

1EW03 – Enabling Works Central

AWHi - Summary Report for Archaeological Recording at Widmore Farm, Oxfordshire (AC250) C25107 & C25086 Site Code: 1C20WIDAR and 1C20WIDTT

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Summary

- 1.1.1 Archaeological Recording and trial trench investigation took on land at Widmore Farm, Oxfordshire ('the Site'). The Site lay slightly south of the A421, approximately 1.3km west from the settlement of Finmere (NGR 462323, 232617). The works were carried out in advance of main construction activities for the High Speed Two (HS2) Phase One railway.
- 1.1.2 The programme of archaeological investigation was undertaken across two land parcels, C25107 measuring c.0.71ha, and C25086 located to the southeast of C25107 and measuring c. 5.17ha (Site Code: 1C2oWIDAR). Within C25107 Archaeological Recording followed soil stripping of a c.0.33ha area. Within C25086 Archaeological Recording of a c.0.55ha area was preceded by the excavation of 17no. trial trenches with a total linear length of 960m² (Site Code: 1C2oWIDTT). The purpose of the trial trenches was to fully investigate geophysical anomalies identified during archaeological works predating the HS2 project, but which had not been sufficiently sampled at that time.
- 1.1.3 The focus of the archaeology was revealed within the eastern part of Area C25086, this comprised a continuation of the unenclosed Middle Iron Age row settlement and previously recorded within Finmere quarry c.300m to the south-east. The settlement was principally evidenced by six roundhouses, these were built along a pre-existing northwest-southeast aligned boundary which appears to have originated as some form of segmented ditch alignment. This was undated but was probably Early Iron Age in origin. Two later rows of pits on the same alignment were evident, dating to the Middle Iron Age and were intimately related to the construction of the roundhouses and the establishment of the row settlement, with the roundhouses being positioned in direct or proximal positions to the pits. The second, broadly perpendicular, boundary constructed as pairs of post holes, also appeared to have predated the roundhouse structures, and was perfectly articulated with the entranceway to one of the roundhouses. The pottery broadly dates to the Middle Iron Age, however an Early Iron Age date for some of the pottery and activity, cannot be precluded.
- 1.1.4 The archaeology in C25107 consisted of a series of undated pits accompanied by a significant number of natural features/bioturbation. Two pits each produced a single worked flint, these were residual finds and not useful for dating the features. Some of the pit features broadly align northwest-southeast with the boundary and row settlement recorded in C25086 and appear to demonstrate that this boundary line continued into C25107.
- 1.1.5 The trial trenches in C25086 exposed two undated parallel ditches, these were broadly east / west oriented and appear to be a direct continuation of two similarly aligned and undated parallel ditches identified at the Finmere Quarry Site to the south-east, interpreted as a Roman trackway. The trenching results did not otherwise identify and further significant remains within C25086 and the recording area was not extended.