



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench evaluation on
land to the east of Stourwell Barn
Swalcliffe, Oxfordshire
May 2013



Northamptonshire Archaeology

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No. 151239
Project name	STOURWELL BARN, SWALCLIFFE	
Short description	An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land to the east of Stourwell Barn, Swalcliffe, Oxfordshire during May 2013. The work was undertaken in advance of the construction of an anaerobic digestion facility. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered during the course of the evaluation.	
Project type	Trial Trench Evaluation	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current land use	Arable	
Future work	None	
Monument type/ period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Oxfordshire	
Site address	Stourwell Barn, Swalcliffe	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 3798 3628	
Area	1.085ha	
Height aOD	165m-170m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Oxfordshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Ed Taylor	
Project Manager	Ant Maul	
Sponsor or funding body	Mr J Taylor	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	1/5/13	
End date	2/5/13	
ARCHIVES		
Archive location	OXCM:2013.58	
Archive contents	Trial Trench forms (7), Col slides (13) B+W contact sheets and negs (1) digital photos (1 cd)	
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	An archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation on land to the east of Stourwell Barn, Swalcliffe, Oxfordshire, May 2012	
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Contents

1	INTRODUCTION
2	BACKGROUND
2.1	Location and topography
2.2	Archaeological and historical background
3	OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY
4	THE RECORDED EVIDENCE
5	CONCLUSIONS
	BIBLIOGRAPHY
	APPENDIX: INDEX OF CONTEXTS BY TRENCH

Figures

Cover: The site, looking east

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: Trench locations

Fig 3: Trench 3, topsoil, subsoil and colluvium, looking north-west

Fig 4: The site, looking south-west

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION ON
LAND TO THE EAST OF STOURWELL BARN
SWALCLIFFE, OXFORDSHIRE
MAY 2013**

Abstract

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land to the east of Stourwell Barn, Swalcliffe, Oxfordshire during May 2013. The work was undertaken in advance of the construction of an anaerobic digestion facility. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in May 2013 prior to the construction of an on-farm anaerobic digestion facility on land at to the east of Stourwell Barn, Swalcliffe, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 3798 3628, Figs 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by ABDS Ltd on behalf of their client Mr J Taylor in response to a brief for archaeological evaluation issued by the Oxfordshire County Council Archaeologist (Oram 2013) in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012). The investigation followed an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2013) and adhered to the procedural document MoRPHE issued by English Heritage (EH 2006) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

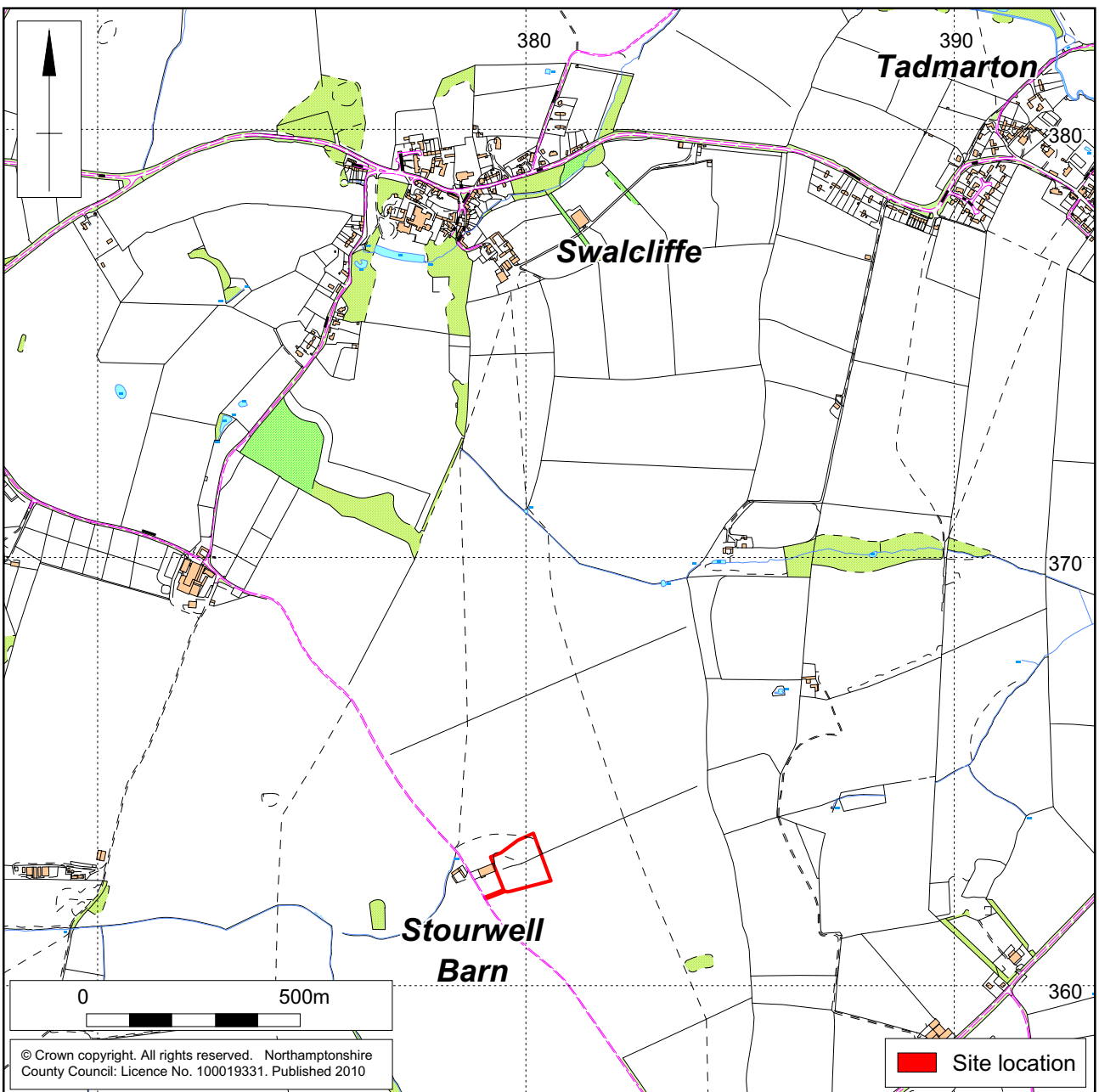
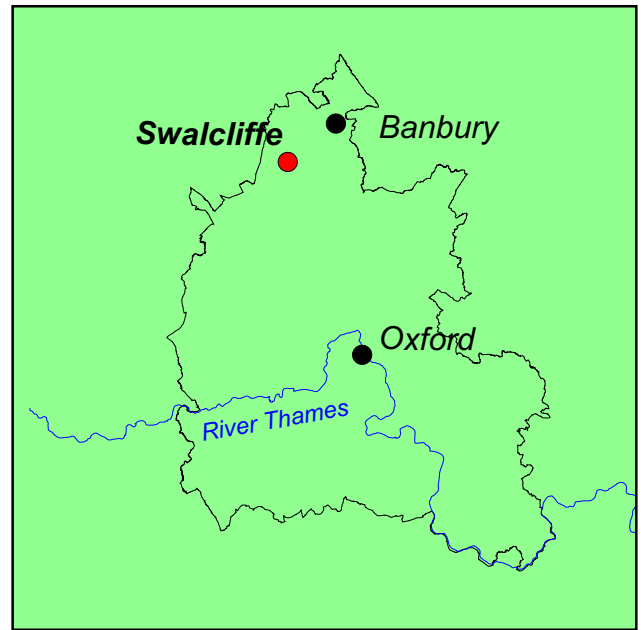
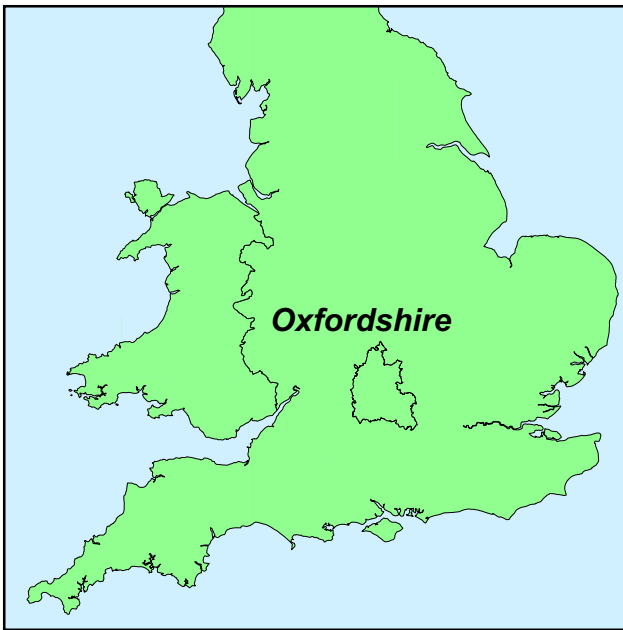
The proposed development area sits within an undulating landscape and comprises part of a single arable field, adjacent to a tree belt and a former quarry, occupying a total of 1.085ha. It is located on the east side of a farm track and east of Stourwell Barn, *circa* 1.5km south of the village of Swalcliffe (Fig 1).

The local geology comprises Great Oolite limestone (www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex) and the proposed development area lies between 165m and 170m aOD.

2.2 Archaeological and historical background

The site lies within a rich archaeological landscape within a bend of the Great Cotswold Ridgeway (PRN 8860), a prehistoric route passing within 500m of the site and bending back to pass *circa* 1km to the south. A number of Neolithic flint tools have been recorded within the field to the north of the application site (PRNs 3307 and 9758).

Aerial photographs of the area show a number of Bronze Age barrows in the vicinity (PRN 4205 and PRN 13487, 750m and 700m SE and SSE respectively). A further complex of cropmarks PRN 16170 and 16171 are also known *circa* 900m to the north-west.

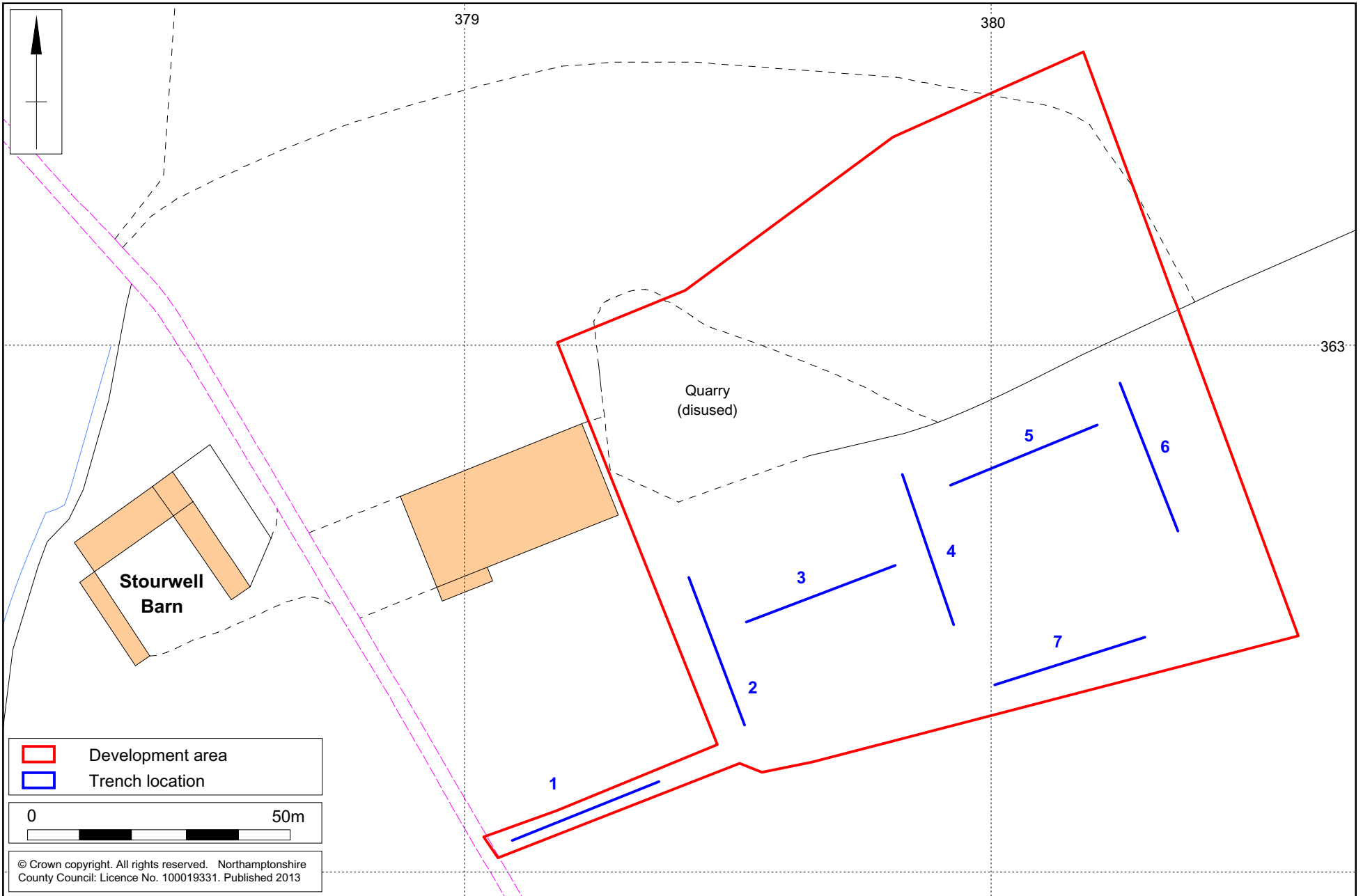


Scale 1:15,000

Site Location Fig 1

Scale 1:1000

Trench locations Fig 2



A substantial Roman settlement situated close to the hillfort at Madmarston Hill lay at Swalcliffe Lea situated upon the Roman road leading from Kings Sutton to the Fosse Way in Warwickshire (Henig and Booth 2000). The later Roman settlement in this area covered up to 24ha and was found to contain a number of stone built structures, one containing the remnants of a poorly-preserved mosaic pavement.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The main objective of the evaluation was to determine if archaeological remains survive within the proposed development area.

Specific aims were to:

- establish the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present on the development site;
- establish the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- recover paleoenvironmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

The trenches were positioned using a Leica System 1200 GPS and were excavated, under continuous archaeological supervision, using a JCB 3CX mechanical excavator fitted with a flat toothless bucket. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately and adjacent to the trenches. Mechanical excavation proceeded to the top of the archaeological deposits or to the natural substrate where no archaeology was encountered.

Archaeological excavation and recording followed the guidelines outlined in NA's *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual* (2011). Trenches containing possible archaeological remains were cleaned by hand, sufficient to define the features. Each feature or deposit was given a unique number consisting of the trench number and an individual context number (eg 402, Trench 4, context 2). The details of each context were recorded on pro-forma sheets. The trenches were planned (scale 1:50) and section drawings were made at an appropriate scale (1:10 or 1:20) where necessary. Levels, which were related to Ordnance Datum, were taken on the trenches at appropriate points, on section datum and on all major features. Trench locations were related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record was made of the excavation, using 35mm black and white negative and colour slide film, supplemented by digital images.

The spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC 1992).

All works were carried out in accordance with the WSI prepared by NA (2013), the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 1985, revised 2010) and *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008).

All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety



Trench 3, topsoil, subsoil and colluvium looking north-west

Fig 3

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The evaluation comprised seven trenches, each 30m long, positioned within the footprint of the proposed development and its access (Fig 2). From the outset of the evaluation it was apparent that the wooded, north-western half of the development area had been more extensively quarried than was suggested by the available mapping. Following on-site discussions with the Planning Archaeologist it was decided that the two proposed trenches in this area need not be excavated.

The natural substrate varied across the site from loose limestone fragments to blue and yellow mottled clay with mid brown silty patches.

Where the trenches were within or encroached upon a broad, natural meandering channel or undulation which crossed the site from south-east to north-west, the natural substrate was overlain by colluvial material (Fig 3). This comprised a mid brown silty clay loam, 0.09m-0.60m thick.

Where the colluvium was present it was overlain by a mid brown sandy loam subsoil, 0.10m-0.50m thick, which had frequent limestone fragment inclusions. Where the colluvium was absent the subsoil overlay the natural substrate.

The topsoil comprised a dark brown silty loam 0.10m-0.30m with occasional, small limestone fragments and pebbles.

No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered during the course of the evaluation



The site, looking south-west

Fig 4

5 Conclusions

No archaeological deposits or artefacts were recovered during the course of the evaluation.

Colluvial deposits, associated with a natural undulation in the landscape, were identified in Trenches 2, 3, 4 and 6.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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NA 2011 *Archaeological fieldwork manual*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Websites

www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex

APPENDIX: INDEX OF CONTEXTS BY TRENCH

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
1	30m x 1.6m NE-SW	437923/236211	165m-166m aOD	0.25m-0.35m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
101	Topsoil	Dark brown/grey sandy loam. Abundant limestone fragments	0.20m-0.30m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay loam with frequent limestone fragments	0.05m-0.15m thick	-
103	Natural	Limestone with silty clay patches	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
2	30m x 1.6m NW-SE	437948/236240	165m-166m aOD	0.25m-0.88m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
201	Topsoil	Dark brown/grey sandy loam. Abundant limestone fragments	0.15m-0.25m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay loam	0.20m-0.26m thick	-
203	Colluvium	Mid brown silty clay	0.18m-0.40m thick	-
204	Natural	Brown/orange sandy clay with blue/grey clay patches	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
3	30m x 1.6m NE-SW	437967/236252	19m aOD	0.89m-1.18m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
301	Topsoil	Dark brown/grey sandy loam. Abundant limestone fragments	0.19m-0.25m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay loam	0.30m-0.50m thick	-
303	Colluvium	Mid brown silty clay	0.20m-0.60m	-
304	Natural	Brown/orange silty clay with blue/grey clay patches	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
4	30m x 1.6m NW-SE	437988/236260	167m aOD	0.20m-0.79m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
401	Topsoil	Dark brown/grey sandy loam. Abundant limestone fragments	0.10m-0.30m thick	-
402	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay loam with frequent limestone fragments	0.10m-0.30m thick	-
403	Colluvium	Mid brown silty clay	0.10m-0.30m thick	-
404	Natural	Limestone with clay patches		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
5	30m x 1.6m NE-SW	438006/236279	167m-169m aOD	0.19m-0.30m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
501	Topsoil	Dark brown/grey sandy loam. Abundant limestone fragments	0.12m-0.23m thick	-
502	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay loam with frequent limestone fragments	0.04m-0.13m thick	-
503	Natural	Limestone with clay patches	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
6	30m x 1.6m NW-SE	438030/236278	169m aOD	0.30m-0.60m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
601	Topsoil	Dark brown/grey sandy loam. Abundant limestone fragments	0.22m-0.30m thick	-
602	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay loam with frequent limestone fragments	0.07m-0.13m thick	-
603	Colluvium	Mid brown silty clay	0.20m-0.30m	-
604	Natural	Limestone with clay patches	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
7	30m x 1.6m NE-SW	438015/236240	167m-169m aOD	0.25m-1m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
701	Topsoil	Dark brown/grey sandy loam. Abundant limestone fragments	0.10m-0.30m thick	-
702	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay loam with frequent limestone fragments	0.12m-0.70m thick	-
703	Natural	Limestone with clay patches	-	-



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