

SLRH/01



GEOTECHNICAL SITE INVESTIGATIONS TO THE SOUTH- WEST OF HEREFORD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
EHE NO. 80306

commissioned by Balfour Beatty Living Places
on behalf of Herefordshire Council

September 2017

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PROJECT SUMMARY

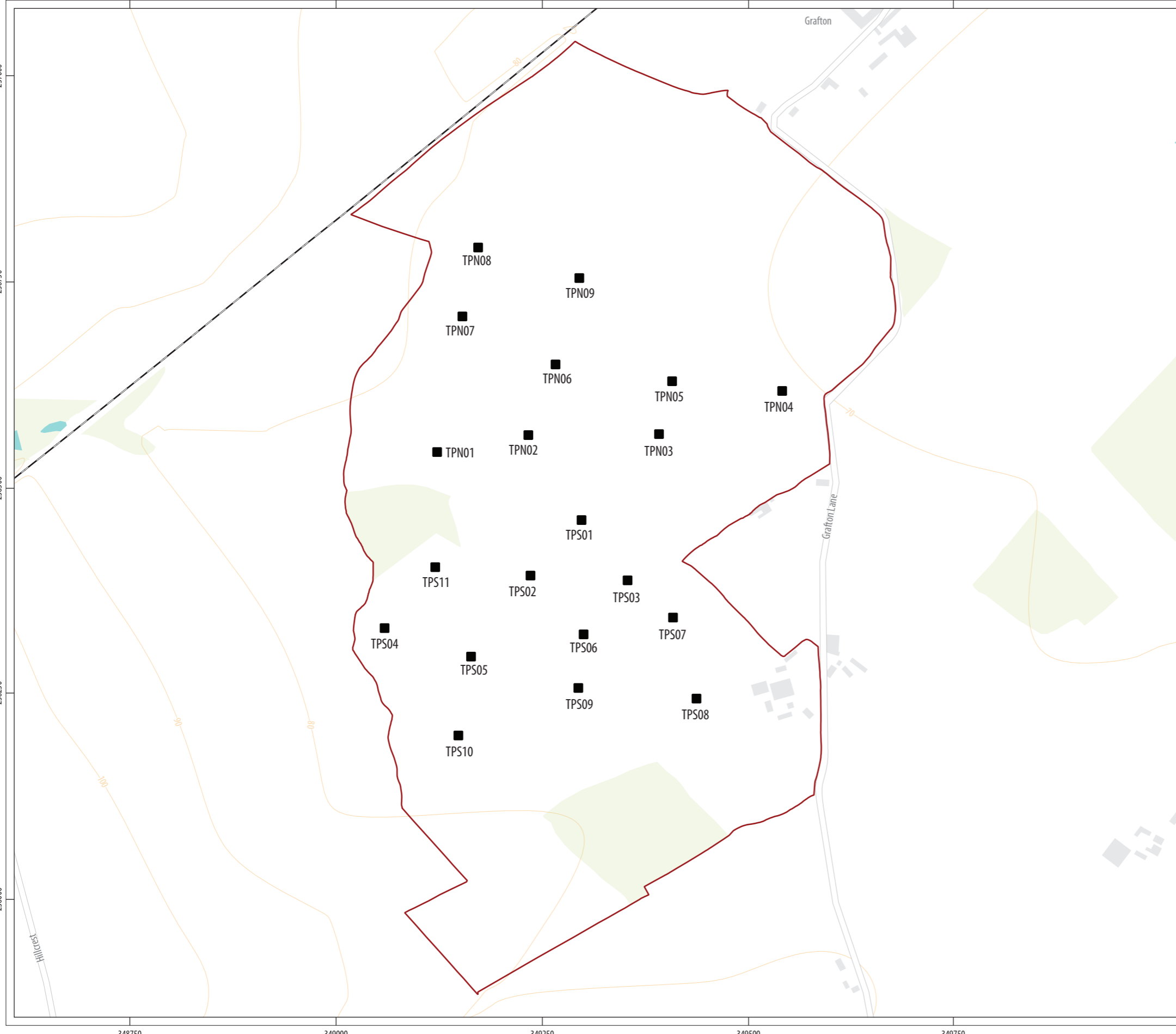
Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd undertook archaeological monitoring during the excavation of a series of geotechnical test pits on land to the south-west of Hereford. The geotechnical survey was undertaken in fields on the potential route of the proposed Hereford southern link road. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified during the work, with only a potential alluvial deposit identified within an otherwise consistent stratigraphic profile.

CONTENTS

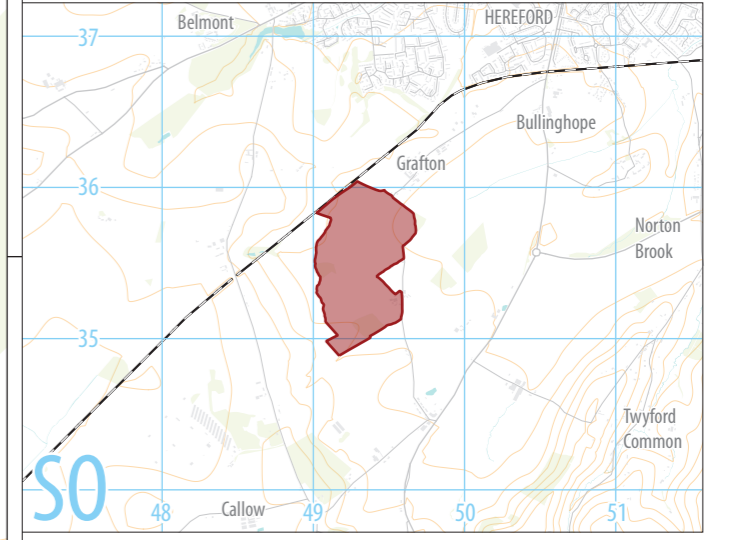
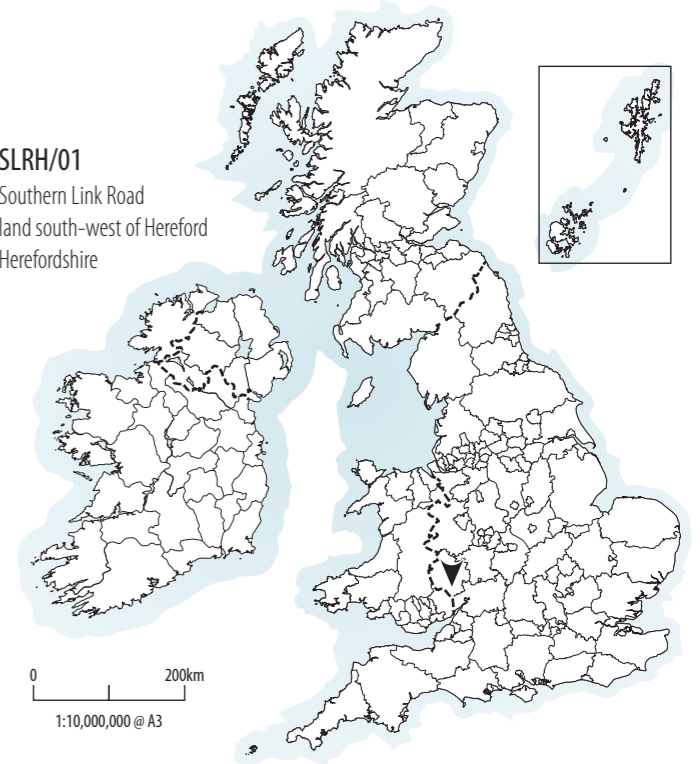
| | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| | 1.1 SITE DESCRIPTION | 1 |
| | 1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND | 1 |
| 2 | METHOD | 2 |
| 3 | RESULTS | 2 |
| | 3.1 TEST PITS | 2 |
| 4 | CONCLUSION | 3 |
| 5 | REFERENCES | 3 |
| 6 | APPENDICES | 4 |
| | APPENDIX 1 TEST PIT REGISTER | 4 |

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

| | | |
|----------------|---|-----|
| ILLUS 1 | SITE LOCATION | VII |
| ILLUS 2 | GENERAL VIEW WORK IN PROGRESS, SOUTHERN TEST PITS, LOOKING NORTH-EAST | 2 |
| ILLUS 3 | GENERAL VIEW OF TPS01 | 3 |
| ILLUS 4 | SOUTH FACING SECTION THROUGH TPS06 | 6 |
| ILLUS 5 | GENERAL VIEW OF TPN07 | 3 |
| ILLUS 6 | WEST FACING SECTION THROUGH TPN01 | 3 |



SLRH/01
 Southern Link Road
 land south-west of Hereford
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GEOTECHNICAL SITE INVESTIGATIONS TO THE SOUTH- WEST OF HEREFORD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

1 INTRODUCTION

This document reports on the findings of an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of geotechnical test pits on farmland to the south-west of Hereford, conducted by Headland Archaeology between the 7th and 11th August 2017.

Balfour Beatty are assessing options for the route of a bypass to relieve traffic congestion in Hereford. In order to assess ground conditions, a series of boreholes and test pits were excavated along a broadly east-west corridor of land south-west of the City of Hereford (Illus 1).

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Headland Archaeology (Bain 2017) and agreed with the archaeological advisor to Herefordshire Council, Mr. Julian Cotton.

1.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposed development corridor links the A49 Ross Road (NGR SO 50447 36586) and the A465 Abergavenny Road near Belmont before continuing on to join the B4349 Clehonger Road opposite Clehonger Court (NGR SO 47347 37581).

The road corridor passes through arable and pasture farmland and in the east of the corridor passes through an area of woodland (Grafton Wood). The corridor rises from a level of approximately 68m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the east, to approximately 95m AOD in the west. The investigation area is located to the south of the village of Grafton, approximately 1.5km west of the A49.

The underlying geology of the proposed development corridor consists of Raglan Mudstone formation (interbedded mudstone and siltstone) formed between 416 and 419 million years ago. Superficial deposits, where they exist, are alluvial clays, silts, sands and gravels (NERC 2017).

1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A Desk Based Assessment of the scheme (Parsons Brinkerhoff 2014) outlined the following archaeological and historical background. There is evidence within the Scheme area for archaeological and built heritage assets spanning the Prehistoric to Industrial periods.

Trial trench evaluation near Grafton (at the eastern end of the road corridor) was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (Lovett, Woodiwiss & Arnold 2015) to test the results of a previous desk-based assessment and geophysical survey of the site. The evaluation identified evidence of Iron Age activity in the form of pits and a ditch.

The evidence for Iron Age settlement in the region has been inextricably linked with the presence of hillforts in the area. Many of the hillforts are situated on steep scarp edges with a univallate defences, like that at Dinedor Camp (SM1001758) located some 1.8km east of the investigation area.

The Roman town of Kenchester lies approximately 10km to the north-west of the Southern Link Road. Despite its relatively small size, it is noted to have had a bastioned town wall and several villa-like farmsteads on its hinterland. The concentration of high-status farms in the vicinity of Kenchester, nearly all found within 2 km, is unparalleled in the county. A villa discovered during the construction of a new rectory at Bishopstone in 1836, less than 10km from the scheme, featured a large mosaic and appears to have been located at the centre of a large complex at least 200m by 200m in extent.

There is one asset dating to the late medieval period within the immediate vicinity of the proposed scheme. The site of a motte (MHE4619) is recorded to the south of Grafton. The motte forms part of the greatest concentration of earth and timber castles in England and is one of 120 recorded in Herefordshire. There is potential for contemporary remains associated with the asset to extend into the Scheme Area.



ILLUS2 General view work in progress, southern test pits, looking north-east

2 METHOD

The bore-hole and test pit locations were set out by the client at designated points along the proposed route.

A total of 20 test pits were excavated during the course of the ground investigation works, to the south (TPS01–11) and north (TPN01–09) of the proposed road corridor. The excavation was monitored archaeologically to establish the stratigraphic sequence and identify any archaeological remains disturbed by the investigation. Test pits were excavated by a 360° tracked excavator to depths between 1.60 and 3.50m, as required (Illus 2). Material recovered to the surface during the test pit excavation was visually scanned by the monitoring archaeologist for archaeological remains, and a record maintained of the sequence of deposits. Excavation was periodically stopped in order to check for the presence of archaeological deposits during the excavation of the test pits. Bore-holes had already been completed prior to attendance on site and were not archaeologically monitored.

All recording followed Cifa Standards and guidance. All deposits identified during the test pit excavation were given a unique number, and recorded on pro forma record sheets, recording the level at which deposits were encountered below ground level (BGL). Where appropriate, digital photographs were taken of the test pit sections together with general views.

3 RESULTS

A full description of the sequence of deposits at each location is provided in Appendix 1. The location of test pits is recorded on illus 1.

3.1 TEST PITS

Test pits TPS01–11 were located south of the proposed road corridor. The pits were approximately 3.00m long, 0.70m wide and ranged in depth between 1.90m (TPS07) and 3.50m (TPS02, 05).

The soil profiles displayed regularity throughout the test pits. Located on generally low lying grass and pasture fields, a mid-reddish brown silty clay topsoil, between 0.15m and 0.35m thick, sealed a mid-orangey brown silty clay subsoil, between 0.17m and 0.27m thick (eg 10001 and 10002) (Illus 3).

Within Test pit TPS06, the subsoil overlay a light brownish grey silty clay with orange mottling, indicative of a gley soil, and interpreted as alluvial deposition (Illus 4). A shallow depression was observed crossing the field which may have represented the course of a palaeochannel. The deposit was some 0.25m thick and is likely to have represented the edge of alluvial deposition within such a potential channel or may have been possibly a flooding event.

The underlying geological deposit was found to be consistent, comprising of a mid-brownish red clay (eg (10003)), with degraded stone fragments observed throughout.

Test pits to the north (TPN01–09) ranged between 3.00m and 3.50m in length, were also 0.70m wide and varied in depth between 1.60m (TPN03) and 3.70m (TPN07) (Illus 5).



ILLUS 3 General view of TPS01 **ILLUS 4** South facing section through TPS06 **ILLUS 5** General view of TPN07 **ILLUS 6** West facing section through TPN01

A top and subsoil profile consistent with that seen in the southern test pits was identified (eg 01001, 01002). The layers varied in thickness between 0.17 and 0.27m and 0.11 and 0.30m thickness respectively.

Within TPN01 a layer of degraded sandstone (01003) was encountered below the subsoil (Illus 6), this was not believed to be archaeologically significant. This in turn sealed a mid brownish red clay geological deposit containing degraded stone (eg 01004), which was consistently observed in all of the northern test pits.

No artefactual finds, features or deposits suggestive of archaeological activity were identified during the excavation of the test pits.

4 CONCLUSION

No archaeological remains or deposits were identified during the monitoring of the ground investigation works on the route of the Southern Link Road. Due to the limited scale of observations made during the works, it is not possible to entirely rule out the possibility of archaeological deposits at the locations observed.

The possible presence of a palaeochannel or flooding event was noted.

The archaeological monitoring has succeeded in providing a record of the sequence of deposits which will aid the development of future strategies for the assessment of archaeological potential along the course of the proposed link road.

5 REFERENCES

- Bain K 2017 *Geotechnical site investigations to the South-West of Hereford: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief* [unpublished client document] Headland Archaeology
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014a *Code of Conduct* (Reading) <http://http.www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CodesofConduct.pdf> accessed 14 September 2017
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- Parsons Brinkerhoff 2014 *South Wye Transport Package: Southern Link Road Cultural Heritage Desk-based Assessment* [unpublished client document] Parsons Brinkerhoff

6 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 TEST PIT REGISTER

DBGL = Depth below ground level

| TPS01 | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|------|
| Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | | |
| | 3.10 | 0.7 | 3.20 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) | |
| 10001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small/medium sub-rounded stones | 0–0.19 | |
| 10002 | Subsoil: Mid-orange brown silty clay | 0.19–0.30 | |
| 10003 | Geological deposit: Mid reddish brown clay containing degraded sandstone | 0.30–3.20 | |
| Summary | On arable land. No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| TPS02 | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|------|
| Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | | |
| | 3.20 | 0.70 | 3.50 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) | |
| 11001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small/medium sub-rounded stones | 0–0.35 | |
| 11002 | Subsoil: Mid-orange brown silty clay | 0.35–0.55 | |
| 11003 | Geological deposit: Mid reddish brown clay containing degraded sandstone | 0.55–3.50 | |
| Summary | Low lying pasture. No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| TPS03 | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|------|
| Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | | |
| | 3.10 | 0.70 | 2.80 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) | |
| 12001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small/medium sub-rounded stones | 0–0.28 | |
| 12002 | Subsoil: Mid-orange brown silty clay containing rare small stones | 0.28–0.53 | |
| 12003 | Geological deposit: Mid reddish brown clay containing degraded sandstone | 0.53–2.80 | |
| Summary | No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| TPS04 | | | |
|--------------------------|---|----------|------|
| Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | | |
| | 3.50 | 0.70 | 2.40 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) | |
| 13001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small/medium sub-rounded stones | 0–0.26 | |

| | | |
|---------|--|-----------|
| 13002 | Subsoil: Mid-orange brown silty clay containing rare small stones | 0.26–0.45 |
| 13003 | Geological deposit: Mid reddish brown clay containing degraded sandstone | 0.45–2.40 |
| Summary | Low lying pasture. No archaeological remains identified. | |

| TPS05 | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|------|
| Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | | |
| | 3.80 | 0.70 | 3.50 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) | |
| 14001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small/medium sub-rounded stones | 0–0.31 | |
| 14002 | Subsoil: Mid-orange brown silty clay containing rare small stones | 0.31–0.45 | |
| 14003 | Geological deposit: Mid reddish brown clay containing degraded sandstone | 0.45–3.50 | |
| Summary | On arable land. No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| TPS06 | | | |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|------|
| Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | | |
| | 3.50 | 0.70 | 3.10 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) | |
| 15001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small/medium sub-rounded stones | 0–0.15 | |
| 15002 | Subsoil: Mid-orange brown silty clay | 0.15–0.30 | |
| 15003 | Alluvial deposit: Light brownish grey silty clay, orange mottling | 0.30–0.55 | |
| 15004 | Geological deposit: Mid reddish brown clay containing degraded sandstone | 0.55–3.10 | |
| Summary | Depression visible across field, low lying rough pasture. Possible alluvial deposit and channel. | | |

| TPS07 | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|------|
| Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | | |
| | 3.00 | 0.70 | 1.90 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) | |
| 16001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small/medium sub-rounded stones | 0–0.19 | |
| 16002 | Subsoil: Mid-orange brown silty clay | 0.19–0.32 | |
| 16003 | Geological deposit: Mid reddish brown clay containing degraded sandstone | 0.32–1.90 | |
| Summary | Pasture. No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| Context | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | DBGL (m) |
|---------|---|------|-----------|
| | Description | | |
| | 2.70 | 0.70 | 3.30 |
| 17001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small/medium sub-rounded stones | | 0–0.25 |
| 17002 | Subsoil: Mid-orange brown silty clay | | 0.25–0.40 |
| 17003 | Geological deposit: Mid reddish brown clay containing degraded sandstone | | 0.40–3.30 |
| Summary | Pasture located towards top of ridge. No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| Context | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | DBGL (m) |
|---------|---|------|-----------|
| | Description | | |
| | 3.00 | 0.70 | 3.00 |
| 18001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small/medium sub-rounded stones | | 0–0.24 |
| 18002 | Subsoil: Mid-orange brown silty clay | | 0.24–0.45 |
| 18003 | Geological deposit: Mid reddish brown clay containing degraded sandstone | | 0.45–3.00 |
| Summary | Low lying pasture. No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| Context | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | DBGL (m) |
|---------|---|------|-----------|
| | Description | | |
| | 4.00 | 0.70 | 3.20 |
| 19001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small/medium sub-rounded stones | | 0–0.21 |
| 19002 | Subsoil: Mid-orange brown silty clay | | 0.21–0.45 |
| 19003 | Geological deposit: Mid reddish brown clay containing degraded sandstone | | 0.45–3.20 |
| Summary | Low lying pasture. No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| Context | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | DBGL (m) |
|---------|---|------|-----------|
| | Description | | |
| | 3.30 | 0.70 | 3.20 |
| 20001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small/medium sub-rounded stones | | 0–0.24 |
| 20002 | Subsoil: Mid-orange brown silty clay | | 0.24–0.50 |
| 20003 | Geological deposit: Mid reddish brown clay containing degraded sandstone | | 0.50–3.20 |
| Summary | Low lying pasture. No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| Context | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | DBGL (m) |
|---------|--|------|-----------|
| | Description | | |
| | 3.00 | 0.70 | 3.30 |
| 01001 | Topsoil: Mid-reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small stones | | 0–0.27 |
| 01002 | Subsoil: Mid orangey brown silty clay containing rare small stones | | 0.27–0.48 |
| 01003 | Deposit: Mid-yellowish grey with brown mottling, degraded sandstones | | 0.48–3.30 |
| Summary | Rough pasture. No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| Context | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | DBGL (m) |
|---------|---|------|-----------|
| | Description | | |
| | 3.00 | 0.70 | 3.10 |
| 02001 | Topsoil: Mid-reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small stones | | 0–0.27 |
| 02002 | Subsoil: Mid orangey brown silty clay containing rare small stones | | 0.27–0.60 |
| 02003 | Geological deposit: Mid-dark brownish red clay containing light grey degraded stone | | 0.60–3.10 |
| Summary | No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| Context | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | | DBGL (m) |
|---------|---|------|-----------|
| | Description | | |
| | 3.00 | 0.70 | 1.60 |
| 03001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small stones | | 0–0.17 |
| 03002 | Subsoil: Mid orangey brown silty clay containing rare small stones | | 0.17–0.38 |
| 03003 | Geological deposit: Mid-dark brownish red clay containing light grey degraded stone | | 0.38–1.60 |
| Summary | Arable field. No archaeological remains identified. | | |

| TPN04 | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| | 3.50 | 0.70 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) |
| 04001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small stones | 0–0.25 |
| 04002 | Subsoil: Mid orangey brown silty clay containing rare small stones | 0.25–0.35 |
| 04003 | Geological deposit: Mid-dark brownish red clay containing light grey degraded stone | 0.35–3.30 |
| Summary | Arable field. No archaeological remains identified. | |

| TPN07 | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| | 3.00 | 0.70 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) |
| 07001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small stones | 0–0.27 |
| 07002 | Subsoil: Mid orangey brown silty clay containing rare small stones | 0.27–0.50 |
| 07003 | Geological deposit: Mid-dark brownish red clay containing light grey degraded stone | 0.50–3.70 |
| Summary | Rough pasture. No archaeological remains identified. | |

| TPN05 | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| | 3.00 | 0.70 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) |
| 05001 | Topsoil: Mid-reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small stones | 0–0.23 |
| 05002 | Subsoil: Mid orangey brown silty clay containing rare small stones | 0.23–0.47 |
| 05003 | Geological deposit: Mid-dark brownish red clay containing light grey degraded stone | 0.47–2.00 |
| Summary | Arable field. No archaeological remains identified. | |

| TPN08 | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| | 3.20 | 0.70 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) |
| 08001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small stones | 0–0.29 |
| 08002 | Subsoil: Mid orangey brown silty clay containing rare small stones | 0.29–0.50 |
| 08003 | Geological deposit: Mid-dark brownish red clay containing light grey degraded stone | 0.50–1.80 |
| Summary | Rough pasture. No archaeological remains identified. | |

| TPN06 | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| | 3.00 | 0.70 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) |
| 06001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small stones | 0–0.18 |
| 06002 | Subsoil: Mid orangey brown silty clay containing rare small stones | 0.18–0.29 |
| 06003 | Geological deposit: Mid-dark brownish red clay containing light grey degraded stone | 0.29–2.10 |
| Summary | No archaeological remains identified. | |

| TPN09 | Dimensions L x W x D (m) | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| | 3.00 | 0.70 |
| Context | Description | DBGL (m) |
| 09001 | Topsoil: Mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional small stones | 0–0.20 |
| 09002 | Subsoil: Mid orangey brown silty clay containing rare small stones | 0.20–0.40 |
| 09003 | Geological deposit: Mid-dark brownish red clay containing light grey degraded stone | 0.40–3.50 |
| Summary | No archaeological remains identified. | |



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