

Survey

A grid, laid out with a total station, will be set up prior to any works starting. The grid will be employed over the whole site and all trenches and archaeological features will be related to this grid. This grid will be related to Ordnance Datum.

A programme of geophysics will be undertaken to compliment the earlier surveys undertaken in 1995, 1998 and 2008.

The trenches

As currently envisaged the archaeological works will comprise the initial machine excavation of trial trenches across the two putative timber halls (figure 26). They will be positioned in such a way to evaluate the possible archaeological remains identified by the geophysical survey. The surrounding area will also be geophysical surveyed to attempt to identify other features within the area. In essence, the project will be a sample evaluation with a wide area non-invasive survey and a small scale invasive trial trenching program.

This scope of the evaluation will allow realistic timescales to be ascertained for recording any archaeological remains and target areas that will require further investigation. The precise location of any trench(es) will be determined in consultation with ACHT, HES and the landowner/tenant.

Initially, a single trial trench measuring 50m x 5m will be excavated across the location of one of the putative timber halls. The density and nature of any archaeological features within the trench will be assessed in plan and a small selection of features will be sample excavated to determine the level of plough truncation. Once the trial trench has been excavated an on-site meeting with HES will be arranged to present the findings and discuss the need for further trenches; if they are necessary to meet the aims of the research design, to assess if they are achievable within the timescale of the evaluation and to determine what the impact would be on the archaeological remains, should they be present.

Prior to the excavation of the any trial trenches, test pits will be hand-excavated (two in the footprint of each trench) to ascertain the depth of topsoil, subsoil (b-horizon), should it be present, and if archaeological features are beneath these.

A rapid metal detector survey will be conducted and will be limited to the footprint of the trial trench. Any metallic artefacts present within the topsoil will be recovered and their location recorded. Any metallic artefacts present below the topsoil will be left in-situ and investigated by hand once the topsoil has been removed. A sample of the topsoil will be hand sieved to assess the potential for artefacts that may have been disturbed by recent ploughing activity.

The machine excavation will be conducted by a tracked excavator equipped with a flat bladed ditching bucket weighing less than 10 tonnes. The relatively small size of the mechanical excavator will ensure that the machine excavation can be conducted in precisely controlled spits. Once the machine excavation has reached the interface between the topsoil/subsoil and suspected archaeological features or the natural sub-stratum, whichever is encountered first, this interface will be removed by hand. This approach will maintain the integrity of any sub-surface archaeological remains whether they are upstanding or negative features.

At present it is currently envisaged that up to 50% of all linear features will be investigated, 100-50% of all post holes and pits, and an appropriate section across any interior deposits, should they survive. This will determine the character, function, condition, nature and date of the full suite(s) of features present. All of the features (following topsoil stripping) will be hand cleaned and hand excavated.

The evaluation will seek to explore the stratigraphic relationship, chronology and function of the possible buildings identified during the previous geophysical surveys. They will also aim to define the limits of the putative timber halls, establish if there are any associated internal features and determine phasing should multiple, non-contemporary, buildings be present. Specifically:

The structure

- Parts of a large rectangular building(s) of grandiose appearance and dimensions?
- Structure material – wood, stone or mortar?
- Trench foundations?
- Axial layout?
- Courts?
- End-chambers?
- Thickness of timbers and the great depth they were sunk into the ground?
- Buttresses?
- Wooden floors?

The interior

- Rooms large enough for setting out feasting benches? Perhaps with a raised platform?
- Areas of sleeping? Areas to accommodate sleeping warriors at night; king and the family sleeping chambers?
- Large central hearth for warmth and cooking – the symbol of the hosts hospitality.

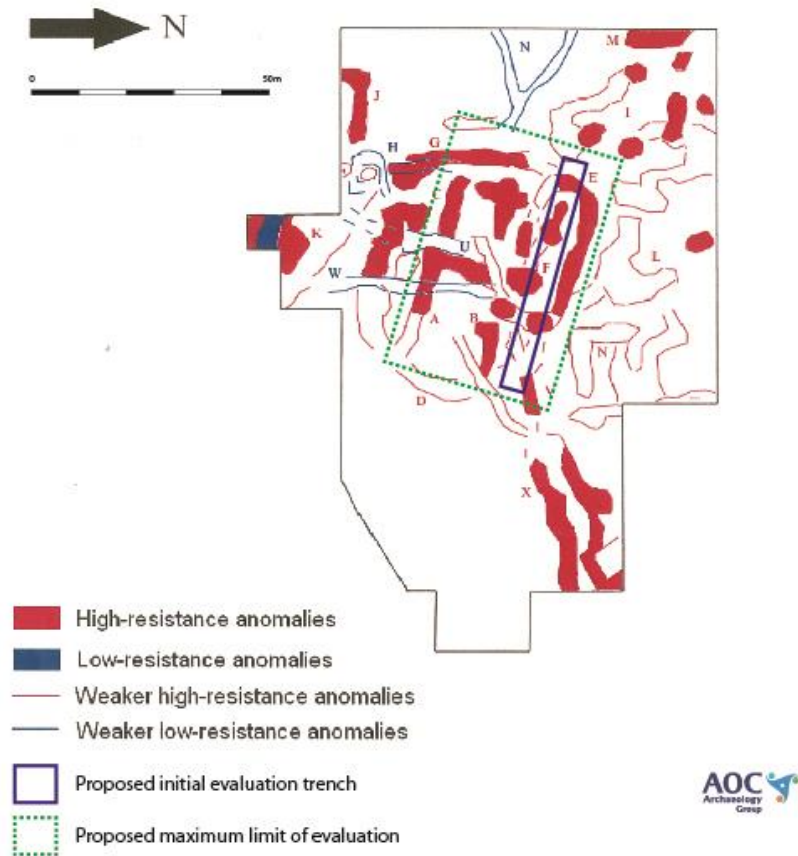


Figure 26: Suggested trench across the Glebe Field focussing on possible building 1 (A,B,C,D) and building 2 (E).