



Land East of Didcot Road Harwell Oxfordshire Archaeological Evaluation Report

January 2021

Client: RPS Group Ltd

Issue No: V1
OA Reference No: 7734
NGR: SU 5043 8942



Client Name: RPS Group Ltd
Document Title: Land East of Didcot Road, Harwell, Oxfordshire

Document Type: Evaluation Report
Grid Reference: SU 5043 8942
Planning Reference: P17/V2777/O
Site Code: HADR20
Invoice Code: HADREV
Receiving Body: Oxfordshire County Museum
Accession No.: OXCMS: 2020.46
OA Document File Location: X:\o\Oxfordshire_Didcot_Road_Harwell_EV\Report
OA Graphics File Location: X:\o\Oxfordshire_Didcot_Road_Harwell_EV\Report

Issue No: V1
Date: 14.12.2020
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Land East of Didcot Road, Harwell, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

In September 2020 Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook a twelve-trench archaeological evaluation on behalf of RPS Group Ltd at the site of a proposed housing development at land east of Didcot Road, Harwell, Oxfordshire. The site lies just to the west of Didcot, which is a landscape rich in prehistoric, Roman and Saxon archaeology. The evaluation aimed to assess whether any activity extended into the site area.

Only two of the evaluation trenches contained archaeological remains in the form of two undated ditch systems and a potential pit. No finds were recovered, and features fills were found to be sterile. A few natural features and geological variations were also investigated as a precaution. The ditches appear to form part of undated field system and hint at low-level agricultural activity at the site, away from areas of settlement activity. Based on these results the archaeological potential of the site is considered to be low.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Matthew Smith from RPS Group Ltd for commissioning and monitored this project. Thanks also to Richard Oram, who monitored the work on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council, for his advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Carl Champness. The fieldwork was directed by Ben Attfield, who was supported by Ben MacAndrew and Tomasz Neyman, fieldwork archaeologists. Survey and digitizing were carried out by Conan Parsons. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Geraldine Crann and prepared the archive under the management of Nichola Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) has been commissioned by the RPS Group Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site of a proposed housing development. A program of twelve evaluation trenches was undertaken across the site representing a 2% sample of the development area.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref: 19/00831/OUT). A brief was set by Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to inform the planning process. The project's Written Scheme of Investigations (OA 2019) outlined how OA was to implement those requirements. This report outlines the result of the evaluation works.
- 1.1.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Guidance (CIfA 2014).

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site is located on the eastern side of Didcot Road, directly south of the Great Western Park urban extension, and to the immediate south of the modern built form of Didcot and c.300m of the village of Harwell. The site is centred on NGR SU 5043 8942 (Fig. 1).
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development consists of a single field under arable cultivation, surrounded by hedgerows, trees and agricultural fields. The geology of the area is mapped as Upper Greensand Formation, overlain by superficial head deposits to the west (www.bgs.ac.uk).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

Previous Archaeological work in the area

- 1.3.1 The site lies to the south of Great Western Park and west of a well-researched section of the Thames Valley (Morigi et al. 2011; Lambrick and Robinson 2009; Booth et al. 2007). Large numbers of excavations - as well as extensive cropmarks (Benson and Miles 1974; Fenner and Dyer nd; Small 2002) - lie within relatively short distances. It is impossible to summarise all the results of these investigations here. An attempt has, therefore, been made to highlight the most relevant nearby sites, emphasizing particularly Great Western Park and Didcot Power Station.
- 1.3.2 Within the area of Great Western Park three discoveries made are worthy of note. The first is a ring ditch, found during an evaluation near the western edge of Great Western Park (Cotswold Archaeology 2003a, 15). The second is the discovery of a hoard of 126 gold aurei, dated to c cal AD 160, by a metal-detectorist prior to the evaluation (Bland and Orna-Ornstein 1997). The third is the Roman villa, located on the top of the hill to the north.

- 1.3.3 Another close by excavations took place at Didcot Power Station (Boyle et al. 1995) which lies immediately to the north of the site. The earliest features found at the Power Station were two late Neolithic pits. Late Neolithic pottery was also recovered from ditches, but it appears likely that the ditches were Roman, as were other ditches on a slightly different alignment and further pits (although Lambrick and Robinson (2009, 79) suggest that the some of the ditches formed part of a middle Bronze Age field system). The major discoveries consisted of two sunken-featured buildings and 16 or 17 Anglo-Saxon graves.
- 1.3.4 More recently in 2019 evidence for a large Iron Age/Roman settlement was excavation just to the west of the power station. Again, evidence of late Roman or Anglo-Saxon burials were found during the excavation (OA 2020).

Archaeological and Historical background

- 1.3.5 The site does not contain any designated heritage assets, such as world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields or listed buildings.
- 1.3.6 There is little evidence of Mesolithic or Neolithic activity, although a few pieces of Mesolithic or early Neolithic worked flint were found in an evaluation to the north of Didcot (Leech 2015).
- 1.3.7 For the Bronze Age, the most significant finds are probably middle Bronze Age rectangular ditched enclosures, of at least two phases, possibly parts of wider field systems, at Wallingford Road, to the east of Didcot (Ruben and Ford 1992). Postholes were also found on the site although no structures could be discerned. Further evidence for middle or late Bronze Age activity, consisting of pits and ditches, was found in the east of Didcot, adjacent to Marsh Bridge Cottages (Fitzsimons et al. 2010). A large pit found in an evaluation to the north of Didcot was dated to the late Bronze Age (Leech 2015). Numerous other pits and ditches were found in this evaluation but apart from some Roman features, none could be dated. Evidence for Bronze Age activity has also been reported from land north of the A4130 although it seems likely that most of the features revealed are later in date (Duncan and Jones 2004).
- 1.3.8 Evidence for activity in the early Iron Age has been found at a number of locations in Didcot, which may, however, have been related to the same settlement: at the Rectory (South Midlands Archaeology 1982, 142-3; 1983, 124-5) and to the west of All Saints' Church (Chambers 1993). The contexts revealed include a probable ditched enclosure, other ditches and postholes, associated largely with pottery attributed to the early Iron Age. Further early Iron Age activity, including pits, postholes and a gully, have been reported from the south of Didcot, to the west of West Hagbourne (Pine 1999; South Midlands Archaeology 2000, 80).
- 1.3.9 Much more extensive evidence for activity in the late Iron Age and Roman period has been found. To the south-west during the Harwell to Blewbury Sewerage Pipeline found evidence for early Roman activity which is probably an extension of that at Great Western Park (Cotswold Archaeology 1998; Enright and Thomas 1999). Further evidence for Roman activity was found on the same pipeline between East and West Hagbourne (Cotswold Archaeology 1998). Within Didcot itself, further evidence of

Roman activity has been found west of All Saints' Parish Church (Chambers 1993) and at Blagrave Farm (South Midlands Archaeology 1975, 34; 1978, 118; 1979, 126; 1980, 174). The most extensive evidence comes from northeast Didcot, where traces of Roman activity have been found on the Ladygrove Estate (South Midlands Archaeology 1995, 50), in an evaluation to the north of the Ladygrove Estate (Leech 2015), on the Abingdon Road, (South Midlands Archaeology 2002, 40; Cotswold Archaeology 2001) and at Hadden Hill (Booth et al. 1993; South Midlands Archaeology 1992, 51). The finds in these locations include several phases of occupation, spanning the Roman period at Hadden Hill, evidence by ditches, gullies, pits and a posthole, trackways and field systems off the Abingdon Road, and poorly dated field systems in the Ladygrove Estate. Further evidence for Roman activity, consisting of ladder enclosures and field systems has been found along the A4130 in the north of Didcot (Duncan and Jones 2004; South Midlands Archaeology 1981, 119; 1982, 142).

- 1.3.10 The National Mapping Programme (Fenner and Dyer nd; Small 2002) has revealed extensive crop marks around Didcot, of which the field systems to the south and west of Didcot, around Great Western Park are of interest. Without the benefit of excavation, such features cannot be dated accurately, and whilst field systems to the north of Didcot, in the Thames Valley (eg Booth and Simmonds 2009; Thomas 1980) include extensive middle and late Bronze Age examples, it is possible, that like the field systems on the Berkshire Downs (Ford et al. 1988), those around Great Western Park are predominantly Roman in date.
- 1.3.11 In the wider region around Didcot it is worth highlighting a small number of the more significant sites. To the north, extensive excavations have taken place at Appleford Sidings (Booth and Simmonds 2009). These revealed a poorly dated Neolithic pit and extensive middle Bronze Age and Roman field systems as well as evidence of Roman settlement.
- 1.3.12 To the north-east lie Sutton Courtenay, Drayton and Milton where, alongside significant evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement and burial, a range of prehistoric evidence has been found. These include small early Mesolithic flint scatters at Bridge Farm Sutton Courtenay, the Drayton cursus and pits of various phases in the Neolithic; ring ditches at several sites, later Bronze Age field systems and a bustum burial, and sparse traces settlement throughout the Iron Age (Hamerow et al. 2007; Barclay et al. 2003; Poole and Booth 2017).
- 1.3.13 To the south, it is worth noting the hillfort at Blewburton Hill (Harding 1976). The hillfort and earlier enclosure as well as the associated late Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement evidence at the Wittenham Clumps lies a similar distance to the north-east (Allen et al. 2010).
- 1.3.14 During the medieval and post-medieval periods, the site appears to have comprised agricultural land, and has been in arable cultivation since then.

1.4 Site Potential

- 1.4.1 Given recent work at Great Western Park, the site was believed to have some potential for remains of prehistoric and Roman date, possibly of an agricultural nature, and also remains of medieval date to be present.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The evaluation aims and objectives were as follows:

- i. To evaluate the survival of archaeological deposits or features to gain information about the archaeological resource (including its presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation, quality and significance);
- ii. To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present;
- iii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence etc;
- iv. To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development;
- v. To assess vulnerability/sensitivity of any exposed remains;
- vi. To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence;
- vii. To provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable the archaeological implications of any proposed developments to be assessed;
- viii. To inform a strategy to avoid or mitigate impacts of any proposed development on surviving archaeological remains; and
- ix. To disseminate the results through the production of a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record.

2.1.2 The programme of archaeological investigation will be conducted within the general research parameters and objectives defined by 'Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment Resource Assessments and Research Agendas' (Hey and Hind 2014). Objective 12.2 of the Solent-Thames Research Framework has particular relevance concerning this site as it relates to the importance of investigating continuity between late Iron Age and early Roman sites.

2.2 Scope of works

2.2.1 A total of 12 trenches measuring 30m by 1.6m were laid out within the site on a standard grid array (Fig. 2). The trenches were located to provide a representative sample of the archaeological potential of the site in order to help inform any further mitigation strategies. Some modifications were made in the field in order to avoid overhead cables running across the site.

2.2.2 Each trench was excavated using an appropriate mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket under the direct supervision of an archaeologist. Spoil was stored adjacent to, but at a safe distance from trench edges. Machining continued in spits down to the top of the undisturbed natural geology or the first archaeological horizon depending upon which is encountered first. Once archaeological deposits were exposed, further excavation proceeded by hand and the appropriate use of a machine excavator.

2.2.3 The exposed surfaces were sufficiently cleaned to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains. A sample of each feature or deposit type were excavated and recorded. Excavation were sufficient to resolve the principal aims of the evaluation.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below and include a stratigraphic description of the trenches that contained potential features. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A.
- 3.1.2 Context numbers reflect the trench numbers unless otherwise stated e.g. 101 is a layer within Trench 1, while ditch 304 is a feature within Trench 3.

3.2 General soils and ground condition

- 3.2.1 The soils sequences in the trenches were fairly uniform. The natural geology of a pale whitish grey sandy silt with angular pieces of chalk was overlain by greyish sandy silt subsoil, sealed by modern topsoil/ploughsoil.
- 3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the trenches remained dry throughout. Archaeological/natural features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

- 3.3.1 Archaeological features were only present in two out of the twelve trenches – two undated ditches were identified in Trench 3 and two intercutting ditches and an undated pit (only partially exposed) in Trench 6. Natural tree-throw holes and areas of geological variation were investigated and confirmed in Trenches 7, 8 and 11. Trenches 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 12 did not produce any archaeological remains. The trenches with potential remains were further investigated through hand excavation and are described in more detail below:

3.4 Trench 3 (Figure 3; Plates 1 and 3)

- 3.4.1 Trench 3 produced the remains of two ditches 304 and 306, running northeast to southwest, and a field drain (Fig. 2). The soils sequence consisted of 0.3m thick topsoil (a brown silt with occasional angular pieces of chalk), overlain by a 0.15m thick, light grey silt subsoil on whitish grey sandy silt natural geology. The ditches were sealed underneath the subsoil.
- 3.4.2 Ditch 304 was flat bottomed and steeped sided, 1.82m wide and 0.33m deep (Fig 3; Plate 3). It was filled with a single sterile light grey silty fill 303, that produced no finds.
- 3.4.3 Ditch 306 had a concave base and gradual sloping sides, 1.40m wide and 0.2m deep (Fig. 3). Again, it was filled with a single brownish grey clayey silt fill 305, which produced no finds.

3.5 Trench 6 (Figure 4)

- 3.5.1 Trench 6 was found to contain two intercutting ditches 604 and 606, running east to west, and a rectangular pit 608 (Fig. 2). The soils sequence consisted of topsoil overlaying greyish sandy silt subsoil with frequent angular pieces of chalk and natural geology.

3.5.2 The earliest ditch 606 had a concave base with moderately steep sloping sides, 0.72m wide and 0.54m deep. It was filled with a single silty fill 605, which produced no finds. Ditch 604, cut or re-cut through the southwest edge of 606, and was filled with a similar, but less stony silt fill 603 (Plate 4).

3.5.3 Pit 608 had flat base with rounded corners, 1.5m in length, 0.58m wide and 0.18m deep. It was filled with a single sterile fill 607 that produced a single struck flint flake.

3.6 Trench 7 (Plate 2)

3.6.1 Two oval shaped three-throw holes were identified and investigated within Trench 7. The irregular and diffuse nature of each feature's sides were consistent with three-throw holes (Plate 5). No finds were recovered from their fills.

3.7 Trench 8

3.7.1 Two three-throw holes 804 and 806 and area of geological variations were investigated within Trench 8. The two three-throw holes had irregular profiles and undulating bases, consistent with root activity. An area of geological variation was also investigated to confirm its character. No finds were recovered from any of the features fills.

3.8 Trench 11

3.8.1 An oval feature was investigated within Trench 11, potentially of natural origin. The feature was 1.30m in length, 0.52m wide and only 0.20m deep. It contained a single sterile grey silty fill 1104 that produced no finds.

3.9 Finds and environmental summary

3.9.1 Only one struck flint was recovered from the pit 608 but was neither diagnostic nor datable. The sterile nature of the feature fills and absence of finds would suggest the area was located away from areas of settlement activity.

3.9.2 No environmental samples were taken during the evaluation due to the absence of datable and suitable features.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The ground conditions and visibility were generally good throughout the evaluation. The majority of the trenches were dug at their proposed locations with only slight modifications necessary due to the location of overhead services. The evaluation was therefore able to achieve good coverage of the proposed development area and the results can be considered to provide a reliable assessment of the archaeological potential of the site.

4.2 Interpretation and conclusion

4.2.1 The evaluation revealed only two significant archaeological features within the development area. The ditches within Trenches 3 and 6 may represent part of former field systems but are of unknown date. The undated pit within Trench 6, containing a single struck flint, may also hint at wider activity within the site area. The topsoil and subsoil were very sterile in all the other trenches. A small number of natural features and geological variations were also investigated as a precaution.

4.2.2 The evaluation suggests that the site has been in mostly agricultural use and located away from areas of settlement activity. Evidence of ditches within two of the trenches hint at low-level activity possibly relating to undated agricultural field systems. Based on these results the archaeological potential of the site is considered to be low.

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APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench located in the north western part of the site. The soils sequence consisted of topsoil and thin subsoil overlying layers of natural geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.45
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
100	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Dark greyish brown silt with occasional angular pieces of chalk.	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil. Greyish sandy silt.	-	-
102	Layer	-	-	Natural geology. Friable, light grey silt with a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized angular pieces of chalk.	-	-

Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench located in the northern part of the site, devoid of archaeology with signs of plough scars.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.45
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
200	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Orangey brown sandy silt with a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized angular pieces of chalk.	-	-
201	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil - Greyish sandy silt	-	-
202	Layer	-	-	Natural geology. Pale Yellowish grey sandy silt with very frequent angular pieces of chalk.	-	-

Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench located in the central southern part of the site. The soil sequence consisted of topsoil overlaying subsoil which overlain					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6

natural geology. Two undated ditches and a field drain were identified within the trench.					Avg. depth (m)	0.55
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
300	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Slightly orangey brown sandy silt with a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized angular pieces of Chalk.	-	-
301	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil Greyish silt with pieces of Chalk.	-	-
302	Layer	-	-	Natural geology. Brownish orange sandy silt with frequent angular pieces of Chalk.	-	-
303	Fill	1.82	0.33	Fill of Ditch 304, firm light grey silty with pebble of chalk	-	-
304	Cut	1.82	0.33	Cut of Ditch	-	-
305	Fill	1.49	0.20	Fill of Ditch 306. Brown slightly clayey silt with a moderate amount of angular pieces of chalk	-	-
306	Cut	1.49	0.20	Cut of Ditch	-	-

Trench 4						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench located in the central part of the site devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying subsoil and natural geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.50
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
400	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Orangey brown sandy silt with a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized angular pieces of ironstone. Overlying 401	-	-
401	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil - Light grey silt	-	-
402	Layer	-	-	Natural geology. Greyish sandy silt with very frequent angular pieces of Chalk.	-	-

Trench 5						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench located in the south eastern part of the site. The soils sequence consisted of ploughsoil overlaying, subsoil and natural geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.30
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
500	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Orangey brown sandy silt with a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized angular pieces of chalk	-	-
501	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil; pieces of angular chalk in light grey silt	-	-
502	Layer	-	-	Natural geology; firm, mottled grey and light white silty	-	-

Trench 6						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench located in the north eastern of the site; the trench contains two intercutting ditches and rectangular pit. The soils sequence consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil and natural geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.60
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
600	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Orangey brown sandy silt with a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized angular pieces of ironstone. Overlaying 601	-	-
601	Layer	-	0.30	Subsoil - Light grey silt	-	-
602	Layer	-		Natural geology. Brownish orange sandy silt with very frequent, small-medium/large sized angular pieces of ironstone	-	-
603	Fill	1.09	0.66	Fill of Ditch 604 – Greyish brown silt	-	-
604	Cut	1.09	0.66	Ditch Cut - NW-SE running linear ditch	-	-
605	Fill	0.72	0.54	Fill of Ditch 604 – Greyish brown silt	-	-

606	Cut	0.72	0.54	Ditch Cut - NW-SE running linear ditch	-	-
607	Fill	1.5	0.18	Fill of Pit -	Struck flint	-
608	Cut	1.5	0.18	Cut of Pit – Rectangular pit with rounded sides	-	-

Trench 7						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench located in the centre of the site; Two tree-throw holes were investigated but found to be devoid of archaeology. The soils sequence consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil and natural geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.70
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
700	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Orangey brown sandy silt with a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized angular pieces of chalk	-	-
701	Layer	-	0.40	Subsoil - Greyish sandy silt	-	-
702	Layer			Natural geology. Pale Yellowish grey sandy silt with very frequent angular pieces of chalk.	-	-
703	Fill	0.90	0.10	Fill of tree-throw hole	-	-
704	Cut	0.90	0.10	Tree-throw hole	-	-
705	Fill	1.6	0.22	Fill of tree-throw hole	-	-
706	Cut	1.6	0.22	Tree-throw hole	-	-

Trench 8						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench located in the centre of the site; Two tree-throw holes were investigated but found to be devoid of archaeology. The soils sequence consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil and natural geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.70
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
800	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Orangey brown sandy silt with a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized angular pieces of chalk	-	-

801	Layer	-	0.40	Subsoil - Greyish sandy silt	-	-
802	Layer			Natural geology. Pale Yellowish grey sandy silt with very frequent angular pieces of chalk.		
803	Fill	0.90	0.10	Fill of tree-throw hole	-	-
804	Cut	0.90	0.10	Tree-throw hole	-	
805	Fill	1.6	0.22	Fill of tree-throw hole	-	-
806	Cut	1.6	0.22	Tree-throw hole	-	-
807	Layer	-	-	Natural variation	-	-

Trench 9						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench located in the north eastern of the site; devoid of archaeology. The soils sequence consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil and natural geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.50
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
900	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Dark greyish brown silt with occasional angular pieces of chalk.	-	-
901	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil - Greyish sandy silt	-	-
902	Layer	-		Natural geology. Pale Yellowish grey sandy silt with very frequent angular pieces of chalk.	-	-

Trench 10						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench located in the north eastern of the site; devoid of archaeology. The soils sequence consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil and natural geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.60
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1000	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Dark greyish brown silt with occasional angular pieces of chalk.	-	-
1001	Layer	-	0.30	Subsoil - Greyish sandy silt	-	-

1002	Layer	-		Natural geology. Yellowish grey sandy silt with very frequent angular pieces of chalk.	-	-
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Trench 11						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench located in the north eastern of the site; contained a oval feature. The soils sequence consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil and natural geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.60
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1100	Layer	-	0.20	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Dark greyish brown silt with occasional angular pieces of chalk.	-	-
1101	Layer	-	0.40	Subsoil - Greyish sandy silt	-	-
1102	Layer	-	-	Natural geology. Yellowish grey sandy silt with very frequent angular pieces of chalk.	-	-
1103	Fill	1.30	0.14	Fill of feature 1105	-	-
1104	Fill	1.30	0.06	Fill of feature 1105	-	-
1105	Cut	1.30	0.20	Cut of Pit – Oval feature	-	-

Trench 12						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench located in the north eastern of the site; devoid of archaeology. The soils sequence consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil and natural geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.60
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1200	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil/ploughsoil. Dark greyish brown silt with occasional angular pieces of chalk.	-	-
1201	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil - Greyish sandy silt	-	-
1202	Layer	-		Natural geology. Yellowish grey sandy silt with very frequent angular pieces of chalk.	-	-

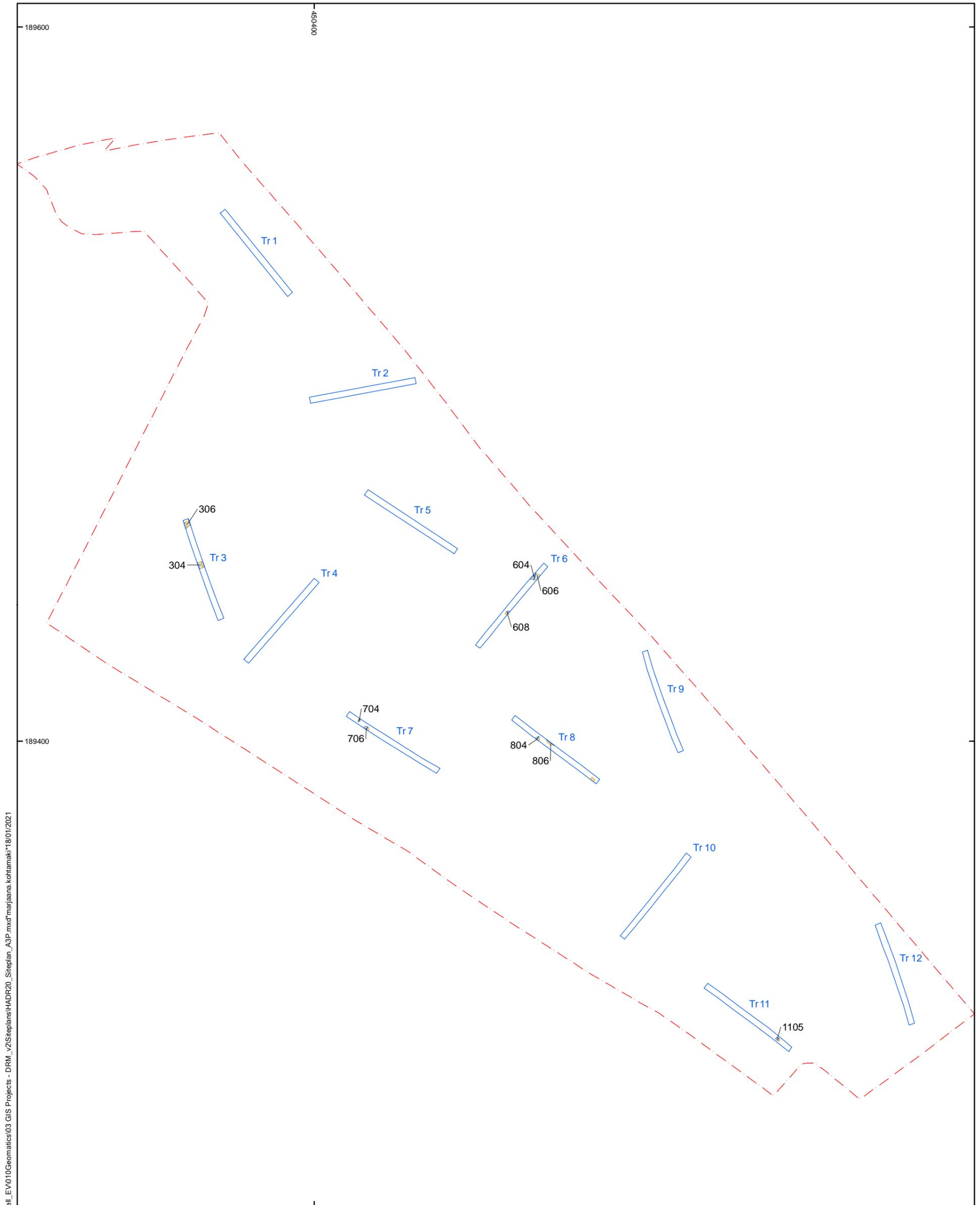
APPENDIX B SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

Site name:	Land East of Didcot Road, Oxfordshire
Site code:	HADR20
Grid Reference	SU 5043 8942
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	September 2020 - 1 week
Area of Site	0.9ha
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ESD, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS: 2020.46
Summary of Results:	<p>In September 2020 Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook a twelve-trench archaeological evaluation on behalf of RPS Group Ltd at the site of a proposed housing development at land east of Didcot Road, Harwell, Oxfordshire. The site lies just to the west of Didcot, which is a landscape rich in prehistoric, Roman and Saxon archaeology. The evaluation aimed to assess whether any activity extended into the site area.</p> <p>Only two of the evaluation trenches contained archaeological remains in the form of two undated ditch systems and a potential pit. No finds were recovered, and features fills were found to be sterile. A few natural features and geological variations were also investigated as a precaution. The ditches appear to form part of undated field system and hint at low-level agricultural activity at the site, away from areas of settlement activity. Based on these results the archaeological potential of the site is considered to be low.</p>



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Figure 1: Site location



X:\Oxfordshire_Didcot_Road_Harwell_EV010Geomatics\03 GIS Projects - DRM_v2\Siteplans\HADR20_Siteplan_A3P.mxd*marjaana.kohlamaki*18/01/2021

- Limits of Excavation
- Evaluation Trench
- Feature
- Intervention
- Section

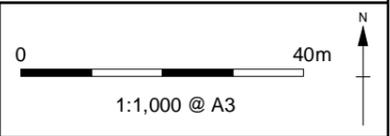


Figure 2: HADR20 Site plan

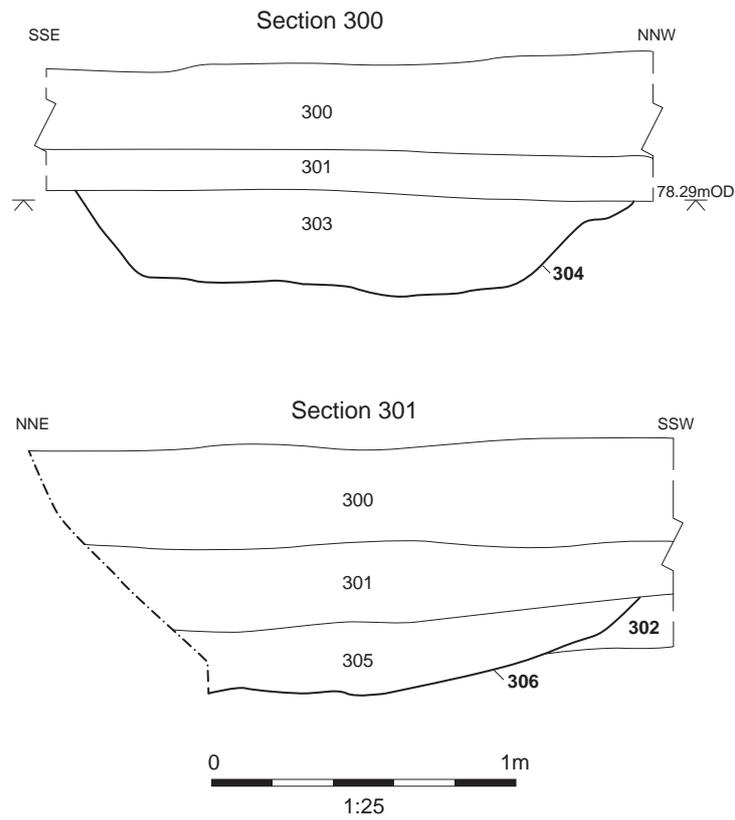


Figure 3: Trench 3 sections

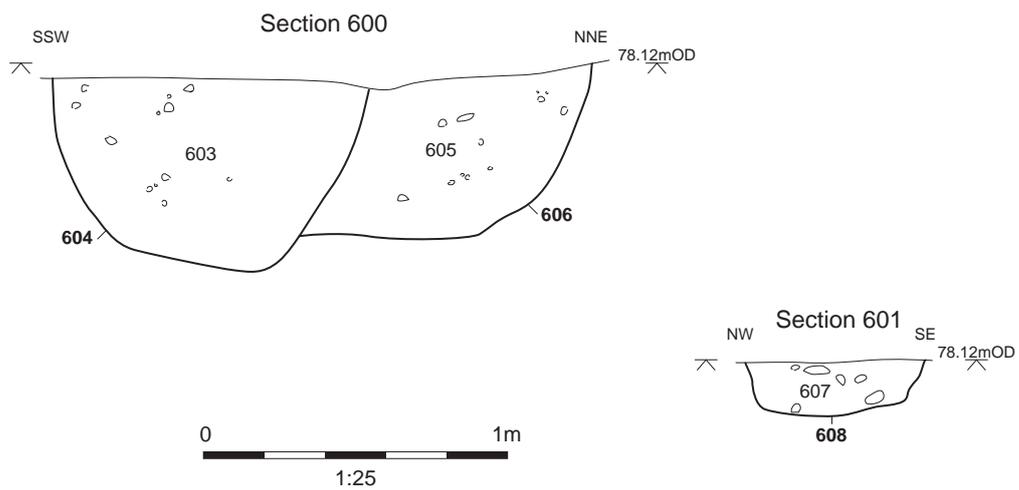


Figure 4: Trench 6 sections



Plate 1: Trench 3 looking southeast (1m scale)



Plate 2: Trench 7 looking southeast (1m scale)



Plate 3: Ditch 304 Looking southwest



Plate 4: Ditch 604 looking east



Plate 5: Tree-throw hole 704 looking southeast (1m scale)



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