



Nunton Farm  
Nunton, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**Nunton Farm,  
Nunton, Wiltshire**

**Report of an Archaeological Watching Brief**

Prepared for:  
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## QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE		ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	<b>S/09/0750</b>	NGR		<b>415550 125500</b>	

VERSION	STATUS*	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FILE
		PH	SF			\\PROJECTSERVER\WESSEX\PROJECTS\75340\REPORT
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\* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

**NUNTON FARM, NUNTON,  
WILTSHIRE**

**Report of an Archaeological Watching Brief**

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**NUNTON FARM, NUNTON,  
WILTSHIRE****Report of an Archaeological Watching Brief****Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr. C. Burrows, of Damen Associates Ltd. to undertake an archaeological watching brief during construction at Nunton Farm, Nunton, Wiltshire. The watching brief was required as a condition of the planning permission granted by Wiltshire Council for the construction of a dirty water lagoon.

Two negative lynchets, former probable prehistoric field boundaries, were identified, which indicated that the site lies within an extensive former chequer-board field system that is known from the area. Similar features have been plotted from aerial photographs but have not previously been traced across the area of the site.

The field system is likely to relate to Iron Age and Romano-British settlement activity that is known from the area. A chalk quarry pit was located within one of the negative lynchets, suggesting that they were directly related and possibly contemporary.

The quarry pit, indicative of an episode of small scale chalk extraction, possibly for building work or track repairs, was backfilled with material that indicates an initial period of weathering and stabilisation followed by activity associated with Romano-British arable farming with associated field clearance (stone picking) debris that contained Romano-British tile and pottery. The sequence was concluded by a change of land use to pasture, suggested by a developed possibly post-Roman/medieval turf line, and final reversion to arable agriculture, itself preceded by levelling of banks around the quarry.

**NUNTON FARM, NUNTON,  
WILTSHIRE****Report of an Archaeological watching Brief****Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by Mr. C. Burrows of Damen Associates Ltd. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Mr. S. Martin, tenant farmer at Nunton Farm, for his interest in the work and cooperation in its successful conclusion.

The field work was undertaken by Susan Clelland and Phil Harding, who also compiled this report. Comments on the finds were made by Lorraine Mephram and the illustrations were produced by Kenneth Lymer. The project managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.

**NUNTON FARM, NUNTON,  
WILTSHIRE****Report of an Archaeological Watching Brief****1 INTRODUCTION****1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Mr Burrows of Damen Associates Ltd (the Client), to undertake an archaeological watching brief during development on land at Nunton Farm, Nunton Drove, Nunton, Salisbury (**Figure 1**), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 415550 125500 (hereafter 'the Site').

1.1.2 The development comprised the construction of a dirty water lagoon and associated works. A condition was attached to the terms of the planning permission (S/09/0750) requiring that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the initial stages of ground work.

1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared (Wessex Archaeology 2010) setting out the methodologies and standards to be employed during the implementation of the watching brief. This document was submitted to and approved by the Assistant County Archaeologist at Wiltshire Council prior to any development commencing.

**1.2 The Site, location and geology**

1.2.1 The Site is located to the south of Nunton village at Nunton Farm, a 500 hectare mixed dairy and arable farm held on tenancy from the Longford Estate. The area for the lagoon was positioned to the south of the farm and east of Nunton Drove (**Figure 1**). The surrounding land was maintained as pasture defined by mature hedgerows and chalk tracks.

1.2.2 The Site lay on a gentle north west facing slope of the River Ebble valley at approximately 70m aOD. The land rises more steeply to the south east to Bodenham Hill Plantation which occupies a spur of land that overlooks the confluence of the rivers Ebble and Avon.

1.2.3 The British Geological Survey map for the area (1:50,000 Solid and Drift Series, sheet 298) indicates that the underlying geology of the Site consists of Upper Chalk.

1.2.4 The Site is within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

2.1.1 The Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record lists 12 sites within a 1km radius of the Site. Most of these have been plotted from aerial photographs and are thought likely to be of prehistoric date.

2.1.2 Elements of a complex field system are known from ploughed out lynchet features plotted from aerial photographs that extend south west from the

immediate environs of the Site. These former land boundaries are undated but are indicative of 'Celtic' fields of Iron Age or Romano-British date although others may relate to more recent ridge and furrow agriculture.

- 2.1.3 Parts of an Early Iron Age enclosure containing storage pits and settlement were excavated approximately 500m south east of the Site, immediately south of Bodenham Hill Plantation in 1976 (SMR SU12NE204).
- 2.1.4 Two Iron Age univallate hillforts are also recorded in close proximity to the Site at Odstock Copse to the west and Clearbury Ring to the south. Both are Scheduled Monuments.
- 2.1.5 In addition, a rectangular enclosure visible on aerial photography is recorded to the west of the Site.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Aims and scope**

- 3.1.1 The watching brief set out to provide further information relating to the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains and to investigate and record these within the proposed footprint of the development area. The results may be used to interpret former land use across the wider landscape.

#### **3.2 Fieldwork**

- 3.2.1 A continuous archaeological presence was maintained as topsoil/ploughsoil was stripped from the underlying chalk within the development area.
- 3.2.2 A number of archaeological features were observed and recorded commensurate with the scale of work and using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system. Of these, one was of sufficient importance to require further investigation by excavation and recording in more detail. This was possible without causing unreasonable delay to the groundworks programme but sufficient to recover artefacts, dating evidence and stratigraphic detail.
- 3.2.3 Written, drawn, and photographic elements were included within the Site archive as conditions allowed. Detailed descriptions of individual contexts are included in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2.4 In addition spoil heaps were scanned to recover additional archaeological material.

### **4 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Soils and Geology**

- 4.1.1 The entire Site was covered by an even depth of dark grey-brown silt loam plough soil, approximately 0.20m thick. Occasional fragments of post-medieval tile and ubiquitous, dark blue patinated worked flints with post depositional edge damage of undated but probable Late Neolithic and Bronze Age date were noted, but not collected.



- 4.1.2 The plough soil directly overlay the natural chalk in most places. The surface of the bedrock was crossed by sub-parallel periglacial stripes, aligned NW-SE. These are a common feature of chalk sites across much of southern England. The surface of the chalk was scored by modern plough marks aligned approximately north to south. This truncation of the natural bedrock indicates that the plough soil is of insufficient thickness to preserve any extensive undisturbed deposits.

## **4.2 Lynchets**

- 4.2.1 Two shallow linear hollows [110, 112] filled with deposits of heavily leached grey-brown silty loam (111, 113) and mixed with sub angular chalk pellets, approximately 10-20 mm, were overlain by the plough soil. These slight features could be observed repeatedly in the sections, as deeper material beneath the plough soil, as stripping progressed across the Site.
- 4.2.2 Feature 110 was aligned approximately N-S and measured 7m wide and up to 0.20m deep, but could only be traced near the southern edge of the Site. The general trend of the feature is consistent with that plotted for lynchets from aerial photographs.
- 4.2.3 Feature 112 was aligned approximately E-W and positioned towards the north end of the Site. It measured approximately 25m wide and 0.30m deep. This feature was more clearly defined at the eastern edge of the area where the gradient of the natural north facing slope was steeper, allowing the development of a more clearly defined negative lynchet. This feature can be compared with another with a similar alignment which has been plotted from aerial photographs in the field to the west.

## **4.3 Chalk quarry pit**

- 4.3.1 A large circular feature [109], approximately 8.50m in diameter and with a maximum depth of 2.30m was exposed towards the south end of the Site. This feature, probably a small scale chalk quarry pit, was located on the line of lynchet 110, suggesting that there was a direct relationship between the two features.
- 4.3.2 The quarry pit was sectioned by a machine-dug slot, 2.0m wide, to establish the stratigraphic sequence and recover dating material.
- 4.3.3 The profile indicated that the quarry comprised a double lobed feature, with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. The northern end was deeper with an upper shelf, 1.50m below the surface, at the southern end.
- 4.3.4 The sequence of deposits was well defined in the central part of the feature but coalesced and became more indistinct towards the edges.
- 4.3.5 The primary deposits (108) were represented by alternating bands of fresh chalk rubble that had weathered from the sides of the pit, and dark brown soils that were themselves capped by a layer of well sorted soil (107).
- 4.3.6 An overlying deposit of densely packed, open framework flint nodules (106), probably derived from field clearance (stone picking), contained fragments of animal bone, Romano-British tile and residual, heavily edge damaged prehistoric worked flints.

- 4.3.7 This activity was succeeded by a deposit of dark brown silty loam (105) with well rounded chalk pellets, probably plough soil derived from a period of arable farming.
- 4.3.8 This layer was replaced by a developed soil horizon (103) and associated sorted horizon (104) that had migrated down through the profile. This indicates a long term period of stabilisation, most likely permanent down-land/ pasture.
- 4.3.9 This deposit was overlain by a band of poorly sorted sub angular chalk rubble (102), up to 0.35 m thick, regarded as deliberate levelling of spoil banks that may once have existed around the former quarry edge.
- 4.3.10 The upper parts of the fill comprised dark/medium grey brown silty loam (101) with chalk pellets and are indicative of the final infilling by post-medieval/medieval colluvium/ploughsoil.

## 5 FINDS

- 5.1.1 A very small quantity of finds was recovered during the watching brief, deriving from ploughsoil/colluvium layers (101, 105), and from a stone-picking debris layer (106). One item was found unstratified. The assemblage includes material of prehistoric and Romano-British date.
- 5.1.2 All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and the results are presented in **Table 1**.
- 5.1.3 Prehistoric material comprises two pieces of worked flint (flake and core), which were residual finds within the ploughsoil/colluvium layer 105. Both pieces are patinated and edge damaged.
- 5.1.4 Other datable finds (pottery, ceramic building material) are Romano-British. The three pottery sherds are all coarsewares (greyware and oxidised wares) and, as undiagnostic body sherds, cannot be dated more closely within the period. None of the ceramic building material is attributable to specific type, but comprises one brick and three tile fragments.
- 5.1.5 The animal bone, which came mostly from the stone-picking debris layer (106) includes identifiable sheep/goat bones, and is of unknown date.

**Table 1: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)**

Context	Animal Bone	CBM	Flint	Pottery
101				1/11
105	1/11	1/282	2/259	1/3
106	21/60	3/328		
unstratified				1/1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>22/71</b>	<b>4/610</b>	<b>2/259</b>	<b>3/15</b>

CBM = ceramic building material

## 6 DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Discussion

- 6.1.1 The results of the watching brief have provided archaeological evidence to suggest that the Site lies within the extensive, former chequer-board field system that is known from the area. These former field boundaries, known from probable ploughed out lynchets, have been plotted from aerial photographs but have not previously been traced across the area of the Site.
- 6.1.2 The date of this field system has not been established, but is likely to relate to Iron Age and Romano-British settlement activity that is known from the area. Some tentative confirmation of this speculative dating may be derived from the discovery of a chalk quarry pit that was recorded in the watching brief area.
- 6.1.3 The quarry was located within a slight negative lynchet, suggesting that the two were directly related and possibly contemporary.
- 6.1.4 The stratigraphy of the backfilled quarry documents an episode of small scale chalk extraction, possibly for building work or track repairs, an initial period of weathering and stabilisation followed by Romano-British arable farming with associated field clearance. The sequence was concluded by a change of land use to pasture, suggested by a developed possibly post-Roman/medieval turf line, and final reversion to arable agriculture, itself preceded by levelling of banks around the quarry.
- 6.1.5 The results of the watching brief have provided unexpected, but interesting indications of the former land use of this area that is likely to be replicated across much of Southern England.

## 7 ARCHIVE

- 7.1.1 The paper archive is contained within a single A4 ring binder and comprises
- a printed copy of the Written Scheme of Investigation
  - the Risk Assessment
  - location graphics, aerial photographs, SMR plot
  - a single A 4 sheet of digital photographic record
  - 13 A4 sheets of context record data
  - A4 graphics record sheet
  - Two A3 sheets of graphics
- 7.1.2 The archive is currently housed at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under the Project Reference Number 75340. It is intended that the archive should ultimately be deposited with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

## 8 REFERENCES

### 8.1 Bibliography

Wessex Archaeology 2010: *Nunton Farm, Nunton, Wiltshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief. Report Reference: 75340.01*

**APPENDIX 1: TABLE OF EXCAVATED CONTEXTS**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Cut/Fill</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpret</b>
101	Fill	Dark-medium grey-brown silty loam, with chalk pellets and scattered rare larger pieces, up to 30mm	0.85 max	Ploughsoil/colluvium
102	Fill	Sub angular chalk rubble, 10-20mm, mainly in central cone in dark-medium grey brown silty loam matrix	0.35	Field levelling
103	Fill	Dark brown silty loam, well sorted	0.20	Old turf line
104	Fill	Sub-angular flints in dark brown silty loam matrix	0.10	Sorted horizon
105	Fill	Dark brown silty loam with well rounded chalk pellets, < 5mm	0.30	Ploughsoil/colluvium
106	Fill	Open framework, densely packed flint nodules, up to 200 mm	0.30	Stone picking debris
107	Fill	Dark brown silty loam, with some scattered flints.		Stabilisation horizon
108	Fill	Alternating bands of angular chalk rubble and dark brown silty loam soils	0.60	Primary silts
109	Cut	Circular double lobed pit with steep sloping sides and flat base.	2.3	Chalk quarry pit
110	Cut	Shallow linear feature, c.7m across, aligned N-S	0.20	Negative lynchet
111	Fill	Grey brown silty loam with chalk pellets c.10mm	0.20	Ploughsoil/colluvium
112	Cut	Broad, c.25m, shallow feature aligned E-W	0.30	Negative lynchet
113	Fill	Grey brown silty loam with chalk pellets c.10mm	0.30	Ploughsoil/colluvium

**APPENDIX 2: OASIS RECORD FORM**
**8.2 OASIS ID: wessexar1-83280**
**Project details**

Project name Nunton Farm, Nunton, Wiltshire

Short description of the project Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr. C. Burrows, of Damen Associates Ltd. to undertake an archaeological watching brief during construction at Nunton Farm, Nunton, Wiltshire. The watching brief was required as a condition of the planning permission granted by Wiltshire Council for the construction of a dirty water lagoon. Two negative lynchets, former probable prehistoric field boundaries, were identified, which indicated the site lies within an extensive, former chequer-board field system that is known from the area. Similar features have been plotted from aerial photographs but have not previously been traced across the area of the site. The field system is likely to relate to Iron Age and Romano-British settlement activity that is known from the area. A chalk quarry pit was located within one of the negative lynchets, suggesting that they were directly related and possibly contemporary. The quarry pit, indicative of an episode of small scale chalk extraction, possibly for building work or track repairs, was backfilled with material that indicates an initial period of weathering and stabilisation followed by activity associated with Romano-British arable farming with associated field clearance (stone picking) debris that contained Romano-British tile and pottery. The sequence was concluded by a change of land use to pasture, suggested by a developed possibly post-Roman/medieval turf line, and final reversion to arable agriculture, itself preceded by levelling of banks around the quarry.

Project dates Start: 02-08-2010 End: 30-09-2010

Previous/future work No / No

Any project codes associated reference 75340 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland

Monument type      PIT Roman

Significant Finds      POTTERY Roman

Investigation type      'Watching Brief'

Prompt                  Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

### Project location

Country                  England

Site location              WILTSHIRE SALISBURY ALDERBURY Nunton Farm

Postcode                  SP5 4HZ

Study area                  0.60 Hectares

Site coordinates          SU 15550 25500 51.0281179498 -1.7782386268 51 01 41 N 001  
46 41 W Point

Height OD / Depth      Min: 70.00m Max: 71.00m

### Project creators

Name                      of Wessex Archaeology  
Organisation

Project                      brief Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District  
originator                      Archaeologist)

Project                      design Wessex Archaeology  
originator

Project                      Sue Farr  
director/manager

Project supervisor      PA Harding

Type                          of Developer  
sponsor/funding  
body

Name of Damen Associates Ltd.  
sponsor/funding  
body

### Project archives

Physical Archive Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum  
recipient

Physical Contents 'Animal Bones','Ceramics'

Digital Archive Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum  
recipient

Digital available Media 'Database','Images raster / digital photography','Survey','Text'

Paper Archive Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum  
recipient

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper available Media 'Context sheet','Drawing','Matrices','Microfilm','Notebook  
Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Plan','Report','Section' -

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Nunton Farm, Nunton, Wiltshire

Author(s)/Editor(s) Harding, P

Other bibliographic 75340  
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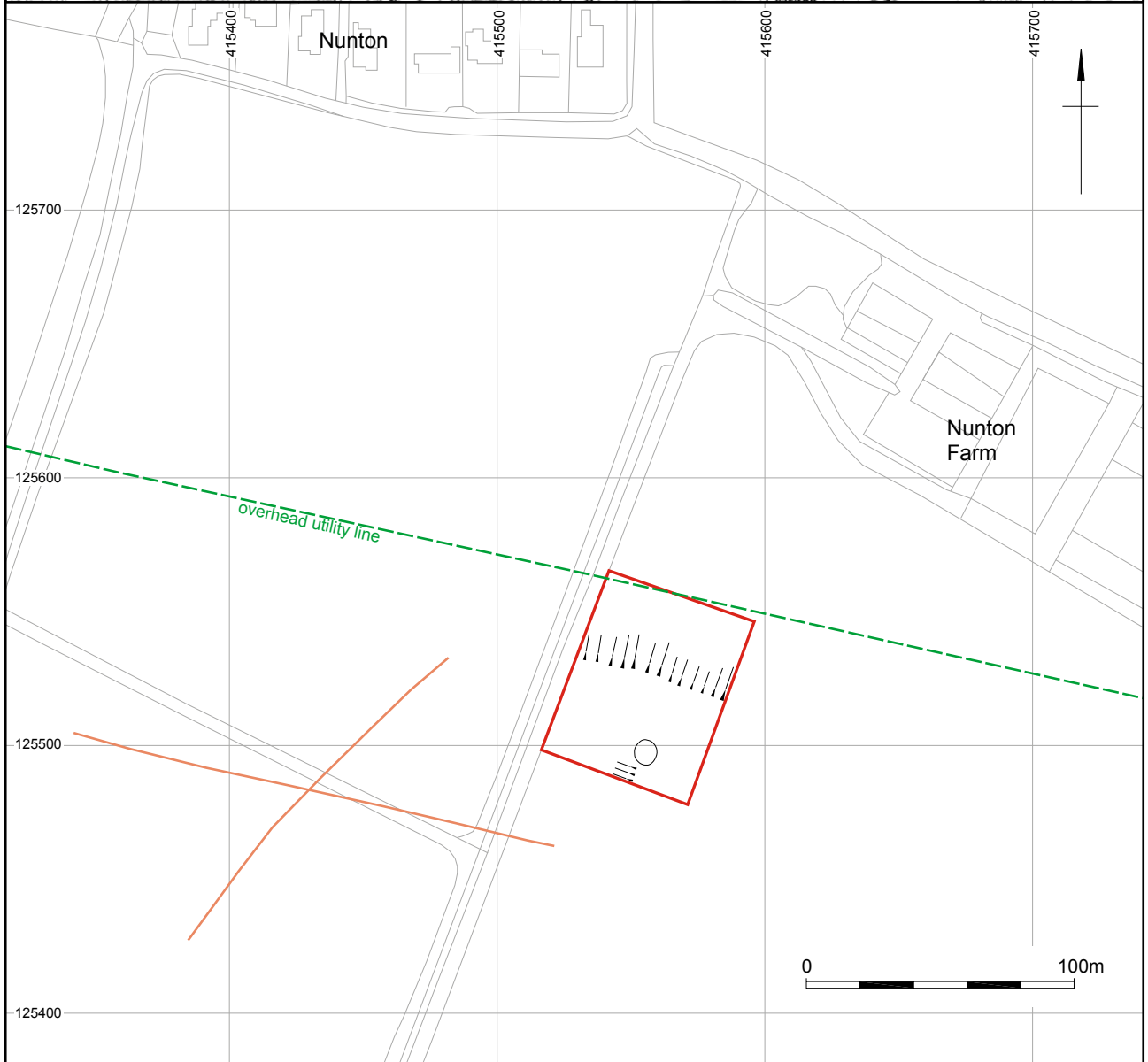
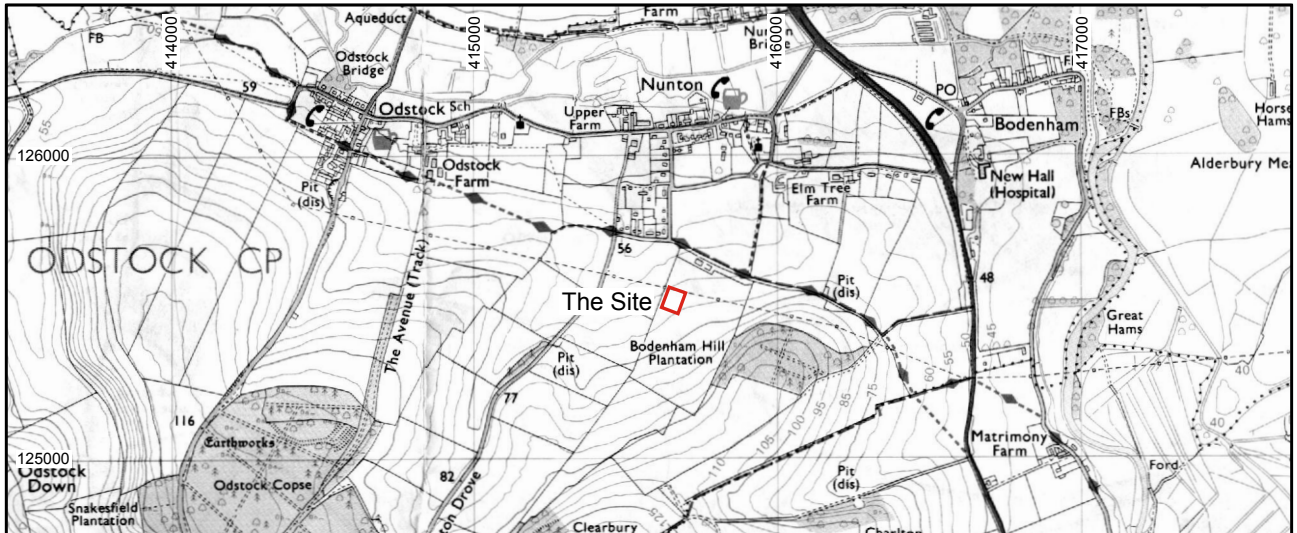
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- The Site
- Archaeological feature
- Cropmark

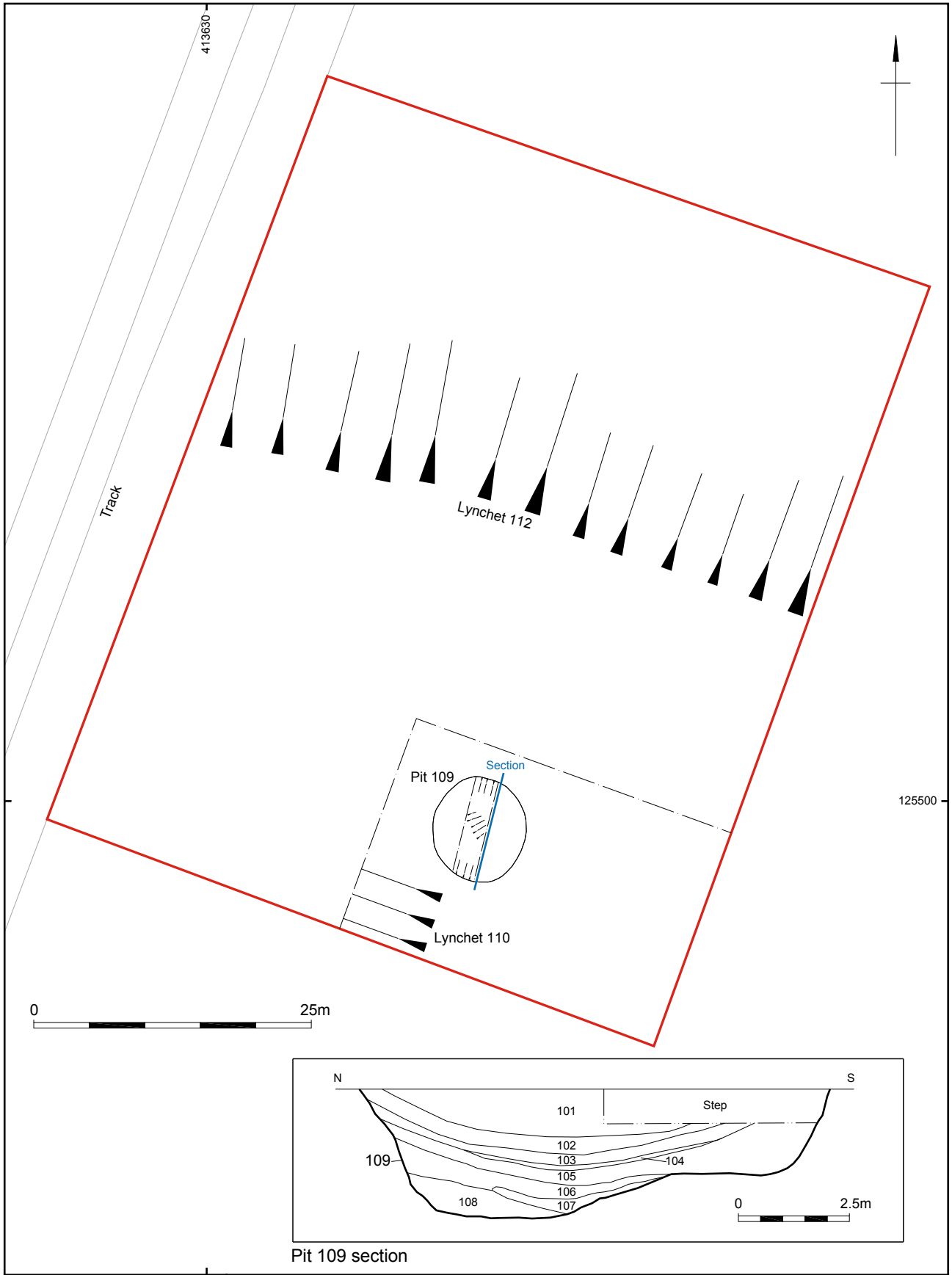


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Scale:	1:25,000 & 1:2500	Illustrator:	KL
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Site location plan

Figure 1



Pit 109 section

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	Scale:	Plan 1:500 & Section 1:100	Illustrator:	KL
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Detail of site and section

Figure 2



**WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED.**

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For more information visit [www.wessexarch.co.uk](http://www.wessexarch.co.uk)

