



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
OF  
LAND ADJOINING C43, BICESTER ROAD,  
KIDLINGTON, OXFORDSHIRE  
(NGR SP 5014 1297)**

*On behalf of  
Kidlington Parish Council*

**May 2010**

**REPORT FOR** Kidlington Parish Council  
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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) conducted an archaeological evaluation of the proposed development site on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010. Nine trenches, totalling approximately 270 metres in length, were excavated to reveal the underlying natural geology.*

*The limited excavations in Trenches 2, 5 and 7 exposed linear features and remnants of a ridge and furrow medieval farming system. During the mechanical removal of soils in Trench 9, headland deposits were partially exposed.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The site is located on the eastern side of Bicester Road, Kidlington, to the west of Water Eaton Lane (SP 5014 1297). The site lies at approximately 60m OD and the underlying geology is shown as Oxford Clay although the eastern side of the site may be under alluvium.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Planning permission was sought from Cherwell District Council for the use of an approximately 1.28ha area to the east of Kidlington as a cemetery. Due to the potential presence of archaeological remains a programme of archaeological work was required in advance of the determination of the application. Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) has prepared a *Brief* for the first stage of the programme of archaeological work undertaken as a field evaluation.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The proposal site lies within an area of archaeological interest, with an Iron Age field system (PRN 9654; SP 5080 1250) recorded 700m southwest of the site, and an Iron Age or Roman settlement complex (PRN 17431; SP 5085 1219) has been recorded 1km to the southeast. A Mesolithic to Bronze Age settlement site (PRN 15811; SP 4930 1260) was recorded during development at Garden City, 900m to the southwest.

Further sites have been identified in the immediate area including a Neolithic henge (PRN 16406; SP 5166 1254) 1km to the east of the site and two ring ditches, likely to be Bronze Age barrows, to the northeast of the site. These sites cover an extensive area and the cropmarks are only visible on fields under arable farming and so the full extent of these sites cannot be identified through cropmarks alone. The site of the proposed cemetery is under pasture and so any archaeological deposits that are present on the site would not show up as cropmarks.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1875 shows the site is located within fields.

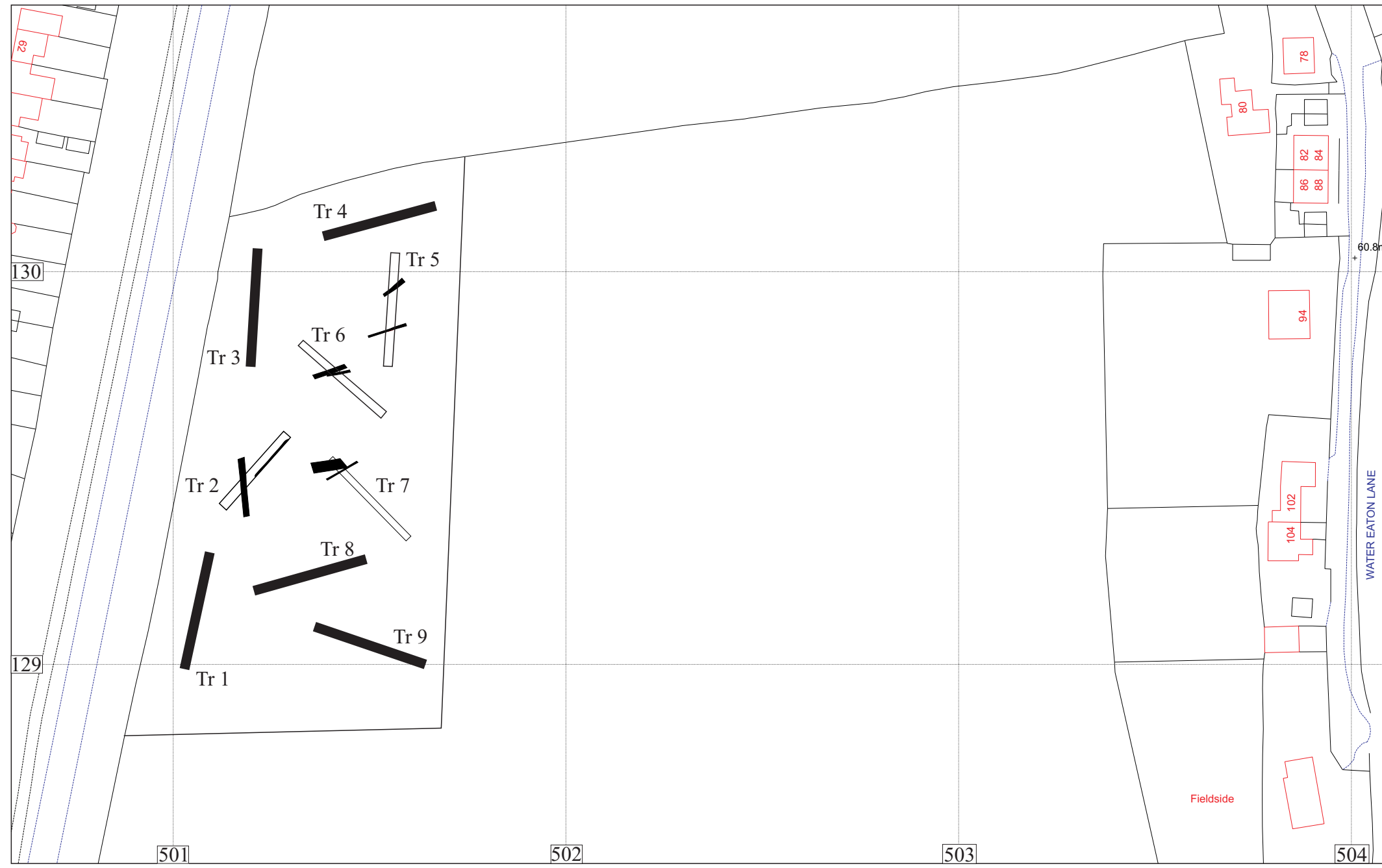


Figure 1. Site location

## **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/absence of archaeological remains within the site.

To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.

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

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

In response to a *Brief* issued by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services a scheme of investigation 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 270m of trenches across the site (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 for Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MoRPHE (English Heritage 2006).

### **3.2 Methodology**

The trenching sample was nine trenches, each 30m in length and 1.6 m wide. All were excavated by a JCB fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand prior to limited hand excavation of any identified archaeological deposits. The trenches were laid out by GPS.

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.

## **4 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Excavation Results**

All features were assigned individual context numbers. This number covered both the feature cut and the fill for pits, unless the feature was sample excavated by hand. Context numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material.

In trenches 1-9, the uppermost layers consisted of topsoil and subsoil, while the lowest deposit recorded was the Oxford Clay consisting of an orange to yellow clay containing sand, angular and rounded stones and gravels (see appendix).

No archaeological features or finds were present within Trenches 1, 3, 4, and 8.

## **Trench 2**

A fill (2/04) and cut 2/05 relating to a tree-hole was exposed at the southern end of the trench. Bone, pottery and glass were recovered from the fill. The tree-hole shape was ovoid, irregular and roughly oriented east-west. A modern field drain truncated the throw. Located to the north of the tree throw was a linear feature 2/07. The orientation of the linear ditch was northeast-southwest. The fill (2/06) consisted of mid grey brown silty clay and contained gravels, charcoal flecks and was 0.20m thick. The cut 2/07 width of the feature measured 0.80m and the length was 1.70m. The break of slope at top and bottom was imperceptible. The bottom of the feature was flat. The fill removed from the linear feature contained one piece of pottery.

Also exposed in Trench 2 was a heavily truncated linear feature 2/09. The feature/ditch was oriented east-west and located along the north-eastern section of the trench baulk. The fill (2/08) of this feature was a firm mid grey orange silty clay. The thickness of the fill measured 0.04m. There were no archaeological finds located in the fill. The cut 2/09 of the feature was 0.20m wide and 0.80m in length. The break of slope at top and bottom was imperceptible. The bottom of the feature was flat.

## **Trench 5**

Two linear ditches were located in Trench 5. The first ditch 5/05 was oriented southwest to northeast and was located in the northern third of the trench. The ditch fill (5/04) was firm mid grey brown silty clay with infrequent manganese flecks. Archaeological finds include pottery, animal bone and a glass bottle top. The thickness of the fill was 0.18m. The cut 5/05 for the ditch measured 0.75m wide. To the southern side of the ditch the shoulder break was sharp, while on the northern side the shoulder break was shallow. The sides of the cut were concave with a sharp break at the base.

The second linear ditch 5/07 is also oriented southwest to northeast and is located in the southern third of the trench. The fill (5/06) of the ditch was firm mid grey brown silty clay and contained occasional gravels. The fill depth was 0.20m. There were no finds associated with the fill. The ditch cut [5/07] measures 0.95m wide. The break of slope at top was gradual, while the sides were concave. The break at the bottom was gradual with a gently rounded base.

## **Trench 6**

Trench 6 contains two roughly parallel linear ditches; both ditches are centrally located within the trench. Both ditches were aligned east-west. The fill (6/04) of the first ditch 6/05 consisted of a firm mid orange brown silty clay with a thickness of 0.30m. The fill contains ceramic building material and occasional manganese flecks with irregular appearing gravels. The cut 6/05 of the ditch measures 1m wide and 1.6m long (the width of the trench). To the south the shoulders of the ditch are break

sharply while along the northern side the break is steep. The sides are concave leading to a gently rounded base.

The second ditch contains a firm mid orange brown silty clay fill (6/06) .10m thick and .40m wide. There were no archaeological finds associated with the fill. The cut (6/07) of the ditch measures .40m wide by .80m in length. The break of slope at the top is gradual with concaving sides leading to a gradual break towards the gently rounded base.

### **Trench 7**

The fill (7/04) and cut 7/05 of the remnants of a medieval ploughing system, ridge and furrow, was located in the south-eastern portion of the trench. The feature was oriented east-west. The fill (7/04) was composed of firm mid grey brown silty clay and contained small stones and coal flecks. The thickness of the fill was 0.20m and contained pottery and bone. The furrow cut 7/05 measured approximately 3.3m wide, while the exposed length was 1.6m, the width of the trench. The break of the cut at the top was imperceptible and the sides were near vertical. The break towards the base of the cut was also imperceptible. The base of the cut was relatively flat.

A small linear gully is located to the southwest in the north-eastern third of Trench 7. The gully is oriented southeast to northwest. The fill (7/06) consists of firm light brown-orange silty clay. The fill contains sparse bits of charcoal. The fill is 0.16m in thickness and extended to a width of 0.45m. The cut 7/07 of the gully is approximately 1.62m (the width of the trench) and 0.45m wide. The cut shoulders were rounded and near vertical. The break towards the bottom was imperceptible and the base was flat.

### **Trench 9**

Headland deposition (9/03) was observed in Trench 9. The deposit consisted of soft mid orange brown silty clay. In some areas concentration of Manganese flecks were observed. In the south-eastern third of Trench 9, the thickness of the deposit was 0.50m. This deposit was sealed by a 0.2m thick subsoil overlain by topsoil 0.1m thick.

## **4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results**

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The excavation of the trenches took place during dry fine weather with good ground conditions.

## **5 FINDS**

### **5.1 Pottery (by Paul Blinkhorn)**

The pottery assemblage comprised 24 sherds with a total weight of 120g. It comprised a mixture of Romano-British, medieval and later pottery, all of which was unstratified, or occurred in contexts of 19<sup>th</sup> century date. All the sherds were abraded to a greater or lesser degree, as would be expected for material from plough-soil horizons.



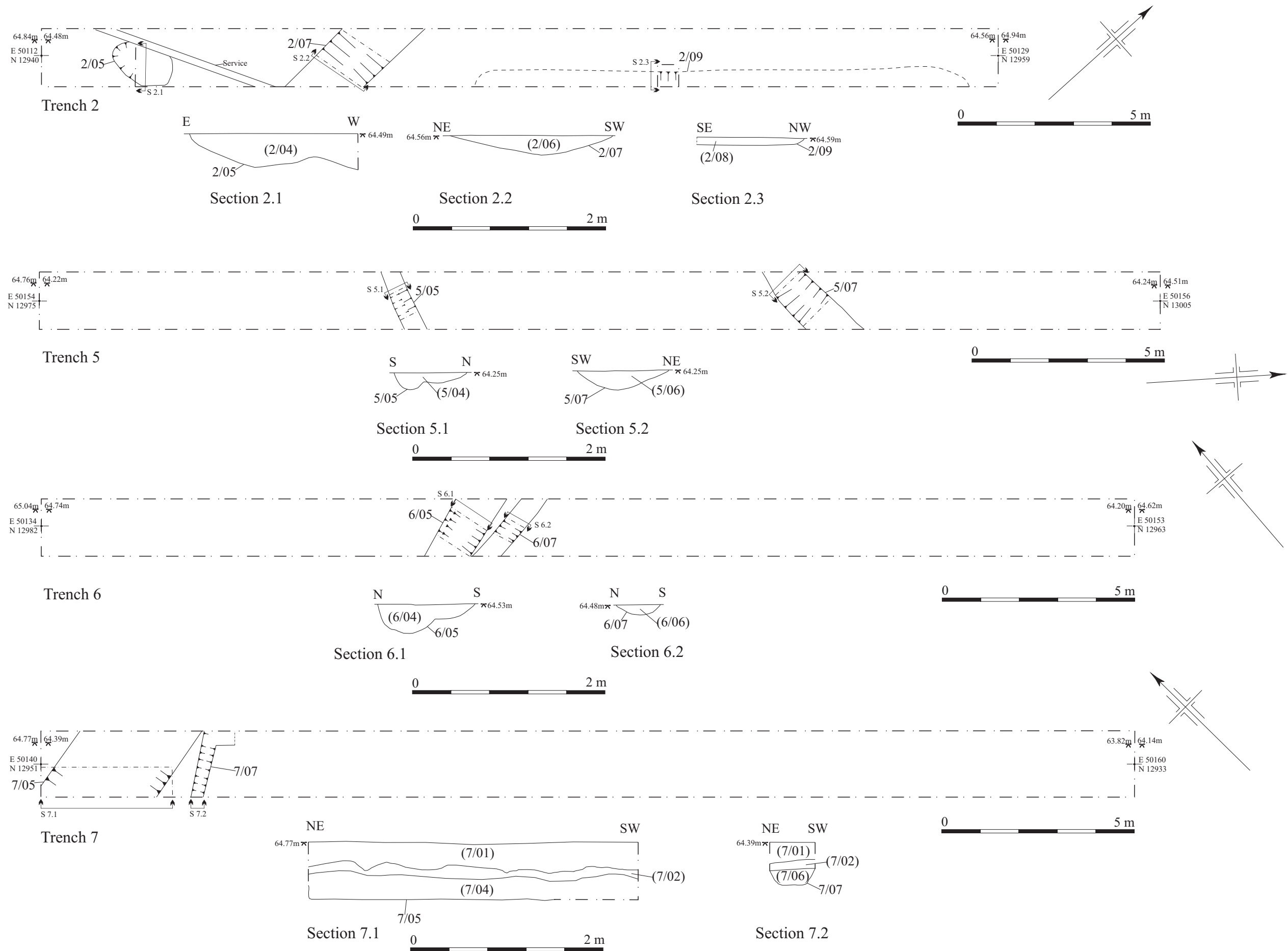


Figure 2. Trenches 2, 5, 6 and 7 plans and sections

It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXAM:	Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200 – 1600. 3 sherds, 59g.
OXDR:	Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 11 sherds, 50g.
OXNOTTS:	Nottingham stonewares. c. 1690-1800. 1 sherds, 2g.
WHEW:	Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19th - 20th C. 9 sherds, 9g.

In addition, a single sherd (2g) of very abraded Romano-British pottery was also present. 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 typical of sites in the region.

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

Tr	Cntxt	RB		OXAM		OXDR		OXNOTTS		WHEW		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
2	6									2	2	19thC
7	U/S			1	52	4	8	1	2	2	2	U/S
7	4	1	2	2	7	7	42			5	5	19thC
	Total	1	2	3	59	11	50	1	2	9	9	

## 5.2 Environmental Remains

Due to the nature of the deposits encountered no environmental samples were taken.

## 6 DISCUSSION

There were no archaeological features or finds observed or recovered from Trenches 1,3, 4 and 8.

The archaeological data recovered from the limited excavation within the trenches suggests a range of activity from the Romano-British period and from the medieval through to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Ditch 2/09 is undated and does not align with any features present in the modern landscape, therefore it is possible a remnant of an earlier agricultural system.

There were a series of undated ditches 5/05, 5/07, 6/05 and 6/07 that are roughly parallel with the present field boundary to the north of the area. This is marked on the first edition OS map and these features may represent drainage ditches or earlier field boundaries.

Farming system headlands are created as a result of the turning of the plough at the end of a furlong, this in turn forms built up soil. Such a deposit was located with Trench 9

Evidence for late 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century activity was indicated in ditches 2/07 and 7/05 where a sherd of mass-produced white earthenware was recovered. Ditch 2/07 is roughly parallel with the road, but is unlikely to represent an earlier boundary or roadside ditch. Ditch 7/05 appears to be roughly at right angles to ditch 2/07 and also roughly parallel to the undated ditches 5/05, 5/07, 6/05 and 6/07. These also may form parts of earlier field boundaries.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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**APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench</b>								
1/01	Topsoil	Dark brown clayey silt	0.10-0.12m	Tr	Tr			
1/02	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.08m	Tr	Tr			
1/03	Natural	Mid greyish-brown clay, 25% medium size rock and smooth to angular gravels	0.11m removed	Tr	Tr			
2/01	Topsoil	Dark brown clayey silt	0.10-0.15m	Tr	Tr			
2/02	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.15m	Tr	Tr			
2/03	Natural	Mid greyish-brown silty clay, 10% sand and gravel	0.05m removed	Tr	Tr			
2/04	Fill	Light orange brown clayey silt with gravels.	0.18m		1.2m		Fill of tree throw	
2/05	Cut	Irregular ovoid cut truncated by modern field drain cut. Gradual break of slope at top, gradual inward taper with an imperceptible break at base. Bottom is irregular and flat.	0.18m	0.50m	0.90m		Cut of tree throw	
2/06	Fill	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay with gravel and charcoal inclusions.	0.20m		1.7m	Pottery	Fill of linear feature	
2/07	Cut	Linear feature cut, shoulders imperceptible, very shallow tapering sides, imperceptible break at base and flat bottom. Orientation is north-south.	0.20m		1.7m		Linear feature	
2/08	Fill	Firm mid greyish orange silty clay with no inclusions.	0.20m				Fill of heavily truncated linear.	
2/09	Cut	Linear feature cut. Break of top slope imperceptible, shallow (tapering) sides, with imperceptible break at bottom. Bottom is flat. Cut oriented SW-NE.	0.04m	0.80m			Linear feature heavily truncated by machine stripping.	
3/01	Topsoil	Dark brown clayey silt	0.10m	Tr	Tr			
3/02	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.15-0.20m	Tr	Tr			
3/03	Natural	Mid greyish-brown silty clay, 5% sand and gravel	0.10m removed	Tr	Tr			
4/01	Topsoil	Dark brown clayey silt	0.10m	Tr	Tr			
4/02	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.15m	Tr	Tr			

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench</b>								
4/03	Natural	Mid greyish-brown silty clay, 5% sand and gravel	0.10m removed	Tr	Tr			
5/01	Topsoil	Dark brown clayey silt	0.08-0.10m	Tr	Tr			
5/02	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.15-0.20m	Tr	Tr			
5/03	Natural	Mid greyish-brown silty clay, 5% sand and gravel	0.05-0.10m removed	Tr	Tr			
5/04	Fill	Firm mid grey brown silty clay contains manganese flecks.	0.18m	0.75m	1m	Pottery, animal bone and glass bottle top	Fill of linear feature.	
5/05	Cut	Linear cut with sharp break at top to southern side, shallow to the north. Sides are concave with sharp break at bottom. Oriented NE-SW	0.18m	0.75m		Post medieval finds	Cut of linear ditch	
5/06	Fill	Firm mid grey brown silty clay containing occasional gravels.	0.20m	0.95m	1m		Fill of linear ditch	
5/07	Cut	Linear cut with a gradual break at top, concave sides and a gently rounded base. Feature is oriented NE-SW.	0.20m	0.95m			Linear ditch, potential field boundary likely to be post medieval	
6/01	Topsoil	Dark brown clayey silt	0.10-0.12m	Tr	Tr			
6/02	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.15-0.20m	Tr	Tr			
6/03	Natural	Mid brownish grey clay, 5% sand and gravel	0.10m removed	Tr	Tr			
6/04	Fill	Firm mid orange brown silty clay with occasional manganese flecks and rare gravels.	0.30m	1m	0.80m	Ceramic building material	Fill of linear feature	
6/05	Cut	Linear cut with sharp break a top to the south, steep on northern side/edge. Walls are concave with a gradual break at base. Base has a gentle roundness.	0.30m	1m			Linear feature probably a post medieval field boundary ditch	
6/06	Fill	Mid orange to brown silty clay.	0.10m	0.40m	0.80m		Fill of linear feature	

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench</b>								
6/07	Cut	Linear feature with gradual break of slope at top, concave sides with a gradual break at base. Base is rounded. Oriented E-W.	0.10m	0.40m			Cut of potential medieval or earlier shallow ditch	
7/01	Topsoil	Dark brown clayey silt	0.08- .10m	Tr	Tr			
7/02	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.15- .20m	Tr	Tr			
7/03	Natural	Mid greyish-brown silty clay, 5% sand and gravel	0.05- 0.10m removed	Tr	Tr			
7/04	Fill	Firm mid grey brown silty clay containing stones and coal flecks. Oriented E-W.	0.20m	3.30m		Pottery and bone	Fill of furrow (Linear cut 7/05)	
7/05	Cut	Linear cut	0.21m	1.70m	1m		Linear cut at base of ridge and furrow	
7/06	Fill	Firm light brown orange silty clay containing charcoal flecks.	0.16m	0.45m	1.62m		Fill of small shallow gully	
7/07	Cut	Linear feature cut	0.16m	0.45m	1.62m		Small linear gully paralleling [7/05]	
8/01	Topsoil	Dark brown clayey silt	0.08- 0.10m	Tr	Tr			
8/02	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.15- 0.20m	Tr	Tr			
8/03	Natural	Mid greyish-brown silty clay, 5% sand and gravel	0.10m removed	Tr	Tr			
9/01	Topsoil	Dark brown clayey silt	0.08- 0.10m	Tr	Tr			
9/02	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.20- 0.25m	Tr	Tr			
9/03	Fill	Soft mid orange brown silty clay containing manganese flecks in concentrated areas within trench.	0.50m	Tr	Tr		Deposit located in SE 3 <sup>rd</sup> of trench. Likely the result of a headland formation created from turning plough at the end of a furlong.	
9/04	Natural	Mid greyish-brown silty clay, 5% sand and gravel		Tr	Tr			