



**Land adjacent to Steart Village, Steart Point, Somerset, TA5 2PX**

**Interim Report no. 4**

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## Quality Assurance

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\* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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**Figure 1:** Site and proposed excavation Area 503

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (the **Contractor**) has been commissioned by May Gurney Ltd (the **Client**) to carry out an archaeological evaluation of land proposed for a habitat creation scheme at Steart Point peninsula, near Bridgwater, Somerset (the **Site** - centred on OS NGR 327000 145000; **Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The archaeological works are being carried out as part of a package of measures in order to mitigate anticipated off-site impacts associated with construction work at Bristol Port, and specifically loss of floodplain/ wildlife habitat. At Steart Point, the works will comprise construction of an artificial floodplain creek system, extending over a footprint measuring approximately 24.5ha, and associated balancing ponds totalling an additional 25.5ha.

## 2 SCOPE OF WORKS

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This Interim Report has been prepared by the Contractor, and sets out the proposed archaeological works. The scope of works under consideration currently comprises excavation of archaeological remains located very close to the eastern entrance into the main creek channel and its confluence with the first major tributary to the south (**Figure 1**).
- 2.1.2 This area was targeted for geophysical survey (Area A), following the recovery of significant quantities of medieval pottery during the fieldwalking survey (WA 2011), and subsequent aerial photograph (AP) evidence (**Figure 1, inset**) provided by the Archaeology Service of Somerset County Council (R Brunning), suggesting the presence of a (moated?) enclosure.
- 2.1.3 It is also of note that the AP evidence, when combined with the relict palaeochannel plot generated from LiDAR data, indicates that the enclosure appears to be located on the north-west bank of a south-west to north-east aligned relict palaeochannel. The geophysical survey results with regard to this palaeochannel appear to suggest the palaeochannel detected by LiDAR is in fact an archaeological ditch (anomaly 4001; see below), though it must be born in mind that the ditch may indeed be the final evolution of what was previously a natural watercourse. If so, the original palaeochannel is likely to be both very deep and buried at some depth, likely beyond the normal penetration for geophysical survey. It is as yet unclear whether the apparent association between the co-location and co-alignment of the ditch and the palaeochannel is therefore coincidental or deliberate.
- 2.1.4 The proposed investigation area (hereafter **Area 503**) extends over approximately 0.6ha.

## 2.2 The archaeological remains

- 2.2.1 The geophysical survey results (WA 2012a, fig. 4), combined with the AP information, offers conclusive evidence that a number of enclosures were situated in this location, almost certainly dated by the significant quantities of medieval pottery recovered during fieldwalking to the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century (WA 2011, 8).
- 2.2.2 Although other enclosures and associated remains (e.g. 4004, 4005 *etc.*) have been identified from the geophysical survey, this Interim Report, and the mitigation proposed, deal only with the main central complex of conjoined enclosures 4000 and 4002, which are specifically within the footprint of the proposed creek system.
- 2.2.3 The enclosures are located immediately to the north of the intersection of two linear anomalies (4001 and 4006) that appear to represent principal boundaries at right-angles to each other; ditch 4001 aligned south-west to north-east, and ditch 4006 aligned south-east to north-west. These boundaries form the south-east and south-west sides (respectively) of enclosure 4002, with enclosure 4000 conjoining 4002 on its north-east side, and therefore also relying on ditch 4001 for its south-east boundary.
- 2.2.4 Enclosure 4002 is sub-rectangular in plan, co-aligned with ditch 4001, and measures approximately 60m by 50m. A number of anomalies were identified within the enclosure boundary, suggesting both internal divisions, and possible discrete features (pits or wells?).
- 2.2.5 Enclosure 4003 is also sub-rectangular, and appears to be c. 45m long and at least 15m wide, aligned with and abutting the north-east boundary of enclosure 4002. Additional co-aligned linear anomalies were located to the north-east of this enclosure, possibly extending the enclosure's extent in that direction, but an area of increased magnetic response (4003) obscures this area to a degree, so such an interpretation must be viewed with caution.
- 2.2.6 As noted above, ditch 4001 also follows the north-west bank of a relict palaeochannel identified from analysis of LiDAR data, though it is unclear whether the channel was active at this time or not; assuming ditches 4001 and 4006 are contemporaneous, and given 4006 extends across the line of the palaeochannel, it would suggest the channel was not active at this time.

### *Discussion*

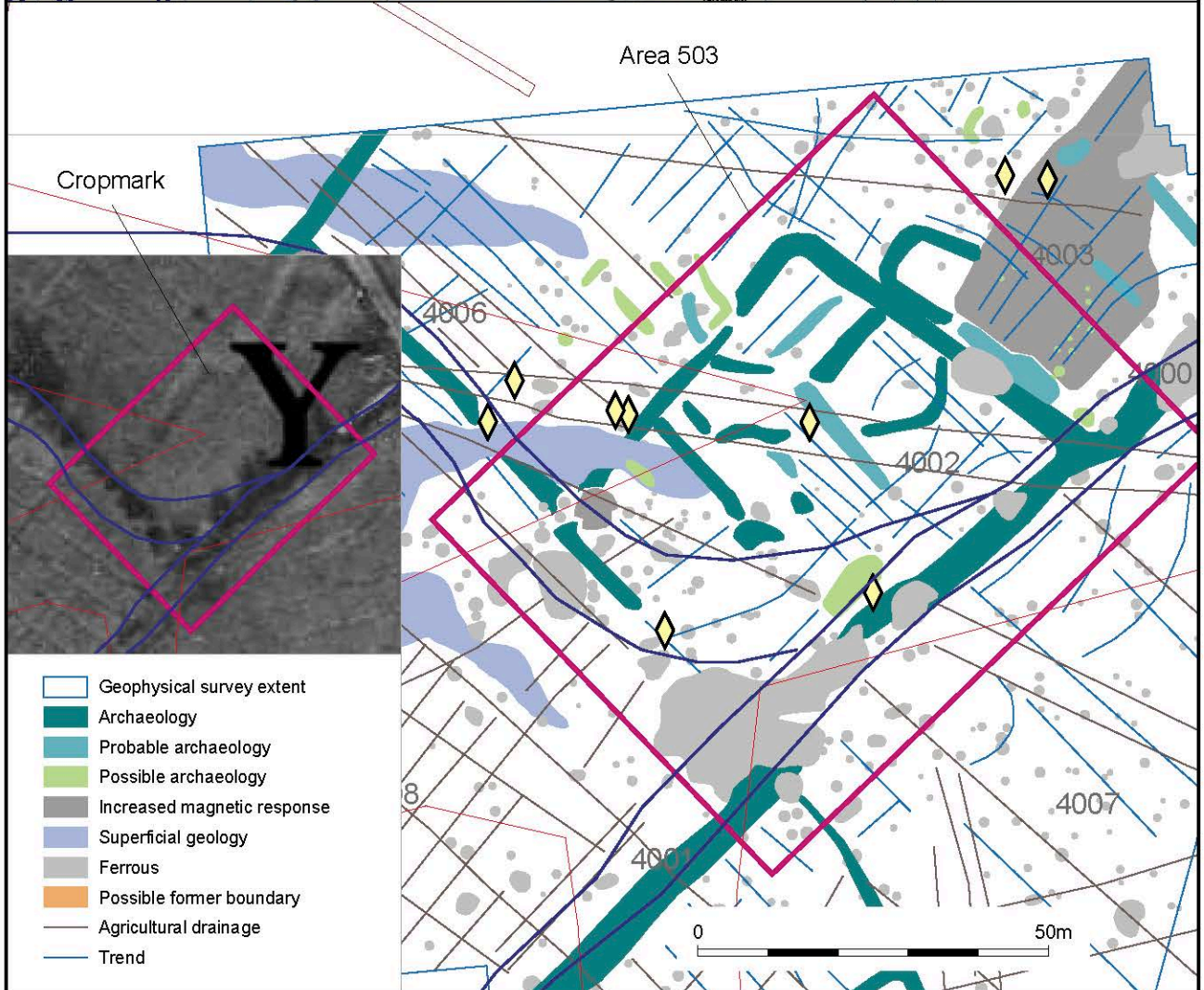
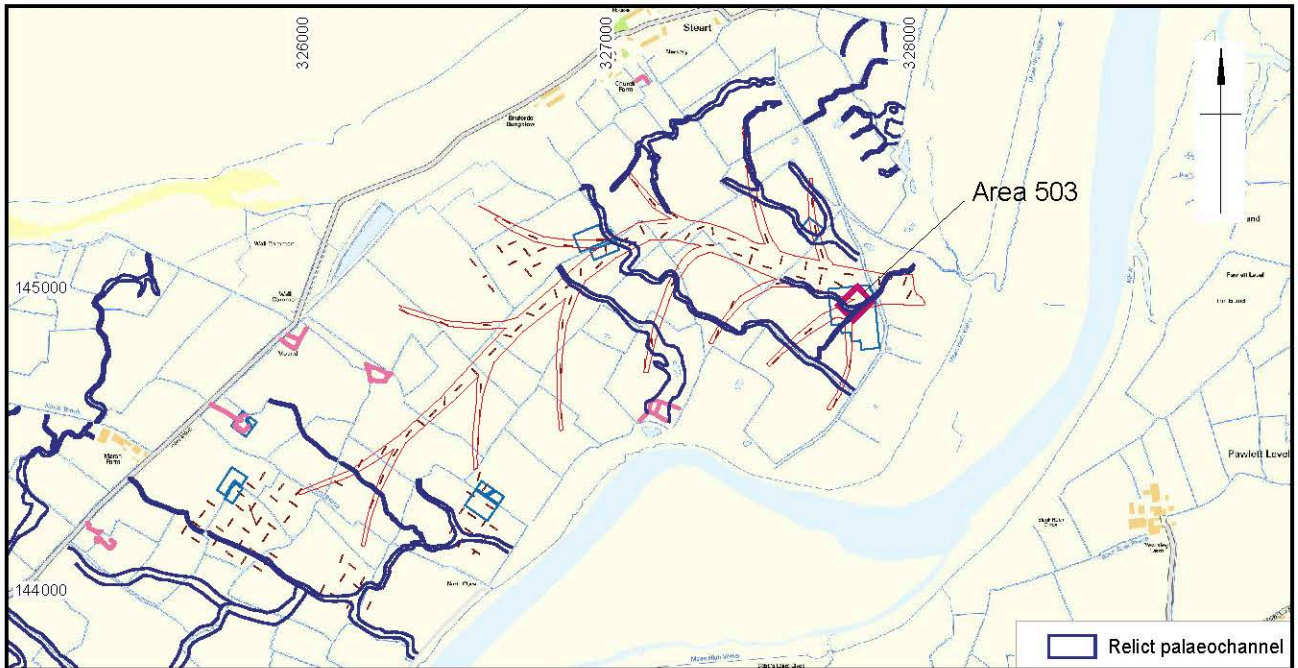
- 2.2.7 After consideration of all the evidence summarised above, and in consultation with the Senior Levels and Moors Heritage Officer of Somerset County Council Heritage Service, it was agreed by all parties to forego evaluation of these remains, in favour of moving straight to machine stripping and detailed excavation.
- 2.2.8 The extent of this excavation has been determined on the basis of the geophysical survey results, in relation to the anticipated scheme impact.

## 3 AIMS, OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY *ETC.*

- 3.1.1 Following machine-stripping of Area 503 a site meeting will be convened to discuss and agree aims, objectives, methodologies *etc.* for the detailed excavation.
- 3.1.2 Thereafter, a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) will be prepared to guide the archaeological works, drawing heavily on the existing WSI for the trial trench evaluation (WA 2012b) and previous Interim Reports 1-3 (WA 2012c-e).

#### 4 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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	Scale: 1:25 000 & 1:1000 @ A4	Illustrator: LJC
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Site and proposed excavation Area 503

Figure 1