



Land South of Western Way Bowerhill, Melksham, Wiltshire

Post-excavation Assessment
and Updated Project Design



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey Bristol to undertake archaeological mitigation works comprising an archaeological strip, map and sample excavation on land South of Western Way, Bowerhill, Melksham, centred on NGR 391180 162610. The work was carried out as a condition of planning permission granted by Wiltshire Council (16/1123/OUT) for the residential development of up to 235 dwellings, primary school with early years nursery and open space provision.

The excavation, undertaken in September and October 2018, was the final stage of a programme of archaeological works relating to the wider development area, which included a heritage assessment, geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation which identified a cluster of features towards the north-western edge of the development area.

Two areas were investigated during the excavation and produced evidence of Iron Age and Romano-British date, including field ditches, pits, and two four-post structures. The main phase of activity dates to the Iron Age, and this activity may have begun during the early to middle Iron Age. Pottery from the features has been dated to the 8–4th centuries BC, and more broadly to the Iron Age period.

The arrangement of pits, structures and ditches suggest small scale activity close to a field margin. The four-post structures and recovery of parts of a quernstone may be considered to tentatively indicate crop processing or storage close to the excavation area, possibly towards the north or north-east, and most likely outside the development area. Limited evidence for Romano-British activity was recorded and suggests that during the 1st–4th centuries AD the development area was largely rural agricultural land. The Romano-British ditches may be associated with field systems recorded as cropmarks to the east, but this remains uncertain due to the limits of the investigation.

The results of the excavation have been adequately assessed in this report and no further work is required on the finds and environmental assemblages or stratigraphic sequence. It is proposed that the results are written up as a short note with accompanying illustration and submitted for publication in the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*.

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The fieldwork was directed by Darryl Freer, with the assistance of Virva Lompolo, Hilde van der Heul, Matthew Whelan and Mariola Orzechowska. This report was written by John Powell and edited by Damian De Rosa. The project was managed by Damian De Rosa on behalf of Wessex Archaeology. The finds were assessed by Lorraine Mephram and the animal bone by Lorrain Higbee. The samples were processed by Sam Rogerson, Liz Foulston, Jenny Giddins and Jenna Jackson. The flots were sorted by Nicki Mulhall and assessed by Inés López-Dóriga. Illustrations were prepared by Kitty Foster



Land South of Western Way, Bowerhill, Melksham

Post-excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey Bristol ('the client'), to undertake archaeological mitigation works comprising an archaeological strip, map and sample excavation. The work comprised the excavation of two separate 25 by 25 m areas (Areas 1 and 2) along with additional contingency stripping to extend the size of Area 1 during the course of the work to further investigate the nature of the archaeology revealed. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) at 391180 162610, on land located South of Western Way, Bowerhill, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6QL (Fig. 1).

1.1.2 The work was carried out as a condition of planning permission, granted by Wiltshire Council (16/01123/OUT) for the residential development of up to 235 dwellings, primary school with early years nursery and open space provision. The development area comprises two adjacent fields to the south of Melksham. The two fields, both currently under arable cultivation cover a total area of 10.7 hectares.

1.1.3 The excavation was the final stage in a programme of archaeological works, which had included a heritage assessment (RPS 2014), geophysical survey (Archaeological Surveys Ltd 2014) and trial trench evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology 2014).

1.1.4 In response to the archaeological potential the Assistant County Archaeologist recommended that two targeted areas of archaeological strip, map and sample should be undertaken focused on areas of activity identified in the evaluation within Trenches 20 (Area 2) and 21 (Area 1) (CA 2014). The requirement for the mitigation was stated in the following pre-commencement condition:

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; and*
- *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 The excavation was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI), which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed, for both the fieldwork and the post-excavation work (Wessex Archaeology 2018). The Assistant County Archaeologist for Wiltshire Council, Rachel Foster, approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing. The excavation was undertaken between 24th September to 15th October 2018.



- 1.1.6 It was agreed within the WSI that should activity within the two areas continue beyond the stripped areas, up to a further 625 m² contingency per area would be allowed for in order to fully establish the extent and character of the archaeological activity. This was enacted for Area 1, but was not required for Area 2.

1.2 Scope of the report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the provisional results of the excavation and to assess the potential of the results in relation to the research aims outlined in the WSI. Recommendations for further work, an outline of the resources needed, and the means of disseminating the archaeological results via publication are given. The long term curation of the archive is also considered.

1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The overall development area comprises two triangular shaped fields located north of Bowerhill Industrial Estate and south of Western Way (A365). The two fields, had previously been under arable cultivation, but had been left to go to grass at the time of the excavation ahead of the commencement of the development. The two areas are divided by the road that leads to the Bowerhill trading estate from the A365.
- 1.3.2 The strip, map and sample areas lay within the western field, which slopes gently down towards the north, falling from around 43.50 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 38.70 m aOD.
- 1.3.3 The underlying geology is mapped as the mudstone of the Oxford Clay Formation, no superficial deposits are recorded (British Geological Survey online viewer).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The following section summaries the results of previous archaeological works carried out in relation to the proposed development.

2.2 Previous works related to the development

- 2.2.1 A heritage assessment was undertaken in relation to the proposed development (RPS 2014). This did not identify any known archaeological features within or immediately adjacent to the development area but did conclude that the scheme would result in a slight loss of significance of five Grade II listed buildings associated with the former Melksham Spa as a result of changes within their settings.
- 2.2.2 A detailed magnetometer survey located several responses interpreted as possible archaeological features (Archaeological Surveys Ltd 2014). These included linear trends thought to relate to ridge and furrow cultivation, former field boundaries and possible pit type anomalies. Two parallel linear responses were also identified in the eastern field.
- 2.2.3 Trial trench evaluation was then undertaken, targeted on the geophysical survey results (Cotswold Archaeology 2014). This identified post-medieval and modern activity within the eastern field with the parallel linear responses found to correspond to two post-medieval ditches. No evidence of ridge and furrow was encountered, though a number of land drains were noted on a similar alignment. The only archaeological features earlier than the post-medieval period were located in the western field. These comprised several undated ditches and pits, along with a posthole. One of the pits in Trench 21 produced 3 sherds (weighing



6 g) and crumbs (95 in number weighing 10 g, recovered from a soil sample) of sandy ware pottery, which within the evaluation report was dated as medieval (Minety Ware) between the 12–15th centuries; and from a posthole 3 sherds or crumbs (weighing 0.4 g) of oolitic limestone tempered ware dating to the 11 to 13th centuries. A reassessment of the pottery by Wessex Archaeology as part of this post excavation assessment report has shown that the pottery dates to the Iron Age period and is consistent with the findings of the strip, map and sample excavation as set out in the results section below. Environmental evidence recovered from the pit suggested possible domestic activity.

2.3 Archaeological and historical context

Prehistoric (970,000 BC–AD 43)

- 2.3.1 No prehistoric finds or features are known within the immediate vicinity of the development area, but evidence for activity from this time is known from the wider area. In particular, Palaeolithic finds have been recovered from the River Avon at Melksham (WSHER MWI4919, MWI1840) as well Neolithic pottery and Bronze Age metalwork (WSHER MWI4920, MWI4922, MWI4923). Two worked flints, one of which is Mesolithic or Early Neolithic in date were found residually in later features during archaeological works adjacent to Melksham Oak Community School (Wessex Archaeology 2015).

Romano-British (AD 43–410)

- 2.3.2 Archaeological works including geophysical survey, evaluation and excavation some 500 m to the east of the development area near Melksham Oak Community School located evidence for settlement and agricultural activity on and probably adjacent to the site (Powell *et al* 2018). Three phases of enclosure were suggested by some of the ditches, with activity from the 1st–2nd century AD, possibly extending into the 3rd century AD. Associated with the enclosures was a circular arrangement of gullies possibly indicating some form of structure, a series of ovens probably used for corn-drying, and clusters of pits and postholes. Although no buildings were positively identified, the finds assemblage is consistent with domestic waste, and the recovery of both roofing and box flue tiles suggests the possible presence of a high-status Romano-British building in the vicinity.
- 2.3.3 Recent work at Snowberry Lane, 500 m to the north-east of the development has identified the remains of a Romano-British settlement. Geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation had identified settlement remains and during subsequent excavation a later Roman villa with hypocaust and a well was investigated. The well contained preserved waterlogged artefacts including a wicker basket and complete ceramic vessels (Orion Heritage 2019).

Saxon, medieval and post-medieval (AD 410–1800)

- 2.3.4 The historic core of Melksham is located more than a kilometre to the north-west focused on the higher ground adjacent to the River Avon, in the area now occupied by St. Michael's church. The town is based around a royal estate that was present at the time of the Norman Conquest and became the capital manor and the centre of the hundred. Melksham was granted market and fair rights in the 13th century and became a prosperous settlement by the later medieval period, with wealth derived from the weaving of broadcloth.
- 2.3.5 While the development area is likely to have been within the wider agricultural hinterland at this time, documentary sources record a number of small settlements to the south-east, at Woolmore Farm (*Wolvemere* in AD1249), Bowerhill (*Bowrehill* or *Bowermede* in AD1540), and Loves Farm (home of *William Love* or *Loove* in AD1597), all of which remain as working agricultural centres.



2.3.6 Research undertaken for the National Archaeological Identification Survey identified possible medieval or early post-medieval ridge and furrow within the development area, though these features are no longer extant (RPS 2014).

19th century and modern (1800–present)

2.3.7 The 1838 Tithe Map of Melksham shows Bowerhill Farmhouse already extant with adjacent outbuildings on the western side of the road and agricultural land within the development area. Low density residential development is also apparent adjacent to Bath Road. This largely rural setting can be seen to be relatively unchanged on late 19th century and early 20th century Ordnance Survey maps.

2.3.8 RAF Melksham, which was situated immediately to the south of the development area, was opened in 1940 as No. 12 School of Technical Training and also housed No. 10 School of Recruit training, with more than 10,000 personnel based here at its peak. The site contained eight large hangars used for the training of technicians and ground crew, but there was no runway and planes were transported to and from the base in dismantled form. The base was closed in 1965.

2.3.9 The bypass to the south of Melksham, including the road which bisects the development area, was constructed in the 1970s.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 The general aims of the excavation, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2018) and in compliance with the ClfA's *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (ClfA 2014a), were:

- To examine the archaeological resource within a given area or site within a framework of defined research objectives;
- To seek a better understanding of the resource;
- To compile a lasting record of the resource; and
- To analyse and interpret the results of the excavation and disseminate them.

3.2 Research objectives

3.2.1 Following consideration of the archaeological potential of the site and the regional research framework (Grove and Croft 2012), the research objectives of the excavation defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2018) were:

- Establish the extent and character of the archaeological activity identified within the north-western part of the western field;
- Consider how activity within the site contributes to evidence for early medieval settlement in the Melksham area and its distribution;
- Add to the knowledge of local medieval pottery wares and their distribution.



4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methods set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2018) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.
- 4.1.2 The archaeological works comprised the excavation, investigation and recording of two areas, shown on Figures 1 and 2, each measuring approximately 25 by 25 m and/or equivalent to 625 m². Both areas were targeted on evaluation trenches that contained archaeological remains; Area 1 was centred on Trench 21 and Area 2 targeted features in Trench 20.
- 4.1.3 During the course of the excavation alterations were made to Area 1. Archaeological features were identified at the eastern side of the area and following consultation with the Assistant County Archaeologist the area was extended in order to better understand the nature, character and extent of the archaeological features. An additional 510 m² was stripped around the south-eastern corner of the area (Fig. 1), which was extended to the east by 15 m and to the south by 10 m.
- 4.1.4 Seven trenches, between 18 and 4 m long by 2.4 m wide, were dug between the south-western corner of Area 1 and the north-eastern corner of Area 2 in an attempt to trace the line of a ditch recorded in Area 1.
- 4.1.5 The total area investigated archaeologically during the strip, map and sample excavation was 0.18 hectares.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

- 4.2.1 The excavation area was set out using GNSS, in the same position as that proposed in the WSI (Fig.1). The topsoil/overburden was removed in level spits using a 360° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under the constant supervision and instruction of the monitoring archaeologist. Machine excavation proceeded in level spits until the archaeological horizon or the natural geology was exposed.
- 4.2.2 Where necessary, the surface of archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand to aid visual definition. A sample of the archaeological features and deposits identified were hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the excavation. A sample of natural features such as tree-throw holes were also investigated.
- 4.2.3 Spoil derived from both machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological features was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. A metal detector was also used. Where found, artefacts were collected and bagged by context.

Recording

- 4.2.4 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete drawn record of excavated features and deposits was made including both plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections) and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD: Newlyn) heights of all principal features were calculated, and levels added to plans and section drawings.



- 4.2.5 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSGM15 and OSTN15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.6 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies

General – Finds and environmental

- 4.3.1 Appropriate strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2018). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 Rachel Foster the Assistant County Archaeologist, acting on behalf of the LPA, monitored the archaeological excavations. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with both the client and the Assistant County Archaeologist.

5 STRATIGRAPHIC RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

Summary of archaeological features and deposits

- 5.1.1 The following section details the results of the archaeological strip, map and sample excavations. The main features are described by excavation Area and related to their landscape setting, full descriptions of all archaeological features and deposits are available in the project archive. The excavations (Figs. 1 and 2) produced evidence for two phases of activity at the site, both of which were found in Area 1, no archaeological features were recorded in Area 2 and this area is described in section 5.2.
- 5.1.2 The nature of the features recorded in the evaluation (CA 2014), which had been interpreted as archaeological in origin, and which Area 2 was targeted on, are considered in section 8.1 below.
- 5.1.3 Within Area 1 Early to Middle Iron Age (700–100 BC) occupation was identified in the form of a series of linear ditches, pits and two four-post structures. A reassessment of the pottery from the previous evaluation (CA 2014 – Trench 21) comprising oolitic limestone tempered and sandy ware sherds (and crumbs) has demonstrated that this is the same material as recovered during the excavation. Two archaeological features, a pit (CA 2014 – pit) and a posthole (CA 2014 – posthole) previously dated to the medieval period (CA 2014) have therefore been reassigned to the Iron Age period (Fig.2).



- 5.1.4 A slight re-organisation of these field ditches occurred during the Romano-British (AD 43–410). Pottery and animal bone were the main types of artefacts recovered, other finds included a quernstone fragment and a piece of Roman roof tile.

Methods of stratigraphic assessment and quantity of data

- 5.1.5 All hand written and drawn records from the excavation have been collated, checked for consistency and stratigraphic relationships. Key data has been transcribed into an Access database for assessment, which can be updated during any further analysis. The excavation has been preliminary phased using stratigraphic relationships and the spot dating from artefacts, particularly pottery.
- 5.1.6 Table 1 (below) provides a quantification of the records from the excavation.

Table 1 Quantification of excavation records

Type	Quantity
Context records	75
Context registers	7
Graphics (A4 and A3)	20
Graphics (A1)	-
Graphics registers	1
Environmental sample registers	
Object registers	-
Digital photographs	2 registers (72 image)

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

Area 1

- 5.2.1 Area 1 (Fig.1 and 2, Pl. 1) was targeted on evaluation Trench 21 (Cotswold Archaeology 2014), that had identified a small gully, a pit and posthole. Following the removal of the topsoil archaeological features were identified cut into the underlying natural deposit, an indurated mid brownish yellow clay. The natural was recorded at 0.4 m BGL (below ground level). A thin, 0.18 m, light greyish brown silty clay subsoil and a dark greyish brown clay loam topsoil (0.22 m thick) completed the natural soil sequence in Area 1.
- 5.2.2 Natural features or tree-throw holes (4 in number.) were investigated and recorded in Area 1 and are not discussed in the following section.

Area 2

- 5.2.3 Area 2 was centred on evaluation Trench 20 which identified a series of shallow ditches, a gully and a pit (Fig.1 and 2, Pl. 2; Cotswold Archaeology 2014). No archaeological features were identified during the archaeological excavation, and features that had been interpreted at the time of the evaluation as archaeological in nature were found to be geological variations in the natural geology.
- 5.2.4 A moderately compact dark greyish brown clay loam topsoil, that was up to 0.17 m thick, was present across the area. Below the topsoil was a thicker, stiff and compacted mid brownish yellow silty clay subsoil that at its thickest was 0.23 m deep. The underlying natural deposit, a very compact light yellowish brown clay, was present from 0.4 m BGL. Lenses of light yellow grey clay with flint and calcareous inclusions were visible across the area and where investigated were of natural origin. Two land drains crossed the area on a NW–SE alignment



5.3 Iron Age

- 5.3.1 Iron Age features were excavated and recorded within Area 1, with a concentration towards the north-eastern edge of the stripped area. The ceramic evidence suggests the main phase of activity occurred during the Early to Middle Iron Age (700–100 BC), seven features have been phased to this period. A further six features were phased to the broader Iron Age period, but it seems likely that these features represent a single phase of activity. A reassessment of the pottery from the previous evaluation (CA 2014 – Trench 21) has demonstrated that this is the same material as recovered during the excavation. Two archaeological features, a pit (CA 2014 – pit) and a posthole (CA 2014 – posthole) previously dated to the medieval period (CA 2014) have therefore been reassigned to the Iron Age period (Fig. 2).
- 5.3.2 Close to the eastern edge of Area 1 two ditches, 1092 and 1072, formed the edge of a possible field (Fig. 2). Ditch 1092 (Fig. 2; Fig. 3 – section and Pl. 3), the larger of the two ditches (1.1 m wide and 0.55 m deep), had a moderate rounded profile. It contained a single mid greyish brown silty clay fill, which produced a small assemblage of Early to Middle Iron Age pottery (11 sherds 34 g) along with scraps of unidentified animal bone and two fragments of a greensand rotary quernstone. Halfway along its length a shallower ditch, 1072 (Fig. 2), was aligned at a broad right angle to the larger ditch 1092 and may tentatively be considered an internal division. Ditch 1072 had been truncated by Romano-British ditch 1090 and it is far from certain how these two ditches relate. Ditch 1072 contained five sherds of Early to Middle Iron Age pottery and a scrap of unidentifiable animal bone, it had a shallow moderately concave profile and was 0.6 m wide and 0.11 m deep.
- 5.3.3 To the west of ditch 1092 a group of five shallow pits and two four-post structures suggest a possible focus of Iron Age activity close to the margins of the field (Fig. 2). Of the five shallow pits only two produced datable material, pits 1037 and 1039. Pit 1037 (2.9 by 2.11 and 0.1 m deep) contained the largest assemblage of Early to Middle Iron Age pottery (17 sherds 65 g) which included two red finished sherds, amongst the identifiable animal bone were feet and leg bones fragments from cattle. The second dated pit, 1039, contained four small sherds of Iron Age pottery and a sheep tooth. It was circular in plan with a shallow (0.15 m) bowl shaped profile and was cut into an earlier feature 1041. Two undated pits (1042 and 1043) may also date from this Iron Age phase of activity, both had pale grey silt clay fills with notable charcoal flecking.
- 5.3.4 Within 14 m of the pits and ditches were two four-post structures 1088 and 1089 (Fig. 2 and 3 - sections, Pl. 4). Both structures formed sub-square arrangements of postholes that measured between 2.4–2.35 m by 2.2–2.15 m. The four postholes that formed structure, 1088, had similar steep sided profiles (up to 0.2 m deep) and contained single dark greyish brown fills. Limestone fragments were found in all four of the postholes and probably represent disturbed post packing (Pl. 5). Iron Age pottery came from posthole 1016, and wheat and barley were identified in the charred plant assemblage. The postholes of four-post structure, 1089 (Pl. 4 and 6), had shallow moderately sloping or concave sides and contained single fills a fragment of limestone from close to the base of one of the postholes may represent post-packing. The pottery, although only small fragments, indicates an Iron Age date of possible Early to Middle Iron Age date. Fragments from a cattle tibia and fired clay were also recovered along with wheat, barley and emmer from environmental samples.
- 5.3.5 An outlying pit 1014 (Fig. 2 and 3 – section and Pl. 7) contained the largest assemblage of Early to Middle Iron Age pottery and animal bone. The pit (0.89 by 0.70 m) had an oval shape in plan with steep concave sides and was 0.28 m deep and contained two backfilled deposits. At the base of the pit, almost centrally, was a collection of artefacts that included a possible piece of building stone, animal bone (1.2 kg) and 10 sherds of Early to Middle



Iron Age pottery (74 g). This material had been backfilled or dumped into the pit within a yellowish grey silty clay deposit. A thinner, charcoal rich dark grey silty clay had been backfilled into the top of the pit and contained Early to Middle Iron Age pottery, scraps of animal bone and burnt and worked flint. Environmental samples from both deposits produced charcoal and charred cereal remains.

5.4 Romano-British

- 5.4.1 Romano-British activity is represented by two linear ditches that crossed the southern half of Area 1 (Fig. 2). The ditches probably represent parts of a wider Romano-British field system possibly at some distance from areas of settlement given the small amounts of datable material recovered.
- 5.4.2 The larger ditch, 1090 (Fig. 2 and 3 - section, Pl. 8), had a wide (1.36 m) concave profile with moderate to gradual sloping sides and was up to 0.41 m deep. The south-western terminal was rounded in plan, additional trenching was undertaken to the south-west, but no opposing terminal was identified. A fragment of Romano-British *tegula* roof tile, a small amount of residual Iron Age pottery and fragments of animal bone were found in the ditches fills. A short length of broadly parallel ditch, 1093, is of Romano-British date, but is again poorly dated by a single rim sherd. Ditch 1093 (Fig. 2 and Fig.3 - section) had a shallow (0.35 m deep) rounded V-shaped profile, its south-western extent was unclear as the ditch continued into an area of alluvium/geology (see section 5.5.2 below).

5.5 Uncertain date

- 5.5.1 An undated ditch (1091) crossed the western side of Area 1 (Fig. 2). The ditch had a narrow V-shaped profile and contained a single dark greyish brown silty clay, no finds were recovered during the excavation, but a section dug during the evaluation produced three scraps of medieval pottery. Given the alignment of ditch 1091, at broad right angles to ditch 1090, it is possible that this feature belongs to the Romano-British field system and the medieval pottery was intrusive.
- 5.5.2 Close to the western edge of Iron Age ditch 1092 an area of possible alluvial deposits or disturbed ground, shown on Fig. 2, made the identification of archaeological features problematic. In places, such as pit 1037, the features were seen to cut through the layer but elsewhere the similarities in the fills and the deposit did not allow for clear definition. A machine trench was excavated across the largest part of these deposits which helped to define the alignments of the Iron Age and Romano-British ditches. The exact nature of these deposits is uncertain and they could either represent an alluvial layer or possibly an area of trampling or puddling close to the field boundaries associated with the Iron Age pit digging and four-post structures.

6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 A small quantity of finds was recovered, all deriving from contexts in Area 1 (no finds were recovered from Area 2). The assemblage consists almost entirely of pottery and animal bone, and ranges in date from prehistoric to Romano-British, with a few post-medieval/modern items from topsoil and other upper layers.
- 6.1.2 All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and the results are presented in Table 2.



Table 2 All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

Context	Animal Bone	Pottery	Other finds
1001	-	-	4 metal
1002	-	-	-
1015	4/1	17/89	-
1017	1/1	8/106	-
1028	548/1213	10/74	1 stone
1030	25/51	-	-
1032	-	3/2	-
1034	-	1/1	2 fired clay
1036	2/2	-	-
1038	57/175	17/65	-
1040	4/1	4/5	-
1047	-	4/13	1 CBM
1056	21/33	6/8	-
1060	-	5/26	2 stone
1073	1/1	5/31	-
1075	2/8	-	-
1079	11/37	2/11	-
Total	677/1523	82/431	-

CBM = ceramic building material

6.2 Pottery

- 6.2.1 Pottery provides the primary dating evidence for the site. The assemblage amounts to 82 sherds, weighing 431 g. This is primary of later prehistoric date, with a few Romano-British sherds. Condition is fair to poor. Sherds are small, and many are in friable fabrics that have laminated. Edges and surfaces have suffered abrasion, and there are very few conjoining sherds. Mean sherd weight is 5.3 g.
- 6.2.2 The assemblage has been quantified (sherd count and weight) by ware type within each context. Detailed fabric analysis has not been undertaken, but the wares have been defined on the basis of dominant inclusion type (e.g. oolitic limestone-tempered ware), or generic type (e.g. Romano-British sandy greyware). There is only one rim sherd, and this is of unmeasurable diameter, so EVEs (Estimated Vessel Equivalents) have not been calculated. This assessment fulfils the recommended minimum standards for a rapid analysis and basic record (Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group *et al* 2016, section 2.4.5). Table 3 gives a quantified breakdown of the assemblage by context.
- 6.2.3 Eighty sherds have been dated as late prehistoric (422 g). These fall into three broad fabric groups: sandy wares, calcareous wares, and flint-tempered wares. Flint-tempered wares are represented by a single sherd. Two of the calcareous sherds are in a shelly limestone-tempered fabric, while the remainder contain oolitic limestone. The sandy wares include some containing glauconitic sand (appearing as small dark grains). Most of the sandy wares are in fine fabrics, but one basal angle is in a noticeably coarser variant, with some crushed flint adhering to the underside of the base. Two sherds are 'red-finished' – they have an external slip or slurry coating which has fired to a cherry red colour.



Table 3 Pottery by context

Context	Ware type	No. sherds	Wt (g)	Comments	Date
1015	Oolitic limestone tempered	1	1	-	E/MIA
1015	Sandy ware	1	30	coarse sandy, flinty base	E/MIA
1015	Sandy ware	15	58	some glauconitic	E/MIA
1017	Sandy ware	8	106	thick-walled	IA
1028	Oolitic limestone tempered	7	52	-	E/MIA
1028	Calcareous ware	2	18	shelly limestone	E/MIA
1028	Greyware	1	4	-	RB
1032	Oolitic limestone tempered	2	1	-	E/MIA
1032	Sandy ware	1	1	-	E/MIA
1034	Sandy ware	1	1	-	IA
1038	Flint-tempered	1	1	-	E/MIA
1038	Oolitic limestone tempered	7	23	-	E/MIA
1038	Sandy ware	9	41	2 red-finished	E/MIA
1040	Sandy ware	4	5	-	IA
1047	Sandy ware	4	13	-	IA
1056	Oolitic limestone tempered	6	8	-	E/MIA
1060	Sandy ware	4	20	-	E/MIA
1060	Oolitic limestone tempered	1	6	-	E/MIA
1073	Sandy ware	2	1	-	E/MIA
1073	Oolitic limestone tempered	3	30	-	E/MIA
1079	Sandy ware	1	6	small rim, slightly everted	IA
1079	Greyware	1	5	-	RB

E/MIA = Early/Middle Iron Age, IA = Iron Age, RB = Romano-British

Late prehistoric

- 6.2.4 Eighty sherds have been dated as late prehistoric (422 g). These fall into three broad fabric groups: sandy wares, calcareous wares, and flint-tempered wares. Flint-tempered wares are represented by a single sherd. Two of the calcareous sherds are in a shelly limestone-tempered fabric, while the remainder contain oolitic limestone. The sandy wares include some containing glauconitic sand (appearing as small dark grains). Most of the sandy wares are in fine fabrics, but one basal angle is in a noticeably coarser variant, with some crushed flint adhering to the underside of the base. Two sherds are 'red-finished' – they have an external slip or slurry coating which has fired to a cherry red colour.
- 6.2.5 The only 'featured' sherd is a small rim in a sandy ware, although this cannot be related to any specific vessel form, which leaves the only chronologically distinctive pieces as the two red-finished sherds. This technique was in use during the Early to Middle Iron Age across Wiltshire and Dorset. The range of sandy, flint-tempered and limestone-tempered wares could all be accommodated within this date range. Similar wares, for example, were recorded for this period from Battlesbury Hillfort, Warminster, dated between the 8th and 4th centuries BC (Every and Mephram 2008, ceramic phases 1–2). Given that sandy wares have a longer currency through the Iron Age, however, the possibility that some sandy sherds occurring alone (see Table 3) may be of later date cannot be ruled out.



6.2.6 Iron Age sherds serve to date pit 1037, pit 1039, posthole 1016 (Gr 1088), postholes 1031 and 1033 both in four-post structure 1089, ditches 1055, 1059 (both Gr 1092) and 1072. Sherds from ditch 1046 (Gr 1090) are presumably residual, occurring alongside a Romano-British *tegula* roof tile, as is a sandy ware sherd (the only rim sherd) from gully 1080 (Gr 1093).

Romano-British

6.2.7 Two sherds are of Romano-British date. Both are sandy greywares of uncertain source, both are undiagnostic body sherds and neither can be dated more closely within the period. These sherds came from pit 1014 and gully 1080 (Gr 1093).

6.3 Animal Bone

6.3.1 The animal bone assemblage (677 fragments, weighing 1523 g) is in poor, fragmentary condition, most fragments having abraded surfaces.

6.3.2 The identified fragments from pit 1037 includes the fragmented remains of several cattle post-cranial bones from both the fore- and hindquarters, the base of a horn core and the mandible from a young adult animal aged between 30–36 months (mandible wear stage E, after Halstead 1985).

6.3.3 Fragments of cattle tibia came from posthole 1029, and a few scraps of cattle tooth from gully 1080, the rest are unidentifiable, they include scraps from posthole 1035, pit 1037 (three burnt fragments), ditch 1055 and ditch 1072.

6.4 Other Finds

6.4.1 Other finds comprise one fragment of Romano-British *tegula* roof tile (from ditch 1046); a small group of medieval or later metalwork from upper layers 1001 and 1002 (fiddle-key horseshoe nail; large masonry nail, rod and possible implement); and three pieces of stone, two conjoining to form part of a greensand rotary quern of Iron Age or Romano-British date (ditch 1059). The third piece of stone, from pit 1014, is in a shelly limestone and could have been utilised as building material, but shows no indisputable signs of working.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Thirteen bulk sediment samples were taken from a range of features such as postholes, ditches, a gully and a pit. These features were of Iron Age, Romano-British and unknown chronology and were processed for the recovery and assessment of the environmental evidence.

7.1.2 The bulk samples break down into the following phase groups:

Table 4 Sample provenance summary

Phase	No. of bulk samples	Volume (litres)	Feature types
Iron Age	11	243	Pit, postholes, ditch, gully
Romano British	2	70	Ditch
Totals	13	313	-



7.2 Aims and Methods

- 7.2.1 The purpose of this assessment is to determine the potential of the environmental remains preserved at the site to address project aims and to provide archaeobotanical data valuable for wider research frameworks.
- 7.2.2 The size of the bulk sediment samples varied between 2 and 92 litres, and on average was around 24 litres. The samples were processed by standard flotation methods on a Syraf-type flotation tank; the flot retained on a 0.25 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 5.6 or 4 mm and 1 mm fractions. The coarse fractions (>5.6/4 mm) were sorted by eye and discarded. The flots were scanned using a stereo incident light microscopy (Leica MS5 microscope) at magnifications of up to x40 for the identification of environmental remains. Different bioturbation indicators were considered, including the percentage of roots, the abundance of modern seeds and the presence of mycorrhizal fungi sclerotia (e.g. *Cenococcum geophilum*) and animal remains, such as earthworm eggs and insects, which would not be preserved unless anoxic conditions prevailed on site. The preservation and nature of the charred plant and wood charcoal remains, as well as the presence/absence of other environmental remains such as terrestrial and aquatic molluscs, animal bone and insects (in cases of anoxic conditions for their preservation), was recorded. Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary and Hopf (2000, Tables 3, page 28 and 5, page 65), for cereals. Abundance of remains is qualitatively quantified (A^{***} = exceptional, A^{**} = 100+, A^{*} = 30-99, A = >10, B = 9-5, C = <5) as an estimation of the minimum number of individuals and not the number of remains per taxa.

7.3 Results

- 7.3.1 The flots from the bulk sediment samples varied in size (Table 5; Appendix 1). There were generally high numbers of roots and low numbers of modern seeds that may be indicative of some stratigraphic movement and the possibility of contamination by later intrusive elements.
- 7.3.2 Charred material was poorly preserved with some iron coating. Wood charcoal was noted in generally varying quantities, also with some iron coating present. One sample contained roundwood charcoal. Remains of terrestrial molluscs were also present in some samples. No other environmental evidence was preserved in the bulk sediment samples.
- 7.3.3 The bulk sediment samples were dominated by the charred remains of cereals (Triticeae), many of which could not be identified. Identifiable species included *Hordeum vulgare* (barley), *Triticum* sp, (wheat) and *Triticum dicoccum* (emmer); tentatively identified due to poor preservation. The samples also included small numbers of the charred remains of Caryophyllaceae (pink/carnation family) and Viciae (vetch family). One sample contained a charred seed of an indeterminate taxon.

8 STATEMENT OF POTENTIAL

8.1 Summary of results and stratigraphic potential

- 8.1.1 The results of the excavation have been successful in its stated aims and have examined the archaeological features identified by the evaluation in the north-western area of development area.
- 8.1.2 The excavation has led to a better understanding of the late prehistoric and Romano-British archaeology preserved within the site. Archaeological features were identified in Area 1, no archaeological features were recorded in Area 2. Features within Area 2 interpreted during



the evaluation (CA 2014) as archaeological in nature were proven to be wholly geological in origin once the larger area had been opened up beyond the confines of the original evaluation trench.

- 8.1.3 The earliest phase of excavated features produced evidence of Iron Age field systems, associated structures and pit. These features contained a small assemblages of artefacts and ecofacts, which do serve to date the features, but suggest that they may lie at some distance from the main area of settlement. The largest finds assemblage came from pit 1014, a small feature that contained waste pottery, animal bone and stone. These materials had been placed on the base of the pit with a dark charcoal rich material backfilled over the artefacts. Four-post structures are a relatively common feature on Iron Age sites and are widely interpreted as granaries or other storages structures (Poole 1984); the two recorded during the excavations (1088 and 1089) are of Iron Age date and the recovery of charred cereal remains helps to support this interpretation. The four-post structures and other small pits were located close to two Iron Age field boundary ditches, when viewed as a whole these features may represent small scale agricultural activity at the edge of a field or paddock. The deposits from the pits, four-post structures and fragments from a rotary quernstone from a field ditch do hint at the presence of local settlement and tentatively to the processing of cereals close to the site, which in this case may lie further to the north outside the current development area.
- 8.1.4 A reassessment of the pottery from the previous evaluation has also demonstrated that features that were previously dated to the medieval period, can now be shown to date to the Iron Age and belong to the archaeological activity revealed within Area 1 belonging to this period.
- 8.1.5 A substantial enclosure of possible later prehistoric and/or Romano-British date was identified by LiDAR survey in 2005 (Historic England, Pastscape monument no. 1579857) 1 km to the east of the site and recent work at Melksham Campus (Wessex Archaeology 2018), 1.2 km to the north-west, identified late prehistoric activity these local sites indicate that the area was occupied in late prehistory and adds a wider context to the features recorded during the excavations.
- 8.1.6 Limited evidence for Romano-British activity was found during the excavation and was represented by two ditches that probably form part of the wider Romano-British field systems. Few finds came from these features and they probably represent field boundary ditches set at some distance from areas of settlement. The larger ditch was aligned NE-SW and is approximately at right angles to field systems record as cropmarks to the east of Bath Road. Parts of these field systems and associated settlement features have recently been recorded at Melksham Town FC (1.2 km to the east, Powell *et al* 2018). Recent work recorded a Roman villa and associated features 500 m to the north of the site at Snowberry Lane (Orion Heritage 2019). The features recorded in the development area fall within the hinterland of this villa and at some distance from the field system to the east of Bath Road and could be related, but, it is not possible to directly establish the relationship between them.
- 8.1.7 The evaluation recorded ditches and pits within the footprint of Area 2, however no features were identified during the excavation. It is likely that the features excavated in the evaluation represented changes in the underlying geology; the wider surface area of the excavation area showed a number of colour differences in the geology which in the confines of a trench may have looked like archaeological features.



Recommendations and proposed methodologies for analysis

- 8.1.8 This assessment has allowed for the main phases of archaeological activity to be understood and no further work is required on the stratigraphic sequence and context records from the site. Information on the archaeological features presented in this report could be edited and used for any short publication proposed for this site.

8.2 Finds potential

- 8.2.1 This is a very small assemblage, in relatively poor condition, and its archaeological potential is correspondingly limited. The majority of it belongs to the later prehistoric period, with Romano-British material very limited in quantity and range. Medieval pottery was recorded from the earlier evaluation, but no further sherds or archaeological features dating to this period were recovered or identified during the mitigation.

- 8.2.2 The pottery provides the primary dating evidence for the Site, but includes very little diagnostic material, and dating relies heavily on fabric type rather than more chronologically distinctive vessel forms. Further analysis would not help to refine this provisional dating. The animal bone is poorly preserved, and fragment count is high in relation to actual bone count. No further analysis is warranted on this small group, nor on the minimal quantities of other finds recovered, some of which are of relatively recent date.

Recommendations and proposed methodologies for analysis

- 8.2.3 Information on the finds presented in this report could be incorporated in any short publication proposed for the Site. No illustration is required.

8.3 Environmental potential

- 8.3.1 The small charred plant remain assemblages recovered evidence for the existence of domestic crop-processing activities in the background; however, no deposits directly associated to plant use practices were identified. Due to the tentative identification of emmer, it is possible that the activities were carried out in prehistoric periods. However, owing to the poor preservation of the material, it is likely that the remains are residual. Due to the reduced volume of the assemblage, little further information may be gathered from the environmental evidence.

Recommendations and proposed methodologies for analysis

- 8.3.2 The assemblages recovered so far have little potential and require no further analysis but should be included in prospective reports and publications. The extracted charred plant remains and flots are recommended for retention and the residues for discard.

9 UPDATED PROJECT DESIGN

9.1 Summary of recommendations for analysis

- 9.1.1 The stratigraphic results from the excavation have been adequately assessed by this report and no further work is necessary. No further work is required on the finds or environmental remains. Information from this report can be incorporated into the proposed publication.

9.2 Proposals for publication

- 9.2.1 The results of the archaeological strip, map and sample excavation warrant publication via a short note and accompanying figure in a local journal. In this case the most likely journal would be *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*.



9.3 Management structure

- 9.3.1 Wessex Archaeology operates a project management system. The team will be headed by a Post-excavation Manager, who will assume ultimate responsibility for the implementation and execution of the project specification as outlined in the Updated Project Design, and the achievement of performance targets, be they academic, budgetary, or scheduled.
- 9.3.2 The Post-excavation Manager may delegate specific aspects of the project to other key staff, who will both supervise others and have a direct input into the compilation of the report. They may also undertake direct liaison with external consultants and specialists who are contributing to the publication report, and the museum named as the recipient of the project archive. The Post-Excavation Manager will have a major input into how the publication report is written. They will define and control the scope and form of the post-excavation programme.
- 9.3.3 The Post-excavation Manager will be assisted by the Senior Research Manager, who will help to ensure that the report meets internal quality standards as defined in Wessex Archaeology's guidelines.

10 STORAGE AND CURATION

10.1 Museum

- 10.1.1 The archive resulting from the excavation is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. The site falls within the collecting area of Wiltshire Heritage Museum, Devizes, because the museum is currently not accepting archives for deposition, the archive will be temporarily curated at the offices of Wessex Archaeology, Salisbury, until such time as it can be deposited. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

10.2 Preparation of the archive

- 10.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Wiltshire Museum, Devizes, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 10.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the site code: 209440, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:
- 02 cardboard boxes or airtight plastic boxes of artefacts and ecofacts, ordered by material type
 - 01 files/document cases of paper records and A3/A4 graphics

10.3 Selection policy

- 10.3.1 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.
- 10.3.2 In this instance, the metalwork from topsoil (all likely to be of post-medieval/modern date) has already been discarded, and other metalwork (horseshoe nail), possible limestone building stone, and Romano-British ceramic roof tile could also be targeted for discard on



the basis of lack of further research potential. The pottery is of limited potential, but retention for long-term curation is recommended.

10.3.3 Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.

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

10.4 Security copy

10.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, 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.

10.5 OASIS

10.5.1 An OASIS online record (<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>) has been initiated, with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.

11 COPYRIGHT

11.1 Archive and report copyright

11.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. 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 conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

11.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

11.2 Third party data copyright

11.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Environmental Data

Table 5 Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

Feature	Context	Sample	Vol (l)	Flot (ml)	Bioturbation proxies	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Charred Other Notes	Charcoal > 2mm (ml)	Charcoal	Other	Comments (Preservation)
1020 (Gr1088)	1021	1001	8	15	70%, C, E	B	-	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> , <i>Triticum</i> sp., Triticeae	-	-	<1ml	Mature	-	Poor, some iron coating
1022 (Gr 1088)	1023	1002	5	10	80%, C, E, I	B	-	cf. <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> , <i>Triticum</i> sp., Triticeae	-	-	Trace	Mature	-	Poor, some iron coating
1024 (Gr 1088)	1025	1003	5	8	10%, E	B	-	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> , cf. <i>Triticum</i> sp., Triticeae	-	-	<1ml	Mature	-	Poor, some iron coating
1016 (Gr 1088)	1017	1004	2	1.5	80%, I	C	-	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> , cf. <i>Triticum</i> sp., Triticeae	-	-	Trace	Mature	-	Poor
1014	1015	1005	33	250	40%, C, I	C	-	Triticeae	-	-	90ml	Mature	Moll-t	Poor
1014	1028	1006	92	400	60%, C, E, I	C	-	Triticeae	-	-	70ml	Mature	Moll-t	Poor
1029 (Gr 1089)	1030	1007	20	50	20%, C, E	C	-	<i>Triticum</i> sp., <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> , Triticeae	-	-	20ml	Mature	Moll-t	Poor
1031 (Gr 1089)	1032	1008	10	15	80%, C, E, I	-	-	-	-	-	Trace	Mature	-	-



1033 (Gr 1089)	1034	1009	20	30	80%, C, E, I	B	-	<i>Triticum cf. dicoccum</i> , Triticeae	-	-	2ml	Mature, some iron coating	-	Poor, some iron coating
1035 (Gr 1089)	1036	1010	8	10	70%, C, E	-	-	-	-	-	<1ml	Mature, some iron coating	-	-
1055 (Gr 1055)	1056	1011	40	60	80%, C, E, I	C	-	Triticeae	C	Caryophyllaceae, indet	<1ml	Mature	-	Poor
1074 (Gr 1090)	1075	1012	40	50	80%, C	C	-	<i>Triticum cf. dicoccum</i> , <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> , Triticeae	C	Vicieae	<1ml	Mature, some iron coating	Moll-t	Poor, some iron coating
1080 (Gr 1093)	1079	1013	30	35	80%, C, E	C	-	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> , Triticeae	-	-	4ml	Mature + roundwood, some iron coating	Moll-t	Poor

Key: B= 9-5, C = <5; Bioturbation proxies: Roots (%), Uncharred seeds (scale of abundance), E = earthworm eggs, I = insects; Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs.



Appendix 2: Oasis Form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-345434

Project details

Project name	Land South of Western Way, Bowerhill Melksham, Wiltshire
Short description of the project	<p>Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey Bristol to undertake archaeological mitigation works comprising an archaeological strip, map and sample excavation on land South of Western Way, Bowerhill, Melksham, centred on NGR 391180 162610. The work was carried out as a condition of planning permission granted by Wiltshire Council (16/01123/OUT) for the residential development of up to 235 dwellings, primary school with early years nursery and open space provision. The excavation, undertaken in September and October 2018, was the final stage of a programme of archaeological works relating to the wider development area, which included a heritage assessment, geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation which identified a cluster of features towards the north-western edge of the development area. Two areas were investigated during the excavation and produced evidence of Iron Age and Romano-British date, including field ditches, pits, and two four-post structures. The main phase of activity dates to the Iron Age, and this activity may have begun during the early to middle Iron Age. Pottery from the features has been dated to the 8-4th centuries BC, and more broadly to the Iron Age period. The arrangement of pits, structures and ditches suggest small scale activity close to a field margin. The four-post structures and recovery of parts of a quernstone may be considered to tentatively indicate crop processing or storage close to the excavation area, possibly towards the north or north-east, and most likely outside the development area. Limited evidence for Romano-British activity was recorded and suggests that during the 1st-4th centuries AD the development area was largely rural agricultural land. The Romano-British ditches may be associated with field systems recorded as cropmarks to the east, but this remains uncertain due to the limits of the investigation</p>
Project dates	Start: 24-09-2018 End: 15-10-2018
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	209440 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	16/01123/OUT - Planning Application No
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 2 - Operations to a depth less than 0.25m
Monument type	DITCH Iron Age
Monument type	PIT Iron Age
Monument type	POST HOLE Iron Age
Monument type	DITCH Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Iron Age
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Iron Age
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman



Significant Finds	ROOF TILE Roman
Significant Finds	GREENSAND ROTARY QUERN Roman
Significant Finds	METALWORK - HORSESHOE NAIL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	METALWORK - LARGE MASONRY NAIL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	METALWORK -ROD Post Medieval
Significant Finds	METALWORK - IMPLEMENT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	METAL WORK - FIDDLE-KEY Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Open-area excavation"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WILTSHIRE WEST WILTSHIRE MELKSHAM WITHOUT Land South of Western Way, Bowerhill Melksham, Wiltshire
Postcode	SN12 6QL
Study area	1800 Square metres
Site coordinates	391180 162610 391180 00 00 N 162610 00 00 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 38.7m Max: 38.9m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Wiltshire Council
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Damian De Rosa
Project supervisor	Darryl Freer
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Taylor Wimpey Bristol

Project archives

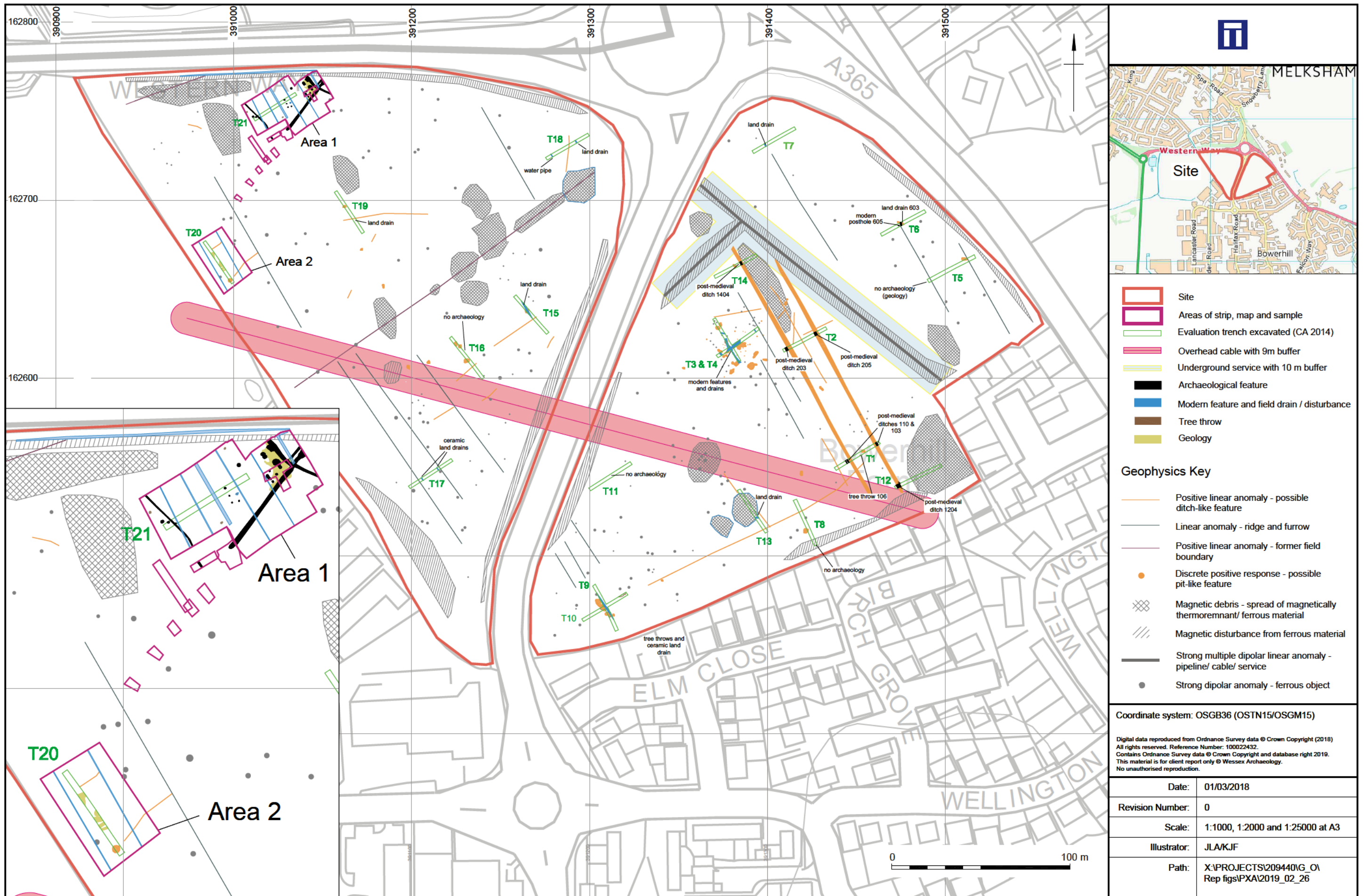
Physical Archive recipient	Wiltshire Museum Devizes
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Metal","Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	Wiltshire Museum Devizes
Digital Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Metal","Worked stone/lithics"



Digital Media available	"Database","GIS","Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Wiltshire Museum Devizes
Paper Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Metal","Worked stone/lithics"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Plan","Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land South of Western Way, Bowerhill, Melksham - Post-excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Powell, J.
Other bibliographic details	209440.03
Date	2019
Issuer or publisher	Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Salisbury
Description	WA A4 standard format post excavation assessment report with figures and plates



Location of site, showing previous evaluation trenches and areas of strip map and sample

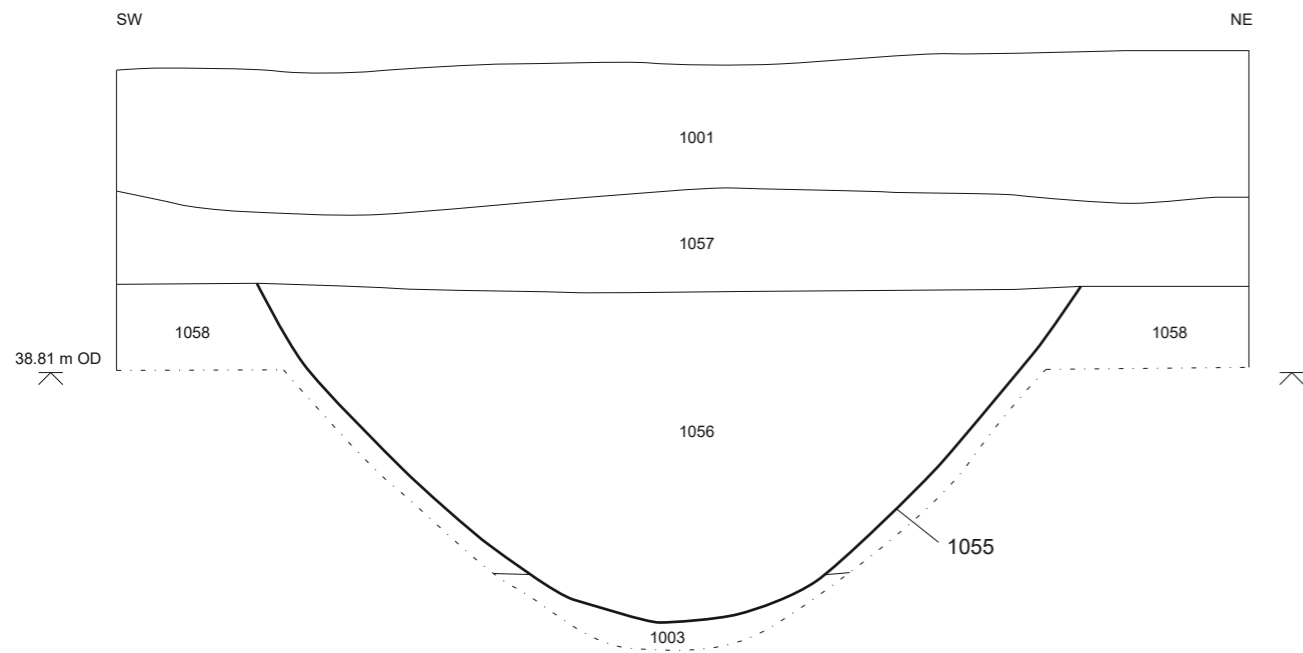
Figure 1



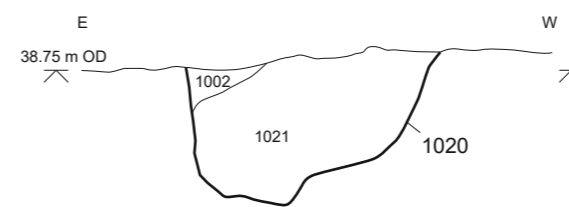
Plan of excavated area and features

Figure 2

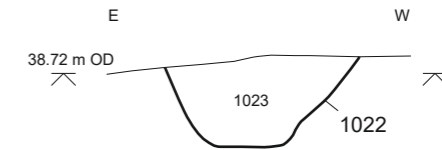
South-east facing baulk section of ditch Group 1092



North facing section of posthole 1020, Group 1088



North facing section of posthole 1020, Group 1088



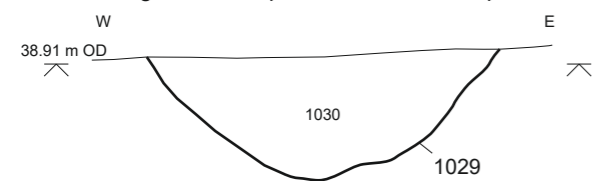
North facing section of posthole 1024, Group 1088



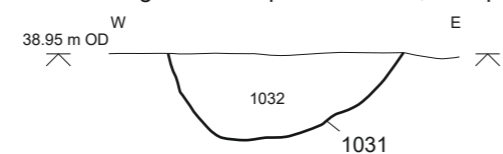
Profile of machined away posthole 1016, Group 1088



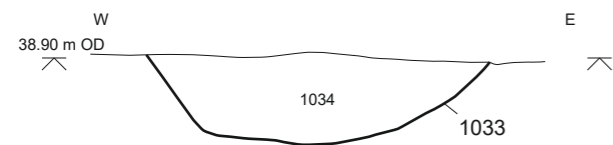
South facing section of posthole 1029, Group 1089



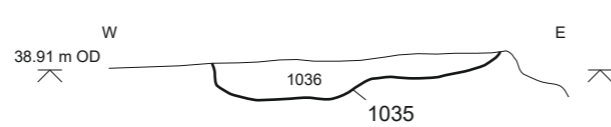
South facing section of posthole 1031, Group 1089



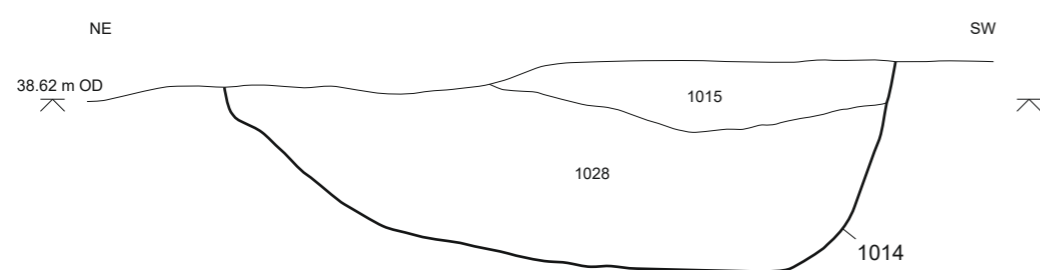
South facing section of posthole 1033, Group 1089



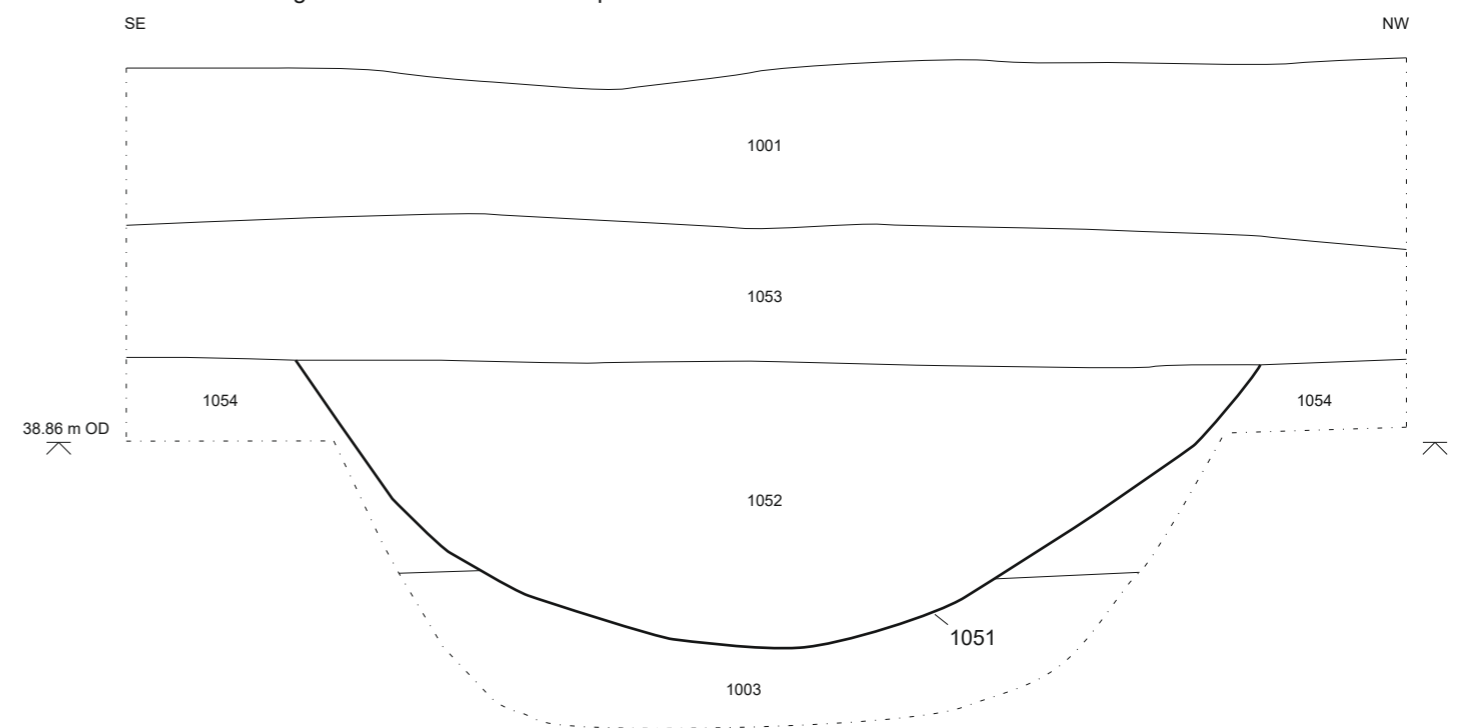
South facing section of posthole 1035, Group 1089



North-west facing section of pit 1014



North-east facing baulk section of ditch Group 1090



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Plate 1: Area 1 viewed from the south-west, scales 2 m



Plate 2: Area 2 viewed from the south-east, scales 2 m


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Plate 3: South-east facing section of ditch 1092, scale 1 m



Plate 4: Four-post structure 1089 viewed from the south-east, scales 2 m


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Plate 5: Post packing in four-post structure 1088, scale 0.5 m



Plate 6: Post packing in four-post structure 1089, scale 0.2 m



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Plate 7: Pit 1014 viewed from the north-west, scale 0.5 m



Plate 8: North-east facing section of ditch 1090, scale 1 m and 0.5 m

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