LAND AT THE WHITE HORSE PUBLIC HOUSE PARK LANE EATON BRAY BEDFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Albion archaeology





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On behalf of: Taylor French Developments

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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the method statement. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the project by Andrew Campbell of Bob Harrington Design Ltd, on behalf of Taylor French Developments. Fieldwork was monitored by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist, Martin Oake.

The project was managed for Albion Archaeology by Christiane Meckseper (Project Officer) and Jeremy Oetgen (Project Manager). Fieldwork was undertaken by Iain Leslie (Archaeological Supervisor) and Gary Manning (Assistant Archaeological Supervisor). Artefacts were analysed by Jackie Wells (Artefacts Officer). All Albion Archaeology projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

This report has been prepared by Christiane Meckseper with contributions by Iain Leslie.

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1.1	11/06/2013	Incorporated comments by CBCA

Structure of the Report

Section 1 is an introduction to the project, the methodology for which is described in Section 2. The results of the fieldwork are presented in Section 3 and conclusions and a statement of significance is given in Section 4. Section 5 is a bibliography. The finds are discussed in Appendix 1 and detailed descriptions of the archaeological deposits encountered can be found in Appendix 2.



Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

ALGAO Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers

CBC Central Bedfordshire Council

CBCA Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist

Client Taylor French Developments

DA Development Area

HER Central Bedfordshire Council Historic Environment Record

IfA Institute for Archaeologists
WSI Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission has been granted on appeal for the construction of four houses in the car park of the White Horse Public House, Park Lane, Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire (CB/11/04496/FULL).

A condition attached to the planning consent (Condition 5) required a programme of archaeological investigation as a consequence of the development. This is in accordance with national planning guidelines in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, which was published on 27 March 2012 (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012). A brief issued by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist in 2013 recommended a three-stage investigation, of which Stage 1 comprised an archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching. The present document reports the results of Stage 1.

The Development Area is located to the west of the White Horse public house, which lies at the junction of Totternhoe Road, Northall Road and the High Street in the centre of Eaton Bray. The present-day settlement of Eaton Bray has its origins in the Saxon period and is first mentioned in historical records in Domesday Book of 1086. The Development Area lies on the north-west edge of the postulated extent of the medieval village of Eaton.

Three trenches, covering a total of 90sqm of the Development Area, were excavated and recorded between 22nd and 24th May 2013. The trenches revealed archaeological features in the form of a small ditch containing a small, abraded fragment of Iron Age pottery, and three pits located towards the centre and western part of the site. The pits measured up to 3m in diameter and were from 0.4m to over 1.9m deep. All the pits contained 12th- to 13th-century pottery and animal bone.

While it is possible that the ditch in Trench 3 was Iron Age, the abraded nature of the Iron Age pot sherd suggests it might have been residual within a ditch constructed in a later period. The tithe map of 1819 shows a number of field boundaries on an alignment similar to that of the ditch and, therefore, the ditch might have been one of those boundaries.

The pits excavated in Trenches 1 and 2 were definite evidence for medieval activity on the Development Area. The nature of their fills and the depth of the features suggest they were two rubbish pits and a potential well. This indicates that the site was located close to an area of medieval occupation within this part of Eaton Bray.

Despite limited previous disturbance of the Development Area as a result of the construction of the car park, the trenches demonstrated that there is still a distinct subsoil that extends across the whole Development Area and serves to protect any archaeological features below. All features revealed during this evaluation were well preserved and in good condition. They were of local to regional significance for the medieval period. Although no Iron Age features were encountered, the presence of Iron Age pottery suggests there is also some potential for the survival of Iron Age remains that would be regionally significant.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Planning permission has been granted on appeal for the construction of four houses in the car park of the White Horse Public House, Park Lane, Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire (CB/11/04496/FULL).

A condition attached to the planning consent (Condition 5) required a programme of archaeological investigation as a consequence of the development. This is in accordance with national planning guidelines in the form of the *National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, which was published on 27 March 2012 (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012).

A brief was issued by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBC 2013) which recommended a three-stage approach to the programme of archaeological investigation, of which Stage 1 comprised an archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching. At the request of the client, Albion Archaeology produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for Stage 1, which set out the scope of the evaluation and the methods to be used for the programme of field evaluation (Albion Archaeology 2013). The results of the field evaluation are presented in this Stage 1 report.

1.2 Site Location and Description

The Development Area (DA) lies to the west of the White Horse public house which lies at the junction of Totternhoe Road, Northall Road and the High Street in the centre of Eaton Bray (Figure 1). It includes the western half of the current pub car park, its adjacent grassed area and a neighbouring overgrown plot of land. It is planted along its boundaries with trees and shrubs. The boundaries of the DA are formed by Park Lane in the north and residential properties in the south and west.

Eaton Bray lies on the northern slope of the Greensand Ridge and the underlying geology consists of outcrops of Upper Greensand Formation and West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation. Drift geology consists of "head" deposits made up of clay, silt, sand and gravel.

The DA is c. 0.2ha in area, on level ground at an average height of 98.5m OD and is centred on grid reference SP 968209.

1.3 Archaeological Background

A heritage asset assessment for the DA was prepared in 2012 (Albion Archaeology 2012). This contains a detailed description of the archaeological and historical background of the site. The main points are summarised below.

The present-day settlement of Eaton Bray has its origins in the Saxon period and is first mentioned in historical records in Domesday Book of 1086 where it is recorded as a large manor consisting of 35 households and being worth 12 hides and 1 virgate. The lands belonging to the manor consisted of meadows, pasture and woodland.



There is little evidence of activity prior to the Saxon period except for two Roman coins (HER 11776 and HER 11777) respectively dating to the 4th and 2nd centuries, which were found in 1912 during gardening work in two locations close to St Mary's Church. A further Roman coin (HER 18344) has been recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme; its find-spot was to the south-west of the DA.

The DA lies on the north-west edge of the postulated extent of the medieval village of Eaton (HER 16838). In terms of medieval settlement form it is unusual for the area (Coleman pers. comm.), as it is an elongated settlement which consisted of four foci around several linear village greens. Polyfocal settlement is a feature more common along the Bedfordshire uplands, where distinctive historic villages are often recognisable by their "Ends"; whilst linear greens are more generally found within the settlements on the Chilterns Hills. However, given the proximity of the village to the northern edge of the escarpment the morphology of Eaton Bray is perhaps less surprising.

A designated Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 24418), consisting of a large medieval moated site with contemporary deer park and fish ponds is located at Park Farm, *c*. 800m to the west of the DA. The 1819 and 1849 tithe maps show the DA to be lying adjacent to the access route to the moat, which joins the main crossroads at Eaton Bray.

A possible smaller moated medieval site (HER 11779) was located c. 300m to the east of the DA close to the current High Street within Eaton Bray.

St Mary's Church (HER 964) lies to the east of the DA and is a Grade I listed building. It was built in the 13th century and altered and extended in the 15th. Its churchyard (HER 8886) was in use until 1882-83. A fragment of medieval glazed tile (HER 2001), dating to the 14th century but of unknown origin, was found in an area to its south.

The tithe map of 1849 shows a mixture of arable and pasture fields within the parish and an area of ridge and furrow cultivation was recorded immediately to the north-east of the DA (HER 5075).

Most surviving heritage assets in the vicinity of the DA and within the village of Eaton Bray date to the post-medieval period and consist of private dwellings and farm buildings. Several of these are designated heritage assets (Grade II listed buildings).

1.4 Project Objectives

The general aim of the evaluation was to establish the character, date and function of any archaeological features within the development area.

Based on regional and local research frameworks and agendas (Medlycott 2011 and Oake *et al* 2008) the following site-specific and general research objectives were formulated in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2013):



- 1. Is there any evidence for medieval occupation in this part of Eaton Bray?
- 2. Can any occupation or activity in the site shed light on the extents and structure of the main settlement, and in particular its unusual elongated form?
- 3. Is there any evidence of the access route from the moated site, shown to pass just to the south of the site on the 1819 and 1849 tithe maps?

The general research aims of the archaeological investigations were to:

- 1. Establish the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation on the DA
- 2. Establish the relationship of any remains found to surrounding contemporary landscapes.
- 3. Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

The objective of the archaeological investigations is to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the site in its cultural and environmental setting.



2. METHODOLOGY

Trial trenching took place between 22nd and 24th May 2013. A layout of three trenches measuring 20m by 2m and covering 120sqm of the DA was agreed with the CBCA (Figure 2).

Trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless bucket and operating under close archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed down to the top of the archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever were encountered first, and the spoil heaps were scanned for artefacts.

The bases and sides of all trenches were cleaned as necessary by hand. Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. Each trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence, commencing at 101 for Trench 1, 201 for Trench 2 *etc*.

A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2012). The trenches were inspected by the CBCA on 23rd May 2013, prior to their backfilling. The project adhered throughout to the standards set out in the following documents:

Albion Archaeology	Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork (2nd edn, 2001).
 Bedford Borough Council 	Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford (2010)
• ALGAO (East)	Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003)
• English Heritage	Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide (2006)
	Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2) (1991)
	Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (2011)
• CBC	Brief for a programme of Archaeological Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication of land at the White Horse Public House, Park Lane, Eaton Bray. VI 16th April
• IfA ¹	2013 MKO. By-Laws and Code of Conduct Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (updated 2012) and finds (updated 2012)

¹ All IfA codes, standards and guidelines are available at: http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

All the deposits and features of archaeological interest are summarised below. Their location and extent are shown on Figure 3. Detailed technical information on all archaeological features and deposits can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2 Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Deposits

There were two distinct areas of overburden on the DA. Within the former car park area this consisted of a 5mm-thick layer of tarmac over a 0.2m-thick make-up layer of loose mid-orange sandy rubble.

The western half of the DA had been grassed and a low bank ran along the eastern edge of the DA. Here the overburden consisted of a humic topsoil which was 0.2m thick, increasing to 0.4m including the bank. The bank was most likely created during the construction of the car park by pushing topsoil off the car park area towards the eastern edge of site.

A subsoil consisting of friable mid brown grey clayey silt and ranging from 0.27m to 0.4m thick extended across the whole site. This lay below the topsoil and car park make-up layer described above. Undisturbed geological deposits consisted of firm, light-brownish-orange clay gravel.

3.3 Ditch

A ditch or gully [304] on a NW-SE alignment was located in the centre of Trench 3. It was 0.55m wide and 0.16m deep with a shallow, concave profile (Figures 3 and 5). It produced one sherd of abraded Iron Age pottery.

3.4 Pits

A total of three pits were located in Trenches 1 and 2, all towards the east end of each respective trench. Pits [105] and [208] extended beyond the limits of the trench so their full diameter could not be recorded.

Pit [105] was located at the east end of Trench 1 and was exposed to a width of 1.5m (Figure 3 and 4). It was circular in plan with sides sloping at *c*. 50 degrees and excavated to a depth of 1.19m. The feature was not bottomed and its full depth is unclear. It contained two fills (106) and (107) which consisted of firm, light- and dark-brownish-grey silty clay. Fill (107) produced a fragment of 12th- to 13th-century medieval pottery.

Pit [205] was located in the east end of Trench 2 and was circular in plan, 1.7m in diameter and 0.4m deep with shallow concave sides and base (Figure 3 and 6). It contained mid-grey (206) and light-brown (207) silty clay fills. Both fills produced a good assemblage of 12th- to 13th-century pottery.

Pit [208] was located adjacent to pit [205]. It was sub-circular in plan, 3m in diameter, and was excavated by hand to a depth of 0.8m when the water table was encountered (Figures 3, 7 and 8). The pit contained several fills (209), (210), (211), (212), which consisted of firm to friable dark-grey clays. Fills (209) along the edges of the cut and main central fill (211) contained frequent



flecks of charcoal. Fill (210) along the sides of the ditch consisted of light-brownish-grey clay with moderate small stones, suggesting an element of slumping of the sides had taken place before the pit was backfilled. Fill (212) produced several fragments of 12th- to 13th-century medieval pottery.

Augering of the pit base suggested that there were further fills present for at least another 1.1m, giving the pit a total depth of more than 1.9m. Natural gravel was not observed within the auger sample.

All the pits produced fragments of animal bone.



4. CONCLUSIONS AND HERITAGE ASSESSEMENT

4.1 Summary of the Evaluation Results

The potentially earliest remains on the DA were in a shallow ditch in Trench 3, which contained a fragment of Iron Age pottery. While it is possible that the ditch was Iron Age, the abraded nature of the pottery suggests it might have been residual within the ditch and that the ditch was constructed in a later period. The tithe map of 1819 (Figure 9) shows a number of field boundaries on an alignment similar to that of the ditch and, therefore, the ditch might have been one of those boundaries. Alternatively it could represent a prehistoric or later land division or plot boundary.

The pits excavated in Trenches 1 and 2 were definite evidence for medieval activity on the DA. All the pits produced 12th- to 13th-century pottery and a small quantity of animal bone, suggesting they were used or re-used as rubbish pits. The nature of the finds (see Appendix 1 - Section 6) suggests that they came from a domestic context of cooking and butchering.

The depth of pit [208] also suggests that it could represent a well or water hole. No definite evidence for a lining structure was found during the evaluation. However, the thin, dark fill (209) along the edges of the pit and a fragment of charred roundwood, probably coppiced, within the main fill could indicate that a wattle lining once existed within the feature. The lower fills, which could not be safely excavated as part of the evaluation, may comprise permanently waterlogged deposits likely to preserve plant remains and wood or leather artefacts that do not normally survive in drier conditions.

The findings of the evaluation clearly show that there was some form of activity within the DA during the medieval period. The rubbish pits and potential well indicate that the DA was located close to medieval dwellings within the settlement of Eaton Bray, even though no residential structures themselves were revealed on the DA. The location of the medieval features at the western end of the DA suggests that they were either set back some distance from houses along the market place and green to the east, or closer to structures set within a plot to the west of the DA.

Despite limited previous disturbance of the DA as a result of the construction of the car park, the trenches demonstrated that there is still a distinct subsoil that extends across the whole site and serves to protect the archaeological features below. All features revealed during this evaluation were well preserved and in good condition.

4.2 Assessment of Heritage Assets Within the Development Area

The trial trenching has revealed the presence within the DA of four archaeological features not previously known and further features may lie in the untested areas of the DA. The possible well [208] is potentially of regional significance, if it contains waterlogged deposits. The other two pits and the ditch are of local significance, but within the context of the medieval village as a whole they may be of regional significance, with potential to address themes



relating to medieval rural settlement and economy in this part of Bedfordshire and eastern England (*see* Edgeworth 2007; Medlycott 2011, 70; Wade 2000, 23–6).

Although no definite Iron Age features were encountered in the trenches, the presence of a single sherd of Iron Age pottery suggests that there was Iron Age settlement nearby. This means there is some potential for Iron Age features to survive within the DA and if the location and character of any Iron Age occupation could be determined, it would add to knowledge of settlement patterns in Bedfordshire and eastern England and would therefore be regionally significant.



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6. APPENDIX 1: ARTEFACT SUMMARY

6.1 Introduction

The evaluation produced a small finds assemblage comprising mainly pottery and animal bone (Table 1).

Tr.	Feature	Description	Context	Date range	Finds Summary
1	105	Pit	107	Early medieval	Pottery (5g); animal bone (64g)
2	205	Pit	206	Early medieval	Pottery (8g); animal bone (89g)
	208	Pit	212	Early medieval	Pottery (148g); animal bone (130g); charcoal (4g)
3	304	Ditch	305	Late Iron Age	Pottery (5g)

Table 1: Artefact summary by trench and feature

6.2 Pottery

Eleven pottery sherds (165g) representing ten vessels were recovered from four features, the majority from pit [208], Trench 2. The pottery is moderately fragmented, with an average sherd weight of 15g, and generally survives in good condition. Six fabric types were identified using common names and type codes in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently maintained by Albion Archaeology (Table 2).

Fabric Type	Common name	Sherd No.	Context/Sherd No.
Late Iron Age			
F09	Sand and grog	1	(305):1
Early medieval			
C01	Sand	2	(212):2
C60	Hertfordshire-type grey ware	1	(212):1
C61	Sand (calcareous inclusions)	4	(206):2, (212):2
C67	Sand (mixed inclusions)	2	(107):1, (212):1
С	Non-specific medieval	1	(206):1

Table 2: Pottery Type Series

The earliest pottery comprises an abraded grog- and sand-tempered body sherd (5g) datable to the late Iron Age. Recovered from the fill of ditch [304], the sherd's poor and fragmentary condition suggests it should not necessarily be taken as an indicator of the date of the feature.

The remainder of the assemblage is of 12th- to 13th-century date and comprises locally manufactured sand-tempered wares, most containing calcareous inclusions, in both hand-made and wheel-thrown forms. A thickened, flat bowl rim with thumbed decoration and a fine-walled, wheel thrown jug sherd with a pale yellow glaze are the only diagnostic vessel forms. Feature sherds comprise single base angles from vessels with flat and sagging bases. Sooting and white residues (possibly limescale) were visible on five sherds, suggesting their use as cooking pots.



6.3 Animal bone

Eleven pieces of animal bone (283g) were collected from three features. The fills of pits [208] and [205] respectively yielded a complete cow metatarsal (130g), and eight skull and horn core fragments (89g), also likely to derive from a cow. Undiagnostic of species, single fragments of mandible and scapula, the latter with several cut marks, derived from pit [105]. Individual pieces have an average weight of 26g, and display variable surface erosion.



7. APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT SUMMARY

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 20.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.5 m. Max: 0.58 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 96847: Northing: 20924)

OS Grid Ref.: SP (*Easting: 96831: Northing: 20933*)

Reason: To evaluate archaeological potential of area

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds Present:		
101	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey clay silt moderate small-medium stones Thickness 0.3m	V		
102	Make up layer	Loose mid orange sandy rubble Thickness 0.25m	✓		
103	Subsoil	Friable mid brown grey clay silt moderate small-medium stones Thickness 0.27m	✓		
104	Natural	Firm light brown orange clay gravel			
105	Pit	Circular sides: concave dimensions: max depth 1.19m, min diameter 1.5	m 🗸		
106	Fill	Firm light brown grey silty clay occasional small-medium stones $$ Thickness $$ 0.15m $$	\checkmark		
107	Fill	Firm mid brown grey silty clay moderate small-medium stones Thickness >0.49m	\checkmark	✓	



Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 20.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.6 m. Max: 0.8 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 96851: Northing: 20937)

OS Grid Ref.: SP (*Easting: 96840: Northing: 20952*)

Reason: To evaluate archaeological potential of area

Context:	Type: Description:		Excavated: Finds Present:	
201	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty clay moderate small-medium stones Thickness 0.4m		
202	Subsoil	Friable mid brown grey silty clay occasional small-medium stones Thickness 0.35m	✓	
203	Make up layer	Loose mid orange sandy rubble Thickness 0.4m	~	
204	Natural	Firm light orange clay gravel		
205	Pit	Circular sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max depth 0.4m, max diameter 1.7m	✓	
206	Fill	Firm mid grey silty clay moderate small-medium stones Thickness 0.4m	✓	✓
207	Fill	Firm light brown silty clay occasional small-medium stones Thickness 0.3m	~	
208	Pit	Sub-circular sides: steep dimensions: min depth 1.9m, max diameter 3.n	ı 🗸	
209	Fill	Friable dark grey silt frequent flecks charcoal Thickness 0.1m	✓	
210	Fill	Firm light brown grey clay moderate small stones Thickness 0.14m	✓	
211	Fill	Friable dark grey silt frequent flecks charcoal Thickness >0.4m	✓	
212	Fill	Firm mid grey silty clay moderate small-medium stones Thickness 0.6m	✓	✓



Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 20.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.45 m. Max: 0.6 m.

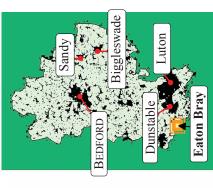
Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 96853: Northing: 20927)

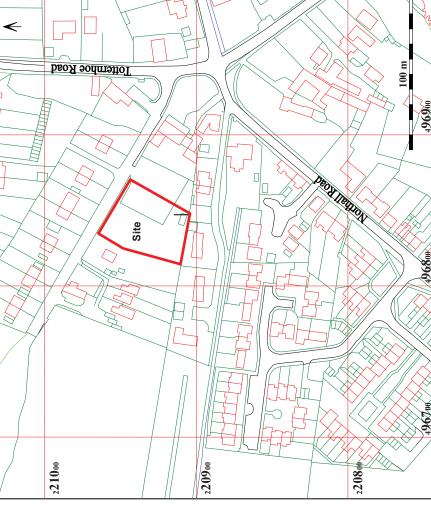
OS Grid Ref.: SP (*Easting:* 96862: *Northing:* 20945)

Reason: To evaluate archaeological potential of area

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds P	cavated: Finds Present:	
301	Make up layer	Loose mid orange sandy rubble Thickness 0.2m	✓		
302	Subsoil	Firm dark brown grey silty clay moderate small-medium stones Thickne 0.4m	ss		
303	Natural	Firm light brown orange clay gravel			
304	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.55m, max depth 0.16m, min length 1.m	✓		
305	Fill	Firm mid grey brown silty clay moderate small-medium stones Thickness 0.16	m 🗸	✓	







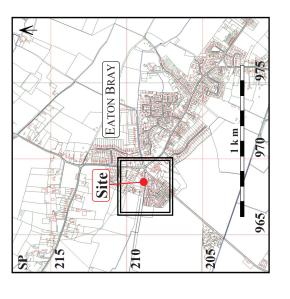


Figure 1: Site location

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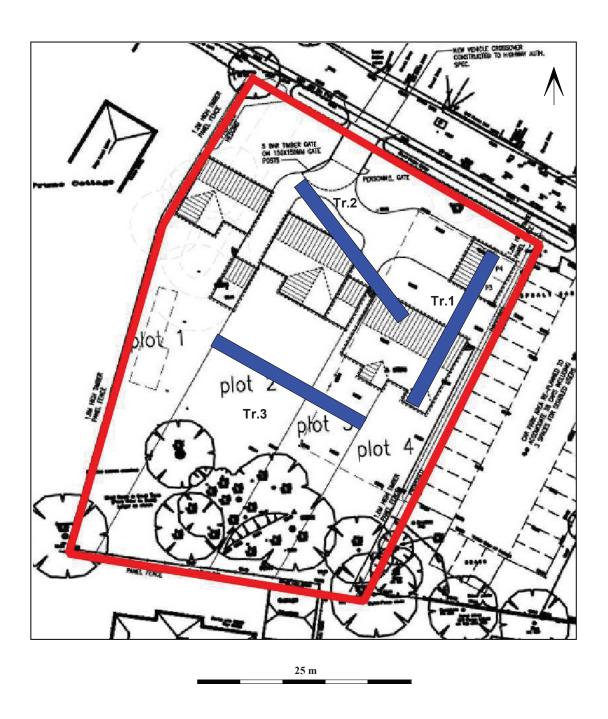


Figure 2: Trench location plan





Figure 4: Pit [105], looking north (1m scale)

Figure 5: Gully [304], looking west (1m scale)





Figure 6: Pit [205], looking north (1m scale)



Figure 7: Pit [208], looking north (1m scale)





Figure 8: Trench 2, looking west, pits [205] and [208]

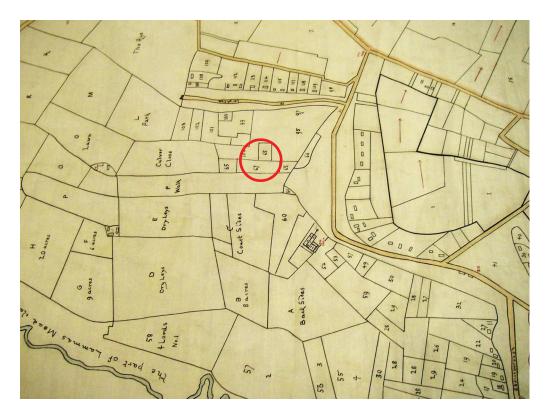


Figure 9: Tithe map 1819 showing approximate location of DA (not to scale)



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