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## **Church Farm, Woodcote, Oxfordshire**

### **Archaeological Evaluation Report**

*Written by Mariusz Gorniak and Stuart Foreman with contributions from John Cotter and Richard Palmer, and illustrations by Caroline Souday and Sophie Lamb*

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## Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by EDP Ltd to undertake a trial trench evaluation of the site of a proposed residential development on land at Church Farm, Woodcote, Oxfordshire.

The five trenches were excavated with a JCB 3CX excavator and the mechanical excavation was followed by sample hand excavation and context recording.

Two trenches (2 and 3) were dug across three geophysical survey anomalies, comprising a WNW-ESE aligned linear feature in Trench 3, and a curvilinear feature and an adjacent circular discrete feature in Trench 2. No evidence for the latter two anomalies was found in Trench 2. Two of the excavated trenches (1 and 5) contained no significant archaeological features.

The linear feature in Trench 3 was confirmed as being a wide ditch, 3.75m wide and 2.1m deep. The ditch fills contained 11th- to 13th-century pottery sherds throughout. The same trench also contained a pit which produced medieval pottery of the same type. The large ditch coincides roughly with the location and alignment of a large y-shaped feature identified on aerial photographs during the RCHME Thames Gravels Survey in 1993 (HER reference MOX8014) which was tentatively interpreted in the DBA as a possible palaeochannel or topographic depression used as a drainage channel. The location of the ditch suggests that it may have marked the outlying northern edge of the medieval village, well beyond the settled core to the south. Given the predominantly woodland environment of this area during the medieval period, located on the western edge of Woodcote Common, it could have been equivalent to a forest 'pale', which were usually substantial boundaries designed both to keep trespassers out and to control grazing livestock.

Most of the trenches contained evidence for bioturbation and root disturbance, including possible large tree-throw holes. It is likely that the site was once wooded. As no artefacts were recovered from these natural features the date at which the woodland was cleared is unknown.

## Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank EDP Ltd, especially for commissioning this project. Claudia Jorge was the Archaeological Consultant. Thanks are also extended to Steve Weaver (Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, OCAS) who monitored the work on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Stuart Foreman. The fieldwork was directed by Mariusz Gorniak, who was supported by Amber Brixton and Hannah Bullmore. Survey and digitising were carried out by Caroline Souday. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the supervision of Leigh Allen, processed the environmental remains under the supervision of Rebecca Nicholson, and prepared the archive under the supervision of Nicola Scott.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by EDP Ltd to undertake a trial trench evaluation of the site of a proposed residential development on land at Church Farm, Woodcote, Oxfordshire.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken to inform the Planning Authority in advance of submission of a Planning Application. Although the Local Planning Authority has not set a brief for the work, discussions between EDP Ltd and Steven Weaver (Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, OCAS) established the scope of work required.
- 1.1.3 The evaluation trenching followed desk-based research and a geophysical survey, the results of which are summarised in Section 2. An outline Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was submitted (OA 2022) and approved by the Steven Weaver prior to the start of fieldwork. The fieldwork was carried out between 11/07/2022 and 13/07/2022 (3 days).
- 1.1.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct (CIfA 2014a) and Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (CIfA 2014b), and local and national planning policies.

### 1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies on the northern edge of the village of Woodcote. The southern limit is defined by a mature hedgerow, which bounds the Reading Road. The eastern and western limits are also defined by hedgerows, separating the site from adjacent commercial properties. The northern edge of the site lies within an open field, which itself extends as far as Tidmore Lane.
- 1.2.2 The proposed development currently consists of two fields of pasture, separated by an east-west aligned hedgerow. The site is generally flat, but gently sloping downwards towards the north and averaging c 166m AOD at its highest and c 164m AOD at its lowest.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as bedrock comprising sedimentary chalk of the Lewes Nodular and Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations overlain by sedimentary superficial deposits of sand and gravel (BGS online).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in an Archaeological and Heritage Assessment produced by EDP Ltd (2022), and this forms the basis of the summary provided below.

#### *Previous archaeological work*

- 1.3.2 No previous intrusive archaeological investigations have been undertaken within the proposed development area. In 2022, Magnitude Surveys undertook a geophysical survey of the site. The survey detected anomalies of natural and undetermined origin. Magnetic disturbance was identified around the edges of the survey area as well as

natural variations within the superficial geological background. Agricultural activity was also detected across the survey area as well as anomalies corresponding with modern ploughing trends, visible on historic satellite imagery, running N-S. Anomalies of an undetermined origin were also present and were thought likely to have modern or agricultural origins, although an archaeological origin could not be entirely ruled out (MS 2022).

### ***Prehistoric Period (500,000BC – AD43)***

- 1.3.3 The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (OHER) has no records relating to the prehistoric period within the site.
- 1.3.4 The earliest evidence from the prehistoric period documented within the vicinity of the site relates to two findspots of Palaeolithic hand axes located c 280m to the west and c 720m to the south-west of the site. These were random surface finds (Roe 1968).
- 1.3.5 Two Mesolithic findspots are also recorded close to the site. An assemblage of flint scrapers and cores and a microlithic core were found around 1920, c 650m to the south-west of the site. The second record relates to a Mesolithic tranchet axe, found in 2011, c 420m to the north of the site.
- 1.3.6 An excavation in 2021, c 230m to the north-east of the site revealed features dating to the Neolithic, including pit clusters. A ditch and gully were also excavated but remained undated and the function of each is unclear. The first pit cluster consisted of six pits from which several sherds of pottery were recovered. In the second cluster, no archaeological finds were recovered. Pit clusters of this date are likely to have been used as rubbish pits associated with settlement activity. A larger pit was also excavated and may have been used for extraction purposes (TVAS 2021a).
- 1.3.7 A possible Iron Age stone head was found in a garden in 1974, c 580m to the west of the site. The OHER mentions doubts about its date, but that its location and the height of the land, as well as the curvature of the modern road, are bases for Sandford's theory that the area served as an Iron Age settlement. No features are visible on aerial imagery. The area yielding the putative evidence for the structures was subjected to magnetometry survey but this did not confirm the presence of any structures (Sandford 2006).

### ***Roman and Anglo-Saxon Periods (AD43 – 1066)***

- 1.3.8 There are no known remains relating to the Roman or Anglo-Saxon periods recorded within 1km of the site.

### ***Medieval and Post-Medieval (AD 1066-1837)***

- 1.3.9 The site is located in the hamlet of Woodcote within the parish of South Stoke and its pre-Conquest history is not known, but it is believed that it was given to the Bishop of Dorchester before the 10th century (Lobel 1962). By 1086 Stoke was temporarily retained by the bishop, but soon afterwards was granted in free alms to Eynsham Abbey. In 1109 Henry I confirmed its possessions, including Stoke and Woodcote. Eynsham Abbey held the manor until its dissolution in 1539, and in 1546 the king granted the manor and rectory to the new cathedral of Christ Church. The dean and chapter were still lords of the manor in 1958 (Lobel 1962).

- 1.3.10 Before the common was inclosed, the hamlet used to lie on the western edge of Woodcote Common or Heath and was probably, as its name indicates, more closely surrounded by woodland. The centre of the ancient settlement was around its 11th-century church c 260m to the west of the site. It is also believed that sometime in the 14th century the settlement shrunk considerably, most likely due to the Black Death (Lobel 1962).
- 1.3.11 Common rights ended with the inclosure of 1853, and the common was divided up, but the area remained mostly agricultural in nature with the recorded evidence mainly relating to agriculture and most of the settlement activity being focused on Woodcote or in scattered farmsteads.
- 1.3.12 The evidence for the medieval period is scarce with the single record within the study area being related to agricultural features, namely a pond at Greenmoor Hill, c 780m to the south of the site. The pond was first mentioned in 1109 when Henry I confirmed the possessions of Eynsham Abbey, but it is believed that it might be even earlier (SOAG 2005). A post-medieval sheep wash was also recorded at the same location.
- 1.3.13 The OHER records a post-medieval clay pit located c 190m to the east of the site. This was recorded during a site visit by the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG) and no further details of the feature are provided.
- 1.3.14 The site of a post-medieval brickworks and associated features is also recorded c 980m to the south of the site. An archaeological watching brief for the infill of an old pit at the location revealed evidence of a building, the brickworks, a clay pit and a pond (JMHS 2005).
- 1.3.15 The OHER records several supposed chalk pits c 900m to the south-west of the site. These were documented within historic cartography and a recent LiDAR analysis of the area revealed an associated holloway, which is thought to have co-existed with the quarrying activity (TVAS 2021c). These features have not been investigated further.

#### ***Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS)/ National Monument Record (NMR) findspots***

- 1.3.16 The OCAS Archaeologist, in reviewing the assessment, noted that a number of artefacts have been recorded in the vicinity on the PAS/NMR, including a 13th-century buckle on or immediately north of the site, a prehistoric flint scatter to the north-west and Roman coins, pottery and a brooch to the north-west, west, and south respectively. Iron Age and Bronze Age metalwork has been recorded to the west.

#### **Potential**

- 1.3.17 Based on the above evidence, it was concluded in the archaeological and heritage assessment of the site that the potential for late prehistoric, medieval, post-medieval and modern deposits to survive within the site of the proposed development area was low.
- 1.3.18 If present, such remains were unlikely to be of such significance that they would preclude development of the site (eg through requiring preservation in situ), subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation, if necessary.

## 2 AIMS

### 2.1 General

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives, as detailed in the WSI (OA 2022) were to provide information regarding the potential location and nature of archaeological remains within the site.

2.1.2 The general aims and objectives of the evaluation were:

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

### 2.2 Specific aims and objectives

2.2.1 The specific aims and objectives of the evaluation were:

- i. To ground-truth the results of the geophysical survey, including targeting potential archaeological features and areas suggested to be devoid of archaeological remains.

2.2.2 The programme of archaeological investigation was conducted within the general research parameters and objectives defined by the Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment Resource Assessments and Research Agendas (Hey and Hind 2014).

## 3 EXCAVATION AND RECORDING METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Scope of works

- 3.1.1 The works comprised the excavation of 5 trenches each measuring 30m x 1.7m to provide a 2% sample of the 1.46ha site. The proposed layout of the trenches was designed to target the anomalies identified by the geophysical survey and to provide an even coverage of the potentially blank areas that will be impacted by the proposed development.
- 3.1.2 An additional contingency allowed for a further 2% sample of the site to be evaluated in the event that significant archaeological remains were revealed during the evaluation. In the event there was no need for the contingency trenches.

### 3.2 Programme

- 3.2.1 The fieldwork took three days to complete and was carried out by a team consisting of a Project Supervisor directing two Project Archaeologists.

### 3.3 Site specific methodology

- 3.3.1 A summary of OA's general approach to excavation and recording can be found in Appendix A of the project's WSI (OA 2022). Standard methodologies for Geomatics and Survey, Environmental evidence, Artefactual evidence and Burials can also be found in Appendices B, C, D and E respectively (OA 2022). Site specific methodologies are set out below.
- 3.3.2 The fieldwork (undertaken by Oxford Archaeology South) was carried out under the management of Stuart Foreman, MCIfA, Senior Project Manager and overseen by the Head of Fieldwork, David Score MCIfA.

#### *Trench excavation*

- 3.3.3 The trenching was carried out in line with the approved WSI (OA 2022).
- 3.3.4 The trenches were laid out as shown in Figure 2 using a GPS with sub-15mm accuracy. Trench 3 was set up in a different location to that specified in the WSI, following an adjustment agreed between the EDP and OCAS.
- 3.3.5 The trenches were excavated using an appropriately powered mechanical excavator (JCB 3CX) fitted with a toothless bucket and under the direct supervision of an archaeologist. Spoil was stored adjacent to, but at a safe distance from, the trench edges. Machining continued in even spits down to the top of the undisturbed natural geology or the first archaeological horizon, depending upon which was encountered first. Once archaeological deposits were exposed, further excavation proceeded by hand. The ground was compact and the soil conditions very dry as the work took place in heat wave weather.
- 3.3.6 The exposed surfaces were sufficiently cleaned to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains. A sample of each feature or deposit type (pits, ditches and potential archaeological features) was excavated and recorded. One of the features in Trench 3 exceeded the safe limit for personnel access.

- 3.3.7 The natural geological horizon was heavily disturbed by bioturbation and had a diffuse interface with the subsoil. As the exposed surface weathered out, sections of the excavated trenches were re-excavated using the JCB. That method ensured that the project achieved its goals adequately.
- 3.3.8 All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with established best practice and the OA field manual. Environmental samples had an allocated unique number. Bulk finds were collected by context.
- 3.3.9 Spoil produced from machine excavation, the surface or archaeological features and spoil from hand excavation were scanned by a metal detector to enhance finds retrieval.
- 3.3.10 Digital photos were taken of archaeological features, deposits, trenches, and the evaluation work in general.
- 3.3.11 Plans were produced using a GPS survey program. Sections of features were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and 1m-wide sample sections of stratigraphy were drawn at a scale of 1:10 where appropriate. All section drawings were located on the plan. The absolute height (mOD) of all principal strata and features and the section datum lines was calculated and indicated on the drawings.
- 3.3.12 Sample sections were located using a GPS unit. Coordinates relative to Ordnance Survey and Ordnance Datum were obtained for each sampling location.
- 3.3.13 Upon completion of the works and in agreement with Steven Weaver, Planning Archaeologist for OCAS, the trenches were backfilled with the arising in reverse order of excavation.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction and presentation of results

4.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, including a stratigraphic description of the trenches that contained archaeological remains. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. Finds data and spot dates are tabulated in Appendix B.

### 4.2 General soils and ground conditions

4.2.1 The soil was very dry, compact and hard and additional work was needed to open and re-excavate/deepen some of the trenches. The ground conditions did not materially affect the reliability of the trenching results.

4.2.2 The soil sequence was similar in all five trenches. The grassy, ploughed topsoil (0.2-0.3m thick) consisted of brown, silty clay with a moderate amount of mostly flint pebbles. It was underlain by a 0.1-0.15m thick subsoil forming a compact, brown, silty clay with frequent sub-angular pieces of flint pebbles. This layer represented a B-Horizon and overlay natural geology. The latter was a very compact, brownish red silty clay with frequent sub-angular flint pebbles and lenses of flint gravel. The natural horizon was heavily disturbed by bioturbation and was marked by numerous geological features filled with silty material.

4.2.3 Archaeological features were cut into the natural geological layer and their cuts through the subsoil were also recorded.

### 4.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

4.3.1 Archaeological features were exposed, sample excavated and recorded in Trenches 2 and 5. The first confirmed the archaeological character of a linear geophysical anomaly and contained a pit with pottery sherds. The latter trench contained only an undated shallow ditch.

4.3.2 A few potential archaeological features were test excavated and recorded in Trenches 2, 3 and 4 but proved to be of natural origin. Features tested in Trench 2, which was placed across a curving linear geophysical anomaly, also provided negative evidence.

### 4.4 Trench descriptions

#### Trench 1 (Fig. 2, Plate 1)

4.4.1 This trench contained no archaeology, and the only features were traces of bioturbation in the surface of the natural geology.

#### Trench 2 (Fig. 2, Plate 4)

4.4.2 Trench 2 was dug across two geophysical anomalies: a curving linear feature and a roughly circular features. Three possible features were sample excavated within the trench: one linear feature (2007) and two discrete features (203 and 205). None of their fills contained any finds. Their profiles (asymmetric, undulating and irregular) suggest that they are of natural origin and were probably created by root action. The geophysical anomalies in this area could be explained as a large tree-throw hole.



### **Trench 3 (Figs 2 and 3; Plates 2, 3 and 5)**

- 4.4.3 Trench 3 was dug across a WNW-ESE aligned linear geophysical anomaly.
- 4.4.4 The anomaly coincided exactly with a large ditch (303) which was 3.75m wide and was excavated to a depth of 1.75m deep within the trench. The feature's base was exposed by machine excavation at a depth of 2.1m below ground level. Its southern side was moderately steep, the northern side sloped gently, and it had a concave base. The ditch had two fills. Both the upper fill and the lower fill (304 and 305 respectively) contained medieval pottery sherds. Twelve worked flints were recovered from the lower deposit. These are probably of post-neolithic date but were clearly residual in a medieval context. One environmental sample taken from the lower fill contained a little charcoal and a few charred wheat, oat/brome grains and a couple of small legumes (see Appendix C2 below).
- 4.4.5 Pit 308 was exposed in the northern part of the trench, extending beyond the edge of Trench 3. The pit had moderately steep sides and a concave base. It was 0.44 wide and 0.26m deep and cut into natural geology. The single fill was a compact, dark yellowish brown, silty clay with frequent sub-angular flint pebbles and relatively frequent medieval pottery sherds.

### **Trench 4 (Fig. 2, Plate 4)**

- 4.4.6 Trench 4 contained no significant archaeology. One possible feature was sample excavated and recorded (403) but was found to be of natural origin (a large tree-throw hole). It was 1.15m wide and 0.45m deep, and was aligned east-west, with asymmetric sides (northern steep; southern irregular undulating) and a strongly undulating base. Its single fill contained no inclusions apart a from moderate amount of small flint pebbles and very occasional charcoal flecks.

### **Trench 5 (Fig. 2)**

- 4.4.7 Trench 5 exposed a linear feature: ditch 503. It was 0.64m wide and 0.2m deep, and was aligned north-south, and had moderately steep sides and a slightly concave base. The feature was cut through both natural geology and the B-Horizon subsoil so is likely the be fairly recent in date. Its single fill contained no inclusions apart from flint pebbles.

## **4.5 Finds and environmental sampling summary**

- 4.5.1 For detailed finds reports see Appendices B and C below.
- 4.5.2 A total of 79 sherds of pottery weighing 325g were recovered from four contexts. Apart from one small prehistoric sherd and one possible Roman sherd, all of the pottery is medieval in date and was all recovered from Trench 3.
- 4.5.3 Twelve worked flints were recovered from an environmental sample from the lower fill of ditch 303. They are probably post-neolithic in date, but were clearly residual in a medieval context.
- 4.5.4 One environmental sample taken from the lower fill of medieval ditch 305 contained a little charcoal and a few charred wheat, oat/brome grains and a couple of small legumes.



## 5 DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 5.1.1 The ground and working conditions were relatively good throughout the field evaluation, although the heat wave conditions baked the soil very dry and made it difficult to excavate. Because the soil below topsoil was very compact, hard parts of the excavated trenches had to be re-machined.
- 5.1.2 The exposed natural geology had frequent traces of bioturbation. Although six features were initially identified as potentially anthropogenic, sample excavation showed them to be of natural origin.
- 5.1.3 The archaeological features were relatively easily distinguishable from the natural geological horizon. The natural layer had a diffuse interface with the B-Horizon subsoil and, where needed, the evaluation trenches were deepened with the mechanical excavator.

### 5.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 5.2.1 The fieldwork met its objectives and goals.
- 5.2.2 The geophysical survey results were confirmed in Trench 3. A large ditch, 3.75m wide and 2.1m deep was found exactly on the alignment predicted. This features contained a fairly large assemblage of medieval pottery. A single pit, also dated by medieval pottery, was found on the north side of the ditch in Trench 3. Excavation in Trench 3 also investigated the possibility of a former bank alongside ditch 303, although none was recognisable. The exposed archaeology was not stratigraphically complex. The ditch in Trench 3 had two fills. Its upper fill could, however, represent a recut, but that is uncertain.
- 5.2.3 One shallow ditch in Trench 5 was undated.
- 5.2.4 Most of the trenches revealed evidence for bioturbation and the geophysical anomaly in Trench 2 is perhaps best interpreted as a large tree-throw hole.

### 5.3 Interpretation

- 5.3.1 The shallow ditch in Trench 4 may represent a field or enclosure boundary – though the feature remains undated.
- 5.3.2 The large medieval ditch in Trench 3 was confirmed as being more than 2m deep and 3.75m wide. The ditch fills contained 11th- to 13th-century pottery sherds. The same trench also contained a pit which produced medieval pottery of the same type. The large ditch coincides approximately with the location and alignment of a large Y-shaped feature identified on aerial photographs during the RCHME Thames Gravels Survey in 1993 (HER reference MOX8014) which was tentatively interpreted in the DBA as a possible palaeochannel or topographic depression used as a drainage channel. The location and large size of the ditch suggests, however, that it may have marked the outlying northern edge of the medieval village, albeit well beyond the limits of settlement further to the south. Given the predominantly woodland environment of this area during the medieval period, located on the western edge of Woodcote Common, this could be equivalent to a forest ‘pale’, which were usually substantial

bank and ditch boundaries designed both to keep trespassers out and to control grazing livestock. Pottery sherds in both fills of the ditch and in the pit may suggest the presence of domestic activity in the area, although no evidence for settlement was identified within the site. The pit appears most likely to have been connected with the boundary rather than being a domestic feature.

## 5.4 Significance

- 5.4.1 The site appears to be of limited archaeological significance. The only notable archaeological features identified comprised the large medieval ditch in Trench 3 and an apparently contemporary pit on the northern side of it. The ditch may represent the outlying northern boundary of Woodcote village in the 11th-13th centuries, well beyond the settled core to the south.

## APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1							
General description					Orientation		North-South
Trench devoid of archaeology.					Length (m)		30
					Width (m)		1.55
					Avg. depth (m)		0.5
Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
100	Layer		1.55	0.3	Topsoil. Friable, brown clayey, sandy silt. Occasional sub-angular flint pebbles Ploughsoil		
101	Layer		1.55	0.15	Subsoil. Compact, light brown, clayey silt with moderate amount of sub-angular flint pebbles. B- horizon.		
102	Layer		1.55		Natural. Compact, brownish red silty clay. Frequent sub-angular flint pebbles.		
Trench 2							
General description					Orientation		East-West
Trench set across a curving geophysical anomaly - not confirmed after the trench was excavated. Three possible linear features investigated. All identified as tree-throw holes and natural features. No finds present.					Length (m)		30
					Width (m)		1.55
					Avg. depth (m)		0.4
Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
200	Layer		1.6	0.3	Topsoil. Friable, brown clayey, sandy silt. Occasional sub-angular flint pebbles. Ploughsoil.		
201	Layer		1.6	0.15	Subsoil. Compact, light brown, clayey silt with moderate amount of sub-angular flint pebbles. B- horizon.		
202	Layer		1.6		Natural. Compact, brownish red silty clay. Frequent sub-angular pieces of flint and flint nodules present.		
203	Cut		0.58	0.07	Tree-throw hole. Irregular ovoid in shape, with uneven base and asymmetric sides.		
204	Fill	203	0.58	0.07	Secondary Fill. Firm, yellowish brown sandy clayey silt. Frequent pieces of flint pebbles; no other inclusions.		

205	Cut		0.8	0.16	Tree-throw hole. Irregular 'oval', Moderate to steep sides, an irregular/undulating base.		
206	Fill	20 5	0.8	0.16	Primary Fill. Compact, yellowish brown, clayey silt. Frequent flint pebbles. A moderate amount of chalk flecks present.		
207	Cut		1.01	0.16	Natural Feature. North-south aligned linear with uneven, asymmetric sides and an irregular/undulating base. Probably a geological feature.		
208	Fill	20 7	1.01	0.16	Secondary Fill. Firm, yellowish brown silty clay with very frequent small sub-angular pieces of flint.		
<b>Trench 3</b>							
General description						Orientation	North West - South East
Trench set across a linear geophysical anomaly; Confirmed: one large linear feature aligned NE-SW. Another linear feature test investigated and identified as a natural feature. One small pit exposed in the northern end of the trench.						Length (m)	30
						Width (m)	1.55
						Avg. depth (m)	0.4
Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
300	Layer		1.5	0.25	Topsoil. Friable, brown, silty sandy clay. Occasional sub-angular pieces of flint. Ploughsoil.		
301	Layer		1.5	0.1	Subsoil. Compact, brown, silty clay. Frequent sub-angular pieces of flint pebbles. B-Horizon.		
302	Layer		1.5		Natural. Compact, brownish red silty clay. Frequent sub-angular flint gravel and flint pebbles		
303	Cut		3.75	1.75	Ditch. Linear aligned ESE-WNW. A moderately steep side southern side and an almost gently sloping northern side; with a concave base. Two fills.		
304	Fill	30 3	3.75	0.3	Secondary Fill. Compact, yellowish brown silty clay. Frequent flint pebbles	Pottery sherds	11th-early 13th

					occasional charcoal flecks. Pottery sherds present.		centuries
305	Fill	303	3.75	1.45	Secondary Fill. Friable, yellowish brown, silty clay. Frequent flint pebbles. Occasional charcoal flecks. A few pottery sherds recovered. Below 1.0m BGL the deposit excavated with a JCB machine. Worked flint recovered	Pottery sherds Worked flint	
306	Cut		0.91	0.28	Natural Feature. Irregular linear feature. with one side gently sloping and the other steep. A slightly undulating base. Probably a natural/geological undulation filled with silt.		
307	Fill	306	0.91	0.28	Other Fill. Yellowish brown sandy clayey silt with frequent pieces of flint pebbles.		
308	Cut		0.45	0.26	Pit. Irregular 'oval'. Extending westwards beyond Trench 3. A moderately sloping side and a concave base.		
309	Fill	308	0.45	0.26	Secondary Fill. Compact, dark yellowish brown, silty clay. Frequent sub-angular flint pebbles. Relatively frequent pottery sherds present	Pottery sherds	

**Trench 4**

General description		Orientation	North - South
Trench devoid of archaeology. One linear feature test excavated - proved to be of a natural origin.		Length (m)	30
		Width (m)	1.55
		Avg. depth (m)	0.4

Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
400	Layer			0.3	Ploughsoil. Topsoil with grass. Overlays subsoil 401. Dark brown clayey silt with moderate amount of flint pebbles		
401	Layer			0.2	Subsoil. Brown sandy silt with moderate amount of flint pebbles. B-Horizon. Overlain by 400, overlaying 402		
402	Layer				Natural. Reddish brown silty clay with frequent flint gravel and light brown silty		

					patches/lenses also with flint pebbles. Overlain by subsoil 401		
403	Cut		1.15	0.45	Tree-throw hole. Linear with wavy edges, aligned east west. Asymmetric sides - northern steep, southern undulating, irregular. A strongly undulating base. Cutting natural geology 402 and subsoil 401. Filled with 404		
404	Fill		1.15	0.45	Primary Fill. Light brown, silty deposit with moderate amount of flint pebbles. No other inclusions. Single fill of tree-throw hole 403. Overlain by topsoil 400		
<b>Trench 5</b>							
General description						Orientation	East-West
Trench with one undated narrow linear feature.						Length (m)	30
						Width (m)	1.55
						Avg. depth (m)	0.35
Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
500	Layer			0.3	Ploughsoil. Dark brown silty clay with moderate amount of mostly flint pebbles. Overlays subsoil 501		
501	Layer			0.1	Subsoil. B-Horizon with frequent bioturbations. Brown, compact, hard, clayey silt with moderate amount of flint pebbles.		
502	Layer				Natural. Overlain by 501. Brownish orangey red silty clay with frequent patches of flint gravel and flint pebbles.		
503	Cut		0.64	0.2	Ditch. Linear, aligned north-south, with moderately steep sides and a slightly concave base. Cutting 502 and 501		
504	Fill	503	0.64	0.2	Primary Fill. Brown clayey silt with moderate amount of mostly angular flint pebbles. No other inclusions.		

## APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

### B.1 Pottery

*By John Cotter*

#### *Introduction and methodology*

- B.1.1 A total of 79 sherds of pottery weighing 325g were recovered from four contexts. Apart from one small prehistoric sherd and one possible Roman sherd, all of the pottery is medieval in date.
- B.1.2 The pottery was scanned and spot-dates were provided for each context. Each context group was quantified by sherd count and weight and recorded on a spot-dating spreadsheet. The pottery is generally in a very fragmentary condition, but some reasonably large and fresh sherds are present. It is all from Trench 3, mainly from the fill of pit 308 and the fills of ditch 303.
- B.1.3 The context spot-date is the date-bracket during which the latest pottery types or fabrics are estimated to have been produced or were in general circulation. Comments on the range of fabrics were recorded, usually with mention of vessel form (jugs, bowls etc) and any other attributes worthy of note (eg decoration etc). Fabric codes referred to are those of the Oxfordshire type series (Mellor 1994). The range of pottery is described in some detail in Table 1 and is therefore only summarised below.

#### *Description*

*Table 1. Description of post-Roman pottery by context*

Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight	Comments
301	c 1050-1250?	4	9	1 vessel. Small body sherds (bos) in early medieval-looking reduced dark grey-black sandy ware (very sandy). Fairly fine sandy texture. Rare coarse inclusions of dark grey mudstone. Possibly South-East Oxfordshire ware (OX162, c 1050-1250)? See 304
304	c 1050-1250	14	59	Mostly small, abraded body sherds - probably from cooking pots but includes 2 sagging base sherds from 2 separate cooking pots. A minimum of 6 vessels present in 3 fabrics. All unglazed. 2x bos (body sherds) (1 vess?) in flint- and coarse quartz-tempered Kennet Valley A ware (OXBF, c 1050-1250), sooted ext from use. The remaining 12 sherds are in coarse grey to grey-brown sandy wares. Most of these (9 sherds) are in a coarser sandy ware with rounded quartz temper - possibly Wallingford ware (WA38, c 1025-1250)? 3 other sherds (1 vess) are in a much finer light brown sandy ware fabric with grey-brown ext surfaces - possibly South-East Oxfordshire ware (OX162, c 1050-1250)?

Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight	Comments
305	c 1050-1250	3	10	1x cooking pot rim in fine sandy light brown-buff fabric with greyer ext surface (mainly grey from sooting). Most probably OX162 (early sub-type WA27). Bifid hammerhead-shaped or slightly triangular rim form with traces of thumbed decoration on the flattish top of the rim. Form exactly as OX162/WA27 cookpot rim in Oxford type series (Mellor 1994, Fig. 31.2). Fairly soft and weathered. 1x small, abraded bo flint and sand-tempered ware - probably medieval OXBF. 1x small very abraded sherd (weight 3g) in coarse probably prehistoric flint-tempered ware with little/no quartz, fine organic inclusions (burnt-out), the flint is mainly angular and calcined. Fabric underfired with grey-brown surfaces and dark grey-black core, fairly thin walled
309	c 1175-1250	58	247	Fill of Pit 308. Mostly small body sherds, fresh and slightly abraded. Mostly sandy OX162 (WA27) including 6 sherds (11g) from a thumbed jug base in light orange-brown fabric with grey core including 2 sherds with splashes of clear glaze. The thumbing appears to be a simple early-looking style of continuous thumbing (from c1150/75+) & the jug possibly handmade? The oxidised fabric of the jug is also similar to Ashampstead-type ware (OXAG) but probably finer. OX162 also includes 1x small flaring rim with plain/flat top - possibly from a thin-walled dish or perhaps the flaring flanged rim of a skillet or pipkin with a trace of either a pulled lip or the start of a handle attached to lip of rim? Latter sooted ext. 6x joining rim sherds from sooted OX162 cook pot with simple everted thickened rim - or a gently flanged rim with internal hollow. 1x fresh sagging base sherd from cook pot. Bos from OX162 cook pots (several vessels) includes lower wall sherd (73mm wide) with clear handmade construction marks int, others with possible evidence of wheel-turning higher up. Textures range from medium to fairly coarse. 18x mostly small/scrappy OXBF incl. 3 sagging bases from 2 cook pots - coarse to v coarse flint. 1x small bo (2g) in fine grey sandy micaceous fabric from smallish globular vessel, sooted ext, possibly Roman(?) or a very fine variant of medieval OX162?
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>79</b>	<b>325</b>	



## Discussion

- B.1.4 The pottery mostly comprises ordinary wares typical of this area of south-east Oxfordshire and typical, in particular, of the period between the middle of the 11th century and the middle of the 13th century. All four contexts can be spot-dated to this broad two-century period, but the larger assemblage from context 309 (pit 308) includes sherds from a glazed jug with a thumbled base – which suggests a date of c 1175-1250 for this particular context. The other three contexts may well be contemporary with 309 but do not contain sufficient diagnostic material to allow a more precise dating than the period c 1050-1250.
- B.1.5 The single small sherd of prehistoric flint-tempered pottery (weight 3g) occurs as a redeposited piece in a medieval context (305). A single, small sherd (weight 2g) in fine grey sandy micaceous fabric, may possibly be of Roman date – or else a very fine variant of the local medieval fabric (Fabric OX162)? If Roman, it was residual in its context (309).
- B.1.6 The medieval assemblage is dominated by local sandy wares in a brownish-grey medium sandy fabric. This is almost certainly south-east Oxfordshire ware (Fabric OX162), a long-lived tradition current from the middle of the 11th century through to the late 15th or early 16th century. The limited typology and character of the vessels here - mainly unglazed cooking pots with thumbled rims - suggests these are in an early variant of this fabric (sometimes known as WA27) which dates from around c 1050-1250 (Mellor 1994). A possible pipkin (small cooking pot) or skillet (cooking bowl) rim with a trace of a handle or a pulled spout was also noted in context 309, along with the thumbled and glazed jug base noted earlier.
- B.1.7 A few coarser sandy ware sherds may be in a coarser version of OX162, or, perhaps, in local Wallingford-type ware (WA38, c 1025-1250)? A few sherds from cooking pots in a coarse flint- and quartz-tempered fabric occur in almost every context; these are recognizable as Kennet Valley A ware (OXBF, c 1050-1250). No pottery types or vessel forms obviously later than the mid-13th century were identified. Though fragmentary, the assemblage is consistent in date.

### ***Recommendations regarding the conservation, discard and retention of material***

- B.1.8 The pottery here has potential to inform research through re-analysis - particularly when reviewed alongside further assemblages from any future excavations in the area of the present evaluation. It is therefore recommended that it should all be retained as part of the site archive.

## B.2 Flint

*By Michael Donnelly*

### *Introduction*

- B.2.1 This evaluation produced 12 flints from ditch fill 305, all of which came to light from a bulk sample taken from ditch 303. The flints comprised four flakes, a piece of irregular waste and seven chips under 10mm in length.
- B.2.2 The assemblage is technically undiagnostic, but the two largest flakes are relatively squat and crude and could indicate that a post-Neolithic date is most probable for this material. Many of the fine chips very clearly show that flint knapping activities such as core or tool maintenance occurred in the immediate vicinity as fine shatter rarely survives in any numbers by itself unless immediately buried or sealed in some manner. Given the age of the ditch, the flints were clearly residual in a medieval context. Most of this material could have been incorporated into a bank and then gradually made its way back into the ditch. The chips consist of a range of flint types indicating the working of at least three different cores/sources which is suggestive of a fairly intensive knapping focus nearby.
- B.2.3 It is quite difficult to interpret this material as by itself a sample yielding 12 flints would be considered to be relatively rich and the lack of hand recovered flints is surprising. It is possible that there are rich flint-bearing deposits in this evaluation area, and this possibility should be taken into account if further work is conducted here.

### *Methodology*

- B.2.4 The artefacts were catalogued according to OA South's standard system of broad artefact/debitage type (Anderson-Whymark 2013; Bradley 1999), general condition noted, and dating was attempted where possible. The assemblage was catalogued directly onto an Open Office spreadsheet. During the assessment additional information on the condition (rolled, abraded, fresh and degree of cortication), and the state of the artefacts (burnt, broken, or visibly utilised) was also recorded. Retouched pieces were classified according to standard morphological descriptions (eg Bamford 1985, 72-77; Healy 1988, 48-9; Bradley 1999). Technological attribute analysis was undertaken and included the recording of butt and termination type (Inizan et al. 1999), flake type (Harding 1990), hammer mode (Ohnuma and Bergman 1982), and the presence of platform edge abrasion.

*Table B.2.1 Description of post-Roman pottery by context*

<b>Context</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>sub-type</b>	<b>notes</b>	<b>date</b>
305	Flake	Inner	Quite squat in form	?LPH
305	Flake	Preparation	Quite squat in form	?LPH
305	Flake x 3	Misc. trimming	Miscellaneous trimming	
305	Irregular waste			
305	Chip x 7	Sieved 10-2mm	Fine shatter from sample	

## APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

### C.1 Environmental samples

*By Richard Palmer*

#### **Introduction**

C.1.1 A single 22L bulk sample was taken from fill 305 of ditch 303 primarily for the retrieval and assessment of ecofacts and the recovery of artefacts.

#### **Method**

C.1.2 The sample was processed in its entirety at Oxford Archaeology using a modified Siraf-type water flotation machine. The flot was collected in a 250µm mesh and the residue in a 500µm mesh and dried. The residue fractions (ie the material which did not float) were sorted by eye and with the aid of a magnet to extract any ferrous material (eg hammerscale) while the flot material was sorted using a low power (x10-x40) binocular microscope to extract cereal grains and chaff, smaller seeds and other quantifiable remains.

C.1.3 Nomenclature for identified species follows (Stace 2010) and cereal and chaff identifications are made with reference to Jacomet (2006).

#### **Results and discussion**

C.1.4 The sample and flot data are summarised in Table 1. A poor flot was produced containing a little charcoal and a few charred wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and oat/brome (*Avena* sp./*Bromus* sp.) grains. The grains comprise single intact specimens of each and a few partial fragments. A couple of small legumes, also mostly fragmentary, were also recovered. Some fragments of worked flint were extracted from the residue and have been passed to the appropriate specialist.

C.1.5 The limited nature of the charred remains in the sample indicates that the material may derive from dispersed middening using domestic waste, or from wind-blown accumulation. The material has been recorded and is otherwise of limited interpretive value although it demonstrates that charred remains survive at the site and may be more abundant in areas closer to domestic or other activity.

#### **Recommendations for retention/disposal**

C.1.6 The flot should be retained until all works on site are complete but is unlikely to be subject to further work and retention in the archive is not considered a priority.

Table C.1.1 Flot 1 assessment

Sample no.	Context no.	Feature/Deposit	Trench	Date	Sample vol. (L)	Flot vol. (ml)	Charcoal >2mm	Grain	Chaff	Weeds	Other Charred	Molluscs	Notes
1	305	303	3		22	15	++	+			+		7.5YR 5/6 sandy clay

Key: +=present (up to 5 items), +=frequent (5-25), +=common (25-100), +=+=abundant (100+)

Other charred covers legumes.

Table 1: Assessment of bulk sample.

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## APPENDIX E SITE SUMMARY DETAILS / OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>Site name:</b>	Church Farm, Woodcote, Oxfordshire
<b>Site code:</b>	WOCH22
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU64718212
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date and duration:</b>	11-13/07/2022 (three days)
<b>Area of Site</b>	1.46 ha
<b>Location of archive:</b>	The archive is currently held at OA (Janus House, Osney Mead Ox2 0ES, Oxford), and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS.2022.62

**Summary of Results:** Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by EDP Ltd to undertake a trial trench evaluation of the site of a proposed residential development on land at Church Farm, Woodcote, Oxfordshire.

The five trenches were excavated with a JCB 3CX excavator and the mechanical excavation was followed by sample hand excavation and context recording.

Two trenches (2 and 3) were dug across three geophysical survey anomalies, comprising a WNW-ESE aligned linear feature in Trench 3, and a curvilinear feature and an adjacent circular discrete feature in Trench 2. No evidence for the latter two anomalies was found in Trench 2. Two of the excavated trenches (1 and 5) contained no significant archaeological features.

The linear feature was confirmed as being a wide ditch, 3.75m wide and 2.1m deep. The ditch fills contained 11th- to 13th-century pottery sherds throughout. The same trench also contained a pit which produced medieval pottery of the same type. The large ditch coincides roughly with the location and alignment of a large Y-shaped feature identified on aerial photographs during the RCHME Thames Gravels Survey in 1993 (HER reference MOX8014) which was tentatively interpreted in the DBA as a possible palaeochannel or topographic depression used as a drainage channel. The location of the ditch suggests that it may have marked the outlying northern edge of the medieval village, well beyond the settled core to the south. Given the predominantly woodland environment of this area during the medieval period, located on the western edge of Woodcote Common, this could be equivalent to a forest 'pale', which were usually substantial boundaries designed both to keep trespassers out and to control grazing livestock.

Most of the trenches contained evidence for bioturbation and root disturbance, including possible large tree-throw holes. It is likely that the site was once wooded. As no artefacts were recovered from these natural features the date at which the woodland was cleared is unknown.





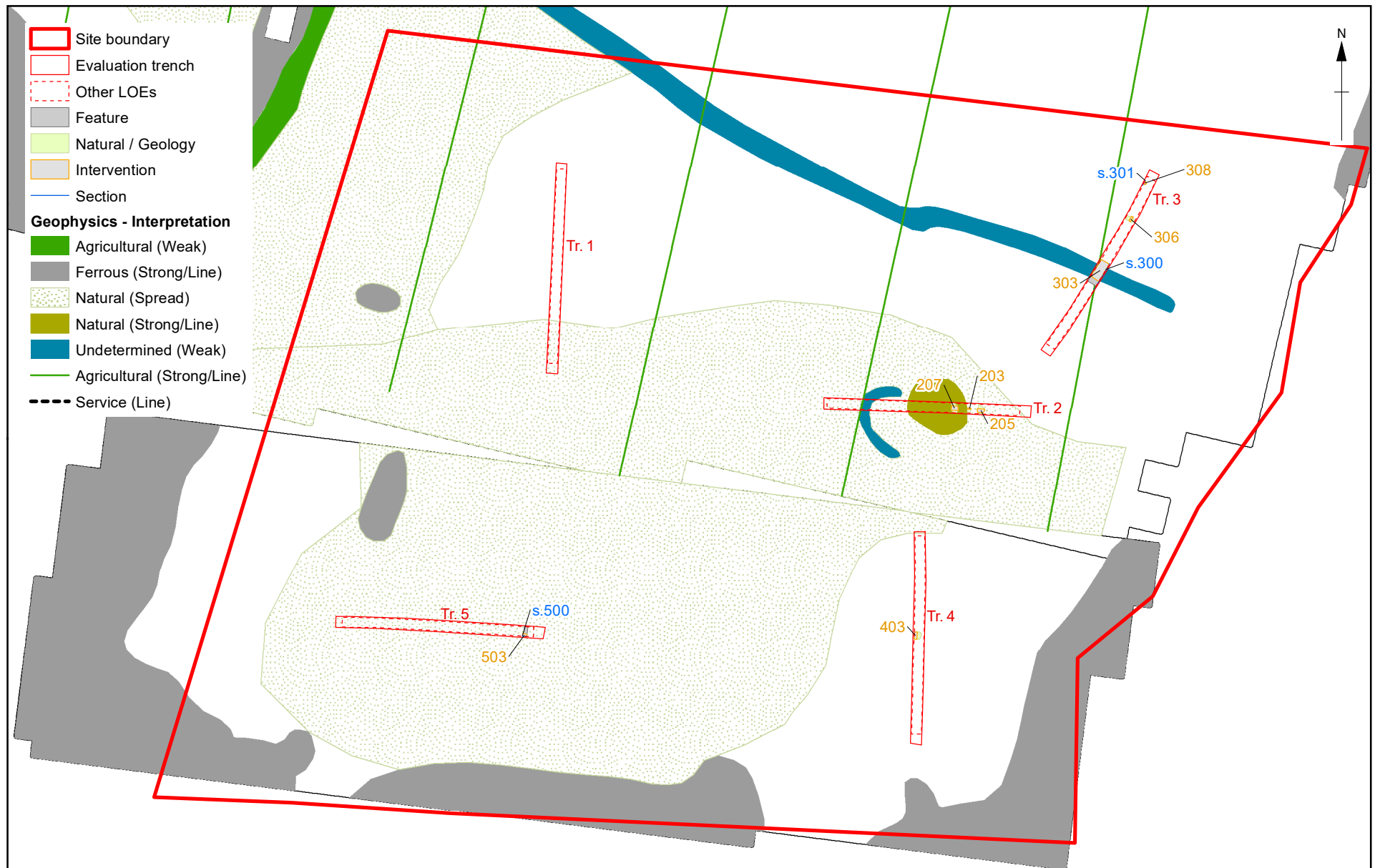


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Figure 1: Site location

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Figure 2: Plan of excavated trenches with geophysical survey results

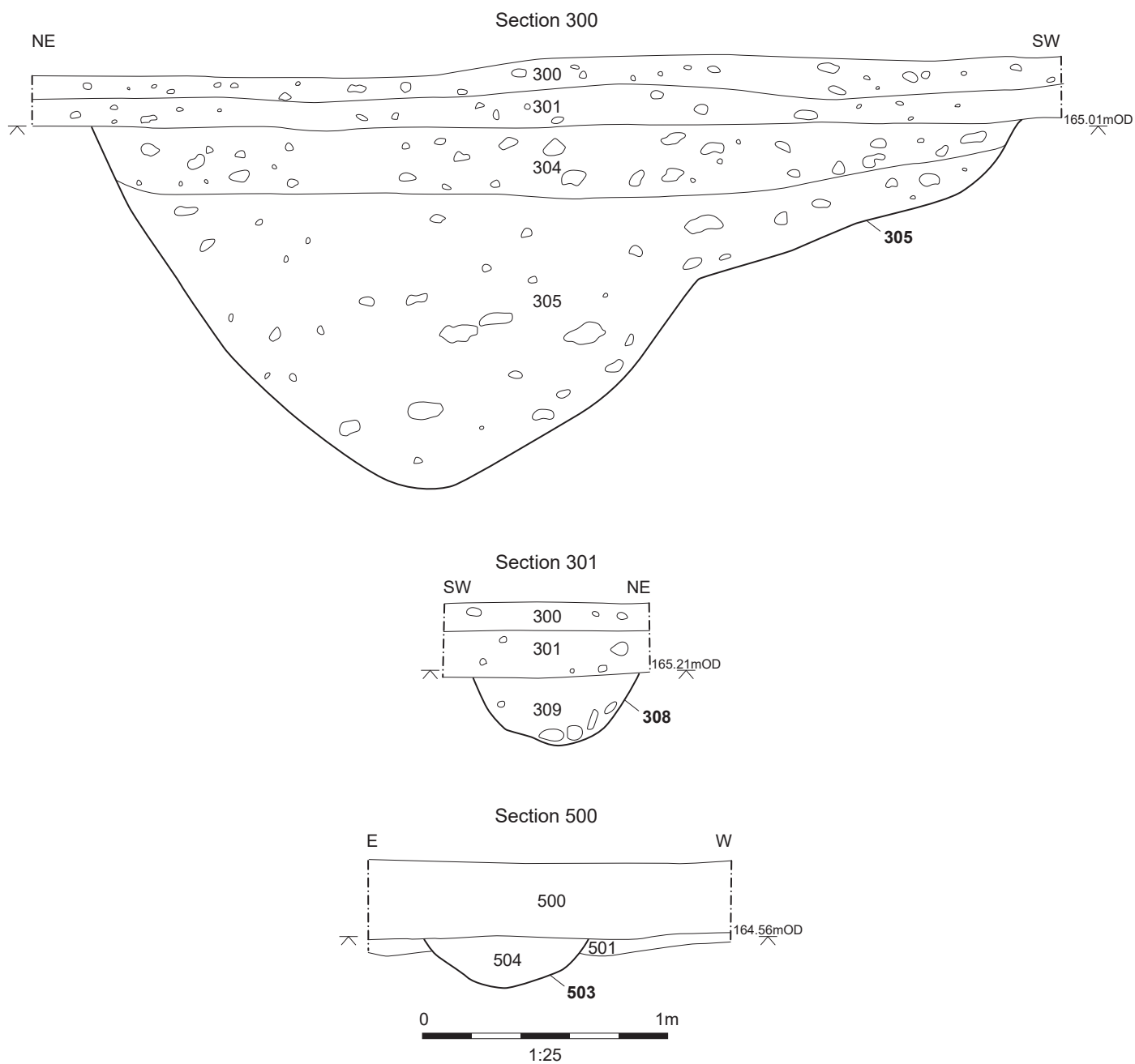


Figure 3: Section 300 of ditch 303, section 301 of pit 308 and section 500 of ditch 503





Plate 1: Trench 1 – view South



Plate 2: Partly excavated ditch 303, Section 300 – view South





Plate 3: Fully excavated ditch 303 – view South



Plate 4: Section of feature 205 – view North





Plate 5: Section 301 of pit 308 – view West



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