

**PRESTON'S FOLLY
HIGHGROVE ESTATE
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
REPORT**

Prepared on behalf of

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Figure 1: Site and trench location plan.

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by the Duchy of Cornwall, to undertake an archaeological field evaluation of land at Preston's Folly, Highgrove Estate, Gloucestershire, centred on NGR 390635 195265. The evaluation comprised eleven machine excavated trenches arranged evenly across the Site, representing a 4% sample of an area of a proposed limestone quarry. Whilst the fieldwork was underway, Wessex Archaeology was also able to monitor and record the excavation of a large geotechnical pit at the same location.

Although the Site was located in an area of known prehistoric activity, no significant archaeological features were identified in any of the trenches. The evaluation did, however, reveal the extent and depth of the underlying Oolite limestone outcrops, and illustrated the geological changes evident across the Site, particularly at its northern and eastern extents, where the limestone dropped away to be replaced by heavy clays.

Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by the Duchy of Cornwall, and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to the Duchy's Land Agent, Tom McCaw in this regard. The assistance of Gloucestershire County Council's Archaeological Officer, Charles Parry is also acknowledged.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Catherine McHarg, assisted by John Powell and Elina Brooks. This report was compiled by Catherine McHarg with illustrations by Linda Coleman. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Rob Armour Chelu.

**PRESTON'S FOLLY
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
REPORT**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Planning Background

1.1.1 Planning Consent was granted for the formation of a quarry for the extraction of building, walling and tile stone on the Site at Preston's Folly, Highgrove Estate (Application No. CT/8311). As a condition attached to the granting of the Consent, Cotswold District Council, on the advice of Gloucestershire County Council's Archaeological Officer, specified an archaeological field evaluation should be undertaken on the Site. This evaluation was undertaken following the submission to, and approval of a written Project Design to Gloucestershire County Council, outlining all methodologies to be employed.

1.2. The Site

1.2.1. The Site comprised part of a larger open field, which was, at the time of the evaluation, under stubble. It was bounded to the north and south by open fields (enclosed by hedgerows), to the west by woodland and to the east by a trackway (**Figure 1**).

1.3. Geology

1.3.1. The underlying geology of the Site comprised Lower Oolite limestone, known locally as Cotswold Brash.

1.3.2. The topography of the Site was generally flat, lying between approximately 126m and 130m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), rising gently to the north.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1 The Site was located approximately 2km to the north-east of Tetbury, Gloucestershire, in an area of undulating limestone uplands which forms part of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

2.1.2 A search of the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record (GSMR) highlighted a number of sites and findspots of predominantly prehistoric date within a 1km radius Study Area centred on the Site, although none within the boundaries of the Site itself.

2.2. Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record (GSMR)

- 2.2.1 A round barrow known locally as 'Warren Tump' lies to the north-east of the Site. The barrow is recorded as being reduced to a spread by ploughing, and is situated close to the Avening/Cherington parish boundary at an elevation of 137.16m aOD. The barrow has a diameter of 24.0m but is cut back to a depth of 4.0m on its western side by a drystone field wall. The maximum recorded height is 1.0m and there is no visible sign of a ditch.
- 2.2.2 A second barrow lies to the south-west of the Site, south-east of Broadfield Farm. This bowl barrow lies on the crest of a ridge and measures 27.0m in diameter and is 1.65m high. Surrounding the mound is a ditch, which, although no longer visible at ground level, survives as a buried feature approximately 3.0m wide. Part of the mound on the south-west side has been removed, thought to be the result of unrecorded excavation in the past. The barrow is a Scheduled Monument (no.32343).
- 2.2.3 Finds of Neolithic stone axe fragments are recorded at three locations to the east and south-east of the Site. Further finds of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age flint work are recorded to the north-east of Warren Tump, attesting to long-term occupation and/or exploitation of the area throughout the Prehistoric period.
- 2.2.4 Two further areas of archaeological interest are recorded to the south and south-east of the Site. Both comprise areas of cropmarks identified from aerial photographs, represented to the south-east by a series of undated enclosures and to the south by further linear features. Although undated, both sets of cropmarks may be indicative of archaeology of later prehistoric date (e.g. Iron Age or Romano-British occupation).
- 2.2.5 There are no records for sites or findspots of medieval date around the Site, although given Tetbury's history as an important wool town, it is likely that this area would have been utilised by local producers, possibly as grazing land.
- 2.2.6 It is likely that the land remained in pastoral or agricultural use throughout the post-medieval period, although again no specific records exist. The line of the former Kemble to Tetbury branch line of the Great Western Railway passes close to the Site. Opened in 1889, there were stations at Culkerton and Tetbury and a Halt at Rodmarton. The line was closed in 1964.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1.1. The objectives of the evaluation were to establish within the constraints of the agreed sampling strategy the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site.

3.2. Method

- 3.2.1. The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of eleven trial trenches, each 20m long and 2m wide, distributed across the Site as illustrated in **Figure 1**. This represented a 4% sample of the Site including both the area to be disturbed by the proposed quarrying, and a haul road to the south and south-east of the quarry.
- 3.2.2. In addition, a geotechnical trial pit, 50m x 1m (6m wide at top of its battered edge), was also recorded. This included the archaeological monitoring during the topsoil strip over an area measuring 50m x 10m, and recording of a 2m long representative section.
- 3.2.3. Trenches were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system. Where no features were discovered, the trenches were photographed and planned, and a representative 1m long section drawn. All trenches were recorded in plan using a total station theodolite (TST), with survey data stored in digital format.
- 3.2.4. Finds were retained, processed and stored temporarily at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury, prior to deposition of the Project Archive.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

- 4.1.1. All context descriptions are presented in tabulated form in **Appendix 1**; trench locations are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

4.2. Modern Disturbance

- 4.2.1. The Site appears to have remained relatively unaffected by modern disturbance, with the exception of shallow ploughing.

4.3. General Stratigraphic Sequence

- 4.3.1. Topsoil across the Site ranged in depth from 0.20m to 0.30m, with shallower deposits occurring in areas where the limestone brash was found to outcrop.
- 4.3.2. An orange-brown subsoil was present in the majority of the trenches, with the exception of Trench 2 and the geotechnical pit (Trench 12). In these areas the topsoil directly overlay the limestone brash. Subsoil was typically between 0.10m and 0.20m deep, with shallower deposits recorded in Trench 4.
- 4.3.3. Limestone brash was encountered in Trenches 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 underlying the topsoil and subsoil (where present). In trenches excavated away from the limestone outcrops, the underlying natural was found to comprise a heavy grey-brown clay.

4.3.4. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded in either the evaluation trenches or the geotechnical test pit. A small quantity of finds was recovered which are discussed below.

4.4. Finds

4.4.1. Post-medieval pottery, clay pipe, one flint flake and one flint core were recovered from the topsoil in Trenches 5 and 6 (contexts **500** and **600**), along with a second flint flake from the subsoil in Trench 3 (context **301**).

4.4.2. All other finds recovered proved to be of modern origin (20th century) and are, therefore, not discussed further.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1.1. No evidence for archaeological activity was found within any of the evaluation trenches excavated across the Site.

5.1.2. As documented in the Archaeological and Historical Background (above), the Site is located within an area of known activity in the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. Although no features and very few finds of prehistoric date were recorded during the evaluation, activity during the earlier prehistoric periods is often very dispersed and difficult to identify.

5.1.3. It is clear from the GSMR descriptions of the two local round barrows, that farming has had a negative effect on the preservation of this type of feature, often rendering them invisible within the modern landscape. Considering this evidence, these results can not be taken to preclude the possibility that features of prehistoric date are present elsewhere on the Site, away from the evaluation trenches, although given the sample size, it is likely that the whole Site is, indeed, archaeologically sterile.

5.1.4. It is also likely that, whilst the Site may have been incorporated within the wider medieval landscapes, in particular its potential relationship with the wool industry, it has never become the focal point for any localised settlement or domestic activity.

6. REFERENCES

Wessex Archaeology, 2004 *Archaeological Works at Preston's Folly, Highgrove Estate, Gloucestershire*. Unpublished Written Scheme of Investigation ref 57760.01

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Evaluation Trench 1		Max depth: 0.58m	Length: 18.9m	Width: 2.0m
Context No.	Type	Description:		Depth:
100	Layer	Topsoil – mid grey-brown clay silt, rare small sub-angular stones (< 60mm), rare charcoal and CBM flecks, root action. Boundary to (101) clear.		0-0.22m
101	Layer	Subsoil – mid orange-brown clay silt, no stone inclusions, root action, rare manganese flecks. Quite compact, boundary to (102) diffuse.		0.22-0.34m
102	Layer	Natural silting – mid grey-brown silt, common manganese flecks, no stone inclusions. Very compact.		0.34-0.42m
103	Layer	Natural – pale grey-brown silty clay, sparse very small grit/stones (< 5mm). Patches of larger sub-angular stones (Cotswold Brash) in rest of trench.		0.42+m

Evaluation Trench 2		Max depth: 0.42m	Length: 20.9m	Width: 2.0m
Context No.	Type	Description:		Depth:
200	Layer	Topsoil – mid brown clay silt, sparse limestone fragments, fairly shallow.		0-0.24m
201	Layer	Natural – Oolitic limestone layers with mid orange-brown silty clay between.		0.24+m

Evaluation Trench 3		Max depth: 0.66m	Length: 21.5m	Width: 2.0m
Context No.	Type	Description:		Depth:
300	Layer	Topsoil – dark brown clay silt, no stones, occasional/rare flecks of charcoal and burnt clay, 1 or 2 fragments slate.		0-0.26m
301	Layer	Subsoil – mid to dark brown, clay silt, no stones, occasional root activity and charcoal flecks. Not present through entire trench.		0.26-0.51m
302	Layer	Natural silting – mid greenish-brown clay silt very similar the clay natural in Trench 4, where natural limestone was not present. Sterile, above natural stone, patchy across trench, settling in natural hollows/faults within the limestone.		0.51-0.58m
303	Layer	Natural – Oolitic limestone with some mid brown clay patches within and between stone layers (< 0.01m).		0.58+m

Evaluation Trench 4		Max depth: 0.44m	Length: 21.8m	Width: 2.0m
Context No.	Type	Description:		Depth:
400	Layer	Topsoil – dark brown clay silt, occasional fragments (20-40mm) limestone.		0-0.30m
401	Layer	Subsoil – mid orange-brown clay silt, occasional fragments (c. 30mm) limestone.		0.30-0.36m
402	Layer	Natural – light greenish-grey clay with occasional patches of orange-brown clay. Common limestone (which is natural in other trenches).		0.36+m

Evaluation Trench 5		Max depth: 0.49m	Length: 20.8m	Width: 2.0m
Context No.	Type	Description:		Depth:
500	Layer	Topsoil – mid grey-brown clay silt, common sub-angular limestone (50-130mm)		0-0.28m
501	Layer	Subsoil – mid orange-brown clay silt, sparse sub-angular limestone (50-80mm). Not present in entire trench, some areas have lenses of greenish-grey silty clay.		0.28-0.36m
502	Layer	Natural – Oolitic limestone within mid orange-brown silty clay. Forms undulating layers across trench.		0.36+m

Evaluation Trench 6		Max depth: 0.44m	Length: 21.25m	Width: 2.0m
Context No.	Type	Description:		Depth:
600	Layer	Topsoil – mid brown clay silt, occasional limestone (< 60mm), occasional flecks of charcoal and CBM.		0-0.21m
601	Layer	Subsoil – mid grey-brown clay silt, occasional charcoal flecks and limestone inclusions (<80mm)		0.21-0.33m
602	Layer	Natural silting – mid grey-brown with greenish mottling, similar to Trench 3.		0.33-0.40m
603	Layer	Natural – Oolitic limestone formed in seams with mid orange-brown silty clay in voids.		0.40+m

Evaluation Trench 7		Max depth: 0.38m	Length: 20.2m	Width: 2.0m
Context No.	Type	Description:		Depth:
700	Layer	Topsoil – mid brown clay silt, occasional sub-angular limestone (< 80mm).		0-0.25m
701	Layer	Subsoil – mid grey-brown (with occasional greenish mottling) clay silt, common stone inclusions (< 120mm). Not present in entire trench.		0.25-0.38m
702	Layer	Natural – Oolitic limestone formed in seams with mid orange-brown silty clay in voids.		0.38+m

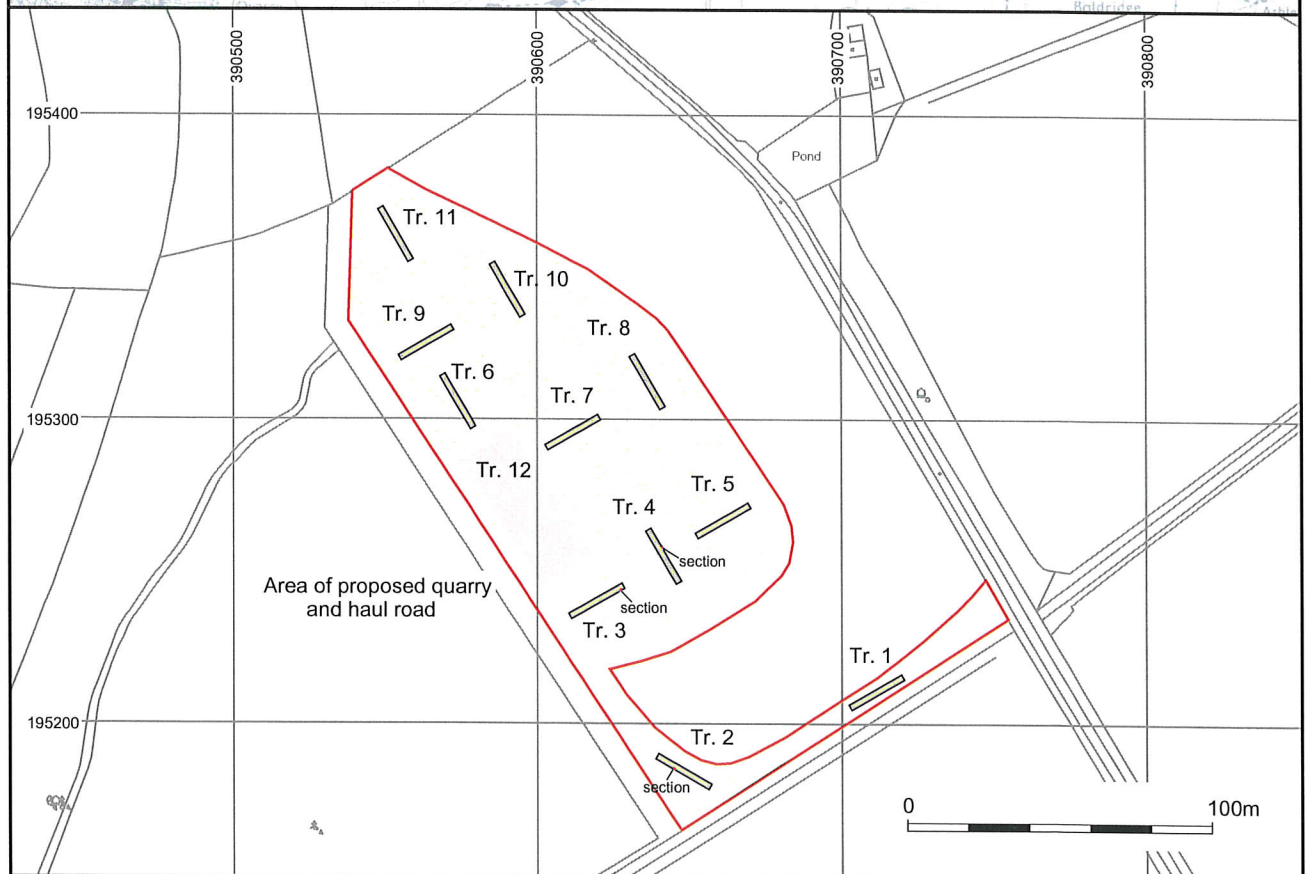
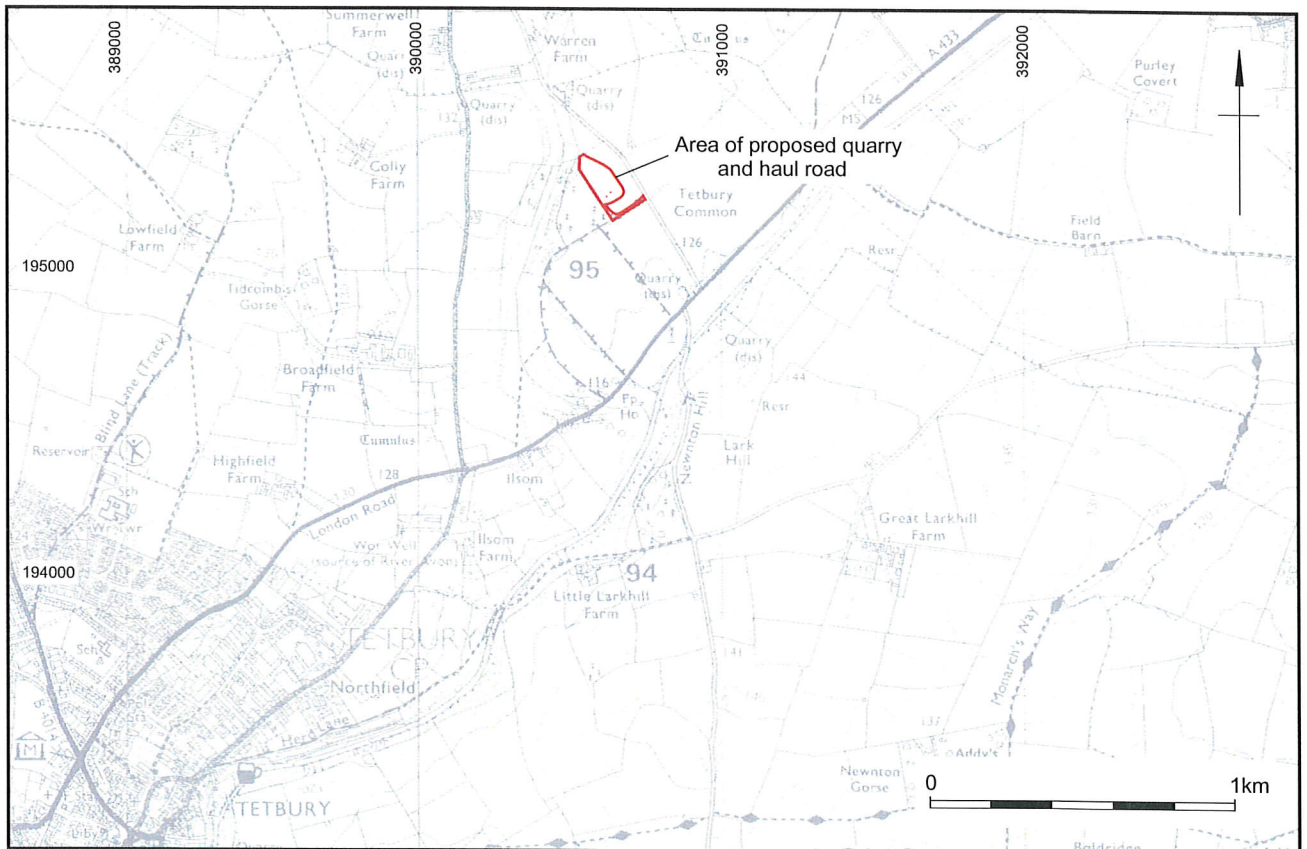
Evaluation Trench 8		Max depth: 0.65m	Length: 19.5m	Width: 2.0m
Context No.	Type	Description:		Depth:
800	Layer	Topsoil – mid grey brown clay silt, rare sub-angular limestone (< 80mm) and CBM, root action. Boundary to (801) clear.		0-0.28m
801	Layer	Subsoil – mid brown clay silt, rare manganese flecks. More compact at southern end of trench.		0.28-0.38m
802	Layer	Natural silting – light orange-grey silty clay, common manganese flecks, sparse sub-angular stones at base of deposit (< 10mm)		0.38-0.63m
803	Layer	Natural – Oolitic limestone formed in seams with mid orange-brown silty clay in voids.		0.63+m

Evaluation Trench 9		Max depth:0-0.4m	Length: 21.0m	Width: 2.0m
Context No.	Type	Description:		Depth:
900	Layer	Topsoil – mid brown clay silt, occasional charcoal flecks, CBM and limestone inclusions (< 80mm).		0-0.20m
901	Layer	Subsoil – mid orange-brown clay silt, occasional limestone inclusions (< 100mm).		0.20-0.40m
902	Layer	Natural - Oolitic limestone formed in seams with mid orange-brown silty clay in voids.		0.40+m

Evaluation Trench 10		Max depth: 0.97m	Length: 21.0m	Width: 2.0m
Context No.	Type	Description:		Depth:
1000	Layer	Topsoil – Mid brown, clay silt, occasional limestone inclusions (< 80mm)		0-0.20m
1001	Layer	Subsoil – Mid greenish-grey, clay silt, common manganese flecks.		0.20-0.35m
1002	Layer	Natural - Oolitic limestone formed in seams with mid orange-brown silty clay in voids.		0.35+m

Evaluation Trench 11		Max depth: 0.95m	Length: 19.2m	Width: 2.0m
Context No.	Type	Description:		Depth:
1100	Layer	Topsoil – mid grey-brown clay silt, rare sub-angular stones (40-120mm), root activity.		0-0.26m
1101	Layer	Subsoil – mid orange-brown clay silt, rare manganese flecks, no stone inclusions.		0.26-0.52m
1102	Layer	Natural – light orange-brown, silty clay, abundant manganese flecks, no stone inclusions.		0.52-0.95m

Evaluation Trench 12		Max depth: 2.2m	Length: 50m	Width: 6m at top
Context No.	Type	Description: GEOTECHNICAL PIT		Depth:
1200	Layer	Topsoil – dark brown clay silt, occasional charcoal flecks and fragments of limestone.		0-0.25m
1201	Layer	Natural – common densely packed layers of Oolitic limestone with thin (c. 10mm) layers of mid orange-brown silty clay in between.		0.25-1.00m
1202	Layer	Natural – fairly common layers of Oolitic limestone between thicker layers (c. 50mm) of blue-grey clay.		1.00-1.15m
1203	Layer	Natural – very similar to (1201), slightly less stone, but more than (1202), with thin (c. 20mm) layers of mid yellow-brown clay.		1.15-1.45m
1204	Layer	Natural – Least stone of all the layers (c. 20%), mainly mid-dark blue-grey clay.		1.45+m

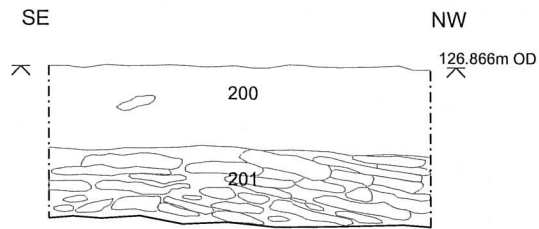


<p>Area stripped for geotechnical testing</p> <p>Evaluation trench</p>	<p>Reproduced from the 1998 Ordnance survey 1:25000 Explorer® map sheet 168 map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright, Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire. SP4 6EB. Licence Number:AL 100006861.</p> <p>Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright 2004 All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</p>			
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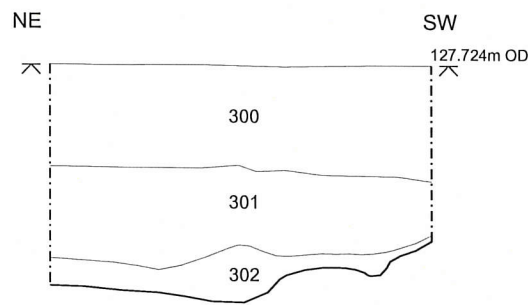
Site and trench location

Figure 1

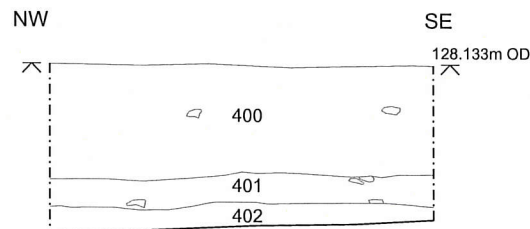
Trench 2



Trench 3



Trench 4



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