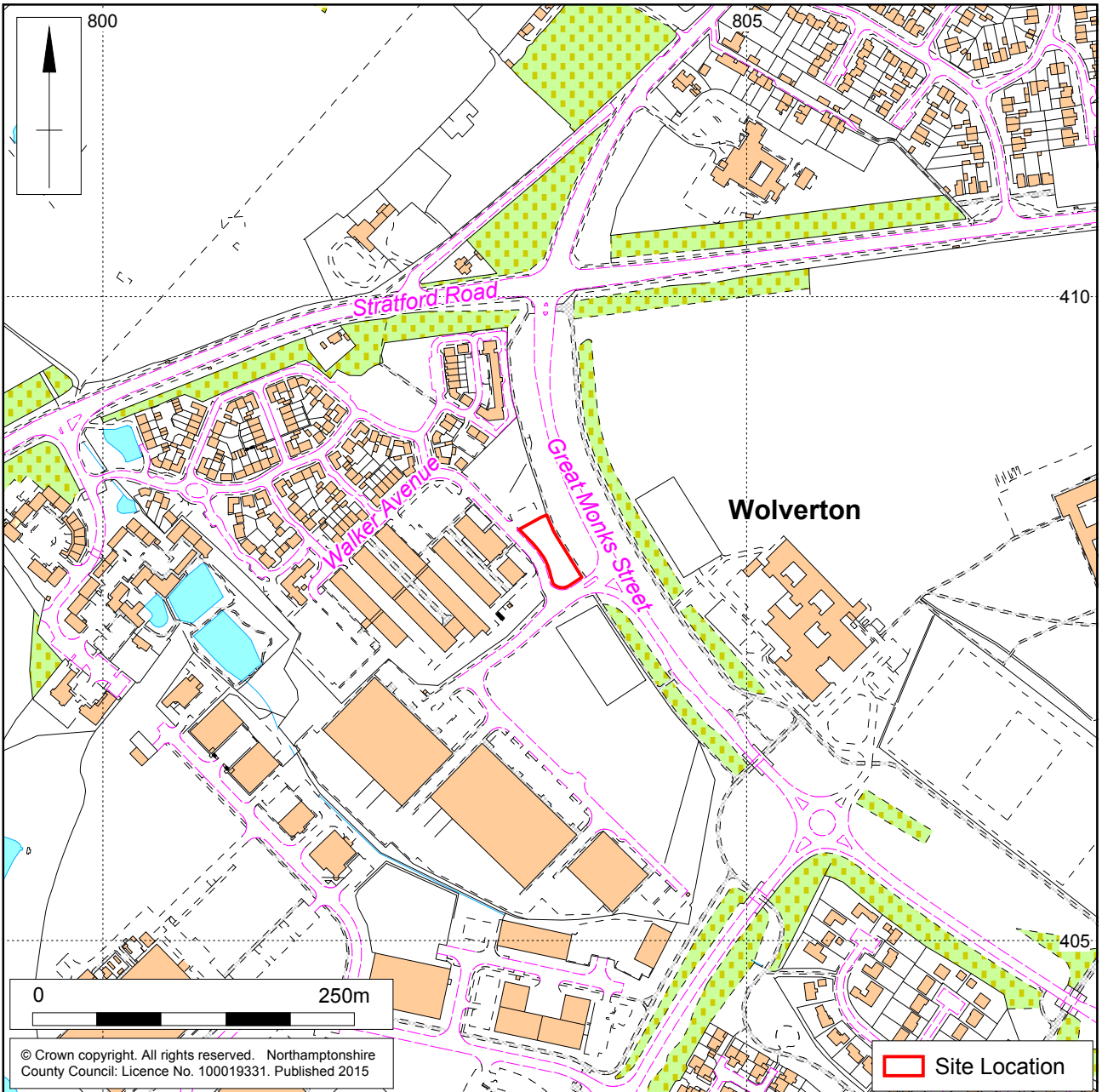
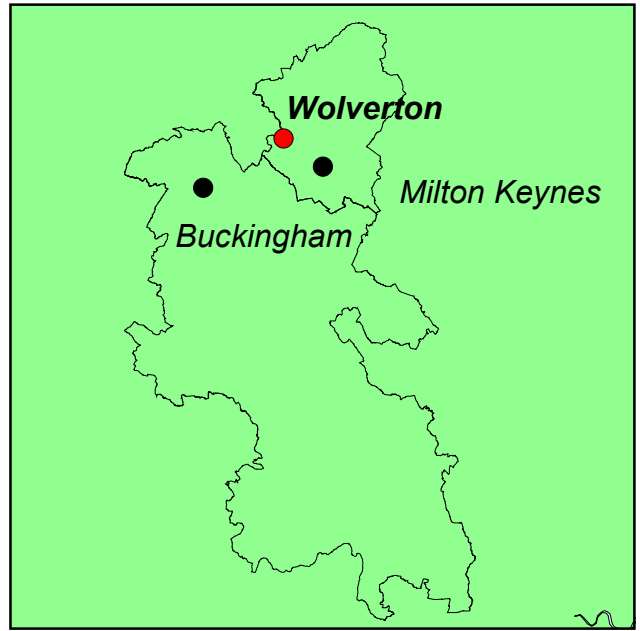
2.1 Location and geology

The development area lies within the town of Wolverton, 1km south of the Great River Ouse, and to the east of the A5. The site is located on relatively level ground, at a height of c80m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), and covers an area of c0.1ha (Fig 1). The underlying geology of the site is Jurassic limestone (Blisworth Beds) overlain by glacial deposits of sands, gravels and clays (BGS 2015).

2.2. Historical and archaeological background

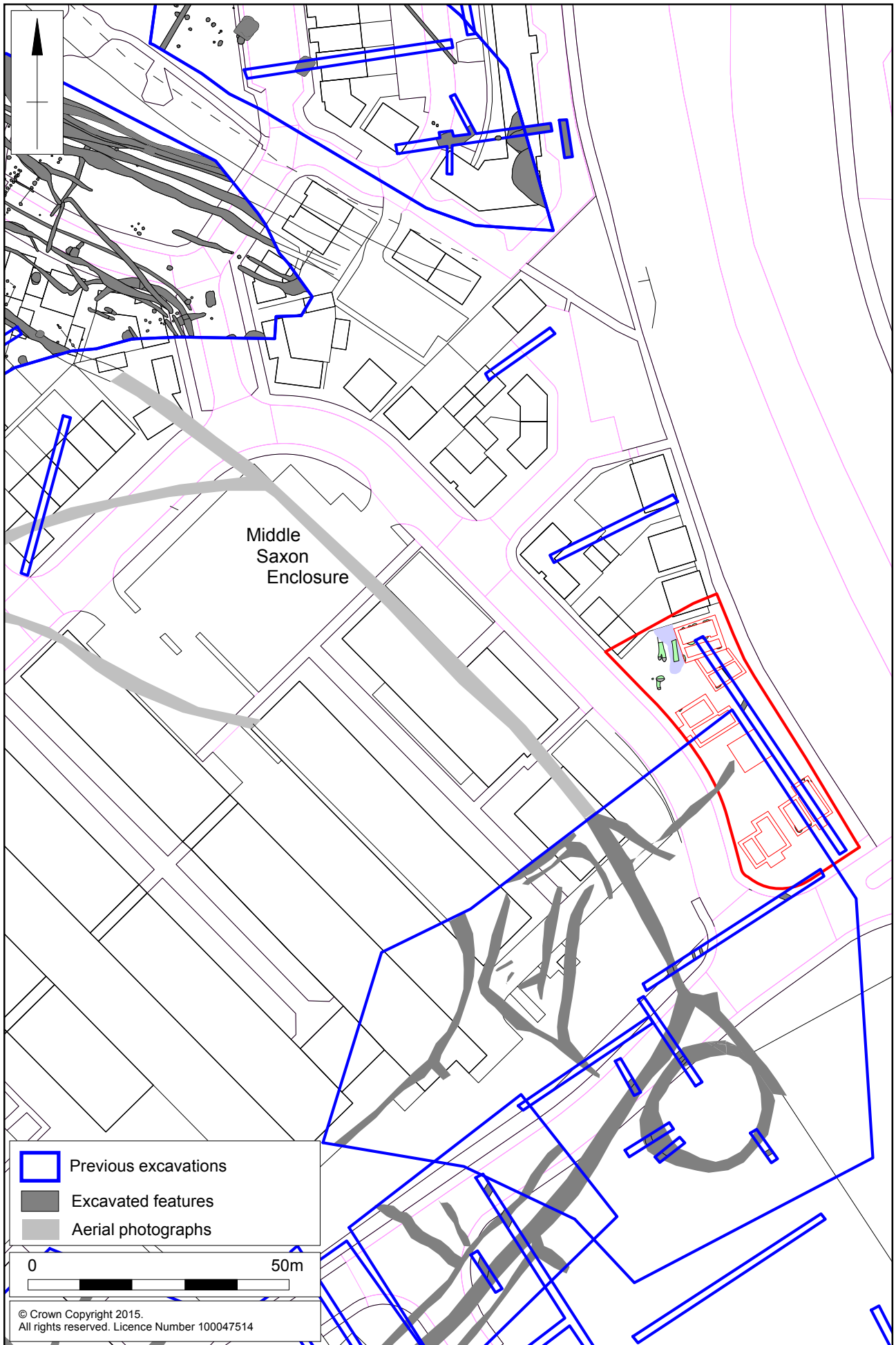
Archaeological investigations within close proximity to the site have revealed extensive remains. Open area excavation to the immediate south-west (Fig 2) identified a Bronze Age round barrow ring ditchfunerary monuments, postholes and pits, perhaps indicative of broadly contemporary settlement, limited Roman activity, as well as the southern part of a substantial middle Saxon enclosure (TVAS 1994).

Excavations c160m to the north-west of the site (Fig 2) identified further Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings of 5th to 8th century date, with a pit containing a curated hoard of two iron spearheads, a seax, a lava quern, two bone combs and a woolcombing heckle. The northern end of the large middle Saxon enclosure was also excavated and part of a Saxo-Norman village abandoned in the 12th century (Chapman *et al* 2015).



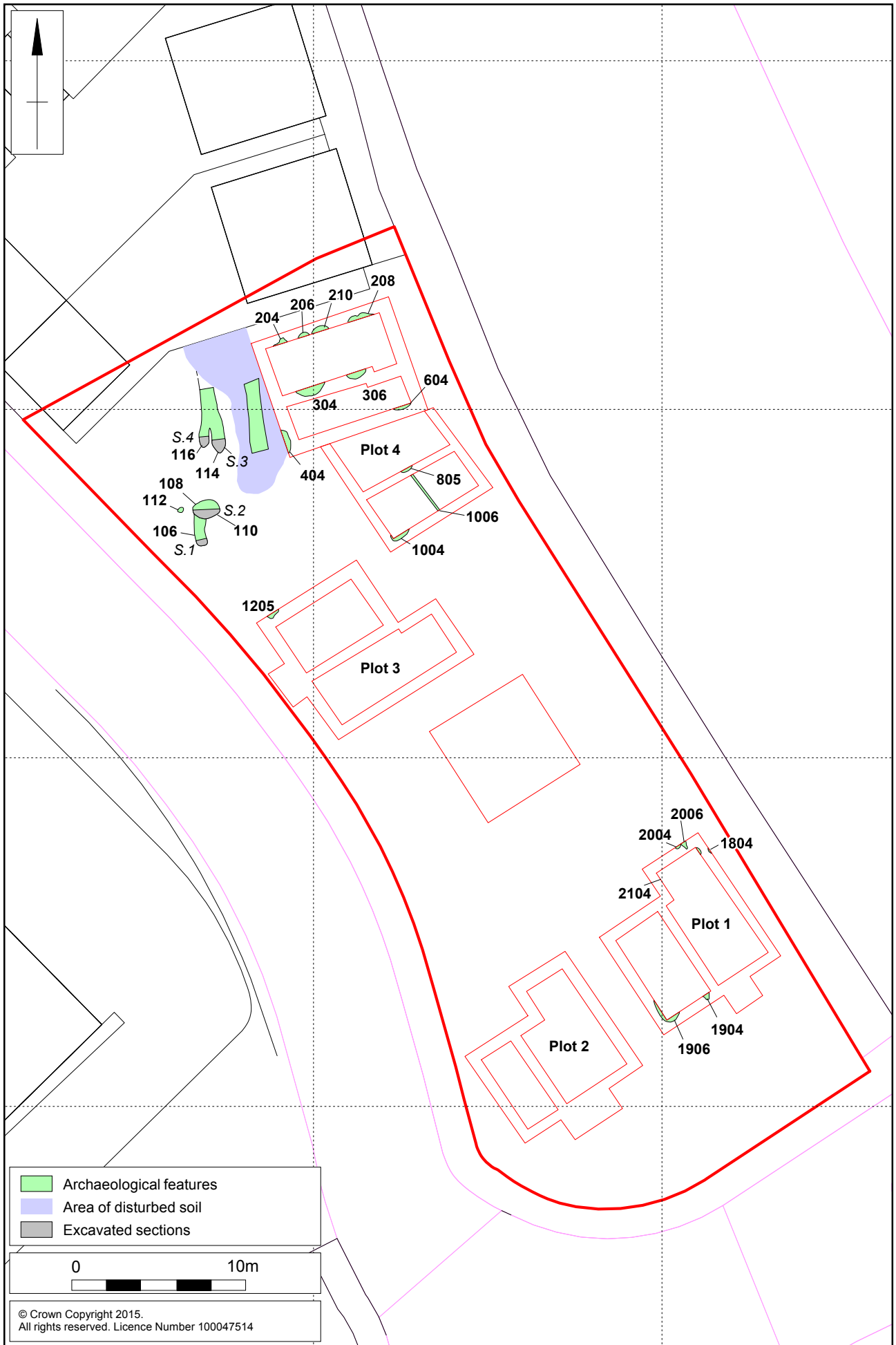
Scale 1:5,000

Site Location Fig 1



Scale 1:1000

Plan showing previous excavations Fig 2



Scale 1:300

Area of archaeological observation Fig 3

Later medieval and post-medieval activity appeared to be confined to occasional pits, some of which were probably the result of quarrying.

Approximately 360m to the north-west of the proposed development site, excavations at Radcliffe School in 2007 revealed Roman ditches and pits, a Saxon pit, and a crouched burial, possibly Bronze Age (Wilson 2007). Archaeological evaluations further to the north have also identified middle Saxon settlement remains comprising two sunken-featured buildings as well as pits and gullies (OA 2002a, BCMAS 1992 and OA 2002b respectively). Activity continued into the late Saxon period with the discovery of a small number of pits and ditches, which overlay the possible Roman quarry pits.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

In order to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed development area the main objectives of the investigation were to determine and understand the nature, function, and character of an archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting. More specifically, the work would:

- Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits exposed during the excavation of the house footings;
- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits;
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

3.2 Methodology

All works were conducted in accordance with the procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (HE 2015), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance: Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2014a) and *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014b). Where appropriate the research frameworks were borne in mind (Hey and Hind 2014).

Prior to the commencement of the excavation work, the site consisted of a raised area of green space (Front cover). Prior to the excavation of the footings trenches for four new dwellings (Plots 1-4) and two associated garage blocks, the turf and underlying layers were removed in the northern part of the site, to a depth of approximately 1m below the surface using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.5m bladed bucket (Fig 4). In the southern part of the site, only the uppermost 0.5m of layers were removed prior to the excavation of the footings trenches. The excavation work for four houses and two garage blocks was machined using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.5m toothed bucket.

The groundwork areas were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features, where present.

Recording followed standard MOLA Northampton procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (MOLA 2014). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships,

interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. The photographic record comprised 35mm black and white film and digital images at 12 megapixels.

All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive. All records and materials will be compiled in a structured archive in accordance with the guidelines of Appendix 3 in the English Heritage procedural document, *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (1991).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The footings trenches were excavated to a variable formation level between 1m and 1.3m below ground level. Although bands of sand and limestone bedrock were encountered at the base of some of the footings trenches within the site, generally the natural substrate (105) consisted of a compact yellow sandy clay with numerous small to medium-sized limestone and flint inclusions approximately 1m below the surface. Overlying this was a 0.3m deep layer of yellow-brown sandy clay loam subsoil (104), above which was a possible former topsoil consisting of a 0.25m deep layer of dark yellow-brown sandy clay loam (103), which appeared to have been sealed by a c 0.25m deep layer of re-deposited natural substrate (102), consisting of yellowish-brown sandy clay with numerous limestone inclusions. Above (102) was a 0.2m deep layer of re-deposited topsoil (101) consisting of a dark brown sandy loam (Figs 5 and 6).

4.1 The gullies

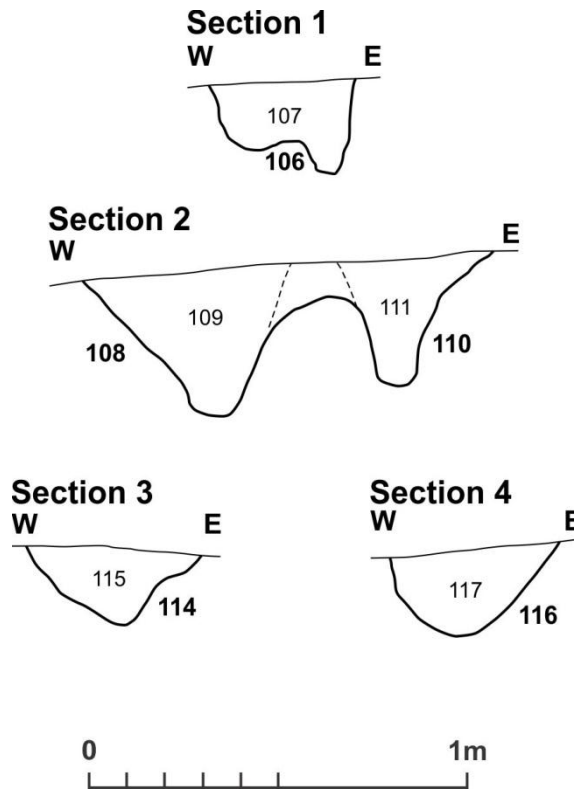
In the north-western corner of the site, a small gully [106] was identified (Figs 3, 4, Section 1; Fig 7). Aligned north-south, it was 2m long by 0.35m wide and 0.25m deep with an undulating base. The fill (107) consisted of a compact, mid-brown sandy clay with a few small and medium-sized fragments of limestone. A fragment of burnt clay was recovered from the fill.

Approximately 4m to the north-west of gully [106], two small gullies [114] and [116] were recorded (Figs 3, 4, sections 3 and 4; Fig 8). Both were aligned in roughly a north-south direction, merging together approximately 2m to the north of the separate terminals, 0.5m apart. Gully [114] was approximately 0.5m wide by 0.2m deep with an uneven U-shaped profile. The fill (115) consisted of a mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few small flint and limestone pebble inclusions together with a few small fragments of charcoal. Gully [116] was 0.4m wide by 0.2m deep with a U-shaped profile. The fill (117) consisted of a mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few small, rounded flint pebble inclusions.

4.2 The postholes

Approximately 2m to the north of the terminal of gully [106], two postholes [108], [110], set closely together, were recorded (Figs 3, 4, section 2; Figs 9 and 10). Posthole [108] was slightly elliptical in plan with a maximum diameter of 0.8m and was 0.4m deep with a diameter at the base of 0.1m. The fill (109) consisted of a mid-brown silty clay with a few small fragments of limestone. Posthole (110) was also slightly elliptical with a maximum diameter of 0.5m and 0.35m deep with a diameter at the base of 0.1m.

Just to the west of postholes [108] and [110] a small possible posthole, [112], was located but was left unexcavated due to time constraints (Fig 3).



Features [106], [108], [110], [114], [116], south facing sections Fig 4



Northern part of site, soil stripping, looking south-east Fig 5



Section, showing layers (101-5) northern part of site, looking north-west Fig 6



Gully [106] looking north-west Fig 7



Gullies [116] (left) and [114] (right), looking north Fig 8



Postholes [108] (left) and [110] (right) looking north Fig 9



Postholes [108] (top) and [110] (bottom), looking west Fig 10

4.3 The linear features

A total of 17 linear features were revealed during the excavations for the footings trenches in three of the four house plots (Fig 3).

Plot 4

Four possible linear ditches were noted ([204], [206], [208], [210]) aligned north to south (Fig 3).

Ditch [204] was 0.8m wide by c 0.6m deep with a V-shaped profile. Ditch [206] was c 1m wide by 0.7m deep with a U-shaped profile. Ditch [208] was c 1m wide by 0.8m deep with a U-shaped profile (Fig 11). Ditch [210] was c 1m wide by 0.7m deep with a U-shaped profile (Fig 12). The fills of the ditches were respectively [205], [207], [209], [211] and all consisted of a yellow-brown sandy clay loam with small limestone inclusions.

In Trench 3, two possible linear ditches, ([304] and [306]), were noted, aligned north-south (Fig 3).

Ditch [304] was 1.2m wide by 0.5m deep with a flattened U-shaped profile. Ditch [306] was c 1.5m wide by c 0.8m deep with a U-shaped profile (Fig 13). The respective fills (305) and (307) consisted of a yellow-brown sandy clay loam with a few small limestone inclusions.

The longitudinal section of a possible ditch [404] was noted (Fig 3). The ditch appeared to share the same alignment as ditch [306] in Trench 3 and would therefore appear to be the southern continuation of [306]. The fill (405) consisted of a yellow-brown sandy clay loam with a few small limestone inclusions.

In Plot 4, the longitudinal section of a possible ditch [604] was noted, aligned north-east to south-west (Fig 3). The ditch appears to have been 1.2m wide by 0.6m deep. The fill (605) consisted of a mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few small limestone inclusions.

Within the garage block footings, two possible linear ditches ([804], [1004]) and a possible gully [1006] were noted (Fig 3). Ditch [804], aligned north to south, was 1.1m wide by 0.5m deep with a U-shaped profile (Figs 3 and 14). Ditch [1004], aligned north-east to south-west, was 1.1m wide by 0.5m deep with a U-shaped profile. The fills (805) and (1005) respectively, consisted of a mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few limestone inclusions. Gully [1006] was noted on the surface of the machined area. It was aligned north-west to south-east, 0.15m wide by 0.15 deep with a U-shaped profile and a fill (1007) consisting of a mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few small limestone inclusions (Fig 3).

Plot 3

A possible linear ditch [1205] aligned north-west to south-east was noted (Fig 3). Ditch [1205] was 0.6m wide by 0.5m deep with a U-shaped profile and a fill (1204) consisting of a mid-brown sandy clay loam with small to medium-sized fragments of limestone.

Plot 1

In Trench 18 a possible linear ditch [1804] was noted running in an east to west direction (Figs 3, 15), possibly on the same alignment as [2004] (see below). Ditch [1804] was 0.8m wide by 0.5m deep with a V-shaped profile and a fill (1805) consisting of a mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few limestone inclusions.

Two parallel, possible linear features, [1904], [1906] aligned north to south were noted (Fig 3). Feature [1904] was 0.2m wide by 0.4m deep with a V-shaped profile and a fill (1905) consisting of a mid-brown sand with numerous small to medium-sized limestone fragments. Feature [1906], was c 1m wide and 0.6m deep and a fill (1907) consisting of a dark yellow-brown sandy loam with numerous small to medium-sized fragments of limestone.

In Trench 20, a possible linear ditch [2004] was noted running in a west to east direction, possibly on the same alignment as feature [1804] (Figs 3 and 16). Ditch [2004] was 0.7m wide by 0.4m deep with a U-shaped profile and a fill (2005) consisting of a mid-brown sandy loam with a few small to medium limestone inclusions. Adjacent to [2004], a deep narrow feature, possibly a frost crack was noted (Figs 3, 16).



Plot 4, Trench 2, possible ditch [208], looking south Fig 11



Plot 4, Trench 2, possible ditch [210], looking south Fig 12



Plot 4, Trench 3, possible ditch [306], looking south Fig 13



Plot 4 (garage), Trench 8, possible ditch [804], looking south Fig 14



Plot 1, Trench 18, possible ditch [1804], looking east Fig 15



Plot 1, Trench 20, possible ditch [2004], and a possible frost crack, looking north Fig 16

5 THE FINDS

5.1 Worked flint by Andy Chapman

Four pieces of struck flint were recovered as unstratified finds, including two irregular pieces that could be a product of accidental impacts on small flint nodules. There is a small cortical flake, 22mm long by 12-20mm wide, with one edge retaining fine but damaged serrations. There is also a broken blade, 23mm wide with only 22mm of its length surviving, with the distal end fashioned as an end scraper. These two pieces may be of Neolithic date.

5.2 The pottery by Andy Chapman

From the surface (104) just south of feature [114], there is a crumb of pottery, weighing 0.5g, which has come from a thin-walled vessel, 3mm thick, with a cream-coloured core and pale orange-pink surface, which may be Roman in date.

From the fill (107) of gully [106], there is an irregular lump of ceramic, weighing 2.4g, pink-cream in colour, which appears to be fired clay.

6 DISCUSSION

In the northern part of the site, gullies [114] and [116] were most likely to have had a drainage function. Gully [106] appears to be associated with postholes [108] and [110] and consequently may have had a structural rather than drainage function. Postholes [108], [110] may be indicative of two adjoining isolated posts as they were the only such features visible on site other than a small, possible posthole [112] close by, which was not excavated.

No artefacts were found within the fills of the excavated surface features in the northern part of the site or in the fills of the linear features noted within the footings trenches. (Plots 1, 3, 4). With the exception of a tiny sherd of Roman pottery found on the surface, there was a general lack of dating evidence from the site. However, the four pieces of struck flint recovered from the site might suggest that the features are of prehistoric, possibly Bronze Age or Neolithic in date and may be part of a prehistoric landscape associated with Bronze Age remains, including a funerary monument found c 50m to the south and postholes and pits discovered during open area excavations, approximately 100m to the south-west of the site (TVAS 1994).

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BGS 2015 www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex

MOLA
23 November 2015

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

| Plot No | Length, width & alignment | | | |
|---------|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| N area | | | | |
| Context | Context type | Description | Dimensions | Artefacts |
| 101 | Layer | Dark brown sandy loam topsoil | 0.2m thick | - Flint |
| 102 | Layer | Yellow-brown sandy clay with limestone inclusions | 0.25m thick | - |
| 103 | Layer | Dark yellow-brown sandy clay loam buried topsoil | 0.25m thick | - |
| 104 | Layer | Yellow-brown sandy clay loam subsoil | 0.3m thick | 1 crumb of Roman pot |
| 105 | Natural | Compacted yellow sandy clay and limestone natural | Variable depth | - |
| 106 | Gully | Gully with gently sloping sides and undulating base | 2m long 0.35m wide 0.25m deep | - |
| 107 | Fill of 106 | Mid-brown sandy clay with a few small limestone fragments | 0.25m thick | 1 fragment of burnt clay |
| 108 | Posthole | Slightly elliptical posthole with sloping sides | 0.8m wide 0.4m deep | - |
| 109 | Fill of 108 | Mid-brown silty clay with a few limestone inclusions | 0.4m thick | - |
| 110 | Posthole | Slightly elliptical posthole with steeply sloping sides | 0.5m wide 0.35 deep | - |
| 111 | Fill of 110 | Mid-brown silty clay with a few small limestone pebbles | 0.35m thick | - |
| 112 | Post hole | Small circular unexcavated posthole | c 0.2m dia u/k depth | - |
| 113 | Fill of 112 | Mid brown silty clay | u/k depth | - |
| 114 | Gully | Gully with gently sloping sides and U-shaped profile | 0.5m wide 0.2m deep | - |
| 115 | Fill of 114 | Mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few small flint and limestone inclusions | 0.2m thick | - |
| 116 | Gully | Gully with gently sloping sides and U-shaped profile | 0.4m wide 0.2m deep | - |
| 117 | Fill of 116 | Mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few small rounded pebble inclusions. | 0.2m thick | - |

WALKER AVENUE, WOLVERTON

| Plot No | Length, width & alignment | | | |
|---------|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|-----------|
| Plot 4 | | | | |
| Context | Context type | Description | Dimensions | Artefacts |
| 204 | Ditch | Ditch with V-shaped profile | 0.8m wide 0.6m deep | - |
| 205 | Fill of 204 | Yellow-brown sandy clay loam with small limestone inclusions | 0.6m thick | - |
| 206 | Ditch | Ditch with U-shaped profile | 1m wide 0.7m deep | - |
| 207 | Fill of 206 | Yellow-brown sandy clay loam with small limestone inclusions | 0.7m thick | - |
| 208 | Ditch | Ditch with U-shaped profile | 1m wide 0.8m deep | - |
| 209 | Fill of 208 | Yellow-brown sandy clay loam with small limestone inclusions | 0.8m thick | - |
| 210 | Ditch | Ditch with U-shaped profile | 1m wide 0.7m deep | - |
| 211 | Fill of 209 | Yellow-brown sandy clay loam with small limestone inclusions | 0.7m thick | - |
| 304 | Ditch | Ditch with flattened U-shaped profile | 1.2m wide 0.5m deep | - |
| 305 | Fill of 304 | Yellow-brown sandy clay loam with small limestone inclusions | 0.5m thick | - |
| 306 | Ditch | Ditch with U-shaped profile | 1.5m wide 0.8m deep | - |
| 307 | Fill of 306 | Yellow-brown sandy clay loam with small limestone inclusions | 0.8m thick | - |
| 404 | Ditch | Ditch with possible U-shaped profile | 1.5m wide 0.8m deep | - |
| 405 | Fill of 404 | Yellow-brown sandy clay loam with small limestone inclusions | 0.8m thick | - |
| 604 | Ditch | Ditch with possible U-shaped profile | 1.2m wide 0.6m deep | - |
| 605 | Fill of 604 | Mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few small limestone inclusions | 0.6m thick | - |
| 804 | Ditch | Ditch with U-shaped profile | 1.1m wide 0.5m deep | - |
| 805 | Fill of 804 | Mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few small limestone inclusions | 0.5m thick | - |
| 1004 | Ditch | Ditch with a possible U-shaped profile | 1.1m wide 0.5m deep | - |
| 1005 | Fill of 1004 | Mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few small limestone inclusions | 0.5m thick | - |
| 1006 | Gully | Gully with U-shaped profile | 0.15m wide 0.15 deep | - |
| 1007 | Fill of 1006 | Mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few small limestone inclusions | 0.15 thick | - |

WALKER AVENUE, WOLVERTON

| Trench No | Length, width & alignment | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------|------------------|
| Plot 3 | | | | |
| Context | Context type | Description | Dimensions | Artefacts |
| 1205 | Ditch | Ditch with a U-shaped profile | 0.6m wide 0.5m deep | - |
| 1204 | Fill of 1204 | Mid-brown sandy clay loam with a few small limestone inclusions | 0.5m thick | - |

| Trench No | Length, width & alignment | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------|------------------|
| Plot 1 | | | | |
| Context | Context type | Description | Dimensions | Artefacts |
| 1804 | Ditch | Ditch with V-shaped profile | 0.8m wide 0.5m deep | - |
| 1805 | Fill of 1804 | Mid-brown sandy clay with a few limestone inclusions | 0.5m thick | - |
| 1904 | Ditch? | Ditch with a V-shaped profile | 0.2m wide 0.4m deep | - |
| 1905 | Fill of 1904 | Mid-brown sand with numerous small to medium limestone inclusions. | 0.4m thick | - |
| 1906 | Ditch? | Possible ditch | 1m wide 0.6m deep | - |
| 1907 | Fill of 1906 | Dark yellow-brown sandy clay loam with numerous small to medium limestone inclusions | 0.6m thick | - |
| 2004 | Ditch | Ditch with a U-shaped profile | 0.7m wide 0.4m deep | - |
| 2005 | Fill of 2004 | Mid-brown sandy loam with a few limestone inclusions | 0.4m thick | - |



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