



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

HILL FARM, AYLWORTH LANE,

NAUNTON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

NGR SP 10899 21302

AUGUST 2022

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SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at Hill Farm, Naunton, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 10899 21302). The watching brief recorded a single linear ditch, aligned east – west, from which a small assemblage of late Iron Age – early Roman pottery was recovered. This was located approximately 40m southwest of an area where previous archaeological work had recorded features of Iron Age and Roman date, including a cluster of pits dating to the early and middle Iron Age, a rectilinear feature that contained an assemblage of Romano-British pottery dating to the late 3rd and 4th century and an area of laid limestone that showed evidence of burning in situ. As such it is likely that the ditch recorded during the excavation was associated with the remains recorded to the north east. The lack of any additional features and small artefact assemblage perhaps suggests the feature was a field or enclosure boundary located in the agricultural hinterland of the settlement.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

Hill Farm is situated 650m south of Naunton, bounded to the east by Aylworth Lane and to the south by Stanborough Lane/A436 (NGR SP 10899 21302). The development site is located to the west of the main farm complex and was formerly a grassed area.

The site lies at approximately 236m OD; geologically the site is situated at the boundary between the Hampden and Taynton Limestone Formations.

1.2 Planning Background

Cotswold District Council granted planning permission for *demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling at Hill Farm (19/03889/FUL)*. Due to the archaeological importance of the surrounding area a condition was attached to the permission:

9 No development shall take place within the application site until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

1.3 Archaeological Background

A search of the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) and Portable Antiquities Scheme Database (PAS) was made over a radius of 1km from the site. The following results are listed in chronological order.

Bronze Age

A round barrow of probable Bronze Age date is located c.440m south-southeast of the site, adjacent to Stanborough Lane/A436 (HER 4327: SP 11150 20890). The barrow, situated on a local high-point measures 14m in diameter and 0.3m in height and has been degraded by ploughing. A further round barrow was excavated in the late 19th century during construction of the Banbury and Cheltenham Railway approximately 900m west of the site (HER 2610: SP 10010 21480). The barrow contained a corbel-roofed cist burial within which was found a cremation and a bronze knife.

Iron Age

An archaeological watching brief undertaken during construction immediately northeast of the site recorded evidence of Iron Age and Roman activity (HER 40924: centred SP 10960 21360). Three areas, labelled A, B and C, were subject to excavation (Hoyle and Cook 2018). The earliest evidence for activity was recorded in area C, located c.40m northeast of the site, where a cluster of 10 pits dating to the early and middle Iron Age were recorded (HER 40925). These were interpreted as storage pits associated with a farmstead or settlement, the location of which is currently unknown though presumed to be nearby.

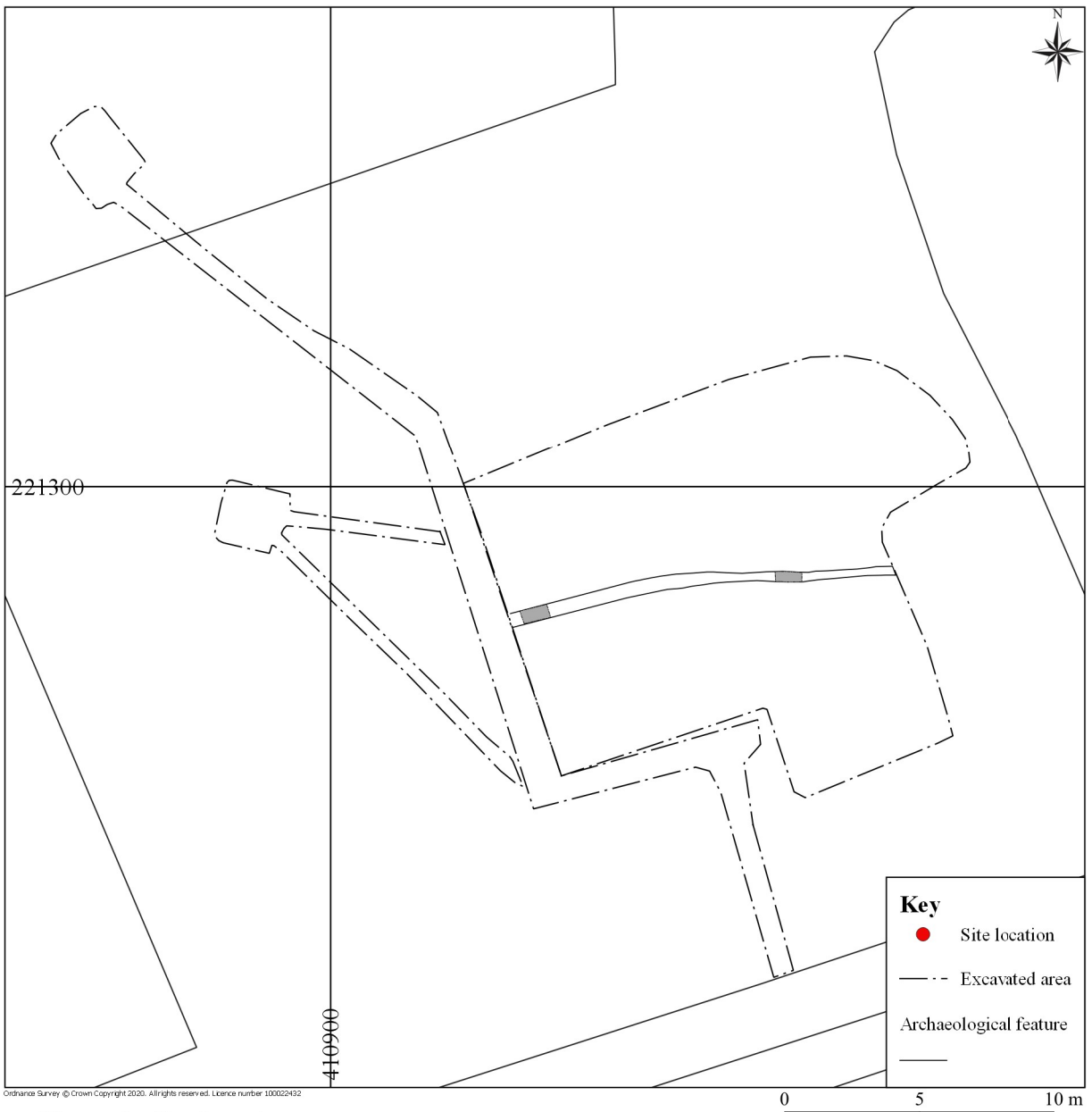
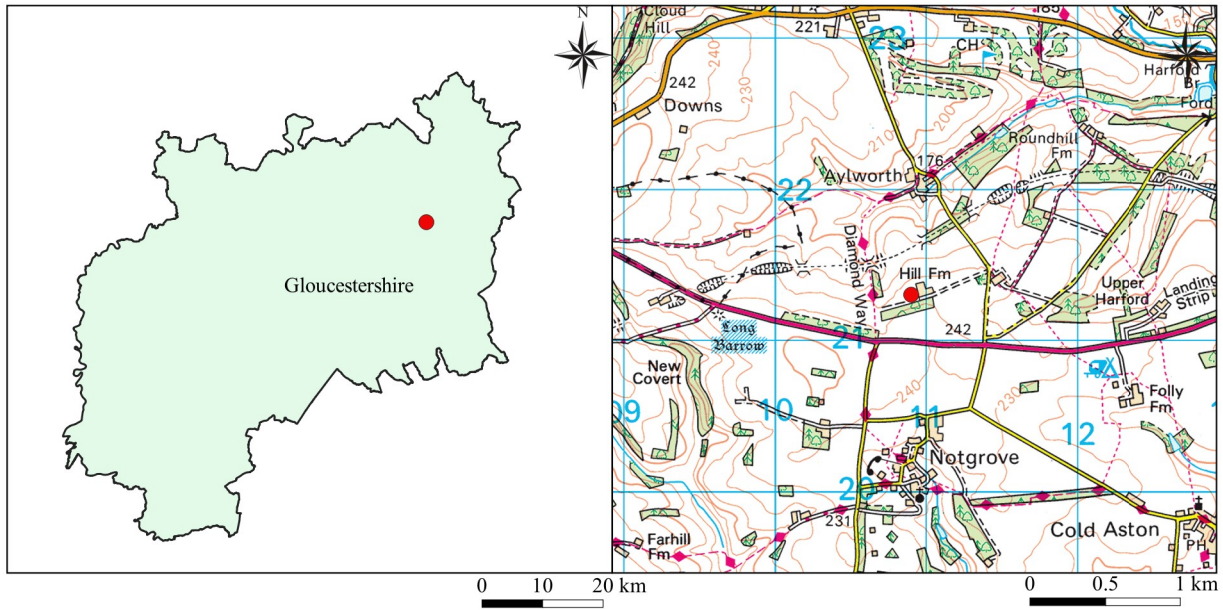


Figure 1: Site location

Romano-British

In area A, located 80m northeast, a rectilinear feature c.6m long by c.2m wide was recorded; the feature contained frequent burnt stone, clay and a large quantity of finds including numerous fragments of iron ore slag and an assemblage of Romano-British pottery dating to the late 3rd and 4th century (Hoyle and Cook 2018). The function of the feature was not entirely certain, though was considered to have been associated with iron smithing; possibly a small ground-level smithing forge (HER 40926).

Area B, 70m northeast, contained a laid limestone surface 2.5m in length by 0.7m in width that showed some evidence of burning in-situ. The function of this surface was uncertain and no dating evidence was recovered, though it may have been associated with the iron smithing feature recorded in area C c.20m to the east (Hoyle and Cook 2018).

Stanborough Lane/ the A436 is considered to be the route of a probable secondary Roman road (HER 9223: centred SP 10966 20986). The road is referred to as 'straet' in an early medieval charter of 737-740, a term associated with a made road, likely of Roman origins.

Two Romano-British inhumation burials were found during construction of the Banbury and Cheltenham Railway approximately 900m west of the site (HER 2611: SP 10000 21400); scatters of Roman pottery was also found in the area (HER 7246).

A number of finds dating to the period have been found near to the site, including: a silver denarius of Trajan dating to AD 103 to 111 found 100m south (PAS 518647: SP 10898 21199); a copper-alloy radiate of Claudius II dating to 268 and 270 AD (PAS 560121) and three coins of Constantius II dating to AD 335 to 337 (PAS 560118, 560119, 560120) found 200m north (SP 10880 21490); a silver denarius of Severus Alexander dating to AD 231 to 232 found 300m southwest (PAS 518649: SP 10700 21100); a silver denarius of Trajan dating to AD 103 to 111 found 350m northeast (PAS 518641: SP 11100 21600) and a silver denarius of the 1st or 2nd century AD found 400m north (PAS 518680: SP 11000 21698).

Early Medieval

There is relatively little evidence for early medieval activity within the area. The probable site of Cynelm's Stone, a Saxon Boundary Stone, is located 500m southeast of the site (HER 2612: SP 11350 20980). A silver penny of Ethelred II (AD 978-1016) was found 330m north-northeast of the site (PAS 47679: SP 11039 21629).

Medieval

During the medieval period the site was situated between the villages of Aylworth and Notgrove. These settlements shrank during the period and earthworks relating to the medieval occupation have survived in both. The Aylworth deserted medieval settlement is located c.500m north of the site (HER 4320: centred SP 12970 21750). 11 households were recorded by the Domesday survey in 1086 though by the late 14th century only 6 people paid poll tax there. Extant remains of the settlement comprise four house platforms and associated paddocks, scarps and banked enclosures. An area of extant ridge and furrow is present to the north of the village (centred SP 11121 22295). The Notgrove shrunken medieval settlement is located on the southern edge of the search area, c.800m south (HER 4332: centred SP 10900 20400). Notgrove was a larger settlement than Aylworth at the time of the Domesday survey, with 15

households, and did not suffer the same level of depopulation; archaeological remains comprise two groups of linear banks that define probable rectilinear enclosures and two amorphous mounds that may represent house platforms.

A penny of Edward I (AD 1272-1307) minted in London between 1300 and 1313 was found 200m north of the site (PAS 560122: SP 10875 21497).

Post-Medieval

A series of post-medieval quarries are located throughout the area, situated to exploit the inferior oolite and Chipping Norton Limestone bedrock of the area. These are generally visible as earthworks or cropmarks and are found: 350m south of the site (HER 11071: SP 11020 20850); 410m east (HER 40103: SP 11330 21380); 625m southeast (HER 4328: SP 11500 20900); 700m east (HER 40102: SP 1157 2110); 750m southwest (HER 40107: SP 10160 21080) and 900m southeast (HER 40111: SP 11850 20830).

Undated

An undated enclosure, seen as cropmarks on aerial photographs, is located c.150 south of the site and extends to Stanborough Lane/A436 (HER 5966: SP 11040 21050). The position of the enclosure suggests it may be associated with the Iron Age or Roman activity recorded at the site.

An undated linear feature is visible as a cropmark c.900m northwest of the site (HER 4490: SP 09960 21690); the feature is aligned northwest-southeast and extends for a length of 200m. The interpretation of the feature is uncertain, though it may represent the remains of a ditch and double bank of a trackway or boundary bank.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

To make a record of any significant archaeological remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains especially with regard to the nearby Iron Age and Roman finds previously found in the vicinity of the site.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Gloucestershire Planning Archaeologist, the archaeological advisors to the Cotswold District Council.

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

3.2 Methodology

Groundworks were undertaken in two phases. The first comprised the stripping of topsoil and subsoil from within the footprint of the proposed dwelling to the top of the geological horizon. This was followed at a later date by the excavation of service and drainage trenches from the property.

Topsoil and subsoil deposits were carefully removed under direct archaeological supervision with a 360 excavator fitted with a bladed bucket. Where archaeological horizons were encountered they were cleaned by hand and excavated appropriately. 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.

The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to the Iron Age and Roman periods.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features or group numbers.

4.1 House Footprint (Figure 2, Plates 1 – 2)

An area 18m in maximum length by 15m in maximum width was excavated over the area of the house footprint. The lowest deposit encountered was the geological horizon (2), fragmented and degraded limestone with patches of light yellowish brown and greyish white sand and silty clay. Towards the southeast of the area of excavation this was overlain by subsoil (3), a firm mid reddish brown clayey silt 0.14m in thickness. This was encountered over an area approximately 8m in length by 6m in width in the southeast corner and extended beyond the limit of excavation (l.o.e.) to the east and south. This was in turn overlain by topsoil and turf (1), a firm mid brown silt, with moderate inclusions of sub-angular stone, which varied in thickness between 0.1 and 0.25m.

A single archaeological feature was encountered within the area of excavation. This was a sub-linear ditch **8** that ran in an east – west direction across the centre of the area for a length of 14m, extending beyond the l.o.e. to the east and west. The width of the ditch varied between 0.3 to 0.6m and in depth from 0.05 to 0.1m; the sides, where excavated, were gently sloping and concave, while the base was concave to irregular. The shallow depth of the feature suggests that it, or any earlier soil layers into which it had been cut, had been heavily truncated by later plough action. The fill of the feature varied along its length from a firm mid greyish brown clayey silt with frequent angular stone (5) at its western extent to a firm mid reddish brown silty clay (7) at its eastern extent. Several fragments of Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery were recovered from fill (5). These variations in form of the ditch are likely due to localised changes in geology and the presence of subsoil (3) towards the eastern side of the excavation, which overlay fill (7).

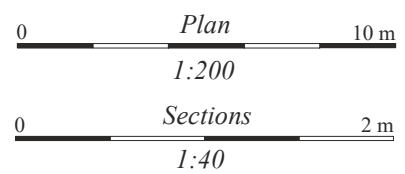
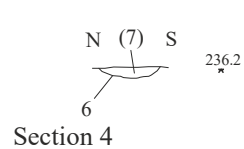
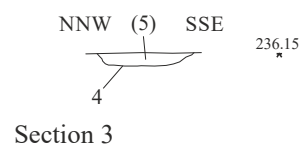
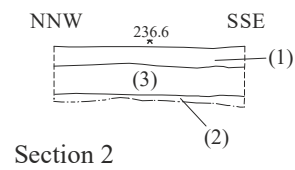
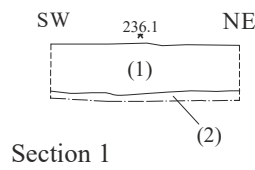
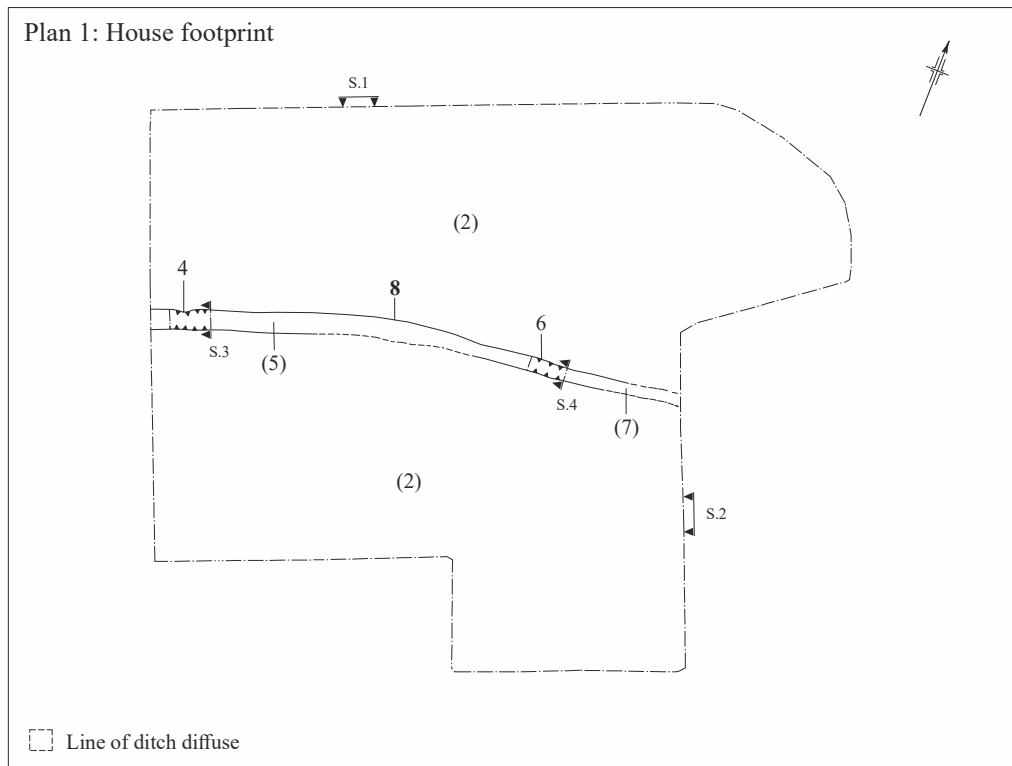


Figure 2: House footprint: Plans and sections



Plate 1: Ditch 8, cut 6 and fill (7). Looking east.



Plate 2: General site shot, showing ditch 8 which crosses the trench centrally. Looking east-southeast.

4.2 Service and Drainage Trenches

Additional excavation was undertaken to the north west of the house (Figure 1, Plate 3), where three linear drainage trenches and two smaller areas of excavation were monitored. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in these areas and the overlying deposits were consistent with those encountered in the main area of excavation.

4.3 Reliability of Results

The archaeological investigations were undertaken in fair conditions with excellent cooperation from site staff. Archaeological features were evident within the limestone geology and easily identifiable. As such the results can be considered reliable.



Plate 3: Septic tank trench. Looking south west.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Barbara McNee

Introduction

A total of 11 sherds weighing 25 gms, and representing two vessels were recovered during a watching brief. The pottery was recorded using the methodology set out by the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 1997).

Vessel 1

This is represented by one unoxidised dark brown/black body sherd. The fabric consists of a ground mass of medium sand sized quartz grains, with rare coarse sand sized quartz. It is not possible to tell if it has been hand built or wheel turned. Based on fabric; a later Iron Age or early Roman date range is suggested, although sandy wares can also occur in the earlier Iron Age (Timby 1998). Black sandy wares have been recovered at Mythe, Gloucestershire, and described as later Iron Age-early Roman native wares (Timby 2013).

Vessel 2

Ten sherds belong to the same vessel, consisting of a small fragment of flat bottomed base, and thin walled body sherds. There are traces of burnish on the exterior and interior surfaces, suggesting a fine vessel. The fabric contains common (25%) quite well sorted rock fragments, possibly limestone, average size 0.5-1mm. The clay matrix is quite silty, and the firing is soft and unoxidised (dark brown/black throughout). The fabric may be compatible with material dating to the Middle Iron Age period (Timby 1999), although limestone-tempered fabrics have a long period of currency across the Cotswolds (McSloy 2013: 30). The precise dating of this small assemblage is somewhat hampered by the lack of diagnostic traits, and consequently the dating is tentative. Close dating cannot be achieved with any degree of confidence when small body sherds alone are represented. The fabric, firing and vessel wall thickness would suggest a later prehistoric date range, possibly mid-later Iron Age or late Iron Age-early Roman.

The geology surrounding Naunton is rich, and includes a variety of Limestone deposits (Richardson 1929: 114), and Head and Alluvium deposits (Geological Survey Sheet 217). These geological deposits would have provided suitable materials for potting, for example the silty clays deriving from Alluvium deposits. It is however difficult to say if the vessels were locally made, due to similar deposits outside of the area.

Summary, significance and research potential

This small pottery assemblage is important as an indicator of settlement or use within the Naunton area during later prehistoric period, possibly the later Iron Age-early Roman. The pottery sherds show high levels of abrasion on all surfaces, with a lower than average mean sherd weight is just 2.3gms. Sherds could have been removed from their original place of discard, and may have derived from a rubbish collection or land surfaces open to erosion, weathering and ploughing.

There is little potential for further analysis due to the condition of the pottery, and the lack of diagnostic sherds, and therefore no further work is recommended for the pottery assemblage. However, in the event of further excavations being carried out on the site, the assemblage should be re-analysed with any additional prehistoric pottery that might be recovered. It is recommended that all of the prehistoric material be retained for long-term storage.

6 DISCUSSION

The watching brief recorded a single linear ditch, aligned east – west, from which a small assemblage of late Iron Age - early Roman pottery was recovered. This was located approximately 40m southwest of an area where previous archaeological work had recorded features of Iron Age and Roman date, including a cluster of pits dating to the early and middle Iron Age, a rectilinear feature that contained an assemblage of Romano-British pottery dating to the late 3rd and 4th century and an area of laid limestone that showed evidence of burning *in situ*. As such it is likely that the ditch recorded during the excavation was associated with the remains recorded to the north east. The lack of any additional features and small artefact assemblage perhaps suggests the feature was a field or enclosure boundary located in the agricultural hinterland of the settlement.

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

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Corinium Museum with the accession number yet to be confirmed.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Summary for johnmoor1-395776

OASIS ID (UID)	johnmoor1-395776
Project Name	Hill Farm, Aylworh Lane, Naunton
Sitename	Hill Farm, Aylworth Lane
Activity type	WATCHING BRIEF
Project Identifier(s)	4243
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	John Moore Heritage Services
Project Dates	03-Jun-2020 - 27-Jul-2022
Location	Hill Farm, Aylworth Lane NGR : SP 10899 21302 LL : 51.8901679638278, -1.84303770067892 12 Fig : 410899,221302
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Gloucestershire District : Cotswold Parish : Naunton
Project Methodology	<p>Groundworks were undertaken in two phases. The first comprised the stripping of topsoil and subsoil from within the footprint of the proposed dwelling to the top of the geological horizon. This was followed at a later date by the excavation of service and drainage trenches from the property.</p> <p>Topsoil and subsoil deposits were carefully removed under direct archaeological supervision with a 360 excavator fitted with a bladed bucket. Where archaeological horizons were encountered they were cleaned by hand and excavated appropriately. 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.</p> <p>The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to the Iron Age and Roman periods.</p>
Project Results	<p>The watching brief recorded a single linear ditch, aligned east – west, from which a small assemblage of late Iron Age - early Roman pottery was recovered. This was located approximately 40m southwest of an area where previous archaeological work had recorded features of Iron Age and Roman date, including a cluster of pits dating to the early and middle Iron Age, a rectilinear feature that contained an assemblage of Romano-British pottery dating to the late 3rd and 4th century and an area of laid limestone that showed evidence of burning in situ. As such it is likely that the ditch recorded during the excavation was associated with the remains recorded to the north east. The lack of any additional features and small artefact assemblage perhaps suggests the feature was a field or enclosure boundary located in the agricultural hinterland of the settlement.</p>

Keywords	DITCH - LATE IRON AGE - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types SHERD - LATE IRON AGE - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Base Sherd - LATE IRON AGE - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus
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HER	City of Gloucester and Gloucestershire HER - noRev - LITE
Person Responsible for work	null, Rose-Jones, T
HER Identifiers	
Archives	