

Archaeological evaluation of land off Welford Road, Long Marston, Warwickshire



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Archaeological Evaluation at Land off Welford Road, Long Marston, Warwickshire

Tim Cornah

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Land off Welford Road, Long Marston, Warwickshire (NGR SP 15463 48946). It was undertaken on behalf Lagan Homes, who intend the erection of up to 20 dwellings, together with access road, attenuation pond and other associated works as well as a change of use from agricultural to playing fields and community orchard for which a planning application has been approved subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

The site comprises a former orchard and part of an arable field located to the immediate north of the village of Long Marston. Eight trenches were excavated across the site in order to gain a representative sample. No features of archaeological significance were recorded.

It is likely that the site was part of Long Marstons' agricultural hinterland in the medieval period, as suggested by the presence of a single furrow of likely medieval date. Its later use as an orchard was evident by the presence of rooting.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Land off Welford Road, Long Marston, Warwickshire (NGR SP 15463 48946). It was commissioned by Lagan Homes, who intends the erection of up to 20 dwellings, together with access road, attenuation pond and other associated works as well as a change of use from agricultural to playing fields and community orchard for which a planning application was approved by Stratford-on-Avon District Council (reference 14/00251/OUT). Permission was granted subject to conditions including condition 20 which specifies the requirement of a programme of archaeological works to allow archaeological evaluation of the site.

A detailed Written Scheme of Investigation was produced for the project (WA 2016) and approved by Stratford on Avon District Council to which the project conforms. The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a).

2 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were;

- to describe any heritage asset with archaeological interest;
- to assess the nature, importance and extent of any heritage asset;
- to assess the impact of the application on any heritage asset.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Timothy Cornah (BA (hons.), MSc); who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2006 and has been practicing archaeology since 2003, assisted by Elspeth Iliff (BA (hons.); MSc). The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA (hons.); MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA).

3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER).

3.3 List of sources consulted

Cartographic sources

- 1884 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1903 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1924 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560

Documentary sources

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2016).

Fieldwork was undertaken between the 30th and 31st of January 2017.

Eight trenches, amounting to just over 630m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 16.9ha, representing a sample of about 4%. It is understood that development of the site will not require groundworks to the playing field area (including the laying of any temporary access roads or works compounds during the construction phase) other than rotovation of the topsoil and this area was

has excluded from the 4% sample. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 1. The trenches were located so as to obtain as representative sample of the site as possible. Some small variations from the intended trench layouts were necessary to avoid below ground services and on-site obstacles.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under 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 (WA 2012). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.5 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.

3.6 Artefact methodology

No pre-modern artefacts were present on the site and no artefacts were retained for analysis.

3.7 Environmental archaeology methodology

No deposits suitable for environmental analysis were identified.

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 archaeological context

The topography of the site is broadly flat and at a height of about 42m AOD. The geology is Blue Lias and Charmouth Mudstone formations with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS 2017).

The site is a former orchard on the northern side of the village of Long Marston which is at the western edge of Warwickshire about 5 miles south-west of Stratford on Avon. The village is linear in form and known to have been established by the time of Domesday (MWA6450). The medieval Church of St James (DWA2064) is located its southern end. There are 22 listed buildings and monuments within 1km of the site, all to the south of the site.

Two archaeological events are recorded as having been undertaken within 1km of the site. An archaeological watching brief (EWA10093) was undertaken at Orchard Cottage, Dorsington Road, Long Marston but no archaeological features were recorded.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Wyre Lane, Long Marston (EWA6704), about 350m to the south of the site, comprising a walkover survey, magnetometer survey and trial trenching. Possible agricultural features comprising a group of shallow gullies and pits of uncertain date (MWA8713) were recorded.

A human burial (MWA2790) was found during dredging works on the Noleham Brook approximately 600m WSW of the site. The date of the burial is unknown.

Ridge and furrow recognised from aerial photography is recorded in Dorsington Parish (MWA3894) 800m to the west of the site. RAF Long Marston (MWA8029), a Second World War airfield is situated 1km north east of Long Marston.

Ordnance Survey maps of 1884, 1903 and 1924 depict the field closest to the road as an orchard and that to its east being an open field crossed by a footpath, illustrated as a track. Two further tracks were shown crossing this field in 1903, though one of these was removed by 1924.

4.2 Current land-use

The field closest to the road had been used up until recently as an orchard, though the trees had been removed and was in use as horse grazing. The adjacent field to the east was in arable agricultural use.

5 Results

5.1 Structural analysis

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

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

Natural deposits (101, 201, 301, 401, 501, 601, 701, 801) consisted of compact yellow clays and were present in all of the trenches. These were located at a depth of between 0.19 and 0.35m below the ground surface.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits

Within Trench 8, a single feature running broadly north to south was present with shallow sides and a depth no greater than c0.10m. This was interpreted as a remnant of a furrow and likely to be medieval in date. It was located immediately below the modern topsoil deposits.

No subsoil deposits were present in any of the trenches.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits

Topsoil deposits were present in all trenches (100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800) and consisted of a mid-brownish grey silty clay.

Ceramic land drains were present in all trenches, along with two areas of modern rubble in trenches 1 and 4 which were part of a track running across the field. Numerous areas of rooting were also present within trenches 1 to 5, consistent with the fields recent use as an orchard.

6 Synthesis

Whilst the historic record environment data highlights the presence of a medieval settlement within Long Marston to the south of the site, it's is clear from the trenching that it did extend up to this point.

The absence of archaeological features within the site suggests that the site lay outside the Medieval settlement of Long Marston.

The only features identified were related to agricultural production in the form of a furrow and rooting from an orchard, and these are of limited archaeological significance. The absence of subsoil deposits within any of these trenches would also suggest that they have been extensively ploughed.

7 Significance and impact of the development

No archaeologically significant features or deposits were present. The archaeological impact of the development is therefore likely to be minimal.

8 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.

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It is likely that the site was part of Long Marstons' agricultural hinterland in the medieval period, as suggested by the presence of a single furrow of likely medieval date. Its later use as an orchard was evident by the presence of rooting.

9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, the site owner Anthony Hodges, Stuart Pearson of Lagan Homes and Jay Singh of Stratford upon Avon District Council.

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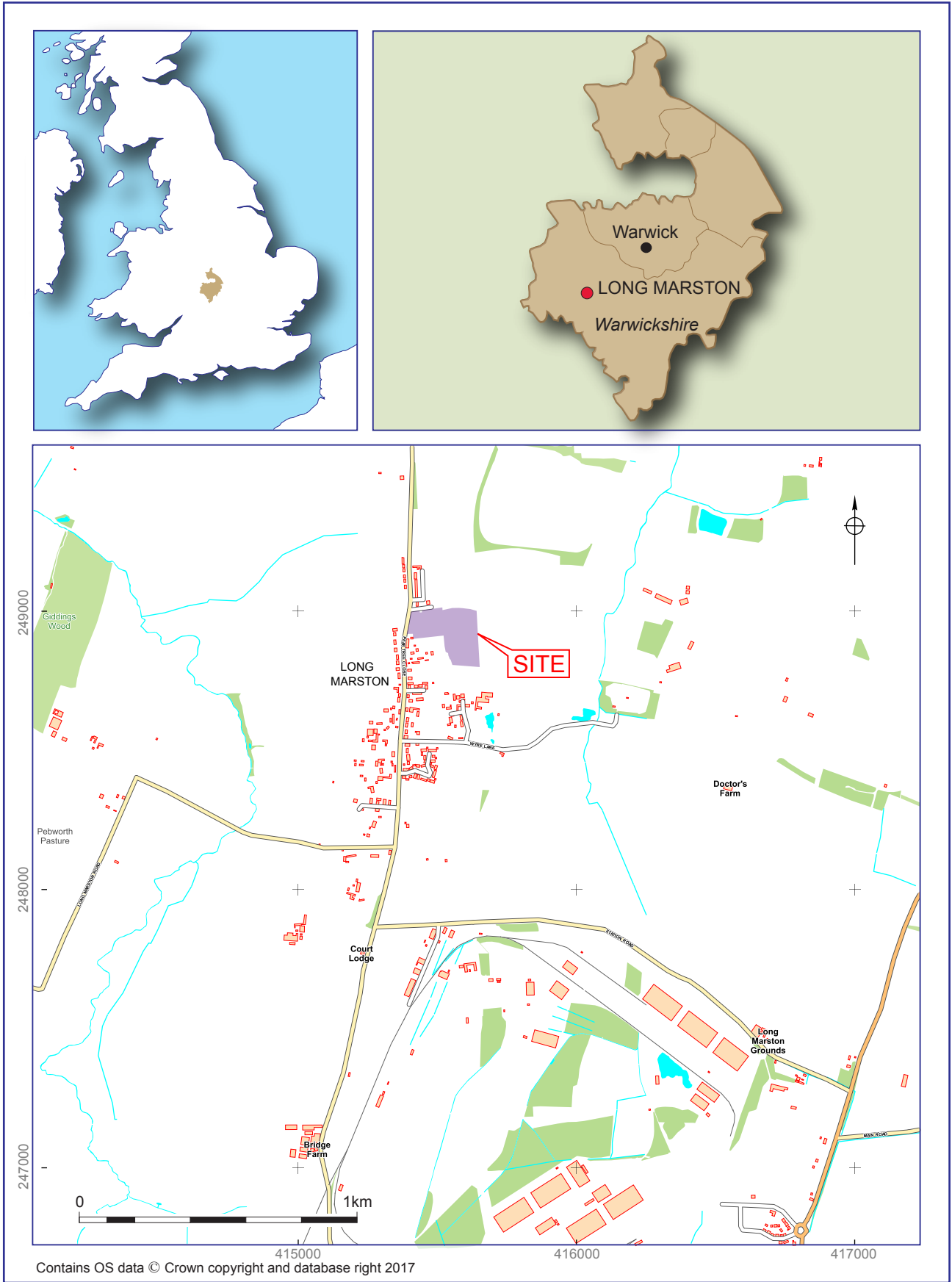
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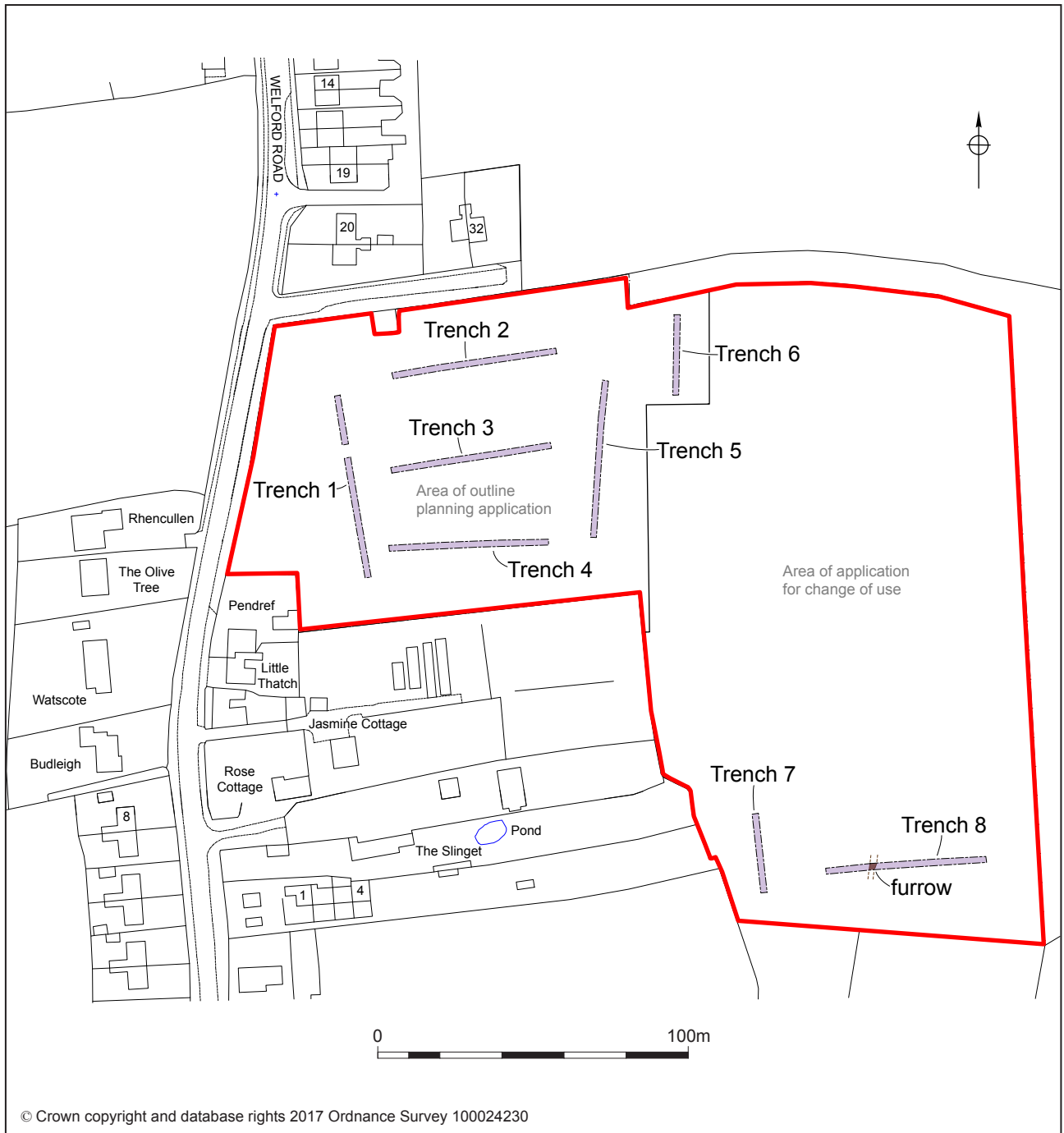
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan (based upon Stansgate Dwg No 6720-104)

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 Trench 1, looking north



Plate 2 Trench 3, looking east



Plate 3 Trench 5, looking south



Plate 4 Trench 6, looking north



Plate 5 Trench 8, looking east

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 55m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.35m

Orientation: N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt with frequent rooting and rare small rounded stones	0-0.18m
100	Natural	Compact and cohesive yellow clay with some blue grey banding	0.18->0.32m
102	Surface	Compact limestone and rubble track surface	0-0.20m

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.35m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt with frequent rooting and rare small rounded stones	0-0.25m
201	Natural	Compact and cohesive yellow clay with some blue grey banding	0.25->0.35m

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.35m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
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Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt with frequent rooting and rare small rounded stones	0-0.25m
301	Natural	Compact and cohesive yellow clay with some blue grey banding	0.25->0.35m

Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.26m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt with frequent rooting and rare small rounded stones	0-0.19m
401	Natural	Compact and cohesive yellow clay with some blue grey banding	0.18->0.26m
402	Surface	Compact limestone and rubble track surface	0-0.20m

Trench 5

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.32m

Orientation: N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
500	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt with frequent rooting and rare small rounded stones	0-0.18m
501	Natural	Compact and cohesive yellow clay with some blue grey banding	0.18->0.32m

Trench 6

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.45m

Orientation: N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
600	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt with frequent rooting and rare small rounded stones	0-0.34m
601	Natural	Compact and cohesive yellow clay with some blue grey banding	0.34->0.45m

Trench 7

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.45m

Orientation: N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
700	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt with frequent rooting and rare small rounded stones	0-0.30m
701	Natural	Compact and cohesive yellow clay with some blue grey banding	0.30->0.45m

Trench 8

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.45m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
800	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt with frequent rooting and rare small rounded stones	0-0.35m
801	Natural	Compact and cohesive yellow clay with some blue grey banding	0.35->0.45m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress report AS2
- 1 Photographic record AS3
- 43 Digital photographs
- 8 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 CD-Rom/DVD
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Market Hall Museum

Market Place

Warwick

CV34 4SA

Tel: 01926 412 132 or 01926 412 500
