

MILLBROOK GARDENS, CASTLE CARY
SOMERSET

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Report no 149

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SUMMARY

On the 27th and 28th November 2000 Foundations Archaeology undertook an Archaeological Evaluation on land at Millbrook Gardens, Castle Cary, Somerset (NGR: ST 639 321). The project was commissioned by South Somerset Homes.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of two 20m by 1.6m trenches across the proposed development area. However Trench 2 could only be 16m in length; due to the presence of a large concrete floor to the east of the trench. Post medieval and modern disturbance was identified in both trenches.

No archaeological features were present in either of the trenches although Trench 1 contained a Victorian bottle pit, the remains of a modern brick wall and the posthole of a telegraph pole (now removed). Trench 2 contained a soakaway infilled with industrial waste and a modern pit filled with building debris.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and c. AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

OS

Ordnance Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology between the 27th and 28th November 2000 on land at Millbrook Gardens, off Lower Woodstock Street, Castle Cary, Somerset (NGR: ST 639 321). The work was commissioned by South Somerset Homes.
- 1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in response to an application submitted to South Somerset District Council for the erection of nine houses on the land at Millbrook Gardens (planning application reference 00/00237). The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project specification prepared by Somerset County Council. The work was carried out in accordance with IFA *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (1994). The programme of archaeological works was undertaken in accordance with the principals of Planning Policy Guidance note 16, Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The proposed development site at Millbrook Gardens is situated to the east of the castle. The motte and bailey castle was probably built in the late 11th to early 12th century and destroyed after *circa* 1153.
- 2.2 From the medieval period to the 18th century the town was one of the most important cloth production and marketing centres of southeast Somerset.
- 2.3 Previous archaeological work in the area during the late 1970's produced evidence for a ditch between the inner and outer baileys and a limekiln.
- 2.4 The site lies on the lower slopes of the hillside above a small stream.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;

ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;

iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The project required the excavation of two 20m x 1.6m trenches. However Trench 2 could only be 16m due to constraints on site.
- 4.2 Topsoil and non-significant overburden was removed to the top of archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved with the use of a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket.
- 4.3 All archaeological deposits and features were subject to the appropriate levels of excavation and recording, with a minimum of a 20% sample of linear features (including all overlaps and intersections) and a minimum of a 50% sample of all non-linear features. All excavation and recording work complied with the *Foundations Archaeology Project Design* and the *Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual*.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The trenches were excavated to an average depth of 1.80m. The natural substrate consisted of a heavy yellow clay. Natural deposits were encountered at a depth of *circa* 79.50m AOD in Trench 1, *circa* 79.10m AOD in Trench 2.
- 5.2 Trench 1 was orientated north-south and excavated onto natural clay at a depth of between 1.6m to 1.8m below the modern ground surface (79.13m to 79.93m AOD). A Victorian bottle pit [106]; 0.6m in diameter by 0.5m in depth was revealed in the southern end of the trench, at a depth of 1.2m from the modern ground surface. A modern brick foundation running east-west and a modern land drain running north-south were also present at this depth (see figure 3). At the level of the natural clays a posthole containing a large wooden post was present, which on investigation was found to be the remains of a telegraph pole.
- 5.3 The trench section showed evidence of the successive dumping of building debris and industrial waste, with obvious tip-lines. All layers contained modern brick inclusions. These were capped by a layer 0.17m thick of made-up ground, consisting of building rubble and hardcore.
- 5.4 Trench 2 was orientated east-west and was excavated onto natural clay at a depth of 1.60m to 1.70m below the modern ground surface (78.835m to

79.31m AOD). The only features present comprised a soakaway running northeast-southwest across the trench, which contained frequent industrial waste inclusions and post-medieval/modern pottery sherds. To the east was a land drain, which was on a similar alignment to the soakaway. Both features were present at *circa* 1.2m from the modern ground surface. The eastern 5m of trench was not excavated below 0.80m below the modern ground surface in order to prevent damage to the land drain.

- 5.5 Trench 2 also showed evidence in section of successive dumping and obvious tiplines. The dumping around Trench 2 contained a higher proportion of industrial waste and cinder than in Trench 1 and included a large modern pit; 2.6m in diameter by 0.54m in depth, filled with cinder and industrial waste. All the levels of tipping contained modern pottery and building debris. This material had been levelled and capped by hardcore/building debris beneath tarmac.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 No evidence of medieval or earlier activity was present in either of the evaluation trenches. No artefactual evidence was recovered to suggest that features might have been present prior to the post-medieval disturbance. The evaluation has, however identified significant dumping during the modern period, including large quantities of industrial waste and cinder.
- 6.2 The ground surface within the study area does not appear greatly different in height to the surrounding areas. No buried soils were present over the natural clays, suggesting that the site had been previously stripped. This was probably to done make-up the gardens when the surrounding houses were built or to level the area of the existing BT yard.
- 6.3 Any archaeological deposits are likely only to survive on the site in the form of deeply cut negative features.

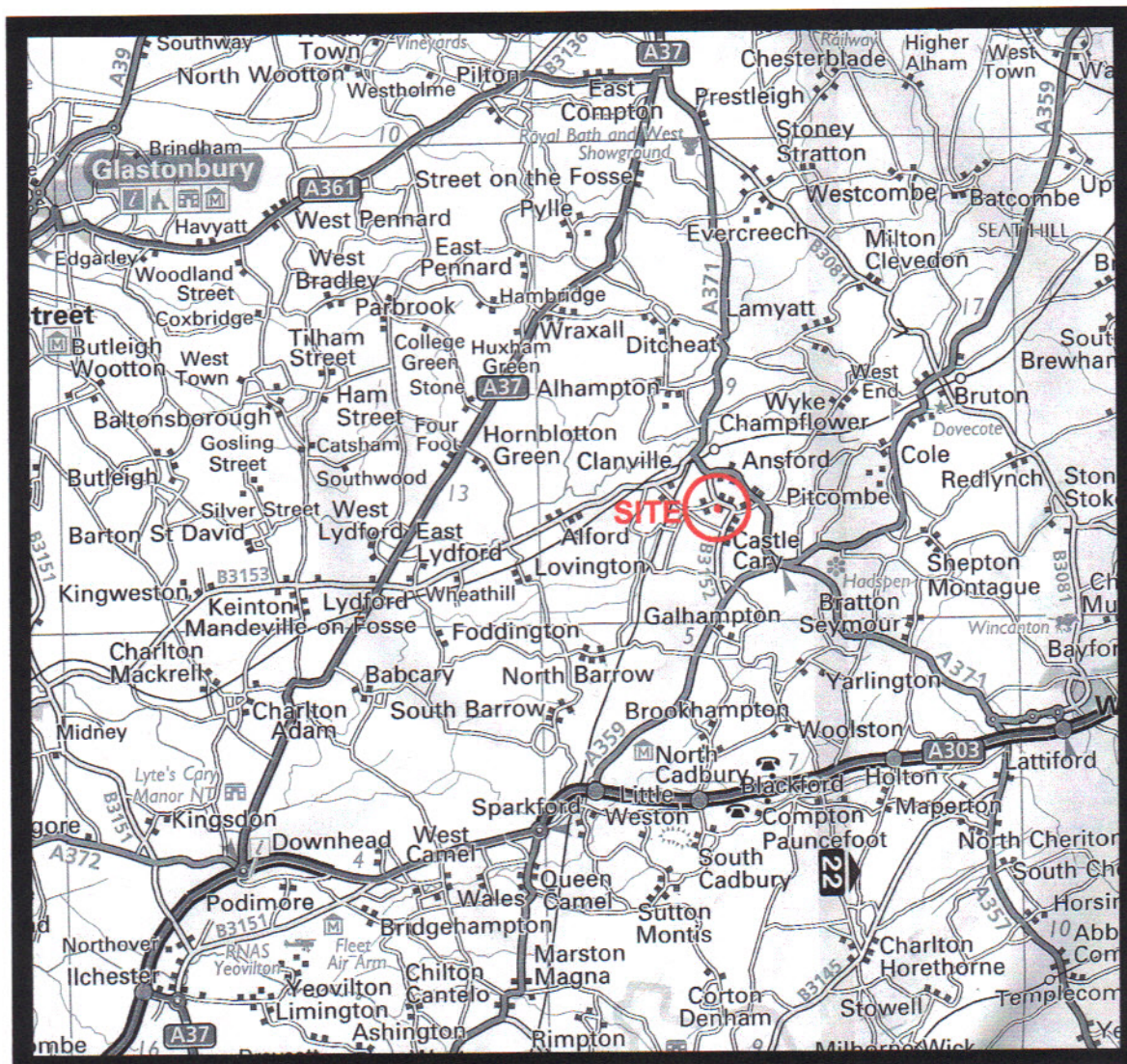
7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

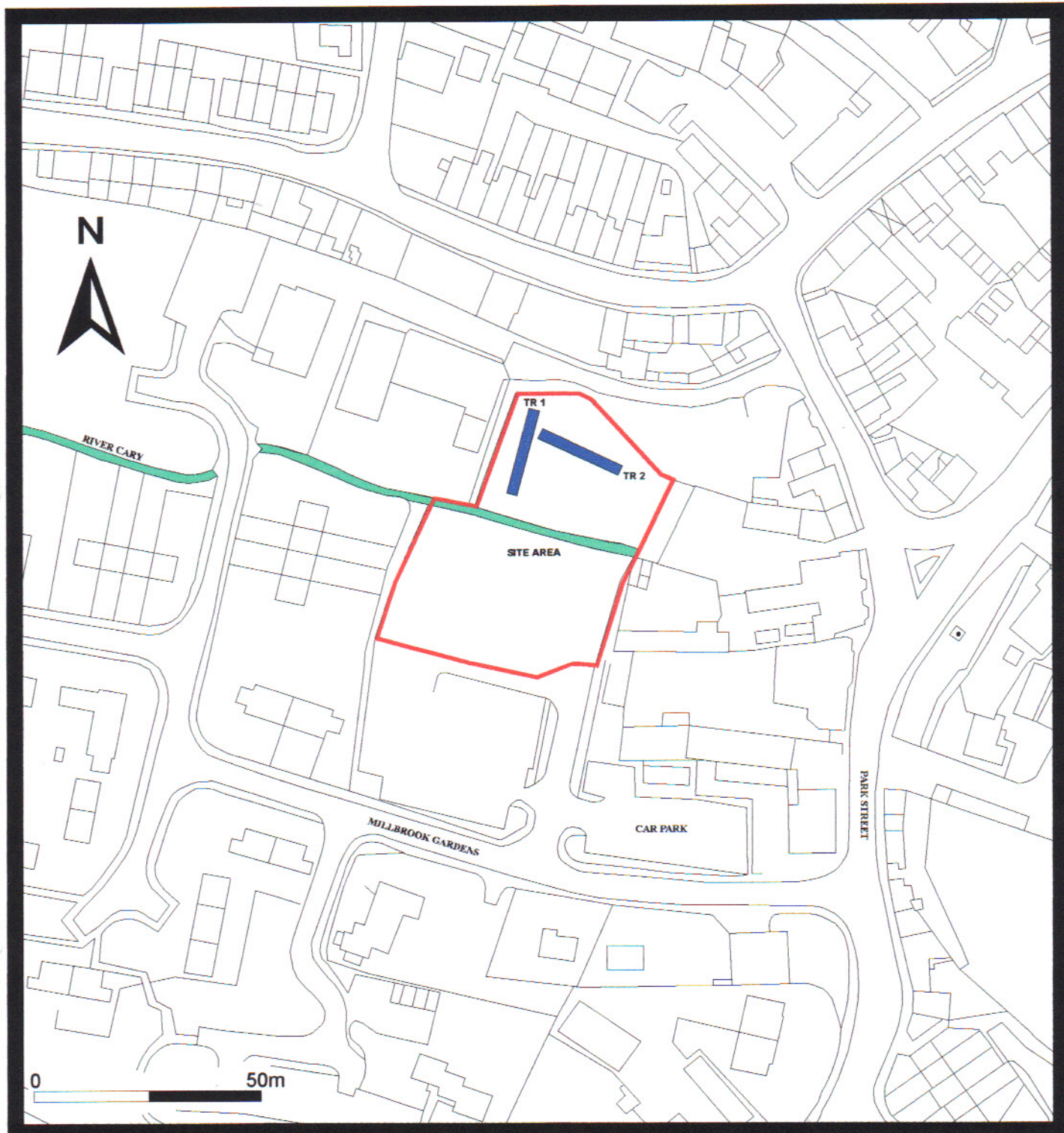
IFA 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*. Institute of Field Archaeologists.

Somerset County Council 2000 *Specification for Archaeological Evaluation*.



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Figure 1: Site Location



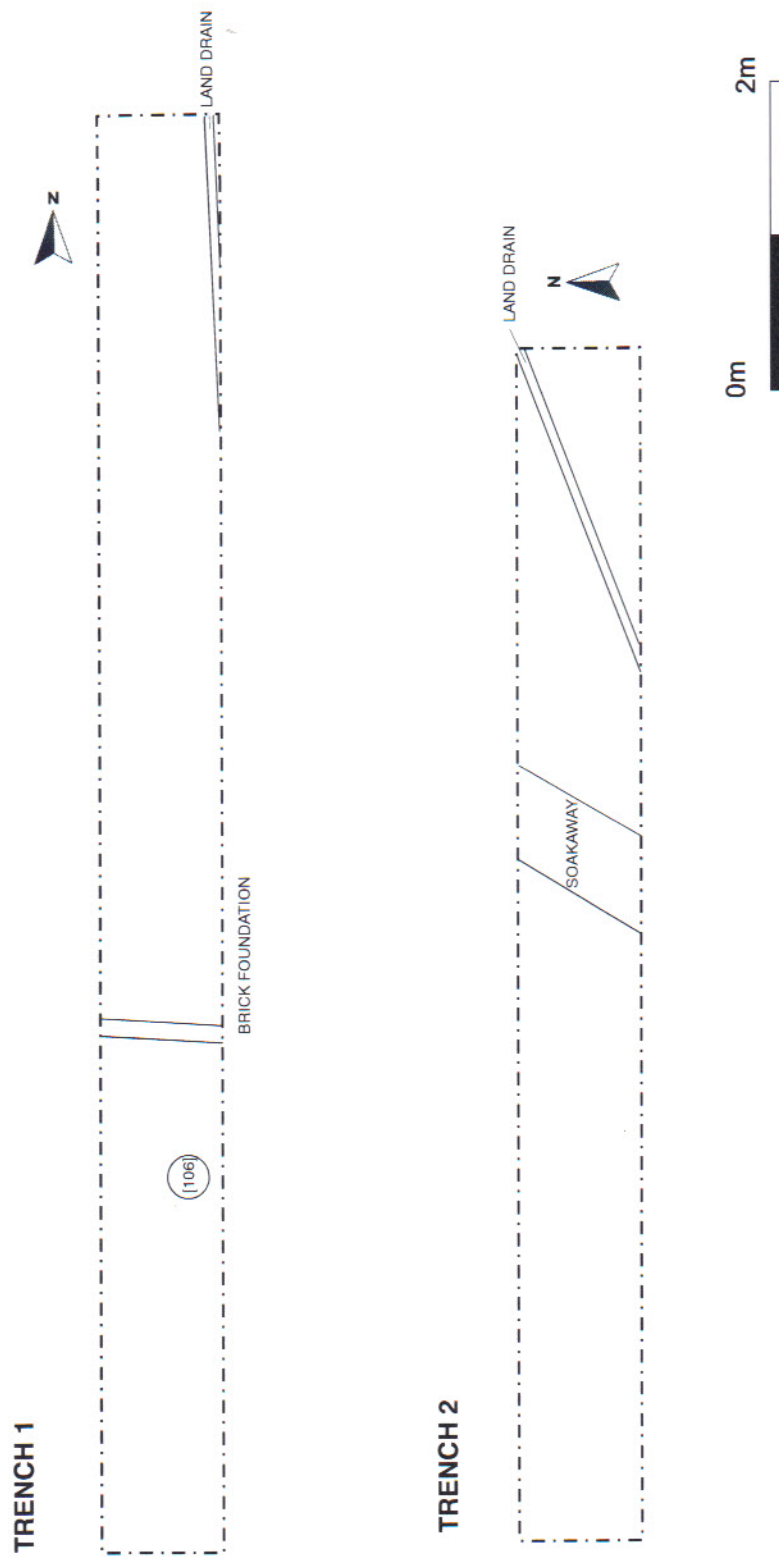


FIGURE 3: TRENCH PLANS