

Crest Hill, Harvington, Worcestershire

Archaeological summary

Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by EDP on behalf of Castlethorpe Homes to undertake a trial trench evaluation on the site of a proposed residential development at Crest Hill, Harvington, Worcestershire, to inform determination of a planning application (Figure 1). A programme of 20 trenches were excavated across the site, with 16 measuring 50m by 1.8m, 1 measuring 40m by 1.8m, 2 measuring 30m by 1.8m and 1 measuring 25m by 1.8m, representing a 4% sample of the proposed development area (Plates 1 and 2).

The trenches were arranged to target potential archaeological enclosures identified on the geophysical survey and to provide even coverage of the site outside areas of modern service restrictions. Of the 20 trenches excavated, eight contained archaeological features corresponding with the geophysical results (Figure 2), ranging in date from Roman to Post-Medieval.

Three intercutting Roman ditches were found in Trench 6, a ditch and spread in Trench 11 and a ditch in Trench 13 (Plates 3 and 5), which were both undated. Trench 12 contained a rectangular waste pit; Trench 14 contained an enclosure ditch and boundary ditch, and Trench 18 contained 2 intercutting ditches that all produced Roman artefactual evidence. Trench 19 contained the truncated remains of a limestone surface/wall footing that was sitting on or associated with a cobbled surface (Plates 4 and 6), as well as associated pits and drainage ditches, which produced Roman pottery.

Post-Medieval to Modern field boundaries were also found in Trenches 7 and 10 relating to the changing rural landscape over time.

The result of the evaluation confirmed the features identified in the geophysical survey represent a series of Roman enclosures most likely part of a rural farmstead or settlement, perhaps with the partial and truncated remains of a small structure or surface present in Trench 19. At least two enclosures appear to be present on the hillside; a smaller square enclosure about 20m in diameter that was investigated within Trench 14 and a larger sub-rectangular enclosure investigated within Trenches 11, 18 and 19. The surface or wall footing remains found in Trench 19, suggest some internal features are present within the larger enclosure and are indicative of occupation activity. The hillside topography clearly offers a desirable location for settlement located on the higher ground overlooking the River Avon valley.

The site has high potential to reveal rural Roman settlement activity located just off the crest of the hill, concentrated within Trenches 11, 12, 14, 18 and 19, Roman field boundary ditches in Trench 6 and post-medieval field boundaries identified in Trenches 7 and 10.



Figure 1: Site location

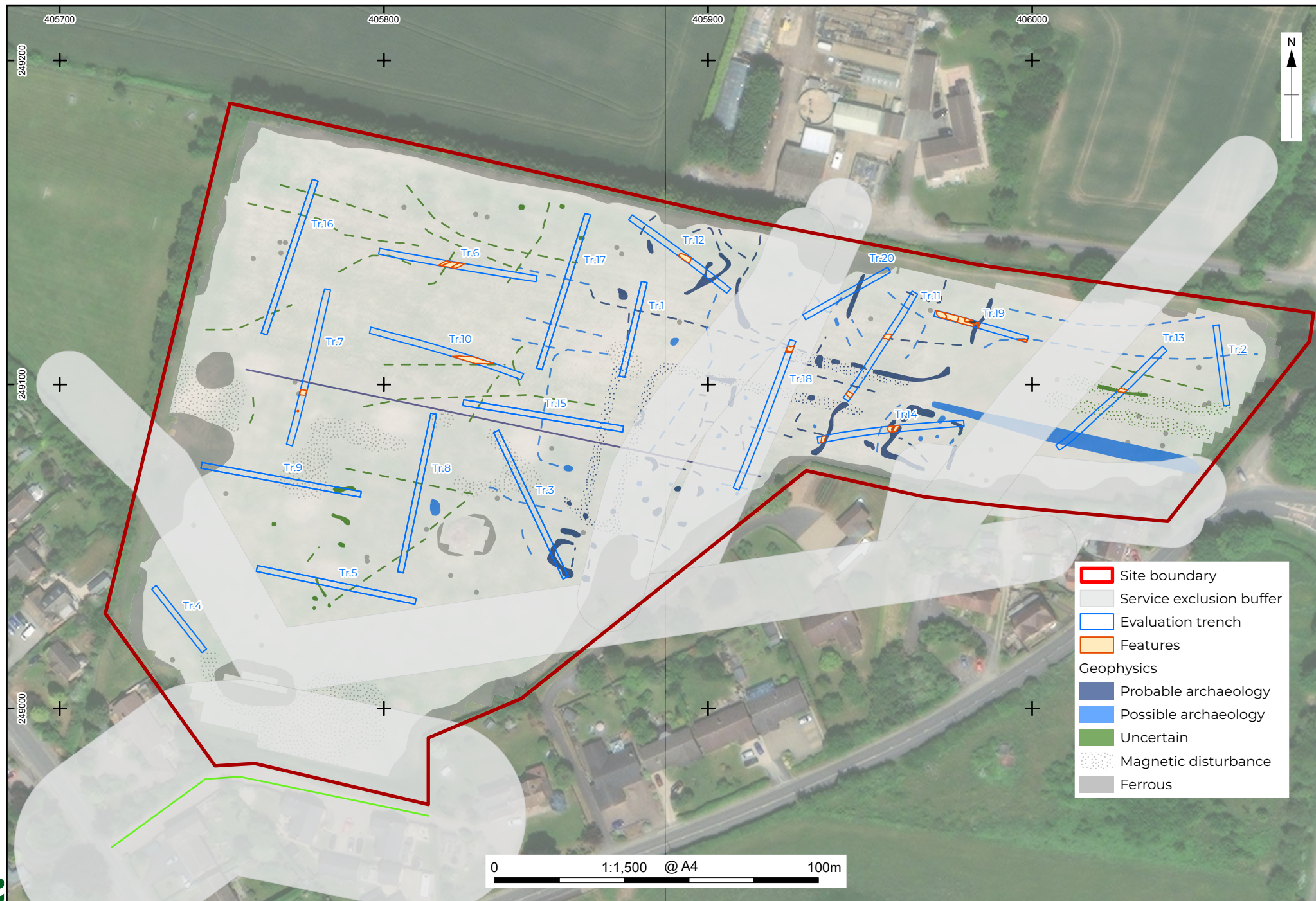


Figure 2: Trench plan with geophysical interpretation



Plate 1: Trench excavation at Crest Hill, Harvington



Plate 2: Hand excavation of archaeological features looking north



Plate 3: Trench 13 looking west (1x1m and 1x2m scales)



Plate 4: Trench 19 looking northwest (1x1m and 1x2m scales)



Plate 5: Ditch 1303 looking northwest in Trench 13 (1m scale)



Plate 6: Limestone surface/ structure Trench 19 looking south (2m scale)