

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**ON LAND AT HOLLYWELL FARM,**

**CUDDINGTON ROAD, DINTON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**NGR SP7565 1160**

**By  
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*On behalf of*

*Mrs B Plastow*

**October 2011**

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological evaluation in advance of the proposed construction of a new development at Hollywell Farm, Cuddington Road, Dinton Cuddington, Buckinghamshire (SP7565 1160). Five trenches, with a cumulative length of approximately 102 metres were excavated to the uppermost surface of the archaeology or natural geology. The earliest features were Romano-British ditches and pits seen in Trenches 2, 3, 4 & 5 which covered a relatively flat area on the immediate crest of a slope descending northwards. The ditches probably once formed boundaries of a Romano-British farming complex, which occupied this hilltop during the 2<sup>nd</sup> through to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD. The actual settlement evidence came from a series of postholes, a gully and waste pits from Trenches 2 & 3 set close to the boundary ditches of the Romano-British farmstead.*

*All of the ditches were broadly contemporary with a mixture of both early and later Roman pottery within the fills. The ditches were generally deep with sharp concave sides filled with sandy clay, which looked deliberately backfilled rather than gradual filling over time. During a later phase of activity, a large (possibly defensive) ditch seen in Trench 5 orientated approximately north-east south-west may have re-instated the boundaries of the farm during the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Century AD. This ditch contained some Saxon and Post medieval pottery on its uppermost surface, which indicates the site was still probably occupied into the Saxon period and also proves later farming activity, such as ploughing, has truncated and disturbed the surface of some features. Other features also contained Saxon pottery a further indication of Post Roman settlement. The site was then abandoned and left as pasture until modern times.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location and Geology (Figure 1)**

The site is located between Dinton and Cuddington on the Cuddington Road at NGR SP7565 1160. The northern half of the site is located on Kimmeridge Clay with bands of Portland Stone and Purbeck Limestone to the south. The drift geology consists mostly of undifferentiated Head, with Alluvium along the banks of the River Thames, forming the northern boundary of the site.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

A planning application has been submitted for equestrian development comprising stable block, ménage, horse exerciser, indoor riding school, turnout barn, feed/tack room, isolation stables, storage and ancillary office space and replacement agricultural greenhouse (11/01403/APP) to Aylesbury Vale District Council. Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) has advised that a pre-determination field evaluation should be carried out.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

Fieldwalking in the field immediately to the south-east of Cowley Farm recovered early Neolithic to late Bronze Age lithics (HER 04989). These appeared to be evenly spread throughout the field. Further similar material of the same date range was found in the field to the north-east of Cowley Farm during fieldwalking (HER 04981). Further lithics of the early

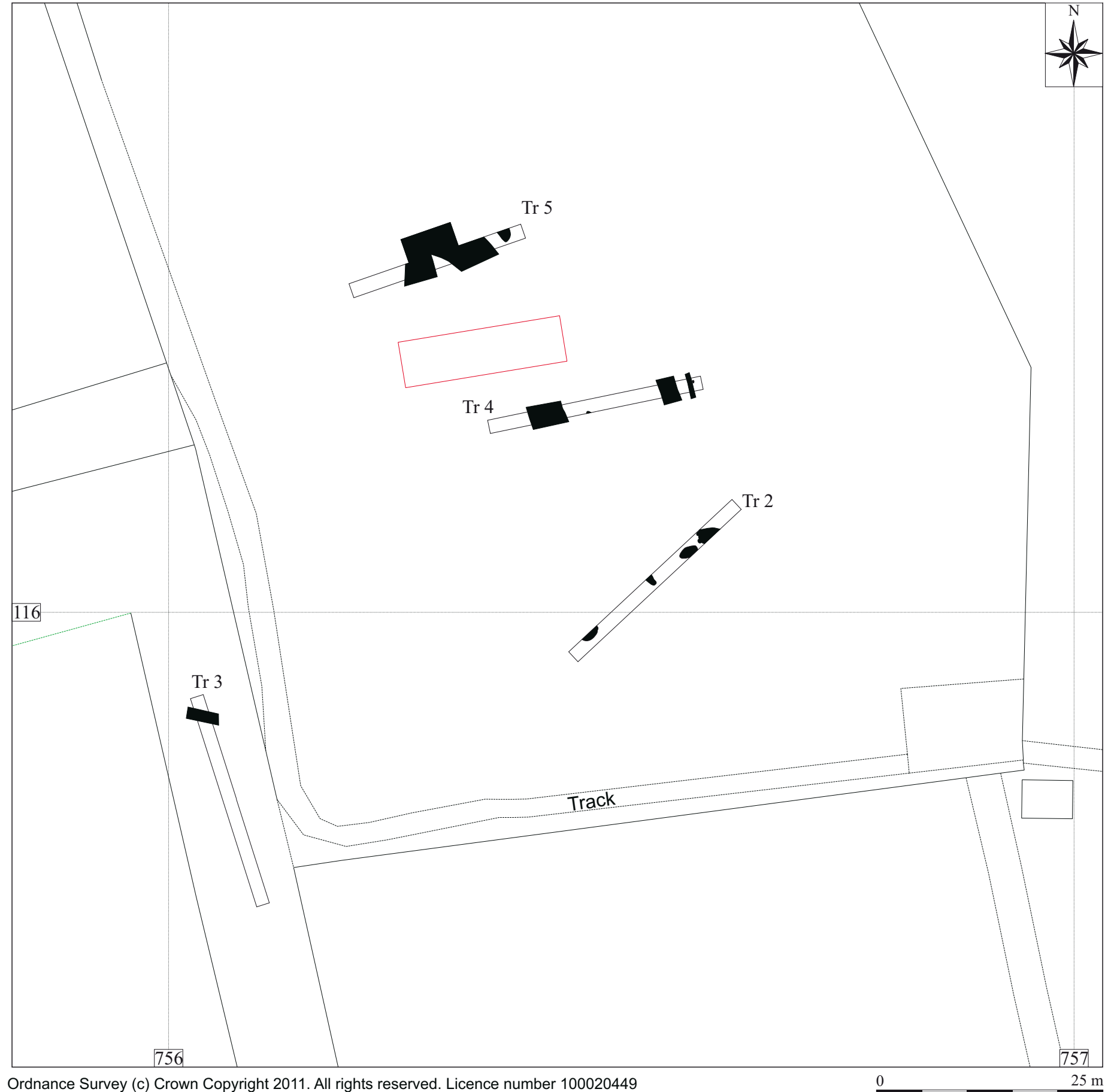
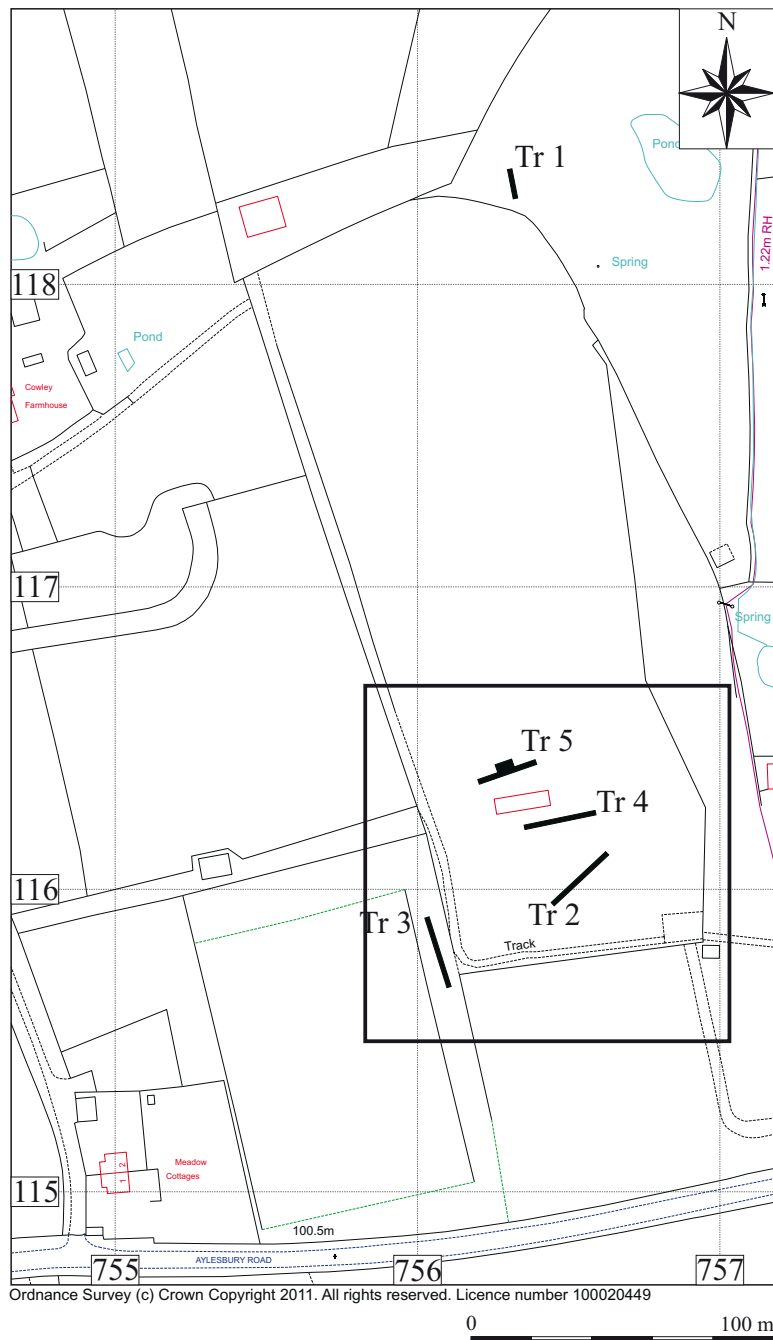
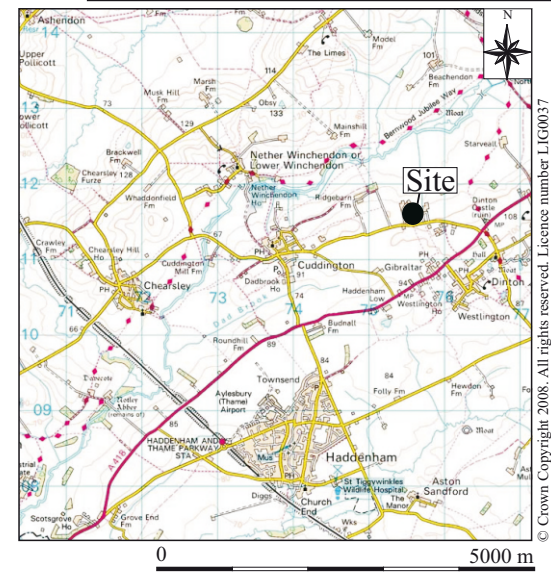


Figure 1. Site location

Neolithic to late Bronze Age period (HER 4982) were found during fieldwalking of the field to the west of Dinton Castle and east of Marsh Mead Farm. A concentration of finds in part of the field may indicate a late Neolithic/early Bronze Age site. During excavations of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery within this field, a pit containing a Neolithic blade was found along with a further undated feature. Other early Neolithic to late Bronze Age flints were recovered during the excavation (HER 4982). A Neolithic to Bronze Age scraper was found north of Dinton Castle (HER 2295)

Apart from the concentration of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age lithics to the west of Dinton Castle and the slight concentration in the field to the north-east of Cowley Farm there appears to be a fairly uniform scatter of material of the early Neolithic to late Bronze Age over the general landscape between Cowley Farm and Dinton Castle. It is presumed that settlement sites occurred in the area and may be in the vicinity of the two concentrations of finds. The fieldwalking south-east of Cowley Farm suggests that no prehistoric settlement was in the area of the proposed development. Further Mesolithic through to Bronze Age flint scrapers and flakes came from the spoil of a pipeline c. 250m south-east of Marsh Mead Farm (HER 4248).

On part of this site systematic fieldwalking located various finds from the fields immediately SE of Cowley Farm. A considerable concentration of Romano-British sherds along with a few fragments of tile was located in one area (HER 0498900002; SP 7558 1170). Other finds of the period were spread around the fields. The amount of material suggests a Romano-British building in the area. An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the fields immediately south of Cowley Farm (which is just to the NW) in 2004 by John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS 2004). The discovery of the butt end of a ditch suggested that a field system associated with the Romano-British settlement could have extended to the north-west of the Romano-British site (HER 0498901000).

An evaluation at Marsh Mead Farm (JMHS 2009), immediately to the east found Romano-British field boundary ditches, pottery and animal bone (HER 09919; SP 75771 11557).

The fieldwalking and evaluations suggests the presence of a Romano-British settlement in the vicinity, now proposed to be on this site. The topographical location on lighter soils overlooking a river is likely to have been favoured for early settlement.

The earliest map available at the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies was the 1770 Jeffrey's map of the county. This showed Cowley Farm to the west, which is still extant, and Hollywell Farm. The Inclosure Award map of 1803 shows the east edge of the property is shown to be the edge of historic Cuddington parish. Hollywell Farm to the north disappeared at some point after the 1922 OS edition.

The Solent Thames Historic Environment Resource Assessment for Roman Buckinghamshire has noted the pattern of rural settlement is one of dispersed agrarian villas and farmsteads. To date there is no evidence for nucleated "village" settlement (Zeepvat and Radford 2007).

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

It was stated within the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) that the aims of the evaluation were to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains at the site. Particular objectives were to:

- 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;
- Establish whether Romano-British remains are present;
- Establish whether prehistoric remains are present;
- 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; and
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* agreed with BCAS. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1999) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

#### **3.2 Methodology**

The trenching sample required was achieved through the excavation of five trenches (1.5m wide).

The trenches were excavated by a 360° type tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were, where necessary, cleaned by hand, prior to hand excavation of the archaeological deposits and features.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced. The trenches were backfilled after recording.

The work was undertaken by Paul Riccoboni (AIFA) (Project Officer), Gwilym Williams (MIFA), Eoin Fitzsimons (PIFA) and Andreij Celovsky (PIFA) over two days under the general direction of John Moore MIFA.

The Planning Archaeologist for BCAS Eliza Alqassar monitored the work on Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

## 4 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.

### 4.1 Excavation Results (Figure 2)

The trenches were set out within the footprint of the proposed new buildings. The lowest deposit noted within the trenches consisted of natural sands and gravels, which was reached at varying heights. Trench 1 was located near the bottom of the slope where natural clay was reached at 81.10m AOD. Where the majority of the trenches were located the surface of the archaeology or natural (whichever was the higher) was reached at heights ranging from 95.40m to 97.31m AOD.

### 4.2 Trench 1 (Figure 2)

Trench 1 was excavated to a length of 10m (1.5m wide) and to varying depths of between 81.10m AOD at the northern end and 81.80m at the southern end.

Table 1: Summary of contexts within Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>							
1/01	Layer	Dark greyish black topsoil	0.15m	Tr.	Tr.	None	Modern
1/02	Layer	Dark brown grey silty clay	0.15m	Tr.	Tr.	None	
1/03	Layer	Natural	/	Tr.	Tr.	None	

The stratigraphy within the trench consisted of the following layers (earliest to latest) (Fig 2; S: 1.1). The natural clay with gravel patches and lighter areas of banding were seen at the base of the trench (1/03). Overlying these were 0.15m thick dark brown grey silty clay layer (1/02) The latest deposit was dark grey-brown silty clay (1/01).

There were no archaeological features or deposits within this trench.

### 4.3 Trench 2 (Figure 2)

Trench 2 was excavated to a length of 24.5m and to varying depths of between 97.19m AOD at the western end and 97.81m AOD at the eastern end of the trench. The average depth of the overburden was c. 0.30m.

The stratigraphy within the trench consisted of the following contexts (earliest to latest). The natural weathered limestone was observed at the base of the trench (2/03) (97.19-97.81m AOD). Directly above the natural was <0.08-0.10m thick dark grey brown silty clay subsoil (2/02) with one fragment of Romano-British *tegula*. The latest layer was dark grey-brown silty clay topsoil (2/01).



Table 2: Summary of contexts within Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
<b>Trench 2</b>							
2/01	Layer	Dark greyish black silty clay topsoil	0.15	Tr.	Tr.	None	/
2/02	Layer	mid brownish grey silty clay subsoil	0.10	Tr..	Tr.	Tile	Romano-British
2/03	Layer	Natural limestone	/	Tr.	TR.	/	/
2/04	Deposit	Fill of 2/05	0.14	1.5	1.5	Pottery	Romano-British-Post med
2/05	Cut	Pit	0.14	1.5	1.5	/	/
2/06	Deposit	Fill of 2/07	0.07	0.40	0.40	None	/
2/07	Cut	Posthole	0.07	0.40	0.40	/	/
2/08	Deposit	Fill of 2/09	0.10	0.50	0.50	None	/
2/09	Cut	Posthole	0.10	0.50	0.50	/	/
2/10	Deposit	Fill of 2/11	0.19	1.20	2.2	Pot	Romano-British/Saxon/P med
2/11	Cut	Pit	0.19	1.20	2.2	/	/
2/12	Deposit	Fill of 2/13	0.22	0.70	1.0	Pot	Romano-British/Saxon
2/13	Cut	Lobate pit	0.22	0.70	1.0	/	/
2/14	Deposit	Fill of 2/15	0.26	0.75	0.70	Pot	Romano-British
2/15	Cut	Pit	0.26	0.75	0.70	/	/

### *Pits*

Pit 2/05 was towards the eastern end of the trench and had a depth of 0.14m and a minimum width of 1.10m with gradual concave sides and a flat base (Fig 2; S. 2.6). It was filled by dark greyish brown silty clay (2/04) with frequent limestone fragments (<20-50mm) and two sherds of pottery dated to the Roman period plus one possibly intrusive Post medieval sherd and one unidentifiable sherd. This may have been a butt end of a ditch.

Pit 2/11 was 0.20m deep and 1.20m wide x 2.20m long with curving concave sides and a gently rounded base (Fig 2; 2.3). It was filled by mid brownish grey silty clay (2/10) with a mix of Roman, Saxon and one intrusive(?) Post medieval pottery sherd.

Pit 2/13 was 0.22m deep and 0.70m wide with concave curving sides forming a gently rounded base (Fig 2; S. 2.2). It was filled by dark greyish brown silty clay (2/12) with one Roman and one Saxon pottery sherds, plus two animal bones and degraded tile with frequent

limestone flecks throughout. One sherd discovered from this fill is likely from a rectangular section bar, typical of portable kiln furniture used during the early Roman period (see finds Section 5).

Pit 2/15 was 0.26m in depth and 2.10m long with steep curving concave sides forming a rounded base (Fig 2; S. 2.1). It was filled by mid grey brown silty clay (2/14) with frequent limestone flecks and one sherd of pottery dated to the Romano-British period.

#### *Postholes*

Cutting into the surface of pit 2/05 were two postholes 2/07 & 2/09 of similar dimensions <0.40-0.50m wide and <0.08- 0.10m deep with gradually curving concave sides and gently rounded bases (Fig 2; S. 2.4 & 2.5). They were filled by dark brownish grey silty clay with limestone flecks (2/06) & (2/08) and no dating evidence.

#### **4.4 Trench 3** (Figure 2)

This trench was excavated to a length of 24m (1.5m wide) and to varying depths of between 96.38m AOD at the northern end and 96.58m AOD at the southern end.

Table 3: Summary of contexts within Trench 3

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
<b>Trench 3</b>							
3/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.15m	Tr.	Tr.	None	Modern
3/02	Layer	Subsoil	0.15m	Tr.	Tr.	None	/
3/03	Layer	Natural	/	Tr.	Tr.	None	/
3/04	Deposit	Dark greyish brown clay silt fill of 3/05	0.20m	1.0.	Tr.	Pot	Romano-British
3/05	Cut	Ditch	0.20m	1.0	Tr.	/	/

The stratigraphy within the trench consisted of the following contexts (earliest to latest) (Fig 2; S. 3.2). The natural limestone with clay patches was encountered at the base of the trench (3/03). Overlying the natural was 0.15m thick dark brown-grey silty clay subsoil (3/02). The final layer was the present topsoil (3/01).

#### *Linear features*

A gully/ditch was seen at the northern end of the trench cutting natural clays and weathered limestone sealed by layer (3/02). This ditch 3/05 was 1.0m in width and 0.20m deep with concave sides and a rounded base (Fig 2; S. 3.1). It was filled by firm dark brown-clay silt (3/04) with two sherds of Romano-British pottery and two animal bone fragments.

#### **4.5 Trench 4** (Figure 2)

This trench was excavated to a length of 24m (1.5m wide) and to varying depths of between 97.25m AOD at the eastern end and 96.46m AOD at the western end.

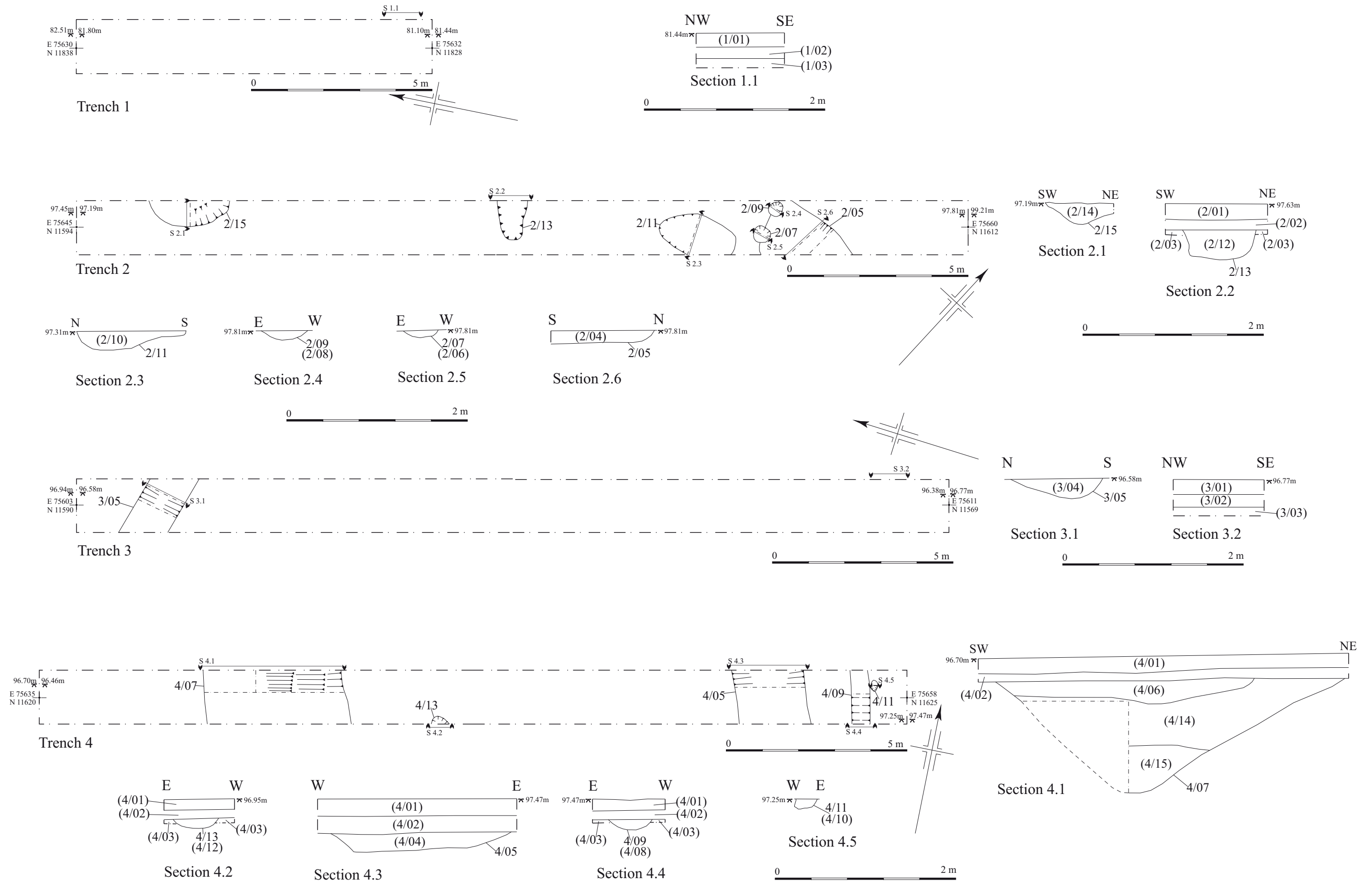


Figure 2. Trenches 1, 2, 3 & 4: Plans and sections

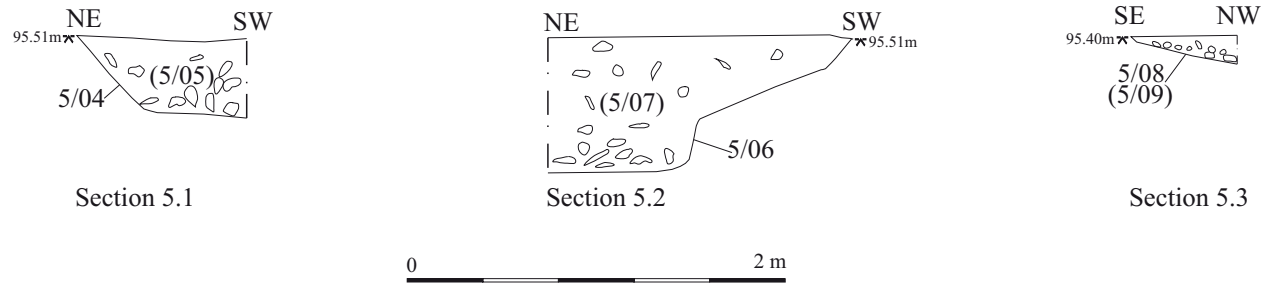
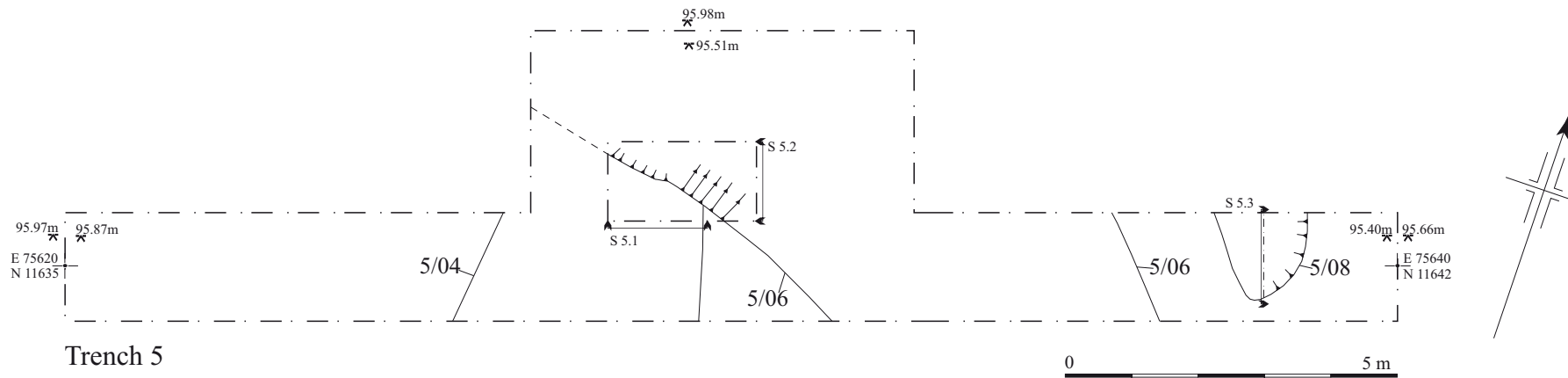


Figure 3. Trench 5 Plan and sections

Table 4: Summary of contexts within Trench 4

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
<b>Trench 4</b>							
4/01	Layer	Dark greyish black topsoil	0.12-0.20	Tr.	Tr.	None	modern
4/02	Layer	Dark brownish grey silty clay subsoil	0.08- 0.20	Tr.	Tr.	None	
4/03	Layer	Natural weathered limestone	/	Tr.	Tr.	None	
4/04	Deposit	Fill of 4/05	0.20	2.0	Tr.	Pot	Romano-British
4/05	Cut	Ditch	0.20	2.0	Tr.	/	/
4/06	Deposit	Fill of 4/07	0.20	2.8	Tr.	Pot	Romano-British/P med
4/07	Cut	Ditch	1.20	3.8	Tr.	/	/
4/08	Deposit	Fill of 4/09	0.12	0.45	Tr.	Pot	Romano-British
4/09	Cut	Gully	0.12	0.45	Tr.	/	/
4/10	Deposit	Fill of 4/11	0.22	0.48	0.12	none	/
4/11	Cut	Posthole	0.22	0.48	0.12	/	/
4/12	Deposit	Fill of 4/13	0.10	0.50	0.20	none	/
4/13	Cut	Posthole	0.10	0.50	0.20	/	/
4/14	Deposit	Fill of 4/07	0.50	2.4	Tr.	/	/
4/15	Deposit	Fill of 4/07	0.52	0.90	Tr.	Pot	Roman

The stratigraphy within the trench consisted of the following contexts (earliest to latest) (Fig 2; S. 4.1- 4.4). The natural limestone with clay patches was encountered at the base of the trench (4/03). Overlying the natural was 0.15m thick dark brown-grey silty clay subsoil (4/02). The final layer was the present topsoil (4/01).

#### *Linear features*

Ditch 4/05 was 0.20m deep and 2m wide with gently sloping concave sides and almost flat base (Fig 2; S. 4.3). It was filled by dark greyish brown silty clay (4/04) with frequent limestone flecks throughout and three sherds of Romano-British pottery.

Ditch 4/07 was 1.2m deep and 3.8m wide with steeply sloping concave sides forming a gently rounded base (Fig 2; S. 4.1). It contained three different fills (4/15), (4/14) & (4/06). The earliest fill was 0.52m thick firm mid brown silty clay with one Roman pottery sherd, iron nail and occasional charcoal flecks (4/15). This was overlain by 0.50m thick light yellowish brown sandy silt (4/14) with occasional charcoal flecks. The latest fill was dark grey clay silt (4/06) with 10 sherds of Roman pottery alongside one probably intrusive Post medieval sherd, fragments of Romano-British tile, iron nail and animal bone. Ditch 4/07 was sealed beneath the subsoil and topsoil (described above).

Gully 4/09 was 0.12m deep and 0.50m wide with concave sides and a gently rounded base (Fig 2; S. 4.4). It was filled by dark greyish brown silty clay (4/08) with one sherd of Romano-British pottery.

*Discrete features*

Posthole 4/11 was sub circular in shape and 0.10m deep and 0.24m wide with sharp concave sides forming an irregular base (Fig 2; S. 4.5). It was filled by dark greyish brown silty clay with small limestone flecks (4/10) and no dating evidence.

Posthole 4/13 was 0.12m deep and 0.50m wide with gradually curving concave sides and gently rounded base (Fig 2; S. 4.2). It was filled by dark blackish brown silty clay (4/12) with no dating evidence.

**4.6 Trench 5** (Figure 3)

This trench was excavated to a length of 20m (1.5m wide) and to varying depths of between 97.40m AOD at the eastern end and 95.87m AOD at the western end. Contingency was used to pull a box shaped extension on the north side of the trench to further ascertain the nature of the archaeology.

Table 5; Summary of contexts within Trench 5

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
Trench 5							
5/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.25m	Tr.	Tr.	None	Modern
5/02	Layer	Subsoil	0.15m	Tr.	Tr.	None	/
5/03	Layer	Natural	/	Tr.	Tr.	None	/
5/04	Cut	Ditch	0.38	0.90	Tr.	None	/
5/05	Fill	Fill of 5/04	0.38	0.90	Tr.	Pot	Romano-British
5/06	Cut	Ditch	0.60	Tr.	Tr.	/	/
5/07	Deposit	Fill of 5/06	0.60	Tr.	Tr.	Pot	Romano-British
5/08	Cut	Pit	0.14	1.40	1.40	/	/
5/09	Deposit	Fill of 5/08	0.14	1.40	1.40	Pot	Romano-British
5/10	Deposit	Surface collection of finds from (5/07)	/	/	/	Pot	Romano-British/Saxon/P med

*Linear features*

Ditch 5/04 was the earliest of the ditches within this trench. It was orientated approximately north-south and had a width of *c.* 3.5m and depth of *c.* 0.40m (Fig 3; S. 5.1). The ditch was filled by pale-mid brown grey silty clay with 15 sherds of mid 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD Romano-British pottery alongside moderate chalk and limestone fragments (5/05).

Ditch 5/06 was cut through Ditch 5/04 orientated on an approximate north west south east alignment with steep concave sides and a flat base (Fig 3; S. 5.2). It was filled by mid to dark grey silty clay (5/07) with 14 sherds of late Romano-British pottery, large animal jaw bone and other broken animal bones, tile fragments and one piece of Roman glass. On the surface

of (5/07) was a collection of pottery sherds mostly Roman with two Saxon and one Post medieval. Other finds including a Romano-British stone *tesserae*, two tile fragments and a collection broken animal bones (5/10) were also recovered from the surface of this ditch (not illustrated in section).

#### *Discrete features*

A small pit 5/08 was excavated at the eastern end of the trench immediately adjacent to the edge of Ditch 5/06, which was thought by the excavator to be a possible tree hole. It had shallow sides and an almost flat irregular base (Fig 3; S. 5.3). The feature was filled by moderate mid brown silty clay with broken animal bones, one tile fragment and chalk flecks (5/05).

### **Reliability of Results**

The archaeological evaluation was carried out in dry conditions with an experienced team of archaeologists and machine driver. The developers were on site and were extremely helpful in aiding us in our work.

The methodology employed fully complied with WSI and a high level of recording was achieved in line with all IfA standards and guidance. Overall, the reliability of the results can be considered to be very good and the nature of the work to evaluate the site has been successful. A significant amount of information has been recovered but due to the limitations of the excavations (at this stage) interpretations are limited.

## **5. THE POTTERY** by Jane Timby

### **5.1 Introduction**

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of 74 sherds of pottery weighing 713 g accompanied by 12 fragments (110 g) of fired clay / degraded ceramic building material.

Most of the pottery dates to the Roman period but there are at least four Saxon and three post-medieval sherds also present.

In general terms the sherds are quite fragmentary with an average sherd size of 9.6 g which is below average for sealed groups but more typical of disturbed material. There were very few featured sherds present which has some ramification with regard the accuracy of the dating.

Pottery was recovered from 12 defined contexts with the quantities ranging from single sherds up to a maximum of 15 from both contexts 5/05 and 5/10. In addition there are three unstratified sherds.

For the purposes of this assessment the material was scanned macroscopically and sorted into fabrics based on firing colour and inclusions (type, size and frequency) in the clay. The sorted fabrics were quantified by sherd count and weight. Freshly broken sherds were counted as one. A note was made of the forms present, mainly from the rim sherds. Known named traded Roman wares were coded using the National Roman fabric reference collection codes (codes in brackets) (Tomber and Dore 1998). Appendix 1 summarises the data for each context (page 17).

The work has been undertaken without knowing the exact stratigraphic relationship of the contexts.

### *Roman*

Most of the pottery, some 65 sherds, date to the Roman period. There appears to be sherds present belonging to the early, middle and late Roman periods.

The earlier wares include grog-tempered wares typical of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries and at least 11 of these sherds were recorded from six contexts but often residually with later material.

Traded wares include a single sherd of small chip of Central Gaulish samian (LEZ SA) in the unstratified material probably of 2<sup>nd</sup>-century date. Slightly more locally sourced are 23 sherds from the Oxfordshire industries to the west. These include examples of white-ware mortaria (OXF WH), fine grey ware (OXF REF), and colour-coated ware (OXF RS). The latter includes examples of Young (1977) forms C49 and C75 dated AD 270-400 and 325-400 respectively. Both these vessels came from context 5/10. A possible flange from a type C51 bowl came from 5/05. Collectively the Oxfordshire wares account for 31% of the assemblage.

Also of note are three sherds of late Roman Midlands shelly ware (ROB SH) from contexts 5/07 and 5/10 with examples of flanged bowl and a jar. Such wares, possibly made at Harrold or nearby kilns in Bedfordshire, are typical of the latter part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Other wares present are largely unfeatured grey, black or oxidised sandy wares which are difficult to date or provenance closely but are likely to be mainly from local sources.

### *Saxon*

There are at least four sherds of Saxon date present, possibly five if an undated sherd of prehistoric or Saxon date from 5/07 is included. The other sherds came from contexts 2/10, 5/10 and 2/12. The fabrics include an organic-tempered sherd and sandy with organic from 5/10, both quite small abraded pieces; an organic-tempered sherd from 2/10 and a fine limestone-tempered sherd from 2/12. The small, abraded nature of the sherds suggests they may have derived from surface deposits, either ploughsoil, or from disturbed material in the top of earlier features.

### *Post-medieval*

Three sherds of post-medieval date are present; all glazed red earthenware from contexts 2/10, 4/06 and 5/10. A possibly fourth sherd, a plain coarse oxidised sherd from 2/04 less than 3 g in weight could be Roman or post-medieval.

### *Fired clay / ceramic building material*

Accompanying the pottery were 12 small fragments of fired clay. All were much abraded with no surfaces or shape but two pieces are worth noting. One fragment from the unstratified material appears to be from a circular disc with just a small part of the edge present, whilst small broken pieces from 2/12 may be from a rectangular-section bar. Both items, if correctly identified, are typical of portable kiln furniture used in the kiln chamber to support and separate pots during firing, particularly in the early Roman period.



### *Potential and further work*

This is a very small group of material but seems to indicate a moderately long-lived Roman settlement in the area from at least the early 2<sup>nd</sup> through to the later 4<sup>th</sup> century with subsequent Saxon activity nearby. The low incidence of traded wares, notably samian, would suggest a fairly modest rural establishment. The possibly presence of kiln furniture may suggest nearby local production but it should be stressed that the fragments were extremely degraded.

The existing assemblage does not warrant further work as a group of pottery due to its small size and fragmentary nature but is important in terms of documenting the presence of Roman and later activity at the site and should be taken into account should further archaeological work takes place.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

The archaeological evaluation was successful in establishing the aims and objectives set out at the start of the project (JMHS 2011). A farmstead of Romano-British date is postulated across the flat ground over the area proposed for development. Ditch 5/04 (Trench 5) was stratigraphically the earliest feature recovered from the site as it was cut by the larger ditch 5/06, indicating the site was occupied over a long time period, perhaps on a seasonal basis, but more likely a permanent settlement. The features were not closely dated with a range of pottery sherds from the Romano-British period covering the 2<sup>nd</sup> through to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD. Additional occupation can be postulated into the 5<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> Century AD by the presence of some Saxon pottery sherds within the backfill of pit features. Other Post medieval pottery sherds are likely to be intrusive resulting from modern ploughing, which is known to have taken place over this field.

Ditch 5/06 provides the clearest indication of enclosures on the flat plateau covering the hilltop. The shape, size and slightly curving shape of ditch 5/06 may indicate a defensive function to protect the farmstead during the unsettled later Romano-British period. The ditch would seem to continue into Trench 4 but terminate or turn before Trench 2, as it was clearly not present at this location. Assuming the ditches are the same an enclosure can be postulated of approximately 80m in length and presumably the same in width. Other sites with comparable sized intercutting ditches have produced settlement evidence. An interesting comparison may be made from Denchworth Road, Wantage (Barber & Holbrook 2001), where a stone walled Romano-British building was set within ditched site boundaries.

Close to the enclosure ditches were traces of a possible Romano-British building, survived as gullies and postholes. The gully discovered within Trench 4 probably acted as a foundation trench for the wall of a structure rather than a drip gully. The adjacent posthole to the gully further indicates the probability of a wooden building, such as a barn or workshop. The two postholes within Trench 2 hint to the presence of further structures, perhaps part of the same building, but likely a different structure over this location. The postholes (2/07 & 2/09) here cut an earlier feature (2/05) which is again indicative of long occupation, with buildings and replacements during the long Romano-British occupation of Britain. The recovered pottery sherds certainly prove a lengthy occupation. Similar Romano-British wooden structures have been excavated at Mansfield College, Oxford (Booth & Hayden *et al.* 2000) where foundation trenches and postholes were set within ditches boundaries dated to the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD.

The finds assemblage fits in with what should be expected from a long lasting rural Romano-British settlement. A high frequency of animal bones (some with possible light butchery marks) found with Romano-British pottery sherds is also suggestive of occupation at the site. The two ceramic finds associated with the operation of a Roman pottery kiln are worthy of special mention. Roman pottery kilns are rare discoveries, and if one existed on the site it may explain why the site was occupied for a long time period and why the inhabitants were seemingly wealthy. The excavations uncovered expensive objects such as the glass tableware fragment and decorated Samian pottery, which were the high status domestic objects of the time. In addition to this a possible *tesserae* was discovered, which may have once formed a high status Romano-British courtyard presumably associated with an important Romano-British dwelling.

The presence of a single ditch at the northern end of Trench 3 would indicate some Romano-British activity in this area, but presumably less intensive at this location, perhaps indicating this area was more peripheral to the actual settlement further to the east.

The archaeological evaluation has enabled the study of an important Romano-British site of regional importance. A confidence rating is high that the best possible results were achieved.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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**HER Summary Form**

<b>Site Name:</b> Hollywell Farm, Cuddington Rd, Buckinghamshire	
<b>Site Address:</b> Hollywell Farm, Cuddington Rd, Dinton, Buckinghamshire	
<p><b>Summary:</b> <i>John Moore Heritage Services concluded an archaeological evaluation in advance of the proposed construction of a new development at Hollywell Farm, Cuddington Road, Dinton Cuddington, Buckinghamshire (SP7565 1160). Five trenches, with a cumulative length of approximately 102 metres were excavated to the uppermost surface of the archaeology or natural geology. The earliest features were Romano-British ditches and pits seen in Trenches 2, 3, 4 &amp; 5 which covered a relatively flat area on the immediate crest of a slope descending northwards. The ditches probably once formed boundaries of a Romano-British farming complex, which occupied this hilltop during the 2<sup>nd</sup> through to the 4th Centuries AD. The actual settlement evidence came from a series of postholes, a gully and waste pits from Trenches 2 &amp; 3 set close to the boundary ditches of the Romano-British farmstead.</i></p> <p><i>All of the ditches were broadly contemporary with a mixture of both early and later Roman pottery within the fills. The ditches were generally deep with sharp concave sides filled with sandy clay, which looked deliberately backfilled rather than gradual filling over time. During a later phase of activity, a large (possibly defensive) ditch seen in Trench 5 orientated approximately north-east south-west may have re-instated the boundaries of the farm during the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Century AD. This ditch contained some Saxon and Post medieval pottery on its uppermost surface, which indicates the site was still probably occupied into the Saxon period and also proves later farming activity such as ploughing has truncated and disturbed the surface of some features. Other features also contained Saxon pottery a further indication of Post Roman settlement. The site was then abandoned and left as pasture until modern times.</i></p>	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> Buckinghamshire	<b>Parish:</b>
<b>Period(s):</b> Roman; Saxon	
<b>NGR (centre of site: 8 figures):</b> SP7565 1160	
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b> Evaluation	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> October 2011	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> JMHS	
<b>Geology:</b>	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> An Archaeological evaluation of a Romano-British site at Hollywell farm, Cuddington Rd, Dinton, Buckinghamshire  Prepared by Paul Riccoboni BA ARCH AIFA	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)</b> <b>Roman field Systems</b> <b>Saxon pottery</b>  <p style="text-align: right;">(cont. on attached sheet)</p>	
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b>	
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> Paul Riccoboni info@jmheritageservices.co.uk	<b>Date:</b> October 2011

## Appendix 1: Quantification Table of Cuddington Pottery

Context	Roman				Saxon	Pmed	Undated	Tot No	Tot Wt	cbm/fc	cbm/fc	Date
	samian	Oxford	grog	other						No	Wt	
2/04	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	4	0	0	Roman/ ?Pmed
3/04	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	6	0	0	Roman
4/04	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	5	0	0	Roman
5/05	0	8	0	7	0	0	0	15	89	1	16	mid C3-C4
4/06	0	1	2	7	0	1	0	11	59.5	3	7	C2-C4/Pmed
5/07	0	2	4	3	0	0	1	10	89	1	19	C2/C3
5/07	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	4	127	0	0	late C4
4/08	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	C1-C2
2/10	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	4	17	0	0	Ro/Sx/Pmed
5/10	0	6	2	4	2	1	0	15	272	2	32	C4/Sx/Pmed
2/12	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	6.5	3	21	Roman/ ?Sx
2/14	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	1	1	Roman
4/15	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	Roman
us	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	28	1	14	C2
TOTAL	1	23	11	30	4	3	2	74	713	12	110	

Plate 1: General shot of Trench 2: Pre excavation



Plate 2: Section through Ditch 4/07

