

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Planning Ref: 13/03622/FUL Ref: 109360.02 Museum Accession Code: TTNCM 38/2015 HER Event: 32838

May 2015





Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Quality Assurance

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Arc Homes (hereafter the 'Client') to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Montacute Road, East Stoke, near Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Somerset centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 348800 117475. The evaluation took place between the 26th and 27th May 2015.

Outline planning permission (planning ref. 13/03622/FUL) was granted for the construction of 18 dwellings and associated works including a new vehicular access, parking, open space and landscaping by South Somerset District Council (SSDC). South West Heritage Trust (SWHT), archaeological advisors to SSDC, requested that a programme of archaeological evaluation be undertaken in order to supply sufficient information regarding potential buried archaeological remains.

A total of six trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development. No archaeological features were revealed, although several modern ditches associated with a fruit farm on the site were recorded.



Archaeological Evaluation Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Wendy Lewis of Arc Homes for commissioning the work and their assistance during the course of the project is gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are extended to Stephen Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer (SHEO) of South West Heritage who monitored the work on behalf of the Local Authority. We also acknowledge the landowner Mrs Mel Shuldham for assistance in gaining access to the Site.

The field work was undertaken by Steve Thompson, Michael Cepak and Stuart Pierson. This report was written and compiled by Steve Thompson and edited by Gareth Chaffey with report illustrations by Kitty Foster. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Gareth Chaffey.



Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Arc Homes (hereafter the 'Client') to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Montacute Road, East Stoke, near Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Somerset centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 348800 117475 (hereafter the 'Site') (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 Outline planning permission (planning ref. 13/03622/FUL) was granted for the construction of 18 dwellings and associated works including a new vehicular access, parking, open space and landscaping by South Somerset District Council (SSDC). South West Heritage Trust (SWHT), archaeological advisors to SSDC, requested that a programme of archaeological evaluation be undertaken in order to supply sufficient information regarding potential buried archaeological remains.
- 1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (WA 2015) setting out the methodologies and standards that were employed by WA in order to undertake the archaeological evaluation was submitted to, and approved by, the Client and Stephen Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer (SHEO) of SWHT.
- 1.1.4 In format and content the WSI conformed with current best practice and to the guidance outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE, English Heritage 2006) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (ClfA) *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation* (ClfA 2014a).
- 1.1.5 This document presents the results of the archaeological field evaluation which took place between the 26th and 27th May 2015.

1.2 Site location, topography, current land use and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located on land north of Montacute Road between East Stoke House and Stanchester Community School in East Stoke 0.4km from Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Somerset. The Site subject to archaeological evaluation is approximately 1.25 ha in size and within a single agricultural field, part of which formed a former fruit farm (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 To the north of the Site is agricultural land, immediately to the east is Stanchester Community School and to the south Montacute Road and beyond this, a mixture of agricultural land and residential dwellings. Immediately to the west of the Site lies East Stoke House and associated grounds. The Grade II listed main building of East Stoke House (National Heritage List for England NHLE list entry no. 1241609) lies 0.5km to the north-west of the Site and its associated entrance gateway (NHLE list entry no. 1241610) is located 0.2km to the east of the Site.



- 1.2.3 The highest point on the Site is the north-eastern corner at an elevation of 58m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The land slopes down southwards towards Montacute Road and reduces to 52.5m aOD in the south-western corner. The southern-eastern extent of the Site lies at 53m aOD.
- 1.2.4 The Site is currently under rough pasture following the end of its use as a fruit farm. The underlying geology of the Site is mapped as Ham Hill Limestone, a brown, shelly, bioclastic limestone in the southern extent of the Site, along the boundary with Montacute Road. This is overlaid by Beacon Limestone Formation, a variably grey, pink, reddish-brown limestone which is mapped as the predominant geology covering the Site. In the northern extent, Jurassic sandstone of the Dyrham Formation is present, consisting of dark grey and greenish grey silty mudstone with interbeds of fine sand and silt. There are no superficial deposits recorded within the Site boundary (BGS 2015).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 There are no previous known archaeological assessments or investigations within the Site boundary itself or relating to the proposed development. The nearest recorded archaeological excavations to the Site listed on the National Monuments Record (NMR) Index are related to Church of St. Mary the Virgin (WA07) (Figure 2).
- 2.1.2 A brief assessment of the archaeological and historical background to the Site and the surrounding area within 1km of the Site (hereafter referred to as 'the study area') has been previously undertaken, the results of which are summarised below and displayed in **Figure 2**. This assessment was primarily based upon the results of a Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) data search.

2.2 Scheduled Monuments

- 2.2.1 There are no designated Scheduled Monuments (SM) within the Site but there are three designated Scheduled Monuments within the 1km study area: Hamdon Hill Camp (WA01), Montacute Castle (WA02) and the Site of a Cluniac priory (WA03).
- 2.2.2 Hamdon Hill Camp (SM list no. 1003678) is located 0.5km to the south-west of the Site. Hamdon Hill is the earthwork remains of an Iron Age multivallate hillfort, the monument is also a possible Neolithic settlement with evidence of continuous occupation through to the Roman period.
- 2.2.3 Montacute Castle is a motte and bailey castle on St. Michael's Hill (SM list no. 1008466). 0.5km to the south-east of the Site. St Michael's Hill is an isolated natural knoll that has been artificially sculpted to create impressive defensive earthworks. The occupation of this prominent landform dates from at least the 11th century and documentary evidence indicates that an 11th century castle once stood on the summit. Today a tall circular 18th century folly tower occupies the top (PastScape 2015)
- 2.2.4 The Site of a Cluniac Priory immediately east of Abbey Farm (SM list no. 1019898) is located just under 1km south-east of the Site and includes the remains of a medieval priory and associated fishpond and dovecote.

2.3 Listed Buildings

2.3.1 There are no designated Listed Buildings within the Site but there are three designated Listed Buildings within 100m of the Site and thirty Listed entries located within 0.5km of



- the Site, all located to the east and south-east of the Site within the village and surrounding area of East Stoke (**Figure 2**).
- 2.3.2 East Stoke or 'Stokett' is listed in the Domesday records of 1086 as being held by Mauger de Cartrai for the Count of Mortain and passed through various hands until the 16th century (VCH, 1911). It is likely that the present day village has its origins in the Anglo-Saxon period.
- 2.3.3 The three Listed Buildings in close proximity to the Site are grade II and lie within the property of East Stoke House and associated grounds which lie immediately to the east of the Site. East Stoke House (WA04) (National Heritage List for England (NHLE) list no. 1241609) is a late 18th century to early 19th century building with an associated coachhouse, begun by the Chaffey family, who assembled an estate piecemeal from portions of the then defunct East Stoke Manor. The south-east entrance gateway to the house (WA05) (NHLE list no. 1241610) is located *c*. 25m to the east of the Site boundary and East Stoke Lodge (WA06) (NHLE list no. 1241608) is a 17th century building located *c*. 70m east of the Site.
- 2.3.4 Of the thirty Listed entries within 0.5km of the Site, twenty nine are Grade II listed and one is Grade I listed which is the Church of St. Mary the Virgin (WA07) (NHLE list no. 1260420). This is an Anglican Parish Church which dates back to the 12th century.

2.4 Designated Parks and Gardens

2.4.1 The park and gardens to Montacute House (WA08), (NHLE list no. 1000468) is Grade I Listed and refers to the 19th century formal gardens with 16th century origins. The park encompasses the Scheduled Monument of Montacute Castle on St. Michael's Hill (SM list no. 1008466).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The aims and objectives of the archaeological field evaluation were outlined within the submitted and approved WSI (WA 2015) which conformed to current best practice and to the guidance outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE, English Heritage 2006) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation* (ClfA 2014a).

3.2 General

- 3.2.1 The aims of the archaeological field evaluation were to:
 - clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be impacted by development;
 - identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character and condition 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;
 - target trenches on anomalies identified as a result of the geophysical survey in order to clarify the nature and presence/absence of underlying archaeological remains; and



 produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation in sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made concerning the Site's archaeological potential.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1.1 A total of nine machine-excavated trial trenches, each measuring approximately 30m in length and 1.8m wide were proposed (WA 2015 Figure 1) which amounted to an approximate 4% sample of the 1.25ha development area. However following discussions with the landowner and the Client it arose that the western portion of the Site was not included within the development area and so Trenches 1-3 were not excavated.
- 4.1.2 The location of the six trenches (Trenches 4–9) were in general accordance with the proposed positions outlined in the WSI (WA 2015) however a number of trenches were moved slightly from their original positions and shortened due to unforeseen on-site constraints
- 4.1.3 The trial trenches were excavated using a 360° tracked excavator equipped with a toothless bucket under constant supervision by WA. Machine excavation proceeded in spits to a depth at which the top of archaeological levels or the top of natural deposits were exposed, whichever was the higher. Where appropriate, hand cleaning of the trenches were undertaken to establish the nature of the deposits and features investigated.
- 4.1.4 Trenches completed to the satisfaction of the Client and the SHEO of SWHT were be backfilled using the excavated material in the approximate order in which they were excavated by WA and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment will be undertaken.

4.2 Recording

- 4.2.1 All exposed archaeological deposits were recorded using WA's *pro forma* recording system.
- 4.2.2 A complete drawn record of archaeological features and deposits was compiled including both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections), and with reference to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels will be calculated and plans/sections will be annotated with OD heights. A representative section of the overlying deposits recorded within the trenches and the test pits was recorded and drawn.
- 4.2.3 A photographic record was maintained during the evaluation using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images will be subject to managed quality control and curation processes which will embed appropriate metadata within the image and ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The following sections provide a summary of the information held in the Site archive. Details of individually excavated contexts and features are retained in the Site archive and a tabulated version of these can be found in **Appendix 1**.



5.1.2 The following result section should be read in conjunction with trench descriptions in **Appendix 1**.

5.2 Natural deposits and soil sequences

5.2.1 The depth of overlying deposits was consistent across the Site with *c*. 0.20m of plough soil sealing a further *c*. 0.10m subsoil. As indicated in the **Section 1.2** the natural geology was variable across the Site, and this was demonstrated within the trenches. The northern trenches revealed probable Beacon Limestone Formation which overlay, and this was seen to overly fines sandy silt. The southernmost trench (Trench 4) revealed a thick mid brown sitly clay with common fragments of limestone which was recorded to a depth of 2.20m below the current ground surface.

5.3 Trenches 4 – 9

- 5.3.1 Five parallel north—south aligned ditches (recorded as *c*. 4.5m apart) were revealed in Trench 9, which related to the former fruit farm. One ditch 904 was investigated and revealed as a 0.95m wide and 0.09m deep with concave sides and concave base. These ditches are the result of the creation of 'ridge and furrows; for the growing of fruit trees and bushes and are modern in date.
- 5.3.2 No further archaeological features were identified.

6 FINDS

6.1.1 No finds were recovered during the programme of works.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL

7.1.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were recorded on the site.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 The programme of archaeological trial trenching conducted on the Site to the north of Grove Road, Harwell on land at Montacute Road, East Stoke, near Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Somerset, was successful in its stated aims of clarifying an absence of buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be impacted by development.
- 8.1.2 Despite the Site's location within a relatively rich archaeological landscape, no archaeological finds or features were observed.

9 STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

9.1.1 As per the agreed WSI (WA 2015), it is recommended that the project archive resulting from the evaluation will be deposited with Taunton Museum under Accession Code TTNCM 38/2015, following agreement with the landowner.

9.2 Preparation of archive

9.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the local museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; CIfA 2014b; Brown 2011; ADS 2013). Details of the archaeological evaluation will also be entered into the online "OASIS"



- database maintained by the Archaeological Data Service (ADS). A copy of the OASIS entry has been included in this report (**Appendix 2**).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the Site code **109360**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:
 - 1 file of paper records & A4 graphics
- 9.2.3 The archive of all records and finds will be consistent with the principles of Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (English Heritage 2006).

9.3 Discard policy

- 9.3.1 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.
- 9.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2011).

9.4 Copyright

9.4.1 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-profit making, and conforms with the *Copyright and Related Rights regulations* 2003.

9.5 Security Copy

9.5.1 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.

10 REFERENCES

ADS 2013, 'Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice', Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice

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APPENDIX 1: TRENCH AND CONTEXT SUMMARIES

Bgl: Below Ground Level. NB - Trenches 1 to 3 not excavated

	Dimensions :	30m by 1.8m by 2.2m	Gro	und		
Trench 4	Centre line Coordinates (NGR):	348788.91, 117426.90 surfa 348814.42, 117427.5610 level		face	57.72m aOD	
Context	Category	Description		Dep	th (bgl)	
401	Plough-soil	Mid brown silt clay with heavy rooting and <i>c</i> . 5% limestone inclusions.		0-	0.35m	
402	Subsoil	Orange brown silty clay with c. 10% limestone inclusions			0.35-0.45m	
403	Deposit	Orange, mid brown silty clay with c.40% (common) small limestone inclusions, well sorted c0.05m in size. The nature of this deposit is unclear, it was investigated (in a sondage) to a depth of 2.20m from the ground surface. The deposit was sterile of finds but did contained flecks of charcoal. It was unclear if this deposit was an alluvial formation or the result of the deliberate dumping of excavated material during the cutting of Montacute road, which appears to run in a cutting at this point.				
Comments	The trench was exc	evated to a depth of 1.20m for its full length and a so	ondad	ne to 2.2	0m hal	

Comments: The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.20m for its full length and a sondage to 2.20m bgl was excavated at the eastern end. The natural basal geology encountered in Trenches 5–9 was not revealed. No archaeology encountered

	Dimensions :	30m by 1.8m by 0.55m		und	
Trench 5	Centre line Coordinates (NGR):	348789.80, 117472.29 348790.37, 117444.97	surface 56.09		56.09m aOD
Context	Category	Description		Depth (bgl)	
501	Plough-soil	Mid brown silt clay with heavy rooting and c. 5% limestone inclusions up to 0.11m		0-0.30m	
502	Subsoil	Orange brown silty clay with <i>c</i> . 10% limestone inclusions up to 0.04m		0-0.45m	
503	Natural	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional orange mottled patches, with rare small limestone inclusions 0.45m		45m+	
Comments: No archaeology encountered					

	Dimensions :	30m by 1.8m by 0.57m	Gro	und		
Trench 6 Centre line Coordinates (NGR):				face	55.54m aOD	
Context	Category	Description		Dep	oth (bgl)	
601	Plough-soil	Mid brown sandy silt clay with c. 5% limestone inclusions 0.03m. heavily bioturbated		0-0.33		
602	Subsoil	Orange brown sandy silty clay with c. 10% limestone inclusions up to 0.04m			0.33-0.45m	
603	Natural	Mid greyish brown fine silty clay with small sand component and occasional light yellow/orange patches. This is a lower band of natural geology beneath 604.		0	.45m+	
Natural limestone bedrock, weathered and fractured, comprises c. 0.20m blocks of limestone and quartz within a mid-brown silty clay matrix. Seals lower		0.45m+				



	geological layer 603.			
Comments: No archaeology encountered				

	Dimensions :	25m by 1.8m by 0.38m	Gro	und		
Trench 7	Centre line Coordinates (NGR):	348790.08, 117486.34 348815.38, 117491.07	surface level:		57.10m aOD	
Context	Category	Description		Dep	oth (bgl)	
701	Plough-soil	Mid brown sandy silt clay with <i>c</i> . 5% limestone inclusions 0.03m. heavily bioturbated		0-0.20m		
702	Subsoil	Orange brown sandy silty clay with c. 10% limestone inclusions up to 0.04m		0.20	0-0.32m	
703	Natural	Natural limestone bedrock, weathered and fractured, comprises c.0.20m blocks of limestone and quartz within a mid-brown silty clay matrix., contains bands of fine silty clay.		0.	.32m+	
Comments:	Comments: No archaeology encountered					

Dimensions :		30m by 1.8m by 0.44m	Grou	ınd	
Trench 8	Centre line Coordinates (NGR):	348828.47, 117507.52 348829.76, 117478.65	surface 5/.		57.50m aOD
Context	Category	Description	Description		th (bgl)
801	Plough-soil	Mid brown sandy silt clay with <i>c</i> . 5% limestone inclusions 0.03m. heavily bioturbated		0-0.20m	
802	Subsoil	Orange brown sandy silty clay with <i>c</i> . 10% limestone inclusions up to 0.04m		0.20	0-0.33m
803	Natural	Natural limestone bedrock, weathered and fractured, comprises c. 0.20m blocks of limestone and quartz within a mid-brown silty clay matrix., contains bands of fine silty clay. 0.33m+			33m+

	Dimensions :	30m by 1.8m by 0.38m	Groun	Ч		
Trench 9 Centre line Coordinates (NGR):		348812.17, 117518.40 348839.86, 117518.14			57.42m aOD	
Context	Category	Description		Dep	th (bgl)	
901	Plough-soil	Mid brown sandy silt clay with c. 5% limestone inclusions 0.03m. heavily bioturbated		0-	0.20m	
902	Subsoil	Orange brown sandy silty clay with c 10% limestone			0-0.30m	
903	Natural	Natural limestone bedrock, weathered and fractured, comprises c.0.20m blocks of limestone and quartz within a mid-brown silty clay matrix., contains bands of fine silty clay.			0.30m+	
904	Cut of roughly north–south aligned ditch recorded as 0.95m wide and 0.09m deep with shallow concave sides and slightly concave base. Contains single		0.09	∂m deep		
905	Fill	Single fill of 904, mid orange brown silty slightly sandy clay. 0.09m thic			9m thick	
Comments: f	ive modern ditches of	bserved.	•			



APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: wessexar1-212800

Project details

Project name Montacute Road, East Stoke

Short description of

the project

Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Arc Homes (hereafter the 'Client') to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Montacute Road, East Stoke, near Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Somerset centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 348800 117475. The evaluation took place between the 26th and 27th May 2015. Outline planning permission (planning ref. 13/03622/FUL) was granted for the construction of 18 dwellings and associated works including a new vehicular access, parking, open space and landscaping by South Somerset District Council (SSDC). South West Heritage Trust (SWHT), archaeological advisors to SSDC, requested that a programme of archaeological evaluation be undertaken in order to supply sufficient information regarding potential buried archaeological remains. A total of six trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development. No archaeological features were revealed, although several modern ditches associated with a fruit farm on the site were recorded.

Project dates Start: 26-05-2015 End: 27-05-2015

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference

codes

109360 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference

codes

13/03622/FUL - Planning Application No.

Any associated project reference

codes

TTNCM 38/2015 - Museum accession ID

Any associated project reference

codes

32838 - HER event no.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Cultivated Land 1 - Minimal cultivation

NONE None Monument type

Significant Finds NONE None

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"

Development type Housing estate

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the After full determination (eg. As a condition)



planning process

Project location

Country England

Site location SOMERSET SOUTH SOMERSET STOKE SUB HAMDON Montacute Road, East Stoke,

near Stoke-sub-Hamdeon, Somerset

Postcode TA14 6UG

Study area 1.25 Hectares

Site coordinates ST 348787 117451 50.9009514647 -2.92618249681 50 54 03 N 002 55 34 W Point

Lat/Long Datum Unknown

Height OD / Depth Min: 55.54m Max: 57.72m

Project creators

Name of Organisation

Wessex Archaeology

Project brief originator

Arc Homes

Project design originator

Wessex Archaeology

Project

director/manager

Gareth Chaffey

Project supervisor Steve

Steve Thompson

Type of sponsor/funding

sponsor/i body

Name of

sponsor/funding

body

Arc Homes

Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?

No

Digital Archive recipient

Taunton

Digital Archive ID

109360

Digital Contents

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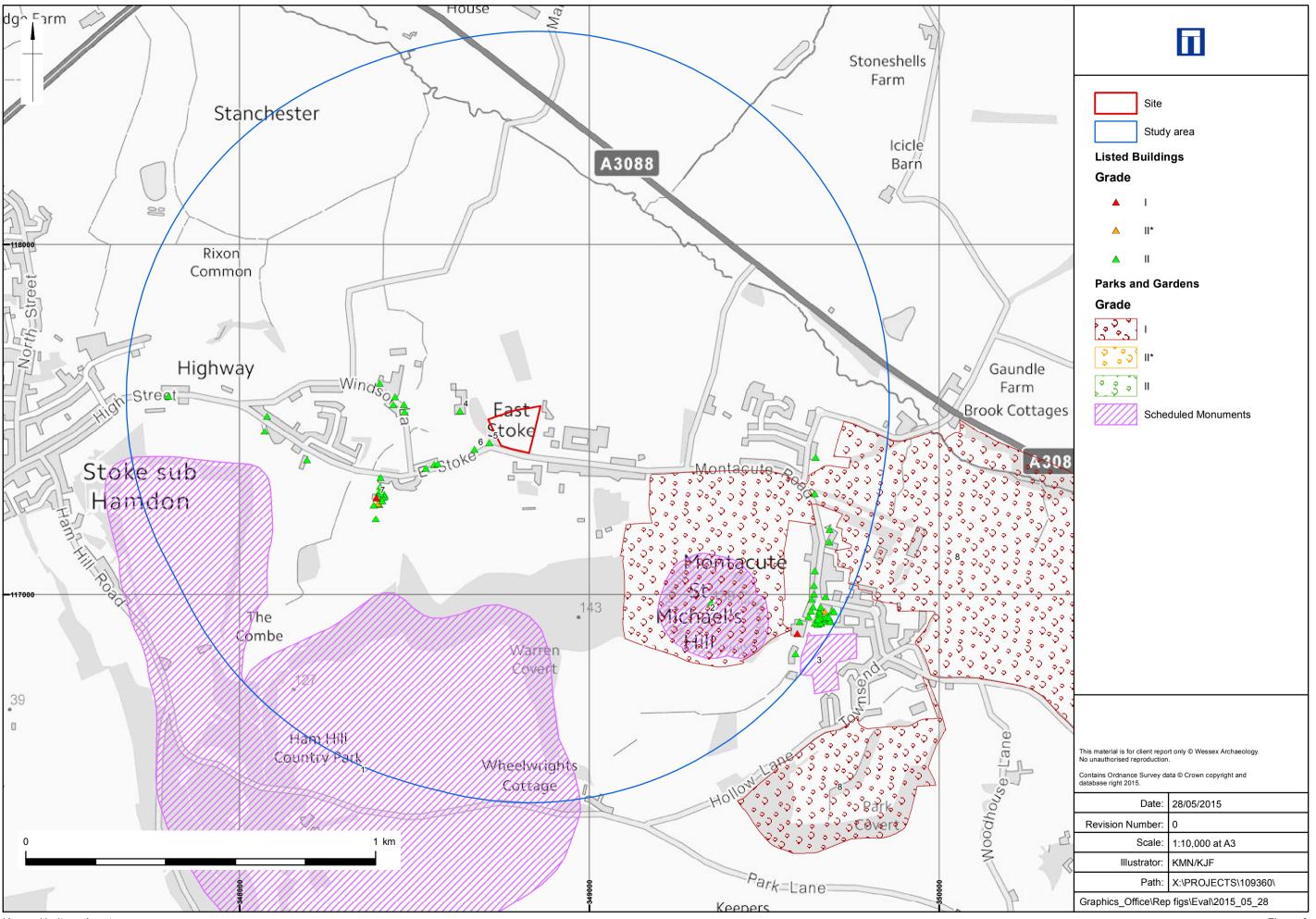
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Entered by Gareth Chaffey (g.chaffey@wessexarch.co.uk)

Entered on 3 June 2015



Site Location and Trenches



Known Heritage Assets



Plate 1: Trench 4 from the east (scale 2m, 1m)



Plate 2: South facing representative section of Trench 4 (scale 1m)



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Plate 3: Trench 5 from the east (scale 2m, 1m)



Plate 4: South facing representative section of Trench 5 (scale 1m)



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Plate 5: Trench 9 from the west (scale 2m, 1m)



Plate 6: North facing representative section of Trench 9 and modern ditch 904 (scale 1m)



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