SGSMR 12653

LAND OFF WEBB'S WOOD ROAD, BRADLEY STOKE, S. GLOS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 1997

BY

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OF

FOUNDATIONS INDEPENDENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT

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SUMMARY

On 16th-18th March 1997 a programme of archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Land Off Webb's Wood Road, Bradley Stoke (NGR ST 631812) for Countryside Planning and Management Ltd on behalf of Bovis Homes. The evaluation consisted of the excavation of ten 30m x 2m trenches in order to test the presence/absence of archaeologically sensitive deposits. Two additional trenches were subsequently excavated in an attempt to further define the nature of archaeological activity identified in the southern part of the study area.

Archaeological features and deposits dating to the Romano-British period were located in Trenches 1, 2, and 11. These consisted of ditches, drains, and a possible quarry pit. Archaeological features elsewhere on site were restricted to two patches of burning (Trenches 8 and 10), a small post-medieval sub-circular cut (Trench 9), and a nineteenth century land-drain (Trench 11).

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purposes 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.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *c* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, in this case the Oxford Clays.

NGR

National Grid Reference given from the Ordnance Survey Grid

OD

Ordnance Datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

OS

Ordnance Survey

Romano-British

Term used to describe the synthesis of indigenous late Iron Age traditions with the invasive Roman culture. It may be approximately dated between AD 43 and *c* AD 400.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Independent Archaeological Management on 16th-18th March 1997 at Land off Webb's Wood Road, Bradley Stoke, South Gloucestershire (NGR: ST631812). The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guideline 16 (DoE 1990) and the Avon County Structure Plan (third alteration) Policy BE4A.

1.2 The objective of the evaluation was to test whether archaeologically sensitive deposits were present within the study area, particularly considering its proximity to Romano-British inhumations and other settlement features from Webbs Wood Road and the area to the south-west of the site.

1.3 The evaluation was undertaken in response to a proposal by Bovis Homes to create a new residential development at Bradley Stoke. The proposals involve the construction of housing with associated access roads.

1.4 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by Foundations Archaeology (BS97/fa) based upon a specification provided by David Haigh (27/02/97). The project design itself was prepared in accordance with IFA Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation 1994 and is included as Appendix 2.

1.5 Field works were carried out under the direction of Mr R. King BA MIFA.

1.6 Figure 1 shows the study area. To the north and east it is bounded by open fields, although these are also scheduled for residential development. The M4 motorway lies immediately to the west of the site, while existing residential developments and a proposed school site lie to the south.

2 FIELD EVALUATION

2.1 The project design called for the excavation of ten 30m x 2m trial trenches (1-10) comprising a 2% sample of the study area. These were to be machine excavated to the top of archaeological deposits, or to the natural substrate, where such deposits were absent. The trenches were located to provide a sample across the entire development area. Trench 3 was sited in order to cross an 18th century field boundary identified in the archaeological assessment (CPM 1997).

2.2 Detailed stratigraphy for each trench is given in Appendix A, although a brief summary is presented here. In each trench a clay loam topsoil approximately 0.20m thick sealed a thin strong brown clay subsoil 0.05-0.10m thick. The subsoil directly sealed the undulating natural Triassic limestone brash which was interleaved with strong brown clays (at c 54m OD). Approximately 0.10m of natural brash was removed in each trench where archaeological deposits were absent in order to test for masked archaeological features.

2.3 Significant archaeological deposits appeared to be restricted to the southern part of the development area, closest to Webbs Wood Road and the previously identified Romano-British activity. Two Romano-British stone lined and capped drains [104] and [106] were present at the southern end of Trench 1 (Fig 4), and it is possible that the area of flat brash between these two features had doubled as a surface. A linear negative feature [110] 0.75m wide by 0.45m deep running NW-SE at the northern end of the trench appeared to be of natural origin, although it may represent an element of the much larger linear feature encountered in Trench 11 [1104]. A large 4.2m wide by 0.85m deep negative feature in Trench 2 [205], probably represented a backfilled quarry pit

2.4 Small sub-circular burnt patches were present in Trenches 8 (804) and 10 (1004). In both cases the burning was present within the subsoil and was sealed by the topsoil. No artefactual evidence was recovered from either of these features. A small (0.45m diameter by 0.1m deep) cut, [904], was located in Trench 9. Artefactual evidence was restricted to two small sherds of post-medieval earthenware. No archaeological features were encountered in Trenches 3-7, although a natural fissure was present running northeast to southwest through Trench 5. Two sondages were excavated through this feature, both of which appeared to confirm its natural origin.

2.5 Two additional Trenches (11 and 12) were subsequently excavated at the request of David Haigh, in order to attempt to clarify the nature and extent of the archaeological deposits in the southern part of the study area. Trench 11 contained two roughly parallel linear cuts running *c* NW-SE at the northern end of the trench. The northern cut [1104], 1.5m wide by 0.75m deep contained two sherds of coarse sandy pottery of Romano-British date and, although wider and deeper, may represent a continuation of the linear feature [110] in Trench 1. The southern cut [1106], 1.3m wide by 0.65m deep, consisted of a 19th century land-drain containing a ceramic pipe.

Archaeological features in Trench 12 were restricted to a band of loose limestone rubble (1204) running NW-SE across the southern part of the trench. This band was sealed by the topsoil and may be the result of modern disturbance; no dating material was recovered from its matrix.

3 CONCLUSION

3.1 The evaluation excavations have revealed archaeologically sensitive deposits within the study area. The presence of stone-lined drains and a probable quarry pit associated with Romano-British occupation suggests that the southwestern part of the study area may be of some archaeological significance. It is possible that this activity may not extend beyond the linear feature [1104] identified in Trench 11 (and possibly continued through Trench 1 [110].

3.2 Little artefactual and ecofactual material was recovered from any of the evaluation trenches, with the exception of feature [205] (possible quarry pit) which yielded a small ceramic assemblage. The majority of the finds were recovered from the topsoil, or subsoil in the southern part of the study area and were not associated with any archaeological feature. Without exception, the few finds from the central and northern part of the site were of post-medieval/modern date.

3.3 The bulk of the ceramic assemblage comprised Romano-British wares of 1st-3rd century date, with some sherds of the late Iron Age. The small ecofactual assemblage was predominantly restricted to bones from cattle, with some sheep/goat remains. No detailed work has yet been undertaken on this material as further works on the site are recommended below.

3.4 The apparent absence of archaeological features from trenches in the central and northern part of the site, cannot preclude the possibility that archaeology may survive elsewhere in these areas, although the potential may be viewed as low.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The results of the evaluation excavations have identified a relatively clearly defined area of archaeological significance within the study area. This area should clearly be subjected to additional works before development of the site proceeds. A project design for these additional works should be agreed with South Gloucestershire's archaeological representative.

4.2 Since the deposits identified during the evaluation do not appear to be of sufficient sensitivity to warrant preservation other than by record, the most appropriate strategy would be a programme of strip and record over the entire area defined as being of archaeological significance.

5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Haigh, D 1997, *Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation - Land off Webbs Wood Road, Bradley Stoke*

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King, R 1997, *Land off Webbs Wood Road, Bradley Stoke: Project Design*, Foundations Archaeology

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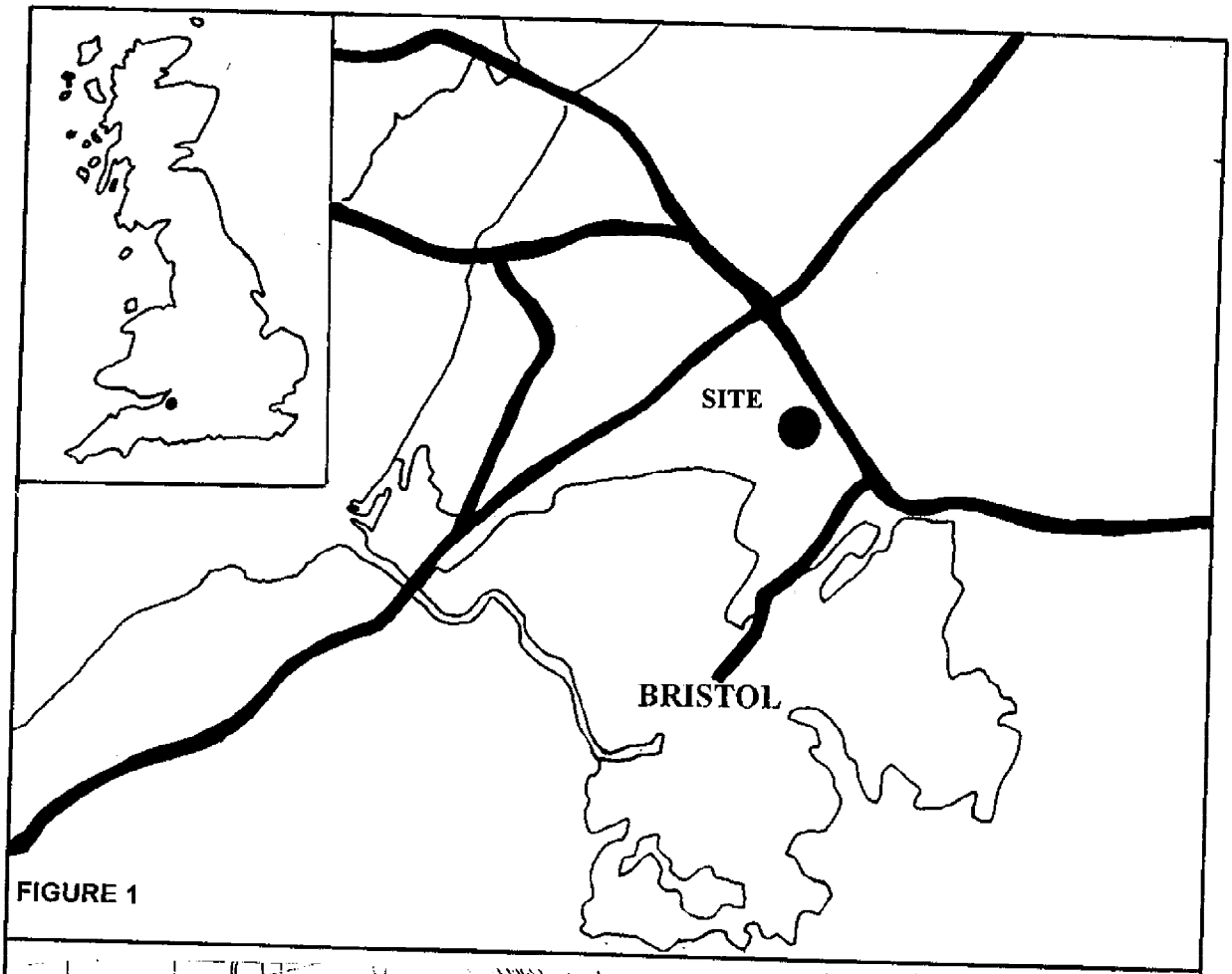

FIGURE 1

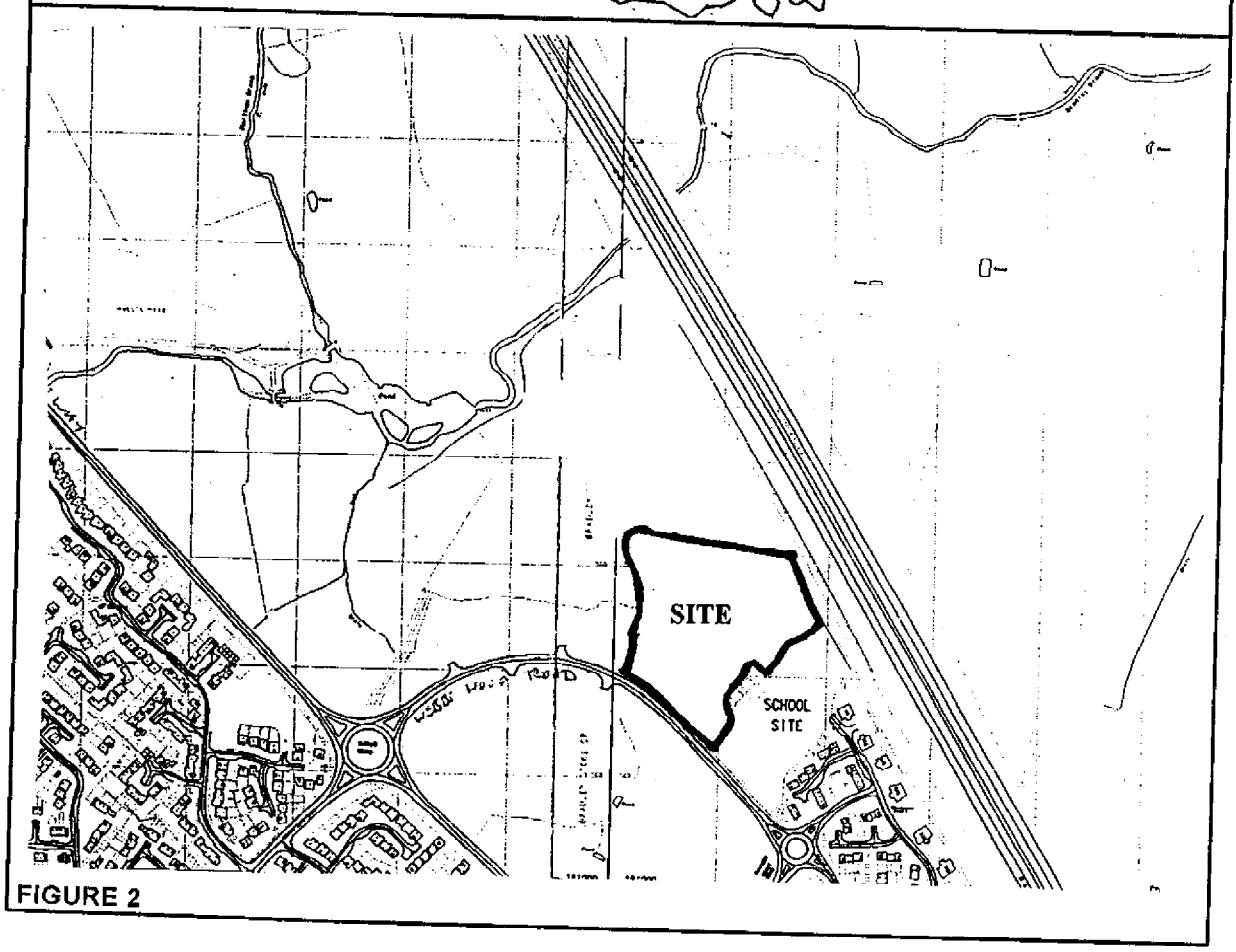

FIGURE 2

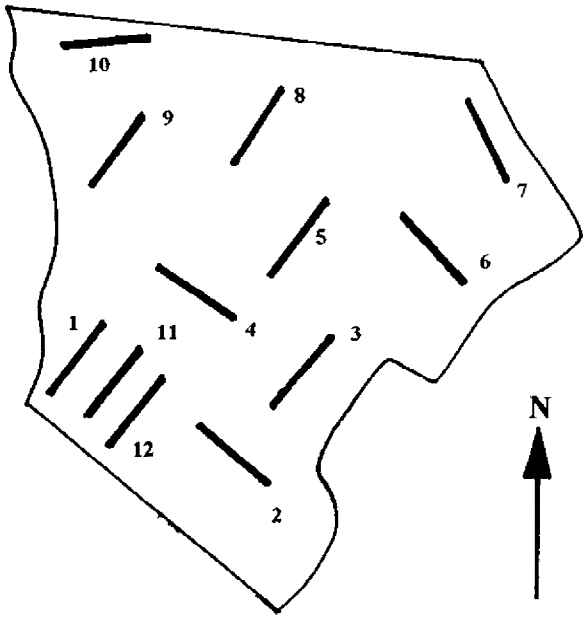

FIGURE 3 Trench Locations

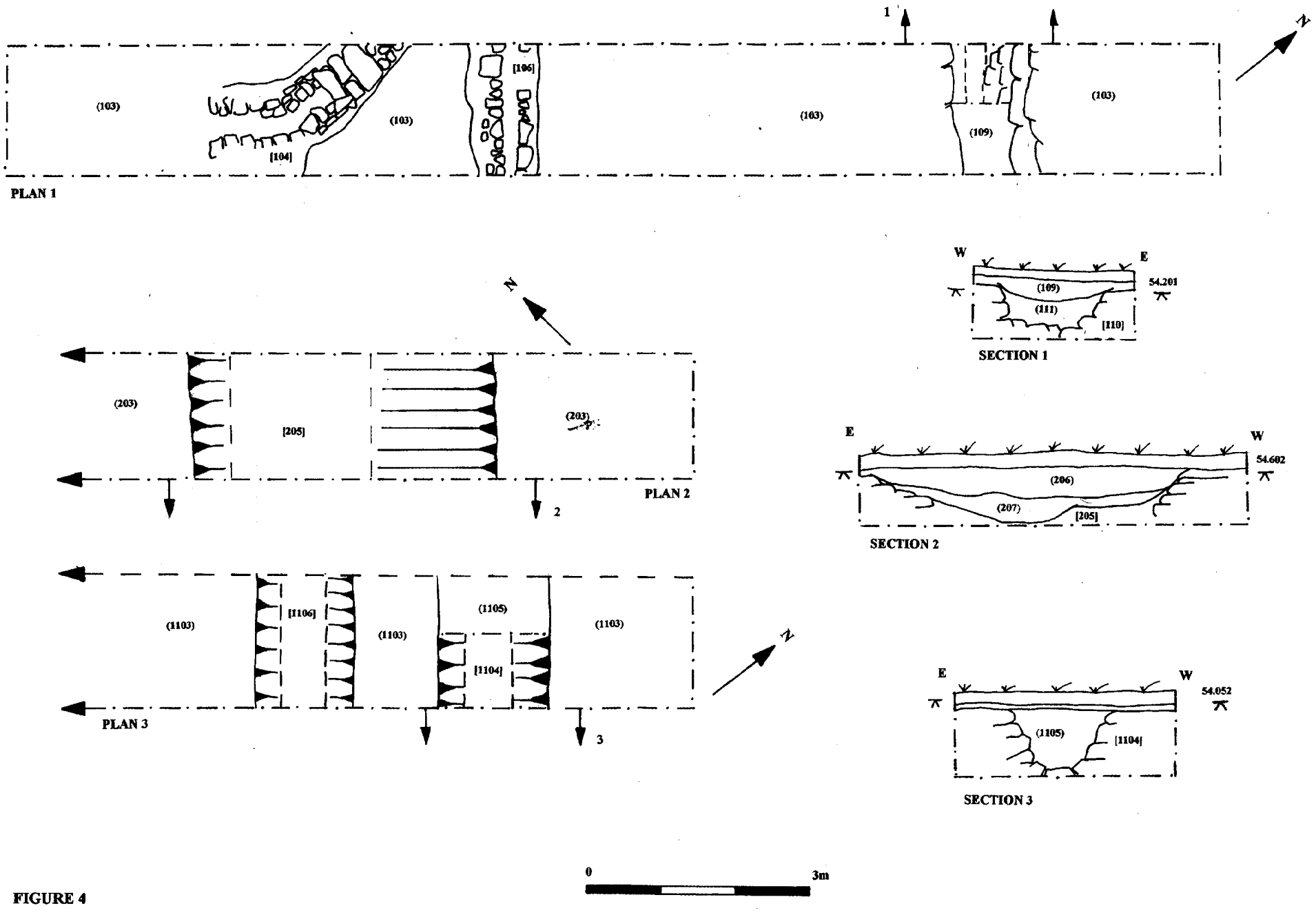
1
N
(103)
(103)
[104]
[106]
(103)
(103)
(109)
(103)
PLAN 1
W
E
54.201
(109)
(111)
[110]
SECTION 1
N
(203)
[205]
(203)
PLAN 2
2
E
W
54.602
(206)
(207)
[205]
SECTION 2
(1103)
[1106]
(1103)
(1105)
[1104]
(1103)
N
PLAN 3
3
E
W
54.052
(1105)
[1104]
SECTION 3
0
3m

FIGURE 4

APPENDIX 1

Trenching Details

APPENDIX 1: Trench Details

Note: Stratigraphic descriptions are given from the earliest to latest deposits. Cut features are designated by square brackets thus: [104], all other deposits are in round brackets (104). OD heights were taken from a benchmark on Winterbourne Road.

General:

The stratigraphic sequence was identical across the site, and a general description is given below that is valid for each trench. Individual trench descriptions are restricted to a brief note on the natural and archaeological features present within them and the depths of the natural brash.

Undisturbed limestone brash, occasionally interleaved with clays, was encountered at an average depth of 0.35m from the modern ground surface, across the entire study area. Natural fissures, hollows and other depressions within the brash were filled with a heavy, frequently anaerobic clay (in the southern part of the site ground water was present only 0.25m below the top of the brash). The natural was sealed by 0.05-0.10m of a mixed clay loam subsoil with degraded limestone. A 0.20-0.25m thick layer of dark brown-black loamy topsoil was present throughout and formed the latest stratigraphic layer present within the study area.

Trench 1
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide; aligned: NE-SW

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural clays at an average depth of 0.25m (53.802m OD) from the modern ground surface. Two stone-lined and capped field drains ([104] and [106]) were present cut through the subsoil into the brash at the southern end of the trench. Drain [104] 0.30m wide by 0.15m deep (53.717m OD), ran roughly north-south through the southern part of the trench. Drain [106] 0.18m wide and 0.10m deep (53.712m OD) ran east-west 1.0-1.5m to the north of drain [104]. The infill of both drains was identical, consisting of a fine silty clay, and both contained small fragments of Romano-British pottery. A weathered area of flat natural brash between the two drains may have doubled as a surface; three small sherds of pottery being recovered from between slabs. The top layer of this brash was subsequently removed, but no artefactual/ecofactual material was present beneath it.

A fissure [110], 0.75m wide by 0.45m (53.722m OD) deep ran east-west through the northern end of the trench. The feature was subjected to 50% sampling, but yielded no artefactual/ecofactual evidence. The worn profile of the fissure and the nature of the infill material suggested that this formed a natural fissure of geological rather than archaeological origin. The alignment of this feature, however, was virtually identical to a larger linear feature of archaeological origin identified in Trench 11, and the two features may be part of a single irregular, but continuous, ditch.

Trench 2
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide. Aligned: NW-SE

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural brash at an average depth of 0.30m (54.372m OD) from the modern ground surface. A substantial northwest- southeast feature [205] was present at the eastern end of the trench. This feature was 4m wide by 0.85m deep (53.902m OD) and was filled with a mixture of black clay loam and redeposited brash and clay. The feature probably represents a small backfilled quarry pit. The largest assemblage of Romano-British ceramics was recovered from this feature; these included sherds from black burnished ware vessels.

An area of deeper subsoil and degraded brash filled a large hollow in the surface of the natural 8m to the west of the probable quarry. No artefactual material was recovered from the infill of this depressions which appeared to constitute a natural undulation in the brash.

Trench 3
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide. Aligned: NE-SW

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural brash at an average depth of 0.25m (54.882m OD) from the modern ground surface. No archaeological features or deposits were present within this trench. No finds were recovered from either the topsoil or the subsoil.

Trench 4
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide. Aligned: NW-SE

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural brash at an average depth of 0.30m (54.122m OD) from the modern ground surface. No archaeological features or deposits were present within this trench. No finds were recovered from either the topsoil or the subsoil.

Trench 5
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide. Aligned: NE-SW

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural brash at an average depth of 0.32m (54.472m OD) from the modern ground surface. No archaeological features or deposits were present, although a natural fissure ran north-south through the trench. No finds were recovered from either the topsoil or the subsoil.

Trench 6
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide. Aligned: NW-SE

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural brash at an average depth of 0.30m (54.852m OD) from the modern ground surface. No archaeological features or deposits were present within this trench. No finds were recovered from either the topsoil or the subsoil.

Trench 7
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide. Aligned: NW-SE

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural brash at an average depth of 0.30m (55.452m OD) from the modern ground surface. No archaeological features or deposits were present within this trench. No finds were recovered from either the topsoil or the subsoil.

Trench 8
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide. Aligned: NE-SW

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural brash at an average depth of 0.25m (54.382m OD) from the modern ground surface. A subcircular patch of burning (804), 1m in diameter, was present within the subsoil at 54.463m OD. No dating evidence was recovered from this feature.

Trench 9
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide. Aligned: NE-SW

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural brash at an average depth of 0.35m (53.982m OD) from the modern ground surface. A small, 0.45m diameter by 0.1m deep sub-circular cut [904] was located towards the northern end of the trench. Two small post-medieval earthenware sherds were recovered from the clay-loam infill.

Trench 10
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide. Aligned: E-W

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural brash at an average depth of 0.30m (54.042m OD) from the modern ground surface. A subcircular patch of burning (1004), 0.89m in diameter, was present within the subsoil at 54.057m OD. No dating evidence was recovered from this feature.

Trench 11
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide. Aligned: NE-SW

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural brash at an average depth of 0.28m (54.002m OD) from the modern ground surface. Two roughly parallel linear features running NW-SE were identified at the northern end of the trench. The northern cut [1104], 1.5m wide by 0.75m deep (53.102m OD), contained two sherds of Romano-British pottery. Although significantly wider and deeper than the linear feature identified in Trench 1 [110], the location of this feature could suggest that they form elements of a continuous ditch, rather than two discontinuous features. The southern cut [1106], 1.3m wide by 0.65m deep, consisted of a 19th century land-drain containing a butt-jointed ceramic pipe.

Trench 12
Dimensions: 30m long by 2m wide. Aligned: NE-SW

The trench was excavated onto undisturbed natural brash at an average depth of 0.28m (53.852m OD) from the modern ground surface. Archaeological features were restricted to a 1.05m wide band of loose limestone rubble (1204) running NW-SE through the southern part of trench. The band was sealed by the topsoil, and yielded no artefactual or ecofactual material.

APPENDIX 2
Project Design

LAND OFF WEBBS WOOD, BRADLEY STOKE
PROJECT DESIGN

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out details of the outline project design for excavation on land at Bradley Stoke based upon the brief supplied by David Haigh of South Gloucestershire Council (27/02/97), and in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

1.2 The code of conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists will be adhered to throughout.

2 STAFF

2.1 The field team will consist of a minimum of 4 experienced operatives which may be supplemented by additional staff as required. The excavation will be directed on site by Mr. R. King BA, MIFA who has wide experience of performing, monitoring and managing field work projects of different periods throughout Britain. He is presently Senior Consultant for *Foundations Independent Archaeological Management* and is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (AoC Excavation).

2.2 Specialists who are likely to advise and report on specific aspects of the project include Dr. Mark Maltby of Bournemouth University (bone), Dr. Keith Wilkinson (macroscopic plant and insect remains), Roy King (pottery), Linda Viner (small finds, glass and metalwork), and Dr. Chris Salter of the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art (metalworking residue).

3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

3.1 Bovis Homes proposes to create a new residential development on its land near Webbs Wood, Bradley Stoke, South Gloucestershire.

3.2 Although the desk-based assessment has not yet been completed, the archaeological background is based upon its preliminary results, and upon on information supplied in the brief provided by South Gloucestershire Council.

3.3 No archaeology is currently recorded from within the area of the site, although Bronze Age and Romano-British features are known from the vicinity. Other Prehistoric and Romano-British remains are known from Savages Wood (SMR 7424) and Webbs Wood (SMR 5200) and additional Roman occupation is recorded nearby (SMR 6755). Medieval settlement is also known at Little Stoke.

4 AIMS

4.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation are 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 will allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.

4.2 These aims will be 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 characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;

iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Ten 30m x 2m trenches (A-J) will be excavated comprising a 2% sample of the development area. Precise trench locations will be decided in the field and upon consideration of the final results of the desk-based assessment.

5.2 Any topsoil and non-significant overburden will be removed to the top of archaeological deposits or natural, whichever is encountered first. This will be achieved through use of a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket. Thereafter excavation will be conducted by hand.

5.3 All archaeological deposits and features will be subjected to appropriate levels of investigation. Where excavation is required for the satisfactory assessment of archaeological deposits, a minimum 20% sample of all linear features will be excavated at appropriate intervals and all intersections, overlaps and terminals will be investigated. A minimum 50% sample of all non-linear features will be excavated.

5.4 Each excavation context will be excavated, wherever possible, in such a way as to produce at least one representative cross-section of the deposit.

5.5 Any human remains which may be encountered will initially be left in situ and reported to the appropriate authorities. If removal is necessary this must comply with the relevant Home Office regulations and current archaeological best-practice.

5.6 Decisions about the relative value of archaeological deposits and features will be made in consultation with South Gloucestershire's archaeological representative and Countryside Planning and Management's archaeological consultant.

5.7 Suitable contexts will be subjected to environmental sampling at an appropriate scale in accordance with FIAM Technical Manual 2 (Environmental Sampling). Decisions regarding which contexts are suitable for environmental sampling will be made on site in consultation with South Gloucestershire's archaeological representative.

5.8 All artefactual and ecofactual remains, whether stratified or not, will be collected, bagged and labelled. Artefacts will be subject to preliminary study on site in order to help date archaeological features and contexts. All artefactual and ecofactual evidence will be treated in accordance with FIAM Technical Manual 4 (Finds Manual).

5.9 Provision has been made within the tender for appropriate levels of artefact and ecofact conservation.

6 SURVEY CONTROL

6.1 Horizontal survey control of the site will be by means of a Cartesian coordinate grid, using metric measurements. The location of the grid will be established, if possible, relative to the National Grid.

6.2 Vertical survey control will be tied to the Ordnance Survey datum. Details of the method employed will be recorded, including the assumed height of the reference point.

7 RECORDING

7.1 All site recording will be undertaken in accordance with FIAM Technical Manual 3 (Excavation Manual).

7.2 Each archaeological feature or deposit will be recorded by means of a measured plan at an appropriate scale. Spot heights will be taken on the deposit and their location recorded on the plan.

7.3 Cross sections will be recorded by means of a measured drawing at an appropriate scale. The height of a datum on the drawing will be calculated and recorded. The locations of cross sections will be recorded either on the site plans, or relative to the

site grid. Cut features will be recorded in profile and plan at an appropriate scale and their location accurately identified.

7.4 All drawn records will be clearly marked with a unique site number, and will be individually identified. The scale of the plan will be recorded. All drawings will be drawn on dimensionally stable media. All plans will be drawn relative to the site grid and at least two grid references marked on each plan.

7.5 Each archaeological context will be recorded separately by means of a written description. The stratigraphic relationships of each context will be recorded. Foundations Archaeology pro forma record sheets will be used throughout. An index will be kept of all record types

7.6 An adequate photographic record of the excavation will be compiled. All photographs will be duplicated in monochrome print and colour slide. Each excavation context will be recorded photographically prior to removal. All photographs will feature an appropriately sized scale.

8 POST-EXCAVATION

8.1 A typescript report will be prepared immediately site works are completed. This will include a full written description and interpretation of the results (including specialist reports), as well as an assessment of the aims as defined in Section 4.

8.2 The report will be fully illustrated with drawings to an appropriate scale showing location, trench layout, recorded features and deposits, and section drawings.

8.3 An indexed and internally consistent archive will be prepared, and arrangements will be made for the deposition of the finds and the site archive with the relevant museum.

8.4 Two copies of the report will be deposited with the local authority and an additional copy will be deposited with the site archive at the appropriate museum. One copy will be deposited with the National Archaeological Record of the Royal Commission for the Historical Monuments of England.

9 TIMETABLING

9.1 *Foundations Archaeology* normally require at least one full weeks written notice prior to the commencement of fieldworks. In view of the tight deadlines on this project, however, site works may commence on 17th March 1997.

10 MONITORING

10.1 An appropriate level of monitoring will be undertaken by the representatives of South Gloucestershire Council and Countryside Planning and Management.

11 HEALTH AND SAFETY

11.1 The excavation will be undertaken with regard to all relevant Health and Safety legislation, in accordance with the *Foundations Archaeology Health and Safety Manual* (1995). A risk assessment will be prepared identifying the major risks inherent in the excavation.

12 INSURANCE

12.1 Foundations Archaeology carries Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance. A copy of the certificate is available on request.

BS97/FA.doc1.ev
11th March 1997