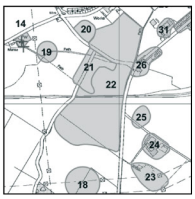
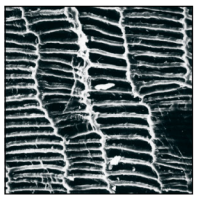
ERSS/01








LAND ADJACENT TO ECCLESHALL ROAD, STONE, STAFFORDSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation

commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd
on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd

14/20854/OUT

October 2015

HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

REGISTERED ORGANISATION CIfA

LAND ADJACENT TO ECCLESHALL ROAD, STONE, STAFFORDSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation

commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd
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project info

HA JOB NO.	ERSS/01
HAS NO.	1130
NGR	SJ 89350 32650
PARISH	Stone
LOCAL AUTHORITY	Staffordshire County Council
OASIS REF.	headland4-221373

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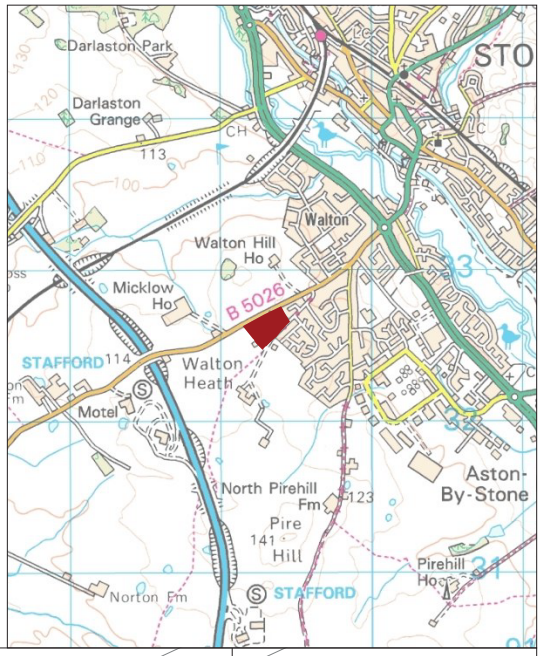
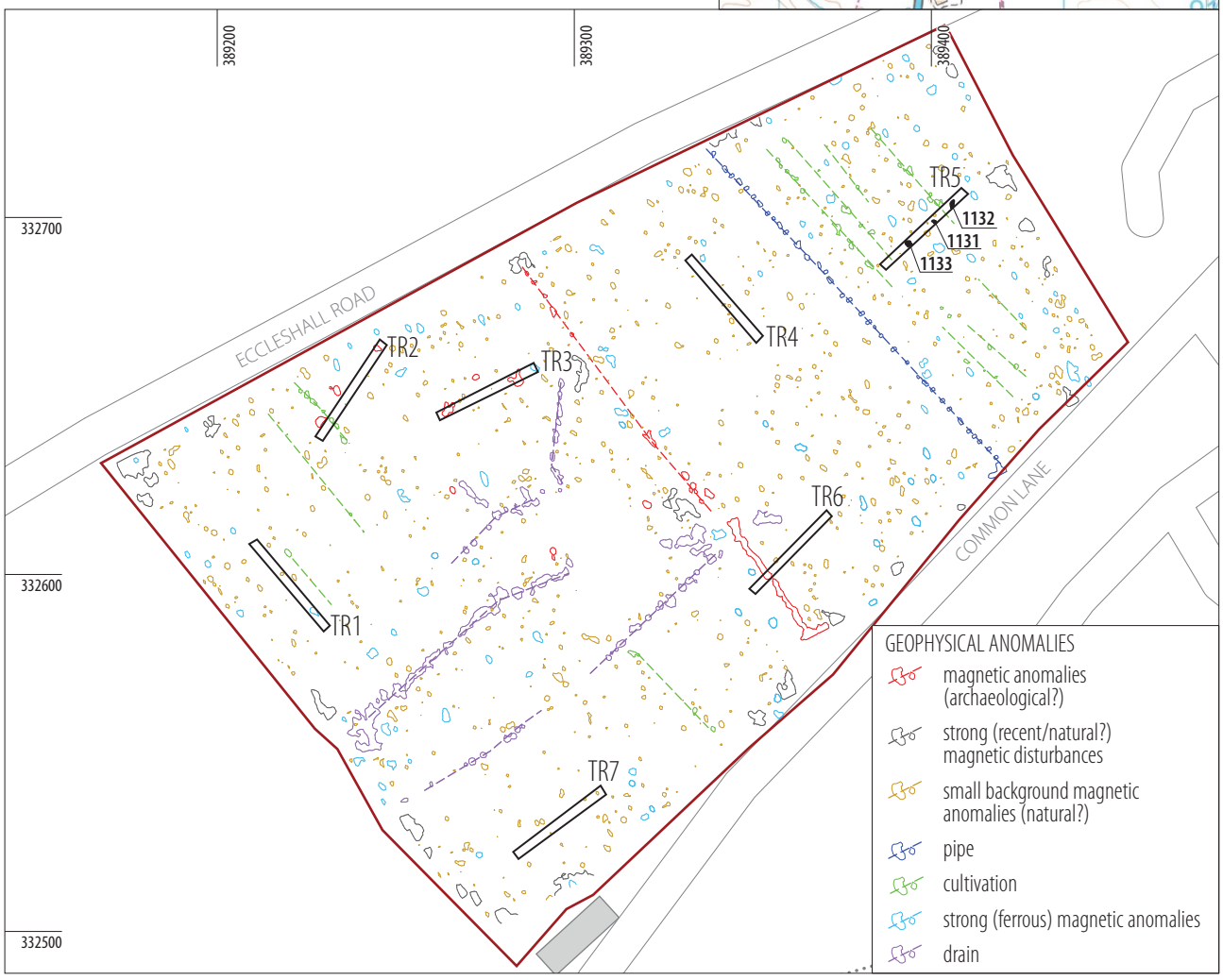
CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ECCLESHALL ROAD, STONE (ERSS/01)

land adjacent to Eccleshall Rd
Walton
Stone
Staffordshire





KEY

development boundary

trench location

N

0 100m

scale 1:2,000 @ A4

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ILLUS 1

Site location

LAND ADJACENT TO ECCLESHALL ROAD, STONE, STAFFORDSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation

Headland Archaeology undertook a trial trench evaluation on an area of land in Stone, Staffordshire. The evaluation confirmed an absence of archaeological features in Trenches 1–4, 6 – 7. Two features of possible archaeological origin were found in Trench 5; these comprised a small, oval pit feature and a more substantial elongate, curvilinear pit feature which contained abundant charcoal. No dateable artefacts were recovered from either feature. They may be of post-medieval or modern date, although an earlier origin cannot be ruled out.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

This report presents the results of an archaeological field evaluation on land to the south of the B5026 Eccleshall Road, Stone, Staffordshire. The archaeological works were undertaken to satisfy a condition placed on the land as part of the planning permission (14/20854/OUT).

It was determined by the archaeological advisor to the planning authority, Stephen Dean, that the site had the potential to include heritage assets of archaeological interest. In accordance with relevant policy and best practice, the archaeological advisor requested that a field evaluation be undertaken to test the results of a geophysical survey, conducted earlier this year as a first step towards satisfying the condition.

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd, to undertake the required works in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation submitted to and agreed with the archaeological advisor on behalf of the planning authority (Craddock-Bennett 2015).

1.2 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The evaluation area is a field located to the south of Eccleshall Road, to the east of Walton, and 2km south-west of Stone, Staffordshire. The site is centred at NGR 389350 332650 and measures approximately 3.7ha in area.

Underlying geology is Mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone Group with superficial deposits of Devensian Diamicton (BGS 2015).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

An aerial photograph transcription undertaken by EDP identified potential archaeological features within the proposed development area, including traces of ridge and furrow cultivation, possible infilled clay extraction pits, and traces of a ditched enclosure.

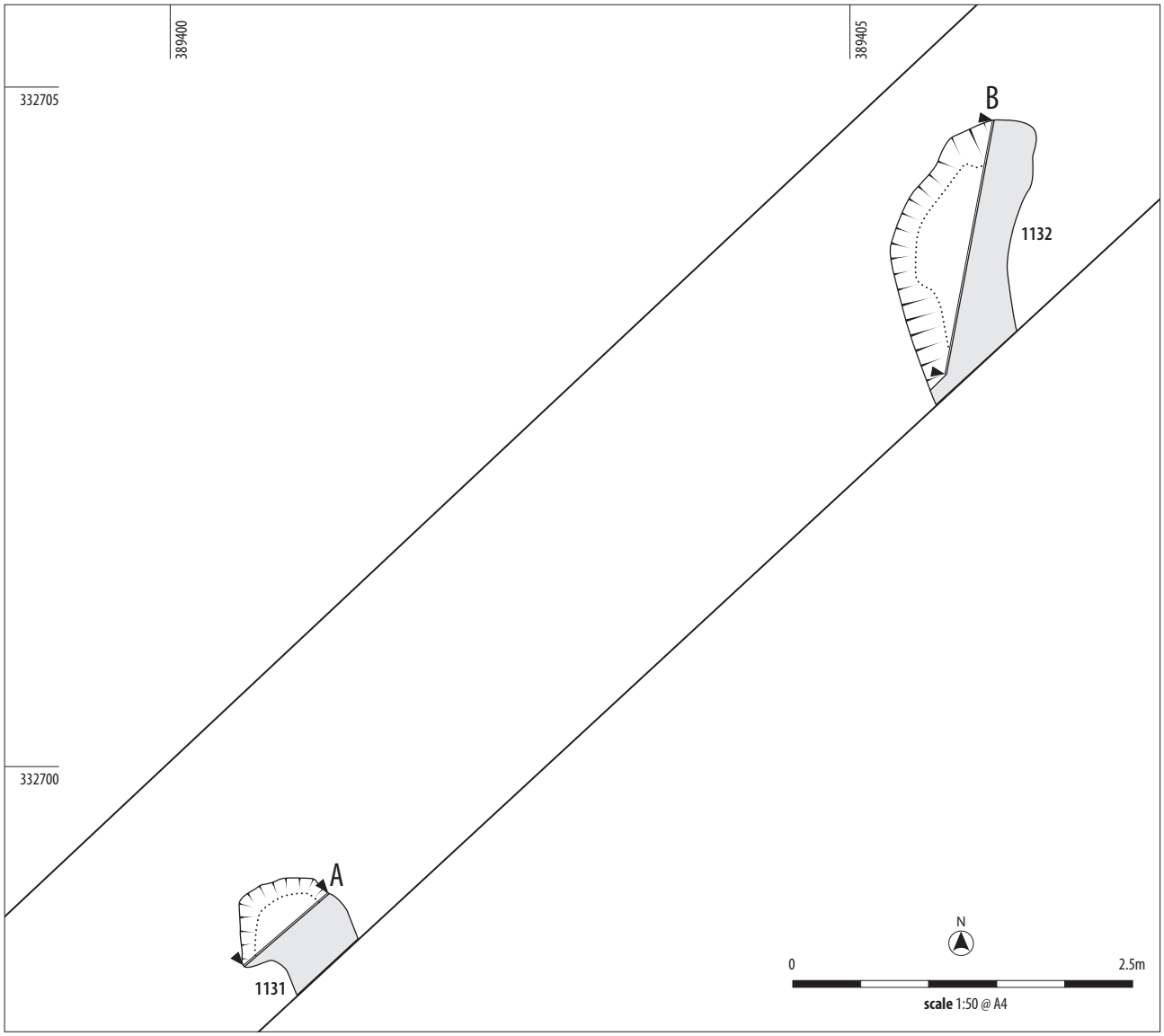
A subsequent geophysical (magnetometer) survey undertaken on the site (Bartlett 2015) produced only limited findings. These included a former field boundary and a few possible pit-like features. The survey also detected traces of ridge and furrow cultivation, and various drainage channels and land drains.

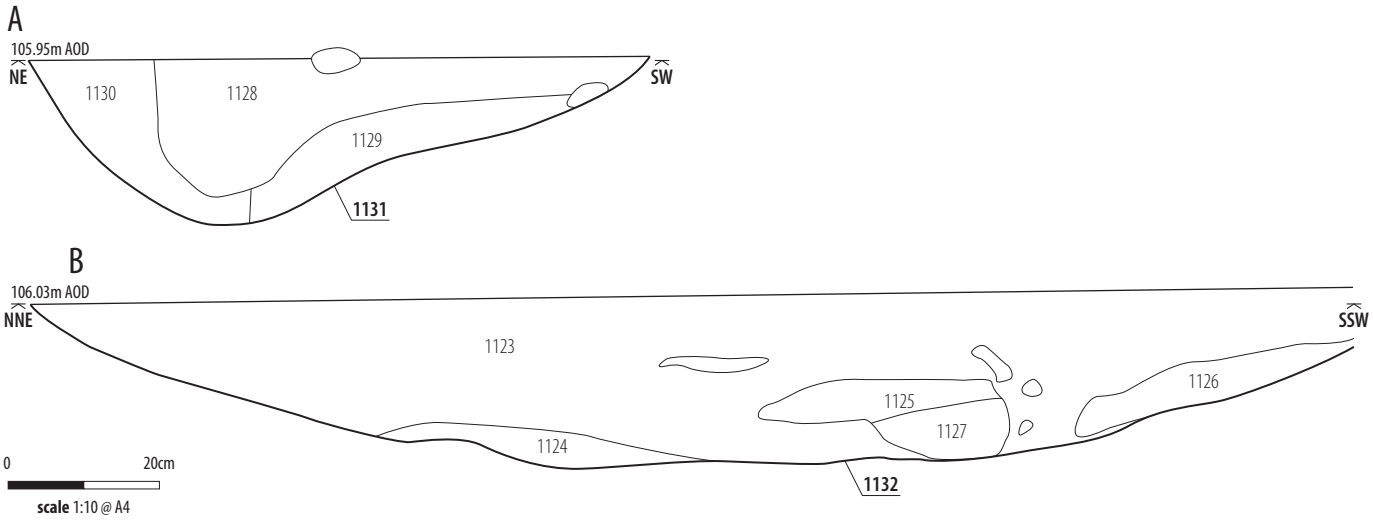
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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 enable the development by fulfilling the archaeological condition to the satisfaction of the planning authority;





ILLUS 2

Plan and section of [1131] and [1132] in Trench 5

ILLUS 3

S facing view of [1131]

- 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; and
- to produce and deposit a satisfactory archive and disseminate the results of the work via grey-literature reporting and publication as appropriate.

3 METHOD

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the following documents:

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

The evaluation comprised the excavation of 7 trenches totalling 210 linear metres. All trenches measured 1.6m wide (standard machine bucket width). Due to the generally negative results of the geophysical survey trenches were arranged to provide even coverage across the site.

The evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision, with topsoil being removed by machine and excavation terminating 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 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. Digital photographic images were taken of all trenches with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. Digital surveying was undertaken using a Trimble dGPS system.

4 RESULTS

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

4.1 GENERAL SITE STRATIGRAPHY

Topsoil across the site consisted of a loose light grey/brown, composed of a homogeneous matrix of clay and fine sand eg [1001, 1004]. Pebbles, cobbles and other inclusions were rare. Topsoil depth varied (0.10-0.45m) and is likely to be a reflection of the diverse glacial derived topography across the site. The composition and depth of the subsoil varied across the site (0.05 – 0.15m) and this is likely to be a reflection of both the topography and the composition of the glacial material below. The natural geology consisted of glacial diamict which was ubiquitous across the site, the composition varied and consisted of matrix supported rounded to well-rounded cobbles and pebbles; the matrix was variously composed of sands and clays. Geological deposits were reached at a depth of between 0.45 and 0.5m

Trenches 1 – 4 and 6 – 7 did not contain any archaeological deposits or features.

4.2 TRENCH 5

A single trench (5), located in the western end of the DA contained two features of possible archaeological interest (**Illus 2**). Evidence for ridge and furrow within the area was present in the form of regular undulations in the topography and the presence of furrows truncating the natural geology in the base of the trench. Feature [1131] appeared to be sealed by a modified subsoil deposit which formed one of the ridges whilst [1132] was present both within the base of a furrow and appeared to continue beneath the adjacent ridge. Although both features appeared to be stratigraphically earlier than the ridge and furrow, some doubt remains due to the absence of dateable artefacts and the evidence for disturbance within the overlying subsoil which may indicate a later date for the features.

Feature [1131] (**Illus 3**) consisted of a sub-circular pit which extended beyond the southern extent of the trench. The pit measured 0.79m x 0.68m in plan and extended to a depth of 0.23m. In profile, the pit was deeper towards the east, rising gradually to the west. The primary fill (1129) was mixed, comprising of material derived from the natural glacial deposits, including pebbles and cobbles, clay and fragments of organics and charcoal. This was abutted to the east by a homogenous deposit of grey clay (1130). The upper fill (1128) was a smooth black sandy clay deposit with a high charcoal content. A sample <1002> was recovered for palaeoenvironmental assessment. No cultural evidence was recovered from [1131].

ILLUS 4

E facing view of [1132]

The second feature [1132] consisted of an elongate, curvilinear feature measuring 1.8m x 0.9m in plan and 0.22m in depth. The internal stratigraphy of this feature contained repeated episodes of dumping. The upper-most fill (1123) was consistent with the topsoil found across the site, the deposit became paler towards the base and was clearly mixed with the natural glacial diamict which underlay the feature. This was interspersed with several lenses of blocky, black material (1124), (1125), (1126) which was rich in charcoal. Larger, discrete fragments of charcoal were found throughout (1123). A small inclusion of mixed glacial diamict and charcoal (1127) was also sealed by (1125). A sample <1001> was recovered for palaeoenvironmental assessment from (1124). No cultural evidence was recovered from [1132].

A further feature [1133] consisting of a large deposit of cobbles, all of a similar size, was also observed within the base of one of the agricultural furrows. The presence of late post-medieval pottery in the deposit below the cobbles (1121) provides a late 18th / early 19th century terminus post quem for this feature.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Two samples recovered from the site were received for palaeoenvironmental assessment. The site comprised two undated pit features. The samples were taken from the fill (1124), of feature [1132] and the fill (1128) of pit [1131]. The aims of the assessment were to assess the presence, preservation and abundance of environmental remains in the samples. The environmental remains are quantified in appendices 6 and 7

5.2 METHOD

Bulk samples were subjected to flotation and wet sieving in a Siraf-style flotation machine. The floating debris (the flot) was collected in a 250 µm sieve and, once dry, scanned using a binocular microscope. Any material remaining in the flotation tank (retent) was wet-sieved through a 1mm mesh and air-dried. All samples were scanned using a stereomicroscope at magnifications of x10 and up to x100. Identifications, where provided, were confirmed using modern reference material and seed atlases including Cappers et al. (2006).

5.3 RESULTS

Results of the assessment are presented in Appendix 2.1 (Retent samples) and 2.2 (Flot samples). Material suitable for AMS (Accelerated Mass Spectrometry) radiocarbon dating is shown in the tables.

5.4 WOOD CHARCOAL

Wood charcoal was present in varying amounts in both deposits. Significant concentrations of well-preserved charcoal were present in the fill (1124) of Pit [1132]. Where preservation allowed, charcoal was categorized as oak or non-oak. The majority of charcoal appeared to be oak.

5.5 DISCUSSION

The environmental assemblage offers little insight into the function of the sampled features. Charcoal of a suitable size for radiocarbon dating was present in the fill (1124) of pit [1132].

6 FINDS ASSESSMENT

The finds assemblage amounted to three sherds (4g) of post-medieval pottery, all found in context (1121), Trench 5. The sherds are small and abraded, probably residual and thus cannot be used to securely date this context, which may be of later date. They include a sherd of creamware, a sherd of blue-painted porcelain and a small degraded whiteware sherd. The pottery could all date to the later 18th or early 19th centuries.

7 DISCUSSION

The two undated features identified within Trench 5 appear to represent the location for the dumping of charred waste. Charcoal was abundant in contexts (1124), (1125), (1126) and (1128). The lenses of charred material within [1132] appear to represent individual events, suggesting that burning was being undertaken elsewhere and the charred remains are subsequently being deposited as waste within the excavated feature.

No immediately datable evidence was found in either [1131] or [1132]. Surface expression of either feature [1131], [1132] or [1133] was entirely absent, however, this may be due to surface truncation caused by

later ploughing. The late date of feature [1133] combined with its proximity to the undated features may suggest a comparable date for features [1131] and [1132], however, there is the potential that the features are earlier.

8 CONCLUSION

The trial trench evaluation has confirmed the presence of two undated features in close proximity to a dump of stone and post-medieval pottery in the east of the site.

The features do not appear to correspond to the location of any geophysical anomalies. Potentially, disturbance caused by ploughing at this location has masked the presence of the features to geophysical survey.

The features contained no readily dateable material. Although the features appeared to be sealed beneath the ridge and furrow agricultural systems, it is possible that truncation by later ploughing has removed the upper parts of the features and they are in fact more recent in origin.

The remaining trenches contained no features or deposits.

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10 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

Appendix 1.1 Trench register

Trench	Orientation	Description	L (m)	Max D (m)
1	N/S	(1004) is underlain by (1005) which is underlain by (1006)	30	0.45
2	ENE/WNW	(1007) is underlain by (1008) which is underlain by (1009)/(1110)	30	0.5
3	E/W	(1111) is underlain by (1112) which is underlain by (1113)	30	0.45
4	N/S	(1114) is underlain by (1115) which is underlain by (1116)	30	0.5
5	E/W	(1120) is underlain by (1121) which seals cut [1131], which contains underlain by (1128), (1129), (1130) and [1132] which contains (1123), (1124), (1125), (1126), (1127).	30	0.5
6	E/W	(1117) is underlain by (1118) which is underlain by (1119)	30	0.5
7	E/W	(1001) is underlain by (1002) which is underlain by (1003)	30	0.45

Appendix 1.2 Context register

Context	Trench	Type	Description	Dimensions L x W x D (m)
1001	7	Layer	**Topsoil** – light grey brown, open textured relatively homogenous sandy loam – rare, well rounded pebbles.	30 x 1.6 x 0.22
1002	7	Layer	**Subsoil** – mid red/brown firm and compact with rare inclusions, gradual interface.	30 x 1.6 x 0.10
1003	7	Layer	**Glacial diamict** – variable across the trench, white/yellow/buff consisting of clays with sand, sub-rounded to rounded, poorly sorted cobbles and pebbles.	30 x 1.6
1004	1	Layer	As (1001)	30 x 1.6 x 0.15 – 0.45
1005	1	Layer	As (1002) – virtually absent at the southern end of the trench.	30 x 1.6 x 0.10
1006	1	Layer	**Glacial diamict** – pebbles and cobbles abundant, sub rounded-well rounded, occasional angular stone. Matrix white/grey sandy clay 7m from s edge, gives way to more compact, red/brown clay. Occasional patches of buff sand, become more apparent upslope.	30 x 1.6
1007	2	Layer	As (1001)	30 x 1.6 x 0.10 – 0.25
1008	2	Layer	As (1005)	30 x 1.6 x 0.15 – 0.25
1009	2	Layer	As (1006) to 24m from N edge gives way to Buff/white diamict downslope	30 x 1.6 x 0.15 – 0.25
1110	2	Layer	24m+ (from N edge of trench) subsoil is clay rich, sand less prevalent, white and compact, the boundary is gradual, inclusions of pebbles and cobbles form 5–10%.	30 x 1.6
1111	3	Layer	As (1001)	30 x 1.6x0.20 – 0.30
1112	3	Layer	Subsoil variable from E 0 – 14m yellow brown, compact and with abundant inclusions of well- rounded pebbles. 14-24m, grey with few pebbles and cobbles, 24m+ as 0=14m.	30 x 1.6 x 0.10 – 0.15
1113	3	Layer	**Glacial diamict** – 0 – 14m from E end, dense, compact sands and clay with abundant pebbles, ltd cobbles 14-24m grey, sandy matrix with abundant pebbles and cobbles, 2m4+ same as 0-14m	30 x 1.6 x 0.35 – 0.45
1114	4	Layer	**Topsoil** – light grey brown, texture more dense and compact some, limited well rounded pebbles.	30 x 1.6 x 0.05 – 0.10
1115	4	Layer	**Subsoil** – shallower and rich in clay than previously seen, appears very smooth when seen in section	30 x 1.6 x 0.10 – 0.15
1116	4	Layer	**Glacial diamict** – highly variable, most substantial component is clay-rich sands with well-rounded/rounded pebbles and cobbles giving way at 20m (from N edge of trench) to smoother clays with smaller patches of cobbles, this finally gives way to a grey and white clays with occasional patches of yellow clay.	30 x 1.6
1117	6	Layer	As (1001)	30 x 1.6 x 0.25
1118	6	Layer	Variable across the trench – as 1115 reflecting the natural and varies from Buff to red brown. Subsoil also relatively shallow in this trench.	30 x 1.6 x 0.07 – 0.10
1119	6	Layer	**Glacial diamict** – very similar to 1116, variable across the trench, largely consisting of white/buff coloured material with small pebbles and cobbles interspersed with patches of orange and yellow clay.	30 x 1.6
1120	5	Layer	As 1001 – much deeper than previously seen across the site.	30 x 1.6 x 0.45
1121	5	Layer	**Subsoil** – light brown, clay rich with some pebbles and cobbles – very shallow. Seals [1131] and [1132].	30 x 1.6 x 0.05
1122	5	Layer	As 1116	30 x 1.6

Context	Trench	Type	Description	Dimensions L x W x D (m)
1123	5	Fill	Upper fill of [1132] similar to the topsoil across the site ie (1001). Also contains discrete inclusions of charred/organic material c. 05m	1.8 x 0.9 x 0.15
1124	5	Fill	Deposit of burnt/organic material, fill of [1132], sample <1001>	0.32 x 0.3 x 0.05
1125	5	Fill	Deposit of burnt/organic material, fill of [1132]	0.3 x 0.3 x 0.07
1126	5	Fill	Deposit of burnt/organic material, fill of [1132]	0.4 x 0.3 x 0.06
1127	5	Fill	Inclusion of natural (1122) at the base of [1132], sealed by [1125] contains some charcoal.	0.2 x 0.2 x 0.08
1128	5	Fill	Upper fill of [1131] Organic rich deposit with some charcoal, sample <1002>	0.64 x 0.45 x 0.18
1129	5	Fill	Same as (1122) with some inclusions of charcoal and organic material.	0.5 x 0.45 x 0.08
1130	5	Fill	Fill of [1131] homogeneous blue/grey clay. Possible lining of pit or packing?	0.18 x 0.45 x 0.15
1131	5	Cut	Subcircular pit.	0.79 x 0.68 x 0.23
1132	5	Cut	Elongate curvilinear pit possibly used for dumping.	1.8 x 0.9 x 0.22

Appendix 1.3 Photographic register

Photo	Digital	Direction facing	Description
001	6526	E	Pre-excavation
002	6527	N	Pre-excavation
003	6528	SE	Pre-excavation
004	6530	W	Trench 7 – E end
005	6531	N	Trench 7 – W end
006	6532	N	Trench 1 – S end
007	6533	N	Trench 1 – middle
008	6534	N	Trench 1 – N end
009	6535	NE	Trench 2 – SE end
010	6536	NE	Trench 2 – middle
011	6537	NE	Trench 2 – NE end
012	6538	E	Trench 3 – W end
013	6539	E	Trench 3 – middle
014	6540	E	Trench 3 – E end
015	6541	E	Trench 3 – feature
016	6542	E	Trench 3 – feature
017	6543	SE	Trench 4 – NE end
018	6544	SE	Trench 4 – middle
019	6545	SE	Trench 4 – SE end
020	6546	E	Trench 5 – W end
021	6547	E	Trench 5 – possible cobble feature
022	6548	E	Trench 5 – possible cut
023	6549	E	Trench 5 – possible cut
024	6550	E	Trench 5 – possible cut
025	6551	E	Trench 6 – W end
026	6552	E	Trench 6 – middle
027	6553	E	Trench 6 – E end
028	6554	E	Trench 5 – [1132] pre-excavation
029	6555	E	Trench 5 – [1132] pre-excavation
030	6556	E	Trench 5 – [1132] post-excavation
031	6557	E	Trench 5 – [1132] post-excavation
032	6558	E	Trench 5 – [1132] post-excavation
033	6559	S	Trench 5 – [1132] post-excavation
034	6560	S	Trench 5 – [1132] post-excavation
035	6561	E	Trench 5 – [1131] pre-excavation
036	6562	E	Trench 5 – [1131] pre-excavation
037	6563	E	Trench 5 – [1131] pre-excavation
038	6564	S	Trench 5 – [1131] post-excavation
039	6565	S	Trench 5 – [1131] post-excavation
040	6566	S	Trench 5 – [1131] post-excavation

Appendix 1.4 Sample register

Sample	Context	Description
1001	1124	Organic/charcoal rich deposit
1002	1131	Organic/charcoal rich deposit

Appendix 1.5 Drawing register

Drawing	Scale	Plan or section	Description
1	1:10	Plan	Plan of [1132]
2	1:30	Section	Section of [1132]
3	1:10	Plan	Plan of [1131]
4	1:10	Section	Section of [1131]

APPENDIX 2 ENVIRONMENTAL TABLES

Appendix 2.1 Flotation sample results

Context	Sample	Total flot Vol (ml)	Charcoal		Material available for AMS dating	Comments
			Qty	Max size (mm)		
1124	1001	50	++++	10	Yes	Charcoal oak
1128	1002	50	++	1	No	Charcoal oak

Key: + = rare (1 – 5), ++ = occasional (6 – 15), +++ = common (16 – 50) and ++++ = abundant (>50)

NB charcoal over 1cm is suitable for identification and AMS dating

Appendix 2.2 Retent sample results

Context	Sample	Sample Vol (l)	Charcoal		Material available for AMS dating	Comments
			Qty	Max size (mm)		
1124	1001	10	++++	20	Yes	Charcoal oak
1128	1002	20	++	5	No	–

Key: + = rare (1 – 5), ++ = occasional (6 – 15), +++ = common (16 – 50) and ++++ = abundant (>50)

NB charcoal over 1cm is suitable for identification and AMS dating

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