



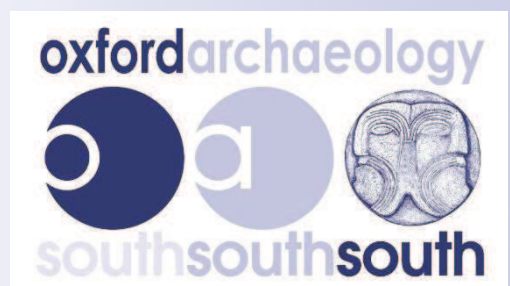
# South-west of Wretchwick Scheduled Monument, Bicester, Oxfordshire

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

June 2017

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**South-west of Wretchwick Scheduled Monument,  
Bicester, Oxfordshire**

***Archaeological Evaluation Report***

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## Summary

Between 14th March and 19th May, 2017, Oxford Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation comprising 251 trenches on the site of a proposed housing development to the south-east of Bicester, Oxfordshire. This report specifically covers four of these trenches that were excavated within a single field centred on SP 59430 21240 to investigate a series of earthworks. These are located to the immediate south-west of the deserted medieval village of Wretchwick, a Scheduled Monument.

Each of the four trenches revealed drainages ditches and structural remains, including limestone walls, floor surfaces and trackways. With the exception of a few residual Roman pottery sherds, all of the finds recovered during this investigation indicate that these remains and the majority of the associated earthworks date to between the 13th and early 15th centuries. The absence of significantly earlier or later artefacts indicates a relatively short-lived period of occupation within this part of the Wretchwick settlement that has pre-Domesday Survey origins.

Limited later activity is indicated by the presence of stratigraphically later ditches in Trenches 1 and 2. These continue to function as drainage ditches in the current landscape and are part of a broad pattern of field boundary and drainage arrangements based on a principal NW-SE axis. This pattern is repeated in the Scheduled Monument boundary. Excavation ahead of the Wretchwick Way road construction north of the site dated an enclosure that formed part of this arrangement to the 18th century.





## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Scope of work**

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Orion Heritage on behalf of Redrow Homes and Wates Developments to undertake an evaluation within the boundary of Wretchwick Green, Bicester, a proposed mixed-use development comprising residential housing, employment land, a local centre with retail and community use, a Primary School and related landscaping. This document specifically presents the results of the trenches excavated within a field bordering the south-western side of the Wretchwick deserted medieval village Scheduled Monument.
- 1.1.2 The evaluation was undertaken to inform the Planning Authority in advance of determination of a Planning Application (Planning Ref:16/00053/SO). A 2% sample for the evaluation was agreed in principle between the client's consultant, Rob Bourn for Orion Heritage, Richard Oram, the Planning Archaeologist covering the Cherwell District for Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), and David Wilkinson of Historic England. The requirements were further stipulated in a brief issued by Richard Oram on behalf of OCC (OCC 2016). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by OA detailing how it would evaluate impact areas of the development within the sample requirements specified by the Planning Archaeologist (OA 2016). The content of the WSI was approved by the Planning Archaeologist prior to the start of the fieldwork.
- 1.1.3 The fieldwork within this field was completed between 14th March and 12th April 2017.

### **1.2 Location, topography and geology**

- 1.2.1 The development proposal boundary encloses approximately 133 hectares and is located south-east of Bicester, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). This is to the east of Wretchwick Way (A4421) and Langford Village, with the A41 and Gravenhill Military Base to the south-west, a railway line and the village of Launton to the north-east, and open fields to the south-east with clear ridge and furrow. The field to the south-west of the Wretchwick deserted medieval village Scheduled Monument is within the western corner of the development boundary. This field is centred on SP 59430 21240. The topography of the field is undulating with clear remains of ditches, banks and raised platforms of the numerous earthworks that survive to the south-west of the Scheduled Monument (Plate 1). These earthworks are otherwise set within a flat landscape situated at 65.5m aOD. The field is semi-improved grass pasture with the well-preserved earthworks suggesting that this field has not been subjected to any arable cultivation.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology of the site is Peterborough Member – Mudstone (British Geological Survey website). There is no recorded drift geology (British Geological Survey website).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been described in detail in the Heritage Chapter of the Environmental Statement. The following is a summary from this relevant to the Wretchwick deserted medieval village and Scheduled Monument only, to reflect the limited date range of archaeological remains uncovered in this specific area.
- 1.3.2 Wretchwick deserted medieval village (DMV) lies immediately to the north-east of the site. Wretchwick is mentioned as an estate in the Domesday Survey although it did not have the status of a manor until 1194. The place name Wretchwick is mentioned as Wrechewich in 1182 and derived from the personal name wrecca.
- 1.3.3 The manor of Wretchwick lay within the parish of Bicester until 1932 and now lies within the parish of Ambrosden. The parish of Bicester was heavily affected by the Black Death and Wretchwick was given tax relief in 1354. There were 10 tenants in the 1430s but also 12 vacant tofts, untilled land, reduced rents and remitted fines. In 1489 Bicester Priory destroyed five houses and by 1535 most of the land was let, together with three houses. Depopulation was perhaps completed by Enclosure in the post-medieval period.
- 1.3.4 An earthworks survey and trial trenching exercise was undertaken on the area north of the evaluation field in advance of the construction of Wretchwick Way. A post-medieval ditched enclosure was recorded overlying medieval ridge and furrow immediately to the south-west of the scheduled area, which established that this enclosure was no earlier than the 18th century. To the west of Middle Wretchwick Farm, along the line of Wretchwick Way, fieldwork produced occasional sherds of medieval pottery, suggesting that part of the medieval village lay beneath later ridge and furrow. Sherds of pottery collected from the topsoil strip along the road alignment were no earlier than the 13th century.
- 1.3.5 The earthwork remains of ridge and furrow survive within the greater part of the larger development boundary east of the Scheduled Monument. The evidence suggests that this part of the site lay within the open fields to the east of and outside the main focus of Wretchwick village during this period.
- 1.3.6 Historic maps of the area demonstrate that the site has been in agricultural usage throughout the post-medieval period.
- 1.3.7 Well-preserved earthwork features are present within the evaluation field. These comprise ditches, apparent trackways and raised platform areas of similar appearance to those within the Scheduled Monument boundary to the immediate north-east. A geophysical survey was completed in July 2015 (Stratascan 2015) over the larger part of the development area including the current evaluation field. This also identified probable trackways and ditches suggesting an access axis running NE-SW towards or through the DMV.

### ***Wretchwick DMV Scheduled Monument listing***

- 1.3.8 The monument is described in the scheduling document as follows:
- 1.3.9 “This monument survives well despite the adjacent fields having been built over by modern development. The earthworks are known by analogy from the part excavation of adjacent platforms to contain archaeological and environmental remains relating to the construction, economy and fate of the settlement and its inhabitants.
- 1.3.10 The monument, which falls into two areas immediately north-east and south-west of Middle Wretchwick Farm, south-east of Bicester, includes the remains of Wretchwick medieval village and its associated earthwork boundaries. Although divided by the present farm complex, the remains clearly represent a medieval settlement with hollow trackways dividing building platforms which vary in size from 2m by 3m to 30m by 40m. There are also a series of water management channels which vary from 3m to 8m wide and feed a series of small ponds associated with the farm. The remains north-east of the farm are less regular in their layout than those to the south-west and it is believed that this is the earlier core of the village, with a later more planned extension being added when dairying increased the need for more labour in the late 1400s. Wretchwick is mentioned as an estate in 1086 in the Domesday book and it is known to have had the status of a Manor by 1194. By 1274 it was owned by Bicester Priory and in 1279 the population consisted of 24 villeins and their dependants. In 1488 it was suffering from a reduced population due to the Black Death and it was depopulated by the Prior of Bicester. By 1536 the manor had been divided up into five leasehold farms and by 1791 an estate map shows only one farm present on the site. By 1881 the present land boundaries had been formed by enclosure and the next major alteration was the development to the north-west in the last decade. Excluded from the scheduling are all boundary fences, the surface of the track to Middle Wretchwick Farm and all water management devices within the drains, although the ground beneath all of these features and the water channels themselves are included in the scheduled area.”

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 General aims

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives were as follows:

- i. to determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains,
- ii. to determine the approximate extent of any surviving remains,
- iii. to determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means,
- iv. to determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains,
- v. to determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy,
- vi. to assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape,
- vii. to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence, and the forms in which such evidence may survive,
- viii. to determine the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity,
- ix. to determine the range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.

### 2.2 Site specific aims

2.2.1 The evaluation trenches within the field to the south-west of the Scheduled Monument specifically aimed to:

- x. assess the possible continuation of earthwork features as buried archaeological remains beyond the Scheduled Monument boundary,
- xi. identify any remains other than ridge and furrow and field boundaries that may be directly associated with the Wretchwick DMV Scheduled Monument.

### 2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 The scope, trench locations and parameters for relocating these were agreed in principle with the Planning Archaeologist and Historic England Archaeologist prior to the field attendance. In the first instance three trenches were arranged to provide an approximate 2% sample of the enclosed field, targeting features recorded by the previous earthwork and geophysical surveys (Fig. 2). At the point of the trench layout the Project Officer in charge of the fieldwork assessed the quality and type of earthworks that the trenches had targeted, the ground conditions and the overhead service constraints. Due to the presence of an overhead electricity cable, each of the trenches was moved to accommodate a safe working distance between the machine and cables whilst still targeting the intended range of earthwork features.

2.3.2 Subsequently an additional trench (Trench 251) was excavated to assess the archaeological remains in the southern corner of the field to cover alternative locations for the proposed development impact. Within this trench significant quantities of limestone rubble were encountered during the removal of the topsoil at the interface with the undisturbed archaeological horizon. To avoid unwarranted



disturbance to the archaeological remains within this trench whilst still fulfilling the aims of the evaluation, it was agreed to expose the archaeological horizon in detail only at selected sample locations within the trench (see Fig. 11).

- 2.3.3 Each trench location was surveyed using GPS equipment prior to mechanical excavation. Mechanical excavation of the turf and soil layers overlying archaeological horizons was completed under strict archaeological control at all times. Due to the nature of the archaeological features and deposits encountered within this field, variable depths of mechanical excavation were undertaken to adequately reveal either cut features (generally ditches) or stone work (surface and walls) that sealed former medieval soil horizons.
- 2.3.4 The meadow turf was carefully removed by machine and placed to one side of the evaluation trenches with associated topsoil arisings stored alongside. Subsoil deposits were stored along the opposing side of the trench. These deposits were visually scanned for the presence of artefacts. Following machine excavation, cleaning, hand excavation and recording of the trenches followed standard OA procedures as specified in Appendix A of the WSI. Environmental samples were also recovered from suitable deposits where charred material was noted.
- 2.3.5 Trenches were backfilled following viewing and approval by the Planning Archaeologist and Historic England Archaeologist. Reinstatement of soil deposits was in reverse order with the meadow turf replaced last and lightly tracked or tamped down by the machine to the specification of the landowner.

## **3 RESULTS**

### **3.1 Introduction and presentation of results**

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below trench by trench. The full details of each trench with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. Detailed finds and environmental reports are presented in Appendices B and C.
- 3.1.2 Context numbers reflect the trench numbers unless otherwise stated; e.g. pit 102 is a feature within Trench 1, while ditch 304 is a feature within Trench 3.

### **3.2 General soils and ground conditions**

- 3.2.1 The soil sequence across all trenches was fairly uniform. The natural geology comprised silty clay that was overlain by a buried gleyed soil horizon that was sealed beneath more recently derived subsoil and topsoil. Where present, the archaeological remains were revealed at the interface between the buried soil and the later subsoil, although cut features were generally not visible until the buried soil horizon was removed. This was undertaken in parts of Trenches 1-3 by machine where other archaeological deposits such as stone surfaces were absent.
- 3.2.2 Ground conditions varied considerably throughout the evaluation. Due to high groundwater levels, Trenches 1-3 were quickly flooded following machine excavation, with only isolated areas remaining above the water table. As the fieldwork progressed during favourable weather conditions, the level of groundwater subsided over time. Towards the end of the fieldwork, standing water was only present in isolated parts of these three trenches. Due to the shallow depth of Trench 251, the location of this trench on a raised platform area, and the fact that it was excavated after a prolonged dry period, no groundwater problems were encountered within this trench. However, the dry conditions did provide alternative challenging conditions once the clay soils had baked hard, making both visibility and excavation difficult.
- 3.2.3 Archaeological features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology once the buried soil layer had been removed. These features were mapped during the excavation of the trenches prior to flooding, and also verified further once conditions had improved and through excavation.

### **3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits**

- 3.3.1 Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 251 all revealed significant archaeological remains, including spreads of limestone rubble that may represent demolition of several structures and associated stone surfaces. Drainage and boundary ditches were also revealed within Trenches 1, 2 and 3.

### **3.4 Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4)**

- 3.4.1 Directly overlying the natural geology was a dark grey brown, clay silt deposit, 111, which was approximately 0.17m thick and represents a buried soil horizon. Due to post-depositional gleying as a result of seasonal waterlogging, it was difficult to determine the relationship between this deposit and a number of cut features that

were revealed visible against the underlying geology once deposit 111 had been removed.

- 3.4.2 Within the north-western half of Trench 1, ditches 107 and 109 were recorded adjacent to each other on broadly parallel NW-SE alignments. They had broad concave profiles and contained single fills of dark brown grey, silty clay (Fig. 4 section 101). At the north-western end of the trench, ditch 112 was recorded on a NE-SW alignment. Although it was left unexcavated, the upper fill was identical to the fills of ditches 107 and 109. None of the fill deposits produce any artefactual material.
- 3.4.3 Two areas of limestone cobbles and fragments (104 and 105) were recorded in the south-eastern part of the trench overlying the buried soil horizon 111 (Fig. 4 section 102). The smaller of these (105) only measuring 0.95m by 0.7m, but it extended beyond the north-east edge of the trench. It comprised small rounded fragments but there was little indication that this a structure-related deposit. The stones were located adjacent to, and possible also overlying a mixed silt clay deposit (117).
- 3.4.4 At the south-eastern end of the trench was a larger spread of limestone fragments (104), that covered an area 4.8m wide, and extended beyond the limits of the trench to the north-east and south-west (Plate 2). The moderately dense spread consisted of sub-angular fragments, between 0.1m and 0.2m across, forming a single layer, which also incorporated a matrix of light brown clay (116) between the stones and a thin layer of silt directly over the stones (103). A combined assemblage of 29 sherds, 280g, of pottery with a date range 1275-1400 was recovered from these deposits.
- 3.4.5 The limestone deposits (104 and 105) were both sealed by the subsoil horizon (101). This was also present to the north-west of ditch 114 overlying the fills of ditches 107, 109 and 112.
- 3.4.6 Ditch 114 was located near the centre of the trench on a NE-SW orientation, and coincided with a distinct earthwork extending across this part of the field (Figs 2 and 4 section 102). Due to flooding the ditch was not excavated beyond the machine excavation level. However, this revealed the upper part of the fill sequence. This suggests that the ditch was cut through the subsoil horizon 101, although it is unclear if this was the actual horizon the feature was cut from or if this just represents infilling of the ditch hollow following later soil accumulations. It was noted that the subsoil horizon (101) also dipped into the edges of the ditch suggesting that this may actually have accumulated whilst the ditch was open or, at least, eroded into the open ditch. The ditch measured approximately 4.5m wide with the upper 0.6m of the feature revealed in the section. It contained a lower fill of reddish brown clay silt, 115, overlain by a naturally silted deposit of humic dark brown material 119. No artefactual material was encountered within the ditch.
- 3.4.7 The current humic topsoil and turf (100) completed the sequence within Trench 1. This directly sealed the upper fill of ditch 114 suggesting that this ditch is later than those more clearly sealed below the subsoil horizon. Artefacts from any period were conspicuously absent from both the topsoil and subsoil horizons.

### 3.5 Trench 2 (figs 5, 6 and 7)

- 3.5.1 A similar geology and soil sequence to that of Trench 1 was recorded in Trench 2, with buried soil horizon 207 probably being a continuation of deposit 111. Layer 207 was approximately 0.2m thick and was present throughout most of the trench (Plate 3). Within the centre of the trench, deposit 207 was cut by a NW-SE aligned ditch (211) (Fig. 7 section 200 and Plate 4). Ditch 211 measured 1.5m wide and 0.94m deep with steep sides and sharp V-shaped profile. It contained a single sterile deposit of naturally accumulated silty clay. It was truncated along its south-western edge by a recut, 209. The full profile of ditch 209 was not exposed during the excavation as it extended under a later stone layer that was not removed. However, the exposed part of the ditch was 0.74m deep, with a broad flattened profile. It was filled with a light brown grey, slightly silty clay (210) which contained a small quantity of animal bone, but no artefacts.
- 3.5.2 Partially laid onto the surface of deposit 210 was a stone surface, 206. It was constructed with small limestone fragments defining a 'path' at least 1.1m wide (Fig. 6). This surface was only partially exposed and was later sealed by a layer of grey brown clay, 205, onto which a second phase of surfacing had been laid. This second surface (203) covered an area approximately 3m wide, and extended beyond the limits of the trench to the north-west and south-east.
- 3.5.3 A third, similar stone surface (204) was located approximately 17.5m to the north-east of 203, similarly overlying the buried soil layer 207 (Fig. 7 section 201). It measured 1.5m across and was constructed with tightly packed small rounded limestone fragments. A single sherd of pottery dated 1225-1400 was recovered from this surface.

### 3.6 Trench 3 (Figs 8, 9 and 10)

- 3.6.1 The buried soil layer observed within Trenches 1 and 2 was also noted within Trench 3 as layer 303, a 0.22m thick deposit of dark grey brown, clay silt (Plates 5 and 6). At the north-western end of the trench was a narrow gully (318) aligned NNW-SSE. It measured 0.35m wide and 0.2m deep and contained a single deposit of dark grey and orange silty clay. The relationship between gully 318 and the soil layer 303 was not observed, but two later ditches, 316 and 314 were recorded cutting through both layer 303 and gully 318. Ditch 314 had a broad concave profile, 0.92m wide and 0.3m deep and was filled with a dark greyish brown, silty clay deposit (315) containing frequent flecks of charcoal (Fig. 10 section 304). This also produced an assemblage of 45 pottery sherds, 349g, dated 1175-1250. Environmental sampling of this ditch yielded significant quantities of charred wheat and other grains. Although ditch 316 was not excavated the final upper fill comprised dark greyish brown, silty clay similar to that encountered in ditch 314.
- 3.6.2 Within the centre of the trench were two large spreads of limestone rubble, 322 and 305 (Figs 8 and 9 and Plate 6). In the area between spreads 322 and 305 was a deposit of mottled light brown, silty clay, 304. The origin of this material is uncertain, but it may have functioned as a levelling layer in advance of construction. This deposit produced a pottery assemblage comprising 19 sherds, 59g, dated 1225-1400. Adjacent to deposit 304 were several large fragments of flagstone (320), with an associated



charcoal-rich deposit (306) that surrounded and partially covered the stones. It is likely that these represented either a hearth, or remnants of flooring material.

- 3.6.3 Limestone spread 305 covered an area approximately 4.6m wide within the trench, and appeared to overlie both 303 and 304. It consisted of densely packed roughly hewn limestone fragments forming a relatively convex surface. There was a notable ridge in the material towards its north-western edge, which was oriented NE-SW, and measured approximately 0.8m wide. The second spread (322) covered an area 4m in length along the trench and also appeared to overlie deposits 303 and 304. Comprised of similar material to deposit 305, it also contained a notable ridge towards its south-east edge, parallel to that within 305 and also measuring approximately 0.8m wide.
- 3.6.4 At the south-east end of the trench were the remnants of a wall (307) aligned north-south. It measured 0.78m wide and survived to a maximum height of 0.25m, with up to two courses preserved over a length of 1.44m. It consisted of unbonded, roughly hewn limestone blocks, up to 0.25m by 0.15m, forming the facing courses. These had been laid directly on the surface of the former soil horizon (303) without a foundation trench to form a neat west-facing elevation, with rubble core. The east facing elevation was disturbed by later truncation and possible robbing represented by a deposit recorded as subsoil (301) directly over the part of the wall that had been removed (Fig. 10 section 301). Abutting the western side of the wall was a dark grey, charcoal-rich, silty clay deposit (308). It is likely that this later deposit presents either hearth debris, or other remains of occupation activities. This deposit produced a small pottery assemblage comprising 6 sherds, 59g, dated 1225-1400 and a fragment of medieval roof tile.
- 3.6.5 The southern end of wall 307 extended beyond the limits of the excavation, the northern end was truncated by a ditch (310) aligned ENE-WSW. This was not sample excavated, although it contained an upper fill of dark greyish brown silty clay, similar to ditches 316 and 314.

### **3.7 Trench 251 (Fig. 11 and Plates 7 and 8)**

- 3.7.1 Following the initial removal of topsoil, further excavation of the subsoil was undertaken by hand within four separate sondages measuring approximately 2m by 2m to specifically characterise and confirm the level of preservation within this trench. This approach was applied due to the density of limestone encountered across the full extent of the trench suggesting that well-preserved structural remains were present throughout.
- 3.7.2 Context 25101 was assigned to the subsoil/archaeological horizon surface contact. This thin layer was removed within each sondage and produced a cumulative assemblage of pottery comprising 15 sherds, 97g, dated 1275-1450.

#### ***Sondage 1***

- 3.7.3** A wall (25102) aligned NW-SE was encountered within this part of the trench. Its construction comprised roughly-hewn small limestone blocks up to 0.25m wide forming a facing course to the wall. This was only partially revealed in plan, and measured at least 0.43m wide. The remainder of the sondage revealed a densely-

packed spread of sub-angular limestone rubble (25103) forming a probable surface. The relationship between 25103 and wall 25102 could not be determined in plan and further destructive excavation was not desirable.

### ***Sondage 2***

- 3.7.4 A deposit of mixed limestone fragments (25104) incorporating both small sub-angular pieces approximately 0.15m across and large fragments of flagstones up to 0.4m across was encountered in sondage 2. The material covered an area approximately 0.55m wide, extending beyond the limits of the sondage and trench. It was unclear if this deposit represented the disturbed remains of a wall, rubble over a floor surface or *in situ* material that had otherwise been disturbed. A moderate concentration of small sub-angular limestone fragments (25106) that may represent a surface was present across the remainder of the sondage.

### ***Sondage 3***

- 3.7.5 Cleaning to the surface of the archaeological horizon within this sondage revealed a densely-packed surface of small rounded limestone fragments (25107) (Plate 9). The surface was present throughout the sondage and extended beyond the area revealed in all directions.

### ***Sondage 4***

- 3.7.6 Cleaning revealed a portion of wall (25108) comprising a single course of limestone blocks and rubble (Plate 10). This was aligned NE-SW with the larger blocks forming the facing stones with a rubble core of smaller stones. It was surrounded by fragments of limestone (25109) that may represent the partial survival of a surface associated with the wall.
- 3.7.7 Within the north-western edge of the sondage a narrow linear cut was identified (25110). It contained a deposit of mid to dark grey silty clay. It was observed cutting from just below the turf line, and is likely to be a land drain, although this was not confirmed by excavation.

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 Although there were significant problems with a high water table as a result of the wet ground conditions at the start of the fieldwork, a prolonged period of dry weather meant that this could be managed in that did not impact on the effectiveness of the investigation. Cut features were easily identified against the underlying geology and were either recorded in plan prior to flooding, or once the groundwater had been successfully controlled. The stonework revealed during the investigation remained above the water table and was never adversely affected by the ground conditions.
- 4.1.2 Due to the proximity of the remains and their possible relationship with the adjacent Scheduled Monument, a minimally invasive approach was taken to the excavation and recording of the trenches. Nevertheless, a detailed picture of the archaeological remains has been revealed by the results of this investigation. Furthermore, the supporting evidence provided by the earlier earthwork survey means that it is possible to interpret the remains in the context of the field rather than being limited to the extent of the excavated trenches alone.

### 4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 The aims and objectives of the evaluation are detailed in Section 2. The investigation successfully identified significant archaeological remains within all four of the trenches investigated. Due to the correlation between the excavated remains and the extant earthworks within the field, it is possible to interpret the likely extent of the surviving remains beyond the excavated areas. Furthermore, the artefactual evidence recovered was dated almost exclusively to the 13th and 14th centuries, with a conspicuous absence of later material either in features or the overlying soil horizons. This provides some certainty on the date range of the features and structures recorded. However, some caution should be applied to the dating of all features as it is also apparent, based on stratigraphic relationships, that some of the ditches may relate to more recent land management. This is discussed in more detail below.
- 4.2.2 A combination of ditches, spreads of limestone and the remains of walls were identified throughout the four trenches. All of these post-dated an earlier soil horizon that underlies the medieval archaeology within this field, although the surface of this soil was probably the contemporary land surface with the medieval activity. Both the excavated remains and the extant earthworks surrounding the trenches demonstrate that the archaeological remains are well preserved. The structural remains do show some signs of post-abandonment disturbance in the form of wall stone robbing, although the impact on the remains appears to be relatively slight. Similarly, there was a sharp interface between the stone layers and the overlying soil layers, further demonstrating that they had not been disturbed by arable farming practices. Where encountered within Trenches 3 and 251, the stone walls comprised little more than two or three surviving courses. However, this shallow level of preservation may partly reflect construction practices, with the walls being the foundations for earthen or timber superstructures.

4.2.3 Well-preserved charred plant remains were recovered from both occupation deposits and a drainage ditch. Analysis of this material has revealed evidence for mixed agricultural regimes, producing wheat, oat and legumes. Despite the heavy clay soil that has the potential to fragment charred remains, there is good potential for further material of this nature. Although the site was excavated during wet conditions, the features appear to only have been seasonally waterlogged and no evidence for permanently waterlogged organic remains was encountered. However, any deeper features that exist on the site are likely to provide the conditions for the survival of such material.

### 4.3 Interpretation and discussion

4.3.1 Within Trench 1, the spread of limestone at the south-eastern end did not appear to have any structural importance, and was not as densely packed as some of the other more obvious surfaces within Trenches 2 and 251. However, it is unclear if this is a poorly compacted and worn surface or if this represents another activity such as the discarding of smaller rubble during robbing of structures.

4.3.2 The densely packed rounded stones forming the surfaces within Trench 2 appear to have been deliberately laid, forming two separate trackways on NW-SE alignments. The two separate phases of surface evidenced by layers 206 and 203, and their relationships with the adjacent ditches, demonstrate that these areas were maintained over a prolonged period - with the ditches being recut and the surface re-laid as necessary.

4.3.3 Within Trench 3 the broad spread of sub-angular stone was similar to the material observed within Trench 1. However, the presence of the large flagstones laid flat and associated with a charred deposit does suggest that these relate to the interior of a possible structure. In this instance, the form of the stonework within deposits 305 and 322 indicates that the building from which the material originated, was located on a SW-NE alignment, with two walls approximately 5.5m apart. The spread of stone debris was positioned upon a visibly raised area recorded during the earlier earthwork survey (Fig. 2). Evidence for a second building was recorded as wall 307 in the south-east end of the trench. The charred remains recovered from the occupation deposits abutting this structure provided contemporary evidence for mixed arable farming.

4.3.4 The stone walls and associated surfaces within Trench 251 represent an area of well-preserved archaeology. When correlated with the results of the earthwork survey and the field observations, it seems reasonable to suggest that this level of preservation is present across the wider area of the raised platform on which this trench was targeted (Fig. 2).

4.3.5 The combined evidence from the various drainage ditches and areas of raised ground on which stone structures and surfaces had been constructed demonstrates that the earthworks in this field are a continuation of the deserted medieval village and Scheduled Monument to the immediate north-east. With the exception of a few residual Roman pottery sherds, all of the pottery recovered during this investigation dates to between the 13th and mid 15th centuries.



4.3.6 There is some limited stratigraphic evidence for later activity within the field that may significantly post-date the medieval settlement. The prominent NW-SE drainage ditches that form the existing field boundaries and run through the centre of the field, combined with some of the ditches that extend off these, seem likely to have later origins. This is based partly on the evidence that the latest ditches in Trenches 1 and 2 are cut through the subsoil horizon, although the clarity of this relationship was poorly defined. No artefactual material beyond the 15th century was present either in the features or topsoil/subsoil horizons to clarify this. However, these features remain as very prominent earthworks and functioning drainage ditches in comparison to less prominent medieval ditches recorded in the trenches. These also appear to link into the 18th-century enclosure arrangement investigated ahead of the Wretchwick Way road construction on the northern edge of the investigation area.

## APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

| Trench 1  |         |           |           |  |                             |            |
|---|---------|-----------|-----------|--|-----------------------------|------------|
| General description   |         |           |           |  | Orientation                 | NW-SE      |
| Trench located in an area of extant earthworks, revealed a layer of buried soil cut through by several ditches, and overlain by a spread of limestone rubble – potentially representing the remains of a building or a surface. The underlying geology consisted of silty clay. |         |           |           |  | Length (m)                  | 50         |
|   |         |           |           |  | Width (m)                   | 1.8        |
|   |         |           |           |  | Avg. depth (m)              | 0.54       |
| Context No.   | Type    | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Description  | Findings                    | Date       |
| 100   | Layer   | -         | 0.15      | Topsoil  | -                           | -          |
| 101   | Layer   | -         | 0.22      | Subsoil  | -                           | -          |
| 102   | Layer   | -         | -         | Natural  | -                           | -          |
| 103   | Layer   | -         | 0.09      | Mid to light reddish brown, silty clay, overlying surface 104                          | Pottery, Animal bone        | c1275-1400 |
| 104   | Surface | 4.8       | 0.2       | Single layer of limestone fragments, ranging between 0.1m-0.2m across, randomly placed | Pottery, Animal bone, metal | c1275-1400 |
| 105   | Surface | 0.95      | 0.05      | Single layer of limestone fragments, ranging between approximately 0.05-0.2m across    | -                           | -          |
| 106   | Void    | -         | -         | -  | -                           | -          |
| 107   | Cut     | 0.5       | 0.3       | Ditch  | -                           | -          |
| 108   | Fill    | 0.5       | 0.3       | Fill of 107, dark brown grey, silty clay   | -                           | -          |
| 109   | Cut     | 0.85      | 0.18      | Ditch  | -                           | -          |
| 110   | Fill    | 0.85      | 0.18      | Fill of 109, dark brown grey, silty clay   | -                           | -          |
| 111   | Layer   | -         | >0.17     | Buried soil horizon, dark grey brown, clay silt  | -                           | -          |
| 112   | Cut     | 0.8       | -         | Ditch (unexcavated)  | -                           | -          |
| 113   | Fill    | 0.7       | -         | Fill of 112, dark brown grey, silty clay   | -                           | -          |
| 114   | Cut     | 4.5       | >0.6      | Ditch (unexcavated)  | -                           | -          |
| 115   | Fill    | 1.1       | 0.4       | Fill of 114, reddish brown, clay silt  | -                           | -          |
| 116   | Layer   | -         | -         | Foundation layer/Levelling, light yellow/blue, silty clay                              | -                           | -          |
| 117   | Layer   | 1         | 0.25      | Mixed light brown grey, silty clay   | -                           | -          |
| 118   | Layer   | -         | 0.2       | Mixed light brown grey, silty clay   | -                           | -          |
| 119   | Fill    | 3.65      | >0.4      | Fill of 114, dark brown, humic clay silt   | -                           | -          |

| Trench 2   |         |           |           |  |                |            |
|--|---------|-----------|-----------|--|----------------|------------|
| General description  |         |           |           |  | Orientation    | NE-SW      |
| Trench contained a buried soil horizon and two areas of stone surface, divided by a ditch boundary. The natural geology consisted of silty clay. |         |           |           |  | Length (m)     | 30         |
|  |         |           |           |  | Width (m)      | 1.8        |
|  |         |           |           |  | Avg. depth (m) | 0.5        |
| Context No.  | Type    | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Description  | Finds          | Date       |
| 200  | Layer   | -         | 0.15      | Topsoil  | -              | -          |
| 201  | Layer   | -         | 0.1       | Subsoil  | -              | -          |
| 202  | Layer   | -         | -         | Natural  | -              | -          |
| 203  | Surface | 3.00      | 0.05      | Spread of rounded limestone fragments, 0.1m-0.2m across  | Pottery        | c1225-1400 |
| 204  | Surface | 1.5       | 0.05      | Spread of rounded limestone fragments, 0.1m-0.15m across | -              | -          |
| 205  | Layer   | -         | 0.1       | Mid reddish brown, silty clay                            | -              | -          |
| 206  | Surface | 1.00      | -         | Spread of rounded limestone fragments, 0.05m-0.1m across | -              | -          |
| 207  | Layer   | -         | 0.2       | Buried soil horizon, dark grey brown, clay silt          | -              | -          |
| 208  | Layer   | -         | -         | Duplication of 207                                       | -              | -          |
| 209  | Cut     | >1.58     | 0.74      | Ditch  | -              | -          |
| 210  | Fill    | >1.58     | 0.74      | Fill of 209, light brown grey, slightly silty clay       | Animal bone    | -          |
| 211  | Cut     | 1.5       | 0.94      | Ditch  | -              | -          |
| 212  | Fill    | 1.5       | 0.94      | Fill of 211, mid reddish brown, silty clay               | -              | -          |
| 213  | Cut     | 3         | 0.42      | Ditch  | -              | -          |
| 214  | Fill    | 3         | 0.42      | Fill of 213, dark brown, clay silt                       | -              | -          |

| Trench 3  |       |           |           |             |                |       |
|---|-------|-----------|-----------|-------------|----------------|-------|
| General description   |       |           |           |             | Orientation    | NW-SE |
| Trench located in an area of extant ditch and platform earthworks. Excavation revealed a layer of buried soil cut through by several ditches, and overlain by a spread of limestone rubble/surfacing likely to represent the remains of a building and interior surface. The underlying geology consisted of silty clay. The truncated remains of a further wall were recorded in the SE end of the trench associated with a deposit rich in charred remains. |       |           |           |             | Length (m)     | 44    |
|   |       |           |           |             | Width (m)      | 1.8   |
|   |       |           |           |             | Avg. depth (m) | 0.60  |
| Context No.   | Type  | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Description | Finds          | Date  |
| 300   | Layer | -         | 0.15      | Topsoil     | -              | -     |
| 301   | Layer | -         | 0.15      | Subsoil     | -              | -     |
| 302   | Layer | -         | -         | Natural     | -              | -     |

|     |       |      |       |   |   |            |
|-----|-------|------|-------|---|---|------------|
| 303 | Layer | -    | 0.22  | Buried soil horizon, dark grey brown, clay silt   | -                                       | -          |
| 304 | Layer | -    | -     | Light brown, silty clay   | Pottery, Animal bone, metal             | c1225-1400 |
| 305 | Layer | 2.1  | -     | Limestone demolition, angular stones up to 0.2m across  | -                                       | -          |
| 306 | Layer | 0.7  | -     | Occupation deposit, very dark brown grey, clay silt   | -                                       | -          |
| 307 | Wall  | 0.78 | 0.25  | Angular limestone wall, stones between 0.05m and 0.25m across, N-S alignment, two courses preserved | -                                       | -          |
| 308 | Layer | 0.7  | 0.3   | Occupation deposit, dark grey brown, silty clay   | Pottery, Animal bone                    | c1225-1400 |
| 309 | Layer | -    | 0.22  | Same as 303   | -                                       | -          |
| 310 | Cut   | 1.75 | -     | Ditch (unexcavated)   | -                                       | -          |
| 311 | Fill  | 1.75 | -     | Fill of 310, dark greyish brown, silty clay   | -                                       | -          |
| 312 | Cut   | 0.5  | -     | Ditch (unexcavated)   | -                                       | -          |
| 313 | Fill  | 0.5  | -     | Fill of 312, dark greyish brown, silty clay   | -                                       | -          |
| 314 | Cut   | 0.92 | 0.3   | Ditch   | -                                       | -          |
| 315 | Fill  | 0.92 | 0.3   | Fill of 314, dark greyish brown, silty clay   | Pottery, Animal bone, metal, fired clay | c1175-1250 |
| 316 | Cut   | 1.2  | -     | Ditch (unexcavated)   | -                                       | -          |
| 317 | Fill  | 1.2  | -     | Fill of 316, dark greyish brown, silty clay   | -                                       | -          |
| 318 | Cut   | 0.35 | 0.2   | Gully   | -                                       | -          |
| 319 | Fill  | 0.35 | 0.2   | Fill of 318, mottled orange and dark grey, silty clay   | -                                       | -          |
| 320 | Layer | -    | -     | Duplicate of 304  | Metal                                   | -          |
| 321 | Layer | 1.85 | >0.12 | Redeposited natural, light brown and blue, clay   | -                                       | -          |
| 322 | Layer | 5.00 | 0.1   | Limestone demolition, angular stones up to 0.2m across  | -                                       | -          |

| Trench 251   |           |           |           |   |                                  |            |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|---|----------------------------------|------------|
| General description  |           |           |           | Orientation   | SW-NE x<br>NW-SE                 |            |
| Trench located on a platform area. Removal of topsoil encountered large quantities of limestone. Machine excavation ceased at the interface between the subsoil and rubble. Four 'sondage' locations were selected for sample excavation where the subsoil was removed to reveal the upper level of the archaeological deposits. Each revealed well-constructed stone surfaces and walls. Further destructive sample excavation was not undertaken to ensure the preservation of the structural remains. |           |           |           | Length (m)  | 15 x 15<br>(T-shaped)            |            |
|  |           |           |           | Width (m)   | 1.8                              |            |
|  |           |           |           | Avg. depth (m)  | 0.30                             |            |
| Context No.  | Type      | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Description   | Findings                         | Date       |
| 25100  | Layer     | -         | 0.15      | Topsoil   | -                                | -          |
| 25101  | Layer     | -         | 0.15      | Subsoil   | Pottery, Animal bone, Fired clay | c1275-1450 |
| 25102  | Structure | 0.43      | -         | Limestone wall, roughly hewn stones, 0.2m x 0.25m. Partially exposed, only single course visible  | -                                | -          |
| 25103  | Surface   | 1.57      | -         | Sub-angular and rounded limestone fragments, up to 0.15m across, horizontal surface   | -                                | -          |
| 25104  | Deposit   | 0.55      | -         | Mixed limestone rubble, sub-angular fragments, 0.15m across, and large flagstones, 0.4m x 0.4m. Possibly not in-situ, possibly plough damaged | -                                | -          |
| 25105  | Layer     | -         | 0.15      | Duplicate of 25101  | Metal                            | -          |
| 25106  | Surface   | 1.5       | -         | Loose limestone rubble, sub-angular, 0.15m across   | -                                | -          |
| 25107  | Surface   | >2.00     | -         | Dense surface of rounded limestone, <0.2m in diameter   | -                                | -          |
| 25108  | Structure | 0.7       | -         | Limestone wall, roughly hewn facing stones <0.4m across, with rubble core of sub-angular limestone fragments, 0.15m                           | -                                | -          |
| 25109  | Surface   | 2.00      | -         | Loose limestone rubble, sub-angular   | -                                | -          |
| 25110  | Cut       | 0.3       | -         | Ditch or Land Drain (unexcavated)   | -                                | -          |
| 25111  | Fill      | 0.3       | -         | Fill of 25110, light brown and dark grey, silty clay  | -                                | -          |

## APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

### B.1 Pottery

*By John Cotter*

#### *Introduction and methodology*

- B.1.1 A total of 115 sherds of pottery weighing 852g were recovered from seven contexts. These include 26 sherds (101g) recovered from sieved samples. Apart from three residual Roman sherds the remainder is all of medieval date. The pottery is generally in a fragmentary condition but with a mix of fairly large/fresh sherds and smaller worn sherds.
- B.1.2 An intermediate level catalogue of pottery types was constructed (in Excel), following standard procedure, for the whole assemblage and spot-dates produced for each context. The catalogue includes, per context and per pottery fabric, quantification by sherd count and weight only. Given the relatively small size of the assemblage and its fragmentary nature more detailed quantification (of vessel form etc) was not considered worthwhile. Additional details, however, including vessel form, part, decoration or any other features of note were recorded in a comments field. Full details remain in archive. What follows is a simply a quantified table of the various fabrics present and a summary report focusing on the more significant or interesting aspects of the assemblage.

#### *Pottery fabrics*

- B.1.3 Medieval pottery fabrics were recorded using the system of codes developed for the Oxfordshire County type series (Mellor 1994). Ordinary domestic pottery types typical of the Oxford area are represented. These are detailed in the catalogue and summarised here. A breakdown of the fabrics present is given in Table 1.

| Fabric       | Common Name                            | Date      | Sherds     | Weight (g) |
|--------------|--|-----------|------------|------------|
| ROM          | Roman pottery                          | 43-410AD  | 3          | 55         |
| OXBF         | SW Oxon ware (Kennet Valley A)         | 1050-1250 | 1          | 8          |
| OXY          | Medieval Oxford ware                   | 1075-1300 | 29         | 257        |
| OXAQ         | East Wilts ware (Kennet Valley B)      | 1150-1350 | 1          | 16         |
| OXBK         | Medieval shelly ware (Northants/Bucks) | 1150-1400 | 3          | 16         |
| OXAG         | Ashampstead-type ware (Berks)          | 1175-1400 | 2          | 14         |
| OXAW         | Early Brill/Boarstall ware (Bucks)     | 1175-1400 | 16         | 103        |
| OXCX         | Wychwood-type ware (NW Oxon)           | 1175-1500 | 14         | 76         |
| OXAM         | Brill/Boarstall ware (Bucks)           | 1225-1625 | 46         | 307        |
| <b>Total</b> |  |           | <b>115</b> | <b>852</b> |

Table 1. Pottery types and quantities in roughly chronological order

### *Date and nature of the assemblage*

- B.1.4 Three sherds of residual Roman pottery were recovered from medieval contexts and comprise two small sherds of sandy greyware (25101) and a fairly large (46g) and very worn sherd of grog-tempered ware (308). Aside from these the earliest pottery is from context (315) which produced a modest assemblage (45 sherds, 349g) attesting to occupation c1175-1250. All 29 sherds of Medieval Oxford ware (Fabric OXY) from the site come from this context alone. These include cooking pot rims and two body sherds of typical yellow glazed jugs or pitchers. Several sherds of Wychwood ware (OXCX) also came from this context and include rim sherds from two shallow bowls. Other fabrics included a bowl rim in medieval shelly ware (OXBK) from Northants or Bucks, and a sherd from a glazed jug/pitcher in Ashampstead-type ware (OXAG) from Berkshire. Elsewhere, a single small sherd of flint-tempered Kennet Valley A ware (OXBF, c1050-1250) is probably residual in a later context (104).
- B.1.5 Wychwood ware is characteristic of north Oxfordshire and fairly rare from the city of Oxford. Although it is a limestone-tempered ware most of the rounded (oolitic) limestone inclusions have dissolved out leaving a corky texture which, along with the weakly oxidised firing colour and grey core, is one of the characteristics of this ware (Mellor 1994, 106-111). The leaching out of limestone inclusions in Wychwood ware, and other limestone/shell-tempered wares, may be due to acid soil conditions in the Bicester area. It was noted that most of the medieval pottery from this excavation has a lighter, more leached, appearance than it does from sites in Oxford, and this is most probably due to local acid soil conditions.
- B.1.6 Most other contexts are dated to the 13th-14th century by the presence of Brill/Boarstall ware (OXAM), the commonest pottery type from the site. This is mainly present as green-glazed jugs. A few sherds from strip jugs, with vertical red or neutral-coloured strip decoration, were also noted as were the rims of two bowls - the latter probably indicating a 14th-century dating. A few harder-fired Brill jugs possibly date from the late 14th or early 15th century (25101), but nothing later than this was identified. Given its size and reasonable condition, it is recommended that the evaluation assemblage here should be incorporated into any future excavation report.



## B.2 Ceramic Building Material

*By Cynthia Poole*

- B.2.1 Ceramic building material amounting to six fragments (42g) were recovered from three contexts. All are probably fragments of flat roof tile, though whether standard peg tile or ridge tile it is not possible to deduce. The largest fragment from context 104 has streaks of amber or clear glaze on the surface, which is typical of both peg and ridge tile of 13th-14th-century date. They are all made in Oxford fabric IIIB, a red sandy clay containing frequent medium-coarse quartz sand, which was in use between c1175 and 1400. Although the fabric is similar to Ashamstead ware pottery, made at kilns in Berkshire, the roof tile is likely to have been made more locally close to Oxford.

### **Context 104**

- B.2.2 Flat roof tile, 1 fragment, 27g; fabric: Oxford IIIB. Fragment with streaks of amber/clear glaze; 15mm thick. Date: 13th-14th century

### **Context 308**

- B.2.3 Flat roof tile, 1 fragment 5g; fabric: Oxford IIIB. Small abraded fragment, 10mm thick. Date: 13th-15th century

### **Context 25101**

- B.2.4 Flat roof tile? 4 fragments, 10g; fabric: Oxford IIIB. Abraded scraps; no complete dimensions. Date: 13th-15th century.

## B.3 Fired Clay

*By Cynthia Poole*

- B.3.1 Fired clay amounting to 14 fragments (49g) were recovered from two contexts. None of the pieces was diagnostic or dateable, the only shaping present being a flat moulded surface on some pieces. All were made in a brown - black sandy clay fabric, probably of local origin, containing frequent medium-coarse quartz sand; two pieces also had fine chaff temper added. All is likely to be structural, derived from the walls or floors of ovens or hearths.

### **Context 315**

- B.3.2 Three fragments, 16g, plus 10 fragments, 16g, from sample 1003. Most pieces were amorphous apart from a couple with evidence of a shaped flat surface. All were made in a sandy clay fired brown or lack apart from one orange fragment with chaff impressions and two larger pieces with a yellowish brown surface and black core, one of which also contained chaff inclusions. Thickness 5-15mm; size: 10-30mm.

### **Context 25101**

- B.3.3 One fragment, 17g, with a very smooth flat surface fired dark brown with a black core; 16mm thick, size 35mm.

## B.4 Metals

*By Ian R Scott*

B.4.1 A total of 16 metal objects were recovered from the excavation of the evaluation trenches. This includes ten nails from five separate contexts. Nine of the objects come from context 25105 and comprise a small drop hinge staple pintle (No. 9), six nails, a horseshoe nail (no. 16) and a copper alloy object of uncertain function (no. 8). Context 320 produced a distinctive harness strap loop (No. 7). None of the finds can be closely dated, although these were generally recovered from deposits that produced exclusively medieval pottery dating evidence. The nails appear to be hand wrought rather than made of drawn wire, but are not otherwise more closely datable.

### **Context 104**

B.4.2 (1) Nail with tapered rectangular section stem and small head, near complete. Fe. L: 40mm. Sf 1000

### **Context 304**

B.4.3 (2) Nail with tapered square section stem and slightly domed circular head. Fe. L: 53mm. Sf 1001

B.4.4 (3) Nail, large, with tapered square section stem and small T-head. Bent at a right angle. Fe. L: 78mm; full L: c100mm. Sf 1002

B.4.5 (4) Nail with incomplete tapered square section stem and flat circular head. Fe. L extant: 50mm. Sf 1003

### **Context 315**

B.4.6 (5) Fragment, small undiagnostic. Fe (magnetic). Not measured. Sample <1003>

B.4.7 (6) Fragment, thin tiny flake or plate. Fe (magnetic). Not measured. Sample <1003>

### **Context 320**

B.4.8 (7) Harness loop, broadly T-shaped, with a broad bar for the strap and tapered loop for attaching a hook or clip. Fe. L: 64mm; W: 75mm. Sf 1004

### **Context 25105**

B.4.9 (8) Small solid cylindrical object with an expanded collar at one end. Uncertain function. Looks machine made and modern. Cu alloy. L: 37mm; D: 11mm.

B.4.10 (9) Small hinge pintle/staple with tapered point and circular section vertical pintle. Fe. L: 57mm; Ht: 28mm

B.4.11 (10) Nail with slightly domed almost circular head. Almost complete. Fe. L extant: 33mm

B.4.12 (11) Nail with tapered stem and small head, complete. Fe. L: 45mm

B.4.13 (12) Nail, stem fragment only. Fe. Not measured

B.4.14 (13) Nail with tapered stem and no head. Fe. L; 34mm.

B.4.15 (14) Nail with tapered stem and no head. Fe. L: 32mm.

B.4.16 (15) Nail with tapered stem and no head. Fe. L: 34mm.

B.4.17 (16) Horseshoe nail with expanded head and stem of thin rectangular section. Fe. L: 31mm.

## **B.5 Brown Coal (Lignite)**

*Identified by Ruth Shaffrey*

B.5.1 A single fragment of brown coal (lignite) weighing 6g was recovered from context 103.

## APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

### C.1 Environmental Samples

*By Sharon Cook*

#### **Introduction**

C.1.1 Two bulk samples were recovered during the course of the evaluation from deposits in Trench 3. Sample <1000> (308) was 36 litres in volume and came from a hearth or occupation deposit abutting wall 307. Pottery recovered from the deposit suggests a 13th-14th-century. Sample <1003> (315) was 40 litres in volume taken from the fill of a ditch (314). Associated pottery dates the deposit to the 12th-early 13th century.

#### **Method**

C.1.2 The samples were processed by water flotation using a modified Siraf style machine. The flots were collected on a 250µm mesh and the heavy residue sieved to 500µm; both were dried in a heated room, after which the residues were sorted by eye for artefacts. The dried flots were scanned using a binocular microscope at approximately x 10 magnification.

#### **Results**

C.1.3 Sample <1000> produced a flot of approximately 150ml of which 100ml was scanned. The majority of the flot consisted of modern roots with the charred component forming approximately 10% of the total flot volume. Charcoal is present, although small (<4mm) and not suitable for wood species identification. The remainder of the charred material is mostly in poor condition with a large amount of fragmentation, some material showing signs of vitrification indicative of high temperature burning.

C.1.4 Over one hundred fragments of unidentifiable cereal grain were observed, in addition to which thirty grains have been identified as wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and two as oat/brome (*Avena/Bromus*), although in most cases the exteriors are badly abraded. Six fragmented chaff/rachis fragments are also present but too small to identify further. In addition to the cereals, eight fragments of hazelnut shell (*Corylus avellana*) were noted. A number of fragmented legumes include 18 small (<2mm) legumes, five 2-4mm legumes likely to be vetch (*Vicia/Lathyrus*) and four fragments of larger legumes which are likely to be pea (*Pisum sativum*). Sixteen wild plant seeds were observed in variable condition, including five stinking chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*), a single goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.), two rushes (*Juncus* sp.), one knapweed (*Centaurea* sp.) and two fragments of seeds from the daisy family (Asteraceae), the remaining five seeds are unidentified.

C.1.5 Sample <1003> produced a flot of approximately 175ml of which 100ml was scanned. Although some modern root material is also present it forms a smaller proportion of the flot. The charcoal is in much better condition than in the preceding sample and a number of potentially speciable fragments are present. The majority of this flot comprises charred grain in variable condition. Approximately five hundred cereal grains were observed with around 30% of those identifiable as wheat (*Triticum* sp.). A

few grains in good condition have the morphological characteristics of a free threshing grain such as bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*). Fourteen grains of oat/brome (*Avena/Bromus*) and four fragmented chaff/rachis fragments are also present but are too small to identify further at this time.

- C.1.6 As in sample <1000>, a few (9) fragments of hazelnut shell (*Corylus avellana*) were noted as well as a number of fragmented legumes, with eight <2mm legumes, fifteen 2-4mm vetch (*Vicia/Lathyrus*) and three fragments of larger legumes which are likely to be pea (*Pisum sativum*). Fifteen wild plant seeds were observed in variable condition, these include seven stinking chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*), a single grass seed, one rush (*Juncus* sp.), one bedstraw (*Galium* sp.) and one fragment of knotweed (Polygonaceae). The remaining four seeds are unidentified.

### ***Discussion and recommendations***

- C.1.7 The material recovered from both samples is consistent with a date within the early/middle medieval period with a mixed arable farming regime of wheat, oats and pulses. Both samples include similar suites of material within the flots, probably showing a continuation of crop types over time. The oat grains may be wild oat (*Avena fatua*) rather than cultivated oat (*Avena sativa*) since the grain morphology does not allow the two species to be separated; consequently, oat may be an accidental crop contaminant rather than a crop in itself. It is also possible that the vetches were grown as a crop for use either as green manure or cattle fodder (Barker 1985, 46-47) although they are often ubiquitous in waste ground and hedgerows.
- C.1.8 The wild plant seeds are a combination of common crop contaminants and plants commonly found on waste ground. *Anthemis cotula* in particular is commonly found on heavier soils (Stace 2010) such as those on this site.
- C.1.9 It is evident that well-preserved plant remains survive at this site despite the clayey nature of the soils.

## C.2 Animal Bone

By Lee G. Broderick

- C.2.1 A total of 50 animal bones were recovered from the site, mostly associated with contexts dated to the medieval period (Table 1) and mostly collected by hand. Environmental samples were taken from some of the contexts and these were sieved at 10mm, 4mm and 2mm fractions, revealing the presence of micro-mammals and frogs/toads, which would otherwise have been absent from the material recovered. (Table 2).
- C.2.2 The specimens were generally in moderate condition and included cattle (*Bos taurus Taurus*), caprines (sheep – *Ovis aries* and/or goats – *Capra hircus*), and horse (*Equus caballus*). All of the caprine specimens were loose adult teeth, from at least two individuals, suggesting that the animals were being slaughtered nearby. Teeth were also among the cattle and horse specimens.
- C.2.3 It is impossible to draw any further conclusions from such a small assemblage.

|                        | c 1175-1250 | c 1225-1400 | c 1275-1400 | c 1275-1450? | undated |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------|
| domestic cattle        | 2           | 1           |             |              | 2       |
| caprine                | 1           | 2           | 3           | 2            |         |
| horse                  |             | 1           | 1           |              |         |
| micro mammal           | 4           |             |             |              |         |
| small mammal           |             | 1           |             |              |         |
| medium mammal          |             |             |             | 1            |         |
| large mammal           |             | 4           |             | 1            | 2       |
| <b>Total Mammal</b>    | 7           | 9           | 4           | 4            | 4       |
| frog/toad              | 3           |             |             |              |         |
| <b>Total Amphibian</b> | 3           | 0           | 0           | 0            | 0       |
| <b>Total NISP</b>      | 10          | 9           | 4           | 4            | 4       |
| <b>Total NSP</b>       | 18          | 16          | 4           | 8            | 4       |

Table 1: Total NISP (Number of Identified SPecimens) and NSP (Number of SPecimens) figures per period from the site.

|                   | Sieved | Unsieved |
|-------------------|--------|----------|
| Amphibian         | 3      | 0        |
| Micro Mammal      | 4      | 0        |
| Small Mammal      | 0      | 1        |
| Medium Mammal     | 0      | 9        |
| Large Mammal      | 0      | 14       |
| indet.            | 5      | 14       |
| <b>Total NISP</b> | 7      | 24       |
| <b>Total NSP</b>  | 12     | 38       |

Table 2: NSP recovered from sieved and unsieved samples.

|                 | Butchery marks | Gnawed | Burnt | Ageing data |
|-----------------|----------------|--------|-------|-------------|
| domestic cattle |                | 1      |       | 2           |
| caprine         |                |        |       | 2           |
| horse           |                |        |       | 1           |
| medium mammal   | 1              |        |       |             |
| <b>indet.</b>   |                |        | 3     |             |
| <b>Total</b>    | 1              | 1      | 3     | 5           |

Table 3: Non-species data recorded for specimens from the site.

| Context | NSP | Mass (g) |
|---------|-----|----------|
| 103     | 1   | 16       |
| 104     | 4   | 72       |
| 210     | 4   | 155      |
| 304     | 6   | 39       |
| 308     | 9   | 12       |
| 315     | 18  | 154      |
| 25101   | 8   | 44       |

Table 4: NSP and total mass of specimens per context.



## APPENDIX D      BIBLIOGRAPHY

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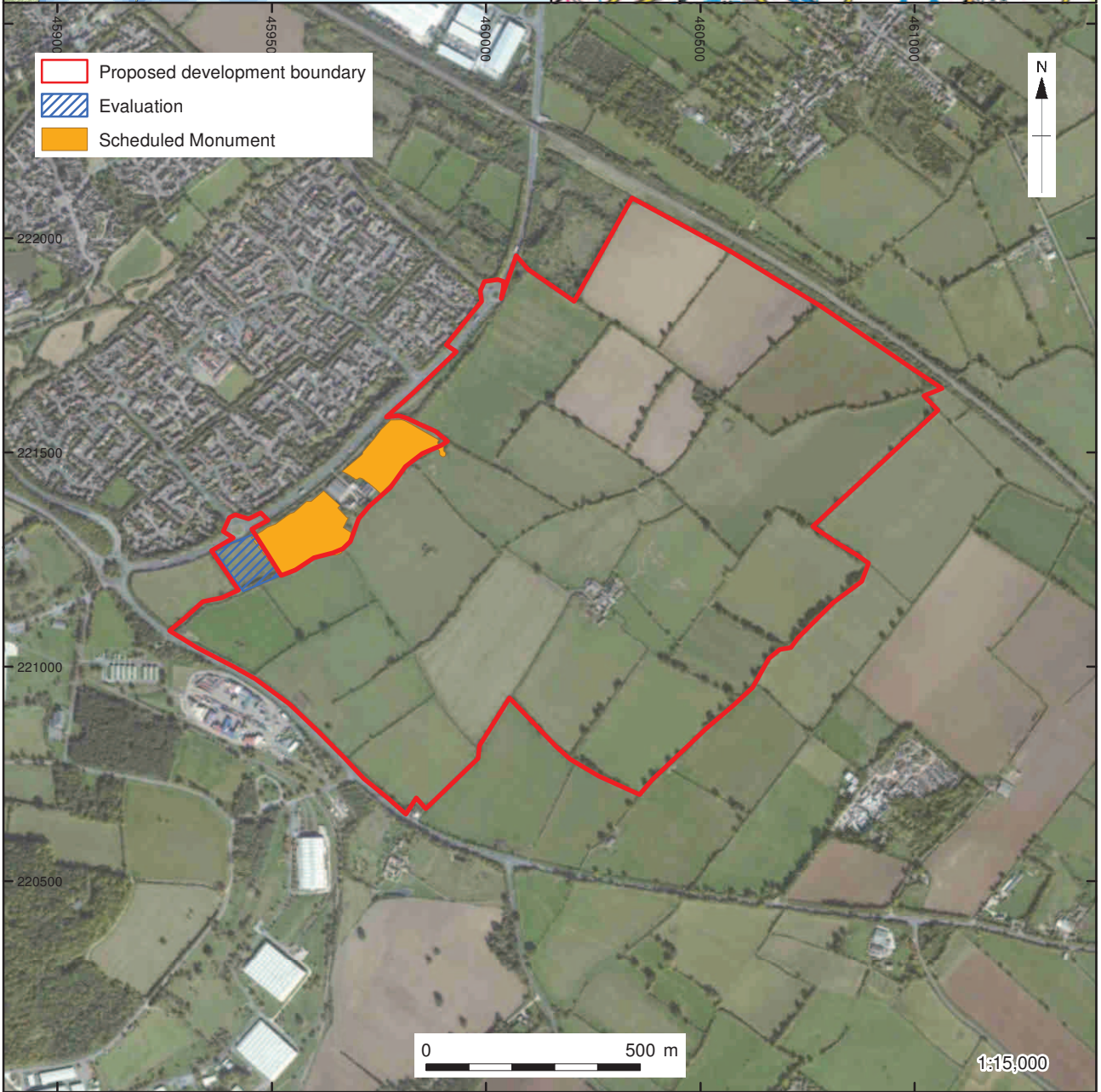
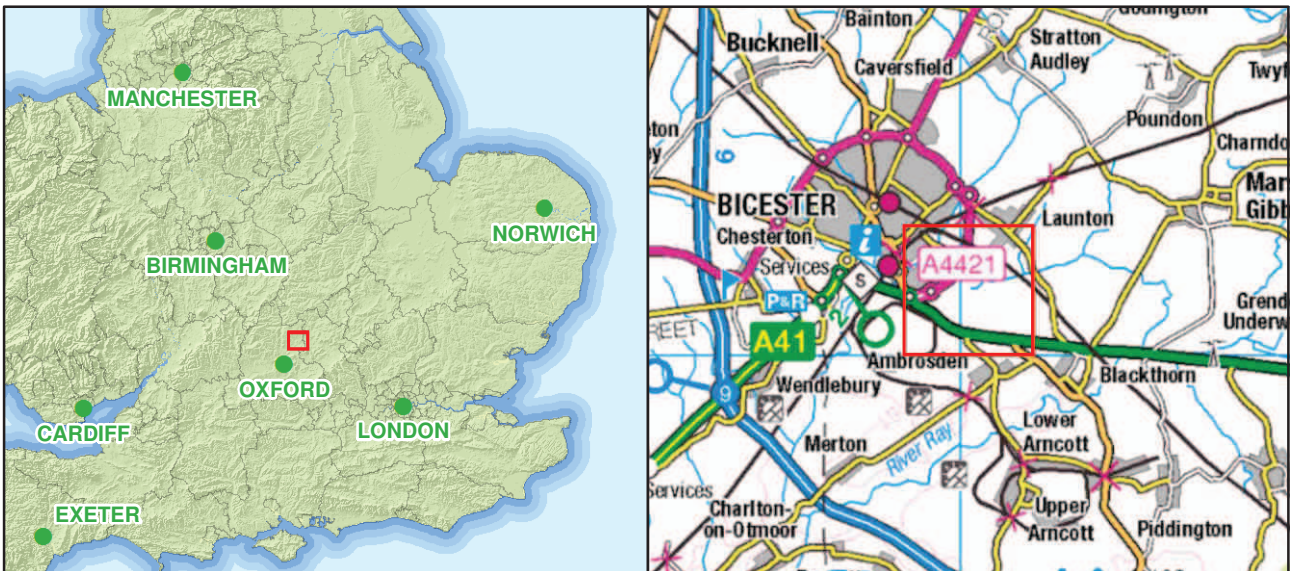
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## APPENDIX E SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Site name:</b>           | South-west of Wretchwick Scheduled Monument, Bicester, Oxfordshire   |
| <b>Site code:</b>           | BIWG 16  |
| <b>Grid Reference</b>       | SP 59440 21230   |
| <b>Type:</b>                | Evaluation   |
| <b>Date and duration:</b>   | 14th March – 12th April 2017   |
| <b>Area of Site</b>         | 1.12 hectares  |
| <b>Location of archive:</b> | The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course under the accession number OXCMS:2017.50.  |
| <b>Summary of Results:</b>  | Between 14th March and 19th May, 2017, Oxford Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation comprising 251 trenches on the site of a proposed housing development to the south-east of Bicester, Oxfordshire. This report specifically covers four of these trenches that were excavated within a single field centred on SP 59430 21240 to investigate a series of earthworks. These are located to the immediate south-west of the deserted medieval village of Wretchwick, a Scheduled Monument. |

Each of the four trenches revealed drainages ditches and structural remains, including limestone walls, floor surfaces and trackways. With the exception of a few residual Roman pottery sherds, all of the finds recovered during this investigation indicate that these remains and the majority of the associated earthworks date to between the 13th and early 15th centuries. The absence of significantly earlier or later artefacts indicates a relatively short-lived period of occupation within this part of the Wretchwick settlement that has pre-Domesday Survey origins.

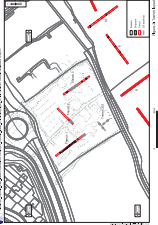
Limited later activity is indicated by the presence of stratigraphically later ditches in Trenches 1 and 2. These continue to function as drainage ditches in the current landscape and are part of a broad pattern of field boundary and drainage arrangements based on a principal NW-SE axis. This pattern is repeated in the Scheduled Monument boundary. Excavation ahead of the Wretchwick Way road construction north of the site dated an enclosure that formed part of this arrangement to the 18th century.



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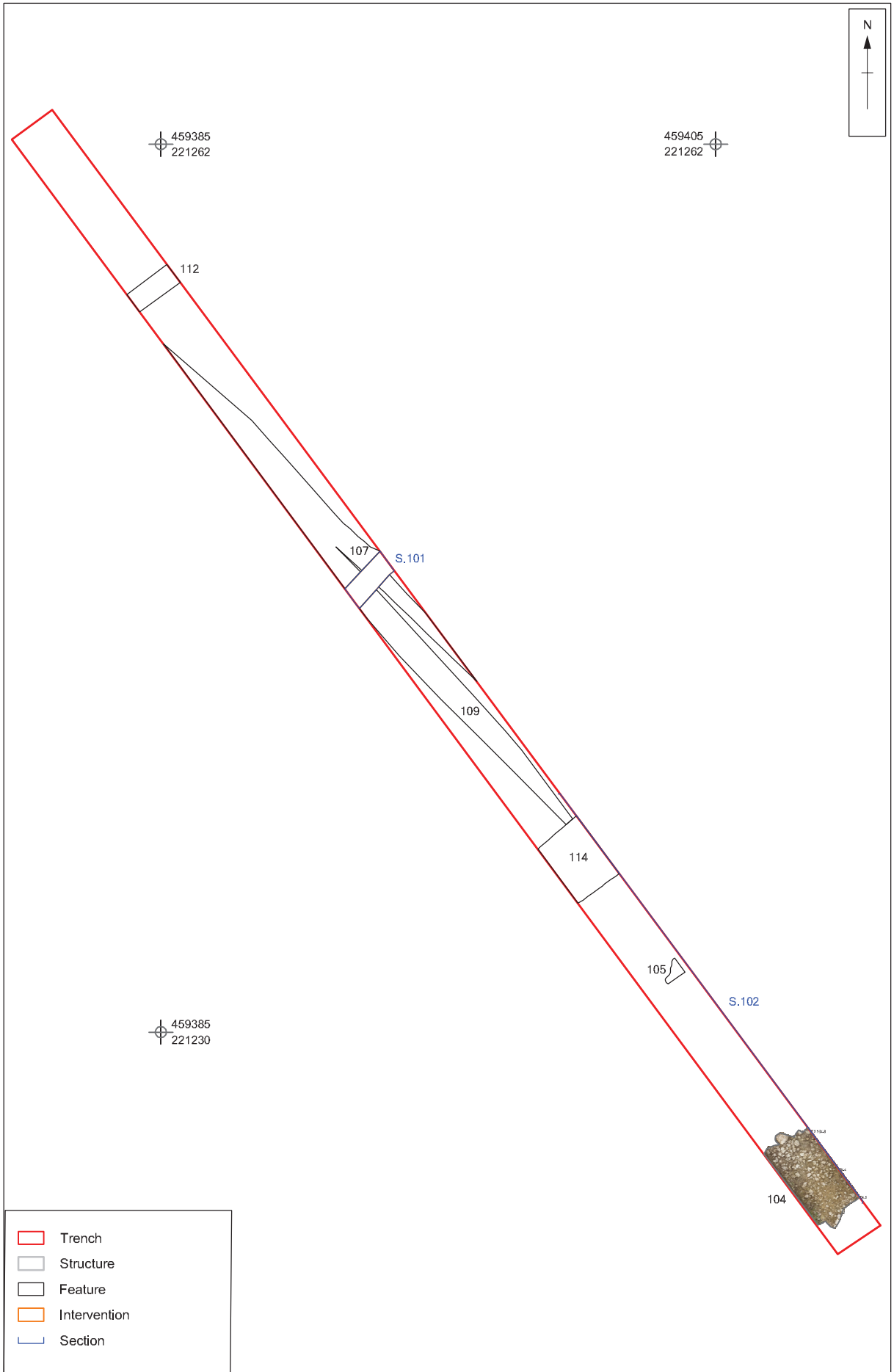
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 Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA,

Figure 1: Site location



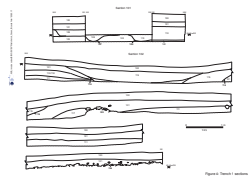


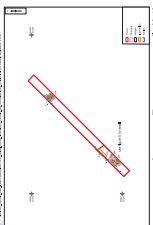
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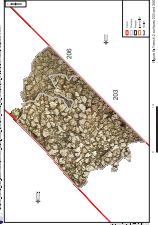
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Figure 3: Trench 1









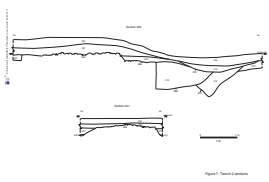
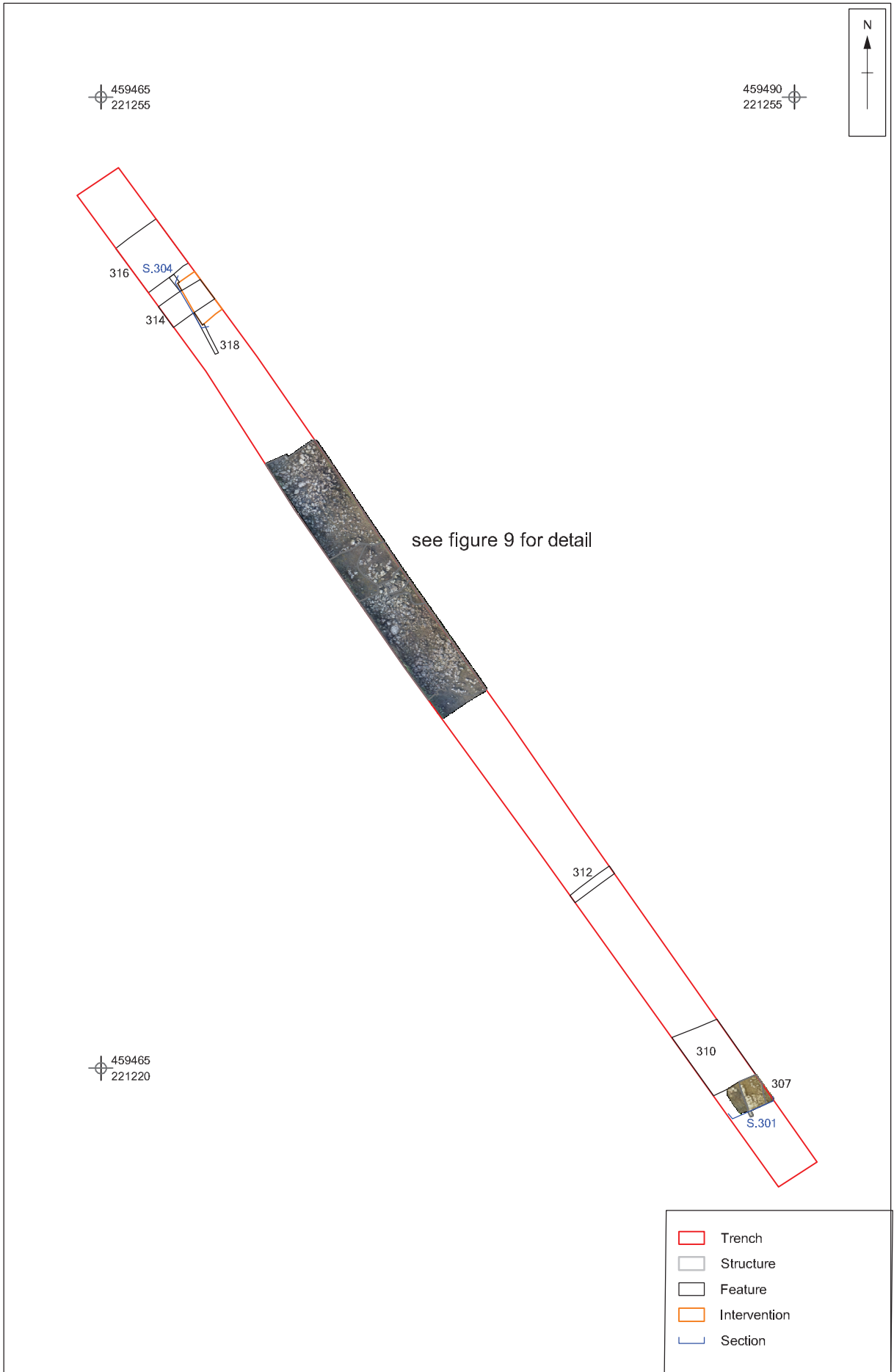


Figure 1: Mechanical drawing of a component.

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Figure 8: Trench 3

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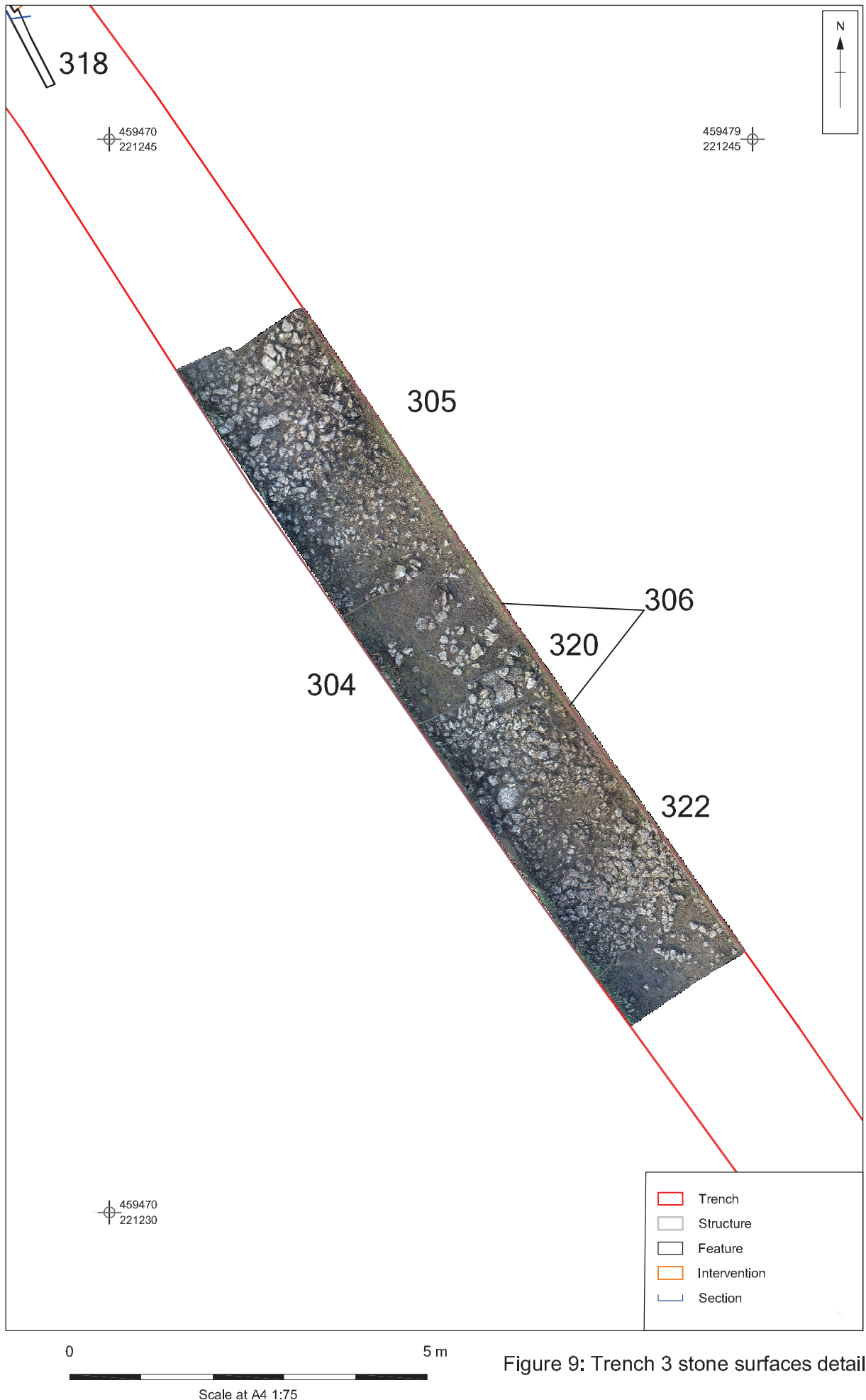


Figure 9: Trench 3 stone surfaces detail

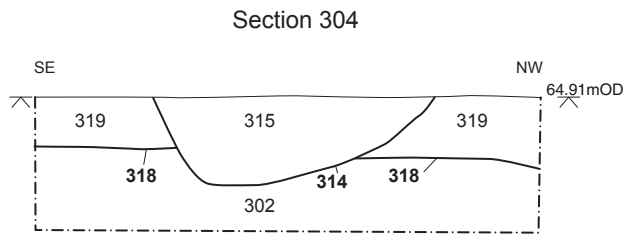
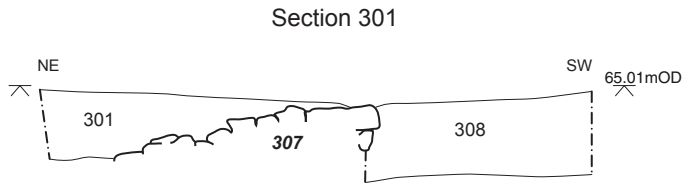


Figure 10: Trench 3 sections

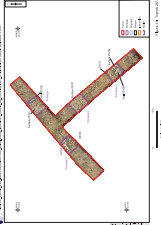






Plate 1: View north-east across the field showing the earthworks prior to the trench excavations



Plate 2: Trench 1 view north-west along the trench





Plate 3: Trench 2 view north-east along the trench



Plate 4: Trench 2 ditch sequence 209, 211 and 213, section 200





Plate 5: Trench 3 view north-west along the trench



Plate 6: Trench 3 stone layers 305 and 322





Plate 7: Trench 251 view south-west along the NE-SW trench

Plate 8: Trench 251 view south-east along the NW-SE trench



Plate 9: Trench 251 surface 25107





Plate 10: Trench 251 wall 25108 and 25109



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