

SEVS/03



# SWINDON EASTERN VILLAGES – ACCESS ROAD

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

commissioned by Ainscough Strategic Land and Mr James Hill

January 2016



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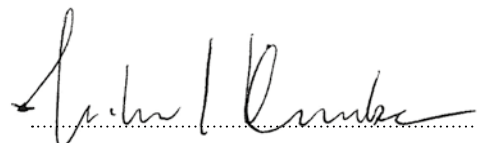
January 2016

project info

**HA JOB NO.** SEVS/03  
**HAS NO.** 1151  
**NGR** SU 20656 86543  
**PARISH** Stratton St Margaret  
**LOCAL AUTHORITY** Swindon Borough Council  
**OASIS REF.** Headland3-235386

project team

**PROJECT MANAGER** Mike Kimber  
**AUTHOR** Iain Bennett  
**FIELDWORK** Iain Bennett, Thomas Cochrane  
**GRAPHICS** Mano Kapazoglou, Rafael Maya-Torcelly  
**APPROVED BY** Mike Kimber – Project Manager



 **HEADLAND  
ARCHAEOLOGY**  
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**MIDLANDS & WEST**

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd  
Unit 1, Clearview Court, Twyford Road, Hereford HR2 6JR

01432 364 901

[midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com](mailto:midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com)

[www.headlandarchaeology.com](http://www.headlandarchaeology.com)





## PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd undertook a trial trench evaluation on land in the vicinity of Longleaze Farm, Swindon. Only two potential archaeological features, both pits, were identified across the site while many of the geophysical anomalies from the survey were found to be either stone throws or large stones still in situ. The absence of much archaeology suggests that the area has been predominantly farmland for an extended period of time.

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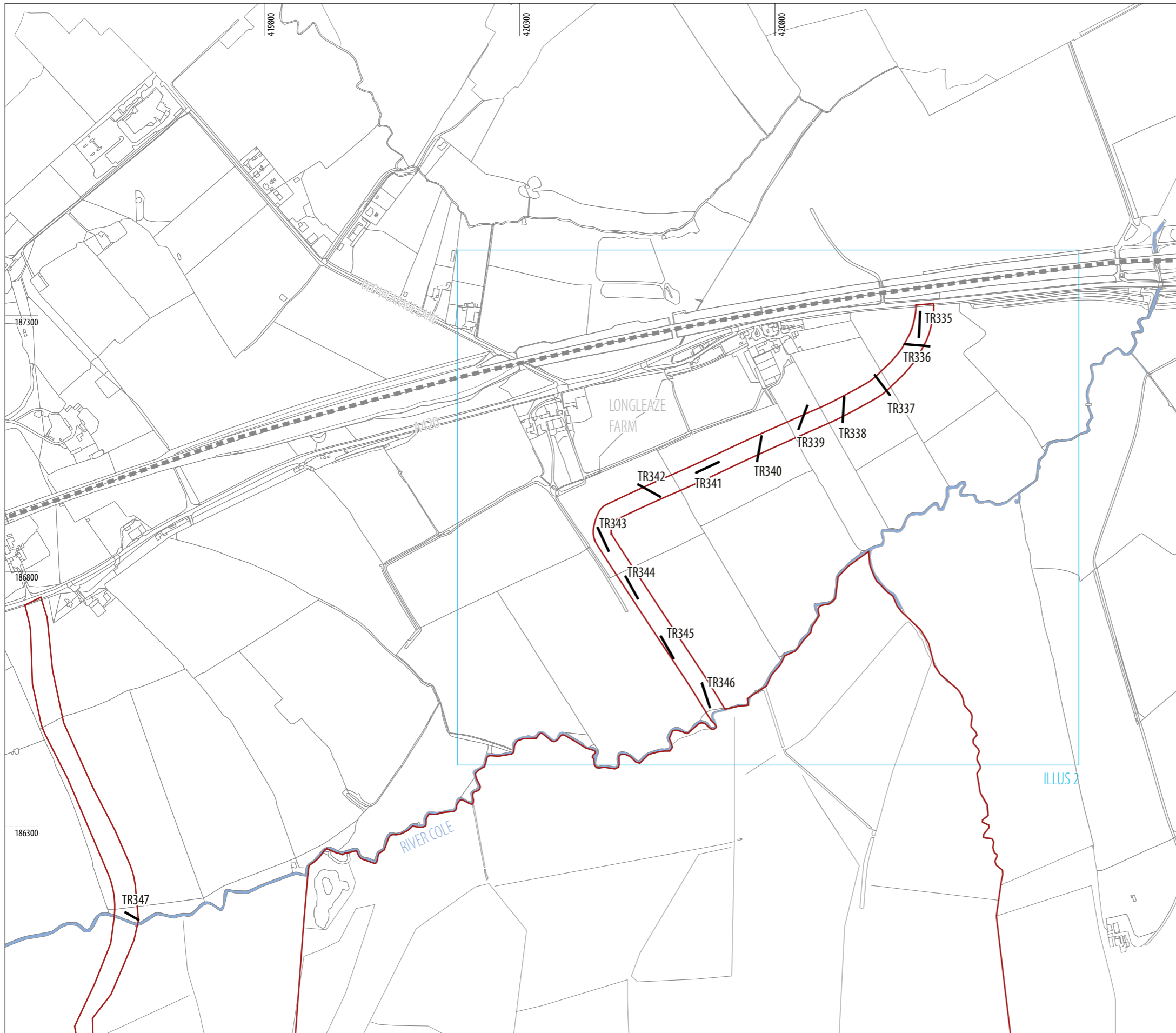
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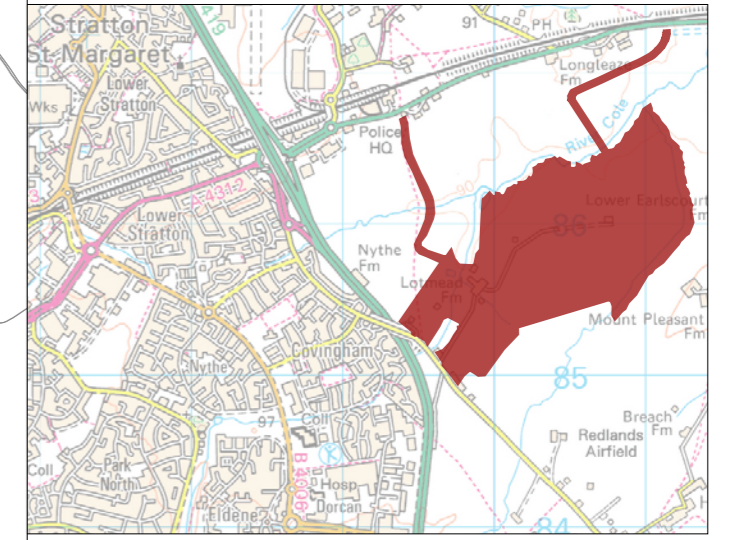
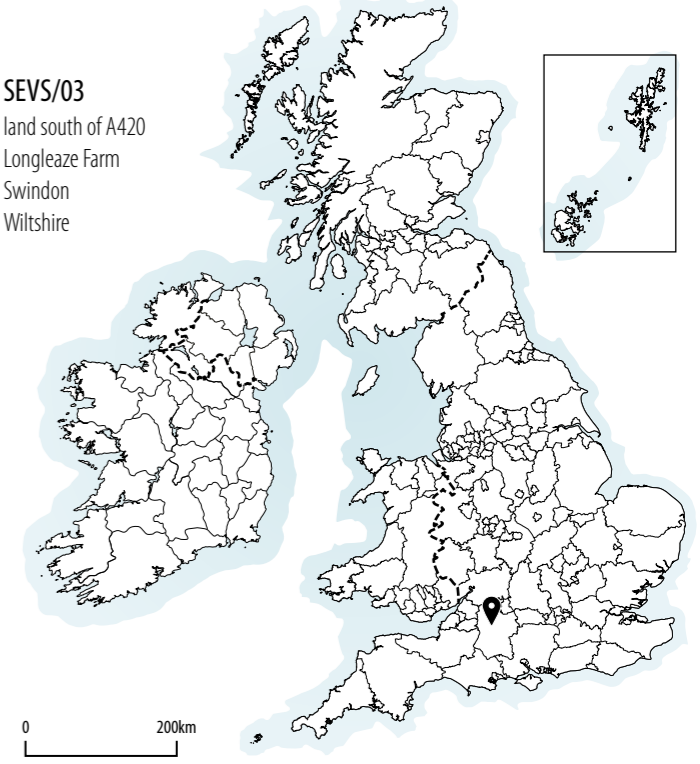
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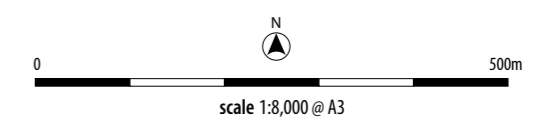
SEVS/03  
land south of A420  
Longleaze Farm  
Swindon  
Wiltshire



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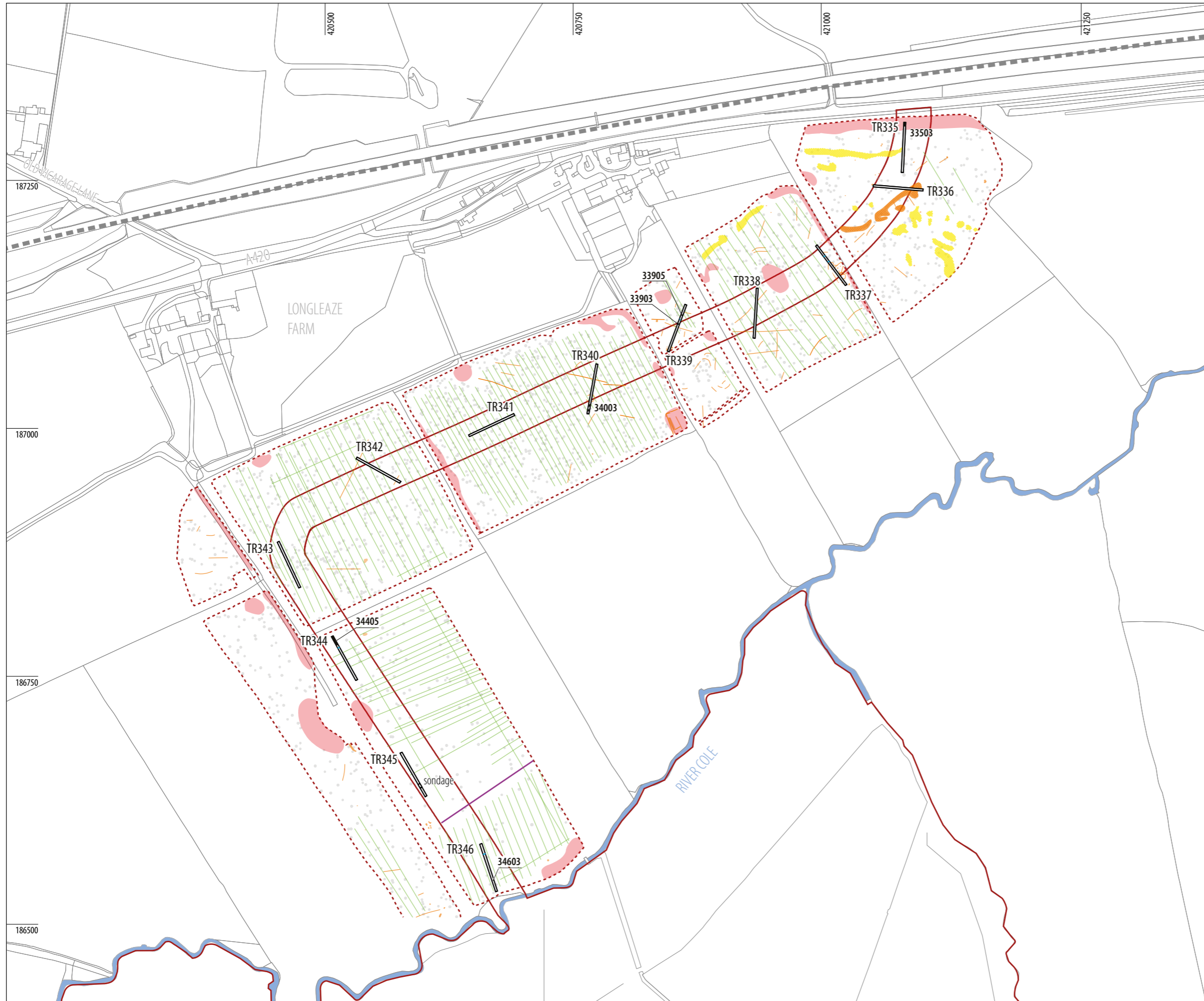
MIDLANDS & WEST Unit 1, Clearview Court, Twyford Road  
Hereford HR2 6JR  
01432 364 901  
www.headlandarchaeology.com

KEY  
development boundary  
trench location

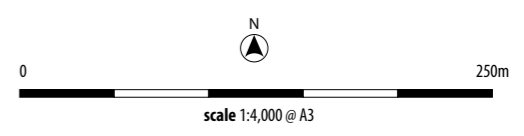


ILLUS 1 Site location





- KEY
- development boundary
  - trench location
  - geophysical survey area
- GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY INTERPRETATION
- agricultural / ridge & furrow
  - debris & disturbance
  - field boundary
  - natural features
  - strong bipolar
  - uncertain positive anomaly



ILLUS 2 Site plan



# SWINDON EASTERN VILLAGES – ACCESS ROAD

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by Ainscough Strategic Land and Mr James Hill through their agent The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP Ltd) to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land to the east of Swindon in the vicinity of Longleaze Farm. The evaluation is connected to a group of planning applications referred to as the Swindon Eastern Villages Scheme, and the proposed development area subject to this document covers the proposed access road leading into Lotmead Villages from the north.

An archaeological evaluation was previously undertaken by Headland Archaeology in the south-west of the proposed development area (Phase 1 – Fields 1–7; Sworn 2015) during July 2014. A second phase was undertaken also by Headland Archaeology over the main part of the Masterplan Area (Fields 8–31) between 8th September 2014 and 3rd December 2014 (Craddock-Bennett 2015).

The trenches were located to target the results of a geophysical survey and to provide even coverage of the site, and were drawn up by EDP and agreed with the archaeological advisor to Swindon Borough Council.

#### 1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The site is situated to the immediate south of the A420. The site covers an area of approximately 22.5 hectares centred on NGR 420656, 186543 (ILLUS 1 and ILLUS 2) To the south-west of the proposed development area lies the site of the former Roman town of Durocornovium.

The site is occupied by pasture and arable land on mainly level ground. The area subject to evaluation is bounded to the south by the River Cole, to the north by the A420. Enclosed pasture land is present to the east and west of the evaluation area.

The underlying solid geology within the site comprises mudstone and sedimentary bedrock of the Ampthill Clay Formation, formed during the Jurassic period, 151–161 million years ago (British Geological Survey website; <http://www.bgs.ac.uk>). The superficial deposits recorded for the site comprise alluvial deposits lying within current and former watercourses.

#### 1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A geophysical survey of the site was undertaken by Archaeological Surveys Ltd (Sabin & Donaldson 2015). The full results will not be repeated here; within the proposed access road area the survey shows a number of weak anomalies that may be archaeological in origin.

Trial trenching of the main application areas around Lotmead Farm was undertaken by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd in 2014. This work revealed remains relating to the hinterland of Durocornovium – primarily enclosure ditches, plus midden deposits and human burials – plus prehistoric settlement activity including a substantial Iron Age site alongside the south bank of the River Cole.

### 2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the evaluation were as follows:

- to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development site;
- to assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits encountered;
- to provide further information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable the archaeological implications of the proposed development to be assessed;
- to assess the impact of previous land use on the site;
- to inform formulation of a strategy to avoid or mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains;
- to produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Wiltshire HER.

The results of the evaluation will enable reasoned and informed recommendations to be made to the local planning authority and a suitable mitigation strategy for the proposed development to be formulated.

### 3 METHOD

Work was undertaken in accordance with the written scheme of investigation approved by the archaeological advisor to Swindon Borough Council (Kimber 2015).

A total of thirteen archaeological trial trenches were excavated, twelve were 50m and one was 10m in length totalling 610 linear metres. These trenches were numbered 335-347 to distinguish them from those excavated in the earlier work stages. All trenches measured 1.8m in width.

Trenches were arranged to provide even coverage across the site, with geophysical anomalies of interest targeted for investigation.

Trenches were excavated under direct archaeological supervision using a 14 tonne tracked excavator fitted with a flat bladed ditching bucket. Machine excavation terminated at the uppermost significant archaeological horizon or when geological deposits were encountered.

All trenches were planned using a Trimble differential GPS system. A record sheet was completed for each trench, even where no deposits of archaeological significance were present. Identified archaeological features were subject to hand excavation, carried out to a sufficient degree to meet the objectives of the evaluation.

All recording followed ClfA Standards and Guidance. All contexts were given unique numbers and recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards. Sections of archaeological features were hand-drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Hand drawn plans of certain archaeological features were also undertaken. A photographic record, utilising black and white negative film, supplemented by high resolution digital data capture, was maintained during the course of the fieldwork.

### 4 RESULTS

Full trench descriptions are given in Appendix 1. There was a low level of archaeological activity identified by the evaluation, the details of which are below.

The geological horizon across the site was a light yellow or orange grey clay with increasing blue-grey patches within as the trenches move north (e.g. 33503). It was identified at a depth between 0.37m and 0.72m below ground level (BGL). Trenches 340 and 341 both contained a higher than usual number of very large stones within this material.

The geological horizon was overlain by alluvium in places (see 4.2) and a mid-yellow brown silty clay subsoil (e.g. 34603) at the south of the site changing to a light grey orange plastic clay at the north of the site (e.g. 33602) identified at a depth between 0.13m and 0.41m BGL. The topsoil was a mid-brown silty clay (e.g 33800) identified at a depth between 0.22m and 0.32m BGL.



ILLUS 3 NW facing section of [33903] elongated pit or terminus

ILLUS 4 NE facing section of pit [33905]

#### 4.1 UNDATED FEATURES

(ILLUS 3 and ILLUS 4)

Trench 339 contained two undated features. An elongated pit or terminus [33903] that extended beyond the limits of the trench measured 0.92m+ in length and 1.04m in width with a depth of 0.40m had steep sides, a flat base and sharp breaks of slope. It contained a single diffuse mid brown grey silty clay fill that had rare small angular stone inclusions but no artefactual or ecofactual material.

A second feature [33905] was excavated 9m north-east of [33903]. It measured 0.73m in length, 0.53m in width and was 0.12m in depth. The single fill (33905) was a mid-blue grey silty clay mottled with yellow that had occasional small stones throughout. There was no artefactual or ecofactual material found.

These features were not noted on the geophysical survey however other similar anomalies were. Several of these especially towards the south western end of the trench proved to be large stones still in situ.

The deposits identified within both of these features was not dissimilar to the surrounding parent material and as such it is likely that they were the result of a natural silting process rather than a deliberate backfilling episode.

## 4.2 PALAEOCHANNELS AND ALLUVIAL DEPOSITS

(ILLUS 5)

Trenches 344, 346 and 347 each had only alluvium present while 345 had both alluvium and the remains of a palaeochannel. These four trenches were the closest to the River Cole as well as the recorded palaeochannels to the south from the main phase of excavations at Lotmead Farm (Craddock-Bennett 2015).

A 4m wide by 2.80m deep machine dug sondage was excavated into palaeochannel (34504) in Trench 345. The base of the feature wasn't reached due to a high water table. The channel consisted of very plastic mid blue-grey clay with occasional small shells throughout. The full width of the channel is unknown as it extended outside the extents of the trench.

The alluvium present in four trenches is likely related to the channel (34504) as well as the proximity of the River Cole.

The channels were not noted on the geophysical survey however the alluvium present across these trenches may have affected the results.

## 4.3 TRENCHES WITH OTHER NATURAL FEATURES

(ILLUS 6)

Trench 346 contained a tree throw. It had an irregular shape in plan but was investigated to confirm the nature of the deposit.

Trench 340 contained a number of very large stones, these corresponded with the circular anomaly picked up by the geophysical survey. Along the southern edge of this anomaly was a stone throw, irregular in shape and darker than the surrounding natural. This was investigated to confirm the nature of the deposit.

## 4.4 TRENCHES WITH MODERN FEATURES AND BLANK TRENCHES

(ILLUS 7)

Field drains were noted in Trenches 337, 339, 344 and 346. There was no indication of archaeological features associated with the geophysical anomalies recorded crossing these trenches.

Trench 335 revealed the line of the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal. Completed in 1810 and closed in 1914. The feature presented as filled with modern refuse, measured over 3.86m in width and extended below the depth of the trench at 0.42m.

Many of the anomalies identified on the geophysical survey were found to be stone throws or large stones still in situ. Large areas of disturbance are likely where these stones have been removed or moved.



**ILLUS 5** NE facing section of sondage through palaeochannel in Trench 345

**ILLUS 6** SE facing section of spread (34003) and stone throw

**ILLUS 7** Modern backfill of Canal [33503]

## 5 CONCLUSION

The evaluation has succeeded in determining the location and extent of the archaeological remains within the proposed access routes. It has confirmed that the anomalies identified by the geophysical survey are primarily natural in origin. The two possible pits identified in trench 339 are likely stone throws as are many of the other anomalies that the geophysical survey identified. The edges

of nearly all of the fields contain many large stones that have been removed from the fields, this action could account for many of the other anomalies identified by the geophysical survey.

The palaeochannels and alluvial deposits identified in trenches 344–347 are likely to be related to the extensive channel system identified to the south of the River Cole. This suggests the system was formerly a lot more active than it is at present. Archaeological remains tended to be associated with the fringes of the channel system, and were readily detectable by geophysical survey. It is therefore unlikely that there are any additional remains present in this area.

The results of the evaluation suggest that the landscape has been used predominately as farmland for an extended period of time.

## 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## 7 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 TRENCH AND CONTEXT REGISTER

| TR335          | Orientation   | L (m)         | W (m) | Av. D (m) |
|----------------|---|---------------|-------|-----------|
|                | N-S   | 50            | 1.8   | 0.42      |
| Context        | Description   | Depth BGL (m) |       |           |
| 33500          | Topsoil – Mid–brown grey silty clay, friable, rare small stones.  | 0–0.22        |       |           |
| 33501          | Subsoil – Light grey orange clay, firm, plastic, firm, no inclusions  | 0.22–0.42     |       |           |
| 33502          | Natural – Light grey yellow clay, plastic, firm, occasional small to medium sized rounded and angular stones. Patchy grey blue clay throughout, likely glacial. | 0.42+         |       |           |
| 33503          | Backfilled Canal – Modern backfilled canal. Width: 3.86   | 0.42+         |       |           |
| <b>Summary</b> | –   |               |       |           |
| TR336          | Orientation   | L (m)         | W (m) | Av. D (m) |
|                | NE-SW   | 50            | 1.8   | 0.40      |
| Context        | Description   | Depth BGL (m) |       |           |
| 33600          | Topsoil – Mid–brown grey silty clay, friable, rare small stones.  | 0–0.27        |       |           |
| 33601          | Subsoil – Light grey orange clay, firm, plastic, firm, no inclusions  | 0.27–0.40     |       |           |
| 33602          | Natural – Light grey yellow clay, plastic, firm, occasional small to medium sized rounded and angular stones. Patchy grey blue clay throughout, likely glacial. | 0.40+         |       |           |
| <b>Summary</b> | –   |               |       |           |
| TR337          | Orientation   | L (m)         | W (m) | Av. D (m) |
|                | NW-SE   | 50            | 1.8   | 0.60      |
| Context        | Description   | Depth BGL (m) |       |           |
| 33700          | Topsoil – Mid–brown grey silty clay, friable, rare small stones.  | 0–0.25        |       |           |
| 33701          | Subsoil – Light grey orange clay, firm, plastic, firm, no inclusions  | 0.25–0.60     |       |           |
| 33702          | Natural – Light grey yellow clay, plastic, firm, occasional small to medium sized rounded and angular stones. Patchy grey blue clay throughout, likely glacial. | 0.60+         |       |           |
| <b>Summary</b> | –   |               |       |           |

| TR338          | Orientation  | L (m)         | W (m) | Av. D (m) |
|----------------|--|---------------|-------|-----------|
|                | NNE-SSW  | 50            | 1.8   | 0.49      |
| Context        | Description  | Depth BGL (m) |       |           |
| 33800          | Topsoil – Mid–brown grey silty clay, friable, rare small stones.   | 0–0.22        |       |           |
| 33801          | Subsoil – Light grey orange clay, firm, plastic, firm, no inclusions   | 0.22–0.47     |       |           |
| 33802          | Natural – Light grey yellow clay, plastic, firm, occasional small to medium sized rounded and angular stones. Patchy grey blue clay throughout, likely glacial.            | 0.47+         |       |           |
| <b>Summary</b> | –  |               |       |           |
| TR339          | Orientation  | L (m)         | W (m) | Av. D (m) |
|                | NE-SW  | 50            | 1.8   | 0.46      |
| Context        | Description  | Depth BGL (m) |       |           |
| 33900          | Topsoil – Mid–brown grey silty clay, friable, rare small stones.   | 0–0.25        |       |           |
| 33901          | Subsoil – Light grey orange clay, firm, plastic, firm, no inclusions   | 0.25–0.46     |       |           |
| 33902          | Natural – Light grey yellow clay, plastic, firm, occasional small to medium sized rounded and angular stones. Patchy grey blue clay throughout, likely glacial.            | 0.46+         |       |           |
| 33903          | Cut of elongated pit/terminus – sub circular, steep sides, flat base, sharp break of slope. L: 0.92m+, W: 1.04m, D: 0.20m  | 0.46–0.66     |       |           |
| 33904          | Fill of [33903] – mid brownish grey, silty clay, diffuse interface, plastic. Rare small stones throughout deposit. L: 0.92m+, W: 1.04m, D: 0.20m                           | 0.46–0.66     |       |           |
| 33905          | Cut of pit – sub circular, gently sloping sides, irregular base, gradual break of slope. L: 0.73, W: 1.04, D: 0.12   | 0.46–0.58     |       |           |
| 33906          | Fill of [33905] – Mid blueish grey, mottled with yellow, silty clay, diffuse interface, plastic consistency, occasional small stones throughout. L: 0.73, W: 1.04, D: 0.12 | 0.46–0.58     |       |           |
| <b>Summary</b> | –  |               |       |           |

| TR340   | Orientation   | L (m)         | W (m) | Av. D (m) |
|---------|---|---------------|-------|-----------|
|         | NNE–SSW   | 50            | 1.8   | 0.41      |
| Context | Description   | Depth BGL (m) |       |           |
| 34000   | Topsoil – Mid–brown grey silty clay, friable, rare small stones.  | 0–0.27        |       |           |
| 34001   | Subsoil – Light grey orange clay, firm, plastic, firm, no inclusions  | 0.27–0.58     |       |           |
| 34002   | Natural – Light grey yellow clay, plastic, firm, occasional very large stones throughout.   | 0.58+         |       |           |
| 340003  | Natural Spread– Light yellow orange sandy clay, only appears in the south of the trench. Shell/fossil inclusions. Lies on top of light blueish grey silty clay with similar inclusions. Some rooting/tree throws and burrowing present. | 0.58+         |       |           |

**Summary** –

| TR341   | Orientation   | L (m)         | W (m) | Av. D (m) |
|---------|---|---------------|-------|-----------|
|         | NE–SW   | 50            | 1.8   | 0.48      |
| Context | Description   | Depth BGL (m) |       |           |
| 34100   | Topsoil – Mid–brown grey silty clay, friable, rare small stones.  | 0–0.32        |       |           |
| 34101   | Subsoil – Light yellow brown silty clay, firm no inclusions   | 0.32–0.61     |       |           |
| 34102   | Natural – Light yellow brown clay, mottled grey patches, very plastic, occasional very large rocks throughout | 0.61+         |       |           |

**Summary** –

| TR342   | Orientation  | L (m)         | W (m) | Av. D (m) |
|---------|--|---------------|-------|-----------|
|         | NW–SE  | 50            | 1.8   | 0.31      |
| Context | Description  | Depth BGL (m) |       |           |
| 34200   | Topsoil – Mid–brown grey silty clay, friable, rare small stones.       | 0–0.24        |       |           |
| 34201   | Subsoil – Light yellow brown silty clay, firm no inclusions            | 0.24–0.37     |       |           |
| 34202   | Natural – Light yellow brown clay, mottled grey patches, very plastic. | 0.37+         |       |           |

**Summary** –

| TR343   | Orientation   | L (m)       | W (m) | Av. D (m) |
|---------|---|-------------|-------|-----------|
|         | NNW–SSE   | 50          | 1.8   | 0.41      |
| Context | Description   | Depth below |       |           |
| 34300   | Topsoil – Mid–brown grey silty clay, friable, rare small stones.      | 0–0.26      |       |           |
| 34301   | Subsoil – Light yellow brown silty clay, firm no inclusions           | 0.26–0.50   |       |           |
| 34302   | Natural – Light blue grey clay, mottles yellow patches, very plastic. | 0.50+       |       |           |

**Summary** –

| TR344   | Orientation  | L (m)         | W (m) | Av. D (m) |
|---------|--|---------------|-------|-----------|
|         | NNW–SSE  | 50            | 1.8   | 0.52      |
| Context | Description  | Depth BGL (m) |       |           |
| 34400   | Topsoil – Mid–brown grey silty clay, friable, rare small stones. | 0–0.23        |       |           |
| 34401   | Subsoil – Mid greenish grey, slightly silty clay                 | 0.23–0.55     |       |           |
| 34402   | Alluvium – mid greenish grey clay, mottles with yellow.          | 0.55–72       |       |           |
| 34403   | Natural – Mid greenish grey clay, very plastic                   | 0.72+         |       |           |

**Summary** –

| TR345   | Orientation  | L (m)         | W (m) | Av. D (m) |
|---------|--|---------------|-------|-----------|
|         | NNW–SSE  | 50            | 1.8   | 0.52      |
| Context | Description  | Depth BGL (m) |       |           |
| 34500   | Topsoil – Mid–brown grey silty clay, friable, rare small stones.   | 0–0.20        |       |           |
| 34501   | Subsoil – Mid greenish grey, slightly silty clay   | 0.20–0.44     |       |           |
| 34502   | Alluvium – mid greenish grey clay, mottles with yellow.  | 0.44–0.66     |       |           |
| 34503   | Natural – Mid greenish grey clay, very plastic   | 0.66+         |       |           |
| 34504   | Palaeochannel – Mid blue grey clay, very plastic, occasional small shells. Width unknown as under (34502) 4m wide sondage put through channel. | 0.66–2.80+    |       |           |

**Summary** –

| <b>TR346</b>   | <b>Orientation</b>   | <b>L (m)</b>         | <b>W (m)</b> | <b>Av. D (m)</b> |
|----------------|--|----------------------|--------------|------------------|
|                | NNW–SSE  | 50                   | 1.8          | 0.52             |
| <b>Context</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Depth BGL (m)</b> |              |                  |
| 34600          | Topsoil – Mid greyish brown silty clay   | 0–0.23               |              |                  |
| 34601          | Subsoil – Mid yellow brown, silty clay   | 0.23–0.44            |              |                  |
| 34602          | Natural – light grey yellow silty clay   | 0.44+                |              |                  |
| 34603          | Cut of treethrow – irregular in plan, irregular base.<br>L: 1.31, W: 1.02, D: 0.10 | 0.44–0.54            |              |                  |
| 34604          | Fill of [34604] – mid yellow brown silty clay. L:<br>1.31, W: 1.02, D: 0.10        | 0.44–0.54            |              |                  |
| <b>Summary</b> | –  |                      |              |                  |

| <b>TR347</b>   | <b>Orientation</b>  | <b>L (m)</b>         | <b>W (m)</b> | <b>Av. D (m)</b> |
|----------------|---|----------------------|--------------|------------------|
|                | NW–SE   | 50                   | 1.8          | 0.46             |
| <b>Context</b> | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Depth BGL (m)</b> |              |                  |
| 34700          | Topsoil – Dark yellow brown, silty clay, friable.                                   | 0–0.22               |              |                  |
| 34701          | Subsoil – mid yellow brown silty clay, firm yet friable                             | 0.22–0.33            |              |                  |
| 34702          | Alluvium – light grey yellow sandy clay, plastic                                    | 0.33–0.52            |              |                  |
| 34703          | Natural – mid orange grey clay, firm, occasional small-medium sized angular stones. | 0.52+                |              |                  |
| <b>Summary</b> | –   |                      |              |                  |

APPENDIX 2 OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: headland3-235386

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**Project details**

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| <b>Project name</b>                           | Swindon Eastern Villages - Access Road   |
| <b>Short description of the project</b>       | Headland Archaeology undertook a trial trench evaluation on land in the vicinity of Longleaze Farm, Swindon. Only two potential archaeological features, both pits, were identified across the site while many of the geophysical anomalies from the survey were found to be either stone throws or large stones still in situ. The absence of much archaeology suggests that the area has been predominantly farmland for an extended period of time. |
| <b>Project dates</b>                          | Start: 30-11-2015 End: 04-12-2015  |
| <b>Previous/future work</b>                   | Yes / Not known  |
| <b>Any associated project reference codes</b> | SEVS-003 - Sitecode  |
| <b>Type of project</b>                        | Field evaluation   |
| <b>Site status</b>                            | None   |
| <b>Monument type</b>                          | N/A None   |
| <b>Significant Finds</b>                      | N/A None   |
| <b>Methods &amp; techniques</b>               | “Sample Trenches”, “Targeted Trenches”   |
| <b>Development type</b>                       | Road scheme (new and widening)   |
| <b>Prompt</b>                                 | National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF  |
| <b>Position in the planning process</b>       | Between deposition of an application and determination   |

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**Project location**

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|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Country</b>          | England   |
| <b>Site location</b>    | WILTSHIRE SWINDON STRATTON ST MARGARET Swindon Eastern Villages - Access Road |
| <b>Postcode</b>         | SN3 4RT   |
| <b>Study area</b>       | 22.5 Hectares   |
| <b>Site coordinates</b> | SU 20405 87127 51.582158522464 -1.705475408352 51 34 55 N 001 42 19 W Point   |

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**Project creators**

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**Name of Organisation** Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd.

**Project brief originator** CLIENT

**Project design originator** Environmental Design Partnership

**Project director/manager** Mike Kimber AlFA

**Project supervisor** Iain Bennett

**Type of sponsor/funding body** client

**Name of sponsor/funding body** Ainscough Strategic Land

**Entered by** Iain Bennett (iain.bennett@headlandarchaeology.com)

**Entered on** 22 December 2015







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**SOUTH & EAST**

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd  
Building 68C, Wrest Park, Silsoe  
Bedfordshire MK45 4HS

01525 861 578

[southandeast@headlandarchaeology.com](mailto:southandeast@headlandarchaeology.com)

**MIDLANDS & WEST**

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd  
Unit 1, Clearview Court, Twyford Road  
Hereford HR2 6JR

01432 364 901

[midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com](mailto:midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com)

**NORTH**

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd  
Unit 16, Hillside, Beeston Road  
Leeds LS11 8ND

0113 387 6430

[north@headlandarchaeology.com](mailto:north@headlandarchaeology.com)

**SCOTLAND**

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd  
13 Jane Street  
Edinburgh EH6 5HE

0131 467 7705

[scotland@headlandarchaeology.com](mailto:scotland@headlandarchaeology.com)

[www.headlandarchaeology.com](http://www.headlandarchaeology.com)