

Land at Northeast Stevenage

Great Ashby, Hertfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

November 2023

**Client: Icení Projects Ltd. On
behalf of Picture Estates Ltd**

Issue No: 3
OA Reference No: 2693

NGR: 526264 227806

Client Name: Icen Projects Ltd. On behalf of Picture Estates Ltd
Document Title: Land at Northeast Stevenage, Great Ashby, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation
Document Type: Archaeological Evaluation Report
Report No.: 2693
Grid Reference: 526264 227806
Site Code: XHTNES23EV
Invoice Code: XHTNES23EV
Accession No.: TBC - requested 08/09/23

OA Document File Location: files.oxfordarchaeology.com/nextcloud/index.php/f/24635085
OA Graphics File Location: files.oxfordarchaeology.com/nextcloud/index.php/f/24635148

Issue No: 3
Date: 16 February 2024
Prepared by: Stuart Ladd (Fieldwork Project Officer)
Checked by: Andrew Greef (Senior Project Manager)
Edited by: Lawrence Billington (Post-Excavation Project Officer)
Approved for Issue by: Elizabeth Popescu (Head of Post-Excavation and Publications)
Signature: 
.....

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford office

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford
OX2 0ES

t. +44 (0)1865 236 800

Cambridge office

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridge
CB23 8SQ

t. +44 (0)1223 850 500

Lancaster office

Mill 3
Moor Lane Mills
Moor Lane
Lancaster
LA1 1QD

t. +44 (0)1524 880 250

E: info@oxfordarchaeology.com
W: oxfordarchaeology.com
Oxford Archaeology is a registered Charity: No. 285627

Land at Northeast Stevenage, Great Ashby, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Written by Stuart Ladd BA MA PCIfA

*With contributions from Séverine Bézie BA(Hons) MA, Lawrence
Billington MA PhD, Martha Craven BA, Ted Levermore MA
(cantab.) MA and Melanie Sayer BA.*

Illustrations by David Brown BA

Contents

LIST OF FIGURES	4
LIST OF PLATES	4
SUMMARY	6
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
1 INTRODUCTION	8
1.1 SCOPE OF WORK.....	8
1.2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY	8
1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	8
2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY	9
2.1 AIMS.....	9
2.2 METHODOLOGY	10
3 RESULTS	11
3.1 INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS	11
3.2 GENERAL SOILS AND GROUND CONDITIONS.....	11
3.3 GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS	11
3.4 TRENCHES 43 AND 44 (FIG. 3)	12
3.5 TRENCH 45 (FIG. 4)	12
3.6 TRENCH 48 (FIG. 4).....	13
3.7 TRENCH 51 (FIG. 4)	13
3.8 TRENCH 56 (FIG. 5).....	13
3.9 TRENCH 61 (FIG. 5).....	13
3.10 TRENCH 63 (FIG. 5).....	14
3.11 TRENCH 65 (FIG. 5).....	14
3.12 TRENCH 67 (FIG. 5).....	14
3.13 TRENCH 72 (FIG. 5).....	14
3.14 TRENCH 73 (FIG. 4)	14
3.15 TRENCH 78 (FIG. 6)	15

3.16	TRENCH 81 (FIG. 6).....	15
3.17	TRENCH 102 (FIG. 7).....	15
3.18	TRENCHES 104, 105 AND 107.....	16
3.19	BLANK TRENCHES.....	16
3.20	FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMARY.....	16
4	DISCUSSION.....	17
4.1	RELIABILITY OF FIELD INVESTIGATION.....	17
4.2	EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS.....	17
4.3	INTERPRETATION.....	18
APPENDIX A	CONTEXT INVENTORY.....	19
APPENDIX B	TRENCH INVENTORY.....	21
APPENDIX C	FINDS REPORTS.....	23
C.1	ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY.....	23
C.2	WORKED FLINT.....	25
C.3	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL.....	25
APPENDIX D	ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS.....	26
D.1	ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES.....	26
APPENDIX E	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	28
APPENDIX F	SITE SUMMARY DETAILS / OASIS REPORT FORM.....	30
APPENDIX G	HERTFORDSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET	33

List of Figures

Figure 1	Site location map
Figure 2	Trench plan showing trenches and principal features excavated during earlier evaluation work (after Piper 2008), overlaid on geophysical survey results
Figure 3	Trenches 43 and 44, showing previous work (after Piper 2008)
Figure 4	Trenches 45-54, 73 and 74
Figure 5	Trenches 55-72
Figure 6	Trenches 75-85
Figure 7	Trenches 102-107

List of Plates

Plate 1	North-western part of the site, looking north-east towards Trenches 60-72 (following backfill).
Plate 2	Centre of the site, looking north-east from Trench 52 towards Trenches 55-59 (prior to excavation).
Plate 3	East of the site, looking north-west towards Trenches 79-86.
Plate 4	Centre/south of site looking south-west towards Trenches 98-106.
Plate 5	Small posthole 4300 , Trench 43, looking south.
Plate 6	Possible ditch 4302 , Trench 43, looking west.
Plate 7	Trench 44, looking west.
Plate 8	Possible ditch 4502 , Trench 45, looking south.
Plate 9	Trench 45, looking south-west.
Plate 10	Pit 4800 , Trench 48, looking north.
Plate 11	Ditch 5100 , looking north.
Plate 12	Trench 51, looking south-west
Plate 13	Trench 56, showing colluvial deposit 5602, looking north-east.
Plate 14	Trench 61, showing darker modern ditch 6104 cutting earlier feature/ditch 6102 , looking north-west.
Plate 15	Trench 61, showing ditches 6102 and 6104 prior to hand excavation, looking south.
Plate 16	Quarry pit 6301 (partially excavated), Trench 63, looking north.
Plate 17	Trench 63, looking west.
Plate 18	Possible ditch 6702 , Trench 67, looking north.
Plate 19	Trench 67, looking north-east.
Plate 20	Trench 72, showing natural feature 7202 , looking north.
Plate 21	Trench 73 showing oblique section through feature 7300 , looking south-west.
Plate 22	Trench 73, looking west.
Plate 23	Possible ditch 7800 in Trench 78, looking south-east.
Plate 24	Trench 78, looking north.
Plate 25	Trench 81, looking north-west.

- Plate 26 Feature **10200** prior to excavation showing redeposited flint and chalk and burnt stone, Trench 102, looking south-west.
- Plate 27 Feature **10202** showing lenses of redeposited chalk in section, Trench 102, looking south.
- Plate 28 Trench 102, looking east.
- Plate 29 Trench 104, looking south-west.
- Plate 30 Trench 105, showing probable natural feature **10500** looking, north-east.
- Plate 31 Trench 107, looking north-east.
- Plate 32 Blank Trench 49, looking south-west.
- Plate 33 Blank Trench 74, looking north-west.
- Plate 34 Blank Trench 88, looking north-west.
- Plate 35 Blank Trench 95, looking south-east.
- Plate 36 Blank Trench 114, looking south.
- Plate 37 Mesolithic tranchet axe/adze (SF1, subsoil 6706, Trench 67)

SUMMARY

Between 11th September and 5th October 2023, Oxford Archaeology (Cambridge Office) undertook an evaluation on Land at Northeast Stevenage, Great Ashby, Hertfordshire (526264 227806), opening 72 trial trenches totalling approximately 2900m in length.

Part of the land had previously been evaluated in 2008 by Oxford Archaeology, identifying medieval field systems and evidence for medieval tile manufacture as well as an Iron Age pit and a small number of Roman pottery sherds.

Relatively few archaeological remains were revealed by the trenching. A Mesolithic flint tranchet axehead was recovered from a subsoil deposit. Eight sherds (33g) of Roman pottery were found including two possibly residual sherds in potentially medieval features in the northern part of the site; and two from ditches or structural features containing burnt flint, charcoal, chalk and burnt stone in the south of the site.

A quarry pit in the north-eastern part of the site may have been medieval or post-medieval, potentially associated with tile production previously identified by the 2008 trial trenching at Tile Kiln Farm. A post-medieval feature in the west of the site may have represented a trackway. Undated ditches and a pit were found across the centre of the site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Stephen McLeod of Iceni Projects Ltd for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Alison Tinniswood who monitored the work on behalf of Hertfordshire LEADS.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Andy Greef. The fieldwork was directed by Stuart Ladd, who was supported by Sigurd Kerr, Cain Redmayne and Dylan Fabian. Survey and digitising was carried out by Tom Houghton. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the supervision of Natasha Dodwell, processed the environmental remains under the supervision of Rachel Fosberry, and prepared the archive under the supervision of Kat Hamilton.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Iceni Projects Ltd on behalf of Picture Estates Ltd to undertake a trial trench evaluation at Land Northeast of Stevenage, Great Ashby, Hertfordshire.

1.1.2 The work was undertaken to inform the Planning Authority in advance of a submission of a Planning Application. The precise description of development has not been finalised, however it is likely to include residential development for up to 650 homes. A brief/specification was set by Alison Tinniswood and a written scheme of investigation was produced by Iceni Projects Ltd detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work (McLeod 2023). This document outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The site lies to the north-east of Stevenage in the parish of Weston, in the district of North Hertfordshire.

1.2.2 The area of proposed development consists of arable fields and woodland (see Plates 1-4).

1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as Lewes Nodular Chalk and Seaford Chalk bedrock overlain by superficial Head (Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel) and Lowestoft Diamicton (British Geological Survey GeoIndex, <https://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html> [accessed 28/09/2023]).

1.2.4 The site is characterised by rolling hills and dry valleys across its middle and southern portions, lying at between 110m and 130m OD, with a plateau in the northern part of the site lying at 135-140m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The site has previously been the subject of a Heritage Impact Assessment (Heritage Network 2016). An earlier planning application prompted a geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation of the north-western part of the site (Piper 2008; see Figures 1 & 2; MHT 31676).

1.3.2 In advance of the evaluation reported here, a second, wider geophysical survey was undertaken (Aslam & Gallagher 2022; see Figure 2) although this does not cover the far eastern part of the site (Trenches 108-114). A synthesis of these reports was produced in the WSI (McLeod 2023), and a brief summary of remains recorded in the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER) from the immediate area is provided here.

Prehistoric to Roman

1.3.3 The proliferation of natural springs around the site, primarily within woodlands between the evaluated fields, and the underlying chalk geology with abundant flint resources, could provide ideal locations for localised Mesolithic activity, but although several finds of Mesolithic flintwork are known from the parish they are poorly provenanced (e.g. Wymer 1977, 133).

- 1.3.4 Undated cropmarks and curvilinear ditches have been recorded from aerial photography in the north-western part of the site (EHT 2136, 2841, 2842, 2843). Trial trenching at Roundwood, Back Lane c. 650m to the west of the site uncovered finds and features of Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age date (HHET 16655, 16656). Excavations at Lob's Hole, 1km to the south of the site, recorded evidence of later prehistoric features with occupation continuing into the Roman period (HHET 9222).
- 1.3.5 Previous evaluation in the north-west of the site uncovered a pit of Late Iron Age/early Roman date containing Belgic style pottery (Piper 2008).

Medieval

- 1.3.6 The site lay within the manor of Weston in 1086, which was held by William de Ow. The great park at Weston, documented from AD 1231, lies c. 1km to the north-east of the site (HHER 17467).
- 1.3.7 The evaluation in 2008 (Piper 2008; see Fig. 2) uncovered medieval ditches and evidence of tile production immediately south of Tile Kiln Farm (Trench 11) with medieval quarry pits to the south-east (Trenches 12, 28, 34, 35 and 37) and a ditched field system of probable medieval date to the south-west (Trenches 22-24, 26-28, 30-32). These features all lie within the north-west of the present evaluation area.

Post-medieval

- 1.3.8 The layout of Warrensgreen Lane, Tile Kiln Farm, Weston village and some of the woodlands in the area were established by the time of the first Ordnance Survey Drawings c. 1804 (British Library OSD 147; https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9a/Ordnance_Survey_Drawings_-_Baldock_%28OSD_147%29.jpg [accessed 9/10/2023]). The field layout, footpaths and woodlands are portrayed more accurately on the first edition Ordnance Survey 25" maps (Hertfordshire XIII.5, 1898; Piper 2008, 12). Over the course of the 20th century, a number of the fields have been consolidated with the loss of field boundaries as well as minor expansion of woodland.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The project aims and objectives as specified in the WSI (McLeod 2023) were based on the overarching aims of the East of England Research Framework (Medleycott 2011) as follows:

General

- 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 within the area of study.

Prehistoric

- Confirm the presence of any isolated/redeposited prehistoric artefacts.

- Confirm the presence/absence, character and extent of any prehistoric features.

Roman

- Confirm the presence/absence, character and extent of any Roman features.
- Confirm the presence/absence of any Roman features that may relate to material previously found in the northwestern part of the site.

Medieval

- Establish if there is any further evidence for medieval activity that may relate to the medieval landscape identified in the northwest of the site.
- Establish if there are any other medieval features or chance finds present.

Post-medieval

- Establish the presence/absence, character and extent of any post-medieval features present.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The archaeological evaluation involved the excavation of 72 trenches (located on Fig. 2). Typical trench dimensions were 40m x 1.8m. Several trenches were moved a short distance in order to avoid overhead cables (Trenches 46, 48, 73, 80, 108, 109) or because survey flags had been pulled out prior to excavation (Trenches 43, 44, 60-62, 64-67, 70). More significant changes were made to Trench 81 (realigned and shortened to 15.7m), Trench 85 (extended to 71.2m), Trench 108 (shifted 12m north and realigned to avoid overhead cables) and Trench 109 (shifted 32m south-east to avoid overhead cables).
- 2.2.2 After adjustment, together with the 42 trenches opened in 2008, the trenches represented a sample of approximately 3% of the Site Outline.
- 2.2.3 Trenches were opened by a 14 tonne 360-type tracked mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and subsoil were removed to the top of natural geological deposits or archaeological features. In the majority of trenches, little to no sub-soil was present, although in a minority of trenches colluvial subsoil was present. In Trench 63 a possible post-medieval/modern quarry feature was machine excavated to a depth of c. 1m below topsoil.
- 2.2.4 All possible archaeological features were then excavated by hand and recorded using OA pro-forma trench and context sheets with sections recorded at 1:10 or 1:20 on permatrace. Trenches, features and section locations were located and levelled by RTK GPS. All paperwork and digital records are held under the site code XHTNES23EV.
- 2.2.5 Environmental bulk soil samples were taken for flotation from two features. Topsoil and subsoil and all features were metal detected. Finds (excluding clearly modern material) were retained for post-excavation analysis off-site.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below and include a stratigraphic description of the trenches that contained archaeological remains. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths, and a full context inventory, can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B. Finds reports are provided in Appendix C and environmental report in Appendix D. Plans of trenches containing archaeological features are presented in Figs 3-7 alongside a selection of section drawings. Selected photographs of features/trenches are reproduced in Plates 5-30.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

- 3.2.1 The underlying natural geology in all trenches was quite variable with the underlying chalk often masked by diamicton clay with flints/gravel/silt and occasionally by overlying colluvial silts on more sloping parts of the site. Undisturbed subsoil was rarely recorded, with shallow topsoil typically interfacing directly with the natural geology. The trench descriptions in App. Appendix B include details of the geology recorded in each trench.
- 3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, although rain did pool at the ends of some trenches. Archaeological features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology except for in Trenches 43 and 44, where possible enclosure ditches identified by the geophysical survey were almost indistinguishable from the natural geology.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

- 3.3.1 A very brief summary of the 2008 evaluation results has been given above in the Archaeological Background (Section 1.3; see Fig. 2) and the 2008 trenches are shown alongside those from the current evaluation on the relevant plans. The earlier evaluation demonstrated evidence for medieval tile production around Tile Kiln Farm in the north of the site, with field systems and quarry pits spread over the area up to c.400m south of Tile Kiln Farm.
- 3.3.2 In the north of the site, features containing Roman pottery were present in Trenches 43 and 44 (which were located in the area evaluated in 2008; Fig 2). Post-medieval features included a possible quarry pit in Trench 63 while Trench 61 uncovered a post-medieval boundary ditch with two earlier undated ditches on the same alignment (Fig. 5). Undated postholes and a ditch were found in Trenches 65 and 67. A Mesolithic flint tranchet axehead was found in the subsoil of Trench 67.
- 3.3.3 In the centre of the site, undated ditches were uncovered in Trenches 45, 51 (Fig. 4) and 78 (Fig. 6) while an undated pit was present in Trench 48 (Fig. 4). A shallow, probably post-medieval, feature of uncertain nature was found in Trench 73 (Fig. 4).
- 3.3.4 In the south of the site, Trench 102 contained two linear features containing chalk/burnt flint, charcoal and Roman pottery (Fig. 7).
- 3.3.5 Possible features were tested in Trenches 81 and 105 but proved to be natural in origin (Figs 6 & 7).

3.4 Trenches 43 and 44 (*Fig. 3*)

- 3.4.1 These trenches were targeted to enhance the understanding of medieval features identified by the 2008 evaluation (Trenches 20 and 21) and a possible enclosure identified on geophysics (*Fig. 3*). Ground surface level here was slightly sloping from 140.15m OD at the north of Trench 43, dropping to 139.29m OD at its southern end and 138.78m OD at the eastern end of Trench 44. Overlying soil ranged from 0.28m (north of Trench 43) to 0.45m in depth, although the siltier colluvial material to the south resulted in a less clear plough horizon.
- 3.4.2 A small posthole (**4300**; Plate 5) at the north end of Trench 43 produced a single sherd of Roman pottery (6g) and a small piece of ceramic building material (1g). The posthole was 0.28-0.33m across and 0.06m deep, filled with a light greyish brown clayey silt (4301).
- 3.4.3 A linear silt-filled feature (**4302**; Plate 6) was just visible within the natural silt/gravel at the centre of the trench. This feature was 1.38m wide and 0.24m deep with gently sloping sides and a concave base, aligned south-east to north-west. Its fill of light orangey brown clayey/sandy silt contained no finds. The feature was almost indistinguishable from the surface, but had reasonably well-defined sides and base.
- 3.4.4 In Trench 44 a north-south aligned linear feature (**4402**; *Fig. 8*, section 4402) corresponded approximately with a possible enclosure ditch identified by the geophysics. Its sides were irregular, but it measured approximately 0.76m in width with a depth of 0.36m. It produced a single sherd of Roman pottery (5g) and a single fragment of CBM from its light greyish brown clayey silt fill (4403).
- 3.4.5 In the eastern part of Trench 44 (Plate 7) the natural geology became very silty. This appeared to represent possible colluvial material, although no major topographic changes were obvious at the trench surface. A 1x1m test pit was excavated within this silty deposit (4401) to a depth of 0.2m, but it appeared to be sterile.

3.5 Trench 45 (*Fig. 4*)

- 3.5.1 The trench surface was relatively flat ranging from 136.07m OD in the north-east to 135.15m OD in the south-west with natural geology consistently around 0.35m below surface (Plate 7).
- 3.5.2 A linear feature (**4502**; Plate 9, *Fig. 8*, section 4502), aligned north-west to south-east, was exposed in the north-eastern end of Trench 45. This feature was 1.7m wide and 0.36m deep, with moderately steep sides breaking to a broad, near-flat base. Its fill (4503) of reddish brown clayey silt contained no finds. It paralleled the alignment of the closest field/wood boundaries to the north as well as general ploughing trends detected by the geophysics across the field, although there was no single clearly corresponding geophysical anomaly.
- 3.5.3 At the south-west end of the trench, a possible feature (**4500**) was recorded. It may have been a ditch terminus or truncated feature extending north-west from the edge of the trench. It was 1.08m long, and at most 0.56m wide and

0.09m deep. Its fill (4501) was mid greyish brown sandy/clayey silt which contained no finds.

3.6 Trench 48 (Fig. 4)

3.6.1 The ground surface lay at 135.28m OD (south-west) dropping to 134.54 (north-east) with a typical cover of 0.3m of plough soil.

3.6.2 A pit (4800, Plate 10) lay against the northern baulk of Trench 48. This was 1.3m wide and 0.29m deep, with irregular sides. The initial section (Fig. 8, section 4800) was excavated and recorded c. 0.4m from the baulk before further excavation of this feature was carried out back to the trench baulk. Its sides were gently sloped and broke gradually onto an irregular concave base. Its fill (4801) was a dark reddish brown clayey silt with a lens of charcoal halfway up its south-western side, but contained no finds.

3.7 Trench 51 (Fig. 4)

3.7.1 The trench was positioned on the edge of a gentle slope from west to east with surface levels 135.63m OD to 133.36m OD. Trench depth to natural silt and gravel was consistently 0.3m.

3.7.2 A south-south-east to north-north-west aligned linear ditch was revealed in Trench 51 (5100; Plates 11 & 12). It was 0.45m wide and 0.3m deep with an asymmetric near-V-shaped profile. Its alignment did not match the modern field boundaries.

3.8 Trench 56 (Fig. 5)

3.8.1 This trench sloped from 134.05m OD in the east down to 132.69m OD adjacent to the field boundary. Machined soil depths were consistently 0.35m.

3.8.2 The western end of Trench 56 contained a dark reddish brown silt colluvial deposit (5602, Plate 13). Machining revealed two tiny fragments of Roman pottery in the upper part of this, however, a hand dug 1x1m test pit produced no further finds, reaching natural clay with flints at a depth of 0.2m.

3.9 Trench 61 (Fig. 5)

3.9.1 The northern end of this trench intersected the line of an in-filled modern field boundary aligned south-west to north-east (Fig. 5). The surface level dropped from 134.15m OD in the north to 132.24m in the south with an average depth of 0.4m.

3.9.2 Two earlier undated features followed the same line as this ditch (6100 and 6102; Plates 14 & 15). Ditch 6100 was 0.38m wide and 0.14m deep with steep sides and a concave base. It produced a fragment of Roman pottery from its light brown silty clay fill (6101).

3.9.3 Feature 6102 was parallel to this to the north-east, measuring 0.5-0.7m in width and 0.17m in depth (Fig. 8, section 6102). Truncating this was a clearly modern iteration of the ditch line (6104) 1.6m wide and 0.33m deep. The latter was filled with dark brownish grey silty clay (6105) containing obviously modern material. Feature 6102 was linear in plan but irregular in profile and it is possible that it represented root disturbance from a hedgeline associated with feature 6104 rather than a distinct cut feature.

3.10 Trench 63 (Fig. 5)

- 3.10.1 The surface here was flat at 136.3-136.2m OD except at the western end of Trench 63, which sat within a slight but visible depression. Soil depths totalled 0.31-0.36m but the depression concealed a large pit (6301; Plate 16). The exposed width of this feature was 4.9m although it extended further west. Its hard-packed fill of silty clay (6302) was excavated by machine to a depth of 0.4m below the plough soil. Part of its shallow eastern edge was visible cutting into the natural reddish brown clay with flints. Occasional fragments of peg tile (not retained) indicate this was probably a quarry pit.

3.11 Trench 65 (Fig. 5)

- 3.11.1 The northern part of the trench was flat at 138.31-138.02m OD sloping down to 137.06m OD at its southern end. Its depth ranged from 0.27 to 0.32m.
- 3.11.2 A single small pit or posthole (6500) was found in the northern part of Trench 65. It measured 0.35m in diameter and 0.06m deep with a dark fill containing charcoal (6501) that was fully sampled (sample 6). However, it contained no finds and flotation of the sample yielded only a very low volume of charcoal and occasional snail shells.

3.12 Trench 67 (Fig. 5)

- 3.12.1 The surface level ranged from 139.82m OD (north-east) to 138.53m OD (south-west) with plough soil typically 0.3m thick.
- 3.12.2 A possible linear ditch (6702; Plates 18 & 19) was revealed in the south-western end of Trench 67. This feature was 0.91m wide and 0.24m deep with gentle slides and a concave base. It was filled with mid yellowish brown silty clay (6703) differing from the underlying geology only in terms of a relative lack of flints. There were no finds. It is not clear that this corresponded to any geophysical anomalies and nor was it visible in Trench 68, 35m to the north-west. It could represent natural periglacial activity.
- 3.12.3 A small undated posthole (6704) lay 5.3m to the north-east. This was 0.27-0.28m in diameter and 0.07m deep and filled with light brownish grey silty clay (6705).
- 3.12.4 A Mesolithic flint tranche axehead (SF1; 6706) was found on the subsoil heap of this trench.

3.13 Trench 72 (Fig. 5)

- 3.13.1 The surface ranged from 141.01m OD (north) to 140.21m OD (south) with typically 0.32m of ploughsoil.
- 3.13.2 At the southern end of the trench was what initially appeared to be a linear feature (7202, Plate 20). However, following hand excavation it was clear this was a shallow (up to 0.1m) variation in the natural silts (7203).

3.14 Trench 73 (Fig. 4)

- 3.14.1 The surface at Trench 73 ranged from 132.82m OD (north-east) to 131.98m OD (south-west) with soil cover consistently 0.35m in depth.

3.14.2 A broad shallow feature (**7300**; Plates 21 & 22) was revealed in the western half of this trench (Figure 4) during machining. Containing post-medieval tile fragments, it was partially machine excavated to establish its depth before being cleaned by hand and recorded. The feature itself was 7.8m across and up to 0.22m deep below the ploughsoil. Its lower fill was mid reddish brown silty clay (7301), sealed by a similar fill with lenses of chalk up to 0.12m thick (7302). The nature of this feature is unclear, but in isolation it appeared to resemble a shallow hollow way. It corresponded with a strong linear trend aligned north-west/south-east on the geophysical survey. It could therefore relate to a lost field boundary or trackway but it did not appear to extend into Trench 45, 105m to the north-west.

3.15 Trench 78 (Fig. 6)

3.15.1 The topsoil surface sloped gently from 133.27m OD in the north-west to 132.04m in the south-east, with typically 0.3m of ploughsoil cover.

3.15.2 Trench 78 contained a single possible feature (Plates 23 & 24). Possible ditch terminus **7800** was revealed against the south-eastern edge of the trench. It was 0.7m wide and 0.3m deep, with steep sides and an asymmetric V-shaped profile. Its edges were sharp with its dark brown mixed silty fill (7801) contrasting with the light reddish silt and gravel geology.

3.16 Trench 81 (Fig. 6)

3.16.1 Across its short length, the surface of Trench 81 (Plate 25) ranged from 127.48m OD (north-west) to 126.23m OD (south-east). Soil cover was typically 0.3m thick.

3.16.2 A linear silt-filled feature (**8100**), clearly contrasting with the underlying gravel/flint geology, was revealed in the northern end Trench 81, aligned south-west/north-east. This feature was 1.38m wide and 0.21m deep with shallow, irregular sides and a concave base. Its edges were diffuse and it contained no finds. It is suspected to have been a natural feature.

3.17 Trench 102 (Fig. 7)

3.17.1 Trench 102 lay on the lowest southern reaches of the site, with surface levels at 116m OD (west) to 114.16m OD. The trench was typically 0.4m in depth.

3.17.2 Two features were revealed in the centre of this trench, exposed against the south-eastern edge of the trench and aligned almost parallel with the bridleway and field boundary to the north.

3.17.3 Ditch terminus **10200** (Plate 26) was 0.58m wide and only 0.12m deep. It contained a single fill (10201) of mid greyish brown clayey silt, but with a significant component of mixed flint nodules and burnt sandstone as well as charcoal and chalk. It extended 1.5m into the trench. An environmental sample of its fill produced charred barley and wheat grains, as well as frequent burnt flint and a single sherd of Roman pottery.

3.17.4 Ditch **10202** (Plate 27, Fig. 8, section 10202) could have been a pit or ditch terminus. It was approximately 1m in length and an estimated 0.8m in width, based on its extent within the trench. It was 0.23m deep below the ploughsoil and contained a series of fills tipped in from the south-west. An initial chalk

deposit 0.05m thick (10203) was interrupted by a silt lens 0.01-0.02m thick (10204) before a second chalk deposit up to 0.08m in thickness (10205). Its upper fill was a mixture of silt and chalk up to 0.23m thick (10206). A single sherd of Roman pottery was found in upper fill 10206.

3.17.5 The nature of these features is unclear. They lay approximately 1.6m apart and they were only loosely co-terminal, but their distinctive chalky/stoney fills suggest they were related. Neither was evident on the geophysical survey.

3.17.6 A single additional sherd of Roman pottery was found in a plough scar close to feature **10202** and assigned to subsoil context 10209.

3.18 Trenches 104, 105 and 107

3.18.1 These trenches (Figure 7) were targeted across an irregular geophysical anomaly which could have represented an old field boundary (see Fig. 2). Once these trenches were opened it was clear that some geological variation followed this anomaly, with linear silty areas running through the centre of the trenches (Plates 28-31). On the surface these deposits clearly corresponded with a dry valley running from around 119m OD in the north of the field to 113m OD in the south-east of the field, and it is strongly suspected that the silt deposits were colluvial in origin. Total soil depths varied between 0.4 and 0.5m across these trenches.

3.18.2 Within Trench 105, a more sharply defined linear feature (**10500**) was excavated by hand. While it had gently sloping sides and a concave base with clear edges 1.47m wide and 0.35m deep, its homogenous sandy silt fill and lack of finds suggest it was a natural feature.

3.19 Blank trenches

3.19.1 Trenches 46, 47, 49, 50, 52-55, 57-60, 62, 64, 66-71, 74-77, 79, 80, 82-101, 103 and 108-114 were all blank. A selection of photos of blank trenches from different areas of the site are given in Plates 32-36.

3.20 Finds and environmental summary

3.20.1 The only worked flint recovered was a flaked Mesolithic axe head found in the subsoil of Trench 67 (SF1, 6706; Plate 37).

3.20.2 Roman pottery was found in small quantities (eight sherds, 33g) in Trenches 43, 44, 56, 61 and 102.

3.20.3 Occasional small fragments of medieval to post-medieval roof tile were scattered across most trenches and were not retained. Two small examples of such ceramic building material, originally thought to be pottery, were retained from posthole **4300** and ditch **4402**.

3.20.4 Two environmental samples were taken, producing charred barley and wheat.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 The paucity of archaeological features corresponds with the general lack of anomalies revealed by the geophysics across the evaluated areas. However, the few archaeological features present across the south of the site were generally not clearly identified by the geophysics. Equally, the excavated features in Trenches 43 and 44 were indistinct and could have been overlooked if it were not for the hint of an enclosure on the geophysical survey and the similarly indistinct features recorded in Trenches 20 and 21 in 2008.
- 4.1.2 Finds were poor – primarily abraded Roman pottery – although processing of environmental samples showed potential for good preservation of charred plant remains from some contexts (App. D.1).

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 One stated aim of the evaluation was to establish the wider potential for Roman and medieval features first identified in the 2008 evaluation in the north-west of the site. Within the Site Outline, there is low potential for Roman features. All the pottery recovered was Roman, albeit in abraded condition and potentially residual. For the medieval period, the potential remains as established in the 2008 evaluation, with evidence of tile production focused on Tile Kiln Farm in the north-west of the site. Most features were undated and widely distributed across the evaluated area.
- 4.2.2 In Trenches 43 and 44 Roman pottery was accompanied by ceramic building material of probable late medieval or post-medieval date. In addition to their uncertain dating, possible ditches (4302 and 4402) were difficult to identify in plan, although they may correspond with a possible enclosure identified by the geophysical survey. Similar uncertainties apply to Roman finds noted in Trench 11 in the 2008 evaluation (Piper 2008, 12). Topsoil thickness for Trenches 20-22 (*ibid.* App A) were recorded between 0.22m and 0.29m, comparable with the depths recorded for Trenches 43 and 44 (0.34m, 0.37m; App. B), possibly with colluvial material clouding the distinction between topsoil and geology. This suggests there has not been significant plough truncation in the intervening 15 years, yet the additional trenching here has not clarified the nature of the archaeology. It should also be noted that the feature in Trench 22 (cut 2203, *ibid.* App. A) was interpreted as a frost fracture and it is possible that natural processes have incorporated later finds into apparent features here.
- 4.2.3 Trench 102 contained the only relatively securely dated Roman features, albeit relying on three small sherds of pottery: two from ditches (10200, 10202) and one from the subsoil (10209). The presence of burnt stone, burnt flint, charcoal and redeposited chalk in these features suggest a more intensive domestic or industrial association, however there were no related features in neighbouring trenches.
- 4.2.4 The location of Trench 102 was at the lower end of a shallow valley c. 30m north of a modern drainage ditch and trackway/bridleway. The trackway is represented on the 1st Edition OS maps, but it is not clear if the ditch follows

an older natural stream that may explain the otherwise isolated archaeology in this trench.

- 4.2.5 The presence of a possible quarry pit in Trench 63 is consistent with the evidence for medieval tile production identified in the 2008 evaluation around Tile Kiln Farm (Piper 2008).

4.3 Interpretation

- 4.3.1 This evaluation has supplemented the work previously undertaken at Tile Kiln Farm (Piper 2008), forming a comprehensive scheme of investigation agreed with the Council and covers the entire allocated area. It adds to the evidence for a low level 'background' presence of Roman finds, whilst a pair of features associated with Roman pottery and charred crop residues within Trench 102 may represent somewhat more sustained/intensive activity. The trenching has also identified additional sparse, undated features or possible features across the centre of the site.

APPENDIX A CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench #	Context #	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Context type	Fill of	Interpretive Category	Comments
43	4300	0.33	0.06	cut		Posthole	
43	4301			fill	4300	Secondary Fill	
43	4302	1.38	0.24	cut		Ditch	
43	4303			fill	4302	Secondary Fill	
44	4400		0.32	layer	4400	Topsoil	
44	4401			void			
44	4402	0.76	0.36	cut		Ditch	
44	4403			fill	4402	Secondary Fill	
45	4500	0.56	0.09	cut		Ditch	
45	4501			fill	4500	Secondary Fill	
45	4502	1.7	0.36	cut		Ditch	
45	4503			fill	4502	Secondary Fill	
48	4800	1.3	0.29	cut		Pit	
48	4801			fill	4800	Secondary Fill	
51	5100	0.45	0.3	cut		Ditch	
51	5101			fill	5100	Secondary Fill	
56	5600			cut		Other Cut	Natural/rooting feature. Not recorded in detail.
56	5601			fill		Secondary Fill	
56	5602		0.3	layer	5602	Colluvial Layer	1x1m test pit
61	6100	0.38	0.44	cut		Ditch	
61	6101			fill	6100	Secondary Fill	
61	6102	0.5	0.17	cut		Ditch	
61	6103			fill	6102	Secondary Fill	
61	6104	1.6	0.33	cut		Ditch	Modern
61	6105			fill	6104	Secondary Fill	
63	6301			cut		Quarry	Quarry pit, not fully exc.
63	6302			fill	6301	Secondary Fill	
65	6500	0.37	0.06	cut		Posthole	
65	6501			fill	6500	Secondary Fill	
67	6700			Void			
67	6702			Void			
67	6702	0.91	0.24	cut		Ditch	
67	6703			fill	6702	Secondary Fill	
67	6704	0.27	0.07	cut		Posthole	
67	6705			fill	6704	Secondary Fill	

Trench #	Context #	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Context type	Fill of	Interpretive Category	Comments
67	6706			layer	6706	Subsoil	
72	7202			cut		Natural Feature	Irregular natural silting
72	7203			fill	7202	Secondary Fill	
73	7300	7.8	0.22	cut		Other Cut	Possible trackway?
73	7301			fill	7300	Secondary Fill	
73	7302			fill	7300	Secondary Fill	
78	7800	0.7	0.3	cut		Ditch	Possibly natural?
78	7801			fill	7800	Primary Fill	
81	8100	1.38	0.21	cut		Ditch	
81	8101			fill	8100	Primary Fill	
102	10200			cut		Gully	
102	10201			fill	10200	Secondary Fill	
102	10202			cut		Gully	
102	10203			fill	10202	Primary Fill	
102	10204			fill	10200	Secondary Fill	
102	10205			fill	10202	Secondary Fill	
102	10206			fill	10202	Secondary Fill	
102	10207			Void			
102	10208			Void			
102	10209			layer	10209	Subsoil	Finds from Plough scar
105	10500	1.47	0.35	cut		Natural Feature	
105	10501			fill	10500	Secondary Fill	

Table 1: Context inventory

APPENDIX B TRENCH INVENTORY

Trench #	Geology	Orientation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Avg. Depth
43	Silt/clay/gravel	N-S	54.5	2	0.34
44	Silt/clay/gravel	E-W	40.3	2	0.37
45	Clay/gravel	SW-NE	41.1	2	0.35
46	Gravel/silt	NW-SE	37.3	2	0.35
47	Clay/silty clay	NW-SE	40	2	0.35
48	Clay/clay w flint	SW-NE	39	2	0.3
49	Clay/clay w flints	SW-NE	40	2	0.35
50	Loam	NW-SE	40	2	0.42
51	Silty clay/gravel	SW-NE	40	2	0.3
52	Gravel/silt/Clay w flints. Deeper silt/colluvium at N end up to 0.25m thick	N-S	40	2	0.35
53	Clay w flints/gravel	NS	40	2	0.25
54	Clay w flints & gravel	NE-SW	40	2	0.35
55	Silty clay/clay w flints	S-N	40	2	0.3
56	Clay w flint. Additional 0.2m colluvium at W end.	W-E	40	2	0.2
57	Clay w flint	N-S	40	2	0.3
58	Clay w flints	N-S	40	2	0.3
59	Silty clay w flints	E-W	40	2	0.3
60	Silty clay	E-W	37.7	2	0.36
61	Silty clay	N-S	41.3	2	0.4
62	Silty/sandy clay	N-S	43.5	2	0.3
63	Silty/sandy clay	E-W	43	2	0.35
64	Silty clay	E-W	39.2	2	0.3
65	Sandy/silty clay	NS & EW	60.4	2	0.3
66	Sandy/silty clay	N-S	40.7	2	0.35
67	Sandy/silty clay	SW-NE	44	2	0.3
68	Sandy/silty clay	NW-SE	41.7	2	0.3
69	Silty/sandy clay	N-S	40	2	0.32
70	Silty/sandy clay	E-W	41.3	2	0.32
71	Silty/sandy clay	N-S	40	2	0.33
72	Silty clay	N-S	37.2	2	0.33
73	Clay w flints	SW-NE	39.2	2	0.35
74	Silt/Gravel/Clay w flints/Chalk	NW-SE	40	2	0.28
75	Chalk & clay	NW-SE	40	2	0.2
76	Clay w flints	SW-NE	40	2	0.28
77	Clay w flints	SW-NE	40	2	0.3
78	Clay w flints	NW-SE	40	2	0.3
79	Clay w flint/chalk	SW-NE	40	2	0.32
80	Clay/gravel	E-W	40	2	0.3
81	Silt/gravel	NW-SE	15.7	2	0.3
82	Chalk/gravel	NW-SE	40	2	0.25

Trench #	Geology	Orientation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Avg. Depth
83	Chalk/Clay/Gravel	NW-SE	40	2	0.3
84	Chalk/gravel&silt	E-W	40	2	0.3
85	Gravel/clay/chalk/silt (colluvium at trench centre)	E-W	71.3	2	0.37
86	Chalk&gravel	E-W	40	2	0.32
87	Clay/chalk	N-S	40	2	0.3
88	Silty clay	SW-NE	4	2	0.3
89	Clay/silt	N-S	40	2	0.35
90	Chalk/clay	W-E	40	2	0.28
91	Chalk	N-S	40	2	0.3
92	Clay/silt	NW-SE	40	2	0.33
93	Chalk/silty clay	E-W	40	2	0.3
94	Chalk	N-S	40	2	0.3
95	Chalk	NW-SE	40	2	0.3
96	Gravel/silt	N-S	40	2	0.4
97	Chalk	SW-NE	40	2	0.35
98	Clay/gravel	E-W	40	2	0.35
99	Silty/Clay w gravel	NW-SE	40	2	0.35
100	Clay/silt w flints	SW-NE	40	2	0.35
101	Silt/gravel + 0.3m colluvium NE end.	SW-NE	40	2	0.45
102	Sand/silt	E-W	40.5	2	0.4
103	Chalk/gravel	SW-NE	40	2	0.38
104	Gravel	SW-NE	40	2	0.42
105	Gravel/silt	SW-NE	40	2	0.5
106	Chalk/clay w flints	NW-SE	40	2	0.3
107	Chalk/Silt w flints	SW-NE	40	2	0.38
108	Chalk/silty clay	SW-NE	43.7	2	0.38
109	Chalk/silty w flints	E-W	40.5	2	0.37
110	Chalk/silt/gravel	N-S	40	2	0.4
111	Chalk/silt/gravel	E-W	40	2	0.38
112	Chalk	N-S	40	2	0.38
113	Chalk/silt w gravel	E-W	40	2	0.36
114	Silt/gravel	N-S	40	2	0.37

Table 2: Trench inventory

APPENDIX C FINDS REPORTS

C.1 Romano-British Pottery

By Séverine Bézie

Introduction

- C.1.1 A total of eight body sherds, weighing 33g was recovered from the evaluation (Table 3).
- C.1.2 The pottery was moderately abraded, with an average sherd weight (ASW) of 3.66g. The scarcity of Roman pottery recovered, its general state of abrasion and the small average size of the sherds suggests that it may largely represent residual material.

Cxt	Cut	Feature	Trench	Sherd Count	Weight (g)	Pottery date
4301	4300	Posthole	43	1	6	AD C1-EC2
4403	4402	Ditch	44	1	5	AD MC1-C4
5602		Colluvial layer	56	2	1	AD M/LC1-LC3/C4
6101	6100	Ditch	61	1	3	AD MC1-C3
10201	10200	Ditch	102	1	9	AD EC1-M/LC2
10206	10202	Ditch		1	4	AD M/LC1-LC3/C4
10209		Subsoil layer		1	5	AD EC1-M/LC2
Total				8	33	

Table 3: Summary catalogue of Roman pottery by context with date

Methodology

- C.1.3 The pottery was examined in accordance with the guidelines set down by the Study Group for Roman Pottery (Barclay *et al* 2016). The total assemblage was studied, and a catalogue prepared. The data was entered onto a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, which is retained in the project archive.
- C.1.4 All the sherds have been counted and weighed to the nearest whole gram. The pottery was divided into fabric groups defined on the basis of inclusion types present and a sample was examined using a x10 magnifying lens. Vessel form was also noted, also any decoration, residue and levels of abrasion.
- C.1.5 National publications (Going 1987; Gurney 1995a; Lyons & Tester 2014) were used for identifying the fabrics and forms.

The Pottery

- C.1.6 The pottery assemblage cannot be more closely dated than from the early 1st century AD to the late 4th century AD. It was recovered from seven contexts, relating to five features (three ditches, one posthole, one layer, and one colluvial layer), in five trenches. Five broad fabric groups were identified during analysis, all unsourced (Table 4).
- C.1.7 The earliest part of the Roman assemblage consists of two body sherds of Grey Ware jars, which were tempered (or mixed) with grog, flint, mica, to

- strengthen them during production. Both presented oxidised surface(s), and one was decorated with a shallow groove.
- C.1.8 The assemblage is also composed of locally produced 'Romanising' coarse Sandy Grey Ware, with one body sherd, a jar, slipped internally in brown, and with inclusions of mica, quartz, and shell.
- C.1.9 The group of Brown Surfaced Grey Ware is also represented with three body sherds from jars All of them contained grog and shell inclusions.
- C.1.10 A single body sherd of a jar represents the earliest group of Oxidised Ware (OW) with inclusions of grog, mica, shell, and clay pellets. The group of OW is associated with early Roman production. It is a later oxidised version of the Grey Ware.
- C.1.11 The last category is the group of Sandy Oxidised Ware (SOW), presents in the assemblage in the form of one body sherd from a jar. SOW is an oxidised version of the coarse sandy ware.

Fabric Date	Fabric Code	Vessel	Sherd Count	Weight (g)
Grey ware (Lyons & Tester 2014, 256-61) AD EC1-M/LC2	GW	Jar	2	14
Oxidised ware (Lyons and Tester 2014, 256-261) AD C1-EC2	OW	Jar	1	6
Sandy Grey ware (Going 1987, 9-10) AD MC1-C4	SGW	Jar	1	5
Brown Surfaced Grey ware (Gurney 1995a, 101) AD M/LC1-LC3/C4	BSGW	Jar	3	5
Sandy Oxidised ware (Lyons & Tester 2014, 256-61) AD MC1-C3	SOW	Jar	1	3
Total			8	33

Table 4: Roman pottery fabrics and forms

Discussion

- C.1.12 The assemblage, being very small, provides only slight evidence for activity on the site during the Roman period. Consisting of small and abraded sherds, much of this material may be residual, having been incorporated into post-Roman features in later periods.

Recommendations for retention and dispersal

- C.1.13 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course. The assemblage, even if residual and limited, should be kept to inform any future archaeological investigations in the vicinity.

C.2 Worked Flint

By Lawrence Billington

Introduction

- C.2.1 A single worked flint was recovered during the evaluation: a complete transversally sharpened - 'tranchet' - Mesolithic axe/adze-head from the subsoil of Trench 67 (deposit 6706).
- C.2.2 The axehead (Plate 14) measures 118mm long and up to 52mm wide at its broadest (cutting) edge. It has a slightly plano-convex profile, and it is up to 30mm thick. It is in very good condition, with only minor edge damage and very slight traces of cortex on one face. It has a regular planform with straight sides, a narrow butt and a broad cutting edge. One face retains two patches of cortex; whilst the other side has been fully flaked. The cutting edge of the axehead has been formed by the removal of a single 'tranchet' flake at right angles to the cutting edge on the fully flaked face of the piece.
- C.2.3 Tranchet axe/adze-heads such as this are a classic Mesolithic tool type, (Clark 1932, xxii) and appear to have been manufactured and used right through the period (c. 9000-4000 BC; Conneller 2022). 'Isolated'/stray finds of Mesolithic axe heads, are a common feature of the record of this period across lowland Britain, and whilst many attest to losses made during 'off-site'/task-based activities taking place in the wider landscape others probably represent the more visible/readily recognised elements of more varied and extensive lithic scatters (cf. Mellars and Reinhardt 1978). Further evidence for Mesolithic activity in this area, around the headwaters of the River Beane, is represented by a relatively large number of Mesolithic artefacts collected during the late 19th and early 20th century provenanced to Weston parish, now held in Letchworth Museum (Wymer and Bonsall 1977, 133). These include at least nine tranchet axe/adzeheads but include other artefacts including a 'broad-blade' (probably Early/Middle Mesolithic) microlith illustrated in M.C. Burkitt's 1922 *Our Early Ancestors* (Burkitt 1922, Plate 24).

C.3 Ceramic Building Material

By Ted Levermore

Introduction

- C.3.1 Two fragments of very abraded ceramic building material (CBM) were retrieved. A small abraded 'nugget' of CBM (1g) was found in posthole 4300, Trench 43; it is made in a compact, fine sandy orange clay. The other fragment, from Ditch 4402, Trench 44, probably derives from a roof tile. It is also made in a mid-orange compact sandy clay and appears to retain a thickness of 12mm. Both fragments are likely to be medieval to early post-medieval in date.

Retention and Discard

- C.3.2 The material is of limited significance and is recommended for discard.

APPENDIX D ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

D.1 Environmental Samples

By Martha Craven and Melanie Sayer

Introduction

- D.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken from features within the evaluated area. These samples were taken in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations. Samples were taken from a posthole and ditch within Trenches 65 and 102.
- D.1.2 The total volume (up to 9L) of each of the samples was processed by tank flotation using modified Sīraf-type equipment for the recovery of preserved plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The floating component (flot) of the samples was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through 10mm, 4mm, 2mm and a 0.5mm sieve.
- D.1.3 The dried flots were scanned using a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 60 and an abbreviated list of the recorded remains is presented in Table 5. Identification of plant remains is with reference to the Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands (Cappers *et al.* 2006) and OAE's reference collection. Nomenclature is according to Zohary and Hopf (2000) for cereals and Stace (2010) for other plants. Plant remains have been identified to species where possible. The identification of cereals has been based on the characteristic morphology of the grains and chaff as described by Jacomet (2006).

Quantification

- D.1.4 For the purpose of this initial assessment, items such as seeds and cereal grains have been scanned and recorded qualitatively according to the following categories:
- # = 1-5, ## = 6-25, ### = 26-100, #### = 100+ specimens
- D.1.5 Items that cannot be easily quantified such as snail shells have been scored for abundance.
- + = occasional, ++ = moderate, +++ = frequent, ++++ = abundant

Results

- D.1.6 Preservation of plant remains is through carbonisation (charring) which only occurs under certain conditions when plant material is incompletely burnt and reduced to pure carbon. It is important to note that any surviving charred remains will only represent a small proportion of the original material being burnt.
- D.1.7 Samples contained frequent rooting which could indicate the movement of material between contexts. The burrowing blind snail (*Cecilioides acicula*) was also noted suggesting the possibility of disturbed contexts.

Trench 65

- D.1.8 Sample 6, fill 6501 of posthole **6500**, contains negligible charcoal and occasional snail shells. This sample did not contain any artefactual material.

Trench 102

- D.1.9 Sample 7, fill 10201 of ditch **10200**, contains a moderately large quantity of charcoal, snail shells and six cereal grains. The cereal types present consist of barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and those too poorly preserved to identify. Frequent burnt flint and a single pottery fragment were recovered from the sample residue.

Trench	Sample Number	Context Number	Cut Number	Feature Type	Volume Processed (L)	Flot Volume (ml)	Cereals	Charcoal Volume(ml)	Pottery	Burnt Flint
65	6	6501	6500	Posthole	7	5	0	3	0	0
102	7	10201	10200	Ditch	9	5	##	42	#	###

Table 5: Environmental Samples

Discussion

- D.1.10 The presence of relatively small quantities of carbonised cereal grains and frequent charcoal within the samples suggests that there is potential for the recovery of such material at this site although it may be somewhat limited.
- D.1.11 The carbonised material recovered is likely to relate to domestic waste that has been unintentionally incorporated into the features.
- D.1.12 An evaluation carried out at the nearby site of Tile Kiln Farm, Stevenage uncovered a range of features dating from the Iron Age to the medieval period. Four bulk samples were taken from this site and produced a range of relatively well-preserved carbonised material including legumes, cereal grains and weed seeds (Stafford 2008, 37-38).
- D.1.13 It is recommended that any future environmental sampling is carried out in accordance with Historic England guidelines (2011).

APPENDIX E BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aslam, H., Gallagher, A., 2022, *Geophysical Survey Report of Land Northeast of Stevenage, Hertfordshire*, Magnitude Surveys Ref: MSTL1230 (unpublished)

Barclay, A., Knight, D., Booth, P., Evans, J., Brown, D. H., and Wood, I., 2016, *A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology*, Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group, Study Group for Roman Pottery, Medieval Pottery Research Group

Burkitt, M.C. 1922. *Our Early Ancestors: An introductory study of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Copper Age Cultures in Europe and Adjacent Regions*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Cappers, R.T.J, Bekker R.M, and Jans, J.E.A., 2006. *Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands* Groningen Archaeological Studies 4. Barkhuis Publishing, Eelde, The Netherlands.
www.seedatlas.nl

Clark, J.G.D. 1932. *The Mesolithic Age in Britain*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Conneller, C. 2022. *The Mesolithic in Britain: Landscape and Society in Times of Change*. Abingdon, Routledge.

Going, C. J., 1987, *The Mansio and other sites in the south-eastern sector of Caesariomagus: The Roman pottery*, Chelmsford Archaeological Trust, Report 3.2, CBA Research Report 62

Gurney, D., 1995a, 'The Roman pottery', in Rickett, R., *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham, Part VII. The Iron Age, Roman and Early Saxon Settlement*, East Anglian Archaeology 73

Heritage Network, 2016, *Area GA2 North-east of Stevenage, Hertfordshire, Heritage Impact Assessment* Unpublished Report

Historic England, 2011. *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (2nd edition). Centre for Archaeology Guidelines.

Jacomet, S., 2006. *Identification of cereal remains from archaeological sites*. (2nd edition, 2006), IPNA, Universität Basel / Published by the IPAS, Basel University.

Lyons, A., and Tester, C., 2014, 'Chapter 6. Specialist Reports I: Pottery', in Ashwin, T., Tester, A., *A Romano-British Settlement in the Waveney Valley: Excavations at Scole, 1993-4*, East Anglian Archaeology 152

McLeod, S. 2023 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation Land at Northeast Stevenage, Great Ashby* (unpublished).

Medleycott, M. 2011, *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24

Mellars, P.A. and Reinhardt, S.C. 1978. Patterns of Mesolithic land-use in southern England: a geological perspective. In Mellars, P.A. (ed.) *The Early Postglacial Settlement of Northern Europe*. London: Duckworth, 243-93.

Piper, L. 2008, *Tile Kiln Farm, Stevenage: Archaeological Evaluation Report*, Oxford Archaeology Job 4223 (unpublished).

Stafford, L. 2008. 'Environmental Reports', in Piper, L. (ed.). Tile Kiln Farm, Stevenage. Oxford Archaeology: Evaluation Report No. 4223, pp. 36-38.

Stace, C., 2010. *New Flora of the British Isles*: Second edition. Cambridge University Press.

Stratacan 2007 *Geophysical Survey Report: Tile Kiln Farm, Stevenage* (unpublished).

Wymer, J.J. and Bonsall, C.J. 1977. *Gazetteer of Mesolithic sites in England and Wales with a Gazetteer of Upper Palaeolithic sites in England and Wales*. London: Council for British Archaeology, Research Report No. 22.

Zohary, D. and Hopf, M., 2000. *Domestication of Plants in the Old World – The origin and spread of cultivated plants in West Asia, Europe, and the Nile Valley*: 3rd edition. Oxford University Press.

APPENDIX F

SITE SUMMARY DETAILS / OASIS REPORT FORM

Site name: Land at Northeast Stevenage, Great Ashby, Hertfordshire

Site code: XHTNES23EV

Grid Reference 526264 227806

Type: Evaluation

Date and duration: 11/09/2023 – 5/10/2023

Area of Site 72ha

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Cambridge, and will be deposited with North Hertfordshire Museum Service in due course, under the following accession number: XHTNES23EV.

Summary of Results: Between 11th September and 5th October 2023, Oxford Archaeology (Cambridge) undertook an evaluation on Land at Northeast Stevenage, Great Ashby, Hertfordshire (526264 227806) opening 72 trenches totalling approximately 2900m in length.

Part of the land had previously been evaluated in 2008 identifying medieval field systems and evidence for tile manufacture as well as an Iron Age pit and a small number of Roman pottery sherds.

A Mesolithic flint tranchet axehead was found in subsoil. Eight sherds (33g) of Roman pottery were found: two possibly residually in potentially medieval features in the north of the site; and two from ditches or structural features containing burnt flint, charcoal, chalk and burnt stone in the south of the site.

A quarry pit in the north-east of the site may have been medieval or post-medieval, potentially associated with tile production previously identified at Tile Kiln Farm. A post-medieval feature in the west of the site may have represented a trackway.

Undated ditches and a pit were found across the centre of the site.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-520086		
Project Name	Land at Northeast Stevenage, Great Ashby, Hertfordshire		
Start of Fieldwork	11/09/2023	End of Fieldwork	5/10/2023
Previous Work	Yes	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XHTNES23EV	Planning App. No.	23/00806/SCOP
HER Number		Related Numbers	
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority		
Development Type	Housing Estate		
Place in Planning Process	Pre-application		

Techniques used (tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Aerial Photography – interpretation | ☐ Grab-sampling | ☐ Remote Operated Vehicle Survey |
| ☐ Aerial Photography - new | ☐ Gravity-core | ☒ Sample Trenches |
| ☐ Annotated Sketch | ☐ Laser Scanning | ☐ Survey/Recording of Fabric/Structure |
| ☐ Augering | ☐ Measured Survey | ☒ Targeted Trenches |
| ☐ Dendrochronological Survey | ☒ Metal Detectors | ☒ Test Pits |
| ☐ Documentary Search | ☐ Phosphate Survey | ☐ Topographic Survey |
| ☒ Environmental Sampling | ☐ Photogrammetric Survey | ☐ Vibro-core |
| ☐ Fieldwalking | ☐ Photographic Survey | ☐ Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit) |
| ☐ Geophysical Survey | ☐ Rectified Photography | |

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Ditch	Uncertain	Flint tranchet axe	Mesolithic (- 10 000 to - 4000)
Pit	Uncertain	Pottery	Roman (43 to 410)
Ditch	Roman (43 to 410)	CBM	Medieval (1066 to 1540)
Quarry	Post Medieval (1540 to 1901)		
Trackway?	Post Medieval (1540 to 1901)		

Project Location

County	Hertfordshire	Address (including Postcode)
District	North Hertfordshire	Land at Northeast Stevenage
Parish	Weston	Great Ashby
HER office	Hertfordshire County Council	SG4 7EA
Size of Study Area	72ha	
National Grid Ref	526264, 227806	

Project Originators

Organisation	Oxford Archaeology (Cambridge)
Project Brief Originator	Alison Tinniswood (Hertfordshire County Council)
Project Design Originator	Stephen McLeod (Iceni Projects)
Project Manager	Andrew Greef (Oxford Archaeology, Cambridge)
Project Supervisor	Stuart Ladd (Oxford Archaeology, Cambridge)

Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	NHDCMS	<i>TBC</i>
Digital Archive	ADS	<i>TBC</i>
Paper Archive	NHDCMS	<i>TBC</i>

Physical Contents	Present?	Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
Animal Bones	☐	☐	☐
Ceramics	☒	☒	☐
Environmental	☒	☒	☐
Glass	☐	☐	☐
Human Remains	☐	☐	☐
Industrial	☐	☐	☐
Leather	☐	☐	☐
Metal	☐	☐	☐
Stratigraphic		☐	☐
Survey		☐	☐
Textiles	☐	☐	☐
Wood	☐	☐	☐
Worked Bone	☐	☐	☐
Worked Stone/Lithic	☒	☒	☐
None	☐	☐	☒
Other	☐	☐	☐

Digital Media		Paper Media	
Database	☒	Aerial Photos	☐
GIS	☒	Context Sheets	☒
Geophysics	☐	Correspondence	☐
Images (Digital photos)	☒	Diary	☐
Illustrations (Figures/Plates)	☒	Drawing	☒
Moving Image	☐	Manuscript	☐
Spreadsheets	☒	Map	☐
Survey	☒	Matrices	☐
Text	☒	Microfiche	☐
Virtual Reality	☐	Miscellaneous	☐
		Research/Notes	☐
		Photos (negatives/prints/slides)	☐
		Plans	☐
		Report	☒
		Sections	☒
		Survey	☐

APPENDIX G HERTFORDSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

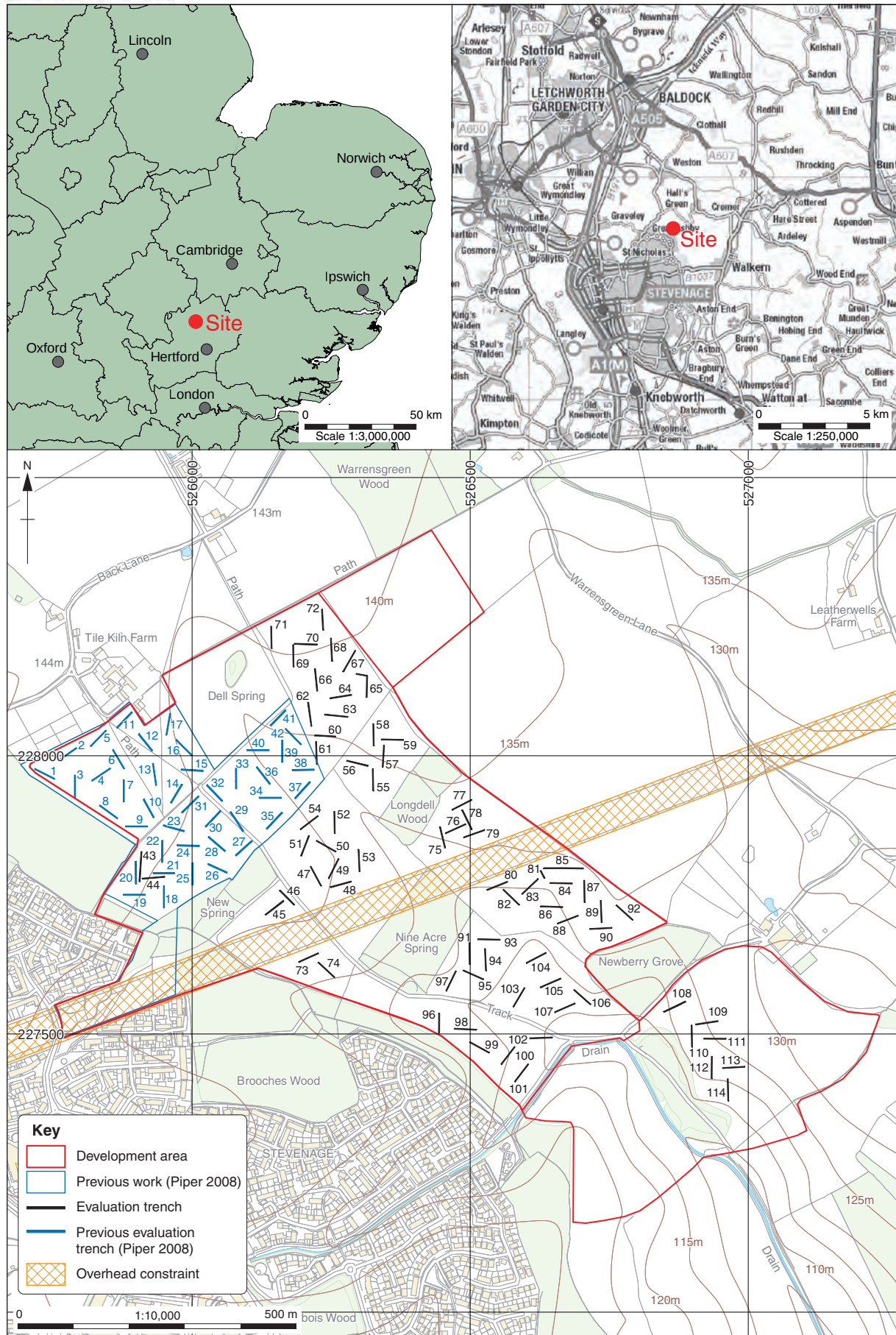
Site name and address: Land at Northeast Stevenage, Great Ashby, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation		
County: Hertfordshire		District: North Hertfordshire
Village/Town:		Parish: Weston
Planning application reference: 23/00806/SCOP		
HER Enquiry reference:		
Nature of application: Pre-application; likely to include residential development for up to 650 homes		
Present land use: Arable farmland		
Size of application area: 72ha		Size of area investigated: 0.56ha
NGR (to 8 figures minimum): 526264 227806		
Site code (if applicable): XHTNES23EV		
Contractor: Oxford Archaeology (Cambridge Office)		
Type of work: Archaeological Evaluation		
Date of work:	Start: 11 th Sept 2023	Finish: 5 th Oct 2023
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: NHDCMS		
Related HER Nos: MHT 31676		Periods represented: Mesolithic, Roman, post-medieval, undated,
Relevant previous summaries/reports MHT31676: Tile Kiln, Farm, Stevenage, Oxford Archaeology (Oxford) Evaluation Report 4223 (Piper 2008)		
Summary of fieldwork results: Part of the land had previously been evaluated in 2008 (accounting for a further 40 trenches or 0.3ha) identifying medieval field systems and evidence for tile manufacture as well as an Iron Age pit and a small number of Roman pottery sherds. A Mesolithic flint tranche axehead was found in subsoil. Eight sherds (33g) of Roman pottery were found: two possibly residually in potentially medieval features in the north of the site; and two from ditches or structural features containing burnt flint, charcoal, chalk and burnt stone in the south of the site. A quarry pit in the north-east of the site may have been medieval or post-medieval, potentially associated with tile production previously identified at Tile		

Kiln Farm. A post-medieval feature in the west of the site may have represented a trackway.

Undated ditches and a pit were found across the centre of the site.

Author of summary: Stuart Ladd

Date of summary: 14/2/2024



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023. All rights reserved. License No. AC0000849896

Figure 1: Site location map

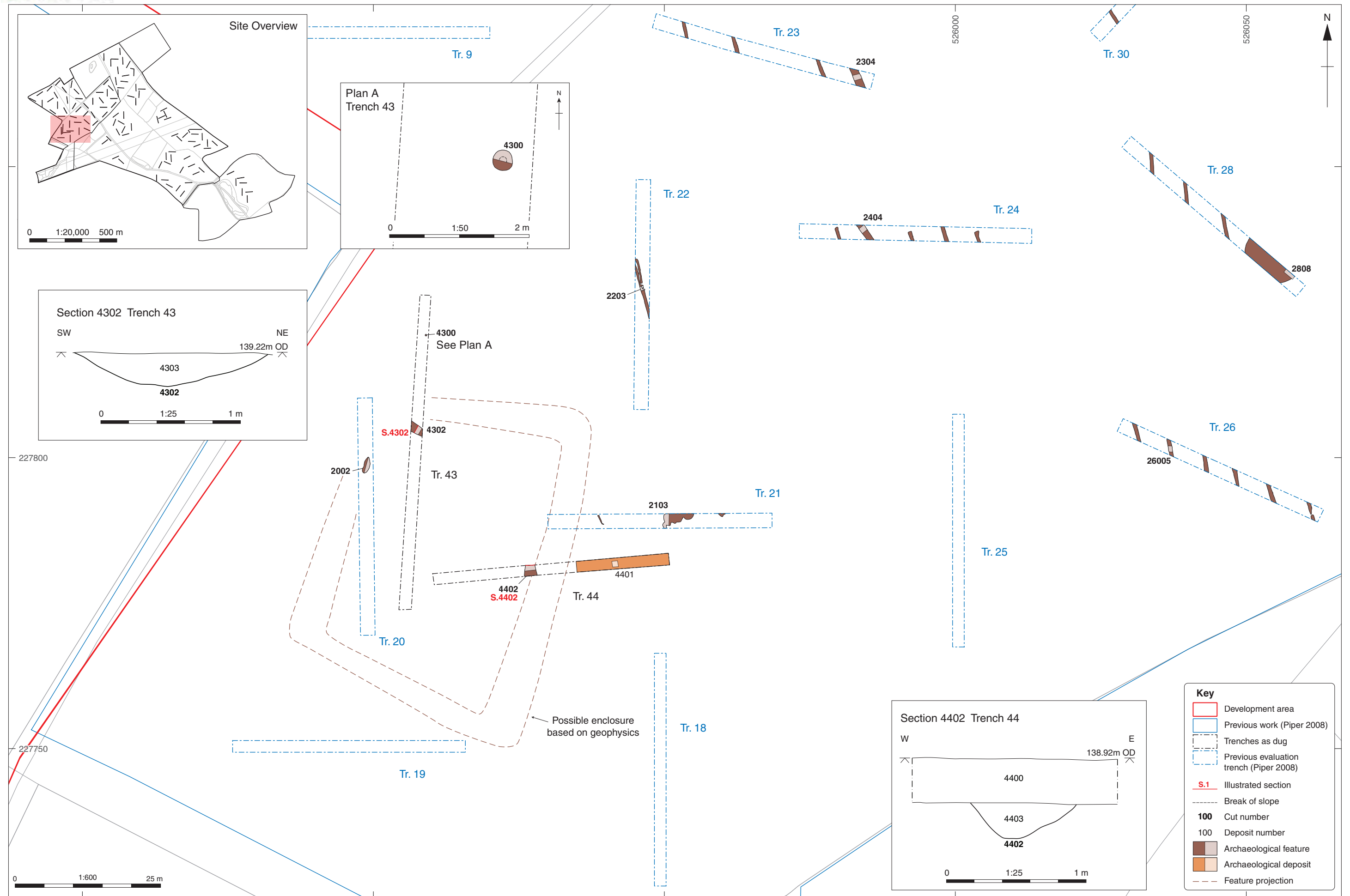


Figure 3: Trenches 43 and 44, showing previous work (after Piper 2008)

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023. All rights reserved. License No. AC0000849896

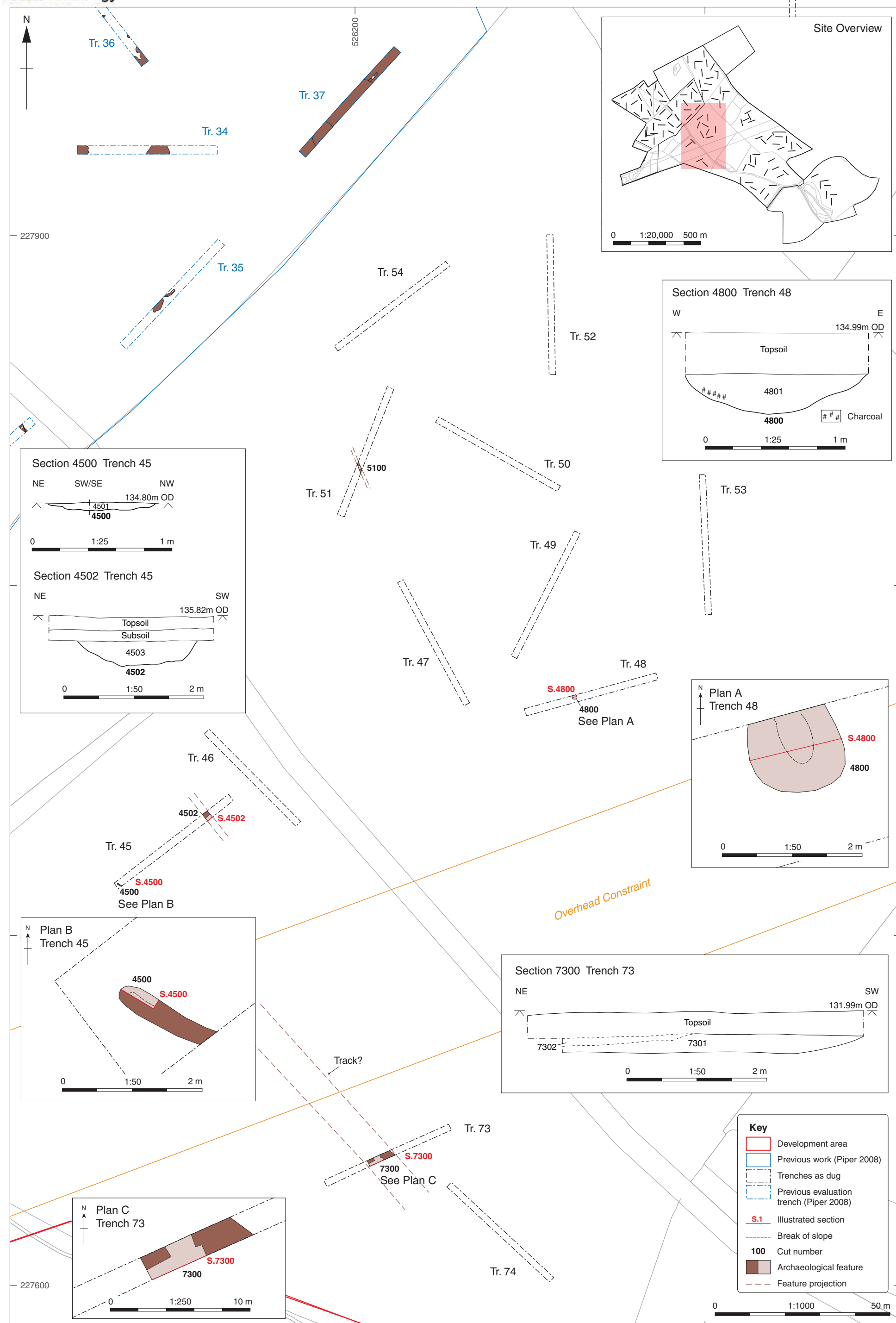


Figure 4: Trenches 45-54, 73 and 74

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023. All rights reserved. License No. AC0000849896