Archaeological evaluation of land off Lutterworth Road, Gilmorton, Leicestershire

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Richard Bradley

With contributions by Laura Griffin, Robert Hedge and Elizabeth Pearson

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land to the west of Lutterworth Road, south of Gilmorton, Leicestershire (NGR SP 57048 87508). It was commissioned by Wardell Armstrong on behalf of their client, Sheiling Homes Limited, who has sought outline planning permission from Harborough District Council for the construction of a new residential development.

Seventeen trial trenches (each 30m in length) were opened over two fields. These were arranged in both gridded and non-gridded array in order to interrogate and characterise geophysical anomalies and to test the quality of capture from the survey in blank areas.

Archaeological remains of varying significance were identified across a wide area. Where geophysical anomalies had been highlighted there was a good correlation with features. However, a number of trenches also demonstrated an archaeological component to the site well beyond that shown on the geophysical survey, particularly in the southern of the two fields.

There were at least three phases of activity identified from the artefactual assemblage: prehistoric, Roman and post-medieval. This could be characterised as small-scale prehistoric land use, a localised focus of Roman activity in close proximity to a rural settlement in the northern third of the site, and the remains of a medieval and post-medieval agricultural landscape. Other features included a number of small gullies and ditches that were widespread, but remain undated and poorly understood both in relation to one another and the sequence of activity on the site.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken between on land to the west of Lutterworth Road, Gilmorton, Leicestershire (NGR SP 57048 87508; Figure 1). This comprised the excavation of seventeen trial trenches across two fields. It was commissioned by Wardell Armstrong on behalf of their client, Sheiling Homes Limited, who has sought outline planning permission from Harborough District Council for the construction of a new residential development with associated access routes, landscaping and infrastructure (Planning Reference: 17/00701/OUT).

A heritage statement (including desk-based assessment of the site) and a geophysical survey were undertaken prior to the evaluation trenching (Wardell Armstrong 2017a and 2017b). The desk-based assessment detailed numerous heritage assets in the wider area but that only ridge and furrow was previously known within the northern part of the site itself. The geophysical survey identified this ridge and furrow cultivation orientated broadly east to west across the site, as well as a number of anomalies thought to represent infilled pits and ditches (particularly in the northern field in the site).

It was therefore considered that the proposed development had the potential to affect the survival of below ground archaeological remains. As a result, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) required a programme of archaeological evaluation to determine the potential significance of the archaeological resource.

No specific brief was provided but a trench plan and Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlining the methodology for the evaluation was prepared by Wardell Armstrong (Wardell Armstrong 2017c) in consultation with Richard Clark, Principal Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council (acting on behalf of Harborough District Council). Following this, a project proposal was produced by Worcestershire Archaeology (Worcestershire Archaeology 2017).

The evaluation was carried out following the trench arrangement and in line with industry guidelines and standards set out in *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a).

2 Aims

The archaeological evaluation aimed, in general terms, to investigate the archaeological potential of the site and, where present, to characterise and date it. This was broken down into a series of aims set out in the WSI (Wardell Armstrong 2017c) as the following:

- to determine the presence or absence of buried or upstanding archaeological remains within the proposed development site;
- to determine the character, date, extent and distribution of any archaeological deposits revealed as well as their potential significance;
- to determine levels of disturbance to any archaeological deposits from plough damage or from any other agricultural/industrial practices or later building activities;
- to determine the likely impact on any archaeological deposits present from the proposed development;
- to disseminate the results of the fieldwork through an appropriate level of recording.

The project also had the specific aim of investigating, dating and characterising the anomalies recorded during the previous geophysical survey.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Richard Bradley (BA (hons.), MA; ACIfA), who has been practicing archaeology since 2005, assisted by Emma Chubb (BA (hons.); MA), Elspeth Iliff (BA (hons.); MSc) and Jamie Wilkins (BA (hons.)). The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan (BA (hons.); MA; ACIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA). Elizabeth Pearson (MSc; ACIfA) contributed the environmental report, and Laura Griffin (BA (hons.); PG Cert; ACIfA) and Robert Hedge (MA Cantab) contributed the finds report.

3.2 Documentary research

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site was prepared by Wardell Armstrong (2017a). This document, alongside the WSI, provides detailed research and background information on the project and, therefore, only a brief summary on the historical and archaeological background is presented below (Section 4.2 below).

The DBA consulted the Leicestershire 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. Information on designated heritage assets was complemented by GIS information downloaded from Historic England. Ordnance Survey early and modern mapping were examined, as well as aerial photographs, and a site walkover was conducted.

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

The detailed methodology was prepared by Wardell Armstrong (2017c). The fieldwork was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology 26 June and 3 July 2017. The project reference number used by Worcestershire Archaeology is P5128 (Wardell Armstrong job reference BM11259).

Seventeen trenches, each up to 30m in length and 1.80m in width, were excavated over the site area of *c* 3.15ha, representing a sample of 3%. The trenches were arranged in both gridded and non-gridded array in order to interrogate and characterise known geophysical anomalies and to test the quality of capture from the survey in blank areas. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

The placing of trenches in the southern field was restricted by the known route of a modern service and the presence of a public right of way. This footpath intersected with a second public right of way in the northern field and this necessitated a re-orientation or slight shortening of a number of trenches in this half of the site so as to avoid damaging this well-used route, as well as to prevent serious health and safety issues occurring with open trenches adjacent or across a footpath. This did not, however, impact on the assessment of geophysical anomalies or the overall percentage of the site investigated.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360º tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (Worcestershire Archaeology 2012) and feature locations were 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 Laura Griffin

The finds work reported on here conforms to the following guidance: for finds work by CIfA (2014b), for archive creation by AAF (2011) and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

3.5.1 Artefact recovery policy

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (Worcestershire Archaeology 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 a *pro forma* Microsoft Access 2007 database.

For the purposes of this assessment, pottery sherds have not been quantified by specific fabric or form type but general composition of the group has been noted and is discussed below.

3.6 Environmental archaeology methodology, by Elizabeth Pearson

3.6.1 Sampling policy

Samples were taken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (2012). A total of five samples (each of 10 litres) were taken from two pits dated to the Bronze Age and Roman periods (Env Table 1).

Context	Sample	description	period	Sample volume (L)	Volume processed (L)	Res assessed	Flot assessed
410	1	Upper fill of pit 413	Bronze Age	10	10	Yes	Yes
410	3	Upper fill of pit 413	Bronze Age	10	10	No	No
412	2	Charcoal basal fill in pit 413	Undated	10	10	Yes	Yes
412	4	Charcoal basal fill in pit 413	Undated	10	0	No	No
1509	5	Lower fill of pit 1510	Roman (M1 – 2 C	10	10	Yes	Yes

Env Table 1: List of bulk samples

3.6.2 Processing and analysis

The samples were processed by flotation using a Siraf tank. The flots were collected on a 300mm 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 hammerscale. 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).

Animal bone was quantified by fragment count and weight by context, and key fragments identified with the aid of modern bone reference collections housed at Worcestershire Archaeology and identification guides (Schmid 1972; Hillson 1992).

Charcoal was examined under a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope in order to determine the presence of oak and non-oak charcoal.

3.6.3 Discard policy

Remaining sample material and scanned residues will be discarded after a period of 3 months following submission of this report unless there is a specific request to retain them.

3.7 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 comprises parts of two fields adjacent to the southern edge of Gilmorton; one is in use for arable and the other pasture (although it has previously been ploughed), and together the area of investigation is approximately *c* 3.15ha. It is surrounded by a combination of existing domestic properties alongside Lutterworth Road to the east and a 20th century housing estate to the north, with fields forming both the west and southern boundaries defined by mature hedgerows. The majority of the northern field is flat, situated at a height of *c* 142m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum), but this begins to slope gently to the south and south-west down to *c* 139m AOD by the southern field boundary. A tributary of the River Swift is located 113m to the west.

The underlying geology is mapped as mudstone of the Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Formation, overlain by Pleistocene Till deposited up to two million years ago during seasonal glacial melt that caused outwashes predominately of sands and gravels (BGS 2017).

4.2 Archaeological context

As detailed in the heritage statement (Wardell Armstrong 2017a) and briefly mentioned above, there are no designated heritage assets on the site, however, undesignated ridge and furrow cultivation had been previously mapped in the northern part. Further undesignated heritage assets in the surrounding area include, in brief, findspots such as a single Bronze Age spearhead located *c* 755m to the north-west (HER reference MLE6441), a single sherd of Roman greyware pottery recovered *c* 515m to the north (HER reference MLE21777) and two Roman brooches found during metal detecting but not securely located (HER reference MLE10306).

There is one Scheduled Monument located 115m to the north-west, comprising the earthwork remains of an early motte castle with a surrounding moat, house platforms and two fishponds (HER reference 1010495). Close to this is the Grade II* Listed church, dating to the early 14th century (HER reference 1292805), and its associated burial ground (HER reference MLE21778).

Eighteen Grade II Listed Buildings lie predominantly within the village of Gilmorton to the north of the site.

In association with the church, the historic core of the settlement lies to the immediate north and north-east of the site, extending further to the north (HER reference MLE9865). As such, historic mapping suggests that the site was away from this occupation, being in agricultural in use from at least the medieval period and throughout the post-medieval period. This later became an enclosed landscape, planned and laid out by surveyors in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The site has not been subject to any previous archaeological investigations, other than the preceding geophysical survey (Wardell Armstrong 2017b). There have, however, been a number of sites nearby that have required some archaeological work, as described in the heritage statement (Wardell Armstrong 2017a). Archaeological evaluation was undertaken immediately east and south-east of the site, where four trenches were excavated. Three were devoid of archaeological features or finds but in the other, a single undated curvilinear feature was recorded. Archaeological evaluation was also completed at Ivanhoe House, 200m to the north, with three trenches that were again devoid of archaeological features or finds. In the same area, a watching brief during the excavation of foundation trenches for a proposed new garage similarly did not identify any archaeological features or deposits.

Effectively, prior to fieldwork commencing, the potential of what may be present within the site remained primarily unknown as there was little previous knowledge regarding below-ground archaeological features in the immediately surrounding area. It was, however, postulated that the geophysical anomalies identified may represent settlement or agricultural activity of Iron Age or Romano-British date (Wardell Armstrong 2017c).

5 Results

5.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 2-6. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

There were numerous archaeological features and deposits encountered of varying significance, and some of these remained unexcavated at this stage. Only limited secure dating evidence was recovered across the site area (mainly in the northern third) and features are therefore described on a trench by trench basis in the following section, for ease of location (rather than by phase).

5.2 Trench descriptions

5.2.1 Natural deposits across the site

Natural deposits were encountered in all seventeen of the trenches excavated, at between 0.44–0.67m below the ground surface. This was slightly variable; it mostly comprised light orange-yellow brown mixed sands and gravels in clay in the southern part of the site (Trenches 1-7), but contained softer sandy gravel with less clay content in the northern trenches (Trenches 8-17).

5.2.2 Trench 1

In Trench 1, 0.26m of friable mid grey-brown clay silt topsoil and 0.29m of compact grey-yellow sandy clay subsoil overlay the archaeological features.

Located in the eastern half of the trench, two thin gully features were left unexcavated; one contained a ceramic land drain [104] and the similarity in size of the other would suggest that it served the same purpose [106].

Two ditches were also present, around 5m apart and on a parallel north-east to south-west alignment. One, [108], was shallow and had an irregular terminus disturbed by rooting, up to 0.24m in depth. The other continued through the trench [110] and exhibited a regular u-shaped profile 0.34m in depth (Plate 2). The grey-brown sandy clay fill (109) contained post-medieval pottery and some clay pipe and was similar in colour and consistency to the fill (107) in the adjacent ditch

terminus [108]. It is possible that these features formed either side of a former ditched field boundary and that they align with undated ditches identified in Trench 6, further north in the southern field (see below). Neither of these ditches was identified on the geophysical survey.

5.2.3 Trench 2

Compared to Trench 1, slightly less topsoil (0.24m) and subsoil (0.20m) was present in Trench 2. At the northern end of the trench was the edge of a partially visible ditch [208]; this was not explored but was clearly a continuation of a drainage ditch [306] identified in Trench 3 (see below).

In the centre of the trench were two small ditch or gully features. The southernmost [204] ran east to west and was cut through the subsoil, containing a friable grey-brown fill similar to the topsoil, 0.35m in depth. No dating evidence was recovered but the stratigraphic position would suggest that it was post-medieval or modern in date. The northern of the pair [206] was aligned north-east to south-west and was below both topsoil and subsoil. This was slightly larger, 0.95m in width and 0.37m in depth, and remains undated. Neither of these was visible on the geophysical survey. Beneath both features were unusual changes in the natural substrate that were difficult to define as anthropogenic in origin, [210] and [212]. No cultural material was identified in either and it is considered most likely that these were natural variations.

5.2.4 Trench 3

Similar deposits of topsoil (0.27m) and subsoil (0.22m) were present in Trench 3. Towards the western end of the trench was a small north to south aligned gully [304], possibly a land drain; this was undated but was cut through the subsoil so is likely to be relatively recent in origin.

The trench also contained a 2.60m wide ditch feature [306] with a redeposited natural mixed blue-grey clay and orange-yellow sand fill. This was partially excavated and found to have vertical sides, with a drain pipe encountered at 0.80m down and therefore excavation ceased. It also appeared to head towards a visible manhole in the middle of the field, related to a known service pipe mapped by the geophysics. Although no finds were recovered from the ditch, it is probably modern. It was not located on the geophysical survey.

5.2.5 Trench 4

Trench 4 had slightly deeper topsoil (0.29m) and subsoil (0.28m) overlying the archaeological features. In the middle of the trench was an irregular, diffuse linear aligned broadly east to west [415], possibly a furrow, although it was not excavated.

Slightly south-west of this was a well-defined near-circular pit feature with vertical and partially undercut sides that had been subject to *in situ* burning, visible in the discoloured heat-affected surrounding natural [413]. The pit was 0.62m in diameter and 0.28m in depth. There were three fills demonstrating a clear sequence of deposition; at the base was a charcoal-rich fill (412) representing fire residue, above was a lump of upcast natural clay (411) in a cohesive block that appeared to have been dumped back in following use within a main backfilling deposit (410). The upper fill contained frequent charcoal and some small fragments of Bronze Age pottery (Plate 4). The pit was 100% excavated for finds and environmental recovery (Sections 5.3.1 and 5.4.2 below).

Close to the pit, but not obviously associated or of similar date, was a large north to south aligned ditch, dug in two phases (Plate 3). The earlier version [404] was 0.46m in depth but had been replaced by a larger feature, 1.54m wide and 0.61m in depth, on the same alignment [407]. This also cut through a small unexcavated gully [409] running east to west. The ditch fills were all fairly sterile and lacked any dating evidence, although animal bone was recovered, so it is not certain as to the period of use for this feature (Section 5.4.1 below). There was no indication that it was related to occupation or enclosure however, and although that purpose could not be ruled out, it is most likely to represent a former field boundary or drainage ditch of similar function to the ditches identified in Trench 1. As with the ditches located in Trench 1, this ditch was not identified through geophysical survey.

In the southern part of the trench were a series of thin parallel linear features on the same alignment as the adjacent ditch [417]. These were undated, but appeared as stony silty bands in the natural and are thought to be remnants of plough scarring from cultivation in the field.

5.2.6 Trench 5

No archaeological features were found in this trench. The mid grey-brown clay silt topsoil (0.28m) and grey-yellow sandy clay subsoil (0.25m) overlay the orange-yellow brown mixed sand and gravel natural substrate.

5.2.7 Trench 6

Trench 6 contained 0.27m of topsoil and 0.28m of subsoil covering the archaeological features. Towards the south-east end of the trench was an irregular pit feature [606]. This correlated with a large geophysical anomaly but was inundated with water at the time of excavation so only a small corner of it could be investigated. The soft grey-brown silty fill (605) included coal, charcoal and a piece of clay pipe stem, suggesting a post-medieval date. It was partially cut by a ceramic land drain [608].

In the centre of the trench was ditch [611], cut by later ditch [604], and aligned north-east to south-west (Plate 5). The fills in both ditches were sterile, lacking in cultural inclusions or dating evidence. Neither was visible on the geophysical survey, although the features were fairly substantial, being up to 2.30m wide and 0.66m in depth. It is possible that these ditches continue to join up with those identified in Trench 1 to the south as they appear to be on the same alignment, although this is not conclusive.

5.2.8 Trench 7

Up to 0.28m of topsoil and 0.31m of subsoil was present in Trench 7. At the northern end of the trench was a small feature identified as a furrow [704], running east to west. In the centre of the trench and parallel with this was a comparable feature [706], probably the base of a furrow, found to be 1.1m in width and 0.07m in depth. These align with the geophysical survey.

Also in the centre of the trench was a small gully feature [708], aligned north-west to south-east, 0.36m in width but only 0.10m in depth. It was not dated and was of uncertain purpose.

5.2.9 Trench 8

Numerous features were identified in Trench 8, sealed by topsoil (0.31m) and subsoil (0.25m). However, no finds were recovered and the majority of fills were sterile and similar to the subsoil without clear indications of purpose.

At the north-east end was a small ditch or gully [804], only partly visible and not excavated. In the centre of the trench were two diffuse linear features, [806] and [808], that were considered to be furrows, although this was not clear.

To the south of these was a cluster of features, including two pits, a gully and a ditch. When cleaned and viewed in plan, it appeared that the ditch post-dated the pits and that the pits post-dated the gully. The ditch was investigated and found to be 1.06m in width and 0.51m in depth, with a sterile orange-brown silty fill but no dating evidence. This feature was visible as a geophysical anomaly and continued into Trench 9, where it was recorded as [910]. One of the pits [816] was partially excavated; this was only 0.20m in depth and had a similar sterile orange-brown silty fill to the ditch, again without any finds.

In the southern part of the trench was an oval pit feature [818], 0.21m in depth, with a sterile orange-brown sandy fill.

5.2.10 Trench 9

The ditch identified in Trench 8 [810] was also recorded in Trench 9 [910], as noted above, at the southern end of the trench. It was below 0.30m of topsoil and 0.29m of subsoil. This was not investigated further, as it had been sampled in Trench 8.

Three diffuse features in Trench 9 were identified as furrows, all aligned east to west and evenly spaced around 6m apart, correlating with the geophysical survey in this area.

5.2.11 Trench 10

Similar to Trench 9, a series of parallel east to west aligned features were evenly spaced along Trench 10, matching the alignment of furrows on the geophysical survey.

5.2.12 Trench 11

A single feature was identified in Trench 11: a small gully located towards the eastern end [1104]. This was 0.36m wide and 0.14m in depth with a regular u-shaped profile, aligned north-west to south-east. The grey-brown sandy fill did not contain any finds. It was beneath 0.31m of topsoil and 0.36m of subsoil.

5.2.13 Trench 12

Trench 12 was positioned across a geophysical anomaly thought to represent a former field boundary, running north-east to south-west from the east side of the northern field (Wardell Armstrong 2017b). This ditch [1206] was located in the middle of the trench, below 0.29m of topsoil and 0.20m of subsoil. It was 0.78m in width and 0.45m in depth with two sterile fills lacking any dating evidence.

At the south-eastern end of the trench was an area of stone banding (1203) which, although initially thought to be archaeological in origin, on balance appeared to be formed of interbedded gravels within the natural sands.

5.2.14 Trench 13

Trench 13 contained 0.26m of topsoil and 0.22m of subsoil above the archaeological features. A small gully [1304] was aligned broadly south-east to north-west across the south-east end of the trench. This was 0.41m wide and 0.11m in depth, with a soft orange-brown sandy fill that included a single piece of flint.

Against the trench edge a possible oval pit was partially visible [1306] (Plate 6). This was up to 0.36m in depth, with a blue-grey silty fill that included a fragment of Roman pottery.

5.2.15 Trench 14

Two ditches were identified in Trench 14, below 0.30m of topsoil and 0.22m of subsoil. Similar to Trench 13, on the same alignment and therefore positioned parallel to it, was a small ditch [1404] running across the south-east end of the trench. The ditch was 0.62m wide and 0.24m in depth and probably continued across the field, where it was also observed in Trench 17 as [1706]. There was no dating evidence in the fill.

Ditch [1406] was located in the centre of the trench and was aligned north-east to south-west, containing an orange-brown sandy silt fill that included Roman pottery. The ditch was 2.10m in width but only 0.32m in depth. It was not identified on the geophysical survey.

5.2.16 Trench 15

Trench 15 contained an array of archaeological features, sealed by 0.29m of topsoil and 0.23m of subsoil (Plate 7).

At the north-east end of the trench was an east to west aligned ditch [1504], 1.28m wide and 0.42m in depth with a u-shaped profile. The fill was quite sterile and similar to the subsoil but included a piece of flint.

Just to the south was ditch [1516], a 2.20m wide feature, 0.56m in depth, with a flattened base (Plate 9). The fill included Roman pottery. It was not clear, but possible that ditch [1516] cut [1518], a smaller ditch which ran parallel along the southern side of the larger one. Both features correlate with the alignment of a large linear anomaly visible on the geophysical survey and continued into Trench 16, recorded as [1606].

Slightly further south again was ditch [1507], heading on a similar alignment but, unlike the other ditches, not appearing to continue into Trench 16. This ditch was 1.74m wide and 0.58m in depth with two fills; the uppermost included frequent large cobbles alongside charcoal and numerous pieces of relatively unabraded Roman pottery.

In the centre of the trench were two pits, one of which remained unexcavated and extended under the trench limit of excavation [1512]. The other, [1510], was near circular (0.67m diameter) and up to 0.22m in depth, with two fills (Plate 9). The uppermost (1508) was sterile, similar to the subsoil and lacking in cultural inclusions. This sealed a grey-brown sandy fill (1509) that included frequent stones, large Roman pottery pieces, charcoal and a substantial piece of fired clay likely to be part of a kiln floor (Plate 11), all suggesting the nearby presence of domestic and/or industrial activity. The pit was 100% excavated for finds and environmental recovery (Sections and 5.3.1 and 5.4.2 below).

Close to these pits was a very shallow gully terminus, only 0.05m in depth [1520]. This did not contain any finds. The gully continued east and was also visible in Trench 16, recorded as [1608].

At the south-west end of the trench was another ditch [1514], slightly diffuse but on a similar alignment to the other linear features in this trench. This was not excavated and remains undated.

5.2.17 Trench 16

Up to 0.31m of topsoil and 0.30m of subsoil was present above the archaeology in Trench 16. Some of the features investigated in Trench 15 were also recorded in Trench 16, as noted above. This included the small gully [1608], identified in the centre of Trench 16, and the parallel ditches visible as a large linear geophysical anomaly running across the northern part of the trench [1606]. It is possible that partially visible ditch [1604], located at the northern end of the trench, was also a continuation of ditch [1504] in Trench 15. These were not investigated further, as they had been sampled in Trench 15.

5.2.18 Trench 17

Two features were recorded in Trench 17, below topsoil (0.28m) and subsoil (0.30m). At the southern end of the trench was a small ditch or gully [1706] that aligned with the similar feature investigated in Trench 14 [1404]. Here in Trench 17 the ditch was 0.47m wide and 0.16m in depth. Again, there was no dating evidence in the fill.

In the centre of the trench was ditch terminus (or possibly part of an elongated pit) [1704], aligned north-west to south-east (Plate 10). This was 1.05m in width but only 0.19m in depth and contained a brown silty fill with charcoal and pottery inclusions, of Roman date.

5.3 Artefactual analysis, by Laura Griffin and Rob Hedge

The assemblage recovered from the site totalled 73 finds weighing 2034g (see Finds Tables 1 and 2). The level of preservation was good with pottery sherds displaying low levels of surface abrasion and an above average weight of 14.4g.

The majority of the assemblage was of Roman date but small quantities of prehistoric and post-medieval material were also present.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
Mesolithic/Neolithic	stone	flint	flake	1	4
Later prehistoric	stone	flint	utilised	1	13
Bronze Age	stone	flint	débitage	2	5
Bronze Age	ceramic		pot	7	33
Bronze Age	ceramic	fired clay		1	10
Roman	ceramic		pot	37	593
Roman	ceramic	fired clay		16	94
Roman	ceramic	fired clay	?kiln floor	1	1202
post-medieval	ceramic		pot	4	67
post-medieval	ceramic		pipe	3	13

Finds Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

5.3.1 Summary artefactual evidence by period

All material has been dated and quantified. For the finds from individual features, see Finds Table 2.

Prehistoric

Material of the prehistoric period consisted of three pieces of flint, seven sherds of pottery and a fragment of fired clay.

Pottery

Seven sherds of pottery thought to be of Bronze Age date were recovered from fill (410) of pit [413] in Trench 4. All were of a fine sandy fabric, largely reduced to dark grey/black but with a reddish brown external surface and it was noted that they were significantly more abraded than the sherds of Roman date. It is thought that the group comes from two separate vessels.

A single rim sherd was identified. This was highly abraded but appeared to be fairly upright with an internal bevel and, therefore, tentatively identified as coming from a jar form. None of the sherds were decorated.

Flint (by Rob Hedge)

Three pieces of worked flint and one fragment of unworked burnt flint were recovered. All were in relatively fresh, unabraded condition.

A roughly discoidal shattered piece of mottled light grey flint débitage and a small fragment of burnt flint were recovered from fill (410) of pit [413]; the former is consistent with the Bronze Age date assigned to the pottery from this feature.

A single shattered piece from fill (1503) of ditch [1504] is on dark honey-brown semi-translucent flint with a weathered, orange-stained cortex. Edge-damage along one lateral margin suggests it may have been casually utilised. Although not closely dateable, a later prehistoric date is suggested.

A large fragment of a narrow, plunging flake, broken at the proximal end, was recovered from fill (1303) of gully [1304]. Parallel dorsal flake scars suggest a degree of regularity more common in Mesolithic/Neolithic flintworking, although a later prehistoric date is possible. Although the cortex is thicker, the raw material is similar to that of the piece from (1503), and both may have come from a similar source, possibly the locally-abundant glacial tills.

Roman

Material of Roman date consisted of 36 sherds of pottery and 17 pieces of fired clay.

Pottery

The Roman pottery formed a discreet assemblage consistent with a mid-1st to 2nd century date. The majority of fabric types were thought to be locally produced coarsewares and included fine grey sandy wares, organically tempered reduced and oxidised wares, very fine oxidised ware with fumed or 'dark' surfaces and a grog-tempered oxidised ware with a distinctive soapy feel. In addition, a small sherd of Black-burnished ware type 1 and a burnt sherd of Mancetter-Hartshill white ware were also identified.

Diagnostic sherds included two rims from everted-rim jar forms (1505), a bead rim jar (1505) and fragments from up to three very fine beaker/cup forms with fumed or 'dark' surfaces (1509). The small size of these latter sherds made it difficult to be sure of specific from type but they are most likely to be from either a carinated or butt beaker form.

One sherd of particular note was the base of a jar found in the same pit (1509) as the fired clay discussed below. The internal surface of this vessel was very uneven, possibly as a result of bloating and there was also an area of scorching with spalling along its upper broken edge which, if caused during production, would have led to it being a waster. Also, the contents of this pit were so distinctive that they may be the result of structured deposition, though this is most often associated with the Iron Age period.

A further base sherd which appeared highly fired and had blackening to the internal surface was retrieved from a ditch terminus fill in Trench 17 (1703).

Fired clay

All fired clay of this date came from the lower fill of a pit in Trench 15 (1509). All were oxidised and appeared to reflect the local glacial till geology with organic, soft red ironstone and flint inclusions noted.

The group included one very large, roughly formed piece measuring 100mm at its thickest point and having the remains of a large, sub-circular perforation with a rough diameter of 47mm (Plate 11). The form and thickness of this object and comparison with similar pieces of fired clay from other sites suggest that it is a fragment of a perforated kiln floor (Swan 1984, 64-66) and so this material could well represent the demolition debris of a pottery kiln. Therefore, although there is no structural evidence of a kiln on the site, it has to be considered highly likely that there was one in close vicinity.

Post-medieval

Material of post-medieval date consisted of four sherds of pottery and three fragments of clay pipe.

Pottery

All sherds could be dated to the 18th century and consisted of two sherds of Midlands blackware (109 and 900), one sherd of mottled ware (100), and one of Nottingham stoneware (600).

Clay pipe

All fragments were from stems (109 and 605).

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)	start date	end date	*TPQ*
100	ceramic		pot	1	5	M17C	18C	18C
109	ceramic		pipe	2	11			
109	ceramic		pot	1	26		18C	18C
410	ceramic		pot	7	33			
410	ceramic	fired clay		1	10			
410	stone	flint	debitage	2	5			Bronze Age
600	ceramic		pot	1	23	M18C	L18C	L18C
605	ceramic		pipe	1	2			Post-medieval
900	ceramic		pot	1	13		18C	18C
1301	ceramic		pot	2	10	M1C	2C	M1-2C
1303	stone	flint	flake	1	4			Prehistoric
1305	ceramic		pot	1	17	M1C	4C	Roman
1405	ceramic		pot	5	38	M1C	2C	M1-2C
1503	stone	flint	utilised	1	13			Later prehistoric
1505	ceramic		pot	1	22		2C	
1505	ceramic		pot	1	4	AD120+		
1505	ceramic		pot	11	171	M1C	2C	M1-2C
1509	ceramic		pot	13	276	M1C	2C	
1509	ceramic	fired clay		16	94	M1C	2C	
1509	ceramic	fired clay	?kiln floor	1	1202			M1-2C
1515	ceramic		pot	2	11	M1C	2C	M1-2C
1703	ceramic		pot	1	44	M1C	4C	Roman

Finds Table 2: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

Recommendations for further analysis and reporting

The following recommendations are made with regard to additional work on the artefacts considered as part of this report, should further investigation take place on the site:

- All pottery should be recorded by specific fabric and form type.

5.4 Environmental analysis, by Elizabeth Pearson

The results are summarised in Env Tables 1 to 4.

context	sample	charcoal	charred plant	uncharred plant	artefacts	comments
410	1	abt	occ	abt	occ fired clay, heat-cracked stone, abt chert flakes	* plant roots=intrusive?
412	2	abt		abt	mod fired clay, abt chert flakes	* plant roots=intrusive ?
1509	5	mod	occ	abt	occ fired clay, chert flakes.	* = probably intrusive, occ earthworm eggs

Env Table 2: Summary of remains from bulk samples; occ = occasional, mod = moderate, abt = abundant

5.4.1 Hand-collected animal bone

A very small assemblage totalling 23g (4 fragments) was recovered from post-medieval and undated ditch fills (Env Table 3), which was well preserved, but little interpretation could be made. A bird bone was noted in the post-medieval ditch (109) and sheep/goat pelvis fragments from the undated ditch (406).

context	description	material class	material subtype	Count	weight(g)
109	Fill of ditch	bone	animal bone	1	1
406	Basal fill of ditch 407	bone	animal bone	3	22

Env Table 3: Hand-collected animal bone

5.4.2 Plant macrofossil remains

context	sample	preservation type	species detail	category remains	quantity/diversity
410	3	?wa*	Poaceae sp indet stem frags, unidentified leaf fragments, unidentified herbaceous root fragments	misc	+++/low
412	1	?wa*	unidentified herbaceous root fragments	misc	+++/low
412	1	ch	unidentified wood fragments	misc	++/low
1509	5	?wa*	unidentified herbaceous root fragments	misc	+++/low
1509	5	ch	Cereal sp indet grain (fragment), Poaceae sp indet grain (fragments)	grain	+/low

Env Table 4: Plant remains from bulk samples

Key:

preservation	quantity
ch = charred	+ = 1 - 10
min = mineralised	++ = 11- 50
wa = waterlogged	+++ = 51 - 100
?wa = waterlogged or uncharred	++++ = 101+
	* = probably intrusive

Uncharred remains, consisting of mainly root fragments are assumed to be modern and intrusive as they are unlikely to have survived in the soils on site for long without charring or waterlogging.

Environmental remains were dominated by small, unidentifiable charcoal fragments in the Roman and undated pits (Contexts 1509 and 412 respectively; Env Table 4). The only identifiable remains were occasional charred fragments of cereal (Cereal sp indet grain) and grass grains (Poaceae sp indet grain) in the lower fill (1509) of the Roman pit. As few identifiable remains were recovered, and little interpretation could be made, it is considered that the site has a low potential for recovery of remains suitable for palaeoenvironmental analysis.

6 Synthesis

The evaluation has established that the site contains a number of archaeological features spread across a wide area and date range, of varying significance. There were at least three phases of activity identified in different parts of the site; prehistoric, Roman and post-medieval artefacts were recovered from a variety of features. Even though activity was broadly dispersed, it was most intensive in a localised area in the northern third of the site (e.g. Trenches 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17) where Roman material was predominant. 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.

Where geophysical anomalies had been highlighted there was a good correlation with features. However, a number of trenches also demonstrated an archaeological component to the site well beyond that shown on the geophysical survey, particularly in the southern field where a series of additional ditches were identified. Given this discrepancy, it is not certain if the lack of geophysical anomalies in parts of the site may demonstrate a real absence, although a general paucity of artefacts when away from the northern area would potentially support the absence of significant or large-scale settlement-related features from geophysical results.

Prehistoric

The single pit feature in Trench 4 is dated to the earlier prehistoric period and suggests that this phase of activity was quite isolated, perhaps indicative of episodic land use, with no extensive occupation activity identified across the surrounding trenches. This is not definite however, as earlier prehistoric settlement evidence is rare and often limited to discrete pits or hearths or pit clusters, with further more diffuse structural remains frequently truncated by later activity (for a regional view, see Clay 2006). The pit had clearly contained a fire, with evidence of *in-situ* burning on the natural substrate around the edges and base, possibly in a single event, before being deliberately backfilled.

There was a limited recovery of prehistoric finds across the site more widely, with flint recovered from features in Trenches 13 and 15. The pieces were not obviously diagnostic and it may be that these items were residual in later contexts. They do, however, suggest the presence of a prehistoric community in the vicinity producing and using this material.

Roman

Roman features were identified in Trenches 13, 14, 15 and 17 and it is possible that other features seen in these trenches (and in Trench 16), but either not excavated or that did not contain artefactual material, are of similar origin. There were no obvious structural remains observed, but the combination of linear ditches/gullies and discrete pits alongside the pottery and fired clay artefacts would suggest that this site is close to, or a small part of, a more extensive rural settlement.

The intensity of discrete and linear features seen in Trench 15 may indicate that this area is particularly close to the main focus of Roman settlement activity. It may even be the case that these are representative of an area of occupation or craft/industrial working itself, perhaps just on the edge of the settlement. The pottery recovered from pit feature [1510], as well as the large piece of kiln floor, suggests that the pit either had a secondary use as a convenient space for the dumping of domestic and industrial refuse or that these items were used as packing material within it. It would be unlikely that this material is being transported long distances before being disposed of/re-used and so it could be expected that a kiln may have existed in close proximity.

The position of these features within the site area – noticeably across the most northerly part but not in the south – may indicate that the focus of Roman occupation was to the north of the current site. This would be consistent with the location of the known historic core of the settlement; it is feasible that the medieval village developed from a pre-existing Roman site. The immediate north of the site is occupied by a later 20th century housing estate and it is not known if any archaeological work was completed prior to its construction.

Locally, although there is limited knowledge regarding archaeological features in Gilmorton, the reported findspots of Roman artefacts (Section 4.2 above) and the discovery of a substantial Roman coin hoard in fields east and south-east of the village (PAS ref. no. LEIC-F45AC4; Treasure case no. 2004T105), do demonstrate a previously identified Roman presence in the nearby area.

Later activity

Plough furrows were identified in Trenches 7, 8, 9, and 10 and were all regularly spaced and aligned east to west, corresponding with the geophysical survey and the previously recorded ridge and furrow in the northern field. These were probably part of an open field system surrounding Gilmorton in the medieval and post-medieval periods, although no dating evidence was recovered from any of these features.

Of the two parallel ditches in Trench 1, one was dated by finds to the post-medieval period, specifically the 18th century, and it is likely that the ditches formed either side of a field boundary. The ditch in Trench 6 may also be another part of this boundary further along, although this is uncertain.

The ditch located in Trench 12 ran north-east to south-west across the northern field and appeared to align with the western boundary of the southern field, as highlighted on the geophysical survey. This was probably a former continuation of the field boundary.

The ditch cut through the subsoil in Trench 2 and the drainage ditch observed in Trenches 2 and 3, as well as the presence of a few land drains (Trenches 1, 3, and 6), appear to be related to post-medieval and modern agriculture use of the land. There was no definitive evidence of any activity other than this taking place on the site from at least the medieval period onwards.

Other features

A number of undated linear ditches and small gullies were also recorded in various trenches across the central and southern part of the site (Trenches 2, 4, 7, 8, and 11) and may be part of smaller field boundaries or have been used for drainage. The largest of the ditches was identified in Trench 4. This had been re-cut, suggesting maintenance, and it ran north to south downslope, perhaps for drainage purposes. Trench 8 also contained a cluster of small features, all undated,

but reflecting a more intensive area of geophysical responses. The majority of these pits and ditches were difficult to discern and had fills comparable to the subsoil; they remain of uncertain purpose and date.

The overall nature of this other activity is difficult to determine therefore, although in general it appears to represent a low-level background scatter of features. These were often diffuse and shallow in nature, with a scarcity of artefacts, and lacking stratigraphic relationships or any obvious arrangement.

7 Significance

7.1 Nature of the archaeological interest in the site

The archaeological features observed on this site were varied, but appear to demonstrate small-scale prehistoric land use, a localised focus of Roman activity in close proximity to a rural settlement, and the remains of a medieval and post-medieval agricultural landscape. Other features included a number of small gullies and ditches that were spread across the site, but remain undated and poorly understood both in relation to one another and the sequence of activity on the site.

The isolated pit containing burnt material identified in Trench 4 perhaps the most interesting and significant features found during the evaluation, particularly as it is provisionally dated to the earlier prehistoric period by the pottery within it. There may be similar pits surviving in this area just outside the coverage of the trench which could potentially provide information on past land-use and transient occupational or ritual activity during the prehistoric period.

The artefactual assemblage indicates low level activity on the site during the later prehistoric and Roman periods, with a concentration of Roman pottery in the northern area of the site possibly suggesting that this is on the periphery of a larger settlement. The pottery was mainly dated to the earlier Roman period. The assemblage as it stands is too small to make any meaningful assumptions, but the range of fabrics and forms present would suggest that the community was not of high status, with few indications of traded pottery from outside the region. Settlement activity was most likely to be related to farming, though if the fired clay is indicative of pottery production, it could also be connected with industry.

Assessment of environmental remains indicates a low potential for recovery of environmental remains suitable for analysis.

7.2 Relative importance of the archaeological interest in the site

The remains observed during the evaluation demonstrate an archaeological site of variable importance, with some features of limited significance and others that demonstrate a site of higher potential.

The furrows and undated small gullies/drainage ditches suggest a site important at a local level for improving understanding of agricultural land use in the immediate area. The Roman features are likely to be related to nearby settlement activity and as such, have local or regional significance in potentially improving the understanding of the extent and nature of rural occupation, as well as craft and/or industrial production, in this area. Further understanding of Roman rural settlement is targeted in the regional research agenda (see Taylor 2006).

The presence of a prehistoric pit on the site is rare and can be viewed as an important feature that has the potential to be of regional significance, especially if similar features exist in association.

7.3 Physical extent of the archaeological interest in the site

The archaeological remains relating to the medieval and later agricultural activity were observed across the majority of the site, but particularly in the central area. In some cases plough furrows correlated between trenches. The field boundaries and sterile linear gullies and ditches were not

seen in all trenches but still cover a substantial area in the southern field and part of the northern field.

The Roman deposits appeared to be restricted to the northern third of the site and were particularly focused around Trenches 14 and 15, but also in Trenches 16 and 17. Other features continued beyond the trench limits and some were of a reasonable size. It is uncertain how far to the north the Roman period archaeological remains will survive but it is likely that this area of the site contains further features of Roman date.

The pit feature dated to the early prehistoric was identified in Trench 4 and, although a few pieces of flint were also found dispersed across the northern part of the site, it is possible that the eastern edge of the southern field may contain a small focus of prehistoric activity.

The survival of most features and deposits was good and the topsoil and subsoil across the site area was extensive. However, the archaeology is still likely to be vulnerable to any intrusive groundwork.

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.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Sheiling Homes Limited, on land to the west of Lutterworth Road, just to the south of Gilmorton, Leicestershire (NGR SP 57048 87508).

Seventeen trial trenches (each 30m in length) were opened over two fields. These were arranged in both gridded and non-gridded array in order to interrogate and characterise geophysical anomalies and to test the quality of capture from the survey in blank areas.

Archaeological remains of varying significance were identified across a wide area. Where geophysical anomalies had been highlighted there was a good correlation with features. However, a number of trenches also demonstrated an archaeological component to the site well beyond that shown on the geophysical survey, particularly in the southern of the two fields.

There were at least three phases of activity identified; prehistoric, Roman and post-medieval artefacts were recovered. This could be characterised as small-scale prehistoric land use, a localised focus of Roman activity in close proximity to a rural settlement in the northern third of the site, and the remains of a medieval and post-medieval agricultural landscape. Other features included a number of small gullies and ditches that were widespread, but remain undated and poorly understood both in relation to one another and the sequence of activity on the site.

9 Acknowledgements

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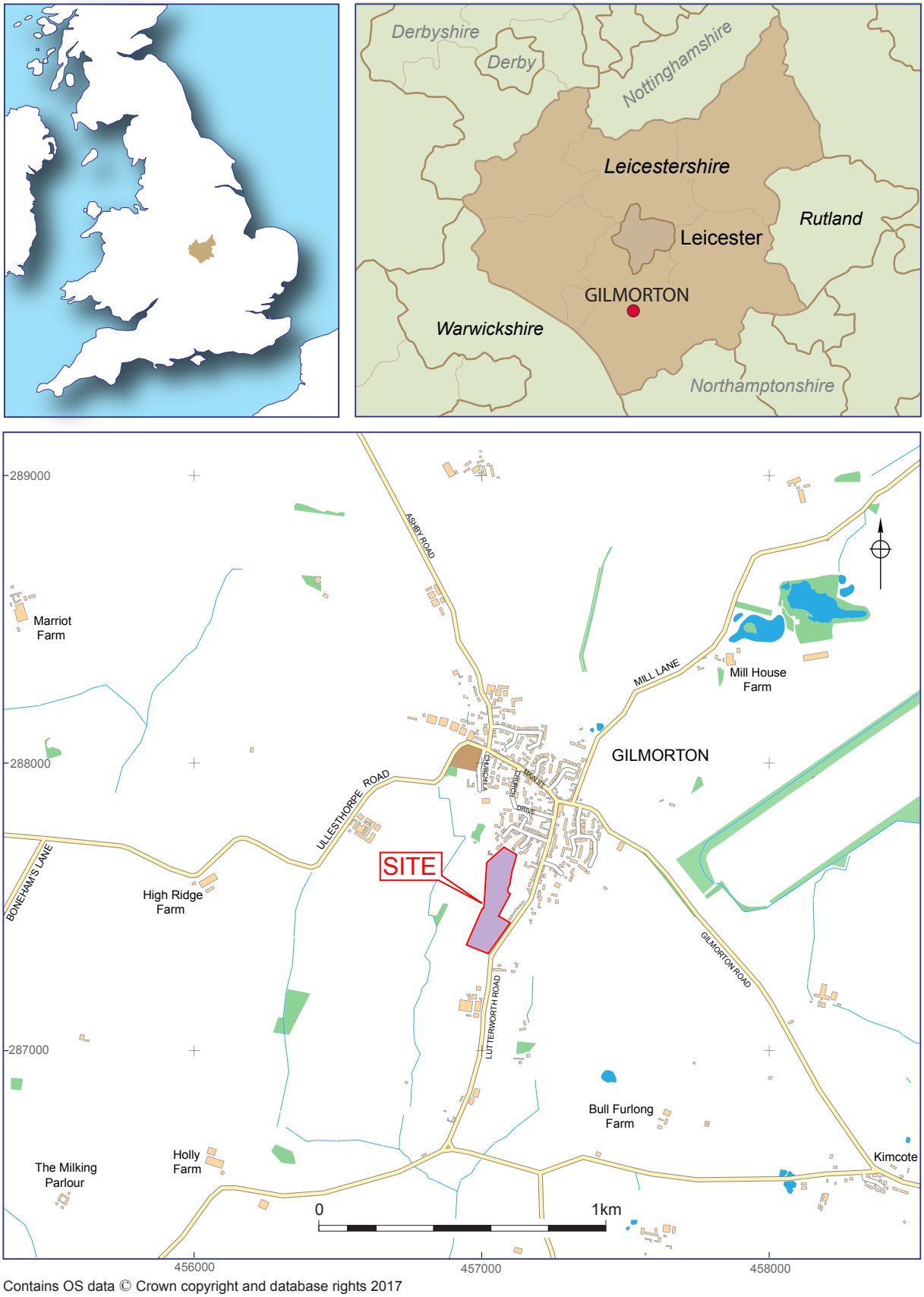
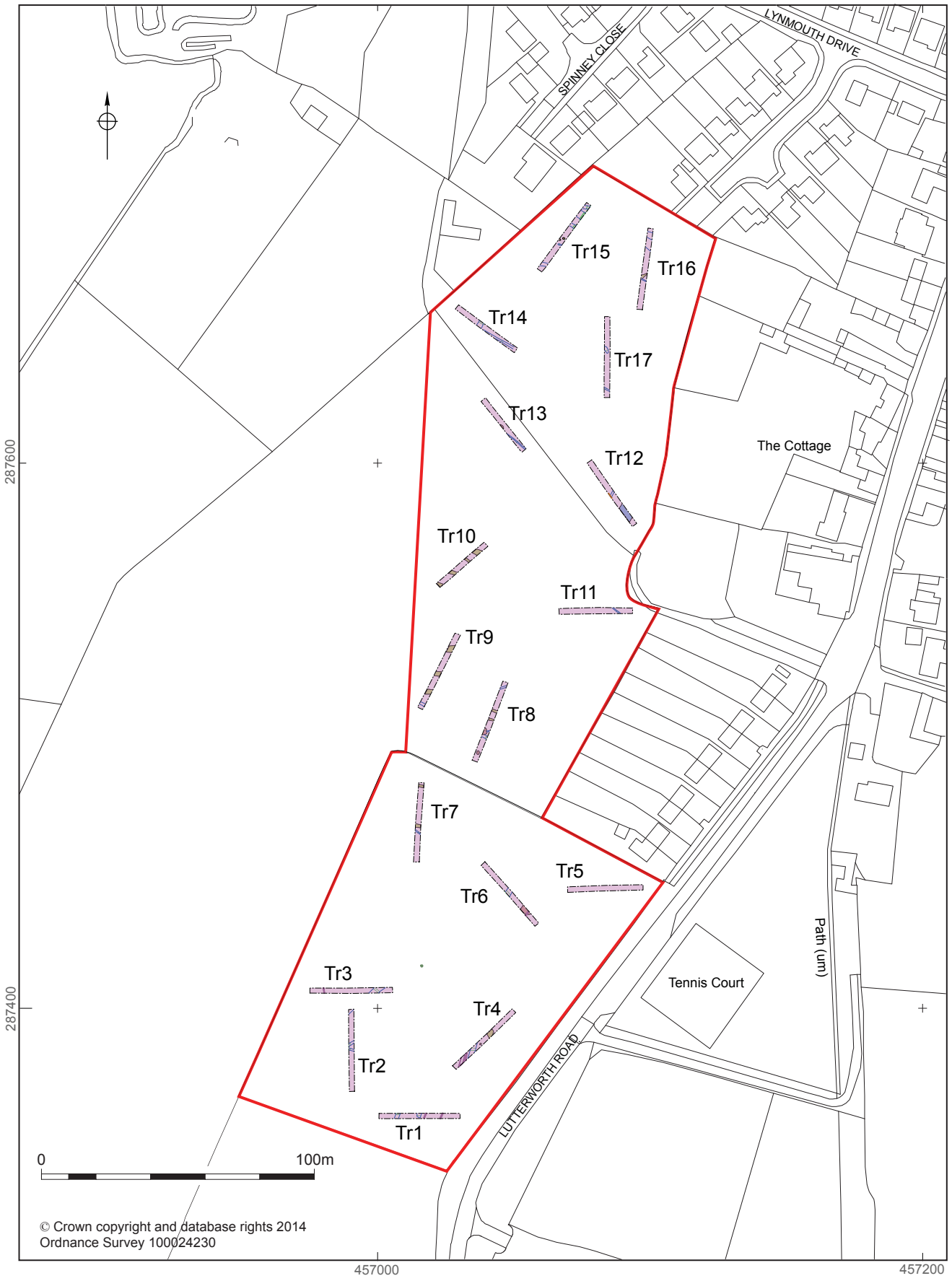
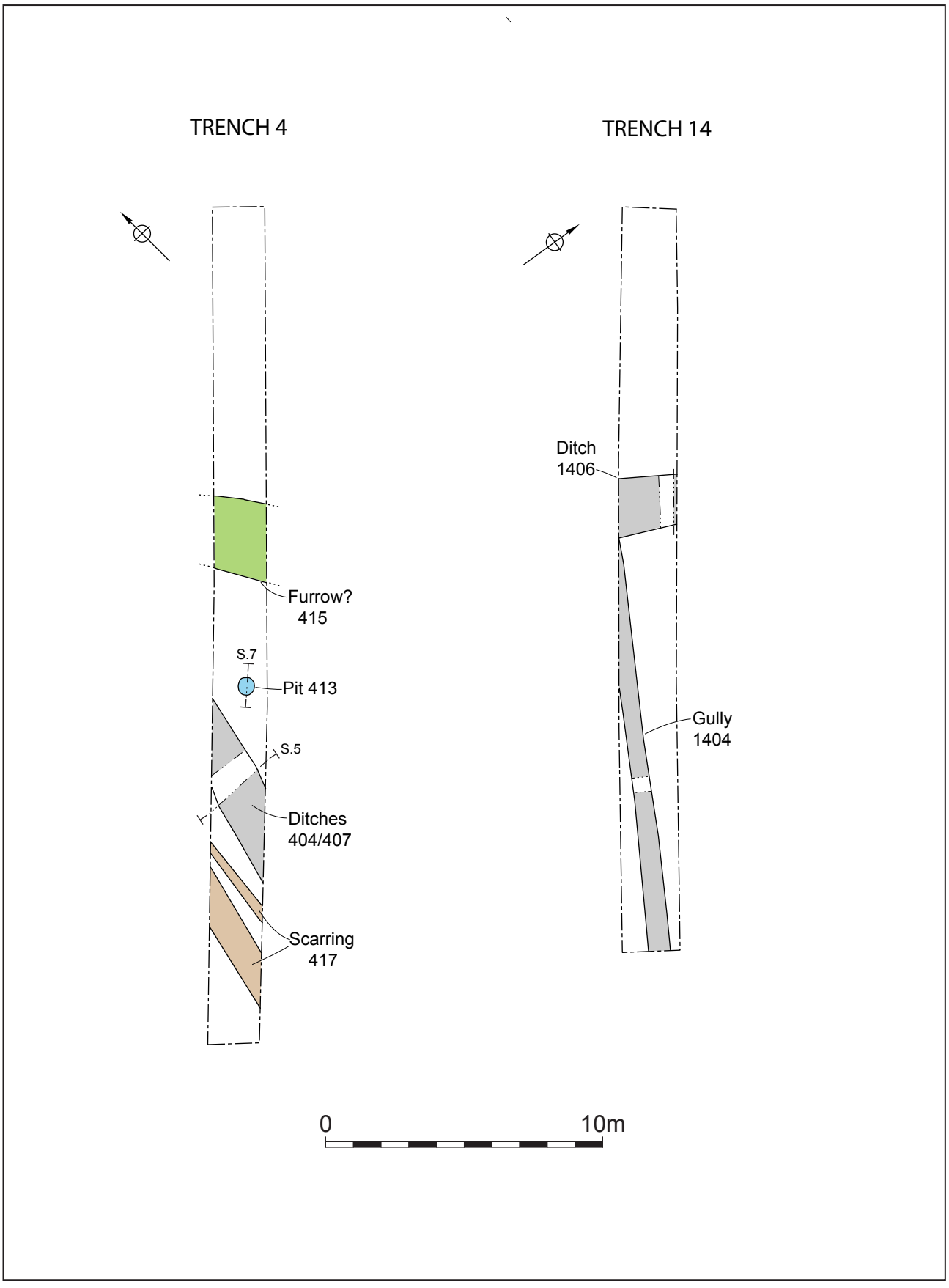
Figures



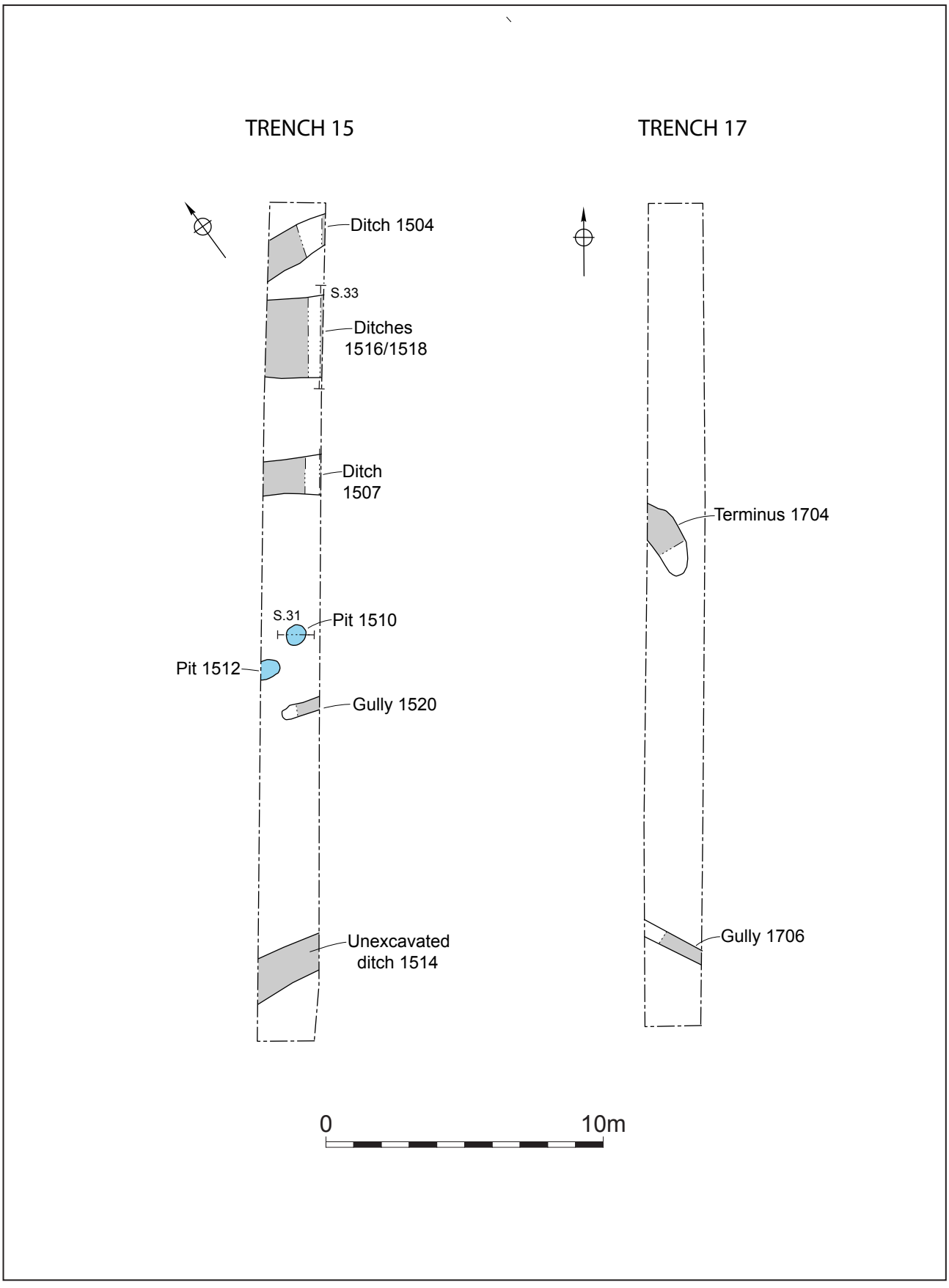
Location of the site *Figure 1*



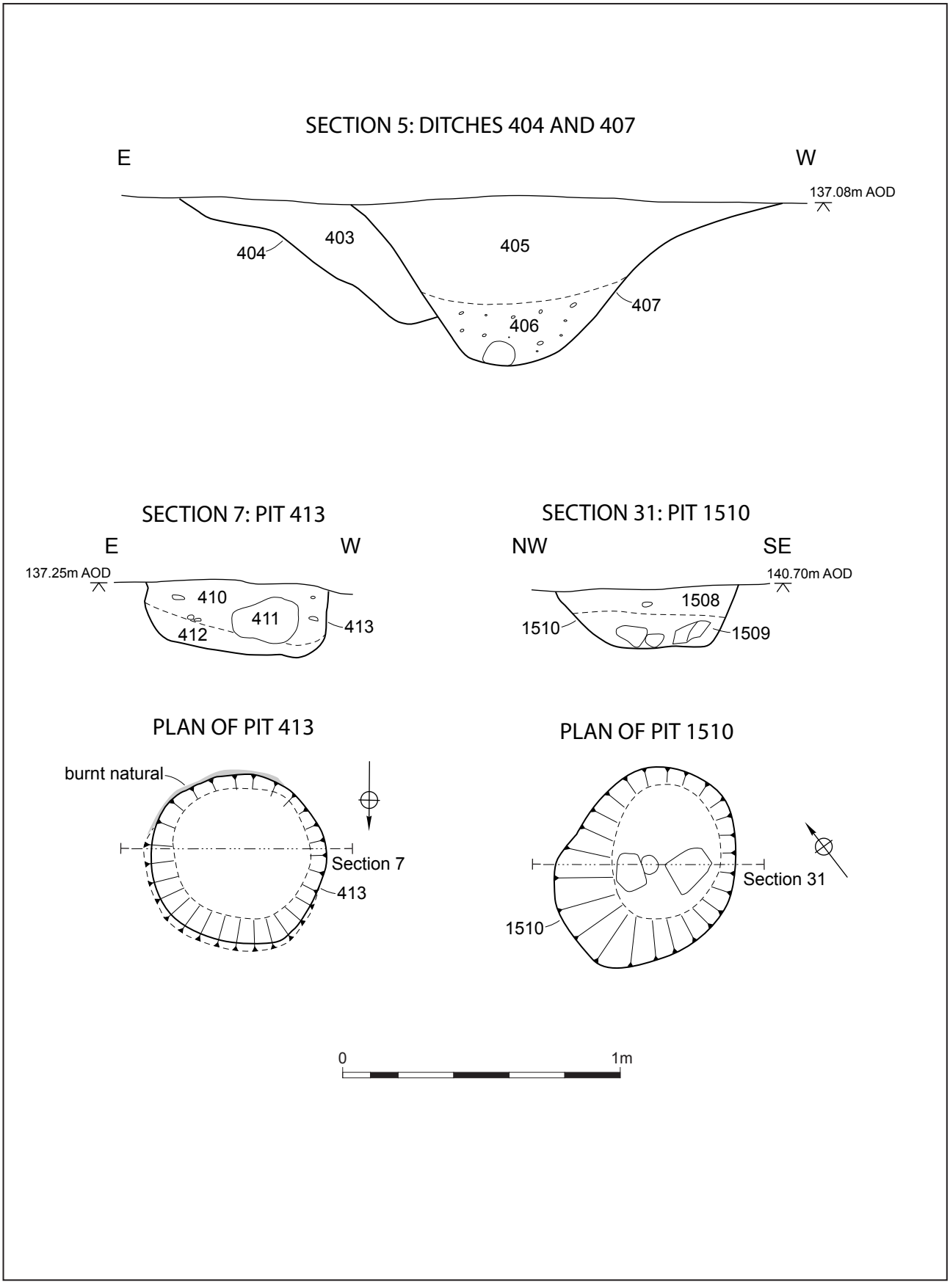
Trench location plan *Figure 2*



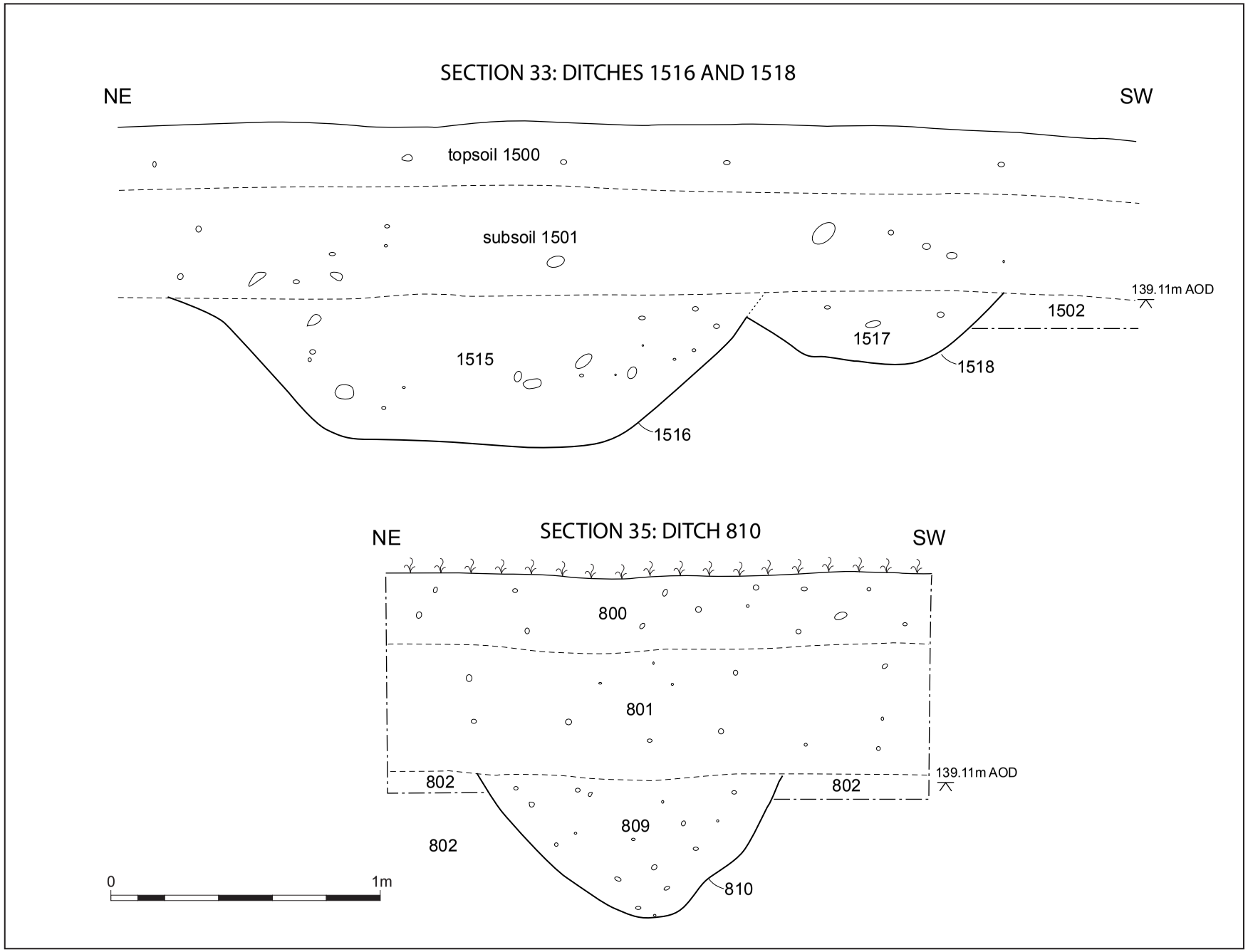
Trenches 4 and 14: plans *Figure 3*



Trenches 15 and 17: plans *Figure 4*



Section of ditches 404 and 407; plans and sections of pits 413 and 1510 *Figure 5*



Sections of ditches 1516 and 1518; ditch 810

Figure 6

Plates

Plate 1: Trenches open in the southern field, looking north across the site

Plate 2: Post-medieval ditch 110 in Trench 1, facing north (scale 1m)

Plate 3: Ditch 404 with re-cut 407 in Trench 4, facing south (scale 1m)

Plate 4: Half section of fire pit 413, Trench 4 (scale 0.5m)

Plate 5: Ditches 604 and 611, below topsoil and subsoil in Trench 6, facing south-west (scales 1m)

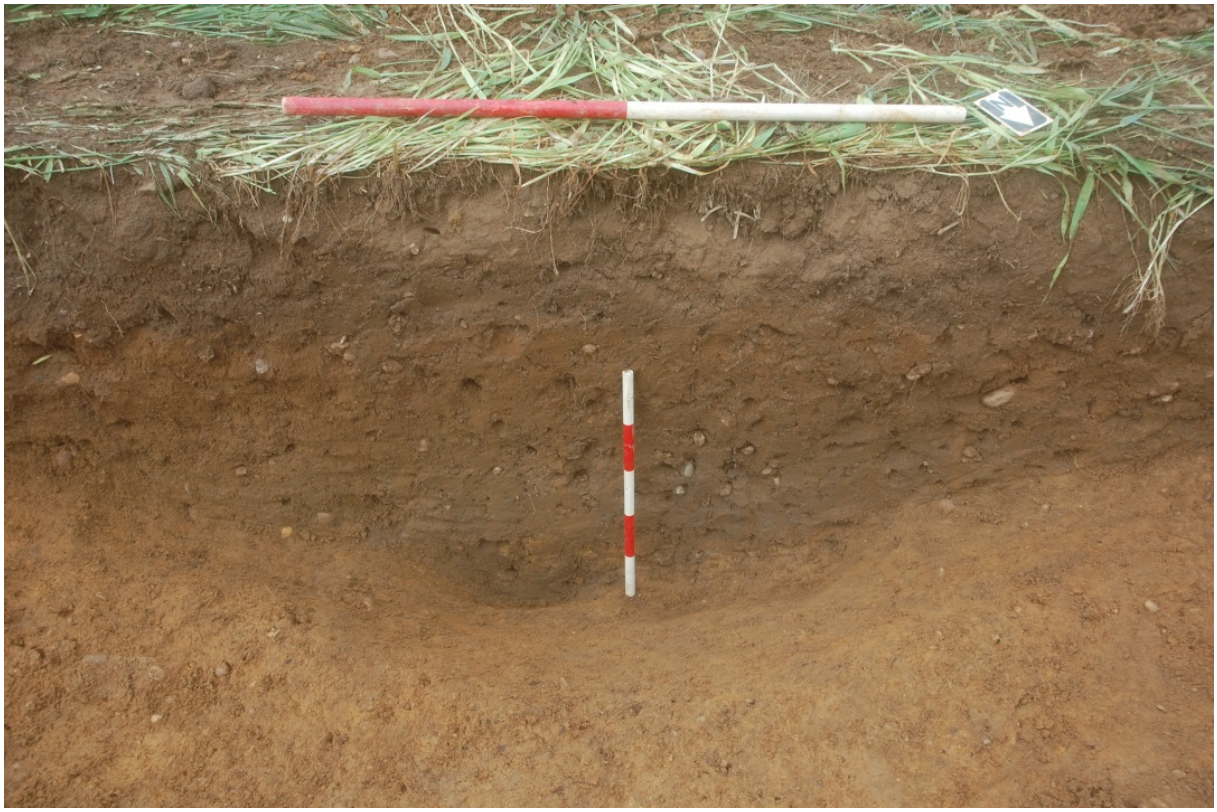


Plate 6: Pit 1306 below topsoil and subsoil in Trench 13, facing south-west (scales 1m and 0.5m)

Plate 7: Trench 15, facing south-west, ditches 1504, 1516, 1518 visible in foreground (scales 1m)

Plate 8: Pit 1510 with Roman pottery vessel, Trench 15, facing north-east (scales 0.5m)

Plate 9: Ditches 1516 and 1518, Trench 15, facing south-east (scales 1m)

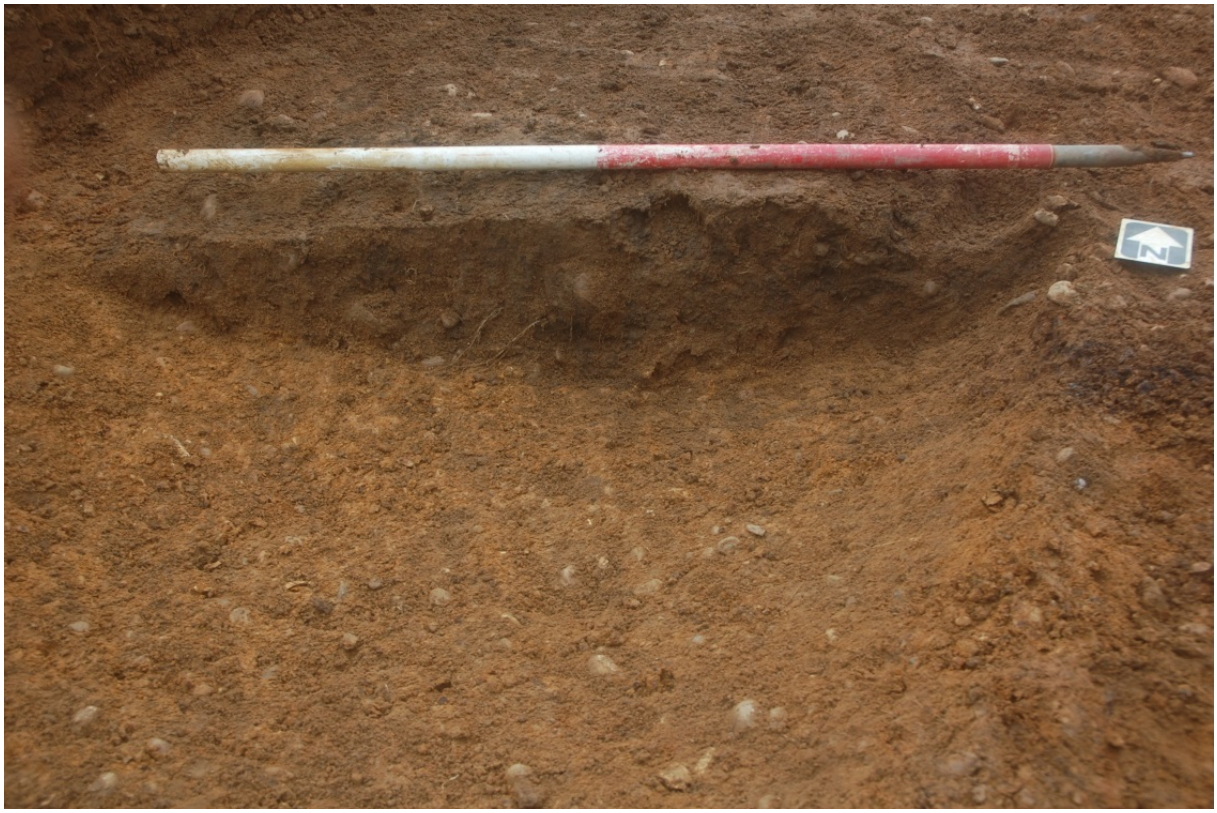


Plate 10: Shallow terminus 1704, Trench 17, facing north-west (scale 1m)

Plate 11: Piece of Roman kiln floor from pit 1510

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Main deposit descriptions

Trench 1

Site area: South field

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.55m max

Orientation: E-W

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
100	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.26m
101	Layer	Subsoil		0.26-0.55m
102	Layer	Natural		0.55m+
103	Fill	Fill of land drain		0.55m+
104	Cut	Land drain		0.55m+
105	Fill	Fill of gully	Fill of gully106, unexcavated	0.55m+
106	Cut	Gully/land drain cut	Small gully, probably a land drain	0.55m+
107	Fill	Fill of ditch terminus	Very shallow, irregular fill in base caused by rooting. No finds. Similar to 109	0.55-0.79m
108	Cut	Ditch terminus	Terminus of ditch, parallel to ditch 110. Very shallow, possibly part of field boundary	0.55-0.79m
109	Fill	Fill of ditch	Sandy clay fill, similar to 107. Contained post-medieval pot and clay pipe.	0.55-0.89m
110	Cut	Ditch cut, N-S aligned	Shallow ditch, post-med in date. Possibly field boundary	0.55-0.89m

Trench 2

Site area: South field

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.48m max

Orientation: N-S

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
200	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.24m
201	Layer	Subsoil		0.24-0.44m
202	Layer	Natural		0.44-0.48m+
203	Fill	Fill of gully	Fill of gully 204. No finds. Similar to topsoil	0.24-0.59m
204	Cut	Gully/small ditch	Small gully, uncertain purpose. Cut through subsoil	0.24-0.59m
205	Fill	Fill of gully	Fill of gully or ditch 206, no finds	0.44-0.78m

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
206	Cut	Gully/small ditch	Gully or ditch, close to 204 but on different alignment and below subsoil	0.44-0.78m
207	Fill	Fill of drainage ditch	Dark blue/grey fill. Similar to 305 but unexcavated	0.44m+
208	Cut	Drainage ditch	Ditch cut for drain - same as 306 in Trench 3	0.44m+
209	Fill	Fill of possible feature	Fill in 210, redeposited natural	0.44-0.81m
210	Cut	Cut, uncertain	Possible cut, near vertical sides, could be modern/natural. Underneath 204	0.44-0.81m
211	Fill	Fill of possible feature	Fill of 212, redeposited natural	0.44-0.84m
212	Cut	Cut, uncertain	Possible feature, near vertical sides. Underneath 206	0.44-0.84m

Trench 3

Site area: South field

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.51m max

Orientation: E-W

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
300	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.27m
301	Layer	Subsoil		0.27-0.49m
302	Layer	Natural		0.49-0.51m+
303	Fill	Fill of gully	Silty sand fill of 304, no finds	0.27-0.55m+
304	Cut	Gully	Small gully, cut through subsoil, unexcavated	0.27-0.55m+
305	Fill	Fill of 306	Redeposited natural with drain pipe in base	0.49-1.29m+
306	Cut	Vertical cut ditch	Drainage ditch feature, with vertical sides and drain pipe in base. Continues into Trench 2. Excavation ceased once pipe reached.	0.49-1.29m+

Trench 4

Site area: South field

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.59m max

Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
400	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.29m
401	Layer	Subsoil		0.29-0.57m
402	Layer	Natural		0.57-0.59m+
403	Fill	Fill of ditch 404	Yellow clay fill in 404, fairly sterile. No finds	0.57-1.03m
404	Cut	Ditch cut	Cut of ditch, truncated by later ditch 407 but follows same alignment	0.57-1.03m
405	Fill	Upper fill of ditch 407	Brown clayey silt fill in upper part of ditch 407, no finds	0.57-0.96m
406	Fill	Basal fill of ditch 407	Grey clay in base of ditch 407, probably resultant from gleying	0.95-1.18m
407	Cut	Ditch cut	Undated cut of linear ditch, truncates 404. Probably a field boundary	0.57-1.18m
408	Fill	Fill of gully 409	Unexcavated silty clay fill of gully 409	0.57m+
409	Cut	Cut of gully	Unexcavated gully, not fully visible as cut by large ditch 407	0.57m+
410	Fill	Upper fill of pit 413	Charcoal-rich upper fill in fire pit 413. Contains prehistoric pottery. Appears to be an intentional backfill	0.57-0.80m
411	Fill	Clay fill in pit 413	Dump of redeposited clay in pit 413. A discrete lump, probably a single infill episode	0.64-0.81m
412	Fill	Charcoal basal fill in pit 413	Charcoal deposit, remnants of last fire in pit 413.	0.67-0.85m
413	Cut	Burnt fire pit	Circular pit with vertical sides and visible in situ burning. Probably a single use feature, then intentionally backfilled. Prehistoric in date	0.57-0.85m
414	Fill	Fill of possible furrow		0.57m+
415	Cut	Possible furrow feature	Irregular, diffuse linear, possible furrow	0.57m+
416	Fill	Fill of plough scarring / furrows		0.57m+
417	Cut	Plough scarring	Thin parallel linears cutting in natural, could be plough scarring	0.57m+

Trench 5

Site area: South field

Length: 28m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.63m max

Orientation: E-W

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
500	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.28m
501	Layer	Subsoil		0.28-0.53m
502	Layer	Natural		0.53-0.63m+

Trench 6

Site area: South field

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.64m max

Orientation: NW-SE

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
600	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.27m
601	Layer	Subsoil		0.27-0.55m
602	Layer	Natural		0.55-0.64m+
603	Fill	Upper fill of ditch 604	Upper fill, no finds, sterile and homogenous	0.55-0.95m
604	Cut	Ditch cut	Ditch cut, aligned with similar feature in Trench 1. Post-dates ditch 611	0.55-1.15m
605	Fill	Fill of pit 606	Soft grey brown silt containing coal, charcoal and post-med clay pipe. Exposed in area of flooded trench so only a small corner sample excavated	0.55-0.95m+
606	Cut	Irregular pit	Probable pit, visible as geophysical anomaly. Included post-medieval clay pipe	0.55-0.95m+
607	Fill	Fill of drain	Contained ceramic pipe	0.55m+
608	Cut	Land drain	Cuts pit 606	0.55m+
609	Fill	Lower fill of ditch 604	Lower fill of 604, no finds, homogenous throughout	0.95-1.15m
610	Fill	Fill of ditch 611	Single fill in ditch 611, probably related to waterlogging/standing water in base of ditch. No finds	0.55-1.21m
611	Cut	Ditch cut	Ditch, cut by later ditch 604. Probably earlier drainage ditch on similar alignment	0.55-1.21m

Trench 7

Site area: South field

Length: 29m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.63m max

Orientation: NW-SE

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
700	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.28m
701	Layer	Subsoil		0.28-0.59m
702	Layer	Natural		0.59-0.63m+
703	Fill	Fill of furrow 704		0.59m+
704	Cut	Furrow	Unexcavated	0.59m+
705	Fill	Fill of furrow 706		0.59-0.66m
706	Cut	Furrow	Very shallow feature. Aligned E-W	0.59-0.66m
707	Fill	Fill of gully 708	Single fill in shallow gully 708	0.59-0.69m
708	Cut	Shallow gully	Small gully, SE-NW aligned	0.59-0.69m

Trench 8

Site area: North field

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.72m max

Orientation: NNE-SSW

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
800	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.31m
801	Layer	Subsoil		0.31-0.56m
802	Layer	Natural		0.56-0.72m+
803	Fill	Fill of 804	Unexcavated fill of 804	0.56m+
804	Cut	Small ditch cut	Ditch or gully at north end of trench, unexcavated	0.56m+
805	Fill	Fill of ditch/furrow 806		0.56m+
806	Cut	Linear cut, unexcavated		0.56m+
807	Fill	Fill of ditch/furrow 808, unexcavated		0.56m+
808	Cut	Linear cut, unexcavated	Uncertain feature, very diffuse	0.56m+
809	Fill	Fill of ditch 810	Fill of ditch 810, similar to subsoil. No finds	0.56-1.07m

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
810	Cut	Ditch cut	Linear ditch, undated. Visible on geophysics, continues into Trench 9 as 910	0.56-1.07m
811	Fill	Fill of gully 812		0.56m+
812	Cut	Gully cut	Small gully, unclear edges, unexcavated	0.56m+
813	Fill	Fill of pit 814		0.56m+
814	Cut	Pit cut	Clearly truncates gully 812	0.56m+
815	Fill	Fill of pit 816	Fill is similar to subsoil, no finds, undated	0.56-0.76m
816	Cut	Pit cut	Uncertain relationship with surrounding features	0.56-0.76m
817	Fill	Fill of pit 818	Loose silty sand fill in pit 818, rare charcoal, no finds	0.56-0.77m
818	Cut	Pit cut	Oval pit, undated	0.56-0.77m

Trench 9

Site area: North field

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.64m max

Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
900	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.30m
901	Layer	Subsoil		0.30-0.59m
902	Layer	Natural		0.59-0.64m+
903	Fill	Fill of furrow 904		0.59m+
904	Cut	Furrow		0.59m+
905	Fill	Fill of furrow 906		0.59m+
906	Cut	Furrow		0.59m+
907	Fill	Fill of furrow 908		0.59m+
908	Cut	Furrow		0.59m+
909	Fill	Fill of ditch 910		0.59m+
910	Cut	Ditch cut	Ditch, visible on geophysics and continues into Trench 8, excavated as 810	0.59m+

Trench 10

Site area: North field

Length: 25m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.70m max

Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
1000	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.26m
1001	Layer	Subsoil		0.26m-0.64m
1002	Layer	Natural		0.64-0.70m+
1003	Fill	Fill of furrow 1004		0.64m+
1004	Cut	Furrow		0.64m+
1005	Fill	Fill of furrow 1006		0.64m+
1006	Cut	Furrow		0.64m+
1007	Fill	Fill of furrow 1008		0.64m+
1008	Cut	Furrow		0.64m+
1009	Fill	Fill of furrow 1010		0.64m+
1010	Cut	Furrow		0.64m+

Trench 11

Site area: North field

Length: 27m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.67m max

Orientation: E-W

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
1100	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.31m
1101	Layer	Subsoil		0.31-0.67m
1102	Layer	Natural		0.67m+
1103	Fill	Fill of gully 1104	Single clay sand fill in gully 1104, no finds	0.67-0.81m
1104	Cut	Shallow gully	NW-SE aligned gully, undated	0.67-0.81m

Trench 12

Site area: North field

Length: 28.5m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.61m max

Orientation: NW-SE

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
1200	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.29m
1201	Layer	Subsoil		0.29-0.49m
1202	Layer	Natural		0.49-0.61m+
1203	Layer	Area of stone banding in the natural	Banded lines of stones in the natural, initially thought to be archaeological, now considered part of the natural substrate	0.49m+
1204	Fill	Fill of ditch 1206	Upper fill in 1206, no finds	0.49-0.71m
1205	Fill	Fill in ditch 1206	Lower fill in 1206, no finds	0.70-0.80m
1206	Cut	Linear ditch	Ditch/gully, visible on geophysics, probably a field boundary	0.49-0.80m

Trench 13

Site area: North field

Length: 25m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.54m max

Orientation: NW-SE

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
1300	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.26m
1301	Layer	Subsoil		0.26-0.48m
1302	Layer	Natural		0.48-0.54m+
1303	Fill	Fill of gully 1304	Soft silty sand fill in 1304. Includes a single flint flake. Possibly a truncated furrow base.	0.48-0.59m
1304	Cut	Gully cut	Small, shallow linear of uncertain date	0.48-0.59m
1305	Fill	Fill of pit 1306	Blue grey clay silt fill in pit, probably formerly waterlogged. Pottery and flint recovered	0.48-0.84m
1306	Cut	Oval pit	Part of pit identified at edge of trench	0.48-0.84m

Trench 14

Site area: North field

Length: 26m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.56m max

Orientation: NW-SE

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
1400	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.30m
1401	Layer	Subsoil		0.30-0.52m
1402	Layer	Natural		0.52-0.58m+
1403	Fill	Fill of gully 1404	Loose silty sand fill in 1404, no finds	0.52-0.76m
1404	Cut	Gully	Linear gully, broadly E-W aligned, deeper than would be expected if a furrow	0.52-0.76m
1405	Fill	Fill of ditch 1406	Friable orange brown silt fill in ditch 1406. Includes pottery fragments	0.52-0.84m
1406	Cut	Shallow ditch	NE-SW aligned ditch, quite shallow but with pottery within	0.52-0.84m

Trench 15

Site area: North field

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.61m max

Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
1500	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.29m
1501	Layer	Subsoil		0.29-0.52m
1502	Layer	Natural		0.52-0.61m+
1503	Fill	Fill of ditch 1504	Fill is similar to subsoil, but includes one flint flake	0.52-0.94m
1504	Cut	Ditch cut	E-W aligned ditch at NE end of Trench 15	0.52-0.94m
1505	Fill	Upper fill of ditch 1507	Main fill in ditch 1507, likely an intentional backfill. Includes pottery and charcoal and frequent large cobbles.	0.52-0.96m
1506	Fill	Lower fill of ditch 1507	Basal fill in 1507, no finds	0.96-1.10m
1507	Fill	Ditch cut	NW-SE aligned ditch, containing cultural inclusions suggestive of proximity to settlement	0.52-1.10m
1508	Fill	Upper fill of pit 1510	Sterile fill in upper part of pit 1510, similar to subsoil	0.52-0.61m
1509	Fill	Lower fill of pit 1510	Silty sand fill in pit 1510. Contains pottery and fired clay kiln material, suggestive of deliberate disposal	0.61-0.74m
1510	Cut	Pit cut	Sub circular pit containing domestic refuse, probably reflecting nearby settlement activity	0.52-0.74m

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
1511	Fill	Fill of pit 1512, unexcavated	Similar to 1509, the lower fill in pit 1510	0.52m+
1512	Cut	Pit cut	Pit, very close to pit 1510	0.52m+
1513	Fill	Fill of ditch 1514, unexcavated		0.52m+
1514	Cut	Ditch	Ditch at SE end of trench, unexcavated	0.52m+
1515	Fill	Fill of ditch 1516	Friable, silty fill of ditch 1516 with occasional pottery	0.52-1.08m
1516	Cut	Ditch cut	Wide ditch with flat base, visible on geophysics and continues to Trench 16	0.52-1.08m
1517	Fill	Fill of ditch 1517	Single, homogenous fill in ditch 1518, no finds	0.52-0.78m
1518	Cut	Ditch cut	Small linear ditch, parallel to 1516	0.52-0.78m
1519	Fill	Fill of gully 1520	Shallow fill in gully 1520, no finds	0.52-0.57m
1520	Cut	Gully	Small gully, undated. Probably continues into Trench 16	0.52-0.57m

Trench 16

Site area: North field

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.66m max

Orientation: N-S

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
1600	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.31m
1601	Layer	Subsoil		0.31m-0.61m
1602	Layer	Natural		0.61-0.66m+
1603	Fill	Fill of ditch 1604		0.61m+
1604	Cut	Ditch	Unexcavated ditch, visible at N end of Trench 16. Probably the same as 1504 in Trench 15	0.61m+
1605	Fill	Fill of ditch 1606		0.61m+
1606	Cut	Ditch	Unexcavated ditch. Visible on geophysics, continues into Trench 15 as 1516	0.61m+
1607	Fill	Fill of gully 1608		0.61m+
1608	Cut	Gully	Unexcavated gully. Continues into Trench 15 excavated as 1520	0.61m+
1609	Fill	Fill of possible feature 1610		0.61m+
1610	Cut	Uncertain feature	Linear feature in centre of trench, shallow and irregular, could be ditch or furrow	0.61m+

Trench 17

Site area: North field

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.68m max

Orientation: N-S

Context	Type	Short description	Additional interpretation	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s)
1700	Layer	Topsoil		0.00-0.28m
1701	Layer	Subsoil		0.28-0.58m
1702	Layer	Natural		0.58-0.68m+
1703	Fill	Fill of terminus 1704	Mid to dark brown silty fill in terminus 1704. Contains charcoal and pottery	0.58-0.77m
1704	Cut	Ditch terminus	Cut of potential ditch terminus, or elongated oval pit	0.58-0.77m
1705	Fill	Fill of gully 1706	Clay silt fill in gully 1706	0.58-0.74m
1706	Cut	Gully	U-shaped, shallow gully	0.58-0.74m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (accession code: X.A64.2017)

The archive consists of:

37	Context records AS1
3	Field progress reports AS2
3	Photographic records AS3
171	Digital photographs
1	Drawing number catalogues AS4
39	Scale drawings
1	Sample number catalogues AS18
17	Trench record sheets AS41
1	Bag of sorted remains from flots and sorted remains
1	Box of finds
1	CD-Rom/DVDs
1	Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed with Leicestershire County Council Museum Collections.

A copy of the report will be deposited with the appropriate Historic Environment Record (HER).