



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

GREENHILL LEISURE PARK, STATION ROAD,

BLETCHINGDON, OXFORDSHIRE

SP 4881 1761

On behalf of

Greenhill Leisure Park

October 2008

REPORT FOR Greenhill Leisure Park
Greenhill Farm
Bletchingdon
Oxfordshire
OXC5 3BQ

PREPARED BY Clare Roberts

FIELDWORK 24th-25th September 2008

REPORT ISSUED 3rd October 2008

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

JMHS PROJECT NO. 1999

ARCHIVE LOCATION Oxfordshire Museums Service
Awaiting accession number

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Summary

An archaeological field evaluation was carried out as part of the consideration of a planning application for further development of the leisure park. The only items of note were in one discrete area. Two postholes were found, both were undated, though probably associated. A fragment of Post-medieval bottle glass was recovered from a thin spread overlying one of the postholes. An utilised flint flake was also recovered from the area.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The proposal site is located south of the A4027 on the west side of the village (NGR SP 4881 1761). The geology is Fourth (Hanborough) Terrace Gravels overlying Cornbrash around the Farm, with Oxford Clay in the area of the proposed lake. The site lies at approximately 81m OD and is currently in agricultural use and as a camping/caravan leisure park.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission is being sought from Cherwell District Council for the change of use of a paddock into additional camping areas as well as additional facilities to the leisure park including the erection of a toilet block, formation of a lake and swimming pool and the erection of an agricultural barn under reference number 08/01827/F. Due to the potential of the site to contain archaeological remains a pre-determination field evaluation was requested by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) which prepared a Design Brief for such, in line with PPG16 and Local Plan Policies. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2008) was prepared to satisfy the requirements of the Brief. This was approved by OCAS.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The potential for archaeological remains in the area is indicated by a number of important artefacts including an Anglo Saxon disc brooch (PRN 26165; SP 4979 1739) and a hammered silver coin that have been found within about 800m of the application area. In addition, a fragment of a sword and a side-looped spearhead both of Bronze Age date have been recorded about 1 km south-east of the application area (SP 4999 1700). Within a kilometre radius of Greenhill Farm, on the other side of the River Cherwell, are two Neolithic long barrows and other prehistoric and Roman settlement sites as well as further Anglo Saxon finds.

2. AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

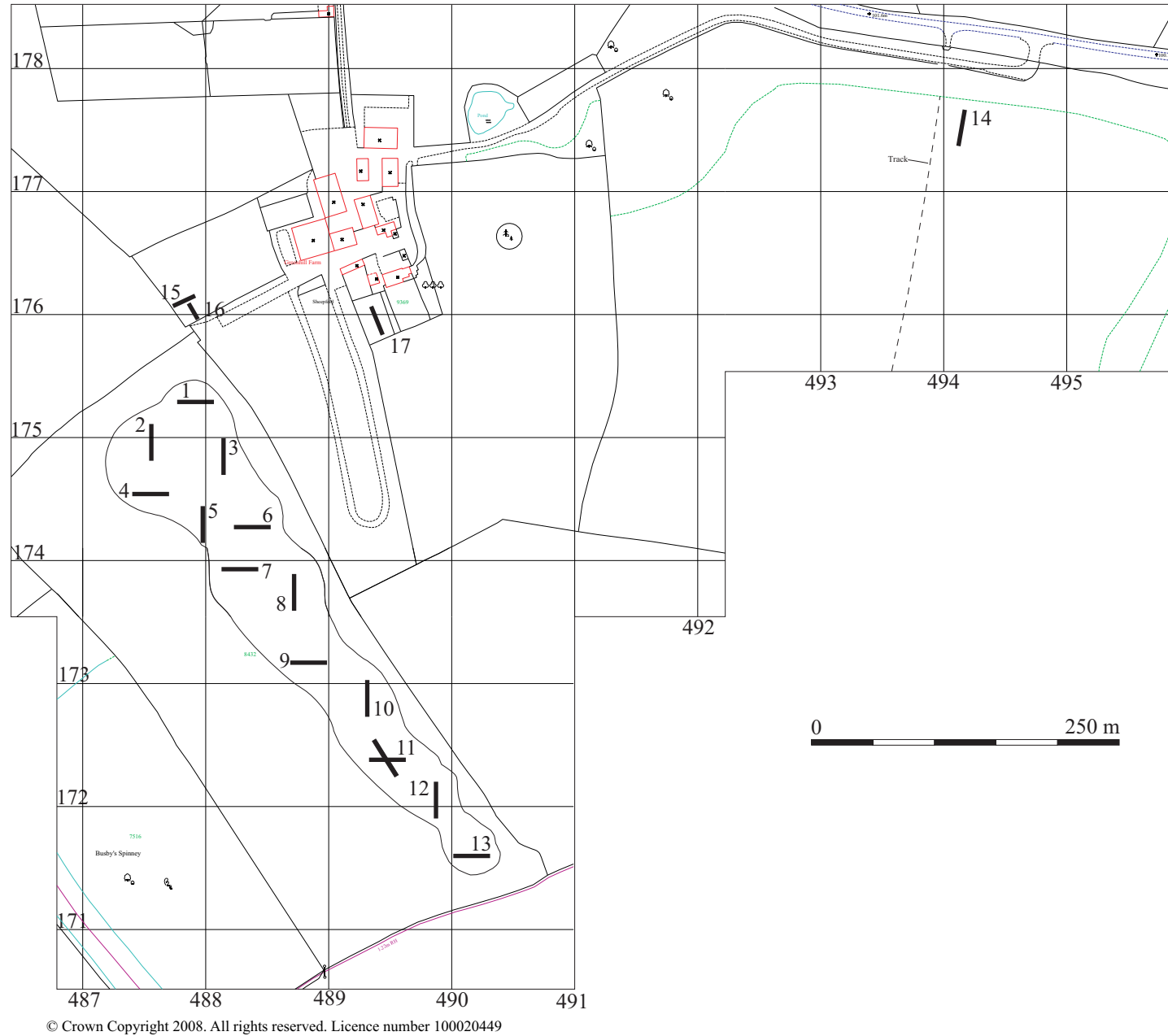


Figure 1. Site location

Figure 1. Site and trench location

- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.

In particular;

- to determine whether the prehistoric activity extends onto this site
- to determine whether there is evidence of Anglo Saxon activity on the site and what form it takes

3. STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Brief* issued by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services a scheme of investigation for an evaluation 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 seventeen trenches (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 MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The field evaluation comprised the excavation of thirteen trenches within the area proposed for the fishing lake (Tr. 1-13), each measuring 30 x 1.6m. In addition, two trenches (Tr. 15, 20m x 1.6m; and Tr. 16, 14m x 1.6m) were excavated within the area of the proposed toilet block, and one on the area proposed for the swimming pool (Tr. 17, 20m x 1.6m), finally one measuring 30m x 1.6m in the area for the barn (Tr. 14). The trenches were excavated using a JCB equipped with a ditching bucket, down to the natural geology and under direct archaeological control. Archaeological features present were sampled by hand excavation.

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 produced.

Mr Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services monitored the works.

4 RESULTS

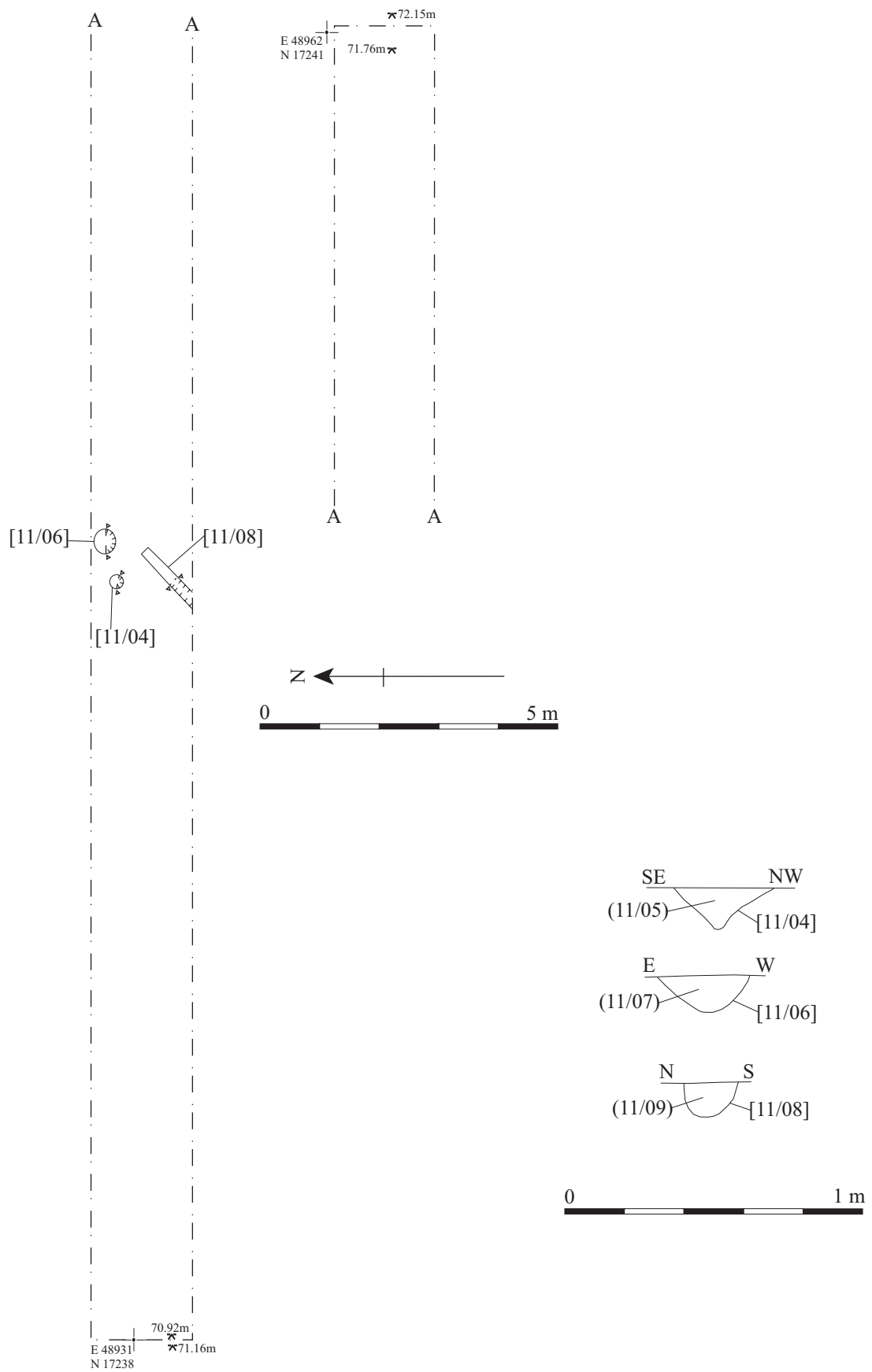


Figure 2. Trench 11 Plan and Sections

Figure 2. Trench 11 Plan and Sections

The majority of the trenches came down onto the natural light brown/grey clay of the Oxford Clay, however Trench 2 had two thick layers of very stony mid orange-brown silty clay (2/02) and (2/03) which overlay the clay natural; Trench 4 also came down onto a similar stony layer, (4/02). This was an outcrop of Cornbrash geology. Trench 14, situated at the top of the hill in the north western side of the site, came down onto firm orange-brown sandy flint gravel (14/02), which is the Fourth (Hanborough) Terrace Gravels. Within Trenches 1-13, the natural was overlaid by a thick layer of ploughsoil, consisting of a uniform firm, mid-brown silty clay, ranging between 0.2m and 0.34m thick. Within trenches 15 and 16 the topsoil was darker brown silty clay, probably due to the lack of cultivation in this area.

Trench 11 uncovered two small, truncated sub-circular features, [11/04], measuring 0.3m in diameter, 0.14m deep; and [11/06] measuring 0.32m in diameter and 0.14m deep. They were each filled with light grey-brown silty clay, with a few small charcoal inclusions (11/05) and 11/07) respectively. They are interpreted as probable truncated remains of postholes.

Posthole [11/06] was overlain by a thin spread of light brown silty clay covering an area of around 1.2m diameter, which contained a small sherd of post medieval bottle glass (11/03). This deposit probably derives from slightly deeper ploughing on an occasion.

Also found to be underlying (11/03), was a narrow linear feature [11/08] running in a roughly north-south direction for 1.1m across the trench. It was 0.15m wide, and was filled with a firm, mid-brown silty clay (11/09), similar in consistency to the natural. This is probably a field drain. The trench was extended to the west and the east to further investigate the area, but no other features were uncovered.

Trench 15 uncovered a narrow, 0.15m wide linear feature running in a northwest - south-easterly direction; it was filled with loose stones, and interpreted as a field drain, and therefore not recorded.

Trench 17 was situated just to the south-west of the main farm buildings. The mid-brown silty clay topsoil (17/01), 0.2m thick, overlay a 0.2m thick layer of firm, light brown silty clay subsoil (17/02) in the northern end of the trench. In the southern half of the trench, (17/01) overlay a 0.2m thick layer (17/04) of very stony light brown silty clay, which contained inclusions of Post Medieval-Modern tile, transfer ware pottery, and remains of iron garden tools, none of which were retained. This is a make-up layer, to level the area for the construction of a tennis court known to have existed when the previous occupants lived at the farm. This levelling layer in turn overlay (17/02). The natural here was compact mid-orange brown clay, containing occasional small rounded flint pebbles (17/03).

No other features were uncovered within the evaluation trenches.

5 FINDS

A small undiagnostic flint flake with some traces of use wear marks along one edge was recovered from around the area of the thin spread of (11/03), along with a sherd of Post-medieval bottle glass, recovered from within (11/03).

6. CONCLUSION

The two features found in Trench 11, [11/04] and [11/06] are probably the truncated remains of postholes. [11/06] was overlain by a thin spread (11/03), which contained Post Medieval bottle glass; this is probably a result of deeper ploughing in the area. The thin linear feature, [11/08], which was probably a field drain, was also overlain by (11/03). The flint flake may be associated with the postholes. The lack of any other artefacts or features in the area suggests a one-off activity perhaps related to hunting.

The layers seen in Trench 17 are a make-up layer, laid to level the area for the construction of a tennis court, known to have been situated here during the previous owner's occupation of the farm.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

IFA 1994, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, Institute of Field Archaeologists.

JMHS 2008, *Greenhill Leisure Park, Greenhill Farm, Bletchingdon, Archaeological Evaluation. Written Scheme of Investigation.*

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (mm)	Width (mm)	Length (mm)	Finds	Date
Trench 1: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Loose, dark red brown sandy silt- Topsoil	360	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Firm, dark orange brown clay silt- Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 2: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Soft, mid brown silty clay- Topsoil	400	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Compact, mid orange brown silty clay, 50% stones 50-80mm- Natural	250	Trench	Trench	None	-
03	Natural	Firm, mid orange brown sandy clay- Natural	300	Unk.	Unk.	None	-
04	Natural	Compact, light brown grey clay- Natural	/	Unk.	Unk.	None	-
Trench 3: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Soft, mid brown silty clay- Topsoil	350	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Firm, dark orange brown clay, patches of grey- Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 4: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Soft, mid brown silty clay- Topsoil	340-380	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Compact, mid orange brown stony silty clay- Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 5: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Soft, mid brown silty clay- Topsoil	340	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Firm, mid orange brown clay- Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 6: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Firm, mid brown silty clay- Topsoil	430	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Compact, mid orange brown clay, river worn pebbles <1% - Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 7: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Firm, mid brown silty clay- Topsoil	340	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Compact, mid orange brown clay, river worn pebbles <1% - Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 8: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Firm, mid brown silty clay- Topsoil	300	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Compact, mid orange brown clay- Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-

Context	Type	Description	Depth (mm)	Width (mm)	Length (mm)	Findings	Date
Trench 9: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Firm, mid brown silty clay-Topsoil	300	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Compact, mid orange brown clay, patches of grey, river worn pebbles <1% - Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 10: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Firm, mid brown silty clay-Topsoil	260-340	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Compact, mid orange brown clay, river worn pebbles <1% - Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 11: Total 60.7m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Firm, mid brown silty clay-Topsoil	300-340	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Compact, mid orange brown silty clay, river worn pebbles <1% - Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
03	Deposit	Firm, light brown silty clay-Spread from ploughing	40	1500	Unk.	Glass	Modern
04	Cut	Circular, sharp sides with 'v' shape base- Posthole	140	320		N/a	-
05	Fill	Firm, light grey brown silty clay- Posthole fill	140	320		Charcoal	-
06	Cut	Circular, concave sides with concave base- Posthole	120	300		N/a	-
07	Fill	Firm, light grey brown silty clay- Posthole fill	120	300		Charcoal	-
08	Cut	Linear, vertical sides with flat base, aligned NE-SW-Field drain	100	150	1100	N/a	-
09	Fill	Firm, mid brown silty clay-Fill of field drain	100	150	1100	N/a	-
Trench 12: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Firm, mid brown silty clay-Topsoil	340	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Compact, dark red brown silty clay- Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 13: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Firm, mid brown silty clay-Topsoil	300	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Firm, dark orange brown silty clay- Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 14: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Loose, mid brown sandy silt 5% stones 10-30mm-Topsoil	300	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Firm, orange brown sandy gravel 30% gravel- Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 15: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Firm, dark brown silty clay-Topsoil	200	Trench	Trench	None	Modern

02	Natural	Compact, light orange brown clay-Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Context	Type	Description	Depth (mm)	Width (mm)	Length (mm)	 Finds	Date
Trench 16: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Firm, dark grey brown silty clay- Topsoil	260	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Natural	Firm, mid yellowish brown clay- Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
Trench 17: 30m x 1.6m							
01	Deposit	Loose, mid brown silty clay, pebbles <5%- Topsoil	105	Trench	Trench	None	Modern
02	Deposit	Firm light brown silty clay- Subsoil	50	Trench	Trench	None	-
03	Natural	Compact, mid orange brown clay, pebbles 0.1-0.5mm- Natural	/	Trench	Trench	None	-
04	Layer	Compact, light brown silty clay, c. 80% large rocks- Levelling layer	110	Trench	10.50m	None	Modern