



making sense of heritage

Land south of Paxcroft Mead Green Lane, Trowbridge

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



WA ref: 89490.02
August 2013



**Land south of Paxcroft Mead,
Green Lane, Trowbridge,
Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Front cover:	View of Site from the south
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Land south of Paxcroft Mead, Green Lane, Trowbridge, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Persimmon Homes Wessex to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land south of Paxcroft Mead, Green Lane, Trowbridge, Wiltshire (NGR 387114, 157329) prior to the construction of a residential development.

An archaeological trial trench evaluation had previously been undertaken on the site which identified the remains of the later post-medieval Black Ball settlement (Wessex Archaeology 2005). Based on the results of this fieldwork, it was recommended that a watching brief should be undertaken on initial groundwork to further characterise and understand the nature of this activity.

This watching brief identified a number of features thought to relate to the former 18th century settlement of Black Ball. This included the full footprint of a building previously identified in the evaluation, as well as further possible wall bases in the northern part of the watching brief area relating to possible animal pens.

A number of linear features were also identified which would appear to relate to the drainage of the site. In particular the arrangement of a central ditch with many perpendicular spurs seen in the central part of the site is reminiscent of drainage patterns seen on reclaimed land and water meadows.

Outside the watching brief area a spread containing Roman pottery was also located.

The watching brief was undertaken intermittently from the 17th June to the 5th July 2013.



Land south of Paxcroft Mead, Green Lane, Trowbridge

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Persimmon Home and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Simon Mortimer and Wayne Jones in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank the County Archaeologist, Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (Wiltshire Council) and Rachel Foster, Assistant County Archaeologist who monitored the works on behalf of the local authority.

The watching brief was undertaken by Oliver Good. This report was written and compiled by Naomi Brennan with specialist reports by Lorraine Mepham and illustrations by Ken Lymer. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.



Land south of Paxcroft Mead, Green Lane, Trowbridge

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) were commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Persimmon Homes Wessex to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land south of Paxcroft Mead, Green Lane, Trowbridge, Wiltshire centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 387114, 157329; hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.

1.1.2 Outline planning permission (application reference 04/02105/OUTES) has been granted for a mixed use residential development consisting of 550 dwellings upon condition that:

'No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Council'

1.1.3 Following the preparation of a desk-based assessment (WA 2003) an archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken consisting of six trenches which identified the remains of the later post-medieval Black Ball settlement (WA 2005). Based on the results of this fieldwork it was recommended that a watching brief should be undertaken on initial groundwork within a small area of the Site (c. 0.3ha) to further characterise and understand the nature of this activity.

1.1.4 The watching brief was undertaken intermittently for 7 days between the 17th June and 5th July 2013.

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site is situated on the eastern edge of Trowbridge, on land between Green Lane to the north and West Ashton Road to the south-west. It comprises mainly arable farmland with some pasture. It is bounded to the east by ancient woodland, currently the Green Lane Wood Nature Reserve, to the north-west by a modern housing development and a rugby ground, and elsewhere by farmland.

1.2.2 The Site lies on largely flat or gently sloping ground between c. 37-39m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and is bisected by the Black Ball brook, a westward flowing tributary of the River Biss.

1.2.3 The underlying geology is Oxford Clay, with overlying alluvium along the course of the Biss and its tributaries. The soils are of the Denchworth Association comprising seasonally waterlogged clayey soils. To the north of the Site are bands of Forest Marble Clay and Cornbrash (limestone), the latter producing relatively light, fertile soils.



2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment (WA 2003) highlighted the presence of a post-medieval settlement within the development area.

2.2 Black Ball settlement

2.2.1 The 1773 Andrews and Dury map of Wiltshire makes reference to the place name Black Ball, west of Castle Wood. The detail of a small settlement at Black Ball, comprising a number of cottages and gardens on the south side of Black Ball brook, and accessed by a lane running from West Ashton Road, is also shown on the 1840 West Ashton tithe map, with a further cottage north of the brook shown on the 1842 Steeple Ashton tithe map.

2.2.2 This settlement appears to have been abandoned by the time of the 1890 1st edition OS map.

2.2.3 A single undated linear feature was noted from recent aerial photographs, and was visible for approximately 500m broadly in a north-south direction in the now cleared part of Green Lane Wood.

2.2.4 A previous trial trench evaluation (WA 2005) within the area of the Black Ball settlement and an additional trench on land to the east of the scrapyard, south of Green Lane indicated that the settlement was short-lived, with finds indicating occupation during the latter 17th and 18th centuries only. No evidence was found for a medieval precursor to the settlement and it was suggested that the settlement may have been abandoned as a consequence of the extremely wet ground conditions and seasonal flooding.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

3.1.1 The aim of the watching brief was to observe and establish within the monitored excavations the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition, and depth of any surviving remains;

- *to determine the presence or otherwise of remains of archaeological interest within the development area; and*
- *to preserve by record any archaeological remains within the development area and to attempt a reconstruction of the history and use of the site.*

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 The full detailed methodology of the archaeological works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs 2009) and is summarised below.

3.2.2 The fieldwork consisted of the observation and monitoring of groundwork within the area of the archaeological watching brief. The area was fully stripped using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Following instruction from the ground workers on Site, all mechanical stripping of overburden was under the full control and direction of a suitably qualified archaeologist and as a result, closely resembled strip, map and sample conditions of excavation.



- 3.2.3 Machine excavation ceased at the identification of archaeological deposits or at the top of the undisturbed natural geology, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological features were encountered they were investigated, with a sufficient sample of each layer/feature type excavated in order to establish, where possible, their date, nature, character, extent and condition. In consultation with the County Archaeologist, five machine-excavated sections were agreed to investigate archaeological features and spreads of material within the Site where considered appropriate.
- 3.2.4 Any archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Archaeological features and deposits were hand-drawn at either 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. Monitored works were referenced to OS mapping.
- 3.2.5 A full photographic record was compiled using digital images. The record illustrated both the detail and the general context of the principal features, finds excavated, and the Site as a whole. Digital images have been subject to a managed quality control and curation process which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and ensures the long term accessibility of the image set.
- 3.2.6 The survey was carried out with a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.
- 3.2.7 A unique site code **89490** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records.

3.3 Best practice

- 3.3.1 The watching brief 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 area recommended for further archaeological monitoring consisted of a sub-rectangular parcel of land measuring approximately 85m by 50m at its widest point. It was located within the south-western part of the Site, immediately south of Black Ball brook and overlapped with Trench 4 from the previous evaluation (**Figure 1**).
- 4.1.2 The archaeological mitigation produced evidence for activity dating from the 17th to 19th centuries relating to a former settlement at Black Ball. A spread of material outside of the watching brief area was also highlighted to the archaeologist by the ground workers on Site and dated to the Romano-British period.

4.2 Site stratigraphy

- 4.2.1 The overburden was generally consistent across the watching brief area and comprised 0.20m of topsoil overlying a further 0.20m of subsoil deposits. The natural geology encountered was clay. Full details of the stratigraphic sequence can be found in **Appendix 1**.

4.3 Archaeological features

- 4.3.1 Within the north-west corner of Site, a meandering and diffuse feature (**1009/1024**) was investigated and concluded to be a water channel given its nature and form (**Figure 2**). An

undiagnostic fragment of fired clay was retrieved from the surface of this feature and is likely to be residual. The channel had been cut by a rectilinear enclosure **1007** containing a single sherd of Verwood and redware pottery, both post-medieval in date (**Figure 3, Section 1**). The feature is likely to form part of a wider field system continuing to the south and west of the watching brief area. A further ditch **1005 (Plate 1)** lay to the east and is likely to form part of the same extensive field system. Further fragments of Verwood pottery were collected from the surface of ditch (**1006**).

- 4.3.2 In the north-eastern corner of Site, a machine-excavated slot investigated a large spread of material (**1023**) containing fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) (**Figure 2**). The material abutted the brook to the north and was concluded to be post-medieval occupation debris dispersed by later flooding events.
- 4.3.3 Ditch **1003**, aligned north-south (**Plate 2**) was located in the central part of the Site. A machine-excavated slot through the feature confirmed a single secondary fill containing post-medieval Verwood pottery. Though much narrower, ditch **1026** to the south had a similar profile and single sandy clay fill and is most likely a continuation of this feature (**Figure 3; Section 2**), as is **1021** to the north. No clear termini could be found for these features which were extremely diffuse in section. Three east to west aligned linear features appear to diverge from this main north-south ditch at regular intervals suggesting a system of contemporaneous drainage ditches running into the brook to the immediate east (**Figure 1**).
- 4.3.4 At the north end of this drainage system and cutting the top of ditch **1021** was the base of a wall foundation or possible robber cut (**1017**) and was a continuation to a feature identified in the earlier evaluation (WA 2005). The external walls **1019** of this building (**Plate 3**) were also noted to the east and south, in addition to a series of internal divisions within the building. The footprint of the former building suggests the entrance lay at the north-east end of the structure. A machine-excavated slot through the southern half of the building confirmed the profile and confirmed the structure was not positioned over an earlier building. Evidence of further possible wall foundations and structures were located in the northern part of the Site (**1011, 1013** and **1015**) and are considered to represent outbuildings or animal pens related to the settlement. The structures were not clear in plan which may indicate they were formed by a combination of walls and temporary fencing suggesting some form of enclosure for livestock is more likely.
- 4.3.5 A network of drainage gullies/features (**1031**) could be seen in the southern part of the Site (**Plate 4**). These were less clearly defined than the features to the north and may represent natural features caused by water runoff to the stream to the east.
- 4.3.6 While undertaking the watching brief the archaeologist in attendance was alerted by ground workers to the presence of pottery some distance to the east of the watching brief area. Upon investigation this was seen to be a spread of material (**1028**) containing a number of sherds of Romano-British pottery. Pottery sherds from the surface were collected and the location of the general spread of material was subject to basic recording and surveyed (**Figure 1**).

5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A small quantity of finds were recovered during the watching brief, consisting largely of pottery. Quantities by context are given in **Table 1**. The assemblage includes material of Romano-British and post-medieval date.



5.2 Pottery

- 5.2.1 The 23 sherds recovered from layer **1028** are of Romano-British date, and consist entirely of coarsewares (grey ware, oxidised ware, and grog-tempered ware). Rim forms present belong to one bead rim jar and two everted rim jars, and a date range of later 1st or 2nd century AD is likely.
- 5.2.2 The remaining 21 sherds are post-medieval. Wares present include coarse redwares (including slipware and sgraffito ware of West Country type), Verwood-type earthenware from east Dorset, English stoneware, Staffordshire-/Bristol-type marbled slipware, basalt ware, pearlware and creamware. These wares suggest a date range of 17th to 19th century. Joining sherds were noted between context **1010** (channel **1009**) and wall footing **1016**, and probably same vessel sherds between contexts **1008** (ditch **1007**) and **1018** (construction/robber cut **1017**), suggesting that much of the pottery may have been deposited (or redeposited) in these contexts at around the same time.

5.3 Glass

- 5.3.1 The glass could also be accommodated within this date range; the two fragments recovered are both from green wine bottles of later 17th or 18th century date.

5.4 Other finds

- 5.4.1 The clay pipe consists of plain stems, undateable within the post-medieval period, while the small fragment of fired clay is of unknown date and origin.

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

Context	Clay Pipe	Fired Clay	Glass	Pottery
1000			1/46	7/375
1004				1/39
1006				1/76
1008	1/3			4/100
1010		1/8		4/31
1012			1/34	
1014	1/3			2/4
1016				1/8
1018				1/74
1028				23/211
TOTAL	2/6	1/8	2/80	44/918

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Discussion

- 6.1.1 The watching brief identified a number of features thought to relate to the former 18th century settlement of Black Ball. This included the full footprint of the building previously identified in the evaluation as well as some additional wall bases in the northern part of the watching brief area. These former structures may have related to possible animal pens surrounding the settlement with enclosures or former field systems to the west indicating a small agrarian community settling alongside Black Ball brook in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 6.1.2 A number of linear features were also identified which would appear to relate to the drainage of the Site. In particular the arrangement of a central ditch with many



perpendicular spurs seen in the central part of the Site is reminiscent of drainage patterns seen in reclaimed land and water meadows. A former water channel was seen in the north-western part of the Site and together with the analysis of the pottery from the Site, suggest the relatively short-lived nature of the settlement may be the result of the poor drainage of an area prone to seasonal flooding.

- 6.1.3 Outside the watching brief area a spread containing Roman pottery was located.

7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Archive

7.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Trowbridge Museum. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, currently under the project code **89490**. The archive will be deposited along with that of the previous evaluation, currently under the project code **53578**. Deposition of the finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

7.1.2 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics and artefacts, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Trowbridge Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Walker 1990; SMA 1995; Richards and Robinson 2000; Brown 2007).

7.2 Oasis record

7.2.1 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> will be initiated 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 WHER. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

7.3 Copyright

7.3.1 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.

7.3.2 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), 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

7.4 Security copy

7.4.1 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 a pdf/a file, which will form part of the project archive.



8 REFERENCES

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9 APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1: Stratigraphic summaries

bgl= below ground level

Context	Description	Depth (m)
1000	<i>Topsoil</i> Modern topsoil. Mid grey-brown silty clay. <1% stone, sub-rounded, <1-2cm. Fairly loose and friable. Homogenous. Bioturbated. Overlies 1002.	0.00-0.22 bgl
1001	<i>Subsoil</i> Modern subsoil. Mid yellow-brown silty clay. <1% stone, sub-rounded, <1-2cm. Homogenous. Moderately compact. Overlies 1003.	0.22-0.45 bgl
1002	<i>Natural</i> Natural geology. Pale yellow-brown clay. Compact.	0.40+ bgl
1003	Cut Cut of north – south aligned ditch filled with 1004. Concave, moderate sides, flat base. 3.74m diameter. Cuts 1002.	0.55 deep
1004	<i>Deposit</i> Secondary fill of ditch 1003 . Mid grey-brown sandy clay. Very diffuse in section. Overlies 1003 .	0.55 deep
1005	Cut North – south ditch with eastern return. Filled with 1006. Unexcavated. Cuts 1002.	-
1006	<i>Deposit</i> Fill of linear 1005 . Mid grey-brown sandy clay. Unexcavated.	-
1007	Cut Cut of north – south aligned ditch filled with 1008. Concave, moderate sides, concave base. 1.96m diameter. Cuts 1002.	0.31 deep
1008	<i>Deposit</i> Secondary fill of ditch 1007 . Mid grey-brown sandy clay. Diffuse in section. Overlies 1007 .	0.31 deep
1009	Cut Cut of east – west aligned channel filled with 1010. Concave, shallow sides, undulating base. 4.34m diameter. Cuts 1002.	0.32 deep
1010	<i>Deposit</i> Secondary fill of channel 1009 . Mid grey-brown sandy clay. Diffuse in section. Overlies 1007 .	0.32 deep
1011	Cut Construction cut for wall footing filled with 1012. South-west – north-east aligned. Unexcavated. Cuts 1002.	-
1012	<i>Deposit</i> Red brick wall footing within construction cut 1011. Unexcavated.	-
1013	Cut Construction cut for wall footing filled with 1014. North-east – south-west aligned with possible south-east return. Unexcavated. Cuts 1002.	-
1014	<i>Deposit</i> Red brick wall footing within construction cut 1013. Unexcavated.	-
1015	Cut Construction cut for wall footing filled with 1016. South-west – north-east aligned. Unexcavated. Cuts 1002.	-
1016	<i>Deposit</i> Red brick wall footing within construction cut 1015. Unexcavated.	-
1017	Cut Cut of north-west – south-east aligned foundation or robber cut filled with 1018. Straight, steep sides, flat base. 0.34m diameter. Cuts 1022. Same as 1019.	0.10 deep
1018	<i>Deposit</i> Deliberate backfill of foundation or robber cut 1017 . Pale grey-brown sandy clay. Contains CBM fragments. Overlies 1017 . Same as 1020.	0.10 deep
1019	Cut Cut of north-west – south-east aligned foundation or robber cut filled with 1018. Straight, steep sides, flat base. 0.46m diameter. Cuts 1002. Same as 1017.	0.08 deep
1020	<i>Deposit</i> Deliberate backfill of foundation or robber cut 1019 . Pale grey-brown sandy clay. Contains CBM fragments. Overlies 1019 . Same as 1018.	0.08 deep
1021	Cut Cut of north – south aligned ditch filled with 1022. Concave, moderate sides, not fully excavated. Cuts 1002. Likely continuation of 1003.	0.19+ deep
1022	<i>Deposit</i> Secondary fill of ditch 1021 . Mid grey-brown sandy clay. Very diffuse in section. Overlies 1021 .	0.19+ deep
1023	<i>Layer</i> Spread of occupation debris. Mid grey-brown sandy clay.	0.18 deep
1024	Cut Cut of east – west aligned channel filled with 1025. Concave, shallow sides, undulating base. 2.60m diameter. Cuts 1002.	0.28 deep
1025	<i>Deposit</i> Secondary fill of channel 1024 . Mid grey-brown sandy clay. Diffuse in section. Overlies 1024 .	0.28 deep
1026	Cut Cut of north – south aligned ditch filled with 1027. Concave,	0.27 deep



		moderate sides, concave base. 1.35m diameter. Cuts 1002.	
1027	<i>Deposit</i>	Secondary fill of ditch 1026 . Mid grey-brown sandy clay. Diffuse in section. Overlies 1026 .	0.27 deep
1028	<i>Layer</i>	Mid grey-green silty clay. 1% stone, sub-angular, <1-2cm. Fairly homogeneous. Moderately compact. RB pottery collected from upper part of deposit. Unexcavated.	-



9.2 Appendix 2: OASIS form

Land south of Paxcroft Mead, Trowbridge, Wiltshire - Wessex Archaeology

OASIS ID - wessexar1-158170

Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	S Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	30 August 2013

Completed sections in current version

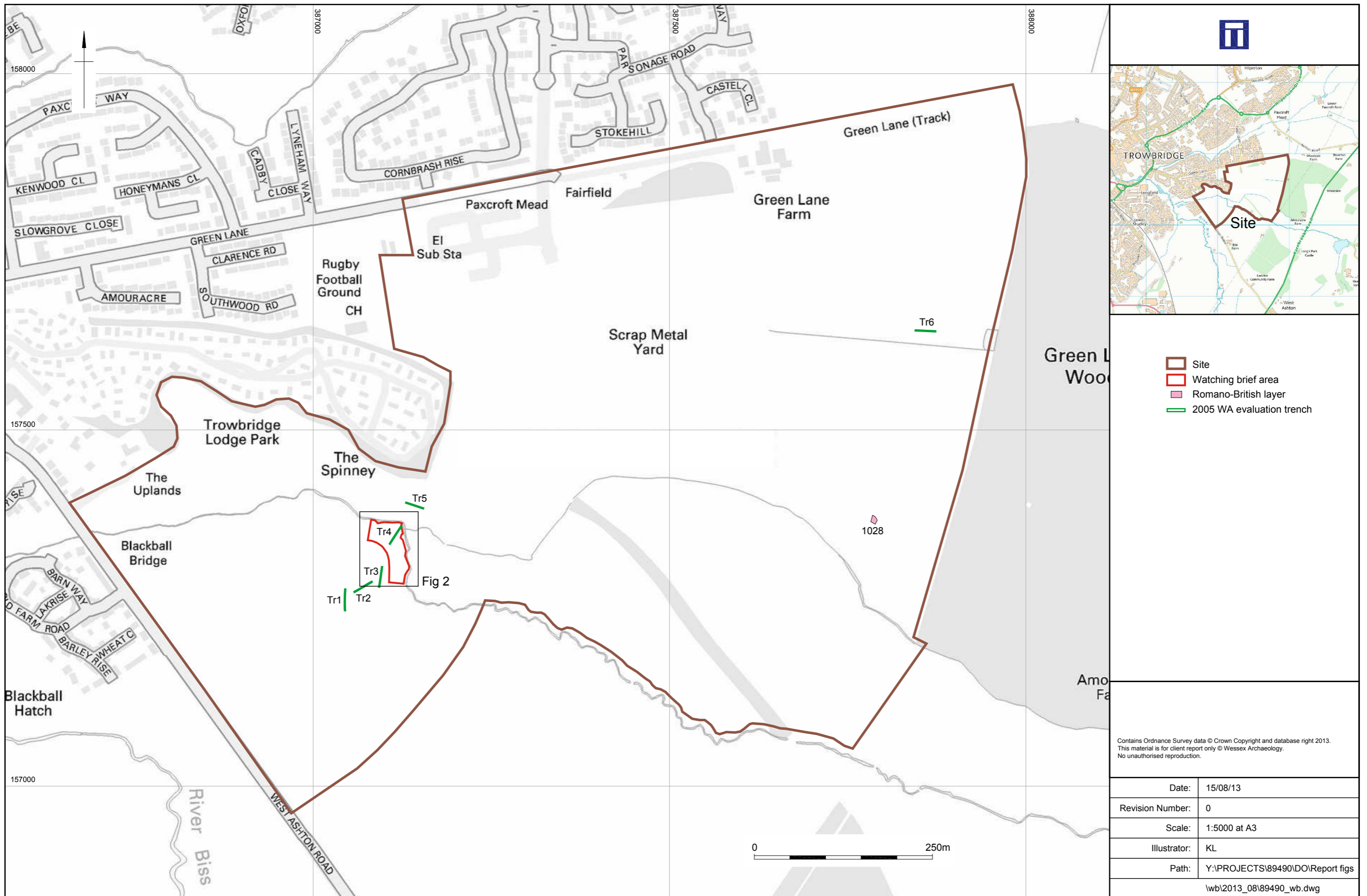
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Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

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	
Report release delay specified?	Yes	Release delay	Release into ADS library once signed off
Images submitted?	No	Image filename/s	
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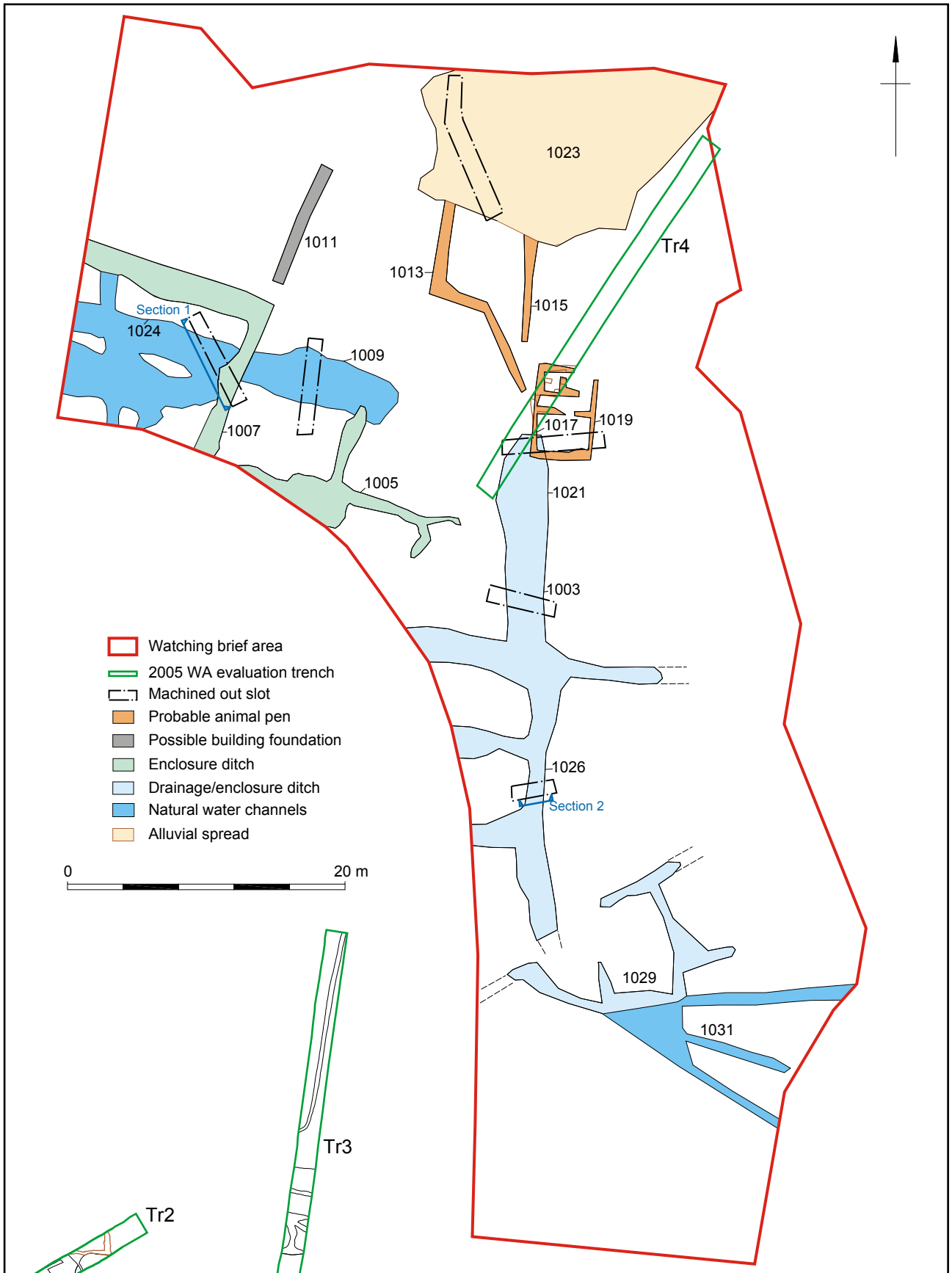



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Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:5000 at A3
Illustrator:	KL
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wbl\2013_08\89490_wb.dwg	

Location of Site, watching brief area and Romano-British layer

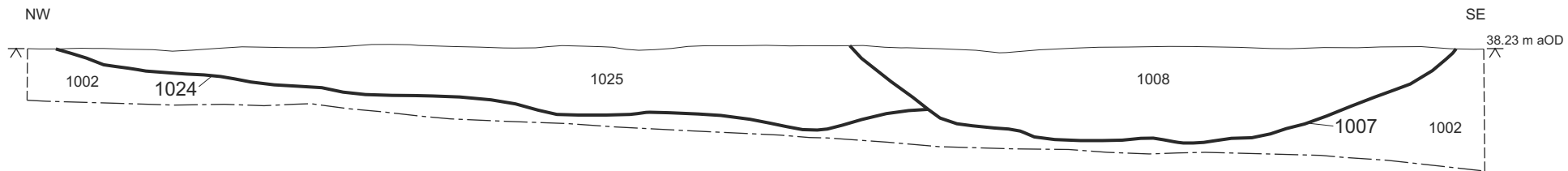
Figure 1



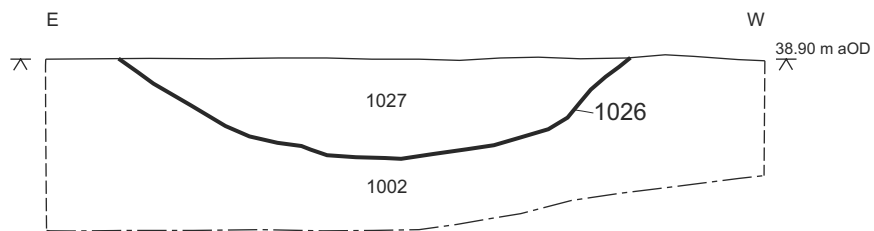
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Results of watching brief

Figure 2



Section 1: South-west-facing section of features 1007 and 1024



Section 2: North-facing section of ditch 1026



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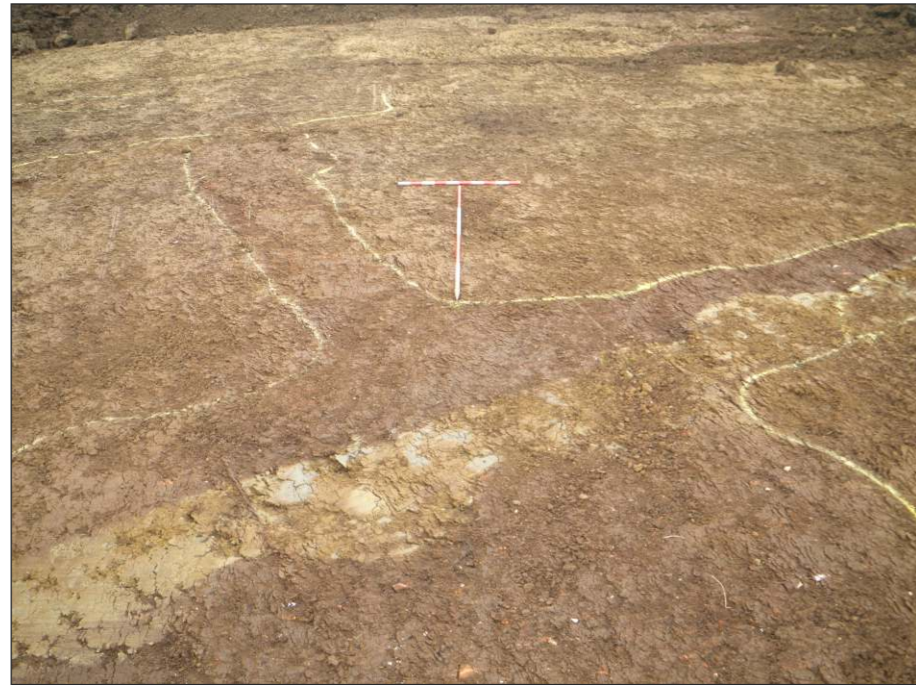


Plate 1: View of ditch 1005, from the south



Plate 2: View of ditch 1003, from the north-east



Plate 3: South-east-facing section of wall footing 1019



Plate 4: Drainage gullies/natural features in southern part of Site, view from the south



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