

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:  
ACOUSTIC BUNDING,  
OLD LINSLADE MANOR  
OLD LINSLADE, BEDFORDSHIRE  
(SOUTH SIDE)**

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



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**July 2004**

**ASC: OLM/02**

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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.3 hectares		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Unmanaged		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Creation of an acoustic bund		
<i>Extent of development:</i>	c.3 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		
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**Internal Quality Check**

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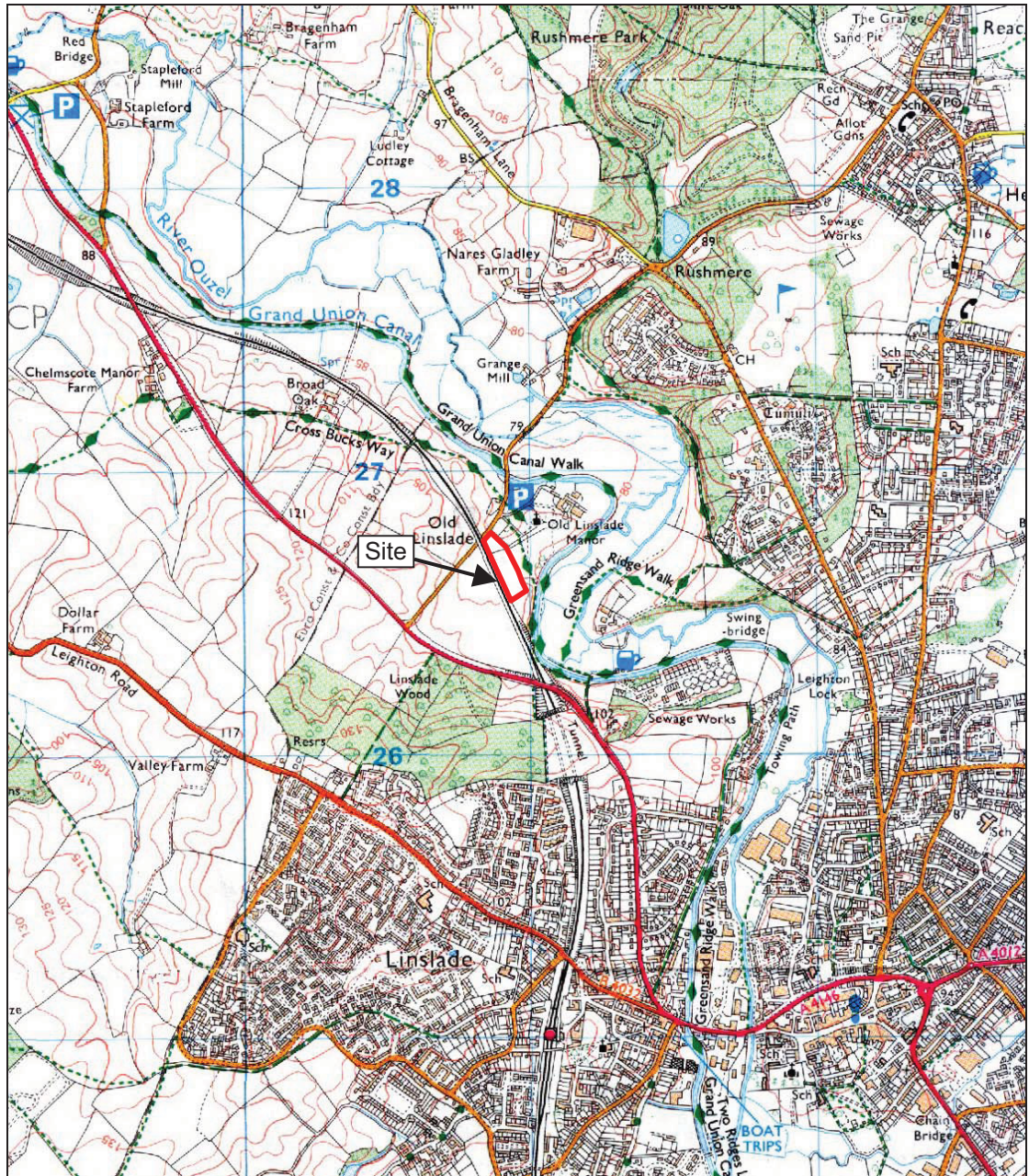


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

In June 2004 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the southern part of a site at Old Linslade Manor, Bedfordshire. A separate report will be issued for the north part of the site. The site is close to a manorial settlement and had the potential to reveal significant archaeological remains. Ten trial trenches were excavated, but archaeological remains were not observed. A number of irregular, shallow earthworks are present, which may have led to the identification of the site as a deserted medieval village. 19<sup>th</sup> century maps record the presence of old sand quarries close to the site and the earthworks observed may be further evidence of sand quarrying.

## 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 *Arcghaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) to undertake the evaluation and prepare a project design (Zeepvat 2004).
- 1.1.3 During the initiation of the fieldwork, a delay was encountered in gaining access to the north part of the site and this matter is awaiting a resolution. Following discussion with Ms Lesley-Ann Mather of the *County Archaeology Office* (CAO) it was agreed that the evaluation could proceed in the southern part of the site. The northern area will be subject to a separate phase of evaluation and a separate report will be issued.

### 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 a west-facing slope at *c.*95m 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.

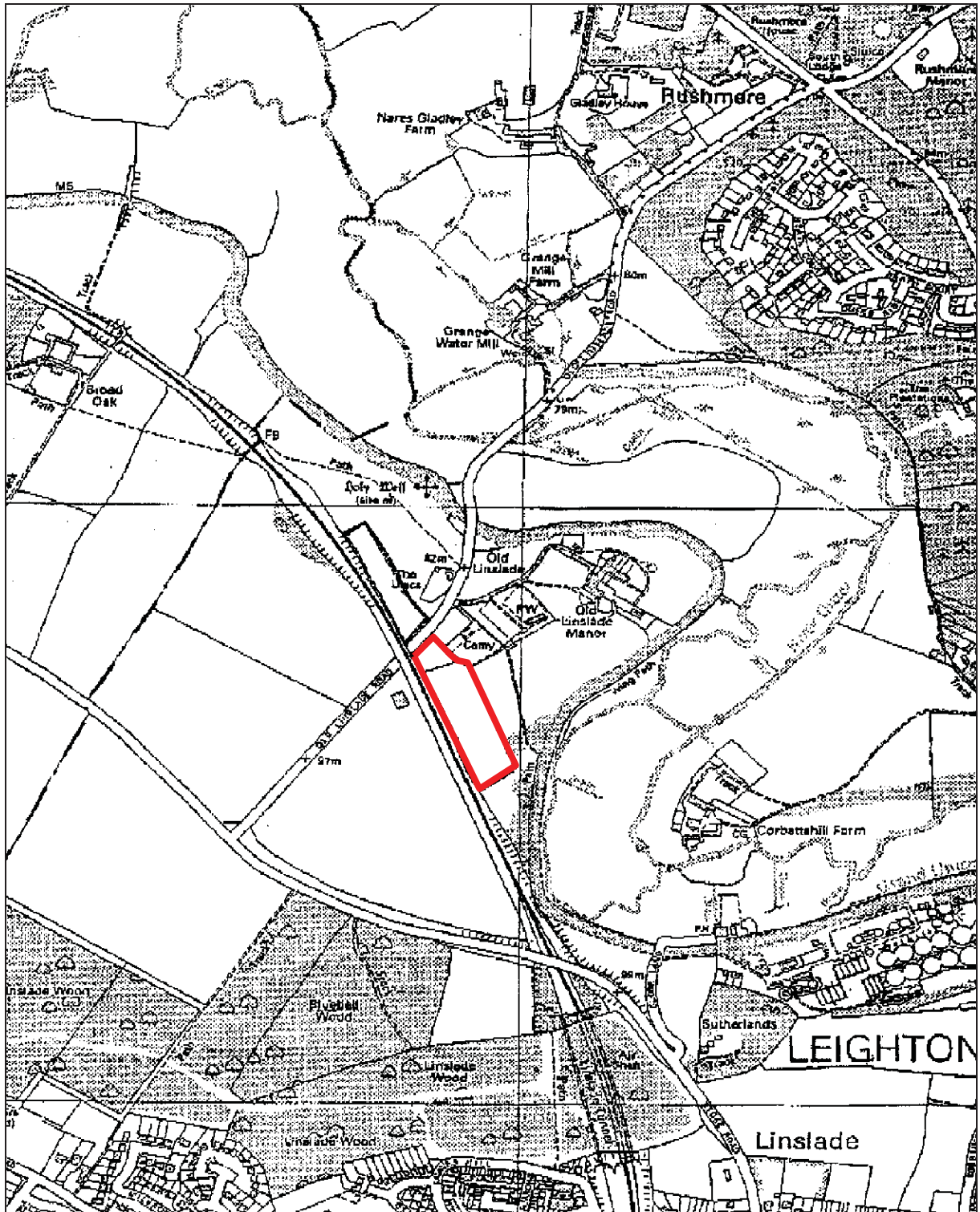


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:10,000)



## 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 Fig 3. 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.

### 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.2 From the 14<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> century (Pevsner 1986, 111), is thought to stand on the same site.
- 3.4 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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*

No archaeological features or finds were revealed during the fieldwork and the trenches revealed a consistent pattern of soil formation. The topsoil comprised loose grey silty clay, with a thick growth of roots. No separate subsoil layer was present and the soil was relatively shallow. The soil in the northern trenches was generally *c.*0.3m deep. It became marginally thinner towards the southern part of the area, and was 0.25m thick in Trenches 6, 9 and 10.

4.3 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.



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



## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The fieldwork successfully addressed the aims of the *brief*. The site was overgrown with long grass and similar vegetation but conditions for the fieldwork were good. A high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the evaluation.
- 5.2 Archaeological deposits were not observed in the trial trenches and the spoil heaps were scanned for artefacts but nothing was found. 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. 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. Lesley-Ann Mather Archaeological Officer of *Bedfordshire County Council* acted as curatorial officer. Access to the Historic Environment Records was provided by Steve Coleman.

The work was supervised for *ASC Ltd* by David Fell BA MA MIFA, assisted by Nigel Wilson HND AIFA and Claire Griffiths BSc The report was prepared by David Fell and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

## 7. Archive

7.1 It is anticipated that the project archive will be combined with the material generated by the evaluation of the northern area. Archives from the current phase of work comprise:


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


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

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**OLM/01**


## Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

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


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


<b>Trench 3</b>					
<b>Max Dimensions</b>					





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


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


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

<b>Trench 6</b>						
	<b>Max Dimensions</b>					
	<b>Length</b>	39.99m	<b>Width</b>	2.2m	<b>Depth</b>	0.55m
	<b>Levels</b>					
	<b>Trench base north</b>		m OD			
	<b>Trench top north</b>		m OD			
	<b>Trench base south</b>		m OD			
	<b>Trench top south</b>		m OD			
	<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>					
	<b>N</b>	90952 26640		<b>S</b>	90966 26604	
	<b>Orientation</b>			North to south		
	<b>Reason for Trench</b>			General evaluation		
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>	<b>Max Width (mm)</b>	<b>Max Thckn (mm)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (mm)</b>	
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	

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

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

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

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