

Hadden Hill, Didcot



Archaeological Evaluation Report



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Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

Between the 3rd and 11th February 2014 Oxford Archaeology (OA) excavated a series of 18 evaluation trenches on a site proposed for residential development at Hadden Hill, Didcot, Oxfordshire. Twenty-two trenches were originally proposed in the Written Scheme of Investigation, but four had to be abandoned entirely, and several others shortened or relocated, due to surface water inundation. The site is c 2.7 hectares in extent and is situated on the eastern edge of Didcot parish, bounded to the south by the Great Western Railway, and to the north by the A4130 Hadden Hill (SU 5411 8988). Bovis Homes commissioned the work in response to a design brief by Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Council.

The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, in particular for Bronze Age remains. Evidence for Bronze Age settlement and a series of linear ditches were excavated in 1991 under the adjacent Wallingford Road Tesco superstore (PRN 15646, Ruben and Ford 1992). A flint knife of Bronze Age type was reportedly found in 1950 during excavation of a pond within the site (PRN 9633). As part of the evaluation a trench was cut through the pond spoil heap in the hope of finding further artefacts. A single worked flint, which is thought most likely to be a crudely made chopper of Middle or Late Bronze Age date, was recovered from the base of the spoil heap.

Very few definite archaeological finds and features of any date were found in the evaluation. The only three cut features identified included a pit in Trench 15, and a ditch and ditch terminal in Trench 21. The pit contained fired clay fragments and charred plant remains which may be waste material raked from an oven. As these features are all undated they could equally be outlying features of the Wallingford Road Tesco Bronze Age site or agricultural features of more recent date.

Lidar data shows ridge-and-furrow (the traces of medieval and post-medieval 'open field' cultivation) throughout the evaluation area, which were clearly visible on the ground as significant earthworks.

The potential for extensive significant discoveries within the site appears to be low. It is likely that occasional outlying elements of the known Bronze Age site under the adjacent Tesco superstore could extend into the proposed development site. However the very limited archaeological remains encountered in the trenches are of no more than local significance.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Origin 3 on behalf of Bovis Homes, to undertake evaluation trenching on the site of a proposed residential development at Hadden Hill, Didcot (SU 5411 8988).
- 1.1.2 The evaluation was designed in accordance with a design brief prepared by Richard Oram, the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Planning Archaeologist, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by OA (OA 2014). Twenty-two trenches were proposed in the WSI, but four had to be abandoned entirely, and several others shortened or relocated, due to surface water inundation. Figure 2 shows the as-dug locations. The changes were discussed and approved by OCC as the fieldwork progressed. As sufficient spatial coverage was achieved, and in light of the largely negative results of the evaluation, it is not intended that the abandoned trench be completed.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is c 2.7 hectares in extent, situated on the eastern edge of the historic parish of Didcot. The Didcot/South Moreton parish boundary follows the watercourse which forms the eastern site boundary. The site is bounded to the north by the A4130 Hadden Hill, to the south by the Great Western Railway, to the east by Fulscot Copse, and to the west by a Tesco superstore (Fig.1). The site lies at c 53m OD.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology is mapped by the British Geological Survey as the Gault Formation – a mudstone, sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 100 to 112 million years ago in the Cretaceous period. These rocks were formed in shallow seas with mainly siliciclastic sediments (comprising fragments of silicate minerals) deposited as mud, silt, sand and gravel. No superficial deposits are recorded within the site (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The natural geology encountered in all of the trenches was the weathered surface of the Gault Formation.
- 1.2.3 At the time of the evaluation the site was used as pasture. The survival of ridge-and-furrow earthworks suggests that the field has not been subject to much mechanised cultivation.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, in particular for Bronze Age remains. A flint knife of Bronze Age type and Roman pottery was found in 1950 during excavation of a pond (PRN 9633).
- 1.3.2 The nearest substantial evidence for prehistoric settlement comes from excavations on the adjacent superstore site in 1991. Evaluation trenches and a subsequent excavation identified a Bronze Age occupation site and field system. The site comprised shallow, plough-truncated pits and a series of N-S aligned rectilinear ditches. The features produced significant assemblages of Late Neolithic and Bronze Age flint tools and pottery. The ditches were interpreted as part of a rectilinear field system (PRN 15646, TVAS 1991 and 1992).
- 1.3.3 A series of further field systems were recorded to the north of the site during an evaluation which recorded further pits and gullies (PRN 26129, BUFAU 2004). A small number of Bronze Age ditches were recorded in an excavation 500m west of the site (PRN 26419).



- 1.3.4 Large scale excavations to the west of Didcot, c2.5km to the west, in advance of a major mixed used development at Didcot Great Western Park have identified extensive multi-period remains. These include Mesolithic and Neolithic occupation sites, Bronze Age barrows and settlements, a large middle Iron Age settlement with extensive areas of buildings and hundreds of pits, a landscape of Roman-period settlement and agricultural enclosures associated with a farmstead and villa, and limited evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement and burial (OA 2012).
- 1.3.5 Discoveries along the Didcot to Oxford and Wootton to Abingdon water mains included excavation of a Roman settlement at Hadden Hill, c700m NE of the development (PRN 15677, OAHS 1993). A trackway and field system of Roman date were recorded in an evaluation and subsequent excavation near Abingdon Road, Didcot, c. 600m NW of the site (PRN16399, CAT 2001).
- 1.3.6 Prior to construction of the Great Western Railway in the early 1840s the village of Didcot was a small agricultural settlement centred to the north of the main road from Wantage to Wallingford, on an east-west ridge between the Thames Valley to the North and the Hagbourne Marshes to the south. There is no reference to Didcot by name in the Domesday Survey. It is possible that a part at least of it was included in the four hides and a virgate at *Wibalditone* held of Henry de Ferrers by Niel (Daubeny) in 1086. In the medieval and post-medieval periods the evaluation site lay at the eastern edge of the parish of Didcot, in a portion of the Didcot common fields known as 'the Hadden' (Ditchfield and Page 1923). The plot is bounded to the north by the road from Wantage to Wallingford. The 12th century parish church lies 1.5 km west of the site. The greatly shrunken Domesday manor of Fulscot, which today forms the NW part of the adjacent South Moreton parish, had its manor house c 900m to the SE of the site (PRN 13556).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 Conor Flanagan (Origin 3) coordinated the work on behalf of the client, Bovis Homes. We would like to thank Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Council for preparing the brief and approving the archaeological work.
- 1.4.2 The evaluation was undertaken by Ashley Strutt, Nick Swift, Peter Vellet and Owen Humphreys of Oxford Archaeology. Stuart Foreman was the Project Manager.



2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims of the investigation, as stated in the brief (Oram 2013) and WSI (OA 2014), were as follows:

- (i) Investigate the presence/ absence, extent, conditions, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains encountered.
- (ii) Present a digest of information on the character and significance of the deposits under review in order to inform the basis of any proposals for appropriate further action.
- (iii) Define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The trenching programme consisted of 18 trenches. Twenty-two were originally proposed but four (Trenches 3, 5, 18 and 19) were abandoned due to surface water inundation. All were intended to be 30m x 1.6 in plan, but three were shortened and/or relocated (Trenches 1, 2 and 8) due to avoid surface water. The alignment of Trench 12 was rotated to avoid damaging the root systems of nearby trees. The final locations are shown on Figure 2. The original trench plan was designed to provide even coverage of the field at 4% sample by area (2.7 ha). The trenching sample was reduced to 3% as a result of these changes.

2.2.2 Plough-disturbed soil horizons were removed by mechanical excavator fitted with a wide toothless bucket to expose archaeologically significant horizons or the surface of solid geology, which ever was encountered first. The trenches were excavated to a typical depth of c. 0.5m.

2.2.3 A summary of OA's general approach to excavation and recording is included in Appendix A of the WSI. Standard methodologies for geomatics and survey, environmental evidence, artefactual evidence and burials can also be found in Appendices B, C, D and E of the WSI respectively.

2.2.4 Site-specific methodologies were as follows:

- (i) The trench layout was agreed with Richard Oram (OCC Archaeological Services) prior to the evaluation commencing. Provision for taking environmental/ organic samples was made in the WSI.
- (ii) The trenching was carried out under the supervision of a competent archaeologist. Mechanical excavation was taken down to the top of the natural geology. The surface of the exposed archaeological horizon was cleaned, as required to clarify the remains. Archaeological features were sampled sufficiently to characterise and date them. Full excavation of features was not undertaken at this stage. Care was taken not to damage archaeological deposits through excessive use of mechanical excavation.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The following section summarises the results of the evaluation. The location of the trenches is shown on Figure 2, and more detailed plans of cut features are shown on Figure 3. Sections are shown on Figure 4. Archaeological descriptions are presented in the context inventory (Appendix A), and within the descriptive text where they are integral to the interpretation of the context in question. Artefacts recovered are noted in the trench descriptions below where they occur.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 Overall the evaluation was undertaken in very wet ground conditions, and the weather was very windy with occasional heavy rain. The waterlogged ground meant that most of the trenches flooded to some extent and some were abandoned or relocated, as detailed in Section 2.2. The excavated trenches remained dry for long enough to permit archaeological visibility and recording immediately after excavation, but in all cases were flooded within a few hours.

3.2.2 The soil sequence consisted of thin topsoil (0.10m – 0.20m) overlying a plough-disturbed subsoil, also of variable thickness (0.10m – 0.20m), overlying weathered brownish grey clay (Gault Formation) in all of the trenches. The presence of extent Ridge-and-furrow earthworks resulted in variable soil thickness (typically (0.1 – 0.20m).

3.2.3 Unless otherwise stated in the trench descriptions, the archaeological features were cut into the solid geology and covered by the plough soil.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Archaeological features were very sparsely distributed, and very few artefacts were recovered. None of the features were dated on artefactual grounds and only three cut features were identified (in Trenches 15 and 21). No reliable dating evidence was recovered from these.

3.4 Trench 9, (Plate 4)

3.4.1 Trench 9 was found to contain six plough furrows running in a SW-NE alignment which is the perpendicular to the SE-NW alignment of the ridge and furrow earthworks in this area. No dating evidence was found but it is thought that these plough furrows pre-date the extant ridge and furrow, presumably reflecting an earlier phase of open field cultivation.

3.5 Trench 12, (Figs. 4 and 5; Plate 1)

3.5.1 Trench 12 contained no archaeological features but was dug through the spoil heap associated with the drainage pond near Fulscot Copse (Fig.2), which was originally created in 1950 (see paragraph 1.3.1). The purpose of the trench was to search for further flint artefacts associated with the previously recorded Bronze Age flint knife.

3.5.2 The spoil mound was 0.98m in depth, overlying a thin buried topsoil layer representing the original land surface. A single unusual flint tool was recovered from the interface of the spoil heap with the underlying former land surface. It is most likely to be a crudely made Middle to Late Bronze Age chopper. However, it is also possible that it could be some form of unfinished Palaeolithic biface. Given the previous find from this location, and the absence of mapped Pleistocene deposits in the near vicinity, a Bronze Age date is most likely.



3.6 Trench 15, (Fig. 4; Plate 2)

- 3.6.1 Trench 15 contained a shallow pit (1504) which was 0.26m in depth and more than 0.55m in diameter. It was seen in section only at the western end of the trench (Fig.4, sections). The fill consisted of a patchy dark blueish grey to light clayey silt with dense charcoal inclusions with occasional fired clay fragments. The feature is undated as it contained no reliably diagnostic artefacts. It was shallow and rather plough-disturbed.
- 3.6.2 A soil sample (1) was recovered from the pit fill (1503), which contained fragments of fired clay of uncertain date, possibly from the interior of an oven. Charred plant remains present in the sample are summarised in paragraph 3.1 and detailed in Appendix C.1.

3.7 Trench 16 (Fig.2)

- 3.7.1 Eight probable plough furrows were observed within the southern half of the trench, all of which were aligned NW to SE, which is perpendicular to the extant ridge and furrow earthworks in this area. One fragment of ceramic building material (CBM) was recovered from one of the furrows.

3.8 Trench 20 (Fig.4; Plate 3)

- 3.8.1 Trench 20 contained one plough furrow (2002) in the southern end of the trench. It was filled with a blackish grey silty clay (Fig.4, section 2001). No dating evidence was recovered.

3.9 Trench 21 (Figs.3 and 4)

- 3.9.1 Trench 21 was found to contain a ditch (2105) of unknown date which was 0.27m in width and 0.20m in depth and filled with a mid brownish grey clay silt. A possible ditch terminal (2107) was also found, although the dimensions (0.38m wide, 0.12m deep) suggest that it may be part of a plough furrow (Fig.4, section 2101).

3.10 Finds summary

- 3.10.1 Very few artefacts were recovered during the evaluation. A single flint was recovered from a buried land surface in Trench 12, at the base of the 1950 pond spoil heap. The flint was somewhat unusual in its form, which suggested that it was probably a crudely made Middle to Late Bronze Age chopper, but could conceivably be an unfinished Palaeolithic biface (Fig.5).
- 3.10.2 Trench 15 (pit fill 1503) produced a small quantity of fired clay, which may be from the interior of an oven. It is undiagnostic in terms of date. Its unabraded condition suggests that it derives from the near vicinity.
- 3.10.3 A piece of grog-tempered pottery from the subsoil in Trench 6 appears to date from the Iron Age or Roman period. Trench 6 also produced one piece of 2nd century AD Roman pottery and one piece of modern transfer-printed pottery, both from the topsoil (600).

3.11 Environmental summary

- 3.11.1 One soil sample was taken during the evaluation: Sample 1 was taken from the charcoal rich fill (1503) of pit 1504 in Trench 15. Burnt/fired clay was recovered from the residue, the fabric of which is uncertainly dated. Fired clay has a very wide potential date range. The sample flot also contained a quantity of charcoal in good condition, which may be identifiable to species. Three fragments of charred grain were recorded (tentatively identified as barley, wheat and possibly oat). Seeds included a single cleaver and a small number of wild turnip, as well as cinquefoil seeds. A single legume is also present. The context is somewhat plough-disturbed so some of these may be residual or intrusive.





4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The evaluation was hampered by wet ground conditions, which required some trenches to be relocated to avoid areas covered with standing water. Nevertheless most of the trenches examined were dry during and immediately after excavation, to the extent that archaeological visibility was reasonable.

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

4.2.1 The evaluation was generally successful in establishing the presence/absence, extent, condition, nature, character and quality of the very limited archaeological remains encountered, as discussed below. However the three cut features identified contained no closely datable artefacts and could not be dated on stratigraphic or morphological grounds.

4.2.2 Only one deposit suitable for environmental sampling was encountered. Sample 1 (fill 1503, from pit 1504) contained a small amount of fired clay, possibly from the interior of an oven, but this is undiagnostic as far as the date of the feature is concerned. The sample appears too disturbed to be suitable for radiocarbon dating.

4.2.3 The site has clearly been adversely affected by plough erosion in the medieval/post-medieval period, but the survival of ridge-and-furrow earthworks indicates that it has not been subject to extensive mechanised ploughing in recent decades. In the neighbouring Wallingford Road Tesco site, a similar level of erosion had left considerable surviving traces of Bronze Age activity. If the Bronze Age settlement had extended into the evaluation site, some traces of the deeper cut features, as well as artefacts, would be expected to survive.

4.3 Interpretation

4.3.1 It is likely that occasional outlying elements of the known predominantly Bronze Age site under the Wallingford Road Tesco superstore (Ruben and Ford 1992) could extend into the proposed development site. The evaluation has proved that archaeological remains survive on the site but are of uncertain date and very few in number. The scarcity of features and artefacts suggests that the site was located outside the main Bronze Age settlement area.

4.3.2 A single worked flint was recovered from the base of the pond spoil heap in Trench 12. The flint was somewhat unusual in its form with two possible interpretations: Given the reported discovery of a Bronze Age knife from this location when the pond was originally dug (in 1950) it is most likely to be a crudely made chopper of Middle to Late Bronze Age date, but it could alternatively be some form of unfinished Palaeolithic biface (hand-axe or cleaver). As there are no mapped Pleistocene deposits in the immediate vicinity, this seems much less likely than a Bronze Age date. Given the unusual nature of the piece, it has been illustrated for this report (Fig. 5). The flint chopper stands out for its rarity on an evaluation which produced no other flint artefacts and no prehistoric pottery at all. In comparison, the adjacent Wallingford Road Tesco site produced 729 pieces of worked flint and 650 sherds of prehistoric pottery, mostly recovered from a variety of shallow cut features including gullies, postholes, pits and scoops. Flint does not occur naturally in the Gault Clay geology of this site, but the assemblage from the Wallingford Road Tesco site included material from several probable flint sources within a radius of a few kilometres (Ruben and Ford 1992).



- 4.3.3 Pit 1504 in Trench 15 seems to have been infilled with material raked out from an oven, but the feature is otherwise undated. It is the most likely candidate for a Bronze Age feature.
- 4.3.4 Lidar data (Environment Agency 2014) show ridge-and-furrow (the traces of medieval and post-medieval 'open field' cultivation) throughout the evaluation area, which was apparent on the ground as significant earthworks. The plough furrows were sometimes visible as broad, dark bands of soil in the trenches. A change in the orientation of the ridge-and-furrow indicates a boundary between two furlongs (cropping units), running through the middle of the site on a NW-SE alignment. Trenches 9, 10, 4 and 18 were cut across this boundary but found no evidence for a ditch, although a line of extant trees on this alignment clearly represents the remnants of a hedgerow.
- 4.3.5 In Trench 16 the evaluation revealed a series of plough furrows on a roughly perpendicular alignment to the surviving earthworks. This could suggest two phases of open field cultivation, or a re-organisation of cropping units at some point in the medieval/post-medieval period.

4.4 Significance

- 4.4.1 The potential for extensive significant discoveries within the site appears to be low, although the presence of important but localised features cannot be ruled out. The only archaeological cut features identified comprise pit 1504 (Trench 15), ditch 2105 and ditch terminal 2107 (Trench 21). All three were undated and could equally be outlying components of the Bronze Age settlement (which is centred c 200m to the west) or agricultural features of more recent date. In isolation they are of no more than local significance as they are undated, poorly preserved, with few associated artefacts and little environmental evidence.
- 4.4.2 The discovery of a crudely made chopper in Trench 12, from the same location as the flint knife found in 1950, may suggest the presence of an ephemeral Bronze Age activity site in the vicinity. However, two unstratified artefacts are insufficient evidence to prove the point. There is certainly no evidence that they are part of a dense artefact cluster. They probably reflect outlying activity associated with the Wallingford Road Tesco site.



APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation	NW-SE	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. Trench shortened and relocated along ridge to avoid flooded furrows.				Avg. depth (m)	0.40	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	29.00	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.10	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.14	Subsoil	-	-
102	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 2						
General description				Orientation	NW-SE	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. Trench moved and shortened due to waterlogged conditions.				Avg. depth (m)	0.44	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	16	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
200	Layer	-	0.06	Topsoil	-	-
201	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil	-	-
202	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 3 abandoned due to surface water inundation.

Trench 4						
General description				Orientation	NW-SE	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. Two land drains cut into natural clay.				Avg. depth (m)	0.38	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
400	Layer	-	0.14	Topsoil	-	-
401	Layer	-	0.10	Subsoil	-	-
402	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 5 abandoned due to surface water inundation.



Trench 6						
General description				Orientation		E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.50
				Width (m)		1.60
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
600	Layer	-	0.20	Topsoil	-	-
601	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil	Modern pot sherd	-
602	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 7						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. Four land drains cut into natural clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.50
				Width (m)		1.60
				Length (m)		29
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
700	Layer	-	0.15	Topsoil	Modern pot sherd	-
701	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-
702	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 8						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. Trench moved from originally proposed position and shortened due to waterlogged conditions.				Avg. depth (m)		0.40
				Width (m)		1.60
				Length (m)		21
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
800	Layer	-	0.13	Topsoil	-	-
801	Layer	-	0.17	Subsoil	-	-
802	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-



Trench 9						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying natural clay. Trench had six plough furrows running through the central area.				Avg. depth (m)		0.35
				Width (m)		1.60
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
900	Layer	-	0.15	Topsoil	-	-
901	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-
902	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 10						
General description				Orientation		E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. A mid orange grey deposit was seen to be present in section. Four land drains cut into natural clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.65
				Width (m)		1.60
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1000	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
1001	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil	-	-
1002	Layer	-	-	Deposit	-	-
1003	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 11						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. Trench shortened by 3m due to flooding at north end. Two land drains cut into natural clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.35
				Width (m)		1.60
				Length (m)		27
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1100	Layer	-	0.20	Topsoil	-	-
1101	Layer	-	0.10	Subsoil	-	-
1102	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-



Trench 12						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. Southern end of the trench relocated 17m to the west due to the close proximity of mature trees. Trench dug through spoil heap from pond 950. Three land drains cut into original natural clay.				Avg. depth (m)	1.20	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1200	Layer	-	0.10	Topsoil	-	-
1201	Layer	-	0.14	Subsoil	-	-
1202	Layer	9.7	0.66	Spoil from 1950's pond	-	-
1203	Layer	25	0.14	Buried topsoil	-	-
1204	Layer	25	0.14	Buried subsoil	-	-
1205	Layer	-	-	Natural	Flint	-
1206	Layer	16	0.48	Spoil from 1950's pond	-	-
1207	Layer	2	0.24	Redeposited material from pond excavation.	-	-

Trench 13						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. Five land drains cut into natural clay.				Avg. depth (m)	0.35	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1300	Layer	-	0.15	Topsoil	-	-
1301	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil	-	-
1302	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 14						
General description				Orientation	N-S	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay.				Avg. depth (m)	0.35	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date



Trench 14						
1400	Layer	-	0.15	Topsoil	-	-
1401	Layer	-	0.10	Subsoil	-	-
1402	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 15						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. A pit was found in the western end of the trench with evidence of burning. A soil sample (1) was recovered from context 1503 which produced fired clay fragments, charcoal and charred seeds.				Avg. depth (m)	0.48	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1500	Layer	-	0.16	Topsoil	-	-
1501	Layer	-	0.12	Subsoil	-	-
1503	Fill	0.55	0.26	Fill of pit (soil sample 1)	Burnt clay	
1504	Cut	0.55	0.26	Pit	-	-
1502	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 16						
General description				Orientation	N-S	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. 7-8 plough furrows (unexcavated) were observed in the southern half of the trench on a NW-SE alignment and a fragment of CBM recovered from one.				Avg. depth (m)	0.35	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1600	Layer	-	0.10	Topsoil	-	-
1601	Layer	-	0.10	Subsoil	-	-
1602	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 17						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. Four E-W plough furrows were observed within the northern half of the trench, not excavated.				Avg. depth (m)	0.31	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						



Trench 17						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1700	Layer	-	0.10	Topsoil	-	-
1701	Layer	-	0.14	Subsoil	-	-
1702	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
1703	Fill	-	-	Fill of furrow	-	-
1704	Cut	-	-	Plough furrow	-	-
1705	Fill	-	-	Fill of furrow	-	-
1706	Cut	-	-	Plough furrow	-	-
1707	Fill	-	-	Fill of furrow	-	-
1708	Cut	-	-	Plough furrow	-	-
1709	Fill	-	-	Fill of furrow	-	-
1710	Cut	-	-	Plough furrow	-	-

Trenches 18 and 19 abandoned due to surface water inundation.

Trench 20						
General description				Orientation	NW-SE	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. One plough furrow observed in south end of trench. Trench shortened due to flooding.				Avg. depth (m)	0.35	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	24.30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
2000	Layer	-	0.10	Topsoil	-	-
2001	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-
2002	Cut	0.38	0.06	Cut of plough furrow	-	-
2003	Fill	0.38	0.06	Fill of plough furrow	-	-
2004	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 21						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. The trench contained one plough furrow, a possible ditch terminal and a ditch.				Avg. depth (m)	0.38	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
2101	Layer	-	0.10	Topsoil	-	-



Trench 21						
2102	Layer	-	0.14	Subsoil	-	-
2103	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
2104	Fill	0.25	0.18	Fill of ditch	-	-
2105	Cut	0.25	0.18	Ditch?	-	-
2106	Fill	0.28	0.12	Fill of ditch terminal	-	-
2107	Cut	0.28	0.12	Ditch terminal	-	-
2108	Fill	0.25	0.11	Fill of plough furrow	-	-
2109	Cut	0.25	0.11	Plough furrow	-	-

Trench 22						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. Two plough furrows and a possible third were observed within the trench at the western end.				Avg. depth (m)	0.30	
				Width (m)	1.60	
				Length (m)	30.00	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
2200	Layer	-	0.07	Topsoil	-	-
2201	Layer	-	0.11	Subsoil	-	-
2202	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-



APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

Identified by John Cotter, compiled by Geraldine Crann

Context	Description	Date
601	1 sherd grog-tempered pottery. 14g.	Late Iron Age - early Roman.
700	1 residual sherd Roman greyware (2 nd century+ AD), 1 sherd transfer printed ware. 26g.	1830 – 1900.

The assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work.

B.2 The fired clay

Identified by Cynthia Poole

Context	Description	Date
1503	Includes <1>. 33 fragments of fired clay, in a sandy fabric with organic inclusions, fresh condition. Finger impressions from smoothing and shaping, fired on one surface. 219g.	?Iron age / Roman.

The assemblage comprised undiagnostic fragments whose general character, with finger impressions from smoothing and shaping, and the pattern of firing on one surface, suggests that it is possibly part of an oven interior. The unabraded condition of the material indicates that it derives from a location in the vicinity of the evaluation. The character of the material perhaps suggests an Iron age or Roman date, but fired clay is found from the Neolithic through to the medieval period.

B.3 The flint

Identified by Mike Donnelly

Context	Description	Date
1205	Single broad, thick flake with hinge termination on sandy-greenish flint. Rough bifacial removals along both margins creating a crude triangular tool. ?Retouch/usewear and edge damage at distal corners, ventral surface worn, margins created by bifacial working are relatively fresh. 40% cortex (dorsal). 65g.	?M-LBA

The single unusual flint from this evaluation is most likely to be a crudely made mid to late Bronze Age chopper. However, it is also possible that it could be some form of unfinished Palaeolithic biface. Given the unusual nature of the piece, it has been drawn and photographed for this report.



APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Environmental samples

By Sharon Cook

C.1.1 Introduction

This report describes a single sample taken from the evaluation at Hadden Hill, Didcot. Sample <1> (1503) was taken from what was described on site as a charcoal-rich deposit filling a pit of unknown date.

C.1.2 Methodology

The sample was processed for finds retrieval and charred plant remains by water flotation using a modified Siraf style flotation machine. The flot was collected on a 250µm mesh and the heavy residue sieved to 500µm; both were dried in a heated room, after which the residue was sorted by eye for artefacts and organic remains.

The flot was scanned for charred plant remains using a binocular microscope at approximately x10 magnification.

Seed identifications were made with reference to Oxford Archaeology's reference collection. Nomenclature for the plant remains follows Stace (2010). Confirmation of identification was done by Sheila Boardman.

C.1.3 Results

The sample was a dark greyish brown silty clay (2.5Y 4/2) and was 3l in volume. Burnt/fired clay was recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 40ml of flot material of which 100% was scanned.

The flot contains frequent fine modern roots and other plant material. Charcoal is present, including fragments of >4mm, which are in very good condition and may be identifiable to species. Three fragments of charred grain were observed, two of which were tentatively identified as barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.). However, the condition made positive identification impossible. The third may be oat (*Avena sativa*). A number of charred seeds are present; overall these are in a good state of preservation. They include a single cleaver (*Galium aparine*), and a small number of wild turnip (*Brassica rapa*) as well as cinquefoil seeds (*Potentilla* sp.), the remaining seeds were not identified. A single legume is also present.

C.1.4 Discussion

The condition of the material within this flot is generally good, with the charcoal being in a very good state of preservation. The cultivated material is in poorer condition which may indicate that it is either residual or less able to withstand the heating process than the denser wild seeds. The charred seeds identified within the flot are largely native wild plants commonly found in areas around cultivation.

C.1.5 Conclusions and recommendations

While the charred grains were in poor condition the other charred seeds and charcoal were well



preserved, but with such a mixed assemblage the origin of the deposit is unclear. Any future excavation of the site should include standard 40L bulk samples for charred plant remains, bones and small artefacts and should be in accordance with the most recent sampling guidelines (e.g; OA 2005, English Heritage 2002).



APPENDIX D. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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APPENDIX E. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Hadden Hill, Didcot
Site code:	DIHA14
Grid reference:	SU5411 8988
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	3 rd to 11 th February 2014
Area of site:	2.7 Hectares

Summary of results: Bovis Homes commissioned an 18 trench evaluation in response to a design brief by Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Council. Twenty-two trenches were originally proposed in the WSI, but four had to be abandoned entirely, and several others shortened or relocated, due to surface water inundation. The site is c 2.7 hectares in extent and is situated on the eastern edge of Didcot parish, bounded to the south by the Great Western Railway and to the north by the A4130 Hadden Hill (SU 5411 8988).

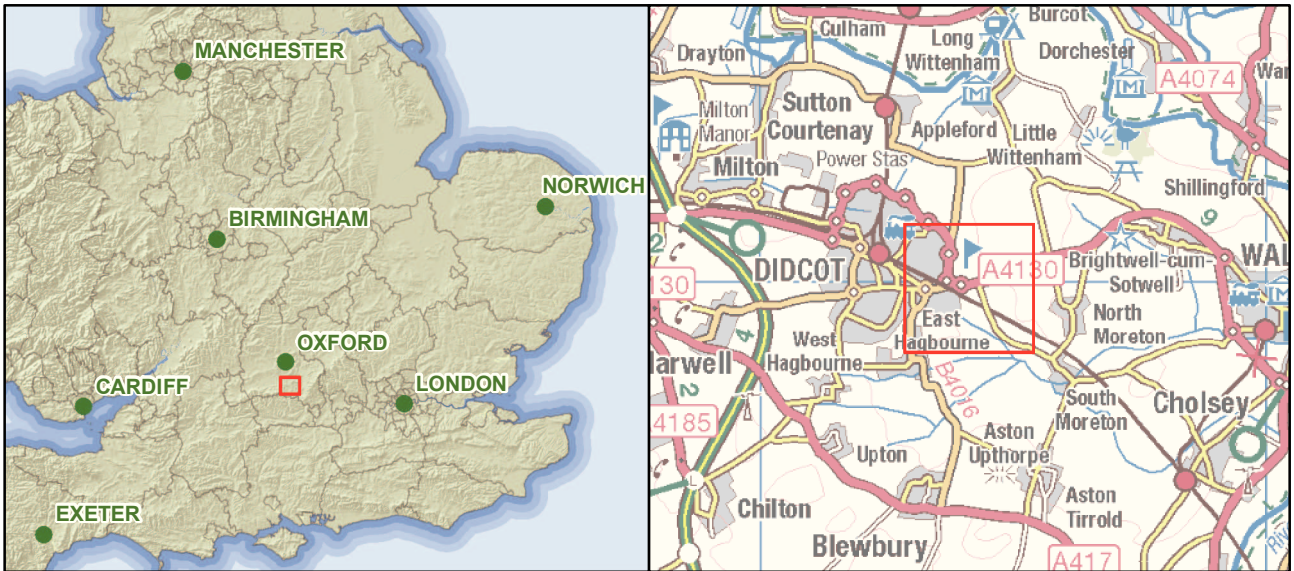
The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, in particular for Bronze Age remains. Evidence for Bronze Age settlement and a series of linear ditches was excavated in 1991 under the adjacent Wallingford Road Tesco superstore (PRN 15646, Ruben and Ford 1992). A flint knife of Bronze Age type was reportedly found in 1950 during excavation of a pond within the site (PRN 9633). As part of the evaluation a trench was cut through the pond spoil heap in the hope of finding further artefacts. A single worked flint, which is thought most likely to be a crudely made chopper of Middle or Late Bronze Age date, was recovered from the base of the spoil heap.

Very few definite archaeological finds and features of any date *were* found in the evaluation. The only three cut features identified included a pit in Trench 15, and a ditch and ditch terminal in Trench 21. The pit contained fired clay fragments and charred plant remains which may be waste material raked from an oven. As these features are all undated they could equally be outlying features of the Wallingford Road Tesco Bronze Age site or agricultural features of more recent date.

Lidar data shows ridge-and-furrow (the traces of medieval and post-medieval 'open field' cultivation) throughout the evaluation area, which were clearly visible on the ground as significant earthworks.

The potential for extensive significant discoveries within the site appears to be low. It is likely that occasional outlying elements of the known Bronze Age site under the adjacent Tesco superstore could extend into the proposed development site. However the very limited archaeological remains encountered in the trenches are of no more than local significance.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS : 2014.10



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Figure 1: Site location

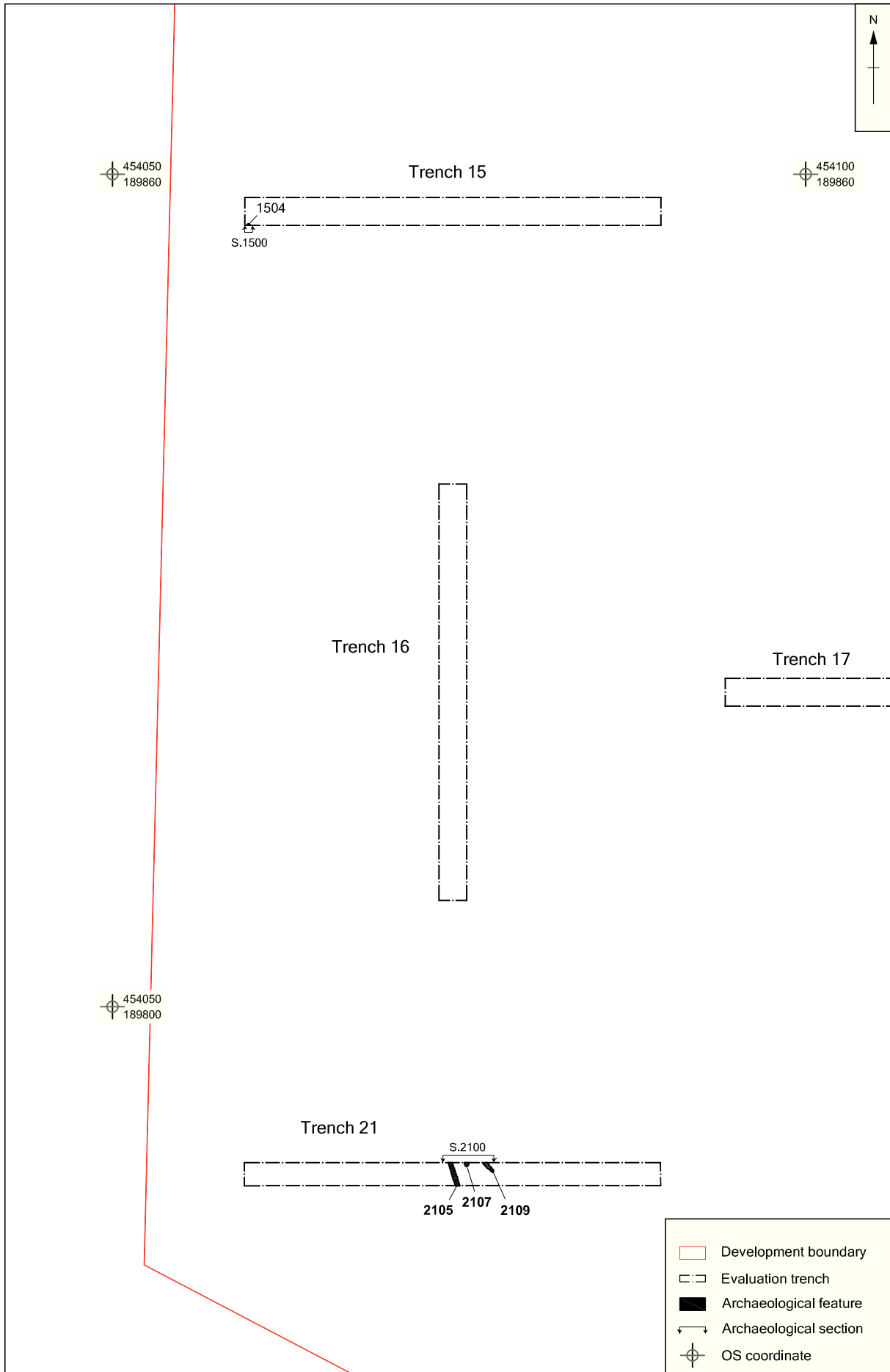


X:\vd\dicot - Hadden Hill_eval\010\Geomatics\03 GIS\current\001_projects\DHAEV_Fig2_010514.mxd\leo.heatley\06/05/2014

0 50 m
1:1,000 @ A4

Figure 2: Trench location plan

X:\d\didcot - Hadden Hill_eval\010\Geomatics\02 CAD\001\current\Hadden_Hill_Didcot_2014-05-01.dwg (Figure 3) *D\HA14*D\HAEV*Hadden Hill_Didcot*loc.heatley* 06 May 2014



0 20 m
Scale at A4 1:400

Figure 3: Detail plan showing features in trenches 15 and 21

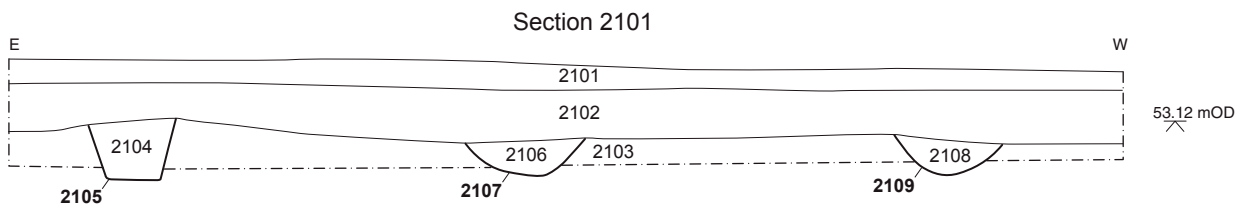
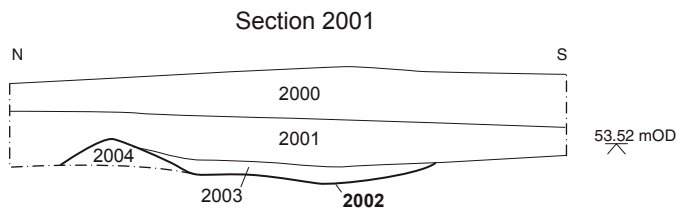
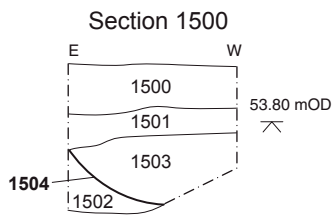
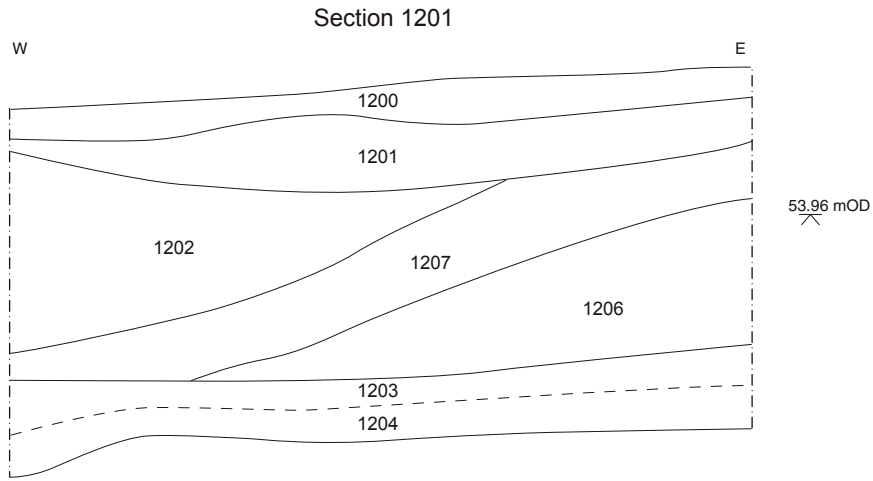


Figure 4: Trenches 12, 15, 20, 21 section drawings

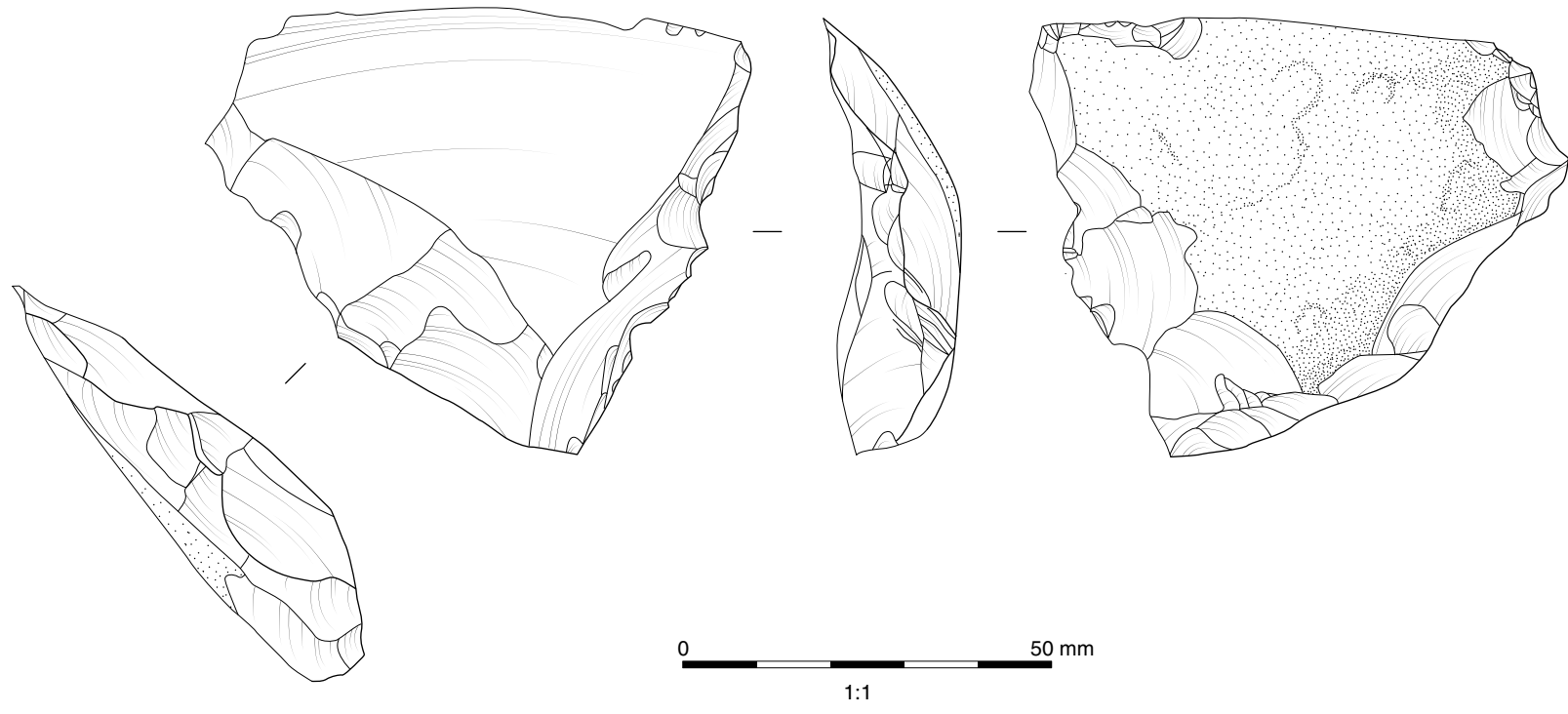


Figure 5: Worked flint from Trench 12 (context 1205)



Plate 1: Trench 12. Section 1200, representative section



Plate 2: Trench 15. Section 1500, pit 1504



Plate 3: Trench 20 – Section 2001, representative section



Plate 4: Trench 9. Representative view of plough furrows



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