

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

71 WANTAGE ROAD, WALLINGFORD, OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SU 5968 9007

On behalf of

Williams-Medway

DECEMBER 2011

REPORT FOR Williams-Medway
Bonny Cross
The Holloway
Harwell
Oxfordshire
OX11 0LS

PREPARED BY Adrian M. Chadwick

ILLUSTRATION BY Eoin Fitzsimons

FIELDWORK 17th-18th November 2011
Adrian M. Chadwick
Gavin Davis
Andre Čelovský

REPORT ISSUED 7th December 2011

ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Hill View
Woodperry Road
Beckley
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ
Tel/Fax 01865 358300
Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk

Site Code WAWR 11
JMHS Project No: 2537
Archive Location The archive is currently held at John Moore Heritage Services and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service with accession code 2011.199

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Summary</i>	1
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
2 AIM OF THE INVESTIGATION	3
3 STRATEGY	3
3.1 Research Design	3
3.2 Methodology	3
4 RESULTS	4
4.1 The Archaeological Results	4
4.2 Trench 1	4
4.3 Trench 2	6
4.4 Trench 3	6
4.5 Trench 4	6
4.6 Reliability of Techniques and Results	7
5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS	7
5.1 The Pottery and Clay Pipe <i>by Adrian M. Chadwick</i>	7
5.2 The Tile <i>by Gwilym Hughes</i>	8
5.3 The Worked Flint <i>by David Gilbert</i>	8
5.4 The Animal Bone <i>by Haley McParland</i>	8
5.5 Palaeo-environmental Remains	8
6 DISCUSSION	8
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY	8
APPENDIX 1: Trench and Context Inventory	9
FIGURES	
Figure 1 Site and Trench Location	2
Figure 2 Plans and Sections of Trenches	5
Figure 3 Trench 1, pit cut 102	6
Figure 4 Trench 4 looking south-east	7

Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at 71 Wantage Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire. Four machine-dug trenches were excavated. The only archaeological features identified were two pits in Trench 1 of relatively recent in date, along with two unstratified prehistoric worked flints. No archaeological remains were identified anywhere else within the development area.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development area (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’) is located to the rear of the existing residential property fronting onto 71 Wantage Road, on the north-western edge of Wallingford, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 5968 9007) (Figure 1). It is bordered to the north by Wantage Road, to the east and west by other residential properties and gardens, and to the south by a footpath and open arable agricultural fields. The underlying geology is Second Terrace river terrace deposits, consisting of mixed gravels and compact sandy silts.

The existing ground level is relatively flat at *circa*. 56 metres above Ordnance Datum and the Site currently consists of grass lawn with bordering fences, hedges and lines of conifers. A large wooden shed also currently occupies part of the Site.

1.2 Planning Background

An earlier planning permission P10/W1920 that was submitted for the construction of three detached dwellings with garages on the Site was refused in March 2011. The Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) requested that any new application should be supported by the results of an archaeological field evaluation, due to the potential presence of below ground archaeological remains. OCAS also prepared a Design Brief for the archaeological work programme.

John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) was commissioned to undertake this work, and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* was prepared by John Moore Heritage Services to satisfy the requirements of the Brief. The *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) proposed the methodology by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out. The WSI was accepted by the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, and the fieldwork for the archaeological evaluation took place on 17th-18th November 2011.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The Site was identified as being of archaeological potential by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services as it was situated to the north of an area where a recent archaeological evaluation found evidence for Bronze Age and Iron Age inhabitation, including a Bronze Age ring gully only *c.* 40m to the south (PRN 26344).

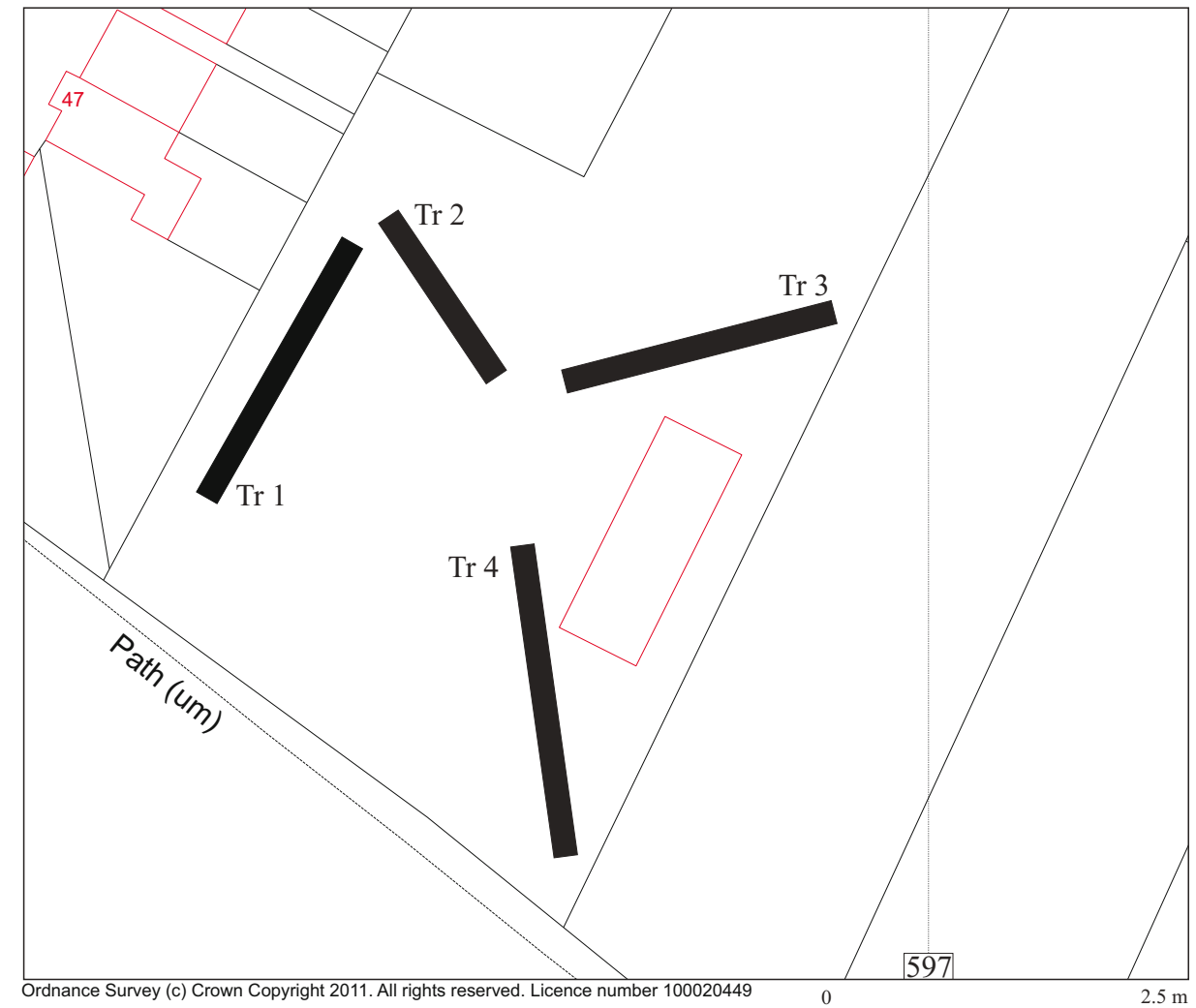
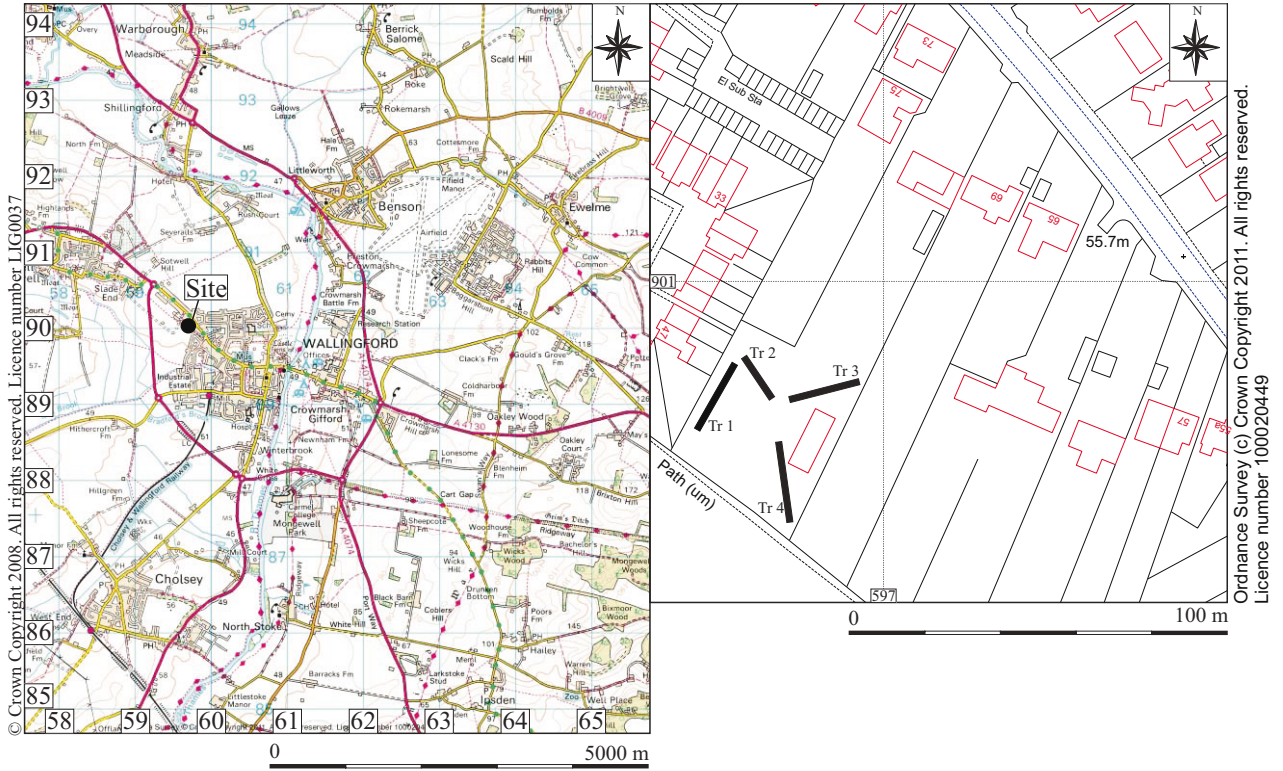


Figure 1. Site & trench location

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the Site;
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered;
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.

And in particular:

- To establish whether features related to the Bronze Age and Iron Age activity in the area survive on the Site.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to the Brief issued by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS), JMHS carried out the work, which initially comprised a proposed scheme for the mechanical excavation of five trial trenches each 20m in length.

3.2 Methodology

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the WSI and agreed with OCAS.

A 5-tonne tracked 360-degree excavator fitted with a toothless 1.5m wide ditching bucket was used to excavate the trenches. Any archaeological deposits and features revealed were then cleaned by hand and recorded in plan before being excavated and recorded at an appropriate level. Archaeological features had written, drawn and photographic records made of them, and all deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in brackets () show feature fills or deposits of material. All context numbers are preceded by trench number and /. Details of individual trenches are presented in Appendix 1 – the context inventory – at the rear of this report.

Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. All artefacts were collected and retained. The trenches without archaeology had record photographs taken of their stripped areas, whilst photographs and drawings recorded representative sections of the deposits above the undisturbed natural subsoil. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

4 RESULTS

4.1 The Archaeological Results

Due to physical constraints such as the need to avoid tree roots, it was necessary to alter the position of some of the trenches (Figure 1). One trench (Trench 2) was shortened to 15m in order to fit it within the Site, though another (Trench 4) was lengthened to 22.50m to partly compensate for this. Due to the presence of a brick garden wall running across the property which blocked access by the excavator, it was also not possible to excavate the fifth proposed trench within the Site. This was accepted by OCAS.

The only identifiable archaeological features were in Trench 1. All the trenches and their contexts have been listed in Appendix 1 at the rear of this report. The Oxfordshire County Planning Archaeologist Mr Richard Oram inspected the Site on Friday 18th November in order to monitor the fieldwork after the trenches had been machine excavated and cleaned by hand.

In all trenches but particularly those nearest the hedges and lines of conifers there was a large number of roots present in the topsoil, and these had sometimes penetrated deeply into the underlying subsoil and undisturbed natural subsoil causing considerable localised disturbance. Several possible features were investigated that proved to be derived from tree throws or were of periglacial origin.

The topsoil across the Site consisted of friable dark grey brown silty sandy loam, above a subsoil of compact, mottled orange brown silty sand. The undisturbed natural subsoil was a mixture of very compact sandy gravel with frequent cobbles and flint pebbles, interspersed with interdigitated patches of compact orange brown silty sand with flint nodules. Though numbered separately according to trench, these three deposits are not described separately below, although their depths are noted.

4.2 Trench 1 (Figs. 2 & 3)

Trench 1 was 20m long and 1.5m wide, and orientated north-east to south-west. The topsoil (1/100) was 0.25-0.30m thick, and the subsoil (1/101) varied between 0.10-0.30m in thickness.

Two potential archaeological features were noted. Cut 1/102 was a small subrounded pit 0.64m long, 0.54m wide and 0.34m deep, with steep, near vertical sides and a relatively flat base. Its fill (1/103) consisted of a mid-grey brown sandy silt with flint pebbles, animal bone, very corroded iron sheet fragments, a fragment of clay pipe, several sherds of modern ceramic flowerpot and also several fragments of post-medieval (post-17th to late 18th century) tile. The animal bone comprised cattle, sheep and chicken bones likely to represent kitchen/consumption waste, and the mixed nature of the overall assemblage indicated an early modern feature with some residual or redeposited material within it.

Cut 1/104 was another small subrounded pit, 0.69m long, 0.64m wide and up to 0.19m deep, with relatively gentle sides and a gently concave, rounded base. The upper fill (1/105) was pinkish grey ash and cinders up to 0.30m thick, representing rake-out material from a hearth or fireplace; whilst the lower fill (1/106) was mid-grey

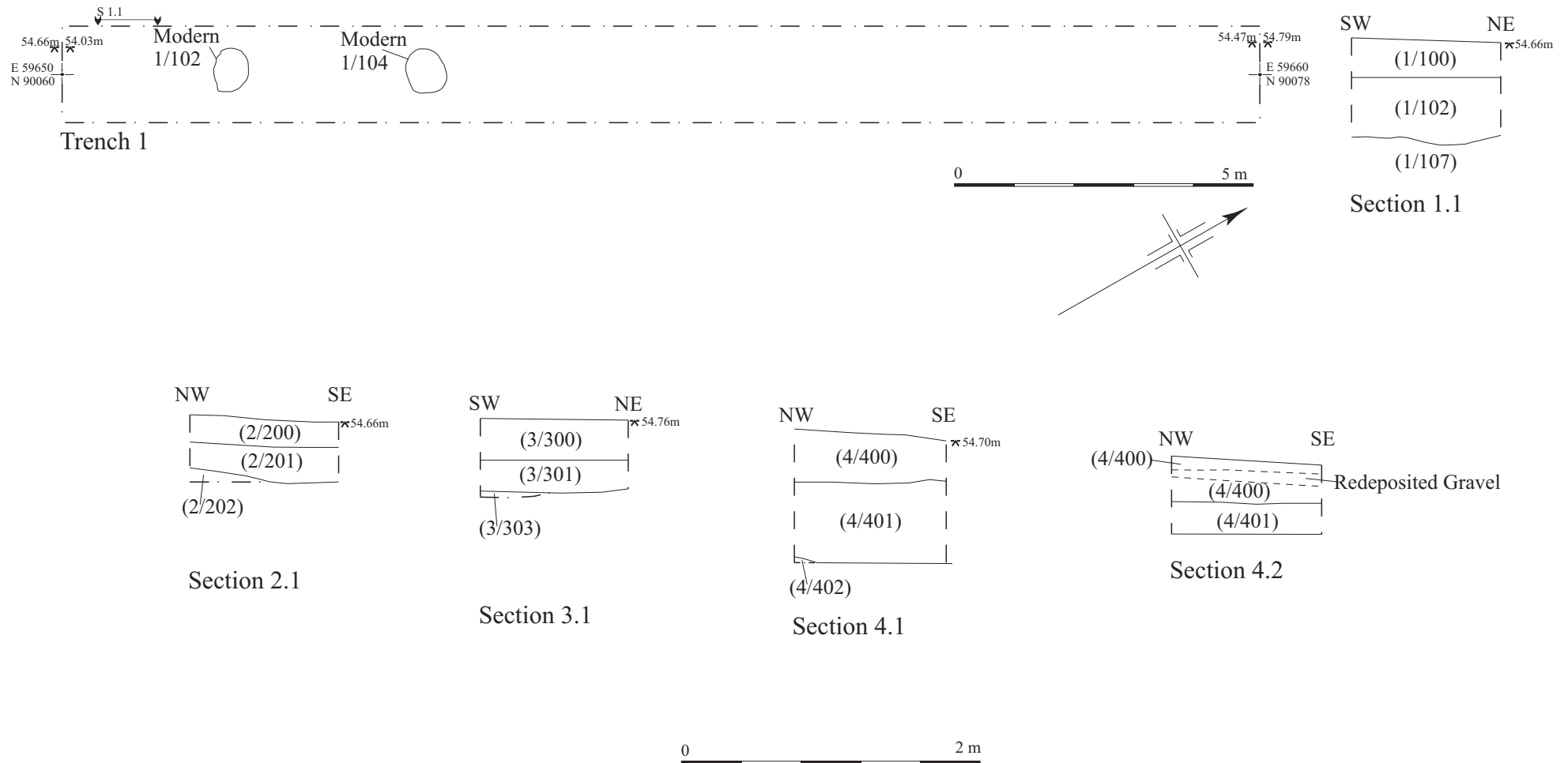


Figure 2. Plans and Sections of Trenches

brown sandy silt with occasional flint pebbles. No finds were recovered from this feature. No other features were identified within this trench. One small piece of worked flint and a sherd of post-medieval pottery were recovered as unstratified finds from the subsoil layer (1/101).

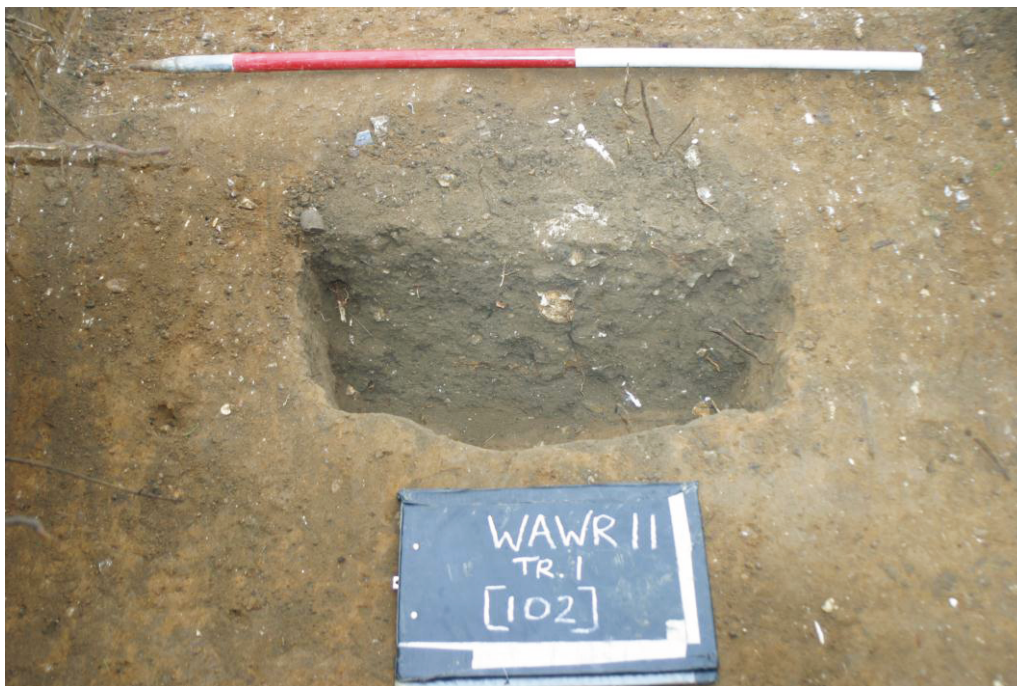


Figure 3. Trench 1, pit cut 102, looking north-west

4.3 Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

Trench 2 was 15m long and 1.5m wide and orientated north-west to south-east. The topsoil (2/200) was 0.20-0.25m thick, and the subsoil (2/201) between 0.08-0.15m in thickness. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in Trench 2.

4.4 Trench 3 (Fig. 2)

Trench 3 was 15m long and 1.5m wide, and orientated north-east to south-west. The topsoil (3/300) was 0.20-0.25m thick, and the subsoil (3/301) between 0.08-0.15m in thickness. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in Trench 3.

4.5 Trench 4 (Fig. 2)

Trench 4 was 22.5m long and 1.5m wide, and orientated NNW-SSE. The topsoil was 0.25-0.30m thick, and the subsoil 0.30-0.50m thick, becoming progressively thicker towards the south-east. A modern soakaway drain consisting of a brick-lined trench capped with slate and asbestos tiles extended north-east to south-west across the northern part of Trench 4, from the corner of the wooden shed where there was a water butt and an overspill pipe leading into the drain (Fig. 4). No archaeological features or deposits were identified in Trench 3. One piece of unstratified worked flint was recovered from the topsoil (1/400).



Figure 4. Trench 4 looking south-east, with the modern soakaway in the foreground

4.6 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place in generally clement, relatively dry conditions with good light and visibility.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 The Pottery and Clay Pipe *by Adrian M. Chadwick*

One sherd of unstratified salt glazed earthenware, probably a base sherd, was recorded from subsoil (1/101) in Trench 1. It had a speckled pale brown inner surface and a speckled light grey outer surface, and is of post-medieval date.

One sherd of modern (very late 19th or 20th century) ceramic flowerpot base was also recovered from the same context (1/101), along with a small fragment of clay pipe stem, the bore of which suggested a later 19th century date.

5.2 The Tile *by Gwilym Williams*

The fragments of tile from fill (1/103) probably post-dated the 17th century but pre-dated the 19th century. The presence of early modern or modern ceramic flowerpot fragments from the same context, however, suggest that this material was residual or re-deposited in a much later context.

5.3 The Worked Flint *by David Gilbert*

Two pieces of struck flint were recovered during the evaluation. The first was an uncorticated broken blade recovered from subsoil deposit (1/101) in Trench 1. The dorsal surface displays fine blade removal scars. It was of a pale honey-brown flint and measured 11mm long, 8mm wide and 2mm thick. It is likely to be of late Mesolithic date.

The second piece was recovered from topsoil (1/400) in Trench 4. It was an uncorticated flake of pale brown cherty flint 30mm long, 24mm wide and 6mm thick. Some later damage has occurred to the artefact, but the way it has been trimmed and the damage to the striking edge might suggest it is possibly a crude gun flint, and thus of post-medieval date.

5.4 The Animal Bone *by Haley McParland*

A total of 18 fragments of animal bone were recovered from pit fill (1/103), weighing 253 grammes. One fragment of sheep/goat bone was found, three fragments of chicken bone and 14 fragments of animal bone.

5.5 Palaeo-environmental Remains

No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental analysis were identified, and no samples were taken.

6 DISCUSSION

The results of the evaluation were almost entirely negative, and the only features identified (in Trench 1) were modern in date. No archaeological deposits or features were recorded.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage. 1991. *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*. London: English Heritage.

Institute for Archaeologists. 2008. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*. Reading: IfA.

Appendix 1: Trench and Archaeological Context Inventory

Context	Type	Description and finds	L (m)	B (m)	D(m)	Levels	Date	Interpretation
Trench 1								
(1/100)	Layer	Friable dark grey brown silty sandy loam with flint nodules & root disturbance.	Across trench	Across trench	0.25-0.30m	54.66-54.79m OD	Modern	Topsoil
(1/101)	Layer	Compact orange brown silty sand mottled with darker brown root disturbance, & flint nodules.	Across trench	Across trench	0.10-0.30m	-	-	Subsoil
(1/102)	Cut	Subcircular pit with near vertical sides & a flat base.	0.64m	0.54m	0.34m	53.80m OD at base	Modern	Pit
(1/103)	Fill	Mid grey brown sandy silt with flint pebbles, animal bone, clay pipe, ceramic flowerpot & tile.	0.64m	0.54m	0.34m	54.14m OD	Modern	Fill
(1/104)	Cut	Subcircular pit with relatively gentle, slightly concave sides & a rounded, gently concave base.	0.69m	0.64m	0.19m	54.02m OD at base	Modern?	Pit
(1/105)	Fill	Pinkish grey ash and cinders.	-	0.40m	0.03m	54.17m OD	Modern?	Fill
(1/106)	Fill	Mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional flint pebbles.	0.69m	0.64m	0.11m	-	Modern?	Fill
(1/107)	Layer	Very compact light yellow brown to orange brown sandy gravel with patches of orange brown silty sand & flint nodules & pebbles.	Across trench	Across trench	-	54.03-54.47m OD	-	Natural subsoil
Trench 2								
(2/200)	Layer	Friable dark grey brown silty sandy loam with flint nodules & root disturbance.	Across trench	Across trench	0.20-0.25m	54.66-54.91m OD	Modern	Topsoil
(2/201)	Layer	Compact orange brown silty sand mottled with darker brown root disturbance, & flint nodules.	Across trench	Across trench	0.08-0.15m	-	-	Subsoil
(2/202)	Layer	Very compact light yellow brown to orange brown sandy gravel with patches of orange brown silty sand & flint nodules & pebbles.	Across trench	Across trench	-	54.25-54.50m OD	-	Natural subsoil
Trench 3								

	(3/300)	Layer	Friable dark grey brown silty sandy loam with flint nodules & root disturbance.	Across trench	Across trench	0.20-0.30m	54.76-54.90m OD	Modern	Topsoil
	(3/301)	Layer	Compact orange brown silty sand mottled with darker brown root disturbance, & flint nodules.	Across trench	Across trench	0.15-0.20m	-	-	Subsoil
	(3/302)	Layer	Very compact light yellow brown to orange brown sandy gravel with patches of orange brown silty sand & flint nodules & pebbles.	Across trench	Across trench	-	54.41-54.60m OD	-	Natural subsoil
Trench 4									
	(4/400)	Layer	Friable dark grey brown silty sandy loam with flint nodules & root disturbance. Southern part also contains a band of redeposited gravel.	Across trench	Across trench	0.25-0.30m	54.66-54.70m OD	Modern	Topsoil
	(4/401)	Layer	Compact orange brown silty sand mottled with darker brown root disturbance, & flint nodules.	Across trench	Across trench	0.30-0.50m	-	-	Subsoil
	(4/402)	Layer	Very compact light yellow brown to orange brown sandy gravel with patches of orange brown silty sand & flint nodules & pebbles.	Across trench	Across trench	-	53.89-54.26m OD	-	Natural subsoil