

ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION ON LAND  
ADJACENT TO HAMPTON  
CEMETERY, PERSHORE ROAD,  
EVESHAM, WORCESTERSHIRE

Tom Vaughan

With contributions by Katie Head, Derek Hurst and Robin Jackson

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

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Worcestershire County Council

Historic Environment and Archaeology Service,  
Worcestershire County Council,  
Woodbury,  
University College Worcester,  
Henwick Grove,  
Worcester WR2 6AJ



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# **Archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Hampton Cemetery, Persnore Road, Evesham, Worcestershire**

**Tom Vaughan**

**With contributions by Katie Head, Derek Hurst and Robin Jackson**

## **Part 1 Project summary**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to Hampton Cemetery, Persnore Road, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR: SP 03004312), on behalf of Evesham Town Council, who intends to extend the existing cemetery into this area, for which a planning application has been submitted. The project aimed to determine if any significant archaeological site was present and if so to indicate its nature, date and location.

Three trenches were excavated, revealing that the medieval ridge and furrow earthworks visible on the north side of the site had been filled in and levelled in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when the site was part of a larger recreation area.

To the north, toward the River Avon, a deep alluvial subsoil contained frequent abraded Roman pottery, occasional medieval pottery, a small quantity of butchered bone, and worked flint. A single small burning pit cut into the clay was sealed by the subsoil toward the riverbank. It contained tiny fragments of indeterminate possible Neolithic, Bronze or Iron Age pottery, worked flint potentially of Mesolithic, early Neolithic or Bronze Age date, pot-boilers and environmental material. It is conjectured to have been a cooking pit. The fuel used may represent burning of general food waste. No other features were identified, although similar unstratified finds indicate that further activity of similar date may exist in the immediate vicinity.

## Part 2 Detailed report

### 1. Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to Hampton Cemetery, Pershore Road, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR: SP 03004312; Fig 1), on behalf of Evesham Town Council. The council intends to extend the existing cemetery into this area and has submitted a planning application to Wychavon District Council (reference W/02/1062), who consider that a site of archaeological interest may be affected (WSM 02707).

#### 1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999).

The project also conforms to a brief prepared by Worcestershire Archaeological Service (AS 2002) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2004).

#### 1.3 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were to locate archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation. The purpose of this was to establish their significance, since this would make it possible to recommend an appropriate treatment, which may then be integrated with the proposed development programme.

Significant deposits were originally defined as those likely to be of Anglo-Saxon or medieval date (AS 2002; HEAS 2004).

### 2. Methods

#### 2.1 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition the following sources were also consulted:

##### *Cartographic sources*

- c 1840 Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup>:1 mile, WRO: BA 3676 xxxii
- 1891 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, scale 6<sup>th</sup>:1 mile, sheet XXXIX.04 NE
- 1905 Ordnance Survey map, scale 6<sup>th</sup>:1 mile, sheet XXXIX.04 NE
- 1924 Ordnance Survey map, scale 6<sup>th</sup>:1 mile, sheet XXXIX.04 NE
- 1938 Ordnance Survey map, scale 6<sup>th</sup>:1 mile, sheet XXXIX.04 NE

##### *Documentary sources*

- Place-names (Mawer and Stenton 1927).

- County histories (VCH II).
- Domesday (Thorn and Thorn 1983).

The site lies within an urban area, so it was considered to be unsuited to aerial photographic evidence.

## 2.2 Fieldwork methodology

### 2.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (HEAS 2004).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2004. The site reference number and site code is WSM 33906.

Three trenches, amounting to just over 256m<sup>2</sup> in area, were excavated over the site area of 2270m<sup>2</sup>, representing a sample of *c* 11.3%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under archaeological supervision using a 180° wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

The following technique was considered for use but were not considered to be appropriate for this project; metal-detector survey, due to the present recreational landuse and the expectation that this would have resulted in many modern metal artefacts.

### 2.2.2 Structural analysis

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, artefactual and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

## 2.3 Artefact methodology, by Derek Hurst and Robin Jackson

### 2.3.1 Artefact recovery policy

All artefacts from the area of salvage recording were retrieved by hand and retained in accordance with the service manual (CAS 1995 as amended).

### 2.3.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined and a primary record was made on a Microsoft Access 2000 database. Artefacts were identified, quantified and dated and a *terminus post quem* produced for each stratified context.

Pottery was examined under x20 magnification and recorded by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the service (Hurst and Rees 1992). For the flint the terminology used broadly follows that provided in Inizan *et al* (1992).

## 2.4 **Environmental archaeology methodology, by Katie Head**

### 2.4.1 **Sampling policy**

The environmental sampling policy was as defined in the County Archaeological Service Recording System (1995 as amended). Samples of 10 litres were taken from two contexts of prehistoric date (Table 1).

### 2.4.2 **Method of analysis**

Two samples were selected (contexts 303 and 304), originating from a burning pit feature. The samples were processed by flotation followed by wet-sieving using a Siraf tank. The flot was collected on a 300µm sieve and the residue retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recovery of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds.

The residues were fully sorted by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. The flots were fully sorted using a low power EMT stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by the Service, and seed identification manual (Beijerinck 1947). Nomenclature for the plant remains follows the Flora of the British Isles, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Clapham *et al* 1989).

## 2.5 **The methods in retrospect**

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

## 3. **Topographical and archaeological context**

The site comprises a rectangular area on the west side of an open recreation ground. It is approximately 32.5x70m, aligned north-north-east by south-south-west, on the south bank of the River Avon, within the parish of Great and Little Hampton, 0.9km to the south-west of Evesham town centre. It is bounded by the river to the north, the playing field to the east, an access track off Pershore Road to the south, and the last extension of Hampton Cemetery to the west (SP 03004312).

The study area is presently under grass. Linear earthworks of ridge and furrow aligned approximately east-south-east by west-north-west, are evident on the north and east sides of the site, which slopes down from south to north, from *c* 25.50m AOD to 21.50m AOD. The dominant soils along the floodplain of the River Avon belong to the Fladbury 1 soil association (813b), comprising stoneless clayey soils in places calcareous, variably affected by groundwater, on flat land with a risk of flooding, over parent material of river alluvium (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

No archaeological work has previously been undertaken on the site. In 1862 a 7<sup>th</sup> century inhumation was found somewhere on the right-hand bank of the river between Little Hampton and the railway bridge to the north. Although its exact location is unknown, the burial assemblage is known to have included weaponry and gold jewellery. Another sword is purported to have been found elsewhere in Little Hampton (WSM 02707).

Hampton is first mentioned as an endowment to Evesham Abbey in 708/9 (VCH II, 113). It was then recorded as *Hamtona*; in 714 as *Hantun*; in 780 as *Heantun*; in 988 as *Heamtun* or *Hamtun*; *c* 1086 as *Hamton*; and only in 1327 settled on its present form *Hampton*. It is thought to derive from the Old English *hēan tūne* meaning 'high farm', as the area is topographically higher than Evesham itself on the opposite side of the river (Mawer and Stenton 1927, 133-4).

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At the time of the Domesday Survey the 15 hide manor of Hampton (with Bengeworth to the east) was held partly by the Bishop of Worcester and partly by Evesham Abbey. The commissioners resolved the dispute by defining the land as tenurially belonging to Evesham, but fiscally and juridically to Worcester (Thorn and Thorn 1983, 10, 11).

St Andrew's church lies adjacent, to the west of the study area. It has a central perpendicular gothic tower of 14<sup>th</sup> century date and an aisle-less nave of similar style although with earlier 12<sup>th</sup> century Norman elements. The benefice of Hampton is first mentioned in a Taxatio of Pope Nicholas IV, when the patron was Evesham Abbey (VCH II, 404-8; WSM 01282). The base and steps of a 14<sup>th</sup> century cross with quatrefoil and fleuron decoration lies along the frontage of the churchyard (WSM 01283). The Friar's Mead lies to the north-west. It is a 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed building on the site of a 14<sup>th</sup> century structure, although has been restored with wrought iron crowns on the gable-ends for example (WSM 00561).

Two mills are recorded as part of the possessions of Hampton manor in the Domesday Survey of 1086, although only one is mentioned in records of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is conjectured that the mill lay close to the confluence of the Isbourne tributary and the River Avon (WSM 02716). The former stone bridge over the Isbourne is thought to have been of 14<sup>th</sup> century date, although has subsequently been rebuilt in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in its present form (WSM 02717).

The site lies within the grounds of the former park of Eastwick Manor, which extended this far north until the 1880s (WSM 28858). By 1891 the site had become part of the grounds of St Andrew's vicarage. The site has never been developed, but has remained as an open grassed area. The only development has been the construction of terraced and semi-detached housing along the Pershore Road frontage in the early/mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. A public footpath formerly ran along the riverbank in the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but has been closed due to erosion.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Fig 2. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

#### 4.1.1 Phase 1 Natural deposits

The natural matrix comprised compact clay. Away from the river, to the south it was a mid yellow beige colour; toward the river to the north it was a mid brownish orange. It was slightly sandy, and contained occasional sub-rounded pebbles to the north and occasional fragments of lias to the south. It was overlain by a silty clay alluvial subsoil.

#### 4.1.2 Phase 2 Prehistoric deposits

A single feature of prehistoric date was identified toward the north side of the site, alongside the riverbank [305]. It was a shallow circular pit-cut with evidence of *in-situ* burning, in the form of an irregular burnt clay lining [304]. The main fill comprised a silty clay with frequent pottery crumbs, charcoal, and fragments of burnt bone [303]. It was sealed by alluvial subsoil [302].

A few stray finds of prehistoric date were also recovered from the north side of the site [300]. These comprised worked flint flakes and a worked flint core.

#### 4.1.3 **Phase 3 Medieval deposits**

Medieval activity was identified in the form of ridge and furrow. To the north it existed as visible earthworks. To the south the furrows had been filled in and it was only evident once the trenches had been excavated. These traces of medieval strip farming were aligned approximately east-south-east by west-north-west. The furrows impinged on the natural clay on the higher ground to the south, but the deeper subsoil along the riverbank to the north meant it had not cut into the natural clay to the north.

A small quantity of residual medieval pottery was recovered during machining, probably the result of agricultural manuring of the field.

#### 4.1.4 **Phase 4 Post-medieval/modern deposits**

The topsoil was noted to be very thin and have a well-defined boundary with subsoil below. It is therefore conjectured that topsoil stripping had been undertaken recently across the entire site.

The linear furrows had been deliberately filled-in along the south side of the site. The dumped material, a dark brown silty clay, contained frequent modern debris which was not retained.

A small quantity of residual post-medieval and modern material was recovered during machining.

### 4.2 **Artefact analysis, by Derek Hurst and Robin Jackson**

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1-4.

#### 4.2.1 **Prehistoric**

The only stratified context (pit fill 303; half sectioned) on the site produced an assemblage of ten sherds (average sherd weight of 0.6g), which was associated with a pot-boiler (heat-shattered pebble), and fired clay. This feature also produced an assemblage of worked flint (see below). All the pottery was extremely fragmentary and none was particularly diagnostic, especially in the absence of rims and form sherds. On the basis of fabric alone it was not possible to assign a particular period as typically pottery of the Bronze and Iron Ages share similarities, both having fabric types derived from the same local geology. To make matters even less clear the amount of Neolithic pottery known from Worcestershire is very small, and so it could not even be entirely ruled out that the pottery was from this period. The most common type was tentatively identified as an ooliticly tempered ware (fabric 4.6 or 4.8). However, all the limestone-tempered sherds were vesicular, their limestone inclusions having completely dissolved away, thereby making definitive identification even more difficult.

The associated finds from Trench 3 were all typical also of the prehistoric period. A small amount of pottery (5 sherds) from Trench 1 may have been of similar date to the pottery from pit fill 303, though again the fabric could not be identified with any certainty.

The flint assemblage totalled 14 pieces of which 11 had been worked (Table 4). The raw material present was mixed. The unworked pieces and large flaked lump were of very poor quality flint of mottled grey colour with moderately thick pale grey or iron-stained cortex. This probably represents local gravel derived flint available at, or very near, to the site. The utilised material mostly exhibited moderate to heavy white patination but where observed the flint was slightly mottled grey brown. Where present, cortex was an abraded buff to yellow brown colour. This material is of fairly good quality and is liable to have been brought onto the site from elsewhere.



The most notable and chronologically diagnostic item was a pyramidal core (from unstratified context 300) measuring 42mm long and weighing 18g (Fig 5). This had a single platform prepared by the removal of a single large flake. Both feathered and hinge termination scars were present on two faces of the core and indicated the removal of fine bladelets.

For the most part the remaining items comprised small waste flakes or snapped sections of flakes, a fine bladelet and part of another possible fine blade being the only exceptions. The potential flaked lump possibly reflects casual testing of the working qualities of local material, which is also represented by several clearly unworked pieces, one of which appeared to have been scorched.

#### 4.2.2 Roman, medieval and later

Unstratified finds from the alluvium and the ploughsoil included pottery from the Roman period onwards. The relatively plentiful Roman pottery was heavily abraded, whereas the medieval ceramic was not.

The latest pottery, from the post-medieval to modern periods, is fairly typical of these periods. Other items of note include some pieces of animal bone which have been butchered and worked.

#### 4.2.3 Unstratified undated pottery

At the south end of the site (Trench 1) there was also a small amount of unstratified unidentified pottery (a black fabric with abundant angular quartz and possible occasional limestone voids). This type of fabric has been previously observed at Bretforton, only 4km to the east of Evesham, where it was also undated (Hurst 2004). The Bretforton assemblage was largely of Iron Age and Roman date, though there were also unidentified fabrics, which could have been of earlier prehistoric date, the high level of uncertainty being due to the relatively poor condition of the sherds as typical for a fieldwalked assemblage.

Material	Total	Weight (g)
Prehistoric pottery	16	17
Roman pottery	8	38
Medieval pottery	2	12
Post-medieval pottery	8	62
Modern pottery	11	53
?Fired clay	4	60
Brick	2	463
Tile	4	64
?Brick/tile	5	20
Clay pipe	5	-
Lithics	4	-
Burnt stone	1	3
Iron object	2	12
Bone	19	270
Oyster shell	6	-

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Fabric number	Fabric name	Total sherds	Weight (g)
74.1/4.6/4.8	Palaeozoic limestone/Oolitic limestone and sand/limestone	3	2
74.3	Fossil Shell	2	1
4.6/4.8	Oolitic limestone and sand/limestone	5	3
97	Unidentified prehistoric	6	11
12	Severn Valley ware	7	37
43	Samian ware	1	1
99	Unidentified medieval pottery	2	12
78	Post-medieval redwares	3	14
81.5	White stoneware	1	7
84	Creamware	2	9
90	Post-medieval orange ware	1	1
91	Post-medieval buff wares	1	31
85	Miscellaneous modern china		53

**Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric**

Date	Artefact type	Total	Weight (g)	Specialist report?	Important research assemblage?
Prehistoric	pottery	16	17	Y	N
Roman	pottery	8	38	Y	N
Medieval	pottery	2	12	Y	N
Post-medieval	pottery	8	62	Y	N
Modern	pottery	11	53	Y	N
Undated	?Fired clay	4	60	N	N
Post-medieval	Brick	2	463	N	N
Med/post-med	Tile	4	64	N	N
Undated	?Brick/tile	5	20	N	N
Post-medieval	Clay pipe	5		N	N
Prehistoric	Lithics	4		Y	N
Prehistoric	Burnt stone	1	3	N	N
Post-medieval	Iron object	2	12	N	N
Undated	Bone	19	270	N	N
Undated	Oyster shell	6		N	N

**Table 3: Summary of the assemblage**

Context	Type	Weight (g)	Comment/notes
300	Core	18	Single platform. Pyramidal.
	Flake	1	Snapped - proximal end
	Flake	1	Snapped - proximal end
	Flake	<1	Snapped - distal end
303	Bladelet	1	31 x 9 x 2mm
	Flake/blade	1	Snapped (also with fresh break) – distal end of fine blade or flake
	Flake	1	Rather squat
	Flake	1	-
	Flake	1	?Stepped termination
	Flake	<1	Distal end of small flake
	?Flaked lump	46	Large irregular gravel chunk with some potential removals
	Unworked	<1	Gravel fragment
	Unworked	19	Scorched and shattered gravel chunk
	Unworked	10	Shattered gravel chunk

**Table 4: Summary of flint assemblage**

#### 4.3 Environmental analysis, by Katie Head

##### 4.3.1 Wet-sieved samples

###### *Context 303*

Context 303 comprised a fill from a burning pit (context 305) of prehistoric date. This context was dominated by fine root material (Tables 6 and 7). Charred plant remains were recorded in moderate quantities, while waterlogged plant macrofossils, burnt bone, and charcoal were all occasionally found. The charred plant macrofossil assemblage was dominated by scentless mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*), as well as examples of goosefoot/cleavers (*Galium aparine*), Caryophyllaceae sp indet, fat hen (*Chenopodium album*), mint (cf *Mentha* sp), sedge (*Carex* sp), and barley (*Hordeum vulgare*). Waterlogged remains comprised just one example of fat hen (*Chenopodium album*), and one of violet (*Viola* sp). With the exception of barley, these herbs are commonly found colonising cultivated or waste ground, with scentless mayweed in particular, a weed of cultivated ground. The environmental evidence tends to suggest that the remains were thrown into the pit as waste from crop processing, possibly used as fuel, having been preserved by burning once in situ. Due to the low levels of crop waste, the feature does not appear to have been used to dry the crop prior to storage (Hillman 1981).

###### *Context 304*

Context 304 comprised the burnt clay lining of the pit (context 305), mentioned above, with very few environmental remains recorded (Tables 6 and 7). Again this context was dominated by root and twig material. There were also occasional examples of burnt bone, charcoal, and charred plant macrofossils. The charred assemblage consisted of just a few instances of legume (*Leguminosae* sp indet), barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), cereal (*Cereal* sp indet grain), cereal culm node (*Cereal* sp indet culm node), goosefoot/cleavers (*Galium aparine*), Caryophyllaceae sp indet, and unidentified berry, possibly elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The assemblage appears to represent cereals and associated processing waste, with the weed seeds of goosefoot/cleavers and Caryophyllaceae sp indet having been brought in with the crop. The plant remains, possibly food or hay waste appears to have been incorporated into the clay to form the lining of the pit, which then became preserved by burning.

Context	Sample	Context type	Description	Period	Sample volume	Volume processed	Residue assessed	Flot assessed
303	1	fill	fill of pit 305	PREH	10	10	Y	Y
304	2	fill	burnt clay lining of 305	PREH	10	10	Y	Y

**Table 5: Summary of contexts sampled**

Context	Sample	small mammal	charcoal	charred plant	waterlogged plant	other	Comment
303	1	occ	occ	mod	occ	abt	roots; occ wood; abt fired clay; occ worked flint; occ pebbles
304	2	occ	occ	occ		mod	roots and twigs; abt fired clay; occ worked flint; occ pebbles; occ mineral matter

**Table 6: Summary of environmental remains**

(Key: occ = occasional; mod = moderate; abt = abundant)

Latin name	Family	Common name	Habitat	303	304
<b>Charred plant remains</b>					
<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> grains (hulled)	Gramineae	barley	F	2	1
<i>Cereal</i> sp indet grain	Gramineae	cereal	F		2
<i>Cereal</i> sp indet culm node	Gramineae	cereal	F		1
Caryophyllaceae sp indet	Caryophyllaceae			1	1
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Chenopodiaceae	fat hen	AB	1	
<i>Leguminosae</i> sp indet	Leguminosae	legume	ABCD		3
cf <i>Meniha</i> sp	Labiatae	mint	ABCDEF	1	
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Rubiaceae	goosefoot/cleavers	CD	5	1
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>	Compositae	scentless mayweed	AB	42	
<i>Carex</i> sp	Cyperaceae	sedge	CDE	1	
unidentified berry	unidentified				1
<b>Waterlogged plant remains</b>					
<i>Viola</i> sp	Violaceae	violet	CDE	1	
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Chenopodiaceae	fat hen	AB	1	
unidentified twig/bud fragments	unidentified				++
unidentified root fragments	unidentified			+++	++
unidentified wood fragments	unidentified			+	

**Table 7: Plant remains for selected contexts**

A = cultivated ground; B = disturbed ground; C = woodlands, hedgerows, scrub, etc; D = grasslands, meadows, heathland; E = aquatic/wet habitats; F = cultivar

Abundance: + = occasional; ++ = moderate; +++ = abundant

## 5. Synthesis

### 5.1 Prehistoric

A single small burning pit was identified toward the north end of the site, alongside the riverbank. The pit produced an assemblage of pottery, worked flint, a pot-boiler and fired clay. The sherds were extremely fragmentary and none were particularly diagnostic. Thus they may date from the Bronze or Iron Age, or possibly as far back as the Neolithic, of which there is very little from the county. The provenance is unclear, but it is hypothesized that they have a fairly local source, possibly imported from the Cotswolds. The range of fabrics was striking

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given the tiny size of the assemblage, showing that a variety of pots from different sources were in use at the same time. The wall thickness of the sherds also suggests that these were generally quite small vessels rather than large storage jars.

Associated finds were also typical of the prehistoric period generally, and the presence of fired clay and fire-shattered stone indicates possible cooking activities. Given the riverside location this might have been the site of summer picnic, which has unusually survived due to subsequent burial under alluvium. Certainly the subsequent cultivation activity on the site would have eradicated such a shallow feature but for its being protected by the alluvium.

A small amount of pottery from Trench 1 to the south may be of similar date to the pottery from the pit, though again the fabric could not be identified with any certainty. This may be significant as, if it were prehistoric, it would show the possibility of prehistoric activity having extended beyond the area of the pit, into an area where early features may have been totally truncated by later agriculture.

The unstratified flint core from Trench 3 is consistent with a Mesolithic or possibly Early Neolithic date, as is the fine bladelet recovered from the pit recorded in the same trench. None of the other items were chronologically diagnostic and the small size of the assemblage precluded detailed analysis of the material to determine technological traits. However, all of this material was recovered from Trench 3 and none of it would be out of place in an assemblage of Mesolithic or Early Neolithic date. It therefore seems appropriate to consider this a single assemblage of this period. During this period, the quality of the majority of the available local gravel derived flint (the only local source for flint) may have been unsuitable for blade-based technologies and it has been suggested that during the Mesolithic and Neolithic imported chalk flint might have been preferred (Dalwood 1992). However, evidence from Lightmarsh Farm (Jackson *et al* 1996), Kinver (Bevan 1993) and Aston Mill (Saville 1990) suggests that higher quality pebble flint was also sought out and used from the Mesolithic right through to the Bronze Age. This may be reflected in the use of an apparently non-local source of flint here, but also for the casual testing of the working qualities of the material available on site.

The artefacts have been useful for providing *terminus post quem* dates, though the group from the prehistoric pit have additional significance, an assessment of which is severely hampered by the small size of the surviving sherds.

The feature does not appear to have been used for crop processing (ie a corn drying oven), as there is little crop waste and few cereals present. Nor does it represent a storage pit, found in other sites within the county, such as the Iron Age site of Beckford, where a variety of cereals were recorded, some indicating storage pits. One pit at Beckford however, contained a large amount of charred cereal, and instead was interpreted as representing waste dumped following crop processing, as the assemblage was dominated by chaff and weed remains (Colledge 1983; 1990 revised). Food preparation also does not appear to have been undertaken near Hampton Cemetery. At Madeley Heath, Belbroughton in Worcestershire for example, two Iron Age pits were found to include charcoal, animal bone, and burnt stones, which was interpreted as evidence of food processing (Hurst and Pearson 1996). The limited charred cereal evidence was believed to represent either a result of being accidentally burnt during small-scale processing, or used as fuel for the fire. The latter explanation seems probable with regard to the Hampton Cemetery site, as few cereals and only a single cereal culm node were found.

The undated but clearly prehistoric feature contained only limited environmental remains, primarily charred cereals and weeds of cultivated land. Survival of the remains was low with many of the charred cereals badly preserved, making identification problematic. Although the feature is early in date, the remains are only of local significance.

While only one feature was identified on the north side of the site, the presence of residual material of similar date indicates that there may have been further activity along the riverbank, within the northern 15m of the site.

## 5.2 Roman and medieval

The prehistoric pit was sealed by alluvium, which contained artefacts dating from the Roman period onwards. The Roman pottery, which was relatively plentiful given the area examined, was all heavily abraded, which would be compatible with its having been in an intensively cultivated soil over a long period, whereas the later medieval ceramic finds were not affected in this way. This would suggest that earlier medieval cultivation had taken place on the site, perhaps in an area previously cultivated in Roman times, as there was no sign of Roman features observed during the evaluation. Alluvial soils would have been productive and their cultivation would, therefore, have been expected, especially in the vicinity of the settlement at Evesham.

Earthworks and filled in ridge and furrow across site, are evidence of the strip field farming method, favoured in the medieval and post-medieval until enclosure in the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unstratified finds of abraded medieval pottery sherds recovered from the subsoil are probably the result of manuring of the field.

Extant ridge and furrow earthworks are common in the midlands, so its presence here is not considered to be of more than minor local significance.

## 5.3 Post-medieval/modern

The latest pottery covers the post-medieval to modern periods and is fairly typical of these periods. The only items of note are some pieces of animal bone which have been butchered and in some cases there is evidence for bone working, as some of the larger long bones have been sawn through to produce pieces about 50mm in length. These might be blanks for further working, but, if so, the nature of the final product is unknown. Such bone working is relatively worthy of notice in this region, as bone working is not generally a craft associated with the West Midlands in any period.

Deliberate levelling of ridge and furrow earthworks by dumping material into furrows, probably undertaken in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. The lack of substantial topsoil, which portrayed a clearly defined boundary with the alluvial subsoil below may also be the result of landscaping at the same time.

## 6. Significance

In considering significance, the Secretary of State's criteria for the scheduling of ancient monuments (DoE 1990, annex 4), have been used as a guide.

These nationally accepted criteria are used to assess the importance of an ancient monument and considering whether scheduling is appropriate. Though scheduling is not being considered in this case they form an appropriate and consistent framework for the assessment of any archaeological site. The criteria should not, however, be regarded as definitive; rather they are indicators which contribute to a wider judgement based on the individual circumstances of a case.

### *Period*

The feature and associated unstratified finds are of undefined prehistoric date, comprising worked flint from the Mesolithic - Early Neolithic, and pottery from the Neolithic - Iron Age.

### *Rarity*

The site is of high rarity, both locally and regionally. There are no known prehistoric finds or sites within the immediate vicinity, while quarry sites along the River Avon in both Worcestershire and Warwickshire have revealed occasional scattered groups of prehistoric, mainly Neolithic, pits indicative of short-lived periods of occupation by essentially nomadic groups (*pers comm* Robin Jackson; Whittle 1999, 64-5).

### *Survival*

The survival of the archaeology is considered to be good within the northern half of the site, where it is undisturbed and sealed by a substantial layer of alluvium.

### *Vulnerability*

The nature of the development (many small but deep grave shafts) is such that any further archaeological remains are very vulnerable to destruction, without the possibility of proper archaeological analysis.

### Potential

The potential for further archaeological remains is high. It is very unlikely that a single isolated feature exists along the riverbank. In addition, although the feature was not waterlogged, it contained well-preserved charred organic remains, which provide important environmental evidence and a good assemblage of worked flint and pottery. Associated features are considered likely to be of similar character, and will allow a greater understanding of the presently undefined prehistoric activity.

## 7. **Publication summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Evesham Town Council on land adjacent to Hampton Cemetery, Pershore Road, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR SP 03004312; HER ref. WSM 33906). Three trenches were excavated, revealing that the medieval ridge and furrow earthworks visible on the north side of the site had been filled in and levelled in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when the site was part of a larger recreation area. The ridge and furrow truncated the natural clay matrix to the south. To the north, toward the River Avon, a deep alluvial subsoil contained frequent abraded Roman pottery, occasional medieval pottery, a small quantity of butchered bone, and worked flint. A single small burning pit cut into the clay was sealed by the subsoil toward the riverbank. It contained tiny fragments of indeterminate possible Neolithic, Bronze or Iron Age pottery, worked flint potentially of Mesolithic, early Neolithic or Bronze Age date, pot-boilers and environmental material. It is conjectured to have been a cooking pit. The fuel used may represent burning of general food waste. No other features were identified, although similar unstratified finds indicate that further activity of similar date may exist in the immediate vicinity.*

## 8. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 3 Fieldwork progress records AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3

- 37 Digital images
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 1 Sample records AS17
- 1 Levels records AS19
- 3 Trench records AS41
- 1 Scale drawings
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 Computer disk

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

The Almonry Heritage Centre

Abbey Gate

Evesham

Worcestershire WR11 4BG

Tel. Evesham (01386) 446944

## 9. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Frank Green (Town Clerk, Evesham Town Council), Mike Glyde (Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeological Service).

## 10. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Tom Vaughan. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Simon Griffin. Fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Sworn, finds analysis by Derek Hurst and Robin Jackson, environmental analysis by Katie Head and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

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12.

## Abbreviations

HER	Historic Environment Record.
NMR	National Monuments Record.
WCRO	Worcestershire County Records Office.

WSM            Numbers prefixed with 'WSM' are the primary reference numbers used by the Worcestershire County Historic Environment Record.

## Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

### Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.35m Width: 4m Depth: 0.44-0.65m

Orientation: NE/SW

#### Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) - top and bottom of deposits
100	U/S finds	Unstratified, spoil and machine-cut finds.	n/a
101	Topsoil	Dark blackish brown silty loam. Turfed and organic rich. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles. Frequent modern brick fragments. Not compact or cohesive. Defined boundary with 102 below.	0.00-0.30m
102	Subsoil	Light brownish beige silty clay. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles and charcoal flecks. Moderately compact. Cohesive. Defined boundary with 101 above. Very diffuse boundary with 103 below.	0.25-0.55m
103	Natural	Mid yellowish beige slightly sandy clay. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles. Very occasional sub-angular grey lias stone fragments. Compact and cohesive. Very diffuse boundary with 102 below.	0.40m+
104	Fill	Mid/dark brownish beige silty clay. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles and charcoal flecks. Moderately compact. Cohesive. Fill of furrows 105. Not fully excavated.	0.50-0.60m
105	Furrow	Linear furrows. Aligned c ESE/WNW. Not fully excavated. Filled by 104, and 106 to south.	0.10-0.60m
106	Levelling deposit.	Upper fill of southern furrows 105. Dark blackish brown silty loam. Frequent modern brick and pottery fragments, concrete, grey lias blocks. Not fully excavated.	0.10-0.60m

**Trench 2**

Maximum dimensions: Length: 19.50m Width: 3.85m Depth: 0.60-0.95m

Orientation: NW/SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) - top and bottom of deposits
200	U/S finds	Unstratified, spoil and machine-cut finds.	n/a
201	Topsoil	Dark blackish brown silty loam. Turfed and organic rich. Occasional sub-rounded pebble gravel. Frequent modern brick fragments. Not compact or cohesive. Defined boundary with 202 below.	0.00-0.25m
202	Subsoil	Light brownish beige silty clay. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles and charcoal flecks. Moderately compact. Cohesive. Defined boundary with 201 above. Very diffuse boundary with 203 below.	0.17-0.60m
203	Natural	Mid brownish orange clay. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles. Compact and cohesive. Diffuse boundary with 202 above.	0.50m+

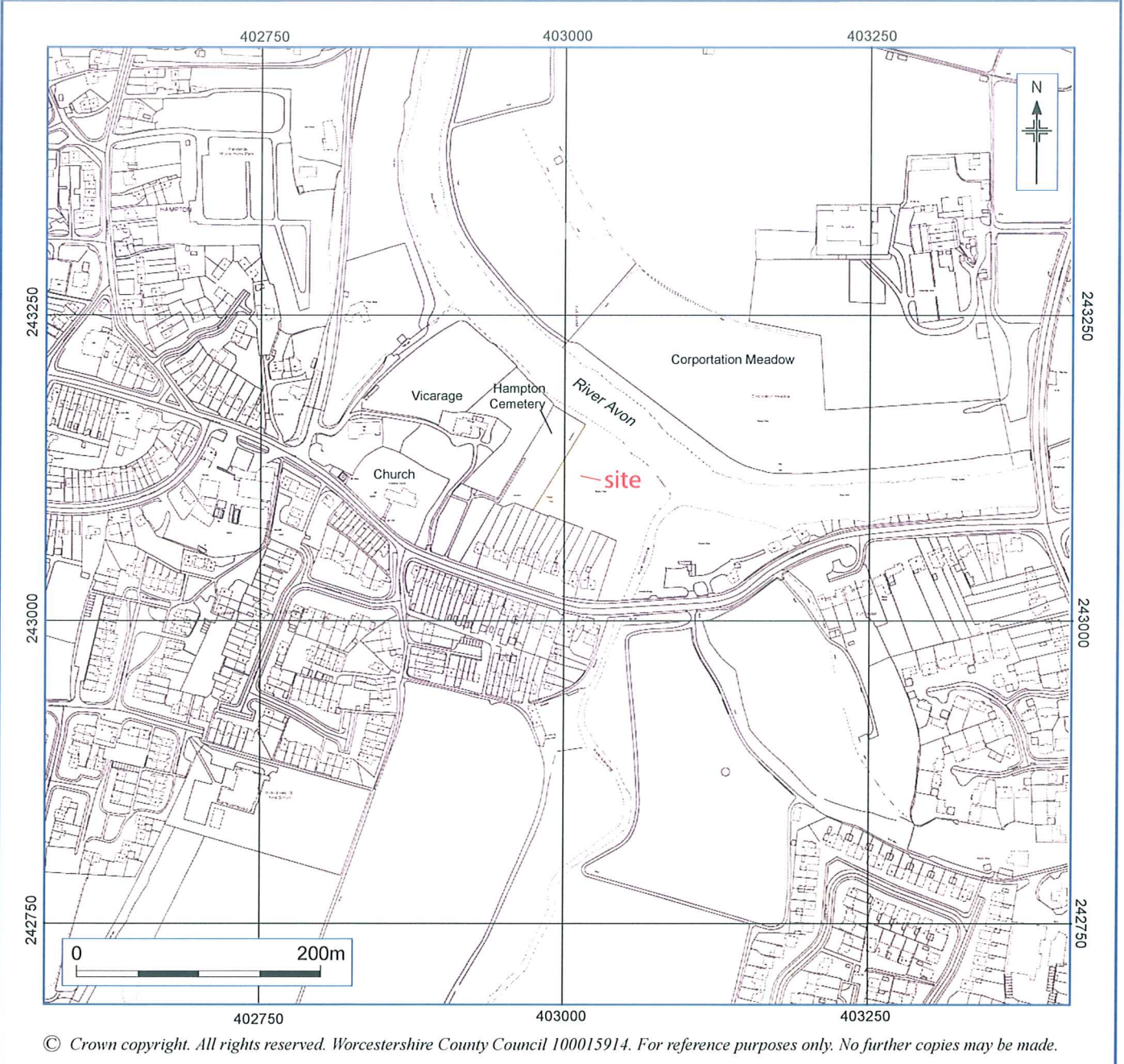
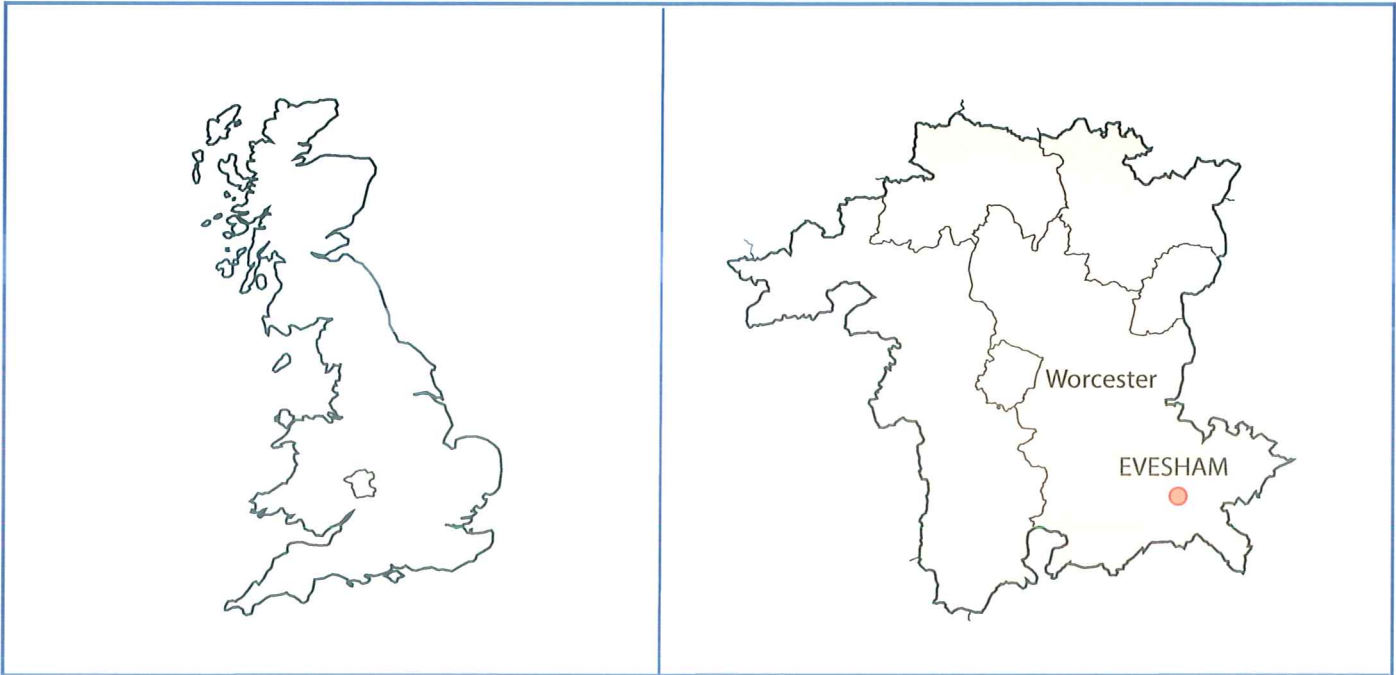
**Trench 3**

Maximum dimensions: Length: 23.80m Width: 2-3.60m Depth: 0.40-0.80

Orientation: NE/SW

## Main deposit description

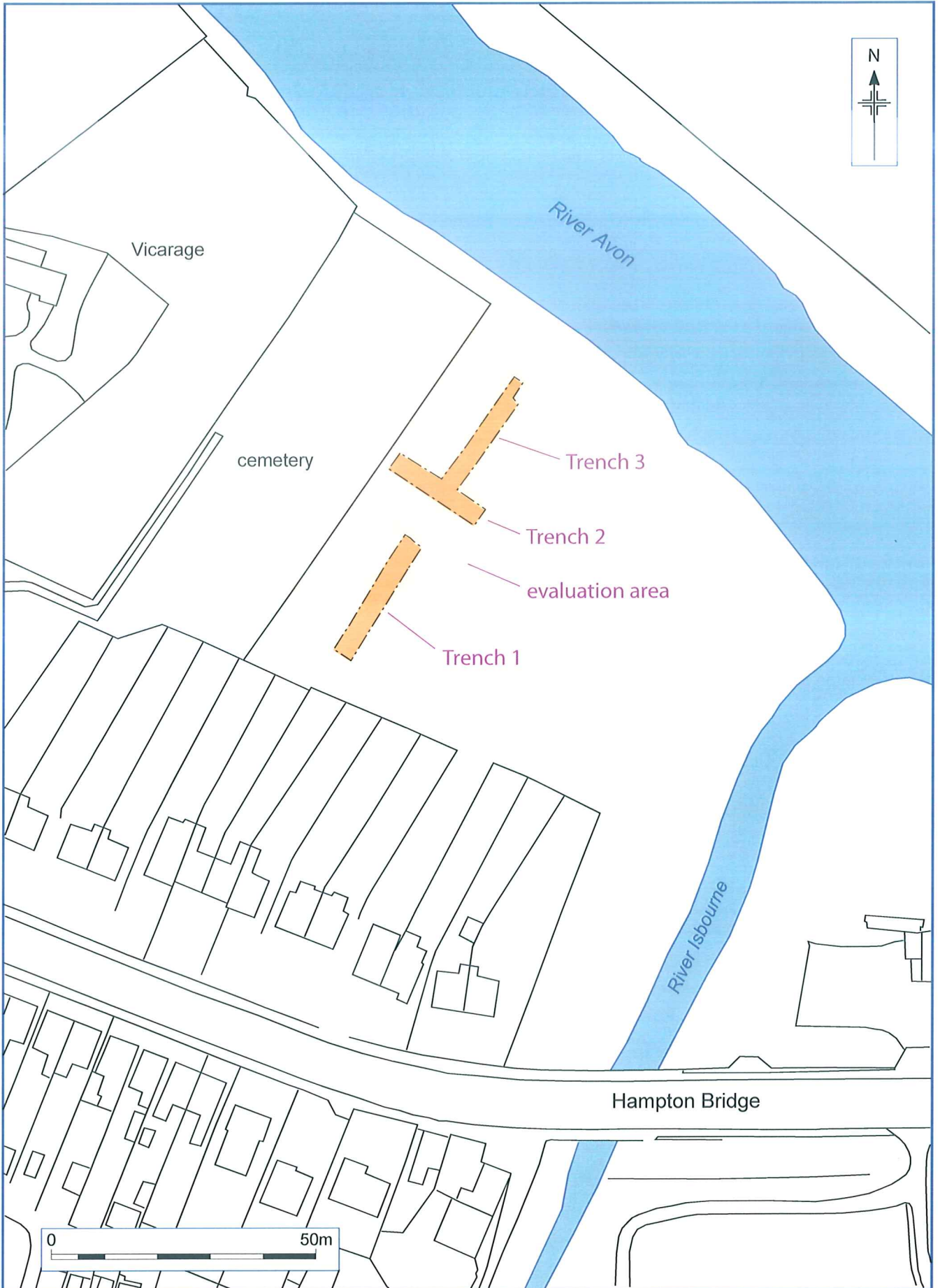
Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	U/S finds	Unstratified, spoil and machine-cut finds.	n/a
301	Topsoil	Dark blackish brown silty loam. Turfed and organic rich. Occasional sub-rounded pebble gravel. Frequent modern brick fragments. Not compact or cohesive. Defined boundary with 302 below.	0.00-0.18m
302	Subsoil	Light brownish beige silty clay. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles and charcoal flecks. Moderately compact. Cohesive. Defined boundary with 301 above. Very diffuse boundary with 306 below.	0.18-0.67m
303	Fill	Dark blackish brown silty clay. Occasional sub-angular gravel. Frequent charcoal flecks to base. Moderately compact and cohesive. Overlies 304. Fill of 305.	0.75-0.94m
304	Fill	Mid brownish orange burnt clay lining of 305. Frequent charcoal flecks. Occasional burnt stone. Compact and cohesive.	0.75-0.94m
305	Pit	Circular feature, sharp break of slope, regular concave sides curving to shallow concave base. 0.60m diameter. Filled by 303 and 304.	0.75-0.94m
306	Natural	Mid brownish orange slightly sandy clay. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles. Compact and cohesive. Diffuse boundary with 302 above.	0.38m+



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Location of the site.

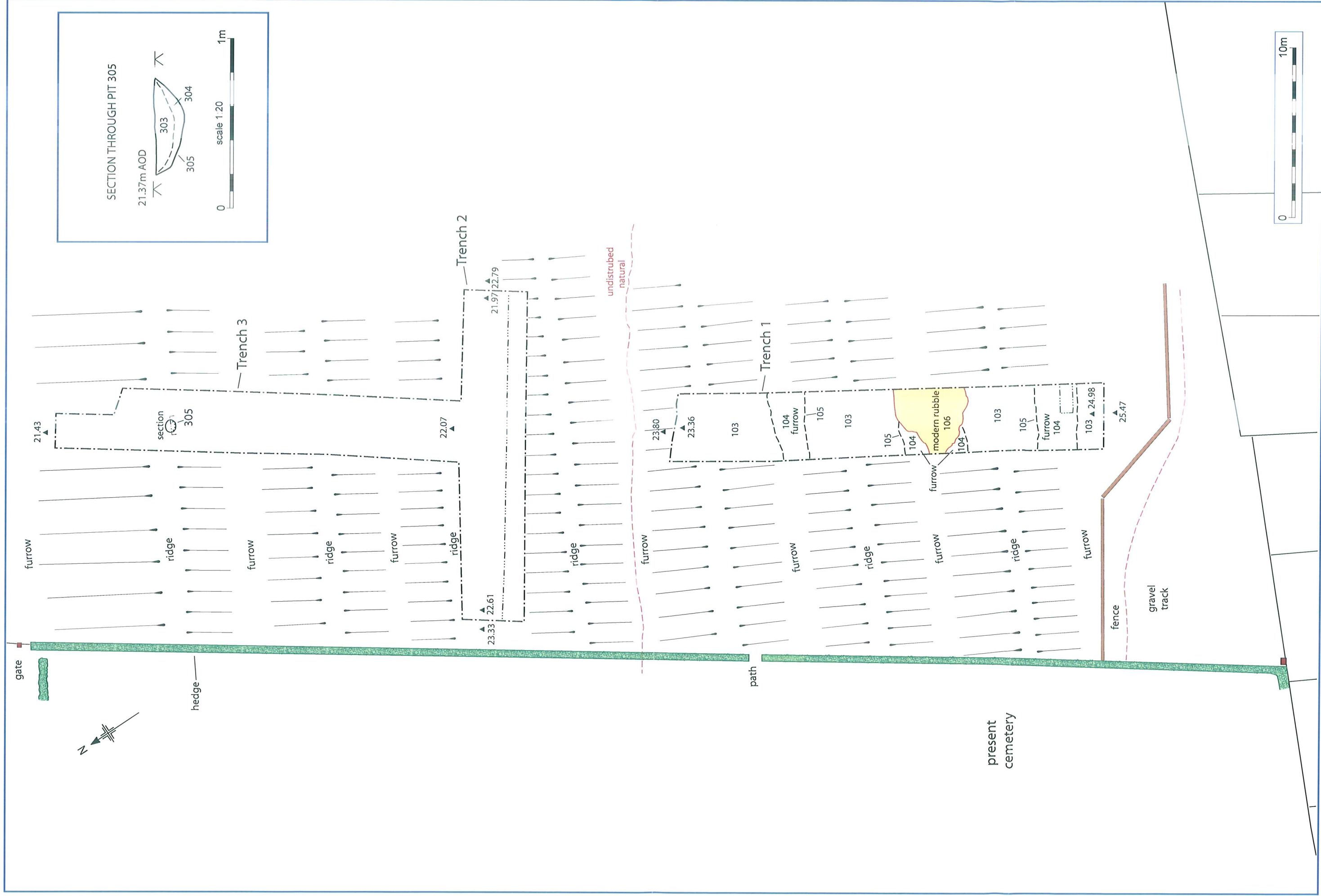
Figure 1



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Trench location plan.

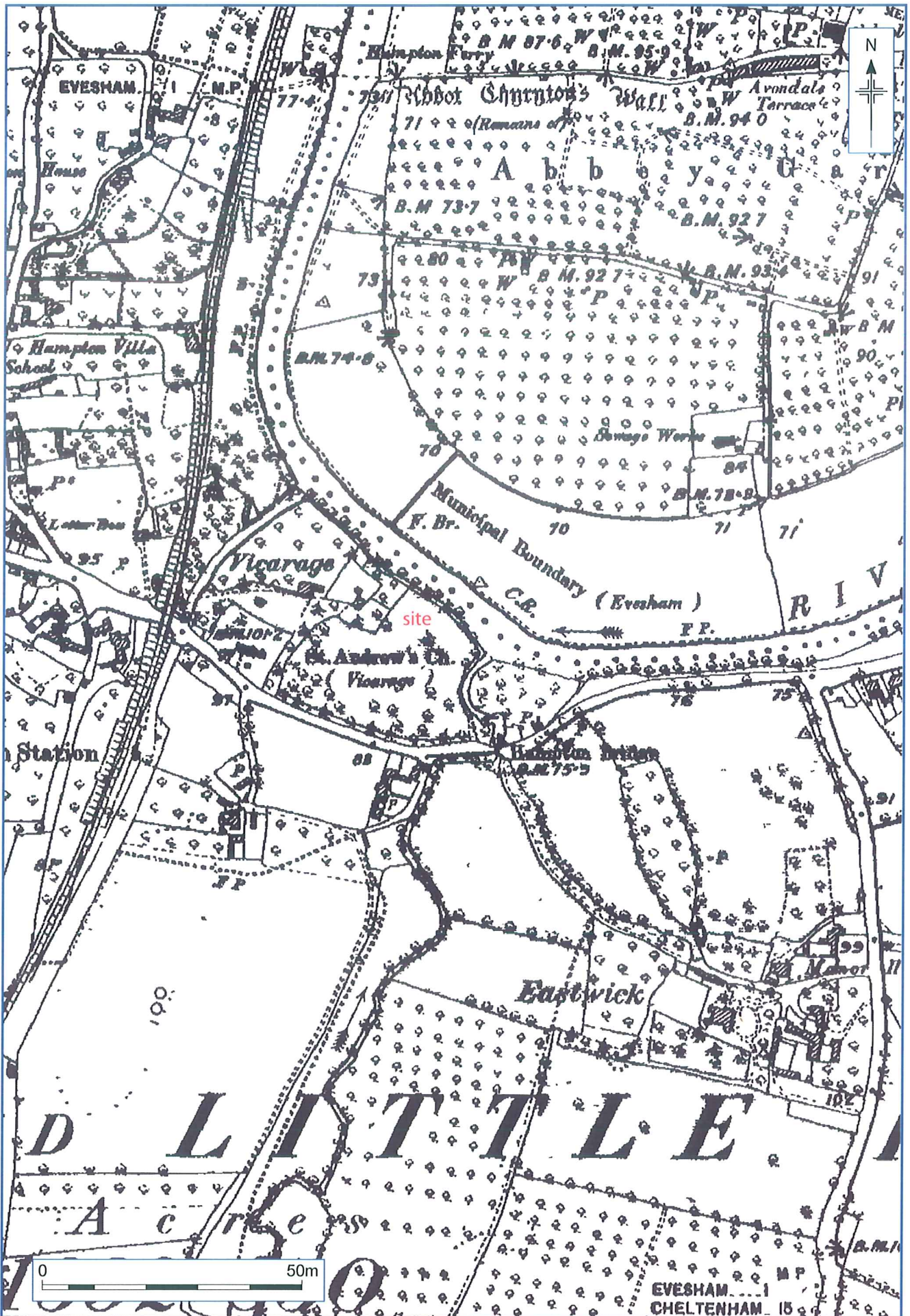
Figure 2



Plan of trenches and section through pit 305.

Figure 3

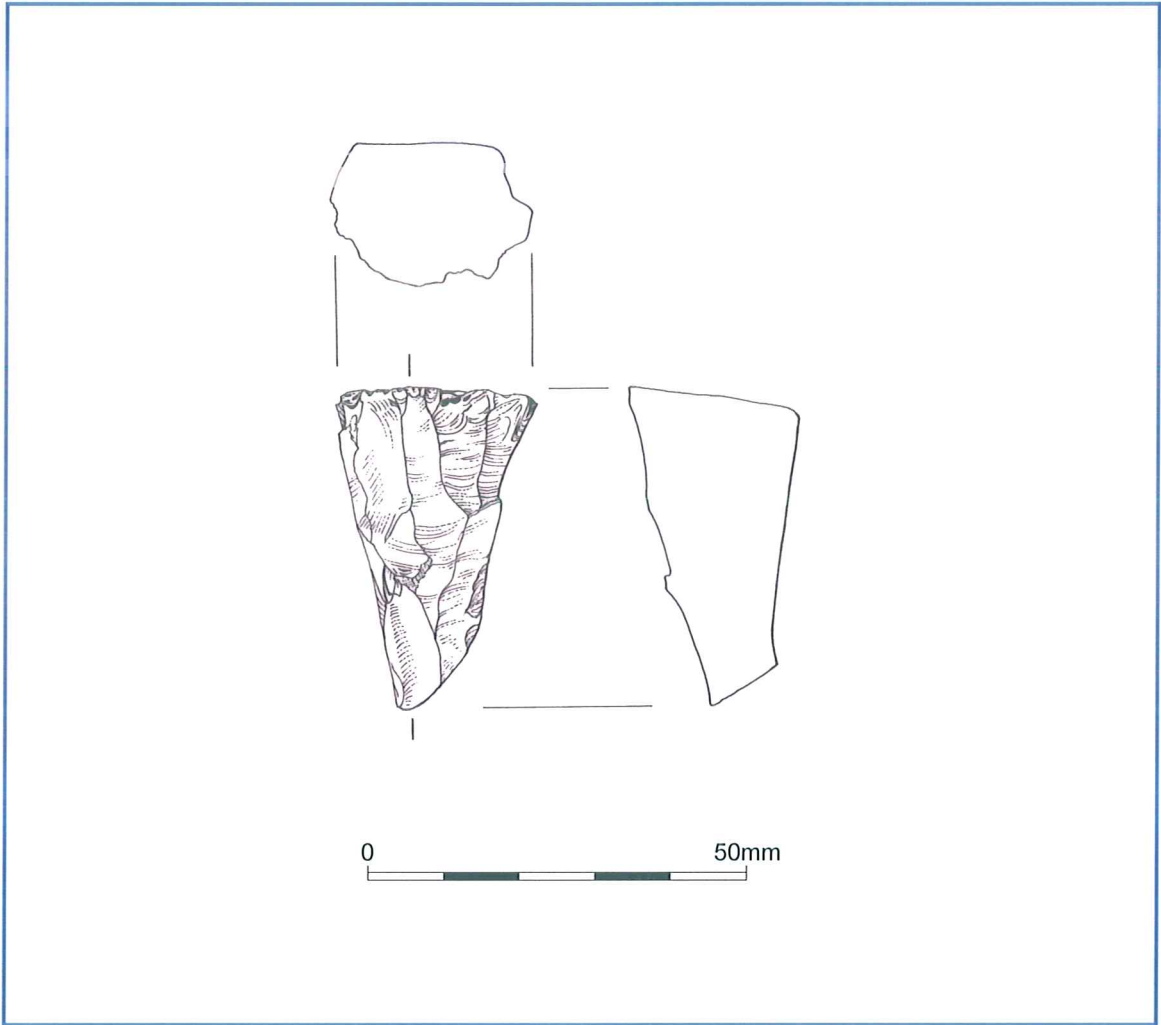




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Extract from First Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1886.

Figure 4.



*Flint core (context 300)*

*Figure 5*