



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
ON LAND TO THE REAR OF 2 FERN LANE,
FORT END, HADDENHAM
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NGR SP 7408 0888**

*On behalf of
Hall Needham Associates*

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REPORT FOR Hall Needham Associates
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on land to the rear of 2 Fern Lane, Fort End, Haddenham in advance of submission of a planning application. Five trenches were excavated within the proposal area. Medieval ditches, dating from the 12th and 13th centuries as well as at least one medieval quarry pit, and undated postholes for a possible building were investigated.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The site is located at 2 Fern Lane, Fort End, Haddenham at NGR SP 7408 0888 and at an approximate height of 79m OD. Geologically the site is situated on Portland Stone.

1.2 Planning Background

A planning application is to be submitted for residential development at 2 Fern Lane, Fort End, Haddenham. Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) advised that a pre-determination programme of archaeological work should be carried out. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) was prepared proposing the methodology by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out by John Moore Heritage Services to satisfy the requirements of the Brief and agreed with BCAS.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Fort End, Haddenham, is one of the several foci of the polyfocal village of Haddenham. The town itself has been the subject of a Historic Town Assessment Report (HTAR) (Beckley & Green 2008), and in which it is suggested that Fort End may have been one of a series of green-based settlements along a north-south axis between Church End and Townsend that date to the late Saxon period. The site lies within the Archaeological Notification Area for Haddenham's historic core.

Little archaeological fieldwork has been carried out in Fort End. To the north at Townsend some Saxon pottery has been recovered. In the HTAR it is noted that the origins of Fort End are as yet unclear. The name Fort End may refer either to a 'ford' – this part of the village is near the stream, a tributary of the Thame, which runs through Haddenham – or to an earthwork of, as yet, unknown date.

At 4 High Street medieval pottery was found while digging a drain (County Historic Environment Record 0401200000). Approximately 50m to the east is the Friends Burial Ground known from documentary records to date from the 17th century to the modern period (HER 0557400000).

An archaeological evaluation by TVAS (2007) at 5 Townsend found some Saxon pottery along with pits, ditches and walls of 11th to 13th century date. An archaeological evaluation at 1 Fort End did not find any archaeological remains (JMHS 2009) (HER EBC17304). A further archaeological evaluation by

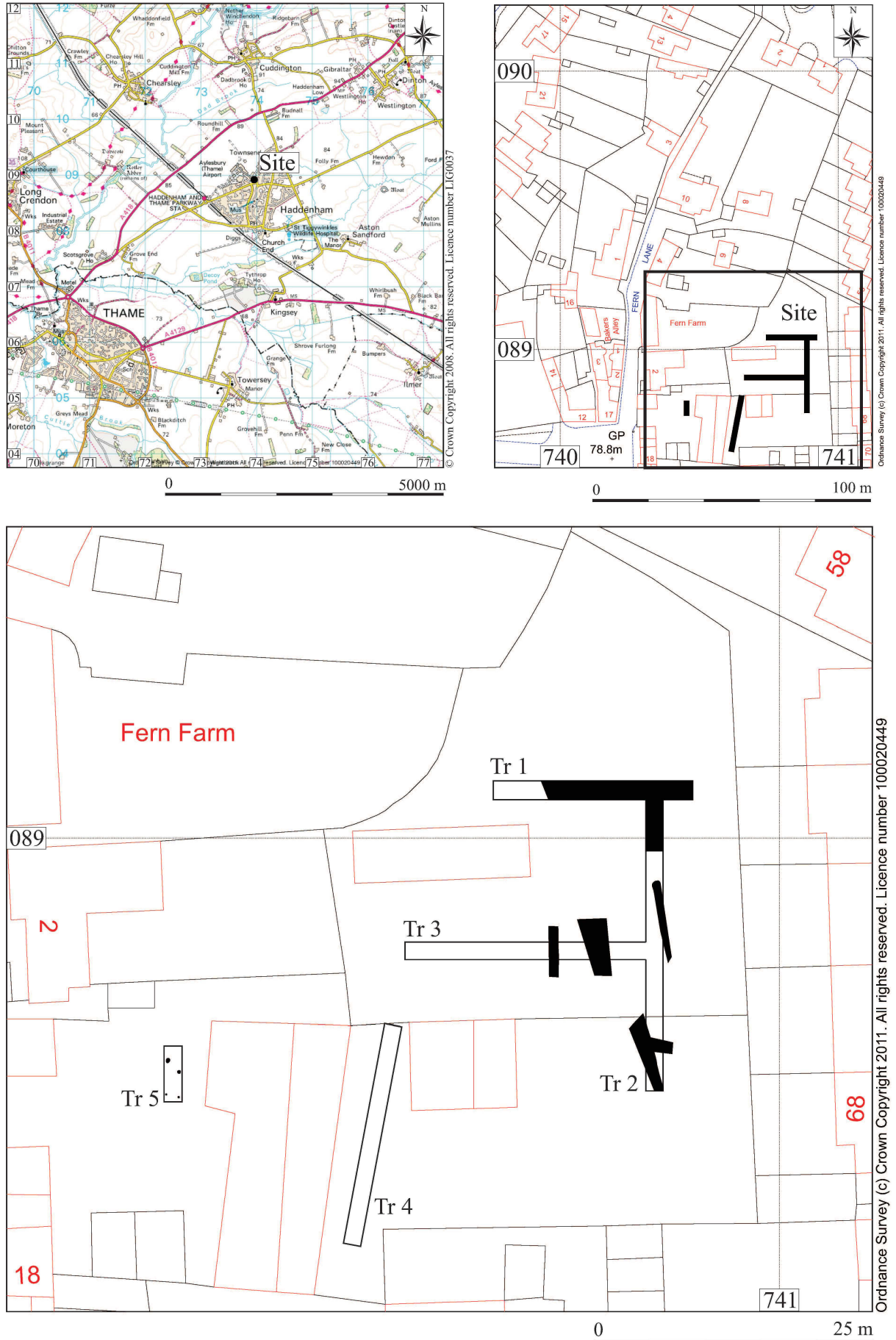


Figure 1. Site location

Archaeological Services & Consultancy (2010) *c.* 125m to the south-east failed to find anything of archaeological significance (HER EBC17373).

Fort End comprises a number of irregularly disposed plots surrounding a central green, in contrast with the adjacent quarter of High St where the properties are more regularly laid out off the straight road, High St. Properties around the green at Fort End date from the 15th century onwards.

At 1 & 2 Bakers Alley is a 19th century two storey rendered wicket utilitarian building (HER 1387100000) while 3 Fern Lane is also a similarly dated wicket building (HER 1387200000) as is No. 1 Fern Lane (HER 1387300000). Other buildings in Fern Lane, Townsend and Fort End are also wicket built such as No. 1 Fort End, a 17th century Grade II listed building with earlier origins.

The SE outbuilding is present on the 1879 OS 1:2500 map set in an enclosure and on its north side. The position of the west outbuilding is shown as a long narrow enclosure on the same orientation as the present building. The enclosure with the southeast building is partly open to the Friends Burial Ground in 1885 and then is within the burial ground from 1899. The northern part of this site is within the burial ground from 1879 although whether burials extended this far is unknown.

In 1938 a building occupies the location of the north end of the west outbuilding. In 1960 the west building is either shown as a long narrow enclosure or as a building. It is shown as a building from 1975 onwards. The northeast building is on the 1973 OS 1:2500 along with a further small building to the north of it on a northeast-southwest alignment.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To aim to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains within the proposal area. Particular objectives were:
 - Establish the potential for Saxon and medieval remains in order to further the research agenda for Haddenham defined in the Town Report (Beckley and Green 2008)
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a Brief issued by BCAS, JMHS carried out the work, which comprised the excavation of five trenches across the site (Fig. 1).

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in JMHS's WSI agreed with BCAS.

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of five trenches by a 5-tonne excavator equipped with a ditching bucket, supplemented by hand investigation of the revealed deposits.

In the WSI, the five trenches were as follows: Trench 1 25m, Trench 2 30m, Trenches 3 & 4 both 20m and Trench 5 5m 15m in length and 1.6m wide at the base. The numbering of the trenches was not as on the WSI (see plan), and due to constraints on site, the lengths were marginally shorter than proposed in the WSI, in part due to nesting birds.

Site procedures carried out followed IfA guidelines. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Field Results

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. All context numbers are preceded by trench number and /. Dimensions and details of features are given in Appendix 1.

Trenches 1, 2 and 3 (Fig. 2)

Trenches 1, 2 and 3 were located on the east side of the proposal site and were contiguous (Figs. 1 & 2). Due to limitations of space due to nesting birds and materials stored on site, the trenches were not the lengths proposed in the WSI, and were necessarily extended from one to the next. All trenches were excavated to the top of the natural.

There were six ditch sections investigated within the area of Trenches 1, 2 and 3 – 2/08, 2/06, 2/04, 3/08, 3/06 and 3/04.

The earliest ditch was possibly 2/06, which was undated, and was oriented roughly east/west. No finds were recovered from it. The ditch 2/06 was cut by ditch 2/04, which was oriented north by northwest/south by southeast.

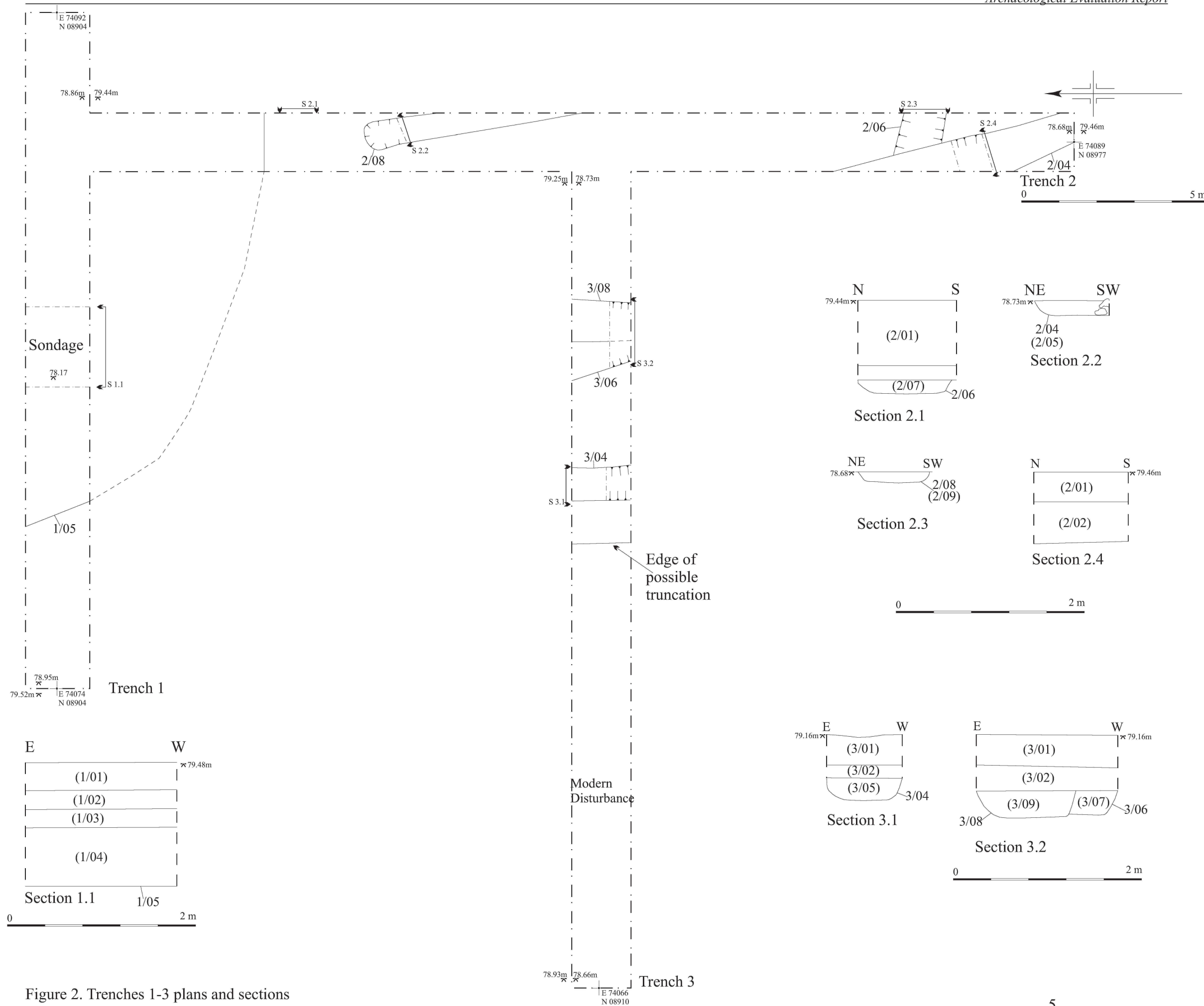


Figure 2. Trenches 1-3 plans and sections

To the northwest was the ditch 3/06 may well be part of 2/04, although the fill was not as dark as that from 2/04; this may however be a localised difference. The ditch 3/06 was cut by 3/08, which was parallel with ditch 3/04, some 3.4m to the west; dating from 3/08 indicates a date after the middle of the 11th century. The ditch 3/08 was also notable for containing snail-shells in the fill.

The ditch 2/08, which was oriented north by northwest/south by southeast and roughly parallel with 2/04, yielded a sherd of pottery, dating from the 12th century onwards, in addition to a residual sherd of Romano-British pottery. This might indicate that 3/08 is later than it appears from the single sherd of pottery recovered, if ditches 2/08 and 2/04 are associated. Within the limited constraints of an evaluation it is not possible to be certain.

Both Trenches 1 and 2 evidenced the quarry pit 1/5, measuring at least 13.6m (east/west) by 6.4m (north/south) and 0.60m deep, filled with redeposited natural that was decayed Portland Stone (1/04). It was sealed by the buried soil (1/3), which yielded pottery from the 13th century onwards and probably represents a former topsoil. The former topsoil (1/3) was characterised by fragments of Portland stone, which were laid flat, on the uppermost part of the deposit. This would seem to indicate that the remains of further, later quarrying was spread out on the topsoil.

All these medieval features were sealed by a later dump of soil containing fragments of Portland Stone (1/02)/(2/02)/(3/02); the deposit (3/2) yielded a fragment of stoneware base which dated from the 18th century. this deposit was possibly truncated in Trench 3 c. 12m from the west end.

Sealing (1/02)/(2/02)/(3/02) was modern topsoil (1/01)/(2/01)/(3/01), which contained a variety of late 20th century artefactual evidence – such as plastic, drinks bottles and building materials – none of which were retained.

Trench 4 (Figs. 1 & 3)

Trench 4 was located to the southwest of Trenches 1, 2 and 3. Extensive modern pitting associated with the shed to the west was observed cut into the natural (4/02). This was sealed with topsoil (4/01), notable for the quantity of plastic, metals, car parts, drinks bottles and building materials within it.

Trench 5 (Figs. 1 & 3)

Trench 5 was located to the west of Trench 4 at the entrance to the proposal site. It measured 5m north/south and evidenced four postholes – 5/04, 5/06, 5/08 and 5/10 – all of which were undated. The posthole 5/06 was 0.4m deep and 0.2-0.25m in diameter and may well represent a structural posthole; it is possible that postholes 5/04 and 5/10 were stakeholes; and posthole 5/08 which was very shallow may not have been a posthole. These were sealed by hardcore (5/02) and tarmac (5/01), indicating that although the area may well be heavily truncated, remains subsist at the entrance to the site. The heavy truncation, which was localised to the area near the trench may well be in order to facilitate drainage. It was not possible to trench elsewhere here as the access is still in regular use.

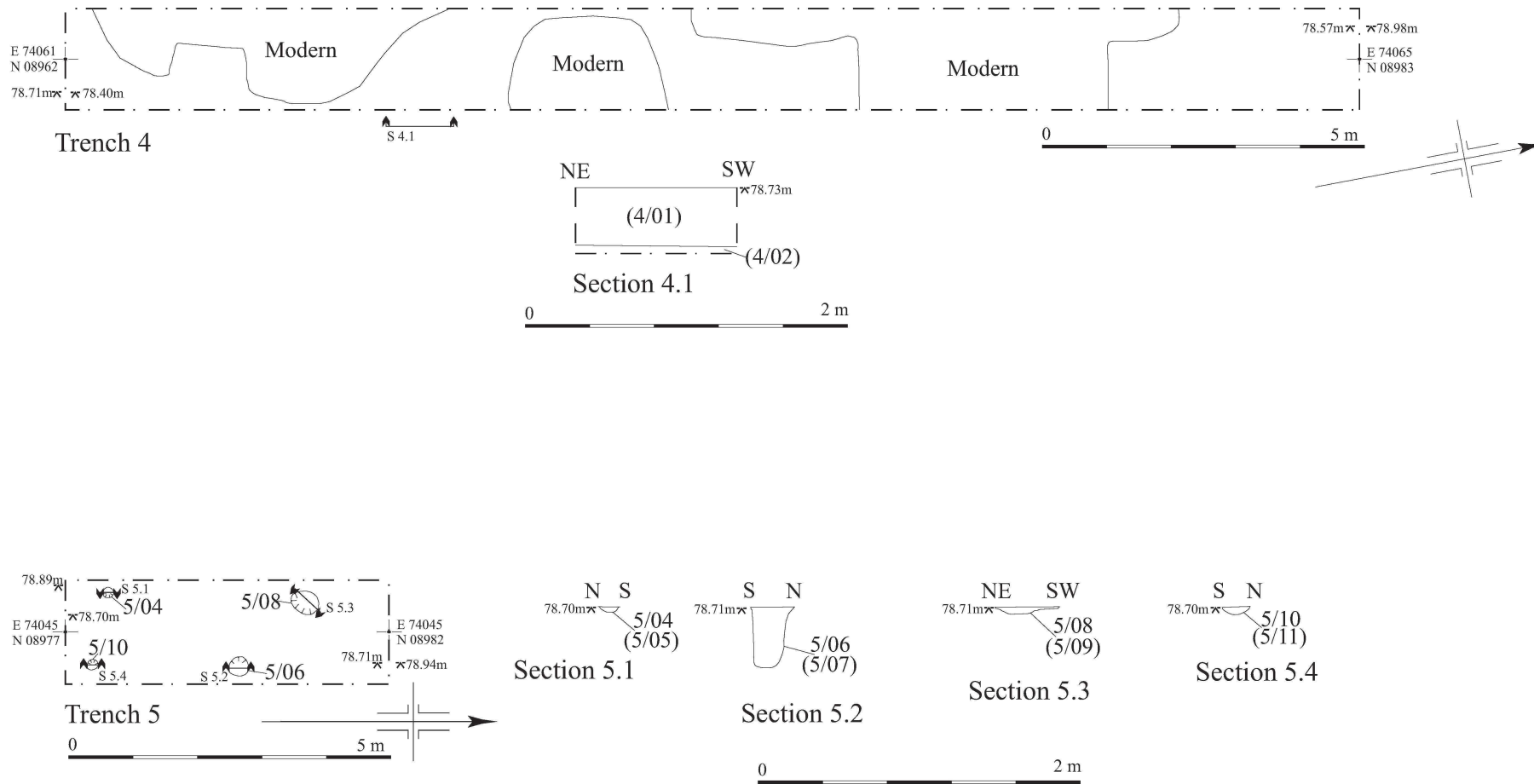


Figure 3. Trenches 4 & 5 plans and sections

4.3 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place in clement conditions and was monitored by Eliza Alqassar for BCAS.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Finds

Pottery By Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 6 sherds with a total weight of 131g. It consisted of mainly medieval wares of the mid 11th – 13th centuries, although a single residual sherd of Romano-British pottery occurred, as did a fragment of a post-medieval vessel. It was all recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeevat 1992; Zeevat et al. 1994), as follows:

MC1: *Shelly Coarseware*. AD1100-1400. 2 sherds, 27g.

MS3: *Medieval Grey Sandy Wares*. Mid 11th – late 14th century. 1 sherd, 4g.

MS9: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. 1200-?1600. 1 sherd, 13g.

PM28: *English Stoneware*. Late 17th C+. 1 sherd, 78g.

In addition, a single sherd (9g) of residual Romano-British pottery as also present. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The medieval sherds were all in good condition, and appear reliably stratified.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type.

Tr	Cntxt	RB		MS3		MC1		MS9		PM28		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	3							1	13			13thC
2	9	1	9			1	13					12thC
3	2									1	78	18thC
3	5					1	14					12thC
3	8			1	4							M11thC
	Total	1	9	1	4	2	27	1	13	1	78	

5.2 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken as the potential of the deposits was not felt to be sufficient to warrant sampling.

6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation on land to the rear of 2 Fern Lane, Fort End, revealed evidence for early medieval boundaries, which may be part of the 11th or early 12th century layout of the village. Fort End is characterised by irregular enclosures (see Archaeological Background above). Whether those ditches investigated are evidence for occupation or farming enclosures was not clear, as no postholes or other structural activity was recovered during the evaluation; this does not need to indicate that it was not present.

Certainly, there was evidence for early quarrying for witchert, as has been demonstrated elsewhere in the village, such as at Townside (Williams 2006), to the southwest of the proposal site. Evaluation work (Wallis 2007) to the north of the present site also indicated extensive 11th to 13th century activity comprising ditches, pits and walls.

Trench 5 at the front of the proposal area evidenced four postholes although their date and function remain unknown. These could feasibly represent structural remains, as much as fencing or other far-related activities.

Trench 4, which was hard by one of the sheds formerly used as a workshop by the client's family, was heavily disturbed, and no full assessment of the archaeological potential of the area to the west of the trench can be made.

The evaluation indicated that despite truncation in parts of the site significant remains of enclosures and possibly structures were present.

The evaluation has partly refined the research agenda for Haddenham showing that this part of the village was used in the 11th-13th centuries fitting into the development model of the town. Further work may address whether this activity was agricultural or occupation. The single sherd of pottery dating from the mid 11th century may indicate use of the area in this period such as seen at 5 Townside (Wallis 2007) although it may commence later. More finds may give a more definite time period for the medieval use. In addition a larger pottery assemblage may help with determining which local markets were used. The presence of the medieval quarry for witchert shows that the material was used during this period, presumably as a building material.

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Appendix 1: Archaeological Context Inventory

Trench	Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date	Interpretation
Trench 1									
	(1/01)		Topsoil with building material, plastic and rubbish through it	0.2	>1.6	>18	X		Topsoil
	(1/02)		Mixed dump of building material in a soil matrix; Portland stone fragments within upper part of deposit	0.2	>1.6	>18	X		Dump
	(1/03)		mid brown silty clay with Portland stone rubble through it	0.2	>1.6	>18	X	13 th C	Dump
	(1/04)		Portland stone fragments; creamy white clay silt	0.6	>1.6	>14	X		Quarry fill
	1/05		Sub rounded cut	0.6	>1.6	>14	X		Quarry
	(1/06)		Natural		>1.6	>18	X		Natural
Trench 2									
	(2/01)	Layer	Loose dark grey brown clay humus 25% small stone	0.32	>1.6	>14.2	X	modern	Topsoil
	(2/02)	Layer	Hard mid grey brown clay 40% small stone and brick	0.40	>1.6	>26	X	modern	Dump of material
	(2/03)	Layer	See 3/03		>1.6		X		Natural
	2/04	Cut	Linear; sharp BoS @ top and base; concave sides, flat base; NE/SW oriented	0.20	1.2	6.5	X		
	(2/05)	Fill	Moderate dark grey black silty clay 10% small stone	0.20	1.2	6.5	X		
	2/06	Cut	Linear; sharp BoS @ top, gentle @ base; concave sides, flat base; E/W oriented	0.20	1.1	>1.1	X		
	2/07	Fill	Hard light grey brown clay 25-30% small stone	0.20	1.1	>1.1	X		
	2/08	Cut	Linear; sharp BoS @ top gentle @ base; concave sides, flat base; NE/SW oriented	0.12	0.80	>5.5	X		Ditch
	(2/09)	Fill	loose mid grey brown clay silt 10% small stone	0.12	0.80	>5.5	Y	12 th C	Ditch fill

Trench	Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date	Interpretation
Trench 3									
	(3/01)	Layer	Loose grey brown sandy clay 25% small stone	0.36	>1.6	>21.5	X	modern	topsoil
	(3/02)	Layer	Compact mid grey brown sandy clay Portland stone fragments	0.14	>1.6	>21.5	Y	18 th C	Buried soil horizon
	(3/03)	Layer	Natural		>1.6	>21.5	X		Natural
	3/04	Cut	Linear; sharp BoS @ top & base; concave sides & flat base	0.23	0.80m	>1.6	Y	12 th C	
	(3/05)	Fill	Hard mid grey brown silty clay 15% small stone	0.23	0.80m	>1.6	Y	12 th C	
	3/06	Cut	Linear; sharp BoS @ top & base; concave sides & flat base	0.26	1	>1.6	X		
	(3/07)	Fill	Hard dark grey brown silty clay 60% small stone	0.26	1	>1.6	X		
	3/08	Cut	Linear; sharp BoS @ top gentle @ base; concave sides & flat base	0.35	1.15	>1.6	Y	M11 th C	
	(3/09)	Fill	Very compact dark grey brown silty clay 60% small stone; snail shells	0.35	1.15	>1.6	X	M11 th C	
Trench 4									
	(4/01)	Layer	Loose dark grey brown clay humus 25% small stone	0.35	>1.6	>21	X	Modern	Topsoil
	(4/02)	Layer	Natural		>1.6	>21	X		Natural
Trench 5									
	(5/01)	Layer	Tarmac	0.05	>1.6	>5	X	Modern	Car park surface
	(5/02)	Layer	Hardcore	0.16	>1.6	>5	X	Modern	Make-up
	(5/03)	Layer	Natural	Unk.	>1.6	>5	X		Natural
	5/04	Cut	Sharp BoS @ top gentle at base, concave sides and base	0.04	0.12	0.12	X	Modern	Posthole
	(5/05)	Fill	mid grey sandy silt	0.04	0.12	0.12	X	Modern	Fill of posthole
	5/06	Cut	Sharp BoS @ top & base, straight sides, flat base	0.37	0.30	0.30	X	Modern	Posthole

Trench	Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	 Finds	Date	 Interpretation
	(5/07)	Fill	mid brown sandy silt	0.37	0.30	0.30	X	Modern	Fill of posthole
	5/08	Cut	Indistinct BoS at top & base	0.05	0.40	0.40	X	Modern	Posthole
	(5/09)	Fill	mid brown-grey sandy silt	0.05	0.40	0.40	X		Fill of posthole
	5/10	Cut	Sharp BoS @ top gentle at base, concave sides and base	0.05	0.17	0.17	X	Modern	Posthole
	(5/11)	Fill	light brown sandy silt	0.05	0.17	0.17	X	Modern	Fill of posthole

BoS = Break of Slope