



**Upper Meadowley Farm, Upton Cressett
Shropshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Upper Meadowley Farm Upton Cressett, Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

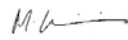


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Plate 6: East-facing representative section of Trench 3, looking west, 1 x 1m scale



Upper Meadowley Farm, Upton Cressett Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Indygen Utility Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a 10.71 MWp solar farm (Shropshire Council Planning Application: 14/03933/FUL) at Upper Meadowley Farm, Upton Cressett, to the west of Bridgnorth in Shropshire (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SO 66625 92790). This report presents the results of the archaeological watching brief.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by WA staff between Tuesday 7 February 2017 and Thursday 9 February 2017, and comprised the monitoring of excavation of a series of electrical cabling utilities trenches through previously undisturbed soils.

Stratigraphic contexts recorded in the electrical cabling utilities trenches across the Site represent a broadly homogeneous stratigraphic sequence, comprising a silty clayey loam pastoral turf topsoil, overlying a heavier, sandy silty clay subsoil. Post-medieval ceramic field drains were uncovered sporadically across the site, located at the horizon between subsoil and underlying natural substratum.

No deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified during the watching brief.



Upper Meadowley Farm, Upton Cressett Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology (WA) would like to thank Indygen Utility Ltd for commissioning the archaeological watching brief and Hugh Hannaford, Senior Archaeological Advisor, Shropshire Council (SC), for his advice.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Liam JS Powell. The report was written and compiled by Liam JS Powell. Illustrations have been prepared by Karen Nichols. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Matt Williams.



Upper Meadowley Farm, Upton Cressett Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Indygen Utility Ltd, hereafter 'the Client' to carry out an archaeological watching brief at Upper Meadowley Farm, Upton Cressett, to the west of Bridgnorth in Shropshire (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SO 66625 92790), hereafter 'the Site' (Figure 1).

1.1.2 The Site is subject to the construction of a solar farm (Shropshire Council Planning Application: 14/03933/FUL), for which outline planning permission for the construction of the solar farm has been granted subject to conditions. Proposed plans include erection of solar panels, inverter buildings, substations, CCTV cameras, and associated underground cabling.

1.1.3 The following condition was attached to the planning permission:

Condition 4:

No development approved by this permission shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI). This written scheme shall be approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works.

Reason:

The development site is known to have archaeological interest, and this information is required prior to commencement to provide protection of such interest. (Shropshire Council South Planning Committee 2015)

1.1.4 The WSI for the watching brief was produced by Wessex Archaeology (2016) and approved by Shropshire Council (SC). The archaeological watching brief formed a part of an archaeological mitigation of the development of Site, along with a geophysical survey conducted by Wardell Armstong (2014b). This report presents the results of the watching brief, and will inform any further requirements for additional archaeological mitigation if deemed necessary by Shropshire Council.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The Site is located on the north side of the settlement of Meadowley, about 4.5km west of Bridgnorth. It is bounded to the west, north and east by open fields and to the south by an unnamed single track road (OS NGR SO 66625 92790).

- 1.2.2 The Site is on the gentle south east slope of Meadowley Hill; it slopes down from 215m AOD in the north to 200m AOD in the south. To the north and east the land drops steeply to the Mor Brook river valley. The river is approximately 1km from the site.
- 1.2.3 Beyond the Mor Brook, around 1.1km to the north of the Site, is the town of Morville and the site of Morville Priory . The Medieval village of Upton Cressett is 470m to the west.
- 1.2.4 The underlying geology of the Site comprises sedimentary deposits of the St Maughan's Formation; Argillaceous Rocks with Sandstone interbedded, with no recorded superficial deposits (BGS 2017).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological background to the Site is summarised from the written *Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Assessment* prepared on behalf of the Client by Wardell Armstrong (2014a).

2.2 Prehistoric (4000 BC–AD 43)

- 2.2.1 Undated earthworks, which are morphologically similar to Neolithic/Bronze Age burial features, are present on the Mor Brook river valley; a Neolithic arrow head was found on higher ground at Upton Cressett suggesting prehistoric hunting activity.

2.3 Romano-British (AD 43–410)

- 2.3.1 The Greensforge to Central Wales Roman road runs east-west approximately 1km north of the site. Roman artefacts, indicating settlement activity, have also been found at Upton Cressett.

2.4 Saxon and medieval (AD 410–1540)

- 2.4.1 A possible late Saxon fishpond and a late Saxon/Medieval college are recorded at Morville Priory. Morville was an important settlement and Priory during the Medieval period; Upton Cressett also has Medieval origins. Extant field patterns in the vicinity of the Site suggest there were extensive open field systems during the Medieval period which have been subsequently modified.
- 2.4.2 The historic boundary between the medieval parishes of Morville and Upton Cressett follows the line of an extant hedgerow which delimits the westernmost field of the Site.

2.5 Post-medieval and modern (AD 1540–present day)

- 2.5.1 The farmhouse at Upper Meadowley Farm dates to the 17th century. Historic maps show the Site as fields from the 19th century; several field boundaries have been removed.

2.6 Previous archaeological work

- 2.6.1 A previous geophysical survey (Wardell Armstrong 2014b) suggests a large east-west aligned ditch in the north of the Site (Area 1 of geophysical survey). The survey also identified a curved enclosure with various subdivisions immediately east of the Site; the enclosure is depicted on the 1840 Tithe map although the subdivisions are not shown. Both of these features were outside of the area of groundworks monitored during this watching brief. The geophysical survey did not indicate any archaeological features within the area to be monitored during groundworks.



3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Project aim

3.1.1 With due regard to the ClfA *Standard and guidance: archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), the principle aim of an archaeological watching brief is to record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices, and in compliance with the *Code of conduct* and other relevant by-laws of ClfA.

3.2 Project objectives

3.2.1 In furtherance of the project aim, the following objectives were defined:

- *to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works, including;*
 - *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 any remains;*
 - *to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains; and*
 - *to determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;*
- *to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and*
- *to prepare a report on the results of the watching brief.*

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Watching brief

4.1.1 A detailed description of the archaeological watching brief methodology is set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WA 2016).

4.1.2 All works were carried out in accordance with the ClfA's *Standard and guidance: archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), except where superseded by statements made below, in concurrence with requirements set out by Hugh Hannaford, (SC).

4.1.3 The mechanical excavation, through previously undisturbed soils, of electrical cabling utilities trenches associated with the erection of solar panels across the site was monitored by an appropriately experienced WA archaeologist. Topsoil and overburden was removed using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.70 m or 0.90 m wide, toothed grading bucket, as no toothless bucket was available. Layers were removed in discrete 0.10–0.20 m spits, and ceased at the required construction levels. The watching brief was maintained throughout initial excavations and was concluded when, in consultation with Hugh Hannaford (SC), it was clear that reasonable potential for archaeological remains to be exposed had been exhausted. This was confirmed by email with Hugh Hannaford (SC)

on 09/02/2017. The extent of monitored works is indicated on amended Site engineering plans (Figure 1).

4.2 Recording

- 4.2.1 Recording of exposed deposits was undertaken using WA's *pro forma* recording sheets, with all features and deposits being assigned a unique context number. Representative soil profile sections were located on the site plan.
- 4.2.2 A complete drawn record of the archaeological data has been compiled. This includes sketch plans of all trenches, and representative sample sections drawn to 1:10 scale. Sketch plans and representative sample sections will be annotated with OS NGR locations, and Ordnance Datum (OD) heights.
- 4.2.3 A full photographic record of the fieldwork was made using a Pentax K50 digital camera with a 16-megapixel image sensor. The photographic record illustrated the general context of works on site, exposed deposits, and general views of the Site as a whole.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The following section provides a summary of the information held in the Site archive. Detailed descriptions of the individual contexts can be found in the Context Tables (Appendix 1).

5.2 Summary

- 5.2.1 Stratigraphic contexts recorded in the electrical cabling utilities trenches across the Site represent a broadly homogeneous stratigraphic sequence, comprising a silty clayey loam pastoral turf topsoil, overlying a heavier, sandy silty clay subsoil, including patches of degraded sandstone and gravels. Post-medieval ceramic field drains were uncovered sporadically across the site, located at the horizon between subsoil and underlying geological deposits (St Maughan's Formation).
- 5.2.2 To best facilitate a *pro forma* recording process, the monitored electrical cabling utilities trenches have been treated as three 'Trenches' (Figure 1).

Groundworks at the north end of the site (Figure 1) were completed and backfilled prior to attendance by WA staff at the Site, and the ground surface was significantly disturbed by on site traffic. Backfill and disturbed material was visually examined. No evidence of disturbance of archaeological material was identified.

5.3 Trench 1

- 5.3.1 Trench 1 comprised a main 0.90 m wide electrical cabling utilities trench, oriented north to south across the interior of the Site, and two main arms branching west (Figure 1); these were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.85m. Various smaller cabling trenches, associated with solar panel arrays, were also excavated in the area to the west. These were monitored intermittently during the works. The general area of these smaller trenches is shown as the pale blue area in Figure 1.
- 5.3.2 A mid-grey-brown, silty clayey loam, modern pastoral turf topsoil (101), measuring 0.30 m thick, and containing occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.01 m, directly overlay a mid-brown sandy silty clay (102), typically measuring 0.40 m thick, and containing occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.02 m. The natural substratum comprising mid-



red-brown, stiff, slightly sandy clay, with moderate degraded sandstone content < 0.02 m (St Maughan's Formation 103), was typically revealed at a depth of 0.70 m below ground level (bgl).

- 5.3.3 A number of modern ceramic drain pipes were uncovered at the lower horizon of subsoil 102 (~ 0.70 m bgl). No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified.

5.4 Trench 2

- 5.4.1 Trench 2 comprised a single, 0.70 m wide, length of electrical cabling utilities trenching along the southern edge of the Site, terminating at the planned site of an electrical substation (Figure 1), excavated to a maximum depth of 1.00 m.

- 5.4.2 As in Trench 1, a mid-grey-brown, silty clayey loam, modern pastoral turf topsoil (201), measuring 0.30 m thick, and containing occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.01 m, directly overlay a mid-brown sandy silty clay (202) with yellow variations in hue, typically measuring 0.40 m thick, and containing occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.02 m, degraded sandstone, and occasional light yellow-grey clay patches. The natural substratum comprising mid-red-brown, stiff, slightly sandy clay, with moderate, patchy, light yellow-grey, fully degraded sandstone content (St Maughan's Formation 203), was typically revealed at a depth of 0.70 m bgl.

- 5.4.3 A number of modern ceramic drain pipes were uncovered at the lower horizon of subsoil 102 (~ 0.70 m bgl). No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified.

5.5 Trench 3

- 5.5.1 Trench 3 comprised a single, 0.70 m wide, length of electrical cabling utilities trenching along the eastern edge of the Site (Figure 1), excavated to a maximum depth of 1.00 m.

- 5.5.2 A mid-grey-brown, silty clayey loam, modern pastoral turf topsoil (301), measuring 0.30 m thick, and containing occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.01 m, directly overlay a mid-brown sandy silty clay (302) with yellow variations in hue, typically measuring 0.30 m thick, and containing occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.02 m, degraded sandstone, and occasional light yellow-grey clay patches and mid-yellow sandy gravel inclusions. The natural substratum comprising mid-red-brown, stiff, slightly sandy clay, with moderate, patchy, light yellow-grey, fully degraded sandstone content, and occasional mid-yellow sandy gravel and banding and angular to sub-angular, medium-hard, weathered, interbedded sandstone outcropping (St Maughan's Formation 203), was typically revealed at a depth of 0.60 m bgl.

- 5.5.3 A number of modern ceramic drain pipes were uncovered at the lower horizon of subsoil 102 (~ 0.60 m bgl). No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified.

6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Summary

- 6.1.1 No artefacts were recovered.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Summary

- 7.1.1 No deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified during monitoring of the groundworks or examination of disturbed ground.

8 STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

8.1.1 Prior to deposition with Shropshire Museum, the archive will be temporarily stored at the WA Bristol office under project code **115440**. All elements of the site archive will be marked with an accession number issued by Shropshire Museum.

8.2 Preparation of archive

8.2.1 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 Shropshire Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014b; Brown 2011; ADS 2013). Two copies of the archive report will be deposited with the museum. A copy of the report and the surveyed spatial digital data (.dxf or shapefile format) relating to the archaeological findings will be deposited with Shropshire Museum.

8.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the unique Wessex Archaeology Site code **115440**, the Museum accession code (tbc), and a full index will be prepared. The archive comprises the following:

- One document case of paper records
- Forty-six photographic images

8.3 OASIS

8.3.1 An OASIS online record (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/>), has been initiated for the work and key fields in regard of the archaeological watching brief have been entered under OASIS ID **wessexar1-277528**. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

8.4 Copyright

8.4.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by WA Ltd under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. Warwick Museum Service, 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 (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

Archaeology Data Service [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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- 2014b, *Upper Meadowley Farm Bridgenorth, Shropshire. Geophysical Survey Report*. Client report, Wardell Armstrong
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10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix 1: Context tables

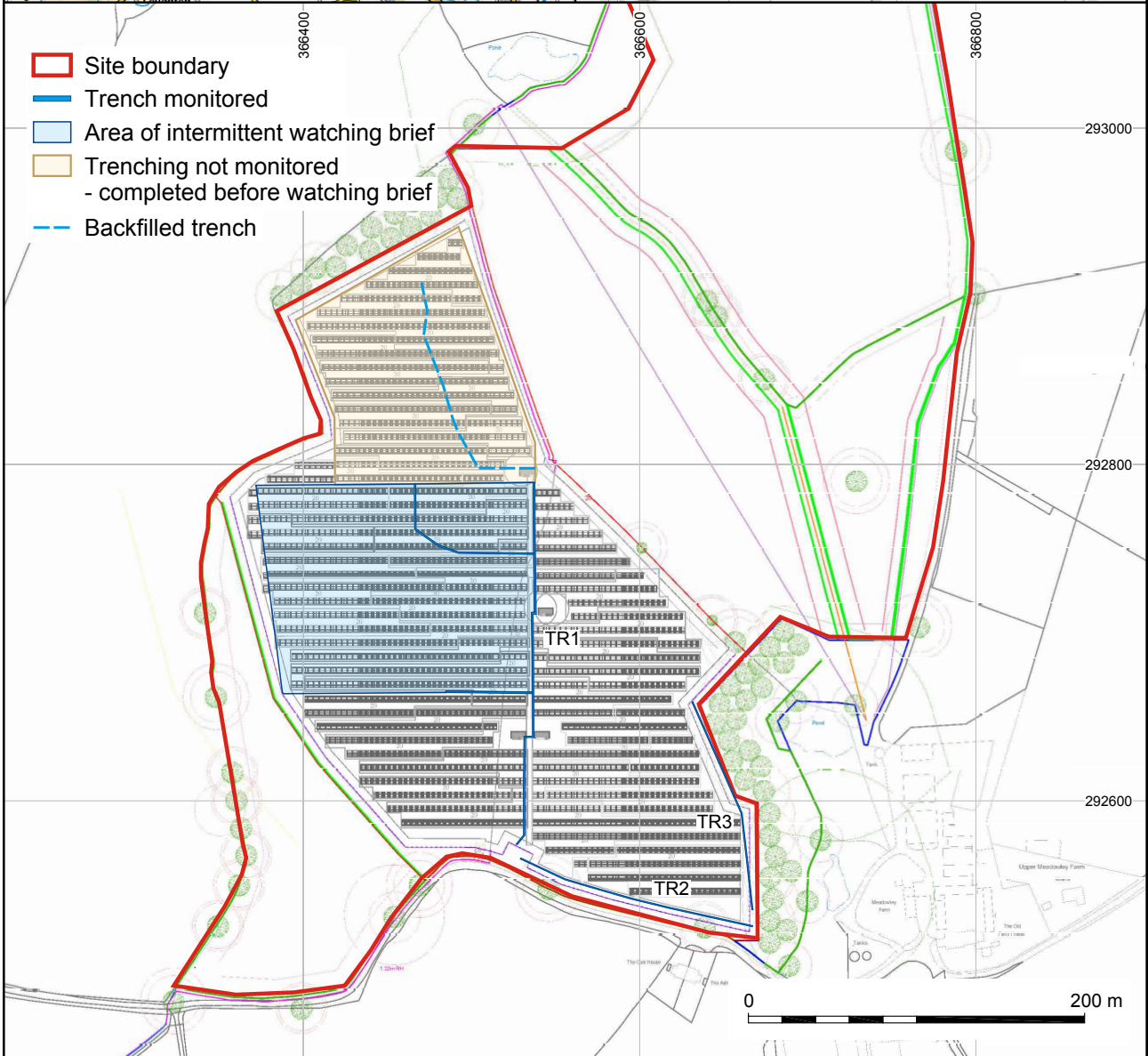
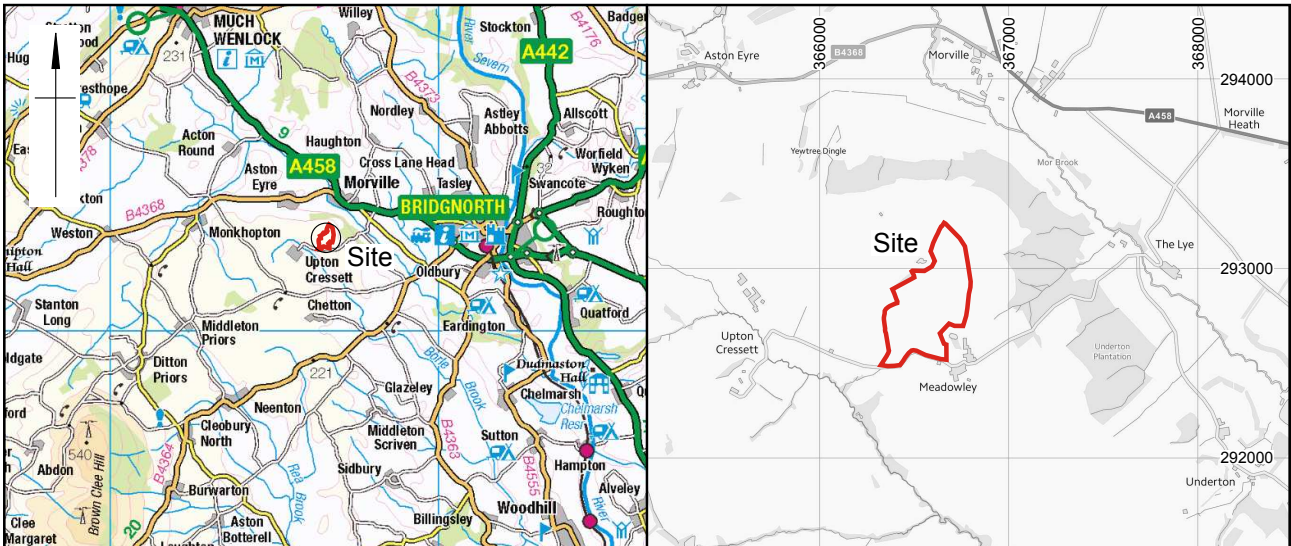
Trench 1			
Length: see Figure 1		Width: 0.90 m	Depth: 0.85 m
Context	Type	Description	Depth bgl.
101	Topsoil	Mid-grey-brown silty clayey loam. Occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.01 m. Frequent turf rootlets.	0.00–0.30 m
102	Subsoil	Mid-brown sandy silty clay, slight yellow hue. Occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.02 m and degraded sandstone. Modern ceramic field drains at lower horizon.	0.30–0.70 m
103	Natural substratum	Mid-red-brown slightly sandy clay. Occasional patchy light yellow and grey heavily degraded sandstone. St Maughan's Formation.	0.70 m +

Trench 2			
Length: see Figure 1		Width: 0.70 m	Depth: 1.00 m
Context	Type	Description	Depth bgl.



201	Topsoil	Mid-grey-brown silty clayey loam. Occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.01 m. Frequent turf rootlets.	0.00–0.30 m
202	Subsoil	Mid-brown sandy silty clay, slight yellow hue. Occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.02 m and degraded sandstone. Modern ceramic field drains at lower horizon.	0.30–0.70 m
203	Natural substratum	Mid-red-brown slightly sandy clay. Occasional patchy light yellow and grey heavily degraded sandstone. St Maughan's Formation.	0.70 m +

Trench 3			
Length: see Figure 1		Width: 0.70 m	Depth: 1.00 m
Context	Type	Description	Depth bgl.
301	Topsoil	Mid-grey-brown silty clayey loam. Occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.01 m. Frequent turf rootlets.	0.00–0.30 m
302	Subsoil	Mid-brown sandy silty clay, slight yellow hue. Occasional rounded sandstone fragments < 0.02 m and degraded sandstone. Modern ceramic field drains at lower horizon.	0.30–0.60 m
303	Natural substratum	Mid-red-brown slightly sandy clay. Occasional patchy light yellow and grey heavily degraded sandstone. St Maughan's Formation.	0.60 m



- ▭ Site boundary
- ▬ Trench monitored
- Area of intermittent watching brief
- Trenching not monitored - completed before watching brief
- Backfilled trench

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Site location and trench plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Overview of length of Trench 1, interior of Site, looking north-west, 1 x 1 m scale



Plate 2: South-west-facing representative section of Trench 1, looking north-east, 1 x 1m scale


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Plate 3: Overview of length of Trench 2, southern edge of Site, looking west, 1 x 1 m scale



Plate 4: South-facing representative section of Trench 2, looking north, 1 x 1m scale


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Plate 5: Overview of length of Trench 3, eastern edge of Site, looking north, no scale

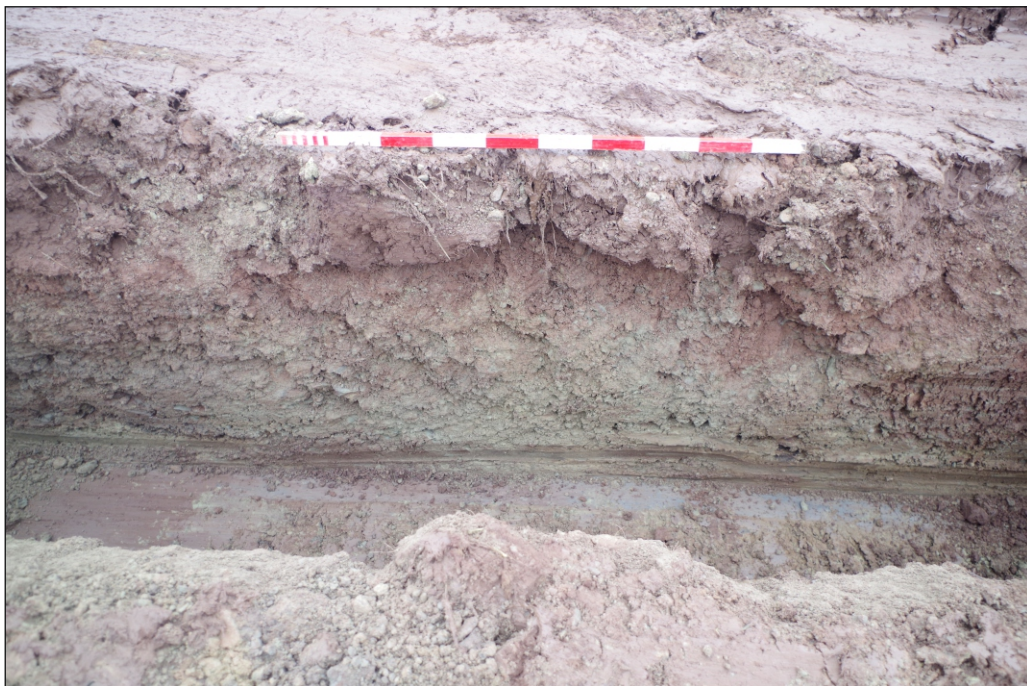



Plate 6: East-facing representative section of Trench 3, looking west, 1 x 1m scale

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