

Pennyfeathers, Ryde, Isle of Wight

Archaeological Evaluation Report





PENNYFEATHERS, RYDE, ISLE OF WIGHT

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Ref: 86540.01

August 2012

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SITE CODE	86540	ACCESSION CODE	CLIENT CODE
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.		NGR	459865 90660

VERSION	STATUS*	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FILE
1	I	NBB	REG		07.11.11	X:\PROJECTS\86540\EVAL REPORT\86540_EVAL_REPORT.DOC

* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by RSK Environment Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation as part of an on-going programme of archaeological works ahead of a proposed housing development.

The evaluation comprised the excavation of six trial trenches measuring on average 15m by 1.8m and distributed across the Site as indicated in **(Figure 1)**. The location of each trench was targeted on the results of a previous recorded scanning and detailed gradiometer survey.

No features of archaeological significance were recorded during the evaluation, however burnt flint collected from topsoil in all of the trenches, and the two known findspots from at Elmfield, Ryde suggest a general level of prehistoric activity in the wider environs of the Site.

The fieldwork was carried out between the 6th and 8th August 2012.

PENNYFEATHERS, RYDE, ISLE OF WIGHT**Archaeological Evaluation Report****Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by RSK Environment Ltd. and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Tim Camp in this regard. The works were monitored for the Isle of Wight Council by the Planning Archaeologist, Owen Cambridge, who we would like to thank for his pragmatic help and assistance.

The evaluation was directed by Piotr Orczewski, assisted by Dave Murdie. This report was written by Piotr Orczewski. The illustrations were prepared by Linda Coleman. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Richard Greatorex, who also edited this report.

PENNYFEATHERS, RYDE, ISLE OF WIGHT

Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by RSK Environment Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land south of Ryde known as Pennyfeathers, on the Isle of Wight, hereafter referred to as “the Site” (**Figure 1**), (centred on NGR 459865 90660).

1.1.2 The fieldwork was conducted between 6th and 8th August 2012.

1.2 Scope of the Report

1.2.1 This report presents a brief description of methodology that was followed, the evaluation results and an interpretation of the archaeological significance of the results. In format and content it conforms with current best practice and to the guidance outlined in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (English Heritage 2006) and the Institute for Archaeologists’ Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (as amended 2008).

1.3 The Site, Location and Geology

1.3.1 The Site lies approximately 2km south-east of Ryde, Isle of Wight, and covers some 53ha. The Site is bound by Smallbrook Lane to the north and the A3055 Brading Road to the east. The western extent of the Site is partly defined by railway tracks, with only two small areas west of the railway; one to the north of Smallbrook Lane and the other opposite Smallbrook Junction railway station.

1.3.2 The Site slopes gradually downwards from 49m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the east to 10m aOD in the west, with the eastern part of the Site situated on the crest of a broad ridge extending north-south, with the majority of the evaluation area occupying the west-facing slope overlooking Monktonmead Brook.

1.3.3 The soils underlying the Site comprise typical palaeo-argillic brown earths and stagnogleys, of the 581c (Sonning 2) and 711h (Wickham 4) associations respectively (SSEW 1983). Solid and superficial geology comprises river terrace deposits over Bembridge Marl formations (after BGS 2012).

1.4 Archaeological and Historical Background

1.4.1 There are no known archaeological sites of any date within a 1km radius of the Site; however findspots from the area suggest a general background of prehistoric activity.

1.4.2 A flint implement has been located approximately 700m to the north-east of the Site in Elmfield, Ryde. The implement is recorded as Neolithic in date and no further information is known.

- 1.4.3 A flint tool found in similar location, 500m to the north-east was interpreted as a plano convex knife and dated to Early to Middle Bronze Age.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

- 1.5.1 The aims of this field evaluation were to determine, as far as it was reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains were potentially threatened was assessed, based on the results of previous recorded scanning and detailed gradiometer survey (Wessex Archaeology 2012).

2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1.1 The evaluation comprised of excavation of six trial trenches, distributed across the Site as indicated in **(Figure 1)**. The location of each trench was targeted on the results of a previous recorded scanning and detailed gradiometer survey. The survey showed no anomalies of definite archaeological interest, although a number of responses of probable archaeological interest were detected. These were identified as likely to relate to former boundaries or field systems. Elsewhere, numerous anomalies of possible archaeological interest have been detected, although their origins were not conclusively archaeological.
- 2.1.2 The trenches were excavated by a tracked mechanical excavator using a toothless, grading bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation continued in spits through topsoil and the deposits below in an attempt to encounter any remaining archaeological features or the natural geology. Excavation was generally confined to 1.2m in depth in order allow safe access. Topsoil was separated from any other arisings and stored at a minimum of 1m from the trench edge. The spoil from the trenches was scanned for artefacts. The trenches were back-filled with the excavated spoil; topsoil last, in order to preserve the soil stratigraphy.
- 2.1.3 All deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Sections were hand-drawn at 1:10; these were referred to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) heights of all principal levels were calculated and this information is included on the sections. A representative section of each trench was recorded showing the depth of the overburden deposits.
- 2.1.4 A full photographic record was kept using both digital and manual cameras. The record illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features, finds excavated, and the site as a whole.
- 2.1.5 The survey was carried out with a Leica 1200 series GPS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.
- 2.1.6 A unique site code **86540** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records.

2.2 Best practice

- 2.2.1 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008).

2.3 Copyright

- 2.3.1 This report contains material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Details of individual excavated contexts are retained in the project archive. Summaries of the excavated sequences can be found in **Appendix 1**.

3.2 Results

- 3.2.1 Six trenches were excavated each measuring an average of 15m long and 1.7m wide (**Figure 1**).
- 3.2.2 **Trenches 1 and 2** were located in the western part of the Site. Under 0.25m of topsoil intermittent bands of orange sandy clay and flint gravel natural was recorded. Both trenches contained east-west oriented bands of blue clay that was interpreted as possible archaeology during the geophysical survey.
- 3.2.3 In **Trenches 3 and 4**, located to target wide linear trends, under 0.25m of topsoil, mixed bands of dark orange clay and gravels were recorded.
- 3.2.4 In **Trench 5** a strong, linear trend interpreted as probable archaeology was identified upon excavation as pipe trench, containing a 220mm clay pipe. Next to the pipe trench a similar but redundant pipe trench was recorded. The natural consisted of orange brown sandy clay on top of jade green sand. In south end of the trench a feature **[507]** interpreted as possible re cut of natural, marshy hollow or channel but more likely a bioturbation (tree roots) was identified. The feature was excavated by hand but later a machine slot was dug through it showing a clean section with visible green sands.
- 3.2.5 In **Trench 6** a wide, irregular spread of darker soils was recorded, containing occasional charcoal flecking. Feature interpreted as bioturbation (tree root disturbance).

4 FINDS

- 4.1.1 A small number of modern (19th or 20th century) domestic finds were found in the topsoil throughout the Site. These included mostly ceramic white and

blue earthenware and glass. Burnt flint fragments were also found within the topsoil in **Trenches 3, 4 and 6**.

- 4.1.2 Small quantities of flint were recovered from topsoil in six trenches. The 17 pieces consisted of 12 flakes, a core, a tested nodule and three scrapers. The core and scrapers are consistent with a date in the later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age, and there is nothing about the remaining pieces to contradict that date.

Context	Flakes	Cores	Scrapers
(100)	3	1	
(200)	2		
(300)	2		1
(400)		1	
(500)	1		
(600)	4		2
Total:	12	2	3

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 No features of archaeological significance were recorded during the evaluation. All of the trends identified during the geophysical survey as possible archaeology, were revealed to be natural variations in the geology. The trend identified as probable archaeology was in fact a modern clay pipe.
- 5.1.2 The flints collected from topsoil in all of the trenches, burnt flint and the two known findspots from Elmfield, Ryde appear to indicate a general background of prehistoric activity within the wider environs of the Site.

6 ARCHIVE

- 6.1.1 The project archive has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in *Appendix 3 of Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (Walker 1990). The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under the project code **86540**. In due course the complete archive will be deposited with Newport Museum.

REFERENCES

Archaeological Data Service ads.ahds.ac.uk

Wessex Archaeology 2012, *Land South of Ryde, Isle of Wight, Recorded Scanning and Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report*. Ref 84830.01

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

bgl = below ground level

TRENCH 1			Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 14.8x1.80m		Max. depth: 0.50m	Ground level:	
Context	Description		Depth (m)	
100	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown slightly sandy silt loam with very occasional flint gravel and pebble (>3cm). Occasional fleck and rounded chalk fragments (>2cm)	0.00-0.25	
101	Band	40cm wide band of blueish gray clay at first thought to be a backfill over field drain, but no pipe located on excavation. Cross the trench E-W, 6m north of south trench edge, 0.20m deep.	0.25+	
102	Natural	Intermittent bands of (E-W) blueish gray with orange sandy clay with occasional spurs of flint gravels.	0.25 +	

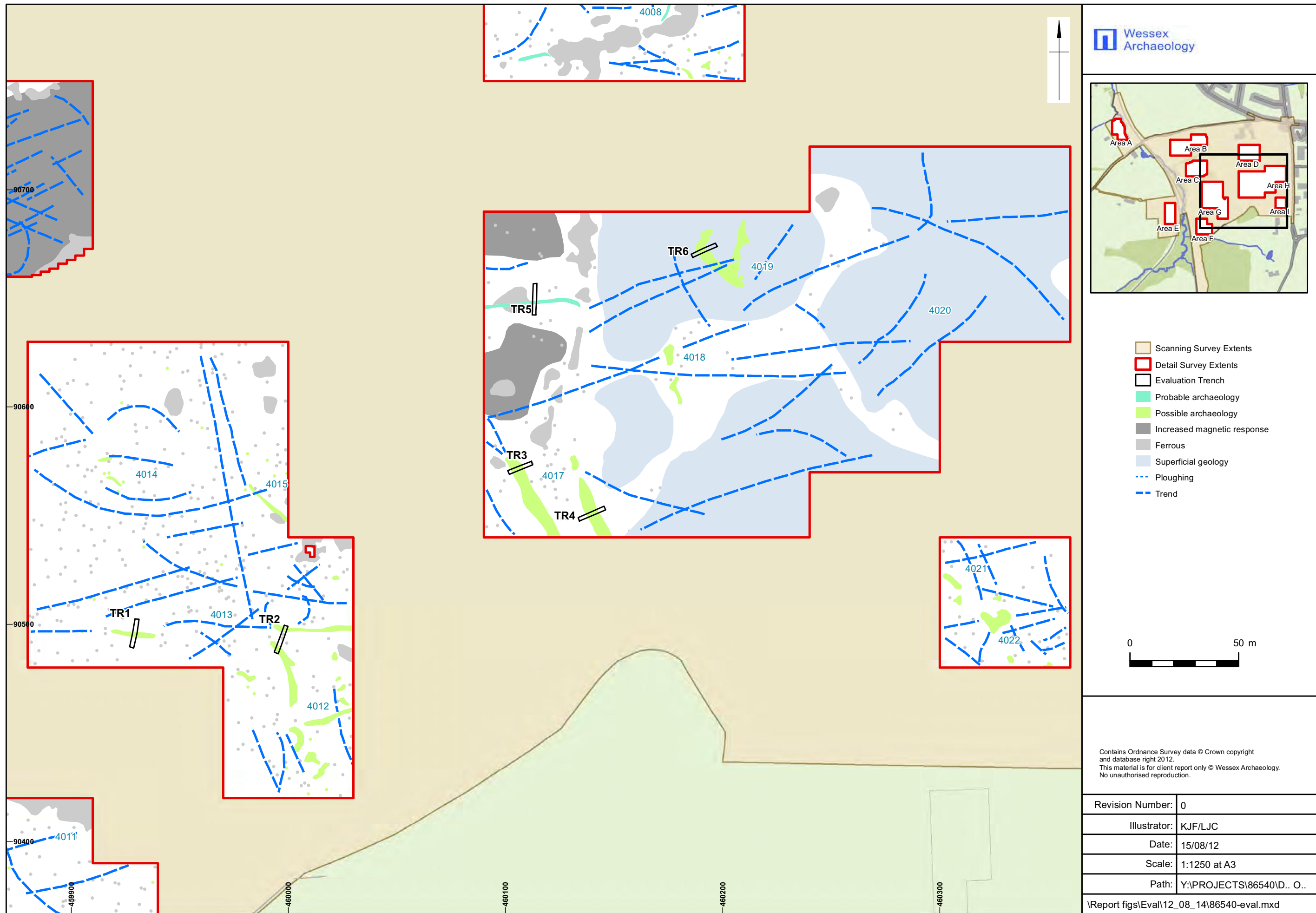
TRENCH 2			Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 14.8x1.80m		Max. depth: 0.42m	Ground level:	
Context	Description		Depth (m)	
200	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown slightly sandy silt loam with rare sub angular flint gravel/pebble and rounded chalk fragments >2cm (probably from marling).	0.00-0.25	
201	Subsoil	Very light gray with 20% orange brown mottle silty loam. Occasional manganese flecks, occasional flint gravel and pebble >4cm	0.25-0.42	
202	Layer	0.70m wide band of light greyish brown flint gravels, oriented E-W, 5m north of south trench end. Heavily iron and manganese strained. Probably what was noted by geo phys survey.	0.42+	
203	Natural	Intermittent bands of orange sandy clays and flint gravels.	0.42+	

TRENCH 3			Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.0x1.80m		Max. depth: 0.50m	Ground level:	
Context	Description		Depth (m)	
300	Topsoil	Mid brown gray silty loam with common flint gravel and very rare chalk fragments. Horizon with natural mixed – no real subsoil.	0.00-0.25	
301	Natural	Mid to light yellowish brown with blue gray tinge silty clay with common gravel bands.	0.25 +	

TRENCH 4			Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 14.80x1.82m		Max. depth: 0.57m	Ground level:	
Context	Description		Depth (m)	
400	Topsoil	Mid brown gray silty loam with rare sub rounded and sub angular stone pebbles.	0.00-0.25	
401	Subsoil	Mixed gray brown and yellowish brown sandy silty loam with moderate flint pebble and lenses of small 1cm sub angular chalk fragments.	0.25-0.52	
402	Natural	Mid to light yellowish brown silty clay with gravel/pebble bands.	0.52 +	

TRENCH 5			Type:	Machine excavated	
Dimensions: 15.00x1.80m		Max. depth: 1.05m	Ground level:		
Context	Description			Depth (m)	
500	Topsoil	Light greyish brown slightly silty loam with occasional flint and gravel/pebble >3cm. Occasional chalk fragments and flecks.			0.00-0.25
501	Subsoil	Light to mid greyish brown sandy silt loam, more frequent inclusions than topsoil. Part colluvial.			0.25-0.5
502	Fill	Mixed top/subsoil and natural backfill of pipe trench [503].			0.40 +
503	Cut	Cut of E-W pipe trench, containing 220mm ceramic pipe.			-
504	Fill	Fill of redundant pipe trench.			0.40 +
505	Cut	Cut of E-W pipe trench parallel to [503] and 40cm south of it.			-
506	Fill	Dark gray brown, humic sandy silt, organic waterlogged plant remains and roots. Fill of E-W natural hollow/channel.			0.50-0.88
507	Cut	Natural hollow runs down slope to valley base. Edge of marshy hollow.			0.50-0.88
508	Natural	Orange brown sandy clay oxidised upper natural.			0.40-0.55
509	Natural	Jade green sand natural.			0.55 +

TRENCH 6			Type:	Machine excavated	
Dimensions: 15.00x1.86m		Max. depth: 0.48m	Ground level:		
Context	Description			Depth (m)	
600	Topsoil	Light greyish brown slightly sandy silt loam, common sub angular and rounded flint gravel and pebble 2-4cm. Occasional struck and burnt flint. Occasional modern CBM brick/tile (discarded).			0.00-0.25
601	Subsoil	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Profuse flint gravels and pebble 2>8cm.			0.25-0.48
602	Fill	Mid to dark greyish brown slightly sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecking. Fill of [603].			0.48 +
603	Cut	4.5m wide spread of amorphous darker soils. 3.5m east of west end of trench. Looks like bioturbation (tree root disturbance, cut into (604)			-
604	Natural	Orangey brown sandy clay with gravel.			0.48 +



Site and trench location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 5, feature 507



Plate 2: Trench 1, west facing section

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Plate 3: Trench 6, east facing section

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