Land at Siddington Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire

NGR SO 03260044

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

Prepared by:
Simon Hughes and Emma Firth

On behalf of:
The Environmental Dimension Partnership

Document No: ACD166/2/0

May 2010

archaeology

LAND AT SIDDINGTON ROAD, CIRENCESTER, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

CENTRED ON NGR SO 03260044

RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRENCH EVALUATION

CONTENTS

Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation, on the site of a proposed residential development on land at Siddington Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR SO 032600449), was undertaken by AC archaeology during May 2010. An earlier geophysical survey of the site recorded two ring ditches and part of a possible L-shaped ditch arrangement, possibly an enclosure. Other linear and curvilinear features or trends were recorded.

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of seven trenches totalling 382m in length, with each trench 1.9m wide. Trenches were generally positioned to target anomalies identified during the geophysical survey, but the presence of overhead cables and buried services in the southern portion of the site meant that some had to be repositioned. The two ring ditches were present in the trenches, with these likely to be drip gullies from roundhouses, with associated pottery indicating a late Bronze Age to early Iron Age date. Associated features comprised pits, postholes, ditches and gullies. The roundhouses appear to be partly within a ditched enclosure.

A number of other buried archaeological features were identified across the site, including some dating to the Romano-British period, while in the eastern portion some pits were present which contained early Saxon pottery. While all trenches contained some evidence for archaeological activity, it appears that most of the site has been eroded by later ploughing. However, in the northeast corner of the site, alongside the eastern boundary, a footslope lynchet was present, which sealed a probable buried soil of late Bronze Age to early Iron Age date.

Generally the results from the evaluation are consistent with those from the earlier geophysical survey. It is therefore likely that many of the geophysical anomalies located in areas where it was not possible to undertake trial trenching will also represent buried archaeological features.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation, carried out in support of an outline planning application for residential development on land at Siddington Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR: SO 03260044), was undertaken by AC archaeology during May 2010. The work was commissioned by the Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP), acting as archaeological consultants to the landowners, and was carried out following consultation with Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service (GCCAS). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.

1.2 The site occupies part of a single pasture field (Plate 1) and covers an area of approximately 3.2 hectares on the southeast side of Cirencester. It lies between *c*. 105 – 115m OD, with the underlying solid geology comprising Jurassic Forest Marble, which is overlain by shallow well-drained brashy calcareous clayey soils.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site lies *c*. 700m south of the Roman civitas capital of *Corinium*. The Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record indicates Romano-British activity to the northeast of the site, between it and Ermine Street, but no archaeological sites or finds are recorded within the site. The presumed location of the deserted medieval village of Upper Siddington may lie to the southwest.

2.2 A geophysical survey by gradiometer was undertaken on the site in April 2010. It recorded two ring ditches and part of a possible L-shaped ditch arrangement, possibly an enclosure.

Other linear and curvilinear features or trends were recorded (Sabin and Donaldson 2010). The results from this survey are summarised on Fig. 2.

3. AIMS

3.1 The aim of the evaluation was to determine, as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present on the site, as dictated by current best practice. The results, as set out in this report, will be reviewed and used to inform any decisions about subsequent mitigation as a condition, should outline planning permission be granted by Cotswold District Council.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design prepared by AC archaeology (Cox 2010), submitted to and approved by GCCAS prior to commencement on site. It comprised the machine-excavation of seven trenches totalling 382m in length, with each trench 1.9m wide. Trenches were generally positioned to target anomalies identified during the geophysical survey, but the presence of overhead cables and buried services in the southern portion of the site meant that some had to be relocated. The locations of trenches as excavated are shown on Fig. 2.

4.2 The site was recorded in accordance with the AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1*. All plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50 and sections at 1:10 or 1:20. All levels have been related to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 **Trench 1** (Plan Fig.3a and section 3b; Plate 2)
This trench was located towards the northeast corner of the site and had a total length of 58m. It was excavated onto natural subsoil, which comprised weathered limestone gravels in a yellow clay (104) that was present at a depth of between 0.45m in the southeast and 1.1m within a hand-dug sondage towards the northwest.

The natural subsoil was overlain by a sequence of mid brownish-red silty clay buried soil (103), colluvial layers (102), then subsoil (101) and topsoil (100) layers. Buried soil layer 103 contained a single sherd of later Bronze Age to early Iron Age pottery, as well as four pieces of prehistoric worked flint. This layer was sealed by colluvium, representing a footslope lynchet about 15-20m wide and up to 1m high at the point where it was sectioned by Trench 1. The lynchet deposits themselves, although broadly banded (see Appendix 1), are largely undifferentiated and represent at least several hundred and probably thousands of years of accumulation and lynchet development.

5.2 **Trench 2** (Plan Fig. 3c and sections 3d-e, Plate 3)
This trench was located towards the northeast corner of the site and was 50m long. It was excavated through topsoil (200) and subsoil (205) onto natural subsoil (201), which was present at a depth of 0.65m. The trench was positioned to investigate a large amorphous geophysical anomaly located towards the southeast end of the trench, as well as a linear anomaly towards the northwest. The latter feature was not present, but it was established that the former comprised a gradually sloping natural hollow that contained a mid brown silty clay loam colluvial deposit (204). A small quantity of Romano-British to post-medieval pottery was recovered from 204, as well as small quantities of ironwork, iron slag, fired clay, ceramic building material, shell and animal bone.

The trench also contained a single, broadly circular, probable pit (F203), which was located towards the centre. The feature was 0.83m in diameter, 0.28m deep, with moderate irregular sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid brown silty clay loam fill (202) that had common sub-angular limestone and burnt limestone inclusions. A total of 10 sherds of later prehistoric pottery was recovered.

5.3 **Trench 3** (Plan Fig. 3a and sections 3b-i)
This trench was located in the eastern portion of the site and had a total length of 75m. It was excavated through topsoil (300) and subsoil (301) onto natural subsoil (319), which was present at a depth of 0.3m below ground level. The trench was mainly positioned to investigate a circular ring anomaly identified by the geophysics.

This feature was exposed in three locations (F307, F309 and 314) as a circular gully, with a maximum width of 0.45m and overall diameter of 11m. Segments excavated through F307 and F309 exposed it to be a maximum of 0.15m deep, with moderately sloping sides and a gentle concave base. Unexcavated segment 314 petered out to the southeast, while F309 represented a rounded terminal.

The fill of the gully comprised a mid brown silty clay (306) at segment F307 (fill 306) and a mid yellowish-brown silty clay (308), with common burnt limestone inclusions, at F309. Finds recovered comprised animal bone and prehistoric worked flint.

Within the circular gully were five small discrete features (F311, F313, F316, 317 and 318) and of these, F311, F313 and F316 were investigated. Feature F311 was circular in plan and was 0.5m wide and 0.5m deep, with steep regular sloping sides and a flat base. This probable posthole contained a mid yellowish-brown silty clay fill (310), containing common limestone gravels and occasional burnt limestone inclusions. Two pieces of prehistoric worked flint were recovered.

Possible pits or postholes F313 and F316 were respectively 0.6m and 0.65m wide and 0.16m and 0.4m deep, with moderately steep-sloping sides and irregular concave bases. The features contained similar mid yellowish-brown silty clay fills (312 and 315). Burnt stone and a small quantity of animal bone were recovered from fill 315.

In the southwest part of the trench was a further linear feature (F305). This was present as a linear anomaly from the geophysical survey and was visible as a linear depression on the surface. F305 was 0.6m wide and 0.05m deep and had a shallow concave profile. The feature contained a mid yellowish-brown silty clay fill (304), with common limestone gravel, rare burnt limestone and charcoal fleck inclusions. No finds were recovered.

Towards the southeast end of the trench was a possible pit feature (F303). This was irregular in plan, measuring 0.6m wide and 0.09m deep, with gradual sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a mid yellowish-brown silty-clay fill (302) and two sherds of early Saxon pottery were recovered.

5.4 **Trench 4** (Plan Fig. 5a and sections 5b-c, Plate 4)
This trench was 50m long and located adjacent to the eastern site boundary. It was excavated through subsoil (401) and topsoil (400) layers onto natural subsoil (402), present at a depth of 0.19m.

The trench contained two sub-oval possible pit features (F404 and F406). Feature F404 was 1.2m wide and 0.25m deep, with moderate to steep-sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid reddish-brown silty clay fill (403) with frequent limestone inclusions. A total of 21 sherds of early Saxon pottery was recovered.

Feature F406 was 0.9m wide and 0.42m deep, with steeply-sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid yellowish brown silty clay fill (405) with frequent limestone gravel inclusions. A total of three sherds of early Saxon pottery was recovered.

The trench also contained two other features (407 and 408) that when investigated were shown to be probable tree throws.

5.5 **Trench 5** (Plan Fig. 5c and sections 5d-e)
This trench was located in the central area of the site and was 22m long. It was excavated through topsoil (500) and subsoil (501) layers onto natural subsoil (502), present at a depth of 0.4m below ground level. The trench was positioned to investigate a northeast to southwest aligned linear anomaly from the geophysical survey. This anomaly was exposed as two inter-cutting ditch terminals (F503 and F505).

Ditch F503 was the earlier of the two features and terminated in the southwest with a rounded terminal. The ditch was 1.4m wide and 0.35m deep, with moderately-sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid reddish-brown silty clay fill with common limestone inclusions (502), which was cut to the southeast by ditch F505.

Ditch F505 was 0.9m wide and 0.38m deep, with moderately-sloping sides and a concave base. The ditch terminated in the northeast with a stepped terminal partially exposed in the base. The ditch contained a mid brownish-red silty clay fill (504), with common limestone inclusions. No finds were recovered from either feature.

5.6 **Trench 6** (Plan Fig. 6a and sections 6b-g; Plates 5 and 6)
This trench was located alongside and parallel with the northern site boundary and had a total length of 62m. It was positioned to investigate a circular ring anomaly and two amorphous features recorded during the geophysical survey. The trench was excavated through topsoil (600) and subsoil (601) onto natural subsoil, present at a depth of 0.4m below ground level.

The ring anomaly was exposed in three locations as a ditch feature (F608, F614 and F616). Two of these were investigated. Segment F608 was 0.83m wide and 0.3m deep, with steep-sloping sides and a fairly level base. It contained two fills, with the basal fill (607) a mid reddish-brown clayey silt, overlain by a dark greyish-brown clayey silt upper fill (606).

Segment F614 was 0.85m wide and 0.14m deep, with moderately-sloping sides and a level base. It was filled with a dark greyish-brown clayey silt. This segment of the ditch terminated to the southwest. Finds recovered from the ditch comprised six sherds of late Bronze Age to early Iron Age pottery, as well as small quantities of worked flint, animal bone and charred bone.

Two postholes or pits (F610 and F612) were present within the area between ditches F608, F614 and F616. These were respectively 0.38m and 0.54m across and 0.25 and 0.21m deep, with each having steep-sloping sides and irregular concave bases. The features contained similar dark reddish-brown clayey silt fills (609 and 611). Five sherds of late Bronze Age to early Iron Age pottery were recovered from F612 (611).

The two amorphous features present on the geophysical survey were also recorded towards the northeast end of the trench as pits (F605 and 615). Pit F605 was investigated and measured 6m across and 0.78m deep, with steep to moderately steep-sloping sides and a flat base. The pit contained a mid brownish-yellow silty-clay stony basal fill (604) that was overlain by a main fill of mid-reddish brown clayey silt (603). Early Bronze Age and late Bronze Age to early Iron Age pottery was recovered, as well as three pieces of worked flint.

The trench also contained a further feature (617), which, upon investigation, was established to be a tree throw.

5.7 **Trench 7** (Plan Fig. 7a and sections 7b-o; Plates 7 and 8)
This trench was located in the northwest corner of the site, alongside the northern boundary, and was 75m long. It was positioned across a series of anomalies identified during the geophysical survey. The trench was excavated through topsoil (700) and subsoil (701) onto natural subsoil (738), which was present at a depth of 0.36m below ground level.

Towards the northeast end of the trench were two intercutting ditches (F702 and F705) and a further parallel ditch (F708), which corresponds with the location of a northwest to southeast aligned double linear anomaly shown on the geophysical survey. The earlier of the inter-cutting ditches, F702, was 0.38m deep (width not established), with moderately-sloping sides and a concave base. The ditch contained a mid yellowish-brown silty-clay basal fill (703), which was overlain by a mid red homogenous silty clay (704), with this cut by ditch F705. A single sherd of late Bronze Age to early Iron Age pottery was recovered from fill 703.

Ditch F705 was 2.11m wide and 0.36m deep, with gradually-sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a basal fill of mid brown clayey silt (706), which was overlain by an upper fill of mid brown clayey silt (707), containing common limestone gravel inclusions. Seven sherds of late Bronze Age to early Iron Age pottery were recovered from fill 706, as well as 11 fragments of animal bone.

Ditch F708 was located to the southwest of F705 and was 1.3m wide and 0.34m deep, with moderately-sloping sides and a concave base. The feature contained a mid brown clayey silt fill (709), with moderate limestone gravel inclusions, occasional charcoal and rare burnt limestone inclusions. Two sherds of late Bronze Age to early Iron Age pottery were recovered, as well as a small piece of ceramic building material. This latter find may be intrusive.

Four small postholes (F716, F718, F720 and F722) were located to the northeast of these ditches. F716 was 0.26m wide and 0.1m deep, with moderately steep-sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid brown clayey-silt fill (717) and no finds were recovered.

Postholes F718, F720 and F722 were 0.18m to 0.22m across and 0.05m to 0.08m deep, with each having moderately-sloping sides and concave bases. They all contained similar mid brown silty clay fills (719, 721 and 723) and no finds were recovered.

Towards the southwest end of the trench were two parallel northwest to southeast aligned linear features, which terminated within the trench. Probable ditch F712 was 0.72m wide and 0.12m deep, with a rounded terminal, moderately sloping sides and an irregular base. It contained a mid brown clayey silt fill (713), with a single sherd of Romano-British pottery recovered.

Probable ditch F714 was 0.9m wide and 0.33m deep, with a rounded terminal and moderately sloping sides and concave base. It contained a mid brown clayey silt fill (715), with occasional limestone, charcoal and burnt limestone inclusions. Finds recovered comprised two sherds of Romano-British pottery, 19 fragments of animal bone and a small burnt stone.

To the southwest of ditch F714 were two round posthole features (F728 and F730). These were respectively 0.28m and 0.32m across and 0.28m and 0.16m deep. Posthole F730 contained a mid brown clay silt fill (731). Posthole F728 contained a mid yellowish-brown

silty-clay fill (729) containing some flat limestone packing. The fill was cut by ditch F714. No finds were recovered. Also to the southwest of F714 was a small possible circular pit (F726). This was 0.54m wide and 0.19m deep, with moderately-sloping sides and an irregular flattish base. The pit contained a mid brown clayey silt fill (727) and three fragments of animal bone were recovered.

Adjacent to F726 was a curving terminal of a possible gully (F732). This extended partially into the trench with a rounded terminal and measured 0.18m wide and 0.15m deep, with steep sides and a concave base. It contained a mid brown clayey silt fill (733) and no finds were recovered.

Towards the centre of the trench was a northwest to southeast aligned linear feature terminal (F710). This was 0.46m wide and 0.05m deep, with steep sides, an irregular base and a rounded terminal in the southeast. The ditch contained a mid brown silty-clay fill (711), with a single small abraded sherd of probable early Saxon pottery recovered.

The trench contained two amorphous features (724 and 736), of which only 724 was investigated. Both features are probably tree throws. In addition, three further partially exposed features (734, 735 and 737) were also present within the trench and were cleaned and recorded in plan only.

6. THE FINDS

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. Finds were then quantified according to material type within each context, Finds totals by material type are given in Table 1 and are described briefly by category below.

Table 1: Finds quantification (weight is in grams). CBM = Ceramic building material

Trench	Context	Iron	Slag		Burnt Stone		Flint		Fired Clay		CBM		Pottery		Shell		Animal Bone		Charred Bone	
		no	no	wt	no	wt	no	wt	no	wt	no	wt	no	wt	no	wt	no	wt	no	wt
Trench 1	101	1									1	13								
	102												1	1						
	103						4	9					1	12						
Trench 2	202												10	120						
	204	5	1	101					1	1	8	149	4	35	1	1	1	11		
Trench 3	300						1	3					1	4						
	302												2	4						
	306																6	6		
	308						1	1									6	6		
	310						2	1												
	315				1	243											5	7		
Trench 4	403												21	178						
	405												3	25						
Trench 5	500												4	16						
Trench 6	603												3	6						
	604						3	4												
	606												2	16			33	288		
	609																4	1		
	611												5	7			1	1		
	613						1	3					6	8			6	4	6	1
Trench 7	700						1	9			1	4	2	5						
	703												1	3						
	706												7	16			11	92		
	709										1	1	2	6						
	711												1	1						
	713												1	9						
	715		1	11									2	2			19	133		
	727																3	38		
Totals		**6**	**2**	**112**	**1**	**243**	**13**	**30**	**1**	**1**	**11**	**167**	**79**	**474**	**1**	**1**	**95**	**587**	**6**	**1**

6.2 Iron objects

A total of six iron objects was recovered, comprising a nail from Trench 1 (context 101) and five nails from Trench 2 (204). All the iron objects are probably of post-medieval date and include round-headed and square-shanked nails.

6.3 Slag

A total of two pieces of iron slag (112g) was recovered, the first from Trench 2 (context 204) and the second from Trench 7 (context 715). The fragment from Trench 7 is probably of Romano-British date, while the fragment from Trench 2 is of uncertain date.

6.4 Burnt stone

A single fragment of burnt stone was recovered from Trench 3 (context 315). The stone is a hard, fine-grained sandstone and is unworked.

6.5 Worked flint

A total of 12 pieces (30g) of worked flint was recovered. The flint includes the following:

Trench 1	(context 103)	Two chips, blade core fragment, snapped blade, all patinated
Trench 3	(context 300)	Broken blade, burnt
Trench 3	(context 308)	Flake
Trench 3	(context 310)	Single patinated chip
Trench 6	(context 604)	Flake and two chips, all patinated
Trench 6	(context 613)	Flake
Trench 7	(context 700)	Retouched flake, patinated

The flint assemblage includes pieces of potential Neolithic and later date, but none of the flint is indicative of a particular technology. Most of the flint is patinated and several pieces have cortex, which would suggest chalk-derived material.

6.6 Fired clay

A single fragment of fired clay was recovered from Trench 2 (context 204). The fragment is small and amorphous and is in a coarse, sandy fabric, which is very abraded. The fragment's date is uncertain.

6.7 Ceramic building material

A total of 11 pieces (167g) of ceramic building material was recovered from a number of trenches. The majority (8 pieces, 149g) was recovered from Trench 2 (context 204) and all this is of post-medieval date and includes fragments of roof tile and field drain. The remaining three pieces were recovered from Trench 1 (context 101) and Trench 7 (contexts 700 and 709). All these are small, abraded fragments in a soft fabric and are likely to be of Romano-British date.

6.8 Pottery

A total of 79 sherds (474g) of pottery was recovered from all trenches. The mean sherd weight is 6g and the majority of the pottery is in a fair condition, although many of the sherds are small and the Romano-British pottery is the most abraded due to the nature of the fabrics. There is a wide range of dates, and these are all discussed below and the pottery is summarised by trench and period in Table 2.

Table 2: Pottery by period (weight is in grams)

Trench	Context	Bronze Age		Later Prehistoric		Romano -British		Saxon		Medieval		Post-Medieval		Total	
		no	wt	no	wt	no	wt	no	wt	no	wt	no	wt	no	wt
1	102					1	1							**1**	**1**
	103			1	12									**1**	**12**
2	202			10	120									**10**	**120**
	204					1	3			1	6	2	26	**4**	**35**
3	300											1	4	**1**	**4**
	302							2	4					**2**	**4**
4	403							21	178					**21**	**178**
	405							3	25					**3**	**25**
5	500											4	16	**4**	**16**
6	603	2	5	1	1									**3**	**6**
	606			2	16									**2**	**16**
	611			5	7									**5**	**7**
	613			6	8									**6**	**8**
7	700			1	1	1	4							**2**	**5**
	703			1	3									**1**	**3**
	706			7	16									**7**	**16**
	709			2	6									**2**	**6**
	711							1	1					**1**	**1**
	713					1	9							**1**	**9**
	715					2	2							**2**	**2**
Totals		**2**	**5**	**36**	**190**	**6**	**19**	**27**	**208**	**1**	**6**	**7**	**46**	**79**	**474**

Early Bronze Age

A total of two very small sherds (5g) of possible Beaker pottery was recovered from Trench 6 (context 603). One sherd, from a base in a fine grog-tempered fabric, has a possible comb impression – though this has been poorly executed and appears to have been pushed deeply into the wall of the vessel. The second sherd is also in a fine grog-tempered fabric with rare fine calcareous inclusions.

Later Prehistoric (Mid -late Bronze Age/early Iron Age)

A total of 36 sherds (190g) of later prehistoric pottery was recovered, and this accounts for 40% (by weight) of the total amount of pottery recovered. The largest proportion of later prehistoric pottery (63% by weight) was recovered from pit F203 (fill 202) in Trench 2 and this comprises sherds in a pale-fired fabric with crushed shell, identical to that recovered from circular ditch F608 in Trench 6. Pit F203 also contained a plain rim of a soft, leached fabric.

Prehistoric pottery was also recovered from Trenches 6 (17% by weight) and Trench 7 (12% by weight). The pottery from these trenches mainly comprises fossil shell/limestone tempered fabrics and oolitic tempered fabrics in a moderately soft clay matrix. The temper is often quite finely crushed, though there are coarser, more poorly sorted sherds present. All the sherds are plain body sherds, with the exception of a single plain rim, which may derive from a barrel jar. Comparable fossil shell/limestone tempered fabrics were recovered from Bishops Cleeve (McSloy 2007) and also at Hucclecote, Gloucester (Timby 2003).

Romano-British

A total of six sherds (19g) of Romano-British pottery was recovered in small quantities from Trenches 1, 2 and 7. All the pottery comprises small, abraded sherds and includes Severn Valley wares and greywares.

Saxon

A total of 27 sherds (208g) of Saxon pottery was recovered, representing 44% (by weight) of the total amount of pottery recovered. The Saxon pottery was recovered predominately from Trench 4, from pit F404 (context 403), which yielded 21 sherds (178g), and pit F406 (fill 405), which yielded 3 sherds (25g).

The sherds from F404 are all conjoining sherds from a small globular jar with a simple rim, in an organic-tempered reduced fabric. The vessel has a large spall, where a piece of the clay wall would have come away from the wall of the vessel during the firing process. The

vessel is dated as 5th to 7th century. The other sherds of Saxon pottery are also organic tempered and are all plain body sherds which derive from globular jars and are of the same date range.

Medieval
A single sherd in a fine sandy, glazed medieval fabric was recovered from a natural hollow (layer 204) in Trench 2. The sherd is abraded and is from a base.

Post-medieval
A total of seven sherds (46g) of post-medieval pottery was recovered, two sherds (26g) from the natural hollow 204 in Trench 2 and four sherds (16g) from topsoil 500 in Trench 5.

6.9 Shell
A single small fragment of oyster shell was recovered from natural hollow 204 in Trench 2.

6.10 Animal bone
A total of 93 fragments of animal bone was recovered, the majority from Trench 6 (50% by weight) and Trench 7 (45% by weight), mainly dated by association with pottery as later Bronze Age or early Iron Age. All of the animal bone from Trench 6 was recovered from segments of ring ditches (F608, F612 and F614). Animal bone from Trench 2 was recovered from natural hollow 204 and is undated. Animal bone from Trench 3 is mainly undated, with the exception to that recovered from context 308, which was associated with worked flint, so could possibly be prehistoric. All the animal bone is fragmented, but in good condition and includes bone from cow, sheep and pig.

6.11 Charred bone
A very small quantity (six fragments, 1g) of burnt bone was recovered from Trench 6, F614 (layer 613). The fragments are too small and undiagnostic for a positive identification to be made.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The evaluation has established the presence of archaeological features and deposits in most trenches, with three main phases identified (Fig. 8). The first phase is likely to be later Bronze Age to early Iron Age and is represented by drip gullies and associated features, from two roundhouses, with these possibly within an enclosure ditch. The second phase relates to a small number of Romano-British features, while the third is represented by three pits containing early Saxon pottery. There were however, earlier finds recovered, including two sherds of early Bronze Age pottery, which are probably residual in a later context, as well as a small number of worked flints.

7.2 Phase 1: Late Bronze Age to early Iron Age
The circular ditch identified in Trench 6 as F608, F614 and 616 is likely to represent a drip gully from a former roundhouse. Within the feature were two probable postholes (F610 & F612), with these likely to be positioned at the entrance on the east side, as represented by terminal 616. The gully has an external diameter of 14m.

The similar feature recorded in Trench 3 as F307, F309 and 314, contained no datable finds, but has been allocated to this phase on the basis of typology and proximity to the feature in Trench 6. This again contained internal postholes, with the entrance also located on the east side.

The two roundhouses were possibly within an enclosure, which was identified in Trench 7 as a northwest to southeast aligned double ditch, with a single ditch extending from the

southeast end of this to the northeast and through Trench 5. This latter ditch did not continue into Trench 3, which confirms the geophysics interpretation.

Other features and deposits allocated to this phase comprise a small isolated pit towards the centre of Trench 2 (F203), which contained the most substantial amount of pottery of this date found on site, as well as a large pit (F605) immediately to the northeast of the roundhouse recorded in Trench 6. This feature also contained two sherds of Beaker pottery.

In the northeast corner of the site, adjacent to the eastern boundary, the footslope lynchet in Trench 1 (see Fig. 8 and Appendix 1) sealed a buried soil containing late Bronze Age to early Iron Age pottery. No other features were present, but it is possible that these may survive beneath this layer.

7.3 Romano-British

Only a small number of features of this date were present, with these generally located at the southwest end of Trench 7, towards the northwest corner of the site. These features comprised two probable linear terminals (F712 & F714), a narrow curvilinear gully (F732) and four discrete features, either small pits or postholes. These features are likely to represent evidence for small scale and localised settlement or agricultural activity. The Romano-British pottery is very small and abraded, so it is difficult to be more precise in terms of date.

7.4 Early Saxon

Four features contained pottery of this date, two pits in Trench 4 (F404 & F406), one in Trench 3 (F303) and a linear feature in Trench 7 (F710). These features do not appear to represent burials of this date, so they are likely to relate to small scale settlement, seemingly restricted to the area at the southwest end of Trench 4 and southern end of Trench 3 (see Fig. 8), as well as the central area of Trench 7; two unexcavated features adjacent F710 could also be of this date. Sites and finds of this period are rare in this area, with none identified nearby as part of the assessment (Crutchley 2010b), while the site itself is some distance away from the known Saxon settlement area of Cirencester, which is within its historic core.

7.5 Other features

A large possible natural hollow at the southeast end of Trench 2 (204) was filled with colluvium which contained a small number of Romano-British, Medieval and post-medieval finds. A shallow linear feature was present towards the southwest end of Trench 3 (F305), which is one of a number of similar northwest to southeast linear trends identified during the geophysical survey. Where surviving, these features are likely to represent evidence for post-medieval or modern agricultural drainage.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 While all trenches contained some evidence for archaeological activity, the features that were identified were located in small clusters, with large parts of many of the trenches devoid of any remains. Many of the features identified were generally shallow and seemingly truncated by later ploughing. However, in the northeast corner of the site, alongside the eastern boundary, a footslope lynchet was present which sealed a probable buried soil of late Bronze Age to early Iron Age date. There is the potential below the layers forming the lynchet for the survival of better-preserved archaeological features, deposits and artefacts.

8.2 Generally the results from the evaluation are consistent with those from the earlier geophysical survey. It is therefore likely that many of the geophysical anomalies located in areas where it was not possible to undertake trial trenching will also represent buried archaeological features and deposits.

9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

9.1 The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. They will be deposited at the Corinium Museum, Cirencester under the relevant accession code, along with any archive generated by subsequent work on the site. The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 77637.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation was commissioned on behalf of EDP by Andrew Crutchley. The site trial-trenching was carried out by Simon Hughes, Chris Caine, Kerry Dean, Dan Carter and Tina Tapply. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Sarah Cottam. The advice and collaboration of Charles Parry, Gloucestershire Archaeology Officer, is duly acknowledged.

11. SOURCES CONSULTED

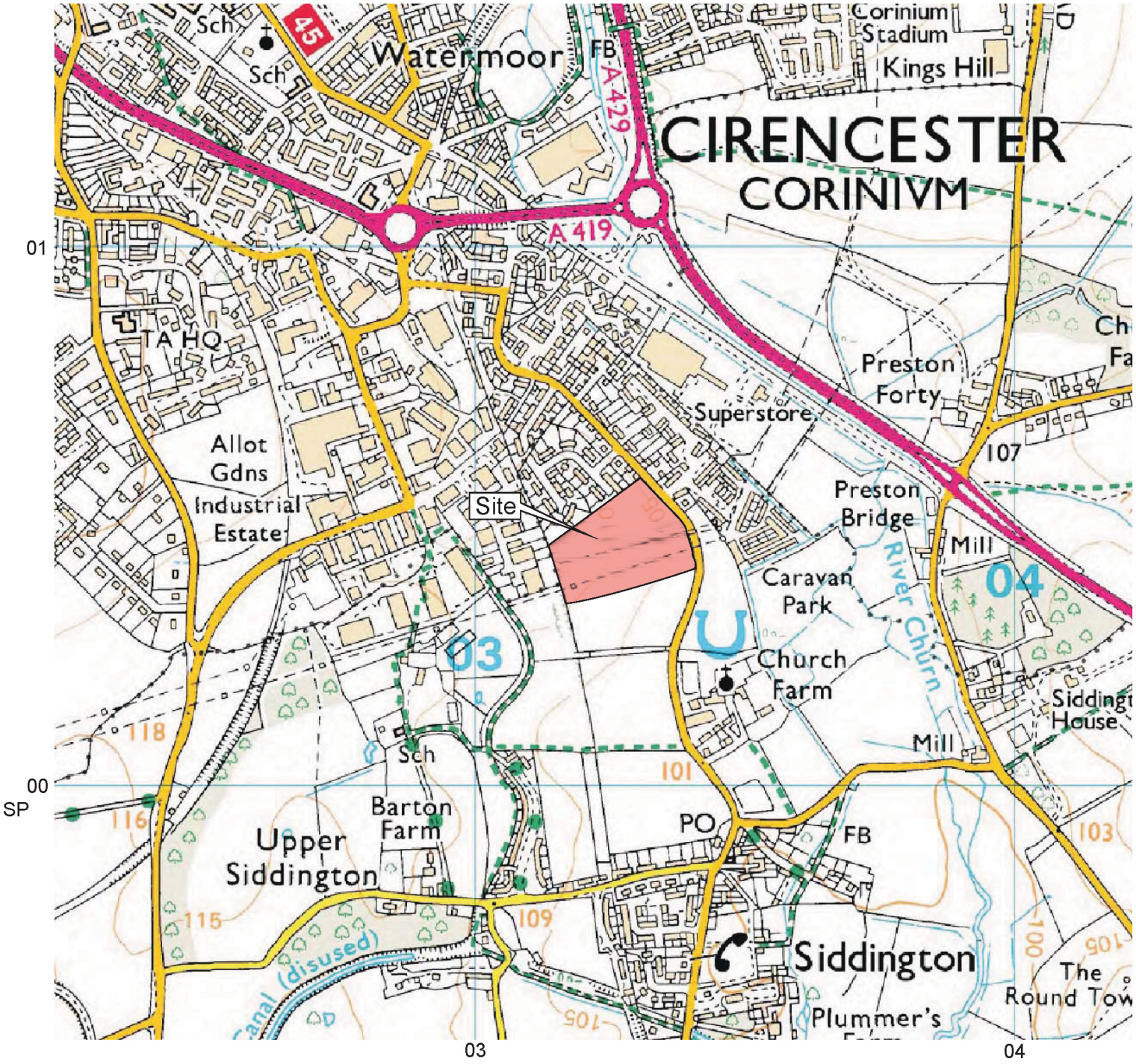
Cox, P.W., 2010, *Land off Siddington Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Project Design for archaeological trench evaluation*. AC archaeology document, ref. ACD166/1/1

Crutchley A., 2010b, *Land at Siddington Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Assessment*. EDP document, ref. H_EDP409_03c

McSloy, E.R., 2007, 'The Finds' in Cullen, K. and Hancocks, A., *Excavations at 21 Bishops Cleeve, 2004,* Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Report No. 5, Cotswold Archaeological Trust Ltd

Sabin D., and Donaldson K., 2010 '*Land at Siddington Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire – Magnetometer Survey Report'* Unpublished report no. 321. April 2010

Timby, J. 2008. 'The Pottery', in Thomas, A., Holbrook, N., and Bateman, C., *Later Prehistoric and Romano-British Burial and Settlement at Hucclecote, Gloucestershire Excavations in Advance of the Gloucestershire Business Park Link Road, 1998,* Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Report No. 2, Cotswold Archaeological Trust Ltd



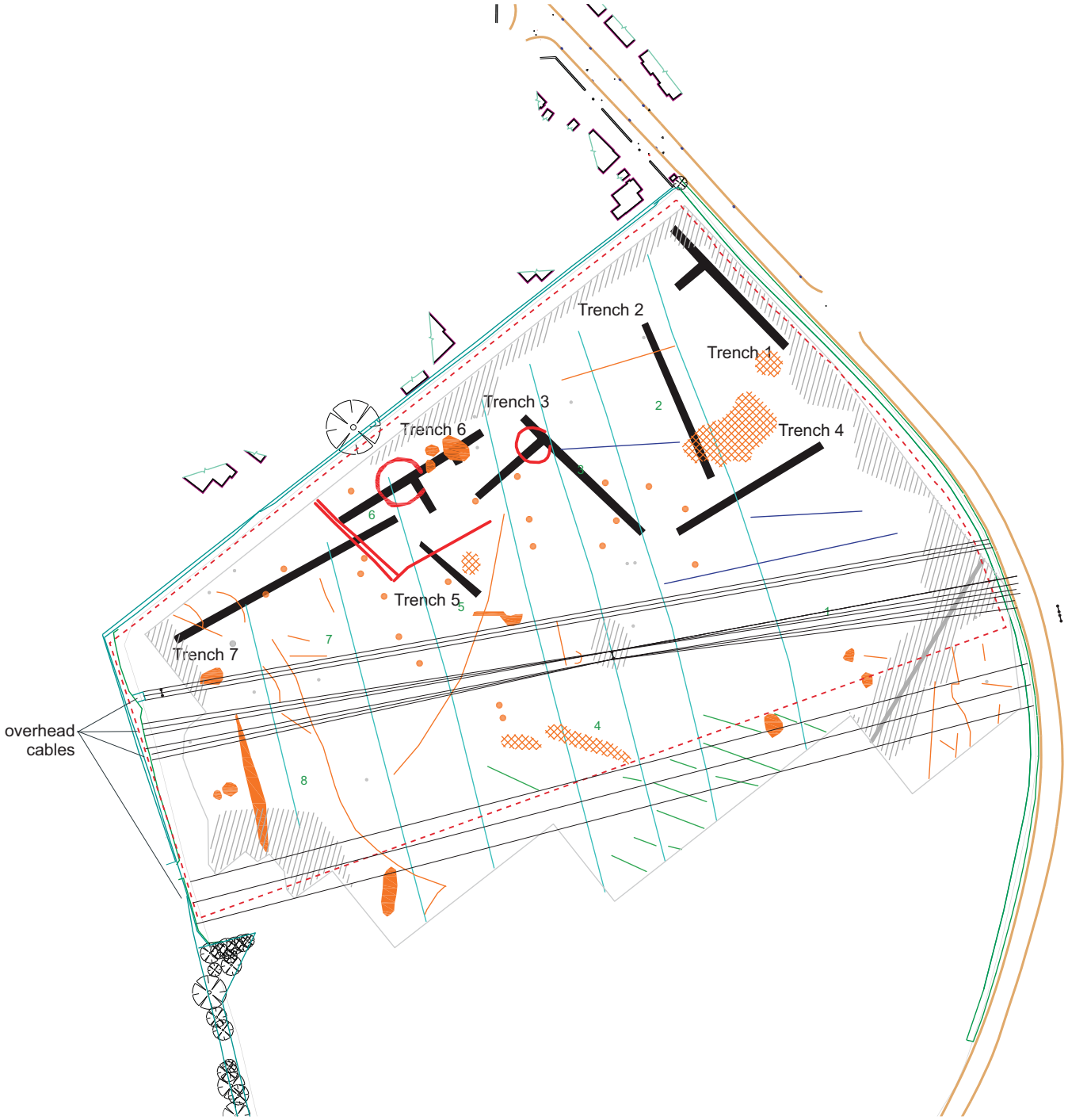
PROJECT

Land at Siddington Road, Cirencester

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location

AC archaeology



N

20 0 20 40 60

1:1781
Metres

Abstraction and interpretation of magnetometer anomalies

- Positive linear anomaly - cut feature of archaeological origin
- Positive linear anomaly - possible ditch-like feature
- Linear anomaly - ridge and furrow
- Positive linear anomaly - possible land drain
- Negative linear anomaly - material of low magnetic susceptibility
- Discrete positive response - possible pit-like feature
- Magnetic disturbance from ferrous material
- Strong multiple dipolar linear anomaly - pipeline / cable / service
- Strong dipolar anomaly - ferrous object

PROJECT

Land at Siddington Road, Cirencester

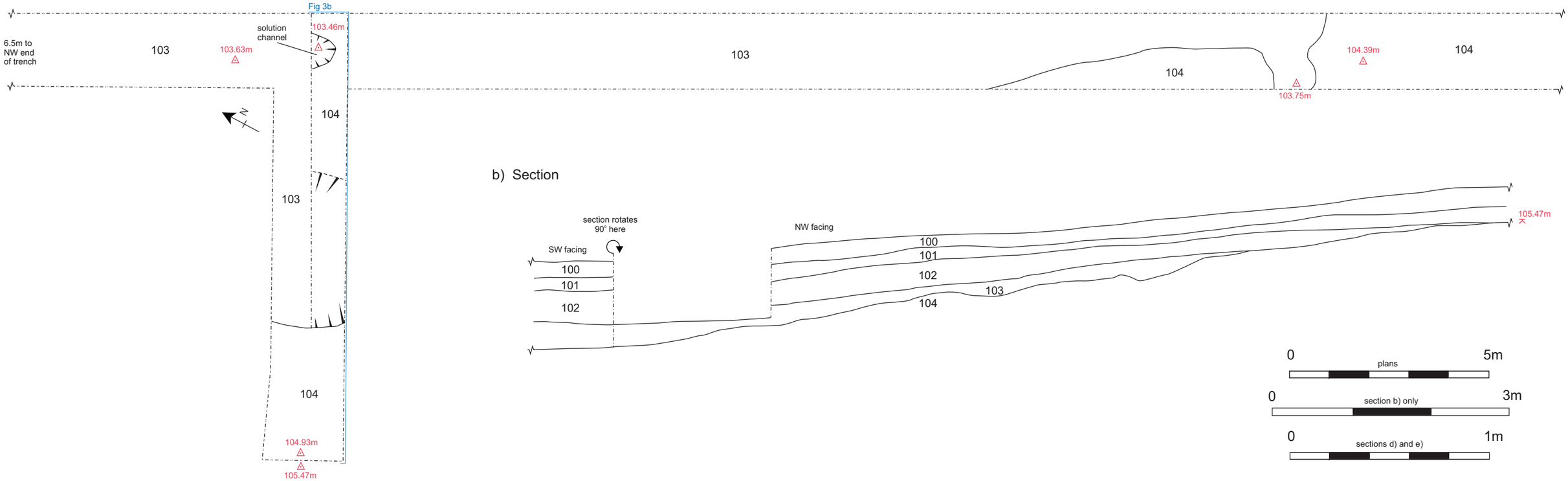
TITLE

Fig. 2: Location of trenches in relation to geophysical survey results

AC archaeology

Trench 1

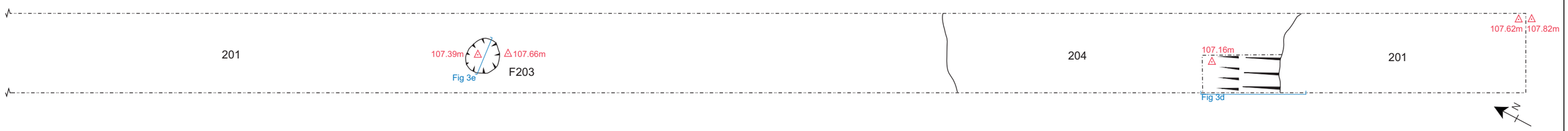
a) Plan



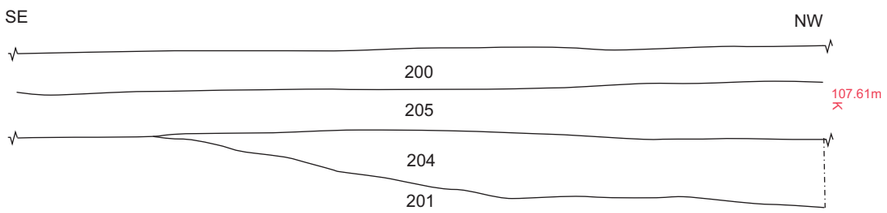
b) Section

Trench 2

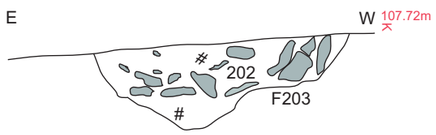
c) Plan



d) Section



e) Section F203



Key

- Limestone
- Burnt limestone
- # Charcoal

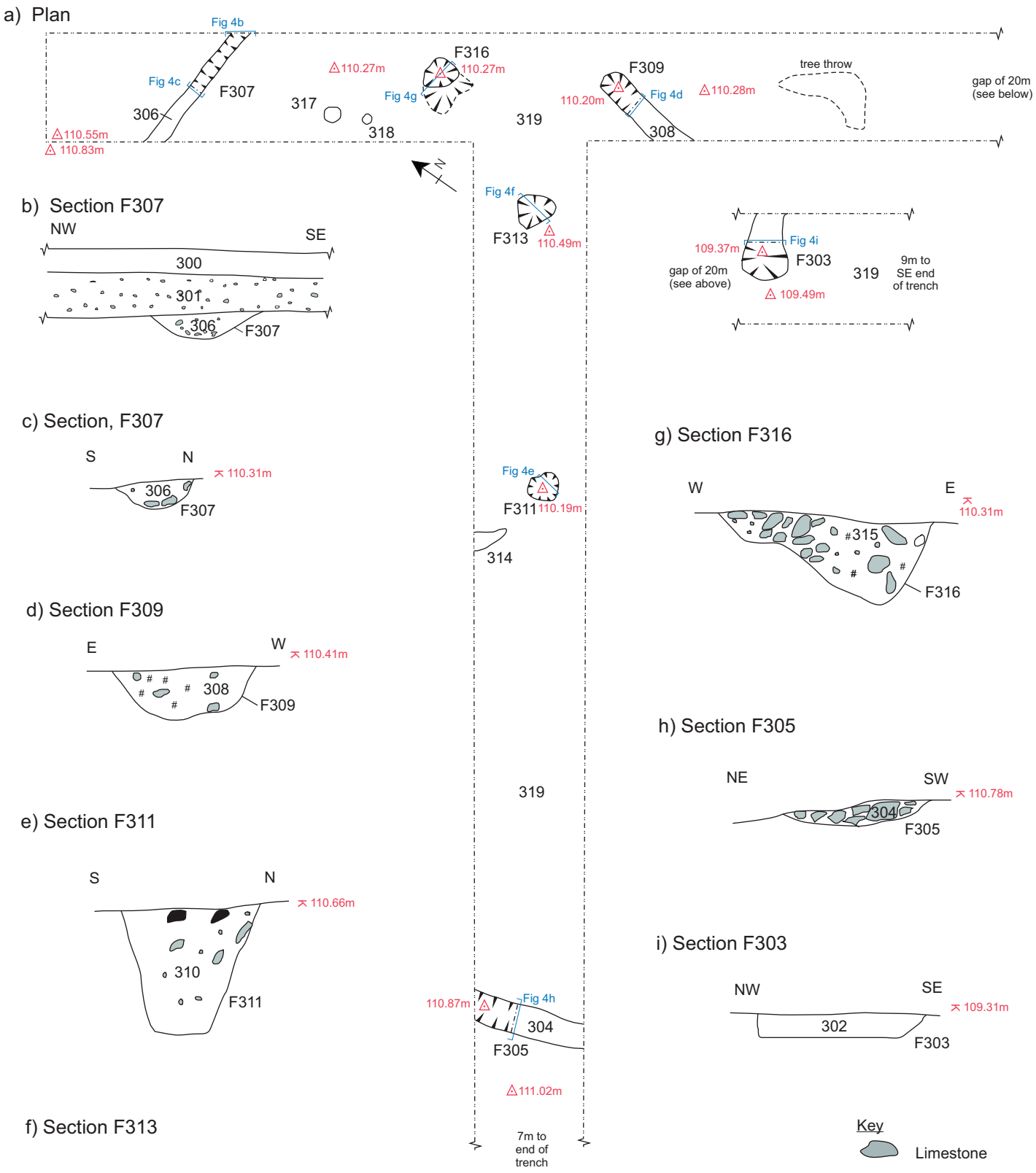
PROJECT

Land at Siddington Road, Cirencester

TITLE

Fig. 3:
Plans and sections, Trenches 1 and 2

AC archaeology



PROJECT

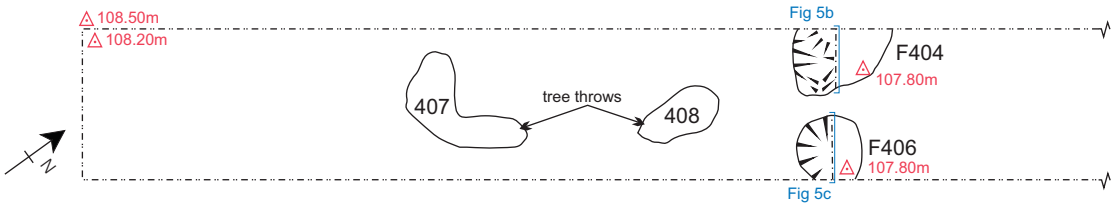
Land at Siddington Road, Cirencester

TITLE

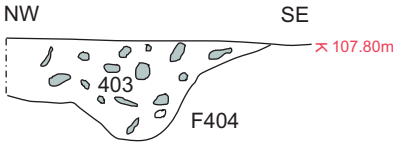
Fig. 4: Plan and sections, Trench 3

Trench 4

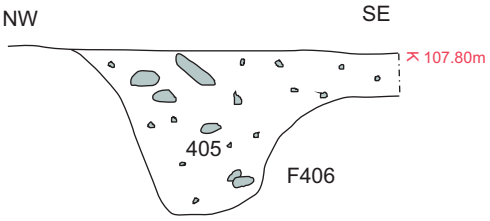
a) Plan



b) Section F404

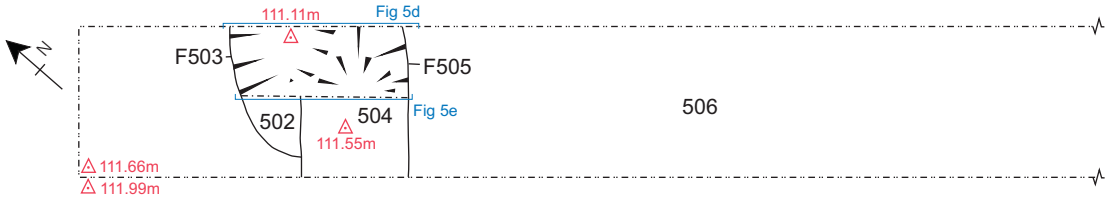


c) Section F406

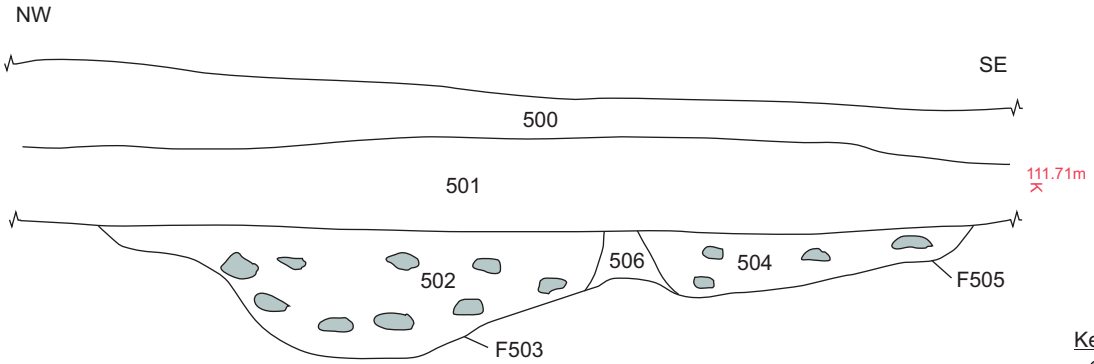


Trench 5

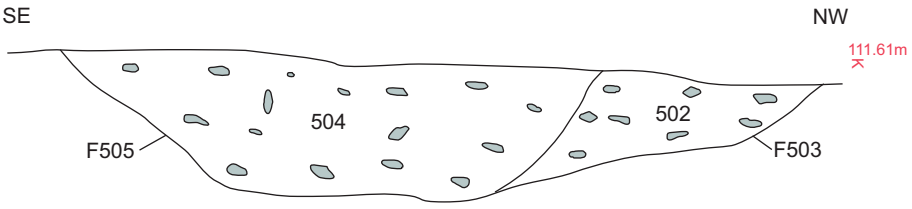
c) Plan



d) Section F503 and F505



e) Section F503 and F505



Key

- Limestone
- Burnt limestone
- Charcoal

0 plans 5m

0 sections 1m

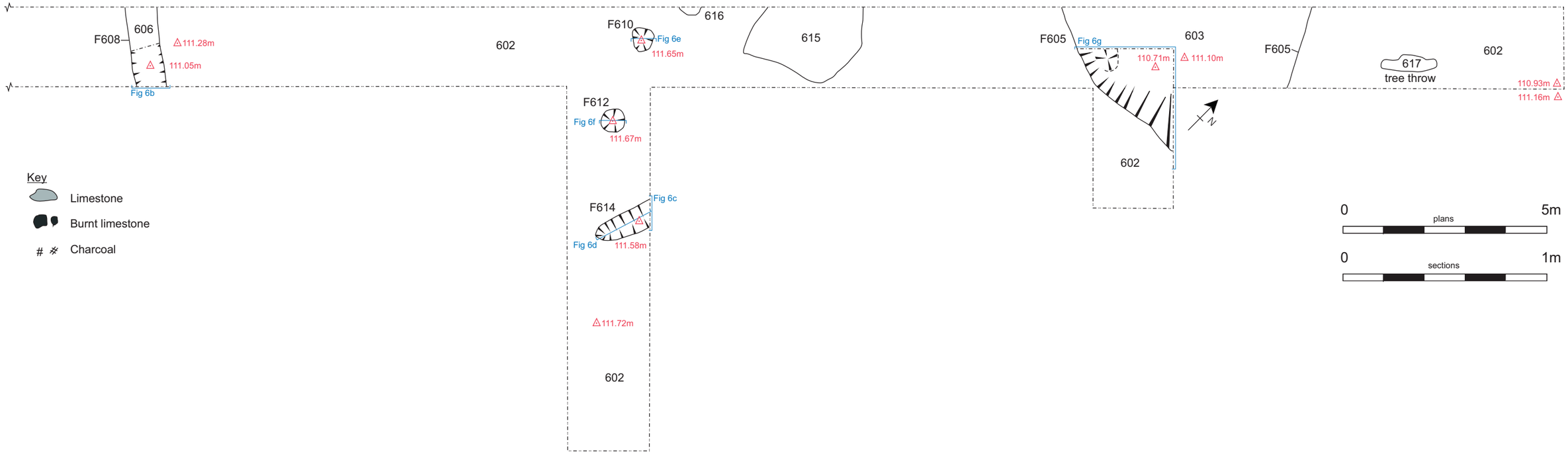
PROJECT

Land at Siddington Road, Cirencester

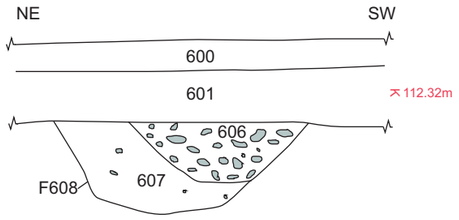
TITLE

Fig. 5: Plans and sections, Trenches 4 and 5

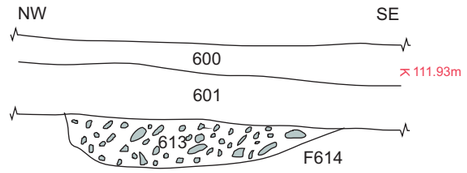
a) Plan



b) Section F608

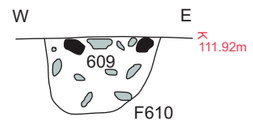


c) Section F614

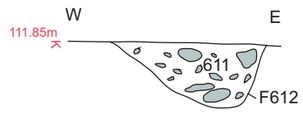


d) Section F614

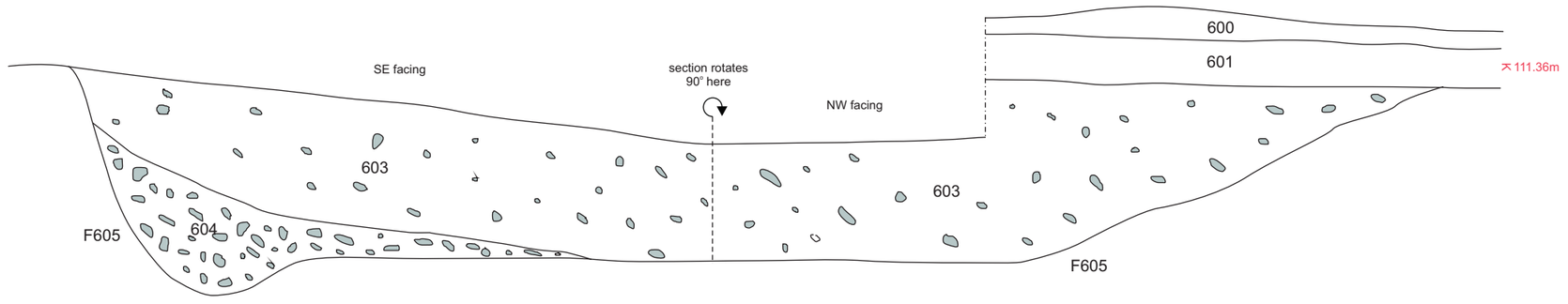
e) Section F610



f) Section F612



g) Section F605



PROJECT

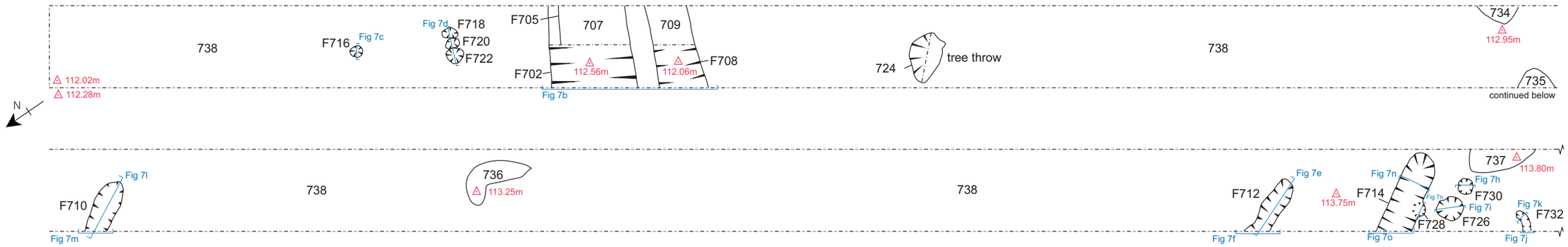
Land at Siddington Road, Cirencester

TITLE

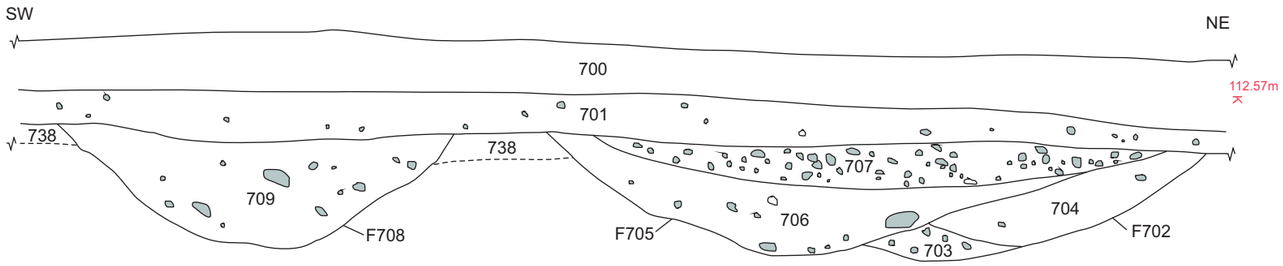
Fig. 6:
Plans and sections, Trench 6

AC archaeology

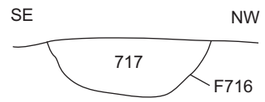
a) Plan



b) Section F702 and F708

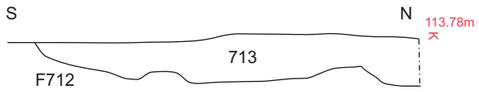


c) Section F716

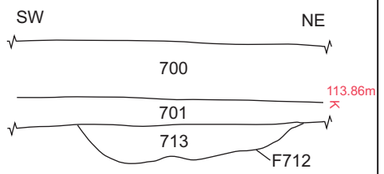


d) Section F718

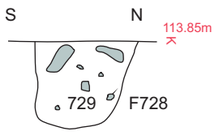
e) Section F712



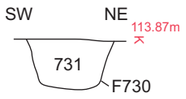
f) Section F712



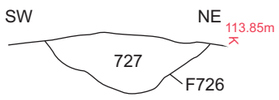
g) Section F728



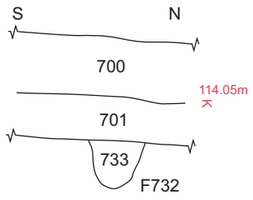
h) Section F730



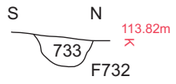
i) Section F726



j) Section F732

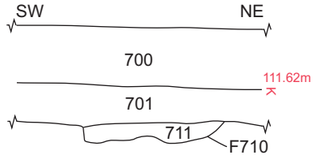


k) Section F732



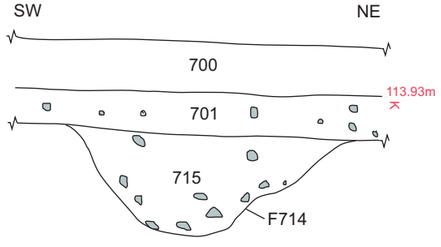
l) Section F710

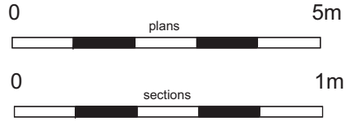
m) Section F710



n) Section F714

o) Section F714





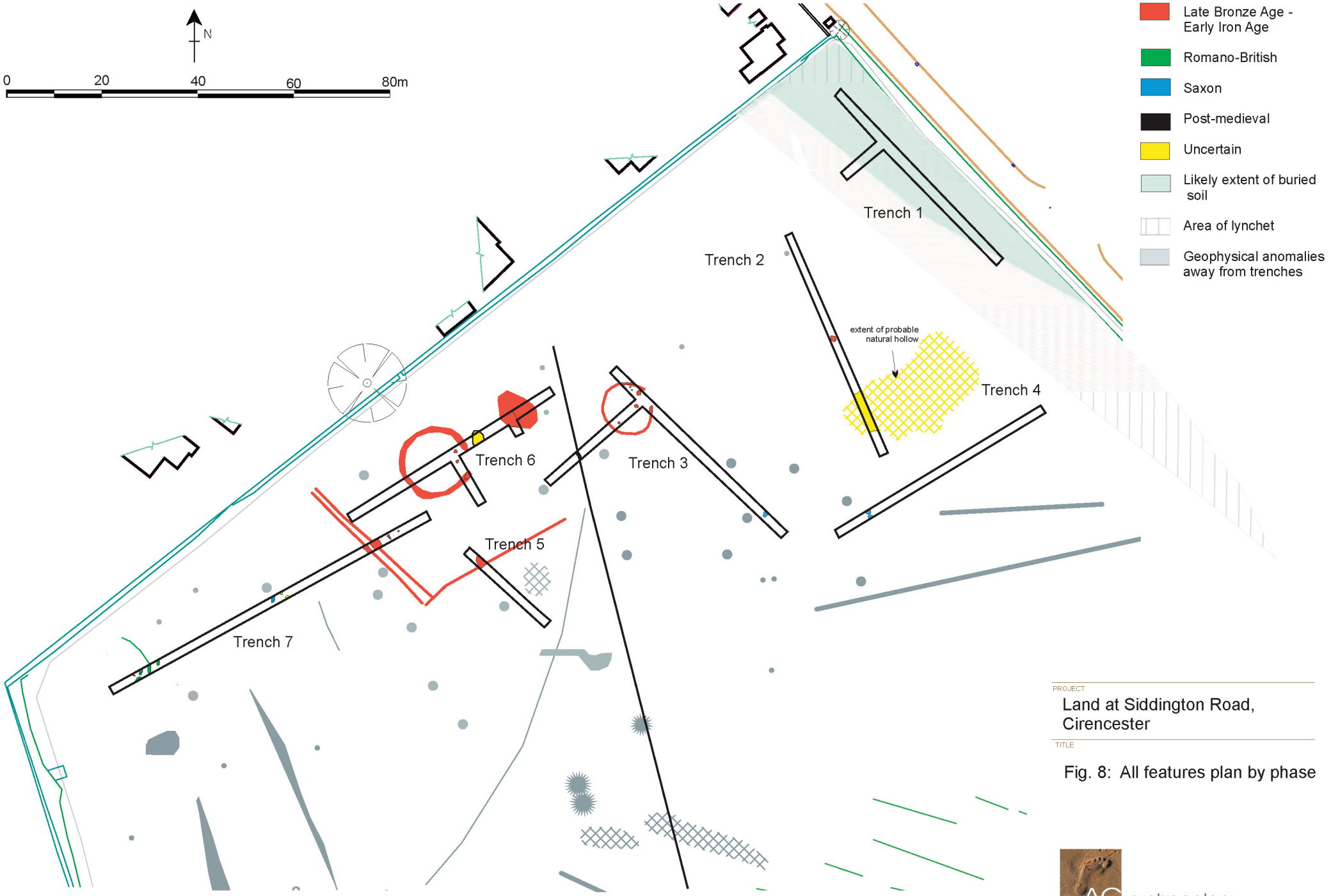
PROJECT

Land at Siddington Road, Cirencester

TITLE

Fig. 7:
Plan and sections, Trench 7

AC archaeology



PROJECT

Land at Siddington Road, Cirencester

TITLE

Fig. 8: All features plan by phase

AC archaeology

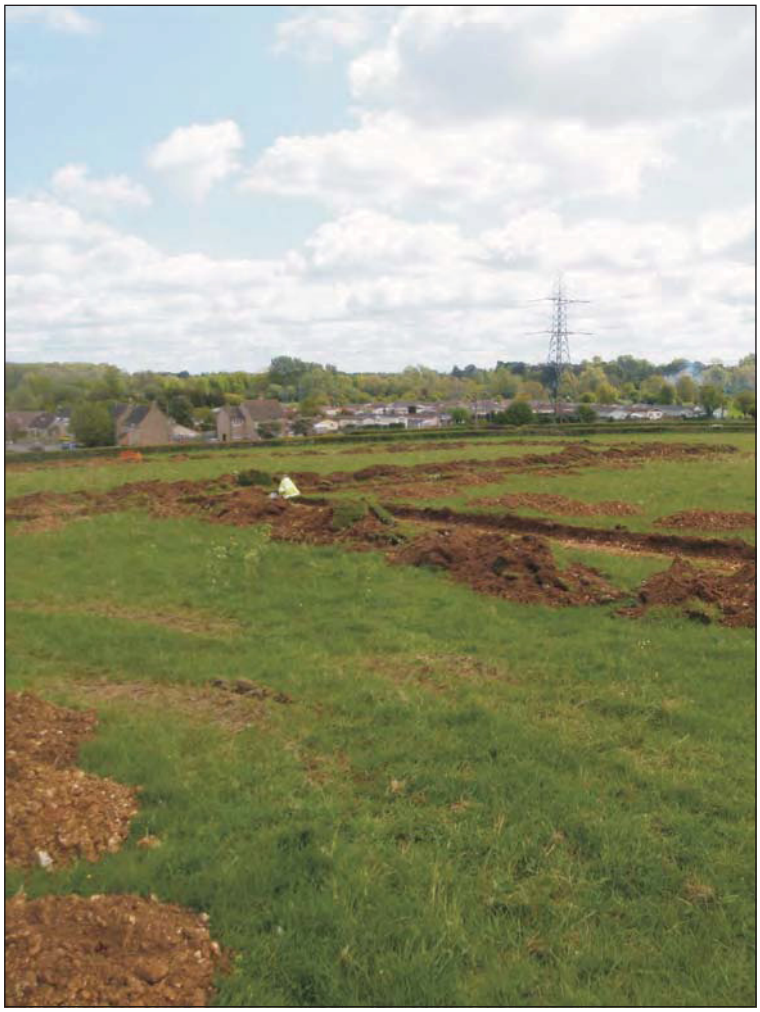


Plate 1: General view of site with Trench 3 in the foreground. Looking east

Plate 2: General view of Trench 1 showing buried soil 103, looking southwest (Scale 1m)

Plate 3:
General view of Trench 2, with pit F203 in foreground. Looking southeast (Scales 1m and 0.2m)

Plate 4: Pits F404 and F406, Trench 4, following excavation. Looking northeast (Scale 1m)

Plate 5: General view of site from Trench 6, looking southwest

Plate 6: General view of roundhouse features, Trench 6. Looking east (Scale 1m)

Plate 7: Plan view of ditches F702, F705 and F708, Trench 7. Looking northeast (Scale 1m)

Plate 8:
Ditch terminals F712 and F714, Trench 7.
Looking northeast (Scale1m)

APPENDIX 1

AEA: Allen Environmental Archaeology
Redroof, Green Road, Codford St. Peter, WARMINSTER, Wiltshire, BA12 0NW (Tel: 07828 103454)

Land off Siddington Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (ACD 166); *geoarchaeology*

The site at Siddington Road, Cirencester, was visited on 12th May 2010 and the geoarchaeological implications explored. The deposits in one trench (trench 1) were described and a full geoarchaeological record made and interpretation provided. The approximate likely extent of the deposit was mapped in the field and the geoarchaeological and palaeo-environmental significance of the site and the local deeper deposits are considered and their potential evaluated. Comments on the archaeological implications of the deposits and their distribution are also made along with potential lines of further targeted investigation should further field intervention be undertaken.

Topography and geology and soils

The area under archaeological investigation forms a hilltop with gentle slopes to the south and steeper convex slopes to the east leading to Siddington Road. The geology is reported as Jurassic Forest Marble (AC Archaeology 2010) which manifests itself as loose medium and large calcareous (limestone) fragments within a mixed stony and clay matrix forming a deeply weathered surface of the solid geology. This supports thin brown rendzinas of the Sherborne Association (Jarvis *et al.* 1984), with thicker colluvial brown earths evident in trenches in flootslope locations (e.g. trench 1).

Geoarchaeology and on site sediments

Most trenches contained shallow silty to clayey thin brown rendzina soils over fragmented weathered limestones. At the foot of the steeper slope, trench 1 revealed deposits up to 1m deep, comprising a footlsope lynchet. The levelled top of the 'lynchet' created by footslope colluvium and ploughwash could be observed as clear topographical feature against the eastern field boundary. The 'lynchet' form was *c.* 15m wide for 100m extending from the northern boundary beyond which (southwards) it was 20m wide at the edge of the investigated area, where the contributing slope to the west became shallower.

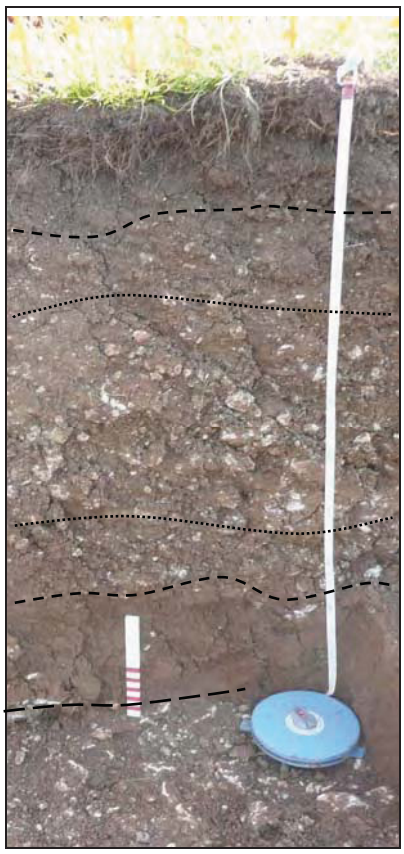
The sequence was described of the eastern face trench 1, and the point where a small trench perpendicular to it was cut on the western side (Figures 1a and 1b). Descriptions follow pedological notation outlined by Hodgson (1976).

Figure 1 a) Trench 1 showing the colluvial lynchet deposits and, b) showing the location described

Sediment record

Depth	***context***	***Description and interpretation***
0-32 cm	1	Very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) weakly calcareous, silty clay loam with few small and medium stones, large crumb structure giving way to weak-moderate medium subangulr blocky structure, many fine fibrous roots, clear wavy boundary. Under grass/pasture. Ah – colluvial brown earth
32-45 cm	2a	Dark brown (10YR 3/3) silty clay loam with common small and very small calcareous stones, and many medium calacreous stones, medium subangular block structure, clear wavy boundary. Colluvial B - Colluvium 3: fine stony ploughwash
45-68 cm	2b	Dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) firm silty clay loam with common to abundant medium stones, abundant small stones and rare large stones, no structure apparent, clear boundary. Colluvial B - Colluvium 2: stony ploughwash
68-92 cm	2c	Brown (7.5YR 4/4) (with a reddish hue in the field), silty clay loam to silty clay less stony than above, and predominanly small stones with few medium stones, clear to abrupt smooth boundary. Colluvial B - Colluvium 1: slightly stony ploughwash
92-111 cm	3	Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) firm, stone-free silty clay with clear moderate medium prismatic structure, clay or silt coating on interpedal surfaces (hand lens), abrupt boundary. Bt – relict truncated former argillic brown earth soil

111 + cm		Loose medium limestone rubble fragments
	natural	Cw – weathered Limestone parent material ('natural')



Context 1: Ah ('topsoil')

Context 2a: Colluvium 3, fine stony ploughwash

Context 2b: Colluvium 2, stony ploughwash

Context 2c: Colluvium 1, slightly stony ploughwash

Context 3: relict truncated former argillic brown earth
Reported to contain pottery – possibly later Bronze Age or early Iron Age

Figure 2. The profile and summary interpretation

The deposits clearly show a footslope lynchet about 15-20m wide and up to 1m high at the point where it was sectioned by trench 1. The current field boundary lies at the face of the lynchet, below which is the Siddington Road. The nature of the colluvium within the body of the lynchet is clearly banded, and overlies an argillic (clay-rich) basal context probably representing the Bt horizon of a former brown forest soils (cf. Limbrey 1975). The variation within the lynchet and deposits themselves allow us to provide an outline land-use and erosion history. Of significance was the lack of charcoal and artefacts observed in the colluvium. Although the deposits were removed by machine, there seemed to be a genuine lack of artefactual material. A relatively large sherd of possibly late Bronze Age to early Iron Age pottery was, however, recovered from the basal clay-rich horizon (Bt), which might provide a *terminus post quem* date for colluviation and lynchet formation. The lynchet deposits themselves, although broadly banded (colluvium 1, 2 and 3), are largely

undifferentiated and represent at least several hundred and probably several thousand years of accumulation and lynchet development.

These deposits are wholly terrestrial colluvium. There is no evidence of any waterlain or alluvial deposits.

Geoarchaeological history

1. The post-glacial formation of an argillic brown earth soil (brown forest soil) with a developed Bt (translocated clay-rich basal horizon), formed under developing post-glacial woodland.

2. Erosion of the A and B horizons leaving the more resistant Bt horizon (context 3), possibly as a result of early local deforestation.

3a. Colluviation probably as a result of tillage on the adjacent slope. Colluvium includes A horizon ('topsoil') material and eroded clay rich argillic brown earth material (reddish hue) in context 2c – colluvium 1.

3b. As tillage continues, soils thin and the loose mobile stones of the weathered natural are incorpated into the colluvium (context 2b – colluvium 2) and form the main body of the lynchet. This represents thinning of soils on the slopes, but may also suggest tillage with a metal tipped ard (later Iron Age onwards) or plough (Romano-British period onwards) and / or more intensive agriculture locally

3b. Final colluviation (context 2a; colluvium 3) is less stony with finer stones, indicating pasture and less intensive / aggressive tillage.

4. The present colluvial brown earth represents long term pasture and deeply worm-worked soil formation, probably indicating permanent pasture in recent times and possibly for several preceding centuries.

Archaeological significance and implications

The deposits in trench 1 represent an ancient, prehistoric, boundary forming at the footslope and possibly forming against an ancient routeway, later becoming established as the Siddington Road.

The lynchet indicates prehistoric and early historic (at least) farming of the hillslope and the land under archaeological investigation.

The presence of a Bt horizon (context 3) indicates the presence of argillic brown earths (brown forest soils) and probably of a post-glacial woodland on the site.

The establishment of the lynchet in possibly the later Bronze Age to early Iron Age, may relate to the settlement activity on the hilltop (i.e. ring ditch exposed in trench 6 for instance), and the buried soil and archaeology related to it may predate that seen on the hillslopes.

The presence of the buried soil also indicates higher potential for the survival of both archaeological artefacts, but also preservation of features which may have been lost by erosion upslope. As such it represents a band of at least between *c.* 15m and 20m width within the investigation area of protected and preserved archaeology. The potential for survival and protection of prehistoric, and possibly early historic, archaeology beneath the lynchet is greater than the plough-damaged landscape on the adjacent slopes and hilltop. To the south of the study area, this band of colluvium seems, from field surface observation only, to increase in width southwards.

Palaeo-environmental and geoarchaeological potential

Land Snails: The deposits on site, and those within the lynchet are weakly calcareous to circum-neutral. The preservation of land snails in the lynchet deposits is considered to be unlikely to poor. The land-use questions that we might wish to address of the lynchet are those of defining tillage from pasture episodes within the main lynchet. These are difficult and challenging questions to pose of palaeo-land snail assemblages, and require the recovery of large and well-preserved assemblages. Such preservation is unlikely to occur here.

Pollen: Similarly, the circum-neutral to weakly calcareous nature of the deposits here (and in the excavated features), the high biotic re-working and biotic activity is not conducive to pollen preservation.

Geoarchaeology: Soil micromorphology of the Bt and lower colluvial horizon (colluvium 1), has the potential to provide a more detailed land-use history and confirm or refute the hypotheses presented here. Such work, however, is best conducted once better dating and chronological control of the events represented has been gained, and in a larger field exercise, i.e. mitigation stage (see below).

Charred plant and charcoal remains: Standard sampling strategy was applied on site and this should include the bulk sampling of the Bt horizon to confirm the presence or absence of charcoal to aid sampling strategies should further fieldwork intervention be required.

Palaeo-environmental and geoarchaeological response and mitigation strategies

If further intervention is undertaken over this archaeologically-rich area, then the palaeo-environmental and geoarchaeological aspects may include the following:-

- A rigorous targeted bulk sampling strategy for the recovery of charred plant and charcoal remains, especially from later Bronze Age or early Iron Age features

- A sampling and sieving strategy from key deposits and feature types for recovery of the moderate to poorly preserved animal bone and charred (cremated) human bone.

- The sectioning of the footslope lynchet and hand excavation of a portion of the deposits to attempt to recovery diagnostic artefacts and examine their two-dimensional distributions through the banded but largely undifferentiated lynchet deposits. This will enable attempts to date the lynchet formation and development (cf. Bell 1975, 251-66; Bell 1983; Allen 2007).

- The geoarchaeological examination of the colluvial lynchet deposits and creation of a full field record and interpretation.

References

AC Archaeology, 2010. Land off Siddington Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR SP03260044). Project Design for archaeological trench evaluation. Unpubl. client report

Allen, M.J., 2007. Evidence of the prehistoric and medieval environment of Old Town, Eastbourne: studies of hillwash in the Bourne valley, Star Brewery Site. *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 145, 33-66

Bell, M.G. 1975. Excavations at Bishopstone, *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 115

Bell, M G., 1983. Valley sediments as evidence of land-use on the South Downs, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 49, 119-150

Hodgson, J.M. 1976. *Soil Survey Field Handbook.* Harpenden, Soil Survey Technical Monograph No. 5

Jarvis, M.G., Allen, R.H., Fordham, S.J., Hazelden, J., Moffat, A.J. & Sturdy, R.G. 1984. *Soils and their use in South East England.* Soil Survey of England and Wales, Bulletin No. 15

Limbrey, S. 1975. *Soils and Archaeology.* London: Academic Press

Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Manor Farm Stables
Chicklade
Hindon
Nr Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581
Fax: 01747 820440

Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops
Bradninch
Nr Exeter
Devon
EX5 4LQ

Telephone/Fax: 01392 882410

www.acarchaeology.co.uk