

Growing Baldock

Environmental Statement Volume 2: Figures & Appendices

Chapter 9: Archaeology

Appendix 9.3 Archaeological Evaluation on land north of Baldock,
Zones 1-4



**Archaeological evaluation on land north of
Baldock, Zones 1-4,
North Hertfordshire
August-November 2024**

Report No. 25/019

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Illustrator: Rebecca Oksman-Sword



Archaeological evaluation on land north of Baldock, Zones 1-4, North Hertfordshire August-November 2024

Accession number: BYG/Z1-4'24

Report No. 025/019

Project Manager: Tony Walsh

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OASIS REPORT FORM

Project:		OASIS No: molastan1-522920	
ACTIVITY TYPE			
Project/ Activity type	Evaluation		
Reason for investigation	Pre-determination archaeological assessment		
Development type	Residential		
Planning reference ID	24/00920/SCOP	Planning stage	
PROJECT LOCATION			
National grid ref	525534, 234980		
Site name	Land north of Baldock, Zones 1-4		
REVIEWERS/ ADMIN			
HER for project	North Hertfordshire District Council		
National organisation	-		
WORK UNDERTAKEN			
Methodological summary	MOLA carried out an archaeological evaluation, comprising 64 trenches, on land north of Baldock, Hertfordshire as part of ongoing pre-determination archaeological assessment works which started in 2008, for the proposed development of a residential neighbourhood comprising up to 3300 properties with supportive infrastructure.		
Previous works?	Geophysical survey (Davies 2016 and Gallagher et al. 2023), Evaluation (Finn and Muldowney 2017)	Future works?	TBC
Dates - Start date:	August 2024	End date:	November 2024
Scientific dating done?	-	Type:	-
Enviro sampling done?	Bulk sampling		
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
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PEOPLE			
Organisation	MOLA		
Project manager	Tony Walsh		
Project officer/ supervisor	Stephen Foster and Andrea Oliveira		
Funding body	Urban and Civic plc		
KEYWORDS			
Monuments found/ date	Bronze Age round barrows; late Iron Age to Roman enclosures, field systems and associated ditches and pits; Roman to early medieval ditches and postholes		
Finds types found/ date	Neolithic to early Bronze Age worked flint; prehistoric, Roman and Post-Roman pottery; clay building material; Bronze Age and Roman human remains; animal bone; metal finds and slag.		
RESULTS			
Description of outcomes/ summary of research framework contribution	Archaeological features were distributed across the evaluation area, including possible Bronze Age round barrows, enclosures, field systems and associated ditches and pits dating from the late Iron Age to Roman period, as well as traces of early medieval activity in the north-eastern area of the site.		
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Archaeological evaluation report on land north to Baldock, Zones 1-4, North Hertfordshire August-November 2024

ABSTRACT

MOLA carried out an archaeological evaluation on land north of Baldock, Hertfordshire as part of ongoing pre-determination archaeological assessment works for the proposed development of a residential neighbourhood comprising up to 3300 properties with supportive infrastructure.

The aims of the evaluation were to assess the extent, character and significance of any archaeological remains present within the proposed development area, to inform the planning application process. The site is situated to the immediate north and east of the town of Baldock, a town renowned for its rich archaeological heritage. Baldock and its surrounding areas have yielded significant evidence of human activity spanning from the prehistoric through to the medieval period. This is corroborated by a series of previous archaeological investigations undertaken by MOLA in 2016, which uncovered evidence of occupation and activity dating from the prehistoric to the medieval periods.

The trenches mainly targeted geophysical anomalies previously identified (Davies 2016) and the results of a previous phase of evaluation (Finn and Muldowney 2017). Archaeological features were distributed across the evaluation area, including possible Bronze Age round barrows, enclosures, field systems and associated ditches and pits dating from the late Iron Age to Roman period, as well as traces of early medieval activity in the north-eastern area of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

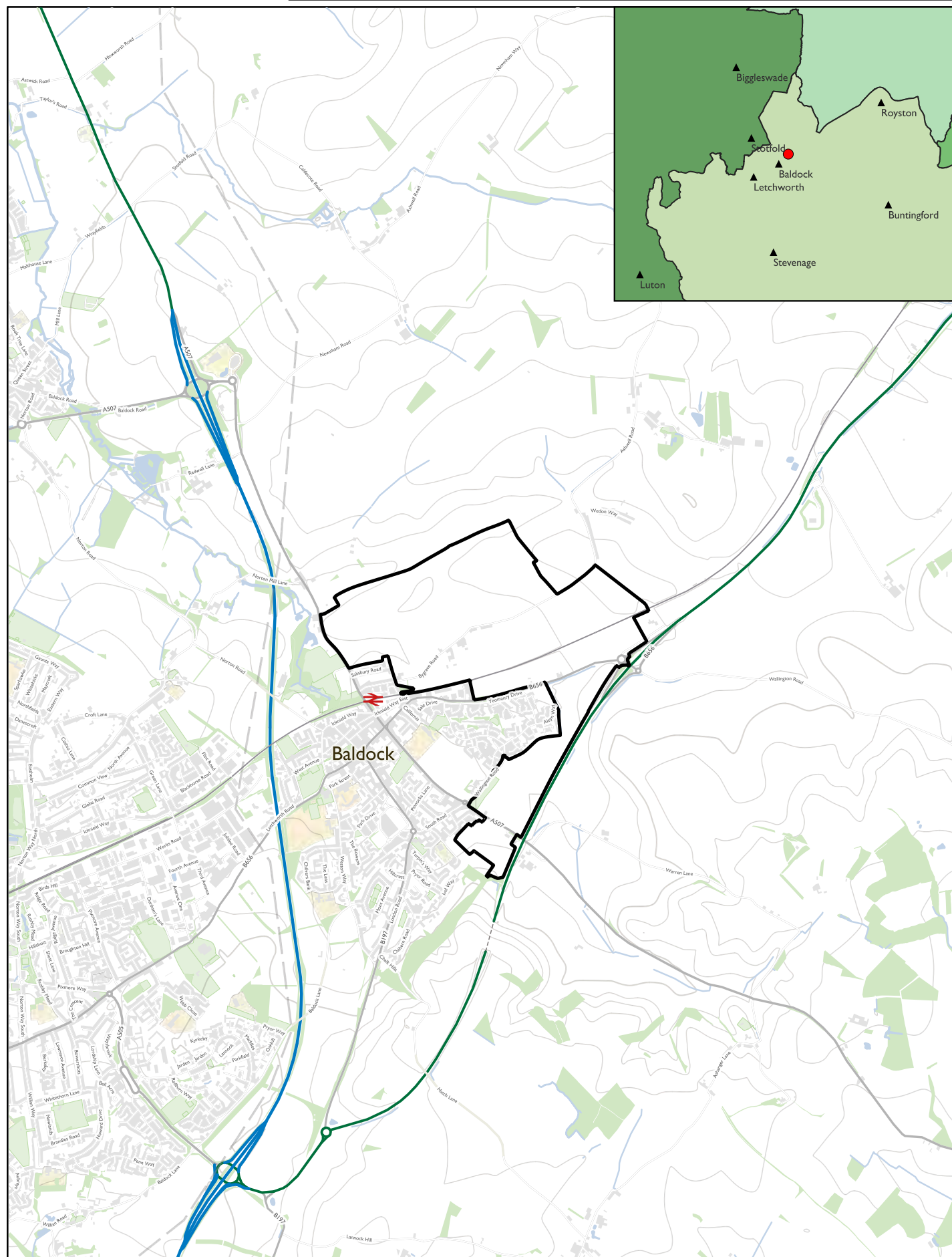
MOLA was commissioned by Urban and Civic to undertake a programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation to assess the presence/absence of any archaeological remains on land north of Baldock, North Hertfordshire (Fig 1; NGR TL 525534 234980, Planning reference 24/00920/SCOP).

The work was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which detailed the method to be employed for the archaeological evaluation (MOLA 2024a). This was based on a brief issued by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC), which takes archaeological planning advice from the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Advisors (as part of the Landscape, Ecology, Archaeology, Design and Sustainability (LEADS) team) who outlined the scope of evaluative works to be undertaken.

The fieldwork adhered to the Code of Conduct (CIFA 2022), Standard for Archaeological Field Evaluation (CIFA 2023a) and Universal Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (CIFA 2023b) as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), with reference to Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003).

The site code allocated by North Hertfordshire Museum was (BYG/Z1-4'24), MOLA allocated site code (LNB24) which also continued to be used for consistency in the archive. The OASIS ID for the project is molastan1-522920.

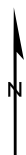
FIGURE I // Site Location - General



Development Area

0

1 km



PROJECT // P24-039 - Land at Baldock

DESCRIPTION // Site Location

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DOC REF: P24-204-AER-v1.0

Planning

The scope of works for archaeological trial trench evaluation was outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (MOLA 2024a) produced as part of an ongoing pre-determination archaeological assessment which commenced in 2008. Baseline information was gathered by North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) to inform early stages of development proposals for housing development at a number of sites on the north-eastern edge of Baldock as set out in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (North Hertfordshire District Council 2022).

The proposed development site will have an impact upon known buried archaeological deposits within a number of areas of archaeological significance and as such, an additional programme of archaeological trial trenching was agreed across the proposed development site in order to inform the planning application and mitigation.

National planning guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in December 2024, and amended February 2025, by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in response to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy consultation (DLUHC 2024). This wholly replaces the original 2012 version published by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (revised and updated in 2018, 2019 and 2021). This document sets out planning policies regarding the historic environment in Section 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'.

Local planning legislation

The Local Planning Authority (LPA) North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) takes archaeological planning advice from the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Advisors, part of the LEADS team at HCC. In providing advice LEADS must consider appropriate policies within relevant Local Plan.

The North Hertfordshire District Local Plan, adopted November 2022, sets out the principles which will guide development management, outlines housing allocation in the district and will inform planning decisions until 2031 (North Hertfordshire District Council 2022).

Within the Local Plan, Chapter 4 Policy SP14 exclusively considers the development of the site, BA1 – North of Baldock, which includes the construction of up to 3000 homes for which 1400 are anticipated to be built within the plan period to 2031. As part of this policy, development proposals should provide planning and master planning requirements including sensitive treatment of heritage assets and their settings as detailed in SP14 paragraph m.

Within the wider body of the Local Plan, Policies related specifically to the Historic Environment are set out in Chapter 12: Historic Environment (North Hertfordshire District Council 2022). In accordance with the NPPF, the relevant policies for the Historic Environment are policies HE1 (Designated Heritage Assets), HE2 (Heritage at Risk), HE3 (Non-Designated Heritage Assets) and HE4 (Archaeology).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, geology and topography

The proposed development site is located on the northern and eastern edges of the town of Baldock (Fig 1). It currently comprises agricultural land (arable/pasture) formed of regular field parcels, which form part of the London Area Greenbelt. The landscape is gently undulating with a general increase in elevation from west to east.

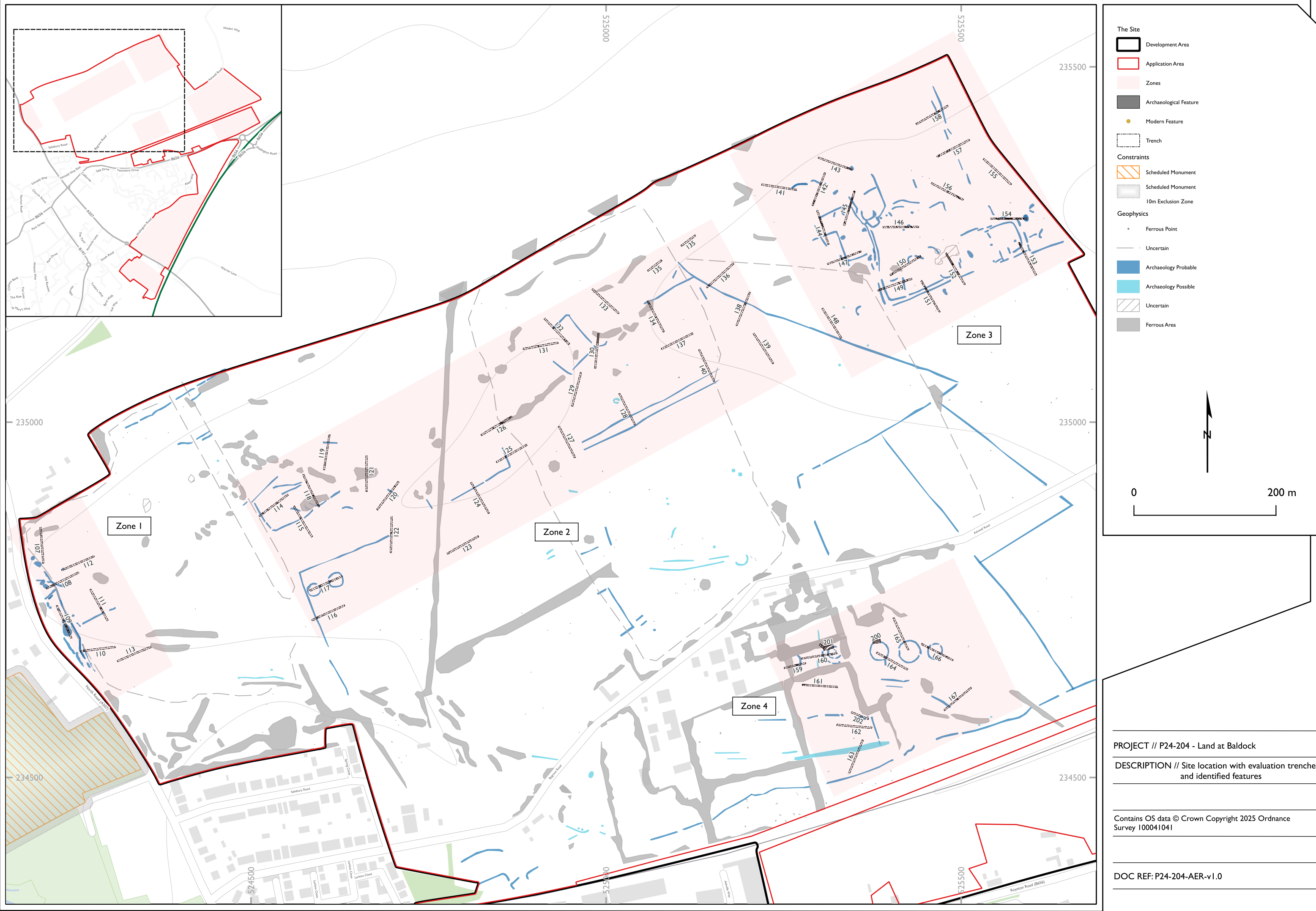
Area BA1 Zones 1-4 lie in the northern part of the proposed development (Fig 2). Bygrave Road/Ashwell Road bisects the site north-east to south-west, with Zones 1-3 on the north side of the road and Zone 4 on the south side. Dispersed agricultural and residential buildings line Bygrave Road. North Road (A507) is aligned north to south along the western site boundary of Zone 1 and the Great Northern rail line extends along the southern boundary of Zone 4.

Zones 1-3 are located on Bygrave Common. A public footpath runs east to west along the northern site boundary, with further footpaths across Zone 2 from north-east to south-west and along the eastern boundary of Zone 4. The nearest watercourse is the river Ivel, which flows just beyond the western site boundary adjacent to North Road.

The British Geological Survey GeoIndex records the underlying bedrock deposits of the site to be that of Holywell Nodular White Chalk Formation and new pit Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) (BGS 2024), interspersed with patches of creamy white chalky clay. Previous archaeological works also identified areas of Melbourn Rock Member – chalk in the west and north of the site, along with Zag Chalk Formation along the northern boundary of the site (Davies 2016). Broad east to west, bands of superficial deposits are locally present within the boundary of the site and comprise Head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel. A band of Lowestoft Formation – Diamicton also runs broadly east to west through the northern part of the site (BGS 2024). Alluvial fan deposits (sand and silt) comprising eroded orange fine silts, sand and gravel are recorded in the south-west areas of site BA1 (Finn and Muldowney 2017).

Previous trial trench evaluation, undertaken prior to the construction of the A505 Bypass (to the east of Zone 5 and BA 2/3) also identified alluvial deposits originating from a palaeochannel aligned north-west to south-east (Albion Archaeology 2003). These were of light yellow-grey chalky clay lying between the natural chalk and the subsoil locally overlaying a red-brown clayey silt of up to 0.35m thick.

FIGURE 2 // Site Location - Detail



2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The following historic and archaeological background summarises the results of the previous works conducted in all the areas of the proposed development site between 2003 and 2023. An up-to-date search of the Historic Environment Record (HER) will be obtained by HCUK and will be made available to MOLA to inform the works and subsequent reporting.

Hertfordshire Historic Environment Numbers (HHER) (HHER1234) and National Heritage List for England numbers (for listed buildings, scheduled monuments etc) (NHLE123456) are given as such.

A number of intrusive and non-intrusive archaeological investigations have previously taken place within the Area BA1 Zones 1-4 site boundaries and in the wider vicinity between 2008-2023, due to the high archaeological potential of the area. Within the site boundary these comprise:

- A desk-based assessment and geophysical survey on Land North of Baldock; Site 2a, 2b and 3 in July 2008 (Abrams 2008);
- Further geophysical survey (North Baldock, Stratascan) in June 2016 (Davies 2016);
- A further desk-based assessment (Land North of Baldock) in August 2016 (Meckseper 2016);
- Archaeological evaluation via a programme of trial trenching (Land adjacent to Bygrave Road, Baldock) conducted by MOLA between October and December 2016 (Finn and Muldowney 2017);
- An additional phase of geophysical survey (Site South of Ashwell Road, Baldock, North Hertfordshire) conducted in June and July 2023 (Gallagher *et al* 2023).

In the wider vicinity, these comprise:

- An archaeological trial trench evaluation and geophysical survey on the A505 Baldock bypass undertaken in January-February 2003 (Albion Archaeology 2003);
- An archaeological trial trench evaluation on site 1b on Land at Wallington Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire undertaken in October 2008 (Newbould 2008);
- An archaeological trial trench evaluation on Site 5, Land at Royston Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire undertaken in March – April 2009 (Albion Archaeology 2009).

Prehistoric and Roman

Throughout North Hertfordshire, there are a large number of early prehistoric funerary monuments, located on elevated ground overlooking river valleys. As such, the Baldock area has been occupied since the prehistoric period, during the Neolithic period (Finn and Muldowney 2017) and more notably, during the Bronze Age period. Significant evidence includes the remains of a Bronze Age barrow cemetery containing a large number of barrows identified and/or recorded both in aerial photographs and during the trial trench evaluation for the A505 Bypass to the south of the site. (Albion Archaeology 2003). Further evidence of ring ditches and barrows within the site boundary were recorded on the results of the 2016 geophysical survey (Davies 2016) and during the course of the 2016 trial trench evaluation (Finn and Muldowney 2017). A small roundhouse associated with domestic activity was also identified partly located within the boundary of the proposed development site (Meckseper 2016).

Further investigation demonstrated that the land north of Baldock continued to be occupied into the Iron Age and Roman period. Late Iron Age settlement including field systems with multiple areas of activity was recorded across the site (Finn and Muldowney 2017). A significant area of settlement activity is situated in and around Zone 5 to the east of Zone 4, identified on the results of the geophysical survey (Davies 2016) and during previous evaluation in 2016. A settlement and rectilinear enclosure field system present here suggests at least three phases of occupation which became more rectangular and structured in plan with each later phase through to the Roman period. This settlement lies within a broader landscape of enclosures, trackways and field boundaries which continued to be in use during the Roman period as suggested by the use and infilling of existing ditch systems. These features are currently under further trial trench investigation by MOLA as part of the proposed development.

Additional geophysical survey conducted in 2023 suggests related, possible contemporary, activity with the features identified in Zone 5, through the identification of linear anomalies in the form of large rectilinear enclosures and associated field boundaries within Zone 4 (Gallagher *et al* 2023).

With origins in the late Iron Age, the settlement at Baldock developed significantly into the Roman period, the status and extent of which were first recognised during excavations at the beginning of the 20th century and during further large-scale investigations in the 1960s and the 1970s. The settlement core was c.20ha in size and was located to the east of a major Roman Road between Braughing and Godmanchester (Margary RR22) (HHER4190). It was situated close to the river Ivel at the intersection of several prehistoric trackways, including the Icknield Way, and there is evidence for substantial structures and metalled streets at the site. The location of the Baldock Iron Age and Roman settlement is now a scheduled monument (Walls Field -NHLE1016305) and lies to the south of the proposed Area BA1 development site.

Saxon and medieval

Saxon settlement evidence in the form of Early Saxon sunken-featured buildings (SFB) (HHER6828) and associated postholes were excavated south of Blackhorse Farm to the south-west of the site. A large Roman pit, later converted into another Saxon SFB, was also recorded during archaeological excavation on Clothall Common (HHER13177) (Meckseper 2016).

Other evidence includes a probable Anglo-Saxon burial cut into a Bronze Age barrow recorded in 2016 during the evaluation across BA1 (Finn and Muldowney 2017). The re-use of Bronze Age and other prehistoric landscape features for Saxon burials is a well-documented practice for this period observed in various locations within the UK.

The medieval market town of Baldock was established by the Knights Templar and laid out along the crossing of the earlier prehistoric and Roman roads (Meckseper 2016).

A ditch enclosure interpreted as part of the early medieval Leper Hospital founded by the Knight Templars in 1200 is known to have existed on the north-eastern outskirts of medieval Baldock, south of the present Royston Road south-east of the site, as suggested by written sources and cropmarks from previous surveys. Trial trench evaluation and geophysical survey undertaken in 2008 and 2009 identified evidence of this enclosure and 19 east to west aligned burials were revealed, along with contemporary evidence of pitting and a well (Albion Archaeology 2009).

The town grew from the 16th century largely due to its proximity to the Great North Road and the town expanded to the south of the Icknield Way (Meckseper 2016). To the south of the site, medieval activity was also recorded in the form of paths/trackways, fields boundaries, ditches and cultivation marks (Newbould 2008) (Abrams

2008). Evidence for later medieval and post-medieval activity reflects continued agricultural use and cultivation.

Post-medieval and modern

Post-medieval settlement activity is concentrated around the core of the present day Baldock town centre to the south-west of the site, where several Grade II listed buildings dating to the post-medieval period still survive.

The land to the north and east of Baldock remained as agricultural fields during the post-medieval period and evidence of activity includes several field boundaries, pits and a small quantity of discrete features (Finn and Muldowney 2017). The 1847 Tithe map shows the site dissected by the road to Bygrave from the 18th century (Meckseper 2016). A number of other roads that cross the site on north to south and east to west alignments are also recorded and it is possible that they form some of the linear cropmarks visible on aerial photographs of the site.

Aside from the construction of the railway line, the landscape to the north of Baldock did not alter significantly in the 19th to the early-mid 20th century and the earliest OS Maps show the area existing as agricultural fields. There is a mixture of surviving medieval strip field boundaries, as well as several amalgamated large fields with irregular boundaries.

There is no modern housing development yet along the distinctive dogleg in Ashwell Road leading from Baldock to Bygrave at the beginning of the 20th century. Housing along this road was constructed in the 1930s and is first shown on the 25-inch map of 1937 (Meckseper 2016).

Undated

There are a large number of cropmarks on the proposed development site that have been identified from aerial photographs and confirmed by geophysical surveys, but not all have previously been subject to intrusive archaeological investigations. These are represented by ring ditches and barrows of possible prehistoric date. Other cropmarks comprise sub-rectangular enclosures and linear features (ditches) which could date from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Project aims

The aims of the evaluation were to:

- Further ground truth the results of the previous geophysical surveys and trial trench evaluation works;
- Further sample excavate any deposits on site in order to record the form, purpose, date, location, likely extent, localised depth and state of preservation of any archaeological remains on the site within the areas identified as being impacted upon by the works;
- Further investigate the buried archaeological remains in the areas of archaeological significance to inform the planning application and mitigation and to allow further investigation or requirement for preservation of in situ remains, if required. If further mitigation works are required as a result of the evaluation these will be agreed in a separate document;

- Ensure that the significance of the historic environment of the site is investigated, evidenced, recorded and made publicly accessible in line with National Planning Policy;
- Further define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required. Such priorities will be outlined in the East of England Regional Research Framework (East of England 2025).

The specific aims of the investigation were to:

- Further define and understand the anomalies and features identified in the geophysical survey, cropmarks and the previous phase of evaluation;
- Further define and understand in Zone 4 the Bronze Age funerary landscape and its relationship with the Iron Age, Roman and Saxon occupation of the landscape;
- Further define and understand the extent and character of the wider Iron Age and Romano-British landscape of the area including the different phases of land management of the agricultural hinterland across the site;
- Further investigate, define and understand in Zone 1 the settlement activity and predicted route of the Roman road along with the potential blocking of the road in the later post-Roman period;
- Further define and understand the medieval deserted settlement in Zone 3 identified in the previous evaluation works and to specifically investigate the possible trackways identified running through both Zones 2 and 3;
- Further understand the impact of past land uses and farming activities that have likely affected the state of preservation of the known archaeological remains;
- Refine the location and extent of colluvial/alluvial deposits in relation to the known paleochannel that is identified on site and define its relationship with the Iron Age and Roman occupation;
- Establish the potential for the survival of environmental evidence in Zones 1-4.

3.2 Research framework

Hertfordshire is included in the East of England Regional Research Framework (ALGAO East of England 2025), which provides a comprehensive chronological review of the historic environment as investigated so far within Hertfordshire and the East of England.

4 METHODOLOGY

The proposed development site was subject to further trial trench evaluation based on the results of the previous geophysical surveys (Abrams 2008, Davies 2016, Gallagher *et al* 2023) and evaluation works undertaken at the site (Newbould 2008, Albion Archaeology 2009, Finn and Muldowney 2017).

The evaluation comprised the excavation of 62 trenches measuring 50m, one trench measuring 30m in length, and one trench opened in two parts due to the presence of buried services, by 1.8m in width (Fig 2). As described in section 4.1.5. of the WSI, 13 trench locations were moved in relation to the original plan provided by HCUK due to the presence of known services and environmental restrictions, maintaining the coverage of the geophysical data (MOLA 2024a).

All trenches were scanned by Cable Avoidance Tools (CAT) and Genny by a suitably trained and qualified individual prior to the commencement of the trench strip to identify any unmapped or unplanned services within the immediate vicinity of the area. All works were undertaken in accordance with HSG47 Avoiding danger from underground services (HSE 2014).

The trench locations were accurately surveyed before excavation and were located using a Leica Survey Grade RTK GPS operating to an accuracy of +/- 0.05m to Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum. After excavation, each trench was photographed and further surveyed to record its location and depth, with all stratigraphic deposits recorded whether archaeological features were present or not.

All trenches were excavated by a 14t 360-degree mechanical tracked machine fitted with a 1.8m toothless ditching bucket under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The topsoil and subsoil were stripped and stored separately and kept at safe distance from the trench edge. Both ends of the trench were battered back for safe access and egress.

Machine excavation was conducted in successive level spits to the depth of the uppermost significant archaeological horizon or interface with the underlying geological (natural) deposits, whichever was encountered first. When determining the level to which machine excavation could be carried out it was not assumed that the most recent archaeological remains on the site were the least important. Care was taken not to damage archaeological deposits through excessive use of mechanical excavation.

Archaeological features/deposits were cleaned and investigated using appropriate hand tools. The features were then GPS surveyed and recorded both in plan and section in accordance with the evaluation WSI (MOLA 2024a).

The trenches were not backfilled without prior agreement by LEADS.

Recording was carried out on pro forma recording sheets based on the Museum of London 'single context' recording system, further information on which can be found in the Museum of London Archaeological Site Manual (Spence 1994). Comprehensive details of the recording techniques adhered to on site during the evaluation are set out in Section 4.6 of the WSI (MOLA 2024a).

All identified artefacts, and industrial and faunal remains were collected and retained. All recovered finds will be cleaned, processed and analysed by finds specialists to produce the finds reports that will be integrated in the final report.

Samples of significant deposits were taken as determined in the WSI, including features devoid of dateable material and those which contained significant quantities of environmental or charcoal/burnt material. At the request of LEADS an additional number of samples were also taken to further support any artefactual recovery, this included cases where features were found to be infilled with multiple fills, and multiple samples from the same feature were recovered.

Following completion of the fieldwork and reporting, born-digital data, such as this report, digital photographs, database and GIS data, with appropriate metadata, will be deposited with a CoreTrustSeal Repository, currently the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), making the archive publicly accessible. Each report, once approved, is subsequently made available for inclusion and publication by digital means through the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) via OASIS V. Digital archiving will follow the and guidelines outlined in MOLA's *Digital Data Management Policy and Procedures* (MOLA forthcoming)

The works were carried out in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (MOLA 2014), as well as with national standards given by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (2022), *Standard for archaeological field evaluation*, and *Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2023a and b), as well as the Historic England guidance document *MoRPHE* (HE 2015).

5 EVALUATION RESULTS

5.1 General stratigraphy

A total of 64 trenches were excavated during the evaluation, containing stratigraphic deposits of topsoil and subsoil of varying depths, overlying the natural substrate.

In Zone 1 the natural substrate was mainly formed by firm grey-white chalk, with occasional patches of mid orange-brown sand, between 0.40m and 0.80m of depth.

In the southern areas of Zones 2 and 3, natural substrate was similar to Zone 1, whilst in the northern area the natural substrate was formed by light yellow to brown-grey clay with small to medium sub-angular flint and frequent chalk flecks. The depth varied between 0.40m to 0.65m.

The topsoil and subsoil had little variation within Zones 1 to 3. The first was mainly composed by mid firm to firm dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional chalk flecks and small sub-angular flint, between 0.25m and 0.30m in depth. Subsoil was formed by mid firm to firm yellow/orange/grey-brown silty sand with frequent chalk flecks and occasional sub-angular flint, between 0.06m and 0.80m in thickness.

In Zone 4, the topsoil was composed by friable, mid grey-brown silty loam sand, with occasional medium rounded chalk and frequent small chalk flecks, between 0.20m and 0.40m in thickness. The topsoil was composed by firm, mid orange-brown silty clay, with frequent small chalk flecks, with a thickness between 0.14m and 0.40m. It was not present in trench 159.

All archaeological features identified, were cut into natural deposits or in other cases found to cut each other, in these circumstances a stratigraphic relationship was identified where possible. Plough scarring was evident in places, truncating the archaeological horizon and natural deposits. This likely accounted for the shallow remains of some features, and in some cases distorted the edges of features making the identification of their true extent difficult.

5.2 Overview of the results

Of the 64 trenches excavated, 50 revealed features, which were confirmed or had the potential to be archaeological in origin whilst the remaining 14 (107, 113, 121, 127, 128, 129, 133, 135, 137, 140, 139, 141, 155 and 162) were found to be devoid of archaeological remains or contained features which were found to be geological in nature after further investigation.

Archaeological remains were distributed throughout the evaluation area, encompassing evidence from the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods. Key findings included seven probable Bronze Age barrows, enclosures, field systems and associated ditches and pits dating from the late Iron Age to Roman period, as well as traces of early medieval activity in the north-eastern area of the site.

The following results provide a summary of the significant features identified and investigated during the evaluation. Results are presented chronologically, rather than by geographical location on the site or numerically by trench number. This is to enable a focus of the results into periods of activity.

Not all context numbers are referred to in the text or are illustrated but will be included in the archive along with detailed descriptions in the final report.

Deposit and fill numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers are given in [square brackets], where an equal sign (=) is encountered, it implies the contexts are a part of the same feature within the same trench. Trench features, contexts and drawing numbers are prefixed by their relevant trench numbers.

5.2.1 Bronze Age

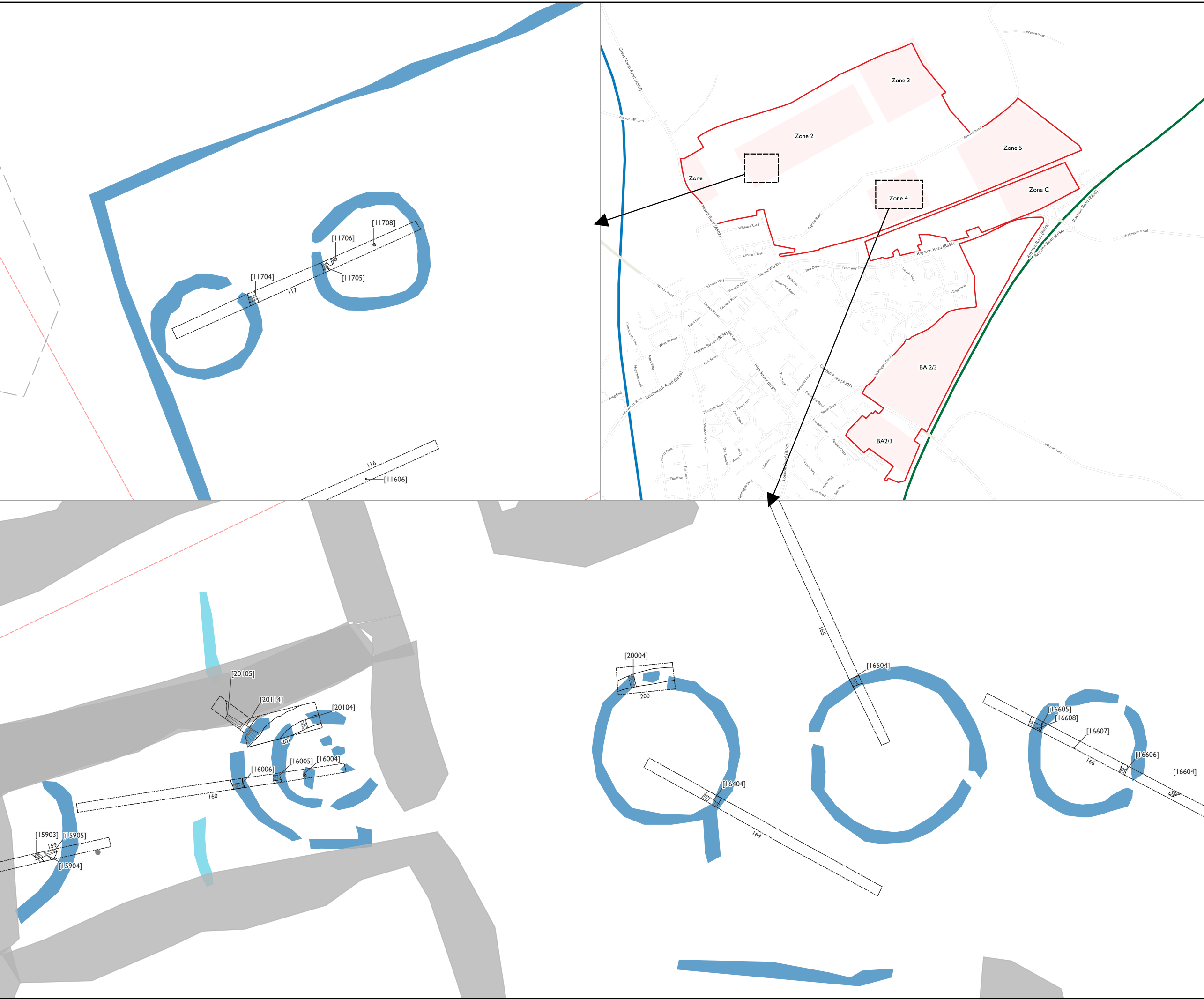
Two areas containing probable Bronze Age barrows were observed in the evaluation area (Fig 3).

In the south-east area of Zone 2, two ring ditches were identified and investigated in Trench 117. The first ring ditch [11704] was located in the south-west of the trench. It measured 1.58m in width and 0.39m in depth, with concave sides and a concave base. The second ring ditch [11705] was situated to the north-east and exhibited evidence of rooting disturbance. This feature was 0.80m wide and 0.10m deep, with an uneven base. No artefacts were recovered from the fills of either ditch. Within the centre of ring ditch [11705], a cremation [11708] was investigated, which was absent of datable finds. It contained at least one individual, although it was not possible to access the biological profile, apart from the age at death of at least six years old. Some identified lower limb bones, tibia and fibula, showed evidence of pathological changes (healed periostitis). Temperatures above 600°C were suggested by the white or off-white colour of the majority of the fragments, whilst some bone fragments presented light and dark blue colours implying lower temperatures.

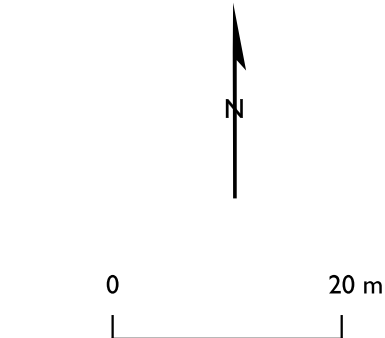
To the north of Trench 117, a boundary ditch [11804] was identified in Trench 118. It was aligned east to west, had straight, near-vertical sides and a sloping base tapering at the centre. It measured 1.82m in width and 1.04m in depth and contained three silty sandy chalk fills (11810), (11811), and (11812). Two ceramics loomweights of unknown date alongside 74 sherds of pottery dated between the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age were recovered from the top fill (11810). It is likely associated with the nearby Bronze Age barrows, located to the south and with the nearby enclosure to the west.

In Zone 4, five probable Bronze Age ring ditches were investigated across Trenches 159, 160, 164, 165, 166, 200, and 201. Trenches 200 and 201 were opened at the request of the county archaeologist to locate termini and identify possible entrances to the ring ditches, though none were observed.

FIGURE 3 // Bronze Age Round Barrows



- The Site
- Application Area
 - Zones
 - Section
 - Extent of Context
 - Limit of Excavation
 - Break of Slope
 - Hachure
 - Trench
- Geophysics
- Ferrous Point
 - Archaeology Probable
 - Archaeology Possible
 - Ferrous Area



PROJECT // P24-204 - Land at Baldock

DESCRIPTION // Probable Bronze age round barrows in Zone 2 and Zone 4

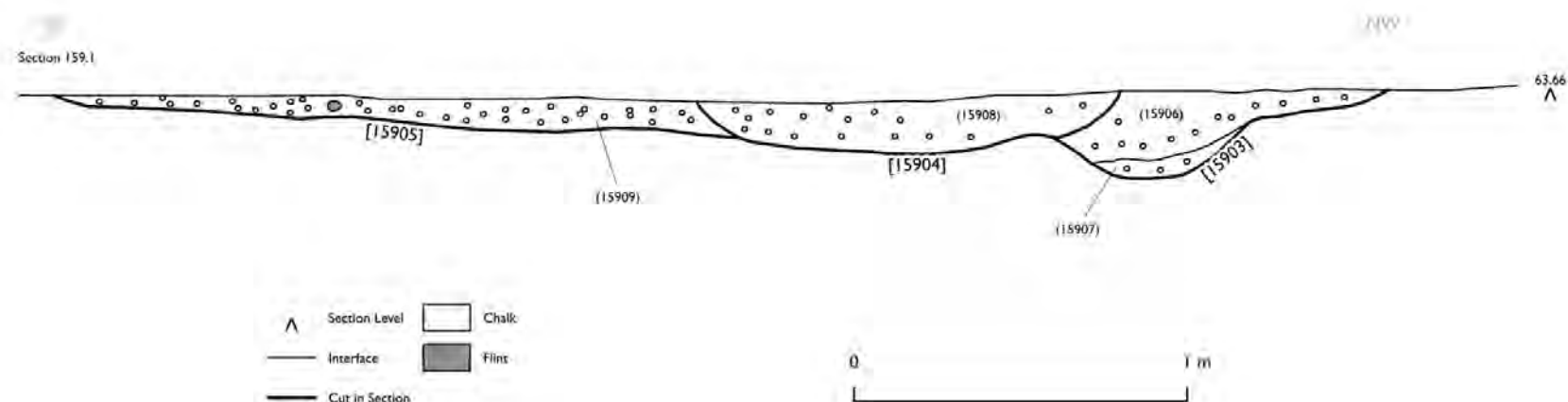
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In Trench 159, two ditches [15903] and [15904] and a pit [15905] were recorded towards the east end of the trench. A geophysical survey identified a possible round barrow corresponding to these features, but agricultural disturbance, mole drains, and the absence of datable finds complicated the interpretation. Ditch [15903] was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 0.65m wide and 0.26m deep, with V-shaped straight sides and a flat base. It contained two silty stone fills, with the latest containing animal bone. Ditch [15904], also aligned north-west to south-east, measured 1.28m wide and 0.15m deep, with concave sides and a flat base. It contained a single mid grey-brown stony silt fill (15908) and truncated both ditch [15903] and pit [15905] (Figs 4 and 5). Pit [15905] was sub-circular with a flat base, measuring 1.60m in visible width and 0.10m in depth. It contained a single mid yellow brown silty stone fill (15909).



Ditch [15904] truncating ditch [15903] and pit [15905], scale 2m, looking south Fig 4



Section of ditches [15903] and [15904], and pit [15905] Fig 5

In Trench 160, one pit and two probable ring ditches were investigated, corresponding to the geophysical survey results. A sub-circular pit [16004] in the east of the trench measured 0.54m wide and 0.20m deep, with an uneven base. It was heavily disturbed by plough scarring along its southern edge. Ring ditch [16005] extended into Trench 201, where it was also identified as [20104]. The ditch varied in width between 1.40m and 1.65m and in depth from 0.43m to 0.47m. It featured gradual sides and an uneven base to the south and a concave base to the north. Two fills were recorded, with the basal fill comprising chalk pellets in silty sand and the upper fill a sandy silt matrix. A small fragment of ceramic building material was recovered from the upper fill (20106). Approximately 6m west of [16005], an outer ring ditch [16006] and [20105] was identified (Fig 6). This ditch varied in width from 2.10m to 6.80m and in depth from 0.23m to 0.56m. It featured an uneven concave base to the south and a flat base to the north, with two fills in the south and four in the north, all likely resulting from silting processes. Three sherds of Iron Age pottery, alongside four sherds of late Iron Age/early Roman and one sherd dated to the Iron Age/Roman period were recovered from the top fill (20108). This outer ring ditch was later recut to the north [20114], though no artefacts were recovered from the recut.



Ring ditch [20105] truncating ring ditch [20114], scale 3m, looking north-west Fig 6

Ring ditch [16404] and [20004] was investigated in Trenches 164 and 200, being 30m in diameter (external). The ditch measured between 2.07m and 3.24m in width and 0.27m to 0.47m in depth, being wider and deeper to the south-east. It had straight sides and a flat base to the south-east, while the north-west end exhibited shallower, uneven sides and a concave base. No datable finds were recovered from the fills.

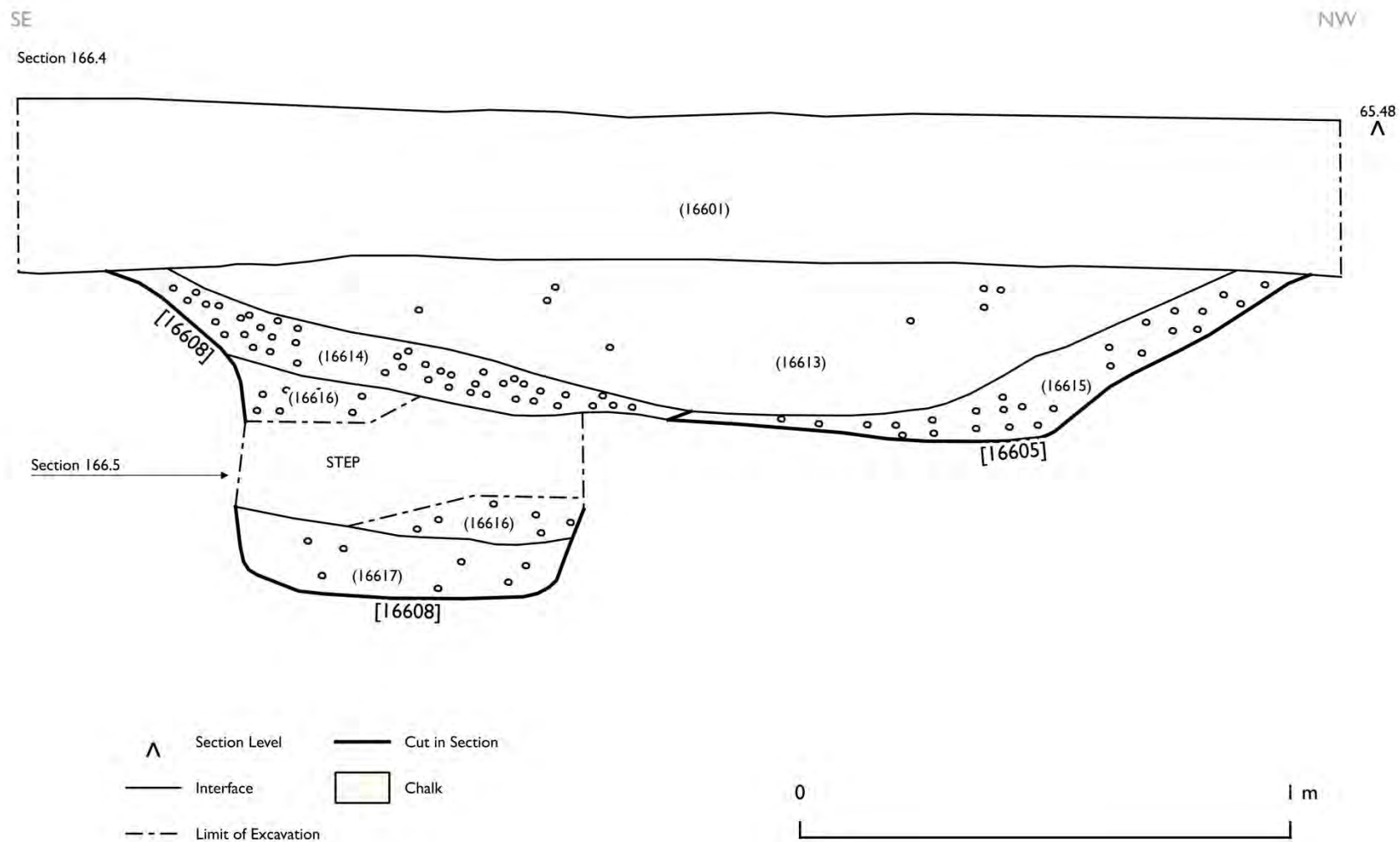
In Trench 165, ring ditch [16504] was recorded approximately 10m from the south-east edge of the trench. This feature was aligned north-east to south-west, measuring 1.60m wide and 0.36m deep. It had gently concave sides and a concave base, with two fills (16506) and (16507). The lower fill (16506) comprised redeposited natural material, while the upper fill (16507) consisted of mid brown silty clay. No dateable artefacts were recovered from either fill, but (16507) contained animal bone.

Ring ditch [16605] in Trench 166 corresponded to a geophysical anomaly, though its curvature was only apparent at the south-west end. This ditch was 2.43m wide and 0.36m deep, with straight sides and a flat base. It contained three fills (16613), (16614),

and (16615), with the first two interpreted as the result of erosion. The ditch truncated an earlier posthole [16608], which had nearly vertical sides and a flat base (Fig 7). No finds were recovered from these features. Ditch [16606] was likely part of the same round barrow as [16605]. It corresponded roughly to the geophysical survey though root action and the ploughing of the soil diffculted the visualisation in plan. It was less wide and less deep, being 1.1m in width and 0.22m in depth, with concave sides and base. Assuming [16605] and [16606] were part of the same round barrow, it would be 20m in diameter (external).

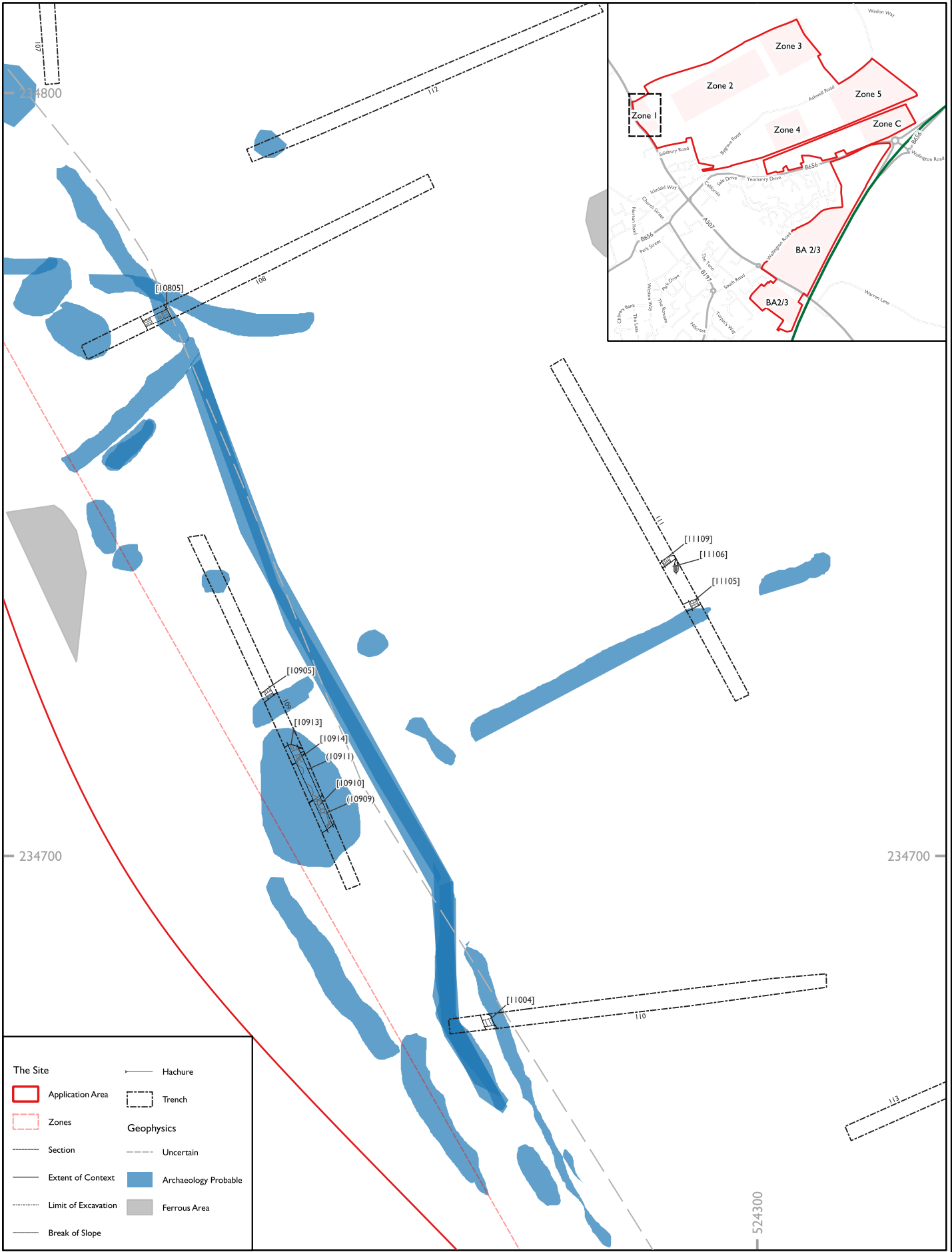


Ring ditch [16605] truncating posthole [16608], scale 2m, looking south-west Fig 7



Section of ditch [16605] and posthole [16608] Fig 8

FIGURE 9 // Iron Age - Roman Activity, Zone I



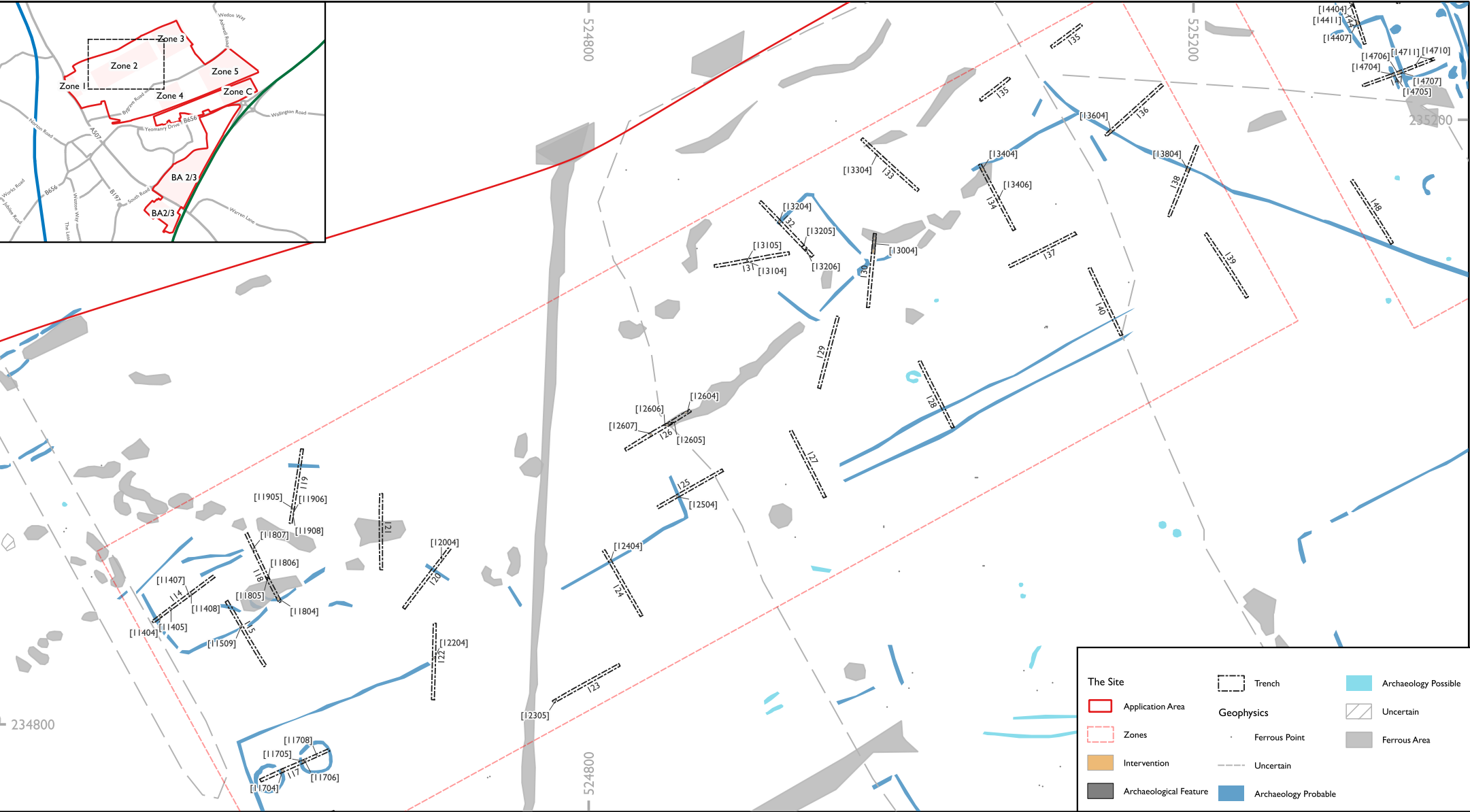
PROJECT // P24-204 - Land at Baldock

DESCRIPTION // Iron age to Roman activity in Zone I

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FIGURE 10 // Iron Age - Roman Activity, Zone 2



0 100 m



PROJECT // P24-204 - Land at Baldock

DESCRIPTION // Iron Age to Roman activity in Zone 2 of the evaluation area

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5.2.2 Iron Age to Roman

Zones 1 and 2 contained evidence of continuous occupation spanning the Iron Age to the Roman period. Key features included sub-square enclosures, field systems, field boundaries, and quarry pits (Fig 9 and 10).

Boundary ditch [10805], aligned roughly parallel to the Great North Road (Roman road of Ermine Street) in a north-west to south-east orientation, measured 3.6m in width and 1.04m in depth (Fig 11). It had steep, concave-sloping sides and a possible U-shaped base, the latter confirmed through auguring due to health and safety restrictions. The fill (10807) was a soft mid red-brown clay with inclusions of cobbles, flint, and small flecks of charcoal and chalk. Sherds of pottery, potentially dating to the late Iron Age or Roman period, were recovered from this context. This ditch appeared to have been maintained over a long period of time. It seemed to enclose a complex of quarry pits to the west, observed in Trench 109. It contained 58 sherds of pottery dated to the late Iron Age/early Roman period, alongside nine sherds of Roman pottery.



Boundary ditch [10805], scale 2m, looking north-west Fig 11

In Trench 109, a complex of irregular, intercutting pits, interpreted as a quarry system, was investigated (Figs 12 and 13). The largest pit, [10909], was at least 1.80m wide and over 1.20m deep, though its base was not fully achieved due to health and safety restrictions. It contained five distinct fills (10919), (10920), (10922), (10923), and (10924), comprising silty sand with chalk flecks and flint, with thicknesses varying between 0.40m and 0.80m. A smaller pit, [10910], was cut by [10909] and measured 1.0m in visible width and 0.50m in depth, filled by two fills (10925) and (10926) of soft, light grey-white silty chalk with frequent small chalk inclusions. Most of the pottery collected across the site was in Trench 109, from quarry pits [10905], [10909], [10910], [10911], [10913], and [10915] with a total of 899 sherds. Eighteen sherds of late Iron Age/early Roman pottery were recovered from the topsoil (10901), likely suggesting agricultural activity being in contact with archaeological features underground. Most of the pottery recovered from the quarry pits [10905], [10909], [10910], [10911], [10913], and [10915] dated from the late Iron Age to early Roman period, with a total of 520 sherds. A copper-alloy penannular brooch, likely dating from the Roman period, as well as a late Iron Age/early Roman ceramic vessel body sherd reworked into a spindle

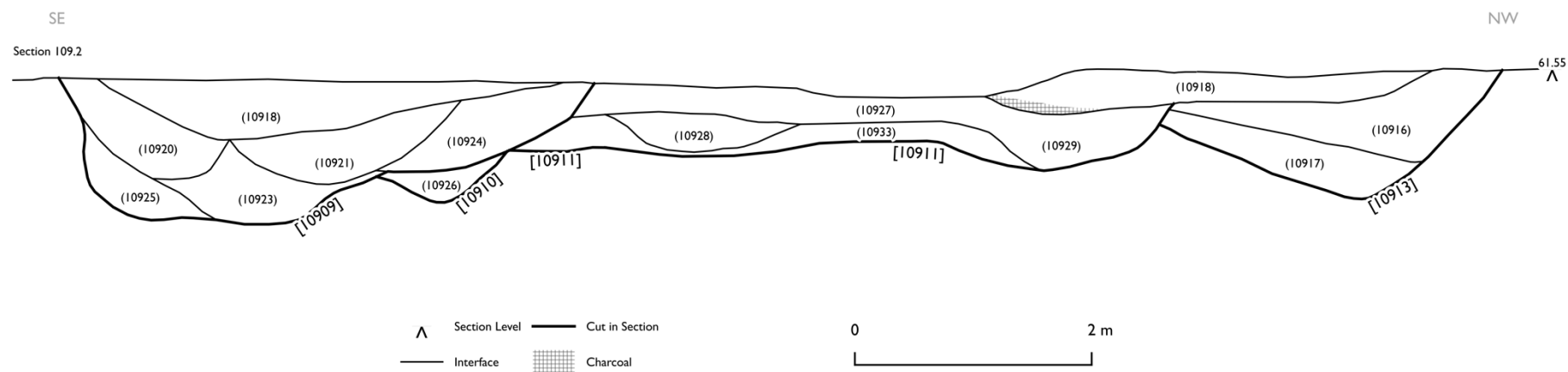
whorl was recovered from fill (10927) in quarry pit [10911]. Fills (10921) and (10930) in quarry pits [10909] and [10911] produced two incomplete ceramics loomweights, the first dates from the Iron Age, whilst the second one is possibly from the Saxon period.



Quarry pit complex in Trench 109, scale 2m, looking north-west Fig 12

Three ditches were investigated in Trench 111, most likely associated with the archaeological features described before. Ditches [11105] and [11109], east to west aligned, were between 1m and 0.75m wide and between 0.41m and 0.22m deep, with concave bases. They were filled by a single silty sand fill (11108) and (11111), respectively.

In the north-eastern area of Zone 2, sections of a probable Iron Age boundary ditch were investigated in Trenches 134, 136, and 138. In Trench 134, ditch [13404] was aligned south-east to north-east and measured 2.20m wide by 0.73m deep, with steep sides and a concave base. Further segments [13608] and [13804], in Trenches 136 and 138, measured between 1.78m and 2.20m in width and 0.78m to 0.82m in depth, containing silty fills. Ditch [13804] had a single fill, while the other segments contained two fills each. Although no finds were recovered from these specific fills, Iron Age pottery was previously identified in other sections of this ditch during earlier evaluation works (Finn and Muldowney 2017).



Section of quarry pit complex in Trench 109 Fig 13