

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

OF

**FRANKLINS FARMHOUSE, SHABBINGDON,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

NGR SP 6659 0687

On behalf of

MOLYNEUX PLANNING

APRIL 2008

REPORT FOR Molyneux Planning
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on land to the rear of Mill Road, Shabbington at Franklins Farm. The evaluation revealed evidence of intensive medieval use of the rear of the plot, comprising some pitting and postholes. This may indicate the presence of structures within the plot boundary. Ditches, at right angles to the street frontage onto Ickford Road, and forming sub-divisions of the current plot may indicate that the current property is formed of at least two plots with internal divisions within each boundary.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The site is located at Franklins Farm House Shabbington (NGR SP 6659 0687) within a residential garden. The underlying geology is Upper Jurassic Kimmeridge Clay, with undifferentiated Quaternary glaciofluvial deposits as overlying drift geology.

1.2 Planning Background

A Pre-panning application enquiry has been submitted to Aylesbury Vale District Council for the erection of a single dwelling at Franklin Farm House Shabbington. Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) has advised that a programme of archaeological works should be undertaken due to the site's potential for archaeological remains. BCAS has prepared a *Brief* for the work recommending that the site should be investigated by trenching totalling 20m in length. A Written Scheme of Investigation was submitted and accepted which proposed a suitable methodology to satisfy the requirements of the Brief.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The name Shabbington refers to the *-ingtun* of *Sceobba*, that is to say the farm/settlement connected with Sc(e)obba. Before the Norman Conquest the village of Shabbington was held by Wigold, or Vigot, of Wallingford and at Domesday the settlement was held by Miles Crispin and comprised 12 villagers, 7 smallholders and 6 slaves, a fishery with 100 eels, woodland for 100 pigs, and a mill comprise the manor of Shabbington (Sobintone, DB). After the Conquest it was incorporated into the forest of Bernwood. From 1299 it was held by the Knights Hospitallers of St John, who lost control of it in the 14th century (VCH, 1969, 102).

Extensive village earthworks survive south and east of the church, which dates from the 11th century, and a street and four house platforms north-east of the church were surveyed prior to being developed in the 1960s. From this development a number of Roman, 13th century and post-medieval pottery sherds were recovered (CAS 565; Gowing, 1964, 305-306). The medieval manor is thought to have been located on the south side of the churchyard where three fishponds are located and where stone and tile have been noted (also CAS 565). The initial assessment of the village morphology at Shabbington suggests a loosely nucleated single row plan stretching northwards from the church. There is probably a more complex sequence of development. Two straight (early/roman?) roads may also intersect at Shabbington Church and there are hints of a 'lost' lane to the west of the main street.

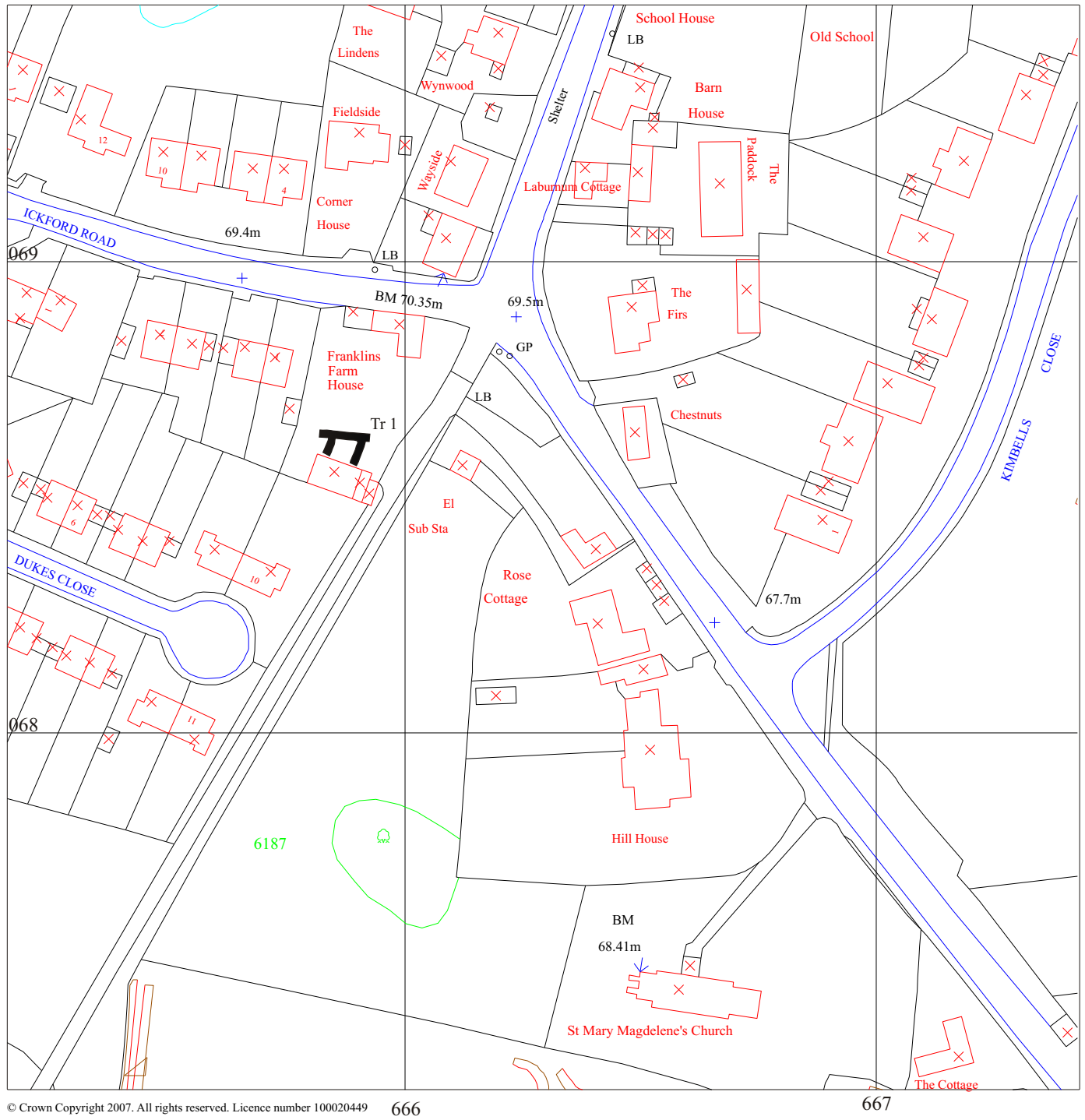


Figure 1. Site and trench location

The line of one of the Roman roads (CAS 2035) crosses the north-west side of the field surveyed in 2006 (JMHS, 2006). An earthwork survey held by the SMR and carried out before the construction of Kimbells Close shows a slight holloway.

An archaeological desk-based assessment, evaluation and excavation were undertaken at The Bungalow, Ickford Road, Shabbington in 2004, west-north-west of the current site. The evaluation produced evidence for significant 11-13th century activity including a rectangular enclosure ditch, substantial amounts of 11-13th century pottery, traces of iron working and well-preserved charcoal plant remains including cereal grain and wood charcoal (Oxford Archaeology 2003, Oxford Archaeology 2004). The results suggest that the boundary ditch enclosed an area of early settlement within the village. The subsequent excavation revealed further curvilinear ditches and large pits of medieval date along with quantities of slag and animal bone (TVAS, report forthcoming).

Further recent work in Shabbington includes an earthwork survey at the Willows, Mill Road (JMHS, 2006). Pits of a 13th century date were also located immediately adjacent at Rose Cottage on Mill Lane (JMHS 2007).

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 or absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To aim to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains (and associated palaeo-environmental deposits) within the area of study.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.

Specific objectives in respect of this evaluation include the requirements

- To identify any remains of saxon, medieval or post medieval settlement and related boundary features
- To interpret the evaluation results in relation to the evolution and topography of the village of Shabbington.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Brief* issued by BCAS a scheme of investigation was designed by John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) and agreed with BCAS and the applicant. The

work was carried out by JMHS on 11 June, 2008. Due to on-site complications, a single 11m trench, oriented west/east, with two north/south spurs, was excavated.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in a *Written Scheme of Investigation* agreed with the BCAS. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The WSI for the evaluation initially proposed the mechanical excavation of two 10m by 1.6m trenches; on-site constraints – consisting of trees and a shed which was to have already been demolished but had not been – required the relocation of the trenches (Fig. 1) which were excavated by a mini-excavator using a toothless ditching bucket, supplemented by limited hand investigation of any archaeological deposits. Excavation was taken to the top of the natural.

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 trench was backfilled after recording.

4 RESULTS

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, a brownish yellow clay silt (103) was observed across the base of the trench. In plan the features were cut into this deposit; however, cleaning of the trench walls revealed that the features were cut into c. 0.4m of buried land surface, (102), which overlay the natural. The deposit (102) was a dark grey brown sticky slightly loamy clay silt, some charcoal and small stone was spread through it.

Phase I: 10th century to 11th century features (Figure 2)

The earliest features observed within the trench dated from the 10th century onwards. There were also a small number of features which were cut by 11th century or later features; these remains will be treated together.

The dated features from this phase comprises a northwest/southeast oriented ditch [125] and a possible pit or recut [124]. The ditch [125] (Section 6) was c. 0.6m deep and at least 2.4m wide; it was cut by later features [122] and [126] on the west side, but it extended beyond the eastern edge of the trench. The break of slope was clear, the slope shallow, at c. 55°, with a slight shoulder on the southwest side. It was not fully observed on the northeast side. The observed base was flat. The ditch was filled with a firm dark green brown sandy clay deposit (108), which contained pot and charcoal.

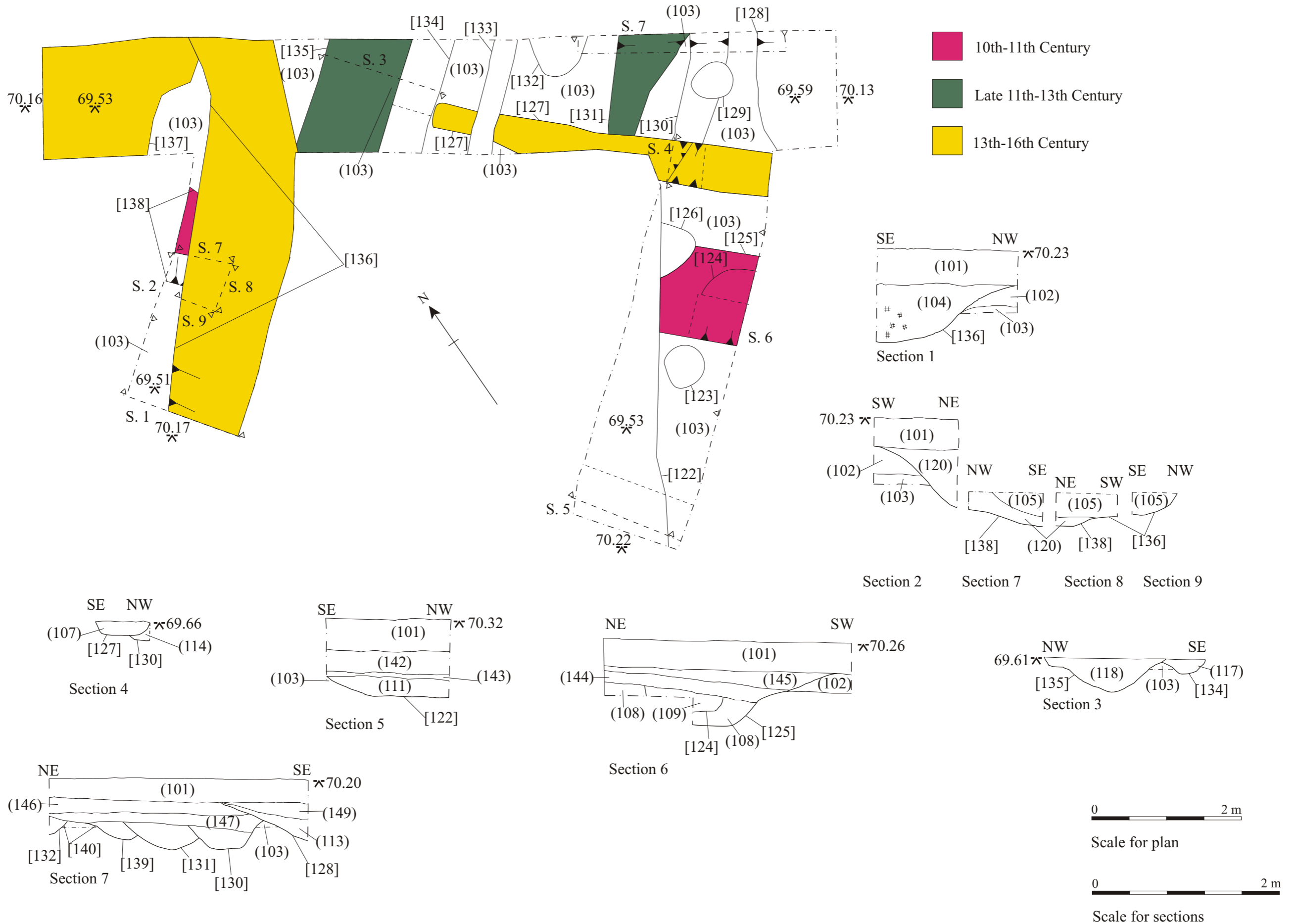


Figure 2. Plan and section

The fill (108) was cut by a later, sub-rounded feature [124], extending under the east wall of the trench, which had straight sides and a flat bottom. The pit was filled with firm blackish brown silty clay and contained pot, bone, heavy sooting and charred grains: wheat, barley, rye and oats. The proportions indicate a mid-Saxon to post-medieval date-range, which concurs with the 10th to 11th century date range for the pottery.

To the west the ditch [125] may well have continued as the northeast/southwest ditch [138], which was filled with (120), a more yellow brown silty clay (Sections 2, 7 & 8). The ditch [138] was seen in section, truncated by the later northeast/southwest ditch [136].

To the north of this ditch were a pit [140] and two northeast/southwest gullies, [139] and [134], both of which were cut by later gullies [131] and [135] respectively, similarly aligned but dating from the 11th century. The pit [140] was only recorded in section, measuring c. 0.38m across and filled with grey brown silty clay. It was cut to the west by [132] and to the east by [139]. The cut [139] (Section 7) was observed to be c. 0.5m wide, c. 0.2m deep and extended beyond the edges of the evaluation trench. The gully was a shallow U-shape, truncated on its southeast side by the later gully [131]. It was filled with pale grey clay silt with yellow clay (148) mottling through it. To the east, the parallel gully [134] (Section 3) was c. 0.45m wide, c. 0.15m deep also extending beyond the edges of the trench. It was filled with grey brown silty clay (117) with yellow clay mottling and charcoal.

Phase II: Late 11th century to 13th century features (Figure 2)

The gullies [139] and [134] were cut by the 11th century or later gullies [131] and [135]. The cut for gully [131] (Section 7) was at least 0.8m wide – it was truncated to the east by [130] – c. 0.25m deep, extending beyond the edges of the trench. The cut was a shallow U-shape filled with firm mid grey brown clay (106) containing pot and bone with occasional charcoal and flint.

Parallel with [131], the gully [135] (Section 3) to the west was a broad, shallow V-shaped cut, c.1.3m wide at the base of the trench and 0.4m deep, with a slight break of slope at the top of the northwest side; it was filled with firm yellowish brown silty clay (118), containing pot, bone and charcoal.

To the east and parallel with and cutting [131] was the gully [147] (Section 7), with straight sides at between 45° and 60° and a flat base, it measured c. 0.7m wide and 0.25m deep. It was filled with pale green brown clay silt (114). No finds were recovered. It was cut to the south by the northwest/southeast oriented gully [127], which yielded a 13th century or later date.

Phase III: 13th century to 16th century features (Figure 2)

The gully [127] (Section 4) ran northwest/southeast across the north side of the evaluation. It measured c. 0.5m across at the base of the trench; it was c. 0.15m deep and was observed for c. 3.6m, extending beyond the eastern edge of investigation. The gully was filled with firm dark grey brown clay silt (107) containing pot, charcoal and some antler; yellow clay mottling was also present. To the west, and at a right angle to the gully [127] was the ditch [136].

The ditch [136] (Sections 1, 7, 8 & 9) was oriented northeast/southwest; it measured more than 1.5m across, 0.5m deep and was observed to be more than 5m in length. The cut was only observed on the northwest side; it was gently convex at c. 60° with a flat base. The ditch was filled with dark greenish brown slightly sandy clay (104)/(105), which contained a pottery assemblage dating from the 13th to 16th centuries.

To the west of this ditch was a pit [137] or group of pits, which was not investigated during the evaluation, as pot was recovered from the surface, and the feature lies outside of the proposed development area. Pottery dating from the 13th to 16th centuries was recovered from the surface of the greyish brown silty clay fill (119).

Phase IV: Post-13th Century and undated features

There were a number of features which either failed to yield dating material, or were not sampled. The northeast/southwest oriented ditch [122] (Section 5) measured at least 1.3m wide, c. 0.2m deep and was observed for c. 4m in length. It was filled with pale green brown clay silt. No dating was recovered from the cut.

The ditch [122] cut two features, the Phase I ditch [125] (see above) and a sub-circular feature [126] – c. 0.7m across, which itself cut the ditch [125], but which was not investigated. The possible pit was filled with greyish brown clay silt (112).

East of the ditch [122] and south of the ditch [125] was a sub-rounded pit [123], with a diameter of c. 0.55m. It was filled with loose blackish brown clay silt flecked with charcoal (110).

The gully [127] was cut by a northeast/southwest oriented gully [133], which measured c. 0.3m across and extended beyond the edges of the trench. It was filled with greyish brown silty clay; charcoal and yellow clay mottling. North of the gully [127] and east of [133] were further cut features: a terminus or pit [132] (Section 7) measuring c. 0.7m across, filled with grey brown silty clay (121) containing charcoal; and a rounded pit or posthole [129]. It was filled with loose blackish brown clay silt flecked with charcoal (115). The fill of this feature was the same as [123]; given their similarity in fill and size, it is possible that they may be postholes for a building.

On the east side of the site, sealing all the cut features were two deposits which may have been dumped to make up the ground, over ditches which were partially backfilled (Sections 7, 6 and 5). The layer directly overlying the tops of [125], [124], [139], [131] and [130] was a deposit of yellow clay mixed with greenish brown clay silt (147), (144) and (143), measuring between 0.2m and 0.05m from north to south. It was not present south of the southern edge of [125], although was visible as a thin lense in the top of [122]; it extended as far west as the cut [132], sealing the possible pit. Overlying this layer of redeposited natural and reworked occupation deposit (147), (144) and (143), was a deposit of green brown to black brown clay silt (146), (145) and (142) measuring between 0.12m and 0.48m thick.

In the northeastern corner of the trench was a cut [128] (Section 7), which truncated the eastern side of the deposit (146), (145) and (142) and the redeposited natural and occupation material (147), (144) and (143). It was not fully observed, extending

beyond the edges of the evaluation trench, but measured at least 1.6m by 1.6m, with a depth of at least 0.4m. It was not possible to ascertain whether it was a pit or ditch. The lower fill (113) was a firm grey brown silty clay, at least 0.3m thick and extended for more than 1.6m northwest/southeast. It was sealed by a coarser and more loose deposit of dark brown clay silt at least 0.2m thick, which also extended for more than 1.6m northwest/southeast. The composition and the gradient of the slope of the deposit (113) might well be indicative of a slow accumulation of sediment, rather than backfilling. If this were the case the feature may well be a ditch, rather than a pit.

All the features and deposits were sealed by the topsoil, (101). Pottery recovered during machining was assigned the unstratified number (100). The two sherds of pottery yielded a 12th – 14th century date, which is not inconsistent with the dated features.

4.3 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The evaluation was carried out in excellent meteorological conditions. The shed located on the southern boundary of the property had not been demolished prior to the evaluation being undertaken; equally, trees were still present on the eastern side of the property. As a consequence, the southernmost trench was moved to the north and the 10m of trenching on the east side of the property was split and moved south of the northwest/southeast trench.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 48 sherds with a total weight of 509g. It comprised a range of late Saxon and medieval wares which indicate that there was activity at the site from the 10th – 13th centuries. It was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

SNC1: *St. Neots Ware*. c AD900-1100. 20 sherds, 114g.

MC1: *Shelly Coarseware*. AD1100-1400. 3 sherds, 30g.

MC9: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. 1200-?1600. 14 sherds, 218g.

MS2: *Medieval Sandy Ware*, 12th – 14th century. 2 sherds, 61g.

MS3: *Medieval Grey Sandy Wares*. Mid 11th – late 14th century. 5 sherds, 33g.

MSC1: *Sandy and Shelly ware*, late 11th – mid 13th century. 3 sherds, 48g.

Also present, not covered by the Milton Keynes type-series, was the following:

Cotswolds-type Oolitic ware, 975 – 1350 (Mellor 1994). 1 sherd, 5g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is fairly typical of sites in the county, with Oolitic ware, occurring at a number of sites in western Buckinghamshire. The late Saxon pottery is in good condition, and suggests very strongly that there was settlement of that date in the immediate vicinity of these excavations. The sherds of St. Neots ware from context

108 are all from the same vessel, and appear to be a primary deposit. Activity at the site appears to have ceased before the end of the 13th century, as wares which are common at sites of the 14th century and later in the county are not present.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type.

Context	SNC1		Cotswolds		MS2		MS3		MSC1		MC1		MC9		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
100					1	29					1	24			12thC
104							2	25					3	78	13thC
105					1	32	2	5							12thC
106									1	39					L11thC
107	1	2									1	2	3	15	13thC
108	11	71													10thC
109	8	41													10thC
118			1	5					1	8					L11thC
119							1	3	1	1	1	4	8	125	13thC
Total	20	114	1	5	2	61	5	33	3	48	3	30	14	218	

5.2 Environmental Remains by Professor Mark Robinson

A single sample of c. 10 litres was taken from (109) and processed for carbonised remains.

The residue from processing comprised free-threshing wheat, hulled six-row barley and very small quantities of rye and oats. This is typical for a mid-Saxon to post-medieval date range.

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological remains at Franklins Farm, Shabbington revealed a group of dated ditches and a pit ranging from the 10th through to 16th centuries. This is the same date-range as the remains found at the Bungalow, Ickford Road to the northwest, as well as at Kimbells Close, off Mill Road to the northeast.

The sequence at Franklins Farm revealed a ditch oriented northwest/southeast with dating from the 10th –11th century. A similarly late Saxon pit was cut into the top of the ditch, which yielded good palaeobotanical remains of wheat, barley, rye and oats. No further late Saxon features were identified, though excavation did reveal that there were gullies on site cut by features dating from the late 11th century onwards.

The post-11th century features observed comprise a number of parallel gullies oriented northeast/southwest, and which are at approximate right angles to the earlier boundary ditch, as well as parallel to the later boundary ditch. These gullies were only observed over a short distance and it was not possible to ascertain whether they were associated with one another and part of enclosures, or whether they were different phases of enclosures evidenced off-site.

The latest features date from the 13th to 16th centuries, these comprise a major northeast/southwest boundary ditch and a northwest/southeast gully at approximate right angles to it, as well as pitting to the west. It is possible that the pit to the east might also date from the latter part of the early middle ages. It is quite possible that this later evidence reveals a shift in the use of the property, with small enclosures for animals being mixed with rubbish disposal.

The undated remains include two postholes which may be part of a building. It was not seen during the evaluation whether the redeposited yellow clay was cut by or whether it sealed the postholes. Nonetheless, it would appear that there is the strong possibility of there being at least one building in the vicinity of the trial trench.

To conclude: the archaeological remains at Franklins Farm were well-preserved, to a depth of c. 0.4m above the natural where the trench was c. 0.7m deep; and of a date-range consistent with those from the other archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the current site. Whereas the remains from the Bungalow site were believed to be peripheral to settlement activity, it would appear that those from Franklins Farm are in part settlement-derived; although interestingly, the site at Rose Cottage only evidenced a small amount of 13th century pitting. The settlement activity is also consistent with other earthwork evidence, such as house-platforms, being present to the south and northeast of the current site.

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Appendix – Archaeological Context Inventory

Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Interpretation
100	Unstratified	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unstratified Finds
101	Topsoil	Loose Dark Brown Clayey Silt	<0.3m	Trench	Trench	Topsoil
102	Subsoil	Firm Dark Brownish Loamy Clayey Silt With Occ Charcoal and Small Stone	<0.3m	Trench	Trench	Subsoil
103	Natural	Firm Yellowish Brown Clayey Silt	Trench	Trench	Trench	Natural
104	Fill	Firm Dark Greenish Brown Sandy Clay	0.3m	1.5m	5m	Fill of [136]. Ditch
105	Fill	Firm Dark Greenish Brown Sandy Clay	0.3m	1.5m	5m	Fill of [136]. Ditch
106	Fill	Firm Mid Greyish Brown Clay With 1% Charcoal Inclusions	>0.28m	>0.8m	>1.6m	Fill of [131]. Gully
107	Fill	Firm Dark Greyish Brown Clayey Silt With 5% Charcoal Inclusions	0.10m	0.6m	<5.5m	Fill of [127]. Gully
108	Fill	Firm Dark Greyish Brown Sandy Clay With 5% Charcoal Inclusion	0.17m	2.4m	>1.1m	Fill of (125). Fill of Ditch. Same as (120)
109	Fill	Firm Blackish Brown Silty Clay With 10% Charcoal Inclusions	0.08m	0.15m	0.15m	Fill of (124). Terminus/Pit
110	Fill	Loose Blackish Brown Clayey Silt With 5% Charcoal Inclusions	N/A	0.55m	0.55m	Fill of [123]. Pit Fill
111	Fill	Firm Pale Green Brown Clayey Silt	N/A	1.0m	1.0m	Fill of [122]. Fill of flat bottomed ditch. Unexcavated
112	Fill	Firm Greyish Brown Clayey Silt	N/A	0.70m	0.45m	Fill of [126]. Sub-rounded Pit
113	Fill	Firm Greyish Brown Silty Clay	<0.4m	1.5m	1.6m	Fill of [128]. Pit/Ditch
114	Fill	Firm pale Greenish Brown Clayey Silt	N/A	2.2m	2.2m	Fill of [130]. Gully

Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Interpretation
115	Fill	Loose Blackish Brown Clayey Silt With 20% Charcoal Inclusions	N/A	0.5m	0.5m	Fill of [129]. Pit
116	Fill	Firm Greyish Brown Silty Clay	N/A	0.3m	1.6m	Fill of [133]. Gully
117	Fill	Firm Greyish Brown Silty Clay With Charcoal and Yellowish Natural Inclusions	0.15m	0.06m	1.5m	Fill of [134]. Gully
118	Fill	Firm Yellowish Brown Silty Clay With 1% Charcoal Inclusions	0.35m	>0.7m	>1.4m	Fill of [135]. Gully
119	Fill	Firm Greyish Brown Silty Clay	N/A	>1.6m	>2m	Fill of [137]
120	Fill	Firm Yellowish Brown Silty Clay With Occ Small Stone	0.48m			Pit. Fill of [132]
121	Fill	Firm Greyish Brownish Silty Clay With Occ Charcoal Inclusions	N/A	0.7m	0.7m	Fill of [132]. Small Pit
122	Cut	Filled by (111)	0.1m	1.5m	N/A	Ditch
123	Cut	Filled by (110)	N/A	0.55m	0.55m	Posthole
124	Cut	Filled by (109)	0.08m	0.15m	0.15m	Terminus/Pit
125	Cut	Filled by (108)	1.3m	N/A	2.2m	Ditch
126	Cut	Filled by (112)	N/A	0.70m	0.70m	Pit/Terminus
127	Cut	Filled by (107)	0.1	0.6m	<5.5m	Gully
128	Cut	Filled by (113)	<0.4m	1.5m	1.6m	Pit/Ditch
129	Cut	Filled by (115)	N/A	0.5m	0.5m	Pit. Not Excavated
130	Cut	Filled by (114)	0.25m	0.68m	1.5m	Gully
131	Cut	Filled by (106)	>0.28m	>0.8m	>1.6m	Gully
132	Cut	Filled by (121)	N/A	0.75m	>0.55m	Small Pit. Not Excavated
133	Cut	Filled by (116)	N/A	0.3m	1.6m	Gully
134	Cut	Filled by (117)	0.15m	0.06m	1.5m	Linear Ditch
135	Cut	Filled by (118)	0.35m	>0.7m	1.55m	Gully

Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Interpretation
136	Cut	Filled by (105) and (104)	0.6m	2.5m	5m	Ditch
137	Cut	Filled by (119)	N/A	2m	1.5m	Pit
138	Cut	Filled by (120)	0.75m	1.20m	2.10m	Ditch
139	Cut	Filled by (204) and (206)	0.2m	>0.38m	>1.4m	Ditch
140	Cut	Filled by (141)	N/A	0.38m	0.38m	Pit
141	Fill	Firm Greyish Brown Silty Clay	N/A	0.38m	0.38m	Fill of [141]. Pit
142	Deposit	Soft Blackish Brown Silty Clay	0.15m	>1.6m	N/A	Layer of Dumping
143	Deposit	Firm Yellow Clay With Patches of (111)	0.15m	>1.6m	N/A	Layer of Dumping
144	Deposit	Firm Yellowish Brown Clayey Silt With 2% Charcoal Inclusions	0.15m	>2m	N/A	Layer of Dumping
145	Deposit	Firm Very Dark Greyish Brown Clayey Silt With 1% Sm Stone	0.2m	>2.5m	N/A	Layer of Dumping
146	Deposit	Firm Pale Greenish Brown With Occ Small Stone Inclusion	0.15m	>2m	N/A	Layer of Dumping
147	Deposit	Firm Pale Greenish Brown Sand With Patches of Yellow Clay	<0.2m	>2m	N/A	Redeposited Natural
148	Fill	Firm pale Grey Clayey Silt With Patches of Yellow Clay	0.2m	0.5m	N/A	Fill of [139]. Ditch
149	Deposit	Firm Dark Brownish Clayey Silt	0.20m	>1.1m	N/A	Layer of Dumping