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ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

SPF BRENT BROAD FARM LIMITED

LAND OFF WICK LANE, BRENT KNOLL

HIGHBRIDGE

SOMERSET

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

November 2016

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DATE ISSUED:	November 2016
JOB NUMBER:	LE13240
SITE CODE:	WLH-A
OASIS REFERENCE:	wardella2-269589
PLANNING APPLICATION REF:	07/15/00016
REPORT VERSION NUMBER:	0001 Version (0.1)

SPF Brent Broad Farm Limited

Land off Wick Lane, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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SUMMARY

Wardell Armstrong LLP (WALLP) was commissioned by SPF Brent Broad Farm Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at land off Wick Lane, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset (NGR: ST 32936 52697). The evaluation was required as a condition of planning consent for a solar development at the site. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) produced in response to advice given by Steve Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer, South West Heritage Trust acting as the archaeological planning advisor on behalf of Sedgemoor District Council.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken over eight days from the 7th to the 16th November 2016, involving the excavation and recording of nineteen 50m long by 1.8m wide trenches across two fields. The evaluation revealed no significant archaeological remains, except for a single linear ditch, probably post-medieval in date, located to the north-east of the site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wardell Armstrong LLP (WALLP) thanks Raoul Fraser, SPF Brent Broad Farm Limited, for commissioning the project, and for all their assistance throughout the work. WA also thank Steve Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer for South West Heritage Trust, and Sedgemoor District Council for their assistance.

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology also thanks Kenny Gordon Plant Hire, and Dave Gordon in particular, for their assistance during this project.

The evaluation was supervised by Kevin Horsley, who also wrote the report, assisted by Jaime Megan Levell, Adam Mager and Kathryn Ormston. The figures were produced by Helen Phillips. Finds assessment was by Megan Stoakley and Sue Thompson. The palaeoenvironmental assessment was by Lynne Gardiner, and the palaeoenvironmental sample was processed by Charles Rickaby. The project was managed by Martin Railton who also edited the report.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Circumstances and Planning Background

1.1.1 In November 2016, Wardell Armstrong (WA) undertook an archaeological evaluation at Wick Lane, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset, TA9 4BU (NGR: ST 32936 52697). The work was commissioned by SPF Brent Broad Farm Limited who intend to construct a solar development at the site, for which planning consent has been granted by Sedgemoor District Council (Planning Application Ref: 07/15/00016).

1.1.2 The grant of planning permission by Sedgemoor District Council, dated 17th December 2015, stated that, "No development hereby approved shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work involving evaluation and subsequent mitigation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Works shall proceed in accordance with the approved details. Reason: It is in the public interest to identify, record and if necessary preserve archaeological remains prior to the commencement of the development" (Sedgemoor District Council 2015a).

1.1.3 This planning condition was in line with advice provided to Sedgemoor District Council by Steve Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer for South West Heritage Trust in a letter dated 19th August 2015 (Sedgemoor District Council 2015b).

1.1.4 There was thought to be the potential for buried archaeology within the proposed development area, the heritage significance of which may be affected by the development.

1.2 Project Documentation

1.2.1 The project conforms to a written scheme of investigation (WSI), which was prepared in consultation with the Steve Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer for South West Heritage Trust. The WSI was produced to provide a specific methodology for a programme of archaeological trial trenches (WAA 2015b). This was approved by the archaeological planning advisor prior to the fieldwork taking place. This is in line with government advice as set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012). In addition, the current programme of works recognises policy D17, as outlined by The Sedgemoor Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2006-2027,

and 'saved' policies HE9 and HE12 in the Local Plan, as directly relating to the development proposal in terms of the local historic environment.

1.2.2 This report outlines the work undertaken on site, the subsequent programme of post-fieldwork analysis, and the results of this scheme of archaeological evaluation.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Standards and guidance

2.1.1 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken following the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a), and in accordance with the WAA fieldwork manual (2015a).

2.1.2 The fieldwork programme was followed by an assessment of the data as set out in the Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation (CIfA 2014a) and the *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014b).

2.2 Documentary Research

2.2.1 An archaeology and cultural heritage assessment was prepared by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology (WAA 2015), which set out the archaeological and historical background of the site, and provided an assessment of the significance of all known and potential heritage assets up to 5km from the area of investigation.

2.2.2 Although no known cultural heritage sites were recorded within the proposed development area, it was recognised that there is the potential for previously-unrecognised archaeological remains to survive at the site, although these may be disturbed by later ridge and furrow cultivation (WAA 2015, 26).

2.3 The Field Evaluation

2.3.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of nineteen trenches measuring 50m long and 1.8m wide across the proposed development area, which measured approximately 5.7ha. The trenches were placed in a random array across the two fields to best sample any linear features crossing the site, or any specific areas of activity, representing a 3% sample of the overall site. The general aims of these investigations were:

- to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these where they were observed;
- to establish the character of those features in terms of cuts, soil matrices and interfaces;
- to assess the impact of the application on the archaeological site;
- to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
- to recover palaeoenvironmental material where it survives in order to understand site and landscape formation processes;

- to disseminate the results of the fieldwork through an appropriate level of reporting.

And specifically to:

- to determine the levels of disturbance to any archaeological deposits from plough damage or from any other agricultural/industrial practices or later building practices.

2.3.2 Deposits considered not to be significant were removed by a 14 tonne 360˚ tracked mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, under close archaeological supervision. The trial trenches were subsequently cleaned by hand. All possible features were inspected and selected deposits were excavated by hand to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples. Once completed all features were recorded according to the WALLP standard procedure as set out in the Excavation Manual (WAA 2015a).

2.3.3 All finds encountered were retained on site and returned to the Carlisle office where they were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* was then produced for each stratified context under the supervision of the WAA Finds Officer, and the dates were used to help determine the broad date phases for the site. On completion of this project, the finds were cleaned and packaged according to standard guidelines (*Ibid*). Please note, the following categories of material will be discarded after a period of six months following the submission of this report, unless there is a specific request to retain them (and subject to the collection policy of the relevant depository):

- unstratified material;
- modern pottery;
- material that has been assessed as having no obvious grounds for retention.

2.3.4 On completion, the evaluation trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material in reverse order with natural and subsoil first followed by topsoil.

2.3.5 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project specification, and the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2011). The archive will be deposited with the South West Heritage Trust, with copies of the report sent to the Somerset HER also managed at the South West Heritage Trust on behalf of Somerset County Council, available upon request. The archive can be

accessed under the unique project identifiers WAA16, WLH-A, LE13240 and the museum accession number TTNCM 111/2016 and HER No. 36801.

2.3.6 Wardell Armstrong LLP supports the Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an on-line index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by WALLP as a part of this national project. The OASIS reference for the project is: wardella2-269589

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location and Geological Context

3.1.1 The site was located at NGR: ST 32936 52697. The site comprised two fields, of approximately 5.7 hectares of pasture land, and was located immediately north east of Wick Lane, accessible via a single track. Several stables and outbuildings bounded the south side of the site, which was bounded on the north, east and west sides by further pasture land separated by a series of drainage ditches, known in Somerset and east Gloucestershire as rhynes and reens in south Wales and west Gloucestershire. Hedgerows had been planted along the western and central boundaries.

3.1.2 The coastline was approximately 2.5 miles to the west of the site, with Brent Knoll half a mile to the south, Lympsham 1.5 miles to the north, and Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge 3 miles to the south west.

3.1.3 The area of investigation was generally flat being part of the Somerset Levels, with a maximum height of *c.*6m aOD (above Ordnance Datum). The ground sloped imperceptibly north to south to a minimum height of *c.*5m aOD.

3.1.4 The underlying solid geology within the area of investigation is mapped as Charmouth Mudstone Formation. This sedimentary rock group was formed approximately 183 to 197 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. This is overlain by superficial tidal flat deposits of sand and clays formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (BGS 2016). The natural substrate observed during the archaeological investigations comprised mid bluish grey clay, mottled brown with subsequent rooting across its horizon; alluvium which is consistent with the mapped superficial geologies described above.

3.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

3.2.1 A previous archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey was undertaken by Wardell Armstrong LLP as part of the archaeology and cultural heritage assessment. This summarised the known historical and archaeological background of the site and the surrounding landscape to a distance of 1km for non-designated assets and 5km for designated assets such as Scheduled Monuments and Grade Listed Buildings (WAA 2015). It is not intended to repeat that information here and what follows is a brief overview, for further details please refer to the original document.

3.2.2 There are no known designated and non-designated assets within the proposed development area, and none within 1km of the site boundary. However, within the

5km search area there are two Grade II* Listed Buildings and six Grade II Listed Buildings. There are two Scheduled Monuments within 5km of the site, and Brean Down Scheduled Monument is located 7.2km to the northwest.

3.2.3 The desk-based assessment concluded that there was a reasonable likelihood that archaeological remains of prehistoric and Romano-British date may be present within the proposed development site.

3.2.4 **Prehistoric (up to c.AD 43)**: There are no known sites dating to the prehistoric period within the development area. It seems likely however, that prehistoric people would have exploited the wider landscape, taking advantage of the resources the wetlands provided. Later prehistoric activity on higher ground in the area is well recorded, with settlements known on Brent Knoll, Bleadon and Compton hills. Brent Knoll, to the immediate south-east, is very visible from the site and would have no doubt been an island of dry ground rife with human activity amongst the salt marshes, raised bogs and open water across the rest of the Levels.

3.2.5 **Roman (c.AD 43-c.AD 410):** There is a relatively large volume of archaeological activity relating to the Roman period in the landscape around the proposed development area. The first partial reclamation of the wetland landscape dates to this time as Romano-British settlements become present within the landscape. Nearby, located 250m to the east of the site, evidence of settlement comprising wall footings, mortar and other structural elements were revealed during the construction of a pipeline (Broomhead and Richards 1991).

3.2.6 Along the lower eastern slopes of Brent Knoll, and extending for approximately 4.5km in a north-westerly direction, are fragmentary landscape features including linear banks, ditches, trackways and an enclosure all dating to the Romano-British period. Several Romano-British settlements are also recorded in the wider area; 795m to the north-west at Wick (Wessex Archaeology 2014), 650m to the south near Shrub Farm and 900m to the north near Lower Farm, Lympsham (Broomhead and Richards 1991). A large amount of Romano-British pottery was recorded at each site.

3.2.7 **Early Medieval to Medieval (c.AD 410-AD 1485):** No activity dating from the early medieval period is known in the immediate vicinity of the site, and with only slow, sporadic settlement from the 13th century, it is likely that inundation of the area by the sea once again prohibited long-term settlement. However, on the south-west

slopes of Brent Knoll, 7th to 10th century settlement has been identified (Young 2008) interpreted as the early medieval origins of the current village.

3.2.8 **Post-Medieval to Modern (AD 1485-present):** Until about 1770 nearly two thirds of the all the floodable land in the Somerset Levels remained unreclaimed, but the subsequent 70 years saw the near full enclosure of the area by a drainage system of rhynes draining into canalised watercourses. The field pattern has remained relatively unaltered since about 1840, and the 1842 tithe map of South Brent notes that the fields were arable and under the ownership of Lewis Davies.

3.3 Previous Archaeological Work

3.3.1 No previous archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken within the development area.

3.3.2 A watching brief was undertaken along a pipeline route from Lympsham Sewage Works to Brent Knoll some 330m east of the site (Broomhead and Richards 1991). The results of the works identified a general spread of Roman activity along the route of the pipeline suggesting significant potential for further archaeology of this period in the area.

3.3.3 An evaluation took place 635m to the west of the site (Broomhead 2002). Nine 2m square test pits were excavated following an unsuccessful metal detector survey. No archaeological features were observed and only a single post-medieval sherd of pot was recovered.

3.3.4 A walkover survey was undertaken as part of a desk-based assessment in May 2015 by Wardell Armstrong (WA 2015) in advance of the current programme of works, to establish the presence of above ground archaeology, assess the topography and assess known and unknown heritage assets in the area. No archaeological sites were identified.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The evaluation was undertaken between the 7th and 16th November 2016, with nineteen trenches excavated across the proposed development site (Figure 2). The trenches were placed using a random grid array to investigate a representative area of the proposed development site (WAA 2015b, 6).

4.1.2 Trenches 1 to 9 were located in Field A to the west, and the trenches 10 to 19 were located in Field B to the east. Eighteen trenches contained no observed archaeology with the exception of Trench 12 which contained a single linear ditch towards its north end. However, due to the high water table this feature was not fully excavated. What follows is a brief summary of each trench to supplement the Trench Descriptions in Appendix 1.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 **Field A:** An average of 0.20m of loose, friable mid-brown sandy silt topsoil was removed from each trench, ranging in thickness from 0.10-0.30m due to ridge and furrow earthworks in the southern half of the field and guttering for drainage in the northern half. Subsoil was also observed in every trench, generally described as a moderately compacted mid-yellowish brown to mid-brownish grey silty clay, with an average thickness of 0.37m, ranging from 0.18-0.63m, with the widely variable measurements again due to the undulating nature of the ground.

4.2.2 Topsoil and subsoil was removed to reveal the underlying natural geology which was broadly described as firm mid-bluish grey with mottled brown clay throughout. The maximum height of the geology ranged from 5.14m aOD in Trench 7 in the north-west to 4.61m in Trench 1 in the south, though could be considered to be generally level across the field.

4.2.3 No trenches contained archaeological features in Field A, though a general spread of finds, mostly comprising ceramic material, were recorded from the topsoil and subsoil in Trenches 2-3 and 5-9 (see Section 5).

4.2.4 **Trench 1 and 2** were positioned in the far south-west of the field, both orientated north-east to south-west. A single sherd of ceramic and a fragment of animal bone was recovered from the topsoil in Trench 2.

4.2.5 **Trench 3** was immediately north of Trench 2 and was orientated north-north-east to south-south-west (Plate 1). All finds from this trench were recovered from the topsoil

towards the southern end of this trench, which could be considered a relatively large and unusual concentration. At the far northern end of the trench, a shallow spread of a modern rubble fragments was observed in the topsoil, possibly belonging to a former field boundary. However, no further evidence of this could be found, and evidence for the possible boundary did not appear in Trench 4.

4.2.6 **Trench 4 and 5** were located in the centre of Field A, orientated north to south and north-west to south-east respectively. A single sherd of ceramic material was found in the topsoil of Trench 5.

4.2.7 **Trench 6, 7, 8 and 9** were located to the north of Field A, with Trenches 6 and 7 both orientated north-north-east to south-south-west, Trench 8 orientated east-north-east to west-south-west, and Trench 9 orientated west-north-west to east-south-east. Finds were recovered from the topsoil in all four of these trenches, with a single sherd recovered from the subsoil in Trench 8.

4.2.8 **Field B:** Topsoil in Field B was similar to Field A, being loose, friable mid-brown sandy silt and with a slightly larger average depth of 0.25m, with a minimum of 0.20 and maximum of 0.30m. The subsoil was again observed in every trench and was described as a moderately compact mid-yellowish brown to mid-brownish grey silty clay. The average thickness of the subsoil is 0.29m, generally thinner than the subsoil in Field A.

4.2.9 The underlying natural geology was mid-bluish grey with mottled brown clay across the field. The maximum height of the geology ranged from 5.00m aOD in Trench 16 in the south to 4.62m aOD in the north. The heights across the whole of the site appear to describe a shallow ridge in the geology which perhaps runs from the north-west of Field A to the south-east of Field B.

4.2.10 **Trench 10 and 11** were located to the north of Field B, orientated north-northeast to south-southwest and east to west respectively, with Trench 10 aligned parallel to the central rhyne and field boundary. No finds were recovered from these two trenches.

4.2.11 **Trench 12** was located to the north-east of Field B, immediately south of Trench 11. It was orientated north-south (Plate 2). An apparent curvilinear ditch cut **[1203]** was observed in the north end of the trench (Plate 3, Figure 3). The possible ditch was first observed at a maximum height of 4.84m aOD, was aligned north-northeast to south-

southwest, and contained a single fill **(1204)**. It measuring 0.75m wide with a total observable length of 5.92m and a maximum excavated depth of 0.09m.

4.2.12 A metre-wide section was excavated through this feature revealing a sharp top break of slope into roughly concave sides, however its full extent could not be determined due to the high water table. Although unclear, it has been determined that the subsoil layer sealed the ditch. Five sherds of pot were recovered from the topsoil, but none from the fill of the ditch.

4.2.13 **Trench 13 and 14** were located to the centre of Field B, both orientated east to west. A relatively large amount of finds were recovered from the topsoil in both these trenches, with the addition of an iron (Fe) object in each. Because of their orientation, the trenches were as close to be being perpendicular to the visible ridge and furrow earthworks in Field B as possible. The south-facing section of Trench 13 illustrates the north-northeast to south-southwest aligned ridge and furrow profile in this field (Figure 4).

4.2.14 **Trench 15 and 16** were located to the south-west of Field B, both orientated north-northeast to south-southwest, with a single sherd of ceramic material recovered from the topsoil in Trench 16.

4.2.15 **Trench 17** was located to the east of Field B immediately north of Trench 19 and was orientated east-northeast to west-southwest (Plate 4).

4.2.16 **Trench 18 and 19** were located to the far southeast of Field B, orientated west-northwest to east-southeast and north to south respectively. A single sherd of ceramic material was recovered from the topsoil of Trench 19.

4.3 Archaeological Finds and Environmental Sampling

4.3.1 A selection of finds were recovered from the topsoil and subsoil across the site, though none were recovered from the single linear ditch feature in Trench 12 (see Section 5). A single environmental sample was retained from the fill of this feature (see Section 6).

5 FINDS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A total of 61 artefacts, weighing 848g, were recovered during archaeological investigations on land at Wick Lane, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset (Table 1). The artefacts were in good condition, with little evidence of post-depositional damage.

Context	Material	Qty	Wgt (g)	Date	Comments
200	Animal Bone	1	12	?	Limb bone shaft fragment
300	CBM	1	24	Med	
1400	CBM	2	75	Med	
1400	CBM	1	16	PM	
200	Ceramic	1	17	RB	
300	Ceramic	12	197	Med	
300	Ceramic	2	26	RB	Rim Sherd
500	Ceramic	1	8	Med	
600	Ceramic	1	9	Med	
700	Ceramic	1	9	Med	
800	Ceramic	2	8	Med	
802	Ceramic	1	14	Med	Rim sherd
900	Ceramic	1	48	Med	
1200	Ceramic	4	48	Med	
1200	Ceramic	1	2	RB	
1300	Ceramic	2	24	IA?	
1300	Ceramic	7	59	Early PM	
1300	Ceramic	1	3	PM-Mod	
1400	Ceramic	6	42	PM	
1400	Ceramic	2	12	Med	
1400	Ceramic	1	58	Med-PM	
1600	Ceramic	1	13	PM	Stoneware jar base
1900	Ceramic	1	7	Med	
600	Fe	1	4	Mod?	Miscellaneous fragment
1300	Fe	1	81	PM-Mod	Partial bolt/bar
1400	Fe	1	13	RB-Med	
600	Other	5	16	Mod	Clay pigeon
TOTAL		**61**	**848**		

Table 1: Quantification of finds

5.1.2 All finds were dealt with according to the recommendations made by Watkinson & Neal (1998) and to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standard & Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of

archaeological materials (2014b). All artefacts have been assessed according to material type and conforming to the deposition guidelines recommended by Brown (2011) and Somerset Heritage Service. Ceramics were recorded using the Medieval Pottery Research Group standards (2016).

5.1.3 The material archive has been assessed for its local, regional and national potential and for its potential to contribute to the relevant research frameworks.

5.1.4 The finds assessment was compiled by Megan Stoakley and Sue Thompson.

5.2 Prehistoric Ceramics

5.2.1 Two sherds of prehistoric ceramics, weighing 24g, were recovered from deposit **(1300)** (Table 1). The sherds are in moderate condition.

5.2.2 The fragments comprise a partial shoulder sherd and a miscellaneous body sherd. The sherds are possibly of Iron Age date. No further analysis is required.

5.3 Roman Ceramics

5.3.1 Four sherds of Roman pottery, weighing 245g, were recovered from three deposits (Table 1). The sherds are in moderate condition and evidence of rolling is visible on virtually all surfaces.

5.3.2 References used to identify fabrics include Tomber & Dore (1998) and the Roman Potsherd Atlas online (RPA 2016 online).

5.3.3 Pottery from context **(200)** comprised a partial base sherd of southwest-region Black-Burnished ware (SOW BB1), which is of 2nd century date (Tomber & Dore 1998, 129).

5.3.4 Pottery from context **(300)** included a rim sherd of potentially Gloucestershire-region mortaria (AD 55-90); the principle potter for this type of pottery was *A. Terrentius Ripanus* (RPA online 2016). The other sherd comprised a miscellaneous body sherd of locally produced oxidised ware with a reduced grey core. A date range of 2nd to 4th century is suitable for the latter sherd.

5.3.5 Pottery from context **(1200)** comprised a very abraded sherd of Central Gaulish Samian ware, dating to the late 1st to 2nd century.

5.3.6 No further analysis of this small Roman ceramic assemblage is required.

5.4 Medieval – Late Medieval Ceramics

5.4.1 A total of 34 sherds of medieval to late medieval ceramics were recovered from the evaluation, weighing 473g (Tables 1 and 2). The sherds are in moderate to good

condition. Only one sherd was from a subsoil deposit **(802)**; this comprises a squared rim of an oxidised coarseware fabric (Table 2). The remaining sherds were all recovered from topsoil deposits.

Context	Fabric	Number	Weight	Date	Sherd type	Form	Comments
300	Partially reduced fabric	2	16	13th-14th	Body		External glaze
300	Sandy oxidised fabric	1	13	13th-15th	Rim		Red slip, unglazed
300	Sandy oxidised fabric	5	60	13th-15th	Body		3 x external glaze, 2 x internal glaze
300	Sandy reduced fabric	2	52	13th-15th	Rim		Open necked jars/bowls. Unglazed
300	Sandy reduced fabric	2	56	13th-15th	Body	Jug	Unglazed. Handle scar x 1
500	Fine sandy redware	1	8	13th-14th	Body		Glazed internally and externally
600	Fine sandy redware	1	9	14th-16th	Rim	Mug	Oxidised core, reduced exterior, brown glaze
700	Sandy redware	1	6	14th-16th	Body		Internal brownish glaze
800	Fine sandy redware	2	8	13th-14th	Body		Green external glaze x 1
802	Coarse sandy red ware	1	14	13th-14th	Rim	Bowl?	Unglazed. Oxidised exterior, reduced core
900	Fine sandy redware	1	48	16th-17th	Body	Platter	Unglazed. Applied strip/ scar to exterior
1200	Fine sandy redware	1	29	13th-14th	Base		Unglazed. Flat base
1200	Fine sandy redware	3	18	13th-14th	Body		Unglazed x 2. Thin patchy glaze x 1
1300	Sandy redware	1	48	16th-17th	Rim	Dish	Lead glaze over red slip?
1300	Sandy redware	6	11	16th-17th	Body		Lead glaze x 3
1400	Fine sandy redware	1	58	16th-17th	Body	Platter	Sgraffito – yellow internal glaze. Green glaze splashes external
1400	Fine sandy redware	2	12	13th-14th	Body		Green glaze externally x 1
1900	Coarse sandy red ware	1	7	13th-14th	Base		Unglazed. Reduced externally
Total		**34**	**473**				

Table 2: Quantification of medieval fabrics

5.4.2 The sherds are all likely to be of fairly local Somerset manufacture, and are mostly of a red oxidised, fine sandy fabric. Somerset was an important source of medieval and post-medieval ceramics (McCarthy and Brooks 1988), due especially to its coastal

location and Somerset fabrics are commonly found into South Wales and Bristol (Forward 2013). One large sgrafitto sherd from context **(1400)** could either be of Somerset or Devon manufacture and is likely to be 16th-17th century (Allan 1984). None of the other sherds are decorated.

5.4.3 Forms include jars, jugs and flatwares. A mug rim sherd with a small handle was recovered from context **(600)**. The fabrics have a wide date range of between 13th – 17th centuries.

5.4.4 Further work could identify close fabric groups and manufacture centres, however, as the assemblage was almost entirely recovered from topsoil deposits further analysis is considered unnecessary.

5.5 Post-medieval Ceramics

5.5.1 Eight sherds of late post-medieval to modern pottery, weighing 58g, were recovered from three deposits (Table 1). The sherds are in good condition.

5.5.2 Fabric types comprises stoneware, Bristol slipware, Transfer Print white earthenware and refined earthenware. Vessel types include plates, saucers, indoor flower-pots and jars.

5.5.3 A date of late 19th to early 20th century is suitable for this assemblage. No further analysis is required on this material.

5.6 Ceramic Building Material

5.6.1 Four fragments of ceramic building material, weighing 115g, were recovered from two deposits (Table 1). The artefacts are in moderate condition and display evidence of post-depositional damage.

5.6.2 Three fragments comprise daub of medieval date and one fragment comprises post-medieval tile. No further analysis is required.

5.7 Iron

5.7.1 Three fragments of iron, weighing 98g, were recovered from three deposits (Table 1). The fragments are in poor to moderate condition.

5.7.2 The fragment from context **(600)** comprises a flat miscellaneous fragment of unknown date or function. The fragment from context **(1400)** comprises a bent, square-shafted

nail of probable Roman to medieval date. The fragment from context **(1300)** comprises a partial bolt or bar of probable post-medieval to modern date.

5.7.3 No further analysis is required.

5.8 **Animal Bone**

5.8.1 A single animal bone, weighing 12g, was recovered from deposit **(200)**. The bone is in poor to moderate condition.

5.8.2 The bone comprises a partial shaft limb bone fragment from a medium/sized mammal. No further analysis is required on the bone.

5.9 **Other**

5.9.1 Five fragments of modern clay pigeon target, weighing 16g, was recovered from deposit **(600)**. The fragments are in good condition.

5.9.2 No further analysis is required.

5.10 **Statement of Potential**

5.10.1 The recovery of prehistoric to medieval ceramics is of local archaeological significance. However, the vast majority of the finds were recovered from topsoil deposits and do not add any significant information to the history or stratigraphy of the site.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSES

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 A single bulk environmental sample was taken during the course of an archaeological evaluation at Wick Lane, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset.

6.1.2 The preliminary results of the evaluation are presented above (see Section 4). This report presents the results of the assessment of the palaeobotanical and charcoal remains in accordance with Campbell *et al*. (2011) and English Heritage (2008).

6.1.3 The finds assessment was compiled by Lynne Gardiner.

6.2 Methodology

6.2.1 The bulk environmental sample was processed at the WALLP offices in Carlisle. The sample was processed with 500 micron retention and flotation mesh using the Siraf method of flotation (Williams 1973). Once dried, the residues from the retention mesh were sorted for any artefacts and ecofacts. The flot, plant remains and charcoal were scanned using a stereo microscope (up to x45 magnification).

6.2.2 The plant remains and charcoal were identified to species as far as possible, using Cappers et al (2006), Cappers and Bekker (2013), Cappers and Neef (2012), Hather (2000) and Schoch *et al.* (2004). Nomenclature for plant taxa followed Stace (2010).

6.3 Results

6.3.1 Sample <1> from silty clay fill (1204) of ditch [1203] weighed 30l. The yield was minimal and contained only 6g of coal, <1g of magnetic matter, <1g of charcoal and a flot. The very small flot (<1g/5ml) consisted of mostly very fine rootlets (90%) and sand (10%). Only a single, un-charred, specimen of blinks (*Montia fontana*) was observed. The three fragments of charcoal were so poorly preserved that they could not be identified to species, however, they were very small roundwood fragments.

6.4 Discussion

6.4.1 The very small assemblage offered no scope for further discourse.

6.5 Statement of Potential and Recommendations

6.5.1 This assemblage may be discarded and offered no suitable candidates for AMS radiocarbon dating.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Interpretation

7.1.1 Archaeological remains within the study area were confined to a single linear ditch toward the north end of Trench 12. The lack of finds or palaeoenvironmental data from the fill of this feature sheds no further light on its date, but suggests it is most probably an earlier drainage ditch or rhyne, excavated and later abandoned, in favour of the current drainage system.

7.1.2 The general spread of ceramic material dating from the late prehistoric to the post-medieval period illustrates the continuous human management of the Levels, and their appearance in the topsoil is likely to belong to the manuring and spreading of soils from elsewhere for agricultural purposes. There is a large amount of archaeological activity dating to the Romano British period in the wider landscape around Brent Knoll, and the small collection of Romano-British ceramic sherds recovered from across the site clearly supports this activity. Of particular interest is the medieval material. The relatively large amount of ceramic material dating from the 13th to 17th centuries indicates the probable use of the area for arable farming, with the pottery present being transported to it through domestic waste manuring, during a phase of medieval reclamation of the Levels.

7.1.3 It has been suggested that between the late Roman to at least the late medieval period, the landscape within the proposed development area was sporadically inundated by the sea and a high water table, with large-scale drainage and complete reclamation of the land unconfirmed until at least the late 18th century (WAA 2015, 9). Post-medieval ridge and furrow was also noted across the site, aligned roughly north-northeast to south-southwest running parallel to the current field boundaries. The relative paucity of post-medieval pottery to medieval may be indicative of the land being more suitable for arable farming before the 17th century, with perhaps a hiatus in arable farming until the implementation of 18th-19th century drainage schemes. It is possible that this hiatus was caused by and followed upon the 1607 Bristol Channel flood event (Bryant and Haslett 2002).

7.2 Survival

7.2.1 Survival of archaeological remains has been influenced by both ploughing in the post-medieval period and by soil conditions. There is a distinct lack of archaeological features at the site, which indicates land use has predominantly been for agriculture.

7.3 Significance

7.3.1 There is little linking the study area to the large late-prehistoric designated heritage asset of Brent Knoll, despite its close proximity. Only two sherds dating to the Iron Age, and four Romano-British sherds of ceramic material were recovered. Their appearance in the topsoil is of little interpretative value, beyond indicating the general utilisation of the landscape during that time. The relatively large amount of medieval material, however, suggests the use of this land for arable farming well before the later post-medieval documented reclamation of this part of the Levels.

7.4 Recommendations

7.4.1 This evaluation has revealed that any development impact will be minimal because of the lack of archaeological features present, beyond the visible post medieval ridge and furrow earthworks.

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9 APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: NE-SW

Minimum Depth: 0.51m Maximum Depth: 1.10m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(100)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.10m	Disturbed by root action.
(101)	Natural Substrate	Firm, sticky mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Mottled clay alluvium.
(102)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid brownish grey silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.59m.	0.59m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 2

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: NE-SW

Minimum Depth: 0.39m Maximum Depth: 0.90m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(200)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.13m	Disturbed by root action.
(201)	Natural Substrate	Moderately compact mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Mottled clay alluvium.
(202)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.63m.	0.63m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 3

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: NNE-SSW

Minimum Depth: 0.48m Maximum Depth: 0.88m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(300)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.21m	Disturbed by root action.
(301)	Natural Substrate	Moderately compact mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Mottled clay alluvium.
(302)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellowish grey silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.21m.	0.21m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 4

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: N-S

Minimum Depth: 0.51m Maximum Depth: 0.82m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(400)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.19m	Disturbed by root action.
(401)	Natural Substrate	Firm, sticky mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Mottled clay alluvium.
(402)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown clayey silt with a maximum thickness of 0.47m.	0.47m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 5

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: NW-SE

Minimum Depth: 0.62m Maximum Depth: 0.70m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(500)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy clayey silt	0.27m	Disturbed by root action.
(501)	Natural Substrate	Firm, sticky mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Mottled clay alluvium.
(502)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.32m.	0.32m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 6

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: NNE-SSW

Minimum Depth: 0.53m Maximum Depth: 0.67m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(600)	Topsoil	Loose mid brown sandy silt	0.15m	Disturbed by root action.
(601)	Natural Substrate	Moderately compact mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(102)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid greyish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.32m.	0.32m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 7

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: NNE-SSW

Minimum Depth: 0.35m Maximum Depth: 0.50m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(700)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.26m	Disturbed by root action.
(701)	Natural Substrate	Firm, sticky mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(702)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.20m.	0.20m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 8

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: ENE-WSW

Minimum Depth: 0.48m Maximum Depth: 0.81m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(800)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.30m	Disturbed by root action.
(801)	Natural Substrate	Firm, sticky mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(802)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.18m.	0.18m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 9

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: WNW-ESE

Minimum Depth: 0.31m Maximum Depth: 0.96m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(900)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.19m	Disturbed by root action.
(901)	Natural Substrate	Moderately compact mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(902)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid brownish grey silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.45m.	0.45m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 10

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: NNE-SSW

Minimum Depth: 0.53m Maximum Depth: 0.90m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(1000)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.30m	Disturbed by root action.
(1001)	Natural Substrate	Firm mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(1002)	Subsoil	Moderately mid yellowish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.20m.	0.20m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 11

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: E-W

Minimum Depth: 0.52m Maximum Depth: 0.80m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(1100)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.20m	Disturbed by root action.
(1101)	Natural Substrate	Firm mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(1102)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.20m.	0.20m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 12

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: N-S

Minimum Depth: 0.54m Maximum Depth: 0.70m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(1200)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.27m	Disturbed by root action.
(1201)	Natural Substrate	Moderately compact mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(1202)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid greyish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.36m.	0.36m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.
[1203]	Cut of linear	Linear cut aligned NNE-SSW, measuring 0.75m in width to a visible length	0.09m	Cut for a linear ditch, only partially excavated due to

		of 5.92m, with a maximum excavated depth of 0.09m. A sharp top break of slope into gradual concave sides. Not fully excavated.		flooding, containing a single deposit (1204).
(1204)	Deposit	Firm mid bluish grey with some brown mottling, silty clay.	0.09m	Silty clay fill of linear cut [1203].

Trench 13

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: E-W

Minimum Depth: 0.45m Maximum Depth: 0.70m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(1300)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brownish grey sandy silt	0.30m	Disturbed by root action.
(1301)	Natural Substrate	Firm mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(1302)	Subsoil	Firm mid orangey grey silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.20m.	0.20m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 14

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: E-W

Minimum Depth: 0.50m Maximum Depth: 0.80m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(1400)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.26m	Disturbed by root action.
(1401)	Natural Substrate	Firm mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(1402)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.34m.	0.34m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 15

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: NNE-SSW

Minimum Depth: 0.59m Maximum Depth: 0.70m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(1500)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.21m	Disturbed by root action.

(1501)	Natural Substrate	Moderately compact mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(1502)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid greyish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.30m.	0.30m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 16

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: NNE-SSW

Minimum Depth: 0.40m Maximum Depth: 0.60m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Depth	Discussion
(1600)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.25m	Disturbed by root action.
(1601)	Natural Substrate	Firm mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(1602)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.25m.	0.25m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 17

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: ENE-WSW

Minimum Depth: 0.38m Maximum Depth: 0.62m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth	Discussion
(1700)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.20m	Disturbed by root action.
(1701)	Natural Substrate	Moderately compact mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(1702)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid greyish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.22m.	0.22m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 18

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: ENE-WSW

Minimum Depth: 0.52m Maximum Depth: 0.74m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth	Discussion
(1800)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.30m	Disturbed by root action.

(1801)	Natural Substrate	Firm mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(1802)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid brownish grey silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.32m.	0.32m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

Trench 19

Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Orientation: N-S

Minimum Depth: 0.38m Maximum Depth: 0.72m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth	Discussion
(1900)	Topsoil	Loose, friable mid brown sandy silt	0.22m	Disturbed by root action.
(1901)	Natural Substrate	Firm, sticky mid bluish grey clay with brown mottling	-	Alluvium mottled due to rooting.
(1902)	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.69m.	0.20m	Silty clay subsoil found throughout trench with a diffuse horizon into topsoil.

10 APPENDIX 2: PLATES

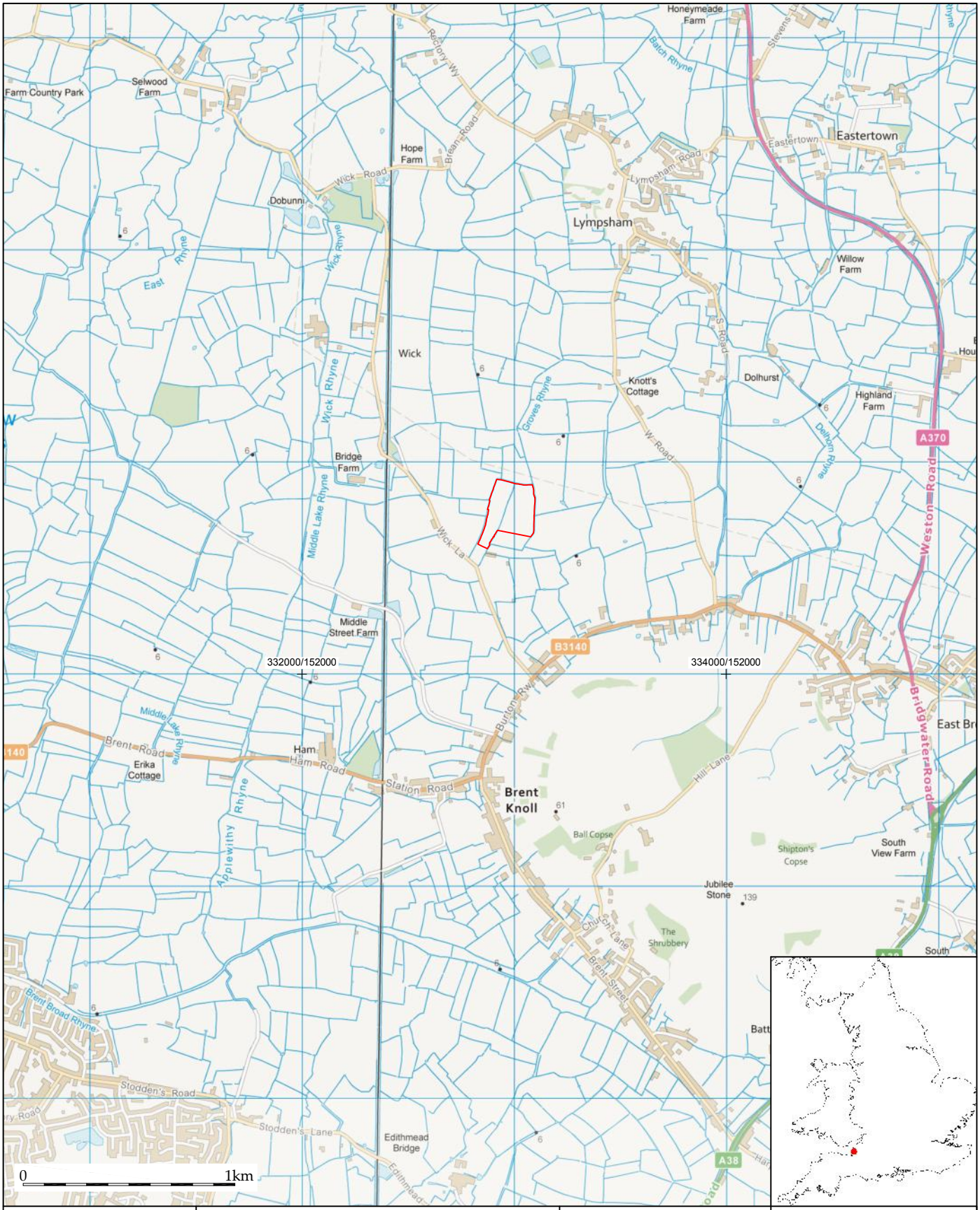
Plate 1; Trench 3, looking north-north-east, 2x1m scales.

Plate 2; Trench 12, looking south-west, 1x1m scale.

Plate 3; Post-excavation shot of ditch [1203] showing high water table, looking north-north-east, 1x1m and 1x0.40m scales.

Plate 4; Trench 17, looking west-north-west, 2x1m scales.

APPENDIX 3: FIGURES



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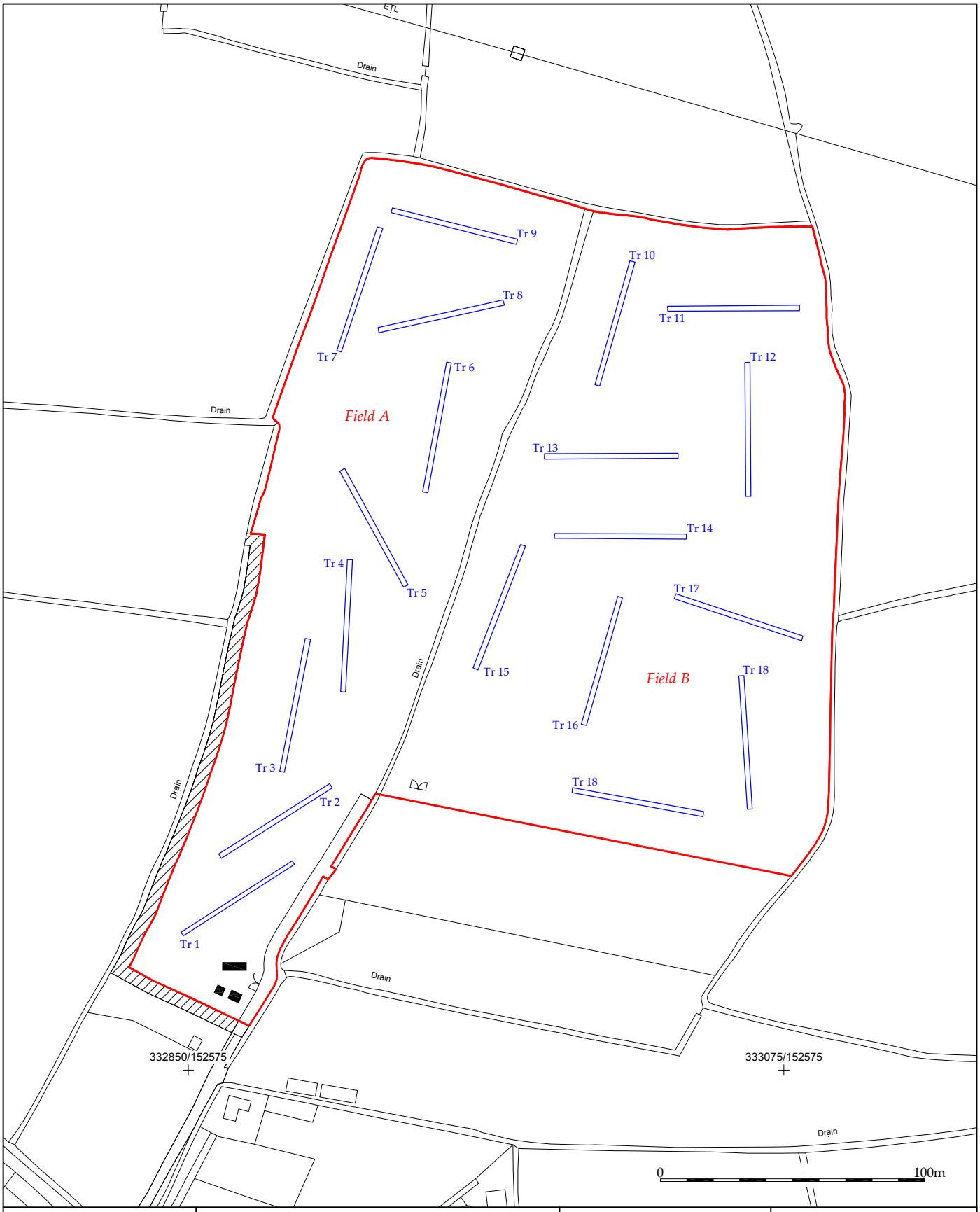
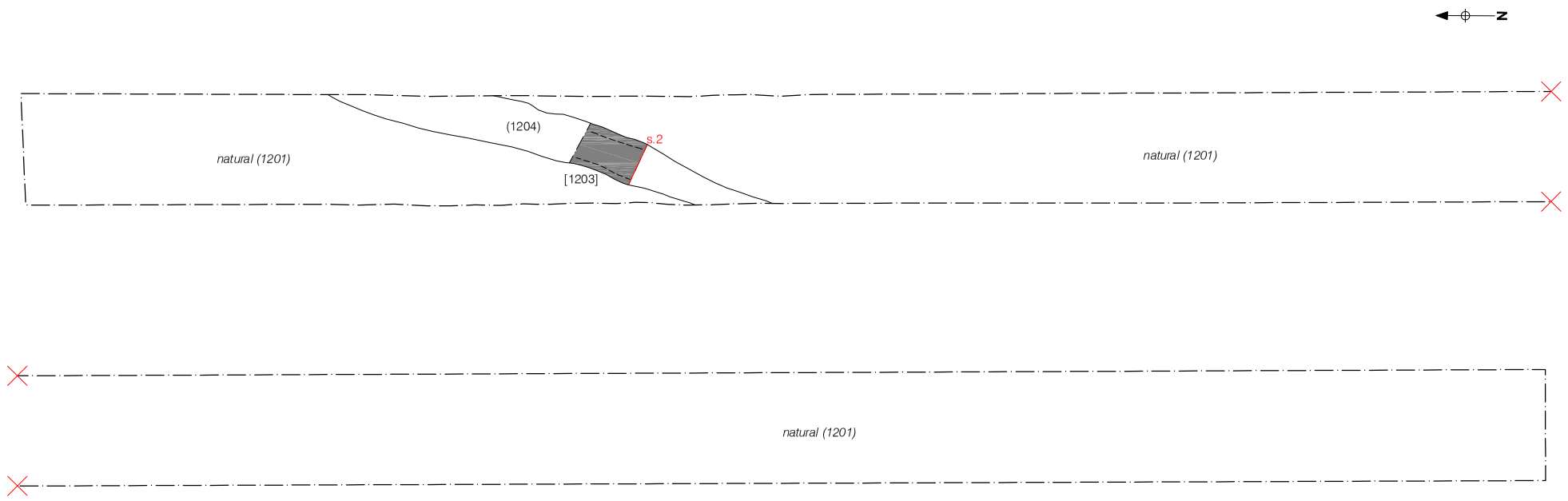
	CLIENT:	SPF Brent Broad Farm Limited	
	SCALE:	1:25,000 at A4	
	DRAWN BY:	HP	
	CHECKED BY:	AB	
	DATE:	December 2016	
	REPORT No:	LE13240	

Figure 1: Site location.



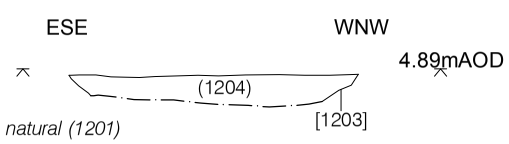
wardell armstrong archaeology Wardell Armstrong Archaeology 2016	PROJECT: Land off Wick lane, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset CLIENT: SPF Brent Broad Farm Limited SCALE: 1:2,000 at A4 DRAWN BY: HP CHECKED BY: AB DATE: December 2016 REPORT No: LE13240	KEY: Site Boundary Evaluation trench	

Figure 2: Location of evaluation trenches.



Trench 12. Plan.

0 5m



Section 2. NNE facing section across Ditch [1203].

0 1m

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology 2016

PROJECT:

Land off Wick Lane, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset

CLIENT:

SPF Brent Broad Farm Limited

SCALE: Plan 1:100/Section 1:20 at A3

DRAWN BY: HP

CHECKED BY: AB

DATE: December 2016

KEY:

(101) Context number

Height mAOD

Section location

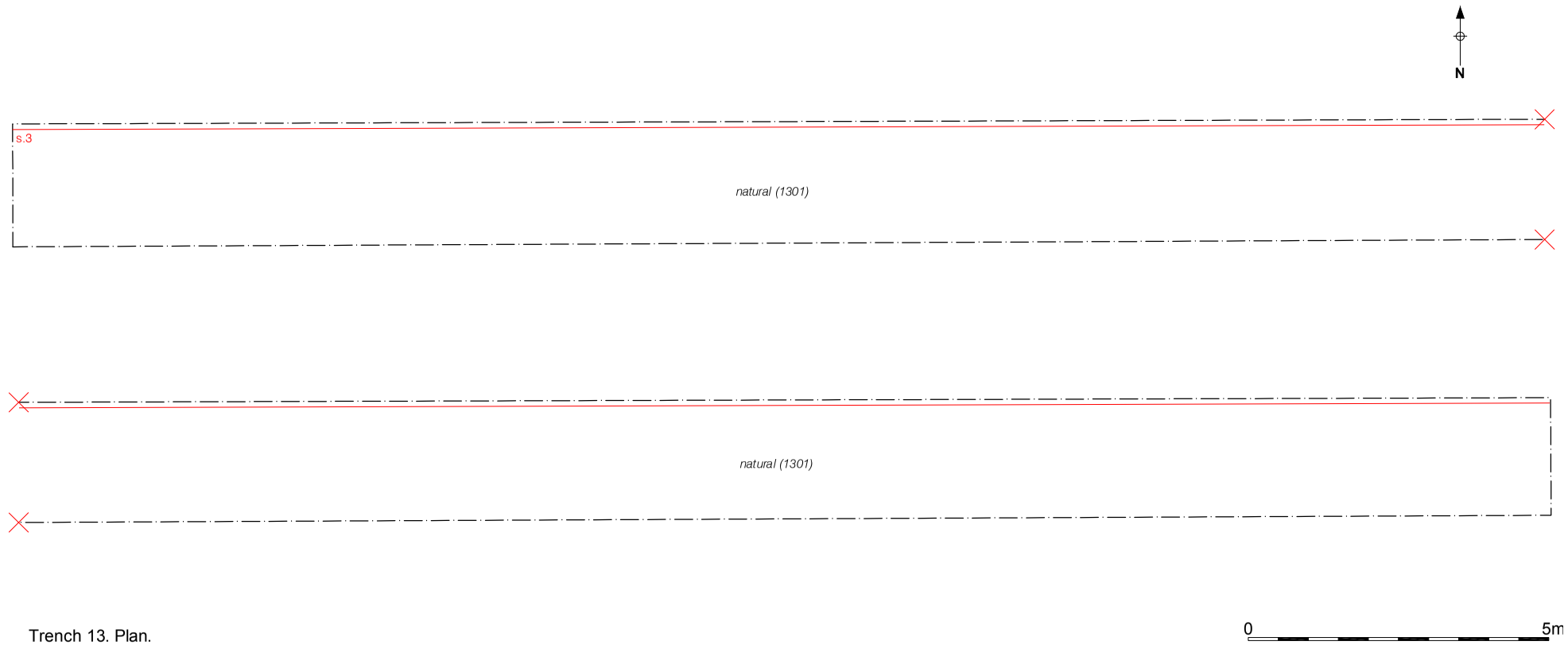
Limit of excavation

Area excavated

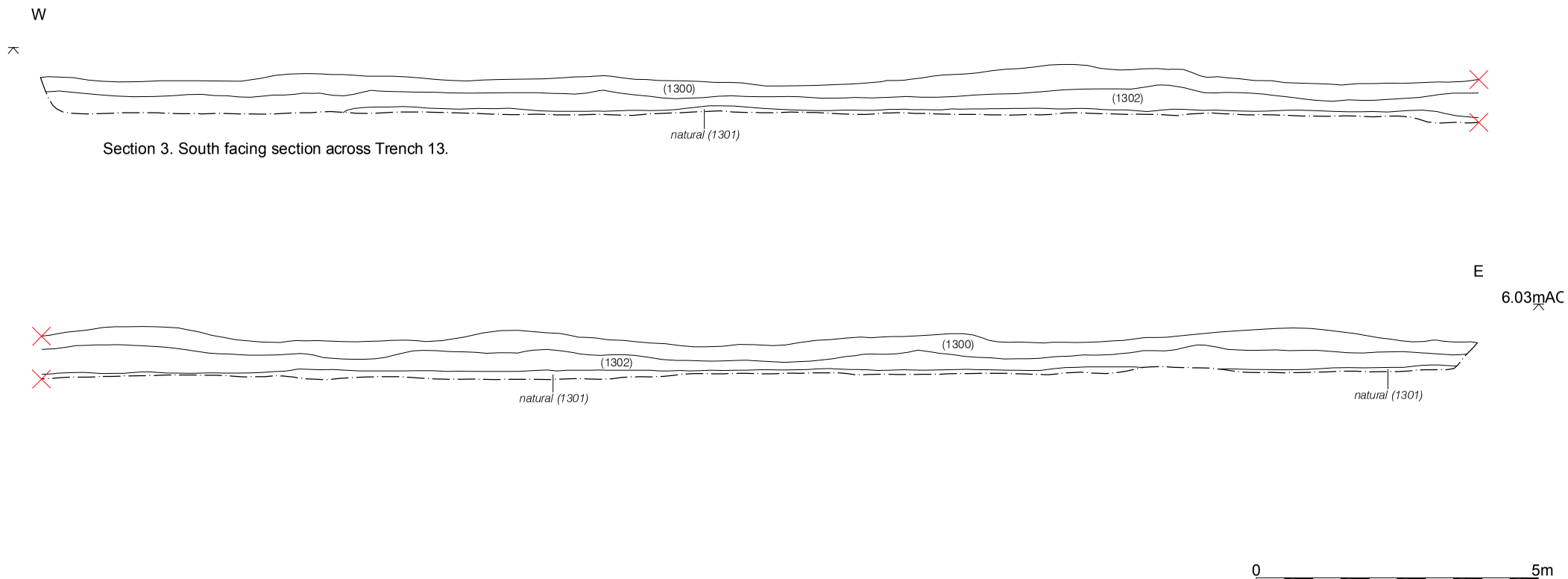
REPORT No:

LE13240

Figure 3: Trench 12; plan and section.



Trench 13. Plan.



Section 3. South facing section across Trench 13.

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology 2016

PROJECT:

Land off Wick Lane, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset

CLIENT:

SPF Brent Broad Farm Limited

SCALE: Plan/Section 1:100 at A3

DRAWN BY: HP

CHECKED BY: AB

DATE: December 2016

KEY:

(101) Context number

Height mAOD

Section location

Limit of excavation

REPORT No:

LE13240

Figure 4: Trench 13; plan and section.

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