



Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land north of Little Horwood Road, Great Horwood Buckinghamshire July 2019

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molanort1-360268	
Project title	Great Horwood, Little Horwood Road		
MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) carried out a trial trench evaluation on land north of Little Horwood Road, Great Horwood, Buckinghamshire in advance of residential development. A total of four trenches were excavated. Archaeological remains included two ditches and a pit, although none produced any finds. Evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation on the site was extensive appearing within each of the four trenches and clearly visible on the surface as extant earthworks.			
Project type	Archaeological Evaluation (Trial Trench)		
Site status	None		
Previous work	Geophysical Survey (Walford 2018)		
Current land use	Grass		
Development type	Housing		
Future work	Not known		
Monument type/period	Ditches and Pits, medieval ridge and furrow		
Significant finds	-		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Buckinghamshire		
Site address	Little Horwood Road, Great Horwood		
OS coordinates	NRG 477600 231200		
Area (sq m/ha)	c1ha		
Height aOD	c124m - c127m		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA		
Project Brief originator	Phil Markam, Buckinghamshire Senior Archaeology Officer		
Project Design originator	MOLA		
Project Director/ Manager	Carol Simmonds		
Project Supervisor	Paul Sharrock		
Sponsor or funding body	Robert Webb, Robert Webb Developments Limited on behalf of Mr J. Grainge		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date (dd-mm-yyyy)	1-7-2019		
End date (dd-mm-yyyy)	2-7-2019		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content	
Physical	AYBCM:2019.110		
Digital		report, photographs, survey data	
Paper		site records, plans, sections	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph or unpublished MOLA report		
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ABSTRACT

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) carried out a trial trench evaluation on land north of Little Horwood Road, Great Horwood, Buckinghamshire in advance of residential development. A total of four trenches were excavated. Archaeological remains included two ditches and a pit, although none produced any finds. Evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation on the site was extensive appearing within each of the four trenches and clearly visible on the surface as extant earthworks.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Robert Webb Development Limited for archaeological evaluation on land north of Little Horwood Road, Great Horwood, Buckinghamshire (NGR 477600 231200, Fig 1). The archaeological work was carried out in advance of the proposed development of on this land.

The evaluation requirement was outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by MOLA (MOLA 2019) and was carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2019).

The archaeological works was undertaken in compliance with the instruction from the Buckinghamshire County Council Senior Archaeology Officer.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, geology and topography

The survey area lies immediately east of Great Horwood, alongside Little Horwood Road and opposite Townsend Cottages. It occupies part of a pasture field and comprises a block of land c1ha in extent with a narrow corridor extending northwards along the line of a proposed drain (Fig 1).

The survey area lies partly on the crest, and partly on the north-facing flank of a narrow ridge between two streams. Its elevation is approximately 125m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The geology of the area comprises Oxford Clay (Weymouth Member) overlain by glacial till. A patch of fluvioglacial sand and gravel is mapped close to the south-east of the area, and may just intrude into it (BGS 2018).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

There are no archaeological findspots recorded within the survey area, and the only recorded archaeological features are earthworks of medieval to early post-medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. However, a recent archaeological evaluation of land to the south, on the opposite side of Little Horwood Road, is reported to have found Saxon remains (P Markham pers comm) whilst an earlier evaluation c200m to the south-west identified two pits and a posthole of probable Iron Age date (Michaels 2014). Other archaeological works in the near vicinity have been less productive. A geophysical survey c300m to the south-west identified no archaeological features other than ridge and furrow (Walford and Meadows 2014) and a watching brief during groundworks at Tudor Cottage, c300m to the west, identified no archaeological features at all (ASC 2007).

An archaeological evaluation of the 'Winslow Green' development site, c1.3km southwest of the survey area, identified four distinct areas of late Iron Age to Roman activity, where enclosures, pits, and ditches marked the sites of small farmsteads (Carlyle 2008).

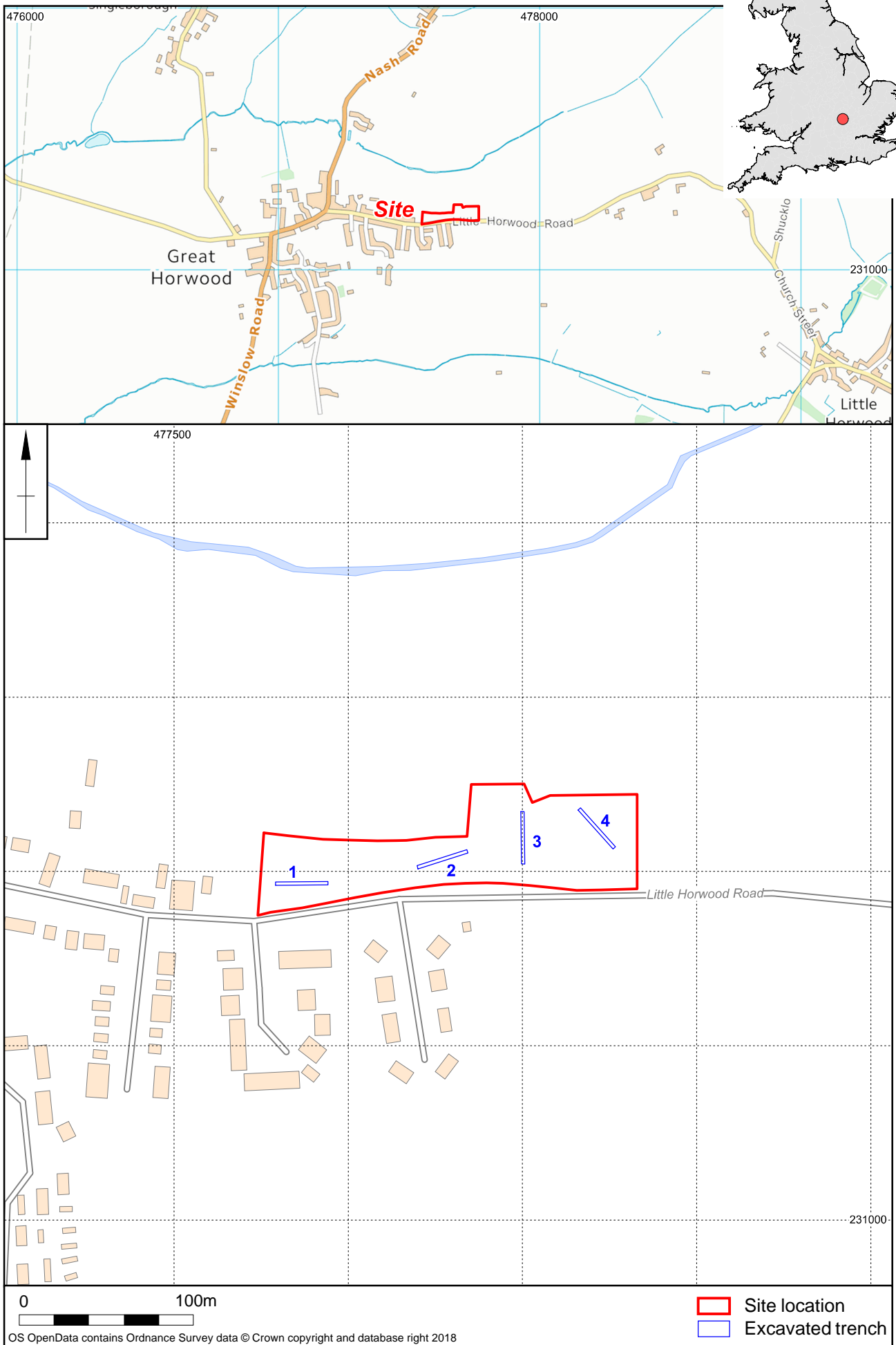
Roman activity around Great Horwood is also demonstrated by the discovery of five silver spoons, ploughed up in the 1870s (Bucks HER No. 0022401000), and by other finds including a brooch, pin, and ring (HER No. 0022400000).

Seven hundred metres east of the survey area is a bank and ditch earthwork which defines part of a Saxon estate boundary described in a charter of AD 792 (HER No. 0658300000). Remains of a possible medieval moated site (HER No. 02201010000) are located c400m north-east of the development site. Further earthworks to the south of the moat are likely to represent medieval house platforms associated with it (HER No. 02201020000). Aerial photographs and LiDAR data show earthwork survival of medieval to post-medieval ridge and furrow cultivation around the development site and around Great Horwood in general.

To the south of the development site are the remains of Little Horwood Airfield (HER No. 0690600000), operational from 1942 to 1945. The airfield was established as a base for the Operation Training Units to train recruits for combat.

Previous geophysical survey



A geophysical survey of the development area was carried out in July 2018 (Walford 2018) which identified three possible pits located along the southern edge of the site and the extensive ridge and furrow which is still visible upon the surface (Fig 4).

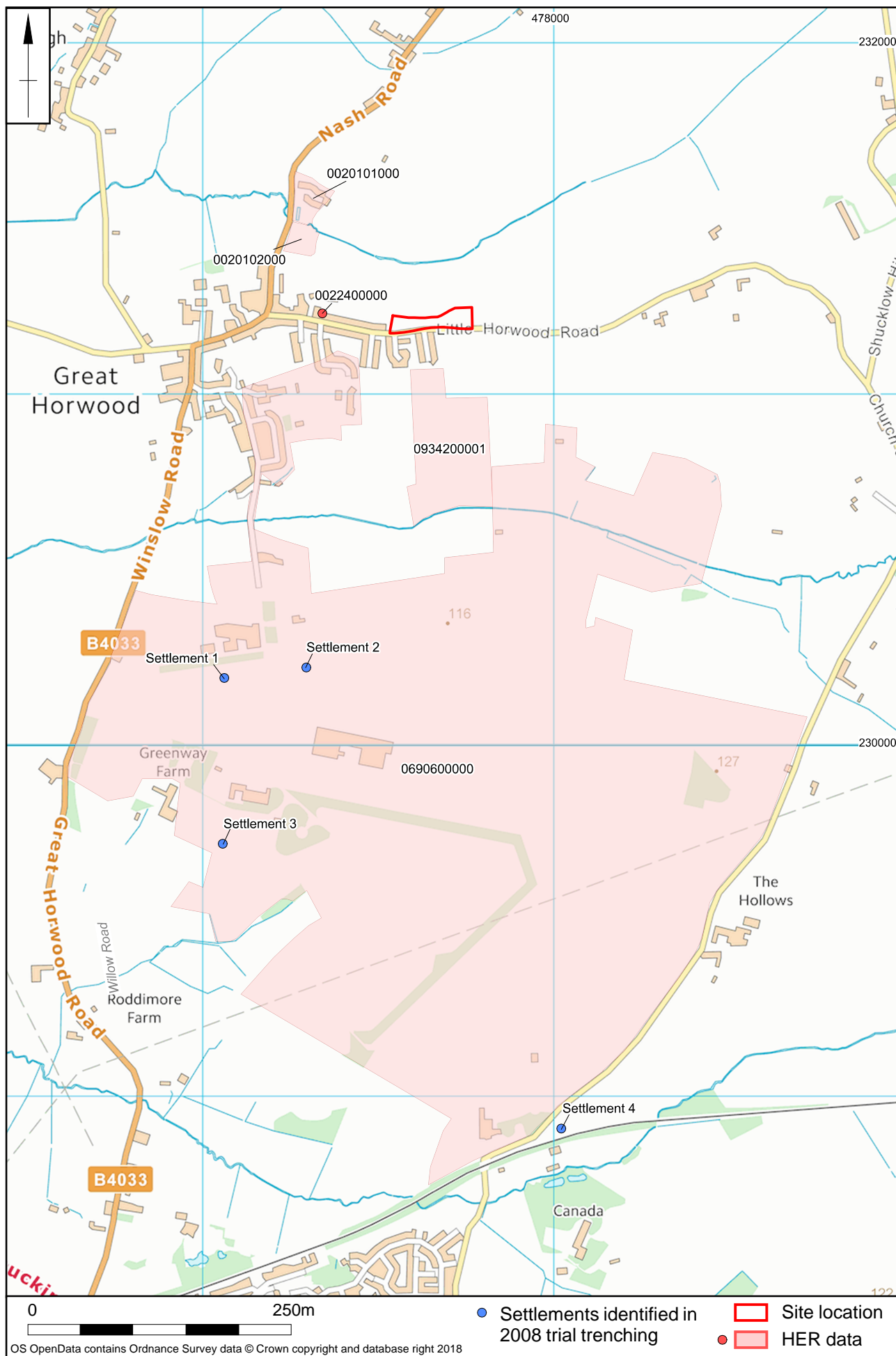


Scale 1:3000

Site location and excavated trenches Fig 1

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-  Site location
-  Excavated trench



Scale 1:5000

Historic Environment Record (HER) data Fig 2

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Project aims

The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting. The trial trench evaluation was designed to provide a broad coverage of the development area.

The general aims were to:

- investigate the date, nature, significance and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;
- determine the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Examine the potential for palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions;
- inform any future excavation or mitigation strategy.

3.2 Research framework

Specific research objectives were drawn from national and regional research framework documents (Hey and Hind 2014, Oxford Archaeology and Wessex Archaeology 2014) as relevant depending upon the results of the evaluation.

4 METHODOLOGY

All works was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct* (2014a), and the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance documents (ClfA 2014b, c and d). All works conformed to Historic England procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (HE 2015). All site recording procedures are detailed in MOLA's in-house *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual* (MOLA 2014), which was issued to all staff. The site records will be archived under the Buckinghamshire Museums accession code of AYBCM:2019.110.

Trenches covering 2% of the development area were positioned to target any geophysical anomalies as well as to provide a general coverage across the site. The trenches measured 30m long by 1.8m wide. Trenches were located using a Leica Viva Survey Grade RTK GPS operating to an accuracy of +/-0.05m to Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum. Trenches were machine-excavated using a toothless bucket, 1.8m wide, under continuous archaeological supervision. Excavation was undertaken to the level of the natural substrate or first archaeological horizon, whichever appeared first.

Excavation did not proceed beyond safe working depths.

The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features where present. The heights of all deposits were established relative to Ordnance Datum.

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of excavation were fully recorded. Recording followed standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All archaeological features were given a separate context number. Deposits were

described on pro-forma context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds

Archaeological features were plotted on an overall plan at a scale of either 1:100 or 1:50 as appropriate. Sections or profiles through features and areas of complex stratigraphy were drawn at a scale of 1:10.

A photographic record was maintained by high resolution digital photography exceeding 12 megapixels, and monochrome negatives. Overall shots of the site were taken prior to excavation and after backfilling. Overall shots of each trench were taken together with detailed shots of individual features and feature groups as appropriate. All photographs, except general site shots or specific shots for publication included a north arrow and suitable photographic scale.

The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval. No samples were taken during the excavation and no artefacts were recovered.

5 EXCAVATION RESULTS

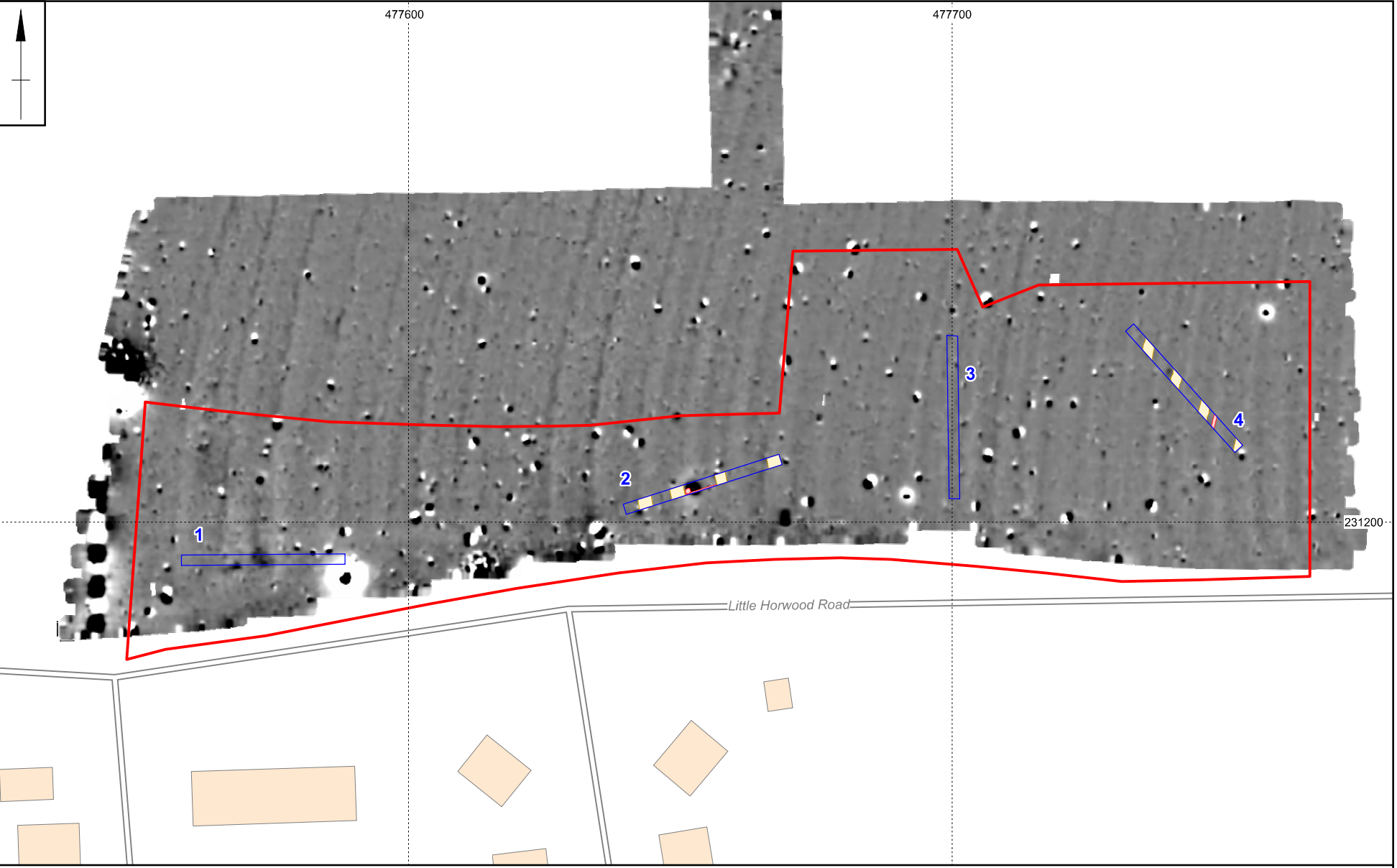
5.1 General stratigraphy

The stratigraphic sequence was broadly comparable across the evaluated area with a layer of topsoil measuring 0.20-0.25m deep with friable compaction, dark brown in colour with a slightly grey hue and a clayish silt composition. This overlaid a layer of subsoil measuring 0.17-0.21m which was medium to lightly compact, yellowish brown in colour and a silty clay composition with a large amount of small chalk flecks and same rare larger stones. The natural surface on the site was a light greyish yellow firm silty clay with frequent chalks small to medium, some sand and ironstone.



Trench 3, representative section, looking west Fig 3

Scale 1:1000



Overview of archaeology

Fig 4

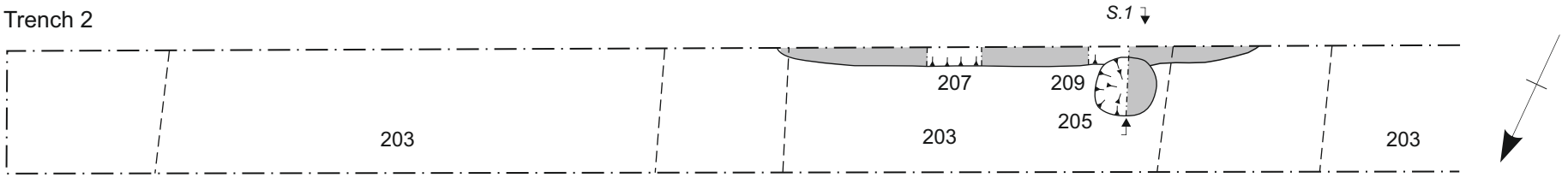


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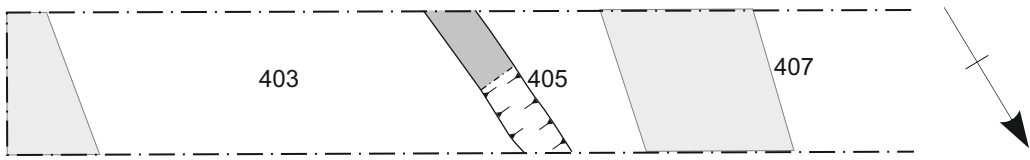
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Scale 1:100

Trench 2



Trench 4



- Feature
- Furrow
- 1 position of furrow

0 5m

Trenches 2 and 4 plans Fig 5

5.2 Archaeological evidence

Of the four trenches excavated, two trenches (Trenches 2 and 4; Figs 4 and 5) had archaeological features other than furrows associated with medieval and post-medieval open field cultivation (Fig 4). No artefacts were recovered from any of the features.

Trench 2

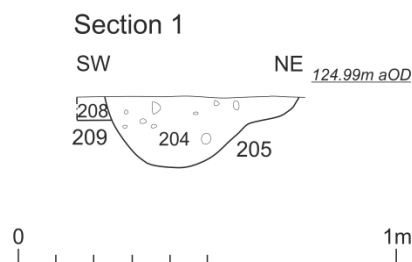
Trench 2, located along the southern edge of the site (Figs 4, 5, 6 and 7) had the northern edge of a ditch [207]/[209] which was subsequently cut by a small pit [205].

The ditch [207]/[209], aligned north-east to south-west, 7m long, at least 0.30m wide and up to 0.21m deep (Figs 4, 5 and 6). Only part of the possible ditch was present within the limits of the trench allowing for only a partial profile to be established (Fig 6), which comprised a flattish base and steep, concave side. The fill of the ditch was mid grey-brown compact silty clay with frequent chalk.

The pit [205] was 0.41m in diameter and 0.21m deep with steep sides and a flat base (Fig 7, Section1). This was filled (204) by a dark grey mottled with orange compact silty clay with frequent chalk inclusions.



Possible ditch [207], looking south-east Fig 6



Pit [205], Section 1, 1:20 Fig 7

Trench 4

Trench 4 was the easternmost of the trenches (Figs 4 and 5) and had a north to south aligned ditch [405] measuring 0.65m wide and 0.08m deep with shallow gradual sides and a concave base (Fig 8). This was filled with a firm mid yellow-brown silty clay with occasional small stones and chalk (404).



Ditch [405], looking south-west Fig 8

Scale 1:1000

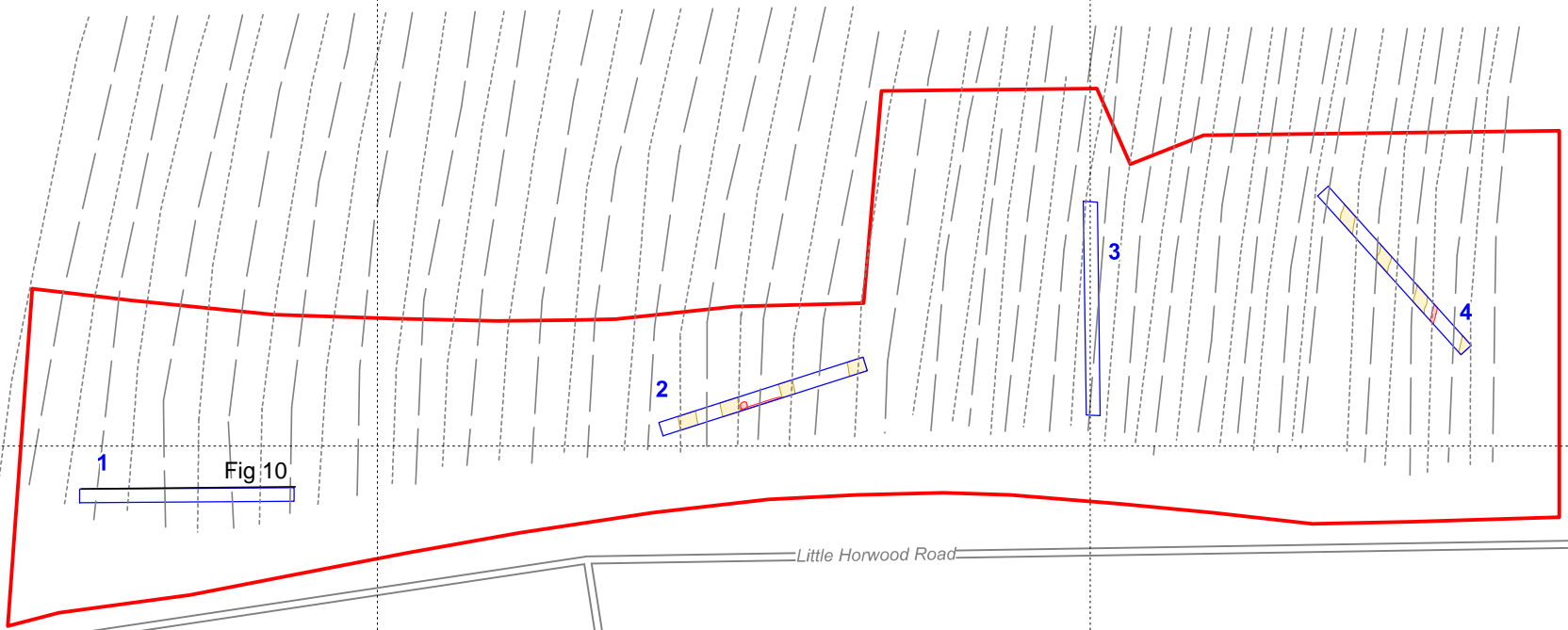


477600

477700

The surviving earthwork ridge and furrow

Fig 9



1 Fig 10

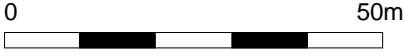
2

3

4

231200

Little Horwood Road



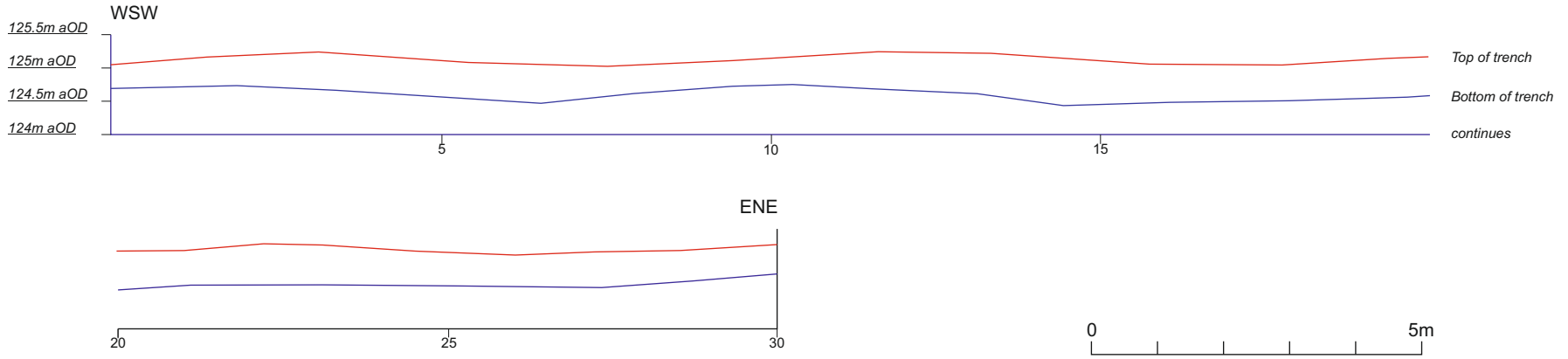
- earthwork- furrow
- earthwork- ridge
- Furrow
- Feature
- Excavated trench
- Site location

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AYBCM:2019.110

Scale 1:100

Trench 1 profile



Trench 1 profile Fig 10

Ridge and furrow

Across the application area there is extensive ridge and furrow, surviving as upstanding earthworks (Fig 9). The ridge and furrow was aligned north to south and generally in good condition. The earthwork ridges were characterised by gradual rounded tops and gentle sides, were 8m apart and 5m wide and up to 0.3m high. The furrows also had slightly rounded bases.

Linear features indicative of ridge and furrow cultivation were also clearly identified in the geophysical survey (Fig 4). Upon excavation, remnant furrows were present in each of the trenches (Fig 4). The furrows were removed in Trenches 1-3 in order to ensure no archaeology was present beneath them (Figs 10 and 11) and left in situ in Trench 4 where they measured 2.5m wide and spaced approximately 5m apart with a depth of 0.15m. The furrows were filled with a friable mid-orange brown silty clay.



Trench 2 ridge and furrow, looking north-west Fig 11

6 DISCUSSION

The excavation produced limited archaeological remains that were situated away from settlement. Early medieval activity was recorded to the south of the site (Michaels 2014) but does not appear to have extended into the present application area.

The earliest activity comprised two ditches and a pit, all undated but which likely represent activity on the margins of occupation. The ditch in Trench 4 was shallow and was perpendicular to Little Horwood Road, it may represent the vestiges of an earlier field boundary. The ditch and the later pit in Trench 2 are not similar in form to recorded Anglo-Saxon Sunken Featured Buildings (SFBs). These features were typically rectangular with rounded corners and measure at greatest 5m by 4m (Tipper 2004). The ditch in Trench 2 is considerably longer than a standard SFB at 7m long. The dearth of artefactual evidence further suggests the the site was away from a focus of settlement.

The geophysical survey had produced two large circular anomalies, which Trenches 1 and 2 targeted. Within Trench 1 no corresponding archaeological remains were identified. Within Trench 2 it is possible that the ditch and pit could have been the anomaly highlighted although it does not match its exact location.

The main period of activity that has been recorded related to the medieval and post-medieval periods, when the site was clearly located within the open fields of the parish, to the east of the village. This phase of archaeological works comprising earthwork survey and excavation has further supported the geophysical survey with recording the extent, form and character of the ridge and furrow.

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MOLA

V1 19 July 2019

V2 24 July 2019

V3 7 August 2019

CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
1	30m, 1.8m, W-E	477573 231193	125.25m	0.45m deep 124.80m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
(101)	Topsoil	Dark brown with a slightly grey hue. Friable clayish silt, some small rounded chalks and stones.	Depth 0.25m	-
(102)	Subsoil	Medium to light yellowish brown, firm silty clay, fairly large amount of small chalk flecks, some rare larger stones.	Depth 0.20m	-
(103)	Natural	Light greyish yellow, firm silty clay, frequent chalks small to medium, some sand and ironstone. Some small rare patches of orange. Some flints.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
2	30m, 1.8m, SW-NE	477654 231206	125.45	0.40m deep 125.05m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
(201)	Topsoil	Dark brown with a slightly grey hue. Friable clayish silt, some small rounded chalks and stones.	Depth 0.20m	-
(202)	Subsoil	Medium to light yellowish brown, firm silty clay, fairly large amount of small chalk flecks, some rare larger stones.	Depth 0.20m	-
(203)	Natural	Light greyish yellow, firm silty clay, frequent chalks small to medium, some sand and ironstone. Some small rare patches of orange. Some flints.	-	-
(204)	Fill of pit	Dark grey mottled with orange, frequent chalks all sizes sub-rounded, compact silty clay	Diameter 0.41m D=0.19m	-
[205]	Cut of pit	Circular. Fairly steep sides with a flat base. Cuts (206).	Diameter 0.41m D= 0.19m	-
(206)	Fill of ditch	Medium greyish brown, silty clay, compacted, frequent chalks all size. Cut by [205]	Total length 7m W= 0.30m D= 0.21m	-
[207]	Cut of ditch	Linear, NE-SW aligned. Shape not completely visible with this being only one edge, but has a flat base and steep, concave sides.	Total length 7m W= 0.30m D= 0.21m	-
(208)	Fill of ditch	Same as (206)	Total length 7m W=0.30m D=0.08m	-
[209]	Cut of ditch	Same as [207]	Total length 7m W=0.30m D=0.08m	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
3	30m, 1.8m, S-N	477700 231219	125.96	0.37m deep 125.59m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
(301)	Topsoil	Dark brown with a slightly grey hue. Friable clayish silt, some small rounded chalks and stones.	Depth 0.20m	-
(302)	Subsoil	Medium to light yellowish brown, firm silty clay, fairly large amount of small chalk flecks, some rare larger stones.	Depth 0.17m	-
(303)	Natural	Light greyish brown, firm silty clay, frequent chalks mainly small but all sizes, some rare sand and ironstone. Some small, rare patches of orange.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
4	30m, 1.8m, S-N	477742 231224	126.70	0.39m deep 126.31m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
(401)	Topsoil	Dark brown with a slightly grey hue. Friable clayish silt, some small rounded chalks and stones.	Depth 0.18	-
(402)	Subsoil	Medium to light yellowish brown, firm silty clay, fairly large amount of small chalk flecks, some rare larger stones.	Depth 0.21m	-
(403)	Natural	Light greyish brown, firm silty clay, frequent chalks mainly small but all sizes, some rare sand and ironstone. Some small, rare patches of orange.	-	-
(404)	Fill of ditch	Firm medium yellow brown silty clay with occasional small stones and chalk.	L=2.40m W=0.65m D= 0.08m	-
[405]	Cut of ditch	Linear N-S. Gradual sides. Concave base.	L=2.40m W= 0.65m D= 0.08m	-
(406)	Fill of furrow	Orange brown clay silt firm-friable. Unexcavated in trench.	-	-
[407]	Cut of furrow	Linear N-S, unexcavated in trench.	-	-



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