PRIORS GREEN

TAKELEY

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

Phase 1, Stage 2

Assessment Report

Essex County Council

Field Archaeology Unit

RPS

March 2006

PRIORS GREEN

TAKELEY

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

SUMMARY

Client:	RPS Planning on behalf of Countryside Properties Plc
FAU Project No.:	1478
NGR:	TL5730 2140
Planning Application No.:	UTT/0816/00/OP
Site Code:	TAPG05
Date of Fieldwork:	20/06/05 – 05/08/05

An archaeological excavation comprising of six areas, over c.9.9 hectares, was carried out on the site of the first phase of a proposed housing development at Priors Green, Takeley. This followed on from Stage 1, a 40 trench evaluation undertaken during the winter of 2004.

Although two small Neolithic features were present, the earliest period from which coherent remains were identified was the Early to Middle Iron Age. These consisted of at least two fragments of field systems which were identified at opposite sides of the development area. At the western end of the site, a long irregular ditch ran approximately north – south across area and two large intercutting pits were located nearby. Only a relatively little amount of pottery was recovered that dated to this period. However a quantity of carbonised grains was recovered from soil samples collected from these features. It seems probable that this area was not occupied during this period, but was under agriculture. The Late Iron Age was represented by large boundary ditch with a blocked entrance, which ran approximately east-west across the western part of the site. Although it is likely that these ditches represented a major landscape division with controlled access; no other features of this date were present to suggest why the boundary was there.

Only one possible Roman feature was identified, a possible pond or watering hole, and although a few other Roman artefacts collected they were residual in later features. No Saxon features or artefacts were identified on the site. It is clear that, even with the close proximity of Roman Stane Street, this area was not intensively utilised during either the Roman or Saxon periods.

The medieval period remains from the site fall into two phases, the early 13th century and the mid to late 13th century. All are concentrated along the line of Jacks Lane which reinforces the perception that this thoroughfare was utilised during the medieval period. The earlier medieval remains comprise of a number of perpendicular gullies which form a right angle, and a relatively deep pit. It is likely that the gullies are associated with small farming plots alongside Jacks Lane.

The remains that date from the mid to late 13th century are more substantial than the earlier ones. These consist of four large pits, and part of a substantial post-built structure such as a barn. All these features were surrounded by a possible ditched enclosure. It is likely that these were part of a small farmstead, more of which probably lies to the east, alongside Jacks Lane.

The post-medieval landscape is dominated by three ditch alignments, comprising 21 ditches, in the far west of the site, which may represent the remains of horticultural activity. With the possible exception of three parallel ditches running east-west towards the east of the site, the remaining evidence for post-medieval activity related to the sub-division of the land into semi-regular fields.

In general the quality of the archaeological remains uncovered is relatively low and the majority of the features are poorly dated. Further work, primarily on wider comparative research for publication is recommended, particularly for the medieval and post-medieval remains. However, such dissemination is not envisaged until all phases of this project have been completed and the results amalgamated and studied as a whole. It is anticipated that an overview of landscape development and use from prehistoric to post-medieval periods will emerge, supplementing the large and important corpus of data that already exists for the Takeley / Stansted area.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is an assessment of the results of a Phase One archaeological mitigation strategy undertaken at Priors Green, Takeley, Essex, during June to August 2005 (Fig. 1). The excavation comprised six areas identified as requiring archaeological mitigation works to discharge the planning condition, following a trial trenching evaluation in winter 2004 (Robertson 2005). Where pertinent the results of the evaluation have been incorporated into this assessment report.

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) carried out the evaluation for RPS Planning on behalf of Countryside Properties Plc. The project was carried out in accordance with a brief prepared by the Historic Environment Management (HEM) Team of Essex County Council, who also monitored the work, and with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by RPS/ECC FAU. The site archive will be deposited at Saffron Walden Museum. A copy of this report will be deposited with the Essex Heritage and Conservation Record (EHCR) and a summary will appear in Essex Archaeology and History (EAH). A copy of the report will also be uploaded to the OASIS database.

Both the fieldwork and the reporting have been carried out to professional standards and guidance issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999) and the Association of County Archaeological Officers (ACAO 1993).

The report is structured to describe the background to the project, followed by an assessment of the results of the fieldwork. Finds assessments are then organised by category, followed by an overall assessment of the results and recommendations for further work. Appendices include context and finds data, in addition to the details of the archive contents and the EHCR summary. All illustrations and plates are placed together towards the back of the report.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Planning

A planning application (UTT/0816/00/OP) for a c.30ha housing development was submitted to Uttlesford District Council by Countryside Properties Plc in August 2000. After the completion of an archaeological desk-based assessment (CgMs 2000), followed by an Environmental Impact Assessment and Statement (RPS 2000), it was agreed that the archaeological issues facing the development could be addressed by the placing of an archaeological planning condition on Outline Consent. An area of c. 9.9ha was evaluated by trial trenching as the first stage of this condition in the winter of 2004 by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU). The results of the evaluation were assessed (Robertson 2005) and a mitigation strategy produced (RPS 2005). The mitigation strategy required six areas to be stripped and mapped and the archaeological features uncovered excavated with a view to answering specific questions posed by the evaluation and placing the site in its wider context. This report presents the results of the excavation. Where pertinent the results of the evaluation have been amalgamated into it.

2.2 Location and Topography (Fig. 1)

The proposed Phase 1 development lies within a parcel of land bounded to the north by Jacks Lane, to the east by Thornton Road, to the south by Dunmow Road and to the west by property boundaries (TL 5730 2140).

The site is currently fallow fields which until recently have been under cultivation. It is a relatively flat, roughly grassed area with a fall to the south, towards Dunmow Road. The highest point, situated at the northwest corner of the site, is 99.37m above O.D. and the lowest, at the southern end of Warwick Road, is 92.49m O.D. There is also a slight downwards slope west - east with the northeast corner of the site having a height of 94.88m above O.D. The area is traversed by Hamilton Road, Warwick Road and a public footpath, all running north-south, and by Clarendon Road running east-west. Several houses are situated around the edges of the area.

2.3 Geology

The depth of the topsoil averaged *c.*0.30m, with *c.*0.25m of subsoil below this.

The drift geology of the site was generally that of pale brown chalky boulder-clay of the Lowestoft Formation, although this was mixed with deposits of purer mid brown clay across the site. A few patches of natural gravel were also observed, especially towards the south of the area. The underlying solid geology of the area is London Clay (BGS map EW222 Great Dunmow v.2).

2.4 History and Archaeology

The site is located within a wider agricultural landscape, dating from the Bronze Age through to the present day. This landscape is becoming increasingly better understood and documented as a result of archaeological fieldwork taking place in advance of extensive construction development in the Takeley area. This is particularly evident in the recent work at Stansted Airport (Havis & Brooks 2004; Framework Archaeology in prep), evaluation and excavation work undertaken in advance of the re-alignment and construction of the A120 (Fitzpatrick 2001), Frogs Hall (Ennis in prep) and also by recent work undertaken in Takeley itself, some 1.5km to the west of the present site (Roberts 2003).

To the immediate south of the site Dunmow Road is thought to be on the approximate line of Stane Street, the Roman road from Braughing/Puckridge to Colchester (Drury and Rodwell 1980). To the northeast at Frogs Hall is a presumptive Roman villa (ESMR 9140) with associated Roman landscape features whilst Warish Hall (ESMR 4572), a Scheduled medieval moated site (protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979), lies 1km to the north. Another medieval moated site, Jacks Green (ESMR 4655), is located immediately to the northwest of the current site. Jacks Lane, a bridleway that runs east-west immediately to the north of the site, is also thought to have medieval origins.

Contrary to the received wisdom that the Essex boulder clays were not extensively settled and farmed until the medieval period, the picture emerging from this growing body of evidence is that the area between Stansted and Braintree was settled and farmed from the Bronze Age onwards. From the Late Iron Age onwards, with an increasing Roman influence on the landscape and the apparent re-alignment of the focus of the landscape, small farmsteads (e.g. Lavender 1997), and villas (e.g. Ennis in prep; Bedwin 1999) began to appear along the road line some which developed into small towns, such as Great Dunmow (Wickenden 1986) and Braintree (Drury and Rodwell 1980), during the Roman period.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the project have been revised and updated by RPS (2005) following analysis of the results from the evaluation (Robertson 2005)

The general aim of the excavation was to characterise the nature, date, function and importance of the archaeological remains. This was to be achieved by:

- Establishing the date, phasing, and function of the landscape ditches, paying particular attention to the terminals and junctions
- Establishing whether the site is fully rural or partially domestic in character
- Establishing whether there are any buildings or other structures on site

In addition to the general aims, a number of more generic and specific aims were also implemented for consideration during the excavation:

Generic Aims

- To add to the landscape studies already undertaken on the Boulder Clay
- Compare with previous work at Stansted Airport
- Examine process of change in settlement pattern and social structures

Specific Aims

- Stansted Plateau remained largely wooded with localised clearance through the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. Does this apply? How and when did this clearance occur?
- Development of agricultural usage.
- What was the nature of the later Bronze Age/ early Iron Age activities and in particular is there evidence of the emergence of more permanent settlements and field systems within the proposal site?
- When was Boulder Clay brought into cultivation?
- Did topographic features affect the development of human activity?
- Prehistoric landscape alignment and usage.
- Impact that Roman occupation has on the landscape
- Is Stane Street an axis for trade and was there settlement alongside?
- What happened to the landscape in the post-Roman period
- The impact and change brought about during the medieval period
- The impact and change brought about during the post-medieval period
- The form and character of the post-medieval landscape
- Surviving historic landscapes in the contemporary landscape

These aims and objectives are discussed in relation to the fieldwork results in Section 7.

4 METHOD

A mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed bucket was used to strip all of the areas of topsoil and subsoil. The machines were at all times under archaeological supervision.

While standard ECC FAU methodologies were employed with regard to excavation and recording, a selective sampling strategy was agreed with ECC HEM and implemented. Features not previously sampled in the evaluation were initially targeted, as were all intercutting relationships and terminals. A minimal number of segments were excavated across the post-medieval linear features and a representative sample of pits, post-holes and tree-throws were investigated. All excavated features were recorded using the FAU's context recording system. Planning and surveying was tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid using TST and GPS. A photographic record consisting of colour slide, black and white print and digital images was maintained thought the course of the excavation.

The machine-excavated surface was sufficiently cleaned to ensure that any features present were visible. Archaeological features and deposits were excavated using hand tools, other than obviously modern features or particularly large features, which were partially machine excavated under close archaeological supervision, with the agreement of RPS and HEM.

Two areas (Areas 1 and 3) were expanded during the machine stripping to clarify the nature of the archaeological features.

5. FIELDWORK RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

Six areas were excavated across this phase of the development. The locations of these were informed by the evaluation trenches and where possible the evaluation results have been amalgamated into those of the excavation. The individual areas are briefly described below (Section 5.2) along with an overview description of the features present in each of them. Four phases of activity and a number of sub-phases were identified on the site:

- Pre-Iron Age
- Iron Age (Early to Middle and Late)
- Medieval (Early 13th century and Middle to Late 13th century)
- Post-medieval
- Undated

In general the survival of the features was good, with only a few features significantly truncated. A number of land drains ran across the areas but the disturbance caused by them was minimal. It seems likely that the c.0.3m of topsoil and the c.0.25m thick layer of subsoil which covered the majority of the excavated areas protected the lower sections of the archaeological features and allowed a relatively high preservation of the remains. The only exception to this seems to have been the animal bone which, with a few exceptions, was very poorly preserved and irretrievable.

The individual features and groups of features are described and discussed in chronological order, under their relevant phase heading. Each ends with an outline of the further work required on the stratigraphic analysis for publication (Sections 5.3 to 5.8). Further detailed information on individual features, including dimensions, is presented in Appendix 1. All pertinent plans and plates are situated at the rear of the report. In the descriptions below the excavated context number is cited in brackets – thus [136]. The ditches that have been assigned ditch numbers, for ease of discussion, are noted – thus Ditch 1; a breakdown of the individual contexts gathered under these ditch numbers is included in Appendix 1. A more general discussion and further work required is outlined in Sections 7 and 8.

5.2 Excavation Areas (Fig. 1)

Area 1 (Fig. 2) measured 800^{2}m and was located in the centre of the eastern third of the site, around evaluation trenches 35 and 20. The evaluation trenches contained prehistoric gullies [98] and [22] which were originally thought to be part of a ring ditch, but were subsequently shown to part of a field system. The features present in this area include fragments of an Early to Middle Iron

Age field system; a Roman pond/waterhole, a post-medieval ditch and a number of undated pits and post-holes. None of the features in this area were particularly well dated.

Situated at the southeast corner the development area Area 2 (Fig. 3) encompassed evaluation trenches 26, 37 and 36, which contained three medieval or post-medieval ditches which were initially thought to have formed a rectangular enclosure. However, further excavation revealed them to be unrelated. This area was not extended and so the excavated area remained the original 600^2m. Only four features were identified in this area, three post-medieval ditches and an undated pit. The features present in this area were poorly dated and did not seem to relate to any other features on the site.

Adjacent to Jacks Lane, Area 3 (Fig. 4 and Plate 2) was 800^2m. The excavated area encompassed the northern part of evaluation Trench 2 which contained pit [100] and gullies [112] and [114]. The majority of the remains uncovered in this area were medieval in date and primarily consisted of pits and ditches, although a possible four post structure was also tentatively identified. Also identified were two gullies one Neolithic and the other Early to Middle Iron Age.

Located in the centre of the western third of the site, Area 4 (Fig. 5 and Plate 3) encompassed the ditches seen in evaluation Trenches 5, 6 and 7. This 6600^2m area contained an Early to Middle Iron Age ditch, three Late Iron Age ditches, a medieval pit, seven post-medieval ditches and a number of undated pits and post-holes. The Early to Middle Iron Age ditch and the post medieval ditches were also exposed in Area 5.

Lying directly to the south of Area 4, Area 5 (Fig. 5 and Plate 4) is the largest of all the areas with 8500^2m stripped. The Early to Middle Iron Age ditch seen in Area 4 also ran through this area, which also contained two intercutting Early to Middle Iron Age pits, twenty-one post-medieval ditches, some of which were also seen in Area 4, and a number of undated pits and post-holes.

In the northwest corner of the development area, immediately to the south of Jacks Lane, lay Area 6 (Fig. 6 and Plate 6). The excavated area measured 650^2m and encompassed the northern part of evaluation Trench 4. A gully of possible Neolithic date, fragments of an Early to Middle Iron Age field system, three parallel post-medieval ditches and a number of undated pits and post-holes were uncovered in this area.

5.3 Pre-Iron Age (Fig. 7)

Although there is some evidence for Neolithic activity on the site it is confined to one or possibly two features and a few patinated flints recovered from later contexts.

The earliest datable feature on the site was shallow Ditch 34, in Area 3, which contained fragments of Neolithic beaker in excavated segment [440]. This ditch ran northeast – southwest across the northwest corner of the area. Only one other feature, curvilinear gully [358]/[379] in Area 6, could possibly have similar origins. It is undated, but is cut by the Early Iron Age features [381] and [377] so although it may be Bronze Age in date it could equally be Neolithic. This shallow gully lies along the western edge of the area and from the north runs north-south for approximately 10m before curving northeast-southwest for approximately 8m and terminating just prior to the western baulk of Area 6. It is possible that these features constitute enclosures or wind-breaks, however, there were no other associated structures or occupation remains in evidence.

The quality of the Neolithic remains is not particularly high as both features sit in isolation, approximately 115m apart, and have no real context in relation to other sites or discoveries in the surrounding landscape. It may, however, be significant that both features lie towards the northern edge of the development area.

A number of tree-throws were identified across the all areas of the site. Only a small percentage of these were excavated and no indication of dates for their formation was forthcoming. They may be evidence of Neolithic landscape clearance, similar to that identified during the Stansted Airport excavations.

5.3.1 Further work

Little further analytical work is possible on this phase other than a search for parallels and comparisons, particularly with regard to possible landscape clearance at Stansted Airport. Although, if further phases of work uncover more features of Neolithic date, this assessment may be revised.

5.4 Iron Age (Fig. 8)

5.4.1 Early / Middle Iron Age

Early/ Middle Iron Age remains were widely spread across all but one of the excavated areas, Area 2. The majority of the features were ditches or gullies, with only three pits identified.

The most securely dated of the Early to Middle Iron Age features is Ditch 21 which ran along the eastern edges of Areas 4 and 5 (Fig.5). In plan the ditch was sinuous and narrow and wove its way, approximately northnorthwest-southsoutheast, for approximately 140m from the northern edge of Area 4 through to the eastern baulk of Area 5, where it took a pronounced kink around a typical horse-shoe shaped tree bowl. The full length of the ditch was not traced as it did not appear in those trenches which lay outside the excavated areas. Although none of the other Early to Middle Iron Age features are particularly close to this feature, it seems likely that they are related in some way and that this ditch was some form of boundary or division in the landscape, possibly bounding a woodland on one side.

Possibly related to Ditch 21, albeit at some distance, were two fragments of what seem to have been field systems. In Area 1 three very shallow perpendicular gullies were uncovered (Figs. 2 and 8), two of which contained small fragments of possible residual Early Iron Age pottery. North-south aligned gully [202]/[223] was probably the same feature as gully [227]/[211] which may have been truncated during machining rather than terminating. Perpendicular to these was gully [200]/[225]. It is clear that these two alignments were related to each other; however the intersection between them was truncated by Roman pond [233].

The second fragment of possible field system was recorded in Area 6 and comprised of two shallow gullies, with an adjacent pit (Figs.6 and 8). Gully [335]/[348] ran from the eastern baulk, of Area 6, westwards for approximately 6m before terminating. It was approximately 0.4m wide and 0.15m deep with the fill containing a single sherd of Early Iron Age pottery and a flint flake. The other two features were closely associated along the western edge of the area. Ditch [381] ran from the western baulk in a north-easterly direction for approximately 6m before terminating. The ditch was particularly shallow, at 0.08m deep, and may have been truncated during the stripping rather than terminating. Lying immediately to the south of ditch [381] was irregular pit [377], which may have been of natural origin but contained burnt flint and pottery.

Although these remains are widely spaced and not particularly substantial, they are all aligned approximately NNW to SSE which does suggest that they may be related. The general paucity of the features and the dating evidence within them, makes it difficult to determine the exact nature of the landscape during this phase. Was it laid out in a regular field system or was it more a scattering of inter-related enclosures? However the spread of these features does suggest, if they are contemporary, that a much wider field/enclosure system did once exist over this part of the early landscape.

The one possibly structural feature dating to the Early to Middle Iron Age was situated in Area 3 (Fig. 4). Curvilinear ditch [31] was located towards the south-east corner of the area and contained substantial amounts of charcoal-rich soils from which was recovered prehistoric pottery and charred grains, extracted from soil sample 4, which was collected from segment [499]. The ditch was approximately 0.5m wide and ranged in depth between 0.12m and 0.35m. It was notable that the sides of the ditch were almost vertical in all the excavated segments which suggests that this ditch was more likely a wall foundation trench rather than a drip or drainage gully. The terminal of the ditch was possibly truncated rather than truly ending and the ditch may have originally formed a roundhouse approximately 15m in diameter. However, no internal structural features were identified nor any associated occupation deposits or features. It may be that further parts of this feature lie eastwards under Gamecards Cottage. The location of this presumptive roundhouse, in relation to Jacks Lane, could hint at earlier origins for the lane.

The final two features from this phase were intercutting pits [307] and [328] which lay 33m to the west of Ditch 21, along the northern edge of Area 5 (Fig. 5). Although they do not seem to directly relate to any of the other features in the phase, it is interesting to note that similar to Ditch 31 small number of charred grains were recovered from the fills of both features (samples 2 and 3).

5.4.1.1 Further work

While on the face of it there seems to be a significant Early to Middle Iron Age presence in the landscape, the remains are spread thinly across a relatively wide area. The primary focus for further analysis of these remains should be to seek parallels with other sites especially in relation to the question of whether a true field system did exist or if it was more likely a series of small enclosures. Comparative analysis of ditch 31 with roundhouse ditches of this date should also be made in order to assess the possibility that it represents a roundhouse. However, further phases of excavation may produce further evidence and warrant a revision of this assessment.

5.4.2 Late Iron Age (Fig. 8)

Only one grouping of ditches, towards the north of Area 4, was dateable to the Late Iron Age (Fig.5). Ditches 22 and 24 form a relatively large boundary running across the landscape northeast - southwest. Towards the northeast corner of the area the terminals of the ditches define a c.6m wide entrance across which ran shallower, but contemporary, Ditch 23. The large boundary ditch was also recorded in evaluation Trench 38, segment [123], to the northeast of the area, which indicates that it may run under the properties to the east and west.

In general the dating from these ditches is not particularly good with only a few sherds of pottery recovered. Although there was a single sherd of medieval pottery recovered from the top of segment [123] of Ditch 22, the rest of the finds from these ditches were prehistoric or Late Iron Age. The ditches are unlikely to be of an earlier prehistoric date as Ditch 24 cuts Early to Middle Iron Age Ditch 21. On balance it is probable that they are Late Iron Age in date.

It is unclear what these ditches represent in terms of the management and use of the landscape. What is clear is that the ditches were a substantial boundary with the gap between them representing an entrance, suggesting control of movement through the landscape, either of humans or livestock. The smaller ditch which connects the terminals may have been the footing for a way in which the entrance could be barred, alternatively it may have been simply to facilitate drainage.

The alignment of this boundary does not seem to match any of the earlier or later alignments evidenced on the site, neither does it compare well with Jacks Lane, as now is.

5.4.2.1 Further work

The primary piece of further work needed for these three ditches is identification of parallels. Topographic analysis of the wider area may give a clue to the function of the ditches as they seem to run along a break of slope in the excavated areas. However, unless further phases of fieldwork uncover more features of this date, it will be difficult to place them in a wider context.

5.5 Roman and Saxon

With one possible exception the few Roman finds collected were residual in later features. The only feature of possible Roman date was pond / watering hole [233] which was located in the approximate centre of the Area 1 (Fig. 2). A machine slot was excavated across this feature with the agreement of RPS and HEM. It contained two fills. The primary fill (239) was probably a water-lain deposit, while the upper fill was more homogenous and may represent the natural silting or deliberate consolidation of a ‘muddy patch’ in a field. Prehistoric and Roman pottery was recovered from this feature however all the sherds were very abraded. The abraded nature of the pottery means that this feature is not securely dated. Associated with the pond was irregular gully [209]. This ran from the western edge of [233] and petered out towards the eastern baulk of the area. It seems likely that this gully represents a small run-off from the pond. Given the irregularity if the feature it is debatable whether this is man-made or of natural origin. No remains of Saxon date were identified during the excavation or proceeding evaluation

The largely negative result for these two periods, in this phase of the development does, however, add to our understanding of the use of the landscape over time, especially given the apparent proximity of Stane Street. It seems that during the Roman and Saxon periods this part of the landscape was marginal land with no evidence that it was utilised for occupation or farming. It may have reverted back to forested land, if indeed it was ever fully cleared.

5.6 Medieval

5.6.1 Early 13th century (Fig. 9)

All the features from this phase were located in Area 3 (Fig.4). They consist of six ditches, three of which run north – south and three which run approximately east – west, and a single pit.

North-south parallel Ditches 32, 33 and 35 ran along the eastern edge of the area. Ditch 28 ran westwards, perpendicular to the southern end of Ditch 33. Parallel to Ditch 28 ran abutting Ditches 29 and 30. These two ditches terminated against each other to de-facto form a single boundary. With the exception of Ditch 35, the ditches seem to have formed a 3m wide right-angled corridor that may be the remains of some form of stock control system, perhaps associated with a small farmstead fronting onto Jacks Lane. Ditch 35 was slightly less regular in plan than the other ditches and the excavated terminal contained an ash and charcoal rich fill, as well as pottery, which is indicative of domestic rubbish disposal. None of the ditches were particularly deep or long and all were cut by later features. The pottery from these features all dates to the early-13th century. It is notable that all of the ditches are aligned on Jacks Lane, which suggests that in its present form it dates to at least the 13th century.

The other feature dating to this phase was pit [513], which was also excavated in Trench 2 as pit [100]. Although it is cut by later pit [463], it seems to have been sub-circular and survived to a depth of 0.68. The function of this pit is unclear but it may have been deliberately positioned at the corner of the ditch system.

The absence of associated remains, such as field systems, further to the south, may be significant in relation to the use of the landscape during this period as it may suggest that the wider area retained the same character as the Roman or Saxon landscape.

5.6.1.1 Further work

The earlier medieval remains do not require any further work other than parallels being sought. Archaeological intervention in future development areas may bring to light more information, particularly around Jacks Lane.

5.6.2 Middle – Late 13th century (Fig. 10)

Apart from a single pit in Area 4, all the Middle to Late 13th century remains were again located in Area 3 (Fig. 4). The remains, although more substantial that those from the early 13th century, appeared similar in nature in that they probably represent continuity and development of agriculture-related activity at the edge of a small farmstead.

The later medieval remains seem to be bounded by perpendicular Ditches 26 and 27. Ditch 26 ran north – south and was approximately 0.5m deep and 1.3m wide. It terminated approximately 2m to the north of Ditch 27, with the gap between the two ditches possibly forming an entrance into the enclosed area. As well as pottery dating to the Mid-13th century, a copper alloy ring (SF 7) was recovered from this feature. Ditch 27 ran east – west along the southern edge of the area, it seemingly terminated just before the eastern baulk and was approximately 0.6m deep and 1.5m wide. A copper alloy rumbler bell (SF 6) was recovered from its fill. It seems highly likely that these ditches represent the delineation of an area that was set aside for a specific use, possibly at the edge of a small farmstead. If these ditches did form part of a farmstead boundary then it is likely that the main part of this site lies to the east.

Within the enclosure defined by Ditches 26 and 27 were four large semi-rectangular pits [396], [457/487], [463] and [473]. Pit [396] was the most north-easterly of the pits and was 1.06m deep. It contained three very homogenised fills and was slightly undercut towards the base. To the west of this pit lay pit [473]. This was the shallowest of the four pits measuring only 0.62m deep. Recovered from the single fill was a copper alloy buckle (SF 11), a quantity of oyster shells and, from the base of the fill four animal bones. Contrary to the remainder of the site assemblage these bones were in reasonably good condition which may suggest that they were deposited along with other organic material. To the south of pit [473] lay pit [463] which contained three fills and cut Early-13th century pit [513/100]. At 1.07m deep, this is the deepest of the four pits. In the top fill (464) were SF 9 and SF 10, both metal fixings or fastenings of some form. The fourth pit lay to the east of [463] and to the south of [396]. Pit [457]/[487] was the most elongated of the pits measuring approximately 6m long, 2m wide and 0.90m deep. It contained five fairly well-defined fills, two of which (459) and (461) were clearly redeposited natural. A quantity of what looks to be daub, with possible wattle impressions, was collected from fill (461). It is not clear as to the function of these four pits, if indeed they all have a similar use. Given the lack of primary silting in any of the pits it is unlikely that they were open for long, or else they were thoroughly cleaned out prior to backfilling. They may have functioned as some form of storage pits but there is no evidence to suggest for what, although they look to have been deliberately located in relation to one another.

The final group of features is a possible four-post structure along the northern edge of the area. Post-holes [446], [493], [495] and [497] may define the corners of an approximately 5m x 5m structure, although it is conceded that the structure could extend to the north and/or east. All the post-holes are sub-rectangular and vary in depth from 0.13m to 0.35m. The pottery recovered from two of the post-holes could only be broadly dated to between the 12th and 14th centuries but it seems likely that this structure is contemporary with the large pits and therefore dates to the Mid-13th century. It appears that the post-holes are on a similar alignment to the enclosing ditches and to the large pits again suggesting that they are associated. No evidence as to the function of the structure was recovered and it seems unlikely that it was occupational, as there is not enough incidence of debris that would be associated with a house of this date. It is more likely to be some form of barn or outbuilding with only part of it uncovered in the area of excavation.

The latest feature in the area was pit [454] which cut Ditch 26. The 13th century date of the relatively large quantities of pottery recovered from this feature suggests that the enclosure did not have a particularly long life span and that by the late 13th or early 14th centuries the area either went out of use or became fields. The apparent rapid backfilling of the large pits further reinforces this idea that the enclosure, and presumably what was within it, went out of use.

The only medieval feature which was located outside of Area 3 was small burnt pit [398] which lies along the western edge of Area 4 to the north of Ditch 24 (Fig. 5). It was probably the remains of a medieval fire pit with in-situ burning. Although no other features were associated with the pit, it is possible that more ephemeral features were truncated by ploughing.

5.6.2.1 Further work

The later medieval remains, in Area 3, are likely to have been associated with a small farmstead and probably represent continuity from the earlier 13th century remains. Parallels and comparisons need to be sought, especially for the large pits to try to define a function for them. The apparent short life-span of the site needs to be considered especially in relation to the moated site to the west. A wider consideration of the remains around Jacks Lane would put the remains in greater context and may aid understanding of why this part of Stane Street does not seem to be a focus of activity during this period. Some analysis of the distribution of medieval farmsteads and moated sites in the area may help to understand settlement patterns and associations.

5.7 Post-medieval (Fig 11)

The post-medieval remains are by far the most numerous on the site and were encountered in all but one of the excavated areas. The predominant group of features were three distinct phases of

parallel ditches, recorded in Areas 4, 5 and 6. Based upon the evidence of the trenching evaluation (Robertson 2005) it was originally thought that some of these phases were prehistoric in date, this was compounded by the presence of prehistoric pottery, which is now known to be residual. The further investigation and mapping of these systems indicates that they are in fact post-medieval in date. Other excavated remains of this date include minor ditches and a possible pond. None of these features are particularly well dated which in itself suggests that this area was predominantly fields and not subject to intensive activity during the post-medieval period.

Running approximately north–south through Areas 4, 5 and 6 were three distinct alignments of ditches (Fig.11 and Plates 3, 4 and 6). The dating evidence recovered from these features is notable only for its paucity, with a significant quantity of the pottery recovered being residual. It is however likely that all three of the alignments are post-medieval in origin, based primarily upon the stratigraphic evidence and the few pieces of peg tile recovered from six of the ditches. This being said, the alignments can only be dated relatively to each other, within the broad date range.

The earliest of the alignments is represented by Ditches 4, 7, 10 and 16 in Area 5 (Fig.5). Although these ditches were all parallel, they were irregularly spaced and were the most north–south aligned of the three systems. These ditches were only identified in Area 5. The second and most numerous of the alignments consisted of Ditches 1, 2, 3, 25, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17 and 18, which run through both Areas 4 and 5. They are set approximately 7m apart and, although the profiles of all of them were fairly consistent, the depths varied. It seems likely that the later alignment is a direct, and more extensive, replacement of the first, possibly representing the expansion of some form of horticultural activity. Both of these alignments appear to have a definite eastern limit to them, but no boundary marker such as a large ditch or track. This may indicate that the eastern edge was defined by something pre-existing, possibly a wooded area. Probably associated with one of these alignments were three north–south ditches, [343,339] and [350], in Area 6 (Plate 6). Although none of these ditches are dated, it is clear from their alignment and the position of their terminals that they are related to each other and, in the basis of their morphology, to those across Areas 4 and 5. Both these systems probably originally extended southwards down to the old A120 and Area 6 ditches suggest that they extended to northward to Jacks Lane. If these ditches are indeed the remnants of horticultural activity then it is probable that they functioned as cultivation trenches, i.e. runs for the crop to be planted in, rather than ditches utilised for drainage or marking boundaries.

The final alignment comprised of only two Ditches, 19 and 20, both of which also run approximately north – south through Area 4 and terminate 13m from the northern baulk of Area 5. As these two

ditches are the only ones which seem to terminate in the excavation areas they may not be necessarily related to the other alignments. Indeed the distance between the ditches and position relative to the earlier systems, along the eastern edge, suggests that they may constitute a defining of a lane or track on the edge of a wooded area.

In Area 1 a single ditch [206] was identified running approximately ENE-WSW across the northwest corner (Fig. 2). This ditch was squared in profile and was 0.46m deep. It ran parallel to two other ditches, 172 and 173, previously identified to the north in evaluation Trenches 28, 29, 34 (Fig.11), the ditches appear to be set approximately 10m apart. The profile of ditch [206] is also very similar to some of those identified in the north-south alignments seen in Areas 4 and 5. While it is not possible to say that these alignments are related, they do run perpendicular to each other. Ditch [206] contained a single piece of very abraded pottery which may be Roman. However, it is more likely that this ditch is of later date possibly post-medieval and may be part of an east-west alignment of ditches along with 172 and 173.

Running east-west along the northern edge of Area 2 was shallow ditch [234] (Fig.3), which was also identified in evaluation Trenches 26 and 37 as contexts [61] and [116]. Cutting this was north-south running ditch [236] which equals ditch [63] from evaluation Trench 26. No dating evidence was recovered from any of the excavated sections of this ditch, but stratigraphically it is later than ditch [234]. The final ditch in the area had no direct relationship to either of the other two. It ran north-south down the western edge of the site, parallel to [263], but terminated before it reached ditch [234]. The dating evidence for these ditches is ambiguous, with abraded Late Iron Age and medieval pottery recovered. On balance all the ditches probably date to the post-medieval period but are not necessarily associated with one another.

5.7.1 Further work

Some further work can be done on the parallel ditches especially in relation to similar alignments identified to the south of the A120 at Takeley (Roberts et al) and Warish Hall (Oxford Wessex Archaeology 2003, 14) and possibly at Marks Hall School, Harlow (Robertson forthcoming). Some thought and investigation also needs to be given to crop types that would have been suitable for growing on the chalky clays in ‘runs’/cultivation trenches. To date no plausible explanation for the function of these ditches has been forthcoming; this is not helped by their very tentative dating. It should be possible to put forward some suggestions as to the possible function of these ditches and assign them a more secure date. The remaining development areas may encompass further examples which will impact on the scope of further analysis of them.

The only other possibility for further analysis is cartographic analysis, including tithe maps, inventories and schedules, of the post-medieval land divisions which seem to by fossilised in the property boundaries immediately to the south of Area 2 and which may relate to some of the excavated ditches. Also any indication as to land use and division, with particular reference to the eastern limit of the cultivation trenches seen in Areas 4 and 5, needs to be sought.

5.8 Undated

A number of undated pits and post-holes were spread across the site, the majority of them are likely to be natural in origin. While some of them were probably tree-throws associated with possible land clearance prior to the Iron Age (see Section 5.3) most of them could not be related to other features or assigned to a phase based upon on their positioning. No further work is warranted on these features.

6 FINDS

Small groups of finds were recovered from ninety-three contexts in total; twenty-three from the evaluation and seventy from the Phase One mitigation stage of work. All of the material has been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context; full details can be found in Appendix 2. The finds are described by category below, along with recommendations for further work, if required. All of the material should be retained, although selection for discard could be made at the archiving stage. Charcoal and coal, plus tiny fragments of various materials, have already been discarded following recording.

6.1 Prehistoric pottery

The evaluation and excavation together produced a total of 323 sherds (1110g) of prehistoric pottery from thirty-six contexts, including two unidentifiable burnt sherds from fill (9), pit [8], which may be later (possibly Roman). The pottery was recorded using a system developed for prehistoric pottery in Essex (Brown 1988). Nine fabrics were recorded. Most of the material is flint and flint-and-sand tempered, with a small number of sand-tempered sherds and grog tempered (Fabric M) sherds from pit fill (9). The assemblage is fragmentary and mostly abraded.

The earliest material comprises three sherds of Beaker period pottery from a small gully in Area 3 (fill 441, Ditch 34); this is decorated with an incised lattice pattern. Sinuous ditch 21 produced most of the pottery (67.5% by sherd count, 69.2% by weight), including the neck of an Early Iron Age (EIA) Form D jar, and the shoulder of a Form K bowl in the Darmsden-Linton style (Cunliffe 1968). A sand-tempered footring base, which is almost certainly Middle Iron Age (MIA), was also recovered from this feature along with a small number of other sand-tempered sherds. Further, highly abraded, residual sand-tempered sherds were recovered from fill (333), Ditch 27, in Area 3. A further 8% (10% by weight) came from pit [307], in Area 5, and included a small sherd from a flared rim, probably of EIA date. The pottery from ditch [31] was all generic Fabric D which ranges in date from Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age. Otherwise most of the assemblage comprises undiagnostic prehistoric pieces that cannot be closely dated, many of them clearly residual in later contexts.

The assemblage indicates activity in this landscape during both the Late Neolithic and Iron Age periods. The scarcity of prehistoric material suggests that in neither case was the activity intensive or long-lived. Iron Age activity appears to have been largely restricted to ditch 21 and pit [307] and the pottery is indicative of a transitional phase. It probably began towards the end of the EIA and extended only a short while into the MIA, as suggested by the footring base, an essentially EIA characteristic here made in an MIA fabric.

6.1.1 Recommendations for further work

Given the fragmentary nature, small quantity and general residuality of the assemblage further analysis and study of the prehistoric pottery is not warranted. The existing material needs no more than a more detailed description and discussion and the illustration of approximately five sherds. Should further prehistoric pottery be recovered from adjacent phases of development, the present assemblage will need to be considered in this light.

6.2 LIA/Roman pottery

A combined total of ten contexts produced pottery of Late Iron Age and Roman date, amounting to 15 sherds, weighing 103g and comprising mainly small and abraded sherds. The pottery has been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context; details are provided in Appendix 2. The pottery fabrics have been recorded using the ECC FAU fabric series, but there were no identifiable forms present, except for a samian dish rim sherd in fill (238) of pond/waterhole [233]. The slip of this vessel is eroded and the fabric is orange in colour. The form (f32) was a popular product of the Colchester industry, and this may be an example. The fill of post-medieval ditch segment [404], Ditch 19, also produced very small sherds of samian. The remaining Late Iron Age and Roman pottery recovered from the site comprised mostly of local coarse wares. The condition and fragmentary nature of the pottery, however, suggest that all the pottery of this date was residual.

6.2.1 Recommendations for Further Work

All the recording of the LIA/Roman pottery has been completed and no further work is required. None is worthy of further study or publication.

6.3 Medieval and later pottery

A relatively small amount of pottery, totalling 437 sherds weighing 3.5kg, was recovered from twenty-nine contexts, most coming from Area 3. Very little pottery was recovered from the ditches in Area 3, comprising mainly unfeatured sherds of medieval coarse ware. A closer date can be assigned to a sherd of Hedingham ware from Ditch 35, which has an unusual pale coloured fabric, indicative of a later 12th century date. There are also sherds of sandy orange ware that could be of this early date, but are just as likely to be 13th or 14th century.

Most of the Area 3 pottery comes from large pits stratified above the ditches; [100, 396, 463, 473, 457/487]. Fine wares from the pits include fragments of Hedingham ware strip jugs, datable to the 13th century. There are also a few sherds of Mill Green and medieval Harlow ware, dating from the mid 13th to 14th centuries. In addition, there are sherds of sandy orange ware and Hedingham ware decorated in the Mill Green style, again indicating a date not before the mid-13th century.

Much of the pottery from the pits consists of medieval coarse ware, including possible examples of Hedingham coarse ware. No pottery manufactured at the nearby production site at Frogs Hall was identified (Walker, in prep). Coarse ware forms comprise cooking pots and at least one coarse ware jug. No bowls were positively identified but some of the more fragmented rims may be from bowls. Most of the cooking pot rims present are 13th century types, but there is one example of an H3 cooking pot rim in pit [473] datable to the late 13th to 14th century. A number of sherds of early medieval ware are residual in the pit groups, including a possible sherd from a storage jar. Although residual, the finds of this ware indicate activity here in the early medieval period. Horizontal cross-fits between three of the pits indicate these features may have been open at the same time. Two post-holes, [495] and [497], and a pit [507] at the northern end of Area 3 produced very small amounts of medieval coarse ware, none of which is closely datable.

The pottery evidence suggests that the ditches in Area 3 are datable to the later 12th to earlier 13th centuries and the pits are datable to the 13th to 14th centuries. Very little medieval pottery was excavated from other areas. The evaluation produced a sherd with very sparse shell-tempering, which is similar, but not identical to, a fabric recovered from the nearby Stansted Airport excavations and datable to the 12th to early 13th centuries (Walker 2004, 408). Further sherds of medieval coarse ware and one sherd of slip decorated sandy orange ware were also recovered from the evaluation.

There is virtually no evidence of late medieval or post-medieval activity. Stratigraphically the latest medieval feature was pit [454] which cut ditch 26 and but it also contained 13th century pottery similar to that found over the rest of Area 3. A sandy orange ware bifid handle and everted jar rim dating to the 14th to 16th centuries were found unstratified in Area 3.

The post-medieval pottery recovered from the site comprises a total of three sherds of glazed post-medieval red earthenware. As this pottery was unstratified it could have been deposited by muck-spreading of midden material and is not enough to constitute evidence of activity in the late medieval or post-medieval periods. No post-medieval pottery was recoved from any of the ditches in Areas 4 or 5.

6.3.1 Recommendations for Further Work

The pottery should be fully recorded on to a database to facilitate further analysis and should also be compared to pottery from other medieval sites in the vicinity, such as Stansted Airport, nearby Frogs Hall, and Stebbingford. Study of the pottery should seek to further knowledge of the

distribution of the fine wares/glazed wares, especially medieval Harlow ware, which seems to have a fairly limited distribution in west Essex.

6.4 Metalwork

Items of metalwork, mostly iron, were recovered from eleven contexts, mainly with the aid of a metal detector. All but five of the contexts also contained medieval pottery.

6.4.1 Copper Alloy Objects

Four items of copper alloy were found. A rumbler bell (SF6), from the fill of segment [288] of medieval Ditch 27, is probably made from sheet metal and not cast in a mould, and thus is probably medieval rather than later. The poor condition of the bell also indicates a probable medieval date. A similar example from Norwich was found in a 1507 fire deposit (Margeson 1993, fig.162, no.1759). A near-complete finger ring, SF7, from the fill of segment [368], of medieval Ditch 26, is paralleled at London and dated 1150-1200 (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 328, fig.216, no.1615). The ring would have probably had a glass or semi-precious stone setting, which is now lost. Joining copper alloy fragments, SF9 from a fill of medieval pit [463], form a decorative fitting of unknown origin. The piece is bow-shaped with a central hole, and had a maximum length of 20mm when complete. A buckle plate, SF11 from medieval pit [473], is in a fair condition, with two copper alloy rivets still *in situ*. The buckle itself is missing.

6.4.2 Iron Objects and Nails

Four iron objects were recovered, few of which could be certainly identified. Only one, SF10 from pit [463], was found with medieval pottery. An iron hook or latch was found unstratified, accompanying a quantity of medieval pottery, but need not be empirically medieval. Ten iron nails, with a total weight of 74g, came from five contexts, four of which also contained medieval pottery. Four of the nails, three of which came from the fill of medieval pit [463], are ‘fiddle key’ nails of medieval date. These are so named because of their resemblance to violin tuning keys, but they were used as shoeing nails for horses.

6.4.3 Lead Object

A single flat piece of lead, SF8 recovered by metal detector [370] from Ditch 35, was recorded. The item is incomplete and with no surface detail. There were no associated finds, but it may derive from an agricultural label, such as once were used on seed sacks.

6.4.4 Recommendations for Further work

The copper alloy items are either in poor condition or are mud-encrusted, and they have thus been submitted to a conservator for cleaning and stabilisation. The iron objects are coated with corrosion products and will be x-rayed, along with the fragments which cannot be identified as nails. This will help to provide identifications in most cases. The lead piece, although broken, is stable, and has been stored in an appropriate environment, along with the iron nails. Since most of the metalwork was found in medieval contexts, it should all be examined by a specialist in this field. The importance of the metalwork could then be established and recommendations for further work towards publication could be made.

6.5 Roof tile

Seven pieces of roof tile, weighing 170g, were recovered from four contexts. Six are post-medieval, retrieved during the evaluation, and these are small and abraded. The remaining fragment, from fill (464) of pit [463], is likely to be medieval in date. The fragment is flat, in a brown gritty fabric, with much quartz sand on the underside. The tile has been burnt black almost to the full depth, and is soot-encrusted on the upper surface. This implies use or re-use in a structure such as a hearth. This is the sole tile fragment to be recovered from the second stage of work.

6.5.1 Recommendations for Further Work

No further work is required, although consideration of the reasons for such an obvious dearth of tile debris on the Area 3 medieval site may usefully infer the nature/ status of the presumed farmhouse itself.

6.6 Baked clay

Fourteen contexts produced fragments of baked clay, most of which are small and friable, amounting to a total of 378g. A single context, fill (461) of medieval pit [457], contained 55% of the total by weight. The fragments are mainly light orange to buff in colour with chalky inclusions. Nearly all of the assemblage comes from contexts of medieval date, and several of the larger pieces have flat surfaces. The baked clay may have derived from structural daub, but there is very little evidence to confirm function.

6.6.1 Recommendations for Further Work

No further work is required, though similar consideration of its low presence in Area 3 to that of the roof tile may be made.

6.7 Flints

The combined total of sixty worked flints is predominantly later prehistoric in date, *i.e.* dating from the later Neolithic to the end of the prehistoric era (with the probable exception of nine patinated pieces). The assemblage includes twelve retouched flakes and blades, but none of them is of a type that is specific to any one period. The nine patinated and partly-patinated pieces are of particular interest, since patination indicates an earlier prehistoric date. It is possible that these were collected and brought onto the site for future modification and subsequent use, as must have been the case with the core from fill (99) of ditch [98], a segment of EIA/MIA sinuous ditch 21. The worked flint collected so far suggests a low level of human presence in this landscape during prehistoric times. The nearby Dunmow Road (old A120) overlies a known prehistoric trackway (Lavender 1997) and it would be expected that artefacts of all ages will be found in the landscape bordering the track. It is of interest that the later prehistoric use of flint in the vicinity has been amply demonstrated (H. Martingell pers.comm).

6.7.1 Recommendations for Further work

Since most of the flint assemblage is either unstratified or residual in later features, further work will not be required. The apparently patinated flints are interesting, but in a wider aspect and not in relation to the excavated features at Priors Green. Further stages of work, however, may produce flints which may add to the significance of the assemblage.

6.8 Animal bone

Small quantities of animal bone were recovered, amounting to just over 34 pieces, weighing 288g, from eleven contexts in all. Among these are several burnt bone fragments recovered from the soil sample taken from fill (9) of prehistoric pit [8], originally thought to be a cremation burial. Identification as a cremation burial, however, has been ruled out and the fragments must derive from food remains. Almost all of the assemblage comes from contexts of medieval date, and nearly all of which cannot be identified to species.

In general, the bone is fragmentary and in poor condition, except for that retrieved from fill (474) of medieval pit [473]. The good condition of the bones from this fill may have resulted from burial alongside organic matter which has since decayed. Interestingly, although only four bones were recovered, two of these have been identified as horse. No butchery marks are evident, but the bones are unlikely to represent part of the burial of an entire animal. A fragment of metapodial in fill (455) of segment [456] of medieval Ditch 26, is also tentatively identified as horse.

6.8.1 Recommendations for Further Work

Since the bone assemblage is so small and in such poor condition, no further work is necessary.

6.9 Shell

Eleven contexts, all from the second stage of work, produced shell, mainly oyster. Single garden snail shells came from fill (452) of pit [454] and fill (464) of pit [463]. All of the shell, amounting to 148 pieces, weighing 1509g, was recovered from contexts of medieval date in Area 3. At least 115 valves, representing a minimum of fifty-eight individuals, were recorded, eighty of these (70%) coming from the fills of a single feature, pit [473]. The shell is in good condition with most of the assemblage comprising complete examples of both valves.

6.9.1 Recommendations for Further Work

The minimum number of shells required for specialist study is thirty and, since the shell comes from medieval features, it may be worth considering submission for further study. Although there is a lack of animal bone, this shell may denote disposal of food waste from an associated farmstead. As such, the oyster assemblage is worthy of study to further understand diet, status/ wealth and access to non-local food produce.

6.10 Environmental material

Method

Nine bulk soil samples were collected from a variety of features. These were processed by wet-sieving with flotation over a 500 micron mesh and collecting the floated fraction on a 0.5mm sieve. The residue was dried and separated into fractions using 2mm and 4mm sieves. All of the material larger than 2mm (the coarse fraction) was sorted by eye, and both artefacts and ecofacts extracted where present. The material smaller than 2mm (the fine fraction) was saved but not sorted, other than to look for plant macrofossils. The flots were also dried and then scanned for plant macrofossil content. (For samples 2, 4, 8 and 9 it should be noted that a 50% fraction was processed for assessment purposes. The remaining fractions are being stored, awaiting a decision either for further processing or for discard).

Results

Four samples (1-4) produced small quantities of charred grains and seeds, and sample 6 produced a single seed. Samples 7-9 produced small fragments of charcoal only, with sample 8 containing recognisable modern stem or root material. Sample 5 produced no flots. Except for samples 1, 4 and 8 which have a higher charcoal content, the saved fine fractions appear to be sterile.

The samples with charred grains are located as follows; sample 1 was taken from prehistoric pit [8] in Evaluation Trench 28; samples 2 and 3 were taken from prehistoric pits [307] and [328] in Area 5; sample 4 came from segment [499] of roundhouse ditch 31, in Area 3. It is notable that few or no macrofossils were extracted from the soil samples taken from the fill of medieval pits [463] and [396], samples 5, 6 and 9, which suggests that they were not grain storage pits.

6.10.1 Recommendations for Further Work

The potential for species identification and further study is high and, since the grain comes from prehistoric features, specialist study is recommended. The specialist study of the grains will not only provide species identification but will compliment the corpus of evidence for early crop production and processing on the Essex Boulder Clay from the Stansted Airport excavations (Havis and Brooks 2004). Only parts of samples 2 and 4 were processed with the remaining parts being stored in sealed containers. The bagged residues have been stored in case of further work, but need not be retained if no work is required.

7. DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT OF AIMS

7.1 Discussion

Overall the remains uncovered in Phase 1 of the development seem to form the outline of a narrative concerning the development and exploitation of the landscape from the Neolithic through to the post-medieval periods. On the surface there are major elements of change, but with subtle undercurrents of continuity hinted at from the site data. A brief outline of what may be inferred of landscape development for each site phase is laid out below.

Pre-Iron Age

It is clear that the landscape around Priors Green was inhabited from at least the Neolithic period onwards. While it is likely that the area remained largely wooded, some of the undated tree-throws identified may relate to limited tree clearance. A speculative picture of the landscape during the Neolithic and/or Bronze Ages is of a low density of relatively isolated farmsteads in woodland clearings.

Early/Middle Iron Age

During this period the first evidence for widespread landscape 'management' occurs. Although it is likely that a large part of the landscape remained wooded, it seems larger areas were cleared to make way for small fields or enclosures. The long sinuous ditch suggests that the wider landscape was to some extent divided up and it is possible that the divisions were related to the remains of a structure, in Area 3. Of further note is the line of the long sinuous ditch which has been seemingly perpetuated over a considerable period of time. The eastern-most extent of the post-medieval cultivation trenches coincides along the same approximate line. A modern footpath also follows the line.

Late Iron Age

The large boundary ditches from this period clearly indicate that movement across the landscape, either for humans and/or animals, was being controlled. This indicates a more substantial regime of landscape 'management' than the earlier Iron Age. The greater size of the ditches could also be an indication that there was a greater concentration/cohesion of manpower available for this. It is eminently possible that larger areas of woodland would have needed to have been cleared to support this increased manpower, either through increased farming production or for larger occupation areas.

Roman/ Saxon/ Early medieval

There is no substantive activity on the development area during these periods, and no apparent roadside settlement along Stane Street. This may suggest that the landscape reverted back to either scrub land or first stage forest, if it was ever cleared.

Later Medieval

The focus for activity during this period seems to be Jacks Lane with a putative farmstead and moated sites seemingly situated along it. Why this route was preferred over Stane Street is as yet unclear, but certainly by the 13th century the lane was set in its current position in the landscape. It may be that parts of Stane Street had become unusable and alternative routes were utilised, although a non-road frontage location may simply have been preferred by the owners of some of the near-by moated houses. The land between Jacks Lane and Stane Street seems not to have been given over to enclosed fields, which may indicate that it was scrub or woodland.

Post-medieval

It is clear that a large amount of the woodland in the development area was cleared by or during this period. By 1881 and the 1st Edition OS map it was all gone, although the surrounding areas do contain wooded areas. The parallel ditches seem to indicate that some reasonably large-scale horticultural activity was taking place in this area, while the well-defined eastern limit perhaps indicates that some woodland survived in places for a while. The nature of this horticulture needs further consideration, but it is interesting to speculate that it represents a fore-runner of the large expanse of 20th century greenhouses, now demolished, to the northwest. It is also of note that Jacks Lane also survives as a route way and is fossilised in the present day field boundaries.

7.2 Assessment of Aims

In relation to the stated aims of the project the excavation produced variable results. It seems clear that the area of the development has since at least the Middle Iron Age been part of an agricultural landscape, and with the possible exception of the putative 13th century farmstead in the vicinity of Area 3, has not been a site of occupation. It is also interesting to note the absence of Roman period features despite the proximity of Stane Street. The specific aims of the project that can be addressed by the results of the excavation are outlined below with a brief discussion as to how they can be answered.

- **Stansted Plateau remained largely wooded with localised clearance through the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. Does this apply?**

  There is evidence of Neolithic activity on the site in the form of two small gullies and nine patinated flints. However, there is not enough evidence to indicate the scale or nature of the activity. The earliest concrete evidence of a cleared landscape from the site dates to the Early Iron Age and a few fragments of a possible field system and a long presumably boundary ditch. So although there is Neolithic activity on the site the present evidence from the development area does not allow comment on the above statement.

- **What was the nature of the later Bronze Age/ early Iron Age activities and in particular is there evidence of the emergence of more permanent settlements and field systems within the proposal site?**

  The evidence from the Early Iron Age suggests that the area was at least partially laid to field during this period. Some charred gains have also been recovered from early Iron Age features which suggests that cereal crops were grown, however the grains have not yet been identified No remains were uncovered that suggest settlement within the present site.

- **When was Boulder Clay brought into cultivation?**

  From the excavated evidence it is possible that the clays that form the natural geology of the development area were brought into cultivation as early as the Neolithic period. However, as outlined above the earliest definite evidence for fields and therefore cultivation is the fragments of Early Iron Age field systems.

- **Prehistoric landscape alignment and usage.**

  The Early Iron Age landscape seems to have been agricultural in nature. Whether this was clearings in a largely wooded area or an open landscape is not clear from the excavated evidence. The long irregular Ditch 21 is roughly aligned northwest by southeast. The small fragments of ditches dotted around the site are not substantial enough to suggest an alignment of fields.

  The large prehistoric ditches with the possible entrance way at the north end of Area 4 are clearly some form of landscape division but without a clear picture of what the ditches actually represent it is difficult to assign a function. It should be noted that the major Late Iron Age ditch is differently aligned to the apparent alignment of Stane Street and may, therefore, suggest an earlier landscape orientation.

- **What happened to the landscape in the post-Roman period**

  Given the lack of Roman, Saxon and early medieval features on the site it is reasonably safe to assume that during these periods there was little or no human activity taking place on the site. The earliest post-Roman evidence is early-13th century and possibly some form of stock control or plot boundary. The medieval features are concentrated in one area, which suggests that the majority of the area was either still forested or under pasture. Although a small farmstead is likely to have grown/ or expanded during the mid to late 13th century it is likely that the wider landscape retained a similar character to the earlier 13th century.

- **The form and character of the post-medieval landscape**

  The parallel north–south ditches seen along the western side of the development area would seem to indicate that the post-medieval landscape use changed from at best partially managed woodland or pasture to some form of horticulture. Further work is however needed to try to define what was likely to have been grown. Other ditches, primarily identified during the evaluation indicate the division of the area into irregular fields.

- **Surviving historic landscapes in the contemporary landscape**

  The most obvious part of a surviving historic landscape is Jacks Lane and the associated moated site which is known to date to the medieval period at least but may have earlier origins. Some of the extant property boundaries may also have earlier antecedents.

8. FURTHER WORK

While the suggestion of a narrative for the landscape development and use is starting to emerge the level to which it can be refined is dependant on the results of further archaeological interventions. Parallels and comparisons should be sought and made for a number of the feature and finds groups, in particular the medieval pottery assemblage; the parallel north – south (and possibly east – west) ditches; the large medieval pits and the large ditches in Area 4. More specific requirements for further work are:

- Further consideration of the fragments of the Early Iron Age field system, including comparisons to pertinent examples in the wider area.
- A detailed description and discussion of the Prehistoric pottery and the illustration of 5 sherds.
- Topographical mapping of the general area should be consulted to try to ascertain whither the Late Iron Age boundary ditch could follow a ridge in the landscape.

- Investigation of the kinds of horticulture possible on chalky clays during the Post-medieval period, with a view to determining the function of the parallel ditch alignments.
- Cartographic analysis of land divisions during the post-medieval period, some of which may be fossilised in modern property boundaries, while others are likely to survive only as ditches identified either in the excavation or evaluation.
- The metalwork; shell and charred grain to be analysed and reported upon by the relevant specialists.

It is considered that the Phase 1 archaeological investigations have already produced data conducive to consideration of landscape development on the north Essex Boulder Clay plateau. Dissemination of this information will be a valuable contribution to the emerging knowledge and understanding of the past of this area of the county and the results of this Phase 1 investigations should be regarded as the first building block of a larger landscape study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was commissioned by RPS Planning on behalf of Countryside Properties Plc. Thanks go to S. Blatherwick and R. Masefield for their assistance throughout the project. The project was conducted by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit. The fieldwork was carried out by the author with the assistance of B. Barker, C. Down, T. Ennis, M. Germany, N. Lavender, A. Lewsey, D. Maynard, A. Turner and D. Smith. All finds were processed by Phil McMichael and analysed by Joyce Compton (Summary and Other finds), Nick Lavender (Prehistoric Pottery), Hazel Martingell (Flints) and Helen Walker (Medieval Pottery). Digitising of plans and preparation of the digital illustration was undertaken by Andy Lewsey and the samples processed by D Smith. The project was managed by Mark Atkinson of ECC FAU. Richard Havis and Vanessa Clarke of the ECC HEM Team monitored the fieldwork.

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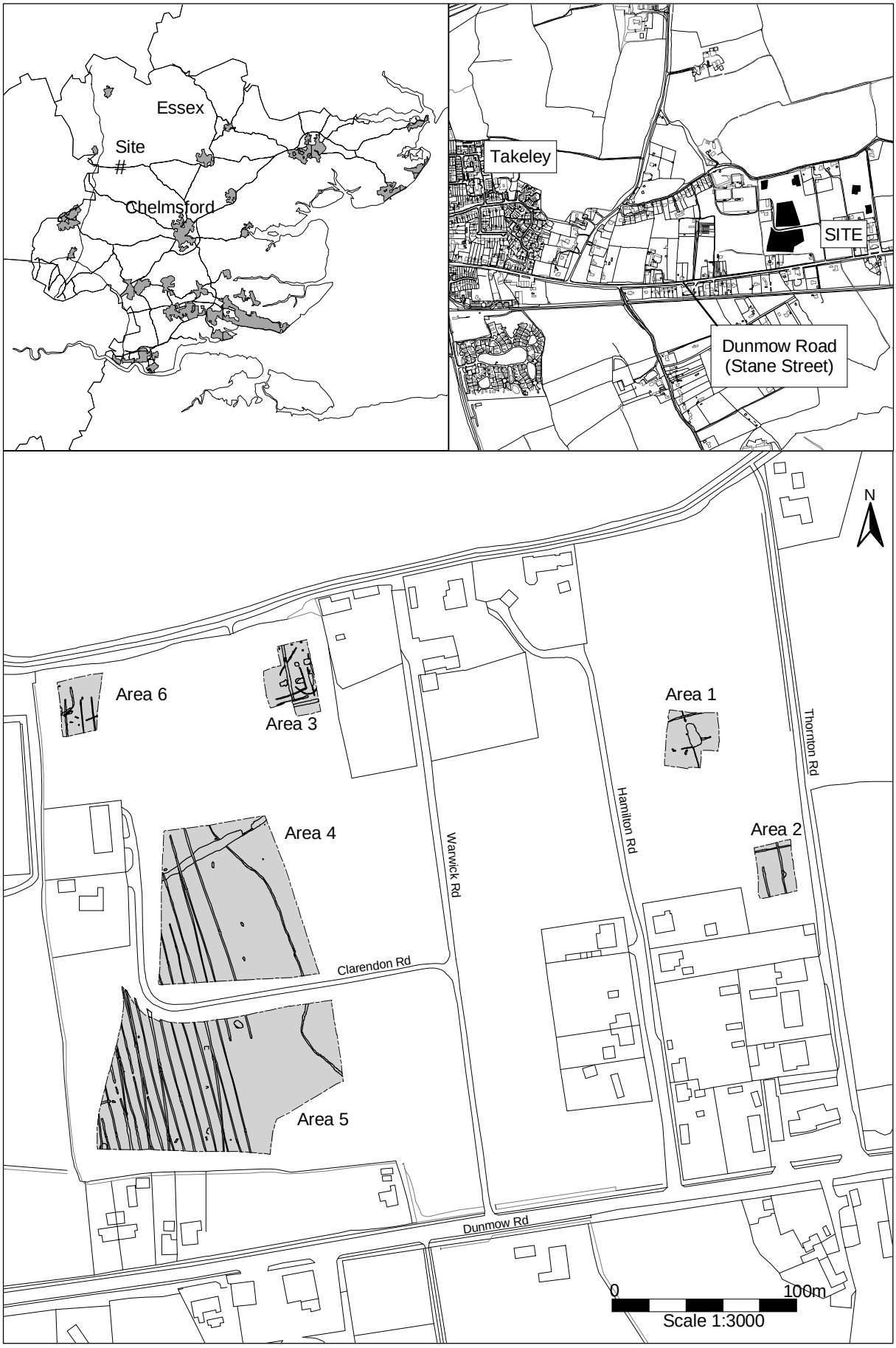

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Fig.1. Site and area locations

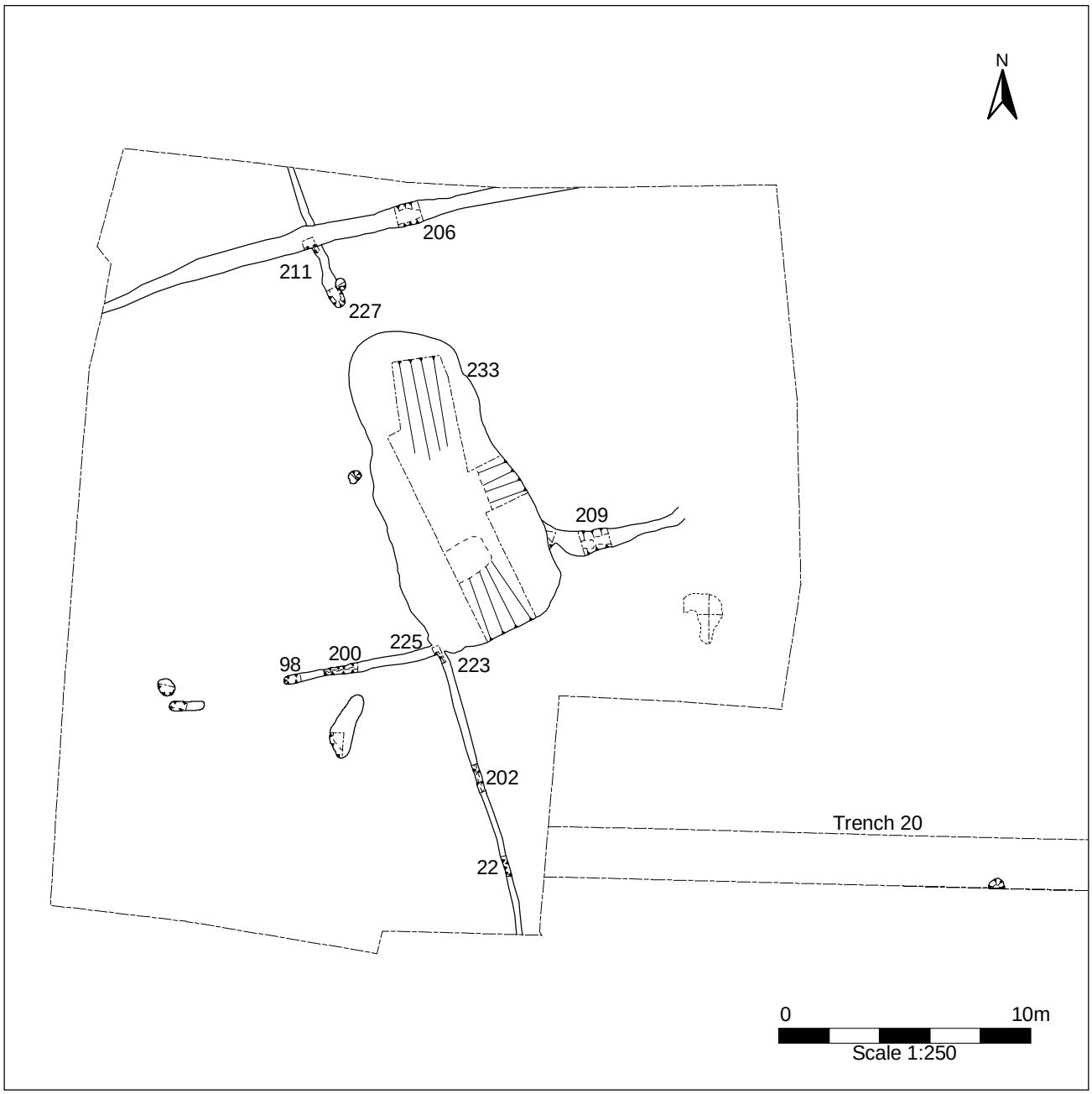

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Fig.2. Area 1, all features

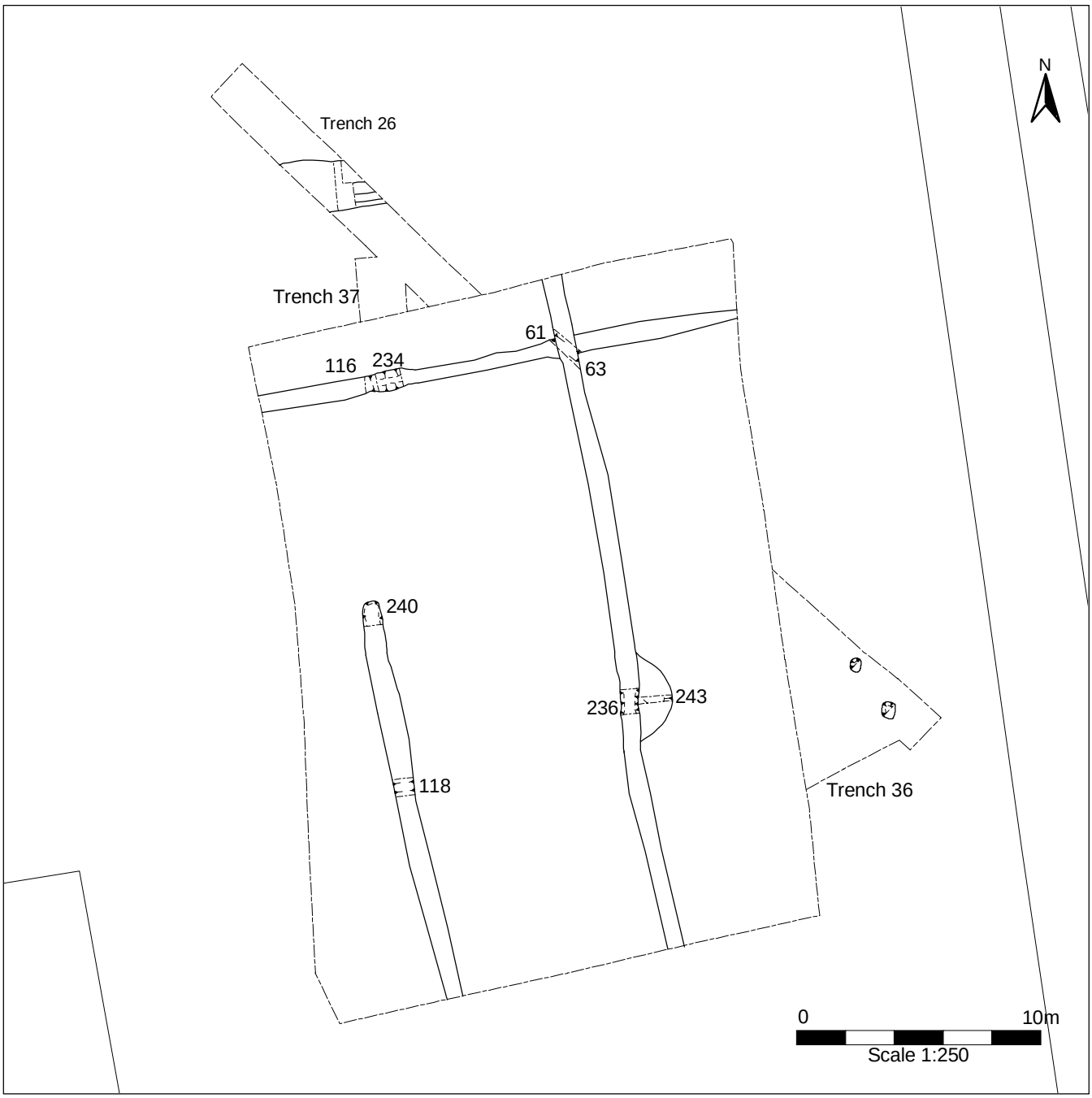

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Fig.3. Area 2, all features

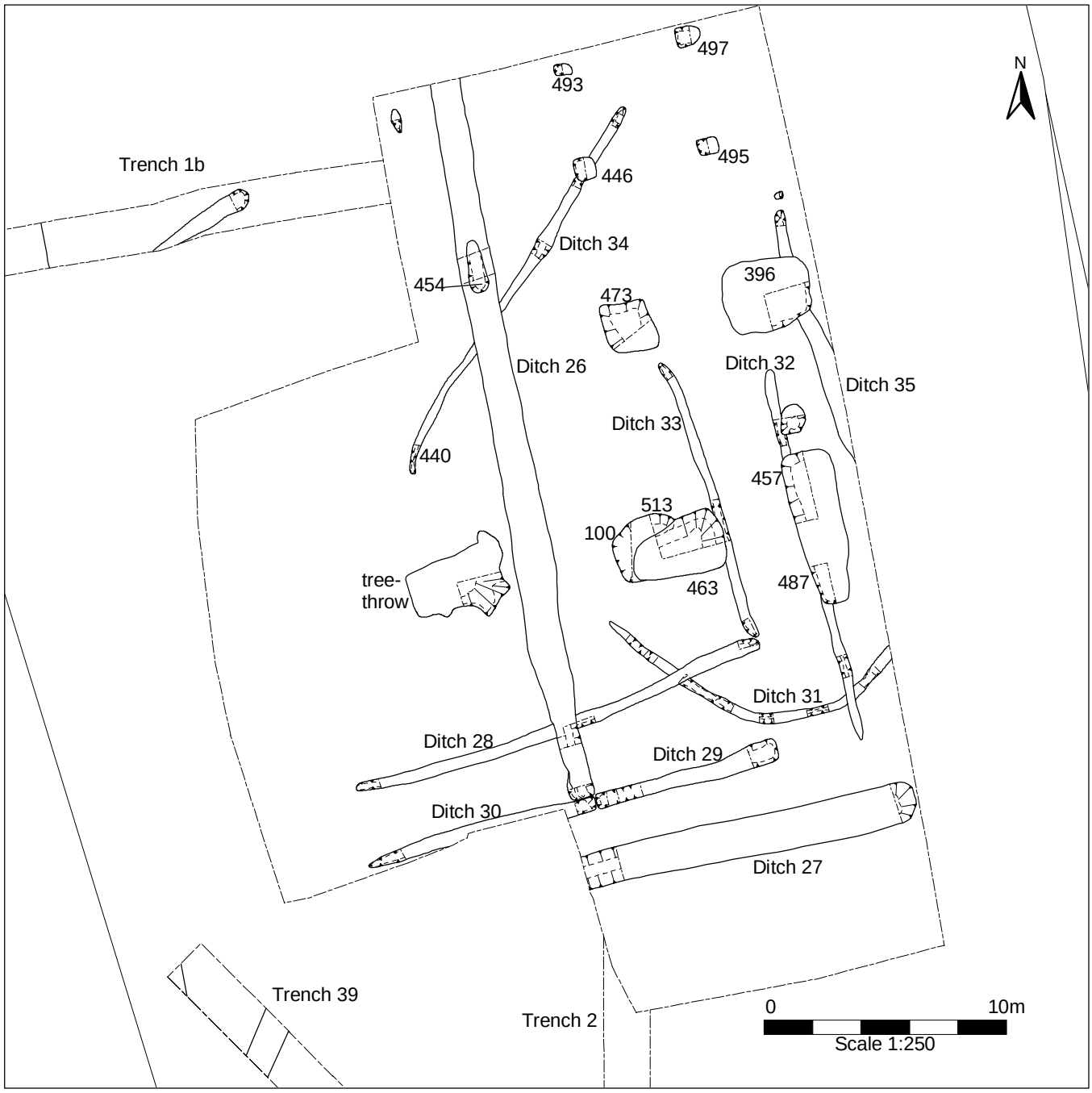

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Fig.4. Area 3, all features

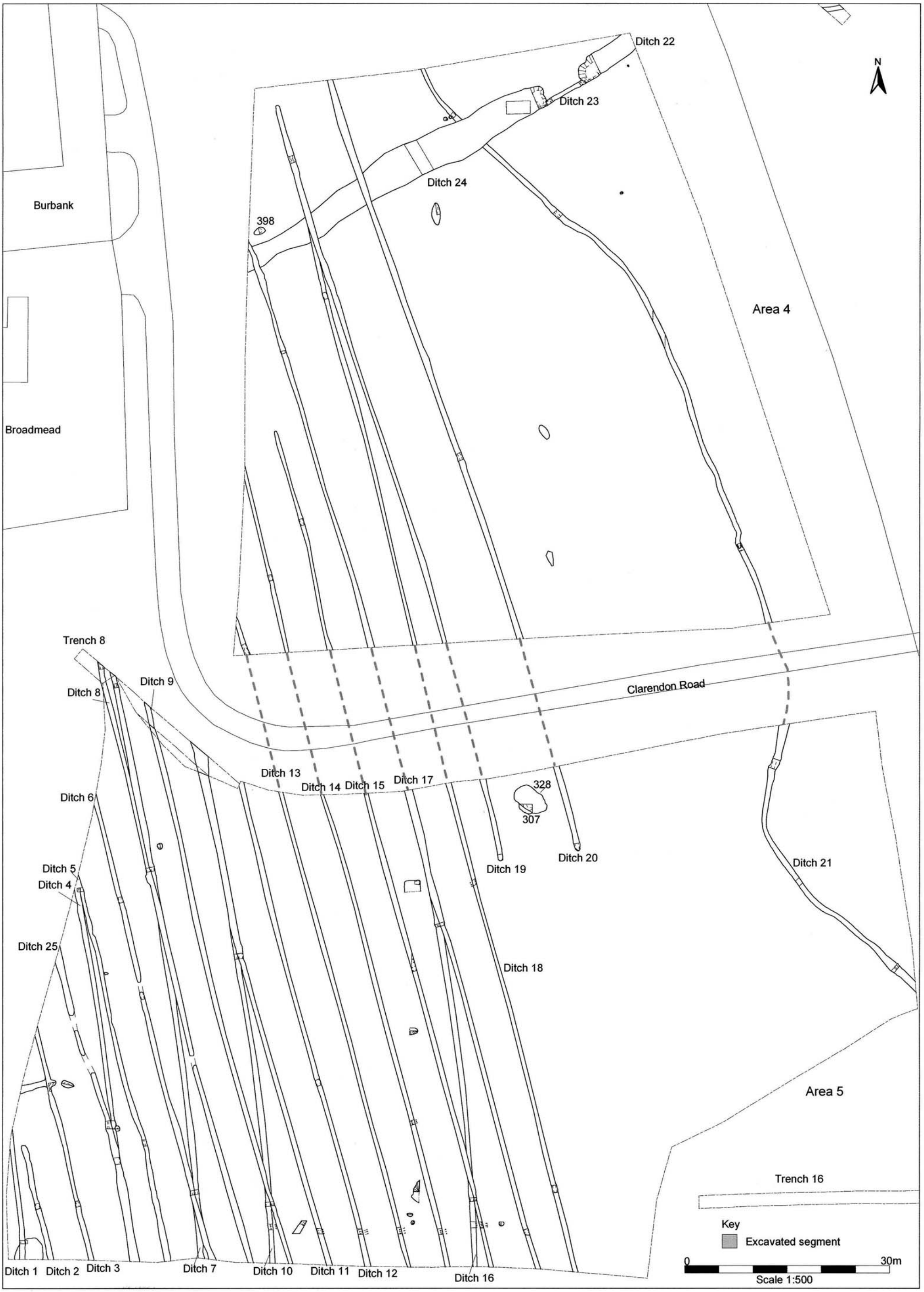

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Fig.5. Areas 4 and 5, all features

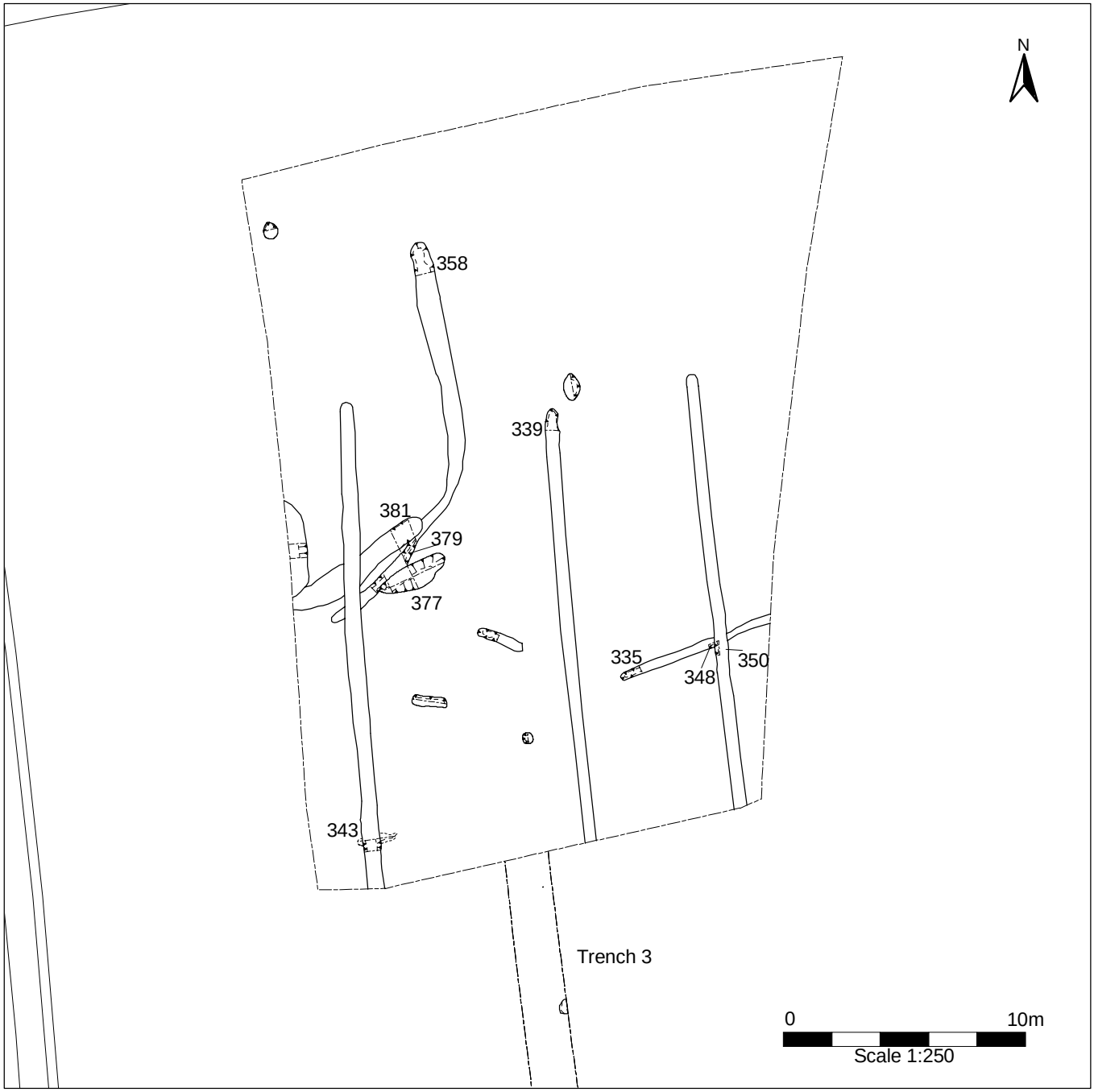

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Fig.6. Area 6, all features

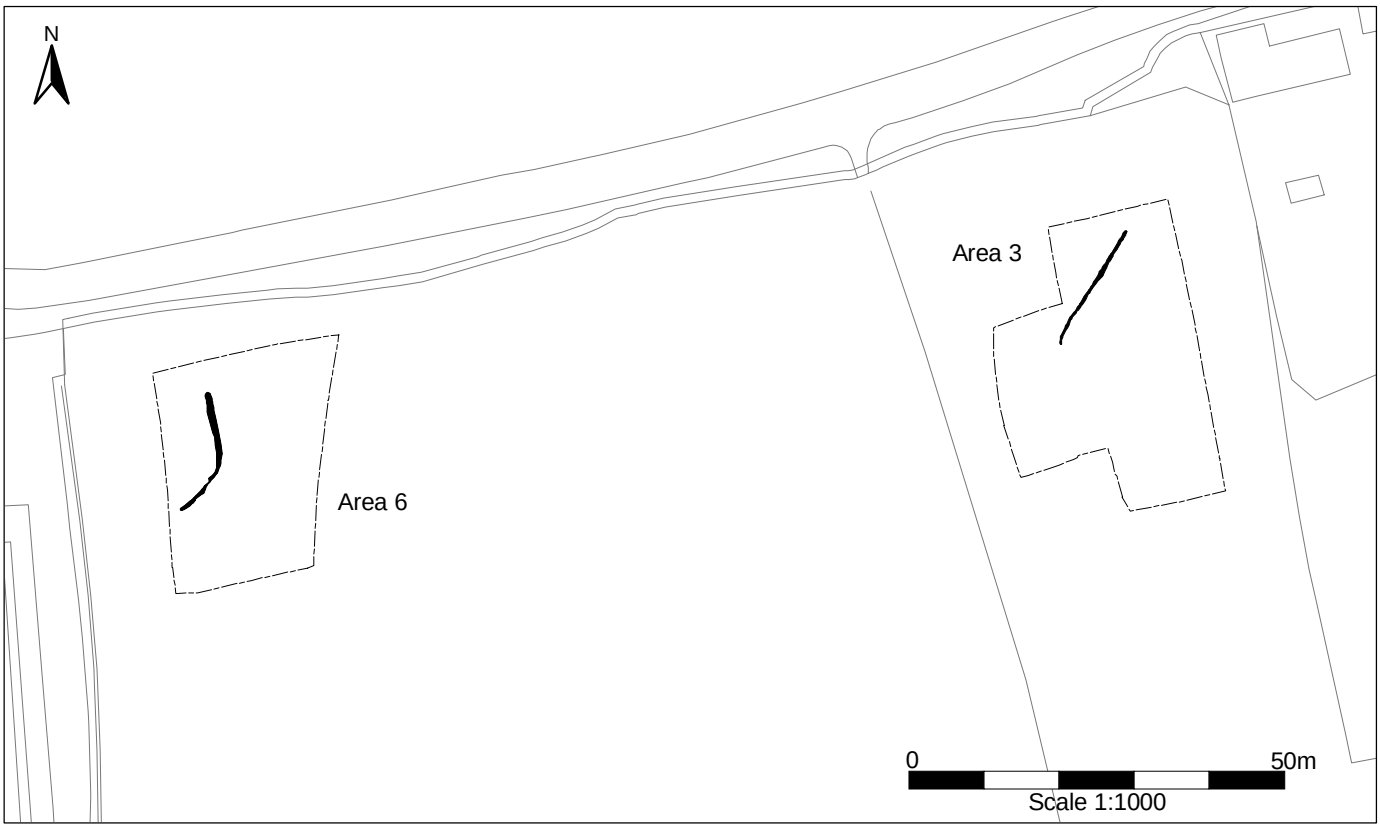

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Fig.7. Neolithic features

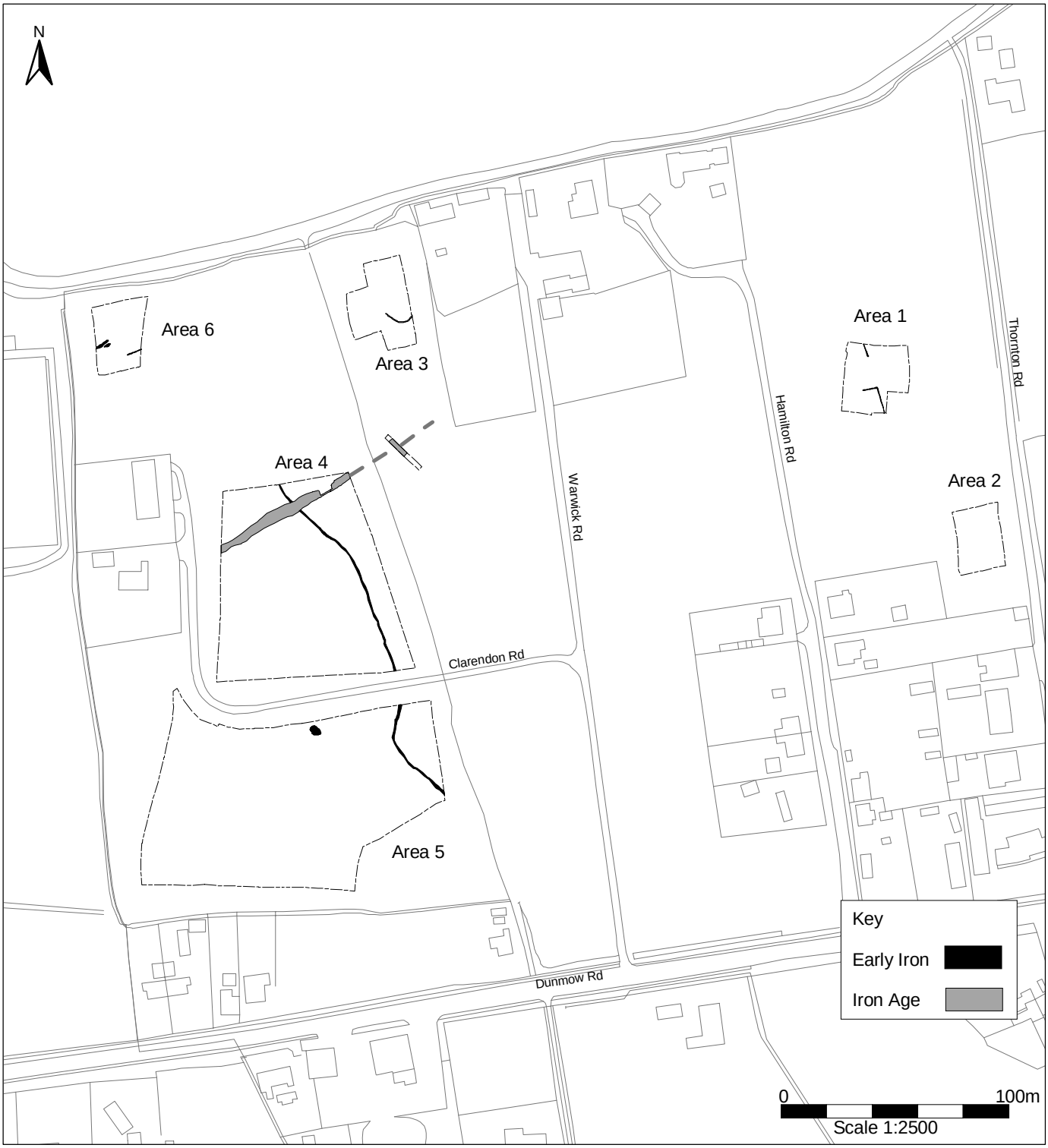

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Fig.8. Iron Age features

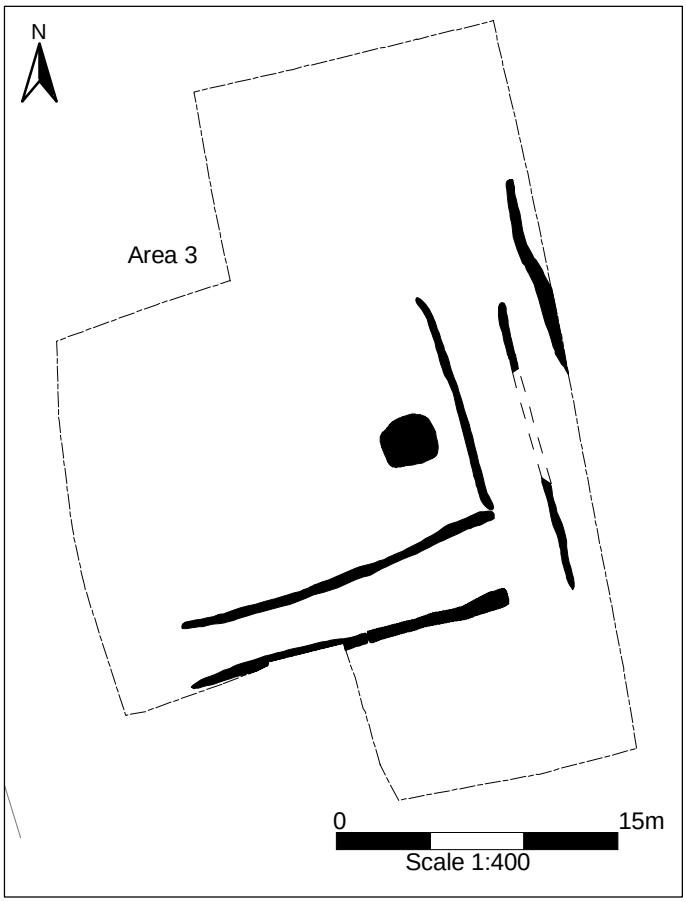

Fig.9. Area 3, early 13th century features

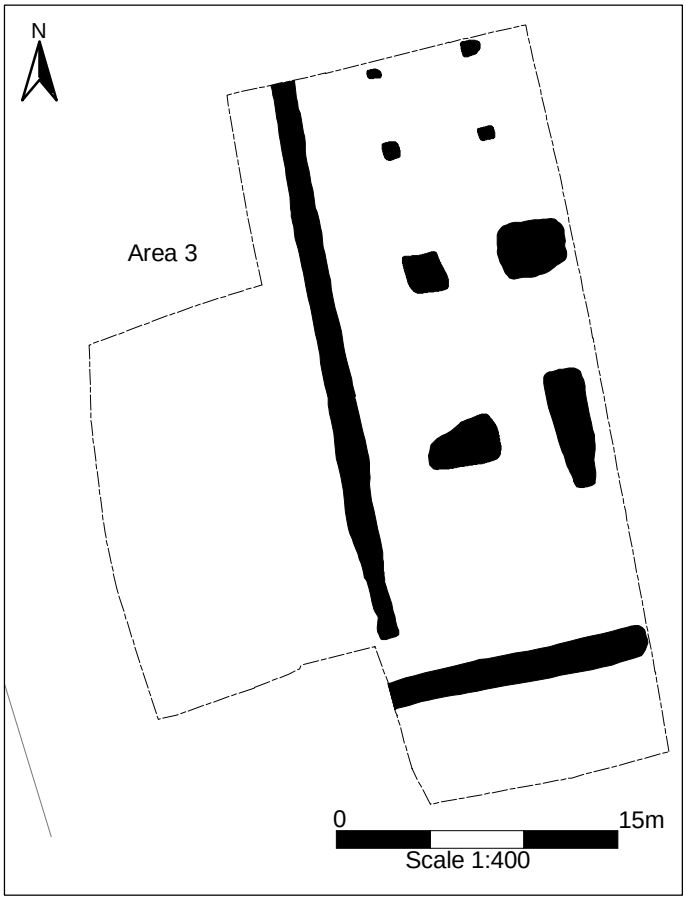

Fig.10. Area 3, mid-late13th century features

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Fig.11. Post-medieval features

Plate 1: Topsoil and subsoil stripping Area 5

Plate 2: Area 3, west facing

Plate 3: Area 4, north – east facing

Plate 4: Area 5, south facing

Plate 5: Areas 4 and 5, facing south - east

Plate 6: Area 6, facing north

APPENDIX 1: FEATURE LIST

All dimensions are given in metres.

TAPG 04

Number	Type	Filled by	Group	Length	Breadth	Depth	Trench	Feature Date
1	Topsoil						All	
2	Subsoil						All	
3	Undist Nat						All	
4	Pit	5		1.1	0.78	0.35	31	
6	Ditch	7		0.55	0.98	0.57	29	P-med
8	Burnt Pit	9		0.3	0.29	0.15	28	LBA or Roman
10	Ditch	11		0.95	1.12	0.35	31	
12	Ditch	13		0.8	0.54	0.28	29	
14	Ditch	15		+1	1.2	0.26	28	P-med
16	Pit	17		0.35	0.78	0.12	28	
18	Pit	19		0.8	0.65	0.19	29	
20	Pit	21		1.65	0.6	0.15	29	
22	Ditch	23		0.7	0.56	0.29	20	EIA/MIA
24	Ditch	35, 36		0.5	1.05	0.4	26	P-med
25	Ditch	37, 38, 39		0.7	1.14	0.62	26	P-med
26	Post-hole	27		0.46	0.28	0.09	25	
28	Pit	29		0.75	0.65	-	25	
30	Ditch	31, 32, 77, 78, 79, 80		+1	1.8	0.9	25	
33	Pit	34		-	0.55ø	0.26	20	
40	Ditch	41		0.5	0.4	0.3	26	
42	Ditch	43, 44		0.6	2.4	1.4	27	Modern
45	Pit	46, 47		1.16	0.74	0.17	22	
48	Pit	49		-	1.2	0.22	21	
50	Pit	51		0.47	0.88	0.11	26	
52	Pit	53		0.58	0.6	0.06	26	
54	Ditch	55		2	1.7	0.7	26	
56	Ditch	57	D14	0.68	0.6	0.25	10	P-Med
58	Ditch	59, 60	D21	2.7	1.06	0.51	12	EIA/MIA
61	Ditch	62		2	0.6	0.36	26	P-Med
63	Ditch	64		2	1.3	0.53	26	P-Med
65	Ditch	66	D15	2.1	0.58	0.12	10	P-Med
67	Pit	68		1.28	1	0.27	10	
69	Ditch	70	D24	1.9	3.5	1.04	5	LIA
71	Ditch	72	D21	1	0.95	0.18	5	EIA/MIA
73	Ditch	74	D2	0.48	0.7	0.98	9	P-Med
75	Pit	76		1.05	0.58	0.32	9	
81	Pit	82		0.4	0.48	0.13	5	
83	Post-hole	84		0.55	0.5	0.21	5	
85	Pit	86		2.5	0.74	0.43	10	
87	Post-hole	88		0.93	0.8	0.19	10	
89	Post-hole	90		0.85	0.7	0.15	10	Modern
91	Ditch	92, 95	D1	0.7	0.6	0.25	9	P-Med
93	Ditch	94	D14	0.91	0.81	0.27	11	P-Med
96	Ditch	97		0.8	0.82	0.31	9	
98	Ditch	99		+1.7	0.5	0.26	35	EIA/MIA
100	Pit	101		+1.9	2.8	0.8	2	E 13thC
103	Nat Feat	104, 105		2	0.5	1	18	

106	Ditch	107	D16	0.9	0.7	0.24	11	P-Med
108	Ditch	109	D15	0.84	0.76	0.11	11	P-Med
110	Nat Feat	111		0.7	1.15	4.9	3	
112	Ditch	113, 122	D31	+1	1.25	0.5	2	EIA/MIA
114	Ditch	115	D29	+1	0.86	0.38	2	E 13thC
116	Ditch	117		+2	0.71	0.38	37	P-Med
118	Ditch	119		+8	0.6	0.51	37	P-Med
120	Ditch	121	D17	0.92	0.69	0.22	11	P-Med
123	Ditch	124,125	D22	+2	8.7	0.94	38	LIA
126	Post-hole	127		-	0.7ø	0.13	11	
128	Ditch	129		+1	0.9	0.28	1b	
130	Post-hole	131		+0.35	0.6	0.3	4	
132	Post-hole	133		0.5	0.4	0.15	4	
134	Ditch	135		+2	0.35	0.08	4	
136	Ditch	137		+5.5	0.4	0.1	1a	
138	Ditch	139		+2.5	0.9	0.6	1a	
140	Pit	141		+1.9	2.35	0.27	33	
142	Ditch	143	D8	+2.5	0.75	0.18	8	P-Med
144	Ditch	145	D7	+2.5	0.89	0.26	8	P-Med
146	Ditch	147	D13	1	0.73	0.26	11	P-Med
148	Ditch	149	D18	+1.9	1	0.23	33	P-Med
150	Ditch	151	D9	+1.9	0.89	0.45	11	P-Med
152	Ditch	153	D11	0.8	1.25	0.36	11	P-Med
154	Ditch	155	D12	0.94	1.36	0.45	11	P-Med
156	Ditch	157		+2	0.83	0.22	11	
160	Ditch	Planned only		-	-	-	39	
163	Ditch	Planned only		-	-	-	8	
172	Group	Comprises [6] & [14]		-	-	-	28,29,34	P-Med
173	Group	Comprises [20]		-	-	-	28, 34	P-Med

TAPG 05

Number	Type	Filled by	Group	Length	Breadth	Depth	Area	Feature Date
200	Gully	201		1	0.3	0.13	A1	EIA/MIA
202	Gully	203		1	0.27	0.09	A1	EIA/MIA
204	Post-hole	205		0.48	0.57	0.2	A1	
206	Ditch	207, 208		1	0.87	0.46	A1	P-Med
209	Lin feat	210		1	0.98	0.36	A1	P-Med
211	Gully	212		0.28	0.4	0.12	A1	EIA/MIA
213	Ditch	214		0.48	0.85	0.32 +	A1	
215	Pond	216		0.33	0.32	0.28	A1	P-Med
217	Post-hole	218		0.64	0.64	0.15	A1	
219	Gully	220		1.2	0.36	0.12	A1	
221	Nat Feat	222		2.4	0.72	0.42	A1	
223	Gully	224		0.44	0.3	0.08	A1	EIA/MIA
225	Gully	226		0.15	0.44	0.23	A1	EIA/MIA
227	Ditch	228		0.8	0.37	0.1	A1	EIA/MIA
229	Post-hole	230		0.46	0.4	0.21	A1	
231	Hollow	232		2.1	1.8	0.06	A1	
233	Pond	238, 239		13	5.4	0.8	A1	P-Med
234	Ditch	235		1	0.68	0.22	A2	P-Med
236	Ditch	237		1	0.9	0.63	A2	P-Med
240	Ditch	241		1	0.82	0.6	A2	P-Med
243	Pit	244		0.25	1.05	0.55	A2	

245	Pit	246		1.87	0.97	0.34	A5	
248	Ditch	249	D3	0.8	0.67	0.24	A5	P-Med
250	Ditch	251	D3	1.17	0.4	0.14	A5	P-Med
252	Ditch	253		1.14	0.5	0.42	A5	
254	Ditch	255	D8	0.5	0.43	0.11	A5	P-Med
256	Ditch	257	D7	0.5	0.7	0.22	A5	P-Med
258	Ditch	259	D2	1	0.74	0.17	A5	P-Med
260	Ditch	261	D6	0.9	0.74	0.16	A5	P-Med
262	Ditch	263	D25	1.25	1.05	0.64	A5	P-Med
264	Ditch	265	D4	0.6	0.74	0.29	A5	P-Med
266	Ditch	267	D5	1	0.6	0.09	A5	P-Med
268	Ditch	269	D6	1	0.6	0.11	A5	P-Med
270	Post-hole	271,272		0.83	0.7	0.18	A5	
273	Ditch	274	D10	0.76	0.9	0.34	A5	P-Med
275	Ditch	276	D11	0.76	0.98	0.11	A5	P-Med
277	Ditch	278	D4	1	1	0.3 +	A5	P-Med
279	Ditch	280	D25	1.18	0.86	0.12	A5	P-Med
281	Ditch	282	D10	0.58	0.81	0.23	A5	P-Med
283	Ditch	284,285	D9	0.58	0.58	0.2	A5	P-Med
286	Post-hole	287		0.48	0.29	0.12	A5	
288	Ditch	289	D27	0.8	1.7	0.5	A3	M/L 13thC
290	Ditch	291	D7	0.6	0.66	0.36	A5	P-Med
292	Ditch	293	D6	0.6	0.8	0.3	A5	P-Med
294	Ditch	295	D12	0.9	0.68	0.1	A5	P-Med
296	Ditch	297	D5	1.05	1	0.3	A5	P-Med
298	Ditch	299	D16	0.58	0.79	0.23	A5	P-Med
300	Ditch	301	D15	0.58	0.42	0.1	A5	P-Med
302	Ditch	302	D1	0.5	0.95	0.39	A5	P-Med
305	Ditch	306	D18	1.1	0.76	0.24	A5	P-Med
307	Pit	324, 323, 310, 322, 321, 320, 321, 320, 319, 318, 317, 327		1.75	1.30	0.65	A5	EIA/MIA
311	Ditch	312	D20	1.27	0.85	0.28	A5	P-Med
313	Ditch	314	D16	0.5	0.8	0.22	A5	P-Med
315	Ditch	316	D17	0.5	0.64	0.15	A5	P-Med
325	Ditch	326	D21	-	-	-	A4	Not ex
328	Pit	308, 309		1.3	1.3	0.64	A5	EIA/MIA
329	Ditch	330	D21	0.5	1.22	0.54	A5	EIA/MIA
331	Ditch	332	D19	1	0.8	0.58	A5	P-Med
333	Ditch	334	D21	1.47	1.1	0.5	A5	EIA/MIA
335	Gully	336		1	0.41	0.15	A6	EIA/MIA
337	Pit	338		1.2	0.82	0.3	A6	
339	Ditch	340		0.96	0.55	0.19	A6	P-Med
341	Pit	342		0.71	0.65	0.2	A6	
343	Ditch	345, 344		0.5	0.76	0.17	A6	P-Med
346	Nat Feat	347		1.6	0.55	0.12	A6	
348	Gully	349		0.3	0.42	0.1	A6	EIA/MIA
350	Ditch	351		0.6	0.45	0.14	A6	P-Med
352	Ditch	353	D23	0.62	0.78	0.21	A4	LIA
354	Ditch	355, 356, 357, 367	D22	3	3	0.4	A4	LIA
358	Ditch	359		1	0.82	0.15	A6	Neolithic
360	Ditch	361, 362, 363, 364	D24	2	5.55	1.06	A4	LIA
365	Ditch	366	D14	1	0.71	0.13	A4	P-Med

368	Ditch	369	D26	-	-	-	A3	Not Ex – MD no
370	Gully	371	D35	-	-	-	A3	Not Ex – MD no
372	Ditch	373	D13	1.5	0.59	0.23	A4	P-Med
374	Ditch	375, 376, 402	D21	1	1	0.57	A4	EIA/MIA
377	Pit	378		2.9	1.02	0.25	A6	EIA/MIA
379	Gully	380		2.8	0.3	0.18	A6	Neolithic
381	Ditch	382		0.78	0.69	0.08	A6	EIA/MIA
383	Ditch	384	D15	1.09	0.95	0.14	A4	P-Med
385	Ditch	386, 387	D24	1.4	3.45	0.66	A4	LIA
388	Ditch	389	D23	1.2	0.62	0.19	A4	LIA
390	Pit	391, 392, 393		3.9	0.8	0.5	A6	
394	Pit	395		1.42	0.46	0.11	A6	
396	Pit	397, 401, 434, 435		3.65	2.9	1.06	A3	M/L 13thC
398	Pit	399, 400		1.87	1	0.33	A4	
404	Ditch	403	D19	1	0.95	0.24	A4	P-Med
405	Ditch	406	D20	1	0.85	0.2	A4	P-Med
408	Ditch	407	D18	1	0.7	0.1	A4	P-Med
409	Pit	410, 411		3.1	1.2	0.21	A4	
412	Post-hole	413		0.29	0.22	0.12	A4	
414	Post-hole	415		0.48	0.33	0.18	A4	
416	Ditch	417, 418, 419, 420	D17	1	1.3	0.56	A4	P-Med
422	Ditch	421	D21	1	0.7	0.42	A4	EIA/MIA
425	Post-hole	423		0.35	0.3	0.5	A4	
426	Post-hole	424		0.35	0.3	0.45	A4	
427	Gully	428	D28	1	0.45	0.15	A3	E 13thC
429	Ditch	431, 432, 433	D27	1.5	1.48	0.61	A3	M/L 13thC
436	Gully	437		-	-	-	A3	Duplicate No
438	Gully	439		-	-	-	A3	Duplicate No
440	Gully	441	D34	0.85	0.3	0.09	A3	Neolithic
442	Gully	443	D34	0.5	0.59	0.26	A3	Neolithic
444	Gully	445	D34	0.3	0.45	0.11	A3	Neolithic
446	Post-hole	447		0.9	0.9	0.13	A3	M/L 13thC
448	Gully	449	D34	1	0.39	0.12	A3	Neolithic
450	Ditch	451	D35	-	-	-	A3	Not Ex
454	Pit	452		1.16	0.73	0.15	A3	
456	Ditch	455	D26	1.1	1.3	0.5	A3	M/L 13thC
457	Pit	458, 459, 460, 461, 462		6.4	1.95	0.88	A3	M/L 13thC
463	Pit	464, 511, 512		4.45	2.65	1.07	A3	M/L 13thC
465	Ditch	466	D30	1	0.62	0.12	A3	E 13thC
467	Ditch	468	D26	1	0.9	0.28	A3	M/L 13thC
469	Ditch	470	D29	1	0.6	0.19	A3	E 13thC
471	Ditch	472	D30	1	0.5	0.08	A3	E 13thC
473	Pit	474, 486		1.35	1.7	0.62	A3	M/L 13thC
475	Ditch	476, 477		1	0.3	0.18	A3	
479	Gully	478	D33	0.7	0.4	0.1	A3	E 13thC
480	Gully	481	D32	1	0.38	0.09	A3	E 13thC
482	Pit	483		1.17	0.96	0.22	A3	
484	Ditch	485	D29	1	0.94	0.26	A3	E 13thC
487	Pit	488		1.7	0.75	0.3	A3	M/L 13thC
489	Nat Feat	490, 505, 506		3.9	2.2	0.75	A3	
492	Post-hole	491		0.4	0.25	0.15	A3	
493	Post-hole	494		0.7	0.47	0.15	A3	M/L 13thC

495	Post-hole	496		0.8	0.68	0.35	A3	M/L 13thC
497	Post-hole	498		1.04	0.9	0.16	A3	M/L 13thC
499	Gully	500	D31	1	0.4	0.25	A3	EIA/MIA
501	Gully	502	D28	0.8	0.7	0.25	A3	E 13thC
503	Gully	504	D33	0.79	0.44	0.12	A3	E 13thC
507	Pit	508		0.82	0.43	0.08	A3	
510	Gully	509	D35	0.65	0.49	0.33	A3	E 13thC
513	Pit	514		1.05	-	0.68	A3	E 13thC
515	Gully	516	D33	1.73	0.42	0.06	A3	E 13thC
517	Gully	518	D31	0.35	0.66	0.35	A3	EIA/MIA
519	Gully	520	D31	0.5	0.5	0.14	A3	EIA/MIA
521	Gully	522	D31	1	0.5	0.15	A3	EIA/MIA
523	Gully	524	D31	0.6	0.4	0.12	A3	EIA/MIA
525	Gully	526	D32	1	0.4	0.2	A3	E 13thC
528	Ditch	527		0.9	0.94	0.39	A3	

Ditch Groups

Group No	Segment Nos	Date
Ditch 1	91;302	P-Med
Ditch 2	73;258	P-Med
Ditch 3	248; 250	P-Med
Ditch 4	277; 264	P-Med
Ditch 5	296; 266	P-Med
Ditch 6	292; 268; 260	P-Med
Ditch 7	144;256;290	P-Med
Ditch 8	142;254	P-Med
Ditch 9	150;283	P-Med
Ditch 10	281;273	P-Med
Ditch 11	152;275	P-Med
Ditch 12	154;294	P-Med
Ditch 13	146;372	P-Med
Ditch 14	56;93;365	P-Med
Ditch 15	65;108;383;300	P-Med
Ditch 16	106;298;313	P-Med
Ditch 17	120;315;416	P-Med
Ditch 18	148;305;408	P-Med
Ditch 19	331;404	P-Med
Ditch 20	311;405	P-Med
Ditch 21	58;71;329;333;422;374;325	EIA/MIA
Ditch 22	354;123	LIA
Ditch 23	352;388	LIA
Ditch 24	385;360;69	LIA
Ditch 25	279;262	P-Med
Ditch 26	456;528;467;368	M/L 13thC
Ditch 27	288;429	M/L 13thC
Ditch 28	427;530;501	E 13thC
Ditch 29	469;484;114	E 13thC
Ditch 30	471;465	E 13thC
Ditch 31	519;523;521;499;112;517	EIA/MIA
Ditch 32	525;480	E 13thC
Ditch 33	479;515;503	E 13thC
Ditch 34	440;442;444;448	Neolithic
Ditch 35	510;370; 450	E 13thC

APPENDIX 2: FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

All weights are given in grams

TAPG04

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
7	6	1	1	Pottery; body sherd, glazed sandy orange ware	Medieval
9	8	1	2	Iron fragment from sample 1	-
		-	22	Slag fragments from sample 1	-
		24	1	Burnt bone fragments from sample 1	-
		-	150	Charcoal fragments, including six carbonised grains, from sample 1	-
		9	26	Pottery; body sherds, inc 5/8g, from sample 1	Prehistoric
23	22	1	-	Charcoal (Discarded)	-
		2	8	Flint flakes	-
		1	-	Pottery; crumb, grey ware	Roman
		2	6	Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
36	24	2	36	Iron nails, with heads	-
		2	18	Roof tile fragments	Post med.
39	25	1	8	Flint flake	-
		1	4	Clay pipe stem	Post med.
		2	36	Roof tile fragments	Post med.
		1	6	Pottery; body sherd PMRE, glazed both sides	Post med.
43	42	1	102	Slag	-
		3	1	Charcoal and coal fragments (Discarded)	Modern
		3	18	Baked clay	-
44	42	2	6	Baked clay	-
		2	14	Roof tile, joining fragments	Post med.
57	56	1	10	Pottery; body sherd, grog-tempered ware	LIA
		1	2	Pottery; body sherd, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
60	58	1	2	Animal bone; sheep/goat molar, badly eroded	-
		91	519	Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, flint-tempered, prob all same vessel	Prehistoric
72	71	60	46	Pottery; body sherds and crumbs, very friable	Prehistoric
90	89	1	12	Burnt stone (Discarded)	-
94	93	1	4	Ironstone fragment SF1	-
		1	2	Tile fragment; fibrous	Modern
		1	2	Pottery; body sherd, grey ware, abraded	Roman
		2	1	Pottery; crumbs, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
99	98	5	102	Three flint flakes, one patinated core fragment and two unworked flints	-
		3	6	Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
101	100	9	58	Pottery; body sherds, coarse ware	Medieval
109	108	1	6	Pottery; body sherd PMRE, glazed both sides	Post med.
115	114	1	12	Flint flake, patinated	-
117	116	3	20	Two flint flakes and an unworked flint	-
		3	2	Pottery; crumbs, grey ware	Roman
		1	-	Pottery; crumb	Prehistoric
119	118	7	44	Flint core fragment, three flakes, two flakelets and an unworked flint	-

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
		2	4	Pottery; body sherds, coarse ware	Medieval
121	120	2	6	Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
124	123	1 1	6 2	Pottery; body sherd Pottery; body sherd	Medieval Prehistoric
143	142	1 2	6 1	Burnt flint, grey and white, crazed Pottery; crumbs	- Prehistoric
145	144	2 1	1 10	Charcoal and coal fragments (Discarded) Pottery; body sherds, grog-tempered ware	- LIA
155	154	1	6	Pottery; body sherd, flint-tempered	Prehistoric

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Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
207	206	1	24	Pottery; very abraded body sherd, grey ware	Roman
208	206	1 5	4 14	Burnt flint Flint flakes	- -
214	213	1	4	Flint flake	-
216	215	3	8	Flint flakes	-
220	219	1	2	Pottery; ?rim sherd, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
224	223	1 2	6 1	Baked clay fragment Pottery; crumbs, possibly flint-tempered	- ?Prehistoric
228	227	1	10	Flint flake	-
232	231	2	1	Pottery; small flint-tempered body sherd and crumb	Prehistoric
235	234	1	4	Flint flake	-
238	233	2	26	Pottery; samian f32 dish rim sherd; small body sherd, poss LIA	Late 2nd to mid 3rd C
239	233	1 2	10 2	Struck flint Pottery; body sherds, one may be LIA	- Prehistoric
241	240	2 3	54 16	Flint flakes Pottery; body sherds, two grog-tempered	- LIA
242	Layer	1	4	Unworked flint	-
244	243	1	1	Flint chip	-
246	245	1 -	1 -	Flint chip ?Pottery; flint-tempered crumbs (Discarded)	- Prehistoric
247	Unstrat	1 - 3 110	14 24 38 1130	Iron hook/latch Baked clay Flint flakes Pottery; rim, handle and body sherds, some glazed; one sherd of PMRE	- - - Medieval
251	250	1	1	Flint chip	-
253	252	1	1	Flint chip	-

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
261	260	2	2	Pottery; body sherds, one flint-tempered	Prehistoric
265	264	2	26	Flint flakes	-
289	288	1 3	8 18	SF6, Copper alloy rumbler/crotal bell Pottery; body sherds, two joining	?Medieval Medieval
295	294	2	2	Pottery; joining body sherds	Medieval
308	328	1 7	10 24	Flint flake Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	- Prehistoric
309	328	1 14	1 80	Flint flake Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	 Prehistoric
310	307	3	10	Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
326	325	1	236	SF5, Pyrites nodule (natural)	-
330	329	5	14	Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
332	331	5	50	Flint flakes	-
334	333	9	44	Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
336	335	1 1	10 2	Flint flake Pottery; body sherd, flint-tempered	- Prehistoric
338	337	3	1	Pottery; crumbs, one flint-tempered	Prehistoric
347	346	13	64	Flints, mostly burnt	-
356	354	1 2	12 1	Pottery; body sherd, grog-tempered Pottery; crumbs, flint-tempered	LIA Prehistoric
357	354	1	60	Flat iron fragment	-
369	368	1	-	SF7, Copper alloy finger ring	1150-1200
371	370	1	12	SF8, Lead piece, flat	-
376	374	1 1 54	4 16 152	Flint flake Burnt stone fragment (Discarded) Pottery; body sherds and crumbs, flint-tempered	- - Prehistoric
378	377	1 6	1 46	Burnt flint (Discarded) Pottery; body sherds, one flint-tempered	- Prehistoric
382	381	10	12	Pottery; body sherds and crumbs, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
386	385	2 10	16 22	Flint flakes Pottery; rim and body sherds, flint-tempered, and crumbs	- Prehistoric
389	388	2	6	Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
397	396	1 1 11	4 16 92	Iron nail Baked clay Pottery; base and body sherds	- - Medieval
400	398	17 10	146 16	Burnt flints Baked clay fragments	- -
401	396	11 1	112 4	Oyster shell; ten valves Baked clay	- -

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
		18	122	Pottery; rim and body sherds	Medieval
403	404	2	1	Pottery; crumbs, samian	Roman
413	412	1	1	Pottery; crumb, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
415	414	1	40	Natural flint nodule, burnt	-
432	429	1	2	Oyster shell fragment (Discarded)	-
		2	2	Pottery; body sherds	Medieval
441	440	3	6	Pottery; body sherds, decorated	Neolithic
443	442	2	2	Animal bone; fragments	-
		2	2	Baked clay	-
452	454	6	6	Animal bone; rib fragments, bird bone; fragments	-
		8	42	Oyster shell; two valves and fragments; garden snail	-
		58	470	Pottery; rim sherds, one glazed and decorated; base and body sherds, several glazed	Medieval
453	454	2	30	Oyster shell; two valves	-
		24	250	Pottery; rim and body sherds, some with glaze	Medieval
455	456	5	38	Animal bone; long bone fragments, poor condition; rib fragment; ?horse metapodial shaft	-
		13	258	Oyster shell; thirteen valves	-
		5	46	Pottery; base and body sherds	Medieval
458	457	11	82	Pottery; rim and body sherds, one glazed and decorated	Medieval
461	457	1	-	Charcoal fragment (Discarded)	-
		-	208	Baked clay fragments, friable, some with flat surfaces	-
		2	6	Pottery; body sherds	Medieval
462	457	1	4	Iron fiddle key nail	Medieval
		1	1	Animal bone fragment (Discarded)	-
		3	30	Oyster shell; two valves	-
		4	26	Baked clay fragments	-
		29	48	Pottery; body sherds, one with slipped stripe	Medieval
464	463	2	-	SF9, Copper alloy fragments	-
		1	8	SF10, Iron strip	-
		3	14	Iron fiddle key nails	Medieval
		6	17	Animal bone; cattle molar; metapodial shaft, medium-sized mammal, both with eroded surfaces; 4 chips weighing 1g from sample 6	-
		7	64	Oyster shell; five valves; garden snail	-
		1	32	Flint flake from sample 6	-
		5	18	Baked clay fragments	-
		1	102	Tile fragment, soot-encrusted upper surface	Medieval
		39	222	Pottery; rim and body sherds, inc 3 body sherds and 3 crumbs weighing 14g from sample 6	Medieval
474	473	1	2	SF11, Copper alloy buckle plate	Medieval
		3	16	Iron nails	-
		4	210	Animal bone; femur, distal end and phalanx, horse; fragments	-
		92	885	Oyster shell; seventy-five valves and fragments	-
		1	-	Charcoal fragment (Discarded)	-
		1	2	Flint flake	-
		4	24	Baked clay fragments	-
		66	585	Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, some glazed	Medieval

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
478	479	1	6	Pottery; body sherd	Medieval
486	473	6 2	76 8	Oyster shell; five valves Pottery; body sherds	- Medieval
488	487	4 1 1 23	2 6 10 112	Animal bone; fragments (Discarded) Oyster shell; one valve Flint flake Pottery; base and body sherds	- - - Medieval
491	492	1 3	6 2	Unworked flint Baked clay fragments	- -
496	495	1	1	Pottery; body sherd	Medieval
498	497	1	1	Pottery; body sherd	Medieval
500	499	3 7 1 4	1 24 104 32	Animal bone; tooth enamel fragments Flint flakes, inc 4/18g from sample 4 Pyrites nodule (natural) from sample 4 Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	- - - Prehistoric
504	503	1	2	Pottery; body sherd	Medieval
508	507	1	6	Pottery; body sherd	Medieval
509	510	2 4 1 3 11	8 4 2 8 66	Animal bone; long bone fragment and splinter Oyster shell fragments (Discarded) Flint chip, mostly cortex Baked clay Pottery; rim, base and body sherds	- - - - Medieval
522	521	8	28	Pottery; body sherds, flint-tempered	Prehistoric
529	530	1	4	Pottery; body sherd	Medieval

APPENDIX 3: ARCHIVE INDEX

SITE NAME: TAPG05

Index to the Archive

File containing:

1. Introduction

1.1 Brief for Evaluation

1.2 Specification for Evaluation

2. Research Archive

2.1 Evaluation Report

2.2 Analytical Reports

2.2.1 Finds Reports

2.3 Finds Catalogues

2.3.1 Context Finds Record

3. Site Archive

3.1 5 x Context Record Register

3.2 Original Context Records 1 to 157

3.2.1 2 x Plans Register

3.2.2 5 x Sections Register

3.3 12 x Levels Register

3.4 6 x Photographic Register

3.5 Site Photographic Record (90 x B+W prints; 90 x Colour Slides)

Not in Files:

Site Drawings – 6 A1-size Permatrace section sheets

21 A1-size Permatrace plan sheets

22 A5-size Permatrace plan sheets

2 boxes of finds

APPENDIX 4: EHER SUMMARY SHEET

Site Name/Address: Priors Green Phase 1, Takeley, Essex.	
Parish: Takeley	***District:*** Uttlesford
NGR: TL 5730 2140	***Site Code:*** TAPG05
Type of Work: Excavation	***Site Director/Group:*** A Robertson ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: 20/06/05 – 05/08/05	***Size of Area Investigated:*** Development area *c.*9.92 ha Excavation Area = 17950m^2
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Saffron Walden	***Funding Source:*** RPS Planning on behalf of Countryside Properties Plc
Further Work Anticipated? Yes	***Related EHCR Nos:*** 4572; 4655
Final Report: N.A.	
Periods Represented: Prehistoric Medieval Post-medieval	

SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:

An archaeological excavation comprising of six areas, over c.9.9 hectares, was carried out on the site of the first phase of a proposed housing development at Priors Green, Takeley. This followed on from Stage 1, a 40 trench evaluation undertaken during the winter of 2004.

Neolithic and Iron Age

Although two small Neolithic features were present, the earliest period from which coherent remains were identified was the Early to Middle Iron Age. These consisted of at least two fragments of field systems which were identified at opposite sides of the development area, a long irregular ditch which ran approximately north – south across the western end of the site and two large intercutting pits. Only a relatively little amount of pottery was recovered that dated to this period, however a quantity of carbonised grains was recovered from soil samples collected from these features. It seems probable that this area was not occupied during this period, but was under agriculture. The Late Iron Age was represented by large boundary ditch with a blocked entrance, which ran approximately east-west across the western part of the site. Although it is likely that these ditches represented a major landscape division with controlled access; no other features of this date were present to suggest why the boundary was there.

Roman and Saxon

Only one possible Roman feature, a pond or watering hole was identified with the few other Roman finds collected being residual in later features. No Saxon remains were uncovered in either stage of work. It is clear that, even with the close proximity of Roman Stane Street, this area was not intensively utilised during either the Roman or Saxon periods.

Medieval

The medieval period remains from the site fall into two phases, the early 13th century and the mid to late 13th century. All are concentrated along the line of Jacks Lane which reinforces the perception that this throughfare was utilised during the medieval period. The earlier medieval remains comprise of a number of perpendicular gullies which form a right angle, and a relatively deep pit. It is likely that the gullies are associated with small farming plots alongside Jacks Lane.

The remains that date from the mid to late 13th century are more substantial than the earlier ones. These consist of four large pits, and a possible four-post structure which may have been part of a structure such as a barn. All these features were surrounded by what may be part of a ditched enclosure. It is likely that these were part of a small farmstead, more of which probably lies to the east, alongside Jacks Lane.

Post-Medieval

The post-medieval landscape is dominated by three ditch alignments, comprising 21 ditches, in the far west of the site, which may represent the remains of horticultural activity. With the possible exception of three parallel ditches running east-west towards the east of the site, the remaining evidence for post-medieval activity related to the sub-division of the land into semi-regular fields.

Previous Summaries/Reports:. Robertson, A. 2005 *Priors Green, Takeley, Essex. Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching. Phase 1 Stage 1* ECC FAU/ RPS Client Report

Author of Summary:	***Date of Summary:***
A. Robertson (ECC FAU)	March 2006