

Archaeological evaluation of land off Evesham Road, Offenham, Evesham, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Shockingly Fresh Ltd

October 2019



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LAND OFF EVESHAM ROAD, OFFENHAM, WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological evaluation report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Land off Evesham Road, Offenham, Evesham, Worcestershire

Local planning authority: Wychavon District Council

Planning reference: 19/01013/FUL

Central NGR: SP 05848 45310

Commissioning client: Brodie Planning Associates Ltd, for Shockingly Fresh Ltd

WA project number: P5685

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Archaeological evaluation of land off Evesham Road, Offenham, Evesham, Worcestershire

By Peter Lovett

With contributions by Rob Hedge and Liz Pearson

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken of land off Evesham Road, Offenham, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR SP 05848 45310). It was commissioned by Brodie Planning Associates Ltd on behalf of Shockingly Fresh Ltd, in advance of a proposed greenhouse development. A planning application has been submitted.

Eleven trenches were excavated across the site, following a geophysical survey. A series of ditches and pits were revealed on the western side of the site, predominantly of late Roman date. These correlate well with the results of a previous excavation to the immediate south-west, showing a continuation of activity likely to be related to the surroundings of a villa complex. Finds included both local and regional pottery wares, and box-flue tile. Animal bone preservation was good, with the assemblage including deer antler.

The site is considered to be significant as it has the potential to further our understanding of the nature of activity on rural villa sites in the late 4th century, and beyond.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in September and October 2019 of land off Evesham Road, Offenham, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR (NGR SP 05848 45310). This comprised eleven evaluation trenches. The project was commissioned by Brodie Planning Associates Ltd on behalf of Shockingly Fresh Ltd, in advance of a proposed greenhouse development. A planning application has been submitted to Wychavon District Council (planning reference 19/01013/FUL).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the proposed development has the potential to impact upon specific heritage assets. Previous excavations immediately adjacent to the site revealed extensive Late Iron Age and Roman settlement activity and a Roman cemetery (WSM 02827 and 70440).

No brief was provided but following detailed discussion with the Archaeological and Planning Advisor for Wychavon District Council (WDC), a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcester Archaeology (WA 2019) and approved by WDC. The evaluation also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site comprises the northern c 1.28ha of a c 2.50ha field, currently used for agricultural purposes. It is located to the south-east of the village of Offenham, on the western side of Evesham Road, the B4510 (SP 05848 45310). To the south, Broadway Brook runs from east to west, feeding into the River Avon c 1km to the west. Greenhouses and agricultural land lie to the west, north, and east.

The site lies on undifferentiated Blue Lias formation and Charmouth Mudstone formation. In the northern half of the site, this is overlain by superficial deposits of the Wasperton Sand and Gravel Member (BGS 2019).

The site is generally flat, at c 30m AOD, and drops down c 28m AOD towards the Broadway Brook to the south of the study area.

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Introduction

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) of Main Street, Offenham, was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology in 2012 (Keith-Lucas 2012; WSM47372). In addition, an updated appraisal of the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) was undertaken in a Heritage Statement (Lovett 2019). The findings from the Heritage Statement are presented below.

2.2 Prehistoric

There is evidence for prehistoric settlement across the locality, with the ford across the River Avon considered to have been in use as a crossing point since prehistoric times (WSM25302). 19th century finds, including a Neolithic stone axe (WSM35820), and a worked stone wrist guard and two quern stones (WSM02812) were early indicators of prehistoric activity, whilst more recent excavations in the area have revealed a well-preserved Beaker period grave, including a vessel, stone wrist bracer and flint arrowheads (Hayes 2018; WSM67766). A number of undated but possibly prehistoric cropmarks

have been identified c 1km to the north-west of the site. These include a ring ditch, a driveway and a rectangular enclosure (WSM02811; WSM05484; WSM02813).

Recent excavations undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology to the immediate west of the site have revealed middle to late Iron Age activity (500 BC – AD 43) in the form of pits and ditches, with defined agricultural and possible domestic functions discernible (Bradley 2019; WSM70440).

2.3 Roman

There is evidence for Roman occupation of the landscape, primarily agricultural activity associated with a high status settlement illustrated by the recent excavations undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology on land immediately adjacent on the western edge of the present development site (Bradley 2019; WSM70440). This site dated mainly from the late 2nd to late 4th century AD. In addition to the agricultural features, a stone-lined structure thought to be a water cistern was discovered. A number of high status finds such as window glass and box-flue tile were recovered, along with a possible 'curse tablet' that "may raise the possibility that there was also some votive focus" (*ibid*, 1).

The aforementioned crossing point in the River Avon is thought to be connected by a minor Roman road to the arterial Icknield Street Roman road c 5.5km to the east. The smaller side road is considered likely to follow the course of Three Cocks Lane c 500m north of the development site (Cox 1953). A Romano-British cemetery was discovered in 1887 at Faulk Mill c 250m to the north-west of the development site where twenty skeletons were excavated, including three decapitation burials, and one laid out on a stone slab with artefacts of 2nd-3rd century date (*ibid*). Numerous find spots have been recorded on the Portable Antiquity Scheme (PAS) within the parish, including coins from the 1st to 3rd century found at one site north of Three Cocks Lane (WSM02810).

2.4 Anglo-Saxon to medieval

The first historical references to Offenham date to the early 8th century, in the form of a land grant to the Benedictine Abbey of Evesham by Offa, King of Essex and Mercia (VCH 1971). Before that, Anglo-Saxon activity is identified in the archaeological record in the form of a 5th-7th century cemetery at Bennet's Hill 1.2km to the north-east (WSM24394). By the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086, Offenham as a village was well established, with fourteen households. In the middle of the 12th century, the abbot of Evesham created a deer park at Offenham, and placed here a grange. This was extended by subsequent abbots who built a dovecote and a tithe barn (VCH 1971).

2.5 Post-medieval

Offenham village contains a number of post-medieval buildings, many of which are designated listed buildings. Closer to the site are an undesignated, partly surviving, threshing barn (WSM30498) and the remains of Faulk Mill (WSM07807), a former water-powered corn mill 200m to the west. The dominance of market gardens in the local economy is attested to by the cartographic evidence. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps through to the present day show fruit farming, and more recently allotments and nurseries in the wider area. The 1st edition OS map of 1886 indicates the present development site to have then occupied the southern half of a larger agricultural field which extended northwards to Laurels Road.

2.6 Previous archaeological work on the site

The site has not been the subject of any recorded intrusive archaeological investigations previously. A geophysical magnetometer survey was undertaken by SUMO Geophysics Ltd on 27 February 2019 (SUMO 2019). The survey did not reveal any defined anomalies of potential archaeological interest, although this conclusion is qualified due to the prevailing ground conditions. The site has been under intensive agricultural use, and it was not possible to survey the eastern third. It was recorded that it was possible that this modern activity had "the potential to mask weaker, more ephemeral, archaeological responses" (SUMO 2019, 3).

3 Project aims

The aims and scope of the project were to undertake sufficient fieldwork to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits beyond reasonable doubt;
- identify their location, nature date and preservation;
- assess their significance;
- assess the likely impact of the proposed development.

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019). Fieldwork was undertaken between 30 September and 4 October 2019.

Eleven trenches, amounting to 756m² in area, were excavated over the c 1.55ha site, representing a sample of 5%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

The trenches were laid out in a rough grid array to attain as much coverage as possible within the limits of the site.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° 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 (WA 2012) and trench 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.

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

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowner it is anticipated that it will be deposited at Museums Worcestershire.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Introduction

The features recorded in the trenches are shown in Figures 2-8. The trench and context inventory is presented in Appendix 1.

5.2 Trench descriptions

5.2.1 Natural deposits across the site

The natural strata on the site consisted predominantly of yellowish brown sands and gravels, except in Trench 11, where it was a yellow sandy clay. The natural layer was between 0.40 and 0.56m below the current ground surface.

5.2.2 Trench 1

A total of seven features were identified in Trench 1 (Fig 3); four pits and three linear features. Of these, three were excavated. At the northern end of the trench, small gully 105 measured 0.6m wide and 0.32m deep, showing a V-shaped profile with a rounded base. This cut pit 103. This pit was shallow, and has probably been quite truncated. The gully contained Roman pottery.

At the southern end of the trench was a large ditch, running north-west to south-east (ditch 107; Plate 5). It contained at least four fills comprised of sterile gravels and silts. The ditch profile was V-shaped, with a steep and narrow base, reminiscent of an “ankle-breaker”, although not interpreted as one. The feature was 2.43m wide and 1.27m deep. The ditch was later recut by shallower linear feature 115. This had a similar profile, excepting the base which was shallow and rounded. It measured 1.85m across and 0.76m deep. No dateable material was recovered from either feature.

The unexcavated features consisted of two pits at the northern end of the trench, one being 2.6m across and the other 1.1m. There was a small gully of similar size and alignment to gully 105 in the middle of the trench, and at the southern end was a probable pit feature that extended beyond the trench edge at both the east and west sides. It measured 2.1m by at least 1.8m. All of these features remain undated but are conjectured to be Roman in date.

5.2.3 Trench 2

There were six features in this trench, three of which are probable tree bole pits (Fig 5). Pit 211 was excavated to test this, and was shallow, at 0.06m deep and 0.85m wide. It was quite regular in shape, however, so may be the truncated base of a pit. Features 207 to the west and 209 to the south were less regular, and are more likely to have been of natural origin. No datable material was recovered from pit 211.

A narrow gully 213 emerged from the northern edge of the trench aligned north-west to south-east. It was 0.34m wide and 0.19m deep, and contained a single undated sandy fill. The gully was partially truncated by two furrows, and did not emerge from underneath the second one. There were two further small gullies of similar size at the western end of the trench. These were aligned roughly north to south, and were unexcavated.

Three furrows of medieval to post-medieval date were present at the eastern end of the trench, running roughly north-north-east to south-south-west, towards the brook at the bottom of the slope.

5.2.4 Trench 3

Two ditches were excavated; large feature 303 in the south of the trench, and smaller ditch 320 in the northern half (Fig 6; Plates 1, 6, 7). Ditch 303 was 3.2m wide and nearly 1m deep. It contained four fills, illustrating the depositional sequence of the ditch from initial edge stabilisation to slow accumulation during its use, through to intentional backfilling. It contained Roman pottery dating to AD 350-450. Ditch 320 was on a similar alignment to ditch 303, but was much smaller, being 1.42m wide and 0.27m deep. It contained pottery dating to AD 160-400.

There were four small gullies in the trench, all c 0.8m wide, and all aligned north-west to south-east. Where these ditches had a relationship with either ditch 303 or 320, the unexcavated one appeared to be truncated. No pottery was recovered from these features. A small pit on the eastern edge of the trench was also identified. It was unexcavated.

Two possible pit clusters, 314 and 318, were revealed in the middle of the trench. They consisted of two separate spreads of material. A modern linear feature truncated both of these spreads, and a slot through this allowed a view of the profile of the deposits. Feature 318 was found to be only c 0.05m deep, and it is possible that this and 314 are the remnants of furrows rather than Roman features.

5.2.5 Trench 4

Four furrows of medieval or post-medieval date were identified in this trench, along with a probable tree bole pit. The furrows were all aligned north-east to south-west.

5.2.6 Trench 5

Trench 5 was similar to Trench 4, in having only furrows and a possible tree bole pit. The furrows maintained the alignment seen previously.

5.2.7 Trench 6

No archaeological features were identified in this trench. There was a modern service ditch aligned north-east to south-west at the northern end.

5.2.8 Trench 7

Two furrows aligned roughly north to south were identified in this trench, along with a probable tree bole pit.

5.2.9 Trench 8

A single furrow was aligned roughly north to south. At the northern end of the trench was a small pit containing a large quantity of early to mid-20th century glass bottles, ceramic vessels, and metal objects, including a candle stick holder and parts of an oil lamp, as well as quantities of broken window glass.

5.2.10 Trench 9

A small gully measuring 0.56m wide and 0.09m deep was aligned north-east to south-west. It contained no dateable material. Also present in the trench were three furrows aligned roughly north to south, and four probable tree bole pits (Plate 2).

5.2.11 Trench 10

A large ditch, 1003, was located at the western end of the trench (Fig 7). It was aligned north-east to south-west, but there was a possibility that it was just beginning to turn to the west at its southern end, before it extended beyond the trench edge. It was not excavated, but a Roman ceramic tile was recovered from its uppermost visible fill at the surface.

A small gully running roughly north to south was excavated in the middle of the trench. This was 0.66m wide and 0.26m deep with steep sides and a flat base. It was undated but is considered probably to be Roman in date.

A small pit 1009 was excavated on the southern edge of the trench. It was 0.86m across and 0.23m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. It was undated. Another small pit (1017) was located to the east, and whilst unexcavated, a surface find of Bronze Age pottery was recovered. A further small pit, a gully, and a posthole were identified but unexcavated.

Two furrows were present at the eastern end of the trench, aligned north-east to south-west.

5.2.12 Trench 11

A total of seven ditches were identified in this trench, of which one was excavated (1103) (Fig 8; Plates 3-4). This was 0.62m wide and 0.5m deep, and was filled with two distinct deposits. The initial fill comprised a mid-yellowish-brown clay sand and represented the use phase of the ditch. Animal bone, and Roman pottery dating to AD 350-410 was recovered from it. The overlying fill was a darker sandy clay, and was likely to be the result of intentional closure of the feature with bank material. A large quantity of building stone rubble was recovered from it, along with a large amount of pottery (dating to AD 350-450), animal bone (including deer antler), iron nails, copper slag and box flue tile. The ditch was excavated against the section (at an oblique angle), and it appeared that the feature cut the shallow subsoil.

Immediately north of 1103 was a ditch that was only partially revealed in the trench, but appeared to be on the same alignment. In the middle of the trench was a large spread of material, which at the time was considered to be two ditches with a possible spread of material between them. On consideration, it could be one wide ditch, with multiple fills visible in plan. If so, it would be c 7m wide. It was roughly north-west to south-east in alignment. Roman pottery was recovered from the surface. At the south-western end of the trench, three ditches were aligned roughly north to south. They remain unexcavated, partly due to the high water table on this part of the site, but box flue tile and

pottery dating to AD 350-410 was recovered from the surface of the middle ditch. They ranged in width from 0.7m to 1.2m.

5.2.13 Modern

The topsoil was around 0.2 to 0.3m thick, and covered the whole site. Modern service trenches were identified, in Trenches 3, 6, and 10.

6 Artefactual evidence, by Rob Hedge (PCIfA)

6.1 Artefact methodology

The finds work reported here conforms with the following guidance: for findwork by ClfA (2014b), for pottery analysis by PCR/SGRP/MPRG (2016), for archive creation by AAF (2011), and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

6.1.1 Recovery policy

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

6.1.2 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 Microsoft Access database.

Artefacts from environmental samples were examined and included in the assessment.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

6.1.3 Discard policy

Artefacts from topsoil and subsoil and unstratified contexts will normally be noted but not retained, unless they are of intrinsic interest (e.g. worked flint or flint debitage, featured pottery sherds, and other potential 'registered artefacts'). All artefacts will be collected from stratified excavated contexts, except for large assemblages of post-medieval or modern material, unless there is some special reason to retain such as local production. Such material may be noted and not retained, or, if appropriate, a representative sample may be collected and retained. Discard of finds from post-medieval and earlier deposits will only be instituted with reference to museum collection policy and/or with agreement of the local museum.

See the environmental section for other discard where appropriate.

6.2 Artefactual analysis

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1 and 2.

The assemblage came from 12 stratified contexts. It included pottery, ceramic building material, iron objects, slag, animal bone, and antler. With the exception of a single sherd of Bronze Age pottery, the finds were Roman in date. Artefact condition was generally good, with the majority of sherds displaying low levels of abrasion. At 15g, the mean sherd weight was above average, indicating a low level of residuality/disturbance.

period	material	object type	count	weight(g)
Bronze Age	ceramic	pot	1	27
Roman	ceramic	box flue tile	2	412
		tile	3	576
		oven	1	33
		pot	26	341
late Roman	ceramic	pot	15	285
undated	animal bone	mammal bone and tooth	74	1436
	antler	cut antler	19	568
	iron	iron objects	2	25
		nail	1	14
	slag(cu)	copper slag	1	5
	stone	burnt stone	4	2
Totals			149	3724

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Broad period	fabric code	Fabric common name	count	weight (g)
Bronze Age	4.7 / 4.12	Shell, grog, and quartz	1	27
Roman	12.1	Reduced Severn Valley ware	1	13
	14	Fine sandy grey ware	2	23
	22	Black-burnished ware, type 1 (BB1)	11	208
	23	Shell gritted ware	7	32
	28	Nene Valley ware	1	5
	29	Oxfordshire red/brown colour coated ware	4	36
	98	Miscellaneous Roman wares	1	6
	149	Worcestershire imitation black-burnished ware	4	138
Totals			32	488

Table 2 Quantification of the pottery by fabric

6.2.1 Summary of artefactual evidence by period

Bronze Age

A single base sherd of pottery was recovered from fill (1018) of pit [1017]. It contains fossil shell, quartz, and grog. Although abraded, it is identifiable as an example of the shell-tempered vessels of Bronze Age date from Kemerton (Woodward and Jackson 2015). Identification to a specific fabric is somewhat speculative, but it is closely comparable to Kemerton fabrics 4.12 (Early Bronze Age) and 4.7 (Later Bronze Age).

Roman

Although relatively small, the pottery assemblage contained a high proportion of identifiable forms. The majority of the pottery was produced in the later 3rd or 4th century. The late Roman shelly wares (fabric 23) are traditionally thought to indicate later 4th century activity in this area, but there are indications from the adjacent Offenham Biomass site (Griffin 2019) that this ware may occur here earlier in the 4th century, if not before. However, there are also a number of vessels that suggest occupation continued after AD 350, including:

- Plain, conical flanged bowls (type 45.3) in black-burnished ware fabric 22, typical of the later 4th century (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 109)
- Plain, conical flanged bowls in imitation black-burnished wares (fabric 149)

Late Roman fine wares include Oxfordshire (fabric 29) and Nene Valley (fabric 28) vessels, and there is a notable absence of samian ware, confirming the later Roman character of this assemblage.

The presence of several fragments of box-flue hypocaust tile suggests a villa complex lies nearby. A large quantity of antler-working waste was also recovered, alongside a domestic animal bone assemblage.

context	material	object type	Count	weight(g)	start date	end date	TPQ date range
106	ceramic	pot	1	1	43	410	AD 43 - 410
116	animal bone	mammal bone	1	12			undated
304	animal bone	mammal bone	38	411			AD 300 - 410
	ceramic	pot	3	27	300	410	
			1	19	43	410	
		tile	1	60	43	410	
	iron	nail	1	14			
antler	cut antler	1	9				
305	animal bone	mammal bone	9	155			AD 350 - 450
		pig tooth	1	12			
		sheep/goat tooth	1	5			
	ceramic	pot	1	9	350	450	
		pot	1	16	43	410	

context	material	object type	Count	weight(g)	start date	end date	TPQ date range
306	animal bone	mammal bone	4	67			undated
321	animal bone	mammal bone	5	107			AD 160 - 400
	ceramic	pot	7	88	160	400	
	stone	burnt stone	2	1			
1004	ceramic	tile	1	434	43	410	AD 43 - 410
1018	ceramic	pot	1	27	-2500	-800	2500 - 800 BC
1104	animal bone	mammal bone	6	141			AD 350 - 450
	ceramic	box flue tile	1	126	43	410	
		oven	1	33	200	410	
		pot	6	114	100	410	
			3	32	120	400	
			1	5	150	400	
			1	9	240	400	
			2	85	350	410	
			6	23	350	450	
		2	13	43	410		
		tile	1	82	43	410	
	iron	iron objects	2	25			
	antler	cut antler	18	559			
	slag(cu)	copper slag	1	5			
	burnt stone	2	1				
1105	animal bone	mammal bone	9	526			AD 350 - 410
	ceramic	pot	2	53	350	410	
			2	24	43	410	
1110	ceramic	pot	1	20	43	410	AD 43 - 410
1116	ceramic	box flue tile	1	286	43	410	AD 350 - 410
		pot	1	88	350	400	

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

6.3 Synthesis

The majority of the Roman pottery dates to the later 3rd and 4th century, with most diagnostic forms indicating a concentration in the later part of that range. The presence of local imitation black-burnished ware conical bowls indicate occupation in the mid to late-4th century or beyond. The finds are strongly comparable to those from the adjoining Offenham Biomass site (Griffin 2019), and the two assemblages should be considered as originating from the same late Roman complex.

6.3.1 Research frameworks

The general pattern of rural settlement in this area is of abandonment by the mid-4th century AD (Dalwood *et al* 2018, 59). That this site is an exception may be seen as an indication of continued status, and 'villa'-type occupation in the later 4th century. However, as White (2018, 211) notes, the presence of a 4th-century assemblage does not preclude later occupation: material culture in 5th century contexts has frequently been shown to consist largely of items of 4th-century production. This is a pattern observed at the late Roman villa at Childswickham, 10km to the south, at which 5th century occupation is identifiable through metalwork rather than ceramics (Hurst and Patrick 2004). Further work on this site has the potential to answer questions on supply and economy at the end of the Roman period, or beyond.

6.4 Recommendations

6.4.1 Further analysis and reporting

The following recommendations are made with regard to further work on the artefacts considered as part of this report.

- Full analysis of the artefacts should be included in any subsequent stages of work on the site.

6.4.2 Discard and retention

Deposition of the archive with Museums Worcestershire is recommended.

7 Environmental evidence by Elizabeth Pearson (ACIfA)

Environmental sampling was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012).

7.1 Environmental methodology

7.1.1 Sampling policy

Samples were taken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (2012). A total of two samples (each of 10 litres) of Roman date were taken from the site (Table 4).

Context	Sample	Feature type	Fill of	Period	Sample volume (L)	Volume processed (L)	Residue assessed	Flot assessed
321	2	Ditch	320	Roman	10	10	Yes	Yes
1104	1	Ditch	1103	Roman	10	10	Yes	Yes

Table 4: List of bulk samples

7.1.2 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 hammerstone. 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).

7.1.3 Discard policy

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

7.2 Environmental analysis

The samples are summarised in Tables 5 and 6.

Only scant environmental remains were recovered. Occasional charred cereal crop remains were noted from fill (1104) of ditch [1103] and a small number of unidentified charred remains which may be parts of a berry.

Little interpretation could be made of these remains, and the assessment suggests low survival of environmental remains on the site.

context	sample	large mammal	small mammal	mollusc	charcoal	charred plant	artefacts
321	2	occ		occ		occ	occ coal/clinker, heat-cracked stone, chert
1104	1	occ	occ	occ	occ	occ	occ chert, heat-cracked stone

Table 5: Summary of environmental samples; occ = occasional, mod = moderate, abt = abundant

context	sample	preservation type	species detail	category remains	quantity/diversity	comment
321	1	ch	<i>Chenopodium/Atriplex</i> sp	seed	+/low	
321	1	ch	Poaceae sp indet culm node	chaff	+/low	
321	1	ch	unidentified	misc	+/low	Berry fragment like Ribes, or Rosa sp seed
1104	1	ch	<i>Triticum dicoccum/spelta</i> grain, Cereal sp indet grain	grain	+/low	

Table 6: Plant remains from bulk samples

Key:

preservation	quantity
ch = charred	+ = 1 - 10

8 Discussion

The results of the evaluation clearly indicate extensive late Roman occupation on the western side of the development area, and demonstrate the absence of such activity in the central and eastern parts of the site.

The pottery recovered from the site is of late-3rd to 4th century AD date, being a combination of locally produced wares and fabrics from central and southern England. A number of pieces of box flue tile were also recovered, as well as large quantities of stone building rubble, suggesting the presence of stone structures, possibly a villa complex, in the immediate vicinity. The Biomass site that was excavated c 30m to the west of Trench 11 (Bradley 2019) revealed extensive Iron Age and particularly late Roman occupation, with box-flue tile, window glass and a stone structure thought to be a cistern. Alongside this high-status material was a series of ditches representing changes in land management, many of which continued beyond the limits of the excavation area towards the development site. The undated features are likely to be Iron Age or Roman date, and whilst Bronze Age pottery was recovered from one pit, such material was encountered on the Biomass site only as residual artefacts within later features. As such, the archaeological activity of both the Biomass excavation and this evaluation should be considered as parts of a larger Iron Age and late Roman landscape, probably encompassing a 3rd to 4th century villa complex with associated agricultural surroundings.

The eastern side of the site contained only medieval furrows, and a single mid-20th century rubbish pit.

As with the Biomass site, animal bone was present in substantial quantities, and the preservation was good. The environmental analysis however showed little potential for the survival of environmental remains.

The depth of the overlying topsoil and (sparse) subsoil across the whole site was shallow, at 0.33-0.53m. The geophysical survey results did not identify any of the archaeological features present, despite this shallow soil profile. This is considered likely to be due to the presence of gravels and other material that had been on the site as a relic of the previous land use, masking the signal.

9 Significance

9.1 Nature of the archaeological interest in the site

The site is considered likely to represent the immediate surroundings of a villa complex and its agricultural hinterlands. As such there is potential for a mix of domestic, industrial and agricultural activity to be present.

The recovery of a late Roman pottery assemblage alongside antler-working waste and ceramic building material suggests that the site has the potential to answer questions about supply and the rural economy in the 4th century, as well as informing our understanding of how villa sites operated during that period of widespread political instability, and potentially also of the transition into the post-Roman period.

9.2 Relative importance of the archaeological interest in the site

The site has the potential to further our understanding of the nature of activity on rural villa sites in the late 4th century, and beyond.

9.3 Physical extent of the archaeological interest in the site

The significant archaeology is considered to occupy approximately the western third of the development site. The eastern limits of the archaeological activity are well defined, whilst previous investigations have demonstrated extensive activity to the south-west of the study site.

The pottery is in good condition, meaning that the site is likely to yield closely-dateable forms, and the late Roman deposits are relatively undisturbed.

10 Conclusions

Eleven trenches were excavated across the site, following a geophysical survey. A series of ditches and pits were revealed on the western side of the site, predominantly of late Roman date. These correlate well with the results of a previous excavation to the immediate south-west, showing a continuation of activity likely related to the surroundings of a villa complex. Finds included both local and regional pottery wares, and box-flue tile. Animal bone preservation was good, with the assemblage including deer antler.

The site is considered to be significant as it has the potential to further our understanding of the nature of activity on rural villa sites in the late 4th century, and beyond.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in all of the trenches to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features. It is considered that the nature, density and distribution of archaeological features provides an accurate characterisation of the development site as a whole.

11 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Peter Lovett (ACIfA), assisted by Jem Brewer (PCIfA).

The project was managed by Tom Vaughan (MCIfA). The report was produced and collated by Peter Lovett. Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text.

12 Acknowledgements

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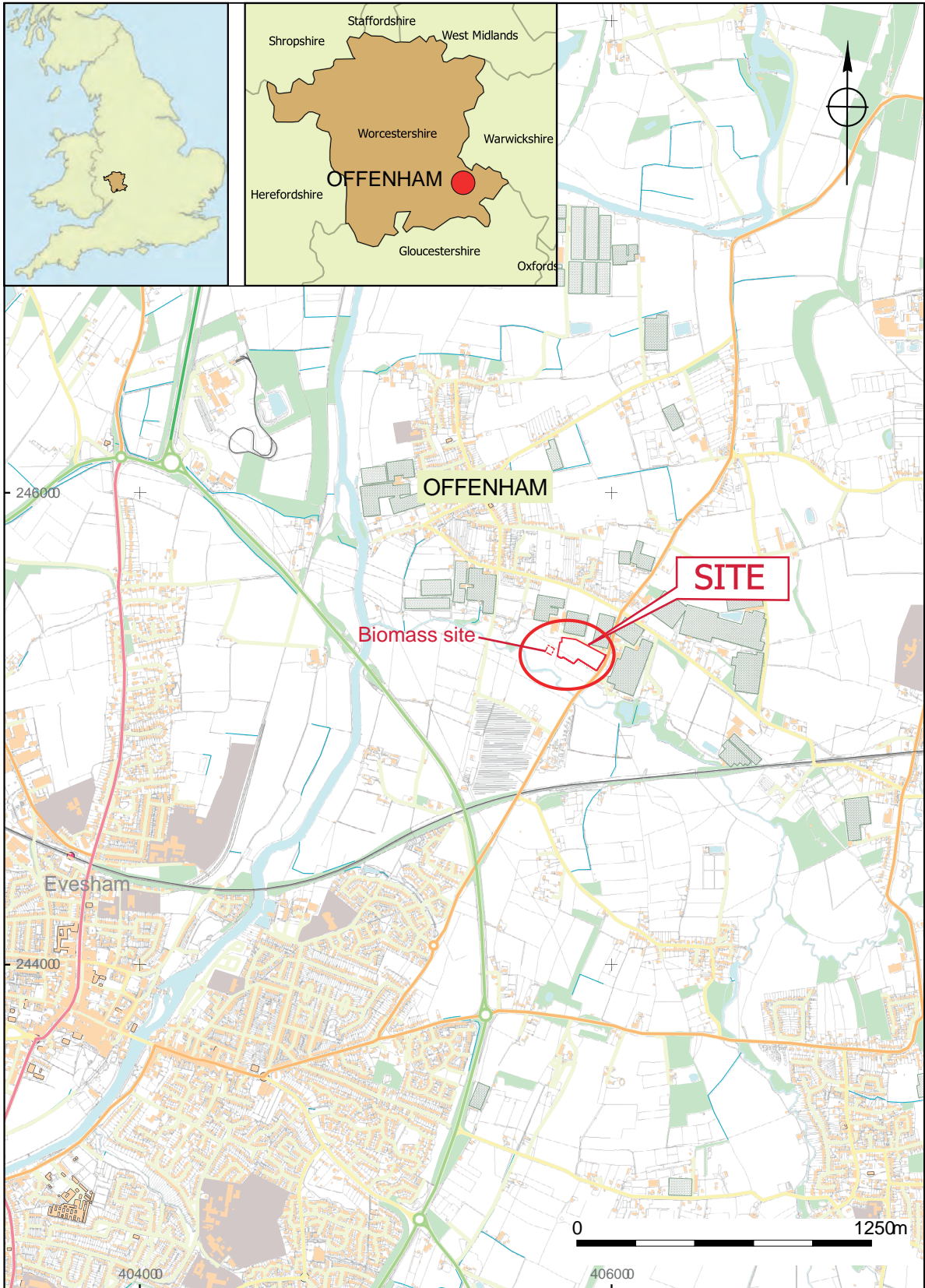
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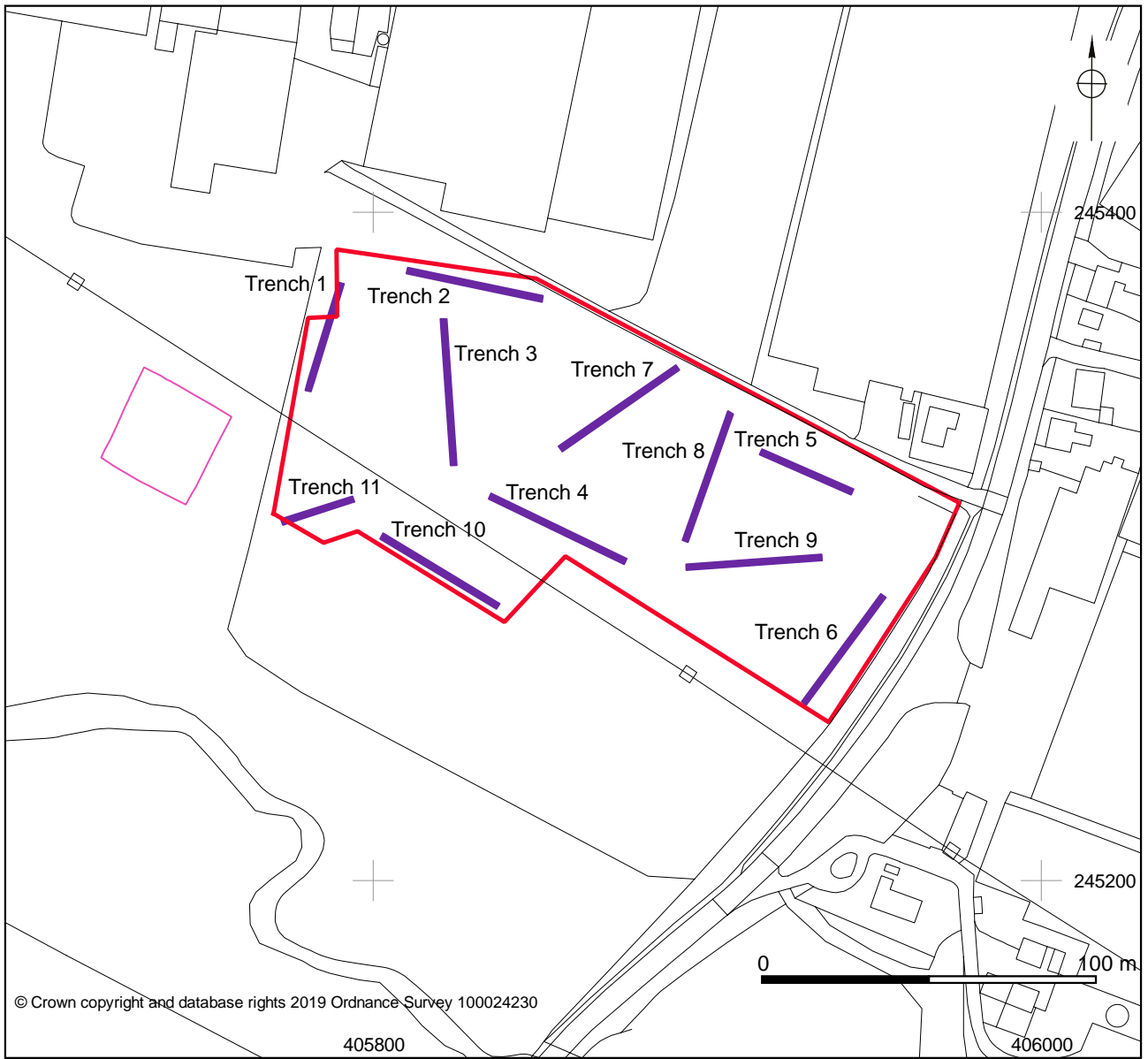
Figures



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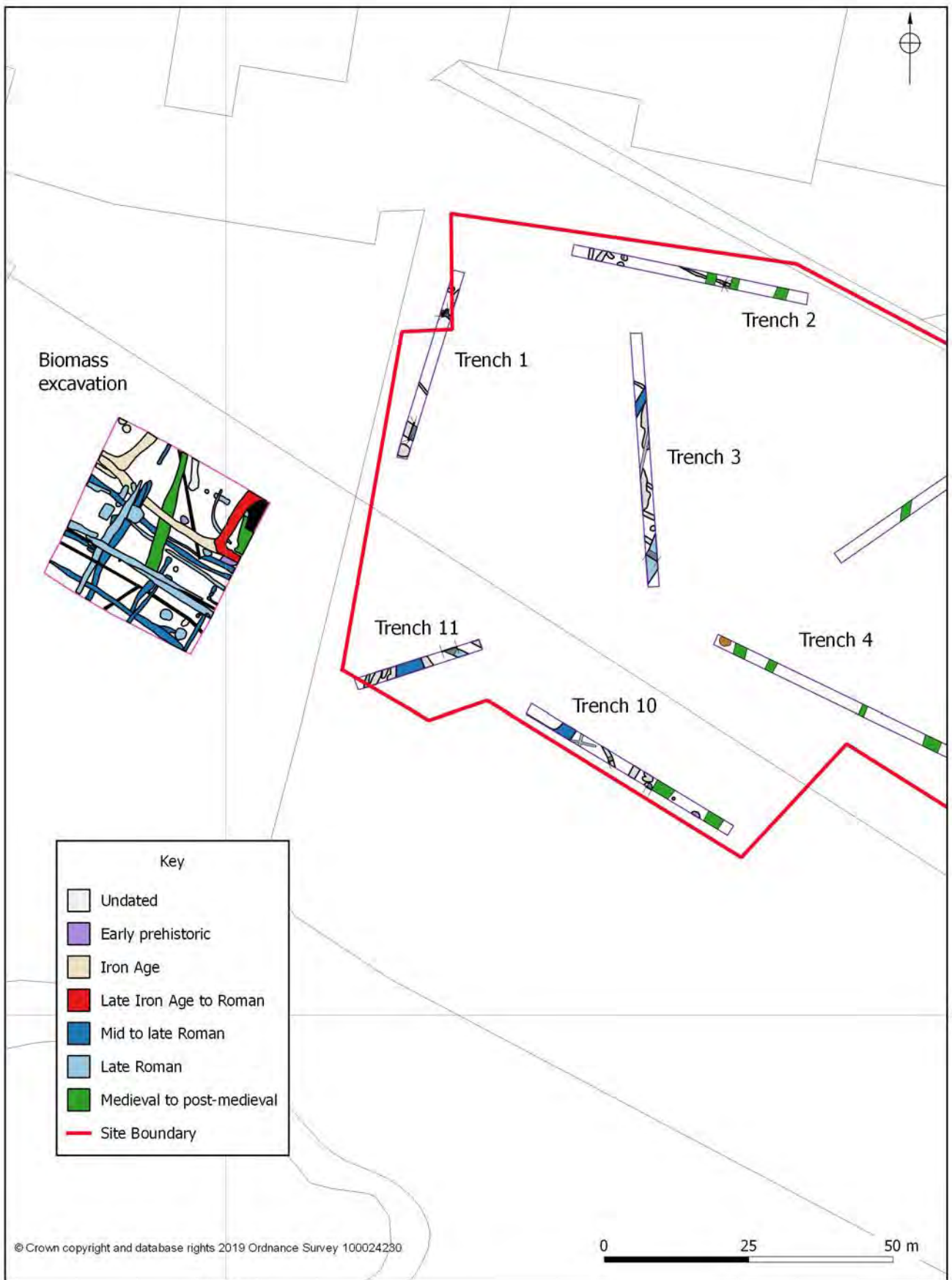
Location of the site

Figure 1



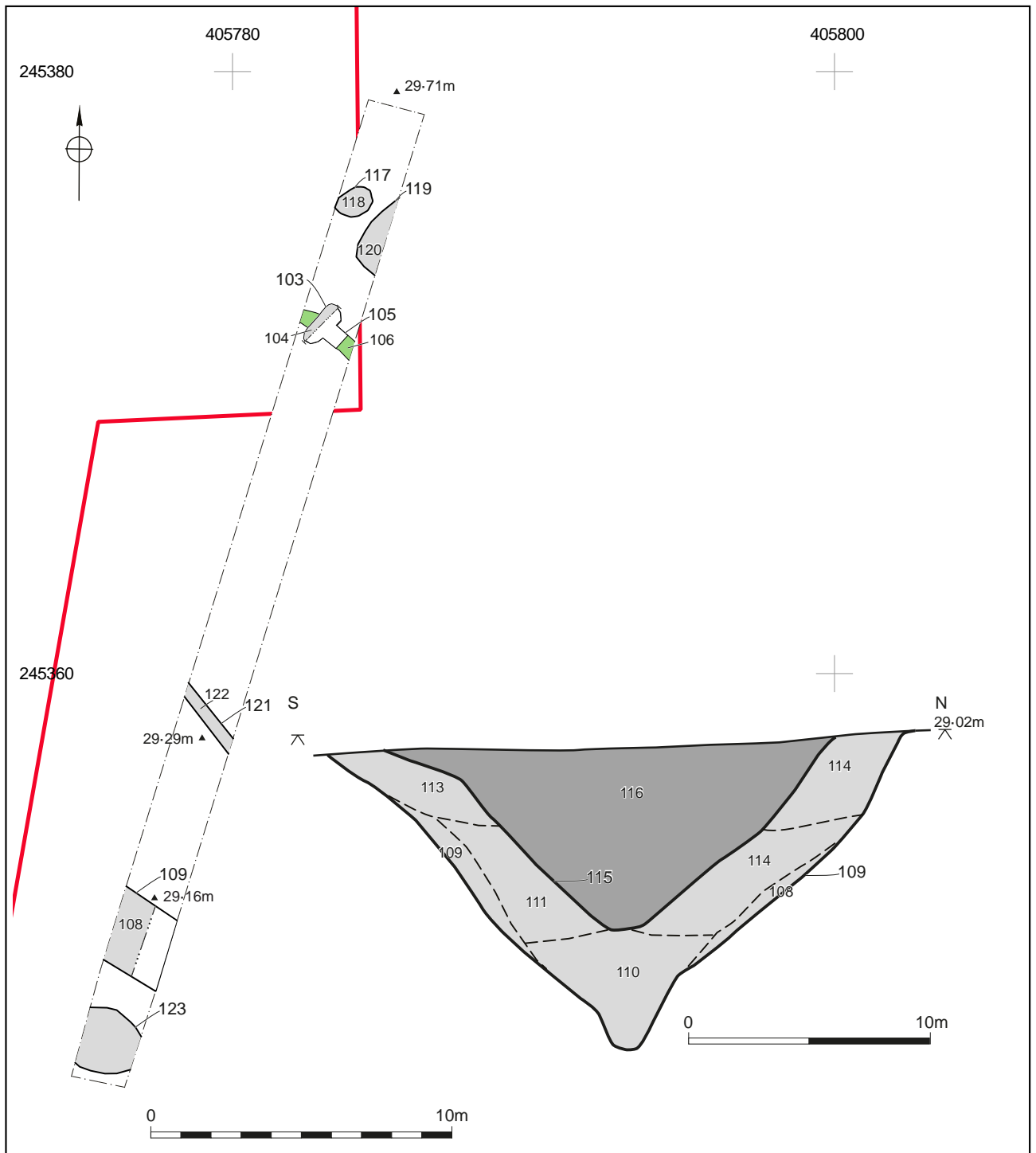
Trench locations

Figure 2



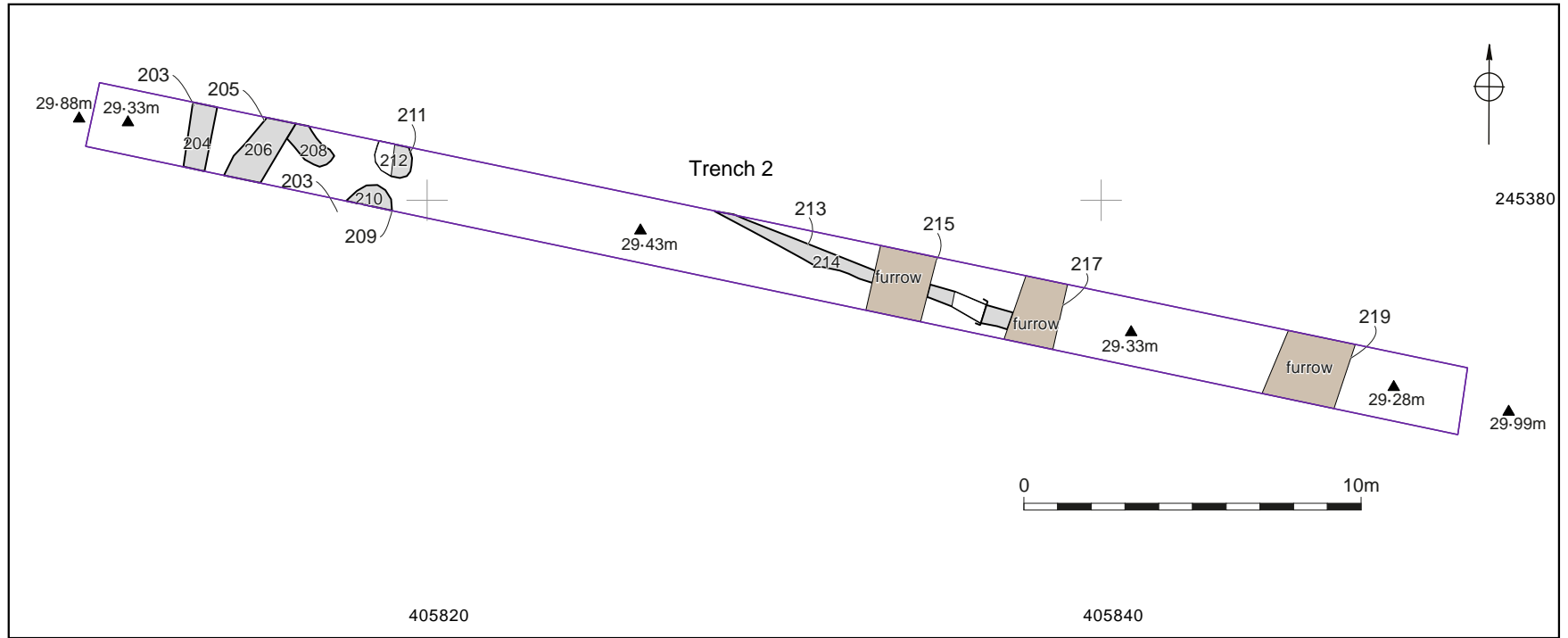
Trenches 1, 2, 3, 10 and 11 and Biomass excavation showing phases

Figure 3



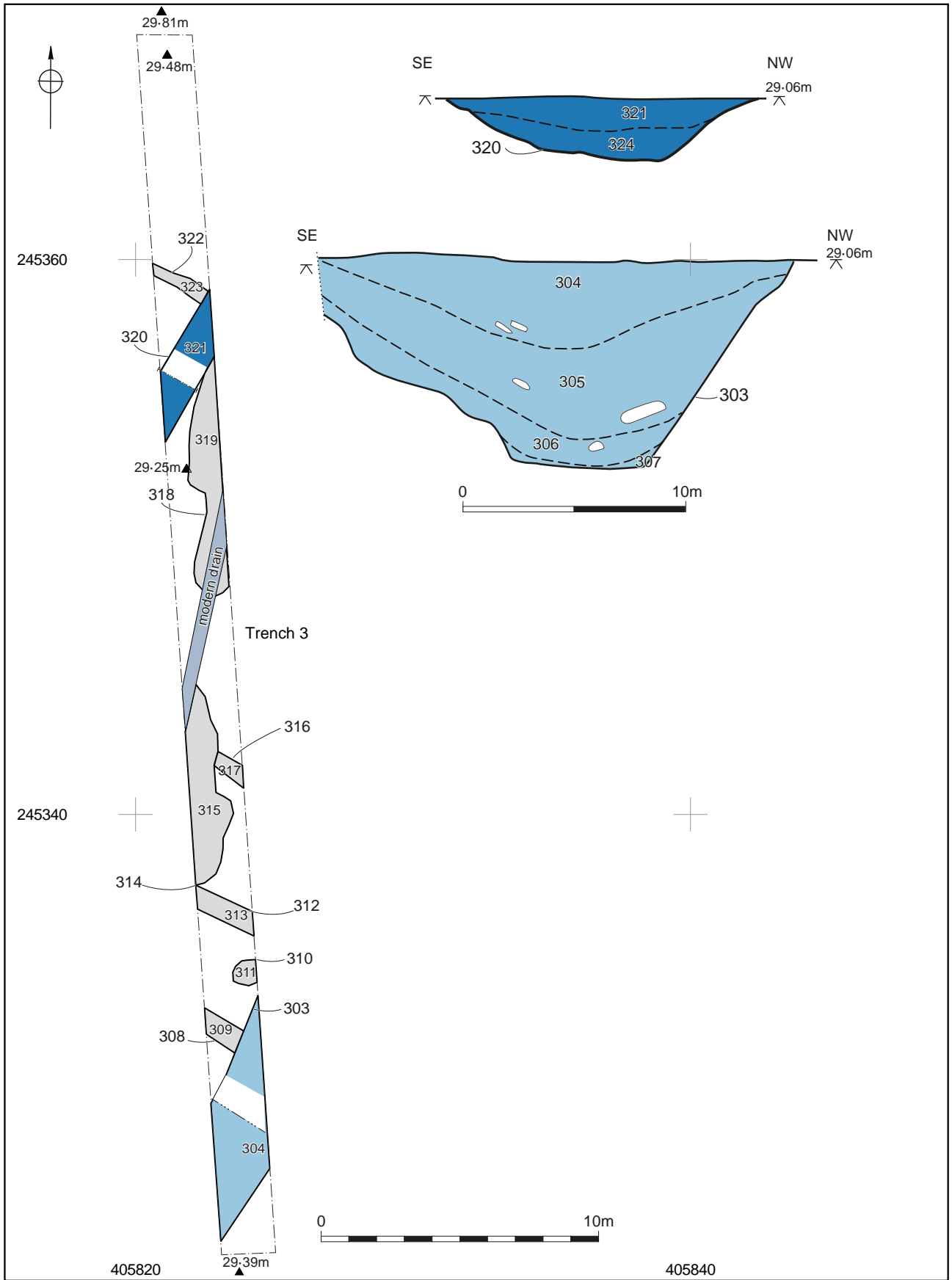
Trench 1 plan

Figure 4



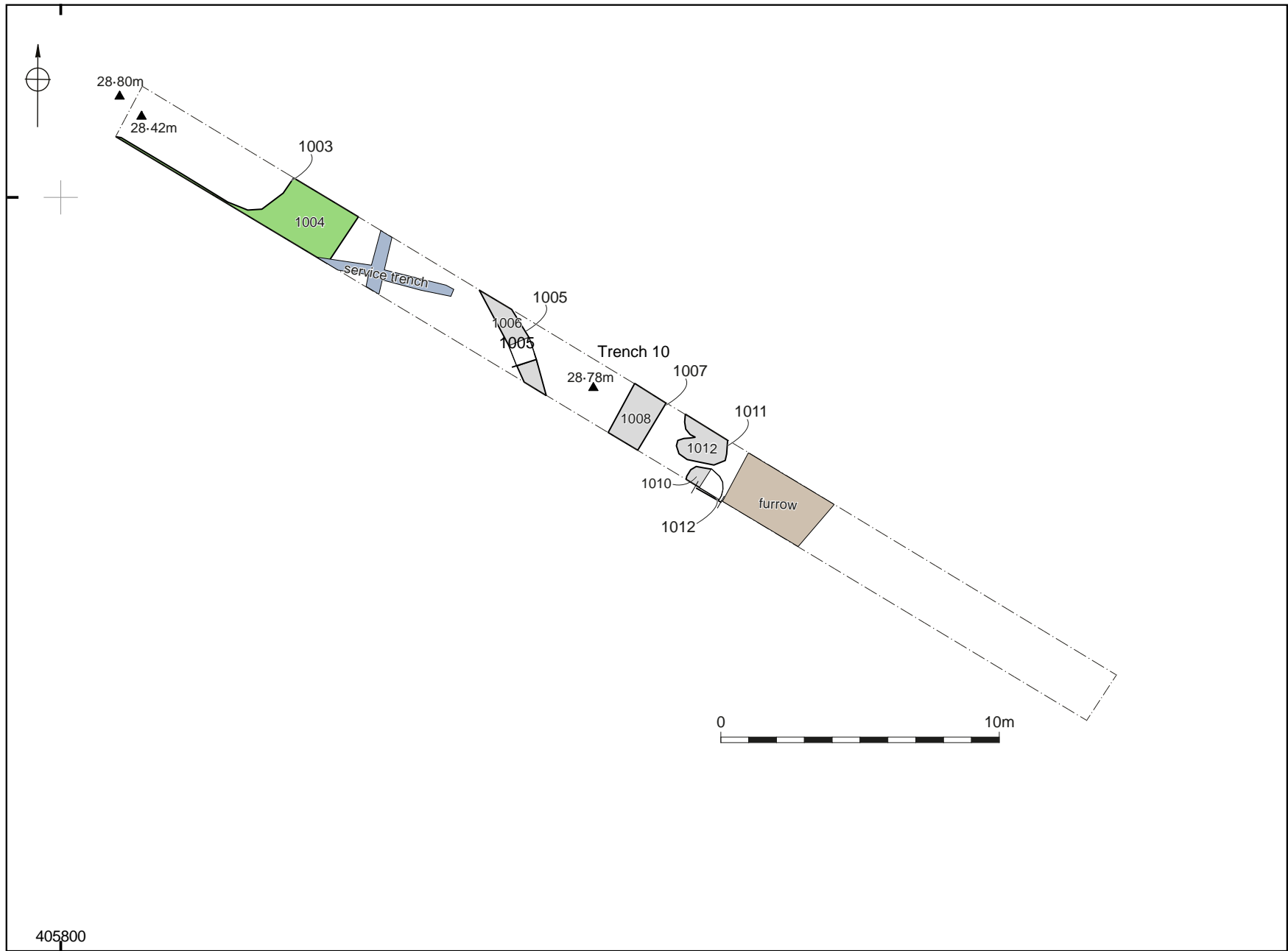
Trench 2 plan

Figure 5



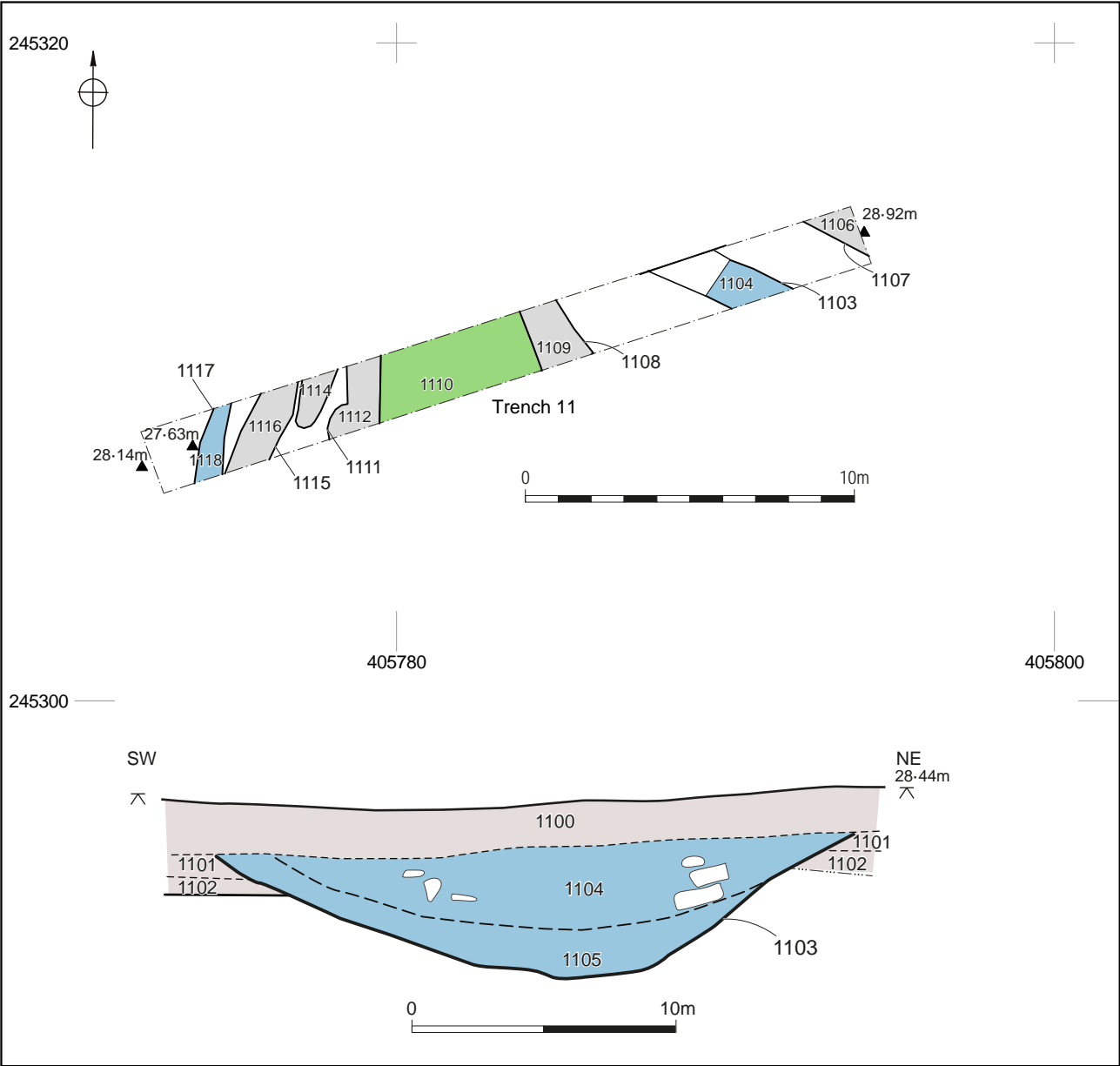
Trench 3 plan and sections of ditches 303 and 320

Figure 6



Trench 10 plan

Figure 7



Trench 11 plan and section of ditch 1103

Figure 8

Plates



Plate 1 Trench 3 looking north (1m scales)



Plate 2 Trench 9 looking south-west (1m scales)



Plate 3 Antler within ditch 1103, looking west (0.2m scale)



Plate 4 Oblique section through ditch 1103, looking west (1m scale)



Plate 5 Ditch 107, looking west (1m scales)



Plate 6 Ditch 303, looking north-east (1m scale)



Plate 7 Ditch 320 looking south-west (1m scale)

Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

Context summaries:

Trench 1

Length: 40 Width: 1.8 Orientation: NNE-SSW

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
100		Layer	Topsoil		
101		Layer	Subsoil		
102		Layer	Natural		
103	Pit	Cut	Cut of pit	0.13	
104	Pit	Fill	Fill of pit 103		Soft and crumbly Mid brown Silty sand
105	Gully	Cut	Cut of ditch	0.32	
106		Fill	Fill of ditch 105	0.32	Soft and friable Mid reddish brown Silty sand
107	Ditch	Cut	Cut of ditch	1.27	
108	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch 107	0.06	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown silty sand
109	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch 107	0.16	Moderately compact Mid yellowish brown Silty sand
110	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch 107	0.51	Loose Light greyish yellow Abundant sub rounded and sub angular pebbles in a silty sand matrix
111	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch 107	0.34	Moderately compact Mid reddish brown Sandy silt
112	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch 107	0.3	Moderately compact Mid brown Sandy silt
113	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch 107	0.19	Moderately compact Mid brown Sandy silt
114	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch 107	0.35	Moderately compact Mid brown Sandy silt
115	Ditch	Cut	Recut of ditch	0.76	
116	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch recut 115	0.76	Moderately compact Mid brown Sandy silt
117		Cut	Pit		
118		Fill	Fill of pit 117		
119		Cut	Pit		
120		Fill	Fill of pit 119		
121		Cut	Gully		
122		Fill	Fill of gully 121		
123		Cut	Pit		
124		Fill	Fill of pit 123		

Trench 2

Length: 40 Width: 1.8 Orientation: WNW-ESE

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
200	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.32	Moderately compact Mid brown Sandy silt
201		Layer	Subsoil	0.19	Moderately compact Mid reddish brown Silty sand
202	Natural	Layer	Natural		Loosen Light yellowish brown Mix of sand and gravels
203		Cut	Cut of gully		
204		Fill	Fill of gully 203		
205		Cut	Cut of gully		
206		Fill	Fill of gully 205		
207		Cut	Cut of pit?		
208		Fill	Fill of pit 207		
209		Cut	Cut of tree bole		
210		Fill	Fill of tree hole 209		
211	Tree bowl Pit	Cut	Cut of tree bole		
212		Fill	Fill of tree bole 211	0.06	Moderately compact Mid reddish brown Sandy silt
213	Gully	Cut	Cut of gully	0.19	
214	Gully	Fill	Fill of gully 213	0.19	Moderately compact Mid brownish red Silty sand
215		Cut	Cut of furrow		
216		Fill	Fill of furrow 215		
217		Cut	Cut of furrow		
218		Fill	Fill of furrow		
219		Cut	Cut of furrow		
220		Fill	Fill of furrow 219		

Trench 3

Length: 4 Width: 1.8 Orientation: NNW-SSE

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
300		Layer	Topsoil		
301		Layer	Subsoil		
302		Layer	Natural		
303		Cut	Enclosure ditch		
304		Fill	Upper fill of ditch 303		
305		Fill	Middle fill of ditch 303		
306		Fill	Lower fill of ditch 303		

307	Fill	Basal fill of ditch 303
308	Cut	Ditch
309	Fill	Fill of ditch 308
310	Cut	Pit
311	Fill	Fill of pit 310
312	Cut	Ditch
313	Fill	Fill of ditch
314	Cut	Possible furrow
315	Fill	Fill of possible furrow 314
316	Cut	Ditch
317	Fill	Fill of ditch 316
318	Cut	Possible furrow
319	Fill	Fill of possible furrow 318
320	Cut	Cut of ditch
321	Fill	Fill of ditch 320
322	Cut	Ditch
323	Fill	Fill of ditch
324	Fill	Lower fill of ditch 320

Trench 4

Length: 40 Width: 1.8 Orientation: NW-SE

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
400	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.15	Topsoil Mid reddish brown Silty sand
401	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.14	Soft Mid reddish brown Silty sand
402	Natural	Layer	Natural		
403	Furrow	Cut	Furrow		
404	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 403		
405	Furrow	Cut	Furrow		
406	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 405		
407	Furrow	Cut	Furrow		
408	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 407		
409	Furrow	Cut	Furrow		
410	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 409		
411	Tree bowl	Cut	Tree throw		
412	Tree bowl	Fill	Fill of tree throw		

Trench 5

Length: 40 Width: 1.8 Orientation: NW-SE

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
500	Layer	Layer	Topsoil		Moderately compact Mid brown Sandy silt
501	Layer	Layer	Subsoil	0.14	Moderately compact Light orangey brown Silty sand
502	Natural	Layer	Natural		Loose Light orangey brown Mix of sand and grkavels
503	Furrow	Cut	Furrow		
504	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 503		Moderately compact Mid orangey brown Sandy silt
505	Furrow	Cut	Furrow		
506	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 505		Moderately compact Mid orangey brown Sandy silt
507	Tree bowl	Cut	Cut of tree booe		
508	Tree bowl	Fill	Fill of tree bole		Moderately compact Mid orangey brown Sandy silt

Trench 6

Length: 40 Width: 1.8 Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
600	Layer	Layer	Topsoil	0.22	Moderately compact Mid brown Sandy silt
601	Layer	Layer	Subsoil	0.2	Moderately compact Mid orangey brown Silty sand
602	Natural	Layer	Natural		Loose Light orangey brown mix of sand and gravels Sand

Trench 7

Length: 40 Width: 1.8 Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
700	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil		Moderately compact Mid brown Sandy silt
701	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.18	Mod compact Mid orangey brown Silty sand
702	Natural	Layer	Natural		Loose Light orangey brown Mid of sand and gravel
703	Furrow	Cut	Furrow		
704	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 703		Moderately compact Mid reddish brown Silty sand
705	Tree bowl	Cut	Cut		
706	Tree bowl	Fill	Fill of tree bole 705		Moderately compact Mid orangey brown Sandy silt

707	Furrow	Cut	Cut of furrow	
708	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 707	Moderately compact Dark reddish brown Sandy silt

Trench 8

Length: 40 Width: 1.8 Orientation: NNE-SSW

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/depth	Deposit description
800	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.23	Moderately compact Mid brown Sandy silt
801	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.22	Moderately compact Mid orangey brown Silty sand
802	Natural	Layer	Natural		Loose Mid brownish orange Miso didn't sand and gravels
803	Furrow	Cut	Cut of furrow		
804	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 803		Moderately compact Mid orangey brown Sandy silt
805	Pit	Cut	Cut of pit		
806	Pit	Fill	Fill of pit 805		Mod compact Mid brown Sandy silt mixedwithabndant pieces of modern glass, greenhouse glass, jars and bottles, together with modern metal -candlestick.

Trench 9

Length: 40 Width: 1.8 Orientation: ENE-WSW

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/depth	Deposit description
900	Layer	Layer	Topsoil	0.2	Soft Mid brown grey Silty sand
901	Layer	Layer	Subsoil	0.21	Soft Mid orangey brown Silty sand
902		Layer	Natural		
903	Furrow	Cut	Furrow		
904	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 903		
905	Gully	Cut	Small gully	0.09	
906	Gully	Fill	Fill of gully 905	0.09	Soft Mid reddish brown Silty sand
907	Furrow	Cut	Furrow		
908	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 907		
909	Furrow	Cut	Furrow		
910	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow 909		
911	Layer	Layer	Tarmac layer	0.08	

Trench 10

Length: 40 Width: 1.8 Orientation: NW-SE

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
1000	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.11	Soft Dark greyish brown Silty sand
1001	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.1	Soft Mid reddish brown Silty sand
1002	Natural	Layer	Natural		
1003	Ditch	Cut	Enclosure ditch		
1004	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch 1003		
1005	Ditch	Cut	Gully	0.26	
1006	Ditch	Fill	Fill of gully 1005	0.26	Soft Mid reddish brown Silty sand
1007		Cut	Ditch		
1008		Fill	Fill of ditch 1007		
1009	Pit	Cut	Pit	0.23	
1010	Pit	Fill	Fill of pit 1009	0.24	Soft Mid orangey brown Silty sand
1011		Cut	Pit		
1012		Fill	Fill of pit 1011		
1013		Cut	Furrow		
1014		Fill	Fill of furrow 1013		
1015		Cut	Posthole		
1016		Fill	Fill of posthole 1015		
1017		Cut	Pit		
1018		Fill	Fill of pit 1018		
1019		Cut	Furrow		
1020		Fill	Fill of furrow 1019		

Trench 11

Length: 20 Width: 1.8 Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
1100	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.2	Firm Dark grey brown Clay sand
1101	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.11	Soft Mid greyish brown Clay sand
1102	Natural	Layer	Natural		
1103	Ditch	Cut	Cut of ditch	0.5	
1104	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch 1103	0.32	Soft Dark grey brown Sandy clay
1105	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch 1103	0.18	Soft Mid yellow brown Clay sand
1106		Cut	Ditch		

1107	Fill	Fill of ditch 1106
1108	Cut	Ditch
1109	Fill	Fill of ditch 1108
1110	Fill	fill of ditch 1108?
1111	Cut	Ditch
1112	Fill	Fill of ditch 1111
1113	Cut	Ditch
1114	Fill	Fill of ditch 1113
1115	Cut	Ditch
1116	Fill	Fill of ditch 1115
1117	Cut	Ditch
1118	Fill	Fill of ditch 1118

Appendix 2: Summary of project archive (WSM71978)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Animal bones, Ceramics, Environmental
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form), Drawing, Plan, Report, Section,
Digital	Database, GIS, Images raster/digital photography, Survey, Text

*OASIS terminology

Appendix 3: Summary of data for HER

period	material	object type	count	weight(g)
Bronze Age	ceramic	pot	1	27
Roman	ceramic	box flue tile	2	412
		tile	3	576
		oven	1	33
		pot	26	341
late Roman	ceramic	pot	15	285
undated	animal bone	mammal bone and tooth	74	1436
	antler	cut antler	19	568
	iron	iron objects	2	25
		nail	1	14
	slag(cu)	copper slag	1	5
	stone	burnt stone	4	2
Totals			149	3724

Finds Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Broad period	fabric code	Fabric common name	count	weight (g)
Bronze Age	4.7 / 4.12	Shell, grog, and quartz	1	27
Roman	12.1	Reduced Severn Valley ware	1	13
	14	Fine sandy grey ware	2	23
	22	Black-burnished ware, type 1 (BB1)	11	208
	23	Shell gritted ware	7	32
	28	Nene Valley ware	1	5
	29	Oxfordshire red/brown colour coated ware	4	36
	98	Miscellaneous Roman wares	1	6
	149	Worcestershire imitation black-burnished ware	4	138
Totals			32	488

Finds Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric

context	material	object type	Count	weight (g)	start date	end date	TPQ date range
106	ceramic	pot	1	1	43	410	AD 43 - 410
116	animal bone	mammal bone	1	12			undated
304	animal bone	mammal bone	38	411			AD 300 - 410
	ceramic	pot	3	27	300	410	
			1	19	43	410	
		tile	1	60	43	410	
	iron	nail	1	14			
antler	cut antler	1	9				
305	animal bone	mammal bone	9	155			AD 350 - 450
		pig tooth	1	12			
		sheep/goat tooth	1	5			
	ceramic	pot	1	9	350	450	
		pot	1	16	43	410	
306	animal bone	mammal bone	4	67			undated
321	animal bone	mammal bone	5	107			AD 160 - 400
	ceramic	pot	7	88	160	400	
	stone	burnt stone	2	1			
1004	ceramic	tile	1	434	43	410	AD 43 - 410
1018	ceramic	pot	1	27	-2500	-800	2500 - 800 BC
1104	animal bone	mammal bone	6	141			AD 350 - 450
	ceramic	box flue tile	1	126	43	410	
		oven	1	33	200	410	
		pot	6	114	100	410	
			3	32	120	400	
			1	5	150	400	
			1	9	240	400	
			2	85	350	410	

context	material	object type	Count	weight (g)	start date	end date	TPQ date range
			6	23	350	450	
			2	13	43	410	
		tile	1	82	43	410	
	iron	iron objects	2	25			
	antler	cut antler	18	559			
	slag(cu)	copper slag	1	5			
		burnt stone	2	1			
1105	animal bone	mammal bone	9	526			AD 350 - 410
	ceramic	pot	2	53	350	410	
			2	24	43	410	
1110	ceramic	pot	1	20	43	410	AD 43 - 410
1116	ceramic	box flue tile	1	286	43	410	AD 350 - 410
		pot	1	88	350	400	

Finds Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

Context	Sample	Feature type	Fill of	Period	Sample volume (L)	Volume processed (L)	Residue assessed	Flot assessed
321	2	Ditch	320	Roman	10	10	Yes	Yes
1104	1	Ditch	1103	Roman	10	10	Yes	Yes

Env Table 1: List of bulk samples

context	sample	large mammal	small mammal	mollusc	charcoal	charred plant	artefacts
321	2	occ		occ		occ	occ coal/clinker, heat-cracked stone, chert
1104	1	occ	occ	occ	occ	occ	occ chert, heat-cracked stone

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

context	sample	preservation type	species detail	category remains	quantity/diversity	comment
321	1	ch	<i>Chenopodium/Atriplex</i> sp	seed	+/low	

321	1	ch	Poaceae sp indet culm node	chaff	+/low	
321	1	ch	unidentified	misc	+/low	Berry fragment like Ribes, or Rosa sp seed
1104	1	ch	<i>Triticum dicoccum/spelta</i> grain, Cereal sp indet grain	grain	+/low	

Env Table 3: Plant remains from bulk samples

Key:

preservation	quantity
ch = charred	+ = 1 - 10