



making sense of heritage

3000l Fermenter Process Train, Porton Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Planning Ref: 15/07630/FUL
Ref: 111930.03
June 2016



3000l Fermenter Process Train, Porton Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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June 2016

**Report Ref: 111930.03
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Quality Assurance

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3000I Fermenter Process Train, Porton Down, Wiltshire

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3000I Fermenter Process Train, Porton Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Porton Biopharma Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new 3000I fermenter process train facility at Porton Down, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 421560 137035.

The archaeological watching brief was required to discharge a condition attached to the planning application (Planning Application Ref. 15/07630/FUL) for the proposed development. The application area covers an area of approximately 1700 m² and comprises the demolition of a number of existing structures (750 m²) with levelling and landscaping of the surrounding area (960 m²).

The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of intrusive groundworks associated with the proposed development, including the reduction of the ground surface and landscaping at the eastern and western ends of the Site.

The proposed development is located in an area of high archaeological potential, with previous archaeological work at the Porton Down Estate placing the site within an important prehistoric and funerary landscape.

The watching brief revealed no evidence of archaeological features, deposits or finds, with all intrusive features restricted to modern drains and cable trenches. A large portion of the proposed development area occupies the location of a former building complex. Excavations in this area revealed that this part of the site had been subject to previous landscaping, associated with the construction of the earlier building complex. The degree of this landscaping was such that any archaeological remains are unlikely to have survived. The eastern and western extents of the site were subject to machine stripping, which revealed no evidence of earlier truncation, but did not expose any archaeological remains.

The watching brief was carried out intermittently between the 7th April and the 11th May 2016.



3000I Fermenter Process Train, Porton Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to acknowledge Jeff Pike of Porton Biopharma Ltd for commissioning the work. Particular thanks are due to Gareth Lloyd, Clive James, Tim Feeney and Nathaniel Bravery of Porton Biopharma Ltd for their help and assistance during the course of the project. We are also grateful to Clare King and Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger of Wiltshire County Archaeology Service who monitored the site on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

The watching brief was carried out by Phil Harding, Neil Fitzpatrick and Steve Thompson. Jon Sanigar compiled this report and the illustrations were prepared by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Ruth Panes.

3000I Fermenter Process Train, Porton Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Porton Biopharma Ltd (hereafter the 'Client') to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new 3000I fermenter process train facility at Porton Down, Wiltshire, centred on NGR 421560 137035 (hereafter the 'Site') (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 A planning application (Planning Application Ref. 15/07630/FUL) was made to Wiltshire Council for the proposed development which covers an area of approximately 1700 m² and comprises the demolition of a number of existing structures (750 m²) with levelling and landscaping of the surrounding area (960 m²) (**Figure 2**).

1.1.3 Following consultation with Clare King of Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service (WCAS), the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), an archaeological watching brief was recommended as an appropriate response to this application. The watching brief was to comprise the archaeological monitoring of all below-ground works on the Site.

1.1.4 The following recommendations were made:

Recommendation: Full condition (WL 26)

No development shall commence within the area indicated (proposed development site) until:

- *A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority;*
- *The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.*

REASON: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest.

1.1.5 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (WA 2016a) for the watching brief, detailing the methodologies and standards to be employed in order to undertake the watching brief, was issued to and approved by WCAS in February 2016.

1.1.6 This document sets out the results of the archaeological watching brief which took place between the 7th April and the 11th May 2016.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site at Porton Down lies immediately to the east of Idmiston and around 2 km to the north-east of the village of Porton. The land slopes down to the south-west, falling from a height of approximately 106 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 105 m aOD (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 The Site is bordered to the east and west by existing structures. To the north-west and south-east are arable fields, while to the north-east land is currently under pasture, and to the south-west is a sports field.
- 1.2.3 The British Geological Survey map for the area (1:50,000 Solid and Drift Series, sheet 298) indicates that the underlying geology of the Site consists of Upper Chalk. Alluvial deposits and Valley Gravel associated with the River Bourne lie a short distance to the north and west.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 A number of nationally important designated assets, defined as ten Scheduled Monuments and a Listed Building, are located within the Site's immediate environs (**Figure 1**).
- 2.1.2 Within the last eight years several archaeological investigations have been undertaken at Porton Down, as detailed in a desk-based assessment (DBA) compiled by WA (WA 2015a). These include geophysical survey, field evaluation and archaeological excavation; a summary of the findings is presented below. Information held with the Wiltshire and Swindon Historical Environment Record (WSHER) and the National Heritage List for England was also accessed for the DBA. In addition to this, an evaluation and a watching brief were undertaken in 2015 (WA 2015b) and a watching brief in 2016 (WA 2016b), the results of which are also included below (**Figure 1**).

2.2 Designated sites

- 2.2.1 A total of ten Scheduled Monuments lie within the Site's immediate environs (**Figure 1**). These statutorily protected monuments include several groups of Bronze Age barrows (burial mounds) to the north of the Site (WA 06, 07, and 08), and to the east (WA 09 and 10). Further groups of barrows lie to the south-east of the Site (WA 11, the monument listing for which includes a Bronze Age enclosure) and to the south and south-west (WA 02, 03, 04 and 05).
- 2.2.2 In addition, there are a further five unscheduled probable barrows (WA 50, 51, 52, 55 and 56) to the north of the Site.
- 2.2.3 One Grade II Listed Building (WA1) lies to the west of the Site. The building (Building 106) represents part of the former Chemical Defence Establishment.
- 2.2.4 Immediately north-west of the Site is a possible field system (WA 41 and 49), while to the south a number of crop marks are visible on aerial photographs, representing undated enclosures and field systems (WA 46, 38 and 40).

2.3 Recent investigations in the area

Geophysical survey 2008

- 2.3.1 A magnetometer survey was undertaken to the south of the Site (Archaeological Surveys Ltd 2008), the results of which identified a number of anomalies of likely archaeological origin within the site's boundaries. It is not proposed to describe the geophysical survey findings further here, as the site was subsequently subject to targeted trial trench evaluation based upon these results.

Archaeological field evaluation 2009

- 2.3.2 A total of 45 evaluation trenches were machine-excavated across the area subject to geological survey in 2008 (WA 2009). The evaluation established that archaeological features comprising a segmented possible enclosure ditch, a crouched inhumation burial, a segmented ring-ditch, a small 'C' shaped enclosure and part of a 'Wessex Linear' ditch were present, though dating evidence was very limited. Relatively few other archaeological features were identified and the evaluation demonstrated that the geophysical survey (of 2008) had been very accurate in indicating the distribution, size and general nature of features present.

Archaeological watching brief 2009

- 2.3.3 An investigation undertaken by Southampton Archaeology Unit (Garner, Russel and Thompson, 2009), immediately to the west of the Site, revealed a possible Late Neolithic ditch 0.8 m wide and 0.5 m deep containing four flint flakes.

Archaeological excavation 2011

- 2.3.4 An archaeological excavation (WA 2012; Andrews and Thompson forthcoming) was undertaken which targeted the results of the 2009 WA evaluation. This partially revealed an Early Bronze Age funerary monument which comprised an unusually complex sequence of eight or more burials, all females or young children, surrounded by a segmented ring-ditch. In the centre was a large grave which contained the disturbed remains of an adult female, accompanied by a Beaker, which had probably been placed within a timber chamber and later revisited on one or more occasions. Two burials were accompanied by a Food Vessel and a miniature Collared Urn respectively, others were unaccompanied and there was a double cremation burial within an inverted Collared Urn. A Middle Bronze Age boundary ditch and a Late Bronze Age 'Wessex Linear' ditch reflected later prehistoric land divisions probably related to stock control.

Archaeological excavation 2014

- 2.3.5 An archaeological excavation (WA 2014; Andrews and Thompson forthcoming) was targeted on the remaining portion of the segmented ring-ditch investigated in 2011 and an enigmatic 'C'-shaped enclosure (revealed in the geophysics), as well as recording more of the Middle Bronze Age field system. The segmented ring-ditch measured 15 m in diameter and was formed from nine separate ditch segments which surrounded two further graves containing the remains of three individuals; a single infant cremation within an inverted Collared Urn and a neonate inhumation sealed by cremated adult remains. An antler implement was recovered from the base of the segmented ring-ditch and radiocarbon dated to the Early Beaker period.
- 2.3.6 The 'C'-shaped enclosure was approximately 13 m long by 8.5 m wide, with a 12 m wide 'entrance' to the north. Although the date and function of the enclosure remains unclear, an association with the Early Bronze Age complex to the west is likely. In the Middle-Late Bronze Age the 'C'-shaped enclosure was augmented with the addition of a small gully, which narrowed the entrance perhaps indicating an alternative use, possibly an animal

corral associated with a probable watering hole or dew pond located to the south-west. Further land divisions were revealed in the watching brief indicating that the remains within the site formed part of a much wider complex of fields and paddocks established c. 1100-700BC.

Archaeological watching brief and evaluation 2015

- 2.3.7 Two separate archaeological investigations (WA 2015b) were undertaken on land at Porton Down: an archaeological evaluation comprising the excavation of 42 trenches on former sport pitches proposed for redevelopment (Zone 2) immediately south of the Site, and an archaeological watching brief monitoring groundwork associated with redevelopment (Zone 3) to the west of the Site.
- 2.3.8 Despite the known archaeological potential, identified through a preceding DBA, the Zone 2 archaeological evaluation only identified a very low density of features. The majority of these features were of modern date and appear to relate to the earlier history of the Porton Down military establishment, although features of uncertain date were also uncovered, including a substantial ditch in the far west of the Site as well as a smaller possible ditch and two postholes. The large undated ditch may potentially be associated with the later prehistoric divisions of the landscape known in the Porton Down area, possibly a later Bronze Age 'Wessex linear' ditch.
- 2.3.9 The location of sub-surface remains of a demolished railway in the south of Zone 2 correspond to the line of a 'light railway' marked on Ordnance Survey (OS) maps from 1925–1961, although by 1961 it is labelled as 'disused'. In the west of Zone 2, the limited remains of a modern building (represented by its footings) approximately correspond to the location of a small building associated with the military establishment shown on OS maps from 1961 and 1977.
- 2.3.10 The Zone 3 archaeological watching brief uncovered a small number of more significant features dating to the Bronze Age. These comprised a slightly sinuous ditch that could not be precisely dated, although it was earlier than a radiocarbon-dated Middle Bronze Age inhumation burial. A short distance to the east of this landscape division, one small pit and a larger pit were both also dated to the Bronze Age and contained a limited range of artefacts indicative of occupation or settlement within the area. A single posthole identified in close proximity to the other remains was of uncertain date.

Archaeological watching brief 2016

- 2.3.11 A watching brief was carried out on three separate areas on the Porton Down Estate. A single a Late Neolithic pit containing worked flint was the only feature identified, in the northern end of the watching brief area 150 m south-east of the present Site.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 With due regard to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (CIfA 2014a), the project aims were:
- *To preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits uncovered and to establish the extent (where possible), date, character, relationship, condition and significance of surviving archaeological features, artefacts and deposits within the area to be impacted by construction work;*

- *To inform discussions on the final extent and scope of any required archaeological mitigation where significant archaeological remains or deposits were identified;*
- *To place any identified archaeological remains within their context.*

3.1.2 The watching brief therefore focused on two critical objectives:

- *Identification, recording, and if feasible, rapid excavation/ recovery of archaeological remains exposed; and*
- *Recording a summary of the stratigraphic sequence encountered – this data would inform any further consideration of appropriate mitigation measures.*

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 The fieldwork adhered to the methodologies and standards detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (WA 2016a) for the watching brief.

3.2.2 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the ClfA *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a).

3.2.3 The fieldwork comprised the monitoring of all intrusive groundworks associated with the proposed development. This included the reduction of the ground surface and landscaping in an area on the north-western side of the Site and in an area towards the south-eastern side (**Figure 2**).

3.2.4 The reduction of the ground surface in the two areas involved the removal of overlying deposits, mainly topsoil and subsoil, using a mechanical excavator. The machine was fitted with a toothless, ditching bucket and the overlying deposits were removed to sufficiently expose the upper surface of the chalk geology, the level at which archaeological remains would be expected, if present.

3.2.5 The watching brief was undertaken on the 7th and 8th April, the 28th and 29th April and the 11th May 2016.

3.3 Recording

3.3.1 All deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system.

3.3.2 A limited photographic record was made using digital photography. For security reasons, only images checked and permitted by the Client were recorded. Where photography was not possible, notes and survey data were collected.

3.3.3 A unique WA project code **111930** was allocated to the work and used on all records.

3.4 Health and safety

3.4.1 Health and safety considerations were of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practices overrode archaeological considerations at all times.

3.4.2 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.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The watching brief (**Figure 2**) revealed no archaeological remains or features.
- 4.1.2 In the north-western part of the Site, the area subject to topsoil stripping/ground reduction revealed a soil sequence which comprised topsoil, subsoil and natural chalk (**Figure 2**).
- 4.2.1 In the north-eastern part, an east facing section was recorded and photographed at the location of the proposed new water tank, providing an example of the soil sequence in this area (**Figure 2; Plate 1**). The topsoil and turf a maximum depth of 0m to 0.3m thick, overlying a thin layer of redeposited chalk 0.06m thick. This in turn overlays subsoil a maximum of 0.14m thick, the natural chalk at 0.5m+ below ground level.
- 4.1.3 In both stripped areas the upper surface of the chalk natural was at a height of 105.75m aOD and contained periglacial pockets and solution features (**Plate 2**).
- 4.1.4 Both stripped areas contained modern services and utilities. The north-western stripped area contained cable trenches and drains and a former gas pipe trench and there were more services concentrated towards the southern extent of the Site, where former buildings were present. The south-eastern area contained drainage trenches and two manhole covers. Both areas were subject to service location prior to machine stripping.
- 4.1.5 The monitoring revealed that a large portion of the Site had been subject to landscaping in the past. The landscaping was centred on the central and southern parts of the Site where existing and recently demolished structures are located (**Figure 2**). The topography of the Site, prior to groundworks commencing in this former development area was between 0.5 and 1 m lower in ground level than the existing surrounding ground surface. Excavations revealed that this central and southern area had been subject to a degree of truncation from above, which most likely would have removed any surviving archaeological remains. It was evident from the monitoring, that the former landscaping had removed the upper surface of the chalk natural at the anticipated level in which archaeological remains would be expected. This truncation most likely occurred during the construction of the former building complex, when the Site was levelled and landscaped for development.
- 4.1.6 Excavations viewed within the area subject to truncation revealed modern deposits comprising of the rubble and building debris, no natural geology was encountered in these areas.

5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

- 5.1.1 No artefacts were recorded during the course of the watching brief.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 6.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was present within the Site.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 The watching brief did not identify any archaeological features, deposits or finds, despite the location of the Site within an area of high archaeological potential. The results of the fieldwork confirmed that a large portion of the Site has been levelled and landscaped in the past, most likely when the Site was first developed and the present buildings

constructed. In the areas where there was no evidence of truncation, no archaeological remains were identified.

8 STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

- 8.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the evaluation will be deposited with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, though it should be noted that this is currently a closed repository. The project archive will therefore be retained at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury until such time as this situation can be resolved.

8.2 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 appropriate Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014b; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 8.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the project code 111930 and a full index will be prepared.
- 8.2.3 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 Wiltshire HER. A copy of the OASIS entry has been included in this report (**Appendix 1**).

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.

8.4 Copyright

- 8.4.1 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 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 to the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003.

8.5 Security copy

- 8.5.1 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.

9 REFERENCES

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10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix 1: OASIS form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-253275

Project details

Project name	3000I Fermenter Process Train, Porton Down, Wiltshire
Short description of the project	<p>Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Porton Biopharma Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new 3000I fermenter process train facility at Porton Down, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 421560 137035. The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of intrusive groundworks associated with the proposed development, including the reduction of the ground surface and landscaping at the eastern and western ends of the Site. The proposed development is located in an area of high archaeological potential, with previous archaeological work at the Porton Down Estate placing the site within an important prehistoric and funerary landscape. The watching brief revealed no evidence of archaeological features, deposits or finds, with all intrusive features restricted to modern drains and cable trenches. A large portion of the proposed development area occupies the location of a former building complex. Excavations in this area revealed that this part of the site had been subject to previous landscaping, associated with the construction of the earlier building complex. The degree of this landscaping was such that any archaeological remains are unlikely to have survived. The eastern and western extents of the site were subject to machine stripping, which revealed no evidence of earlier truncation, but did not expose any archaeological remains.</p>
Project dates	Start: 07-04-2016 End: 11-05-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	111930 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WILTSHIRE SALISBURY IDMISTON Porton Down
Postcode	SP4 0JG
Study area	1700 Square metres



Site coordinates SU 21560 37035 51.131658403045 -1.691841707368 51 07 53 N 001 41 30 W
Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 105m Max: 106m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology

Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator Wessex Archaeology

Project director/manager Ruth Panes

Project supervisor Steve Thompson and Neil Fitzpatrick

Project supervisor Phil Harding

Type of sponsor/funding body Landowner

Name of sponsor/funding body Porton Biopharma Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Diary", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Photograph", "Report", "Survey", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

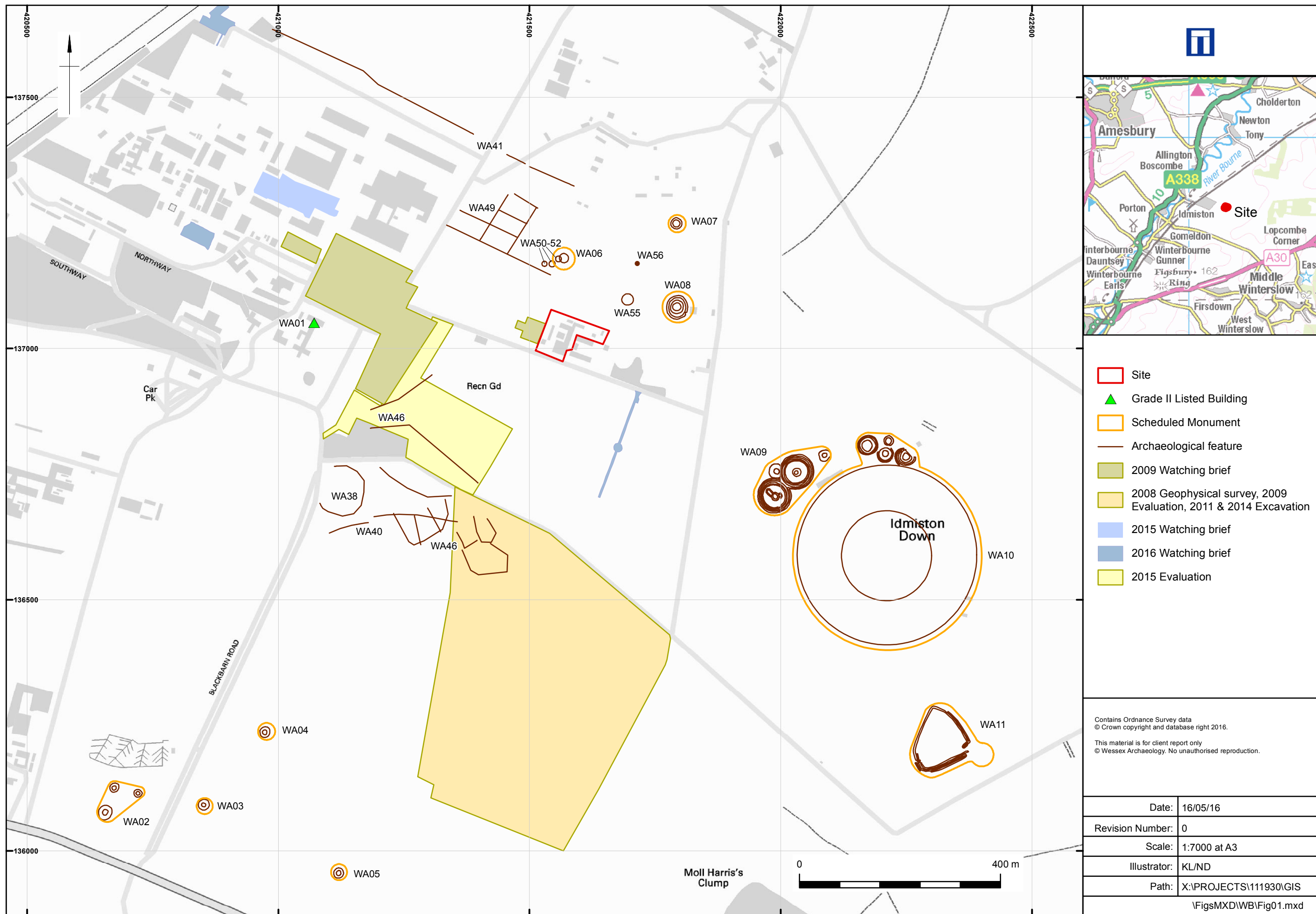
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Location of Site, adjacent archaeological records and designated heritage assets

Figure 1

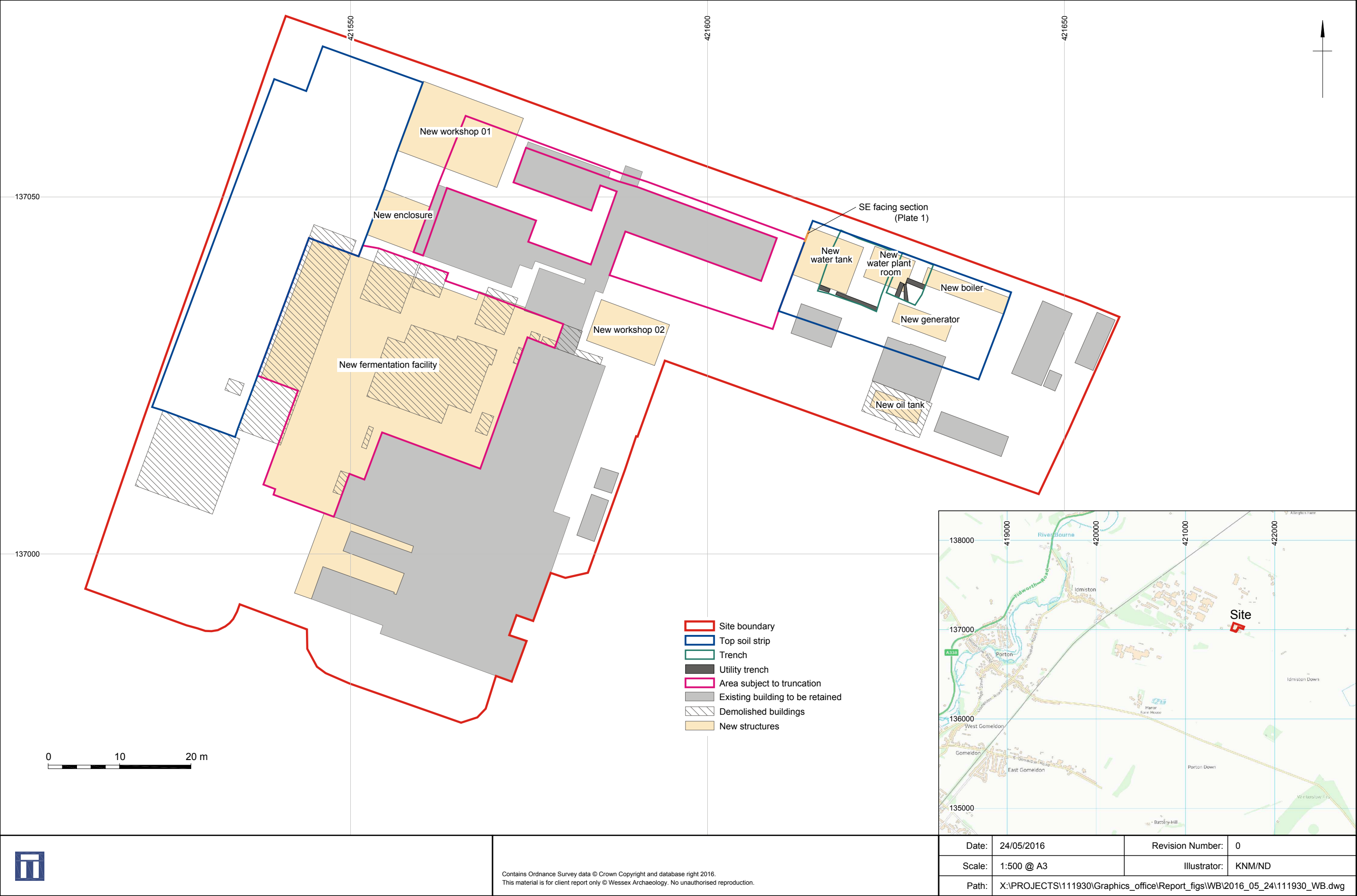





Plate 1: South-east facing section of the eastern stripped area for the new water tank



Plate 2: Eastern stripped area, view from the south-east

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	Scale:	N/A	Illustrator: ND
	Path:	X:\PROJECTS\111930\Graphics_office\Report_figs\WB\2016_05_16\111930_Plates.cdr	



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