



making sense of heritage

Long Close Cricklade, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Scheduled Monument Consent ref: S00087982
Ref: 104182.03
May 2015



**Long Close,
Cricklade,
Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Prepared for:

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On behalf of:

Wiltshire Council and Cricklade Town Council

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May 2015

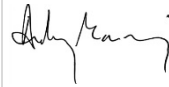
**WA ref 104182.03
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Quality Assurance

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* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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Long Close, Cricklade, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Atkins on behalf of Wiltshire Council and Cricklade Town Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during drainage work in the area of Long Close, Cricklade, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409847, 193812.

The work comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundworks undertaken within the boundary of Scheduled Monument 1002997, designated as *Cricklade town banks* and was undertaken between the 9th March and 19th April 2015.

No archaeological features were observed during the monitoring of the drainage ditch excavation. Romano-British pottery was recovered from the subsoil and from an intermittent deposit comprising levelled settlement debris, including angular limestone fragments, which was recorded adjacent to the eastern boundary of Long Close and which may derive from the demolition of the Anglo Saxon town bank. However no evidence of a town ditch was observed during the course of the watching brief.



Long Close, Cricklade, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Atkins for commissioning the project. The help and assistance of Hugh Beamish (English Heritage) during the course of the fieldwork and Danny Everett (Wiltshire Council) is also duly acknowledged. Thanks is also due to John Samways of the Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society for his advice.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Darryl Freer and Sean Rice. This report was prepared by Susan Clelland with contributions from Racheal Seager Smith (Pottery). The report illustrations were prepared by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Manning who edited this report.



Long Close, Cricklade, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Atkins on behalf of Wiltshire Council and Cricklade Town Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during drainage work in the area of Long Close, Cricklade, Wiltshire (hereafter the 'Site', **Figure 1**), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409847, 193812.
- 1.1.2 Long Close lies within the north-western part of the Saxon outer town defences and specifically within the boundary of Scheduled Monument 1002997, designated as *Cricklade town banks*. Part of the route also lies adjacent to a known area of the Saxon 'burh' (settlement) Scheduled Monument 1004679. As a result, development has required the issue of Scheduled Monument Consent, which was awarded on 16th July 2014 (S00087982), with, amongst others, the following conditions attached:
- 1.1.3 *(e) No ground works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work before and/or during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by English Heritage.*
- 1.1.4 It was initially proposed that ground works would involve the digging out of infill from the existing ditches to a depth of 1.0m and along a length of approximately 120m within the Scheduled Area. Where the route passed under footpaths short sections of 300mm plastic pipe would be installed. Excavated spoil was to be used to create a bund to protect property and will not be removed from Site.
- 1.1.5 In addition to the installation of the pipe, three manhole chambers were to be dug to contain three circular concrete ring sections. These pits were to be approximately 1.8m wide, 1.8m long and 1.0m deep and lie within the existing ditch line.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location, topography and geology

- 2.1.1 Long Close lies within the north-western area of the town of Cricklade, a small town in north Wiltshire. The Site comprises a largely grassy area bordered by scrub with a number of public access footpaths. It is bounded to the west by the outer town defences and to the east by the residential development of North Wall and Gas Lane.
- 2.1.2 The Site lies at approximately 80m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology is mapped as the Oxford Clay Formation (BGS).



2.2 Archaeological and historical background

Background

- 2.2.1 As noted above, the Site is within part of a Scheduled Monument (SM no. 1002997), which form part the outer Saxon defences of the town.
- 2.2.2 A number of findspots indicate some earlier prehistoric activity in the area and although no sites from this period have yet been discovered this may be partially the result of later disturbance and development. Both Mesolithic (Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record (WSHER) ref. MWI16863) and Neolithic or Early Bronze Age (WSHER ref. MWI16867) material has been discovered at Abingdon Court Farm on the western edge of the town.
- 2.2.3 Evidence of Iron Age activity is also limited to stray finds, including a leaf shaped socketed spearhead recovered at the edge of the River Churn (WSHER ref. MWI16869). In addition, several sherds of unstratified pottery were also recovered during the Abingdon Court Farm during archaeological investigations (WSHER ref. MWI16875), while two Iron Age coins are reported to have been found at unspecified locations within the parish (Wiltshire County Archaeology Service 2004).
- 2.2.4 A Romano-British settlement is thought to have existed on the site of the present day town. While its exact nature and limits remain poorly defined, material attributed to this period is widely recorded throughout the town and its immediate environs, with the distribution apparently representing an occupation area of up to 18ha in extent (Wiltshire County Archaeology Service 2004).
- 2.2.5 Direct evidence for settlement is largely confined to the historic core of the town, though excavations in the north-west corner of the defences found evidence for Roman occupation (Haslam 1984, 107). Excavations within the north-west quarter of the town in 1975 revealed discrete stony layers interpreted as possible Romano-British building platforms (WSHER ref. MWI9561). Further structural remains, comprising two limestone wall footings, were encountered during a watching brief in the vicinity of St Mary's Church (WSHER ref. MWI6884). Just to the south-east of the Site at St Sampson's School an extensive occupation layer containing 3rd to 4th century pottery was identified (WSHER ref. MWI8323).
- 2.2.6 There is little evidence to suggest occupation of the Romano-British settlement at Cricklade continued beyond the end of the 4th century; however the survival of Ermine Street may imply that the area retained some importance as a fording point in the early Saxon period (Haslam 1984, 107).
- 2.2.7 First recorded in AD 903, the fortified settlement or *burh* of Cricklade is believed to have been established in the late 9th century as part of the system of defence of Wessex instigated by King Alfred (Haslam 1984, 106). Though the origin of its name, *Crecca gelad*, has been a subject of debate, with one suggestion that it refers to Horsey Down immediately south-west of the Site, the most likely translation denotes its location at a river crossing point ('creek passage') (Wiltshire County Archaeology Service 2004).
- 2.2.8 The extent of the Saxon *burh* is defined by the alignments of the defences, which formed a rectangular enclosed area of approximately 25ha. Numerous investigations have enabled the identification of two main phases of construction, the earliest of which involved the creation of a substantial clay bank surrounded by a triple ditch system. This appears to have been strengthened in the late 10th or early 11th century with the addition



of a stone wall. The subsequent levelling of the defences in early 11th century seems to have coincided with a growth of settlement, suggesting their destruction may reflect a transition away from the earlier defensive role of the town rather than an act of attack (Haslam 1984).

2.2.9 Within the limits of the walls, the layout of the Saxon settlement can be partially inferred from the existing street pattern, which appears to preserve the main axis of the grid system in its present configurations. The excavations along the town defences concluded that much of the western part of the *burh* comprised open ground during the Saxon period. Though this is thought to be due to the provision of 'reserves' for the protection of livestock during times of attack (Wiltshire County Archaeology Service 2004).

2.2.10 Although recognised as being of medieval construction, the extant churches of St Sampson (LB no. 1023081) and St Mary (LB no. 1183154) both appear to have origins in the Saxon period. The earliest reference to St Sampson's dates to AD 973, and remnants of early 10th century brickwork have been found within its fabric. Foundations of an earlier structure identified beneath the 12th century Church of St Mary appear to have been constructed with reference to the alignment of the Saxon defences. Both of these parish churches would have represented focal points within the town

Geophysical Survey

2.2.11 A Section 42 licence was granted by English Heritage for a geophysical survey to be undertaken within the Scheduled area (ref: AA/070789/5). Work was undertaken in July 2013. The survey concluded

- *No evidence of the Roman settlement nor early medieval farming was revealed within the survey area (Samways 2015 forthcoming)*
- *Modern utility service pipes and the construction of a footpath appeared to have removed evidence of the inner walkway around the ramparts (BCAS 2015 forthcoming)*
- *The foundations and debris of the revetment wall of the Anglo-Saxon ramparts are extant in the hedgerows between the fields along both the western and northern field boundaries (Samways 2015 forthcoming)*
- *The magnetometer and resistivity surveys have not revealed a ditch in front of the wall along the western boundary nor of the middle ditch of the three ditch system. The re-analysed pseudosection profiles, taking into account the variations in the surface heights, would suggest that there are ditches in the presence of the wall. This aligns with the results of Haslam's 1975 excavations in the south west corner and the re-evaluation of the earlier work by Wainwright. No middle ditch is apparent from the any of the pseudosection profiles. The results for an outer ditch are inconclusive as it was not possible to survey fully to the edge of the field. (Samways 2015 forthcoming)*

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were to:

- *To undertake the archaeological watching brief in accordance with the Scheduled Monument Consent*



- *to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains, and should remains be present, to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;*
- *to confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;*
- *to determine or confirm the approximate extent of the remains;*
- *to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains;*
- *to determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present; and*
- *to prepare a report on the results of the Watching Brief.*

3.2 Health and safety

- 3.2.1 Health and safety considerations were of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practices override archaeological considerations at all times.
- 3.2.2 All work was carried out in accordance with the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974* and the *Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992*, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.

3.3 Best practice

- 3.3.1 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a), excepting where they are superseded by statements made below.

3.4 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.4.1 Drainage groundworks comprised the digging out of infill from existing ditches within the playing fields south of Gas Lane, adjacent to the eastern boundary of Long Close and the northern boundary of the Cemetery (**Figure 1**).
- 3.4.2 The Scheduled monument consent was amended during the course of the works to include the excavation to an increased depth of no more than 2m of these ditches to create trenches allowing the insertion of pipes below existing utility services around the junction of Long Close and the playing fields. A direct consequence of this was that the number of manhole access chambers required within the scheduled monument area was reduced to one.
- 3.4.3 All ground works were excavated using a 360° 3T excavator equipped with a toothless bucket and under constant supervision. Machine excavation was under the instruction of the monitoring archaeologist and proceeded in level spits approximately 0.10m in thickness.
- 3.4.4 Spoil derived from and during machine was visually scanned by trained archaeological personnel for the purposes of finds retrieval.

3.5 Recording

- 3.5.1 All exposed archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system.

- 3.5.2 A full photographic record was made using digital photography. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and the general context of the principal features and finds excavated as well as 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.
- 3.5.3 A unique project code **106170** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records and finds.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Trenching comprised the machine excavation of a drainage ditch on average 1.7m wide and broadly following the outer accessible edge of extant field boundaries (**Figure 1**). The depth and profile of the drainage ditch varied to reflect water flow requirements in response to the existing topography. A total of approximately 442m of drainage work was undertaken by a 3 and 5 tonne tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant observation by a suitably qualified archaeologist.
- 4.1.2 Aligned north-east to south west the section of the drainage ditch excavated south of Gas Lane (**Figure 1**) was approximately 0.4m deep with steep sides and a broad flat base (**Plate 1**). Aligned north-east to south-west the section of drainage ditch in Long Close (**Figure 1**) had steep tapered sides and a concave base extending from approximately 0.7m in depth at its southern end to 1m deep at its northern end (**Plates 2** and **3**). The north-west to south-east aligned section of drainage ditch following the extant ditched hedge boundary at the northern end of the cemetery (**Figure 1**) had steep to moderate sides with a broadly flat base and was approximately 0.7m deep (**Plate 4**).

Stratigraphic sequence

- 4.1.1 A consistent stratigraphic soil sequence was recorded throughout the drainage works and is described below. A representative section of the excavated drainage ditch is presented in **Figure 2**.
- 4.1.2 The underlying bedrock geology (**1003**) comprised pale yellow orange brown clay of the Oxford Clay formation and was commonly reached at approximately 0.35m below ground level. Within the northern eastern half of Long Close this was overlain by an intermittently occurring layer of levelled material (**1002**) (**Figure 2**) which comprised a pale grey brown silty clay with occasional stone including tabular limestone fragments, pottery, animal bone, charcoal and ceramic building material (CBM). Where it was recorded, this deposit was horizontally spread and was on average 0.2m thick and is likely to derive from the demolition and levelling of material associated with the Saxon Town defences. A dark grey brown silty clay subsoil (**1001**) approximately 0.1m thick was recorded either sealing layer **1002** or directly overlying the geological horizon (deposit **1003**). The topsoil was between 0.25m and 0.30m thick and was found to contain modern detritus (plastic, glass, paving slabs, bottles *etc.*) (**Figure 2**).

Modern Disturbance

- 4.1.3 Live utility services were encountered along the line of the drainage trenching between the junction of Long Close and the playing field area south of Gas Lane (**Figure 1**). Following approved amendments to the Scheduled Monument Consent incumbent on the works, excavation of the drainage trenching in this area proceeded to a depth of approximately 2m below ground level to allow drainage piping to be inserted below the depth of these services. No archaeological features or deposits were observed within this section of

deeper excavation (as shown on **Figure 2**) due to the previous disturbance caused by the original insertion of the utilities. A manhole access chamber was also constructed within this area of disturbed ground.

- 4.1.4 A small section of deeper excavation (as shown on **Figure 2**) was also undertaken at the southern end of Long Close to allow the placing of drainage pipe under a pavement. No archaeological features or deposits were observed within this section of the works.

5 FINDS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Small quantities of artefacts, totalling just 2.4kg, were recovered from three contexts. All the finds have been cleaned and quantified (number/weight of pieces) by material type within each context, and all were subsequently examined to establish their nature and date range.

5.2 Results

- 5.2.1 The most recent material consists of a single fragment (41g), of peg-hole roof tile from the topsoil (**1000**). Tiles such as this cannot be precisely dated, remaining typologically unchanged from their inception in the 12th or 13th century to the present.
- 5.2.2 All the other artefacts are of Romano-British (1st – 4th century AD) date. Four sherds (85g), of 2nd to 3rd century AD pottery came from the subsoil (**1001**), comprising two hard, light grey Savernake-type ware body sherds, a sandy grey, flared rim jar sherd and part of a small Central Gaulish samian form 33 cup. Part of a stamp giving the potter's or workshop owner's name survives on the interior of this vessel, but unfortunately, it is too abraded to be legible.
- 5.2.3 A fifth sherd (18g) of pottery, a rim from high-shouldered bead rim jar in hard, light grey Savernake-type ware, likely to be of similar date came from the levelled demolition deposit (**1002**). Other material from this context comprised two pieces (108g) of animal bone (a fragment from the proximal end of a cattle metacarpal and a midshaft fragment from a horse metatarsal) and ten pieces (2230g) of ceramic building material (CBM). Single pieces from *tegula* and *imbrex* roof tiles occur amongst this material, along with a corner fragment (30mm thick) from one of the smaller, thinner types of Roman brick, two flat fragments with combed keying and two flat, plain pieces (one internally sooted with part of a vent hole surviving) from box flue tiles. The remainder are flat, featureless fragments, although their thickness (22-24mm) suggests that they are from *tegula* or, less probably, the smaller, thinner bricks.
- 5.2.4 The presence of this material implies that Romano-British settlement, including substantial buildings with tiled roofs and *hypocaust* heating systems, existed in the vicinity. However, the small quantity of finds recovered, the relatively small size of the CBM pieces (mean weight 223g), especially when compared with the weight of even a single complete brick or tile, and their abraded condition suggests this may have been located some distance from the Site itself.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1.1 The watching brief covered a relatively small sample of the scheduled area and did not revealed any evidence of archaeological remains which may have pertained to the triple Anglo-Saxon town ditches or bank. An intermittent deposit (deposit **1002**) noted during the course of the watching brief contained a small quantity of Romano-British pottery,



settlement detritus and abundant fragments of angular limestone fragments. It appears more likely that this deposit may be derived from the demolition and levelling of the Saxon town ramparts. It should be noted however that an extensive occupation layer containing 3rd to 4th century pottery was identified to the south-east of the Site at St Sampson's School and it is possible that deposit **1002** is a reworked remnant of this occupation deposit.

7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

7.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Wiltshire Museums Service who have agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project. Deposition of the finds with the Museum Service will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

7.2 Archive

7.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper and photographic, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Hampshire County Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013). Details of the Site will, on completion of the full programme of archaeological works, be submitted online to the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) database.

7.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/ code **106170**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:

- *1 file of paper records*

7.3 Discard policy

7.3.1 WA 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.

7.4 Security Copy

7.4.1 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 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: OASIS SUMMARY

OASIS ID: wessexar1-211778

Project details

Project name	Long Close, Cricklade
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Atkins on behalf of Wiltshire Council and Cricklade Town Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during drainage work in the area of Long Close, Cricklade, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409847, 193812. The work comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundworks undertaken within the boundary of Scheduled Monument 1002997, designated as Cricklade town banks and was undertaken between the 9th March and 19th April 2015. No archaeological features were observed during the monitoring of the drainage ditch excavation. Romano-British pottery was recovered from the subsoil and from an intermittent deposit comprising levelled settlement debris, including angular limestone fragments, which was recorded adjacent to the eastern boundary of Long Close and which may derive from the demolition of the Anglo Saxon town bank. However no evidence of a town ditch was observed during the course of the watching brief.
Project dates	Start: 09-03-2015 End: 19-04-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	106170 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	1002997 - SM No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POT Roman
Significant Finds	TILE Roman
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WILTSHIRE NORTH WILTSHIRE CRICKLADE Long Close
Postcode	SN6 6DU



Study area 1.00 Hectares
Site coordinates SU 09866 93842 51.6428249891 -1.85740487427 51 38 34 N 001
51 26 W Point
Height OD / Depth Min: 78.00m Max: 80.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator English Heritage
Project design originator Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager A Manning
Project supervisor Darryl Freer
Type of sponsor/funding body County Council
Name of sponsor/funding body Wiltshire Council

Project archives

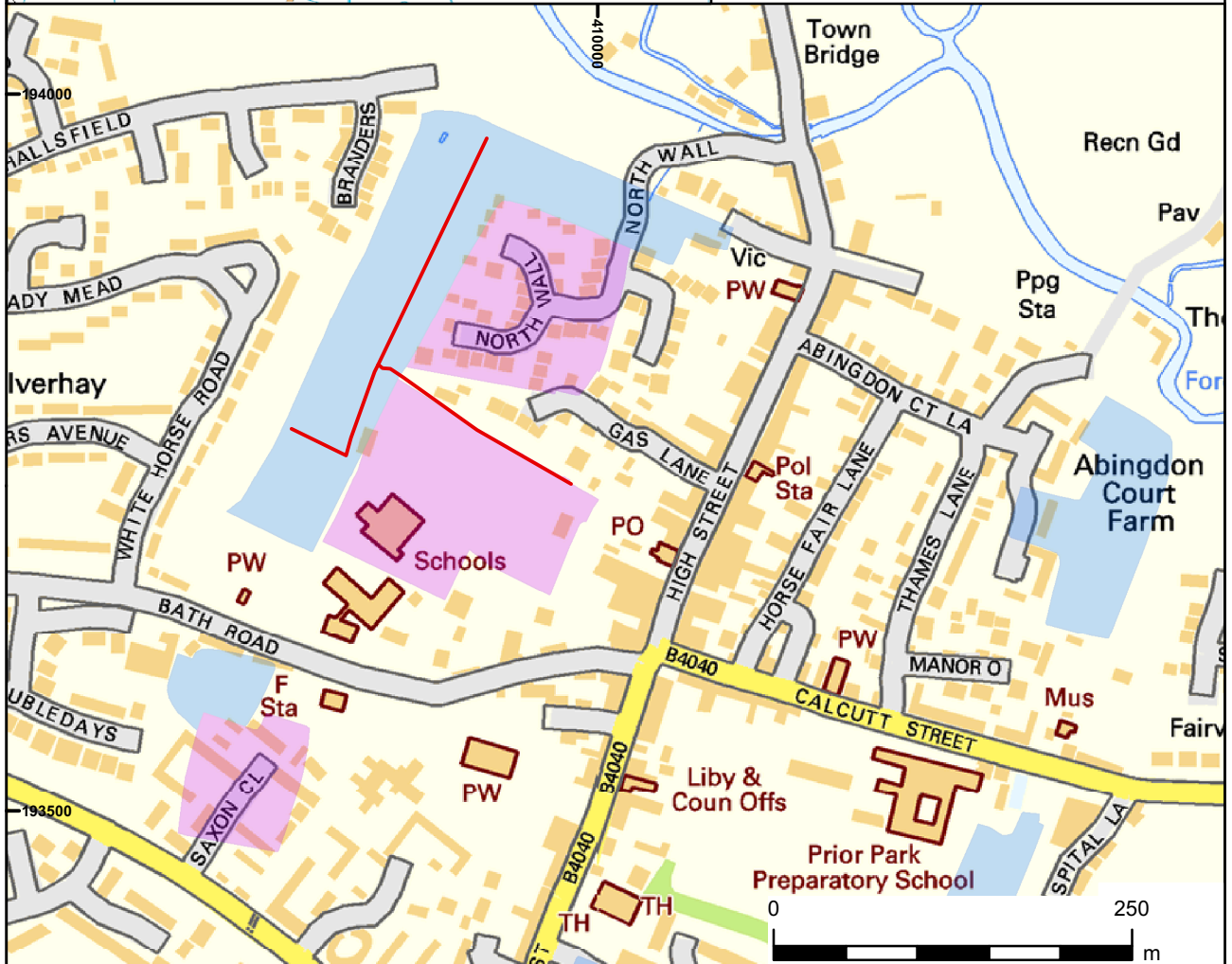
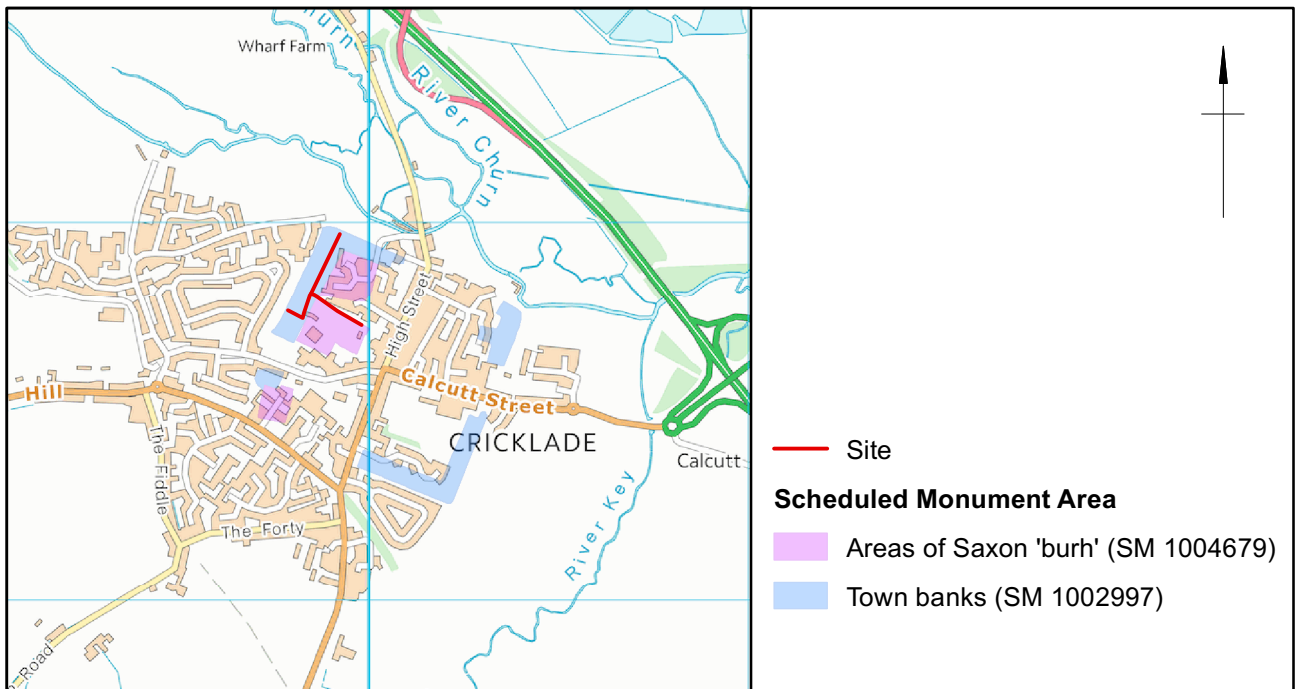
Physical Archive Exists? No
Physical Archive recipient Devizes Museum
Digital Archive recipient Devizes Museum
Digital Contents "none"
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient Devizes Museum
Paper Contents "none"
Paper Media available "Context sheet","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title Long Close, Cricklade, Wiltshire: Archaeological Watching Brief



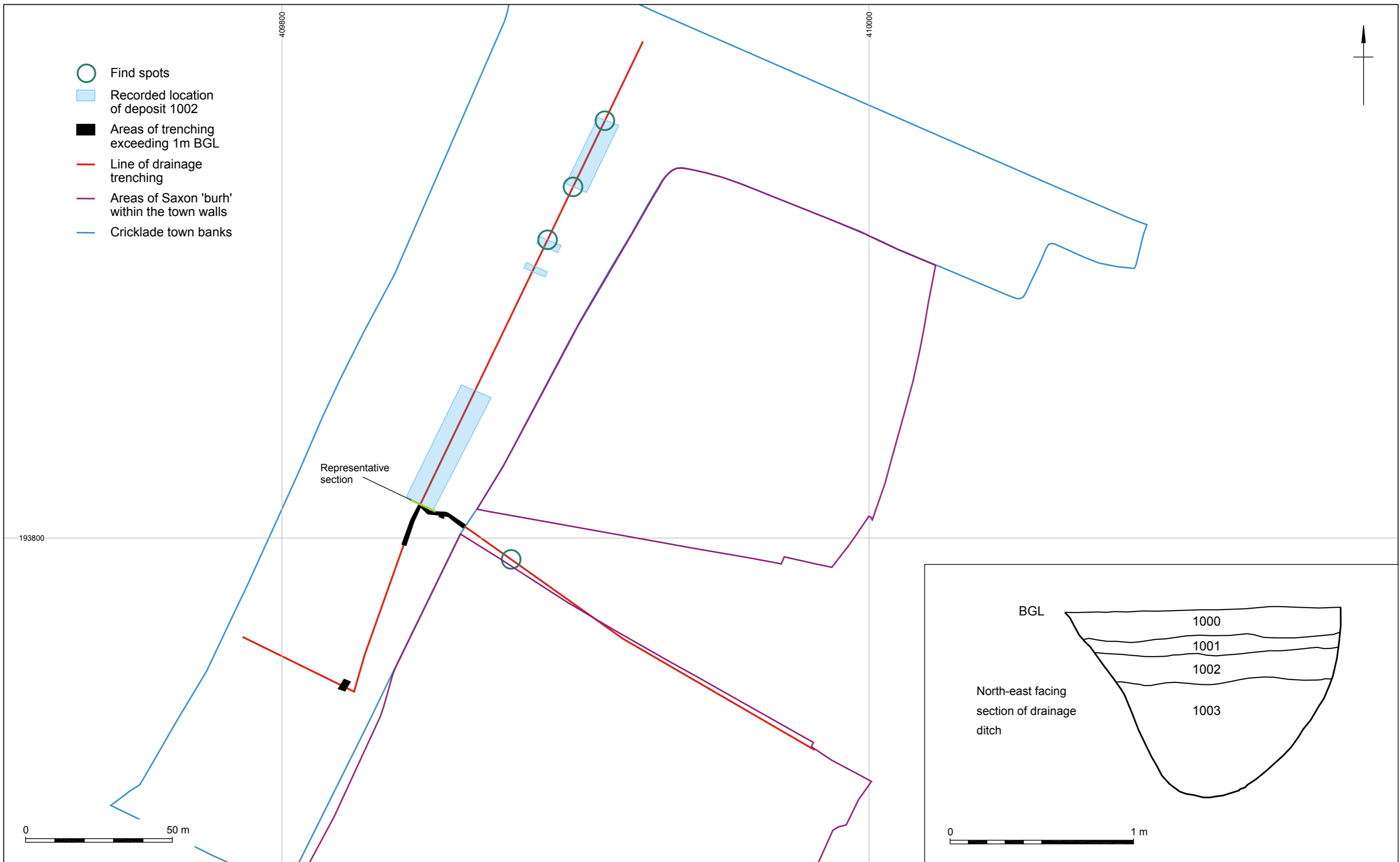
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Location of Site and Scheduled Monument Areas

Figure 1



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Plate 1: Section of drainage ditch south of Gas Lane taken from the east



Plate 2: Southern section of drainage ditch in Long Close looking north


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Plate 3: Northern section of drainage ditch in Long Close looking north



Plate 4: Section of drainage ditch in cemetery boundary looking east



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Plate 5: South facing section of drainage trench adjacent to utilities

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