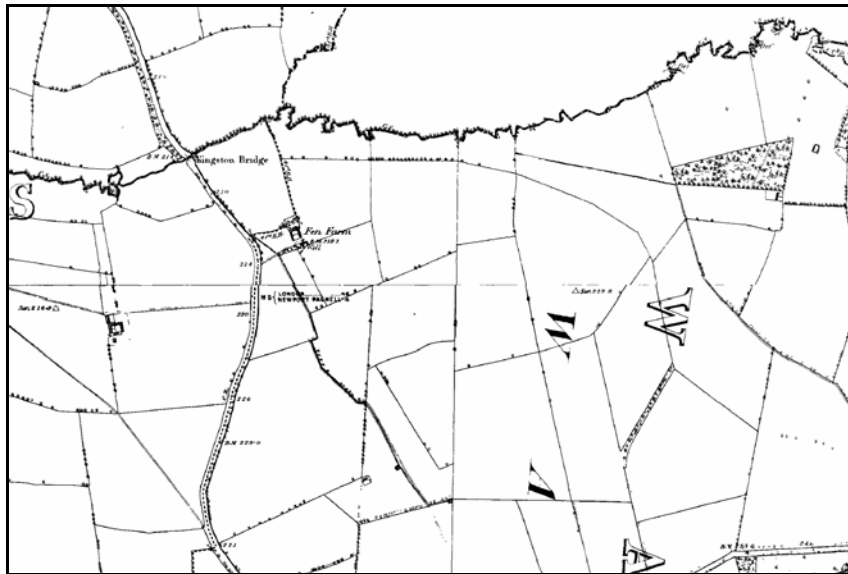


# Northamptonshire Archaeology

## Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Nova Mk1, Milton Keynes

July / August 2006

Event No 1080



Adrian Burrow

September 2006

Report 06/119

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**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY**  
**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**JULY 2006**  
**EVENT NO 1080**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**  
**OF LAND AT NOVA MK1, MILTON KEYNES**  
**SEPTEMBER 2006**  
**06/119**

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## OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project title	An Archaeological Evaluation at Nova MK1, Milton Keynes	
Short description (250 words maximum)	An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology at Nova MK1 at Milton Keynes. It revealed evidence for Romano-British occupation in the north-east corner of the site in the form of ditches, gullies and postholes. It is likely that these formed part of a small rural settlement dating from the 2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Centuries AD. Apart from a sparse pattern of similar features in the southern field, no other archaeology was present in the rest of the development area.	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Field Evaluation (Site Code: MKN06)	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)		
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type And period		
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	Romano-British Pottery	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Milton Keynes	
Site address (including postcode)		
Easting	491400	
Northing	238600	
Height OD	70m OD	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator		
Project Design originator	JSAC	
Director/Supervisor	Adrian Burrow	
Project Manager	Adam Yates (NA) Simon Mortimer (JSAC)	
Sponsor or funding body	Fen Farms Developments Ltd	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	July 2006	
End date	August 2006	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Title		
Serial title & volume		
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
Date		

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
OF LAND AT  
NOVA MK1, MILTON KEYNES,  
JULY-AUGUST 2006**

**ABSTRACT**

*An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology at Nova MK1 at Milton Keynes. It revealed evidence for Romano-British occupation in the north-east corner of the site in the form of ditches, gullies and postholes. It is likely that these formed part of a small rural settlement dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD. Apart from a sparse pattern of largely undated features in the southern field, no other archaeology was present in the rest of the development area.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation on behalf of John Samuels Archaeological Consultants during July and August 2006 on proposed development land at the Nova MK1 site in Milton Keynes, NGR TL 4914 2386 (Fig 1). The evaluation met the requirements of a specification prepared by JSAC (2006) acting on behalf of their clients, Fen Farms Developments Ltd.

**2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

The entire site occupies an area of approximately 99ha.on the east side of Milton Keynes. It is bounded to the south by the A421 Standing Way and to the west by the A5130. To the north and east are further arable fields and drainage ditches.

The ground slopes moderately to the east with an elevation of between 60-70m above Ordnance Datum to the east and west respectively.

Field 1 is a fallow set-aside field with the remnants of a wheat crop mixed with weeds, while Field 3 is within the former exhibition grounds. Fields 2 and 4 are currently under pasture. The geology of the site comprises Glacial Till overlying Oxford Clay (JSAC 2006:3).

### **3      ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

Although the development site contains no known archaeological features, large numbers of Iron-Age and Roman features have been identified to the north-west(JSAC 2006:3).

### **4      METHODOLOGY**

A total of 39 trenches, each measuring 50m long by 2m wide, were excavated (Fig 2) using a mechanical digger fitted with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. Several of these were targeted over sub-surface anomalies detected during the geophysical survey (Butler 2006). Mechanical excavation proceeded as far as the first significant archaeological layer or in its absence, the surface of the natural substrate.

The trenches were laid out and located relative to Ordnance Survey using a Leica System 1200 GPS system operating in RTK mode. Levels were taken and related to Ordnance Datum.

All archaeological features were examined by hand excavation. Standard Northamptonshire Archaeology recording procedures were employed. Trenches containing archaeology were planned at 1:100 while all sections were recorded at 1:10 or 1:20.

All works were carried out according to the policy & guidance for archaeological fieldwork projects in Northamptonshire (NA 2003). All procedures complied with the Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines (NA 2003).

### **5      RESULTS OF FIELDWORK**

#### **5.1   Field 1 (Fig 3 & 4)**

Nineteen trenches were excavated in this field. The underlying geology comprised orange sand and gravels on the east and north-east and light grey clays over the remainder at a depth of between 0.3m and 0.6m. The subsoil, a mid grey brown silty clay layer between 0.15 and 0.30m thick, was largely consistent across the field, as was the topsoil of dark brown silty clay, generally about 0.2m thick.

A linear feature identified in the geophysics phase and passing through Trenches 11, 12 and 13 on a north-east to south-west orientation was thought to be the western continuation of the Fox Covert boundary to the east. Measuring 4m in width, it was cut between 0.12-0.2m into the natural substrate and contained subsoil material. This suggests that Field 1 was at



one point sub-divided into smaller plots of land (Butler 2006, 3).

Archaeology was present in five Trenches, (2, 8, 12, 15 and 18). The remainder were blank. Of these, six features were linear, whilst five were either pits or postholes. Fills were generally consistent; usually brown grey silty clays with frequent gravel inclusion. Very little dating evidence was recovered from these features. A large number of natural features, mostly tree boles were present in many trenches, some of the features recorded as possible pits may be of similar origin.

### ***Trench 2***

Trench 2 contained three features; a ditch, pit and posthole (Fig 3). No dating was recovered from these features.

Ditch [206], on a north north-west to south south-east orientation, with a steep U-shaped profile with curved base measured 0.90m wide by 0.25m deep with a single silty clay fill (205).

Pit [208], extending from the north trench baulk, had a shallow irregular profile 1m wide by 0.25m deep, with an unconvincing undulating base.. The fill was dark brown clay (208).

To the east of [208] was a single steep sided posthole, [204] 0.4m in diameter and 0.45m deep. The sole fill (203) was a mid brown sandy clay loam with no evidence of packing material.

### ***Trench 8***

In this trench, two large linear features were present running on a roughly parallel east-west alignment (Fig 4), probably representing silted up natural channels.

The smaller of the two, [805] had a broad, shallow profile 4.2m wide and 0.5m deep, with two grey silty clay fills, (804) and (809).

Ditch [808], 12m to the north was a much more substantial feature, 7m in width, with an undulating profile 1.8m deep(Fig 6, section 1). The primary fill (807) was mottled brown/grey silty clay, very similar in composition to the natural into which it was cut. The extensive mottling and frequent iron panning was suggestive of a naturally silted up deposit. The uppermost fill (806) was a shallow deposit of yellow sandy clay 0.45m thick.

### ***Trench 12***

A well defined U-shaped ditch [1205], 0.75m wide by 0.35m deep aligned north north-east to south south-west was present at the extreme southern end of the trench. (Fig 3, Plate 1). This may be a continuation of ditch [206] in trench 2. One sherd of highly abraded Romano-British pottery was recovered from the fill (1204).

Towards the north of the trench, a small pit [1207] measuring 0.6m wide and 0.25m deep with a shallow irregular profile and single fill (1206) was present.

### ***Trench 15***

A single small pit [1505] was present in the mid part of the trench. Only partly exposed, it measured 1m wide with a depth of 0.20m. The fill was grey brown silty clay (1504).

### ***Trench 18***

Two parallel east to west aligned ditches, [1805] and [1807] were present on the southern part of the trench 6m apart (Fig 4).

The southernmost ditch [1804] was 0.85m wide with a convex north edge, concave south edge and flat base (Fig 6, section 2). It was filled with dark grey clay (1805) overlain by dark grey brown silty clay (1806), which contained a sherd of Roman pot.

Ditch [1808] was poorly defined compared to its neighbour, exhibiting a shallow, irregular profile 0.7m in width and only 0.11m deep. Its fill was dark grey brown silty clay (1807).

## **5.2 Field 2 (Fig 2)**

Three trenches were located in this field in the south-west corner of the site. The underlying geology was the same orange sand and gravels seen in parts of Field 1, present at a depth of approximately 0.4m, overlain by subsoil and topsoil similar to those in Field 1. No archaeology was present in any of the trenches.

## **5.3 Field 3 (Fig 2)**

Seven trenches were excavated in this field on the north-west part of the site. The natural geology here was light yellowish grey clay with patches of orange sand at an elevation of 71m OD. In most of the trenches, both the natural substrate and the overlying layers had been extensively disturbed by modern activity relating to the modern use of the site as an exhibition ground, effectively removing the upper stratigraphy. In Trenches 28, 29 and 30, the construction of a sunken gravel hard standing had resulted in the complete truncation of the plough-soils while Trenches 20, 29 and 38 contained machine dug pits cut into the natural clays. Only Trench 19 had intact topsoil and subsoil remaining. No archaeological features were present in this field.

#### 5.4 **Field 4** (Fig 5)

Ten trenches, most targeting geophysical anomalies (Butler 2006), were sited in Field 4 on the north of the site at 61m OD. The natural substrate and plough-soils were similar to those of Field 1 for the most part, with topsoil 0.25m thick and subsoils spanning 0.15-0.25m. Trenches 31, 35 and 37 contained extensive areas of modern disturbance similar to that in Field 3, where modern make-up layers had truncated the original stratigraphy down to the level of the natural substrate.

Archaeology was present in six trenches (32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37) in a cluster on the extreme north east corner of the site. A total of 26 features were recorded, the majority of which (20) were ditches and gullies, the remainder were pits and postholes.

##### ***Trench 32***

A large ditch [3212] was present towards the north east end of the trench on a north-south alignment (Plate 2). Below a broad, shallow upper lip on the south west edge, it had a steep U-shaped profile measuring 2m wide by 0.6m deep, with a single fill of dark grey silty clay (3211).

Two roughly parallel ditches orientated east-west crossed the mid part of the trench. Ditch [3205] had a shallow steep-sided profile with a flat base and single fill (3204) of compact grey clay. Ditch [3208] had a broader, deeper contour with two fills (3206, 3207) of yellowish orange silty clay (Fig 6, section 3). Between them, on the same alignment was a shallow, irregular gully [3210] only 0.10m deep. Another small sinuous gully [3214] was present to the west of [3205], oriented north-south, filled by a single grey silty clay fill (3213).

##### ***Trench 33***

Two discrete features were present, pit [3317] and posthole [3319]. Pit [3317] was small, flat based oval pit 0.7m wide and 0.3m deep (Fig 7, section 5). The single fill (3316) comprised re-deposited natural clay mixed with patches of charcoal and red fired clay. A sample retrieved from the fill (sample 3) contained an extremely small assemblage of material derived from a deposit of burnt grasses and grassland herbs (see Fryer below). A complete but broken ceramic brick or tile lay flat directly atop the base.

Posthole [3319] was a small, circular posthole with a diameter of 0.35m, directly adjacent to pit [3317], filled by a single silty clay fill (3318) with small gravel inclusions.

Both pit [3317] and posthole [3319] were cut by ditch [3315]. This was 3.2m wide and 0.8m deep with a very broad, flat based profile (Fig 7, section 5). The primary fill (3314) was re-deposited natural clay slumped in from the east side. This was overlain by (3312)

and (3313), brown/grey silty clays with limestone flecks and iron panning.

Parallel to ditch [3315] were two further ditches, [3306] and [3309]. Ditch [3306], 2.5m wide, 0.7m deep and U-shaped was in the southern end of the trench on a north-west to south-east alignment (Fig 6, section 4). The single fill (3305) was a compact grey/brown clay. Ditch [3309] had a steeper, more narrow profile, 1.7m wide and 0.7m deep, filled by (3308), a light grey sandy clay.

A small, sinuous gully [3311] was also present in the trench, its shallow single fill (3310) producing several sherds of diagnostic Roman pot.

#### ***Trench 34***

Six ditches were present in the southern half of Trench 34, all on a rough east-west orientation.

Ditch [3405] was 1.4m wide and 0.2m deep, with a broad, shallow profile with a single grey silty clay fill (3404).

Ditch [3407] was V-shaped in profile, 1.25m wide and 0.95m deep (Fig 7, section 6). The primary fill (3419) comprised re-deposited natural clays, also containing charcoal. This was overlain by a deposit of grey-black clayey silt (3418), containing charcoal and burnt material. This deposit also contained cereal grains almost certainly derived from a deposit of either burnt cereal processing/storage waste or malting residue, which was deliberately placed within the ditch fill (see Fryer below, sample 4).

Ditch [3409] had a U-shaped profile, 1.55m wide and 0.95m deep (Fig 7, section 7). The single fill was a dark grey/brown silty clay with gravel inclusion (3408). This was re-cut as ditch [3415], 0.7m wide and 0.2m deep. The fill (3414) contained large amounts of charcoal, in contrast to the grey silty clay fill of the earlier ditch.

In the south end of the trench flat bottomed ditch [3413], 1.1m wide, 0.38m deep, was filled by dark grey clay (3412). It was re-cut to the north by U-shaped ditch [3411, 1.1m wide, 0.42m deep, filled by dark grey clay (3410) overlain by dark grey silty clay containing charcoal (3417), (Plate 4).

#### ***Trench 35***

Two ditches were present within this trench. In the south end was a large, distinctive V-shaped ditch [3505] measuring 2.8m wide and 1.05m deep and containing three grey silty clay fills (3504), (3508), (3509), (Fig 5, section 8, Plate 5). Ditch [3507] was 1.4m wide and 0.35m deep with a single gravely clay fill (3506). Both ditches ran on the same north-south alignment.

***Trench 36***

Aligned north-west to south-east, [3608] was a small, shallow gully 0.4m wide and only 0.13m deep. It was cut by the similar sized gully [3306] extending from the north baulk at right angles to [3408] and butt-ending in the mid part of the trench. A third gully, [3618] with the same profile and dimensions as the previous two, ran across the south-west end of the trench on a west north-west to east south-east orientation (Plate 6). All three contained single fills dark brown/grey silty clay fill (3607), (3605) and (3617) respectively. No finds were recovered from any of these features.

Partly exposed on the north baulk adjacent to the butt-end of [3606] was [3616], either a small pit or the extreme terminal of another small gully. On the east side of the [3606] / [3608] intersection were two postholes on an alignment paralleling [3608]. Posthole [3610] was 0.4m in diameter and 0.15m deep, whilst [3612] was 0.5m by 0.16m. A third posthole, [3614] was located on the north-east end of the trench. It had the same dimensions as [3612]. The fills of all three comprised moderately compacted brown/grey sandy clays with gravel but no evidence of post packing (3609), (3611) and (3613) respectively.

***Trench 37***

Undated ditch [3709] extended across the northern end of the trench on a north east-south west alignment. Measuring 1.08m wide and 0.3m deep, it had a fairly shallow, gently sloped profile and a single silty clay fill of compact dark grey clay (3708). To the north of this was a small, shallow pit [3707] containing a black sandy silt fill (3706) with extensive gravel and charcoal inclusions.

**6 THE FINDS****6.1 The Roman pottery**

by Tora Hylton

The evaluation produced a small group of Roman pottery dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries. A total of 47 individual sherds with a combined weight of 0.896kg were recovered, of that number 33 sherds were recovered from stratified deposits in 5 trenches, the remainder (14) were unstratified. The analysis included sherd count and weight by fabric type (Table 1).

This assemblage comprises mainly locally produced coarsewares represented by greyware (72% by weight), shell-gritted (12% by weight) and soft-pink grog fabrics (13% by weight). There are very few diagnostic sherds, but those present include a wide-mouthed bowl with simple grooving on the shoulder in greyware, a neckless jar in shell-

grittled ware and two jars in soft-pink-grog (Fabric 2, Marney 1989, 64), which may be paralleled by examples recovered elsewhere in Milton Keynes (Marney 1989, fig 27, 10, 14) and which date to a mid-late 2nd century.

Non-local wares are represented by 4 very abraded undiagnostic sherds of Nene Valley Colour Coat (AD240-4th century) recovered from topsoil deposits.

Table 1: Summary of Roman pottery types (weight g)

Fabric	Context													
	1205		3206		3307		3309		3404		3605		U/S	
	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg	No/Wg
Grog tempered wares	1	13												
Greyware			6	34	1	4	17	585					4	29
Lower Nene valley CC													4	5
Oxidised sandy ware									1	1				
Shell-grittled ware					4	21					1	5	2	86
Soft-pink-grog					2	4							4	109
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>229</b>

## 6.2 The ceramic building material

by Pat Chapman

A single portion of one large flat slab of fired clay was recovered in four pieces, from fill (3316) of pit [3317]. It measures at least 300mm long by 95mm wide and by 40-45mm thick. The surviving edge on the long side is straight. The upper surface is smooth but uneven, greyish with frequent voids resembling grass or cereal seeds in shape and a few stem impressions. The lower surface is rougher, orange in colour but has been blackened in places and has more voids and stem impressions. This surface has a slightly raised margin alongside the surviving edge, from 0.5mm high and 15mm wide to 2mm high and 33mm wide.

The fabric is a silty clay, hard but brittle, layered rather than mixed because of the grass tempering, with many voids for seeds or chaff and occasional shelly fragments, it is reddish brown in colour.

It is similar in size to the larger Roman tiles or bricks. The lydion brick measures on

average 410mm by 300mm by 35-45mm thick and was used in walls and as floor tiles or as part of the capping in a hypocaust (Ward 1999, 43).

It is also similar to the clay slabs found at the Roman settlement at Baldock in Hertfordshire (Rigby and Foster 1986, 187). They are described as being more or less rectangular in plan with squared-off edges with finger smoothed upper surfaces. The thickness varies between 15mm and 50mm, the thicker versions being poorly fired, probably in a bonfire, leaving the vegetable tempering to rot away leaving voids. All these were found in features dating to the 1st century AD, no later than 70AD. They belong to the category of 'Belgic' bricks as described in Verulamium. However, their use is obscure as they are too uneven for stacking as wall bricks and there were no traces of mortar or clay, and they are not strong enough for floor slabs. There was no evidence for additional firing or from increased temperature that could have indicated a use as structural components for ovens, kilns or hearths. One possibility suggested was that the thick, poorly fired slabs were used as salt licks for cattle.

This slab of fired clay is more likely to be of the early 'Belgic' brick type as described from Baldock, possibly used as a salt lick, rather than as a structural brick or tile.

### **6.3 The animal bone**

by Stephanie Vann

#### ***Method***

The animal bone from Milton Keynes Nova was subjected to macroscopic examination and identifiable bone was noted and quantified by context. A summary of the results is presented in Table 2. Age was calculated where possible from bones where fusion was discernible.

#### ***Results***

Preservation of the animal bone at this site was poor to moderate. Fragmentation was moderate to high and surface abrasion was moderate to high with bone exhibiting signs of erosion, weathering and other taphonomic damage in many instances. Fragmentation was the result of both old and fresh breaks. There was evidence of canid gnawing on only one bone. There was no evidence of butchery, burning or pathology.

Table 2 Total number of fragments per species

Species	<i>Bos</i> (Cattle)	<i>Ovicaprid</i> (Sheep/Goat)	<i>Equus</i> (Horse)	<i>Sus</i> (Pig)	<i>Canid</i> (Dog)	Large Mammal	Small Mammal	Unid.
No of fragments	4	0	3	0	0	8	0	9

The total number of fragments was 24, of which 15 (62.5 %) were identifiable. The species present were cattle and horse. No wild species were present, nor was there any evidence of bird or fish remains.

Only one bone, a possible vertebra from context (807), showed evidence of a lack of bone fusion, suggesting that this specimen represented a juvenile individual. All other elements were fully fused where it was possible to discern such. No teeth or mandibles were sufficiently well-preserved to permit analysis of tooth wear.

### ***Discussion***

Whilst it is true that the small size of the assemblage and its poor condition makes it difficult to draw any significant conclusions, there is nothing about the assemblage that is in any way extraordinary for one of this period. Cattle are regularly exploited throughout the Iron Age and Romano-British periods, as is the horse, albeit not generally in the same numbers as ovicaprids (sheep/goat) or cattle (Maltby, 1981). The dominance of such remains within the assemblage from Milton Keynes Nova is therefore not unusual. The survivability of large, strong bones such as those of cattle and horse when compared to those of smaller mammals does also need to be taken into consideration, however, as this dominance may be a reflection of preservation rather than husbandry practices at this site.

Only one element at this site showed an unfused epiphysis. It was not possible to identify this to species however, as all other elements at this site appear to be from large mammals such as cattle or horse. If this bone is comparable then it is likely it is from an individual under 84 months of age. The vertebral centrum is a late-fusing element that in cattle fuses between 84 and 108 months (7 – 9 years) of age (Reitz and Wing, 1999: table 3.5).

Whilst there is no evidence of canids within the faunal assemblage itself, the presence of gnawing upon one element confirms the presence of these at the site on at least some occasions.



## **7 ENVIROMENTAL SAMPLES**

by Val Fryer

### **7.1 Introduction and method statement**

Evaluation excavations at Nova MK1, undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology, revealed features of Roman date. Samples to evaluate the content and preservation of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from a pit (sample 3) and three ditch fills (samples 1, 2 and 4).

The samples were bulk floated by Northamptonshire Archaeology and the flots were collected in a 500 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16, and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed on Table 3. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (1997). All plant remains were charred. Modern contaminants comprising fibrous and woody stems and roots formed a major component of all four assemblages.

### **7.2 Results**

Cereal grains/chaff and seeds of common weeds are present within two of the four assemblages studied. Preservation is moderately good, although some grains are puffed and distorted as a result of combustion at high temperatures.

Sample 4, from ditch fill [3418], contains a moderately high density of material including oat (*Avena* sp.) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains and wheat chaff. Of the identifiable wheat grains, most are of an elongated 'drop-form' shape typical of spelt (*T. spelta*), and spelt glume bases are also abundant. A proportion of the grains have very pronounced concave profiles, which may be indicative of germination. A small number of detached cereal sprouts are also recorded. However, it is not clear whether germination was a result of inappropriate storage conditions or whether it was deliberately achieved as part of the malting process. Seeds of common cereal crop weeds including brome (*Bromus* sp.), black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*) and dock (*Rumex* sp.) are also present. The presence of seeds of blinks (*Montia fontana*) may indicate that some cereals were being grown on areas of newly cultivated damp grassland.

The assemblage from sample 3 is extremely small but appears to be derived from a deposit of burnt grasses and grassland herbs. The remaining two assemblages contain little other than charcoal.

### 7.3 Conclusions and recommendations for further work

Although small, the assemblage from sample 4 is almost certainly derived from a deposit of either burnt cereal processing/storage waste or malting residue, which was deliberately placed within the ditch fill. Cereals and/or cereal products appear to have been of importance to the local economy, and new areas of marginal grassland may have been cultivated during a period of agricultural expansion.

If further excavations are scheduled for this area, it is strongly recommended that additional plant macrofossil samples are taken from all well sealed and dated contexts (including pits, ditch fills, postholes and discrete layers) and from any deposits which may be related to either agricultural or domestic activity. All relevant specialists should be consulted at the earliest opportunity and site visits should be scheduled if necessary. Plant macrofossil samples should be stored in cool dark conditions if at all possible, and processing should be completed with a minimum of delay. Relevant documentation should accompany samples at all times.

Table 3: Summary of sample data

Sample No.	1	2	3	4
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>1806</b>	<b>1205</b>	<b>3316</b>	<b>3418</b>
<b>Cereals</b>				
<i>Avena</i> sp. (grains)				xcf
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grains)				xx
(glume bases)				xxx
(spikelet bases)				xx
(rachis internodes)				xx
<i>T. spelta</i> L. (glume bases)				xxx
Cereal indet. (grains)			x	xx
(basal rachis nodes)				x
(detached sprouts)				x
<b>Herbs</b>				
<i>Atriplex</i> sp.				x
<i>Bromus</i> sp.				x
Chenopodiaceae indet.				x
<i>Fallopia convolvulus</i> (L.)A.Love				x
Small Poaceae indet.			x	x
<i>Ranunculus</i> sp.			x	
<i>Rumex</i> sp.				xx
<i>Rumex/Carex</i> sp.				x
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i> (L.)Schultz-Bip				x
<b>Wetland plants</b>				
<i>Eleocharis</i> sp.			x	
<i>Montia fontana</i> L.				x
<b>Other plant macrofossils</b>				
Charcoal <2mm	xx	xx	xx	x
Charcoal >2mm	xx	x		
Charred root/stem	x			
Indet.culm nodes				x
<b>Other materials</b>				
Black porous 'cokey' material				xx
Black tarry material			x	
Small coal frags.	x			
Vitrified material				x
<b>Sample volume (litres)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Volume of flot (litres)</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>
<b>% flot sorted</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Key**

x = 1 – 10 specimens    xx = 10 – 100 specimens    xxx = 100+ specimens

## 8 DISCUSSION

The excavations at Nova MK1 revealed evidence for mid-late Romano-British occupation of the area. Occupation was concentrated on the north side of Field 4, a cluster of medium-large ditches with smaller ditches and gullies and isolated postholes present. The ditches in Trenches 32 and 33 tie in fairly closely with what geophysics suggest could have been a large sub rectangular enclosure; ditches [3208], [3208], [3306] and [3309] have a broad, flat based profile with similar fills containing cattle and horse bone. Other features identified during the evaluation are not reflected in the geophysical survey. This could be explained by a number of factors, including the similarity between the fills and surrounding natural deposits, the low magnetic enhancement of the features or the masking effect of overlying modern overburden or alluvium.

It would appear that between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, a small Romano-British settlement was located in the vicinity of the north-east part of the site, in which both animal husbandry and crop production were practised. Little structural evidence remains; a loose scattering of postholes leaves little scope for interpretation.

The character of the finds assemblage is fairly poor, the pottery assemblage dominated by locally produced coarsewares, present in only a small percentage of features excavated, although often in significant quantities per context. This suggests a fairly low status rural site with access to, at most, regional wares. The paleoenvironmental evidence is likewise limited but suggests the cultivation of cereals within an expanding agricultural landscape. The dominance of large mammal bone within the fills of probable enclosure ditches, along with the presence of a possible clay salt lick suggests an animal husbandry function within this part of the site.

The evaluation has defined an area of archaeological significance in Field 4 (Fig 2), as agreed during discussions between Simon Mortimer of JSAC and Brian Giggins and Nick Crank from Milton Keynes City Council. No evidence for occupation was found in Fields 2 and 3 whilst only a scattered pattern of largely undated features were present in Field 1.

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## APPENDIX A1: SITE DATA

Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
1	101	Layer	Topsoil, dark brown silty clay with moderate gravel inclusion, 0–0.40m thick	
	102	Layer	Subsoil, dark grey brown silty clay 0.3–0.63m thick	
	103	Layer	Natural sand and gravels	
2	201	Layer	Topsoil, 0 – 0.3m thick	
	202	Layer	Subsoil, 0.2-0.3m thick	
	203	Fill	Fill of [204], dark grey brown clayey silt	
	204	Cut	Posthole, 0.4m wide x 0.45m deep	
	205	Fill	Fill of [206], mid grey brown silty clay	
	206	Cut	Ditch aligned E-W, 1m wide x 0.25m deep	
	207	Fill	Fill of [208], dark brown grey clay	
	208	Cut	Pit, 0.75m wide x 0.18m deep	
	209	Layer	Natural sand and gravels	
3	301	Layer	Topsoil 0–0.3m thick	
	302	Layer	Subsoil, 0.25m thick	
	303	Layer	Natural yellow/grey clay	
4	401	Layer	Topsoil, 0.3m thick	
	402	Layer	Subsoil, 0.25m thick	
	403	Layer	Natural yellow clay	
5	501	Layer	Topsoil 0.15 – 0.2m thick	
	502	Layer	Subsoil, 0.25m thick	
	503	Layer	Natural sand and gravels	
6	601	Layer	Topsoil, 0.2m thick	

Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	602	Layer	Subsoil 0.15m thick	
	603	Layer	Natural sand and gravels	
7	701	Layer	Topsoil, 0.25m deep	
	702	Layer	Subsoil, 0.2m thick	
	703	Layer	Natural sand, gravels and clay	
8	801	Layer	Topsoil, 0.25m deep	
	802	Layer	Subsoil, 0.25m thick	
	803	Layer	Natural clay/sand patches	
	804	Fill	Fill of [805], dark brown grey silty clay	
	805	Cut	Ditch/channel 4.3m wide x 0.5m deep	
	806	Fill	Fill of [808], mottled grey silty clay	
	807	Fill	Fill of [808], light yellow/grey clayey silt	
	808	Cut	Ditch/channel 4.3m wide x 0.5m deep	
	809	Fill	Fill of [805], mottled orange/grey clay	
9	901	Layer	Topsoil 0.25m deep	
	902	Layer	Subsoil 0.15m thick	
	903	Layer	Natural sands and gravels	
10	1001	Layer	Topsoil, 0.20-0.25m deep	
	1002	Layer	Subsoil, 0.15-0.2m thick	
	1003	Layer	Natural sands and gravels	
11	1101	Layer	Topsoil, 0.28 deep	
	1102	Layer	Subsoil, 0.40m thick	
	1103	Layer	Natural sands and gravels	

Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
12	1201	Layer	Topsoil, 0.38 deep	
	1202	Layer	Subsoil, 0.35m thick	
	1203	Layer	Natural sands and gravels	
	1204	Layer	Fill of [1205], mid grey silty clay	
	1205	Cut	U-shaped ditch aligned N-S, 0.7m wide x 0.35m deep	
	1206	Layer	Fill of [1207] dark brown/grey silty clay	Pottery
	1207	Cut	Sub-circular posthole, 0.3m wide x 0.15m deep	
13	1301	Layer	Topsoil, 0.40-0.5m deep	
	1302	Layer	Subsoil, 0.3m thick	
	1303	Layer	Natural sands and gravels	
14	1401	Layer	Topsoil, 0.40m deep	
	1402	Layer	Subsoil, 0.3m thick	
	1403	Layer	Natural sands and gravels	
15	1501	Layer	Topsoil, 0.32-0.36m deep	
	1502	Layer	Subsoil, 0.3m thick	
	1503	Layer	Natural sands and gravels	
	1504	Fill	Fill of [1505], mid grey/brown silty clay	
	1505	Cut	Possible pit, semi-circular in plan, 1m wide x 0.2m deep	
16	1601	Layer	Topsoil, 0.32-0.36m deep	
	1602	Layer	Subsoil, 0.3m thick	
	1603	Layer	Natural yellow/grey clay	
17	1701	Layer	Topsoil, 0.31-0.42m deep	



Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	1702	Layer	Subsoil, 0.10-0.25m thick	
	1703	Layer	Natural yellow/grey clay with yellow sand patches	
<b>18</b>	1801	Layer	Topsoil, 0.25m deep	
	1802	Layer	Subsoil, 0.2-0.25m thick	
	1803	Layer	Natural yellow/grey clay with yellow sand patches	
	1804	Cut	Ditch aligned E-W, 0.85m wide x 0.35m deep	
	1805	Fill	Fill of [1805], dark grey silty clay with frequent charcoal inclusion	
	1806	Fill	Fill of [1804], dark grey silty clay	
	1807	Fill	Fill of [1804], dark brown/grey silty clay	
	1808	Cut	Ditch aligned E-W, 0.9m wide x 0.4m deep	
<b>19</b>	1901	Layer	Topsoil/Turf 0.03m deep	
	1902	Layer	Subsoil, 0.2-0.25m thick	
	1903	Layer	Natural yellow/grey clay	
<b>20</b>	2001	Layer	'Topsoil', modern makeup layer comprising re-deposited soils and gravel, containing debris such as bricks and tarmac, 0.10m thick	
	2002	Layer	Modern makeup/levelling layer comprising re-deposited silty clays mixed with debris, 0.5-0.6m thick.	
	2003	Layer	Natural yellow/grey clay	
<b>21</b>	2101	Layer	Topsoil, very thin turf layer 0.10m thick	
	2102	Layer	Modern deposition layer, mid grey/brown silty clays containing fragments of limestone, brick, gravel etc, 0.45m thick	
	2103	Layer	Subsoil, dark yellowish grey silty clays with frequent chalky marl within, 0.30-0.35m thick	

Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	2104	Layer	Natural yellow/grey clays	
22	2201	Layer	Topsoil, 0.3-0.4m thick	
	2202	Layer	Subsoil, 0.2-0.3m thick	
	2203	Layer	Natural sand and gravel	
23	2301	Layer	Topsoil 0.3-0.35m thick	
	2302	Layer	Subsoil 0.2m thick	
	2303	Layer	Natural orange/brown sands and gravels	
24	2401	Layer	Topsoil 0.35-0.5m thick	
	2402	Layer	Subsoil 0.2m thick	
	2403	Layer	Natural orange/brown sands and gravels	
25	2501	Layer	Topsoil 0.35-0.4m thick	
	2502	Layer	Subsoil, 0.15-0.2m thick	
	2503	Layer	Natural orange/brown sands and gravels	
26	2601	Layer	Modern deposition layer of soils, gravel and clay, 0.15-0.2m thick	
	2602	Layer	Modern deposition layer of light yellow/grey clay containing patches of lime mortar, brick, burnt material, ceramic etc, 0.20-0.65m thick (S-N)	
	2603	Layer	Natural orange/brown sands and gravels	
27	2701	Layer	Topsoil, brown/grey silty clay, 0.25m thick	
	2702	Layer	Natural yellow/grey clay	
28	2801	Layer	Gravel from sunken road/hard standing, 0.05m thick (topsoil and subsoil truncated)	
	2802	Layer	Natural yellow/grey clay	

Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
29	2901	Layer	Gravel from hard standing (topsoil and subsoil truncated)	
	2902	Layer	Natural yellow/grey clay	
30	3001	Layer	Topsoil, 0.3m thick	
	3002	Layer	Subsoil, 0.10m thick	
	3003	Layer	Natural grey clay/yellow sand patches	
31	3101	Layer	Topsoil, 0.25m thick	
	3102	Layer	Subsoil, mid grey/brown clayey silt, 0.15m thick	
	3103	Layer	Modern deposition layer, comprises silty clays mixed with limestone, lime mortar, gravel and brick, wire mesh etc, 0.55m thick	
	3104	Layer	Natural orange clay	
32	3201	Layer	Topsoil, 0.20m thick	
	3202	Layer	Subsoil, 0.25m thick	
	3203	Layer	Natural yellow/orange sand and gravels with grey clay patches	
	3204	Fill	Fill of [ 3205], compact grey clay	
	3205	Cut	Ditch aligned NW-SE, broad, flat based profile, 1.1m wide x 0.3m	
	3206	Fill	Fill of [ 3208], compact mottled mid yellow/orange silty clay	Pottery
	3207	Fill	Fill of [ 3208], compact mottled dark yellow/orange silty clay	
	3208	Cut	Ditch aligned NW-SE, broad, U-shaped profile, 2m wide x 0.67m deep	
	3209	Fill	Fill of [3210], compact grey silty clay, 0.2m thick	

Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	3210	Cut	Ditch aligned NW-SE, very shallow, flat based profile, 0.87m wide x 0.2m deep	
	3211	Fill	Fill of [3212], firm dark grey silty clay	
	3212	Cut	Ditch aligned NE-SW, steep U-shaped profile with long upper lip on SW side, 1.8m wide x 0.65m deep	
	3213	Fill	Fill of [3214], firm dark grey silty clay	
	3214	Cut	Gully aligned NE-SW, very shallow rounded profile, 0.3m wide x 0.1m deep	
<b>33</b>	3301	Layer	Topsoil, 0.20-0.25m thick	
	3302	Layer	Subsoil, 0.20-0.25m thick	
	3303	Layer	Natural yellow/orange sand and gravels with grey clay patches	
	3304	Fill	Fill of [3306], compact grey clay with small gravel inclusion, 0.15m thick	
	3305	Fill	Fill of [3306], compact grey brown clay with small gravel inclusion, 0.55m thick	
	3306	Cut	Ditch aligned N-S, broad U-shaped profile, 2.5m wide x 0.7m deep	
	3307	Fill	Fill of [3309], compact grey/brown clay with small gravel inclusion, 0.4m thick	Pottery
	3308	Fill	Fill of [3309]. Moderately compacted light grey sandy clay, 0.3m thick	Pottery
	3309	Cut	Ditch aligned N-S, wide V-shaped profile, 1.7m wide x 0.7m deep	
	3310	Fill	Fill of [3311], compact grey clay with small gravel inclusion	pottery
	3311	Cut	Gully aligned NW-SE, sinuous in plan with very shallow rounded profile 0.08m deep	

Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	3312	Fill	Fill of [3315], firm mottled dark red/grey silty clay with frequent iron panning, gravel, limestone and charcoal flecking, 0.50m thick	pottery
	3313	Fill	Fill of [3315], moderately compacted dark grey brown silty clay with frequent iron panning, 0.43m thick	
	3314	Fill	Fill of [3315], soft mottled grey brown clay (re-deposited natural), 0.25m thick	
	3315	Cut	Ditch aligned N-S, very broad, flat based profile with shallow upper and steep lower edges, 4m wide x 1.10m deep	
	3316	Fill	Fill of [3317], soft deposited natural yellow/grey clay mixed with very dense charcoal and fired clay patches, 0.5m thick	
	3317	Cut	Pit, oval in plan with steep profile and flat base, 0.6m x 0.4m x 0.5m deep	
	3318	Fill	Fill of [3317], firm mid brown/grey silty clay with frequent gravel inclusion	
	3319	Cut	Post-hole, circular in plan with broad upper lip and steep lower section, 0.35m wide x 0.20m deep	
	3320	Layer	Grey clay alluvial layer beneath subsoil (3302), 0.25m thick	
	3321	Layer	Red clayey silt layer beneath (3320), 0.25m thick	
<b>34</b>	3401	Layer	Topsoil, 0.25-0.30m thick	
	3402	Layer	Subsoil, 0.3m thick	
	3403	Layer	Natural yellow/orange sand and gravels with grey clay patches	
	3404	Fill	Fill of [3405], compact grey/brown silty clay with gravel inclusion	Pottery
	3405	Cut	Ditch aligned E-W, shallow irregular profile 1.4m wide x 0.2m deep	

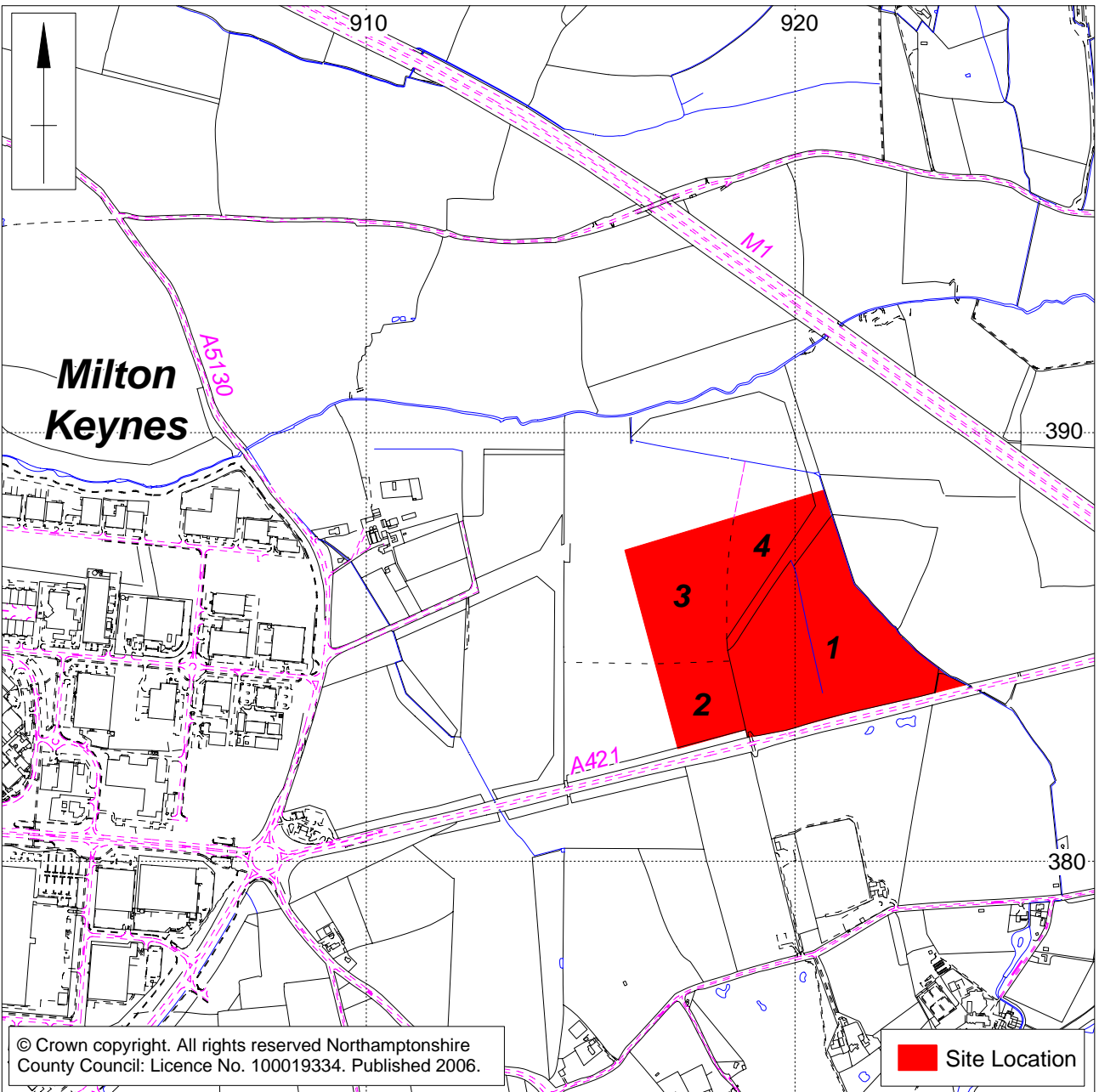
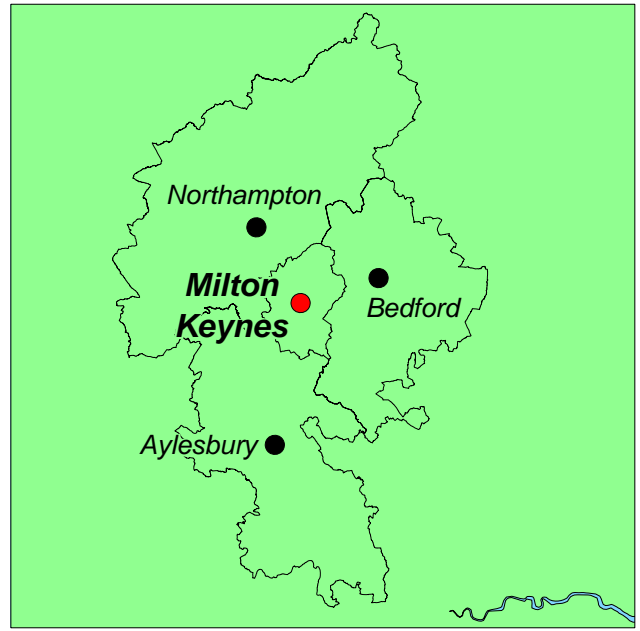
Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	3406	Fill	Fill of [3405], firm dark grey/brown silty clay with freq. gravel and moderate iron panning, 0.35m thick	
	3407	Cut	Ditch aligned E-W, shallow upper lip and steep lower profile with curved base, 1.25m wide x 0.95m deep	
	3408	Fill	Fill of [3409], firm dark grey/brown silty clay with freq. gravel, 0.52m thick	
	3409	Cut	Ditch aligned E-W, wide U-shaped profile with curved base. Re-cut by [3415], 1.55m wide x 0.95m deep	
	3410	Fill	Fill of [3411], compact dark grey clay	
	3411	Cut	Ditch aligned E-W, fairly narrow U-shaped profile with curved base Cut by [3413]	
	3412	Fill	Fill of [3413], firm dark grey/brown silty clay with gravel and charcoal inclusion	
	3413	Cut	Ditch aligned E-W, fairly broad profile with flat base Cuts [3411]	
	3414	Fill	Fill of [3415], firm dark grey/brown silty clay with freq. charcoal inclusion.	
	3415	Cut	Ditch aligned E-W, shallow flattened U-shaped profile, 0.85m wide x 0.25m deep	
	3416		Not Assigned	
	3417		Fill of [3411]	
	3418		Fill of [3405]	
	3419		Fill of [3405]	
35	3501	Layer	Topsoil, 0.25m thick	
	3502	Layer	Subsoil, 0.20m thick	
	3503	Layer	Natural yellow orange sands and gravels with grey clay patches	

Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	3504	Fill	Fill of [3505]. Compact grey/brown silty clay. 0.20 thick	
	3505	Cut	Ditch aligned N/S with broad u shape. Gently sloping sides lead down to narrow curving base. 2.80m wide x 1.05m deep	
	3506	Fill	Fill of [3507]. Compact grey silty clay with moderate gravel inclusion	Pottery
	3507	Cut	Ditch on N/S alignment. Broad sloping sides lead to narrow relatively flat base. 1.40m wide x 0.35 deep	
	3508	Fill	Fill of [3505]. Compact dark grey silty clay. Large iron panning content. 0.40 thick	
	3509	Fill	Fill of [3505]. Firm compaction of dark grey clay. Very frequent gravel and iron panning content. 0.30 thick	
<b>36</b>	3601	Layer	Topsoil. 0.20 thick	
	3602	Layer	Subsoil. 0.25 thick	
	3603	Layer	Natural yellow orange sands and gravels with grey clay patches	
	3604		Not assigned	
	3605	Fill	Fill of [3606]. Compact dark grey clay material	Pottery
	3606	Cut	Gully aligned E/W. Broad u shaped feature with gently curving sides to flat base. 0.50m wide x 0.13m deep	
	3607	Fill	Fill of [3608]. Compact dark grey clay.	
	3608	Cut	Gully aligned N/S. Broad u shaped with gently curving sides to flat base. 0.40m wide x 0.13m deep	
	3609	Fill	Fill of [3610]. Compact dark grey clay	
	3610	Cut	Post hole with deep sheer sides to a flat base. 0.40m wide x 0.15deep	
	3611	Fill	Fill of [3612]. Compact dark grey clay	

Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	3612	Cut	Post hole with sheer sides to flat base. 0.50m wide x 0.16m deep	
	3613	Fill	Fill of [3614]. Loose compaction of light grey sandy clay.	
	3614	Cut	Post hole. Shallow sheer sides to flat base. 0.50m wide x 0.16m deep	
	3615	Fill	Fill of [3616]. Compact dark grey clay	
	3616	Cut	Possible pit or Butt end. Oval feature coming out of bulk at N side. Aligned N/S with steep sides to fairly flat base. 0.80 wide x	
	3617	Fill	Fill of [3618]. Loose compaction of brown sandy clay	
	3618	Cut	Gully aligned NW/ SE. V shaped feature with steep sides to narrow rounded base. 0.40m wide x 0.13m deep	
<b>37</b>	3701	Layer	Topsoil. 0.25 thick	
	3702	Layer	Subsoil. 0.30 thick	
	3703	Layer	Natural yellow orange sands and gravels with grey clay patches	
	3704		Not assigned	
	3705		Not assigned	
	3706	Fill	Fill of [3707]. Very compact black silty clay	
	3707	Cut	Pit. Shallow sides to rounded base. 0.90m wide x 0.45m deep	
	3708	Fill	Fill of [3709]. Compact dark Grey clay.	
	3709	Cut	Ditch aligned NE/SW. V shaped feature with changing gradients to sides and rounded narrow base. 1.08m wide x 0.30m deep	
<b>38</b>	3801	Layer	Topsoil. 0.25 thick	

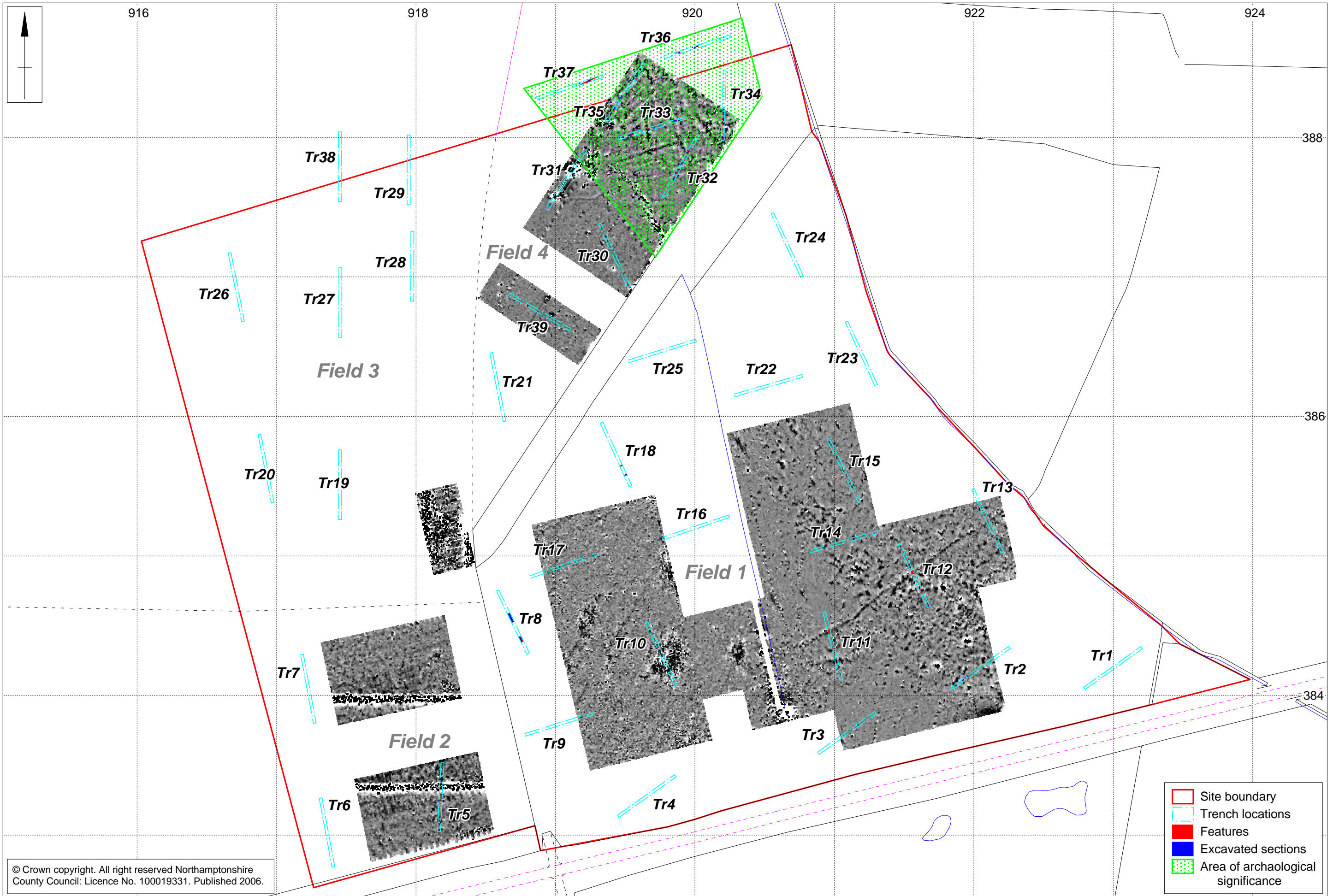


Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description	Artefact types
	3802	Layer	Subsoil. 0.30 thick	
	3803	Layer	Natural yellow orange sands and gravels with grey clay patches	
39	3901	Layer	Topsoil. 0.25 thick	
	3902	Layer	Subsoil. 0.25 thick	
	3903	Layer	Natural yellow orange sands and gravels with grey clay patches	



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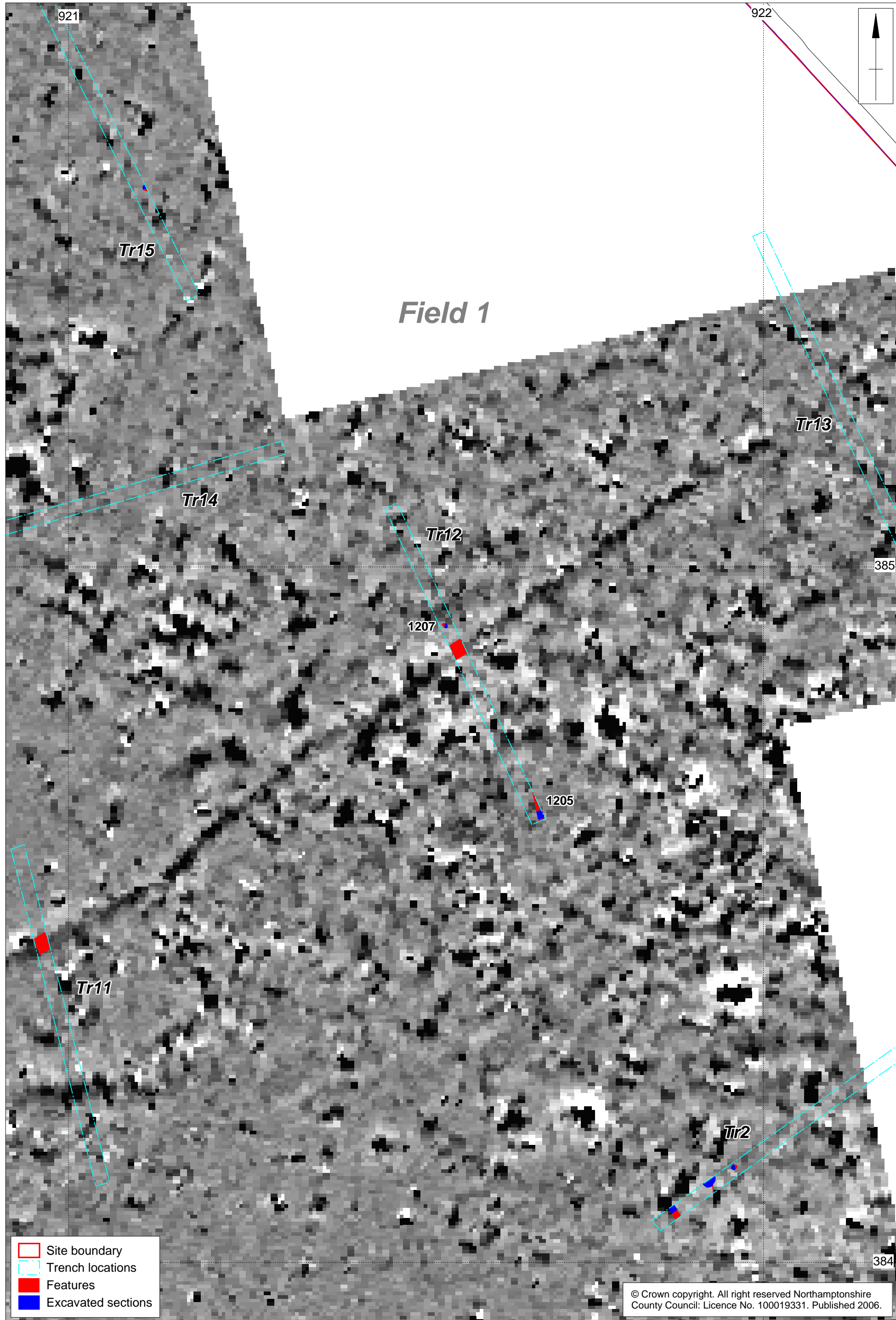
Site Location Fig 1



Scale 1:2500

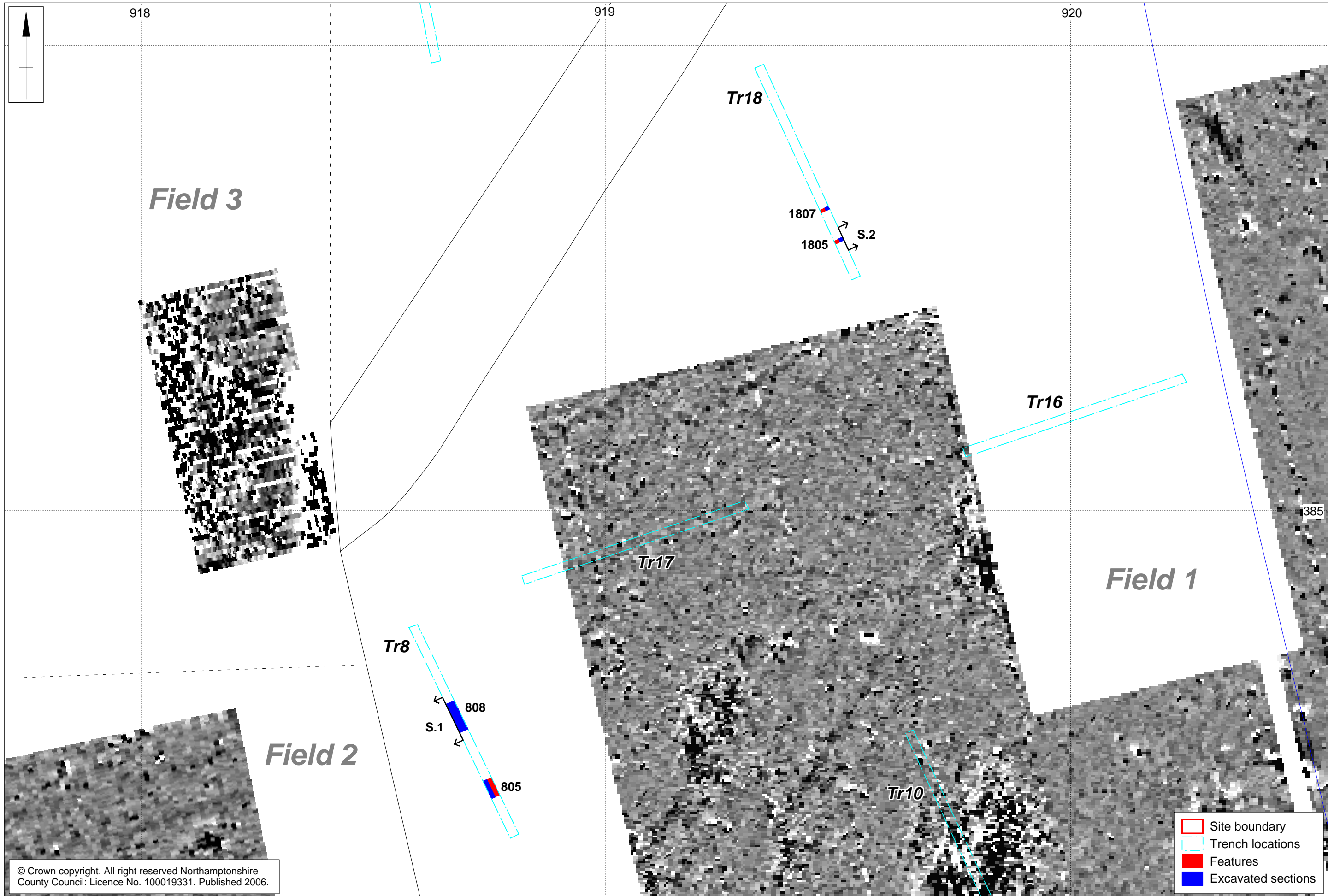
Trench locations and features Fig 2

Scale 1:500



Plan of Trenches in Field 1 (east) Fig 3

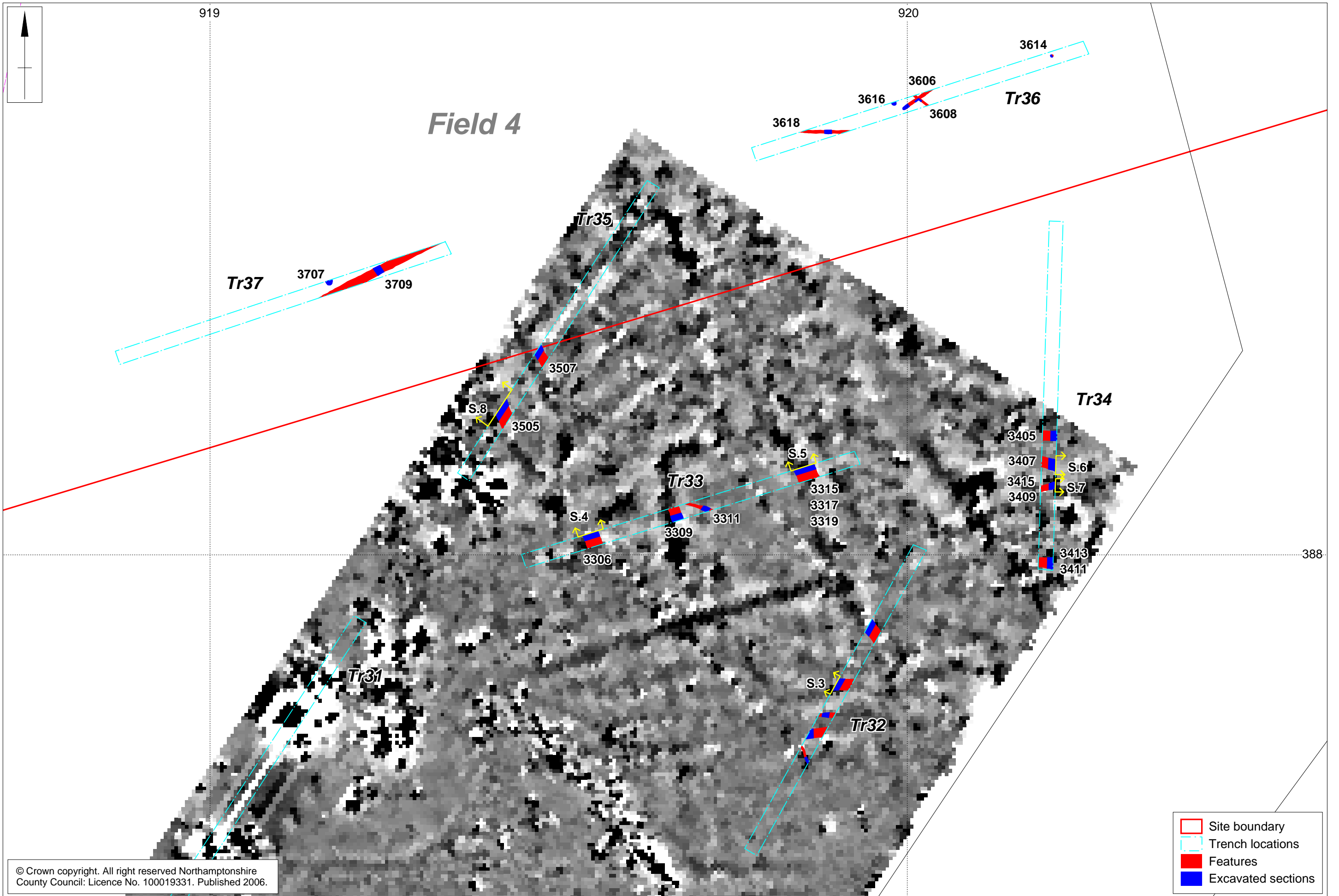
- Site boundary
- Trench locations
- Features
- Excavated sections



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Scale 1:500

Plan of Trenches in Field 1 (west) Fig 4

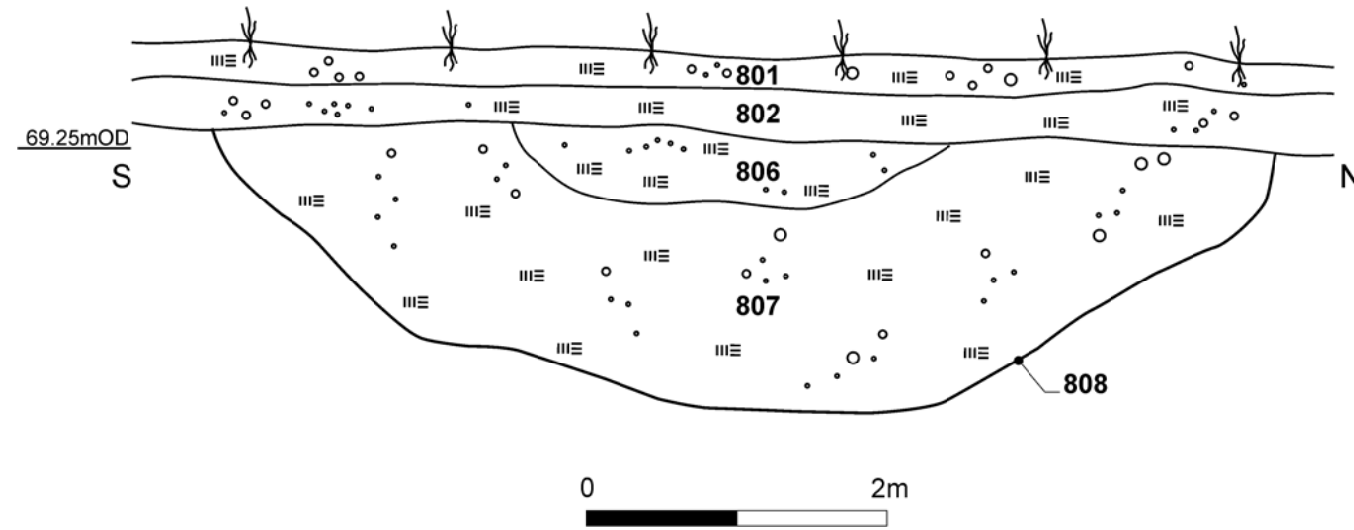


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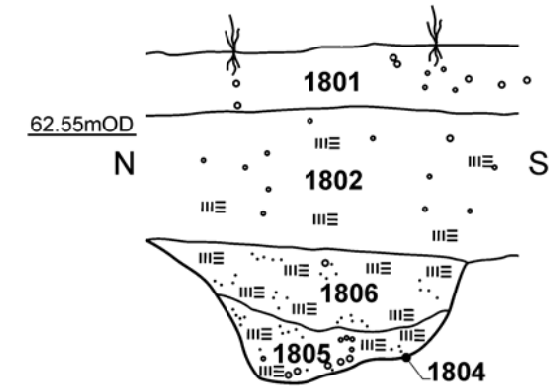
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Plan of Trenches in Field 4 Fig 5

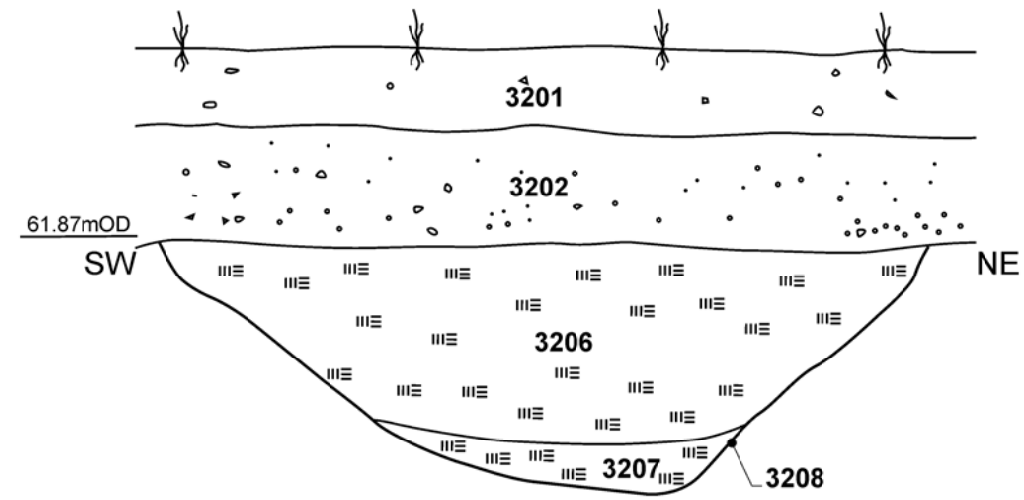
**Section 1 - Trench 8**



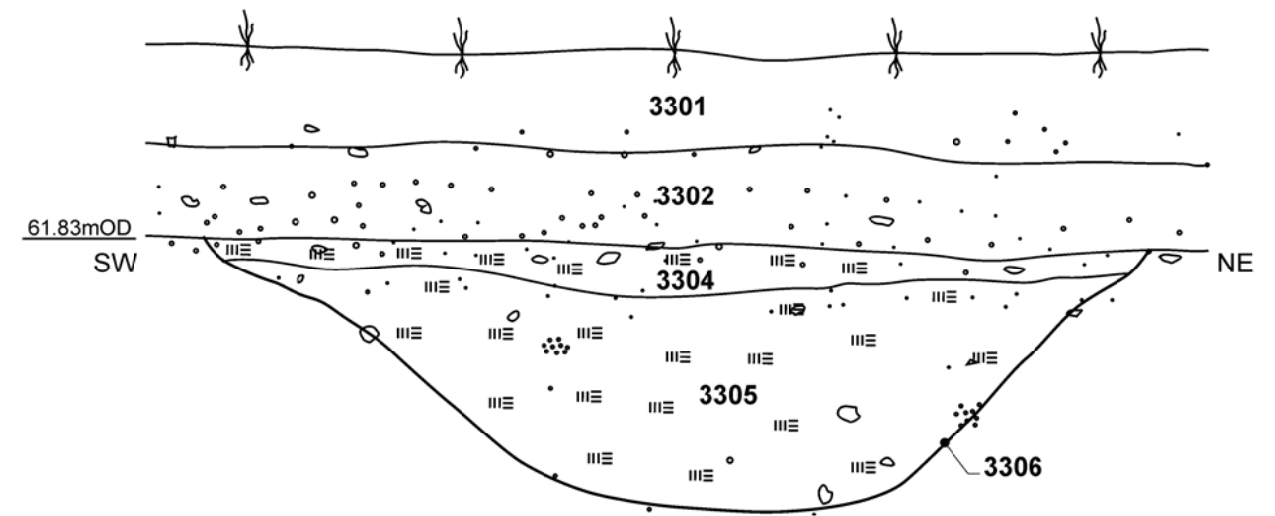
**Section 2 - Trench 18**



**Section 3 - Trench 32**



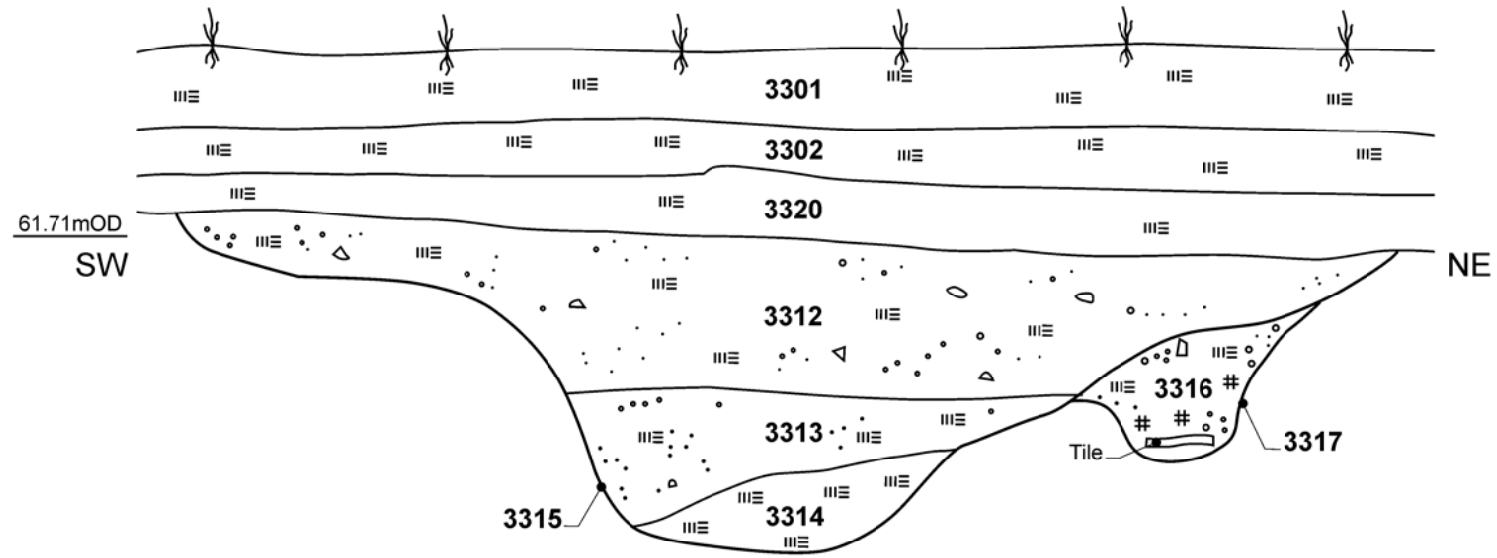
**Section 4 - Trench 33**



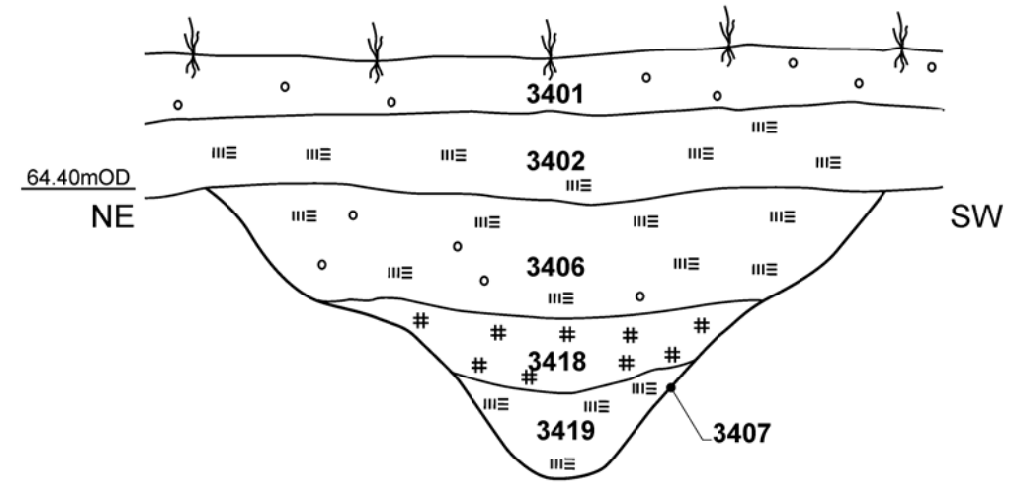
▨ Clay  
# Charcoal



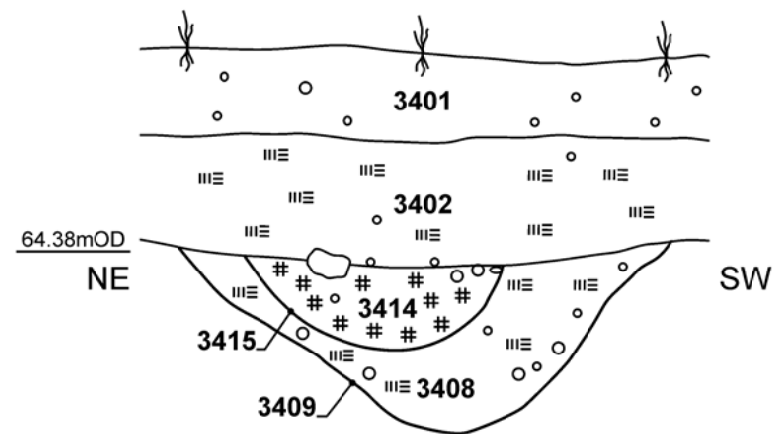
**Section 5 - Trench 33**



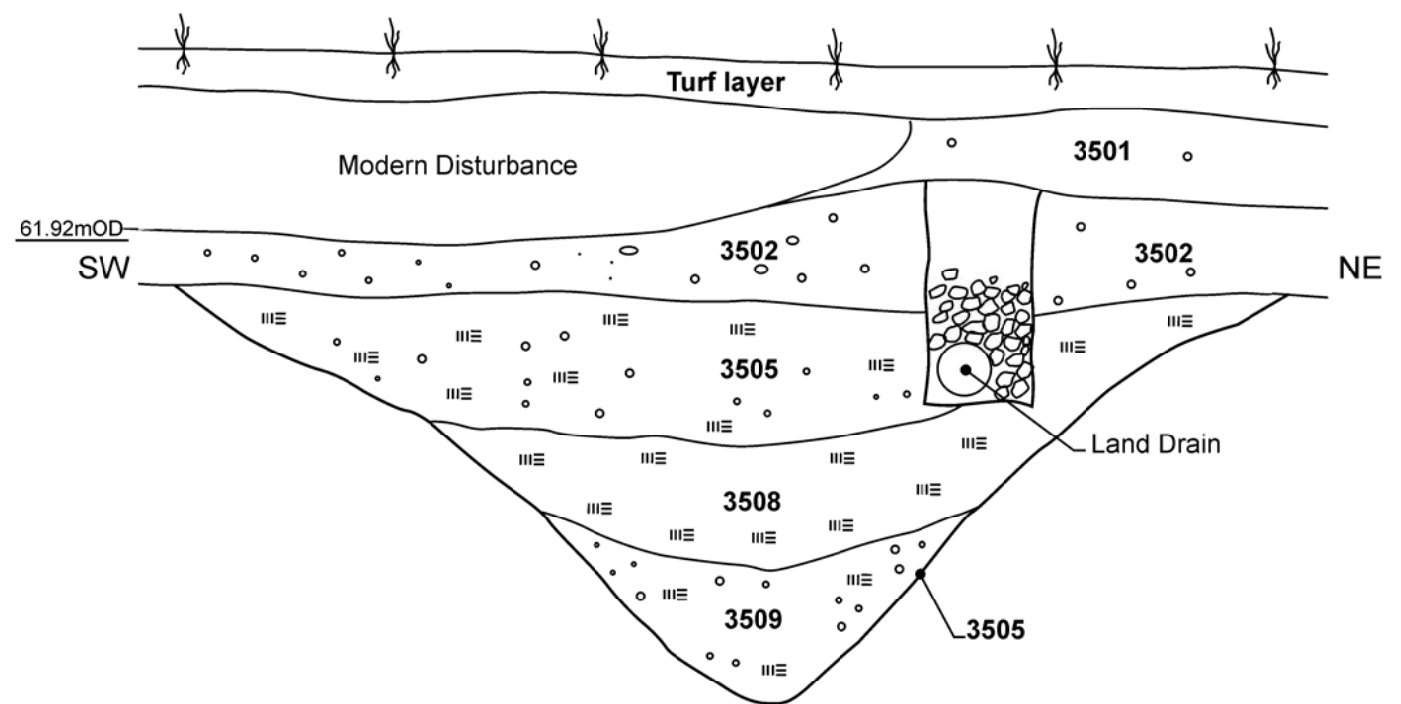
**Section 6 - Trench 34**



**Section 7 - Trench 34**



**Section 8 - Trench 35**





 Clay  
 Charcoal







Plate 1: Trench 12, Ditch [1205], looking north north west.



Plate 2: Trench 32, Ditch [3212] looking north.

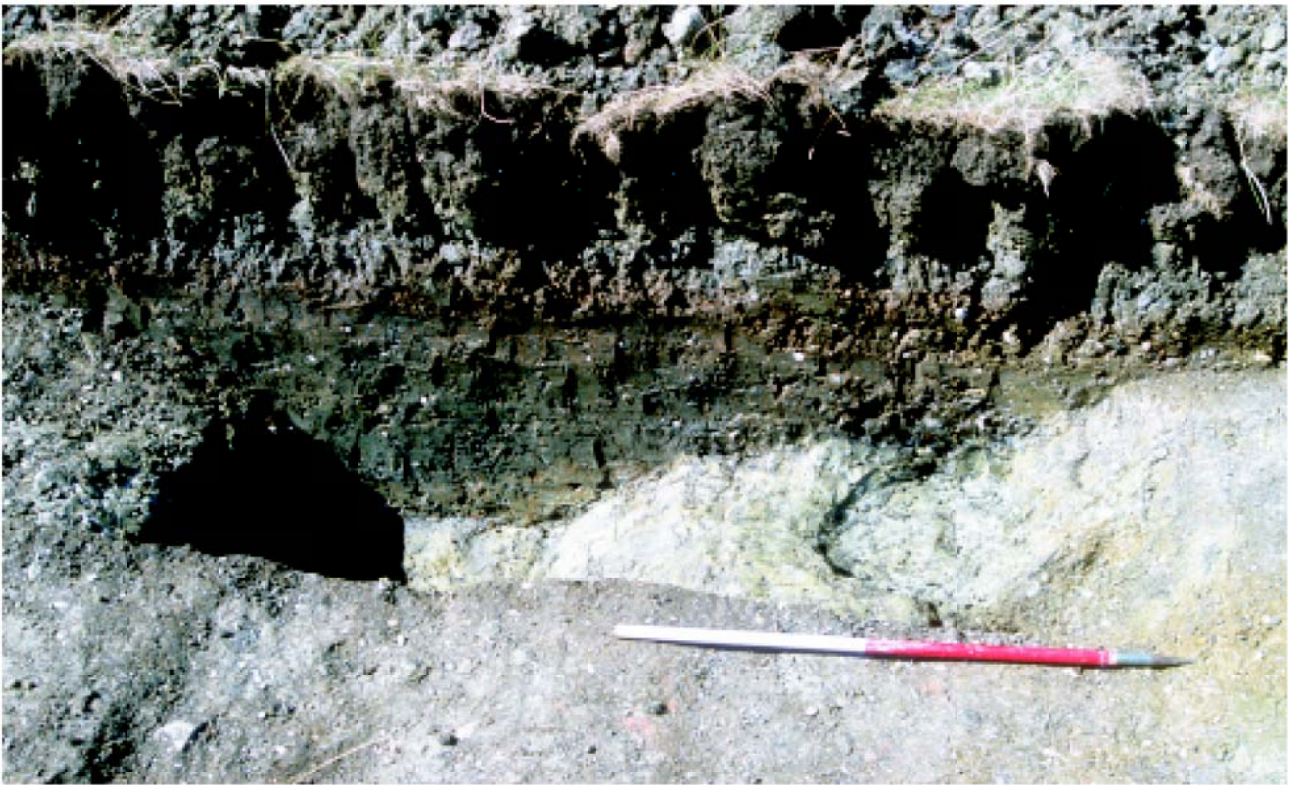


Plate 3: Trench 33, Ditch [3315] with Pit [3317] and Posthole [3319], looking north west.



Plate 4: Trench 34, Ditches [3411] and [3413], looking east.



Plate 5: Trench 35, Ditch [3505], looking east.



Plate 6: Trench 36, Ditches [3618], looking north east.