

Perham Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**Perham Down,
Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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February 2013

Report Ref: 87180



Quality Assurance

Project Code	87180	Accession Code	n/a	Client Ref.	
Planning Application Ref.	n/a	Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)	426222 149352		

Version	Status*	Prepared by	Checked and Approved By	Approver's Signature	Date
v01	I	BC	SF		21/02/13
File:	\\projectserver\wessex\PROJECTS\87180\Reports				
V02	E	SF	REG		22/02/13
File:	\\projectserver\wessex\PROJECTS\87180\Reports				
File:					
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Watching Brief Report

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Figure 1: Site location plan.



Plates

- Plate 1: North facing section of Trench 1
Plate 2: Part of Trench 1 from the west



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by SSE Power Distribution, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the replacement of overhead power cables with their underground equivalents within the eastern part of the Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) on Perham Down, centred on National Grid Reference 426222 149352.

The development comprised the replacement of three existing overhead lines with two 33kV underground cables and an 11Kv cable to facilitate the installation of a new tank track crossing. Part of the proposed tank track ran under existing power cables and Defence Estates had requested that these cables be re-routed underground to enable the tank crossing to be safely sited.

The Assistant County Archaeologist advised an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken during the excavations to record anything of archaeological interest.

The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of the cable trench and the test pits for the telegraph poles and associated stays. Despite the potential for archaeological remains, nothing of interest was recorded during the excavations.

The fieldwork was carried out between the 25th September and the 10th October 2012.



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Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by SSE Power Distribution and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Greg Moore in this regard.

The fieldwork was carried out by Benjamin Cullen, David Murdie and Rebecca Wills. This report was compiled by Benjamin Cullen and illustration prepared by Elizabeth James. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.



Perham Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by SSE Power Distribution (the Client), to undertake an archaeological watching brief during development located within the eastern part of the Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) on Perham Down at National Grid Reference (NGR) 426222 149352 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The development comprised the replacement of three existing overhead lines with the installation of two 33kV underground cables and an 11Kv cable to facilitate the construction of a new tank track crossing.
- 1.1.3 Although planning permission was not required, given the groundwork was positioned within an area of archaeological potential, the Assistant County Archaeologist at Wiltshire Council advised an archaeological watching brief was maintained. The archaeological monitoring was therefore undertaken in accordance with the Clients own code of conduct and obligations towards environmental matters in the Electricity Services Act 1989 .
- 1.1.4 Wessex Archaeology prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Wessex Archaeology 2012) setting out the methodology for the work to mitigate the impact on any archaeological remains that may have been present during the development. This document was submitted to and approved by the Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council prior to any development commencing.
- 1.1.5 The fieldwork was carried out between the 25th September and the 10th October 2012.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site is located to the east of Perham Down to the north of the Sewage Treatment Works and east of Somme Road within the eastern part of the Salisbury Plain Training Estate at National Grid Reference (NGR) 426222 149352 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 The ground rises evenly from west to east rising from c. 116m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 120m aOD in the east.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology is Cretaceous Upper Chalk (British Geological Survey).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The Defence Training Estate of Salisbury Plain is well known for its prehistoric archaeology including round and long barrows, field systems and enclosures and contains over 2,300 archaeological sites and monuments from all ages. The area has been in



military use for over 100 years and contains features associated with the development of warfare during this period.

- 2.1.2 Boundary earthworks which include linear earthworks, so called ranch boundaries, dykes and cross ridge dykes are particularly well preserved in the Salisbury Plain Training Area. To the west of the Site at Perham Down Barracks the remains of a truncated linear ditch was revealed during an evaluation in 2003 and was considered to be an extension to the Scheduled linear earthwork extending approximately 285m across Lamb Down to the west. The southern section of the earthwork is flanked on its east side by a ditch for a length of 100m.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 With due regard to the IfA Standards and Guidance for archaeological watching brief (IfA 2008), the generic aims of the project were to;

- Monitor the programme of works to locate, identify, investigate and record the presence/absence of archaeological features or deposits, including palaeoenvironmental deposits;
- Establish, where possible, the extent, date, character, relationship, condition and significance of any archaeological features and deposits within the area impacted;
- Inform the scope and nature of any requirements for potential future mitigation, if appropriate.

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.2.1 Works comprised the monitoring of all groundwork within the watching brief area by at least one experienced archaeologist. The watching brief was maintained throughout initial stripping until it was clear that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed had been exhausted.
- 3.2.2 The watching brief was maintained during the removal of topsoil down to the natural chalk in areas associated with the cable trench (Trench 1) and sub-rectangular pits (Trenches 2-7) for telegraph poles and stays (**Figure 1**).
- 3.2.3 The groundwork was carried out using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. The excavation proceeded in spits to the required level or where services were present, was continued by hand.
- 3.2.4 All potential archaeological features and deposits were subsequently hand cleaned and sample excavated. Features and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets and were planned at a scale of 1:20. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. All principal strata and features were related to the Ordnance Survey datum.
- 3.2.5 A photographic record of the watching brief was maintained through digital images. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and general context of the archaeological remains revealed, and the Site as a whole.



- 3.2.6 The WSI also included details covering retrieval of artefacts from spoil heaps and archaeological deposits as well as procedures for environmental sampling to meet the watching brief's objectives.

3.3 Best practice

- 3.3.1 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (IfA 2008).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of 7 trenches during the installation of electricity cables, telegraph poles and associated stays. Full details of the stratigraphic sequence can be found in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Stratigraphy

- 4.2.1 Throughout the Site the stratigraphy was generally consistent and comprised a topsoil consisting of a dark reddish brown silty clay loam measuring a maximum of 0.36m deep below ground level. The topsoil overlay a well-developed mid yellow brown silty clay subsoil beneath which the natural chalk was observed (**Plate 1**).
- 4.2.2 Bands of periglacial striping were noted within the natural chalk and filled with a colluvial deposit similar to the subsoil, comprising a light to mid yellow brown silty clay. The natural chalk geology contained sparse flint nodules.

4.3 Results

- 4.3.1 No archaeological features or finds were observed during the course of the watching brief.
- 4.3.2 The cable route cut through existing farmland, beneath which the intact natural chalk geology was observed and contained north-east to south-west aligned periglacial scarring (**Plate 2**).

5 DISCUSSION

- 1.1.1 The excavation of a cable trench provided a valuable opportunity to look at the archaeological potential of this area of Salisbury Plain.
- 1.1.2 Nevertheless, no archaeology was observed during the works and given the natural chalk contained frequent periglacial scarring, it is probable that the absence of archaeological remains is a true indication of the archaeological potential of the Site.

6 STORAGE AND CURATION

6.1 Preparation and Deposition

- 6.1.1 The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office building under the site code 87180. The complete archaeological project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2007).



- 6.1.2 At a later date, the archive will be deposited with Wiltshire Council Museum under the site code 87180. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the Museum's archive preparation standards.
- 6.1.3 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> has been initiated (**Appendix 2**) and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators Forms. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the WSHER. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

6.2 Archive

- 6.2.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage (UKIC 1990). It comprises a ring-bound file containing a watching brief attendance form, site 'day book', trench record sheets, photographic register and Written Scheme of Investigation.

6.3 Copyright

- 6.3.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

6.4 Security Copy

- 6.4.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National Archaeological Record (English Heritage), a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology. Alternatively, the security copy may be in the form of a pdf file.

7 REFERENCES

7.1 Bibliography

British Geological Survey information available at:

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/services/digmap50wms.html>

Brown, D.H., 2007, *Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*, Archaeological Archives Forum

Walker, K., 1990, *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage*, UKIC Archaeology Section

Wessex Archaeology 2012, *Perham Down, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation – method statement for an archaeological watching brief*, unpublished WSI, reference 87180.01



8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Trench Summaries

Bgl: below ground level

aOD: above Ordnance Datum

Trench 1	Dimensions :	114.84m by 1.7m by 1.80m	Ground surface level:	119.06maOD
Context	Category	Description	Depth (bgl)	
101	Topsoil	Very dark grey brown silty clay loam. Heavily bioturbated. Rare sub-angular flints <0.03m. Sparse sub-rounded chalk flecks. Loose. Clear horizon	0-0.20m	
102	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay. Heavy bioturbation. Rare sub-angular flint <0.06m. Moderate chalk flecks and fragments. Friable. Clear horizon.	0.20-0.30m	
103	Natural	White chalk. Sparse sub-angular and sub-rounded flint nodules, cobbles & boulders. Clear horizon. Very compact. Common periglacial scarring <0.60m deep. Filled with light brown silty clay colluvium with moderate chalk and sparse flint.	0.30m -	

Trench 2	Dimensions :	4.50 by 1.00m by 1.80m	Ground surface level:	119.36maOD
Context	Category	Description	Depth (bgl)	
201	Topsoil	Very dark grey brown silty clay loam. Heavily bioturbated. Rare sub-angular flints <0.03m. Rare sub-rounded chalk <0.06m. Loose. Clear horizon	0-0.22m	
202	Colluvium	Light brown silty clay. Sparse sub-angular flint <0.10m. Sparse sub-angular chalk <0.08m. Bioturbated. Compact. Clear horizon. Fill of periglacial scarring	0.22-0.70m	
203	Natural	White chalk. Sparse sub-angular and sub-rounded flint cobbles and nodules. Very angular. Compact. Clear horizon.	0.70m -	

Trench 3	Dimensions :	4.10 by 1.00m by 1.70m	Ground surface level:	116.44maOD
Context	Category	Description	Depth (bgl)	
301	Topsoil	Dark reddish brown silty loam. Very loose compaction. Frequent rooting throughout. Sparse flint fragments and nodules, angular and sub-angular 0.02-0.08m. Rare chalk fragments <0.04m. Clear horizon.	0-0.19m	



302	Subsoil	Mid yellow brown clayey silt. Sparse to moderate flint, sub-angular and angular 0.02-0.08m. Sparse chalk fragments, sub-rounded and sub-square <0.04m. undulates in accordance with chalk fissures – periglacial scarring. Firm.	0.19-0.48m
303	Natural	Compact white chalk. Periglacial scarring to depth of 0.50m. sparse flint nodules, sub-angular 0.04-0.18m	0.48m-

Trench 4	Dimensions :	4.00m by 0.40m by 1.90m	Ground surface level:	116.47maOD
Context	Category	Description	Depth (bgl)	
401	Topsoil	Dark reddish brown silt loam. Very loose compaction. Frequent rooting throughout. Sparse chalk, sub-rounded and sub-square <0.04m. Sparse flint, angular fragments and sub-angular nodules 0.03-0.12m. Clear horizon.	0-0.34m	
402	Subsoil	Mid yellow brown clayey silt. Firm compaction. Moderate sub-rounded and sub-square chalk fragments <0.04m. Sparse to moderate flint fragments and nodules, angular and sub-angular 0.04-0.18m. Undulates according to periglacial scarring. Clear horizon.	0.34-0.68m	
403	Natural	Compact white chalk. Periglacial scarring to a depth of 0.68m. Sparse flint nodules, 0.04-0.30m	0.68m-	

Trench 5	Dimensions :	4.00m by 0.40m by 1.90m	Ground surface level:	116.53maOD
Context	Category	Description	Depth (bgl)	
501	Topsoil	Dark reddish brown silty loam. Very loose compaction. Frequent rooting throughout. Sparse chalk fragments <0.04m, sub-rounded and sub-square. Sparse flint, angular fragments and sub-angular nodules 0.03-0.12m. Clear horizon	0-0.36m	
502	Subsoil	Mid yellowish brown clayey silt. Firm compaction. Moderate occurrence of chalk fragments, sub-round and sub-square <0.04m. Moderate flint fragments and nodules, sub-angular and angular 0.04-0.18m. Undulates according to periglacial scarring. Clear horizon.	0.36-0.72m	
503	Natural	Compact white chalk. Scarring to a depth of 0.72m. Sparse flint nodules 0.04-0.30m	0.72m-	

Trench 6	Dimensions :	5.20m by 0.40m by 1.90m	Ground surface	118.91maOD
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Context	Category	Description	Depth (bgl)
601	Topsoil	Dark red brown silty clay loam. Heavily bioturbated. Rare sub-angular flint <0.03m. Sparse sub-rounded chalk flecks. Loose. Clear horizon.	0-0.32m
602	Colluvium	Light yellow brown silty clay. Sparse sub-angular flint <0.06m. Common chalk fragments. Compact. Distinct horizon. Fills periglacial scars.	0.32-0.68m
603	Natural	White chalk. Sparse sub-angular and sub-rounded flint nodules and cobbles. Compact. Distinct horizon.	0.68m-

Trench 7	Dimensions :	Ground surface level:
	4.10m by 0.40m by 1.90m	119.03maOD

Context	Category	Description	Depth (bgl)
701	Topsoil	Dark reddish brown silty clay loam. Rare sub-angular flint <0.06m. Rare chalk flecks. Heavily bioturbated. Loose. Clear horizon.	0-0.30m
702	Colluvium	Mid yellow brown silty clay. Sparse s-a flint <0.06m. Sparse chalk fragments. Compact. Distinct horizons. Fill of periglacial scars.	0.30-0.78m
703	Natural	White chalk. Sparse sub-angular and sub-rounded flint nodules and cobbles. Compact. Distinct horizon.	0.78m-

8.2 Appendix 2: OASIS form

Perham Down, Wiltshire - Wessex Archaeology

OASIS ID - wessexar1-144356

Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	S Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	21 February 2013

Completed sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

Validated sections in current version

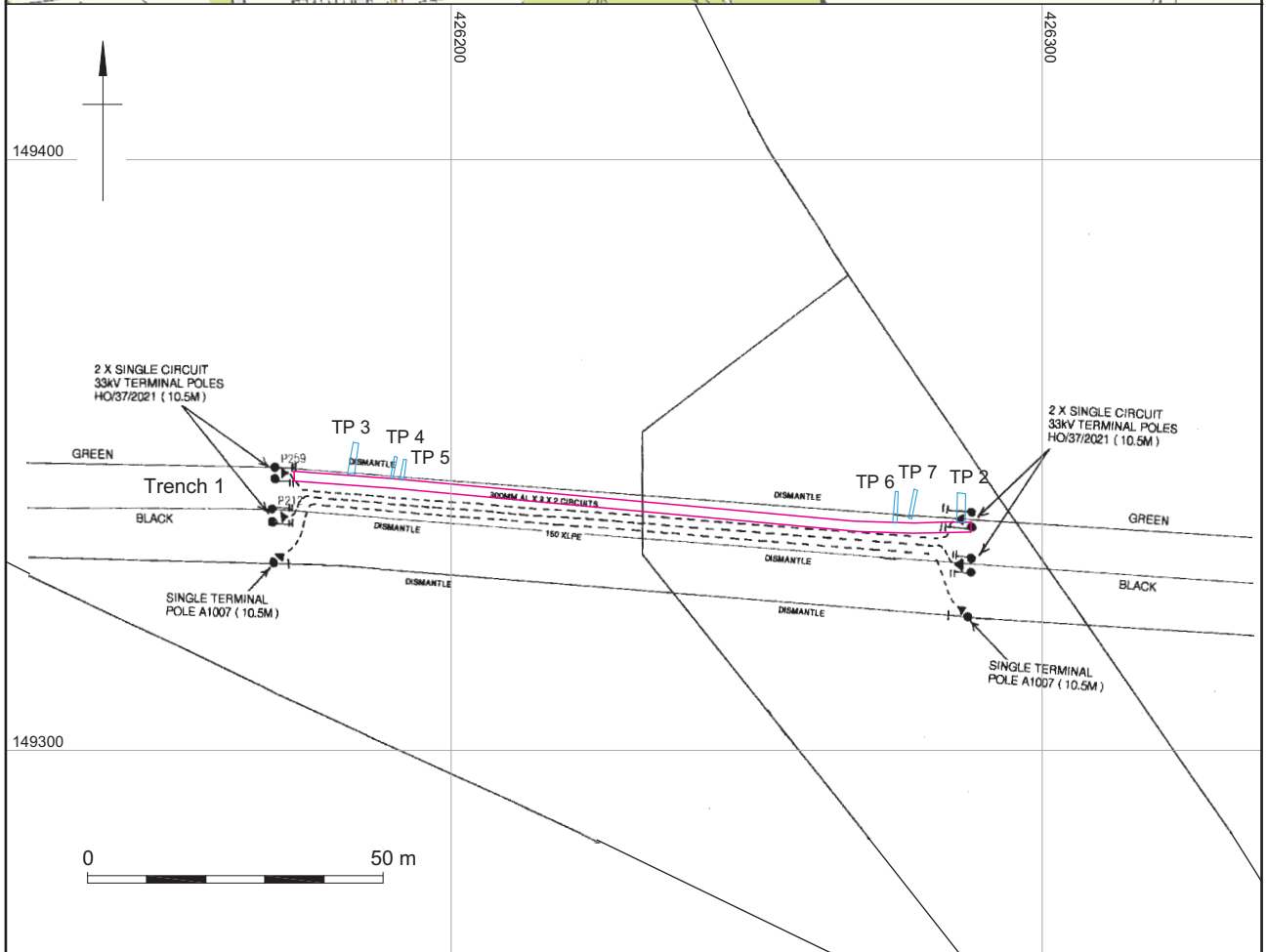
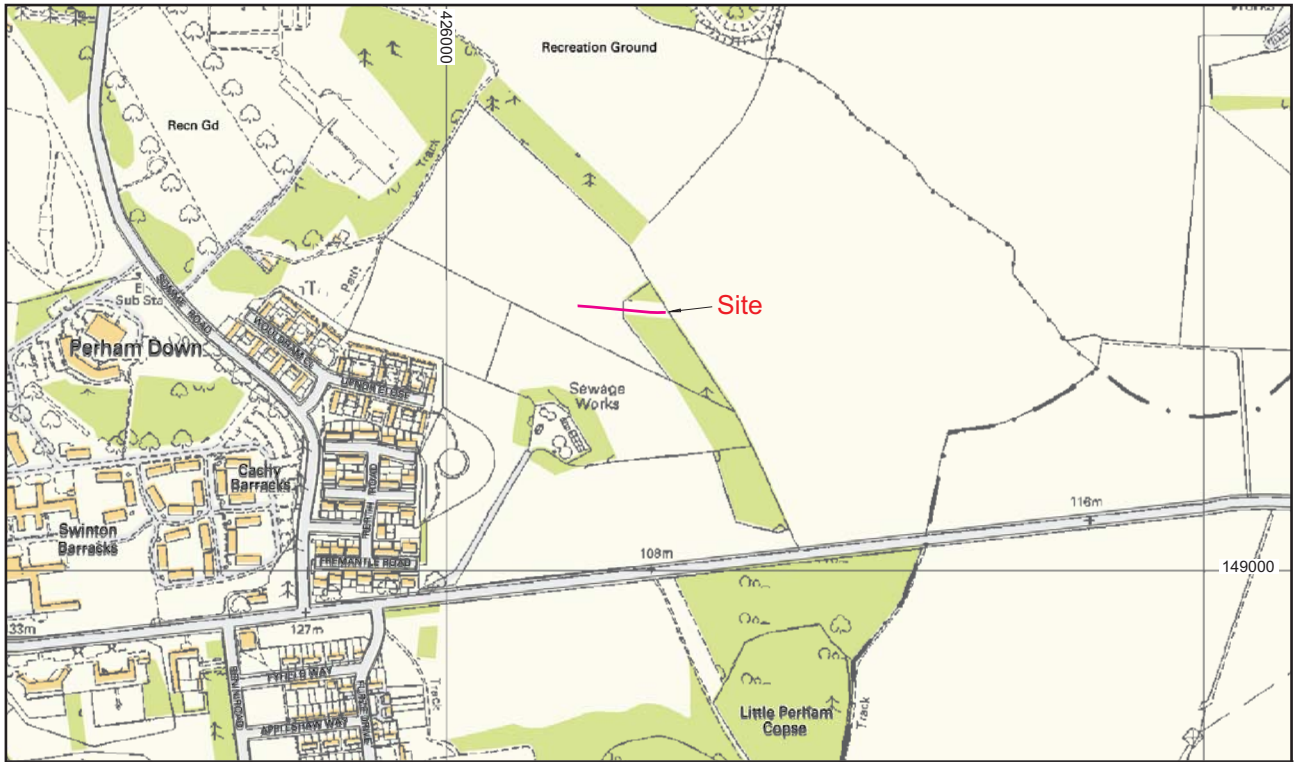
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1

File submission and form progress

Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s
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Report release delay specified?	Yes	Release delay	Release into ADS library once signed off
Images submitted?	No	Image filename/s	
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename	
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?	



- Trench
- Test pit



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Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: North facing section of Trench 1



Plate 2: Part of Trench 1 from the west

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