

**LAND AT ERMIN STREET,
BLUNSDON,
SWINDON,
WILTSHIRE.**

NGR: 414404.190520 (centred)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

March 2016
Report No. 1113



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

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Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

In March 2016 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at Ermin Street, Blunsdon, Swindon, Wiltshire (NGR: 414404.190520 - centred). The project was commissioned by Linden Homes.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of nine trenches within the site.

The archaeological trenching revealed natural clay and limestone deposits, which were located beneath subsoil and topsoil. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were present within any of the trenches. The site therefore has a low archaeological potential.

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.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

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.

Post-medieval

The period between AD 1500 and AD 1900.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43, traditionally sub divided into; *Palaeolithic* – c. 500,000 BC to c. 12,000 BC; *Mesolithic* – c. 12,000 BC to c. 4,500 BC; *Neolithic* – c. 4,500 BC to c. 2,000 BC; *Bronze Age* – c. 2,000 BC to c. 800 BC; *Iron Age* – c. 800 BC to AD 43.

Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in March 2016 on land at Ermin Street, Blunsdon, Swindon, Wiltshire (NGR: 414404.190520 - centred). The project was commissioned by Linden Homes.
- 1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2016), CIfA *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2014) and *Standards for Field Evaluation and Assessment in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995).
- 1.3 The code of conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission is being sought from Swindon Borough Council for a new residential development at the site under Planning Application Number S/14/1304.
- 2.2 The site has been subject to a desk-based assessment (Foundations Archaeology 2014) which highlighted that the site is of low-moderate archaeological potential for the recovery of Prehistoric and Roman finds, and of low potential for remains from the Saxon through to the Modern period. The results of this report are summarised below.
- 2.3 The main archaeological potential of the site was for the general presence of Prehistoric and Roman finds; Saxon and Medieval finds may have been present in the form of pottery and other waste material used for the manuring of fields, although there was also the potential for features relating to agricultural usage of the site during these periods. These levels of potential may, however, be modified due to the fact that previous archaeological interventions within the vicinity of the site have identified wide-spread levels of truncation, presumably due to the construction of the original A419 dual-carriageway and the later Blunsdon bypass. It is of particular note that archaeological evaluation undertaken in 1990 in advance of construction works for the golf course, which borders the proposed development site to the north and northeast, identified a significant degree of Post-medieval/Modern truncation and similar levels of truncation were identified during a recent evaluation to the south of Ermin Street, within 100m of the site. There was, therefore, a significant possibility that the site area itself may have suffered similar degrees of truncation and that any such truncation may have had a significant adverse effect on the survival of any potential archaeological features.

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. This will 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 Nine trenches were excavated within the site, as shown in Figure 2. Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological supervision, to the top of archaeological remains or the underlying natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through the use of a mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Spoil tips were visually scanned for finds.
- 4.2 Trench 9 was dug in two parts due to the presence of a water main running along the southwestern edge of the site.
- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 A full description of all contexts identified during the course of the evaluation is presented in Appendix 1. A summary of the results is given below:
- 5.2 The general stratigraphic sequence was relatively uniform across the site and consisted of natural clay and limestone deposits, which were located beneath subsoil and topsoil, at an average depth of 0.42m below the Modern ground. The presence of relatively intact subsoils across the site indicated that preservation conditions were generally good.
- 5.3 There were no archaeological features, finds or deposits in any of the excavated trenches.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The archaeological evaluation trenches did not contain any evidence for on-site archaeological activity. There was no evidence for Modern truncation, as noted during other archaeological investigations nearby. The site therefore has a low archaeological potential.
- 6.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited in due course with the appropriate museum. 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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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data

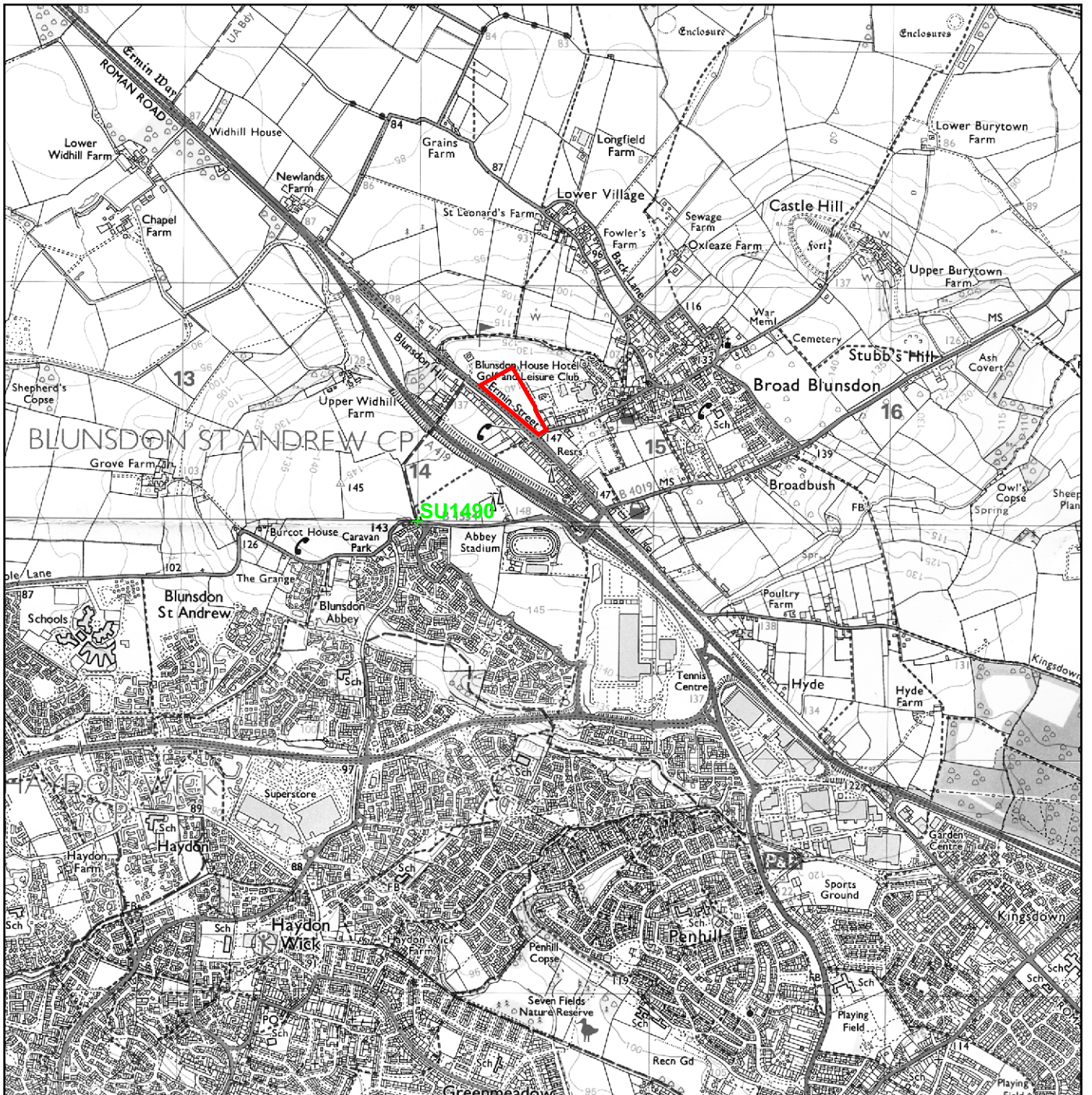
CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	LATER THAN	EARLIER THAN
				Trench 1: 50m by 1.8m. Natural = beige to brown fragmentary limestone with occasional patches of red plastic clay.		
				Top of natural at average height of 137.40m OD		
101	na	na	0.19	Topsoil; dark brown clay silt.	102	na
102	na	na	0.16	Subsoil; grey brown clay silt, which contained frequent limestone fragments.	natural	101
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 2: 46m by 1.8m. Natural = beige to brown fragmentary limestone with occasional patches of red plastic clay.		
				Top of natural at average height of 139.4m OD		
201	na	na	0.2	Topsoil; dark brown clay silt.	202	na
202	na	na	0.16	Subsoil; grey brown clay silt, which contained frequent limestone fragments.	natural	201
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 3: 50m by 1.8m. Natural = beige to brown fragmentary limestone with occasional patches of red plastic clay.		
				Top of natural at average height of 139.5m OD		
301	na	na	0.39	Topsoil; dark brown clay silt.	302	na
302	na	na	0.17	Subsoil; grey brown clay silt, which contained frequent limestone fragments.	natural	301
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		

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CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	LATER THAN	EARLIER THAN
				Trench 4: 50m by 1.8m. Natural = beige to brown fragmentary limestone with occasional patches of red plastic clay.		
				Top of natural at average height of 139.3m OD		
401	na	na	0.21	Topsoil; dark brown clay silt.	402	na
402	na	na	0.25	Subsoil; grey brown clay silt, which contained frequent limestone fragments.	natural	401
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 5: 50m by 1.8m. Natural = beige to brown fragmentary limestone with occasional patches of red plastic clay.		
				Top of natural at average height of 141.45m OD		
501	na	na	0.27	Topsoil; dark brown clay silt.	502	na
502	na	na	0.33	Subsoil; grey brown clay silt, which contained frequent limestone fragments.	natural	501
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 6: 50m by 1.8m. Natural = beige to brown fragmentary limestone with occasional patches of red plastic clay.		
				Top of natural at average height of 141.16m OD		
601	na	na	0.21	Topsoil; dark brown clay silt.	602	na
602	na	na	0.14	Subsoil; grey brown clay silt, which contained frequent limestone fragments.	natural	601
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		

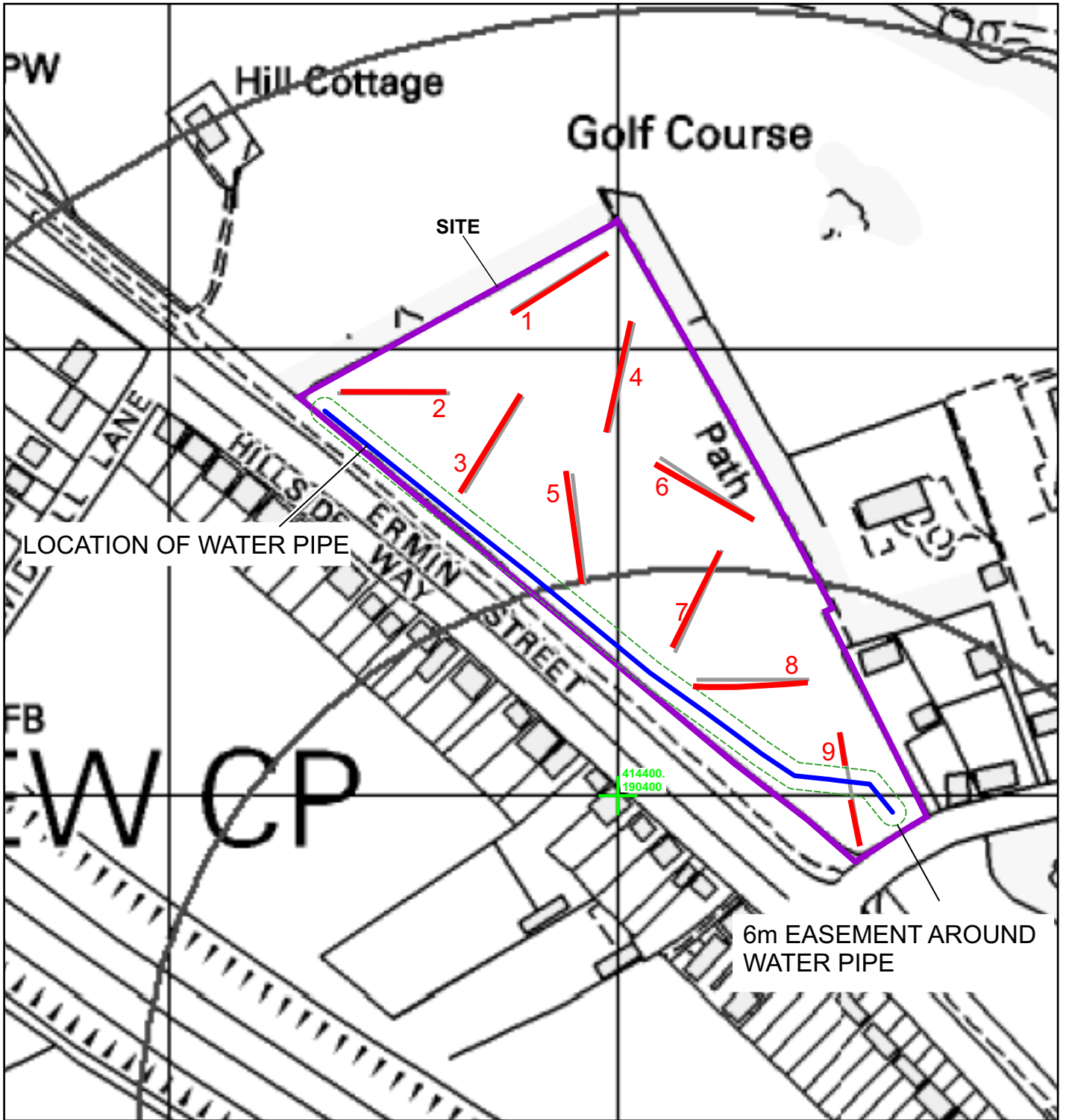
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CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	LATER THAN	EARLIER THAN
				Trench 7: 47m by 1.8m. Natural = beige to brown fragmentary limestone with occasional patches of red plastic clay.		
				Top of Natural at average height of 142.43m OD		
701	na	na	0.19	Topsoil; dark brown clay silt.	702	na
702	na	na	0.23	Subsoil; grey brown clay silt, which contained frequent limestone fragments.	natural	701
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 8: 50m by 1.8m. Natural = beige to brown fragmentary limestone with occasional patches of red plastic clay.		
				Top of natural at average height of 143.81m OD		
801	na	na	0.19	Topsoil; dark brown clay silt.		
802	na	na	0.12	Subsoil; grey brown clay silt, which contained frequent limestone fragments.	802	na
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.	natural	801
				Trench 9: 14.6m by 1.8m. 20m by 1.8m.		
				Natural = beige to brown fragmentary limestone with occasional patches of red plastic clay.		
				Top of natural at average height of 143.48m OD		
901	na	na	0.19	Topsoil; dark brown clay silt.	902	na
902	na	na	0.18	Subsoil; grey brown clay silt, which contained frequent limestone fragments.	natural	901
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		



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Site Code: SAB16
Accession Code:

FIGURE 1: Site Location



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N

0m 100m

FIGURE 2: Trench Locations