

A96 Inveramsay Upgrade: Data Structure Report on Archaeological evaluation and monitoring

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Client: Atkins

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Summary

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by Atkins to undertake archaeological monitoring and trial trench evaluation as part of a programme of works to upgrade the A96 at Inveramsay Rail Bridge. The site was located to the north and east of the A96 at Inveramsay Rail Bridge on the western banks of the River Urie and extended for 1.45 km. A total of 33 trenches were excavated, of which two contained features of archaeological significance.

The features included two spreads of artefact rich material and 10 pits from which a significant finds assemblage was recovered. It was dominated by Neolithic pottery consisting of rim and base fragments of the modified Carinated Bowl tradition; providing a date range of c 3800 to c 3300 BC. Retrieved lithics also included two scrapers of Neolithic origin. A single sherd of pottery dating to the Chalcolithic-Early Bronze Age (c 2400-1800 BC) offered limited evidence for later activity.

Palaeoenvironmental analysis provided an indication of environment and economy; with the presence of wild and domestic plants on the site, along with hazelnut shell, cereal grain and flax seeds. The site is one of only a small number in Scotland from the Neolithic where flax has been recorded.

Introduction

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by Atkins to undertake archaeological monitoring and trial trench evaluation along the route of the proposed upgrade to the A96 at Inveramsay Rail Bridge. The work was carried out to fulfil the archaeological mitigation requirements of the Contract as identified in Vol 3, Part 2, Section 4.4.4.7:

...The archaeological contractor will be required to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation for the watching brief during the topsoil strip for the embankment.

The contractor shall ensure that the archaeological contractor carrying out the onsite watching brief during topsoil strip for the embankment is allowed sufficient time to carry out the work to the standards required by the Institute for Archaeologists.

The contractor will ensure that the archaeological contractor secures the approval of the Aberdeenshire Archaeological Officer at each stage of the archaeological works, including preparation of the WSI and post-excavation requirements...

The fieldwork was undertaken on 11th and 12th February 2015 and between 30th March and 8th April 2015, and this report outlines the results.

Site Location

The site is located at NGR 373440 825490 (Illus 1) and extends for 1.45 km around the Inveramsay Rail Bridge on the western bank of the River Urie. The route runs 300m north-west of the rail bridge, extending towards the River Urie before crossing the railway, running parallel to and then rejoining the existing A96 south of the junction with an unclassified road. The immediate environs consist of arable fields and an area recently cleared of trees, as well as made ground at the existing bridge and along the railway embankment. The site is underlain by glaciofluvial sheet deposits and alluvium, which overlie metamorphic bedrock of Aberdeen Formation – Psammite and Semipelite (British Geological Society).

Archaeological Background

The Environmental Statement (URS 2013) identified no known heritage assets within the development boundary. The closest designated asset is a Scheduled Monument located approximately 700m to the south-west: a stone circle known as the Mains of Balquhain (reference no 3961). The boundary of the Battle of Harlaw (fought on the 24th July 1411) lies within 100m to the east of the route and has been identified on the Inventory of Battlefields as a site of national significance. In the wider area there is cropmark evidence for prehistoric activity, while a large temporary Roman Camp and associated Roman road located to the north-west at Durno attest to significant activity in this period. The late 15th century Pitcaple Castle lies 1km west of the route.

Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the archaeological works was to preserve by record any archaeological remains exposed and threatened by the proposed works. More specific objectives were to establish the location, extent, nature, and date of archaeological features and deposits identified within the site.

The resulting archive will be organised and deposited in the NMRS to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.

Method

Archaeological monitoring of Compound Area

The compound area was located between the footprint of the planned route and a farm steading; covering some 3,250m². The contractor's topsoil strip of the construction compound area was undertaken by mechanical excavator equipped with toothless ditching bucket. Excavation was undertaken in spits down to formation level and was monitored by an archaeologist at all times.

Trial trench evaluation of Compound Area and remaining Landtake

Following discussion with the Client and groundworks contractor, it was agreed that trial trench evaluation would present a more suitable mitigation strategy to both meet the needs of the project and characterise the archaeological potential of the site.

The evaluation trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator, suitably equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, under direct supervision by the archaeologist. Excavation was undertaken in controlled spits to remove topsoil and subsoil with machine excavation terminating at the top of natural geology or the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

Where archaeological features were encountered (Trenches C04 and C05) the evaluation trench was extended beyond its footprint until an area of 5m around the features was established in which no archaeology was observed or the boundary of the development area was reached. Excavation of archaeological features and deposits was continued by hand using appropriate hand tools where required, and all identified features were investigated and recorded. Where pottery was recovered from a feature it was 100% excavated, once sufficient recording of the feature had taken place.

Results

Compound Area

The monitoring of the compound area noted that the topsoil was not removed to a depth significant enough to disturb any archaeological features. As a result only a third of the area (approximately 950m²) was monitored, while three evaluation trenches (totalling 98m²) were excavated to the

formation depth across the remaining two thirds of the compound. The trenches exposed the same stratigraphy as the area already stripped, with natural subsoil exposed only in the northern end of the first trench beneath 0.25m of topsoil. Plough marks were observed cut into the natural subsoil.

Remaining Landtake

A separate evaluation was undertaken within the remaining landtake (3Ha). Thirty-three trenches were excavated measuring 25m by 2m and located to provide good, random coverage across the area of the proposed route (Illus 2). The trenches were divided into four groups (A, B, C, D) and listed numerically. Full trench details are tabulated in Appendix A.

Group A

Trench Group A was located at the southern end of the route and consisted of two trenches. The topsoil comprised mid brown clayish silt 0.25m – 0.3m thick on top of light brown clayish silt subsoil 0.2m -0.3m thick, which overlay yellowish orange clayish silt natural geology. Two modern field drains were observed in Trench A2.

Group B

Trench Group B was located to the south-east of the proposed route and consisted of four trenches. The topsoil comprised mid brown silty clay 0.3m – 0.4m thick on top of mid brown and mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil 0.3m – 1.3m thick, which overlay mid brownish yellow and orange silty clay natural geology. A modern field drain and a plough furrow were observed in Trench B1 and a modern animal burial was observed in Trench B2.

Group C

Trench Group C was located along the middle section of the route and consisted of 13 trenches. The three northernmost Trenches C12, C13 and C14, and Trenches C2 and C3 were located in arable land, the remaining trenches were located in land that had recently been cleared of trees. Trenches C2, C3, C4 and C5 were located on a plateau above the River Urie (Trench C5 was moved from its planned location due to the presence of a dried up watercourse between C4 and C5). The topsoil comprised mid brown clayey silt 0.3m – 0.6m thick across the southern half of the area, and mid greyish brown silt 0.3m thick across the northern half. The subsoil varied from mid-orangey brown to yellowish orange clayey silt, 0.2m – 0.7m thick. The natural geological deposit which underlay the subsoil varied from brownish orange gravelly sand to yellowish orange silty sand.

In Trench C4 a total of 12 archaeological features were observed once the trench had been extended comprising one large spread (011), one small spread (005), seven large pits and three medium sized pits (Illus 3 & 4).

Pit [001] was sub-circular in plan and measured 0.80m by 0.75m and was 0.17m deep. It contained three fills; the primary fill (016) was a mid-greyish brown stony sandy loam 0.10m thick, overlain by a mid-greyish yellow very stony sand (015) 0.04m thick which was similar to the surrounding natural subsoil. The uppermost fill was a dark greyish brown stony sandy loam (002) 0.05m thick, with rare charcoal fragments and one fragment of Beaker pottery dated to the Early Bronze Age (EBA; see Lochrie & Franklin, below). Its location in the upper fill of the pit suggests the pottery fragment may have been deposited there by natural processes. It is likely that pit [001] was heavily truncated.

Immediately to the west of pit [001] lay pit [017]. It measured 0.50m by 0.50m and was 0.18m deep with steep sides. It was filled by a dark greyish brown stony silty sand. While it yielded no dating evidence, its proximity to pit [001] may indicate an EBA date. It was not possible to establish a stratigraphic relationship between pit [001] and [017] due to the presence of an animal burrow.

A cluster of six features was located about two metres to the south of pit [001]. Pit [003] (Illus 3 & 5) measured 0.75m by 0.66m and was 0.48m deep. It contained two fills; the primary fill (004) was a dark brown clayey silt 0.40m thick with rare charcoal fragments and occasional fragments of Neolithic pottery of the modified carinated bowl tradition (see Lochrie & Franklin, below). A concentration of hazel nutshell fragments was recovered from this fill along with five flax seeds (see Bailey & Holden, below). The secondary fill (014) was mid brown loam 0.38m thick with rare small charcoal fragments.

A small spread (005) was located 0.7m to the north-west of pit [003]. It measured 0.54m by 0.40m and was 0.05m deep. It comprised a mid-brownish red, loamy sand with stone inclusions. The reddish nature of the fill was interpreted as heat-affected material indicative of a small fire associated with domestic activity. Although undated, the feature is tentatively dated by association to the Neolithic.

A small pit [009] was located 0.80m to the south-east of pit [003]. It measured 0.38m by 0.30m and was 0.07m deep with gently sloping sides. It was filled by a dark greyish brown sandy silt (010).

Two further pits lay around 0.25m to the south of pit [003]. Pit [007] (Illus 3 & 7) measured 0.85m by 0.75m and was 0.27m deep with steep sides. It contained four fills; the primary fill (008) was a mid-brown slightly stony sand 0.11m thick and was similar in nature to the surrounding natural geology. The secondary fill (024) was a mid-greyish brown sandy loam 0.12m thick. The tertiary fill (025) was a dark grey sandy loam 0.06m thick with frequent charcoal fragments and occasional Neolithic pottery fragments. The uppermost fill (026) was a mid-greyish brown moderately stony sandy loam 0.08m thick with occasional charcoal flecks.

Pit [027] was truncated by pit [007] to the south-east. It measured 1.05m by 1m and was 0.37m deep with steep sides. It contained three fills; the primary fill (028) was dark grey moderately stony silty sand 0.17m thick with frequent charcoal fragments and Neolithic pottery fragments. The second fill (029) was mid brown slightly stony sandy loam 0.19m thick. The uppermost fill (030) was dark greyish brown stony sandy loam 0.25m thick with frequent charcoal fragments.

Pit [012] was located 0.25m south of pit [027]. It measured 0.50m by 0.46m with steep sides. It was filled with a dark brown moderately stony sandy loam, 0.12m thick.

1.3m to the south of pit [012] was a large spread (011), 7.1m by 3.3m, of mid brown clayey silt which was 0.15m thick and contained fragments of pottery. It appeared to be highly disturbed by bioturbation and was initially interpreted as a colluvial deposit filling a slight depression within the slope. However, the inclusions of prehistoric material suggests it is likely to represent midden deposits associated with a Neolithic domestic structure. Typically such a structure would consist of a post and beam construction leaving little trace if truncated by ploughing.

Pit [031] was located c1.5m north of the middle edge of spread (011). It measured 0.62m by 0.6m and was 0.25m deep with steeply sloping sides. It contained three fills; the primary fill (032) was dark brownish grey stony sand 0.12m thick with occasional charcoal fragments. The secondary fill (033) was mid greyish brown slightly stony sandy loam 0.11m thick, and the uppermost fill (034) was dark grey moderately stony sandy loam 0.12m thick with frequent charcoal fragments. Pit [031] yielded no dating evidence but its location, size and multiple fills are very similar to the Neolithic pits in the vicinity.

In the north-west part of the site lay pit [021] (Illus 3 & 6). It measured 0.92m by 0.84m and was 0.21m deep with vertical sides. It contained three fills; the primary fill (037) was dark grey

moderately stony sand 0.10m thick. This was overlain by slumping of the edges which were overlain by fill (022); a dark grey moderately stony sandy loam 0.13m thick with frequent charcoal fragments and occasional pottery fragments. The uppermost fill (023) was a mid-greyish brown slightly stony sandy loam 0.13m thick with occasional charcoal fragments and rare pottery fragments. The slumping observed suggests the pit was left open long enough after the initial deposit for weathering of the edges to occur.

Pit [035] was located 3.7m to the south-east of pit [021] and 2.4m north-west of spread [005]. It measured 0.6m by 0.55m and was 0.15m deep with steep sides. It was filled by a mid-greyish brown slightly stony sandy loam (036) with one pottery fragment.

In Trench C5 a small pit [019] measuring 0.74m by 0.54m and 0.17m deep was observed with a dark brown sandy loam deposit (020) within it. The trench was extended to create a 5m buffer around this pit in which no archaeological features were observed.

Group D

Trench Group D was located at the northern end of the route and consisted of 13 trenches (Illus 3 & 8). Trenches D12, D14, and D16 were located within a watercourse and so were not excavated. The topsoil consisted of mid brown silt 0.3m – 0.5m thick on top of light brown to dark brownish orange subsoil 0.2m – 0.7m thick, which overlay the natural geological deposit. This comprised orangey / yellowish brown sand and gravel natural in the southern trenches and orange silty sand in the north.

No archaeological features were observed in the Group D trenches.

Finds assessment

by Julie Lochrie & Julie Franklin

The assemblage numbered 254 sherds (7.0kg) of prehistoric pottery, with 53 finds of chipped stone and a single saddle quern. Almost all the assemblage can be dated to the Neolithic period, with one slightly later Chalcolithic sherd. A summary of the assemblage is given below and a complete catalogue is included at the end of the report.

Feature	Pottery (PH)		Lithics		Stone		Dating
	Count	Wgt	Count	Wgt	Count	Wgt	
Pit [001]	1	26g					L.Neol/EBA?
Pit [003]	71	3618g	2	<0.5g			Neol
Pit [007]	27	383g					Neol
Pit [019]	3	27g	5	37g			Neol
Pit [021]	41	467g	46	2g			Neol
Pit [027]	92	2166g			1	12600g	Neol
Post-hole [036]	1	73g					Neol?
Spread (011)	11	105g					Neol

Unstrat	7	160g					-
Total	254	7025g	53	39g	1	12600g	

Table 1 - Summary of assemblage by feature

Pottery

The pottery assemblage is of particular note. All but one of the sherds were of Neolithic date, all in the modified Carinated Bowl (CB) tradition. They represented a number of different vessels and a wide variety of forms, from small cups to large bowls, suggesting a range of different functions. Residues on some vessels show some were used for cooking. The most remarkable of these pots is a very large (c.300mm diameter) shallow bowl represented by a number of large sherds making up at least half the circumference. Most of these sherds were found in pit [003] with additional sherds in pit [007]. There were sherd joins between the two feature assemblages, confirming they represent the same vessel. The two pits were very close though not intercutting while the sherds were slightly abraded. This implies that the pits were both open simultaneously, and the pottery part of a general midden deposit that was deposited into them as backfill.

The pottery is of the north-eastern style of Carinated Bowl (CBNE) which marks a 'style drift' from the traditional form and which is unique to north-east Scotland. Radiocarbon dates associated with pottery of this style indicate that it began rather early in the Neolithic, from as early as c 3800bc but had a long life span (Alexander 2000, 17; MacSween 2002, 41; MacSween 2008, 179; Sheridan 2009, 92). The range of forms present in this assemblage suggests a date around 3600bc, though activity may have had a longer date range from c 3800 to c 3300bc.

The single Beaker sherd was found in pit [001]. It is decorated in the 'all over cord' (AOC) style which dates it to the earlier end of the Beaker range (c 2400-1800 BC) (Needham 2005). No other finds were found in this pit and no other finds could be ascribed to this period. It is possible that the sherd is intrusive and was ploughed into the feature.

Lithics

The lithics assemblage includes two well-made scrapers in very fresh condition. They can be dated to the Neolithic period. Both were found in pit [019] some distance from the main cluster of features. The scrapers were associated with a few sherds of Neolithic pottery. The assemblage found in the main cluster of features was largely unremarkable, mainly small fragments of debitage. It suggests flint working in the vicinity, though is undiagnostic of any particular process or date.

Coarse Stone

A saddle quern was found in pit [027]. It shows distinct signs of wear and implies a prehistoric date but is otherwise largely undiagnostic. It was associated with Neolithic pottery and is likely to be contemporary with it.

Conclusion

The finds were concentrated in the three central pits [003], [007] and [027], close to spread (011). The similarity of the material in all features (except pit [001]) implies they represent a single phase of occupation and the variety of forms suggest domestic occupation. It is likely that the features were in the vicinity of a house which, in keeping with typical domestic structures of this period, has left no archaeological trace.

Palaeo-environmental Assessment

By Laura Bailey & Tim Holden

Introduction

Nine, 10 litre, samples recovered during archaeological works at Inveramsay Rail Bridge, Aberdeenshire, were received for palaeoenvironmental assessment. The site comprised several pits, containing fragments of modified Carinated Bowl (CB), dating to the Neolithic period, spreads, and one pit containing a fragment of beaker pottery dating to the Bronze Age. The samples were from the fills of various pits.

Method

The samples were subjected to flotation and wet sieving in a Siraf-style flotation machine. The floating debris (the flot) was collected in a 250 µm sieve and, once dry, scanned using a binocular microscope. Any material remaining in the flotation tank (retent) was wet-sieved through a 1mm mesh and air-dried. The samples were scanned using a stereomicroscope at magnifications of x10 and up to x100. Identifications, where provided, were confirmed using modern reference material and seed atlases including Cappers et al. (2006). Charcoal was identified as oak/non-oak wherever possible.

Results

Results of the assessment are presented in Tables 1 (Retent samples) and 2 (Flot samples). Material suitable for AMS (Accelerated Mass Spectrometry) radiocarbon dating is shown in the tables.

Charcoal

Wood charcoal was present in all samples, ranging in quantity from rare to abundant, and up to 15mm in size. Significant concentrations were present in the fills of pits [031] and [027]. Wherever preservation allowed, charcoal was categorised as oak or non-oak.

Charred cereal grain

Charred cereal grain was present in six of the nine samples (Table 2). The cereal was generally heavily abraded and vesicular, therefore, in some cases it was not possible to identify to species level. The largest amount of cereal grain was recovered from the fill (003) of Pit [004], a feature containing several modified CB fragments, dating to the Neolithic period. Identified cereal grains included naked barley (*Hordeum vulgare* var. *nudum*), possible emmer wheat (*Triticum* cf. *dicoccum*) and possible bread wheat (*Triticum* c.f. *aestivum*-*compactum*). Naked barley and emmer wheat were the two main crops cultivated in Neolithic Scotland and many assemblages from this period contain a mixture of both naked barley and emmer wheat. Bread wheat has also been identified at Neolithic sites, though in comparatively small numbers (Bishop et al 2009).

Other charred plant remains

Five flax (*Linum usitatissimum*) seeds were present in the fill (003) of Pit [004]. The concentration of flax seeds in this sample, and lack of them in any other, suggests that they were collected for a specific purpose. Flax is a cultivar, grown primarily for fibre, for linen, and seeds (linseed) which are used as food and for oil extraction (Dickson and Dickson 2000). Neither of these processes require the application of heat, so flax seeds are not recovered as commonly as some other cultivated plants. In 2009, flax seeds had only been identified at three Neolithic sites in Scotland. Balbridie and Lockerbie, formed the two largest concentrations of Neolithic flax in Scotland, and, at the time, only one other possible flax fragment had been recovered, at Achnasavil in Kintyre (Bishop et al 2009). If anything, the charring of flax seeds is more likely to occur in a domestic context during food

preparation, and since modified CB fragments (also generally thought to be a domestic type of vessel) were recovered from the same context, these two strands of evidence seem to support each other.

Burnt bone

Burnt bone was present in six contexts. The bone was heavily fragmented, generally measuring less than 1cm in length and indeterminate.

Hazelnut shell

Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) nutshell fragments were recovered from all contexts, with the exception of the fill (020) of pit [019]. The nutshell has been weighed as part of the assessment and is quantified in the retent table (Table 1). The largest quantity of nutshell (38g) was recovered from the fill (003) of pit [004]. The nutshell was generally heavily fragmented but unabraded.

Hazelnut shells are commonly recovered from Neolithic sites. Hazelnuts provide a good source of fats, protein, carbohydrates and vitamins, particularly vitamin E (Monk 2000) and were a common wild foodstuff collected in prehistory. The roasting of hazelnuts may have been common practise during the prehistoric period as a means to prolong storage, to facilitate processing, portability and most importantly to aid digestion (Mithen et al 2001). It is likely that the shells would have been deliberately discarded onto domestic fires or used as kindling.

Other remains

Finds including pottery and lithics will be discussed as the subject of a separate report.

Conclusion

The palaeobotanical assemblage is significant, offering important information about the site economy. Evidence for wild and domestic plants was present, with hazelnut shell, cereal grain and flax seeds recovered. The largest amount, and variety, of palaeoenvironmental material was recovered from the fill (003) of pit [004], a feature also containing several large fragments of modified carinated bowl, dating from around 3600-3300 BC. The plant remains recovered are consistent with this date. The palaeoenvironmental material from pit [003] together with several carinated bowl fragments suggests that material, from a domestic context, may have been swept in from hearths and floor surfaces, or deliberately dumped in the feature.

Hazelnut shells, may have been deliberately discarded onto fires or used as kindling whereas cereal grains would only be incidentally charred. Similarly, flax, for linen processing for example, does not require close contact to fire (Bond & Hunter 1987, 176), so flax seeds may have been incidentally burnt if the stems were hung up to dry near a fire after the retting process (Dickson & Dickson 2000, 254). It is also possible that they may have been accidentally charred on domestic hearths during pressing for oil (Bishop et al 2009). The small quantity of cereal grain, together with its poor condition, suggests that it is the result of secondary deposition and does not relate to the original function of the features. Grain survival depends on accidental charring, therefore even with societies dependent on cereal charred grains, they are relatively rare (Jones 2000, 80). The recovery of a quern stone fragment from pit [027] suggests that grain was being ground for meal, though it is unclear from the plant remains where the processing area was. The plant remains are preserved through carbonisation, and many of the processing activities required to turn cereal into flour will leave no archaeological trace.

Discussion

Compound Area

Archaeological monitoring of groundworks and trial trenches revealed no features of archaeological significance in the proposed Compound Area. There was no discernible difference here in topography or soil profile compared to the remaining Landtake area that might infer reasons for variable survival of archaeology. It is therefore plausible that there are no surviving archaeological remains at this location, or that the monitored area and trenches avoided any that do survive.

Remaining Landtake

The archaeological remains identified in Trenches C04 and C05 in the remaining Landtake revealed evidence of domestic activity from two separate periods. Based on provisional dating by pottery assessment, the remains predominantly derive from the middle part of the Neolithic (c. 3800 to c. 3300 BC) with a single sherd dated to a later period of activity in the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age (c. 2400-1800 BC).

The recorded Neolithic features represent the remains of pits and depressions that would likely have been located adjacent to domestic structures (no longer visible) and in which accumulated the debris of every-day activities including grain, flax and hazel nut processing. It can be difficult to separate routine and ritual actions in the Neolithic, as they often appear to have been intertwined within everyday practice; however, the variety of pottery suggests deposition of domestic waste.

The relevance of the site is highlighted by the rarity of both the palaeo-environmental and finds assemblages. It represents possibly only the third Neolithic site in Scotland where flax has been identified and the pottery assemblage is highly significant.

The single sherd of pottery dating to the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age is not sufficient to characterise activity and indeed may have been introduced from elsewhere through ploughing.

Aberdeenshire in general is notably rich in Neolithic sites, which tend to cluster along major rivers. The basin of the River Urie (known as the Garioch) is an area with a dense concentration of Neolithic finds (RCAHMS, 2007), no doubt due to its favourability to mixed arable / pastoral farming from prehistory to the present.

The findings contribute further evidence of Neolithic settlement activity in the Garioch. In particular it emphasises the potential of the terraces above the River Urie, as with the River Don (Murray and Murray, 2013), for evidence of prehistoric activity to survive despite extensive agricultural activity in the area.

Recommendations for Further Work

Compound Area

- No further work required

Remaining Landtake (specifically assemblages from Trenches C04 and C05)

- Detailed Lithics analysis
- Detailed pottery analysis
- Analysis and illustration of the saddle quern
- Four No. C14 dating of organic residue on pots from pits [003], [007], [021] and [027]

- Illustration of six pottery vessels
- Illustration of the two scrapers

If undertaken, the above analyses would meet the required standards as set out by Historic Scotland, ClfA, Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group and the Lithic Studies Society.

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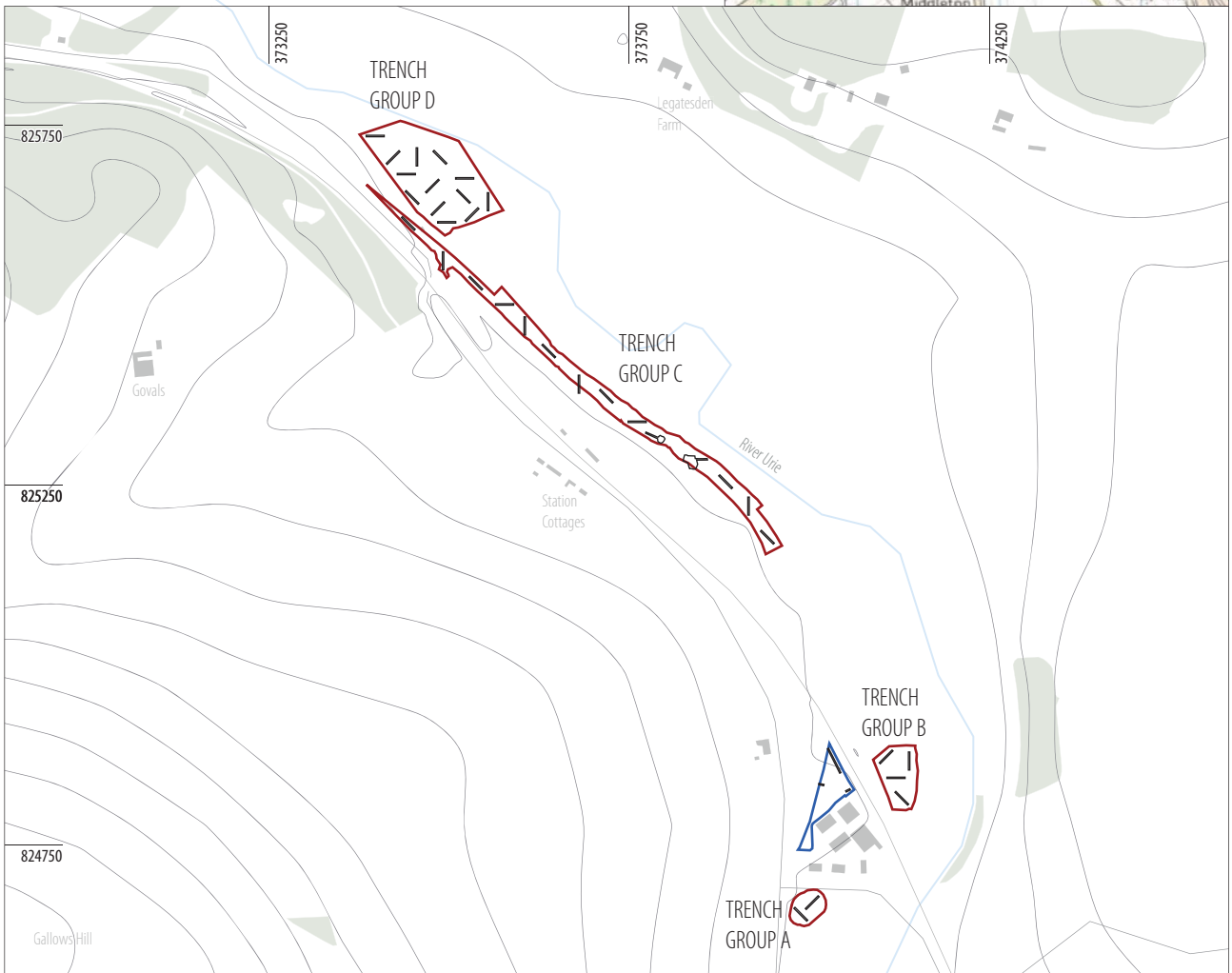
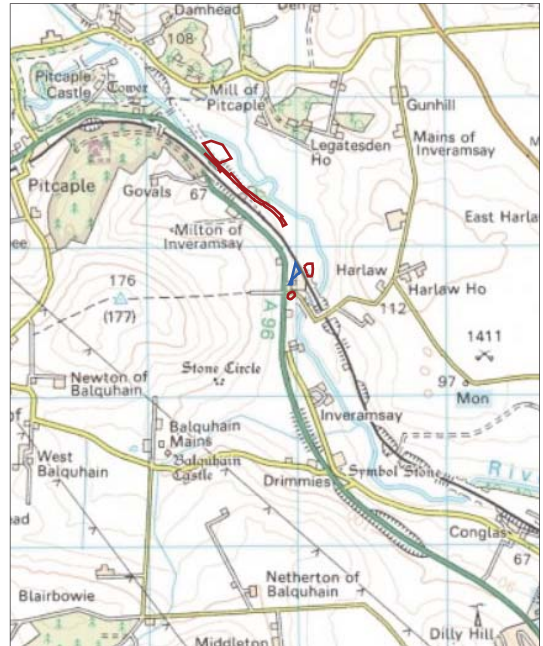
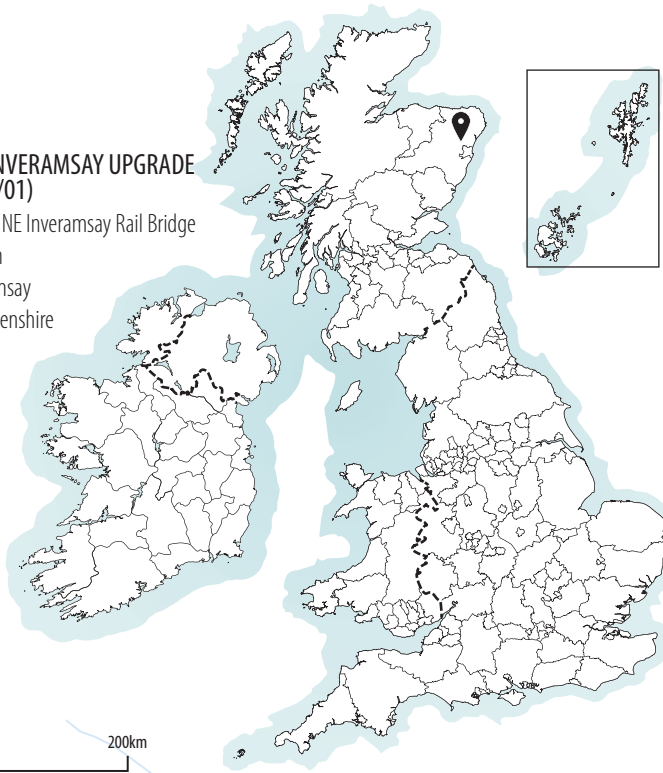
Murray, H K & Murray, J C 2013 *Site West of International Paper Port Elphinstone Inverurie Aberdeenshire Murray Archaeological Services Ltd Unpublished Client Report*

RCAHMS, 2007 *In The Shadow of Bennachie Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*

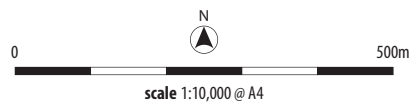
URS 2013 *A96 Inveramsay Bridge Improvement. Environmental Statement. Transport Scotland.*

**A96 INVERRAMSAY UPGRADE
(ANSI/01)**

land at NE Inveramsay Rail Bridge
Garioch
Inveramsay
Aberdeenshire



- KEY**
- boundary evaluation areas
 - compound area
 - trench location



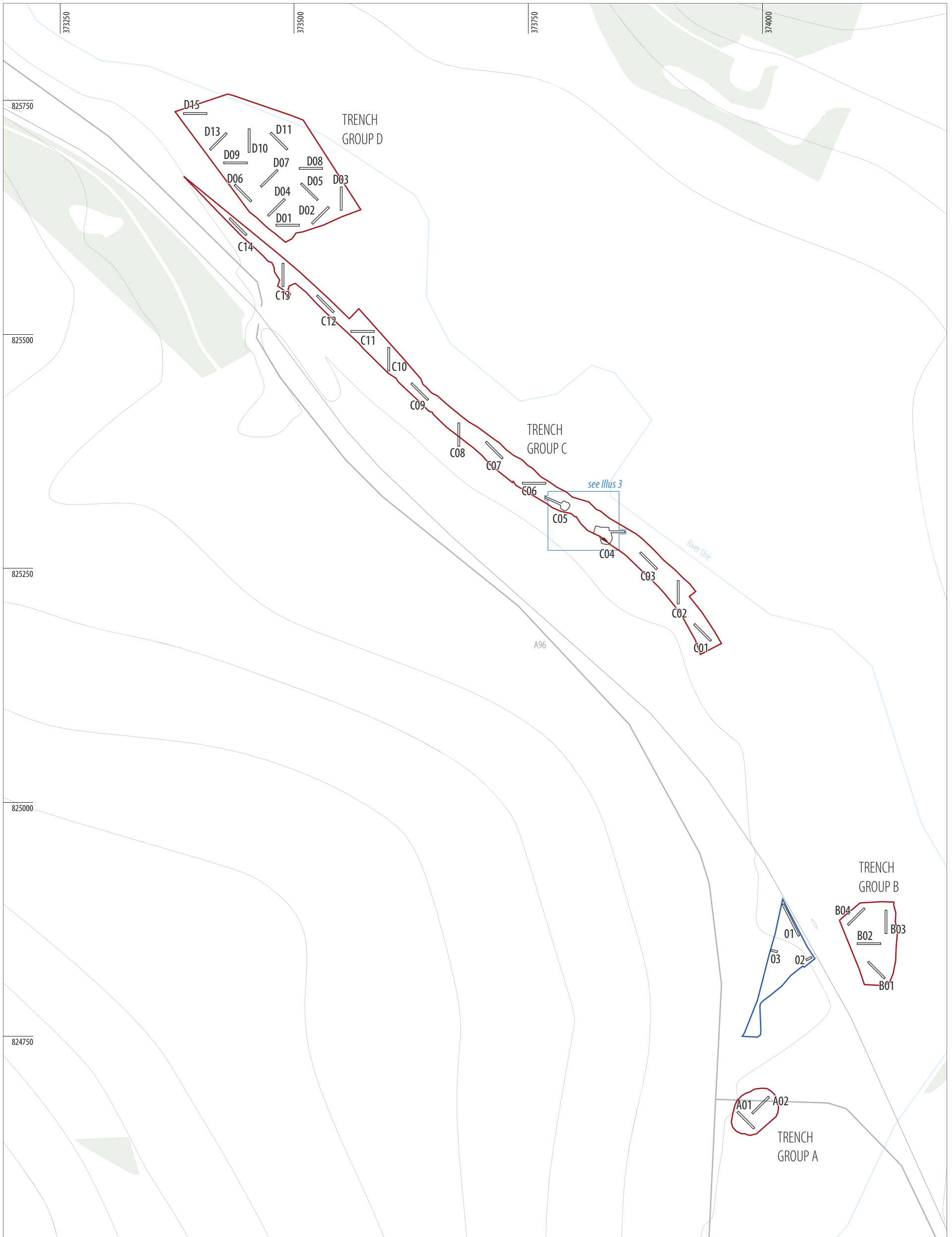
SCOTLAND

13 Jane Street
Edinburgh EH6 5HE
0131 467 7705

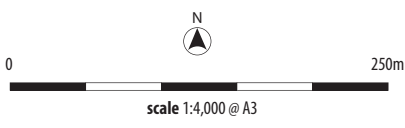
www.headlandarchaeology.com

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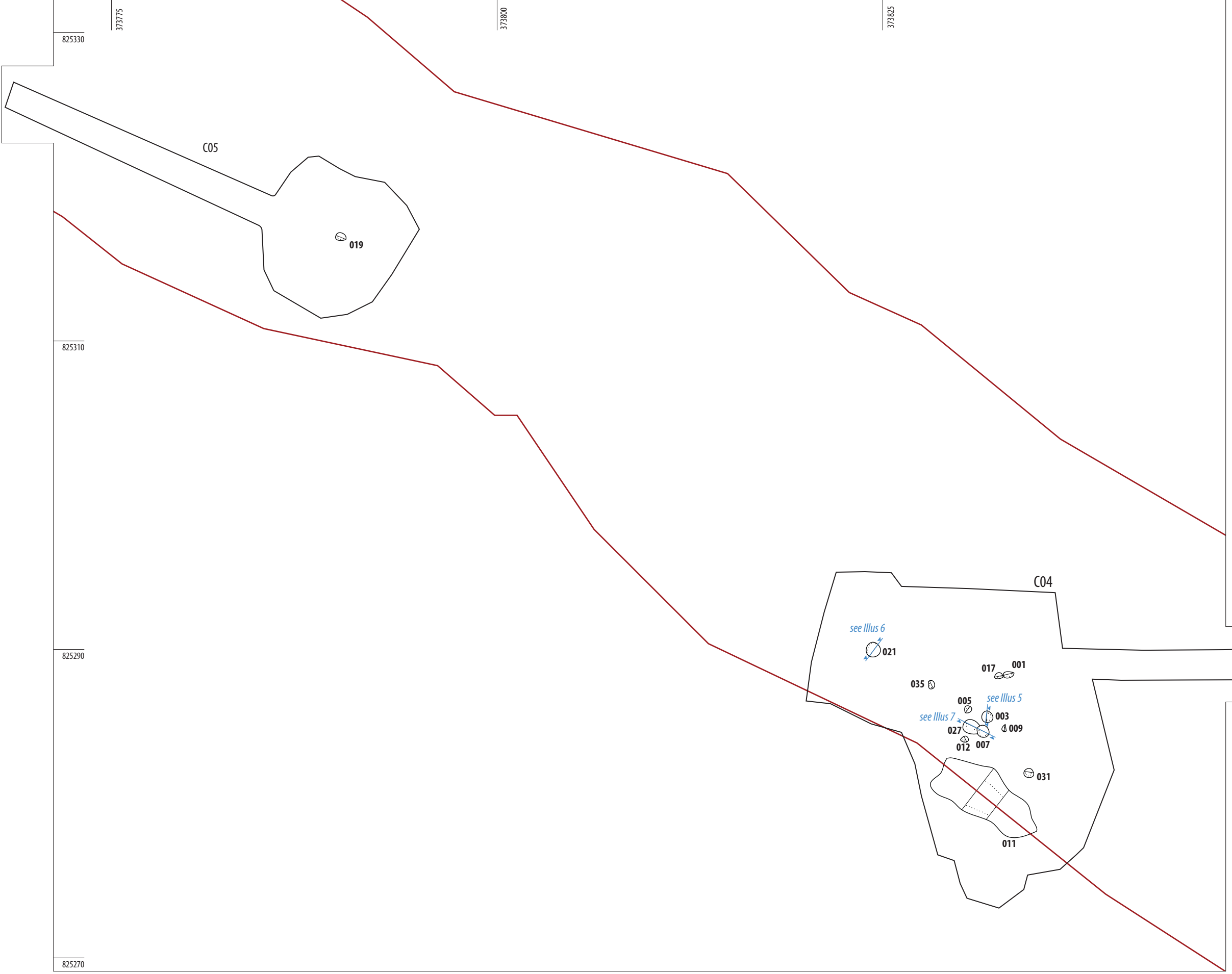
ILLUS 1
Site location



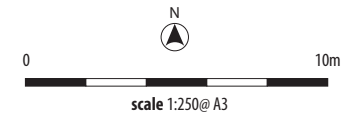
KEY
 [red outline] boundary evaluation areas
 [blue outline] compound area
 [black line] trench location



ILLUS 2
 Site plan



KEY
 [Red line] development boundary
 [Black outline] trench location

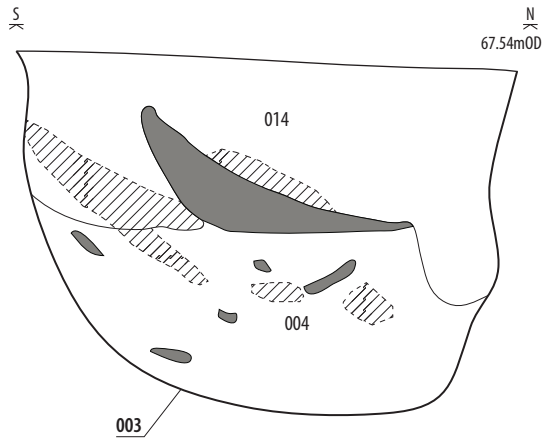


ILLUS 3
 Detail plan of expanded area around C04 and C05



ILLUS 4

General view N of expanded Trench C04



KEY

 bioturbation

 pottery

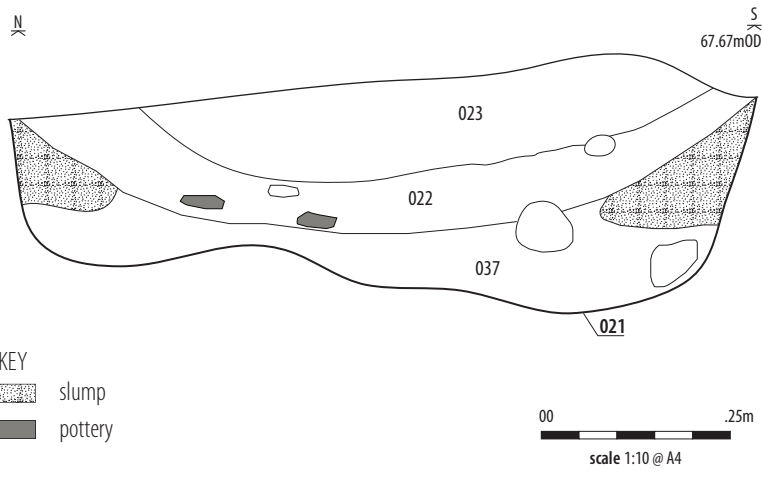
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ILLUS 5

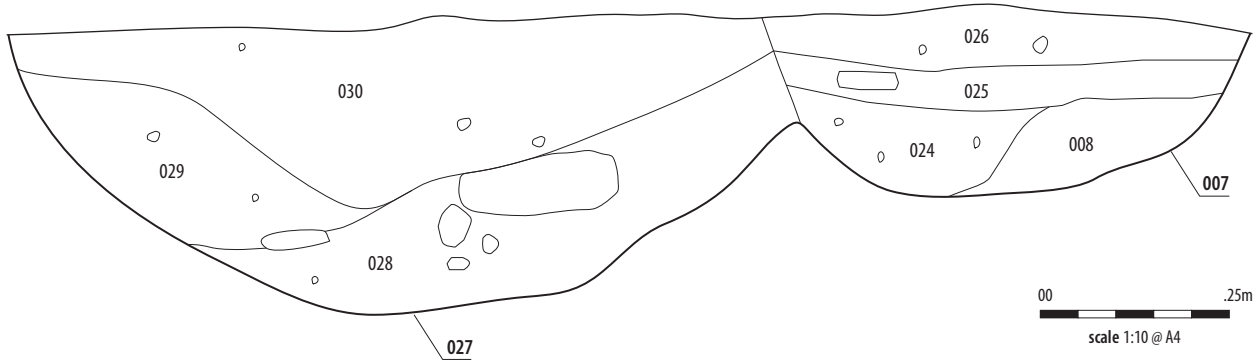
E facing section and W facing shot of Pit [003] showing pottery in situ



ILLUS 6
W facing section and E facing shot of Pit [021]

W

E
67.67mOD



ILLUS 7

S facing section and S facing shot of Pit [027] and Pit [007]



ILLUS 8

E facing shot of Trench D09

APPENDIX 1: Site Registers

1.1: Trench Register

Trench	Orientation	Dimensions (m)	Max Depth (m)	Details
1	NW-SE	1.9 x 38	0.3-0.5	Dark brown humic silty sand (upper topsoil) 0.25m to 0.3m deep overlying of less humic and slightly lighter brown silty sand (lower topsoil). At N end of trench: Upper topsoil overlying light grey natural sand and gravels with plough-marks.
2	ENE-WSW	1.9 x 6.5	0.35	Dark brown humic silty sand (upper topsoil) 0.25m to 0.3m deep overlying of less humic and slightly lighter brown silty sand (lower topsoil).
3	ESE-WNW	1.9 x 7	0.35	Dark brown humic silty sand (upper topsoil) 0.25m to 0.3m deep overlying of less humic and slightly lighter brown silty sand (lower topsoil).
A1	NW - SE	25 X 2	0.60	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.25m) with light brown clayish silt subsoil (0.2-0.3m) then yellowish orange silty sand natural
A2	NE-SW	25 X 2	0.80	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3m) with light brown clayish silt subsoil (0.2-0.5m) then yellowish orange sandy clay natural. Two modern field drains observed.
B1	NW-SE	25 X 2	1.00	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3m) with mid brown silty clay subsoil (0.5-0.7m) then brownish yellow silty clay natural. One modern field drain and one furrow were observed.
B2	E-W	25 X 2	1.60	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3-0.4m) with mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil (0.3-1.2m) then brownish yellow silty clay natural. One modern animal burial observed.
B3	NW-SE	25 X 2	0.40	Mid brown silty clay topsoil (0.3-0.4m) then brownish orange silty sand natural
B4	SW-NE	25 X 2	1.60	Mid brown silty clay topsoil (0.3m) with reddish brown silty clay subsoil (0.3-1.6m) then light orangey brown silty clay
C1	NW-SE	25 X 2	0.60	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3-0.6m) then brownish orange gravelly sand natural. Very rooty - cleared woodland
C2	N-S	25 X 2	1.00	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3m) with mid orangey brown clayish silt subsoil (0.7m) then brownish orange gravelly sand natural. One tree bole and one modern animal burial observed.
C3	N-S	25 X 2	1.30	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3m) with mid greyish brown dirty gravelly sand subsoil (0.7m) then brownish orange gravelly sand natural
C4	NW-SE	25 X 2	0.80	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3m) with light brown clayish silt subsoil (0.2-0.5m) then yellowish orange sandy clay natural. Trench extended to north and south and six pits , four post-holes, one possible hearth and one spread / trample layer were identified.
C5	NW-SE	25 X 2	0.40	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3-0.4m) then orangey yellow silty sand natural. One archaeological feature (pit) observed and trench extended.
C6	E-W	25 X 2	0.40	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3-0.4m) then orange silty sand natural. Five tree boles observed.
C7	NW-SE	25 X 2	0.70	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3m) with light brown clayish silt subsoil(0.3-0.4m) then orange silty sand natural. Two features identified as resulting from bioturbation observed.
C8	N-S	25 X 2	0.60	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3m) with light brown clayish silt subsoil (0.3m) the orange gravelly sand natural. One stone hole and one modern gravel pit observed.
C9	NW-SE	25 X 2	1.20	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3-0.5m) with mid grey silty clay subsoil (0.7m) then yellowish grey silty clay natural
C10	N-S	25 X 2	1.10	Mid greyish brown silty clay topsoil (0.3m) with yellowish orange silty clay subsoil (0.4m) and peat, then blue sandy clay natural
C11	E-W	25 X 2	1.00	Mid greyish brown silt topsoil (0.3m) with orangey brown silty clay subsoil (0.4m) with peat, then grey clayish sand natural
C12	NW-SE	25 X 2	1.00	Mid greyish brown silt topsoil (0.3m) with orangey brown silty clay subsoil (0.4m) with peat, then grey clayish sand natural
C13	NW-SE	25 X 2	0.60	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3m), light orangey brown sandy silt subsoil, brownish orange silty sand natural
C14	E-W	25 X 2	1.60	Mid brown clayish silt topsoil (0.3m) with building debris / modern refuse (1.2m) then yellowish orange silty sand natural
D1	E-W	25 X 2	0.30	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3m) then orangey brown gravelly sand natural
D2	NE-SW	25 X 2	0.70	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3-0.4m) with light orangey brown silt subsoil then grey gravelly sand natural
D3	N-S	25 X 2	0.90	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.4m) with light brown clayish silt and peat subsoil then dark blue sandy gravel natural
D4	NE-SW	25 X 2	0.60	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3m) with light brown silt subsoil (0.2-0.3m) then light brown gravelly sand natural
D5	NW-SE	25 X 2	0.90	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3m) with light brown clayish silt subsoil (0.2-0.4m) then brownish grey rocky silt natural
D6	NW-SE	25 X 2	0.50	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3m) with dark brownish orange clayish silt subsoil then mid orange clayish silt
D7	NE-SW	25 X 2	0.40	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3m) with orangey brown sandy silt subsoil (0.3-0.5m) then yellowish brown gravelly sand
D8	E-W	25 X 2	0.80	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3m) with mid grey silty sand subsoil (0.3-0.4m) then greyish brown sandy gravel
D9	E-W	25 X 2	0.50	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3m) with light brown silt subsoil (0.3-0.5m) then brownish orange sandy silt natural
D10	N-S	25 X 2	1.40	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3m) with light brown silt subsoil (0.3-0.4m) and grey silty clay subsoil (0.4-0.7m) then brownish orange gravelly sand natural
D11	NW-SE	25 X 2	0.80	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3m) with orangey brown silty clay subsoil (0.3-0.5m) then orangey grey silty clay natural
D12				Not excavated
D13	NE-SW	25 X 2	0.40	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3-0.4m) then orange silty sand natural
D14				Not excavated
D15	E-W	25 X 2	1.20	Mid brown silt topsoil (0.3-0.5m) with mid reddish brown silt subsoil (0.5-0.7m) then orangey silty sand
D16				Not excavated

1.2: Photo Register

Photo no.	Direction	Description
1	NE	Area stripped 12/02/2015.
2	N	Area stripped 12/02/2015.
3	S	Area stripped 12/02/2015.
4	SE	Line of modern rubble drain visible as a light strip on the
5	NW	Modern rubble drain.
6	NW	Line of modern rubble drain visible in background as a
7	NW	Section showing faint difference between the darker and
8	SSE	Trench 1. N end of trench showing ploughmaks cut into natural sand and gravels.
9	NNW	Trench 1 seen from the SE.
10	ENE	Trench 2.
11	ESE	Trench 3.
12	ENE	Area stripped 13/02/2015.
13	NNE	Area stripped 13/02/2015.
14	SE	General view of area A
15	E	General view of area A
16	SE	General view of area A
17	NE	General view of area A
18	SW	General view of area A
19	E	General view of area B
20	SE	General view of area B
21	NE	General view of area B
22	SW	Post-ex view of Trench B4
23	NE	Post-ex view of Trench B4
24	NW	SE facing section of Trench B4
25	SE	Post-ex view of trench B3
26	NW	Post-ex view of trench B3
27	N	Animal bones in modern pit in trench B2
28	E	Post-ex view of trench B2
29	N	Modern pit in trench B2
30	N	Modern pit in trench B2
31	W	Post-ex view of trench B2
32	NW	Post-ex view of trench B1
33	SE	Post-ex view of trench B1
34	NW	Post-ex view of trench A1
35	SE	Post-ex view of trench A1
36	SW	Post-ex view of trench A2
37	NE	Post-ex view of trench A2
38	SE	Post-ex view of trench C1
39	NW	Post-ex view of trench C1
40	NE	Tree clearance of trench C1
41	N	General view of area C from trench C2
42	N	Post-ex view of trench C2
43	N	Modern sheep pit in trench C2
44	S	Post-ex view of trench C2
45	N	Post-ex view of trench C3
46	S	Post-ex view of trench C3
47	N	General view of trench C5 from trench C4

48	W	General view of features in trench C4
49	W	General view of features in trench C4
50	NE	General view of features in trench C4
51	NW	Post-ex view of trench C5
52	SE	Post-ex view of trench C5
53	E	Post-ex view of trench C6
54	W	Post-ex view of trench C7
55	S	Post-ex view of trench C8
56	N	Post-ex view of trench C8
57	SE	Post-ex view of trench C9
58	NW	Post-ex view of trench C9
59	N	Post-ex view of trench C10
60	S	Post-ex view of trench C10
61	W	Post-ex view of trench C11
62	E	Post-ex view of trench C11
63	E	Post-ex view of trench C11
64	NW	Post-ex view of trench C12
65	SE	Post-ex view of trench C12
66	NW	Post-ex view of trench C13
67	SE	Post-ex view of trench C13
68	N	General View of area D
69	NE	General view of area D
70	SE	Extent of modern refuse in C14
71	SE	Post-ex view of trench C14
72	NW	Post-ex view of trench C14
73	SW	Post-ex view of Area C
74	E	Post-ex view of trench D1
75	W	Post-ex view of trench D1
76	NE	Post-ex view of trench D4
77	SW	Post-ex view of trench D4
78	SE	Post-ex view of trench D5
79	NW	Post-ex view of trench D5
80	NE	Post-ex view of trench D2
81	SW	Post-ex view of trench D2
82	N	Post-ex view of trench D3
83	S	Post-ex view of trench D3
84	E	Post-ex view of trench D8
85	W	Post-ex view of trench D8
86	NE	Post-ex view of trench D7
87	SW	Post-ex view of trench D7
88	NW	Post-ex view of trench D6
89	SE	Post-ex view of trench D6
90	E	Post-ex view of trench D9
91	W	Post-ex view of trench D9
92	N	Post-ex view of trench D10
93	S	Post-ex view of trench D10
94	NE	Post-ex view of trench D13
95	SW	Post-ex view of trench D13
96	E	Post-ex view of trench D15
97	W	Post-ex view of trench D15

98	SE	Post-ex view of trench D11
99	NW	Post-ex view of trench D11
1000	SW	General view of slot in trench C4 for the investigation of deposit [011]
1001	NE	General view of slot in trench C4 for the investigation of deposit [011]
1002	SE	NW facing section of deposit [011] in trench C4
1003	NW	SE facing section of deposit [011] in trench C4
1004	SW	NE facing section of deposit [011] in trench C4 with heat affected soil
1005	S	N facing section of possible post-hole [012]
1006	NW	SE facing section of scoop [009]
1007	W	Mid-ex view of E facing section of pit [003]
1008	W	Mid-ex view of E facing section of pit [003]
1009	W	E facing section of pit [003]
1010	W	E facing section of pit [003]
1011	E	W facing section of pit [003]
1012	SSW	NNW facing section of pit [001] and post-hole [017]
1013	NE	SW facing section through pit [019]
1014	NE	General view of trench C5 - boxed out
1015	E	W facing section through pit [021]
1016	N	S facing section through pits [027] and [007]
1017	E	West facing section through pit [005]
1018	N	S facing section pit [031]
1019	NE	SW facing section through pit [035]
1020	N	S facing section through pit [012]
1021	SE	General site view
1022	NW	General site view
1023	N	General site view
1024	E	General site view

1.3: Context Register

Context no.	Trench	Description
001	C4	Cut of shallow pit
002	C4	Fill of pit [001]
003	C4	Cut of pit
004	C4	Silty burnt soil, fill of [003]
005	C4	Patch of heat affected soil
006	C4	VOID
007	C4	Cut of pit
008	C4	Primary fill of [007]
009	C4	Cut of small scoop
010	C4	Fill of pit [010]
011	C4	Brown clayey silt deposit below subsoil
012	C4	Cut of post-hole
013	C4	Fill of post-hole [012]
014	C4	Upper fill of pit [003]
015	C4	Middle fill of pit [001]
016	C4	Lower fill of pit [001]
017	C4	Cut of post-hole

018	C4	Fill of post-hole [017]
019	C7	Cut of pit
020	C7	Fill of pit [019]
021	C4	Cut of pit
022	C4	Primary fill of pit [021]
023	C4	Secondary fill of pit [021]
024	C4	Secondary fill of pit [007]
025	C4	Tertiary fill of pit [007]
026	C4	Uppermost fill of pit [007]
027	C4	Cut of pit (cut by pit [007])
028	C4	Primary fill of pit [027]
029	C4	Secondary fill of pit [027]
030	C4	Tertiary fill of pit [027]
031	C4	Cut of pit
032	C4	Primary fill of pit [031]
033	C4	Secondary fill of pit [031]
034	C4	Tertiary fill of pit [031]
035	C4	Cut of post-hole
036	C4	Fill of post-hole [036]

1.4: Sample Register

Sample no	Context no	Description / reason for sampling	Size
001	020	Fill of pit / charcoal pottery	20l
002	022	Primary fill of pit / charcoal and pottery	10l
003	023	Secondary fill / charcoal and pottery	10l
004	034	Upper fill / charcoal	10l
005	032	Primary fill / charcoal	10l
006	014	Upper fill / charcoal and pottery	10l
007	004	Primary fill / charcoal and pottery	10l
008	025	Fill / charcoal and pottery	10l
009	028	Fill / charcoal and pottery	10l

1.5: Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Section/Plan	Description
001	S	East facing section of pit [003]
002	S	North-west facing section of pit [001] and [017]
003	S	West facing section of pit [021]
004	S	South facing section of pit [031]
005	S	South facing section of pits [007]

APPENDIX 2: Environmental Data

Table 1- Retent Sample Results

Context Number	Sample Number	Feature	Sample Vol (l)	Ceramic		Stone	Burnt bone	Charred nutshell	Charcoal		Material available for AMS Dating	Comments
				Pottery	Lithics				Mammal	Quantity		
						20	1	Fill of pit [019]			20	
22	2	Primary fill of pit [021]	10	++	+			+	+++	14	Yes	Charred nutshell -3.1g
23	3	Secondary fill of pit [021]	10	++	+			++	++	11	Yes	Charred nutshell -3g
34	4	Tertiary fill of pit [031]	10				+		++++	14	Yes	Charred nutshell 1g
32	5	Primary fill of pit [031]	10					+	+++	15	Yes	Charred nutshell 1g
14	6	Upper fill of pit [003]	10	++	+	++	++	++	+++	13	Yes	Charred nutshell <0.1g
4	7	Fill of Pit [003]	10	++	+	++	++++	+++	+++	12	Yes	Charred nutshell- 11g
25	8	Tertiary fill of pit [007]	10	++		++	+++	++	++	10	Yes	Charred nutshell- 3.8g
28	9	Primary fill of pit [027]	10	+++	+++	++	+++	++++	++++	12	Yes	Charred nutshell- 3.7g

Key: + = rare (0-5), ++ = occasional (6-15), +++ = common (15-50) and ++++ = abundant (>50)
NB charcoal over 1cm is suitable for identification and AMS dating

Table 2- Flotation Sample Results

Context No.	Sample Number	Feature	Total flot Vol (ml)	Barley	c.f. Bread wheat	c.f. Emmer wheat	Cereal Indet	Charred seeds	Charcoal	Charcoal size (mm)	AMS material	Comments
20	1	Fill of pit [019]	500						+	5	No	Modern roots and seeds
22	2	Primary fill of pit [021]	100	+	+		+		+++	5	Yes	
23	3	Secondary fill of pit [021]	100	+			+		++	10	Yes	Charcoal non-oak. Cereal heavily abraded
34	4	Tertiary fill of pit [031]	100	+					++	10	Yes	Charcoal oak
32	5	Primary fill of pit [031]	50						+	10	Yes	Charcoal oak
14	6	Upper fill of pit [003]	50		+		+		++	5	Yes	Contains modern roots and uncharred wood
4	7	Fill of Pit [003]	100	++	+	+	+	c.f. <i>Linum</i> sp. +	++	5	Yes	Cereal very heavily abraded
25	8	Tertiary fill of pit [007]	100	+					+++	10	Yes	Charcoal non-oak
28	9	Primary fill of pit [027]	100						+	10	Yes	Charcoal oak and non-oak

Key: + = rare (1-5), ++ = occasional (6-15), +++ = common (16-50) and ++++ = abundant (>50)
NB charcoal over 1cm is suitable for identification and AMS dating

APPENDIX 3: Finds Data

Context	Feature	Sample	Quantity	Weight (g)	Material	Object	Description	Period
0	Unstrat		6	145	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Small to medium body sherds, one is everted with diagonal fluting	Neol
0	Unstrat from near [017]		1	15	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Small burnished body sherd	Neol
2	Pit [001]		1	26	Pottery (PH)	Beaker	Medium neck sherd, all over decorated with horizontal twisted cord , 5 lines visible. At points the cord has not left an impression	Chalco-EBA
4	Pit [003]	7	1	0	Lithics	Debitage	Flint, red brown. Inner chip	PH
4	Pit [003]		58	3568	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	At least 6 vessels present. A least 30 of the sherds are from a large portion of conjoining sherds from a very large bowl. Rim is everted and a carination takes the form of a slightly upturned applied cordon, base is hemphishperical. Also present are sherds from three uncarinated bowls, a lugged vessel, and one well burnished vessel with everted rims.	Neol
4	Pit [003]		9	32	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	One rim sherd, two body sherds and five fragments. One of the body sherds is a conjoining sherd from the large pot from (004)	Neol
8	Pit [007]		1	5	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Small body sherd	Neol
11	spread		11	105	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Mix of small body sherds from different vessels including one fluted, burnished carination sherd. One of the body sherds has an impression of a possible seed and some shallow plant remains on others	Neol
14	Pit [003]	6	1	0	Lithics	Debitage	Flint, yellow brown. Inner chip	PH
14	Pit [003]	6	4	18	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Four small body sherd	Neol
20	Pit [019]	1	5	37	Lithics	Debitage & Tools	Flint, mottled grey and yellow brown. Two sub circular distal end scrapers, two secondary flakes and one inner flake	Neol
20	Pit [019]		3	27	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Medium body sherd	Neol
22	Pit [021]	2	3	0	Lithics	Debitage	Flint, red brown and yellow-brown. Three inner chips	PH
22	Pit [021]	2	13	38	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Eight small body sherds (one is possibly an everted neck sherd) and five fragments	Neol
22	Pit [021]		18	378	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Rim and body sherds from at least two vessels. Most of the sherds conjoin to form an uncarinated round based bowl, smoothing visible on exterior	Neol
23	Pit [021]	9	42	2	Lithics	Debitage	Flint, dull grey brown. One edge retouched fragment with abrupt lateral edge retouch, one blade, four flakes and 36 chips	PH
23	Pit [021]	3	1	0	Lithics	Debitage	Flint, yellow-brown. Inner chip	PH

Context	Feature	Sample	Quantity	Weight (g)	Material	Object	Description	Period
23	Pit [021]	3	5	16	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Small rim and body sherds. Rim sherd is rolled and flattened	Neol
23	Pit [021]		5	35	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Small body sherds	Neol
25	Pit [007]		12	8	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Small sherds and frags	Neol
25	Pit [007]		14	370	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Rim and body sherds - same vessels as from (004)	Neol
28	Pit [027]		47	1970	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	At least five vessels represented, large and small sherds and many conjoins, breaks are sometimes fresh and sometimes abraded. burnished bowl with overhanging rim; bowl with thick upright rim with applied, upturned cordon; baggy shaped vessel with straight sides and rolled rim; burnished bowl with rolled rim and vertical linear grooved decoration around neck. Two hourglass shaped perforations present; body sherds with upturned cordon, no rim sherds.	Neol
28	Pit [027]		43	156	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Small to large sherds and fragments, mostly body sherds, one rim. There are at least three vessels present. Only one indicates form - everted, rolled rim, post firing perforation beneath and gently curving walls. This vessel is highly burnished and has some residue	Neol
28	Pit [027]		1	12600	Stone	Quern	Flat saddle quern	
30	Pit [027]		2	40	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Small and burnt everted rim sherd and thick body sherd	Neol
36	PH [036]		1	73	Pottery (PH)	Mod CB	Medium body sherd with possible everted neck and rounded body, exterior is uneven	Neol