Northern Extension, Baston, No. 1 Quarry, Lincolnshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

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Northern Extension
Baston No. 1 Quarry
Lincolnshire

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The archaeology was excavated and interpreted by Katie Hutton and Laura James. The area was surveyed and digitised by Donald Horne and Iain Forbes. The machine excavation was undertaken with great care by Terry from Neil's Plant Ltd. Jason Hawkes sorted and catalogued the finds. Bryan Crossan assisted with the illustrations.

Quarried Areas

Northern Extension Baston No. 1 quarry

Other Investigations

1. Baston Quarry Area A (1998)
2. Baston Quarry Area B (2001)
3. Baston Quarry Area C (2002)
4. Baston Quarry Areas D-E (2003)
5. Outgang Road Excavation (Heritage Lincs.)
6. Outgang Road Watching Brief (Heritage Lincs.)
7. Cross Road Watching Brief (1998-99)
8. Langtoft Common Watching Brief (2001)
9. Areas F-H The Bluebell Land (2006)
10. Glebe Land (2007 and 2008)
11. Freeman Land (2007)
12. Whitfield Land (2007)
13. Northampton Archaeological Unit (2007)

Figure 1. Location map

Introduction

Hanson Aggregates are currently promoting a site known as Baston No. 1 Quarry, Cross Road, Baston, Lincolnshire for mineral extraction. In response to a request from the Mineral Planning Authority an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the site by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (centred on NGR TF 137 154). The site lies approximately 1.5km to the east of the centre of the village of Baston.

The programme of evaluation trenching took place between 29th June and 3rd July 2009 on an area covering *c.* 19ha, the aim being to establish the presence, extent and nature of potential archaeological features highlighted in the geophysical survey (see below). Several linear features dated to the Post-Medieval period were recorded in addition to several discrete features in the form of two postholes and two gullys that were undated.

The work was carried out in line with a specification produced by CAU in relation to a brief from Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd. and approved by the Lincolnshire Development Control Archaeology Office.

Topography, Geology and Archaeological Background

The site lies on First Terrace river gravel which overlie Oxford Clay, and is situated approximately 1.6km west of Older Marine Alluvium and Nordelph peats at the former fen edge. The geology of the area is characterised by the River Welland (the site is approximately 5.5km due north of the Welland) and associated interconnected alluvial belts within which are numerous palaeochannels. The site was capped by a ploughed topsoil horizon between 0.31m and 0.43m in depth; the height of the natural geology was between 0.50m and 2.00m OD. Towards the western part of the excavation area the level was higher than that towards the east, highlighting the gradual sloping elevation of the area down to the fen edge towards the east, (see figure 3). The section in figure 8 illustrates a change in the land level of 1.00m over 500m, sloping down towards the east and the fen edge. There was no indication of subsoil, however there was evidence of plough-marks across the eastern area of the excavation. The geology was mainly gravel and sand with patches of clayey silts.

Previous Work

No intrusive investigation has previously been carried out with the proposal area. A desktop study was done in May 2007 (Richmond and Coates 2007) and a geophysical survey in January 2009 (Bartlett 2009). The findings of both these surveys are referred to where appropriate in the text.

Archaeology in the Quarry Environs

Abundant archaeology is known both within the quarry environs and surrounding landscape of the fen-edge gravel in Langtoft and Baston parishes. An impressive cropmark complex extending for several kilometres across the quarry environs appear to span several periods of activity. Four probable Bronze Age barrows have been identified from aerial survey east of the site, close to the contemporary fen edge (Hayes *et al* 1992) and further attest to the extent of the later prehistoric activity

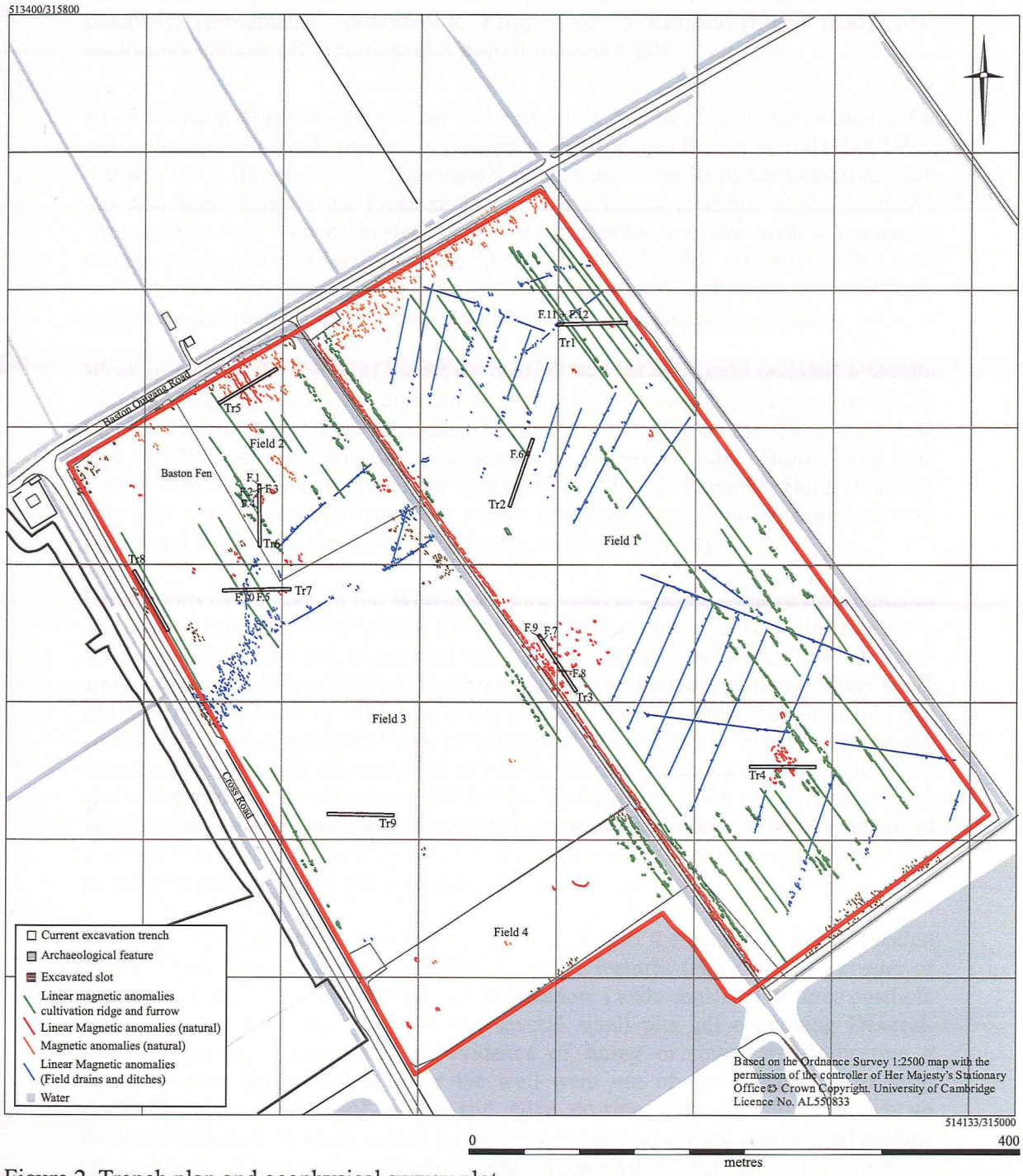

Figure 2. Trench plan and geophysical survey plot

within the Langtoft/Baston landscape. Extensive cropmarks attributed to the Romano-British period are also evidenced, including a northeast-southwest orientated trackway, (presumably connected to King Street, a Romano-British road), with enclosures running off at right angles from its northern side.

Excavations within the quarry over a decade by CAU have provided evidence for settlement spanning later prehistory through to the Romano-British period (Hall 1998; Webley 2007; Hutton 2007). Immediately west of the Cross Road site extensive work has also been done on the Freeman Land. This revealed elements of the extensive Bronze Age field system evidenced in the cropmarks, together with a cremation cemetery set around at least two ring ditches (Hutton 2008b). Slightly further west work by the Northants. Unit to the west of Freeman found evidence of Roman settlement and more of the Bronze Age field system (A. Mudd pers. comm.).

Work in 1992 in the centre of the Glebe lands (1.4km to the south) revealed a Middle Iron Age saltern which was then excavated in 1994 (Heritage Lincolnshire 1992b, Lane & Morris 2001). Two subsequent phases of excavation on the rest of the Glebe land in 2007 and 2008 revealed evidence of the extensive Middle Bronze Age field system seen elsewhere in the quarry area and on aerial photographs. Here, however, was also a settlement enclosure set within the field system and evidence of both earlier and later use of the landscape (Hutton 2008, forthcoming).

Excavations carried out on the Whitfield Land, south of Glebe, revealed linear ditches again part of the extensive Middle Bronze Age field system with complimentary pits with domestic debris that included a large quantity of pottery, perforated sea shells and a log ladder (Hutton 2008a). Three watching briefs carried out immediately south of the Whitfield Land in 1998 and 1999 revealed sparse archaeological remains that consisted of a small number of pits, postholes and linear ditches. None contained any dateable artefacts, with the exception of one pit which contained a sherd of prehistoric shell-tempered pottery (Higbee 1998; 1999). However, in 2001, an area adjacent to Whitfield to the south had three pits and two linear ditches. One of the pits contained a complete ash palstave haft, and a C14 date was obtained from the lower layer that produced a date of 1900-1510 CAL BC.

Extensive excavations on the Meadow Lands 2.2km to the southwest have revealed Middle Bronze Age and Middle to Late Iron Age features (Hall 1998). A cluster of discrete features in the northern part of the Meadow Lands consisted of three posthole structures, eighteen large pit/wells and several small pits, all containing Deverel-Rimbury pottery. There was no evidence of lining or revetment (indicating a relatively short span of use), after the well went out of use it was left to infill gradually with episodes of silting and edge erosion with occasional deliberate dumping episodes. Finds occurred in the upper tertiary layers and represented midden redeposition. It was unclear whether these represented a single small settlement or separate episodic visitations to the area, a settlement pattern involving a certain degree of residential mobility.

A Middle Iron Age saltern was excavated in the centre of the Glebe Land in 1994 that comprised of sub-circular and sub-square buildings along with considerable quantities of briquetage that included pedestals and fragments of troughs (Lane 2001). The surrounding area was excavated in December 2008, (Hutton forthcoming). This Iron

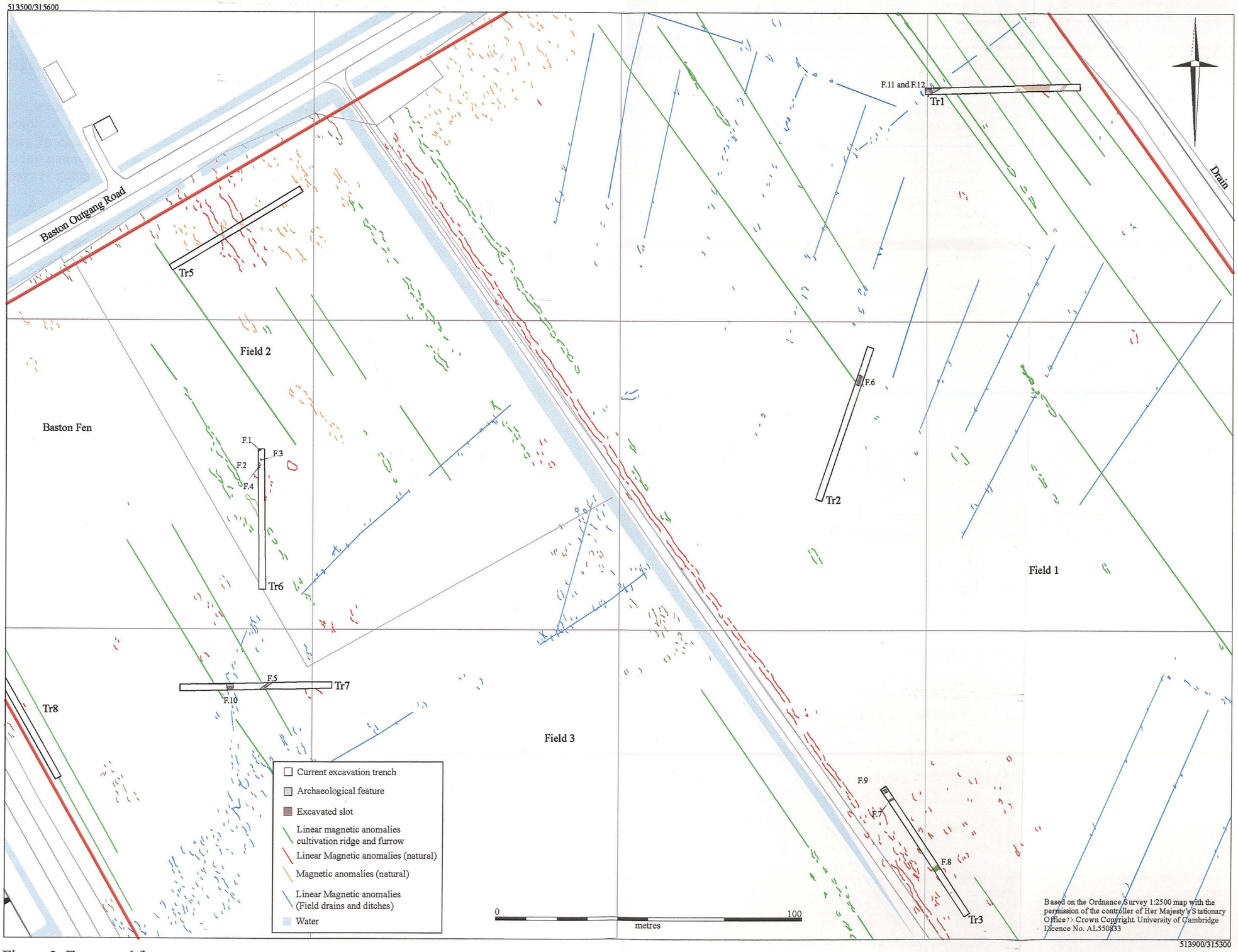

Figure 3. Excavated features

Age activity was also recorded on another site with Iron Age features revealed by a watching brief 475m to the west, on the north side of Outgang Road (Heritage Lincolnshire 1992).

Methodology

The trenches were stripped to an archaeological level with a 360° tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under careful supervision of an experienced archaeologist. In each trench this level was at the interface between the plough-soil and underlying natural geology. Within the fields every effort was made to follow existing tracks in the centre and circumference of the crop to minimize damage.

The unit modified version of the MoLAS recording system was used; features were base planned at 1:50, with sections drawn at 1:10. All postholes were half sectioned, and linear features were sampled at appropriate intervals. Archaeological features were assigned a unique number (e.g. **F.001**; bolded upon introduction within the text) and each stratigraphically distinct episode (e.g. a cut, a fill) was recorded with a unique context number (e.g. [001]).

All work was carried out with strict accordance with Statutory Health and Safety legislation and with recommendations with SCAUM. Hanson Quarry Safety Regulations were also followed. The site was surveyed into the Ordnance Survey Grid and Ordnance Datum by means of a RTK GPS unit.

Excavation Results

The evaluation consisted of nine trenches targeted upon the geophysical results. The trench positions were determined by the Consultant in their 2009 brief (Coates 2009). Following the nomenclature established by the geophysical survey the area was divided into three fields. Fields 1 and 2 are separated by a large drainage ditch, with a smaller ditch dividing Fields 2 and 3, (see Figure 2). A ripening crop of wheat was in Field 1, 2 and the northern half of Field 3; the southern half of Field 3 contained barley.

Appendix 1 has a summary of each trench including depths and geology.

Brief Summary of the Geophysical Survey Results (Figure 2)

Field 1: The green lines represented plough scars that were evident throughout the evaluation, especially in Field 1. The blue lines (orientated NE-SW) represented field drains; two were uncovered in Trench 4. The red anomalies (pit clusters?) were natural clay pockets with the exception of tree boles in Trench 4.

Field 2: The red linear anomalies in Trench 5 were modern disturbances with additional natural clay pockets. Discrete features were sampled and recorded in the northern part of Trench 6 which potentially matched the red anomalies in the geophysical survey. The yellow cropmark was not found.

Field 3: Trench 7 had two linears, including one that matched the blue line in the geophysical survey. There was no archaeology in the rest of the field.

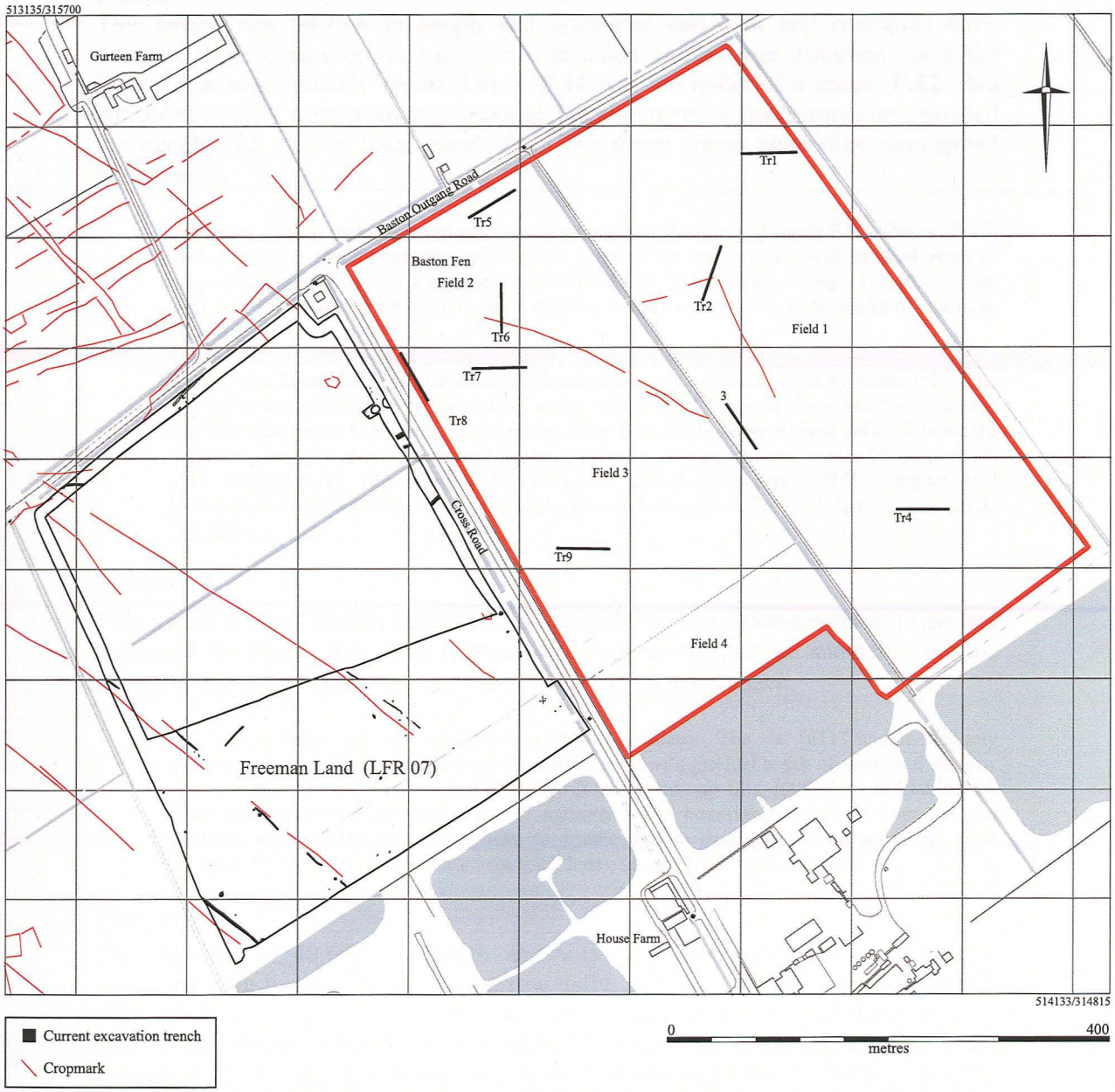

Figure 4. Northern Extension and Freeman Land with cropmarks

Field 1

Trench 1

This trench was 50.75m in length and orientated east-west and contained three features; three linears on an east-west orientation and a large disturbed pond-like feature that was probably recent. Linear **F.11** was the re-cut of a linear, **F.12**. No dateable artefacts were recovered although the alignment of the linears corresponded the geophysical results highlighted blue. The green linear anomalies represented plough scars.

F.11 was a linear that was orientated northeast-southwest and re-cut linear F.12. The cut [022] had moderately sloping concave sides, more steep on the northern side with gradual break of slope and concave base (1.23m wide and 0.36m deep). It contained a single fill; [021] loose mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal. No finds.

F.12 was a linear that was orientated northeast-southwest and was re-cut by linear F.11. The cut [026] had moderately steep concave sides with gradual break of slope and concave base (1.53m wide and 0.51m deep). It contained three fills; [023] compact mid yellow/brown silt with frequent gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal and chalk; [024] compact mid orange/brown silty clay with occasional gravel inclusions; [025] compact mid yellow/brown silt with frequent gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal and chalk. No finds.

Trench 2

This trench was 52.40m in length and orientated northnortheast-southsouthwest and contained one linear, **F.6**. This feature corresponded with the red anomaly from the survey and probably represented a furrow with animal disturbance.

F.6 was a linear that was orientated northwest-southeast. The cut [011] had moderately sloping concave sides, more steep on the northern cut with gradual break of slope and shallow concave base (2.10m wide and 0.30m deep). It contained two fills; [009] firm to friable dark grey sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal and frequent iron pan staining; [010] firm to friable mid to dark grey/brown sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and a 5cm thick lens of fragmented shell. No finds.

Trench 3

This trench was 49.60m in length and was orientated northwest-southeast and contained three linears; including a narrow gully, **F.7** and a furrow, **F.8**, all of which were orientated east-west. No diagnostic finds were associated with these features apart from F.9 that contained an iron nail. These features could relate to the small agricultural building that was evident on the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1888. The red anomalies could represent remains of the building (e.g. nails) that have been spread throughout the topsoil.

F.7 was a linear that orientated northeast-southwest. The cut [013] had moderately steep concave sides with gradual to moderate break of slope and shallow concave base (0.27m wide and 0.09m deep). It contained a single fill; [012] loose mid grey brown silt with frequent gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal. No finds.

F.8 was a linear that was orientated northeast-southwest. The cut [015] had sloping concave sides with gradual break of slope and flat base (1.56m wide and 0.08m deep). It contained a single fill; [014] firm to friable mid to dark brown/grey sandy silt with rare gravel inclusions. No finds.

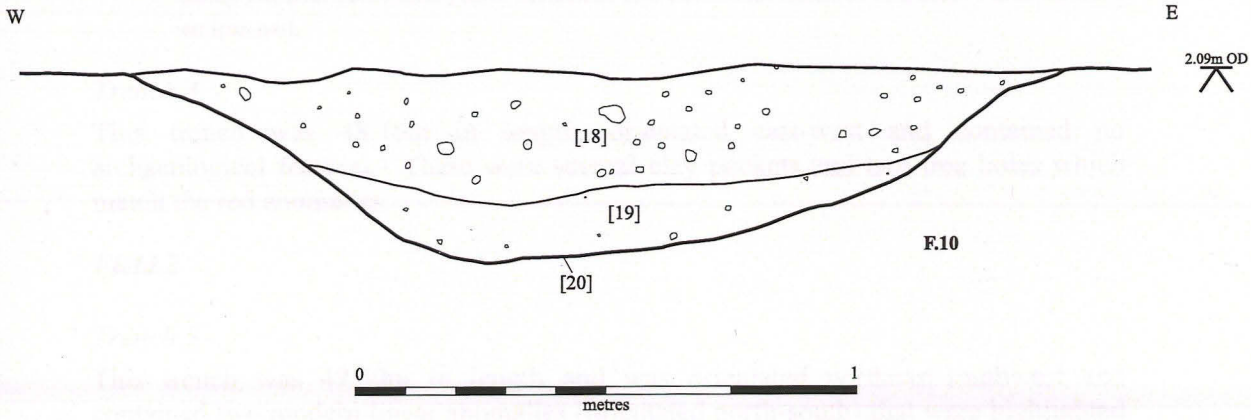

Figure 5. Section and Photograph of linear F.10

F.9 was a linear that was orientated northeast-southwest. The cut [017] had moderately sloping concave sides, more convex on northern cut with gradual break of slope and concave base (1.00m wide and 0.25m deep). It contained a single fill; [016] loose mid grey/brown sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal. Finds included an iron nail.

Trench 4

This trench was 48.10m in length, orientated east-west and contained no archaeological features. There were several clay pockets and two tree boles which match the red anomalies.

Field 2

Trench 5

This trench was 49.50m in length and was orientated northeast-southwest and contained two modern linear anomalies (orientated north-south) that were highlighted in the geophysical survey and were probably associated with the entrance of the field. Field 2 was previously allotment gardens marked on the Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition map of 1904, this map also shows two parallel linears that correspond with the red anomalies in the geophysical and evaluation results.

Trench 6

This trench was 45.50m in length and was orientated north-south and contained four discrete features in the northern end of the trench. There consisted of two postholes (one was sampled, **F.3**) and two gullys; **F.1** and **F.2**. No artefacts were recovered. There were no other features in this trench. It is uncertain as to whether these features pertain to disturbance caused by the presence of the allotment gardens although they do correspond with the red anomalies highlighted in the survey. There was no evidence of a feature to correspond with the linear cropmark.

F.1 was a linear that was northeast-southwest orientated. The cut [001] had gradually sloping concave sides with gradual break of slope and concave base (0.30m wide and 0.08m deep). It contained a single fill; [002] compact and dry mid brown silt with frequent gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal. No finds.

F.2 was a linear that was orientated northwest-southeast. The terminal cut [004] was round in plan with steep concave sides with moderate break of slope and shallow concave base (0.30m wide and 0.10m deep) It contained a single fill; [003] compact and dry mid brown silt with frequent gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal. Finds included a fragment of coal.

F.3 was a posthole adjacent to another posthole, F.4. The cut [005] was circular in plan with gradual sloping concave sides with gradual break of slope and concave base (0.25m x 0.25m wide and 0.008m deep). It contained a single fill; [006] compact and dry dark brown silt with frequent gravel inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal. No finds.

F.4 was a posthole adjacent to F.3 and was not sampled.

Field 3

Trench 7

This trench was 49.50m in length and was orientated east-west and contained two linears; **F.5** was aligned east west and represented the continuation of the boundary

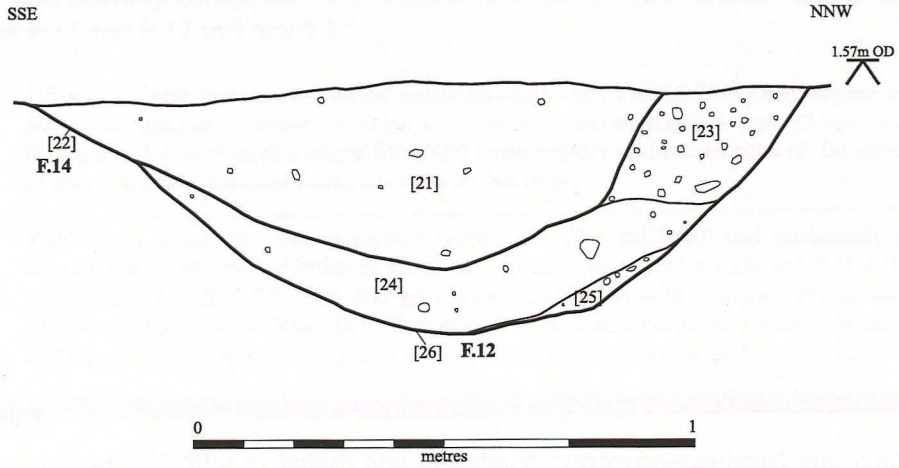

Figure 6. Section and Photograph of linear F.11 and F.12

ditch of Field 2. Evidence for this can also be seen on the 1888 Ordnance Survey map. Linear **F.10** corresponded with the geophysical results represented in blue. This linear also possibly correspond with a linear recorded in the Freeman Land in 2007 as well as F.11 and F.12 in Trench 1.

> **F.5** was a linear that was orientated northeast-southwest. The cut [008] had sloping concave sides with gradual to moderate break of slope and uneven concave base (0.50m wide and 0.12m deep). It contained a single fill; [007] loose and dry mid brown silt with frequent flecks of charcoal and occasional flecks of charcoal. No finds.
>
> **F.10** was a linear that was orientated north-south. The cut [020] had moderately sloping convex sides with gradual break of slope and concave base (1.95m wide and 0.41m deep). It contained two fills; [018] firm mid grey/brown clayey silt with moderate gravel inclusions with an orange iron pan lens; [019] firm mid to light orange/brown silty clay with rare gravel inclusions. Contained small pieces of modern wood and fragmented shells.

Trench 8

This trench was 50.50m in length and orientated northwest-southeast and contained no archaeological features. The red anomaly from the survey was probably clay pockets in the gravel natural.

Trench 9

This trench was 48.50m in length and orientated east-west and contained no archaeological features. The red anomaly from the survey was probably clay pockets in the gravel natural.

Discussion

The archaeological features recorded on the Baston North Extension site compliment and add to the information recorded from the geophysical survey and map data, while the majority of the anomalous readings highlighted in the geophysical survey were deemed to be natural clay pockets within the gravel matrix, field drains or modern plough scars.

The majority of the linears sampled and recorded represent earlier field boundaries identifiable with those seen from cartographic evidence, such as F.5 in Trench 7. The features and magnetic anomalies in Trench 3 probably represent remains from the old farm building (probably a field barn) that was evident on the 1888 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition map (Richmond and Coates 2007 figure 2).

Given the ubiquitous nature of the Bronze Age field system in this part of the landscape, as evidenced by aerial photographs and earlier excavations to the west and south, there appears to be no indication of similar features that might have been expected. There are several possibilities by way of explanation:

- although widespread the Bronze Age field system does not extend across even all the areas that have seen more detailed investigation. The linear element was entirely absent across most of the Meadow Lands (2.2km to the southwest) although there were other features present dating to the same period. Absence of the linears does not equate to an absence of the Bronze Age.

Figure 7. Photograph of F.5 and Trench 8

- most of the archaeology in the immediate area has been seen at a height AOD of around 2-4m. The general level at the Cross Roads site is between 0.5-2.0m and may be too low to expect the field system to extend into it (Figure 8, see discussion below).

- alternatively the height difference may be due to different agriculture regimes either side of Cross Road, the relatively shallow field boundaries being removed by deeper ploughing activity.

- the apparent absence of the linear field system (and the trenching interval is too large to be definitive) does not necessarily equate to the absence of the other feature types encountered elsewhere of the Bronze Age and later (e.g. pit wells, pits etc). The limited trenching on other parts of the quarry and environs in the 1990s showed that discrete features, even large ones, are rarely encountered during evaluation. This was particularly shown to be true for the Freeman Land immediately on the other side of Cross Road (Hutton 2008b).

The evaluation has shown a demonstrable correlation between the late features encountered and field boundaries, buildings and activities evidenced by the later map sequence (see Richmond and Coates 2007 figures 2-5). The earlier phases, specifically Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman, which might be expected to be present in some form, were not seen, but the sample is not sufficient to make a definitive statement as to their absence. It may well be that the lower height to the east of the Cross Road is relevant, either because it is "too low" or because of damage through agricultural practice, but neither has been categorically demonstrated. Francis Pryor's model of fen edge settlement, based principally on investigations in the Flag Fen basin, has activity stopping at about the 1m AOD line (Prior 2001). More recent investigations on the western fen edge, specifically at Must Farm and Bradley Fen (Evans and Knight 2005, Evans *et al* 2005, Gibson and Knight 2006, Tabor 2008) indicate that this is too simple and that evidence of activity does extend below that level (in cases down to -0.30m AOD) but that the nature of the archaeology changes becoming more extensive and less predictable. High-density sampling programmes have failed to find discrete features (pits burnt mounds) or ephemeral linear features such as stake or post alignments, which were subsequently revealed by extensive stripping programmes (M. Knight pers. comm.). Whilst the nature of the western fen edge cannot necessarily be extrapolated to the eastern edge, there will certainly be similarities in the range and variation of the evidence. The main differences between the two are that the Flag Fen, Must Farm and Bradley Fen finds were made in deep fen, in some cases with more than a metre of overburden above a buried soil. This is clearly not the case here (with a maximum of 0.40m plough-soil and no sub-soil), although in the right conditions organic preservation can be very good (e.g. the log ladders, artefacts and structural wood from Freeman, Glebe and Whitfield).

If the apparent absence of earlier features proves to be real then it may be that a remodelling of activity on this part of the eastern fen edge is required. An "empty quarter" would be an important addition to that body of knowledge.

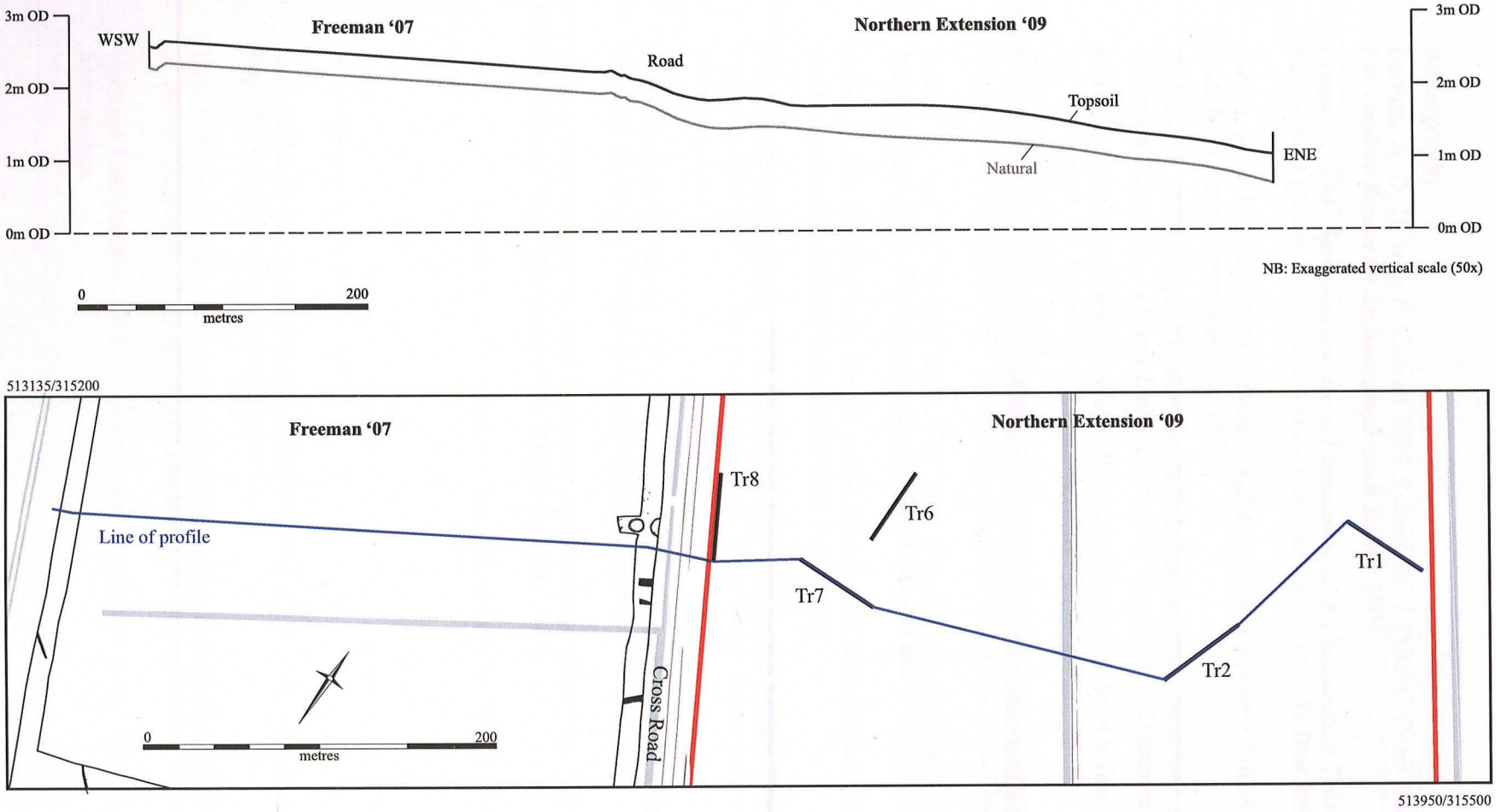

Figure 8. Profile of topsoil across Freeman Land and current evaluation area

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Appendix

Trench Summary Table

Trench No.	Orientation	Length	Archaeological Features?	Location	Topsoil Depth	Geology	Notes
1	E-W	50.75m	Linears, Modern pond feature	0m (E)	0.39m	Orange sandy gravel	
1	E-W	50.75m	Linears, Modern pond feature	25m	0.35m	Orange sandy gravel	
1	E-W	50.75m	Linears, Modern pond feature	50m (W)	0.35m	Orange sandy gravel	
2	NNE-SSW	52.40m	Linear	0m (SSE)	0.33m	Orange sandy gravel with pockets of natural grey clay	
2	NNE-SSW	52.40m	Linear	25m	0.36m	Orange sandy gravel with pockets of natural grey clay	
2	NNE-SSW	52.40m	Linear	52m (NNE)	0.32m	Orange sandy gravel with pockets of natural grey clay	
3	NW-SE	49.60m	Linears	0m (SE)	0.36m	Light to Mid white/orange gravel	Evidence of plough scars running NW-SE
3	NW-SE	49.60m	Linears	25m	0.42m	Light to Mid white/orange gravel	Evidence of plough scars running NW-SE
3	NW-SE	49.60m	Linears	48m (NW)	0.41m	Light to Mid white/orange gravel	Evidence of plough scars running NW-SE
4	E-W	48.10m	Tree Boles	0m (E)	0.34m	Orange sandy gravel with pockets of natural grey clay	Evidence of plough scars running NW-SE
4	E-W	48.10m	Tree Boles	25m	0.36m	Orange sandy gravel with pockets of natural grey clay	Evidence of plough scars running NW-SE
4	E-W	48.10m	Tree Boles	47m (W)	0.39m	Orange sandy gravel with pockets of natural grey clay	Evidence of plough scars running NW-SE
5	NE-SW	49.50m	Modern features	0m (SW)	0.34m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	

Trench No.	Orientation	Length	Archaeological Features?	Location	Topsoil Depth	Geology	Notes
5	NE-SW	49.50m	Modern features	25m	0.36m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
5	NE-SW	49.50m	Modern features	49m (NE)	0.37m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
6	N-S	45.50m	Gullys, postholes	0m (S)	0.39m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
6	N-S	45.50m	Gullys, postholes	25m	0.43m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
6	N-S	45.50m	Gullys, postholes	45m (N)	0.39m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
7	E-W	49.50m	Linears	0m (E)	0.38m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
7	E-W	49.50m	Linears	25m	0.31m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
7	E-W	49.50m	Linears	49m (W)	0.35m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
8	NW-SE	50.50m	None	0m (SE)	0.35m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
8	NW-SE	50.50m	None	25m	0.36m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
8	NW-SE	50.50m	None	50m (NW)	0.38m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
9	E-W	48.50m	Tree Boles	0m	0.37m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
9	E-W	48.50m	Tree Boles	25m	0.36m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	
9	E-W	48.50m	Tree Boles	48m	0.39m	Light grey/white and orange gravel with patches of grey sandy silt	