

Archaeological Evaluation

**Blackfriars Stand
Hereford United Football Club
Edgar Street
Hereford**

NGR: SO 50865 40446

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1. Non Technical Summary

This report details the interim findings of an archaeological field evaluation carried out by Border Archaeology adjacent to the Blackfriars Stand at Hereford United Football Ground, Edgar Street, Hereford, in advance of development.

Fieldwork was undertaken between October 19th and 22nd 2009 when two trenches, each measuring 10m by 1.5m, were opened by machine and toothless bucket and subsequently excavated by hand to a maximum depth of 1m.

At least one of these trenches revealed features and deposits potentially indicative of early human occupation, based on comparison with the results of fieldwork carried out immediately to the south of the site at Hereford Cattle Market in 2006, where a pit was identified containing prehistoric pottery, carbonised wood, soil samples and burned stones. Study of the pottery collected from this feature suggests that it is Late Neolithic or early Bronze Age and may potentially date to the Beaker period, c. 2500bc.

There are striking similarities between the feature revealed at Hereford Cattle Market and a series of pits identified by Border Archaeology at the Hereford United site on the opposite side of Blackfriars Street, these being their relatively shallow depth below existing ground level, their stratigraphic relationship with the natural gravels and the composition and content of their fills.

It is thus concluded that the features exposed on either side of Blackfriars Street are broadly contemporary, although this interpretation remains provisional at present. Upon advice (and instruction to proceed thereof) from Julian Cotton of Herefordshire Archaeology as to the importance of the environmental samples taken during the evaluation in determining an appropriate mitigation strategy, laboratory analysis of material recovered from the pits will be undertaken.

It may well provide sufficient additional evidence on which to base a firm conclusion as to the date and function of these features and the results of this analysis will thus be the subject of a further report in due course.

2. Introduction

Border Archaeology was instructed by Hereford United Football Club (HUFC) to undertake the archaeological evaluation of land adjacent to the Blackfriars Stand of the club's Edgar Street football ground comprising open space to the S of the southern goalposts (NGR: SO 50865 40446) (**Fig. 1**) in advance of proposed development.

Copies of this report will be sent to Hereford United Football Club (HUFC) and Julian Cotton Esq., Archaeological Advisor, Herefordshire Council.

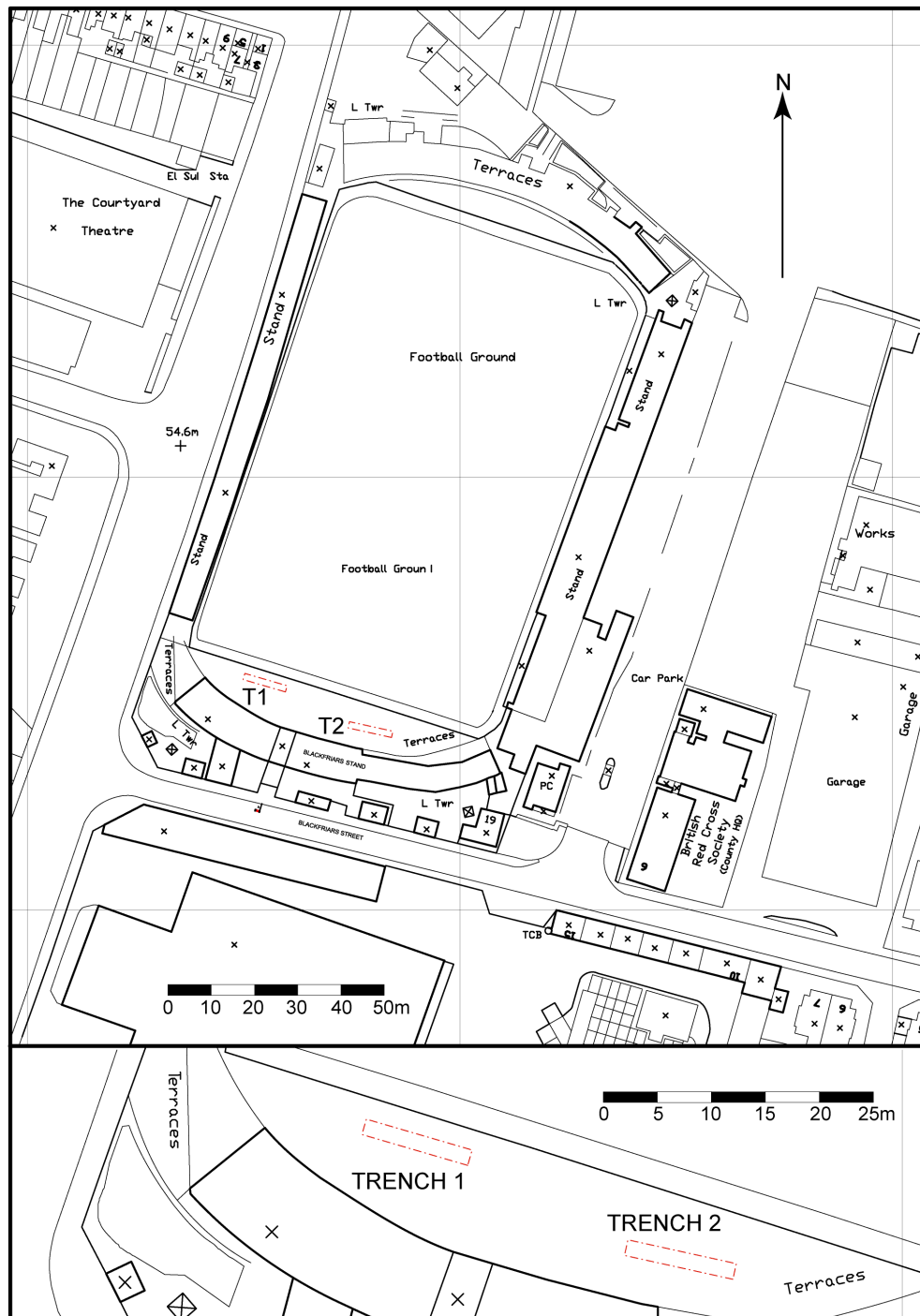


Fig. 1: Site and trench location plan

2.1 Soils & Geology

Hereford is classified as an unsurveyed urban area by the Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983). However, other studies (e.g. Shoesmith 1982) present a complex and varied picture, with peat beds observed to the N of the city in Widemarsh while towards the city centre gravels occur relatively close to the surface.

3. Methodology

Fieldwork was carried out in accordance with archaeological practices set out in *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008). Border Archaeology adheres to the IfA *Code of conduct* and *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology* and to Herefordshire Archaeology's *Standards for Archaeological Projects in Herefordshire* (Herefordshire Council 2004)

Two NW-SE evaluation trenches measuring 10m × 1.5m were opened by machine and toothless bucket within the proposed development area (**Fig. 1**) and excavated to the first archaeological horizon. A *sondage* measuring 1.5m × 1.5m was excavated in each trench to establish that natural deposits had been attained.

All spoil and removed material were visually scanned for artefacts, which were recorded and, where appropriate, retained. A temporary benchmark was established on the site with a value of 54.34m AOD.

Written and drawn records were made using *pro-forma* record forms and sheets in accordance with archaeological practices set out by the Institute for Archaeologists. Archaeological deposits, features and structures were recorded in plan and section on gridded archivally stable drawing film at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 and a photographic record made using a 10.3 MPX digital camera.

4. Evaluation results

Trench 1 was orientated NW-SE and measured 10m × 1.5m. Eight contexts were revealed, the uppermost of which (101) (**Plate 1; Fig. 2**) was a modern tarmacadam surface extending >10m × >1.5m to an average depth of 0.06m. This surface overlay (102) a loose, reddish-brown fine gravel sub-base measuring 0.16m thick and presumably coterminous with context (101).

Underlying this sub-base material was an earlier tarmacadam surface (103) and sub-base (104) (**Plate 1; Fig. 2**), again extending beyond the trench limits to average depths of 0.04m and 0.03m, respectively.

This earlier tarmacadam surface and sub-base overlay a firm dark brown sand-silt-clay representing a cultivation soil or make-up layer (105) (**Plate 1; Fig. 2**), which contained a range of materials. These included frequent CBM, mortar and charcoal flecking; moderate small sub-rounded stones, oyster shell fragments, post-medieval ceramic sherds and fragmentary animal bone; together with occasional clay pipe stem, iron objects and slag. This extended >10m × >1.5m to an average depth of 0.18m and overlay a firm (plastic) dark yellowish-brown silty clay (106) (**Plate 1; Fig. 2**) with

occasional charcoal flecking, extending >10m x >1.5m to a maximum depth of 0.09m, representing an accumulation of soils prior to the deposition of post-medieval layer (105).

Underlying (106) was a firm mid yellowish-brown sandy clay (107) (**Plates 1 & 2; Fig. 2**) containing frequent degraded sandstone fragments and small sub-rounded stones, together with occasional charcoal flecking. This extended >10m x >1.5m to an average depth of 0.2m and overlay moderately compact pinkish-brown gravels (108) (**Plates 1 & 2; Fig. 2**) identified as natural deposition extending, as revealed within the *sondage* at the SE end of the trench, >1.45m NW-SE x >1.5m to a depth >0.53m.

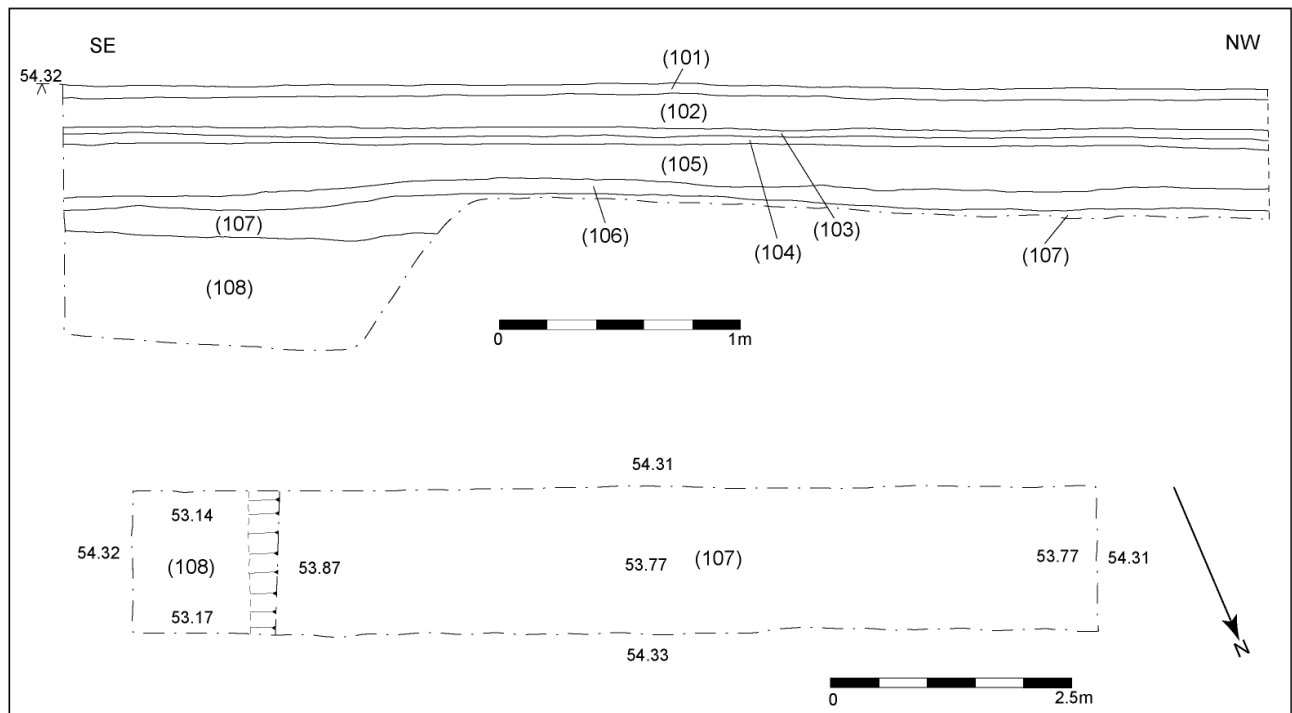


Fig. 2: NE-facing section & post-ex plan of Trench 1



Plate 1: View SW showing NE-facing section of sondage in Trench 1



Plate 2: Post-ex shot of trench 1 – View NW

Trench 2 was orientated NW-SE and measured 10m × 1.5m. Seventeen contexts were revealed, the uppermost of which (201, 202) (**Plate 3; Fig. 3**) was an extension of the modern tarmacadam surface and sub-base comprising contexts (101) and (102) in Trench 1. The surface revealed an average depth of 0.06m while the dark orangey-brown silty sand sub-base material (**Plate 3; Fig. 3**), containing frequent very small sub-rounded stones, was 0.05m thick. Beneath the modern surface was a firm, plastic mid to dark greyish-brown silty clay deposit (203) extending >10m × >1.5m to an average depth of 0.28m (**Plate 3; Fig. 3**). This contained frequent CBM, mortar and charcoal flecking; moderate small sub-rounded stones, charcoal, oyster shell, post-medieval ceramic sherds and animal bone; and occasional clay pipe stem, iron objects and slag.

Underlying this post-medieval deposit was a firm, plastic mid greyish-brown silty clay accumulation (206) (**Plate 3; Fig. 3**) extending >10m × >1.5m to an average depth of 0.1m and containing moderate charcoal flecking and small and medium subangular stones, together with a single heavily abraded ceramic sherd.

This overlay moderately compact mid yellowish-brown/dark pinkish-brown mottled silty clay gravels (204) (**Plates 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10; Fig. 3**) extending >10m × >1.5m to an average (visible) depth of 0.06m. This material was composed of very frequent small subangular and sub-rounded stones and contained frequent degraded sandstone, moderate medium subangular stones and charcoal flecking and occasional charcoal fragments. The deposit was cut by four features [207], [209], [211] and [213].

The base of the (exposed) sequence (205) (**Plate 3; Fig. 3**) was composed of compact mid pinkish-brown natural gravels. These were partially revealed within the *sondage* at the NW end of the trench extending >1.5m NW-SE × >1.2m to a depth of >0.35m.

Plate 3: View NW showing SE-facing section of *sondage* in Trench 2

The first feature identified to be cutting (204) was [207] (**Plates 4, 9 & 10; Fig. 3**), a roughly square cut with rounded corners measuring 0.34m SE-NW × 0.33m × 0.13m. The break of slope at the top of the profile was sharp, with steeply sloping/vertical sides breaking sharply to an undulating base. This was filled by a moderately compact dark brown silty clay (208) (**Fig. 3**) containing frequent charcoal flecking, moderate degraded sandstone, small sub-rounded stones, charcoal fragments and CBM/ceramic flecking and occasional fragmentary ceramic material, an iron nail and a single piece of fragmented animal bone.



Plate 4: Post-ex view NE of [207]

The second feature identified [209] (**Plates 5, 6, 9 & 10; Fig. 3**) was a sub-circular cut measuring 0.8m NW-SE × >0.4m × 0.22m. The break of slope at the top of the profile was sharp, with moderately sloping sides breaking gradually to a slightly concave base. The cut was filled by moderately compact dark greyish-brown sandy silt (210) (**Plate 6;**

Fig. 3) containing moderate small subangular and sub-rounded stones, degraded sandstone and CBM/ceramic flecking, together with occasional charcoal flecking.

Spurring off from the northern portion of this feature was a small natural gully containing moderately compact mid greyish-brown sandy silt (215) (**Plate 5; Fig. 3**) with moderate small sub-rounded stones. This gully extended >1.1m NE-SW × 0.45m NW-SE (average) × 0.09m (average).



Plate 5: Post-ex view NE of [209] showing gully containing (215)



Plate 6: Post-ex view SW of [209], showing gully

The third feature cutting (204) was a sub-circular cut [211] (**Plates 7, 9 & 10; Fig. 3**) measuring 1.53m NW-SE × >0.72m to a maximum depth of 0.4m. The break of slope at the top of the profile was sharp, with sides sloping moderately to the NW and steeply to the SE, breaking sharply at the SE and gradually at the NW to a slightly concave undulating base. The feature contained three fills (216, 217 and 212) (**Plate 7; Fig. 3**). The uppermost (212) was a firm dark greyish-brown to black, slightly sandy silt (211) extending 1.15m NW-SE × >0.4m to a maximum depth of 0.34m. This contained frequent small sub-rounded stones, degraded sandstone and charcoal flecking; moderate CBM/ceramic flecking and charcoal fragments and occasional medium sub-rounded stones.

Underlying (212) was a moderately compact mid greyish-brown silty clay (217) containing moderate very small subangular stones and occasional medium pebbles with flecks of organic material. This extended to a maximum of 1.1m NW-SE × 0.7m NE-SW × 0.14m and overlay a moderately compact mid orangey-brown sand-silt-clay (216) containing frequent degraded sandstone and small pebbles extending to a maximum of 0.45m NW-SE × 0.48m NE-SW × 0.14m.



Plate 7: Post-ex view NE of [211]

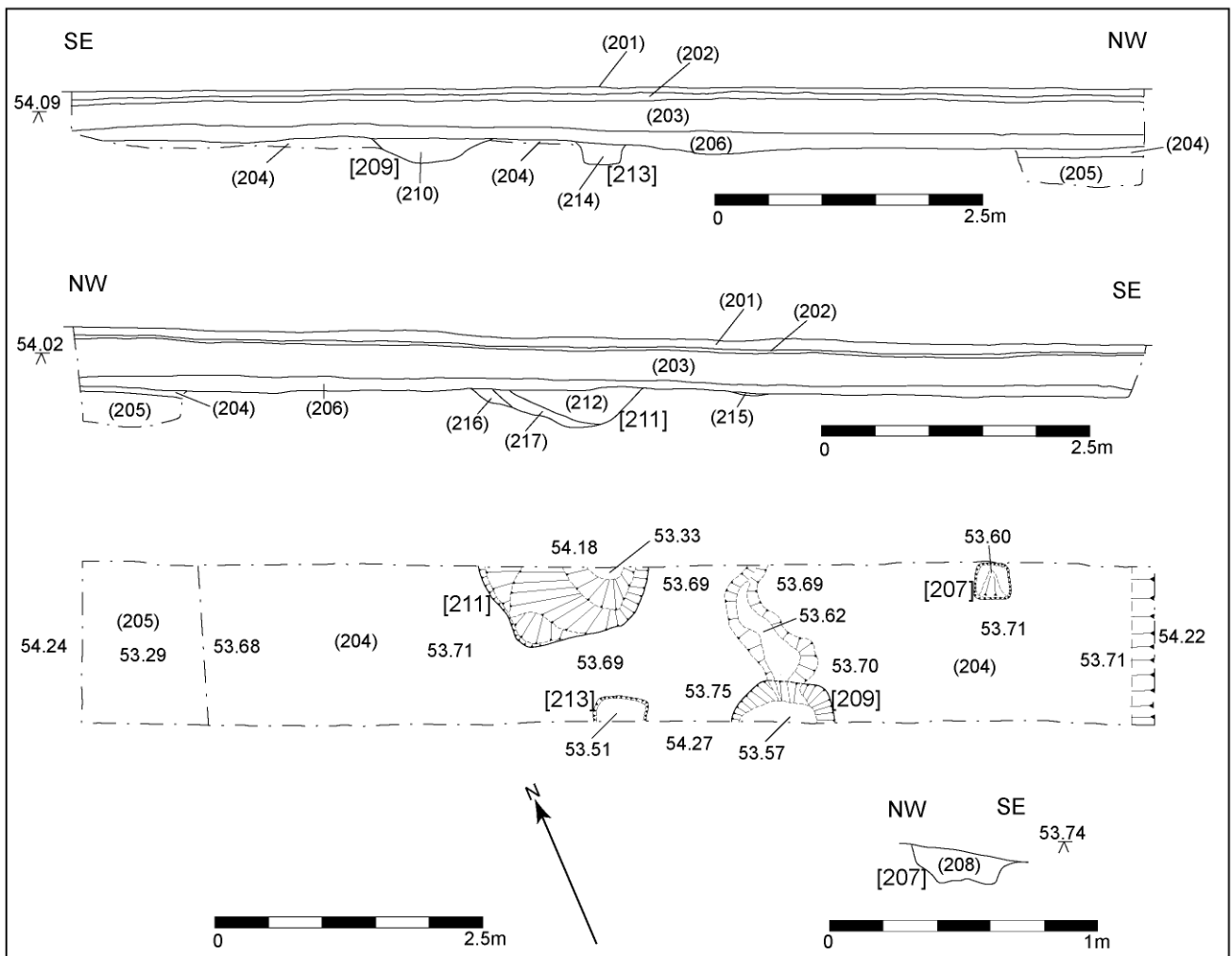


Fig. 3: SW-facing profile of [207], NE- & SW-facing sections and post-ex plan of Trench 2

The final feature identified cutting (204) was a roughly square cut [213] (**Plates 8, 9 & 10; Fig. 3**) with rounded corners measuring 0.44m SE-NW × >0.24m × 0.22m. The break of slope at the top of the profile was sharp, with steeply sloping/vertical sides breaking sharply to an undulating base. This was filled by a plastic, mid greyish-brown sand-silt-clay (214) (**Plate 8; Fig. 3**) containing frequent charcoal flecking, moderate degraded sandstone, small sub-rounded stones, charcoal fragments and CBM/ceramic flecking and occasional fragmentary ceramic material, together with a single animal tooth.



Plate 8: Post-ex view SW of [213]



Plate 9: Post-ex view SE of Trench 2



Plate 10: Post-ex view NW of Trench 2

5. Summary and Conclusion

Trench 1 revealed post-medieval cultivation soils or levelling material beneath a succession of modern surfaces relating to current land use. This post-medieval deposit overlay a relatively sterile accumulation of silty material (106) overlying an apparent occupation deposit (107), which, in turn, lay directly over gravels (108). Although evidence of occupation within (107) was negligible, the deposit was very similar in character to (204) in Trench 2, which is presumed to be broadly contemporary and which revealed evidence of potentially early activity.

Trench 2 contained a similar sequence of deposits to that revealed in Trench 1, although here the presumed occupation deposit contained much more substantial evidence of human activity. Cut from this layer were four features, two of which appeared to represent postholes, based on their dimensions and form. Very little dating evidence was recovered from these two features, but the presence of a single nail in (208) may indicate that at least one was cut from higher up the sequence, with only its base surviving, although this single find may have been intrusive. Both postholes were filled by charcoal-rich material and 100 per cent of (the visible extent of) their contents were recovered for assessment.

The two remaining features were only partially exposed within the limits of the trench but appeared to represent sub-circular pits. Neither provided any artefactual evidence nor offered any clue as to its function. Although both the primary and secondary fills of [211] were relatively sterile and appeared to relate to slumping or silting, the uppermost fill was very humic in composition and was recovered as far as possible in its entirety for assessment.

There are interesting and potentially highly significant parallels between the character of the deposits and features revealed at the southern extent of the football ground and those discovered immediately to the S on the opposite side of Blackfriars Street during the course of a field evaluation carried out in 2006 at Hereford Cattle Market. Twelve evaluation trenches were opened on the cattle market site, of which Trench 8, located close to Blackfriars Street, revealed a roughly elliptical pit apparently relating to domestic occupation, which produced pottery subsequently identified as Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age and which could potentially date to the Beaker period (c.2500bc) (Rouse, 2007). Several striking similarities are to be noted, these being the relatively shallow depth of the features below existing ground level, their stratigraphic relationship with the natural gravels and the composition and content of their fills.

It thus seems reasonable to suggest that the features revealed in Trench 2 may be of similar antiquity and it is on this basis that these features have been extensively sampled. The samples will be submitted in due course for laboratory analysis which, it is anticipated, will provide further evidence as to their date and function, and a further report produced based on these results.

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7. Bibliography

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8. Appendix 1: Context Register

CONTEXT NO	DESCRIPTION
<i>TRENCH 1</i>	
(101)	Indurated light grey tarmacadam extending trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.06m (average depth). Overlies (102)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Modern tarmacadam surface</i>
(102)	Loose reddish-brown fine gravels extending trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.16m (average depth). Overlies (103), underlies (101)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Sub-base for overlying tarmacadam surface (101)</i>
(103)	Indurated dark grey tarmacadam extending trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.04m (average depth). Overlies (104), underlies (102)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Earlier tarmacadam surface</i>
(104)	Moderately compact pinkish sandy clay with frequent small pebbles/gravels. Extends trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.03m (average depth). Overlies (105), underlies (103)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Sub-base for tarmacadam surface (103)</i>
(105)	Firm dark brown sandy silt clay containing frequent CBM, mortar and charcoal flecking; moderate small sub-rounded stones, oyster shell fragments, post-medieval ceramic sherds and animal bone; occasional clay pipe stem, Fe and slag. Extends trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.18m (average depth). Overlies (106), underlies (104).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Post-medieval cultivation soil/make-up deposit</i>
(106)	Firm (plastic) dark yellowish-brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecking. Extends trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.09m (maximum depth). Overlies (107), underlies (105).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Soil accumulation prior to post-medieval deposition</i>
(107)	Firm mid yellowish-brown sandy clay with frequent degraded sandstone fragments and small sub-rounded stones; occasional to moderate charcoal flecking. Extends trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.2m (average depth). Overlies (108), underlies (106).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Possible prehistoric occupation deposit</i>
(108)	Moderately compact pinkish-brown gravels extending >1.45m NW-SE × >1.5m × >0.53m. Underlies (107). Same as (205)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Natural gravels</i>

CONTEXT NO	DESCRIPTION
<i>TRENCH 2</i>	
(201)	Indurated light grey tarmacadam extending trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.06m (average depth). Overlies (202).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Modern tarmacadam surface</i>
(202)	Firm dark orangey brown silty sand containing frequent very small sub-rounded stones. Extends trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.05m (maximum depth). Overlies (203), underlies (201).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Sub-base for modern tarmacadam surface</i>
(203)	Firm (plastic) mid to dark greyish-brown silty clay containing frequent CBM, mortar and charcoal flecking; moderate small sub-rounded stones, charcoal and oyster shell fragments, post-

CONTEXT NO	DESCRIPTION
	medieval ceramic sherds and animal bone; occasional clay pipe stem, Fe and slag. Extends trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.28m (average depth). Overlies (206), underlies (202).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Post-medieval cultivation soils / make up deposit</i>
(204)	Moderately compact mid yellowish-brown/dark pinkish-brown mottled silty clay gravels with very frequent small subangular and sub-rounded stones; frequent degraded sandstone fragments; moderate medium subangular stones and charcoal flecking; occasional charcoal fragments. Extends trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.06m (average [visible] depth). Overlies (205), physically underlies (206) and (215). Cut by [207], [209], [211] and [213].
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Possible prehistoric occupation deposit</i>
(205)	Compact mid pinkish-brown gravels extending >1.2m NW-SE × >1.5m × >0.35m. Underlies (204). Same as (108).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Natural gravels</i>
(206)	Firm (plastic) mid greyish-brown silty clay containing moderate charcoal flecking, small and medium subangular stones and a single very abraded ceramic sherd. Extends trench-wide >10m × >1.5m × 0.1m (average depth). Overlies (208), (210), (212), (214) and (215). Underlies (203). Physically overlies (204).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Soil accumulation prior to post-medieval deposition</i>
[207]	Cut - roughly square, rounded corners measuring 0.34m SE-NW × 0.33m × 0.13m. Break of slope top sharp, sides steeply sloping/vertical, break of slope base sharp, base undulating. Cuts (204), filled by (208).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Possible prehistoric posthole or small pit of unknown function</i>
(208)	Moderately compact dark brown silty clay containing frequent charcoal flecking; moderate degraded sandstone fragments, small sub-rounded stones, charcoal fragments and CBM/ceramic flecking, occasional ceramic fragments, one Fe nail and one piece of fragmented animal bone. Extends 0.34m × 0.33m × 0.13m. Fills [207], underlies (206).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Fill of posthole or small pit of unknown function</i>
[209]	Cut - sub-circular, measuring 0.8m NW-SE × >0.4m × 0.22m. Break of slope top sharp, sides moderately sloping, break of slope base gradual, base flat. Cuts (204), filled by (210).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Possible prehistoric pit of unknown function</i>
(210)	Moderately compact dark greyish-brown sandy silt containing moderate small subangular and sub-rounded stones, degraded sandstone fragments, CBM/ceramic flecking and occasional charcoal flecking. Extends 0.8m × >0.4m × 0.22m. Fills [209], underlies (206). Possibly contemporary with (215)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Fill of pit of unknown function</i>
[211]	Cut - sub-circular, measuring 1.53m NW-SE × > 0.72m × 0.4m (maximum depth). Break of slope top sharp, sides moderately sloping to NW, steep to SE, break of slope base sharp at SE, gradual at NW, base slightly concave, undulating. Cuts (204), filled by (212), (216) and (217).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Possible prehistoric pit of unknown function or terminus of linear</i>
(212)	Firm dark greyish-brown/black slightly sandy silt containing frequent small sub-rounded stones, degraded sandstone fragments

CONTEXT NO	DESCRIPTION
	and charcoal flecking; moderate CBM/ceramic flecking and charcoal fragments; occasional medium sub-rounded stones. Extends 1.15m NW-SE × >0.4m × 0.34m. Fills [211], overlies (217), underlies (206).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Uppermost fill of pit or linear of unknown function</i>
[213]	Cut - roughly square, rounded corners, measuring 0.44m SE-NW × >0.24m × 0.22m. Break of slope top sharp, sides steeply sloping/vertical, break of slope base sharp, base undulating. Cuts (204), filled by (214).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Possible prehistoric posthole or small pit of unknown function</i>
(214)	Moderately compact mid greyish-brown sandy silt clay containing frequent charcoal flecking; moderate degraded sandstone fragments, small sub-rounded stones, charcoal fragments and CBM/ceramic flecking, occasional ceramic material fragments and one animal tooth. Extends 0.44m × >0.24m × 0.22m. Fills [213], underlies (206).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Fill of posthole or small pit of unknown function</i>
(215)	Moderately compact mid greyish-brown sandy silt containing moderate small sub-rounded stones. Extends >1.1m NE-SW × 0.45m NW-SE (average) × 0.09m (average). Underlies (206). Physically overlies (204)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Accumulation within small natural gully</i>
(216)	Moderately compact mid orangey-brown sandy silt clay containing frequent degraded sandstone fragments and small pebbles. Extends to a maximum of 0.45m NW-SE × 0.48m NE-SW × 0.14m. Underlies (217), fills [211].
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Primary fill of pit or linear of unknown function</i>
(217)	Moderately compact mid greyish-brown silty clay containing moderately very small subangular stones; occasional medium pebbles and organic flecking. Extends to a maximum of 1.1m NW-SE × 0.7m NE-SW × 0.14m. Underlies (212), overlies (216), fills [211].
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Secondary fill of pit or linear of unknown function</i>



Document Control

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