

KWDB12/002



## LAND AT KILN WAY, DUNSTABLE, BEDFORDSHIRE

*Archaeological Evaluation*

*for Dunmore Developments Limited*

*CB/11/04135/OUT*

*March 2013*



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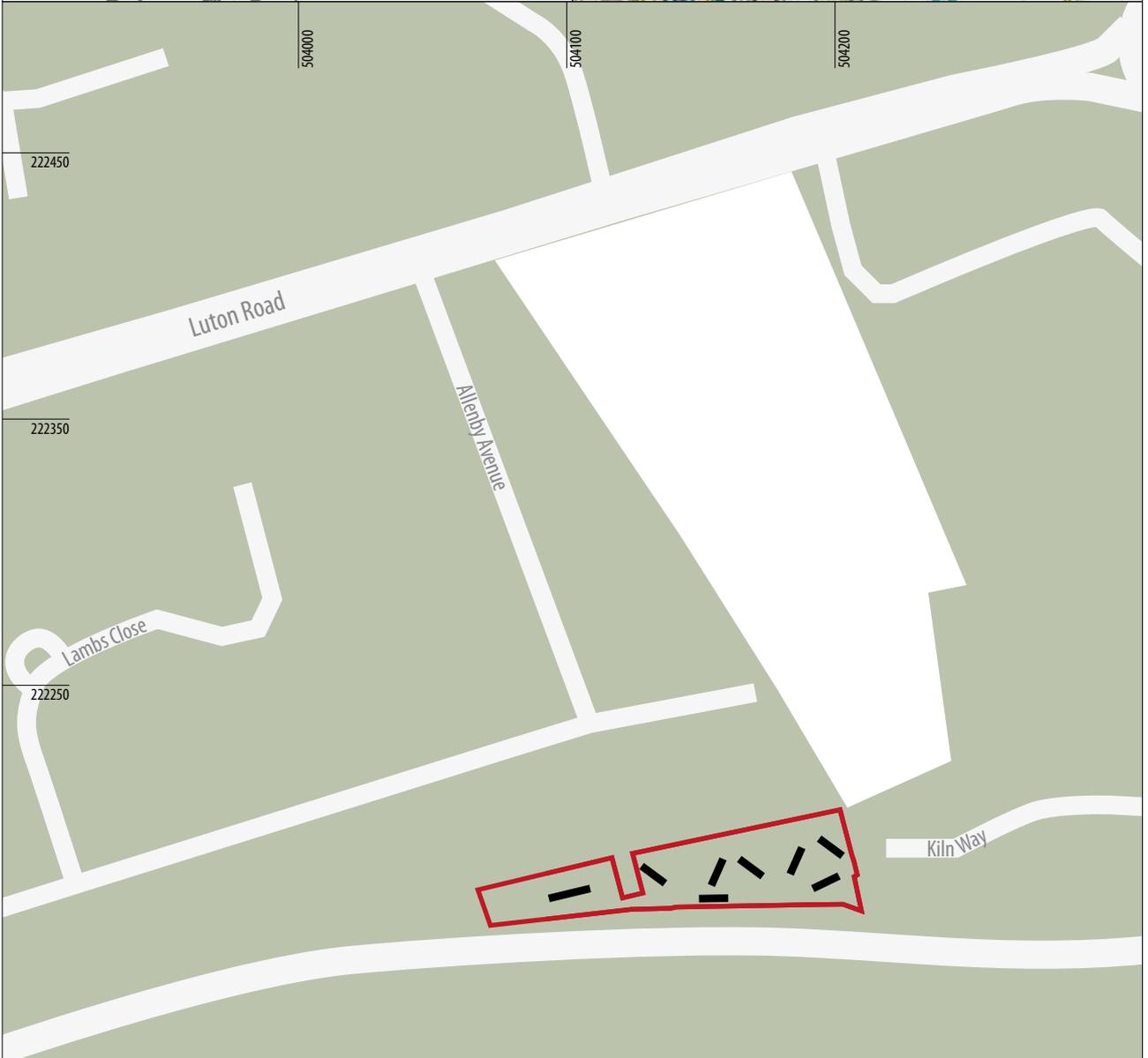
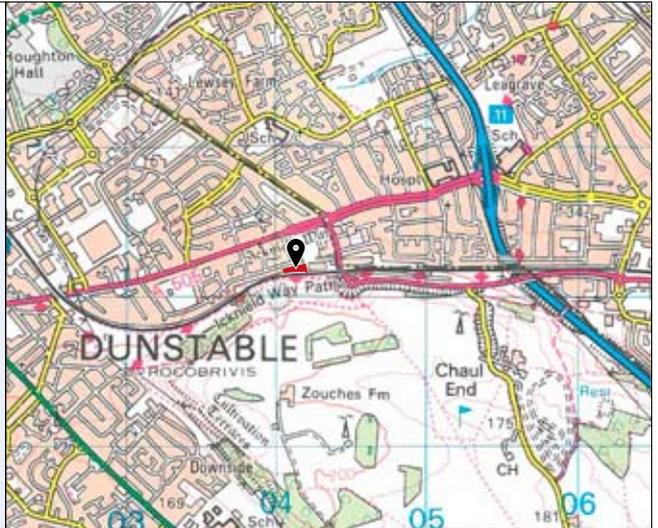
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Kiln Way  
Dunstable  
Luton Borough Council



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scale 1:2,500 @ A4



### Illus 1

Site location

# LAND AT KILN WAY, DUNSTABLE, BEDFORDSHIRE

## Archaeological Evaluation

Headland Archaeology Ltd conducted an evaluation on land proposed for residential development at Kiln Way, Dunstable in Bedfordshire, in order to provide further information on its archaeological potential. The work was commissioned by Dunmore Developments Limited. A total of 8 trenches were excavated within the Proposed Development Area (PDA). No sub-surface remains of archaeological significance were revealed and no artefacts were recovered.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Planning background

- <sup>1.1.1</sup> Dunmore Developments Limited (the client) is submitting a planning application (Outline Planning Reference CB/11/04135/OUT) for residential development on land at Kiln Way, Dunstable, Bedfordshire centred on TL 04175 22160; henceforth referred to as the Proposed Development Area (PDA) (*Illus 1*).
- <sup>1.1.2</sup> Central Bedfordshire Council is advised on archaeological matters by the Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Archaeological Officer (AO). The AO advised that the area covered by the PDA is archaeologically sensitive and that an intrusive trial trench evaluation (*Illus 1* and *2*) would be required in advance of any development in order to obtain further information on the sub-surface archaeological potential. These works were requested in accordance with government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012).
- <sup>1.1.3</sup> A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the evaluation was prepared by Headland Archaeology Ltd (2013) on behalf of the client. Prior to which the Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) AO issued a Brief outlining the requirements for the programme of archaeological investigation (CBC 2012). Headland Archaeology was commissioned to prepare a WSI for the evaluation, undertake the site works and produce a report (this document) on the results. The evaluation was carried out to assess the extent, nature and survival of archaeological features within those parts of the site where any intrusive development may take place. The results of this evaluation will allow the CBC AO to make their recommendations on the requirement for additional (mitigation) works to fulfil the planning condition (Condition 5) pertaining to archaeology.

### 1.2 Site location and geology

- <sup>1.2.1</sup> The PDA is located at the western end of Kiln Way in Dunstable centred on TL 04175 22160, comprising an area of rough ground. Kiln Way is accessed via Skimpot Road (the A505) to the east of the PDA (*Illus 1*). The PDA lies to the south of existing residential development fronting Jeans Way and to the north of the railway track beyond which lies open land further south.
- <sup>1.2.2</sup> The PDA lies at the base of the northern escarpment of Blows Down (part of the Chiltern Hills) at around 150m AOD. The underlying geology consists of Holywell nodular and New Pit chalk formation dating to the Cretaceous period. There is no superficial geology mapped for the area (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/> – accessed 21/12/2012).

### 1.3 Archaeological background

- <sup>1.3.1</sup> The archaeological and historical background of the PDA has been detailed in the Brief issued by the CBC AO (CBC 2012) and in the WSI prepared by Headland Archaeology (2013) and is summarised here.
- <sup>1.3.2</sup> The town of Dunstable has Roman origins and a small town known as Durocobravis or Durocobriva developed around the crossroads of the Icknield Way (an ancient routeway HER 353) and Watling Street (HER 5508) early in the Roman period (HER 135 and 11824). It is possible that the town formed a stopping point (mansio) along Watling Street. There is varying evidence for Roman settlement including an inhumation cemetery in the southwest part of the town (Albion Archaeology 2003). Evidence comprising the remains of timber buildings, industrial activity, wells and cobbled road surfaces suggests that the core of the Roman town expanded 400 meters beyond the Icknield Way/Watling Street crossroads.



**Illus 2**  
*Trench plan*

## Headland Archaeology

- <sup>1.3.3</sup> At present the relationship between the town and its hinterland is not fully understood, however evidence including cropmarks and findspots in addition to excavated remains indicate that area surrounding the town was likely to have been fairly densely populated. A villa has been recorded to the west of the town at Totternhoe (HER 534) and a settlement has been identified at Puddlehill (HER 687) (CBC 2012).
- <sup>1.3.4</sup> The decline of the Roman town is thought to have taken place during 5th century and whilst evidence for Saxon activity has been recorded at the northwest of the modern town (HER 152) there is currently no evidence to suggest any continuity of settlement.
- <sup>1.3.5</sup> The projected line of the Icknield Way (HER 353) crosses the PDA. This asset is associated with road-side settlement of Iron Age or Roman date in Luton at Limbury and Leagrave as well as at Dunstable. Fieldwork along West Street in Dunstable has revealed the remains of a rutted road surface interpreted as the remains of the Icknield Way. Roadside burials of Roman date have also been found in Dunstable (CBC 2012).
- <sup>1.3.6</sup> An Iron Age settlement including a small enclosure has been revealed at Skimpot (HER 15287) and Roman occupation was identified to the north of Zouches Farm (HER 1778) within a 600m radius of the PDA.
- <sup>1.3.7</sup> In addition finds of Bronze Age daggers (HER149) as well as Mesolithic and Neolithic flint tools (HER1778) and Saxon burials (HER1460) have been recorded in the more immediate vicinity of the PDA.
- <sup>1.3.8</sup> The Ordnance Survey map of 1880 indicates that the PDA comprised open land to the west of Skimpot Farm and to the north of the railway. The 1888 to 1891 map shows little change but the 1901 map shows Blows Down Limeworks to the immediate south of the railway line.
- <sup>1.3.9</sup> Archaeological evidence from the site and the surrounding area suggests that the PDA has the potential to contain archaeological deposits from the prehistoric, Roman and Saxon periods. The above findings were noted prior to trial trenching being undertaken and have been considered in the production of this report.
- 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 *Research & Archaeology: A framework for the eastern counties*, volumes 1 & 2 (Glazebrook 1997 & Brown and Glazebrook 2000) updated in *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011) and *Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy* (Oake et al 2007)
  - to consider the results in light of National Research objectives detailed in *Exploring Our Past* (English Heritage 1991), and *English Heritage Archaeology Division Research Agenda* (English Heritage 1997).
- <sup>2.1.2</sup> In addition to these general aims, it was hoped the results of the evaluation would provide an opportunity to address the following specific research objectives:
- to establish the date, nature, function, character and extent of activity or occupation within the development area
  - consideration of the projected line of the Icknield Way and the road network during the Roman period (Oake et al 2007) including the form of any such features/ structures if revealed and any variations in form and layout (Medlycott 2011)
  - to identify and characterise any Roman activity areas including examination of the function and role of any such areas in the development of the landscape (Oake et al 2007)
  - to establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes, including the inter-relationship between the Roman town of Durocobriavae and its hinterland
  - to consider of the distribution of Saxon occupation in the area and if relevant continuity between Roman and Saxon settlement and the wider development of the landscape including;
  - to establish a stratigraphic sequence for the later phases of Roman development and subsequent activity (Oake et al 2007)
  - to recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions
  - to define any constraints encountered during the evaluation and any potential constraints for further archaeological fieldwork (e.g. areas of disturbance, service locations, etc.)

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Objectives

- <sup>2.1.1</sup> The objectives of the evaluation were:
- to identify and assess the particular significance of any element of the historic environment that may be affected the relevant proposal:
  - to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any remains on the site, in their cultural and environmental setting:

### 2.2 Methodology

- <sup>2.2.1</sup> The fieldwork took place between the 25th February and 1st March 2013 and was carried out in accordance with the WSI (Headland Archaeology 2013) and the Brief (CBC 2012). A total of eight trenches were excavated (*Illus 1*) amounting to 96 linear meters at 2.00m wide. The trenches were targeted within the footprints of the proposed new buildings and access way. In addition, one trench was excavated to the west of the current area to be developed (*Illus 2*).
- <sup>2.2.2</sup> A 360° tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a wide toothless ditching bucket was used to remove topsoil and



deposits of modern make-up in controlled spits under constant archaeological direction. Machine excavation continued until the top of the underlying geological sediments or the first significant archaeological horizon were encountered, whichever was uppermost.

- <sup>2.2.3</sup> Further excavation required to satisfy the objectives of the evaluation was continued by hand. A representative sample, sufficient to meet the objectives of the evaluation, of identified features was investigated by hand and all features were recorded. The stratigraphy of each trench was recorded in full.

## 2.3 Recording

- <sup>2.3.1</sup> All recording was in accordance with the code of practice of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and the CBC Brief (2012). All trenches and contexts were given unique numbers. All recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards that conform to accepted archaeological standards. All stratigraphic relationships were recorded.
- <sup>2.3.2</sup> An overall site plan at an appropriate scale and relative to the National Grid was compiled. The site plan was accurately linked to the National Grid using a differential GPS.
- <sup>2.3.3</sup> A digital photographic record was taken and a metric scale was clearly visible in record photographs.

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## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Introduction

- <sup>3.1.1</sup> Full trench descriptions, including orientation, length and depth are presented in Appendix 1.1. Technical details of individual contexts are presented in Appendix 1.2. Contexts are numbered by trench number: i.e. Trench 1 [101], Trench 2 [201]. Cut features are shown as [101] whilst their fills are expressed as (102) for example.
- <sup>3.1.2</sup> The overburden across the PDA varied, most likely as a result of long-term root turbation and similar action. In addition the PDA has long been used to dump waste. The overburden was fairly shallow in Trenches 5, 6 and 8 and the underlying natural was heavily disturbed by root turbation. The overburden in Trench 1 was very mixed and the Topsoil contained lenses of re-deposited chalk, mixed material and waste including modern bricks and sand. In general the overburden across the PDA comprised mixed modern topsoil underlain by subsoil overlying natural as detailed in full in Appendix 1.
- <sup>3.1.3</sup> Topsoil was recorded overlying subsoil in seven trenches (Trench 1 and Trenches 3 to 8) and overlying



Illus 3

Pre-ex of tree throw [205]



Illus 4

Pre-ex of tree throw [304]

Made Ground above probable subsoil in one trench (Trench 2). The topsoil varied in thickness from 0.16m (Trench 6) to 0.74m (Trench 1). The topsoil across the entire PDA contained frequent rootlets and occasional to moderate modern waste such as pieces of plastic. The Subsoil varied in thickness from 0.05m (Trenches 4 and 8) to 0.21m (Trench 1). The Subsoil generally comprised an orangey brown sandy silt with frequent flecks of chalk. The underlying natural geology generally comprised a light brownish cream to white chalk. Evidence for root disturbance was observed in all eight trenches such as root scars truncating the natural (Appendix 1).

<sup>3.1.4</sup> A layer of mixed Made Ground varying in thickness from 0.07m to 0.16m was recorded underlying the Topsoil overlying probable Subsoil in Trench 2. The Made Ground was similar to the Topsoil (Appendix 1) and probably represented re-deposited material associated with a disused pipe visible at the northern end of the trench.

<sup>3.1.5</sup> There was no evidence for any remains of archaeological significance revealed in any of the eight trenches. Possible features were investigated in four trenches (Trenches 2 to 4 and 7). One linear feature was recorded in Trench 4. However, the fill was very similar to the Topsoil and it was considered likely to be of modern date. Aside from which three discreet features interpreted as tree throws were investigated in three trenches (Trenches 2, 3 and 7). None of the features investigated contained any artefacts and no artefacts were recovered from the overburden.

### 3.2 Undated

<sup>3.2.1</sup> A single linear feature was recorded in one trench (Trench 4) at the east of the PDA.

<sup>3.2.2</sup> A broadly north-south aligned narrow linear feature [404] was recorded in Trench 4 at the east of the PDA (*Illus 5*). It had a shallow u-shaped profile measuring 0.08m deep and was filled by a greyish brown gravelly coarse sand similar to the Topsoil (Appendix 1.2). Although no dating evidence was recovered it is considered likely that linear feature [404] relates to the modern use of the PDA, given the nature of the fill.

<sup>3.2.3</sup> Two possible pits/linear terminus were identified in two trenches (Trenches 2 and 3) (*Illus 3* and *4*) at the east of the PDA. However, both contained frequent rootlets visible across the surface in plan indicating the possibility that they were tree throws or similar non-archaeological features. Features [205] and [304] were both irregular in section and contained similar mixed sterile fills with frequent flecks of chalk and rootlets (Appendix 1.2) and were proved to be tree throws.



**Illus 5**  
Post-ex north facing section of  
narrow linear [404]



**Illus 6**  
Pre-ex of tree throw [704]



<sup>3.2.4</sup> In addition a probable tree throw was identified in one trench (Trench 7) (*Illus 6*) at the west of the PDA. It contained very frequent rootlets visible across the surface in plan indicating the probability that it was a tree throw. Feature [704] was shallow and irregular in section and contained a greyish brown gravelly sandy silt similar to the topsoil with very frequent rootlets (Appendix 1.2) and was confirmed to be a tree throw.

### 3.3 Description of the significance of the Heritage Assets

<sup>3.3.1</sup> The local and regional research contexts are provided by *Research & Archaeology: A framework for the eastern counties* volumes 1 & 2 (Glazebrook 1997 & Brown and Glazebrook 2000) updated in *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011) and *Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy* (Oake et al 2007) outline various gaps in knowledge in the Bedfordshire area. Due to the limited evidence for any activity of archaeological significance revealed by the trial trenching, the site does not allow for detailed comment on these research aims.

<sup>3.3.2</sup> Although the trial trenching revealed limited archaeological evidence for past activity of any date the results contribute to our general understanding of the development and use of the PDA during the modern period.

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## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Discussion

<sup>4.1.1</sup> Trial trenching has revealed no evidence of archaeological remains within the PDA. The stratigraphic sequence identified within the PDA generally comprised mixed Topsoil with frequent rootlets, overlying Subsoil above natural. The underlying natural revealed evidence for root disturbance/truncation and root scars were observed truncating the natural across the entire PDA.

<sup>4.1.2</sup> The Ordnance Survey map of 1880 indicates that the PDA comprised open land to the west of Skimpot Farm and to the north of the railway. By 1901 Blows Down Limeworks had been constructed to the south of the railway line in the vicinity of the PDA. However, there is no particular evidence to suggest any related activity within the PDA. Although, it is considered likely that the PDA has been subject to some form of modern landforming probably relating to the dumping of waste material and rubbish from properties to the immediate north of the PDA.

<sup>4.1.3</sup> Overall the trial trench evaluation revealed little evidence for past activity of any date. It is likely that there has been extensive modern disturbance and truncation within the PDA, as a result of its use for waste disposal and similar activities. Furthermore, root disturbance and turbation is likely to have had a negative impact across the PDA.

### 4.2 Assessment of the impact of development on the significance of Heritage Assets

<sup>4.2.1</sup> The change of use of the PDA to dwellings will involve destructive groundworks.

<sup>4.2.2</sup> Several sub-surface anomalies were investigated. However, the results of the evaluation indicate that the groundworks required for the proposed development will not impact on any significant heritage assets.

## 5. REFERENCES

### 5.1 Bibliography

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Medlycott, M 2011 (ed.) *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24.

Oake, M, Luke, M, Dawson, M, Edgworth, M & Murphy, P 2007 *Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy*, Bedfordshire Archaeology Monograph 9.

### 5.2 Websites

Open Geoscience – British Geological Survey Website [www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk) Accessed: 21.12.2012

## 6. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Site registers

#### Appendix 1.1 Trench register

Trench	Orientation	Description	Length (m)	Max depth (m)
1	E-W	Very mixed Topsoil/Made Ground of greyish brown slightly gravelly sandy silt with frequent small stones (up to 50mm) & flecks of chalk. Occasional lenses of re-deposited chalk, frags of CBM and modern rubbish. Frequent rootlets. Underlain by Subsoil of orangey brown sandy silt. Overlying Natural consisting of brownish cream/white chalk with flint nodules.	11.3	1.00
2	N-S	Topsoil of greyish dark brown sandy silt to gravelly sandy silt with occasional flecks of chalk and lenses of redeposited natural and frequent rootlets. Underlain by Made Ground of greyish brown sandy silt with occasional fragments of chalk, very occasional flecks of CBM and occasional rootlets. Underlain by orangey brown sandy silt with frequent flecks of chalk. Overlying Natural chalk. Heavy root disturbance present along length of trench and disused service pipe present at northern end of trench extending from eastern section.	11	0.74
3	NW-SE	Topsoil of dark brown silty coarse sand with frequent rootlets. Underlain by Subsoil of slightly orangey greyish brown sandy silt. Overlying Natural chalk.	11.2	0.48
4	NNE-SSW	Topsoil of dark brown slightly silty coarse sand with very frequent rootlets. Underlain by Subsoil of slightly orangey brown silty sand with moderate chalk inclusions. Overlying Natural of brownish cream/ white chalk.	13.7	0.52
5	NW-SE	Topsoil of dark brown slightly silty coarse sand with very frequent rootlets. Underlain by Subsoil of slightly orangey brown silty sand with moderate chalk inclusions. Overlying Natural of brownish cream/ white chalk.	11	0.55
6	E-W	Topsoil of greyish brown sandy silt with frequent rootlets. Underlain by Subsoil of orangey brown sandy silt with frequent chalk flecks. Overlying Natural of brownish cream/white chalk.	11	0.36
7	E-W	Topsoil of greyish brown sandy silt with occasional fragments of chalk, occasional lenses of re-deposited chalk and frequent rootlets. Underlain by Subsoil of orangey brown sandy silt with frequent flecks of chalk. Overlying Natural of brownish cream/white chalk.	15.8	0.62
8	E-W	Topsoil of dark brown slightly silty coarse sand with very frequent rootlets. Underlain by Subsoil of slightly orangey brown silty sand with moderate chalk inclusions. Overlying Natural of brownish cream/ white chalk.	11.3	0.39

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#### Appendix 1.2 Context register

Context	Trench	Description	Dimensions and Cut/ Fill details	Context	Trench	Description	Dimensions and Cut/ Fill details
(201)	Tr.2	Topsoil	See Trench Register	(305)	Tr.3	Fill of [304] Tree Throw	Yellowish brown silty sand with moderate flecks of chalk and frequent rootlets.
(202)	Tr.2	Made Ground	See Trench Register	(401)	Tr.4	Topsoil	See Trench Register
(203)	Tr.2	Layer under (202)	See Trench Register	(402)	Tr.4	Subsoil	See Trench Register
(204)	Tr.2	Natural	See Trench Register	(403)	Tr.4	Natural	See Trench Register
[205]	Tr.2	Cut of Tree Throw	1.53m (N-S) X 1.51m + (E-W) x 0.26m deep. Broadly semi-circular in plan extending into eastern trench edge. Western edge sloping gradually to an irregular base.	[404]	Tr.4	Cut of narrow linear feature	Narrow linear feature measuring 2.50m + in length x 0.31m wide x 80mm deep. 1.00m terminus section excavated. Shallow u shaped profile.
(206)	Tr.2	Fill of [205] Tree Throw	Mixed light orangey brown slightly silty sandy gravel with frequent flecks of chalk and rootlets.	(405)	Tr.4	Fill of [404] narrow linear feature	Greyish brown gravelly coarse sand, similar to the topsoil. Occasional small stone inclusions up to c.0.10m in size.
(301)	Tr.3	Topsoil	See Trench Register	(701)	Tr.5	Topsoil	See Trench Register
(302)	Tr.3	Subsoil	See Trench Register	(702)	Tr.5	Subsoil	See Trench Register
(303)	Tr.3	Natural	See Trench Register	(703)	Tr.5	Natural	See Trench Register
[304]	Tr.3	Cut of Tree Throw	1.70m (NW-SE) X 1.00m + (E-W) X 0.30m deep. Broadly semi-circular in plan extending into western trench edge. Eastern edge sloping to an irregular rounded base.				



Context	Trench	Description	Dimensions and Cut/ Fill details
[704]	Tr.5	Cut of Tree Throw	1.30m (E-W) X 1.05m (N-S) X 0.12m deep. Broadly circular in plan extending beyond the northern trench edge. South edge sloping slightly to an irregular base.
(705)	Tr.5	Fill of [704] Tree Throw	Greyish brown gravelly sandy silt with frequent chalk flecks and rootlets.

Photo	Direction	Description
031	N	General Shot at east of site (Trench 6 in foreground and Trench 2 to rear)
032	W	General Shot at east of site (Looking west to Trench 1)
033	W	General Shot at east of site (Looking west to Trench 1)
034	W	General Shot at east of site (Trench 4 in foreground)
035	W	General Shot at east of site (Trench 4 in foreground)
036	SE	Post-ex Trench 5
037	SE	Post-ex Trench 5
038	E	Post-ex Trench 8
039	E	Post-ex Trench 8
040	W	General shot at east of site (Area of Trench 8)
041	S	N Facing section of shallow linear [404], Trench 4
042	S	N Facing section of shallow linear [404], Trench 4
043	S	N Facing section of shallow linear [404], Trench 4
044	SE	NW Facing Section of Tree Throw [304], Trench 3
045	SE	NW Facing Section of Tree Throw [304], Trench 3
046	SE	NW Facing Section of Tree Throw [304], Trench 3
047	SSW	NNE Facing Section of Tree Throw [205], Trench 2
048	SSW	NNE Facing Section of Tree Throw [205], Trench 2
049	SSW	NNE Facing Section of Tree Throw [205], Trench 2
050	E	W Facing Section of Tree Throw [704], Trench 7
051	E	W Facing Section of Tree Throw [704], Trench 7
052	E	W Facing Section of Tree Throw [704], Trench 7

### Appendix 1.3 Photographic register

Photo	Direction	Description
001	NA	ID Shot
002	NW	Post-ex Trench 1
003	NW	Post-ex Trench 1
004	NNE	SSW Facing Section of Trench 1
005	E	Post-ex Trench 7 General Shot
006	E	Post-ex Trench 7 General Shot
007	E	Post-ex Trench 7 Close up Shot
008	E	Post-ex Trench 7 Close up Shot
009	NE	General shot western part of site (Area of Trench 7)
010	NE	General shot western part of site (Area of Trench 7)
011	NE	General shot western part of site (Area of Trench 7)
012	NW	General shot western part of site (Area of Trench 7)
013	NW	General shot western part of site (Area of Trench 7)
014	N	Post-ex Trench 2 General Shot
015	N	Post-ex Trench 2 General Shot
016	N	Post ex Trench 2 Close up Shot
017	N	Post ex Trench 2 Close up Shot
018	W	Post-ex Trench 6
019	W	Post-ex Trench 6
020	NW	Post-ex Trench 3 General Shot
021	NW	Post-ex Trench 3 General Shot
022	NW	Post-ex Trench 3 Close up Shot
023	NW	Post-ex Trench 3 Close up Shot
024	SSW	Post-ex Trench 4
025	SSW	Post-ex Trench 4
026	NW	General Shot at east of site (Area of Trench 1)
027	W	General Shot at east of site (Area of Trench 1)
028	NW	General Shot at east of site (Area of Trench 2-6 and 8)
029	NW	General Shot at east of site (Area of Trench 2-6 and 8)
030	NE	General Shot at east of site (Location of Trench 8)





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