

**Land at Shiplake Village,
Reading Road, Lower Shiplake,
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation



for:
RPS Consulting Services Ltd

CA Project: AN0304
CA Report: AN0304_3

December 2021



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SUMMARY

Project name:	Land at Shiplake Village, Reading Road
Location:	Lower Shiplake, Oxfordshire
NGR:	476900 179248
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	21-24 June 2021
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Service and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Accession Number:	OXCMS: 2021.11
Site Code:	SHIV21

In June 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Shiplake Village, Reading Road. A total of 17 trenches were excavated.

The archaeological evaluation demonstrated that the site was affected by periglacial processes leading to weathering of the chalk bedrock and formation of coombe rock that was later covered by gravel deposits. The gravels could be associated with Middle Thames terraces.

A single possible ditch terminus, containing a posthole, was encountered within the northern part of the site. These features (both undated) were cut into the natural chalk and capped by the topsoil. The environmental evidence (molluscs) suggests that the site was covered by woodland or shrubs. A possible deforestation of the area during prehistory and the subsequent presence of arable fields made the slopes prone to erosion that resulted in the formation of colluvial layers. Neolithic/Bronze Age worked flints were recovered from this colluvium, suggesting prehistoric activity close to or within the site. The presence of post-medieval pottery within colluvial layers implies continuation of the slope erosion into historical periods.

Subsequent archaeological excavation was undertaken around the possible ditch terminus in November 2021, revealing it to be an elongated pit. An interim summary of the results is appended to this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In June 2021, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Shiplake Village, Reading Road, Lower Shiplake, South Oxfordshire centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 476900 179248 (see Figure 1). This evaluation was undertaken on behalf of RPS Consulting Services Ltd.
- 1.2. The evaluation results will inform a planning application for residential development of the site, which will be made to South Oxford District Council (SODC).
- 1.3. The scope of this evaluation was defined by Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire and archaeological advisor to SODC. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2021) and approved by Richard Oram.
- 1.4. The evaluation was also undertaken in line with *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

The site

- 1.5. The proposed development site is approximately 2.48ha in extent. The site currently comprises a single, open, pastoral field bounded by hedgerows to the north-east and south-west. Agricultural fields are located to the east and south-east separated by hedgerows. Reading Road, flanked by a drainage ditch, forms the eastern boundary of the site. The site lies approximately 700m north-west of the River Thames at Shiplake and approximately 900m west of the Thames at Lower Shiplake.
- 1.6. The site is located on ground which gently slopes to the east, with a maximum height of c. 54m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) across the western and southern edges of the site and c.43m (aOD) across the eastern edge of the site.
- 1.7. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation, which formed during the Cretaceous Period

between 89.8 and 72.1 million years ago. No superficial deposits are mapped by BGS within the site boundaries (BGS 2021).

- 1.8. Superficial deposits associated with terraces of River Thames are mapped slightly beyond the site boundaries. Boyn Hill Gravel Member is mapped c. 100m to the south-west, consisting of predominantly fluvial loam, sand and gravel units laid down by River Thames during the Hoxnian Stage to Wolstonian Stage (2.5 million to 130,000 years before present). The Boyn Hill Gravel lies on elevation above 55m (aOD). A superficial deposit of Taplow Gravel Member consisting of silts/sand and gravel and dated to the Middle Pleistocene (770,000 to 126,000 years BP) is mapped c. 230m to the north-west (Gibbard 1994). This gravel terrace lies on lower elevations below 42m (aOD).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The archaeological background is a succinct summary of the information contained within the archaeological Desk Based Assessment provided by CgMs (2016) and reference should be made to this document for full details.
- 2.2. No World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks, Historic Battlefield or Historic Wreck designations lie within the study area search radius. The site does not lie within an Archaeological Priority Area as designated by South Oxfordshire District Council.

Palaeolithic

- 2.3. The study area (1km radius from the site's boundaries) seems likely to have been subject to human activity during the Palaeolithic. A pointed handaxe of Palaeolithic date was found north of the site in 1977 (HER ref. MOX7825, SU7702 7938), most likely at the edge of the superficial Taplow Gravel Formation. Palaeolithic handaxes were found south-west of the site (HER ref. MOX7816, SU764 783) in the superficial Boyn Hill Gravel Member. A further 16 untouched flakes were recovered from a cutting in the Boyn Hill Terrace gravels south of the site (HER ref. MOX7833, SU770 788). The Palaeolithic material found within the study area is all located within the gravel formations in close vicinity to the site and no gravel deposits are mapped by the BGS within the site boundaries.

Mesolithic

- 2.4. No Mesolithic finds have been identified within the study area. Therefore, the archaeological potential for this period can be considered to be low.

Neolithic/Bronze Age

- 2.5. A Neolithic flint borer was discovered east of the study site (HER ref. MOX7814, SU7707 7927), most likely at the edge of the superficial Taplow Gravel Formation. Two axes were found in 1969 north east of the site (HER ref. MOX7837, SU775 798) on the same gravel formation.
- 2.6. Two possible later prehistoric cremation burials and various pits were identified during a watching brief north west of the site (HER ref. MOX7842, SU7645 7943). A rectilinear enclosure of later prehistoric date was identified during the same watching brief south-west of the site (HER ref. MOX7836, SU7671 7888).
- 2.7. The remains described above suggest prehistoric activity, however no certain Bronze Age settlements have been identified in the study area. It seems likely that the area of the site would have seen some activity during the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, due to its proximity to the River Thames and suitability as pastureland.

Iron Age/Roman

- 2.8. No certain Iron Age finds have been identified in the study area.
- 2.9. 'Roman Remains' were found in 1907 east of the study site, although no further details are available (HER ref. MOX7801, SU7741 7886). A Roman coin, probably an As, was found south-west of the site (HER ref. MOX7799, SU7630 7849).
- 2.10. Possible prehistoric rectilinear cropmarks of a pentagonal double enclosure were identified immediately north of Shiplake Lock, south-east of the site (HER ref. MOX7809, SU7780 7890).

Early Medieval to Medieval

- 2.11. A possible Anglo-Saxon cemetery has been identified at Lower Shiplake, near to the north-east of the site (HER ref. MOX12252, SU7723 7950). Two pots with 6th century ornaments seem to be cremation urns and other finds including a sword probably indicate inhumations.
- 2.12. The settlement of Lashbrook is recorded c. 600m east of the site in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as a settlement of thirteen households, whilst the Survey records

the settlement of Bolney c. 1.2 km north of the site as a settlement of sixteen households. Shiplake, situated south of the site, seems to have existed by 1163, the Church of St Peter and St Paul being of 13th century date with 15th century alterations (HER ref. MOX7800, SU7674 7824). The name 'Shiplake' means 'sheep stream'.

2.13. A small iron spearhead was dredged from the Thames east of the site (HER ref. MOX7802, SU7793 7967). It was thought to be a medieval hunting weapon.

2.14. It is likely that the settlement of Lashbrook recorded in the 1086 Domesday Survey is of earlier origins and that the Saxon cemetery found to the north-east of the site is associated with this settlement. The site would have most likely lain within agricultural land, adjacent to the main roadway on the north side of the River Thames between Reading and Marlow which likely existed in the Saxon period. The settlement of Shiplake seems to have its origins in the medieval period, by which point the site would have lain within agricultural land between the settlements of Shiplake and Lashbrook.

Post-medieval and Modern

2.15. The map regression demonstrates that the site has not been previously developed during the post-medieval and modern period and has been used as agricultural land throughout.

2.16. The first residential development occurred adjacent to the site between 1932 and 1962 with a small number of detached dwellings. More widespread residential development occurred during the 1960s and early 1970s, with the establishment of dwellings to the north-east of the site.

2.17. The site remains an open pastoral field dotted with trees, whilst Home Farm has been built to the west in the second half of 20th century.

Previous Archaeological Investigations

2.18. Three watching briefs have taken place to the east of the site but revealed no evidence of archaeological deposits (HER ref. EOX285, SU7775 7909) (HER ref. EOX2370, SU77350 79230) (HER ref. EOX286, SU7732 7898). Two watching briefs have taken place at Shiplake College south of the site which revealed no evidence of archaeological deposits (HER ref. EOX886, SU7680 7836) (HER ref. EOX984, SU7675 7834).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objective of the evaluation was to provide further information on the likely archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation. This information will enable SODC to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets within the site, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise conflict between heritage asset conservation and the development proposals, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2019).
- 3.2. The specific objective of the evaluation was to assess the site for any potential archaeology and sample appropriate deposits and archaeological features in order to place the site within their local and regional context.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of 17 trenches, 30m in length and 1.8m in width, in locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The locations of **Trench 1**, **Trench 11** and **Trench 12** were moved slightly from those agreed in the WSI in order to avoid natural constraints.
- 4.2. The trenches were placed across the site provide a representative sample of the area. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS were scanned for live services by trained CA staff using CAT and genny equipment, in accordance with the CA Safe System of Work for avoiding underground services.
- 4.3. Overburden was stripped from the trenches by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate and the level at which archaeological features were first encountered. The horizon of this upper natural substrate was in some trenches unclear and confused by the presence of periglacial striations and colluvial deposits. Where this resulted in over-cutting into the natural chalk, it is possible that discrete archaeological features may have been missed.
- 4.4. Due to a complex stratigraphy encountered at the site and the presence of colluvial layers, a single sondage was excavated in **Trenches 9, 10, 11, 12, 13** and **15** each to test the depth and nature of the slope deposits (Figures 8-11).

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- 4.5. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.6. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential and samples were taken in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*.
- 4.7. Artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.8. CA will make arrangements with the Oxfordshire Museums Service [accession number OXCMS: 2021.11] for the deposition of the project archive. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).
- 4.9. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A. Details of the artefactual material recovered from the site are given in Section 6 and Appendix B. Details of the environmental samples (palaeoenvironmental evidence) are given in Section 7 and Appendix C.

Geology

- 5.2. The natural geology consisted of a compact white chalk that was covered by a thick deposit of a light yellow/brown to pale yellow chalky silt, with abundant inclusions of chalk rubble and angular flint nodules. The upper part of this deposit was uneven with periglacial striations filled with red/brown silt/clay. The deposit is suggestive of weathered chalk that covers the chalk slope. This layer was recorded at the base of all trenches and sondage pits. The lower interface of the weathered chalk was not reached in the sondage pits due to instability of their sides. Based on observation in **Trench 6**, the average thickness is estimated between 1.2m - 1.5m.

5.3. The weathered chalk was overlain by a layer of sandy gravel, present in several trenches (deposits **202**, **902**, **1004**, **1105**, **1205**, **1303**, **1304**, **1403**, **1505** and **1603**), that consisted mainly of yellow/brown to red/brown medium to coarse sand with abundant to common, mainly angular, flint pebbles and cobbles. Rounded tertiary pebbles and chalk rubble were rare. The coarse clasts were poorly sorted and randomly distributed. The thickness ranged between 0.20m to 0.56m. The gravels were encountered at different levels ranging from 0.6m (bpgl) in the northern part of the site and c. 1.70m (bpgl) in the lowest part of the site (**Trench 12**). A sharp boundary separated these gravel layers from a relatively homogenous and fine colluvium, consisting of mid-brown to grey/brown silt/sand with occasional pebbles, rare cobbles and chalk inclusions. The colluvium was recorded in all trenches approximately at 0.30m (bpgl) but was not uniformly present along each trench length. Its thickness varied in each trench, possibly depending on the location along the general east facing slope within the site. In **Trench 2**, (the north of the site) the colluvium was 0.24m thick (**201**) and in the southern part of the site the total depth of the colluvium was c. 1.40m (**Trench 12**, **1202**, **1203** and **1204**). Very rare granular charcoal, burnt flints, worked flint flakes and fragments of red CBM were recovered from the colluvium. A dark grey/brown topsoil and subsoil developed atop the colluvium.

5.4. **Trenches 1 to 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16 and 17** contained no archaeological features. Part of a modern land drain was exposed crossing **Trench 1** (see Fig. 2). A periglacially affected coombe rock was recorded, covered by colluvial layers (Figures 3 and 4).

Trench 6 (Figure 5 and 6)

5.5. **Trench 6** was located on south facing slope of the site in its northern corner. A ditch terminus, **603** (same as **609**), was recorded in the southern part of **Trench 6** on a south-west/north-east alignment. The recorded terminus was c. 2.25m long, 2.18 wide and 1.23m deep. The sides were steep and symmetrical and the base rounded. The ditch was cut into weathered chalk **602** and covered by topsoil **600**.

5.6. Ditch **603** was filled with a sequence of natural fills. The primary fill, **608**, consisted of an orange/brown loose clay/silt with sub-rounded flint pebbles and rare charcoal flecks. This fill contained mollusc shells and the weathered fragment of an antler. This context was overlain by chalk rubble, **607**, eroded from the north-west side of the ditch and covered by secondary fills, **610** and **605**, that accumulated gradually due to a natural silting. The upper most fill, **606**, consisted of red/brown friable

silt/sand with occasional flint gravel and represents a colluvial backfill (tertiary type of fill). The similarity of fill **606** to colluvium **601** (identified elsewhere within **Trench 6**) led to the misinterpretation of ditch **603** as a periglacial striation during the excavation of the trench (see photograph of trench on Fig. 5). This further led to the overcutting of the trench into the weathered chalk, which appeared less clearly defined during excavation due to leaching of the topsoil and/or colluvium into the upper horizon and presence of striations elsewhere.

- 5.7. A circular post-hole **611** was recorded at the base of ditch terminus **603** cutting **602** and **614**. Sides of the post-hole were symmetrical and vertical. A single fill **612** was recorded. No evidence for a post pipe were present which suggests that the post may be removed. The interface between post-hole fill and ditch fill was diffuse and no clear stratigraphic relation was visible. This feature may alternatively represent an animal burrow.

Trench 8 (Figure 7)

- 5.8. **Trench 8** was located along the south facing slope of the site. Periglacial striations were recorded at the top of weathered chalk **803** at the base of the trench at 0.50m (bpgl). A possible solution hollow filled with colluvium **804** was recorded in the trench. The feature was not bottomed and no finds were recovered.

Trench 10 (Figure 8)

- 5.9. **Trench 10** was located at the base of the south facing slope. A sondage pit was opened at the west end of **Trench 10** to assess the depth of the colluvium and presence of archaeological features. No archaeology or cultural material was observed within the trench.
- 5.10. The lowest layer **1004** encountered in the sondage was a brown/grey friable sand/silt with frequent poorly sorted angular to subangular flint pebbles and cobbles. Some of the clasts were weathered. The layer was not bottomed and the thickness recorded in section was 0.50m. A sharp horizontal boundary separated **1004** from a homogenous dark grey/brown sand/silt colluvium **1003**. Colluvium **1003** was covered by c. 1.00m thick layer of brown silt/sand colluvium **1002** with randomly distributed occasional flint gravel. Subsoil **1001** and topsoil **1000** developed at the top of the sequence.

Trench 11 (Figure 9)

- 5.11. **Trench 11** was located at the base of a south facing slope within the site. A sondage pit was excavated at the northern end of the trench to investigate depth of the colluvial layers. Several possibly Neolithic/Bronze Age worked flints were recorded throughout the colluvial layers but no archaeological features were identified or recorded.
- 5.12. The top of weathered chalk **1106** was recorded at 1.85m (bpgl). A sharp boundary separated **1106** and sandy gravel **1105** indicating erosional contact and change in depositional processes. The sandy gravel consisted of loose yellow/brown and oxidised sand with frequent angular flint gravel inclusions. This was overlain by a homogenous grey/brown silt/sand, **1104**, with common angular to subangular flint pebbles and rare cobbles. Well rounded tertiary pebbles were rare. This layer was 0.40m thick and prehistoric worked finds were recorded throughout. A diffuse boundary separated **1104** from colluvium **1103** which may indicate gradual change in depositional processes. Colluvium **1103** was 0.55m thick and consisted of a homogenous grey/brown friable sand/silt with common angular to subangular flint pebbles and rare cobbles that were more frequent in its upper parts. Several worked flint flakes were recorded within this context. **1103** was covered by colluvium **1102** and was siltier than the lower contexts and 0.32m thick. Subsoil **1101** and topsoil **1100** developed at the top of the sequence.

Trench 12 (Figure 8)

- 5.13. **Trench 12** was recorded at the base of the south facing slope, c. 5m west from **Trench 11**. A sondage pit was excavated at the north-west end of the trench to investigate depth of the colluvial layers and to assess presence of layers with worked flints. The sequence recorded in the sondage pit was same as in **Trench 11** but with a lower quantity of flint flakes. No archaeological features were identified.
- 5.14. Weathered chalk **1206** was recorded at depth 2.00m (bpgl) and was sealed by 0.30m thick layer of gravelly sand **1205**. This in turn was covered by colluvium **1204**, **1203** and **1202**. The total thickness of the colluvial layers was 1.50m.

Trench 13 (Figure 10)

- 5.15. **Trench 13** was situated at the lower part of the site, between south and north facing slopes. A sondage pit was excavated at the north-west end of the trench to

investigate depth of the colluvial layers. No archaeological remains were identified within the trench.

- 5.16. Weathered chalk **1305** was encountered at 2.30m (bpgl) and was covered by grey/brown coarse sand **1304** with small to medium rounded pebbles and rare cobbles. Oxidised clay pockets were also noted. Context **1304** was separated by a sharp contact boundary with context **1303** that consisted of brown coarse sand with common large angular to subangular flint nodules and occasional rounded flint pebbles. The coarse clasts were moderate sorted and horizontally orientated. The size of the flint decreased toward the top. Gravel **1303** was 1.10m thick and covered by 0.42m thick colluvium **1302** with topsoil **1300** and subsoil **1301** developed at the top.

Trench 15 (Figure 11)

- 5.17. **Trench 15** was situated at the lower part of the north facing slope. A sondage pit was excavated at the northern end of the trench to assess the depth of the colluvial layers and the base of the north facing slope. No archaeological remains were identified within the trench.
- 5.18. The lowermost context **1506** represented the weathered chalk that was covered by 0.60m thick sandy gravel **1505**. The gravel was followed by two layers consisted of a loose yellow fine sand, contexts **1504** and **1503**. The contexts were 0.35m and 0.22m thick, respectively, and were recorded only in the northern part of the trench tipping gradually along the slope. Approximately 0.47m thick colluvium **1502** was encountered at depth 0.26m (bpgl). Topsoil **1500** and subsoil **1501** developed were recorded at the top.

6. THE FINDS by Alejandra Gutiérrez and Jacky Sommerville

- 6.1. Only three sherds of pottery and a small assemblage of flints were recovered during the evaluation. The group of 64 flints is indicative of prehistoric activity in the area, although almost all such material was recorded from topsoil or subsoil (colluvium) deposits.

Pottery: late prehistoric

- 6.2. Three unfeatured bodysherds (2g) in a quartz-tempered fabric were recorded from colluvium deposit **102**. In the absence of decoration and indicators of form, this is

tentatively assigned a late prehistoric date, spanning the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age.

Pottery: Post-medieval

- 6.3. A single sherd from a post-medieval (16th-17th centuries) red earthenware vessel, weighing 8g, was found in subsoil **1101**. The sherd is too small to identify its profile, but it is a closed form (such as a jar) and brown glazed on the interior surface

Lithics

- 6.4. A total of 65 worked flints (799g) and four (135g) fragments of burnt, unworked flint was recorded from the hand-excavation and bulk soil sampling of seven deposits. Only one of the lithics may be in a primary context: a thick flake from fill **604** of ditch **603**. However, its heavily edge-damaged and moderately rolled condition is suggestive of redeposition. The remaining flints were recovered from topsoil or colluvial deposits. The worked flints include four tools: a spurred piece from topsoil deposit 900, a double notched flake from colluvium deposit **1203** and two retouched flakes from colluvium deposit **1103**. None of these can be dated more narrowly than to the prehistoric period.
- 6.5. The remaining 61 flints are flakes, 22 of which are broken; one of the broken flakes, from colluvium deposit **1104**, is also burnt. An apparent bladelet (a blade measuring <12mm in width, typically Mesolithic in date), from colluvium deposit **102**, has a dorsal face which is entirely cortical. Therefore, it has not been deliberately produced using blade/bladelet technology and must be classified as a bladelet-like flake, which is not chronologically diagnostic. A notable proportion of the flakes, particularly those from colluvium deposit **1103**, are thick and/or irregular in form which is most suggestive of dating in the Late Neolithic or Bronze Age. However, their condition is variable and they are residual, so they cannot be considered as a homogenous assemblage.

Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

- 6.6. A single fragment in a red fabric with inclusions of polished quartz and rare flint was recovered from colluvium deposit **1203**. The fragment, tentatively identified as of ceramic building material (brick or tile), is very abraded and rounded all over. There are no diagnostic features to confirm its original form or date.

Discussion

- 6.7. The evaluation provided a very small assemblage of finds. In the almost total absence of ceramics, the group of worked flints is broadly indicative of activity in the prehistoric period in the area. Most of the flints were found in the subsoil and colluvium, however one flake was found among the few identified deposits covered by the colluvium.

7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

- 7.1. Three environmental samples (42 litres of soil) were processed from **Trenches 6** and **11** from across an evaluation excavation. This was done to evaluate the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains across this area and with the intention of recovering environmental evidence of industrial or domestic activity on the site and examining how this changed over time. The samples were processed by standard flotation procedures (CA Technical Manual No. 2).
- 7.2. The presence of mollusc shells has been recorded. The following nomenclature is according to Anderson (2005) and habitat preferences according to Kerney (1999) and Davies (2008).

Trench 6

- 7.3. Undated ditch **603** and undated ditch **609** (samples **5** and **6** respectively) contained no charred plant remains and only a small number of charcoal fragments. Large quantities of mollusc shells were noted in both assemblages. The molluscs noted in the assemblages include such species as the terrestrial open country species *Vallonia* sp., the intermediate species *Trochulus hispidus*, *Pomatias elegans*, *Cochlicopa* sp., and *Cepaea* sp., and the shade-loving species *Oxychilus cellarius*, *Aegopinella* sp., *Carychium tridentatum*, *Discus rotundatus*, and *Clausilia/Cochlodina* type.
- 7.4. The environmental material from sample **5** and sample **6** are likely to be indicative of wind-blown/dispersed waste material and do not provide any insight into the possible use of function of ditches **603** and **609**. The molluscan assemblages are indicative of a well-established open landscape with some areas of longer grassland.

Trench 11

- 7.5. Sample 1 of colluvium layer 1103 contained a single charred cereal grain fragment, that is unidentifiable due to its poor preservation, and a small number of charcoal fragments. Column samples 2, 3 & 4 were taken from colluvial layers 1102, 1103 and 1104, respectively (Figure 9), and did not provide any palaeoenvironmental evidence.
- 7.6. This environmental assemblage is likely to be indicative of wind-blown/dispersed waste material.

Animal bone by Sharon Clough

- 7.7. Two fragments of animal bone (25g) were recovered from deposit 608, the fill of ditch 609 which remains undated (See Table 1, Appendix C). The fragments were not well preserved, showing surface erosion indicative of exposure to the elements. However, they were identifiable as pieces of roe deer antler (*Capreolus capreolus*). The larger of the two fragments was an intact lower half that had been naturally shed rather than cut from an animal. There was no indication of either fragment having been worked which, when combined with the poor preservation suggests that the material is residual in nature.

8. DISCUSSION

- 8.1. The site is located within the Middle Thames Valley and encompasses gentle, concave north, south and east facing slopes likely formed under periglacial conditions. The topography is indicative of erosion of the chalk bedrock under glacial conditions and may be associated with palaeochannels of the Middle River Thames (Bell and Walker 2005, 35-37; Wymer 1999, 59).
- 8.2. *In situ* chalk bedrock was not seen in any of the trenches. The lowermost layer was represented by the thick layer of weathered chalk (coombe rock) that suggests breakdown of the chalk by frost-shattering and its subsequent movement downslope as mudflow in periglacial conditions. The upper parts of this deposit were repeatedly affected by freeze-thaw processes that lead to the formation of periglacial striations.
- 8.3. The weathered chalk was covered by sandy gravel/gravelly sand, mainly recorded within the lower parts of the slopes. The gravel may represent a Head deposit formed as a result of downslope flow of waterlogged sediments under cold

periglacial conditions that filled the base of the shallow valley. The gravel clasts would be derived from the Boyn Hill Gravel terraces located on higher elevations around the site. Flint gravel recorded at the site was not affected by frost action and has little signs of weathering, which could be characteristic for translocated flint gravels. It may be suggested that the gravels, recorded within the lowest part of the site, and the well-sorted sands (**Trench 15**) were laid down by the ancient Thames channels and correlate with the Boyn Hill Gravel Member. Onsite assessment of the gravel did not provide any dating evidence.

- 8.4. Several layers of colluvium filled the valley base and covered the slopes as exposed within the site. The slight changes in the texture and structure may suggest several episodes of formation processes. It is possible that prehistoric activities related with deforestation and cultivation triggered the slope processes resulting in mass movement along the slopes (Bell and Walker 2005, 36). Snail assemblages characteristic for woodlands/shrubs and indeterminate landscapes dominate in both samples taken from the ditch fills. *Vallonia* sp., an open grassland snail, was noted within the secondary fill of ditch **603** suggesting presence of short grassland around the ditch.
- 8.5. Most likely the ditch **603** represents a boundary or drainage ditch. The ditch was filled by natural processes. The antler fragments recorded within the ditch were weathered and did not provide any chronological indications or suggestions of human working. The worked flint recorded within the secondary fill is suggestive of Neolithic/Bronze Age date.
- 8.6. Relatively high quantities of Neolithic/Bronze Age flint flakes and sparse charcoal granules were recorded in **Trench 11** and **Trench 12**. The cultural material was redeposited and geoarchaeological assessment of the sediments on site did not provided clear evidences for buried land surfaces. Therefore, it can be suggested that the colluvial layers post-date the prehistoric activity and the material was washed from the activity areas located on the higher elevation. The flint artefacts were mainly recorded within a slightly darker and siltier colluvium (**1103** and **1203**). The darker hue may indicate an organic content, thus the slightly darker colluvium may represent a redeposited former land surface.
- 8.7. The darker colluvium was covered by another layer of colluvium. Environmental assessment of samples taken from **Trench 11** did not provide evidence for changes

in the local vegetation history. It could be assumed that the area was covered by arable fields or pasture and the lack of vegetation and climatic conditions during certain times of the year led to colluvial processes along the slope.

- 8.8. A post-medieval pottery fragment and undated CBM fragment were recovered from the upper parts of this colluvial layer and subsoil in **Trench 11** and **12**, suggesting that the formation of the slope deposit may have taken place also in an historic period. Post-depositional bioturbation (deep worm channels and rooting) may have resulted in translocation of the CBM fragments further down the profile.
- 8.9. The similarity in composition and appearance between the colluvial layers and upper fills of features may reasonably have prevented the identification of archaeological features during the excavation of the trenches, further compounded by the heavily weathered state of the upper chalk horizon and presence of periglacial striations within many trenches. It is therefore possible that discrete archaeological features, such as postholes and small pits, may have gone unnoticed and the archaeological presence within the site may have been greater than is currently understood.

9. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 9.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Agata Kowalska, assisted by Steffan Klemenic and Martha Simms. This report was written by Agata Kowalska. The finds and biological evidence reports were written by Jacky Sommerville, Sharon Clough, Andrew Clarke and Emma Aitken. The report illustrations were prepared by Ryan Wilson. The project archive has been compiled by Richard Paxford and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Tony Brown.

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 Site boundary

0  1km

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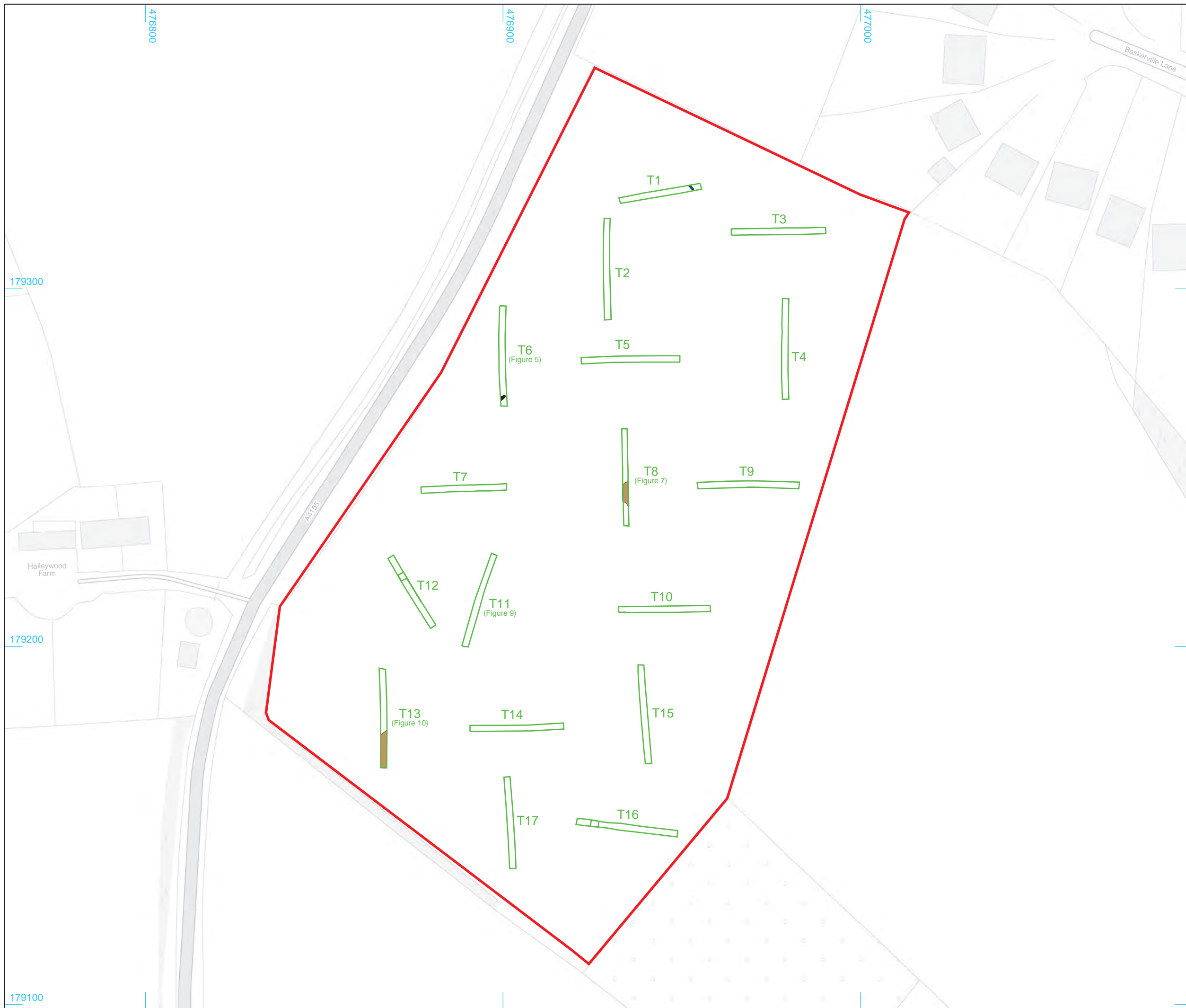
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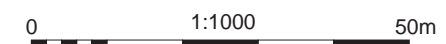
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Site location plan

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CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	12/07/2021	1
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- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature
- Modern feature
- Natural feature



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FIGURE TITLE
 Trench location plan

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<small>APPROVED BY</small> AK	<small>SCALE@A3</small> 1:25,000	



Trench 1, looking south-west (1m scales)



Trench 2, looking north-east (1m scales)



Trench 3, looking east (1m scales)



Trench 4, looking south-west (1m scales)



Trench 5, looking west (1m scales)


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FIGURE TITLE
 Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5: photographs

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Trench 7, looking west (1m scales)



Trench 9, looking east (1m scales)



Trench 14, looking east (1m scales)



Trench 16, looking west (1m scales)



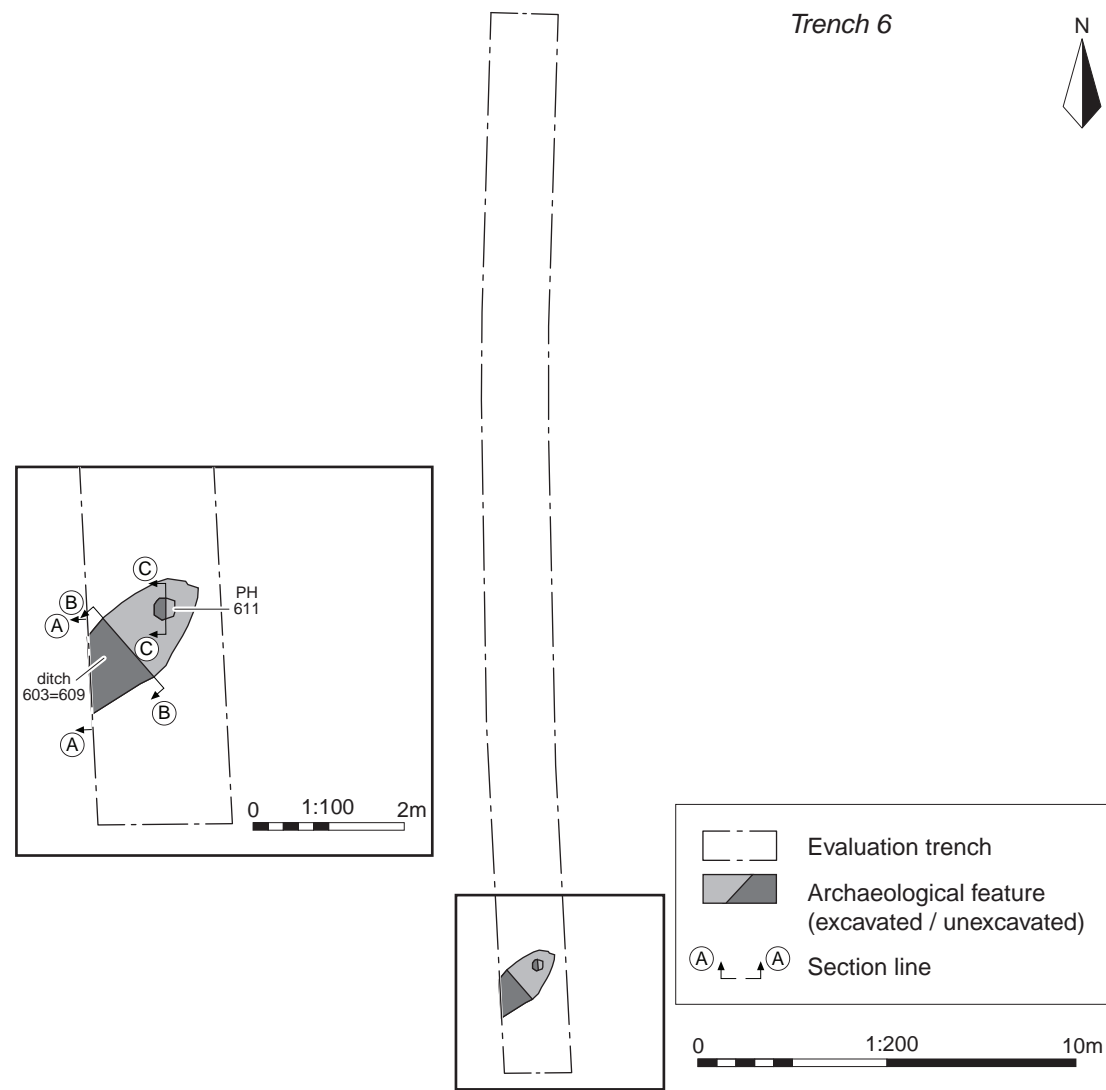
Trench 17, looking north (1m scales)


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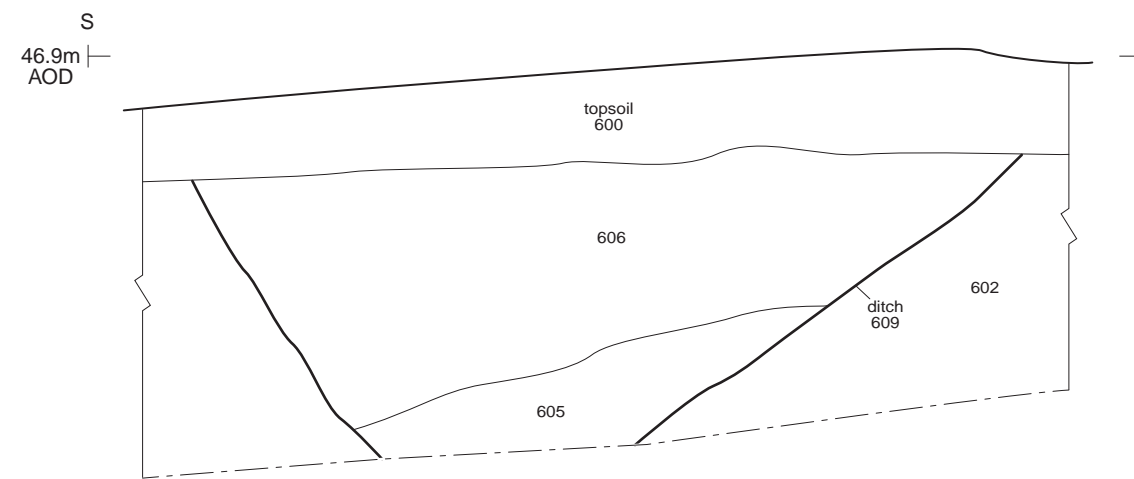
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FIGURE TITLE
Trenches 7, 9, 14, 16, and 17:
photographs

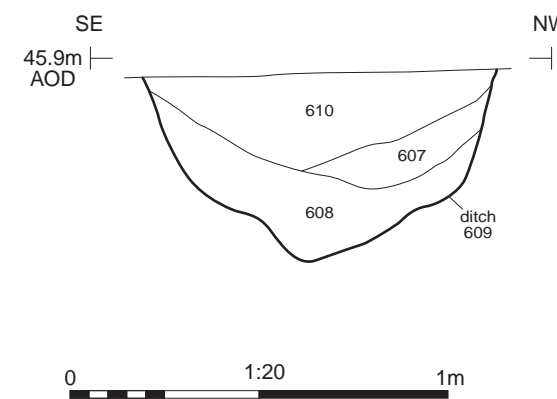
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<small>APPROVED BY</small> AK	<small>SCALE</small> @A3 NA	



Section AA



Section BB



Trench 6, looking north (1m scales)



Ditch 603=609, looking west (2m scale)

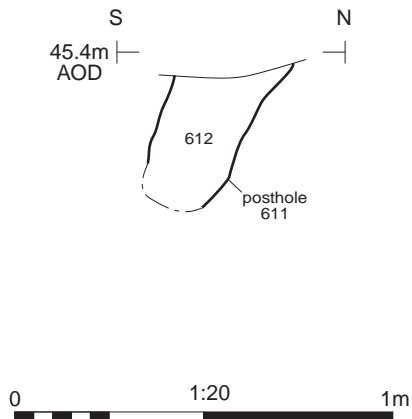
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FIGURE TITLE
 Trench 6: plan, sections and
 photographs

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Section CC



Posthole 611, looking west (0.2m scale)



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Trench 6: section and photograph

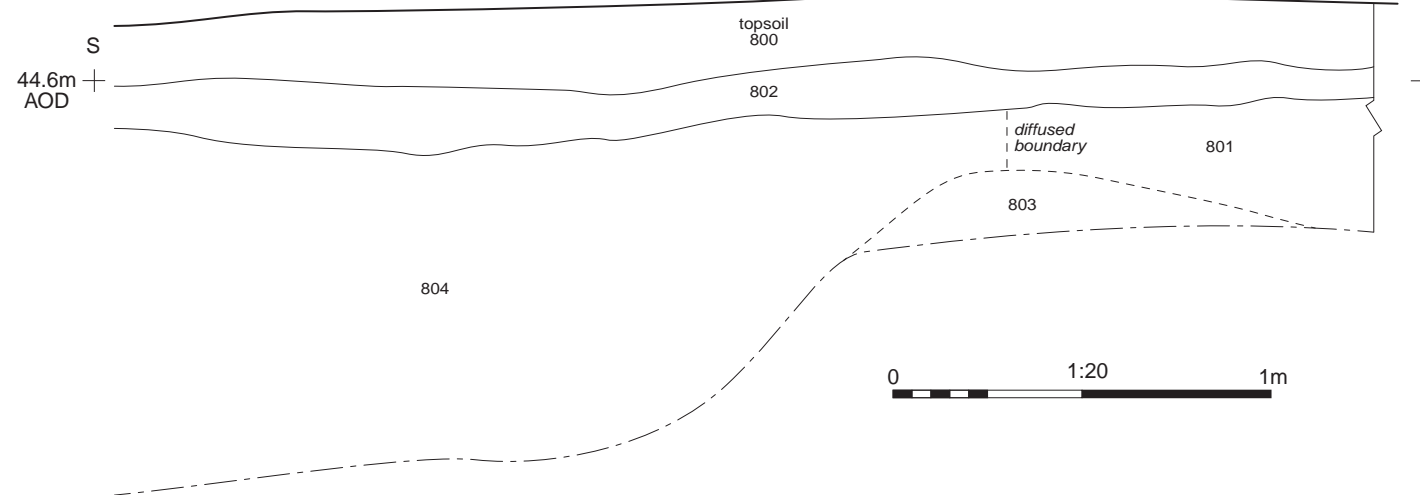
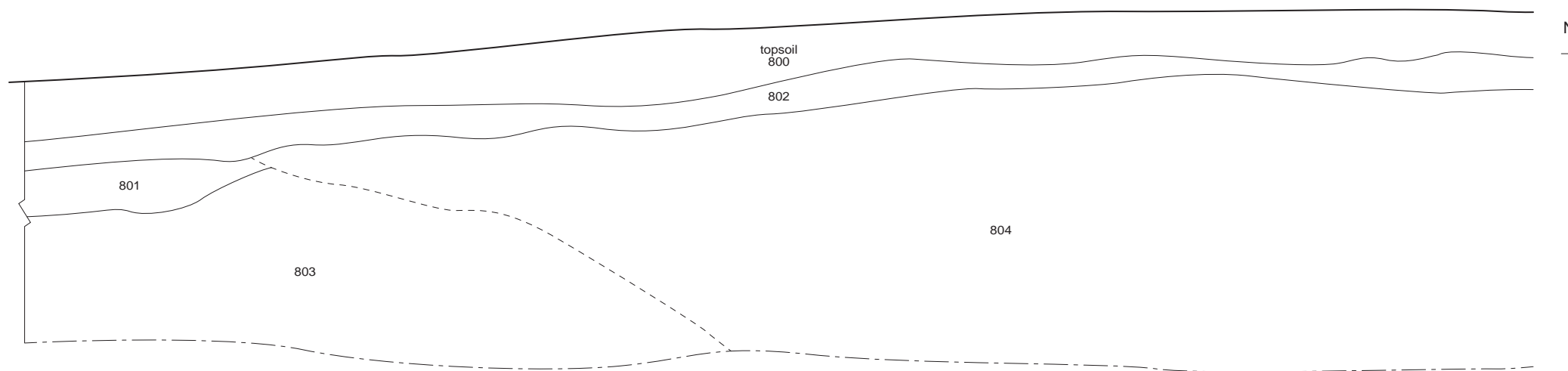
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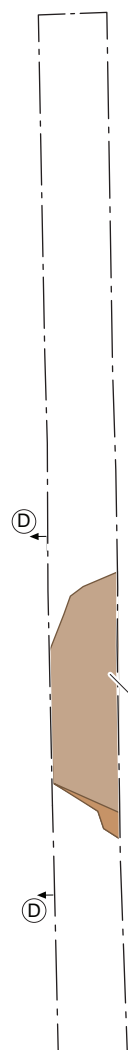
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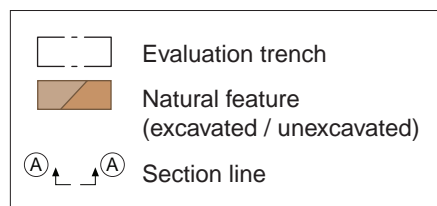
S
44.6m
AOD



Trench 8



natural feature
804



0 1:200 10m



Natural feature 804, looking south-east (1m scale)

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FIGURE TITLE
Trench 8: plan, section and photograph

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Trench 10, looking west (1m scales)



Trench 10 sondage, looking north (1m scale)



Trench 12, looking north-west (1m scales)



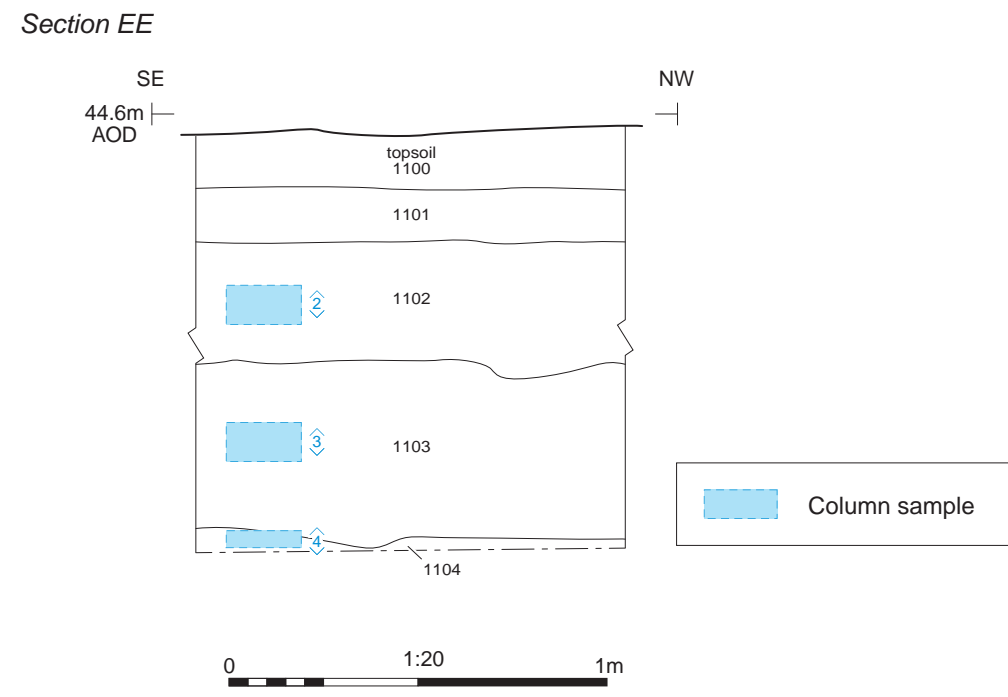
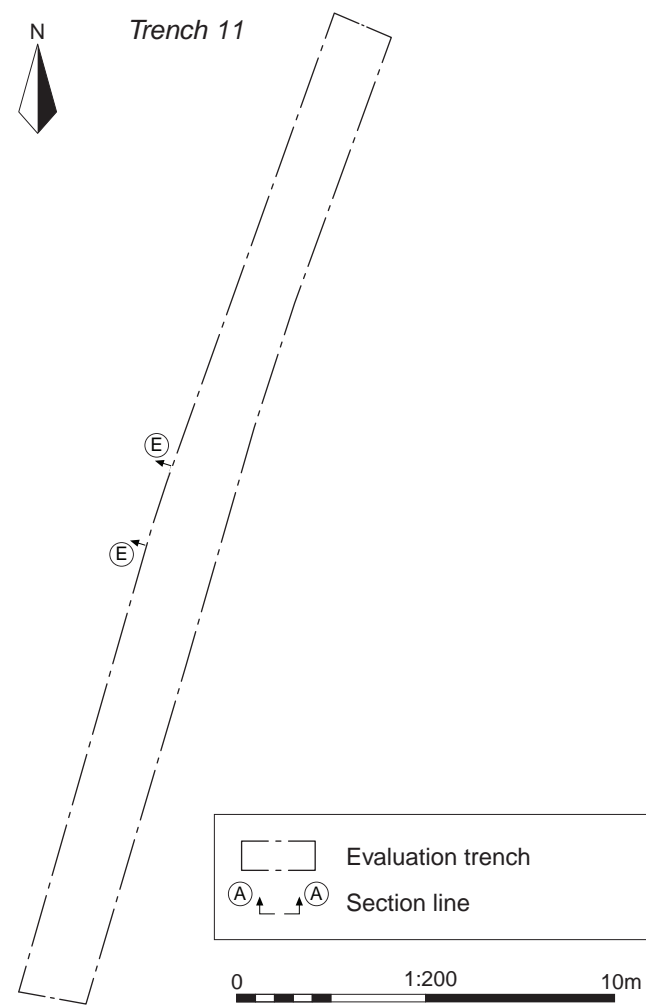
Trench 12 sondage, looking north-east (1m scale)


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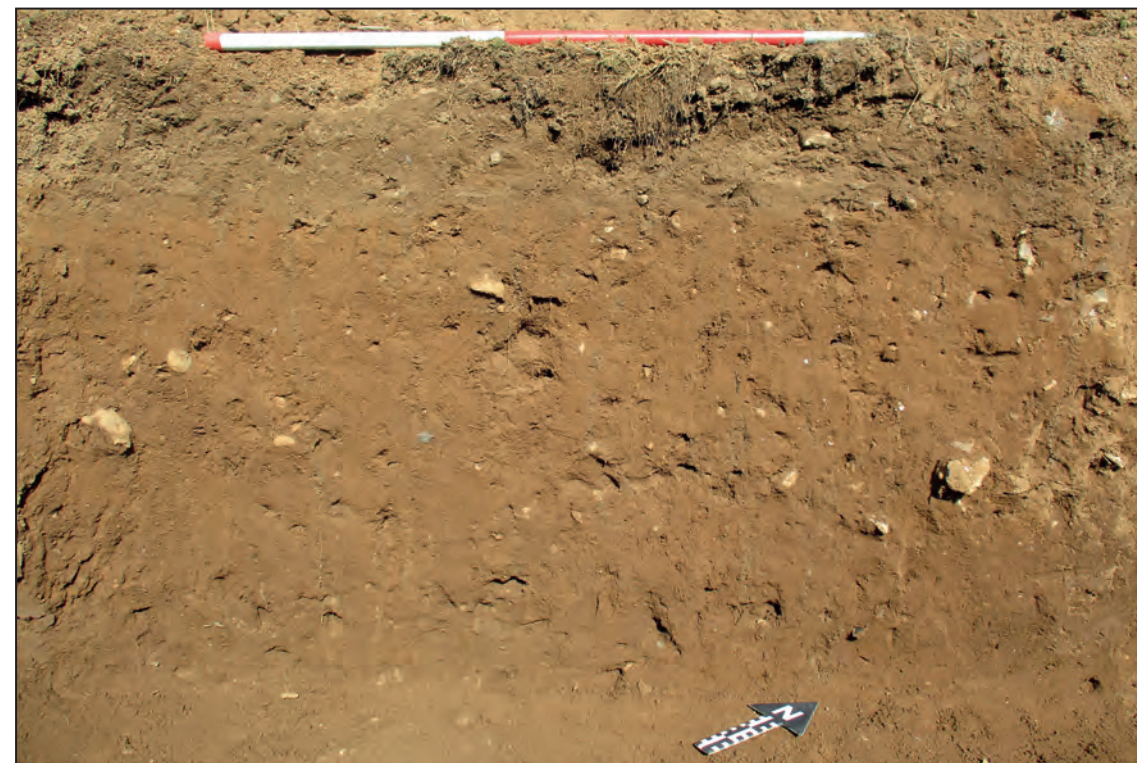
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FIGURE TITLE
Trenches 10 and 12: photographs

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APPROVED BY	AK	SCALE	@A3	



Trench 11, looking north-east (1m scales)



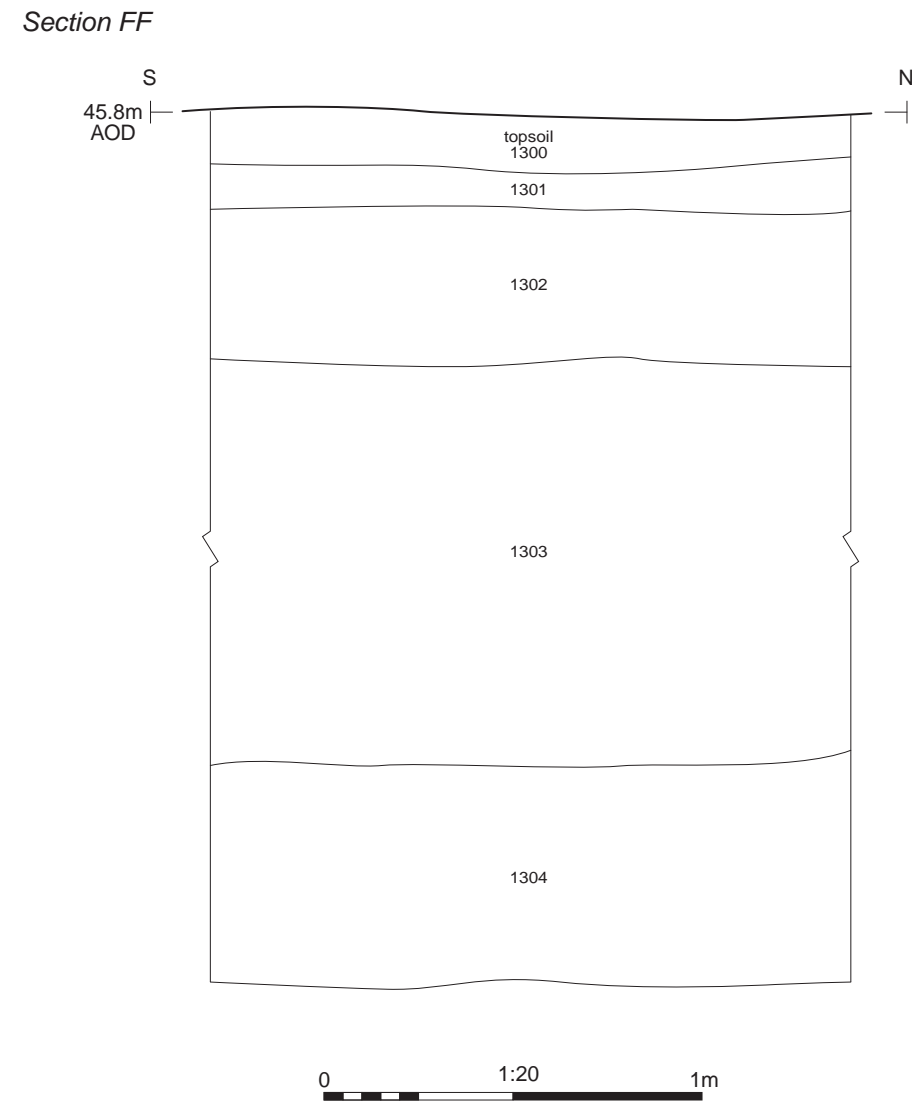
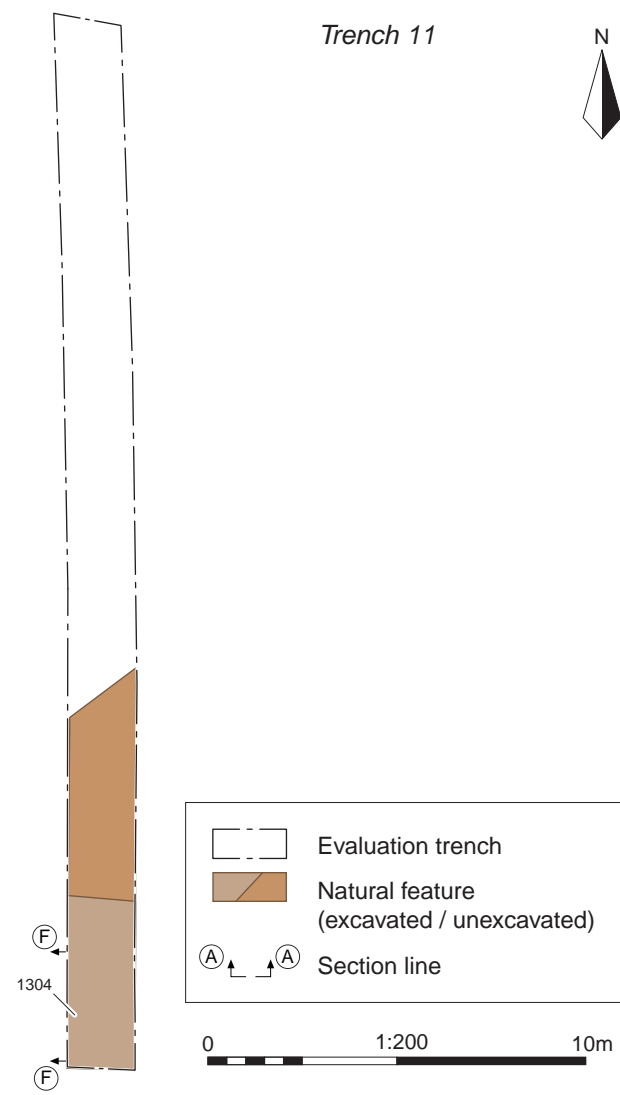
Trench 11 representative section, looking north-west (1m scale)

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FIGURE TITLE
 Trench 11: plan, section and
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Trench 13, looking south (1m scales)



Trench 13 representative section, looking south-west (1m scale)

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FIGURE TITLE
**Trench 13: plan, section and
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Trench 15, looking north-east (1m scales)



Trench 15 representative section, looking north-west (1m scale)



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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 15: photographs

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FIGURE NO.

11

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey/brown sandy silt. Occasional small to large flint gravel and roots.	>30	>1.8	0.3	Modern
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Mid greyish brown sandy silt/clay. Occasional small to large flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.25	
1	102	Layer		Colluvium	Mid greyish brown, firm silty sand. Rare small to mid flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.37	
1	103	Layer		Colluvium	Mid yellowish brown, homogenous and friable silty sand. Rare flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.35	
1	104	Layer		Colluvium	Mid yellowish brown sand with frequent angular flint pebbles and cobbles.	>30	>1.8	0.1	
1	105	Layer		Weathered chalk	Pale yellow silt with common chalk inclusions and common angular flints.	>30	>1.8	>1.35	
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt. Occasional small to large flint gravel and roots.	>30	>1.8	0.4	Modern
2	201	Layer		Colluvium	Mid orange brown friable clayey sand with common angular flints.	>30	>1.8	0.24	
2	202	Layer		Gravel	Brownish orange sandy gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.2	
2	202	Layer		Weathered chalk	Light brownish yellowish clayey sand with common chalk inclusions and flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	>0.64	
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt. Occasional small to large flint gravel and roots.	>30	>1.8	0.2	Modern
3	301	Layer		Colluvium	Mid orange brown friable clayey sand with common angular flints.	>30	>1.8	0.13	
3	302	Layer		Weathered chalk	Light brownish yellowish clayey sand with common chalk inclusions and flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	>0.34	
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt. Occasional roots.	>30	>1.8	0.32	Modern
4	401	Layer		Colluvium	Mid orange brown friable clayey sand with common angular flints.	>30	>1.8	0.24	
4	402	Layer		Weathered chalk	Light yellowish brown clayey sand with common chalk inclusions and flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	>0.56	
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy silt. Occasional small to large flint gravel and roots.	>30	>1.8	0.2	Modern
5	501	Layer		Colluvium	Mid grey brown firm silty sand with common small to medium flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.8	
5	502	Layer		Weathered chalk	Yellowish white silt with chalk inclusions and angular flints.	>30	>1.8	>0.1	
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown sandy silt/clay. Occasional small to large flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.28	
6	601	Layer		Colluvium	Mid orange brown friable clayey sand with common angular flints.	>30	>1.8	0.4	
6	602	Layer		Weathered chalk	Light brownish yellowish clayey sand with common chalk inclusions and flint	>30	>1.8	>0.68	

					gravel.				
6	603	Cut		Ditch, same as 609	U-shape ditch with rounded base and symmetrical steep sides.NE/SW orientation.	>2.25	2.18	1.23	
6	604	Fill	603	Secondary fill, same as fill 610	Mid greyish brown loose sandy silt/ Rare roots fragments and flint and chalk inclusions.	>2.25	0.93	0.26	
6	605	Fill	603	Secondary fill	Very dark greyish brown friable sandy silt with very rare charcoal fragments.	>2.25	1.42	0.28	
6	606	Fill	603	Tertiary fill	Reddish/orange brown friable silty sand with occasional flint gravel.	>2.25	2.18	0.66	
6	607	Fill	609	Secondary fill, same as fill 613	Light yellowish white compact clay/silt with frequent chalk inclusions.	>2.25	0.49	0.12	
6	608	Fill	609	Secondary fill	Mid orange brown loose clayey silt with subrounded flint pebbles and rare charcoal flecks.	>2.25	0.87	0.24	
6	609	Cut		Ditch, same as 603	U-shape ditch with rounded base and symmetrical steep sides.NE/SW orientation.	>2.25	2.18	1.23	
6	610	Fill	609	Secondary fill, same as 604	Mid greyish brown loose sandy silt/ Rare roots fragments and flint and chalk inclusions.	>2.25	0.93	0.26	
6	611	Cut		Post hole	Sub circular, sharp break of slope, vertical sides. Base not excavated.	0.31	0.33	>0.36	
6	612	Fill	611	Fill of post-hole	Mid orange brown sandy clay with rare angular flints and chalk.	0.31	0.33	>0.36	
6	613	Fill	603	Secondary fill, same as fill 607	Light yellowish white compact clay/silt with frequent chalk inclusions.	>2.25	0.49	0.12	
6	614	Layer		Natural	White solid chalk.	>30	>1.8	>1.05	
7	700	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy silt. Occasional small to large flint gravel and roots.	>30	>1.8	0.12	Modern
7	701	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown sandy silt, occasional rooting and small to mid flint pebbles.	>30	>1.8	0.13	
7	702	Layer		Colluvium	Mid orange brown firm silty sand with rare small to mid flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.85	
7	703	Layer		Weathered chalk	Yellowish white soft silt with chalk inclusions and angular flints.	>30	>1.8	>0.24	
8	800	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy silt. Occasional small to large flint gravel and roots.	>30	>1.8	0.2	Modern
8	801	Layer		Colluvium	Mid grey brown firm silty sand with common small to medium flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	>1	
8	802	Layer		Subsoil	Light greyish brown firm silty sand with rare small flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.1	
8	803	Layer		Weathered chalk	Yellowish white soft silt with chalk inclusions and angular flints.	>30	>1.8	>1	
8	804	Deposit		Fill of possible sinkhole	Mid greyish brown firm sandy silt with occasional angular flints and very rare rounded flints. Occasional chalk inclusions.	>1.8	8	>0.9	
9	900	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy silt. Occasional small to large flint gravel and roots.	>30	>1.8	0.3	Modern

9	901	Layer		Colluvium	Mid grey brown firm silty sand with common small to medium flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.9	
9	902	Layer		Gravel	Mid yellowish brown sandy gravel. Common angular to subangular flint pebbles and cobbles.	>30	>1.8	0.4	
9	903	Layer		Weathered chalk	Yellowish white soft silt with chalk inclusions and angular flints.	>30	>1.8	0.1	
10	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt with roots and occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.15	Modern
10	1001	Layer		Subsoil	Mid greyish brown friable silty sand with occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.15	
10	1002	Layer		Colluvium	Dark brown friable silty sand with occasional angular flint pebbles and rare cobbles. Randomly distributed.	>30	>1.8	0.7	
10	1003	Layer		Colluvium	Dark greyish brown friable sandy silt with occasional angular to subangular flint pebbles and rare cobbles.	>30	>1.8	0.3	
10	1004	Layer		Gravel	Brownish grey friable sandy silt with frequent poorly sorted angular to subangular flint pebbles and cobbles.	>30	>1.8	>0.5	
11	1100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt with roots and occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.14	Modern
11	1101	Layer		Subsoil	Mid greyish brown friable silty sand with occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.12	
11	1102	Layer		Colluvium	Mid brown friable sandy silt with rare angular to subangular flint pebbles and rare cobbles. Rare rounded small to mid flint pebbles. Very rare chalk inclusions.	>30	>1.8	0.32	
11	1103	Layer		Colluvium	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt with common angular to subangular flint pebbles and rare cobbles. Rare rounded flint pebbles.	>30	>1.8	0.55	
11	1104	Layer		Colluvium	Mid greyish brown friable silty sand with common angular to subangular flint pebbles and rare cobbles. Rare rounded flint pebbles.	>30	>1.8	0.4	
11	1105	Layer		Sandy Gravel	Yellowish brown loose and oxidised sandy gravel (mainly angular).	>30	>1.8	0.3	
11	1106	Layer		Weathered chalk	Yellowish white soft silt with chalk inclusions and angular flints.	>30	>1.8	>1.85	
12	1200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt with roots and occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.1	Modern
12	1201	Layer		Subsoil	Mid greyish brown friable silty sand with occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.2	
12	1202	Layer		Colluvium	Mid brown friable sandy silt with rare angular to subangular flint pebbles and rare cobbles. Rare rounded small to mid flint pebbles. Very rare chalk inclusions.	>30	>1.8	0.5	
12	1203	Layer		Colluvium	Dark greyish brown firm sandy silt. Rare flint inclusions.	>30	>1.8	0.5	
12	1204	Layer		Colluvium	Mid greyish brown friable silty sand with common angular to	>30	>1.8	0.6	

					subangular flint pebbles and rare cobbles. Rare rounded flint pebbles.				
12	1205	Layer		Gravelly sand	Dark brown mid to coarse sand with angular flint pebbles and cobbles.	>30	>1.8	0.3	
12	1206	Layer		Weathered chalk	Yellowish white soft silt with chalk inclusions and angular flints.	>30	>1.8	>0.20	
13	1300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt with roots and occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.12	Modern
13	1301	Layer		Subsoil	Mid greyish brown friable silty sand with occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.1	
13	1302	Layer		Colluvium	Mid yellowish brown friable silty sand with occasional angular flint pebbles and cobbles.	>30	>1.8	0.42	
13	1303	Layer		Gravel	Brown mid to coarse sand with common large angular to subangular flint nodules. Occasional rounded flint pebbles. Moderate sorting and horizontal orientation.	>30	>1.8	1.1	
13	1304	Layer		Sandy Gravel	Greyish brown coarse sand with small to mid rounded to surrounded gravel. Loose. Rare cobbles. Lenses of red clay.	>30	>1.8	0.56	
13	1305	Layer		Weathered chalk	Yellowish white soft silt with chalk inclusions and angular flints.	>30	>1.8	>2.30	
14	1400	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt with roots and occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.12	Modern
14	1401	Layer		Subsoil	Mid greyish brown friable silty sand with occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.12	
14	1402	Layer		Colluvium	Mid brown friable sandy silt with rare angular to subangular/rounded flint pebbles and rare cobbles.	>30	>1.8	0.49	
14	1403	Layer		Gravel	Reddish brown silty sand with abundant angular to rounded flint gravel, rare cobbles. Poorly sorted.	>30	>1.8	0.37	
14	1404	Layer		Weathered chalk	Yellowish white soft silt with chalk inclusions and angular flints.	>30	>1.8	>1.10	
15	1500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt with roots and occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.16	Modern
15	1501	Layer		Subsoil	Mid greyish brown friable silty sand with occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.1	
15	1502	Layer		Colluvium	Dark brown friable sandy silt with occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.47	
15	1503	Layer		Sand	Yellowish brown silty fine sand. Loose.	>15	>1.8	0.22	
15	1504	Layer		Sand	Yellow fine sand. Friable.	>15	>1.8	0.35	
15	1505	Layer		Gravel	Reddish brown silty sand with abundant angular to rounded flint gravel, rare cobbles. Poorly sorted.	>30	>1.8	>0.5	
15	1506	Layer		Weathered chalk	Yellowish white soft silt with chalk inclusions and angular flints.	>30	>1.8	>0.5	
16	1600	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt with roots and occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.12	Modern

16	1601	Layer		Subsoil	Mid greyish brown friable silty sand with occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.14	
16	1602	Layer		Colluvium	Dark brown friable silty sand with occasional flint pebbles, poorly sorted.	>30	>1.8	0.66	
16	1603	Layer		Gravel	Yellowish brown coarse sand with poorly sorted angular to surrounded flint gravel. Loose.	>30	>1.8	0.46	
16	1604	Layer		Weathered chalk	Yellowish white soft silt with chalk inclusions and angular flints.	>30	>1.8	>0.10	
17	1700	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy silt with roots and occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.14	
17	1701	Layer		Subsoil	Mid greyish brown friable silty sand with occasional flint gravel.	>30	>1.8	0.12	
17	1702	Layer		Colluvium	Dark brown friable silty sand with occasional flint pebbles, poorly sorted.	>30	>1.8	0.66	
17	1702	Layer		Weathered chalk	Yellowish white soft silt with chalk inclusions and angular flints.	>30	>1.8	>0.10	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Table 1: Finds concordance

Context	Category	Description	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Spot-date
102	Flint	Flakes	3	9	Late prehistoric
	Prehist. pottery	Black-firing, quartz-tempered	3	2	
604	Flint	Flake	1	48	Prehistoric
608	animal bone	Deer antler	2	26	-
801	Flint	Flake	2	27	Prehistoric
	Burnt flint		1	28	
900	Flint	Spurred piece	1	25	Prehistoric
	Burnt flint		1	26	
1101	Pmed. pottery	Glazed red earthenware	1	8	C16-C17
1103	Flint	Flakes, retouched flakes	49	612	Prehistoric
	Burnt flint		2	81	
1104	Flint	Flake	3	3	Prehistoric
1203	Flint	Flakes, notched flake	6	75	-
	CBM?	red-firing sandy fabric, very abraded	1	4	

APPENDIX C: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Table 1: Assessment of the palaeoenvironmental remains

Feature	Context	Sample	Vol (L)	Flot size (ml)	Roots %	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Charcoal > 4/2mm	Other
Trench 6											
Ditch 603	605	5	19	20	95	-	-	-	-	*/**	moll-t****
Ditch 609	608	6	11	30	70	-	-	-	-	*/*	moll-t*****
Trench 11											
Colluvium	1103	1	12	30	90	*	-	Indet. grain	-	*/**	-
Colluvium	1102	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Colluvium	1103	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Colluvium	1104	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Key: * = 1–4 items; ** = 4–20 items; *** = 21–49 items; **** = 50–99 items; ***** = >100

Items: moll-t = terrestrial mollusc Indet.= Indeterminate

Table 2: Assessment of the mollusc

	snail ID	sample 5	sample 6
open country	<i>Vallonia</i> sp.	*	-
intermediate	<i>Trochulus hispidus</i>	*	*
	<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp.	*	*
	<i>Pomatias elegans</i>	*	***
	<i>Cepaea</i> sp.	-	*
shade-loving	<i>Oxyhailus cellarius</i>	***	*
	<i>Aegopinella</i> sp.	**	*
	<i>Clausilia/Cochlodina</i>	*	-
	<i>Carychium tridenatum</i>	*	**
	<i>Discus rotundatus</i>	***	**

Key: * = 1-4, ** = 5-19, *** = 20-49, **** = 50-99, ***** = >100)

Table 3: Identified animal species by fragment count (NISP) and weight and context.

Cut	Fill	CAP	Total	Weight (g)
609	608		2	25
Total			2	2
Weight			25	25

CAP = roe deer

APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Land at Shiplake Village, Reading Road, Lower Shiplake, Oxfordshire,	
Short description	<p>In June 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Shiplake Village, Reading Road. A total of 17 trenches were excavated.</p> <p>The archaeological evaluation demonstrated that the site was affected by periglacial processes leading to weathering of the chalk bedrock and formation of coombe rock that was later covered by gravel deposits. The gravels could be associated with Middle Thames terraces.</p> <p>A single ditch terminus, containing a posthole, was encountered within the northern part of the site. These features (both undated) were cut into the natural chalk and capped by the topsoil. The environmental evidence (molluscs) suggests that the site was covered by woodland or shrubs. A possible deforestation of the area during prehistory and the subsequent presence of arable fields made the slopes prone to erosion that resulted in the formation of colluvial layers. Neolithic/Bronze Age worked flints were recovered from this colluvium, suggesting prehistoric activity close to or within the site. The presence of post-medieval pottery within colluvial layers implies continuation of the slope erosion into historical periods.</p>	
Project dates	21-24.07.2021	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Unknown	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Reading Road, Lower Shiplake, Oxfordshire,	
Study area (m ² /ha)	2.48ha	
Site co-ordinates	476900 179248	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Oxfordshire County Council	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Tony Brown	
Project Supervisor	Agata Kowalska	
MONUMENT TYPE	Ditch terminus, post-hole	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	Flint flakes, pottery fragments, CBM fragments, deer antler	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	Oxfordshire Museum Service OXCMS: 2021.11	Ceramics, animal bone, flints
Paper	Oxfordshire Museum Service OXCMS: 2021.11	Context and trench sheets, sections
Digital	Oxfordshire Museum Service OXCMS: 2021.11	Database, digital photos and survey plans
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2009 <i>Land at Shiplake Village, Reading Road, Lower Shiplake, Oxfordshire, Archaeological Evaluation</i> CA typescript report AN0304_2		

APPENDIX E: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION INTERIM SUMMARY

**AN0459 Land at Lower Shiplake
Reading Road
Oxfordshire**

INTERIM EXCAVATION SUMMARY

In November 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological excavation of land at Lower Shiplake, Reading Road, Oxfordshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 476900 179248. A 25m-by-25m area was excavated within the site, centred on the archaeological remains encountered during the previous evaluation (see Fig. 1).

This interim summary presents the preliminary fieldwork results, based upon an initial consideration of the site stratigraphy, recorded features and interim dating of artefacts. The information and interpretations should be considered as provisional at this time.

The site stratigraphy

The natural substrate of the excavation area appeared as weathered chalk, crossed by numerous striations and channels filled with light yellowish-brown clayey/sandy silt. The frequency of these features increased within the lower, southern part of the site. A large, circular feature, filled with a similar material, was identified within the western part of the site and was interpreted as a solution hollow.

Between the weathered chalk and topsoil lay a thick layer of colluvial material, comprising a mid-reddish-brown clayey/sandy silt with flint and chalk inclusions. No features (archaeological or otherwise) nor geological differences were identified at the upper interface of the colluvium, save for a small outcrop of weathered chalk at the highest point of the excavated area, to the north-east. The colluvium was therefore largely removed except for the eastern corner of the excavation area, to investigate the potential for archaeological remains beneath this unit.

The archaeology

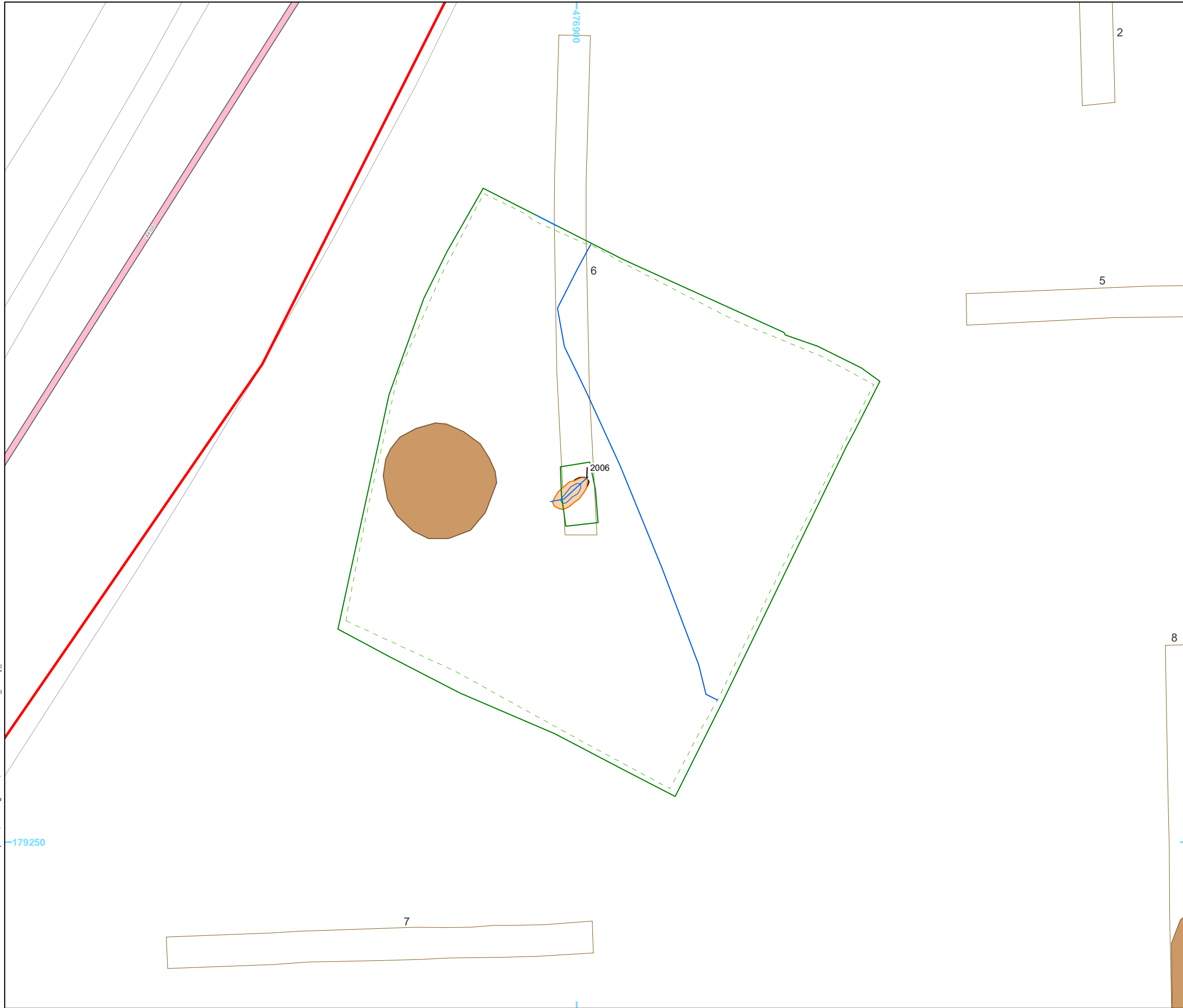
The previous evaluation provisionally recorded a ditch terminus at the southern end of **Trench 6**, within the northern part of the evaluated site. The excavation was centred on this feature and exposed it as a pit rather than a terminus. Pit **2006** (Fig. 1) appeared as an elongated oval in plan, with steep sides, a rounded base and measuring 2.35m in length, 0.98m wide and greater than 0.99m deep. The feature extended 0.6m beyond the evaluation trench to the west. It contained five fills; three of which were sampled but were not assessed

at the time of writing. Fill **2007** contained a single, retouched, flint flake, suggesting a possible prehistoric date. This feature, although believed to cut through the colluvium, was not able to be distinguished upon removal of the topsoil, given the similarity between the colluvial and upper fill compositions and the frequency of striations filled with similar material. The upper part of this feature was therefore removed along with the colluvium.

No further archaeological features were identified during the excavation. A further two struck, flint flakes and a single sherd of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the colluvium.



Figure 1 Pit 2006, 1m scale, view to north west



- Legend**
- Site Boundary
 - Section
 - intervention/break of slope
 - LOE Top
 - LOE Bot
 - Excavated base
 - Excavated intervention
 - Cut feature
 - Natural_Geology
 - previous trench/loe
 - previous feature
 - Natural



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PROJECT TITLE
Land at Lower Shiplake
Reading Road, Oxfordshire - Excavation

FIGURE TITLE
Archaeological excavation plan

DRAWN BY KW	PROJECT NO AN0459	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY TB	DATE 13/12/2021	1
APPROVED BY TB	SCALE@A3 1:200	

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