



Barrington Court, Barrington, Ilminster, Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation of Helen's Close



Report No. 53524/2/1

February 2020

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Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
OASIS Reference	terraina1-386109 and terraina1-386128		
Project Title	Helen's Close Evaluation, Barrington Court, Somerset		
Short Description of Project	Terrain Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of the site of a new car park at Helen's Close, Barrington Court, Somerset. Three trenches were excavated across the field. Only two post-medieval or modern features were found at the northern end. One was a possible drainage feature and the other was probably no more than a wheel rut.		
Project Dates	Start: 18-02-2020	End: 18-29-2020	
Previous/Future Work	Yes/Yes		
Project Code	53524		
Monument Type and Period	Drainage Ditch (Modern)		
Significant Finds	None		
Project Location			
County/District/Parish	Somerset/South Somerset/Barrington		
Site Address	Barrington Court, Barrington, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 0NQ		
Site Coordinates	ST 3957 1804		
Site Area	135 m ²		
Height OD	c. 29 m aOD		
Project Creators			
Organisation	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Brief Originator	Martin Papworth, National Trust Regional Archaeologist,		
Project Design Originator	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Supervisor	Peter Bellamy		
Project Manager	Peter Bellamy		
Sponsor or Funding Body	The National Trust		
Project Archive			
Archive Type	Physical	Digital	Paper
Location/Accession No	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with the National Trust.	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with the National Trust.	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with the National Trust.
Contents	Pottery, glass	Digital photography	Context sheet, plan, report

Barrington Court, Barrington, Ilminster, Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation of Helen's Close

1. Introduction

1.1 Project introduction

The National Trust is undertaking a project to improve the visitor parking arrangements at Barrington Court, near Ilminster, Somerset. A new main visitor car park is to be created at Helen's Close, the existing main car park at the Beagles is to be rearranged and resurfaced, the Orchard overflow car park is to be improved and a new staff car park created at Barrington Court Cottages.

The proposed archaeological programme of works to mitigate the impact of the car parking improvements on the potential archaeological resource consists of the archaeological evaluation of Helen's Close and archaeological observations and recording during the works on the car parks, where this may disturb potential archaeological features and deposits. This report is on the evaluation of Helen's Close only.

This programme of works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Terrain Archaeology in part fulfilment of Condition 4 of the granting of Planning Application No. 18/03270/FUL, *Change of use of land to form additional car parking and a visitor route from the car park. Modification of existing car parking facilities to reduce impact on listed buildings and enhance visitors' experience: Barrington Court, National Trust Eastfield Lane Barrington Ilminster TA19 0NQ (GR:339453/118299)*. Condition 4 of the granting of approval of Planning Application No. 18/03270/FUL by South Somerset District Council, the Local Planning Authority, states "*Before the commencement of the development hereby permitted the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been submitted and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The WSI shall include details of the archaeological investigation, the recording of the heritage asset, the analysis of evidence recovered from the site and publication of the results. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.*"

Reason: To ensure a proper archaeological assessment is carried out and heritage assets are safeguarded, in accordance with policy EQ3 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of the NPPF."

Fieldwork was carried out on the 18th February 2020 by Peter Bellamy and Mike Trevarthen.

1.2 Brief

No written brief for the works was produced by or on behalf of the National Trust.

1.3 Site Location and Topography

The site lies at the entrance to the National Trust estate at Barrington Court (Figures 1 and 2). Helen's Close is situated near the southern end of the property on the west side of the entrance road into Barrington Court, between Silver Street to the south and Water Street to the north, centred on ST 3957 1804. The topography slopes down gently from south to north with the northern end of the field relatively flat. It lies at a height of about 29 – 30 m above OD.

1.4 Geology

Bedrock geology is mapped as Jurassic Siltstone and Sandstone of the Dyrham Formation, with no recorded superficial deposits (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

1.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

The following archaeological and historical background was supplied by Martin Papworth, Regional Archaeologist, National Trust.

Barrington is an ancient site and Roman burials and occupation debris have been found just beyond the southern boundary of the present estate.

Barrington is mentioned in Domesday Book and during the 1920s alterations to the Court House remains of a medieval stone building were reported under its east side.

The Daubenay family held the estate from 1236 to 1543 and by 1483 a deer park was recorded at Barrington.

Barrington Court House is believed to have been built for William Clifton when he held Barrington 1552-64. The Cliftons were related to the Phelps family of Montacute who acquired the estate in 1605.

The Strode family mortgaged Barrington in 1625 and it remained in their family until 1775. In 1674, the Strode family commissioned the building of the grand stable block on the west side of Barrington Court, converted to accommodation in the 1920s, and now known as Strode House.

Geophysical survey of the South Lawn and a survey of earthworks to the east of the house indicate that the mansion house was complemented by fashionable formal gardens (Papworth 2000).

In 1775, the Harvards bought the estate from the Strodes and kept it in their family for 4 generations before selling it to the Peters family sometime in the mid-19th century.

As time went by, the Court slipped down the social scale, and through most of the 19th century was used as a farmhouse, known as Court Farm, tenanted by the Jacobs family. At various times Farm buildings were erected close to the Court including the Buss stalls to the north-west which are thought to originate in the 16th century.

The tithe map, of 1842, shows that that much of the land around the village was still in open fields with strips held by different owners and tenants.

At some time in the 19th century, much of the old furniture and fittings in the Court, including wood panelling was sold. The journal *The Builder* of 1845 noted that no carved work remained within the house.

At the end of the 19th century Barrington changed hands frequently as the house fell further into disrepair. In 1904 the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings approached the National Trust and were commissioned by NT to make a survey and estimate for restoration and running costs.

In 1905 Miss J. L. Woodward purchased the Court on the understanding that it would pass to the Trust. In 1907 the NT took on Barrington Court, its first large house. It was in a poor state and for the first few years, funds were raised to keep the place watertight and it was still used as a farmhouse until 1918.

In that year Colonel Abram Arthur Lyle took on the lease of the house. He was a partner to the Tate and Lyle sugar corporation. He commissioned the architect J Edwin Forbes to create an Estate Master plan, which created a model estate with farm buildings moved to new locations away from the Court. The result is a layout of buildings dating from 1921-5 including many recreational buildings such as the squash court and cricket pavilion, which show definite Arts and Crafts influence.

The garden designs were influenced by Gertrude Jekyll and reflect her work with careful colour schemes, bold groupings and overlays through time (Fretwell 1993). Her plans survive within the archive held at Somerset Record Office including a proposal for the South Lawn, which was never carried out. The work was completed by 1927.

Colonel Lyle furnished the Barrington and Strode House with his collection of historic panelling and architectural features brought from other historic houses.

The Lyles continued to lease the property until 1991 when Andrew Lyle relinquished direct management to the National Trust. The building was then leased by a business, 'Stewart Interiors'. The company used Barrington Court to display examples of their interior designs and reproductions of historic furniture and fabrics until 2008. Since that time the National Trust has displayed the house without historic collections using the room spaces for occasional art displays.

1.6 Previous Archaeological Fieldwork

There have been a number of archaeological investigations at Barrington Court, but these have been focussed mainly in areas closer to the main house itself and not in the vicinity of the current proposals. These have included works by the National Trust in 2000, including geophysical survey of the South Lawn, a watching brief during the installation of a water main across the South Lawn, and a survey of earthworks to the east of the house, which indicated that the mansion house was complemented by fashionable formal gardens (Papworth 2000). A watching brief was conducted in 2016 by Terrain Archaeology during the installation of a new biomass boiler system in the area between the former kennels and Strode House, which revealed traces of former farm buildings (Bellamy 2016). Another watching brief was undertaken in 2017 during the laying of a new SSP Cable Duct in the area north of the former kennels, but nothing of archaeological significance was recorded (Bellamy 2017).

The only archaeological investigations in the areas of the car parks are a watching brief in the Orchard overflow car park and a geophysical survey of Helen's Close. Terrain Archaeology observed the installation of a new fibre optic cable from Water Lane to the Barrington Court Ticket Office in 2018. The route of the new cable ran along the eastern and northern edges of the Orchard overflow car park (Bellamy 2018). Nothing was revealed other than a small number of patches of clinker and brick rubble, which appear to fill in hollows in the field. The National Trust undertook a preliminary geophysical survey of Helens Close in April 2018 (Portus + Whitton 2018). The survey showed traces of parallel linear anomalies, which may be drainage features. There was also a central higher resistance response running about 20m broad along the centre corresponding with the long field alignment, perhaps a trackway or buried harder surface in this area.

1.7 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the field evaluation is to understand, record and make available information on archaeological resource existing in Helen's Close, in order to assess the impact of the proposed new car parking works. The evaluation will aim to place the archaeological results within the local, regional and national context, as appropriate, and advance understanding of the archaeology of the site and its surroundings.

Its objectives were:

- To provide sufficient data to enable an informed decision to be taken on the impact of the proposed new car park on the heritage assets of the site.
- To investigate and record the in situ archaeological deposits, features, and finds revealed during the evaluation excavation to an appropriate professional standard.
- To present the results in a report to the appropriate standard.

1.8 Proposed Development

A new car park is to be constructed in the field known as Helen's Close to the south of the existing car parks. This will be used as the main car park for NT visitors. This car park will have 65 parking spaces and 65 overspill spaces. The car park will be formed from a combination of different surfaces and be accessed by a new widened vehicular bridge. The access lanes will be tarmac and the parking spaces formed from self-binding gravel in the main car park area and reinforced grass surfaces consisting of self-binding gravel, topsoil and grass seeded in the overflow area. There will also be new tree and shrub planting. Pedestrian access to and from the car park will be along a new path with a wooden pedestrian bridge (Portus + Whitton 2018).

1.9 Methods

The methodology, scope, aims and objectives of the works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Terrain Archaeology in May 2019 (Terrain Archaeology document no. 3524/0/1). All archaeological works were carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2014a).

The evaluation comprised intrusive investigation in the form of trial trenching, with three trenches positioned to investigate the results of the geophysical survey, crossing the parallel linear anomalies and the central higher resistance response running along the centre of the field (Figure 3; Plate 1). All three trenches were excavated by machine down on to the natural deposits below and all features subsequently investigated by hand. Trench 1 measured 30 m by 1.5 m and up to 0.25 m deep and was excavated to investigate the parallel linear geophysical anomalies in the north part of the field (Figures 3 and 4; Plates 2, 5 and 6). Trench 2 across the central part of the field measured 29.5 m by 1.5 m and up to 0.2 m deep and was dug to investigate the broad higher resistance response running along the field (Figure 3; Plate 3). Trench 3 across the southern part of the field measured 30.2 m by 1.5 m and up to 0.2 m deep and was dug to investigate the broad higher resistance response running along the field (Figure 3; Plate 4).

All deposits revealed, irrespective of their apparent archaeological significance, were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. A photographic record of the work was maintained in digital format, and includes aspects of its setting, conduct and technical detail.

1.10 Archive and Dissemination

1.10.1 Paper Archive

The project archive, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and appropriate background documentation, has been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current guidelines (Brown 2011; CIfA 2014b) and the requirements of the receiving museum. It is currently stored by Terrain Archaeology under the project code 53524. In due course, the archive will be accessioned for long-term curation and storage by the National Trust.

1.10.2 Report

A copy of this report will be lodged with the National Trust Sites and Monuments Record and with Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is a publicly funded and accessible resource, and deposition of the report will place it, and the project results, in the public domain.

A digital summary of the archive will be placed with the OASIS project (www.oasis.ac.uk) under the reference code *terraina1-386109* and *terraina1-386128*. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded for inclusion in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) online 'grey literature' library.

2. Results

2.1 Introduction

Only Trench 1 contained any archaeological features. Both Trenches 2 and 3 revealed only undisturbed natural immediately below the topsoil. The context descriptions are listed in Appendix 1.

2.2 Natural Deposits

The natural deposits were broadly similar in all three trenches and were exposed at a depth of 0.1 m, immediately below the topsoil. At the NE end of Trench 1 the natural was a light to mid orange-brown silty clay (101), About 11 m along the trench to the SW, the natural changed to a slightly darker mid orange brown silty clay (102). In Trench 2,

the natural (201) was very similar to 102 in Trench 1. In Trench 3, the natural (301) was similar, but slightly darker than in Trench 2.

2.3 Post-medieval or Modern Features

The only archaeological features revealed during the evaluation were in the SW end of Trench 1. Unfortunately, this end of the trench filled with water almost immediately after machining, so it presented difficulties in recording these features. The earlier of the two features appears to be cut 103, which was a straight-sided linear feature cut into the natural 102, running NNE-SSW (Figure 4). It measured 0.4 m wide with vertical sides and a flat bottom 0.25 m deep (Figure 4; Plate 5). It was filled with loose dark greyish-brown silty clay (104), which produced a single sherd of nineteenth century industrial whiteware pottery. This feature is of unknown function and is on a different alignment to the parallel linear geophysical anomalies. It did not continue as far south as Trench 2. It is possible that it was a drainage feature, but this is unclear. Feature 103 appears to have been cut by short linear feature 105 which runs in a roughly SW-NE direction (Figure 4; Plate 6). It is a slightly sinuous feature 3.7 m long and 0.3 m wide with a slightly rounded profile 0.17 m deep. It was filled with loose dark greyish-brown silty clay, which produced a single sherd of nineteenth century pottery. This relatively ephemeral feature may be no more than a wheel rut.

2.4 Topsoil

All trenches had a similar mid brown silty clay topsoil (100, 200, 300), 0.10 m thick. A number of post-medieval and modern finds were recovered from the topsoil Trenches 2 and 3 (Table 1).

3. Finds

3.1 Finds Assemblage

The finds recovered are tabulated by context below in Table 1.

Context	Post-med. Pot	Ceramic Building Material	Stone Building Material	Glass
104	1/6	--	--	--
106	1/2	--	--	--
200	2/12	--	--	2/17
300	6/47	1/44	1/6	2/43
Total	10/67g	1/44g	1/6g	4/60g

Table 1: Quantification of finds by context (count/weight in grams)

3.2 Pottery

A total of 10 sherds (67g) of post-medieval pottery was recovered, including local earthenwares and industrially-produced wares.

The local earthenware consists of a single base sherd probably of nineteenth or earlier twentieth century date from context 300.

The industrial wares include three sherds of transfer ware from contexts 104, 200 and 300 and 202 and seven plain whitewares (from contexts 106, 200 and 300), all of probable nineteenth century date

3.3 Building Materials

3.3.1 Ceramic Tile

A single fragment of ceramic roof tile was recovered from context 300.

3.3.2 Roofing Slate

A single small fragment of Welsh roofing slate was recovered from context 300.

3.4 Glass

Four fragments of glass were recovered from contexts 200 and 300. These comprised two fragments of pale blue glass sauce bottle bases, one each from 200 and 300, of late nineteenth or twentieth century date. A single sherd from a modern brown beer or wine bottle was found in context 200 and a thick flat fragment of clear glass from 300.

4. Assessment

4.1 Evaluation Sample

The three trenches evaluated a total area of about 130 m², which represents an approximate 2.5% sample of the proposed development site. Experiments on the effectiveness of differing sample strategies on large scale rural archaeological sites have indicated a trial trenching sample of between 5%-10% of the area is broadly effective in evaluating Roman and medieval remains with a relatively high degree of confidence, but is less effective at picking up and understanding prehistoric and Saxon archaeology (Hey & Lacey, 2001). However, the trenches were specifically positioned to evaluate geophysical anomalies rather than provide an overall sample of the development area. The geophysical survey indicated there was unlikely to be extensive archaeological features present on the site.

4.2 Heritage Asset Resource of the Site

The geophysical survey identified a small number of anomalies that may represent archaeological features (Portus + Whitton 2018, 20). However, neither the broad higher resistance anomaly along the centre of the site, nor the parallel linear anomalies in the northern part of the field were visible as archaeological features and may represent differences within the geology of the site. There were only two archaeological features revealed by the evaluation excavation: a post-medieval or modern ditch(?) (103), and another post-medieval or modern feature (105).

4.2.1 Feature 103

Feature 103 runs roughly NNE-SSW across Trench 1. It is difficult to interpret the function of this feature, as only a small part of it was exposed. It appears to be a relatively insignificant feature, which does not extend as far as Trench 2 about 20 m to the south. It was not picked up by the geophysical survey. Given that it lies in the lowest part of the field, it may be a drainage feature, but its relatively shallow depth may argue against this.

4.2.2 Feature 105

The short shallow, slightly sinuous linear feature 105 crosses the top of ditch 103. It appears to be a relatively recent feature and may be no more than a wheel rut, given the current use of the field as an overflow car park.

4.3 Significance

4.3.1 Definition of Significance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines significance as: *The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.* In the case of the heritage assets directly related to the current development proposal, the interest is primarily archaeological.

Historic England has issued a Planning guidance note covering Significance – *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2* (March 2015), which provides information on assessing the significance of heritage assets in implementing the NPPF.

The value of the heritage assets has been assessed with reference to the guidance given by the Highways Agency (now Highways England) in 2007 in *The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2: Cultural Heritage (Highways Agency document 208/07)*, which is the most suitable and widely-acknowledged detailed assessment methodology for assessing the impact on and value of heritage assets. The scale of heritage asset values is set out in Table 2, which is based on Highways Agency document 208/07, Annex 5, Table 5.1.

4.3.2 Heritage Asset Value and Significance

The value of the recorded and potential heritage assets on the Site is primarily evidential. Evidential Value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

The two post-medieval or modern features are not well understood, but their significance, based on the heritage asset value criteria set out in Table 2, is considered to be **Negligible**.

Value of Heritage Asset	Factors for assessing the value of archaeological assets
Very High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Heritage Sites (including nominated sites). Assets of acknowledged international importance. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives.
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduled Monuments (including proposed sites). Undesignated assets of schedulable quality and importance. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated or undesignated assets that contribute to regional research objectives.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated and undesignated assets of local importance. Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations. Assets of limited value, but with potential to contribute to local research objectives.
Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assets with very little or no surviving archaeological interest.
Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of the resource has not been ascertained.

Table 2: Scale of Heritage Asset Value

4.4 Potential Impact of the Proposed Development

The policy on the impact of development on the significance of non-designated heritage assets is set out in paragraphs 196 and 197 of the *National Planning Policy Framework*. The Planning Practice Guidance to the NPPF makes it clear that it is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that should be assessed. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset, or development within its setting. The NPPF Practice Guidance describes the degree of harm to the significance of heritage assets in terms of 'substantial harm', 'less than substantial harm' and 'no harm'.

4.5 Direct Impacts on the Heritage Assets

The ground reduction levels required for the formation of the new car park surface will almost completely remove all traces of the revealed archaeological features.

4.6 Scale of Impact of the Development Proposals on Potential Heritage Assets

The proposed car park groundworks will directly impact the modern topsoil and the post-medieval features of negligible significance in Trench 1. The scale of direct impact is assessed as causing **significant harm** to a heritage asset of **negligible significance**.

4.7 Suggested Mitigation of the Proposed Development Impacts

The archaeological features exposed during the evaluation excavation are all post-medieval or modern and of negligible significance. The proposed car park works are likely to almost completely remove these features, but given their negligible significance, no further recording is recommended. The lack of archaeological features and only a sparse quantity of post-medieval and modern finds across the rest of the site suggests there is unlikely to be significant archaeology elsewhere within this new car park area. No further archaeological mitigation is suggested for Helen's Close.

5. References

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------|---|
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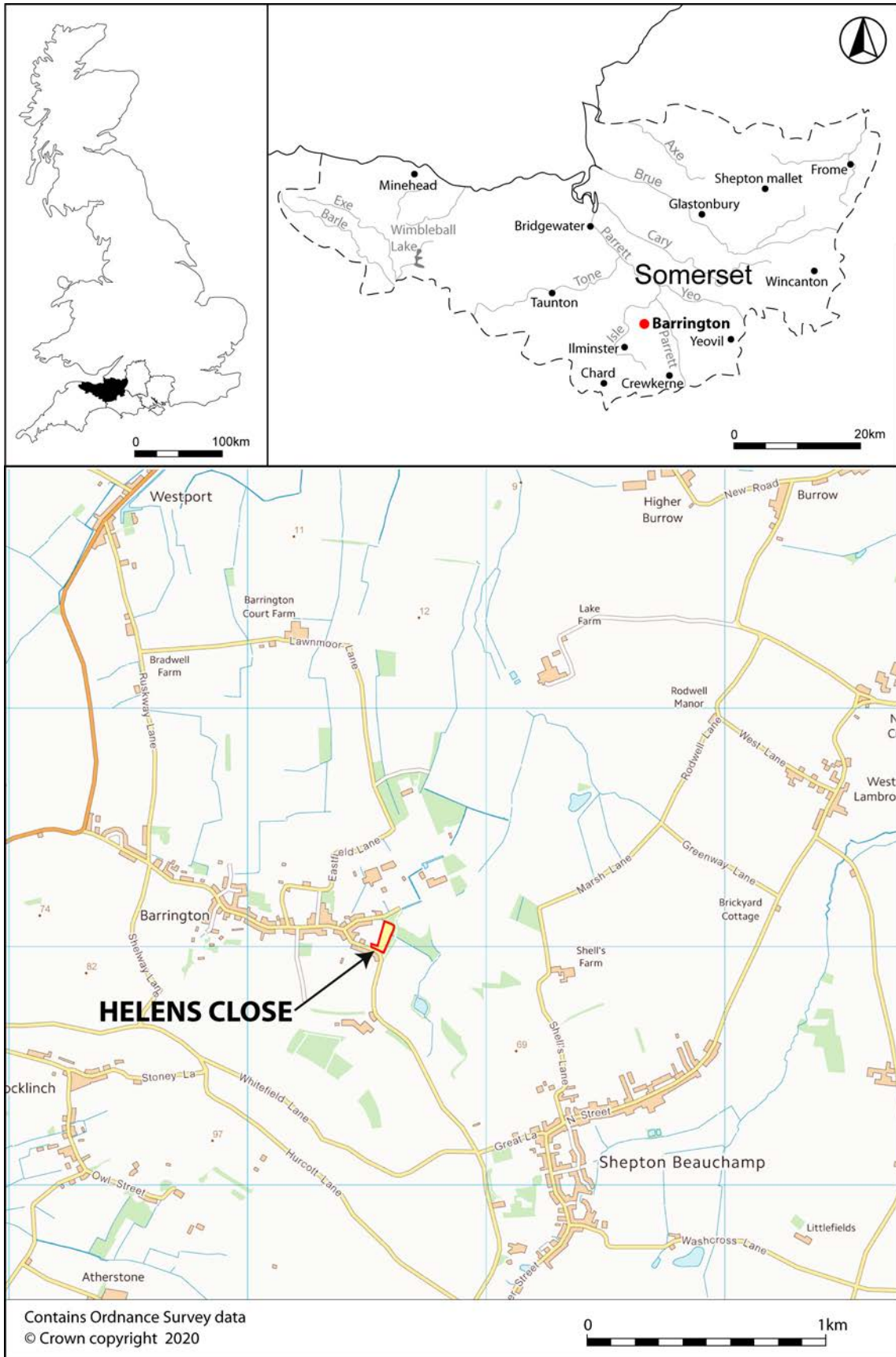


Figure 1 Location map.

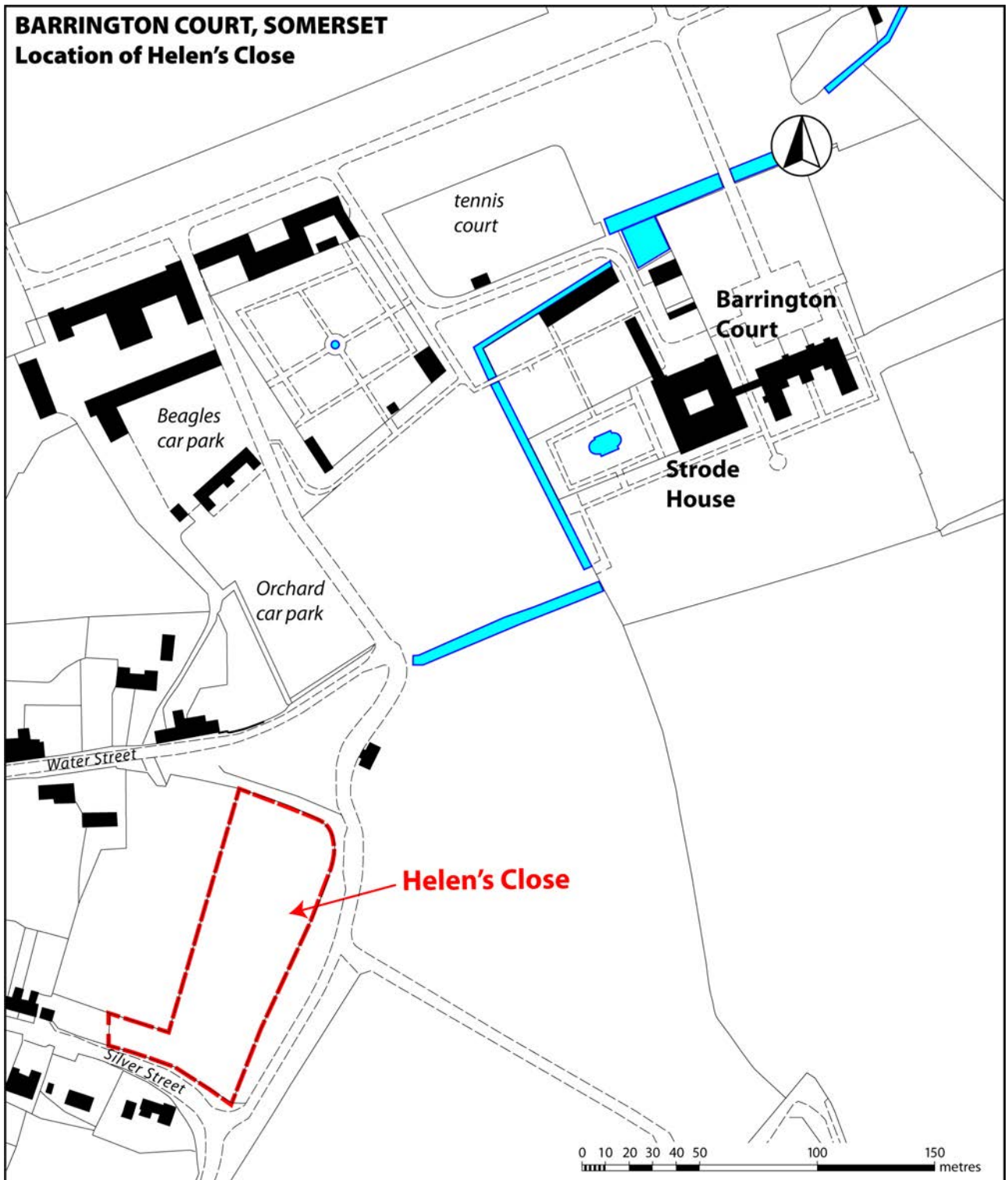


Figure 2: Location Plan of Helen's Close.



Figure 3: Plan of Evaluation Trenches plotted on Geophysical Survey.

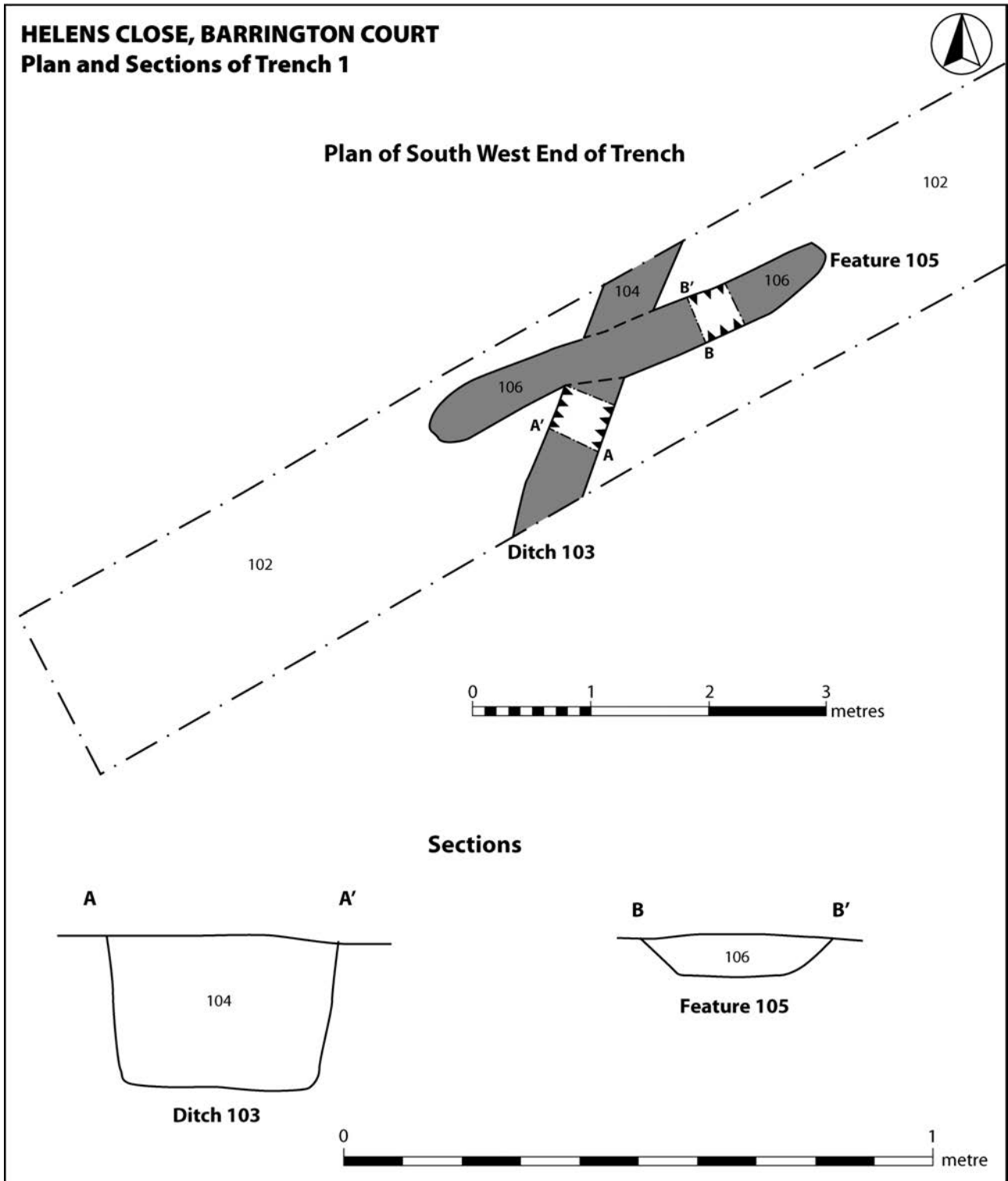


Figure 4: Plan and Sections of Trench 1.



Plate 1: General View of evaluation trenches in Helen's Close, looking north.



Plate 2: Trench 1 looking NE. 1m scale.



Plate 3: Trench 2 looking SE. 1m scale.



Plate 4: Trench 3 looking SW. 1m scale.



Plate 5: Section across Feature 103, looking SSW. 20cm scale.



Plate 6: Section across Feature 105 looking WSW. 20cm scale.

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Trench 1

Length: 30 m; Width 1.5 m; depth 0.25 m.

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
100	Topsoil: Mid brown silty clay.	0.00 – 0.10m
101	Natural: Mid-light orange-brown silty clay in north east end of trench.	0.10m+
102	Natural: Mid orange-brown silty clay.	0.10m+
103	Ditch?: Straight-sided linear cut with vertical sides and flat bottom, aligned roughly N-S. 0.4 m wide and 0.25 m deep. Filled with 104.	0.10 – 0.35m
104	Fill of Ditch 103: Loose mid-dark greyish-brown silty clay with occasional orange-brown mottles.	0.10 – 0.35m
105	Linear Feature: Short linear feature aligned roughly NE-SW, 0.3 m wide with steep, slightly rounded sides and base. Filled with 106.	0.10 – 0.27m
106	Fill of Feature 105: Loose mid-dark greyish-brown silty clay.	0.10 – 0.27m

Trench 2

Length: 29.5 m; Width 1.5 m; depth 0.2 m.

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
200	Topsoil: Mid brown silty clay.	0.00 – 0.10m
201	Natural: Mid orange-brown silty clay with sparse small stone.	0.10m+

Trench 3

Length: 30.2 m; Width 1.5 m; depth 0.2 m.

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
300	Topsoil: Mid brown silty clay.	0.00 – 0.10m
301	Natural: Mid orange-brown silty clay with sparse small stone. Slightly darker than 201.	0.10m+