

BLHS/01



# LAND AT BOWDEN LANE, HENSTRIDGE, SOMERSET

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

commissioned by British Solar Renewables Ltd

15/02718/FUL

December 2015



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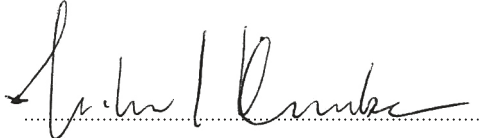
December 2015

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

An archaeological field evaluation at Bowden Lane, Henstridge, Somerset revealed limited past agricultural use of the land. Although the majority of features were undated, at least two phases of agricultural activity were identified. The earlier phase was possibly medieval in date, the later was post-medieval. The site seems to have been marginal land away from the focus of settlement activity and activity there was related to ploughing, drainage, field boundaries and possible quarrying.

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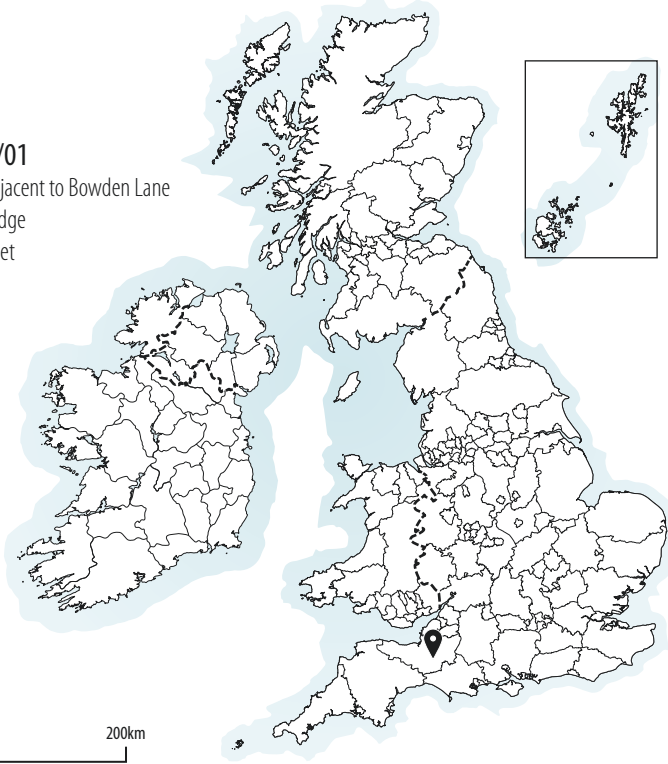
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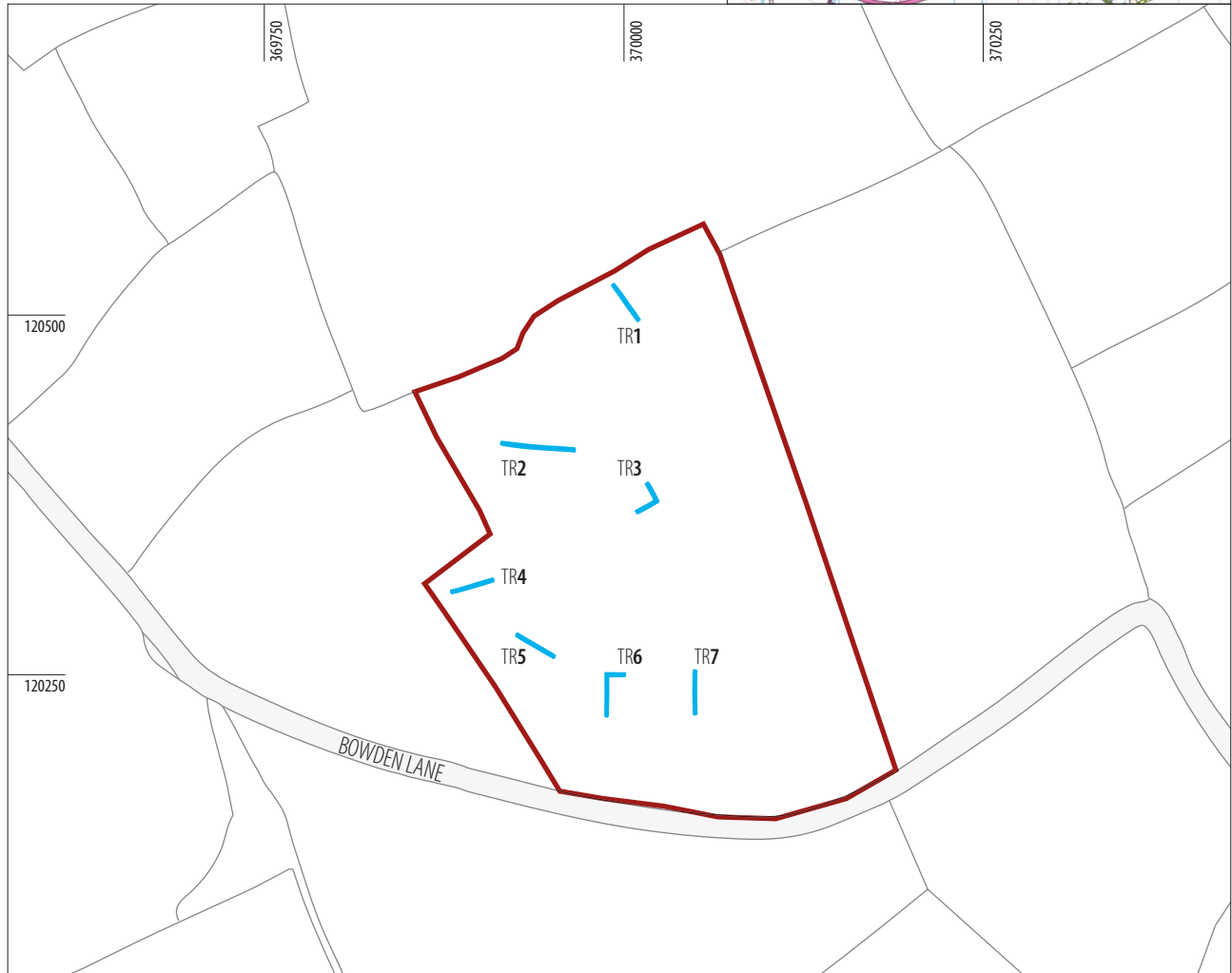
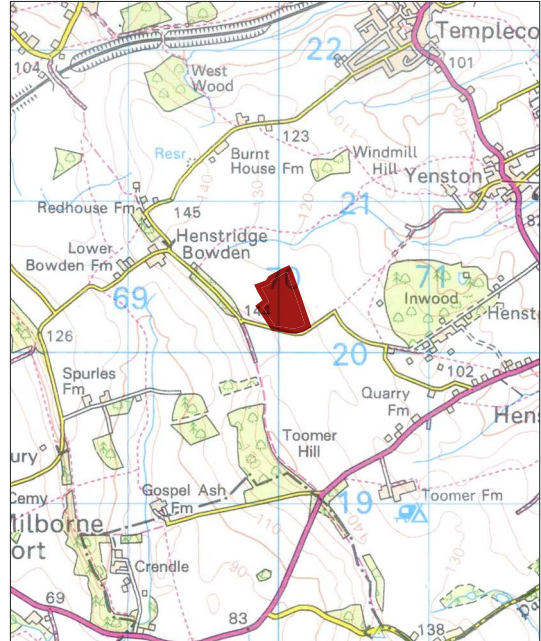
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------------------------------------------------------------------	---

**BLHS/01**  
 land adjacent to Bowden Lane  
 Henstridge  
 Somerset



0 200km



**KEY**  
 [Red line] development boundary  
 [Blue line] trench location

0 250m  
 scale 1:5,000 @ A4

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**ILLUS 1** Site location



# LAND AT BOWDEN LANE, HENSTRIDGE, SOMERSET

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Planning permission has been granted for solar development on the site (15/02718/FUL) subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation. This initial phase of archaeological investigation will be used to further inform Somerset County Council in relation to the completion of this condition.

#### 1.2 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The site is located to the north of Bowden Lane, approximately 2km west of the village of Henstridge in the south of the County of Somerset (ILLUS 1). The centre of the site is at coordinates NGR 370015,120315. The site consists of arable land covering approximately 8.5ha in a single field, bound by hedgerows with the eastern field boundary a wire fence. The site gently slopes to the east and is at 130m OD.

The underlying solid geology within the site comprises sedimentary geology of the Great Oolite Group - sandstone, limestone and argillaceous rocks (British Geological Survey website; (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk>)).

#### 1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

An Archaeological and Heritage Assessment has been carried out for the site by The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP, 2015). It states that a number of Roman pottery finds were located in the field immediately south-east of the survey area and Bowden Lane; an early medieval site was also recorded approximately 200m to the north of the survey area. Further Roman artefacts have been recorded 750m to the south-east and 750m to the north-west. The nearest scheduled monument is the promontory fort at Barrow Hill, Milbourne Wick, some 2.6km to the west.

The 1839 tithe map of Henstridge shows that the field was once subdivided into three, with a field boundary extending across the northern part of the site, and a rectangular boundary in the south-east corner. The boundaries were removed by the 1890s with the field incorporated into a larger area and subsequently the eastern boundary inserted by the 1960s.

The assessment also describes a watching brief over the course of a new pipeline which bounds the eastern edge of the site, carried out in 1991. No finds or features were located within the survey area at the time.

A geophysical survey was undertaken in August 2015 by Archaeological Surveys Ltd (Donaldson 2015). In summary, the report states:

'The results indicate the presence of widespread anomalies associated with the underlying geology, possible land drains or land divisions, agricultural anomalies and at least two areas of quarrying. Two parallel linear anomalies extend across the southern part of the survey area and appear to have been truncated by quarrying. These east to west aligned anomalies may relate to cut, linear ditches. Other positive linear anomalies are also evident, with a fragmented linear feature in the north western corner of the site. Some linear anomalies of uncertain origin may relate to land drainage'.

### 2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the investigation were in line with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) forwarded by Headland Archaeology (2015) and accepted by Somerset Heritage Services (HES).

The objectives of the programme of works were as follows:

- to enable the development by fulfilling the archaeological condition to the satisfaction of the planning authority;
- to establish the location, extent, nature and date of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the areas proposed to be disturbed during the development;

- to establish the integrity and state of preservation of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the areas proposed to be disturbed during the development;
- to inform the development of an appropriate mitigation strategy;
- to produce and deposit a satisfactory archive and disseminate the results of the work via grey-literature reporting and publication as appropriate.

### 3 METHOD

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the above mentioned brief and WSI and the following documents:

- Code of Conduct (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014)
- Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014a)

The evaluation of the proposed development area consists of a total of seven trial trenches, of various lengths (see below) by 1.85m wide, totalling approximately 436m linear meters (ILLUS 2). Trenches 3 and 6 were L-Shaped. Trenches were positioned to target anomalies identified by the geophysical survey (ILLUS 2), as agreed by the LPA advisors Somerset Heritage Services (HES). Each trench was placed according to the following principles:

Trench	Dimensions	Location	Reason
1	30m x 1.85m	North of site	To test archaeological potential of a group of positive linear geophysical anomalies possibly relating to land management and drainage.
2	50m x 1.85m	West of site	To test archaeological potential of geophysical anomalies possibly representing ditch-like and pit-like features.
3	30m x 1.85m (L-shaped)	Centre of site	To test archaeological potential of a group of negative linear geophysical anomalies, possibly relating to quarrying in the area.
4	30m x 1.85m	West of site	To test archaeological potential of geophysical anomalies possibly representing ditch-like and pit-like features.
5	30m x 1.85m	South-West of site	To test archaeological potential of a group of positive geophysical anomalies possibly relating to land drainage.
6	42m x 1.85m (L-shaped)	South of site	To test archaeological potential of the large zone of magnetically variable responses which could indicate quarrying and two linear geophysical anomalies that could possibly be cut ditches.
7	30m x 1.85m	South of site	To test archaeological potential of two linear geophysical anomalies that could possibly be cut ditches.

TABLE 1 Description of trenches and reason for placement.

Trenches were set out using a differential GPS. Prior to excavation, utility plans were consulted and all trench areas, including a 2m

additional buffer, were scanned using a cable avoidance tool to identify any potential buried services. Trenches were excavated using an 8 tonne mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket to depths where archaeological features were identified or geological deposits encountered.

Exposed archaeological remains were recorded on pro forma record sheets and each feature identified was subsequently excavated by hand to establish their form, character and function and retrieve dateable artefactual material where possible.

Drawings of significant archaeological remains and the general stratigraphy of the site were produced at a scale of 1:10 where appropriate or digitally surveyed.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). The recorded contexts were assigned unique numbers and recording was undertaken on Headland Archaeology pro forma trench and context record sheets. Digital and black and white photographs were taken of all trenches and identified features, with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. An overall site plan of the trenches and recorded features was digitally produced. Digital surveying was undertaken using a Trimble dGPS system.

### 4 RESULTS

The location of features discussed below can be found on ILLUS 2. A full trench and context register is included in Appendix 1.

#### 4.1 GENERAL SITE STRATIGRAPHY

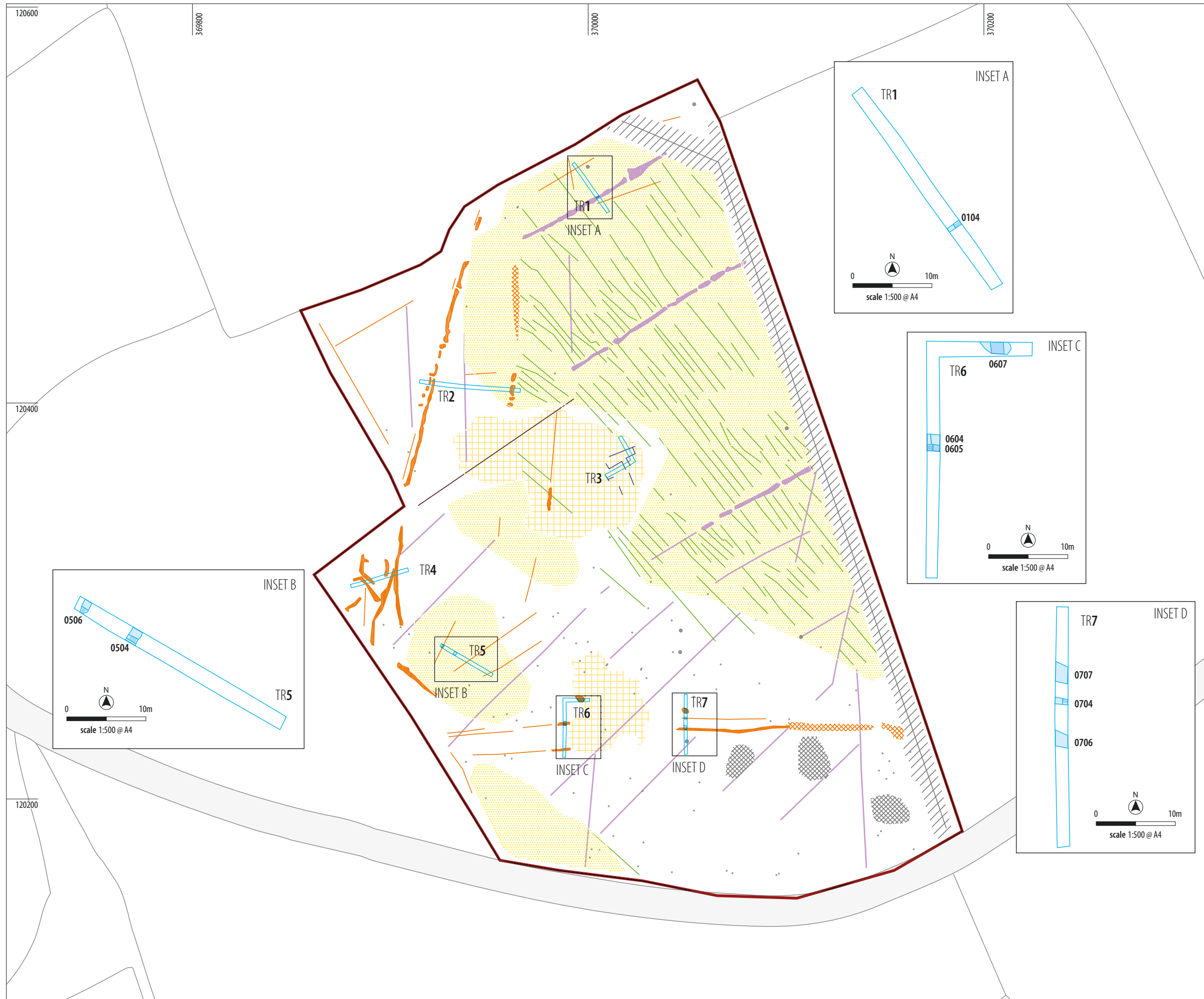
Within the site area, a friable loamy topsoil of around 0.22 – 0.28m (e.g. 0101, 0202, etc.) sealed a variably 0.05 to 0.20m deep, homogeneous friable, sandy clay, subsoil (e.g. 0102, 0202, etc.). This in turn overlay a variable natural geology (e.g. 0103, 0203, etc.). The geology was relatively shallow and was present from around 0.30 – 0.52m and varied from a firm clay to a flaked, fragmented limestone bedrock, within which linear and amorphous pockets of clays and sands had formed due to geological erosion of the bedrock (ILLUS 3). Several of these amorphous and linear features had shown up on the geophysics plots and were test excavated and the deposit was found to undercut the geological deposits (e.g. Trench 4, ILLUS 4).

#### 4.2 TRENCHES WITH NO ANTHROPOGENIC FEATURES

Trenches 2 and 4, targeting geophysical anomalies suggesting ditch and pit-like features (see TABLE 1), only revealed amorphous natural features. Trench 3, targeting anomalies suggesting possible quarrying (see TABLE 1), had a high concentration of limestone brash and the pockets of clays within it which appeared to correlate with the negative readings on the geophysics (ILLUS 5). It seems probable that the anomaly on the geophysics, identified as possible quarrying, was in fact the aforementioned high amount of natural limestone brash.

#### 4.3 TRENCHES CONTAINING UNDATED DEPOSITS

Trench 1, targeted geophysical anomalies suggesting features related to land management and drainage (see TABLE 1). A linear feature



- KEY
- development boundary
  - trench location
  - feature
  - positive linear anomaly - possible ditch-like feature
  - linear anomaly - of agricultural origin
  - linear anomaly - possible land drain
  - positive linear anomaly - possible former field boundary
  - negative linear anomaly - material of low magnetic susceptibility
  - discrete positive response - possible pit-like feature
  - positive anomaly - magnetically enhanced material
  - variable magnetic response - of natural origin
  - variable magnetic response - quarrying
  - magnetic debris - spread of magnetically thermoremanent/ferrous material
  - magnetic disturbance from ferrous material
  - strong multiple dipolar linear anomaly - pipeline / cable / service
  - strong dipolar anomaly - ferrous object
- 0 10m 100m  
scale 1:2,000 @ A4

ILLUS 2 Trench location plan







**ILLUS 3** Trench 4, looking east, geological formations **ILLUS 4** Excavated geological features in Trench 4 **ILLUS 5** Trench 3, looking south-east, displaying high amounts of limestone brash

[0104], orientated southwest-northeast and measuring 0.35m wide and 0.16m deep was identified and interpreted as a small agricultural related ditch (e.g. a drainage ditch) (**ILLUS 6**). The feature corresponds to a linear anomaly identified on the geophysics interpreted as a land drain, but no clay drainage pipes were found. Instead the feature was cut into the limestone bedrock, giving it a slightly irregular profile, and was interpreted as a field drainage feature.

Trench 5, targeted geophysical anomalies suggesting features related to land drainage (see **TABLE 1**). It identified two linear features. Ditch [0504] measured 1.22m wide and 0.20m deep. Ditch [0506] had variable dimensions measuring 0.36–1.00m wide to 0.14–0.28m deep. Both were orientated north-south with gradually sloping profiles, the bases were cut into underlying limestone. They were both filled with a fine grained silty clay (0505) & (0507) suggestive of a gradual sedimentation of the ditch. These were interpreted as field drainage related to agricultural work on the land. The variability of the dimensions of [0506] was due to the limestone surrounding it

and which seemed to affect its morphology.

Three linear ditches all identified as furrows were also recorded, [0604], [0706] and [0707] in Trenches 6 and 7. These were roughly 2m wide and 0.10m deep, orientated east-west, and all filled with a silty clay suggestive of a gradual sedimentation.

In Trench 6, targeting geophysics anomalies suggesting quarrying and cut ditch features (see **TABLE 1**), the furrow [0604] was cut by another later linear ditch [0605], orientated east-west and measuring 0.95m wide and 0.20m deep (**ILLUS 7**). This was filled with a firm silty clay, suggestive of purposeful backfilling. Animal bone, identified as a pelvis of an unknown large mammal (see Appendix 3), and ceramic building material, identified as post-medieval, was recovered from this fill (see Appendix 2). This ditch was identified as a later agricultural feature, possibly a field boundary. Also in Trench 6 was a large pit [0607], measuring 3.95m in length and 0.4m in depth, which had a very sterile fill of a light brown silty clay. With the





**ILLUS 6** South facing section of stone cut linear ditch [0104], Trench 1    **ILLUS 7** East facing sections of later ditch [0605] cutting earlier furrow [0604], Trench 6

nature of the trench width the extent of this feature could not be fully recorded but it seems possible that this feature could be related to the potential quarrying activity on site that was identified in the geophysics report in this area.

Trench 7, targeting geophysics anomalies suggesting cut ditches (see **TABLE 1**), identified a small steep sided linear ditch [0704]; measuring 1.00m wide and 0.25m deep, orientated east-west, again cut into the limestone geology. It was filled with a soft, gritty silty clay with some animal bone inclusions (which were not recovered due to their poor fragmentary condition) and is presumed to be the same linear ditch as [0605].

## 5 DISCUSSION

The shallow depth of the overlying substrate across the evaluation trenches suggests a landscape that has not had a build-up of material from prolonged ploughing. Due to the shallow nature of the substrate, the underlying geological limestone deposits are therefore readily accessible and could make opportunistic quarrying viable. The only possible suggestion of such quarrying comes from the pit in Trench 6, but there was no certain evidence that this was the case.

The remaining archaeology seems to represent a low level of agricultural works, comprising ditches dug for drainage or irrigation and remnants of ridge and furrow. The fills of ditches, though highly truncated, were strongly suggestive of low energy, gradual sedimentation, and indicative of a function of the features as drainage ditches. These features and trenches were mainly notable for the general paucity of any cultural material.

In Trenches 6 and 7 a possible field boundary ditch was identified, this was the only feature on the site that produced any material culture. Within Trench 6, this truncated a possible medieval furrow, indicating the presence of at least two separate phases of agricultural activity. Potentially this was a brief phase of medieval cultivation and then later post-medieval enclosure of the area as pasture.

The material remains seems to highlight no nearby settlement activity in any period, even the lack of material in top and subsoils (such as charcoal, or porcelain) seems to represent a lack of modern manuring. In the recent past the area was probably used for pasture rather than being intensively cultivated.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The evaluation was successful in terms of locating the position and character of archaeological remains on the site in line with the project objectives. Limited use of the land through probable drainage or field management of probable medieval or later date was identified. No evidence of occupation or other non-agricultural activity or use of the land was found.

There was not sufficient evidence in the evaluation to corroborate the areas of potential quarrying which was suggested on the geophysics plot. A large pit was excavated but it remains uncertain if this was actually related to quarrying. Therefore, it has to be considered that the geophysical anomaly could have been caused by the large areas of limestone brash.

The depth of overlying sediments was very shallow, the archaeological features identified were similarly shallow and were

largely stone cut. The evidence of activity in multiple phases comes from a single ditch cutting earlier plough furrows.

The likelihood of any significant remains being present is considered to be negligible.

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## 8 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 TRENCH AND CONTEXT REGISTER

\*LOE = Limit of Excavation

TR1	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	NW-SE	30	1.8	0.31
Context	Description			DBGL (m)
0101	Topsoil. Mid slightly orange, brown, loamy soil, friable, containing roots.			0 – 0.25
0102	Subsoil. Mid orangish brown, sandy clay, friable.			0.25 – 0.30
0103	Natural. Orangish Yellow Clay, firm, patches of grey clay and limestone bedrock geology. Mottled areas of stony, sandy concentrations			LOE
0104	Cut of ditch. Narrow and shallow, cut into limestone, slightly irregular base. W: 0.35. D: 0.16			0.30 – 0.46
0105	Fill of ditch [0104]. Mid yellowish brown silty clay, inclusions of charcoal, mineral mottling and stone.			0.30 – 0.46

#### Trench Summary

Shallow depth to trench, with bands of clay over the limestone bedrock. Single narrow linear in SE of trench, possibly related to agriculture.

TR2	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	W-W	50	1.85	0.47
Context	Description			DBGL (m)
0201	Topsoil. Dark greyish brown, loamy soil, friable, containing roots.			0 – 0.28
0202	Subsoil. Mid to dark orangish brown, silty clay, friable.			0.28 – 0.47
0203	Natural. Light yellowish brown, clay, firm. Patches of reddish sandy deposits with mottled orange. Limestone bedrock at East extent.			LOE

#### Trench Summary

Much shallower deposits on East extent, only 0.20m depth down onto limestone. No archaeology present just changeable natural.

TR3	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	NE-SW / SE-NW	30	1.85	0.52
Context	Description			DBGL (m)
0301	Topsoil. Dark greyish brown, loamy soil, friable, containing roots.			0 – 0.28
0302	Subsoil. Mid Reddish Brown, Silty Clay, Friable/Soft			0.28 – 0.47
0303	Natural. Mid to light reddish brown, with a yellow tiny silty clay. With grey clay patches. Areas of the limestone bedrock and large rock throughout.			LOE

#### Trench Summary

Very stony natural, high to bedrock, lots of folds in the clay formation.

TR4	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	E-W	30	1.85	0.40
Context	Description			DBGL (m)
0401	Topsoil. Dark greyish brown, loamy soil, friable, containing roots.			0 – 0.22
0402	Subsoil. Mid to dark orangish brown, silty clay, friable.			0.22 – 0.36
0403	Natural. Light yellowish brown, clay, firm. Patches of reddish sandy deposits with mottled orange. Limestone bedrock at East extent.			LOE

#### Trench Summary

In East of trench there are amorphous natural hollows/pits filled with red sandy material. This material is present on the western extent of the trench also. Three of the natural hollows/pits were dug and all proved to be natural.

TR5	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	E-W	30	1.85	0.34
Context	Description			DBGL (m)
0501	Topsoil. Dark greyish brown, loamy soil, friable, containing roots.			0 – 0.22
0502	Subsoil. Mid to dark yellowish brown, silty clay, friable.			0.22 – 0.30
0503	Natural. Mid yellowish brown, silty clay, firm. Patches of grey clay and limestone bedrock throughout. Some small patches of a red sandy clay in areas.			LOE
0504	Cut of linear, stone cut ditch; Gently sloped with a flat / slightly rounded base. Probable plough scar related to agricultural activity. W. 1.22			0.30 – 0.50
0505	Fill of ditch [0504]; Mid yellowish reddish brown silty clay, soft with charcoal, stone and mineral mottling inclusions.			0.30 – 0.50
0506	Cut of stone cut ditch; possibly related to agricultural activity. Variable size with south section being wider and shallower. Tapers from North to South, which seems to be a product of the limestone bedrock outcrops. Slightly rounded appearance to the base. W. 0.36 to 1.00.			0.30 – 0.44
0507	Fill of ditch [0506]; Mid yellowish reddish brown silty clay, soft with charcoal, stone and mineral mottling inclusions.			0.30 – 0.44

#### Trench Summary

Towards the western extent, two linear ditches. [0504] looks like it's a plough scar and [0506] with an undulating size looks related to a miscellaneous agricultural activity. Both are cut into the limestone bedrock and inform their morphology.



TR6	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	N-S	42	1.85	0.
Context	Description	D BGL (m)		
0601	Topsoil. Dark brown, silty clay, friable, containing roots.	0 – 0.25		
0602	Subsoil. Mid brown, silty clay, friable.	0.25 – 0.30		
0603	Natural. Clay, Stoney.	LOE		
0604	Furrow. W 2.2m x D 0.12m	0.30 – 0.42		
0605	Cut of Ditch; Deep linear, U-Profile. W 0.95m x D 0.20m.	0.30 – 0.50		
0606	Fill of Ditch; Friable/Firm, Mid Brown, silty clay, fragments of animal bone, fired fabric.	0.30 – 0.50		
0607	Large Pit; Lightish mid brown, silty clay, firm, occasional large fragment of limestone. W 3.95m.	0.30 – 0.70		

#### Trench Summary

Evidence of later agricultural activity and possible quarrying. With ditch [0605] appearing to cut furrow [0604], and fired clay fragments from fill (0606) appear to be hard, post-medieval fabric, found with animal bone.

TR7	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	N	3	1.85	0.50
Context	Description	D BGL (m)		
0701	Topsoil. Dark brown, silty clay, friable, containing roots.	0 – 0.18		
0702	Subsoil. Mid brown, silty clay, friable, occasional small stone.	0.18 – 0.38		
0703	Natural. Brackish stony clay.	LOE		
0704	Cut of small gully. U-Profile, Rock Cut. W 1.00m x D 0.25m.	0.38 – 0.63		
0705	Fill of [0704]. Mid yellow brown, soft/friable, gritty inclusions, contained fragments of animal bone.	0.38 – 0.63		
0706	Furrow. W 2.3m x D 0.3m. Filled with mid brown, friable silty clay.	0.38 – 0.38		
0707	Furrow. W 1.8m x D 0.13m. Filled with mid brown, friable silty clay.	0.38 – 0.51		

#### Trench Summary

Gully [0704] sealed by lower subsoil and is a shallow, cut into bedrock ditch, animal bone retrieved from fill. Either side of the gully are the two furrows.

APPENDIX 2 FINDS ASSESSMENT

JULIE FRANKLIN

Two fragments (22g) of ceramic building material were found from deposit (0606). Both were abraded, or an orange fabric. One is a sherd of thin flat tile, the other a piece of possible field drain or perforated maltings brick. Neither is closely datable though a post-medieval or modern date is most likely.

Context	Qty	Wgt (g)	Material	Object	Description	Spot date
0606	1	6	CBM	Field drain/tile	Fragment with two concave sides, possibly part of field drain or perforated maltings brick	PM/Mod
0606	1	16	CBM	Tile	small abraded sherd of flat tile	?

APPENDIX 3 ANIMAL BONE ASSESSMENT

LAURA BAILEY

Pelvis fragments from a large animal were collected during archaeological works at Bowden Lane Solar Park, Henstridge, Somerset. The bone was from the fill (0606) of a ditch. It was heavily fragmented and abraded and offers little information on site economy or the nature of activity that generated the material.

Context	Condition	Wgt (g)	Description
0606	Poor	31	Heavily fragmented and abraded pelvis – large mamma





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