



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

LAND EAST OF DRAYTON

OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SU 4851 9448

On behalf of

W F Caudwell

JANUARY 2015

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological field evaluation at land east of Drayton in Oxfordshire. Five machine-dug trenches each approximately 30m long were excavated across the site. The aims of investigation were to establish if features relating to the prehistoric landscape and remains of Anglo Saxon settlement or activity are present on this site. During the fieldwork no archaeological features securely dated to prehistoric or early medieval period were discovered. Two residual struck flints discovered in Trench 2, indicates some activities within the evaluated area during the prehistoric period. Stratigraphically the earliest features were a linear ditch and associated posthole in Trench 2. Those features predate the 18th/19th century drainage ditch and might be related to any prehistoric or historic period. Five late medieval and/or post-medieval furrows, from ridge and furrow agricultural practises, identified in Trenches 2, 3, and 5 represented the major group of features. The dating evidence suggest that the furrows were in use at least until 18th century. The next stage of activity was represented by a drainage ditch investigated in Trenches 2 and 5. This ditch was dated to 18th/19th century. Two rubble land drains discovered in Trenches 1 and 2 were probably constructed in the second half of 19th century. Two undated features, a ditch and a small sub-oval pit, found in Trench 4 could be related to any prehistoric or historic period. Ditch or sub-rectangular pit 5/04 investigated in Trench 5 was also undated. However, based on the shape of the feature, there is very low possibility that this feature represents a sunken featured building or other structure related to early medieval period. The site shows very low archaeological potential, although it is set in the vicinity of important prehistoric and early medieval monuments.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The application site is located to the east of Drayton off the north side of Drayton Road (B4016) 230m west of the junction with the road to Milton (NGR SU 4851 9448). It lies at approximately 55m above OD and the geology is Second Terrace Gravel deposits overlying Ampthill Clay deposits. The site is currently under pasture.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission is being sought from the Vale of White Horse for a new farmyard complex comprising a 4000 ton grain store, straw barn, workshop and two smaller grain storage buildings. There will be a concrete apron area and weighbridge, with a new access track and entrance (P14/V2540/FUL).

Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, the Oxfordshire Historic and Natural Environment Team (OHaNET) required that an archaeological field evaluation should be undertaken as part of the determination of the application. OHaNET prepared a *Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (OHaNET 2014).

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

1.3 Archaeological Background

To the east and the south of the proposed development site are substantial Neolithic ritual sites consisting of two cursuses. One has largely been removed by mineral extraction whilst the one to the south is a scheduled Ancient Monument. The area also contains Bronze Age barrows and an Anglo Saxon palace. Immediately adjacent to the application site are a number of cropmark features, including linear features, enclosures, pits and what appear to be Anglo Saxon sunken feature buildings (JMHS 2014, OHaNET 2014).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the WSI were:

- 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.

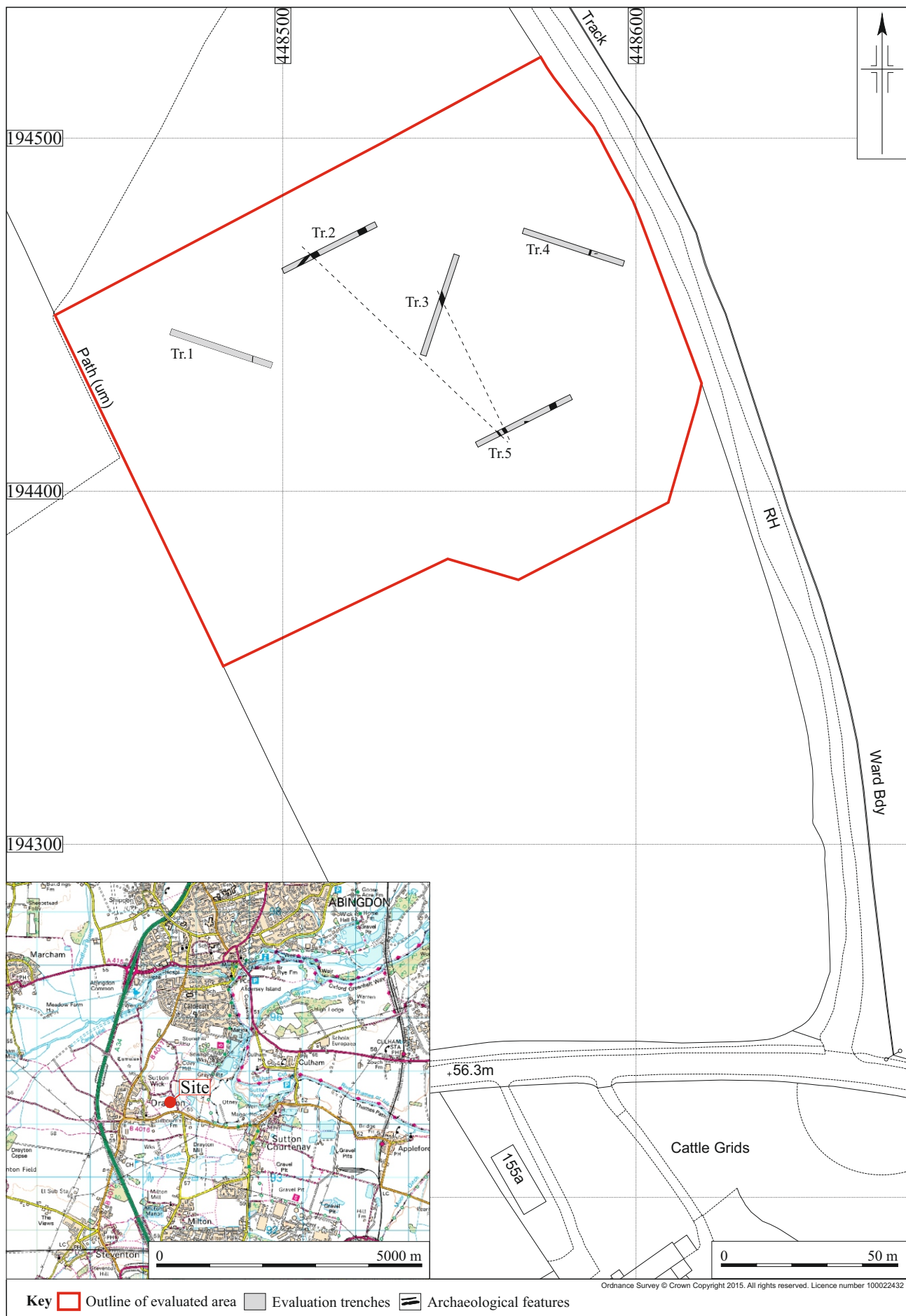


Figure 1: Site location

And in particular:

- To establish if features relating to the prehistoric landscape are present on this site.
- To establish whether there are remains of Anglo Saxon settlement or activity on the site.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In accordance with the Brief issued by OHaNET (2014) and WSI by JMHS (2014), JMHS carried out the work, which comprised a scheme for the mechanical excavation of five trial trenches across the site. Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the WSI (Sections 3.1 – 3.21).

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the principles of MoRPHE (English Heritage 2006).

3.2 Methodology

A seven tonne excavator fitted with a toothless 1.6m wide ditching bucket was used to excavate the five trenches each 30m long across the site. The ground was reduced down to the archaeological horizon and/or top of natural deposit.

Archaeological deposits and features revealed were then cleaned by hand 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. All artefacts were collected, analysed and not retained.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Field Results

All features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers with no brackets indicate feature cuts, numbers in round brackets () show feature fills or deposits of material and numbers in bold indicate any form of masonry.

The lowest deposit encountered in all five trenches was a layer of light orange-brown fine sandy gravel (1/03), (2/03), (3/03), (4/03), and (5/02), with areas of silty clay and sand, interpreted as a natural deposit. It was overlaid by up to 0.30m thick layer of subsoil (1/02), (2/02), (3/02), and (4/02), described as light brown loamy silt with up to 25% of gravel inclusion. The thickness of the subsoil gradually decreases towards the southeast of the site, and only partially was presented at west-northwest end of Trench 4 and entirely absent in Trench 5. The entire site was covered by up to 0.36m

of thick topsoil (1/01), (2/01), (3/01), (4/01), and (5/01), described as mid grey-brown sandy loam (S.2.1, 4.2 & 5.1).

4.2 Trench 1 (Figure 1)

Trench 1 was 30m long and 1.6m wide. It was orientated west-northwest to east-southeast, and located at northwest part of the evaluated area (Fig. 1).

In Trench 1 a linear feature, located towards southeast end of trench was investigated. This feature was identified as rubble land drain possible constructed in 19th or early 20th century. No other archaeological features were presented within trench 1.

4.3 Trench 2 (Figure 2)

Trench 2 was 29.5m long and 1.6m wide, aligned northeast to southwest, and placed across the footprint of the proposed grain store 2 (Fig. 1).

Stratigraphically the earliest feature investigated in Trench 2 was linear ditch 2/04 with shallow concave sides and flattish concave base (Fig. 2, S. 2.3, Pl. 1). It was at least 4m long, 0.8m wide and 0.11m deep, orientated northeast to southwest. Fill (2/07), was described as light brown sandy clay, containing c. 10% of small pebbles. No finds were recovered from this fill.

Ditch 2/04 was truncated by later drainage ditch 2/10, over 1.6m long, 0.90m wide and 0.3m deep, and aligned northwest to southeast (Fig. 2). Single fill (2/11), mid brown sandy clay, contained fragment of roof tile, presumably 18th/19th century in date (see 5.1). Parallel with ditch 2/10 was linear cut 2/06, 1.6m long, 1.5m wide and 0.3m deep, with steep sides and narrow concave base, backfilled with rubble in a matrix of mid brown sandy clay (2/08). From the fill were recovered fragments of bricks, one fragment of indeterminate copper alloy object and a flint flake (see 5.2). Cut 2/06 was interpreted as rubble land drain, 19th century in date. There is possibility that cuts 2/06 and 2/10 cut into an earlier medieval or post medieval furrow.

Immediately to the southeast from ditch 2/04 and southwest from drainage ditch 2/10 was located oval posthole 2/05. It was 0.4m long, 0.3m wide and 0.12m deep (Fig. 2, S. 2.2, Pl. 2). Fill (2/09) was mid brown clay, containing occasional charcoal and c. 15% of gravel inclusions. No finds were recovered from posthole 2/05, however it seems to be related to ditch 2/04 rather than drainage ditch 2/10.

At the east-northeast end of Trench 2 was linear cut 2/12 approximately 2.62m wide and 1.60m long. The fill (2/13) was mid brown sandy clay containing less than 5% content of gravel. From the fill was recovered a fragment of the base of a glass bottle (see 5.4). Due to its dimensions and the finds the feature was not further investigated, and was interpreted as post-medieval furrow.

From the area of Trench 2 was recovered one unstratified flint flake with striking platform and bulb (see 5.3).

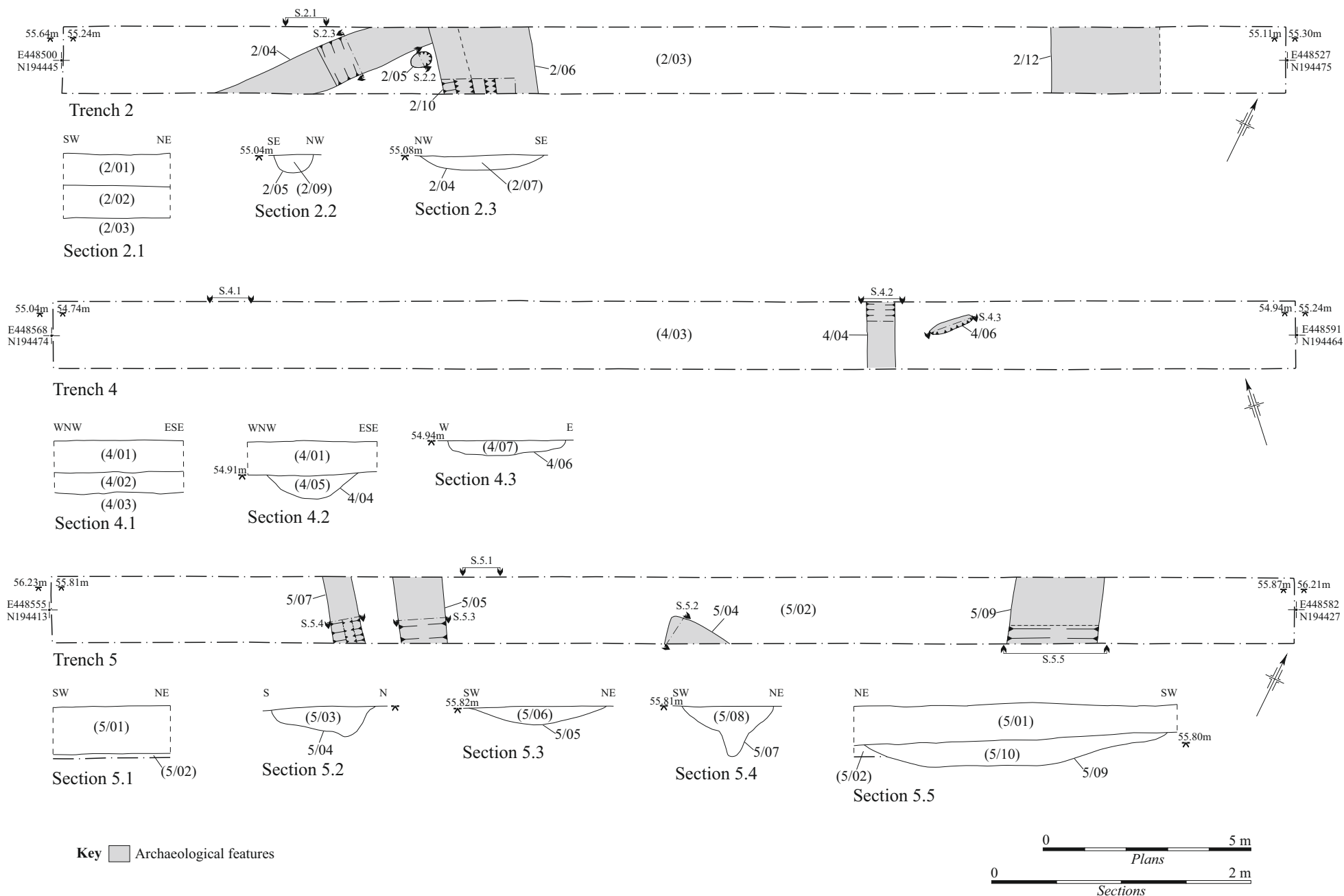


Figure 2: Trenches 2, 4, and 5 - plans and sections

4.4 Trench 3 (Figure 1)

Trench 3 was 29.8m long and 1.6m wide, orientated northeast to southwest, and placed across the area of the proposed concrete apron (Fig. 1).

Within Trench 3 was unearthed one linear cut feature 3/05 located approximately in the middle of trench. The cut 3/05 was over 2.5m long and 1.7m wide, filled with mid grey-brown sandy silt (3/04). From the top of the fill (3/04) was recovered a single fragment of post-medieval roof tile (see 5.1). Due to dimension and character of feature, it was not further investigated, and was interpreted as a post-medieval furrow.

4.5 Trench 4 (Figure 2)

Trench 4 was 29.6m long and 1.6m wide. It was orientated west-northwest to east-southeast, and was positioned to investigate the area of the proposed concrete apron and straw barn (Fig. 1).

Two undated features were investigated in Trench 4. Linear ditch 4/04 was over 1.6m long, 0.65m wide and 0.19m deep with shallow concave sides and concave base (Fig. 2, S. 4.2, Pl. 3). The fill (4/05) was described as mid brown sandy silt with c. 10% gravel inclusion.

Small oval cut 4/06, 0.90m long, 0.28m wide and 0.12m deep, was located approximately 0.75m to the southeast from ditch 4/04 (Fig. 2, S. 4.3, Pl. 4). It was filled with dark grey sandy silt contained (4/08) approximately 15% of gravel. The identity of feature is uncertain, however it seems to represent animal burrow or modern disturbance.

4.6 Trench 5 (Figure 2)

Trench 5 was 30m long and 1.6m wide, aligned approximately northeast to southwest. It was placed across the footprint of the proposed 4000 tonne store (Fig. 1).

Four archaeological features were unearthed and investigated in Trench 5. Stratigraphically all four features cut into the natural deposit (5/02), and were truncated by topsoil (5/01).

Linear ditch 5/07 with stepped sides and narrow concave base was located approximately 6.6m from the southwest end of the trench, and aligned northwest to southeast (Fig. 2, S. 5.4, Pl. 5). It measured at least 1.6m in length, 0.7m in width and reached a maximum depth of 0.4m. The fill of the ditch was mid brown sandy clay (5/08), and contained c. 15% content of small well-rounded stones. No finds were recovered from the investigated section.

A second linear feature 5/05, was located c. 1m to the northeast from ditch 5/07 and ran in a north-northwest – south-southeast direction (Fig. 2). The profile of feature 5/05 was of very wide-open U-shape, 1.12m wide with shallow concave sides and concave base (Fig. 2, S. 5.3, Pl. 6). The maximum depth of the cut was 0.11m. The single fill (5/06) was described as mid brown sandy clay with c. 15% of gravel inclusions. No dating evidence was obtained from fill (5/06). Feature 5/05, possibly represents the remains of a post-medieval furrow.



Plate 1: Ditch 2/04, looking northeast



Plate 2: Posthole 2/05, looking southwest



Plate 3: Ditch 4/04, looking north-northeast

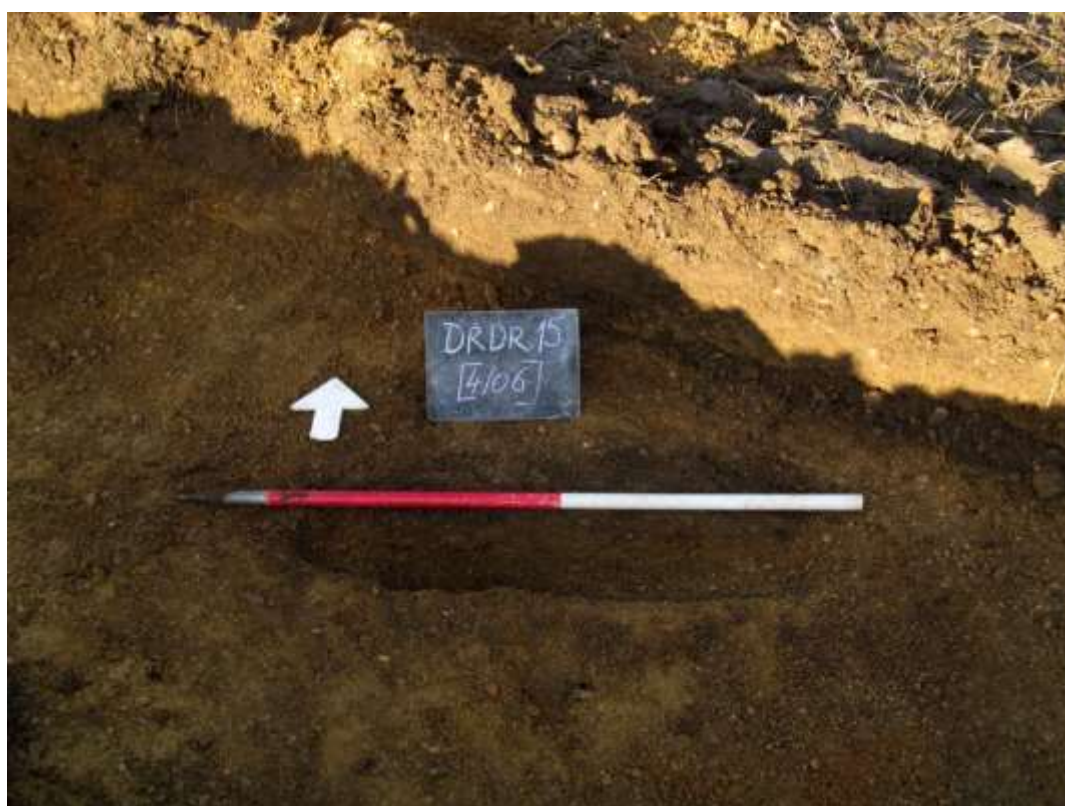


Plate 4: Feature 4/06, looking north



Plate 5: Ditch 5/07, looking northwest



Plate 6: Possible furrow 5/05, looking northwest



Plate 7: Ditch or pit 5/04, looking west



Plate 8: Furrow 5/09, looking south-southeast

Cut 5/04 was located approximately in the middle of the trench on its southeast edge (Fig. 2, S. 5.2, Pl. 7). It was 1.07m long within the trench, 0.80m wide and 0.36m deep. The fill of feature 5/04 was mid brown-grey sandy silt (5/03), and contained frequent small well-rounded stones. No finds were recovered from this fill. Cut 5/04 might represent another linear ditch or corner of sub-rectangular pit.

Furrow 5/09 with shallow concave sides and flattish concave base was located close to the northeast end of the trench. It measured at least 1.6m in length, 2.33 in width and reached a depth of 0.23m (Fig. 2, S. 5.5, Pl. 8). The fill (5/10) was mid grey-brown sandy silt with *c.* 20% of gravel. Once more, no finds were recovered from the investigated section; however this feature is perhaps of medieval or post-medieval date.

4.7 Reliability Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological field evaluation took place in changeable weather conditions with low temperature and variable light and visibility.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Ceramic building material (CBM)

The assemblage of CBM comprised two fragments of bricks (610g) and two fragments of roof tiles (129g) generally dated to the late post-medieval/early modern period (Table 1).

Context	Length (mm)	Width (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Weight (g)	Colour	Date
Brick						
(2/08)	60	55	62	389	dark red-brown	19 th C.
(2/08)	67	57	53	221	dark red-brown	19 th C.
Roof tiles						
(2/11)	61	51	11	62	mid red-brown	18 th /19 th C.
(3/04)	57	52	12	67	mid red-brown	Post-med.

Table 1: Ceramic building material

5.2 Copper alloy object

A small fragment of an indeterminate copper alloy object was recovered from context (2/08), which was the fill of rubble land drain 2/06, dated to 19th century. The dimensions of the object were as follows: length 20mm, width 12mm, thickness 6mm and <1g weight.

5.3 Lithics

A total of two struck flints were recovered during the field evaluation. One fragment of possible blade with retouch on one side was recovered from the fill of rubble land drain (2/08). It was 22mm long, 13mm wide and 5mm thick, and weighed less than 1g. The second struck flint flake had a striking platform and bulb. It was found unstratified in the area of Trench 2. The dimensions of the flake were as follows: length 66mm, width 45mm, thickness 4.5mm and weight 3.41g.

5.4 Glass

A fragment from a glass bottle recovered from context (2/13), represents approximately quarter of a base, which originally measured c. 100mm in diameter. It was of dark green colour with traces of oxidation, 8mm thick and weight 75g. No diagnostic elements were preserved on the fragment; however it could be generally in post-medieval period.

5.5 Palaeo-environmental Remains

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

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological field evaluation was successful and meets the aims, which were laid out in the WSI.

No archaeological features securely dated to the prehistoric or early medieval period were revealed during the fieldwork. However, two residual struck flints discovered in Trench 2, indicates some type of activity within the evaluated area during the prehistoric period.

Stratigraphically the earliest features seem to be linear ditch 2/04 and with it associated pesthole 2/05 investigated in Trench 2. However, due to lack of dating evidence, the exact date of those features is uncertain, although based on the stratigraphic relationship those features predate 18th/19th century drainage ditch 2/10, and might be related to any prehistoric or historic period.

The second stage of activity was represented by late medieval and/or post-medieval furrows 2/12, 3/05, and 5/09 identified in Trenches 2, 3, and 5. Cut 5/05 seems to represent of continuation of furrow 3/05 and there is possibility that drainage ditch 2/10 and rubble land drain 2/06 actually cut into an earlier furrow. Dating evidence suggests that furrows were in use at least until 18th century.

The last stage of activities was represented by drainage ditch 2/10 and 5/07 investigated in Trenches 2 and 5. This ditch was dated to 18th/19th century. Two rubble land drains discovered in trenches 1 and 2 were probably constructed in the second half of 19th century.

Undated ditch 4/04 investigated in Trench 4 could be relate to any prehistoric or historic period. Small sub-oval cut feature 4/06 seems to represents an animal burrow or modern disturbance.

Ditch or sub-rectangular pit 5/04 investigated in Trench 5 was also undated. However, based on the shape of the feature, there is very low possibility that this feature represents a sunken featured building or other structure related to the early medieval period.

The evaluated site shows a very low archaeological potential, although it is set in vicinity of important prehistoric and early medieval monuments. Possible prehistoric and/or early historic features are of a very low density.

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Appendix 1: Trench Context Inventory

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Length	Width	Finds	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1								
1/01	Deposit	Mid grey-brown sandy loam with c. 5% gravel	0.26m	30m	1.60m	-	Topsoil	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Light brown loamy silt with c. 25% gravel	0.16m	30m	1.60m	-	Subsoil	-
1/03	Deposit	Light orange-brown fine sandy gravel with areas of silty clay and sand	N/A	30m	1.60m	-	Natural	-
Trench 2								
2/01	Deposit	Mid grey-brown sandy loam with c. 5% gravel	0.20m	29.60m	1.60m	-	Topsoil	Modern
2/02	Deposit	Light brown loamy silt with c. 5% gravel	0.30m	29.60m	1.60m	-	Subsoil	-
2/03	Deposit	Light orange-brown fine sandy gravel with areas of silty clay and sand	N/A	29.60m	1.60m	-	Natural	-
2/04	Cut	Linear cut with shallow concave sides and flattish concave base. Orientation: NE-SW	0.11m	4m	0.80m	N/A	Ditch	Uncertain
2/05	Cut	Oval cut with steep sides and concave base. Orientation: NE-SW	0.12m	0.40m	0.30m	N/A	Posthole	Uncertain
2/06	Cut	Linear cut with steep concave sides and concave base. Orientation: NW-SE	0.30m	1.60m	1.50m	N/A	Rubble land drain	19 th century
2/07	Fill	Light brown sandy clay with <10% pebbles	0.11m	4m	0.80m	-	Fill of ditch 2/04	Uncertain
2/08	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay with rubble	0.30m	1.60m	1.50m	Brick, Fragment of Cu-alloy object, flint flacke	Fill of land drain 2/06	19 th century
2/09	Fill	Mid brown clay, contains occasional charcoal and c. 15% gravel	0.12m	0.40m	0.30m	-	Fill of posthole 2/05	Uncertain
2/10	Cut	Linear cut with moderate sides and flat base. Orientation: NW-SE	0.30m	1.60m	0.90m	N/A	Drainage ditch	18 th /19 th century
2/11	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay	0.30m	1.60m	0.90m	Fragment of roof tile	Fill of drainage ditch 2/10	18 th /19 th century
2/12	Cut	Linear cut. Orientation: NNW-SSE	N/A	1.60m	2.62m	N/A	Furrow	Post-medieval
2/13	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay with <5% gravel	N/A	1.60m	2.62m	Fragment of glass bottle	Fill of furrow 2/12	Post-medieval
Trench 3								
3/01	Deposit	Mid grey-brown sandy loam with c. 5% gravel	0.36m	30m	1.60m	-	Topsoil	Modern
3/02	Deposit	Light brown loamy silt with <10% gravel	0.24m	30m	1.60m	-	Subsoil	-
3/03	Deposit	Light orange-brown fine sandy gravel	N/A	30m	1.60m	-	Natural	-
3/04	Fill	Mid grey-brown sandy silt	N/A	2.50m	1.70m	Fragment of roof tile	Fill of possible furrow 3/05	Post-medieval

3/05	Cut	Linear cut. Orientation: NW-SE	N/A	2.50m	1.70m	N/A	Possible furrow	Post-medieval
Trench 4								
4/01	Deposit	Mid grey-brown sandy loam with c. 5% gravel	0.24m	30m	1.60m	-	Topsoil	Modern
4/02	Deposit	Light brown loamy silt with <25% gravel	0.16	7m	1.60m	-	Subsoil	-
4/03	Deposit	Light orange-brown fine sandy gravel with areas of silty clay and sand	N/A	30m	1.60m	-	Natural	-
4/05	Cut	Linear cut with moderate concave sides and concave base. Orientation: NNE-SSW	0.19m	1.60m	0.65m	N/A	Ditch	Uncertain
4/06	Fill	Mid brown sandy silt with c. 10% gravel	0.19m	1.60m	0.65m	-	Fill of ditch 4/05	Uncertain
4/07	Cut	Sub-oval with steep sides and flattish concave base. Orientation: E-W	0.12m	0.90m	0.28m	N/A	Small pit or animal barrow	Modern (?)
4/08	Fill	Dark grey sandy silt with c. 15% gravel	0.12m	0.90m	0.28m	-	Fill of small pit or animal barrow 4/08	Modern (?)
Trench 5								
5/01	Deposit	Mid grey-brown sandy loam with <2% gravel	0.36m	30m	1.60m	-	Topsoil	Modern
5/02	Deposit	Light orange-brown fine sandy gravel with areas of silty clay	N/A	30m	1.60m	-	Natural	-
5/03	Fill	Mid brown-grey sandy silt with frequent small well rounded stones	0.36m	1.07m	0.80m	-	Fill of pit or ditch 5/04	Uncertain
5/04	Cut	Linear or sub-rectangular cut with steep sides and flattish concave base. Orientation: E-W	0.36m	1.07m	0.80m	N/A	Ditch or pit	Uncertain
5/05	Cut	Linear cut with shallow concave sides and concave base. Orientation: NW-SE	0.11m	1.60m	1.12m	N/A	Possible furrow	Post-medieval
5/06	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay with c. 15% small well rounded stones	0.11m	1.60m	1.12m	-	Fill of possible furrow 5/05	Post-medieval
5/07	Cut	Linear cut with stepped sides and narrow concave base. Orientation: NW-SE	0.40m	1.60m	0.70m	N/A	Drainage ditch	Post-medieval
5/08	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay with c. 15% small well rounded stones	0.40m	1.60m	0.70m	-	Fill of drainage ditch 5/07	Post-medieval
5/09	Cut	Linear cut with shallow concave sides and concave base. Orientation: NW-SE	0.23m	1.60m	2.33m	N/A	Furrow	Post-medieval
5/10	Fill	Mid grey-brown sandy silt with c. 20% gravel	0.23m	1.60m	2.33m	-	Fill of furrow 5/09	Post-medieval