

Land at Grove Farm, Coxgrove Hill, Pucklechurch, South Gloucestershire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

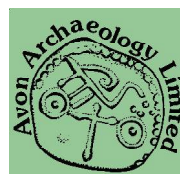
Application Ref: PK18/4150/F



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Avon Archaeology Limited

February 2019



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Summary


Avon Archaeology Ltd were commissioned by Prestige Developments Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Grove Farm, Pucklechurch, South Gloucestershire (centred on NGR ST 68283 77314). The project was commissioned in compliance with the wishes of South Gloucestershire Council that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken as part of the pre-application process (application ref: PK18/4150/F). The work was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Avon Archaeology Ltd and approved by South Gloucestershire Council.

The WSI proposed 10 trenches of which 9 were excavated (reflected in 7 trenches, two of which were essentially conjoined). The 10th trench had to be abandoned due to the presence of established trees and a power cable. All trenches were opened by machine and recorded by hand using single context record sheets and a survey grade GPS unit. No significant archaeological features or deposits were observed within any of the trenches. The natural substrate was reached within each trench, generally at shallow depths of below 0.5m below ground surface. The natural varied, being at the intersection of at least two distinct geological strata. This was observed as either yellow brown clay or sandstone brash with outcrops of solid geology.

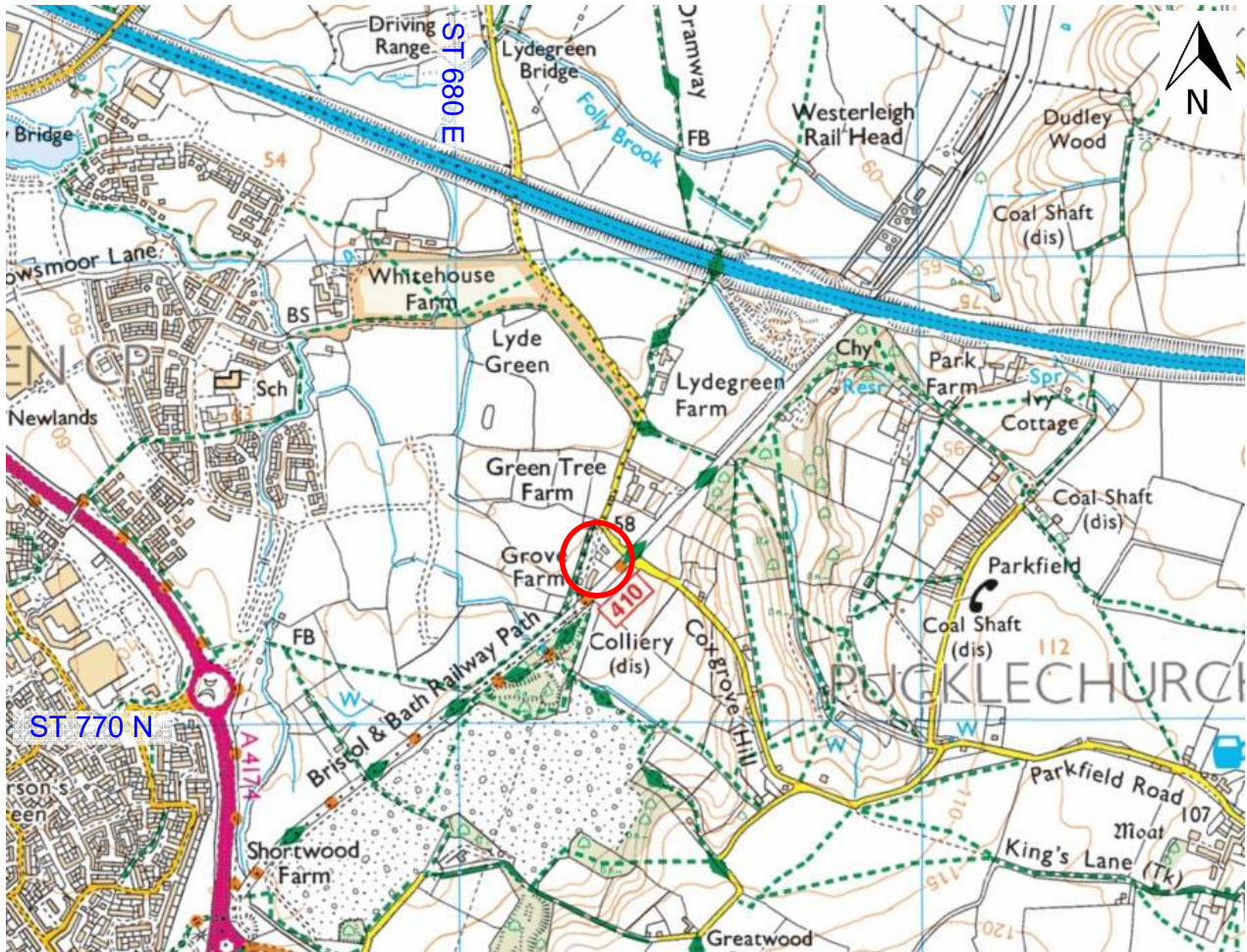
Where buried subsoil was identified it was a mid-brown clay silt, possibly reflecting an earlier agricultural horizon.

Figure 1

Location of the Study Area

The Study Area 

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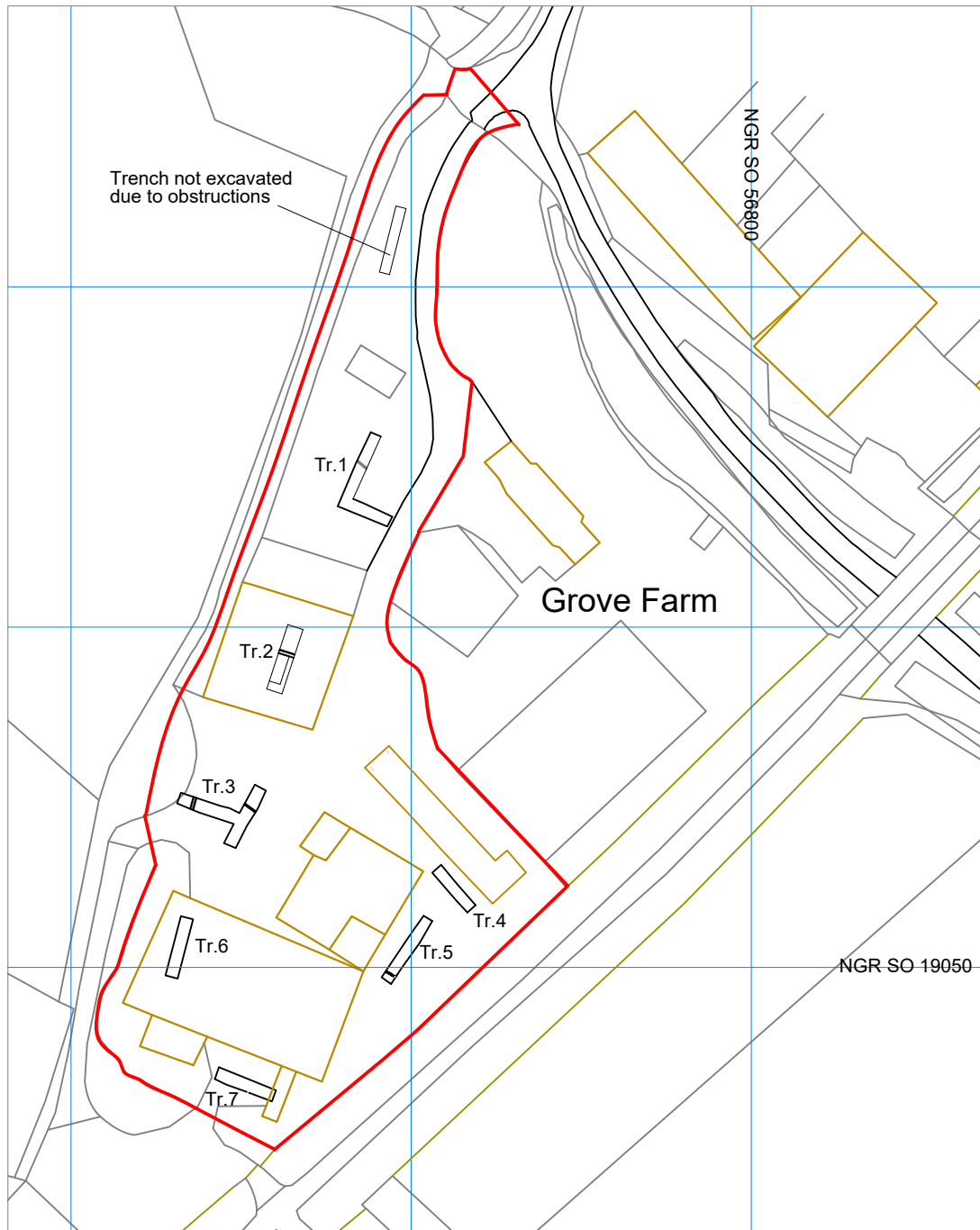
Grid lines at 1km intervals

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Figure 2

Site location plan showing red line boundary
and trench locations



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Avon Archaeology Limited would like to thank Kit Stokes for commissioning the project. Prestige Developments for funding the project and for their patience and cooperation on site and Paul Driscoll of South Gloucestershire Council for his advice and assistance.

NOTES

Whereas Avon Archaeology Limited have taken all care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAL	Avon Archaeology Ltd
aOD	above Ordnance Datum
NGR	National Grid Reference
OS	Ordnance Survey



1 INTRODUCTION

The project for which this report has been prepared proposes to construct 11 new houses on the site (Figure 2). Planning permission has yet to be approved for the application (ref: PK18/4150/F), and this report is designed to inform the planning decision process.

The scope of the evaluation was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Avon Archaeology Limited (Potter 2019), which was approved by the local authority. It was designed to encompass a sample of 0.2% of the total site area, reflected in 10 trenches of 2m x 10m size. However, only 9 of those trenches could be excavated.

The evaluation was undertaken on the 12th and 13th of February 2019 under the supervision of Kevin Potter MCIfA.

A copy of this report will be submitted to the South Gloucestershire HER and a copy will be uploaded to the Archaeology Data Service. The project archive will be given to the care of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.

2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

Pucklechurch is a large village and civil parish in South Gloucestershire. It is located to the north-east of the city of Bristol, between Emerson's Green and Hinton. The development area lies about 1km to the north-west of Pucklechurch proper, south of Lyde Green and Parkfield.

Topographically the site appears to lie on relatively level ground, with an average height of 62m aOD, but with a low of 60maOD in its extreme northern corner and a high of 63m aOD in its extreme south-western corner.

The underlying geology of the site is complex and it may be that two or more different kinds and ages of strata will be encountered during excavation, since the site is located at a point where a number of geological boundaries intersect. It is most likely that deposits of the Mercia Mudstone Group will underpin the site.

The Mercia Mudstone Group is an extremely widespread calcareous clay, which was being deposited throughout virtually the whole of the Triassic Period, 250-200 million years ago. Its basic physical characteristics are described by BGS as

dominantly red, less commonly green-grey, mudstones and subordinate siltstones with thick halite-bearing units in some basinal areas. Thin beds of gypsum/anhydrite widespread; sandstones are also present.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND DOCUMENTARY BACKGROUND

The site was the subject of a Desk-Based Assessment (Corcos 2018), which made a detailed account of its archaeological and historic setting. The following background is extracted from that document.

The site is essentially triangular in shape, and it is defined, on its western side, by the suspected line of a known Roman road, and on the eastern side by the line of the so-called Dramway, a 19th century coal railway originally drawn by horses. Further to the west lie open agricultural fields, which are currently undeveloped. The site's northern boundary is defined by land belonging to Grove Farm, to which it formerly belonged.

Up to at least the late 19th century, the area within the site was part of an empty, undeveloped agricultural enclosure, with a small quarry outside it but butting against its western boundary. The South Pit site of Parkfield Colliery, which had been opened earlier in the 19th century, lay just to the south, on the other side of the line then belonging to the Midland Railway. Its site is now protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. What is now Grove Farm does not appear on maps until after the Second World War, and indeed only appears to have been established after 1955. The farm itself is therefore of little or no historic interest and significance. Most of the known items which appear on the South Gloucestershire HER, close to the proposed development site, are associated with the South Pit of Parkfield Colliery, and indeed the overwhelming majority of all the known sites within the radius of the formal HER trawl are of post-medieval date. The site is not within any Conservation Area, and the nearest listed building is Lydegreen Farm a few hundred metres to the north, at the core of which lies a farmstead of at least 16th century date. Lyde appears as a marker point in a boundary perambulation attached to an Anglo-Saxon charter of the mid-10th century, granting an estate at Pucklechurch to Glastonbury Abbey, and a large area of common green there was enclosed in the 18th century.

A trawl of the local authority's HER revealed that the overwhelming majority of the items recovered related to the area's industrial history in the 18th and 19th centuries, chiefly of

the coalmining, transport and quarrying industries. In terms of the study site itself, the chief interest lies in its close proximity to the line of a known Roman road, which has been traced intermittently in the Mangotsfield/Pucklechurch area, and the line of the so-called Dramway, upon both of which it is possible that the proposed development may impinge. Brandy Bottom colliery, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, also lies close by to the south-west of the site, which represents a rare survival of a virtually complete Bristol coalfield colliery site, including buildings and structures, dating to the second half of the 19th century. An archaeological watching brief undertaken very recently on land belonging to Grove Farm, on the site of a new stable block immediately adjacent to the proposed development site, was entirely negative. Grove Farm and its associated buildings represent an entirely modern development, and it is likely that some damage will already have been done to any underlying archaeological deposits, features and structures which had survived in situ up to that point. The extent of that damage, and of prior archaeological survival is, however, entirely unknown, and while it is considered that the archaeological potential of the site as a whole is on balance likely to be low, it is also entirely unknown.

Prior to the current development an Archaeological Watching Brief was maintained during groundworks associated with a recently constructed stable block within the grounds still belonging to Grove Farm (Potter 2017). No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

4 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed during the fieldwork was set out in detail in the WSI (Potter 2019). In summary:

The project was conducted in accordance with the standards and guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, of which Avon Archaeology is a registered organisation. All trenches were excavated initially by machine, utilising a toothless bucket, onto the first significant geological or archaeological deposit. Further excavation and cleaning was undertaken by hand.

Trench locations and levels were surveyed and taken using a Topcon GRS1 survey grade GPS rover. Stratigraphic units were recorded by trench on pro-forma single context record sheets. A photographic record was also maintained utilising metric photographic scales.

The archaeological officer for South Gloucestershire Council was invited to examine the trenches prior to being backfilled, however it was decided that there was no need for him to attend.

5 RESULTS

Trench locations can be found on Figure 2. Levels can be found on the detailed trench plans (**Figures 3 - 5**).

General

The trenches were set out in the WSI to have a wide distribution covering the site, however, minor adjustments in their location had to be made on site, reflecting practicalities of access and safety. Trench 10 was not excavated. The geological substrata was reached within all of the trenches, in each case across their entire length. No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified within any of the trenches.

Trench 1 (Figure 3, Plates 1 – 3)

Trench 1 was an L shaped trench located towards the NW of the site. Its axes were orientated NNE-SSW and ESE-WNW. The NNE-SSW axis measured 12m x 2m and the ESE-WNW axis 2m x 8m. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.82m below the modern ground level. The depositional sequence observed comprised a ground surface of dark grey-brown topsoil (100) of up to 0.28m depth. Throughout most of the trench the topsoil sealed a layer of orange-brown silty clay subsoil of up to 0.3m depth. Towards the NNE extent of the trench the topsoil overlay a ceramic pipe [104] which filled a cut [103], which was also filled with a deposit of dark grey-brown sandy silt (103). The natural substrate (102) was a mid-grey sandstone brash containing patches of orange-brown clay.

Trench 2 (Figure 3, Plates 4 – 5)

Trench 2 was a linear 10m x 2m trench orientated NNE-SSW. It was located within the barn situated midway along the western site boundary. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m below the modern ground surface. The modern ground surface of the barn is c0.1m thick concrete bedded on a 0.16m thick layer of scalplings, to which were attributed the context numbers (200) and (201) respectively. Below the hard standing was a modern mixed dark brown silty deposit, presumably deposited to raise ground level below the

barn, with lenses of black ash/soot of up to 0.24m depth (202). Deposit (202) sealed a 0.25m thick layer of dark brown buried topsoil. The topsoil sealed a 0.23m thick layer of orange-brown silty clay subsoil. The natural substrate was a yellow-brown clay brash.

An electrical cable ran across the centre of the trench and was left in situ. Additionally fragments of cement bonded asbestos were found both below the cable and in the southern half of the trench. As a result roughly half of the trench was not excavated below modern deposits.

Trench 3 (Figure 4 – Plates 6 – 9)

Trench 3 formed a T shape located in the yard area between the barns. Its axes were orientated roughly NW - SE and SW – NE. The NW – SE axis formed the stem and the SW – NE axis the cross section. The stem section measured 8.5m x 2m and the cross section 9.8m x 2m. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.25m below the modern ground surface. The depositional sequence recorded was sealed by a 0.28m thick, surface of hard packed grey-brown clay sand, which was probably deposited to support hard standing (300). Below (300) was a 0.1m thick layer of buried grey-brown topsoil (301). The buried topsoil in turn sealed a layer of orange-brown silty clay subsoil (302). The natural at the base of the trench was yellow brown clay with patches of sandstone brash.

Towards the N-W extent of the trench a modern plastic service pipe was found (305) filling a cut [304] which was excavated through the modern ground surface. A ceramic field drain (308) transected the trench towards its N-E extent.

Trench 4 (Figure 4, Plates 10 & 11)

Trench 4 was a linear trench which measured 7.8m x 2m (the length was reduced due to machine access issues). It was located towards the eastern boundary of the site. It was orientated roughly NW – SE. The natural substrate was found at shallow depths throughout the trench and the maximum depth excavated was only 0.46m below the modern ground level. Only three deposits were recorded. The modern ground surface was 0.2m deep dark grey-brown sandy silt topsoil and turf (400). The topsoil sealed a

0.26m deep layer of orange-brown silty clay subsoil (401), which overlay the natural. The natural (402) at the base of the trench was grey-brown sandstone bedrock with patches of orange-brown clay.

Trench 5 (Figure 5, Plates 12 – 14)

Trench 5 was a linear trench which measured 10.8m x 2m and was located towards the eastern boundary of the site, to the SW of Trench 4. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.52m below the current ground level, within a section cut to investigate a land drain. The depositional sequence recorded was identical to that recorded within Trench 4. The ground surface sealing the trench was 0.15m of dark grey-brown sandy silt topsoil and turf (500). Below the topsoil was a 0.1m dep layer of grey-brown silty clay subsoil (501). The natural substrate (502) was a yellow-brown clay. Towards the SW end of the trench was a stone rubble field drain [503] (**Plate ?**). It was constructed of rubble filling a V shaped cut [504]. The field drain was sealed by deposit (501).

Trench 6 (Figure 5, Plates 15 -16)

Trench 6 was a linear trench measuring 9m x 2m. It was located within the large barn at the southern end of the site and was orientated NE – SW. Its location and orientation was adjusted from that proposed in the project WSI, due to access constraints. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.9m below the modern ground surface. The ground surface of the barn, in the location of the trench, was a packed grey-brown silty sand containing modern ceramic building material (CBM) which measured up to 0.6m in depth. The depth would suggest that the ground level below the barn was raised prior to its construction. The modern ground surface sealed a layer (601) of buried grey-brown silty clay topsoil, which was on average 0.1m thick. As in many of the other trenches, the buried topsoil sealed a layer of subsoil, which in this case was a 0.2m thick grey-brown silty clay (602). The natural at the base of the trench was a yellow-brown clay (603)

Trench 7 (Figure 5, Plates 17 -18)

Trench 7 was a linear trench measuring 9m x 2m. It was located towards the southern end of the site to the rear of the large barn and was orientated roughly SE – NW. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.9m below the modern ground surface. The ground

surface (700) was grey-brown sandy clay with occasional gravel inclusions. Below the ground surface was a 0.2m deep layer of grey-brown clay subsoil (701). The natural substrate at the base of the trench was yellow-brown clay (707). Two modern services transected the trench. Towards the centre was a ceramic pipe encased in concrete [703] which was cut by [702] from the level of the subsoil. At the western end of the trench was a small plastic water pipe [705], connected to a tap in the large barn, which was buried in a shallow cut [704] backfilled with re-deposited subsoil (706), through which it was cut.

Context Tables

Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions
100	Layer	Topsoil and turf.	T = 0.28m
101	Layer	Subsoil. Mid orange-brown, firm, silty clay.	T = 0.3m
102	Layer	Natural substrate. Light greyish-brown, brash/clay with bedrock outcrops.	N/A
103	Cut	Cut for ceramic waste water pipe.	L=1.6m+ W = 0.5m D = 0.4m+
104	Pipe	Ceramic waste water pipe.	L = 1.6m+ Dia.= 0.2m
105	Fill	Fill of cut 103. Dark greyish brown, sand silt, loose.	L = 1.6m+ W = 0.5m D=0.4m

Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions
200	Surface	Concrete floor surface	T = 0.1m
201	Layer	Scalpings/bedding for concrete floor 100.	T = 0.12m
202	Layer	Makeup/dump layer. Mid greyish-brown, silty sand, firm, moderate CBM.	T = 0.47m
203	Layer	Buried topsoil. Dark greyish brown, sandy silt, firm.	T = 0.1m
204	Layer	Buried subsoil. Mid orange-brown, silty clay, firm.	T = 0.23m
205	Layer	Natural substrate. Light greyish-brown, brash/clay.	N/A
206	Cable	Electric cable lain into floor 200	Dia.= 0.05m

Trench 3

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions
300	Layer	Makeup/dump deposit. Makeup/dump layer. Mid greyish-brown, silty sand, firm, moderate CBM.	T = 0.28m
301	Layer	Buried topsoil. Dark greyish brown, sandy silt, firm.	T = 0.1m
302	Layer	Buried subsoil. Mid orange-brown, silty clay, firm.	T = 0.2m

303	Layer	Natural substrate. Light greyish-brown, clay. Brash to the northern end of trench.	N/A
304	Cut	Cut for modern plastic pipe.	L = 2m+
305	Pipe	Plastic service pipe.	L = 2m+ Dia. = 0.5m approx.
306	Fill	Fill of pipe trench 304. Dark greyish-brown, sandy clay, firm	L = 2m+
307	Cut	Linear cut for ceramic field drain 309.	L = 2m+ W = 0.4m D = 0.9m
308	Pipe	Ceramic field drain pipe.	L = 2m+ Dia = 0.15m
309	Fill	Fill of 307. Dark greyish brown silty clay, firm.	L = 2m+ W = 0.4m D = 0.9m
310	Layer	Modern yard surface. Mid grey scalplings/hardcore.	T = 0.1m

Trench 4

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions
400	Layer	Topsoil and turf.	T = 0.2m
401	Layer	Subsoil. Mid orange-brown, firm, silty clay.	T = 0.26m
402	Layer	Natural substrate. Light greyish-brown, brash/clay.	N/A

Trench 5

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions
500	Layer	Topsoil and turf.	T = 0.15
501	Layer	Subsoil. Mid orange-brown, firm, silty clay.	T = 0.1m
502	Layer	Natural substrate. Brownish-yellow, clay.	N/A
503	Cut	Cut for filed drain. Linear, V-shaped profile.	L=1.6m+ W=0.25m D= 0.27m
504	Fill	Fill of filed drain 503. Mix of angular pennant sandstone fragments and light greyish yellow clay.	L=1.6m+ W=0.25m D= 0.27m

Trench 6

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions
600	Layer	Dump deposit. Light greyish-brown, silty sand, firm, moderate CBM.	T = 0.6m
601	Layer	Buried topsoil. Dark greyish brown, sandy silt, firm.	T = 0.1m
602	Layer	Buried subsoil. Mid orange-brown, silty clay, firm.	T = 0.2m
603	Layer	Natural substrate. Brownish-yellow, clay.	N/A

Trench 7

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions
700	Layer	Modern ground surface. Dark greyish-brown, silty clay, firm.	T = 0.1m
701	Layer	Subsoil. Mid greyish-brown, firm, silty clay.	T = 0.2m
702	Cut	Linear cut for modern pipe.	L=2.0m+ W= 0.3m D= 0.2m+
703	Pipe	Concrete encased ceramic pipe	L=2m+ W=0.4m D= 0.2m+
704	Cut	Cut for modern water pipe	L=2.0m+ W= 0.1m D=0.2m
705	Pipe	Modern plastic water pipe	L=2.0m+ W= 0.1m D=0.2m
706	Fill	Fill of 704. Dark greyish brown sandy silt, loose.	L=2.0m+ W= 0.1m D=0.2m
707	Layer	Natural substrate. Brownish-yellow, clay.	N/A

6 FINDS

No finds were recovered from the site. Modern ceramic building material was present within the topsoil and surface layers of most trenches.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological evaluation found no evidence of buried archaeological features. Combined with the negative results of the Watching Brief conducted during the construction of the stable block within Grove Farm (Potter 2016) it is concluded that the site has low potential for preservation of significant archaeological remains. Traces of buried subsoil were present, suggesting that archaeological strata are preserved. However, no dating evidence was found within the subsoil, which suggests a low level of human activity. Even so it cannot be concluded that archaeological features are not present at all on the site, only that investigation thus far demonstrates low potential.

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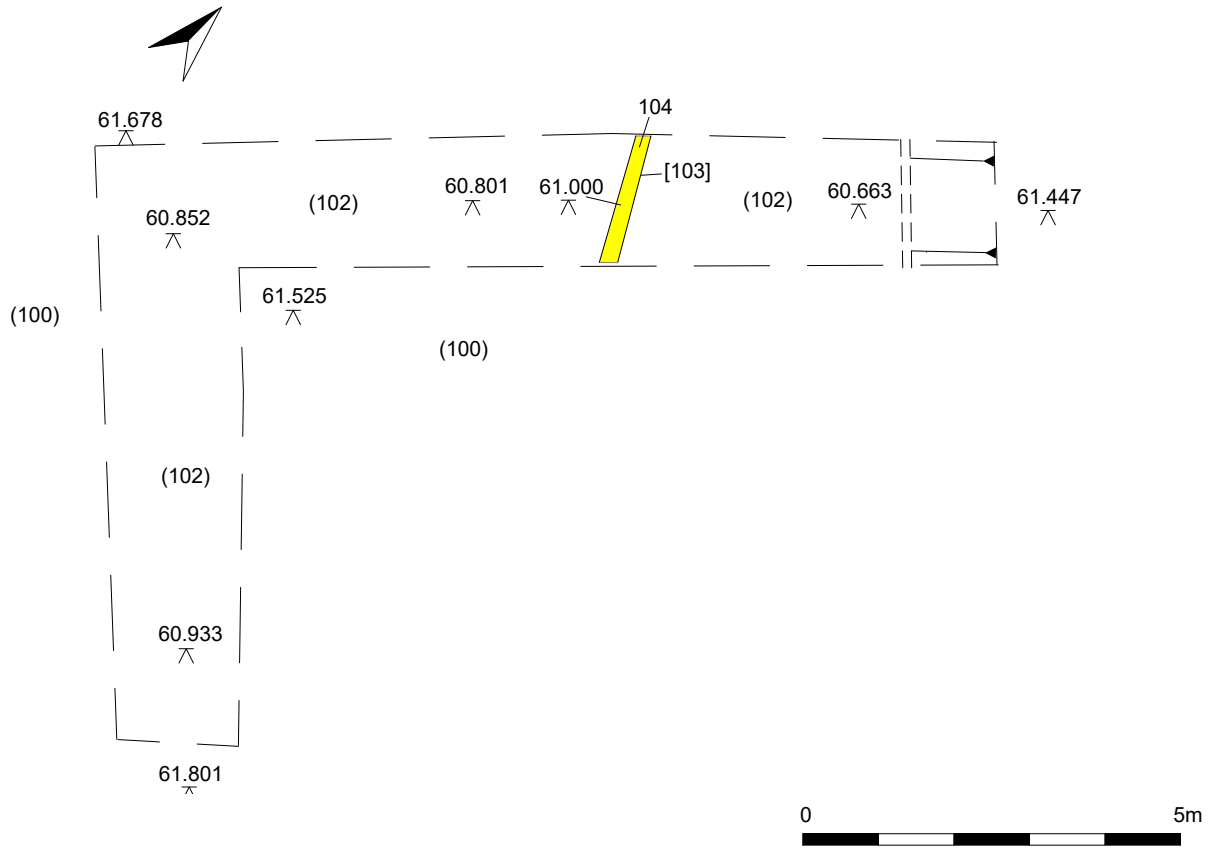
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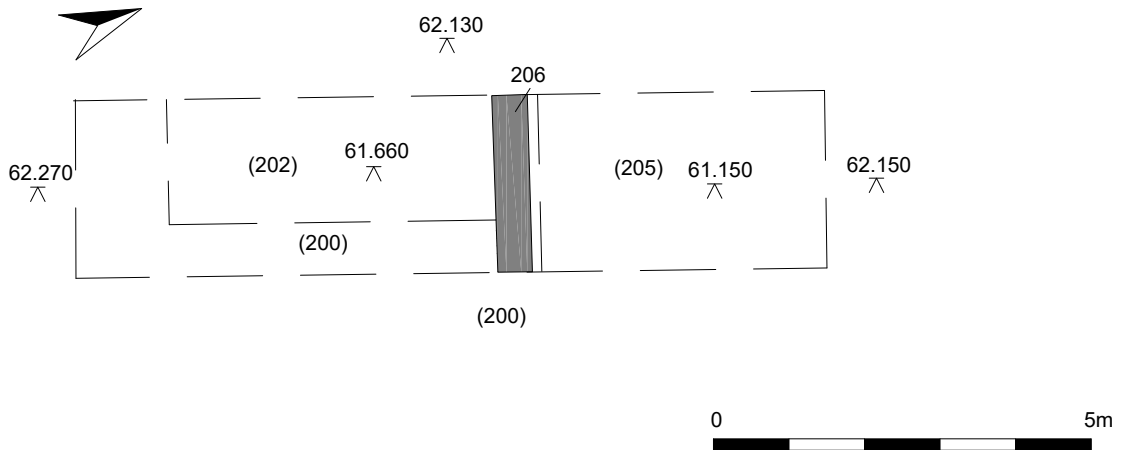
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Figure 3

Trench 1



Trench 2



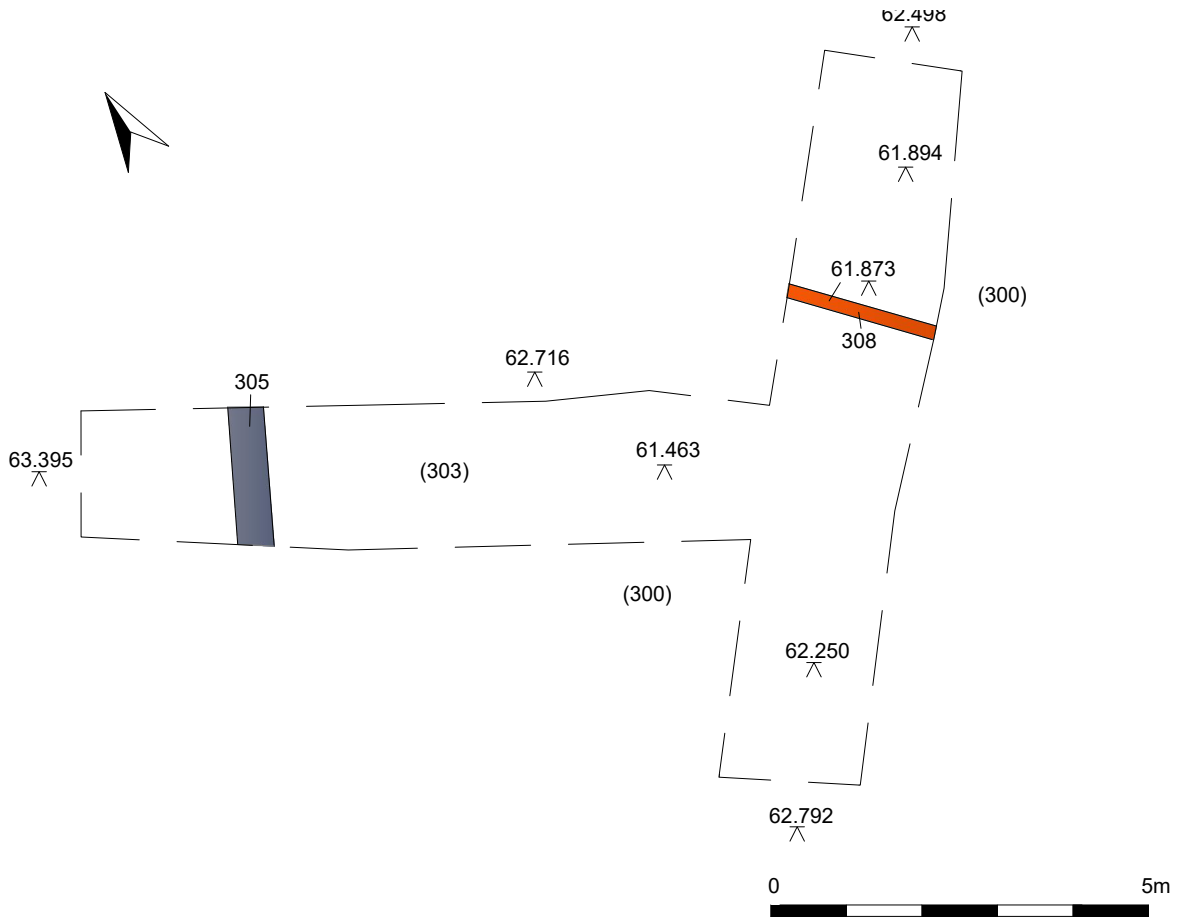
Key

- Waste pipe
- Ceramic field drain
- Water pipe
- Electric/other services



Figure 4

Trench 3

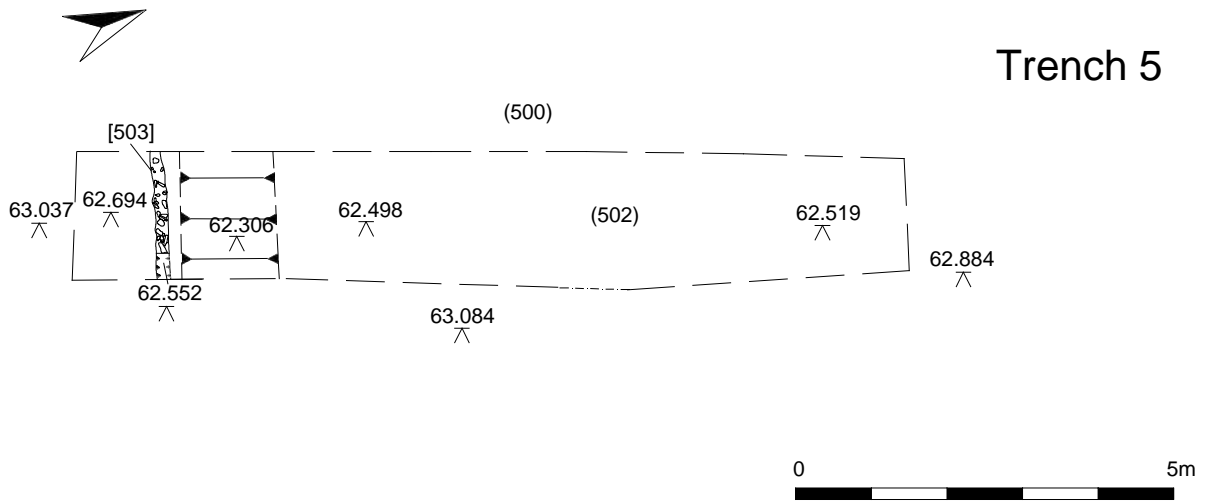


Trench 4

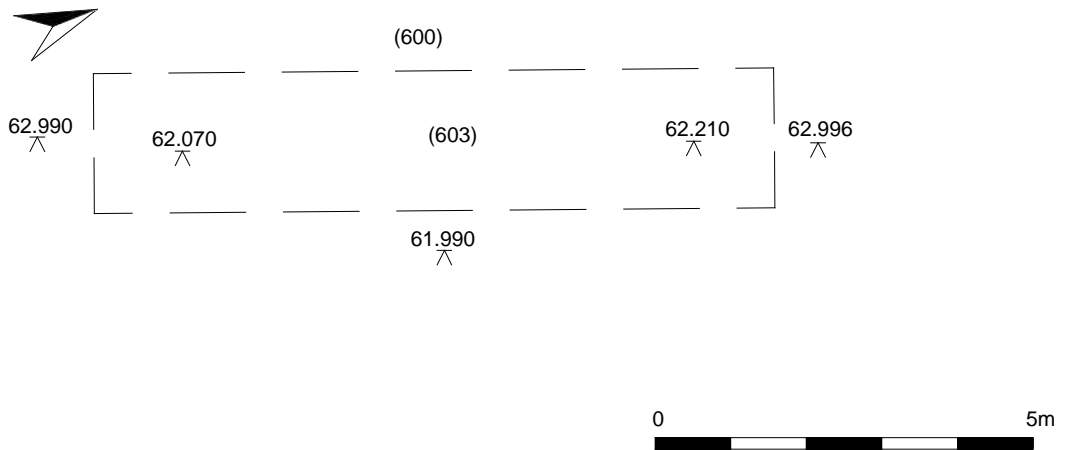


Figure 5

Trench 5



Trench 6



Trench 7



Plates



Plate 1: Looking north-west at Trench 1. 2 x 2m scales.



Plate 2: Looking south-west at Trench 1. 2 x 1m scales.



Plate 3: North-west facing section in Trench 1. 1 x 1m scale.



Plate 4: Looking south-west at Trench 2. 2 x 2m scales.



Plate 5: North-west facing section in Trench 2. 1 x 1m scale.



Plate 6: Looking north-east at Trench 3. 2 x 1m scales.



Plate 7: Looking south-west at Trench 3. 2 x 1m scales.

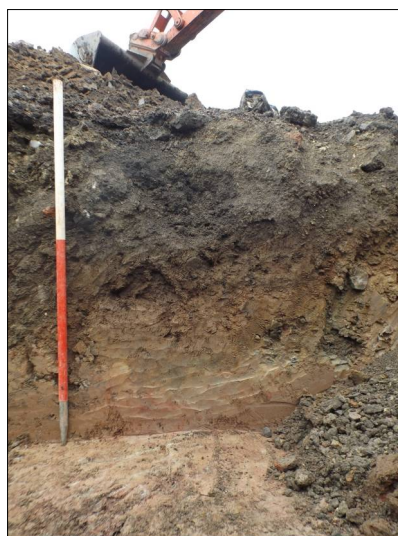


Plate 8: South-west facing section in Trench 3. 1 x 1m scale.



Plate 9: East facing section in Trench 3. 2 x 1m scales.



Plate 10: Looking south-east at Trench 4. 2 x 1m scales.



Plate 11: North-east facing section in Trench 4. 1 x 1m scale.



Plate 12: Looking north-east at Trench 5. 2 x 1m scales.



Plate 13: Field drain [503] in Trench 5. Looking south-east. 1 x 1m scale.



Plate 14: North-east facing section through field drain [503] in Trench 5. 1 x 1m scale.



Plate 15: Looking south-west at Trench 6. 2 x 1m scales.



Plate 16: South-east facing section in Trench 6. 1 x 1m scale.



Plate 17: Looking north-west at Trench 7. 2 x 1m scales.



Plate 18: North-east facing section in Trench 7.