



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

**ILEY AND AVALON, BANBURY ROAD, BLOXHAM,
OXFORDSHIRE**

SP 4320 3650

On behalf of

Haigh-Smith Developments Ltd.

February 2007

REPORT FOR Haigh-Smith Developments Ltd.
Garden Cottage
Staverton
Northants
NN11 6JH

PREPARED BY David Gilbert

FIELDWORK 31st January 2007

REPORT ISSUED 1st February 2007

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

Site Code BMBR 07
JMHS Project No: 1728
Archive Location Oxfordshire County Museum Service
OXCMS: 2007.5

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>SUMMARY</i>	1
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	2
3 STRATEGY	3
3.1 Research Design	3
3.2 Methodology	3
4 RESULTS	3
5 FINDS	4
6 DISCUSSION	4
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY	7
APPENDIX Archaeological Context Inventory	8
 FIGURES	
Figure 1 Site and trench location	2
Figure 2 Plans and Sections of the Trenches 1 & 2	5
Figure 3 Plans and Sections of the Trenches 3 & 4	6

Summary

An evaluation of this site was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services on 31st January 2007. Four trenches, totalling 60 metres in length, were excavated to the natural geology. Archaeological deposits were limited to two modern shallow pits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The two sites are adjoining and are located to the north of Bloxham on the west side of Banbury Road (NGR SP 4320 3650). The Iley site is a residential dwelling surrounded by a garden while the site to the east is part of the garden of Avalon. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay and the sites lie at *c.* 124m OD.

1.2 Planning Background

A planning application (06/01752/F) for the demolition of an existing building and the construction of two dwellings on the proposal plot with associated services has been submitted to Cherwell District Council. A second application for the construction of a new dwelling in the garden of the adjacent property of Avalon has also been submitted. An archaeological evaluation of the site is required as a condition of the permission.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The proposal sites lies in an area of some archaeological potential. A recent excavation carried out at Ells Lane Bloxham, 90m to the northwest of the site, has recorded an Iron Age roundhouse and associated field ditches as well as a deposit of possible cremated human bone. The roundhouse was located against the southern edge of excavation with only half of the feature in the area of investigation. A fragment of a Neolithic polished stone axe was also recovered in the area of the excavation. Further to this a small amount of Roman material was recovered from a field 160m to the southwest of the site. This comprised bone, pottery and three millstones. These are suggestive of a settlement in the vicinity.

On the Ordnance Survey map of 1885 the site is shown as occupying a triangular field lined with trees.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- 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.

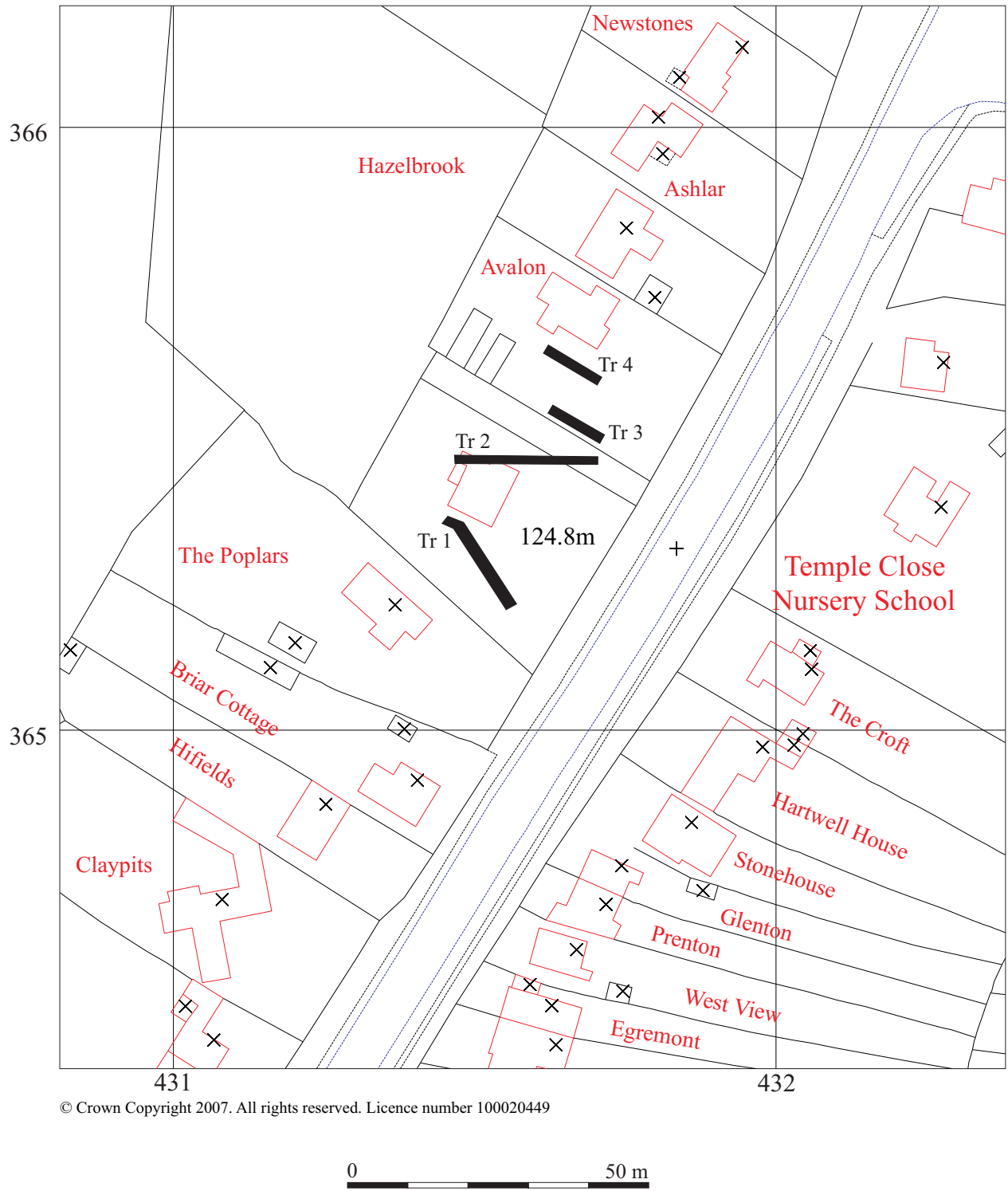


Figure 1. Site and trench location

- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

In particular:

- To establish whether there are any associated occupation deposits or activity of Iron Age or Roman date.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Brief* issued by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the excavation of a total of four trenches across the site (Fig. 1).

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MoRPHE (English Heritage 2006).

3.2 Methodology

The trenching sample was to be two 20m trench and two 10m trenches (Fig. 1). All trenches were 1.6 m wide and were excavated by a 5 Ton Excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand prior to limited hand excavation of any identified archaeological deposits.

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.

4 RESULTS (Figures 2 & 3)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

The natural for all trenches was a soft mottled brownish yellow grey clay (1/08), (2/03), (3/03) and (4/03).

Trenches 1 & 2 (Iley Plot)

The uppermost deposit within both trenches was a soft pale grey-brown silty clay loam (1/01) & (2/01) that varied between 0.1m and 0.15m thick. This contained large quantities of modern brick and other demolition debris. This lay directly above a

subsoil of soft yellowish brown silty clay (1/02) & (2/02) that varied between 0.15m and 0.2m thick. This subsoil was flecked with charcoal and contained small fragments of brick. Under the subsoil in Trench 1 was a layer of soft dark grey-brown silty clay 0.2m thick (1/03) containing small fragments of brick.

Cut into the natural of Trench 1 were two pits. The first pit [1/05] was roughly circular and 0.6m in diameter and 0.05m deep. It was filled with a pale grey-brown silty clay (1/04) flecked with charcoal and containing modern brick fragments. The second pit [1/07] was sub-circular measuring 1.3m by 0.5m and 0.1m deep. It was filled with a mid grey-brown silty clay (1/06) charcoal flecked containing modern brick fragments.

Trench 2 also displayed modern dumping layers (2/03) across the topsoil (2/01) up to 0.2m thick. These were associated with the demolition of the previous buildings. It also displayed modern services and areas of disturbance again associated with demolition.

Trenches 3 & 4 (Avalon Plot)

The uppermost deposit within both trenches was a mid grey-brown clay loam (3/01) & (4/01) that was on average 0.1m thick. This contained small quantities of modern pottery. It lay directly above a subsoil of yellowish brown silty clay (3/02) & (4/02) that was on average 0.3m thick. This subsoil was flecked with charcoal.

Due to a leaking water pipe on site, caused by the demolition of the previous buildings, the condition of the ground for all trenches except number 4 was very wet.

5 FINDS

The topsoil across the site contained sherds of White mass produced earthenwares dating to the 19th and 20th century.

6 DISCUSSION

All trenches showed a very uniform soil sequence. The only features to be located were the two pits [1/05] and [1/07], both contained modern brick fragments and appeared to be associated with modern planting beds for small shrubs as both were located very close to the westerly boundary hedge of the site.

The Iron Age settlement located to the east did not spread as far as the site. The quarry area located to the west of the site was also shown not to have encroached this far.

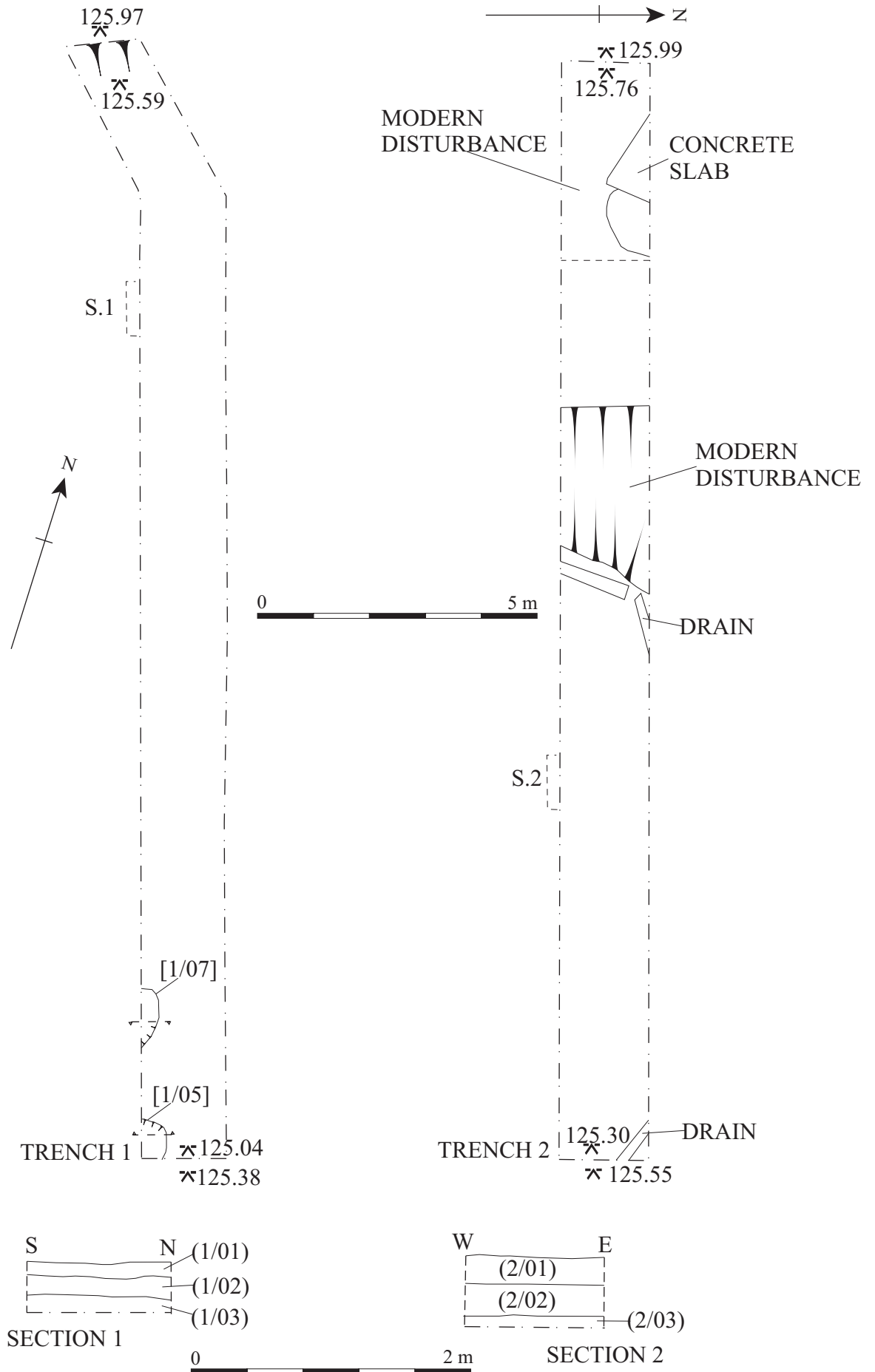


Figure 2. Plans and sections of the trenches 1 and 2

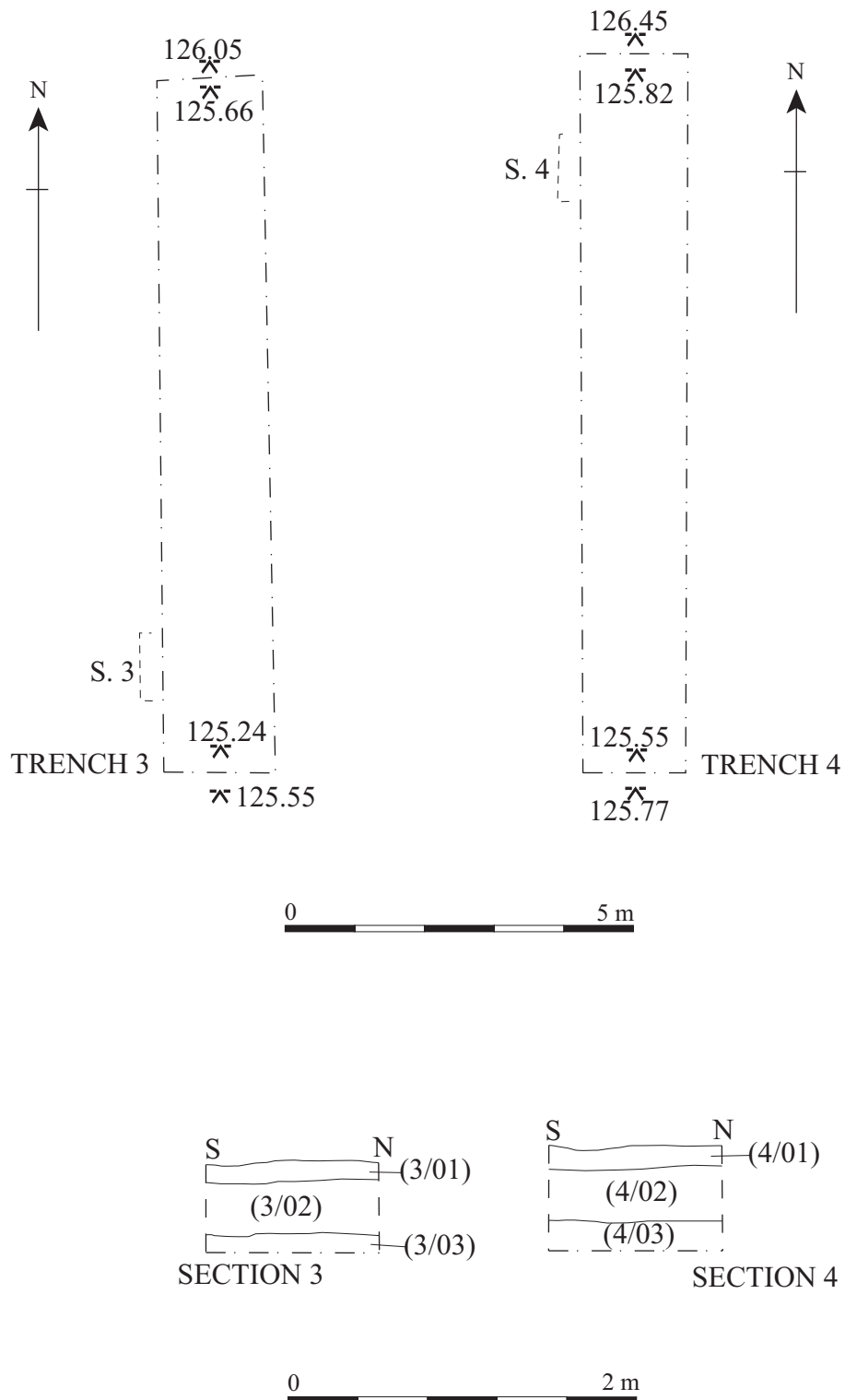


Figure 3. Plans and sections of the trenches 3 and 4

7 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*.

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 1994: *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.

APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
Trench 1			0.45	1.5	20		
1/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.1	Tr.	Tr.	CBM	Modern
1/02	Layer	Yellow-brown silty clay	0.15	Tr.	Tr.	-	
1/03	Layer	Brown-grey silty clay	0.2	Tr.	Tr.	-	
1/04	Fill	Pale grey brown clay	0.05	0.6	0.6	-	
1/05	Cut	Sub-circular pit	0.05	0.6	0.6	CBM	Modern
1/06	Fill	Grey-brown silty clay	0.1	0.5	1.3	-	
1/07	Cut	Sub-circular pit	0.1	0.5	1.3	CBM	Modern
1/08	Natural	Mottled brown grey clay		Tr.	Tr.	-	Natural
Trench 2			0.6	1.5	20		
2/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.2	Tr.	Tr.	CBM	Modern
2/02	Layer	Yellow-brown silty clay	0.2	Tr.	Tr.	CBM	Modern
2/03	Layer	Brown loam	0.2	Tr.	Tr.	CBM	Modern
2/04	Natural	Mottled brown grey clay		Tr.	Tr.		Natural
Trench 3			0.4	1.5	10		
3/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.1	Tr.	Tr.	Pottery	Modern
3/02	Layer	Yellow-brown silty clay	0.3	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
3/03	Natural	Mottled brown grey clay	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	Natural
Trench 4			0.4	1.5	10		
4/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.1	Tr.	Tr.	Pottery	Modern
4/02	Layer	Yellow-brown silty clay	0.3	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
4/03	Natural	Mottled brown grey clay	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	Natural