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SITE AT WALKERS BRIDGE FIELD, LAVENDON ROAD, OLNEY, MILTON KEYNES. MK46 4HH

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING

Authors: Julie Walker (report and fieldwork)	
NGR: 489661 252811	Report No: 5321
District: Milton Keynes	Site Code: EMK1294
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: 6949
	Date: 22nd February 2017

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Site at Walkers Bridge Field, Lavendon Road, Olney, Milton Keynes.</i>		
<p><i>In February 2017 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording in advance of a proposed development on land at Walkers Bridge Field, Lavendon Road, Olney, Milton Keynes. (NGR: 489661 252811). The proposed development comprises the construction of a modern agricultural building in the north-eastern corner of a field. The monitoring was required in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval (Milton Keynes Council Planning Ref. 16/02435/FUL).</i></p> <p><i>The Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record suggested there was potential for the site to reveal remains of late Iron Age to Roman date as evidence for settlement of these dates was recorded, comprising the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Ashfurlong (NHLE No. 1006918). The latter is a nationally-significant Romano-British settlement site, located to the west. Further finds from the area also demonstrate a Neolithic to Bronze Age presence.</i></p> <p><i>Monitoring of the excavations for the footings of the new agricultural building in the north-eastern corner of Walkers Bridge Field revealed a Roman ditch (F1009), orientated northwest/southeast and a Roman century pit (F1004). The latter cut undated Pit F1007. The fill (L1008) of Pit F1007 consisted of a compact pale grey, with red, orange and yellow mottling, crushed limestone. This suggests the possibility that the feature may have been a footing or pad for a large post. Pit F1004 may represent the deliberate removal of the post.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>2nd & 3rd February 2017</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>6949</i>	Site code	<i>EMK1294</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Monitoring & Recording</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Agricultural field</i>		
Planned development	<i>Agricultural building</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Roman ditch, Roman pit</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>Roman pottery</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Buckinghamshire</i>	<i>Milton Keynes</i>	<i>Milton Keynes</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Bucks HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>MK46 4HH</i>		
Area of site	<i>c.0.25ha</i>		
NGR	<i>489661 252811</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c.51m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Milton Keynes Council Archaeological Officer</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Julie Walker</i>		
Funded by			
Full title	<i>Site at Walkers Bridge Field, Lavendon Road, Olney, Milton Keynes. Archaeological Monitoring and Recording</i>		
Authors	<i>Walker, J.</i>		
Report no.	<i>5321</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>February 2017</i>		

SITE AT WALKERS BRIDGE FIELD, LAVENDON ROAD, OLNEY, MILTON KEYNES. MK46 4HH

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING

SUMMARY

In February 2017 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording in advance of a proposed development on land at Walkers Bridge Field, Lavendon Road, Olney, Milton Keynes. (NGR: 489661 252811). The proposed development comprises the construction of an agricultural building in the north-eastern corner of a field. The monitoring was required in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval (Milton Keynes Council Planning Ref. 16/02435/FUL).

The Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record suggested there was potential for the site to reveal remains of late Iron Age to Roman date as evidence for settlement of these dates was recorded, comprising the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Ashfurlong (NHLE No. 1006918). The latter is a nationally-significant Romano-British settlement site, located to the west. Further finds from the area also demonstrate a Neolithic to Bronze Age presence.

Monitoring of the excavations for the footings of the new agricultural building in the north-eastern corner of Walkers Bridge Field revealed a Roman ditch (F1009), orientated northwest/southeast, and a Roman pit (F1004). The latter cut undated Pit F1007. The fill (L1008) of Pit F1007 consisted of a compact pale grey, with red, orange and yellow mottling, crushed limestone. This suggests the possibility that the feature may have been a footing or pad for a large post. Pit F1004 may represent the deliberate removal of the post.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In February 2017 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording in advance of a proposed development on land at Walkers Bridge Field, Lavendon Road, Olney, Milton Keynes. (NGR: 489661 252811). The proposed development comprises the construction of an agricultural building in the north-eastern corner of the field. The monitoring was required in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval (Milton Keynes Council Planning Ref. 16/02435/FUL).

1.2 The archaeological monitoring was carried out in accordance with advice from the Milton Keynes Council Archaeological Officer dated 06/10/2016, and a specification compiled by AS (dated 24/10/2016). It

was conducted according to the ClfA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2014) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (2014).

1.3 The objectives of the project were:

- Archaeological monitoring and recording of all groundworks associated with the new agricultural building and any associated works;
- The provision of an adequately detailed project report; and
- The dissemination and publication of the project results, as appropriate.

Planning policy context

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings, scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE (Figs. 1 - 3)

2.1 The site lies on the northern side of the B565 Lavendon Road at Olney. It comprises an agricultural field and it is proposed to erect an agricultural building in the north-eastern corner of the field.

3 THE EVIDENCE

3.1 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential recorded on the Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record (HER), being adjacent to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Ashfurlong (NHLE No. 1006918). This is a nationally-significant Romano-British settlement site, located to the west. The HER also records cropmarks of a trackway traversing the site. Dense scatters of Romano-British pottery sherds and tile, a knife blade and a Roman coin, have been recorded as surface finds in the area of the site.

3.2 The Historic Environment Record for the surrounding area is dominated by entries associated with the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Ashfurlong. These include late Iron Age to Roman settlement evidence with stone structures, roundhouses, and a possible hypercaust, crossed by roads and tracks (HER MMK 239), Roman linear features (HER MMK 233), Iron Age or Roman enclosures identified on aerial photographs (HER MMK 249), and a 2nd century Roman building identified during road construction in the 1950s (HER MMK 253). In addition a variety of spot finds of Iron Age (e.g. HER MMK 243, MMK 245, MMK 256) and Roman (e.g. HER MMK 224, MMK 226, MMK 227, MMK 230, MMK 232, MMK 234, MMK 235, MMK 240, MMK 242, MMK 244, MMK 246, MMK 254, MMK 258, MMK 260, MMK 5424, MMK5427, MMK 5433) date have been recorded in the surroundings and these are clearly associated with settlement evidence from the area. In addition further spot finds (e.g. HER MMK 225, MMK 228, MMK 238, MMK 251, MMK 252, MMK 5432) demonstrate an early Neolithic to Bronze Age presence in this area. Roman finds have also been identified at Lavendon Road Farm (HER MMK 3857) and during river dredging nearby (HER MMK 3890).

3.3 The site thus has a potential in particular for features associated with the Romano-British settlement to be identified in the limited area of new groundworks for the proposal. Indications that the settlement activity at Ashfurlong originated in the Iron Age suggest that the current site may have the potential to provide information on the Iron Age/Roman transition; as Fulford and Allen (2010) state, sites with well-preserved deposits of both late Iron Age and Roman date should be given careful attention in order to investigate continuity of local tradition at these sites.

3.4 The presence of Neolithic and Bronze Age spot finds in the area surrounding the site indicates that there is some potential for it to provide information relating to the landscape and land use, settlement character, extent, and distribution, and crafts, industries and exchange/trade in these periods (Bradley with Allen & Hey 2010).

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The archaeological monitoring observed the excavation of the footing trenches for the new agricultural building. The excavation was carried out using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

4.2 Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Excavated spoil was searched for archaeological finds. Deposits were recorded using pro forma recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate.

5 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS Figs. 2 - 3

5.1 Sample sections were recorded and are presented below:

<i>Sample Section 1</i> 51.11m AOD		
0.00 – 0.19m	L1000	Topsoil. Firm, dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional small stones.
0.19m+	L1001	Natural deposits. Friable, mid orange sand.

<i>Sample Section 2</i> 51.06m AOD		
0.00 – 0.11m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.11m+	L1001	Natural deposits. As above.

Description: The monitoring revealed a Roman ditch (F1009), orientated northwest/southeast, and a Roman century pit (F1004). The latter cut undated Pit F1007. The fill (L1008) of Pit F1007 consisted of a compact pale grey, with red, orange and yellow mottling, crushed limestone. This suggests the possibility that the feature may have been a footing or pad for a large post. Pit F1004 may represent the deliberate removal of the post. F1011 was a modern land drain.

Pit F1004 was sub-circular (1.90 x 1.50 x 0.71m). It cut Pit F1007. It had steep sides and a concave base. Its basal fill (L1013) was a firm, mid grey orange clay with small chalk fragments. Its secondary fill (L1005) was a friable, silt with occasional gravel. It contained Roman pottery (5; 479g). Its upper fill (L1006) was a friable, mid grey brown sandy silt that contained no finds.

Pit F1007 was sub-circular (0.43 x 0.42 x 0.14m), and was cut by Pit F1004. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill (L1008) was a compact pale grey, with red, orange and yellow mottling, crushed limestone. It contained no finds.

Ditch F1009 was linear (8.00+ x 3.70 x 0.69m), orientated northwest/southeast. It had steep sides and a shallow concave base. Its fill (L1010) was a friable, mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional small stones. It contained Roman pottery (5; 132g).

F1011 was a modern land drain (8.80+ x 0.16 x 0.45m) which cut Ditch F1009. It had vertical sides and a concave base. Its fill (L1012) was a friable, pale orange yellow gravel. A ceramic pipe was located at its base.

6 CONFIDENCE RATING

6.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features of finds.

7 DEPOSIT MODEL

7.1 Uppermost Topsoil L1000 was a firm, dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional small stones (0.11 - 0.19m thick). Below was a 0.59m thick layer (L1001) of natural, friable, mid orange sand.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 The Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record suggested there was potential for the site to reveal remains of late Iron Age to Roman date as evidence for settlement of these dates was recorded, comprising the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Ashfurlong (NHLE No. 1006918). The latter is a nationally-significant Romano-British settlement site, located to the west. Further finds from the area also demonstrate a Neolithic to Bronze Age presence.

8.2 Monitoring of the excavations for the footings of the new agricultural building in the north-eastern corner of Walkers Bridge Field revealed a Roman ditch (F1009), orientated northwest/southeast, and a Roman century pit (F1004). The latter cut undated Pit F1007. The fill (L1008) of Pit F1007 consisted of a compact pale grey, with red, orange and yellow mottling, crushed limestone. This suggests the possibility that the feature may have been a footing or pad for a large post. Pit F1004 may represent the deliberate removal of the post.

DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

The requirements for the deposition of the archive records, with an inventory, will be agreed with Buckinghamshire County Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank David Coles Architects Ltd for commissioning the monitoring.

Archaeological Solutions Ltd would like to thank Nick Crank, Milton Keynes Council Archaeological Officer, for his assistance.

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Bradley, R with Allen, M & Hey, G, 2010, *Solent Thames Research Frameworks Research Agenda, The Neolithic and early Bronze Age*, Buckingham

Fulford, M & Allen, M, 2010, *Solent Thames Research Frameworks Research Agenda, The Roman Period*, Buckinghamshire

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Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994 (2014) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations*

APPENDIX 1 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

Feature	Context	Segment	Trench	Description	Spot Date (Pot Only)	Pot Qty	Pottery (g)	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other Material	Other Qty	Other (g)
1004	1005			Fill of Pit	Roman	5	479					
1007	1008			Footing or Post Pad						Rammed chalk		292
1009	1010	A		Fill of Ditch	Roman	1	9					
		B			Roman	4	123					

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORT

The Roman Pottery

Andrew Peachey MCIfA

The monitoring recovered a total of 11 sherds (625g) of Roman pottery in a slightly abraded condition.

With the exception of a single sherd (9g) in Ditch F1009, the assemblage was entirely comprised of wheel-made shell-tempered ware, probably manufactured in the kilns at Harrold c.7.5km to the north-east (Tomber & Dore 1998, 212: ROB SH). Pit F1004 contained cross-joining sherds from a ROB SH storage jar with a robust, rolled, everted bead rim; a long lived type that entered production in the mid 1st century AD and continued until at least the late 3rd/early 4th centuries AD (Brown 1994: figs.22.8 & 26.95). Further ROB SH body sherds in Pit F1004 and Ditch F1009 appear to be from standard jars or cooking pots; while a single sherd also in Ditch F1009 comprises a locally-produced sandy grey ware possibly produced at Ecton or a similar Upper Nene Valley source. This body sherd appears derived from a folded beaker, likely of 3rd century AD date, though the absence of any rim makes this a tentative conclusion.

Bibliography

Brown, A. 1994 'A Romano-British Shell-Gritted Pottery and Tile Manufacturing Site at Harrold, Bedfordshire,' *Bedfordshire Archaeology* 21, 19-107

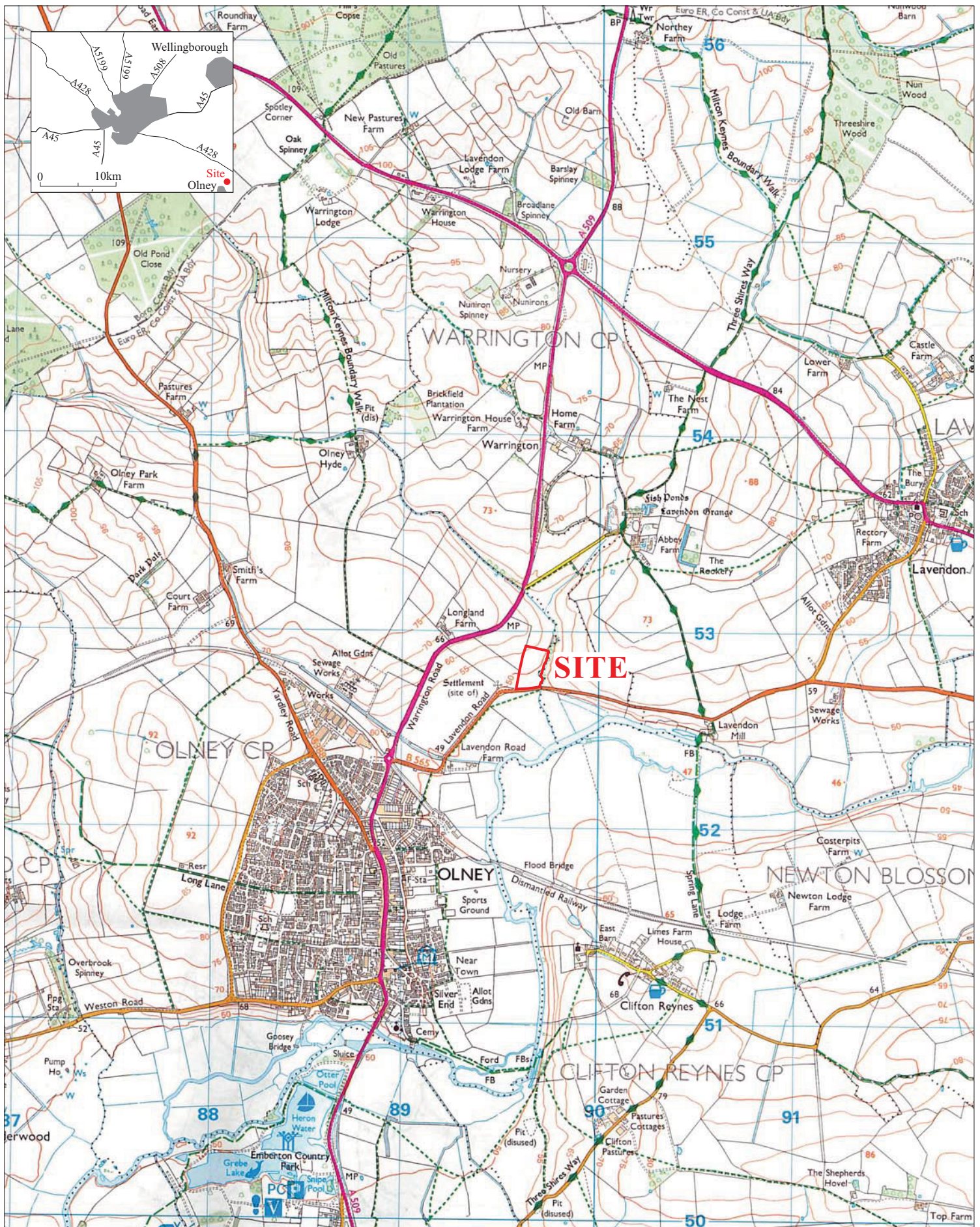
PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
Pit F1004 looking south-east



2
Ditch F1009A and drain F1011 looking south-east



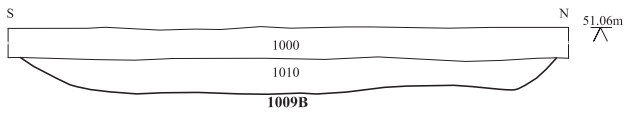
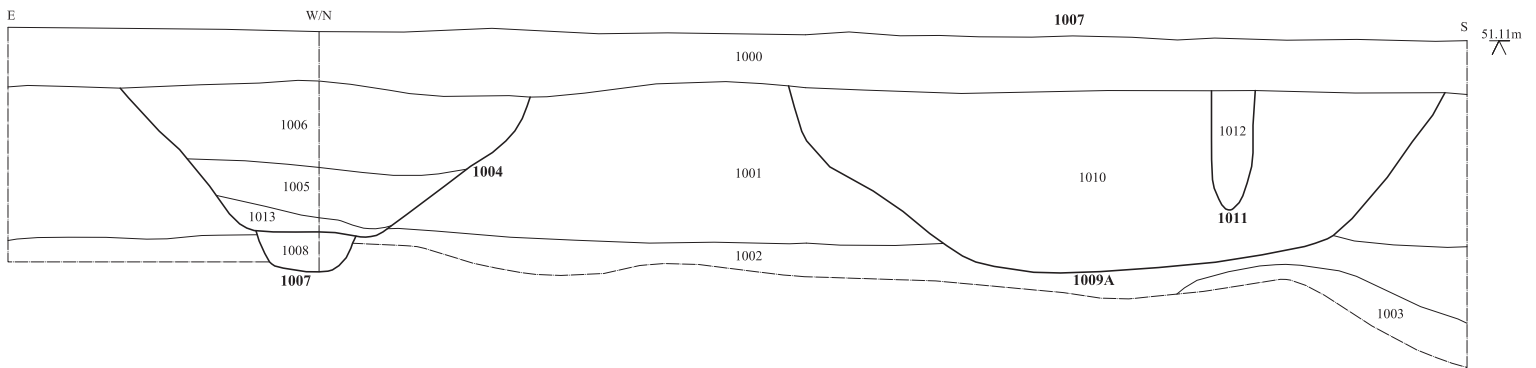
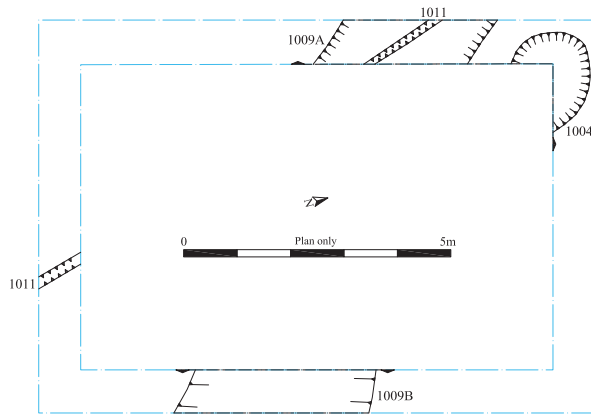
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4
 Walkers Bridge Field, Olney, Buckinghamshire (P6949)



0 75m

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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:1000 at A4
Walkers Bridge Field, Olney, Buckinghamshire (P6949)



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Fig. 3 Site plan and sections
 Scale 1:1000 at A4
 Walkers Bridge Field, Olney, Buckinghamshire (P6949)