

**LAND AT THE REAR OF THE SHIP INN
BANWELL
NORTH SOMERSET**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

For

BICKFIELD ASSOCIATES

CA REPORT: 05182

DECEMBER 2005

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CA PROJECT: 2082
CA REPORT: 05182

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
<i>The site</i>	4
<i>Archaeological background</i>	4
<i>Archaeological objectives</i>	5
<i>Methodology</i>	5
2. RESULTS	6
<i>Trench 1</i>	6
<i>Trench 2</i>	6
<i>Trench 3</i>	7
<i>The Finds</i>	7
3. DISCUSSION.....	7
4. CA PROJECT TEAM	8
5. REFERENCES	8
APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS.....	9
APPENDIX 2: THE FINDS.....	10

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
 Fig. 2 Trench location plan, showing archaeological features (1:500).
 Fig. 3 Trench 1; sections AA, BB and CC (1:50)

SUMMARY

Site Name:	Land at the rear of the Ship Inn
Location:	Banwell, North Somerset
NGR:	ST 3980 5909
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	14-15 November 2005
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with North Somerset Museum Service
Accession no.	WESTM 2005/131
Site Code:	SIB 05

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in November 2005 at the request of Bickfield Associates on land at the rear of the Ship Inn, Banwell, North Somerset. Three trenches were excavated across the proposed development area.

Trench 1 contained two curvilinear gullies, which appear to form part of a single 5m diameter sub-circular feature. Both gullies contained animal bone, and a sherd of 2nd to 4th century Roman pottery was recovered from the fill of gully 104. At the south-east end of trench 1 lay a ditch, the fill of which contained 14 sherds of relatively unabraded mid to late Iron Age pottery, and some animal bone. All three features were sealed by topsoil and modern material up to 2m deep. The depth of the disturbance represented by this material may suggest that truncation of the archaeological features has taken place in this part of the site.

No archaeological remains were revealed in trenches 2 and 3, which lay upslope of trench 1, and showed considerably less evidence for modern dumping, being covered by only 0.5m of topsoil.

The evaluation has indicated that late prehistoric, and possibly Roman, archaeological features survive at a depth of 1.5m to 2m below the modern ground surface in the north-western half of the proposed development area.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In November 2005 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Bickfield Associates on land at the rear of the Ship Inn at Banwell, North Somerset (centred on NGR: ST 3980 5909, Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to fulfil a requirement for an archaeological survey prior to the determination of any planning application.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the *Project Brief for Archaeological Mitigation* (Russett 2005) prepared by Mr Vince Russett, Archaeological Officer, North Somerset County Council, and with a subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2005) and approved by Mr Russett. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999), and the *Management of Archaeological Projects II* (EH 1991).

The site

- 1.3 The proposed site encloses an area of approximately 1300m², and comprises uneven, partly level ground between West Street and the High Street, declining from approximately 25m AOD at its southern edge to around 19m AOD at its northern extent. It is bounded on all sides by existing residential and office development (Fig. 2).
- 1.4 The underlying geology of the site lies on the junction of the Dolomitic Conglomerate, the Mercia Mudstones and the Burrington Oolite (BGS 1967).
- 1.5 The area is currently unused and overgrown with brambles.

Archaeological background

- 1.6 Archaeological interest in the site arises from the identification of Romano-British occupation activity in the centre of the village of Banwell. Roman buildings have been identified at East Street (SMR10716), the churchyard (SMR10083), Banwell Abbey (SMR10715) and possibly from West Street (SMR 7932). A Roman Villa (SMR97) lies to the north of the village and Romano-British finds have been

recovered from the bowling green (SMR42303) and several other sites in the centre of the village. The site also lies at the centre of the medieval village of Banwell (*English Heritage Extensive Urban Assessment LaTrobe-Bateman 1999*).

Archaeological objectives

- 1.7 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the character, quality, date, significance and extent of any archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site. This information will assist the Local Planning Authority in making an informed judgement on the likely impact upon the archaeological resource by the proposed development.

Methodology

- 1.8 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of three trenches, all measuring 20m long and 1.5m wide (Fig. 2).
- 1.9 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2005).
- 1.10 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential. In this instance no deposits were considered appropriate for this treatment and so no samples were taken. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 3: *Treatment of Finds Immediately After Excavation* (1995).
- 1.11 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive (including artefacts) will be deposited with the North Somerset Museum Service under accession number WESTM2005/131.

2. RESULTS

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.
- 2.2 Of the three trenches excavated, only trench 1 was found to contain archaeological deposits. Trenches 2 and 3 revealed no features of archaeological significance.

Trench 1 (Figs 2, 3 and 4)

- 2.3 The natural substrate 107, comprising hard pink clay, was revealed 2m below the present ground level (bpgl) at the trench's north-western end and 1.2m bpgl at its south-eastern extent. This was cut by three linear features, 102, 104 and 106. Gully 102 was a shallow curvilinear feature aligned north-east to south-west, running across the width of the trench. It was 0.6m wide, and was filled by deposit 101, from which a single fragment of animal bone was recovered. Gully 104 lay 4.5m south-east of 102, and was very similar, although slightly smaller. It curved towards 102, perhaps forming a sub-circular feature with it beyond the trench edges. Gully 104 was filled by deposit 103, from which a sherd of Roman pottery dating to the 2nd to 4th centuries AD was recovered along with a single fragment of animal bone (see 2.6, below). At the south-eastern end of the trench lay ditch 106. This was slightly larger than the other two features and contained 14 sherds of relatively large, unabraded mid to late Iron Age pottery including a cooking pot, in association with a quantity of animal bone possibly representing discard of domestic food waste (2.6, below). These features were sealed by modern dumping and topsoil layer 100.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

- 2.4 The natural substrate 201 was revealed at an average depth of 0.5m bpgl. It changed from hard pink clay in the north-east to limestone brash halfway down its length, rising steeply uphill. Layer 201 was sealed by topsoil 200. No deposits or features of archaeological significance were present in this trench.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2)

- 2.5 The natural substrate 301, comprising limestone brash, was revealed at an average of 0.5m bpgl at the eastern end of the trench, rising to only 0.3m bpgl at the far western extent. Layer 301 was sealed by topsoil 300. No deposits or features of archaeological significance were present in this trench.

The Finds

- 2.6 The finds assemblage recovered from ditch 106 is suggestive of later Iron Age settlement activity in the vicinity, consisting as it does of cattle and sheep/goat bones in association with cooking pot. Finds from the other features were less informative, amounting to a single small sherd of Roman pottery from gully 104 and single small animal bone fragments from gullies 104 and 102.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Archaeological features were only recorded in trench 1, which was located on the only relatively level part of the site. The recovery of an assemblage of unabraded and relatively large sherds of Late Iron Age pottery, including part of a cooking pot, and potentially associated food waste in the form of animal bone from ditch 106, points to the rapid burial of domestic material and therefore the likely presence of a settlement nearby. Ditch 106 may represent a truncated boundary ditch of such a settlement. Gullies 102 and 104 appeared to form part of a small sub-circular enclosure of only 5m diameter and uncertain date and function. Whether they were contemporary with ditch 106, and therefore potentially internal features of a settlement, cannot be established due to a lack of secure dating evidence.
- 3.2 The distribution of all the features seems to indicate that archaeological activity was concentrated in the north-western corner of the site. This could be due to the relatively level topography of this area, and it may be significant that all features were cut into firm pink clay here, rather than the limestone brash found in the other two trenches: this area of the site may have been a more favourable location for

settlement. The shallow profiles of the features, and significant depth of the overlying modern deposits are suggestive of fairly extensive truncation on the site, perhaps associated with the construction of a telephone exchange which stood on the site into the 1960s (pers. comm. George Perris, Lewis Foster Lewis Architects). Differences in the depth of the topsoil/dumping layer across the site could be related to this, and also the naturally uneven topography.

- 3.3 In conclusion, later prehistoric and possibly Roman archaeological features survive at between 1.5m to 2m below the modern ground level in the north-western part of the proposed development area. The remains appear to have been truncated by modern activity, but may represent evidence for settlement activity in the vicinity from the later prehistoric period.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by David Cudlip assisted by Andrew Loader. The report was written by David Cudlip. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by David Cudlip, and prepared for deposition by Ed McSloy. The project was managed for CA by Simon Cox.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1967 Sheets 250, 251, 264, 265, 280, 281: Bristol District

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2005 *Land at the rear of The Ship Inn, Banwell, North Somerset: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

LaTrobe-Bateman, E 1999 *Banwell Extensive Urban Assessment*

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

100	Modern dumping and topsoil layer. 2m deep maximum.
101	Mid grey brown silty clay fill of gully 102. 0.13m deep.
102	Cut of gully. Shallow sides, concave base.
103	Mid grey brown silty clay fill of gully 104. 0.13m deep.
104	Cut of gully. Shallow sides, concave base.
105	Mid red brown silty clay fill of gully 106. 0.36m deep.
106	Cut of gully. Steep sides, concave base.
107	Firm pink clay natural.

Trench 2

200	Modern dumping and topsoil layer. 0.5m deep maximum.
201	Firm pink clay giving way to limestone brash. Natural

Trench 3

300	Modern dumping and topsoil layer. 0.5m deep maximum.
301	Limestone brash. Natural.

APPENDIX 2: THE FINDS

Artefactual material was restricted to quantities of Iron Age and Roman pottery.

Pottery from ditch fill 105 (fill of 106), consists of sherds from at least two handmade vessels of a coarse limestone-tempered and a finer, sandy fabric. A single form: a globular jar with simple, slightly everted rim, is recognisable. The fabrics compare with material of middle and later Iron Age date from the locality and the one form is suggestive of later Iron Age date. The condition of this material is good with sherds large and unabraded, and with one sherd preserving evidence of use as a cooking pot in the form of external sooting.

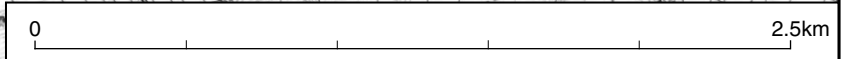
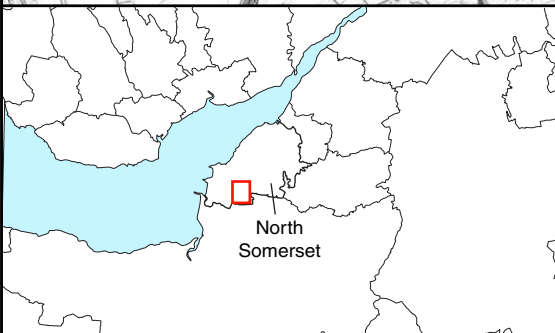
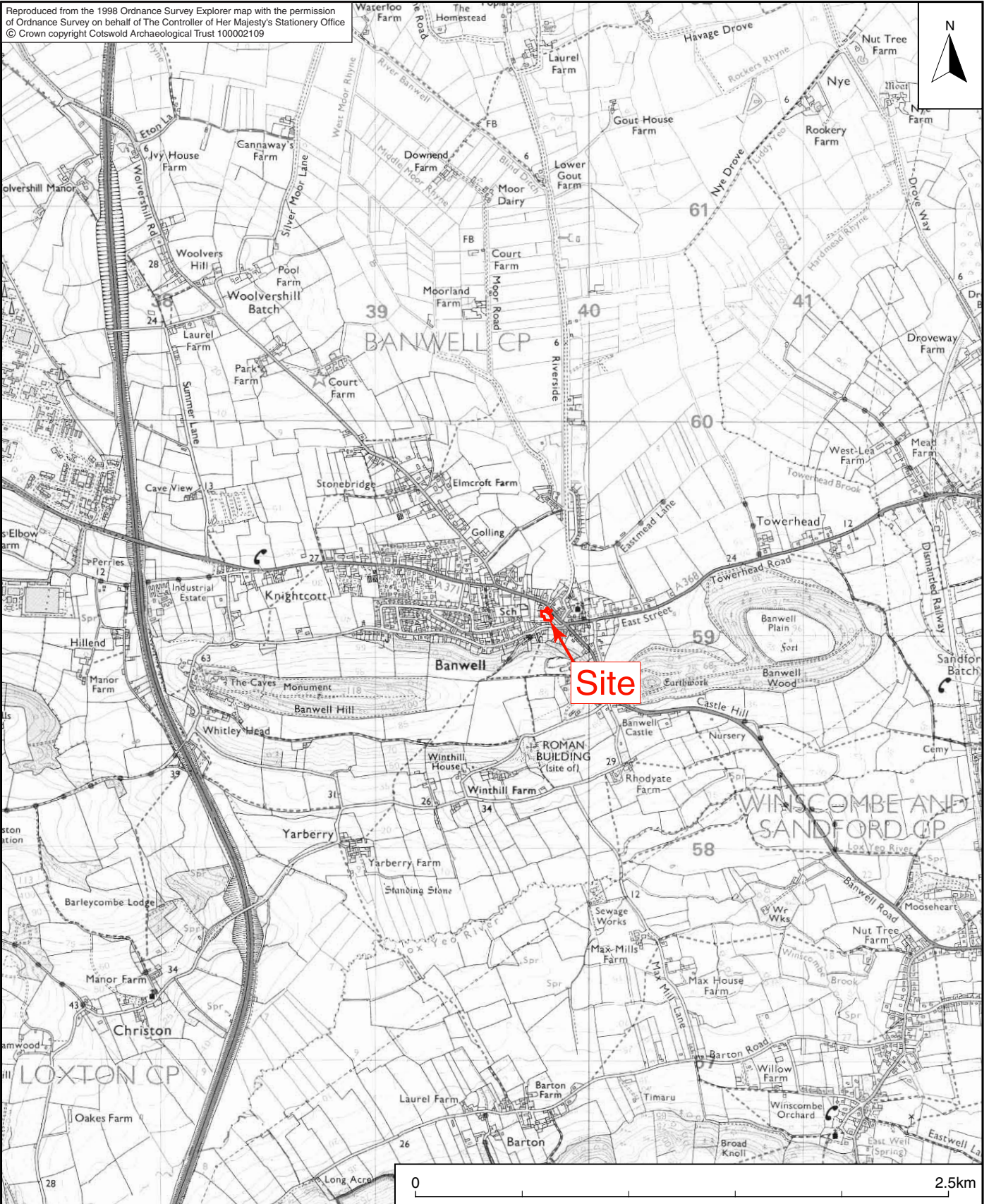
A single, small sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from gully fill 103 (fill of 104). The fabric, Dorset Black Burnished ware, is widespread across western Britain from the early 2nd to the fourth centuries AD.


Animal bone

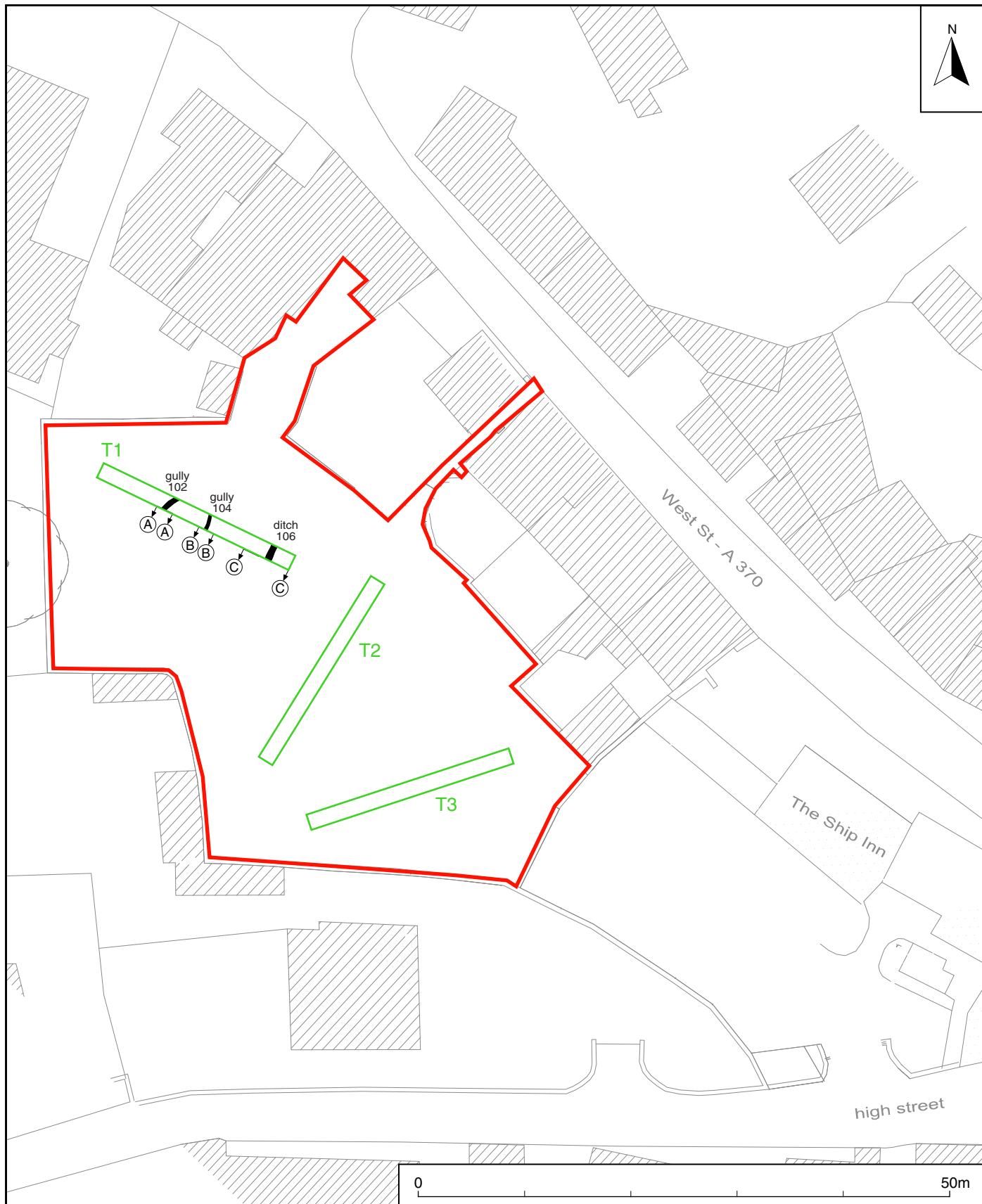
Animal bone was recovered from three deposits. Gully fills 101 (fill of 102) and 103 (fill of 104) each contained single fragments, whilst a larger assemblage was recovered from 105. This was predominately cattle limb bones from at least two adult individuals as well as a femur from a sub-adult sheep/goat. The material was fragmented, but the breaks appear fresh. One cattle distal femur showed signs of dog gnawing and a proximal femur head had a polished surface suggestive of joint disease such as arthritis. It is difficult to draw conclusions from such a small assemblage except to say at least two domestic species, cattle and sheep/goat, are present and the elements are predominately meat bearing ones, thus this could be food waste. The good condition of the material reflects rapid burial, but the gnawing indicates that dogs had some access to food waste.

Context	Description	Count	Wt (g)	Spot-date
101	Animal bone; sheep-sized	1	4	-
103	Roman pottery: Dorset BB1	1	2	C2-C4
	Animal bone; unidentified	1	1	
105	Iron Age pottery: limestone tempered; quartz tempered	14	291	MLIA
	Animal bone; cattle, sheep	9	703	

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 COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY		
PROJECT TITLE Land at the rear of the Ship Inn Banwell, North Somerset		
FIGURE TITLE Site location plan		
SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
1:25,000@A4	2082	1



- site
- / evaluation trench showing archaeological features



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Land at the rear of the Ship Inn
Banwell, North Somerset

FIGURE TITLE

**Trench location plan, showing
archaeological features**

SCALE

1:500@A4

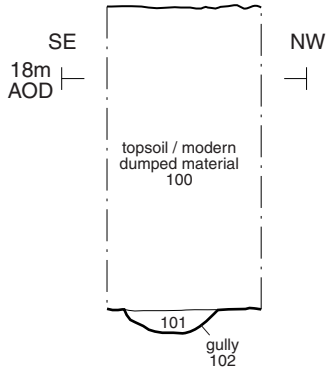
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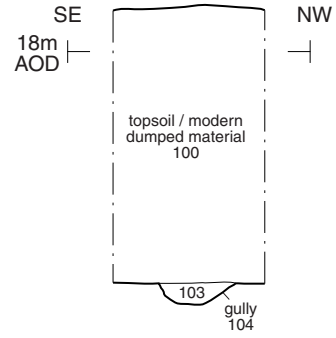
FIGURE NO.

2

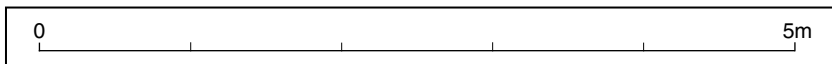
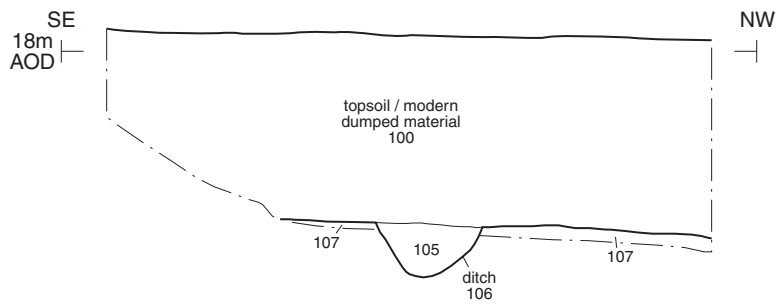
Section AA



Section BB



Section CC



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Land at the rear of the Ship Inn
Banwell, North Somerset

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 1; sections AA, BB and CC

SCALE

1:50@A4

PROJECT NO.

2082

FIGURE NO.

3