

LAND SOUTHWEST OF THE STREET, LATTON, WILTSHIRE.

NGR: 409053.195509

Accession Code: DZSWS:22-2022

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

May 2022 Report No. 1490









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SUMMARY

Between 11th and 13th April 2022 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation on land southwest of The Street, Latton, Wiltshire (NGR: 409053.195509). The project was commissioned by Andrew Miles of LPC (Trull) Ltd.

The works comprised the excavation of five trenches within the area of a proposed development, which had previously been subject to a geophysical survey.

The geophysical survey and evaluation have indicated that the southern part of the site contains ditches and postholes, which may be related to Anglo-Saxon activity; although, due to a general paucity of finds, an earlier, or later date for some or all of the revealed features could not be ruled out. The ditches appeared to form part of a co-axial field or enclosure system, to which the postholes may have been related, although this remained uncertain.

The northern part of the site was devoid of archaeological features and was therefore of lower archaeological potential.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between AD 1066 and AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms, this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum).

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-medieval

The period between AD 1500 and AD 1900.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43, traditionally sub-divided into; Palaeolithic - c. 500,000 BC to c. 12,000 BC; Mesolithic - c. 12,000 BC to c. 4,500 BC; Mesolithic - c. 4,500 BC to c. 2,000 BC; Mesolithic - c. 4,500 BC to c. 2,000 BC; Mesolithic - c. 4,500 BC to c. 2,000 BC; Mesolithic - c. 4,500 BC to AD 43.

Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken 1.1 by Foundations Archaeology between 11th and 13th April 2022 on land southwest of The Street, Latton, Wiltshire (NGR: 409053.195509). The project was commissioned by Andrew Miles of LPC (Trull) Ltd.
- 1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2022) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (2014).
- 1.3 The CIfA code of conduct was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There is currently an application (No.19/08877/OUT) for a new development, which consists of a village hall, six houses and a tennis court.
- 2.2 The site currently comprises part of a field given over to pasture, which is located to the southwest of The Street, to the north of the A419, with housing to the southeast and northwest. The topography within and around the site is generally flat, at around 82m aOD. The underlying geology is recorded as Oxford Clay Formation - mudstone, overlain by Northmoor Sand and Gravel Member - sand and gravel (BGS Online Viewer).
- 2.3 A Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared for this site by Foundations Heritage (2019), which is summarised below:
- Prehistoric activity within the study area predominately relates to extensive 2.3.1 surveys undertaken in advance of the Latton Bypass and gravel extraction. Evidence includes Neolithic pits (MWI75468) and finds (MWI9428), a late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age enclosure (MWI75206), Bronze Age activity in the form of a round barrow (MWI9491), ring ditch (MWI76312) and gully (MWI76313), ditches (MWI75470) and enclosures (MWI75469). Two further round barrows are known from near Field Barn (MWI9474 and MWI9476). The greatest concentration of prehistoric activity, however, relates to the Iron Age. This includes settlements (MWI75471, MWI75207, MWI75472 and MWI76314), enclosures (MWI9431, MWI75208, MWI75209 (Iron Age-Roman with later burials) and MWI76316), pits (MWI75473, MWI75477 and MWI76315), ditches (MWI75474 and MWI75476) and a gully (MWI75475). There are also two Prehistoric records that cannot be assigned a specific period in the form of a posthole (MWI9432) and a ditch (MWI9467).
- 2.3.2 Roman activity in the general area is very well represented. Latton is located virtually equidistant, between the small town of Durocornovium at Wanborough in Swindon and the civitas capital of Corinium Dubunnorum at Cirencester. The village lies on the east side of the major Roman Road of

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Ermin Street (MWI9434), with the site located immediately adjacent to the west side of the road. Extensive Roman settlement remains are known from the parish, with two Scheduled Monuments within the study area dating to this period, both in the form of a Roman settlement, which may or may not have been in contemporary use. The Weavers Bridge settlement ('Settlement West of Latton' MWI9449, UID 1004689) is located approximately 95m to the northwest of the site, while the Field Barn settlement is located approximately 220m to the southeast of the site ('Settlement SE of Latton' MWI 9437, UID 1004690). There are numerous individual HER records relating to the scheduled areas; these are not individually discussed in this report. There are a small number of other HER entries relating to this period outside of the scheduled areas in the form of a number of pits northeast of Court Farm on the edge of the scheduled area and partially beneath the A419 (MWI9438) and further pits found northwest of Latton Lock (MWI8318), which have also been destroyed by the A419. A series of rectilinear earthworks to the west of the Field Barn scheduled area and now predominantly destroyed by the A419, may also date to this period (MWI9468).

- 2.3.3 The West Saxons advanced from the south coast in the 5th century AD and brought the area around Swindon under their control after the Battle of Beranburgh, reportedly at Barbury Castle in AD556. Saxon settlement may be anticipated within the general vicinity from around this time, but limited activity is known from the study area in the form of Saxon pits (MWI75480 and MWI9457) both located approximately 300m to the west and a Saxon building (MWI75479) approximately 1km to the northwest; both of which have been destroyed by gravel quarrying. It should be noted, however, that early Saxon settlement would have taken the form of family groups or small hamlets, prior to the nucleation of villages and may not be easy to identify.
- 2.3.4 There was an estate at Latton prior to 1066, at which time the estate was amalgamated with Eisey (Eysey). Domesday Book of 1086 mentions Latton as 'Latone'; the name deriving from 'farm where herbs are grown' in the hands of Reinbald the Priest. During the 13th 14th century the village probably lay as two separate parts with the church, demesne farm and vicarage house forming one core and perhaps as many as 25-30 farmsteads and tenements beside Ermin Street, with the two parts linked by Gosditch. The HER defines the historic core of the Medieval village of Latton (MWI9458) focussed around the Grade I listed Medieval church of St. John The Baptist (MWI33838, UID 1284123) and Church Farm. The Victoria County Histories (VCH) considers it likely that there would also have been settlement throughout the period along Ermin Street, but aerial photographic and LiDAR evidence suggests that the site area was in agricultural use during this period.
- 2.3.5 The area was probably in agricultural use during the early part of the Post-medieval period, although late 18th century mapping shows buildings within the southern half of the site. The HER records no clear evidence for 15th 17th century activity, beyond a limestone building to the west of The Street, which was excavated during the construction of the bypass, with its earliest phase of activity dating from 13th to 14th century (MWI9466), it was in use until the 16th

century and the site reused again later. A quarry pit (MWI75798) at 35 Upcott in the main historic core was identified as being Post-medieval and a number of undated pits/quarry pits (MWI9498) within the gardens of Nos 38-39 Upcott may be contemporary (no HER number). Further Post-medieval pits (MWI9470) are known from approximately 95m to the west of the site. The Thames and Severn Canal (MWI31335) also passed to the southwest of the site within the study area and there are several HER entries relating to this feature (MWI76164, MWI76165, and MWI9468; the latter also including 18th - 19th century property boundaries).

- 2.4 A magnetometer survey was carried out by Archaeological Surveys in 2022. The survey identified a number of positive linear and rectilinear anomalies in the eastern and southern parts of the site which are parallel with and orthogonal to The Street, which follows the course of the Ermin Way Roman road. Although they appear to relate to cut features, it is not clear if they relate to Post-medieval boundaries or if they relate to Medieval or possibly Roman features. Within the central part of the site, outside of the area outlined for development, are a number of positive linear, discrete and amorphous anomalies that form a ring or arc of features. A number of negative linear and rectilinear anomalies are situated to the north, but they lack a coherent morphology. Strongly magnetic discrete anomalies appear to relate to Modern bonfires and a water pipe crosses the site partly truncating the earlier features.
- 2.5 The site therefore contained the potential for significant archaeological features and deposits dating from the Prehistoric period onwards.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn, this would allow reasonable planning/mitigation decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the development.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
 - i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
 - ii) to attempt to characterize the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;
 - iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;

- iv) to provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable that archaeological implications of the proposed development to be assessed;
- v) to inform formulation of a strategy to avoid or mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation consisted of five trenches, as shown in Figure 2. The trenches were located in order to test the results of the previous geophysical survey, as well as to provide a representative sample of the development area.
- 4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological supervision, to the top of archaeological remains, or the underlying natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through use of a 360° mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Features and spoil tips were visually scanned for finds, whilst spoil heaps were subject to metal detector survey.
- 4.3 Where potential archaeological features were present, these were subject to appropriate levels of investigation. All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the approved WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 A full description of all contexts identified during the course of the fieldwork is presented in Appendix 1, whilst a report on the recovered ceramics is given in Appendix 2 and a list of miscellaneous finds is presented in Appendix 3. A summary of the results of the evaluation is given below.
- 5.2 The natural substrates, which consisted of variable bright beige gravel and bright brown orange clay silt, were present at an average depth of 0.45m below the Modern ground level. In Trenches 1 to 4 these were sealed by subsoil (102/202/302/402), 0.30m average thickness, which was subsequently overlain by topsoil (101/201/301/401), 0.22m average thickness. The subsoil was absent in Trench 5 and, as such, the natural gravel was directly overlain by topsoil (501), 0.22m average thickness.
- 5.3 A single Modern feature [405] was present at the east end of Trench 4, other than this, there was no evidence for significant or extensive Modern disturbance within the evaluated area and, as such, preservation conditions were assessed as moderate to good.

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- 5.4 **Trenches 1 to 3** were devoid of archaeological features. A small assemblage of Post-medieval and Modern pottery, along with a fragment of glass, was recovered from the topsoil (101) in Trench 1, whilst a sherd of Post-medieval pottery was present as unstratified material in Trench 2. The metal detecting survey recovered a lump of clinker or industrial waste from Trench 1 spoil heap, as well as a Victorian or Modern metal clothes button from Trench 2 spoil heap.
- 5.5 **Trench 4** contained two ditches and a Modern feature.
- 5.5.1 Feature [403] consisted of a northeast southwest aligned ditch, which was cut into the top of the natural and was sealed by subsoil (402). It contained soil fill (404), which yielded a single sherd of Early to Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery, as well as four fragments of animal bone and a very small lump of undiagnostic burnt material.
- 5.5.2 Feature [407] consisted of a northeast southwest aligned ditch, which was cut into the top of the natural and was sealed by subsoil (402). It contained soil fills (408) and (409), which were devoid of finds.
- 5.5.3 Feature [405] was partially revealed at the southeast end of the trench. It was cut through the subsoil and contained a clinker-rich fill, which was associated with Modern detritus.
- 5.6 **Trench 5** contained two ditches and two postholes.
- 5.6.1 Feature [502] comprised a northwest southeast aligned ditch, which was cut into the natural and was directly overlain by topsoil (501). It contained fills (503) and (504), from which was recovered a single crumb of Early to Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery, from fill (504) and two fragments of animal bone, from fill (503).
- 5.6.2 Features [505] and [508] consisted of two near identical probable postholes, which were cut into the natural and were directly sealed by topsoil (501). Both postholes contained a loose gravel basal fill (506/9), overlain by a brown soil fill (507/10). Feature [505] was devoid of finds, however, posthole [508] yielded a fragment of animal bone, from fill (509), as well as a sherd of Early to Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery, from fill (510).
- 5.6.3 Feature [511] comprised a northeast southwest aligned ditch, which was cut into the natural and was directly overlain by topsoil (501). It contained fill (513), from which was recovered a small fragment of burnt animal bone.
- 5.7 There was a generally good correlation between the results of the geophysical survey and the evaluation. Positive linear anomalies of archaeological potential (Figure 2; red features) were confirmed within Trenches 4 and 5. However, possible ditch-like linear anomalies (orange features) were generally not present within the evaluation trenches, apart from a correlation with ditch [407] at the northwest end of Trench 4.

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6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The evaluation has indicated that the north part of the site, in the areas of Trenches 1 to 3, has a generally low archaeological potential.
- 6.2 A total of four ditches [403], [407], [502] and [511], which were present within Trenches 4 and 5, appeared to represent parts of a possible co-axial field or enclosure system, which was set out on alignments that were orthogonal to the Roman road to the northeast. Two postholes [505] and [508], present within Trench 5, were situated on an alignment perpendicular to an adjacent ditch [511].
- 6.2.1 The features in Trenches 4 and 5 were generally poorly dated, however, a small amount of Early to Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered from ditches [403] and [502] and posthole [508]. It was also notable that ditches [403] and [407] were sealed beneath the subsoil (402) in Trench 4, which suggested that they were likely to be of some antiquity.
- 6.2.2 The geophysical survey and evaluation have therefore indicated the presence of archaeological features in the southern part of the site, around the areas of Trenches 4 and 5. At present, these are poorly dated, although a small amount of recovered pottery may indicate that at least some of the features may date to the Early to Middle Anglo-Saxon period. Although there was no evidence for any particular focus of activity within the site, the presence of ditches and postholes, along with a small number of finds including pottery and animal bone, some of which was burnt, may indicate settlement activity in the vicinity.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The geophysical survey and evaluation have indicated that the southern part of the site contains ditches and postholes, which may be related to Anglo-Saxon activity; although, due to a general paucity of finds, an earlier, or later date for some or all of the revealed features could not be ruled out. The ditches appeared to from part of a co-axial field or enclosure system, to which the postholes may have been related, although this remained uncertain. The northern part of the site was devoid of archaeological features and was therefore of lower archaeological potential.
- 7.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited with Wiltshire Museum, under Accession Code DZSWS:22-2022. A digital report/archive will also be submitted to OASIS/ADS. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal.

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9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data

СХТ	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				TRENCH 1: 24m long by 1.5m wide. Natural = bright brown orange clay silt, which contained occasional patches of bright beige gravel. Present at average 81.32m aOD.		
101	n/a	n/a	0.22	Topsoil: dark grey brown sand silt.	102	n/a
102	n/a	n/a	0.37	Subsoil: brown clay silt sand.	natural	101
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		
				TRENCH 2: 24m long by 1.5m wide. Natural = variable bright beige gravel and bright brown orange clay silt. Present at average 81.50m aOD.		
201	n/a	n/a	0.18	Topsoil: dark grey brown sand silt.	202	n/a
202 n/a n/a 0.36 Subsoil: brown		0.36	Subsoil: brown clay silt sand.	natural	201	
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		
				TRENCH 3: 29m long by 1.5m wide. Natural = variable bright beige gravel and bright brown orange clay silt. Present at average 81.39m aOD.		
301	n/a	n/a	0.20	Topsoil: dark grey brown sand silt.	302	n/a
302	n/a	n/a	0.33	Subsoil: brown clay silt sand.	natural	301
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		
				TRENCH 4: 24m long by 1.5m wide. Natural = variable bright beige gravel and bright brown orange clay silt. Present at average 81.13m aOD.		
401	n/a	n/a	0.27	Topsoil: dark grey brown sand silt.	402	n/a
402	n/a	n/a	0.35	Subsoil: brown clay silt sand.		401
[403]	1.50	2.23	0.53	Northeast – southwest aligned ditch with a rounded to undulating profile. Contained 404.		404
404	1.50	2.23	0.53	Fill of [403]: orange brown sand clay, which contained frequent gravel.	[403]	402
[405]	1.65	0.70	0.45	Cut feature with a steep to vertical profile. Partly revealed within the evaluation trench. Contained 406. Modern feature, which was cut through subsoil 402 into the top of the natural substrates. Partially recorded in plan only.		406
406	1.65	0.70	0.45	Fill of [405]: black clinker, which contained Modern metal and glass. [405]		401
[407]	1.85	1.56	0.38	Northeast – southwest aligned ditch with a rounded profile. Contained 408 and 409.	Northeast – southwest aligned ditch with a rounded profile. Contained 408 and 409. natural	
408	?	0.68	0.11	Fill of [407]: light grey brown silt gravel.	[407]	409
409	1.85	1.56	0.38	Fill of [407]: orange brown silt sand.	408	402

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СХТ	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				TRENCH 5: 25m long by 1.5m wide. Natural = bright beige gravel with occasional patches of bright brown orange clay silt. Present at average 81.67m aOD.		
501	n/a	n/a	0.22	Topsoil: dark grey brown sand silt.	natural	n/a
[502]	4.0	2.03	0.87	Northwest – southeast aligned ditch with a steep sloping to rounded profile. Contained 503 and 504.	natural	503
503	?	1.12	0.31	Fill of [502]: grey brown sand gravel, which contained rare charcoal flecks.	[502]	504
504	4.0	2.03	0.56	Fill of [502]: brown clay sand.	503	501
[505]	0.55	0.48	0.32	Sub-circular probable posthole with near vertical sides and a rounded base. Contained 506 and 507. Similar / related to [508].	natural	506
506	?	0.47	0.20	Fill of [505]: grey loose gravel.		507
507	0.55	0.48	0.12	Fill of [505]: brown clay sand.		501
[508]	0.56	0.50	0.30	Sub-circular probable posthole with near vertical sides and a rounded base. Contained 509 and 510. Similar / related to [505].	natural	509
509	?	0.54	0.18	Fill of [508]: grey loose gravel.	[508]	510
510	0.55	0.48	0.13	Fill of [505]: brown clay sand.	509	501
[511]	4.50	2.13	0.78	Northeast – southwest aligned ditch with a steep sloping to rounded profile. Contained 513.	natural	513
512				Void – natural gravel.		
513	4.50	2.13	0.78	Fill of [511]: red brown clay sand silt, which contained frequent gravel.	[511]	501

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APPENDIX 2: The Ceramics

By Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised eight sherds with a total weight of 303g. It was all Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon or Post-medieval. The following fabric types were noted:

E/MSAX: Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon Hand-built Ware, 5th – 9th century. 3 sherds,

17g.

PMR: Glazed Red Earthenware, 16th – 19th century (Brears 1969). 4 sherds, 234g.

MOD: Misc. Modern Wares, 19th century+. 1 sherd, 52g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is fairly typical of sites in the region.

The sherd of E/MSAX from context (510) is a rim from a small jar with an upright rim-form typical of the tradition. The fabric is sandy, with moderate organic voids up to 5mm and rare quartz and flint up to 0.5mm. The fragment from context (504) is in a sandy fabric, whilst that from (404) is in an organic-tempered fabric, with moderate to dense oolitic limestone temper. The fabrics are very typical of the pottery of the period in the region (eg. Seager Smith 1997, 68). The sherds are all undecorated and so cannot be closely dated other than to within the broad Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon period ($5^{th} - 9^{th}$ century).

The PMR is fragments of jars and bowls, which is fairly typical of the tradition. The sherd of Modern pottery from context (101) is from a stoneware drain-pipe.

The assemblage is in reasonably good condition and appears reliably stratified, albeit as the product of secondary deposition.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type.

	E/M	E/MSAX		PMR		OD	
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
Tr2 U/S			1	47			U/S
101			3	187	1	52	MOD
404	1	7					E/MSAX
504	1	1					E/MSAX
510	1	9					E/MSAX
Total	3	17	4	234	1	52	

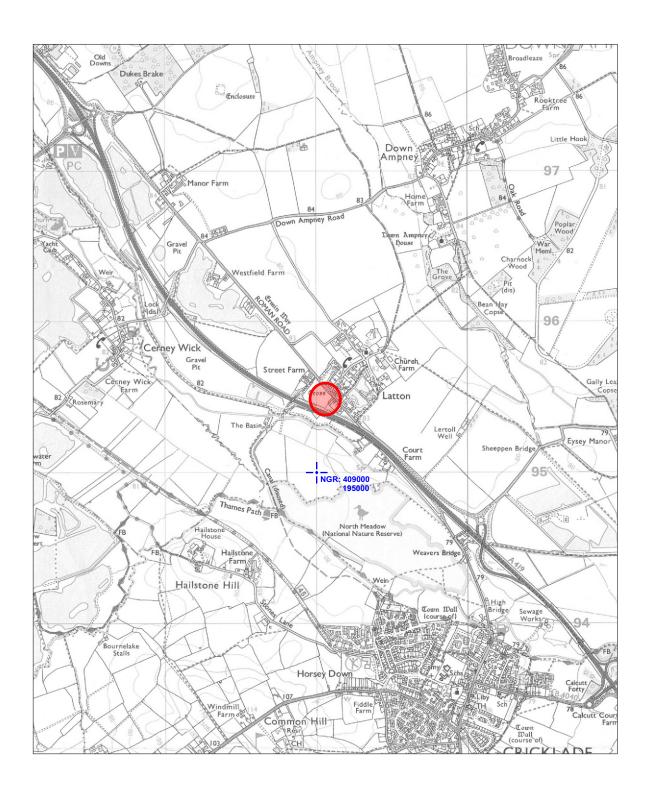
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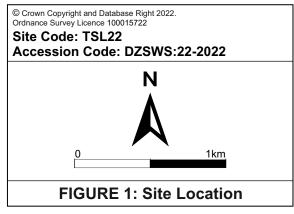
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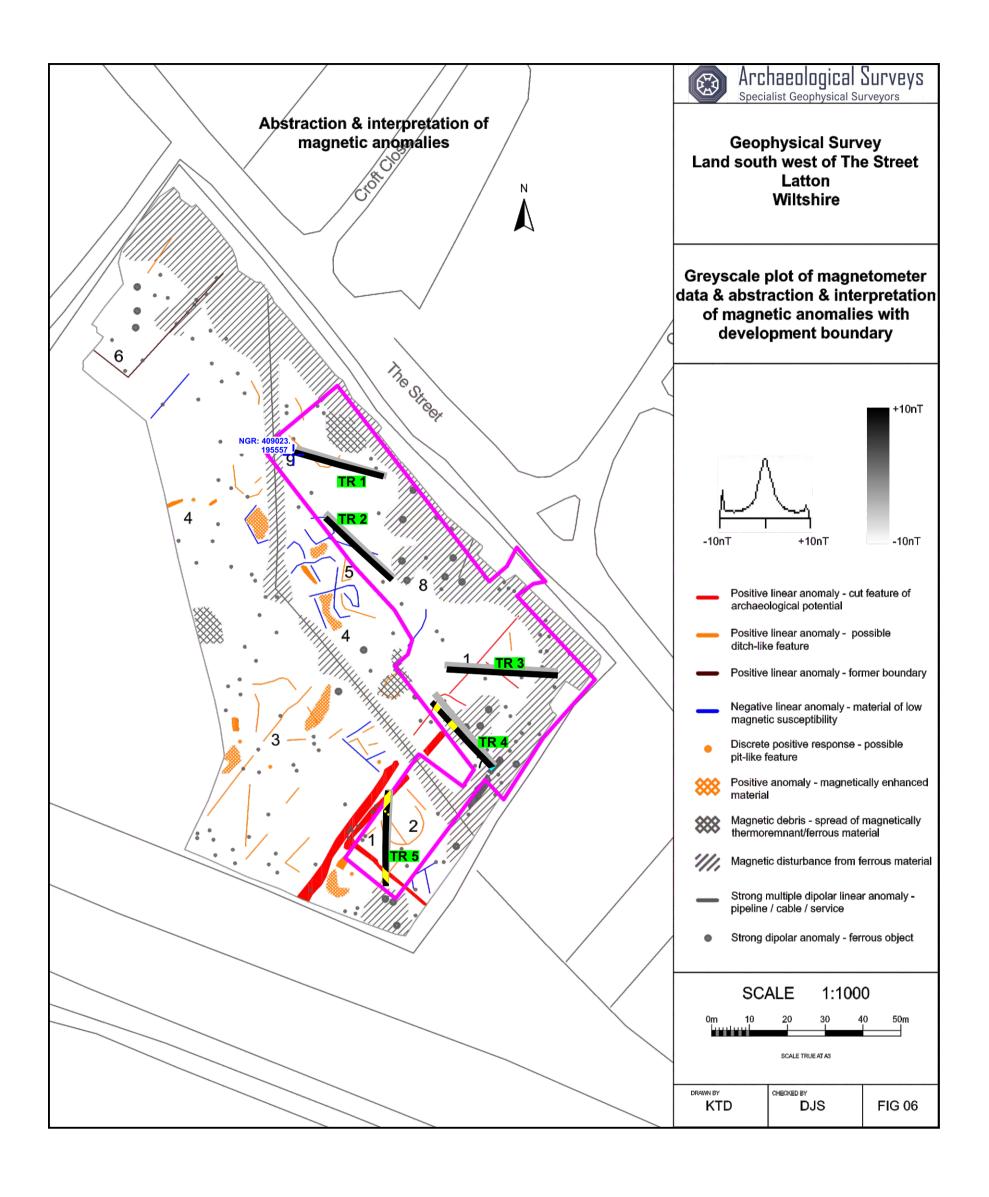
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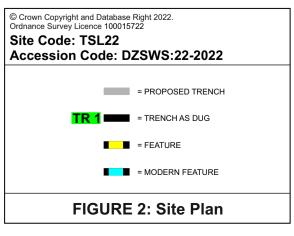
APPENDIX 3: Miscellaneous Finds List

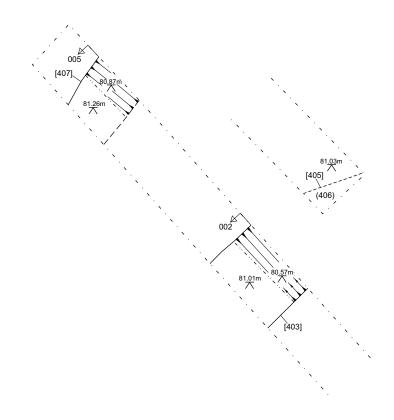
СХТ	DESCRIPTION
101	1 x fragment of semi opaque glass. 8g.
Tr1 spoil heap	1 x lump of clinker or industrial waste. 7g. Metal detecting survey find.
Tr2 spoil heap	1 x metal perforated clothes button - Victorian / Modern. <1g. Metal detecting survey find.
404	4 x animal bone fragments. 10g.
404	1 x lump of burnt material, possible industrial waste. Uncertain. <1g.
Tr4 u/s	2 x animal bone fragments. 3g.
503	2 x animal bone fragments. 75g.
509	1 x animal bone fragment. 6g.
513	1 x animal bone fragment (burnt). 2g.



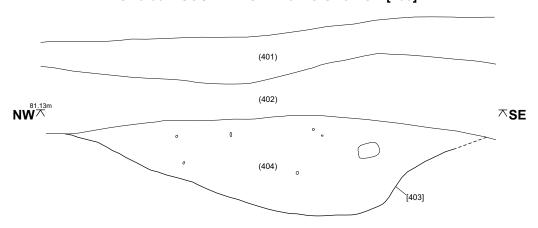






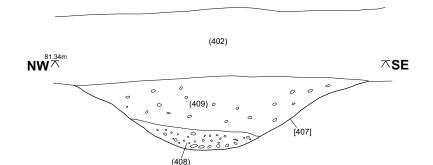


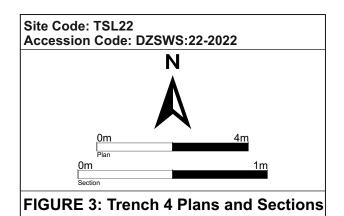
SEC 002: SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [403]

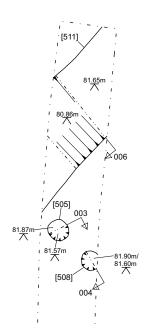


SEC 005: SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [407]

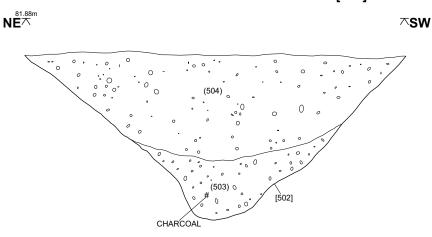
(401)



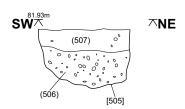




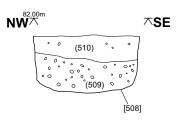
SEC 001: NORTHWEST FACING SECTION [502]



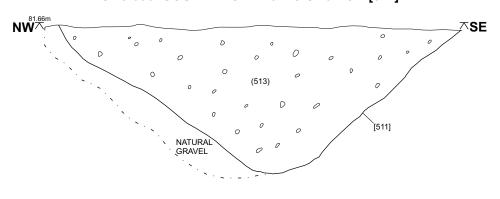
SEC 003: SOUTHEAST FACING SECTION [505]



SEC 004: SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [508]



SEC 006: SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [511]



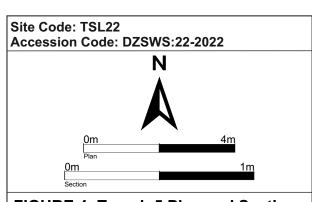
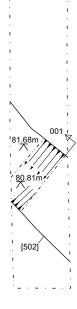


FIGURE 4: Trench 5 Plan and Sections





























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FIGURE 5: Photographs