



Archaeological Field Unit

**An Archaeological Evaluation at Land Adjacent to
Parkway, Hinchingsbrooke, Cambridgeshire**

Taleyna Fletcher and Mark Hinman

March 2004

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. 709

Commissioned by D.H. Barford & Co.

**An Archaeological Evaluation at Land Adjacent to Parkway,
Hinchingsbrooke, Cambridgeshire**

(TL 223 722)

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March 2004

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SUMMARY

Between 1st and 3rd March 2004 the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) undertook an evaluation by means of trial trenching on land adjacent to Parkway, Hinchingsbrooke (TL 223 722). The work was commissioned by D.H. Barford & Co. on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council in advance of the proposed sale of land for residential development.

Extensive remains of predominantly Iron Age and Romano-British date have previously identified and excavated by the AFU on land adjacent to the southern, western and northern boundaries of this development area as part of the Bob's Wood project. Archaeological remains identified by the evaluation included one small heavily truncated pit of possible Bronze Age origin (c.2000BC) in the north-eastern corner of the development area and a similarly sized feature dateable to the later Iron Age (c.100BC) within the south-western corner.

A small, artefactually sterile pit was located within the north-western corner of the site. Previous evaluation within the same area identified three other pits with similar fills, one of which contained the poorly preserved remains of a horse skull which had been covered by sherds of Early Bronze Age Beaker style pottery. No other remains of this type have so far been identified during the extensive Bob's Wood excavations and any associations between horses and Beaker pottery remain a high priority for studies of the period.

Later features related to post-medieval agriculture, including elements of a ridge and furrow field system.

The relative paucity of archaeological remains within the current area is probably due to the location of this part of the site on the north facing slope of a hill with an underlying heavy boulder clay geology. These factors combined with heavy ploughing in the post-medieval and modern periods explain both the degree of truncation of surviving remains and the low density of features.

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An Archaeological Evaluation at Land Adjacent to Parkway, Hinchingsbrooke, Cambridgeshire

1 INTRODUCTION

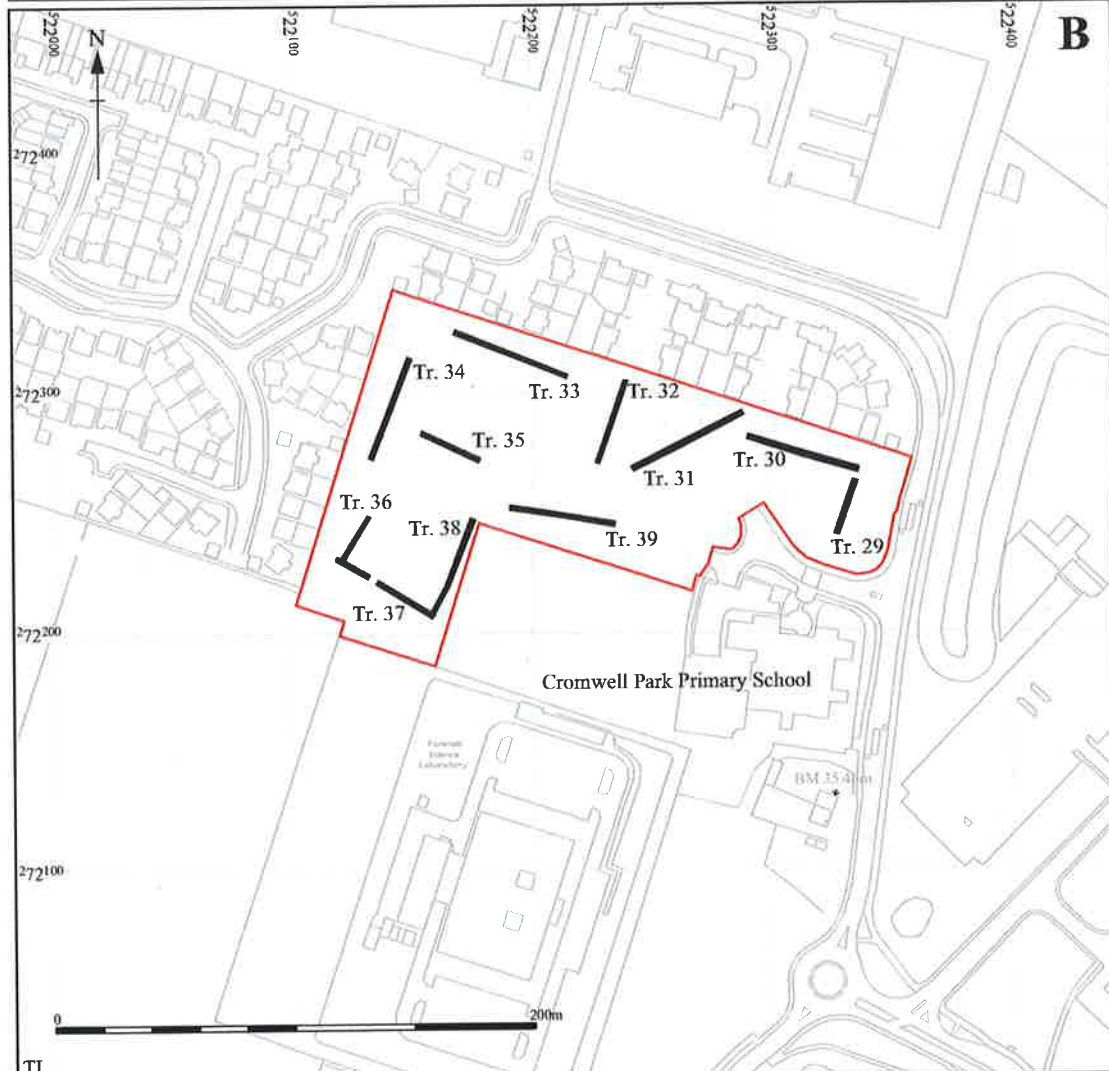
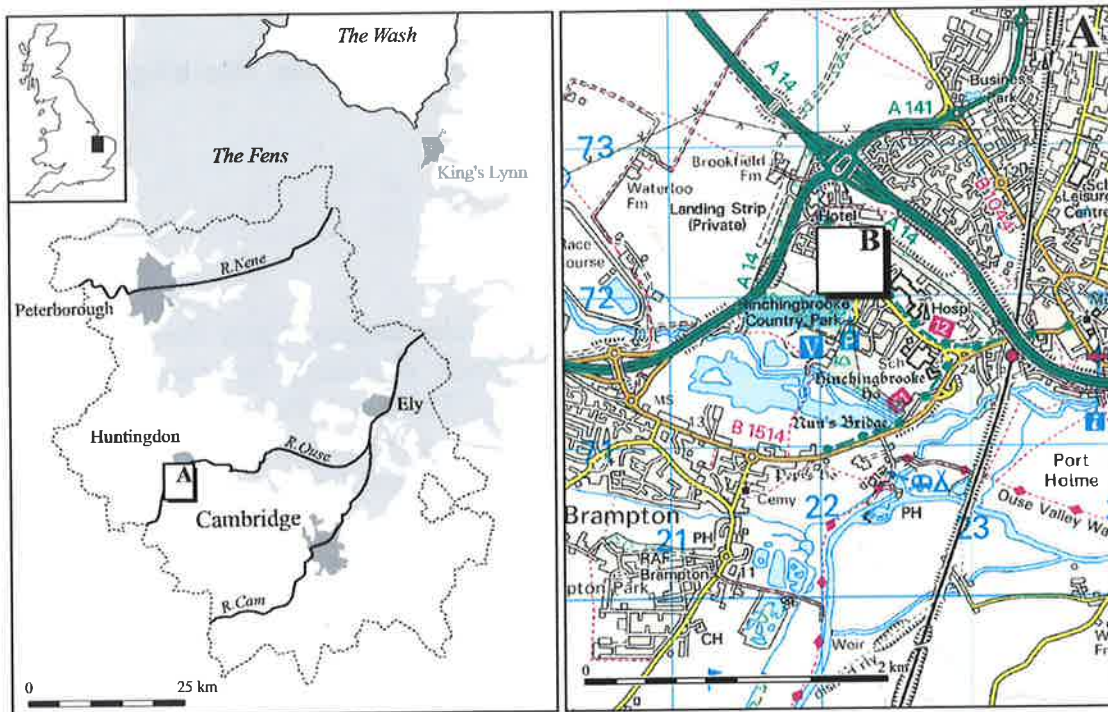
Between 1st and 3rd March 2004 the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council undertook evaluation by means of trial trenching on 1.8ha of land adjacent to Cromwell Park Primary School, Parkway, Hinchingsbrooke. The work was commissioned by D.H. Barford & Co. on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), in advance of the proposed sale of the subject site. The project was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Office (Thomas 2003).

Eleven trenches (Trenches 29-39) totalling 435m in length and 2m wide were excavated within the bounds of the development area providing a 5% sample of the site. Archaeological features were recorded in Trenches 29, 36, 37 and 38. A ridge and furrow system was identified predominantly in Trenches 29, 30, 31 and 32. Trenches 31 and 32 contained parallel, modern linear features and Trenches 33, 34 and 35 contained no archaeological features other than post-medieval ceramic field drains.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site lies to the south-west of Huntingdon on high ground north of Alconbury Brook within the Ouse Valley. It is positioned on the north-facing slope of a hill and is located on Boulder Clay overlooking the alluviated terrace gravels of the Great Ouse valley in the Brampton area.

The hill upon which the site is situated appears as a solitary, upstanding geological feature at the juncture of three broad valleys (Fig.1). The importance of these valleys is witnessed by the range of prehistoric and later sites in the vicinity (see Section 4). The rivers and later roadways (including Ermine Street and the A14) serve to emphasise the strategic location of the site at this ancient transport intersection.



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Figure 1 Location of trenches with development area outlined.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 By Period

3.1.1 *Prehistoric (general)*

The major river systems within Cambridgeshire have been the focus for much of the prehistoric activity within the county. The results of aerial photographic studies and excavations have shown the Ouse Valley to be particularly rich in such remains. Palaeolithic remains have been found within the terrace gravels of the river system. Mesolithic and Neolithic finds appear to be sparse in comparison to the later Neolithic and Bronze Age. To the west of the subject site lies the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age ceremonial complex of Brampton (SAM 121).

3.1.2 *Neolithic*

Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age remains (SAM 121), have been recorded to the west of the site in Brampton. Neolithic monuments within this complex include henges, a cursus and a long mortuary enclosure. These monuments are considered to form a ceremonial complex (Malim 2000). A Neolithic mortuary enclosure at the end of a cursus, forming part of this complex was investigated in 1990-1991 (Malim 1990).

A series of parallel ditches interpreted as Neolithic territorial markers or field systems was found during an archaeological excavation on Thrapston Road itself which is situated 2km south-west of the subject site (Malim and Mitchell 1993).

Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age field systems and an enclosure were revealed 2km to the west of the subject site at Huntingdon Racecourse in 1993 (Macaulay 1993; Last and Macaulay unpubl.). The enclosure ditch discovered here contained a series of placed deposits including a broken quernstone and sherds of Neolithic pottery.

Another ceremonial complex was discovered on the south side of the Ouse, 3km to the south-east of the subject site at Rectory Farm, Godmanchester (McAvoy forthcoming). This site was investigated by English Heritage during 1989-91 and revealed evidence for a large atypical trapezoidal ditched enclosure with standing timber posts within. A cursus, some secondary enclosures and a number of ring ditches were also found.

Excavation on the Bob's Wood project (Hinman 1997a and b; 2000) immediately south and west of the proposed development area, produced a range of lithic artefacts including flakes, tools and an arrowhead (barbed and tanged) as well as a single pit containing structured deposits of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age ceramics, lithics, animal bone and stone.

3.1.3 Bronze Age

The area surrounding the site is similarly rich in Bronze Age remains. A Bronze Age triple ring ditch (SMR 02117) was uncovered during excavations immediately east of Thrapston Road in 1966 before the construction of the Miller Way housing estate (White 1969).

A small pit containing fragments of Bronze Age Beaker pottery including fragments of charcoal and burnt bone was uncovered during an archaeological assessment on the area south of Thrapston Road (SMR 11176) during September 1993.

Bronze Age field systems and a Bronze Age round barrow (burial monument) were uncovered during excavations at Huntingdon Racecourse (Macaulay 1993), situated 2km west of the site.

Evaluation in advance of the new Parkway School development highlighted a presence during the Bronze Age which, perhaps significantly, includes a number of pits, one of which contained a series of placed or structured deposits.

3.1.4 Iron Age

A number of Iron Age sites have been identified within a 5 mile radius of the subject site. Iron Age finds have been located within Huntingdon including Scored ware pottery dating from the Middle to Late Iron Age, including Watersmeet, Huntingdon (Cooper and Sperry 2000).

A rectilinear enclosure containing two circular huts with eavesdrop gullies was discovered as part of SAM 121, just 1.5km south-west of the subject site during an excavation in 1966 (White 1969).

A roundhouse and associated ditched field systems were uncovered during excavations on the western half of White's site on the south-west corner of Thrapston Road in 1992 (Malim and Mitchell 1993).

A series of Iron Age farmsteads have been located at intervals along the gravel terrace in Godmanchester, 3km from the subject site (Green 1977).

Significant Iron Age remains were uncovered from the area immediately adjacent to the current site (Hinman 1997a and b; 2000) the findings of which are summarised below.

3.1.5 Romano-British

The proximity of Godmanchester, 3km to the south-east of the development site, is significant since this town was a major focus for settlement during this period.

Inskip Ladds (Proby, Page and Ladds 1932), Dickinson (various unpub. manus.) and Green (1977) have all in the past attempted to locate the line of Ermine Street between Godmanchester and the northern edge of Huntingdon. For the purposes of this study it is assumed that Ermine Street lies close by and to the east.

A Roman villa with an ornamental pond was investigated in the 1970s and 1980s (Green unpublished) and between 1990-92 (McAvoy forthcoming) at Rectory Farm, Godmanchester, 3km to the south-east of the present site. A cremation cemetery was found associated with this villa.

A Roman farm was discovered in Brampton in 1991 (Malim 2000), as part of A14 salvage excavations.

A number of Roman coins and miscellaneous metalwork have been recovered adjacent to the southern boundary of the subject site in recent years. The coins are predominantly of 3rd to 4th century origin although a number of late 1st and early 2nd century issues are also known.

3.1.6 *Anglo-Saxon*

The borough of Huntingdon to the west of the site is thought to have originated during the Anglo-Saxon period. It is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle for AD656 as '*Huntedune-porte*'. No activity from the period has yet been identified within the immediate area of the subject site.

3.1.7 *Medieval/Post-Medieval*

There are a number of sites of note in the vicinity which include a medieval bridge, recorded to the south-east of Hinchingbrooke House (SMR 2589). The SMR map shows a medieval church and churchyard (SMR 2655) to the north-west of the site and the SMR documents one piece of medieval pottery discovered on the subject site itself (SMR 9963).

The subject site is located within the boundaries of the former estate of Hinchingbrooke House, previously the site of the Benedictine nunnery of St James. The origins of the nunnery at Hinchingbrooke are unclear. It was claimed at the time of the Dissolution that the nunnery had been founded by William the Conqueror. In the 16th century, however, Leland (in Page, Proby and Ladds 1932) claimed that the house was in fact founded by the Benedictine nuns of Eltisley who moved here in the early 13th century. The situation is complicated, although for the purposes of this study it is sufficient to note that the earliest surviving structural elements are dateable to c.1100 (Dickinson 1972) and the first record of a building on the site comes in 1228 (Haigh 1988).

Between the suppression of the nunnery in 1538 and 1627 the house was largely rebuilt and extended by the Cromwell family. Following a serious fire

in 1830 the house was restored and rebuilt by Blore, with further restoration undertaken in 1894 and the 1960s (*op. cit.*).

In the post-medieval period the proposed development area was used for arable farming. The remnants of ridge and furrow field systems were identified during archaeological works in 1997, 2000 and again during the recent evaluation. Furthermore, up-standing remnants of the ridge and furrow have been noted as surviving within the bounds of Bob's Wood which is a part of the Country Park.

3.2 Previous Investigations in the Immediate Area (Fig. 3)

The first phase of evaluation, which took place between 21st and 31st January 1997 involved the cutting of 16 trenches, total length 900m, identified remains relating to Middle Iron Age settlement to the west of the current development and a marked concentration of features datable to the Late Iron Age immediately adjacent to the northern limit of the study area.

As a result of this evaluation the AFU were commissioned to undertake the simultaneous excavation of two open areas (Area 1; 40m x 120m, and Area 2; c.30m x 20m), adjacent to the current development area (see below).

3.2.1 The 1997 Excavation

Area 1 (TL 219 / 723)

The earliest evidence of human activity took the form of a pit alignment running east to west and presumably extending to the west beyond the limit of the excavation. This alignment appeared to delineate an area to the south (at present unexcavated), upslope, towards the crest of the hill. The date at which this alignment was established remains unknown at present but it may well be associated with an as yet unidentified Bronze Age or Early Iron Age component to the site. The symbolic placement of the upper fore limb of a boar on the northern edge of the base of the largest of these pits appears to reinforce the importance of this boundary. At present it is unclear whether this pit alignment is defining the settlement boundary or performing some other role.

A shallow linear ditch 30m to the north (again undatable) which mirrored the pit alignment may have been contemporary or may represent evidence for another, possibly earlier, phase of boundary definition.

The pit alignment was truncated along its inner (southern) limit by a c.20m long ditch (dateable to the Middle Iron Age) with a defensive 'ankle breaking' profile. A placed deposit of a ritually? defaced quern base was revealed against the northern edge of this ditch at its western terminal end.

The final phase of boundary definition maintained the alignment of the previous phases. It took the form of a shallow unbroken ditch and truncated both of the earlier phases. Two currency bars were found placed against the

northern edge of this ditch lying parallel to each other with the socketed ends pointing to the east.

The placement of symbolic deposits in the same location throughout all three phases of boundary definition was likely to have been influenced by the local topography although further work is required to illustrate this point.

The southern and eastern limits of this settlement core have been identified as present within the area of the 2003 Bob's Wood excavations.

Certain additional ditches which were undatable due to a lack of artefactual evidence were located towards the southern limit of the site. The north to south alignment of the largest of these ditches was mirrored by the alignment of later ditches to the north that were securely datable to the Middle Iron Age. The paucity of domestic debris within certain of these ditches could be seen to imply a peripheral position to the settlement core during a particular phase in the development of the site. The considerable quantity and diversity of the ceramic and faunal assemblages within adjacent features is an initial indication that more than one phase of activity was represented within the excavation area and may well be seen as evidence for a shift in the settlement core over time.

Area 2 (TL 223 / 723)

Enclosure ditches associated with a separate Late Iron Age settlement were also revealed at the eastern limit of the area, within 30m of the northern limit of the current development.

Due to the limited area available for excavation there is little that can be said about the nature of the settlement revealed in this area. The large quantities of pottery and other domestic debris recovered during excavation were clearly indicative of habitation in the immediate vicinity. The types of pottery recovered were also of significant interest as they form a uniform Late Iron Age assemblage of pre-conquest date, a period highlighted as a research priority by ceramic specialists (J.D. Hill pers. comm.).

3.2.2 *The 2000 investigations*

Evaluation took place between the 27th March and 20th April 2000 and involved the cutting of a total of 20 separate trenches of total length 1750.5m covering an area of roughly 8.5ha to the south-west of the current development area. This evaluation identified marked concentrations of settlement related features datable to the Later Iron Age and Roman periods.

New School Site

The New School site to the immediate south of the current area of investigation included limited investigation of the current development area. Trial trenching revealed a group of pits, one of which contained the poorly preserved remains of a horse's skull placed on a collection of cobbles and covered with Beaker style pottery (see below). The pit group is located within

the current development area, within a trench which extended from the new school site evaluation in 2000 (Hinman and Cooper 2001). The evaluation also identified a continuation of the ridge and furrow system in this area.

Following the evaluation of the new school site immediately to the south of the current development area, a second phase of investigation was undertaken by the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (Crank 2001). The features identified during the excavation matched those of the evaluation. No additional features were found.

3.2.3 *Bob's Wood Excavations (2000 and 2003)*

The AFU was commissioned by Twigden Homes to conduct the archaeological excavation of c.8.5 hectares of land adjacent to Bob's Wood, Hinchingbrooke in advance residential development on the land.

Iron Age Settlement

Between 200 and 50BC, in the Middle to Late Iron Age, boundary ditches were established on the hilltop and a settlement was placed in the north-western corner of the site. Many of the ditches were used to define irregular fields linked by drove ways and tracks, all of which were laid out to enable the control of livestock. Cattle were the predominant species although sheep were present in significant numbers too. Dog, horse and pig bones were also found.

During the Late Iron Age large enclosures were incorporated into the existing field pattern. These enclosures were initially small and rounded but became more regular and rectangular with time. Their layout suggested that they were originally intended to provide more effective control of livestock but, as time went by, segregation for controlled breeding (probably of cattle) was introduced. This specialisation seems to have reached its peak at around the time of the Claudian invasion. The site looks down on Ermine Street which was built by the invading Roman forces between AD42-43. The availability of a surplus of meat 'on the hoof' combined with a ready market of hungry soldiers may have been the result of careful planning and negotiation before the invasion rather than a happy coincidence. The local inhabitants seem to have been able to maintain their previously high living standards, using their wealth to purchase luxuries such as olive oil from Spain, wine from Italy and the latest tableware in the distinctive gallo-belgic style, often referred to as the Aylesford-Swarling group.

Eleven roundhouses which were built at intervals throughout this period were excavated, although only the drainage gullies which collected water from the eaves survived. One large pit contained a complete dog skeleton and what appears to be the burnt remains of a meal.

The early Romano-British Period

By the late 1st century AD the ditchwork of the large enclosures had silted up but was still maintained for drainage purposes. The big enclosures gave way to smaller paddocks, while fences and an aisled building were built, the house

being supplied by cisterns dug to store water. The occupants moved out of the roundhouses and into the new rectangular building, near which a selection of well-used cooking pots and kitchenware was found.

In the later 1st century AD a more formalised settlement was integrated into the stock enclosures and the inhabitants moved out of their roundhouses and into a new aisled building. Cremation became the dominant form of mortuary practice in the Late Iron Age in this part of Britain, a Romanised tradition that persisted into the 2nd century AD. A small cemetery, possibly used by a single family, was laid out within the main enclosure opposite the aisled building at this time.

Animal bones suggest that many horses were kept in the paddocks. At around the time the small fields went out of use, a horse was buried with a quern made from puddingstone.

The later Romano-British Period

The late 2nd to 3rd centuries AD saw the return to the practice of digging large ditched enclosures, while a substantial pond and other features designed to aid drainage and water management were incorporated into the enclosure system. Another new house was built within the centre of the settlement during the 2nd century AD. This would have been a timber-framed building and appears to have had a stone-built front porch. It was centrally heated and its rooms were decorated with plastered panels painted in red, white and green. The cemetery continued in use although there was a change in burial practice from cremation to inhumation.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Aerial Photographic Assessment

Aerial photographic assessment has not been carried out. Previous experience of these techniques on this area has proven that the heavy clay soils do not provide ideal circumstances for producing cropmark data.

4.2 Geophysical Survey

Consultation with Peter Masters of Pre-Construct Geophysics confirmed that the site was unsuitable for the application of remote sensing techniques.

4.3 Sites and Monuments Record

In order to provide a context for the evaluation a desk-based assessment of currently accessible sources relating to archaeological sites and finds spots within a 5km radius of the subject site was undertaken.

The known archaeological resource was investigated through Cambridgeshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), Huntingdon Records Office and information, including maps and past publications held at the AFU's headquarters in Fulbourn.

4.4 Trial Trenching

Eleven trenches (Trenches 29-39) totalling 435m in length x 2 m wide (5 % sample) were excavated within the bounds of the development area (Fig. 2). The trench design was approved by the Development Control Officer from Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Office (CAO), and was determined by the location of the live sewer and water pipes. Two trenches from the 2000 New School Site evaluation (Hinman and Cooper 2001) extended into the investigation area of this evaluation, these trenches were numbered 26 and 28. Trench 28 on a north-east to south-west orientation was 51m in length and contained no archaeological features. Trench 26 contained three pits, discussed in greater detail below (Section 5). Given the known location of these pits, Trench 29 was cut to establish the density and nature of activity in this corner of the site as part of the current scheme of works. All trenches were opened using a 360° tracked excavator with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket.

The trenches were numbered from 29 to 39 to avoid confusion with earlier evaluations on the Bob's Wood site during 2000 (Trenches 1-20; Hinman 2000) and the New School Site (Trenches 21-28; Hinman and Cooper 2001).

Relative artefact densities across the area were examined through controlled visual scanning of the spoil heaps generated through trenching.

Excavation of all surviving deposits and features was conducted to characterise the nature and extent of the surviving archaeological remains. Digital photographs were taken, plan and section drawings made where appropriate and environmental samples were taken.

4.5 Recording

All deposits were recorded using the AFU's single context system. Trench locations were surveyed using a Leica Total Station Theodolite whilst the individual trench plans showing feature locations were hand drawn, at a scale of 1:50 prior to incorporation with the surveying data.

In line with previous phases of work on the Hinchbrooke site extant registers were utilised for all context, environmental, plan/section registers *etc.* in order to avoid duplication of unique key numbers within the bounds of the archaeological site as distinct from the development area.

All site records and artefacts are held currently at the AFU headquarters at Fulbourn and stored under the site code STU PAR 04.

5 RESULTS

This evaluation has demonstrated the presence of archaeological remains in the north-eastern and south-western extremes of the development area. The results of the recent evaluation are presented below by period. A full context list (Appendix 1) and trench plans (Figs 2 and 3) are provided.

5.1 Trenches with no archaeological remains

Trenches 33, 34, 35, and 39 contained no archaeologically significant remains.

5.2 Neolithic/Bronze Age (Trench 29)

Trench 29 was 24m in length and aligned approximately north to south. One archaeological feature was identified. Pit **1558** extended into the western limit of excavation, had a maximum depth of 0.14m with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. The fill (1557) contained occasional charcoal flecks and was a mid greyish brown colour. Although the date of the feature could not be established directly the similarity of the fill with those of features previously recorded suggests that it may be contemporary and therefore associated with a group of features excavated during the New School Evaluation.

During evaluation a group of three pits (**2246**, **2250** and **2252**) was identified in the northern end of Trench 26. Pit **2250** was sub-circular in plan with a concave base and was 0.51m deep and 1.10m wide. This pit contained three fills which produced a small quantity of hand made pottery, animal bone and occasional lithics. It contained a series of apparently structured deposits consisting of a collection of flint cobbles with a horse skull placed on top, overlain with a layer of Beaker pottery. Unfortunately both the skull and the pottery were both extremely poorly preserved and only a few teeth from the horse and several small fragments of pottery survived excavation. The flintwork consisted of several abraded flakes the condition of which suggested that they were residual, possibly curated. Environmental Sample 141, taken from fill 2248, contained fragments of charcoal, much of which was heavily vitrified and one fragment of a cereal grain.

Pit **2252** was oval in plan with concave sides and was 0.65m wide and 0.15m deep. It contained a single fill (2251) which consisted of a light greyish brown sandy clay silt. This fill produced a single poorly preserved fragment of animal bone.

Pit **2246** was oval in plan with concave sides and was 0.75m wide and 0.23m deep. It contained a single fill (2245) and did not contain any finds.

Similarity of feature fill, size and shape suggests that these features were probably broadly contemporary with pit **1558**.

5.3 Middle Iron Age (Trenches 37 and 38)

Evidence of activity from this period was identified by a pit located at the intersection of Trenches 37 and 38 in the south-west corner of the site. This feature (1552) measured 1.15m in length, was 0.60m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.20m with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. The pit contained two fills (1150 and 1151) with the upper fill, rich in charcoal flecks, producing one small piece of a human tibia, one small lump of fired clay with flint inclusions, likely to be a fragment of oven lining, and a single broken sherd of pottery. The pottery dates the feature to the Middle to Late Iron Age, making this the only datable feature found in this evaluation.

The New School evaluation identified a possible ditch terminal or pit (2201) and an irregular shaped pit (2204) at the southern end of Trench 21. No artefacts were recovered although pottery from the subsequent excavations (Crank 2001) confirmed the Iron Age date and extent of the ditch.

The identification of a range of features of Middle to later Iron Age date accords well with the results of the Bob's Wood excavations and serves to highlight a dispersed presence across the hilltop during the period.

5.4 Post-Medieval (Trenches 29, 30, 31 and 32)

The evaluation revealed evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation in the post-medieval period, as remnants of furrows were identified in Trenches 29, 30, 31 and 32. Trench 30 in particular revealed an alignment of four furrows, each approximately 1m wide and 6m apart, on a north-south alignment, representing part of the same system identified on the Bob's Wood excavations and also identified during the excavation on the Cromwell Park Primary School site (Crank 2001). The trenches in which ridge and furrow survived were all on the eastern side of the site. This may suggest that the remainder of the area was not suitable for cultivation, and considering that the land does appear to slope off more in this area and there is a greater concentration of field drains here, that this area was prone to holding water.

5.5 Undated Features (Trenches 36 and 37)

The western end of Trench 37 revealed a deposit of burnt material (1556). The trench was then extended to the north (as Trench 36), to expose the feature in full. This feature was an irregular shape in plan, 1.80m in length, 0.85m wide with a maximum depth of 0.20m. The fill was a mixture of a bright orange and very dark brown material with a brighter more reddish deposit in the centre, characteristic of *in situ* burning. No finds were retrieved from this feature, and its irregular shape in plan indicated that it was perhaps a natural feature such as a burnt tree bole. An environmental sample (Sample 650) was taken, which upon analysis proved to contain only small pieces of unworked burnt flint.

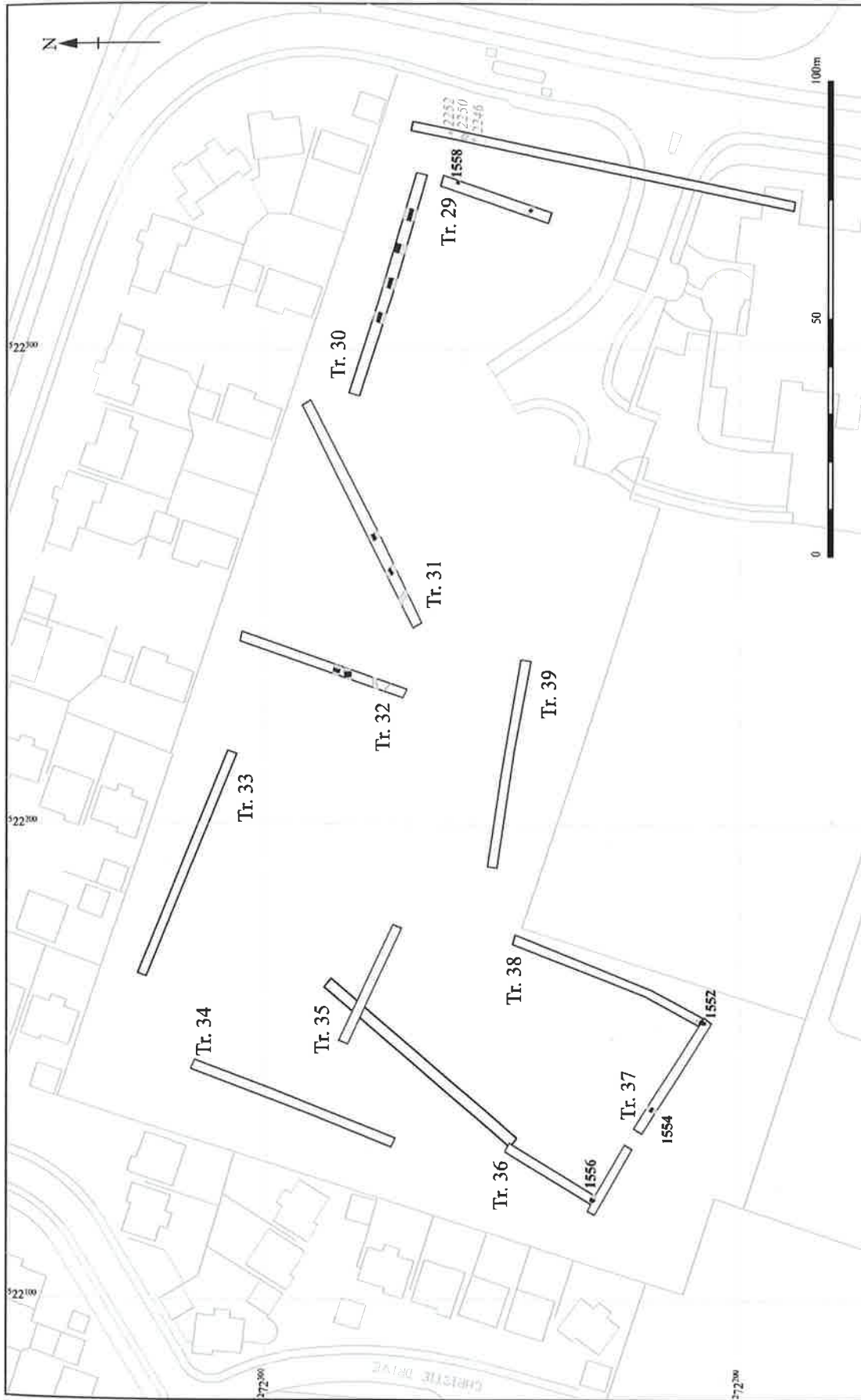


Figure 2 Detailed trench plan with two 2000 evaluation trenches (grey)

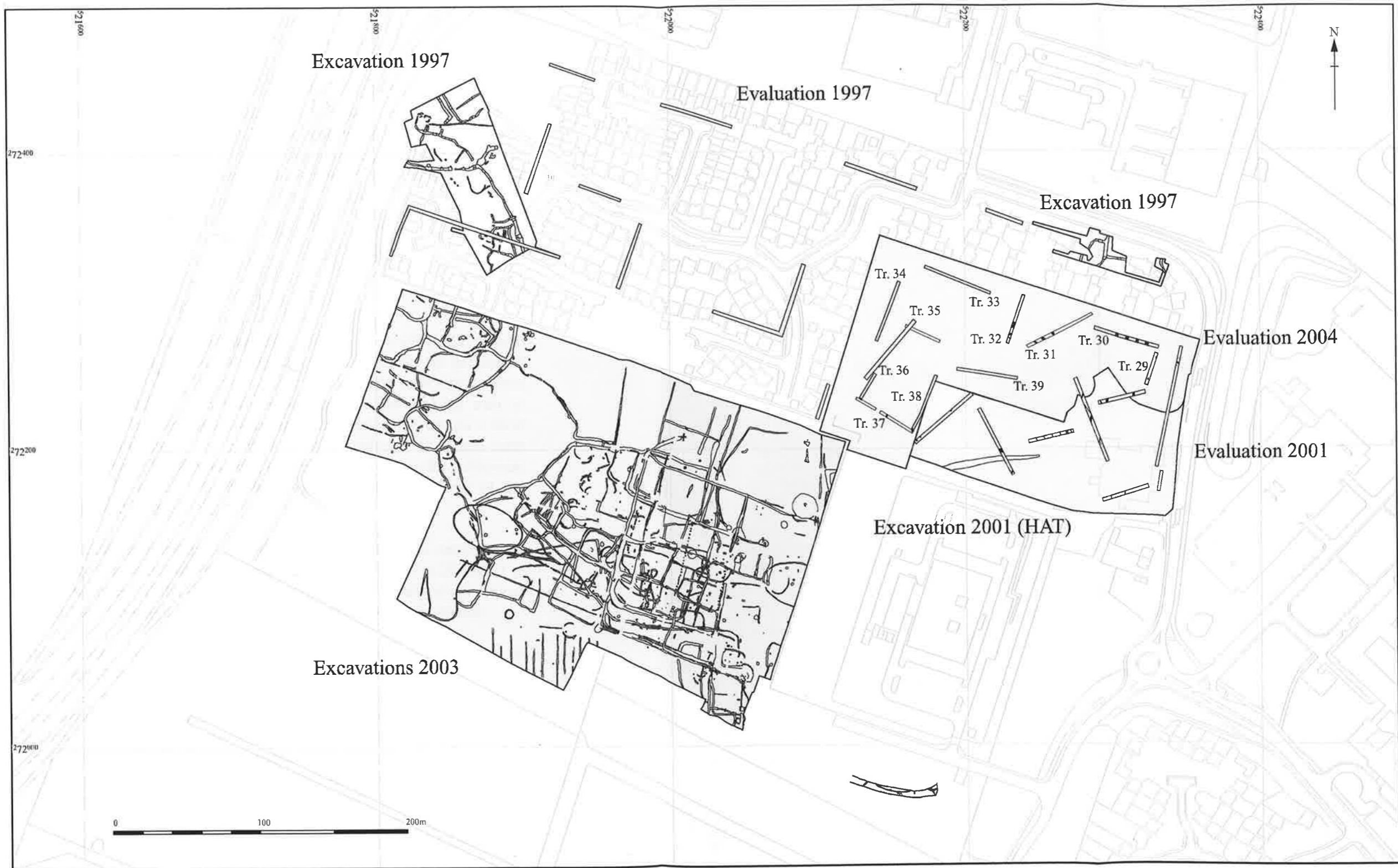


Figure 3 Archaeological investigations at Hinchingsbrooke

Trench 37 contained a north to south aligned linear feature (**1554**), 0.80m wide with a maximum depth of 0.20m which, due to its bright orange sandy fill, was interpreted as a natural sand crack, a characteristic of the natural geology of the area.

5.6 Modern Features (Trenches 31 and 32)

Two parallel ditches were recorded in Trenches 31 and 32. These ditches were on a north-east to south-west alignment and contained no datable evidence other than fragments of field drain which were seen within the trench section. The ditches had a V shaped profile, steep on one side and less so on the other, with a rounded base, the fill was a very thick blueish grey clay with chalk flecks and occasional flint stones.

6 DISCUSSION

As a dominant feature of the local landscape, the hill upon which the subject site is located appears to have held some special significance for the peoples of early prehistory. The location of the site is particularly interesting when considered topographically. The surrounding area is particularly rich in Neolithic and Bronze Age remains including a number of the region's most notable ceremonial monuments and centres of ritual activity. Evidence from previous work suggested that this hillside provided the location for settlement from at least as early as the Middle Iron Age through to the end of the Romano-British period (Fig. 3).

Significant archaeological remains identified by the evaluation consisted of one small heavily truncated pit of possible Bronze Age origin (*c.*2000BC) in the north-eastern corner of the development area and a similarly sized feature dateable to the later Iron Age (*c.*100BC) within the south-western corner.

The possible Bronze Age pit was only dated by association with a group of three similar pits discovered on the site in 2000. The largest of these pits (**2250**) contained a series of structured deposits: the co-incidence here of horse remains and Beaker pottery are still extremely rare in Britain. Currently the earliest known examples are from New Grange in Ireland and have been carbon dated to *c.*1900BC. Within the Anglia Region the only example from the period of which the authors are aware at the time of writing came from Grimes Graves in Norfolk and has been dated to *c.*1740 +/- 210BC (Glutton-Brock & Burleigh 1991; highlighted by Ian Baxter and Stuart Needham, pers comm.). It is highly likely that pit **2250** was originally excavated around the time that the horse is thought to have been re-introduced into Britain and carbon/accelerator dating is like to be a requirement for this feature and any similar features encountered during any forthcoming excavation.

A fragment of human tibia was recovered from Middle to Late Iron Age pit 1552. Such deposition is not uncommon in a range of feature types of this period. Unfortunately, the fragment from the JLP site is poorly preserved.

One possible explanation for the paucity of features dateable to the Late Iron Age and the surprising absence of Romano-British artefactual materials may be that the area currently under investigation had held some special significance to the earlier prehistoric peoples of the area, a significance that continued to be respected during the later Iron Age and Romano-British periods. Support for this idea may be gained by the presence of the pits dateable to the Bronze Age and Iron Age within Trenches 26 and 29.

Other more pragmatic explanations may include the possibility that this part of the hillside was unattractive for settlement, perhaps due to poor drainage or a relatively exposed location. Evaluation identified a similar absence of artefactual materials combined with a lack of any surviving archaeological features within the south western corner of the Bob's Wood site (Hinman 2000). Here the void in the archaeological record was attributed to poor drainage and soil conditions where the underlying boulder clay lay directly below the subsoil.

Environmental preservation was very poor and may be attributed to localised soil conditions on the side of the hill. Preservation within the Bob's Wood project to the south of the subject site was occasionally better. Localised soil conditions may well be the reason for the extremely poor preservation of the few artefactual remains recovered. Both pottery and bone had degraded to such a degree that only small fragments of both materials survived.

The relative paucity of archaeological remains within the current area is probably due to the location of this part of the site on the north facing slope of a hill with an underlying heavy boulder clay geology. These factors combined with heavy ploughing in the post-medieval and modern periods explain both the degree of truncation of surviving remains and the low density of features.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Synthesis of information gained as a result of this evaluation and the forthcoming results of the previous work nearby will present the opportunity to make significant advances in current understanding and interpretation of the development of the local landscape, particularly during the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age periods. It may be the case that the paucity of Roman and, to a lesser degree, Iron Age activity reflects the fact that this was the edge of the settlement in the Iron Age and Roman period.

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Appendix 1: Context List

Context	Cut	Trench	Category	Type	Length	Width/Diameter	Depth	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan
1550	1552	37	Fill	Pit	1.15	0.45	0.2	Brownish black	Silty clay	occasional flecks of charcoal. Pot, bone, oven lining frag.	
1551	1552	37	Fill	Pit	1.15	0.12	0.12	Light brown	Silty clay	Occasional charcoal flecks	
1552		37	Cut	Pit	1.15	0.6	0.2				Subcircular
1553	1554	37	Fill	Ditch	0.48	0.8	0.28	Light brown	Sandy clay		
1554		37	Cut	Ditch	0.48	0.8	0.28				Linear
1555	1556	36/37	Fill	Pit	1.8	0.85	0.2	Mixed dark orange and brown with reddish flecks	Silty clay	Occasional small stones and charcoal flecks, rare burnt flint	
1556		36/37	Cut	Natural	1.8	0.85	0.2				Irregular
1557	1558	29	Fill	Pit	0.38	0.47	0.14	Dark grey brown	Silty clay	occasional small stones, occasional charcoal flecks	
1558		29	Cut	Pit	0.38	0.47	0.14				Subcircular



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