

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

**NEWINGTON HOUSE, WINKFIELD LANE,
WINKFIELD**

NGR SU 90507290

On behalf of

Mr D Axmark

NOVEMBER 2013

REPORT FOR Mr D Axmark
Newington House
Winkfield Lane
Winkfield
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation at Newington House, Winkfield Lane, Winkfield on the 16th and 17th October 2013. Seven machine-dug trenches were excavated in total; three were located on the site of the planned earth bund and the remaining four across the site of the proposed reservoir.

A number of possible paleochannels (or variations in the natural geology), two ditches and a number of plough scars were observed and recorded. One of the ditches contained 18th/19th century pottery but no other features contained dateable evidence.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located at Newington House, Winkfield Lane, Winkfield, Berkshire NGR SU 9050 7290 at a height of approximately 65m OD.

The underlying geology is London Clay according to the British Geological Survey maps of the area (BGS 1981).

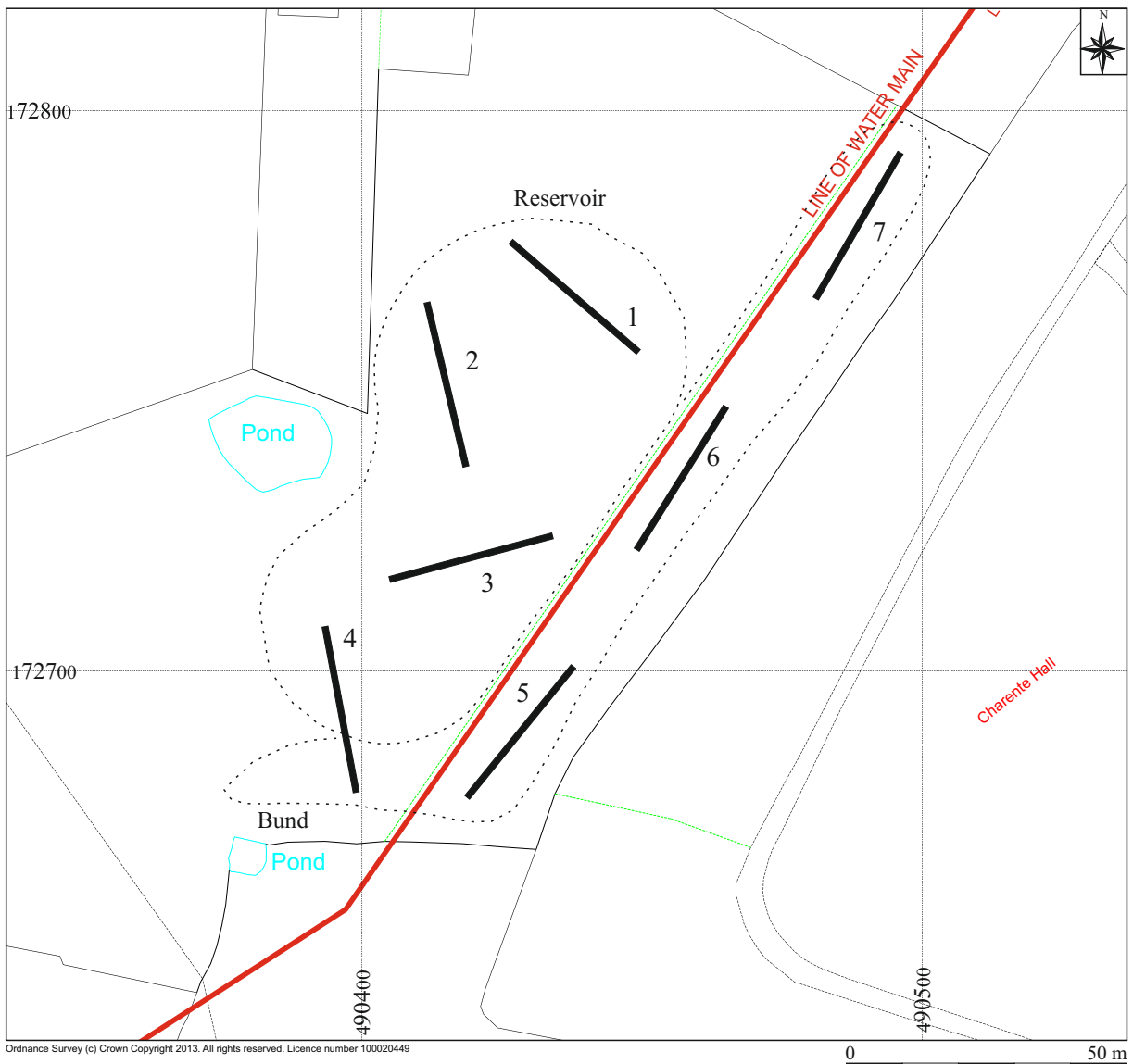
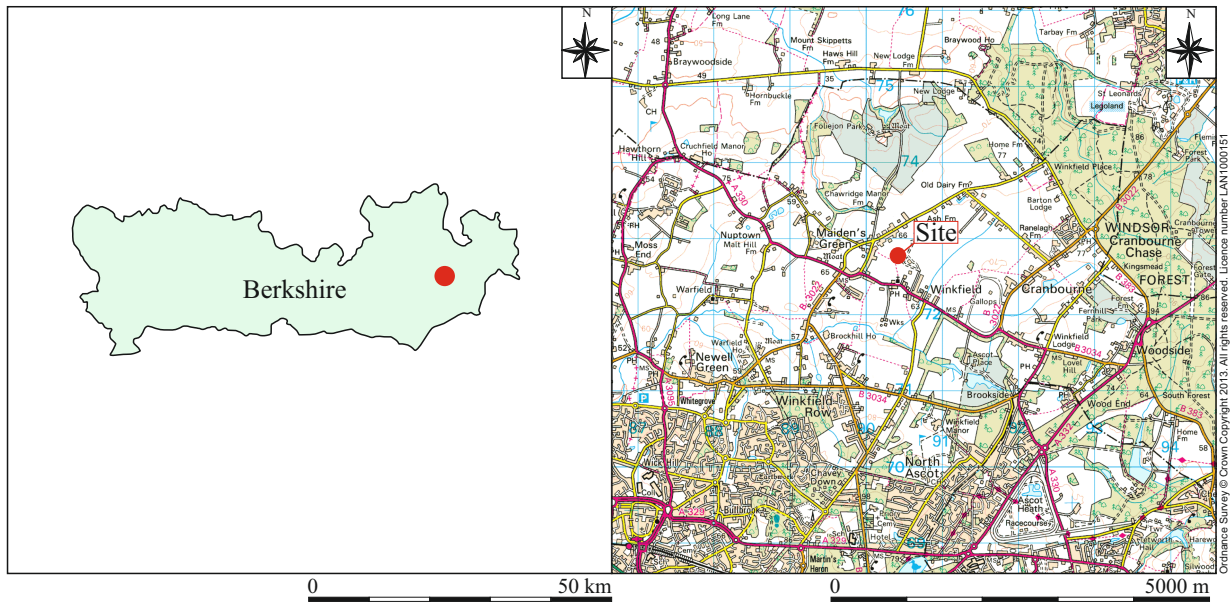
1.2 Planning Background

Bracknell Forest Borough Council granted permission for the formation of a pond to form a reservoir and the creation of a bund at Newington House, Winkfield (13/00325/FUL). Berkshire Archaeology had been consulted regarding this development and advised that a programme of archaeological work was required. The first stage of which was a preliminary archaeological evaluation in the area. John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) were commissioned to undertake this work, and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2013) was prepared to satisfy the requirements of Berkshire Archaeology's suggested programme.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The manor of Winkfield at the date of the Domesday Survey belonged to the Abbey of Abingdon. In 942 Winkfield had been granted, together with Swinley, by King Edmund to a holy woman called Saethryth, who is said to have transferred it to the Abbey of Abingdon. It was not until 1015 that the abbey received the estate from Eadflæd, a noble matron. William I is said to have taken from it 4 hides to enlarge Windsor Forest, and also two woods called Jerdelea and Bacsceat. In an undated list of the possessions of the abbey during the first half of the 12th century Winkfield is assessed at 3½ hides and was said to be held by the kitchener of the monastery. It was held by the abbey until the Dissolution.

The 14th century Grade II* listed Church of St Mary the Virgin (HER 00221.03 – MBF 302) lies 200m to the south of the site. A possible moated site lies adjacent to the church (HER 00221.05 – MBF 15468), another moated site is located 600m to the west (DBF11).



Key ■ Evaluation trenches

Figure 1: Site location

An evaluation on Church Road, 300m to the southeast, recovered medieval pottery sherds (TVAS 2001). A negative evaluation was conducted a further 100m away on Church Road (SAS 1999). A watching brief 300m to the west of the site at Winkfield Road recovered three sherds of abraded medieval pottery and a cluster of undated postholes (TVAS 1994). Four negative watching briefs were situated close by (JMHS 2003; TVAS 2005; TVAS 2007; TVAS 2013).

A World War 2 relief airfield was situated to the east of the site (Historic Environment Record No. MRM16233). This was closed in 1945, but turned into a space research station in 1975. A watching brief in this area was conducted in 2005 when the research facility was redeveloped; although not all the area was monitored no significant archaeological features were recorded (FA 2005).

A desk-based assessment was produced in 2006 in advance of the Stage II Bray water main that appears to run across the development site (ERM 919). Survey work of historic field boundaries was conducted 450m to the north of the site as part of associated water treatment works (ERM 921). This water main may have impacted considerably on any archaeological remains on the site, depending on the width of the associated easement excavated to accommodate this pipeline.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- 2.1 To undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.
- 2.2 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site and the depth of soil deposits which overlie the remains.
- 2.3 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- 2.4 To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- 2.5 To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape.
- 2.6 To determine the implications of the remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity.
- 2.7 To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.
- 2.8 To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits. The forms in which such evidence may be present will be determined in accordance with the guidelines set out in English Heritage's *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from*

Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation and Geoarchaeology: Using earth sciences to understand the archaeological record.

2.9 To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.

2.10 To address some of the key issues highlighted in the Solent Thames Research Framework. This will depend on the type and date of remains encountered.

2.11 To inform the need for, and scope of, further phases of work to mitigate the impact of the proposed development

2.12 To try and assess any damage to the archaeological remains caused by the easement corridor created by the laying of the water main pipe.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In accordance with the requirements of Berkshire Archaeology and the Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2013), JMHS carried out the work, which comprised a scheme for the mechanical excavation of seven trial trenches across the site. Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the Written Scheme of Investigation.

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of seven trial trenches each 30m long and 1.6m wide, supplemented by limited hand-excavated investigations of pertinent archaeological deposits (Fig. 1). The area investigated included both the area for the proposed reservoir and the bund.

Excavation was carried out by an 8 tonne excavator using a ditching bucket. Mechanical excavation was taken down to the top of “natural” geological deposits or the first archaeological horizon encountered.

During the trial trenching a representative sample of features were investigated through hand excavation to achieve the objectives. Site procedures were carried out to IfA guidelines and to the requirements of Berkshire Archaeology. A qualified Supervisor and three assistants undertook the evaluation trenching work in two days under the overall direction of David Gilbert MifA.

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 brackets () show deposits or fills. The context numbers show the trench number followed by a slash (/) and the context number (i.e. 1/01 = Trench 1, feature or layer 1).

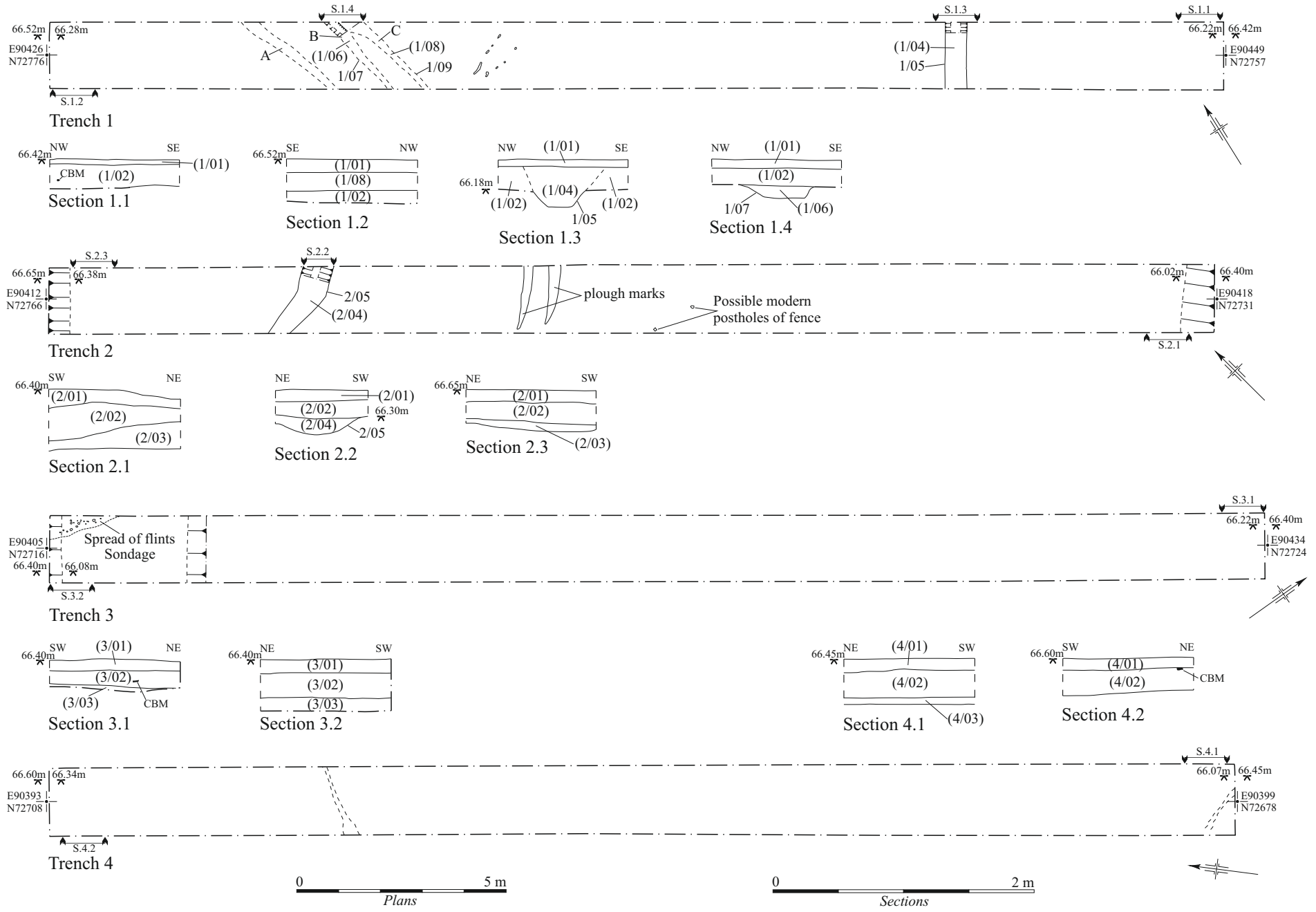


Figure 2: Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4 - plans and sections

There was a slight deviation from the original plan in terms of the trench layout due to the incursion of a number of modern features in the paddock/enclosure that did not tally with the Ordnance Survey plan which was several years old. This only required a slight modification of the angle of two of the trenches but all trenches stayed within the bounds of the proposed future works.

It was noted that the field possessed an almost imperceptible slope towards the south and, according to one of the estate workers (Pers Comm), prone to flooding along its southern edge in winter. It contained a pond on the north-west side and another behind the boundary fence to the south. The quality of the soil was poor and the subsoil contained fragmentary ceramic building material (CBM), pottery and glass fragments.

Along the east side on the site of the proposed earth bund a plantation of bushes had to be removed whose roots had penetrated the natural geology. These were removed by the mechanical digger prior to the excavation of the trenches.

4.2 Trenches

Trench 1 (Figure 2)

Trench 1 was 28m long and 1.6m wide, and orientated northwest to southeast located within the proposed reservoir area.

In nearly all cases, the modern turf of the field - here annotated (1/01) - varied between 0.05 and 0.9m in thickness and overlay a subsoil which was identified as a former plough-soil (1/02) at around 0.16m in depth. This inference could be made as this layer was heterogeneous, contained fragmentary pieces of CBM (present in both millimetre and centimetre fragments) and flecks of charcoal (present at around 1% of the whole) at its base – indicating that it had been turned or ‘folded’ by the plough. In every trench this was found to be the case.

However, in a 1m sample section excavated at the northeast end of Trench 1, a further subsoil (1/08) could be seen under the turf (1/01), which appeared to be either an interface or a buried surface layer under the current turf (Fig.2, S1.2). This was the only instance where an extra layer was observed that was not part of the underlying clay geology.

There were a number of features in Trench 1, including a modern ditch 1/05 which was investigated with a section across it, (Fig. 2, S1.3), and whose fill (1/04) was found to contain modern string, glass and china pottery. The fill appeared to be heavily oxidised.

At the northwest end a number of plough-scars were recorded (A, B & C) and one investigated. The profile of 1/07 showed the classic cut of the plough imprint; one side having a gradual, sloping side while the other was almost vertical. A fragmentary piece of CBM was recovered from its fill (1/06). This small section (Fig. 2, S1.4), also revealed that plough-scar C was in fact an ephemeral, surface feature.

Trench 2 (Figure 2)

Trench 2 was 28m long and 1.6m wide, and orientated northwest to southeast located within the proposed reservoir area. Turf layer (2/01) was 0.10m thick and the underlying subsoil (2/02) 0.12 thick before the natural geology (2/03) was encountered (Fig. 2, S2.1 & S2.3).

This trench contained ditch 2/05 and two plough-scars. Ditch 2/05 profile was shallow with gradual, sloping sides with a base in a flat 'U' (Fig. 2, S2.2) .A few fragmentary pieces of CBM were recovered from its fill (2/04).

Trench 3 (Figure 2)

Trench 3 was 29m long and 1.6m wide and orientated northeast southwest located within the proposed reservoir area. Turf layer (3/01) was around 0.09m thick whilst the subsoil (3/02) was 0.12m thick at the northeast end but nearer to 0.20m at the southwest end (Fig. 2, S3.1 & 3.2). As the ground fell away slightly to the south this may be the effect of colluvium of soil creep down hill, or indeed the action of the plough which has moved the soil southwards.

A modern land drain the southwest corner back-filled with natural, rounded flint was observed but not investigated. No other archaeological features were present in this trench.

Trench 4 (Figure 2)

Trench 4 was 28.5m long and 1.6m wide and orientated north south, located so as to straddle both the proposed reservoir and earth bund areas. Turf layer (4/01) was around 0.08m thick whilst the subsoil (4/02) was 0.21m thick with the natural geology (4/03) being encountered at a depth of 0.29m (Fig. 4, S4.1 & S4.2).

Two possible plough-scars were observed and recorded but not investigated. No other archaeological features were present in this trench.

Trench 5 (Figure 3)

Trench 5 was 29m long and 1.6m wide and orientated northeast southwest and located so as to be within the zone of the proposed earth bund. Turf layer (5/01) was around 0.07m thick whilst the subsoil (5/02) was 0.17m thick with the natural geology (5/03) being encountered at a depth of 0.29m (Fig. 3, S5.1 & S5.3).

A band of darker clay (5/04) was noted at the southwest end and investigated by way of a sondage or slot. It revealed it to be a probable palaeochannel [5/05] with characteristic wide, gradual sides at oblique angles, likely to have been caused by water erosion as opposed to the more vertical sides one would expect in a 'cut' feature. A surface find of a single fragment of CBM was more likely to have originated in the above subsoil (5/02).

A small sondage was cut at the northeast end by the mechanical digger to better comprehend the underlying geology; two bands or layers of clay, (5/06) and (5/07) were recorded in section to add to the geological 'log' of the site.

No other archaeological features were present in this trench.

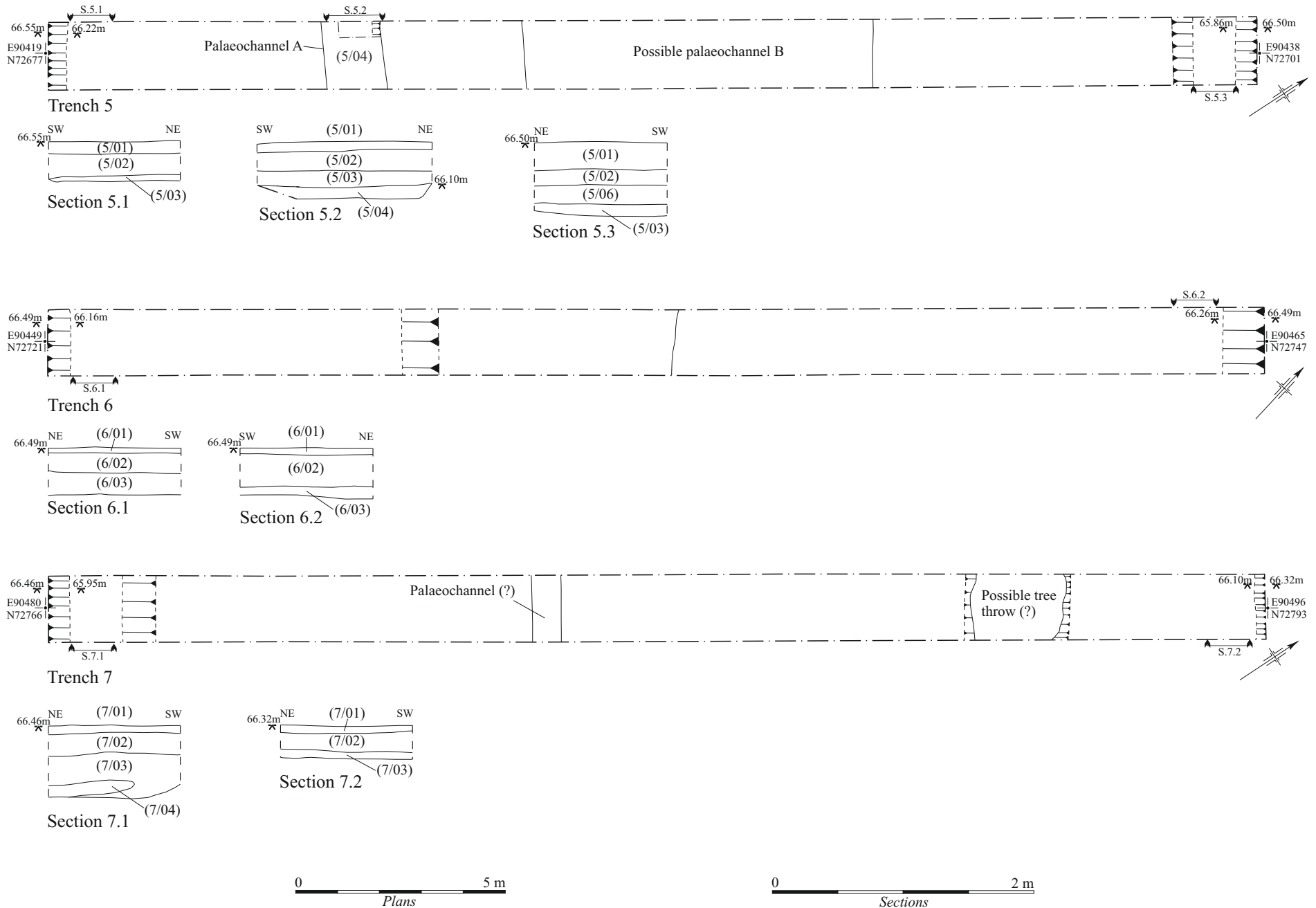


Figure 3: Trenches 5, 6 and 7 - plans and sections

Trench 6 (Figure 3)

Trench 6 was 29m long and 1.6m wide and orientated northeast southwest and located so as to be within the zone of the proposed earth bund. Turf layer (6/01) was around 0.08m thick whilst the subsoil (6/02) was 0.14m thick with the natural geology (6/03) being encountered at a depth of 0.22m (Fig. 3, S6.1 & S6.2).

An area of darker, blue-grey clay was noted in the centre of the trench and was interpreted as a possible palaeochannel.

No other archaeological features were present in this trench.

Trench 7 (Figure 3)

Trench 7 was 29m long and 1.6m wide and orientated northeast-southwest and located so as to be within the zone of the proposed earth bund. Turf layer (7/01) was around 0.08m thick whilst the subsoil (7/02) was 0.14m thick with the natural geology (7/03) being encountered at a depth of 0.22m (Fig. 3, S7.1 & S7.2). A rim sherd was recovered from the base of layer (7/02); it being the only diagnostic fragment of ceramic material gathered during the evaluation process.

Another layer of the natural geology (7/04) was recorded in a sondage cut by the mechanical digger at the southwest end of the trench which was intended to inform our understanding of the geological sequence on the site. A description of this layer was added to the geological log.

Two possible plough-scars were observed and recorded but not investigated. No other archaeological features were present in this trench.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery (*By David Gilbert*)

Two sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from two contexts (1/04) and (7/02), these were identified and not retained. This was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Reading Waterfront type-series (Underwood 1997), the following fabrics were noted:

Context (1/04)

CRM Creamware, 1 sherd - 2g. C.18th-19th century.

Context (7/02)

REW Red earthenware, 1 sherd - 19g. First made in the 16th century, and in some areas continued in use until the 19th century.

No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental analysis were identified, and no samples were taken. A number of deeper sondages were cut through the natural in Trenches 5 and 7 to illustrate the sequence of geological deposits or layers present.

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological evaluation was successful and met the aims of the WSI.

The field was situated in marshy land liable to flooding in the winter. The subsoil in all trenches had been identified as relict plough-soil due to the presence of fragmentary ceramic building material, pottery and modern glass at its base and on the interface with the natural geology. In the 2001, during the evaluation of Church Cottage, the excavator surmised that the presence of pottery in this quantity was consistent with the prior manuring of the fields when they were under cultivation (Taylor 2001). This further illustrates the point that the pottery recovered is residual and in a secondary context.

The field is now under pasture and is due to be redeveloped as a reservoir. It is possible to suggest that either the soil quality was found to be poor or that the field's propensity for flooding (or being waterlogged) has meant that it has always been 'marginal' land – the soil depth may never have surpassed 0.20m across the site. This may also explain the 'negative' evaluation undertaken by TVAS at Church Cottage in May 2001 just to the south – the land may be too wet for settlement and/or too poor a quality soil to be under cultivation. It appears to be best suited to seasonal pasture – which is its current usage.

A number of other evaluations in the area have so far produced negative results in terms of locating evidence for settlement in vicinity, such as the one mentioned above and those at Church Road (SAS 1999) as well as at other locations in the village; (JMHS 2003), TVAS (2005), TVAS (2007) and TVAS (2013). Thus far, evidence for the core of the earlier settlement has eluded the archaeological investigations to date.

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Appendix 1: Trench Context Inventory

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1								
1/01	Layer	Friable Mid brown clay-silt	0.06m	1.60m	30m	-	Turf/Topsoil	Modern
1/02	Layer	Tenacious Mid grey-brownish silty clay	0.18m	1.60m	30m	-	Subsoil (relict plough soil)	Modern
1/03	Layer	Tenacious mid brown-orange mottled light grey silty clay	-	1.60m	30m	-	Natural Geology	-
1/04	Fill	Tenacious dark grey-brownish clay silt heavily oxidised	0.31m	0.63m	1.60m	-	Fill of ditch 1/05	Modern
1/05	Cut	Linear, aligned NE-SW, profile: sides gradual with a flat base	0.31	0.62m	1.60m	-	Cut of ditch	Modern
1/06	Fill	Friable mid-grey silty clay with pebbles and fragmentary CBM at 1%	0.09m	0.34m	1.60m	-	Fill of plough scar	Modern
1/07	Cut	Linear, aligned N-S. Profile: sides gradual on the west and vertical on the east	0.09m	0.34m	1.60m	-	Cut of plough scar	Modern
1/08	Layer	Friable mid brown-orange silty clay	0.13	1.60m	4.0m	-	Buried subsoil	Modern
Trench 2								
2/01	Layer	Friable dark brown loamy silt	0.10m	1.60m	30m	-	Turf/Topsoil	Modern
2/02	Layer	Tenacious mid brown reddish silty clay	0.12m	1.60m	30m	-	Subsoil (relict plough soil)	Modern
2/03	Layer	Tenacious dark brown-yellowish silty clay	0.15m	1.60	30m	-	Natural Geology	-
2/04	Fill	Tenacious mid brown clay silt with inclusions of angular stones at 30% and fragmentary CBM & Glass at 1%	0.15	0.66m	1.60m	-	Fill of ditch 2/05	Modern
2/05	Cut	Linear aligned NE-SW, profile: gradually sloping sides with flat base	0.16	0.66	1.60	-	Cut of ditch	Modern
Trench 3								
3/01	Layer	Friable dark brown clay-silt	0.08m	1.60m	30m	-	Turf/Topsoil	Modern
3/02	Layer	Tenacious mid grey mottled orange silty clay heavily oxidised	0.13-0.20m	1.60m	30m	-	Subsoil (relict plough soil)	Modern
3/03	Layer	Tenacious mid brown-orange clay with inclusions of pebbles and flint at 1%	-	1.60	30m	-	Natural Geology	-
Trench 4								
4/01	Layer	Friable dark brown silty clay with inclusions of small (mm) angular stones <=20%	0.10	1.60	30m	-	Turf?Topsoil	Modern
4/02	Layer	Tenacious mid brown silt clay with inclusions of small stones (mm) <=20% and flecks of CBM	0.18	1.60	30m	-	Subsoil (relict ploughsoil)	Modern

4/03	Layer	Tenacious mid brown-yellowish silty clay with inclusions of small angular stones <=10%	-	1.60m	30m	-	Natural Geology	-
Trench 5								
5/01	Layer	Friable dark brown loamy silt	0.10	1.60m	29m	-	Turf/Topsoil	Modern
5/02	Layer	Tenacious mid-dark brown silty clay	0.10	1.60m	29m	-	Subsoil (relict plough soil)	Modern
5/03	Layer	Tenacious mid brown-yellowish clay	-	1.60	29m	-	Natural Geology	-
5/04	Fill	Tenacious yellow-brown clay silt	0.13	1.9m	1.6 0m	-	Fill of palaeochannel 5/05	-
5/06	Cut/Edge	Linear aligned NW-SE, profile: oblique, shallow sides with a flat base	0.13	1.90m	1.60m	-	Cut/Edge of palaeochannel	-
5/07	Layer	Tenacious light yellow-orange silty clay	0.14	-	-	-	Natural Geology	-
Trench 6								
6/01	Layer	Friable dark brown clay silt with inclusions of angular stones at <=30%	0.08m	1.60m	29m	-	Turf/Topsoil	Modern
6/02	Layer	Tenacious mid brown orange-yellowish silty clay	0.14m	1.60m	29m	-	Subsoil (relict plough soil)	Modern
6/03	Layer	Tenacious dark yellow clay	-	1.60m	29m	-	Natural Geology	-
Trench 7								
7/01	Layer	Friable mid brown loamy silt	0.08m	1.6m	29m	-	Turf/Topsoil	Modern
7/02	Layer	Tenacious mid brown-reddish silty clay with inclusions of angular stones at <=20%	0.14m	1.6m	29m	-	Subsoil (relict plough soil)	Modern
7/03	Layer	Tenacious mid orange-yellowish clay	0.14m	1.60m	29m	-	Natural Geology	-
7/04	Layer	Tenacious mid brown-yellowish clay	0.10	1.6m	29m	-	Natural Geology	-