

WFKN12



# WORMSLADE FARM, KELMARSH, NOTHAMPTONSHIRE

*Archaeological Evaluation*

*for Mark Newton*

*November 2012*



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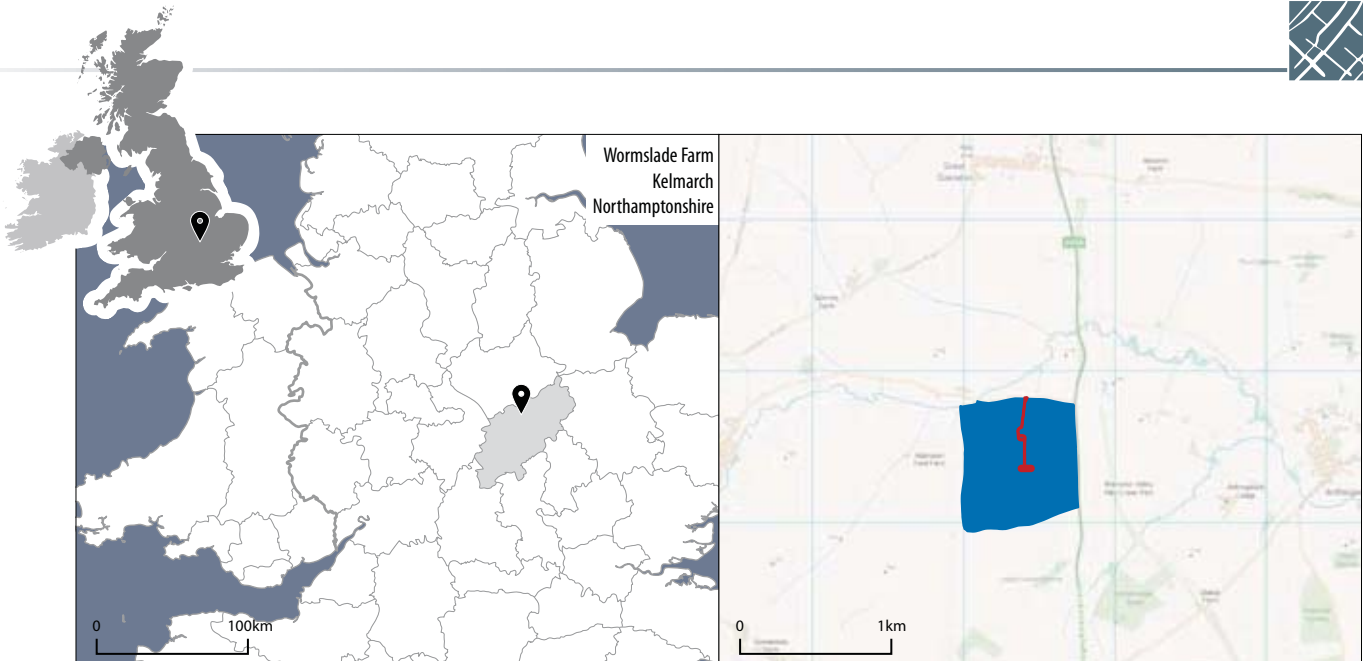
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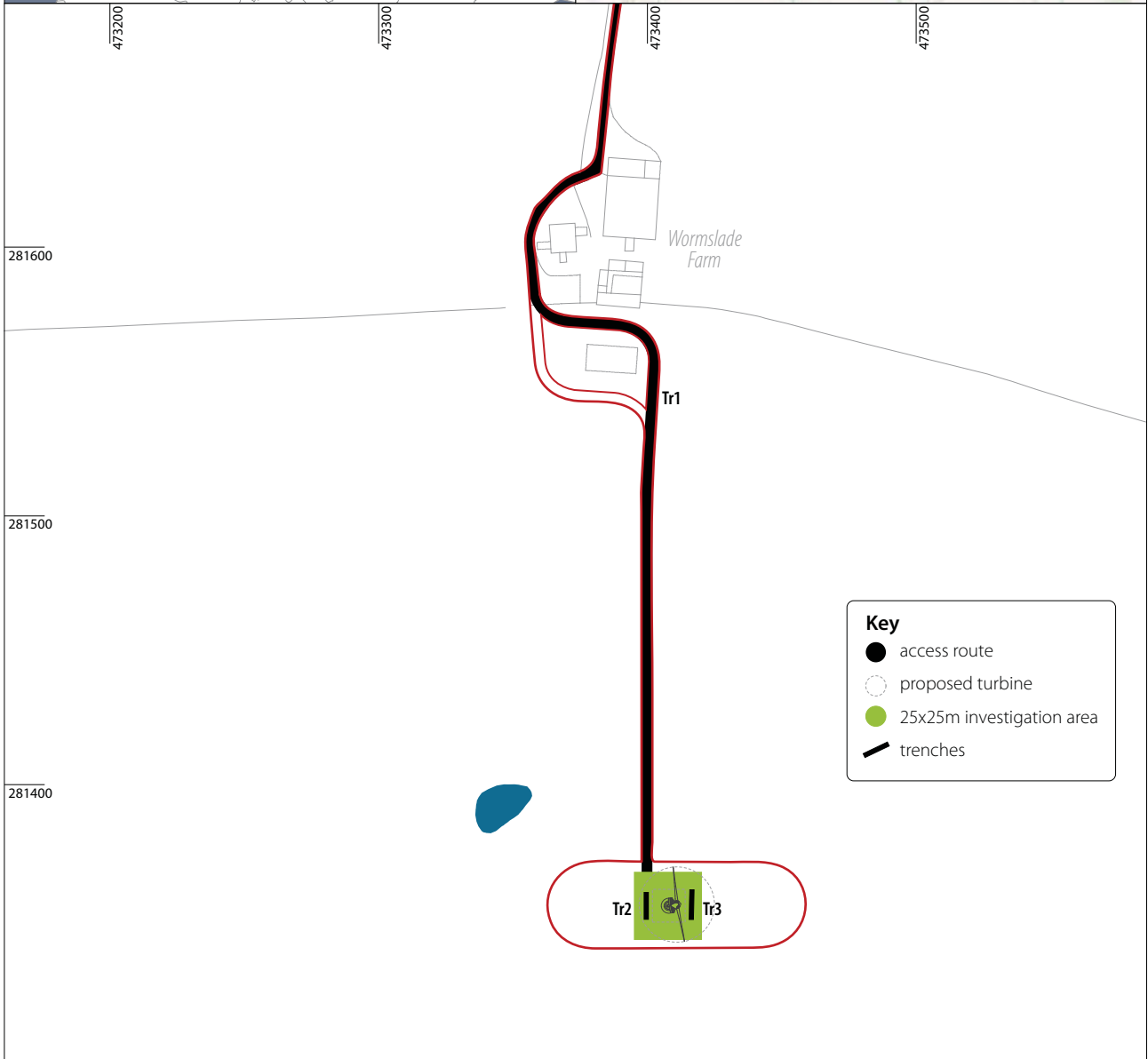
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Scale 1:2,500 @ A4



**Illus 1**  
Site location



# WORMSLADE FARM, KELMARSH, NOTHAMPTONSHIRE

## Archaeological Evaluation

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd conducted an evaluation on land proposed for the construction of a single turbine at Wormslade Farm, Kelmarsh. The evaluation was designed to provide further information on its archaeological potential. The work was commissioned by Mark Newton. A total of three trenches were excavated over the development area revealing two linear features, these would have functioned as land boundaries and are medieval or earlier date.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Planning background

Mark Newton (client) has submitted an application for a single wind turbine 50m to hub in the field south of Wormslade Farm (Illus 1). This would have an associated access track and infrastructure, including a transformer/substation within the farm complex.

As part of the preparation for this application, a desk-based assessment was produced (Headland Archaeology 2012) and submitted to the local planning authority (LPA – Daventry DC). The LPA consulted with the Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Officer (AO), who advised that a pre-determination evaluation (using intrusive trial trenches) was required to adequately ascertain the potential of this site to contain sub-surface remains. The results of this evaluation will be submitted for consideration by the Planning Committee.

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by the client to agree a programme of trial trenching and produce a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the work (Headland Archaeology 2012). Headland Archaeology was also commissioned to undertake the site works and produce a report (this document) on the results. Fieldwork took place on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012.

### 1.2 Site location and geology

The development area (DA) is a field south of Wormslade Farm located between the villages of Clipston and Arthingworth, approximately 2km north of Kelmarsh Hall in Northamptonshire (DP 73394 81349 – turbine location). The proposed turbine will be 50m to hub height and located approximately 300m south of the buildings

of Wormslade Farm. Access is proposed to be from the unclassified road north of Wormsalde Farm, through the farmyard on an existing track and across the field on a proposed new track (Illus 1).

The geology of the area comprises Whitby Mudstone Formation dating to the Toarcian period; superficial deposits are of Diamicton Till (British Geological Survey Website). The site lies at around 138m OD at the proposed turbine location, rising from c.116m OD on the road north of Wormslade Farm (Illus 1 & 3).

### 1.3 Archaeological background

The archaeological background is described in detail in the Desk Based Assessment (Headland Archaeology, 2012). The following summarises these findings:

The most relevant remains comprise areas of potential Roman settlement from two locations; one within the DA around Wormslade Farm (cropmarks - HER MNN1627) and one to the south of the DA (Roman finds – HER MNN5851).

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation were:

- to identify and assess the particular significance of any element of the historic environment that may be affected by the relevant proposal (as well as the affect on setting of a heritage asset);
- to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any remains on the site, in their cultural and environmental setting; and



- to analyse any evidence retrieved in light of objectives contained within the frameworks of local and regional research. In this case they are provided by Cooper, (2006) [supplemented by Knight, Vyner and Allen (2012)] and English Heritage (1991 & 1997).

Specifically, the aims of the investigation were:

- to establish the depth and character of archaeologically 'sterile' overburden; and
- to identify, characterise and date any potential archaeological remain within the site; and
- to define any constraints encountered during the evaluation and any potential constraints for further archaeological fieldwork (eg areas of disturbance, service locations, etc).

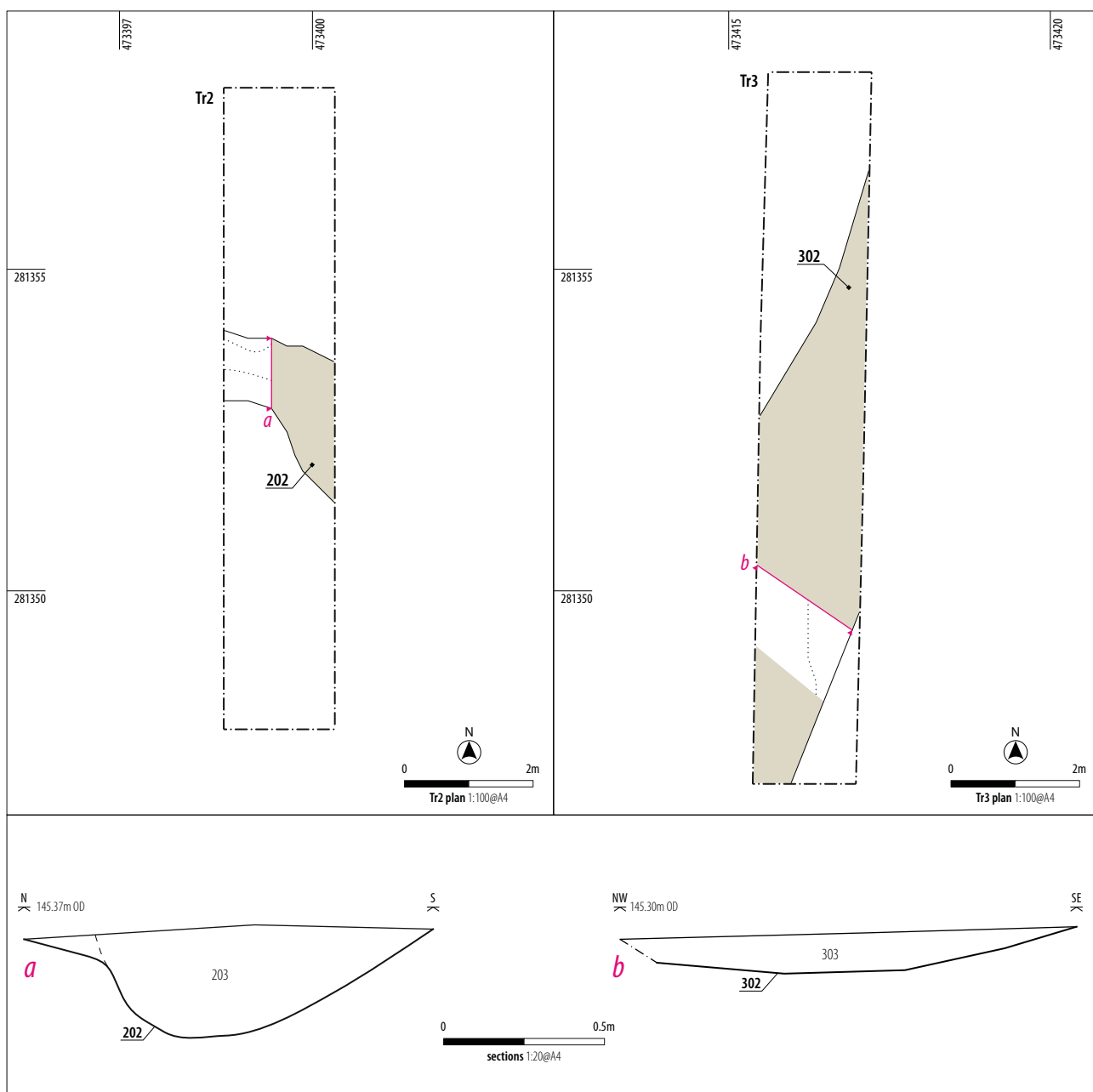
## 2.2 Methodology

Three trenches were excavated across the DA, one 15m by 1.6m trench and two 10 by 1.6m trenches. The trenches were placed on various alignments and were used to sample the land that fell within zones of proposed development impact (turbine base and track). Full trench descriptions, including orientation, length and soil profile, can be found in Appendix 1.1.

A JCB mechanical excavator equipped with a flat-bladed bucket was used to remove topsoil under direct archaeological control. Excavation continued until clean geological deposits were encountered.

Further excavation required to satisfy the objectives of the evaluation was continued by hand. The stratigraphy of each trench was recorded in full.

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Illus 2

Trench 2 & Trench 3 results



**Illus 3**

*Site conditions*

### 2.3 Recording

All recording was in accordance with the code of practice of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). All trenches were given unique numbers and all recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards that conform to accepted archaeological standards. All stratigraphic relationships were recorded.

An overall site plan at an appropriate scale and relative to the National Grid was recorded. A full photographic record including colour slide, black and white print and digital photographs was taken. A metric scale was clearly visible in record photographs.

cow and horse) was recovered (Section 5). No other material was recovered to date the ditch.

Another linear feature [302] was recorded in Trench 3 (Illus 2 & 5). The full length and width was not revealed within the constraints of the trench but investigation revealed an irregular shallow cut ditch with a depth of 0.15m. The fill (303) was of a similar nature to (203) with animal bone and one sherd of pottery being recovered. The sherd of pottery is not closely datable being of a similar nature to both late Iron Age and early Saxon fabrics found in the region (Section 4).

## 3. RESULTS

In general, the soil profile of the DA comprised 0.3m of mid brown sand clay topsoil lying over natural geology of orange and grey clay with very rare angular stone inclusions. Evidence of mole drains and plough marks were visible in all trenches. In Trenches 2 and 3, the natural geology displayed a considerable amount of disturbance from ploughing.

In Trench 2, a linear feature [202] was recorded (Illus 2 & 4). It measured 1m in width by 0.35m deep and was orientated broadly E-W, curving slightly to the south. The edges of this feature were undefined in plan (due to the disturbance from intensive ploughing), but investigation revealed a concave cut feature which was interpreted as a ditch. The backfill of the ditch (203) was characteristic of a natural silting up over time with no obvious signs of deliberate dumping or backfill. Animal bone from large mammals (sheep,

No other significant archaeological remains were recorded.



**Illus 4**

*Linear within Trench 2 looking south*



**Illus 5**

*Linear within Trench 3 looking south*

## 4. FINDS ASSESSMENT

*Sarah Percival*

A single, undecorated body sherd of handmade pottery weighing 20g was recovered from the fill of linear feature [302]. The sherd is made of dense, sandy fabric with no inclusions discernible within the matrix, however moderate to common mica shreds are visible on the exterior and interior surfaces. The exterior surface is orange brown whilst the remainder of the sherd is black.

The sherd is not closely datable. It is possible that it is earlier Saxon as sandy fabrics with biotite mica are found in the region during this period (Williams and Vince 1997). Iron Age pottery from the region is generally shell-tempered although sherds in similar sandy fabrics have been found in small quantities within Iron Age assemblages from Cranbourne Avenue, Milton Keynes (Blinkhorn 2003, 43, fabric F2) and Wavendon Gate, Milton Keynes (Elsdon 1996, 169, fabric 934), suggesting a possible later Iron Age date, perhaps the mid-1st century BC or a little earlier.

## 5. FAUNAL ASSESSMENT

*Tegan Daly*

The assemblage comprises 40 fragments recovered from backfill deposits (203) and (303). Fragments were small (average weight 9g) meaning twenty-seven fragments could not be identified to species-level; the majority of which were longbone fragments (Table 2). Bone preservation was variable, although many pieces displayed surface erosion and fissuring suggesting that the bone was exposed above ground at some point (Brehrensmeier 1978).

All fragments present were from large mammals, and a total of 13 fragments indicated that cow, sheep/goat and horse were present. The minimum number of individuals (MNI) represented in context (203) was one cow and one sheep/goat and in context (303) the MNI was one cow, one sheep and one horse.

The stage of epiphyseal fusion (Silver 1969) and mandibular tooth wear (Grant 1982, Payne 1973) indicated that all individuals were of an adult age. The presence of just adult individuals may infer that these animals were not being killed for meat (Payne 1973) but rather cows were kept for milk and/or traction, sheep for wool, and horses for traction and/or transport. Although there was only a small amount of animal bone recovered, the lack of butchery marks may support this inference.

There was no evidence of pathology.

### 4 3.1 Description of the significance of the heritage assets

The local and regional research contexts that are provided by Cooper (2006) [supplemented by Knight, Vyner and Allen (2012)] and English Heritage (1991 & 1997) outline various gaps in knowledge in the Northamptonshire area. In particular, there is a cross-period research theme of *settlement hierarchies and their interactions*; a sub-theme of which is *rural settlement*. Any information gained on rural settlement from Wormslade Farm can contribute to this research theme and hence advance the understanding of the regions archaeology (Cooper, 2006 287–288).

Description of heritage asset	Trench no.	Feature no.	Significance of heritage asset (low, medium, high) and of local, regional, national, international interest
Ditches (undated)	2 & 3	[202], [302]	Low - Medium significance of local interest.

**Table 1**

*Description of heritage asset*

Context	Weight (g)	Total no.	Identifiable	Unidentifiable
203	124.55	16	1 cattle proximal radius (left) 2 cattle mandibular teeth (M1 & partial M2) 1 sheep/goat mandibular tooth (M1)	12 Cattle-sized fragments – including 7 longbone, 2 tarsal?, 2 illum & 1 cranial
303	236.01	24	1 horse mandibular tooth (right) 1 sheep/goat mandibular tooth (LM2) 7 cattle os coxae fragments	2 cattle-sized longbone fragments 13 sheep-sized fragments – including 9 long bone and 4 cranial

**Table 2**

*Summary of faunal assessment results*

## 6. DISCUSSION

Within the DA, cropmarks of enclosures visible on aerial photographs around Wormslade Farm (HER MNN1627) were thought to be evidence of Roman settlement. The location of Trench 1 evaluated this but produced a negative result. Instead, archaeological remains of ditches, likely relating to rural settlement activity, were recorded to the south of the farm at Trenches 2 and 3.

The ditches recorded are of an uncertain date with only one sherd of pottery recovered which could date to either the Iron Age or Saxon Period. However, its presence in sealed deposits suggests these are of some antiquity; of Medieval or earlier date. The faunal remains recovered from the backfill of both ditches may infer that animals at this site were not used for meat but instead were utilised for milk (cows), wool (sheep) and as transport (horses); all of which would be typical in a small rural farm of Medieval or earlier date.

### 6.1 Assessment of the impact of development on the significance of heritage assets

Sub-surface heritage assets at the DA are located at 0.3m directly below the ploughsoil. The groundworks for the change of use to a turbine base and access track will involve exceeding this depth and therefore the impact of the development upon any underlying remains is considered high.

## 7. REFERENCES

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Williams, DF & Vince, AG 1997 'The Characterization and Interpretation of early to Middle Saxon Granitic Tempered Pottery in England' *Medieval Archaeology* 41, pp.214–220.

### 7.2 Internet sources

British Geological Survey Website <[www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)> [accessed 02.11.12].



## 8. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Site registers

#### Appendix 1.1 Trench register

Trench no.	Orientation	Description	Max Depth (m)	Length (m)
001	NW	Topsoil of mid brown sandy clay ploughsoil (0.3m). Underlying the topsoil is natural geology of mid orange clay with very rare angular stone inclusions. Plough marks and mole drains are visible within the natural.	0.65	15
002	NW	Topsoil of mid brown sandy clay ploughsoil (0.3m). Underlying the topsoil is natural geology of mid orange grey plastic clay. Plough marks and mole drains are visible within the natural.	0.4	10
003	N	Topsoil of mid brown sandy clay ploughsoil (0.3m). Underlying the topsoil is natural geology of mid orange plastic clay. Plough marks and mole drains are visible within the natural.	0.45	10

#### Appendix 1.2 Context register

Context no.	Area	Description
101	T1	Topsoil
102	T1	Natural geology
201	T2	Topsoil
202	T2	Cut of curvilinear
203	T2	Fill of [202]
204	T2	Natural geology
301	T3	Topsoil
302	T3	Cut of linear
303	T3	Fill of [302]
304	T3	Natural geology

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#### Appendix 1.3 Photographic register

Frame no.	Direction	Description
001	NW	Pond area
002	NW	Pond area
003	N	Direction of track towards farm yard
004	N	Post-ex Trench 1
005	E	Sample section WFS in T1
006	N	Post-ex Trench 2
007	E	WFS through [202]
008	S	Slot in [202]
009	SE	Slot in [202]
010	W	EFS through [202] (section edge)
011	NE	Slot through [302]
012	NE	Slot through [302]

Frame no.	Direction	Description
013	NE	Box slot SWFS through [302]
014	SW	Linear [302]
015	N	Post-ex Trench 3
016	SW	Trench 2 backfilled
017	SE	Trench 3 backfilling
018	S	Looking towards turbine area
019	N	Looking down to Trench 1
020	N	Trench 1 backfilled





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