



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING ACTION

AT

72 PURLEY RISE,

PURLEY-ON-THAMES, BERKSHIRE

NGR SU 65354 76403

On behalf of

AUGUST 2016

REPORT FOR Venners
c/o Henry Venners Ltd
Bagley Croft
Hinksey Hill
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation at Purley on Thames, Berkshire (NGR S SU 65354 76403). The six trenches excavated revealed one ditch and one gully of no definite date in the northern extent of the investigation area. Considerable hill wash has accumulated in the area since the creation of these features.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located at the western edge of Purley on Thames (NGR SP 6947 0884) and has a total area of approximately 2.9 hectares. To the north the site is bounded by the railway, to the east and south by residential housing and to the west by an arable field. The site is currently divided in two, with the southern half in use as a caravan storage area and the northern half in pasture. The site is accessed from the south via the A329. The site is situated on a north east facing slope at between 45 and 55m AOD. The bedrock geology comprises the Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation; sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 71 to 89 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. This is overlain by superficial river terrace deposits of gravel, sand, silt and clay that were formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

1.2 Planning Background

A planning application is to be submitted for the erection of approximately 35 homes, including a number of self-build plots. West Berkshire Archaeology Service (WBAS) has been consulted and due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area a proposal for archaeological evaluation trenching has been agreed. The site has a developable area of 1.2 hectares, while a further 1.7 hectares will be incorporated as an undeveloped buffer zone, although some landscaping may be necessary.

1.3 Archaeological Background (by Stephen Yeates)

A Heritage Impact Assessment of the area has been prepared (JMHS 2017). In summary, there is a focus of Neolithic and Bronze Age activity on the floodplain to the west and north of the site. This activity does not appear to extend onto the area of the site; however, this may be a result of the differential visibility of cropmarks on the gravels of the floodplain (as opposed to the slightly raised terraces upon which the site is located). A rubbish pit of Late Iron Age date was found during archaeological evaluation immediately to the north of the site, possibly signifying the presence of a settlement within the immediate area. The potential for remains dating to the Neolithic, Bronze Age or Iron Age was considered to be moderate to high, especially as a possible flint projectile point has been found immediately outside of the north side of the site.

Roman pottery, thought to be residual, was found in a boundary ditch just north of the site. There is therefore a low to medium potential for remains of this date on the site.

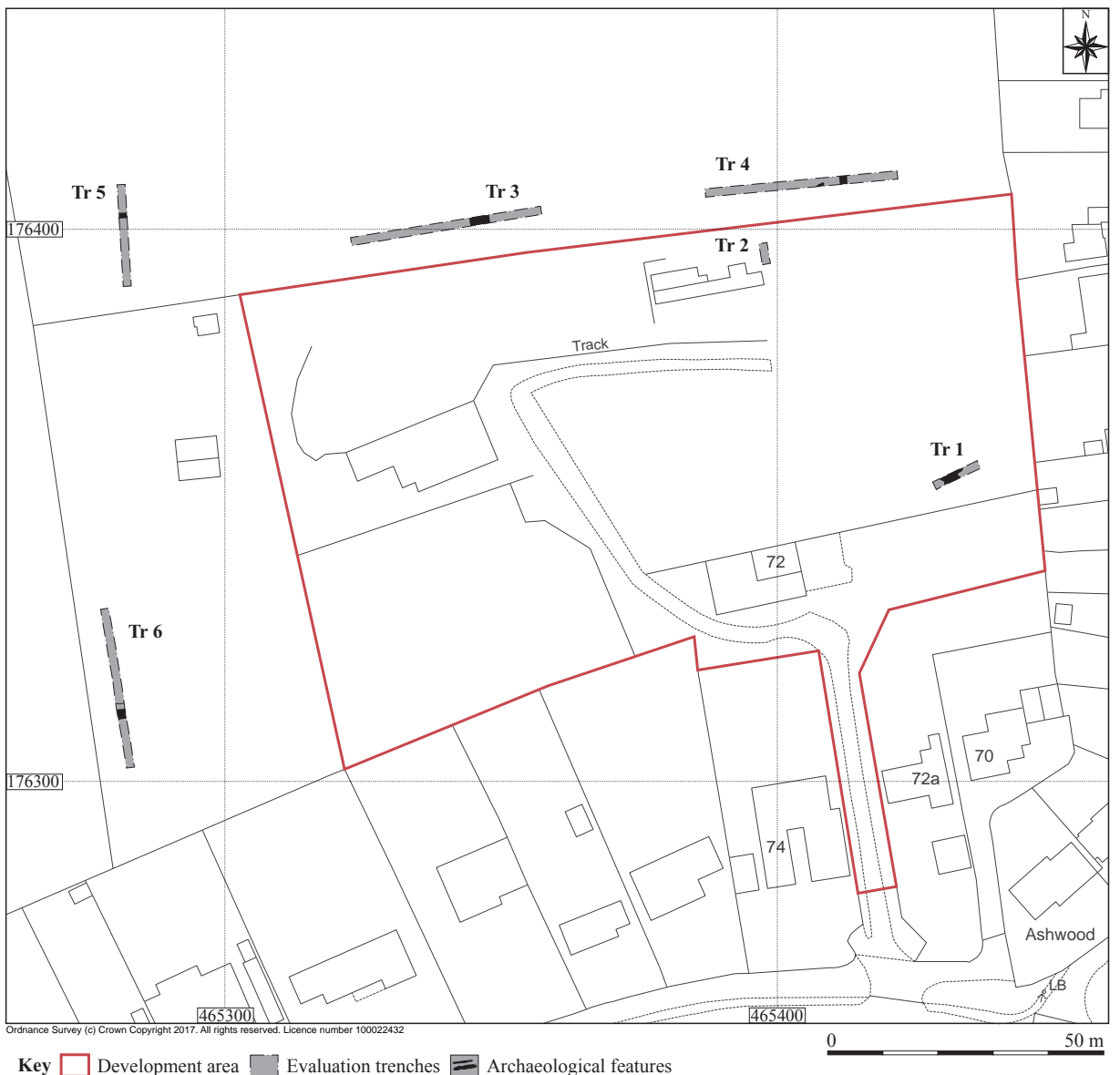
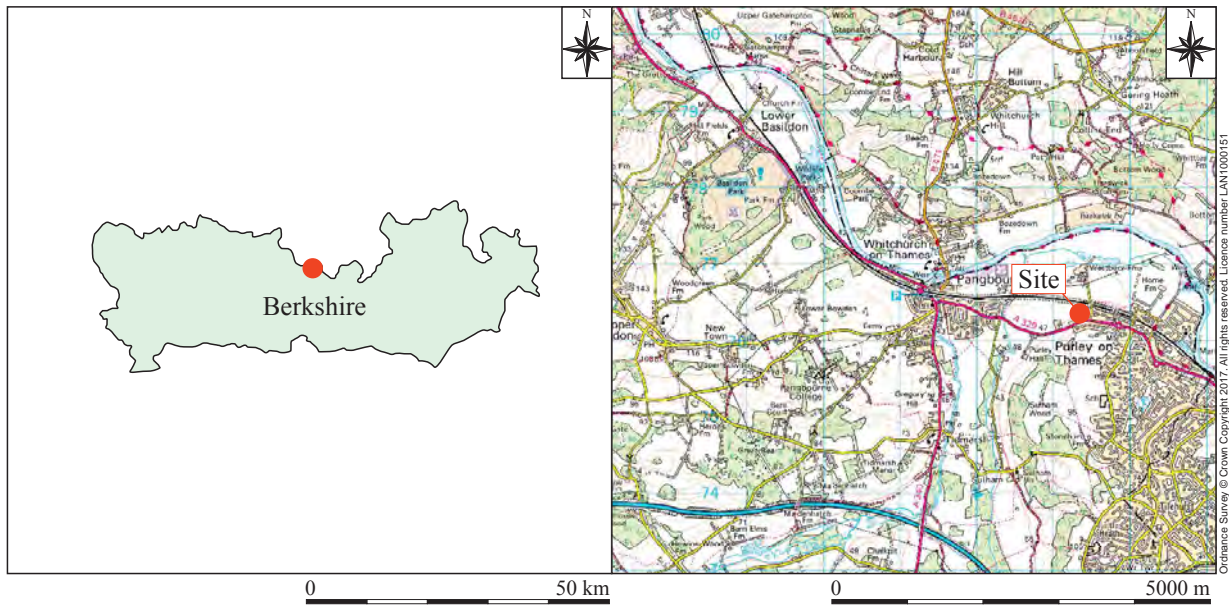


Figure 1: Site location

A Saxon burial was discovered immediately to the north of the site, on the northern side of the railway, although there is no further evidence of Early Medieval activity within the search area. When excavated the burial was deemed not to be associated with any further burials and evaluation on the northern side of the railway line did not record any further evidence of Early Medieval activity. As such the potential for remains dating to this period is considered to be low to medium.

Up until the early 20th century the area of the site was located within the agricultural environs of Purley, in an area of fields described in the 18th century as Purley Farther Fields or Yonder Common Fields.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To undertake an archaeological evaluation of the proposed development site.
- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site and the depth of soil deposits that overlie any remains.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to prehistoric to Saxon remains found in the area.
- 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.

In particular:

- To identify whether prehistoric, Roman and or Saxon remains are present.
- To inform the need for, and scope of, further phases of work to mitigate the impact of the proposed development.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Sarah Orr, the historic environment record officer for West Berkshire Council.

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 six trenches each 1.5m wide (Fig. 1) supplemented by limited hand investigation of any archaeological deposits. Ground level was reduced to the upper interface of secure archaeological deposits or, where these were not present, to the upper interface of natural deposits. This was carried out using a 5 tonne 360° excavator fitted with a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket. Three locations were immediately north of the proposed development area. The trenches were in the only possible locations and restricted in size due to obstructions in the caravan park. Trench 1 measured 8.23m long, Trench 2 was 4.5m long, Trench five measured 18.4m long, Trench six measured 29.1m long and Trenches 3 and 4 measured 35m long. Thereafter, hand-excavation hand excavation was carried out to sample the features exposed. During the evaluation trenching, sufficient features were sampled by hand excavation to achieve the objectives. Tree boles were excavated by half-sectioning a representative sample. Linear features were cross-sectioned. All features were recorded by written, drawn and photographic records.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

4 RESULTS

Trench 1 (Figure 2)

Trench 1 was oriented northwest – southeast, 8.23m long, 1.5m wide and 0.76m deep. It contained light brown clay with patches of chalky outcrop (1/03), the natural horizon. This was overlain by a 0.40m thick colluvial layer of mid-red/brown silty clay (1/02). This was in turn overlain by dark brown/grey clayey silt topsoil deposit (1/01). Tree bole feature 1/04 was cut into the natural geology (1/03) and overlain by subsoil (1/02) along the centre of the north western edge of the trench. It contained no finds and was filled by lower fill (1/06) of mid-brown clayey silt and upper fill (1/05) of mid brown silty clay. The trench was devoid of archaeology.



Plate 1: South west facing general view of Trench 1



Plate 2: South facing section through tree bole 1/04

Trench 2

Trench 2 was oriented north – south, 4.50m long and measured 1.5m wide and 0.70m deep. It contained mid-brown/red sandy clay with patches of chalky outcrop (2/03), the natural horizon. This was overlain by a 0.35m thick colluvial layer of mid-brown/red clay rich silt (2/02). This was in turn overlain by dark brown silt topsoil deposit (2/01). This trench was devoid of archaeological features.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was oriented east – west and measured 35m long, 1.5m wide and 0.72m deep. It contained light yellow silty clay with patches of chalky outcrop (3/03), the natural horizon. This was overlain by a 0.32m thick colluvial layer of mid brown silty clay. This was in turn overlain by dark brown clayey silt topsoil deposit (3/01). Tree bole feature 3/04 was cut into the natural geology (3/03) and overlain by subsoil (3/02) along the centre of the northern edge of the trench. It contained no finds and

was filled by (3/05) of mid-red/brown silty clay. The trench was devoid of archaeology.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was oriented east – west measuring 35m long, 1.5m wide and 0.60m deep. It contained mid-dark silty clay (4/03) with patches of chalky outcrop (4/04), the natural horizon. This was overlain by a 0.18m thick colluvial layer of mid brown clay rich sand (4/02). This was in turn overlain by mid-brown silt topsoil deposit (4/01). It contained ditch feature 4/05 which was cut into the natural geology (4/03) and overlain by colluvium (4/02) This was oriented north – south across the eastern end of the trench. It contained no finds and was filled by (4/06) of mid-dark reddish brown sandy clay. Tree bole feature 4/07 was cut into the natural geology (4/03) and overlain by colluvium (4/02) along the centre of the southern edge of the trench. It contained no finds and was filled by (4/05) of dark reddish brown sandy clay.



Plate 3: North facing section through ditch 4/05



Plate 4: North facing section through tree bole 4/07

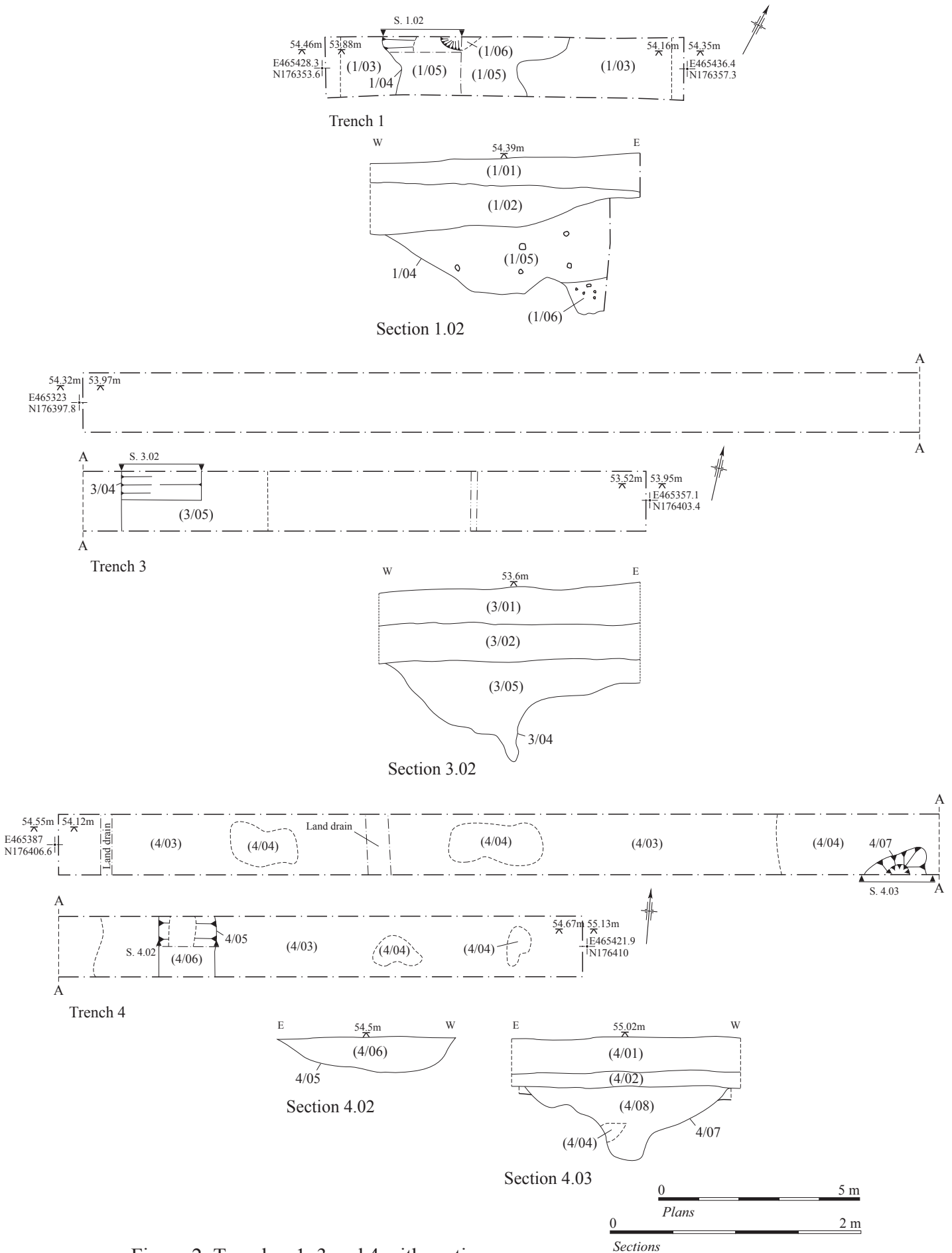


Figure 2: Trenches 1, 3 and 4 with sections

Trench 5

Trench 5 was oriented north – south and measured 18.4m long, 1.5m wide and 0.69m deep. It contained mid reddish brown sandy clay (5/03) with patches of chalky outcrop, the natural horizon. This was overlain by a 0.90m thick layer of mid reddish brown silty clay colluvium deposit (5/02) which increased in thickness/depth towards the lower north end on the trench. This was in turn overlain by mid-dark reddish brown silt topsoil deposit (5/01). The trench contained linear gully feature 5/04 which was cut into the natural geology (5/03) and overlain by colluvium (5/02). This was oriented east – west across the northern end of the trench, contained no finds and was filled by (5/05) of mid-light reddish brown sandy clay.



Plate 5: South facing general view of trench 5. Note the increased depth of colluvium layer (5/02) towards the lower lying north end



Plate 6: East facing section of gully 5/04

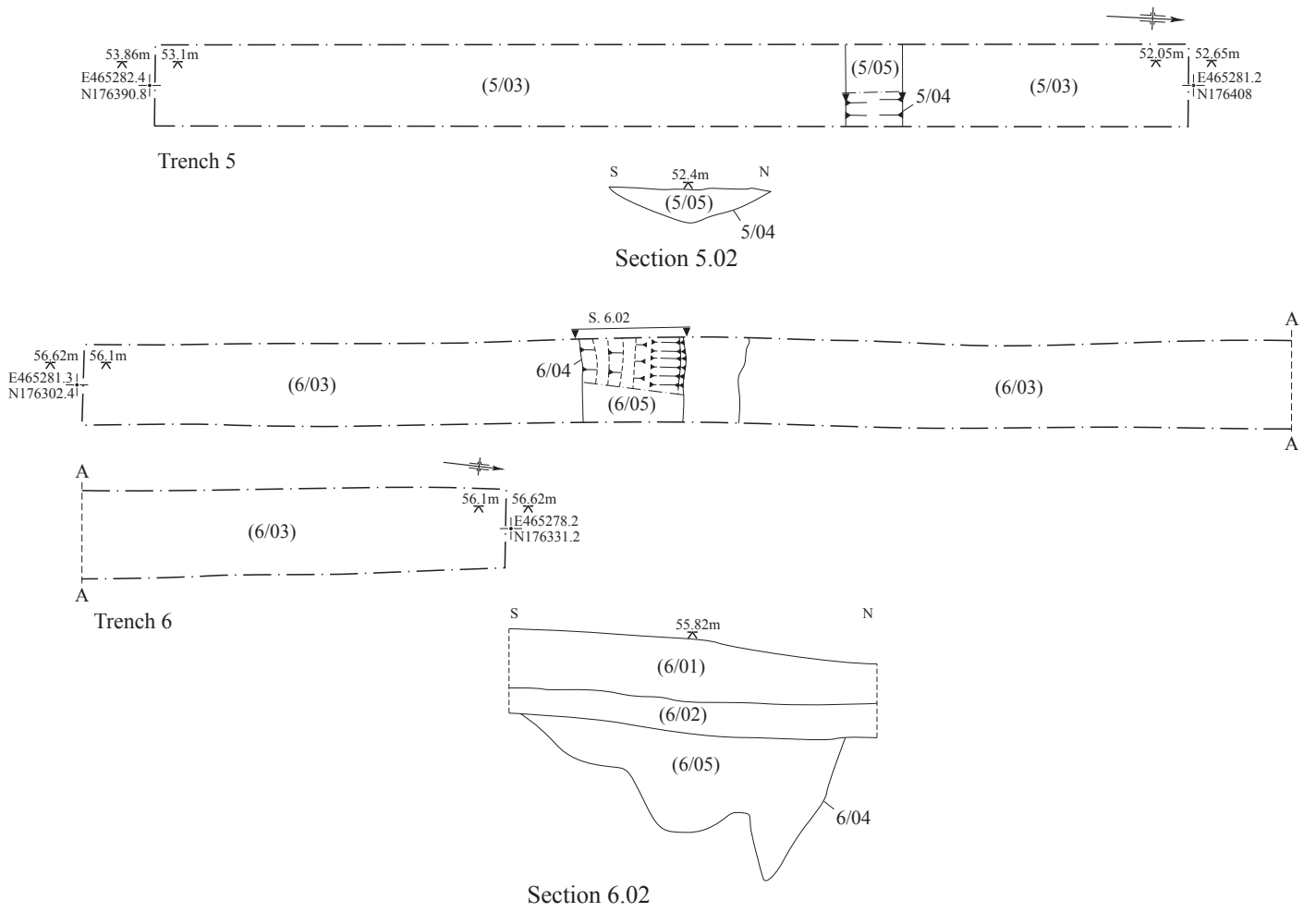
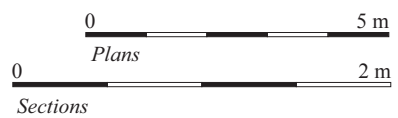


Figure 3: Trenches 5-6 and sections



Trench 6

Trench 6 was oriented north – south, 19.1m long, 1.5m wide and 0.57m deep. It contained light yellowish brown silty clay (6/03) with patches of chalky outcrop, the natural horizon. This was overlain by a 0.39m thick layer of mid reddish brown silty clay colluvium deposit which was in turn overlain by dark brown silt topsoil deposit (6/01). It contained tree bole feature 6/04 which was cut into the natural geology (6/03) and overlain by subsoil (6/02). This was located across the southern end of the trench, contained no finds and was filled by (6/05) of mid-light reddish brown silty clay.



Plate 7: West facing section through tree bole 6/08

Reliability of Results

The reliability of results is considered to be very good. The archaeological investigations took place in generally clement conditions with good light and visibility. On the whole there was good cooperation from the land owner Marion Venners during the all stages of archaeological field work.

5 FINDS

No finds were recovered during the evaluation.

6 DISCUSSION

Although no dating evidence was present within the features investigated, it can be presumed that they are of a relatively significant date. This is due to the nature of their fills and fact that they are overlain by either colluvium from hillwash or through ploughing moving material down slope. These deposits did not contain any modern material. Furthermore it is evident that underlying deposits on the site have remained relatively undisturbed since the creation of these features. Ditch 4/04 may be a former

field boundary ditch or enclosure ditch. Gully 5/04 is very isolated and little can be determined about its function.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site record

Physical record

Finds

Environmental remains

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to West Berkshire Museum.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

John Moore Heritage Services, 2017 *Heritage Impact Assessment on 72 Purley Rise, Purley-on-Thames, Berkshire*. Unpublished report

Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Findings	Interpretation
Trench 1							
1/01	Deposit	Dark-brown/grey clayey silt. Loose with rare nodules of chalk and flint which are round and angular, 2 – 10mm.	0.30m	>TR	>TR	None	Topsoil
1/02	Deposit	Mid – red/brown silty clay. Loose with frequent round and sub angular chalk 20 – 80mm	0.40m	>TR	>TR	None	Subsoil
1/03	Deposit	Light brown firm clay with chalky outcrop	>0.60 m	>TR	>TR	None	Natural
1/04	Cut	Very irregular and undulating	0.92m	4.66m	>1.5	None	Cut of Tree bole
1/05	Fill	Mid brown silty clay. Loose with occasional rounded flints 100mm diameter	0.74m	4.66m	>1.5	None	Upper fill of tree bole
1/06	Fill	Mid-light brown clayey silt. Loose with frequent very small chalk fragments	0.78m	0.50m	8.38m	None	Lower fill of tree bole
Trench 2							
2/01	Deposit	Dark brown loose silt. Contains frequent pebbles – sub angular stones >30mm	0.30m	>TR	>TR	None	Topsoil
2/02	Deposit	Mid brown/red sandy clay rich silt. Friable with frequent pebbles >25mm	0.35m	>TR	>TR	None	Colluvium
2/03	Deposit	Mid brown/red sandy clay. Frequent flint pebbles + chalky outcrop	0.05m	>TR	>TR	None	Natural
Trench 3							
3/01	Deposit	Dark brown clayey silt. Loose with occasional flint pebble inclusions 500 – 800mm	0.40m	>TR	>TR	None	Topsoil
3/02	Deposit	Mid brown silty clay. Medium compaction. Rare occasional flint pebble inclusions 500 – 800mm	0.32m	>TR	>TR	None	Subsoil
3/03	Deposit	Light yellow/brown silty firm clay with chalky outcrop	>0.50 m	>TR	>TR	None	Natural
3/04	cut	Irregular in plan and undulating profile throughout	<0.79 m	3.60m	0.60m	None	Cut of Tree bole
3/05	fill	Mid red/brown silty clay. Medium – firm compaction. Occasional flint and chalk nodules 200 – 400mm	<0.79 m	3.60m	0.60m	None	Fill of tree bole

Trench 4							
Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation
4/01	Deposit	Loose mid brown silt with no inclusions	0.30m	>TR	>TR	None	Topsoil
4/02	Deposit	Firm mid reddish brown clayey sand with no inclusions	0.18m	>TR	>TR	None	Subsoil
4/03	Deposit	Firm mid dark brown/red clayey sand with frequent stone inclusions <300mm	0.12m	>TR	>TR	None	Natural
4/04	Deposit	Firm mid dark brownish red clayey sand with frequent chalk inclusions	/	>TR	>TR	None	Natural chalk outcrop
4/05	Cut	Linear, N – S orientation	/	1.80m	1.40m	None	Cut of ditch
4/06	Fill	Firm, mid – dark reddish brown, sandy clay, frequent	0.28m	1.80m	1.40m	None	Fill of ditch
4/07	Cut	Sub circular orientation	/	1.50m	0.70m	None	Cut of tree bole
4/08	Fill	Firm mid-dark reddish brown sandy clay frequent natural flint inclusions. No finds.	0.60m	1.50m	0.70m	None	Fill of tree bole
Trench 5							
5/01	Deposit	Mid-dark reddish brown silt. Loose compaction. Occasional flint inclusions	0.29m	>TR	>TR	None	Topsoil
5/02	Deposit	Mid reddish brown silty clay. Loose compaction with occasional flint inclusions	0.40m	>TR	>TR	None	Subsoil
5/03	Deposit	Mid reddish brown sandy clay. Firm with frequent large flint inclusions	0.20m	>TR	>TR	None	Natural
5/04	Cut	Linear N – W oriented through N end of TR 5	0.19m	0.92m	>1.5m	None	Gully
5/05	Fill	Mid-light reddish brown sandy clay. Firm with frequent flint inclusions	0.19m	0.92m	>1.5m	None	Fill of gully
Trench 6							
6/01	Deposit	Dark brown silt. Loose with occasional rounded ovular flint pebbles 300 – 400mm	0.18m	>TR	>TR	None	Topsoil
6/02	Deposit	Mid brown silty clay. Medium compaction. Occasional rounded/ovular flint pebbles 300 – 400mm diameter	0.39m	>TR	>TR	None	Subsoil
6/03	Deposit	Light yellow brown silty clay. Friable with compact chalky outcrop	0.20m	>TR	>TR	None	Natural

6/04	Cut	Irregular in plan and undulating in profile	0.82m	0.28m	>1.5m	None	Cut of tree bole	
6/05	Fill	Mid red/brown silty clay with frequent – occasional rounded and sub angular flint pebbles 200 – 300mm	0.82m	0.28m	>1.5m	None	Fill of tree bole	