University of Salford MANCHESTER

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Cuerden Strategic Site,
South Ribble,
Lancashire

Client:
Lancashire County Council and Maple Grove Development Ltd

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Technical Report:
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The Centre for Applied Archaeology

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Summary

Lancashire County Council and Maple Grove Development Limited have obtained planning consent for a major mixed-use development at Cuerden, in the Central Lancashire borough of South Ribble. The study area extends to 65 hectares and comprises land to the south of the M65, to the west of A49 Wigan Road, and east of Stanifield Lane, near Cuerden in Lancashire (centred on NGR SD 55526 24603). The hybrid planning application (Planning Ref: 07/2017/0211/ORM) comprises a wide range of residential and commercial premises, car parks and roads, the construction of which is likely to cause damage to any surviving archaeological remains.

The potential for archaeological remains to survive across the development site was highlighted in an archaeological assessment that was prepared to support the planning application. This concluded that intrusive site investigation to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains was merited. In the light of this conclusion, Lancashire County Council commissioned Salford Archaeology to devise an execute an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation which, in the first instance, comprised the excavation of 15 evaluation trenches that aimed to establish the presence, extent and nature or any below-ground remains, to enable informed recommendations to be made for the future of any surviving features.

The trenches were targeted on a medieval/post-medieval farmstead, and a range of cropmarks indicative of earlier field-systems and occupation, perhaps of prehistoric origin. In addition, the two putative routes of a Roman road between the fort at Wigan and the industrial settlement at Walton-le-Dale are projected along the western and eastern edges of the site, and these courses were targeted by evaluation trenches.

The results obtained from the evaluation have demonstrated the survival of a suite of structural remains relating to the medieval/post-medieval farmstead, together with several negative features of post-medieval date. The trenching of known or suspected cropmarks also produced positive results. The presence of ditches and gullies attest to ancient field systems, which diverge from the existing pattern of field boundaries. Such features appear on the basis of their typology and stratigraphy to pre-date the medieval/post-medieval enclosures and, significantly, may potentially represent prehistoric activity or settlement in the area.

It is not considered that any of these remains are of national importance that would necessitate preservation *in-situ*, although the features encountered during the evaluation are considered to be of high local/borough or regional significance, particularly those features of potential prehistoric origin. In order to offset the harm of development on the archaeological resource of the site, it would be appropriate to implement a further stage of intrusive archaeological excavation in advance of development.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In January/February 2018, Salford Archaeology was commissioned by Lancashire County Council and Maple Grove Development Limited to carry out an archaeological evaluation for a major mixed-use development at Cuerden, in the Central Lancashire borough of South Ribble. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Salford Archaeology in December 2017, and was undertaken in order to fulfil a condition placed on the planning permission for the development of the site (Planning Ref: 07/2017/0211/ORM).

The evaluation comprised the excavation of 15 trenches that were targeted on a medieval/post-medieval farmstead and a range of cropmarks indicative of earlier field-systems and occupation. The trenches were intended to assess the presence and condition of the below-ground archaeological resource, thereby enabling informed recommendations to be made for the future treatment of any surviving remains, in line with the guidance provided by the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main objective of the evaluation was to provide an assessment of the archaeological resource that survived across the site to enable informed decisions to be made for their treatment in advance of the development of the site. This objective was supplemented in academic terms by more specific research aims which intended to:

- define the footprint of structural remains of medieval/post-medieval farmhouse and devise an appropriate strategy for understanding the building and its environs;
- investigate a series of cropmarks and earthworks relating to past human activity;
- advance the understanding of settlement land-use in this part of Lancashire.

1.3 Setting

The study area (centred on NGR SD 55526 24603) lies within the dispersed historic settlement of Cuerden. The settlement occupies a position to the south of the River Lostock, and is encompassed by a wide range of ecosystems being close to the historic Farrington Moss, drained wetland, wooded and open pasture, arable land and woodland. The study area occupies an irregular plot of land bounded by the M65 to the north, the A49 Wigan Road to the east, and Stanifield Lane to the west (Plate 1), and lies at a height of approximately 36m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). At the time of the evaluation, the site comprised a mixture of pasture and plantation.

Plate 1: Aerial view across Cuerden, showing the site boundary

The solid geology over most of the site is the Sidmouth Mudstone Formation – Mudstone and Halitestone, although there is a small area within the eastern part of the site that consists of Hambleton Mudstone Member – Mudstone geology. The solid geology is overlain by till and glacio-fluvial deposits of sands and gravel. There is a small area of clay over towards the eastern part of the site (www.bgs.ac.uk).

The natural topography of the area has been little altered by modern development, excepting the construction and widening of nearby roads and motorways, and the extensive extraction of sand in an area beyond the southern boundary. Archival sources and cartographic evidence allow some reconstruction of the natural landscape to be made.

The earliest detailed maps, tithe and estate maps from the 18th and 19th century, highlight a great deal of continuity in the division and use of land and concentration of settlement. The available mapping does make clear a trend of localised population decline in the hamlets of Lower and Higher Green from the mid-19th century, reflected in the disappearance of crofts around Cuerden Nook and the abandonment of Pinfold House. Nevertheless, the area has retained a rural prospect and continues to support pastoral farming. The aspect of the site is largely unaltered, although at a distance it has been surrounded by frequent, modern residential and commercial development.

2. Historical Background

2.1 Contextual Background

Very little direct evidence for prehistoric settlement has been found locally. Mesolithic activity within Lancashire is known and has been mapped to lowland areas close to rivers and the coast, partially using the extent of wooded areas as an indicator of human activity (Hodgson and Brennand 2006, 28). The interface between different ecological zones is frequently highlighted as being favorable for prehistoric subsistence and occupation (Reader, 2016). Studies of the wetland area around Farrington Moss, located approximately 2.5km to the west of the site, for example, has brought to light a relatively small yet impressive collection of finds attesting to its habitation/exploitation through the prehistoric and Romano-British periods with flint tools, stone querns, jewelry and a substantial coin hoard found in its vicinity (Middleton, Tooley and Innes *et al*, 2013, 161). It seems likely this environment, which is rich in natural resources, would have been exploited over a very long period of time.

Evidence for Neolithic and Bronze Age activity are markedly absent in the immediate environs of the site. There have, however, been many individual artefactual finds within a 10km of the site, including a socketed axe and socketed spearhead found at Fishwick and a perforated stone hammer found in Cadley (ARCHI 2018). During the Iron Age, settlement and human activity in the whole of north-west England is much less understood than in the rest of the country (Hodgson and Brennand 2006, 51). There are few thoroughly investigated Iron Age sites in this part of Lancashire.

On the whole, physical evidence from the periods spanning the Mesolithic to Iron Age is poorly represented. Potential evidence is recorded in the Lancashire Historic Environment Record, with Iron Age activity in the form of cropmarks identified in the northern part of the site. It is believed that an Iron Age antennae enclosure was visible on past aerial photography, whilsy subsequent analysis of aerial photographs from the 1940s and 1960s has revealed a network of linear and curvilinear cropmarks visible across the northern half of the site, substantiating the HER record (Plate 2).

There is stronger evidence for Romano-British activity in the North West, much of which is related to the Roman military, such as the supply depot and settlement at Walton-le-Dale, occupying a strategic site at the confluence of the rivers Ribble and Darwen, some 3.5km to the north of Cuerden. A Roman road connected Wigan and Lancaster, via Walton-le-Dale. As of yet, this road has not been found archaeologically, and it is possible that this road may lie underneath or close to the A5083. Two potential routes of this Roman road were targeted by Trenches 6, 7 and 8 during the present archaeological evaluation. In spite of the more permanent and visible Roman additions to the wider landscape, however, no identifiably Roman sites have been found in close proximity to the study area.

Plate 2: Linear cropmarks in the northern part of the site visible on mid-20th-century aerial photography

Evidence from the early medieval period is similarly scarce. However, place-name studies, hoards, isolated finds, and geography suggest that Lancashire would have seen activity during this time, particularly related to Hiberno-Norse culture and Irish Sea trading network (Griffiths 2010, 33). While archaeological evidence for activity in the early medieval period around Cuerden is sparse, spectacular finds such as the Cuerdale hoard shed some light on activity during this period in and around the Ribble Valley. Found just 8km from the site, this Viking-Age hoard contained coins and hacksilver weighing over 40kg (Graham-Campbell 2010, 2). It was buried sometime in the early 10th century, and its deposition close to the River Ribble reflected the importance of the trade route. This suggests that there was a significant amount of early medieval activity in the area, although the archaeological evidence is still limited.

The name Cuerden is first recorded as *Kerden* in *c* 1200 and appears to derive from *cerddin*, which is Welsh for Mountain Ash (Ekwall 1922; Breeze 1999, 193). This suggests that a settlement may have existed in the Cuerden area in the early medieval period. It was one of nine townships within the Leyland Hundred administrative district, and is briefly mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 (Morgan 1978). It is also mentioned in the 13th century when the lordship passed from the Molyneux family to the Banastres of Walton-le-Dale and Newton-in-Makerfield. It appears to have passed through to several families over the next few centuries, including the Charnocks, the Langtons and the Banastres again by the 17th century (Farrer and Brownbill 1911, 23). The present Cuerden Hall dates to the 18th century, although there is reference to an 'original' house on the site (*op cit*, 24), but with no reference to when it originates from.

Cuerden lies 5km to the south-east of Penwortham, which was an important settlement during the medieval period. It had a castle as well as a monastic cell and occupied a strategically important site overlooking the River Ribble. There were also moated homesteads closer to the study area, likely established around 12th-13th century, such as at Clayton Hall and Farrington Hall (Hallam 1980) (2.6km to the south and 2km to the south-west of the study area respectively). Excavation at Clayton Hall yielded fragments of pottery dating to the 14th century (OA North 2008).

Part of the study area is named Cuerden Green, which was a part of the Walton-le-Dale township. Lostock Hall, now a village in its own right, was originally part of Cuerden Green, and the manor is first mentioned in the 14th century as belonging to James de Lostock. Through marriage, it passed to the Banastres during the 15th century before changing hands several times and ending up with the Dandies during the 17th century (Farrer and Brownbill 1911, 295). Within the study area itself, the 1839 tithe map and the first edition Ordnance Survey map show small areas of fossilized field boundaries which could be medieval in date, and ridge and furrow cropmarks are also known from aerial photography. LiDAR data also shows ridge and furrow ploughmarks, characteristic of medieval agricultural practice, across several fields within the study area.

The wider area cemented its association with textile manufacturing during the post-medieval period, particularly in Preston to the north. This is also when the study area begins to develop beyond just agricultural use. Other landowners are also documented at this time within the Cuerden township, including the Woodcocks who are documented from the 16th century onwards. They lived at Woodcock Hall, which was built in the 17th century. The Dandy family came to own Lostock Hall during the 17th century, and it is to this family that one of the earliest known buildings in the study area is dedicated. Although the dedication is dated 1690, Andrew Dandy left money to found a school in Cuerden in 1673 (Farrer and Brownbill 1911, 29), so it was probably built around this time.

However, the school struggled after Andrew's grandson, also called Andrew, died in 1714 as the £5 per annum was not enough to supply a schoolmaster, and the charity was in arrears of £126 and 15 shillings by 1740. It appears a trust was set up, consisting of 12 members including Daniel Dandy and Thomas Woodcock to settle the arrears and continue to provide for the poor. It was still run as a school into the 19th century, partly helped by a further endowment by Samuel Crooke in 1770, a local philanthropist and benefactor. According to a Commissioner's report of 1826, it still had a trust of 12 Governors and taught 20 fee-paying children and five 'poor free children'. Children were taught reading, writing and casting accounts (summing columns of figures).

The earliest detailed map of the area is an estate map dating to *c* 1700, which shows a few of the fields with names corresponding to the 19th-century tithe map and Walmsley Farm. It is not clear for what purpose this map was drawn up, although the fields coincide with the land tenanted by John Walmsley and owned by Susanna Hoghton on the tithe mapping and schedule. It also indicates that Cuerden Green was located within the north-western part of the site. It has been argued that this area was a large green and a centre for the local community's activities (*Leyland Guardian* 19th Dec 2014).

The next available map is William Yates' map of Lancashire, dating to 1786, and although not completely accurate, it depicts several isolated buildings within the study area, with a focus around the junction of Old School Lane and Stony Lane. It also shows several buildings around Cuerden Nook or Higher Green to the south, and a possible moss/wasteland area to the north-east of the study area and where the M65 is now located. This area also extended into the north-western part of the study area, although this was reclaimed for agriculture in 1804.

Several buildings depicted on Yates' map can be seen on the 1839 tithe map and first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1848, including Cuerden School, Pinfold House and Stoney Lane House. Two buildings shown at Old School Lane/Stony Lane crossroads on both maps are not labelled, but one is possibly Blackhurst Farm. The Wigan-Preston road that ran along the eastern boundary of the study area was established as a turnpike road in 1727. The field pattern shows that much of the area has changed little since *c* 1700. Although not labelled, there are several circular features on the first edition Ordnance Survey map, and others have been recorded within the study area, which have been interpreted as marl pits (OA North 2002a). These were pits that tended to have an elongated square end with a rounded end, normally dug to a depth of 1-2m. Although difficult to date, they appear to have been part of a long-standing agricultural practice.

By the late 19th century, a few minor changes can be seen from the first edition 25": 1 mile Ordnance Survey map of 1893. Pinfold House has been demolished, a building shown to the south of the school appears to have also gone, Walmsleys is first named as such on this map, and another building appears to have gone which was located to the south of Stony Lane. Some of the field boundaries have been swept away to create larger fields, new marl pits are shown and others have been infilled. A new woodland was created towards the eastern side of the study area, known as New Plantation.

The site appears to have changed little during the 20th century; the school was discontinued in 1909 and allowances made to sell the buildings, which eventually happened in 1912. The charitable foundation continued to exist and held the leasehold over the property, to continue to educate the children of Cuerden, and this still appears to be the case. The farmsteads remain although some buildings have been demolished and new ones constructed.

The field patterns remain broadly the same, although some amalgamation has taken place but, in general terms, little new development has taken place. Immediately within the vicinity of the study area, however, surrounding villages like Lostock Hall and Bamber Bridge have grown, and the construction of the motorways during the later 20th century have had an impact. However, this has not changed the character of the site, which still to this day remains predominantly rural.

Plate 3: Plan of the township of Cuerden in the Parish of Leyland, dated 1839, showing the footprint of Pinfold House

3. Methodology

3.1 Excavation Methodology

Prior to the commencement of the evaluation trenching, the Client provided Salford Archaeology with service plans for the area, and the areas of trenching were scanned with a cable avoidance tool. In total, 15 evaluation trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Spoil was placed next to the excavated trenches, and was then backfilled on completion of the evaluation.

3.2 Recording Methodology

Separate contexts were recorded individually on Salford Archaeology *pro-forma* trench sheets. The trench was located and planned by total station theodolite using EDM tacheometry.

Photography of all relevant phases and features were undertaken in digital format using a digital SLR camera.

All fieldwork and recording of archaeological features, deposits and artefacts were carried out to acceptable archaeological standards. All archaeological works carried out by Salford Archaeology was carried out in accordance with the standards set out in the Code of Conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA).

4. Evaluation Results

4.1 Introduction

In total, 15 trenches were excavated across the site, providing a combined total sample of 640m^2. Archaeological remains of interest were encountered in Trenches 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 15. Conversely, Trenches 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13 and 14 were devoid of any significant archaeological remains.

The features identified in the excavated trenches have been ascribed provisionally to one of three periods. This phasing is both broad and provisional and will be subject to scrutiny following further work and analysis.

- Period 1: Prehistoric
- Period 2: Medieval/Post-medieval
- Period 3: Modern

4.2 Cropmark (PR1558; Site 14)

4.2.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was overlain by a soft to friable, dark greyish-brown loamy topsoil ***(0101)***. The topsoil lay to a depth of 0.32m above a soft light bluish-grey sandy clay subsoil ***(0102)***, which was 0.21m thick.

Natural clay ***(0103)*** was observed at 0.5–0.6m below ground level and consisted of stiff, mid-orange-brown/pinkish-brown clay with patches of coarse yellowish-white sand.

A single ditch ***[0104]*** was excavated at the western end of the trench, aligned north-east/south-west. It was cut into the natural clay geology ***(0103)***. The ditch measured approximately 5.26m in length, extending from the northern section of the trench and terminating 1.4m from the western end of the trench. The ditch was aligned north-east/south-west and had a maximum width of 0.65m wide and depth of 0.25m. The ditch was filled with a firm, dark grey silty clay ***(0105)*** with frequent inclusions of rounded to sub-angular sandstone and occasional flecks of charcoal. The feature was sealed by subsoil ***(0102)***, indicating that it was of some antiquity.

The absence of any modern/post-medieval material from this feature is highly suggestive that it derives from a previous phase of activity; given its relatively close proximity to the putative ‘antenna’ enclosure that was identified in the 1970s/80s, there is potential for ditch ***0104*** to be of prehistoric origin.

*Plate 4: Excavated terminus of ditch **[0104]** looking north-east*

4.2.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was overlain by 0.17m of topsoil ***(0201)***, comprising soft dark greyish-brown loam. Below ***(0201)*** was a thin layer of subsoil, which was 0.41m thick.

Natural deposits of stiff, light to mid-orange brown clay ***(0203)*** were observed at a depth of 0.59m below ground level.

A single field boundary ditch ***[0204]*** was recorded running east/west across the trench. This was observed as a linear surface depression on the ground and corresponds to the extant field system visible across the site. The ditch had a total recorded length of 1.48m; it was 3.6m wide, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.75m. At this level a ceramic field drain, consistent with an 18th- or 19th-century date was revealed. The ditch was filled with a sticky dark greyish-brown silty clay ***(0205)***. The ditch cut through the subsoil ***(0202)***, as may be anticipated of a feature that dates to the 18th or 19th century.

4.2.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was overlain by 0.17m of topsoil ***(0301)***, which comprised a soft, dark greyish-brown sandy clay. This overlaid subsoil ***(0302)***, which consisted of a friable to firm mid-greyish-brown sandy clay, which ranged in thickness from 0.35 to 0.66m. This lay thickest at the southern end of the trench.

Natural clay ***(0303)*** was observed at a depth of between 0.52 and 0.87m below ground level. The clay was very stiff, mid-orange-grey with bluish-grey veining.

A single ditch ***[0304]*** was excavated in the middle of the trench. This was aligned north-west/south-east, and ran diagonally across the trench for 4.89m. It appeared to have been cut through the subsoil, suggesting that it dated to the post-medieval or later period, and was filled by a soft, dark greyish-brown sandy clay ***(0305)***. It was not possible to confidently ascribe a date to the origin of this ditch from the evidence recovered from the trench, although the absence of any post-medieval/modern material was noted.

4.3 Cropmark (Site 82)

4.3.1 Trench 4

Trench 4 measured 1.75 x 20m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.51m. No archaeological features were observed.

The trench was overlain by 0.18m of topsoil ***(0401)***, consisting of friable mid brownish-grey silty/clayey sand. A layer of subsoil ***(0402)*** underlay the subsoil; this comprised a mid to light reddish-brown sandy clay. Stratigraphically below ***(0403)*** was a 1.02m thick layer of glacial drift clay, which contained well sorted, round sedimentary pebbles. A thin layer of stiff pinkish-brown clay ***(0404)*** lay beneath the glacial drift. Natural deposits of coarse sand ***(0405)*** were exposed at 1.51m below ground level. No artefacts or ecofacts were recovered from this trench.

4.3.2 Trench 5

Trench 5 measured 1.75 x 20m, and was positioned to the south of Trench 4 on a higher elevated terrace within the same field. The trench was aligned north/south and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.53m. No archaeological features were observed.

Topsoil ***(0501)*** consisting of a friable mid greyish-brown sandy/silty clay lay up to 0.13m above a 0.18m thick layer of subsoil ***(0502)***. The subsoil consisted of a friable to soft light greyish-brown sandy clay.

Natural ***(0502)*** stiff light orange-brown/pinkish-brown deposits of clay with bluish-grey veining was exposed across the length of the trench. Hollows within the clay, perhaps signs of floralturbation were filled with subsoil type deposits.

4.4 Roman Road (PRN26143)

Trenches 6, 7 and 8 were placed across the putative courses of a Roman road, which has been projected to take a line along the western and eastern edges of the site. No evidence for the road was encountered in any of the trenches, although an undated ditch was revealed in Trench 7, and a feature of a potentially early date was exposed in Trench 8.

4.4.1 Trench 6

Trench 6 was located close to the eastern limit of the site and targeted the eastern projected course of the Roman road connecting Wigan with Walton-le-Dale. This trench measured 2.3 x 40m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.77m No archaeological features were recorded in this location, and no artefacts or ecofacts were recovered. The trench was overlain by soft dark greyish-brown sandy clay topsoil ***(0601)***, which was up to 0.32m in depth. Subsoil ***(0602)*** was observed comprising a firm mid-brown friable silt. Natural deposits of stiff mid-orange-brown clay ***(0603)*** was recorded at the base of the trench, overlain with patches of mid-bluish-grey sandy clay with occasional rounded stone inclusions.

4.4.2 Trench 7

Trench 7 was located in the north-western corner of the site. Along with Trench 8, this targeted the western projected course of the Roman road, which ran from Wigan to Walton-le-Dale. A single ditch feature was excavated in the middle of the trench. This feature does not seem to follow the alignment of the existing field-system.

The trench was overlain by a loose to friable dark greyish-brown topsoil ***(0701)***, which lay up to 0.41m in thickness. Below was a thin layer of subsoil ***(0702)*** which was a soft mid-brownish-grey sandy clay. Natural deposits of clay ***(0703)*** were exposed at the eastern and western ends of the trench, with patches of coarse sand and sandy clay observed in the middle of the trench.

A ditch ***[0704]*** was excavated in the middle of the trench (Plate 5). This feature was aligned north-east/south-west and was cut into the natural ***(0703)***. This was linear in plan and had a rounded, tapering terminus.

The feature had a maximum recorded length of 2.7m and extended south-westwards beyond the limit of excavation. A section was excavated through the terminus of the feature, revealing a concave profile with a maximum depth of 0.29m. The ditch was filled by ***(0705)***, a firm dark reddish-brown silty clay, which contained occasional burnt clay patches, lenses of organic peaty clay and rounded stone inclusions. No artefacts or ecofacts were recovered from this fill.

*Plate 5: Excavated terminus of ditch **[0704]**, looking south-west*

4.4.3 Trench 8

Trench 8 was positioned some 540m to the south of Trench 7, over the same projected course of the putative Roman road. Whilst no remains pertaining to the road were uncovered, a single enigmatic gully feature could be a remnant of ancient farming or domestic enclosure. This isolated feature was situated in the eastern part of the trench, approximately 40m from the current road. A post-medieval field boundary formed by cuts ***[0804]*** and ***[0807]*** was also excavated, running north/south through the middle of the trench. This was visible on the ground as a linear hollow earthwork, running in line with a well-maintained ditch. A mature deciduous/broadleaved tree survived to the north of the trench, growing along the former boundary.

Trench 8 was overlain by a mid- to dark greyish-brown topsoil ***(0801)***, which was up to 0.15m thick. This lay thickest to the western part of the trench. Below the topsoil was a thin layer of subsoil, forming a clear yet ephemeral interface between the natural geology and the topsoil. The subsoil ***(0802)*** was formed of soft greyish-brown sandy clay. This lay above a stiff natural deposit of clay ***(0803)***, which was light orange-brown/pinkish-yellow in colour with patches of greyish-brown sandy clay. Interspersed in the natural clay geology were frequent, well-sorted, rounded pebbles, indicative of glacial drift deposits.

A field boundary ditch ***[0804]*** was excavated in the middle of the trench. This was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.35m and was 3m in width. This ran diagonally across the trench for 1.27m. This was easily identified by its very dark organic fill, which stood in contrast to the natural. This fill ***(0806)*** contained frequent large to very large fragments of oak, which suggested the boundary was once demarcated by trees. This primary fill was overlain by firm dark greyish-brown sandy clay, containing moderate amounts of fragmented ceramic field drains.

An earlier field boundary ditch ***[0807]*** was cut by ***[0804]*** and was viewed in section and plan at the base of the sondage through these features. This earlier ditch had a more rounded narrow profile and was easily distinguished by its firm mid-grey fill ***(0808)***. This feature seemed to respect the alignment of the later ditch ***[0804]***. ***[0807]*** was truncated and survived to a depth of 0.35m. No artefacts or ecofacts were recovered from this feature.

A single curvilinear feature ***[0809]*** was excavated at the eastern end of the trench (Plate 6). This stood out from the other features in this area in both shape and contents. The feature, interpreted as a gully, lay at a depth of 0.3m below ground level and was cut into the natural deposits of clay. It was 0.33m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.16m. It had a concave profile. It was filled with firm light grey sandy silty clay, with moderate inclusions of charcoal and sub-round to angular stones. This feature has been provisionally ascribed to the prehistoric period.

*Plate 6: General view of Trench 8 showing curvilinear gully [**0809**]*

4.5 Pinfold House (PRN36276; Site 44)

Trenches 9 and 10 were placed across the footprint of Pinfold House. This was shown on Yates' map of 1786, Hennet's map of 1829 and more clearly on a plan of Cuerden from 1839 and the OS 1:10,560 mapping of 1848. It had vanished by the time of the 1893 1:2,500 sheet, and presumably had been demolished; Census Returns confirm it was demolished after 1881. Mapping shows that the building measured approximately 40 feet by 20 feet (12.19 x 6.10m), marked as Pinfold House. The name pinfold means 'a pound for stray animals', perhaps relating to a walled or fenced stock enclosure.

The trenching produced positive results with the exposure of structural remains in the form of stone and brick walls, brick and crushed-brick surfaces and rounded cobble floors. A potential post-hole and post-pad were also encountered in T10. At the western end of T10 was a linear gully, which produced fragments of ceramic vessels.

4.5.1 Trench 9

Trench 9 measured 1.7 x 20m, and was aligned north/south across the footprint of Pinfold House. The trench was overlain by 0.2m of soft dark greyish-brown sandy clay topsoil ***(0901)***. This overlay a series of structural remains associated with the post-medieval building, namely floor surfaces and an east/west-aligned wall. These structural remains were exposed in the middle of the trench across an area of 5.85m. Underlying the structural remains was a 0.21m thick deposit of subsoil ***(0902)***, comprising firm light grey sandy clay. Natural deposits ***(0903)*** of clay were observed between 0.65 and 0.7m below current ground level. The natural geology consisted of stiff orange-grey/pinkish-brown clay with patches of coarse sand.

The earliest feature to be encountered was a north/south-aligned ditch ***[0909]=[0911]***. This feature had a maximum recorded length of 3.8m and width of 1.2m, with a maximum depth of 0.35m. Two slots were excavated through the feature to ascertain its depth and profile. It had a concave profile. It was cut into the natural ***(0903)*** and filled by ***(0910)=(0912)***, a light brownish-grey clayey sand with moderate inclusions of rounded stones. No artefacts or ecofacts were recovered from this feature.

A suite of structural remains was revealed above the subsoil ***(0902)***. A stone wall ***[0908]*** was observed in the middle of the trench, with a width of 0.3m. This was constructed of faced, squared blocks of grey sandstone, the largest of which measured 0.3 x 0.6m. A gap in the wall measuring 0.7m was infilled with brick and stone rubble and may potentially relate to a former threshold at ground level. A whole brick recovered from this wall measured 250 x 115 x 7mm.

Two compacted surfaces were exposed to the north of wall ***[0908]***. A surface composed of crushed brick and stone ***(0906)*** measuring 0.95 x 1.7m lay immediately to the north of the wall. A shallow linear depression in this surface was filled with a thin deposit of ash ***(0907)***. A less uniform surface was encountered to the north of ***(0906)*** comprised of larger fragments of brick and stone rubble. Deposits of ash overlying the surface contained sherds of post-medieval pottery (Plate 7).

4.5.2 Trench 10

An east/west-aligned trench was positioned over the eastern extent of the building shown on historic maps. This trench measured 1.7 x 20m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.75m.

The trench was overlain by 0.17 – 0.20m of friable dark greyish-brown clayey sand topsoil ***(1001)*** and 0.31m of soft, light brownish-grey clayey sand subsoil ***(1002)***. Natural deposits of sand ***(1003)*** with patches of stiff light yellowish-brown clay were exposed at the base of the trench.

The earliest feature to be identified was a narrow gully ***[1013]*** running north/south at the western end of the trench. This feature ran across the trench, extending beyond the southern and northern limits of excavation. The feature was cut into the natural and filled with a deliberate dark brown silty fill ***(1014)***, which contained early post-medieval pottery. The feature lay below the topsoil.

A series of structural remains associated with the building shown on the historic maps were exposed across the length of the trench. These were found immediately below the topsoil.

A spread of bricks was exposed above the natural geology ***(1003)*** and below the subsoil ***(1002)***, 3m from the eastern limit of excavation. This potentially formed a surface that measured 0.9 in width and survived to 0.11m in height. It was composed of un-bonded hand-made brick (each measuring 241 x 52 x 130mm), with a broad date range spanning the 17th to early 19th centuries.

The fragmentary remains of a substantial stone-built wall ***[1005]*** were revealed in the middle of the trench. Two squared, faced blocks of un-bonded grey sandstone, ranging in size from 505 x 220 x 130mm to 510 x 300 x 130mm. The stone blocks were laid on a bedding of clay ***(1007)***. The surface of this wall lay 0.3m below the current ground level, and it was housed in a linear construction trench ***[1004]***, which ran north/south across the trench. The trench measured 0.6m in width, and was cut through the subsoil ***(1002)***. The eastern side of the cut was not clearly visible in plan or section. Coupled with the absence of stonework from part of the trench, this implies that the wall had been partially robbed out.

A putative stone wall ***[1008]*** was exposed to the west of wall ***[1005]***. This was formed of rounded, small-medium sized stones. This structure was 0.34m wide and survived to a length of 1.33m, truncated at its southern extent by a linear cut feature ***[1016]***.

A highly truncated brick wall ***[1009]*** lay to the west of ***[1008]***. This measured 1.13 x 0.28m. This was comprised of hand-made bricks, with average dimensions of 280 x 140 x 50mm. No signs of bonding material were apparent.

*Plate 7: Stone walls in Trench 10 [**1008**] (left) and [**1005**] (right)*

A series of floor surfaces survived between walls ***[1009]*** and ***[1005]***. A hardened clay surface survived in patches around the brick wall and an adjacent post-hole ***[1011]*** up to the putative stone wall ***[1008]***. Vestiges of a cobbled floor ***(1006)***, perhaps internal, survived over an area of 2.5 x 3.2m. This was formed by well-sorted sub-angular stones and brick fragments, which had been laid directly onto the subsoil. This surface was sealed by the topsoil.

Further structural remains were exposed in the form of a round posthole with a 0.36m diameter. A tentative post-pad in the form of a large flat stone was found to the north of the posthole. This stone measured 0.32 x 0.26m.

The most modern feature to be exposed in Trench 10 was a linear cut feature exposed along the southern limit of excavation. This feature had a maximum recorded length of 7.8m and was a minimum of 0.6m wide. It ran roughly east/west, and may represent a robbed out wall trench or later truncation. It was filled with a mixed fill of composition similar to the topsoil and subsoil with pockets of redeposited natural.

*Plate 8: Stone walls [**1005**], [**1008**] and cobbled surface (**1066**)*

4.6 Field system (PRN37362; Site 57)

4.6.1 Trenches 11 and 12

Trenches 11 and 12 aimed to investigate a tentative medieval/post-medieval field system, identified through historic mapping. An initial walk-over survey carried out prior to the trenching work confirmed the presence of two north/south-aligned ditches, and a large sub-circular depression in the south of the field, which is likely to have originated as a post-medieval marl pit. This part of the site was considerably wetter than other fields, and the two trenches were abandoned at an early stage of excavation due to ingress of water. However, no indication of any archaeological remains of interest were identified from the limited investigation that was carried out.

4.7 Antennae Enclosure (PRN1438; Site 11)

Trenches 13, 14 and 15 were placed in the field to the east of Pinfold House, and targeted a feature that has been interpreted previously as an 'antennae' enclosure of possible Iron Age date; the outline of the earthworks are visible on late 20th-century aerial photographs. Whilst no definitive evidence for this feature was encountered on the surface, a single ditch, which diverged from the alignment of the extant field boundaries, is highly suggestive of a prehistoric phase of activity. This is in turn supported by the available aerial photography of the 1960s, which demonstrates the survival of cropmarks in this part of the site.

4.7.1 Trench 13

Trench 13 measured 1.8 x 20m, and was aligned north/south. This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.66m. No archaeological features were encountered. Two shallow ephemeral features were investigated in the northern end of the trench, proving to be natural in origin.

The trench was overlain by 0.29m of topsoil ***(1301)***, consisting of a friable mid- to dark greyish-brown sandy, silty clay and subsoil ***(1302)***, a friable light greyish-brown sandy clay. Natural deposits of gravelly sand ***(1303)*** with patches of clay were exposed at the base of the trench. Two irregular-shaped hollows filled with subsoil-type deposits were exposed at the northern end of the trench, and interpreted as natural root action.

4.7.2 Trench 14

Trench 14 measured 1.8 x 20m and aligned north-west/south-east and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.52m. A series of furrows were visible in the north-east-facing section of the trench. No further archaeological features were recorded.

The trench was overlain by 0.28m of topsoil ***(1401)***, comprised of friable, dark brown clayey sand. The subsoil ***(1402)*** was a friable mid- to light greyish-brown sandy clay. The natural differed considerably from the sand and gravel deposits exposed in T13. This was made up of stiff orange-grey sandy clay ***(1403)*** with moderate, small sized sedimentary stone inclusions.

4.7.3 Trench 15

This trench measured 1.85 x 20m, and was excavated to a depth of 0.5m. A single ditch ran across the trench, and measured 2.3m in length and 1.55m in width.

The trench was overlain by 0.35m of topsoil ***(1501)*** comprised of friable dark brown sandy clay, and subsoil ***(1502)*** of friable light brown sandy clay.

Natural deposits of firm, light orange-grey/pinkish-brown sandy clay and clay, with moderate, small-large sized rounded stone inclusions. This was observed at a depth of 0.45m below ground level.

A single V-shaped ditch ***[1504]*** was excavated in the middle of the trench (Plate 9). This had near vertical sides leading to a very narrow flat base and was partially stepped on the western side. It was excavated to a depth of 0.41m. The ditch was filled by ***(1505)*** a soft, light greyish-brown sandy clay with lenses of sand. It had occasional charcoal inclusions.

*Plate 9: North-east-facing section through **[1504]***

5. Finds

5.1 Introduction

The entirety of the small finds assemblage from the evaluation was recovered from Trenches 9 and 10 (placed across the footprint of Pinfold House), and comprised four fragments of post-medieval ceramic vessels, and a single fragment of a clay tobacco pipe (Plate 10). Other common material classes, such as metalwork, animal bone and glass, were absent.

The artefacts were in good condition, comprising reasonably-sized sherds with little indication of abrasion, suggesting that they had not been subject to a significant level of post-depositional disturbance.

5.2 The Pottery

Four fragments of pottery were recovered from the evaluation, all deriving from those trenches placed across the footprint of Pinfold House. The fragments represented parts of at least three ceramic vessels, with a likely date range spanning the 17th and early/mid-18th centuries.

Two large fragments of a wheel-turned vessel, probably representing a slender jar, had a fine, hard sandy fabric and a lead glaze. This vessel is likely to have been produced locally, although the fabric is not of a type that has been recognised previously, and is thus difficult to date with any precision. In broad terms, however, it is comparable to Midland Purple-type wares, which are frequently recovered from 17th-century contexts in the southern parts of north-west England.

A fragment of another ceramic vessel incorporated part of the rim and strap handle of a jug or mug with a dark brown lead glaze. The vessel had a hard, fine fabric, characteristic of a refined Blackware vessel, to which a 17th- or early 18th-century date may be ascribed.

The group also included a single fragment of a Mottled ware vessel, probably a plate. Barker (2008) suggests that manufacture of Mottled ware occurred in *c* 1700-70, although Dr Plot, writing in the late 17th century, also notes that it was being produced at this time (Plot 1686, 123). The fabric of the sherd recovered from the evaluation trenching is buff coloured, but cannot be attributed to a specific production centre.

5.3 The Clay Tobacco Pipe

A single fragment of clay tobacco pipe was recovered from the trenches placed across the footprint of Pinfold House. The fragment comprised a complete pipe bowl, with a single band of rouletted decoration around the top of the bowl, and part of the bowl foot; no makers' stamp was present on the foot. The relatively small size of the pipe bowl and its apparent angle to the pipe stem (missing) is consistent with an 18th-century date.

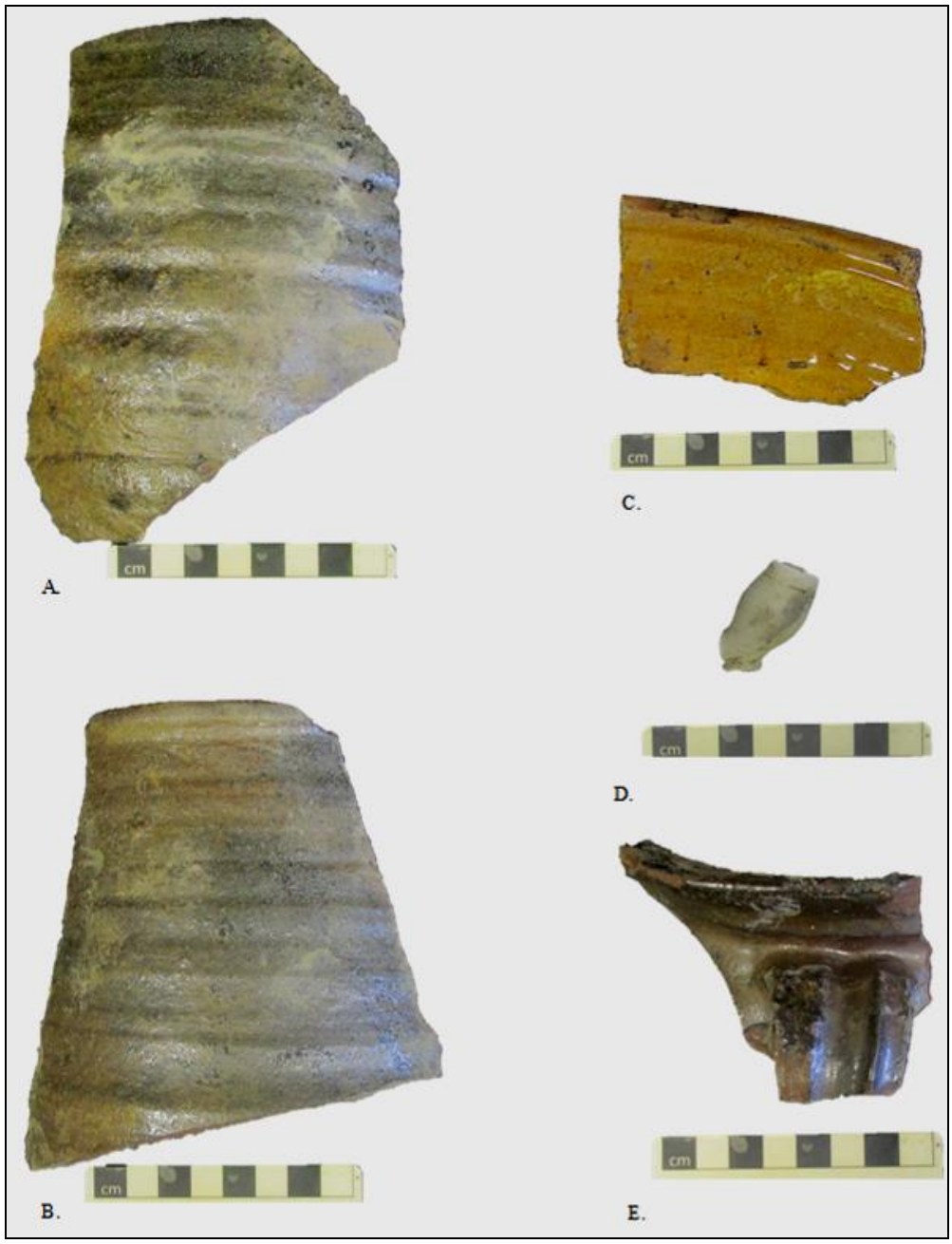

Plate 10: Finds recovered from the trenches placed across Pinfold House

6. Discussion

6.1 Pinfold House

The structural remains encountered in Trenches 9 and 10 represent parts of the post-medieval building, identified in historic records and mapping as Pinfold House. When overlaid onto the sequence of historical mapping for the area, it is evident that the survey data from Trenches 9 and 10 closely reflects the alignment and position of the building shown on the estate map of 1839 and the Ordnance Survey map of 1848.

A suite of different built remains, ranging from brick and stone walls, cobble and crushed brick floor surfaces imply the building underwent several phases of development. The exact form this structure took is unclear, although it is best illustrated on a mid-19th century estate map (Plate 3). The recovery of post-medieval pottery of an unusual fabric type is also of interest, and raises the potential for other artefacts to survive that have potential to shed light on the material culture of an early/mid-19th-century farmstead.

6.2 Field Systems

Trenches 1, 3, 7, 8 and 15 all yielded evidence of ditches or gullies, which do not conform to the alignment or typology of the existing boundaries (ditches and hedgerows) visible on the ground or on mid-19th-century to modern mapping. This was inherently clear when the survey was overlaid to modern and historic mapping, suggesting that this group of features is of some antiquity.

These features were also notable in their difference in size, shape and fill composition when compared to the larger post-medieval and modern boundaries excavated within the study area. These later features tended to be characterised by more organic soils. The presence of fragmented or intact ceramic land drains within later features, for example in the fill of ***[0204]*** and ***[0304]***, marks them out from these earlier linear features, which were absent of ceramics.

Given that the sequence of historic mapping from 1848 to the present day reflects continuity in the division of the landscape, it should be understood that these enigmatic features are suggestive of the survival of pre-19th century fields. This is particularly tantalising when one considers the potential for prehistoric activity in the vicinity.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Impact

The archaeological evaluation has demonstrated that significant buried remains survive *in-situ* at a relatively shallow depth beneath the modern ground surface. The development proposals will impact on these remains, resulting in their damage or complete loss. In the light of the high local, and potential regional significance of the archaeological resource, it is appropriate to implement a strategy to offset the harm of development by compiling a detailed archaeological record of the buried remains that survive across the site, in accordance with the guidance provided by the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.2 Research Potential

The surviving buried remains have the potential to address a range of the initiatives for archaeological research of the Prehistoric, Medieval and Post-medieval periods stated in the current *Research Agenda* presented in the Archaeological Research Framework for North West England (Brennand, 2007).

7.2.1 Prehistoric

A number of features have provisionally been ascribed to the prehistoric period on the basis of their typology, stratigraphy and absence of inclusion of modern material within their fills. These features are all negative, *ie* they are cut into the ground, and likely relate to past occupational or agricultural/pastoral activity.

Further excavation and study of these remains offers potential to address broad issues that were raised in the *Research Agenda* relating to the poor site visibility and chronology in the North West as a whole, and specifically the low density of recorded and investigated sites in the central are of Lancashire. These are outlined by:

- *Initiative 2.30:* 'Sites that have been identified through survey require further targeted work and characterisation, accompanied by programmes of dating.'
- *Initiative 2.69:* 'Many of the issues raised regarding Iron Age settlement' are shared with the previous prehistoric period and relate to poor site visibility and inadequate representation across the north west as a whole' (p39-40).

There is also the potential of further work to contribute to a more nuanced comprehension of early human activity at a local level, specifically relating to the paragraphs on settlement and land use in prehistory (Brennand, 2007, 39 – 41, 51-52).

7.2.2 Medieval/Post-medieval

The survival of structural remains pertaining to medieval/post medieval rural settlement has the potential to contribute significantly to various research initiatives, ranging from household, to local and regional scales. The most relevant initiatives are laid out in *Chapter 6: Post-Medieval Agenda* in relation to rural settlement*:*

- *Initiative 6.15:* 'Excavations of abandoned farms and cottages should be a high priority, especially where the ownership or tenancy is documented, in order to study the material culture of individual households';

Initiative 6.15 is particularly relevant when one considers the wealth of available documentary evidence in the form of Census Returns and historic mapping relating to Pinfold House. A similar research initiative is laid out more broadly in relation to the study of historic buildings, pressing for the excavation of sites of well-preserved house remains and their environs (*Initiative 6.8).*

In addition, the artefacts found within and around buildings hold importance in their own right:

- *Initiative 6.1:* 'The available data set should be greatly enlarged. Stratified artefact sequences from both small towns and rural settlements need to be collected, in order to establish the character of ceramic use throughout the region and to create the basis for socio-economic interpretation.'

- *Initiative 6.2*: 'Unpublished ceramic groups, especially those from areas with no previous evidence should be published as a priority. The relevant grey literature should be made generally available.'

At a macro-scale, the surviving archaeological evidence can be seen as an insight into settlement patterns. It is stressed that 'some types of settlement such as isolated farmsteads and hamlets are nationally less well studied than villages' and that furthermore, mapping and landscape characterisation has been over-reliant on available 19th century mapping. This has led to distorted interpretations of settlement at various levels. Archaeological excavation combined with historical analysis offers an opportunity to add to the regional dataset, in turn ameliorating these shortcomings:

- *Initiative 6.14:* 'Regional survey of farmstead creation and abandonment would help refine the regional settlement pattern identified by Wrathmell and Roberts, as well as improve county based characterisation programmes'.

7.2 Recommendations

It is recommended the remains of Pinfold House and its environs be excavated, with an aim to expose the full extent of the holding shown on mid-19th-century mapping. Excavation will help define the building's origin, development and areas of activity in the complex. It may also contribute to more nuanced ideas about depopulation and abandonment in Cuerden and this part of Lancashire.

In order to contextualise the historic and potential prehistoric settlement of Cuerden, trenches, which produced evidence of field-systems in the form of ditches appearing to pre-date the extant boundaries (surviving hedgerows and ditches) should be targeted to help define their extent, nature and any associated remains. This would help characterise the origins and development of the dispersed settlement.

A single enigmatic, curvilinear gully was found in isolation in the south-western part of the site, approximately 40m from the western site boundary. Curvilinear gullies of this type and size (approximately 8.2m diameter) are typically regarded as Iron Age/Romano-British in date and frequently equated with settlement rather than enclosure. This should be subject to controlled excavation.

The areas containing evidence of past field systems should be subject to 'strip and record' exercises to contextualise the features found in the evaluation and try to relate these to patterns visible on available aerial imagery. These areas can be rapidly planned with GPS and subject to targeted excavation to understand their organisation and development, recovering dating evidence in the form of ceramics and soil samples to further characterise environmental change and land use. Any such evidence that can be recovered has the potential to be studied alongside regional pollen data and artefactual evidence from other archaeological sites, specifically those identified in the North West Wetland Survey or large-scale archaeological excavations in the region.

In summary, it is recommended that six areas are targeted for further archaeological investigation in advance of development (Fig 5). These should be targeted on the footprint of Pinfold House, and the early features revealed during the evaluation trenching.

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Archive and Acknowledgements

Archive

The archive is currently held by Salford Archaeology, but will be deposited ultimately with Lancashire Museum Services. The digital archive consists of survey drawings, digital photographs, and electronic data. As part of the archiving process, the on-line OASIS (On-line Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations) form has been completed.

A copy of this report will be forwarded to the client and deposited with the Lancashire (HER).

Acknowledgements

Salford Archaeology would like to thank Lancashire County Council, and specifically Emma Prideaux, Ed Robertson and Chris Dyson for commissioning and supporting the programme of archaeological works.

The on-site works were carried out by Oliver Cook and Andrew Radford, who compiled the report. This report was edited by Ian Miller, who was also responsible for project management.

Appendix 1: Figures

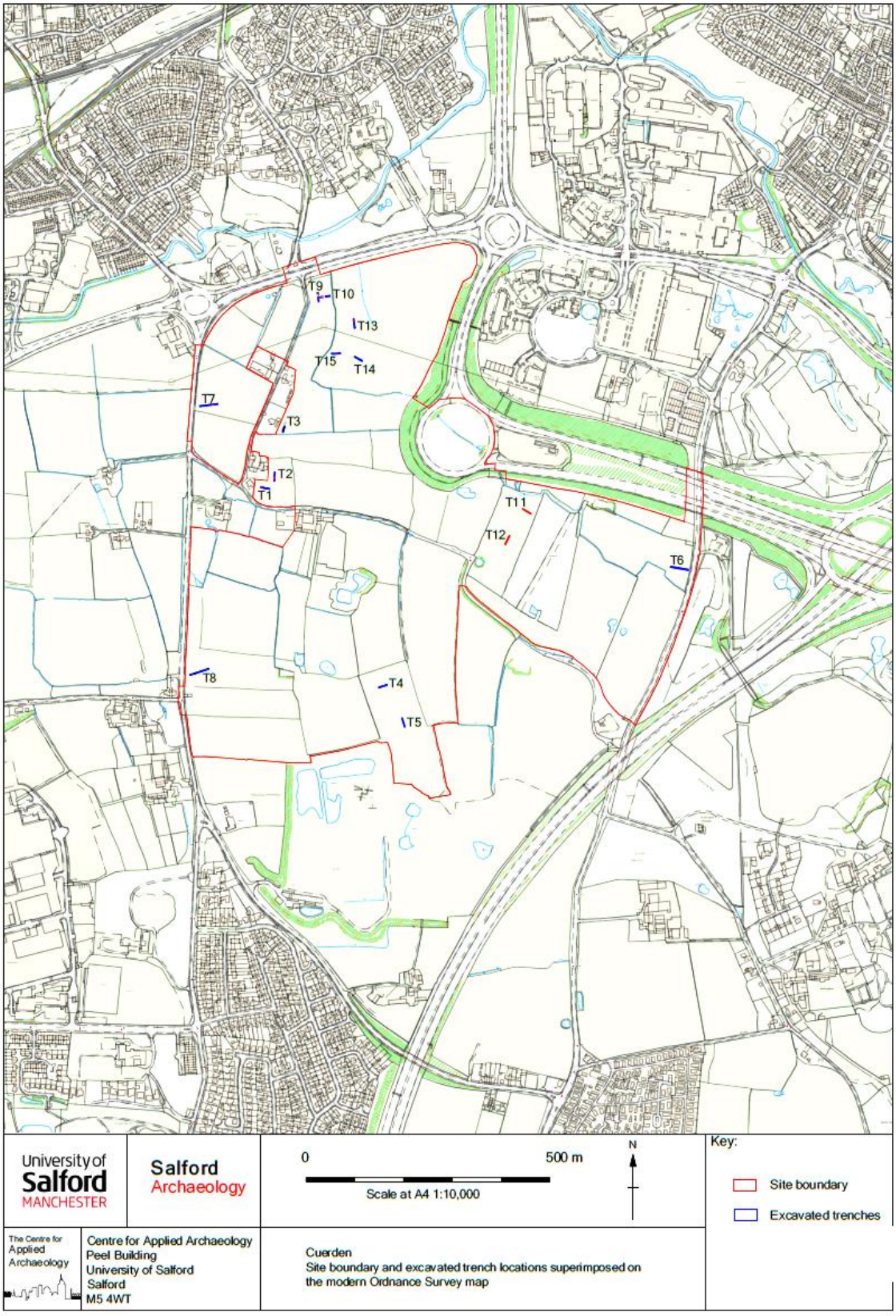

Figure 1: Site location, showing position of the excavated trenches

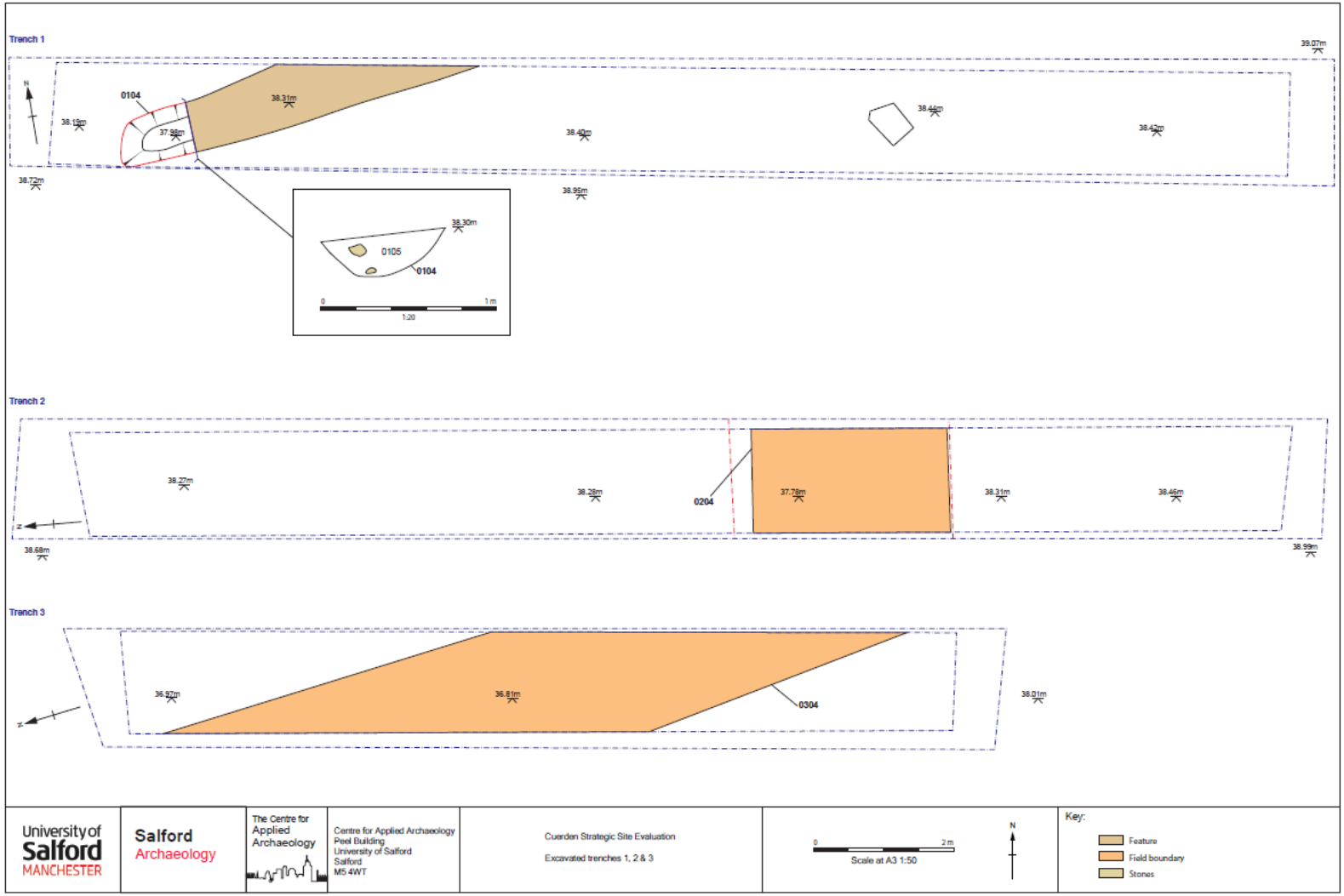

Figure 2: Detail of archaeological features revealed in Trenches 1, 2 and 3

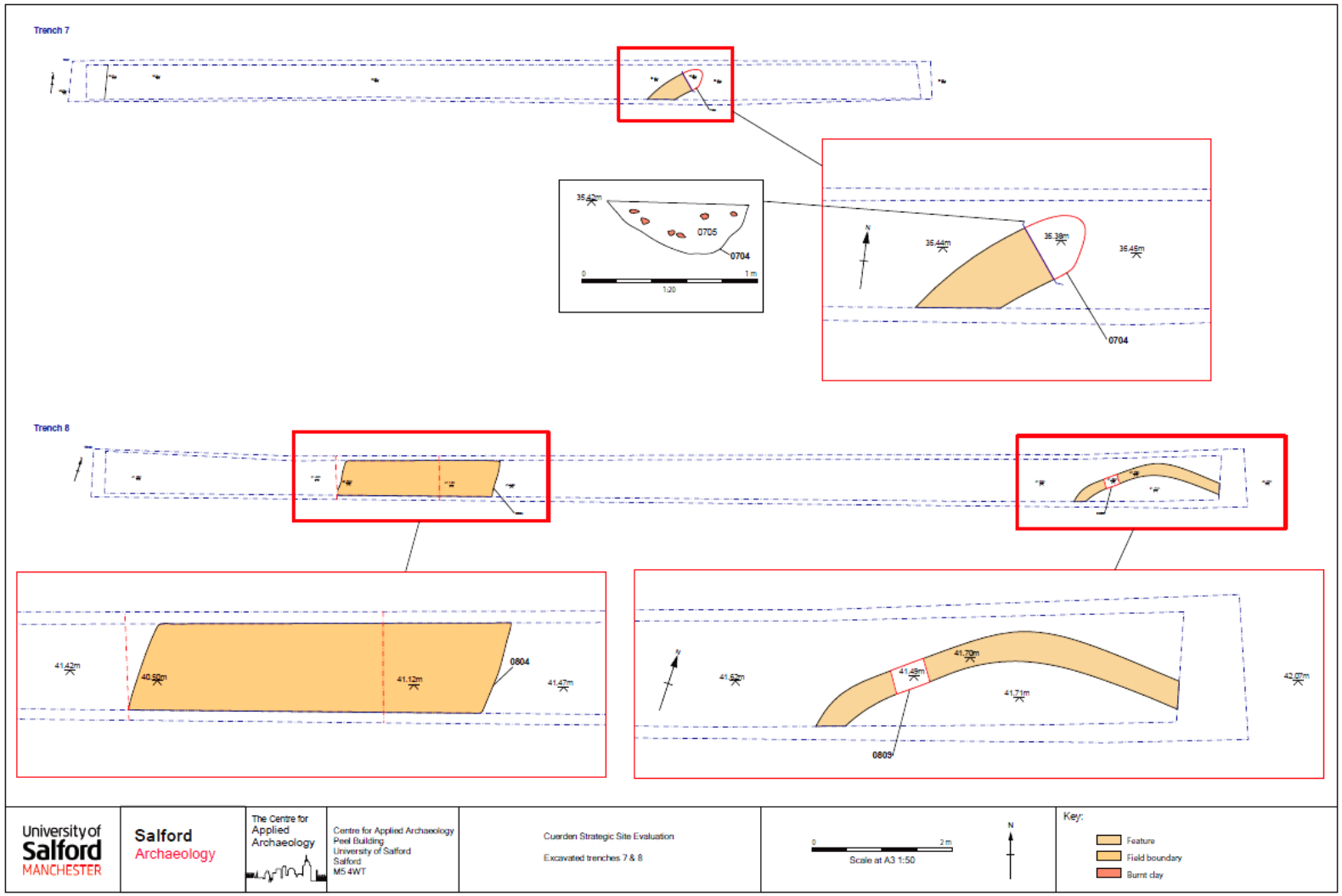

Figure 3: Detail of archaeological features revealed in Trenches 7 and 8

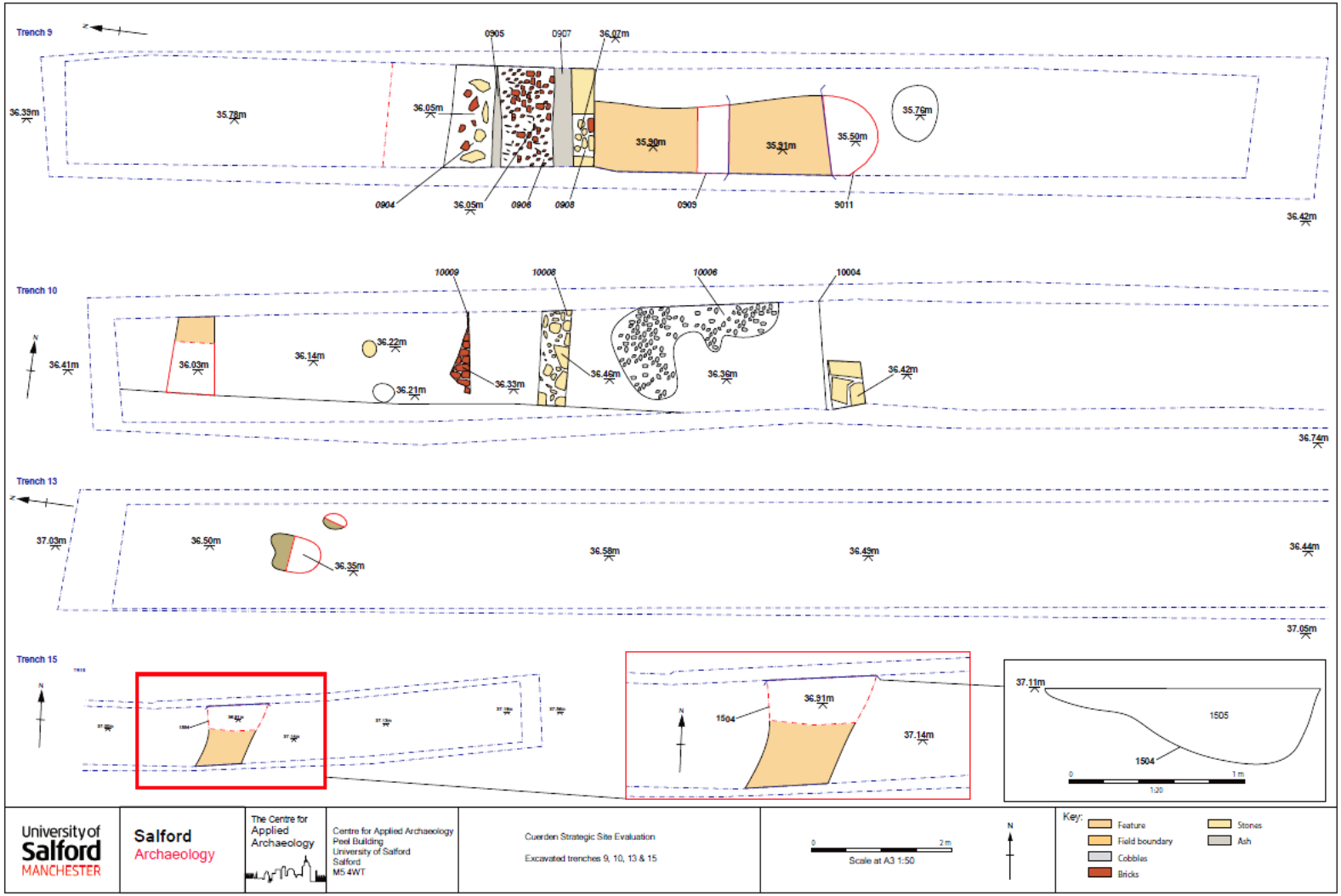

Figure 4: Detail of archaeological features revealed in Trenches 9, 10, 13 and 15

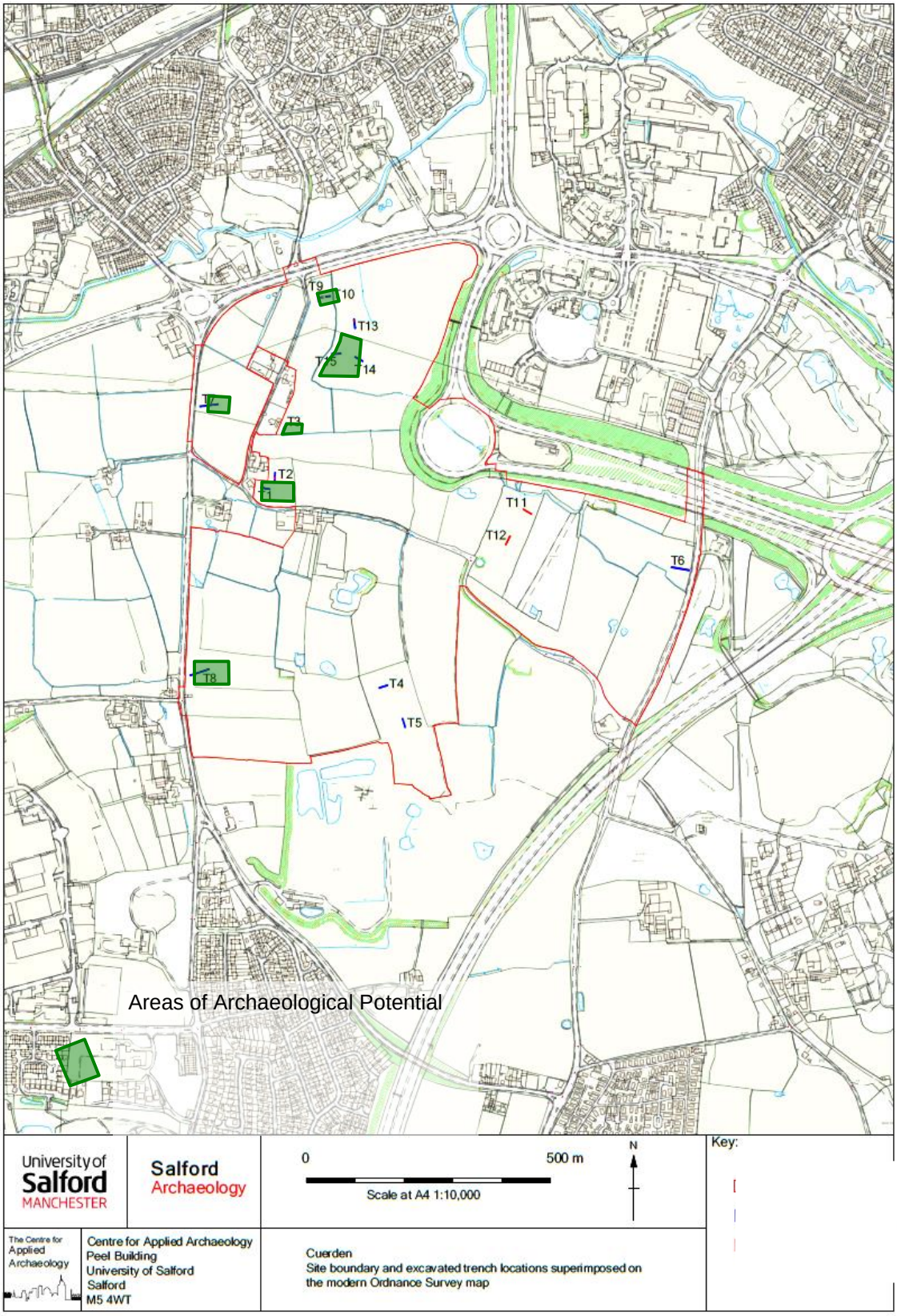

Figure 5: Areas of Archaeological Potential

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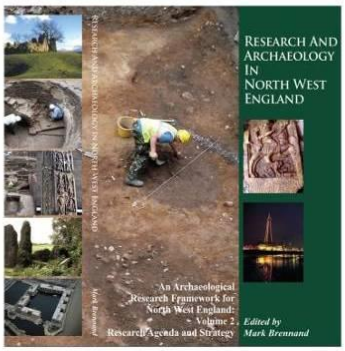
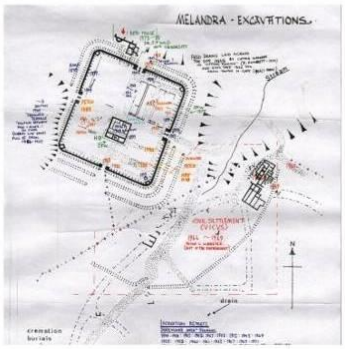


DESK BASED ASSESMENTS

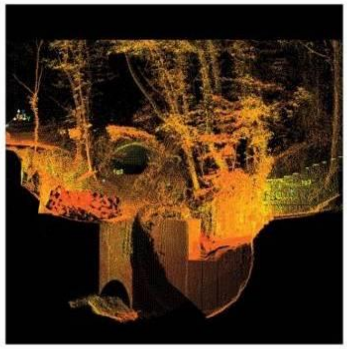


WATCHING BRIEF & EVALUATION

EXCAVATION

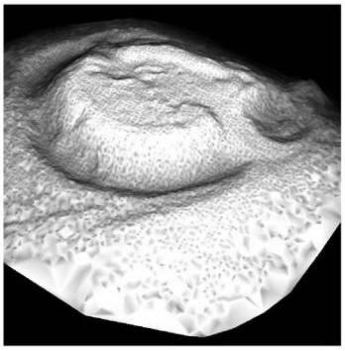
BUILDING SURVEY

3D LASER SCANNING



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

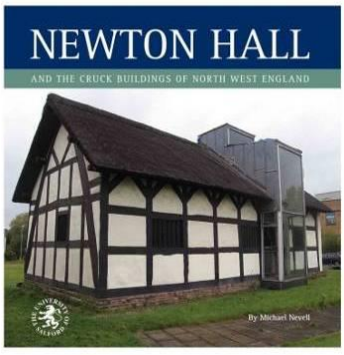
LANDSCAPE SURVEYS



GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

WORKSHOPS & VOCATIONAL TRAINING

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS



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