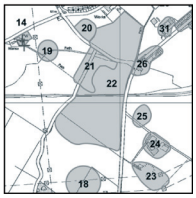
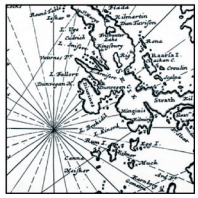
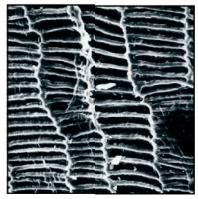
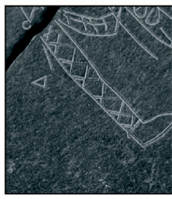
DRAA/01







DOONHOLM ROAD, AYR

Archaeological Trial Trenching

commissioned by Miller Homes

May 2014

HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

REGISTERED ORGANISATION IfA

DOONHOLM ROAD, AYR

Archaeological Trial Trenching

commissioned by Miller Homes

May 2014

HA Job no.: DRAA/01
NGR: NS 34089 17800
Parish: Ayr
Local authority: South Ayrshire
OASIS ref.: headland1-175687

Project Manager	Alistair Robertson
Author	Jürgen van Wessel
Fieldwork	Meaghan Dyer & Jürgen van Wessel
Graphics	Anna Sztromwasser
Approved by	Alistair Robertson – Project Manager

Headland Archaeology
North East

13 Jane Street
Edinburgh EH6 5HE

0131 467 7705
northeast@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

land adjacent to
Doonholm Road
Ayr
South Ayrshire

- application boundary
- trench
- trackway

N

0 100m

scale 1:1,500 @ A3

Illus 1
Site location

DOONHOLM ROAD, AYR

Archaeological Trial Trenching

Headland Archaeology was commissioned to undertake a programme of trial trenching at land south of Doonholm Road, Ayr in support of a proposed planning application by Miller Homes for a housing development. A total of 38 trenches were excavated by machine, providing an 8% sample of the 6 hectare development area. The remains of a trackway, most likely dating to the mid-18th century but possibly earlier were encountered in three trenches. No further features of archaeological interest were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological trial trenching at a site south of Doonholm Road, Ayr in advance of a proposed housing development by Miller Homes. The work was commissioned to inform a planning application and was undertaken to a specification (Headland Archaeology 2013) agreed by West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS). Headland Archaeology undertook the fieldwork between the 10th and 13th of March 2014.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Situation and topography

Doonholm is located in the south-eastern corner of Ayr, between Alloway and the A77 (**Illus 1**). Significant housing development has taken place in this area in recent years, and Doonholm Road itself has been recently upgraded. The development area lies within the Doonholm estate and consists of three gently undulating pasture fields (Fields A–C), sloping generally down to the south-west with levels of between 27 and 32m OD (**Illus 2**). The bedrock geology consists mainly of sandstones with superficial deposits of glacial till (BGS website). The River Doon carves a deep gorge some way to the south and west of the site.

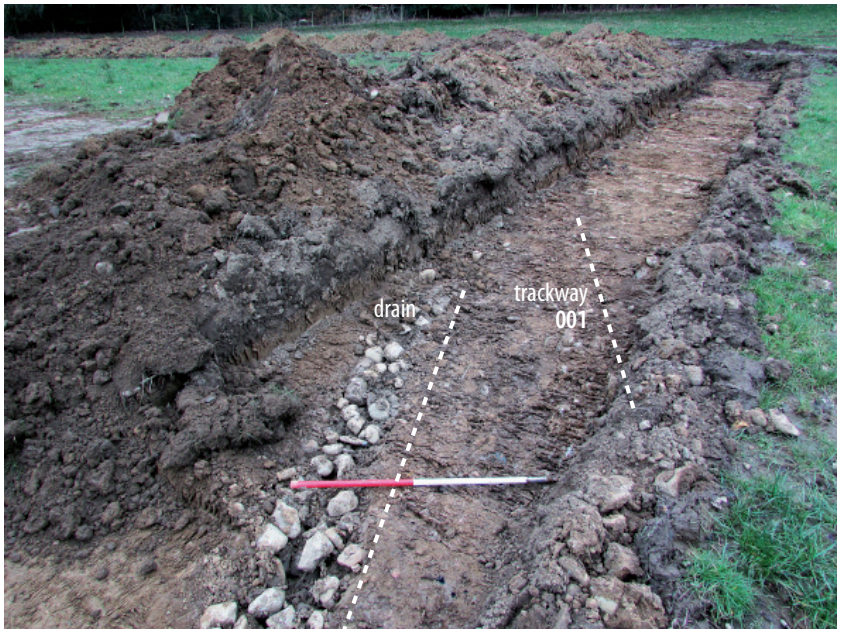
2.2 Historical background

There are no known heritage assets within the development area itself. Close by however, there are a number of features relating to the former Doonholm Estate (Ayrshire Mansions website). The lands of Doonholm, in the barony of Alloway, south of Ayr, belonged to the town of Ayr until 1754. They were known at that time as Old Berriesden and Warlockholm. James Neill, of Ayr, acquired the lands in 1755, sold them to David Mitchell of Ayr, who in turn, sold them later that year to William Ferguson of London (a relative of the Ferguson's of Castlehill / Ayrshire).

William Ferguson had amassed a considerable fortune as a medical practitioner working in London. His high standing in the community, led to the position of Provost of Ayr for a number of years. It was at this time that Ferguson had the older portion of the present house built and named the land Doonholm. On his death in 1776, Ferguson left Doonholm to his eldest daughter Elizabeth, who married Malcolm Fleming of Barochan in 1780. The estate was bought by John Ferguson (a merchant in Calcutta) in 1783, who was a nephew of William Ferguson. The death of John Ferguson in 1790 saw the lands of Doonholm return to the Fleming's of Barochan. The Fleming's sold Doonholm to John Hunter in 1796. A new wing was added in 1818 giving Doonholm House its present day look.

By the middle of the 1800s, Doonholm had been purchased by Lord Blackburn (one of Her Majesty's judges). The death of Lord Blackburn in 1896 saw Doonholm sold again, probably to the Kennedy's, the present day owners.

To the north-west of the application area is Alloway Mote, situated on a steep drop down to the River Doon. A well preserved example of a medieval Motte and bailey castle, it was protected as a Scheduled Monument in 1969 (Historic Scotland). The defensive mound measures some 10m across, set within a massive rampart.



Illus 2

General view of fields B and C prior to trial trenching, facing SSW

Illus 3

General view of Field A during trial trenching, facing W

Illus 4

General view of track [001] in Trench 07, facing NNW

2.3 Archaeological background

Previous archaeological work in the area relates principally to other housing developments, mostly to the north of Doonholm Road. A desk-based assessment undertaken in 2002 concluded that the area north of Doonholm Road had very low archaeological potential (Murray 2002); this was confirmed by trial trenching (Brown 2002) which revealed no archaeological features. Similar results were encountered to the east of Doonholm where a small pit and a possible hearth were the only features uncovered in 9500m^2 of trial trenching (Cook and Paton 2012).

The potential for buried archaeological remains in the present development area remained, particularly considering the proximity of Alloway Mote. During fieldwork, the present landowner highlighted the line of an undated trackway coming from the direction of the Motte and which could also be identified as an earthwork to the south-east of the development area. It was possible that remains of this track would be uncovered by the trial trenching.

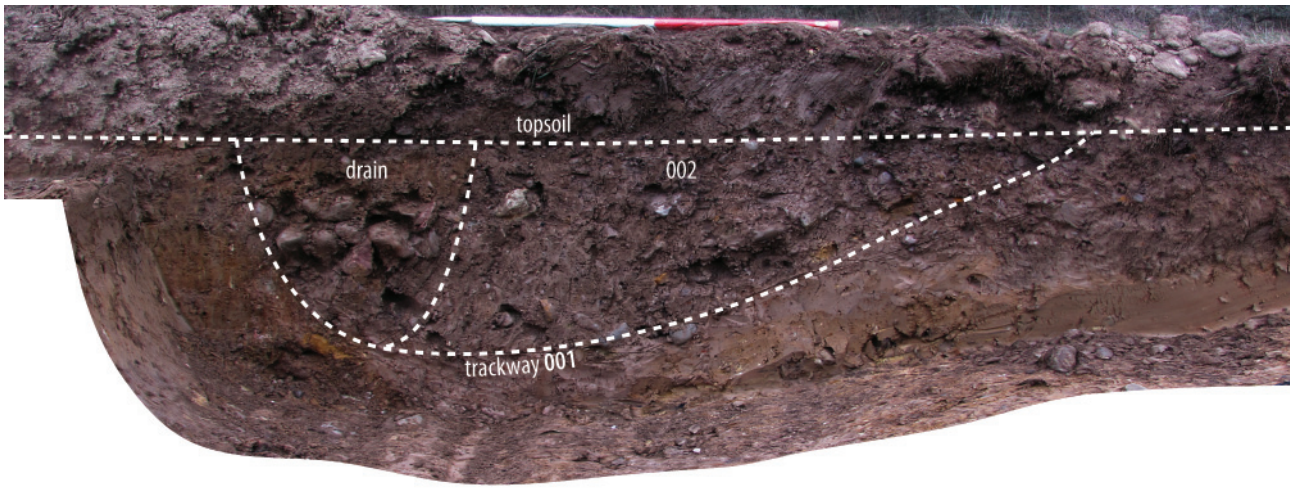
3 OBJECTIVES

In general, the purpose of the evaluation is to assess the archaeological potential of the proposed development site.

More specific aims of the trial trenching included:

- establishing the location, extent, nature and date of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the accessible areas targeted for trenching;
- establishing the integrity and state of preservation of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the accessible areas.

The results of the evaluation will be used to inform and support the planning application.



Illus 5

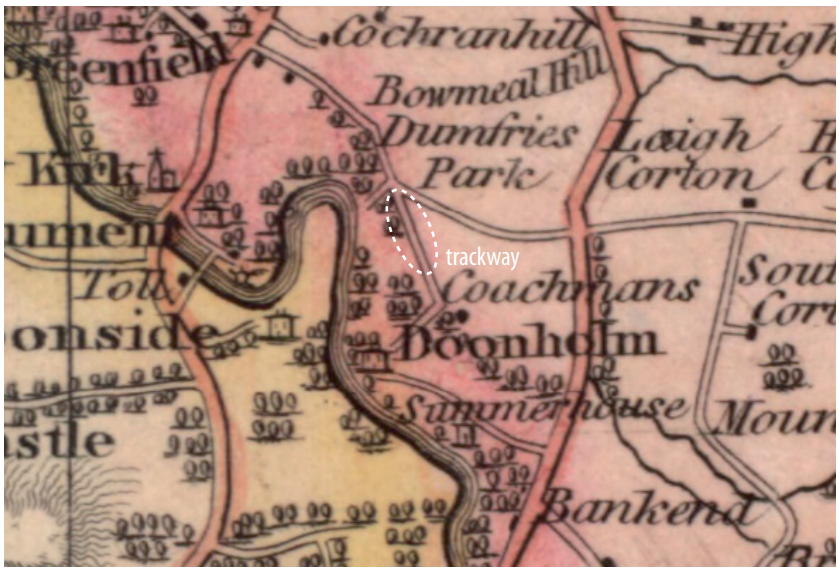
Section through track [001] in Trench 02, facing NNW

Illus 6

View of holloway in woodland to W of site, facing S

Illus 7

Excerpt from John Thomson's Atlas of Scotland, Northern Part of Ayreshire (1832)



The resulting archive (finds and records) will be organised and deposited in the National Monuments Record of Scotland to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Strategy

The trial trenching was designed to expose 7% of the available area (6ha), with a further 1% to be targeted around any areas of interest or deployed randomly if no archaeological features were encountered. This would result in at total 4800m^2 of trenching. As there were no known targets, trenches were randomly located and of varying sizes (typically 50m or 100m linear) depending on topography and other local issues. Their placement provided good even coverage across the site. An area north of Trench 9 was avoided as a gas main was believed to run through the site at this point.

4.2 Trial trenching

The trenches were located by differential GPS and scanned with a CAT cable locator prior to excavation. Trenches were opened with a mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Machine excavation terminated at the top of the natural geology or the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

Excavation of archaeological deposits and features required to satisfy the objectives of the evaluation continued by hand (except where agreed otherwise with the curator). On completion of machine excavation, all faces of the trench that required examination or recording were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. The stratigraphic sequence of each trench was then recorded in full.

A sufficient quantity (to adequately evaluate the site) of identified features was investigated and recorded. This typically involved excavation of 50% of discrete features, and a 1m slot of linear features.

4.3 Recording

All recording followed IfA Standards and Guidance for conducting archaeological evaluations. All contexts, small finds and environmental samples were given unique numbers. All recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards. In the event that stratified deposits were encountered, a 'Harris' matrix was compiled. All photography was in digital format.

A site plan including all identified features, areas of excavation and other pertinent information was recorded digitally. The site plan was accurately linked to the National Grid and heights to OD. Where appropriate, sections and stratigraphic sequences were recorded digitally. Digital recording was undertaken using a differential GPS. Where additional detailed recording of features and sections was required (ie. where their complexity meant that archaeological information could be lost if recorded digitally) then plans and sections were hand-drawn on permatrace at an appropriate scale (normally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections).

4.4 Finds and environmental sampling

No finds or environmental samples were recovered during the trial trenching.

5 RESULTS

A total of 38 trenches of between 20m and 100m in length were excavated (**Illus 3**). Topsoil (003) was found to be between 0.1m and 0.4m deep, normally deepest at the base of slopes, and consisted of a grey-brown slightly clayey silt. The interface between topsoil and geological subsoil was found to be generally diffuse (up to 0.2m in depth); in places a distinct subsoil (004) of orange-brown silty clay was identified (up to 0.3m in depth). The geological subsoil (005) to which the trenches were excavated consisted generally of a compact patchy orange-grey-brown stony silty clay, with occasional manganese fragments. Patches of compact grey clay were encountered in places, most likely relating to areas of differing drainage. Several dense networks of field drainage were identified, consisting of both ceramic and rubble drains, often very shallow (within plough depth).

The only archaeologically significant feature was the remains of a trackway [001], which was aligned in a north-north-west to south-south-east orientation in the western part of Field A. The trackway was encountered in Trenches 02 and 07 and later targeted in Trench 34. In plan, the track was visible as a darker, stony band (**Illus 4**) between 1.6m and 2m wide and was more heavily truncated to the south-south-east. By agreement with WoSAS, a machine slot was dug across the trackway in Trench 02, which revealed a cut 0.5m deep with a gently sloping side to the east-north-east (**Illus 5**). The west-south-western side had been truncated for much of the length of the trackway by a large rubble drain. The fill (002) of the track cut was a compact grey-brown silty clay with frequent sub-angular to sub-rounded stones of between 0.05m and 0.15m in diameter. This is likely to be redeposited natural material, possibly mixed with additional stones. No finds were recovered from this deposit.

Several further possible cut features were encountered in Trenches 01, 02, 07, 14, 26 and 30. On further examination, these all transpired to be stone holes or the results of bioturbation, being irregular in plan and section with very loose topsoil-derived fills.

6 DISCUSSION

The paucity of archaeological remains encountered during the trial trenching is likely to reflect the poor quality of the land for agriculture or early settlement. Despite the dense modern drainage, the topsoil remained very wet in places due to the compact silty clay natural. There was little direct evidence for extensive ploughing and it is unlikely that vertical truncation has removed all evidence of earlier habitation or farming.

The trackway [001] encountered in Field A was not previously recorded in either NMRS or the local HER. Physically, the remains are more consistent with an infilled or consolidated hollow way than a formally built road; no evidence for metalling or foundations was encountered.

The trackway is visible as a hollow way in the woodland to the north-west of the site (**Illus 6**), and follows the line of the woodland plantation to the south-west of Fields B and C. This alignment can be followed for several kilometres to the south east in plantations, field boundaries and existing tracks and roads. The Old Roads of Scotland website makes reference to a 'lesser track' of medieval age running from Alloway Motte to Carcluie Loch, 2km to the south-east, used to take seaweed to the fields and peat to the town. The excavated trackway [001] appears to closely align with the most likely route for this track.

The first mapped road on this alignment is depicted on John Thomson's Atlas of Scotland from 1832 (**Illus 7**) linking the north-western part of Doonholm Road to Doonholm House. This suggests that part of the medieval route was re-used within the estate during or after the construction of Doonholm House in the mid 18th century. It is possible that the infilling of the hollow way and the construction of the drain related to this period. The southern part of the estate track remains visible on Ordnance Survey mapping until the end of the 19th century.

7 REFERENCES

7.1 Bibliographic sources

Brown, G 2002 ***Report of an Archaeological Evaluation at Doonholm Farm, Ayrshire,*** Headland Archaeology Ltd, Unpublished Client Report.

Cook, M & Paton, K 2012 ***Archaeological Evaluation: Areas B & E, Phase 1 Corton, South East Ayr,*** AOC Archaeology Group, Unpublished Client Report.

Headland Archaeology 2013 ***Method Statement for Archaeological Evaluation at Doonholm Road, Ayr.***

McNicol, D 2010 ***South East Ayr, Corton, Ayr: Results of Archaeological Site Investigations,*** Headland Archaeology Ltd, Unpublished Client Report.

7.2 Cartographic sources

1832 Thomson, J ***John Thomson's Atlas of Scotland, Northern Part of Ayreshire. Southern Part.***

1860 ***Ayr,*** Sheet XXXIX.2, Ordnance Survey 25 inch to-the-mile, 1st Edition.

1896 ***Ayrshire,*** Sheet 039.2, Ordnance Survey 25 inch to-the-mile, 1st Edition.

7.3 Online sources

Ayreshire Mansions, ***Doonholm,*** <http://www.ayrshirescotland.com/mansions/doonholm.html>, accessed 26th March 2014.

British Geological Survey, ***Geology of Britain viewer,*** <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>, accessed 26th March 2014

Historic Scotland, ***Listed Building Report for Doonholm Estate, Doonholm, Including Wall and Archway,*** <http://data.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pls/htmldb/f?p=2300:35:5852853932981701::::P35_SELECTED_MONUMENT:02864>, accessed 26th March 2014

Old Roads of Scotland, ***Roads and Tracks of Ayrshire – Medieaval Roads,*** <http://www.oldroadsofscotland.com/mediaeval%20roads.htm#ayr_local>, accessed 26th March 2014

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Site registers

Appendix 1.1 Trench register

Trench	Dimensions (m)	Description
01	50x2	Topsoil: 0.1–0.35m; subsoil: 0.2–0.3m orange-brown silty clay and regular medium stones; geological subsoil: orange stony slightly silty clay. Stone holes.
02	100x2	Topsoil: 0.15–0.25m, subsoil: 0.15–0.30m orange-brown silty clay; geological subsoil: mixed orange-grey-brown silty clay with broken stone and manganese fragments. Remains of trackway [001].
03	50x2	Topsoil: 0.15–0.35m with white pot fragments; subsoil: 0.1m orange-brown silty clay; geological subsoil: orange silty clay with stones in places and greyer towards end of trench.
04	50x2	Topsoil: 0.15–0.25m; subsoil: 0.05–0.15m orange-brown silty clay; geological subsoil: orange stony slightly silty clay with patches of more compact grey clay and broken stone.
05	50x2	Topsoil: 015–0.3m; geological subsoil: patchy orange-grey slightly silty clay.
06	50x2	Topsoil: 0.15–0.25m; diffuse interface 0.15–0.25m to geological subsoil: patchy dark grey-brown-orange stony slightly silty clay.
07	100x2	Topsoil: 0.2–0.3m; subsoil: 0.1–0.2m orange-brown silty clay; geological subsoil: orange-brown slightly silty clay, siltier towards N end of trench; remains of trackway [001].
08	100x2	Topsoil 0.15–0.2m; subsoil: 0.25m brown silty clay and stones; geological subsoil: dark orange-brown stony slightly silty clay with occasional degraded sandstone. Large stone near NE end of trench.
09	100x2	Topsoil 0.15–0.35m; subsoil: 0.1–0.15m orange-brown silty clay; geological subsoil: compact orange-brown slightly silty clay with patches of sand. ENE end left high to avoid possible service cut.
10	50x2	Topsoil: 0.2m; subsoil: 0.15–0.2m orange silty clay; geological subsoil: dark brown-grey stony slightly silty clay with occasional degraded sandstone.
11	50x2	Topsoil: 0.15m, subsoil: diffuse interface 0.15m to geological subsoil: orange-grey stony sandy clay.
12	100x2	Topsoil: 0.2–0.3m; subsoil: 0.2–0.3m orange-brown silty clay; geological subsoil: compact reddish-brown stony slightly silty clay with degraded sandstone.
13	50x2	Topsoil: 0.2–0.25m; subsoil: 0.2–0.3 orange-tan silty clay; geological subsoil: orange-tan silty clay with degraded stone.
14	50x2	Topsoil: 0.2–0.3m; subsoil: 0.2–0.3m orange-tan silty clay; geological subsoil: orange-tan stony silty clay, more grey to SE.
15	50x2	Topsoil: 0.2–0.25m; subsoil: 0.25m mid brown silty clay; geological subsoil: orange-tan stony silty clay, some natural grey clayey patches.
16	100x2	Topsoil: 0.15–0.25m; subsoil: 0.3m orange-tan silty clay; geological subsoil: orange-brown stony silty clay.
17	100x2	Topsoil: 0.25m; subsoil: 0.2–0.3m orange silty clay; geological subsoil: brown-orange-grey mixed silty clay.
18	50x2	Topsoil: 0.2m; subsoil 0.1–0.2m orange-brown silty clay; geological subsoil: orange-brown stony slightly silty clay.
19	50x2	Topsoil: 0.2–0.3m, subsoil: 0–0.2m orange-brown silty clay in S part of trench; geological subsoil: brown-grey stony silty clay with decomposed sandstone.
20	50x2	Topsoil: 0.25–0.3m; subsoil: 0.1–0.25m orange-brown silty clay; geological subsoil: orange brown stony silty clay.
21	100x2	Topsoil: 0.2–0.35m; diffuse interface 0.15m to geological subsoil: orange-brown stony silty clay, occasional manganese fragments.
22	100x2	Topsoil: 0.3; subsoil: diffuse interface 0.1–0.15m to geological subsoil: orange-brown-grey stony slightly silty clay.
23	50x2	Topsoil: 0.25–0.35m, diffuse interface 0.05–0.15m to geological subsoil: mixed brown-grey-orange stony silty clay. Deeper to WNW end.
24	100x2	Topsoil: 0.25–0.35m, diffuse interface 0.1–0.2m to geological subsoil: mixed brown-grey-orange stony silty clay. Stone hole.
25	50x2	Topsoil: 0.2m; subsoil: 0–0.2m mid brown-orange silty clay; geological subsoil: mixed brown-orange-grey stony silty clay + degraded sandstone.
26	100x2	Topsoil: 0.2–0.3m; subsoil: 0.1–0.2 orange-brown clayey silt; geological subsoil: orange-tan stony silty clay with occasional larger stones to 0.4m diameter.
27	50x2	Topsoil 0.3–0.45; diffuse interface 0–0.2m to geological subsoil: orange-grey-brown patchy stony silty clay. Some bioturbation.
28	50x2	Topsoil 0.3–0.4m; diffuse interface 0–0.15m to geological subsoil: orange-brown stony silty clay.
29	50x2	Topsoil 0.2–0.3m; diffuse interface 0–0.1m to geological subsoil: orange-brown stony silty clay, more orange and silty to eastern end.
30	50x2	Topsoil 0.3–0.4m; subsoil: 0.1–0.2m orange-brown silty clay; geological subsoil patchy orange-grey stony silty clay. Stone hole.
31	50x2	Topspoil 0.3–0.4m; subsoil: 0.1–0.2m ornage-brown clayey silt; geological subsoil orange-brown stony silty clay.
32	20x2	Topsoil 0.25–0.3m; subsoil: 0.05–0.15m orange-brown silty clay; geological subsoil orange-brown stony silty clay.
33	30x2	Topsoil 0.25–0.3m; subsoil: 0.05–0.15m orange-brown silty clay; geological subsoil orange-brown stony silty clay.
34	50x2	Topsoil 0.2–0.3m; diffuse interface 0.05–0.15m to geological subsoil: mixed orange-brown-grey silty clay. Remains of trackway [001].
35	50x2	Topsoil 0.25–0.3m; diffuse interface 0.1m to geological subsoil: patchy grey-brown-orange stony silty clay.

Trench	Dimensions (m)	Description
36	50x2	Topsoil 0.25–0.35m; diffuse interface 0.1m to geological subsoil: patchy orange-grey-brown stony silty clay.
37	50x2	Topsoil 0.25–0.4m; diffuse interface 0.1m to geological subsoil: patchy orange-grey-brown stony gravelly silty clay.
38	50x2	Topsoil 0.2–0.3m; geological subsoil: patchy orange-frey-brown stony silty clay with patches of compact grey clay and degraded sandstone.

Appendix 1.2 Photographic register

Photo	Direction facing	Description
001	SW	Gate from Doonholm Road
002	WSW	Gate to Field A
003	W	General view of Field A
004	S	Gate to Field B
005	SE	General view of Field B showing tracks inside gate
006	ESE	General view of Field B
007	SW	Tr01
008	SW	Tr02
009	W	Tr03
010	WSW	Tr04
011	S	Tr05
012	SSE	Tr06
013	N	Tr07
014	SW	Tr08
015	SW	Tr09
016	SSE	Tr10
017	E	Tr11
018	SW	Tr12
019	E	Tr13
020	SSE	Tr14
021	N	Tr15
022	NW	Tr16
023	SE	Tr17
024	SSE	Tr18
025	S	Tr19
026	ENE	Tr20
027	SE	General view of Field C showing deep track marks
028	SE	General view of Field C showing deep track marks
029	W	Tr21
030	W	Tr22
031	WNW	Tr23
032	WSW	Tr24
033	SW	Tr25
034	SSW	Tr26
035	SSE	Tr27
036	SE	Tr28
037	E	Tr29
038	N	Tr30
039	NW	Tr31
040	NW	Tr32
041	NW	Tr33
042	NE	Tr34
043	SE	Tr35
044	E	Tr36
045	W	Tr37
046	SW	Tr38
047	NNW	[001] Section in Tr02
048	NNW	[001] Section in Tr02
049	–	Photogrammetric shots of [001] section in Tr02
050	–	Photogrammetric shots of [001] section in Tr02
051	–	Photogrammetric shots of [001] section in Tr02
052	–	Photogrammetric shots of [001] section in Tr02
053	–	Photogrammetric shots of [001] section in Tr02
054	–	Photogrammetric shots of [001] section in Tr02
055	–	Photogrammetric shots of [001] section in Tr02
056	N	[0001] in Tr07
057	SSE	[0001] in Tr39
058	–	Deleted
059	NW	Trackway in woodland to NW of site
060	SE	Trackway in woodland to NW of site

Appendix 1.3 Context register

Context	Area	Description
001	A	Cut for trackway running NNW-SSE across area A, visible in Trenches 02, 07, and 34. 1.6–2m wide, and up to 0.50m deep, more truncated to SSE. Irregular sides, concave base and gradual breaks of slope where seen. Drain running alongside cuts trackway and may be associated.
002	A	Fill of trackway [001]. Grey-brown silty clay, compact with moderately diffuse interface to geological subsoil. Has frequent sub-angular to sub-oval stones between 0.05–0.15m diameter. In Tr34 this fill is more clayey and greyer with larger stones. Most likely represents infilling of the trackway with material derived from geological subsoil.
003	A–C	General number for topsoil. Grey-brown slightly clayey silt, between 0.1 and 0.4m deep. Occasional fragments of white ceramics. Waterlogged in places. Generally diffuse interface to (004) and (005).
004	A–C	General number for subsoil. Orange-brown silty clay, stony in places. Diffuse interface to (003) and (005).
005	A–C	Geological subsoil. Very patchy and mixed orange-grey-brown stony silty clay, with some patches of compact grey clay, grey sand, degraded sandstone and manganese fragments. Diffuse interface to (003) and (004).

Headland Archaeology
North East

13 Jane Street
Edinburgh EH6 5HE

0131 467 7705
northeast@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology
North West

10 Payne Street
Glasgow G4 0LF

0141 354 8100
northwest@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology
Midlands & West

Unit 1, Premier Business Park, Faraday Road
Hereford HR4 9NZ

01432 364 901
midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology
South & East

Building 68A, Wrest Park, Silsoe
Bedfordshire MK45 4HS

01525 861 578
southandeast@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com