

APTG/03



LAND AT APPERLEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation

commissioned by Bloor Homes Ltd

August 2015

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

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project info

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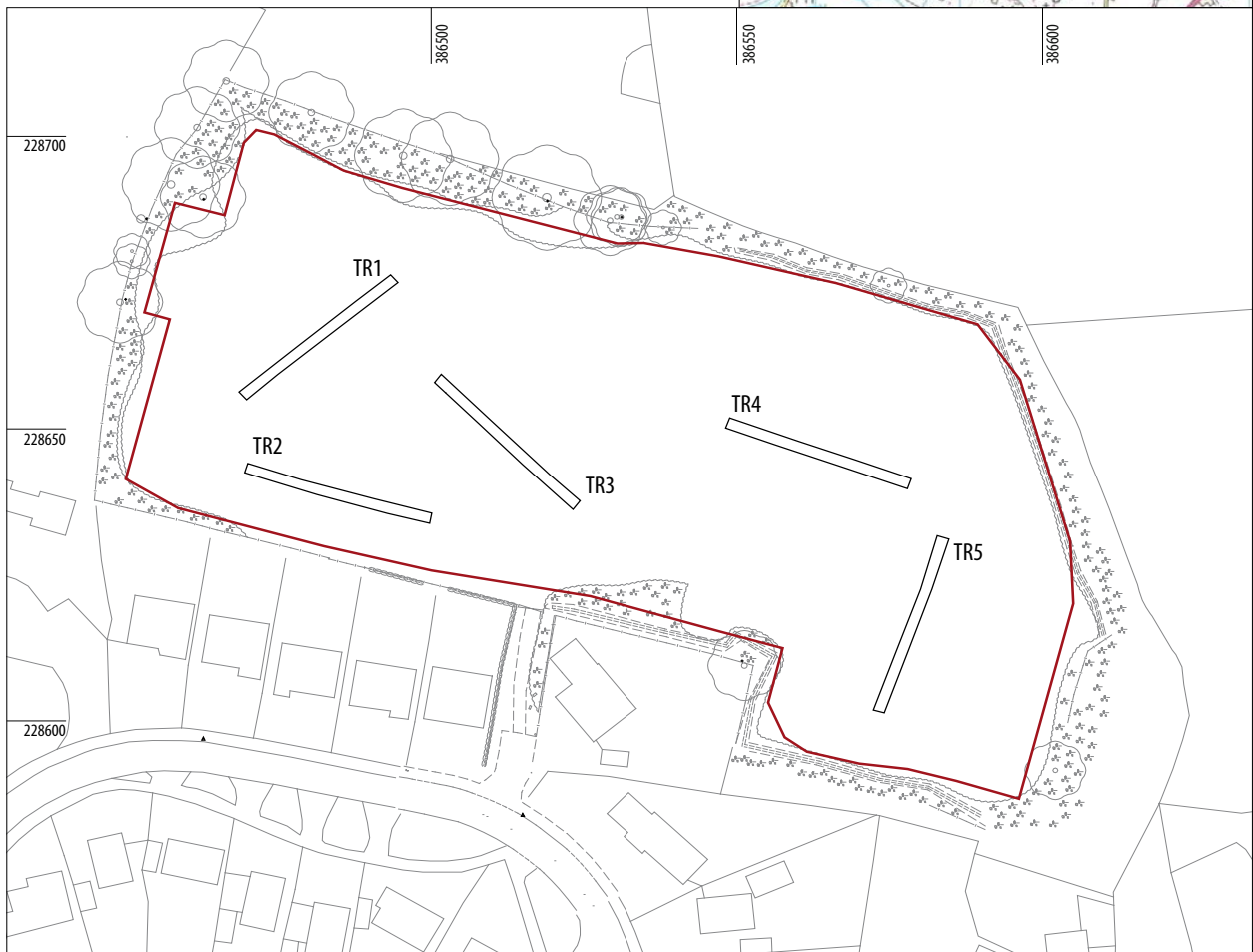
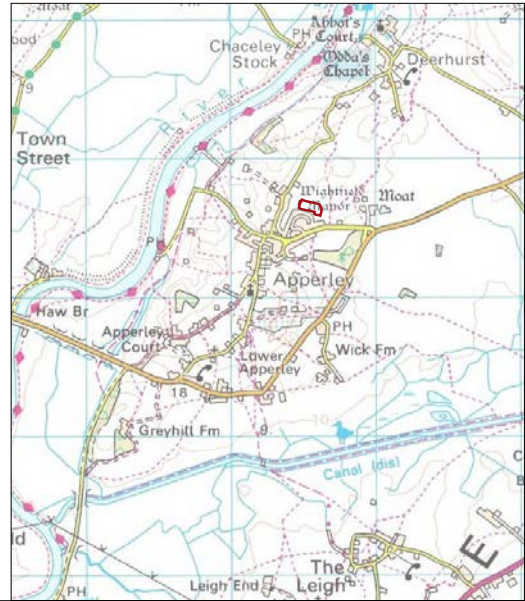
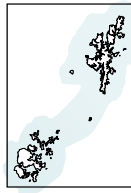
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APPERLEY (APTG/03)
 land north of Apperley Park
 Apperley
 Gloucestershire

0 200km



KEY
 development boundary
 trench location

0 50m
 scale 1:1,200 @ A4

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ILLUS 1
 Site location

LAND AT APPERLEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd conducted a trial–trench archaeological evaluation on land at Apperley, Gloucestershire, in support of a planning application for the residential development of the site. Trial trenching confirmed the results of the geophysical survey revealing a general sequence of topsoil overlying subsoil above the natural substrate. A series of east–west furrows were present in the western part of the site, representing the medieval practice of ridge and furrow cultivation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND

BloorHomes Ltd are preparing a planning application for the residential development of land to the north of Apperley Park, Apperley, Gloucestershire, NGR 386520 22865. This land is henceforth referred to as the Development Area (DA) and covers an area of approximately 1.3ha. In support of the planning application, the developer has been required to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation, consisting of a geophysical survey (Headland Archaeology 2015b), and trial trenching.

Bloor Homes Ltd has commissioned Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd to carry out the trial trenching evaluation and produce a report on the results. The evaluation has been carried out in order to assess the extent, nature and survival of archaeological features within those parts of the site where intrusive development will take place. The results will allow the Gloucestershire Council Archaeologist (AO), the Archaeological Advisor to Tewkesbury Borough Council, to determine the significance of any archaeological remains within the DA, and the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource. Decisions on the type and scope of mitigation measures (if required by the AO) will be based on the results of the field evaluation.

The remit of the archaeological trial trenching programme was outlined in a Project Design compiled by Headland Archaeology before the fieldwork started, and was agreed with the AO (Headland Archaeology 2015a; **Illus 1**). All works were carried out with the agreement of the AO.

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The DA is located on the northern edge of Apperley, to the north of the residential housing on Apperley Park. It is bounded by the gardens of houses to the south, and open fields to the north, east, and west.

The DA currently consists of a single field, approximately 1.3ha in size, covered with vegetation, and bounded by hedgerows.

The DA is generally level ground, at approximately 25mOD. There are no nearby watercourses.

The solid geology of the DA comprises Triassic Mudstone and Sandstone of the Branscombe Mudstone Formation. No superficial deposits are recorded (www.bgs.ac.uk).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Very little is known about the archaeology within Apperley, as there have been no previous investigations. The Severn Vale more generally is known to contain extensive remains of prehistoric and Roman settlement, and a Roman settlement is known nearby at Deerhurst.

The first reference to Apperley Manor is in 1212 (<http://www.aperley-deerhurst.co.uk/history---a-taster.html>). This suggests that there was some activity around this area in the medieval period. The Manor was passed down through the Bridges and Throckmorton families.

The first edition Ordnance Survey Map (1884) shows the road layout of Apperley already established, with a few farms and other buildings, but no intensive settlement within Apperley (www.old-maps.co.uk). The DA itself is shown as an orchard, with the boundaries of



the field the same as those today. Greater development is shown within Apperley on the 1954–5 OS Map, although the DA itself is still shown as an orchard. By the time of the 1970 OS Map, the western half of the DA remained as an orchard, whereas the eastern half had changed into an open field. The Apperley Park development took place in the later part of the 20th century, and the DA has remained as an open field until the present day.

The geophysical survey of the DA identified ridge and furrow cultivation pattern in the western half of the DA, but no other archaeological features.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The general aim of the trenching evaluation was to obtain useful information concerning the presence, character, date, status and level of preservation of surviving archaeological remains. It also allows the curatorial authority to determine the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource, and to discuss the necessity for the preservation by record and/or the possibilities which may exist to preserve certain areas of archaeological remains in situ if appropriate and thus determine their significance.

The archaeological investigations were carried out in order to:

- assess extent, layout, structure and date of features and deposits of archaeological interest;
- place, where possible, the identified features within their local and regional context;
- place the findings in the context of the results of earlier work in the surrounding area.

The local and regional research contexts are provided in the *South West Archaeological Research Framework* (SCC 2012). Specific questions from the framework will be analysed in relation to the evidence recovered from the evaluation, but may include:

- Research Aim 42 – ‘Improve our understanding of medieval farming’ (290).
- Research Aim 43 – ‘Address the lack of knowledge of post-medieval to modern food production’ (290).

2.2 METHODOLOGY

Trial trenching was carried out between the 15th and 16th July 2015. A total of five trenches were excavated across the DA, all measuring 33m in length by 2m in width.

The methodology for the archaeological trial trenching programme was outlined in the Project Design (Headland Archaeology 2015a), and agreed with the AO. The trench layout was designed to evaluate the DA using a systematic trenching array, with the trenches spread evenly across the DA.

A 13 tonne tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket was used to remove topsoil under direct archaeological

control. Excavation continued until clean geological sediments or archaeological deposits were encountered.

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

All recording was in accordance with the Code of Practice of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a) and in line with the approved Project Design (Headland Archaeology 2015a). 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.

An overall site plan at an appropriate scale and relative to the National Grid was recorded by digital survey using a differential GPS.

A full photographic record comprising digital photography was taken. A metric scale was clearly visible in record photographs.

3 RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

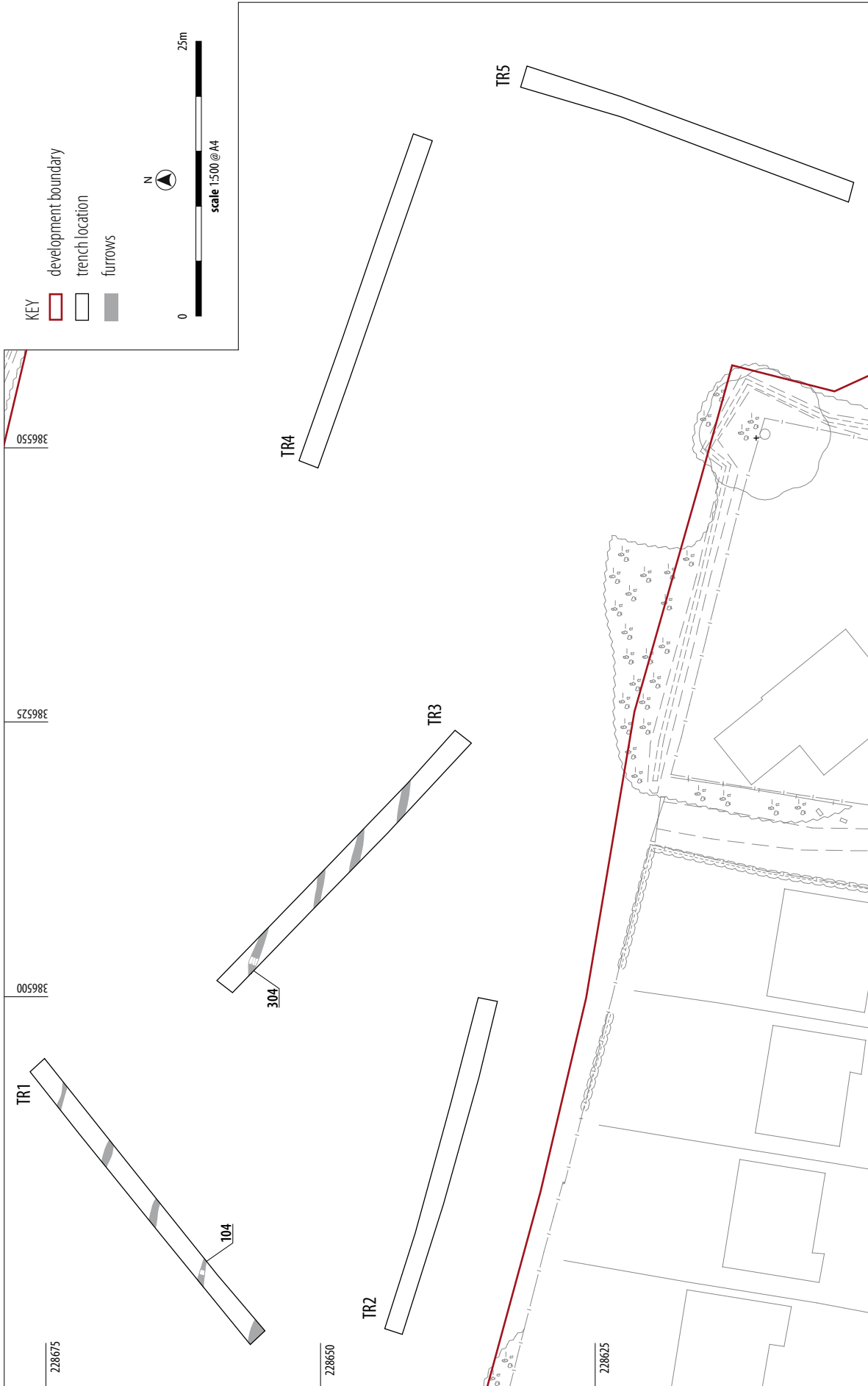
Full trench descriptions, including orientation, length, and depth are presented in Appendix I. Technical details of individual contexts are presented in Appendix II. Contexts are numbered by trench number: ie Trench 1 (101), Trench 2 (201). Cut features are shown as [101] whilst their fills are expressed as (102), for example.

Undisturbed natural deposits comprised compact red clay, with large flints and gravel. Occasional patches of blue / grey clay were observed in the trenches towards the eastern part of the DA. The natural substrate was observed 0.4m–0.45m beneath the present ground surface.

The topsoil was observed across the entirety of the DA, and consisted of a friable mid grey–brown sandy–silt, between 0.15 and 0.2m in thickness, with occasional small pebbles and some rooting. Underlying this was compact yellow–brown / light brown clayey–silt, with occasional small and medium pebbles (the subsoil deposit). This was between 0.2 and 0.25m thick.

Occasional amorphous patches of subsoil and the remains of roots were observed at the level of the natural geological deposit in some of the trenches. These were the remains of tree–throws, from when the area was in use an orchard.

The stratigraphy of the majority of the trenches across the DA simply consisted of topsoil over subsoil over natural, with no archaeological finds, discrete features, or deposits. Cultivation furrows were observed in Trenches 1 and 3.



ILLUS 2
Trench plan showing archaeological features



ILLUS 3

Trench 4, looking NW

ILLUS 4

SW facing section of Trench 3

ILLUS 5

Furrows in Trench 1, looking N

3.2 FURROWS

Cultivation furrows were identified in the western part of the DA, Trenches 1 and 3 (five furrows in Trench 1 and four in Trench 3). These were aligned east–west, and spaced approximately 8–10m apart. Two of these were investigated: [104] and [304]. They measured 0.35–0.4m wide, by 0.05–0.06m deep, with gently–sloping sides and flat bases. The furrow fill, compact yellow–brown clayey–silt, was similar to the subsoil from which it was derived. No finds were recovered from these furrows, and so they are undated.

These furrows were identified on the geophysical survey, aligned east–west and positioned in the western part of the site. Local residents also informed us that the ridges of the ridge–and–furrow cultivation are visible on the ground when there is no vegetation.

Although undated, furrows are generally understood to represent the medieval pattern of ‘ridge and furrow’ cultivation. The suggestion they are medieval in date is supported by the fact that post–medieval mapping shows the field in use as an orchard, rather than as a field which would have been subjected to ploughing.

3.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

The local and regional research contexts are provided by the *South West Archaeological Research Framework* (2012). In Section 2.1 of this document we identified research aims relating to medieval and post–medieval agriculture. The results of the trial trenching evaluation provided some limited evidence for medieval agriculture:

Description of HA	Trench	Feature	Significance of heritage asset (Low, Medium, High) and of local, regional, national, international interest
Medieval cultivation furrows.	1; 3	104; 304	Low significance of local interest.

Table 1
Heritage Assets (HA) recorded during intrusive evaluation

HA1 consists of the remains of medieval cultivation furrows identified on the geophysical survey and in the trial trenching evaluation in the western part of the site. These are considered to have low significance of local interest, adding slightly to knowledge about medieval cultivation practices in the area.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation uncovered limited archaeological evidence for past activity, with the majority of the trenches across the DA consisting of topsoil overlying subsoil over the natural substrate. Furrows, representative of the medieval system of ridge and furrow cultivation, were identified in the western part of the site. This supports the results of the geophysical survey.

5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Apperley and Deerhurst History (Website): (<http://www.apperley-deerhurst.co.uk/history---a-taster.html>)

British Geological Survey (Website): <http://bgs.ac.uk>

CIfA 2014a *Code of Conduct*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

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Somerset County Council 2012 *The Archaeology of South West England: South West Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*, Somerset Heritage Service.



6 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 TRENCH REGISTER

Trench	Orientation	Depth	Description	Length
1	NE–SW	0.48m	Topsoil (100) over subsoil (101) over the natural geological deposit (102). Five E–W aligned furrows: one investigated [104].	33m
2	WNW–ESE	0.45m	Topsoil (200) over subsoil (201) over the natural geological deposit (202). No archaeological features.	33m
3	NW–SE	0.5m	Topsoil (300) over subsoil (301) over the natural geological deposit (302). Four E–W aligned furrows: one investigated [304].	33m
4	NW–SE	0.45m	Topsoil (400) over subsoil (401) over the natural geological deposit (402). No archaeological features.	33m
5	NNE–SSW	0.45m	Topsoil (500) over subsoil (501) over the natural geological deposit (502). No archaeological features.	33m

APPENDIX 2 CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	Trench	Description	Dimensions
100	1	Topsoil: friable mid grey–brown sandy–silt with rooting.	0.20–0.2m
101	1	Subsoil: compact yellow–brown clayey–silt.	0.2–0.4m
102	1	Natural: compact red clay with moderate large flints and gravels.	0.4m+
103	1	Single fill of furrow [104]. Compact yellow–brown clayey–silt with occasional small stones. No finds. Accumulation fill within furrow.	2.3m+ (E–W) x 0.4m x 0.06m
104	1	Cut of furrow. Aligned east–west, with gently–sloping sides and a relatively flat base. Parallel to other four in trench (spaced 8m apart). Fits with furrows shown on the geophysical survey.	2.3m+ (E–W) x 0.4m x 0.06m
200	2	Topsoil: friable mid–brown sandy–silt with occasional small pebbles and rooting.	0–0.2m
201	2	Subsoil: compact light brown clayey–silt.	0.2–0.4m
202	2	Natural: compact red–brown clay with moderate large flints and gravels.	0.4m+
300	3	Topsoil: friable mid grey–brown sandy–silt with rooting.	0–0.2m
301	3	Subsoil: compact yellow–brown clayey–silt with occasional small and medium pebbles.	0.2–0.45m
302	3	Natural: compact red clay with moderate large flints, gravels, and patches of blue clay.	0.45m+

Context	Trench	Description	Dimensions
303	3	Single fill of furrow [304]. Compact yellow–brown clayey–silt with occasional small and medium stones. No finds. Accumulation fill within furrow.	3.8m+ (E–W) x 0.35m x 0.05m
304	3	Cut of furrow. Aligned east–west, with gently–sloping sides and a relatively flat base. Parallel to three others in trench (spaced 10m apart). Fits with furrows shown on the geophysical survey.	3.8m+ (E–W) x 0.35m x 0.05m
400	4	Topsoil: friable mid grey–brown sandy–silt.	0–0.15m
401	4	Subsoil: compact light brown clayey–silt with occasional small pebbles.	0.15–0.4m
402	4	Natural: compact red clay with moderate large flints, gravels, and patches of grey clay.	0.4m+
500	5	Topsoil: friable grey–brown sandy–silt with rooting.	0–0.2m
501	5	Subsoil: compact light brown clayey–silt with occasional small and medium pebbles.	0.2–0.4m
502	5	Natural: compact red clay with occasional large flints, gravels, and grey/blue clay patches.	0.4m+

APPENDIX 3 PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Photo	Digital	Direction Facing	Description
1	6412	W	Western half of site
2	6413	SE	Eastern half of site
3	6414	SE	Trench 4
4	6415	NE	Southwest–facing section of Trench 4
5	6416	NW	Trench 4
6	6417	SSW	Trench 5
7	6418	E	West–facing section of Trench 5
8	6419	NNE	Trench 5
9	6420	NW	Trench 3
10	6421	NE	Southwest–facing section of Trench 3
11	6422	SE	Trench 3
12	6423	SW	Trench 1
13	6424	SE	Northwest–facing section of Trench 1
14	6425	NE	Trench 1
15	6426	N	Central part of Trench 1, showing furrows
16	6427	E	Trench 2
17	6428	N	South–facing section of Trench 2
18	6429	W	Trench 2

Photo	Digital	Direction Facing	Description
19	6430	N	Furrow [304]
20	6431	W	East-facing section of furrow [304]
21	6432	E	West-facing section of furrow [104]
22	6433	E	West-facing section of furrow [104]
23–26	6433– 6437	–	Backfilled trenches



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