Land at Hunts Grove, Hardwicke, Gloucetser

Archaeological Watching Brief

By Rachel Heaton
On Behalf of Andy Mayes
of URS

Avon Archaeology Unit Limited
January 2014

Hunts Grove, Hardwicke, Gloucestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief

Avon Archaeology Limited
January 2014

CONTENTS

FIGURES

PLATES

SUMMARY

The following report details the results of an Archaeological Watching Brief carried out during excavation of geotechnical test pits at Hunts Grove, Hardwicke, Gloucestershire. The site had undergone previous geophysical survey, which highlighted a number of probable archaeological features interpreted as being indicative of Iron Age and Romano British date. Excavation of the test pits aimed to prevent significant disturbance to archaeological features with a brief to preserve them in situ if encountered. Despite the findings of the geophysical survey, no archaeological features or deposits were found.

The work was monitored by Rachel Heaton of Avon Archaeology Limited between the 22nd and 24th January 2014.

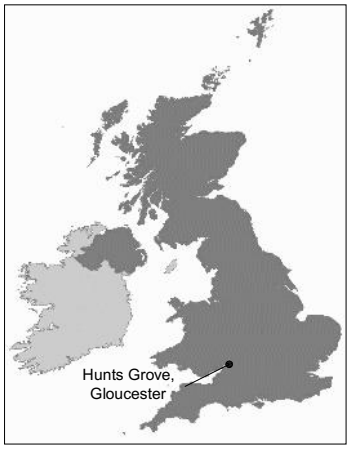
Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Andy Mayes for providing information regarding the site, patience and assistance from the onsite contractors; James Godphrey of Peter Brett Associates, Steve and the geotechnical survey team from Geotchnical. Thanks also to Susana Dias for producing the illustrations.

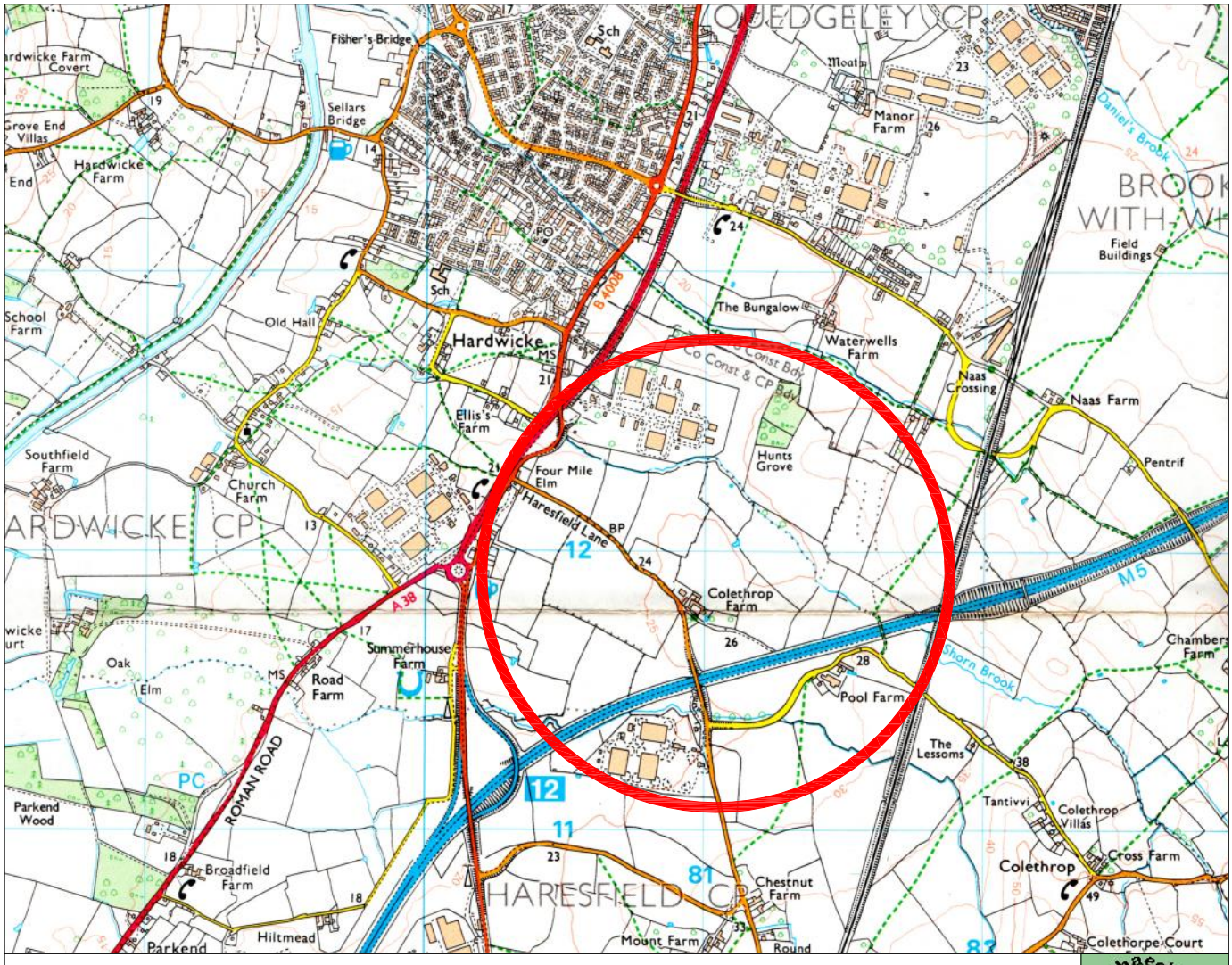
Avondale Business Centre, Woodland Way, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 1AW.
Telephone 0117 960 8487
E-mail mail@avonarchaeology.co.uk

Figure 1

N



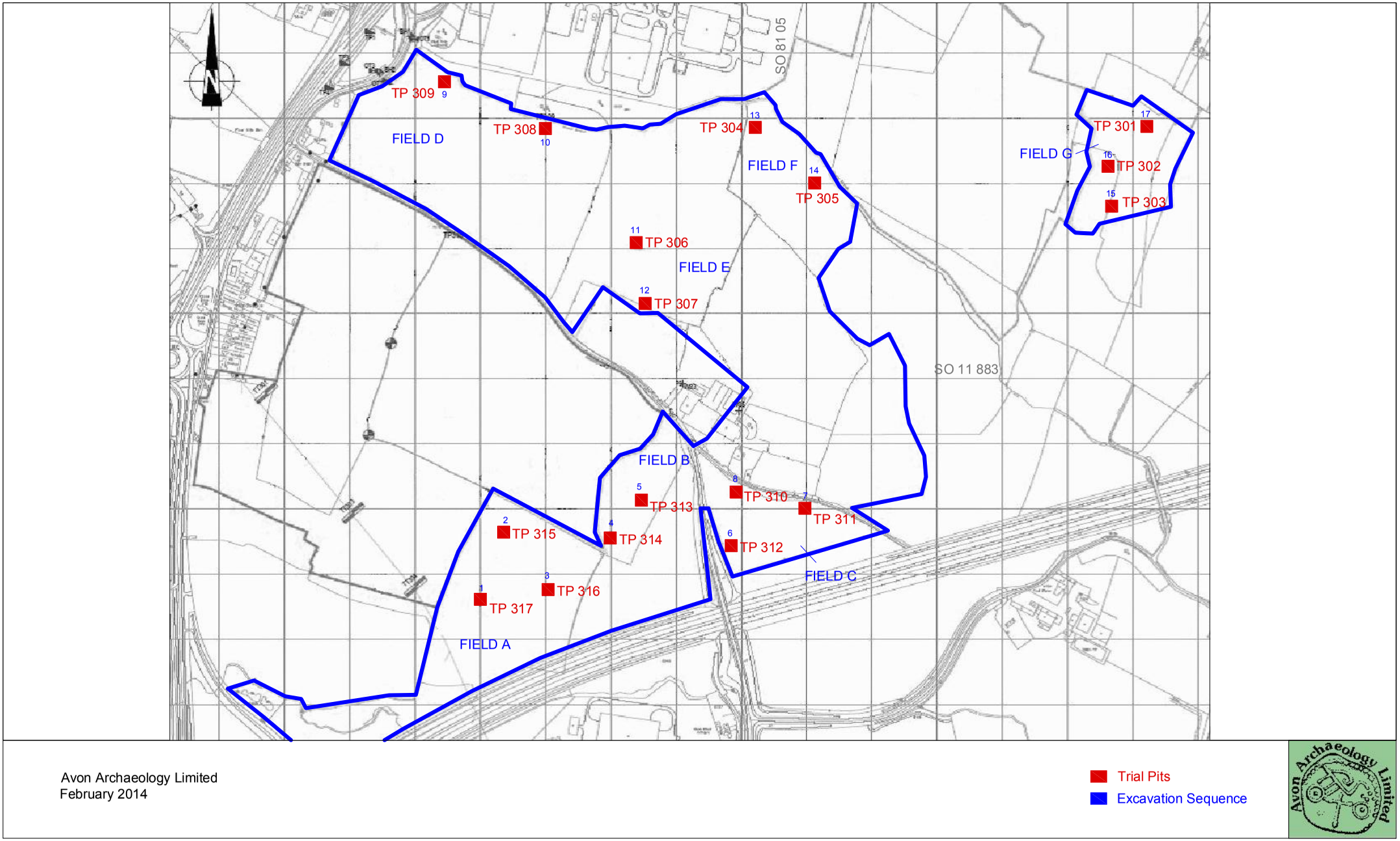
Location of the Study Area
Grid lines at 1 km intervals (extract from OS 1:25 000)



Avon Archaeology Limited
February 2014

Site and Trial Pit Location Plan, Hunts Grove, Gloucester

Figure 2



Avon Archaeology Limited
February 2014

Trial Pits
Excavation Sequence

1 INTRODUCTION

Avon Archaeology Limited were commissioned by Andy Mayes of URS to carry out an archaeological watching brief during excavation of seventeen Geotechnical Test pits prior to a proposed building project on a large area of farm land called Hunts Grove. The site is located to the south of Gloucester, between Hardwicke and Haresfield, close to Junction 12 of the M5. The watching brief did not form a requirement of planning but will be used to inform the development and planning process.

The work was undertaken over a three day period from the 22nd to the 24th of January 2014 and was monitored by the author.

2 THE SITE

Seventeen Geotechnical Test Pits were excavated (**Figure 2**) across seven separate fields covering an area of approximately 25.5m². This process has evaluated a tiny proportion of the total area of the proposed development, which measures approximately 3 km².

3 METHODOLOGY

The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Mayes, 2014) produced by URS.

Written, drawn and photographic records were made of each stratigraphic unit as they were exposed. Individual layers, features and deposits were given a unique context number described in stratigraphic sequence.

Excavation was carried out by Ken Pink (plant hire), on behalf of, and under the supervision of the primary site contractor for the work, Geotechnical. The work was undertaken using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator with a 0.5m wide toothless bucket.

Each Test Pit measured 0.5m wide, approximately 2.5m long and 3m deep. Geotechnical gave each trench a unique reference number (TP 301 - TP317) and archaeological context numbers were given in relation to the sequence in which they were excavated.

4 THE WATCHING BRIEF

Despite the potential for archaeology, highlighted by the geophysical survey, the watching brief recorded no significant archaeological deposits. Each trench showed a fairly consistent sequence of deposits. The natural, generally a blue grey clay was reached between 0.35m and 0.5m below the current ground surface. Orange brown sandy gravel lenses of varying thickness and depth were recorded in several trenches, predominantly those in Field A (TP317, 315 & 316),and probably reflect natural palaeochannels.

The natural clay was sealed by a 'subsoil' consisting of yellow orange-brown, friable, silty clay, which varied in thickness generally between 0.1m and 0.35m.

The topsoil was a consistent mid brown soft sandy silt, containing only occasional small angular stones. It was generally between 0.18m and 0.3m thick, with the exception of TP 310 where it was 0.4m thick. This test pit was, however, excavated close to the field boundary where ground level had clearly been built up against the hedgerow.

Small pieces of ceramic roof tile, red brick, stone, slate, glass, pottery and plastic were scattered across the surface of most of the fields in varying quantities, though never frequent. A limited field walk around the location of each trench produced little of interest; however a few sherds of pottery were retained for further analysis (see **Finds**).

CONTEXT TABLE

Field A

Trench Order	Test Pit Number	Context Number	Description	Thickness
1	**TP317**	100	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.3m
		101	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.2m
		102	Natural , grey blue firm clay, becoming darker blue grey with depth. Contains lenses of orange brown sandy gravels, possible palaeochannels. Reached at 0.5m below ground level	
2	**TP315**	200	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.3m
		201	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.18m
		202	Natural , grey blue firm clay, becoming darker blue grey with depth. Contains thin lenses of orange brown sandy gravels, possible palaeochannels. Reached at 0.48m below ground level	
3	**TP316**	300	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.25m
		301	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.1m
		302	Natural , grey blue firm clay, becoming darker blue grey with depth. There was a thick deposit of of orange brown sandy gravels, at the north end approximately 1m below the surface: possible palaeochannel. Reached at 0.35m below ground level	

Field B

Trench Order	Test Pit Number	Context Number	Description	Thickness
4	**TP314**	400	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.18m
		401	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.25m
		402	Natural , grey blue firm clay, becoming darker blue grey with depth. Reached at 0.43m below ground level	
5	**TP313**	500	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.2m
		501	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.35m
		502	Natural , grey blue firm clay, becoming darker blue grey with depth. Reached at 0.55m below ground level.	

Field C

Trench Order	Test Pit Number	Context Number	Description	Thickness
6	**TP312**	600	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	Not measured
		601	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	Not measured
		Natural was not seen in this trench. The ground was waterlogged and was very unstable, the upper two deposits collapsed in quickly. For health and safety the trench was backfilled and abandoned. A replacement trench was not excavated.		
7	**TP311**	700	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.26
		701	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.15
		702	Friable grey blue clay, becomes darker and harder with depth. Reached at 0.41m below ground level.	
8	**TP310**	800	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.4m
		801	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.1m
		802	Friable grey blue clay, becomes darker and harder with depth. Reached at 0.5m below ground level.	

Field D

Trench Order	Test Pit Number	Context Number	Description	Thickness
9	**TP309**	900	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.3m
		901	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.15m
		902	Friable grey blue clay, becomes darker and harder with depth. Reached at 0.45m below ground level	
10	**TP308**	1000	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.28m
		1001	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.17m
		1002	Friable grey blue clay, becomes darker and harder with depth. Reached at 0.45m below ground level.	

Field E

Trench Order	Test Pit Number	Context Number	Description	Thickness
11	**TP306**	1100	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.3m
		1101	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.2m
		1102	Friable grey blue clay, becomes darker and harder with depth. Reached at 0.5m below ground level	
12	**TP307**	1200	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.18m
		1201	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.25m
		1202	Friable grey blue clay, becomes darker and harder with depth. Reached at 0.43m below ground level.	

Filed F

Trench Order	Test Pit Number	Context Number	Description	Thickness
13	**TP304**	1300	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.19m
		1301	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.2m
		1302	Friable grey blue clay, becomes darker and harder with depth. Reached at 0.39m below ground level.	
14	**TP305**	1400	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.23m
		1401	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.25m
		1402	Friable grey blue clay, becomes darker and harder with depth. Reached at 0.48m below ground level.	

Field G

Trench Order	Test Pit Number	Context Number	Description	Thickness
15	**TP303**	1500	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.23m
		1501	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.2m
		1502	Pale yellow grey, friable clay, with mottled appearance, becomes darker and harder with depth. Reached at 0.43m below ground level	
16	**TP302**	1600	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.22m
		1601	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.21m
		1602	Pale yellow grey, friable clay, with mottled appearance, becomes darker and harder with depth. Reached at 0.43m below ground level	
17	**TP301**	1700	Topsoil/Ploughsoil : Mid brown soft sandy silt, very occasional small angular stones otherwise no inclusions.	0.2m
		1701	Yellow orange-brown, friable silty clay, contains no inclusions.	0.22m
		1702	Pale yellow grey, friable clay, with mottled appearance, becomes darker and harder with depth. Reached at 0.42m below ground level.	

5 FINDS

No artefacts were recovered during the excavation of the geotechnical test pits; however several surface finds of pottery, recovered from the surrounding fields, were retained.

In Field D (TP 308 and TP 309) three sherds of pottery were recovered; two of early post medieval date and one body sherd of an unidentified but earlier, possibly Roman, date.

In Field F, two sherds of 19th century pottery were recovered.

In Field G, four sherds of pottery of three unknown types were recovered; all are likely to be early medieval or medieval date.

Further analysis would be able to determine the exact dates and fabrics present, but their small number and unstratified nature make such an undertaking of limited value.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of the project was to identify and locate any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the works. A wider objective was to characterise the overall state of archaeological preservation and, if possible, extent.

The test pits monitored encompassed only a tiny percentage of the proposed development site. As such the absence of archaeological features or deposits within them cannot be viewed as being indicative of absence across the site. Indeed, where geophysical survey identified possible features, further investigation would certainly be advisable. However, the test pits clearly demonstrate that any archaeology preserved on the site exits, if present, within localised areas and that large parts of the site can reasonably be expected to contain no significant archaeological remains.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mayes, A January 2014. *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Monitoring GI Works Hunts Grove Phase 2*. URS, Prepared for Crest Nicholson.

MoRPHE, April 2009. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*, English Heritage, Swindo

1. Trench 1 (TP317) general view, looking north east
2. Trench 1 (TP317) section view, looking north west
3. Trench 2 (TP315) section view, looking north west

4. Trench 2 (TP315) looking into the trench
5. Trench 3 (TP316) general view, looking north east
6. Trench 3 (TP316) looking into south end of trench

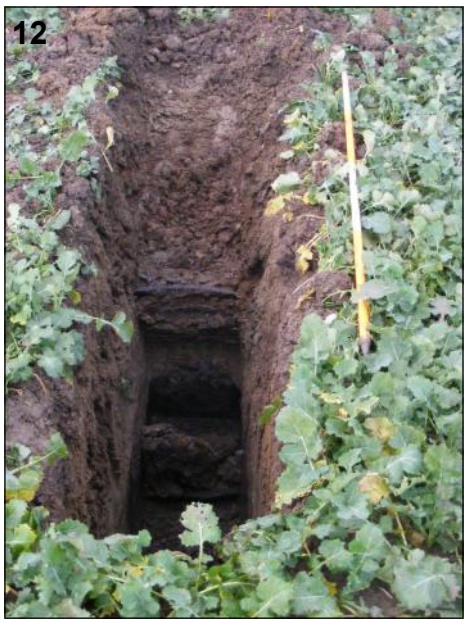
7. Trench 4 (TP314) general view, looking north east

8. Trench 4 (TP314) general view, looking east

8. Trench 5 (TP313) general view, looking north east

10. Trench 5 (TP313) section, looking north west

11. Trench 6 (TP312) general view, looking south west



12. Trench 7 (TP311) general view, looking north east
13. Trench 7 (TP311) section view, looking south east
14. Trench 8 (TP310) general view, during excavation
15. Trench 8 (TP310) section view, looking north west
16. Trench 9 (TP309) general view, looking south east
17. Trench 9 (TP309) section view, looking south west

18. Trench 10 (TP308) general view, south east

19. Trench 10 (TP308) section view, south west

20. Trench 11 (TP306) section view, north west

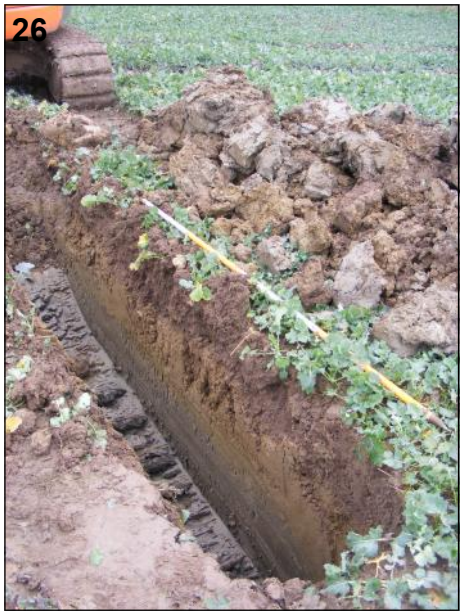
21. Trench 11 (TP306) general view, south west

22. Trench 12 (TP307) general view, looking south east

23. Trench 12 (TP307) section view, looking north east

24. Trench 13 (TP304) general view, looking south

25. Trench 13 (TP304) section view, looking south west



26. Trench 14 (TP305) general view, looking north east

27. Trench 14 (TP305) section view, looking north west

28. Trench 15 (TP303) general view, looking north east

29. Trench 15 (TP303) section view, looking north

30. Trench 16 (TP302) general view, looking north east
31. Trench 16 (TP302) section view, looking north west
32. Trench 17 (TP301) section view, looking north west
33. Trench 17 (TP301) general view during excavation, looking north east