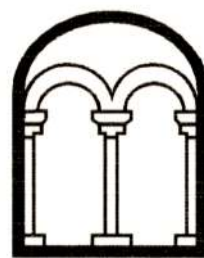


**LAND BETWEEN BUSH WOOD AND ROKEY WOOD
REED
HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION
INTERIM REPORT**

Albion
archaeology



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION
INTERIM REPORT**

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Preface

All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and was prepared solely for the benefit of the client. The material contained in this report does not necessarily stand on its own and should not be relied upon by any third party. This document should not be used for any other purpose without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and the prior written authority of Albion Archaeology (a trading unit of Central Bedfordshire Council). Any person/party relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Albion Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Albion Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the persons/party by whom it was commissioned. This document is limited by the state of knowledge at the time it was written.

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This report was prepared by Ian Turner, with contributions from Jackie Wells (artefacts and animal bone) and Irene Sala (plant remains), and was edited by Jeremy Oetgen. Digitisation of site drawings and illustration were undertaken by Joan Lightning (Geomatics Technician).

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Key Terms

The following abbreviations are used throughout this report:

HER	Historic Environment Record (Hertfordshire)
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
OD	Ordnance Datum
PD	Project Design
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

This is a report on an archaeological investigation undertaken as a condition of planning permission for an agricultural reservoir between Bush Wood and Rokey Wood, Reed, Hertfordshire. The investigation revealed indeterminate activity of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date, part of an Iron Age settlement, parallel cultivation trenches (probably Roman), and a medieval enclosure system.

The few late Bronze Age/early Iron Age features were found in association with later Iron Age settlement, but were too ephemeral to determine the relationship between the two. The small Iron Age settlement was enclosed and predates the end of the 1st century BC. The recovered artefacts and level of preservation were fairly standard for small Iron Age settlements in the region.

An undated but extensive system of parallel, steep-sided, flat-based cultivation trenches, set c.6m apart, was found in all areas except the Iron Age settlement, whose earthworks may still have been extant. The trenches contained residual late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery but post-dated an Iron Age boundary ditch, whilst they had certainly gone out of use by the medieval period. No Roman artefacts were recovered, but these trenches are commonly interpreted as the remains of Roman viticulture, and the examples at Reed were either late Iron Age or Roman in date.

The medieval remains appear to have been part of a wider system of smaller enclosures, rather than communal open fields. These might have been part of a seigniorial farmstead attached to a moated manor house in Bush Wood – perhaps previously attached to the conjectured motte and bailey castle at Periwinkle Hill to the north-east of the site.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Planning permission (22/00910/FP) was granted by North Hertfordshire District Council for the construction of an agricultural reservoir on land between Bush Wood and Rokey Wood, Reed, Hertfordshire.

Given the high archaeological potential of the development site, the Historic Environment Advisor of Hertfordshire County Council's Natural, Historic and Built Environment Team advised that the full planning consent should contain provision for the archaeological monitoring of groundworks for the development, followed by an appropriate level of analysis, reporting and archiving.

The planning permission contained a condition pertaining to archaeology as follows:

Condition 6.

(A) No demolition/development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and;

- 1. The programme and methodology of the site investigation and recording.*
- 2. The programme for post investigation assessment.*
- 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.*
- 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation.*
- 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation.*
- 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.*

(B) The demolition/development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A).

(C) The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the programme of archaeological works required by the condition. This was completed in accordance with the written scheme of investigation (WSI) (Savills 2024) and subsequent Project Design (PD) (Albion Archaeology 2024), which were approved in advance by the Local Planning Authority. This report presents the results of the archaeological investigation.

1.2 Site Location

The site lies c.1km south-east of the village of Reed, comprising a roughly rectangular area of c.3ha, between Rokey Wood to the east and Bush Wood to the west (Fig. 1). A



farm track partially borders the site on the south, east and north sides. Wisbridge Solar Farm lies on land to the south of the site.

The land is relatively level at c.152m OD, 0.5km south of a ridge running approximately east–west. The land falls away sharply to the north of the ridge towards the town of Royston, sitting at c.69m OD. The terrain to the south is more gently undulating, with a series of ridges and valleys stretching across the landscape towards Buntingford.

The bedrock geology comprises Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation¹. The superficial geology comprises Lowestoft Formation Diamicton.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

An archaeological desk-based assessment for Wisbridge Solar Farm (Archaeological Solutions 2019) considered the area to have high potential for archaeological remains dating to the prehistoric period (specifically the Bronze Age) and the medieval period, with moderate potential for Roman remains, and a low potential for significant Anglo-Saxon, post-medieval and later remains. The data from the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record was updated for the WSI (Savills 2024) and this contained nothing to contradict or alter the earlier assessment. The archaeological and historical background to the site is summarised below.

1.3.1 Prehistoric

There are six assets on the HER of prehistoric date, five of which are recorded as the ring ditches of late Neolithic to early Bronze Age round barrows. These are visible as crop-marks, with one recorded as ploughed out. One (HER17747) is located at the northern edge of the site; the others are more than 700m distant, located to the north, east, and south.

There is only one Iron Age record (HER6515). This is the find-spot of some late Iron Age pottery located more than 0.5km to the east of the site.

1.3.2 Roman

The only Roman record is for the discovery of the Barkway Hoard (HER2233). This cache of bronze and silver objects was found in the 18th century during quarrying within Rokey Wood, on the eastern edge of the site. The items might have come from a temple or shrine, and they are now in the British Museum².

1.3.3 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

There are two early-medieval records: one to the west in Reed records the Anglo-Saxon origins of the parish church; and another c.600m to the east of the site, records the discovery of a likely Saxo-Norman building during the installation of a gas pipeline in 1980.

There are three medieval scheduled monuments nearby:

¹ British Geological Survey, Geology Viewer, <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/> (accessed 18/03/2025)

² Barkway Local History Group, The Barkway Roman Hoard, <https://www.barkwayhistory.com/view-details/2032/the-barkway-roman-hoard.htm> (accessed 18/03/2025)



- Gannock Grove Moated Site and Hollow-way (NHLE 1010907) c.450m south-west of the site;
- Double Moat and Fishpond, Queenbury, in Reed village (NHLE 1010754) c.900m west of the site;
- Bush Wood Moated Site and Hollow-way (NHLE 1017608), located immediately west of the site.

Thirteen non-designated records of medieval date exist on the Hertfordshire HER for the area, which pertain to the medieval village of Reed and its immediate rural landscape. They include fishponds, remains of ridge and furrow cultivation, trackways, and the possible remains of moated sites. Immediately to the north-east of the site is a postulated moat or motte and bailey castle known as ‘Periwinkle Hill’ (HER855). Now largely ploughed out and poorly preserved, this is not designated. However, it was mapped as an earthwork on successive Ordnance Survey map editions (*e.g.* the 25-inch 1st edition map sheet Hertfordshire IX.1, published in 1878³). A speculative reconstruction of the site as an earthwork and timber castle features on a nearby interpretation panel, but this interpretation is conjectural.

1.3.4 Post-medieval and later

Ten post-medieval HER records mostly pertain to buildings in the village of Reed. Two of the records are for crop-marks of ditches and a hollow-way, which lie respectively c.550m and c.700m east of the site.

There are two recorded sites of Second World War installations on the ridge north of the site: a searchlight emplacement (HER30392) at Reed; and a radio monitoring station (HER31347) at Barkway.

1.3.5 Undated

There are twelve records for undated features, generally comprising crop-marks of enclosures, hollow-ways and ditches.

³ National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/view/107227483> (accessed 19/03/2025)



2. METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

Detailed method statements for the investigation were given in the PD (Albion Archaeology 2024, sections 2 and 6).

2.1 Methodological Standards

The project adhered throughout to the standards and requirements set out in the following documents:

Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2017, 3rd edn)
ALGAO (East)	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (Gurney 2003)
Chartered Institute for Archaeologists	<i>Charter and by-law</i> (2022)
	<i>Code of conduct</i> (2022)
	<i>Standard for archaeological monitoring and recording</i> (2023)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2020)
Hertfordshire Museums	<i>Hertfordshire Archaeological Archive Standards: A Countywide Standard for the Creation, Compilation and Transfer of Archaeological Archives in Hertfordshire</i> (2017)
Historic England	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (2015)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation</i> (2nd edn, 2015)

2.2 Implementation

Archaeological monitoring and investigation were undertaken between 19th August and 8th November 2024.

Three separate areas were subject to archaeological monitoring (Fig. 1). These comprised:

- Central reservoir area, located in the north of the site;
- Eastern reinstatement area;
- Western reinstatement area.

The areas had been stripped prior to the start of this investigation in preparation for a larger reservoir. However, planning permission 22/00910/FP was for a smaller reservoir, which required the two reinstatement areas to be returned to agricultural use.

Removal of the overburden was carried out by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver under archaeological supervision. Ground-reduction to formation level ceased at the top of undisturbed geological deposits or archaeological remains, whichever was encountered first. In the reinstatement areas some subsoil was retained *in situ* below formation level (Fig. 2), and any archaeological remains below that subsoil were also retained. The archaeological features or deposits that were revealed elsewhere were fully investigated and recorded in accordance with methods outlined in the WSI and PD.

The fieldwork was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Hertfordshire County Council's Historic Environment Advisory Team.



2.3 **Project Objectives**

The initial objectives of the archaeological investigation (Albion Archaeology 2024) were to monitor all groundworks and investigate the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance, and quality of archaeological features and deposits present. Dependent on the nature of any remains that were revealed, specific research aims would be derived from the East of England Regional Research Framework⁴, which continues earlier frameworks and agendas.

Contrary to predictions, there was very little Bronze Age evidence but there more numerous remains of Iron Age settlement, an array of undated (probably Roman) cultivation trenches and medieval features. Therefore, revised objectives for the Iron Age, Roman and medieval periods have been identified as listed below.

- LBA-MIA 02: Should the Middle Iron Age really be thought of as a distinct period?
- LBA-MIA 04: How can we increase our understanding of the Early to Middle Iron Age transition?
- LBA-MIA 05: How can we increase our understanding of the familial and communal organisation?
- LBA-MIA 16: What crops were grown and which animals reared during this period?
- LIA-Rom 05: How can we better understand the late Iron Age to Roman transition?
- LIA-Rom 16: Can we better distinguish between late Iron Age and early Roman features and sites?
- Med (Rural) 03: How can we improve our understanding of medieval agricultural practices?
- Med (Rural) 09: How can we characterise medieval rural settlement morphology and relationships?
- Med (Rural) 13: Can we clarify the dating, form and function of medieval rural moated sites?
- Med (Rural) 14: How can we characterise and explain medieval rural settlement change, evolution and abandonment?

2.4 **Project Archive**

In line with Historic England and Hertfordshire Museums guidelines, Albion Archaeology will seek to obtain ‘in principle’ agreement from the landowner to donate the recovered artefacts to the museum. On completion of the final report, the archive of materials (subject to the landowner’s permission) and accompanying records will be deposited with North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) Museum Service (the accession number is to be confirmed). The digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service and the DOI (digital object identifier) will be sent to the HER Team when the archive has been accepted.

⁴ <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/> (accessed 09/03/2025)



Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and the Archaeology Data Service. The OASIS reference number is cited on the title page of this document.

3. CONTEXTUAL RESULTS

This section describes the contextual information in chronological order. The associated artefacts and palaeoenvironmental evidence are discussed in Section 4.

The numerous features and deposits recorded on site were collated into Groups (indicated by a 'G' prefix). The Groups were then assigned to Land-use elements (indicated by an 'L' prefix) based on their similar character, date and/or location. The Land-use elements were assigned to chronological Phases based on the dated artefacts they contained and/or their stratigraphic and spatial relationships to other, dated features. These assignments are summarised in Table 1; a full catalogue can be found in Appendix 1. When individual features within a Group are referred to in the text below, square brackets *e.g.* [327] are used for feature numbers, and round brackets *e.g.* (328) for their fills.

Phase	L	Land-use element description	Group
1: Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age	L1	Indeterminate activity area	G1–G3
	L2	Indeterminate activity area	G4
2: Iron Age	L3	Enclosure and roundhouses	G5–G15, G18–G23, G25, G33, G34
	L4	Enclosure and roundhouse ditches	G16, G26
	L5	Ditches recut and pits added	G17, G24, G27–G32
3: Undated (probably Roman)	L6	Cultivation trenches	G36, G37
4: Medieval	L7	Indeterminate activity area	G38–G41, G43 G45–G47
	L8	Ditch system	G42, G44, G48–G51
5: Post-medieval and later	L9	Ditch, land drains and a posthole	G52–G54, G58–G60
6: Geological and bioturbation features	L11	Geological features and tree-throws	G35, G55, G61
7: Overburden	L10	Overburden	G56–G57

Table 1: Summary of phasing

The features of archaeological interest were 'negative' or 'cut' features, generically comprising:

- Ditches – generally interpreted as boundary features or drains.
- Gullies – less substantial than ditches and possibly associated with structures.
- Pits – discrete features for a range of purposes.
- Postholes – small pits that were dug to receive an upstanding wooden post that has since rotted or been removed.

Possible roundhouses have been identified, defined by the gullies that once encircled them, and there was one instance of a four-post structure. A parallel arrangement of ditches of similar profile is thought to represent cultivation trenches. There was also evidence of recent agricultural improvement (land drainage) and groundworks. Some amorphous features were interpreted as being caused by bioturbation, including tree rooting.

The features generally contained similar deposits of silty clay with occasional stones; they ranged in colour from mid-orange-grey to dark grey-brown or brown-grey, and



only significant variations are noted below. The undisturbed geological deposits comprised light grey-yellow silty clay with chalk inclusions.

3.1 Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (Phase 1)

The earliest evidence of human activity dated from the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (Figs 3 and 8; Photograph 1). Two distinct Land-use elements of dispersed features containing late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery were located: L1 was in the western reinstatement area and L2 in the eastern area. Some late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery was also present residually within many of the Phase 2 (Iron Age) settlement features.

3.1.1 Indeterminate activity area L1

The features in L1 were located in the north of the western reinstatement area. They comprised a small pit, a short gully and four postholes that formed an approximate L-shape in plan. However, it was not clear if they had any structural association. Sufficient pottery was contained within the features for them to be considered broadly domestic in character, located in the vicinity of settlement.

Pit G1

Pit G1 was oval with a shallow, concave profile, up to 1.25m across and 0.17m deep. Its fill was relatively dark (grey-black).

Gully G2

Gully G2 was slightly curving at its west end, with steep sides and a concave base. It was 4.3m long, 0.35m wide and 0.17m deep. Its purpose is uncertain, but it might indicate the position of a hurdle windbreak.

Four postholes G3

These four postholes ranged from circular to oval in plan, measuring up to 0.57m across and up to 0.20m deep. Their close proximity suggests that the posts formed part of a structure of unknown function. They might have been in pairs.

3.1.2 Indeterminate activity area L2

Activity area L2 was located in the south of the eastern reinstatement area.

Two pits and posthole G4 (including a possible cooking pit)

One of the pits was oval (Figs 3 and 8, [327]), with concave sides and an uneven base. It was 1.2m long, 0.65m wide and 0.2m deep and contained frequent heat-cracked medium to large stones, within a dark brown-grey silty clay deposit. The sides of the pit had not been affected by the heat, suggesting that the stones had been heated elsewhere before being placed in the pit. This type of pit with heated stones might have been used as an earth oven for cooking food, although no animal bones or charred seeds were found in L2.

An adjoining small, circular pit might have held a post used to assist the cooking process. It was 0.25m in diameter and 0.03m deep. A second small pit (Figs 3 and 8, [210]) c.12m to the north was circular, with a shallow, concave profile, 0.55m in diameter and 0.14m deep. Its function was unclear.



3.2 *Iron Age (Phase 2)*

The reservoir area contained an enclosed Iron Age settlement comprising at least three roundhouses and associated features, including a four-post structure (Figs 4 and 8; Photographs 2–13). Three roundhouses lay within a rectangular enclosure attached to the west side of an earlier boundary. One roundhouse lay just outside the enclosure to the north-east. The dating relied on the pottery recovered from the features, corroborating the presumed Iron Age date of the roundhouses.

3.2.1 *Roundhouses and enclosures (L3)*

At least three roundhouses and a four-post structure were associated with ditches that appeared to form a contemporary settlement and enclosure system.

Enclosure ditches G5, G6, G7 and G15

Ditch G6 was probably a field boundary that established the axis of the settlement, although there was no trace of it to the south within the western reinstatement area. It had very steep sides with a narrow base, measuring up to 0.5m wide and 0.3m deep.

A wide, shallow ditch G7 extended north-north-east of ditch G6, on a similar line. It might have been the same feature, but it had shallow concave sides with a flat base and was 1.7m wide and 0.16m deep. Its precise relationship with G6 was obscured by a later feature G17. The ditch terminated to the north, leaving a c.7m-wide gap between it and ditch G15, which was presumably a crossing point.

On the other side of the gap, ditch G15 apparently formed the northern arm of an enclosure. It had concave sides that were variable in their steepness, and a concave base. It was up to 1.3m wide and 0.5m deep. The south side of the enclosure was possibly defined by a ditch that was later recut by L4 ditch G16 (see below); if so, the enclosure would have been 35m north–south and at least 23m east–west, with an entrance at the east end.

Ditch G5 to the south-east was broadly aligned north–south, curving towards the other ditches at its north end, which may be a sign that it was a related boundary. The ditch was concave in profile, up to 0.4m wide and 0.2m deep.

Roundhouse G8, pits G9 and G10, and postholes G11 and G12

Compared with the other roundhouses, gully G8 contained the darkest-coloured, brown-grey deposit. It also encircled the largest number of internal features, comprising two pits (G9 and G10) and eight postholes (G11 and G12), although there was no stratigraphic evidence to confirm that these were contemporary with the use of the roundhouse. A moderate pottery assemblage was recovered from the gully.

The internal diameter of the roundhouse was c.11m, and it had a 3.3m-wide entrance to the south-east. The slope of the gully's sides and the flatness of its base varied slightly throughout its length; it was up to 0.7m wide and 0.4m deep.

The gully fill suggested that it had gradually silted up, but it is unlikely to have functioned effectively as a drain because there was no outlet channel. It is more likely that it was a quarry ditch used to obtain the material to build the walls of the roundhouse. A conical thatched roof would have effectively shed rainwater away from



the roundhouse walls. It is assumed that the walls would have been within the circular gully. The roundhouse superstructure itself left no evidence.

Large pit G10 in the north-west side of roundhouse G8 was sub-oval in plan, 2.5m long and 1.7m wide. It had a stepped, slightly undercut profile (Fig. 8), the first step 0.3m deep, dropping vertically to a flat base that was 0.95m deep. It contained a moderate amount of pottery and animal bone. If contemporary with the roundhouse it might have been used for storage inside the structure – it was perhaps deep enough to have provided the anaerobic conditions required for grain storage (Hill *et al.* 1983).

A smaller pit G9 was circular in plan with asymmetric sides and a flat base, 0.7m in diameter and 0.1m deep. This might possibly have been a setting for a large stone (removed) or a timber placed opposite the entrance to the roundhouse.

Two postholes G11 were circular or oval in plan, 0.23–0.45m long, both c.0.22m wide and 0.1m deep. There was no evidence of their function, but they might have formed a partition within the roundhouse.

The six postholes G12 clustered inside the entrance varied considerably in size and profile (*e.g.* Figs 4 and 8, [516] and [530]) and may not have all been contemporary. Their location near the entrance might suggest that they were placed to support partitions controlling movement, air flow or light coming into the roundhouse. Three of the postholes contained a small amount of pottery and one posthole (Fig. 4, [516]) contained medium to large packing stones.

Roundhouse G18 and pits G19

Roundhouse G18 was 2m to the east of roundhouse G8. It is not possible to say whether they were contemporary, but the fill of G18 was considerably paler than that of G8. The roundhouse was sub-circular, with some straighter segments along its length, and its east side was truncated by later ditch G17 (L5). Its internal diameter was just under 8m, with a c.3m-wide entrance to the south. The slope of the gully's sides and the flatness of its base varied slightly throughout its length, with the gully measuring up to 0.5m wide and 0.22m deep. It contained a small amount of pottery.

In the north-east quadrant of the roundhouse were two pits, G19. These were irregular or sub-oval in plan, with steep, asymmetric sides and flat bases, up to 1.1m across and 0.35m deep. They did not contain any artefacts and their function is unknown.

Roundhouse G13 and pits or postholes G14

A possible roundhouse, gully G13, was located north-west of roundhouse G8 and was only partly visible within the excavation area. An apparent gap on the south-east side might have been an entrance, at least 6m wide. The gully contained a similar fill to that of roundhouse G8 and may well have been contemporary. The gully's sides ranged from steep to nearly vertical with a broadly flat base, and the gully was up to 0.38m wide and 0.23m deep. It contained a small amount of pottery.

Six discrete features G14 were located inside the entrance of the roundhouse and were probably associated with it. They were sub-oval in plan, measuring up to 1.15m across and 0.15m deep; the three smallest may have been pits rather than postholes. They contained a small amount of pottery.

**Roundhouse G20 and postholes G34**

This roundhouse was located outside the enclosure, immediately north-east of the enclosure's entrance. G20 was the first iteration of the roundhouse gully (Fig. 8 [479]), comprising just over a semi-circle, c.11m in diameter. The gully terminated at both ends within the limit of excavation, suggesting that it was open to the east. The gully had concave sides with a flat base, measuring up to 0.75m wide and 0.35m deep.

The gully contained a relatively large amount of pottery and was subsequently replaced by two further gullies – G26 (L4) and G27 (L5) – suggesting that it was a well-used and/or long-lived structure.

Two postholes, G34, were associated with the roundhouse. Although one was inside (Figs 4 and 9, [527]) and one outside the gully (Figs 4 and 8, [340]) they were very similar: circular, measuring 0.4m in diameter and up to 0.15m deep. Their function is unknown.

Four-post structure G21

A four-post square structure G21 lay immediately south of roundhouses G8 and G18, in the corner of the surrounding enclosure. The postholes were sub-oval and placed c.2m apart. They measured up to 1m wide and 0.16m deep (*e.g.* Figs 4 and 8, [499]), all with a flat base. Four-post structures are commonly found on Iron Age sites and are usually interpreted as platforms for grain and other foodstuffs, to protect their contents from animal pests. All four pits contained large stones around the edges, suggestive of repairs to steady the posts as they rotted from contact with wet ground. A small amount of pottery was recovered from three of the postholes.

Four external pits and two postholes G23

A closely-spaced group of four shallow pits was located south-east of the four-post structure. Two pits were truncated by either the corner turn of L4 ditch G16 or its later recut G17 (L5) (Fig. 8). There was no evidence of their function. The pits were sub-circular in plan with concave sides and flat bases, up to 2m wide and 0.18m deep. Three of the pits contained a small amount of pottery.

Two of the pits were each cut by a posthole, dug through the fill of the pits (Figs 4 and 8, [430] and [434]). The postholes were circular, measuring up to 0.2m in diameter and 0.13m deep.

Two postholes G22

Two circular postholes, 2m apart, were located north of roundhouse G8. Their purpose is unknown. They measured up to 0.4m in diameter and 0.24m deep; one contained a pottery fragment.

Pit G25

Pit G25 was located outside the main enclosure, near ditch G5. It was sub-oval in plan, with asymmetric sides and a concave base. It contained a small amount of pottery.

Pit G33

A shallow pit at the entrance to the rectangular enclosure was truncated by the terminal of ditch G15. This pit had concave sides and a flat base, measuring over



1.25m across and 0.34m deep, and containing a small amount of pottery. Its function is not known.

3.2.2 Enclosure and roundhouse ditches (L4)

Stratigraphically later ditches renewed and respected the earlier L3 settlement layout (Fig. 4). The southern half of the main L3 enclosure was redefined, as was the gully of roundhouse G20.

Enclosure ditch G16

Ditch G16 formed the southern arm of the main enclosure that had been established in L3, in all likelihood representing a recut of an earlier ditch on the same line that was contemporary with ditches G6 and G7. It had a steep-sided, concave profile, up to 1m wide and 0.45m deep (Fig. 8, [262]), and contained a small amount of pottery.

Roundhouse enclosure ditch G26

Ditch G26 encircled roundhouse gully G20 at a 0.5–0.9m offset, truncating part of enclosure ditch G15 (Fig. 8) and terminating at approximately the same points as G20. Its profile underwent minor variations along its length, measuring up to 1m wide and 0.4m deep. It contained a low amount of pottery.

3.2.3 Ditch recuts, terminals and later pits (L5)

Stratigraphically, the latest features comprised a ditch redefining the eastern arm of the rectangular enclosure, a pit, and a recut of roundhouse gully G20 (Fig. 4). Additional ditch terminals and pits to the north indicate the continuation of the enclosure system – and possibly the settlement – beyond the edge of excavation.

Enclosure ditch G17

Ditch G17 was a late recut of the eastern arm of the rectangular enclosure of L3. It truncated the gully of roundhouse G18, suggesting that the roundhouse may no longer have been present. The ditch varied considerably in profile; its flatter base towards its northern limit may indicate additional cleaning-out or recutting here. The ditch was 1.37–2.15m wide and 0.42–0.62m deep and contained a moderate amount of pottery.

Pit G24

Pit G24 truncated the western edge of ditch G17. It was sub-circular in plan with concave sides and a flat base, 1.85m in diameter and 0.47m deep. It contained a small amount of pottery. As one of the larger Iron Age pits it might have been used for storage, but compared with pit G10, it was not deep enough to have provided the anaerobic conditions required for effective long-term grain storage.

Roundhouse enclosure ditch G27

A new ditch, G27, was dug around the western arc of the roundhouse, between the circuits of gully G20 (L3) and ditch G26 (L4). It terminated at approximately the same point as the earlier iterations of the roundhouse gully. The latest ditch also had a variable profile; it was up to 1m wide and 0.5m deep, and contained a moderate amount of pottery.

Ditch terminals G30, G31 and G32

Three linear features were identified at the northern edge of excavation. G30 and G32 may represent parallel ditch terminals, with G31 forming an extension to G30. Earlier



enclosure ditch G15 (L3) must have been fully silted up and probably obsolete when ditch G31 was constructed. Ditches G30–32 all had concave sides and flat bases, measuring 0.90–1.15m wide and 0.10–0.32m deep. Ditches G31 and G32 contained a moderate amount of pottery.

Elongated pits G28 and G29

Pit G28 was dug across roundhouse ditches G27 and G26 (L4) and gully G20 (L3), indicating that these had silted up. Pit G28 was in turn truncated by pit G29, which extended into the interior of the roundhouse. It is possible that the structure was still extant at the time, so the pits might be interpreted as alterations rather than evidence that the roundhouse had gone out of use. The pits were oval to sub-oval in plan, with concave sides and concave or flat bases, measuring 0.75–1.1m long, 1–1.2m wide and 0.2–0.25m deep (Fig. 8).

3.3 Undated – Probably Roman (Phase 3)

An extensive system of parallel ditches on a WNW–ESE alignment was found in all three excavated areas (Fig. 5). These were regularly spaced and set c.6m apart, beginning just south of the Iron Age settlement (Phase 2) and covering an area of more than 3ha. They continued beyond the edges of excavation to the west and east, though their absence at the very south of the two reinstatement areas suggests that their full north–south extent may have been exposed. Their fills were generally pale and sterile, except for the two trenches closest to the Iron Age settlement, which contained a darker deposit similar to that observed in the settlement features. They contained little pottery, but stratigraphy suggests that they postdate the Iron Age because they cut across boundary ditch G6 (L3), even though they did not extend into the settlement enclosure itself. They also predated the medieval ditches of L7 and L8 (Phase 4) that cut across them. A Roman date is conjectured and discussed further in Section 5.

3.3.1 Cultivation trenches G36 and G37 (L6)

The cultivation trenches comprised two contiguous groups on a very slightly different alignment, separated by abutting terminals (Fig. 5). The larger group, G37, covered most of the two reinstatement areas, but G36 occupied the north-west corner of the western reinstatement area as well as the area immediately south of the Iron Age settlement. It is possible that the interface reflects separate stages in the construction of the cultivation trenches, or it might have followed a natural break of slope that is no longer apparent in the present landscape (which is now difficult to assess because of the existing woodland either side of the site).

The trenches of both groups varied in profile: some were concave; others had steep, straight sides and a flat base. They were 0.55–1.07m wide and 0.1–0.3m deep.

3.4 Medieval (Phase 4)

Medieval features were present in both reinstatement areas (Fig. 6; Photographs 14–22), but did not extend northwards into the reservoir interior. Features comprised medium-sized ditches and pits (L7) at the north end of the western reinstatement area, and parts of a substantial ditch system (L8) crossing both reinstatement areas. Furrows were conspicuously absent, suggesting that the land was never given over to ridge and furrow cultivation. Many of the identified features contained small amounts of 12th–13th-century pottery, and the rest were dated by stratigraphic or spatial associations.



3.4.1 Indeterminate activity area L7

Five ditches and six pits lay at the north end of the western reinstatement area.

Ditches G39, G40, G41, G44 and G46

Three ditches at the north of the western reinstatement area may represent the remains of a small enclosure: G41 the western arm, with evidence of recutting (Fig. 9); and G39 and G40 the north-eastern arm. The ditches had generally concave profiles and were up to 0.8m wide and 0.47m deep. They mostly contained early medieval pottery, with occasional residual sherds of Saxo-Norman wares. Ditch G40 contained a slight concentration of charred seeds of free-threshing wheat and hulled barley (Section 4.4.3).

Ditch G46 may have subdivided the enclosure. It had a shallow concave profile, c.3.5m long, 0.7m wide and 0.1m deep.

Large pit G38

Large pit G38 was sub-oval in plan with an asymmetric profile (Fig. 9); the north side was stepped with large stones that might have been placed for access. It was 4.4m long, 3m wide and 1.1m deep, and contained a small amount of pottery and a quern fragment (Registered Artefact 1). The large size and shape of the pit suggest that it was probably a quarry to obtain the silty clay.

Three rectangular pits G45 and G47

These three pits had steep sides and flat bases, measuring 1.7–2m long, 0.75–1.1m wide and 0.17–0.47m deep. Pit G45 had a sub-circular posthole – 0.4m in diameter and 0.22m deep – cut into its base towards its eastern end. Pit G45 contained a small amount of pottery, and the northern pit in G47 contained a slight concentration of charred seeds (Section 4.4.3).

Two intercutting pits G43

Two intercutting pits G43 to the south of the enclosure were truncated by a later ditch of L8. They were irregular in plan, with steep sides and concave bases, measuring 1.6–3m long, 0.75–1m wide and 0.4–0.52m deep.

3.4.2 Ditch system L8

A medieval enclosure system was present across both reinstatement areas. The ditches probably acted as boundaries, perhaps also providing drainage and irrigation.

Ditches G44, G50, G51, G48 and G49

Ditch G44 in the western reinstatement area had steep sides and a broadly flat base, and measured up to 1.5m wide and 0.6m deep. This ditch was probably around the same date as the ditches and pits of the possible small enclosure L7, except that it cut pits G43. Ditch G42 formed a 3.5m-long spur that channelled into G44; it had a shallow, concave profile, measuring 1.25m wide and 0.18m deep.

Ditch G50 in the eastern reinstatement area was the largest on site from any period, measuring up to 2.6m wide and 1.2m deep (Figs and 9). Its profile was steep-sided but variable, and it showed signs of recutting.



Three ditches on a perpendicular alignment to G50 extended on either side. G51 was the most substantial, with a concave profile and measuring 1.45m wide and 0.63m deep. The two smaller ditches G48 and G49 also had broadly concave profiles, up to 1m wide and 0.52m deep. An eastward continuation of G49 was visible even through the subsoil (Fig. 6).

3.5 *Post-medieval and Later (Phase 5)*

The features in this phase comprised a trackside ditch, land drains, and disturbance associated with the current development (Fig. 7).

3.5.1 *Ditch, land drains and recent disturbance L9*

The post-medieval and modern features are grouped together as L9.

Posthole G52

This posthole, with a loose, topsoil-derived deposit, was present towards the centre of the eastern reinstatement area.

Ditch G53

This ditch lay c.3m from the southern limit of the reinstatement areas and ran east to west, parallel to the extant farm access track. It was c.3m wide and at least 0.5m deep, with modern metal artefacts and post-medieval roof tiles in its fill.

Land Drains G54

A network of land drains crossed the reservoir interior and the two reinstatement areas.

Recent disturbance G58, G59 and G60

A number of linear and sub-oval features in the reinstatement areas represent shallow recent disturbance associated with the current development, caused by vehicles.

3.6 *Natural Features (Phase 6)*

Features formed by natural geological processes or bioturbation are represented by Phase 6 (Fig. 7).

3.6.1 *Tree-throws/rooting and geological anomalies L11*

A few irregular, shallow features containing sterile deposits were investigated and confirmed to be tree-throws/rooting boles (G35) or geological anomalies (G55). They did not contain any artefacts. The two large tree-throws within the rectangular Iron Age enclosure (Phase 2, L3) were possibly contemporary with the settlement.

The undisturbed geological layer, G61, was consistent across the whole area, comprising light grey-yellow silty clay with chalk inclusions.

3.7 *Overburden (Phase 7)*

3.7.1 *Overburden L10*

Topsoil G57 comprised c.0.3m of light brown chalky clay with occasional modern brick fragments. It resembled made ground in appearance, and was either a recent deposit or had been subject to considerable modern disturbance of a non-agricultural nature.



Subsoil remained *in situ* below the formation level in places within the reinstatement areas. Any archaeological remains below this layer should remain in place once the soil is reinstated. The extent of this deposit, G56, is shown on Figure 2.

4. ARTEFACTS AND ECOFACTS

4.1 Pottery

Jackie Wells

The pottery was examined and quantified in accordance with standard guidelines (Barclay *et al.* 2016). The assemblage totals 587 sherds (4.9kg) representing a minimum of 275 vessels, and comprises a range of late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and late Anglo-Saxon/early medieval wares (Table 2).

Fabric Type	No. Sherd	Wt. (g)
<i>Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age</i>		
Coarse flint	4	14
Fine flint	81	341
Flint and sand	71	787
<i>Iron Age</i>		
Fine shell	2	21
Fine shell and sand	10	56
Sand and organic	44	353
Shell, sand, grog and organic	1	8
Fine sand	182	1,367
Coarse sand	108	1,257
<i>Late Anglo-Saxon and medieval</i>		
St Neots-type ware	4	12
Early medieval sandy coarse ware	70	635
Early medieval calcareous sandy ware	10	48

Table 2: Pottery Type Series

4.1.1 Phase 1: late Bronze Age/early Iron Age

Forty-five sherds (156g) were recovered from features assigned to activity areas L1 and L2 (Table 3). Wares are flint-tempered, characteristic of the late Bronze Age and earlier Iron Age across south-east England. The assemblage includes both coarse-ware and fine-ware vessels, although no diagnostic forms occur. Plain body sherds constitute most of the assemblage – a single upright rounded rim with finger-nail impressed decoration is the sole feature sherd.

Land-use element	Group	Sherd	Wt. (g)
L1 Activity area	G1 Pit	9	39
	G2 Gully	3	7
	G3 Postholes	8	22
L2 Activity area	G4 Two pits and posthole	25	88
Total		45	156

Table 3: Phase 1 Pottery quantification

4.1.2 Phase 2: Iron Age

Phase 2 settlement features yielded 432 sherds (3.9kg), most associated with the L3 enclosure (Table 4). The material is well-fragmented (mean sherd weight 9g), and although several pots are represented by more than single sherds, individual vessels are typically represented by less than 100g. The largest deposit derived from



roundhouse gully G20 and included 38 base and lower body sherds (486g) from a single pot.

The hand-built pottery broadly dates to the pre-‘Belgic’ Iron Age and is predominantly sand-tempered, with a few examples containing shell and organic matter. The forms present are plain, round-shouldered vessels with upright, rounded or flattened rims (one and two examples respectively). Eight vessels have wiped/lightly burnished surfaces, one is scored, and one rim has finger-tip-impressed decoration. A smaller number of flint-tempered wares comparable with those of the preceding phase were randomly distributed across all land-use elements.

Land-use element	Group	Sherd	Wt. (g)
L3 Roundhouses and enclosures	G5 Ditch	4	17
	G6 Ditch	4	22
	G8 Roundhouse gully	49	537
	G9 Pit	1	7
	G10 Pit	17	244
	G12 Postholes	4	24
	G13 Roundhouse gully	7	47
	G14 Pits and postholes	7	113
	G15 Ditch	21	167
	G18 Roundhouse gully	3	18
	G20 Roundhouse gully	121	1,258
	G21 Four-post structure	5	20
	G22 Postholes	2	6
	G23 Shallow pits and postholes	9	49
	G25 Pit	16	134
	G33 Pit	9	74
L4 Enclosure and roundhouse ditches	G16 Ditch	3	39
	G26 Roundhouse ditch	25	158
L5 Ditch recuts, terminals and later pits	G17 Ditch	38	330
	G24 Pit	8	32
	G27 Roundhouse ditch	42	281
	G28 Pit	2	33
	G29 Pit	4	45
	G31 Ditch terminus	14	173
	G32 Ditch terminus	17	137
Total		432	3,965

Table 4: Phase 2 Pottery quantification

4.1.3 Phase 3: undated

L6 cultivation trenches G36 and G37 yielded sixteen predominantly flint-tempered late Bronze Age/early Iron Age sherds (43g). All are abraded and well-fragmented, with a mean sherd weight of 2g, their condition suggesting that the sherds are highly likely to be residual.

4.1.4 Phase 4: medieval

Ditches and pits assigned to L7 and L8 contained 94 mainly early medieval sherds (735g), most recovered from ditch G39 (Table 5). Ten residual late Bronze Age/early Iron Age sherds (40g) also occur. Sherds have a mean weight of 8g, and most vessels are each represented by less than 100g.

Four small and abraded sherds of shell-tempered St Neots-type ware (12g) are broadly datable from c. 900 to the early 12th century. Most wares are sand-tempered – likely



to be of local manufacture and spanning the 12th–13th centuries in date. Both hand-built and wheel-thrown vessels occur. Forms include two jars, one with an everted rim and the second with a square rim, and a thumbled rim likely to derive from a jug. A flat-topped, straight-sided lid or shallow dish also occurs. Decoration is rare, although a few sherds display linear and/or wavy combing.

Land-use element	Group	Sherd	Wt. (g)
L7 Activity area	G38 Large pit	7	97
	G39 Ditch	25	187
	G40 Ditch	13	57
	G41 Ditch	4	86
	G43 Pit	1	9
	G45 Pit	12	126
	G47 Pit	1	6
L8 Ditch system	G42 Ditch	12	65
	G44 Ditch	16	76
	G50 Ditch	3	26
Total		94	735

Table 5: Phase 4 pottery quantification

4.2 Other Artefacts

Jackie Wells

4.2.1 Phase 2: Iron Age

Ditch G6 yielded three degraded fragments of a flat square-headed iron nail (Registered Artefact 2). Surviving in very poor condition, the undatable object had no analytical potential and has not been retained.

Worked flint recovered from L4 roundhouse ditch G26 comprises a rudimentary or unfinished end scraper with a retouched dorsal face at the distal end (9g).

Three pieces of fuel ash slag (34g) derived from L3 roundhouse gully G20. The product of any high-temperature fire in which alkalis and silicates are mixed, the material is not indicative of a specific industrial process and has not been retained.

4.2.2 Phase 4: medieval

Six abraded and largely amorphous pieces from a lava rotary quern (Registered Artefact 1) were collected from L7 quarry pit G38. Traded from the continent, lava querns have an extended period of use spanning the Roman, late Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. The recovery of the fragments in association with 12th–13th-century pottery suggests that they can be assigned a similar date.

Seven pieces of heat-affected, unmodified flint (425g) collected from L8 ditch G42 have not been retained.

4.3 Animal Bone

Rebecca Gordon

A total of 278 animal bone fragments were recovered from contexts dated from the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age through to the medieval period, with most bones associated with Iron Age roundhouses. The assemblage comprises domestic food



waste, predominantly from cattle, with other species including sheep/goat, pig, horse, and dog.

4.3.1 Methodology

The animal bones were identified using the author's reference collection. The remains were recorded using an 'all fragments' method. Bones that could not be identified to species were recorded to their nearest size category (*i.e.* large or medium), and those not defined to either category were recorded as unidentifiable. Fragments from the same element or animal were recorded as one bone fragment.

Since sheep and goat are morphologically similar, the term 'sheep/goat' was employed, unless it was possible to distinguish between the two species following the methods of Boessneck (1969) and Payne (1985). Epiphyseal fusion and the eruption and subsequent wear of mandibular teeth were recorded for cattle, sheep/goat and pig. Mandibular wear stages were recorded using Grant (1982) for cattle. Tooth wear was converted into age categories following Hambleton (1999).

Gnawing and butchery were only recorded on identifiable bones. Butchery and its location were recorded using the codes devised by Lauwerier (1988). Bone preservation was recorded for identifiable post-cranial bones using Harland *et al.* (2003) and measurements were taken following von den Driesch (1976).

4.3.2 Taphonomy and bone modification

Twenty-seven post-cranial bones were in good condition and eighteen bones were either in fair or poor condition (Table 6). Bones from contexts 173, 242, 398 and 402 were notably poorly preserved. Eight bones showed evidence of carnivore gnawing, indicating exposure on the surface before burial. Butchery marks were observed on six bones: two cattle humeri and one tibia, a pig humerus, and one dog tibia. Burning evidence was only noted on two bones in the unidentifiable assemblage. There were more loose teeth compared to those found within mandibles, and fourteen bones exhibited fresh breaks, suggesting that the assemblage was disturbed after initial burial.

Preservation	P2: Iron Age	P4: medieval
Good	25	2
Fair	6	2
Poor	6	4
Total	37	8
Gnawing	8	–
Butchery	5	1
Loose teeth*	22	5
Teeth in mandible/maxilla*	2	–
Fresh break	11	3

*Cattle, sheep/goat, pig and horse teeth

Data is based on post-cranial bones only, except for teeth.

Table 6: Condition and taphonomic modifications on hand-collected bones

4.3.3 Phase 1: late Bronze Age/early Iron Age

Two unidentifiable medium-sized bone fragments were recovered from activity area L1 in gully G2.



4.3.4 Phase 2: Iron Age

A total of 209 animal bone fragments were retrieved from the Iron Age features. Of these, 61 were identified to species, with cattle being most common, followed by horse/donkey. Other mammals include sheep/goat, pig and dog (Table 7). More than half of the identifiable bones were recovered from enclosures and roundhouses L3, 22 were recovered from recut ditches and pits L5, and only five fragments were produced from enclosure and roundhouse ditches L4 (Table 8). Although there was an equal number of cattle and horse/donkey, the latter was mostly represented by loose teeth. Cut and chop marks were also observed on two cattle humeri and a tibia on the shaft and distal articulations, which is typical of secondary butchery. Dog is represented by one tibia (G10) from L3, which exhibited cut marks on the medial side of the proximal diaphysis.

Taxon	P1: LBA/EIA	P2: Iron Age	P3: Undated	P4: medieval	Total
Cattle	—	32	—	2	34
Sheep/goat	—	8	—	2	10
Sheep	—	1	—	—	1
Pig	—	7	—	2	9
Horse/donkey	—	12	—	5	17
Dog	—	1	—	1	2
Subtotal identifiable	0	61	0	12	73
Unidentifiable large mammal	—	126	1	44	171
Unidentifiable medium mammal	2	22	—	10	34
Subtotal unidentifiable	2	148	1	54	205
Total	2	209	1	66	278

Table 7: Species representation (NISP) of hand-collected animal bones

Due to the assemblage's size, data on body parts, mortality and sex are limited. However, two cattle third molars belonged to adult animals, one of which had a missing hypoconulid. This occurs as a congenital trait that is dominant within an animal population and is therefore indicative of breeding within a small gene pool (Thomas 2005, 74).

Taxon	P2: Iron Age			P4: medieval	
	L3	L4	L5	L7	L8
Cattle	10	3	19	1	1
Sheep/goat	7	—	1	1	1
Sheep	1	—	—	—	—
Pig	5	2	—	—	2
Horse/donkey	10	—	2	—	5
Dog	1	—	—	1	—
Total	34	5	22	3	9

Table 8: Identified hand-collected animal bones recovered by Land-use Area

4.3.5 Phase 3: undated but probably Roman

One unidentifiable large mammal bone fragment was recovered from cultivation trenches L6.

4.3.6 Phase 4: medieval

The medieval features produced a small assemblage of 66 bone fragments, with twelve identified to species (Table 7). Five belong to horse/donkey as well as two from cattle, sheep/goat and pig, and one from dog. As in Phase 2, horse/donkey is represented mainly by loose teeth. Nine of the identifiable bones were recovered from ditch system



L8 and three from activity area L7 (Table 8). Butchery evidence was observed on a pig humerus, with a chop mark present on the distal shaft. Due to the size of the assemblage, it is not possible to comment further on body parts, mortality or sex.

4.3.7 Summary

The Reed Reservoir assemblage is too small to provide a detailed account on husbandry practices, the economy or diet. However, the animal bones associated with the roundhouses (L3, L4, L5) represent the remnants of discarded food waste, mostly from beef. The limited amount of butchery evidence suggests that animals were brought to the settlement for processing and consumption, with waste being discarded in nearby enclosures and ditches. The discovery of the cut mark on the dog tibia implies that the animal was exploited either for meat or its fur.

4.3.8 Retention Strategy

As a standalone assemblage, the remains have no potential or significance and can be discarded; however, if future mitigation work is planned, the material should be retained and included in further faunal analyses.

4.4 Charred Plant Remains

Irene Sala

4.4.1 Methodology

Forty-four bulk samples, with volumes ranging from 0.5 to 70 litres, were collected during the excavation. Most of the samples (29) were from Iron Age features (Phase 2), in particular roundhouse ditches. A smaller number of samples (five per Phase) were recovered from late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (Phase 1), undated but probably Roman (Phase 3), and medieval (Phase 4) features.

For the purpose of this assessment, one bucket/bag (up to 10 litres) of each sample was processed via flotation. The flot was captured on a 300micron sieve and the residue on a 1mm mesh. The material was then air-dried before being examined. The dried flots were sorted using a binocular microscope (with a magnification of up to x40).

All samples produced small flots, ranging from less than 1ml to 16 ml and occasionally containing intrusive rootlets. Occasional uncharred seeds were often present, with a range of common weeds such as goosefoot (*Chenopodium*), fool's parsley (*Aethusa cynapium*), thistle (*Cirsium*) and knotgrass (*Polygonum*). Wetland plants such as *Persicaria* and buttercup (*Ranunculus*) were also documented in many flots. These uncharred remains are likely to be intrusive, blown or washed onto site from the surrounding vegetation.

A list of the plant remains found is presented in Table 9. The charred carpological remains, both complete and fragmented, were precisely counted. The quantities of charcoal and uncharred seeds were recorded using the following scale: + = 1–10; ++ = 11–50; +++ = 51–100. The plant remains were identified and interpreted with the use of modern reference material and reference literature (Jacomet 2006; Cappers *et al.* 2006; Carruthers and Hunter Dowse 2019).



4.4.2 Charcoal

All the samples yielded small to moderate amounts of charcoal, all having the potential for identification (>2mm).

Sample	Context	Feature	Feature type	Flot vol. (ml)	Charcoal	CPR	Uncharred PR
Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (Phase 1)							
1	L1	G3	Posthole	3	++	3	+
5	L1	G2	Gully	2	+	1	+
6	L2	G4	Pit	5	++	1	-
10	L1	G1	Pit	4	+	-	+
17	L2	G4	Pit	5	++	-	-
Iron Age (Phase 2)							
11	L3	G20	Gully (roundhouse)	6	++	2	-
12	L3	G13	Gully (roundhouse)	8	+++	-	++
13	L3	G13	Gully (roundhouse)	6	++	1	+
14	L3	G13	Gully (roundhouse)	5	++	-	++
15	L5	G27	Ditch (roundhouse)	15	+++	-	-
16	L3	G8	Gully (roundhouse)	5	++	3	-
18	L3	G18	Gully (roundhouse)	2	++	1	++
19	L3	G18	Gully (roundhouse)	2	+	1	+
20	L3	G18	Gully (roundhouse)	2	++	-	++
21	L3	G20	Ditch (roundhouse)	<1	+	-	-
22	L3	G18	Gully (roundhouse)	2	++	-	+
24	L3	G6	Ditch	<1	+	-	-
27	L3	G8	Gully (roundhouse)	12	+++	2	++
28	L3	G10	Pit	16	+++	-	-
29	L4	G16	Ditch	2	++	2	-
30	L3	G8	Gully (roundhouse)	8	++	1	+
31	L3	G5	Gully	1	+	1	-
32	L3	G25	Pit	1	+	2	++
33	L3	G8	Gully (roundhouse)	2	++	-	-
34	L3	G21	Four-post structure	4	++	-	++
35	L3	G21	Four-post structure	2	+	-	-
36	L3	G21	Four-post structure	3	++	-	-
37	L3	G21	Four-post structure	2	+	-	+
38	L3	G12	Posthole	5	+	-	+
40	L5	G24	Pit	6	+++	3	++
41	L5	G17	Ditch	5	+++	-	-
42	L4	G26	Ditch (roundhouse)	2	++	1	-
43	L3	G13	Gully (roundhouse)	1	++	-	-
44	L5	G32	Ditch	3	++	1	+
Undated (Phase 3)							
9	L6	G36	Cultivation trench	1	+	-	-
23	L6	G36	Cultivation trench	<1	+	-	-
25	L6	G37	Cultivation trench	1	+	3	++
26	L6	G36	Cultivation trench	No flot	-	-	-
39	L6	G36	Cultivation trench	No flot	-	-	-
Medieval (Phase 4)							
2	L7	G40	Ditch	5	++	32	++
3	L7	G47	Pit	15	++	40	-
4	L7	G45	Pit	8	++	5	+
7	L7	G38	Quarry pit	3	++	14	-
8	L8	G42	Ditch	2	+	3	++

CPR = Charred Plant Remains; PR = Plant Remains.

The numbers in the table comprise all seeds/fruits, including both whole and fragmented items.

Table 9: List of soil samples and their contents



4.4.3 Other charred plant remains

Twenty-two of the samples contained occasional charred seeds, consisting almost exclusively of cereal grains.

The samples taken from prehistoric features produced mostly fragmented grains, too poorly preserved to be identified. Only two items, both from roundhouse gullies (G8 and G18), were tentatively identified as spelt (*Triticum spelta*) and hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) respectively.

The largest assemblages of charred grains were found in two medieval features: a ditch (G40) and a pit (G47). These samples produced 32 and 40 items respectively, and the better-preserved grains were identified as free-threshing wheat (*T. turgidum/durum*, 22 grains) and hulled barley (11 grains).

The only charred seed remains from the cultivation trenches are a few unidentifiable fragments of cereal grains from G37.

Wild plant/weed remains were even more sparse, amounting to only seven items. Two seeds of speedwell (*Veronica*) were documented in roundhouse gullies G8 and G13, and three fragments of hazelnut shell (*Corylus avellana*) were found in Iron Age pits G10 and G24. Prehistoric gullies G2 and G8 produced one seed of wild grass (*Avena/Bromus/Lolium*) and one seed of *Brassica* (mustard/cabbage/turnip).

4.4.4 Conclusions

The scarcity of charred plant remains recovered from the prehistoric samples (Phases 1 and 2) suggests a lack of substantial crop/food-processing activities in this area of the site. More evidence for such activities, though seemingly on a small domestic scale, are documented for the medieval occupation of the site (Phase 4). In both cases, the crops identified appear consistent with the data from contemporary sites in the region (Carruthers and Hunter Dowse 2019, 52–4 and 124–5).

The presence of hazelnut shell in two Iron Age features seems indicative of the occasional gathering of wild foodstuffs from woodland/hedgerow areas close-by.



5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Discussion

The investigation revealed features dating from the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age to the present, but the most significant remains comprised part of an Iron Age settlement, a series of parallel cultivation trenches of uncertain but probably Roman date, and medieval settlement features relating to a field system.

5.1.1 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age indeterminate activity

A few small pits, postholes and a short gully of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date were present in two separate areas (Fig. 3). These were dated by the small quantity of characteristic flint-tempered pottery that they contained. A few residual sherds of pottery were also found in Iron Age features at the north end of the site, but there were no contemporary features in this area. One of the pits of L4 contained heated stones and there is ample ethnographic, archaeological and experimental evidence to suggest that such pits might have been used for cooking. However, with few associated finds and no structural evidence, there was nothing to indicate permanent settlement in the excavated area at this period. That said, a crop-mark of a Bronze Age round barrow is recorded to the north of the site (HER17747).

5.1.2 Iron Age settlement

The evidence for Iron Age settlement was much more substantive and was located in the central reservoir area. Features chiefly comprised a rectangular enclosure, at least three roundhouses (possibly four) and a four-post structure, interpreted as a grain store. The rectangular enclosure was attached to a more extensive boundary ditch, and its perimeter was enhanced and maintained with deeper recuts.

The dating relies on the pottery recovered from the features, which is broadly pre-‘Belgic’ Iron Age, with a few residual sherds of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery. Although only occurring in low to moderate amounts, the pottery comprises local hand-built forms, with no signs of Roman influence. Evidence from some sites, however, indicates that hand-built forms continued throughout the Iron Age and several decades into the Roman period (J. Wells pers. comm.). The settlement continued beyond the western limit of excavation, and possibly also to the north, although its full size is unknown. It is possible that the crop-mark ring-ditch HER17747 might be the site of an Iron Age roundhouse rather than a Bronze Age round barrow. However, this is very unlikely – the excavated examples described in this report were relatively slight and unlikely to have been manifest as crop-marks.

5.1.3 Cultivation trenches

The cultivation trenches were found in all three excavation areas but did not extend into the area of the Iron Age settlement. This might have been because the earthworks were still extant when they were laid out, whether or not the settlement was still occupied. The darker fills of the trenches closest to the settlement are indicative of settlement-derived deposits, and the small amount of Iron Age pottery in them could be residual from activity nearby. The trenches cut across an Iron Age boundary ditch (G6, L3), demonstrating that the landscape around the settlement was modified to accommodate them.



The trenches had certainly gone out of use by the medieval period, because they were cut by the Phase 4 ditches, but an Anglo-Saxon date for the trenches seems unlikely and has no corroborative evidence. No Roman artefacts were recovered during the investigation, although a Roman silver hoard (HER2233) is recorded from Rokey Wood to the east, attesting to Roman-period activity within the wider area. The cultivation system is therefore likely to be either late Iron Age or Roman in date.

Their interpretation as a system of cultivation trenches seems most likely. Whilst their 6m-wide spacing resembles that between furrows of medieval strip fields, a similar interval is also typical of Roman cultivation trenches (Brown *et al.* 2001, 747; Oxford Archaeology East 2009, 9), and their angular profile suggests that the trenches were dug with hand tools rather than being produced by ploughing. They may have been bedding trenches, where richer soil was deposited in the trenches before planting crops. Alternatively, they may have acted as an irrigation or drainage system for other crops grown on the raised beds between the trenches, functioning in a similar way to the ridge and furrow systems of the medieval and post-medieval periods. There was no evidence from the excavations as to what plants might have been grown – environmental samples contained only a few unidentifiable fragments of cereal grains (Section 4.4.3).

Brown *et al.* (2001) discuss the varied evidence for Roman viticulture in the south and east of Britain. Although the archaeological remains at Wollaston were particularly well preserved, being sealed beneath clay-rich alluvium (Brown *et al.* 2001, 248), numerous sites have since revealed further arrays of bedding trenches, indicative of very labour-intensive horticulture. Indeed, cultivation-trench systems might have been widespread near Reed and Barkway, because similar features were found at Cokenach, nearly 3km east of the site (Oxford Archaeology East 2009). Whether or not this was for growing vines, the extent of the evidence would now imply that this was more than mere subsistence and probably beyond the capacity of a local community enterprise. Such effort is more likely to have been directed at the production of a marketable commodity such as grapes, which would have been important for the production of wine, vinegar, syrup, or dried fruit. These factors might not necessarily prove that this was a Roman initiative, but it does certainly appear to have been Romanising in character.

5.1.4 Medieval field system

The field system comprised a small area of medieval settlement-related activity and a wider enclosure system in the north of the reinstatement areas. The features are dated by early-medieval pottery to the 12th/13th centuries, although the presence of a small amount of Saxo-Norman pottery suggests an earlier origin to the overall activity.

Four ditches formed a possible small enclosure, which contained a large quarry pit and three small pits. One of the pits and a ditch contained slight concentrations of charred seeds of free-threshing wheat and hulled barley (Section 4.4.3), suggesting that the area might have been used for agricultural processing. However, there were no structures such as grain-drying or malting ovens that would have more clearly demonstrated that such activity took place, nor was any chaff recovered; it is perhaps more likely that the charred seeds derived from the burning of rubbish or even an accidental fire.



There was no evidence of medieval structures on the site, but several moated sites are recorded within the vicinity. The closest of these is a designated monument (NHLE 1017608) located within Bush Wood, immediately to the south-west. This would have been broadly contemporary with the medieval features revealed in the investigation. Furthermore, there was no evidence of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, so the area was probably not within the communal fields of the parish.

LiDAR mapping (Fig. 10) has revealed a ditch system extending out from the Bush Wood moat. The LiDAR features do not obviously correlate with the ditches revealed during this excavation, except one which probably continues east as a linear LiDAR feature into Rokey Wood. However, it appears that the excavated ditches would have comprised part of a system of smaller enclosures around the moat.

5.2 Conclusions

The late Bronze Age/early Iron Age features were few and of low to moderate local interest in their own right. Whilst they were found in association with later Iron Age settlement, the remains were too ephemeral to contribute to our understanding of the transition between the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and the later Iron Age.

Prior to this investigation, the only known Iron Age site in the area was through a pottery find-spot (HER6515) more than 0.5km east of the site. Therefore, the presence of an Iron Age settlement on the site was not expected and is a notable addition to existing knowledge. That said, it was a typical example of a small, enclosed settlement of the pre-Roman (pre-‘Belgic’) Iron Age, which adds to the known distribution, but such sites are relatively common regionally. The recovered artefacts and level of preservation were not exceptional. The discovery is of local interest, demonstrating that there is potential for the survival of Iron Age remains on the land between Reed and Barkway, but further analysis of the evidence is unlikely to contribute to the regional research agenda.

The cultivation trenches are of regional interest because other examples investigated in the East of England have presented difficulty with regards to dating and, to some extent, purpose. These are commonly interpreted as the remains of Roman viticulture, the type-site being Wollaston, Northamptonshire (Brown *et al.* 2001). Similar features have now been recorded at numerous locations in the South Midlands and East of England (Wiseman *et al.* 2020), but only three are listed from Hertfordshire – at Barkway (Oxford Archaeology East 2009), south of Bishop’s Stortford (John Moore Heritage Services 2008; Oxford Archaeology East 2020), and at Buntingford (Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit 2012). Further examples were recorded north of Bishop’s Stortford (Albion Archaeology 2023a; 2023b), but these results are not yet widely in the public domain. However, the cultivation trenches in Hertfordshire have not been securely dated and their purpose conclusively ascertained.

The examples at Reed were adjacent to an Iron Age settlement and, although not conclusive, the relationship of the trenches to the settlement does suggest that the trenches are either late Iron Age or Roman in date. At Wollaston, the cultivation trenches were dated to the 2nd–4th centuries AD (Brown *et al.* 749). There is no new evidence from Reed to suggest the purpose of the trenches, but they add to the growing corpus of similar sites, suggesting that large-scale horticultural activity was widespread in the region by the 1st century AD. Other than that, the lack of dating



evidence means that the results of the investigation are unlikely to contribute further to our understanding of the transition from the late Iron Age to Roman period, or help us to distinguish between late Iron Age and early Roman features and sites.

The medieval remains appear to have been part of a wider system of smaller enclosures, rather than communal open fields. These might have been part of a seigniorial farmstead attached to a moated manor house in Bush Wood – perhaps previously attached to the conjectured motte and bailey castle at Periwinkle Hill to the north-east of the site. This gives the medieval features a relatively high local interest, as evidence of the landscape contemporary with the moated site and possible motte and bailey castle.

The modern features are of negligible archaeological interest because they relate to recent agricultural land use and groundworks.



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7. APPENDIX 1: CONTEXTUAL HIERARCHY

Phase	Period	Land-use element (L)	L description	Group (G)	G Description	Feature no.	Fill no.
1	Late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age	L1	Indeterminate activity area	G1	Pit	109	110
				G2	Gully	154	155
						192	193
						592	593
				G3	Four postholes	111	112
						123	124
						113	114
						146	147
						117	118
						148	149
						150	151
						119	120
						152	153
		L2	Indeterminate activity area	G4	Two pits and a posthole	327 336 210	328 335 337 211 212
2	Iron Age	L3	Enclosure and four roundhouses	G5	Ditch	380 382 384 573	381 383 385 574
						436 378 392 394 571	437 438 379 393 395 572
						366 577	367 578
				G8	Roundhouse gully	311 313 416 446 448 462 468 476 561	312 314 315 417 447 449 450 463 464 469 470 477 478 562
						316	317
				G10	Pit	418	419 420 421 422 423
				G11	Two postholes	318 320	319 321



Phase	Period	Land-use element (L)	L description	Group (G)	G Description	Feature no.	Fill no.
				G12	Six postholes	530 516 513 511 322 324	531 517 514 515 512 323 325
				G13	Roundhouse gully	278 280 559	279 288 560
				G14	Three pits and three postholes	295 355 270 272 291 289 274 276	296 356 271 273 292 290 275 277
				G15	Enclosure ditch	295 355 270 272 291 289 274 276	296 356 271 273 292 290 275 277
				G18	Roundhouse gully	307 309 342 344 346 348 350 542 563	308 310 343 345 347 349 351 543 564
				G19	Two pits	305 302	306 303 304
				G20	Roundhouse gully	266 293 297 352 357 459 479 494 532 557	267 294 298 353 354 358 359 460 461 480 481 495 533 534 558



Phase	Period	Land-use element (L)	L description	Group (G)	G Description	Feature no.	Fill no.
				G21	Four-post structure	502 505 496 499	503 504 506 507 497 498 500 501
				G22	Two postholes	518 520	519 521
				G23	Four pits	525 522 430 432 434 428	526 523 524 431 433 435 429
				G25	Pit	388	389
				G33	Pit	403	404
				G34	Two postholes	340 527	341 528 529
		L4	Enclosure and roundhouse ditch	G16	Enclosure ditch	565 262 424 439	566 263 264 265 425 426 427 440 441 442
				G26	Enclosure ditch	284 363 407 456 471 485 492 553	285 364 365 408 457 458 472 486 487 493 554
		L5	Ditches recut and pits added	G17	Enclosure ditch	368 396 575 443	369 370 397 398 576 444 445
				G24	Pit	399	400 401 402



Phase	Period	Land-use element (L)	L description	Group (G)	G Description	Feature no.	Fill no.
				G27	Enclosure ditch	286 360 409 473 482 555	287 361 362 410 411 474 475 483 484 556
				G28	Pit	333	334
				G29	Pit	329	330
				G30	Ditch terminal	535	536
				G31	Ditch terminal	540	541
				G32	Ditch	508	509 510
				3	G36 Cultivation Trenches	256 376 465 567 569 373 386 371 390 580 185 207 250 252 414 451 589	257 258 377 466 467 568 570 374 375 387 372 391 581 186 208 209 251 253 415 452 590
						582 159 161 163 203 205 338 412 587 107 216 218 220 230 591	583 160 162 164 204 206 339 413 588 108 217 219 221 231
4	Medieval	L7	Indeterminate activity area	G38	Quarry pit	133	134 135 136 137 138 139



Phase	Period	Land-use element (L)	L description	Group (G)	G Description	Feature no.	Fill no.
				G39	Ditch	140 174 547	141 142 143 144 175 548
				G40	Ditch	127 545 176	128 129 130 546 177 178 179
				G41	Ditch	125 180 182 453 301	126 181 183 184 454 455 544
				G43	Two pits	198 196	199 197
				G45	Pit	121 579	122 145
				G46	Ditch terminal	194	195
				G47	Two pits	165 131	166 167 168 132
		L8	Ditch system	G42	Ditch terminal	171	172 173
				G44	Ditch	156 222 254 268 299	157 158 223 255 269 300
				G48	Ditch	187	188
				G49	Ditch	189	190 191
				G50	Ditch	224 228 226 259 549 233 234 235 236 237	225 229 227 260 261 550 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249



Phase	Period	Land-use element (L)	L description	Group (G)	G Description	Feature no.	Fill no.
				G51	Ditch	200	201 202
5	Post-medieval and later	L9	Ditch, land drains and a posthole	G52	Posthole	213	214 215
				G53	Trackside ditch	103 105	104 106
				G54	Land drains	586	
				G58	Plough furrow/ vehicle rut	594	595
				G59	Dumper truck ruts	596	597
				G60	Dumper truck related anomalies	598	599
6	Geological/ bioturbation features	L11	Geological/ bioturbation features	G35	Bioturbation – Tree-throws	169 115	170 116
				G55	Geological anomalies	584	585
				G61	Geological layer		102
7	Overburden	L10	Overburden	G56	Subsoil		101 232
				G57	Topsoil		100

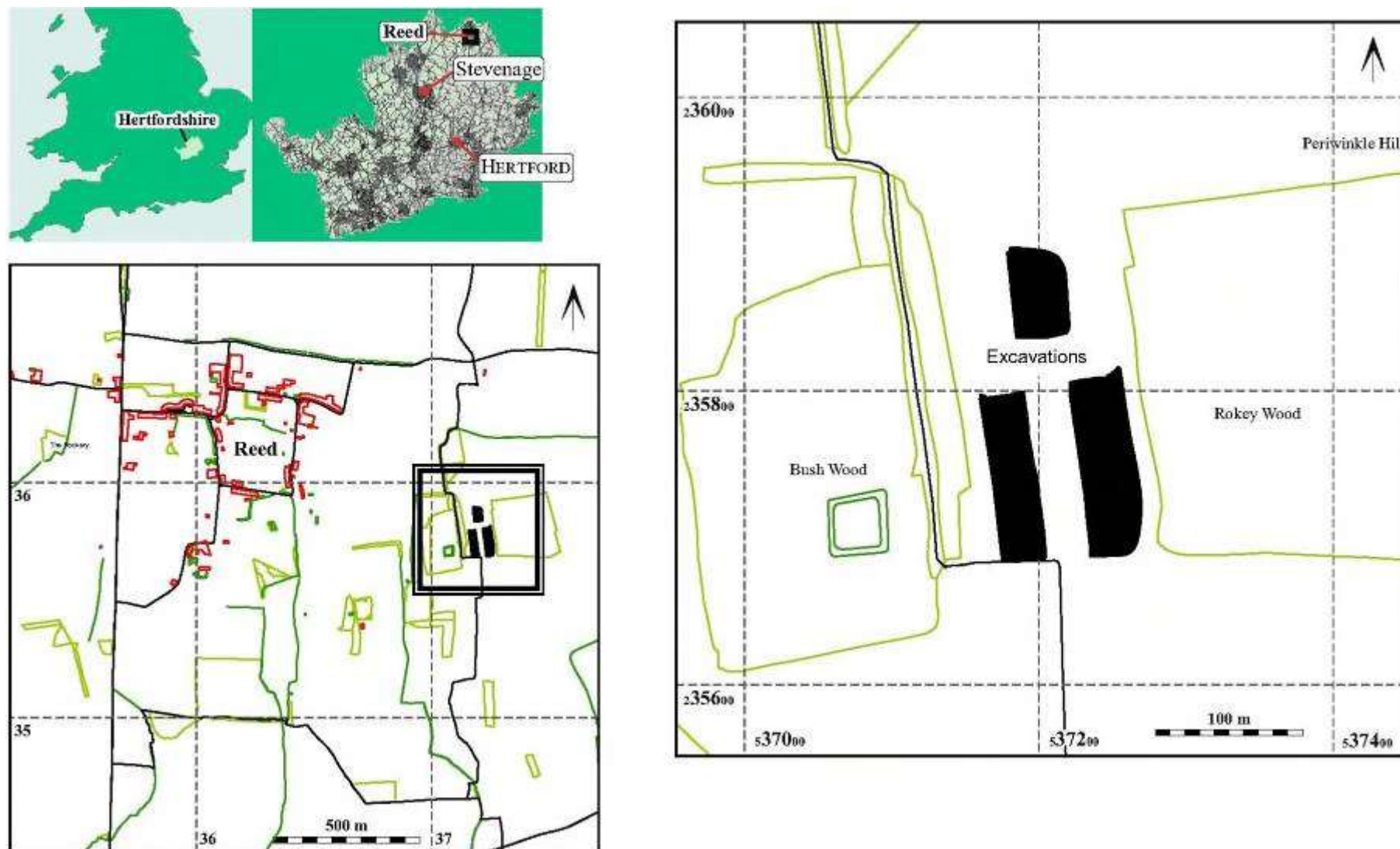


Figure 1: Site location

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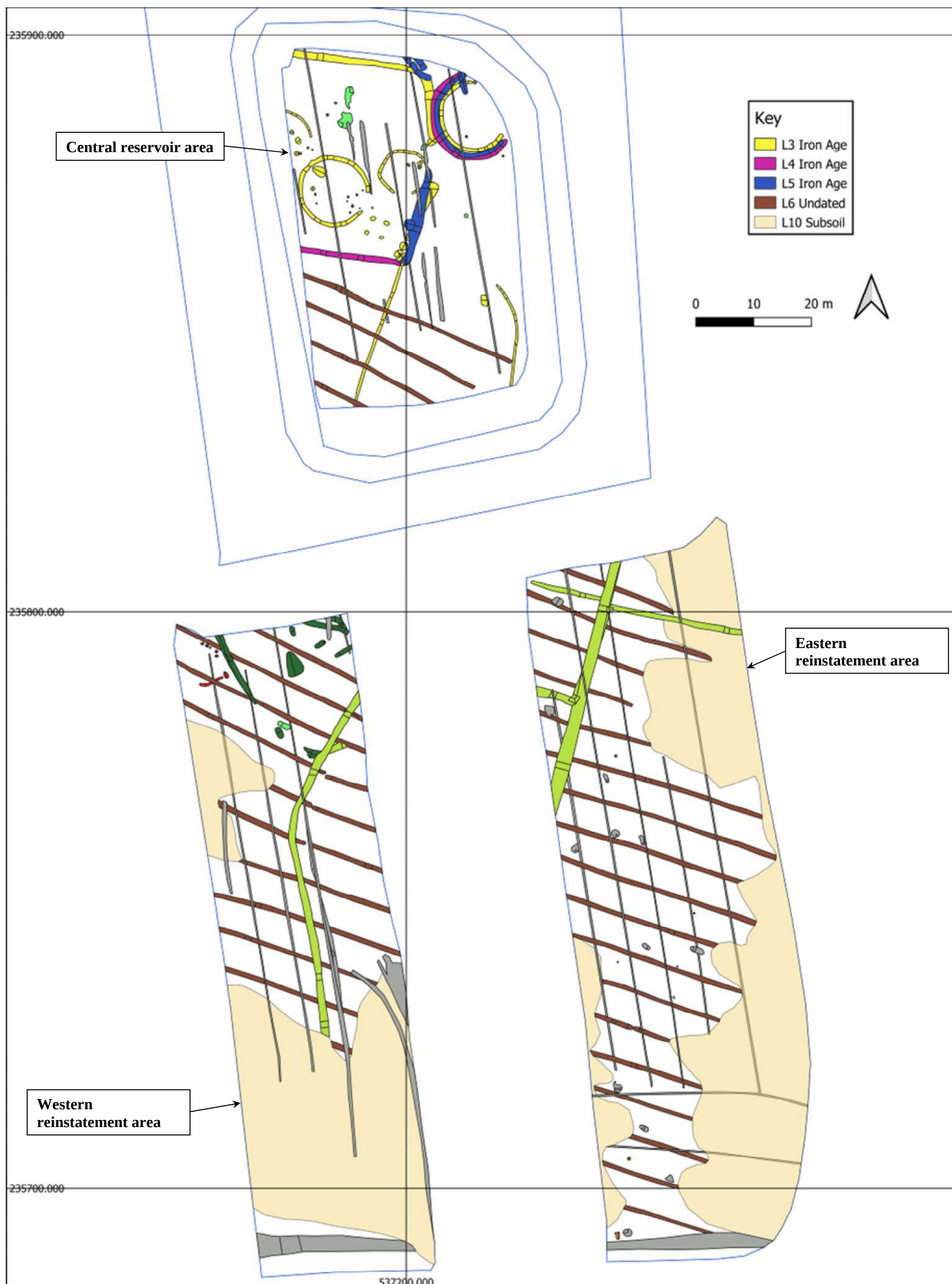


Figure 2: Plan of the Land-use elements of all Phases

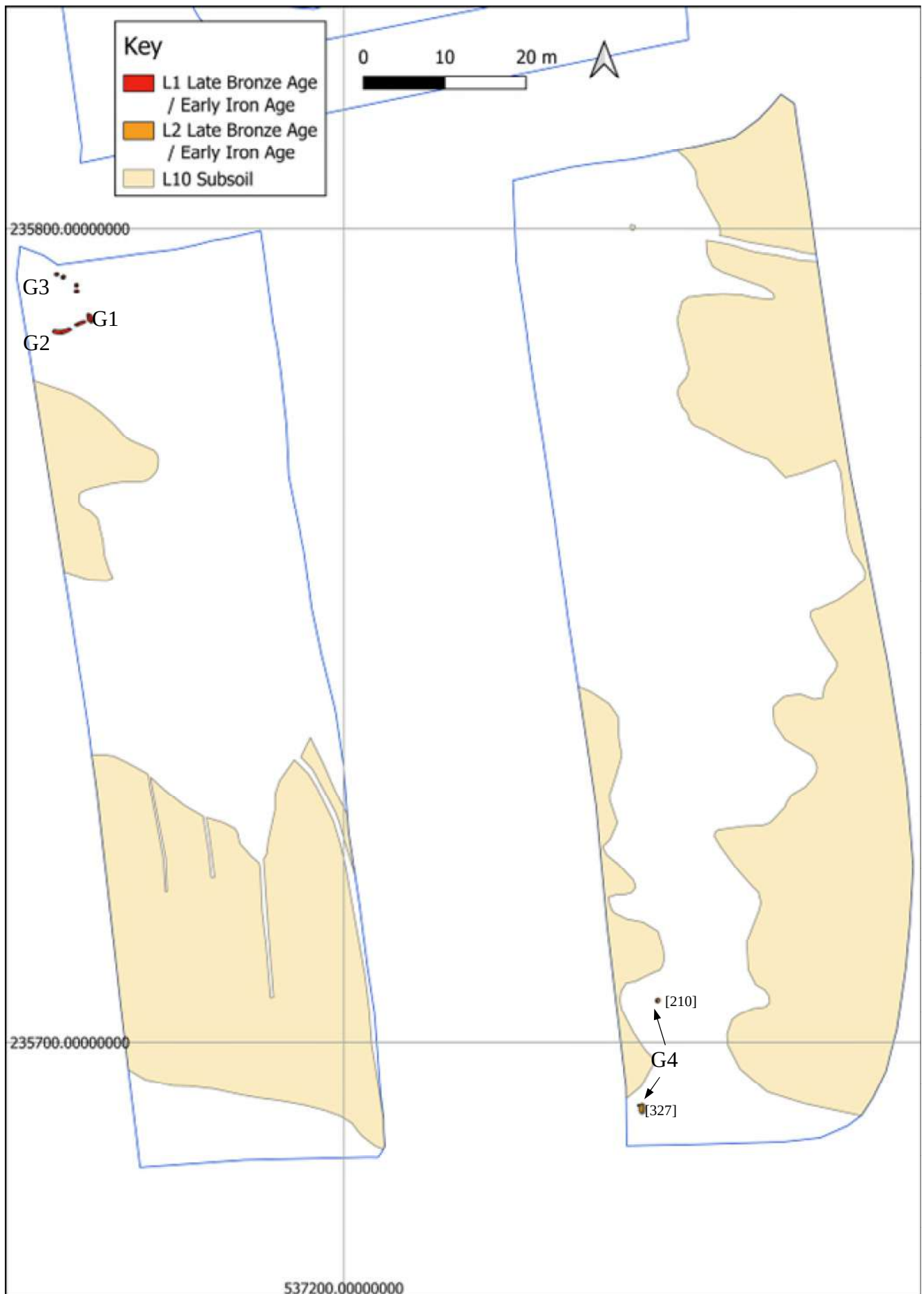


Figure 3: Phase 1, Land-use elements 1 and 2 (late Bronze Age/early Iron Age)

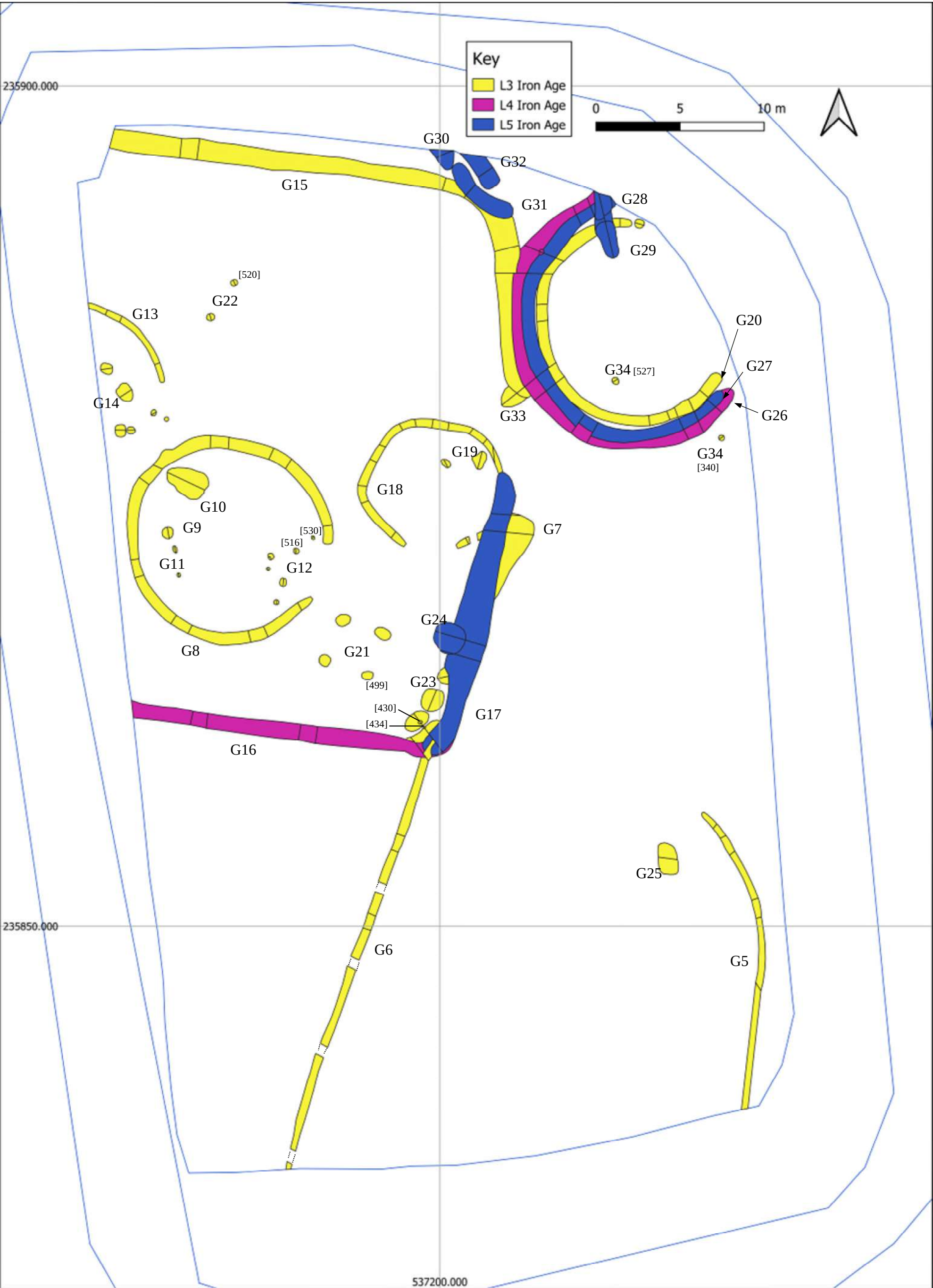


Figure 4: Phase 2, Land-use elements L3, L4 and L5 (Iron Age)

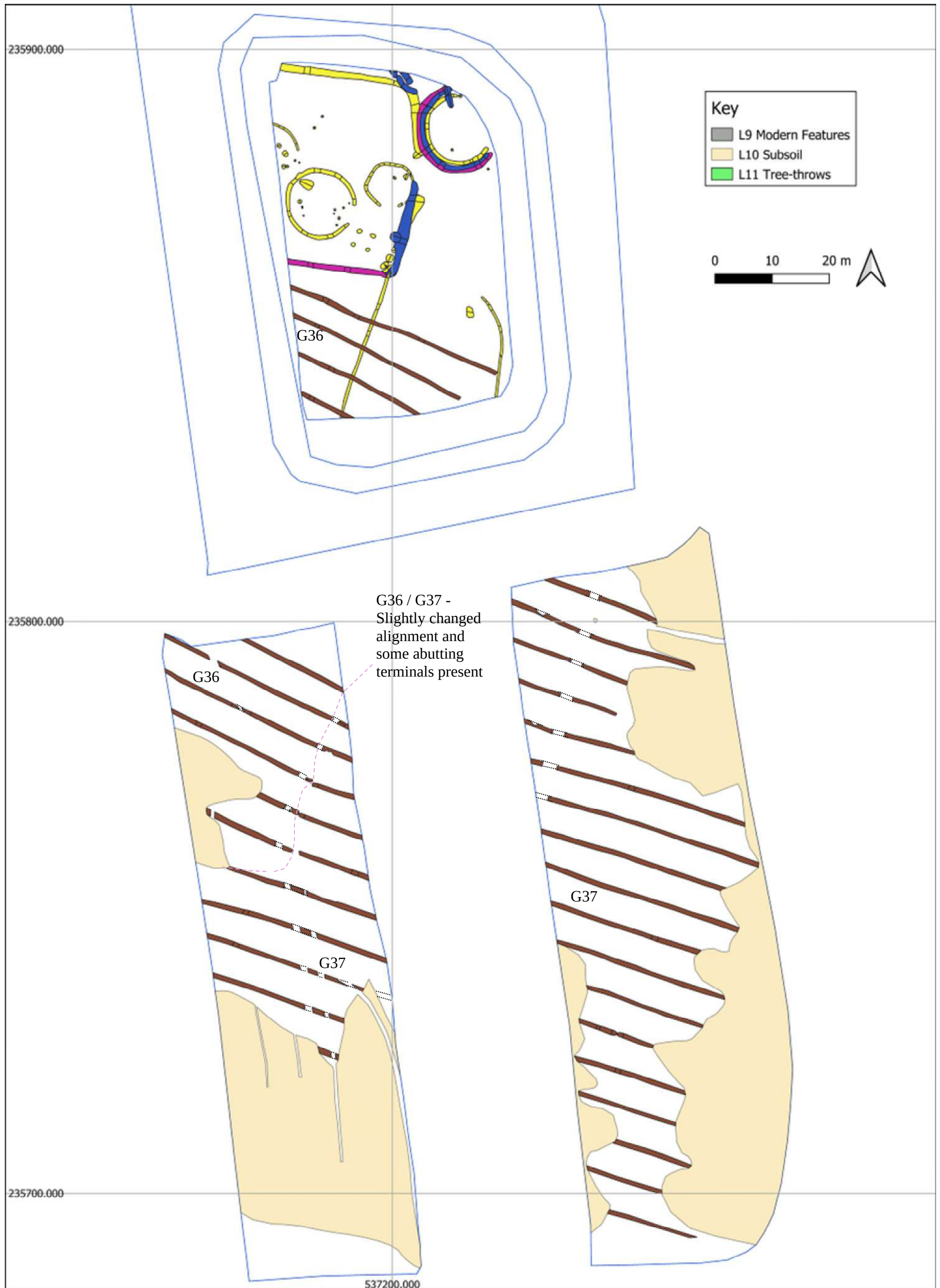


Figure 5: Phase 3, Land-use elements L6 (undated) compared with Phase 2 L3, L4 and L5 (Iron Age)