

**LAND AT GRAYAN HOUSE AND ORCHARD HOUSE,
COUNTRESS ROAD,
AMESBURY,
WILTSHIRE.**

NGR: SU 154 416

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Quality Assurance

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**Land at Grayan House and Orchard House, Countess Road, Amesbury, Wiltshire:
Archaeological Evaluation**

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**Land at Grayan House and Orchard House, Countess Road, Amesbury, Wiltshire:
Archaeological Evaluation**

SUMMARY

In January 2008 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at Grayan House and Orchard House, Amesbury, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 154 416). The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd. on behalf of McCarthy & Stone (Developments) Ltd.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of two trenches, each measuring 15m by 1.8m, across the proposed development area (Figure 2).

A substantial undated feature, probably a large ditch, is likely to represent the eastern boundary of the Amesbury Abbey estate.

A compacted chalk hard-standing layer, which occurred across both evaluation trenches, was dated to the Post-medieval period or later.

No other archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present within the investigation area.

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 the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, in this case river terrace gravel overlying upper chalk.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in January 2008 on land at Grayan House and Orchard House, Countess Road, Amesbury, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 154 416). The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd. on behalf of McCarthy & Stone (Developments) Ltd.
- 1.2 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works. The project was undertaken in accordance with the Specification by CgMs Consulting Ltd. (2007), based upon the Brief provided by Wiltshire County Council Archaeological Service. The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (1994, revised 2001) and *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 It is proposed to undertake a new residential development on land at Grayan House and Orchard House, Countess Road, Amesbury. A programme of archaeological works was required prior to the determination of planning permission, in accordance with the principals of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG 16): Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990) and the archaeological policies of Wiltshire County Council.
- 2.2 The study area is bounded by Countess Road to the east, properties fronting Fairfax Road to the south and west, and The Camelot Nursing Home to the southeast.
- 2.3 An archaeological desk-based assessment undertaken by CgMs (2006) has indicated that the site is located to the east of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site and lies within the former precinct of Amesbury Abbey. The study area therefore contained the potential for the preservation of archaeological remains, predominately dating to the prehistoric and Medieval periods. This in no way prejudiced the evaluation against finds or features 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; 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.

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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 15m long evaluation trenches. Due to space constraints it was necessary to amend the trench locations (Figure 2). The revised trench methodology was agreed, on site, with the archaeological representative of Wiltshire County Council.

4.2 Topsoil and non-significant overburden was removed to the top of the archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved with the use of a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket. Thereafter the trenches were cleaned and all additional excavation was conducted by hand.

4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the CgMs Specification (2007) and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Due to deep sections, both trenches had to be stepped in order to comply with relevant health and safety legislation.

5.2 **Trench 1** (15m long by 0.80m wide at the base) was excavated onto natural deposits at an average depth of 1.30m (72.57m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural substrate, which comprised orange clay with gravel, was sealed beneath subsoil layer (104), up to 0.36m thick, which consisted of a light brown clay silt with occasional gravel. This was overlaid by (103), up to 0.30m thick, which comprised a dark brown clay silt. Layer (103) contained occasional CBM fragments. Context (102) comprised a layer of compacted chalk, up to 0.35m thick, which overlaid (103). Context (102) was overlaid by topsoil (101), up to 0.23m thick, which comprised a dark brown clay silt. One archaeological feature was present within the trench.

5.3 Feature [105] was 5.34m wide, at least 0.90m in depth and consisted of a substantial cut, probably a ditch, with sloping sides, which occurred at the northwest end of the trench. The feature cut subsoil (104) and the natural

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deposits and was sealed by layer (103). Due to health and safety constraints it was not possible to fully excavate the feature. Context (106), up to 0.34m thick, formed the lowest excavated fill and comprised a light brown clay silt, which contained occasional patches of green clay sand. This was overlaid by fill (107), up to 0.20m thick, which consisted of a light green sand. Fill (107) was overlaid by context (108), up to 0.90m thick, which comprised a mid brown clay silt with occasional patches of green sand. Fill (108) contained a single un-diagnostic fragment of bone.

- 5.4 **Trench 2** (15m long by 0.80m wide at the base) was excavated onto natural deposits at an average depth of 1.51m (72.56m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural substrate, which comprised orange clay with gravel, was sealed beneath subsoil layer (205), up to 0.49m thick, which consisted of a light brown clay silt with occasional gravel. This was overlaid by (204), up to 0.21m thick, which comprised a dark brown clay silt. Layer (204) contained occasional CBM fragments, including brick and tile. Context (203) comprised a layer of compacted chalk, up to 0.23m thick, which overlaid (204). Context (203) was overlaid by a brick rubble layer (202), up to 0.15m thick, which was in turn overlaid by a dark brown clay silt topsoil (201), up to 0.43m thick. No archaeological features were present within the trench.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 No dating evidence was recovered from probable ditch [105]. However, it was sealed by context (103) and is unlikely to be of modern origin. Although the base of the evaluation trench was relatively narrow, the feature appeared to be aligned northeast-southwest, and as such shares a similar alignment to the estate boundary on the 1726 Estate Map (CgMs, 2006; Fig. 5). On this basis, feature [105] is likely to represent the eastern boundary of the Amesbury Abbey estate.
- 6.2 Contexts (102) and (203) are clearly equivalent and probably represent a hard-standing layer. Brick fragments recovered from context (204) provide a Post-medieval *terminus post quem* for layer (102)/(203).
- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months 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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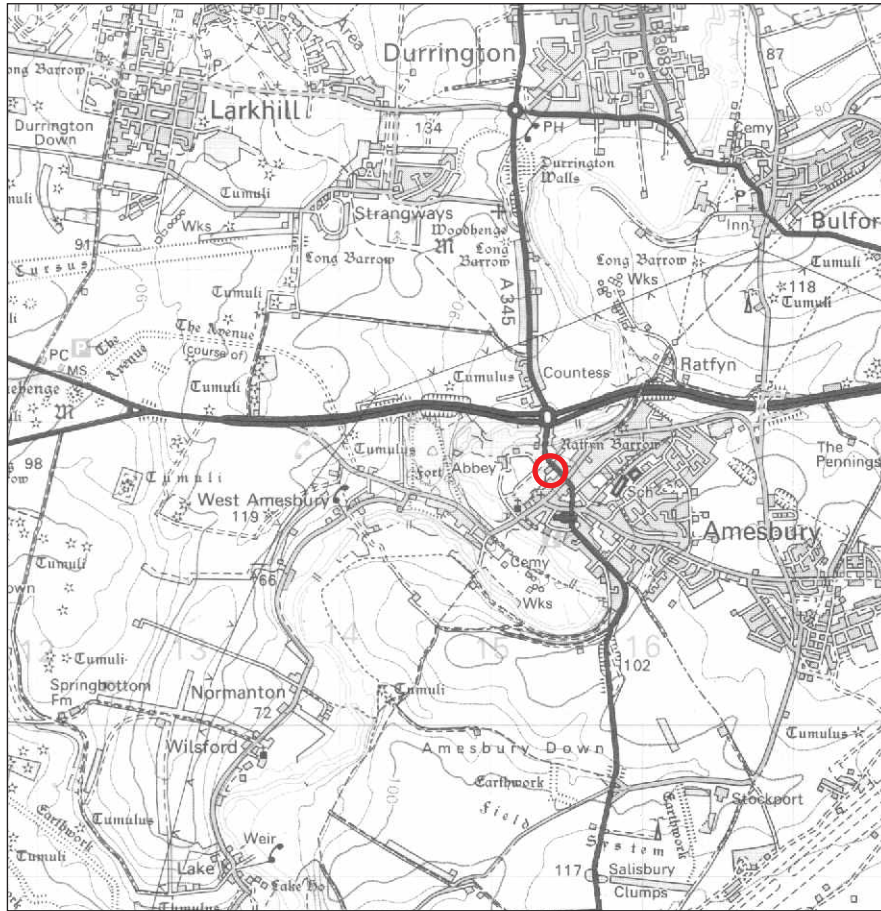
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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURE 1: Site Location

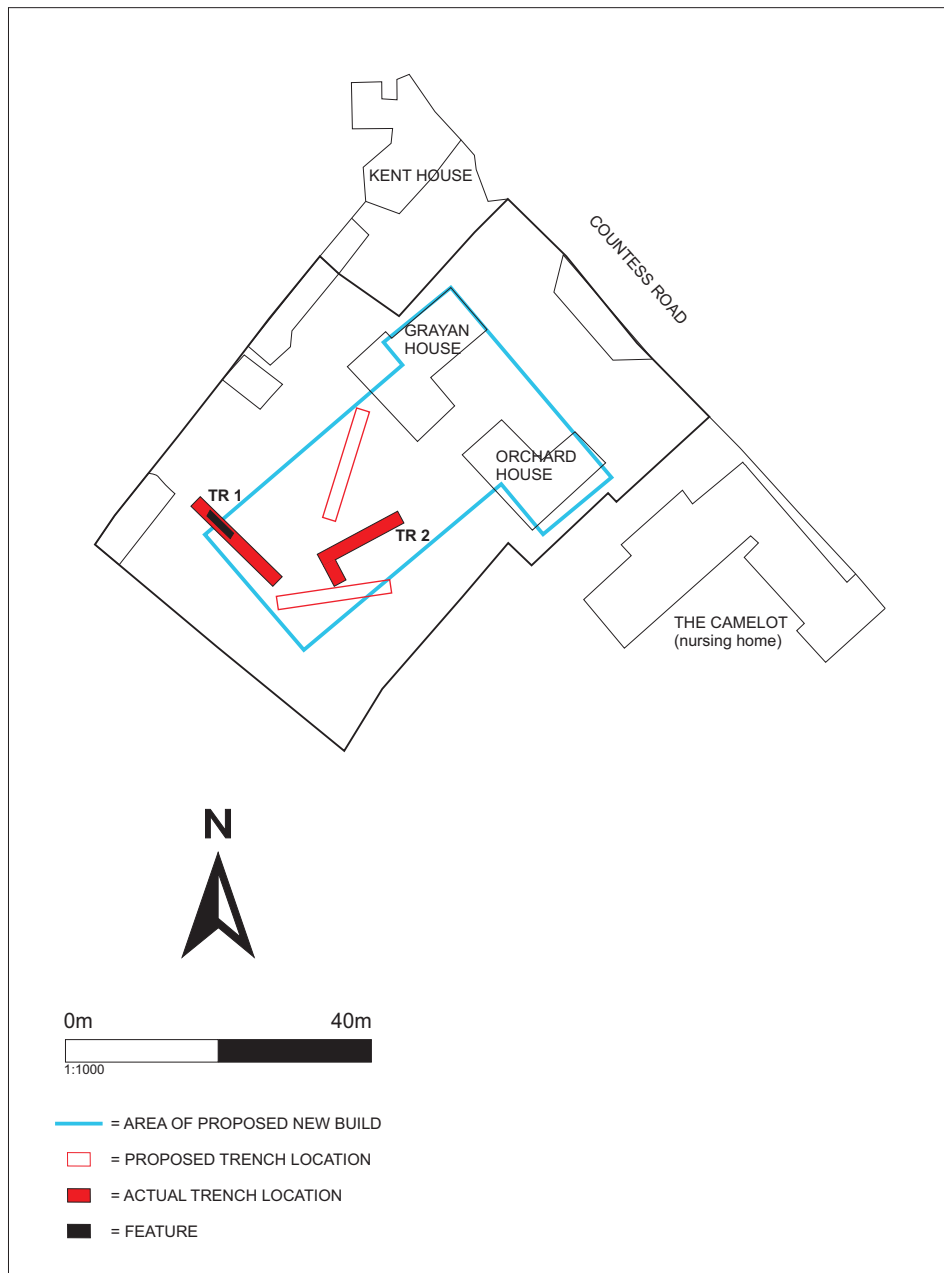
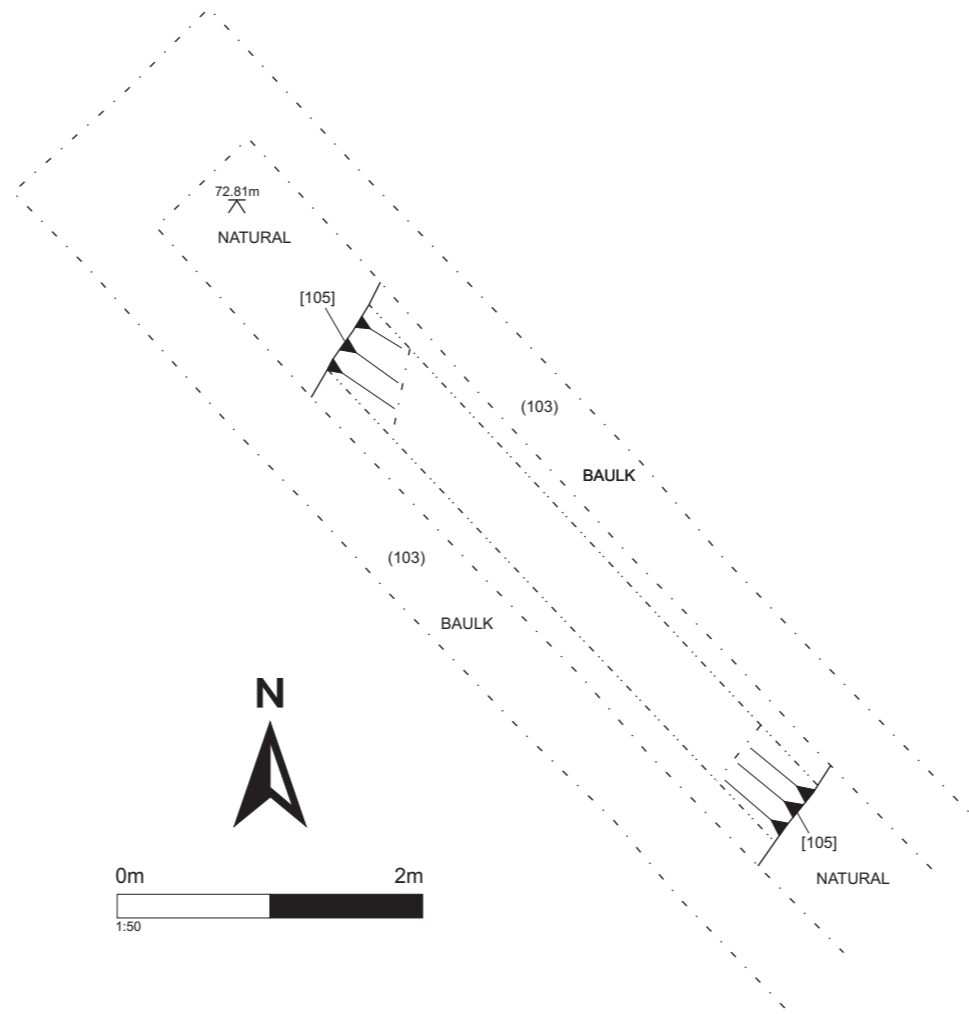


FIGURE 2: Trench Locations

TRENCH 1 PLAN



NORTHEAST FACING SECTION [105]

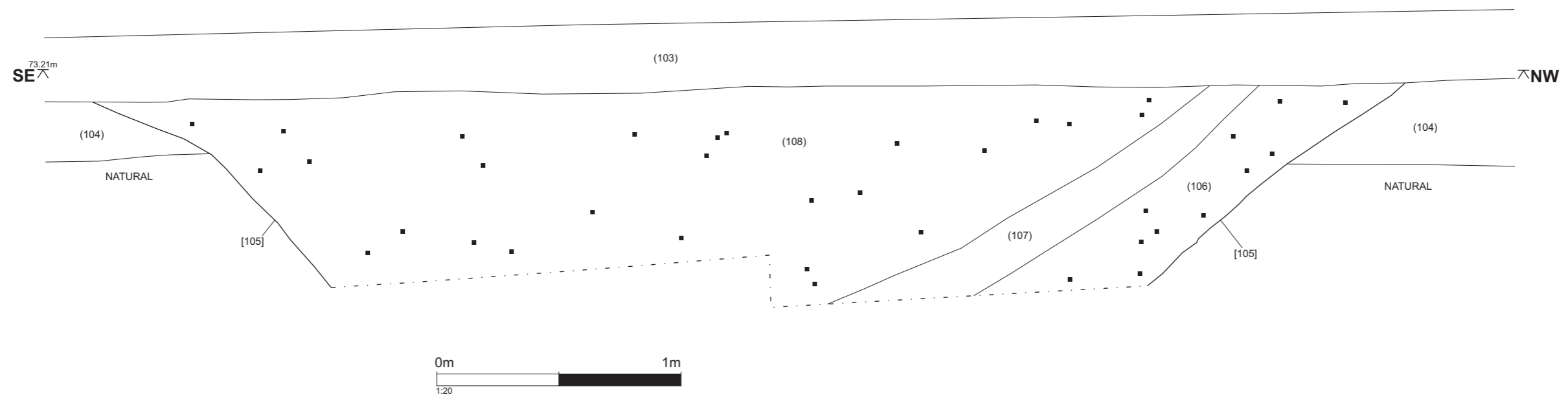


FIGURE 3: Plan and Section, Feature [105]



FEATURE [105] LOOKING SOUTHEAST



FEATURE [105] NORTHEAST FACING SECTION

FIGURE 4: Photographs of Feature [105]