

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H W E S T

**Land at Townsend Farm,
Carhampton, Somerset**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Weale

Site Code: TFC12/187

(ST 0054 4280)

Land at Townsend Farm, Carhampton, Somerset

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Hastoe Homes Ltd**

by Andrew Weale
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code TFC12/187

December 2012

Summary

Site name: Land at Townsend Farm, Carhampton, Somerset

Grid reference: ST 0054 4280

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 20th to 23rd November 2012

Project manager: Andrew Weale

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: TFC 12/187

Area of site: c. 1ha

Summary of results: The evaluation has confirmed the archaeological potential of the site and has recorded the presence of a number of linear archaeological features, certainly and possibly of medieval date. Parts of the area occupied by the former farmyard had been terraced into the natural geology and this is likely to have led to the truncation of any archaeological deposits in this zone of the site.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Somerset County Museum Service in due course, with accession code TTNCM 115/2012. The HER reference is 31992

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Land at Townsend Farm, Carhampton, Somerset An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Weale

Report 12/187

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Townsend Farm, Carhampton, Somerset (ST 0054 4280) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Peter Friend of Hastoe Homes, Fleur de Lis, Middleman Street, Poundbury, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 3GX.

Planning permission is to be sought from South Somerset District Council to redevelop the land of c. 1ha for housing. The results of a field evaluation have been requested to determine if the site has archaeological potential and if so produce information to allow the formulation of an appropriate mitigation strategy for the impact of the proposed development.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer of Somerset County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale and Natasha Bennet between the 20th of November and the 22nd of November 2012 and the site code is TFC12/187. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services South West, Taunton and will be deposited with Somerset County Museum Service with accession code TTNCM 115/2012 in due course and the evaluation will be recorded in the HER as entry 31992.

Location, topography and geology

The site is a mixture of pasture and former farm buildings covering c. 1ha, located to the west of the centre of the village of Carhampton and to the east of the town of Dunster 2km to the west (Fig. 2). The site consists of a grassy paddock with a range of farm buildings fronting on to the A39 with a barn behind, a metal milking shed and concrete yards. It is bounded by south by farmland to the east by Winsors Lane and hedgerows, to the west by Townsend Farm House and the north by the A39 and Townsend Cottages. The land slopes down from the south towards the north and the A39. The underlying geology is described as Triassic Mercia Mudstone Group (BGS 1997), and a red brown silty clay was observed in the base of all trenches. The site is at a height of 31m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The village of Carhampton lies in an area of high archaeological potential. To the south of the village on Gallox Hill are the sites of two probable Iron Age earthworks, Ball Camp and Bat's Castle (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2003a). The course of the old Dunster to Carhampton road may be aligned on a Roman road with a possible Roman fort at the foot of Dunster Castle (Gathercole 2002). To the north-west of Eastbury Farm within the village a prehistoric settlement has been recorded. Within Townsend farm itself during an evaluation and watching brief for a road widening scheme Roman pottery together with 6th-century eastern Mediterranean and 7th-century Gaulish pottery as well a 9th-century ditch and 10th- to 12th-century occupation debris were recorded. Pre-10th-century burials were also found near the farm (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2003a). In the grounds of the old vicarage (Sandmartin House) to the west of Eastbury Farm, a medieval cemetery dating from the 12th to 16th centuries together with medieval building foundations was discovered. The 12th-century *Life* of a 5th- to 6th-century Welsh missionary bishop, St Carantoc, says he founded a church or monastery at Carhampton (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2003a).

Townsend Farm was created in 1799 as Western Farm and changed its name to Townsend between 1832 and 1840 (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2003a). Nine evaluation trenches were dug at Townsend Farm in May 2003 prior to redevelopment. Medieval post holes and pits, indicating occupation, were recorded at the east end of the site, at the base of a slope and in the area of the modern farm buildings. The earliest artefacts found were pottery sherds dating to the 10th and 11th century, probably originating from a medieval plough soil. A number of medieval and post-medieval field boundaries were recorded, some recorded on a map of 1770 and others not, indicating they fell out of use before 1770. Evidence of levelling was encountered at the east end of the site and was probably undertaken from the 17th to 18th centuries when the present farm buildings were constructed (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2003b).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. This work will be carried out in a manner which will not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation in-situ, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project are:

to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;

to determine if any Saxon or Medieval deposits representing ancillary settlement features such as enclosures, field systems or cemeteries are present;

to determine if there are any late Medieval/Post-medieval field boundaries as shown on the map of 1770 are present; and

to determine the impact of the development on the archaeological resource and allow for a mitigation strategy to be developed if necessary.

It was proposed to dig six trenches, each 20m long and 1.6 wide (*c.* 2% of site area). The trenching was positioned as a 'stratified random' layout across the site. A contingency of 20m of trench was included should this be required to clarify the nature of the initial findings

Topsoil, and any other overburden was to be removed by a JCB-type machine. Fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. This was to take place under constant archaeological supervision. Concrete was broken out by a concrete breaker and removed along with underlying hardcore with a toothed bucket.

A metal detector was used to enhance the recovery of metal finds and both stripped areas and a sample of spoilheaps were scanned for the retrieval of artefacts.

Results

Due to shared use of the machine at the same time as geotechnical investigations, the trenches were dug using a 360⁰ machine and were 1.8m wide. Three of the trenches (1-3) were dug as intended (Fig. 3). Trench 4 was started but live services were found in this area of the site. An attempt was made to change the location of trench 4 but no suitable location in that area could be found. After consulting Mr Membery, 10m were added to the lengths of Trenches 5 and 6 to make up the sample area and the orientation of these trenches was altered to fit the extended length in to the same area as the original positions. The trenches ranged from 18.4m to 29.6m in length and in depth from 0.30m to 1.50m..

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Trench 1 was aligned south-east to north-west, and was 18.40m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of concrete up to 0.30m thick, beneath which was made ground up to 0.20m, beneath which was brown/red clay natural geology. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 2 was aligned south-west to north-east, was 21.00m long and 1.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of concrete up to 0.20m thick, beneath which was made ground up to 0.10m. Beneath the made ground was a layer of mixed topsoil and made ground which contained modern concrete, brick, slate, and plastic, up to 0.30m deep. Beneath this layer was a thick layer of topsoil which contained modern brick, tile and plastic up to 0.80m thick. Beneath the buried topsoil was a layer of subsoil up to 0.10m thick which overlay natural geology.

Cut into the natural at the northern end of the trench was gully 7 which was linear in plan and 0.30m wide. Gully 7 was filled with a dark brown to black silty clay (64) that contained no artefacts. Due to the depth of the trench and flooding in the base, Gully 7 was unexcavated.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned south-east to north-west, 20.60m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of concrete up to 0.20m thick, beneath which was made ground up to 0.10m, beneath which was natural geology. No archaeological features or artefacts were present within Trench 3. The northern end of Trench 3 was then excavated as a geotechnical test pit.

Trench 4 (Fig.3)

Trench 3 was aligned south-east to north-west, and was just 4.5m long and 0.40m deep before abandonment. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil up to 0.30m thick, beneath which was made subsoil up to 0.10m though which were running live services.

Trench 5 (Figs 4 and 5; Pls1 and 2)

Trench 5 was aligned west to east, and was 29.60m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil up to 0.30m thick, beneath which was made subsoil up to 0.35m, beneath which was natural geology.

Cut in to the natural geology were gullies 1, 2 and 3. Gully 1 was aligned south to north, 0.44m wide and 0.15m deep. It was filled with dark brown silty clay (58) that contained a few flecks of charcoal but no artefacts. To the east of gully 1, gully 2 was aligned north-west to south-east, 0.52m wide and 0.14m deep. It was filled

with dark brown silty clay (59) that again contained charcoal flecks but no artefacts. To the east of gully 2, gully 3 was aligned south-west to north-east, 0.56m wide and 0.12m deep. It was filled with dark brown silty clay (60) that again, contained charcoal flecks but no artefacts.

Trench 6 (Figs 4 and 5; Pls 3 and 4)

Trench 6 was aligned south-east to north-west, 27.70m long and 0.68m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil up to 0.30m thick, beneath which was subsoil up to 0.38m deep, beneath which was natural brown red clay. Cut into the natural geology were gullies 5 and 6, and ditches 4 and 8. Gullies 5 and 6 were only seen in plan before the trench flooded and were not excavated. Gully 6 was filled with dark brown silty clay (63) that contained charcoal flecks. Gully 5 was filled with (62) dark brown silty clay that also contained charcoal flecks. At the south-eastern end of Trench 6, ditch 4 was 1.12m wide and 0.42m deep. It was filled with a brown red silty clay (61) that contained 5 sherds of pottery that dated to the medieval period as well as large stones. Ditch 4 cut ditch 8 which was 0.56m wide and 0.29m deep. Ditch 8 was filled with a light brown red silty clay (65) but contained no artefacts.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised five sherds with a total weight of 17g. They all occurred in the same context, Ditch 4 [61]. The following fabric types were noted:

F1: Chert-tempered Ware, 11th – 12th century (Allen 2003). 2 sherds, 11g.

F2: Exmoor/Quantocks Coarseware, ?13th – 15th century (Allen 1998). 3 sherds, 6g.

The fabric types are typical finds in the region. The sherds are all small and demonstrate signs of slight abrasion, so are probably the product of secondary deposition. The deposit in which they occurred is likely to be of 13th century date, although it could be slightly earlier, as the start date of fabric F2 is still a little uncertain.

The three sherds of F2 are all from the base angle of the same vessel, probably an unglazed jar. The two sherds of F1 are both from different vessels, again unglazed jars.

Sieved samples

Two soil samples of 20L each were taken from cut 1(58) and cut 4(61) to recover any charred plant remains or small artefacts. The samples were floated and sieved using a nest of sieves down to 0.25mm. A few small flecks of charcoal were the only items of interest recorded.

Conclusion

The evaluation has recorded the presence of a number of archaeological features across the site and determined the archaeological potential. The archaeological deposits comprise a series of gullies that are likely to represent a series of small land divisions, but mostly contained no dateable artefacts. One feature, ditch 4 to the east, contained pottery of medieval date and is likely to date from this period as is its precursor, ditch 8, which it recut.

The southern and northern parts of the concreted farmyard had been terraced away down into natural geology which would have removed all but the deepest archaeological features. However, the middle of the farmyard had been filled to a depth of well over a metre which had served to preserve the gully in the northern end of Trench 2.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at west or south end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	18.40	1.8	0.50	0–0.30m concrete; 0.30–0.50 made ground; 0.50m+ brown red clay natural geology
2	21.00	1.8	1.50	0–0.20m concrete; 0.20–0.30m made ground; 0.30–0.60m mixed topsoil and made ground; 0.60–1.40m buried topsoil; 1.40–1.50 subsoil; 1.50m+ brown red clay natural geology. Gully 7
3	20.60	1.8	0.30	0–0.20m concrete; 0.20–0.30 made ground; 0.30m+ brown red clay natural geology
4	4.5	1.8	0.40	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30–0.40m+ subsoil; 0.4m+ brown red clay natural geology.
5	27.70	1.8	0.68	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30–0.68 subsoil; 0.68m+ brown red clay natural geology. Gullies 1, 2, 3. [Pls 1 and 2]
6	29.60	1.8	0.70	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30–0.70 subsoil; 0.70m+ brown red clay natural geology. Ditches 4, 8, Gullies 5, 6. [Pls 3 and 4]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

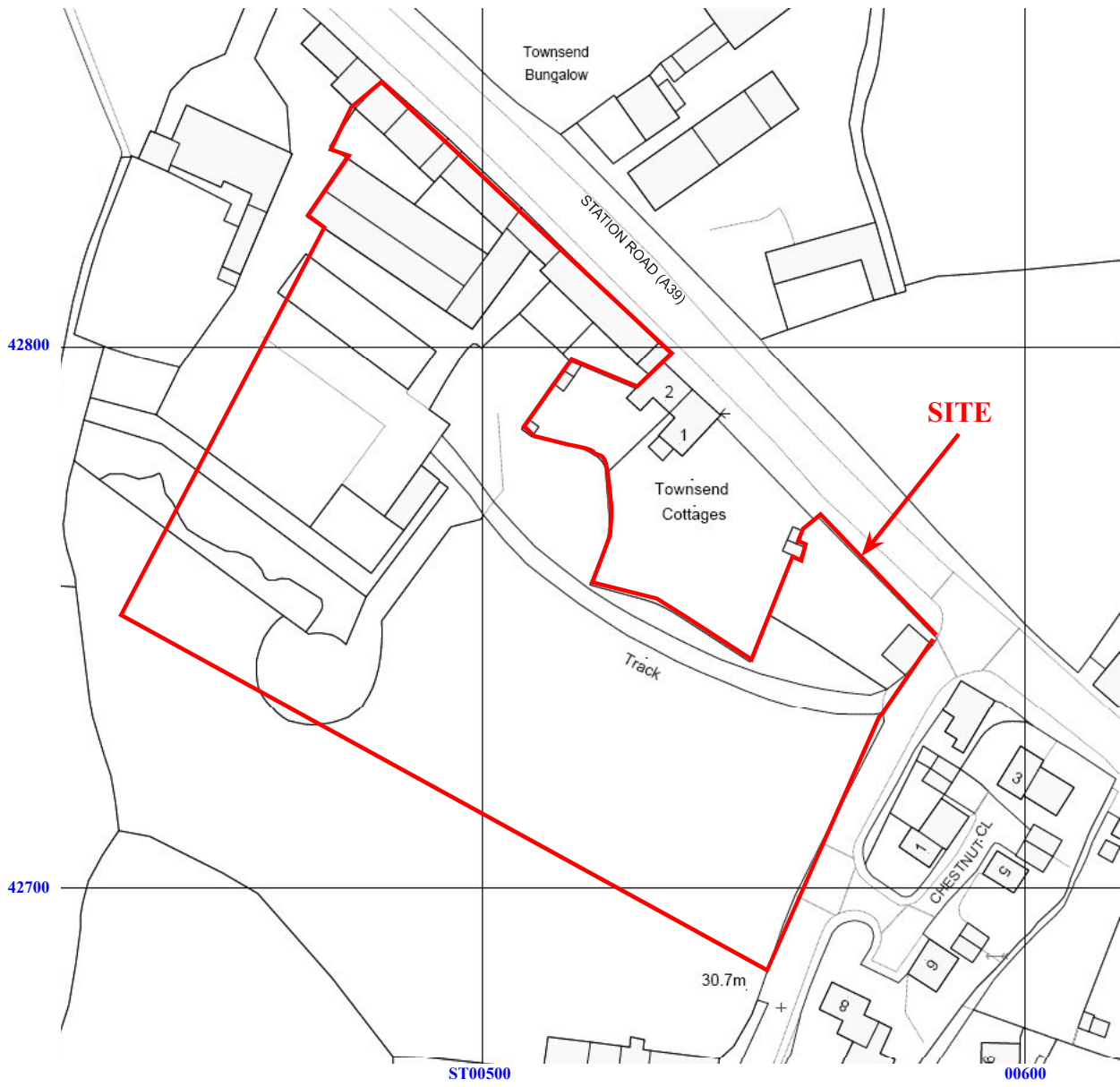
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	7	64	gully	unknown	none
5	1	58	gully	unknown	none
5	2	59	gully	unknown	none
5	3	60	gully	unknown	none
6	4	61	Ditch (recut of 8)	Medieval (13th century)	Pottery
6	5	62	gully	Unknown	none
6	6	63	gully	Unknown	none
6	8	64	Ditch	earlier than ditch 4	stratigraphy



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Figure 1. Location of site within Carhampton and Somerset.

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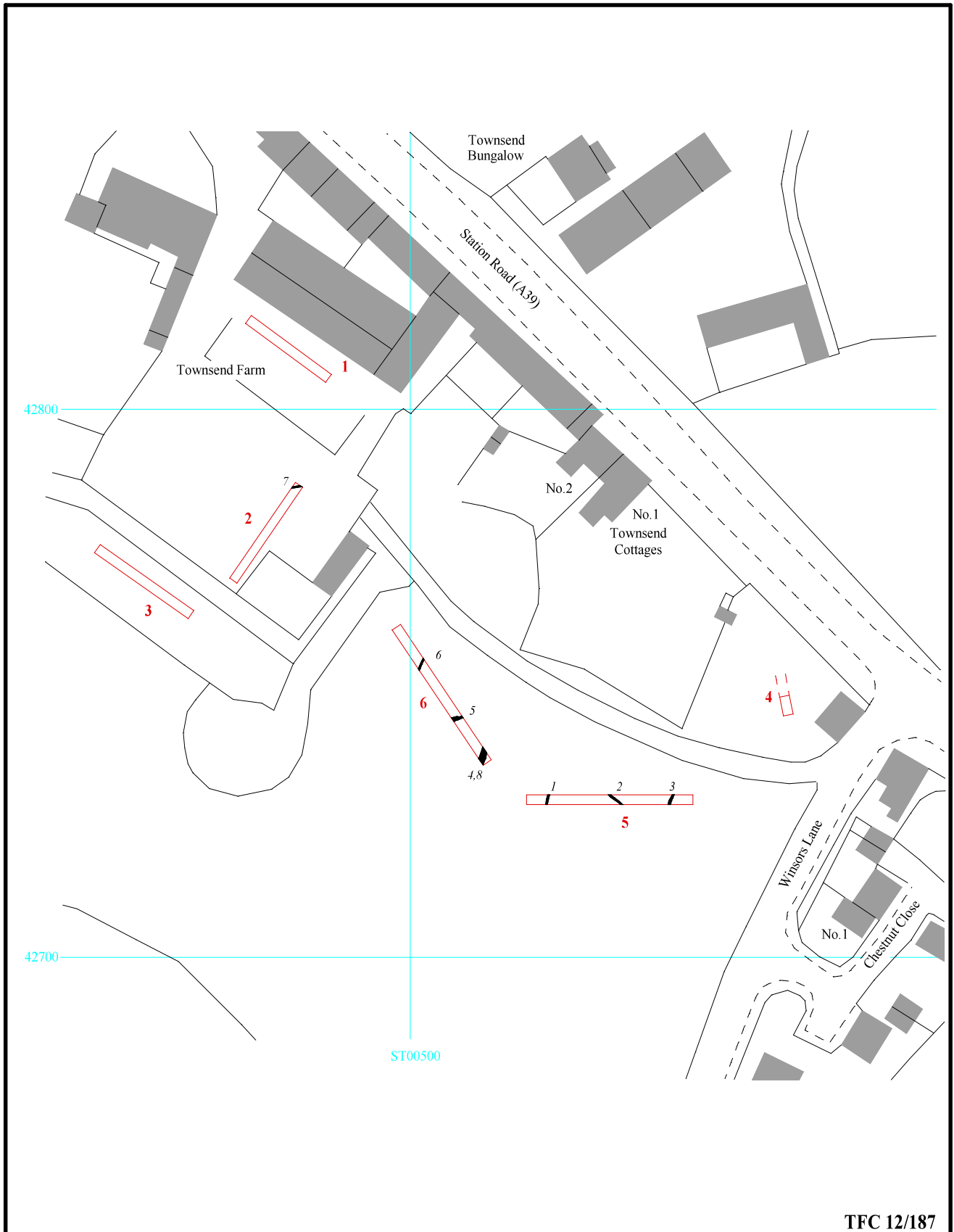


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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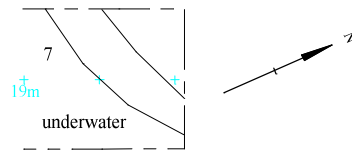
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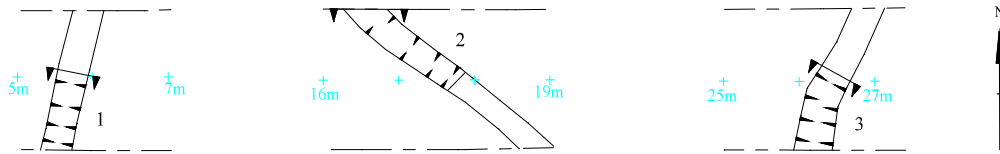
Figure 3. Location of evaluation trenches.



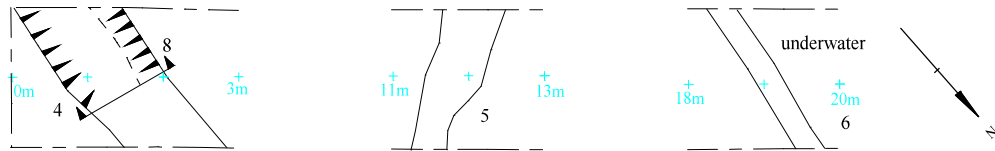
Trench 2



Trench 5



Trench 6



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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.



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Plate 1. Trench 5, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 6, looking south east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 5, gully slot 3, looking north east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.



Plate 4. Trench 6, ditch slot 4 and 8, looking south, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.

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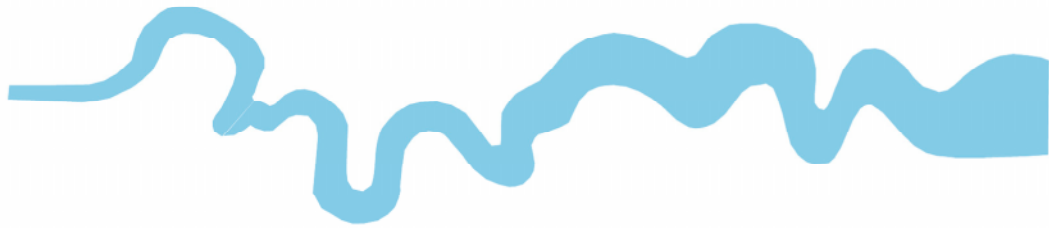
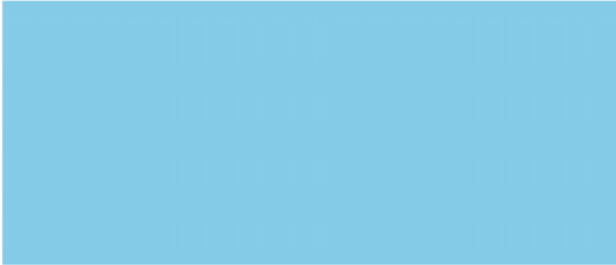
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Plates 3 and 4.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC
↓	↓



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