



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological trial trench evaluation at
Hampton Road, Knowle, Solihull
July 2013



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Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BN
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822
e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk
w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk



Northamptonshire
County Council

Carol Simmonds

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STAFF

Project Manager: Adam Yates BA MifA

Text and illustrations: Carol Simmonds BA PlfA

Fieldwork: Carol Simmonds

Peter Haynes

QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Verified by	Adam Yates		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: 155795	
Project name	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Hampton Road, Knowle, Solihull		
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned by CgMs Consulting, acting on behalf of their clients Miller Homes, to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on grassland east of Hampton Road, Knowle, Solihull. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.		
Project type	Evaluation- trial trenching		
Site status	None		
Previous work	Desk-based assessment (Gajos 2012), Geophysical Survey (Roseveare 2013)		
Current Land use	Grass land (former agricultural)		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type	None		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Solihull, West Midlands		
Site address	Land east of Hampton Road, Knowle		
Study area	5.77ha		
OS co-ords	SP 18300 77100		
Height OD	123m		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Project brief originator			
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting		
Director/Supervisor	C Simmonds		
Project Manager	A Yates (NA), Simon Mortimer (CgMs)		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	22/7/2013		
End date	26/7/2013		
ARCHIVES	Location	Content	
Physical	KHR13	None	
Paper		1 archive box of site forms and records	
Digital		Digital photographs, pdf of report and dxf data	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Hampton Road, Knowle, Solihull July 2013		
Serial title & volume	NA report 13/136		
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION ON LAND OFF
HAMPTON ROAD, KNOWLE, SOLIHULL
JULY 2013**

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned by CgMs Consulting, acting on behalf of their clients Miller Homes, to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on grassland east of Hampton Road, Knowle, Solihull.

No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

CgMs Consulting, acting on behalf of Miller Holmes (East Midlands), commissioned Northamptonshire Archaeology to undertake archaeological work on the proposed development site on land to the east of Hampton Road, Knowle, Solihull (NGR 418300 277100, Fig 1). The proposed development area comprises three fields of grassland (Fig 2). Miller Homes intends to construct houses in Fields 1 and 2 and a balancing pond in Field 3. The archaeological works comprised 600 linear metres of trial trenching encompassing the area of the housing and in the area of a proposed pond in Field 3.

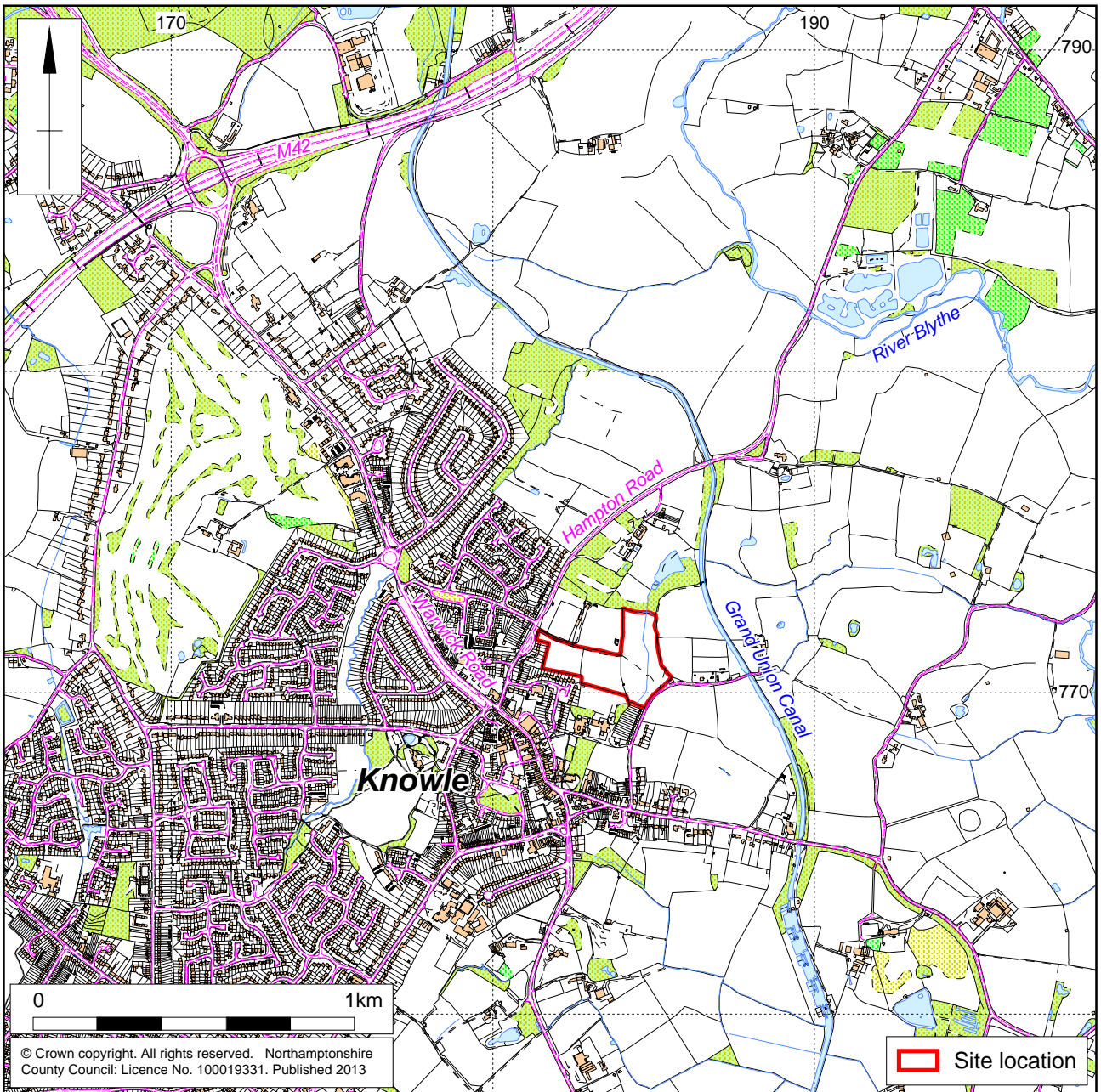
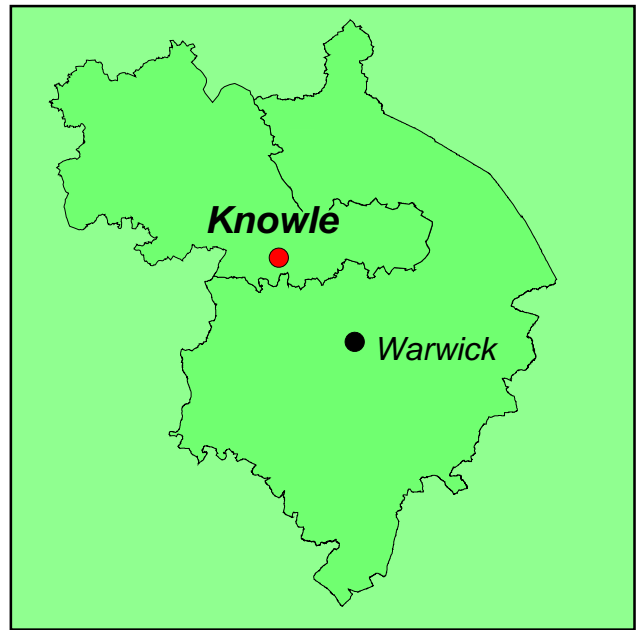
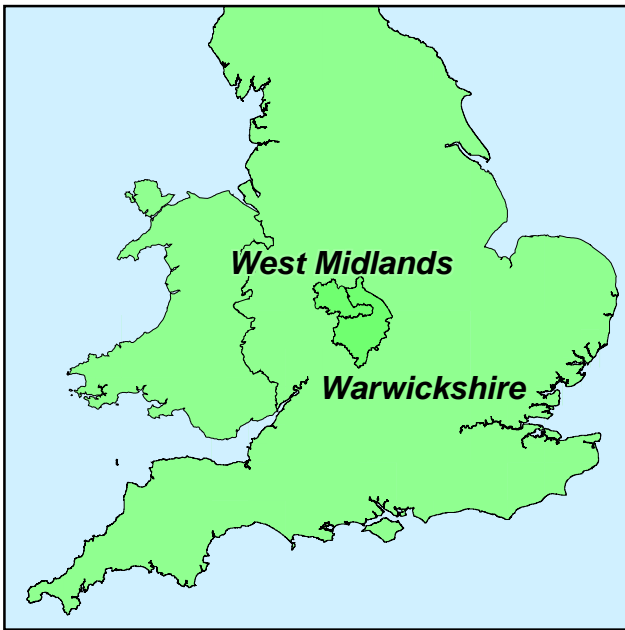
The works were required as part of the planning approval for residential development (Planning Application: 2012/1928/S), in line with National Planning Policy Framework NPPF (DCLG 2012). The archaeological works were undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by CgMs Consulting (Mortimer 2013).

2 BACKGROUND

The development area of 5.77ha comprised an 'L'-shaped parcel of land to the north of the urban centre of Knowle, Solihull. The western boundary was defined by Hampton Road and Kixley Lane and open fields lay to the east. To the north were the recreation grounds for Knowle Football Club and the town cricket grounds, as well as the grounds of Grimshaw Hall.

Fields 1 and 2 were situated on a flattish piece of ground (at 123m aOD) which gradually rose to the east forming a slight plateau of higher ground in Field 2 (124.50m aOD). The ground then gradually fell away eastwards into Field 3 (117.60m aOD) to lower lying, marshy ground. A stream running north to south divides Field 3 into two portions and crossed via a footbridge. Although all three fields were grassland, formerly agricultural in nature, the lower lying areas (Field 3) were considerably wetter at the time of the archaeological works. A public footpath along the northern boundary of Fields 1 and 2 and between Hampton Road and Kixley Lane was in continuous use during the archaeological works.

The bedrock geology comprises Mercia Mustone (Rhaetian – Scythian) overlain by Glacio-fluvial sands and gravels (Cromerian- Ipswichian) (BGS GeoIndex).

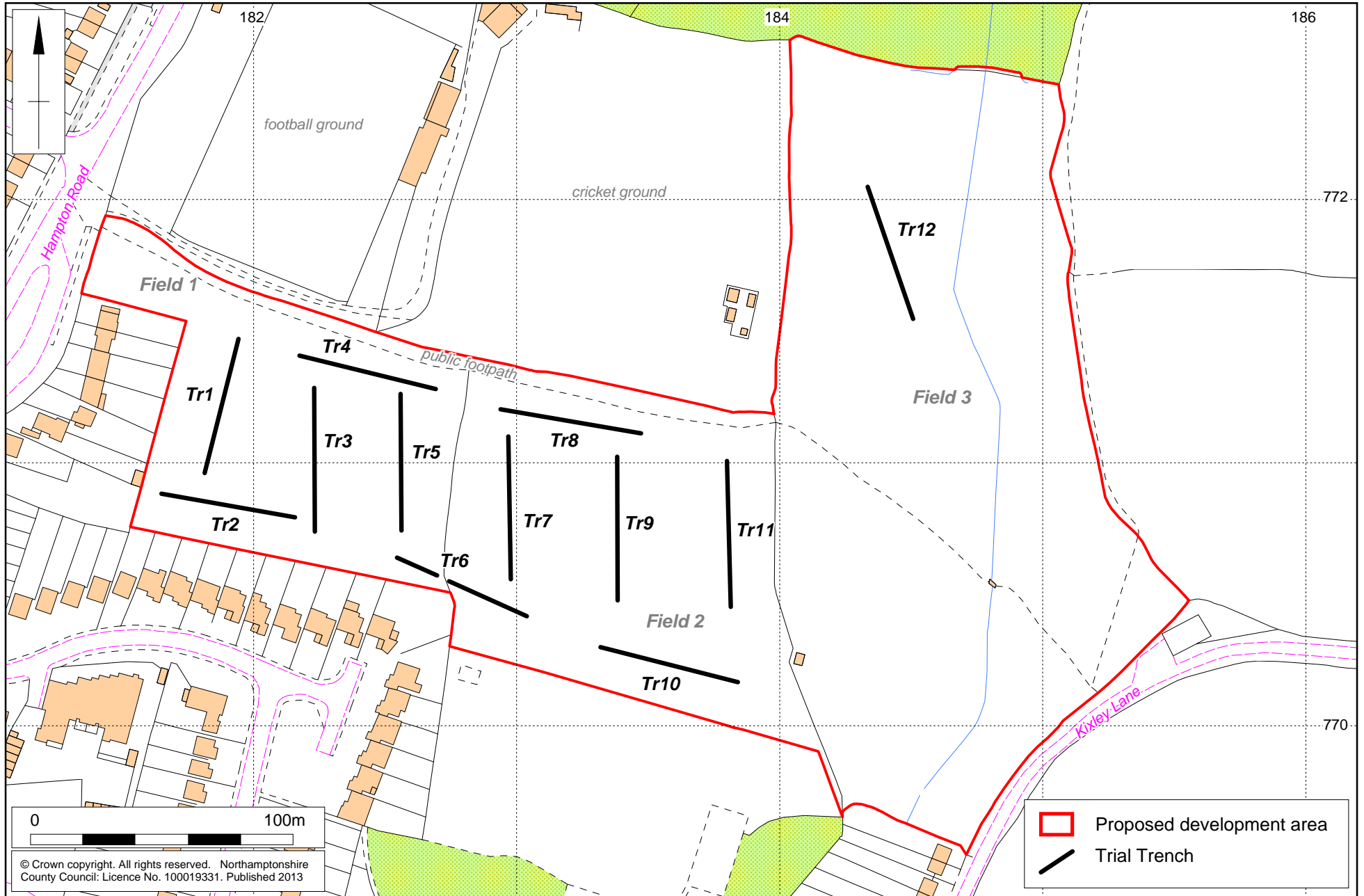


Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1

Scale 1:2,000 (A4)

Trial trench location Fig 2



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Prior to the trial trench evaluation taking place, the heritage assets of the development area and its environs were assessed in an archaeological desk-based assessment (Gajos 2012). Subsequent to this a detailed geophysical survey of Fields 1 and 2 was undertaken by ArchaeoPhysica (Roseveare 2013). The results of both documents are briefly summarised below.

Although Knowle lies in an area of known medieval occupation there is a dearth of known records for the development of the site. There are no designated heritage assets or other heritage assets listed within the Historic Environment Record (HER) within the development area. The earliest known occupation of the area dates from 1200 when the settlement at Knowle was granted as part of a marriage portion for the wife of Will de Arden (**MSI 5834**). It is likely that the development area lay outside the medieval core and within open fields or pasture. Evidence for the medieval open field system, surviving as ridge and furrow earthworks, lie to the east, south and south-west the development area (**MSI 8762, 8768, 8769, 8770, 8771, 8773 & 9042**). Analysis of the historic map resource indicated that the arrangement of fields had not altered since the production of an Estate Map of the property of Wilson and Lewis in 1816. No other boundaries or landscape features, other than footpaths and streams, were recorded on the maps.

The geophysical survey also indicated that the development area had not been settled (Roseveare 2013). The only identifiable feature was a weak positive magnetic anomaly aligned east to west in Field 2, tentatively interpreted as a possible ditch.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The aims of the evaluation are as follows (Mortimer 2013):

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development site;
- To assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits encountered;
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site;
- To inform formulation of a strategy to mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains;
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Warwickshire HER.

3.2 Methodology

The works were conducted in accordance with the WSI (Mortimer 2013) and the following guidance documents: *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008) and the *Code of Conduct* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2010).

Trial trenching comprised the excavation of twelve trenches, each one measuring 50m long by 1.8m wide. The trenches were machine-excavated using a toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. The trenches were positioned in accordance with the trench location plan approved by Anna Stocks, Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire County Council and CgMs Consulting. The trenches were related to Ordnance Survey National Grid (Fig 2). On completion of

archaeological recording the trenches were backfilled with the upcast material (Back Cover).

The non-structural deposits (topsoil and subsoil) were removed to reveal the natural substrate. Topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification of any features, and the bases of the trenches and spoil were scanned with a metal detector to aid recovery of artefacts.

All deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were given separate context numbers and fully recorded. Recording followed standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures (NA 2011). Deposits were described on pro-forma context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation.

A full photographic record comprising both 35mm black and white negatives and high resolution digital photographs was maintained. The field data was compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

4 EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

Detailed context information is situated in the Appendix (Context Inventory). In general the trenches were between 0.45m deep and 0.77m deep with natural soils overlain by subsoil and topsoil. The sequence and character of deposits in Fields 1 and 2 were uniform and consistent (Fig 3); by contrast the deposits in Field 3 (Trench 12) were very different. No archaeological features, artefacts or ecofacts were identified or recovered from the site. A geotechnical test pit was noted towards the northern end of Trench 3.



Sequence of deposits in Trench 6, looking north-east Fig 3

4.1 Fields 1 and 2

In Trenches 1- 11 the natural substrate comprised firm yellowish-brown or reddish-orange sands with pockets of grey sands with coarse rounded gravel (Figs 2 & 4). The natural level mirrored the surface topography, being at a slightly higher level in the western part of Field 2 (Trenches 7 and 8) where it lay at a height of 123.95m aOD.



General view of Trench 3, looking south Fig 4

The natural substrate was overlain by a subsoil of either loose greyish-brown or brown silty sands which was between 0.10m and 0.42m thick, with an average thickness of 0.20m. This was overlain by a topsoil of loose yellowish-brown or greyish-brown sand, between 0.20m and 0.35m thick.

The weak positive anomaly recorded in the geophysical survey (Roseveare 2013) which was interpreted as a possible ditch or a furrow, was not present in Trenches 7, 9 or 11.

4.2 Field 3

In Trench 12 the natural substrate comprised light grey and yellow sand (1203) which was affected by root action from the grasses and undergrowth (Figs 2 & 5). The north-western end of the trench was heavily disturbed by modern ceramic field drains.



General view of Trench 12, looking north-west Fig 5

The natural was overlain by a thin layer of subsoil (1202) comprising friable light grey clayey-sands, measuring between 0.17m and 0.25m thick. It was overlain by topsoil (1201) comprising friable, wet black clayey-silts.

5 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features were identified during the evaluation. The anomaly recorded in the geophysical survey may have been the remnants of open field cultivation which are likely to have been truncated by later modern ploughing. The deposits recorded relate to the continuous and long term agriculture or pastoral economy of the site. The evaluation supports the conclusions drawn in the desk-based assessment (Gajos 2012) and the geophysical survey (Roseveare 2013).

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Websites

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APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Field 1

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
1	50m, 1.80m & N-S	481187 277121	123.30m	0.54m & 122.76m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Loose/friable dark greyish-brown sand, occasional small stones, root disturbance from long grasses.	0.30m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Loose/friable mid brown slightly silty sand, occasional small stones, root disturbance from long grasses.	0.20m – 0.24m thick	-
103	Natural	Firm to hard light grey sands with gravels and red sands.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	50m, 1.80m & E-W	418190 277083	123.50	0.45m & 123.05m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
201	Topsoil	Same as 101	0.23m-0.28m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Same as 102	0.10m-0.25m thick	-
203	Natural	Same as 103	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
3	50m, 1.80m & N-S	418227 277101	123.85m	0.58m & 123.27
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
301	Topsoil	Same as 101	0.20m-0.27m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Same as 102	0.30m – 0.38m thick	-
303	Natural	Firm light yellowish-brown and reddish-orange sands.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
4	50m, 1.80m & E-W	418243 277134	123.80m	0.58m & 123.42m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
401	Topsoil	Same as 101	0.28m thick	-
402	Subsoil	Same as 102	0.20- 0.28m thick	-
403	Natural	Loose light brown and orangey-red sands, rare small stones.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
5	50m, 1.80m & N-S	418256 277100	124.20m	0.64m & 123.56
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
501	Topsoil	Same as 101	0.30m thick	-
502	Subsoil	Same as 102	0.18- 0.36m thick	-
503	Natural	Same as 401	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
6	50m, 1.8m & SE-NW	418281 277051	124.50m	0.77m & (aOD) & 123.73m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
601	Topsoil	Loose, very dry mid greyish-brown sandy loam, occasional small rounded pebbles.	0.25m- 0.35m thick	-
602	Subsoil	Friable very dry mid yellowish-brown sands, occasional small rounded pebbles, poorly sorted. Leaching into natural (603). Thickest where it is near to the boundary between Fields 1 & 2.	0.14m- 0.42m thick	-
603	Natural	Same as 401	-	-

Field 2

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
7	50m, 1.8m & N-S	418297 277082	124.50m	0.55m & 123.95m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
701	Topsoil	Loose, very dry mid yellowish-brown clayey sands, occasional small rounded pebbles.	0.30- 0.35m thick	-
702	Subsoil	Loose very dry mid greyish-orange sands with occasional very small rounded pebbles, clear but leaching into (703).	0.20m thick	-
703	Natural	Loose-friable patchy grey and orange sands with small and medium rounded gravels.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
8	50m, 1.8m & E-W	418320 277115	124.50m	0.55m & 123.95m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
801	Topsoil	Same as 701	0.24m – 0.30m thick	-
802	Subsoil	Same as 702	0.20m – 0.25m thick	-
803	Natural	Same as 703	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
9	50m, 1.8m & N- S	418338 277074	123.20m	0.58m & 122.62m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
901	Topsoil	Same as 701	0.28m thick	-
902	Subsoil	Same as 702	0.20- 0.30m thick	-
903	Natural	Same as 703	-	-



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