

Norcot Community Centre, Reading, Berkshire

Archaeological Excavation



for:
Beard Construction

CA Project: AN0226
CA Report: AN0226_1

November 2020



Norcot Community Centre, Reading, Berkshire

Archaeological Excavation

CA Project: AN0226
CA Report: AN0226_1

Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	17/01/20	Ray Kennedy	Richard Greatorex	Internal review	General Edit	Karen Walker

This report is confidential to the client. Cotswold Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability to any third party to whom this report, or any part of it, is made known. Any such party relies upon this report entirely at their own risk. No part of this report may be reproduced by any means without permission.

Cirencester Building 11 Kemble Enterprise Park Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6BQ t. 01285 771 022	Milton Keynes Unit 8, The IO Centre Fingle Drive Stonebridge Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK13 0AT t. 01908 564 660	Andover Stanley House Walworth Road Andover Hampshire SP10 5LH t. 01264 347 630	Exeter Unit 1, Clyst Units Cofton Road Marsh Barton Exeter EX2 8QW t. 01392 573 970	Suffolk Unit 5, Plot 11 Maitland Road Lion Barn Industrial Estate Needham Market Suffolk IP6 8NZ t. 01449 900 120
e. enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk				

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	8
4. METHODOLOGY.....	9
5. RESULTS.....	10
6. THE FINDS	12
<i>Pottery</i>	12
<i>Lithics</i>	14
7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE	16
<i>Animal Bone</i>	16
<i>Paleoenvironmental</i>	16
8. GEOARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT	18
<i>Discussion</i>	23
<i>Recommendations</i>	23
9. DISCUSSION.....	24
10. CA PROJECT TEAM.....	25
11. REFERENCES.....	25
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS	27
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS.....	28
APPENDIX C: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE.....	30
APPENDIX D: MONOLITH.....	31
APPENDIX E: OASIS REPORT FORM.....	36

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Figure 2 Trench location plan (1:100)
- Figure 3 Ditches 303 and 315: section and photographs (1:20)
- Figure 4 Ditches 305: section and photograph (1:20)

SUMMARY

Project name:	Norcot Community Centre
Location:	Reading, Berkshire
NGR:	467909 174551
Type:	Excavation
Date:	12-15 October 2020
Planning reference:	181377
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Reading Museum and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Site Code:	NOCO20

In October 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological excavation of land at Norcot Community Centre, in Reading, Berkshire. An area of c.0.005ha was excavated within the site.

The excavation succeeded in its objective of further characterising the ditch associated with the Tilehurst Bank Linear Earthwork, as well as identifying a potentially earlier ditch. The ditches were likely to have been dug in the Middle Iron Age but by the Late Iron Age had been abandoned. The material excavated from the ditches is likely to have been used in the construction of the Tilehurst Bank.

Residual material from the Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Bronze Age periods was recovered from the fill of the main ditch, but no features of these dates were identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In October 2020, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological excavation of land at Norcot Community Centre, in Reading, Berkshire centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 467909 174551 (see Figure 1). This excavation was undertaken for Beard Construction.
- 1.2. Reading Borough Council has granted planning permission for the erection of a three storey building comprising 18 (8x1 and 10x2 bed) residential units (Use Class C3) with associated bin and cycle storage, a 96.4sqm (NIA) building for community use (Use Class D1), vehicle parking, landscaping and associated works (planning ref: 181377). Condition 18 of this planning permission requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved WSI.
- 1.3. The scope of this excavation was defined by Roland Smith, Archaeological Officer (AO) for Berkshire Archaeology, Archaeological Advisor to Reading Borough Council following a previous evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology (CA 2020a). The excavation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2020b) and approved by Roland Smith.
- 1.4. The excavation was also in line with Berkshire Archaeology's Standards for the Historic Environment (Berkshire Archaeology 2016), *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (ClfA 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 site is bounded by Lyndhurst Road to the south-east and is surrounded by back-gardens along its northern and western extents. To the south it is bounded by a path which leads to the nursery to the north-west. Immediately to the south of this path is a linear earthwork bank. The site lies at around 60.0m Ordnance Datum (OD).
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as Seaford Chalk, which formed in the Cretaceous Period; this is overlain by an island of

superficial head deposits comprising gravel, sand, silt and clay (BGS 2020). The River Thames lies some 300m from the site to the north-east of the site. The River Kennet (a tributary of the Thames lies some 3.7km to the south of the site (WSP 2018, 8).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. The Archaeological background given below is a succinct summary of an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of the site by WSP (2018).

Prehistoric

2.2. Within the vicinity of the site there are two find spots of Palaeolithic date; including an assemblage of Mid-Acheulian flint tools 950m north-west of the site, and a hand axe discovered in 1962, 340m to the south-west of the site.

2.3. Two Mesolithic find spots were found in the vicinity of the site within the River Thames, and as such, are likely residual. More than twenty Mesolithic Tranchet Axes were found 445m to the north of the site, and an axe and long blade were discovered 940m to the north-west of the site.

2.4. There are seven finds of Neolithic date in the vicinity of the site, all consisting of stray lithics, two of which were dredged from the River Thames. The dating of these finds are as suggested on the HER, but they could potentially also be Early Bronze Age in date. The density of find spots in the area suggests some level of prehistoric activity, however there is no direct evidence for any Neolithic settlement. The closest find spot to the site is that of a polished flint axe discovered at 28 Weald Rise, 90m north-west of the site, and an adze (axe) found in the garden of 34 Lyndhurst Road in 1939, 320m to the south-east of the site. A further three finds (all single finds comprising stone tools) are recorded from, 360m, 670m and 720m to the southeast of the site.

2.5. Archaeological evidence relating to the Bronze Age is predominantly finds found in the River Thames. These include a socketed knife or dagger and a sword fragment, 600m to the northeast, and a Palstave axe 800m also in the northeast. A possible Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery, was identified through aerial photography and is visible as five ring ditches is c. 930m to the northeast of the site.

2.6. It has been suggested that a large linear earthwork (the Tilehurst Bank) which is preserved adjacent to the south-east of the site is a prehistoric boundary feature. It is a substantial banked and ditched linear, which extends to the River Thames. It is described as being in excess of 2m high and 7m wide, aligned north-east to south-west and at right angles to the Thames. Ford, writing in 1981, suggested that the bank may have linked with other monuments to form a division in the land between the River Thames and the River Kennet and argued that the dog-legged plan of the bank was reminiscent of prehistoric earthworks (Ford 1981). Despite this, excavation of a 2m section of the earthwork by TVAS in 2005 could not confirm the chronology of the earthwork and found no trace of a ditch (WSP 2018). A find of a single piece of prehistoric pottery, and a flint flake, made during the cleaning of the base of the bank was broadly dated to the Neolithic/ Bronze Age.

Roman

2.7. The only known local Roman activity is from stray finds. Examples include five coins: one of Hadrian (AD 117–138), 320m to the northeast; another dated to the 1st century AD, 790m to the north-west; one of Tericus found 930m to the north-east and one of Antonius Pius (138 AD–161) 920m to the north-east on the south bank of the River Thames. An additional coin is recorded at Grasmere Avenue, 800m to the south. Roman pottery sherds have been discovered 940m to the east and 240m to the north-west.

Early Medieval

2.8. There are no archaeological features dated to this period recorded other than a Saxon sword discovered at Tilehurst station 210m to the north-east of the site, close to the western side of the Tilehurst earthwork.

Medieval

2.9. The HER records two find spots dated to the later medieval period, both on the southern bank of the River Thames, 350m to the north-east of the site. These include the base of an unglazed pottery vessel, with a collection of animal bones, and an iron spearhead found on an eyot (Gravel Island) on the Thames.

2.10. There is no mention of Norcot Farm (Northcot, Northecott; Northcott; Northecote; North cottages) in Domesday Book, but it is documented from AD 1327. A small-scale settlement is mapped on the HER 630m south-east of the site and a few buildings are shown on later historic mapping suggesting a possible earlier

farmstead had existed in the area during this period. During this period, it is likely the site lay outside of the main centres of settlement in a wooded landscape.

Post Medieval

- 2.11. The site is first depicted in Rocque's 1761 Survey of Berkshire. This shows the site as lying in arable fields on the north-eastern edge of a higher plateau (Beecham Hill) between Kentwood Grove in the north-west and Norcott to the south. The closest development to the site consists of two buildings 350m to the south-west and the Kentwood farm buildings 400m to the west.
- 2.12. A small settlement is shown at Norcot (written Northcot), approximately 700m to the south, likely consisting of a hamlet or farmstead at this time. A field boundary is illustrated by a dotted line of trees in the vicinity of the site and possibly represents the location of the existing Tilehurst bank to the south-west of the site.
- 2.13. Church's map of the Parish of Tilehurst dating to 1811–17 shows the site on the eastern side of a large square agricultural field. Kentwood Farmhouse can be seen 485m to the west with associated ancillary buildings. There is a large, wooded area on the peak of the hill and the Tilehurst bank is indicated by a wider field boundary to the south-east of the site.
- 2.14. The later Tithe Map of 1844 identified broadly the same field delineations, and the Tilehurst bank adjacent to the site is shown as still covered with scrub and woodland at this time. The Great Western railway main line can be seen 260m north-east of the site. There are no changes to the site evident on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map of 1878, with the site on the eastern edge of a large field. A brick and tile works is indicated, 510m to the south-west of the site. Unlike the earlier map, this map indicates that the Tilehurst bank may have extended to the southern bank of the River Thames, although cut in two locations by Oxford Road and the Great Western Railway mainline.
- 2.15. The surrounding area underwent rapid residential housing development throughout the 1930s. The site is located within the grounds of a newly constructed Mission Church, which lies 50m to the north-east. According the 'History of Norcot Mission Church' (online resource), an earlier building, 'that resembled an army hut' was constructed at this location in 1929. The site remained undeveloped within the

grounds of the Mission Church. A Church Hall has been built 125m to the north-east of the site, also within the grounds of the church.

- 2.16. The Ordnance Survey map of 1967 shows a single storey irregular shaped building in the centre of the site. The Tilehurst bank has been cut by the new road, Thirlmere Avenue 50m to the south of the site, and also by a path or track adjacent to the south-east corner of the site, leading to Ringwood Road and Lyndhurst Road. The single storey, late 20th century, building shown on this map currently occupies the site and was in use as a community centre. The surrounding area of hardstanding is used for car parking.

Recent works

- 2.17. In September 2020, Cotswold Archaeology (2020a) carried out an archaeological evaluation of the site. Two trenches were excavated (Figure 2). The evaluation succeeded in its objective of identifying the presence of a ditch within Trench 2 associated with the Tilehurst Earthwork. The pottery recovered from the fill of the ditch in Trench 2 could only be broadly dated to the Late prehistoric period, Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age. Late Iron Age or early Roman pottery was also identified within the colluvial deposit within Trench 2 indicating it was likely that the feature had been abandoned by this period.
- 2.18. Trench 1 was archaeologically sterile.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objectives of the archaeological excavation were to:
- identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits/features at the site prior to their destruction by the proposed development;
 - recover and analyse any artefactual evidence;
 - sample and analyse environmental remains to create a better understanding of past land use and economy;
 - report on and publish the archaeological results at a level appropriate to their significance; and
 - compile a stable, ordered, accessible project archive.

3.2. The specific objective of the excavation is to further investigate the ditch, associated with the adjacent prehistoric earthwork, which was partially excavated in the previous evaluation.

- confirm (or refute) the interpretation of this ditch as the quarry for the adjacent earthwork
- establish as far as is practical its full dimensions, especially its width and depth
- establish through artefactual evidence and/or scientific dating a date for its construction
- establish the local environment within which the monument was constructed
- establish the infill history of the ditch and to identify any changes in the local environment over time
- establish if there was any later re-use of the monument
- make an overall assessment of the significance of the monument.

3.3. As the site is associated with the Tilehurst Earthwork, the excavation had the potential to contribute to Research Aim 10.4 (Landscape and Land use) of the Solent-Thames Research Framework (Lambtick 2014) (). Of particular relevance might have been 10.4. 4 (farming and clearance should be explored through studies of alluvial and colluvial deposits), and 10.4.7 (research may show whether fields were mainly created to control grazing. The importance of grassland management in the Iron Age economy, and the degree of specialisation of grazing farmsteads, for example whether horse raising was a major economic activity in the Thames valley, should be explored).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. An excavation area was opened within the site (Figure. 2):

- Area 1 (c. 0.005ha): located on the area of the ditch

4.2. This has been located to further investigate features recorded by the previous trial trench evaluation (see *Archaeological background*, above).

4.3. The excavation areas were set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS. Overburden was stripped from the excavation areas by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under

archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate, which was the level at which archaeological features were first encountered.

- 4.4. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.5. Deposits were assessed for their palaeo-environmental potential and samples were taken in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*.
- 4.6. Artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.7. CA will make arrangements with Reading Museum for the deposition of the project archive and, subject to agreement with the legal landowner(s), the artefact collection. 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).
- 4.8. 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 excavation 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 (palaeo-environmental evidence) are given in Section 7 and Appendix C. Details of the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres above Ordnance Datum (m aOD) are given in Appendix D.
- 5.2. The natural substrate encountered at a depth of 0.31m below the present ground level; it consisted in a friable mid-red/brown silt/clay, with frequent flint inclusions. It was overlaid by mid-brown clay/silt colluvium which was in turn overlaid by a made ground layer of mid-grey/brown silt mixed with rubble of aggregate hard core.

5.3. Artefactual dating evidence indicates that the majority of the archaeological activity on the site dates to the prehistoric period. Stratigraphic analysis of the features indicates three phases of activity:

- Phase 1 Mesolithic/Neolithic
- Phase 2: Bronze Age
- Phase 3 Iron Age

Phase 1: Mesolithic/Neolithic

5.4. No features indicative of Mesolithic or Neolithic activity were recovered during the excavation but several worked flints were recovered from the fills of Ditches 303, 305 and 315. All the lithics are unrolled or slightly rolled, and likely to be residual, however, the good condition suggests they have not moved far from where they were originally deposited.

Phase 2: Bronze Age

5.5. No archaeological features were identified that dated to the Bronze Age. Iron Age ditch **315** produced the majority of the worked flint from the excavation (33 pieces, Appendix B). The Bronze Age worked flint recovered from this ditch is likely to be residual in nature

5.6. Iron Age ditch **303** is the same ditch as **305**. Some 5 sherds of Bronze Age pottery were recovered from this ditch section, as were 18 pieces of worked flint. (Appendix B). The pottery included a single grog-tempered sherd of a possible early Bronze Age fabric and four sherds of a flint-tempered fabric possibly of Middle or Late Bronze Age date. (McSloy, this volume). The Bronze Age material recovered from both these ditches is likely to be residual in nature.

Phase 3: Iron Age

5.7. Ditch 315 was orientated NE/SW had steep sides (Figure 3). It was not fully excavated due to its close proximity to the baulk. It 0.4m long, 0.2m wide and 0.5m deep as excavated. It was cut by ditch 303 and filled by 314 which produced a single sherd of Iron Age pottery (Appendix B).

5.8. Ditch 303 was orientated NE/SW had steep sides and a v shaped base (Figure 3). It was filled with 304, 310, 311, 312 and 313. It was 2m in length as excavated, 3m

wide and 1.34m deep. It is the same ditch as 305. Some 30 sherds of Iron Age pottery were recovered from this ditch section (Appendix B).

5.9. Ditch 305 was orientated NE/SW had steep sides and a v shaped base. It was filled with 306, 307, 308, and 309 (Figure 4), It was 2m in length as excavated, 1.75m wide and 1.02m deep. It was substantially more truncated in this section than in that excavated as ditch 303. It produced a single sherd of Iron Age pottery (Appendix B). A placed partial cattle skull (*Bos taurus*) was recovered from fill 304 at a relatively high level within the ditch (Figure 3).

5.10. Geoarchaeological evidence (Kowalska this report) suggests that the fills of 303/5 were natural sediments that had accumulated within the ditch over a long period of time, probably washing in from the adjacent area, possibly from the former land surface. Erosion of the ditch sides and possible bank material is represented by clayey fills and clayey lumps within the fills.

6. THE FINDS

Pottery

by E.R. McSloy

6.1. A small assemblage of 37 sherds (230g) was recovered, the large majority from fills of a single feature, ditch **303** (Table 1). Most sherds were recovered from hand excavation of this feature, with 3 sherds (10g) retrieved from bulk soil sample 30 taken from fill **313**. In addition, two small and unfeatured bodysherds (3g) were hand recovered from ditches **315** (fill **314**) and **305** (fill **308**). The pottery is moderately fragmented, although minimal surface loss was observed. Only two rim sherds were recorded, this limiting the use of this group for dating.

6.2. The pottery has been fully recorded direct to a database which will form part of the archive, the methodology matching the standards recommended for prehistoric material (Barclay et al. 2016). Fabric codes used for recording are defined below.

Composition: Fabrics

6.3. Five fabrics, all handmade types could be defined (below). Early Bronze Age dating is tentatively suggested for fabric GTo, although it appears to be redeposited. Flint-tempered type FL may possibly of Middle or Late Bronze Age dating, although

similarly coarsely tempered types persist locally into the Iron Age and Early Roman periods.

- 6.4. The sandy fabrics GLQ, QZ and QZf appear typical of Iron Age types from the area, comparing to groups of this period from Thames Valley Park, Reading (Mephram 1997, 48–49) and Ridgeway School, Reading (Timby 2017, 18–19). Dating is supported by the few featured sherds, described (below). Glaucanitic sandy fabrics similar to type GLQ have been recorded only in small quantities from sites in the area (*ibid.*, 19) and a non-local source is probable. The glauconite suggests origins from the upper greensand, the nearest outcrops of which are c. 15–20km to the north. More distant origins are however possible and the association of this type with a vessel of saucepan pot form (below), might indicate a more westerly source, possibly in the northwest Hampshire region.

GTo Dark grey/ brown. Contains common, coarse (0.5–1mm) sub-angular grog. Buff or light brown at exterior surface and grey in core. Common linear voids from burnt-out organic inclusions; sparse, fine (<0.5mm) burnt flint.

FL Grey, with light brown exterior. common, moderately sorted medium/coarse burnt flint (0.5-1.5mm).

GLQ Dark grey. Contains abundant sub-rounded sand made up of quartz and glauconite grains; sparse, fine (<0.5mm) burnt flint

QZ Dark grey. Contains common medium/fine (<0.3mm) clear, sub-angular quartz

QZf Dark grey. Contains common medium/fine (<0.3mm) clear, sub-angular quartz and sparse, fine fine (<0.5mm) burnt flint

Vessel forms/decoration

- 6.5. As has been noted, rim and other featured sherds were sparsely present, limited to from ditch fills **313** and **304**. The latter is a small rim sherd of simple, everted form in fabric QZ which is undiagnostic, but consistent with a broader Iron Age date. The vessel from deposit **313** is represented by some 14 sherds in fabric GLQ, which includes portions from its rim and lower portion. The vessel is in the Middle Iron Age (c. 3rd to 1st centuries BC) saucepan pot tradition, with decoration as a double line of horizontal grooves below its bead-like rim and the burnished below this. As

stated, the saucepan pot tradition is more often associated with the assemblages to the west and south, although examples are known occasionally from this locality, including Thames Valley, Park, Reading (Mephram 1997, 63, fig. 36.5).

Lithics

by Jacky Sommerville

Introduction and methodology

- 6.6. A total of 46 worked lithics (321.4g) and five unworked burnt flints (36g) was retrieved from the hand-excavation and bulk soil sampling of five separate deposits. The artefacts were recorded according to broad debitage/artefact type and catalogued directly onto a Microsoft Access database. Full recording was carried out, except for chips (debitage $\leq 10\text{mm}$), which were quantified. Attributes recorded include: raw material type and quality; colour; cortex description; weight; dimensions; degree of edge damage (microflaking), rolling (abrasion) and recortication (a white or blueish surface discoloration resulting from soil conditions [Shepherd 1972, 109]); presence of breakage and burning; and knapping stage, butt and termination type for flakes, blades and bladelets.

Raw material

- 6.7. The raw material is flint in all cases, most of which is fine-grained and brown or grey in colour. Cortex is present on 24 items – it is chalky on 19 of these and abraded on five, indicating a reliance on chalk flint. The underlying bedrock is the Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk formation, so good quality chalk flint would have been available locally (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

Provenance and condition

- 6.8. All of the lithics were retrieved from ditches (Table 2) – fills **304** and **313** of ditch **303**; fills **307** and **308** of ditch **305**; and fill **314** of ditch **315**. The only flints which were not recovered in association with Iron Age pottery are the two flakes from fill **307** of ditch **305**. However, fill **308** of this ditch produced a single sherd of probable Iron Age date. The concept of flint knapping continuing into the Iron Age has become more widely accepted in recent years (e.g. Cooper and Humphrey 1998; Bevan 1998, 17). Humphrey and Young (1999, 59) suggest that the characteristic features of Iron Age lithic assemblages include: small assemblage size; high proportions of hinge fractures; a length/breadth ratio of 1:1 for flakes; few formal tool types; and recycling of raw materials. The lithic assemblage from Norcot

Community Centre is small and the average flake dimensions (calculated from 17 complete examples) are 36 x 31 x 9mm, which is relatively close to a length/breadth ratio of 1:1. However, only one item (from ditch **315**) was made using a blank which had been knapped in an earlier period and there is evidence that the flints include earlier prehistoric material. Three out of 24 flakes/blades terminate in hinge fractures, which is not an especially high proportion, at 12.5%. It does not appear likely that the lithics are the result of Iron Age flintworking.

- 6.9. The flints are in a relatively good condition – slight or no edge damage was noted on: all but one of the 12 items from ditch **303**; two of the four flakes from ditch **305**; and all but one of the 23 flints from ditch **315** (chips are excluded). All of the lithics are unrolled or slightly rolled. Fifteen items are broken (33%) and one is burnt (2%). A degree of recortication was observed on five of the flints from ditches **303** and **315**. Most or all of the flints are likely to be residual, however, the good condition suggests they have not moved far from where they were originally deposited.

Range and variety

Primary technology

- 6.10. Debitage totals 41 items – three blades, one bladelet, seven chips and 30 flakes. The presence of four blade-proportioned items, in addition to one flake from ditch **303** which was removed using a ‘soft’ hammer, indicates that a proportion of the assemblage is likely to be of Mesolithic or Early Neolithic date, as blade technology and ‘soft’ hammer percussion were in use during those periods. The remaining flakes do not display chronologically diagnostic features.
- 6.11. Just one core was recovered – a discoidal type from ditch **303**. Discoidal cores were used for the production of flakes and are usually considered to be Late Neolithic in date (Edmonds 1995, 82).

Secondary technology

- 6.12. The assemblage includes four retouched tools – a piercer (made using a flake blank) and retouched flake from ditch **303**, and two microdenticulates from ditch **315**. The tools from ditch **303** are not closely dateable types. Microdenticulates were in use until the Bronze Age (Saville 2002, 96), but are particularly common in Mesolithic and Early Neolithic assemblages (Pitts and Jacobi 1979, 173). One of the microdenticulates from ditch **315** was made on a blade blank, which supports

Mesolithic or Early Neolithic dating for this item. This tool type is thought to have been used for plant processing (Jensen 1994).

7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Animal Bone

by Andy Clarke

- 7.1. A partial cattle skull (*Bos taurus*) was recovered from deposit **304** a fill of ditch **303**. Artefactual material dating to the Middle Iron Age was also recovered from this feature. The skull was very poorly preserved showing heavy surface erosion consistent with exposure to the elements causing further fragmentation upon lifting and cleaning. As a result, very little osteological information could be retrieved, the skull was from a mature animal, but it was not possible to estimate an age at death. In addition, if any cut marks linked to butchery practice were present, they have now been completely obscured by the surface erosion.
- 7.2. The recovery of a single skull in this feature is suggestive of a deliberate deposition, a practice that has been frequently noted in the Bronze Age. However, this was not a common practice with cattle bone in the Iron Age (Morris, 2011). As the interpretation of ditch **303** suggests an open feature that gradually silted up, potentially the skull is the result of the disposal of meat-poor bone waste, with any other fragments eroding or taken by scavenging animals.

Paleoenvironmental

by Sarah F Wyles

- 7.3. A sampling strategy was followed on site to try to address the major aims stated in the WSI, namely to try to establish the nature of the local environment and whether this changed during the infilling of the ditch and also to help establish the date of the ditch's construction.
- 7.4. Three bulk samples were taken from the basal fills of ditches **303** and **305** and also from the lowest fill reached in ditch **315**. It was hoped that these samples would contain suitable material from radiocarbon dating.
- 7.5. A sequence of four monoliths were taken from the sections of ditches **303** and **315** to enable detailed sedimentary descriptions of the ditch infills. These monoliths

were available for subsampling for the recovery of pollen if, on examination of these deposits in detail, it was thought that pollen is likely to be preserved.

- 7.6. As establishing the nature of the local landscape history is a key question for this site, a series of 15 small contiguous samples were taken from the sections of ditches **303** and **315** alongside the monoliths for the possible recovery of molluscan remains.
- 7.7. The bulk environmental samples were processed by standard flotation procedures (CA Technical Manual No.2). Preliminary identifications of plant macrofossils are noted in Table 1, following nomenclature of Stace (1997). The flots were small in size with low numbers of rooty material and uncharred seeds. The charred material was poorly preserved, and the charcoal fragments were very comminuted. A single hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) shell fragment was recovered from ditch **303** (sample 30). The sparse charred material in these assemblages may be representative of dispersed/wind-blown material and it provides no indication of the likely date of these deposits. This material is not suitable for radiocarbon dating.
- 7.8. The monoliths have been described (Kowalska this report) and it has been concluded that it is unlikely that countable or well-preserved concentrations of pollen would be present in these sediments. In addition, the sandy nature of the sediments could cause translocation of the fine pollen grain down the profile. As a result, no pollen work has been undertaken (as agreed with Roland Smith) on these deposits.
- 7.9. No molluscan remains were recovered in the bulk samples other than a single modern shell of the shade loving species *Vitrea* sp. which still had its periostracum coating. The sandy clay and clayey sand nature of the sediments is not conducive for mollusc preservation and it is unlikely that molluscan remains would be preserved in enough numbers to be able to ascertain a detailed local landscape history. As a result, the small contiguous samples have not been processed (as agreed with Roland Smith)
- 7.10. Unfortunately, the poor preservation and dearth of environmental remains within the samples from these ditches has meant that the environmental work has not been able to provide any information on the nature of the local environment and whether

this changed during the infilling of the ditches or any help with establishing the date of the construction of these ditches.

8. GEOARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by Agata Kowalska

Introduction

8.1. Four monolith samples were taken from two Prehistoric boundary ditches (fig 1):

- Ditch 315, the earlier boundary ditch – monolith sample 32 from the upper fill of the ditch. Ditch 315 was cut by the later boundary ditch 303.
- Ditch **303**, the later boundary ditch – monolith samples 33, 34 and 35.

8.2. The British Geological Survey map (BGS 2020) shows the bedrock geology of the site as Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation that formed between 89.8 and 72.1 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. According to the BGS maps the superficial deposits within the excavated area comprises Head Deposit. The superficial Head Deposit has formed by solifluction processes under cold climatic conditions during the Pleistocene. On the site the Head Deposit, context 302, consisted of brown to strong brown sandy clay with poorly sorted angular to rounded flint pebbles and cobbles. The site lies at around 60.0m Ordnance Datum (OD), in the middle of a slope leading to the River Thames. The Head Deposit was washed down the slope from the higher elevations and most likely derived from the Lambeth Group and/or Black Park Gravel Member that lie at around 76m OD to the south west of the site.

8.3. The main aims of this report are to:

- To describe and interpret the ditch sediments in order to characterise the depositional processes within these features.
- To assess the palaeoenvironmental potential of the sediments for any palaeoenvironmental evidence that would provide information regarding the nature of the environment in which the deposits accumulated and human activities on the site.



Figure 1 Section showing monolith samples taken from earlier ditch 315 (on the left) and ditch 303.

Methodology

- 8.4. Four monolith samples were retained in steel tins measuring 100 x 100 x 500mm and 100 x 100 x 250 mm and were then wrapped and labelled following standard sampling procedures (CA 2017).
- 8.5. The monoliths were opened, and the deposits cleaned, photographed and recorded. The lithostratigraphy of the samples was described according to standard geological criteria provided by Jones et al. 1999; Munsell Color 2018; and Tucker 2011. All observations have been summarised in tables 1 to 4.

Results

- 8.6. The lithological descriptions of the monolith samples are presented in tables 1 to 4. The text description is in stratigraphic order with the earliest unit described first. Each sequence is presented separately and followed by the discussion. The off-site monolith description is supported by on-site description of the sediments.

Ditch 315, monolith 32

- 8.7. The monolith sample was taken from the upper part of ditch **315**. The ditch was not fully excavated due to the limit of the excavation area and the presence of modern services.
- 8.8. Unit 1, context **314**, was a strong brown clayey sand with rare angular to rounded small to large flint pebbles. The Unit was friable and homogenous. Common micropores, greyish patches and manganese accumulation were recorded throughout the Unit during the on-site description. Very rare (<1%) flecks of charcoal, pottery sherds and flint flakes were recovered from this Unit.
- 8.9. The medium to fine sand, clays and poorly sorted flint gravels derived from the Head Deposit encountered on the site. The homogenous texture and low quantity of cultural material implies accumulation due to natural processes, possibly slope wash combined with blown wind material. The presence of micropores and greyish patches suggests bioturbations by root and/or worm activity. There is an indication that after the accumulation of the sediments, a sparse vegetation occurred within the ditch. The manganese impregnation could be associated with probable mineralised organic matter.

Ditch 303, monoliths: 33, 34 and 35

- 8.10. The lowermost Unit 7, context **302**, consists of a firm, strong brown sandy clay with common poorly sorted angular to rounded flint cobbles and pebbles. The Unit represents the natural geology – Head Deposit - encountered on the site.
- 8.11. A sharp contact boundary separated Unit 7 from Unit 6, context **313**. The Unit was c. 0.15m thick and consisted of a friable, brown sandy clay with common angular to subrounded flint cobbles and pebbles. Occasional reddish iron oxidised mottling and manganese accumulations were concentrated mainly at the base of the Unit. The Unit was porous. Very rare charcoal granules and pottery fragments were noted.
- 8.12. The sharp contact boundary represents the cut of ditch **303**. Unit 6 is homogenous and much sandier than the natural geology, context **302**. The Unit is not representative of sediments entirely weathered from the ditch sides soon after construction, but it could be suggested that the Unit represents a natural silting of the ditch. The fine to medium sands are likely to have been washed in from the

former surrounding soil horizons due to rainfall. The common flint cobbles derived from the Head Deposit accumulated at the bottom of the ditch. The redox features recorded at the base of the unit formed under changing oxidation condition caused by movement of the water table. Micropores can indicate roots activity. The rare charcoal and pottery fragments could be associated with human activity nearby.

- 8.13. Unit 5, context **313** was a friable, brown sandy clay with common angular to subrounded flint cobbles and pebbles. Patches of strong brown clay and brown clayey sand were recorded throughout the Unit. Occasional manganese accumulation and a porous structure were also noted. The Unit was c. 0.45m thick.
- 8.14. The Unit represents the upper part of context **313** which was characterized by a heterogeneous/mixed appearance. The common rounded lumps of clay could be derived from the erosion of exposed sides of the ditch. It seems most likely that the Unit represents a continuous natural silting of the ditch caused by the erosion of the unstable and unvegetated slopes of the ditch and washed in material from exposed profiles of former land surfaces.
- 8.15. Micropores recorded within the Unit may suggest the presence of vegetation. Also, the manganese staining can imply that the fluctuating water table led to mottling and organic matter replacement by iron and manganese. The heterogeneous nature of the Unit could be a result of bioturbation by earthworm activity.
- 8.16. A diffuse contact boundary separated Unit 5 from Unit 4, context **312**. The Unit was c. 0.06m thick and consisted of friable, strong brown sandy clay with rare angular to subrounded small to medium flint pebbles and rare manganese accumulations. The Unit most likely represents a slump deposit from the east slope of the ditch that possibly derived from the erosion of the side of the ditch or bank material.
- 8.17. Unit 3, context **311**, was a dark yellow/brown clay/sand with rare angular to subrounded flint cobbles and pebbles. The Unit was porous with occasional manganese accumulations. The contact boundary with the lower context **313** was diffuse possibly due to mixing by the post-depositional earthworm activity.
- 8.18. Unit 3 represents a natural silting of the ditch caused by natural processes such as a possible erosion of ditch slopes, washed in sediments due to rainfall and wind-

blown material. Rare pottery sherd fragments and charcoal recorded in this Unit on site may suggest some human activity nearby.

- 8.19. The Unit is relatively darker and seems to be more organic than the others fills. Micropores can indicate roots activity and the manganese staining suggest organic matter replacement by oxides, nevertheless no clear soil horizon was recorded.
- 8.20. Unit 3 was overlain by Unit 2, context **304**. The Unit was c. 0.22m thick and consisted of friable dark yellow/brown clay/sand with rare angular to subrounded flint cobbles and pebbles. Common lumps of brown sandy clay were recorded. The Unit was porous. Occasional manganese accumulations and very rare charcoal fragments were observed. Worm burrows were noted throughout the Unit. A diffuse contact boundary separated the Unit from Unit 3.
- 8.21. The diffuse contact suggests continuous sedimentation under the same natural processes. It should be noted that the Unit was bioturbated by earthworm activity. The post-depositional bioturbations could lead to mixing and blurring of interfaces between separate contexts. Unit 2 accumulated due to natural silting such as slope wash and erosion of the ditch sides and possibly bank material. An animal skull was recorded at the top of the context and possibly marks the former surface. The few flint flakes and pottery sherds indicate nearby human activity.
- 8.22. The uppermost Unit 1, context **310** was separated by a sharp contact boundary from Unit 2. Unit 1 was a friable, strong brown sand/silt/clay with rare angular to subrounded flint cobbles and pebbles. The Unit was porous with greyish patches of sandy clay to clayey sand. Manganese accumulations were common. Fragments of pottery and earthworm burrows were also noted.
- 8.23. A sharp, erosional contact boundary separated Unit 1 and Unit 2, which may suggest changes in depositional processes. The general texture and colour suggest slumping along the west side of the ditch. The greyish patches could be mixed into the redeposited clay by post-depositional bioturbations or could be associated with erosion of a former soil. The poorly sorted and randomly distributed flint gravel implies relatively higher energy of deposition, such as mass movement/colluvium. The presence of cultural material implies human activity nearby, so some deliberate backfilling cannot be excluded. Context **310** was truncated by modern activity – context 300.

Discussion

Ditch 315

- 8.24. The fill recorded within the partially excavated ditch **315** was natural in origin and no evidence for deliberate backfilling was observed.

Ditch 303

- 8.25. The sediments recorded within the monolith samples represent natural sediments that accumulated within the ditch over a long period of time. The sediments were washed in from the adjacent area, possibly from the former land surface. Erosion of the ditch sides and possible bank material is represented by the clayey fills and clayey lumps within the fills. Any bank material could have been washed over the berm into the ditch as a result of gully erosion of the bank slopes. This may occur in the early years of the ditch history, as the erodibility of fine clayey sand and sandy clays is relatively high and colonisation by vegetation, and in consequence stabilisation, of sandy material is slower (Crabtree 1990, 232).
- 8.26. The charcoal fragments could be blown-in by wind or mixed by earthworms' activity. Although it is possible that pottery sherds and worked flints could have been deliberately dumped into the ditch on a number of occasions (as they were randomly distributed throughout the fills of the ditch), it should be emphasised that the cultural material could have been washed in from the surrounding area.
- 8.27. The presence of micropores indicates that there was some vegetation within the ditch. Earthworms activity was also recorded, and this could cause blurring of contact boundaries between contexts and the homogenisation of the sediments. No evidence for soil stabilization was recorded within the ditch.

Recommendations

- 8.28. The visual assessment of the monolith samples determined that these sediments were predominantly sandy clays and clayey sands. It is unlikely that countable or well-preserved concentrations of pollen would be present in these sediments and the sandy nature of the sediments could cause translocation of any pollen grains down the profile. No pollen analysis is recommended as the potential from the ditches is low.

9. DISCUSSION

- 9.1. The excavation succeeded in its objective of further characterizing the ditch associated with the Tilehurst Earthwork, as well as identifying a potentially earlier ditch. The ditches were likely dug in the Middle Iron Age but by the Late Iron Age had been abandoned. The material excavated from the ditches is likely to have been used in the construction of the Tilehurst Earthwork.
- 9.2. The relatively shallow depth of the ditches, compared to the height of the Tilehurst Earthwork can be explained by the truncation of the ditches in the modern period. This truncation is shown in the difference in the depth of Ditch **303** compared to Ditch **305**. However, even assuming that there has been a degree of truncation to the ditches since they were initially constructed, it seems unlikely that the two ditches identified (**303/305**, and **315**) would have contained enough material to build the Tilehurst Embankment, and it is therefore possible that a similar series of ditches may also exist on the opposite side of the Tilehurst Earthwork, outside the scope of this report.
- 9.3. Ditch **315** is stratigraphically earlier than Ditch **303/305** but the only dating evidence recovered from this feature is a single sherd in a sandy fabric of probable Iron Age date. The limited scope of the investigation into this ditch due to it being on the edge of the boundary to the site, has therefore limited our ability to securely date this feature. But similarly, to Ditch **303/305** mentioned below it is likely to have been abandoned by the Late Iron Age.
- 9.4. The pottery recovered from the fill of ditch **303/305** ranged from the Early Bronze Age to the Middle Iron Age in date. The Bronze Age pottery is likely to be residual in nature, with the majority of the pottery from the Middle Iron Age.
- 9.5. The recovery of a single cattle skull within the ditch is suggestive of a deliberate deposition, a practice that has been frequently noted in the Bronze Age. However, this was not a common practice with cattle bone in the Iron Age. As the interpretation of ditch **303** suggests an open feature that gradually silted up, the skull is potentially the result of the disposal of meat-poor bone waste in the Iron Age.
- 9.6. It is likely, based on the evidence recovered, that Ditch **303/305** was dug in the Middle Iron Age, and is likely to be broadly contemporaneous to similar earthwork

features such as Grim's Ditch. The archaeological evidence would seem to indicate that by the Late Iron Age the feature had been abandoned.

- 9.7. Neolithic and Mesolithic flints recovered from the fill of the ditch are most likely residual in nature but are indicative of activity from these periods in the vicinity of the site, most likely due to its close proximity to the River Thames.

10. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 10.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Bush, assisted by Agata Kowalska. This report was written by Ray Kennedy. The finds evidence reports were written by Jacky Sommerville, Ed McSloy and Andy Clarke. The biological evidence report was written Sarah Wyles. The paleoenvironment report was written by Agata Kowalska. The animal bone report was written by Andy Clarke. The report illustrations were prepared by Ryan Wilson. The project archive has been compiled by Zoe Emery, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ray Kennedy.

11. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 2020 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/> Accessed 17
November 2020

Cotswold Archaeology (CA), 2020a, Norcot Community Centre, Reading, Berkshire:
Archaeological Evaluation CA typescript report AN0207_1

CA, 2020b, Norcot Community Centre, Reading, Berkshire: Written Scheme of
Investigation for an Archaeological Excavation

Ford S, 1981, 'Linear Earthworks on the Berkshire Downs' in Berkshire
Archaeological Journal 71: 3-19.

Green, H. S. 1980 *The Flint Arrowheads of the British Isles: A detailed study of
materials from England and Wales with comparanda from Scotland and
Ireland. Part i.* BAR British Series 75(i). Oxford

Lambrick, G. 2014 *The Later Bronze Age and Iron Age: Research Agenda in Hey,
G. and Hind, J. Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic
Environment Resource Assessments and Research Agendas. Project
Report.* Oxford Wessex Archaeology.

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2019 National Planning
Policy Framework

WSP, 2018, *Norcot Community Centre and Affordable Housing, Reading,
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* Unpublished client Report Ref:
50823

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
300	Layer		Made ground	Dark greyish brown sandy clay mixed with modern debris. Compact			0.23
301	void	void	void	void	void	void	void
302	Layer		Natural	Friable, mid red brown, silty clay, frequent sub angular flint inclusions			0.31
303	Cut		Ditch	Linear in plan with steep sides and a v shaped base	2	3	1.34
304	Fill	303	Fill of ditch	Mid greyish brown friable clayey sand	2	3	0.22
305	Cut		Ditch	Linear in plan with steep sides and a v shaped base	2	1.75	1.02
306	Fill	305	Fill of ditch	Mid brown sandy clay	1	0.74	0.54
307	Fill	305	Fill of ditch	Light brown grey clayey sand	2	1.25	0.8
308	Fill	305	Fill of ditch	Mid brown grey clayey sand	2	1.64	0.36
309	Fill	305	Fill of ditch	Mid grey sandy clay	2	0.63	0.13
310	Fill	303	Fill of ditch	Mid brown sandy clay	2	1.7	0.4
311	Fill	303	Fill of ditch	Mid greyish brown silty sand, slightly clayey	2	2	0.17
312	Fill	303	Fill of ditch	Mid brown sandy clay	2	1.04	0.14
313	Fill	303	Fill of ditch	Mid greyish brown sandy clay	2	1.12	0.66
314	Fill	315	Fill of ditch	Mid greyish brown clayey sand	0.4	0.2	0.5
315	Cut		Ditch	Linear in plan with steep sides, not fully excavated	0.4	0.2	0.5

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Table 1: Pottery quantification by fabric, shown by feature and deposit.

Feature	Fill	Fabric	Ct.	Wt.(g)
Ditch 303	304	FL	1	7
	304	GLQ	8	23
	304	QZ	4	39
	304	QZf	2	7
	311	GTo	1	8
	313	FL	3	13
	313	GLQ	15	122
	313	QZf	1	8
<i>Sub-total</i>			35	227
Ditch 305	308	QZ	1	2
Ditch 315	314	QZf	1	1
Total			37	230

References

Barclay A., Booth P., Knight D., Evans J., Brown D.H. and Wood I., 2016 A standard for pottery studies in Archaeology Historic England.

Dawson, T., Ford, S. and Taylor, A., 2017 Archaeological Excavations on Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Medieval Sites in Reading and Wokingham, Berkshire Reading, Thames Valley Archaeological Services Occasional Paper 21

Mephram, L., 1997 'Iron Age and Romano-British Pottery', in Barnes et al. 1997, 9–77

Barnes, I, Butterworth, C.A., Hawkes, J.W. and Smith, L. 1997 Excavations at Thames Valley Park, Reading 1986–88: Prehistoric and Romano-British occupation of the Floodplain and Terrace of the River Thames, Salisbury, Wessex Archaeology Rep. 14

Timby, J. 2017, 'The Pottery', in Dawson et al 2017, 17–24

Table 2 Flint assemblage by provenance

Type	Iron Age Ditch 303	Iron Age Ditch 305	Iron Age Ditch 315	Total
Burnt unworked	1	1	3	5
Primary technology				
Blade	2		1	3
Bladelet			1	1
Chip			7	7
Core	1			1
Flake	7	4	19	30
Secondary technology				

Microdenticulate			2	2
Piercer	1			1
Retouched flake	1			1
Total	13	5	33	51

Beamish, M. 1998 'A Middle Iron Age Site at Wanlip, Leicestershire'. *Trans. Leicestershire Archaeol. & Hist. Soc.* 72, 1–91

Bevan, L. 1998 'Flint', in Birmingham University Field Archaeological Unit 1998, 17–8

Birmingham University Field Archaeological Unit. 1998 *The Excavation of an Iron Age Settlement at Covert Farm (DIRFT East), Crick, Northamptonshire: Post Excavation Assessment and Updated Research Design. Project No. 468*

Cooper, L. and Humphrey, J. 1998 'The Lithics', in Beamish, M. 1998, 63–74

Edmonds, M. 1995. *Stone Tools and Society. Working Stone in Neolithic and Bronze Age Britain.* London. B T Batsford Ltd

Humphrey, J. and Young, R. 1999 'Flint Use in Later Bronze Age and Iron Age England – Still a Fiction?' *Lithics* 20, 57–61

Jensen, J. J. 1994 *Flint tools and plant working* Arhus, Denmark, Arhus University Press

Pitts, M. W. and Jacobi, R. M. 1979 'Some aspects of change in flaked stone industries of the Mesolithic and Neolithic in Southern Britain', *J. Archaeol. Sci.* 6, 163–77

Saville, A. 2002 'Lithic artefacts from Neolithic Causewayed Enclosures: Character and meaning', in Varndell, G. and Topping P. 2002, 91–105

Shepherd, W. 1972 *Flint: Its Origin, Properties & Uses.* London. Faber and Faber

Varndell, G. and Topping P. 2002 *Enclosures in Neolithic Europe: Essays on Causewayed and Non-Causewayed sites* Oxford, Oxbow Books

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Viewed 17 November 2020

APPENDIX C: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Table 1: Identified animal species by fragment count (NISP) and weight and context.

Cut	Fill	BOS	Total	Weight (g)
303	304		1	154
Total			1	1
Weight			154	154

BOS = cattle

Bibliography

Morris, J. 2011 Investigating Animal Burials: Ritual, mundane and beyond. BAR British Series 535

Table 2 Paleoenvironmental evidence

Feature	Context	Sample	Processed vol (L)	Unprocessed vol (L)	Flot size (ml)	Roots %	Grain	Chaff	Charred Other	Charred Other notes	Charcoal > 4/2mm	Other
Iron Age Ditches												
303	313	30	20	10	5	25	-	-	*	<i>Corylus avellana</i> shell frag x 1	-/*	-
305	307	31	20	20	5	15	-	-	-	-	*/*	-
315	314	36	20	20	5	5	-	-	-	-	*/*	-

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

References

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2012 The taking and processing of environmental and other samples from archaeological sites: Technical Manual No. 2

Stace, C. 1997 New Flora of the British Isles. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press Books

APPENDIX D: MONOLITH

Table 1 Monolith sample 32, ditch 315.

Monolith	Unit	Depth [m]	Context	Description
	1	0-0.25	314	7.5YR 5/6 strong brown, friable clayey sand (fine to medium sand). Rare (<5%) angular to rounded small to large flint pebbles (<50mm). Very rare (<1%) flecks of charcoal.

Table 2 Monolith sample 35, ditch 303.

Monolith	Unit	Depth [m]	Context	Description
	1	0-0.23	310	7.5 YR 4/6 strong brown sandy silty clay (medium to fine sand). Friable. Rare (<5%) angular to subrounded flint cobbles and pebbles (<100mm). Porous. Occasional manganese accumulations. Sharp contact with:
	2	0.23-0.45	304	10YR 4/4 dark yellowish brown clayey sand (medium to fine). Friable. Rare (<5%) angular to subrounded flint cobbles and pebbles (<80mm). Porous. Occasional manganese accumulations present. Very rare charcoal fragments. Worm burrows present. Diffuse contact with:
	3	0.45-0.50	311	10YR 4/4 dark yellowish brown clayey sand (medium to fine). Friable. Rare (<5%) angular to subrounded flint cobbles and pebbles (<80mm). Porous. Occasional manganese accumulations present.

Table 3 Monolith sample 34, ditch 303.

Monolith	Unit	Depth [m]	Context	Description
	4	0-0.06	312 (context 304 not recorded)	<i>c. 0.15m overlap with monolith 35.</i> 7.5YR 5/6 strong brown sandy clay (medium to fine sand). Friable. Very rare (<3%) angular to subrounded small to medium flint pebbles (<20mm). Rare manganese accumulations. Diffuse contact with:
	5	0.06-0.50	313	10YR 5/3 brown sandy clay (medium to fine sand). Friable. Common (<10) angular to subrounded flint cobbles and pebbles (<120mm). Porous. Patches of strong brown clay and brown clayey sand. Occasional manganese accumulation throughout.

Table 4 Monolith sample 33, ditch 303.

Monolith	Unit	Depth [m]	Context	Description
	6	0-0.15	313	10YR 5/3 brown sandy clay (medium to fine sand). Friable. Common (<10) angular to subrounded flint cobbles and pebbles (<120mm). Porous. Occasional reddish Fe mottling and manganese accumulations. Very rare charcoal granules (<2mm). Sharp contact with:
	7	0.15-0.25	302	7.5YR 5/8 strong brown sandy clay (medium to fine sand). Firm. Oxidised. Common (<10%) poorly sorted angular to rounded flint cobbles and pebbles (<150mm).

References

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2020 Geology of Britain Viewer <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>? Accessed 16.10.2020.

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017 *Fieldwork Recording Manual. Technical Manual No.1.*

Crabtree, K. 1990 Experimental Earthworks in the United Kingdom. In: Robinson, D. (ed.) *Experimentation and Reconstruction in Environmental Archaeology.* Oxbow Books, 225-236.

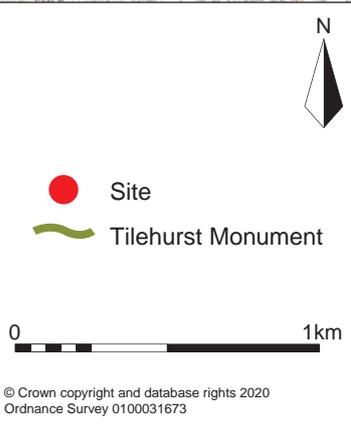
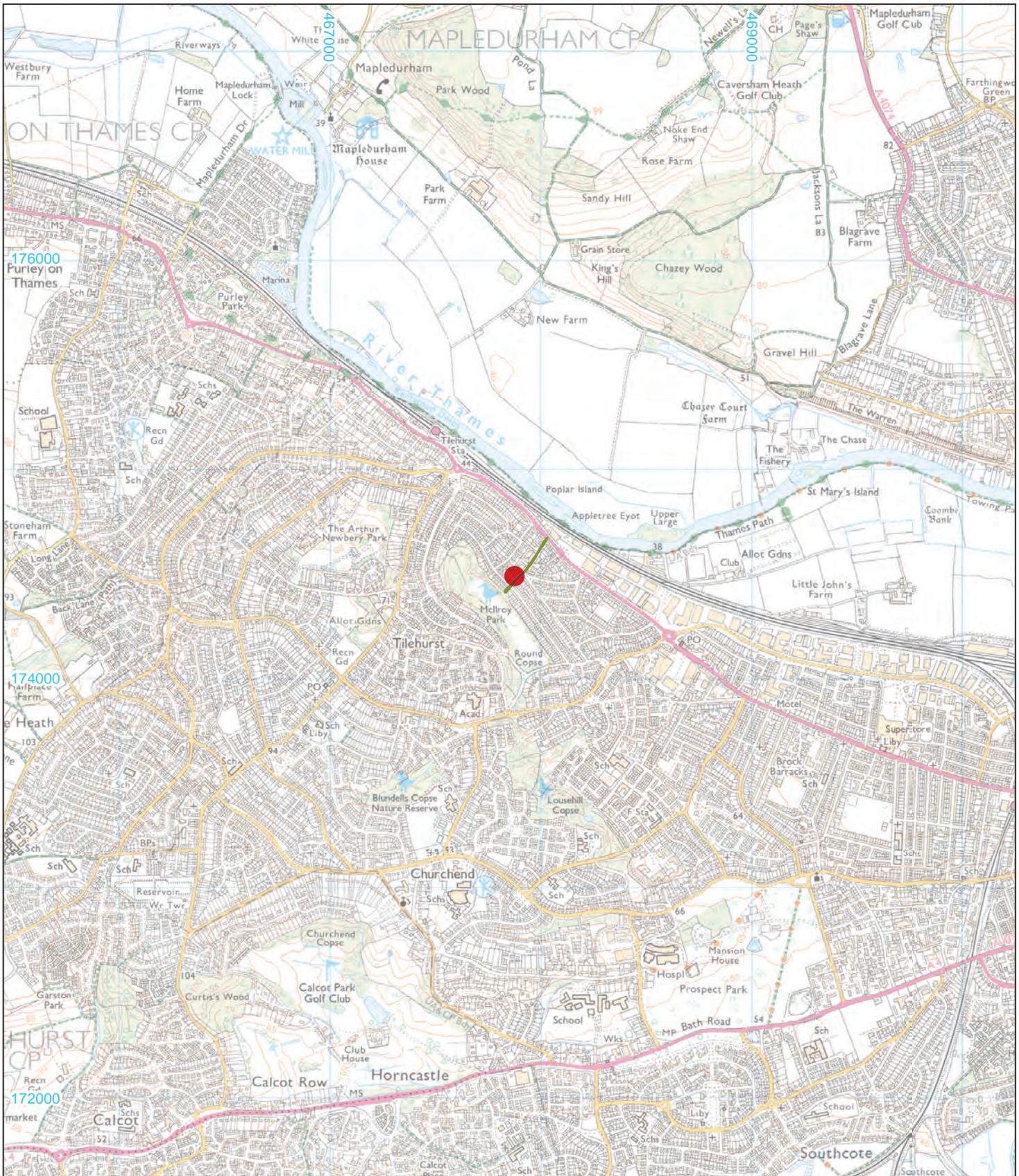
Jones A.P., Trucker M.E. and Hart J.K. 1999 *The Description and Analysis of Quaternary Stratigraphic Field Sections.* Quaternary Technical Association. *Technical Guide No. 7.* London, 27-76.

Munsell Color 2018 *Munsell Soil Colour Chart. 2009 Revision.* Michigan.

Tucker M. E. 2011 *Sedimentary Rocks in the Field. A Practical Guide*. 4th ed. Wiley-Blackwell.

APPENDIX E: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Norcot Community Centre, Reading, Berkshire	
Short description	<p>In October 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological excavation of land at Norcot Community Centre, in Reading, Berkshire. An area of c.0.005ha was excavated within the site.</p> <p>The excavation succeeded in its objective of further characterising the ditch associated with the Tilehurst Bank Linear Earthwork, as well as identifying a potentially earlier ditch. The ditches were likely to have been dug in the Middle Iron Age but by the Late Iron Age had been abandoned. The material excavated from the ditches is likely to have been used in the construction of the Tilehurst Bank. Residual material from the Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Bronze Age periods was recovered from the fill of the main ditch, but no features of these dates were identified.</p>	
Project dates	12-15 October 2020	
Project type	Excavation	
Previous work	Field evaluation (CA 2020a)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Norcot Community Centre, Reading, Berkshire	
Study area (m ² /ha)	0.005ha	
Site co-ordinates	467909 174551	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator		
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Ray Kennedy	
Project Supervisor	Steve Bush	
MONUMENT TYPE		
	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
	Reading Museum	
Physical		ceramics, animal bone etc
Paper		Context sheets, matrices etc
Digital		Database, digital photos etc
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology, 2020, <i>Norcot Community Centre, Reading, Berkshire: Archaeological Excavation CA typescript report AN0226_1</i>		



Cotswold Archaeology

Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 573970
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
 Norcot Community Centre, Reading, Berkshire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY RW **PROJECT NO.** AN0226 **FIGURE NO.**
CHECKED BY DJB **DATE** 16/09/2020 **1**
APPROVED BY SB **SCALE**@A4 1:25,000

© Crown copyright and database rights 2020
 Ordnance Survey 0100031673



- Site boundary
- Constraint
- Tilehurst Monument

- Excavation (CA 2020)
- Limit of excavation (top)
 - Limit of excavation (bottom)
 - Archaeological feature (excavated / unexcavated)
 - Modern feature
 - A Section line

- Previous evaluation (CA 2020)
- Previous evaluation trench
 - Modern feature



© Crown copyright and database rights 2020 Ordnance Survey 0100031673

Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Exeter 01392 573970
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
Norcot Community Centre, Reading, Berkshire

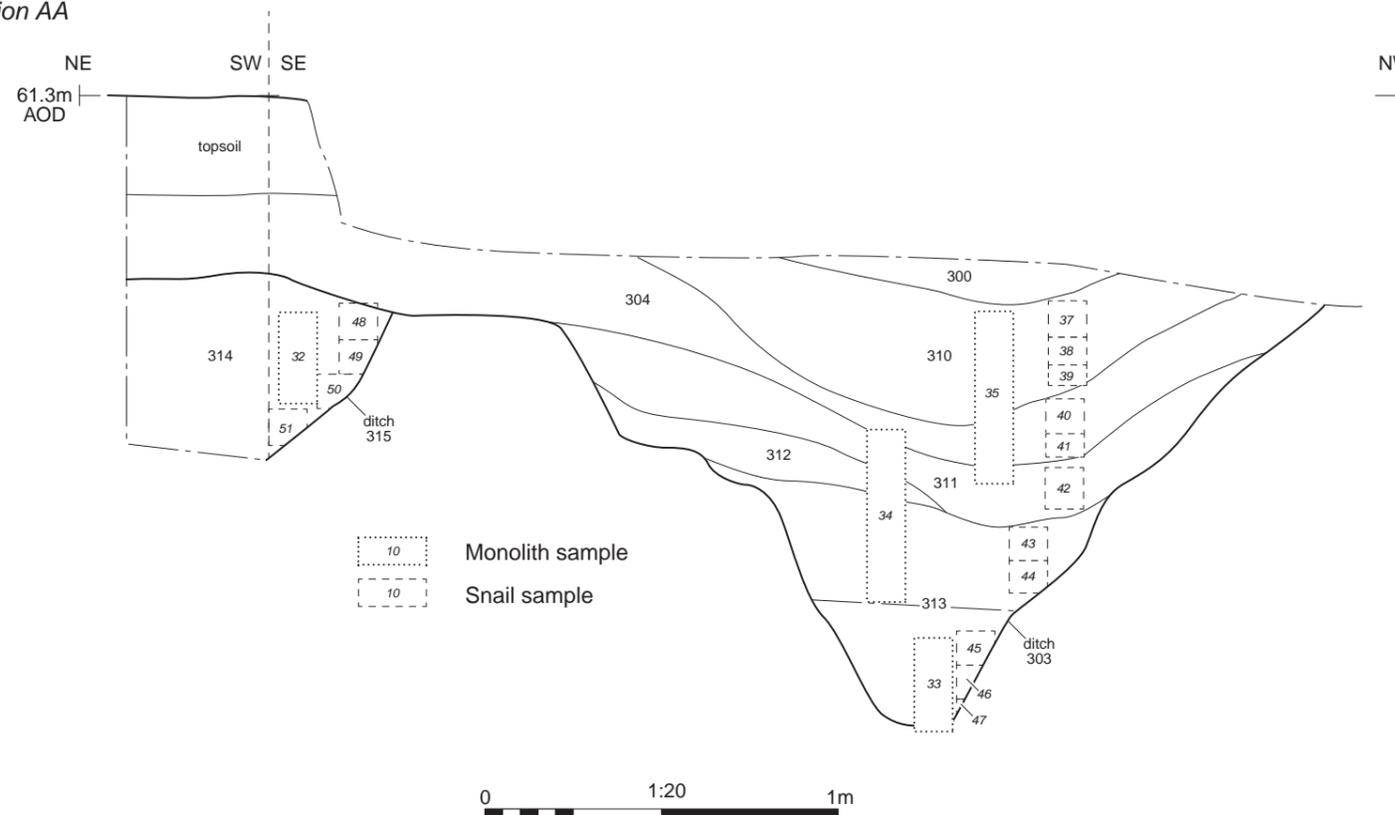
FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	AN0226	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	16/09/2020	2
APPROVED BY	SB	SCALE@A3	1:100	



Ditches 315 (left) and 303 (centre), looking south-west (2m scale)

Section AA



Ditches 315 (left) and 303 (right), looking south-west (0.4m scale)



Animal Skull RA1, looking north-west (0.3m scale)


Cotswold Archaeology
 Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 573970
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

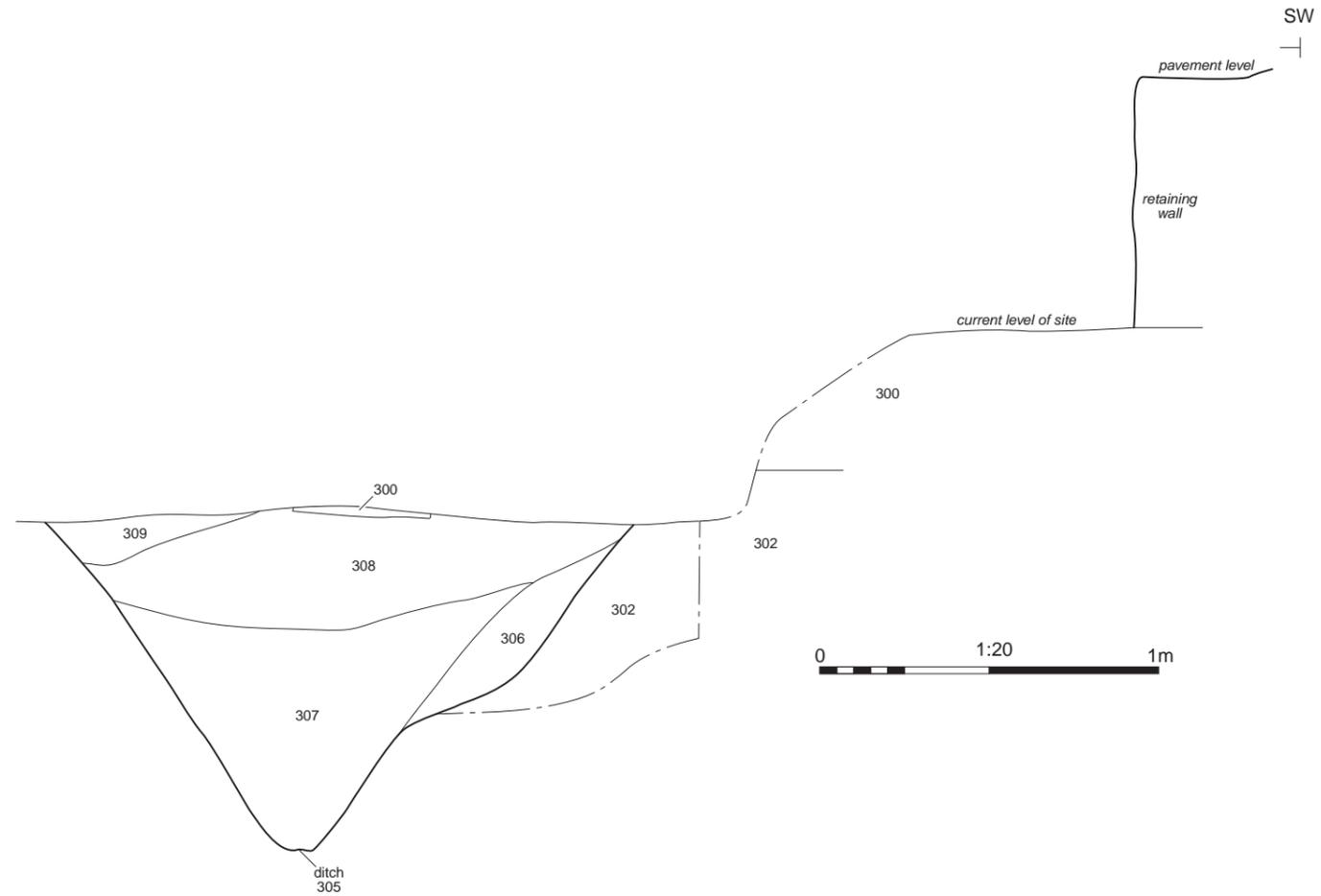
PROJECT TITLE
 Norcot Community Centre, Reading,
 Berkshire

FIGURE TITLE
**Ditches 303 and 315: section and
 photographs**

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	AN0226	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	16/09/2020	3
APPROVED BY	SB	SCALE	@A3 1:20	

Section BB

NE
62.4m
AOD



Ditch 305, looking north-east (2m scale)


Cotswold Archaeology
 Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 573970
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
 Norcot Community Centre, Reading,
 Berkshire

FIGURE TITLE
Ditches 305: section and photograph

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	AN0226	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	16/09/2020	4
APPROVED BY	SB	SCALE	@A3 1:20	

Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Kemble Enterprise Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Exeter Office

Unit 1, Clyst Units
Cofton Road
Marsh Barton
Exeter
EX2 8QW

t: 01392 573970

Milton Keynes Office

Unit 8 - The IO Centre
Fingle Drive, Stonebridge
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK13 0AT

t: 01908 564660

Suffolk Office

Unit 5, Plot 11, Maitland Road
Lion Barn Industrial Estate
Needham Market
Suffolk
IP6 8NZ

t: 01449 900120

e: enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

