



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**AT**

**LAND ADJOINING DRAYTON ROAD,**

**MILTON, OXFORDSHIRE**

**NGR SU 4863 9365**

*On behalf of*

*JPPC*

**MARCH 2014**

<b>REPORT FOR</b>	JPPC Bagley Croft Hinksey Hill Oxford OX1 5BD
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**CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b><i>SUMMARY</i></b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
<b>2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 STRATEGY</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1 Research Design	3
3.2 Methodology	3
<b>4 RESULTS</b>	<b>4</b>
4.1 Field Results	4
4.2 Trench 1	4
4.3 Trench 2	6
4.4 Trench 3	6
4.5 Trench 4	8
4.6 Trench 5	8
4.7 Trenches 6 - 10	10
<b>5 FINDS</b>	<b>11</b>
5.1 Roman Pottery	11
5.2 Other finds	11
<b>6 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: Trench Context Inventory</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>FIGURES</b>	
Figure 1 Site location	2
Figure 2 Trenches 1, 3 & 5 – plan and sections	5
<b>PLATES</b>	
Plate 1 Section 1.1. Context 1/04 SE view	4
Plate 2 Trench 3 NW view.	6
Plate 3 Section 3.1. Context 3/06, ENE view.	7
Plate 4 Section 3.2 Context 3/06, West view.	7
Plate 5 Section 3.3. Context 3/08, WSW view.	8
Plate 6 Section 5.1. Context 5/05, West view.	9
Plate 7 Section 5.2, Context 5/07, West view.	9
Plate 8 Trench 5, West view	9
Plate 9 Section 5.3. Context 5/09, South view.	10
Plate 10 Section 5.4. Context 5/09 North view.	10

## **Summary**

*A total of ten evaluation trenches, each 1.6 m wide were opened across the proposed area of development at Drayton Road, Milton. Three linear ditches were discovered towards the west of the site and were all filled by a similar grey clayey fill. One ditch was undated and the other was identified as Victorian or later. These two ditches may have been continuous with each other although the alignment in plan appeared slightly off. A third ditch contained three pieces of Roman pottery, and this was also the only pottery identified across the entire area of excavation. All other finds were topsoil and subsoil finds from the west of the site and dated broadly as Post-medieval. A small irregular shaped undated pit was also identified as well as several modern features. The modern features were related to the recent use of the site as allotments. No burials were encountered on the site despite discovery of burials in the area. The linear cropmark which had been shown to cross the application area was not encountered in any of the evaluation trenches.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The site lies on the west side of Drayton Road, north of Milton (NGR SU48639265). The site lies at approximately 58m OD and the geology is Second Terrace River Gravels. The development area is approximately 0.95ha in size and is currently under pasture, former allotments and partly in use as a builder's yard.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Planning permission is being sought from the Vale of White Horse District Council (VHDC) to construct eighteen dwellings off Drayton Road, Milton (P14/V0052/O).

Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological remains a pre-determination archaeological field evaluation is required as part of the consideration of the application. Oxfordshire Historic and Natural Environment Team (OHaNET), on behalf of VHDC, has prepared a Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation.

John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) was commissioned to undertake this work, and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2014) was prepared to satisfy the requirements of the *Brief*. The *Written Scheme of Investigation* proposed the methodology by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

There are a number of linear features in the application area that have been identified as cropmarks. These form part of an extensive spread of cropmarks to the north and west. These include a vast spread of pits, trackways and rectangular and circular enclosures or barrows. To the east are further linear features, two identifiable as cropmarks that are probably part of an extensive field system. The Ordnance Survey map also shows the field to the east of Drayton Road contains an Anglo Saxon burial site. This appears to have been the site of some considerable status with grave goods

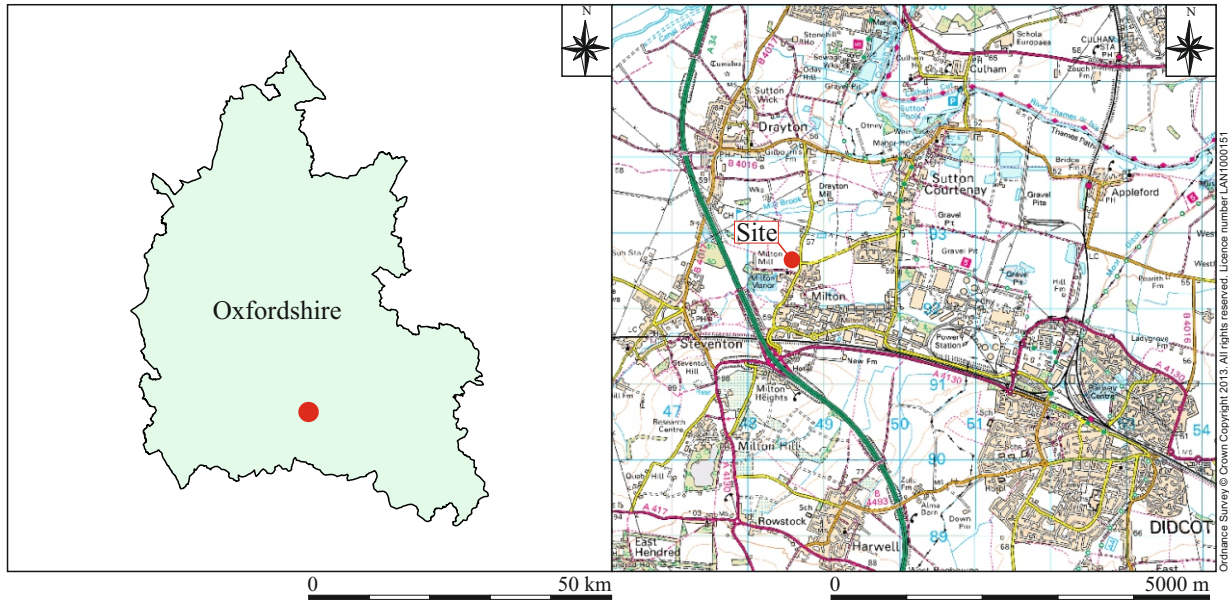


Figure 1: Site location

and was therefore of early Anglo Saxon origin. There is evidence of outlier burials and there is the likelihood therefore that burials may be present in the application area.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.

And in particular:

- To establish the date of the linear cropmark that crosses the application site.
- To establish whether any other types of remains are associated with it.
- To determine whether there are any burials on site that are within the evaluation sample.
- To attempt to determine how this application site fitted into the prehistoric and later landscape.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

JMHS carried out the work, which comprised a scheme for the mechanical excavation of 10 trial trenches with a combined length 240m. Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the Written Scheme of Investigation.

### **3.2 Methodology**

An excavator fitted with a toothless 1.5m wide ditching bucket was used to excavate 10 trenches each with a width of 1.6m wide. There were six trenches of 30m, two 20m trenches and two 10m trenches

Revealed archaeological deposits and features were cleaned by hand and recorded at the appropriate level by written, drawn and photographic record. All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers and all artefacts were collected, retained, and analysed by specialists.

## 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 feature fills or deposits of material.

The soil profile of the site was quite uniform. The lowest layer was the natural layer of gravel with yellow sand. This layer was deeper towards the west and south of the site where it was between 0.7m and 1.1m down from the ground. Overlying this layer was a layer of red brown natural sand which was 0.1m and greater than 0.3m thick. Towards the south and east of the site this layer was much deeper. Overlying this was a subsoil layer of mid brown sandy loam which was between 0.15 and 0.6m thick and was thicker towards the south and west of the site. Across the site was a dark brown layer of sandy, silty loam that was between 0.2m and 0.4m thick.

### 4.2 Trench 1 (Figure 2)

Trench 1 was 20m long and 1.6m wide. The lowest deposit was red brown slightly clayey, natural sand (1/03). Overlying the natural was context (1/02) a 0.25m thick subsoil layer of mid brown sandy loam. Context (1/01) was a dark brown topsoil layer of sandy silty loam.

Context 1/04 (Figure 2, Section 1.1, Plate 1) was a narrow linear cut which was cut into the subsoil layer (1/02). The cut was 0.45m wide and 0.22m deep and the length greater than 2.1. Context 1/04 was filled with a soft dark brown black loam, context (1/05) and contained a fragment of plastic twine suggesting that the feature was related to recent horticultural activity.



Plate 1. Section 1.1. Context 1/04 SE view.

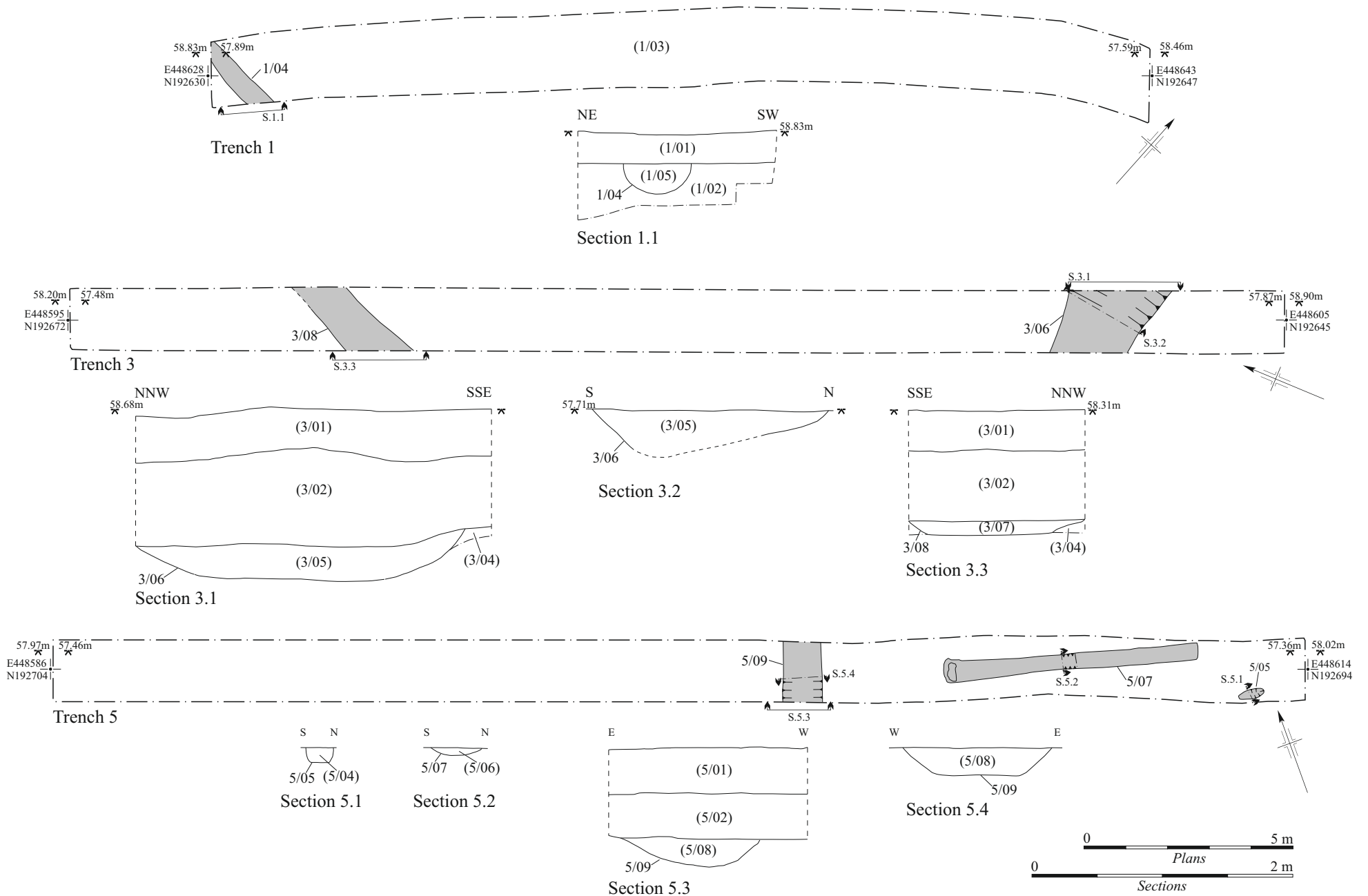


Figure 2: Trenches 1, 3 and 5 - plans and sections



### 4.3 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 20m and contained no archaeological features. The lowest layer in trench 2 was context (2/04) which was a natural layer of gravel and coarse yellow sand. Above (2/04) was a 0.14m thick layer of red brown sand, context (2/03). Above (2/03) was Context (2/02) a 0.26m thick layer of mid brown sandy loam. The topsoil was context (2/01) and was a 0.36m thick layer of dark brown sandy, silty loam.

### 4.4 Trench 3 (Figure 2, Plate 2)

The soil profile of Trench 3 was the same as the soil profile across the site. The lowest layer of gravel and yellow sand (3/04), was overlaid by a 0.1m thick red brown sand (3/03) which did not appear to be continuous across the whole of the trench. Above this layer the subsoil (3/02) was 0.6m deep. Context (3/03) was overlaid by a 0.4m thick layer of topsoil (3/01).

Towards the southeast end of Trench 3 a linear ditch, context 3/06, was discovered (Figure 2, Section 3.1 & 3.2, Plates 3 & 4). The ditch was orientated in an east west direction and was 2m wide and greater than 1.9m in length. It appeared shallow with a concave base and a depth of around 0.35m although the high water table and the depth of the feature made identification of the base difficult. Context 3/06 was cut into the natural gravel (3/04) and was overlaid by a deep layer of subsoil (3/02). Linear ditch 3/06 was filled by context (3/05). Context (3/05) was a dark brown, greyish silty clay with frequent gravel inclusions. The fill contained three fragments of pottery (see 5.1 below).

Towards the northwest end of Trench 3 another linear ditch 3/08 was identified (Figure 2, Section 3.3, Plate 5). Context 3/08 was orientated in a southwest to northeast direction. The ditch was 1m to 1.1m wide and had a depth of around 0.1m although a rising water table made excavation to the bottom difficult. The fill of 3/08 was context (3/07) a mid grey clayey fill that contained a fragment of glass bottle neck.

**Plate 2. Trench 3 NW view**





**Plate 3. Section 3.1. Context 3/06, ENE view.**



**Plate 4. Section 3.2 Context 3/06, West view.**



**Plate 5. Section 3.3. Context 3/08, WSW view.**

#### **4.5 Trench 4**

Trench 4 was 30m in length and had a similar soil profile to Trench 3. The natural gravel (4/04) was overlaid by a 0.15m thick layer of sand (4/03). This was overlaid by 0.4m thick layer of dark brown subsoil (4/02) which was overlaid by 0.3m thick layer of topsoil (4/01). Contexts (4/01) and (4/02) contained fragments of brick and tile.

#### **4.6 Trench 5 (Figure 2, Plate 8)**

Trench 5 was 30m long. The lowest context was the natural gravel (5/03) that was overlaid by 0.2m of subsoil (5/02) and 0.3m of topsoil (5/01). At the east end of Trench 5 was a small pit 5/05 (Figure 2, Section 5.1, Plate 6). Pit 5/05 was 0.2 m wide by 0.6m. It was 0.1m deep and was filled by (5/04) a soft dark brown clayey loam. Context 5/05 was cut into context (5/03).

Also in Trench 5 orientated east to west was Context 5/07 (Figure 2, Section 5.2, Plate 7). This was a shallow linear cut filled with a dark brown loam (5/06). Context 5/07 was 0.06 deep, 0.45 wide and 6m long. The fill (5/06) contained a large lump of concrete which would suggest that the feature was modern. Context 5/06 appeared to cut context (5/03) though it may have been truncated during machining.

Further towards the west of Trench 5 was a linear ditch 5/09 orientated north to south, (Figure 2, Section 5.3 & 5.4, Plates 9 & 10). Context 5/09 was 1m wide and greater than 1.6m in length. Context 5/09 was cut into context (5/03) and was 0.2m deep. It was filled with a mid-grey clayey fill (5/08) which contained a fragment of animal bone.





**Plate 6. Section 5.1. Context 5/05, West view.**



**Plate 7. Section 5.2, Context 5/07, West view.**



**Plate 8. Trench 5,  
West view**



**Plate 9. Section 5.3. Context 5/09, South view.**



**Plate 10. Section 5.4. Context 5/09 North view.**

#### **4.7 Trenches 6 to 10**

The remaining 5 trenches contained no archaeology and all revealed a similar soil profile to that found across the site. Trench 7 contained a small pit but this was identified as a recent back filling of a tree hole due to the nature of the back fill and its proximity to the current ground surface.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Roman Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of just three bodysherds of wheel-thrown pottery weighing 18 g from context 3/05. All the pieces are of Roman date and are in moderately fresh condition but quite fragmented. Two sherds are from a burnt white ware jar, one of the products made in the Oxfordshire industry (Young 1977) and generally typical of the later Roman period. The third sherd is a black sandy ware from a closed form and also likely to be a local product but not closely datable other than Roman.

The assemblage is too small to warrant any further work but appears to indicate some form of later Roman activity in the area.

### 5.2 Other finds by Gavin Davis

One fragment of brick or tile was recovered from topsoil context (4/01) weighing 6g and ten fragments of brick and tile were recovered from subsoil (4/02) weighing 460g. All the brick and tile was identified as being broadly Post-medieval in date.

A fragment of glass bottle neck was recovered from fill context (3/07) of ditch 3/08 which weighed 10g. The rim seam on the neck dated the fragment to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A single fragment of animal bone was recovered from fill context (5/08) of ditch 5/09 which weighed 24g.

Neither the bone fragment nor the post-Roman finds were considered worthy of retention.

## 6 DISCUSSION

Three linear features were identified which all contained similar greyish clayey fills. The linear ditches 3/08 and 5/09 were possibly continuous, as a possible alignment could be seen between the two features in plan. Context 5/09 only contained a small fragment of animal bone and so was undated but ditch 3/08 could be identified as Victorian or later due to the presence of a later 19<sup>th</sup> century glass bottle neck fragment in the ditch fill. The linear ditch, context 3/06, contained three pieces of Roman pottery and this was the only pottery identified across the whole of the site. The orientation of context 3/06 would suggest a continuation of that feature into the area of Trench 2 but no features were identified in Trench 2. The small and irregular shaped pit identified in Trench 5, context 5/05, was undated. The small number of remaining features identified during the evaluation were modern and probably related to the recent use of the site as an allotment.

## 7 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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

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Young, C J, 1977, *The Oxfordshire Roman pottery industry*, BAR 43, Oxford

**Appendix 1: Trench Context Inventory**

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>								
1/01	Deposit	Soft dark brown sandy silty loam	0.20m	1.60m	20m	-	Topsoil	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Mid brown sandy loam	0.25m	1.60m	20m	-	Subsoil	-
1/03	Deposit	Red brown slightly clayey sand	-	1.60m	20m	-	Natural	-
1/04	Cut	Linear cut with concave sides and base	0.24m	0.50m	> 2.1m	-	Linear ditch	Modern
1/05	Fill	Soft dark brown loam	0.24m	0.50m	>2.1m	Plastic twine	Fill of linear ditch 1/04	Modern

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 2</b>								
2/01	Deposit	Soft dark brown sandy silty loam	0.36m	1.60m	30m	-	Topsoil	Modern
2/02	Deposit	Mid brown sandy loam	0.26m	1.60m	30m	-	Subsoil	-
2/03	Deposit	Red brown slightly clayey sand	0.14m	1.60m	30m	-	Natural	-
2/04	Deposit	Yellow brown sandy gravel	-	1.60m	30m	-	Natural	-

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 3</b>								
3/01	Deposit	Soft dark brown sandy silty loam	0.40m	1.60m	30m	-	Topsoil	Modern
3/02	Deposit	Mid brown sandy loam	0.60m	1.60m	30m	-	Subsoil	-
3/03	Deposit	Discontinuous layer of red brown sand	0.10m	1.60m	-	-	Natural	-
3/04	Deposit	Yellow brown sandy gravel	-	1.60m	30m	-	Natural	-
3/05	Fill	Dark brown greyish silty clay	> 0.30m	1.70m	>1.70m	Pottery	Fill of linear ditch 3/06	Roman
3/06	Cut	Shallow linear ditch	> 0.30m	1.70m	>1.70m	-	Cut of linear ditch	Roman
3/07	Fill	Mid grey silty clay	>0.10m	1.10m	2.0m	Glass	Fill of linear ditch 3/08	>19 <sup>th</sup> Century
3/08	Cut	Shallow linear ditch	>0.10m	1.10m	2.0m	-	Cut of linear ditch	>19 <sup>th</sup> Century



ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 4</b>								
4/01	Deposit	Soft dark brown sandy silty loam	0.30m	1.60m	30m	Brick or tile	Topsoil	Modern
4/02	Deposit	Mid brown sandy loam	0.40m	1.60m	30m	Brick or tile, bone	Subsoil	Post Medieval
4/03	Deposit	red brown clayey sand	0.15m	1.60m	30m	-	Natural	-
4/04	Deposit	Yellow brown sandy gravel	-	1.60m	30m	-	Natural	-

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 5</b>								
5/01	Deposit	Soft dark brown sandy silty loam	0.30m	1.60m	30m	-	Topsoil	Modern
5/02	Deposit	Mid brown sandy loam	0.20m	1.60m	30m	-	Subsoil	-
5/03	Deposit	Yellow brown sandy gravel	-	1.60m	30m	-	Natural	-
5/04	Fill	Soft dark brown	0.10m	0.20m	0.60m	-	Fill of small pit 5/04	-
5/05	Cut	Small irregular pit	0.10m	0.20m	0.60m	-	Cut of small irregular pit	-
5/06	Fill	Dark brown loam	0.05m	0.40m	6.20m	Concrete	Fill of linear ditch 5//07	Modern
5/07	Cut	Shallow linear ditch	0.50m	0.40m	6.20m	-	Cut of shallow linear ditch	Modern
5/08	Fill	Mid grey clayey sand	0.20m	1m	>1.6m	Bone	Fill of linear ditch 3/09	-
5/09	Cut	Linear ditch	0.20m	1m	>1.6m			-

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 6</b>								
6/01	Deposit	Soft dark brown sandy silty loam	0.27m	1.60m	20m	-	Topsoil	Modern
6/02	Deposit	Mid brown sandy loam	0.16m	1.60m	20m	-	Subsoil	-
6/03	Deposit	Mid to light brown yellowish clayey sand	-	1.60m	20m	-	Natural	-

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 7</b>								
7/01	Deposit	Soft dark brown sandy silty loam	0.20m	1.60m	10m	-	Topsoil	Modern
7/02	Deposit	Mid brown sandy loam	0.15m	1.60m	10m	-	Subsoil	-

7/03	Deposit	Mid to light brown yellowish clayey sand	-	1.60m	10m	-	Natural	-
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ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 8</b>								
8/01	Deposit	Soft dark brown sandy silty loam	0.30m	1.60m	30m	-	Topsoil	Modern
8/02	Deposit	Mid brown sandy loam	0.20m	1.60m	30m	-	Subsoil	-
8/03	Deposit	red brown clayey sand	0.30m	1.60m	30m	-	Natural	-
8/04	Deposit	Yellow brown sandy gravel	-	1.60m	30m	-	Natural	-

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 9</b>								
9/01	Deposit	Soft dark brown sandy silty loam	0.30m	1.60m	10m	-	Topsoil	Modern
9/02	Deposit	Mid brown sandy loam	0.20m	1.60m	10m	-	Subsoil	-
9/03	Deposit	red brown clayey sand	-	1.60m	10m	-	Natural	-

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 10</b>								
10/01	Deposit	Soft dark brown sandy silty loam	0.30m	1.60m	30m	-	Topsoil	Modern
10/02	Deposit	Mid brown sandy loam	0.30m	1.60m	30m	-	Subsoil	-
10/03	Deposit	red brown clayey sand	-	1.60m	30m	-	Natural	-