

**LAND AT SANDFIELD,
WEST LAVINGTON,
WILTSHIRE.**

NGR: SU 005 538 (centred)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

May 2017
Report No. 1193



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

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Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

On 8th to the 10th May 2017 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on Land at Sandfield, West Lavington, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 005 538 - centred). The project was commissioned by Richard Cosker of RCC Town Planning on behalf of Gaiger Brothers.

The works comprised the excavation and recording of fifteen 50 metre evaluation trenches within the proposed development area.

The evaluation works identified only two archaeological features across the entire site area in the form of undated gullies in Trenches 8 and 12, both cut into the natural greensand. The gullies were both apparently below the subsoil, but survived in too shallow a form to suggest that this represented their original depths, suggesting that they were either actually cut through the subsoil or, given that the subsoil may represent a medieval/early post-medieval ploughsoil, had been heavily truncated. Neither feature appeared to be curvilinear and did not, therefore, give any indication of comprising part of anything other than an agricultural feature or land boundary.

A number of other potential features were investigated, but did not prove to be of anthropogenic origin; rather representing geological features and animal burrows. A very small assemblage of heavily abraded and very small sherds of Medieval and Post-medieval pottery was recovered from atop the natural sands in four trenches across the site area.

Modern made ground deposits were present within Trenches 11 and 15 and are likely to have originated from the construction of the primary school and associated access road to the south of the site. The ground surface across the remainder of the site was very uneven and may suggest that this comprised a deliberate programme of disturbance (perhaps to deter gypsies or travellers), rather than merely resulting from tufting.

Buried subsoils, including shallow colluvial deposits in Trenches 2, 7 and 12, were identified within all of the evaluation trenches, along with two archaeological features. Therefore, although the likelihood of significant archaeological deposits is considered very low, the potential for the survival of any such deposits is moderate-good.

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 On 8th to the 10th May 2017 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on Land at Sandfield, West Lavington, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 005 538 - centred). The project was commissioned by Richard Cosker of RCC Town Planning on behalf of Gaiger Brothers.
- 1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2017), CIfA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2014), the *Standards for Field Evaluation and Assessment in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995) and complies with the principles of NPPF (2012).
- 1.3 The code of conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) was adhered to throughout.
- 1.4 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The trial trenching was required prior to an application for outline Planning Permission for a new residential development on the site. There is also a proposal for a woodland planning scheme for part of the site and provision of improved parking and dropping off/picking up facilities for the school to the south.
- 2.2 The current study area is located approximately five miles south of Devizes and is located at a height of between 75 to 82m AOD. The site is bounded to the north by Lavington Lane, to the west by residential development, to the south by Dauntsey Academy Primary School and to the east by open woodland. The site is not within the West Lavington and Littleton Panell Conservation Area.
- 2.3 There is evidence of occupation within the wider area from late Neolithic or early Bronze Age, with remains of two round barrows and field systems visible on the downs to the south. Early to mid Bronze Age and early Iron Age material has also been found at New Copse Farm and Romano-British settlement remains have been uncovered in the grounds of Littleton Panell Manor (now Dauntsey's school). Further Roman artefactual evidence has been found on West Lavington Down.
- 2.4 West Lavington is mentioned in the Domesday Book and, although there is currently no Saxon archaeological evidence within the area, it is thought that there was a Saxon church and certainly settlement here from late Saxon times. The earliest elements of the current church, however, date from the second half of the 12th century.

- 2.5 The solid geology of the study area comprises *Upper Greensand Formation - Sandstone*. with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS – online viewer).
- 2.6 As a result of the identified archaeological potential, the County Archaeological Officer requested a programme of field evaluation to be carried out to fully assess the potential impact on any heritage asset of archaeological interest, in accordance with paragraph 128 of the NPPF.
- 2.7 The main archaeological potential of the site was therefore for evidence dating to the Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, Medieval and Post-medieval periods. This did not prejudice the evaluation against the recovery of data relating 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. 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;
 - 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.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 A total of fifteen 50m x 1.6m trenches were excavated within the proposed development area, as shown on the attached plan (Figure 2). Trenches 1, 7 and 14, were slightly relocated/realigned to avoid overhead services. Four trenches (5, 6, 11 and 15) were spilt in two, in order to straddle existing footpaths.
- 4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological supervision, to the top of the archaeological deposits or the underlying natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through the use

of a JCB-type mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Spoil tips were visually scanned for finds.

- 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 project is presented in Appendix 1.
- 5.2 The study area was located on a generally shallow north-facing slope, with a further dip towards the south east towards the river. The natural substrates of grey brown sand with occasional sandstone outcrops was present at a maximum height of 81.12m AOD in Trench 15 in the southern part of the site and 71.37m AOD in Trench 3 in the northern part of the site. In all of the trenches, the natural substrates were sealed by buried subsoils (including shallow colluvial deposits in Trenches 2, 7 and 12); these were in turn sealed by topsoil deposits, with Modern made ground apparent in Trenches 11 and 15, presumably resulting from the construction of the primary school and adjacent road.
- 5.3 Two cut features were present; within Trenches 8 and 12, in the form of gullies. Both features appeared to be sealed by the subsoil and may, therefore, be of some antiquity, however; due to the similarity between the subsoils and the fills, their exact relationship could not be determined. No finds were recovered from either feature. A total of six small highly abraded sherds of Medieval pottery (four *Minety ware* and two 'Bath A' sherds of c.13th century date) and one Post-medieval *Red-glazed Earthenware* sherd (of 16th century + date) were identified from the interface between the subsoil (which may represent a medieval/early post-medieval ploughsoil) and natural deposits in Trenches 6, 9, 10 and 14.
- 5.4 No archaeological features or deposits were present within any of the other evaluation trenches.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The evaluation works identified only two archaeological features across the entire site area in the form of undated gullies in Trenches 8 and 12, both of which cut into the natural greensand. The gullies were both apparently below the subsoil, but survived in too shallow a form to suggest that this represented their original depths, suggesting that they were either actually cut through the subsoil or, given that the subsoil may represent a Medieval/early Post-medieval ploughsoil, had been heavily truncated. Neither feature appeared to be curvilinear and did not, therefore, give any indication of comprising part of anything other than an agricultural feature or land boundary.

- 6.2 A number of other potential features were investigated, but did not prove to be of anthropogenic origin; rather representing geological features and animal burrows. A very small assemblage of heavily abraded and very small sherds of Medieval and Post-medieval pottery was recovered from atop the natural sands in four trenches across the site area.
- 6.3 Modern made ground deposits were present within Trenches 11 and 15 and are likely to have originated from the construction of the primary school and associated access road to the south of the site. The ground surface across the remainder of the site was very uneven and may suggest that this comprised a deliberate programme of disturbance (perhaps to deter gypsies or travellers), rather than merely resulting from tufting.
- 6.4 Buried subsoils, including shallow colluvial deposits in Trenches 2, 7 and 12, were identified within all of the evaluation trenches, along with two archaeological features. Therefore, although the likelihood of significant archaeological deposits is considered very low, the potential for the survival of any such deposits is moderate-good.
- 6.5 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited with Devizes Museum at the earliest opportunity. 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

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*. Reading.

Foundations Archaeology 2017. *Sandfield, West Lavington, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*. Unpublished.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Rachel Foster, the Archaeology Officer for Wiltshire County Council, the directors and staff of Gaiger Brothers and Richard Cosker of RCC Town Planning for their help during the course of the project.

APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	LATER THAN	EARLIER THAN
				Trench 1: 50m by 1.6m. E-W aligned. Natural (76.43m AOD E end, 76.44m AOD W end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops.	n/a	102
101	50+	1.6+	0.27	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	102	n/a
102	50+	1.6+	0.14	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	101
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 2: 50m by 1.6m. NE-SW aligned. Natural (74.06m AOD NE end, 78.20m AOD SW end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops.	n/a	202/203
201	50+	1.6+	0.20	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	202	n/a
202	50+	1.6+	0.20	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural/203	201
203	8+	1.6+	0.23	Colluvium: mid-dark brown clay sand at NE end only.	Natural	202
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 3: 50m by 1.6m. E-W aligned. Natural (72.76m AOD W end, 71.37m AOD E end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops.	n/a	302
301	50+	1.6+	0.20	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	302	n/a
302	50+	1.6+	0.20	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	301
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 4: 50m by 1.6m. N-S aligned. Natural (74.72m AOD N end, 77.55m AOD S end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops.	n/a	402
401	50+	1.6+	0.22	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	402	n/a
402	50+	1.6+	0.18	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	401
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 5: 50m by 1.6m. E-W aligned. Natural (79.39m AOD W end, 78.11m AOD E end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops.	n/a	502
501	50+	1.6+	0.21	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	502	n/a
502	50+	1.6+	0.17	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	501
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 6: 50m by 1.6m. NW-SE aligned. Natural (76.37m AOD NW end, 76.52m AOD E end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops. One sherd of Minety ware was recovered from the surface.	n/a	602
601	50+	1.6+	0.29	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	602	n/a
602	50+	1.6+	0.17	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	601
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		

Sandfield, West Lavington, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	LATER THAN	EARLIER THAN
				Trench 7: 50m by 1.6m. NW-SE aligned. Natural (74.20m AOD NW end, 79.44m AOD S end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops.	n/a	702/703
701	50+	1.6+	0.23	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	702	n/a
702	50+	1.6+	0.15	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural/703	701
703	8+	1.6+	0.16	Colluvium: mid-dark brown clay sand at NW end only	Natural	702
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 8: 50m by 1.6m. NW-SE aligned. Natural (78.14m AOD NW end, 78.61m AOD SE end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops.	n/a	802
801	50+	1.6+	0.21	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	802	n/a
802	50+	1.6+	0.16	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	801
803	1.6+	0.31	0.02	Fill of [804]: mid grey brown silty sand	Natural	802
[804]	1.6+	0.31	0.02	Narrow NE-SW aligned gully; flat base (78.57m AOD) and sloping edges, contained (803).	Natural	802
				Trench 9: 50m by 1.6m. NE-SW aligned. Natural (78.18m AOD NE end, 79.62m AOD SW end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops. Two sherds of Minety ware were recovered from the surface of the natural substrates.	n/a	902
901	50+	1.6+	0.26	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	902	n/a
902	50+	1.6+	0.15	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	901
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		
				Trench 10: 50m by 1.6m. E-W aligned. Natural (79.97m AOD W end, 77.21m AOD E end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops. Two 'Bath A' sherds of were recovered from the surface of the natural substrates.	n/a	1002
1001	50+	1.6+	0.26	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	1002	n/a
1002	50+	1.6+	0.18	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	1001
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		
				Trench 11: 50m by 1.6m. NE-SW aligned. Natural (77.60m AOD NE end, 79.83m AOD SW end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops.	n/a	1102
1101	50+	1.6+	0.26	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt with Modern rubble.	1102	n/a
1102	50+	1.6+	0.18	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	1101
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 12: 50m by 1.6m. N-S aligned. Natural (78.43m AOD N end, 76.04m AOD S end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops.	n/a	1202
1201	50+	1.6+	0.29	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	1202	n/a
1202	50+	1.6+	0.19	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural/1205	1201
[1203]	1.6+	0.33	0.08	ENE-WSW aligned gully; slightly concave base (76.86m AOD) and sloping edges, contained (1204).	Natural	1202
1204	1.6+	0.33	0.08	Fill of [1203]: mid grey brown silty sand.	Natural	1202

Sandfield, West Lavington, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	LATER THAN	EARLIER THAN
1205	11+	1.6+	0.40	Colluvium: mid-dark grey silty sand at S end only.	Natural	1202
				Trench 13: 50m by 1.6m. N-S aligned. Natural (76.83m AOD N end, 77.95m AOD S end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops.	n/a	1302
1301	50+	1.6+	0.35	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	1302	n/a
1302	50+	1.6+	0.20	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	1301
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 14: 50m by 1.6m. NE-SW aligned. Natural (78.49m AOD NE end, 80.62m AOD SW end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops. One sherd of Minety ware and one sherd of RGE were recovered from the surface of the natural substrates.	n/a	1402
1401	50+	1.6+	0.35	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	1402	n/a
1402	50+	1.6+	0.20	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	1401
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		
				Trench 15: 50m by 1.6m. NW-SE aligned. Natural (78.85m AOD NE end, 81.12m AOD SW end) = grey-brown sand with sandstone outcrops.	n/a	1402
1501	50+	1.6+	0.20	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt.	1502/1503	n/a
1502	18+	1.6+	0.35	Modern make-up.	1502	1501
1503	50+	1.6+	0.15	Subsoil: mid-dark grey brown silty sand.	Natural	1501/1502
				No archaeological features or finds were present within the trench.		



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Site Code: SSL17

Accession Code:

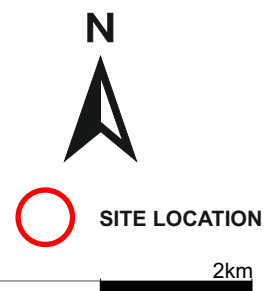
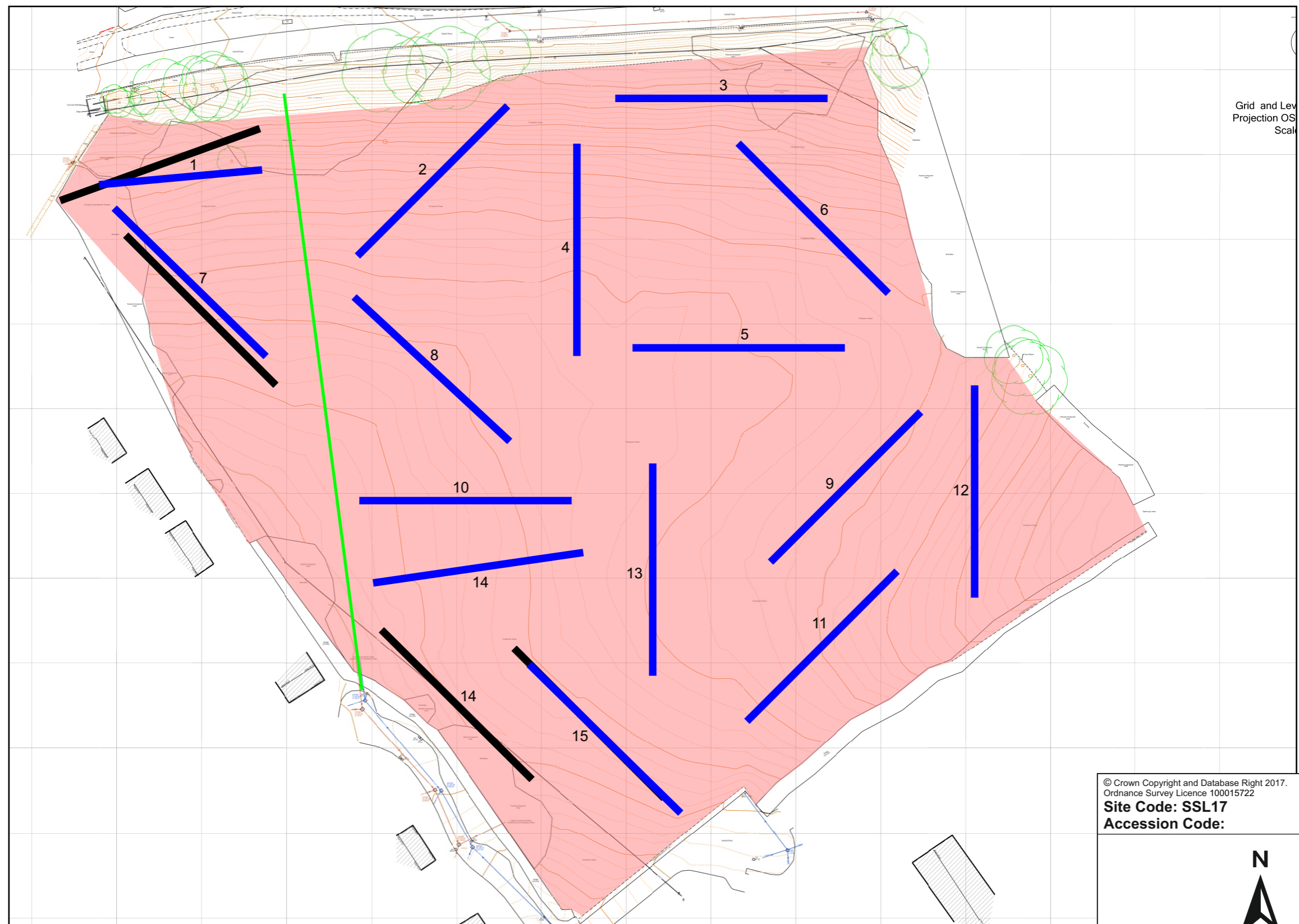


FIGURE 1: Site Location



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Site Code: SSL17
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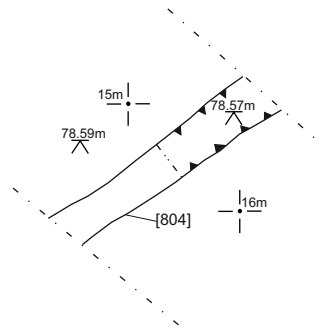


- Proposed Evaluation Trench
- Excavated Evaluation Trench
- Line of Sewer

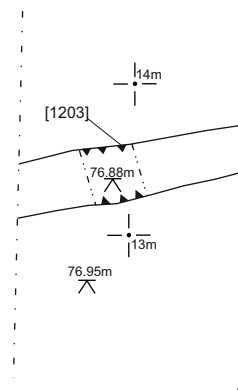
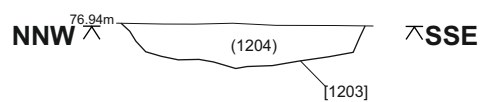
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FIGURE 2: Trench Locations

NE FACING SECTION [804]



WEST SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [1203]



Site Code: SSL17

Accession Code:

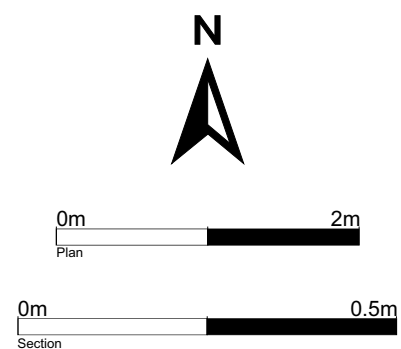


FIGURE 3: Trenches 8 and 12 Plans and Section