Wessex Archaeology

Phase 3 Land (King's Gate), Boscombe Down, Amesbury, Wiltshire

Report on Additional Trial Trench Evaluation at Southmill Hill and Swale

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December 2011

PHASE 3 LAND (KING'S GATE), BOSCOMBE DOWN, AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE

Report on Additional Trial Trench Evaluation at Southmill Hill and Swale

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Report on Additional Trial Trench Evaluation at Southmill Hill and Swale

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by J.S. Bloor Homes Ltd to undertake an additional archaeological trial trench evaluation within the Southmill Hill area, which covers approximately 7.2ha and which forms a part of land referred to as the Phase 3 Land (Kings Gate), Boscombe Down, Amesbury, Wiltshire.

In late 2011, a proposed design which is due to be submitted as a planning application in late 2011 was extended to include the raising of ground levels and the construction of new sport pitches within the Southmill Hill area. This area is known to contain a significant concentration of features relating to an Iron Age settlement and Bronze Age barrows, which have previously been the subject of a geophysical survey.

A limited programme of additional trial trenching was required within the area of the proposed playing fields to assess the existing depth and condition of existing archaeological features and the accuracy of the previous geophysical survey. In addition, the opportunity was taken to target a newly proposed swale further to the south, which was located outside previously investigated areas.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken between 14th and 18th November 2011. A total of eleven trenches were excavated in the course of the fieldwork, measuring on average 20m x 1.8m. A single trench was excavated in the new swale area and ten trenches in the Southmill Hill area were targeted upon features identified in the previous geophysical survey.

The archaeological evaluation on Southmill Hill area confirmed the accuracy of the geophysical survey and identified dense concentrations of features within the limits of the enclosed Iron Age settlement. Identified features included a possible roundhouse and concentrated clusters of pits, filled with deliberate dumps of occupation debris and narrow ditches which appear to be used to divide the settlement into separate internal sub-enclosures within the main settlement area.

The density of features and initial dating based on a small excavation sample of selected features indicates that the settlement was subject to intensive, prolonged human occupation, which is thought to have spanned the Iron Age.

No archaeological features were observed in the proposed swale area and in four trenches located to the south of the Southmill Hill settlement boundary.

Within the settlement, there was good correlation between the results of the geophysical survey and the evaluation. The majority of the targeted geophysical anomalies which had been classified as archaeological ditches were positively confirmed as linear features. In contrast, only a few of the anomalies described as possible archaeology corresponded with archaeological pits or features of natural origin. The evaluation demonstrated that large areas of increased magnetic response, thought to have been derived from intensive human habitation, are indeed

composed of multiple settlement features, such as pit clusters. Within such areas, the geophysics survey was unable to locate smaller features, such as discrete pits or ring gullies.

The results of the field evaluation show that the archaeological features are buried beneath between 0.2m and 0.27m of topsoil. The present ground surface of the trenches, in which archaeological features were identified, lay between 102.174m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and 106.151m aOD. Consequently, across the evaluation area, the uppermost archaeological horizon is to be expected at an elevation between 101.914m aOD, in the north-western part of the evaluation area, and 105.911m aOD, to the east.

This information will be used to inform the construction of the proposed playing fields construction to ensure that the settlement features are protected from any development impact and that appropriate methodology will be applied during the raising of the ground levels.

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The fieldwork was directed in the field by Julia Sulikowska, who was assisted by Rob Scott. The report was prepared by Julia Sulikowska with contributions from Sarah Wyles and Nikki Mulhall (environmental assessment), Lorraine Mepham (Finds) and Lorrain Higbee (Animal bone). The report illustrations were prepared by Linda Coleman. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Manning.

PHASE 3 LAND (KING'S GATE), BOSCOMBE DOWN, AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE

Report on Additional Trial Trench Evaluation at Southmill Hill and Swale

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by J.S. Bloor Homes Ltd (the Client) to undertake a limited programme of additional archaeological trial trench evaluation within the Southmill Hill area and a new swale, covering an area of approximately 7ha, which forms a part of land referred to as the Phase 3 Land (Kings Gate), Boscombe Down, Amesbury, Wiltshire (hereafter, 'the Site'), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 416150 140130 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The Phase 3: King's Gate area lies immediately to the southwest of the Archer's Gate development area, which has been the subject of an intensive archaeological investigation since 2002 and which has been shown to contain a very significant number of prehistoric and Romano-British remains.

1.1.3 An Environmental Statement is currently being prepared in support of a planning application, which is to be submitted in late 2011, for Phase 3: King's Gate development, comprising 460 residential units and formal open space, located within an area of approximately 20ha.

1.1.4 A programme of archaeological investigations has been undertaken in order to inform the heritage chapter of the Environmental Statement. The investigations included an aerial photography interpretation (Deegan 2010), an initial appraisal of the archaeological potential (Wessex Archaeology 2011a), a rapid and subsequent detailed geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2010) and a trial trench evaluation covering an area of approximately 15ha (Wessex Archaeology 2011b).

1.1.5 In late 2011, the area contained in the planned planning application submission was extended to include new sport pitches located on Southmill Hill, at the northern edge of the development area. This area is known from aerial photographs and previous geophysical survey to contain an enclosed Iron Age settlement and Bronze Age barrows. The intention is that the archaeological remains are to be preserved *in situ* by raising ground levels to protect the remains from any subsequent impact from the construction, drainage and use of the playing fields.

1.1.6 Following discussions with Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS), a limited programme of archaeological trial trenching was required within the proposed playing field area to primarily assess the existing depth and condition of existing archaeological features and the accuracy of the previous geophysical survey.

1.1.7 In addition, the opportunity was taken to target a newly proposed swale further to the south, which was located outside previously investigated areas.

1.1.8 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), initially prepared in October 2010, was revised to include the agreed methodology and extent of the new evaluation areas (Wessex Archaeology 2011c). This revision was submitted to, and approved by, WCAS before the commencement of the fieldwork.

1.1.9 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken between 14th and 18th November 2011.

2 THE SITE

2.1 The Site, Location and Geology

2.1.1 The Southmill Hill area comprises a rectangular block of open rough ground approximately 7.2ha in area, immediately to the east of the Salisbury to Amesbury road (A345), to the north of the new link road, to the south of Lynchets at Southmill Hill Scheduled Monument and to the west of the completed Boscombe Down residential development (Archer's Gate). The swale is located on similar ground 600m to the south (**Figure 1**).

2.1.2 The Site is located at a height of approximately 106m above Ordnance datum (aOD) within the northern and southern edges of the plateau area which is flanked by dry valleys to the north and south, with a gentle westwards downward slope edge, which extends beyond the Site boundaries. The underlying geology of the area is Upper Chalk of the Cretaceous Period (Geological Survey 1976).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The 100ha Boscombe Down site has already been the subject of widespread archaeological survey, evaluation and mitigation.

3.1.2 A full account of the background and results of the previous fieldwork has already been detailed in five assessment reports covering:

- The initial excavations on the new school site (Wessex Archaeology 2002);
- Large scale excavations to the east of Byway 20 (Wessex Archaeology 2005a);
- The excavation of the Byway 20 Romano-British cemetery (Wessex Archaeology 2008);
- Subsequent excavations at the northern edge of the development area and other minor works (Wessex Archaeology 2009); and
- Development of the Phase 1 and 2 Playing fields (Wessex Archaeology 2011d).

3.1.3 In summary, the Site lies within an area which is known to contain significant Later Neolithic, Early Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British archaeological remains.

3.1.4 The majority of the archaeological works have been focused on the Archer's Gate development: along the line of the new link road, to the south of the development area and within the Phase 1 and 2 Playing fields area in the centre of the development area (Wessex Archaeology 2005a, 2008, 2009

and 2011d). However, limited trial trench evaluation of landscaping areas and a balancing pond was undertaken during works along the link road (Wessex Archaeology 2005b).

3.1.5 In 2007, an excavation along the eastern edge of the development area along the line of a haul road and refurbishment of the existing Byway 20 identified a large unenclosed Romano-British cemetery, which forms the (presently) western-most element of a group of five enclosed and unenclosed late Romano-British cemeteries (Wessex Archaeology 2008).

3.1.6 The main focus of the additional evaluation, Southmill Hill, occupies the north-west section of the development area and covers an area of approximately 7ha. Although no intrusive fieldwork has been carried within this part of the site, an aerial photographic and geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2007) have been used to map in detail buried archaeological features which comprise a large enclosed probable Iron Age settlement and at least five possible Bronze Age barrow sites (**Figure 2**).

3.1.7 Recent fieldwork to the south and east of the area (Wessex Archaeology 2009 and 2011b) has identified isolated Iron Age pits and pit clusters, which may be associated with the settlement activity.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Evaluation Strategy

4.1.1 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the methodology detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2011c) and standards set out in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008).

4.1.2 The fieldwork consisted of the excavation of ten trenches in the Southmill Hill area, targeted on geophysical anomalies and a single trench in the new swale area.

4.2 Aims and Objectives

4.2.1 The objectives of the additional trial trench evaluation were to:

- Assess the general cover of overburden overlying the archaeological features across the whole of the Southmill Hill area to ensure sufficient imported material is used to preserve the features from any subsequent development impact and to inform the methodology to be used in any subsequent raising of ground level to avoid any impact on the existing archaeological resource;
- Assess the accuracy of the location of the 2007 geophysical survey plot by targeting a number of key points; and
- Establish the condition, nature and date of archaeological features using selective excavation of small number of features and, where possible, a representative collection of surface finds.

4.3 Trial Trenching

4.3.1 After discussion with the Wiltshire County Archaeologist, the evaluation trenches were targeted on the identified areas of high potential within the

enclosed settlement, including some known discrete features and immediately outside the settlement where no significant archaeology was identified by geophysics.

4.3.2 A total of eleven trenches were excavated in the course of the fieldwork, ten within the Southmill Hill area and one on the site of the proposed swale. All trenches were marked out on the ground prior to the commencement of work and located relative to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid. The trench locations were scanned with a Cable Avoidance Tool prior to and during excavation.

4.3.3 The trenches were excavated using a 13-tonne 360º tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, working under the continuous archaeological supervision. Topsoil was removed in a series of level spits of approximately 0.1m down to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon, or natural geology, whichever was encountered first. Spoil was stockpiled at a safe distance from the edge of trenches, with topsoil and subsoil stockpiled separately, and scanned visually for artefacts.

4.3.4 Following excavation and recording, all trenches were carefully backfilled on completion using excavated material in accordance with best practice, but not otherwise reinstated.

4.4 Archaeological Excavation and Recording

4.4.1 All archaeological features and deposits encountered were recorded using WA *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. Plans and sections of trenches and excavated archaeological features were prepared at an appropriate scale (1:20 and 1:10, respectively). A full photographic record was maintained, using digital photography, colour transparencies and black and white negatives (on 35mm film).

4.4.2 The Site was surveyed using Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) and tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Site drawings were annotated with co-ordinates and spot heights, as appropriate.

4.4.3 As the evaluation results will inform the methodology and depth of the subsequent raising of ground levels within the Southmill Hill area, the depth and condition of the overburden overlying the archaeological remains were recorded in detail. In this area, the sampling of any archaeological features was limited to the manual excavation of two representative features in order to ensure intact preservation of this significant area. All finds from the excavated contexts were retained and environmental samples were taken, where appropriate. The unexcavated features were mapped using the GNSS and a selection of datable surface material was collected.

4.4.4 Within the swale area, all possible archaeological features were excavated in order to determine their date, character and function.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A total of eleven trenches, each on average, 20m x 1.8m, were excavated during the evaluation (**Figures 1** and **2**). In order to avoid any duplication in context numbers between this and previous phases of fieldwork, trench numbers used were **442**-**452** with context numbers **60701**-**60750**.

5.1.2 The following section provides a summary of the information derived in the course of the field evaluation. Detailed descriptions of the trial trenches are included in **Appendix 1: Trench Tables**.

5.2 General Stratigraphy

5.2.1 The soil sequence across the Site comprised a thin layer of topsoil which comprised a mid greyish brown silty clay loam and was between 0.2m (Trench **444**) and 0.27m (Trenches **445**, **448**, **449** and **451**) in depth (**Figure 3**, **Sections 7202** and **7209**).

5.2.2 Burnt flint was noted in the topsoil across the Site, which indicates that ploughing undertaken within the Site at least from the post-medieval period (Wessex Archaeology 2011a) must have disturbed buried archaeological features.

5.2.3 The topsoil overlay the natural geology, which comprised Upper Chalk and into which all archaeological and natural features were cut.

5.3 Southmill Hill Area

5.3.1 Within the Southmill Hill area, archaeological features were identified in six of the ten trenches (**Figure 2**). Four of the trenches (**442**, **446**, **447** and **541**), located to the south of anomaly **4006** (Wessex Archaeology 2007) defining the southern limit of the large enclosed Iron Age settlement, revealed no archaeological features, despite having been targeted upon several possible archaeological and ferrous anomalies. Several tree throw holes and plough scars were observed in these trenches.

5.3.2 Within the enclosed settlement, there was good correlation between the results of the geophysical survey and the evaluation. A number of possible sub-enclosure ditches which had been identified on the geophysical survey were targeted and were confirmed as such, either in plan (Trenches **445**, **449** and **450**) or in plan and sample excavation (ditch **60707** in Trench **448)**.

5.3.3 In contrast, where the geophysical survey had identified anomalies suggesting possible archaeology or tree throws the results did not match so well, since the concentration of features appeared higher. This is also the case with areas identified in the geophysical survey as areas of increased magnetic response, when the evaluation trenches in these areas found complex and dense patterns of multiple settlement features, such as pit clusters.

Ditches

5.3.4 Six linear ditches observed in Trenches **445**, **448**, **449** and **450** corresponded with anomalies identified as archaeological ditches in the geophysics survey. At one location, in trench **448**, a group of pits was located in the vicinity of a ditch-like anomaly.

5.3.5 Ditch **60720** in Trench **445**, aligned north-east to south-west, was *c.* 1.4m wide and is thought to have formed the south-eastern boundary of the settlement. Due to its size it is unlikely that it functioned only as a land division, but also as a defensive feature. The pottery collected from the surface of the feature was of Iron Age date. A second possible ditch, north-west to south-east alignment, was observed to the south of ditch **60720**. The second ditch was not identified by the geophysical survey.

5.3.6 The remaining recorded ditches likely formed internal enclosures within the settlement.

5.3.7 In Trench **448**, ditch **60707** corresponded with the north-eastern of the two ditches suggested by the geophysics results. The south-western archaeological ditch anomaly was not observed in the trench, however, this anomaly might have been caused by a large pit cluster located in the vicinity.

5.3.8 The north-west to south-east aligned ditch **60707** was one of two features selected for sample excavation. This 0.98m wide and 0.52m deep feature was characterised by steep 'V' shaped profile (**Figure 3**, and **Plate 1**). It was filled with two episodes of gradual, secondary deposition comprising domestic debris. The ditch was dated broadly to the Iron Age period, although a single sherd of Beaker pottery was also recovered.

5.3.9 In Trench **449**, two enclosure ditches, aligned east to west and north-east to south-west, were revealed at locations suggested by the geophysical survey. However, the possible entranceway the southern ditch was targeted upon was not observed. The different orientation of the features might indicate that they formed different phases of the enclosure system development.

5.3.10 Both archaeological ditch anomalies targeted upon in Trench **450** were revealed. The southern of the ditches, however, comprised two smaller merging south-west to north-east aligned ditches. It is likely that due to their proximity, the geophysical survey interpreted these features as one. The northern ditch was only partially exposed within the trench, but the geophysical survey suggests it was on north-west to south-east alignment.

Ring Gullies

5.3.11 Two ring gullies were recorded in Trenches **448** and **449**. The gully in Trench **448** was approximately 0.25m wide and was truncated by two small possible rubbish pits. The curvature indicates that the ring gully would have been approximately 6m in diameter and might have been the remnants of a roundhouse.

5.3.12 Because only a small stretch of a 0.23m wide probable ring gully was exposed at the northern end of Trench **449**, it was not possible to identify it as a roundhouse with any confidence.

5.3.13 The ring gullies did not appear on the geophysical survey. The gully in Trench **448** was located in vicinity of pits and partially within the increased magnetic response area, within which features were not clearly distinguishable. The gully in Trench **449** is thought to have been too small and, possibly, too shallow, to show during the geophysical investigation.

Pits and pit clusters

5.3.14 A concentration of pits was located within the central part of the evaluation area, in Trenches **444**, **445** and **448**. Small number of pits was also recorded in Trenches **443** and **450**.

5.3.15 The majority of the pits were identified as refuse pits and were filled with deliberate dumps of likely domestic waste comprising mostly burnt flint, but pottery and animal bone were also noted on the surface of the features. Discrete features were sub-circular and sub-oval in shape and measured between 0.8m and 1.5m in diameter. Pit clusters, comprising unknown number of individual features, were from 2m to 7m in extent.

5.3.16 A single pit, feature **60726** in Trench **444** (**Figure 3** and **Plate 2**), was excavated in the course of the evaluation. The 1.12m long and 0.98m wide and 0.96m deep pit was sub-circular in shape and was characterised by undercut, concave sides and a flat base. It was backfilled with three deliberate dump deposits, characterised by large quantities of burnt flint. The presence of domestic refuse, such as animal bone, pottery, daub and charcoal suggests that the pit was used to dispose of occupation debris and therefore the burnt flint was likely used in cooking processes.

5.3.17 Pottery retrieved from pit **60726** was dated to Early to Late Iron Age period, which corresponds with the dating obtained from the top of the fills of pits **60742**, **60716** and **60710**.

5.3.18 The majority of the pits were located within the increased magnetic response areas. Several of the pits also corresponded with the possible archaeology anomalies located within those areas.

Other

5.3.19 Three tree throw holes were recorded in vicinity of the archaeological features. They did not correspond with geophysical anomalies. In Trench **448**, the tree throw was truncated by Iron Age pit **60712**.

5.4 Proposed Swale Area

5.4.1 Within the Swale, a single trench was excavated (Trench **452**, **Figure 1**). In the trench, 0.25m deep mid greyish brown silt loam topsoil overlay natural chalk geology. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed in the trench. Two tree throw holes, located at the northern end of the trench, were investigated, but no archaeological material was recovered from these features.

6 FINDS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The trial trenching produced a small finds assemblage, consisting of animal bone, pottery, fired clay, ceramic building material, worked and burnt flint.

Datable finds indicate that the overwhelming majority of the assemblage is of later prehistoric date (**Table 1**).

6.2 Pottery

6.2.1 Of the 44 sherds recovered, all but one can be dated to the Iron Age. A single square-tooth comb impressed Beaker fragment, is of late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date (ditch **60707**, ditch fill **60709**). The remainder of the assemblage occurs in sandy fabrics, some also containing sparse shell inclusions; two sherds are in shelly fabrics. Diagnostic forms comprise two rim sherds from simple pointed rim jar/bowl forms, both from **60709** and of probable Early-Middle Iron Age date.

6.2.2 The condition of the assemblage is fair to poor; the sherds are generally in soft-firing fabrics and have suffered relatively high levels of surface and edge abrasion.

6.3 Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

6.3.1 Three pieces of CBM were recovered, two from a medieval peg-tile (pit fill **60719**) and one featureless fragment (ditch fill **60721**).

6.4 Fired Clay

6.4.1 Seven fragments of fired clay, all amorphous in character and in poorly fired fabrics were recovered from two fills within pit **60726**.

6.5 Worked and Burnt Flint

6.5.1 The worked flint consists primarily of undiagnostic flake debitage; there is one possible cortex fragment (topsoil **60722)**. Raw material is in all cases flint derived from the upper chalk, dark grey with a white cortex, most pieces displaying a heavy mottled, bluey-white patination. In terms of date the assemblage is late Neolithic or later.

6.5.2 Burnt, unworked flint was recovered from a single pit **60726**. This material type is intrinsically undatable, although frequently taken as an indicator of prehistoric activity.

6.6 Animal Bone

6.6.1 The animal bone assemblage comprises a total of 160 fragments (or 1.449kg) from two Iron Age features, ditch **60707** and pit **60726**. Once conjoins are taken into account this figure falls to just 112 fragments, approximately half of all fragments are identifiable to species and skeletal element.

6.6.2 The following species have been identified and are listed in terms of their relative abundance: sheep/goat, cattle, horse, pig and crow. Frog bones were also recovered from pit fill **60744**; the presence of these remains is an indication that the pit was left open for a period.

6.6.3 The assemblage is a mixture of bone waste from different processes in the carcass reduction sequence and there is no difference between feature types. Of note are several horse bones from pit fill **60744** displaying butchery marks consistent with dismemberment. Butchered horse bones are not uncommon from sites of this period.

Table 1: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

Context	Animal Bone	Burnt Flint	Worked Flint	Pottery	Fired Clay	Ceramic Building Material
60708	8/24			4/81		
60709	26/335		2/38	12\103		
60711				1/8		
60713				1/10		
60717				8/47		
60719					2/18	
60721						1/2
60722			2/56			
60724	18/187	722/49600			1/7	
60725	7/3	446/20039	5/13	6/37		
60732				1/1		
60734				1/11		
60736				1/7		
60744	101/900	536/41200		9/133	4/62	2/7
Total	**160/1449**	**1704/10839**	**11/114**	**44/438**	**7/87**	**3/9**

7 PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Environmental samples taken

7.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken from an Iron Age pit **6072** in Trench **444** to evaluate the presence and preservation of palaeo-environmental remains. The samples were processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and charcoals. This information can assist in providing an indication of the significance of the archaeological site as a whole.

7.2 Charred Plant Remains

7.2.1 Bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods; the flots were retained on a 0.5 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 5.6 mm, 2mm and 1mm fractions and dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6 mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded. 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 2**. Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997).

7.2.2 The flots varied in size with 10-20% rooty material and high numbers of modern seeds, in particular those of goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.), that may be indicative of stratigraphic movement and the possibility of contamination by later intrusive elements. Charred material comprised varying degrees of preservation.

7.2.3 The moderate numbers of charred plant remains recovered from the Iron Age pit **60726** mainly comprised grain fragments of barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), together with a few wheat grain fragments, probably those of hulled wheat, emmer or spelt (Triticum dicoccum/spelta). There were also a number of seeds of goosefoot, which were probably modern intrusions.

7.2.4 These assemblages are similar to others seen during previous work in the Boscombe Down area.

7.3 Wood Charcoal

7.3.1 Wood charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in **Table 2**. Wood charcoal fragments of >4mm were retrieved in a moderate quantity from the Iron Age pit **60726**. The wood charcoal fragments included pieces of both roundwood and mature wood.

7.4 Land Snails

7.4.1 Land snails were noted within the bulk sample flots. These flots were rapidly assessed by scanning under a x 10 – x 40 stereo-binocular microscope to provide some information about species representation, with nomenclature according to Kerney (1999). The presence of these shells may aid in broadly characterising the nature of the wider landscape.

7.4.2 The small mollusc assemblages from Iron Age pit **60726** were dominated by open-country species. The assemblage from **60725** included the open-country species *Vallonia* spp., *Helicella itala*, *Pupilla muscorum, Vertigo pygmaea* and Introduced Helicellids together with a few shells of the shade loving species *Oxychilus cellarius*. The assemblage from **60744** only included a few shells of Helicella itala and Introduced Helicellids.

7.4.3 These mollusc assemblages are reflective of a generally open environment. They are similar to other assemblages seen else where in the Boscombe area.

Table 2: Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

Samples				***Flot***							
Feature	**Context**	**Sample**	**Vol. Ltrs**	**Flot (ml)**	**% roots**	**Charred Plant Remains**				**Charcoal >4/2mm**	**Other**
						Grain	**Chaff**	**Other**	**Comments**		
Tr 444											
Iron Age Pit											
60726	60725	11010	7	30	20	A	-	-	Barley +?hulled wheat grain frags, *Chenopodium* (prob. modern)	7/3 ml	Moll-t (A), Sab (C)
60726	60744	11011	1.5	5	10	B	-	-	Barley grain frags, *Chenopodium* (prob. modern)	<1/<1 ml	Moll-t (C), Sab (B)

Key: A*** = exceptional, A** = 100+, A* = 30-99, A = >10, B = 9-5, C = <5; Sab = small animal bones, Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Archaeological Features

8.1.1 The archaeological evaluation carried across the Southmill Hill area has confirmed the presence of potential structures, subdivisions and concentrated high density areas of features within the interior of the enclosed Iron Age settlement.

8.1.2 The density of the archaeological resource within the Site indicates that the settlement was subject to intensive, prolonged human occupation, which is thought to have spanned the Iron Age. The presence of numerous archaeological features, comprising external and internal boundary features, possible roundhouses and domestic pits allows a better understanding of the settlement, its layout and dating.

8.1.3 Although the possible Bronze Age barrows in the western third of the Site were excluded from the evaluation, a single residual Beaker sherd found in ditch **60707** does indicate pre-Iron Age activity as taking place within the Site.

8.1.4 The settlement activity was centred within an area bounded to the south-east by the settlement enclosure ditch (feature **60720** exposed in Trench **445**) and to the north-east by a Wessex Linear ditch, a major late prehistoric landscape boundary, which excavated during the previous phases of work (Wessex Archaeology 2002, 2005a and 2005b).

8.1.5 The remaining ditches, located in Trenches **448**, **449** and **450**, likely formed internal enclosures within the north-eastern part of the settlement. Their inconsistent orientation indicates that the ditches possibly represent several phases of the development of the settlement. However, due to limited excavation of the features undertaken during the evaluation, the phasing of the internal enclosures was not possible.

8.1.6 Settlement features have also been identified during the evaluation. Remnants of a roundhouse in the form of a curvilinear drip gully were recorded in Trench **448** and, possibly, in Trench **449**. Both possible roundhouses were located outside the internal enclosures. Multiple rubbish pits, filled with deliberate dumps of occupation debris, such as burnt flint, pottery and animal bone, were located in the central part of the evaluation area and often formed clusters of intercutting features. The ring gully in Trench **448** was truncated by two rubbish pits, which suggests that the occupation of the area consisted of multiple phases. Due to limited excavation, it is not possible to assess whether all of the pits comprised domestic debris, or if some were used to dispose of production waste, and to define production and occupation areas.

8.1.7 The settlement was established within a landscape that had already been altered by human activity. Within the Stonehenge environs, the construction of ceremonial and funerary monuments during the Neolithic period required extensive woodland clearance (Richards 1991) and the evidence from previous archaeological investigations within the Boscombe Down area suggests a significant level of Middle Neolithic to Early Bronze activity in the vicinity of the Site (Wessex Archaeology 2005a). During the Bronze Age

period, numerous round barrow cemeteries were established within the open landscape and several round barrows have been identified within the Southmill Hill area on aerial photographs (Deegan 2010) and during the geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2007).

8.1.8 Although relatively few features dated to the Iron Age had been recorded during previous Boscombe Down investigations, the late 2010 evaluation undertaken to the south-east of the Southmill Hill area revealed three quarry pit clusters (Wessex Archaeology 2011b), located at least 250m away from the settlement boundary. The recovered material indicated that these clusters might have been associated with the Early Iron Age phase of the settlement. Scarcity of waste material within the pits implies that the processing of the quarried material was undertaken at a distance, probably within the settlement. It is considered that further investigation of the quarry pits will allow a better understanding of the phasing of the Southmill Hill settlement, its nature and economy.

8.1.9 It has not been possible to establish the date of the abandonment of the settlement. The limited material retrieved from the Site may suggest that the occupation did not extend into the Romano-British period, although the nature of the investigation and material gathered is very limited indeed.

8.1.10 No archaeological features were observed in the proposed swale area (Trench **452**).

8.2 Accuracy of the Geophysical Survey Plot

8.2.1 Six trenches were targeted upon features identified during the geophysical survey within the enclosed settlement.

8.2.2 Within the settlement, there was good correlation between the results of the geophysical survey and the evaluation. The majority of the targeted geophysical anomalies which had been classified as archaeological ditches were positively confirmed as linear features. In contrast, only a few of the anomalies described as possible archaeology corresponded with archaeological pits or features of natural origin. The evaluation demonstrated that large areas of increased magnetic response, thought to have been derived from intensive human habitation, are indeed composed of multiple settlement features, such as pit clusters. Within such areas, the geophysics survey was unable to locate smaller features, such as discrete pits or ring gullies.

8.2.3 The investigation of the possible Bronze Age barrows identified on the aerial photographs (Deegan 2010) and in the geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2007) was not included in the evaluation.

8.2.4 Outside the settlement, the recorded ferrous and possible archaeology anomalies did not correspond with the observed tree throw holes.

8.3 Assessment of the depth of the archaeological features

8.3.1 The results of the field evaluation show that the archaeological features are shallowly buried beneath between 0.2m and 0.27m of mid greyish brown silty clay loam topsoil. The presence of archaeological material within the

topsoil, comprising mostly burnt flint, was likely due to intensive ploughing, which occurred on the Site in the post-medieval period (Wessex Archaeology 2011a) and which must have disturbed the top of archaeological features. This indicated the vulnerability of the preserved archaeological remains to any below ground activity within the Site.

8.3.2 The present ground surface of the trenches, in which archaeological features were identified, lay between 102.174m aOD (Trench **443**) and 106.151m aOD (Trench **450**). Consequently, across the evaluation area, the uppermost archaeological horizon is to be expected at an elevation between 101.914m aOD, in the north-western part of the evaluation area, and 105.911m aOD, to the east.

8.3.3 This information will be used to ensure that sufficient imported material is used to preserve the archaeological features from any subsequent development impact and that appropriate methodology will be applied during the raising of the ground levels. The methodology and the required thickness of the soil buffer will be agreed in advance with the Wiltshire County Archaeologist and will be included in the Environmental Statement.

9 STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Preparation of Archive

9.1.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts and ecofacts, and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Walker 1990; SMA 1993, 1995;).

9.1.2 All archive elements are marked with the site code (65534), and a full index will be prepared.

9.2 Museum

9.2.1 The archive is currently stored at Wessex Archaeology's office in Salisbury under the project code 65534. The complete project archive will be prepared in accordance with the relevant standards set out in 'M*anagement of Research Projects in the Historic Environment'* (MoRPHE), English Heritage (2006), Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990)*. In due course the complete archive will be deposited with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

9.3 Oasis Form

9.3.1 On completion of the final report, Wessex Archaeology will complete an online OASIS pro forma at http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/ for the works. The form is included in **Appendix 2: OASIS Summary**.

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APPENDIX 1: TRENCH TABLES

Trench 442	**Length: 20.0m**	**Width: 1.80m**	**Max depth: 0.26m**
NGR (SE)	Easting: 415877.913	Northing: 140453.51	104.223m aOD
NGR (NW)	Easting: 415863.396	Northing: 140467.259	104.51m aOD

Context	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
60738	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown silty clay loam with common chalk and moderate flint gravel inclusions	0 – 0.26
60739	Layer	Natural geology: chalk	0.26 +
No archaeological components			

Trench 443	**Length: 20.0m**	**Width: 1.80m**	**Max depth: 0.26m**
NGR (W)	Easting: 415827.172	Northing: 140578.656	102.174m aOD
NGR (E)	Easting: 415846.294	Northing: 140573.061	103.2m aOD

Context	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
60740	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown silty clay loam with common chalk and moderate flint gravel inclusions	0 – 0.26
60741	Layer	Natural geology: chalk	0.26 +
60742	Cut	Unexcavated pit	-
60743	Fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay. Possibly deliberate backfill of pit. Contained pottery	-
A total of five pits observed			

Trench 444	**Length: 20.0m**	**Width: 1.80m**	**Max depth: 0.30m**
NGR (NE)	Easting: 415889.518	Northing: 140552.428	104.624m aOD
NGR (SW)	Easting: 415876.083	Northing: 140537.957	104.584m aOD

Context	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
60722	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown silt loam with sparse chalk flecking and burnt flint (not kept)	0 – 0.20
60723	Layer	Natural geology: chalk	0.20 +
60724	Fill	Mid greyish brown silt loam with sparse chalk and flint inclusions. Contained abundant burnt flint. Deliberate dump of domestic refuse into rubbish pit	0.33m deep
60725	Fill	Dark greyish brown silt loam with sparse flint and gravel inclusions. Contained abundant burnt flint and moderate charcoal. Deliberate dump of domestic rubbish (fire debris)	0.23m deep
60726	Cut	Cut of sub-circular refuse pit with steep, undercut sides and flat base. The only excavated domestic refuse pit	0.96m deep
60732	Fill	Dark greyish brown silty clay loam with abundant burnt flint. Possibly deliberate backfill of rubbish pit. Contained pottery	-
60733	Cut	Cut of unexcavated rubbish pit	-
60734	Fill	Dark greyish brown silty clay loam with abundant burnt flint. Possibly deliberate backfill of rubbish pit. Contained pottery	-
60735	Cut	Cut of unexcavated rubbish pit	-
60736	Fill	Dark greyish brown silty clay loam with abundant burnt flint. Possibly deliberate backfill of rubbish pit. Contained pottery	-
60737	Cut	Cut of unexcavated rubbish pit	-
60744	Fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay loam with sparse flint and moderate chalk inclusions. Contained common burnt flint, also pottery, animal bone etc. Deliberate backfill of refuse pit with domestic waste	0.59m deep
A total of eleven pits and pit clusters observed			

Trench 445	**Length: 20.0m**	**Width: 1.80m**	**Max depth: 0.37m**
NGR (NW)	Easting: 415935.213	Northing: 140539.481	105.089m aOD
NGR (SE)	Easting: 415944.877	Northing: 140522.517	105.122m aOD

Context	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
60714	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown silty clay loam with moderate chalk and flint inclusions	0 – 0.27
60715	Layer	Natural geology: chalk	0.27 +
60716	Cut	Cut of unexcavated pit	-
60717	Fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay. Fill of unexcavated pit – contained pottery	-
60718	Cut	Cut of unexcavated pit	-
60719	Fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay. Fill of unexcavated pit – contained pottery	-
60720	Cut	Cut of unexcavated NE-SW aligned ditch	-
60721	Fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay. Fill of unexcavated ditch – contained pottery	-
Two ditches, eight pit and pit clusters and a tree throw recorded			

Trench 446	**Length: 20.0m**	**Width: 1.80m**	**Max depth: 0.26m**
NGR (NW)	Easting: 415980.166	Northing: 140511.912	104.673m aOD
NGR (SE)	Easting: 415989.775	Northing: 140494.514	104.015m aOD

Context	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
60703	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown silty clay loam with moderate chalk and flint inclusions	0 – 0.26
60704	Layer	Natural geology: chalk	0.26 +
No archaeological components. Single tree throw observed			

Trench 447	**Length: 20.0m**	**Width: 1.80m**	**Max depth: 0.30m**
NGR (E)	Easting: 416051.152	Northing: 140536.978	104.454m aOD
NGR (W)	Easting: 416031.52	Northing: 140535.652	104.527m aOD

Context	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
60701	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown silty clay loam with moderate chalk and flint inclusions	0 – 0.26
60702	Layer	Natural geology: chalk	0.26 +
No archaeological components. Single tree throw observed			

Trench 448	**Length: 20.0m**	**Width: 1.80m**	**Max depth: 0.27m**
NGR (NE)	Easting: 415991.111	Northing: 140600.479	105.07m aOD
NGR (SW)	Easting: 415973.179	Northing: 140589.448	104.923m aOD

Context	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
60705	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown silty clay loam with moderate chalk and flint inclusions	0 – 0.27
60706	Layer	Natural geology: chalk	0.27 +
60707	Cut	North-south aligned ditch with steep, straight sides and narrow, flat base. Iron Age boundary ditch	0.52m deep
60708	Fill	Mid brownish grey silty clay loam with common chalk and flint nodules. Secondary fill derived through gradual erosion of surrounding land surface	0.29m deep
60709	Fill	Mid brownish grey silty clay loam with common chalk and flint inclusions. Secondary fill derived through gradual erosion of surrounding land surface	0.29m deep
60710	Cut	Unexcavated pit	-
60711	Fill	Dark brown silty clay loam. Possible deliberate backfill of unexcavated pit. Contained pottery	-
60712	Cut	Unexcavated pit	-

60713	Fill	Dark brown silty clay. Possible deliberate backfill of unexcavated pit. Contained pottery	-
Six pits and pit clusters, a boundary ditch, a ring gully and a tree throw observed			

Trench 449	**Length: 20.0m**	**Width: 1.80m**	**Max depth: 0.27m**
NGR (N)	Easting: 415953.283	Northing: 140675.792	102.551m aOD
NGR (S)	Easting: 415954.449	Northing: 140656.102	103.201m aOD

Context	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
60745	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown silty clay loam with moderate chalk and flint inclusions	0 – 0.27
60746	Layer	Natural geology: chalk	0.27 +
E-W and NE-SW aligned boundary ditches and possible ring gully			

Trench 450	**Length: 20.0m**	**Width: 1.80m**	**Max depth: 0.24m**
NGR (N)	Easting: 416070.625	Northing: 140657.715	106.151m aOD
NGR (S)	Easting: 416064.269	Northing: 140638.339	105.921m aOD

Context	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
60747	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown silty clay loam with moderate chalk and flint inclusions	0 – 0.24
60748	Layer	Natural geology: chalk	0.24 +
NW-SE and two NE-SW merging ditches, a pit and a tree throw identified			

Trench 451	**Length: 20.0m**	**Width: 1.80m**	**Max depth: 0.35m**
NGR (N)	Easting: 416009.568	Northing: 140587.867	105.673m aOD
NGR (S)	Easting: 416094.776	Northing: 140569.23	105.144m aOD

Context	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
60749	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown silty clay loam with moderate chalk and flint inclusions	0 – 0.27
60750	Layer	Natural geology: chalk	0.27 +
No archaeological components. Several tree throws observed			

Trench 452	**Length: 20.0m**	**Width: 1.80m**	**Max depth: 0.25m**
NGR (NW)	Easting: 416188.799	Northing: 139887.013	100.673m aOD
NGR (SE)	Easting: 416196.987	Northing: 139868.488	99.768m aOD

Context	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
60727	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown silt loam with sparse flint gravel and chalk inclusions.	0 – 0.23
60728	Layer	Natural geology: weathered chalk	0.23 +
60729	Cut	Cut of sub-circular tree throw with moderate sides and irregular base. Unknown date	0.26m deep
60730	Fill	Fill of tree throw: redeposited natural chalk	0.22m deep
60731	Fill	Fill of tree throw: weathering of topsoil	0.21m deep
Tree throws and animal burrows observed			

APPENDIX 2: OASIS SUMMARY

OASIS ID: wessexar1-114552

Project details

Project name	PHASE 3 LAND (KINGS GATE), BOSCOMBE DOWN, AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by J.S. Bloor Homes Ltd to undertake an additional archaeological trial trench evaluation within the Southmill Hill area, covering approximately 7.2ha, which forms a part of land referred to as the Phase 3 Land (Kings Gate), Boscombe Down, Amesbury, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference 416150 140130. In late 2011, the planning application was extended to include the formation of a number of new sport pitches within the Southmill Hill. A limited programme of additional trial trenching was required within the proposed playing fields and the proposed swale area, which was located outside previously investigated areas. A total of eleven trenches were excavated in the course of the fieldwork, measuring on average 20m x x1.8m. A single trench was excavated in the new swale area and ten trenches in the Southmill Hill area were targeted upon geophysical anomalies. No archaeological features were observed in the proposed swale area and in four trenches located to the south of the Southmill Hill settlement boundary. The archaeological evaluation carried across the Southmill Hill area has confirmed the presence of the enclosed Iron Age settlement, identified in the geophysical survey and on aerial photographs. The density of archaeological resource within the Site indicates that the settlement was subject to intensive, prolonged human occupation, which is thought to have spanned throughout the Iron Age.
Project dates	Start: 14-11-2011 End: 18-11-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	65534 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	35530 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	35533 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	35531 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	56249 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	56248 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	56247 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	56246 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	56245 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	56244 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	56243 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes	56242 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	56241 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	56240 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	ENCLOSED SETTLEMENT Iron Age
Monument type	RUBBISH PITS Iron Age
Monument type	ROUNDHOUSE Iron Age
Monument type	DITCH Iron Age
Significant Finds	POTTERY Iron Age
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Iron Age
Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	After outline determination (eg. As a reserved matter)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	WILTSHIRE SALISBURY AMESBURY Southmill Hill
Postcode	SP4 7WQ
Study area	7.20 Hectares
Site coordinates	SU 16150 40130 51.1596698538 -1.769027484210 51 09 34 N 001 46 08 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 99.00m Max: 106.00m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	A Manning
Project supervisor	Julia Sulikowska
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	J.S. Bloor Ltd
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Database','Images raster / digital photography','Survey','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Drawing','Plan','Report','Section'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	PHASE 3 LAND (KING'S GATE), BOSCOMBE DOWN, AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE

Author(s)/Editor(s)	Sulikowska, J. and Manning, A.
Other bibliographic details	65534.04
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Salisbury
Description	A4 client report
Entered by	Julia Sulikowska (j.sulikowska@wessexarch.co.uk)
Entered on	24 November 2011

Southmill Hill

Byway 20

Playing field area

Swale

TR452

Countess Motel

Ratfyn

Ratfyn Barrow

Tumulus

Fort

Abbey

Amesbury

The Pennings

Earl's Farm Down

Cemy

Wks

Boscombe Down West

Amesbury Down

Earthwork

Field System

Stockport

Salisbury Clumps

107 Boscombe Down Airfield

414000 415000 416000 417000 418000 419000

142000 141000 140000 139000 140500 140000

416000 416500

Evaluation area (late 2011)

Evaluation area (2010/early 2011)

Detailed geophysical survey area

Rapid geophysical scan area

Archaeological feature

Romano-British cemeteries

Original cropmark survey

2010 cropmark survey

Previous Excavation areas

Previous Geophysical survey areas

Previous Evaluation Trenches

Late 2011 Evaluation Trenches

0 100 200m

Wessex Archaeology

Date:	25/11/11	Revision Number:	0
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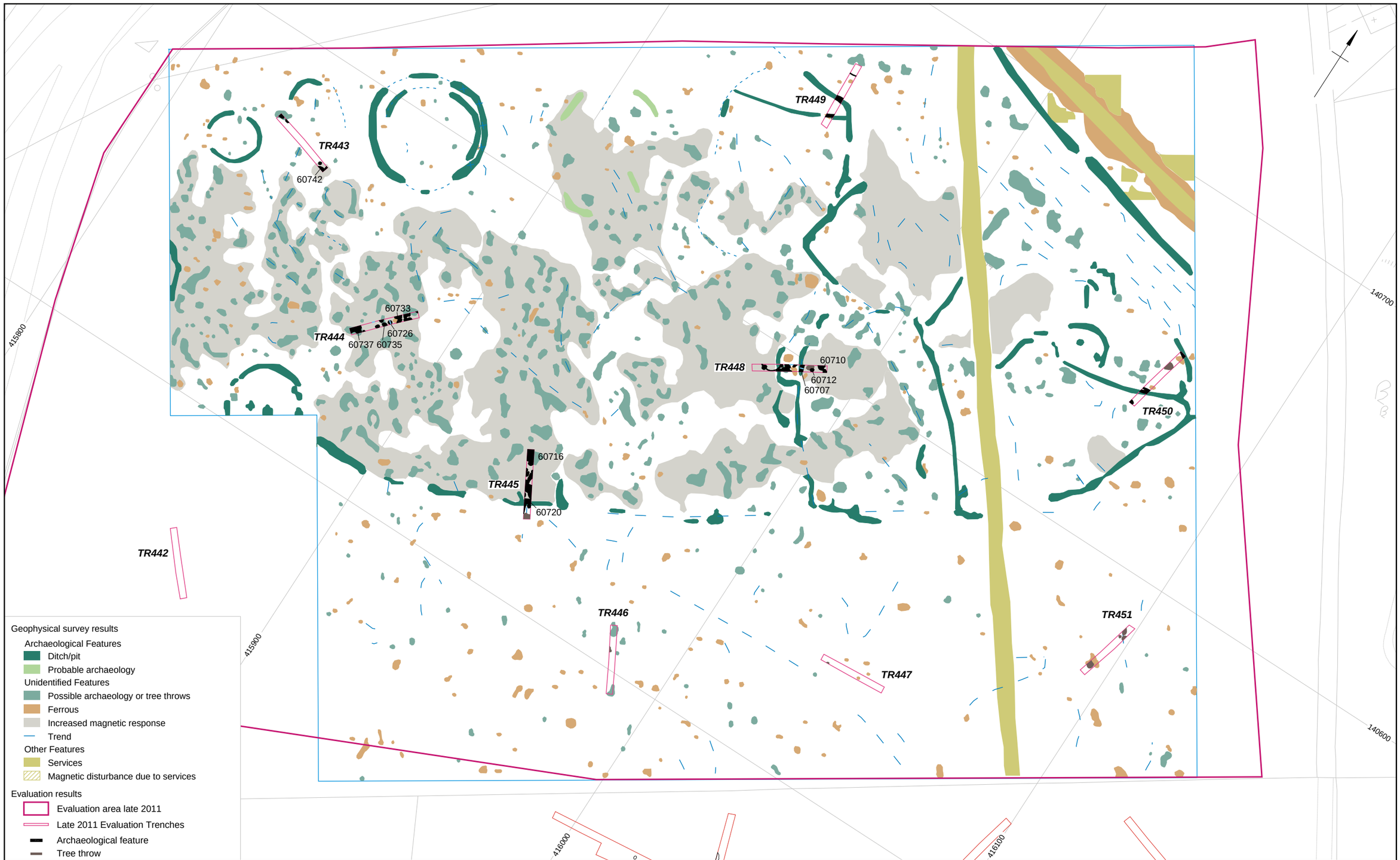
Southmill Hill and Swale evaluation areas showing previous work

Figure 1



Wessex Archaeology

0 50m

Date:	25/11/11	Revision Number:	0
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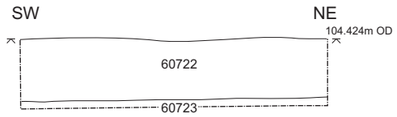
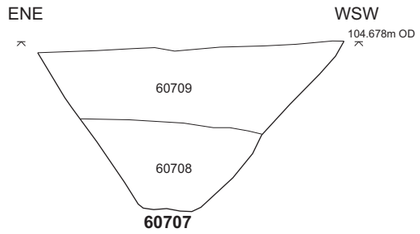
Results of trial trench evaluation within Southmill Hill area in relation to geophysical survey

Figure 2

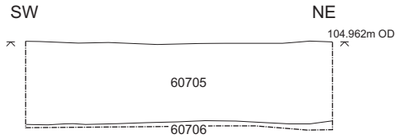


South-east facing representative section of Trench 444

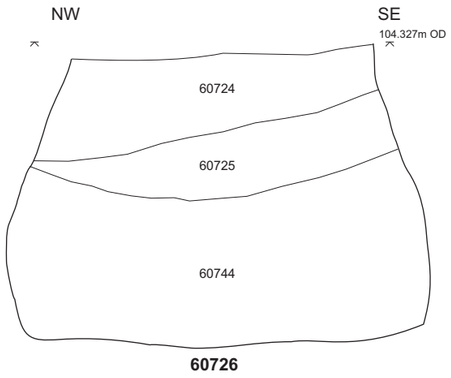


North-northwest facing section of ditch 60707

Plate 1: View of ditch 60707 from north-northwest



South-east facing representative section of Trench 448



South-west facing section of pit 60726

Plate 2: View of pit 60726 from south-west

Wessex Archaeology

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Selected sections and photographs

Figure 3

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