

SRPG/01



LAND AT SOUTHAM ROAD, PRESTBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CgMs on Behalf of Gleeson Strategic Land Ltd

February 2016

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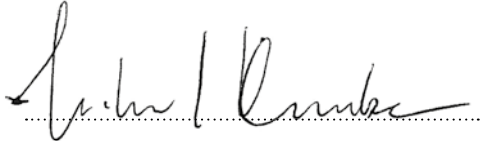
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project team

PROJECT MANAGER Mike Kimber
AUTHOR Kate Bain
FIELDWORK Kate Bain, Robyn Pelling
GRAPHICS Anna Sztromwasser, Mano Kapazoglou
APPROVED BY Mike Kimber – Project Manager



 **HEADLAND
ARCHAEOLOGY**
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MIDLANDS & WEST

Headland Archaeology
Unit 1, Clearview Court, Twyford Road, Hereford HR2 6JR

01432 364 901

midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com



PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology undertook an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land off Southam Road, Prestbury, Gloucestershire between January 12th and 15th 2016. The evaluation identified evidence of former fluvial activity in the eastern portion of the site; and of ridge and furrow cultivation in to the west. A single, narrow, undated linear feature was also observed in the western part of the site. Evidence of a modern works compound was also identified. No artefacts or other archaeological features or deposits were observed during the course of the work.

The trial trenching has corroborated the evidence of the geophysical survey in suggesting that the site is of limited archaeological potential.

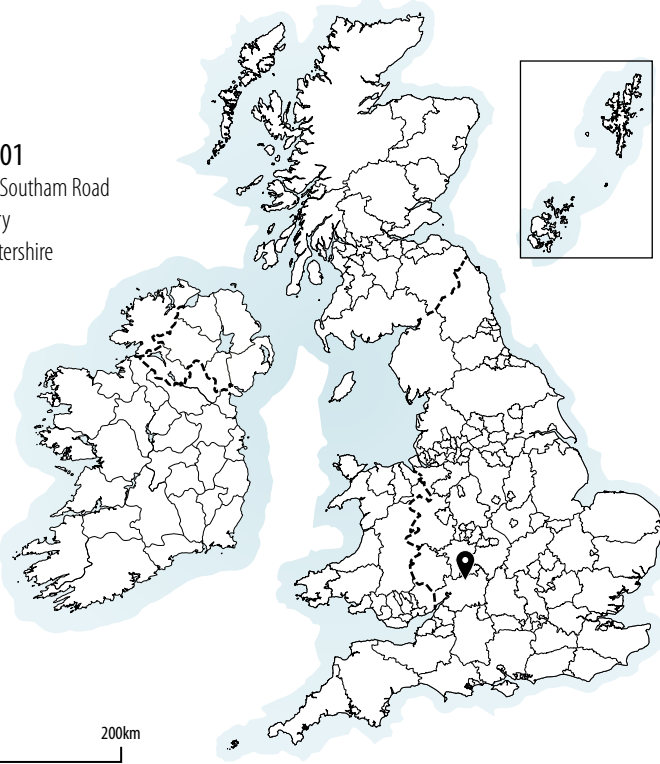
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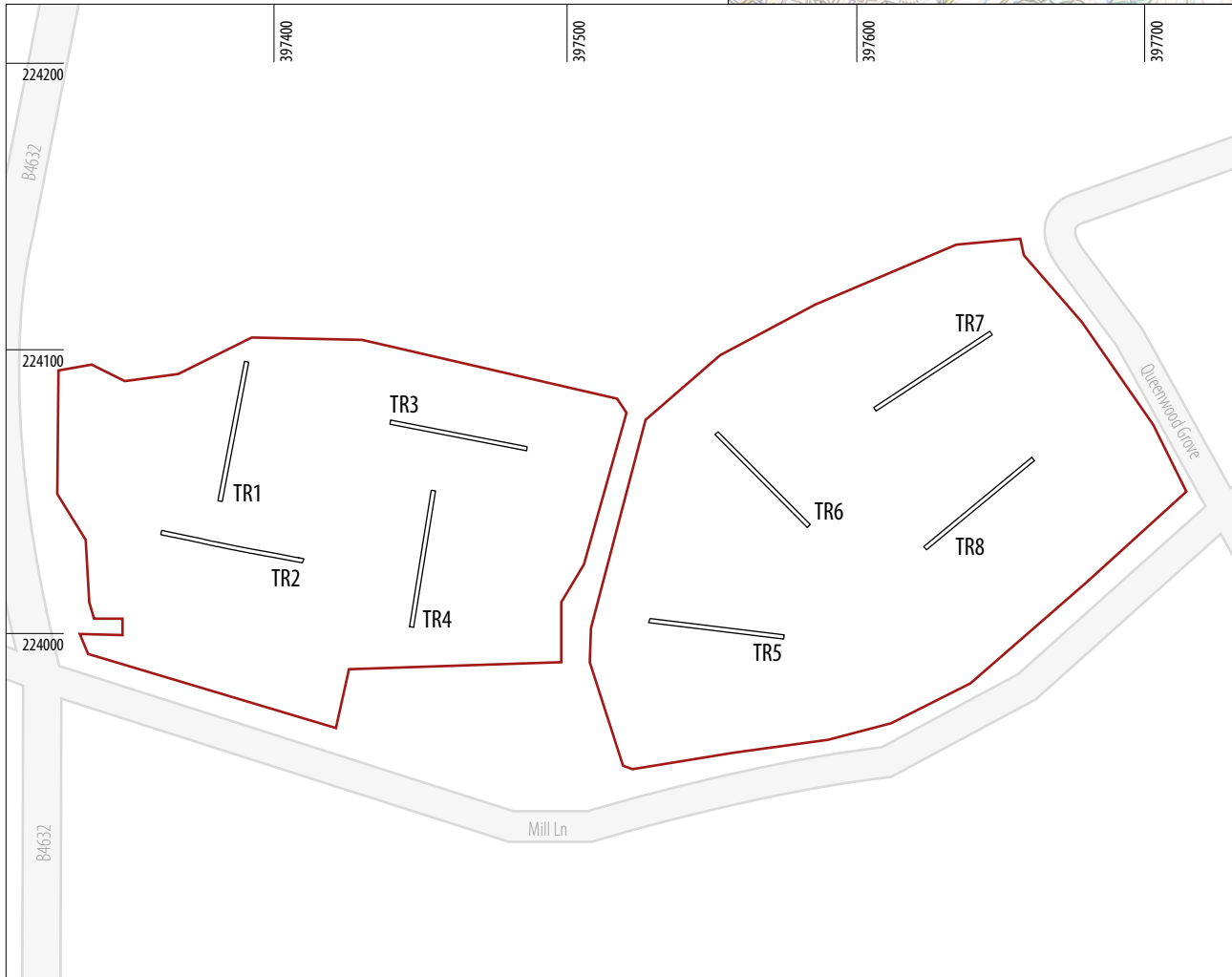
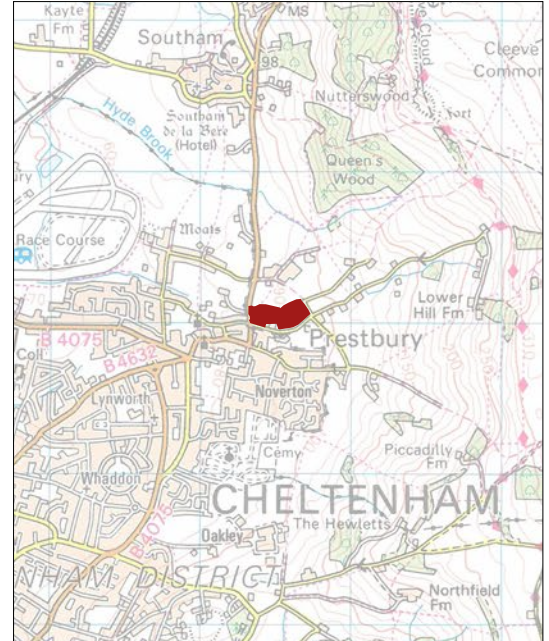
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SRPG/01
land at Southam Road
Prestbury
Gloucestershire





0 200km



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KEY
 development boundary
 trench location


 0  100m
 scale 1:2,500 @ A4

HEADLAND
ARCHAEOLOGY

MIDLANDS & WEST Unit 1, Clearview Court, Twyford Road
 Hereford HR2 6JR
 01432 364 901
 www.headlandarchaeology.com

ILLUS 1 Site location

LAND AT SOUTHAM ROAD, PRESTBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

This report presents the results of archaeological trial trenching on land off Southam Road, Prestbury, Gloucestershire between January 12th and 15th 2016. The archaeological works, commissioned by CgMs Consulting of behalf of Gleeson Strategic Land Ltd, were carried out as part of pre-determination works in advance of a planning application for a proposed residential development.

In accordance with relevant policy and best practice, the archaeological advisor to Tewkesbury Borough Council, Mr Charles Parry, requested that a field evaluation be undertaken in order to provide sufficient information to allow the consideration of the planning application.

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Gleeson Strategic Land Ltd to undertake the required works in accordance with a project design agreed with the archaeological advisor.

1.2 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND SETTING (ILLUS 1)

The proposed development site comprises a total area of land of approximately 4ha, centred on NGR 397510,224020, and is divided between two fields, located to the east of Southam Road in the village of Prestbury, Gloucestershire.

The site is bounded to the north by Gravel Pit Lane, to the east by Queenwood Grove, south by Mill Lane and west by Southam Road. A hedge boundary divides the two fields comprising the site from north to south.

The north of site is located at approximately 90m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to the east, falling gently to 84m AOD in the west of the site.

The solid geology of the site is represented by the Charmouth Mudstone Formation over which the superficial deposit comprises the Cheltenham Sand and Gravel (BGS 2016).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Whilst some prehistoric and Roman activity is known within the general vicinity of the site, the majority of sites and monuments associated with the village of Prestbury appear to be medieval or later in origin.

A single, possible Roman ditch was identified during works at Queenwood, to the south of the site, however, an archaeological evaluation carried out in advance of flood alleviation works in the south-western part of the site itself identified a single post-hole, possibly relating to a Post-Medieval fence post or similar..

Well preserved, upstanding ridge and furrow cultivation was clearly visible across the whole of the western field, but notably absent in the eastern field.

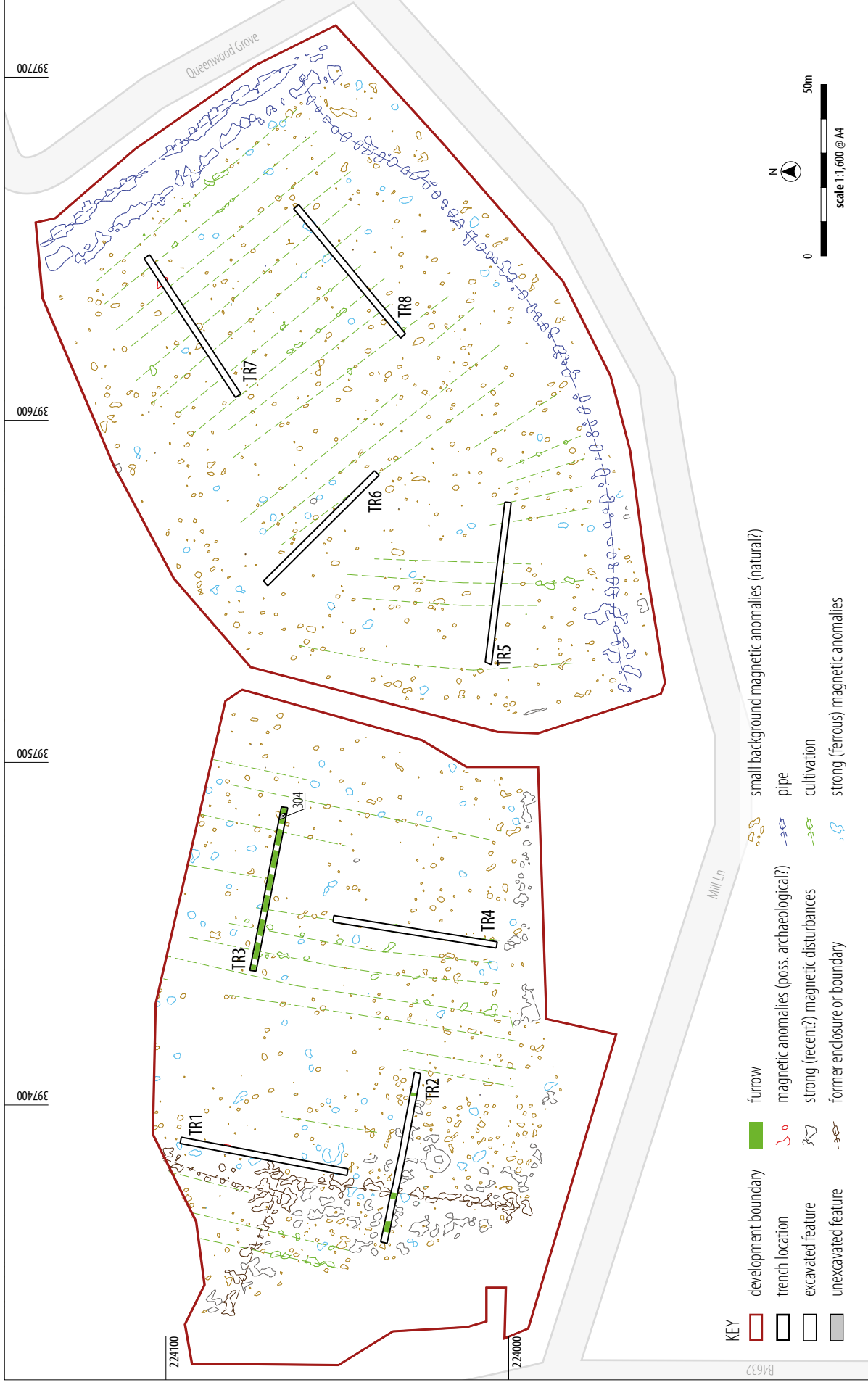
A geophysical survey detected traces of cultivation furrows and numerous smaller magnetic anomalies, observed in concentration in the south-western corner of the site.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the extent, nature and importance of any buried heritage assets within the proposed development area.

Specifically the evaluation aimed to:

- provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable the archaeological implications of any proposed development to be assessed;
- assess the impact of previous land use on the site;
- produce a site archive for deposition with Cheltenham Museum and to provide information for accession to the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record.



ILLUS 2 Trench plan



ILLUS 3A Trench 1, looking S **ILLUS 3B** Trench 2, looking SE **ILLUS 3C** Trench 3, looking E **ILLUS 3D** Trench 4, looking N

3 METHOD

The evaluation comprised the excavation of eight, 50m long trial trenches, using a wheeled mechanical excavator, fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket.

All trenches were excavated under the supervision of an appropriately qualified archaeologist. Overburden was removed by machine and excavation ceased at the uppermost significant archaeological horizon or when geological deposits were encountered.

The stratigraphic sequence was recorded in full in each of the trenches, even where no archaeological deposits were identified.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014). Stratigraphic units were assigned unique numbers and recording was undertaken on pre-printed pro-forma trench and context record sheets. The photographic record comprised black and white prints, supplemented with digital images. Record shots were taken of all trenches with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. Surveying was undertaken using a Trimble dGPS system.

4 RESULTS

The location of features discussed below can be found on **ILLUS 1**. A full trench and context register is included in Appendix 1.

4.1 TRENCHES 1–4 (**ILLUS 3**, **ILLUS 4**)

Trenches 1–4 were located in the southern part of the westernmost field within the development. The field was under grass and contained groups of mature trees. The remains of upstanding ridge and furrow cultivation, including former field headlands in evidence across the majority of the area.

The most westerly of the trenches (Trenches 1 and 2) were positioned over an area of magnetic anomalies, located within an area where the remnants of former cultivation appeared sparse, both on at the surface and in the geophysical data.

The geological horizon was encountered at a maximum depth of 0.43m (BGS) and was represented by yellow sandy-clay with inclusions of gravel (102/203). Immediately overlying the natural was a shallow deposit of light yellow-brown silt clay subsoil (104/202). Toward the western and eastern extremes of Trench 2, the linear remains of roughly north-south aligned furrows (205) were observed, cutting into the surface of the geology. Also truncating the surface of the geology, in both trenches, were multiple patches of modern disturbance including geotextile and red road stone (103/204). Where this disturbance appeared to be at its greatest concentration, there was also a marked absence of ridge and furrow and, indeed, subsoil. This was interpreted as the remnants of a former compound, perhaps associated with earlier flood alleviation works along the southern field boundary. The topsoil consisted of mid to dark brown clayey silt, 0.27m thick, with rare stone inclusions.



ILLUS 4 S facing section of linear [304] in Trench 3

Trenches 3 and 4 were located toward the eastern side of the field. The surface of the geological horizon (303) in Trench 3 was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.4m and consisted of the same sandy clay as in the earlier trenches. A single north-south aligned linear feature [304] was observed at the eastern extent of the trench (ILLUS 4). Excavation revealed a shallow, ditch-like feature, 1.0m wide and 0.28m deep, filled with a stiff, buff coloured silty clay (305). Deposit (305) appeared to be quite sterile and very similar in composition to alluvial deposits observed in Trenches 5–8 in the western field. Sealing this feature was a layer of subsoil (302), seen throughout the trench, measuring up to 0.39m deep. Crossing the trench on a roughly north-south alignment and truncating both the substrate and the subsoil, were the linear bases of a series of furrows (306) the upper parts of which were clearly expressed at the ground surface. The bases of the furrows were identified at a depth of approximately 0.50m (BGL).

The natural geology in Trench 4 (403) was encountered at a depth of 0.46m (BGL) and was overlain by a deposit of subsoil (402) consistent with the stratigraphic matrix of Trench 3, to its north. No evidence of ridge and furrow was observed in association with this trench either at the ground surface or expressed as negative features, consistent with the geophysics plot. Root disturbance, from nearby mature trees, was prevalent throughout the trench. The topsoil, (401), was represented by 0.25m of dark brown silty clay. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered within this trench.

4.2 TRENCHES 5–8 (ILLUS 5)

Trenches 5–8 were located in the eastern field associated with the proposed development. The grass field sloped gently downward toward a possible former pond in its south-west corner.

Trenches 5, 6 and 8 all revealed near identical stratigraphic matrices. Each trench was excavated to a depth of between 0.85 and 1.0m, to the surface of a distinct sandy clay and gravel deposit (505/605/804). In each case this was overlain by a fairly consistent shallow layer, approximately 0.10m thick, of dark grey silty clay with possible organic content (504/604/803). This was sealed by a stiff, buff silty clay deposit (503/603/805) which was encountered at depths varying from between 0.45 and 0.80m (BGL). Only at the northern end of Trench 6 was an additional stratigraphic unit encountered. This appeared to be an upward (northward) sloping reddish gravelly deposit (606), replacing the stiff clay, approximately 4.5m from the end of the trench. Both the gravel and the clay were overlain by a layer of subsoil encountered at 0.25–0.30m (BGL). The subsoil was sealed by approximately 0.30m of dark brown clayey topsoil in all cases.

Trench 7 was, in nearly every respect, the same as the previously discussed trenches in the eastern field. However, rather than the gravelly surface at which excavation ceased, a deposit of sand (704) was encountered, sealed by up to 0.50m of the same stiff, buff coloured sterile clay (703), seen in Trenches 5, 6 and 8. Subsoil and topsoil deposits (702 and 701), as in the earlier trenches, completed the stratigraphic sequence.

No features or deposits of an archaeological nature were identified in association with these trenches.

5 DISCUSSION

The only potential archaeological feature, with the exception of the well represented ridge and furrow cultivation, was the narrow, shallow linear feature identified in Trench 3. Its single fill strongly



5A



5C



5B



5D

ILLUS 5A Trench 5, looking SE **ILLUS 5B** Trench 6, showing contrasting deposits (NW)
ILLUS 5C Trench 7, looking NE **ILLUS 5D** Trench 8, SE facing section

resembled the stiff, buff coloured clay deposit seen throughout Trenches 5–8. This may indicate that the feature is of natural origin, perhaps representing a narrow depression or channel, infilled with alluvial material rather than an archaeological feature. It was, however, not possible to reach a firm conclusion on the origin of the feature based on the portion of it represented and investigated within the trench. No finds or other anthropogenic materials were found in association with this feature.

Evidence of furrows both on the ground surface and in the geophysics data was observed in all but Trench 4, in the western field. Where furrows were absent in Trenches 1 and 2, evidence of the construction of a possible former works compound, which appeared to include the levelling of the ground surface, was observed. The absence of furrows in Trench 4 did not appear to be associated with modern activity, rather, it appeared to reflect an area

to the south of a group of mature trees, which may have indicated the position of a former boundary or other obstacle to ploughing.

The trenches in the eastern field contained no features or deposits of anthropogenic origin. Rather, the deposits encountered appeared to represent a former fluvial environment. The clean sandy material encountered at the base of Trench 7 was interpreted as being within possible former river channel, whilst the dark deposit encountered in Trenches 5, 6 and 8 was thought to have been the result of standing, brackish water, perhaps associated with a former cut off channel or flooding event. The stiff, sandy clay material, seen throughout these trenches was reminiscent of alluvium, laid down across a probable former flood plain. A sample of the darker, potentially organic rich deposit was collected, but it is proposed to be discarded on the grounds that there is no evidence of any human activity associated with these deposits.

6 CONCLUSION

With the exception of the undated, single linear feature and the upstanding ridge and furrow cultivation, no archaeological features or deposits were identified in association with any of the trenches.

The trial trenching also corroborated the evidence of the geophysical survey in suggesting that the site is of limited archaeological potential.

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8 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 TRENCH AND CONTEXT REGISTER

TR1

Context	Description	Dimensions	Deposit D (BGL)
101	Topsoil: mid to dark brown, silty clay with very occasional small stones.	50m × 1.7m	0.00–0.15m
102	Natural: Yellow buff-clay becoming sandy and gravelly to north		0.30m+
103	Red road stone and geotextile patches mixed into topsoil and truncating natural		0.10–0.35m
104	Subsoil: yellow brown silty clay with sand and small gravelly particles		0.15–0.30m

Summary: Blank trench truncated by modern disturbance- probably former compound for earlier flood alleviation works

TR2

Context	Description	Dimensions	Deposit D (BGL)
201	Topsoil: mid to dark brown, silty clay with very occasional small stones.	50 × 1.7m	0.00–0.27m
202	Subsoil: yellow brown silty clay with sand and small gravelly particles		0.22–0.35m
203	Natural: slightly greyish yellow sandy clay with gravel		0.29+
204	Red road stone and geotextile patches mixed into topsoil and truncating natural		0.09–0.32m
205	Furrows- reflected@ground surface		0.50m

Summary: Upstanding, roughly N-S aligned ridge and furrow truncated by modern disturbance- probably former compound for earlier flood alleviation works.

TR3

Context	Description	Dimensions	Deposit D (BGL)
301	Topsoil: mid to dark brown, silty clay with very occasional small stones.	50 × 1.7m	0.00–0.20m
302	Subsoil: yellow brown silty clay with sand and small gravelly particles		0.20–0.39m
303	Natural: slightly greyish yellow sandy clay with gravel		0.39+
304	Narrow N-S aligned linear feature with single fill (305). 1m wide × 0.28m deep with shallow bowl shaped profile. Located at eastern end of trench.		0.40–0.68m
305	Single, sterile fill of linear [304], Pale buff/ brown stiff clay similar to alluvium in east field.		0.40–0.68m
306	Furrows reflected @ground surface		0.52

Summary: Numerous N-S aligned ridge and furrow visible at ground surface and single possible linear feature [304] (may be natural channel/hollow). Land drains observed exploiting bottom of furrows

TR4

Context	Description	Dimensions	Deposit
401	Topsoil: mid to dark brown, silty clay with very occasional small stones.	50m × 1.7m	0.00–0.25m
402	Subsoil: yellow brown silty clay with sand and small gravelly particles		0.25–0.46m
403	Natural: slightly greyish yellow sandy clay with gravel		0.46m+

Summary: Blank trench with numerous tree roots

TR5

Context	Description	Dimensions	Deposit D (BGL)
501	Topsoil: mid to dark brown, silty clay with very occasional small stones.		0.00–0.25 m
502	Subsoil: reddish brown clay with sand and small gravelly particles		0.25–0.45m
503	Pale buff/brown still silt clay- possible alluvium		0.45–0.75m
504	Layer of dark grey brown silt clay with possible organics		0.75–0.85m
505	Natural: Yellowish sands with clay and gravel patches		0.85 +

Summary: Blank trench- fluvial deposits

TR6

Context	Description	Dimensions	Deposit D (BGL)
601	Topsoil: mid, slightly yellowish brown, rich silty clay with very rare stones		0.00–0.30m
602	Subsoil: reddish brown sandy clay with pebbles		0.30–0.70m
603	Mid yellowish/buff- brown, stiff sandy clay- possible alluvium		0.70–0.85m
604	Dark grey brown silt clay deposit with possible organic content		0.85–1.00m
605	Natural: Buff/yellow sandy clay with gravel		1.00m+
606	Sandy, orange brown, gravelly deposit at N end of trench, replaces possible buff alluvial clay		0.70–0.85m

Summary: Blank trench, fluvial deposits

TR7

Context	Description	Dimensions	Deposit D (BGL)
701	Topsoil: mid, slightly yellowish brown, rich silty clay with v.rare stones		0.00–0.30m
702	Subsoil: brownish yellow sandy clay with pebbles		0.30–0.50m
703	Mid yellowish/buff- brown, stiff sandy clay- possible alluvium		0.50–0.95m
704	Natural: Orange fine sand with patches of fine gravel		0.95m+

Summary: Blank trench, fluvial deposits

TR8

Context	Description	Dimensions	Deposit D (BGL)
801	Topsoil: mid-dark brown silty clay with v.rare stones		0.00–0.30m
802	Subsoil: reddish brown sandy clay with occasional pebbles		0.30–0.45m
803	Dark grey silty sand and clay with possible organics, sealed by (805)		0.56–0.73m
804	Natural: Mixed yellow and white sands and gravels with patches of clay.		0.73m +
805	Mid yellowish/buff- brown, stiff sandy clay- possible alluvium		0.45–0.56m
Summary: Blank trench, fluvial deposits			



SOUTH & EAST

Headland Archaeology
Building 68C, Wrest Park, Silsoe
Bedfordshire MK45 4HS

01525 861 578

southandeast@headlandarchaeology.com

MIDLANDS & WEST

Headland Archaeology
Unit 1, Clearview Court, Twyford Road
Hereford HR2 6JR

01432 364 901

midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com

NORTH

Headland Archaeology
Unit 16, Hillside, Beeston Road
Leeds LS11 8ND

0113 387 6430

north@headlandarchaeology.com

SCOTLAND

Headland Archaeology
13 Jane Street
Edinburgh EH6 5HE

0131 467 7705

scotland@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com