

MONB/01



LAND AT MONGER LANE, MIDSOMER NORTON, BATH AND NORTH-EAST SOMERSET

Archaeological Evaluation

commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership
on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd

Appeal Ref. APP/F0114/A/13/2199783

Application Ref. 12/04590/OUT

January 2015

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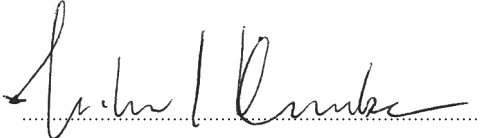
January 2015

project info

HA JOB NO. MONB/01
HAS NO. 1087
NGR ST 65968 55210
PARISH Midsomer Norton
LOCAL AUTHORITY Bath and North-East Somerset Council
OASIS REF. headland4-199374

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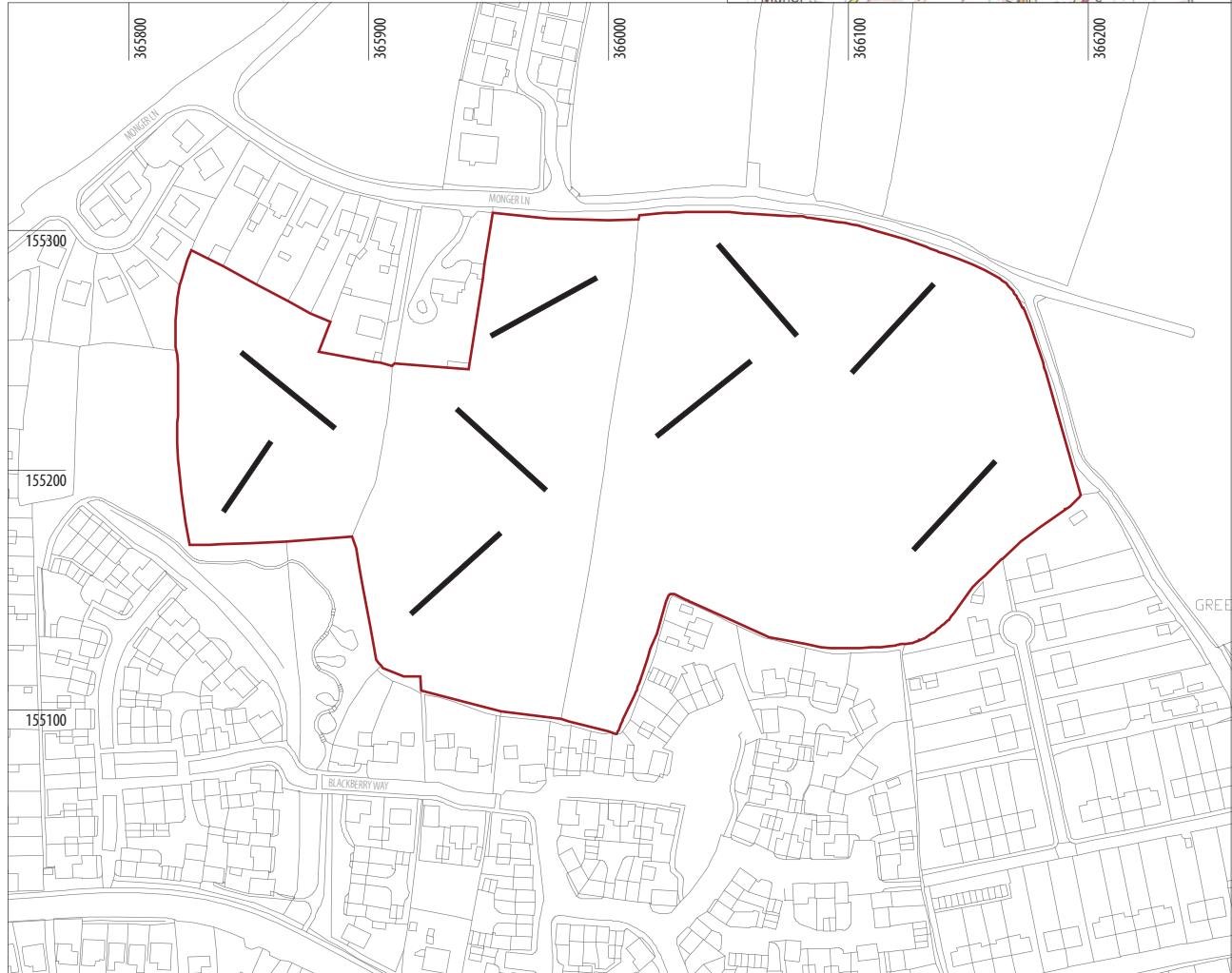
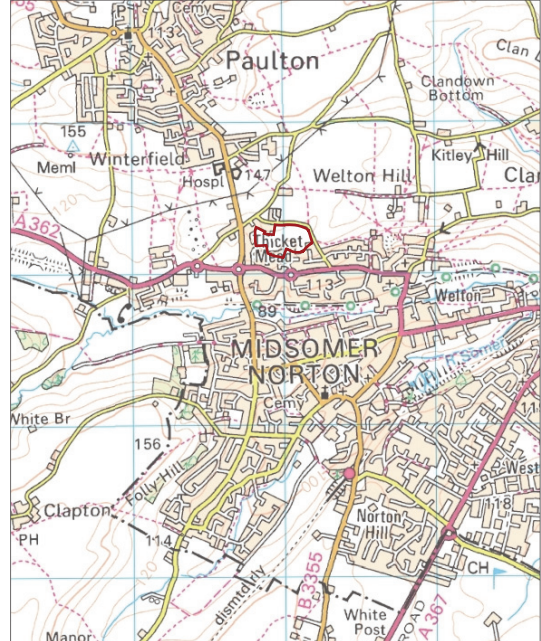
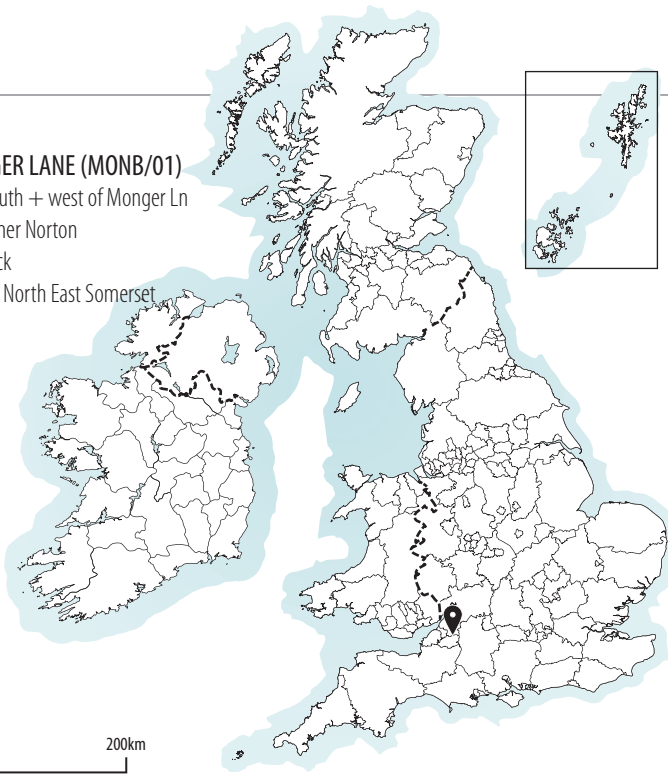
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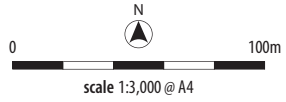
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MONGER LANE (MONB/01)

land south + west of Monger Ln
 Midsomer Norton
 Radstock
 Bath + North East Somerset



- KEY**
- development boundary
 - trench location



ILLUS 1
 Site location



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LAND AT MONGER LANE, MIDSOMER NORTON, BATH AND NORTH-EAST SOMERSET

Archaeological Evaluation

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd conducted a trial-trench archaeological evaluation on land at Monger Lane, Midsomer Norton, as part of a programme of archaeological evaluative works carried out in response to a condition placed on planning consent for the residential development of the site. Trial trenching revealed very little archaeological evidence for past activity, with the majority of the trenches simply consisting of topsoil overlying subsoil over the undisturbed geological deposits. The only archaeological feature was a small post-medieval pit in Trench 8, potentially associated with the agricultural or mining activity taking place in the area. This is considered to be of low significance, and the site is not considered to have the potential to contain any remains of greater importance than this.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND

Planning permission has been granted for the residential development of land at Monger Lane, Midsomer Norton (NGR 365968, 155210) by Bath and North-East Somerset Council. This land is henceforth referred to as 'the site' and covers 5.4 hectares. An archaeological condition was placed on the planning permission which required a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken. This comprised in the first instance archaeological trial trenching.

The Environmental Dimension Partnership, acting on behalf of Taylor Wimpey, commissioned Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd to carry out the trial trenching evaluation and produce a report on the results. This evaluation was carried out in order to assess the extent, nature and survival of archaeological features within the site and to inform the need (or lack thereof) for further mitigation.

The remit of the archaeological trial trenching programme was outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation compiled by Headland Archaeology before the fieldwork started, and was agreed with the Archaeological Advisor to the planning authority (Headland Archaeology 2014). A systematic array of trenches was designed to effectively evaluate the site (**Illus 1**).

1.2 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

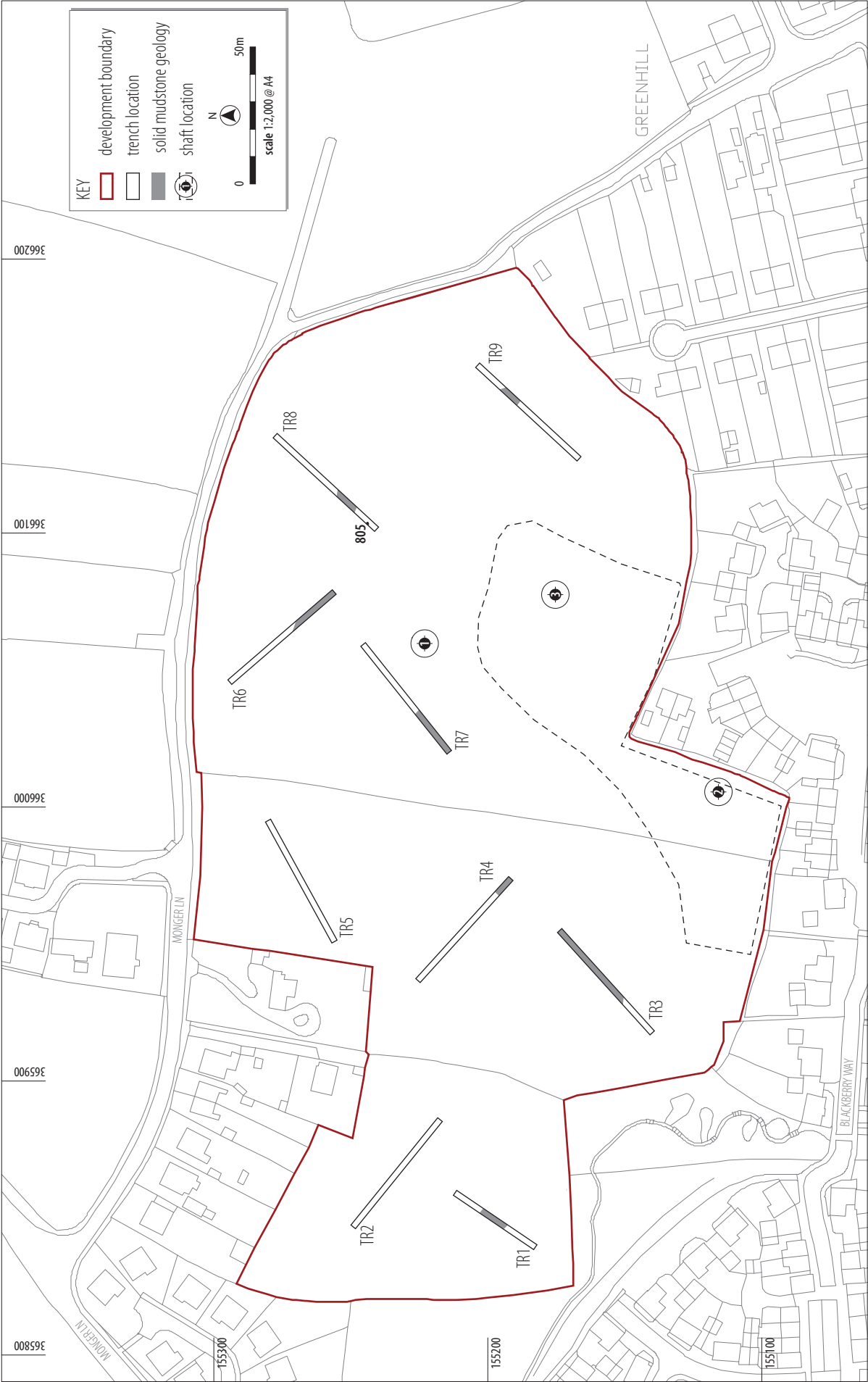
The site is located in the north-western part of the settlement of Midsomer Norton (centred at NGR 365958 155210) in north-east Somerset. It is bounded by Monger Lane to the north and east; the rear of residential houses to the north-west; and residential housing off the A362 to the south.

The site currently consists of three fields under pasture and arable cultivation, surrounded by mature hedgerows. It is broadly an irregular rectangle in shape, and is a total of 5.4 hectares in size (although once ecological and mineshaft exclusions have been taken into account the area available for evaluation was 3.9ha).

The site lies on sloping ground which rises to the north from approximately 110m to approximately 125mOD. There are also some more minor variations in topography across the site, particularly in the eastern field where the central part is far lower than the eastern and western parts. This appears to have been the result of mining activity.

The underlying geology of the site is Langport Member and Blue Lias Formation. This is a sedimentary bedrock (mudstone and limestone), formed in the Jurassic and Triassic Periods. No superficial deposits are recorded in this area (www.bgs.ac.uk).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND



ILLUS 2
Trench plan

The archaeological background of the site has been detailed in the desk-based assessment (Stephenson 2014). The results of this are summarised here.

There is very little evidence for prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site. The only record in the Historic Environment Record is the discovery of 18 worked flint flakes during archaeological monitoring on a pipeline 400m to the west of the site – this has been interpreted as a possible settlement site.

No evidence for Roman activity has been uncovered within the direct vicinity of the site. However, the Fosse Way, a Roman road, runs through the eastern edge of Midsomer Norton, and a Roman settlement at Camerton is known (although 2km away from the site).

Evidence for medieval activity in the vicinity of the site is all associated with the historic core of Welton, 500m to the east of the site, and comprises a medieval ditch or rubbish pit, a medieval trackway, and other medieval material found in this area. No evidence for medieval activity closer to the site has been uncovered.

The post-medieval history of the site can be understood through analysis of historic mapping. The earliest available map is the 1813 Parish Map, which replicates a copy of William Simpson's 1789 Map and shows the site consisting of a large field in the east, subdivided by a line of trees and a footpath running from north-west to south-east across the site. The 1841 Tithing Map shows a 'stall' in the southern part of the large eastern field and a small enclosure adjacent to Monger Lane in the north-east, but with the field layout remaining broadly the same. The accompanying apportionment shows that these fields were in use for arable and pastoral cultivation, with a small plantation. The 1880s and 1948 Ordnance Survey Maps still show the site as consisting of open fields, with little change to field boundaries. It would therefore appear that the site remained as open fields, used for agriculture, throughout its post-medieval history.

Development immediately south of the site was subject to an archaeological watching brief during construction, although no archaeological remains were recorded.

The results of a geophysical (conductivity) survey commissioned to search for buried mine workings (Whiteley 2012) indicate the likely presence of mineshafts. No other potential archaeological remains were identified but this method of investigation is not commonly suited for archaeological prospection.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The archaeological investigations were carried out in order to:

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

- produce and deposit a satisfactory archive and disseminate the results of the work via grey-literature reporting and publication as appropriate.

The local and regional research contexts are provided in the South West Archaeological Research Framework. Specific questions from these frameworks will be analysed in relation to the evidence recovered from the evaluation, but may include:

Research Aim 19: Improve our understanding of wild and domesticated animals in the past;

Research Aim 20: Improve our understanding of wild and cultivated plants in the past;

Research Aim 21: Improve our understanding of the environmental aspects of farming;

Research Aim 43: Address the lack of knowledge of post-medieval to modern food production.

3 METHODOLOGY

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the following documents:

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

The methodology underlying the archaeological trial trenching programme was outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Headland Archaeology 2014), and agreed with the archaeological advisor. The trench layout was designed to evaluate the site using a systematic trenching array, with the trenches spread evenly across the area.

Trial trenching was carried out between the 15th and 17th December 2014. A total of nine trenches were excavated across the site, eight measuring 50m in length by 2.1m in width, and one measuring 35m in length by 2.1m in width.

A 360° tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket was used to remove topsoil under direct archaeological control. Excavation continued until clean geological sediments or archaeological deposits were encountered.

Further excavation required to satisfy the objectives of the evaluation was continued by hand. A representative sample, sufficient to meet the objectives of the evaluation, of identified features was investigated by hand and all features were recorded. The stratigraphy of each trench was recorded in full.

All recording was in accordance with the code of conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and in line with the approved WSI (Headland Archaeology 2014). All trenches and contexts were given unique numbers. All recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards that conform to accepted archaeological standards. All stratigraphic relationships were recorded.



ILLUS 3

Trench 1, looking S, and showing clean geological deposit

ILLUS 4

Section of Trench 4, showing solid mudstone geology

ILLUS 5

NE facing section of pit [805]

An overall site plan at an appropriate scale and relative to the National Grid was recorded by digital survey using a differential GPS.

A full photographic record comprising colour slide and black and white print photographs was taken, supplemented with digital photography. A metric scale was clearly visible in record photographs.

4 RESULTS

Full trench descriptions, including orientation, length, and depth are presented in Appendix 1. Technical details of individual contexts are also presented in Appendix 1. Contexts are numbered by trench number: i.e. Trench 1 (101), Trench 2 (201). Cut features are shown as [101] whilst their fills are expressed as (102), for example.

4.1 GENERAL STRATIGRAPHY

The stratigraphy of the majority of the trenches across the site simply consisted of topsoil over subsoil over the substrate, with no archaeological finds, features, or deposits. The only exception to this



was in Trench 8, where a small post-medieval pit was recorded.

The topsoil was observed in all trenches, and consisted of a loose red-brown clayey-silt deposit with some rooting. This was a consistent thickness of between 0.2m and 0.25m. This overlay the subsoil deposit, a firm brown-red silty-clay with occasional pebbles, CBM flecks, charcoal flecks, and rooting. This was 0.1-0.15m in thickness.

The undisturbed geology mainly comprised a compact pink-red silty-clay. In places, areas of medium-large sub-angular/rounded mudstone were observed. This tended to occur in patches within trenches, and was particularly found in areas of higher ground. For example, a concentration of mudstone was observed in the north-eastern part of Trench 3, disappearing at the south-western end with the drop in elevation. Illustration 2 provides a graphic representation of where these areas of mudstone were recorded. This undisturbed geology was recorded at between 0.3-0.4m beneath the present ground-surface.

4.2 PIT [805]

A single small sub-circular pit was uncovered towards the south-western end of Trench 8. It measured 0.75m by 0.6m, and was 0.15m in depth. The pit had irregular sides and a flat base, and contained a single loose grey clayey-silt fill. Finds of post-medieval pottery, an iron nail, coal, and animal bone, were recovered from the fill of this pit. The fill of this pit also extended to the west by c.0.5m, as a spread of material extending beyond its edges.

The precise function of this pit is unclear, however it is of post-medieval date and may be associated with the agricultural activity

taking place within the site. Alternatively, it might have had a function in relation to the mining activity taking place in the southern part of the site.

5 DISCUSSION

The trial-trenching evaluation uncovered very little archaeological evidence for past activity. The majority of the trenches across the site simply consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil over the undisturbed geological deposit. The only feature of archaeological interest was a single isolated post-medieval pit [805], potentially associated with the agricultural or mining activity taking place in this area.

The local and regional research contexts are provided by the South West Archaeological Research Framework. Section 2.1 of this document identified research aims relating to the understanding of agriculture, particularly post-medieval agriculture. The limited information retrievable from this isolated pit cannot contribute significantly to these research goals, therefore it is considered to have very low significance.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The trial trenching has addressed the objectives of the work by establishing that the site does not contain any archaeological remains of importance. There is the potential for further isolated features of post-medieval date to occur but in all likelihood these will be similar in nature and significance to that found during the evaluation.

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Stephenson 2012 *Monger Lane, Midsomer Norton: Heritage Statement*, Tyler Grange LLP

Whiteley 2012 *Geophysical Survey to map two potential mine features*. TerraDat.



8 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 TRENCH REGISTER

TR1	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	D (M)
	NE-SW	35	2.1	0.45

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	THICKNESS OF DEPOSIT (M)
101	Topsoil – mid reddish brown, clayey silt, loose, rooting.	0.0–0.25
102	Subsoil – mid brownish red, silty clay, firm, rooting, occasional pebbles, CBM, charcoal flecks.	0.25–0.4
103	Undisturbed geology – mid pinky red (some occasional light grey patches), silty clay, compact, occasional small sub angular/rounded mudstone, very frequent medium-large mudstone patch located centrally in trench.	0.4+

No archaeology.

TR2	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	D (M)
	NW-SE	50	2.1	0.45

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	THICKNESS OF DEPOSIT (M)
201	Topsoil – mid reddish brown, clayey silt, loose, rooting.	0.0–0.25
202	Subsoil – mid brownish red, silty clay, firm, rooting, occasional pebbles, CBM, charcoal flecks.	0.25–0.4
203	Undisturbed geology – mid pinky red (some occasional light grey patches), silty clay, compact, occasional/sporadic medium-large sub angular/rounded mudstone.	0.4+

No archaeology.

TR3	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	D (M)
	NE-SW	50	2.1	0.45

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	THICKNESS OF DEPOSIT (M)
301	Topsoil – mid reddish brown, clayey silt, loose, rooting	0.0–0.25
302	Subsoil – mid brownish red, silty clay, firm, rooting, occasional pebbles, CBM, charcoal flecks.	0.25–0.4
303	Undisturbed geology – mid pinky red (some occasional light grey patches), silty clay, compact, moderate medium-large sub angular/rounded mudstone ¾ length of trench, no inclusions at SW end at drop in elevation.	0.4+

No archaeology.

TR4	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	D (M)
	NW-SE	50	2.1	0.4

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	THICKNESS OF DEPOSIT (M)
401	Topsoil – mid reddish brown, clayey silt, loose, rooting	0.0–0.2
402	Subsoil – mid brownish red, silty clay, firm, rooting, occasional pebbles, CBM, charcoal flecks.	0.2–0.35
403	Undisturbed geology – mid pinky red (some occasional light grey patches), silty clay, compact, occasional/sporadic small sub angular/rounded mudstone patches, frequent medium-large sub rounded/angular mudstone rocks at SE trench end.	0.35+

No archaeology.

TR5	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	D (M)
	NE-SW	50	2.1	0.45

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	THICKNESS OF DEPOSIT (M)
501	Topsoil – mid reddish brown, clayey silt, loose, rooting.	0.0–0.25
502	Subsoil – mid brownish red, silty clay, firm, rooting, occasional pebbles, CBM, charcoal flecks.	0.25–0.4
503	Undisturbed geology – mid pinky red (some occasional light grey patches), silty clay, compact, occasional small sub angular/rounded mudstone.	0.4+

No archaeology.

TR6	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	D (M)
	NW-SE	50	2.1	0.35

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	THICKNESS OF DEPOSIT (M)
601	Topsoil – mid reddish brown, clayey silt, loose, rooting.	0.0–0.2
602	Subsoil – mid brownish red, silty clay, firm, rooting, occasional pebble, CBM, charcoal flecks.	0.2–0.3
603	Undisturbed geology – mid pinky red (some occasional light grey patches), silty clay, compact, occasional/sporadic medium-large sub angular/rounded mudstone, no inclusions in NW trench end.	0.3+

No archaeology.

TR7	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	D (M)
	NE-SW	50	2.1	0.45

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	THICKNESS OF DEPOSIT (M)
701	Topsoil – mid reddish brown, silty clay, firm, rooting.	0.0–0.25
702	Subsoil – mid brownish red, silty clay, firm, rooting, occasional pebble, CBM, charcoal flecks.	0.25–0.4
703	Undisturbed geology – mid pinky red (some occasional light grey patches), silty clay, compact, moderate small–medium sub angular/rounded mudstone, no inclusions in NE trench end.	0.4+

No archaeology.

TR8	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	D (M)
	NE-SW	50	2.1	0.45

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	THICKNESS OF DEPOSIT (M)
801	Topsoil – mid reddish brown, clayey silt, loose, rooting.	0.0–0.25
802	Subsoil – mid brownish red, silty clay, firm, rooting, occasional pebble, CBM, charcoal flecks.	0.25–0.4
803	Undisturbed geology – mid pinky red (some occasional light grey patches), silty clay, compact, very occasional small sub angular/rounded mudstone, very frequent medium–large sub angular/rounded mudstone patches located centrally and in NE trench end.	0.4+
804	Fill of pit [805] – mid grey, clayey silt, clear deposit interface, loose, no inclusions.	0.4–0.55
805	Cut of pit – sub-circular in plan, irregular sides, flat base, and irregular break of slope.	0.4–0.55

Small post medieval pit with spread, cut into natural (803), located 3.5m from SW trench end against NW trench section. One fill (804) contained finds of post medieval pottery, fe nail, coal, animal bone.

TR9	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	D (M)
	NE-SW	50	2.1	0.45

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	THICKNESS OF DEPOSIT (M)
901	Topsoil – mid reddish brown, clayey silt, loose, rooting.	0.0–0.25
902	Subsoil – mid brownish red, silty clay, firm, rooting, occasional pebble, CBM, charcoal flecks.	0.25–0.4
903	Undisturbed geology – mid pinky red (some occasional light grey patches), silty clay, compact, very occasional small sub angular/rounded mudstone, very frequent medium–large sub angular/rounded mudstone patch located centrally in trench.	0.4

No archaeology.

APPENDIX 2 PHOTO REGISTER

PHOTO	C/S	B&W	DIGITAL	DIRECTION	DESCRIPTION
001	36	36	001	–	ID shot
002–012	–	–	002–12	–	General pre-excavation shots of site
013	35	35	013	SW	Trench 5 plan
014	34	34	014	SE	Trench 5 sample section
015	33	33	015	NW	Trench 4 plan
016	32	32	016	NE	Trench 4 sample section
017	31	31	017	SW	Trench 3 plan
018	30	30	018	SE	Trench 3 sample section A
019	29	29	019	NE	Trench 3 plan
020	28	28	020	SE	Trench 3 sample section B
021	27	27	021	NW	Trench 2 plan
022	26	26	022	SW	Trench 2 sample section
023	25	25	023	S	Trench 1 plan
024	24	24	024	W	Trench 1 sample section
025	23	23	025	NE	Trench 7 plan
026	22	22	026	NW	Trench 7 sample section
027	21	21	027	NW	Trench 6 plan
028	20	20	028	NE	Trench 6 sample section A
029	19	19	029	NE	Trench 6 sample section B
030	18	18	030	NE	Trench 8 plan
031	17	17	031	SW	Trench 9 plan
032	–	–	032	–	Copy of photo register
033–035	–	–	033–035	–	General post-excavation shots of site
036	16	16	036	SW	NE-facing section of pit [805]
037	15	15	037	NW	Trench 9 sample section
038	14	14	038	SE	Trench 8 sample section
039–41	–	–	039–41	–	General shots of verge damage by passing vehicles
042–048	–	–	042–48	–	Backfilled trenches

APPENDIX 3 DRAWING REGISTER

DRAWING	SCALE	DESCRIPTION
1	1:10	NE facing section of pit [805]



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