

# Plot 20A, West Wiltshire Trading Estate Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report





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## **Contents**

	maryowledgements	
1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.  2.1 Introduction	2
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	5
4	METHODS	6
5	ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS	7
6	CONCLUSIONS	7
7	ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION  7.1 Museum  7.2 Preparation of the archive  7.3 Selection policy  7.4 Security copy  7.5 OASIS	8 8 8
8	8.1 Archive and report copyright	S
REFE	ERENCES1	C
APPE	Appendix 1 Trench summaries	

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1 Site location plan

## **List of Plates**

Cover:

Plate 1

General shot of site looking southwest
General shot of Trench 1 looking east-northeast
General shot of Trench 4 looking southeast. Scales are 2m X 1m Plate 2



## **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by David Brain Partnership, on behalf of Stonecutter Construction Ltd, to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a 0.65 ha parcel of land located in West Wiltshire Trading Estate, 1.1km north-west of the town of Westbury, centred on NGR 368287, 153156.

Four trial trenches were excavated on the development site, each measuring 30 m x 2 m covering roughly 4% of the development area. Trenches 2, 3 and 4 revealed a sequence of topsoil sealing natural geology while in Trench 1 the remains of a modern building was discovered, with the associated demolition layer below the turf and topsoil.

## **Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank David Brain Partnership on behalf of Stonecutters Ltd, for commissioning the archaeological evaluation. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Rachel Foster, Assistant County Archaeologist, who monitored the project for Wiltshire County Council, and to Smiths Plant for their cooperation and help on site.

The fieldwork was directed by Daniel Connor, with the assistance of Christo Nicolle. This report was written by Daniel Connor and edited by Bruce Eaton. The project was managed by Bruce Eaton on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.



# Plot 290A West Wilts Trading Estate, Wiltshire

# **Archaeological Evaluation Report**

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project and planning background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by David Brain Partnership, on behalf of Stonecutter Construction Ltd, to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a 0.65 ha parcel of land located in West Wiltshire Trading Estate, 1.1km north-west of the town of Westbury, centred on NGR 368287, 153156 (**Fig. 1**).
- 1.1.2 The proposed development comprises the construction of 16 light industrial units, across three blocks, one to the north and two to the south, separated by a car parking area. A planning application (18/06025/FUL) has been submitted to Wiltshire Council, and is awaiting decision, subject to some conditions, one of which related to archaeological investigation. This comprised an evaluation by trial trench equating to a 4% sample of the proposed development area.
- 1.1.3 All works were undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed in order to undertake the evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2018a). Rachel Foster, Assistant County Archaeologist, approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing.
- 1.1.4 The evaluation, comprising 4 trial trenches (4 % sample) was undertaken on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2018.

#### 1.2 Scope of the report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description of the results of the evaluation, to interpret the results within a local, regional or wider archaeological context and assess whether the aims of the evaluation have been met.
- 1.2.2 The presented results will provide further information on any archaeological resources that may be impacted by the proposed development and facilitate an informed decision with regard to the requirement for, and methods of, any further archaeological mitigation.

#### 1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The evaluation area is located on an irregular parcel of land, 1.1 km north-west of the town of Westbury. The B3097 bounds the Site to the east, Link Road to the north and Commerce Close to the west. The southern boundary of the Site bisects a large, post-enclosure field which is currently unmanaged pasture.
- 1.3.2 The development plot is situated within a area of land with a gentle rise to the south at an elevation of approximately 55 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Local topography falls gently to the east, towards Bitham Brook.



1.3.3 The underlying bedrock geology throughout the Site is mapped as Oxford Clay Formation, a sedimentary mudstone bedrock formed between 166.1 and 157.3 million years ago during the Jurassic period (British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer). This is overlain by seasonally wet, base rich loamy and clayey soils (Cranfield soil and Agrifood Institute, Soilscapes Viewer).

#### 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background was assessed in a prior desk-based assessment (DBA: WA 2018b), which considered the recorded historic environment resource within a 1 km study area of the proposed development. A summary of the results is presented below, with relevant entry numbers from the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) included. Additional sources of information are referenced, as appropriate.

## 2.2 Previous investigations in vicinity of the proposed development

Watching Briefs

- 2.2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology on Plot 289, 75 m to the west of the Site (Wessex Archaeology, 2018c). Two of the four trenches revealed archaeological features comprising drainage and boundary ditches of probable post-medieval or modern date. Residual finds were recovered from topsoil and subsoil deposits and included pottery, slag, oyster shell, iron, and struck flint ranging in date from the late prehistoric to modern era. Features, including mole drains and ceramic land drains, relating to recent agricultural activity were also identified. All the trenches revealed some level of disturbance with widespread dumping of soils and building debris from recent nearby development.
- 2.2.2 A Watching Brief on Land between Hawkeridge Pumping Station and Westbury Sewage Treatment Works, Westbury revealed no pre-modern activity except Romano-British finds. Building debris relating to a World War Two prisoner of war camp was identified towards the western end of the scheme (**EWI5573**).
- 2.2.3 A Watching Brief on Geotechnical Test Pits on the Westbury Eastern Bypass revealed towards the northern end of the route a potential Romano-British or medieval field system was identified. The easternmost part revealed a concentration of Late Bronze age and Early Iron Age finds. Flints of Mesolithic to Neolithic date were noted in minor concentrations below the natural spring line towards the southern and north-eastern ends of the proposed bypass (**EWI6551**).

#### Archaeological Evaluations

- 2.2.4 Evaluation on the proposed Westbury Eastern Bypass revealed several undated ditches, potentially related to pre-medieval field systems (**EWI6547**).
- 2.2.5 An evaluation at Hawkeridge Farm, Westbury demonstrated that previously identified geophysical anomalies were derived from subsurface remains, though many were seen on investigation to be either modern disturbance, or more often relatively modern land drainage. Discoveries of more significance included a small concentration of Early/ Middle Iron Age pottery in one trench, within a spread considered likely to be post-medieval in date. A single sherd of Romano-British pottery was recovered from the subsoil in a different trench. Medieval (primarily 12th to early 14th century) pottery was recovered throughout the evaluation, though few features were identified that could be confidently described as



- belonging exclusively to this period (most occurrences of medieval pottery were in association with later post-medieval material) (**EWI7197**).
- 2.2.6 An evaluation at Blenches Mill Farm confirmed several likely prehistoric features previously identified by geophysical survey (**EWI7346**).
- 2.2.7 Multiple phases of archaeological evaluation at Glenmore Farm identified an area of archaeological potential towards the north-eastern end of the site. Trenches 1-10 in this area contained a dense concentration of archaeological features, mainly in the form of ditches and gullies. Most were felt to be Romano-British field boundaries or drainage ditches, however some linear feature were identified as a possible trackway. Further Romano-British linear features were identified in Trenches 15-21, however, the concentration of archaeological material became less dense towards the south and west. In the southern part of the site only Trench 24 contained archaeological features in the form of a small boundary ditch. A small amount of prehistoric and medieval pottery was also recorded during the evaluation (EWI7703, EWI7708, EWI8002).

Geophysical surveys

- 2.2.8 Geophysical Survey on the Westbury Eastern Bypass revealed a series of large pits, linear anomalies and two semi-circular features. Several agricultural features were also identified such as ridge and furrow and two previous field boundaries (**EWI6552**).
- 2.2.9 Geophysical Survey on Glenmore Link, Westbury, identified a series of positive linear and curvilinear anomalies which appear to have the form of land boundaries or enclosures (**EWI7005**).
- 2.3 Archaeological and historical context

Prehistoric (pre-AD 43)

- 2.3.1 Considerable prehistoric activity is known from the Wessex Ridgeway, which lies just to the south-east of Westbury, with several prehistoric sites and findspots located within the Study Area. Two separate finds of Neolithic axes are recorded within the southern part of the Study Area (MWI1448 and MWI1447).
- 2.3.2 Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age settlement activity is recorded to the south-east of the Site (MWI1468), consisting of a number of pits and ditches as well as a square enclosure (Wessex Archaeology 2004 and 2013), while Bronze Age pottery has been found just to the south (MWI1468).

Iron Age and Romano-British (700BC – AD 410)

- 2.3.3 The chalk downland to the south-east of Westbury is also known for the survival of material remains and Iron Age and Romano-British activities. The recorded archaeological resource within the Study Area indicates that the landscape was likely settled and farmed during the later Iron Age and Romano-British period. Indeed, the area is overlooked by the large multivallate Iron Age hillfort at Bratton.
- 2.3.4 While no Iron Age sites have yet been positively identified within the Study Area the presence of a cluster of finds within the Westbury Ironworks area (MWI1447) and the late date of some of these finds could suggest continuity of occupation into the Romano-British period. Iron Age pottery was also recovered from a later layer uncovered during an evaluation at Hawkeridge Farm (EWI7197) (Wessex Archaeology 2011).



- 2.3.5 Further Romano-British activity has been identified close to The Ham, including a settlement site and at least one burial first identified during the 19th century (Wessex Archaeology 2014). Another Roman settlement site has been identified immediately adjacent the Site on the opposite side of Hawkeridge Road (MWI1510), where several pits, postholes and ditches were identified during evaluation as well as a possible Iron Age ditch (Wessex Archaeology 2004). Two burials were also identified during this archaeological evaluation and all together the recorded evidence is thought to relate to Romano-British occupation activity (MWI1508 and MWI1509).
- 2.3.6 Settlement features including possible enclosures and trackways have also been identified at Glenmore Farm to the immediate south of the Site (MWI1585) with several further residual Roman pottery scatters encountered across the Study Area.
  - Saxon and Medieval (AD 410 1500)
- 2.3.7 Evidence for Saxon activity is scant within the landscape surrounding the Site. However, the name Westbury or Westberie is of Saxon origin and it is thought to derive from 'West burgh', suggesting a possible fortified settlement within the local area during this period (Haslam 1976, 65). Westbury is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as a large settlement of 170 households with six mills, held by the King. Although the current structure is 19th century, there is a suggestion that Blenches Mill, to the east of the Site, may have been the location of the one the mills listed (Haslam 1976, 65). The church is also listed in the Domesday Book and since the present structure dates to the 15th century (list entry 1180510), an earlier structure must have existed, most likely on the same site. Both Hawkeridge (MWI1526) and Heywood (MWI1525) are also thought to have medieval origins.
- 2.3.8 To the south-west of the Site lies the Scheduled moated site (**SM1013102**), currently within the West Wiltshire Trading Estate. It is likely that this medieval site would have consisted of a house and house platform surrounded by a moat. The site is thought to have been abandoned by the late 13th century as a deer park is known to have encompassed this area by the early 14th century (**MWI1538**). Brook Hall, a Grade II Listed Building lying just to the north-west of the Study Area (**LB1021502**), dates to the 15th century and is thought to potentially be the successor to the moated site.
- 2.3.9 Possible ridge and furrow has been noted to the east of the Site near Blenches Mill Farm (MWI1548) (Wessex Archaeology 2004), with medieval pottery found in the area of The Ham (MWI1530), although an archaeological evaluation here in 2000 found no features dating to this period suggesting that the pottery recovered may be the result of manuring.
  - Post-medieval and modern (1500 present)
- 2.3.10 By the end of the 15th century Westbury had become the centre of the region's cloth industry with several fulling mills in and around the town (Haslam 1976, 65), for example Hawkeridge Mill to the north-east of the Site (MWI1616), which dates to at least the early 19th century. Economic decline impacted the area from the 17th century onwards and by 1826 was described by William Cobbett as 'a nasty odious rotten borough, a really rotten place. It has cloth factories in it, and they seem to be ready to tumble down as well as many of the houses' (Cobbett 1912, 78).
- 2.3.11 Blenches Mill Farm, to the east of the Site (LB1387285) was a water-powered corn mill and is shown on a late 18th century map. Earthworks thought to be associated the mill and a watermeadow system were identified during an evaluation in 2003 and thought to be later medieval or post-medieval in date (MWI1562). Other water meadows are noted adjacent to Bliss Brook in the western part of the Study Area (WA10).



- 2.3.12 The presence of several post-medieval farmhouses within the Study Area (LB1181492, LB1021504) suggests a largely rural and agricultural setting for the Site until the later modern period. The proposed development area is identified on the 1887 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map as the site of Biggs' Brush Farm (MWI70267). The farm is still present on the 1941 edition, indicating that demolition occurred during the latter half of the 20th century.
- 2.3.13 The modern land parcel does not directly correspond with the 1842 Tithe map (not reproduced) or early OS editions (Figures 4A and 4B in WA 2018b). The road which bounds the northern edge of the Site was constructed during the mid-20th century and bisects previous field boundaries.
- 2.3.14 The construction of the railway, to the west of the Site, in 1848 led to the discovery of iron ore and the establishment of the Great Western Iron Ore Smelting Company in 1857 at the Westbury Ironworks (MWI1552). It is likely that the quarrying observed to the south of the Site (MWI1468) relates to the iron works as the geology is recorded here as the Westbury Ironstone Member (BGS). Quarrying is already recorded in the 1842 tithe apportionment with the name as 'Old Quarries' and the adjacent fieldname 'Iron Mould', which would seem to reflect the underlying geology (Wessex Archaeology, 2014).
- 2.3.15 To the immediate east of the Site is a section of dismantled railway, this originally led westwards off the main line into the area now occupied by the industrial estate. This area of land was acquired by the War Department during the Second World War and utilised as an Ordnance Supply Depot (Crittall 1965, 139-148). During the Second World War the area now occupied by Hawkeridge Park housing estate was the location of the Eden Vale Prisoner of War camp, evidence of which was been uncovered during recent archaeological works (EWI5573).

#### 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1 General aims

- 3.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2018a) and in compliance with the CIfA's *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a), were:
  - To provide information about the archaeological potential of the site; and
  - To inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.

#### 3.2 General objectives

- 3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the evaluation were:
  - To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified area;
  - To establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;
  - To place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and



• To make available information about the archaeological resource within the site by reporting on the results of the evaluation.

## 3.3 Site-specific objectives

- 3.3.1 Following consideration of the archaeological potential of the site and the regional research framework (SWARF), the site-specific objectives of the evaluation are:
  - To examine evidence for remains of Late Iron Age/Romano-British settlement that
    may exist within the site (the presence of substantial Late Iron Age/Romano-British
    period settlement features to the south and numerous examples of likely field
    boundaries and systems within the surrounding landscape is known from the HER);
  - To examine evidence for remains of 18th and 19th-century Biggs Bush Farm buildings (depicted on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1887, 1924 and 1941);

#### 4 METHODS

#### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methods set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2018a) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

#### 4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

- 4.2.1 The trench locations were set out using GPS, in the approximate positions as those proposed in the WSI.
- 4.2.2 The 4 trial trenches, each measuring 30 m in length and 2 m wide, were excavated in level spits using a 360° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under the constant supervision and instruction of the monitoring archaeologist. Machine excavation proceeded until either the archaeological horizon or the natural geology was exposed.
- 4.2.3 Where necessary, the base of the trenches were cleaned by hand. A sample of archaeological features and deposits identified would have been hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the evaluation however the trenches were archaeologically sterile or contained contaminated ground.
- 4.2.4 Spoil derived from machine stripping was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval.
- 4.2.5 All trenches completed to the satisfaction of the client and the Assistant County Archaeologist were backfilled using excavated materials in the order in which they were excavated, and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

Recording

4.2.6 The archaeologically blank trenches were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete survey of the trenches was taken and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD: Newlyn) height of all trench bases were taken.



- 4.2.7 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of the trial trenches. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSGM15 and OSTN15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.8 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

## 4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies

4.3.1 An appropriate strategy for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples was developed, in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2018a) using CIfA guidelines (CIfA 2014b) and English Heritage (English Heritage 2011). However no artefacts or environmental samples were recovered.

## 4.4 Monitoring

4.4.1 The client informed the Assistant County Archaeologist of the start of the evaluation and its progress. Access was arranged for the County Archaeologist to visit site on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 in order to inspect the progress of the evaluation.

#### 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

#### 5.1 Trench 1

- 5.1.1 Excavation of Trench 1, situated to the western extent of the development area, revealed the remains of a modern concrete and brick structure to the west of the trench.
- 5.1.2 The trench contained the concrete remains of a floor and brick foundation wall extending from the west of the trench to the centre (Plate 1), covered by a layer of demolition rubble. This deposit covered the rest of the trench and was sealed by topsoil. The topsoil was similar to that recorded sealing the other trial trenches.

## 5.2 Trench 2, 3 and 4

5.2.1 The remaining trial trenches were archaeologically sterile (Plate 2). The trenches contained the same stratigraphic sequence of deposits, consisting of a loose dark brown silty loam topsoil, measuring 0.3m to 0.4m thick, sealing a mid brownish yellow clay, the natural geology.

#### 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 The 4 trial trenches excavated within the development area allowed the archaeological potential of the site to be assessed. The results illustrated a site with low archaeological potential, with the east and centre of the site being archaeologically sterile while to the west a demolished modern building was discovered.
- 6.1.2 The remains of an obviously modern building was partially recorded in Trench 1 to the west of the site. The function of the building was likely connected to Biggs' Brush Farm, with the farm present on a 1961 OS map.
- 6.1.3 Unlike the rest of Biggs' Brush Farm, which is subsequently removed from later maps, a single building in the correct position continues to exist up until 1971. This indicates a



- surviving outhouse or structure connected to the farm was still standing, possibly used in connection to the growing trading estate on the location of the previous Second World War Ordnance Supply Depot.
- 6.1.4 Further work to the east and centre of the site, located around Trenches 2, 3 and 4, would have a negligible impact on any archaeological potential of the area. To the west the archaeological potential of the area would be low as any older archaeological features will have likely been truncated by the modern building.

#### 7 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

#### 7.1 Museum

7.1.1 The site falls within the collecting area of Wiltshire Heritage Museum. The museum is not currently accepting archaeological archives. Every effort will be made to identify a suitable repository for the archive resulting from this fieldwork, and if this is not possible, Wessex Archaeology will initiate discussions with the local planning authority in an attempt to resolve the issue. If no suitable repository is identified, Wessex Archaeology will continue to store the archive, but may institute a charge to the client for ongoing storage beyond a set period.

## 7.2 Preparation of the archive

- 7.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 7.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:
  - 01 file/document cases of paper records and A3/A4 graphics:

## 7.3 Selection policy

7.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4). In this case only document archive material has been generated, and thus the whole archive will be retained.

## 7.4 Security copy

7.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

## 7.5 OASIS

7.5.1 An OASIS online record (http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main) has been initiated, with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.



#### 8 COPYRIGHT

## 8.1 Archive and report copyright

- 8.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* 1988 with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations* 2003. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

## 8.2 Third party data copyright

8.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.



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# **APPENDICES**

# **Appendix 1 Trench summaries**

Depth bgl = below ground level

Trench 1	30 m x 2 m			
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description	Depth bgl (m)
101	Topsoil		Topsoil: dark greyish brown silty loam with sparse inclusions of small sub-rounded stones and modern demolition fragments, well sorted	0.00-0.35

Trench 2	30 m x 2 m			
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description	Depth bgl (m)
201	Topsoil		Topsoil: dark greyish brown silty loam with sparse inclusions of small sub-rounded stones, well sorted	0.00-0.40
202	Natural Geology		Mid brownish yellow clay, with sparse bioturbation	0.40+

Trench 3	30 m x 2 m			
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description	Depth bgl (m)
301	Topsoil		Topsoil: dark greyish brown silty loam with sparse inclusions of small sub-rounded stones, well sorted	0.00-0.40
302	Natural Geology		Mid brownish yellow clay, with rare small angular stones and flint	0.40+

Trench 4	30 m x 2 m			
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description	Depth bgl (m)
401	Topsoil		Topsoil: dark greyish brown silty loam with sparse inclusions of small sub-rounded stones, well sorted	0.00-0.41
402	Natural Geology		Mid brownish yellow clay, with rare small angular stones and flint and rare bioturbation	0.40+

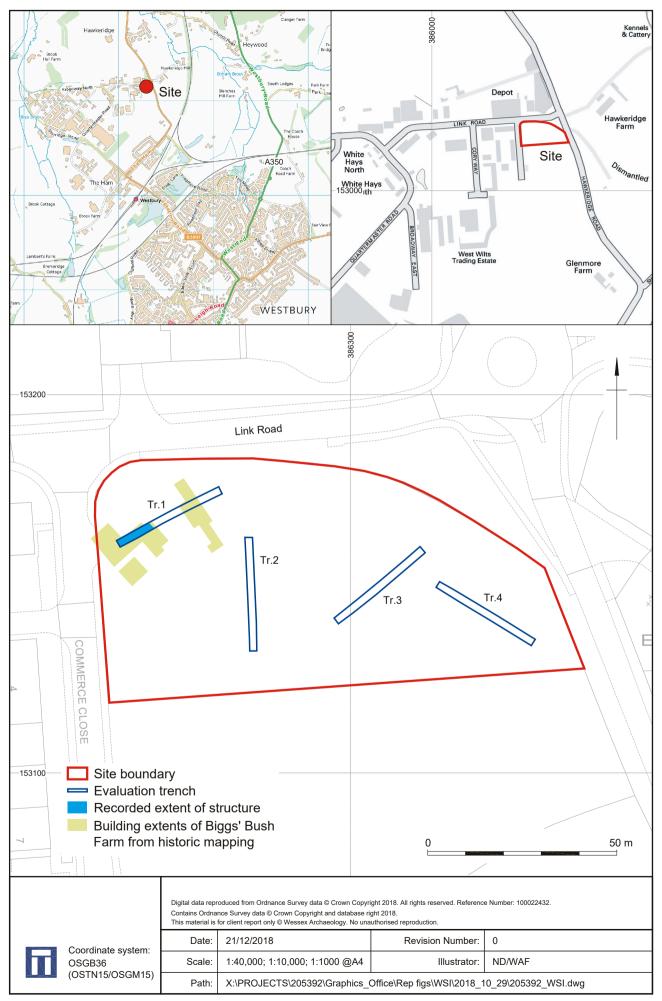




Plate 1: General shot of Trench 1, looking east-north-east



Plate 2: General shot of Trench 4, looking south-east. Scales are 2m X 1m

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	Date:	20/12/18	Revision Number:	0
<b>       </b>	Scale:	Not to scale	Illustrator:	WAF
	Path:	X:\PROJECTS\205392\Graphics_Office\Rep figs\Evaluation\2018_12_20		





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