

Taplow Court (Phase 2)  
Taplow  
Buckinghamshire



**Archaeological Evaluation Report**



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## Taplow Court ( Phase 2 ), Taplow, Buckinghamshire

NGR: SU 907 823

*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION*

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## SUMMARY

*Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Taplow Court, Buckinghamshire on behalf of SGI-UK. The site environs had previously been subject to an archaeological evaluation by Wessex Archaeology in 1998, and to an excavation and subsequent Watching Brief carried out by OA in 1999 and 2000 in advance of the construction of a Butsuma (Phase 1). The latest evaluation was carried out in advance of Phase 2 of the development to investigate two alternative locations for a proposed accommodation block.*

*The northernmost evaluation trench revealed further evidence relating to the previously identified late Bronze Age/Iron Age hillfort complex in the form of a very large defensive ditch. This trench also revealed a Late Bronze Age pit west of the ditch, and a later shallow ditch that cut both the upper fills of the defensive ditch and the pit. Three trenches dug further south contained one possibly Saxon tree-throw hole, but no other archaeological features, possibly due to truncation prior to the construction of industrial units in the 1950s.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In April 2005 OA carried out a field evaluation at Taplow Court on behalf of Soka Gakkai International (SGI-UK) in respect of a planning application for an accommodation block (Planning Application No.98/00118/FUL). A brief was set by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services (BCAS 2005) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, OA 2005) was agreed with Buckinghamshire County Council's Senior Archaeological Officer. The development site is situated in the grounds of the Taplow Court Estate, Clivedon Road, Taplow, Buckinghamshire, centred upon NGR SU 907 823 (Fig. 1).

### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies upon a projecting spur of the Burnham Plateau on the east bank of the Thames and from its elevation of *c* 65 m O.D. overlooks the river Thames and its valley floor. On the west and south sides the ground drops steeply from the plateau to the river Thames, but slopes more gently to the east. To the north the plateau is interrupted by a natural gully, defining an area approximately 6 ha. in extent. The underlying geology is Black Park terrace gravel over Upper Chalk (British Geological Survey, 1: 50,000 Solid and Drift series, Sheet 255).

### 1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The archaeological background has been summarised in the project design for the Phase 1 development (OA 2002), and will not be repeated here in detail. The background and potential for the two proposed locations for the accommodation building are presented below.

#### *Option 1*

1.3.2 This location was partly evaluated by Wessex Archaeology, Trenches 3 and 4 (WA 1998). The 1998 evaluation revealed, but only partially excavated, two substantial ditches aligned north-south, with a series of stratigraphically earlier postholes between them. Subsequent excavation of the footprint of the Butsuma to the south showed that these ditches were part of the defences of a late Bronze Age and Iron Age hillfort, and that the postholes belonged to a palisade. This excavation also revealed numerous smaller archaeological features and a sequence of preserved stratified horizons above the terrace gravel west of the large ditches. These stratified archaeological deposits are likely to be well-preserved in the area of Option 1, as this area is beyond the limit of truncation associated with the construction of the Plessey buildings in the 1950s.

1.3.3 To the north of the eastern end of the Option 1 footprint, Wessex Archaeology evaluation Trench 5 revealed a deep sequence of soils all along its length, suggesting

that it had been dug within another large, possibly linear, feature. The feature was recorded as 1.9 m deep and appeared to be aligned roughly north-south, and so is therefore likely to be present in the footprint of Option 1. No dating evidence was recovered from the Wessex Archaeology evaluation of this feature.

### *Option 2*

- 1.3.4 Option 2 lies to the east of the late Bronze age and early Iron Age defensive hillfort ditches found beneath the Butsuma. Wessex evaluation Trench 9 is located within the northern end of the Option 2 footprint, and did not reveal any archaeology. A posthole was however found in Trench 7 to the north, and a gully in Trench 6. A watching brief on a service trench for the Butsuma that crossed the line of the Option 2 building footprint (fig. 2) did not locate any archaeology within the area of the proposed building, but immediately to the south-east a substantial ditch over 1.5 m deep was located. It is possible that this ditch may run into the proposed development area. In addition, further features relating to the pre-hillfort occupation of the hilltop, to the later prehistoric defences or to the Saxon settlement and burials found beneath the Butsuma may be encountered in this area.

## 1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The evaluation was funded by SGI-UK and monitored for Buckinghamshire County Council by Sandy Kidd.

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any of archaeological remains within the proposed development area. In particular:

### *Option 1*

- to establish the presence, orientation, dimensions, date and character of the possible substantial linear ditch at the eastern end of Option 1, and whether it has a rampart, palisade or similar structure associated with it.
- to establish the presence or absence of additional discrete features.
- to establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features

### *Option 2*

- to establish if the substantial ditch to the east of Option 2 extends into the proposed impact area.
- to establish the presence or absence of additional palisades east of the known Iron Age defensive ditch.
- to establish whether further archaeological features or deposits relating to the pre-hillfort occupation of the hilltop occur in this area.

- to establish whether the Saxon activity found beneath the Butsuma just to the west extends into this area.
- 2.1.2 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.3 To signal, before the excavation of the material in question, the discovery of a significant archaeological find, for which the resources allocated for evaluation are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard. In this case work would be halted and a site meeting would be convened with the client and Buckinghamshire County Council's Senior Archaeological Officer to agree an appropriate recording action.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation.



### 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The field evaluation was originally designed to comprise one trench to the east end of Option 1 and two trenches in the southern area of Option 2. The trench in Option 1 was to be approximately 14 m long by 4.0 m wide over the suspected ditch, with a 5 m by 1.6 m extension to the west (Trench 1). During the excavation it was necessary to widen the trench to 5.0 m to allow for safe working, as the ditch proved deeper than anticipated.

3.1.2 The trenches in Option 2 were to comprise a 14 m by 1.6 m trench aligned east to west (Trench 2), which would have extended 2 m beyond the east edge of the footprint of the proposed building, and a 10 m by 1.6 m trench aligned east to west further south (Trench 3). Trench 2, however, could not be excavated to its full length due to a live service running across the eastern end of the trench, and as a result the trench stopped short of the footprint of the proposed building.

3.1.3 The Senior County Archaeological Officer and the client's representative decided that an additional trench should be excavated to compensate for the shortened length of Trench 2 and increase the overall area evaluated. Trench 4 was situated 6 m north of the east end of Trench 2. The trench was 'L' shaped, measuring 5 m by 1.6 m east to west with a 3 m by 1.6 m projection to the north at its western end. The eastern end of Trench 4 extended 2 m beyond the east edge of the footprint of the proposed building.

#### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The trenches were excavated using a JCB equipped with a 1.6 m wide toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision. The machine excavation proceeded in level spits no more than 150 mm thick to the top of the first archaeological horizon or, where no such horizons were present, to the top of the natural geology.

3.2.2 The trenches were cleaned by hand and, unless obviously modern, were excavated. The revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and, unless obviously modern, were excavated, and their sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (OAU ed. Wilkinson 1992).

#### 3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.



### 3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.4.1 Most of the potential archaeological features were bulk sampled. These were processed (floated and sieved) in order to define the presence/absence and level of preservation of ecofactual material (small animal bones and charred plant remains). Deposits that were especially targeted were the fills of a Bronze Age pit in Trench 1 and a charcoal-rich layer containing domestic debris within the V-profiled ditch.

### 3.5 Presentation of results

- 3.5.1 In the following sections the deposits are described trench by trench. There is additional comment on the finds and reliability of the results. This is followed by a discussion, interpretation and conclusion. A context inventory, including finds lists is included in Appendix 1.
- 3.5.2 The work was carried out by a team from OA supervised by D Maricevic, directed by Senior Project Manager T Allen, and under the overall control of the Director of Operations and Business Development, Bob Williams (MIFA). The report was prepared by D Maricevic and Project Officer H Lamdin-Whymark, and was edited by T Allen.

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The evaluation was carried out on the flat plateau of the hilltop, with Trench 1 situated at the north end of the car park, while Trenches 2, 3 and 4 were on a grassed area between the Butsuma and the canteen building. The overburden in Trench 1 comprised the car park tarmac surface and associated hardcore make-up layers, while the trenches to the south contained a thick sequence of sandy loams and gravels underlying dark brown sandy loam topsoil, the whole being 1.0-1.2 m deep. The natural was gravel with light orange and yellow bands of sand.

### 4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 All four trenches contained dark soilmarks that were excavated by hand, though those in Trenches 2 and 3 proved to have been created by root activity. The highest concentration and thickness of archaeological deposits was present in Trench 1, where a substantial V-profiled ditch occupied most of the trench.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Description of deposits

#### *Trench 1*

- 5.1.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3) was orientated east-west, and was 12 m long by 5 m wide with an additional extension to the west measuring 3.5 m by 1.6 m. Natural gravel and sand was reached at the depth of 0.60 m at the west end of the trench; the top of the sandy natural was stained and pressed into by hardcore make-up for the car park surface.
- 5.1.2 A sub-rectangular pit [3032], measuring 1.15 m by 0.80 m, was cut into the natural gravel in the middle of the western extension of the trench. The pit had regular vertical sides and a flat base and was 0.60 m deep. It contained four fills (Fig. 3), the first being a localised primary fill (3037) along the base on the west side, probably formed by erosion of the pit edge. This was overlain by a dark greyish brown, charcoal rich, silty sand (3036) that filled the lower half of the pit. This fill contained late Bronze Age pottery, several pieces of worked flint and a fragment of quern stone.
- 5.1.3 The darker fill was overlain by a sandy fill (3035) on the east side, interpreted as further collapse of the pit side. The uppermost surviving fill (3034) was a friable, mid greyish-brown sandy silt with gravel inclusions and frequent charcoal flecking, and represents the final silting of the feature. This fill also contains late Bronze Age pottery and worked flint, including a thumbnail scraper (Sf 3025).
- 5.1.4 The whole of the central and eastern part of the trench was occupied by a substantial ditch [3050] on a roughly north-south alignment. The ditch was identified in the 1998

evaluation by Wessex Archaeology (Trench 5), although the 1998 evaluation failed to locate the sides of the ditch, as the trench was on approximately the same orientation of the ditch (Fig. 2), and also failed to reach the bottom (see below).

- 5.1.5 The location of the proposed accommodation block did not extend over the full width of the ditch, and so the eastern lip of the ditch lay beyond the end of the trench. The lower part of the east side of the ditch was however found, providing a very good indication of the overall shape and width of the ditch (Fig. 3).
- 5.1.6 The ditch (3050) has a wide 'V' profile, the slope shallowing towards the top, with a total width of more than 12 m (the greatest width observed within the trench). The ditch was excavated using a stepped trench, and was mechanically excavated to a depth of 1.6 m, as agreed in the WSI and on site with the Buckinghamshire County Council Senior Archaeological Officer. The lower half of the ditch was then dug by hand within a central slot to the base, a depth of 3.35 m from the top of the gravel and 3.90 m from the modern ground surface.
- 5.1.7 Seven fills were distinguished within the ditch. The lowest and primary fill of the ditch (3051) mainly comprised large gravel inclusions and flint nodules and was 0.4 m thick. It is interpreted as a rapid accumulation of material eroded from the sides of the ditch. This fill contained a single sherd of late Bronze Age flint-tempered plain ware and several worked flints.
- 5.1.8 Overlying the primary fill is a deposit of light orangey brown sandy silt with occasional gravel (3003) up to 0.65 m thick representing more gradual silting of the ditch, mainly from the west side. This fill appears to have derived mainly from the sand in the ditch sides, and possibly also from redeposited bank material. Several worked flints were found within this layer. Flintwork and late Bronze Age pottery was also found in the overlying deposit, a light yellowish brown sandy silt (3049), which, judging from the high percentage of gravel inclusions (*c* 35%) within it, represents continued erosion of the bank and sides of the ditch.
- 5.1.9 Above fill (3049) the ditch profile appeared to have stabilised and the overlying deposit (3004) was of a different character. This 0.35 m thick deposit of dark grey sandy silt was the lowest archaeological horizon reached in the 1998 Wessex Archaeology evaluation Trench 5 (Fig. 7). It was very rich in charcoal (*c* 30%) and fired clay fragments and contained several sherds of early/middle Saxon pottery dated between *c* AD 450 and AD 850. The fired clay included a fragment of daub and a piece of an unidentifiable object. Deposit 3004 also contained a fragment of rotary quern stone manufactured from Millstone Grit and more residual worked flint. The deposit was sampled for environmental remains and produced a varied assemblage of charred cereals and plants (see section 5.3 below). The ditch appears to have been used as a convenient hollow for the disposal of domestic refuse, although as it was still over 1.5 m deep it continued to be a significant boundary.
- 5.1.10 A charred *Triticum Sp.* grain from deposit 3004 in ditch 3050 was radiocarbon dated to 1255 ±30 BP (Poz-12532, see Appendix 9 for the radiocarbon report), which

calibrates at 95% confidence to Cal AD 670-870. The radiocarbon date correlates well with the latter half of the date range of the pottery recovered and is appropriate for the charred plant assemblage.

- 5.1.11 The upper profile of the ditch is characterised by much more gradual silting with very low energy deposition in the form of a uniform dark greyish brown sandy silt loam (3002) over 1.00 m thick, apparently derived mostly from the east side of the ditch. The predominance of material from the east side of the ditch may have been due either to a surviving bank on the west side, or to cultivation of the land east of the ditch and outside the enclosure, which would have increased erosion. The deposit contained two residual early Iron Age sherds, an early/middle Saxon sherd and a Cotswold-type ware of the 11th century or possibly marginally earlier.
- 5.1.12 The next surviving fill (3001), a light yellowish brown sandy silt, contains a reasonably high proportion of gravel (*c* 25%), and may indicate deliberate infilling, and possibly the slighting of an adjacent bank. Above this the fill contains progressively less gravel, and the final tertiary silting of the ditch hollow is fill (3000). These uppermost fills contained more of the residual flintwork that characterised the entire sequence of fills.
- 5.1.13 In the south-west corner of the trench a shallow gully [3052] ran east-west perpendicular to the V-profiled ditch [3050], and cut across its top fills (3000) and (3001). The line of the gully then became unclear towards the east due to the similarities of the respective, light brown sandy silt fills. No artefacts were retrieved from this feature, but it is clearly stratigraphically later than the uppermost fills of the V-profiled ditch.

### ***Trench 2***

- 5.1.14 Trench 2 (Fig. 4) was an east-west trench and it measured *c* 12 m by 1.6 m. This trench was originally planned to be 14m long, but was stopped short when an underground service was detected. The trench was excavated to the top of natural gravel and sand at a depth of around 1.10 m.
- 5.1.15 Only one feature [3021] was revealed in this trench, a narrow linear feature cut into the natural on a north-west to south-east alignment. Sample cross-sections were cut and recorded, and then the feature was fully excavated. The base of the feature was extremely irregular with root holes disappearing in the gravel natural. In fact the single fill of the feature, a mid yellowish brown silty sand still contained numerous roots, which did not appear to have been very old. This has been interpreted as a soilmark resulting from root activity, possibly a hedgerow.
- 5.1.16 The overlying deposits in Trench 2 are a sequence of similar sandy silts and loams (3010 - 3006) overlain by landscaping topsoil (3005).

### ***Trench 3***

- 5.1.17 Trench 3 (Fig. 5) was an east-west trench measuring 10 m by 1.6 m, situated just to the south of Trench 2. It was excavated to the top of the natural sand and gravel at a maximum depth of 1.20 m.
- 5.1.18 The only feature revealed in this trench was a tree-throw hole [3030], situated at the eastern end. It was half-sectioned, drawn and then fully excavated. It contained two fills, one was a dark greyish brown sandy silt, rich in charcoal (*c* 20%) (3033), the other represented redeposited natural sand and gravel (3031). Fill (3033) contained two cattle bones but no other dating evidence. A range of charred cereals and other plants was recovered from a bulk sample of fill 3033, whose character was very similar to that of the Saxon deposit 3004 in the ditch in Trench 1. It is therefore suggested that this tree-throw hole may be of Saxon date, or have disturbed a feature of that date.
- 5.1.19 The overlying sequence of silt deposits is virtually identical to those in Trench 2; the uppermost deposit was a recently landscaped topsoil.

### ***Trench 4***

- 5.1.20 Trench 4 was situated 6 m north of the east end of Trench 2. It was L-shaped and measured 5 m by 1.6 m east to west with a 3 m by 1.6 m arm running north at its western end. It was excavated to the top of natural gravel, which lay at a depth of 1.00 m.
- 5.1.21 Three discrete features were revealed in this trench. A possible small shallow posthole [3039] was situated centrally within the western arm of the trench, containing a single fill of loose, mid yellowish brown silty sand. South-east of [3039] there was a small feature with irregular base and sides [3041], and a single fill of loose, mid yellowish-brown sandy silt and gravel (3040). This feature was most likely caused by root disturbance. No artefactual or dating evidence was recovered from either feature.
- 5.1.22 At the north-east corner of the eastern arm of the trench was the edge of another feature [3046] disappearing beyond the limits of the trench. The feature cut across the corner of the trench and may represent either a pit or ditch terminus. A complete profile was not revealed but the feature had shallow sides and a single fill of friable, dark brown silty sand 0.50 m thick. There were no finds. No trace of the large ditch seen in the service trench further east during the Watching Brief in 2000 was found in this trench.
- 5.1.23 Overlying these features in Trench 4 was a sequence of silts identical to those in Trenches 2 and 3. At the centre of the eastern arm of the trench there was a brick drain or manhole that cut through the lower silt layers and the underlying gravel natural. This was not excavated as it was clearly very recent, and was probably associated with the construction of the Plessey buildings in the 1950s.



## 5.2 Finds

### *Prehistoric Pottery*

5.2.1 A total of 35 sherds (319 g) of prehistoric pottery was recovered. Late Bronze Age pottery was recovered from the large V-profiled ditch 3050 (contexts 3000, 3004, 3049, 3051) and from pit 3032 (contexts 3034, 3036). The assemblage consisted of body sherds whose fabric included common sand inclusions and coarse, poorly sorted, flint ranging from 1 to 3 mm in size. The sherds were densely tempered and finger wiping was present on one sherd. This is a common feature of late Bronze Age Plain Ware. The pottery recovered from the large V-profiled ditch is very similar to pottery recovered from other excavations at Taplow (Edwards 2004), where the majority of diagnostic sherds indicate a Plain Ware date (1150-950 cal BC). One plain, shouldered and externally expanded rim sherd from context 3000 in the top of the V-profiled ditch, manufactured using a sand, ironstone and fine flint temper, is more likely to be late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (950-600 cal BC).

### *Roman and Post-Roman Pottery*

5.2.2 The post-Roman pottery assemblage comprised 7 sherds with a total weight of 147 g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rim sherd circumference was 0.15. Six of the sherds were Anglo-Saxon hand-built wares, the seventh a Saxo-Norman rimsherd. In addition a sherd of Roman grey ware (7 g) and a sherd of a late Roman import (38 g) were recovered.

### *Fabrics*

5.2.3 The hand-built Anglo-Saxon pottery occurred in the following fabrics:

- F1: Sandy. Dense sub-angular clear, grey and pink quartz < c 0.5 mm. 5 sherds, 64 g, EVE = 0.05.
- F2: Chaff. Dense chaff voids up to 10 mm, very sparse sub-angular quartz and calcitic material < 0.5mm. 1 sherd, 65 g, EVE = 0.

5.2.4 In addition, a late Saxon pottery/early medieval sherd was noted. It was recorded utilising the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

- OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD 975-1350. 1 sherd, 18 g, EVE = 0.10.

5.2.5 The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

5.2.6 A single rimsherd, in F1, was noted in context 3004. It was from a jar, had a simple everted profile, and an original diameter of 160 mm. The sherd of OXAC was also a rim sherd, from a jar with an original diameter of 240 mm

*Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (g) of sherds per context by fabric type*

Context	F1		F2		OXAC		Other		Date	Comment
	No	Wt	No	No	Wt	Wt	No	Wt		
3002	1	14			1	18			11thC?	
3004	4	50	1	65					E/MS	
3004							1	6	1-2nd C AD	Sandy Grey Ware body sherd
3004							1	38		Late Roman import
Total	5	64	1	65	1	18	2	44		

### *Chronology*

5.2.7 All the Saxon hand-built material was undecorated, making it impossible to date other than to within the broad early/middle Saxon periods, i.e. AD 450-850. The Anglo-Saxons appear to have generally stopped decorating hand-built pottery around the turn of the 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, and vessels with fabrics similar to the ones from this site are known from both early and middle Saxon sites along the length of the Thames Valley. For example, at Radley Barrow Hills near Abingdon (Blinkhorn forthcoming), a range of decorated early Saxon pottery occurred in quartz- and chaff-tempered fabrics were noted, whereas at the sites excavated before the construction of the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation scheme, less than 5 km to the south-east of this site, similar wares were found in association with middle Saxon Ipswich Ware and Continental imported wares (Blinkhorn 2002, Table 4.1). Such wares are also common at middle Saxon sites in the City of London (Blackmore 1988; 1989), and chaff-tempered wares were found in association with Ipswich Ware at Lechlade, Glos. (Blinkhorn, in archive).

5.2.8 The dating of the Cotswolds-type ware is also slightly problematic. Such material is known to be as early as the late 9<sup>th</sup> century in Oxford and Cricklade (Mellor 1994, 51), but did not occur in quantity until the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century at the former. This is one of the most easterly finds of the ware in the Thames Valley, and so caution must be applied to the dating of the sherd. For this reason, it is given a date of the 11<sup>th</sup> century here, although it could conceivably be a century or two earlier.

### *Discussion*

5.2.9 The Anglo-Saxon hand-built and later wares are typical of the pottery of the period in the region, but the imported amphora/flagon sherd (see below) is of considerable significance. In this country, such pottery is mainly known from what are traditionally regarded as the ‘Celtic’ areas of Dark Age Britain, i.e. the south-west of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland (Dark 2000, Fig. 33), usually from sites which are regarded as centres of power, and often located within re-used Iron Age fortifications. A few finds have been made in the more easterly areas of England, but there are nearly all known from place which were major towns during the period of Roman government. A sherd of fifth-century amphora is known from St. Albans (op cit. *ibid.* 100), but it appears to be the only sherd of that type from the area, and is earlier than the example known from this site. The presence of the sherd here is



therefore of some significance. It suggests that the occupants of Taplow at that period were linked by trade to the Byzantine empire and, by definition, must have commanded considerable wealth and power.

#### *Thin Section of Late Roman Import*

- 5.2.10 In thin section this sherd has a silty clay matrix with abundant colourless mica and occasional iron-rich inclusions. A larger fraction of inclusions is moderately common, comprising medium- to coarse-sand grade quartz, polycrystalline quartz and, rarely, chert. Iron-rich clay pellets can also be seen.
- 5.2.11 Prior to thin section the form and general appearance of this sherd suggested an Eastern Mediterranean origin, possibly allied to Late Roman Amphora 1/Peacock and Williams Class 44 (1986). Closer examination of the fabric does not, however, support this identification. While there is nothing particularly distinctive about the fabric it could easily originate in the Eastern Mediterranean and the sherd could belong to a flagon or other vessel type from that region.

#### *Struck Flint*

- 5.2.12 A total of 62 flints and 1 piece/39 g of burnt unworked flint was recovered during the evaluation. The flintwork assemblage includes material dating from the Mesolithic to late Bronze Age.
- 5.2.13 The limited flint assemblage recovered from Taplow Court phase 2 evaluation includes a small number of flints deriving from a blade-based industry of Mesolithic or early Neolithic date. These flints can be distinguished through the employment of careful reduction strategies including platform-edge abrasion and soft-hammer percussion.
- 5.2.14 The flintwork from late Bronze Age pit 3032 (3034 and 3036) is probably contemporary with the feature. The flint assemblage consisted of broad, thick flakes with little care taken in the reduction of nodules, as is demonstrated by the multi-platform flake core in context 3036, which exhibits erratic flake removals from two platforms prior to abandonment due to the development of hinge fractures, an error resulting from attempts to remove flakes from a platform at an inappropriate angle. An end-and-side scraper from context 3034 was relatively small, measuring only 21 mm, but exhibited reasonably fine semi-abrupt retouch around the perimeter of the flake. Many of the large and broad flakes recovered from the lower fills of the V-profiled ditch 3050 (3049 and 3051) are probably also of later Bronze Age date.
- 5.2.15 The flint assemblage recovered from the Phase 2 evaluation is comparable to material recovered from previous excavations at Taplow Court, demonstrating the presence of a background scatter flints dating from the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods and also late Bronze Age flintworking contemporary with the excavated features.

### *Worked Stone*

5.2.16 Four pieces of stone were retained and examined; these include one probable pounder, two rubbers and one rotary quern fragment. Cobble (SF 3054) exhibits slight damage around the edges suggesting use for pounding, and burning on one side suggesting it was placed in the corner of a hearth. There is also a fragment of rotary quern of Millstone Grit (SF 3042) from a Saxon ditch fill (3004) and a fragment of probable rubber of Sarsen (SF 3039) from the late Bronze Age pit (3030). A further fragment of sarsen pebble from the same context is burnt but has been used as a rubber along a broken edge.

### *Other finds*

5.2.17 The bone comprises two cattle 1st phalanges from undated tree-throw hole 3030 (3033) and a pig molar and fragment of sheep skull from Saxon ditch fill 3004. The bones survived in reasonably good condition, but no cut marks, gnawing or pathology was noted.

## 5.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

### *Carbonised plant remains and charcoal*

#### *Introduction*

5.3.1 Evaluation excavations for Phase 2 of the Taplow Court development included the cutting of a section across a large V-profiled ditch and the excavation of other archaeological features. Three bulk samples were taken for the evaluation of charred plant remains: one from a late Bronze Age pit 3032 in Trench 1 (Sample 302), one from a 6th-7th century AD deposit in the V-profiled ditch (Sample 303) and one from an undated tree-throw hole 3030 in Trench 3 (Sample 300).

#### *Methods and Results*

5.3.2 Each sample was floated onto a 0.3 mm mesh using a flotation machine. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications of up to x20 for charred remains. The remains were identified and their abundance indicated in Table 2.

#### *Results*

5.3.3 Charred remains are present in all samples although Sample 302 from Context 3036, the fill of the late Bronze Age pit, only contains a single unidentified cereal grain and a small quantity of *Alnus* or *Corylus* (alder or hazel) charcoal.

5.3.4 The two other samples contain useful quantities of remains. Sample 303 from Context 3004, a layer in the V-profiled ditch, contains a high concentration of mixed cereal grains including short free-threshing grains of *Triticum* sp. (rivet or bread wheat), hulled *Hordeum* sp. (hulled barley) and *Avena* sp. (oats) along with a small

quantity of *Secale cereale* (rye). Arable weed seeds, particularly *Chenopodium album* (fat hen), are present although there is little cereal chaff. In addition to the remains related to cereal processing, there are also nut shell fragments of *Corylus avellana* (hazel). This sample contains much charcoal of *Fagus sylvatica* (beech) and *Quercus* sp. (oak).

- 5.3.5 Sample 300 from Context 3033, the fill of a tree-throw hole, contains a generally similar range of remains to Sample 303 (context 3004), although in lower concentrations. It is likely that this assemblage is of similar date to that in Sample 303. In addition there is a presence of *Vicia faba* (field bean) and perhaps *Pisum sativum* (pea). However, nut shell fragments are absent.

#### *Potential*

- 5.3.6 The earlier Saxon charred crop processing remains have the potential to supplement the evidence from the first phase of work at Taplow Court (TAPC 99), Sample 300 adds *Vicia faba* (field bean) and possibly *Pisum sativum* (pea) to the list of crops. Large assemblages of charred remains other than charcoal are unusual from this period and they have the potential to provide evidence on the agricultural economy as it revived following the post-Roman agricultural decline. The high proportion of *Fagus sylvatica* (beech) charcoal in the earlier Saxon samples is also of interest and gives some evidence on the origin of the Chilterns beech woods, which were possibly of post-Roman origin. The late Bronze Age sample has no further potential.

#### *Recommendations*

- 5.3.7 It is recommended that should further excavation occur at Taplow Court, particular attention be paid to sampling Saxon contexts for charred plant remains. It is also recommended that if there is no further excavation, Samples 300 and 303 be analysed in full and the results incorporated into the report on the first phase of excavation.

Table 2: Charred Plant Remains from Taplow Court Phase 2 (TAPC 05)

No. of Samples 3, No. of Samples with seeds etc 3, No. of Samples with charcoal 3		Late Bronze Age	Early Saxon	Undated
Date	Feature Type	Pit	V-profiled Ditch	Tree-throw
Feature		3032	3050	3030
Context		3036	3004	3033
Sample		302	303	300
<b>CEREAL GRAIN</b>				
<i>Triticum</i> sp. - short free-threshing	rivet or bread wheat	-	+++	-
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	wheat	-	+	-
<i>Secale cereale</i>	rye	-	+	+
<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> - hulled lateral	six-row hulled barley	-	-	+
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. - hulled	hulled barley	-	++++	++
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	barley	-	+	-
<i>Avena</i> sp.	oats	-	+++	+
cereal indet.		+	++++	++
Total		+	++++	+++
<b>CHAFF</b>				
<i>Secale cereale</i> - rachis	rye	-	+	-
<b>LEGUMES</b>				
<i>Vicia faba</i>	field bean	-	-	+
cf. <i>Pisum sativum</i>	pea	-	-	+
<b>NUTS</b>				
<i>Corylus avellana</i> - nutshell frags		-	++	-
<b>WEED</b>				
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	fat hen	-	++	++
<i>Vicia</i> or <i>Lathyrus</i> sp.	vetch or tare	-	+	-
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	dock	-	+	-
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	ribwort plantain	-	-	+
<i>Galium aparine</i>	goosegrass	-	-	+
<i>Anthemis cotula</i>	stinking mayweed	-	-	-
<i>Bromus</i> Sect. <i>Eubromus</i> sp.	chess, brome grass	-	-	+
weed seeds indet.		-	+	+
Total		-	++	++
<b>CHARCOAL</b>				
<i>Alnus</i> or <i>Corylus</i> sp.	alder or hazel	+	-	-
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	beech	-	++++	+
<i>Quercus</i> sp.	oak	-	+++	+

seeds and chaff: + 1-5, ++ 6-20, +++ 21-100, ++++ 101-300

## 6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 6.1 Reliability of field investigation

6.1.1 The evaluation was carried out in generally good weather, and the character of the soils allowed clear differentiation of archaeological and other features in the natural gravel. Despite the depth of the V-profiled ditch excavation was successfully completed to the bottom of the ditch. Machine excavation was carried out to remove the upper fills of the ditch down to the charcoal-rich Saxon deposit 3004, but this excavation was carried out in closely controlled spits, such that a number of small finds were retrieved and could be attributed with confidence to the appropriate level and fill within the ditch. The lower fills of the ditch, and the fills of all other features, were excavated by hand.

### 6.2 Overall interpretation

#### *Summary of results*

6.2.1 The evaluation has shown that a third large ditch does indeed run north-south east of the two found below the Butsuma. This ditch appears to have few finds in the primary deposits, but a single sherd of late Bronze Age pottery, and some struck flint, give a *terminus post quem* of the late Bronze Age for the ditch. When the ditch had partly silted up it was used for the dumping of occupation material in the Saxon period, as the 1999 excavation demonstrated had occurred in the U-profiled hillfort ditch just to the west. The ditch appears to have remained open into the medieval period, but was probably eventually deliberately backfilled.

6.2.2 West of the ditch in Trench 1 was a late Bronze Age pit, showing that activity of this date extends beyond the ditches excavated beneath the Butsuma (Fig. 7). The presence of this pit immediately west of the ditch suggests either that there was a wide berm between the ditch and any upcast bank, that there was no bank west of the V-profiled ditch, or that the ditch and pit are not contemporary. There is room for the bank belonging to the V-profiled ditch to have been west of the pit and east of the U-profiled ditch, which also remained open into the Saxon period, but a wide berm would have served no useful defensive purpose, and seems inherently unlikely. The uppermost surviving fill of the pit did not contain any clear evidence, such as clean gravel upcast, that might indicate that it was buried beneath the upcast from the V-profiled ditch, but since the soil profile was truncated to the surface of the natural plateau gravel, this does not prove that there was no bank. It seems most plausible that the V-profiled ditch was a later addition to the defence provided by the U-profiled ditch, and that its upcast bank overlay the already infilled late Bronze Age pit.

6.2.3 Trench 1 clearly shows that there is dense and significant archaeology in this area. The large V-profiled ditch is approximately parallel to the ditches found further west,

and is also in line with the ditch recorded in the service trench in 2000 (Fig. 7). It is probably a continuation of the same ditch circuit. The ditch recorded in the 2000 service trench does not run across the line of Trenches 2-4 further south.

- 6.2.4 Trenches 2, 3 and 4 contained little archaeology, although a Saxon tree-hole or a feature disturbed by a tree-hole was found in Trench 3, and a probable feature was found in Trench 4.
- 6.2.5 The depth of overlying soils in these trenches is considerably greater than that in Trench 1, or in the excavation beneath the Butsuma just to the west. A slight drop in the level of the plateau gravel, and a corresponding increase in the depth of the overlying soils, was noted along the east edge of the 1999 excavation, leading to the view that the U-profiled hillfort ditch might have been following the edge of the flat plateau, the ground dropping away to the east. The depth of soils in Trenches 2-4 could certainly be interpreted as supporting that interpretation, but this drop is not really evident in Trench 1, so is either localised, or may instead indicate that the area of these trenches has been truncated at some time between the Saxon period and the 1950s, when the Plessey buildings were constructed. This truncation may have been due to cultivation associated with the medieval/early post-medieval manor house.

### *Significance*

- 6.2.6 The discovery of further Mesolithic or early Neolithic flintwork in Trench 1 indicates that this activity is more widespread than indicated by the previous evaluation.
- 6.2.7 The presence of a late Bronze Age pit well outside the known defences of this date indicates that the spread of Bronze Age activity is larger than previously suspected, and indicates that the limits of activity of this date have not yet been established.
- 6.2.8 The confirmation of a third defensive ditch on the hilltop, and the discovery of Saxon material at some depth, proves that this was a multivallate hillfort in later prehistory, putting this hillfort among the most significant in the region, and further emphasising its significance in later prehistory. The relative absence of activity in Trenches 2-4 may indicate that this area was covered by a bank in later prehistory, and the absence of any obvious associated palisade or posthole line west of the ditch may indicate that the rampart or bank was of dump construction.
- 6.2.9 The presence of Saxon occupation material, associated with a radiocarbon date of Cal AD 670-870 (95% confidence), in the V-profiled ditch shows that the spread of Saxon activity of the mid-Saxon period is more extensive than previously indicated, and strengthens the case for a significant settlement focus within the still visible defences in this area. The discovery of a sherd of an imported amphora/flagon, possibly from the Eastern Mediterranean, is extremely significant, as it suggests that this was a high-status settlement, perhaps associated with the individual buried under Taplow mound.

6.2.10 The charred plant remains found within the tree-throw hole in Trench 3 indicates that Saxon (or early medieval) activity is also present in this area. The character and extent of this activity is not easy to characterise, but in any case appears to have been truncated.



## 7 IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1.1 The development of Option 1 will clearly impinge upon all three of the defensive ditches. On the basis of the discoveries made beneath the Butsuma just to the south, it is likely that there will also be a palisade trench and associated posthole lines west of the ditches, some of which the building footprint is also likely to have an impact upon (Fig. 7). Although evaluation has already investigated a proportion of these features within the proposed development area, significantly more of these features is likely to be affected by the construction of a residential block in the area already given planning permission. It is unlikely that a design solution can be achieved that will not still result in a significant archaeological impact that will require substantial mitigation by archaeological excavation.
- 7.1.2 Evaluation both in 1998 and 2005 has shown that a scatter of archaeological features are likely to be encountered in the area of Option 2. No major features have however been found so far, and on present evidence it is therefore likely that development of Option 2, while requiring renegotiation of the planning consent, will probably have much less impact upon archaeological remains, and will be significantly less expensive to mitigate.

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## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctx No.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	3000	Fill		0.13	fill of 3050	3 pot sherds; 9 flints	Modern
1	3001	Fill		1.12	fill of 3050	3 flints	Medieval/Post Medieval
1	3002	Fill		1.05	fill of 3050	2 pottery sherds; 11 flints; 1 burnt flint	c 11th C
1	3003	Fill		0.65	fill of 3050		
1	3004	Fill		0.34	fill of 3050	2 pieces of animal bone; 7 pottery sherds; 2 flints	Mid Saxon
2	3005	Layer		0.18	Topsoil		
2	3006	Layer		0.12			
2	3007	Layer		0.12			
2	3008	Layer		0.23			
2	3009	Layer		0.34			
2	3010	Layer		0.18	Subsoil		
2	3011	Natural		-	Natural sands and gravels		-
2	3012	Fill		0.30	Fill of 3013		
2	3013	Cut	1.00	0.30	Ditch		
2	3014	Layer			Consists of 3007-9		
2	3015	Fill		0.32	Fill of 3016		
2	3016	Cut	0.60	0.36	Root hole?		
2	3017	Fill		0.35	Fill of 3018		
2	3018	Cut	0.30	0.35	Root hole?		
2	3019	Fill		0.34	Fill of 3020		
2	3020	Cut	0.35	0.34	Root hole?		
2	3021	Group			3016, 3018, 3020 - hedgerow?		
3	3022	Layer		0.20	Topsoil		

3	3023	Layer		0.10			
3	3024	Layer		0.20			
3	3025	Layer		0.35			
3	3026	Layer		0.10	Subsoil		
3	3027	Natural		-	Natural sands and gravels		
3	3028	Layer		0.10			
3	3029	Layer		0.30			
3	3030	Cut	0.80	0.35	Tree-throw hole		Saxon?
3	3031	Fill		0.23	Fill of 3030		Saxon?
1	3032	Cut	1.00	0.60	Pit		Late Bronze Age
3	3033	Fill		0.36	Charcoal rich fill of 3030	2 cattle phalanges	Saxon?
1	3034	Fill		0.30	Fill of 3032	9 pottery sherds	Late Bronze Age
1	3035	Fill		0.20	Fill of 3032		Late Bronze Age
1	3036	Fill		0.30	Fill of 3032	13 pottery sherds; 3 flints	Late Bronze Age
1	3037	Fill		0.40	Fill of 3032		Late Bronze Age
4	3038	Fill		0.10	Fill of 3039		
4	3039	Cut	0.36	0.10	Posthole		
4	3040	Fill		0.26	Fill of 3041		
4	3041	Cut	1.00	0.26	Root disturbance		
4	3042	Layer		0.32	Topsoil		
4	3043	Layer		0.30		1 flint	
4	3044	Layer		0.28			
4	3045	Fill		0.25	Fill of 3046		
4	3046	Cut	1.00 +	0.50	Pit or ditch terminus		
4	3047	Layer		0.12	Subsoil		
4	3048	Natural		-	Natural sands and gravels		
1	3049	Fill		0.48	Fill of 3050	1 LBA pottery sherd; 13 flints	
1	3050	Cut	12.00+	3.35	Ditch cut		

1	3051	Fill		0.40	Fill of 3050	1 LBA pottery sherd; 9 flints	
1	3052	Cut	1.00	.038	Ditch (later than 3050)		
1	3053	Fill		0.38	Fill of 3052		
1	3054	Natural		-	Natural sands and gravels		

**APPENDIX 2 PREHISTORIC POTTERY ASSESSMENT***By Emily Edwards***Introduction**

This report assesses all the prehistoric pottery from Taplow. The total assemblage (35 sherds, 319 g) includes pottery of late Bronze Age and early Iron Age date. The majority of the pottery is, however, of late Bronze Age date. Table 1 presents a breakdown of the total assemblage by site and period. The major elements of the assemblage include coarsely flint tempered late Bronze Age body sherds and one externally expanded rim.

*Table 1: Table giving breakdown of pottery from Taplow.*

Codes: Period = EIA-early Iron Age, RO-Roman, LBA-late Bronze Age. Fabrics = A-sand, F-flint, G-grog.

Context	Date	Fabric	Count	Weight (g)	Form comments
3000	LBA	F1	2	7	body sherds
3000	LBA or EIA	APfeF1	1	11	shoulder and neck with externally expanded rim
3034	LBA	FA1	1	9	
3034	LBA	F2	7	22	
3034	LBA	FA2	1	9	
3036	LBA	F1	12	48	body sherds
3036	LBA	F1	1	2	body sherd
3049	LBA	F1	1	7	body sherd
3051	LBA	AF1	1	19	body sherd with finger wiping
Total			35	319	

**Methodology**

All of the material was examined. The assemblage was quantified by count and weight and a note was made of principal fabric groups, forms and surface treatment. Spot dates were based on the presence of diagnostic forms and particular fabrics. OA standard codes were used for prehistoric fabrics.

**Range and Variety of Material**

The late Bronze Age pottery was recovered from the large V-profiled ditch (contexts 3000, 3004, 3049, 3051) and from a pit located just to the west (pit 3032, contexts 3034, 3036). The assemblage consisted of body sherds that were manufactured using common sand and coarse, badly sorted flint ranging from 1 to 3 mm in size. The sherds were densely tempered and finger wiping was present on one sherd, which is a common feature of late Bronze Age Plain Ware. This material, recovered from the hillfort ditch, compares very closely with pottery recovered from other excavations at Taplow (Edwards 2004), where the prevalence of diagnostic sherds secured a Plain Ware date (1150-950 cal BC). One plain, shouldered rim sherd was of an externally expanded form, manufactured using a sand, ironstone and fine flint temper, and was more likely to be later Bronze Age or early Iron Age (950-600 cal BC).

**Conservation**

At this stage all the material should be retained. The pottery is adequately bagged and boxed for long term storage and will require no further conservation.

**Discussion**

The pottery recovered from this evaluation complements the assemblages recovered from the previous excavations at Taplow. Little further work, however, is required. A more closely defined chronology might result from further fabric analysis. This was an assemblage consisting of a range of relatively abraded plain body sherds. The pottery appears, predominantly, to be late Bronze Age or early Iron Age.

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**APPENDIX 3 ROMAN AND POST-ROMAN POTTERY ASSESSMENT***By Paul Blinkhorn***Introduction**

The post-Roman pottery assemblage comprised 7 sherds with a total weight of 147 g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rim sherd circumference was 0.15. The entire assemblage consisted of Anglo-Saxon hand-built wares, with the exception of a single sherd of Saxo-Norman material. In addition a sherd of Roman grey ware (7 g) and a sherd of a late Roman import (38 g) was recovered.

**Fabrics**

The hand-built Anglo-Saxon pottery occurred in the following fabrics:

F1: Sandy. Dense sub-angular clear, grey and pink quartz < c 0.5 mm. 5 sherds, 64 g, EVE = 0.05.

F2: Chaff. Dense chaff voids up to 10 mm, very sparse sub-angular quartz and calcitic material < 0.5mm. 1 sherd, 65 g, EVE = 0.

In addition, late Saxon pottery/early medieval sherd was noted. It was recorded utilising the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD 975-1350. 1 sherd, 18 g, EVE = 0.10.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

A single rimsherd, in F1, was noted in context 3004. It was from a jar, had a simple everted profile, and an original diameter of 160 mm. The sherd of OXAC was a rim sherd from a jar with an original diameter of 240 mm.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	F1		F2		OXAC		Other		Date	Comment
	No	Wt	No	No	Wt	Wt	No	Wt		
3002	1	14			1	18			11thC?	
3004	4	50	1	65					E/MS	
3004							1	6	1-2nd C AD	Sandy Grey Ware body sherd
3004							1	38		Late Roman import
Total	5	64	1	65	1	18	2	44		

**Chronology**

All the Saxon hand-built material was undecorated, making it impossible to date other than to within the broad early/middle Saxon periods, i.e. AD 450-850. The Anglo-Saxons appear to have generally stopped decorating hand-built pottery around the turn of the 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, and vessels with fabrics similar to the ones from this site are known from both early and middle Saxon sites along the length of the Thames Valley. For example, at Radley Barrow Hills near Abingdon (Blinkhorn forthcoming), a range of decorated early Saxon pottery occurred in quartz- and chaff-tempered fabrics were noted, whereas at the sites excavated before the construction of the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation scheme, less than 5 km to the south-east of this site, similar wares were found in association with middle

Saxon Ipswich Ware and Continental imported wares (Blinkhorn 2002, Table 4.1). Such wares are also common at middle Saxon sites in the City of London (Blackmore 1988; 1989), and chaff-tempered wares were found in association with Ipswich Ware at Lechlade, Glos. (Blinkhorn, in archive).

The dating of the Cotswolds-type ware is also slightly problematic. Such material is known to be as early as the late 9<sup>th</sup> century in Oxford and Cricklade (Mellor 1994, 51), but did not occur in quantity until the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century at the former. This is one of the most easterly finds of the ware in the Thames Valley, and so caution must be applied to the dating of the sherd. For this reason, it is given a date of the 11<sup>th</sup> century here, although it could conceivably be a century or two earlier.

### Discussion

The Anglo-Saxon hand-built and later wares are typical of the pottery of the period in the region, but the imported amphora/flagon sherd (see Tomber below) is of considerable significance. In this country, such pottery is mainly known from what are traditionally regarded as the 'Celtic' areas of Dark Age Britain, i.e. the south-west of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland (Dark 2000, Fig. 33), usually from sites which are regarded as centres of power, and often located within re-used Iron Age fortifications. A few finds have been made in the more easterly areas of England, but there are nearly all known from places which were major towns during the period of Roman government. A sherd of fifth-century amphora is known from St. Albans (op cit. ibid. 100), but it appears to be the only sherd of that type from the area, and is earlier than the example known from this site. The presence of the sherd here is therefore of some significance. It suggests that the occupants of Taplow at that period were linked by trade to the Byzantine empire and, by definition, must have commanded considerable wealth and power.

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**APPENDIX 4 THIN SECTION OF LATE ROMAN IMPORT FROM CONTEXT 3004**

By Roberta Tomber

In thin section this sherd has a silty clay matrix with abundant colourless mica and occasional iron-rich inclusions. A larger fraction of inclusions is moderately common, comprising medium- to coarse-sand grade quartz, polycrystalline quartz and, rarely, chert. Iron-rich clay pellets can also be seen.

Prior to thin section the form and general appearance of this sherd suggested an Eastern Mediterranean origin, possibly allied to Late Roman Amphora 1/Peacock and Williams Class 44 (1986). Closer examination of the fabric does not, however, support this identification. While there is nothing particularly distinctive about the fabric it could easily originate in the Eastern Mediterranean and the sherd could belong to a flagon or other vessel type from that region.

**Bibliography**

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**APPENDIX 5 WORKED FLINT**

By Hugo Lamdin-Whymark

**Introduction**

A total of 62 flints and 1 piece/39 g of burnt unworked flint was recovered during the evaluation. The flintwork assemblage includes material dating from the Mesolithic to late Bronze Age.

**Methodology**

The artefacts were catalogued according to broad artefact/debitage type, general condition noted and dating attempted where possible. Unworked burnt flint was quantified by weight and number. The assemblage was catalogued directly onto a Microsoft Access database. A printout of the catalogue will be deposited with the archive; where possible a digital copy will be deposited.

**Quantification**

A total of 62 flints and one piece/39 g of burnt unworked flint was recovered during the evaluation. The flint assemblage from the site is shown in Table 1.

*Table 1: The flint assemblage from the Taplow court phase 2 evaluation by context*

CATEGORY TYPE	Context										Grand Total
	3000	3001	3002	3003	3004	3034	3036	3043	3049	3051	
Flake	7	2	6	2	1	5	2		6	6	37
Blade					1				2		3
Blade-like									3	2	5
Irregular waste				2					1		3
Chip				1							1
Rejuvenation flake other			1					1			2
Tested nodule/bashed lump			3								3
Single platform flake core	1								1		2
Multi-platform flake core			1				1				2
Core on a flake	1										1
End and side scraper						1					1
Spurred piece		1									1
Retouched flake										1	1
Total	9	3	11	5	2	6	3	1	13	9	62

Burnt unworked flint (no./g)		1/39g									1/39 g
No. Burnt	1										1 (1.6%)
No. Broken	2		1						2	1	6 (9.8%)
No. Retouched		1				1				1	3 (4.9%)

**Provenance**

Flintwork was recovered from 10 contexts dated to the late Bronze Age, Saxon and post-medieval periods. The majority of the flints exhibited some post-depositional edge damage and are unlikely to be contemporary with contexts from which they were recovered. However, the flintwork from late Bronze Age pit 3032 (3034 and 3036 was in fresh condition and is most probably contemporary with the feature and flintwork from the lower fills of the hillfort ditch 3050 (3049 and 3051) include a small number of fresh flints possibly contemporary with the feature.

**Raw material and condition**

The raw material for the flints in this assemblage was the locally available gravel flint nodules derived from the black park terrace.

The condition of the flint assemblage was mixed. The flintwork from contexts 3034 and 3036 (pit 3032) was in fresh condition, whilst the flints from contexts 3049 and 3051, the lower fills of hillfort ditch 3050, included a mixture of fresh flintwork and pieces exhibiting post-depositional edge damage. The flintwork from the upper fills of the hillfort ditch 3050 (3000 - 3004) was generally in poor condition exhibiting considerable post-depositional edge damage and the occasional flint was rolled. The majority of the flint assemblage was uncorticated, although a few pieces exhibited a light bluish white cortication.

### **Storage and curation**

The struck flints are bagged individually; the burnt unworked flint is bagged by context. The flintwork is adequately boxed and bagged for long-term storage and curation.

### **The assemblage**

The limited flint assemblage recovered from Taplow Court phase 2 evaluation includes a small number flints deriving from a blade-based industries probably of Mesolithic through to early Neolithic date. These flints can be distinguished through the employment careful reduction strategies including platform edge abrasion and soft hammer percussion.

The flintwork from late Bronze Age pit 3032 (3034 and 3036) is probably contemporary with the feature. The flint assemblage consisted of broad, thick flakes with little care taken in the reduction of nodules, as is demonstrated by the multi-platform flake core in context 3036, which exhibits erratic flake removals from two platforms prior to abandonment due to the development of hinge fractures; an error resulting from attempts to remove flakes from a platform at an inappropriate angle. An end and side scraper from context 3034 was relatively small, measuring only 21 mm, but exhibited reasonably fine semi-abrupt retouch around the perimeter of the flake. Many of the large and broad flakes recovered from the lower fills of hillfort ditch 3050 (3049 and 3051) are probably also of later Bronze Age date.

### **Conclusions**

The flint assemblage recovered from the Phase 2 evaluation is comparable to material recovered from previous excavations at Taplow Court. This evaluation demonstrates the presence of a background scatter flints dating from Mesolithic and Neolithic, and also contemporary late Bronze Age flintworking.

**APPENDIX 6 WORKED STONE***By Ruth Shaffrey***Summary and Quantification**

Four pieces of stone were retained and examined; these include one probable pounder, two rubbers and one rotary quern fragment.

**Methodology**

All the stone has been examined with the aid of a x10 magnification hand lens. The worked and utilised stone has been briefly recorded and catalogued below.

**Description**

The worked stone assemblage is small but includes one cobble (SF 3054) with slight damage around the edges suggesting use for pounding and with burning on one side suggesting it was in the corner of a hearth. There is also a fragment of rotary quern of Millstone Grit (SF 3042) from a Saxon ditch fill (3004) and a fragment of probable rubber of Sarsen (SF 3039) from a late Bronze Age pit (3030). A fragment of sarsen pebble is burnt but has been used as a rubber along one broken edge.

**Catalogue**

Context	SFNO	Descrip	Notes	Size
3036	3054	Cobble / hammerstone	Flat faced cobble with naturally squarish shape. Has some wear around the edges of the flat face suggesting limited use as a pounder and has burning on one particular corner suggesting it was placed at the edge of a hearth.	Measures 110 x 120 x 100mm approx.
3036	3039	Probable rubber fragment	No original edges survive but one face is slightly pecked into lines and has a little wear at one edge while the other face is smoothed and has some polish. The smoothed face is very slightly convex while the other face is flat.	Measures 38 mm thick
3004	3042	Probable rotary quern fragment	Appears to have concentric wear marks on one side although neither the edges or the centre survive	Measures 48 mm thick
3034	3036	Rubber	Broken pebble used as a rubber along one broken edge. Edge is worn smooth and almost polished through use.	Measures 20 mm thick



**APPENDIX 7 ANIMAL BONE**

*By Emma-Jayne Evans*

The bone from this site comprises two cattle 1st phalanges from undated tree-throw hole 3030 (3033) and a pig molar and fragment of sheep skull from Saxon ditch fill 3004. The bones survived in reasonably good condition, but no cut marks, gnawing or pathology was noted.

## APPENDIX 8 ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

by Mark Robinson

### Introduction

Evaluation excavations for Phase 2 of the Taplow Court development included the cutting of a further section across the outer hillfort ditch and the excavation of other archaeological features. Three bulk samples were taken for the evaluation of charred plant remains from a late Bronze Age pit (Sample 302), a 6th-7th century deposit in the hillfort ditch (Sample 303) and an early Saxon tree-throw hole (Sample 300).

### Methods and Results

Each sample was floated onto a 0.3mm mesh using a flotation machine. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications of up to x20 for charred remains. The remains were identified and their abundance indicated in Table 1.

### Results

Charred remains are present in all samples although Sample 302 from Context 3036, the fill of the late Bronze Age pit, only contains a single unidentified cereal grain and a small quantity of *Alnus* or *Corylus* (alder or hazel) charcoal. The two Saxon samples contain useful quantities of remains. Sample 303 from Context 3004, a layer in the outer hillfort ditch, contains a high concentration of mixed cereal grains including short free-threshing grains of *Triticum* sp. (rivet or bread wheat), hulled *Hordeum* sp. (hulled barley) and *Avena* sp. (oats) along with a small quantity of *Secale cereale* (rye). Arable weed seeds, particularly *Chenopodium album* (fat hen), are present although there is little cereal chaff. In addition to the remains related to cereal processing, there are also nut shell fragments of *Corylus avellana* (hazel). This sample contains much charcoal of *Fagus sylvatica* (beech) and *Quercus* sp. (oak). Sample 300 from Context 3033, the fill of a Saxon tree-throw hole, contains a generally similar range of remains to Sample 303, although in lower concentrations. In addition there is a presence of *Vicia faba* (field bean) and perhaps *Pisum sativum* (pea). However, nut shell fragments are absent.

### Potential

The earlier Saxon charred crop processing remains have the potential to supplement the evidence from the first phase of work at Taplow Court (TAPC 99), adding *Vicia faba* (field bean) and possibly *Pisum sativum* (pea) to the list of crops. Large assemblages of charred remains other than charcoal are unusual from this period and they have the potential to provide evidence on the agricultural economy as it revived following the post-Roman agricultural decline. The high proportion of *Fagus sylvatica* (beech) charcoal in the earlier Saxon samples is also of interest and gives some evidence on the origin of the Chilterns beech woods, which were possibly of post-Roman origin. The late Bronze Age sample has no further potential.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that should further excavation occur at Taplow Court, particular attention be paid to sampling Saxon contexts for charred plant remains. It is also recommended that if there is no further excavation, Samples 300 and 303 be analysed in full and the results incorporated into the report on the first phase of excavation.

**Table 1: Charred Plant Remains from Taplow Court Phase 2 (TAPC 05)**

No. of Samples 3, No. of Samples with seeds etc 3, No. of Samples with charcoal 3

Date		Late Bronze Age	Early Saxon	Early Saxon
Feature Type		Pit	Hillfort Ditch	Tree-throw
Feature		3032	3050	3030
Context		3036	3004	3033
Sample		302	303	300
<b>CEREAL GRAIN</b>				
<i>Triticum</i> sp. - short free-threshing	rivet or bread wheat	-	++++	-
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	wheat	-	+	-
<i>Secale cereale</i>	rye	-	+	+
<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> - hulled lateral	six-row hulled barley	-	-	+
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. - hulled	hulled barley	-	++++	++
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	barley	-	+	-
<i>Avena</i> sp.	oats	-	+++	+
cereal indet.		+	++++	++
<b>Total</b>		+	++++	+++
<b>CHAFF</b>				
<i>Secale cereale</i> - rachis	rye	-	+	-
<b>LEGUMES</b>				
<i>Vicia faba</i>	field bean	-	-	+
cf. <i>Pisum sativum</i>	pea	-	-	+
<b>NUTS</b>				
<i>Corylus avellana</i> - nutshell frags		-	++	-
<b>WEED</b>				
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	fat hen	-	++	++
<i>Vicia</i> or <i>Lathyrus</i> sp.	vetch or tare	-	+	-
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	dock	-	+	-
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	ribwort plantain	-	-	+
<i>Galium aparine</i>	goosegrass	-	-	+
<i>Anthemis cotula</i>	stinking mayweed	-	-	-
<i>Bromus</i> Sect. <i>Eubromus</i> sp.	chess, brome grass	-	-	+
weed seeds indet.		-	+	+
<b>Total</b>		-	++	++
<b>CHARCOAL</b>				
<i>Alnus</i> or <i>Corylus</i> sp.	alder or hazel	+	-	-
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	beech	-	++++	+
<i>Quercus</i> sp.	oak	-	+++	+

seeds and chaff: + 1-5, ++ 6-20, +++ 21-100, ++++ 101-300

## APPENDIX 9 RADIOCARBON REPORT

## Report

*on C-14 dating in the Poznań Radiocarbon Laboratory*

<i>Sample name</i>	<i>Lab. no</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Age 14C</i>	<i>Cal 68% Confidence</i>	<i>Cal 95% Confidence</i>
TAPC'05 CTX 3004 SS 3003	Poz-12532	Charred <i>Triticum Sp.</i> Grain	1255 ± 30 BP	685-780 AD	670-870 AD

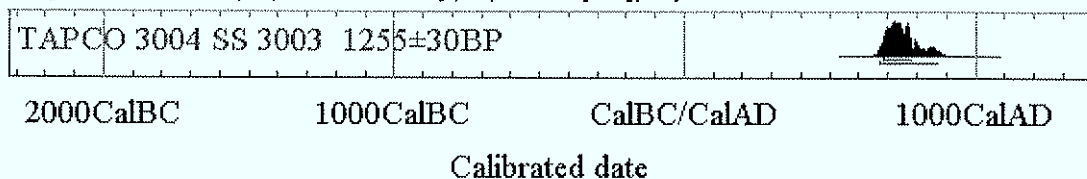
**Head of the Laboratory***Dr. hab. Tomasz Goslar, prof. UAM***Results of calibration of 14C dates – order 1111/05.**

Given are intervals of calendar age, where the true ages of the samples encompass with the probability of ca. 68% and ca. 95%. The calibration was made with the OxCal software.

INFORM : References - Atmospheric data from Reimer et al (2004); OxCal v3.10 Bronk Ramsey (2005); cub r:5 sd:12 prob usp[chron]

TAPC'05 3004 SS 3003 : 1255±30BP  
 68.2% probability  
 685AD (68.2%) 780AD  
 95.4% probability  
 670AD (95.4%) 870AD

Atmospheric data from Reimer et al (2004); OxCal v3.10 Bronk Ramsey (2005); cub r:5 sd:12 prob usp[chron]

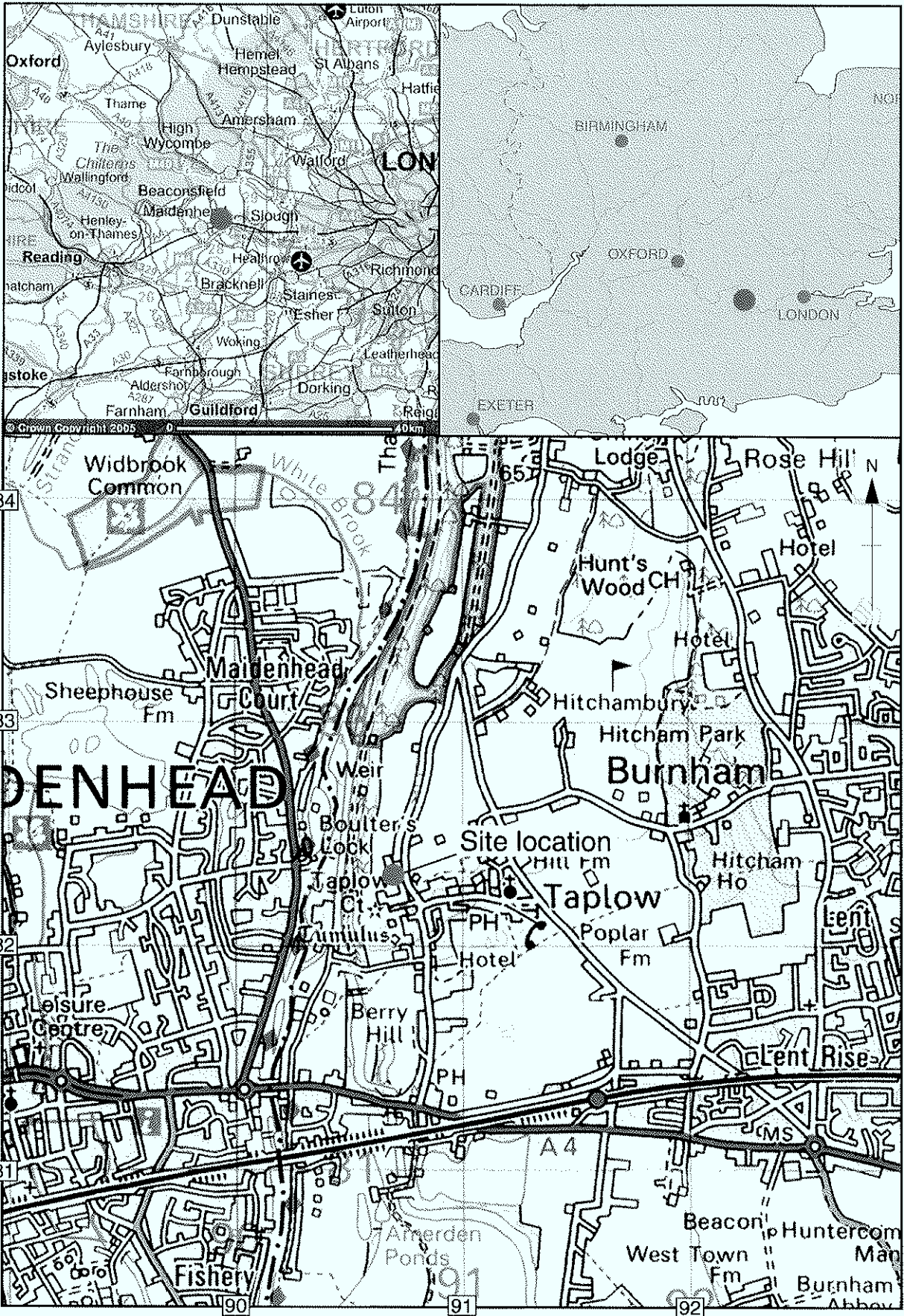


**APPENDIX 10 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS****Site name: Taplow Court (phase 2 evaluation)****Site code: TAPC 05****Grid reference: SU 907 823****Type of evaluation:** Archaeological trenching**Date and duration of project: April 2005 (6 Days)****Area of site: 114.7 m<sup>2</sup>**

**Summary of results:** The northernmost evaluation trench (1) revealed further evidence relating to the previously identified late Bronze Age/Iron Age hillfort complex in the form of a very large defensive ditch. This trench also revealed a late Bronze Age pit west of the ditch, and a later shallow ditch that cut both the upper fills of the defensive ditch and the pit. Three trenches dug further south (2-4) contained one possibly Saxon tree-throw hole, but no other archaeological features, possibly due to truncation during the construction of industrial units during 1950s/1960s

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES. Microfilming of the primary archive is in progress, prior to deposition of the archive with Buckinghamshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: AYBCM 1999.19





Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

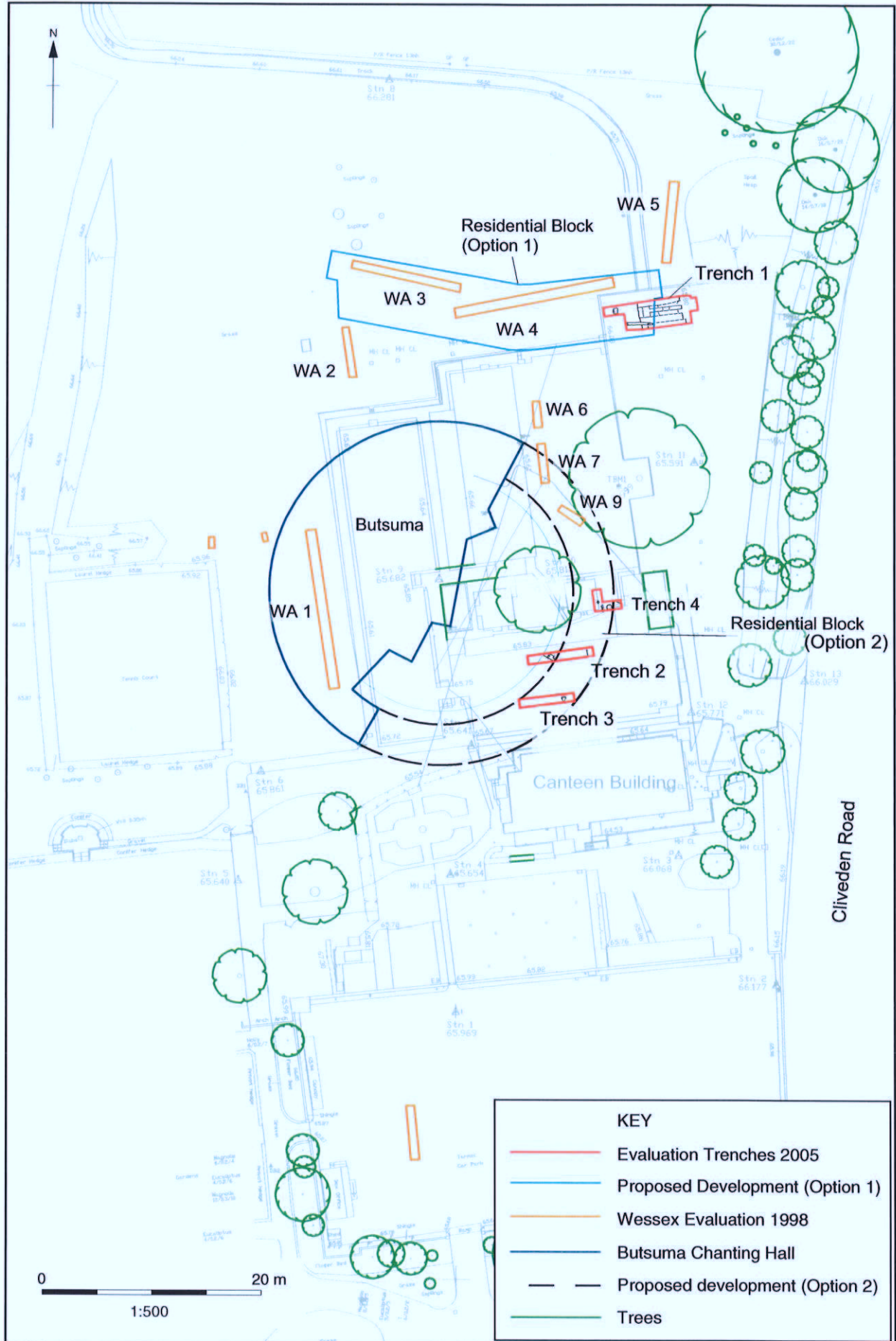
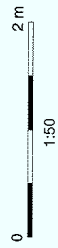
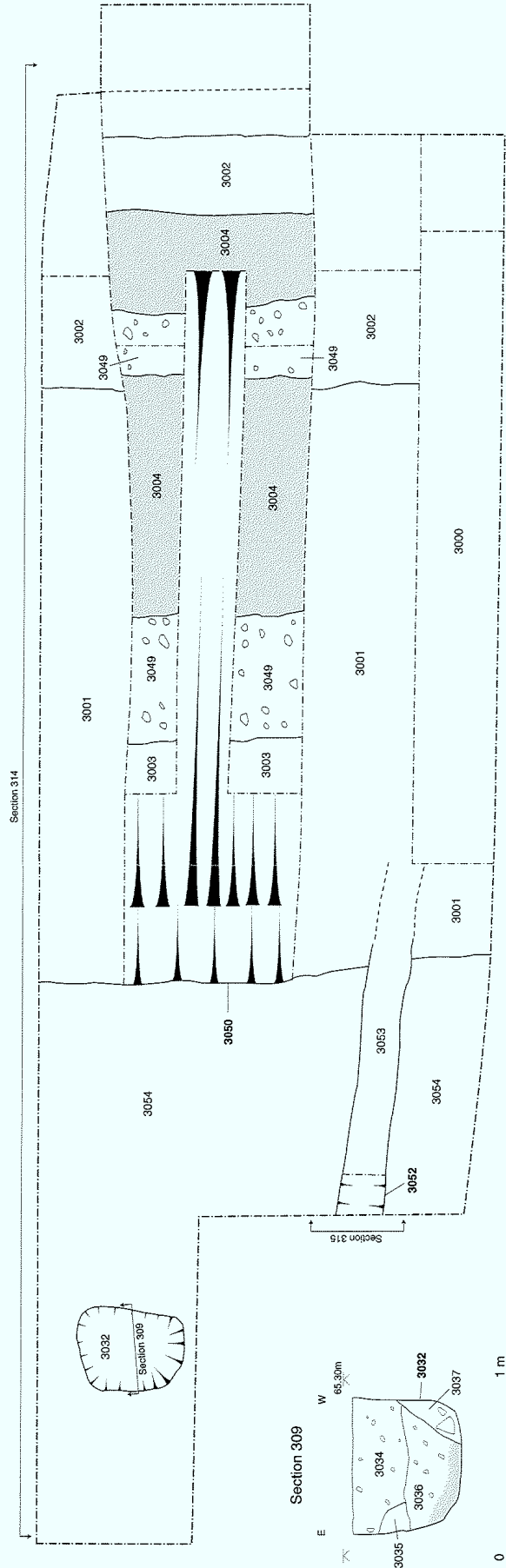


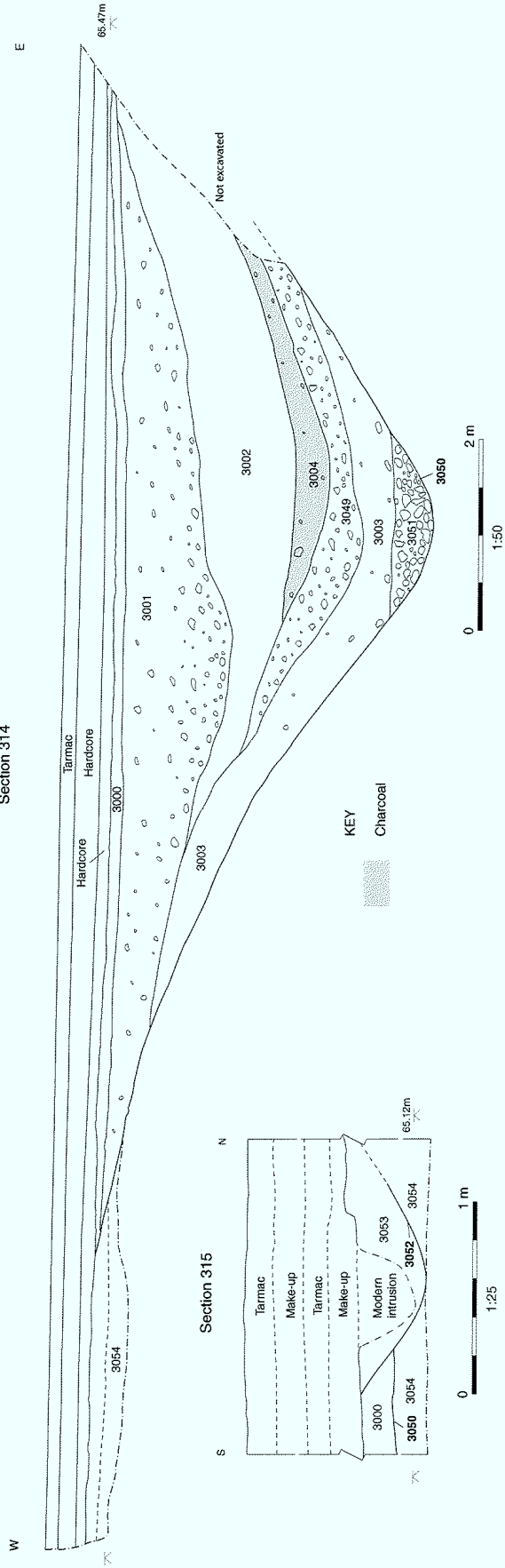
Figure 2: Location of trenches in relation to option 1 and option 2 of the proposed development



Trench 1  
Plan



Section 314



Section 315

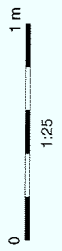
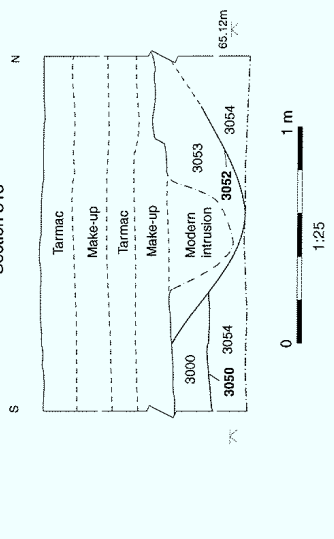


Figure 3: Trench 1, plan and sections

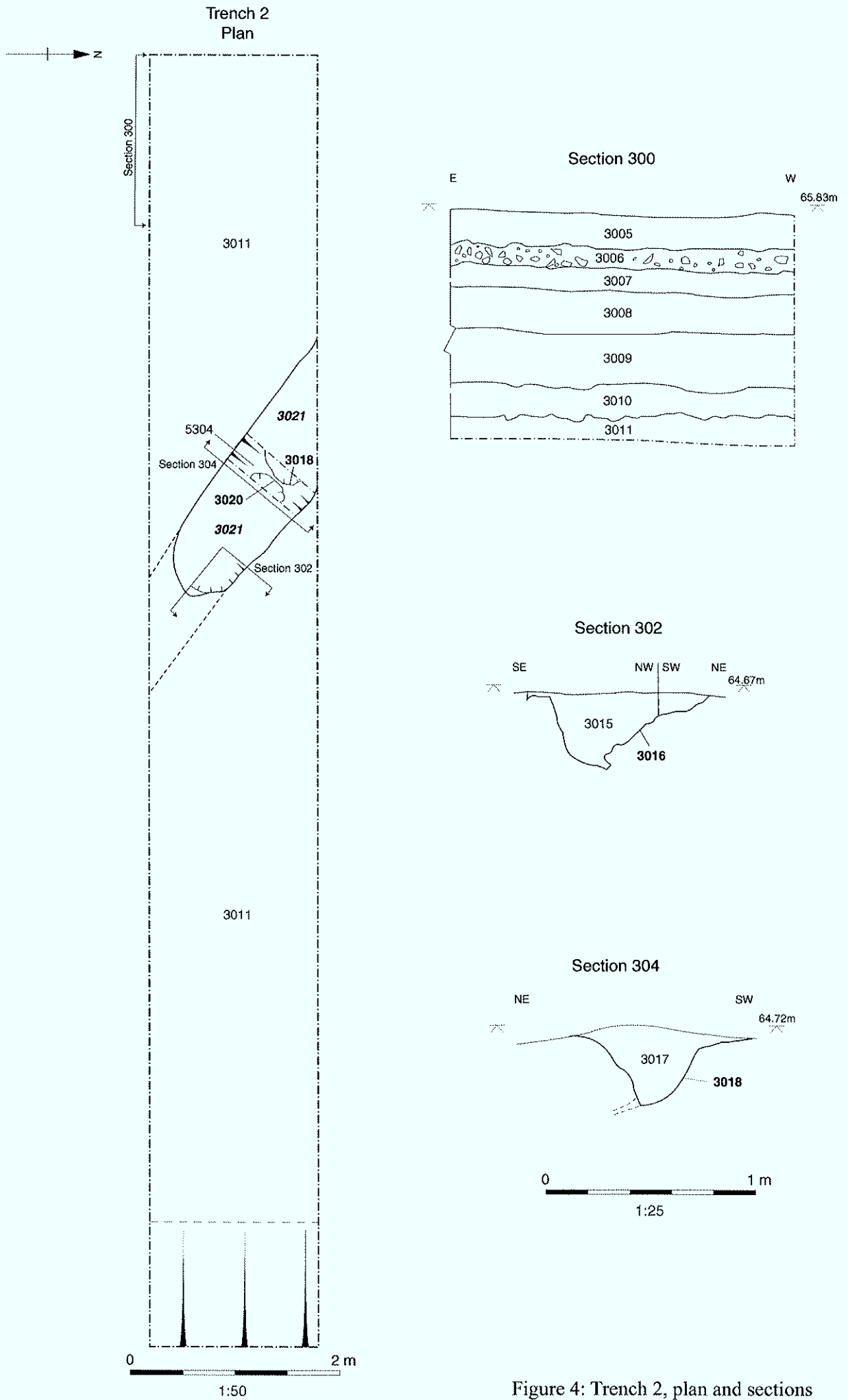


Figure 4: Trench 2, plan and sections

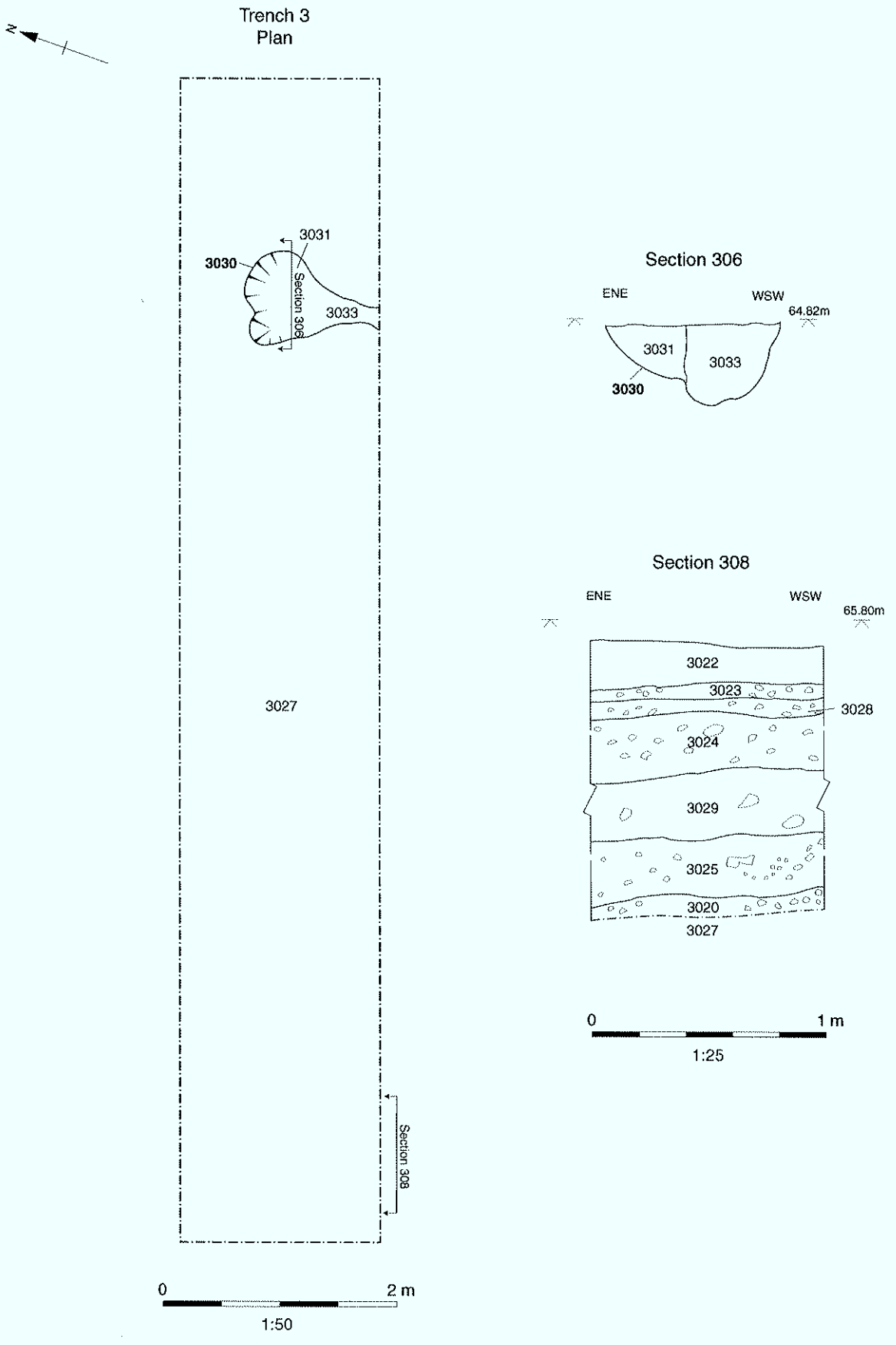
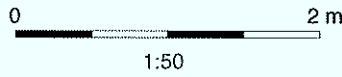
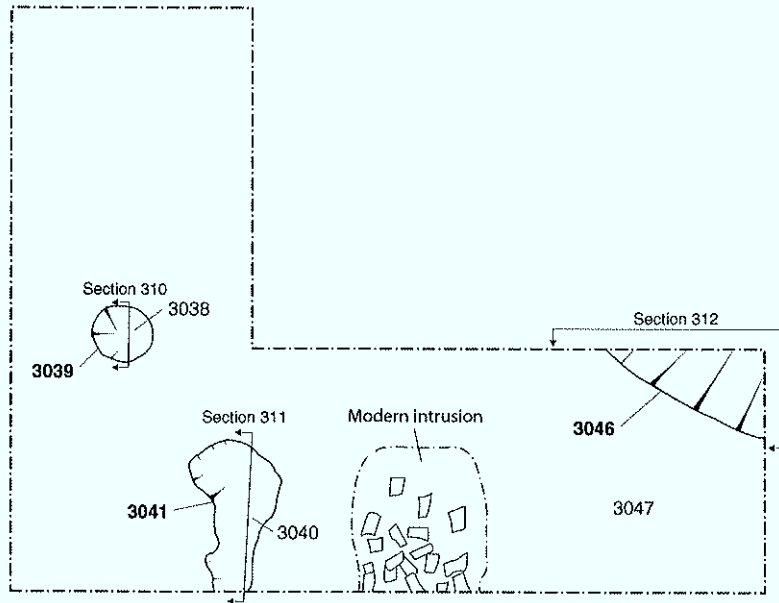


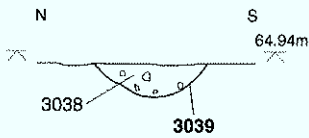
Figure 5: Trench 3, plan and sections



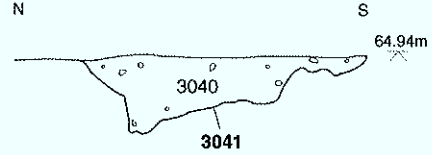
### Trench 4 Plan



### Section 310



### Section 311



### Section 312

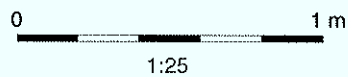
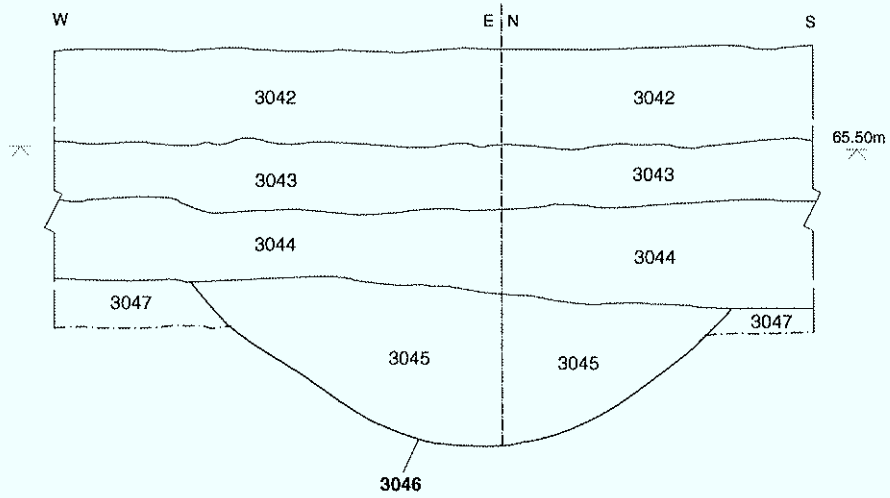


Figure 6: Trench 4, plan and sections

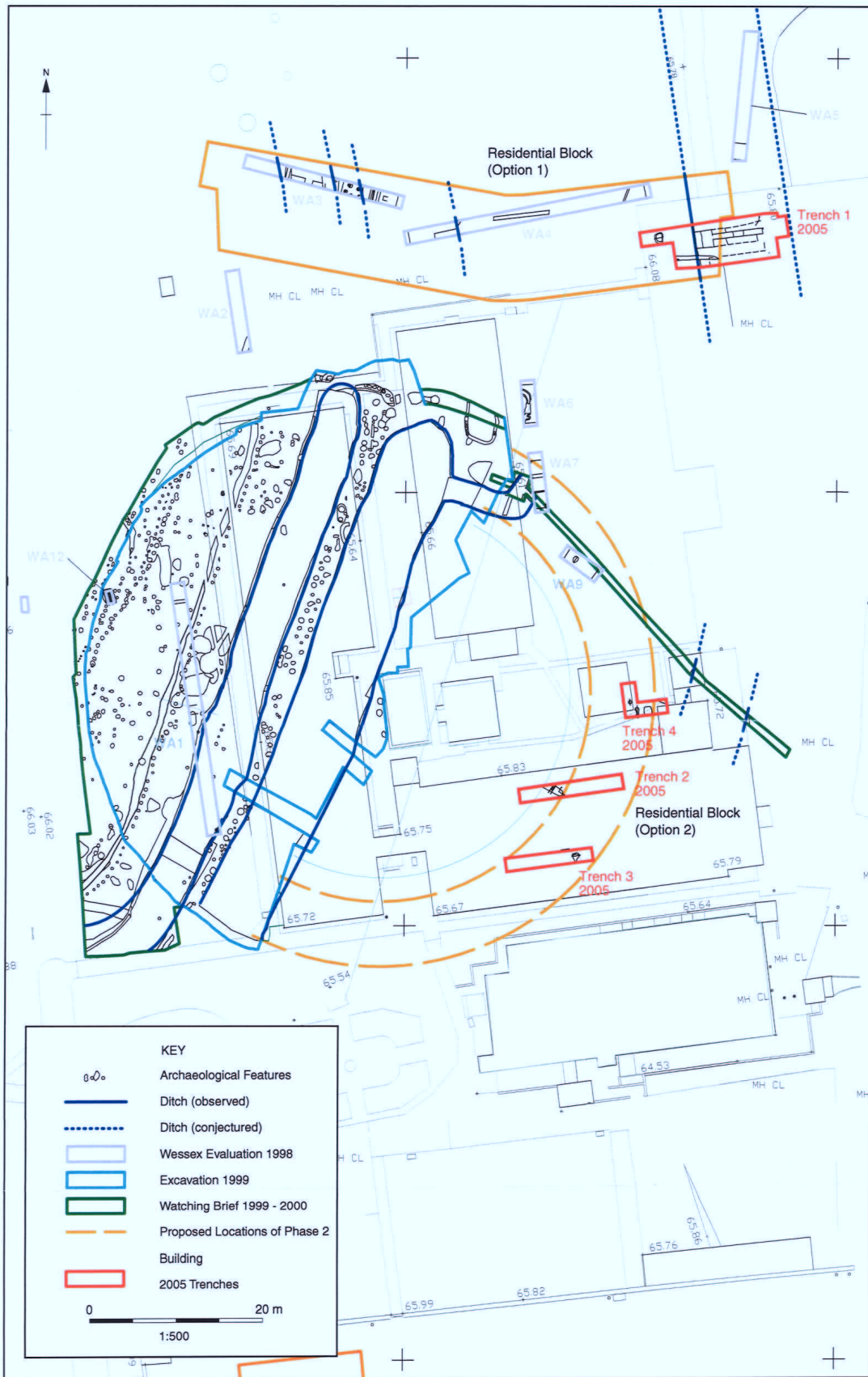


Figure 7: Archaeological detail from current and past work at Taplow Court



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