

WSNH19



# LAND OFF WOODVILLE GROVE, SUTTON ST NICHOLAS, HEREFORD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

EHE NO. EHE 80403

commissioned by Bell Homes

June 2019



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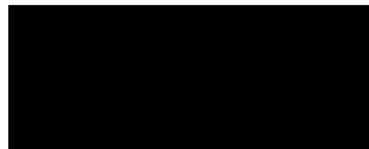
#### PROJECT INFO:

HA Project Code: **WSNH19** / HAS No. **1345** / NGR **SO 53110 45363** / Parish **Sutton St. Nicholas and St. Michael** / Local Authority **Herefordshire Council** / OASIS Ref. **headland3-345611**

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

Archaeological field evaluation, via trial trenching, was undertaken by Headland Archaeology on land off Woodville Grove, Sutton St Nicholas, Hereford. The stratigraphy across the site suggested that it had historically been subject to a series of flood events. Evidence for previous activity on the site was limited to a single field boundary and drainage ditch believed to be of post-medieval date

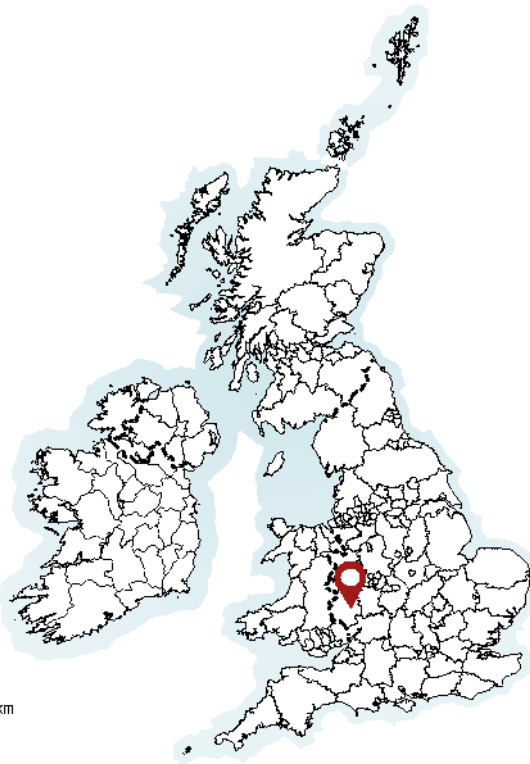
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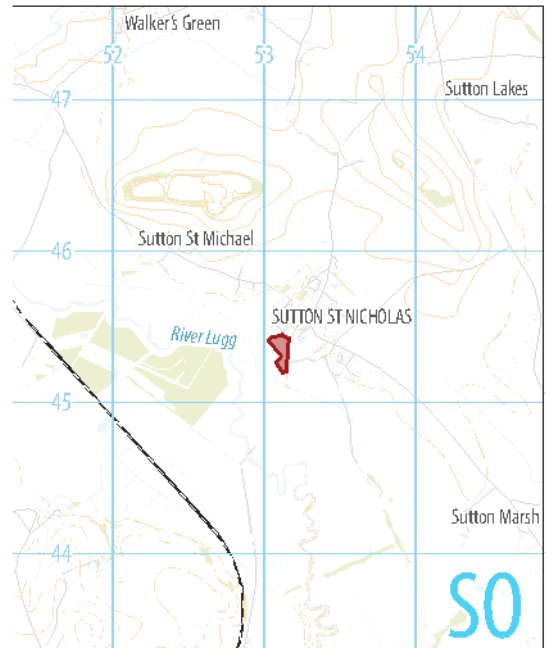
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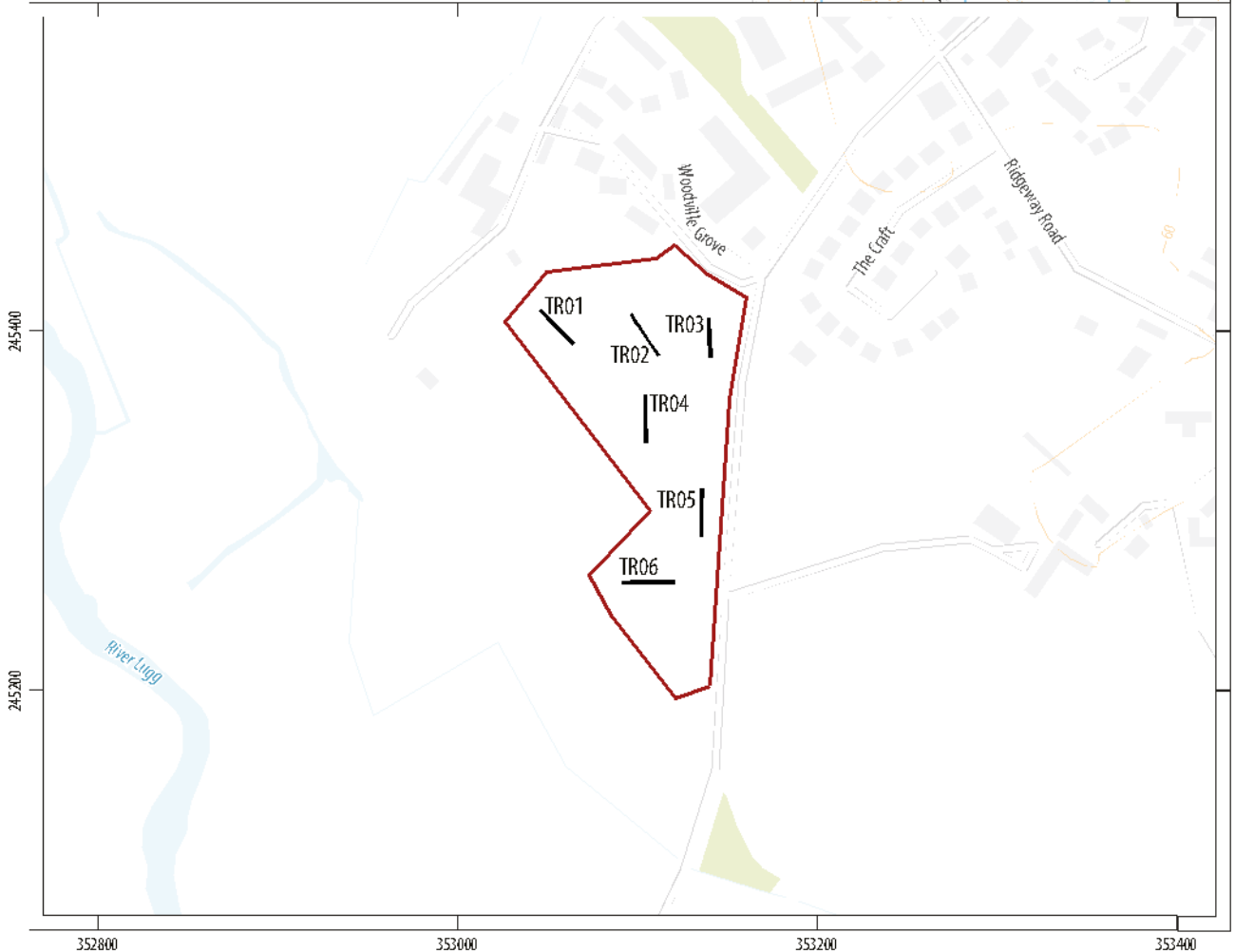
Woodville Grove  
Sutton St Nicholas  
Herefordshire



0 200km  
1:12,500,000 @ A4



SO



245400  
245200

352800 353000 353200 353400

0 80m  
1:4,000 @ A4

development boundary  
trench location

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ILLUS 1 Site location

# LAND OFF WOODVILLE GROVE, SUTTON ST NICHOLAS, HEREFORD

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by Be Homes, to undertake a programme of archaeological work prior to the submission of a planning application for a potential development comprising new homes. The work took the form of an archaeological trench evaluation.

#### 1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

A site for the potential development of 21 new homes has been purchased by Be Homes on and adjacent to Woodville Grove, Sutton St Nicholas, Herefordshire (Figure 1). The proposed development is at the pre-application stage and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has advised that a trial trench evaluation should be undertaken. Be Homes has instructed Headland Archaeology to complete a programme of works to determine the archaeological potential of the site in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

#### 1.2 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The proposed development area (PDA) is centred on SO 53110 45363 and comprises two irregular parcels of land, currently variably overgrown. The site encompasses approximately 1.7 hectares and is bounded by Woodville Grove to the north; the main Hereford road to the east and properties off The Lane to the north west. It is surrounded by open fields to the south and west. The site is located at 56m AOD to the west and 58m AOD to the east.

The underlying bedrock geology comprises Raglan Mudstone Formation with interbedded siltstone and mudstone, which is overlain by superficial deposits of Alluvium – Clay, silt, sand and gravel in the south and some deposits of head – Clay, silt, sand and gravel to the east and west (NERC 2019). The soils are classified in the Soil scope 08 association, characterised as slight y acid, loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Cranfield University 2017).

### 1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA), produced by Headland Archaeology (Nixon 2019) and subsequently the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), (Craddock-Bennett 2019), provide the archaeological background to the site and surrounding area. In summary it states that:

- › excavations in 2000 identified a prehistoric double ditched ring ditch (–ER 30516), approximately 520m west of the site. Part of a Middle Bronze Age sword was discovered 195m south-east of the site in 2001 and recorded with the portable antiquities scheme.
- › Sutton Walls Iron Age hill fort (SAM 1001/1/), is located 800m north of the site. It remained in use into the 11th century and is thought to be the site of a massacre by the Roman Army in c. 54AD. A silver coin of Roman date was found 50m east of the site at Sutton Court; this is one of several similar findspots in the area.
- › Sutton is thought to be near the site of a palace belonging to King Offa of Mercia located at Sutton Walls, and therefore an area of importance in the early medieval period. Following excavations in 1999 the location is thought to be part of a dispersed Saxon royal complex spanning Freen's Court, Downfield Knoll, Sutton Walls and Downs East – a deserted medieval village (–ER 1026 /SAM 1005323).
- › Sutton appears in the Domesday record as a relatively large settlement of 22 households. The extant buildings of St Michael's Church and St Nicholas' Church are both medieval in date, though they are sometimes described as Saxo-Norman and it is possible that they have earlier origins. Evidence for medieval agricultural practices are present within the bounds of the proposed development area in the form of remnant ridge and furrow field systems identified through LIDAR.
- › a 1/20's map of Marden shows orchards covering the site, as does the 1887 OS map – which also shows a footpath crossing the northern field. The site has remained in agricultural use up to the present day.





ILLUS 2 Trench 1 showing maximum depth of alluvial deposition across site

- › a site walkover in May 2019, suggested the presence of buried features due to distinct differences in vegetation growth across the site. A raised platform was also identified in association with a ditch in the north-western corner of the site.

## 2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the investigation were detailed in the WS.

The primary objectives regarding archaeological features were to establish their presence, location, extent, condition, date and significance.

The results of the evaluation will be used to describe the significance of heritage assets potentially affected by the development.

The resulting archive will be organised and deposited with Herefordshire Museums Service to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.

## 3 METHOD

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the above mentioned WS and in accordance with the following documents:

- › Code of Conduct (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014)

- › Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014a)

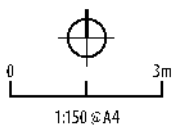
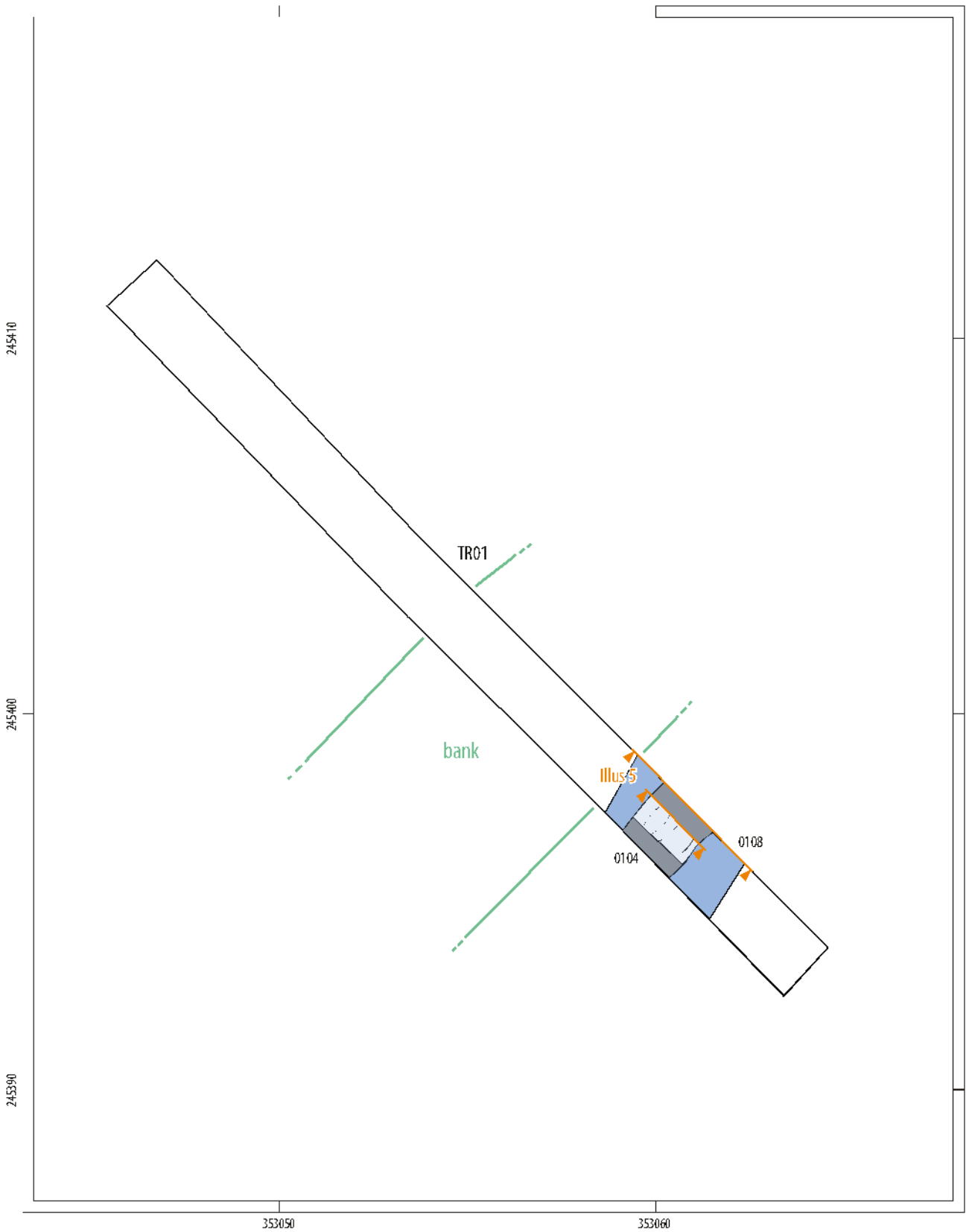
A total of six trenches, measuring 30m in length and 1.80m in width, were excavated. The work was undertaken on the 3rd and 4th of June 2019.

Prior to excavation, utility plans were consulted and a cable avoidance tool was used to check for the presence of potential buried services.

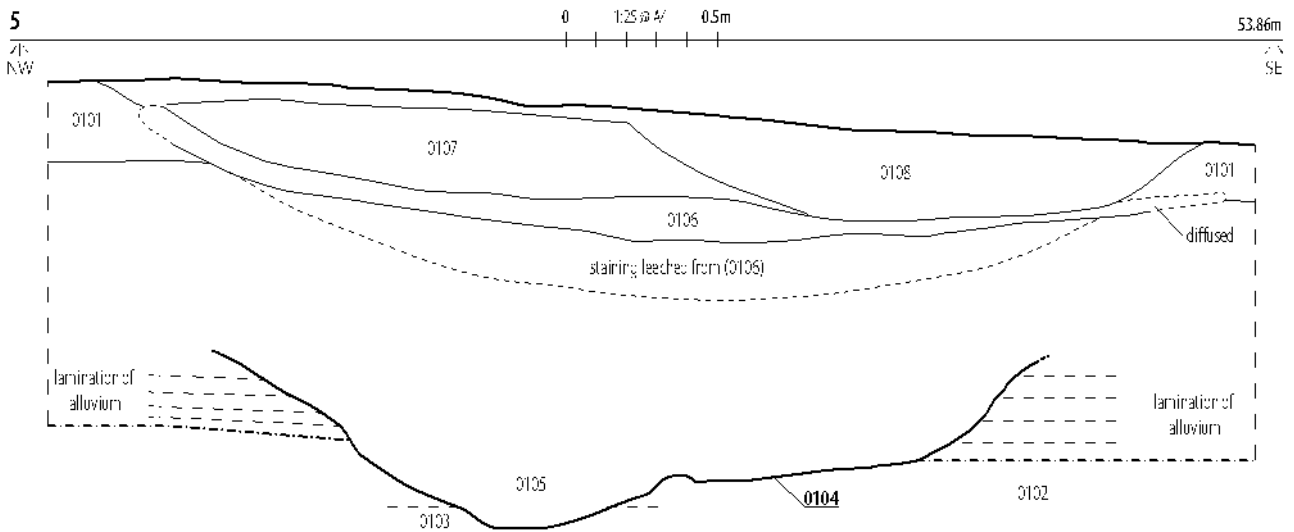
The north end of Trench 03 was moved slightly to the west in order to avoid a tree stump.

Trenches were excavated using a 14t, 360°, tracked, mechanical excavator fitted with a bladed bucket, to depths where archaeological features were identified, or geological deposits encountered. In Trenches 02 and 03, no archaeological features were identified and deposits overlying natural geology continued to a depth greater than 1.10m, where excavation was halted. A sondage was excavated in the south east end of Trench 01 which exposed geological deposits at 1.65m (illus 2).

Exposed archaeological remains were recorded on plan and Archaeology evaluation trench sheets and a representative sample of features identified were subsequently excavated by hand to determine form, function and retrieve datable material.



- trench location
- modern deposit 0108
- unexcavated/excavated archaeological feature



ILLUS 4 Section through ditch [0104], looking north-east ILLUS 5 South-west facing section through ditch [0104]

Drawings of significant archaeological remains and the general stratigraphy of the site were produced at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 where appropriate or digitally surveyed.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA). The recorded contexts were assigned unique numbers and recording was undertaken on field and Archaeology Proforma context record sheets. Context numbers followed a two-digit format (eg 01, 02 etc) prefixed by the Trench number. Digital and black and white photographs were taken of all trenches and identified features, with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. An overall site plan of the trenches and recorded features was digitally produced. Digital surveying was undertaken using a Trimble dGPS system.

## 4 RESULTS

A summary of all trenches and recorded contexts is presented as Appendix 1. A plan of excavated trenches is presented in Illus 1. A preceding summary and description of the general stratigraphy across the site is as follows.

### 4.1 GENERAL STRATIGRAPHY

The site was not in use and was heavily overgrown. Topsoil (0101), was present across the site to a depth of 0.25/0.30m. This deposit sealed an alluvial subsoil (0102), comprising a series of deposits which continued to an average depth of 1.10m below ground level (BGL) and to a maximum of 1.65m BGL. The upper 0.50m of this deposit was leached as a result of fluctuating water levels and appeared completely homogenous. At lower levels some banding was evident. Geological deposits of glacio-fluvial gravels in a sandy clay matrix (0103), were observed from a depth of 1.00m BGL. Pockets of alluvial material were still present within the geological deposit at various points across the site.

### 4.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

A single north-east to south-west aligned ditch was recorded towards the south east end of Trench 01, to a maximum depth of 1.44m BGL (Illus 3). The ditch was filled with (0105), alluvial material very similar to the surrounding subsoil, indicating that it had silted up naturally over time. The cut of the ditch was partially visible in section – from the base and rising c.0.56m (Illus 4 and 5). Above this the leaching of the ditch fill and surrounding alluvial deposits had entirely removed any sign of the cut. The ditch had silted to leave a visible depression on the ground surface. A lensed deposit of burnt material (0106), containing modern twisted copper alloy cable had





**ILLUS 6** Looking north at eroded bank on north-west side of ditch [01104]

been deposited into this depression. Sealing this was a deposit of compacted gravel (0107), containing fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), and then a stony topsoil (0108). Both were key attempts to level the ground surface. The width of the burnt deposit was 3.60m, suggesting that the ditch may originally have been of similar dimensions. The ditch has been interpreted as a land boundary and drainage feature. The topography of the existing ground surface suggests that a bank ran along the ditch on its north-west side (Illus 6). There were no discernible differences in either the topsoil or subsoil deposits to warrant recording a separate context.

### 4.3 BLANK TRENCHES

Trenches 02–06 did not contain any archaeological remains.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Very little cultural material was observed across the site. Rare fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), and a few fragments of post-medieval ceramic pottery were noted in the topsoil and its interface with the subsoil. Occasional modern material was noted in the area of Trenches 01 and 02. Heavily degraded animal bone fragments were present in the alluvial deposits, including the ditch fill but were rare and were most likely to have been deposited naturally. They would not suggest any intensity of human activity in the immediate area.

The ditch located in Trench 01 [0104] was identified in the DBA (Nikolic 2019), as a field boundary that was present in 1720. The fields either side were at that time orchards, and remained so until modern times.

Agricultural features identified in the DBA could not be discerned in any of the excavated trenches.

The paucity of evidence for human activity within the evaluation area is most likely due to the location of the site, which is situated on the edge of the flood plain. Whilst flood alleviation measures are now in place, the depth of alluvial deposits present across the site demonstrate that historically it had not been an area suitable for many uses, which might explain its prolonged standing as an orchard.

## 6 REFERENCES

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## 7 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 TRENCH AND CONTEXT REGISTER

\* D BGL – Depth Below Ground Level

RD1	ORIGIN A ION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NW-SE	30	1.8	1.10
CON. LX	DESCRIPTION			*D BGL (M)
(0101)	topsoil – mid yellowish brown clayey silt; rare small sub-rounded stone; rare very small coal fragments.			0 – 0.25
(0102)	Alluvial subsoil – Light brownish grey, slightly sandy, silty clay with rare sub-rounded gravel and stone. Small yellowish clay and pink gravelly lenses in places. Banding variable visible (more so at depth). Evidence of burrowing. No cultural inclusions.			0.25 – 1.50
(0103)	Natural geology – compacted gravels in mid reddish brown sandy clay. Pockets of alluvium still visible. Glacio-fluvial deposit.			1.50 – LOL
(0104)	Cut of NL – SW ditch – only visible part way up from base due to leached deposits higher up. Estimated up to 4m wide.			0.90 – LOL
(0105)	Fill of ditch (0104) – Mid reddish brown silty, fine sandy clay. Very rare small rounded stone and heavily degraded animal bone inclusions (not retained). Natural infill.			0.40 – LOL
(0106)	Lens of black slightly fine sandy ash deposit. Modern Cu alloy twisted cable within. Deliberate backfill to depression of silted ditch.			–
(0107)	Mid reddish brown gravels in sandy clay – compacted. Contained CBM (not retained). Deliberate backfill – levelling over silted ditch.			0.04 – 0.30
(0108)	Mid greyish brown sandy clay with frequent sub rounded stone <0.06m. Deliberate backfill over silted ditch.			0 – 0.45
SUMMARY: 1 X LARGE NE-SW DITCH				

RD2	ORIGIN A ION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NW-SE	30	1.8	1.00
CON. LX	DESCRIPTION			*D BGL (M)
(0201)	topsoil – mid yellowish brown clayey silt; rare small sub-rounded stone; rare very small coal fragments. Evidence of burrowing. Modern disturbance at NW end			0 – 0.25/0.30

(0202) Alluvial subsoil – Light brownish grey, slightly sandy, silty clay with rare sub-rounded gravel and stone. Small yellowish clay and pink gravelly lenses in places. No cultural inclusions. Evidence of burrowing. 0.25 – LOL

SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

RD3	ORIGIN A ION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	N-S	30	1.8	1.10
CON. LX	DESCRIPTION			*D BGL (M)
(0301)	topsoil – mid yellowish brown clayey silt; rare small sub-rounded stone; rare very small coal fragments.			0 – 0.30
(0302)	Alluvial subsoil – Light brownish grey, slightly sandy, silty clay with rare sub-rounded gravel and stone. Small yellowish clay and pink gravelly lenses in places. No cultural inclusions.			0.30 – 1.00–
SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS				
RD4	ORIGIN A ION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	N-S	30	1.8	1.00
CON. LX	DESCRIPTION			*D BGL (M)
(0401)	topsoil – mid yellowish brown clayey silt; rare small sub-rounded stone; rare very small coal fragments. Rare CBM.			0 – 0.25/0.30
(0402)	Alluvial subsoil – Light brownish grey, slightly sandy, silty clay with rare sub-rounded gravel and stone. Small yellowish clay and pink gravelly lenses in places. No cultural inclusions.			0.25 – 0.90/1.00
(0403)	Natural geology – compacted gravels in mid reddish brown sandy clay. Pockets of alluvium still visible. Glacio-fluvial deposit.			0.90 – LOL
SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS				
RD5	ORIGIN A ION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	N-S	30	1.8	1.00
CON. LX	DESCRIPTION			*D BGL (M)
(0501)	topsoil – mid yellowish brown clayey silt; rare small sub-rounded stone; rare very small coal fragments.			0 – 0.30

- (0502) Alluvial subsoil – Light brownish grey, slightly sandy, silty clay with rare sub-rounded gravel and stone. Small yellowish clay and pink gravelly lenses in places. No cultural inclusions. Though silt rare, a noticeably greater level of inclusions than other trenches. Rare pantheon type pottery at upper interface. 0.30 – 1.05
- (0503) Natural geology – compacted gravels in mid reddish brown sandy clay. Pockets of alluvium still visible. Glacio-fluvial deposit. 1.00 – LOL

SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

POS	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	E-W	3.0	1.8	–
CON. LX	DESCRIPTION			*DBGL (M)
(0501)	Topsoil – mid yellowish brown clayey silt; rare small sub-rounded stone; rare very small coal fragments.			0 – 0.30
(0502)	Alluvial subsoil – Light brownish grey, slightly sandy, silty clay with rare sub-rounded gravel and stone. Small yellowish clay and pink gravelly lenses in places.			0.30 – LOL
<p>SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS</p>				









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