Land East of Aylesbury Broughton Crossing Bierton



Archaeological Evaluation Report



October 2011

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Gary Jones and Georgina Slater

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Land East of Aylesbury, Broughton Crossing, Bierton, Buckinghamshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Written by Laura King

with contributions from John Cotter and illustrated by Gary Jones and Georgina Slater

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Summary

In September 2011, Oxford Archaeology South (OAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation, on behalf of Barratt Strategic, on two fields to the east of Aylesbury at Broughton Crossing, Bierton, Buckinghamshire. The evaluation comprised 11 trenches measuring 50m in length, eight of which targeted visible earthworks or crop marks which may be associated with Worlds End Green medieval site.

The investigation revealed the truncated remains of a medieval ridge and furrow agricultural system. The majority of the low earthworks, which are present in the western field, were not associated with below ground archaeological features. In one case, a layer of limestone rubble forming an earthwork contained fragments of post-medieval peg tile. It is possible, therefore, that the cropmarks and earthworks in this field form part of a post-medieval agricultural landscape superimposed on the earlier medieval system of ridge and furrow agriculture.

In the eastern field, faint traces of former furrows were recorded, perhaps corresponding with a recorded cropmark. Elsewhere in the field, the recorded cropmarks did not correspond with any below ground archaeological features and probably result from later agricultural practices.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA), was commissioned by Barratt Strategic to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the site of a proposed new urban expansion to the east of Aylesbury. The proposed development consists of 2450 homes, a 10 ha employment land, a neighbourhood centre, two primary schools, construction of an eastern link road (part) and the Stocklake link road (rural section), green infrastructure, associated community facility and support infrastructure including expanded electricity sub-station and flood defences. This phase of evaluation works comprised eleven 50m long archaeological trial trenches targeted upon two fields containing known cropmarks close to World's End Green deserted medieval village (DMV). The western field is situated within one of Buckinghamshire County Council's Archaeological Notification Areas.
- 1.1.2 The archaeological work was undertaken in response to comments received from Buckinghamshire County Council following the submission of a planning application (planning reference: 10/02649/AOP). This phase of work comprised limited archaeological trenching in the vicinity of World's End Green medieval site in order to inform the master planning process. Although the Local Planning Authority did not set a brief for this phase of work, discussions with Sandy Kidd, Buckinghamshire County Archaeologist, established the scope of work required.
- 1.1.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Oxford Archaeology 2011) and with local and national planning policies.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The investigation area lies to the east of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, within the administrative area of Aylesbury Vale District Council. The area of the current phase of archaeological trial trenching is situated towards the southern extent of the proposed development and is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 848 145 (Fig. 1).
- 1.2.2 The investigation area lies over farmland used for grazing and is surrounded on all sides by agricultural land. Trenches 1-6 were sited in the western field and Trenches 7-11 in the eastern field (Fig. 2).
- 1.2.3 The geology of development area is complex. The majority of the development is dominated by Kimmeridge Clay, with a layer of Alluvium at the extreme western edge (associated with the Bear Brook) and Upper Greensand and Gault in the south east corner (BSG sheet 219). Both fields in this phase of works are situated on the boarder between Kimmeridge Clay and Gault Formation and Upper Greensand. The ground slopes gradually from east to west and lies from an approximate height of 80 85m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been described in detail in the Cultural Heritage Baseline (Oxford Archaeology 2010) and is not reproduced here . A brief summary of the archaeological potential of the two fields which comprise the current investigation is given below.



Potential

- 1.3.2 A pattern of cropmarks has been recorded in both fields (Fig. 2). These cropmarks are located immediately to the east and to the north (separated by the Grand Union Canal) of cropmarks and earthworks associated with World's End Green DMV and may represent an extension of the known settlement. The western field includes a possible oval enclosure and field divisions. The eastern field contains a series of rectilinear cropmarks of unknown origin. A geophysical survey of the site did not find evidence to corroborate the presence of features suggested by the cropmarks.
- 1.3.3 Previous archaeological investigations conducted in the immediate vicinity include an evaluation to the north of Oak Farm, which lies *c* 350m to the south-west of the investigation area, within the Worlds End Green DMV. This revealed a medieval building platform. Pottery recovered from a subsequent service trench dated to between the 12th and 16th century, thus providing further evidence for medieval activity on the site.
- 1.3.4 In 2007, an evaluation was undertaken at Manor Farm, c 390m south-west of the current investigation area. The works identified an outer enclosure which was attached to a medieval moat and originated in the 12th century. The enclosure was divided by ditches and the remains of a 15th or 16th century building was found. A silted up stream channel was also uncovered along with residual Iron Age, Roman and Saxon pottery.
- 1.3.5 Other significant archaeological remains in the immediate area include a series of ditched enclosures with internal features, possibly Iron Age or Roman, recorded in a geophysical survey, situated approximately 150m to the east. Further enclosures have been recorded by geophysical survey approximately 570m to the north-west of the investigation area.

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The project was funded by Barratt Strategic and the work was monitored by Sandy Kidd of Buckinghamshire County Council. Julian Coxell, the landowner's representative, provided support and assistance in gaining access to the site. The fieldwork and reporting was carried out by site supervisor Laura King who was assisted on site by Mark Patenall and Chris Richardson. The project was managed by Ken Welsh.



2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to inform the master planning process by determining:
 - (i) the presence/absence of archaeological remains;
 - (ii) the degree of survival of any archaeological remains and the character of the remains present, without compromising any deposits that may merit detailed investigation under full area excavation;
 - (iii) the date range of any remains from artefacts or otherwise;
 - (iv) the palaeo-environmental potential of any archaeological deposits.

2.2 **Project Specific Aims**

2.2.1 The specific aim of the project was to ascertain the level of archaeological potential and use the information to inform the master planning process and develop a strategy for potential further mitigation.

2.3 Methodology

- 2.3.1 Eleven trenches, measuring 50m in length and constituting an approximate 1 % sample area, were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of the project archaeologist. The trenches were sited within two fields in the southern part of the development area which contained potentially archaeologically significant cropmarks. Many of the cropmarks in the western field proved to exist as low earthworks. After consultation with Sandy Kidd, Buckinghamshire County Archaeologist, Trenches 1 and 3 were extended to incorporate further extant earthworks.
- 2.3.2 All fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with standard OAS practices (Wilkinson 1992).



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, beginning with a stratigraphic description of the trenches which contained archaeological remains, this is followed by an overall discussion and interpretation. An index of all trenches is also presented in tabular form in Appendix 1.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The underlying geology comprised Kimmeridge clay, which appeared wetter near the western boundary of the site. At the time of the investigation the the site had been recently utilised as pasture and comprised uncut grass and low-level scrub.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 The remains of a medieval ridge and furrow farming system were identified in Trenches 2 to 6 and Trench 8, alongside a narrow gully, a possible medieval hedgerow and a deposit of compacted limestone. Trenches 1, 7, 9, 10 and 11 were empty.

3.4 Trenches in Field 1 (Fig. 3)

3.4.1 Trenches 1 and 2 were excavated in order to examine a potential curvilinear feature seen as a cropmark. On discussion with Sandy Kidd the southern end of Trench 1 was extended in an easterly direction in order to examine an extant earthwork. Trench 3 and 6 targeted a NE-SW aligned linear cropmark. Trench 3 was also extended to the north in order to examine an extant earthwork.

Trench 1

3.4.2 Despite clear undulations in the surface topography neither the cropmark nor the earthwork were represented by below-ground archaeological features.

Trench 2

- 3.4.3 Trench 2 revealed the remains of a medieval furrow crossing the trench obliquely on an approximately east-west orientation. Furrow 206 was at least 1.06m wide and 0.24m deep, and produced three sherds of post-medieval pottery and three fragments of post-medieval peg tile.
- 3.4.4 No evidence of a feature corresponding with the cropmark was present.

Trench 3

3.4.5 A deposit of loosely compacted limestone rubble (305) intermixed with clayey silt was found at the northern end of the trench below an extant earthwork (Fig. 5). It was 0.3m thick and covered an area 2.6m in width, continuing beyond the northern end of the trench beneath the public footpath. The material did not lie within a cut but had been pressed into the surface of the natural clay (302) and was directly overlain by the topsoil (300). Four fragments of post-medieval peg tile were recovered from the deposit.

3.4.6 Trenches 4 and 5

3.4.7 Trenches 4 and 5 contained the remnants of medieval ridge and furrow. The furrows were on an east-west orientation, and were up to 3m wide and 0.4m deep. In Trench 4,

October 2011



a sherd of pottery and a fragment of peg tile, both of post-medieval date, were recovered from the subsoil.

3.4.8 In Trench 5, a sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from furrow 505 and a fragment of medieval or post-medieval peg tile was recovered from furrow 508. A sherd of medieval pottery and a fragment of medieval or post-medieval peg tile were recovered from the topsoil.

Trench 6

3.4.9 Trench 6 contained two furrows and a ditch. Ditch (604) was aligned NE-SW and was 0.4m wide and 0.15m deep (Fig. 5). No artefactual material was recovered from the feature. A sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from one of the furrows.

3.5 Trenches in Field 2 (Fig. 4)

- 3.5.1 Trenches 7, 9, 10 and 11 were devoid of archaeology. Trench 8 contained the possible shallow remnants of medieval furrows on the same alignment and in a similar location to a recorded cropmark. Medieval pottery was recovered from the subsoil in Trenches 8 and 9 along with a sherd of modern stoneware from the topsoil in Trench 9.
- 3.5.2 No evidence of the recorded cropmarks was identified in any of the trenches.

3.6 Finds and environmental summary

Pottery by John Cotter

3.6.1 A total of 10 sherds of pottery, weighing 101g, was recovered from the evaluation. Of this, five sherds were of later medieval date, four sherds were of post-medieval date and one sherd was modern. The pottery is summarised in the table below.

Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight (g)	Comments
203	c1650-1700	2	32	Black glazed redware (PMR) cup/mug base. 1x worn late Brill unglazed bs 16/E17C
207	c1550-1800	1	9	PMR poss bowl/jug rim with pour lip - damaged. Clear glazed. Prob 17/18C
402	18C	1	7	Worn unglz PMR c1550-1800. (Date based on 1x clay pipe stem, 7g, with stem bore c2.5mm, prob 18C)
500	c1250-1600?	1	9	Worn bs prob from vessel base floor with traces brownish-gr glz. Poss Potterspury (Northants). 15-16C?
503	c1350-1550?	1	6	Bs med coarse grey sandyware - prob Late Med Reduced ware (LMRD)
607	c1350-1550?	1	3	Bs med coarse grey sandyware - prob Late Med Reduced ware (LMRD)
801	c1250-1600?	1	3	Small fine pale grey bs, prob from cookpot, sooted ext. poss Potterspury?
900	c1875-1940	2	32	Rim modern stoneware ginger beer bottle, brown salt glz.
901	c1350-1550?	1	6	Jug rim - med coarse grey sandyware - prob Late Med Reduced ware (LMRD). Fresh



Land East of Aylesbury, Broughton Crossing, Bierton, Buckinghamshire

TOTAL	10 101
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Ceramic Building Material by John Cotter

3.6.2 A total of ten fragments, weighing 125g, of ceramic building material was recovered from the evaluation. All of the material derived from peg tiles of medieval or, more commonly, post-medieval date. The ceramic building material is summarised in the table below.

Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight (g)	Comments
203	16-19C	2	8	Scraps red post med peg tile
207	16-19C	1	37	Edge frag red pmed peg tile with circ nailhole
305	17-19C?	4	65	Frags min 2 pmed peg tiles - 1 in dense late-looking purplish fabric
402	16-19C	1	7	Scrap red post med peg tile
500	13-19C	1	6	Worn scrap med/pmed peg tile
506	13-19C	1	2	Worn scrap med/pmed peg tile
TOTAL		10	125	

Environmental Remains

3.6.3 No deposits suitable for the preservation of environmental remains were encountered and no soil samples were taken.

v.1



4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The trenches were excavated in good conditions and remained dry throughout the evaluation. It is therefore felt that the recorded density and distribution of archaeological features provides an accurate representation of the evaluation area as a whole.

4.2 Interpretation

- 4.2.1 The cropmarks in the western field were thought to form part of the Worlds End Green medieval settlement. However, the low density of features recorded and the paucity of artefactual material of medieval date recovered strongly indicates that field did not lie within the main settlement focus. This is corroborated by map evidence which indicates that the settlement focus lay to the south of the Grand Union canal.
- 4.2.2 In the area of the western field, the Bierton and Hulcott enclosure map of 1780, which appears to represent the, then still-surviving, medieval landscape, shows a funnel-like enclosure leading south and west towards an open green (Fig. 6). Such funnel entrances to medieval greens are characteristic features, typically associated with the movement and control of livestock to and from the green. However, the surviving earthworks (as represented by the cropmark plot) appear to have been inserted within this landscape. This, together with the dating evidence recovered from Trench 3, suggests a later, perhaps 19th-century date, for these features. It is quite possible, therefore, that the surviving low earthworks form part of a post-medieval agricultural landscape superimposed on the earlier medieval one. The surviving earthworks are an isolated fragment of the historic landscape which has otherwise been largely lost, at least to the north of the Grand Union Canal. In addition, the presence of the canal itself separates and dislocates the area from the focus of medieval settlement to the south.
- 4.2.3 In contrast, no earthworks are evident in the eastern field. This field, further removed from the focus of medieval settlement, contains the possible faint remnants of medieval ridge and furrow agriculture. No evidence of below-ground archaeological features corresponding with the recorded cropmarks was found other than, perhaps in Trench 8. Here, two very faint possible furrows followed the same alignment as a pair of parallel cropmarks. It is probable that the remaining cropmarks are the product of the more recent agricultural use of the field.



APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1							
General d	lescriptio	n	Orientat	ion	N-S		
Trench d	evoid of	archaeol	Avg. de	oth (m)	0.32		
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of blue brown clay. A 21.5m east-west orientated						Width (m)	
extension	was exca	vated at th	ne souther	n end of the trench.	Length (m)		50
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
100	Layer	-	0.22	Topsoil	-	-	
101	Layer	-	0.1	Subsoil	-	-	
102	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-	

Trench 2		
General description	Orientation	NE-SW
	Avg. depth (m)	0.53
Trench contained a furrow cutting a natural of blue brown clay.		1.6
	Length (m)	50
Contexts		1

Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
201	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-	
202	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil	-	-	
203	Fill	-	-	Fill of Furrow	Pottery	-	
204	Fill	-	-	Fill of furrow	-	-	
205	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-	
206	Cut	1.06	0.24	Furrow	-	-	
207	Fill	1.06	0.24	Fill of 206	Pottery CBM	-	

Trench 3							
General description						ion	N-S
							0.4
Trench contained a deposit of limestone fragments pressed into blue brown clay.						Width (m)	
	n ciay.				Length (m)		56
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
300	-						
301	Layer	-	0.1	Subsoil	-	-	

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302	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
303	Layer	-	0.32	Root disturbed natural	-	-
304	Layer	-	0.2	Root disturbance	-	-
305	Layer	>3	0.3	Limestone rubble	CBM	Post-medieval

Trench 4							
General c	descriptio	n	Orientat	E-W			
			Avg. dep	oth (m)	0.43		
Trench co	ntained fu	irrows cutt	iral of blue brown clay.	Width (n	1.6		
					Length (Length (m)	
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
401	Layer	-	0.24	Topsoil	-	-	
402	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil	-	-	
403	Fill	-	-	Fill of furrow	-	-	
404	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-	

Trench 5									
General c	lescriptio	Orientat	ion	N-S					
		Avg. dep	oth (m)	0.45					
Trench co brown cla		six east-w	est furrow	vs cutting a natural of blue	Width (m	n)	1.6		
brown old	y.				Length (m)	50		
Contexts									
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date			
500	Layer	-	0.23	Topsoil	-	-	-		
501	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-	-		
502	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-			
503	Fill	3	0.2	Fill of 505	Pottery	-			
504	Fill	3	0.2	Fill of 505	-	-			
505	Cut	3	0.4	Furrow	-	-			
506	Fill	2	0.33	Fill of 508	-	-			
507	Fill	2	0.22	Fill of 508	-	-			
508	Cut	2	0.45	Furrow	-	-			
509	Fill	2	0.16	Fill of 505	-	-			

Trench 6		
General description	Orientation	N-S
Trench contains one gully and two furrows cutting a natural of blue	Avg. depth (m)	0.58



brown cla	у.		Width (m)		1.6		
			Length (m)	50		
Contexts					L		
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
600	Layer	-	0.33	Topsoil	-	-	
601	Layer	-	0.14	Subsoil	-	-	
602	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-	
603	Fi;;	0.4	0.15	Fill of 604	Animal Bone	-	
604	Cut	0.4	0.15	Gully	-	-	
605	Fill	0.8	0.15	Fill of 606	-	-	
606	Cut	0.8	0.15	Furrow	-	-	
607	Fill	-	0.2	Fill of 608	Pottery	-	
608	Cut	-	0.2	Furrow	-	-	

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Trench 7							
General d	lescriptio	n	Orientat	ion	N-S		
			Avg. dep	oth (m)	0.5		
Trench d overlying a			Width (n	1.6			
o tonying t			Length (m)		50		
Contexts							I
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
700	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-	
701	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil	-	-	
702	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-	

Trench 8											
General d	escription	า	Orientatio	on	N-S						
Trench de	evoid of	archaeol	Avg. dept	h (m)	0.52						
overlying a	natural o	f blue bro	Width (m)	1.6							
and furrow	were also	o noted.	Length (m) 50		50						
Contexts					•		1				
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date					
800	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-					
801	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil	-	-					
802	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-					

Trench 9



General d	lescriptio	n	Orientat	Orientation Avg. depth (m)				
			soil Avg. dep					
overlying	a natural o	Width (n	Width (m) 1.					
					Length ((m)	50	
Contexts								
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date		
900	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	-	-	-	
901	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-		
902	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-		

Trench 10											
General d	lescriptio	n	Orientat	ion	E-W						
			Avg. dep	oth (m)	0.49						
Trench d overlying a			Width (m) 1.		1.6						
ovonynig			Length (m)		50						
Contexts											
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date					
1000	Layer	-	0.34	Topsoil	-	-					
1001	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-					
1002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-					

Trench 11										
General d	lescriptio	n	Orientat	ion	N-S					
_		_	Avg. de	oth (m)	0.55					
Trench d			Width (r	1.6						
overlying			Length (m)		50					
Contexts					•					
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date				
1100	Layer	-	0.4	Topsoil	-	-				
1101	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-				
1102	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-				



APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Oxford Archaeology, 2010 Appendix 1: Land at Broughton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. Cultural Heritage Baseline

Oxford Archaeology, 2011 Land East of Aylesbury, Broughton Crossing, Bierton, Buckinghamshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation, unpublished

Wilkinson, D (ed), 1992 Fieldwork Manual, unpublished



APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Buckinghamshire	Land	East	of	Aylesbury,	Broughton	Crossing,	Bierton,
Site code:	BRWC	E !!					
Grid reference:	SP 848	3 145					
Туре:	Evalua	tion					
Date and duration:	Septer	nber 20	11				
Area of site:	insert s	site area	a				

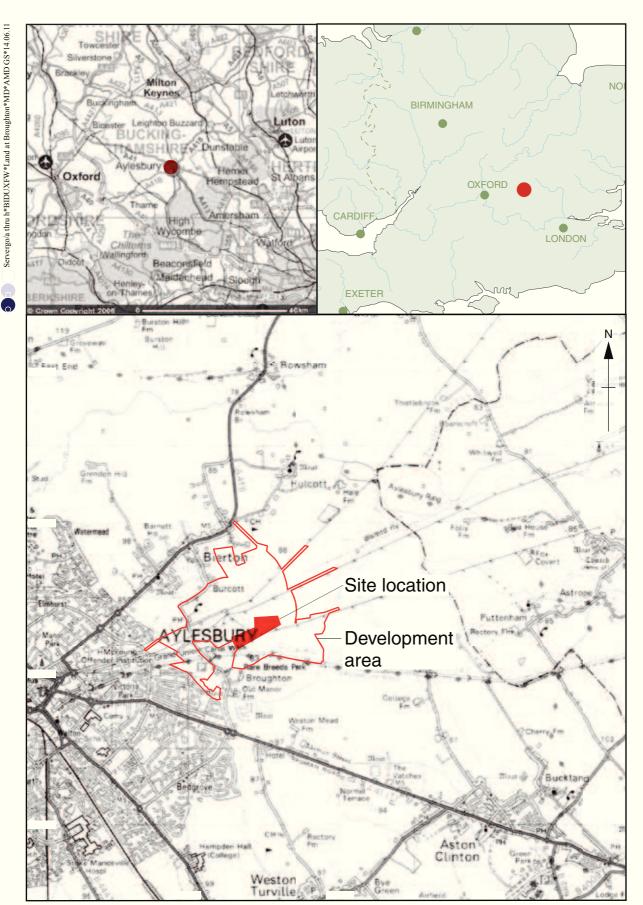
Summary of results: In September 2011, Oxford Archaeology South (OAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation, on behalf of Barratt Strategic, on two fields to the east of Aylesbury at Broughton Crossing, Bierton, Buckinghamshire. The evaluation comprised 11 trenches measuring 50m in length, eight of which targeted visible earthworks or crop marks which may be associated with Worlds End Green medieval site.

The investigation revealed the truncated remains of a medieval ridge and furrow agricultural system. The majority of the low earthworks, which are present in the western field, were not associated with below ground archaeological features. In one case, a layer of limestone rubble forming an earthwork contained fragments of post-medieval peg tile. It is possible, therefore, that the cropmarks and earthworks in this field form part of a post-medieval agricultural landscape superimposed on the earlier medieval system of ridge and furrow agriculture.

In the eastern field, faint traces of former furrows were recorded but the recorded cropmarks did not correspond with any below ground archaeological features and probably result from later agricultural practices.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course. The museum accession number has yet to be confirmed.

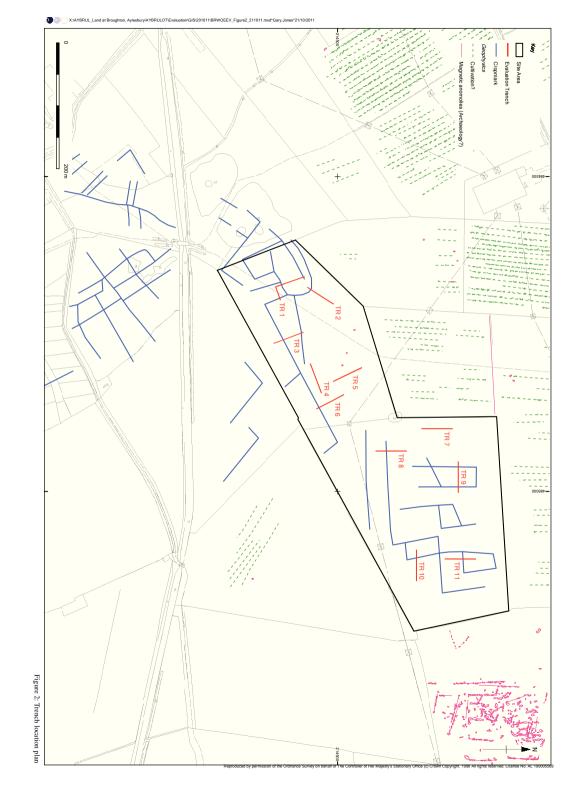


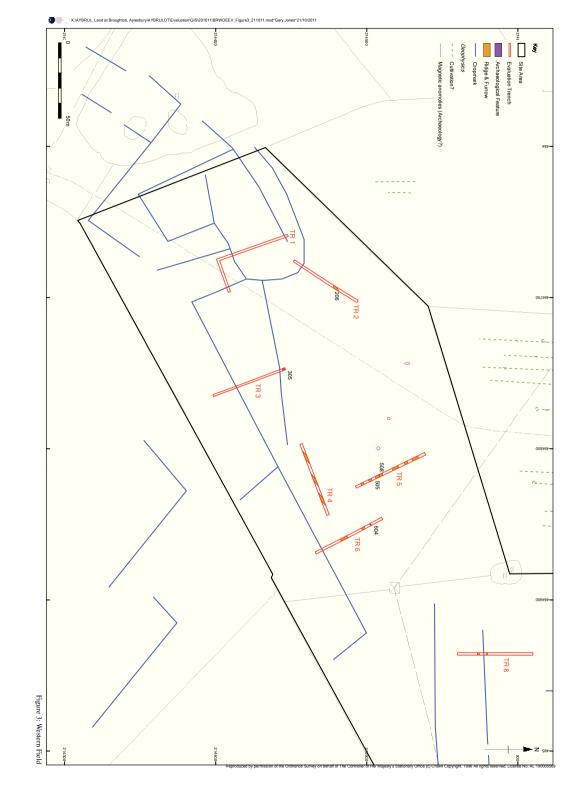


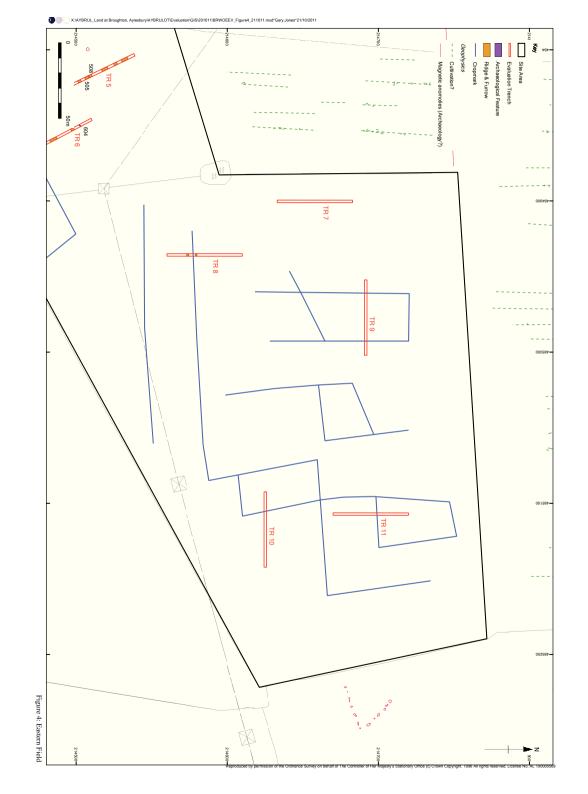
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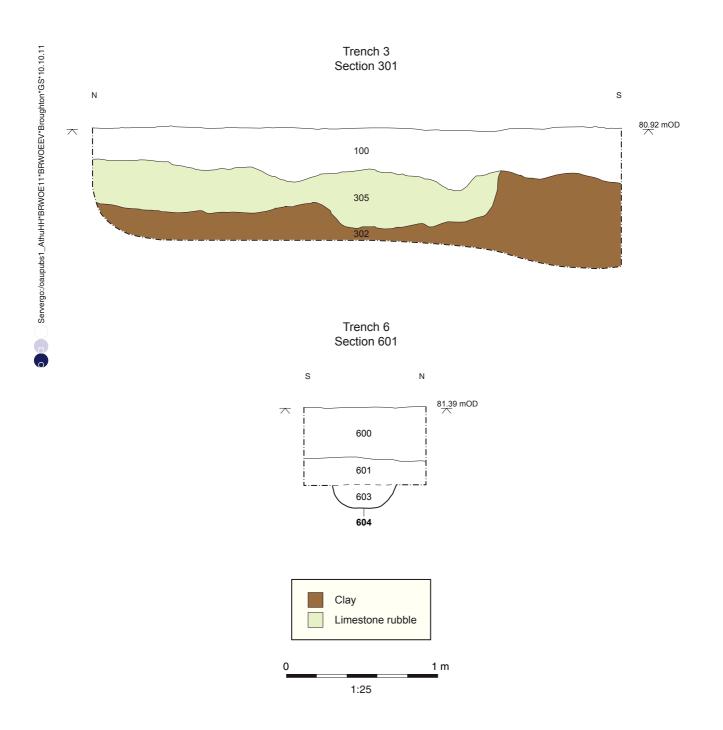
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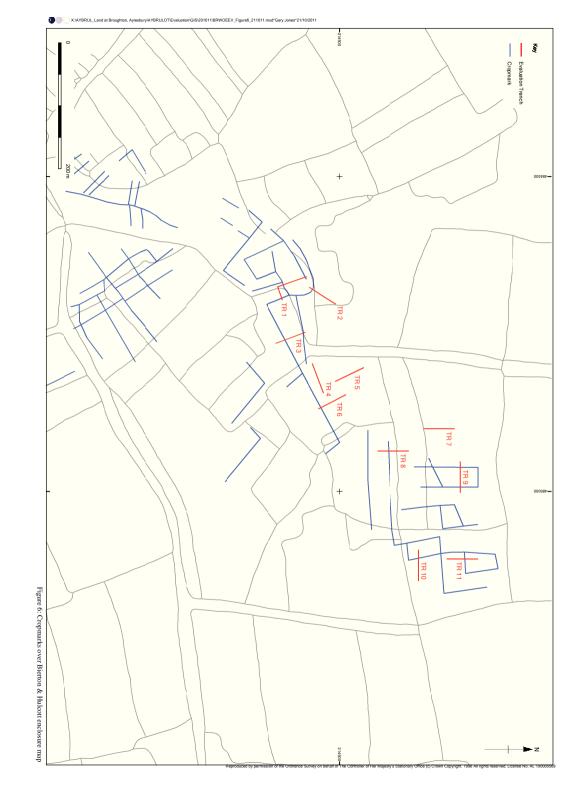
Figure 1: Site location













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