

Archaeological Evaluation at land off Horcott Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire



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With contributions by Robert Hedge, Derek Hurst, Elizabeth Pearson and James Spry

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken between the 4th and 12th of July 2016 on land to the west of Horcott Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 414812 200616). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, whose client intends to undertake residential development alongside public open space and associated works on the site, for which an outline planning application has been submitted to Cotswold District Council.

Twenty trenches (twelve 30m in length and eight 20m in length) were excavated across the site area, which comprised two agricultural fields. They were positioned to target geophysical anomalies thought to represent archaeological features. These included a possible prehistoric round barrow, a number of large discrete features thought to be sunken-featured buildings (SFBs) dating to the Anglo-Saxon period, and linear features of probable archaeological origin.

Archaeological remains were identified across a wide area, including the entirety of the north-eastern field (Trenches 1-16), as well as the northern part of the south-western field (Trench 17). The majority of these were indicative of an extensive Anglo-Saxon settlement that forms part of wider occupation of this date in the vicinity of Fairford. This can be considered alongside numerous sites nearby that have previously revealed archaeology of a similar character.

The settlement, probably 5th to 7th or early 8th century in date, comprised up to fifteen possible sunken-featured buildings (SFBs) and a posthole arrangement thought to be the remains of a post-built rectangular structure. This structure was not securely dated but it has the potential to be a hall-type building. Beyond the buildings, other features included postholes that were probably associated with the SFBs, and a series of pits.

A modest number of small discrete features were also identified as prehistoric in date, probably early prehistoric, and these were not obviously characteristic of settlement. Rather, they suggest a landscape important for other reasons, perhaps associated with the prehistoric round barrow, the presence of which was confirmed in the north-east of the site.

Overall, it was apparent that the site contains a significant array of archaeological features that all offer good potential to contribute to a number of research priorities for the wider region.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken between the 4th and 12th of July 2016 on land to the west of Horcott Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 414812 200616; Figure 1). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, whose client intends to construct 92 dwellings, public open space and associated works on the site, for which an outline planning application has been submitted to Cotswold District Council (reference 16/01766/OUT).

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA; CgMs 2016) and a geophysical survey (Stratascan 2015) have previously been carried out. The desk-based assessment identified that there are no designated archaeological assets within the site area, although there is an undesignated asset (a field barn considered to be of no more than local significance; HER 12840).

The DBA noted that archaeological investigations previously undertaken in the immediate area, including an adjoining field to the west and south-west (HER 44798, 45955, 46024, 48001), have identified Neolithic pits plus Anglo-Saxon features. These included three sunken-featured buildings (SFBs) and post-hole alignments. Further Anglo-Saxon remains have been recorded at Coln House School, 50m to the north of the site (HER 20521). It was, therefore, concluded that the potential for the site to contain previously unrecorded Anglo-Saxon evidence was high, with a moderate potential for survival of prehistoric features and a low potential for all other periods.

The geophysical survey confirmed this potential, locating numerous anomalies thought to be archaeological in origin. These include a possible prehistoric round barrow, a number of discrete features thought to be sunken-featured buildings dating to the Anglo-Saxon period, and linear anomalies of probable archaeological origin.

No brief was provided but a trench plan was produced by CgMs and agreed with Charles Parry (Senior Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council), as a result of which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced by Worcestershire Archaeology (Worcestershire Archaeology 2016). The evaluation was carried out following this trench arrangement and the generic brief previously issued by the planning authority (Gloucestershire County Council 2013).

The project also conformed to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a).

2 Aims

The evaluation aimed, in general terms, to determine the extent, state of preservation, date, type and vulnerability of any archaeological deposits.

More specifically, the purpose was to assess the significance of any deposits and the likely impact of the proposed development, thereby informing decisions on the need for and extent of any further archaeological work.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The fieldwork stage was led by Richard Bradley (BA (hons.), MA; ACIfA), who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2008 and has been practicing archaeology since 2005, assisted by Nina O'Hare (BA (hons.)), James Spry (BA (hons.); MA) and Jessica Wheeler (BA (hons.)). The report was prepared by Richard Bradley, with assistance from James Wilkins (BA (hons.)).

Illustrations were completed by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA). Elizabeth Pearson (MSc; ACIfA) and James Spry (BA (hons.); MA) contributed the environmental reports, and Derek Hurst (BA (hons.); PG Dip) and Robert Hedge (MA Cantab) the finds report. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA (hons.); MSc).

3.2 Documentary research

As mentioned above, an archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site had been prepared by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of their client Gladman Developments Ltd. This document provides the detailed background research information of the project and, therefore, only a brief summary of the results are presented here (see Section 4.2).

The DBA consulted the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record, analysing a search area with a 1km radius from the centre of the site. This provided access to records of archaeological sites, monuments and findspots within the search area, as well as readily available archaeological and historical information from related documentary and cartographic sources. Ordnance Survey early and modern mapping, as well as aerial photographs, were examined, and a site inspection was conducted.

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (2016). Fieldwork was undertaken between 4th July and 12th July 2016. The Worcestershire Archaeology project number is P4711.

Twenty trenches (twelve 30m in length and eight 20m in length), amounting to just over 1040m², were excavated across the site area of 5ha (50000m²), representing a sample of c 2%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. The trenches were positioned to target geophysical anomalies (thought to represent archaeological features), within the constraints presented by underground and overhead services (Figure 3). All trenches were excavated in their intended locations, although a number were expanded to further define archaeological features following consultation with CgMs consulting and Charles Parry.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under constant archaeological supervision. 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 Worcestershire Archaeology practice (Worcestershire Archaeology 2012) and trench and feature locations surveyed using a differential GPS with an accuracy limit set at <0.04m. On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.4 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.

3.5 Artefact methodology, by Derek Hurst

The finds work reported here conforms with the relevant sections of *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014; <http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>), with archive creation informed by *Archaeological archives: a guide to the best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2011; <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives>), and museum deposition by *Selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological collections* (SMA 1993; <http://www.socmusarch.org.uk/publica.htm>).

3.5.1 Artefact recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012; appendix 2).

3.5.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on *pro forma* sheets.

Several small artefactual items were recovered from environmental samples and were examined, but are not included in the Table 2 quantification, as they did not add anything of significance to the assemblage.

The ceramics were examined macroscopically and reference was made to Vince (1978), though this fabric type-series does not cover the early-mid Anglo-Saxon period.

3.5.3 Discard policy

The following categories/types of material will be discarded after a period of 6 months following the submission of this report, unless there is a specific request to retain them (and subject to the collection policy of the relevant depository):

- where unstratified;
- post-medieval material in general, and;
- generally where material has been specifically assessed as having no obvious grounds for retention.

See the environmental section for other discard where appropriate.

3.6 Environmental methodology, by Elizabeth Pearson

The environmental project conforms to relevant sections of the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a), *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (English Heritage 2010), and *Environmental archaeology and archaeological evaluations* (AEA 1995).

3.6.1 Aims

The aims of the assessment were to determine the state of preservation, type, and quantity of environmental remains recovered, from the samples and information provided. This information will be used to assess the importance of the environmental remains.

3.6.2 Sampling policy

Environmental samples were taken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology (2012) practice. A total of 9 samples (each of up to 40 litres) were taken from deposits of Anglo-Saxon date from the site (Table 5).

3.6.3 Processing and analysis

The samples were processed by flotation using a Siraf tank. The flots were 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 scanned by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. A magnet was also used to test for the presence of hammscale. The flots were scanned using a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology, and a seed identification manual (Cappers *et al* 2012). Nomenclature for the plant remains follows the *New Flora of the British Isles*, 3rd edition (Stace 2010).

3.6.4 Discard policy

Samples and scanned residues will be discarded after a period of 6 months following submission of this report unless there is a specific request to retain them.

3.7 Animal bone methodology, by James Spry

All of the animal bones were hand-collected on site. A rapid assessment of the assemblage was undertaken in order to judge its future potential.

The bone was identified using the aid of a modern bone reference collection housed at Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service, in conjunction with identification guides (Sisson 1930; Hillson 2005; Serjeantson 2009). The overall recording strategy has followed the guidance set out by Davis (1992) for rapidly recording animal bone assemblages.

The bones have been recorded by context, with the number of fragments, total weight and species present noted. Due to the requirements of the assessment individual species and elements have been noted but not individually recorded. Butchery marks have been recorded as cut, chop or saw (Lauwerier 1988). Evidence of burning has been recorded as singed, burnt or calcined (O'Connor 2000, 45). Preservation has been recorded on Harland's four point scale (Harland *et al* 2003). No ageing or sexing of the bones has been attempted.

3.8 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

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

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and current land-use

The site comprise two land parcels currently in use as hay meadow (Plate 1), although the evaluation trenching indicated that it has previously been subject to arable cultivation and probably significant plough disturbance. This former agriculture was also noted by the geophysical survey, which traced faint parallel linear anomalies across the field, probably plough furrows. The site is bounded by modern housing and quarrying to the south-east and Horcott Road to the north-east. The north-west of the site is bounded by modern and post-medieval field boundaries, with a new housing development under construction to the west and south-west. An agricultural barn is located in the centre of the southernmost field, and has been reported on in the DBA (CgMs 2016). The majority of the site is generally flat, at approximately 86 to 87m AOD, but a gentle slope to the south-east is present, the ground sloping down to around 84.5m AOD.

Geologically the site is situated on bedrock geology of the Limestone Cornbrash Formation. This is overlain by superficial geological deposits consisting of Summertown-Radley and Northmoor sand and gravel formations. These were deposited via water movements and relate to river terracing (BGS 2016).

4.2 Archaeological context

As detailed in the desk-based assessment (CgMs 2016) and briefly mentioned above, there are no designated heritage assets on the site; however, an undesignated heritage asset comprising a post-medieval field barn is recorded in the southern field. This is considered to be of no more than local significance (CgMs 2016). Within the wider locale, two scheduled monuments are present, comprising a Bronze Age hengiform barrow and ring ditch (NHLE 1014394; HER 3203) 340m to the southwest and an Anglo-Saxon cemetery (NHLE 1003419; HER 280) 680m to the northwest.

The site is surrounded by known Anglo-Saxon archaeology and thus the DBA states the high probability of previously unrecorded archaeology of this period to exist within the site. Settlement at Horcott Quarry, located 320m to the south, is one of the largest Anglo-Saxon occupation centres in

the Thames Valley (CgMs 2016; HER 33416). Excavations have revealed three timber buildings and thirty-four sunken-featured buildings, all of which were dated to the Anglo-Saxon period (Oxford Archaeology 2009). Sunken-featured buildings have also been recorded within the vicinity to the north-west (Headland Archaeology 2014; HER 40957) and, of particular note, in the field immediately to the west and south-west currently under development (Oxford Archaeology 2013; Headland Archaeology 2015; HER 45956). Further Anglo-Saxon settlement features were found 50m to the north of the site at Coln House School and comprised ditches and a posthole (Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service 1999; CgMs 2016; HER 20521).

The desk-based assessment also identified the moderate potential for prehistoric evidence within the site area (CgMs 2016). Excavations at Home Farm, c 190m to the northwest, revealed a Neolithic crouched inhumation burial, and evidence for an extensive Iron Age co-axial field system (Headland Archaeology 2014). Further prehistoric activity was recorded during the excavations at Horcott Quarry. Early prehistoric activity consisted of a Mesolithic flint scatter and pits dated to the Neolithic and Bronze Age. Later prehistoric activity comprised twenty-two round house structures, five oval post-built structures, and related pits and ditches (Oxford Archaeology 2009). Further prehistoric evidence from the locale includes, but is not limited to, findspots comprising two Neolithic polished flint axes (HER 2490, 3379), a Bronze Age palstave axe (HER 2485), and numerous cropmarks thought to represent ploughed out round barrows, the closest of which is 150m to the east (CgMs 2016; HER 7215, 7216).

5 Results

5.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 1–9. The trench and context inventory is presented in Appendix 1.

Due to the numerous archaeological features and deposits encountered, many of which remained unexcavated at this stage and, therefore, only a limited amount of secure dating evidence was recovered, they are described on a trench by trench basis in the following section, for ease of location (ie rather than by phase).

However, the finds information and morphological similarities in features found across the site area have allowed a broad site phasing to be established. The following table (Table 1) is presented so as to highlight the character of the archaeology and the site phase to which it is considered to date, as well as providing a general overview of the location of the type of feature encountered.

Site period	Character/location
Period 1: Natural substrate	Geological sand and gravel formation, all trenches.
Period 2: Prehistoric	Features generally filled with reddish-brown gravel, three containing flint flakes. These include part of a ring ditch in Trench 1 and small pits in Trenches 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8. Pits in Trench 13 and Trench 15 contained prehistoric pottery. Three small ditches/gullies were present in Trench 4, Trench 11 and Trench 17.
Period 3: Anglo-Saxon	The majority of features across the site area, most of which contained a dark or mid greyish brown silty fill. Up to fifteen possible sunken-featured buildings, in Trenches 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16. Many of these contained Anglo-Saxon pottery. A series of pits and numerous post and stakeholes dispersed

Site period	Character/location
	across Trenches 1–9 and 11–17. Sixteen postholes in Trench 13 formed a building outline, possibly a post-built hall. Ditches and gullies in Trenches 8, 12, 13, 14 and 17.
Period 4: Post-medieval	Two ditches in Trench 10 aligned on a field boundary, with pit in between.
Period 5: Modern	Land drain in Trench 18, service trench in Trench 20.

Table 1: Summary site phasing and archaeological character

5.2 Trench descriptions

5.2.1 Natural deposits across the site

Natural deposits were encountered in all twenty of the trenches excavated, at around 0.20–0.40m below the ground surface. This was slightly variable; it was mostly a light brownish yellow limestone brash with mixed sands and gravels (Plates 2–3), but contained softer sand content in the southernmost trenches (Trench 19 and 20) where it was revealed at a noticeably deeper level (0.50–0.59m from ground surface). In places, patchy depressions within the gravel were filled by moderately compact light brownish-red silty clay. Where investigated, these were often highly irregular and in some cases were found to be cut by archaeological features, demonstrating their geological origin.

5.2.2 Trench 1

In Trench 1, 0.25m of loose dark grey-brown silt topsoil directly overlay the archaeological features; there was no subsoil in evidence. At the south-east end of the trench, a 1.20m wide and 0.65m deep ditch exhibited a slight curve when viewed in plan [102] (Figs 4 and 6). This included flint likely to be early prehistoric in date, possibly Neolithic or early Bronze Age, within a reddish brown gravel-rich fill (103; Plate 4). The size of this feature suggests that it is the western side of a round barrow ditch (overall diameter c 15m and visible in this location as a near circular anomaly on the geophysical survey) rather than a roundhouse drip gully (Figure 3).

Towards the north-west end of the trench was a 0.35m deep oval pit [105] with a fill of similar colour and consistency to that in the ditch, suggesting that it may be contemporary, but it did not contain any finds.

Two small postholes were located in close proximity to the pit, but are not securely dated, [107] and [109]. These were 0.24m and 0.07m in depth respectively.

5.2.3 Trench 2

As with Trench 1, there was no subsoil interface between the topsoil (0.38m) and the archaeology. No finds were recovered from features in this trench, but they are all considered to be Anglo-Saxon due their similarity with other features on the site of this date.

The largest feature in Trench 2 was a large hollow, a possible sunken-featured building (SFB). This was broadly oval yet slightly irregular in plan, 0.48m in depth and up to 3m wide [210]. It was lacking in finds, which was unusual compared to similar features seen elsewhere on site, so is not conclusively established as an SFB, but a possible posthole was located on its western side [215]. The feature is also visible as a large anomaly in this location on the geophysical survey (Fig 3).

Just over 0.60m to the north of the possible SFB was a 1.07m wide pit with a greyish-brown clay silt fill; this was not excavated [208]. Similarly, an irregular pit feature with a comparable fill was located 4m to the south, but not excavated [206].

At the southern end of the trench, two interrelated pits were investigated, [202] and [204]. These were only 0.14m and 0.10m in depth respectively, both with sterile fills lacking in finds.

5.2.4 Trench 3

The topsoil (0.28m) was again directly above the archaeology. The features revealed in this trench are visible as clear anomalies on the geophysical survey (Fig 3).

Towards the south-east end of the trench, part of a large oval feature was exposed but not excavated [303]; this is probably a SFB. It was up to 4.80m in width and finds of Anglo-Saxon date were recovered from the surface of the only visible fill.

At the north-west end of the trench, extending beyond the limit of excavation, a shallow pit was excavated [305]. This was up to 3m wide but only 0.18m in depth. The grey-brown silty fill included Anglo-Saxon pottery and fuel ash slag, along with animal bone.

5.2.5 Trench 4

Up to 0.34m of topsoil was present in this trench, but no subsoil (Plate 2; Fig 4). Numerous pieces of 5th to 8th century Anglo-Saxon pottery alongside animal bone were recovered from the topsoil (400), especially in the vicinity of a 4.10m wide irregular oval feature at the north-east end of the trench [408]. This is probably another SFB, again visible on the geophysical survey (Fig 3). Animal bone was also recovered from the surface of the fill, although it was not excavated.

A posthole was located 2m to the south of the SFB; this was 0.14m in depth and contained a flat piece of limestone, probably a post pad, within the dark grey-brown silty fill [406].

Two pits, [402] and [404], and an unexcavated gully terminus [410] were located in the middle third of the trench, all in close proximity. Both pits contained mid reddish brown gravel-rich fills and fragments of flint, thought to be early prehistoric in date, perhaps being associated with the probable round barrow ditch in Trench 1 located around 20m to the north-east. The gully contained a similar fill but was not excavated.

At the south-west end of the trench was an elongated sub-oval pit [412], 1.30m in length and 0.57m wide, but only 0.06m in depth. Although no bone was recovered, its shape suggested that it may be the base of a highly truncated grave. This was not dated.

5.2.6 Trench 5

As with the other trenches located in the north-eastern area of the site, the 0.28m deep topsoil in Trench 5 directly overlay the archaeological features. At the north-west end was another probable SFB, oval in shape and 3.79m in width, that correlates with a large geophysical anomaly [509]. Anglo-Saxon and late medieval pottery (this later material probably intrusive from ploughing) was recovered from the surface.

Two pits were also found, located towards the middle of the trench; one [505] was a well-defined sub-oval shape, 0.86m in width and 0.40m in depth, with reddish-brown sandy gravel fill (Plate 5). Pit [507] contained a similar fill but was larger and more irregular, extending beyond the trench limits, and was the same depth. Neither contained dating evidence but the similarity of the fills to the nearby pits in Trench 4, [402] and [404], may suggest that these are also prehistoric in date.

5.2.7 Trench 6

In Trench 6, 0.15m of mid orange-brown sandy silt subsoil was present, below the topsoil (0.28m). Two possible sunken-featured buildings (SFBs) were recorded, [606] and [608], both in the northern half of the trench where a series of large anomalies are visible on the geophysical survey (Fig 3). Neither of these was fully visible, so this is not conclusive, but they were both around 4.20–4.40m in width which is similar to other examples on site. However, the northern of the two, [608], had a reddish-brown clayey fill that was not like the greyish-brown silty fills seen elsewhere, so this is less convincing than the southern example.

A small oval pit was also partially visible [604]. This was 1.10m wide and 0.28m in depth and contained a brownish-red silty gravel fill, but no finds (Plate 6).

5.2.8 Trench 7

In the north-east part of the trench, sealed by subsoil (0.12m) below the topsoil (0.20m), was part of a slightly irregular oval feature [714] with a clear posthole at the southern edge [712]. This is considered to also be an SFB, again correlating with a geophysical anomaly in this location. The SFB was 4.50m in width and Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered from the surface (Plate 8).

At the south-west end of the trench were three circular postholes in a slightly curved alignment – [706], [708] and [710] – which were similar in shape, between 0.24m and 0.30m in diameter and only 0.06m–0.09m in depth. No dating evidence was recovered.

The postholes were adjacent to a possible large pit feature, partially visible and extending beyond the trench limits [704].

5.2.9 Trench 8

There were two probable sunken-featured buildings in Trench 8, again sealed by subsoil (0.18m). The SFB in the south-eastern part of the trench was 4.10m in width [804]; the other [810] was 3.4m in width. No finds were recovered from the surface of either, although a large piece of sandstone was noted in [804]. Both correspond with large geophysical anomalies.

Located between the two probable buildings was an irregular, slightly curved hollow thought to be a tree throw [806], and a more regular oval pit [808]. The pit was 1.06m in width and 0.22m deep but extended beyond the edge of the trench so was not fully visible. It contained a brownish-red silty gravel fill, but no finds, and was comparable to pit [604] in Trench 6.

At the north-west end of the trench was a substantial irregular depression filled with moderately compact mid brownish-red silty clay (813). This was geological in origin and had been cut by a small 0.94m wide and 0.35m deep ditch, aligned north-east to south-west [812]. No finds were recovered, although charcoal inclusions were present.

5.2.10 Trench 9

At the north-east end of Trench 9 was another irregular depression (908), filled with brown silty clay, similar to that in Trench 8. A further 0.40m thick spread of this deposit was present at the south-west end of the trench (903). This was cut by a small sub-circular pit [906] that contained numerous charcoal fragments, some of which were identified as possibly oak (Plate 7). This was initially thought to be the heavily truncated base of a possible cremation, although the very limited recovery of bone fragments may discount this and it may be more appropriately identified as the residue of a fire pit. There was no dating evidence.

5.2.11 Trench 10

Two ditches, [1004] and [1008], were located at the south-west end of Trench 10, immediately below topsoil (0.30m). These contained post-medieval pottery, clay pipe and modern glass. The alignment of the ditches can be traced to the north-west on the geophysical survey to correspond with a surviving field boundary in an adjacent land parcel, so these perhaps once marked either side of a hedge or tree line (Figure 3). The geophysical survey also identified faint but regularly spaced parallel linear anomalies on the same alignment as the ditches across the field, probably being the remnants of former arable agriculture in the field.

Between the two ditches, on a slightly raised part of the natural substrate (perhaps reflecting a less truncated area on the route of the former boundary), was a small pit 0.17m in depth [1006]. This was not dated, but contained a fill similar to the topsoil and appeared to be a residue of the vegetation along this boundary, perhaps a tree bole.

5.2.12 Trench 11

No subsoil was present in Trench 11, with topsoil (0.27m) directly above the archaeological features (Fig 4).

At the north-west end of the trench was a small ditch, 1.15m wide and 0.25m in depth, which seemed to have a slight curve when viewed in plan [1103]. This is not visible as an obvious geophysical anomaly and no dating evidence was recovered, but the orange-brown sandy gravel fill was similar to features thought to be of prehistoric date in Trenches 4 and 5 to the north-east.

Trench 11 also contained the partially visible south-west edge of what was probably another SFB [1105], although this was only 1.80m in width which is slightly small than the other features of this type (Fig 7). It was 0.54m in depth, with a probable post setting at the edge [1106], and the humic dark grey-brown silty fill (1104) contained Anglo-Saxon pottery, animal bone and the blade of an iron knife (Plate 9). It corresponds with a geophysical anomaly in this location (Figure 3).

5.2.13 Trench 12

Two large features, 12m apart and clearly visible as geophysical anomalies, were revealed in Trench 12 (Figs 3 and 5). Both are thought to represent sunken-featured buildings. Topsoil (0.25m) and subsoil (0.14m) sealed the buildings.

The western of the pair, [1208], was 4.60m in width and associated with a small gully [1210] extending from its southern edge. The size (as visible) suggested that it would have been a particular substantial building. This was not excavated and no finds were recovered.

The eastern SFB [1204] was fully exposed; it was also of substantial size, around 5.6m in length and 4.5m in width (Fig 5). Just under 25% was sample excavated (Plate 10 and 11; Fig 8). It was a maximum of 0.68m in depth and contained three fills, the upper two (1203; 1211) of which included an extensive assemblage of animal bone and Anglo-Saxon pottery (a small amount of residual prehistoric flint and Roman material was also noted, as well as an intrusive piece of land drain on the surface). A series of structural postholes were identified around the building; three appeared to be external (not excavated) and two were inside the edge of the main cut (Plate 12; Figure 8). One, at the southern edge, [1214], was 0.30m in depth and 0.45m in diameter, containing numerous flat limestone pieces as packing. The other, on the western edge [1216], was 0.20m in depth and 0.42m in diameter. The base of the fill in this posthole comprised compacted greyish-green clay around a large flat limestone post pad.

5.2.14 Trench 13

Trench 13 contained an array of archaeological features, sealed by 0.22m of topsoil but lacking any subsoil.

Corresponding with a large geophysical anomaly was a possible SFB at the north-east end of the trench [1338]. This was at least 3.70m in width, but only part of it was visible. A small posthole [1336], which may be associated, was located 0.80m to the south of this.

Another sixteen postholes were identified within the trench. These formed a clear arrangement and, although the full extent was not exposed, are probably the remains of a post-built structure up to 14.40m long and 4.30m wide (Fig 5). One long side of the structure was formed by ten regularly spaced small postholes in a north-east to south-west alignment, comprised of two groups of five (but probably truncated by ditches; see below) with a clear 2.59m gap in between. Two additional postholes, one at either end of these linear groupings, [1334] and [1307], were slightly off the alignment and extended the overall outline to the north-west, representing a return at either end. The south-west end of the building was further revealed in an extension to the trench; this showed that another 2.48m gap was present, before a parallel sequence of four postholes continued the other side (Plate 15). The gaps are likely to denote entrances. Within the space of the one on the long side, a small disturbed area of silty soil was noted that could potentially represent wear in this entrance (1347). No dating evidence was recovered from any of the postholes.

Two ditches, [1326] and [1313], possibly post-dated the building as no posts could be seen cutting through them in plan, but where investigated the relationship with the postholes was not conclusive (Plate 14; Fig 9).

Ditch [1313], which was 0.92m wide and 0.48m in depth, and contained Anglo-Saxon pottery, slag and some animal bone. It may have cut posthole [1315], which was only 0.10m in depth. Ditch [1326], 2.04m wide and 0.62m in depth, included animal bone in one of the fills. These ditches are clearly visible as extended features on the geophysical survey, both continuing into Trench 14 to the north-west, and may represent land divisions (Fig 3). Ditch [1326] in particular is in parallel alignment with the boundary identified in Trench 10, possibly being part of the same field system. Ditch [1313] follows a sinuous route to Trench 15 in the south-east of this field.

At the south-west end of the trench were two pits. One, [1305], was 0.96m in width and continued beyond the trench; this was not excavated. The other, [1303], was circular, 0.85m in diameter and 0.29m in depth, with a brown gravelly silt fill that included prehistoric pottery, possibly late Bronze Age or early Iron Age in date (Plate 13).

5.2.15 Trench 14

The ditches identified in Trench 13 and visible as geophysical anomalies were also located in Trench 14, as noted above. Ditch [1406], the northernmost of the pair, corresponds with [1326], and ditch [1410] is a continuation of [1313]. Neither was investigated, as they had been sampled in Trench 13.

Both ditches appeared to post-date earlier features in Trench 14, as with Trench 13. Ditch [1406] cut through the middle of a large 4.9m wide possible SFB [1404]; Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered from the surface and this feature is visible a large anomaly on the geophysical survey. Ditch [1410] potentially cut a curving gully [1408] that extended away from the SFB.

5.2.16 Trench 15

Only 0.20m of topsoil was present in Trench 15, directly above the archaeological features. Ditch [1507] was the south-eastern extension of the same feature recorded in Trench 14 [1410] and sample excavated in Trench 13 [1313], visible on the geophysical survey.

Three small pits or possible postholes were also identified: two, [1503] and [1505], were in close proximity to the ditch, the other was isolated at the north-east end of the trench [1509]. None were excavated, but early prehistoric pottery was recovered from the surface of [1503]. All had a greyish-brown clay silt fill.

5.2.17 Trench 16

Trench 16 was located across a substantial geophysical anomaly, a discrete feature larger than most others seen on the site (Figure 3). Part of this, which was possibly a SFB, was identified within the central part of the trench and seen to be 3.8m in width. The full length was not exposed but Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered.

No other archaeological features were identified in Trench 16, although another irregular depression (1605) filled with reddish-brown silty clay, and similar to those in Trench 8 and Trench 9, was present towards the north-west end.

5.2.18 Trench 17

Trenches 17–20 were located in the southern field of the site area, and noticeably deeper soil profiles were in evidence on the sloping ground. Subsoil (0.16m) below topsoil (0.30m) sealed the archaeology in Trench 17.

At the northern end of the trench a large and slightly irregular circular pit was identified [1704], around 2.10m in diameter. No finds were recovered and it was not excavated. A north-east to south-west aligned gully, 0.50m in width, was located 2.5m to the south of the pit [1706], and a small posthole [1708] was adjacent to this. These features all had mid brown silty fills.

Orientated broadly east-west across the centre of the trench was another small gully [1710]. This was filled with reddish-brown gravelly silt, similar to features thought to be of prehistoric date elsewhere on the site.

5.2.19 Trench 18

There were no significant archaeological features in Trench 18. Subsoil (0.20m) was present and a land drain was identified [1806] at the south-east end, where a small patch of dark soil (1803) appeared to be a modern intrusion, and was associated with a magnetic response on the geophysical survey.

5.2.20 Trench 19

No archaeological features were identified in this trench. Mid greyish brown silty topsoil (0.25m) overlay light yellowish brown clay sand subsoil (0.25m).

5.2.21 Trench 20

There were also no significant archaeological features in Trench 20. An area of modern disturbance was noted at the south-eastern end [2003], where reinforced steel bars and a service trench were present, corresponding with a peak of magnetic response on the geophysical survey. Two subsoil layers were recorded below 0.10m of topsoil; the lower was 0.14m in depth, the upper 0.35m in depth.

6 Artefacts

6.1 Artefactual analysis by Derek Hurst, with lithics by Robert Hedge

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 2-3 below. Most of the material was stratified and could be dated from the earlier prehistoric period onwards (see Table 4 for context *tpq* dating). Using pottery as an index of artefact condition, this was generally excellent with the some sherds displaying low levels of abrasion, though with the average sherd size being below average (ie 8g) clearly much better than normal preservation in some features (*viz* sunken-featured buildings) was a significant factor in this pattern.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
Creswellian to early Neolithic	stone	flint	?dihedral burin	1	2.6
Mesolithic/early Neolithic	stone	flint	notch/utilised flake	1	1.7
Neolithic/early Bronze Age	stone	flint	core trimming flake	1	5.4
LBA/EIA	ceramic		pot	5	14
?LBA/EIA	ceramic		pot	1	25
prehistoric	ceramic		?weight	1	4
prehistoric	stone	flint	broken utilised flake	1	9
prehistoric	stone	flint	chip	2	0.2
prehistoric	stone	flint	chunk	2	7.7
Roman	ceramic		pot	2	13
?Roman	ceramic		pot	1	9
early/mid-Saxon	ceramic		pot	100	789
early/mid-Saxon	metal	iron	knife	1	8
late medieval	ceramic		pot	2	42
post-medieval	ceramic		land drain	1	221
post-medieval	ceramic		pipe	1	1
post-medieval	ceramic		pot	1	15
modern	glass			1	1
undated	bone	animal bone		158	2200
undated	ceramic	?fired clay		3	29
undated	ceramic	fired clay		4	61
undated	organic		charcoal	10	2

undated	slag			4	4
undated	stone			1	260
totals				305	3724.6

Table 2: Quantification of the site assemblage

6.2 Summary artefactual evidence by period

6.2.1 Prehistoric lithics

A small quantity of worked flint was recovered, all from the north-east half of the site. At least three raw material sources were evident: a fine flint with light grey patination, a dark grey flint with blue-grey patina and a mid-grey unpatinated flint with thick chalky cortex.

Much was not closely dateable, comprising small chips and chunks of debitage. However, three pieces could be provisionally assigned more specific dates:

- a core trimming flake from a multi-directional platform core, recovered from the fill (103) of a ring ditch. Although the core type and features suggestive of soft-hammer percussion indicate an early Neolithic date, occasional pieces of this type can occur in later assemblages (Butler 2005, 137), so a later Neolithic or early Bronze Age date is possible;
- a small notched piece on a distal flake/blade fragment from fill (405) of pit [404], typical of Mesolithic assemblages although an early Neolithic date is possible;
- an abraded piece suffering some post-depositional edge damage from topsoil (1200), which appears to be a dihedral burin on a blade fragment. This piece is considered likely to be Mesolithic, although an earlier (Creswellian) or slightly later (early Neolithic) date is possible.

Of the undiagnostic debitage, two pieces were residual within fills (1211) and (713) associated with SFBs, one was within topsoil (400) and the remaining chip, exhibiting traces of soft-hammer percussion, was from fill (403) in pit [402].

Given the close proximity of the site to the substantial Mesolithic assemblage from Horcott Quarry (Oxford Archaeology 2009), a background scatter of Mesolithic material would be consistent with known patterns of Mesolithic activity in the area.

The presence of worked flint of potentially early date within pits [402] and [404] suggests that they are at least contemporary with the nearby ring ditch, but may belong to a considerably earlier phase of prehistoric activity.

The flake from the ring ditch may be contemporary with its construction; however, given the prehistoric activity of multiple periods in the environs of the site, occurrence of residual flint from earlier periods is possible.

period	type	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
Creswellian to early Neolithic	tool	flint	possible dihedral burin	1	2.6
Mesolithic/early Neolithic	tool	flint	notch/utilised flake	1	1.7
Neolithic/early Bronze Age	debitage	flint	core trimming flake	1	5.4
prehistoric	tool	flint	broken utilised flake	1	9
prehistoric	debitage	flint	chip	2	0.2
prehistoric	debitage	flint	chunk	2	7.7
totals				8	26.6

Table 3: Quantification of worked flint by type and broad period

6.2.2 Pottery and other finds

?Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age

The presence of earlier prehistoric pottery is suggested on the basis of a decorated rim in (1302), fill of pit [1303] which is also in a different fabric than the diagnostically identified early-mid Anglo-Saxon wares. This same fabric only otherwise occurs (5 sherds) in fill (1502) in pit/posthole [1503]. In both cases it potentially dates features of this period. Pit [1303] was also associated with a fragment of possible loomweight.

Roman

A small quantity of Roman pottery was present (up to 3 sherds) but this was always residual in later features.

Early-Middle Anglo-Saxon

The bulk of the artefactual assemblage comprised early-middle Anglo-Saxon pottery which could be determined both by fabric- and form-types for much of this material. It can also be paralleled with period assemblages noted on nearby sites, such as Home Farm, also at Fairford (Timby 2014).

There was a wide range of fabrics, the most distinctive being where organic, limestone (oolitic), and quartz was the main tempering agent, but there were also other fabrics with various combinations of these inclusions. The predominantly quartz-tempered fabrics were the most diverse of all. However, heavily organically tempered fabric was by far the commonest type.

The forms were typically globular jars of various sizes that would have been suitable for general domestic use, and this was confirmed by examples exhibiting sooting on the outside and limescale residue on the inside, the latter presumably derived from prolonged use to boil water. This indicates that some individual pots had lasted a considerable time before breakage. Surface treatment was usually limited to outside burnish, and most vessels were reduced grey/black throughout.

The dating of this pottery is key to the main site phase, though presently a broad date of 5th to 7th/8th century is generally preferred (eg Cotter 2009, 38), as there has been insufficient study, as yet, of a well stratified sequence from the vicinity of Fairford to modify this view.

Apart from the pottery the only other ceramic material was fired clay from several contexts (eg 1203, 1211), though since the fabric was usually quite similar to some pottery fabrics identification was not always clear-cut. An oxidised firing was perhaps one of the best indicators, as this is often the case with fired clay generally. Such material may arise from ovens/hearths with which the tiny amounts of fuel ash slag found in fill (304) may also have been associated. A small iron knife (fill 1104 of 1105/6 SFB; c 90mm long) is typical of the period (*cf* Evans and Loveluck 2009, fig 5.30) – no specific use could be attributed to it.

Late medieval and later

Only a very small amount of pottery post-dated the early-middle Anglo-Saxon activity. This consisted of late medieval/early post-medieval glazed wares, possible products of the Ashton Keynes (Wilts) industry just c 10km to the south-west.

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date
103	stone	flint	core trimming flake	1	5.4	-4000	-1500
302	bone	animal bone		2	62		
302	ceramic		pot	2	17	400	700
304	bone	animal bone		15	44		
304	slag			1	1		
304	ceramic		pot	1	1	400	700
400	bone	animal bone		9	407		
400	stone	flint	chunk	1	1.3	-8000	43

400	ceramic		pot	5	121	400	700
403	stone	flint	chip	1	0.1	-8000	43
405	stone	flint	notch/utilised flake	1	1.7	-8000	-3000
409	bone	animal bone		3	41		
409	ceramic		pot	1	7	400	700
508	ceramic	fired clay		1	49		
508	ceramic		pot	1	6	400	700
508	ceramic		pot	1	28	1500	1700
713	stone	flint	chunk	1	6.4	-8000	43
713	ceramic		pot	3	115	400	700
1000	stone	flint	broken utilised flake	1	9	-8000	43
1000	ceramic		pot	1	14	1500	1700
1003	ceramic		pipe	1	1	1600	1900
1003	ceramic		pot	1	15	1600	1700
1007	bone	animal bone		1	6		
1007	ceramic		pot	1	9	?50	?400
1007	glass			1	1	1900	2000
1104	bone	animal bone		40	382		
1104	metal	iron	knife	1	8	400	1200
1104	ceramic		pot	5	20	400	700
1200	stone	flint	possible dihedral burin	1	2.6	-10500	-3000
1203	bone	animal bone		25	476		
1203	ceramic		pot	30	117	400	700
1203	ceramic		pot	1	3	50	400
1203	ceramic	?fired clay		2	13		
1203	ceramic		land drain	1	221	1600	1900
1207	ceramic		pot	2	3	400	700
1211	bone	animal bone		42	669		
1211	stone	flint	chip	1	0.1	-8000	43
1211	ceramic		pot	36	295	400	700
1211	ceramic	fired clay		3	12		
1211	ceramic		pot	1	10	50	400
1211	organic			10	2		
1215	bone	animal bone		4	31		
1215	ceramic		pot	1	4	400	700
1302	bone	animal bone		7	9		
1302	ceramic		pot	1	25	1200	700
1302	ceramic		?weight	1	4		
1302	slag			1	1		
1312	bone	animal bone		7	19		
1312	ceramic		pot	10	53	400	700
1312	ceramic	?fired clay		1	16		
1312	slag			2	2		
1325	bone	animal bone		1	37		
1401	ceramic		pot	1	3	400	700
1403	ceramic		pot	1	25	400	700
1403	stone			1	260		
1405	bone	animal bone		2	17		
1502	ceramic		pot	5	14	1200	700
1603	ceramic		pot	1	2	400	700

Table 4: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

6.3 Discussion

The presence of a small quantity of worked flint reflects prehistoric activity both on and in the environs of the site. Although in part residual and overall not closely dateable, the presence of flint within pits [402] and [404] supports a prehistoric origin for this group of features. Their association with ring ditch [102] remains to be established: although they may be contemporary, there is a possibility that the features within Trench 4 represent an earlier prehistoric phase of activity.

The earlier prehistoric pottery may potentially indicate the dates of some features on the site, but, presently, this would look to be only a minor component. By contrast, the Roman pottery was always residual in later features, and, therefore, no Roman features were identified.

The main site period of activity is clearly early/middle Anglo-Saxon with most features being attributable to this period. Finds were generally more plentiful in association with the sunken-featured buildings, but material was also found across the whole area of excavation in smaller amounts. Taken together with the structures, the finds indicate a settlement of some duration that seems to have been mostly domestic in character given the current assemblage (ie no significant industrial activity noted; although see Section 7.2.2 for limited evidence of craft working).

6.3.1 Recommendations for further work

Further work on the assemblage as it is not required at this stage. Only the material later than the Anglo-Saxon period should be considered for discard, though this is so little that it may not be worthwhile.

7 Ecofacts

7.1 Plant macrofossils and charcoal, by Elizabeth Pearson

Results are summarised in Tables 5 to 7 below.

Context	Sample	Feature type	Fill of	Period	Sample volume (L)	Volume processed (L)	Residue assessed	Flot assessed
211	1	Building	210	?Anglo-Saxon	10	0	No	No
212	2	Building	210	?Anglo-Saxon	40	0	No	No
904	3	Pit	906	?Anglo-Saxon	30	30	Yes	Yes
907	4	Pit	906	?Anglo-Saxon	10	0	No	No
1104	5	Building	1105/1106	Anglo-Saxon	10	10	Yes	Yes
1203	8	Building	1204	Anglo-Saxon	20	0	No	No
1211	9	Building	1204	Anglo-Saxon	40	10	Yes	Yes
1212	7	Building	1204	Anglo-Saxon	10	10	Yes	Yes
1213	6	Posthole	1214	Anglo-Saxon	10	10	Yes	Yes

Table 5: List of bulk samples

7.1.1 Results

Uncharred herbaceous root fragments and seed remains found in most samples are assumed to be modern and intrusive, as it is unlikely that they would have survived for any length of time on the sandy soils found on the site.

Sunken-featured buildings

Only occasional unidentified charcoal fragments and charred cereal grains were recovered. The latter included hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), emmer or spelt wheat (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*) and unidentified cereal grains.

Mollusc remains were also abundant but are thought to be intrusive as they were dominated by opaque shells (likely to be modern) of a burrowing type. Little interpretation could be made of this material.

Pit [906] with burnt deposit

Charcoal was particularly abundant but highly fragmented and mostly unidentifiable. Only occasional fragments of oak were noted. Bone that was clearly burnt was absent, although fragments of unburnt bone were present, so there was no conclusive evidence that this was cremation material.

Context	large mammal	Small mammal	fish	Frog/toad	bird	mollusc	charcoal	charred plant	uncharred plant	artefacts	comments
904	occ					occ*	abt	occ	occ*	occ fire ash, fired clay, pot, flint	* = probably intrusive
1104	occ	occ		occ		abt	mod	occ	abt*	occ pot	* = probably intrusive
1211	occ					abt*	occ		occ*	occ flint	* = probably intrusive
1212	occ			occ		abt*	occ			occ coal, pot, Fe slag.	* - probably intrusive
1213	occ		occ		occ	abt*	occ		occ*	occ clinker, fired clay, heat-cracked stone	* - probably intrusive

Table 6: Summary of environmental remains from bulk samples; occ = occasional, mod = moderate, abt = abundant

Context	sample	preservation type	species detail	category remains	quantity/diversity	comment
904	3	ch	unidentified wood fragments	misc	++++/low	
904	3	?wa	<i>Atriplex</i> sp	seed	+/low	probably intrusive
904	3	ch	<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp	seed	+/low	
1104	5	?wa	unidentified herbaceous root fragments	misc	++++/low	probably intrusive
1104	5	ch	unidentified wood fragments	misc	++/low	
1104	5	?wa	<i>Fumaria</i> sp, <i>Urtica dioica</i> , <i>Atriplex</i> sp	seed	+/low	probably intrusive

1104		ch	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> grain (hulled), Cereal sp indet grain	grain	+/low	
1211	9	ch	unidentified wood fragments	misc	+/low	
1211	9	?wa	unidentified herbaceous root fragments	misc	+/low	
1211	9	?wa	<i>Atriplex</i> sp	seed	+/low	probably intrusive
1212	7	ch	unidentified wood fragments	misc	+/low	
1212	7	ch	<i>Triticum dicoccum/spelta</i> grain, <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> grain (hulled)	grain	+/low	
1213	6	ch	unidentified wood fragments	misc	+/low	
1213	6	?wa	unidentified herbaceous fragments	misc	+/low	

Table 7: Plant remains from bulk samples

Key:

Preservation	Quantity
wa? = waterlogged	+ = 1 - 10
ch = charred	++ = 11- 50
	+++ = 51 - 100
	++++ = 101+

7.1.2 Discussion

Only very low levels of charred plant remains were recorded for Anglo-Saxon deposits, with the exception of context (904) which is not conclusively dated. These results are consistent with those from excavations of sunken-featured buildings at Home Farm, Fairford (Bailey and Holden 2014). Charred cereal chaff and weed seeds were, however, more abundant within a similar building at Horcott Quarry (Druce 2009).

Overall, there is limited potential to recover detailed information on arable farming practices, although, despite the poor preservation, it should still be possible to determine the cultivated crops in use and, therefore, if there are any changes in the assemblage between phases. The fragmentation of charcoal is a limiting factor on the recovery of information about the fuel economy.

7.2 Animal bone, by James Spry**7.2.1 Results - quantification**

In total, 158 individual bone fragments were recorded from thirteen separate contexts, weighing a total of 2,200g (Table 8). Nine (6%) specimens are from modern topsoil, one (1%) is from a post-medieval context, 141 (89%) are from Anglo-Saxon contexts and seven (4%) are from a prehistoric context.

context	material class	material subtype	count	weight(g)	feature type	period
302	bone	animal bone	2	62	Building	Anglo-Saxon
304	bone	animal bone	15	44	Pit	Anglo-Saxon
400	bone	animal bone	9	407	Topsoil	Modern
409	bone	animal bone	3	41	Building	Anglo-Saxon
1007	bone	animal bone	1	6	Ditch	Post-medieval
1104	bone	animal bone	40	382	Building	Anglo-Saxon
1203	bone	animal bone	25	476	Building	Anglo-Saxon
1211	bone	animal bone	42	669	Building	Anglo-Saxon
1215	bone	animal bone	4	31	Posthole	Anglo-Saxon

1302	bone	animal bone	7	9	Pit	Prehistoric
1312	bone	animal bone	7	19	Ditch	Anglo-Saxon
1325	bone	animal bone	1	37	Ditch	Anglo-Saxon
1405	bone	animal bone	2	17	Ditch	Anglo-Saxon

Table 8: Count and weight of animal bone by context

7.2.2 Results – species representation

Prehistoric

The bones recovered from a prehistoric pit fill (1302) were mostly unidentifiable fragments, except for one calcaneus from an adult sheep/goat.

Anglo-Saxon

Seventy-nine per cent of the bones recovered from Anglo-Saxon contexts came from features considered to be sunken-featured buildings (SFBs). The majority of these were large mammal specimens, with cattle the dominant taxa among those identifiable to species. This included cattle horn core fragments, a rib and calcaneus with butchery marks and several loose cattle teeth. One of the SFB contexts (1211), which was likely created after the building has been abandoned, also contained one horse metacarpal and one horse metatarsal.

The other Anglo-Saxon contexts were also dominated with large mammal fragments. Pit fill (304) contained several cattle horn core fragments. Along with fragments of slag from the same context this may be evidence of craft working on site, with the widespread use of animal horn as a secondary product resulting in a price being placed upon them under Anglo-Saxon law (MacGregor 2001, 364). In addition, ditch fill (1312) contained one fragment with a cut mark and several that had been burnt.

Post-medieval

A single medium mammal bone fragment was recovered from the post-medieval ditch fill (1007).

Modern

The bones recovered from the topsoil included a cattle mandible, a sheep/goat humerus (burnt) and several other large mammal fragments.

7.2.3 Assemblage comparison and potential

Only the Anglo-Saxon assemblage warrants comparison with other contemporary assemblages.

Adjacent excavation, south of Cirencester Road, identified three sunken-featured buildings (Headland Archaeology 2015, 5–6). Deposits in these contained an assemblage of animal bone that, like the current assemblage, was predominately made up of cattle remains but also included sheep/goat and pig (Strid 2013, 18). The bones came from deposits that likely formed after the buildings had gone out of use. In contrast, excavations at Home Farm, Fairford recovered higher than average quantities of burnt and unburnt animal bone from the lower fills of an SFB, which likely represent debris from food preparation and cooking during their use (Bailey and Holden 2014, 49).

A significant amount of animal bone was also collected from six sunken-featured buildings during excavations to the rear of Sherbourne House, Lechlade (Maltby 2003, 72–6). Again, cattle bones formed the majority of the identified material. In addition, at Horcott Quarry, Fairford the structured deposition of cattle skulls was recorded within SFB fills; this is increasingly being recognised on Anglo-Saxon settlements (Oxford Archaeology 2009, 23).

These assemblages, in addition to the present one, are consistent with Anglo-Saxon assemblages more generally, where the exploitation of wild and domestic animals was largely determined by the surrounding environment. It is possible that at Fairford, as at Sherbourne House, areas of good

lowland pasture and adequate water supplies were more favourable for cattle farming (Maltby 2003, 73).

As with the Cirencester Road and Home Farm site sites noted above (Headland Archaeology 2015, Headland Archaeology 2014), the assemblage here is too small to learn anything of significance regarding animal husbandry practices or patterns of consumption. Therefore, no further work on this assemblage would be appropriate at this stage. However, it is evident that the site holds significant potential for the recovery of a larger animal bone assemblage, with the remains reasonably well preserved and coming from a variety of different context types. This may facilitate a more reliable comparison to larger contemporary assemblages within the surrounding landscape (e.g. Maltby 2003; Strid 2009), and provide more information about the deposition of domestic and industrial waste on Anglo-Saxon settlement sites.

8 Overview and discussion

The evaluation has established that the site contains numerous archaeological features across a wide area, including every trench across the north-eastern field (Trenches 1–16), as well as the northern part of the south-western field (Trench 17). Activity was broadly dispersed, but often intensive in localised areas (e.g. Trench 4, 7, 8, 13, 14), and probably of at least two phases; both prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon artefacts were recovered. A lack of finds from many features has led to these only being broadly identified to each phase, mainly through comparison. However, the presence of settlement-related activity of Anglo-Saxon date may suggest that most can be associated with this. Although the trenches represent a relatively small sample of this site, and it is therefore not definitive as to whether every type of feature or period of activity that may exist here has been observed, it is considered that a general characterisation of the level and nature of the archaeology here has been defined.

This reflects the known archaeology within the wider area and confirms the archaeological potential for the site as highlighted in the desk-based assessment. In addition, most of the features had a good correlation with the geophysical anomalies, particularly larger discrete features and substantial ditches. Associated with these were a further range of buried remains (particularly smaller pit and posthole features, but also diffuse ditches/gullies) that demonstrate an extensive archaeological component to the site beyond that identified in the geophysical survey. None of the discrete features investigated were particularly deep and in many cases their shallow nature suggested that significant truncation from arable cultivation had occurred.

Given the largely accurate correlation of the clear geophysical anomalies with the presence of archaeology, the lack of either in the southernmost part of the site (Trenches 18-20) may indicate a real absence. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that this area is largely devoid of significant archaeological remains, probably a reflection of the lower lying and wetter nature of the ground here making it less suitable for occupation.

Prehistoric

Features considered to date to the prehistoric period suggest that this phase of activity was widely dispersed, with little indication of a settlement focus on the site, although this is not conclusive. Aside from a small gully in Trench 17, not excavated but thought to be prehistoric due to the similarity of its fill with others containing flint, these were located in the north-east field of the site area.

It is possible that the pits in Trenches 1, 4 and 5 represent small-scale transient activity associated with a wider funerary landscape, of which the probable ring ditch in Trench 1 marks the most visible evidence. This is potentially an outlying element of a barrow complex that continues across Horcott Road, where other examples are known from cropmarks 150m to the east (CgMs 2016, 11). If this is a monumental grouping, then it conforms to an expected siting within the surrounding landscape; barrow groups are often found on slightly sloping ground in deliberate association with

springs, streams or rivers (Woodward 2000, 73-4), and the River Coln is 200m north-east of the site.

There was limited recovery of prehistoric finds, but a few ceramic and flint artefacts dating from the Mesolithic/Neolithic to the early Iron Age (some of which was residual in later contexts) demonstrate the presence of a prehistoric community in the vicinity producing and using this material. Two pits, in Trench 13 and Trench 15, included prehistoric pottery that is possibly late Bronze Age or early Iron Age in date.

The prehistoric activity supplements similar evidence from the surrounding area, such as at Horcott Quarry to the south, where early prehistoric flint scatter and pits have been found alongside a substantial later prehistoric unenclosed settlement (Oxford Archaeology 2009). Further prehistoric features have been recorded at Home Farm, 190m to the north-west; these include a Neolithic crouched inhumation burial and an extensive Iron Age field system (Headland Archaeology 2014).

Anglo-Saxon

The Anglo-Saxon remains were extensive and define an area of clear settlement activity, probably 5th to 7th or early 8th century in date. This adds to the expanding picture of Anglo-Saxon occupation along the upper Thames valley and into the Cotswolds region and also complements a growing body of evidence that has demonstrated a focus of Anglo-Saxon occupation in environs of Fairford. Numerous sites discovered over the last 20 years in the immediate surrounds have revealed archaeology of a similar date and character (e.g. Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service 1999; Oxford Archaeology 2009; Headland Archaeology 2014 and 2015), adding a new level of understanding for a period which, in the wider area, has predominantly been visible only through burials (e.g. Boyle *et al* 2011; scheduled monument NHLE 1003419, 680m to the north-west).

In terms of structures, up to fifteen possible sunken-featured buildings (SFBs) were identified, although not always conclusively so, and, comparing these with geophysical anomalies, similar features probably exist in areas beyond the trench extents. A posthole arrangement thought to be the remains of a post-built rectangular structure was also located. This was not securely dated and it does remain possible that it is of earlier date. On balance, however, the general artefactual material from the site and comparisons with known patterns for Anglo-Saxon settlements suggests that this is most likely to be a hall-type structure of Anglo-Saxon date. It is not dissimilar in size (around 14.40m by 4.30m) to three similar buildings identified at Horcott Quarry, each approximately 10m by 5m (Oxford Archaeology 2009, 23). More features such as this may also be present within the site area and not visible on the geophysical survey.

It is possible that a group of the SFBs may have been associated with the post-built structure, as these are often found in combination; it has been suggested that post-built structures formed main barns or houses, with the SFBs used for industrial/craft working or storage functions (see, for example, Oxford Archaeology 2009, 22–3). The buildings were always separate from one another and, therefore, no stratigraphic relationships occurred between these features that could demonstrate a sequence of use. This also suggests a level of visibility between buildings (or, at least, the site of former buildings) when constructed, and this may demonstrate that the majority are contemporary. Possible boundary ditches did appear to post-date some of these structures however, indicative of changing land use.

Locally, a comparative association of features was evident at Horcott Quarry, 320m to the south, where thirty-four SFBs were found alongside three post-built structures, as noted above (Oxford Archaeology 2009, 22–3). Further afield in Gloucestershire, 6km to the east, a similar composition of SFBs with post-built structures was seen at Sherborne House, Lechlade (Bateman *et al* 2003). Horcott Quarry and Lechlade are also analogous to the site identified here in terms of settlement layout; all appear to be unenclosed with little form or regular organisation to the location of the buildings. This is characteristic of early Anglo-Saxon settlements in the region, which are frequently spread in a wide landscape sprawl, rather than being nucleated, and are often dispersed across

the gravel terraces above the River Thames and its tributaries (Bateman *et al* 2003, 87; Webster 2008a, 172).

The nearby investigations in fields to the immediate south-west (Oxford Archaeology 2013; Headland Archaeology 2015) and 190m to the north-west (Headland Archaeology 2014) of the site also match this regional trend, locating a broad spread of SFBs with associated activity. These sites exhibited smaller numbers of SFBs however, so it is possible that the site here is more central to a settlement focus, although this is difficult to ascertain at this stage of work. It could equally be the case that all of the sites in this area are on the periphery of a main settlement now supplanted by Fairford itself, or perhaps in unexplored fields to the north-west. Alternatively, they may represent numerous phases of shifting occupation. Perhaps of significance in this regard is the size of the SFBs identified here, which were generally at least 4m in width (although smaller examples were noted). This is comparable with the largest SFB identified on the adjacent site (SFB1; Headland Archaeology 2015, 5), possibly indicating a commonality of building grouping, or perhaps that they are broadly contemporary.

Beyond the buildings, other features were also considered to be of Anglo-Saxon date, mostly postholes that were probably associated with the SFBs, and a series of pits. Pits were not frequent, unless those thought to be of prehistoric date are actually later and contain residual finds, and because the trenches were targeted on prominent geophysical anomalies (almost always identified as SFBs) this may be a factor leading the evaluation away from other (smaller) features. As only a limited amount of investigation of the buildings was undertaken, there is so far little indication of the economy of the settlement, although it did appear to have included at least some level of cattle farming. Cattle horn core fragments from one Anglo-Saxon pit in Trench 3 suggest at least one craft activity on the site.

Later activity

Based on the features located in the trenches, and combined with the anomalies visible on the geophysical survey, it is apparent that following the Anglo-Saxon period the site reverted to an undeveloped agricultural landscape. It is possible that this reflects a shift in settlement to the north-east, focused around the establishment of St Mary's Church, perhaps as early as the 9th century when Fairford is first recorded (CgMs 2016, 12).

Aside from the insertion of field boundaries and a land drain, there was no evidence to suggest any activity other than agriculture taking place on the site from at least the medieval period until the current programme of evaluation trenching. Unfortunately, it does appear that this past agriculture has resulted in the truncation of the archaeological remains and left only a shallow depth of soil coverage above these features.

9 Significance

9.1 Research potential and significance of the site

Prehistoric

Only a relatively modest number of features were identified as prehistoric in date, and these were not obviously characteristic of settlement. Rather, they suggest a landscape important for other reasons, perhaps associated with nearby funerary and more transient activity. No burials were definitely identified, but the presence of a probable ring ditch in the north-east corner of the site has the potential to be a focus for prehistoric burial in the surrounds. The flint recovered suggests an early prehistoric date for this ring ditch, although this may be residual. Pits in Trench 4 also included flint of early prehistoric date and other pieces were recovered from topsoil contexts. The presence of worked flint within these pits suggests that they are at least contemporary with the ring ditch, but may also belong to an earlier phase of prehistoric activity. Such early remains are relatively rare finds and, therefore, of significance. A small amount of prehistoric pottery, probably late Bronze Age or early Iron Age in date, was identified in pits in Trench 13 and Trench 15.

There are, therefore, regional research objectives to which this phase of activity on the site may contribute, as identified in *A Research Agenda for Archaeology in South West England* (Webster 2008b, 269-94). In particular, these could include:

- **Research Aim 28b:** The potential of cumulative patterns in small-scale evidence such as pits and stake-holes to improve our understanding of prehistoric landscapes;
- **Research Aim 54:** Improved regional understanding of monumentality in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age.

Anglo-Saxon

The size of the Anglo-Saxon settlement identified on this site is significant and, if more buildings and associated features survived in the areas surrounding the trenches, it has the potential to be one of the most extensive in Gloucestershire. When considered alongside the similar evidence from the adjacent site to the south-west (Headland Archaeology 2015), this is certainly suggestive of a considerable density of land use from the 5th century onwards. It may even become comparable in size to that at Horcott Quarry to the south, which is the largest Anglo-Saxon settlement excavated to date in the county and one of the largest in the wider Thames Valley area (Oxford Archaeology 2009). The remains here are seemingly complementary to the Horcott Quarry site; they offer a further opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the nature and chronology of Anglo-Saxon settlement in the region, and will provide an additional comparative dataset.

In terms of artefacts, the period and quality of the Anglo-Saxon finds is such that this signifies a notable site, where the main activity took place in association with sunken-featured buildings and so there is a high possibility of the finds assemblage being extensive and, therefore, informative. This site is liable to offer opportunities of closer scientific dating and so improve understanding of occupation sequence within a wider region much favoured for settlement in this period.

Therefore, this phase of activity on the site also exhibits considerable potential to contribute to a number of research priorities for the region, as identified in the *Research Agenda for Archaeology in South West England* (Webster 2008b, 269-94). These include, most notably:

- **Research Aim 3:** Addressing apparent 'gaps' in knowledge, particularly of Anglo-Saxon rural settlement in Gloucestershire;
- **Research Aim 10e and 10f:** Improving understanding of key transitional periods, such as diagnostic material culture of the transition from the post-Roman to early medieval and then to later medieval periods;
- **Research Aim 16h:** The use of targeted scientific dating, particularly in the early medieval period where diagnostic material culture is hard to recognise;
- **Research Aim 27:** Investigating changes in cultivation from hulled to free-threshing wheat during the late/post-Roman to early medieval periods;
- **Research Aim 30:** Developing methodologies to identify early medieval rural settlement;
- **Research Aim 33:** Widening understanding of the origins of villages during the transition from the early medieval period into the pre-Conquest period;
- **Research Aim 44:** Developing the understanding and identification of early medieval technologies in non-elite material culture.

9.2 Physical extent and preservation of the archaeological site

Archaeological features were recorded across a wide area, including the entirety of the north-eastern field (Trenches 1-16), as well as the northern part of the south-western field (Trench 17). The majority of these were indicative of an extensive Anglo-Saxon settlement that forms part of wider occupation of this date in the vicinity of Fairford, but also included dispersed prehistoric activity. This can be considered alongside numerous sites nearby that have previously revealed

archaeology of a similar character. Of particular note was a lack of geophysical anomalies and significant archaeological features in the southernmost part of the site (Trenches 18-20), potentially demonstrating an absence of occupation in this area.

The site exhibits good preservation of Anglo-Saxon artefacts and animal bone, with a significant potential for the recovery of a larger assemblages of both, but charred plant remains were not well-preserved in the environmental samples assessed at this stage.

Numerous substantial features, such as sunken-featured buildings, have demonstrated that in many cases there is a good survival of archaeological remains across the site. However, it was also apparent that much of the site was only covered by a shallow depth of soil and that extensive truncation has occurred through past agricultural activity. Postholes and small diffuse pits were especially affected by this. Overall, it is clear that any groundworks undertaken to a depth greater than 0.20m would negatively impact upon the survival of significant archaeological deposits.

10 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology 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 in July 2016 on land to the west of Horcott Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 414812 200616). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, whose client intends to undertake residential development alongside public open space and associated works on the site, for which an outline planning application has been submitted to Cotswold District Council.

Twenty trenches were excavated across the site area, which comprised two agricultural fields. They were positioned to target geophysical anomalies thought to represent archaeological features. These included a possible prehistoric round barrow, a number of large discrete features thought to be sunken-featured buildings dating to the Anglo-Saxon period, and linear features of probable archaeological origin.

Archaeological remains were identified across a wide area, including the entirety of the north-eastern field, as well as the northern part of the south-western field. The majority of these were indicative of an extensive Anglo-Saxon settlement that forms part of wider occupation of this date in the vicinity of Fairford. This can be considered alongside numerous sites nearby that have previously revealed archaeology of a similar character.

The settlement, probably 5th to 7th or early 8th century in date, comprised up to fifteen possible sunken-featured buildings (SFBs) and a posthole arrangement thought to be the remains of a post-built rectangular structure. This structure was not securely dated but it has the potential to be a hall-type building. Beyond the buildings, other features included postholes that were probably associated with the SFBs, and a series of pits.

A modest number of small discrete features were also identified as prehistoric in date, probably early prehistoric, and these were not obviously characteristic of settlement. Rather, they suggest a landscape important for other reasons, perhaps associated with the prehistoric round barrow, the presence of which was confirmed in the north-east of the site.

Overall, it was apparent that the site contains a significant array of archaeological features that all offer good potential to contribute to a number of research priorities for the wider region.

11 Acknowledgements

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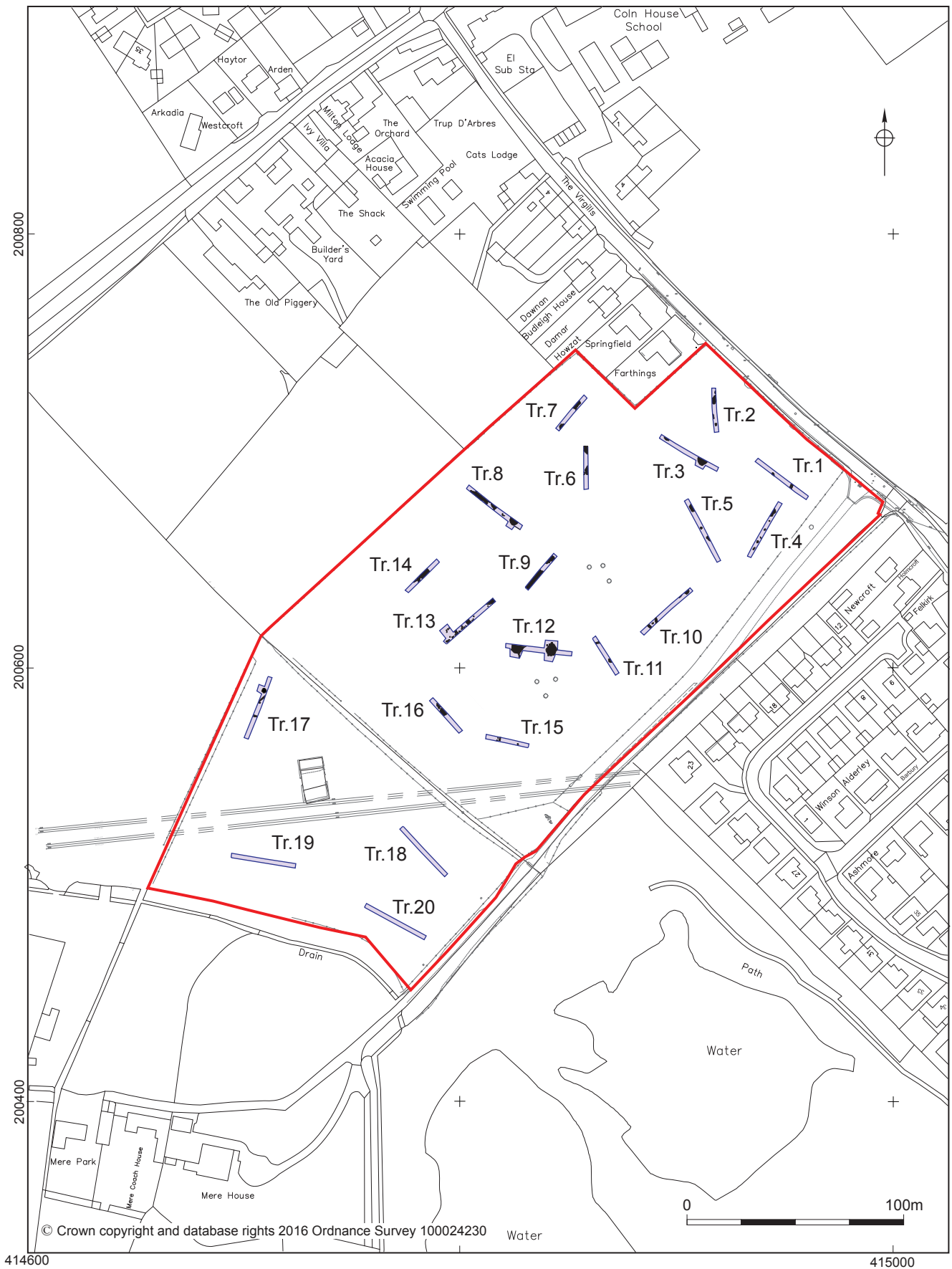
Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



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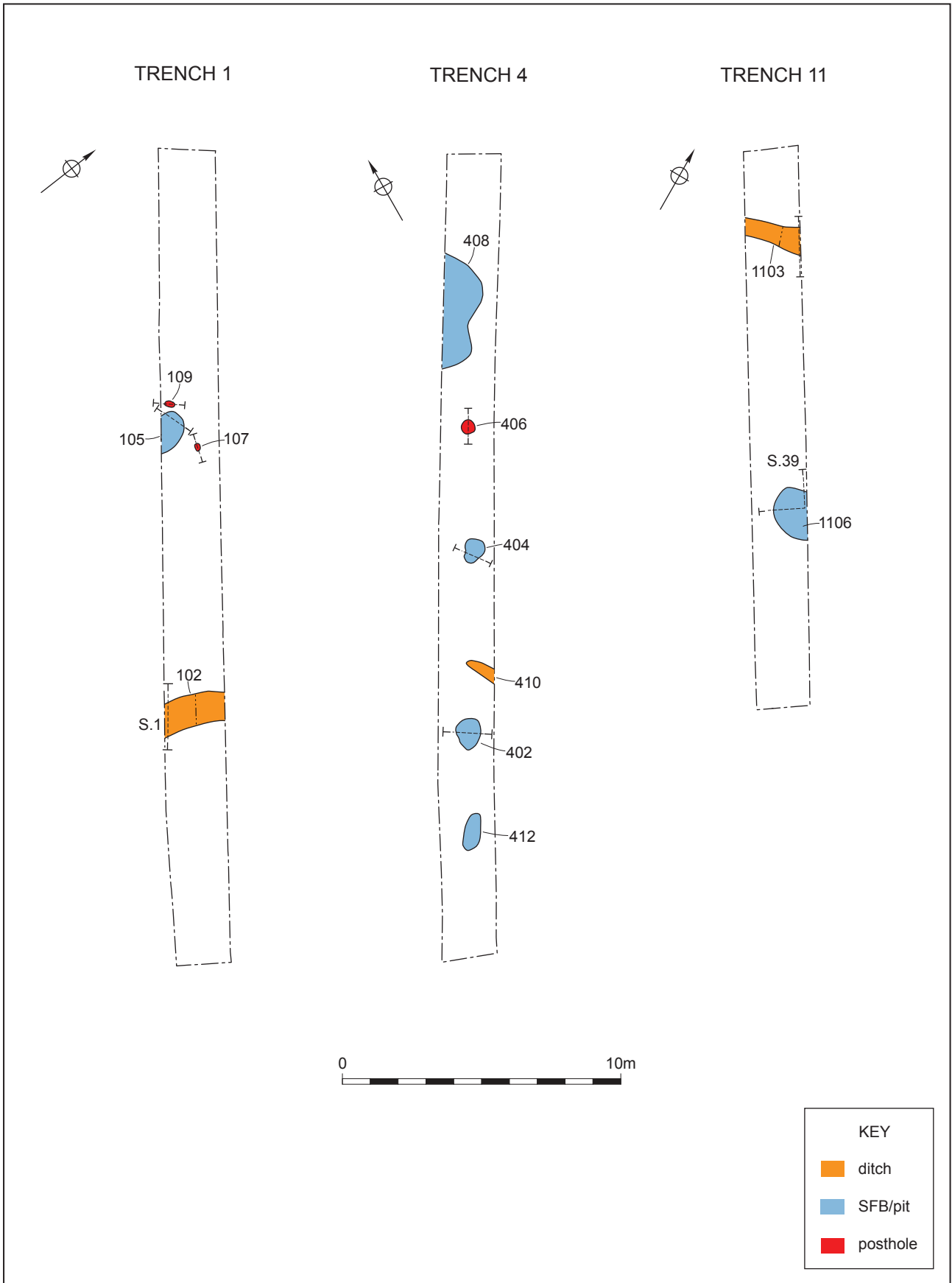
Trench location plan

Figure 2



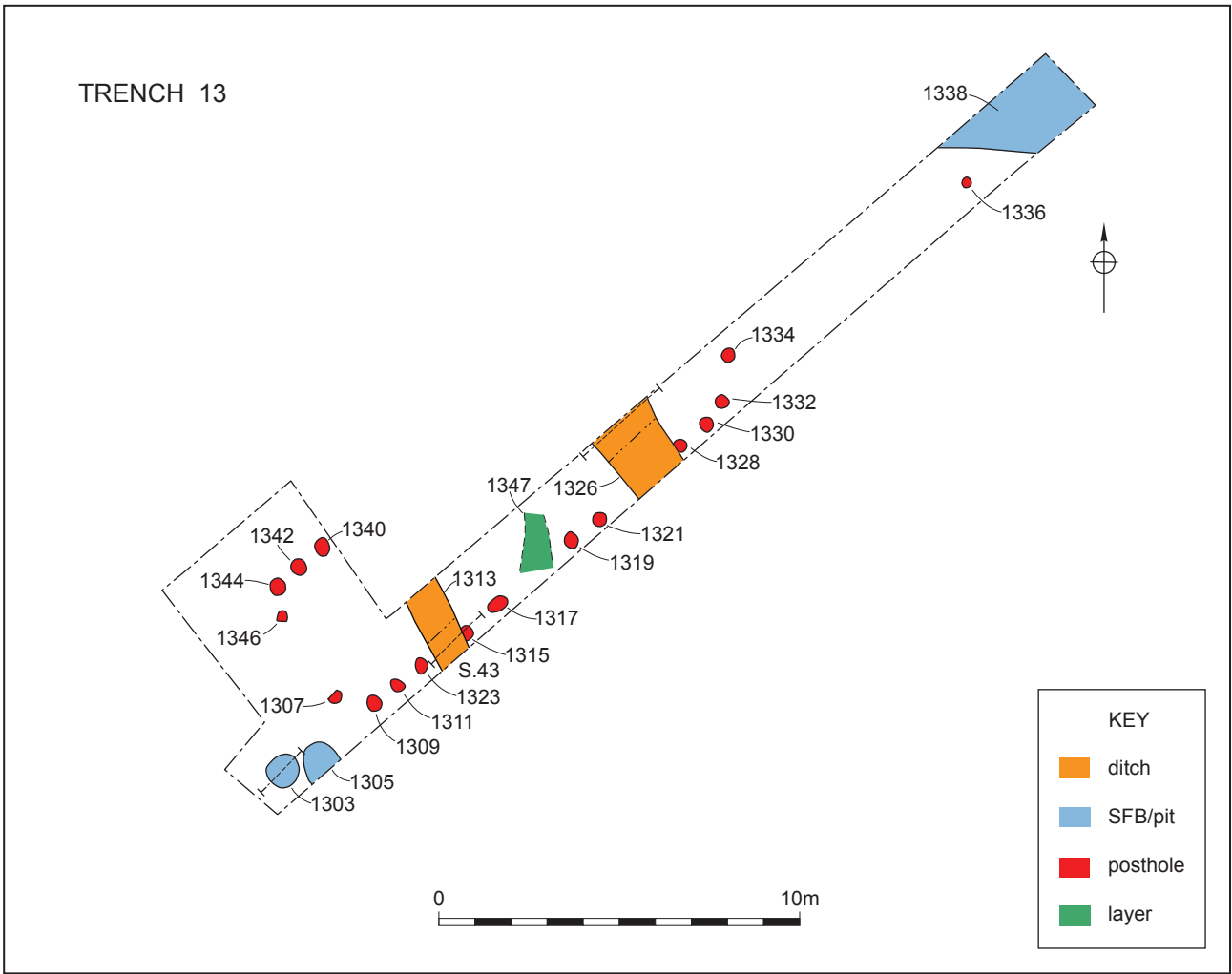
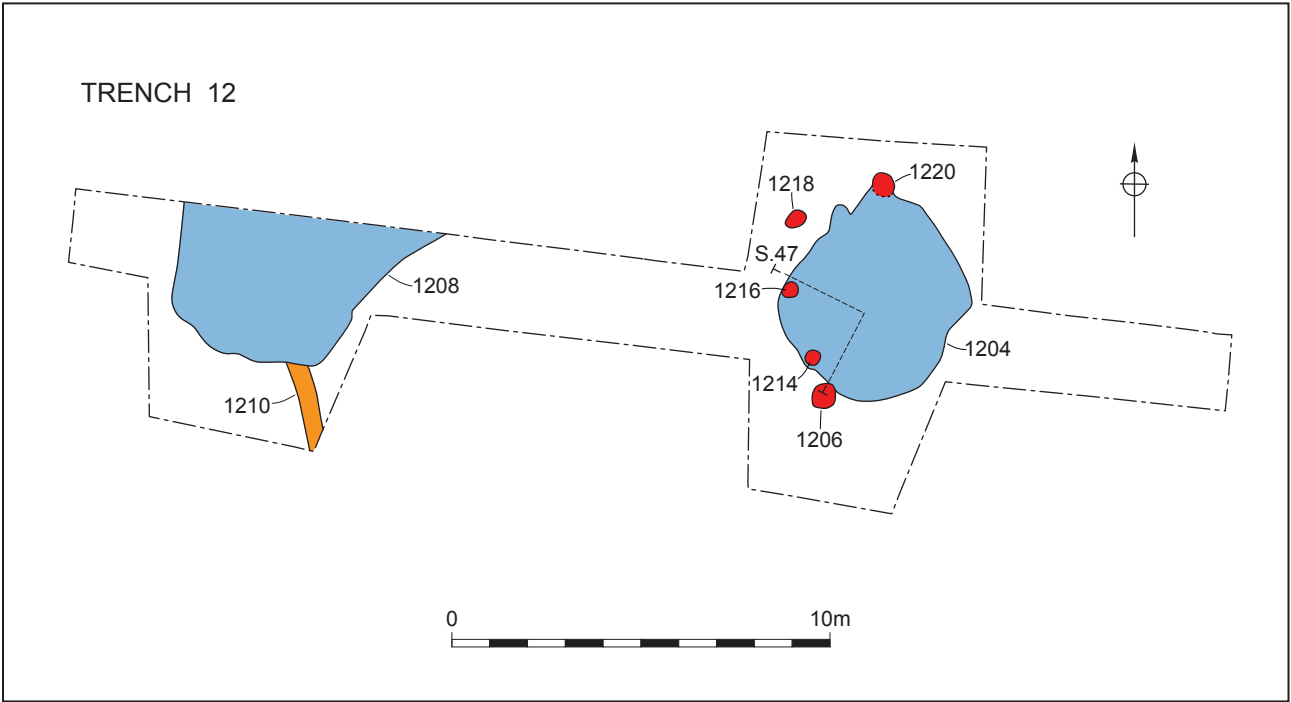
Geophysical survey with trench locations (based upon Stratascan Fig B)

Figure 3



Trenches 1, 4 and 11: plans

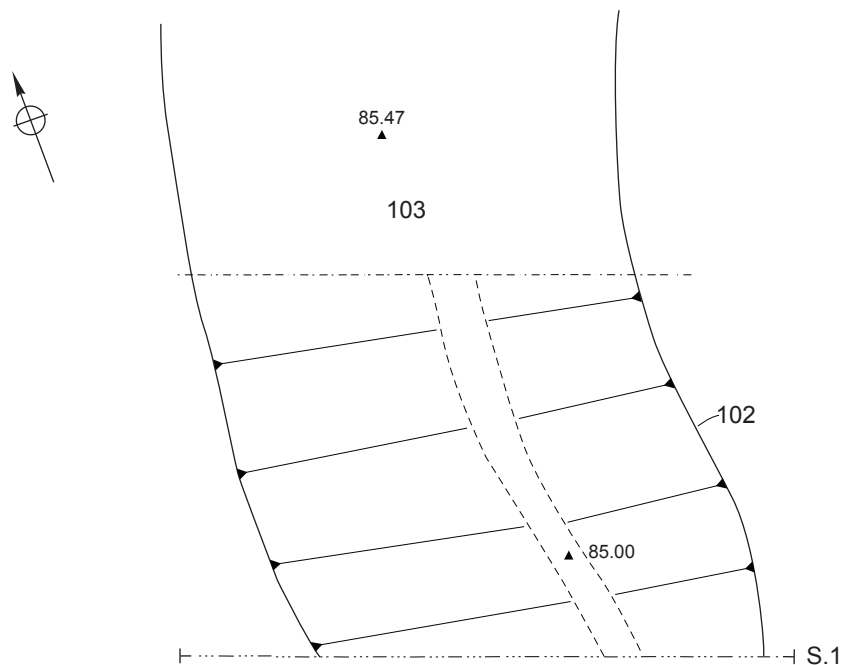
Figure 4



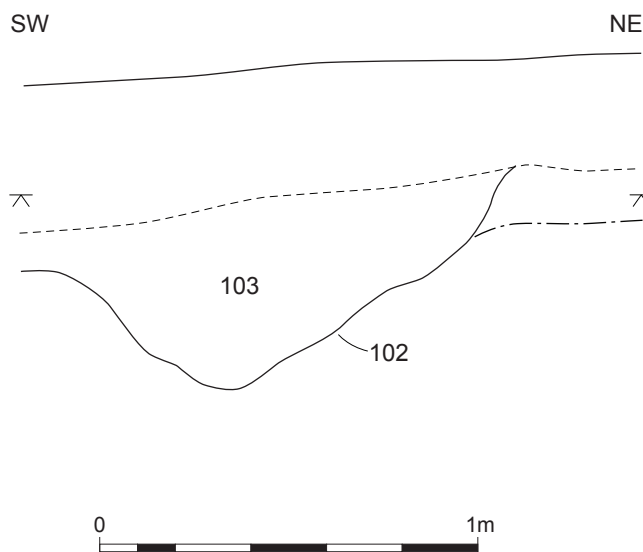
Trenches 12 and 13: plans

Figure 5

PLAN OF RING DITCH 102

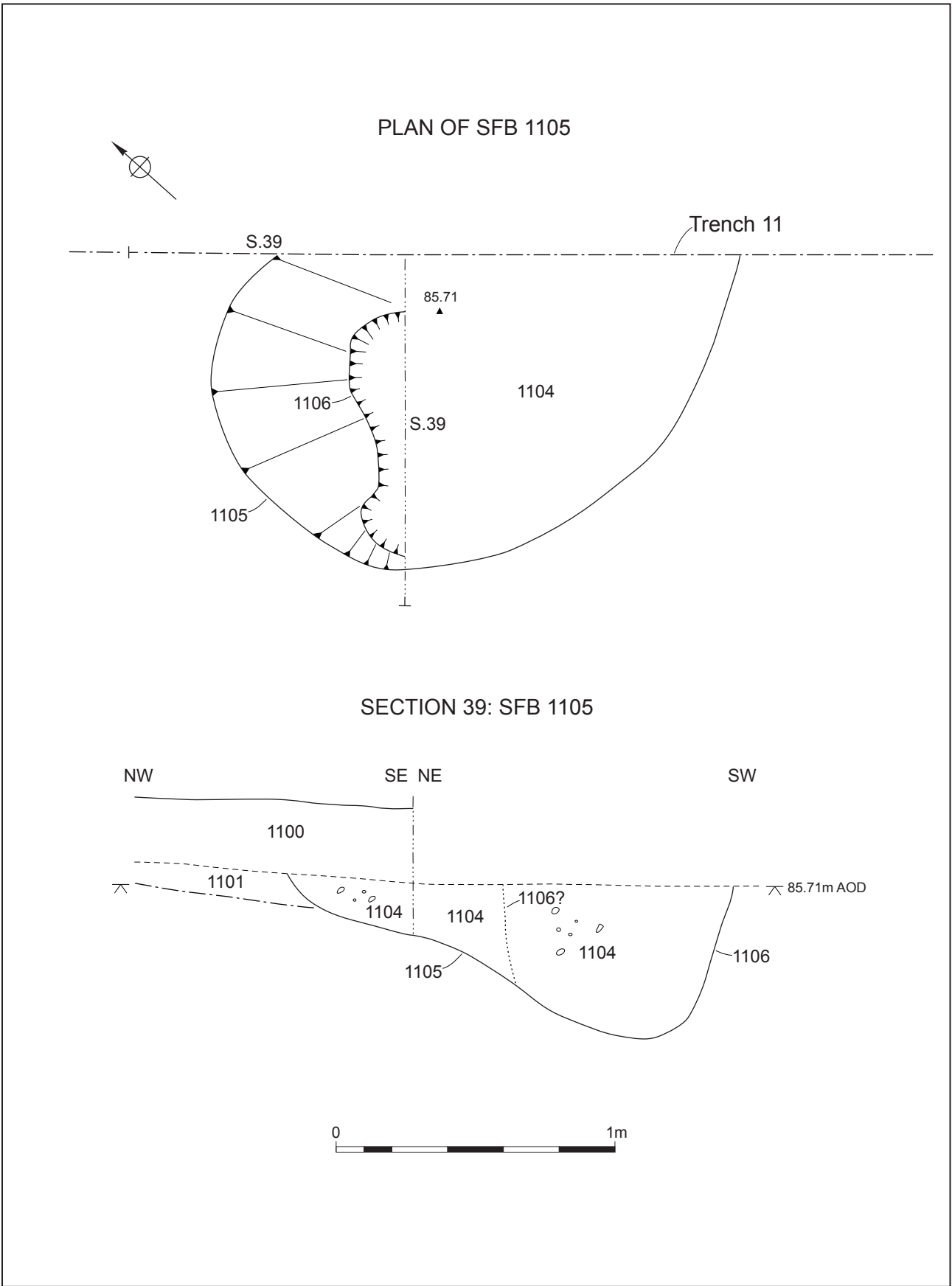


SECTION 1: RING DITCH 102



Plan and section of ring ditch 102

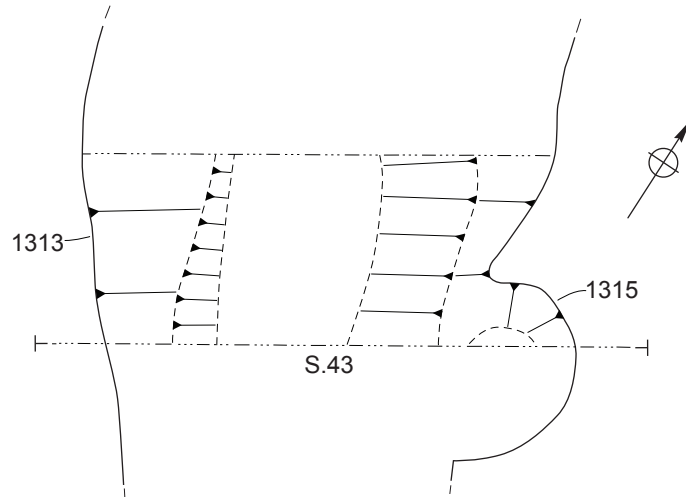
Figure 6



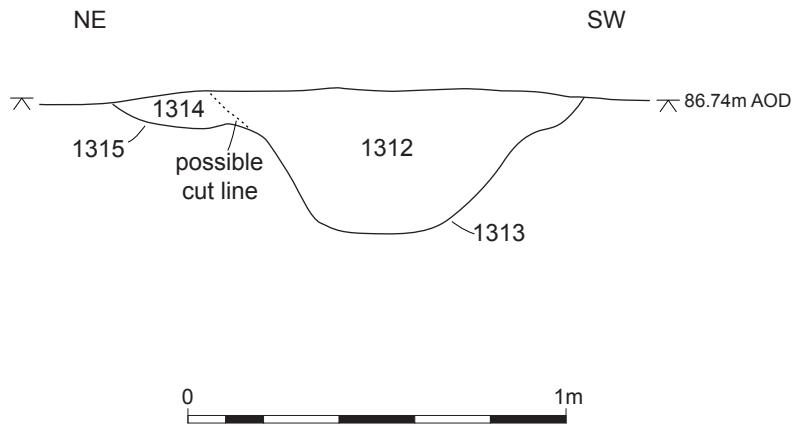
Plan and section of SFB 1105

Figure 7

PLAN OF DITCH 1313 AND POSTHOLE 1315



SECTION 43: DITCH 1313 AND POSTHOLE 1315



Plan and section of ditch 1313 and posthole 1315

Figure 9

Plates



Plate 1: The site before trenching, facing south-west



Plate 2: Trench 4 general view, facing north-north-east, with pits visible along trench



Plate 3: Trench 3 general view, facing north-west, with SFB 303 in middle distance



Plate 4: Ring ditch 102 in Trench 1, facing south-south-west



Plates 5 and 6: Pit 505 in Trench 5 (left) and pit 604 in Trench 6 (right), both thought to be prehistoric in date



Plate 7: Pit 906 in Trench 9, with charcoal deposit



Plate 8: Oblique view of SFB 714 in Trench 7, facing west



Plate 9: SFB 1105 with post setting at edge, Trench 11, facing south-east



Plate 10: Fully exposed SFB 1204 in Trench 12, facing north-east



Plate 11: Slot in SFB 1204, facing north-east



Plate 12: Postholes 1214 and 1216 in SFB 1204, facing west



Plate 13: Pit 1303 in Trench 13, facing south-east



Plate 14: Ditch 1313 and posthole 1315 in Trench 13, facing south-east



Plate 15: South-west entrance of post-built structure Trench 13 – ditch 1313 is visible to the north-east of the 1m scales

Appendix 1 Trench and context inventory

Trench 1

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
100	Topsoil	Layer	Loose dark greyish brown silt	0.25m	
101	Natural	Layer	Loose mid brownish yellow brash with sand/gravel	0.07m+	
102	Curvilinear	Cut		0.65m	Curvilinear ditch identified on geophysics - contained flint, no other finds
103	Curvilinear	Fill	Compact mid reddish-brown gravel clay silt	0.65m	Fill of curvilinear [102] - not a highly cultural fill - charcoal rare but distinct from surrounding naturals
104	Pit	Fill	Compact mid reddish brown clay silt	0.35m	Sterile gravel fill of oval pit [105]
105	Pit	Cut		0.35m	A relatively wide but shallow oval pit of unknown function. Homogenous fill and even sides
106	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt	0.24m	Sterile fill of posthole [107]
107	Posthole	Cut		0.24m	Cut of a relatively small but deep posthole, to the east of pit [105] and with p/h [109] to the west
108	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt	0.07m	Fill of a small, oval posthole [109]
109	Posthole	Cut		0.07m	Cut of a small posthole NW of pit [105]. Similar to p/h [107] nearby.

Trench 2

Length: 20m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north to south

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
200	Topsoil	Layer	Loose dark greyish brown	0.38m	
201	Natural	Layer	Loose mid brownish yellow brash with sand/gravel		
202	Pit	Cut		0.14m	Pit cut. Although edges of these pits are somewhat diffuse, there is a clear cut from [204] into [202]
203	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt	0.14m	Fill truncated by [204], very sterile - no finds or cultural indicators
204	Pit	Cut		0.10m	Pit cut.
205	Pit	Fill	Compact mid reddish brown	0.10m	Very sterile fill of silty clay
206	Unknown	Cut			Cut of discrete feature. Not excavated
207	Unknown	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of discrete feature. Not excavated
208	Pit	Cut			Cut of pit. Unexcavated
209	Pit	Fill			Fill of pit [208]. Same as (207). Unexcavated
210	Building	Cut		0.48m	Sunken building feature. One of many on site. Assumed Saxon, though pottery has characterised others elsewhere on site. Partially excavated. One internal posthole found [215]
211	Building	Fill	Compact mid brownish red silty clay		Red clay deposit observed central to SFB [210] both within and under deposit (212)
212	Building	Fill	Moderately compact mid yellowish blue clay silt	0.22m	Very fine grained deposit - formed during use of SFB>
213	Building	Fill	Moderately compact mid brownish yellow clay silt	0.20m	Could be occupational layer like (212) however has been heavily disturbed by rooting and shares characteristics with deposits both above and below so could represent interface
214	Building	Fill	Mid greyish brown clay silt	0.20m	Appears to be a layer of siltation after

215	Posthole	Cut		0.15m	SFB went out of use Posthole cut into southern side of SFB [210]
216	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact mid yellowish blue clay silt	0.15m	Fill of [215]
217	Building	Fill	Loose mid yellowish orange sand	0.10m	Slumping of soft natural sands and gravels.

Trench 3

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
300	Topsoil	Layer	Loose mid greyish brown silt	0.28m	
301	Natural	Layer	Loose mid brownish yellow limestone brash		
302	Building	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of [303] a probable sunken building. Some pottery and animal bone
303	Building	Cut			Cut of unexcavated SFB at the east end of trench
304	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of pit [305]. Animal bone, flint, pottery and slag
305	Pit	Cut		0.18m	Cut of shallow pit, or possibly the southern end of a SFB on a seemingly similar alignment to [303]. Gradually increases in depth to north

Trench 4

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-east to south-west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
400	Topsoil	Layer		0.34m	
401	Natural	Layer			
402	Pit	Cut		0.12m	Southernmost in series of pits in the trench. Is most similar in size, shape and fill to [404]. Flint retrieved from both of these features
403	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid reddish brown clay silt	0.12m	Mixed deposit with clay and stones, a reflection of surrounding natural
404	Pit	Cut		0.16m	Central pit in alignment- can be assumed to be broadly contemporary with [402] to the south
405	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid reddish brown clay silt	0.16m	Although incorporating elements of naturals, fill seems more clayey and with fewer elements of larger limestone brash which potentially indicate a deliberate backfill
406	Posthole	Cut		0.14m	Profile and plan, with stone packing elements, suggests post pad
407	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	0.14m	Assumed to be packing for placement of a post
408	Building	Cut			Unexcavated potential SFB
409	Building	Fill	Compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of potential SFB. Unexcavated. Pottery found on surface. Fill in common with others observed elsewhere
410	Terminus	Cut			Unexcavated gully terminus
411	Terminus	Fill	Moderately compact mid reddish brown clay silt		Unexcavated fill of terminus [410]
412	Pit	Cut			Possible grave - investigated but produced no bone so possibly truncated badly, if it was a grave
413	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid reddish brown clay silt		Upper fill of [412]

Trench 5

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
500	Topsoil	Layer	Loose mid greyish brown sandy loam	0.28m	
501	Natural	Layer	Mid brownish yellow sand		
502	Pit	Fill	Friable mid brownish red silty sand	0.35m	Main and upper fill of pit [505]. Is very similar in colour and composition to the other prehistoric fills in the field, but no finds
503	Pit	Fill	Loose mid yellowish white sand/gravel	0.18m	Slumping down the side of pit [505]. Very gravelly so likely originates from the natural
504	Pit	Fill	Friable mid brown silty sand	0.12m	Basal fill of pit [505]. No finds
505	Pit	Cut		0.40m	Cut of pit
506	Pit	Fill	Friable mid brownish grey silty sand	0.40m	Single fill of pit [507]. No finds or organic material.
507	Pit	Cut		0.40m	Cut of large pit running under trench section. No finds. The fill resembles that of other prehistoric features on site.
508	Building	Fill	Compact mid brown silt		Fill of SFB?
509	Building	Cut			Cut of possible SFB?

Trench 6

Length: 20m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north to south

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
600	Topsoil	Layer	Loose mid brownish grey silt	0.26m	
601	Subsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid orange brown sandy silt	0.15m	
602	Natural	Layer	Loose mid brownish yellow brash and gravel		
603	Pit	Fill	Soft mid brownish red silty sand	0.28m	Sterile fill of probable oval pit [604] - no finds
604	Pit	Cut		0.28m	Cut of a pit continuing beyond the west side of trench - probably oval in plan. Small, offset base implies pit has been truncated by trench at an odd angle. No dating evidence, fill appears deliberately backfilled
605	Building	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of probable SFB [606]
606	Building	Cut			Cut of probable SFB, east of [604]
607	Building	Fill	Mid reddish brown clay silt		Fill of [608]. Possible SFB
608	Building	Cut			Cut of possible SFB at north end of trench

Trench 7

Length: 20m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-east to south-west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
700	Topsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt	0.20m	
701	Subsoil	Layer	Friable mid yellowish brown silty clay	0.12m	
702	Natural	Layer	Loose limestone brash		
703	Pit	Fill	Mid reddish brown clay silt		Fill of [704]
704	Pit	Cut			Pit cut, unexcavated and undated.
705	Posthole	Fill	Loose dark greyish brown clay silt	0.09m	Fill of posthole [706]
706	Posthole	Cut		0.09m	Cut of shallow posthole, aligned with [708] and [710]
707	Posthole	Fill	Loose dark greyish brown clay silt	0.06m	Fill of posthole [708]
708	Posthole	Cut		0.06m	Cut of very shallow posthole - in alignment with [710] and [706]. Undated by finds but possibly Saxon given surrounding features on site.
709	Posthole	Fill	Loose dark greyish brown clay silt	0.09m	Fill of posthole [710]
710	Posthole	Cut		0.09m	Cut of shallow posthole. One of 3 in a row
711	Posthole	Fill	Compact dark brown clay silt		Fill of [712]
712	Posthole	Cut			Post at edge of [714]
713	Building	Fill	Compact dark brown clay silt		Fill of SFB
714	Building	Cut			Large probable SFB

Trench 8

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
800	Topsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid brownish grey sandy silt	0.20m	
801	Subsoil	Layer	Compact mid red brown sandy silt	0.18m	
802	Natural	Layer	Loose mid brownish yellow limestone brash		
803	Building	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of SFB [804]
804	Building	Cut			Cut of SFB
805	Unknown	Fill	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay		Fill of [806]
806	Unknown	Cut			Cut of irregular feature containing shallow, sterile fill. Natural hollow? Possible tree throw
807	Pit	Fill	Firm mid reddish brown clay silt	0.22m	Sterile fill of probable pit [808].
808	Pit	Cut		0.22m	Cut of a probable oval pit, although full extent not seen as continues beyond side of trench. May be same as [604] in form
809	Building	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of possible SFB
810	Building	Cut			Cut of probable SFB. Rounded end. Continues north, on same alignment as [804]
811	Ditch	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	0.35m	Fill of [812]
812	Ditch	Cut		0.35m	Slightly curvilinear ditch cutting natural, which may be filling natural depression. Ditch relationship with Saxon archaeology remains unclear.
813	Layer	Layer	Moderately compact mid brownish red silty clay	0.30m	Soil filling naturally occurring depression

Trench 9

Length: 20m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-east to south-west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
900	Topsoil	Layer	Dark reddish brown silty sand	0.27m	
901	Subsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid brown silty sand		
902	Natural	Layer	Yellow sand and gravel		Gravels and angular pebbles in a yellow sand matrix
903	Layer	Layer	Moderately compact mid brownish red sandy clay		Soil in natural depression. Unsure of origin but has [906] cut into it
904	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact black charcoal	0.05m	Upper fill of pit [906]. Almost entirely charcoal with a few small pieces of bone
905	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown silty sand	0.14m	Fill of pit [906]. No finds. Is possibly slumping down the NW side of the pit as has no charcoal inclusions
906	Pit	Cut		0.14m	Cut of pit (100% sampled – fill contained charcoal and bone). Cut into soil (903)
907	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid brownish orange sandy clay	0.13m	Fill of pit [906]. Some charcoal flecks indicate that it contains some of the material from (904) above
908		Fill	Moderately compact mid reddish brown sandy clay		Soil in possible natural depression
909		Cut			Possible natural depression

Trench 10

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-east to south-west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
1000	Topsoil	Layer	Loose mid greyish brown silt	0.30m	
1001	Subsoil	Layer	Compact mid reddish brown clay silt	0.18m	
1002	Natural	Layer	Loose mid brownish yellow limestone brash		
1003	Ditch	Fill	Loose dark greyish brown sandy silt		Fill of [1004]
1004	Ditch	Cut			Linear ditch cut, irregular base, wide u-shaped profile
1005	Pit	Fill	Firm mid greyish brown clay silt	0.17m	Sterile fill of a small pit of unknown date and function. Fill appears to be topsoil material
1006	Pit	Cut		0.17m	Cut of a small, shallow, irregular pit between ditches [1004] and [1008]. Irregular sides to SW may be due to rooting
1007	Ditch	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown silty clay		Fill of [1008]. Pot and glass in the fill, post-med date
1008	Ditch	Cut			Linear ditch cut
1009	Natural	Fill	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay		Fill of [1010]. Irregular natural depression
1010	Natural	Cut			Irregular natural
1011	Natural	Fill	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay		Irregular natural depression
1012	Natural	Cut			Irregular natural depression

Trench 11

Length: 20m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
1100	Topsoil	Layer	Loose dark brownish grey loamy sand	0.27m	
1101	Natural	Layer	Mid yellow sand and gravel		Gravels and angular pebbles in a mid yellow sandy matrix
1102	Ditch	Fill	Moderately compact mid orangey brown silty sand	0.25m	Single fill of ditch [1103]. Very unremarkable fill, no finds or organic material. Mixed stones and gravel
1103	Ditch	Cut		0.25m	Cut of ditch. No finds
1104	Building	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	0.54m	Fill of SFB with post-setting at SW end. Very humic fill, quite organic. Contained finds suggesting a Saxon date
1105	Building	Cut		0.54m	Cut of possible SFB - classic shape with post setting [1106] at end. Dated as Saxon
1106	Posthole	Cut		0.54m	Post setting at SW end of SFB [1105]. No change in fill visible but given separate number for cut to denote change in profile of [1105]. Probably contemporary with [1105] construction.

Trench 12

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: east to west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
1200	Topsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid brownish grey silt	0.25m	
1201	Subsoil	Layer	Compact mid greyish brown clay silt	0.14m	
1202	Natural	Layer	Loose mid brownish yellow limestone brash		
1203	Building	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt	0.34m	Fill of SFB [1204]. Fill contains Saxon pottery and animal bone and is likely to have come from the immediate surrounding area
1204	Building	Cut		0.66m	Sunken building feature - one of many on site and easternmost of the two found in this trench. Dated to Saxon period through pottery finds in fills (1211) (1203). One of the largest structures found on site
1205	Posthole	Fill	Mid yellowish brown sandy silt		Fill of p/h [1206]
1206	Posthole	Cut			Cut of oval posthole on west side of [1204]. May cut [1204] but unexcavated.
1207	Building	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of SFB [1208]
1208	Building	Cut			Cut of SFB at west end of trench
1209	Gully	Fill	Firm mid brownish red clay		Fill of gully [1210]. Unexc
1210	Gully	Cut			Cut of gully aligned NE-SW
1211	Building	Fill	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown clay silt	0.62m	Fill likely created post abandonment of SFB. Fill contains a high percentage of naturals and fractured brash suggesting upcast from post removal and side collapse.
1212	Building	Fill	Moderately compact dark blackish grey clay silt	0.32m	Basal fill of SFB. Fine grained and highly charcoal-rich.
1213	Building	Fill	Loose mid yellowish brown clay silt		Fill created by removal of post, whilst leaving the stone packing around it. Sandy gravel fill likely caused by collapse of

				posthole surrounds.
1214	Posthole	Cut		0.30m Deep posthole in southern interior of SFB [1204]. Diameter and depth suggest it was structural and likely to have been cut as the building was being dug out itself
1215	Posthole	Fill	Compact greyish green clay	Fill of assumed posthole on western interior of SFB [1204]. Clay fill must have been deliberate as no clay of this colour observed anywhere onsite
1216	Posthole	Cut		0.20m Cut of posthole on western interior of SFB [1204]
1217	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt	Post outside SFB fill of [1218]
1218	Posthole	Cut		Post outside SFB
1219	Posthole	Fill	Mid yellowish brown sandy silt	Fill of possible posthole [1220] N end of SFB
1220	Posthole	Cut		Cut of possible posthole N end of SFB

Trench 13

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-east to south-west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
1300	Topsoil	Layer	Loose mid brownish grey silt	0.22m	
1301	Natural	Layer	Loose mid brownish yellow limestone brash		
1302	Pit	Fill	Firm mid reddish brown clay silt	0.29m	Fill of pit [1303] containing a small quantity of bone and pottery sherds. Fill relatively homogenous
1303	Pit	Cut		0.29m	Cut of a medium sized circular pit to the SW of p/h structure. Unlikely to have been open for a considerable length of time
1304	Pit	Fill	Firm mid reddish brown clay silt		Fill of pit [1305]
1305	Pit	Cut			Cut of pit east of [1303], unexc
1306	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of p/h [1307]
1307	Posthole	Cut			Cut of northernmost posthole in structure
1308	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of 1309
1309	Posthole	Cut			Cut of p/h between [1307] and [1311]
1310	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of posthole [1311]
1311	Posthole	Cut			Cut of posthole between [1309] and [1323]
1312	Ditch	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	0.48m	Fill appears to be the result of a deliberate backfilling event
1313	Ditch	Cut		0.48m	Ditch that may cut posthole [1315]. Provisionally dated late Saxon by pottery inclusions. Profile suggests boundary ditch
1314	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	0.10m	Fill of posthole - part of an alignment of postholes aligned NE-SW. Fill likely occurred as surrounding deposits fell in on removal of the post, followed by natural siltation.

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1315	Posthole	Cut		0.10m	One in an alignment of postholes running NE-SW
1316	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of posthole [1317].
1317	Posthole	Cut			Cut of posthole between [1315] and [1319]
1318	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of p/h [1319]
1319	Posthole	Cut			Cut of posthole between [1317] and [1321]
1320	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of posthole [1321]
1321	Posthole	Cut			Cut of posthole between p/h's [1319] and [1326]
1322	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of p/h [1323]
1323	Posthole	Cut			Cut of p/h between [1311] and [1313]
1324	Ditch	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	0.36m	Fill of boundary ditch after it had silted up and gone out of use.
1325	Ditch	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	0.30m	Natural siltation of ditch as it was open
1326	Ditch	Cut		0.62m	Boundary ditch, also seen in Trench 14. No secure dating evidence found within
1327	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of p/h [1328]
1328	Posthole	Cut			Cut of p/h on eastern edge of ditch [1326]
1329	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of p/h [1330]
1330	Posthole	Cut			Cut of posthole between p/h's [1328] and [1332]
1331	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of p/h [1332]
1332	Posthole	Cut			Cut of p/h between p/hs [1330] and [1334]
1333	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of p/h [1334]
1334	Posthole	Cut			Cut of p/h at NE end of structure beyond [1332]
1335	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt		Fill of p/h [1336]
1336	Posthole	Cut			Cut of p/h at NE end of trench

1337	Building	Fill	Mid brown clay silt	Fill of SFB [1338]
1338	Building	Cut		Cut of SFB at NE end of trench.
1339	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	Fill of p/h [1340]
1340	Posthole	Cut		Cut of p/h to NE of p/h [1342]
1341	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	Fill of p/h [1342]
1342	Posthole	Cut		Cut of p/h between [1340] and [1344]
1343	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	Fill of p/h [1344]
1344	Posthole	Cut		Cut of p/h between [1342] and [1346]
1345	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	Fill of p/h [1346]
1346	Posthole	Cut		Cut of p/h S of [1344] at side of entrance
1347	Layer	Layer	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt	Irregular layer/spread of material in entrance to P/H structure

Trench 14

Length: 20m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-east to south-west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
1400	Topsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid brownish grey silt	0.20m	
1401	Subsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid orangey brown clay silt	0.08m	
1402	Natural	Layer	Loose mid brownish yellow limestone brash		
1403	Building	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of SFB [1404]. Some Saxon pot
1404	Building	Cut			Cut of probable SFB, cut by ditch [1406] and with unclear relationship to ditch [1408] - unexcavated
1405	Ditch	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown sandy silt		Fill of ditch [1406]
1406	Ditch	Cut			Cut of ditch running through SFB [1404] same as [1326]. Orientated SE-NW, unexcavated
1407	Curvilinear	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish Brown clay silt		Fill of curvilinear [1408]
1408	Curvilinear	Cut			Cut of curvilinear ditch
1409	Ditch	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of ditch [1410]
1410	Ditch	Cut			Cut of ditch intercutting [1408]. Oriented N-S. unexcavated, same as [1313]

Trench 15

Length: 20m

Width: 2m

Orientation: east to west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
1500	Topsoil	Layer	Loose mid brownish grey silt	0.20m	
1501	Natural	Layer	Loose mid orangey yellow limestone brash		
1502	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of pit [1503] - unexcavated
1503	Pit	Cut			Cut of pit west of ditch [1507] - continues into section so full extent unknown but appears circular
1504	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of p/h [1505]
1505	Posthole	Cut			Cut of p/h or stakehole west of ditch [1507], circular in plan - unexcavated
1506	Ditch	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of ditch [1507]
1507	Ditch	Cut			Cut of ditch corresponding to geophys, oriented N-S - unexcavated
1508	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of p/h [1509]
1509	Posthole	Cut			Cut of oval p/h at east end of trench - unexcavated

Trench 16

Length: 20m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
1600	Topsoil	Layer	Loose mid brownish grey Silt	0.21m	
1601	Subsidence	Layer	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt	0.09m	
1602	Natural	Layer	Loose mid brownish yellow limestone brash		
1603	Building	Fill	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clay silt		Fill of possible SFB [1604]
1604	Building	Cut			Cut of possible SFB, corresponding to geophys anomaly. Middle of structure seen, both ends beyond trench
1605	Layer	Layer	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay		Natural pocket of soil in depression

Trench 17

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north to south

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
1700	Topsoil	Layer	Loose mid brownish grey silt	0.30m	
1701	Subsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid reddish brown clay silt	0.16m	
1702	Natural	Layer	Loose mid brownish yellow limestone brash		
1703	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid reddish brown sandy silt		Fill of pit [1704]
1704	Pit	Cut			Cut of slightly irregular circular pit.
1705	Linear	Fill	Moderately compact mid reddish brown sandy silt		Fill of linear [1706]
1706	Linear	Cut			Cut of narrow linear with broadly parallel sides, widening to east, E-W
1707	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid reddish brown sandy silt		Fill of small pit/posthole [1708]
1708	Pit	Cut			Cut of possible p/h or small round pit
1709	Ditch	Fill	Moderately compact mid brownish red clay silt		Fill of ditch [1710]
1710	Ditch	Cut			Cut of linear with slightly uneven sides, diffuse edges, oriented NW-SE

Trench 18

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
1800	Topsoil	Layer	Loose mid greyish brown silt	0.22m	
1801	Subsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown clay silt	0.20m	
1802	Natural	Layer	Loose mid reddish yellow sand		
1803	Unknown	Fill	Firm mid brownish grey silty clay		Patch of dark soil in [1804]
1804	Unknown	Cut			Cut of possible feature at SE end of trench – appears modern
1805	Drain	Fill			Gravel fill of [1806]
1806	Drain	Cut			Land drain

Trench 19

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: east to west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
1900	Topsoil	Layer	Loose mid greyish brown silty clay	0.25m	
1901	Subsoil	Layer	Moderately compact light yellowish brown clayey sand	0.25m	
1902	Natural	Layer	Mid yellow sand and gravel	0.05m+	Gravels and angular pebbles in a sand matrix

Trench 20

Length: 30m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
2000	Topsoil	Layer	Loose mid greyish brown silty sand	0.10m	
2001	Subsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid brown clayey sand	0.35m	
2002	Natural	Layer	Mid yellow sand and gravel		
2003	Modern Layer	Layer			Area of modern disturbance inc. rebar
2004	Subsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid greyish yellow clayey sand	0.14m	Lower subsoil layer

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

70	Context records AS1
3	Field progress reports AS2
4	Photographic records AS3
283	Digital photographs
1	Drawing number catalogues AS4
48	Scale drawings
1	Context number catalogues AS5
1	Sample number catalogues AS18
20	Trench record sheets AS41
1	Box of finds
1	Box of flots and sorted remains
1	CD-Rom/DVDs
1	Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

The Wilson
Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum
Clarence Street
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 3JT
