



Mapledurham Playing Fields, Caversham, Berkshire

Palaeolithic Test Pitting Report

December 2018

Client: Reading Borough Council

Issue No: 1

OA Reference No: 7112

NGR: SU 69857563



Client Name: Reading Borough Council
Document Title: Mapledurham Playing Fields, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire
Document Type: Test Pit Report
Report No.: 1
Grid Reference: SU 6985 7563
Planning Reference: Pre-planning
site Code: CAMP18
Invoice Code: CAMPTP
Receiving Body: Reading Museum
Accession No.: -

OA Document File Location: X:\c\Caversham_Mapledurham_Field\002Reports\Evaluation report 2018
OA Graphics File Location: X:\c\Caversham_Mapledurham_Field\002Reports\Evaluation report 2018

Issue No: V1
Date: 11/10/18
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***Mapledurham Playing Fields, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire***

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

In October 2018 Oxford Archaeology undertook a Palaeolithic test pitting survey as part of a wider evaluation strategy for the site of a proposed 5.9ha sports pitch improvement scheme at the Mapledurham Playing Fields, Caversham, Reading. The survey consisted of 8 test pits measuring 3m by 2m, which were excavated in order to assess the Palaeolithic potential of the site.

The site is situated in a landscape which was heavily utilised during the prehistoric period, and is located just to the east of an abandoned channel of the former Thames known as the Caversham Channel. The channel, represented by the Black Park terrace gravels, dates from the Late Anglian and has produced a significant concentration of Palaeolithic finds. The underlying geology of the site is mapped as the Boyn Hill Gravel, which has also previously yielded significant Palaeolithic finds.

Pleistocene deposits were recorded in all of the test pits immediately beneath top- and subsoils and consisted of both undisturbed and disturbed Boyn Hill terrace deposits. The investigations have highlighted the fact that the terraces at this location may be more truncated and disturbed than previously thought, especially to the south and east within the influence of the dry valley that runs to east of the site. Better preserved river terrace deposits are present in the northern and western parts of the site. The recovery of one Palaeolithic flake from these deposits underlines the general richness in Palaeolithic implements of the Boyn Hill Gravels deposits within the area.

No significant concentrations of Palaeoliths or buried landsurface deposits were, however, identified during the works.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Andy Lockwood, Reading Borough Council, for the opportunity to carry out this project. Thanks are also extended to Kathelen Leary of Berkshire Archaeology, who monitored the work, for her advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Carl Champness. The fieldwork was directed by Rachel Legge, who was supported by John Carne and Muhammed Quadir. Specialist Palaeolithic advice and expertise was provided by Barry Bishop and Ella Egberts (PCA Archaeology). Survey and digitizing work was carried out by Conan Parsons. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Geraldine Crann and prepared the archive under the management of Nicky Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Reading Borough Council to undertake a Palaeolithic test pitting survey as part of a wider evaluation strategy for the site of a proposed 5.9ha sports pitch improvement scheme at Mapledurham Playing Fields, Caversham, Reading. The survey consisted of 8 test pits measuring 3m by 2m which were excavated in order to assess the Palaeolithic potential of the site.
- 1.1.2 This work follows on from the submission of an updated desk-based assessment (Oxford Archaeology 2018a), geophysical survey (Magnitude 2018) and 30 trench evaluation (Oxford Archaeology 2018c) that covered the proposed site, and which highlighted the potential for archaeological remains to survive, including the high potential for Palaeolithic and Roman remains. The WSI (Oxford Archaeology 2018b) outlined how Oxford Archaeology planned to undertake the archaeological evaluation works.
- 1.1.3 The work is being undertaken as part of a pre-determination investigation to support a planning application. Discussions with Kathelen Leary of Berkshire Archaeology have established the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to evaluate the archaeological potential of the site. This document outlines the results of the evaluation.
- 1.1.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (2014) and local and national planning policies.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site is located on the top of Caversham Hill and is bounded on all sides by houses which face onto Chazey Road to the south, Hewett Road to the west and St Peters Avenue to the east (centred on SU 6985 7563; Fig. 1). To the north, the site is bounded by three closes of houses off the A4074 Woodcote Road. The site is currently a public park which is largely open grassland, the exception being the south-eastern corner which is wooded. The site is generally flat although the southern third of the open area slopes from north to south. The site lies within the administrative area of Reading Borough Council.
- 1.2.2 The site (between 71-66 m aOD) is located on the Caversham heights, towards the southern edge of a chalk spur of Seaford and Newhaven Chalk, covered by Boyn Hill Gravels. The Boyn Hill terrace deposits are bordered by Black Park terrace gravels to the north. The southern edge of the Boyn Hill gravels extends to the edge of the chalk spur where they have been truncated by the lower lying and most recent manifestation of the Thames valley. The terrace is dissected to the northwest and east by two dry valleys which have completely truncated all pre-Quaternary deposits.
- 1.2.3 The Mapledurham Playing Fields are situated towards the southern extend of this relic of the Boyn Hill Terrace and at the site's location a smaller, less pronounced dry valley runs north-west to south-east (BGS 2018).

- 1.2.4 The Black Park Gravel Member, located c. 350m to the north of the site, represents an abandoned course of the River Thames known as the Caversham Channel, which dates to the Late Anglian glaciation, c. 500,000BP (Bridgland 1994). The Pleistocene deposits in the wider area around the site are therefore of significance because they provide important information on the palaeo-landscape and changes in the drainage of the Thames and its tributaries (Sealy 1956).
- 1.2.5 The area of proposed development consists of 5.9 hectares (Fig. 1) and is divided into two areas: the woods in the south-eastern corner and the open playing field area. The site lies at c. 70m aOD at the northern edge sloping to c. 65m aOD at the southern edge and is located 500m north of the River Thames.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in the 2015 desk-based assessment (Oxford Archaeology 2015) and the updated 2018 desk-based assessment (Oxford Archaeology 2018). Background information will be summarised below, focusing on the Palaeolithic potential of the site.
- 1.3.2 The site is situated in a landscape which was heavily utilised during the prehistoric period. The site is located just to the east of an abandoned channel of the former Thames known as the Caversham Channel. The channel, represented by the Black Park Gravel Terrace, dates from the Late Anglian and has produced a significant concentration of Palaeolithic finds. The underlying geology of the site is mapped as the Boyn Hill Gravel, which elsewhere within the study area (less than 200m from the site) has also yielded Palaeolithic finds. Should further Palaeolithic activity be recorded within the site it would be of particular significance as current research suggests the presence of a tool production site in the area. The site is considered to have a high potential to contain Palaeolithic finds and a moderate potential to contain Mesolithic to Iron Age remains.
- 1.3.3 The Caversham Channel has been the source of significant concentrations of Palaeolithic finds (Wymer 1961). The later Boyn Hill Gravels in the vicinity of the site have also yielded numerous Palaeolithic artefacts including rich concentrations at sites such as Toot's Farm, 800m southeast of the site, as well as many isolated finds (Wymer 1999; Wenban-Smith et al. 2014). This material from the Boyn Hill terrace and its lateral equivalents such as Barnfield Pit at Swanscombe, Kent, are considered to present the first well-established human occupation of the post-Anglian diversion Thames valley, dated to MIS 11 or c. 430,000 – 350,000 BP (White et al. 2018).
- 1.3.4 If present, Palaeolithic finds could be of regional significance or, if a tool production site was found within the site, of national significance. Any Mesolithic to Iron Age remains are more likely to be of local or regional significance.

1.4 Previous archaeological field investigations

- 1.4.1 A geophysical survey was completed in July 2018 across the proposed area (Magnitude 2018). The survey identified a large possible D-shaped enclosure to the northwest of the site, probably of archaeological origin, along with other curvilinear features and potential linear ditches.

- 1.4.2 The recent phase of 30 evaluation trenches at the site confirmed that a number of the geophysical features represented variations in the natural geology. Archaeological features were discovered towards the eastern part of site within Trenches 1, 3, 7 and 10, where a large D-shaped Roman enclosure was found (Fig 2). The area inside the enclosure was also tested within Trench 7 and two post-holes and a gully were found. The postholes measured 0.45-48m in diameter and contained later Iron Age pottery. The enclosure ditches, however, contained pottery dating from the 1st-2nd century AD and were later than the post-holes.
- 1.4.3 The presence of a samian ware mortarium fragment suggests a date after c. AD 170. The D-shaped enclosure may have been associated with several phases of occupation and potential industrial activity. The TVAS evaluation of 1998 uncovered similar Roman features located c. 250m north-west of the site, and rectangular cropmarks suggest that this site could have been part of a substantial late Iron Age/Roman rural settlement.
- 1.4.4 The site also contained four northeast-southwest aligned furrows to the north-east and a late 19th-20th century boundary ditch running roughly east-west in the centre of the site.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives were as follows:

- i. To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development site
- ii. To assess the accuracy of the archaeological desk-based assessment and geophysical survey in determining the true potential for significant archaeological remains to exist within the site
- iii. To assess the potential for the Roman features identified in the wider area to continue within the site
- iv. To assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits encountered
- v. To assess the impact of previous land use on the site
- vi. To inform formulation of further measures to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains
- vii. To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Berkshire HER.

2.1.2 The specific aims and objectives of the evaluation were:

- i. To further develop our understanding of the Roman agrarian landscape, and in particular to investigate how landscapes and rural settlements had varied between the upland and lowland zones
- ii. To investigate the character of artefact assemblages (eg artefacts from the Black Park, Lynch Hill and Boyn Hill terraces) with specific reference to techno-typological variability and those factors which may explain it
- iii. To understand how remains on the site may contribute towards the regional framework agenda for the Solent-Thames sub-region (Hind and Hey 2014).

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 A total of eight geo-archaeological test pits were excavated across the site (Plate 1). The test pits were located in order provide insights in the terrace deposits across the site whilst avoiding the football fields (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 The methodology for this was detailed in the WSI (Oxford Archaeology 2018b). The test pits were located using a Global Positioning System (GPS).
- 2.2.3 The test pits measured approximately 3m x 2m and were excavated under the supervision of the Palaeolithic specialist until either pre-Quaternary geology was exposed or to the maximum reach of the mechanical excavator (c. 3m). Sediment was removed by the mechanical excavator using a 0.6m wide ditching bucket in spits up to 250mm thick, but followed the interfaces between sedimentary units wherever possible. Each sedimentary unit was numbered separately. Where safe to enter (the upper c. 1m of the test pits) the sides of the test pits were cleaned, photographed and drawn. The deeper parts of each test pit were photographed and drawn from the side. Samples (100 litres) from each significant geological unit were shaken through a 10mm mesh on site in order to retrieve artefacts and coarse ecofacts, and 10 litre bulk samples were taken for off-site grain size and clast size analysis (Plate 2).
- 2.2.4 The fieldwork reported here follows the methodologies developed by the Medway Palaeolithic Project and the Managing the Essex Pleistocene Project (O'Connor 2015; Wenban-Smith et al. 2007) and is detailed in the test pit method statement (Bishop 2018). Its aims are to assess the nature and significance of the Pleistocene deposits and Palaeolithic remains present at the site, establish their distribution and depth across the site and to assess the archaeological significance of any deposits.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The results of the test pitting, including a stratigraphic description of the pits that contained archaeological remains, are presented below. The full details of all test pits with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A.
- 3.1.2 Context numbers reflect the test pit numbers unless otherwise stated (e.g. deposit 101 is a layer within Test pit 1, while ditch 304 is a feature within Trench 3).

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

- 3.2.1 The upper and lower soil sequences appeared to vary across the site and in some cases within each test pit. The topsoil ranged from grey-brown sandy silt to pale loose silt, loamy silt, fine silt and silty clay. The topsoil layer ranged in depth from 0.12m to 0.23m. The subsoil layer ranged from brown silty sand to loamy silt, sandy silt and gravel, loamy silty and silty clay. The subsoil layer ranged from 0.14m to 0.3m thick. The topsoil and subsoil contained high numbers of flints, and gravels made up 10-30% of the layers.
- 3.2.2 The variation in the upper sequences may partly reflect the erosion of the underlying Boyn Hill Gravel Member which is mostly sand and gravel but also contains lenses of silt and clay. The natural geology was encountered at a depth of 0.23m to 0.52m. It varied from silty sand or sandy silty to gravels with clayey silt, silty clay and silty gravel.

3.3 Overview

- 3.3.1 Quaternary deposits were recorded in all the dedicated geo-archaeological test pits excavated at the site. They comprise a set of remnant Pleistocene sand and gravel deposits and reworked and weathered, compact clayey silt deposits containing very large flint nodules.
- 3.3.2 Cretaceous chalk bedrock was encountered in all test pits except TP2 and TP5. Mapping the height of the top of the chalk in the other pits suggests the chalk dips to the east/southeast with the lowest point recorded in TP8 at 63.3m aOD. The highest point was recorded in TP1 at 67.6 m aOD (Plate 3). This dip appears to represent a continuation of the erosional effects of the small dry valley that runs from the northwest to the southeast along the eastern side of the site.
- 3.3.3 The Pleistocene deposits at Mapledurham Playing Fields can be divided in two main sediment groups (see Table L01 and Appendix 1 for detailed sediment logs of the test pits). Sediment Group I consists of a variation of yellowish brown to strong brown sand, gravelly sand and sandy gravel. The sand is compact and occasionally shows fine bedding of finer sediments. The sandy gravel is loose, and in some locations clast supported. Sediment Group II consists of a variation of strong brown, gravelly silt to silty gravel (Plates 4-6). Where present, towards the lower boundary of the Pleistocene deposits, these sediments become very compact, massive, very poorly sorted and include large, fresh flint nodules and weathered chalk.

- 3.3.4 Sediment Group I was encountered in TP2 and the lower part of TP4 and TP5, in the highest area of the site, and appears to represent minimally disturbed Boyn Hill Gravel deposits.
- 3.3.5 Sediment Group II was encountered in all test pits except TP2 and was found in most occasions to lie directly on top of the chalk bedrock, the boundary with which was irregular. It represents Pleistocene deposits that have been disturbed to a greater or lesser extent and includes large fresh flint nodules incorporated from erosion of the underlying chalk. These deposits appear to fill a small channel in the chalk that may be associated with the dry valley that can be seen to run to the east of the site.
- 3.3.6 In all test pits the Pleistocene deposits were found to be overlain by pale brown gravelly silt or silty gravel, in places becoming more clayey towards the base of the deposit (Sediment Group III). These deposits also included occasional pockets of gravel indicating that solifluction processes have impacted the sediments.
- 3.3.7 Four samples, two from Sediment Group I and two from Sediment Group II, were taken for clast lithology and grain size analysis.

Sediment group	Deposit	Period	Interpretation	Test pits
T	Topsoil. Current topsoil covered by turf.	Recent		All
III	Post Boyn Hill Gravel deposits. Pale brown gravelly silt to silty gravel, including a variety of clast sizes, mostly flint. Includes prehistoric worked flint dating to the Holocene.	Late Pleistocene/Holocene	Partly originating from Boyn Hill gravel, reworked/disturbed. and includes more recent material (aeolian/colluvial) and worked flint dating to the Holocene.	All
II	Disturbed Boyn Hill (?) gravels and Head. Compact, strong brown gravelly silt to silty gravel. Poorly to very poorly sorted, includes all clast sizes and large flint nodules towards the lower boundary with the chalk.	Pleistocene	Reworked gravel and weathered chalk. Inclusion of large fresh flint nodules in gravelly silt and irregular boundary with the chalk suggest solution processes.	TP1, TP3-8
I	Boyn Hill Gravels. Yellowish brown to strong brown sand, gravelly sand and sandy gravel. Sand is compact and in some places fine layers are visible. The gravel is loose, does not show structure, though in some places there are bands of clast supported gravels.	Pleistocene	Preserved Boyn Hill Gravel deposits	TP2, TP4, TP5
Ch	Chalk	Cretaceous	Bedrock >65 million years old	TP1, TP3, TP4, TP6-8

Table L01: Major sediment groups identified during geo-archaeological investigations at the Mapledurham Playing Fields.

3.4 Archaeological evidence

- 3.4.1 Each sedimentary unit was sieved on-site through a 10mm mesh with a minimum of 100 litres per unit being processed. In total, c. 2,600 litres of sediment were sampled. This resulted in the recovery of 17 struck flints (see appendix for details). The only

Palaeolithic implement found during these investigations came from Sediment Group II (see above) in TP 4 (context [42], sample <118>). It comprised a sturdy, rolled and edge-chipped secondary flake measuring 45mm long by 49mm wide and is 18mm thick. The discovery of a Palaeolithic flake from these deposits is consistent with the wealth of material recovered from the Boyn Hill terrace in the wider area. The remaining artefactual material, recovered from the topsoil and reworked gravelly silts (Sediment Group III), is all representative of Holocene (mostly Bronze Age) flint working.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 The test pits were excavated in reasonable weather, and conditions were sufficiently good in all of the test pits to identify the presence or absence of archaeological material.
- 4.1.2 Although the test pit locations were confined by site constraints, it is still felt that the achieved distribution of sample areas provides an accurate reflection of the Palaeolithic potential of the site as a whole.

4.2 Interpretation

- 4.2.1 The geo-archaeological evaluation at the site has produced valuable evidence relating to the location and composition of the Pleistocene deposits in the area. Pleistocene deposits were recorded in all trenches immediately beneath top- and subsoils and consisted of both undisturbed and disturbed Boyn Hill terrace deposits. The investigations have highlighted the fact that the Boyn Hill terraces may be more truncated and disturbed at this location than was previously thought, especially to the south and east within the influence of the dry valley that runs to east of the site. Better preserved river terrace deposits are present in the northern and western part of the investigated area. These terrace deposits have conventionally been attributed to the Boyn Hill Gravel deposits, which could be confirmed with further clast lithology analysis on the samples taken during this investigation. The investigations suggest that Boyn Hill Gravels to the north and west of the investigated area are likely to be better preserved. The recovery of one Palaeolithic flake from these deposits underlines the general richness in Palaeolithic implements of the Boyn Hill Gravels deposits.

4.3 Recommendations

- 4.3.1 The geo-archaeological investigations have improved the understanding of the extent and condition of the Boyn Hill Gravel deposits at Caversham heights. It has highlighted the disturbed nature of the terrace deposits within the small dry valley and towards the southern extent of the remnant of terrace. The field observations suggest that Boyn Hill terrace deposits are better preserved towards the north and west of the investigated area, and that in these locations there is a higher potential for the recovery of Palaeolithic artefacts and biogenic material.
- 4.3.2 The proposed development of the site is two-fold and includes the construction of a school north of the investigated area, and the levelling of the football fields and the construction of a drainage system around the fields in the area of the test pits.
- 4.3.3 Based on the conclusions drawn from the geo-archaeological investigations, it is recommended that further geo-archaeological investigations are conducted to the north or west of the present investigations if any construction work is likely to impact on the Pleistocene deposits.

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Appendix A TEST PIT DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Test pit:	1	Dimensions			Length (m):	3	NGR	Easting:	469852
Date:	03/10/2018				Width (m):	2		Northing:	175748
OD (m):	69.32				Depth (m):	2.2			
Group	Context	Description	Top	Base	samples	vol. (L)	Finds	Enviro	
TS	10	TOPSOIL. Pale brown (10YR 4/3) silt with occasional fine and medium gravel inclusions.	0	0.3					
III	11	GRAVELLY SILT. Pale brown (10 YR 4/4), gravelly silt with common fine to coarse flint pebbles, sub-angular to sub-rounded. No structure. Gradual, irregular boundary.	0.3	0.8	<128>	100	None	None	
II	12	GRAVELLY SILT. Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) very compact, clayey silt with large flint nodules. Silt includes some grit and medium sized gravel. No structure. Clear lower boundary.	0.8	2.2	<129>	100	None	None	
Ch	13	CHALK. White chalk rubble, grading down to Chalk bedrock.	1.7	2.2					

Test pit:	2	Dimensions			Length (m):	3	NGR	Easting:	469953
Date:	03/10/2018				Width (m):	2		Northing:	175693
OD (m):	67.63				Depth (m):	2.4			
Group	Context	Description	Top	Base	samples	vol. (L)	Finds	Enviro	
TS	20	TOPSOIL. Pale brown (10YR 4/3) silt with occasional fine and medium gravel inclusions.	0	0.3					
I	21	SAND. Dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/6), compact, moderately sorted medium sand. Some grit and granule inclusions and occasional fine flint gravel. Some fine horizontal bedding: fine, more silty and clayey layers. Gradual boundary.	0.3	1.2	<125>	100	None	None	
	22	SANDY GRAVEL. Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) moderately loose, very poorly sorted, sandy gravel. Very poorly sorted sandy matrix with coarse sand, grit and granules and silt and clay. Large flint clasts, angular to sub-rounded, occasional quartz pebbles. Some possible N-S orientation? In places bands of fine to medium, poorly sorted gravel.	1.2	2.4	<124>	10	Clast lithology and grain size analysis		
					<126>	100	None	None	
					<127>	100	None	None	

Test pit:	3	Dimensions		Length (m):	3	NGR	Easting:	
Date:	03/10/2018			Width (m):	2		Northing:	
OD (m):	67.43			Depth (m):	2.2			
Group	Context	Description	Top	Base	samples	vol. (L)	Lithic	Enviro
TS	30	TOPSOIL. Pale brown (10YR 4/3) silt with occasional fine and medium gravel inclusions.	0	0.35			2 flakes, 1 frag of prehistoric pot.	
III	31	GRAVELLY SILT. Pale brown (10YR 4/4), gravelly silt with common fine to coarse flint pebbles, sub-angular to sub-rounded. No structure. Gradual, irregular boundary.	0.35	0.6	<121>	100	1 flake	None
II	32	GRAVELLY SILT. Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) clayey silt, massive and compact. Occasional grit and coarse sand inclusions in the clayey silt. Pockets of large flint clasts and nodules within this matrix. Irregular boundary with layer of very large flint nodules.	0.6	1.6	<122>	100	None	None
	33	GRAVELLY SILT. Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) clayey silt with very large, often fresh, flint nodules.	1.6	2.2	<123>	100	None	None
Ch	34	CHALK. White chalk rubble, grading down to Chalk bedrock.	1.8	2.2				

Test pit:	4	Dimensions			Length (m):	3	NGR	Easting:	469802
Date:	02/10/2018				Width (m):	2		Northing:	175662
OD (m):	69.23				Depth (m):	2.4			
Group	Context	Description	Top	Base	samples	vol. (L)	Finds	Enviro	
TS	40	TOPSOIL. Pale brown (10YR 4/3) silt with occasional fine and medium gravel inclusions.	0	0.3	<117>	100	1 flake, 2 unworked burnt flint fragments	None	
III	41	GRAVELLY SILT. Pale brown (10 YR 4/4), gravelly silt with common fine to coarse flint pebbles, sub-angular to sub-rounded. No structure. Gradual, irregular boundary.	0.3	0.5					
II	42	GRAVELLY SILT. Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) clayey silt with flint gravel inclusions, less towards the upper boundary, becoming more abundant lower down. Irregular boundary.	0.5	0.9	<118>	100			
	43	SILTY GRAVEL. Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6), compact, clayey silty gravel. medium to large flint clasts, sub-angular to sub-rounded. Silty matrix with coarse sand inclusions. Irregular lower boundary.	0.9	1.4	<119>	100	1 flake	None	
I	44	GRAVELLY SAND. Strong brown (7.5YR 5/8), compact, clayey, coarse sand and gravel inclusions from granule to medium sized flint clasts. Includes patches of less clayey sand. Sand is getting finer towards the bottom.	1.4	2.4	<120>	100	1 flake	None	
Ch	45	CHALK. White chalk rubble, grading down to Chalk bedrock.	2.4						

Test pit:	5	Dimensions		Length (m):	3	NGR	Easting:	469705
Date:	02/10/2018			Width (m):	2		Northing:	175674
OD (m):	71.70			Depth (m):	2.3			
Group	Context	Description	Top	Base	samples	vol. (L)	Finds	Enviro
TS	50	TOPSOIL. Pale brown (10YR 4/3) silt with occasional fine and medium gravel inclusions.	0	0.4			1 flake	
III	51	GRAVELLY SILT. Pale brown (10 YR 4/4), gravelly silt with common fine to coarse flint pebbles, sub-angular to sub-rounded. No structure. Gradual boundary.	0.4	1	<112>	100	3 flakes	None
II	52	SILTY GRAVEL. Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6), compact silty gravel with medium to large flint clasts, sub-angular to sub-rounded. Some patches of medium, clast supported gravel. Silty matrix with coarse sand inclusions, becoming more clayey silt towards the clear, lower boundary.	1	1.4	<113>	100	None	None
I	53	SAND. Medium to coarse, strong brown (7.5YR 4/6 and 7.5YR 5/6) sand, moderately sorted and compact. Becoming more loose and gravelly towards the lower boundary.	1.4	2.3	<114>	100	None	None
	54	GRAVELLY SAND. Yellowish brown to dark yellowish brown (10YR 5/6 to 10YR 4/6), loose sand with fine to very large flint clasts including v. large flint nodules and quartz, quartzite, and chalk fragments. Sand includes grit and granules.	2.3		<115>	100	None	5 fossil oyster shell fragments
					<116>	10	Clast lithology and grain size analysis	

Test pit:	6	Dimensions		Length (m):	3	NGR	Easting:	469782
Date:	02/10/2018			Width (m):	2		Northing:	175555
OD (m):	68.98			Depth (m):	2.5			
Group	Context	Description	Top	Base	samples	vol. (L)	Finds	Enviro
TS	60	TOPSOIL. Pale brown (10YR 4/3) silt with occasional fine and medium gravel inclusions.	0	0.3	<108>	100	flint, 1 bu	None
III	61	GRAVELLY SILT. Pale brown (10 YR 4/4), gravelly silt with common fine to coarse flint pebbles, sub-angular to sub-rounded. No structure. Gradual boundary.	0.3	0.8				
II	62	SILTY GRAVEL. Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) silty gravel with medium to large flint clasts, sub-angular to sub-rounded. Silty matrix with coarse sand inclusions, becoming more clayey silt towards the gradual, lower boundary.	0.8	1	<106>	10	For clast lithology and grain size analysis	
					<109>	100		
	63	GRAVEL. Strong brown/yellowish red (7.5YR 4/6 to 5YR 4/6), very poorly sorted, compact and massive, gravel with clayey silty matrix with coarse sand and grit inclusions. Clasts are sub-angular to sub-rounded flints and occasional quartz, quartzite. Includes large (200mm) weathered and fresh flint nodules.	1	2.5	<107>	10	For clast lithology and grain size analysis	
					<110>	100		
Ch					<111>	100		
	64	CHALK. White chalk rubble, grading down to Chalk bedrock. Irregular surface.	2.3	2.5				

Test pit:	7	Dimensions			Length (m):	3	NGR	Easting:	469884
Date:	01/10/2018				Width (m):	2		Northing:	175522
OD (m):	67.76				Depth (m):	2.6			
Group	Context	Description	Top	Base	samples	vol. (L)	Finds	Enviro	
TS	70	TOPSOIL. Pale brown (10YR 4/3) silt with fine and medium gravel.	0	0.3	<102>	100	4 struck flints, 3 unworked burnt flints, 2 prehistoric pot frags	None	
III	71	GRAVELLY SILT. Pale brown (10 YR 4/4), gravelly silt with common fine to coarse flint pebbles. Gradual and irregular boundary.	0.3	0.7	<103>	100	None	None	
II	72	GRAVELLY SILT. Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) gravelly silt with common flint, fine to very coarse including nodules, becoming more frequent towards the lower boundary. Gradual boundary.	0.7	2	<104>	100	None	None	
	73	SILTY GRAVEL. Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6), very poorly sorted, compact and massive, gravel with silty matrix. Clasts are sub-angular to sub-rounded flints and occasional quartz and quartzite. Darker weathering surface at the boundary with the chalk.	2	2.6	<105>	100	None	None	
Ch	74	CHALK. White chalk rubble, grading down to Chalk bedrock.	2.6						

Test pit:	8	Dimensions		Length (m):	3	NGR	Easting:	469957
Date:	01/10/2018			Width (m):	2		Northing:	1755827
OD (m):	66.18			Depth (m):	2.8			
Group	Context	Description	Top	Base	samples	vol. (L)	Finds	Enviro
TS	80	TOPSOIL. Pale brown (10YR 4/3) silt with some flint gravel.	0	0.4			1 flake	
III	81	SILTY GRAVEL. Band of poorly sorted medium gravel in pale brown (10YR 4/4) silty matrix. Sub-angular to sub-rounded flint clasts.	0.4	0.45				
	82	GRAVELLY SILT. Pale brown (10 YR 4/4), gravelly silt with common fine to coarse flint pebbles. Gradual boundary.	0.45	1	<100>	100	1 unworked burnt flint	None
II	83		1	2.8	<101>	100	1 flake	None
Ch	84	CHALK. White chalk rubble, grading down to Chalk bedrock.	2.8					

Appendix B

SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

site name:	Mapledurham Playing Fields, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire
site code:	CAMP 18
Grid Reference	SU 69847 75639
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	October 2018
Area of site	5.9 hectares
Location of archive:	The archive will be held at Oxford Archaeology until it can be combined with any later works on the site and will be deposited with Reading Museum.
Summary of Results:	In October 2018 Oxford Archaeology undertook a Palaeolithic test pitting survey as part of a wider evaluation strategy for the site of a proposed 5.9ha sports pitch improvement scheme at the Mapledurham Playing Fields, Caversham, Reading. The survey consisted of 8 test pits measuring 3m by 2m which were excavated in order to assess the Palaeolithic potential of the site. The site is situated in a landscape which was heavily utilised during the prehistoric period, and is located just to the east of an abandoned channel of the former Thames, known as the Caversham Channel. The channel, represented by the Black Park terrace gravels, dates from the Late Anglian and has produced significant concentrations of Palaeolithic finds. The underlying geology of the site is mapped as the Boyn Hill Gravel, which has also previously yielded significant Palaeolithic finds. Pleistocene deposits were recorded in all test pits immediately beneath top- and subsoils and consisted of both undisturbed and disturbed Boyn Hill terrace deposits. The investigations have highlighted the fact that the terraces may be more truncated and disturbed at this location than was previously thought, especially to the south and east within the influence of the dry valley that runs to east of the site. Better preserved river terrace deposits are present in the northern and western parts of the site. The recovery of one Palaeolithic flake from these deposits underlines the general richness in Palaeolithic implements of the Boyn Hill Gravels deposits within the area. No significant concentrations of Palaeoliths or buried landsurface deposits were however identified during the works.



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Figure 1: Site location

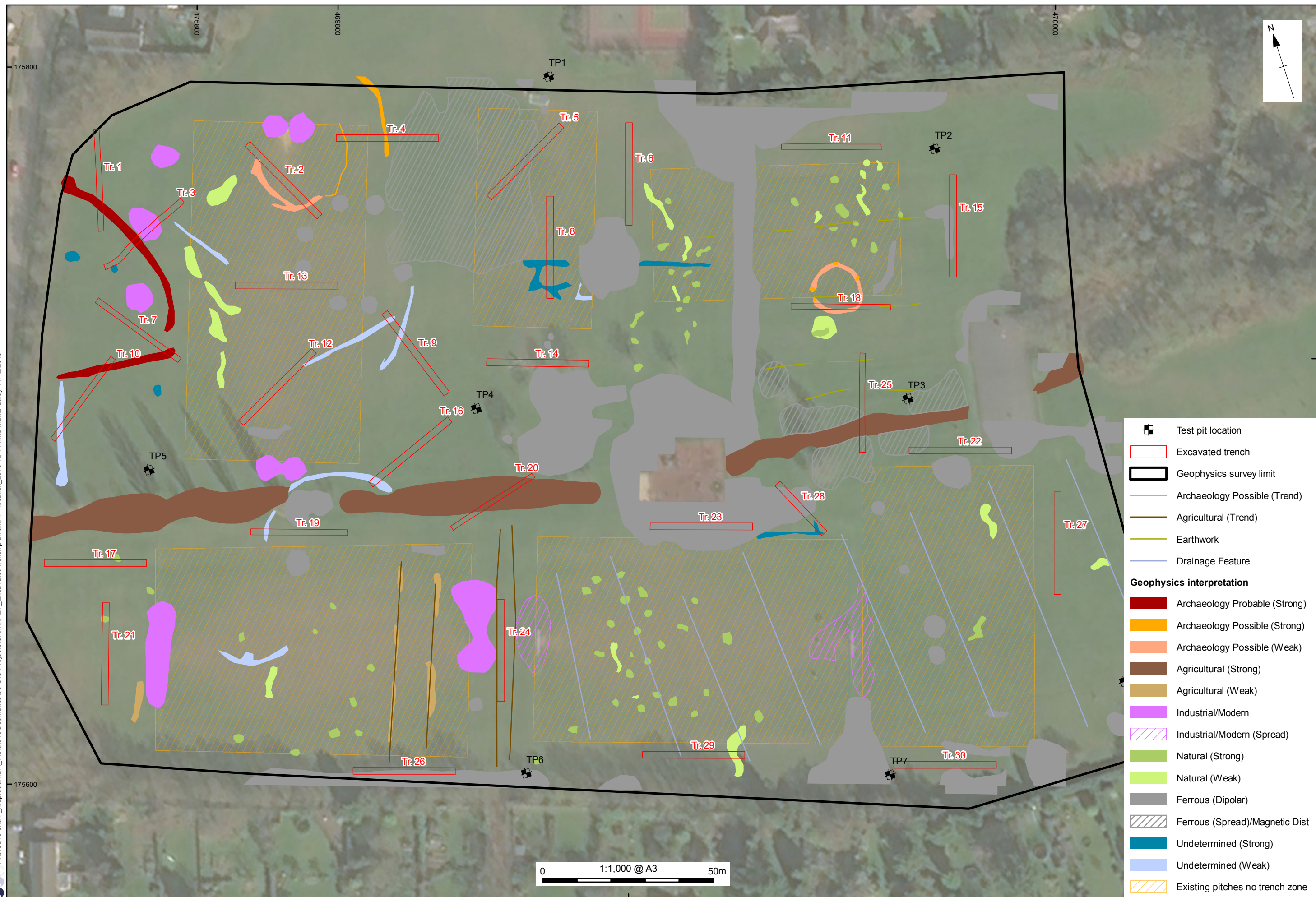


Figure 2: Excavated test pits with trench plan and geophysical interpretation



Plate 1: Excavations of the Palaeolithic test pits



Plate 2: Sieving of gravel deposits to look for Palaeolithic lithics



Plate 3: Test pit 1 looking east (1m scale)



Plate 4: Test pit 3 looking north (1m scale)



Plate 5: Test pit 6 looking north (1m scale)



Plate 6: Test pit 7 looking north (1m scale)



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