LAND AT SHOWELL FARM, CHIPPENHAM, WILTSHIRE

CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

TECHNICAL APPENDIX
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeological Trust in February 1999 in advance of a proposed business park development at Showell Farm, Chippenham, Wiltshire.

Trial trenching revealed undisturbed natural clays and limestone brash across a large proportion of the site. Archaeological remains were, however, recorded within two parts of the application area.

Within the south-eastern part of the site two concentrations of prehistoric worked flint were recovered from the ploughsoil surface, including both Mesolithic and early Bronze Age material. These sites are judged to be of Local Importance but the Impact of the development on them is likely to be Severe. The recommended mitigation is archaeological recording of the ploughsoil assemblage and any subsoil features.

A series of Romano-British ditches of first to second century AD date was identified within the northern part of the site, together with a short length of gully containing a sherd of Beaker Ware. Vestigial linear earthworks recorded in pasture in the same area may represent the remains of medieval or later cultivation. The site is judged to be of Regional or County Importance and the Impact of the development is likely to be Severe. The recommended mitigation is archaeological recording of the deposits beneath the pasture by excavation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In January 1999 Cotswold Archaeological Trust was commissioned by DPDS Consulting Group, on behalf of Crest Nicholson Properties, to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at Showell Farm, Chippenham (centred at NGR: 907 712, Fig. 1).

1.1.2 The evaluation forms the second stage of a Cultural Heritage Assessment, which is itself part of a wider Environmental Statement (ES) prepared by DPDS Consulting Group in support of an outline planning application for the North Wiltshire Business Park development. The first stage of Assessment was a desk-based study of the site, and this report on the fieldwork forms a technical appendix to the cultural heritage component of the ES (DPDS 1998b).

1.1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with an initial brief for cultural heritage assessment (DPDS 1998a) and with a subsequent detailed project design for field evaluation (CAT 1999) approved by Mr Roy Canham, County Archaeological Officer, Wiltshire County Council. The fieldwork also followed the 'Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire` issued by the County Archaeological Service (Wilts County Council 1995) and the 'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations' issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1996). Monitoring visits were made by Mr. Canham on the 10th, 16th and 17th February 1999.

1.2 Geology, topography and landuse

1.2.1 Details of the site topography, land use, natural and man-made environment and planning policy background are all contained within the Environmental Assessment Scoping Study prepared by DPDS Consulting Group (DPDS 1998a).

1.2.2 In summary the *c* 25ha site lies to the south of Chippenham, immediately east of the main railway line. The underlying geology across the southern half of the site is mapped as Cornbrash, with Kellaway Clay to the north (British Geological Survey 1990). The approximate position of this geological division is shown on Fig. 2. It was considered that alluvial gravels, long favoured for agriculture, might intrude into the eastern part of the site. This was consequently examined through the trenching programme but shown not to be the case. Topographically, the ground level slopes very gently towards the A350 to the east, with the exception of the north-eastern part of the site which lies on a gentle rise at approximately 54-55m O.D.

1.2.3 The site is predominantly under arable cultivation, although areas of pasture are present in the north-western part of the site and immediately south-west of Showell Farm (the latter coded as fields 1, 2, 4, 7-9 on Fig. 2). The northern and eastern boundaries of the site are formed by the A350 Lacock to Chippenham road, whilst the southern boundary of the site is marked by a section of the new Chippenham Bypass, due for completion in December 1999.

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The archaeological background of the application area is contained within the first stage of the Cultural Heritage Assessment (DPDS 1998b). In summary, no archaeological sites were known to lie within the boundary of the

proposed development area itself but the site was recorded as lying within an area of archaeological potential (Fig. 2).

1.3.2 Mesolithic activity in the vicinity of the application area is indicated by the recovery nearby of numerous small snapped flint blades (Bateman 1998a, 1998b). Evidence of continuing activity in the area during the Neolithic/Early Bronze Age period is also indicated from flints recovered from the bypass route and from flints and cut features at the Showell Nurseries site, approximately 0.5km east of the study area, together with a possible habitation area discovered in 1997 just south of the Sainsbury's supermarket 1.2km north-west of the study area (TAU 1991, Bateman 1998a, 1998b, OAU 1991, Fielden 1991, 1993).

1.3.3 Iron Age features have also been identified at Showell Nurseries, together with ditches and enclosures relating to Romano-British domestic occupation and agricultural exploitation (OAU 1991). These features were previously visible on aerial photographs as cropmarks extending across the River Avon gravels. Settlement of this date in the environs of the application area is also indicated by pottery finds from the route of the Chippenham bypass (Bateman 1998a, 1998b).

1.3.4 Although there are a number of settlements with demonstrable medieval origins in the wider area, very little evidence of medieval activity has been retrieved from the immediate locality of the application area (DPDS 1998b).

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 The Cultural Heritage Assessment, having considered the available evidence, recognised that there was reason to believe that deposits of significance might lie within the application area (given the previous discoveries on adjacent sites), and accordingly field evaluation (as defined by PPG16, paragraphs 21-2) was recommended. The evaluation was commissioned by the applicants

to determine the existence of such deposits and, if present, to establish their extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality. This information would assist in devising an appropriate mitigation strategy, if required.

1.4.2 The fieldwork methodology followed that set out within the original assessment brief and in the subsequent evaluation project design (DPDS 1998a, CAT 1999). Twenty-nine trenches were machine-excavated under archaeological supervision in the positions shown in Fig. 2. The trench distribution was designed to give as comprehensive a sampling of the site as possible, whilst ensuring a bias in coverage to the northern and eastern parts of the site where the archaeological potential was thought to be the highest (given the possibility that alluvial gravels, settled in the Romano-British period at the nearby Showell Nurseries site, might extend across part of the site).

1.4.3 The majority of trenches were 50m in length and 1.9m wide. The positions of trenches 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 18 and 19 were slightly altered due to access requirements and/or to avoid overhead power cables. Two proposed trenches were, with the approval of the County Archaeological Officer, omitted from the trenching scheme due to the presence of stock in fields 1 and growing crops in field 5. Extra trenches 29 and 30 were, however, excavated in field 2 to explore areas of interest in more detail.

1.4.4 Machine excavation was halted at the top of the first significant archaeological horizon, or otherwise at the top of the natural geological deposits. All recording was undertaken in accordance with the CAT Technical Manual 1: *Site Recording Manual*. Levels taken on site were related to an O.S. benchmark at Showell Farm with a value of 49.06m O.D.

1.4.5 All artefacts recovered were retained for processing and analysis in accordance with the CAT Technical Manual: *Treatment of Finds immediately after Excavation* and are listed in Appendix I. Subject to the agreement of the

legal landowner the finds and site archive will be deposited with Devizes Museum under accession number DZSWS 1999.1.

2. EVALUATION RESULTS

2.1 General

2.1.1 The natural geological substrate, consisting of sandy silty-clays and limestone brash, was revealed within all twenty-nine trenches at depths of between 0.25-0.40m below present ground level. The division between these two formations is marked on Fig 2.

2.1.2 Fifteen trenches were devoid of archaeological features (trenches 6-12, 18, 19, 21, 23-24, 26-28) whilst eleven others contained only undated field-drains (trenches 1-4, 13-17) or pipe trenches (trenches 5 and 15) which appeared to be of post-medieval/modern date.

2.1.3 The remaining trenches revealed a series of prehistoric and Romano-British features (trench 20) and an undated, but probably post-medieval/early-modern, ditch (trench 22) (Figs. 2, 3). At the request of the County Archaeological Officer some additional trenching was undertaken on the higher ground of field 2, with a view to further defining the nature and extent of remains there. Trench 28 proved to be devoid of archaeological features but trenches 29 and 30 both revealed further Romano-British features.

2.1.4 A short description of the main evaluation results, in chronological order, is provided below whilst a fuller summary of the deposits encountered in all twenty-nine trenches is set out in Appendix II.

2.2 Prehistoric

Trench 30 (Fig. 3)

2.2.1 One probable prehistoric feature was encountered during the course of the evaluation. A 7.5m length of narrow curving gully [3004], approximately 0.35m wide and 0.30m deep, was exposed within trench 30. The broadly NW-SE aligned gully had a rounded terminal, and sampling revealed it had steep sides and flat base. Its gravelly sandy-clay fill (3005) yielded an early Bronze Age beaker bodysherd, decorated with horizontal lines of twisted cord impressions. It cannot be entirely discounted that the beaker sherd is residual within a later, Romano-British, feature. However, a prehistoric date for gully [3004] seems likely given the fresh condition of the sherd. In addition fill (3005) was distinct from those of the proven Romano-British features, with a much more gravel-rich composition. Residual worked flint was also recovered from several Romano-British contexts in trenches 20 and 29, adjacent to trench 30.

Trench 5, 16 and 17 vicinity

2.2.2 Two small scatters of struck flint, each approximately 10m across, were noted on the ploughsoil surface between trenches 5, 16 and 17 in field 3 (Fig. 2, Appendix 1).

2.2.3 The assemblage of struck flint includes a small, crudely fashioned, early Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead as well as a round scraper, scraper/knife and several squat flakes likely to be of similar date. The presence of six small blade fragments indicates, however, that at least part of the assemblage is Mesolithic in date. The flint assemblage is similar in composition to that recovered from recent CAT excavations on the Chippenham Bypass, a short distance to the northwest of the present evaluation area (Bateman 1998a, 1998b).

2.2.4 No evidence was encountered in the nearby trenches to suggest survival of prehistoric features cut into the natural cornbrash.

2.3 Romano-British

Trench 20 (Fig. 3)

2.3.1 A number of Romano-British features were recorded within trench 20, running on E-W, NE-SW and NW-SE alignments. Ditch [2009], 0.9m in width, was noted crossing the trench on an E-W alignment. The ditch was recorded in plan and no finds were recoverable from its orange-brown sandy-clay surface fill (2010).

2.3.2 Ditch [2011] was 1.25m wide and 0.45m deep. It also contained an orange-brown sandy-clay surface fill, (2012), from which 12 sherds of 1st century AD pottery were recovered.

2.3.3 Ditch [2006] was 2.5m wide and 0.60m deep with gently sloping sides and a broadly flat base. Its single fill (2007) of charcoal-flecked orange-brown sandy-clay yielded 23 sherds of early to mid second century AD pottery.

2.3.4 Ditch [2003] was 1.5m wide and 0.50m deep with gently-sloping sides and a concave base. It had a basal fill (2005), 0.30m thick, of light yellow-brown sandy-clay which contained one sherd of Flavian to mid second century AD pottery. A secondary fill (2004), 0.20m thick, of grey-brown sandy-clay yielded 33 sherds of early to mid second century AD pottery.

2.3.5 Ditch [2013] was 1.35m wide and 0.40m deep. It had steeply sloping sides and a concave base. Its single fill (2014) of mottled yellow to grey-brown sandy-clay produced three sherds of Flavian to mid second-century AD pottery.

2.3.6 Ditch [2015] was 2.15m wide. Its surface fill (2016) of yellow-brown sandy-clay yielded one sherd of Flavian to mid second century AD pottery.

2.3.7 Adjacent to ditch [2015] a pit or ditch terminal [2017] was noted. The relationship between the two features remains uncertain, although it was suspected that ditch [2015] was the latest feature. Pit [2017] was approximately 0.90m by 0.50m in size. Its sandy-clay surface fill (2018) yielded no dating evidence.

Trench 29 (Fig. 3)

2.3.8 Ditch [2904] was approximately 1.35m wide. Its yellow-brown sandy-clay surface fill (2905) yielded no pottery.

2.3.9 A pit or ditch terminal [2906] was also noted, approximately 2.1m by 0.90m in size. No dating evidence was recoverable from sandy-clay surface fill (2907).

2.3.10 Pit [2910] was 1m long and between 0.20m-0.60m in width. Its sandy-clay surface fill (2911) also yielded no pottery.

2.3.11 A circular posthole [2908], 0.35m in diameter, was noted cut into pit fill (2911). No finds were recovered from the surface of stony sandy-clay fill (2909).

2.3.12 Ditch [2912] consisted of NW-SE and NE-SW sections with a right-angled turn. Both ditch sections were approximately 0.60m in width. Sandy-clay surface fill (2913) contained two sherds of Flavian to mid second century AD pottery.

2.3.13 Ditch [2914] was 3.6m in width. A light yellow-brown sandy-clay surface fill (2915) yielded three sherds of second century AD pottery. A darker

grey-brown sandy-clay surface fill (2916) was also noted, the latter suggesting a possible recut of ditch [2914].

2.3.14 A pit or ditch terminal [2917], at least 0.75m by 0.40m in size, was also recorded. Sandy-clay fill (2918) yielded no finds.

2.3.15 A small ?pit, [2919], was recorded alongside feature [2917]. It was at least 1.2m by 1m in size, and its sandy-clay surface fill (2920) produced no pottery

2.3.16 One probable Roman sherd was also recovered from subsoil (2920).

Trench 30 (Fig. 3)

2.3.17 At the northern end of the trench a NE-SW aligned ditch [3006], approximately 1.15m in width, was recorded in plan. Its sandy-clay surface fill (3007) yielded one sherd of Flavian to mid second century AD pottery.

2.4 Modern

2.4.1 A NW-SE aligned ditch, 1.55m in width, was recorded crossing trench 5. Sample excavation revealed that it housed a modern ceramic pipe.

2.4.2 A second NW-SE aligned ditch, 2.5m in width, was recorded within trench 15. Excavation revealed it also contained a modern ceramic pipe.

2.4.3 Numerous stone-built field drains were recorded on NW-SE and NE-SW alignments criss-crossing the poorer-draining Kellaway Clay of the northern part of the site. No field drains were encountered in areas of cornbrash geology further south.

2.5 Undated

2.5.1 Within trench 22 a shallow E-W aligned ditch [2203] was recorded. It was 1.45m in width and 0.15m deep with a concave base and very gently sloping sides. Its position suggests that this is the ephemeral remains of the former line of the Lacock/Corsham parish boundary, the earliest cartographic record of which dates to 1764.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 General

3.1.1 Field evaluation has proved successful in providing a clearer picture of the archaeology within the study area. Whilst a large number of trenches have proved to be devoid of features, the evaluation has identified several areas within the site where archaeological deposits and artefact concentrations do survive.

3.2 Date and interpretation of archaeological deposits

Prehistoric

3.2.1 Prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the Romano-British activity in field 2 is highlighted by the recovery of an early Bronze Age beaker bodysherd from gully [3004] in trench 30, and from residual worked flints from trenches 20 and 29. This may be paralleled by the recovery of Beaker pottery from a pit excavated during the evaluation of the Showell Nursery site to the east. In addition, the identification of two surface scatters of worked flint on the ploughsoil in the vicinity of trenches 5, 16 and 17 in field 3, in the southern part of the site, should be noted (Fig. 2). However, trenching within this part of field 3 has revealed no associated prehistoric features to indicate that contemporaneous cut features survive within field 3. The flint assemblage recovered contains material broadly datable to the Mesolithic and early Bronze Age period. Similar artefacts have been recovered immediately south of the application area (DPDS 1998b).

Romano-British activity

3.2.2 The evaluation has also identified Romano-British activity on the higher ground of field 2 in the north-western part of the site, with sherds dating from the pre-Flavian period through to the mid 2nd century AD. Trenching revealed a series of ditches on varying alignments, with the evidence of recutting suggesting more than one phase of activity. The remains appear to represent ditched enclosures, perhaps of domestic plots, paddocks or fields. A posthole and several pits recorded in trenches 29 allude to possible settlement activity in the vicinity of these ditched enclosures, as does the fresh unabraded pot from the ditches. The Romano-British remains lie approximately 300m west of Showell Nurseries, where similar ditched enclosures have previously been identified (DPDS 1998b).

Undated

3.2.3 Within trench 22 a shallow, undated, linear feature [2203] was recorded. Its position broadly correlates with the plotted position of the former line of the 18th-century or earlier parish boundary, and a post-medieval date for the feature appears likely.

3.2.4 A series of low parallel earthworks, spaced approximately 8m apart, were discernible within field 2 on NE-SW alignments (their approximate position being indicated on Fig. 2). These earthworks appear to represent vestigial remains of ridge and furrow cultivation of medieval or later date. No associated furrows were discernible within trenches 11, 12, 20-21 or 28-30 but a clay subsoil, approximately 0.10-0.15m thick, was recorded sealing all Romano-British features identified within field 2.

3.2.5 Numerous stone-built field-drains were noted across the site. Although no dating evidence was recovered these features are likely to be of post-medieval/early-modern date, associated with improved drainage of those fields with underlying clay geology. Two post-medieval/modern pipe-trenches running towards Showell Farm were also noted.

3.3 Survival and extent of archaeological deposits

Prehistoric

3.3.1 Prehistoric activity within the application area is highlighted by the recovery of an early Bronze Age beaker sherd from gully [3004] in trench 30 of field 2 and by residual flint from trenches 20 and 29. The gully, sealed beneath a former ploughsoil, is 0.3m deep but its extent is uncertain. Prehistoric activity is also alluded to from the assemblage of relatively fresh, unabraded, worked flint recovered from the surface of field 3 in the vicinity of trenches 5, 16 and 17. Inspection of surrounding areas revealed no further flint artefacts, suggesting that the material was confined to the two, relatively discrete, areas indicated on Fig. 2. No evidence of cut features was recorded within adjacent evaluation trenches and the evidence of prehistoric activity appears confined to artefactual material within the ploughsoil.

Romano-British

3.3.2 The Romano-British features examined within trenches 20, 29 and 30 in field 2 varied between 0.40m and 0.60m in depth, and were sealed by an average of 0.10-0.15m of subsoil and 0.15-0.20m of topsoil. The remnant ridge and furrow cultivation patterns suggests former ploughing in this area and some degree of truncation to underlying remains may have occurred although no furrows were present cut into the natural clays. The ridge and furrow cultivation remains, which appear on present evidence to be wholly contained within the topsoil, may overlie a worm-sorted subsoil from which all archaeological stratigraphy has been lost. The underlying features do survive to a reasonable depth, and the evaluation has identified a good potential for the recovery of dateable artefactual material. Palaeo-environmental and/or palaeo-economic evidence may also survive within their fills. It cannot be discounted that associated structural remains may also be present in the vicinity, given the presence of a posthole and probable pits in trench 29.

3.3.3 The extent of the Romano-British activity detected by trenching cannot be precisely defined. However the presence of Romano-British features within trenches 20, 29 and 30, and their notable absence within trenches 11, 12, 21 and 28 suggests Romano-British activity focused on the higher ground of field 2, although several ditches appear to run downslope to the west. Care was taken to remove the clay subsoil under the topsoil, and there was no masking effect on features by unremoved material within negative trenches 11, 12, 21 and 28.

3.3.4 It remains unclear whether the Romano-British features identified within field 2 are associated with the occupation remains at Showell Nurseries. Trenching within the intervening area of field 3 has identified no Romano-British features to suggest their westward continuation from the Showell Nurseries site.

Undated

3.3.5 The undated cultivation-related earthworks noted in field 2 were reasonably well-preserved and widely distributed across the field. An undated linear feature noted in trench 22 within field 3 may represent part of a former parish boundary. It survived to only 0.15m in depth and may have been truncated by past ploughing.

4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 This section contains a consideration of the two areas where the evaluation located deposits of archaeological interest. These are the flint scatters identified in field 3, hereafter referred to as Area A and defined in extent on Figure 2, and the area of Romano-British and possible Bronze Age activity identified in field 2, hereafter referred to as Area B and also defined in extent on Figure 2. The significance of Area B is considered with reference to the

non-statutory criteria; which the Secretary of State has listed for determining monument importance, as modified for application as discrimination criteria in the English Heritage Monument Protection Programme. In the light of these criteria three levels of importance can be identified (in descending order of merit): National Importance, Regional or County Importance, and Local or District Importance. Area A, however, which appears to be an area of flint deposition contained, on present evidence, wholly within the ploughsoil, falls outside the legal definition of what constitutes a monument and cannot easily be assessed with reference to the discrimination criteria, as it does not include buildings, structures, or works.

4.2 *Area A: the Mesolithic-Bronze Age flint scatters*

4.2.1 The two flint scatters identified within the evaluation area are one of a number identified from the immediate locality (see 1.3.2). It may be of some significance that these two scatters appear to lie on the boundary between the limestone Brash and the Kellaway clay. No evidence was found for the survival of contemporary cut features in the trenches opened in the immediate vicinity of the scatters. The two scatters are judged to be of Local Importance.

4.3 *Area B: the Romano-British settlement*

4.3.1 Survival: medium. The archaeological evidence in this area does not survive as an upstanding monument and any earthworks have been levelled by earlier ploughing. Site stratification is likely to be restricted to relationships between negative features cut into the natural clay and deeply stratified deposits are not likely to survive. It should be noted, however, that a layer of homogenised soil, lacking stratification and perhaps worm-sorted, lies between the maximum depth of the ridge and furrow and the top of the archaeological deposits. This will have limited the effects of truncation by ploughing.

4.3.2 Potential: medium: The evaluation suggests reasonable potential for evidence of ditch recutting and, perhaps, several phases of activity. Pits and postholes

suggest settlement/occupation may be represented on the site, as does the fresh, unabaded Roman pottery recovered from the ditches. There is moderate potential for well-preserved environmental deposits in the deeper features, although permanent waterlogging is not expected.

4.3.3 Group value (associations): medium: It is unlikely that there is physical continuity between the possible Bronze Age activity on the site and the Romano-British presence. The site does, however, lie close to the cropmarks around Showell Nurseries, which lie on the gravels of the river Avon to the east and have been shown to be of similar early Roman date (see 1.3.3). No physical link, in the form of linear features *etc,* has been demonstrated between the two sites.

4.3.4 Group value (clustering): medium: It is likely that the site is one of an emerging pattern of Romano-British sites, of similar form, that has been recognised, on the basis of aerial photographs and limited excavation, as extending in an arc around the western periphery of Chippenham. Other sites include: Manor Farm, Allington; Bailey's Farm; two possible sites near Sheldon Manor; and a further possible site near Corsham.

4.3.5 Documentation (archaeological): medium: The site is only known through the evaluation work contained in this report.

4.3.6 Documentation (historical): not applicable.

4.3.7 Diversity (features): medium: The evaluation results suggests that in addition to linear features, of a variety of forms and sizes, other features such as pits and postholes may be represented on the site.

4.3.8 Amenity value: low: The site is on private land with no public access and no surface evidence of archaeological remains.

4.3.9 In summary, although the site is not judged to be of National Importance, the nature of the evidence and its place in a likely distribution pattern of similar sites in the Chippenham region, raise it above a purely Local Importance. The site is, therefore, judged to be of Regional or County Importance. Thus, whilst its importance is not such that it demands presevation *in-situ*, it will certainly require full preservation by record prior to destruction.

5 PREDICTION OF IMPACT

Current Situation and Ongoing Processes

5.1 The probable early Bronze Age gully [3004] (Area B) is currently protected from disturbance by the pasture landuse of field 2. There is no indication from evaluation trenching that prehistoric features, associated with the ploughsoil flint assemblage, survive within field 3 (Area A) to be affected by current ploughing. The Romano-British deposits encountered within field 2 (Area B) lie beneath pasture and thus are not subject to ongoing agricultural erosion. Whilst the majority of the study area is at present under arable cultivation no buried archaeological deposits predating the post-medieval/early modern period are known from the remainder of the site.

Constructional Effects

5.2 Twenty-six of the twenty-nine evaluation trenches proved to be either entirely devoid of archaeological remains, or otherwise contained undated, but probably post-medieval/early modern, features (trenches 1-19, 21-28). Proposed development should not therefore impact upon significant archaeological deposits across extensive areas of the site.

Area A: the Mesolithic to Bronze Age flint scatters

5.3 The surface finds of prehistoric flint recorded in the vicinity of trenches 5, 16 and 17 in field 3 (and any undetected features sealed beneath the ploughsoil) are susceptible to damage by any groundworks or topsoil disturbance in this area. Such works, even if confined to topsoil disturbance, would inevitably affect the integrity of the ploughsoil assemblage. The Master Plan suggests this level of disturbance is likely in this part of the site.

Area B: the Bronze Age gully and Romano-British settlement

5.4 Groundworks, including any topsoil stripping, footing excavations, access roads, service runs or landscaping, that expose or intrude upon the prehistoric and Romano-British remains identified in field 2 will damage the features currently sealed beneath the pasture in this area. The Master Plan suggests this level of disturbance is likely in this part of the site.

5.5 The impact of the proposed development upon the recorded archaeological resource is summarised in Table 1.

IMPORTANCE

	NATIONAL	**REGIONAL**	**LOCAL**
IMPACT			
SEVERE		*AREA B*	*AREA A*
SIGNIFICANT			
MINOR			

TABLE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT MATRIX

Operational Effects

5.6 There will be no operational effects upon the archaeological resource within the proposed development area.

6 PROPOSED MITIGATION STRATEGY

6.1 Where the programme of evaluation work failed to demonstrate the presence of archaeological deposits, no further archaeological recording is proposed. In Areas A and B the following mitigation measures are proposed, if it is confirmed that the constructional effects identified in 5.4 and 5.5 will impact upon these areas and preservation *in-situ* is not an option.

Area A: the Mesolithic to Bronze Age flint scatters

6.2 In this area it is proposed that a programme of ploughsoil testing and examination of the underlying natural brash be instituted across Area A (an area of *c* 1ha). It is suggested that this be achieved by a series of hand-dug tespits (5 litre sample), laid out on a 10m grid, across Area A. The soil from the pits should be sieved on site for artefacts. A selection of the pits should then be expanded by machine to test for features cut into the underlying natural. Such pits should measure 4m square and be cut on a 50m grid across the extent of Area A. Any features revealed should then be excavated in the normal fashion.

Area B: the Bronze Age gully and Romano-British settlement

6.3 Within this area it is suggested the archaeological deposits identified by the evaluation be subject to archaeological excavation, following removal of the topsoil under archaeological supervision. The archaeological excavation would record the extent of the deposits in plan, excavate the various types of

feature present to a previously agreed sampling level, recover dating evidence from features, record the site stratigraphy, and obtain samples for environmental analysis from appropriate contexts.

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Fig. 1 Location map

Fig. 2 Study area showing trench locations and recorded archaeology

Fig. 3 Trenches 20, 29 and 30 showing archaeological features

Fig. 4 Trenches 20 and 22, sections

APPENDIX I

Finds Register

Worked Flint, by Graeme Walker

Thirty-one pieces of flint were recovered from the evaluation, five of which were discarded as natural flakes. Most of the assemblage was collected from surface scatters in the vicinity of trenches 5, 17 and 23 in field 3, although five pieces were collected from contexts within trenches 20 and 29 in field 2. All of the artefacts have been struck from good quality, mostly grey-coloured, flint. Several pieces were heavily patinated whilst others show no sign of discoloration.

The small assemblage has been sorted into the following categories:

Cores	2 (1 burnt)
Flakes	13
Retouched flakes	2
Blades	5 (broken, 1 burnt)
Retouched blades	1 (broken)
Scraper	1
Scraper/knife	1
Barbed and tanged arrowhead	1 (burnt)
Natural	5
Total	**31**

A small, crudely-fashioned, barbed and tanged arrowhead is of early Bronze Age date. A round scraper, scraper/knife and several squat flakes are likely to be of similar date. However the presence of six small blade fragments indicates at least part of the assemblage is Mesolithic in date.

The assemblage is similar in composition to that recovered from the CAT excavations on the Western Bypass (WBC97) a short distance to the north-west of the present evaluation.

The Pottery, by Jane Timby.

Introduction

A small group of 82 sherds of pottery (763g) was submitted for assessment. Apart from one sherd the entire group dates to the earlier Roman period. The single exception is a piece of early Bronze Age decorated beaker.

The sherds were recovered from 12 individual contexts, with in excess of 20 sherds from ditch fills (2004) and (2007).

The material is quite fragmentary, with an average sherd size of just 9g, although surface preservation is relatively good. The Beaker sherd is well-preserved.

For the purposes of this assessment the pottery was quickly scanned to assess composition and date and a count and weight recorded for each excavated context. The data is summarized in Table 1.

Early Bronze Age

A single isolated bodysherd, decorated with horizontal lines of twisted cord impressions, was recovered from fill (3005) of gully [3004].

Roman

The remainder of the pottery dates to the early Roman period with sherds dating from the pre-Flavian period through to the mid 2nd century.

Despite the relatively small size of the group it is quite diverse with three sherds of samian, Dorset black burnished ware and various local wares including two mortaria.

The samian includes both South Gaulish and Central Gaulish pieces, but of particular note is a sherd from a cup (Dragendorff type 24/5) from (2012) which was made in the pre-Flavian period.

Local products include south-west white-slipped wares including a mortaria, Savernake ware and various oxidised and reduced sandy wares. Savernake ware can date from the mid 1st century AD through to the mid 2nd century AD, and is thus not a useful chronological indicator on its own.

Summary

Although this is a relatively small group of wares and is dominated by local products its status is considerably raised by the presence of a sherd of pre-Flavian samian.

It is also a relatively homogeneous group in terms of chronology, and contains vessels of specifically Roman use such as the mortaria.

Isolated Beaker sherds are not an uncommon occurrence in assemblages from the general region, but its presence does imply early Bronze Age activity in the immediate locality.

Table 1: Showell Farm, pottery fabric quantification.

CONT	FABRIC	WT	NO	COMMENT	DATE
2004	SAVGT,SWWS,SAM,BB1,WILRE,OXID	129	33		E-M 2ND
2005	SAVGT	26	1		FLAV-MID 2ND
2007	SAVGT, SWWS, CGSAM,WILBW,MORT,	391	23		E-M 2ND
2008	WILBW	1	1		FLAV-MID 2ND
2012	SGSAM,SAVGT,WILBW	88	12	DRAG 24/5	PRE-FLAV+
2014	SAVGT,WILBW	47	3		FLAV-MID 2ND
2016	SAVGT	3	1		FLAV-MID 2ND
2902	OXID	5	1		?ROMAN
2913	WILBW	6	2		FLAV-MID 2ND
2915	WILBW,GREY,SWWS	9	3		2ND
3005	GROG	4	1	twisted cord	EBA (BEAKER)
3007	SAVGT	54	1		FLAV-MID 2ND
TOTAL		**763**	**82**		

Key to fabric codes

BB1: Dorset black burnished ware
GREY: grey sandy ware
GROG: earlier Prehistoric grog-tempered
MORT: mortaria
OXID: oxidised sandy ware
SAM: samian
SAVGT: Savernake ware
SWWS: South-west white-slipped ware
WILBW:Wiltshire black sandy ware
WILRE: Wiltshire grey sandy wares

Table 2: Finds Concordance, by Emma Harrison.

Context	Description	Spot Date	Pottery		Bone		Other
			No	Wgt	No	Wgt	
unstrat	Tr 5 area						13 flint (44g)
unstrat	Tr 17 area						5 flint (24g)
2004		E-Mid 2nd	33	129g	2	59g	1 Fe nail 1 slag (75g) 1 flint (1g)
2005		Flav-Mid 2nd	1	26g			
2007		E-Mid 2nd	23	391g	6	53g	1 Fe ?nail 1 flint (5g)
2008		Flav-Mid 2nd	1	1g	63	282g	
2012		pre-Flav +	12	88g	3	21g	
2014		Flav-Mid 2nd	3	47g	5	49g	2 fired clay (18g)
2016		Flav-Mid 2nd	1	3g	3	77g	
unstrat	Tr 23						4 flint (22g)
2902		?Roman	1	5g			1 flint (9g)
2913		Flav-Mid 2nd	2	6g			
2915		2nd	3	9g			2 flint (8g)
3005		EBA	1	4g	3	10g	
3007		Flav-Mid 2nd	1	54g			

APPENDIX II

Trench Descriptions

Note: stratigraphic descriptions are given from the earliest to the latest deposits. Cut features are designated by square brackets, thus; [000], all other deposits are in round brackets; (000).

Trench 1

No archaeological features were encountered, with the exception of six NE-SW and NW-SE aligned stone-built ?post-medieval/early modern field drains.

The natural geological substrate (102) of mid red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25m of clay-loam ploughsoil (101).

Trench 2

No archaeological features were encountered, with the exception of one NE-SW aligned stone-built ?post-medieval/early modern field drain.

The natural geological substrate (202) of mid red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25m of clay-loam ploughsoil ploughsoil (201).

Trench 3

No archaeological features were encountered, with the exception of ten NE-SW and NW-SE aligned stone-built ?post-medieval/early modern field drains.

The natural geological substrate (302) of light yellow sands/coarse gravels and blue clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25m of clay-loam ploughsoil ploughsoil (301).

Trench 4

No archaeological features were encountered, with the exception of eight NW-SE and NE-SW aligned stone-built ?post-medieval/early modern field drains.

The natural geological substrate (402) of light yellow sands/coarse gravels and blue clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25m of clay-loam ploughsoil ploughsoil (401).

Trench 5

No archaeological features were encountered, with the exception of six NE-SW aligned stone-built ?post-medieval/early modern field drains.

The natural geological substrate (502) of light yellow-brown clay-silt was encountered at an average depth of 0.25-0.30m.

A NW-SE aligned ditch, 1.55m in width, was recorded crossing trench 5. Sample excavation revealed it housed a modern ceramic pipe.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25-0.30m of clay-loam ploughsoil (501).

Trench 6

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (602) of limestone brash with pockets of natural red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25-0.35m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.10m of sandy clay-subsoil and 0.15-0.20m of clay-loam topsoil (601).

Trench 7

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (702) of limestone brash with pockets of natural red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25m of clay-loam topsoil (701).

Trench 8

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (802) of limestone brash with pockets of natural red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.30-0.40m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.30-0.40m of clay-loam topsoil (801).

Trench 9

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (902) of limestone brash with pockets of natural red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.35m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.35m of clay-loam topsoil (901).

Trench 10

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (1002) of limestone brash with pockets of natural red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25-0.35m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25-0.35m of clay-loam topsoil (1001).

Trench 11

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (1102) of light yellow/blue clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25-0.30m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.10m of sandy clay subsoil and 0.15m of clay-loam ploughsoil (1101).

Trench 12

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (1202) of light yellow/blue clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.10m of sandy-clay subsoil and 0.15m of clay-loam ploughsoil (1201).

Trench 13

No archaeological features were encountered, with the exception of six NW-SE aligned stone-built ?post-medieval/early modern

field drains.

The natural geological substrate (1302) of reddish-brown gravels and sands was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25m of clay-loam ploughsoil (1301).

Trench 14

No archaeological features were encountered, with the exception of nine NE-SW and NW-SE aligned stone-built ?post-medieval/early modern field drains.

The natural geological substrate (1402) of light yellow sands/coarse gravels and blue clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25-0.30m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25-0.30m of clay-loam ploughsoil (1401).

Trench 15

No archaeological features were encountered, with the exception of three NE-SW aligned stone-built post-medieval/early modern field drains

The natural geological substrate (1502) of light yellow-brown silty clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m.

A NW-SE aligned ditch, 2.5m in width, was recorded. Excavation revealed it also contained a modern ceramic pipe.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25m of clay-loam ploughsoil (1501).

Trench 16

No archaeological features were encountered, with the exception of one NE-SW aligned stone-built ?post-medieval/early modern field drain.

The natural geological substrate (1602) of limestone brash within a yellow-brown silt matrix was encountered at an average depth of 0.30m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.30m of clay-loam ploughsoil (1601).

Trench 17

No archaeological features were encountered, with the exception of two NW-SE aligned stone-built ?post-medieval/early modern field drain.

The natural geological substrate (1702) of limestone brash within yellow-brown silt matrix was encountered at an average depth of 0.25-0.30m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25-0.30m of clay-loam ploughsoil (1701).

Trench 18

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (1802) of limestone brash with pockets of natural red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25m of clay-loam topsoil (1801).

Trench 19

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (1902) of limestone brash with pockets of natural red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m.
The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.25m of clay-loam topsoil (1901).

Trench 20

The natural geological substrate of light yellow/blue clay and gravels was encountered at an average depth of 0.30m.

Ditch [2003], aligned WNW-ESE, was 1.5m wide and 0.50m deep, with gently-sloping sides and a concave base. It had a basal fill (2005), 0.30m thick, of light yellow-brown sandy-clay which contained one sherd of Flavian to mid second century AD pottery. A secondary fill (2004), 0.20m thick, of grey-brown sandy-clay yielded 33 sherds of early to mid second century AD pottery.

Ditch [2006], aligned NE-SW, was 2.5m wide and 0.60m deep with gently sloping sides and a broadly flat base. Its single fill (2007) of charcoal-flecked orange-brown sandy-clay yielded 23 sherds of early to mid second century AD pottery.

Ditch [2009], 0.9m in width, was noted crossing the trench on an E-W alignment. The ditch was recorded in plan and no finds were recoverable from its orange-brown sandy-clay surface fill (2010).

Ditch [2011], aligned E-W, was 1.25m wide and 0.45m deep. It also contained a orange-brown sandy-clay surface fill, (2012), from which 12 sherds of pre-Flavian + pottery were recovered.

Ditch [2013], aligned WNW-ESE, was 1.35m wide and 0.40m deep. It had steeply sloping sides and a concave base. Its single fill (2014) of mottled yellow to grey-brown sandy-clay produced three sherds of Flavian to mid second-century AD pottery.

Ditch [2015], aligned WNW-ESE, was 2.15m wide. Its surface fill (2016) of yellow-brown sandy-clay yielded one sherd of Flavian to mid second century AD pottery.

Adjacent to ditch [2015] a pit or ditch terminal [2017] was noted. The relationship between the two features remains uncertain, although it was suspected that ditch [2015] was the latest feature. Pit [2017] was approximately 0.90m by 0.50m in size. Its sandy-clay surface fill (2018) yielded no dating evidence.

The natural substrate and all archaeological features were overlain by approximately 0.15m of silty-sand subsoil (2002), and by 0.15m of clay-loam ploughsoil (2001).

Trench 21

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (2102) of light yellow/blue clay and gravels was encountered at an average depth of 0.35-0.40m.

A thick horizon of fine ?colluvial clay, up to 0.80m deep, was noted along the western half of trench 21, overlying the natural clays.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.35-0.40m of clay-loam ploughsoil (2101).

Trench 22

No archaeological features were encountered, with the exception of one NE-SW aligned stone-built ?post-medieval/early modern field drain.

The natural geological substrate (2201) of limestone brash within yellow-brown silt matrix was encountered at an average depth of 0.15-0.25m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.15-0.25m of clay-loam ploughsoil()

Trench 23

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (2302) of limestone brash within a yellow-brown silt matrix was encountered at an average depth of 0.30m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.30m of clay-loam ploughsoil (2301)

Trench 24

No archaeological features were encountered.
The natural geological substrate (2402) of limestone brash with pockets of natural red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.40m.

The natural substrate was overlain by 0.40m of clay-loam ploughsoil (2401).

Trench 25

Not excavated

Trench 26

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (2602) of limestone brash with pockets of natural red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.30m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.30m of clay-loam topsoil (2601).

Trench 27

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (2702) of limestone brash with pockets of natural red-brown silty-clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.30m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.30m of clay-loam topsoil (2701).

Trench 28

No archaeological features were encountered.

The natural geological substrate (3103) of yellow/blue clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.30m.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.15m of subsoil (3102), and by 0.15m of clay-loam ploughsoil (3102).

Trench 29

The natural geological substrate of yellow/blue clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.30m.

Ditch [2904], aligned broadly E-W, was approximately 1.35m wide. Its yellow-brown sandy-clay surface fill (2905) yielded no pottery.

A pit or ditch terminal [2906] was also noted, approximately 2.1m by 0.90m in size. No dating evidence was recoverable from sandy-clay surface fill (2907).

A circular posthole [2908], 0.35m in diameter, was also noted. No finds were recovered from the surface of stony sandy-clay fill (2909).

Pit [2910] was 1m long and between 0.20m-0.60m in width. Its sandy-clay surface fill (2911) also yielded no pottery.

Ditch [2912] consisted of NW-SE and NE-SW sections with a right-angled turn. Both ditch sections were approximately 0.60m in width. Sandy-clay surface fill (2913) contained two sherds of Flavian to mid second century pottery.

Ditch [2914], aligned broadly E-W, was 3.6m in width. A light yellow-brown sandy-clay surface fill (2915) yielded three sherds of second century pottery and a darker grey-brown sandy-clay surface fill (2916) were noted, the latter suggesting a possible recut of the ditch.

A pit or ditch terminal [2917], at least 0.75m by 0.40m in size, was also recorded. Sandy-clay fill (2918) yielded no finds.

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.15m of subsoil, and by 0.30m of clay-loam ploughsoil.

Trench 30

The natural geological substrate of yellow/blue clay was encountered at an average depth of 0.30m.

A 7.5m length of narrow curving gully [3004], approximately 0.35m wide and 0.30m deep, was exposed within trench 30. The broadly NW-SE aligned gully had a rounded terminal, and sampling revealed it had steep sides and flat base. Gravelly sandy-clay fill (3005) yielded an early Bronze Age beaker bodysherd

At the northern end of the trench a NE-SW aligned ditch [3006], approximately 1.15m in width was recorded in plan. sandy-clay surface. Its fill (3007) yielded one sherd of Flavian to mid second century AD pottery..

The natural substrate was overlain by approximately 0.15m of gravelly silty-sand subsoil, and by 0.15m of sandy clay-silt topsoil clay-loam ploughsoil.