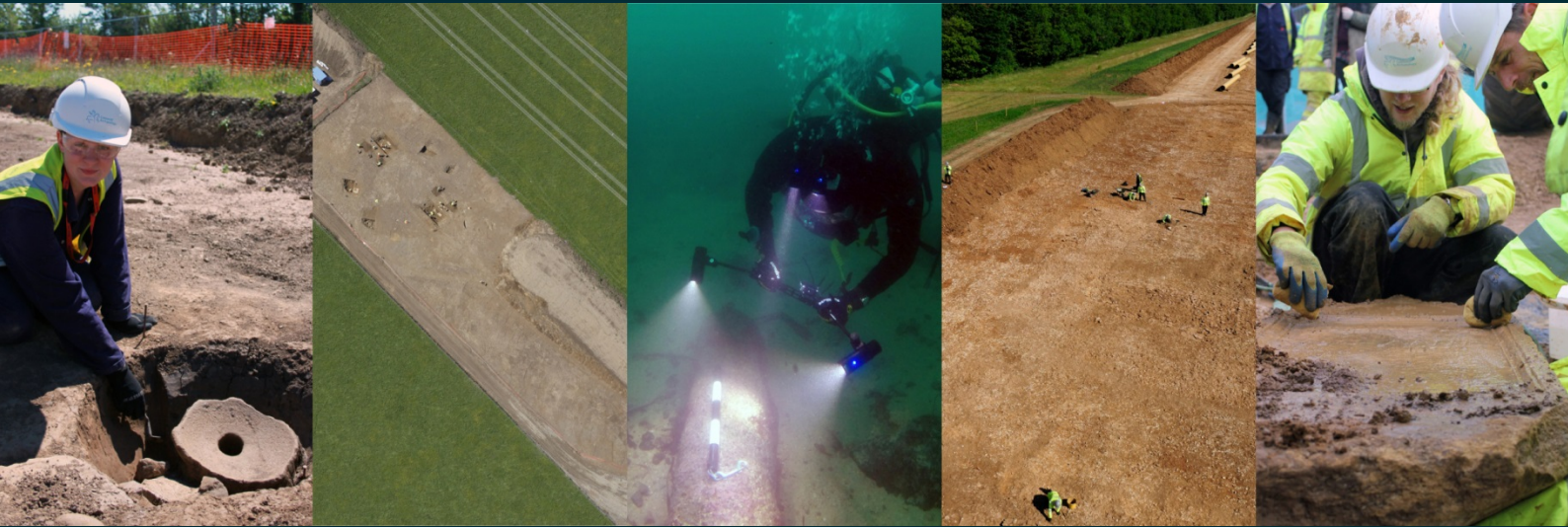


# Land at Abingdon Road Steventon Oxfordshire

*Archaeological Evaluation*



for  
CgMs

CA Project: 770249  
CA Report: 15634

Accession Number: OXCMS: 2015.153

August 2015



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## Archaeological Evaluation

Accession Number: OXCMS: 2015.153

CA Project: 770249

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Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	12 August 2015	Tom Weavill	DDR	Internal review		DDR
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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Land at Abingdon Road
<b>Location:</b>	Steventon, Oxfordshire
<b>NGR:</b>	SU 4735 9250
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	4-6 August 2015
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	P14/V2704/FUL
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service
<b>Accession Number:</b>	OXCMS: 2015.153
<b>Site Code:</b>	ABR 15

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2015 on land at Abingdon Road, Steventon, Oxfordshire. Ten trenches were excavated.

Ditches relating to probable prehistoric and Roman field systems were identified on approximate north-west/south-east and north-east/south-west alignments which were not detected by a preceding geophysical survey. A ditch, which was cut through the subsoil and probably represents a modern or post medieval field boundary, was also identified. This ditch does not appear on any of the available historic mapping of the site. Several furrows and land drains were also identified, some of which relate to anomalies identified on the preceding geophysical survey.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In August 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for CgMs on land at Abingdon Road, Steventon, Oxfordshire (centred on NGR: SU 4735 9250; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany and inform a planning application (P14/V2704/FUL) for the construction of 57 new dwellings and a bakery with associated public spaces at the site.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2015) and approved by Hugh Coddington, Archaeology Team Leader, Oxfordshire County Council and archaeological advisor to Vale of the White Horse District Council (VWHDC). The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006). It was monitored by Hugh Coddington, including a site visit on 5 August 2015.

### **The site**

- 1.3 The site is 2.7ha in size and consists of a single meadow field located on the northern edge of Steventon, immediately north of “By the Meadows Farm” and east of the B4017 Abingdon Road.
- 1.4 The site is largely flat and lies at a height of approximately 61m aOD. The geology of the area is recorded as a Gault formation mudstone overlain by Summertown-Radley terrace deposits of sand and gravel (BGS 2015).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An Archaeological and Heritage Assessment (CgMs 2014) and geophysical survey (MoLA 2014) have been undertaken of the site. A summary of these results is presented below.
- 2.2 The site lies c. 300m outside the historic core of Steventon, which first developed as a linear settlement aligned south-west to north-east along ‘the Causeway’. The 1761

Rocque map and the 1811 Ordnance Survey map both record the site as undeveloped agricultural land lying in an open field.

- 2.3 There is no record of any previous archaeological work or any archaeological remains found within in the survey area. However, to the immediate south there is evidence for a number of post medieval buildings, with the oldest building dating to the 17th century (Historic Environment Record (HER) 22993), furthermore some of the buildings closer to the village centre potentially date back to the 15th century (HER 22973).
- 2.4 Approximately 1km to the west cropmarks and archaeological evaluation have uncovered evidence of Iron Age settlement, surrounded by field systems which can be seen in cropmarks in the adjacent field (CA 1998). Evaluation in the field c.1km to the west of the site (OA 2007) found elements of a possible prehistoric field system within the Medieval and Post Medieval system, but no evidence of settlement activity.
- 2.5 An evaluation undertaken c.500m to the southwest of the study site found no Roman activity, but there was evidence of field systems predating the medieval period (John Moore, 2014).
- 2.6 The HER records a high status Anglo-Saxon settlement to the northwest of the site. Approximately 750m northwest of the site, two pits of at least 3.5m length were recorded, and were interpreted as sunken feature buildings (SFB). Approximately 750m to the northeast of the study site, the HER records cropmarks suggestive of SFBs in a settlement complex (HER: 15288.05). However, the archaeological investigations undertaken c.500m to the southwest of the site (John Moore, 2014; HER: 28353), found no evidence of Saxon remains, nor did a watching brief undertaken c.500m to the south along the frontage of The Causeway, near to the village green (OA 2001; HER: 16476)
- 2.7 During the Medieval period Steventon became established starting as a large manorial farm (Page and Ditchfield 1924). A raised causeway, running c.250m south of the site, bisects the village, and was constructed by the 14th century (HER: 13873). It would seem that the focus of settlement during this period was nearer to the site of the medieval church, over 1km to the southwest of the study site.

- 2.8 The site itself is likely to have remained as open fields throughout the medieval period. Historic mapping indicates that the site remained in agricultural use most likely as pasture throughout the post-medieval period and up to the modern day.

### **Geophysical Survey**

- 2.9 A geophysical survey of the site was undertaken (MoLA 2014). The only archaeological features detected by the survey consisted of furrows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. Anomalies of modern origin were also detected. A curvilinear anomaly was detected on the eastern side of the site, but was interpreted as geological rather than archaeological in origin. A large area of magnetic noise was detected across the southern portion of the site indicating modern debris, such as waste bricks or scrap metal in the upper soil layers.

## **3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014). This information will enable VWHDC to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of ten trenches, measuring 30m in length and 1.8m in width, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*.
- 4.2 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological



deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* and, no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.4 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service under accession number OXCMS: 2015.153, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-6)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.
- 5.2 The general stratigraphic sequence encountered throughout site was as follows. The natural substrate, comprising yellow grey sand and gravels, was encountered within all of the trenches at an average depth of 0.55m. This was sealed by subsoil measuring an average thickness of 0.25m which in turn was covered by topsoil measuring an average of 0.30m in thickness. Furrows were encountered within Trench 1 and Trenches 3 – 10 on approximate north-east/south-west and north-west/south-east alignments. Land drains correlating with the results of the geophysical survey were identified within Trenches 2, 5, 7 and 8. All archaeological features, unless otherwise stated, were sealed by subsoil.

### ***Trench 1 (Figs 2, 3 & 6)***

- 5.3 Ditch 104 was identified within the north-western end of Trench 1 on a north-west/south-east alignment and appeared to be cutting subsoil 101. It was filled by dark grey sandy clay deposit 103. The appearance and consistency of fill 103 suggests that it is derived from the topsoil and is likely to be relatively recent in date.



A potential continuation of this ditch was identified within Trench 3, recorded as ditch 305. Fill 103 was cut by a north-east/south-west aligned furrow.

### **Trench 2 (Figs 2, 3 & 4)**

- 5.4 Three ditches were revealed within Trench 2, all on an approximate north-west/south-east alignment. Ditch 206, located in the centre of Trench 2, was filled by single fill 205 which produced 2nd-century Roman pottery and worked flint, including a convex scraper.
- 5.5 Located approximately 4m to the north of ditch 206 was ditch 211. Ditch 211 contained four fills, all of which were undated. The earliest, fill 210, comprised a brown silt clay and appeared to have slumped in from the south-western edge of the ditch. This was sealed by fill 209, a brown clay silt, which may also have slumped into the ditch from the south western edge. Fill 209 was covered by 208, friable brown silt sand which was covered by 207.
- 5.6 In the southern part of Trench 2 ditch 204 was identified cutting the subsoil. This was filled by single fill 203.

### **Trench 3 (Figs 2 & 3)**

- 5.7 In the south-eastern end of Trench 3 ditch 305 was identified on an approximate north-west/south-east alignment and contained single fill 304. Both the form and fill of ditch 305 are very similar to ditch 104 and could potentially form a continuation of this.

### **Trench 4 (Figs 2, 3 & 5)**

- 5.8 Ditch 404, located in the centre of Trench 4, contained fill 403 which produced mid to late-Bronze Age pottery and a worked flint flake. There is potential for ditch 404 to be a continuation of ditch 206 identified within Trench 2 as it is similar in form and also contains a single fill. However, this would suggest that the mid to late-Bronze Age pottery recovered from fill 403 is residual.

### **Trench 7 (Figs 2 & 3)**

- 5.9 Located at the southern end of Trench 7 was ditch 704 containing single fill 703. The fill and form of the ditch are very similar to that of ditches 104 and 103 and may represent a continuation of these.



- 5.10 Located approximately at the centre of Trench 7 was pit 705 which contained single fill 704 and is undated.

### ***Trench 8 (Figs 2, 3 & 5)***

- 5.11 Ditch 804 was identified within the north-western end of Trench 4. It was filled by a single light grey clay silt fill, 803, and produced mid to late-Bronze Age pottery.

## **6. THE FINDS**

- 6.1 Artefactual material from the evaluation was hand-recovered from three deposits, all of which are ditch fills. The recovered material dates to the Bronze Age and Roman periods. Quantities of the artefact types recovered are given in Appendix B. The pottery has been recorded according to sherd count/weight per fabric. Recording also included vessel form/rim morphology and any evidence for use in the form of carbonised/other residues (although none was apparent). Roman fabrics are equated to the Oxfordshire type series (unpublished).

### ***Pottery***

#### *Prehistoric*

- 6.2 Fill 403 of ditch 404 produced six unfeatured bodysherds (47g) in a coarse, thick-walled fabric tempered with quartz and quartzite (QZQT). The condition is moderate to good and a moderate degree of fragmentation is demonstrated by the average sherd weight of 8g. In the absence of form and decoration, this pottery is dated to the Middle to Late Bronze Age on the basis of fabric and firing characteristics. The use of quartzite tempering has been recorded in Late Bronze Age pottery at sites such as Eynsham, Oxon (Barclay 2001, 127–30) and Milton Hill, Oxon, (the latter approximately 2km south of Steventon) (McSloy 2012, 231).

#### *Roman*

- 6.3 Eight sherds (21g) representing a single (but incomplete) necked jar in a Sandy black ware fabric (R07B) were retrieved from fill 205 of ditch 206. This pottery is in good condition and dating in the 2nd century is most likely.

### **Lithics**

- 6.4 A total of five worked flints were recorded from three deposits (Appendix B): that from ditch fill 205 is residual in a Roman-dated feature. They comprise four flakes and a convex scraper made on a thermal blank. The flakes are rather scruffy and all the flints are in a heavily edge damaged condition, so all are likely to be redeposited. All of the flints are consistent with Bronze Age dating, however, due to the scruffy nature of the flakes and the use of a thermal blank for tool-making.

## **8. DISCUSSION**

- 8.1 Apart from land drains and north-south aligned furrows none of the archaeological features revealed during the evaluation were detected by the preceding geophysical survey.
- 8.2 Ditch 804 produced mid to late-Bronze Age pottery sherds which were in a good condition. Whilst it is entirely possible that the ditch may be of this date, the possibility that the sherds are residual within a later feature cannot be discounted.
- 8.3 Ditch 404 also produced mid to late-Bronze Age pottery; however this is likely redeposited as the most likely continuation of this ditch within Trench 2, ditch 206, produced 2nd-century Roman pottery.
- 8.3 A possibly unmapped field boundary ditch may be represented by ditches 104, 305 and 704. No ditches on this alignment appear on any of the available historic mapping but the appearance composition of the fill suggests at least a tentative post medieval date, although it did not produce any artefactual evidence.
- 8.3 Whilst it is difficult to determine the exact layout of any field systems or enclosures from the ditches identified during the evaluation, the lack of substantial artefactual evidence would suggest that there is very little possibility of any settlement activity within the site. Ditches of a similar date and later were identified during archaeological evaluations approximately 1km to the west of the site (CA 1998), (OA2007) and approximately 500m to the south-west also (John Moore 2014) attesting to the sites location as being within a wider, long lived agricultural landscape originating within the prehistoric period and continuing into the modern period.

## 9. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Tom Weavill, assisted by Andrew Hurst and Dani Adams. The report was written by Tom Weavill. The finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by Tom Weavill, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Damian De Rosa.

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## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brownish grey sandy clay	>30	>1.8	0.26	
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Light brownish grey sandy clay	>30	>1.8	0.30	
1	102	Layer		Natural substrate	Light greyish yellow/orange mixed sand and gravel				
1	103	Fill	104	Ditch fill	Dark brownish grey sandy clay	>7.0	0.56	unexcavated	
1	104	Cut		Ditch	Possible field boundary cutting subsoil	>7.0	0.56	unexcavated	

2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Same as 100	>30	>1.8	0.29	
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	Same as 101	>30	>1.8	0.30	
2	202	Layer		Natural substrate	Same as 102				
2	203	Fill	204	Ditch fill	Dark greyish brown sandy clay	>1.8m	0.89	0.26	
2	204	Cut		Ditch	Steep sided flat based ditch. Possible field boundary cutting subsoil	>1.8	0.89	0.26	
2	205	Fill	206	Ditch fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay	>1.8	1.01	0.33	C2
2	206	Cut		Ditch	U-shaped straight ditch	>1.8	1.01	0.33	
2	207	Fill	211	4th fill of ditch	Light greyish brown clay silt	>1.94	0.84	0.16	
2	208	Fill	211	3rd fill of ditch	Light yellowish brown silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks	>1.94	0.59	0.09	
2	209	Fill	211	2nd fill of ditch	Light greyish brown clayey silt	>1.94	0.92	0.19	
2	210	Fill	211	1st fill of ditch	Light greyish brown silty clay	>1.94	0.78	0.12	
2	211	Cut		Ditch	V-shaped straight ditch	>1.94	1.05	0.50	

3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Same as 100	>30	>1.8	0.21	
3	301	Layer		Subsoil	Same as 101	>30	>1.8	0.19	
3	302	Layer		Natural substrate	Same as 102				
3	303	Fill	305	Ditch fill	Mid greyish brown sandy clay	>4.0	0.6	unexcavated	
3	304	Cut		Ditch	Possible field boundary ditch cutting subsoil	>4.0	0.6	unexcavated	

4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Same as 100	>30	>1.8	0.37	
4	401	Layer		Subsoil	Same as 101	>30	>1.8	0.19	
4	402	Layer		Natural substrate	Same as 102				
4	403	Fill	404	Ditch fill	Light greyish brown clayey silt	>4.0	>1.2	0.29	MBA-LBA
4	404	Cut		Ditch	U-shaped straight ditch	>4.0	>1.2	0.29	

5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Same as 100	>30	>1.8	0.25	
5	501	Layer		Subsoil	Same as 101	>30	>1.8	0.20	
5	502	Layer		Natural substrate	Same as 102				

6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Same as 100	>30	>1.8	0.30	
6	601	Layer		Subsoil	Same as 101	>30	>1.8	0.25	
6	602	Layer		Natural substrate	Same as 102				

7	700	Layer		Topsoil	Same as 100	>30	>1.8	0.31	
7	701	Layer		Subsoil	Same as 101	>30	>1.8	0.10	
7	702	Layer		Natural substrate	Same as 102				

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
7	703	Fill	704	Ditch fill	Light greyish brown clayey silt	>2.19	0.74	0.25	
7	704	Cut		Ditch	U-shaped straight ditch	>2.19	0.74	0.25	
7	705	Fill	706	Pit fill	Mid greyish brown clayey silt	>0.55	0.49	0.10	
7	706	Cut		Pit	Oval pit. Shallow sides, flat base. May also be gully/ditch terminus	>0.55	0.49	0.10	

8	800	Layer		Topsoil	Same as 100	>30	>1.8	0.34	
8	801	Layer		Subsoil	Same as 101	>30	>1.8	0.34	
8	802	Layer		Natural substrate	Same as 102				
8	803	Fill	804	Ditch fill	Light greyish brown clayey silt	>1.8	1.18	0.46	
8	804	Cut		Ditch	U-shaped straight ditch	>1.8	1.18	0.46	

9	900	Layer		Topsoil	Same as 100	>30	>1.8	0.36	
9	901	Layer		Subsoil	Same as 101	>30	>1.8	0.24	
9	902	Layer		Natural substrate	Same as 102				

10	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Same as 100	>30	>1.8	0.30	
10	1001	Layer		Subsoil	Same as 101	>30	>1.8	0.24	
10	1002	Layer		Natural substrate	Same as 102				



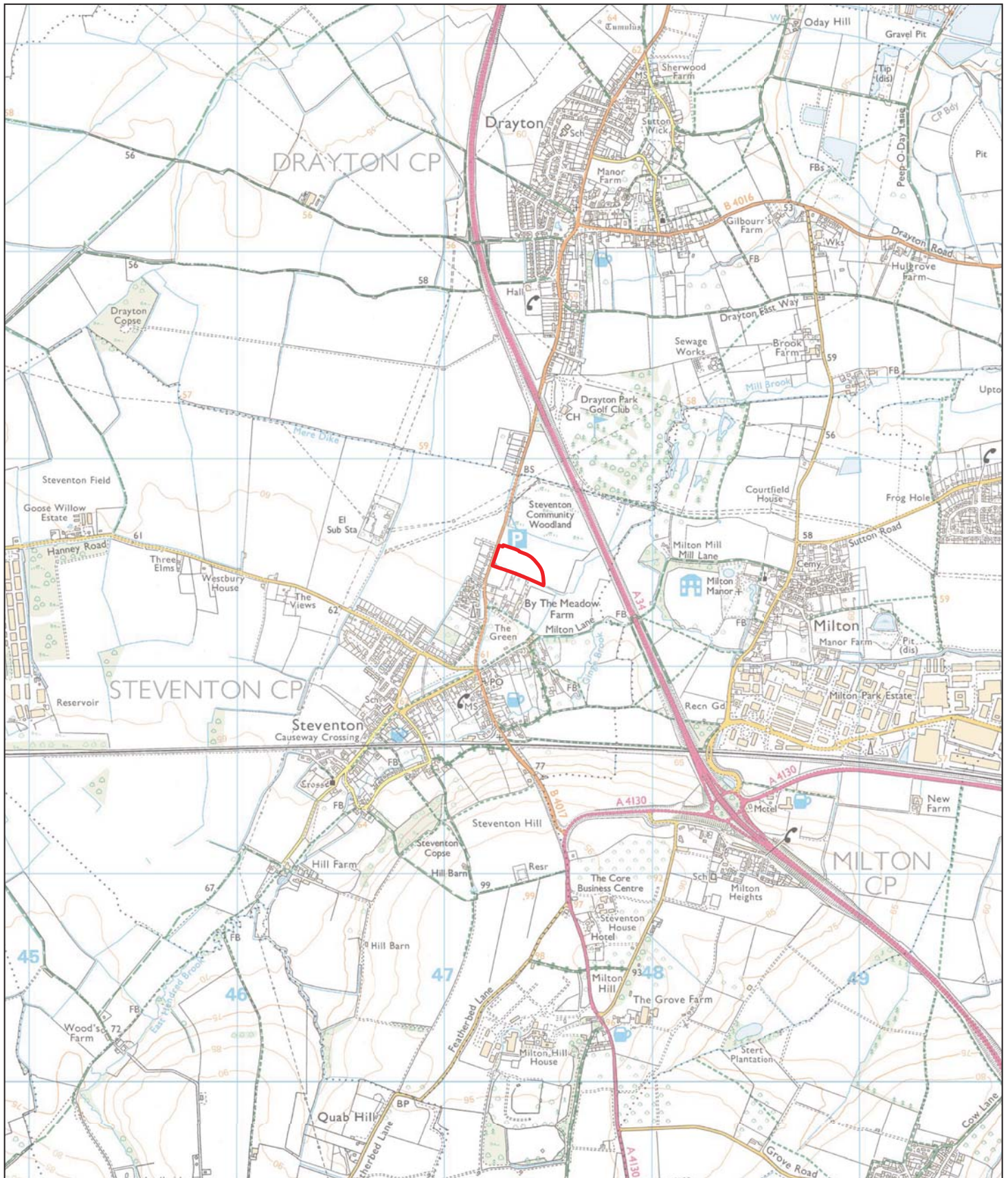
**APPENDIX B: THE FINDS**

## Finds concordance

<b>Context</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Fabric code</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Weight (g)</b>	<b>Spot-date</b>
205	Roman pottery Worked flint	Sandy black ware Flake, convex scraper	R07B	8 2	21 31	C2
403	Prehistoric pottery Worked flint	Quartz-and-quartzite tempered fabric Flake	QZQT	6 1	47 7	MBA-LBA
803	Worked flint	Flake		2	6	-

## APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land at Abingdon Road, Steventon, Oxfordshire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2015 on land at Abingdon Road, Steventon, Oxfordshire. Ten trenches were excavated.</p> <p>Ditches relating to probable prehistoric and Roman field systems were identified on approximate north-west/south-east and north-east/south-west alignments which were not detected by a preceding geophysical survey. A ditch which was cut through the subsoil and probably represents a modern or post medieval field boundary was also identified. This ditch does not appear on any of the available historic mapping of the site. Several furrows and land drains were also identified, some of which relate to anomalies identified on the preceding geophysical survey.</p>	
Project dates	4-6 August 2015	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Geophysical Survey (MoLA 2014), Desk-based Assessment (CgMs 2014)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Land at Abingdon Road, Steventon, Oxfordshire	
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)	2.7ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SU 4735 9250	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	None	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Damian De Rosa	
Project Supervisor	Tom Weavill	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	Ditches – Bronze Age Ditches – Roman Ditches – Post medieval/modern	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	Pottery – Bronze Age Pottery - Roman	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Oxfordshire Museum Service (OXCMS 2015.153)	Pottery, flint
Paper	Oxfordshire Museum Service (OXCMS 2015.153)	Trench sheets, context sheets, permatrace drawings, photo register
Digital	Oxfordshire Museum Service (OXCMS 2015.153)	Digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 <i>Land at Abingdon Road, Steventon, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i>. CA typescript report <b>15634</b>. CA Project <b>770249</b>.</p>		



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**PROJECT TITLE**

Land at Abingdon Road, Steventon  
Oxfordshire

**FIGURE TITLE**

Site location plan

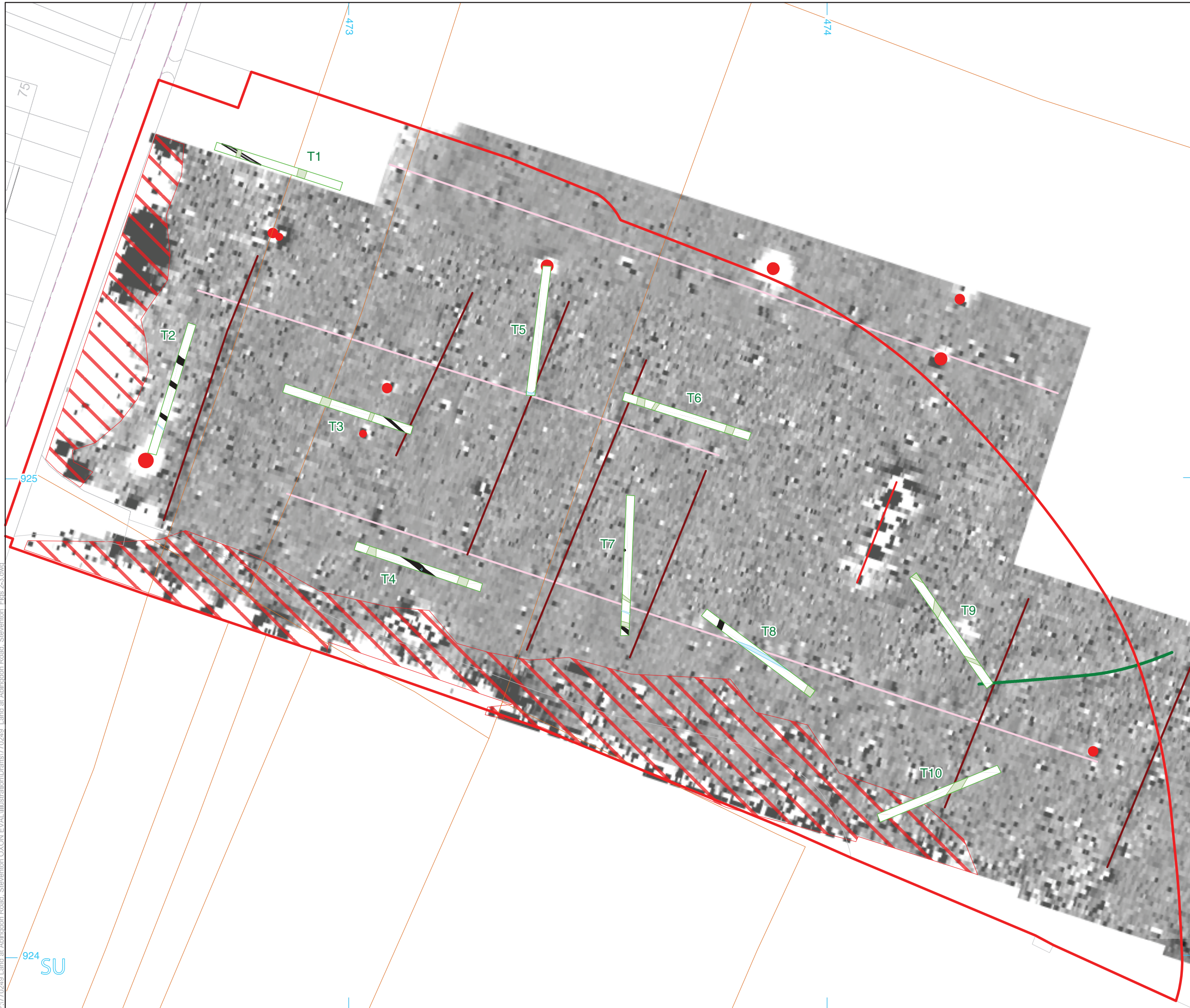
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 APPROVED BY DDR SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1





- site boundary
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- geological feature
- furrow
- field drain
- historic map boundary (taken from Greffed 1843 Tithe Map)

**Geophysical survey results (MOLA 2014)**

- ridge and furrow
- field drain
- pipe
- geological trend
- ferrous object
- ferrous debris / halo



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Land at Abingdon Road, Steventon  
 Oxfordshire

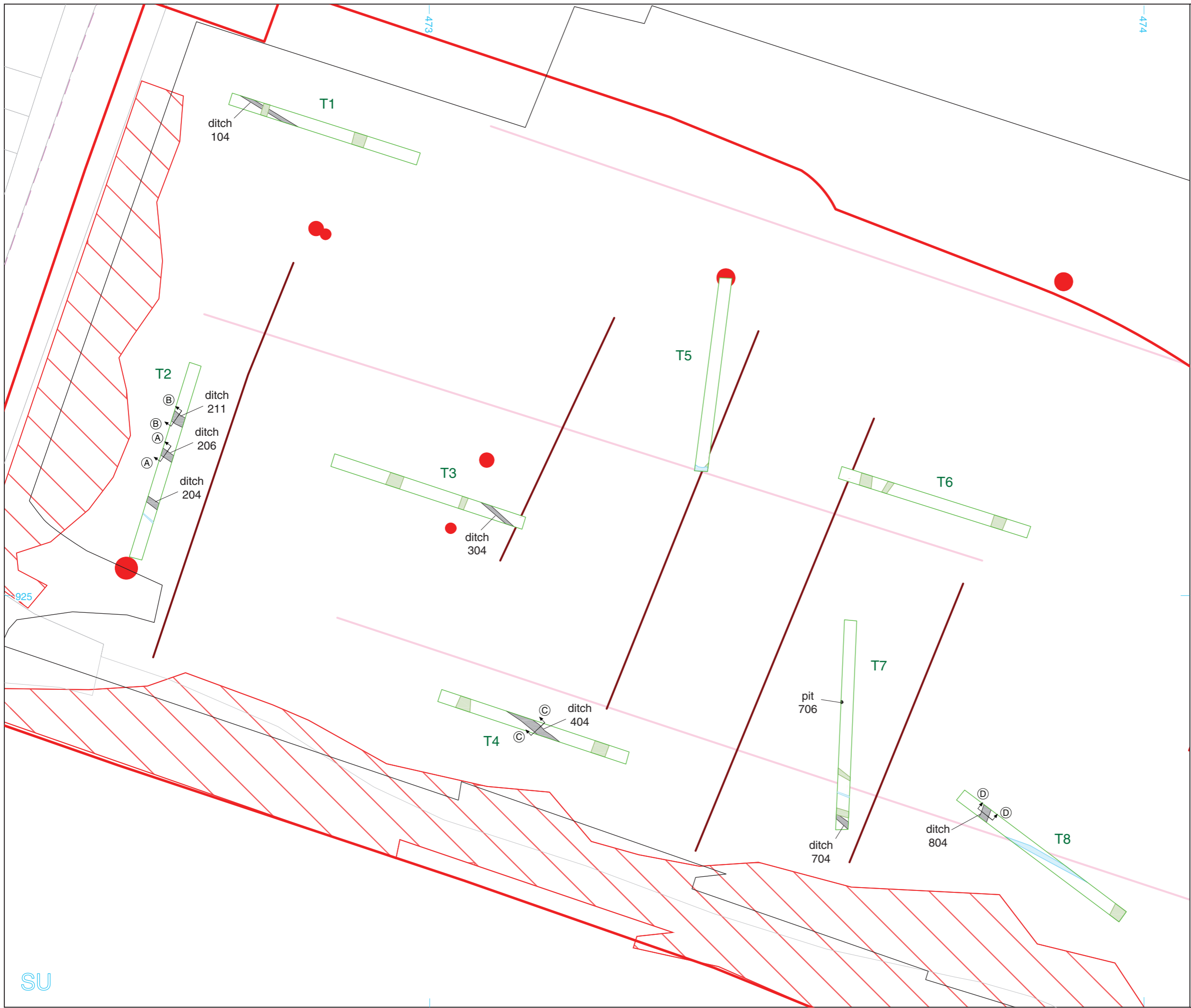
**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Trench location plan showing  
 archaeological features and  
 geophysical survey results

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924 SU





- site boundary
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- geological feature
- furrow
- field drain
- A A section location

**Geophysical survey results (MOLA 2014)**

- ridge and furrow
- field drain
- ferrous object
- ferrous debris / halo



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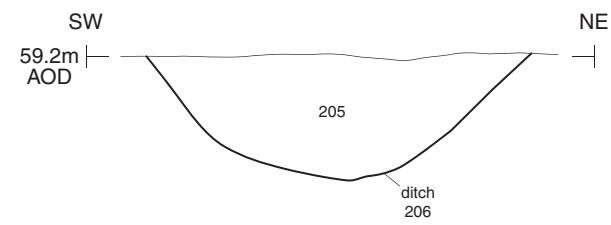
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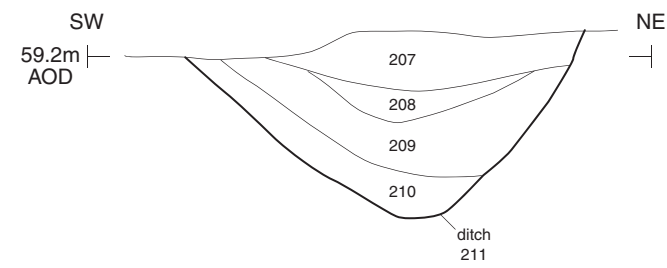
**FIGURE TITLE**  
**Trenches 1 to 8: archaeological features and geophysical survey results**

<small>DRAWN BY</small> L J H	<small>PROJECT NO.</small> 770249	<small>FIGURE NO.</small>
<small>CHECKED BY</small> D B	<small>DATE</small> 14/08/15	<b>3</b>
<small>APPROVED BY</small> D D R	<small>SCALE@A3</small> 1:500	

Section AA



Section BB



South-east facing section of ditch [206] (0.4m scale)



South-east facing section of ditch [211] (1m scale)




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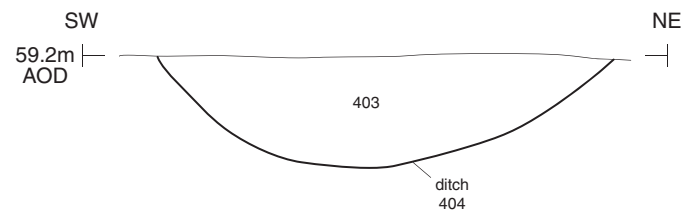
PROJECT TITLE  
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FIGURE TITLE  
**Trench 2: sections and photographs**

DRAWN BY	LJH	PROJECT NO.	770249	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	LM	DATE	13/08/15	4
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Section CC



Section DD



North-east facing section of ditch [804] (0.4m scale)



South-east facing section of ditch [404] (0.4m scale)



South facing section of ditch [804] (0.4m scale)




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FIGURE TITLE  
**Trenches 4 & 8: sections and  
 photographs**

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6

**6 Trench 1, ditch [104] (0.4m scale)**



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*PROJECT TITLE*

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*FIGURE TITLE*

**Trench 1: photograph**

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<i>CHECKED BY</i>	LM	<i>DATE</i>	13/08/15		
<i>APPROVED BY</i>	DDR	<i>SCALE@A4</i>	n/a		

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