

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
ACOUSTIC BUNDING,
OLD LINSLADE MANOR
OLD LINSLADE, BEDFORDSHIRE**

*on behalf of
Thomas Bros Excavations (Luton) Ltd*



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August 2004

ASC: 583/OLM/03

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	OLM	<i>Project no:</i>	583
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>District:</i>	South Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Old Linslade		
<i>Parish:</i>	Leighton-Linslade CP		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 9096 2674		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.5 hectares		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Unmanaged/Pasture		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Creation of an acoustic bund		
<i>Extent of development:</i>	c.5 hectares		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	BC/CM/2003/11		
<i>Client:</i>	Thomas Bros Excavation (Luton) Ltd Nursery Road Luton Bedfordshire LU3 2RG		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Andrew Burton		
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Internal Quality Check

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Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During June and August 2004 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Old Linslade Manor, Bedfordshire. The site is close to a manorial settlement and had the potential to reveal significant archaeological remains. Eighteen trial trenches were excavated (Figs. 3 & 4) and two features were investigated within trench 12: A substantial, deep modern pit [1202] and a probable geological feature visible as a slightly darker band within the sand subsoil [1204]. No archaeological deposits were revealed in the remaining trial trenches.

While the presence of occasional isolated features away from the trenches cannot be entirely excluded, it is unlikely that large quantities of archaeological remains are present on the site. A number of irregular, shallow earthworks are present, which may have led to the identification of the site as a deserted medieval village. 19th century maps record the presence of old sand quarries close to the site and the earthworks observed may be further evidence of sand quarrying as may the deep modern pit [1202] revealed in trench 12.

1 Introduction

1.1 Planning Background

1.1.1 An acoustic bund is to be constructed on land to the west of St Mary's Church, Old Linslade. The developer applied to *South Bedfordshire District Council* for Planning permission in support of the development (planning application no. BC/CM/2003/11) and, in line with the guidance contained in the document PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning* the Archaeological Officer of *Bedfordshire County Council* advised that the site may be archaeologically sensitive, required the developer to commission an archaeological evaluation and issued a *brief* for the works (Oake 2004).

1.1.2 The developer's contractor, *Thomas Bros Excavations Ltd* commissioned *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) to undertake the evaluation and prepare a project design (Zeepvat 2004).

1.2 Proposed Development

The proposed development on the site comprises the construction of acoustic bunds alongside the railway line, using imported material.

1.3 Reason for Work

The work was necessary because the site is within an area of archaeological sensitivity and the construction of the acoustic bund has the potential to damage or destroy significant archaeological remains (section 3).



Plate 1: View of the site prior to the evaluation



Plate 2: View looking west



Plate 3: View looking southwest

1.4 *Setting*

The site is located to the west of Old Linslade Manor and church, on the north-east side of the West Coast Main railway line, about 2km north-west of Leighton Buzzard, at NGR SP 9086 2674. The site, which extends alongside the railway for some 500m, comprises two areas, separated by Old Linslade Road. The north area covers *c.*2 hectares and the south area *c.*3 hectares. Both areas are currently under pasture, and are accessed from Old Linslade Road.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

1.5.1 The site lies on an east-facing slope at an elevation of between 85 - 90m AOD above the floodplain of the river Ouzel, which flows in a northerly direction, *c.*0.5km to the east. A number of minor irregular undulations/earthworks are present, notably in the northern part of the site (Plates 2 and 3).

1.5.2 Soils in the area of the site are assigned to the *Bearsted 1 Association*, described as 'well-drained coarse loamy and sandy soils over sand or sandstone, in places ferruginous. Some permeable coarse and fine loamy soils affected by groundwater. Risk of water erosion' (Soil Survey 1984, 541A). The *brief* notes that the underlying geology of the site is quite complex, with deposits of Oxford Clay, Gault Clay and Lower Greensand, overlain in places with valley gravels derived from the Ouzel.

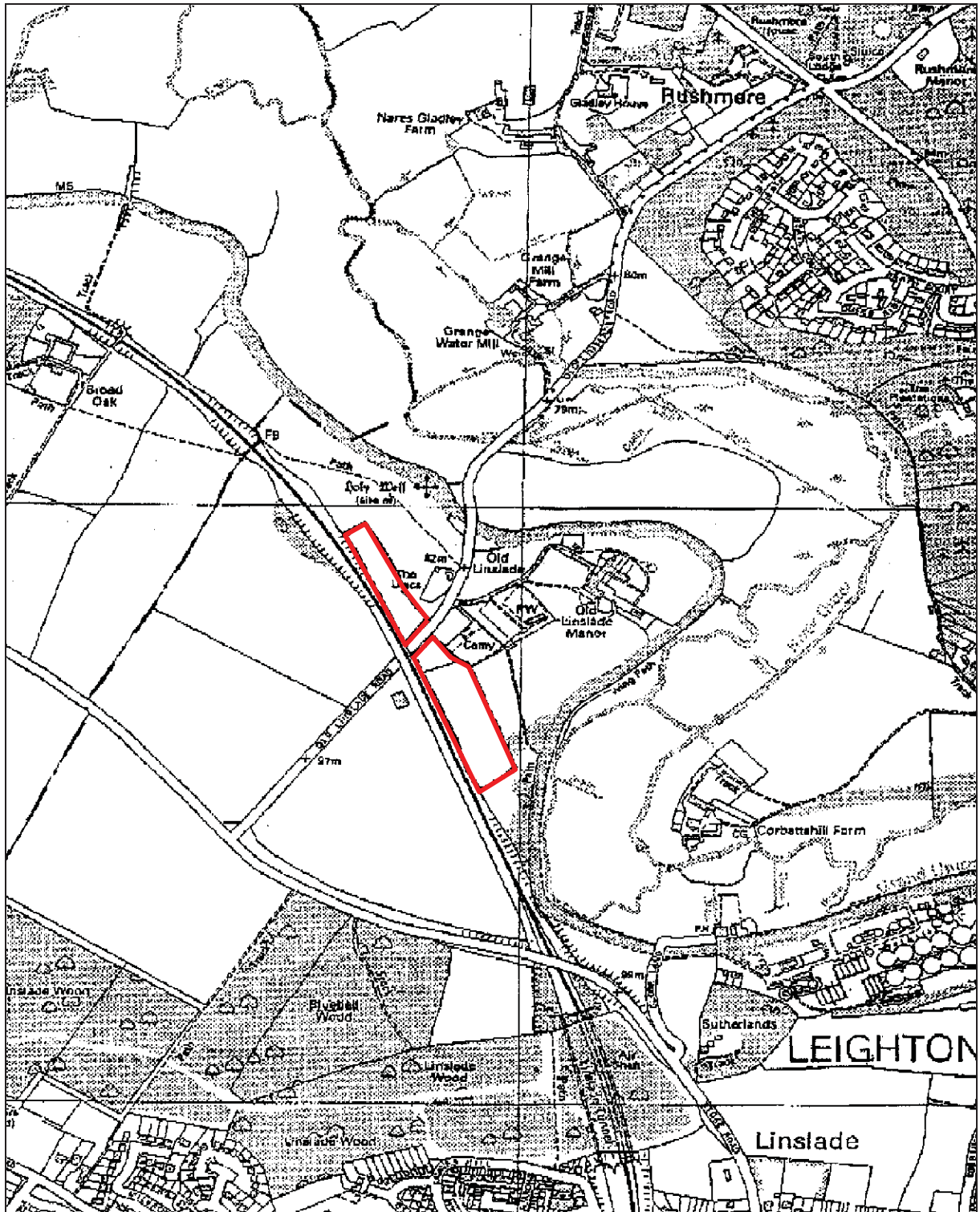


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:10,000)

2 Aims and Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the *brief* (Section 4), the aims of the evaluation were:

- to determine the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present in the development area;
- to ascertain the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present in the development area

2.2 Methods

The work was carried out according to the *brief* (Section 5), which required:

- Archaeological trial trenching, up to a maximum of 5% of the area of development
- The trench locations are shown in Figs. 3 & 4. The trench pattern was set out in order to achieve an even and adequate coverage of the site, as required in the *brief* (para. 5.6.3). A number of minor errors were noted on the official design drawings, principally in relation to trees and boundary fences, which are reflected in the final trench layout
- the trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision, with a mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless bucket 2.2m wide.
- The evaluation was conducted in two stages due to difficulties of access: The trenches in the southern part of the site (Nos. 1 – 10, Fig. 3) were excavated during June (Fell 2004) and those in the northern part during August (Nos. 11 – 18, Fig. 4).

2.3 Standards

The work conforms to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 The village of Old Linslade is mentioned in the Domesday Survey (1086), and was the principal settlement in the parish during the early medieval period. In 1251 the lord of the manor was granted a weekly market and annual fair. The church of St Mary (Historic Environment Record (HER) 1805), which dates from the early 12th century (Pevsner 1986, 109), was originally the parish church. The churchyard (HER 8921) forms part of the east boundary of the site. This is referred to in a document dated 1519 and was enlarged in 1893 and again in 1926. A holy well (HER 1613) was situated *c.*200m to the north of the church and was a focus for pilgrimage in the 13th century.
- 3.2 From the 14th century onwards the settlement appears to have declined, possibly due to decreasing agricultural viability. Its decline was matched by the growth of a settlement at Southcott, further south in the parish, which became the present-day Linslade. The Historic Environment Record (10997) asserts that the medieval village was to the south and west of the church (*i.e.* within the site), but offers no supporting evidence.
- 3.3 By the late 15th century Old Linslade appears to have become largely abandoned, though the church retained its rights and functions within the parish. The medieval manor house (HER 4684) also fell out of use at this time: the present manor house, which dates from the 18th century (Pevsner 1986, 111), is thought to stand on the same site.
- 1.4 The *Grand Union Canal* opened *c.*1800 and lies close to the east of the site (Faulkner 1993). The canal is of considerable historical and architectural importance. Notable local features included the *Sandhoe Canal Bridge* (HER 4695), which is *c.*400m northeast of the site. This is a fine single brick arched bridge constructed in 1880 and is a *Scheduled Ancient Monument* (no. 22446 Beds 88). The canal was of considerable importance to the economy of the local area and a wharf was constructed *c.*300 northeast of the site (HER 7883) in order to load sand from quarries at Heath and Reach. An old sandpit is marked on the first edition Ordnance Survey map, immediately south of the site (HER 10999). This may also have been served by the wharf, or may have had a separate facility to the south. During the 19th century a clay pit and brickworks were situated the field to the west of the railway line. The railway line, which opened in 1838 as the *London and Birmingham Railway* forms the western boundary of the site.

4 Results

4.1 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the results of the trial trenches. A full description of the soils, with illustrations of the trenches, is provided in Appendix 1.

4.2 *Results*

A substantial modern pit [1202] was revealed in the south-eastern end of trench 12. This feature ran beyond the confines of the trench and was machined out to a depth of 1.5m without revealing its base, its fill contained modern debris including barbed wire strands. Immediately to the north-west a small linear feature [1204] was excavated and interpreted as a variation in the sand subsoil. Examination of the baulk section revealed this feature to be contained within the natural subsoil. No archaeological features or finds were revealed in the remaining trenches.

4.3 The trenches revealed a consistent pattern of soil formation. The topsoil comprised loose grey silty clay, with a thick growth of roots in the southern part of the site. No separate subsoil layer was present and the soil was relatively shallow. The depth of topsoil across the site was generally between 0.25 – 0.3m.

4.4 Greyish orange sand was revealed beneath the topsoil. It was relatively soft and contained occasional lenses of natural gravel and is interpreted as the natural strata.



Plate 4: Modern pit [1202] in Trench 12



Plate 5: Geological feature [1204] in Trench 12

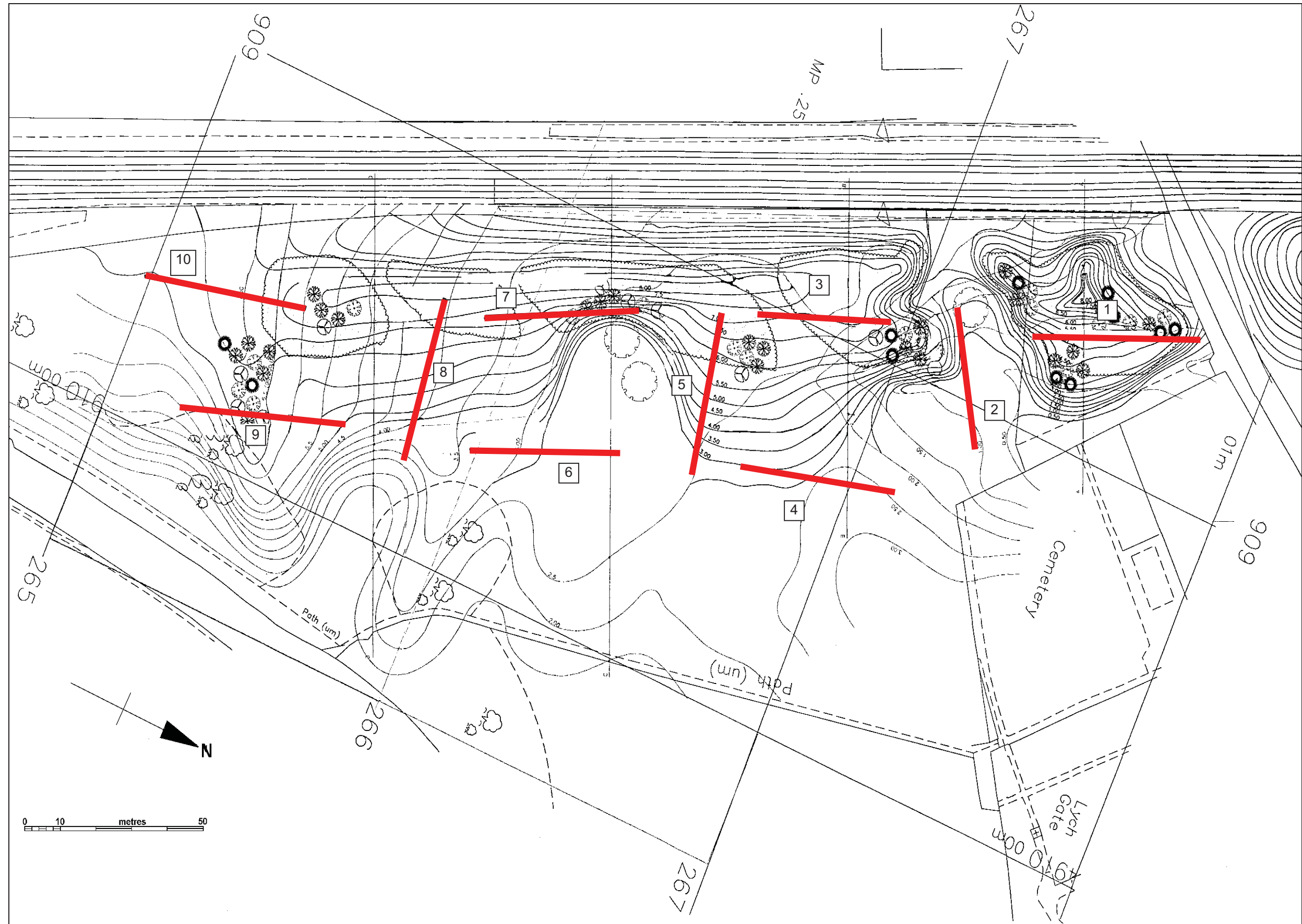


Figure 3: Trench locations southern area (scale 1:1,000)



Figure 4: Trench locations northern area (scale 1:1,000)

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The fieldwork successfully addressed the aims of the *brief*. The southern part of the site was overgrown with long grass and similar vegetation but conditions for the fieldwork were good. The northern part of the site was well-grazed pasture. A high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the evaluation.
- 5.2 Two features were investigated within trench 12: A substantial, deep modern pit [1202] and a probable geological feature visible as a slightly darker band within the sand subsoil [1204]. Archaeological deposits were not observed in the remaining trial trenches. In addition the spoil heaps were scanned for artefacts but none were revealed. While the presence of occasional isolated features away from the trenches cannot be entirely excluded, it is unlikely that large quantities of archaeological remains are present on the site.
- 5.3 The surface of the site comprised the natural soil layer. This was generally thin, notably in the southern part of the site (especially trenches 9 and 10) and separate subsoil and topsoil layers were not identified. The underlying strata comprised greyish orange sand with occasional minor patches of gravel.
- 5.4 Research into the history of the area indicates that the site is situated west of the Manor House of Old Linslade. The site of the medieval village is shown on the HER map, but the records do not provide any evidence to support this identification. The identification may rest on the presence of the earthworks. These were visible at the time of the initial site visit (Plates 1 to 3), but are irregular, are generally shallow and do not have the appearance of earthwork features generally present at deserted medieval sites of this type. They appear more like shallow quarries or extraction pits, of which [1202] in trench 12 may be an example. Given the recorded presence of former sand quarries to the south of the site and the total absence of any artefacts, it is likely that they represent the remains of former quarrying operations rather than medieval earthworks. If a medieval settlement exists it is considered unlikely to be present within the site.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Mr Andrew Burton of *Thomas Bros Excavations (Luton) Ltd* for commissioning the evaluation. Martin Oake and Lesley-Ann Mather Archaeological Officers of *Bedfordshire County Council* acted as curatorial officers. Access to the Historic Environment Records was provided by Steve Coleman.

The work was supervised for *ASC Ltd* by David Fell BA MA MIFA and Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA, assisted by Nigel Wilson HND AIFA and Claire Griffiths BSc Dip Arch. The report was prepared by David Fell with additions by Nicholas A Crank. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Wilson and the report was edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The site archive comprises:


1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs/slides
7. Colour slides
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files


7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Luton Museum*.


8. Bibliography


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Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables


Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	38.94m	Width	2.2m	Depth	0.75m
	Levels					
	Trench base north		85.18m OD			
	Trench top north		85.82m OD			
	Trench base south		85.04m OD			
	Trench top south		85.76m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	N	SP 90864 26761	S	SP 90881 26723		
	Orientation		North to south			
Reason for Trench		General evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
100	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	300	-	
101	Layer	Orange sand with pockets of gravel. Natural strata	-	450+	300	


Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	36.80m	Width	2.2m	Depth	0.65m
	Levels					
	Trench base east		85.50m OD			
	Trench top east		86.09m OD			
	Trench base west		86.34m OD			
	Trench top west		86.93m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	E	SP 90914 26720	W	SP 90882 66702		
	Orientation		East to west			
Reason for Trench		General evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
200	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	300	-	
201	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	350+	300	


Trench 3						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	39.66m	Width	2.2m	Depth	0.5m
	Levels					
	Trench base north		87.28m OD			
	Trench top north		87.63m OD			
	Trench base south		87.16m OD			
	Trench top south		87.66m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	N	SP 90893 26688	S	SP 90904 26657		
	Orientation		North to south			
Reason for Trench		General evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
300	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil		-	300	-
301	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata		-	200+	300


Trench 4						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	40.88m	Width	2.2m	Depth	0.6m
	Levels					
	Trench base north		86.84m OD			
	Trench top north		87.30m OD			
	Trench base south		86.76m OD			
	Trench top south		87.34m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	N	SP 90931 26706	S	SP 90942 26669		
	Orientation		North to south			
Reason for Trench		General evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
400	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil		-	300	-
401	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata		-	300+	300


Trench 5											
						Max Dimensions					
						Length	39.16m	Width	2.2m	Depth	0.55m
						Levels					
						Trench base east			87.13m OD		
						Trench top east			87.67m OD		
						Trench base west			87.22m OD		
						Trench top west			87.58m OD		
						NGR Co-ordinates					
						E	SP 90949 26658		W	SP 90908 26649	
						Orientation			East to west		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation								
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)					
500	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil		-	300	-					
501	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Root disturbance at E end. Natural strata		-	250+	300					


Trench 6											
						Max Dimensions					
						Length	39.99m	Width	2.2m	Depth	0.55m
						Levels					
						Trench base north			85.87m OD		
						Trench top north			86.24m OD		
						Trench base south			86.40m OD		
						Trench top south			86.89m OD		
						NGR Co-ordinates					
						N	90952 26640		S	90966 26604	
						Orientation			North to south		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation								
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)					
600	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil		-	250	-					
601	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Pocket of natural gravel in centre. Natural strata		-	300+	250					


Trench 7						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	40.04m	Width	0.6m	Depth	0.6m
	Levels					
	Trench base north		86.05m OD			
	Trench top north		86.43m OD			
	Trench base south		86.61m OD			
	Trench top south		87.17m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	N	SP 90916 26629		S	SP 90934 26597	
	Orientation		North to south			
	Reason for Trench		General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
700	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	300	-	
701	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	300+	300	


Trench 8						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	40.83m	Width	2.2m	Depth	0.55m
	Levels					
	Trench base east		87.05m OD			
	Trench top east		87.54m OD			
	Trench base west		87.21m OD			
	Trench top west		87.50m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	E	SP 90975 26590		W	SP 90934 26585	
	Orientation		East to west			
	Reason for Trench		General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
800	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	300	-	
801	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	250+	300	


Trench 9						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	41.77m	Width	2.2m	Depth	0.45m
	Levels					
	Trench base north		88.09m OD			
	Trench top north		88.37m OD			
	Trench base south		89.77m OD			
	Trench top south		89.84m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	N	SP 90972 26574		S	SP 90987 26534	
	Orientation		North to south			
	Reason for Trench		General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
900	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	250	-	
901	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	200+	250	


Trench 10						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	41.20m	Width	2.2m	Depth	0.5m
	Levels					
	Trench base north		88.87m OD			
	Trench top north		89.15m OD			
	Trench base south		90.05m OD			
	Trench top south		90.37m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	N	SP 90951 26553		S	SP 90960 26563	
	Orientation		North to south			
	Reason for Trench		General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1000	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	250	-	
1001	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	250+	250	


Trench 11						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	38.85m	Width	1.6m	Depth	0.35m
	Levels					
	Trench base north-west		88.46m OD			
	Trench top north-west		88.98m OD			
	Trench base south-east		87.90m OD			
	Trench top south-east		88.43m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	SP 90817 26829	SE	SP 90832 26791		
	Orientation		North-west to south-east			
Reason for Trench		General evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1100	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	250	-	
1101	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	250+	250	


Trench 12						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	39.08m	Width	1.6m	Depth	1.5m
	Levels					
	Trench base north-west		86086m OD			
	Trench top north-west		87.60m OD			
	Trench base south-east		85.42m OD			
	Trench top south-east		85.80m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	SP 90845 26849	SE	SP 90860 26813		
	Orientation		North-west to south-east			
Reason for Trench		General evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1200	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	250	-	
1201	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	250+	250	
1202	Cut	Modern sand pit(?)	>1600	>1500	>1500	
1203	Fill	Backfill of 1202	>1600	>1500	>1500	
1204	Cut	Geological feature				
1205	Fill	Brownish orange sand fill of 1204				


Trench 13						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	36.6m	Width	1.6m	Depth	0.5m
	Levels					
	Trench base north-east		87.44m OD			
	Trench top north-east		87.81m OD			
	Trench base south-west		89.98m OD			
	Trench top south-west		90.57m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NE	SP 90842 26860		SW	SP 90806 26845	
	Orientation			North-east to south-west		
	Reason for Trench			General evaluation		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1300	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	250	-	
1301	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	250+	250	

Trench 14						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	39.8m	Width	1.6m	Depth	0.4m
	Levels					
	Trench base north-west		90.10m OD			
	Trench top north-west		90.46m OD			
	Trench base south-east		90.26m OD			
	Trench top south-east		90.63m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	SP 90783 26899		SE	SP 90799 26863	
	Orientation			North-west to south-east		
	Reason for Trench			General evaluation		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1400	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	250	-	
1401	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	250+	250	

Trench 15						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	42.35m	Width	1.6m	Depth	0.25m
	Levels					
	Trench base north-west		87.96m OD			
	Trench top north-west		88.43m OD			
	Trench base south-east		87.97m OD			
	Trench top south-east		88.36m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	SP 90804 26914	SE	SP 90821 26878		
	Orientation		North-west to south-east			
Reason for Trench		General evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1500	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	250	-	
1501	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	250+	250	

Trench 16						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	41.01m	Width	1.6m	Depth	0.5m
	Levels					
	Trench base north-east		88.27m OD			
	Trench top north-east		88.57m OD			
	Trench base south-west		89.97m OD			
	Trench top south-west		90.62m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NE	SP 90809 26934	SW	SP 90773 26916		
	Orientation		North-east to south-west			
Reason for Trench		General evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1600	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	250	-	
1601	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	250+	250	

Trench 17						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	39.7m	Width	1.6m	Depth	0.5m
	Levels					
	Trench base north-west		94.62m OD			
	Trench top north-west		95.22m OD			
	Trench base south-east		91.53m OD			
	Trench top south-east		91.80m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	SP 90750 26973		SE	SP 90767 26934	
	Orientation			North-west to south-east		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1700	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	250	-	
1701	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	250+	250	

Trench 18						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	40.44m	Width	1.6m	Depth	0.4m
	Levels					
	Trench base north-west		92.15m OD			
	Trench top north-west		92.51m OD			
	Trench base south-east		89.69m OD			
	Trench top south-east		89.91m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	SP 90782 26986		SE	SP 90799 26949	
	Orientation			North-west to south-east		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
1800	Layer	Turf and loose grey silty clay. Topsoil	-	250	-	
1801	Layer	Greyish orange sand. Natural strata	-	250+	250	