

**LAND AT EAST SHEFFORD FARM,
GREAT SHEFFORD,
BERKSHIRE.**

NGR: SU 389 748

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
(planning reference number: 08/00140/OUTD)

Quality Assurance

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Report No. 592

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SUMMARY

In April 2008 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at East Shefford Farm, Great Shefford, Berkshire (NGR: SU 389 748). The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of three trenches within the proposed development area.

A shallow, amorphous feature, which was associated with charcoal, was present within the investigation area. No dating evidence was recovered from the feature.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance Datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum).

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-Medieval

Period from *circa* AD 1500 onwards.

Roman

The period traditionally dated between AD 43 and AD 410.

Saxon

The period traditionally dated between AD 410 and AD 1066.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in April 2008 on land at East Shefford Farm, Great Shefford, Berkshire (NGR: SU 389 748).
- 1.2 A planning application has been made for a residential development with associated access road (planning reference number: 08/00140/OUTD).
- 1.3 To adequately inform any planning decision, a predetermination archaeological field evaluation was requested by the archaeological advisor to West Berkshire Council, in order to determine the archaeological impact of the development proposal.
- 1.4 The archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2008), the principals of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990) and the archaeological policies of West Berkshire Council.
- 1.5 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is located in an area close to where a number of human burials have been recorded. The burials were of early Saxon date, mid 5th to late 6th century. They were first discovered in the 1890's during the construction of the Lambourn branch line, but subsequent excavation was also carried out in 1912. In total approximately 71 burials were located.
- 2.2 The study area therefore contained the potential for the preservation of archaeological features and deposits, predominately dated to the Saxon period. This, however, did not prejudice the works against the retrieval of information from other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The general aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits, in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.

- 3.2 The presence of a previously recorded Saxon cemetery in the near vicinity raised a number of site specific aims and objectives. The project therefore sought to determine whether:
- Further early Saxon burials existed within the site area;
 - Evidence for related settlement of early Saxon date existed within the site area.
- 3.3 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- i) To define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
 - ii) To attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;
 - iii) To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The project required the excavation of three 10m by 1.8m trenches within the proposed development area, the trench locations are shown in Figure 2.
- 4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed to the top of archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved with the use of a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Thereafter the trenches were cleaned and all additional excavation was conducted by hand.
- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the Specification and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 **Trench 1** (10m by 1.8m) was excavated onto natural clay and gravel deposits at an average depth of 0.77m (106.55m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural deposits were overlaid by an orange brown clay silt subsoil (102), up to 0.50m thick, which contained occasional fragments of animal bone. In the vicinity of feature [103], occasional charcoal flecks were present within layer (102). Subsoil (102) was overlaid by topsoil (101), up to 0.30m thick, which consisted of a dark brown clay silt. A single feature was present in the trench.
- 5.2 Feature [103] was 2.3m long, 1.5m wide, 0.18m in depth and comprised a shallow, amorphous feature, which extended beyond the east limit of

excavation. Feature [103] cut the natural clay and was overlaid by subsoil (102). Fill (104) comprised a brown orange clay/silt/gravel, which contained frequent charcoal lumps and flecks.

- 5.3 **Trench 2** (10m by 1.8m) was excavated onto natural clay and gravel deposits at an average depth of 0.77m (106.41m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural deposits were overlaid by an orange brown clay silt subsoil (202), up to 0.55m thick, which contained a piece of pig bone. Subsoil (202) was overlaid by topsoil (201), up to 0.31m thick, which consisted of a dark brown clay silt. A single fragment of CBM was contained within context (201). No features were present within the trench.
- 5.4 **Trench 3** (10m by 1.8m) was excavated onto solid natural chalk and gravel deposits at an average depth of 0.43m (109.09m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural deposits were overlaid by topsoil (301), up to 0.45m thick, which consisted of a dark brown clay silt with frequent gravel. No features were present within the trench.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 In general, visibility and preservation conditions were good. However, the lack of subsoil within Trench 3 indicates that this part of the site had previously been stripped, though not necessarily reduced into the top of the natural.
- 6.2 Feature [103] was present below subsoil (102) and is unlikely to be of modern origin. It was unclear if feature [103] represented a cut feature or animal/root disturbance. The occurrence of frequent charcoal lumps and flecks in fill (104) may be indicative of archaeological activity.
- 6.3 The evaluation has indicated that there is a low potential for archaeological remains to be present within the study area.

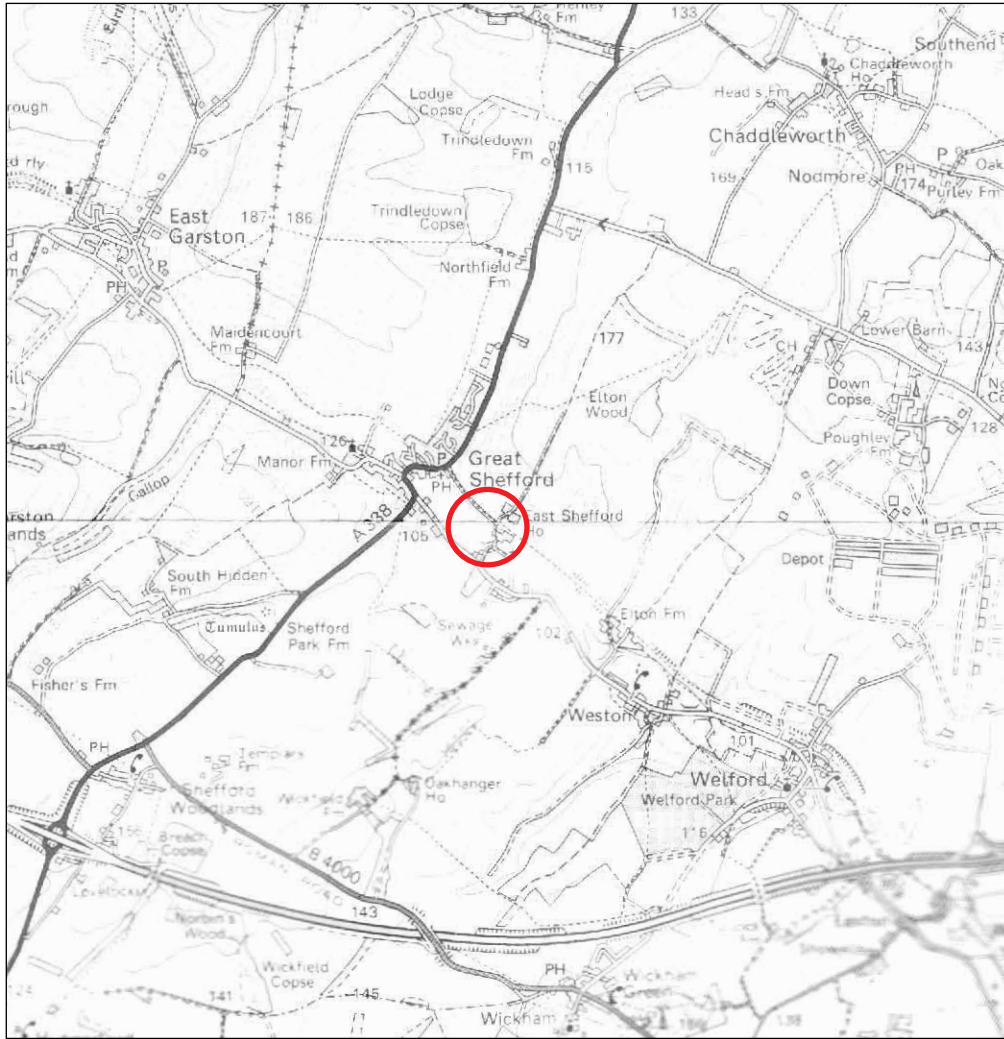
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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURE 1: Site Location

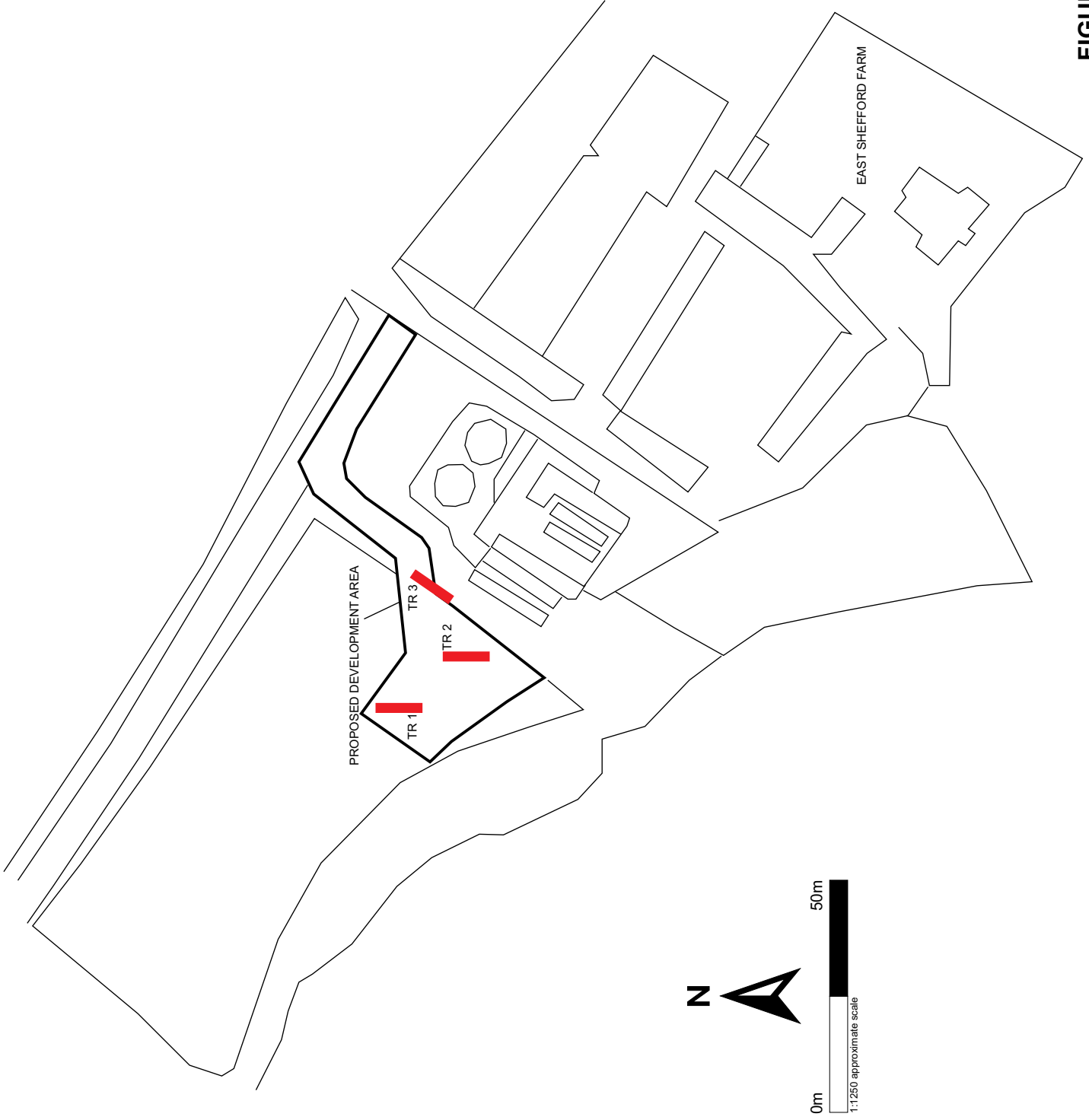
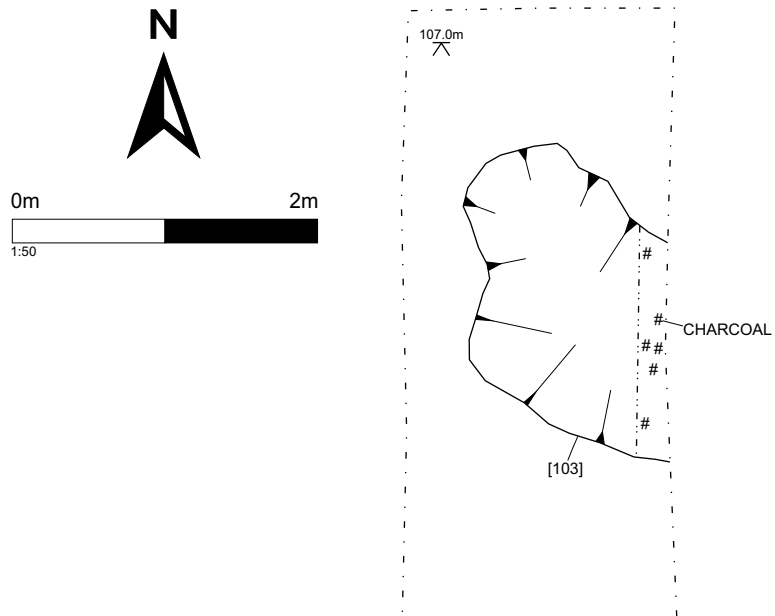


FIGURE 2: Trench Locations

TRENCH 1 PLAN



WEST FACING SECTION [103]

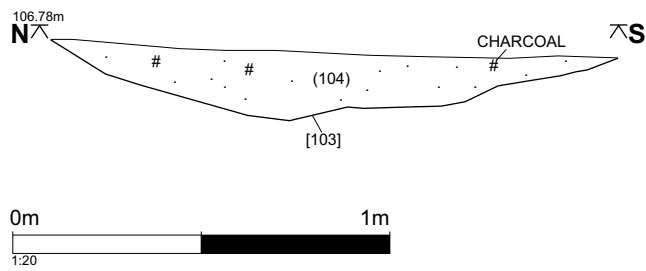


FIGURE 3: Trench 1, Plan and Section