



AWHe Interim Summary of Trial Trench Evaluation at C10007 Upper Bottom House Farm, Vent Shaft, Chalfont St. Giles, Buckinghamshire (AC100/9)

Site Code: 1C18BOTTT

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken on land designated as Upper Bottom House Farm Lane, north of Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire (henceforth the Site).
- 1.1.2 The Site is adjacent to Bottom House Farm Lane located between the Colne Valley to the south and the Chilterns to the north. The Site extends south-westwards from the A413 Amersham Road from an access point opposite Harewood Downe House (NGR SU 97524 94751; Figure 1).
- 1.1.3 The Site comprised several fields, predominantly pastoral, encompassing approximately 13 ha (Site GIS ID No: C10007).
- 1.1.4 The evaluation was targeted on the site of the Chalfont St Giles Vent Shaft, widening of access and provision of a temporary compound and other works as outlined in the Project Plan (Document Ref: 1EWo3-FUS-EV-REP-CSo2_CLo4-001608). A total of 48 trenches were excavated, three revealed archaeological features, including two ditches and a large quarry pit, with a further two trenches containing palaeochannels. The evaluation was carried out in three phases, December 2018, June 2019 and December 2019.

2 Introduction

- This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation, carried out in three phases on land designated as (Site GIS ID No: C10007) Upper Bottom House Farm, St Giles Vent Shaft, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 97524 94751; Figure 1). The bulk of the trenching was carried out in December 2018, with fields 12-15 delayed till June 2019 due to the wet floodplain and fields 3-11 carried out in December 2019 following access being gained through land possession.
- 2.1.2 The site code allocated for this work was 1C18BOTTT.
- 2.1.3 The general aims of the trenching were to:
 - confirm the presence/absence, extent and depth of any surviving archaeological remains within the Site
 - determine the nature, date, condition, state of preservation including any preservation bias, complexity and significance of any archaeological remains
 - determine the likely range, quality and quantity of artefactual and environmental evidence present
 - suggest measures, if appropriate and feasible, for further archaeological investigation to mitigate identified significant impacts
 - contribute to the delivery of GWSI: HERDS Specific Objectives as specified in Section 3.2 of the project plan.

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- 2.1.4 The site-specific aims of the trial trenching were:
 - KC5: Identifying settlement location and developing models for settlement patterns for the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Early Bronze Age
 - KC21: Assess the evidence for regional and cultural distinctiveness along the length of the route in the Romano-British period, with particular regard to the different settlement types encountered along the route.
 - KC40: Identify patterns of change within medieval rural settlement from the 11th to mid-14th century

Change Controls

- 2.1.5 The movement of trenches from their original locations or descoping was implemented through change control:
 - Trench 042, 044 and 045 were moved eastward up to 4m to avoid a BT overhead exclusion zone.
 - Trench 33 was moved to the southwest by 9m to avoid an existing field boundary.
 - Trench 34 was moved to the southwest by 9m to avoid an existing field boundary.

3 Preliminary Results

3.1 Site Geology

- 3.1.1 The natural geology comprised chalk with bands of flint and sandy clays on the plateau and upper slopes of the site, changing to orange flinty clay on the mid slope, and periglacial gravels and colluvium along the base of the combes (*dry valley*) (BGS 2020). No alluvial deposits were observed in Trenches at the east end of Site within the floodplain.
- 3.1.2 Most archaeological features were sealed by topsoil and subsoil. Isolated colluvial deposits were recorded in Trenches 003 and 004 in the north of Site, and Trenches 025 and 028 in the west of Site, along with a roughly north-south strip of colluvium through Trenches 011, 012, 017, 018, 019, 027 and 030 in the centre of Site. Isolated deposits of colluvium were further recorded in Trenches 034, 036, 039, 040 and 044 in the east of Site.

3.2 Trench Summary

- 3.2.1 A total of 48 trenches were designed as per the Project Plan.
- 3.2.2 Of these 48 trenches three contained archaeological features (Figure 3) with a further two containing palaeochannels. The initial results of the positive trenches are discussed below, in numerical order (Figure 2).
- 3.2.3 A summary of the findings is in table 1, below.

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Table 1 – Summary of trench results

Trench Number	Features	Provisional Date
001	Blank	
002	Blank	
003	Blank	
004	Blank	
005	Blank	
006	Blank	
007	Blank	
008	Blank	
009	Blank	
010	1 x ditch	Undated
011	Blank	
012	Blank	
013	Blank	
014	Blank	
015	Blank	
016	Blank	
017	Blank	
018	Blank	
019	Blank	
020	Blank	
021	Blank	
022	1 x pit	Post-Medieval
023	Blank	
024	Blank	
025	Blank	
026	Blank	
027	Blank	
028	Blank	
029	Blank	
030	Blank	
031	Blank	
032	Blank	
033	Blank	
034	Blank	
035	Blank	
036	Blank	
037	Blank	
038	Blank	
039	Blank	
040	Blank	
041	Blank	
042	Blank	
043	Blank	
044	Blank	
045	1 x palaeochannel	Undated
046	1 x palaeochannel	Undated
047	1 x ditch	Undated
048	Blank	

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3.3 Archaeological Results

Trench 010

3.3.1 A straight wide shallow ditch [201004], 1.1m wide and 0.06m deep, oriented northwest to southeast, was located centrally within the trench. The fill was firm brown silty clay (201005) with rare stone inclusions and frequent charcoal flecking. No finds were recovered. This feature corresponds to a former field boundary identified in the geophysical survey carried out prior to the evaluation.

Trench 022

3.3.2 A large deep pit [202204], with a steep stepped western side and gradual sloping east side, a flat base, 14.92m long and in excess of 4.0m wide (in trench), was located centrally within the trench. The lower fill was friable very dark brown silt (202207), with frequent large flint inclusions and charcoal flecking overlain by firm brown silty clay (202205) with frequent flint and chalk nodule inclusions. The upper fill was firm brown clay (202206) with rare stone inclusions and charcoal flecking. A single fragment of Post-Medieval CBM was recovered from (202205), which with the backfill comprising flint nodules and chalk up-cast suggests this may be a Post-medieval quarry pit for the extraction of chalk.

Trench 045

3.3.3 A wide, moderately deep paleochannel [204504], 7.75m wide and 0.8m deep, oriented northwest to southeast, was located within the western half of the trench. The fill comprised loose yellow sand (204005) with rare sub-rounded to rounded stone inclusions. No finds were recovered. Environmental samples recovered from the fills of the palaeochannel confirmed that there was no survival or organic remains and no palaeoenvironmental potential.

Trench 046

3.3.4 A wide, moderately deep paleochannel [204604], 2.6m wide and 0.9m deep, oriented northwest to southeast, was located within the western half of the trench. The lowest fill present was mid-grey brown silt (204605), representing the remnants of a riverbank. This was sealed by light grey sandy silt (204606), which was in turn sealed by a mid-grey brown matrix of silt and stone. The upper fill was dark grey brown sandy silt (204608) with occasional subrounded stone. No finds were recovered. Survival of palaeoenvironmental material was judged onsite to be poor, and on flotation plant macrofossils within the sample were found to be very scarce and although small amounts of charcoal/charred wood fragments were present there was deemed to be no further palaeoenvironmental potential.

Trench 047

3.3.5 A linear narrow, moderately deep ditch [204704], 0.32m wide and 0.8m deep, oriented east to west was located within the centre of the trench. The fill was friable grey brown sandy silt (204705) with common sub-rounded to rounded stone inclusions. No finds were recovered.

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4 Summary

- The results from the evaluation revealed archaeology in three of the trenches excavated: a shallow ditch in Trench 10; a large post-medieval quarry pit in Trench 22; and a narrow ditch in Trench 47. The ditch recorded in Trench 10 corresponded with a field boundary picked up by the geophysical survey previously conducted on the main area of the site, while the ditch recorded in Trench 47, though not observed on Lidar or during the geophysical survey, also likely represented the former course of a now removed field boundary. The pit within Trench 22 correlated with what appeared to be a wider section of a former field boundary on the geophysical survey, it may therefore be that the quarrying had truncated the former boundary. The two palaeochannels in Trenches 45 and 46 were not surprising due to their proximity to existing and still active water courses, showing the river to have meandered through the valley bottom. Survival of palaeoenvironmental material within the palaeochannels was poor which precludes further palaeoenvironmental analysis.
- The remaining trenches were all blank showing that activity appears to be confined to more recent occupation associated with the surrounding current up standing farmsteads, associated buildings and field systems along the length of Upper Bottom House Farm Lane.
- 4.1.3 The results of the evaluation demonstrated the Site has little potential to contribute to the HERDS objectives outlined in the Project Plan for this Site, or to other Knowledge Creation (KC) objectives.

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5 Appendix - Figures

















