Trench MFNA1 narrative

Sheila Raven

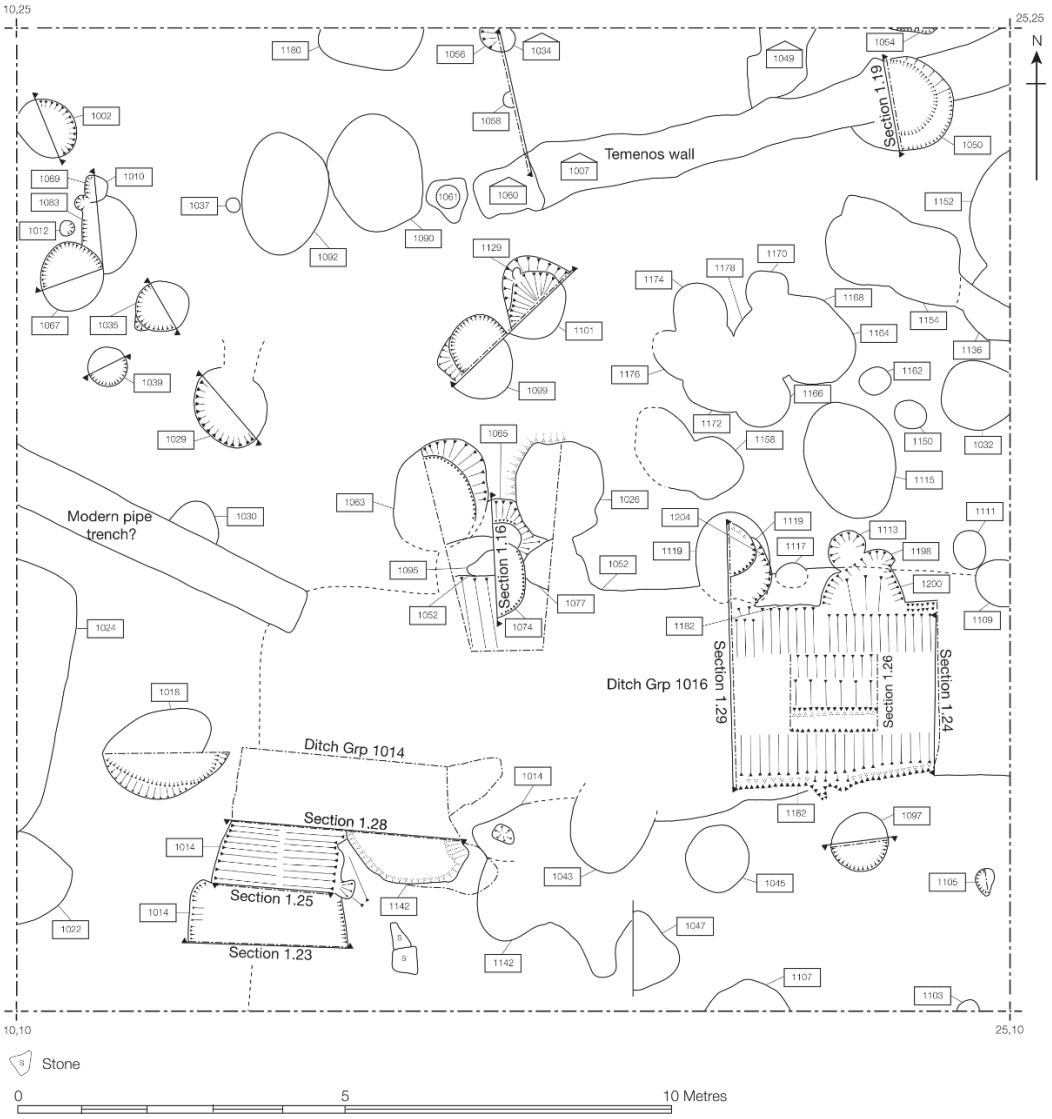
Introduction

Trench 1 was located in the Scheduled Ancient Monument part of the site in the Noah's Ark gardens (OX11, Sch. Monument Consent HSD 9/2/9919) on the southern edge of the *temenos* enclosure. An area *c.* 15m x 15m was opened. This trench was excavated in 2008 to explore the date and character of the large, unusual barrel-shaped enclosure (from now on the BSE) just to the south of the *temenos* wall, and to reveal the southern wall of the *temenos* itself, and establish any possible relationship between the two. The double ditched BSE (Enclosure Ditch Group [1016]) had only been recently revealed in a geophysical survey. In this trench the NW corner of the enclosure is revealed with an E-W leg called cut [1052] and a N-S leg called cut [1014]. They are collectively called Enclosure Ditch Group [1016]. A series of pits seem to have predated the ditched enclosure. Initially it was thought some of the earlier features explored in MFNA Trench 1 and MFNA Trench 2 might be Bronze Age in date, but this has not been supported by the pottery evidence in Trench 1 or Trench 2, though the lack of any dating evidence in some of these earlier ditches in MFNA Trench 2 means a BA date still remains a possibility. Residual finds of a Neolithic leaf arrowhead and a thumbnail scraper in Trench 1 may indicate even early activity.

The BSE probably dated from the Middle Iron Age. A small assemblage of LIA pottery and a large assemblage of early Roman pottery in the upper fills of the enclosure ditch suggests it was still open in the Late Iron Age and early Roman period. Significantly, some of the Roman finds (including two 1st century coins and three 1st century brooches), seem to pre-date the earliest suggested date for the construction of the main temple inside the *temenos*. This suggests this area must have been a focus for the first Roman activity on the site. The excavation of the BSE ditches continued in 2009. In this season it became clear that the section of the ditch forming the western boundary of the BSE (in cut 1014) was narrower than the ditch forming the northern boundary (in cuts 1052 and 2004) and also lacked the stepped profile. It differed also in not being re-cut like the northern boundary ditch. This may imply that the west side of the enclosure was not dug at the same time as the northern side and/or may not have had the same importance as the north and east sides of the BSE later on in the Iron Age.

There were also a large number of pits and possible postholes across Trench 1, many of them intercutting each other. Fifty one definite pits were revealed, plus twenty-three other smaller cuts (postholes/small pits, slots, and stakeholes). Out of the 51 pits only 31 were excavated due to time restrictions. In the 31 fully excavated pits, 47% produced any pottery from their fills. Of these, the majority contained only prehistoric pottery and approximately 15% contained a mix of prehistoric and Roman pottery in their various fills. Only a few of these pit assemblages have had any detailed pottery analysis but based on these it is clear that there is a mix of EIA and MIA pits in the area.

MFNA 08
Trench 1



Trench MFNA1

The southern wall of the *temenos* runs from the NE corner of the trench for *c.* eight metres westwards, then ends abruptly. There was no evidence of a continuation of the *temenos* wall towards the west, perhaps suggesting there was a southern entrance into the *temenos* area here. The concentration of early Roman finds and some possible Late Iron Age finds in the upper fills of the large enclosure just to the south of this possible entrance may be significant. The geophysics unfortunately does not show the line of the *temenos* wall continuing west, or anything of the potential western boundary of the *temenos*, due to problems surveying this area. It is a possibility that the course of a stream or the River Ock itself once formed a natural boundary to the west in the Roman period and that there was never a western wall for the *temenos.*

The total number of pottery sherds found in the entire trench was 2,635. Of these only 575 (22%) were prehistoric and 2,060 (78%) were Roman. The prehistoric pottery assemblage is of mixed EIA, EIA/MIA and MIA date, with a smaller number of LIA sherds. The bulk of the

Roman sherds are in the top layers overlying pits and ditches and in the top fills of the barrel-shaped enclosure ditch. Much of the Roman pottery sampled from this area dates to the 2nd century A.D., but in the BSE ditch upper fills this also includes some 1st century types like butt-beakers.

A total of 802 animal bone fragments were found in this trench. As with many other trenches across the site, the assemblage was dominated by sheep/goat bones, followed by smaller amounts of cattle and pig. The assemblage breaks down into *c.* 61% sheep/goat; *c*. 17% cattle; *c.* 14% pig; *c.* 2% horse; followed by small amounts of dog, possible deer, tiny bird/rodent/frog bones and unidentifiable fragments.

Sixty-nine small finds were discovered in this trench, with about 40% deriving from the topsoil. Of the remainder, approximately 32 %, (23 finds) were either from the fills of the BSE or from the fills of the re-cut. The remaining 28% of small finds were distributed in layers and pits in the northern half of the trench. The small finds consisted of 11 cu-alloy items; five Roman coins; four iron objects ;17 flint objects (mostly scrapers); ten Roman glass vessel fragments; five worked animal bone fragments; four pottery sherds or objects: two lead fragments; one piece of fired clay; one piece of slag and two human teeth. Among those small finds which can be assigned dates are the Roman coins, four of out of the five being found in the area of the BSE. Three of these coins date from either A.D. 41-54 or A.D. 69-70 (SF56 from context 1017; SF62 from context 1015; and SF4 from topsoil), confirming an early Roman focus for this area. The remaining two Roman coins (SF31 from context 1017and SF77 from context 1019) are too worn for close identification. The four cu-alloy brooches found in this trench are all dated to the 1st century A.D. and once again these are focused in the upper fills of the BSE ditches supporting the evidence for an early Roman focus in this area.

One of the most unusual and interesting items was a broken pottery animal horn *c.* 10cm in length (SF69, context 1089) made from Roman colour-coated pottery, possibly from the Oxford kiln group. It derived from an upper fill of the BSE Ditch Cut [1014] and may have come from a pottery cult figurine of a bull's head. It is unlikely that this represents the horn of a complete ceramic figurine, as it would have been enormous, but it is possible it derived from a figurine of a whole bull's head (see Votive Finds Report by Sheila Raven for significance of bull offerings on this website). The discovery of such a potentially religious find in the vicinity of the southern part of the Roman *temenos* enclosure may be of significance.

Iron Age Phase

The BSE ditch (Enclosure Ditch Group [1016]) was excavated in two places in this trench, on either side of the NW corner, across the east-west section [ditch cut [1052]), which formed the northern boundary of the enclosure, and the north-south section (ditch cut [1014]), which formed the western boundary of the enclosure. The ditch forming the western boundary was shallower and narrower (1.8m wide) than the section forming the northern boundary (approximately 3.2m wide) as revealed in both trenches MFNA1 and MFNA2. The profile in

the western boundary was also different in being V-shaped rather than the original stepped V-shape profile found along the northern boundary in Trench 2. The ditch is of Middle Iron Age origin, based on the pottery finds, and was recut on the E-W alignment at least (cut [1182]), probably in the Late Iron Age, based on the pottery finds. This feature was still open during the late Iron Age and into the early Roman period, based on both pottery and other finds found in the upper fills.

There were *c*. 51 pits within Trench 1, but only 66% of these were fully excavated. The remainder only had their top fills excavated and their rough shape and diameter established. These cuts have all been described in the "Unphased" section below and though they lack any pottery dating even from their top fills; it is likely that most of them are of prehistoric date. Many of the excavated cuts were intercut or form large intercutting groups, and some were small enough to be either small pits or large postholes. There was a particular concentration of pits just to the south of the *temenos* wall. Some of the pits, such as a group of intercutting pits (with pit [1065] as the earliest) on the north edge of the large enclosure ditch, are clearly cut by it, so represent earlier activity in the area. Only the pits with some Iron Age pottery dating (or those that are cut by later features with IA pottery) have been described in this IA phased section. The features in this trench seem to contain a mix of both EIA and MIA pottery suggesting there was activity in this northern zone of the barrel-shaped enclosure ditch in both these periods. Smaller amounts of LIA pottery attest to some continuity in this area in the final phase of the Iron Age, which was then succeeded by various recuts and reuse of upper fills of Iron Age ditches into the Early Roman period.

CUTS:

Pit [1002] is a sub-circular pit, with steep sides, *c*. 1m wide and 0.3m deep. It is situated in the NW corner of the trench and has a single fill (1003). It cuts bedrock (1001).

Pit [1005] is a shallow sub-circular pit, *c.* 0.6m wide and 0.15m deep. It is situated in the NW corner and is cut by pit [1067]. The relationship with pit [1083] is not clear, but it probably, but it probably cuts and post-dates it. It has a single fill (1006), which contained only five Iron Age pottery sherds so the dating is not very secure. However as it is cut by pit [1067] it is also probably of Iron Age date.

Ditch [1014] (see Enclosure Ditch Group 1016)

Pit [1018] is a large oval shaped pit on the W side of the trench, with vertical sides, *c.* 1.70m x 0.86 wide and 0.63m deep. It is situated just outside the corner angle of the large enclosure ditch. The single fill (1019) contained 74 sherds of Iron Age pottery and one unrecognisable Roman coin.

Pit [1026] is a large sub-circular beehive-shaped pit with a sloping floor, *c.* 1.40 – 1.70m wide and *c.* 0.6m deep. This pit cuts bedrock layer (1001) and contained five fills. Upper layer (1062) produced 27 EIA sherds and overlay middle fills (1072) and (1123), both of which produced EIA pottery. These overlay lower fill (1073) and basal fill (1079). The latter

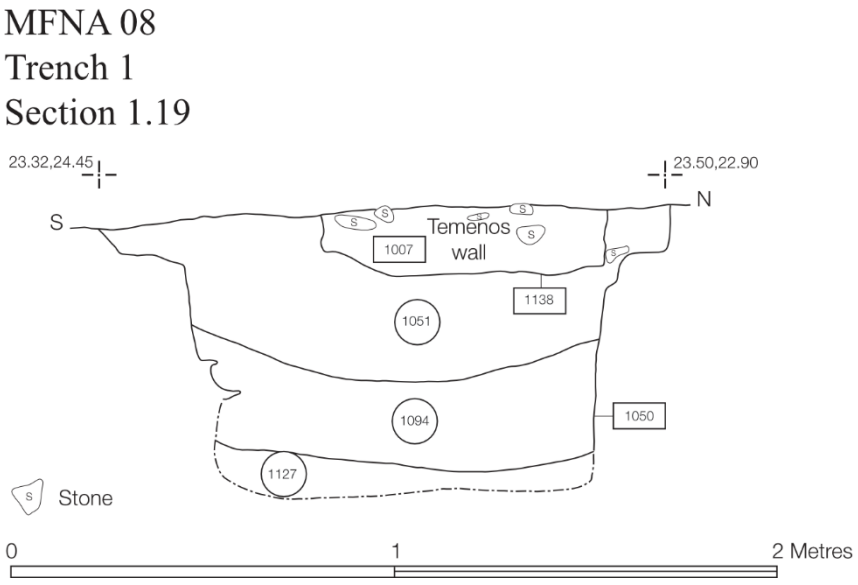
contained nine EIA/MIA sherds. From the pottery dating we can conclude this was an EIA pit.

Pit [1028] is an oval shallow pit on the west side of the trench, *c*. 1.3 x 1.10 across and *c*. 0.2m in depth. It only contained one fill (1029), which produced only five Iron Age pottery sherds and five Roman pottery sherds, which makes its dating a little uncertain. However, it is most likely to be an Iron Age pit with a few intrusive Roman sherds.

Pit [1035] is a small circular pit on the west side of the trench, *c*. 0.8m in diameter and *c*. 0.35m deep. It has a single fill (1036) which contained Iron Age pottery. It appears to cut rectangular feature [1037] and possible posthole cut [1081]

Pit/Slot [1037] seems to be a narrow and shallow rectangular slot *c*. 0.45m long and *c*. 0.2m wide by *c*. 0.06m deep, but as it is cut by pit [1035] its definite dimensions and shape remain uncertain. The single fill (1038) contained no dating evidence but as it was cut by Iron Age pit [1035] it must be Iron Age or earlier.

Pit [1050] is a deep largely straight-sided pit underlying *temenos* wall foundation cut [1138], and cutting sandy clay natural layer (1127). It measures *c.* 1.5m in diameter and was *c*. 0.75m deep. It is cut by *temenos* foundation cut [1138]. The pit contained two fills, top fill (1051) which is cut by [1138] and lower or primary fill (1094), both of which contained small quantities of Iron Age pottery.



Pit [1050]

Ditch cut [1052] (see Enclosure Ditch group 1016)

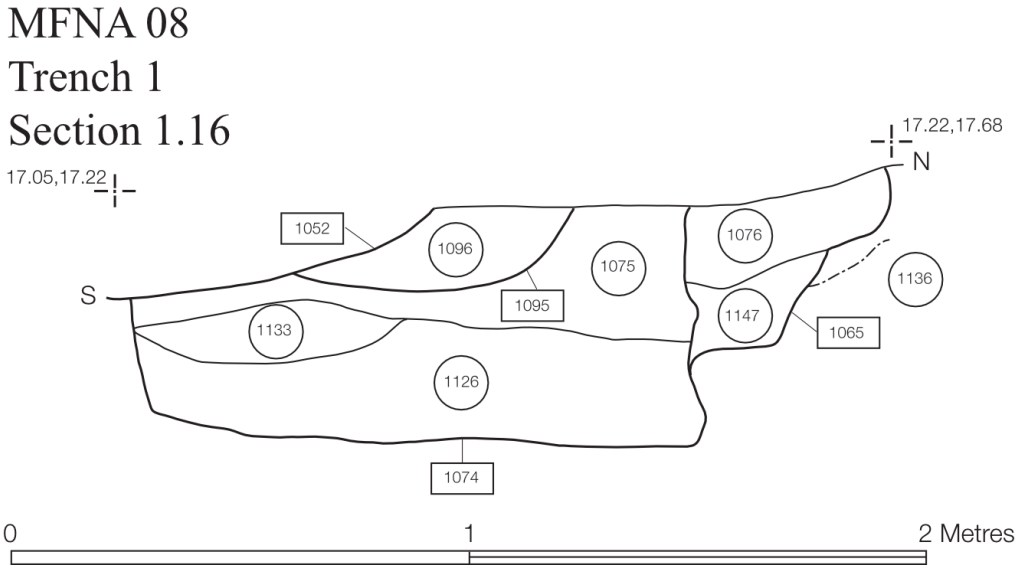
Pit [1054] is a sub-circular pit cut by the north baulk with only a small part of it visible within the trench confines, so its depth and dimensions are not known. Only the upper fill of this pit (1055) was able to be excavated and this did contain some IA pottery.

Pit [1063] is a large pit in a group of intercutting pits on the north edge of ditch cut [1052] (part of Enclosure Ditch Group [1016]). It measured *c*. 1.5m in dimeter and was *c.* 0.26m deep with sloping sides and a flat base. This feature cut pit [1065] but its relationship to neighbouring pit [1074] is unclear. The single fill (1064) contained some IA pottery.

Pit [1065] is a medium sized pit, heavily truncated by later pits [1026], [1063], [1074] and [1077], so its shape and dimensions are difficult to ascertain. It has sloping sides and must have been at least 0.6m in diameter originally and was at least 0.3m deep. It contained two fills, the top fill being (1076) and the primary or basal fill being (1076). Neither of these fills contained any dating evidence, but as all three pits which truncated it, did contain Iron Age pottery, it must also be Prehistoric in date.

Pit [1067] is a large circular pit, cutting the SW edge of pit [1005]. It is a bee-hive shaped pit with a flat base, *c*. 1m wide and 0.54m deep. It was cut down to natural clay and had a single fill (1068), containing Iron Age pottery and a few intrusive Roman sherds.

Pit [1074] is a sub-rectangular straight-sided pit in a group of intercutting pits on the north edge of ditch cut [1052] (part of Enclosure Ditch Group [1016]). It measured *c.* 1.2 m in diameter and was 0.55m deep. This feature cuts pit [1065] and small pit [1077]. It was cut by ditch cut [1052] of the large BSE. It contained five fills, the uppermost being (1096) a lens of darker material within top fill (1075). Fill (1075) overlay fills (1096) and (1133) and primary or lower fill (1126). Upper fill (1075) produced eight EIA sherds and basal fill (1126) also produced EIA pottery. This must therefore be an EIA pit.



Pits [1074] and [1065]

Pit [1077] is a pit on the north edge of Enclosure Ditch [1052] and probably cut by it. Only the top fill (1078) was partially excavated, so the relationship with pit [1026] to the north is unclear. It was probably cut by pit [1074] to the west. As the latter was cut by the Enclosure Ditch [1052], it seems likely that pit [1077] also predates the ditch. The top fill contained no dating evidence, but if it predates the Enclosure Ditch it must be Prehistoric.

? Posthole [1081] is a small shallow cut, roughly triangular in shape, *c*. 0.2m x 0.24m and only 0.06m in depth. It may be a posthole, but its precise shape is uncertain as it was cut by pit [1035]. Its only fill (1082) contained no dating evidence, but as this feature was cut by Iron Age pit [1035] it must be Iron Age or earlier in date.

Pit [1083] is a shallow pit in the intercutting group of cuts in the NW corner, whose dimensions and shape are difficult to determine as it was truncated by posthole [1010] and pit [1005] on either side. The remaining depth was 0.12m and its width may have been *c.* 0.5 - 0.6m. It contained a single fill (1084), which included no dating evidence. However, as it was cut by [1005], which did contain Iron Age pottery, it must be of prehistoric date.

Pit [1090] is a large oval shallow pit situated at the terminal end of the temenos wall [1007], measuring *c.* 1.8 x 1.4m across and *c*. 0.25m deep. It is sited right next to two intercutting pits [1092] and [1139]. This shallow pit had only one fill (1121) containing some IA pottery. The base of the fill showed patches of clay which may represent a clay lining.

Pit [1092] is an oval pit, adjacent to pit [1090] at the terminus of the *temenos* wall, *c.* 0.6m x 0.5m across and *c*. 0.6m deep. It contains three fills, the top one being (1122) which contained EIA/MIA pottery with a few intrusive Roman sherds. This overlies (1230), a thin band of clay with flecks of charcoal that may represent a sealing layer. That fill in turn overlies fill (1231), which contained pottery which may be EIA and one bowl fragment which may even by Bronze Age in date, but of course that may be residual. Below this was a thin layer of clay originally thought to be the primary fill (thought to be a clay lining) but it was later identified as natural layer of clay that the pit cut. This pit can be dated to EIA/MIA based on the pottery evidence with a possible residual BA sherd.

Pit [1097] is a small straight-sided pit in the extreme NE corner of the trench, to the north of the *temenos* wall, measuring *c*. 0.8m in diameter and *c*. 0.5 m deep. It cuts a natural clay layer (1128) (originally thought to be the lower clay lining of the pit itself). The single fill (1098) contained various finds including some IA pottery.

Pit [1099] is a sub-circular pit, situated between the *temenos* wall and the large enclosure northern ditch, measuring *c*. 1.1m across and *c.* 0.44m deep. It has vertical sides and was dug through natural clay layer (1131) and natural sand layer (1134). The single fill (1100) included some IA pottery.

Pit [1101] is a shallow sub-circular pit situated next to pit [1099], measuring *c.* 1.1m across and only 0.13m deep. It is cut by later posthole [1129]. Single fill (1102) contained some IA pottery.

Pit/posthole [1113] is a small pit or large circular posthole situated on the edge of the northern bank of the large enclosure ditch, but whether it cuts/or is cut by the ditch is unclear. It cuts bedrock layer (1001) and measures *c.* 0.5m in diameter and 0.43 deep. The relationship between intercutting pits [1198] and [1200] is not entirely clear, but it seems likely that it cuts and postdates both of them. It contained two fills, the upper one being

(1114), which contained some IA pottery. Lower or primary fill (1203) contained no dating evidence.

Pit [1119] is a circular pit on the northern edge of the enclosure ditch re-cut [1182] and cut by it. It cuts earlier pit [1204]. Its relationship to the original ditch cut [1052] is unclear. It measured *c.* 1.2m in diameter and had one fill (1120) which included some IA pottery.

Posthole [1124] is a small posthole, *c*. 0.30m in diameter, situated under the *temenos* wall on the north edge. The single fill (1125) included some IA pottery.

Pit/slot [1136] is narrow ovoid pit or a linear slot in the east baulk, south of the temenos wall. It was not fully excavated, so its edges and dimensions remained undefined, as does its relationships with intercutting pits [1152] and [1154]. The observable dimensions were *c*. 0.50m x 0.80m and it may have cut pit [1152] and been cut by [1154] but this is still uncertain. The exposed top fill (1137) contained Iron Age pottery.

Pit [1139] is a small oval pit just to the west of the *temenos* wall in the southern entrance, measuring *c*. 1.1m across and *c.* 0.85m deep, cutting bedrock layer (1001). Though the relationship to intercutting pit [1092] is not totally clear, it probably does cut it and post-date it. The pit contained nine fills, some of which were extremely thin bands of grey clay. The top fill is (1140), which contained some MIA pottery and one intrusive Samian sherd. This overlies (1141), which in turn overlies (1145), both of which had some MIA pottery. Below this was fill (1146) with some EIA dated pottery sherds, which in turn overlies thin grey clay fill (1235). Below this were fills (1222) which produced undiagnostic Iron Age pottery which might be MIA, and then thin grey clay layer (1226). The latter contained some IA pottery which may be EIA or MIA. Below this fill (1227) overlies what appears to be the primary bottom fill (1228), a blue-grey layer across the whole base of the pit. Neither of these lower fills contained any dating evidence. It remains a possibility that this was actually a natural clay layer that the pit cut through. This is clearly an Iron Age pit, most probably of the MIA.

Pit [1142] is a large sub-circular pit on the eastern edge of enclosure ditch cut [1014] and cut by [1014]. The pit cuts natural bedrock (1001). It measured *c*. 1.85 across and was *c.* 1m deep and contained nine fills, which included IA pottery and some burnt materials like charcoal and burnt bone. The top fill (1135) contained EIA pottery as did the two fills below this (1143) and (1144) respectively. These in turn overlie thick fill (1202), which produced pottery which might be EIA to MIA. Below this were fills (1207) and (1206), containing pottery which might be later EIA to MIA, though a MIA seems unlikely as these fills are well below fills which are definitely EIA. Fill (1206) overlies primary or bottom fills (1223), (1224) and (1225), which appear to have been deposited adjacent together and at a similar phase. The only pottery in these basal fills is of an indeterminate date. It seems most likely that this pit is of EIA date, given the pottery in the upper fills.

Enclosure Ditch [1182] (see Enclosure Ditch Group 1016)

Pit [1200] is a shallow circular pit on the north edge of enclosure re-cut ditch [1182], but its relationship to the original cut of the ditch (1052) is unclear. It measures *c*. 1.2m across by *c*.

0.4m deep. It is cut by enclosure ditch [1182] and probably by later pits/postholes [1198] and [1113]. The single fill (1201/1208) contained a small amount of MIA pottery.

Pit [1204] is a circular flat-based pit just on the northern edge of large enclosure ditch [1052], measuring *c*.1m across and *c*. 0.5m deep. It is cut by later pit [1119]. There were two fills, the uppermost being (1191), overlying primary or lower fill (1196). Both fills included some IA pottery.

GROUPS:

Enclosure Ditch Group [1016]: Consists of the N-S leg (western boundary, cut [1014]) of the outer ditch of the large BSE and the E-W leg (northern boundary, cut [1052]), and also the recut [1182] of the northern boundary ditch. The geophysics in this area also shows a linear feature running parallel to the wide enclosure ditch on its inside. It probably represents a palisade trench. Most of the pottery dating from the lower fills of the northern and western legs of this outer ditch was MIA in date and the upper fills that survived contained large amounts of early Roman pottery. However, the picture is a little more complex than that as though the recut [1182] of the northern boundary ditch also produced MIA in the lower fills, the basal fill produced EIA/MIA pottery, perhaps representing some earlier residual material from this outer ditch. Also, the upper fills of this recut included Late Iron Age pottery alongside Early Roman. This all suggests some kind of continuity of activity in this area running from the MIA and possibly also the EIA into the Early Roman period.

Ditch cut [1014] is on a north-south alignment and formed the western boundary of the BSE. It measured *c*. 2.30 – 2.55m wide and was *c.* 1.5m deep. This section of the ditch was narrower than the northern sections of the enclosure ditch. It had a different profile (being V-shaped without the step feature) from both the recut of the northern boundary ditch [1182] and the original profile of the enclosure ditch as explored in Trench MFNA2 in cut [2004]. This west boundary of the BSE also differed from the northern boundary as explored in cut [1052] and cut [2004] in Trench 2, in showing no signs of a later re-cut. Perhaps this implies that the western boundary had less importance as a functional boundary line as time progressed, in contrast to the northern boundary?

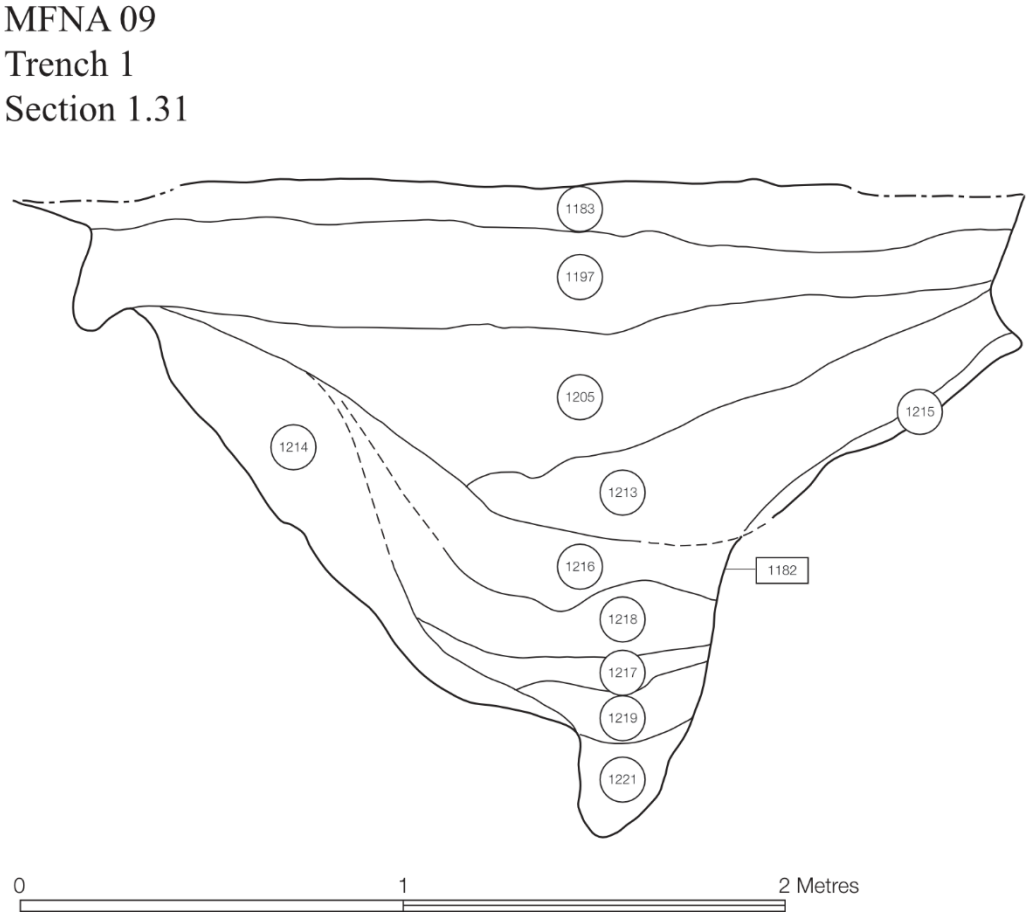
The top fill was (1015) which contained a huge amount (721 sherds) of Roman pottery, including many decorated types and fine wares. The same fill also produced residual MIA pottery and even a few EIA sherds, so clearly the stratigraphy here is disturbed and contains much residual material. Early Roman finds in this fill include a 1st century AD Roman coin (69-79 A.D.) and an early Roman Nauheim-derivative brooch dated 1st century BC/1st century A.D. This overlies fill (1080), a sandy clay with frequent small charcoal, and no finds. Below this was (1089), and the pottery here (25 sherds) was largely Roman with some residual MIA. Also found in this context was a pottery spindle whorl SF70 made from a cut down Roman greyware vessel and also a very rare pottery model of an animal horn SF69. The latter may well derive from some kind of pottery votive model. Fill (1089) overlies (1148), a thick 0.6m deep grey-brown clay loam across the full width of the ditch and with no finds. This overlies both fill (1211) on the east side of the section and (1210) on the west side

of the section, which contained largely MIA pottery. Below this is fill (1233), which in turn overlies fill (1212), a yellow clay fill *c*. 0.40m thick and contained six MIA sherds. This overlies the primary or bottom fill (1232), a grey clay containing no pottery and very few finds apart from some animal bone and charcoal fragments.

Ditch cut [1052] was on an east-west alignment and formed the northern boundary of the BSE. This section of the ditch was severely truncated by ditch re-cut [1182]. The ditch measured *c*. 3.3m across and because the recut has obliterated the original ditch profile and fills, we can only assume its depth was *c.* 1.7m or less. We do not know what the original profile of the ditch was in this particular section of the northern boundary due to the recut obscuring the original profile, but it must have been at least a little shallower the section of the northern boundary ditch to the east, as explored in cut [2004], as it was not observable below the later recut here. Why the northern boundary of the BSE was a different profile to the western boundary is unclear, but it may imply they were created at different times.

Ditch cut [1052] cut earlier pit [1074] and possibly also pit [1077]. Its relationship to the pits [1113], [1117], [1119], [1200] on its northern edge is unclear, as these pits were not fully excavated or were not sectioned. The ditch may have cut pit [1109] on the east baulk and may have been cut by small pit [1198]. The only fill that survived was top fill (1017) which was extremely rich in finds, especially in early Roman pottery (489 sherds), as already discussed in the introduction. Included in this upper fill was also residual MIA pottery. An early 1st century Roman coin SF56, dated 41-54 A.D, was also found in this fill as well as an unrecognisable pierced Roman coin SF31. Two 1st century Early Roman brooches, SF22 and SF53, also attest to activity in this area in the 1st century A.D. The close proximity of this section of the Iron Age enclosure to the Roman *temenos* and its probable southern entrance in this area, may explain the high level of deposition here.

Ditch cut [1182] is the re-cut of the original east-west ditch cut [1052] of the BSE outer ditch. The ditch was a stepped V-shape with an 'ankle-breaker' base, *c*. 2.8 m wide x 1.75 deep and very similar in profile and size to that of the sections of the same enclosure ditch, explored to the east and south in trenches MFNA2 and 3 in 2008. This recut ditch also cuts pit [1119] and pit [1200] on the northern edge of the ditch. The small amount of MIA pottery in the two lower fills may be residual, part of the recutting, and it seems more likely that the recut dates to the LIA. The ditch contained 12 fills, the top one being fill (1183), which contained a small quantity of mixed Iron Age pottery including some LIA (37 sherds), possibly residual, and a large quantity (221) of Early Roman pottery, mostly grey ware. This fill overlies fill (1197) which stretches across the whole width of the ditch and shows a similar pattern in its pottery content i.e. a small quantity of LIA Age pottery (17) but a very large quantity of Early Roman pottery (404), also mostly grey wares with no apparent imported table wares. The pottery assemblage in these two upper fills, suggests that this ditch re-cut was still open and in use during the Roman period.



Ditch [1182]

Fill (1197) overlies (1205), which also contained some MIA and some Roman pottery, but larger quantities of Iron Age. This overlies fill (1213) and fill (1216) and fill (1214) which was situated on the northern edge of the ditch. All these fills only contained very small amounts of probably Iron Age pottery, but none of it was very diagnostic. Fill (1213) lay directly over (1216), and also seals the thin weathering deposit (1215) on the eastern slope of the ditch. Fill (1216) in turn overlies fill (1218) which runs across the width of the ditch at this point and also contained a small handful of MIA pottery. Below this lay fill (1217), with no pottery. Fill (1217) in turn overlies fill (1219), in the narrow ankle-breaker lower part of the ditch. This fill overlies the primary or bottom fill (1221). Both lower fills (1219) and (1221) contained small amounts of EIA-MIA and MIA Age pottery. From the pottery dating it seems this recut of the BSE enclosure ditch was dug in either the late EIA to MIA or the MIA and remained open at least in the upper parts into the LIA and Early Roman period.

Roman Phase

One of the aims of this trench was to ascertain any relationship between the large Iron Age BSE and the southern *temenos* wall just to the north of it. There was a lot of Iron Age activity in the form of pits immediately south of the *temenos* wall [1007], suggesting this area may have been important in the period preceding the building of the Roman temple and its *temenos* enclosure. The date when the large Enclosure went out of use is still unclear but

some light maybe shed by the discovery of an unusual amount of early Roman finds in the upper fills (1017, 1015, and 1089) of Enclosure Ditch Group [1016]. The finds in these fills included two late 1st century asses (Domitian and Claudian) and three early Roman brooches, plus a large assemblage of Late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery not seen anywhere else on the site. Indeed this type of early Roman material was not even encountered in the upper fills of the same large Enclosure ditches revealed in trench MFNA2 to the east. So something was different about this location in the NW corner of the BSE. The evidence suggests this large feature was still open and visible in the 1st century A.D. Further explanation may be that there was a southern entrance into the *temenos*, positioned, just opposite the corner NW junction of the prehistoric BSE. It was assumed that on analogy with other Romano-Celtic temples sites that there was only ever one entrance to the east. However the abrupt end of the *temenos* wall in Trench 1, only 8m along from the NE corner of the trench, suggests there may have been a southern *temenos* entrance here. So the late Iron Age/early Roman evidence from these upper fills in the Enclosure ditch could be related to early Roman activity within the *temenos* itself. The finds assemblages from these ditch fills may support Bradford and Goodchild's original dating of the temple construction to A.D. 80-90 (subsequently disputed by Harding who postulated a 2nd century A.D. date instead).

UPPER FILLS OF IA ENCLOSURE DITCHES:

Although the original ditch cuts [1014] and [1052] and the recut [1182] of Enclosure Ditch Group [1016] date to the Iron Age, the upper fills contain a mix of Late Iron Age and Early Roman period pottery, implying this feature was still open in the early Roman period and was being used for deposition. The ditch fills containing this LIA/ERom material are:

Upper fill (1015) of the N-S leg of the original enclosure ditch [1014]. Contained 1st and 2nd century Roman pottery.

Upper fill (1017) of the E-W leg of the original enclosure ditch [1052]. Contained 1st and early 2nd century pottery.

Upper fills (1183 and (1197) of recut ditch [1182]. Contained Late Iron Age and early 2nd century Roman pottery.

STRUCTURES:

***Temenos* wall foundation cut [1138]** runs across the northeast corner of the trench for approximately eight metres, and represents the cut for the southern E-W aligned boundary of the *temenos* enclosure. It contains the remnants of the original stone wall [1007]/ [1060]. The foundation cut measures 0.9m wide by 0.20m deep, and is straight sided and flat bottomed. It cuts bedrock layer (1001) and natural clay (1127). The wall cut cuts the top fill (1051) of Iron Age pit [1050].

There are only small remnants of the robbed stone wall in [1007/1060], which contained no dating evidence. There is no sign of this E-W wall cut extending any further west than the western end explored in this trench, so this may suggest there was a gap here forming a southern entrance into the temenos enclosure. Whether this possible entrance was

contemporary to the main entrance leading to the temple is not clear. It is of interest that the apparent break in the wall here coincides with the corner of the BSE. As discussed above, the upper ditch fills of the enclosure in this were full of unusual late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery – it is possible that the deposition in these upper fills relates to activity within the temenos or to religious activity in this area preceding the building of the temple.

Unphased

Most of these cuts were not fully excavated, with only their approximate dimensions and part of their top fills being revealed. Other cuts in this section were fully excavated but their fills contained no dating evidence. However, the majority of these pits and postholes were most probably of Iron Age date, but we can be no more specific than that.

CUTS:

? Posthole [1008] was situated in the NW corner of the trench, measuring *c*. 0.2 x 0.2m. It was unexcavated apart from part of its top fill (1009), which contained no dating evidence.

Posthole [1010] is a deep and straight-sided cut, stepped on one side, *c.* 0.38m wide and 0.4m deep. It cuts pit [1083], but the relationship with small posthole [1069] on its W side is unclear. It contained a single fill (1011), with a clay rich base and many large packing stones, but no dating evidence.

Pit [1020] is a circular pit, *c.* 0.9m in diameter, situated in the SW corner of the trench. Only the top fill (1021) was excavated and this contained no dating evidence.

Pit [1022] is a large pit, only half of which was revealed on the W baulk. It was unexcavated apart from part of its top fill (1023), which contained no dating evidence. The pit was *c.* 1m in diameter.

Pit [1024] is a very large sub-rectangular pit cutting into the W baulk, with only part of its shape and dimensions observable. As most of it is under the baulk and it was unexcavated, apart from part of its top fill, it is unclear what this feature was. Its initial plan shows it being *c*. 4m in length or width, which makes it a very large feature, situated just outside the BSE. Its partially excavated top fill (1025) contained no dating evidence. This may have been a significant feature given its unusual size, but whether it was Prehistoric or Roman in date remains uncertain.

Pit [1030] is a small pit on the western side of the trench, unexcavated apart form part of its top fill (1031). Its diameter was *c*. 0.85m and it is cut by a modern pipe trench. The top fill contained no dating evidence.

Pit [1032] is a medium circular pit, partly cutting into the E baulk, and *c.* 1m in diameter. It was unexcavated apart from part of the top fill (1033). This fill contained almost equal amounts of prehistoric and Roman pottery so its dating is uncertain.

Pit [1039] is a small pit with straight sides and a rounded base, *c*. 0.53m in diameter and *c.* 0.45m deep. It contained two fills, the upper fill being (1040), overlying a thin basal or

primary fill (1132). The latter included some large stones on one side but no pottery. The main fill (1040) contained five prehistoric and five Roman sherds, so the dating of this feature remains uncertain. This pit was mistakenly also given the cut number [1041].

Pit [1041] – see cut [1039 above.

Pit [1043] is a sub-circular pit either cutting or cut by Enclosure ditch cut [1052], on its southern side. The diameter was *c.* 0.9m. It was unexcavated, apart from part of its top fill (1044) so the sequence of its relationship with the large Enclosure ditch is uncertain. The top fill contained no dating evidence.

Pit [1045] is a small circular pit (or a large posthole), *c.* 1m in diameter, just inside the large enclosure to the south of ditch cut [1052]. It was unexcavated apart from part of its top fill (1046), which contained no dating evidence. It similarity in size, and possible alignment with, the small pit [1097] to the east, raises the possibility that these may represent some internal feature in the NW corner of the Enclosure?

Pit [1047] is an irregular sub-circular pit near the southern edge of the trench, *c*. 1.3 wide. It was unexcavated apart from part of its top fill (1048). There was no dating evidence from this fill.

? Posthole [1056] is a large posthole (or possibly a small pit) to the north of the *temenos* wall, *c*. 0.5m in diameter and *c.* 0.35m deep. It contained two fills, the upper being (1034) which consisted of a small patch of dumped burnt stone and fired clay. The bottom fill was (1057), which contained only two sherds of possible prehistoric pottery, but not enough for definitive phasing.

Posthole [1058] is a small posthole just to the north of the *temenos* wall and south of large posthole [1056], *c*. 0.23 in diameter and 0.3m deep. It cuts layer (1149) and has a single fill (1059), which contained no dating evidence.

? Posthole [1069] is a small cut in the NW corner, whose relationship both to pit [1083] and large posthole [1010] is unclear, but it is probably cut by [1010]. It is circular with vertical sides and a flat base, *c*. 0.2m wide and 0.2m deep. Its single fill (1070) contained no dating evidence.

Posthole [1085] is a small posthole situated under the *temenos* wall about halfway along from the E baulk of the trench, *c*. 0.15m in diameter and 0.28m deep. The sole fill (1086) contained no dating evidence.

Posthole [1087] is a small posthole situated directly under the *temenos* wall at the western end, *c*. 0.24m in diameter and 0.28m deep. The sole fill (1088) contained no dating evidence.

Posthole [1103] is a small posthole in the far SE corner of the trench, *c*. 0.30m in diameter. The depth is unknown as the posthole was never excavated. The top fill (1104) contained no dating evidence.

Posthole [1105] is a circular posthole in the SE corner of the trench, *c*. 0.32m in diameter and *c.* 0.30m deep. Single fill (1106) only contained one undiagnostic pottery sherd.

Pit [1107] is a circular pit on the south baulk of the trench, only partly revealed. It measured *c*. 0.8m across and was unexcavated apart from part of the top fill (1108), which contained no dating evidence.

Pit [1109] is a small pit probably cutting original ditch cut [1052], the northern part of the large enclosure ditch. It measures *c*. 0.8m in diameter and was unexcavated, apart from top fill (1110), which contained no dating evidence.

?Small pit [1111] is small circular pit or large posthole adjacent to pit [1109] on the northern edge of the large enclosure ditch. It measures *c*. 0.5m in diameter and was unexcavated, apart from top fill (1112), which contained no dating evidence.

Pit/Pits [1115] is a very large ovoid pit/pits just to the north of the large enclosure ditch, which probably represents two pits. It was unexcavated however, so the precise definition of this feature or features remains unknown. The pre-excavation shape measured *c*. 1.7m x 1m. Part of the top fill/fills (1116) was investigated but contained no dating evidence.

Pit/Posthole [1117] is a small pit or large posthole on the northern edge of the large enclosure ditch, which measures *c*. 0.4m in diameter. It may have cut ditch [1052] but as the features was not excavated, this relationship is unclear. The single fill (1118) contained no dating evidence.

Posthole [1129] is a small straight-sided posthole just south of the *temenos* wall and cutting earlier pit [1101] and bedrock (1001). It measures *c.* 0.20m and is 0.18mdeep and was filled (1130) which contained no dating material.

Posthole [1150] is a large posthole to the north of enclosure ditch [1052], measuring *c*. 0.5m x 0.4m. It was unexcavated apart from its top fill (1151), which contained no dating evidence.

Pit [1152] is a large pit cutting into the east baulk and situated just south of the *temenos* wall. It measured *c*. 2m across but was unexcavated apart from its top fill (1153), which contained no dating evidence.

Pit [1154] is a pit to the south of the *temenos* wall, which intercut with pit [1156] to the west and pit/slot [1136] to the east, and measured *c.* 1.2m across. Because none of these pits were excavated apart from their top fills, the relationship between the three is unclear, though [1154] may have cut slot [1136]. The top fill of pit [1154] was (1155) and contained no dating material.

Pit [1156] is a pit to the south of the *temenos* wall, which intercut with pit [1154] to the east, but which pit cut which is uncertain as this pit was not excavated apart from its top fill. The pit measured *c*. 1.3m across and its top fill (1157) contained no dating material.

Pit 1158 is a small pit to the north of enclosure ditch [1052] which intercuts with pit [1160] to the west. It was unexcavated apart from its top fill, so the relationship with the intercutting

pit is unclear. The pit measured *c*. 1m across and its top fill (1159) contained no dating material.

Pit [1160] is a small ovoid pit to the north of enclosure ditch [1052] which intercuts with pit [1158] to the east. It was unexcavated apart from its top fill, so the relationship with the intercutting pit is unclear. The pit measured *c*. 1.4m across and its top fill (1161) contained no dating material.

Posthole [1162] is a posthole to the north of enclosure ditch [1052], near the east edge of the trench. It measured 0.5m across and was unexcavated apart from its top fill (1163), which contained no dating material.

Pit [1164] (see Pit Group [1186])

Pit [1166] (see Pit Group [1186])

Pit [1168] (see Pit Group [1186])

Pit/Posthole [1170] (see Pit Group [1186])

Pit [1172] (see Pit Group [1186])

Pit [1174] (see Pit Group [1186])

Pit [1176] (see Pit Group [1186])

Pit [1178] (see Pit Group [1186])

Pit [1180] is a sub-rectangular pit situated on the north baulk of the trench and measuring *c*. 1.6m across. It was unexcavated apart from its top fill (1181), which contained no dating material.

Posthole [1184] (see Pit Group [1186])

Posthole [1187] (see Pit Group [1186])

Posthole [1192] (see Pit Group [1186])

Posthole [1194] (see Pit Group [1186])

Pit/Posthole [1198] is a small pit or large posthole in an intercutting group of cuts on the north edge of enclosure ditch re-cut [1182]. It may have been cut by the original line of the enclosure ditch [1052]. It measures *c*. 0.4m in diameter and *c.* 0.5m deep. The relationship between intercutting features pit [1200] and pit [1113] are not entirely clear but it seems likely that [1198] cut pit [1200] and was itself cut by [1113]. Single fill (1199) contained no dating material.

GROUPS:

Pit Group [1186]: This group is made up of intercutting pits [1164], [1166], [1168], [1170], [1172], [1174], [1176], [1178], and postholes [1184], [1192], and [1194]. This large group is situated between the *temenos* wall [1007] and the north boundary of the large Enclosure Ditch (Ditch Group [1016]).

Five of these pits were never excavated beyond defining their approximate position (cuts [1164], [1168], [1170], [1174] and [1178]) and apart from postholes [1192] and [1194], the remainder were only excavated as far as their top fills. So we have no full sequence for any of these pits. As only two of the pits, [1172] and [1176], had any pottery in their top fills, the dating of this whole group is insecure, even though it is very likely they are all Iron Age features.

Pit [1164] is an ovoid pit on the east side of the intercutting pit Group [1186] and measured *c*. 1.4m across. It intercut with pits [1168] and probably [1178], but as none of these pits were fully excavated the sequencing is unknown. The top fill (1165) contained no dating material.

Pit [1166] is a small pit on the south edge of group [1186] measuring *c*. 0.9m across. It intercut with pit [1172] and posthole [1194] and seems to have been cut by both. The pit was unexcavated apart from its top fill (1167), which contained no dating material.

Pit [1168] is a pit on the NE edge of Group [1186] but its measurements are unclear. It intercut with pit [1164] and pit/posthole [1170], and possibly also with pit [1178], but as none of them were fully excavated their relationships are unclear. The pit was unexcavated apart from its top fill (1169), which contained no dating material.

Pit/posthole [1170] is a small pit or a large posthole on the north edge of Group [1186], measuring *c*. 1m across. It intercut with pit [1168] and pit [1178], but as none of them were fully excavated their relationships are unclear. The pit was unexcavated apart from its top fill (1171), which contained no dating material.

Pit [1172] is a circular pit with sloping sides on the south edge of Group [1186], measuring *c*. 1.3m across. It intercut with pit [1176] to the west and pit [1166] to the east and appears to have cut both of them. It was in turn cut by posthole [1192]. The pit was unexcavated apart from its top fill (1171), which contained a small amount of IA pottery. It therefore does belong in the Iron Age phased group above, but as the features in Group [1186] as a whole contained no dating material, it has been described in this unphased section.

Pit [1174] is a pit on the NW edge of Group [1186], measuring *c.* 0.8m across. It intercuts with pit [1176] and pit [1178], and possibly with pit [1172], but as none of them were fully excavated their relationships are unclear. The pit was unexcavated apart from its top fill (1175), which contained no dating material.

Pit [1176] is a pit on the SW edge of Group **[1186],** measuring *c*. 0.8m across. It intercuts with pit [1172] and pit [1174], and seems to have been cut by both of them. This pit was unexcavated apart from its top fill (1175), which contained a small amount of IA pottery.

Therefore, as an individual pit, as opposed to the whole Group [1186], it belongs in the Iron Age phased section.

Pit [1178] is a pit on the N edge of Group [1186], and as it interacts with many other cuts its actual dimensions remain unknown. It intercuts with pit [1170] and pit [1174], and possibly with others in the group, but as none of them were fully excavated their relationships are unclear. The pit was unexcavated apart from its top fill (1179), which contained no dating material.

Posthole [1184] is a posthole on the west edge of Group [1186], measuring *c.* 0.5m in diameter by *c*. 0.10m deep. It cuts pit [1176] and has a single fill (1185) which contained no dating material.

Posthole [1187] is a possible posthole on the southern edge of Group [1186]. It was neither fully excavated, planned, or had a section drawn, but was said to intercut with pit [1166]. Its dimensions are unknown and its top fill (1188) contained no dating material

Posthole [1192] cuts earlier pit [1172] and measured *c*. 0.6m in diameter and *c*. 0.25 deep. Its single fill (1193) contained no dating material.

Posthole [1194] cuts earlier pit [1166] and measured *c*. 0.55m in diameter and *c*. 0.15 deep. Its single fill (1195) contained no dating material.