

BLCW/01



LAND BETWEEN PENTALOW AND BERRYCROFT, BLACK-SMITHS LANE, CROPTHORNE, WORCESTERSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

commissioned by Highbury Design

W/15/01927/RM HER: WSM67935

May 2017

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Archaeological field evaluation, via trial trenching and watching brief was undertaken in advance of residential development in the village of Cropthorne, Worcestershire. Probable horticultural bedding trenches of post-medieval date and a burnt deposit likely related to the 19th century blacksmith's shop were recorded to the north of the site with no other archaeological remains identified.

A fragment of a Neolithic arrowhead was recovered as a residual find within the post-medieval features.

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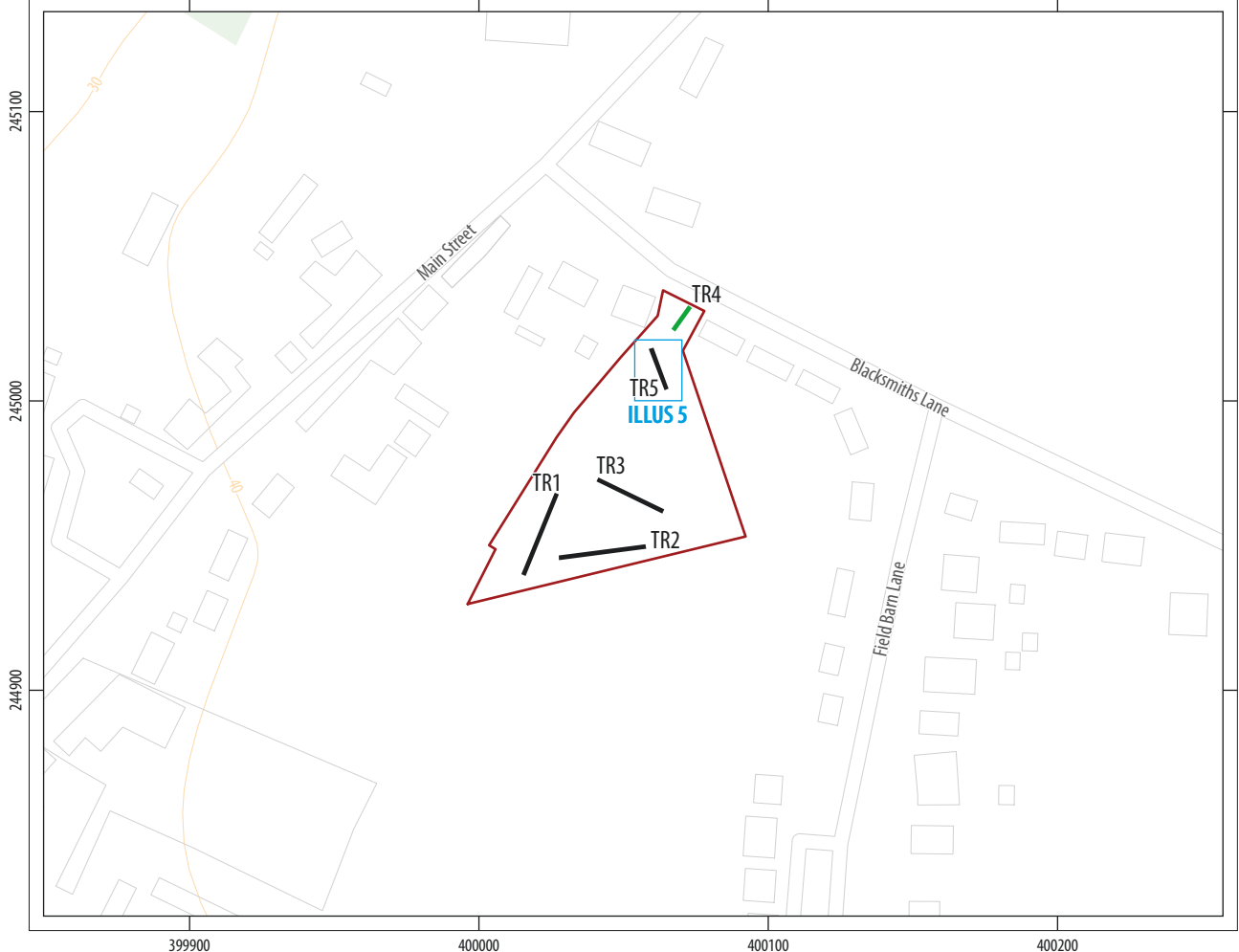
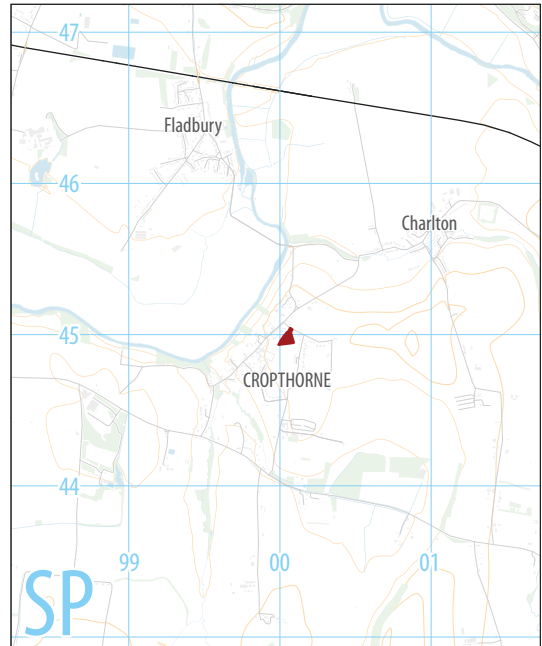
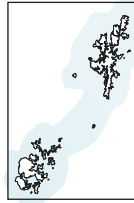
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BLCW/01
 Blacksmiths Lane
 Crophorne
 Worcestershire

0 200km
 1:10,000,000 @ A4

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0 50m
 1:2,500 @ A4

- KEY**
- development boundary
 - trench location
 - trench location (excavated during watching brief)



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ILLUS 1 Site location

LAND BETWEEN PENTALOW AND BERRYCROFT, BLACK-SMITHS LANE, CROPTHORNE, WORCESTERSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological site investigation, via trial trenching and watching brief, on land at Blacksmith's Lane, Crophorne, Worcestershire.

1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Highbury Design commissioned Headland Archaeology to undertake an archaeological evaluation and monitoring of works on an area of land at Blacksmiths Lane, Crophorne, Worcestershire. Planning permission was granted by Wychavon District Council for 8 dwellings and new access on the site (ref W/13/01686/OU) subject to Condition 14 which states:

'No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work, including a Written Scheme of Investigation, has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- › the programme and methodology of site investigation and recording.
- › the programme for post investigation assessment.
- › provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.
- › provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation.
- › provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation.
- › nomination of a competent person or persons/ organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.

No demolition/development shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (1).

The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (1) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.'

Reserved matters for this application were approved in August 2015 (ref W/15/01927/RM).

A brief was produced by the archaeological advisor to the planning authority outlining how the programme of works should be commenced (Scruby 2016). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by Headland Archaeology (Kimber 2016) in response to this, detailing a phased approach to the archaeological works, with each phase informing the need or otherwise for further work, this was agreed by the archaeological advisor.

Due to on-site constraints it was not possible to excavate one of the intended trenches (Trench 4) during Phase 2 (trial trenching).

During Phase 3 (Review) it was agreed with the archaeological advisor to the planning authority that an archaeological watching brief (Phase 4) would be undertaken during initial groundworks in the region of Trench 4 in order to identify and record potential archaeological remains in this area. A WSI was written (Craddock-Bennett 2016) and approved by the archaeological advisor.

1.2 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The site is located south of Blacksmiths Lane, Crophorne, NGR SO 99978 44987 and is accessed between two existing properties



ILLUS 2 View of Trench 3, showing plough scarring, looking north-west

ILLUS 3 East facing section showing stratigraphy, Trench 2

ILLUS 4 North-west facing section of Trench 4

(Pentalow and Berrycroft) (**ILLUS 1**). The site covers an area of approximately 0.45 hectares, it is predominantly flat, lying at approximately 42m AOD, and comprises the northern tip of an approximately triangular field bounded by the rear gardens of properties on Main Street to the west, Blacksmiths Lane and Field Barn Lane to the east and by a further field to the south.

The underlying geology comprises the Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (undifferentiated) overlain by superficial deposits of the Ailstone Member Sand and Gravel (NERC 2017).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

No previous archaeological investigations have been carried out on the site. The advice from the archaeological advisor noted that the proposed development lies in a topographically favourable area for early settlement, on the free-draining gravel terraces of the nearby River Avon. The site lies adjacent to the historic core of the village of Cropthorne and the area is also rich in prehistoric and Romano British remains. Accordingly, the site has the potential to contain as yet unknown archaeological deposits.

Historic map regression shows that the site has most likely been in arable use since the medieval period, forming part of the open fields of Cropthorne that were enclosed in 1780. A blacksmith's shop previously stood on the south side of the lane within the area of the proposed access (now within the garden of Berrycroft), but burnt down in the late 19th century. Photographs of the period show the shop as a timber built structure, with a probable tiled roof.

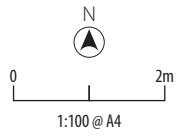
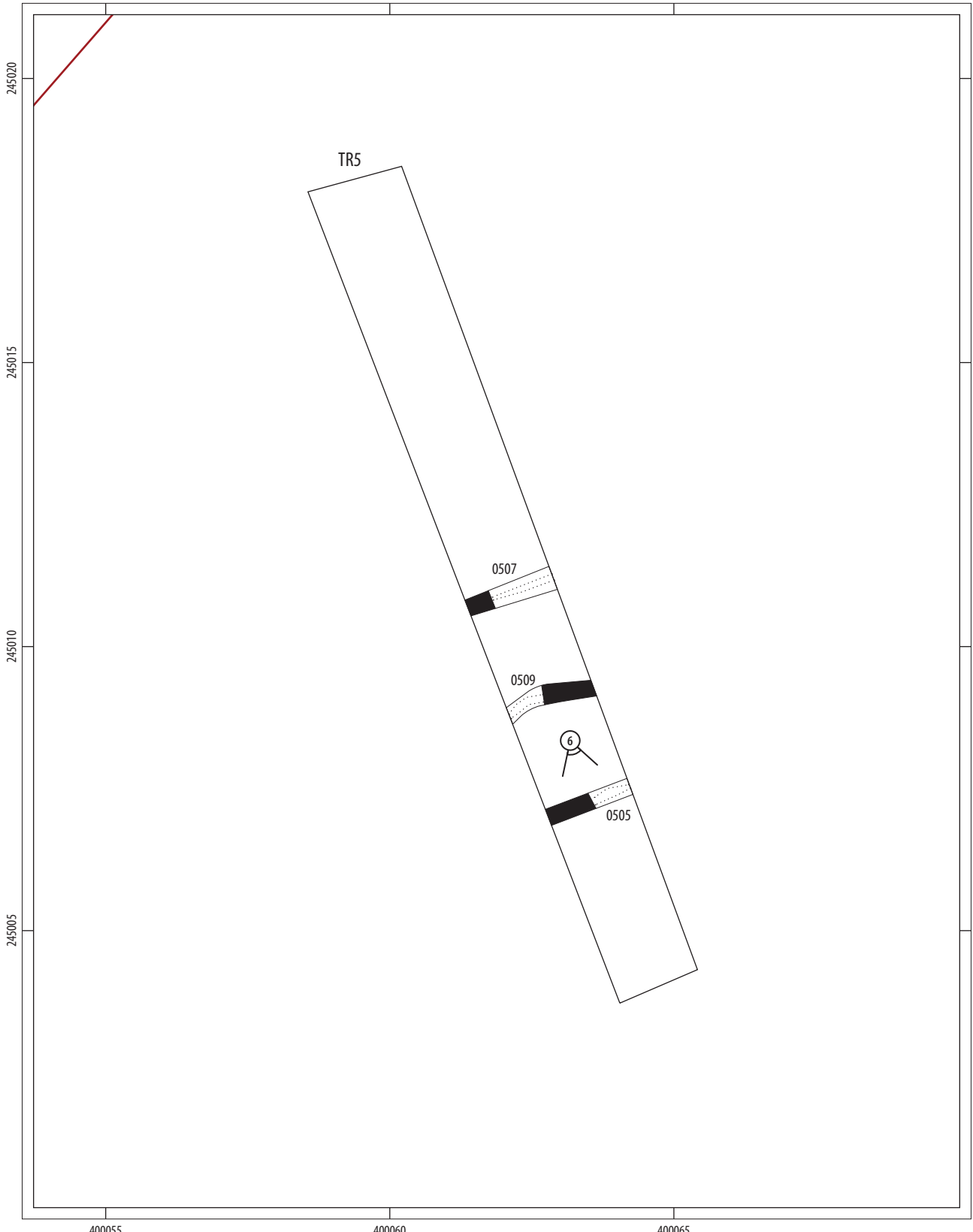
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- › to enable the development by fulfilling the archaeological condition to the satisfaction of the planning authority;
- › to establish the location, extent, nature and date of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the areas proposed to be disturbed during the development;
- › to establish the integrity and state of preservation of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the areas proposed to be disturbed during the development;
- › to inform the development of an appropriate mitigation strategy;
- › to produce and deposit a satisfactory archive and disseminate the results of the work via grey-literature reporting and publication as appropriate.

The local and regional research contexts are provided by the Archaeological Research Framework for the West Midlands (Watt 2011). Any evidence retrieved during the works will be analysed in light of the objectives contained in these frameworks.

The resulting archive (finds and records) will be organised and deposited with Worcestershire Museum to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.



- KEY
- development boundary
 - trench location
 - archaeological features

3 METHOD

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the above mentioned WSI and project brief and in accordance with the following documents:

- › Code of Conduct (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014)
- › Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014a)

Prior to excavation, utility plans were consulted and a cable avoidance tool was used to check the presence of potential buried services.

Excavation of Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 5 was undertaken on the 25th and 26th July 2016 using a 360° 5tonne mini-digger using a flat bladed bucket. Trenches measured between 25m and 30m in length and 1.5m in width. Due to the presence of underground electrical services and probable line of a sewer, insufficient space was available in the garden area of Berrycroft to allow positioning of Trench 4 to evaluate the suggested location of the former Blacksmith's workshop. It was agreed with the archaeological advisor to abandon this trench during the archaeological evaluation phase.

After the evaluation it was agreed with the archaeological advisor to undertake a watching brief during the initial groundworks in the area of Trench 4. This was undertaken on the 9th May 2017. The area excavated was the maximum available (9m x 1.6m) within the confines of the area due to an abundance of services, footpaths and other constraints.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). The recorded contexts were assigned unique numbers and recording was undertaken on Headland Archaeology pro forma trench and context record sheets.

The general stratigraphy of the site and archaeological features were recorded on Headland Archaeology trench record sheets and pro forma context sheets with an overall plan of the exposed remains and trench locations surveyed digitally using a Trimble DGPS.

Digital and black and white photographs were taken of trenches and identified features, with a graduated metric scale clearly visible.

4 RESULTS

4.1 GENERAL STRATIGRAPHY

The earliest deposits encountered comprised mid-reddish brown sandy gravels (e.g. 202). These were encountered between as little as 0.30m to 0.54m below ground surface and were identified as river terrace gravels.

Plough scarring, broadly oriented east-west was observed at the top of the interface with overlying deposits (**ILLUS 2**).

In Trenches 2 and 3 the gravels were sealed by a dark grey silty sand (201, 301) topsoil (**ILLUS 3**). The topsoil became noticeably more strongly cemented and compact through its profile.

Within Trench 1, a mid-reddish-brown gravelly sand (102) containing charcoal flecks, was noted to overlie the gravels and was sealed by the topsoil (101). The deposit was a maximum of 0.10m deep and identified as a shallow subsoil remnant.

Similarly, within Trench 5, a dark grey slightly sandy clayey silt (502) overlay the natural gravels (503) and was sealed by the topsoil (501). The deposit measured between 0.15 and 0.20m depth and extended eastwards from the northwest edge of the trench a maximum of 6m. This was interpreted as relating to former agriculture, perhaps related to ploughing as a type of lynchet deposit.

Modern glass, glazed ceramics and tile were observed and noted within the topsoil in Trench 5 but were not retained.

4.2 POST-MEDIEVAL DEPOSITS

At the northern end of Trench 4 was a 0.12m deep deposit (403) containing charcoal and rare fragments of slag. Heavily truncated by surrounding services and rooting from a large tree only a small (approx. 2m x 1m) area remained within the confines of the trench (**ILLUS 4**).

Located in Trench 5, 3 linear features [505, 507, 509] (**ILLUS 5**) were recorded oriented northeast-southwest at approximately 0.42m below ground surface. The features were shallow and narrow measuring a maximum of 0.35m wide and 0.13m deep and filled with a brownish grey silty sand containing frequent charcoal fragments and gravel (504, 506, 508 respectively) (**ILLUS 6**).

A similar profile was evidenced in each cut and relatively even spacing of approximately 1.50 and 1.70m apart. The cuts were interpreted as bedding or horticultural trenches, probably associated with properties fronting towards Blacksmith's lane.

Pottery dating to the 19th century was recovered from (508) together with a fragment of a flint blade. A single piece of flint debitage was recovered from (504).

4.3 TRENCHES WITH NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

Trenches 1, 2 and 3 contained no archaeological features or remains.

5 DISCUSSION

The recovered flint from the site would suggest prehistoric activity within the vicinity of the development but the precise form of this remains unknown. The flint was redeposited in post-medieval features and given the shallow nature of the soils, it is possible that later agriculture may have completely truncated any traces of any such activity or that only peripheral prehistoric activity existed on the site.

Plough scars within the top of the geological deposits, oriented east-west, appear indicative of agricultural use of the site, probably in the post-medieval period. However, the compaction of the topsoil towards its base would suggest that this had not occurred for some time and that the land may have existed as rough pasture for a protracted period.



ILLUS 6 Plan view of horticultural feature [0505]

Probable horticultural bedding trenches were recorded in Trench 5. Their location is suggestive of features located in the rear gardens of properties fronting onto Blacksmith's lane and it is possible that they may even relate to occupation associated with the former smithy buildings themselves. No evidence for the former smithy building was identified, however, it is likely that the slag and charcoal deposit recorded during the watching brief represents discard of waste products to the rear of the smithy building.

Other than within the area of Trench 5, in closer proximity to the road frontage and public footpaths, a noticeable paucity within the topsoil of more recent ceramics, brick fragments and such, would also appear to confirm relatively limited disturbance and/or ploughing of the soils for some time.

6 CONCLUSION

Archaeological evaluation of land at Blacksmith's Lane, Cropthorne revealed evidence of post-medieval horticultural activity probably associated with gardens attached to buildings fronting onto Blacksmith's lane. The gap within the existing houses at the location of the former Blacksmith's shop has become a thoroughfare for services and as such any remains of the burnt down building have been heavily truncated or destroyed. Extensive ploughing of the site was evidenced with prehistoric flint recovered as residual artefacts. Later agricultural activity may have truncated associated archaeological remains or this was peripheral to the site with limited use of the land in antiquity.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 TRENCH AND CONTEXT REGISTER

DBGL = Depth below ground level

TR1	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NE-SW	30	1.5	0.4
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION			DBGL(M)
101	Dark greyish brown silty sand containing frequent rounded gravel, rootlets and rare CBM fragments – Topsoil			0 – 0.40
102	Mid-reddish brown sand and gravel containing rare charcoal flecks – Subsoil			0.35 – 0.45
103	Mid-reddish brown sand and gravel – Natural geological deposit			0.4

Summary: No archaeological remains

TR2	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NE-SW	30	1.5	0.45
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION			DBGL(M)
201	Dark greyish brown silty sand containing frequent rounded gravel, rootlets and rare CBM fragments – Topsoil			0 – 0.45
202	Mid-reddish brown sand and gravel – Natural geological deposit			0.45

Summary: No archaeological remains

TR3	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NW-SE	25	1.5	0.4
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION			DBGL(M)
301	Dark greyish brown silty sand containing frequent rounded gravel, rootlets and rare CBM fragments – Topsoil			0 – 0.40
302	Mid-reddish brown sand and gravel – Natural geological deposit			0.40

Summary: No archaeological remains

TR4	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NE-SW	9	1.6	0.4
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION			DBGL(M)
401	Mid brown grey sandy silt. Frequent small – medium stones, friable. Large tree roots from adjacent tree stump.			0 – 0.20
402	Track make up material present on north western side of trench. Made up of general detritus, stone, plastic, metal waste etc.			0 – 0.25
403	Burning material – Dark grey – brown silty sand. Friable. Small occasional slag fragments and charcoal.			0.20 – 0.32
404	Natural substrate – mid red-brown sandy gravel, occasional small-medium sub-angular stones.			0.32+

Summary: Small deposit of burnt material, heavily truncated by modern services.

TR5	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	N-S	30	1.5	0.45
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION			DBGL(M)
501	Dark greyish brown silty sand containing frequent rounded gravel, rootlets and rare CBM fragments – Topsoil			0 – 0.35/0.40
502	Dark grey slightly sandy clayey silt – poss agricultural subsoil			0.35 – 0.54
503	Mid-reddish brown sand and gravel - Natural geological deposit			0.40 – 0.54
504	Mid-brownish grey silty sand containing frequent gravel and charcoal flecks – fill of 0505			0.42
505	Linear cut NE-SW orientation, gradually sloping sides, uneven tending to concave base, 0.30m wide x 0.10m deep.			0.42
506	Mid-brown silty sand containing frequent gravel and charcoal fragments – Fill of 0507			0.42
507	Linear cut, NE-SW orientation, gradually sloping sides, rounded base, 0.35m wide x 0.13m deep			0.42
508	Mid-brown silty sand containing frequent gravel and charcoal fragments – Fill of 0509			0.42
509	Linear cut, NE-SW orientation gradually sloping sides, slightly uneven base tending to concave, 0.35m wide 0.10m deep			0.42

Summary: 3 linear cuts – probable horticultural bedding trenches

APPENDIX 2 FINDS

Appendix 2.1 Finds assessment

The finds assemblage was very small, numbering two sherds (2g) of pottery and two lithic finds. These were all found in the same trench. The Neolithic and modern periods were represented in the assemblage. The finds are summarised by feature in the Table 1, a complete catalogue is given in Appendix 2.2.

FEATURE	POTTERY (MOD)		LITHICS	DATING
	COUNT	WGT		
linear [505]	–	–	1	PH
linear [509]	1	2g	1	19thC
Total	1	2g	2	

TABLE 1 Summary of finds assemblage by feature with spot dating

The two lithic finds consisted of an elongated bifacial pressure flaked arrowhead, found in linear [509] (508) and a secondary hard hammer flake, found in linear [505] (504). The arrowhead is broken, with only the medial portion surviving, but can be dated typologically to the Neolithic period. The flake is also broken, with some damage on the distal end as well as on the edges.

A single sherd of modern pottery was also found in linear [509] (508). It was a coloured stoneware mug rim, of 19th century or later date.

The presence of lithics suggests that there may have been some level of activity in the area during the prehistoric period, though it is likely that both lithic finds are residual in these linear features. The presence of modern pottery in linear [509] may suggest a recent date for this feature though equally may be intrusive.

Due to the small size of this assemblage, further study would be of limited value.

Archive recommendations

The lithics should be retained, however the modern pottery is of no further value and can be discarded. Finds catalogue

Appendix 2.2 Finds catalogue

TR	CONTEXT	FEATURE	QUANTITY	WGT (G)	MATERIAL	OBJECT	DESCRIPTION	SPOT DATE
5	504	linear 505	1	1	Lithics	Flake	secondary hard hammer flake, break to distal and some edge damage	PH
5	508	linear 509	1	2	Lithics	Arrowhead	medial section of an elongated bifacial pressure flaked arrowhead	Neolithic
5	508	linear 509	1	2	Pottery (Mod)	Stoneware	coloured stoneware mug rim, grey fabric, external grey glaze, internal white glaze	19thC–Present

TABLE 2 Finds catalogue



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