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# Land at Ridgeway Farm Purton, Wiltshire

Post-Excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design



Planning Reference: 10/04575/OUT  
Ref: 86362.01  
December 2014



**LAND AT RIDGEWAY FARM, PURTON, WILTSHIRE**  
**Post-Excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design**

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## Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey Oxon to undertake a strip, map and record excavation of a 1.4 hectare site at Ridgeway Farm, Purton, Wiltshire, centred National Grid Reference 411180 186900. The work was undertaken as a condition of planning permission being granted by Wiltshire Council for the mixed use development of the site (planning reference 10/04575).

The excavation, undertaken between March and June 2014, was the final stage in a programme of archaeological works relating to a wider development site, which had included a desk-based assessment, walk-over survey, geophysical survey, and a trial trench evaluation which had identified an area of archaeological potential immediately south-west of Ridgeway Farm.

The distribution of features on the site reflects the underlying geology, the southern third (clay) containing numerous natural features of periglacial origin, but few archaeological features, and with the central and northern parts (Limestone) containing numerous settlement features of predominantly Iron Age and Romano-British date, as well as quarry pits of possible post-medieval date.

The earliest dated feature was a grave containing a crouched inhumation. A sample of the bone was submitted for radiocarbon dating and provided a date of 2290–2030 cal BC. This falls within the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age and is consistent with the dates of early Beaker burials, although no Beaker pottery or associated artefacts were found in the grave.

Most of the settlement features date to the Early and Middle Iron Age. At least five post-built round-houses were identified among the dense array of post-holes; a sixth round-house, defined by a ring gully, is likely to be Middle Iron Age. A number of square, four-post granary-type structures were also identified, mostly towards the eastern side of the site; a similar structure of post-and-slot construction contained much of the ironworking slag from the site, and may therefore have had some other function. There were also numerous pits, a few of them of a size and depth suitable for grain storage. An east–west ditch towards the south of the site may mark the edge of adjacent agricultural land.

There appears to have been a break between the Middle Iron Age occupation and renewed activity possibly spanning the period of the Roman conquest, with a small number of pits containing pottery of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British date, followed by activity of uncertain nature during the Romano-British period, represented by often irregular pits, some in a close cluster, but no identifiable structures. One pit contained the burial of a foal, along with sherds of Romano-British pottery and a piece of Romano-British ceramic building material.

A number of areas of intercutting pits were recorded in the central and northern parts of the site. These are interpreted as resulting from the quarrying of limestone, and although poorly dated are considered most likely to be of post-medieval date.

The excavation has helped provide a fuller understanding of developments in the Iron Age and Romano-British period, which are well represented in the archaeological record in the surrounding landscape. It is proposed that a limited programme of further stratigraphic, artefactual and environmental analysis be undertaken, after which a short article describing the results of the fieldwork will be submitted for publication in the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*.

The project archive will be curated at the offices of Wessex Archaeology, Salisbury, until such time as it can be deposited.



## **Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey Oxfordshire, and would like to thank Andy Cattermole, Andrew Green and Mary Beck for their assistance. Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, who monitored the project on behalf of the Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service, are also thanked for her advice and assistance.

The fieldwork was managed by Andy Manning managed and directed by Ben Urmston. Geoarchaeological investigations were undertaken by Dave Norcott. The post-excavation assessment was managed by Alistair Barclay. The finds were assessed by Elina Brook, with contributions from Phil Andrews (slag), Phil Harding (worked flint), Lorrain Higbee (animal bone) and Kirsten Egging Dinwiddy (human bone). The environmental samples were processed by Tony Scothern, and assessed by Sarah Wyles; the sediments were described by David Norcott and Nicki Mulhall. The radiocarbon was assessed by Alistair Barclay and Sarah Wyles. This report was compiled by Andrew Powell; the illustrations are by SE James.



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey Oxon to undertake a strip, map and record excavation on land at Ridgeway Farm, Purton, Wiltshire (Fig. 1). The work was undertaken as a condition of planning permission being granted by Wiltshire Council for a mixed use development (planning reference 10/04575). The excavation covered approximately 1.4 hectares centred on National Grid Reference 411180 186900 ('the Site').
- 1.1.2 The excavation was the final stage in a programme of archaeological works relating to the wider development site, which had included a desk-based assessment (Wessex Archaeology 2007), walk-over survey (Wessex Archaeology 2007), geophysical survey (Archaeological Surveys Ltd 2007) and trial trench evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2011).
- 1.1.3 The evaluation identified an area of archaeological potential south-west of Ridgeway Farm (Wessex Archaeology 2011). A written scheme of investigation (WSI) containing a method statement for a strip, map and record excavation of this area was submitted to, and approved by Wiltshire Council's Archaeologist (Wessex Archaeology 2012). It covered on- and off-site work including the analysis, publication and archiving of the results. The fieldwork was undertaken between March and June 2014.

### **1.2 Scope of document**

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the results of the excavation, and to assess their potential to reveal past activities that have taken place on the Site, so increasing knowledge of Wiltshire's past and providing a resource for future research and education. The report also recommends a costed programme of further work needed to achieve that aim, including analysis, public dissemination through publication and the curation of the archive.

### **1.3 Site location, topography and geology**

- 1.3.1 The Site falls within the broad landscape of the upper Thames valley, approximately midway between the Marlborough Downs and Berkshire Downs to the south and south-east, and the Cotswolds to the north-west. It lies within 600 m of the River Ray, a tributary of the River Thames. It is located approximately 2 km east-south-east of the village of Purton, and immediately north of the Common Platt area of north-west Swindon.
- 1.3.2 The Site occupies the eastern part of a pasture field (*Home Field* on a 1744 map) to the immediate south-west of Ridgeway Farm, bounded to the south by the B4553 Cricklade–Purton road, and to the east by the farm access from that road. The ground is undulating, ranging in height from 102 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the north-west, to 98 m aOD and the south.
- 1.3.3 The underlying geology is mapped as Ampthill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation (undifferentiated) – Mudstone, in the south part of the Site, and as Stanford Formation – Limestone, in the north part (British Geological Survey online viewer).





## 1.4 Archaeological background

- 1.4.1 The desk-based assessment recorded no archaeological finds within the Site, but did identify a background level of prehistoric, Romano-British, Saxon and medieval activity in the wider area.
- 1.4.2 A Neolithic arrowhead is recorded 1 km north of the Site, but the nearest known Neolithic settlement activity is recorded at Ringsbury Camp 3.5 km to the west. Small finds (predominantly flint) and pits dating to the Neolithic or Bronze Age were recorded during an evaluation at Haydon Wick to the north-east (Wessex Archaeology 1998), and occasional stray finds have been recorded in archaeological investigations in the wider area. The majority of recorded Bronze Age activity is located on the Marlborough Downs to the south, but a number of undated circular cropmarks on Mouldon Hill 600 m north-east of the Site could represent the remains of a Bronze Age barrow cemetery.
- 1.4.3 The Site lies within an Iron Age landscape containing a number of hillforts, such as Ringsbury Camp, Bury Hill 6 km to the north-west, and Castle Hill 6 km to the north-east. Enclosed settlements have been excavated at Groundwell Farm (Gingell 1982) and Groundwell West (Walker *et al.* 2001), 4.5 km to the north-east of the Site.
- 1.4.4 The landscape was extensively developed during the Romano-British period, containing evidence for dispersed settlement, industrial and agricultural activity. Romano-British pottery was recovered during field walking on Mouldon Hill. Pottery kilns have been recorded at Purton, 2 km to the west, and Eastleaze Farm and Shaw Ridge, 2 km to the south (Frere 1984). A substantial Roman structure was recorded at Lydiard Park 2 km to the south (Wessex Archaeology 2004). Further settlement evidence was discovered at Haydon Wick 2 km to the north-east, and at Shaw Ridge (Powell 2010). There was a substantial Roman ritual site at Groundwell Ridge 3 km to the north-east, including a temple and bathing complex (Morley and Wilson forthcoming).
- 1.4.5 A small early to mid-Saxon cemetery excavated in 1912 and 1925 at The Fox (Grinsell 1957, 98), 800 m west of the Site, may indicate the presence of a nearby settlement, while the focus of settlement during the later Saxon period is likely to have been Purton, 1 km to the west, which was first mentioned in AD 796 when the Saxon King Ecgrith gave 35 hides from Purton to Malmesbury Abbey (Chandler, n.d.).
- 1.4.6 Purton is likely to have remained the focus of settlement during the medieval period. Aerial photographic evidence confirms that medieval ridge and furrow earthworks were widely present around the Site prior to ploughing during WWII, indicating that the Site was under intensive open field arable cultivation during the medieval period. Extensive areas of ridge and furrow still survive in fields east of Ridgeway Farm.
- 1.4.7 The earliest known detailed map of the Site is a map of the Parish of Purton dated 1744 (Wiltshire Record Library ref. x6/56), on which Ridgeway Farm farmhouse is clearly marked. Field names, such as *Cows Leaze*, indicate the land consisted largely of pasture.



## 2 AIMS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The aim of the excavation, as stated in the WSI, was 'to establish within the constraints of the agreed strategy the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains which may be affected by the proposed works'.

### 2.2 Methods

#### ***Excavation***

- 2.2.1 The overburden was removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Stripping proceeded in spits until the top of the archaeological levels, or the top of natural deposits was reached. The overburden was scanned with a metal detector to avoid the loss of any metal finds. A sufficient sample of features exposed was excavated to fulfil the aim of the works, as agreed with the Wiltshire Council Archaeologist.

- 2.2.2 All features and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's standard methods and *pro forma* recording system. A full graphic record was made, with plans and sections drawn at scales of 1:20 and 1:10, respectively. A full photographic record was made, using digital cameras, colour transparencies and black and white negatives (on 35 mm film). Features were surveyed using TST and GPS surveying equipment and tied into the OS National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) heights of all principal features and levels were calculated, with plans and sections annotated with OD heights.

#### ***Human remains***

- 2.2.3 The human remains were removed under the terms of a Licence for the Removal of Human Remains held by Wessex Archaeology (Ref: 14-0071 issued 07/04/2014). Their excavation and assessment followed Wessex Archaeology guidelines, in compliance with all current legislation and standards set by the Institute for Archaeologists (2004).

#### ***Artefacts***

- 2.2.4 All artefacts were recovered, stored and processed in accordance with standard methodologies and national guidelines (Institute for Archaeologists 2008; Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993; 1995). Small finds were recorded three-dimensionally. Bulk finds were collected and recorded by context from both excavated features and the surfaces of unexcavated features.

#### ***Environmental***

- 2.2.5 Bulk environmental soil samples (normally up to 40 litres), for plant macro-fossils, charred plant remains, small animal bones and other small artefacts, were taken from appropriate well-sealed and dated/datable archaeological deposits following Wessex Archaeology's standard environmental sampling policy.



### **3 RESULTS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

- 3.1.1 The geological boundary that crosses the Site was reflected in the distribution of features exposed by the machine stripping (Fig. 1). To the south there was a dense pattern of irregular features, which upon geoarchaeological investigation were shown to be of natural, periglacial origin, and not clay extraction pits as had been considered a possibility.
- 3.1.2 The archaeological features were concentrated in the northern part of the Site. The majority of them were pits (approximately 170) and post-holes (approximately 200) of which at least 72 were components of recognisable structures; there were also numerous pit- and post-hole-sized features that were surveyed but not excavated.
- 3.1.3 Finds of Iron Age, Romano-British and post-medieval date were recovered from the Site, but an undated inhumation burial was radiocarbon dated and proved to be of Late Neolithic–Early Bronze Age date. The majority of dated features were Early–Middle Iron Age, some of the post-holes forming identifiable round-houses; a further round-house was defined by a ring gully. Possible four-post square structures were also identified. Romano-British activity was more limited and localised, comprising pits of uncertain function.

#### **3.2 Natural deposits and soil sequence**

- 3.2.1 The topsoil (91001) was a dark grey/brown silty clay loam 0.1–0.2 m thick. It overlay a mid-orange/brown silty clay subsoil (91002), 0.2–0.5 m thick, containing common limestone pieces. Once these were removed, the geological boundary between weathered limestone in the north of the Site (Stanford Formation) and the clay in the south (Amphill and Kimmeridge Clay Formations) was very apparent.
- 3.2.2 At the north the natural was recorded as a brash of degraded Limestone (91004), which varied considerably in appearance and characteristics, in places being relatively solid, cream-coloured and laminar, in other areas being partially decalcified and heavily weathered, almost granular in texture and yellowy brown in colour. Several fault-lines or other geological features were noted, including both large amorphous and linear patches.
- 3.2.3 At the south the natural was clay (91003), generally a mid-yellowish brown. This area was covered with what on initial inspection were thought to be possible archaeological features – slightly darker brown, irregular shaped features, the majority approximately 1.5-3 m across – separated from each other by typically around 0.5 m of apparently unaffected ‘natural’ clay. Test excavation showed these to be shallow features (up to 0.4 m deep), with gently sloping sides, and filled with clay of the same texture as the surrounding ‘natural’. The small numbers of finds recovered from them were found at their interfaces with the overlying subsoil (eg, 91055; Fig. 1).
- 3.2.4 The features were examined by the Wessex Archaeology geoarchaeologist (David Norcott) who concluded that these features were geological in origin, and best described as ‘patterned ground’, a result of freeze–thaw processes during the Pleistocene. There was no evidence to support their interpretation as clay quarry pits.



### 3.3 Neolithic (c. 4000–2200 BC) to Early Bronze Age (c. 2200–1800 BC)

#### **Grave**

- 3.3.1 Towards the east of the Site there was a very truncated subcircular oval grave (91158), 1.1 m wide and 1.2 m long, and less than 0.1 m deep (Fig. 1). It contained a crouched inhumation of a subadult, placed on the right side with the head to the south; much of the skull was missing due to truncation (Plate 2). The grave fill contained single pieces of struck flint and animal bone and two fragments (2 g) of Romano-British pottery. However, the pottery was considered likely to be intrusive, and not to provide reliable dating for the burial. A sample of the bone was therefore submitted for radiocarbon dating. This produced a calibrated result of 2290–2030 cal BC (SUERC-56574 at 95% confidence) which spans the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age and is consistent with the dates of early Beaker burials.
- 3.3.2 No other features were identified that predate the Iron Age occupation of the Site, although some level of pre-Iron Age activity is indicated by components of the small worked flint assemblage which are of Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date (see *Worked flint*, below), and it is possible that some of the undated (and unexcavated) features are also earlier.

### 3.4 Iron Age (c. 700 BC–AD 43)

- 3.4.1 Of all the Iron Age pottery recovered (including that identifiable only as late prehistoric), 57% (by weight) was chronologically undiagnostic, hampering the secure phasing of the development of the Site during this period. Only 2% of it was identifiable as Early Iron Age date, 16% as Middle Iron Age date and 24% as Early/Middle Iron Age. Many features, therefore, can only be dated to the Early–Middle Iron Age, or even less specifically as simply Iron Age, although the very small number of Middle/Late Iron Age sherds also recovered strongly suggests that most Iron Age features date to either the Early or the Middle Iron Age (**Fig. 2**).

#### **Round-houses**

- 3.4.2 Six round-houses were identified, five defined by rings of post-holes and one by a ring gully. It is possible that other round-houses are represented by the numerous unassigned post-holes across the Site, and a number of potential but inconclusive candidates can be discerned.
- 3.4.3 Only four of the round-houses (93002, 93003, 93004 and 93005) produced significant quantities of pottery, and of these two (93003 and 93005), both post-built, contained both Early and Early/Middle Iron Age sherds, but no Middle Iron Age sherds, suggesting construction during the Early Iron Age. Round-house 93002, in contrast, which was defined by a ring gully, contained Early, Early/Middle and Middle Iron Age sherds, suggesting a Middle Iron Age date (the early sherds presumed to be residual). The other post-built round-houses (93006 and 93017) are considered likely, therefore, to also be of Early Iron Age date, although this cannot be established.
- 3.4.4 All the round-houses had additional pits and post-holes within their interiors, but given the wide distribution of such features across the Site, none of these other features can be associated with the structures with any confidence.

#### Round-house 93004

- 3.4.5 The largest round-house was 9.6 m in diameter, and defined by an arc of 15 post-holes, the majority spaced on average 1.5 m apart, although with a number of gaps possibly due



to truncation. The widest gap, of 5.5 m, was at the east, the likely position of the entrance, although none of the post-holes could be identified as definitely marking the entrance. The post-holes were 0.32–0.72 m wide (average 0.5 m) and up 0.34–0.56 m deep (average 0.4 m). Between them, the post-holes contained quantities of pottery, fired clay and animal bone, and a few pieces of worked and burnt flint. One of the post-holes (91589) contained 13 sherds (140 g) of Early Iron Age pottery, amounting to 27% (by weight) of the pottery from this structure, possibly indicating its date.

#### Round-house 93005

- 3.4.6 The next largest round-house was 9.3 m in diameter, and defined by an arc of at least 11 post-holes, spaced around 1.5 m apart, most forming its southern and western sides. They were 0.42–0.60 m wide (average 0.47) and up 0.33–0.55 m deep (average 0.42 m). The northern and north-eastern parts of the circuit appear to have been destroyed by later quarry pits (see *Post-medieval and modern*, below), but there was a 4.3 m wide gap towards the east-south-east which indicates the likely position of the entrance. Together, the post-holes contained quantities of pottery and animal bone, the pottery including nine Early Iron Age sherds (138 g), amounting to 29% (by weight) of the Iron Age pottery from this structure.

#### Round-house 93003

- 3.4.7 This round-house, just 1 m south-west of round-house 93004, and therefore probably not contemporary with it, was 7.8 m in diameter and defined by an arc of at least 12 post-holes, spaced on average 1.4 m apart. They were 0.33–0.61 m wide (average 0.44) and up 0.34–0.64 m deep (average 0.48 m). A 5 m wide gap towards the east indicates the probable position of the entrance, although the average depth of the post-holes makes it unlikely that the entrance post-holes had been lost due to truncation. Together, the post-holes contained quantities of predominantly Early/Middle Iron Age pottery, fired clay and animal bone. One post-hole (91896) contained a large piece (2438 g) of apparently unworked sandstone and 1038 g of fired clay.

#### Round-house 93006

- 3.4.8 Only two post-holes in this arc of ten were excavated. They lie around the western side of the structure, which was 6.6 m in diameter. They were of similar size, and produced comparable material to the post-holes in the other round-houses.

#### Round-house 93017

- 3.4.9 The smallest round-house was 6.4 m in diameter and defined by an arc of up to 12 post-holes, the majority spaced on average 1.2 m apart. There were a number of wider gaps in the circuit, including at the east. The post-holes were 0.22–0.55 m wide (average 0.34 m) and 0.11–0.32 m deep (average 0.21 m). Very small quantities of pottery and animal bone were recovered.

- 3.4.10 This round-house lay inside round-house 93004, and the post-holes were initially considered to have formed the inner ring of a round-house with a more complex, double-ring construction. While this remains a possibility, the fact that the two rings are not concentric suggests that they represent two different structures, one replacing the other at the same location. Given that round-houses 93003 and 93004 appear to be too close to have been contemporary (see above), it is possible, instead, that round-houses 93003 and 93017 were contemporary.

#### Round-house 93002

- 3.4.11 In contrast to the other round-houses, round-house 93002 was defined by two lengths of curving gully (see *Cover*), and had no ring of post-holes, suggesting a different method of



construction. The gullies give the round-house an internal width of 9.4–9.9 m, with a 2.6 m wide entrance at the north-east; a 3.6 m wide gap at the south-west is probably due to heavier truncation in this area.

- 3.4.12 The gully was up to 0.55 m wide and 0.16 m deep, with a single fill from which were recovered quantities of Iron Age pottery, including 11 Middle Iron Age sherds (73 g) representing 15% (by weight) of the assemblage; also recovered were quantities of animal bone and worked flint and fragments of fired clay, slag and iron. A human tooth was recovered from the gully terminal on the west side of the entrance. A shallow feature (91622) at the centre of the round-house may be associated with its occupation; it contained a small amount of charred plant remains and charcoal, including wheat grain, hazelnut shell and weed seeds.

#### **Other structures**

- 3.4.13 A number of possible four-post square structures were discernible predominantly on the eastern side of the Site (eg, 93007, 93010, 93011 and 93016), two of them (93011 and 93019) overlapping within the interior of round-house 93002. Given the density of post-holes some such apparently square arrangements may be due to chance; for example, two less convincing structures lay towards the south (Fig. 2).
- 3.4.14 Three of these structures (93010, 93011 and 93016) had similar orientations, slightly west of north. Structure 93010 was 2.1 m square, measured from the centres of its post-holes which averaged 0.8 m wide and 0.3 m deep. Structure 93011 was 2.5 m square, with post-holes averaging 0.6 m wide and 0.4 m deep. Structure 93016 was 2.6 m square with four post-holes averaging 0.7 m wide and 0.4 m deep. All contained relatively small quantities of pottery and animal bone, with occasional pieces of worked flint and fired clay.
- 3.4.15 A possibly related structure (93009), on the same orientation, lay to the south of 93010. It consisted of three parallel arrangements of smaller features (slots with post-holes at either end) appearing to form a narrow rectangular structure 2.1–2.7 m wide and 7.5 m long. It contained a similar range of finds to the four-post structures. It is possible that the southern of the three slot/post-hole arrangements was not part of the structure, in which case the rest of the structure would have been square and of similar size to the four-post structures.
- 3.4.16 This interpretation may be supported by a second slot-and-post-hole structure (93007), 2.5 m square, in the same general area but with a different orientation. However, this may have had a different, possibly industrial, function – in addition to further pottery, animal bone, fired clay and a fragment of square-sectioned, tapering iron rod/bar, it produced over 2 kg of ironworking slag (84% of all the slag from the Site), with a further 187 g (8%) coming from adjacent features (ring gully 93002 and pit 91435).
- 3.4.17 It is possible, within the dense distribution of post-holes in the northern part of the Site, to see apparent curving or short linear arrangements, and it is likely that many of the unassigned post-holes formed a variety of structures, such as fence-lines, screens, windbreaks, as well as drying racks, loom footings and other facilities with specific but unknown functions.

#### **Ditches and other linear features**

- 3.4.18 An east–west ditch (93001) in the southern part of the Site extended for 40 m from the western side of the excavation to a rounded terminal at the east. It was 1.3–1.6 m wide and up to 0.7 m deep with moderately steep sides and a flat or slightly concave base. It had two fills from which were recovered three Iron Age sherds, one of them Early Iron



Age. It lies approximately 50 m south of the area of settlement features, within the area of clay geology, and cut across the periglacial features. Although the dating evidence is meagre, it could mark a boundary between the Iron Age settlement area and adjacent agricultural land. Only four sherds (6 g) of Iron Age pottery were recovered from the surfaces of the periglacial features to the south of the ditch.

- 3.4.19 Within the settlement area there were also a small number of short linear features of uncertain function (eg, 91652, 91809, 93015). Feature 91652, at the north-east of the settlement, was 2.8 m long, 0.8 m wide and 0.4 m deep, and contained three small dumps of dark soil overlain by a thick deposit of red/brown soil (91657) (Plate 1). Although there was no sign of *in situ* burning, the colour of the soil, which contained few inclusions, suggested it had been affected by heat; this appeared to be confirmed by the detailed examination of the soil including the measurement of its magnetic susceptibility (see *Sediments*, below). The overlying deposit (91658) also contained red soil but with abundant small pieces of limestone. Small quantities of Iron Age pottery (four sherds, 7 g) and animal bone were recovered from the feature, but its function remains unclear.

#### ***Pits and other features***

- 3.4.20 There was a large number of pits (in addition to many pit-sized features which were not excavated). They varied considerably in size, profile and contents, and therefore likely function.

#### Early Iron Age

- 3.4.21 Two pits can be tentatively dated to the Early Iron Age, but neither with any great confidence. Pit 91181 was a large oval possible storage pit, 2 m by 2.6 m and 1.1 m deep with near-vertical sides and a flat base, reused for the dumping of waste (Fig. 3); it contained one Early Iron Age sherd among the otherwise undiagnostic assemblage. Other finds comprised 6.5 kg of fired clay (67% by weight of all the fired clay from the Site), including pieces from a perforated triangular object, a sarsen quern fragment, and small quantities of burnt flint and animal bone.
- 3.4.22 A second pit (91972), 1.2 m in diameter and 0.5 m deep, and containing three Early Iron Age sherds and one undiagnostic sherd, was stratigraphically late within an area of intercutting possible quarry pits, cutting through the fill of an earlier undated pit.

#### Middle Iron Age

- 3.4.23 Seven features (91207, 91243, 91337, 91585, 91755, 91981 and 92072) can be tentatively dated to the Middle Iron Age, and two (91313 and 91952) as Middle–Late Iron Age. Feature 91585 was a small shallow depression within the Middle Iron Age round-house; it contained one Middle Iron Age sherd among the otherwise undiagnostic assemblage.
- 3.4.24 The other Middle Iron Age features were pits, the two largest being of comparable size and form. Pit 92072 was 2.4–2.8 m wide and 0.9 m deep, with very steep sides and an almost flat base. Its three fills contained 43 sherds (424 g) of Middle Iron Age pottery (52% by weight of the pit's assemblage), fired clay including a complete spindle whorl, animal bone and a fragment of iron. Pit 91981, was 2.6 m in diameter and 0.8 m deep with steep sides and a flat base. The middle two of its four fills contained 69 sherds (1303 g) of Middle Iron Age pottery (73% by weight of the pit's assemblage) and 1.3 kg of animal bone. The remaining Middle Iron Age pits were smaller (between 1.0 m and 1.4 m wide) and contained further pottery and animal bone.



3.4.25 There was no clear evidence of Late Iron Age activity. Pit 91313, which was 1.3–1.7 m wide and 0.3 m deep, contained four Middle/Late Iron Age sherds and one Iron Age sherd, and fragments of bone. Pit 91952, which was 1.4 m wide and 0.4 m deep, contained six sherds – including two Middle Iron Age and two Late Iron Age, the latter being the only Late Iron Age pottery from the Site. The pit lay 1.3 m west of Middle Iron Age pit 91755 (1.2 m in diameter and 0.6 m deep) and the two pits may be associated and therefore contemporary.

#### Iron Age

3.4.26 Many pits contained pottery datable only as Early/Middle Iron Age or just Iron Age; all the latter are assumed to be of Early or Middle Iron Age date. The majority of pits were relatively shallow, of variable size and form, and of uncertain function, containing variable quantities of domestic and other waste.

3.4.27 A few, however, were of a form and depth suitable for storage (before being emptied and then deliberately backfilled). The deepest of the possible storage pits was pit 91359 which was 1.3 m in diameter and 1.5 m deep with vertical sides and a flat base (Fig. 3). Its three fills contained pottery and animal bone (including one worked fragment), and pieces of fired clay. Pit 91829, which was 1 m deep, had a 'bell-shaped' profile, being 1.2 m wide near the top widening to 1.55 m wide near the base (Fig. 3). It has a series of seven fills, the lower fills dumped from the west, followed by others from the east, which together contained, pottery, animal bone, slag and burnt stone, as well as fragments of neonatal human bone.

3.4.28 Two relatively small features appeared to have had clay linings. A small feature (91294) packed with pieces of burnt limestone was cut by a small pit (91249) lined with a layer of clay up to 50 mm thick. The latter feature, which also had a stone-rich fill, contained pottery and a piece of slag, and it is possible that these two cuts formed part of a single feature of uncertain function: neither showed signs of *in situ* burning. The remains of a possible clay lining were also observed on the base of a shallow circular pit (91461), 0.6 m in diameter and 0.1 m deep. There was no evidence of *in situ* burning, although the pit did contain a piece of fired clay, pieces of burnt limestone, and charcoal, along with pottery and animal bone (one piece burnt).

### **3.5 Late Iron Age/early Romano-British**

3.5.1 Only two sherds of Late Iron Age pottery were recovered, both from a pit (91952) also containing Middle Iron Age sherds, so there is no clear evidence for activity on the Site during the Late Iron Age. Similarly, only two sherds could be identified as early Romano-British – one unstratified the other from the other from a Romano-British pit 94841 in the north-western corner of the Site (Fig. 4).

3.5.2 Three pits (91947, 91950 and 91974), however, contained Late Iron Age/early Romano-British sherds, in combination with Iron Age sherds, all of them also in the north-western corner of the Site, suggesting short-lived and localised activity potentially spanning the period of the Roman Conquest.

### **3.6 Romano-British (AD 43–410)**

3.6.1 The majority of the Romano-British pottery from the Site was chronologically undiagnostic, with almost all the diagnostic material being of late Romano-British date. This may indicate a break between the phase of activity indicated by the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British material, and the phase of later activity.





- 3.6.2 Features of this period had a broadly similar distribution to the Iron Age features, concentrated in the northern part of the Site (Fig. 4). In contrast to the Iron Age, however, a larger quantity (27 sherds, 132 g) of Romano-British pottery was recovered from the periglacial features at the south, amounting to 92% (by weight) of all the pottery from these features.

#### ***Ditches***

- 3.6.3 Two lengths of ditch (93012), one approximately north–south, the other east–west, met at a right angle, appearing to form the south-western corner of a land division of which there were no other traces. The ditch, which was up to 1.1 m wide and 0.2 m deep, was insecurely dated, the only datable material being two sherds of Romano-British pottery. There was a 0.7 m wide gap at the corner, and the western terminal of the southern ditch was cut by a shallow undated pit (91140).
- 3.6.4 A 4 m long linear feature (93013), 0.5–0.7 m wide and 0.1 m deep, was recorded on a similar orientation at the north-east of the Site; it is of unknown function.

#### ***Animal burial***

- 3.6.5 A large sub-oval pit (91240), 1.2 m by 2.5 m, and 0.6 m deep, contained the complete skeleton of a foal (Plate 3), as well as 14 sherds (86 g) of Romano-British pottery and a fragment of ceramic building material (CBM).

#### ***Other features***

- 3.6.6 The Romano-British features were generally widely spaced, although there was an apparent foci of activity towards the north of the Site. This comprised an approximately rectangular arrangement of up to 11 irregular pits and three post-holes, possibly reflecting the presence of some form of structure (93014), approximately 7 m long (NNE–SSW) and 4–6 m wide.
- 3.6.7 Together these features contained 74 sherds (551 g) of Romano-British pottery; there were also 21 Iron Age sherds (222 g), the high level of residuality due to the fact these features overlap with Iron Age round-houses 93003, 93004 and 93017 (there were also a number of intrusive Romano-British sherds in some of the adjacent round-house post-holes). Other finds included animal bone (504 g), stone (6247 g), and single pieces of fired clay and oyster shell, as well as a fragment of neonate human bone (from pit 91838). The function of this group is unclear from the form, arrangement and contents of the features.

### **3.7 Post-medieval and modern (after c. 1500)**

- 3.7.1 The only direct evidence for post-medieval and later activity on the Site were small quantities of post-medieval pottery (12 sherds, 75 g) and CBM (350 g), and two modern sherds (14 g). However, a number of large features interpreted as resulting from quarrying may also be of post-medieval date (Fig. 4).

#### ***Quarries***

- 3.7.2 Stripping of the topsoil revealed an extensive and irregular area (30 m by 17 m) of dark brown soil in the north-western part of the Site, which excavation revealed to be the upper fill of a large hollow (93020) appearing to result from a number of episodes of quarrying. This feature, which was up to 1.5 m deep (although considerably shallower in places), was shown to have been backfilled with a series of layers of soil containing variable limestone inclusions. The hollow was poorly dated, containing only four sherds (6 g) of



Romano-British pottery, two post-medieval sherds (15 g) and one piece of post-medieval CBM (all from the uppermost fill), as well as a small quantity of animal bone, and single pieces of iron and slag.

- 3.7.3 There were few clear stratigraphical relationships between quarry 93020 and other features. Three discrete features were recorded within the area of the hollow. An irregular pit (91567), measuring 1 m by 1.2 m, and 0.3 m deep, cut the quarry's upper fill. It contained numerous large pieces of limestone, as well as 12 Iron Age sherds (51 g) and animal bone (282 g). Another irregular pit (91790), 1.5 m wide and 0.6 m deep, cut into the limestone base of the quarry at a point where it was relatively shallow. It contained five sherds (43 g) of Iron Age pottery and one piece of animal bone; the uppermost of its three fills was similar to the quarry fill, suggesting that the pit may predate the quarrying. A shallow pit (91794) adjacent to pit 91790 was undated.
- 3.7.4 Two further areas of possible quarrying were recorded to the south. One (91332), exposed in an evaluation trench extending west beyond the excavation, was subsequently investigated during the excavation (Plate 4). It was similar in form, and 0.6 m deep, and contained a single sherd of Romano-British pottery. The other quarry (91026), at least 0.7 m deep, was at the boundary of the Limestone and clay geologies; it contained one Iron Age sherd (6 g), 17 Romano-British sherds (120 g, one of them late Romano-British), five post-medieval sherds (25 g) and 19 modern sherds (146 g). The modern sherds were from the uppermost fill, but the post-medieval sherds were at a greater depth.
- 3.7.5 There were a number of smaller and more isolated features which could also have been used for the extraction of limestone, although this use cannot be proved. There was also an area, approximately 20 m by 30 m, in the centre of the Site, between the main concentration of settlement features and the clay geology, containing numerous unexcavated large irregular features which could also indicate quarrying.
- 3.7.6 The weight of the evidence for all these possible quarry features suggests a post-medieval date, although earlier (possibly Romano-British) quarrying cannot be ruled out.

## 4 FINDS

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Approximately 62 kg of finds were recovered, of Iron Age to modern date with a focus primarily on the Early to Middle Iron Age (Table 1). The finds have been quantified by material type within each context and have been scanned to assess their nature, condition and potential date range.

### 4.2 Metalwork

#### *Copper alloy*

- 4.2.1 Two pieces of copper alloy were recovered. Romano-British pit 91613 contained an almost complete Polden Hill type brooch, which probably dates to the 1st century AD (Bayley and Butcher 2004, 91, group b), while a thin sheet fragment of uncertain date was found in natural feature 91055.

#### *Iron*

- 4.2.2 Ten fragments of iron were found, from nine contexts. They included a pin shank from possible Iron Age post-hole 91248; a strip fragment from the gully of Middle Iron Age



round-house 93002, and two tapering rod/bar fragments (ON 7 and ON 11) from Iron Age pit 91300 and Iron Age square structure 93007. A perforated fragment, possibly the head of a dome-headed nail, was found in Middle Iron Age pit 92072.

- 4.2.3 Material from features of later date comprised a possible nail shank (from post-medieval pit 91330) and four post-medieval horseshoe nails (from quarry pits 91026 and 91528, and the subsoil 91002 (ON 16)).

Table 1. Summary of finds by material type (number and weight in grammes)

Material type	Number	Weight (g)
Metalwork		
Copper alloy	2	36
Iron	10	134
Slag	145	2471
Worked flint	36	134
Worked and utilised stone	28	13,256
Pottery		
Iron Age	2297	19,302
Latest Iron Age to early Romano-British	432	3489
Post-medieval/modern	14	89
Sub-total	2743	22,880
Ceramic building material	5	355
Fired clay	235	9765
Burnt flint	19	206
Worked bone	3	13
Glass	1	1
Shell	1	6
Human bone	1 burial + redep	n/a
Animal bone	2763	13,055

### 4.3 Slag

- 4.3.1 The excavation produced 2.47 kg of slag and related debris (from 17 certain or probable Iron Age contexts), virtually all of it derived from ironworking, and at least some possibly the result of iron smelting. A single sherd from a copper alloy working crucible was also recovered.
- 4.3.2 The ironworking debris is generally in a moderate, unabraded condition and includes a range of material, a small amount of it relatively light and vesicular, often with a smooth, glassy surface, though most is denser and less vesicular. Some pieces are notably dense and it is considered most likely that these pieces derive from smelting rather than smithing. However, there is no iron ore or furnace lining to indicate smelting and, overall, the quantity of debris is very small in terms of what would be expected from an iron smelting site.
- 4.3.3 There is approximately 1.44 kg of the relatively dense debris, most of it (up to 1.36 kg) from square structure 93007 (contexts 91378 and 91479), and 0.08 kg from pit 91399. All of this possible smelting slag comprises small pieces (< 0.1 kg), a few with slight traces of flow structure on the surface.
- 4.3.4 Undiagnostic ironworking slag comprises a further 0.96 kg of material, with most also from structure 93007 (context 91474, 0.47 kg). This undiagnostic slag includes several pieces with small remnants of hearth or furnace lining attached, and there are, in addition, some separate, tiny pieces of hearth or furnace lining. There is also 0.06 kg of fuel ash slag,



probably though not certainly derived from ironworking, and this includes a single fragment of grey, very vesicular material from pit 91947 (context 91945).

4.3.5 The crucible sherd, from pit 91829 (context 91830), is from the rim of a relatively thick-walled vessel of uncertain form and capacity, vitrified externally, with the green and red colouration typical of copper alloy working.

4.3.6 Overall, the small quantity and condition of the slag indicates that some low-level ironworking, most likely smelting, was undertaken in the vicinity of the Site during the Middle–Late Iron Age, while the crucible sherd provides evidence for possibly contemporary copper alloy working. The assemblage is therefore of moderate interest in terms of the Iron Age settlement recorded, although no remains of ironworking features were found, and none of the debris appears to represent *in situ* activity and primary deposition.

#### **4.4 Worked flint**

4.4.1 A small assemblage of worked flint, comprising 36 pieces of material, was recovered from 25 excavated contexts (eight pieces of them unstratified). The assemblage comprised primarily of flakes and broken flakes with two end scrapers. There were no cores. Flint was of variable quality ranging from good quality to coarser-grained raw material, but quite workable nonetheless. This material is likely to have been introduced from the local Chalk escarpment or possibly obtained as derived material from the local gravel.

4.4.2 Surface condition was also variable with some pieces displaying a well-developed white surface patina with other pieces less well patinated and others totally unpatinated. There were an insufficient number of pieces to enable any useful comment regarding technology, although a platform rejuvenation flake and an end scraper, both patinated (and both recovered (from Late Iron Age/early Romano-British pit 91950), may be broadly contemporary.

4.4.3 Worked flints were found in a range of contexts, principally pits, post-holes and ditches that are likely to relate to the Iron Age and Romano-British occupation. The worked flint is therefore undoubtedly residual and does little more than provide an indication of activity that predates the Iron Age. This it does with some certainty. The area is known to have been within the territorial range of Mesolithic groups (Harding 2011) and it is possible that isolated pieces from this assemblage are of this date. Apart from this possibility it is unquestionable that at least some of the assemblage is of Neolithic or at the latest Early Bronze Age date, although nothing can be considered to be diagnostic.

#### **4.5 Worked and utilised stone**

4.5.1 Only items that were considered to be from portable stone objects were collected and retained (Table 1). This comprised fragments from five querns, two rubber/grinders, two possible rub-stones, three whetstones and 15 undiagnostic fragments.

4.5.2 Of the quernstone fragments, three were of sandstone and two of sarsen. Four are from probable saddle querns and were all found within features of Iron Age date (post-holes 91664 and 91678, pits 91181 and 91364). The fifth fragment had only one original surface present, so its type is uncertain; it was found in a post-hole forming part of Romano-British structure/pit group 93014. Saddle querns of sarsen and sandstone have been found at other Iron Age sites in the area including Groundwell Farm and Groundwell West (Gingell 1982; Roe 2001), with both materials being available locally.



- 4.5.3 The rubber/grinder found in Iron Age structure 93007 was also of sarsen – parts of the natural pebble were pitted and others were smooth suggesting its use as a multi-purpose tool. The other rubber/grinder (ON 12, undated post-hole 91551), a metasediment pebble, had also been heavily used worn smooth. Pieces from two rubstones, both in a well-cemented sandstone, were found in Romano-British pit 91720; one had also been utilised as a sharpening stone. Fragments from three possible whetstones were recovered; one of schist (Romano-British pit 91759), another a bar-shaped piece of a coarse sandstone (Romano-British structure/pit group 93014), and the third a piece of a Pennant-type sandstone (undated tree-throw hole 91738).
- 4.5.4 The fifteen undiagnostic fragments contained pieces of sandstone, Pennant-type sandstone and one fragment of currently uncertain rock type. None showed any obvious signs of working, but some were burnt.

## 4.6 Pottery

- 4.6.1 The pottery provided the primary dating evidence for the Site and amounted to 2743 sherds (22,880 g). Sherds from each context were sub-divided into broad ware groups (eg, shell-tempered ware) or known fabric types (eg, South-east Dorset Black Burnished ware) and quantified by number and weight of pieces. A breakdown of the assemblage by ware type is shown in Table 2.
- 4.6.2 The condition of the assemblage is poor, which is reflected in a mean sherd weight of 8.3 g. There is some variation in the condition of sherds between the chronological periods, with mean sherd weights ranging from between 2.4 g to 8.4 g (Table 2). Many fragments, particularly those in the softer and more lightly fired fabrics from all the periods, had suffered from considerable surface abrasion and edge damage. Generally the groups consisted of small and abraded plain body fragments, with 161 rim fragments recorded, representing just 5.9% of the total assemblage.

### *Iron Age*

- 4.6.3 The majority of sherds were of Iron Age date (83% by sherd count) and came from 283 contexts in 234 features. The fabrics were dominated by fossil shell-tempered wares, sandy wares and a coarse 'detrital' fabric which contained varying quantities of shell, limestone, coarse sand and iron grits (Table 2). The calcareous wares were predominantly tempered with limestone along with some fossilised shell. The more minor fabric groups comprised sand used in combination with calcareous, shell or flint inclusions, flint-tempered and grog-tempered wares. All the inclusion types are available within the geology of the local area and so none need to be of non-local origin. Overall the range of tempering agents and their mixtures are paralleled in other broadly contemporary assemblages from the area such as Groundwell Farm, Groundwell West, A419 Blunsdon Bypass and Watchfield, Shrivenham (Gingell 1982, 55; Timby 2001, 20; McSloy 2011, 105; Laidlaw 2001, 253) for example.
- 4.6.4 Most of the sherds appear to be from coarseware jars, with a few from jars/bowls and fineware bowls. However, diagnostic pieces were scarce, with just 123 rims present (5% of the Iron Age sherds) and most were very small, representing less than 5% of the diameter and/or broken at or just below the neck/shoulder junction. The jar and jar/bowl rims present include upright, rounded and flattened pieces, sometimes externally expanded. Other identifiable forms include slack-shouldered vessels and sharply carinated upright or slightly everted rims from fineware bowls. Bases, where present, were flat.



Table 2. Pottery totals by chronological period and ware type

Period	Ware	Number	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
<b>Iron Age</b>	Shell-tempered ware	826	8130	
	Sandy ware	631	4036	
	'Detrital' ware	297	3264	
	Calcareous ware	236	1752	
	Sand and calcareous ware	162	1145	
	Sand and shell-tempered ware	112	760	
	Sand and flint-tempered ware	4	23	
	Flint-tempered ware	6	120	
	Grog-tempered ware	6	31	
<i>Sub-total</i>		2280	19,261	8.4
<b>Late prehistoric unspecified</b>	Calcareous ware	4	13	
	Shell-tempered ware	6	19	
	Sandy ware	7	9	
<i>Sub-total</i>		17	41	2.4
<b>Late Iron Age/ early Romano-British</b>	Calcareous ware	77	736	
	Shell-tempered ware	1	8	
	Sandy ware	25	90	
	Grog-tempered ware	13	118	
<i>Sub-total</i>		116	952	8.2
<b>Romano-British</b>	Samian	9	22	
	Other imports	1	4	
	Fine greywares	5	10	
	Oxfordshire colour-coated ware	4	10	
	Oxfordshire white ware	1	28	
	Verulamium region white ware	1	6	
	White-slipped redware	1	2	
	Oxidised ware	36	101	
	Savernake-type ware	51	554	
	Greyware	148	870	
	South-east Dorset Black Burnished ware	17	84	
	Sandy ware	9	22	
	Calcareous ware	8	103	
	Shell-tempered ware	2	11	
	Grog-tempered ware	29	710	
<i>Sub-total</i>		322	2537	7.9
<b>Post-medieval and modern</b>	Stoneware	1	7	
	Redware	11	78	
	Refined whiteware	2	4	
<i>Sub-total</i>		14	89	6.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>2749</b>	<b>22,880</b>	<b>8.3</b>

- 4.6.1 Surface treatments on coarsewares included burnishing, both internal and external, and coarse wiping on the exterior of jars. Occasionally fineware vessels were red finished, as seen on sandy body sherds from pits 91224 and 91974. The application of an iron-rich slip of haematite to create a deep red, polished finish was typical of the earliest Iron Age All Cannings Cross style in Wiltshire and was also imitated elsewhere within the Thames Valley (Lambrick and Robinson 2009, 199).
- 4.6.2 Decoration was limited; coarsewares were decorated with finger-tip and finger-nail impressions on the tops of rims and shoulders of jars as seen on a sand and shell-tempered piece from pit 91376 and fragments found within pits 91663 and 91972. Scored line decoration was present on sandy coarseware body sherds from pit 91585 and four-post structure 93009 whilst two rejoining fragments from pit 91990 came from a sharply carinated vessel, with a deeply scored zig-zag motif present above and below the carination. Linear geometrical motifs are characteristic of the Early Iron Age period in the

Upper Thames region to the east, although they do continue into the Middle Iron Age (Lambrick 1984, 172, fig. 11.4; Lambrick 2010, Appendix 5, 10). Burnished line decoration was limited to a sandy fineware body sherd from pit 91313. Sooting was present on the interior and exterior of a small number of sherds, and indicates the use of vessels in the preparation of foodstuffs and other materials.

- 4.6.3 Comparisons with other sites in the area indicate that the bulk of this assemblage was of Early to Middle Iron Age date (789 sherds, 29% of the total assemblage). In addition, a small number of sherds displayed characteristics that may be more associated with Middle Iron Age ceramics in this area such as a nicely burnished shell-tempered, high-shouldered jar and sandy ware straight-sided, almost barrel shaped jar from pit 91207 which are comparable to material from Groundwell Farm dating to the earlier part of the Middle Iron Age (Gingell 1982, 63). A small proportion were (seven sherds, 0.3%) of Middle to Late Iron Age date, while 1484 of the less diagnostic sherds (54%) could only be given a generalised 'Iron Age' date.

#### ***Latest Iron Age to early Romano-British (0–410 AD)***

- 4.6.4 The Latest Iron Age to Romano-British material derived from 76 contexts and represents approximately 16% of the total assemblage (Table 1). Most of the group consisted of undiagnostic sherds in 15 fabrics/wares (Table 2). The more chronologically diagnostic pieces suggest that it spanned all four centuries of the period.
- 4.6.5 Based on the absence of anything 'Romanised', three pits (91947, 91950 and 91974) contained material dating to the 1st half of the 1st century AD. The fabrics represent a continuation of the native ceramic traditions of the area, but with a shift towards the use of finer sandier clays and inclusions. Thirty-five of the calcareous ware sherds from pit 91947 derived from a single necked, round-shouldered jar/bowl. Part of a small, post-firing perforation in the base indicates a change in use of this vessel during its life. Other diagnostic forms include two calcareous ware bead rim jars/bowls from pit 91974, which also contained a cordoned hard fired, coarse sandy ware body sherd. Surface treatment was evidenced by a single grog-tempered body sherd from pit 91950 which was burnished externally.
- 4.6.6 Romano-British imported material was very scarce, consisting of one footring base sherd of *Terra Nigra* (unstratified), datable to the mid-1st century AD, and two undiagnostic fragments of Central Gaulish samian (pits 91799 and 91837) of 2nd to early 3rd century AD date. The range of British finewares was similarly limited and included only one diagnostic sherd from an Oxfordshire whiteware mortaria (pit 91822) datable to 240–400AD; the remainder being abraded, undiagnostic fragments. They include one sherd of Verulamium region whiteware of 1st–2nd century AD date from structure/pit group 93014 and fragments from at least three Oxfordshire colour-coated ware vessels (pit 91026; natural features 91038 and 91055) of Late Roman, 3rd–4th century AD, date. Of the five fine greyware sherds, one (pit 91399) may have been from a poppy head beaker. The small collection of unsourced oxidised wares included an upright, rounded rim fragment (pit 91694) and an everted rim from a probable jar (structure/pit group 93014). An intrusive fragment from the neck of a possible flagon was found in Iron Age pit 92072.
- 4.6.7 Unoxidised coarsewares comprise approximately 10% of the total assemblage (Table 2). The hard, grog-tempered Savernake-type wares were probably from the Whitehill Farm and Toothill Farm kilns to the west of Swindon (Anderson 1979, 13), while even more locally, sandy coarsewares were made in the area of the Dogridge housing estate on the western side of Purton (Anderson 1980). A small quantity of South-east Dorset Black Burnished ware was present, whilst the other minor fabrics include calcareous wares,



shell-tempered wares and softer grog-tempered wares all currently unsourced. Amongst the diagnostic sherds, the most common forms in all fabrics were everted rim jars. Four other necked jar rims, including two with a hooked profile (structure/pit group 93014) were identified, all in greyware, whilst the Savernake-type wares also included two bead rim jars/bowls (pits 91829 and 91841) and one storage jar rim (also from pit 91829).

#### ***Post medieval/modern***

- 4.6.8 Fourteen sherds (89g) were of post medieval to modern date. Six were found within modern pit 91026 – these comprised one sherd of 18th century English salt glazed stoneware, four fragments of post medieval green-glazed redware and one piece of modern refined whiteware. The remaining sherds (seven of redware, 1 of refined whiteware) came from pits 91330, 91725 and 91728, and probably intrusively within the fill of post-hole 91777 which formed part of Romano-British structure/pit group 93014 and Early to Middle Iron Age pit 92094.

#### **4.7 Ceramic building material (CBM)**

- 4.7.1 Five pieces of CBM were recovered. Four were fragments of post-medieval brick, one of which was vitrified and one was intrusive; they came from possible post-medieval pit 91352, quarry 91528, modern feature 91851 and intrusive in Iron Age pit 92094. The undatable, featureless fragment was found in Romano-British pit 91240.

#### **4.8 Fired clay**

- 4.8.1 The fired clay assemblage (Table 1) was recovered from 62 contexts. The majority were small, abraded, featureless fragments made in slightly sandy, predominantly oxidised fabrics sometimes with rare iron grits and calcareous (shell and limestone) inclusions. The dating of most pieces relied on associated material. Several pieces, including some from Iron Age structures 93004 and 93007, and post-holes 92089 and 91869, for example, are characterised by flattish and angled edges which may suggest they derived from the linings of ovens, kilns or hearths. Some fragments are almost vitrified, while others had possible waxy impressions (pit 91305; gully 91809), suggesting the presence of structural debris.
- 4.8.2 Fragments from a perforated, triangular object (ON 2) were found along with pieces from at least seven other similarly shaped, but unperforated, items in Early Iron Age pit 91181 (five objects), post-hole 91861 (one example) and Early/Middle Iron Age pit 92094 (one example). Although traditionally interpreted as loomweights, there is now increasing evidence to suggest that these items may have been used as oven/hearth furniture (Lowther 1935; Poole 1995). They are relatively common finds in Iron Age contexts across the whole of southern Britain, remaining current well into the 2nd century AD (Wild 2002, 10).
- 4.8.3 Approximately half of an oval slingshot, probably of Iron Age date, was found within Romano-British pit 91531. Similar objects, thought to be used for hunting rather than warfare, were found in the latest phases (cp 6 and 7; c. 400–100/50 BC) at Danebury and at other Iron Age sites including Yarnbury, Maiden Castle, Glastonbury, All Canning's Cross and Gussage All Saints (Poole 1984, 398, fig. 7.44).
- 4.8.4 The only other identifiable object was a disc-shaped spindle whorl (ON 17), made in a slightly sandy, micaceous fabric (Middle Iron Age pit 92072). Clay spindle whorls have been found at many Iron Age sites, such as Danebury for example (Poole 1984, 401, fig. 7.46), although not in large numbers.





## 4.9 Worked bone

4.9.1 The three fragments of worked bone were all incomplete. Part of a possible gouge (ON 6) from Iron Age pit 91281 was manufactured from a sheep tibia shaft. Such items are not uncommon on sites of Iron Age date (Sellwood 1984). Another shaft fragment (ON 19; pit 91359) was in poor condition, but not enough of the object was present to identify it to type. The third piece was the tip of a possible needle (ON 3, post-hole 91245) which had been highly polished through use.

## 4.10 Human bone

4.10.1 Human bone was recovered from four contexts and subject to a rapid scan to assess its condition, age and sex of individuals, the potential for metric data recovery and indices calculation, and the presence of pathological lesions (Table 3).

4.10.2 The condition of the bone was recorded following McKinley 2004 (fig. 6). Age was assessed using standard methodologies (Brothwell 1972; Beek 1983; Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994; Scheuer and Black 2000), and sex from the sexually dimorphic traits of the skeleton (Bass 1987; Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). The minimum number of individuals was calculated following McKinley (2004).

Table 3. Human bone assessment – summary of results

Feature	Context	Deposit type	Date	Quantity	Age/sex	Pathology
91158	91159	inhumation burial	Beaker	75%	subadult 13–18 years	dental calculus; enamel hypoplasia; cortical defect – right clavicle
91383	91384	redeposited (ring gully terminus)	E/MIA	1 tooth	subadult/adult 13–25 years.	dental calculus; enamel & root hypoplasia
91829	91834	redeposited (pit)	IA	15% l.	neonate 38–40 weeks	-
91838	91840	redeposited (pit)	RB	28% u.l.	neonate 38–40 weeks	-

KEY: u. = upper limb, l. = lower limb (where not all skeletal regions are represented)  
NB, neonatal ages = gestation

4.10.3 The bone included the remains of an unaccompanied inhumation burial (91159) in grave 91158, a sample of bone from which has been submitted for radiocarbon dating. There was also redeposited bone from three other contexts – Iron Age pit 91834, the ring-gully (91383) of round-house 93002, and Romano-British pit 91840. The assemblage represents a minimum of four individuals (MNI); two neonates, a subadult and a subadult/adult (one per context).

4.10.4 The bone is in good condition with most surfaces recorded as grades 1 or 2, with sporadic greater degradation of the ends (grade 3; 91159 only). The *in situ* remains in grave 91158 are crushed, probably as a result of soil compression and later land use. Abundant dark purple/grey fungal mottling is present across much of the bone from the grave. The redeposited bone fared better with only minimal, mostly old, breakage; the well-preserved state of the neonatal remains implies a low level of reworking.

4.10.5 A good proportion of the skeleton was recovered from the *in situ* remains in grave 91158, including many small bones and epiphyses (Table 3). All regions of the skeleton are represented, although much of the skull had been removed by truncation by later agricultural activity; the grave survived to a depth of only 0.08 m. The neonatal remains comprise the lower limbs of two individuals.



4.10.6 Pathological lesions manifest in the subadult/adult remains are indicative of childhood stress, eg, disease and/or nutritional deficiency, a certain amount of sticky carbohydrate in the diet, and a fairly physically demanding lifestyle.

#### 4.11 Animal bone

4.11.1 The assemblage comprises 2763 fragments (or 13.055 kg) of animal bone, although once conjoins are taken into account the figure falls to 2142 fragments. The difference between these two figures indicates that the assemblage is moderately fragmented. The assemblage includes material of Iron Age (75% of the total) and Romano-British (14%) date (Table 4).

4.11.2 The following information was recorded where applicable: species, skeletal element, preservation condition, fusion and tooth ageing data, butchery marks, metrical data, gnawing, burning, surface condition, pathology and non-metric traits. This information was directly recorded into a relational database (in MS Access) and cross-referenced with relevant contextual information.

##### ***Preservation condition***

4.11.3 Bone preservation at the Site varies but is generally good to fair, cortical surfaces are intact and fine surface details such as knife cuts are clear and easily observed. The few poorly preserved fragments that are present all show signs of physical weathering (i.e. eroded cortical surfaces and abraded edges) and are likely to have been exposed and re-deposited from surface deposits of midden material. Most of these fragments are from Iron Age pits and post-holes, in particular pits 91354 and 92072.

Table 4. Animal bone: number of identified specimens present (or NISP) by period (ABGs have been counted as one specimen each)

Species	Iron Age	Romano-British	Undated	Total
Cattle	100	13	4	117
Sheep/goat	183	37	42	262
Pig	38	9	3	50
Horse	11	1	-	12
Dog	11	-	-	11
Red deer	1	1	-	2
Rabbit	1	-	-	1
<i>Total identified</i>	<i>345</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>455</i>
Mammal	1262	234	188	1684
Bird	1	-	1	2
Amphibian	-	1	-	1
<i>Total unidentified</i>	<i>1263</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>189</i>	<i>1687</i>
<i>Overall total</i>	<i>1608</i>	<i>296</i>	<i>238</i>	<i>2142</i>

4.11.4 The number of gnawed bone fragments is reasonably high at 16% and this suggests that a significant number of deposits contain bones that have been re-deposited from surface detritus and/or midden heaps that were accessible to scavenging carnivores. Most of the gnawed fragments came from Iron Age pits.

##### ***Distribution by feature type***

4.11.5 Most (75%) of the animal bone was recovered from pits of Iron Age date. The number of fragments recovered from each pit ranges from one to over 100, and the largest groups are from 91337, 91359, 91908 and 92072, all of which have been dated to the Early–Middle Iron Age. A further 17% of fragments were recovered from post-holes of Iron Age



date including from round-houses and small square or rectangular structures. Very little bone was recovered from ditches and gullies, indeed only 86 fragments of bones were recovered from the gully of round-house 93002.

- 4.11.6 The overall distribution of the assemblage suggests that a large proportion of the bone waste from butchery and domestic consumption was deliberately disposed of into disused pits, very little was allowed to accumulate as surface midden material.

#### ***Species represented***

- 4.11.7 Twenty-one percent of the assemblage is identifiable to species and skeletal element. Seven species have been identified although the vast majority (95%) are from livestock species, in particular sheep/goat and cattle. Less common species include horse, dog, red deer and rabbit. The assemblage is briefly described by period in the following sections:

#### ***Iron Age***

- 4.11.8 The Iron Age assemblage comprises a total of 1608 fragments, 21% of which are identifiable to species. Most (54%) of the animal bone is from features of Early–Middle Iron Age date and the rest is from more broadly dated features. As indicated above, most of the Iron Age assemblage is from pits and a small proportion is likely to have been re-deposited from surface middens. Several of the pits contained associated bone groups (or ABGs), including partial lamb skeletons and articulated horse and dog limbs.
- 4.11.9 Most (93%) of the identified fragments are from livestock species. Sheep/goat is the most common livestock species at 53%, followed by cattle and then pig. This pattern of relative importance is fairly typical for the region (Hambleton 1999, 46). Based on the range of body parts it is clear that these animals were slaughtered and butchered on site for local consumption. These animals are likely to have been bred and reared in the fields that surrounded the settlement and based on the presence of bones from neonatal lambs and piglets, it is likely that at certain times of the year, pregnant ewes and sows were brought closer to the settlement where they could be more carefully managed.
- 4.11.10 Similar numbers of horse and dog bones were identified. Cut marks were noted on a few bones including the femoral head of an articulating left forelimb from pit 91908. The dog bone assemblage includes bones from both adult and juvenile animals, and this implies that there was a breeding population on the Site during the Iron Age. It is likely that these animals were fed on table scraps and material scavenged from midden deposits.
- 4.11.11 The large fragment of red deer antler recovered from pit 91359 is from the base of the beam and represents an off-cut from antler working. Saw marks were noted at both ends of the beam and at the base of the brow tine. This evidence clearly demonstrates that personal and/or decorative items made of antler (and bone; see section on Worked bone) were being manufactured on the Site.
- 4.11.12 The only other identified bone is the radius from a rabbit, which was recovered from pit 91271. It is highly likely that the bone is intrusive given the burrowing habit of this species.

#### ***Romano-British***

- 4.11.13 Twenty percent of the bone fragments recovered from Romano-British features can be identifiable to species, and the majority belong to livestock species, in particular sheep/goat. The body part data indicates that the settlement remained self-sufficient in terms of meat supply, while the age information suggests that the husbandry strategy



remained unchanged, particularly with regard to over-wintering sheep/goat and dealing with the spring lambing season (see for example Hambleton 1999, 70).

- 4.11.14 The only other identified species horse and red deer, the former is represented by the complete skeleton of a foal (ABG 4) from pit 91240 and the latter by a mandible from pit 91822.

#### **Undated**

- 4.11.15 Bone was recovered from a small number of undated features including pits, post-holes and tree-throw holes. All of the identified bones belong to livestock species and of note are the partial skeletons of an adult sheep (ABG 9) and two lambs (ABG 10) from a shallow irregular feature (91406) (Plate 5).

### **4.12 Other finds**

- 4.12.1 A very small quantity of burnt flint was recovered from natural features (91053, 91099), pits (91181, 92072), and post-holes (91713 and 91714). This material type is intrinsically undatable, but is frequently associated with prehistoric activity which in this instance is most likely of Iron Age date.
- 4.12.2 One small fragment of pale blue/green vessel glass was found unstratified, it is possibly of Romano-British date.
- 4.12.3 A single left valve fragment from an oyster shell came from Romano-British structure/pit group 93014.

## **5 ENVIRONMENTAL**

### **5.1 Introduction**

- 5.1.1 Thirty-two bulk samples selected from a range of features, in particular pits and post-holes of mainly Early–Middle Iron Age and Romano-British date, were processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and wood charcoal. The provenance of the bulk samples is summarised by phase in Table 5.

Table 5. Environmental sample provenance summary

<b>Phase</b>	<b>No of samples</b>	<b>Volume (litres)</b>	<b>Feature types</b>
EIA	1	18	Pit
E/MIA	11	168	Roundhouses, 4 post structures, pits
MIA	5	71	Roundhouse, pit
IA	8	127	Pits
RB	2	30	Pit, animal bone group
Undated	5	21.9	Pit, animal bone groups
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>435.9</b>	

### **5.2 Charred plant remains**

- 5.2.1 The bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods; the flot retained on a 0.5 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 5.6 mm and 1 mm fractions and dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6 mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded. The flots were scanned under a



x10 – x40 stereo-binocular microscope and the preservation and nature of the charred plant and wood charcoal remains recorded in Table 6. Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary and Hopf (2000, tables 3 and 5) for cereals.

- 5.2.2 The flots varied in size, and in their numbers of roots and modern seeds which can indicate the movement of and contamination by intrusive elements. The charred material was in varying degrees of preservation.
- 5.2.3 A large quantity of cereal remains were recorded within the charred assemblage from Early Iron Age pit 91181. These included barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) grain fragments and hulled wheat, emmer or spelt (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*), grain, glume base and spikelet fork fragments. A number of the glume base fragments were identifiable as being those of spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*). The moderate number of weed seeds included seeds of oat/brome grass (*Avena/Bromus* sp.), bedstraw (*Galium* sp.) and goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.).
- 5.2.4 The nine charred assemblages recovered from Early/Middle Iron Age features were generally moderately small. The cereal remains included hulled wheat and barley grain fragments and hulled wheat glume base and spikelet fork fragments, Again some of the glume bases were identifiable as being those of spelt wheat. Other remains include hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) shell fragments, sloe (*Prunus spinosa*) stone fragments and seeds of bedstraw, vetch/wild pea (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.), clover/medick (*Trifolium/ Medicago* sp.), rye-grass/fescue (*Lolium/Festuca* sp.), goosefoot, oat/brome grass and docks (*Rumex* sp.). An exception was the extremely large and well-preserved assemblage observed in the sample from pit 91311. This assemblage included a very high number of hulled wheat grain and glume base fragments together with some barley grain fragments, hulled wheat spikelet fork fragments and seeds of oats/brome grass, vetch/wild pea, bedstraw and docks.
- 5.2.5 Generally small assemblages were recorded in the five samples from Middle Iron Age features, with a moderate assemblage observed from pit 92072. The cereal remains included hulled wheat and barley grain fragments and the weed seeds included seeds of orache (*Atriplex* sp.), vetch/wild pea, docks and spike-rush (*Eleocharis* sp.). There were also a few fragments of hazelnut shell.
- 5.2.6 The moderately small assemblages retrieved from other Iron Age pits again included barley grain fragments and hulled wheat grain and glume base fragments. Other remains included hazelnut shell fragments, sloe stone fragments, thorn fragments and seeds of bedstraw, vetch/wild pea, clover/medick, knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*), docks and goosefoot.
- 5.2.7 The sample from Romano-British pit 91531 contained a large amount of charred remains, both cereal remains and weed seeds. The cereal remains included barley grain fragments and hulled wheat grain and glume base fragments. A number of the glume base fragments were identifiable as being those of spelt wheat. The weed seeds included seeds of oat (*Avena* sp.), brome grass (*Bromus* sp.), docks, field madder (*Sherardia arvensis*) and buttercup (*Ranunculus* sp.).
- 5.2.8 The small number of charred remains recovered from undated pit 91622 included hulled wheat grain fragments, hazelnut shell fragments and seeds of vetch/wild pea and bedstraw.



5.2.9 The charred assemblages are compatible with the Iron Age and Romano-British dates and are comparable with some assemblages from other deposits of this date in the area, such as at Groundwell West (Stevens and Wilkinson 2001), Latton Lands (Griffiths 2009) and Shaw Ridge (Powell 2010). The assemblages appear typical of general settlement waste and the weed seeds are mainly those found in grassland, field margins and arable environments. There is evidence for some exploitation of the wild food resource from hedgerow/scrub environments.

### 5.3 Wood charcoal

5.3.1 Wood charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in Table 6. The fragments included mature wood pieces. Large quantities of wood charcoal were retrieved from Early/Middle Iron Age Roundhouse group 93004 postholes 91589 and 92055 and pits 91205 and 91763, and undated pit 91622.

### 5.4 Sediments

5.4.1 The thick deposit of red/brown soil (91657) in feature 91652 was examined to see if the visible reddening was a result of burning. The description is as follows.

- Sample 50, context (91657) – 5YR 3/4 dark reddish brown gritty clay loam, crumbly when dry. Sparse to moderate subrounded crystalline structured lumps present <3 cm in size. Easily broken. Clear banding present with ?Fe. Effervesces on contact with hydrochloric acid but definitely not tufa or chalk.

5.4.2 The sample was measured with the Bartington magnetic susceptibility meter hand-held probe. Magnetic susceptibility readings are not a definitive proof of the presence of burning or not but are a useful guide. Three control samples were also picked at random from feature fills to give a guide to back ground readings. The results were:

- Sample 50 (91657) – 1109 SI units
- Sample 44 (91382) – 203 SI units
- Sample 52 (91743) – 109 SI units
- Sample 33 (91486) – 75 SI units

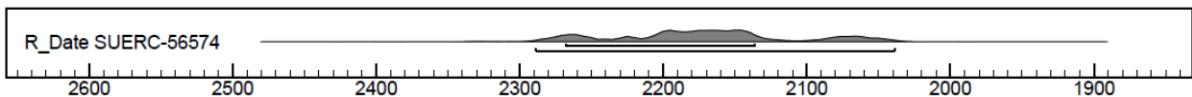
5.4.3 Although it is possible that the reddening and increased magnetic susceptibility in sample 50 (10657) are due in part at least to an increase in iron minerals within the sample, the very high reading suggests that enhancement by burning is the most probable outcome.

## 6 RADIOCARBON DATING

- 6.1.1 A radiocarbon date (SUERC-56574) was obtained on a sample of human bone submitted to the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC) (Table 7). The calibrated result is calculated using the curve of Reimer *et al.* (2013) and the computer program OxCal (v4.2.3) (Bronk Ramsey and Lee 2013) and cited in the text at 95% confidence and quoted in the form recommended by Mook (1986), with the end points rounded outwards to 10 years. The range is calculated using the maximum intercept method (Stuiver and Reimer 1986).
- 6.1.2 In addition, the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  values (see Table 7) are consistent with a terrestrial diet and, therefore, the potential for date offsets is unlikely (see Bayliss *et al.* 2004). Dietary offsets can cause radiocarbon measurements to appear older than their actual date, which in turn can lead to misleading conclusions about the phase of a site.
- 6.1.3 The calibrated result, 2290–2030 cal BC (SUERC-56574 at 95% confidence) is consistent with an early Beaker date, indicating that the burial was made at some point during the 23rd or 22nd century BC, and possibly but less likely the 21st century BC (Table 7).
- 6.1.4 It is recommended that up to three radiocarbon measurements are obtained to help confirm the date of significant deposits of charred material and/or clarify the date of the Iron Age pottery.

Table 7. Radiocarbon result, and plot of calibrated date cal BC (95% confidence)

Lab ref.	Context	Material	Date BP	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$	$\delta^{15}\text{N}$	C/N ratio	Calibration BC 95% confidence
SUERC-56574	Grave 91158 (91159)	Human bone, right femur from an articulator burial	3760±35	-21.3‰	10.0	3.3	2290-2030 cal BC



## 7 POTENTIAL AND PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER WORK

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The excavation produced evidence for an early Beaker period burial, an Early–Middle Iron Age settlement, Romano-British activity, and extensive limestone quarrying of possible post-medieval date. The findings, therefore, help provided a fuller understanding particularly of developments in the Iron Age and Romano-British period, which are well represented in the archaeological record in the surrounding landscape.

### 7.2 Archaeological potential

#### **Beaker period**

- 7.2.1 The radiocarbon date of 2290–2030 cal BC (SUERC-56574) obtained on bone from grave 91158 makes this burial of considerable significance, as it indicates that the burial was made during the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age. Although no Beaker pottery or



associated artefacts were found in the grave, the date and the mode of burial are consistent with those of early Beaker burials.

- 7.2.2 There is little evidence for activity in this period in the area, although a number of undated circular cropmarks on Mouldon Hill 600 m north-east of the Site may represent the remains of an Early Bronze Age barrow cemetery. Much of the recorded evidence for Beaker and Early Bronze Age activity in the wider landscape is located on the Marlborough Downs to the south.

### ***Iron Age***

- 7.2.3 The Site produced minimal evidence for activity in the Late Iron Age, and it is assumed that all the prehistoric features, and the majority of those that are undated, are of either Early or Middle Iron Age date. Few features can be more precisely phased within that time span, but there are indications that the two forms of round-house – at least five defined by circles of posts and one by a ring gully – reflect a chronological development. There appears to have been a break in settlement activity during the 2nd to 1st century BC.
- 7.2.4 The post-built structures appear to have been relatively early, with at least two of them providing evidence for an Early Iron Age date. They were not all contemporary, however, with at least one being replaced by another at the same location. Nor are they the same size, ranging from 6.4 m to 9.6 m in diameter. It is unclear whether this reflects development over time, differences in status within the settlement, or different functions. In contrast, the ring gully round-house, which indicates a different method of construction, appears to be of Middle Iron Age date.
- 7.2.5 The large number of other post-holes suggests that there were many other unrecognised structures on the Site. A number of square four-post structures, of a type often interpreted as granaries, were evident on the eastern side of the site. Two other structures, combining post-holes and possible beamslots, were recorded in the same general area, although the recovery from one of them (of similar size to the granaries) of much of the ironworking slag from the Site, might indicate some form of industrial use.
- 7.2.6 The Iron Age finds from the Site suggest a relatively low-status agricultural settlement, undertaking domestic crafts and small-scale industrial activity. The finds comprised predominantly pottery, animal bone, fired clay, slag, and stone. The ditch at the south of the Site may mark the boundary between the settlement area and adjacent farmland.
- 7.2.7 The open character of the settlement contrasts with the Middle Iron Age settlement enclosures revealed at Groundwell Farm (Gingell 1981) and Groundwell West (Walker *et al.* 2001), perhaps occupied by a single family unit engaged in mixed farming.

### ***Romano-British***

- 7.2.8 The nature of the activity during the Romano-British period is less clear. No obvious structures were recognised, although the range of finds associated with the Romano-British pottery – mainly animal bone, but also small quantities of fired clay, stone and slag – are suggestive of domestic waste indicating settlement within the immediate vicinity, if not on the Site itself.

### ***Recommendations***

- 7.2.9 Further analysis will be undertaken of the pits and post-holes (location, size, contents etc) with the aim of identifying additional structures and feature groups. Digitisation of selected





drawings is required to enable the accurate representation of complex structures and grouped features.

### **7.3 Finds potential**

- 7.3.1 The assessment results indicate that the preservation of artefacts is generally poor across much of the Site. Chronological evidence, primarily from the pottery, indicates a clear Early to Middle Iron Age phase of activity, limited evidence for the Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British use of the landscape and with further small scale settlement activity continuing throughout the Romano-British period.
- 7.3.2 The range of material culture is also relatively restricted, with only the pottery and animal bone occurring in any quantity. The pottery provides evidence for the trading links and ceramic influences on this region, although the relatively low numbers of diagnostic pieces severely limit the amount of information that could be further recorded. Additional analysis is therefore unlikely to enhance the chronological framework much further. However, elsewhere in the region, it appears that coarse shell-tempered fabrics belong to the earlier phases of the Iron Age, with limestone temper becoming more common/replacing the coarse shell in the Middle Iron Age, both occurring alongside an increase in finer, sandier, wares/fabrics (Gingell 1982; Timby 2001; Laidlaw 2001). Therefore, a closer look at the fabric type of the diagnostic pieces present within the assemblage, may help determine whether this pattern is reflected at Ridgeway Farm.
- 7.3.3 The worked bone, slag and fired clay provide some evidence for crafts and industrial activities, while the copper alloy provides some indication of the range of personal adornment worn by the inhabitants. The other material categories (CBM, burnt flint, iron, stone, glass and shell) have only limited potential to provide further information beyond that already recorded.
- 7.3.4 The human bone allows for a moderate level of osteological observation and data collection.
- 7.3.5 The animal bone assemblage includes 454 identified bones, the majority of which are from Iron Age features. The economy and husbandry strategy appear to be fairly typical for the region, and the assemblage includes a number of ABG that appear to have been intentionally placed within pits, as practice that is also common practice on sites of this date range.

#### ***Recommendations***

- 7.3.6 Further analysis of the following classes of finds are recommended, and reported in the proposed publication (below). It is also recommended that the finds from the evaluation be reviewed alongside the material recovered from the excavation. Where no further work is recommended information gathered as part of this assessment stage may be adapted for use in the publication report.

#### **Metalwork**

- 7.3.7 The metal objects have been X-radiographed as part of the assessment phase, as a basic record and also to aid identification. The Polden Hill type copper alloy brooch should be illustrated.

#### **Worked and utilised stone**

- 7.3.8 Geological identifications will be obtained for the worked and utilised stone objects and added to the catalogue entries.



### Pottery

- 7.3.9 The pottery from all periods should be considered in its feature groups and in relation to other assemblages from contemporary sites in the area. For the prehistoric pottery, it is recommended that the diagnostic and featured sherds (amounting to approximately 15% of the assemblage) are recorded in full, in accordance with national guidelines (PCRG 2010). Provision should be made for the illustration of up to 20 vessels. The Romano-British pottery has already been recorded to the recommended minimum standards (Darling 1994) and no further work is proposed.

### Fired clay

- 7.3.10 The fired clay slingshot will be illustrated.

### Human bone

- 7.3.11 It is recommended that the human bone be fully analysed and reported in relation to their temporal contexts. All unsorted <4 mm residues will be subject to a rapid scan to extract any identifiable material, osseous or artefactual. Taphonomic factors potentially affecting differential bone preservation will be assessed. Age and sex will be assessed using standard methodologies (as above). Where possible a standard suite of measurements will be taken (Brothwell and Zakrzewski 2004) and non-metric traits recorded (Berry and Berry 1967; Finnegan 1978). Pathological lesions will be recorded in text and via digital photography; some lesions may warrant photographing for publication purposes. It may also be necessary to make X-radiographs of skeletal elements to establish as far as possible the full nature of certain lesions

### Animal bone

- 7.3.12 The Iron Age assemblage merits further analysis and reporting to record detailed information (ie, age, biometry and butchery) and discuss the significance of the assemblage in relation to other relevant contextual information, and contemporary sites in region, for example Ridge Green, Shaw near Swindon (Powell 2010).

## **7.4 Environmental potential**

### ***Charred plant remains***

- 7.4.1 The analysis of the charred plant assemblages has the potential to provide some information on the nature of the settlement, the surrounding environment and local agricultural practices and crop husbandry techniques during the Iron Age and Romano-British periods. The results of this analysis could provide a comparison with the data from other sites in the local area, such as Groundwell West (Stevens and Wilkinson 2001), Latton Lands (Griffiths 2009) and Shaw Ridge (Powell 2010).
- 7.4.2 It is proposed to analyse the charred plant remains from Early Iron Age pit 91181, posthole 91425 in Early/Middle Iron Age 4-post structure 93007, Early/Middle Iron Age pit 91311, Middle Iron Age pit 92072, Iron Age pit 91359 and Romano-British pit 91531 (Table 6, Appendix 1). It is suggested that radiocarbon measurements are obtained for three of these deposits to confirm their date.
- 7.4.3 All identifiable charred plant macrofossils will be extracted from the 2 mm and 1 mm residues together with the flot. Identification will be undertaken using stereo incident light microscopy at magnifications of up to x40 using a Leica MS5 microscope, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary and Hopf (2000, tables 3 and 5), for cereals and with reference to modern reference collections where appropriate. They will be quantified and the results tabulated.



### **Wood charcoal**

- 7.4.4 The analysis of the wood charcoal has the potential to provide some limited information on the species composition, management and exploitation of the local woodland resource on the site during the Iron Age. Although no further work is proposed on these samples, the results from the assessment will be incorporated in the report.

## **8 RESOURCES, PROGRAM AND PUBLICATION**

### **8.1 Proposed analysis, program and publication**

- 8.1.1 It is proposed that, following the further analyses outlined above, an article describing the results of the fieldwork will be submitted for publication in the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, (WANHM) a peer-reviewed journal with a regional and national readership.
- 8.1.2 Subject to approval by Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service, a ten month program of works is suggested, starting in March 2015 with submission of the completed journal article by December 2015.
- 8.1.3 The report will comprise a brief introduction giving background of the project, followed by a largely integrated, chronological narrative describing the Iron Age settlement and Romano-British activity, incorporating relevant specialist detail within the narrative text, followed by specialist reports on selected finds categories and environmental remains. The significance of the findings will be discussed within their local and regional contexts.

### **Provisional synopsis of WANHM article**

Working title:

*Early to Middle Iron Age settlement, and Romano-British activity, at Ridgeway Farm, Purton, Wiltshire*

by Andrew B. Powell, with specialist contributions

Introduction	500 words
Beaker burial	200 words
Iron Age settlement	3000 words
Romano-British features	1000 words
Later activity	300 words
Finds and environmental reports	8000 words
Discussion	1000 words

Total: approximately 14,000 words, 10 figures, 2 plates, 6 tables

### **8.2 Management**

- 8.2.1 Wessex Archaeology operates a project management system. The team will be headed by a Post-Excavation Manager who will assume ultimate responsibility for the implementation and execution of the project specification as outlined in the Updated Project Design, and the achievement of performance targets, be they academic, budgetary, or scheduled.



- 8.2.2 The Post-Excavation Manager may delegate specific aspects of the project to other key staff; they will supervise others and have a direct input into the compilation of the report. They may also undertake direct liaison with external consultants and specialists who are contributing to the publication report, and the museum named as the recipient of the project archive. The Post-Excavation Manager will have a major input into how the publication report is written. They will define and control the scope and form of the post-excavation programme.
- 8.2.3 The Post-Excavation Manager will be assisted by the Reports Manager, who will help to ensure that the report meets internal quality standards as defined in Wessex Archaeology's guidelines.

### 8.3 Personnel

- 8.3.1 The following Wessex Archaeology core staff are scheduled to undertake the work as outlined in the task list for post-excavation analysis and publication (**Table 8**).

**Table 8** Task list

Task no		Days	Staff	
	<b>Manage &amp; support</b>			
1	Project management	5	Barclay A	WA
2	Project management	2	Powell A	WA
3	Project Management	0.5	Manning A	WA
4	Project monitor and QA	0.5	Bradley P	WA
5	Finds management	0.5	Seager Smith R	WA
6	Environ management	0.5	Wyles S	WA
7	Graphics management	0.5	Nichols K	WA
8	IT support	2	Nueberger J	WA
	<b>Pre-analysis</b>			
9	Sample sort and prep	2	Wyles S	WA
10	Complete digitising	5	Illustrator	WA
11	Project meetings	1	All	WA
12	Radiocarbon submission	0.5	Barclay A	WA
13	Radiocarbon dates - up to 3	1	Ext	
14	Check phasing and stratigraphic analysis, update site database	2	Powell A	WA
15	Brief specialists	0.5	Powell A	WA
16	Additional conservation	2	WCC/Wootten L	Ext/WA
17	Background research	0.5	Powell A	WA
	<b>Finds - Appendices</b>			
18	Pottery	6	Brook E	WA
19	Worked stone identification	0.5	Ext	Ext
20	Metalwork	3	Brook E	WA
21	Other finds	2	Brook E	WA
22	Animal bone	2	Higbee L	WA
23	Human bone	2	Egging Dinwiddy K	WA
24	Illustrations: finds	5	James E	WA



	<b>Environmental - Appendices</b>			
25	Charcoal	0.25	Wyles S	WA
26	Plant remains	5	Wyles S	WA
	<b>Publication</b>			
27	Introduction & prelims	0.5	Powell A	WA
28	Natural features and Bronze Age	0.5	Powell A	WA
29	Iron Age	5	Powell A	WA
30	Romano-British	2	Powell A	WA
31	Post-Roman	0.5	Powell A	WA
32	Discussion	1	Powell A	WA
33	Illustrations	8	James E	WA
34	Captions (figs & pls)	0.25	Powell A	WA
35	Check and compile Bibliography	0.5	Powell A	WA
36	Compile report	1	Powell A	WA
37	Compile figures	0.25	James SE	WA
	<b>Journal article edit and production</b>			
38	Review report	1	Barclay A	WA
39	Edit report and submission to journal	4	Bradley P	WA
40	Revision following journal editor's comments	1	All	WA
41	Journal costs & proofs	1	Ext	
	<b>Archiving</b>			
42	Environ archiving	0.5	Wyles S	WA
43	Archive management	0.5	Mepham L	WA
44	Archive preparation	2	Coates C	WA
45	Archive preparation	1	Powell A	WA
46	Archive preparation	1	Nelson S	WA
48	Archive deposition to museum	1	Coates C including transport	WA
49	Box storage grant - museum charges	1		Ext

## 9 STORAGE AND CURATION

### 9.1 Museum

9.1.1 The Site falls within the collecting area of the Wiltshire Heritage Museum, Devizes. Because the museum is currently not accepting archives for deposition, the archive will be temporarily curated at the offices of Wessex Archaeology, Salisbury, until such time as it can be deposited.

### 9.2 Archive

9.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data for both the evaluation and the excavation



stages, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1995; Institute for Archaeologists 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the appropriate site codes – 78261 (evaluation) and 86361 (excavation) – and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:

- 21 cardboard boxes or airtight plastic boxes of artefacts and ecofacts, ordered by material type, and a large unboxed piece of quernstone;
- six files of paper records and A3/A4 graphics sheets;
- three A1 graphics sheets.

### 9.3 Conservation

9.3.1 No finds have been identified as of unstable condition, and therefore potentially in need of further conservation treatment. The metal objects have been X-radiographed as part of the assessment phase, as a basic record and also to aid identification. Some further conservation to assist identification may be carried out at the analysis stage.

### 9.4 Discard policy

9.4.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.

9.4.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2002).

### 9.5 Copyright

9.5.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. The recipient museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms with the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.

### 9.6 Security copy

9.6.1 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.



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## APPENDIX 1 ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

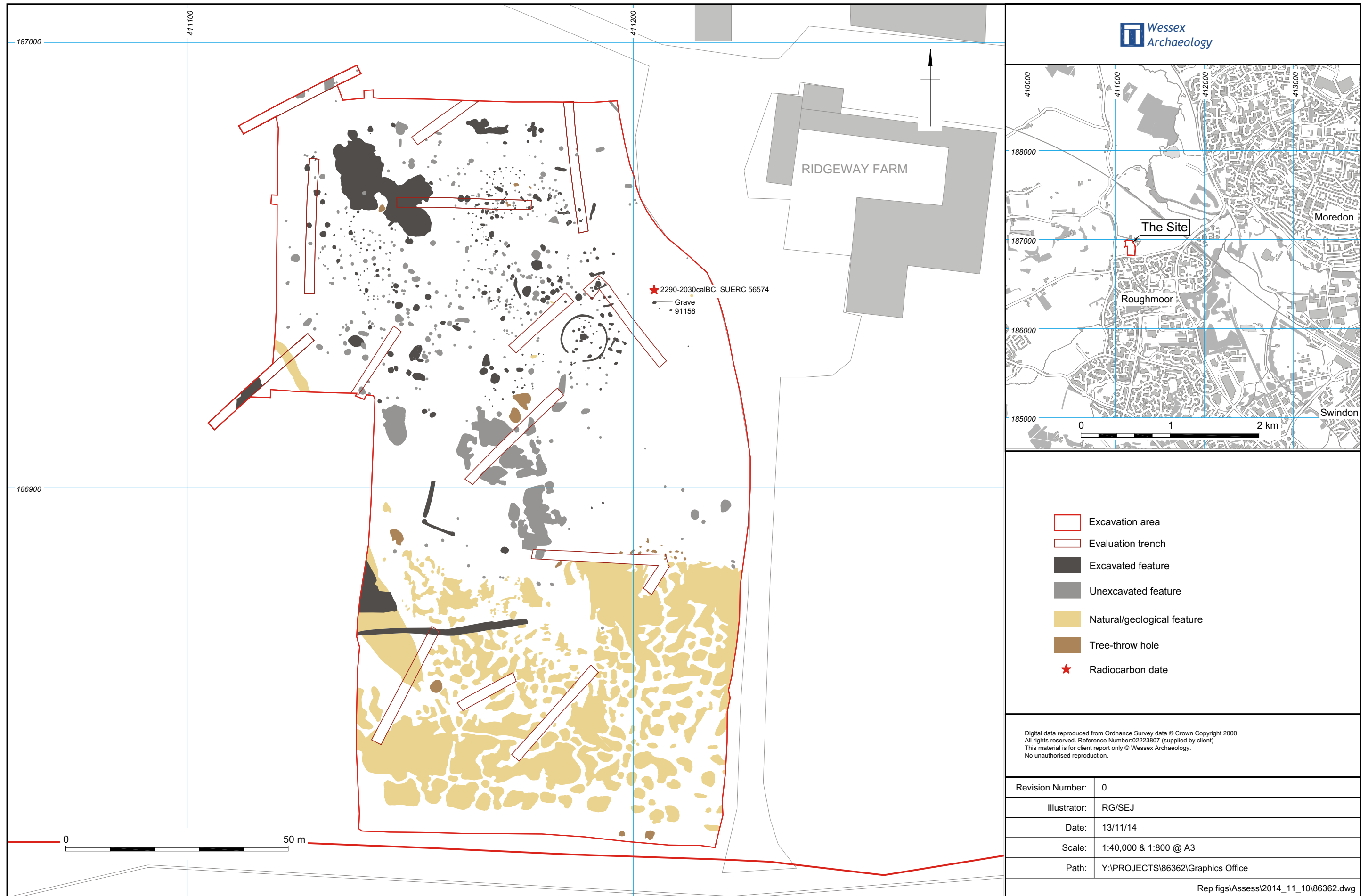
Table 6. Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

Group	Feature	Cxt	Sam	Vol (l)	Flot (ml)	Roots %	Grain	Chaff	Cereal notes	Charred other	Notes	Charcoal > 4/2 mm	Other	Anl.
<i>Early Iron Age</i>														
-	Pit 91181	91183	12	18	75	35	A*	A	Hulled wheat + barley grain frags, spikelet forks + glume base frags inc. spelt	B	<i>Avena/Bromus, Galium, Chenopodium</i> , stem frags	2/5 ml	Sab (C)	P
<i>Early-Middle Iron Age</i>														
R-house 93004	P-h 91589	91591	36	2	230	8	-	-	-	-	-	25/80 ml	Moll-t (C)	
	P-h 91713	91715	51	8	45	35	-	-	-	C	<i>Corylus avellana</i> shell frags	5/5 ml	Moll-t (C)	
	P-h 92055	92056	57	20	90	25	-	-	-	-	-	20/20 ml	Moll-t (C)	
R-house 93005	P-h 91625	91624	39	10	45	55	C	-	Barley grain frags	C	<i>Corylus avellana</i> shell frags, <i>Galium</i>	5/5 ml	Moll-t (A)	
Square structure 93007	P-h 91379	91378	20	40	130	50	C	-	Hulled wheat + barley grain frags	A	<i>Corylus avellana</i> shell frags, <i>Vicia/Lathyrus, Galium</i>	4/7 ml	Moll-t (A), slag, hammerscale	
	P-h 91425	91424	41	10	30	65	C	B	Hulled wheat grain frags, glume base frags inc. spelt	B	<i>Prunus spinosa</i> stone frag, <i>Trifolium/Medicago, Vicia/Lathyrus, Lolium/Festuca</i>	2/2 ml	Moll-t (B), slag	P
	P-h 91488	91487	42	20	140	70	C	C	Indet. grain frag, glume base frags	C	<i>Galium, Vicia/Lathyrus</i>	2/8 ml	Moll-t (B), slag, hammerscale	
-	Pit 91205	91206	11	19	150	50	C	-	Barley grain frags	C	<i>Chenopodium</i>	20/20 ml	Moll-t (A)	
-	Pit 91342	91343	17	19	50	70	B	-	Barley grain frags	-	-	1/2 ml	Moll-t (B)	
-	Pit 91311	91310	18	10	1000	2	A***	A***	Mainly hulled wheat grain, some barley grain frags, spikelet fork, glumes base frags inc. spelt	A**	<i>Avena, Bromus, Vicia/Lathyrus, Galium, Rumex</i>	10/5 ml	Sab (C), Moll-t (C)	P
-	Pit 91763	91765	55	10	250	25	C	-	Hulled wheat + barley grain frags	-	-	25/85 ml	Moll-t (C)	
<i>Middle Iron Age</i>														
R-house 93002	Gully 91390	91391	22	13	45	50	C	-	Barley grain frags	C	<i>Atriplex</i>	0/5 ml	Moll-t (C), hammerscale	
	Gully 91383	91384	24	9	20	65	C	-	Hulled wheat grain frag	-	-	1/2 ml	-	
	Gully 91431	91432	31	20	40	65	-	-	-	C	<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> , stem/root frags	2/4 ml	Moll-t (C)	
	Gully 91483	91484	32	20	50	70	C	-	Indet. grain frags	-	-	1/3 ml	Moll-t (B)	
-	Pit 92072	92074	58	9	25	40	C	-	Hulled wheat grain frags	A	<i>Corylus avellana</i> shell frags, <i>Rumex, Vicia/Lathyrus, Eleocharis</i>	2/3 ml	Moll-t (B)	P



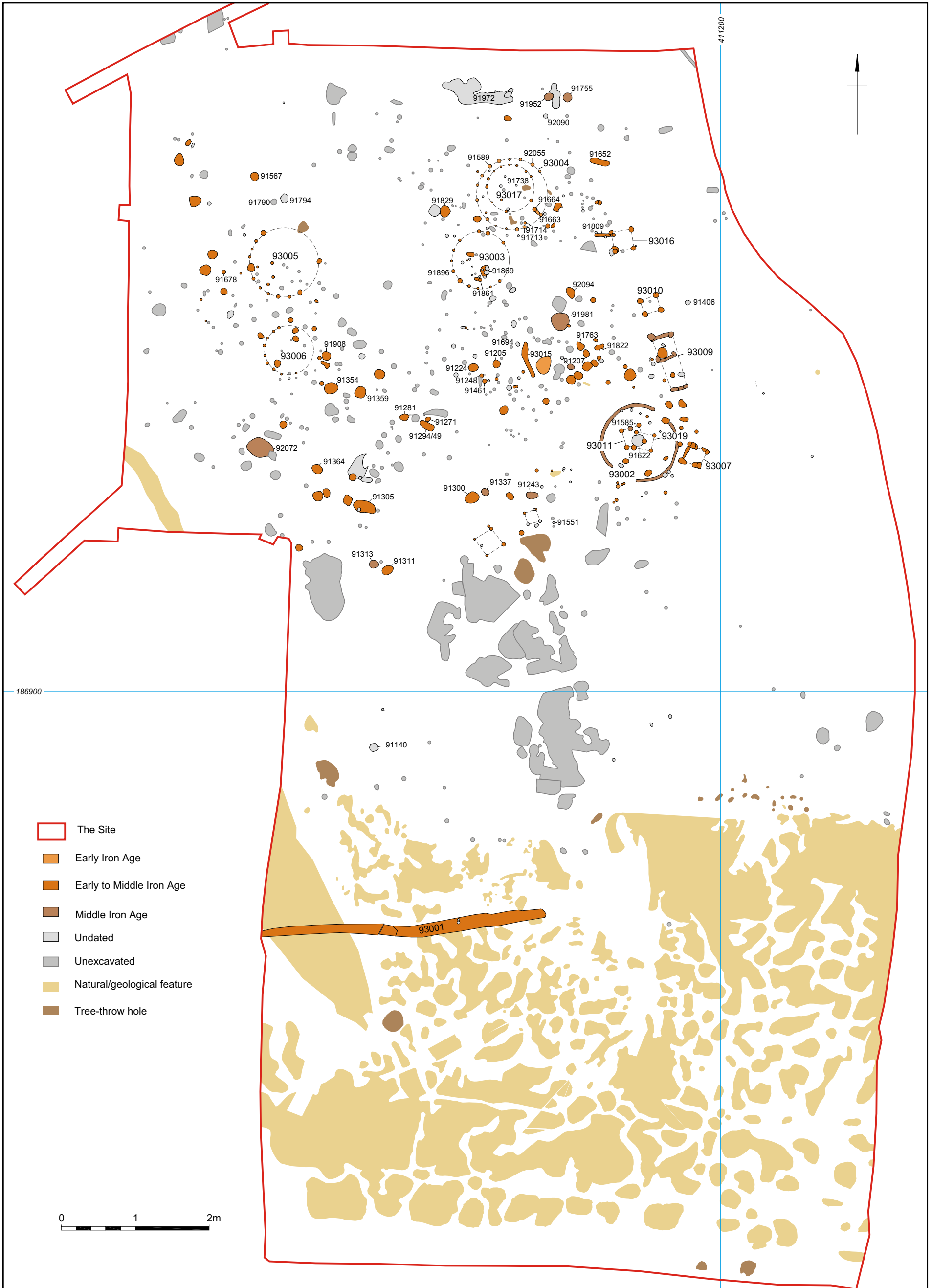
Group	Feature	Cxt	Sam	Vol (l)	Flot (ml)	Roots %	Grain	Chaff	Cereal notes	Charred other	Notes	Charcoal > 4/2 mm	Other	Anl.
<i>Iron Age</i>														
-	Pit 91281	91282	14	19	75	50	-	-	-	C	Galium	3/10 ml	Sab (C), Moll-t (A), min. matter	
-	Pit 91340	91341	19	20	90	70	C	-	Barley grain frags	B	Vicia/Lathyrus, Galium, Trifolium/Medicago	0/2 ml	Sab (C), Moll-t (A), Slag	
-	Pit 91359	91360	21	40	55	35	C	C	Hulled wheat + barley grain frags, glume base frags	B	Galium, Corylus avellana shell frag, Prunus spinosa frags, Polygonum	2/5 ml	Sab (C)	P
		91361	38	9	30	15	C	-	Indet. grain frags	C	Rumex, thorn frag	2/5 ml	Moll-t (B), Sab (C), slag	
-	Pit 91652	91654	48	1	3	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	Moll-t (C)	
		91655	49	10	15	50	-	-	-	-	Stem frags	-	Moll-t (B)	
		91657	50	10	25	50	-	-	-	-	-	0/<1 ml	Moll-t (C)	
-	Pit 91943	91944	56	18	40	70	C	-	Hulled wheat grain frags	C	Rumex, Galium, Chenopodium, thorn frag	2/5 ml	Moll-t (C), Slag	
<i>Romano-British</i>														
-	Pit 91240	91241	13	20	20	50	-	-	-	-	-	<1/<1 ml	Moll-t (A)	
-	Pit 91531	91532	35	10	75	50	A	A	Barley + hulled wheat grain frags, glume base frags inc. spelt	A*	Avena, Bromus, Vicia/Lathyrus, Rumex, Sherardia, Ranunculus	3/7 ml	Sab (C), Moll-t (C)	P
<i>Undated</i>														
-	Pit 91622	91623	59	10	15	50	C	-	Hulled wheat grain frags	C	Corylus avellana shell frags	0/<1 ml	Moll-t (C)	
		91665	45	10	325	10	-	-	-	C	Vicia/Lathyrus, Galium	50/125 ml	-	
-	Feature 91406	91407	26	1	4	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
		91407	27	0.4	2	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
		91407	28	0.5	2	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	Moll-t (C)	

Key: A\*\*\* = exceptional, A\*\* = 100+, A\* = 30-99, A = >10, B = 9-5, C = <5; Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs, Analysis: CPR = charred plant remains



Site location and plan of all features

Figure 1



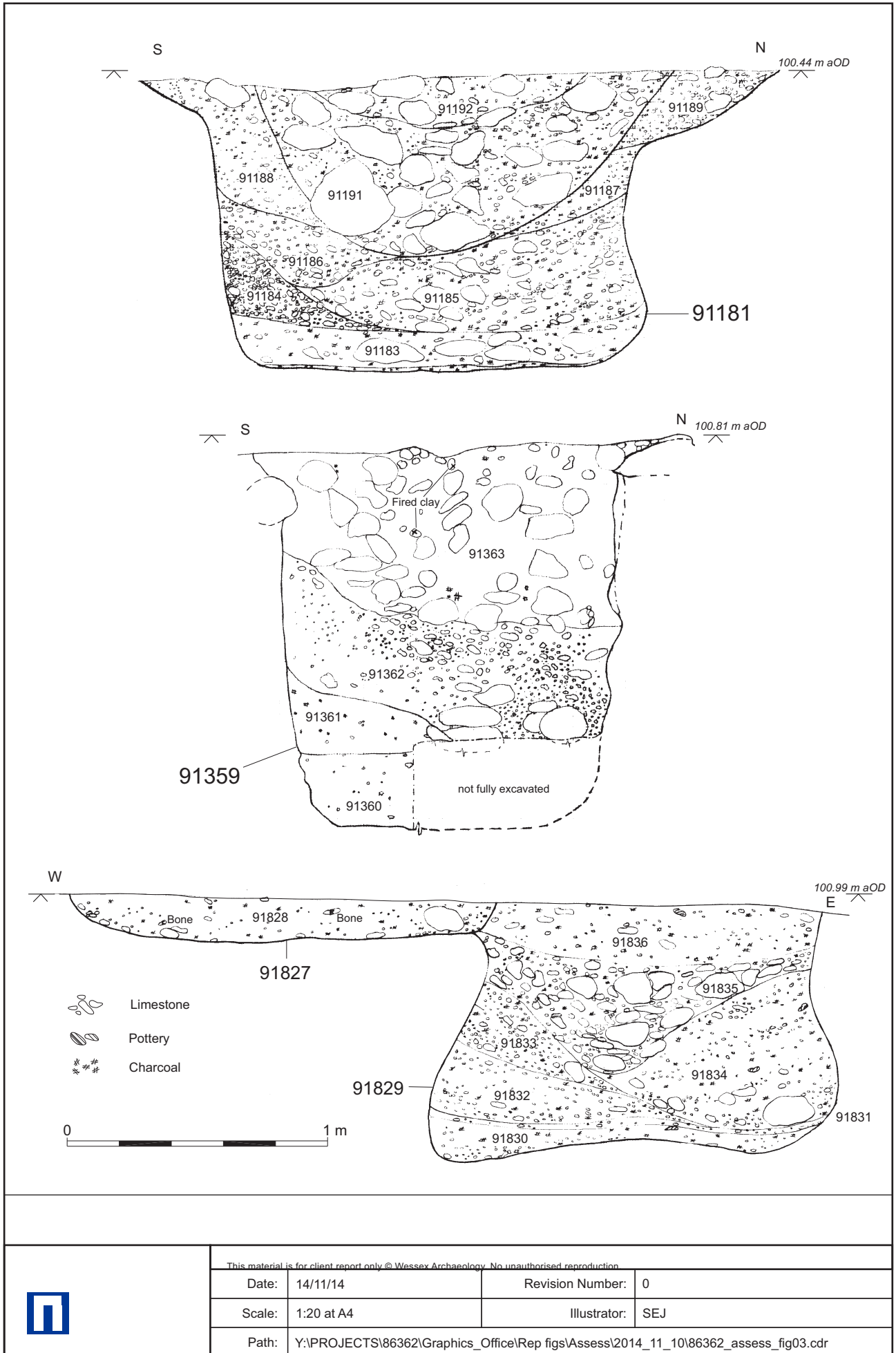
- The Site
- Early Iron Age
- Early to Middle Iron Age
- Middle Iron Age
- Undated
- Unexcavated
- Natural/geological feature
- Tree-throw hole

0 1 2m

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Scale:	1:500	Illustrator:	SEJ
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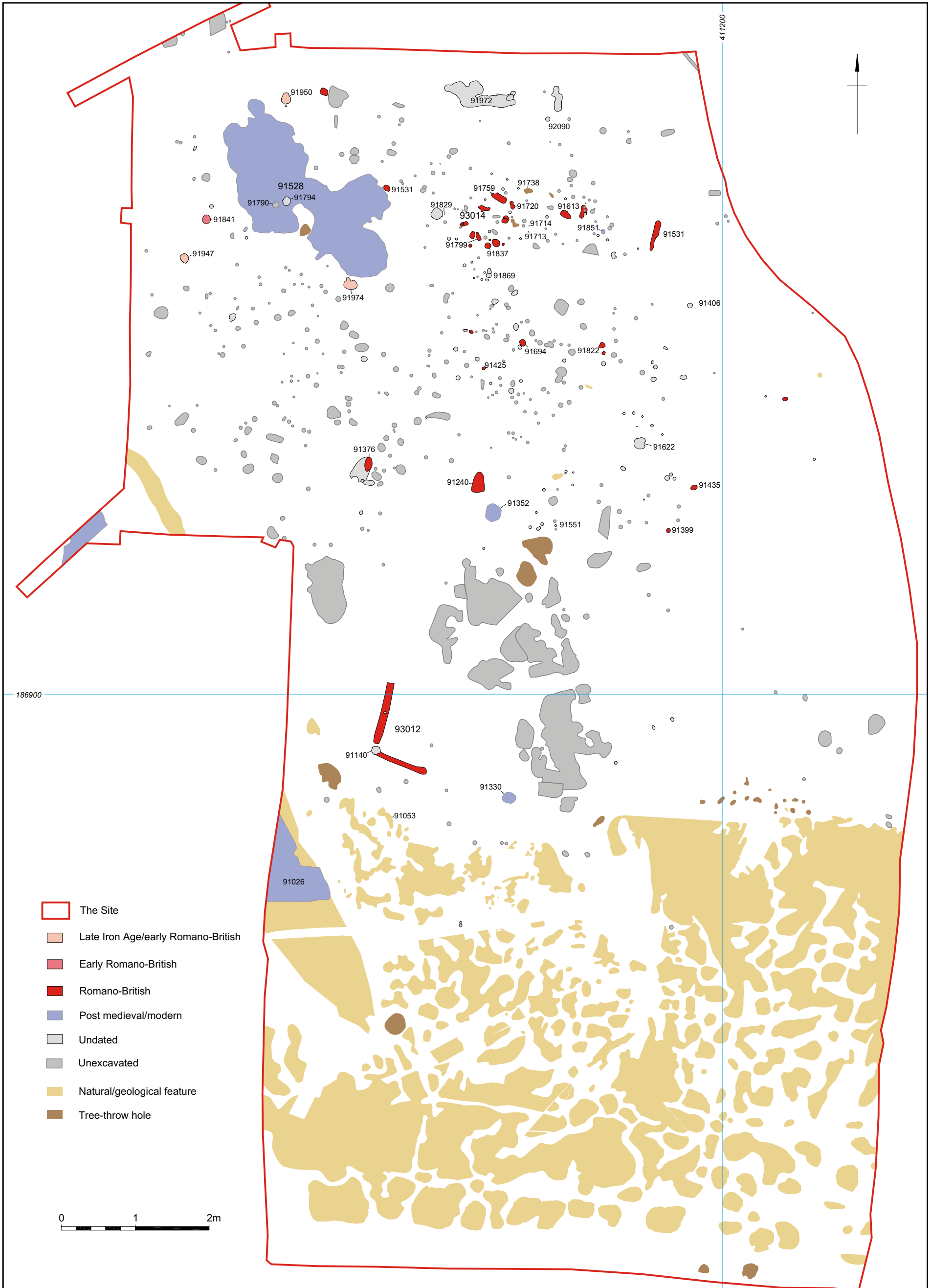




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Pit sections

Figure 3



- The Site
- Late Iron Age/early Romano-British
- Early Romano-British
- Romano-British
- Post medieval/modern
- Undated
- Unexcavated
- Natural/geological feature
- Tree-throw hole



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Romano-British and later features

Figure 4





Plate 1: Feature 91652, viewed from the north



Plate 2: Burial in grave 91158, viewed from the north


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Plate 3: Skeleton of foal in pit 91240



Plate 4: Quarry 91332, viewed from the south-west  
Sheep and lamb bones in undated feature 91406



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Plate 5: Sheep and lamb bones in undated feature 91406

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