JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

LAND NORTH OF LONGLEA,

FIFIELD ROAD, FIFIELD, BERKSHIRE

NGR SU 910772

On behalf of

Phoenix Gymnastics Club

SETEMBER 2016

REPORT FOR	Phoenix Gymnastics Club Unit 1 Windsor Road Water Oakley Windsor SL4 5UJ
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SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation on land north of Longlea, Fifield Road, Fifield, Maidenhead, Berkshire. The excavations recovered a number of shallow negative features which may have been bioturbation or ephemeral in nature. Two pits were identified which may have contained burnt material. The larger and deeper of the two pits also contained burnt flint and charcoal.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located north of Longlea on the east side of Fifield Road, Fifield (NGR SU 910772 centred). The site is currently part of a field and the underlying geology is London Clay (BGS 1981 sheet 269, Solid and Drift).

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission has been granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for a new gymnastics club and associated parking and landscaping. A condition of planning permission requires a programme of archaeological work to be carried out. The first stage of the programme of archaeological work is a preliminary archaeological evaluation of the area.

1.3 Archaeological Background

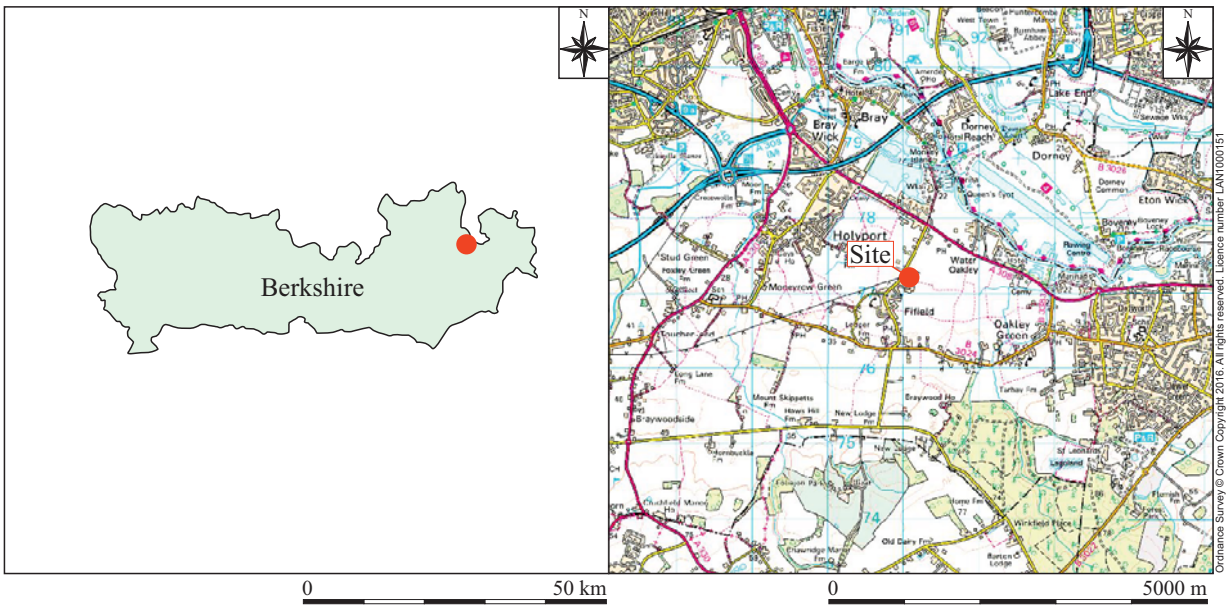
The site is located on the fringes of the Middle Thames Valley, an area rich in prehistoric, Roman and post-Roman remains. This demonstrated by archaeological investigations and finds spots in the vicinity of Bray as recorded on the Berkshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Record. Most prominent of these are a number of Roman features and finds at Down Place, Water Oakley, to the north of the application site. Antiquarian investigation in the early 19th century recorded building foundations, inhumation burials and coins of Roman date. Further investigation in the early 1970s recorded 60 inhumation burials and evidence for metal working. The site is conjectured to represent a riverside Roman villa, although unfortunately most, if not probably all of this site, has been lost to gravel extraction

In the wider area excavations have recorded a nationally important Mesolithic (12,000 – 4,000 BC) site at Moor Farm, Holyport, while excavations in the early 1990s and in the late 2000s at Weir Bank Stud Farm, Bray, and Bray Triangle recorded the remains of Mesolithic, Neolithic (4,000 – 1,800 BC), Bronze Age (1,800 – 700 BC) and Roman settlements and other deposits.

The archaeological potential of the site is demonstrated by a cropmark complex, 600m to the west, at Stroud Farm (and since lost to gravel extraction), and a further cropmark enclosure recorded in the field immediately to the west of Fifield Road, adjacent to the application site. This latter site was identified during survey for a water pipeline, which is understood to pass through the western portions of the application site. These crop marks almost certainly indicate the presence of buried archaeological remains.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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



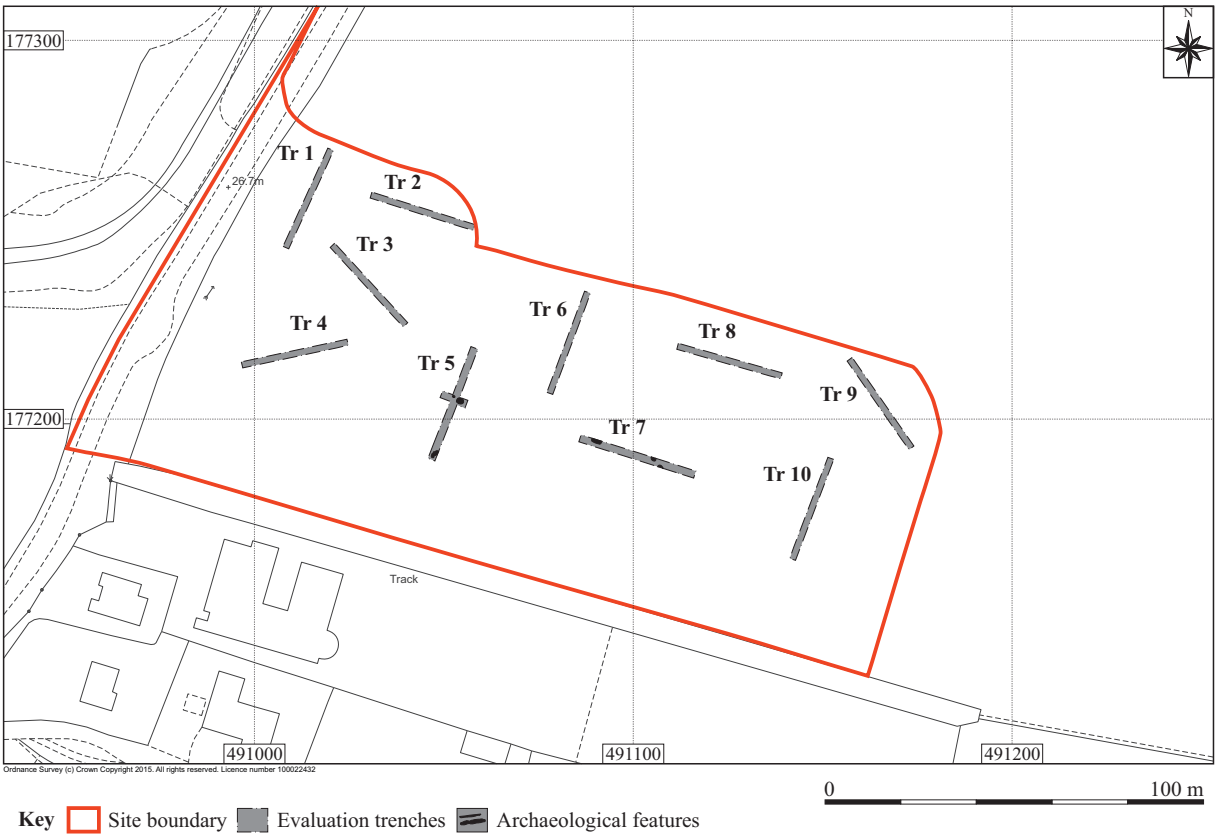


Figure 1: Site location

- To undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site and the depth of deposits that overlie these remains.

- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered. In particular to determine whether the cropmark enclosure site on the west side of Fifield Road continues onto this development site.

- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.

- To determine the implications of the remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity.

- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.

- 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.

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

- 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.

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

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3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2016) agreed with Berkshire Archaeology the archaeological advisors to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of ten evaluation trenches (this excluded the water main and its easement). Each trench was approximately 30m long

and 1.65m to 1.8m wide. This amounted to a 4% sample of the application area. There was a contingency for a further 25m of trenching to be used only at the request of Berkshire Archaeology. Trench 5, which was orientated NNE-SSW, was extended east and west by 2m and 2.5m respectively to reveal the extent of archaeological features. Mechanical trenching was supplemented by limited hand investigation of archaeological deposits. The integrity of any archaeological features or deposits was not be compromised. Initially consideration was to be given to preservation in situ and Berkshire Archaeology was to be consulted on all matters.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2; Appendix 1)

The majority of trenches across the site were blank and showed a simple two layer horizon of compact mid-brown orange clay which was identified as the top of the natural geology and deposited above a 0.2m to 0.4m thick medium compact dark grey clayey silt, with occasional stone. Land drains were identified in all the trenches but possible archaeological features were only identified in two trenches, 5 and 7.

4.1 Trench 5 (Figure 2)

The lowest layer in Trench 5 was a compact mid-brown orange clay (5/02) which was the top of the natural geology that had been identified across the site. Towards the centre of Trench 5 the trench was extended east and west and this revealed a large sub-rounded pit that was 1.5m by 1.8m across, 5/03. It had a gradual break of slope with slightly concave sides and an undulating base. The lowest fill was a firm 0.15m thick light brown yellow clay with occasional stone (5/11); the layer was identified as a primary fill and deposited above this was a 0.35m thick deposit of mid brown, grey and yellow mixed silty clay (5/04). The fill had a moderate inclusion of pebbles and occasional charcoal inclusions. The fill also included a quantity of burnt flint.

Further to the west of this pit was small shallow sub-circular pit, 5/05. It was 0.6m by 0.5m wide and had a depth of 0.06m. It was filled by a mid grey-brown silty clay with orange patches and an inclusion of small stone and charcoal flecks.

Two negative features were identified towards the south end of the trench, 5/07 and 5/09 but were later considered to be the result of bioturbation.

4.2 Trench 7 (Figure 2)

The lowest layer in Trench 7 was a mid orange brown clay (1/02) which was identified as the natural geology. Cut into this layer was a number of sub-rounded pits and possible pits and one sub-rectangular pit; these were all of a shallow nature. Pit 7/03 extended beyond the limits of the northern section of Trench 7. It was 2.5m along its longest visible dimension and greater than 0.9m width. It had a depth of 0.06m and was filled by a light brown silty clay (7/04). Further east another possible pit was observed, 7/05. This feature also extended beyond the limits of the excavation and was 1.2m by 0.7m to the limit of excavation. The depth of the feature was only 0.03m and was filled by a mid grey brown silty clay (7/06). South of this feature and extending beyond the southern section was a further negative feature, 7/07. The dimensions of the features were 1.38m by greater than 0.44m and it had a depth of 0.08m. It was filled by a mid grey brown silty clay (7/.08).

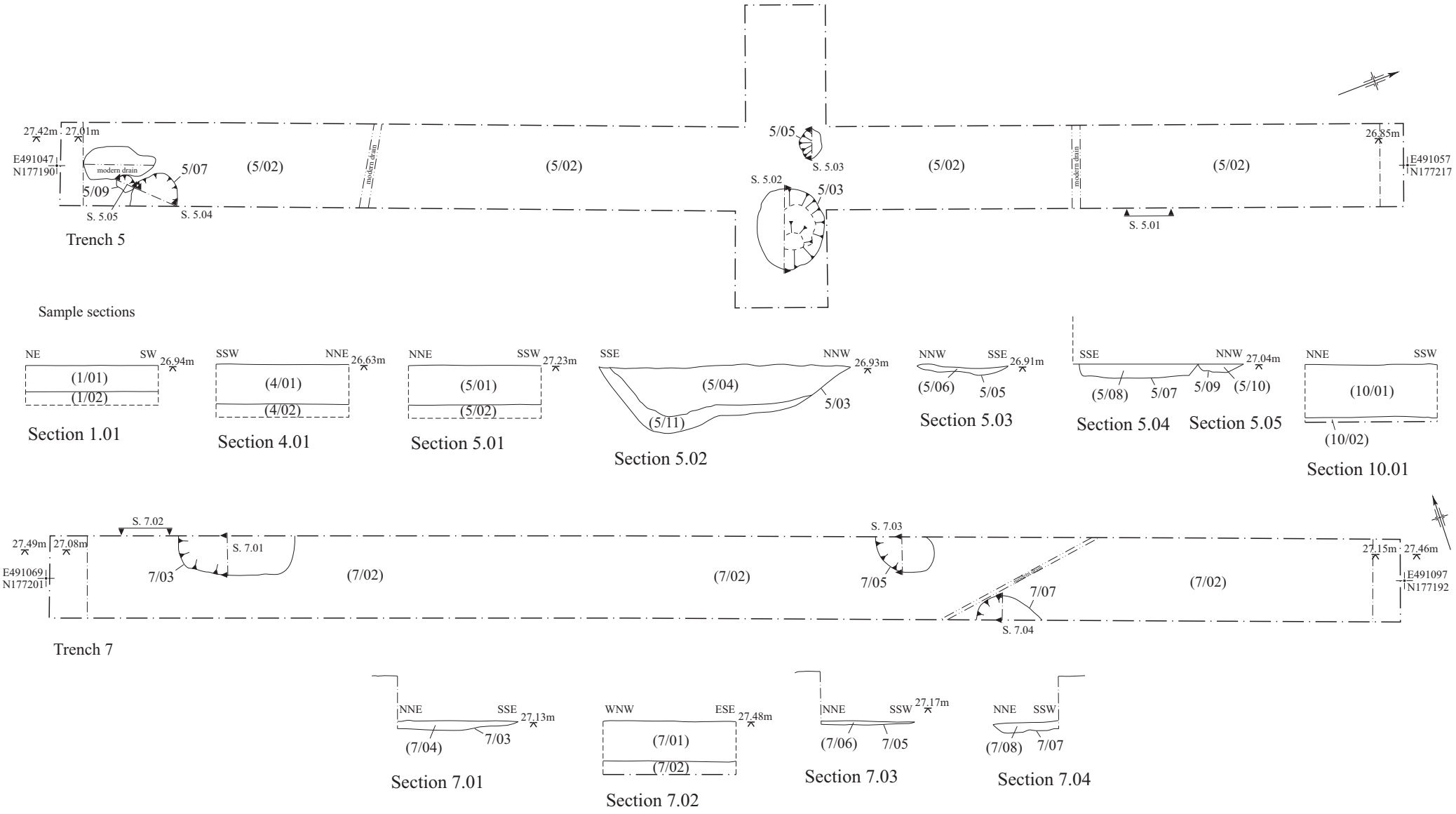

Figure 2: Trenches 5 and 7 with sections

None of these features contained any finds and may have been ephemeral or the result of bio-turbation.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

5.1 Finds

No finds were recovered from the site aside from a number of burnt flints that were recovered along with environmental sample from (5/04), the upper fill of pit 5/03. These were 24 fragments of burnt flint, weighing 501g in total. 2.5g

5.2 Environmental samples

A single soil sample weighing 26.8kg was collected from context (5/04), and processed by flotation.

The sample produced 1260.5g of heavy fraction and 4g of light material. The latter was mainly composed by carbonized plant remains.

The heavy fraction contained 24 fragments of burnt flint, weighing 501g in total. 2.5g of carbonized material were also recovered through sorting. No carbonised seeds were present

6 DISCUSSION

The majority of features identified on the site were considered to be doubtful in nature and probably not the result of human activity.

In Trench 5 two pits were positively identified as archaeology. Pit 5/05 contained a fill with burnt inclusions and the larger pit 5/03 contained a fill with charcoal and burnt flints.

None of the features contained any dateable artefacts but it should be noted that these excavations were approximately 300m SW of ongoing excavations which have revealed Roman and prehistoric activity.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents
The archive consists of the following:

Paper record	Physical record
The project brief	Finds
Written scheme of investigation	Environmental remains
The project report	
The primary site record	

The archive is currently maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the appropriate accepting museum when one becomes available.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014 *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological field evaluation*

Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1								
1/01	Deposit	Dark grey brown clayey silt of medium compaction with occasional stones	0.2m	>1.65	>30m	None	Topsoil	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Mid orange brown compact clay	>0.06m	>1.65	>30m	None	Top of geological horizon	Formed 2 to 3 million years in the Pleistocene
Trench 2								
2/01		Dark grey brown clayey silt of medium compaction with occasional stones	0.26	>1.65	>30m	None	Topsoil	Modern
2/02		Mid orange brown compact clay	>0.04m	>1.65	>30m	None	Top of geological horizon	Formed 2 to 3 million years in the Pleistocene
Trench 3								
3/01	Deposit	Dark grey brown clayey silt of medium compaction with occasional stones	0.32m	>1.65	>30m	None	Topsoil	Modern
3/02	Deposit	Mid orange brown compact clay	>0.06m	>1.65	>30m	None	Top of geological horizon	Formed 2 to 3 million years in the Pleistocene
Trench 4								
4/01	Deposit	Dark grey brown clayey silt of medium compaction with occasional stones	0.3m	>1.65	>30m	None	Topsoil	Modern
4/02	Deposit	Mid orange brown compact clay	>0.1m	>1.65	>30m	None	Top of geological horizon	Formed 2 to 3 million years in the Pleistocene
Trench 5								
5/01	Deposit	Dark grey brown clayey silt of medium compaction with occasional stones	0.3m	>1.65	>30m	None	Topsoil	Modern
5/02	Deposit	Mid orange brown compact clay	>0.1m	>1.65	>30m	None	Top of geological horizon	Formed 2 to 3 million years in the Pleistocene
5/03	Cut	Sub circular pit with slightly concave sides and an undulating base.	0.5m	1.8m	1.5m	-	Undated pit	Undated
5/04	Fill	Mid brown grey yellow silty clay with occasional pebbles and occasional charcoal	0.35m	1.8m	1.5m	Burnt Flint	Upper fill of pit 5/03	Undated
5/05	Cut	Shallow cut with flattish base	0.06m	0.6m	0.5m	-	shallow pit	Undated
5/06	Fill	Mid grey brown orange silty clay with charcoal flecks	0.06m	0.6m	0.5m	None	fill of 5/05	Undated
5/07	Cut	Shallow rounded negative feature	0.08m	0.8m	> 0.7m	-	Bioturbation	Undated

5/08	Fill	mid grey brown silty clay with patches of roange	0.08m	0.8m		None	Bioturbation	Undated
5/09	Cut	shallow sub circular feature	0.04m	0.34m	0.3m	-	Bioturbation	Undated
5/10	Fill	mid grey brown silty clay with patches of roange	0.04m	0.34m	0.3m	None	Bioturbation	Undated
5/11	Fill	Firm light brown yellow clay, with occasional pebbles.	0.15m	1.8m	1.5m	None	Primary fill of 5./03	Undated
Trench 6								
6/01	Deposit	Dark grey brown clayey silt of medium compaction with occasional stones	0.3m	>1.65	>30m	None	Topsoil	Modern
6/02	Deposit	Mid orange brown compact clay	>0.1m	>1.65	>30m	None	Top of geological horizon	Formed 2 to 3 million years in the Pleistocene
Trench 7								
7/01	Deposit	Dark grey brown clayey silt of medium compaction with occasional stones	0.3m	>1.65	>30m	None	Topsoil	Modern
7/02	Deposit	Mid orange brown compact clay	>0.1m	>1.65	>30m	None	Top of geological horizon	Formed 2 to 3 million years in the Pleistocene
7/03	Cut	Sub rectangular with rounded corners. Shallow with flattish base.	0.06m	2.5m	>0.9m	-	Shallow pit	Undated
7/04	Fill	Light brown sandy clay of medium compaction	0.06m	2.5m	>0.9m	None	Fill of 7/03	Undated
7/05	Cut	Oval cut with flattish base	0.03m	1.2m	>0.7m	-	Shallow pit?	Undated
7/06	Fill	Mid grey brown silty clay	0.03m	1.2m	>0.7m	None	Fill off 7/5	Undated
7/07	Cut	Oval cut with irregular base	0.08m	1.38m	>0.44m	-	Shallow pit?	Undated
7/08	Fill	Mid grey brown silty clay	0.08m	1.38m	>0.44m	None	Fill off 7/5	Undated
Trench 8								
8/01	Deposit	Dark grey brown clayey silt of medium compaction with occasional stones	0.4m	>1.65	>30m	None	Topsoil	Modern
8/02	Deposit	Mid orange brown compact clay	>0.04m	>1.65	>30m	None	Top of geological horizon	Formed 2 to 3 million years in the Pleistocene
8/03	Deposit	Medium compacted Light greyish yellow clayey silt with occasional manganese inclusions and rare gravel	Not recorded	>1.65 m	4.6m	None	Alluvial deposit? Below the topsoil and above the natural clay	Undated
Trench 9								
9/01	Deposit	Dark grey brown clayey silt of medium	0.4m	>1.65	>30m	None	Topsoil	Modern

		compaction with occasional stones						
9/02	Deposit	Mid orange brown compact clay	>0.01m	>1.65	>30m	None	Top of geological horizon	Formed 2 to 3 million years in the Pleistocene
Trench 10								
10/01	Deposit	Dark grey brown clayey silt of medium compaction with occasional stones	0.4m	>1.65	>30m	None	Topsoil	Modern
10/02	Deposit	Mid orange brown compact clay	0.01m	>1.65	>30m	None	Top of geological horizon	Formed 2 to 3 million years in the Pleistocene