

DEVELOPMENT ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICES Ltd

SUMMARY REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION AT LAND OFF KINGSTON LANE, EAST PRESTON, WEST SUSSEX.

[Site Centred at National Grid Reference SU 07822 02724]

West Sussex DBA HER Reference: 202122.86

**PREPARED FOR
SEAWARD PROPERTIES LTD**



By

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September 2022

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation involving the excavation of ten [10] trial trenches [10 X 30m X 2m] with a combined area of approximately 600m² was carried out at the study site by Development Archaeology Services Ltd (DAS) on and between the 22nd to 24th August 2022.

The majority [Trenches 1-9] contained no significant archaeology. The trial trenches 1-9 revealed a simple deposit sequence which consisted of a topsoil / sub soil unit that overlay a natural horizon of brickearth silts.

At the north eastern site area [Trench 10] a north west south east aligned shallow ditch was recorded. The linear contained fragments of pot preliminarily dated to the 1st / 2nd century Roman period.

Three contingency Trenches, A, B and C all produced features containing C1st- C 2nd roman / Romano British pottery.

Two additional contingency Trenches D and E both of 40m in length and with a common north south orientation were excavated to check for continuation of linear emanating from the linear found within Trench TA. These 'perimeter trenches prove negative.

The results of the evaluation suggest the north east site area, focused on evaluation Trench 10 may contain further evidence attesting to Romano British activity and possibly occupation focused on this localised site area.

Given the results of the survey it is suggested that consideration should be given to an additional phase of investigation focused on the area of evaluation Trench 10.

Additional investigation phase, if required, to be undertaken in advance of any permitted development works that may be forthcoming and after consultation with the LPA's [Arun District Council] archaeology officer.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Development Archaeology Services Limited (DAS) was commissioned by Seaward Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological field evaluation at the site. The archaeological evaluation was carried out at the development site on and between the 22nd to 24th August 2022.
- 1.2 This report documents the results of the archaeological evaluation, which was guided by a previously submitted and approved Written Scheme of Investigation [WSI] submitted by DAS [DAS, Pine C.A.2022] The WSI was submitted to and approved by Mr James Kenny, the Archaeological Officer of Chichester District Council (in his capacity as archaeological advisor on planning issues to Arun District Council (LPA)), prior to the commencement of the on-site works. This approach complies with the principles established in *NPPF: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2010) and *Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluations* (IFA, 2008) and Sussex Archaeological Standards [2019 vers]
- 1.3 Copies of this report will be deposited with the client, Mr James Kenny of Chichester District Council, as advisor to ADC and the designated recipient Museum, along with an ordered project archive for long term storage and curation as required.

2. Site Location and description & description of the proposed development

- 2.1 The assessment site currently comprises an existing field that is situated of the north-eastern frontage of Kingston Lane and to the east and south of the modern built up urban area of East Preston. The development site is located within the modern civil parish of Kingston, administrative district of Arun, county of West Sussex.
- 2.2 The assessment site is situated on well drained calcareous fine silty soils of the Coombe 1 Series, which have developed on chalky drift deposits. These in turn overlie Chalk of the Upper Cretaceous [Soil Survey, 1984; BGS, 1996].
- 2.3 The site is centred at approximately Central National Grid Reference: SU 07822 02724.
- 2.4 The assessment site is located on the lower elevations of the Sussex Coastal Plain at a height between approximately +7.25 m AOD [Above Ordnance Datum]
- 2.5 The site is predominantly used as arable farm land. At the time of the survey the site the pre-existing crop had been harvested and the ground surface was under stubble [See Plate A].
- 2.6 **Description of the proposed development.** It is understood the forthcoming application will be an outline planning application for up-to 95 dwellings on the site. An illustrative proposed build layout is shown at **Figure 3**.



Figure 1: General site location at a scale of 1:25,000. The area of the proposed development site is shown in red. (O.S. copyright licence number 100048723)



Figure 2: Site location on a vertical aerial photograph, (scale as per scale bar). The assessment site is shown outlined in red. 



Figure 3: Block plan showing the proposed layout of the development site at an original scale of 1:500 at A1, (extract from Architects plan).



Plate A. Ground / site conditions in advance of investigation.

3. Summary Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 Aside from Bronze Age finds, this study has not identified any archaeological activity or finds from the other prehistoric periods within the vicinity of the assessment site.
- 3.2 A Bronze Age flint scraper was found to the north of this assessment site in the rear garden of No. 46, Russell's Close in 1961. This may have been an isolated find, which may not be necessarily consistent with associated and contemporary settlement activity being encountered on this site.
- 3.3 Finds of Roman pottery and tile of 1st century AD date were made in 1961 at 'Briarwood', North Lane to the west of the site. These finds may suggest the presence of contemporary settlement activity within the area of this assessment site. However, modern deep ploughing activity may have modified such potential from this site.
- 3.4 No searches produced evidence for Anglo-Saxon and medieval archaeological activity or finds within the proximity of the site.
- 3.5 The map regression undertaken for this study has established that a post-medieval enclosure boundary formed the present eastern boundary to the assessment site.
- 3.6 The above summary of potential is based on review of the previously submitted Desk Based Assessment for the site [DAS Ltd 2022a].

4.0 Methodology

- 4.1 The archaeological evaluation was carried out by DAS Ltd on and between the 22nd to 24th August 2022 with the investigation / survey directed by C.A. Pine of DAS. All phases of work were guided by the previously submitted and approved WSI [DAS 2022b]
- 4.2 A total of 10 [2m X 30m] evaluation trenches were excavated at space site locations as shown at **Figure 4**. The initial excavation of the trial trenches was undertaken by a c.14 ton 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a c.2.00-metre-wide toothless ditching bucket. The machine excavated in less than 10cm spits.
- 4.3 A total area of approximately 600m² of trenching was excavated / investigated. This area equates to approximately >5.0 % of the proposed new build impact footprint
- 4.4 Trenches were positioned at spaced site intervals to allow a thorough sample of the site to be undertaken. For trench distribution within the site area refer to Figures 4 and 5 and see Plates 1-10 and Sections S1-S4.
- 4.5 In addition, due to the presence of a linear / ditch within Trench 10, 5 additional trenches of varying length were excavated proximal to Trench 10. For location of Trenches TA, TB, TC, TD and TE see Figures 4 and 5 and for detail within contingency Trenches see Figure 6. Contingency area by Trench was; Trench TA [44m²] Trench TB [24m²], Trench TC [30m²] Trench TD [80m²] and Trench TE [80m²].
- 4.6 All trenches were surveyed in and excavated under the supervision of a suitably qualified and/or experienced archaeologist(s).
- 4.7 A total of 6No. c. 20ltr bulk samples were taken from recorded linears within Trenches T10 and Trenches TA and TB. Bulk samples were processed off site. The results are shown at Appendix 1 and 2

5. Results:

- 5.1 **Trench 1** was positioned at the south-western corner of the survey area and was orientated from approximately south west north east. [See Figure 4] **Trench 1** was excavated to depths of between 0.69m-0.72m below ground levels [See Plate 1 and Section 1]. This monitored mechanical excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (001) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearths (002), which was recorded at the base of this excavation. This deposit sequence was recorded within **Representative Section 1**. No significant archaeological activity was encountered within this survey / trial trench
- 5.2 **Trench 2** was positioned at the west the survey area and was orientated north south [See Figure 4]. **Trench 2** was excavated to depths of between 0.65m-0.70m below ground levels [See Plate 2]. This monitored mechanical excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (001) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearths (002), which was recorded at the base of this excavation. No significant archaeological activity was encountered within this survey / trial trench.
- 5.3 **Trench 3** was positioned at the north west the survey area and was orientated east west [See Figure 4] **Trench 3** was excavated to depths of between 0.65m-0.72m below ground levels [See Plate 3]. This monitored mechanical excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (001) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearths (002), which was recorded at the base of this excavation. No significant archaeological activity was encountered within this survey / trial trench.
- 5.4 **Trench 4** was positioned at the west / central area of the site [See Figure 4] and was orientated south east north west. **Trench 4** was excavated to depths of between 0.65m-0.70m below ground levels [See Plate 4]. This monitored mechanical excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (001) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearths (002), which was recorded at the base of this excavation. No significant archaeological activity was encountered within this survey / trial trench
- 5.5 **Trench 5** was positioned at the south / central area of the site [See Figure 4] and was orientated south east north west. **Trench 5** was excavated to depths of between 0.56m-0.65m below ground levels [See Plate 5]. This monitored mechanical excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (001) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearths (002), which was recorded at the base of this excavation. No significant archaeological activity was encountered within this survey / trial trench

- 5.6 **Trench 6** was positioned at the central northern area of the survey area and was orientated from approximately south east north west. [See Figure 4] **Trench 6** was excavated to depths of between 0.60m-0.69m below ground levels [See Plate 6 and Section 2]. This monitored mechanical excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (001) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearths (002), which was recorded at the base of this excavation. This deposit sequence was recorded within **Representative Section 2**. No significant archaeological activity was encountered within this survey / trial trench
- 5.7 **Trench 7** was positioned at the south eastern area of the survey area and was orientated from approximately north south. [See Figure 4] **Trench 7** was excavated to depths of between 0.66m-0.68m below ground levels [See Plate 7 and Section 3]. This monitored mechanical excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (001) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearths (002), which was recorded at the base of this excavation. This deposit sequence was recorded within **Representative Section 3**. No significant archaeological activity was encountered within this survey / trial trench
- 5.8 **Trench 8** was positioned at the east of the survey area of the site [See Figure 4] and was orientated south north. **Trench 8** was excavated to depths of between 0.55m-0.60m below ground levels [See Plate 8]. This monitored mechanical excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (001) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearths (002), which was recorded at the base of this excavation. No significant archaeological activity was encountered within this survey / trial trench
- 5.9 **Trench 9** was positioned at the extreme north east of the survey area of the site [See Figure 4] and was orientated north west south east. **Trench 9** was excavated to depths of between 0.50m-0.60m below ground levels [See Plate 9]. This monitored mechanical excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (001) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearths (002), which was recorded at the base of this excavation. No significant archaeological activity was encountered within this survey / trial trench
- 5.10 **Trench 10** was positioned within the north east of the survey area of the site [See Figure 4] and was orientated north east south west. **Trench 10** was excavated to depths of between 0.50m-0.60m below ground levels [See Plate 10]. This monitored mechanical excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (001) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearths (002), which was recorded at the base of this excavation.

- 5.11 Within the western part of Trench 10 a north south aligned linear [ditch line?] was recorded. See Figure 5 and see Section 5 at Figure 6. Finds [pot frags.] recovered from this feature indicate a C1st-C2nd Romano British date for this feature. This linear extended northwards into Trench TA.
- 5.12 **Trench TA** [22m X 2m]. Contingency Trench TA was excavated to length of 22m [width 2m] parallel to T10. Trench TA was excavated to check confirm the southern extension of the linear feature T10 [003/004]. In the event TA contained a linear although of similar dimensions and fill to that recorded within T10, though at a different east west orientation [See Figure 5]
- 5.13 **Trench TB** [14m X 2m] Contingency Trench TB was excavated to length of 12m [width 2m] parallel and to the north of T10. Trench TB was excavated to check confirm the northern extension of the linear feature T10 [003/004]. In the event TB contained a linear of similar dimensions and fill to that recorded within T10 [003/004], and at a similar orientation. Linear TB [003/004] is considered and extension of the linear T10 [003/004]. [See Figure 5]
- 5.14 **Trench TC** [15m X 2m] Contingency Trench TC was excavated to length of 15m [width 2m] and orientated north west south east. Trench TC was excavated to check confirm the northern extension of the linear feature T10 [003/004] that extended into TB at a similar orientation. In the event TC contained a terminal [See Figure 5]
- 5.15 **Trench TD** [40m X 2m] was excavated with a north south orientation [See Figures 4 & 5] to the east of Trench 10. Excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (**001**) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearth (**002**), which was recorded at the base of this excavation. No significant archaeological activity was encountered within this survey / trial trench
- 5.16 **Trench TE** [40m X 2m] was excavated with a north south orientation [See Figures 4 & 5] to the west of Trench 10. Excavation extended through a topsoil horizon (**001**) and into the upper levels of an underlying natural horizon of brickearth (**002**), which was recorded at the base of this excavation. No significant archaeological activity was encountered within this survey / trial trench.
- 5.17 A total of 6No. c. 20ltr bulk samples were taken from recorded linears within Trenches T10 and Trenches TA and TB. Bulk samples were processed off site. The results are shown at Appendix 1 and 2.

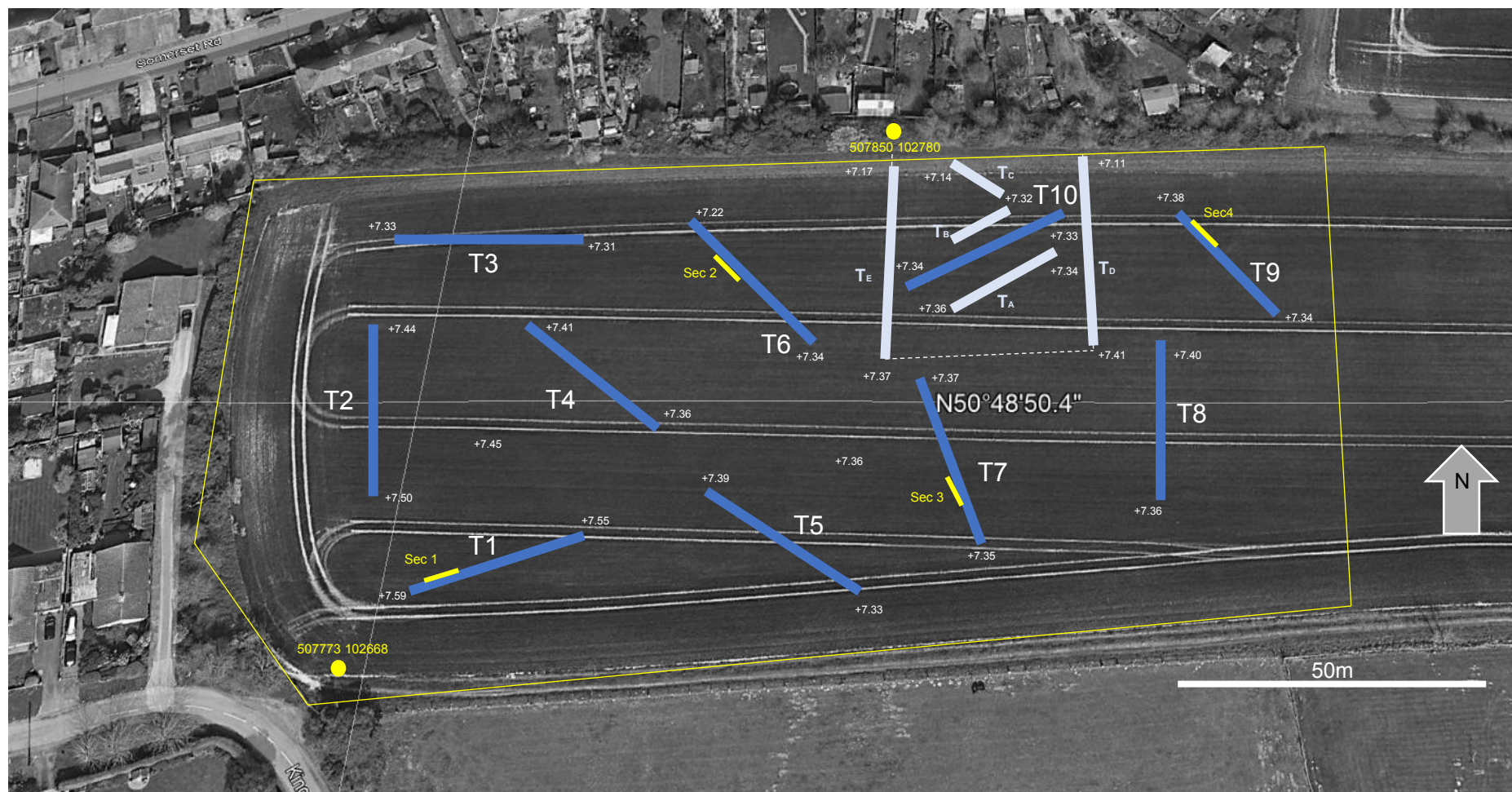
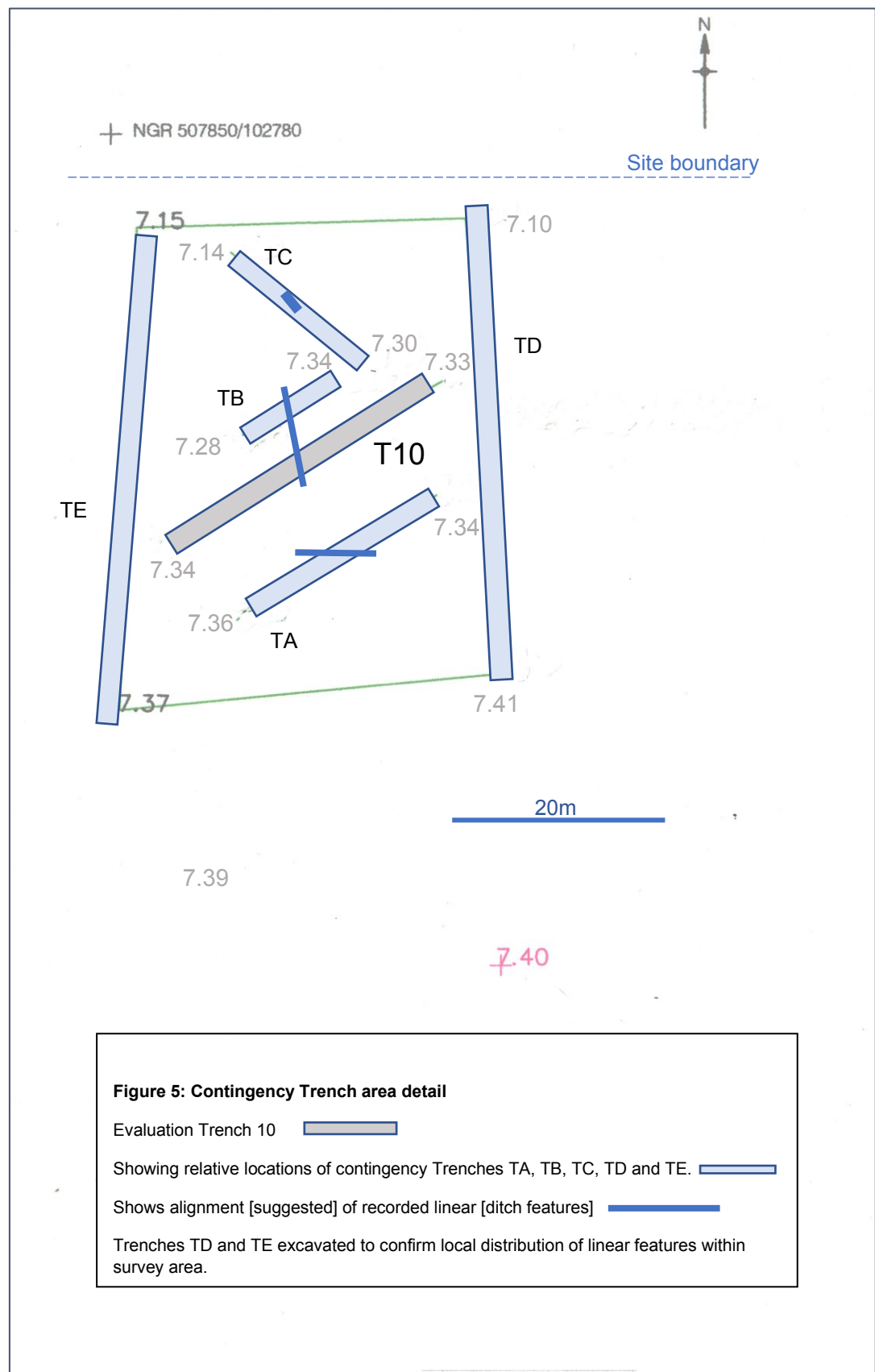


Figure 4. Shows location of Evaluation **Trenches 1-10**

Shows location of representative **Sections 1-4**. [For section descriptions see Section Plates 1-4]

Shows location of contingency **Trenches TA to TD**

[Contingency excavation of trenching totalling 258m².



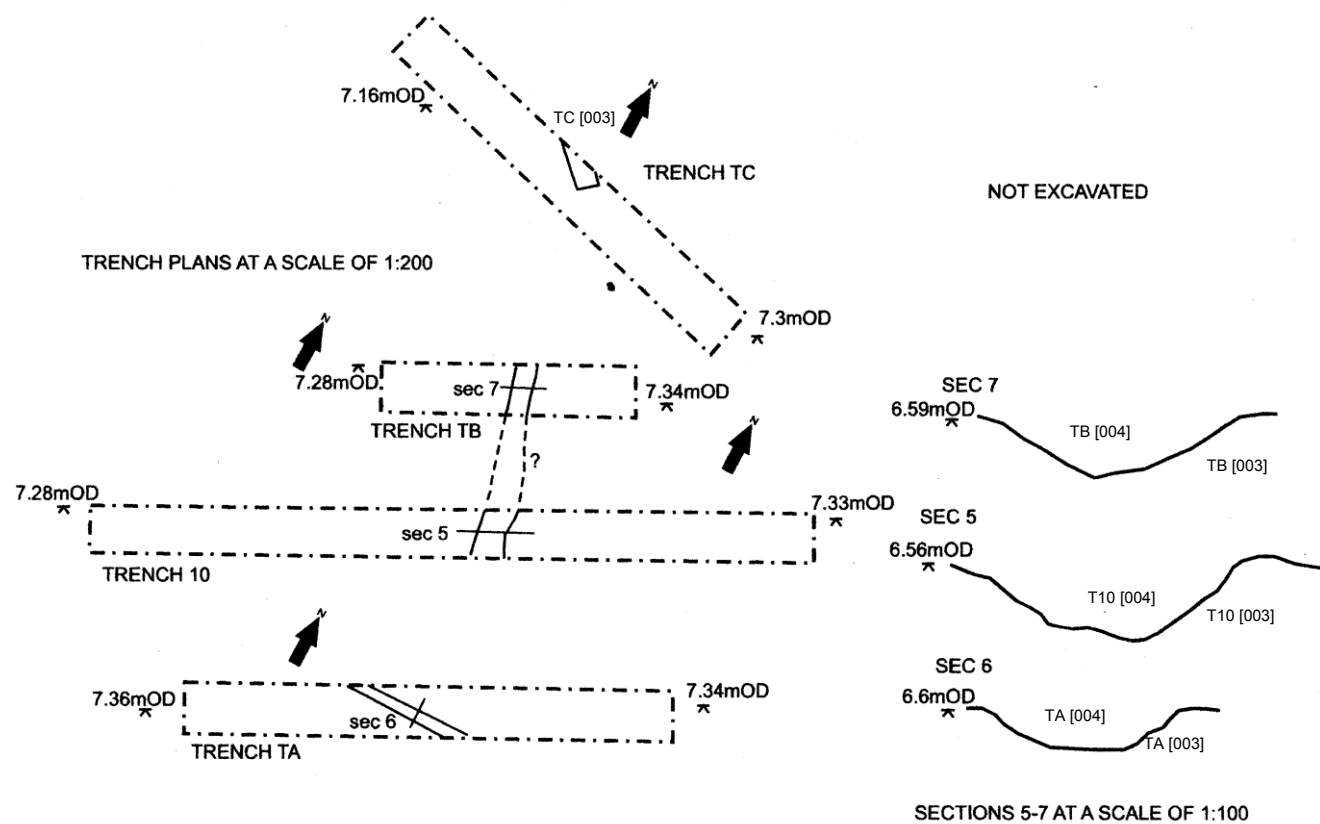


Figure 6:

Location / detail within contingency Trenches:

Contingency Trench detail:

TA: 22mX2m [44m²]

TB 12m X 2m [24m²]

TC 15mX2m [30m²]

Refer to Figure 5 for location of 'negative' contingency Trenches TD & TE

6.0 Discussion and conclusion

- 6.1 The majority [Trenches 1-9] contained no significant archaeology. The trial trenches 1-9 revealed a simple deposit sequence which consisted of a topsoil / sub soil unit that overlay a natural horizon of brickearth silts.
- 6.2 At the north eastern site area [Trench 10] a north west south east aligned shallow ditch was recorded. The linear contained fragments of pot preliminarily dated to the 1st / 2nd century Roman period.
- 6.3 As a result of finds made within Trench 10, 5 contingency Trenches, with a total contingency investigation area of 258m², were excavated in this localised area. The main purpose of the additional trench excavation was to check / confirm the extent of the linear recorded within Trench 10 and check for the presence / absence of any additional features within this site area.
- 6.4 Trench TA to the south of Trench 10 contained an additional approximately east west aligned linear. Finds from this linear were of equivalent date to that recorded within Trench 10 [1st / 2nd century Roman period.
- 6.5 Trench TB to the north of Trench 10 contained an extension of the linear recorded within Trench 10 again containing pot preliminarily dated to the 1st / 2nd century Roman period.
- 6.7 The most northerly Trench, Trench TC contained the terminal of a north east south east aligned linear that although not physically connected to the linear within Trenches TA, and TB. produced finds dated to 1st / 2nd century Roman period.
- 6.8 Two additional contingency Trenches D and E both of 40m in length and with a common north south orientation were excavated to check for continuation of linear emanating from the linear found within Trench TA. Trenches TD and TE produced no significant archaeology suggesting the main focus for archaeological evidence /activity is contained within a localised area centred on Trench 10.
- 6.9 The general characteristics of recovered pot and probably associated finds [quern stone fragments] suggests a localised activity / possibly occupation area focused within the area of Trench 10. Datable evidence suggests activity /occupation confirmed within the c. late C1st early C2nd.
- 6.10 It is considered that the form and extent of the recorded linears are contained within the site area within and defined by contingency Trenches TD and TE.
- 6.11 The results of the evaluation suggest the north east site area, focused on evaluation Trench 10 may contain further evidence attesting to Romano British activity and possibly occupation, focused on this localised site area.

- 6.12 Given the results of the survey it is suggested that consideration should be given to an additional phase of investigation focused on the area of evaluation Trench 10.
- 6.13 Additional investigation phase, if required, to be undertaken in advance of any permitted development works that may be forthcoming and after consultation with the LPA's [Arun District Council] archaeology officer.

7.0 Acknowledgements

- 7.1 Thanks are gratefully extended to Seaward Properties Ltd for commissioning this work. Thanks, are also extended to James Kenny [Chichester District Councils archaeology officer and advisor to Arun District Council regarding archaeology] for his assistance and comments throughout. all project stages.

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Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4

4

Plate 1: Trench 1 viewed from the north east looking to the south west.

Plate 2: Trench 2 viewed from the north looking to the south.

Plate 3: Trench 3 viewed from the east looking to the west

Plate 4: Trench 4 viewed from the south east looking to the north west

For trench locations within the site refer to Figure 4.

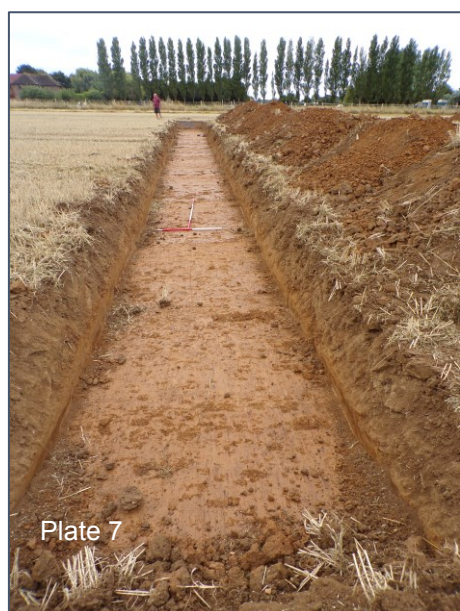


Plate 5: Trench 5 viewed from the south east looking to the north west

Plate 6: Trench 6 viewed from the south east looking to the north west

Plate 7: Trench 7 viewed from the north looking to the south

Plate 8: Trench 8 viewed from the south looking to the north

For trench locations within the site refer to Figure 4.



Plate 9



Plate 10



Plate 11



Plate 12

Plate 9: Trench 9 viewed from the south east looking to the north west

Plate 10: Trench 10 viewed from the north east looking to the south west

Plate 11: Trench TD viewed from the south looking to the north

Plate 12: Trench TE viewed from the north looking to the south

For trench locations within the site refer to **Figure 4**.



Plate 13:

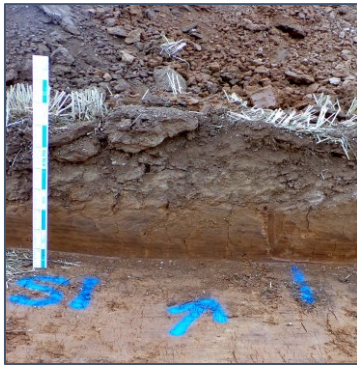
Section 5 Trench 10 [south facing section] [T10
[003/004]

Refer to Figure s 5 and 6 for detail.



Plate 14: Contingency Trench TC viewed rom the north east looking to the south west.

Plate 15: Trench C: Plan detail showing TC [003/004].



Section 1: Top of Section + 7.55 [south east facing section]

0.00-0.22 10YR 5/2 greyish brown silt. Moderately firm and compact, moderately well rooted [topsoil]

0.22 diffuse horizontal contact

0.22-0.32 10YR 6/3 pale brown silt / clay silt [subsoil]

0.32 moderately sharp horizontal contact

0.32-0.72 10YR 6/4 light yellowish brown silt / clay silt. Brickearth silt

Base of section at + 6.83m OD.



Section 2: Top of Section + 7.27 [north east facing section]

0.00-0.26 10YR 6/4 light yellowish brown silt. Moderately firm and compact well rooted [topsoil]

0.26 diffuse horizontal contact

0.26-0.35 10YR 6/4 pale brown silt / clay silt [subsoil]

0.35-60 10YR 6/4 light yellowish brown silt / clay silt. Brickearth silt

Base of section at +6.62m OD



Section 3: Top of Section + 7.35 [east facing section]

0.00-0.24 10YR 6/4 light yellowish brown silt. Moderately firm and compact well rooted [topsoil]

0.24 diffuse horizontal contact

0.26-0.36 10YR 6/4 pale brown silt / clay silt [subsoil]

0.35-0.65 10YR 6/4 light yellowish brown silt / clay silt. Brickearth silt

Base of section at +6.70m OD



Section 4: Top of Section + 7.40 [north east facing section]

0.00-0.17 10YR 6/4 light yellowish brown silt. Moderately firm and compact well rooted [topsoil]

0.17 diffuse horizontal contact

0.17-0.31 10YR 6/4 pale brown silt / clay silt [subsoil]

0.31-60 10YR 6/4 light yellowish brown silt / clay silt. Brickearth silt

Base of section at +6.80m OD

APPENDIX 1

[Pottery CBM and geological material]

[L. Barber]

Angmering East Preston eval LB finds (DAS)

The Pottery by Luke Barber

The archaeological work recovered 27 sherds of pottery, weighing 486g, from four individually numbered contexts. The material has been fully listed by provisional ware type in **Table 1** as part of the visible archive. Overall, the pottery consists of medium-sized sherds that, although relatively unabraded, have suffered from being buried in an acidic subsoil. As such the material does not appear to have been subjected to any significant reworking.

Table 1: Pottery assemblage (RB – Romano-British 43-410AD).

Context	Fabric	Period [spot date]	No	Weight (g)	Comments (including estimated number of different vessels represented by form.? = undiagnostic of form)
T/A [003/004]	R1a Arun Valley type medium grey sandy ware	RB [spot date] later C1st-2nd	3	24	Jar x1 (simple everted rim); x1
T/A [003/004]	R2a Rowlands Castle type ware	RB [spot date] later C1st-2nd	1	25	Jar x1 (out-turned rim)
T/B [003/004]	R1a Arun Valley type medium grey sandy ware	RB [spot date] later C1st-2nd	4	97	? x2
T/B [003/004]	R1b Arun Valley type medium oxidised sandy ware	RB [spot date] later C1st-2nd	4	54	Jar x1 (simple everted rim); x1
T/B [003/004]	R2a Rowlands Castle type ware	RB [spot date] later C1st-2nd	1	131	Storage jar x1 (oxidised, internally thumbled. Possibly early Rowlands Castle)
T/B [003/004]	R3a Fine sandy oxidised ware	RB [spot date] later C1st-2nd	2	19	? Flagon x1
T/B [003/004]	R4a Silty reduced ware	RB [spot date] later C1st-2nd	1	2	? x1
T/C [003/004]	R3b Fine sandy greyware (Alice Holt type)	RB [spot date] later C1st-2nd	2	25	? x1
T10/[003/004]	R1a Arun Valley type medium grey sandy ware	RB [spot date] later C1st-2nd	5	76	Jar x1 (simple everted rim); x1
T10/[003/004]	R1b Arun Valley type medium oxidised sandy ware	RB [spot date] later C1st-2nd	3	24	? x1
T10/[003/004]	R4b Silty oxidised ware	RB [spot date] later C1st-2nd	1	9	? x1

All of the pottery is of Roman date. The majority of sherds consist of sandy ware products of the generalised Arun Valley industry which dominated the local markets in the later 1st to 2nd centuries. Other pieces include some probable Rowlands Castle products and a few fine wares that may also be of local manufacture. Overall, the assemblage would appear to relate to activity in the later 1st to 2nd centuries. The single better made greyware sherd from T/C is finer and has much in common with Alice Holt products. This suggests a slightly later but overlapping date, perhaps in the 2nd to 3rd centuries. More diagnostic sherds would be needed to confirm and/or refine the current dating.

The pottery assemblage is small and of types well known of in the area. It is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis beyond that undertaken for this report but should be reviewed in the light of any further pottery that may be recovered during any mitigation works at the site.

The Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

Just six pieces of ceramic building material were recovered. The assemblage is summarised in Table 2.

Context	Form	Period	Date	No	Weight (g)	Dimensions	Comments
T/B [003/004]	Burnt clay	?	?	1	106	n/a	Silty. Amorphous
T10 [003/004]	Burnt clay	?	?	6	51	n/a	Silty. Amorphous

Table 2: Ceramic Building Material assemblage summary (? – not intrinsically datable)

The assemblage consists solely of pieces of silty fired clay. These are not datable in their own right but probably relate to the Roman activity at the site. All consist of amorphous lumps with no morphological features. As such it is uncertain if the pieces are daub or simply pieces of accidentally burnt clay.

The ceramic building material assemblage consists solely of amorphous pieces of burnt clay. As such the assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis beyond that undertaken for this report. This material is not suitable for long-term curation in a museum and has therefore been discarded.

The Geological Material by Luke Barber

The archaeological work recovered just two pieces of stone from the site. The material has been fully listed in Table 3 as part of the visible archive.

Context	Sample	Stone type	No	Weight (g)	Comments
T/A [003/004]		Lodsworth-type Lower Greensand	1	609	Rotary quern fragment. Lower stone. 25+ to 52mm+ thick. Worn grinding face
T10 [003/004]		Fire-cracked flint	1	26	

Table 3: Stone assemblage

Fire-cracked flint is a common find on prehistoric and Roman sites in the area and is not unexpected here. The quernstone fragment suggests an agricultural base to the Roman occupation but is of the most common stone type used for querns in West Sussex. The stone is of well-known types for the area/period and is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis.

APPENDIX 2

Assessment of charcoal from three bulk sediment samples recovered during archaeological works at; Land off Kingston Lane, East Preston, West Sussex.

by

C.A. Pine with contribution from J Carrott

Summary

3 Small 'flots', consisting largely of small quantities of charcoal, recovered from three bulk sediment samples from 3 linears encountered during archaeological works were submitted for species identification (if possible) and a determination of their bioarchaeological potential.

The trenches were excavated and encountered 1st/2nd century boundary/irrigation ditches which appeared to indicate activity within a Romano-British managed landscape.

The quantities of charcoal recovered from each deposit were very small and represented no more than a 'background' level of material, presumably fuel waste. The greatest 'concentration' was from the fill of linear 10 [003/004] which gave just 4.2 g of 'flot' – mostly charcoal but including a few small stones – from a sample of 40 litres of sediment.

All of the charcoal was rectilinear, fragment size was uniformly small (the largest individual fragment being no more than 8 mm), and preservation was poor with most of the fragments being fragile and crumbly. Some fragments also exhibited a vitrified appearance and distorted cell structure.

The no clear, accurate definitive species level identification was possible.

Although sufficient charcoal was recovered from each of the deposits for radiocarbon dating (via AMS) to be attempted, none of the material was considered suitable for submission for this purpose

Introduction

Archaeological works were undertaken by Development Archaeology Services Ltd (DAS) at land north-eastern frontage of Kingston Lane and to the east and south of the modern built up urban area of East Preston. The site is centred on NGR SU07822 02724.

Of 10 trial trenches excavated only Trench 10 located at the north east of the site produced any defined archaeological features consisting of shallow linear 'ditch' features. A contingency of 5 additional trenches [total contingency area of 258m²] were excavated in close proximity to Evaluation Trench 10 and encountered 1st/2nd century boundary/irrigation ditches which appeared to indicate the perimeter of a Romano-British managed landscape.

Three bulk samples [25ltrs] Small quantities of charcoal recovered from three bulk sediment samples collected from the fills of three sections were examined for species identification (if possible) and a determination of their general bioarchaeological potential.

Methods

The samples were processed by DAS following their standard methodology. Samples were processed outside using a 'Siraf' style flotation tank (Williams 1973), with meshes of 500 microns for retention of the residue and the 'flot' collected in a 300-micron mesh sieve. Residues were subject to additional bucket flotation in order to obtain maximum possible retrieval of environmental evidence.

Only the 'flot' fractions, which consisted almost entirely of charcoal, were submitted for assessment.

Charcoal identifications were attempted for larger fragments, all of which were over 4 mm in at least one dimension. Pieces were broken to give clean cross-sectional surfaces and the anatomical structures were examined using a low-power binocular microscope (x7 to x45) and higher magnification where necessary (x100 and x150). Identifications, where possible, were made by comparison with modern reference material where possible, and with reference to published works (principally Hather 2000 and Schoch *et al.* 2004).

During recording, consideration was given to the identification of suitable remains (if present) for possible submission for radiocarbon dating by standard radiometric technique or accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS).

Results

The results of the examination of the submitted remains are presented below in context number order by Trench. Archaeological information, provided by the excavator, is given in square brackets. A brief summary of the processing method follows (in round brackets) after the sample numbers and additional information provided by the excavator regarding the sediments is shown as “Excavator’s description”.

TRENCH 10

Context T10 003/004 [004 fill of shallow, linear Pottery dated C1st/C2nd Romano British.

Sample B1 (40 litres sieved to 500 microns with 300 micron ‘flot’ sieve; no unprocessed sediment remains)

Excavator’s description: Mid to dark grey/brown silt fill. Sparse charcoal fragments present.

Results: The submitted ‘flot’ (dry weight 6 g) was predominantly charcoal (to 12 mm; ~7 fragments over 2 mm), together with occasional small stones (to 3 mm). Charcoal was mixed rectilinear and roundwood fragments all of which were fragile, crumbly and mostly rather thin slivers (with at least one dimension less than 2 mm), and species identification was attempted for 5 pieces. **No precise species definition was possible.**

CONTINGENCY TRENCH A

Context TA 003/004 [004 fill of shallow linear Pottery dated C1st/C2nd Romano British.

Sample B2 (40 litres sieved to 500 microns with 300 micron ‘flot’ sieve; no unprocessed sediment remains)

Excavator’s description: Mid to dark grey clay silt fill. Pockets of dark brown/black staining present.

Results: No ‘flot’ produced. Negative.

CONTINGENCY TRENCH B

Context TB 003/004 [004 fill of shallow, linear Pottery dated C1st/C2nd Romano British.

Sample B3 (40 litres sieved to 500 microns with 300 micron ‘flot’ sieve; no unprocessed sediment remains)

Excavator’s description: Mid to dark grey/brown silt fill. Sparse charcoal fragments present.

Results: The submitted ‘flot’ (dry weight 8 g) was predominantly charcoal (to 10 mm; ~5 fragments over 2 mm), together with occasional small stones (to 4 mm). Charcoal was mixed rectilinear and roundwood fragments all of which were fragile, crumbly and mostly rather thin slivers (with at least one dimension less than 2 mm), and species identification was attempted for 5 pieces. **No precise species definition was possible.**

Discussion and statement of potential

Although present in two of the sampled deposits the quantities of charcoal recovered from each were very small representing no more than a 'background' level of material, presumably fuel waste.

All of the charcoal was uniformly small (the largest individual fragment being no more than 12 mm – from Context TB 003/004) and preservation was poor with all of the fragments being fragile and crumbly.

No definitive species level identifications were possible owing to distortion of the cell structures and as a result of the fragile nature of the remains.

The quantities of charcoal were very small but sufficient for radiocarbon dating (via AMS) to be attempted. This material cannot be recommended for the purpose, however. All of the fragments were of an indeterminate number of years of wood growth and none being identified to species. Furthermore, there is the possibility that such small amounts of material may have been disturbed from their original point of deposition by, for example, bioturbation, which would also cast considerable doubt on the validity of extending any dates returned to the deposits as a whole.

Recommendations

No further study of the charcoal from the sediment samples is warranted.

Retention and disposal

The small quantities of charcoal recovered from the sediment samples are of no additional interpretative value and may be discarded.

References

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