

**LAND AT 'MAGNOLIA',
OLD SHAW LANE,
SWINDON,
WILTSHIRE.**

NGR: SU 117 854 (centred)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Report No. 967
April 2014



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES



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Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

On 28th and 29th April 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at 'Magnolia', Old Shaw Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 117 854 - centred). The works were commissioned by Stuart Morgan.

The project comprised the excavation and recording of three trenches within a proposed development area. Due to extensive surface flooding it was not possible to excavate the possible features in Trench 2; therefore these were recorded in plan only.

The evaluation identified three possible archaeological features, two of which could not be excavated due to surface flooding. The probable pit [103] was excavated but, due to a paucity of artefacts could not be dated. One sherd of probable Roman greyware pottery was recovered from the spoil of Trench 2, but as it was unstratified could not be used to date any of the features observed.

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 AD 1066 and 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. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum).

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on 28th and 29th April 2014 by Foundations Archaeology on land at 'Magnolia', Old Shaw Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire (NGR: SU117854 - centred). The works were commissioned by Stuart Morgan.
- 1.2 The project was conducted in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2014); IfA *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (2008); and MoRPHE, issued by English Heritage (2006).
- 1.3 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site was located in the garden of 'Magnolia', a private dwelling in a residential area of west Swindon (Figure 1). The garden is bounded to the north, south and west by residential dwellings and to the east by 'Magnolia'. The site covers an area of approximately 1200m². The base geology consisted of Amptill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation from the Jurassic (BGS Online Viewer).
- 2.2 Proposed development works at the site consist of the construction of two dwellings and associated access areas.
- 2.3 Excavation in the early 1980s at nearby Shaw Farm revealed a small concentration of Medieval dwellings. Further survey and excavation of land to the northeast of the site also revealed Medieval activity in the form of a ruined limestone structure and Late Medieval pottery sherds. An archaeological evaluation of land at 17 Packington Close, almost immediately to the west of the site also revealed sherds of Medieval pottery. Multiple isolated findspots of Medieval and Romano-British pottery have also been recorded in the area of Shaw.
- 2.4 The site therefore contained the potential for the presence of archaeological features relating to the Medieval and Roman periods. This did not prejudice the evaluation against deposits dating to other periods.

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 and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present on the site;

iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;

iv) to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

v) to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The WSI stipulated that two 20m by 1.6m trenches were to be excavated. However, due to the presence of mature trees and a walled area which could not be disturbed it was agreed to replace one of the 20m trenches with two shorter trenches of 14m and 6m (Figure 2) and slightly amend the position of Trench 1. Due to extensive surface flooding it was not possible to excavate features in Trench 2.

4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological supervision, to the top of the archaeological deposits or the underlying natural substrates, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through the use of a mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Thereafter, cleaning and excavation was conducted by hand. Spoil tips were scanned for finds.

4.3 Where possible, all excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

4.4 Prior to flooding within the Trench 2, visibility conditions allowed for the identification of two features. However, it was not possible to excavate these features and were therefore recorded in plan only.

- 4.5 All amendments to the trenching and excavation methodology were agreed with the archaeological representative of Wiltshire Council.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 **Trench 1** was 20m in length. It was orientated approximately northeast southwest and excavated down onto the natural deposits of orange grey clay with flint and gravel, which was encountered at a depth of between 0.23-0.34m (108.91m OD) from the Modern ground surface. The natural deposits were sealed by a mid brown plastic silt clay subsoil (102), up to 0.20m thick, which contained occasional charcoal and flint inclusions. This was sealed by a dark brown friable humic silt topsoil and turf (101), up to 0.14m thick.

5.1.1 An undated probable pit and two Modern land drains were identified within this trench. The pit and land drains were cut into the natural deposits and sealed by subsoil (102). The land drains were orientated approximately east-west and northwest-southeast. The probable pit [103] was only partly contained within the trench and appeared to continue beyond the southeast edge of the trench. It was 1.30m in length, at least 0.45m in width and 0.10m in depth (Fig 4). It contained mid grey plastic clay (104) with orange brown loamy patches. Occasional pieces of charcoal (approximately 20mm²) and animal bone were present in the fill, but no dateable material was recovered.

5.2 **Trench 2** was 14m in length. It was orientated west southwest - east northeast and excavated down onto the natural deposits of orange grey clay with flint and gravel at a depth of between 0.15-0.35m (108.74m OD) from the Modern ground surface. The natural deposits were sealed by orange brown plastic silt clay subsoil (202), up to 0.15m thick. This was sealed by a dark brown friable humic silt topsoil and turf (201), up to 0.20m thick.

5.2.1 Sealed beneath the subsoil was probable linear [203] and possible pit/ posthole [205] (Figure 3). Both of these features were left unexcavated due to extensive surface flooding. Probable linear [203] was orientated approximately north-south, was 0.60m in width and over 1.6m in length. The surface fill was a mid brown plastic clay (204). Possible pit or posthole [205] flooded almost immediately, so accurate measurements and characterisation of the fill (206) was not possible, but it was approximately of 0.20m in diameter. A single sherd of probable Roman greyware pottery was recovered from the spoil of Trench 2.

5.3 **Trench 3** was 6m in length. It was orientated west northwest – east southeast and excavated down onto the natural deposits of orange grey plastic clay with flint and stones at an average depth of 0.20-0.35m (108.84m OD) from the Modern ground surface. The natural deposits were sealed by mid brown plastic clay with occasional charcoal subsoil (302), up to 0.20m thick. This was sealed by dark brown friable humic silt topsoil (301). No archaeological features were identified in this trench (Fig 3). A single piece of animal bone was recovered from the surface of the subsoil (302) during machining.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The evaluation identified three possible archaeological features, two of which could not be excavated due to surface flooding. The probable pit [103] was excavated but, due to a paucity of artefacts could not be dated. One sherd of probable Roman greyware pottery was recovered from the spoil of Trench 2, but as it was unstratified could not be used to date any of the features observed.
- 6.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited with the Wiltshire county museum service in due course. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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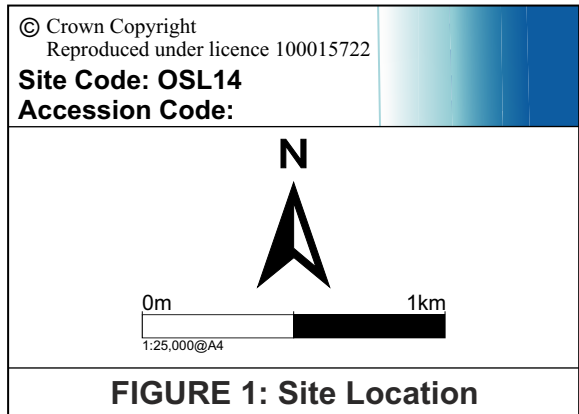
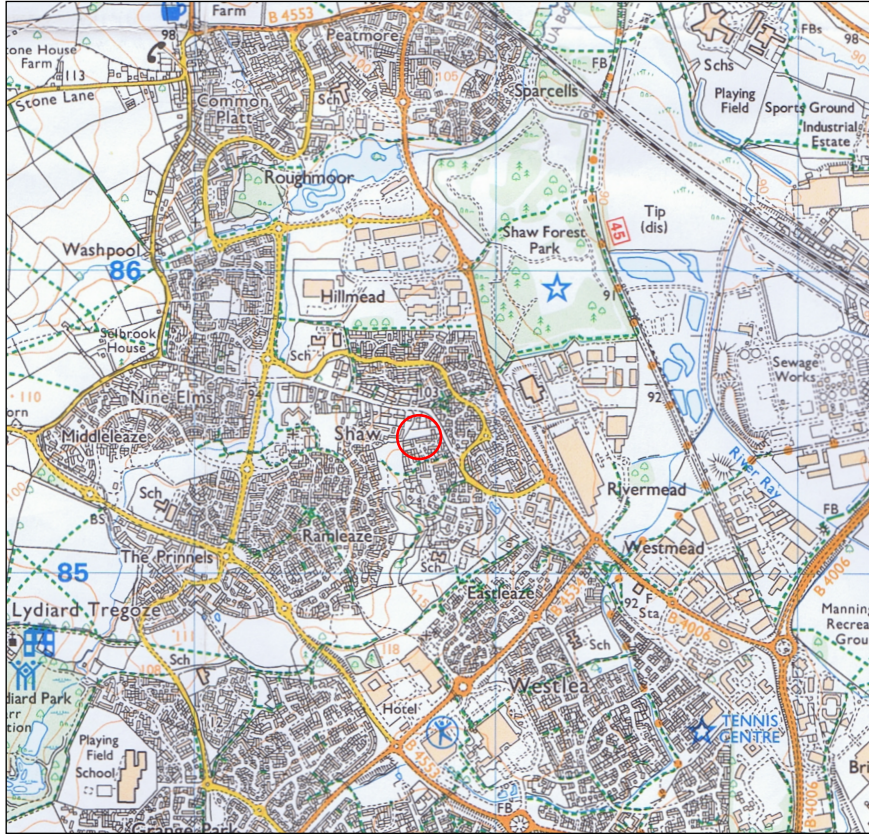
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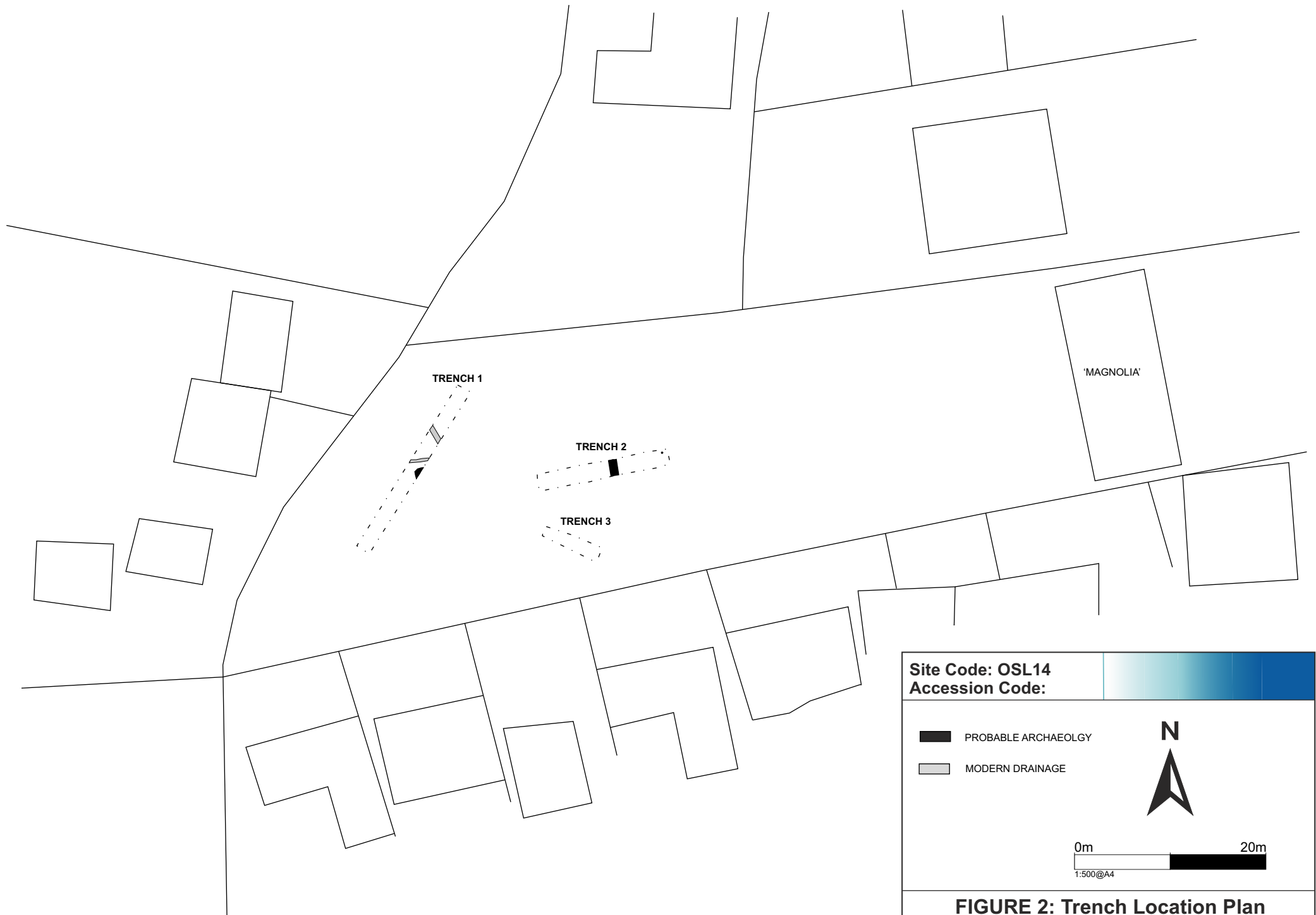
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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger of Wiltshire Council and Stuart Morgan for their help during the course of the project.





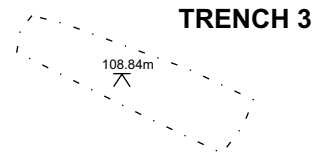
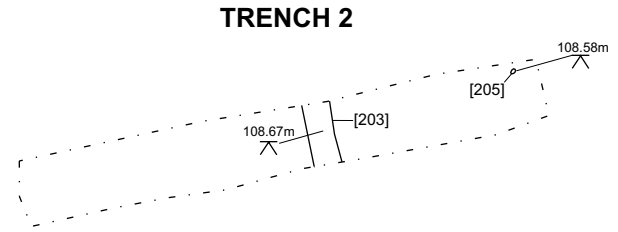
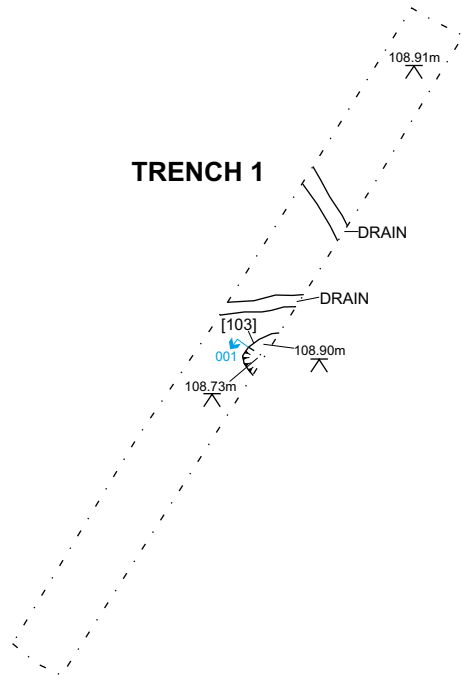
Site Code: OSL14
Accession Code:

PROBABLE ARCHAEOLOGY
MODERN DRAINAGE

N

0m 20m
1:500@A4

FIGURE 2: Trench Location Plan



001: SOUTHWEST AND NORTHWEST FACING SECTION [103]

