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# Pingry Farm Coleford, Gloucestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Planning ref: P1418/12/FUL  
Ref: 87802.01  
March 2014



**Pingry Farm  
Coleford, Gloucestershire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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## Quality Assurance

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# Pingry Farm Coleford, Gloucestershire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Figure 1: Site and trench location plan

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Cover: Working shot of Trench 4 excavation, viewed from the north-east.

Plate 1: South-east facing section of Trench 7

Plate 2: West facing section of Trench 3

Plate 3: West facing section of pit 3005

Plate 4: General view of Trench 4, viewed from the south



# **Pingry Farm Coleford, Gloucestershire**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Pingry Solar Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during excavations on land at Pingry Farm, Coleford, Gloucestershire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 357044 209445.

This work was required as a planning condition for the construction of a solar farm, consisting of solar panels, service trenches and access routes. The watching brief followed a phase of archaeological evaluation undertaken in early 2013 which identified a number of isolated pit features and tree throw holes. A watching brief was therefore required during the excavation of service trenches associated with the solar farm construction, and took place between the 30<sup>th</sup> January and the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

The results of the watching brief demonstrated a limited archaeological presence on site, with a single pit feature discovered. This feature contained no dating evidence and reflects isolated activity on the site. Due to the lack of material encountered it is unlikely that any further archaeological work will be required.



# **Pingry Farm Coleford, Gloucestershire**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

### **Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Pingry Solar Ltd, and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank them in this regard. The assistance of Nigel Davie in particular is appreciated. Wessex Archaeology are also grateful to Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), on behalf of the Forest of Dean District Council for his advice and assistance.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Angus Forshaw, who also prepared this report. The illustrations were by Rob Goller and Ken Lymer. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Caroline Budd.





# Pingry Farm Coleford, Gloucestershire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Pingry Solar Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground works associated with the solar farm on land at Pingry Farm, Coleford, Gloucestershire (**Figure 1**). The site area comprised approximately 16ha of arable land centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 357044 209445 (hereafter 'the Site').
- 1.1.2 A planning application was submitted to Forest of Dean District Council in October 2012 for the construction of a solar farm, which was accompanied by an Archaeological Desk-Based assessment (WA 2012) and was later supported by an Archaeological Evaluation Report (WA 2013a and b) undertaken for the Site. The development work comprised the establishing of solar panels, service trenches and access routes.
- 1.1.3 Planning permission was granted by Forest of Dean District Council (P1418/12/FUL) in March 2013 for the development of the Site as a solar park.
- 1.1.4 A decision notice has been issued by Forest of Dean District Council for the scheme, which includes a pre-commencement condition stating the requirement for a programme of archaeological work.
- 1.1.5 Condition 13 of the approval states:
- *No works shall take place within the area indicated (the site) until there has been carried out a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*
- Reason: To ensure that any items of archaeological interest are properly recorded for posterity, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.*
- 1.1.6 Following discussions with the Senior Archaeological Officer at Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), it was agreed that a watching brief was required on the main, deeper construction elements of the scheme.
- 1.1.7 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the watching brief (WA 2013c) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology and submitted to, and approved by, GCC and subsequently the LPA, prior to the start of fieldwork. The watching brief was conducted in accordance with the guidelines and standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IFA 2008).





- 1.1.8 The watching brief took place on the 30<sup>th</sup> January, 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> February, and 5<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

## **1.2 The site, location and geology**

- 1.2.1 The Site is located in western Gloucestershire, just over 3km east of the Welsh border, and c. 1km south-south west of the centre of Coleford. The Site comprises an irregular, c. 16ha parcel of agricultural land containing four fields and a small portion of a fifth which are currently under stubble.
- 1.2.2 The Site is bounded on three sides by farmland, with woodland along the south-western boundary. Pingry Farm itself is c. 250m beyond the eastern Site boundary, outside the application area (**Figure 1**). The Site is crossed by a generally north-south aligned footpath. There are no watercourses within the Site. The highest point lies slightly to the west of Site centre, at an elevation of c. 160m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The Site occupies a hilltop; there are gentle downslopes to the north, east and south.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology is mapped as Black Rock limestone of the Pembroke Limestone group (BGS Online Viewer).

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 Desk-based Assessment (WA 2012) identified the potential for as yet unidentified, buried archaeological features to occur within the Site. The lack of intrusive archaeological investigations within the Site and surrounding area meant that the archaeological potential of the Site is largely untested.
- 2.1.2 The Site is likely to have been woodland or farmland belonging to the Brecknock Court Estate since at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was therefore considered unlikely that significant buried archaeological features from this date to the present day would occur within the Site.
- 2.1.3 Both the geophysical survey of the area and the trial trenching (WA 2013b) demonstrated that archaeological features were present on the Site, but were limited to undated pits and tree throws. These probably reflect periods of tree and shrub clearances during the establishment of arable fields. The current layout of fields has remained largely unchanged since its establishment in the 1840's.
- 2.1.4 To the north of the Site there is a post-medieval iron working complex at Whitecliff Iron Works (WA 2012).
- 2.1.5 Linear features identified by the geophysical survey were shown to reflect changes in the underlying geology and the location of the dry valley/coombe rather than archaeological features.

## **3 AIMS AND METHODS**

### **3.1 General aims and objectives**

- 3.1.1 Prior to the commencement of works, a WSI (WA 2013c) was written which set out the agreed aims of the archaeological watching brief and the methods by which these aims would be achieved.
- 3.1.2 The general aims and objectives of the archaeological works were to:



- *Record any features which may be encountered during the excavation of any main, deeper groundwork's (comprising of the underground cable trench and drainage swales);*
- *Identify, within the constraints of the investigation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site;*
- *Assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits; and*
- *Produce a report which will present the results of the fieldwork.*

## 3.2 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.2.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the methodology set out within the WSI (WA 2013c).
- 3.2.2 The works consisted of the constant archaeological supervision of the excavation of deeper cable trenches. All machining took place using a mechanical tracked excavator using a toothless trenching bucket. The machining was discontinued at the depth of archaeology or when the desired trench depth for function was reached, whichever was encountered first.
- 3.2.3 The location of **Trench 1** was moved outside the original site area due to a change in route of the high voltage cable connecting the solar farm to the power grid. The adjusted location was monitored and surveyed as with the other trenches (**Figure 1**).
- 3.2.4 Where practicable and safe to do so, all archaeological deposits and features observed were cleaned manually to an acceptable standard by the archaeologist on site and planned and/or drawn in section, and located on a site plan.
- 3.2.5 The excavated material from the groundwork was stored adjacent to the service trenches, and was scanned for artefacts by the archaeologist on site during excavation.
- 3.2.6 Due to wet conditions the base of **Trench 2** was not visible in plan; and therefore the section of the trench was used to establish the presence of archaeological remains.
- 3.2.7 Recording was undertaken using WA's *pro forma* recording sheets. Representative soil profile sections of the excavations were drawn to appropriate scale. Digital images were taken of groundwork operations during the watching brief.
- 3.2.8 Site survey was carried out using 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.

## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section provides a descriptive summary of archaeological information derived from the watching brief. The location of the trenches is detailed in **Figure 1**.

### 4.2 Natural deposits and soil sequences

- 4.2.1 The natural soil sequence was relatively uniform across the whole Site, and consisted of mid-reddish brown clay-loam topsoil that was up to 0.28m thick. Underlying the topsoil

was a mid to light reddish-brown silty clay loam subsoil (between 0.10m and 0.28m thick) containing occasional to common inclusions of fragmented, angular limestone (<0.15m) (**Plate 1**).

- 4.2.2 A thick dark reddish-brown clay loam colluvium layer was present in the northern part of **Trench 3** and in **Trench 1 (Plate 2)**, measuring 0.38m thick and 0.54m below the ground surface.
- 4.2.3 The underlying natural geology consisted of weathered limestone rubble within a mid-reddish-brown clay-loam matrix. The limestone rubble consisted of sub-angular and angular cobbles and occasional boulders, ranging in size from 0.15m – 0.70m. The depth of the natural geology beneath the soil sequences varied from 0.23m to 0.92m, with deeper natural geology below the colluvium layer in **Trench 1** and **3**.

### 4.3 Archaeological features

- 4.3.1 One feature was identified during the duration of the archaeological watching brief. **Trench 3** contained a possible pit (**3005**) which was only visible in section within the cable trench due to the homogenous nature of the fill against the natural subsoil deposits (**Plate 3**). The pit contained a single fill of red-brown clay loam with common charcoal fragments, which was cut into the underlying natural limestone and clay. No dateable artefacts were recovered from the feature. The soil sequence above the pit was 0.35m in depth.

## 5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

- 5.1.1 No archaeological artefacts were identified during the course of this work.

## 6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 6.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the course of this work.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 The archaeological watching brief aimed to record any archaeological material encountered during the machining of deeper cable routes, in order to obtain any additional information and dating about the archaeology of the area.
- 7.1.2 The watching brief demonstrated that archaeological features were limited within the Site, with a single pit feature identified. This probably represents isolated pockets of activity within the Site. The pit could be associated with the large charcoal rich pit within the same area as Trench 35 (**Figure 1**) which was excavated during an earlier phase of work at the Site (WA 2013). This has been tentatively linked to post-medieval iron working to the north of the Site. It is possible that pit **3005** reflects either the testing of the local iron stone for its suitability for smelting or the burning of removed scrub and trees. However, given the lack of dating material these features remain undated.
- 7.1.3 The watching brief was able to confirm the results of both the geophysical survey of the area and the trial trenching (WA 2013a) by demonstrating that archaeological features were present on the Site, but were limited to undated pits and tree throws.
- 7.1.4 The lack of remains encountered is probably due to the past land use and the landscape of the area. The use as woodland and subsequently for farming means that limited activity would have occurred within the site.



## 8 STORAGE AND CURATION

### 8.1 Museum

8.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with the Dean Heritage Centre. The Centre has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, under the accession code: **SOYDH:2013.7**. Deposition of any finds with the Centre will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

### 8.2 Preparation of Archive

8.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the Dean Heritage Centre, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; IfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

8.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:

- *1 cardboard box or airtight plastic boxes of artefacts & ecofacts, ordered by material type*
- *1 file/document case of paper records & A3/A4 graphics*

### 8.3 Discard policy

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

8.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2002).

### 8.4 Security Copy

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

### 8.5 OASIS

8.5.1 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 GHER, a copy of this has been supplied in **Appendix 1**. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive). A full archive of site photographs will also be submitted to the ADS.

### 8.6 Publication proposal

8.6.1 Following consultation, GCC has confirmed that, following the completion of the archive, no further work will be required.



## 9 REFERENCES

- ADS 2013, *Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice*, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice
- Brown, D.H., 2011, *Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*, Archaeological Archives Forum (revised edition)
- English Heritage, 2002, *Environmental Archaeology; a guide to theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation*, Swindon, Centre for Archaeology Guidelines
- IfA 2009, *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*, Institute for Archaeologists
- SMA 1993, *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections*, Society of Museum Archaeologists
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- Wessex Archaeology, 2012. Pingry Farm, Milkwall, Coleford, Gloucestershire. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment. Unpublished client report, ref: 87800.01
- Wessex Archaeology, 2013a. Pingry Farm, Coleford, Gloucestershire. Written Scheme of Investigation for Geophysical Survey and Trial Trenching. Unpublished client report, ref: 87801.01
- Wessex Archaeology 2013b, Pingry Farm, Coleford, Gloucestershire. Archaeological Evaluation Report. Unpublished client report, ref: 87801.03
- Wessex Archaeology, 2013c. Pingry Farm, Coleford, Gloucestershire. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief. Unpublished client report, ref: 87801.04

## 10 APPENDIX 1 - OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: wessexar1-174630**

### Project details

Project name Pingry Farm, Coleford, Gloucestershire

Short description of the project Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Pingry Solar Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during excavations on land at Pingry Farm, Coleford, Gloucestershire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 357044 209445. This work was required as a planning condition for the construction of a solar farm, consisting of solar panels, service trenches and access routes. The watching brief was principally concerned with the excavation of the deeper service trenches, and took place between the 30th January and the 5th March 2014. The results of the watching brief demonstrated a limited archaeological presence on site, with a single pit feature discovered. This feature contained no dating evidence and reflects isolated activity on the site. Due to the lack of material encountered it is unlikely that any further archaeological investigations will be required.



Project dates	Start: 30-01-2014 End: 05-03-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	P1418/12/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	SOYDH:2013.7 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	87802 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GLOUCESTERSHIRE FOREST OF DEAN COLEFORD Pingry Farm, Coleford, Gloucestershire
Postcode	GL16 8QD
Study area	16.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	SO 357044 209445 51.8829106432 -2.93422803881 51 52 58 N 002 56 03 W Point

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Pingry Solar Ltd
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Caroline Budd
Project supervisor	Angus Forshaw



Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
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**Project archives**

Digital Archive recipient	Dean Heritage Centre
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Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
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Paper Archive recipient	Dean Heritage Centre
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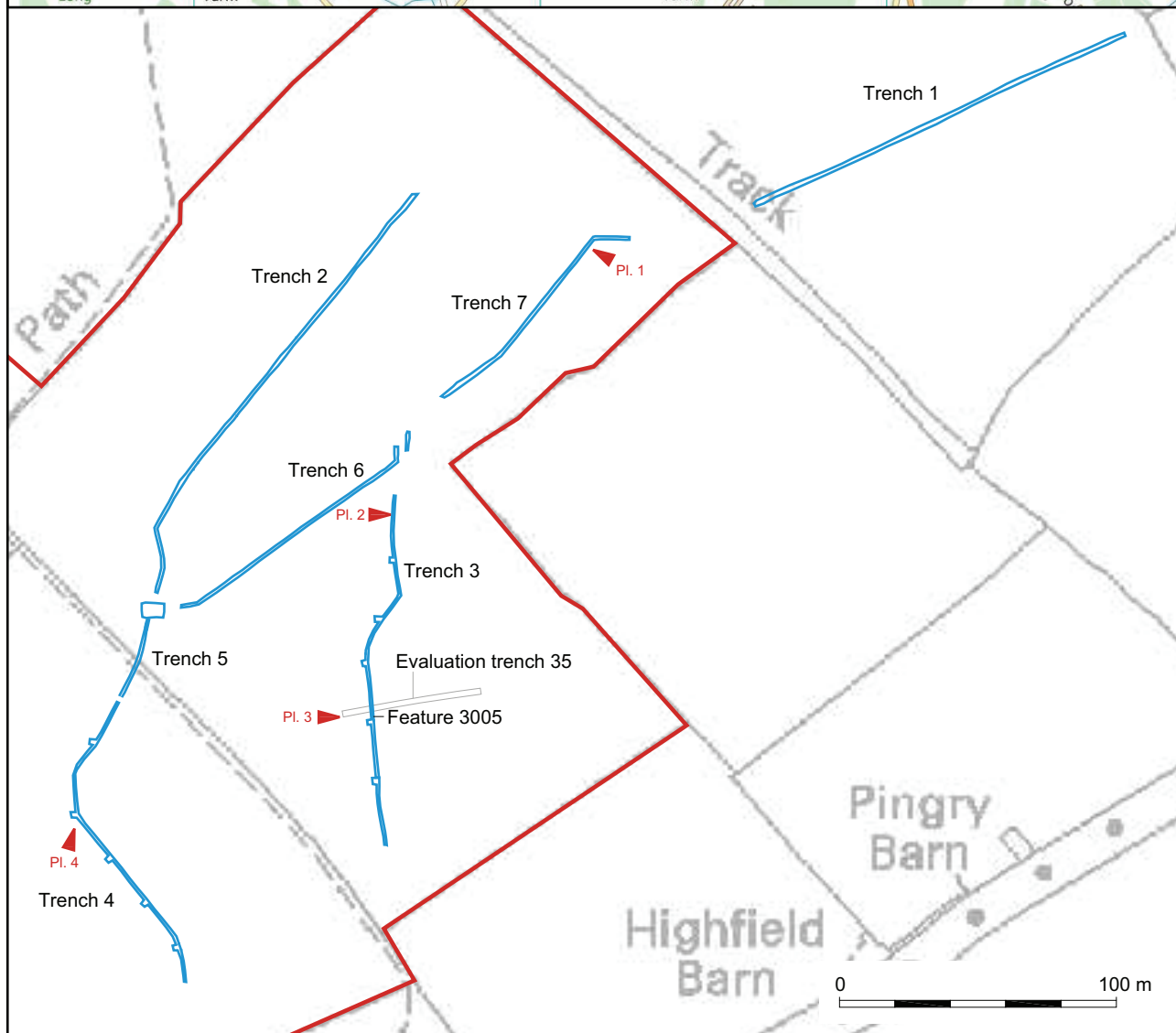
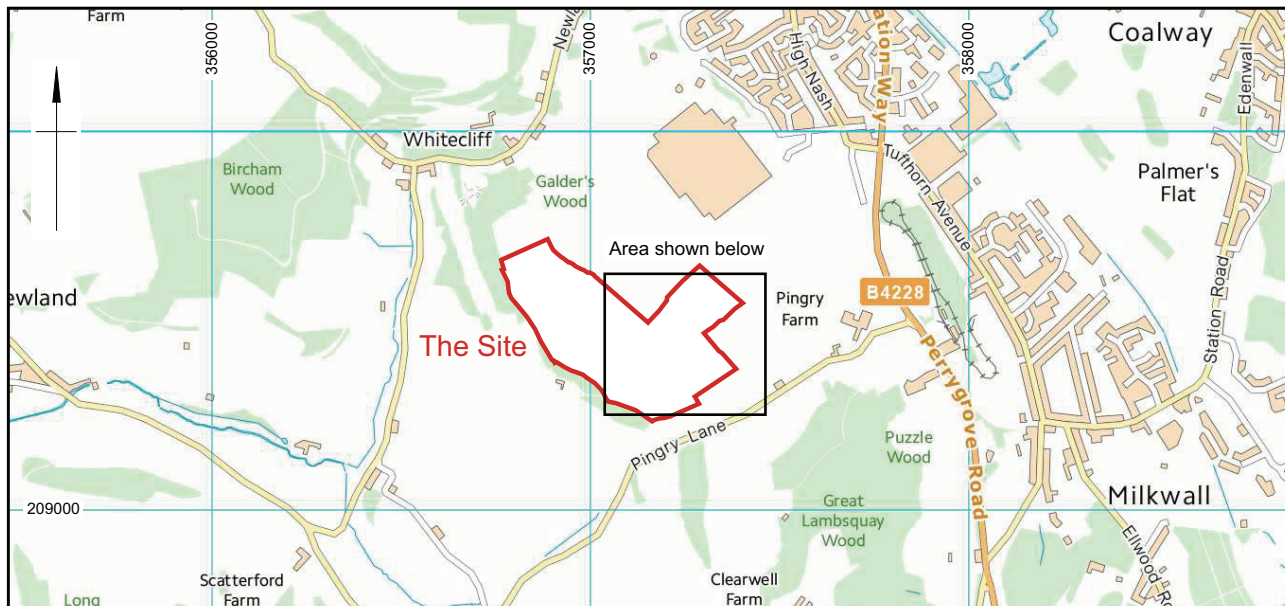
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Notebook - Excavation", ' Research', ' General Notes"
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Entered by	Angus Forshaw (aforshaw@wessexarch.co.uk)
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Entered on	14 March 2014
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Site and trench location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: South-east facing section of Trench 7



Plate 2: West facing section of Trench 3


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Plate 3: West facing section of pit 3005



Plate 4: General view of trench 4, viewed from the south

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