

**Coln House School  
Horcott Lane, Fairford  
Gloucestershire**  
*Archaeological Evaluation*



for  
Gloucestershire County Council

CA Project: 6711  
CA Report: 18440

September 2018



Coln House School  
 Horcott Road, Fairford  
 Gloucestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Coln House School
<b>Location:</b>	Fairford, Gloucestershire
<b>NGR:</b>	414883 200890
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	28-29 August 2018
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with Corinium Museum
<b>Site Code:</b>	CHSF 18

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2018 at Coln House School, Horcott Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire. Two trenches were excavated.

Two ditches dated to the medieval period were identified. In addition, three undated ditches were also recorded that, given their similar or perpendicular alignments, may be contemporary with the two medieval ditches. All are likely to represent a continuation of a Saxon/medieval field system identified during a previous phase of evaluation immediately to the south.

A modern wall, landscaping and made-ground associated with the former school were also identified.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In August 2018 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) at Coln House School, Horcott Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire (centred at NGR: 414883 200890; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to support any future planning applications which may be made to Cotswold District Council (CDC) for development of the site. The scope of the archaeological works was recommended by Charles Parry, Archaeologist, GCC, the archaeological advisor to CDC.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2018) and approved by Charles Parry. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014). It was monitored by Charles Parry.

### ***The site***

- 1.3 The site as a whole is approximately 1.25ha in extent and comprises former school buildings and associated residences, as well as areas of hardstanding, grassed playing fields and former allotments. Approximately 0.3ha of the application area has not previously been developed and is, following consultation with the archaeological advisor to CDC, subject to the current archaeological trenching (Fig. 2). The site is bounded to the north by A417 Fairford to Cirencester Road, to the east and north-east by residential properties, to the west by Horcott Road and to the south by further playing fields.
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as limestone of the Cornbrash Formation predominately overlain by superficial Summertown-Radley sands and gravels, although both Northmoor sands and gravels as well as Head deposits are recorded along the eastern and northern site boundary respectively (BGS 2018). Natural sand and gravel was identified in both trenches during the current works.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The current site lies in an area of known archaeological potential and has, in part, been subject to a preceding programme of archaeological trenching (GCC 1999).

The following is a brief summary of that work along with any other publically available information pertinent to the site.

- 2.2 The 1999 evaluation was largely concentrated in the playing fields to the south of the current application area, although four trenches (GCC Trenches 3, 7, 8 and 9) were located in, or partially within, the current site (see Fig. 2 for locations). The evaluation identified evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in the form of ditches, which may have been settlement boundaries or stock enclosures, as well as postholes that may be indicative of associated structural remains. It also identified a medieval stone wall dating to the 12th to 14th century. The majority of the securely dated Anglo-Saxon activity (and the medieval wall) was revealed to the south of the current site, although undated pits and postholes, possibly of Saxon date, were identified in Trenches 3 and 9. Within Trench 8, evidence for modern truncation, possibly quarrying, was identified to a depth in excess of 1.5m below the modern ground surface, although the full extent of this disturbance was not determined (ibid.).
- 2.3 Prior to the 1999 evaluation evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity within Fairford, itself first mentioned in a mid 9th-century charter (Tilley et al 2007), was principally limited to the identification of an extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery, containing over 150 inhumations, during 19th-century quarrying at Tanners Field approximately 500m north of the current site. Subsequent to the 1999 works an increasing corpus of Anglo-Saxon activity has been identified, including evidence for sunken-featured buildings (SFB), immediately to the west of the current town (cf. AC Archaeology 2011, OA 2013, Wills 2016 & 2017) as well as for the extensive settlement and cemetery at Horcott Quarry approximately 850m to the south-west of the current site (Hayden et al 2017).
- 2.4 Within the wider environs of the site there is extensive evidence for pre-Anglo-Saxon archaeology, particularly on the gravel river terraces. Find spots of Neolithic polished flint axes (HER 2490, 3379) have previously been recorded 400m to the south and 200m to the north-east of the current site, and evidence of Late Neolithic activity was recorded during evaluation work at Lady Lamb Farm, 1km to the west (OAU 1993). A number of ring ditches, believed to be Bronze Age barrows, have been identified from cropmarks to the south and east of the site. The closest lies 800m to the south-west and includes a Scheduled Bronze Age hengiform monument (National Monument 1014394).

- 2.5 A multi-period site was identified by cropmarks and subsequently during excavations at Horcott Quarry. The main phase of identified activity was Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, comprising a series of 22 round-houses and associated pits and fence lines (Hayden et al 2017). Evidence for Roman activity, largely agricultural enclosures but including a small, but possibly wealthy settlement with an adjacent cemetery was also identified at the quarry (ibid.).

### 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* (ClfA 2014). This information will enable CDC 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 in line with the *Revised National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2018).

### 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of two trenches (Trenches 10 and 11) in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). Trench 10 measured 25m in length and 1.8m, with Trench 11 being 30m in length and 1.8m in width. The 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 Both 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.* 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 Corinium Museum along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts, finds and biological evidence are to be found in Appendices A, B and C respectively
- 5.2 The natural geological substrate, consisting of sands and gravel, was identified at a typical depth of 0.4m below present ground level (bpgl). Subsoil survived solely within the north-eastern extent of Trench 10. Elsewhere the natural substrate was sealed by a sandy silt cultivation soil, measuring approximately 0.3m in depth, that was in turn overlain by modern topsoil. Unless otherwise noted, all identified features cut the natural substrate and were sealed by the cultivation soils.

### ***Trench 10***

- 5.3 Ditch 1026 (see Fig. 3; section AA) was aligned broadly north-east/south-west. It measured at least 0.9m in width, 0.32m in depth and contained undated silty sand fill 1025. It was recut as ditch 1021 that measured 2.4m in width, 0.9m in depth and contained three fills (1022 to 1024 inclusive; see Fig. 3; section AA). Pottery dating from the 10th to 13th century was recovered from lower fill 1024, with late 11th to 15th-century pottery and animal bone being retrieved from fill 1023 and upper fill 1022. A fragment of post-medieval/modern ceramic building material was recovered from upper fill 1022 but is likely to be intrusive.
- 5.4 Close to the northern extent of the trench an area of made-ground, concrete post-sockets and north-west/south-east aligned limestone wall 1009 were identified



cutting through the cultivation soils. All are most probably associated with modern landscaping and garden features associated with the former school. .

### **Trench 11**

- 5.5 Ditch 1103 was broadly aligned north-east/south-west with moderate sides and a concave base (see Fig. 3; section BB). It measured 0.52m in width, 0.21m in depth and contained fill 1104 which remained undated.
- 5.6 Ditch 1105 (see Fig. 4; section CC) was broadly aligned north-west/south-east with steep sides and flat base. It measured 1.3m in width, 0.55m in depth and contained fills, 1106 and 1107, with 13th to 14th-century pottery being recovered from upper fill 1106.
- 5.7 Ditch 1108 was broadly aligned north-west/south east with moderate sides and concave base (see Fig. 4; section DD). It measured 0.9m in width, 0.22m in depth and contained silty gravel fill 1109 from which a sherd of abraded, and most probably residual, Roman pottery and animal bone was recovered.

## **6. THE FINDS**

- 6.1 Artefactual material was hand-recovered from five ditch fills. The recovered material dates to the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. The pottery has been recorded according to sherd count/weight per fabric. Where possible, pottery fabric codes (in parenthesis in the text) are equated to the online Gloucester pottery type series (<http://glospot.potsherd.net/docs/intro>).

### *Pottery: Roman*

- 6.2 Fill 1109 of ditch 1108 produced an abraded, unfeatured bodysherd of sandy greyware (TF20), which is broadly Roman in date.

### *Medieval*

- 6.3 Medieval pottery totals 21 sherds (244.3g). The group from fill 1106 within ditch 1105 is well broken-up, with an average sherd weight of less than 2g. The pottery recovered from ditch 1021 has an average sherd weight of 18g, indicating only a small degree of fragmentation. Most of the fabrics represented are commonly found in Gloucestershire: Cotswold oolitic limestone-tempered ware (TF41, 10th to 13th

centuries), Brill/Boarstall ware (TF83, 13th to 14th centuries) and Kennet Valley ware (KVA, late 11th to 15th centuries). Less common is the sandy limestone-tempered ware from fill 1106 of ditch 1105 (TF110, late 11th to 12th centuries).

#### *Ceramic building material*

- 6.4 A fragment of post-medieval/ modern ceramic building material (7g), possibly from a drainpipe, was recorded from fill 1022 within ditch 1021.

## **7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE**

### ***Animal Bone***

- 7.1 Animal bone amounting to nine fragments (74g) was recovered from fill 1109 ditch within 1108 and from fills 1022 and 1023 within ditch 1021. The material was fragmentary but well enough preserved to identify three fragments of sheep/goat (*Ovis aries/Capra hircus*) from both ditches. The remaining fragments can only be identified as cattle-sized or sheep-sized mammals. No cut marks suggestive of butchery waste were identified on any of the recovered bone.

## **8. DISCUSSION**

- 8.1 The evaluation identified five ditches within the proposed development area. Ditches 1021, 1026 and 1103 were aligned broadly north-east/south-west with ditches 1105 and 1108 being broadly perpendicular. Pottery recovered from within ditches 1021 and 1105 dates to the medieval period, albeit with a small component being of Saxo-Norman origin, with the remaining undated features likely to be contemporary through association and alignment that formed part of a regular, gridded field system.
- 8.2 Whilst no definitive Saxon activity was revealed during the current works, the medieval and undated ditches identified are comparable in both size and alignment to those recorded during the previous evaluation, although the latter were predominantly dated to the Saxon period (GCC 1999). It is therefore tempting to suggest that the ditches identified during the current evaluation represent the continuation, or a later incarnation, of the previously identified field system as it extends further to the north.

8.3 It is noteworthy that, in contrast to the 1999 works, no pits or postholes were identified during the current works. Whether this is indicative of the current application area being immediately beyond the area of contemporary settlement or is merely a reflection of the limitations of the current evaluation trenching remains undetermined.

## 9. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Sausins, assisted by Holly Young. The report was written by Daniel Sausins. The finds and biological evidence reports were written by Jacky Sommerville and Andy Clarke respectively. The illustrations were prepared by Tom Brown. The archive has been compiled by Daniel Sausins, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman.

## 10. REFERENCES

AC Archaeology 2011 *Land at Home Farm, Fairford; Results of Archaeological Evaluation*

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Tilley M., Douthwaite, A. and Devine, V. 2007 Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey: Cotswold District Archaeological Assessments: Fairford (updated)

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Wills, J., (ed) 2017 'Archaeological Review No. 41 2016' in *Trans. Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Soc* **135**, 326-7



## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
10	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown sandy silt loam			0.4	
10	1001	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown red sandy silt loam			0.16	
10	1002	Cut		Posthole	Circular, vertical sides, flat base		0.4	0.45	
10	1003	Fill	1002	Posthole fill	Grey concrete		0.4	0.45	
10	1004	Layer		Consolidation	Lose white shingle			0.15	
10	1005	Cut		Construction cut	Aligned NW/SE, steep sides, flat base	>1.8	1.4	0.25	
10	1006	Structure	1005	Footpath	Concrete slabs	>1.8	1.2	0.1	
10	1007	Fill	1005	Consolidation	Yellow sand and gravel	>1.8	1.4	0.25	
10	1008	Cut		Construction cut	Aligned N/S, vertical sides	>1.8	1.1		
10	1009	Structure		Wall	Unhewn limestone pieces with yellow limestone sandy mortar	>1.8	0.64		
10	1010	Fill	1008	Construction cut backfill	Dark grey black gritty gravel and silt	>1.8	1.1		
10	1011	Cut		Landscaping cut	Irregular in plan and profile	>1.8	>2.5	0.5	
10	1012	Fill	1011	Landscaping cut fill	Limestone rubble	>1.8	>2.5	0.3	
10	1013	Fill	1011	Landscaping cut fill	Compact pea grit with yellow limestone mortar	>1.8	>2.5	0.3	
10	1014	Cut		Irregular feature	Irregular in plan and profile		0.5	>0.5	
10	1015	Fill	1014	Irregular feature fill	Mid grey brown silt with limestone and mortar rubble		0.5	>0.5	
10	1016	Layer		Cultivation soil	Dark black brown clay silt with abundant limestone rubble			0.35	
10	1017	Layer		Subsoil	Mid red-brown clay silt			0.1	
10	1018	Layer		Natural substrate	Light yellow sands and gravel				
10	1019	Cut		Service cut	Aligned N/s, vertical sides	>1.8	0.5		
10	1020	Fill	1019	Service cut fill	Mixed brown silty sand and rubble	>1.8	0.5		
10	1021	Cut		Ditch	Aligned NE/SW, moderate sides, concave base	>0.75	2.4	0.9	
10	1022	Fill	1021	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown sandy silt	>0.75	2.4	0.32	LC11-C15
10	1023	Fill	1021	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown silty sand with abundant angular limestone rubble	>0.75	2.24	0.42	LC11-C15
10	1024	Fill	1021	Ditch fill	Mid orange brown sand	>0.75	0.7	0.14	C10-C13
10	1025	Fill	1026	Ditch fill	Light brown grey sand	>0.75	0.9	0.32	
10	1026	Cut		Ditch	Aligned NE/SE moderate side, flat base	>0.75	0.9	0.32	
11	1100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown clay silt			0.16	
11	1101	Layer		Cultivation soil	Mid red brown clay silt			0.31	
11	1102	Layer		Natural substrate	Light brown yellow sand and gravel				
11	1103	Cut		Ditch	Aligned NE/SW, moderate sides, concave base	>9.0	0.52	0.21	
11	1104	Fill	1103	Ditch fill	Mid red brown clay silt	>9.0	0.52	0.21	
11	1105	Cut		Ditch	Aligned NW/SE, steep sides, flat base	>1.8	1.28	0.55	
11	1106	Fill	1105	Ditch fill	Mid red brown clay silt	>1.8	1.28	0.27	C13-C14

11	1107	Fill	1105	Ditch fill	Mid brown yellow silt and gravel	>1.0	1.25	0.28	
11	1108	Cut		Ditch	Aligned NW/SE, moderate sides, concave base	>1.8	0.9	0.22	
11	1109	Fill	1108	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown silt gravel				RB

**APPENDIX B: THE FINDS**

Table 1: Finds concordance

Context	Category	Description	Fabric Code	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
1022	Medieval pottery	Kennet Valley ware	KVA	2	16	LC11-C15/ Post-med
	Post-medieval ceramic building material	Drainpipe		1	7	
1023	Medieval pottery	Cotswold oolitic limestone-tempered ware	TF41	4	56	LC11-C15
	Medieval pottery	Kennet Valley ware	KVA	2	26	
	Burnt stone			1	13	
1024	Medieval pottery	Cotswold oolitic limestone-tempered ware	TF41	5	142	C10-C13
1106	Medieval pottery	Cotswold oolitic limestone-tempered ware	TF41	5	3	C13-C14
	Medieval pottery	Brill/Boarstall ware	TF83	1	0.6	
	Medieval pottery	Sandy limestone-tempered ware	TF110	2	0.7	
1109	Roman pottery	Sandy greyware	TF20	1	1	RB

**APPENDIX C: THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE**

Table 2: Identified animal species by fragment count (NISP) and weight and context.

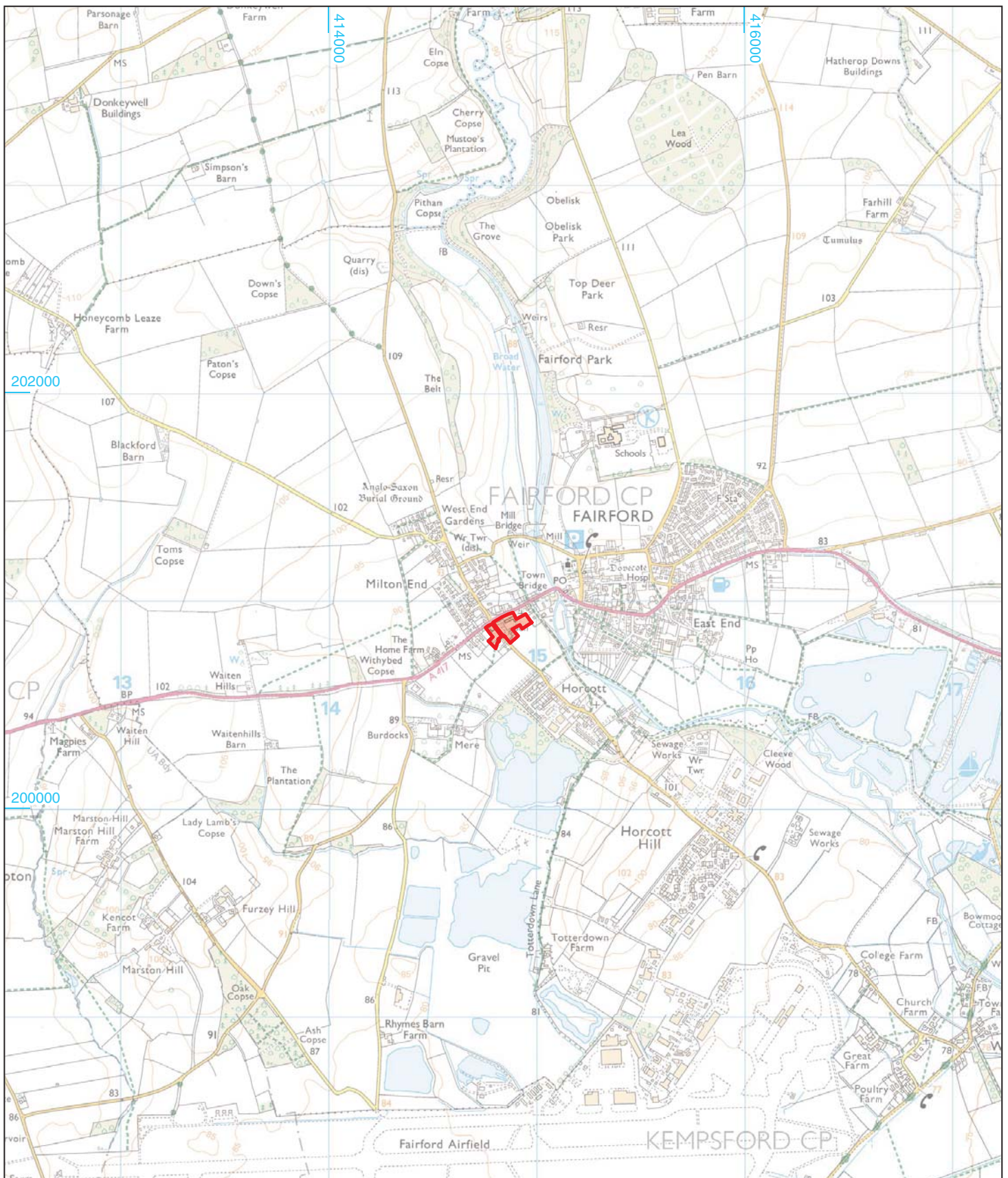
Cut	Fill	O/C	LM	MM	Total	Weight (g)
1108	1109	1	3		4	40
1021	1022	2		2	4	31
1021	1023			1	1	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	
<b>Weight</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>74</b>	

O/C = sheep/goat; LM = cattle size mammal; MM = sheep size mammal

## APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Coln House School, Horcott Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2018 at Coln House School, Horcott Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire. Two trenches were excavated.</p> <p>Two ditches dated to the medieval period were identified. In addition, three undated ditches were also recorded that, given their similar or perpendicular alignments, may be contemporary with the two medieval ditches. All are likely to represent a continuation of a Saxon/medieval field system identified during a previous phase of evaluation immediately to the south.</p> <p>A modern wall, landscaping and made-ground associated with the former school were also identified.</p>	
Project dates	28 to 29 August 2018	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Evaluation (GCC 1999)	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Coln House School, Horcott Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire	
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)	1.25ha	
Site co-ordinates	414883 200890	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	none	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Daniel Sausins	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>		
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	none	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Corinium Museum	Pottery, animal bone
Paper	Corinium Museum	Context sheets, trench sheets, photo registers
Digital	Corinium Museum	Database, digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2018 <i>Coln House School, Horcott Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i>. CA typescript report <b>18440</b></p>		





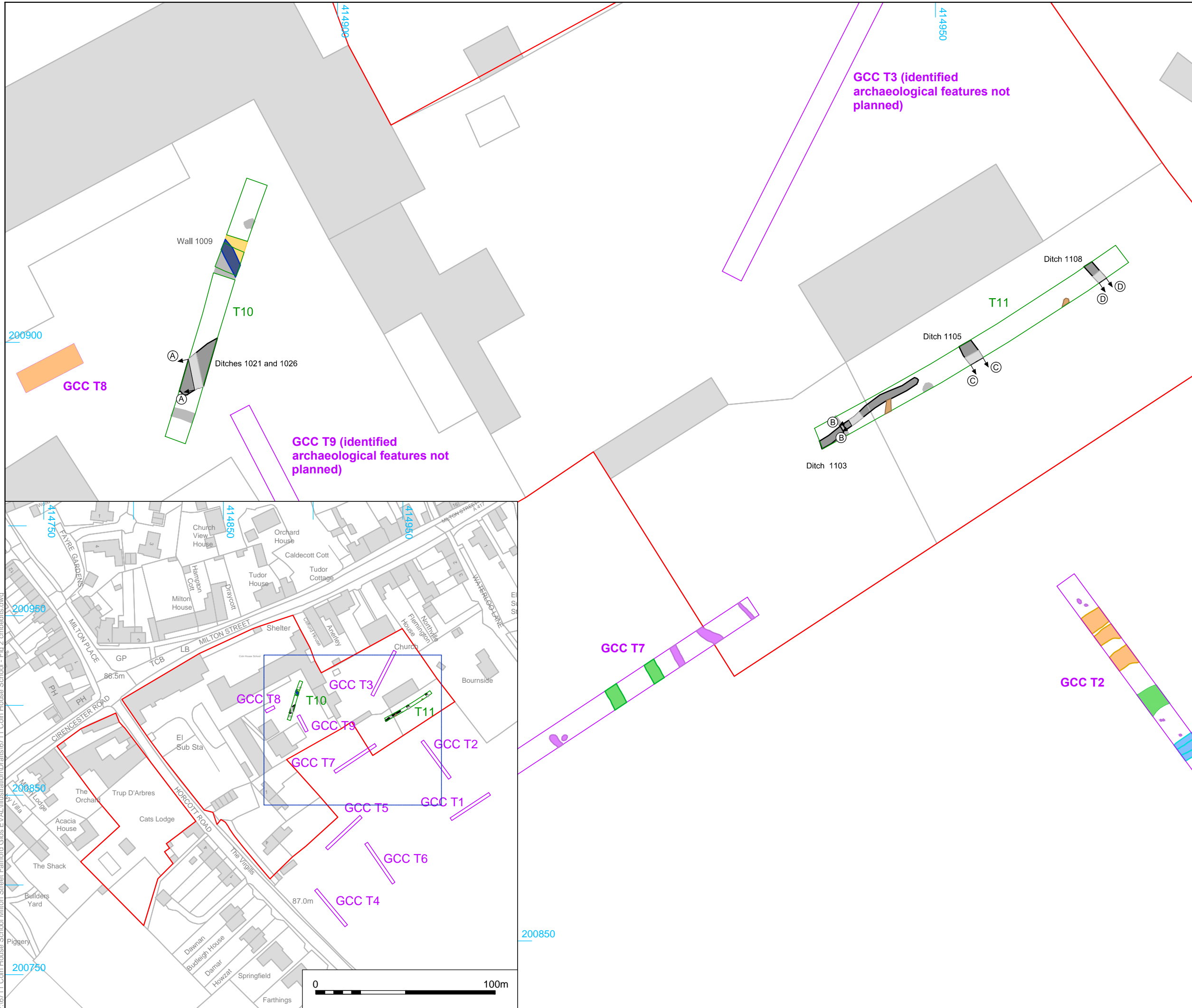
**Cotswold Archaeology**  
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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Coln House School, Fairford,  
 Gloucestershire






**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

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<b>DRAWN BY</b>	<b>TB</b>	<b>PROJECT NO.</b>	<b>6711</b>	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHECKED BY</b>	<b>DJB</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>30.08.18</b>		
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	<b>CB</b>	<b>SCALE</b>	<b>@A4 1:25,000</b>		



-  site boundary
-  evaluation trench
-  cut feature
-  deposit/fill
-  modern
-  structure
-  natural
-  section location

- GCC 1999 evaluation**
-  evaluation trench
  -  Saxon
  -  medieval
  -  Modern
  -  Undated

0 15m

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[enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)

**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Coln House School, Fairford,  
 Gloucestershire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Trench location plan, showing  
 identified archaeological features and  
 1999 GCC evaluation trenches

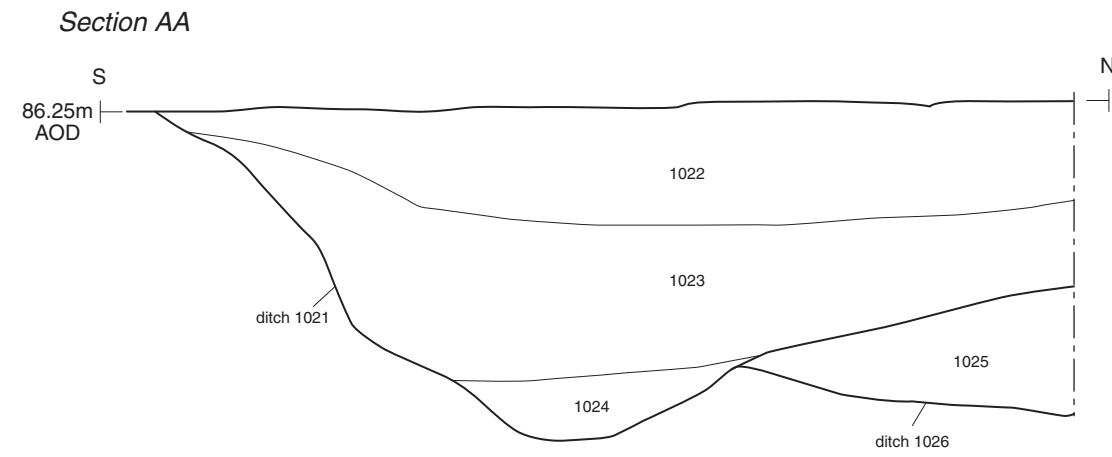
DRAWN BY	TB	PROJECT NO.	6711	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	31.08.18	
APPROVED BY	CB	SCALE@A3	1:300 & 2000	<b>2</b>

0 100m

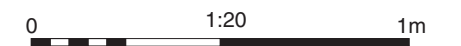
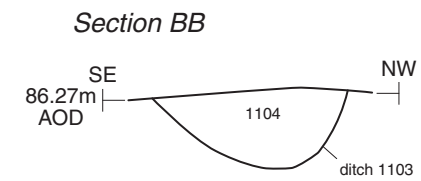
P:\6711 Coln House School\Fairford\Glos EVAL\Illustration\Drawings\67111 Coln House School - Fin 2 cmbedit5.dwg



Trench 10, ditches 1021 and 1026, looking west (1m scale)



Trench 11, ditch 1103, looking south-west (1m scales)




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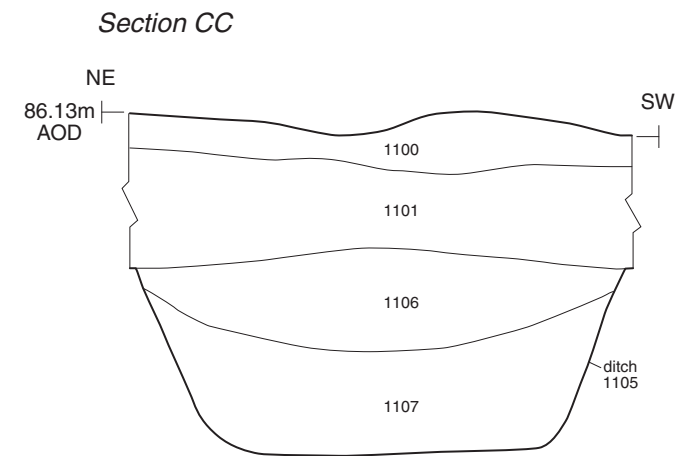
PROJECT TITLE  
**Coln House School, Fairford,  
 Gloucestershire**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Trenches 10 & 11: Photographs and  
 sections**

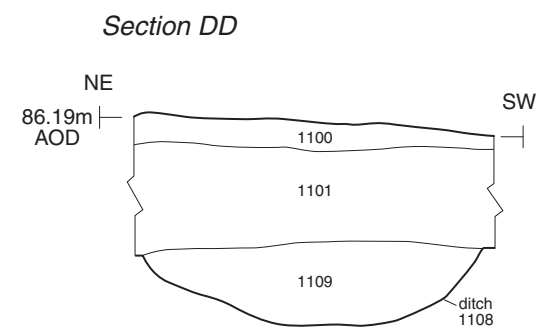
DRAWN BY	TB	PROJECT NO.	6711	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	31.08.18	<b>3</b>
APPROVED BY	CB	SCALE @A3	1:20	



Trench 11, ditch 1105, looking south-east (1m scale)



Trench 11, ditch 1108, looking south-east (1m scales)



0 1:20 1m


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PROJECT TITLE  
**Coln House School, Fairford,  
 Gloucestershire**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Trench 11: Photographs and sections**

DRAWN BY	TB	PROJECT NO.	6711	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	31.08.18	
APPROVED BY	CB	SCALE @A3	1:20	<b>4</b>



Trench 10, modern wall 1009, looking south, (1m scale)



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PROJECT TITLE

Coln House School, Fairford,  
Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE

**Trench 10: Photograph**

DRAWN BY **TB** PROJECT NO. **6711**  
CHECKED BY **DJB** DATE **31.08.18**  
APPROVED BY **CB** SCALE@A4 **NA**

FIGURE NO.

**5**

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