

1EW03 – Enabling Works Central

AWHe Summary Report for Trial Trench Evaluation at Hunts Green Farm (Grim's Ditch Environs), Buckinghamshire (AC210/15)

Site Code: 1C19HGFTT

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1 Summary

- 1.1.1 A trial trench evaluation was undertaken on land at Hunts Green Farm (Grim's Ditch Environs), Buckinghamshire on a single land parcel (C21023) totalling c.32.15 ha (NGR 489270 203580) during October to December 2020, ahead of construction of Phase One of the new High Speed Two (HS2) railway. The Site is required for the rail alignment formation which in this section will be in a cutting, associated engineering works that include environmental bunds and tree-planting alongside the cutting, as well as land needed for temporary soil storage areas. The Site code for the work was 1C19HGFTT.
- 1.1.2 A total of 151 trenches of a planned 152 (Trench 72 still to be excavated) were excavated, targeted on geophysical anomalies identified by the geophysical survey, cropmarks identified through LiDAR imagery and aerial photographs (undertaken as part of the Environmental Statement), and 'blank areas' where no archaeological anomalies were identified. A total of 453 test pits were also excavated within the footprint of the evaluation trenches. The evidence suggested there was potential for the site to contain a continuation of the Grim's Ditch Scheduled Monument (List Entry 1021198) as well as archaeological remains of uncertain date, which included a possible T-shaped field boundary visible in the LiDAR imagery. Although the geophysical results were not wholly conclusive, it appeared that a continuation of Grim's Ditch might exist to the north east of the surviving monument, aligned broadly northeast – southwest. Other geophysical anomalies might have represented activity contemporary with the monument or of an altogether different period and unrelated phase of activity.
- 1.1.3 A total of 89 trenches revealed archaeological features, including a substantial ditch on the line of the projected line of Grim's Ditch, Mesolithic or early Neolithic activity in the general vicinity, sparse Middle Iron Age activity and most evidence on Site dating from the very late Iron Age and Romano-British period. This principally consisted of ditches and pits but also included possible waterholes and a stone surface.
- 1.1.4 Evidence for later activity was limited to a small number of features probably associated with post-medieval quarrying activity. A large number of features were undated and thus could belong to any period, meaning that the full archaeological story of the Site is still not fully understood. It was not certain if some features were of archaeological or natural origin.
- 1.1.5 Most activity on Site took place during the Romano-British period and likely represents a small agricultural settlement which became established in the decades preceding the Roman invasion. The pottery evidence suggested that it seemed to experience a period of increased prosperity in the 3rd century before declining in the 4th. While no in-situ structures or industrial remains were identified, the CBM evidence suggests a building of reasonable status was constructed around the 3rd century, while the palaeoenvironmental evidence suggests both iron smithing and smelting were taking place nearby.