



Land at Scocles Road Isle of Sheppey Kent

Archaeological Evaluation Report



**LAND AT SCOCLES ROAD
ISLE OF SHEPPEY, KENT**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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SCOCLES ROAD, ISLE OF SHEPPEY, KENT

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SCOCLES ROAD, ISLE OF SHEPPEY, KENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Summary

Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by Jones Homes (Southern) Limited (the Client) to undertake an archaeological field evaluation comprising machine excavation of 10 evaluation trenches on land at Scocles Road, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, which comprises Phase 1 of a proposed residential development centred on National Grid Reference 595220 172200. The fieldwork was carried out between 16th and 20th July 2007.

The archaeological features revealed during the evaluation comprised a diffuse shallow pit and three, north-east to south-west aligned gullies thought to form part of a post-medieval field drainage system. They were recorded on the highest ground towards the north and off a break of slope in the north-west of Site.

The medieval artefacts recovered are largely thought to be residual with no definitive medieval structures or settlement features observed within the evaluation trenches. However artefacts of this date were found to be concentrated both in archaeological deposits and the machine removed overburden in the north-west corner of the Site, predominately in Trenches 1 and 8. Both Romano-British and medieval remains are known to the west of the Site.

A considerable amount of truncation was identified within trenches located in the south-west of the proposed development which had been subsequently backfilled with modern refuse which included asbestos.

The low level of archaeological remains revealed during the evaluation would suggest a very low/no potential for archaeological remains to be affected by the proposed development.

ISLE OF SHEPPEY, KENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Gerry Phoenix and managed by Julie Damiral for Jones Homes (Southern) Limited and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank them for their assistance. Wessex Archaeology would also like to acknowledge the help and advice of Simon Mason and Adam Single of Kent County Council's Archaeology Section, who monitors the project on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

The fieldwork was carried out by Rob D'eath, Liz Chambers and Katherine Hamilton. The project was supervised by Rob D'eath and this report was compiled by Susan Clelland. The finds analysis was undertaken by Lorraine Mepham and the illustrations were produced by Will Foster. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Caroline Budd.

LAND AT SCOCLES ROAD, ISLE OF SHEPPEY, KENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Project Background

- 1.1.1. Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Jones Homes (Southern) Limited (the Client) to undertake an archaeological field evaluation on land at Scocles Road, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, which comprised Phase 1 of a proposed residential development centred on National Grid Reference 595220 172200 (hereafter 'the Site') (**Figure 1**).

1.2. Site Location and Description

- 1.2.1. The Site comprises an area of approximately 1.05 hectares of former agricultural land, located south of Minster in the north-eastern part of Sheppey.
- 1.2.2. The Site is bounded to the north and west by fields, to the east by Scocles Road and to the south by Thistle Hill Way and Scocles Cottages (**Figure 1**).

1.3. Geology and Topography

- 1.3.1. The Site lies on a north-east facing slope at approximately 10m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) with an underlying solid geology of London Clay.

1.4. Archaeological and historical background

- 1.4.1. Before 1999, there had been no systematic survey of the archaeology of the Isle of Sheppey. A small number of surface scatters of prehistoric and Roman pottery have been recorded in the vicinity of the Site (ASE 2000, 1) and an unpublished excavation at Norwood Manor, revealed Bronze Age/Iron Age and early medieval features. Metal detector finds in the area include a Bronze Age axe fragment and coins of Late Iron Age and medieval date.

- 1.4.2. The Harps Avenue development was subject to an archaeological evaluation in 1997 to 1998. These recovered an undated (but Prehistoric) flint scraper, a Roman brick fragment together with a midden of discarded shell fish, and a burnt pit associated with a single sherd of Anglo Saxon pottery. The 1997-1998 investigations also revealed a late Post-medieval (probably early nineteenth century) clay quarry with brick/tile making debris. This activity appears to extend for 125m from Scocles Road westwards along Thistle Hill Way and to extend by 25m to 50m northwards from Thistle Hill Way (WA2006).
- 1.4.3. Extensive archaeological works at Kingsborough Manor, to the north-east of the Site, by ASE in March 1999 and Wessex Archaeology 2002 - 2005 produced a wealth of archaeological information. A number of important archaeological features were recorded dating from the Neolithic to Medieval periods (ASE 2000, WA 2005).
- 1.4.4. These included a Neolithic Causewayed Enclosure with the remains of a Romano-British period sub-square enclosure with an internal division overlying the north-eastern extent of the Causewayed Enclosure. The Romano-British enclosure was c. 43m square and comprised an 'internal' enclosed area of c. 28m by c. 14m. Pottery of 2nd Century AD date dominated the Romano-British pottery assemblage from the excavation.
- 1.4.5. Two Romano-British urned cremation burials were recorded cutting the upper fills of the Causewayed Enclosure outer ditch circuit. The finds assemblages from both cremation burials consisted of pottery and glass vessels of 2nd Century AD date.
- 1.4.6. Excavations carried out in 2001 in advance of construction of the Community Hospital to the north-east of the Site at Barton Hill Drive (Canterbury Archaeological Trust 2001-2002) revealed evidence of four main phases of occupation representing Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age activity indicated by a series of ditches, pits and postholes. A thinner spread of features dating to the early medieval and late post-medieval period was also identified on the site.
- 1.4.7. In February 2006 an evaluation comprising twenty eight trial trenches were investigated on Land Parcels 6, 7 and 8 of the residential development at Thistle Hill (WA 2006). The remains of three urned Romano-British cremation burials dating to the mid 2nd century AD were identified within Land Parcel 8 (**Figure 1**). No other archaeological features or deposits were identified in the remaining trial trenches.
- 1.4.8. In March 2007 further evaluation was carried out at Thistle Hill on Land Parcel 10 consisting of fifteen trial trenches (WA 2007). Three of the trenches revealed archaeological features dated to the medieval period, including drainage ditches and a pit.

1.5. Health and Safety

- 1.5.1. All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety regulations 1992. An H&S Risk Assessment was produced by Wessex Archaeology

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1. Archaeological Field Evaluation: Aims and Objectives

- 2.1.1. The aims of the evaluation were to determine, as far as was reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the development.
- 2.1.2. The archaeological results from the evaluation are intended to facilitate an informed decision to the extent, scope and nature of any further archaeological mitigation that may be required by the Local Planning Authority on the advice of Kent County Council.

3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1. Project Design

- 3.1.1. Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, Wessex Archaeology produced a detailed specification and project design (Wessex Archaeology 2007) which outlined the aims, objectives and methodology for the evaluation.
- 3.1.2. In total 10 trenches equating to 6.3% of the Site were excavated, providing detailed coverage of the proposed development area.
- 3.1.3. Overburden was removed under constant archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a ditching bucket. The trenches were cleaned by hand and features and /or deposits of possible archaeological significance were sample excavated to determine their extent, nature and date. All archaeological features were fully recorded, graphically, textually and photographically, using the Wessex Archaeology *pro-forma* recording system. The trenches were located, using a Global Positioning System, in relation to the Ordnance Survey national grid. Recording procedures complied with the standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (as amended 1994).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

- 4.1.1. A catalogue of trench descriptions, giving brief soil descriptions, dimensions and finds information can be found in **Appendix 1**. Trench locations and archaeological features are illustrated on **Figure 1**.

4.2. Archaeological features

- 4.2.1. Archaeological features were recorded within Trenches 1, 3, 4 and 8 (**Figure 1**) and comprised a shallow oval pit (**104**) located at the western end of Trench 1, a shallow north-east to south-west aligned field gully (**304**) towards the north of Trench 3 and a parallel field gully (**404**) situated at the western end of trench 4. A twelve metre length of north-east to south-west aligned field gully (**804**) was recorded traversing obliquely across the north-eastern end of Trench 8 (**Figure 2, Plate 1**). A tree hollow (**106**) was also recorded within Trench 1 (**Figure 2, Plate 2**) and was found to contain residual artefacts of medieval and post-medieval date.
- 4.2.2. Parallel gullies **304**, **404** and **804** each measured approximately 0.5m in width and between 0.04m to 0.14m in depth. Their surviving profiles indicated they were concave sided with flat slightly undulating base and were filled with material derived from the gradual erosion the surrounding A/B soil horizon. The three gullies appear to cut diagonally across the dominate gradient and are thought to be part of a post-medieval field drainage system.
- 4.2.3. The shallow and poorly defined pit **104** was found to contain a single deposit **105** of homogenous silty clay containing a number of medieval artefacts including ironworking slag and medieval roof tile. The pit measured 0.2m in depth and 2.05m in width; it was truncated across its width by the northern baulk of Trench 1. A further medieval roof tile and a lava quern fragment were also recovered from the B soil horizon sealing this feature.
- 4.2.4. A tree hollow **106** lay adjacent to shallow pit **104** and a range of artefacts of medieval and post-medieval date were found within the associated fill of mixed up-cast material **107**. A single sherd of residual prehistoric pottery was also recovered from the feature.
- 4.2.5. Trenches located towards the south-west of the Site were heavily truncated and subsequently backfilled with modern debris including dumps of asbestos.

5. FINDS ASSESSMENT

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. The evaluation produced a very small quantity of finds, deriving from five trenches. These have been quantified by material type within each context, and the results are presented in **Table 1**. Datable material (pottery, ceramic building material) indicates that the assemblage is of medieval to post-medieval date, although there is one prehistoric flint-tempered pottery sherd (**107**), and one worked flint flake (**405**), both residual finds.

Table 1: Finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

CBM = ceramic building material

Context	Animal Bone	CBM	Pottery	Stone	Other Finds
102		3/42		1/319	
105		3/46	2/7		1 slag
107		3/75	5/14		
405	1/1	4/154	1/1	1/1	1worked flint
Tr 5 unstrat			2/22		
Tr 6 unstrat			2/26		
805	1/1		1/4		2 oyster shell
TOTAL	2/2	13/317	13/74	2/320	

5.2. Pottery

5.2.1. The pottery sherds included examples of early medieval shelly ware, medieval coarse sandy ware and medieval Tyler Hill ware, with a broad date range of late 11th to 14th century (contexts **105**, **107**, **605**, Trench 6 unstratified). There were also some modern sherds (context **405**, trench 5 unstratified).

5.3. Ceramic Building Material

5.3.1. The ceramic building material recovered includes both medieval and post-medieval fragments, the former consisting of roof and floor tile (contexts **102**, **105**, **405**), and the latter comprising brick (contexts **107**, **405**).

5.4. Other Finds

5.4.1. Other finds comprised two fragments of animal bone, one burnt; one piece of ironworking slag, one piece of post-medieval roofing slate, one fragment from an imported lava quern stone (context **302**; Romano-British or later date), and two oyster shells.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL

6.1.1. No features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the evaluation.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1. All of the recorded archaeological features were located on the highest ground towards the north and just off the break of slope in the north-west of the Site.

- 7.1.2. North-east to south-west aligned gullies **304**, **404** and **804** (Trenches 3, 4 and 8 respectively) appear to form part of a post-medieval field drainage system (**Figure 1**).
- 7.1.3. The range of finds types recovered from drainage gullies 404 and 804, pit 104 and natural hollow 106 (trench 1) along with artefacts recovered from layer 102 and the un-stratified pottery from Trench 6 suggests medieval and post-medieval activity within the vicinity and a proximity to contemporary settlement. However many of the medieval artefacts recovered are thought to be residual and no definitive medieval structures or settlement features were recorded within the evaluation trenches despite both Romano-British and medieval remains being known to the west of the Site.
- 7.1.4. The single sherd of later prehistoric pottery found residually within deposit **107** may be viewed in conjunction with the small number of surface scatters of prehistoric and Roman pottery recorded within the vicinity of the Site (ASE 2001).
- 7.1.5. A considerable amount of truncation was identified within trenches located in the south-west of the proposed development which had been subsequently backfilled with modern refuse which included asbestos.
- 7.1.6. The low level of archaeological remains revealed during the evaluation would suggest a very low/no potential for archaeological remains to be affected by the proposed development.

8. REFERENCES

- Archaeology South-East, 2000 Archaeological Investigations at Kingsborough Farm, Eastchurch, Isle of Sheppey, Kent: Post-excavation assessment and draft proposals for future work. Unpublished Client Report No.1067.
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9. APPENDIX 1

9.1. Trench Summaries

Evaluation Trench 1		Max depth: 0.24m	Length: 30m	Width: 2.4m	MaOD 11.95
Context No.	Type	Description:			Depth: (m)
101	<i>layer</i>	Topsoil – A horizon. Mid-dark black brown silty clay			0-0.24m
102	<i>layer</i>	B horizon – Light –Mid grey brown silty clay Intermittent along length of trench			0.24-0.33m
103	<i>layer</i>	London Clay – mid brown orange silty clay			0.24m+
104	<i>cut</i>	Sub-ovular shallow concave sided pit with flat base (2.05mx0.2mx0.2m). FB 105			0.24-0.44m
105	<i>fill</i>	Primary deposit derived from eroded B horizon. Pottery/CBM recovered. FO 104			0.24-0.44m
106	<i>cut</i>	Diffuse irregular feature with undulating base. Natural Hollow. FB 107			0.3-0.56m
107	<i>fill</i>	Mixed primary deposit derived from eroded A/B horizons. Pottery, Stone, CBM residual? FO 106			0.3-0.56m

Evaluation Trench 2		Max depth: 0.24m	Length: 30m	Width: 2.4m	MaOD 11.71
Context No.	Type	Description:			Depth: (m)
201	<i>layer</i>	Topsoil – A horizon. Mid-dark brown silty clay			0-0.24m
202	<i>layer</i>	B horizon – Light –Mid grey brown silty clay			0.24-0.33m
203	<i>layer</i>	London Clay – mid brown orange silty clay			0.24m+

Evaluation Trench 3		Max depth: 0.34m	Length: 30m	Width: 2.4m	MaOD 12.00
Context No.	Type	Description:			Depth: (m)
301	<i>layer</i>	Topsoil – A horizon. Mid-dark brown silty clay			0-0.22m
302	<i>layer</i>	B horizon - Mid-dark orange brown silty clay			0.2-0.32m
303	<i>layer</i>	London Clay – mid brown orange silty clay			0.3m+
304	<i>cut</i>	Very shallow (1.16mx0.41mx0.04m) field gully. NE-SW aligned with SW terminus thought to result from subsequent truncation. Truncated by land drain along SE side. FB 305			0.3-0.34m
305	<i>fill</i>	Primary deposit derived from eroded AB horizon			0.3-0.34m

Evaluation Trench 4		Max depth: 0.24m	Length: 30m	Width: 2.4m	MaOD 12.17
Context No.	Type	Description:			Depth: (m)
401	<i>layer</i>	Topsoil – A horizon. Mid-dark brown silty clay			0-0.21m
402	<i>layer</i>	B horizon – Mid-dark orange grey brown silty clay			0.21-0.34m
403	<i>layer</i>	London Clay – mid – light orange brown silty clay			0.34m+
404	<i>cut</i>	NE-SW aligned field gully (1mx0.5mx0.14m). FB 405			0.34-0.48m
405	<i>fill</i>	Secondary deposit derived from erosion of A/B horizons. CBM, pottery, flint, slate, shell, bone retrieved. FO 404			0.34-0.48m

Evaluation Trench 5		Max depth: 0.4m	Length: 30m	Width: 2.4m	MaOD 12.02
Context No.	Type	Description:			Depth: (m)
501	<i>layer</i>	Topsoil – A horizon. Mid-dark black brown silty clay			0-0.23m
502	<i>layer</i>	B horizon – Very Dark brown silty clay + CBM frags, oyster shell (noted but not retained) Fairly organic deposit with occupation debris possibly derived from downslope movement (natural/ploughing) of upslope midden deposits. Material may be modern? Unstratified modern pottery fragments collected from mixed overburden.			0.2-0.37m
503	<i>layer</i>	London Clay – light yellow orange silty clay			0.3m+

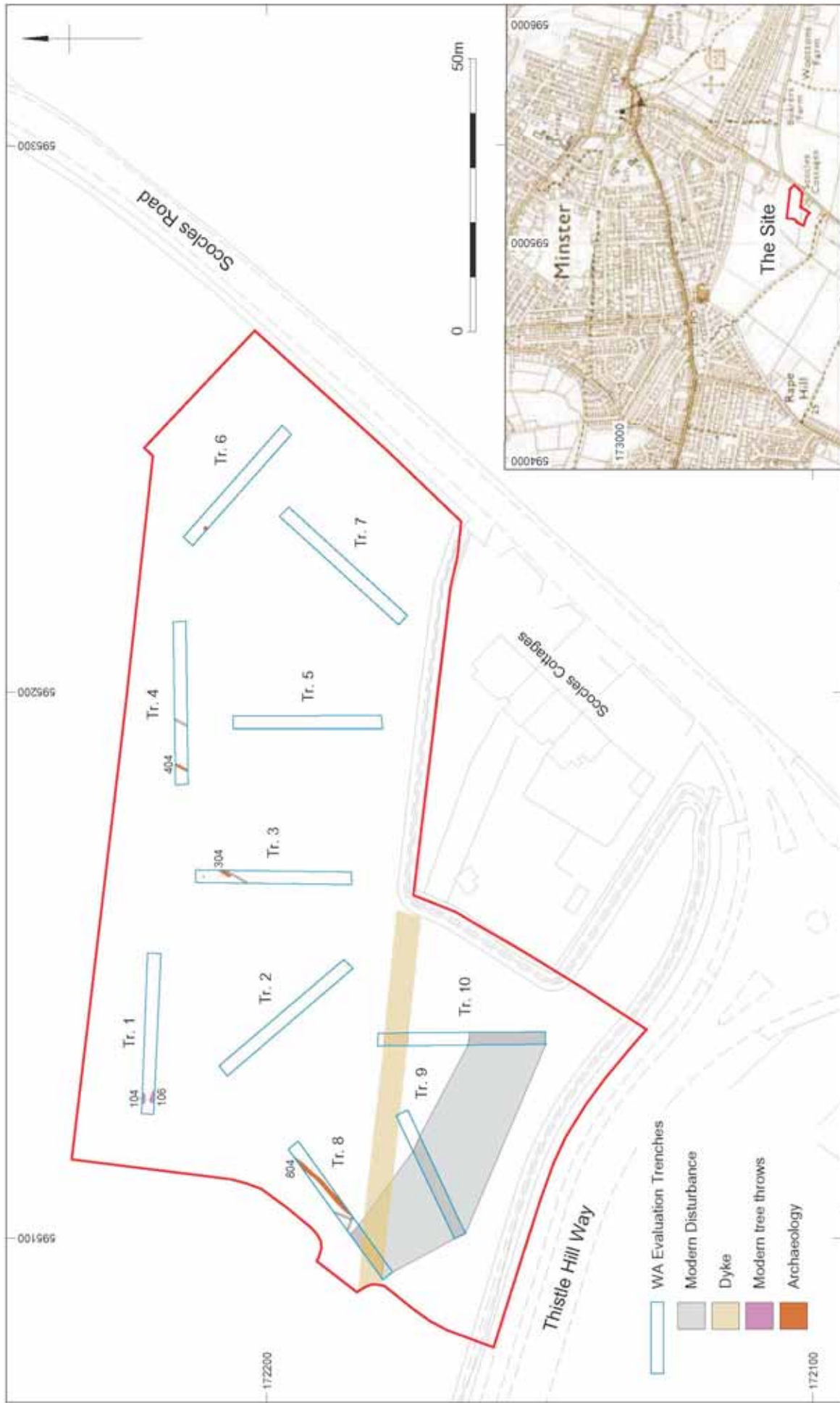
Evaluation Trench 6		Max depth: 0.4m	Length: 30m	Width: 2.4m	MaOD 12.15
Context No.	Type	Description:			Depth: (m)
601	<i>layer</i>	Topsoil – A horizon. Mid- brown silty clay			0-0.18m
602	<i>layer</i>	B horizon –Mid orange grey brown silty clay occ/rare abraded CBM frags noted not retained.			0.18-0.35m
603	<i>layer</i>	London Clay – mid orange brown silty clay			0.3m+

Evaluation Trench 7		Max depth: 0.4m	Length: 30m	Width: 2.4m	MaOD 11.98
Context No.	Type	Description:			Depth: (m)
701	<i>layer</i>	Topsoil – A horizon. Mid-dark brown silty clay			0-0.24m
702	<i>layer</i>	B horizon –Mid-dark orange brown silty clay. Sharp upper horizon			0.24-0.4m
703	<i>layer</i>	London Clay – mid orange brown silty clay			0.4m+

Evaluation Trench 8		Max depth: 0.45m	Length: 30m	Width: 2.4m	MaOD 11.09
Context No.	Type	Description:			Depth: (m)
801	<i>layer</i>	Topsoil – A horizon. Mid-dark black brown silty clay			0-0.27m
802	<i>layer</i>	B horizon – Light –Mid grey brown silty clay			0.27-0.36m
803	<i>layer</i>	London Clay – mid orange brown silty clay			0.36 +
804	<i>cut</i>	NE-SW aligned field gully (0.5mx0.55mx0.08m). FB 805			0.36-0.44m
805	<i>fill</i>	Secondary deposit derived from topsoil erosion. Pottery, shell, bone retrieved. FO 804			0.34-0.44m
Trench also contained NE-SW and NW-SE land drains and the SW end of the trench was truncated by a modern dyke containing refuse including asbestos.					

Evaluation Trench 9		Max depth: 0.4m	Length: 25m	Width: 2.4m	MaOD 11.44
Context No.	Type	Description:			Depth: (m)
901	<i>layer</i>	Topsoil – A horizon. Mid-brown grey friable silty clay. Sharp lower horizon			0-0.2m
902	<i>layer</i>	B horizon –Mid grey orange brown silty clay			0.2-0.45m
903	<i>layer</i>	London Clay – mid orange brown silty clay			0.45m+
Only 7m at the NE extent of the trench was undisturbed by modern asbestos dump. No archaeological features visible.					

Evaluation Trench 10		Max depth: 0.4m	Length: 30m	Width: 2.4m	MaOD 10.94
Context No.	Type	Description:			Depth: (m)
1001	<i>layer</i>	Topsoil – A horizon. Mid-brown grey friable silty clay. Sharp lower horizon			0-0.2m
1002	<i>layer</i>	B horizon –Mid grey orange brown silty clay			0.2-0.35m
1003	<i>layer</i>	London Clay – Light yellow orange silty clay			0.35m+
The northern and southern ends of the trench contained modern asbestos dump. Only an 11m length of trench survived undisturbed. No archaeology was visible					



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Fig 1: Site and trench location showing archaeological features



Plate 1: South facing section through Ditch 804 - Trench 8



Plate 2: North facing section of tree thow 106 showing representative section of Trench 1

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