

Quedgeley Hunt's Grove Gloucestershire



Interim Post Excavation Assessment Phase 1



October 2010

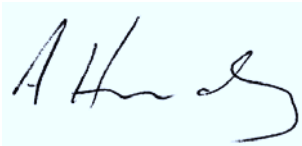
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Hunts Grove, Quedgeley, Gloucestershire

Phase 1 Interim Post Excavation Assessment Report

By A Norton

with contributions by John Cotter, Rebecca Nicholson, Ian Scott and Ruth Shaffrey

Table of Contents

Summary.....	5
1 Introduction.....	6
1.1 Background.....	6
1.2 Location, geology and topography.....	6
1.3 Archaeological background.....	6
2 Aims and Objectives.....	8
2.1 General aims.....	8
2.2 Specific aims.....	8
3 Methodology - Excavation Area.....	9
3.1 General.....	9
4 Quantification of Archive.....	10
4.1 Stratigraphic.....	10
4.2 Artefactual/ecofactual.....	10
5 Results.....	11
5.1 Stratigraphic summary/statement of potential.....	11
5.2 Artefactual/ecofactual summary.....	11
6 Significance.....	13
6.1 General	13
Appendix A. References and Bibliography.....	15



List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location
- Fig. 2 Site plan
- Fig. 3 Ditch 1039 and enclosure 1027
- Fig. 4 Roman and modern features



Summary

Between May and September 2010, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a strip map and sample exercise at Hunts Grove, Quedgeley, Gloucestershire (NGR SO 809 117). The work was carried out on behalf of Scott Wilson and Trench Farrow PLC, in advance of a mixed use development. The strip map and sample was carried out during the stripping of new haul roads and any associated groundworks. The work revealed evidence of prehistoric activity, Romano-British field systems and post-medieval boundary ditches.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Between May and September 2010, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a strip map and sample exercise at Hunts Grove, Quedgeley, Gloucestershire (NGR SO 809117; Fig. 1). The work was carried out on behalf of Scott Wilson and Trench Farrow PLC, in advance of a mixed use development. The strip map and sample was carried out during the stripping of new haul roads, and any associated groundworks in accordance with approved Written Scheme of Investigations (WSI; OA 2010 and Scott Wilson 2010).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is located at Hunts Grove in Hardwicke, near Gloucester (NGR SO 809 117). The proposed development site is bounded to the north by RAF Quedgeley, to the south by the M5 motorway, to the east by the Birmingham to Bristol railway and to the west by the A38.
- 1.2.2 The site lies 6-7 km to the south-west of the Roman town of *Glevum*, and 500 m to the south-east of the major Roman road, which connected *Glevum* with the port at *Abonae*. The proposed development area lies adjacent to the principal medieval route from Gloucester to Bristol (now the A38). Haresfield Lane is also of medieval origin and is located to the south of the site, running towards Haresfield.
- 1.2.3 The topography across the site varies with an area of higher ground to the east, sloping down to the south-west where the ground becomes flat. The majority of the site lies at c 20 m above OD, but to the east of the site the land rises to c 40 m above OD.
- 1.2.4 The underlying geology is Lower Lias (British Geological Survey South Sheet 234). The overlying soils across the higher ground on the north-east are recorded as Evesham 2 soils, which are described as typical calcareous pelosols consisting of permeable calcareous clayey soils. In the south-west, over the more level ground the soils are Badsey 2 soils which are typical brown calcareous earths. These consist of well-drained fine calcareous soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales, Sheet 5 South West England).
- 1.2.5 The site is located on a dairy farm with land use comprising grazing fields, grass seeded fields, maize fields and silage fields. The site is 97 hectares in area.

1.3 Archaeological background

- 1.3.1 Wessex Archaeology carried out a Desk Based Assessment in 2001, the results of which concluded that there was evidence of Romano-British activity within the area of the site, whilst no evidence could be found of both prehistoric or post Roman/Saxon activity.
- 1.3.2 Evidence of a medieval farmstead and agricultural practices have been recorded on the site. A farmstead of a medieval date was found to the south of the site and evidence of ridge and furrow, as well as evidence of coppicing and part of the boundary ditch for the Colethrop Estate, has also been observed. A cemetery dating to the Romano-British period was recorded to the south-east of Hunts Grove in 1847. Post-medieval activity was restricted to the presence of Colethrop Farm.
- 1.3.3 A geophysical (magnetometer) survey was undertaken by Stratascan in 2005. The survey located many anomalies of archaeological potential with the majority of features relating to ridge and furrow activity.



- 1.3.4 Between April and June 2005 OA undertook a 351 trench field evaluation of the site. The evaluation revealed evidence of an Iron Age/Romano-British settlement in the east and west of the site in the form of enclosure ditches, pits and postholes. Ceramic building material (CBM), pottery sherds, metalwork, worked stone and animal bone were recovered from the features. Unburned human bone and a cremation deposit were recovered from two features but not seen anywhere else. Little evidence of post-Roman activity was revealed during the evaluation. Postholes of a possible medieval date and post-medieval ridge and furrow were also revealed.



2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 General aims

2.1.1 The general objectives of the works within the areas of archaeological interest were:

- to preserve by record the archaeological remains that will be impacted by the proposed development;
- to confirm and enhance the results of the evaluation to understand the extent date and nature of archaeological deposits and features and
- to provide a clearer understanding of the level of activity within the proposed development area and surrounding landscape.

2.2 Specific aims

2.2.1 The specific aims of the works were:

- to determine the extent of the occupation settlement activity previously recorded;
- to obtain further information on the nature and function of the occupation areas;
- to determine the nature and extent of archaeological features and/or deposits within the apparent blank areas;
- to establish the presence/absence and extent of the cemetery identified in 1847;
- To establish the full extent and character of the enclosed settlement enclosure, identified by the geophysical survey located, to the east of the site;
- To investigate the scatter of non-ridge and furrow linear and possible enclosure and
- To establish if further burials are present at the western edge of the site.



3 METHODOLOGY - EXCAVATION AREA

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 Mechanical excavation was carried out by a 360° tracked excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and proceeded under direct archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.2 Excavation took place within the width of the haul road (c 20 m - 30 m; Fig. 2), or within any localised excavation areas, and stopped at the level of any undisturbed natural deposits/the first archaeological horizon (Fig. 2).
- 3.1.3 Where archaeological features were revealed at the impact level for the new road, they were excavated and recorded so as to avoid compaction/damage from site traffic.
- 3.1.4 All identified features were marked on the ground to ensure that they are not “lost” during the mapping stage.
- 3.1.5 No complex archaeological deposits, groups of features or structures were uncovered, and the contingency to extend the stripped area in order to define the full extent of the remains was not used. As a result there was no opportunity to determine if the sampling strategy detailed in Scott Wilson's Project WSI was appropriate (see Aims, Scott Wilson 2010).
- 3.1.6 Pre-excavation plans were made and meetings held with Andy Mayes (Scott Wilson) and Charles Parry (GCC) in order to agree an appropriate excavation strategy.
- 3.1.7 All fieldwork took place in accordance with the OA fieldwork manual (ed. Wilkinson 1992).



4 QUANTIFICATION OF ARCHIVE

4.1 Stratigraphic

Material	Quantity
Context check-lists	4
Context sheets	1124
Section drawings	57 (A4)
Plans	52 (A4)
B&W Films	5
Digital record sheets	6
Small find record sheets	1
Environmental record sheets	1
Daily journals/WB record sheets	31

4.2 Artefactual/ecofactual

Material	Quantity
Pottery	13 (382 g)
Ceramic Building Material (CBM)	9 (1093 g)
Metalwork	57 (A4)
Glass	52 (A4)
Stone	1
Animal bone	23 (89 g)
Bulk environmental soil samples	3



5 RESULTS

5.1 Stratigraphic summary/statement of potential

Roman

- 5.1.1 Evidence of a Roman field system was observed in the central part of the north-south aligned haul road. Four NW-SE or NE-SW aligned shallow ditches (1039, 1044, 1053 and 1066; Figs 3 and 4) were revealed that were up to 0.66 m wide and up to 0.2 m deep, although the features were probably truncated by ploughing. The ditches were filled with grey brown silty or sandy clays that contained sherds of Roman pottery. A sherd (1052) from ditch 1053 was dated to the late 1st or 2nd century and a sherd of pottery from ditch 1039 (1040) may have been either Roman or Anglo-Saxon in date. For the purposes of this report a Roman date is considered more likely.
- 5.1.2 Similarly filled but undated ditches were also revealed in this part of the site, and most likely represented the re-cutting of the field boundaries. Undated pits and postholes were also recorded and were probably associated with Roman agricultural activity.
- 5.1.3 The largest feature was part of an undated ring or penannular ditch/gully (1023; Group 1027). The ditch was c 12 m in diameter, c 0.7 m wide and 0.2 m deep. No finds were recovered from the fill but the ditch may have formed part of a Roman stock enclosure (Fig. 3).

Post medieval

- 5.1.4 Three NE-SW aligned furrows measuring 0.9 m wide and 0.15 m deep were located within the NW-SE aligned southern section of haul road (Fig. 4), and 19th- or 20th-century ceramic building material was recovered from the fill (1112) of furrow 1111 (Fig. 2). Furrow 1074 contained redeposited Roman pottery (1075).
- 5.1.5 Furrows were also identified in the area north of the M5. A boundary ditch (1015) and tree hole (1036) containing 19th/20th- century finds were also recorded (Figs 2 and 4).

Statement of potential

- 5.1.6 The archaeological features were largely undated and were only revealed within the narrow confines of the haulage road. It may be possible to further understand the layout of the field system following further work, but at a minimum the results of the watching brief on the haul road will serve to augment the results from later phases of the project.
- 5.1.7 Further stratigraphic analysis of the revealed features is not recommended unless more of the undated enclosure is revealed, or it can be determined that the postholes form part of a larger structure.

5.2 Artefactual/ecofactual summary

Pottery by John Cotter

- 5.2.1 A total of 13 sherds of pottery weighing 382 g were recovered from 6 contexts. This is a mixture of Roman and late post-medieval material. All the pottery was examined and spot-dated during the present assessment stage.
- 5.2.2 The pottery mainly comprises small worn bodysherds of Roman coarseware, including Severn Valley ware (identified by Edward Biddulph). These cannot be closely dated. There is also a small bodysherd of rare Roman glazed ware (late 1st to 2nd century)



which has dark greenish-brown glaze (1052). Context (1017) produced two sherds from a late 19th-century stoneware flagon with a fragmentary proprietor's stamped inscription, and also a sherd of 17th-19th-century North Devon gravel-tempered ware. The pottery types present are domestic in nature and, apart from the sherd of Roman glazed ware, are fairly unremarkable. Further details are available in archive and no further work is recommended.

The ceramic building material (CBM) by John Cotter

- 5.2.3 The CBM assemblage comprises 9 pieces weighing 1093 g from 3 contexts. This was examined and spot-dated following standard Oxford Archaeology procedures, and the data recorded on an Excel spreadsheet. As usual, the dating of broken fragments of ceramic building materials is an imprecise art and spot-dates derived from them are necessarily broad and should therefore be regarded with caution.
- 5.2.4 The assemblage mostly comprises late post-medieval material, including fragments of machine-made field drains dating to the late 19th or 20th century (gully fill 1017). The end of a worn orange brick of 18th- or 19th-century date was also recovered from the fill of a furrow (1112). The material is fairly unremarkable. Fuller details are available in archive. No further work is recommended.

Glass and metalwork by Ian Scott

- 5.2.5 The finds comprise a single glass bottle neck (gully fill 1017) and a short length of iron chain (also 1017). The bottle neck is made from colourless glass and is machine moulded and therefore dates after c 1900. The chain which comprises six elongated oval links cannot be closely dated but is probably contemporary with the bottle. No further work is recommended.

Stone by Ruth Shaffrey

- 5.2.6 A single quartzite hammerstone with percussion wear round the entire circumference was recovered from a buried ploughsoil (1001; SF 1). The pebble is tapered with more pronounced damage at the wider end. The overall shape of the pebble and the nature of the wear suggests it may have been used for different tasks; more delicate flint knapping could have been undertaken with the narrower end. The pebble would have been easily available nearby. No further work is necessary.

Animal bone by Rebecca Nicholson

- 5.2.7 A very small number of bone fragments weighing 89 g was recorded from two contexts: (gully fills 1017 and 1078). Bone condition ranged from fair to very poor, and as a consequence of this and the small number of fragments, no evidence of butchery or gnawing was seen.
- 5.2.8 Fifteen fragments came from fill 1017, but of these nine were evidently recently broken fragments from a single large mammal long bone shaft. The remaining fragments included two conjoining shaft fragments from a juvenile cattle metatarsal and four small indeterminate large mammal bone fragments.
- 5.2.9 Context 1078 included two small and very eroded fragments of horse tooth.
- 5.2.10 With so few mammal bones present it is not possible to comment on husbandry practices beyond noting that a young calf was present and so cattle were probably bred close by. No further work is necessary.



Charred plant remains by Julia Meen

- 5.2.11 Three environmental samples were taken from archaeological features during excavations at Hunts Grove, Quedgeley, in Gloucestershire, for the recovery of charred plant remains and small bones and artefacts.
- 5.2.12 Sample 1 (1026) was a light olive brown clay loam with bluish grey mottles taken from a ring ditch. Sample 2 (1094) was a yellowish brown clay loam taken from a posthole and contained burnt clay. Sample 3 (1108) was a light olive brown clay loam taken from a posthole.
- 5.2.13 Samples were processed for the recovery of CPR by water flotation using a modified Siraf style flotation machine according to standard OA procedure.
- 5.2.14 A small quantity of burnt animal bone was recovered from Sample 1, a small amount of burnt clay and rare small mammal bone were recovered from Sample 2.

Charred Plant Remains

- 5.2.15 All three samples contained very low amounts of charred plant remain (CPR), full details can be found in archive.
- 5.2.16 Sample 1 was composed almost entirely of root matter with a small quantity of charcoal, much of which was less than 2mm in diameter and hence not suitable for identification. Three snails were also present.
- 5.2.17 The charred material in Sample 2 was rare and in a poor state of preservation. Occasional charcoal was present but again tended to be less than 2mm in maximum dimension. Approximately six poorly preserved seeds, including *Chenopodium* sp. (goosefoot), were observed. Evidence of crop processing was limited to a single indeterminate cereal grain fragment and a fragment of indeterminate glume base. The flot was again dominated by root material.
- 5.2.18 Sample 3 contained a very limited charred plant assemblage, although the remains were better preserved than in the other two samples. A single complete, well-preserved, wheat grain (probably *Triticum aestivum* - bread wheat) was present, as well as a fragment of a second, indeterminate cereal grain. Given the type of feature, preservation, and rarity of charred plant remains, it is possible that these grains are intrusive. Two charred seeds were also present. Charcoal was present in greater quantity than in the other two samples although much was fragmented and only a few fragments were potentially identifiable.
- 5.2.19 No further work is recommended.

6 SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 The results of the strip map and sample are comparable to the results of the earlier evaluation. The mostly undated ditches probably form part of a field system associated with the Roman settlement immediately to the east. However, the presence of a redeposited prehistoric hammerstone may point to an earlier date for some of the features. The furrows are post-medieval in date and the southernmost furrows correspond to those seen on the geophysical survey. No evidence of burials or the cemetery identified in 1847 was seen.
- 6.1.2 The results are of local significance and if no further work takes place, a summary will be published in a local journal.



- 6.1.3 The site archive (paper and photographic record, artefacts and environmental samples) will be prepared for long-term storage in accordance with Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage (Walker 1990 - UKIC) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (Museums and Galleries Commission 1992).
- 6.1.4 The archive will be deposited with Gloucester City Museum and Art Gallery under the following accession number: GLRCM.2010.15.



APPENDIX A. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

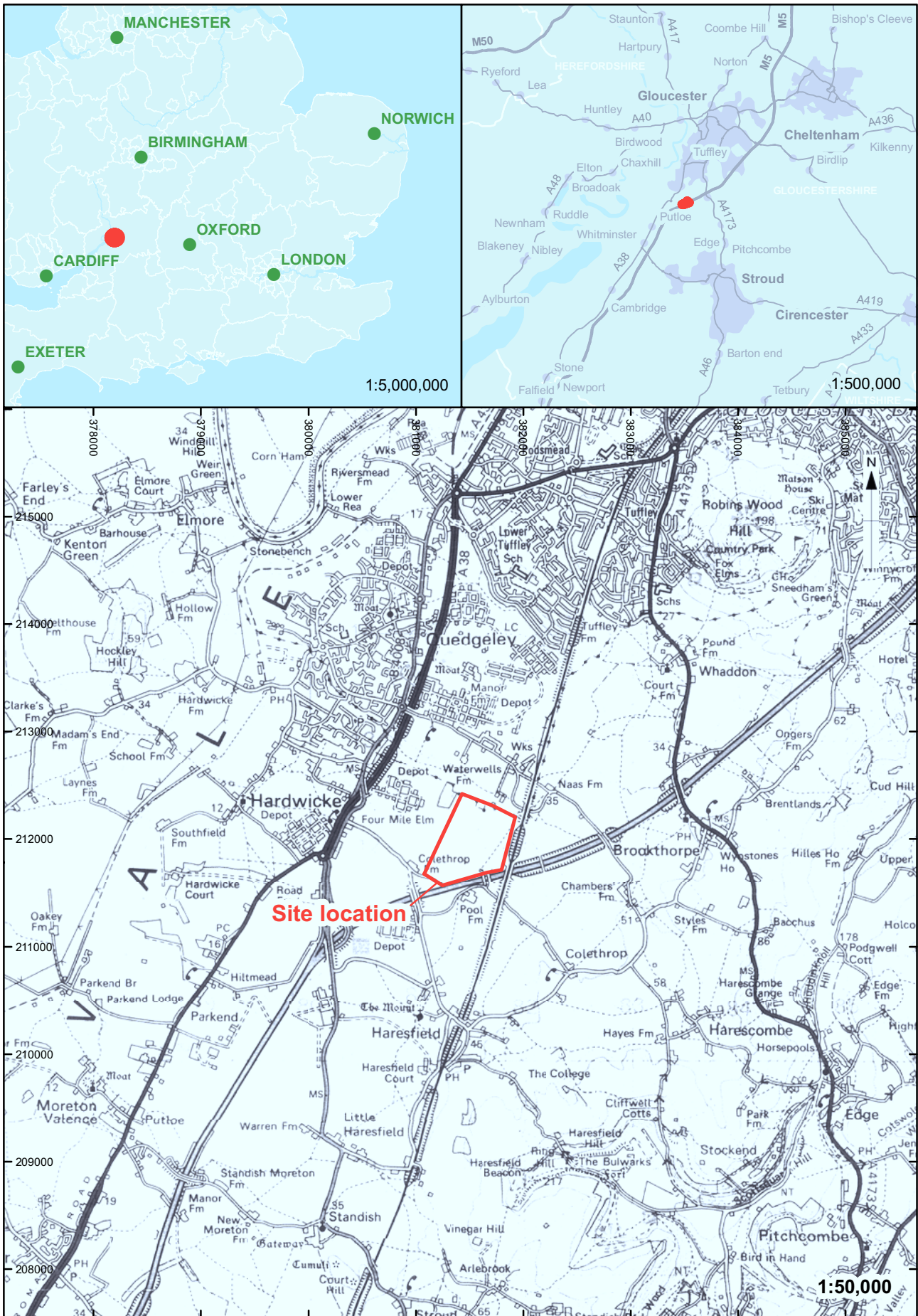
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Figure 1: Site location

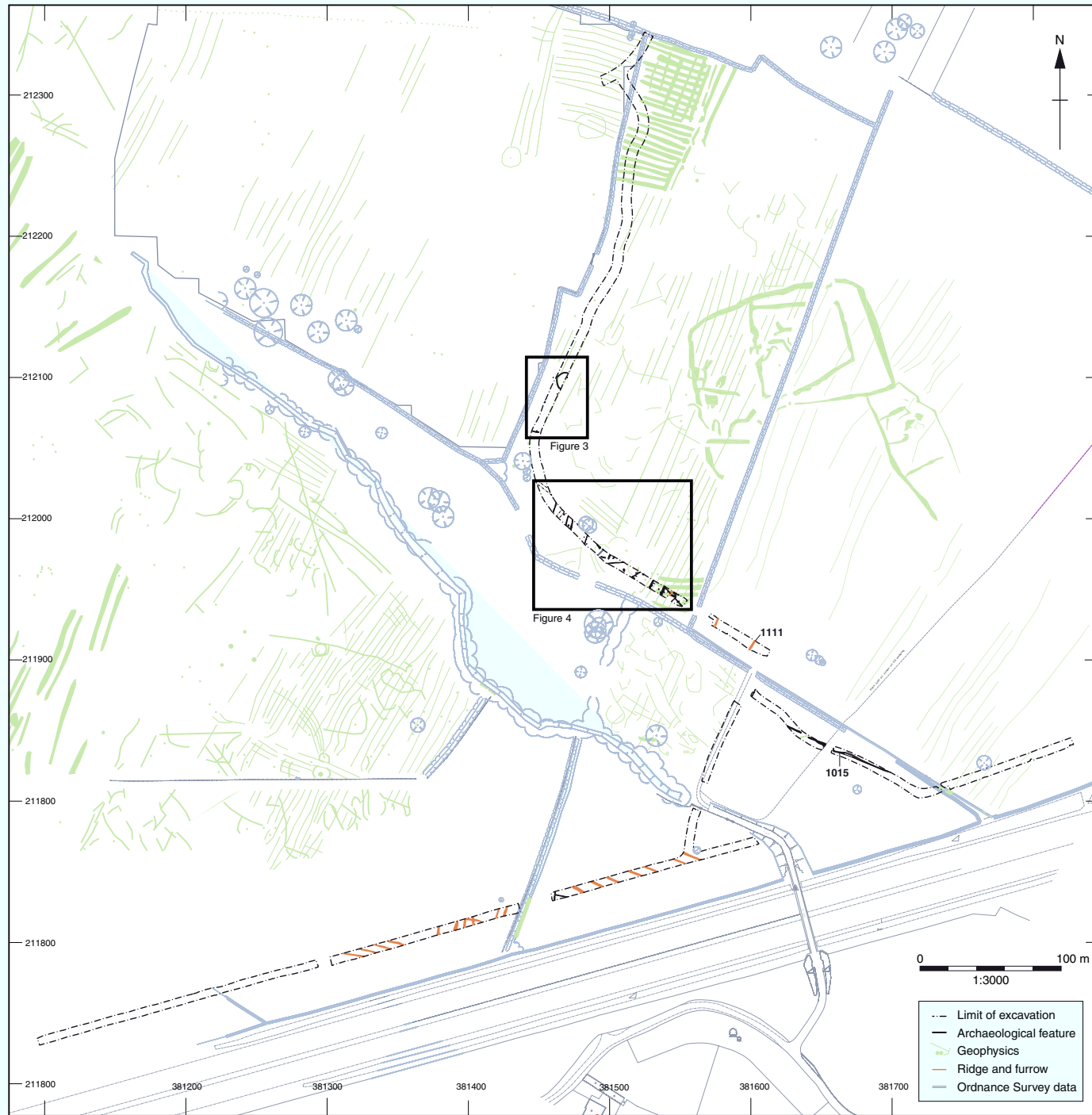


Figure 2: Site plan

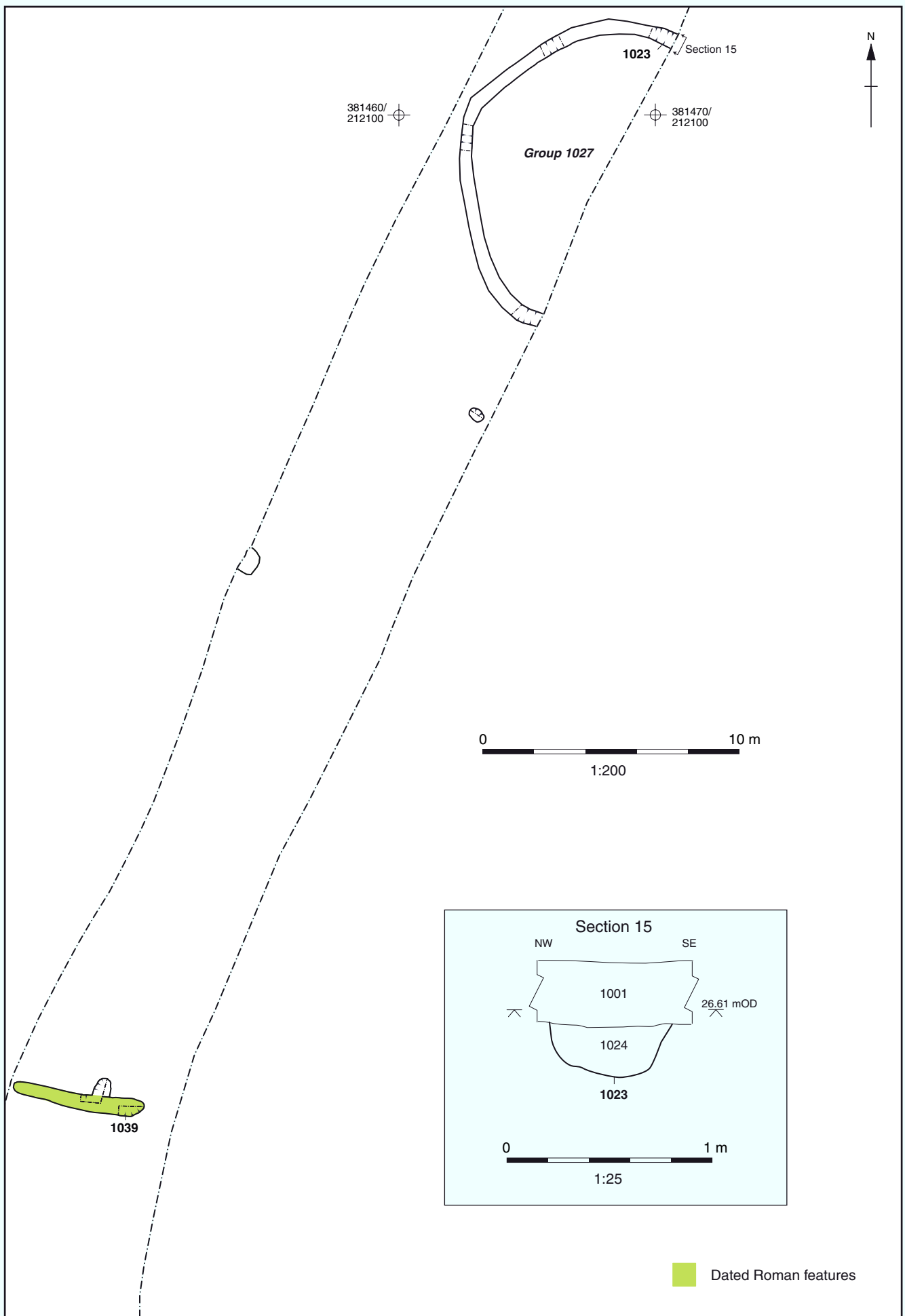


Figure 3: Ditch 1039 and enclosure 1027

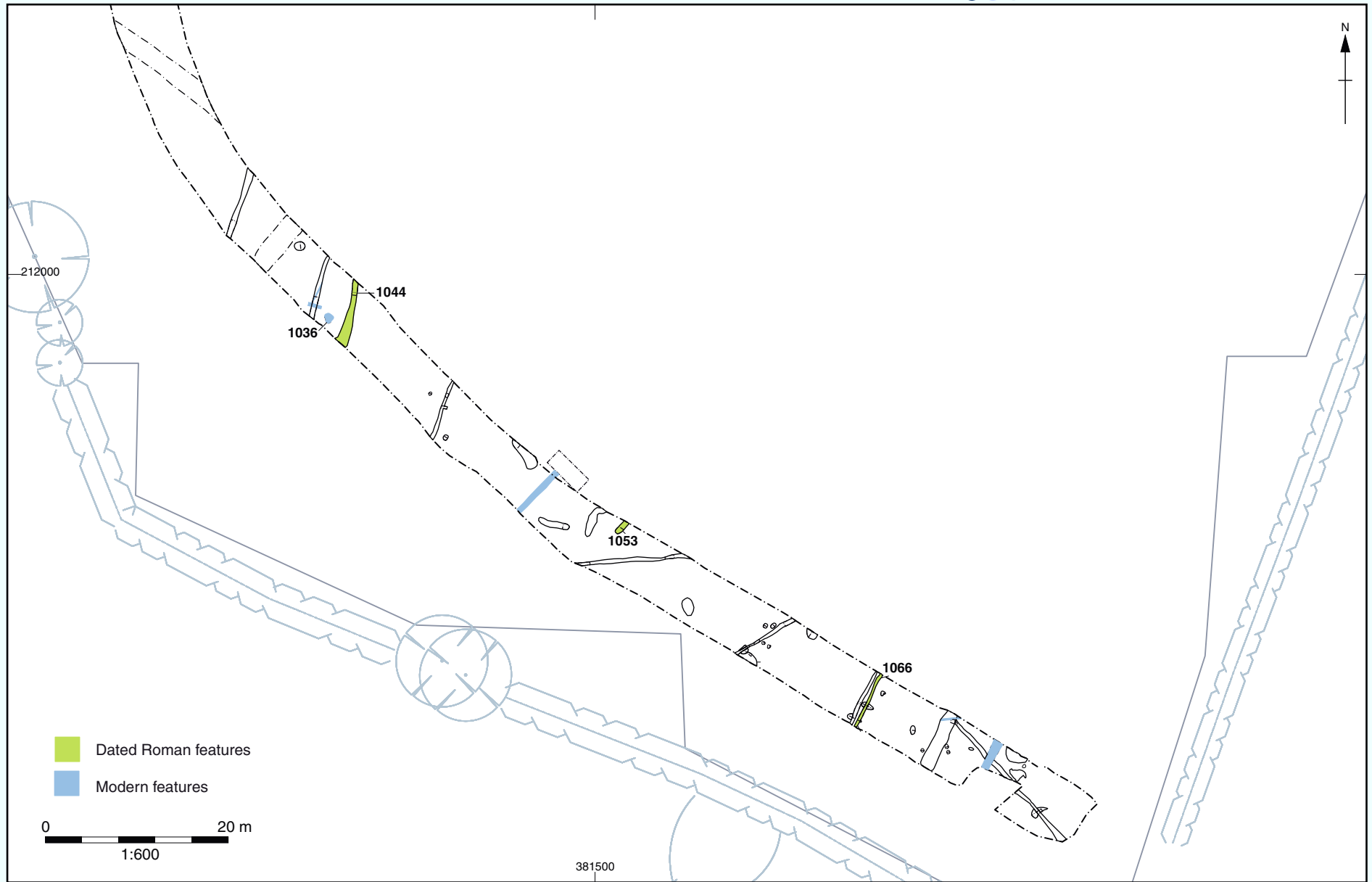


Figure 4: Roman and modern features



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