

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Land off B4019, Broad Blunsdon,  
Swindon, Wiltshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Andy Taylor**

**Site Code: BBB18/219  
SU 1491 9017**

**Land off B4019, Broad Blunsdon,  
Swindon, Wiltshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Kingsman Estates Ltd**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BBB18/219

**June 2019**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land off B4019, Broad Blunsdon, Swindon, Wiltshire

**Grid reference:** SU 1491 9017

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 18th-19th June 2019

**Project coordinator:** Tim Dawson

**Site supervisor:** Andy Taylor

**Site code:** BBB 18/219

**Area of site:** 2.39 hectares

**Summary of results:** Most trenches contained no deposits of archaeological interest. A pair of shallow, parallel gullies that aligned with the modern road network were noted in three trenches and contained a few fragments of animal bone but no dating evidence. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Swindon Museum in due course.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 25.06.19
	Steve Preston ✓ 25.06.19

# Land off B4019, Broad Blunsdon, Swindon, Wiltshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

**Report 18/219**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land off the B4019, Broad Blunsdon, Swindon, Wiltshire (SU 1491 9017) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr David Curtis of GreenSquare Group, Methuen Park, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 0GU on behalf of Kingsman Estates Ltd.

Planning permission (S/OUT/19/0294) has been sought from Swindon Borough Council to construct up to 43 new dwellings with associated services and access on a 2.39 hectare parcel of land. In accordance with the Ministry of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology an archaeological evaluation has been carried out in order to inform the planning process. This has taken the form of a geophysical survey reported separately (Kruger 2019) and trial trenching reported here. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, County Archaeologist with Wiltshire Council, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor, Maisie Foster and Ashley Kruger the 18th and 19th June 2019 and the site code is BBB 18/219. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Swindon Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located approximately 5.2km north of Swindon town centre, adjacent to the B4109 on the southern edge of the village of Broad Blunsdon (Fig. 1). It consisted of well kept grass and is currently being utilized as pasture and for the stabling of horses. The underlying geology is mapped as Highworth Limestone formation (BGS 1974), which was observed across the trenches with no recorded superficial deposits (BGS 1974). The site lies at a height of c.145m above Ordnance Datum on an essentially flat plateau with the land beyond the immediate environs of the site dropping steeply to both north and south.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted by a desk-based assessment (Baljkas 2018). In summary, it is primarily defined by the area's proximity to the Roman road of Ermine Street, a small portion of which is thought to survive on a north-west/south-east trajectory, to the west of the site. It is thought that due to the site's location and the propensity for Roman settlements to develop along these ancient highways there is a potential for a Roman roadside settlement in or around the area of investigation. A Lidar study was undertaken as part of the desk-based assessment which noted a weak interrupted circular feature towards the south of the site which may be archaeological in origin.

The geophysical survey of the site itself (Kruger 2019) revealed nothing of obvious archaeological interest, but noted that extensive magnetic interference may have been masking any anomalies of archaeological origin.

## **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.

The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any deposits of Roman date are present;
- to determine if any geophysical anomalies are of archaeological origin;
- to provide information in order to draw up an appropriate mitigation strategy if required; and
- to report on the findings of the evaluation.

Eleven trenches were to be dug, each measuring 1.60m wide and 25m long. If archaeological deposits were encountered, sufficient of these were to be investigated to meet the aims outlined above. The trenches were dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

## **Results**

All 11 trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 2), measuring 1.80m wide and between 24.80m and 27.10m in length and between 0.26m and 0.38m deep. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

#### Trench 1

This trench was aligned approximately E-W and measured 26.20m long, 0.39m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil overlying 0.21m of subsoil overlying limestone and silty clay natural geology. No archaeological features were observed and no finds recovered.

#### Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

This trench was aligned approximately N-S and measured 26.10m long and 0.32m deep. Topsoil 0.16m deep overlay 0.16m of subsoil overlying limestone and silty clay natural geology. A potential feature was noted at the southern end of the trench into which a slot [5] was dug measuring 0.10m deep and was interpreted as being a furrow.

#### Trench 3

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 26m long and 0.32m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.14m of topsoil overlying 0.18m of subsoil overlying limestone and silty clay natural geology.

#### Trench 4

This trench was aligned approximately E-W and measured 24.80m long and 0.30m deep. Topsoil to a depth of 0.13m overlay 0.17m of subsoil overlying limestone and silty clay natural geology.

#### Trench 5

This trench was aligned NW-SE and was targeting a possible Lidar anomaly and measured 26.80m long and 0.26m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of topsoil overlying 0.14m of subsoil overlying limestone and silty clay natural geology. No evidence of any features could be determined to account for the Lidar anomaly.

#### Trench 6 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 2, 4 and 5)

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 26.80m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.14m of topsoil overlying 0.17m of subsoil overlying limestone and silty clay natural geology. Two parallel gullies were noted at 7m and 11.60m from the SE end of the trench. Gully 3 was 0.50m wide, 0.13m deep and its mid grey brown silty clay fill (52) produced one piece of animal bone. Gully 4 measured 0.45m wide, 0.11m deep and its mid grey brown silty clay fill (53) produced one piece of animal bone.

#### Trench 7 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

This trench was aligned approximately NE-SW and measured 25m long and 0.32m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil overlying 0.17m of subsoil overlying limestone and silty clay natural geology. The same parallel gullies as in trench 6 were observed between 7.60m and 11.40m. Gully 1 measured 0.58m wide, 0.08m deep and its mid red brown silty clay fill (50) did not produce any finds. Gully 2 measured 0.56m wide, 0.12m deep and its mid red brown silty clay fill (51) produced two pieces of animal bone.

#### Trench 8 (Figs 3 and 4)

This trench was aligned approximately NE-SW and measured 26m long and 0.26m deep. A depth of 0.11m of topsoil overlay 0.15m of subsoil overlying limestone and silty clay natural geology. Gully 6, a continuation of one of the gullies from trenches 6 and 7, was located at 1m and measured 0.47m wide, 0.07m deep and its light grey brown silty clay fill (55) did not produce any dating evidence.

#### Trench 9

This trench was aligned NW-SE and measured 25m long and 0.28m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil overlying 0.18m of subsoil overlying limestone and silty clay natural geology.

#### Trench 10

This trench was aligned N-S and measured 26m long and 0.35m deep. It consisted of 0.14m of topsoil overlying 0.21m of subsoil overlying limestone and silty clay natural geology.

#### Trench 11

This trench was aligned approximately ENE-WSW and measured 27.10m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of topsoil overlying 0.26m of subsoil overlying limestone and silty clay natural geology.

#### *Animal Bone by Ceri Falys*

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from three contexts. A total of four fragments of non-human bone were present for analysis, weighing 82g (Appendix 3). The overall preservation of the remains was poor, with all surfaces etched and eroded. The fragment size was generally large, however, the eroded preservation masked surface features.

A minimum of two animals were present in this small assemblage: one large (horse or cow), and one medium-sized animal (sheep/goat or pig). It was not possible to suggest the animal(s) of origin in either case. The eroded surface preservation did not permit assessment of any butchery practices that may have been present.

## **Conclusion**

The evaluation identified a small number of potential archaeological deposits, in the form of two parallel gullies. However, neither of these produced any dating evidence, despite having been excavated 100% within the trenches. These features do not match any boundary shown on historic maps within the site (Baljkas 2019) but do align closely on extant (and historic) boundaries beyond the site and lie perpendicular to the modern road (Fig. 5). As these features are of uncertain date and significance, the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

## **References**

- Baljkas, G, 2019, 'Land off B4019, Broad Blunsdon, Swindon, Wiltshire: An archaeological desk-based assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report **18/219**, Reading
- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Kruger, A, 2019, 'Land off B4019, Broad Blunsdon, Swindon, Wiltshire: Geophysical survey (magnetic)', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report **18/219b**, Reading
- NPPF, 2019, *National Planning Policy Framework (revised)*, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, London



**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

**0m at S or W end**

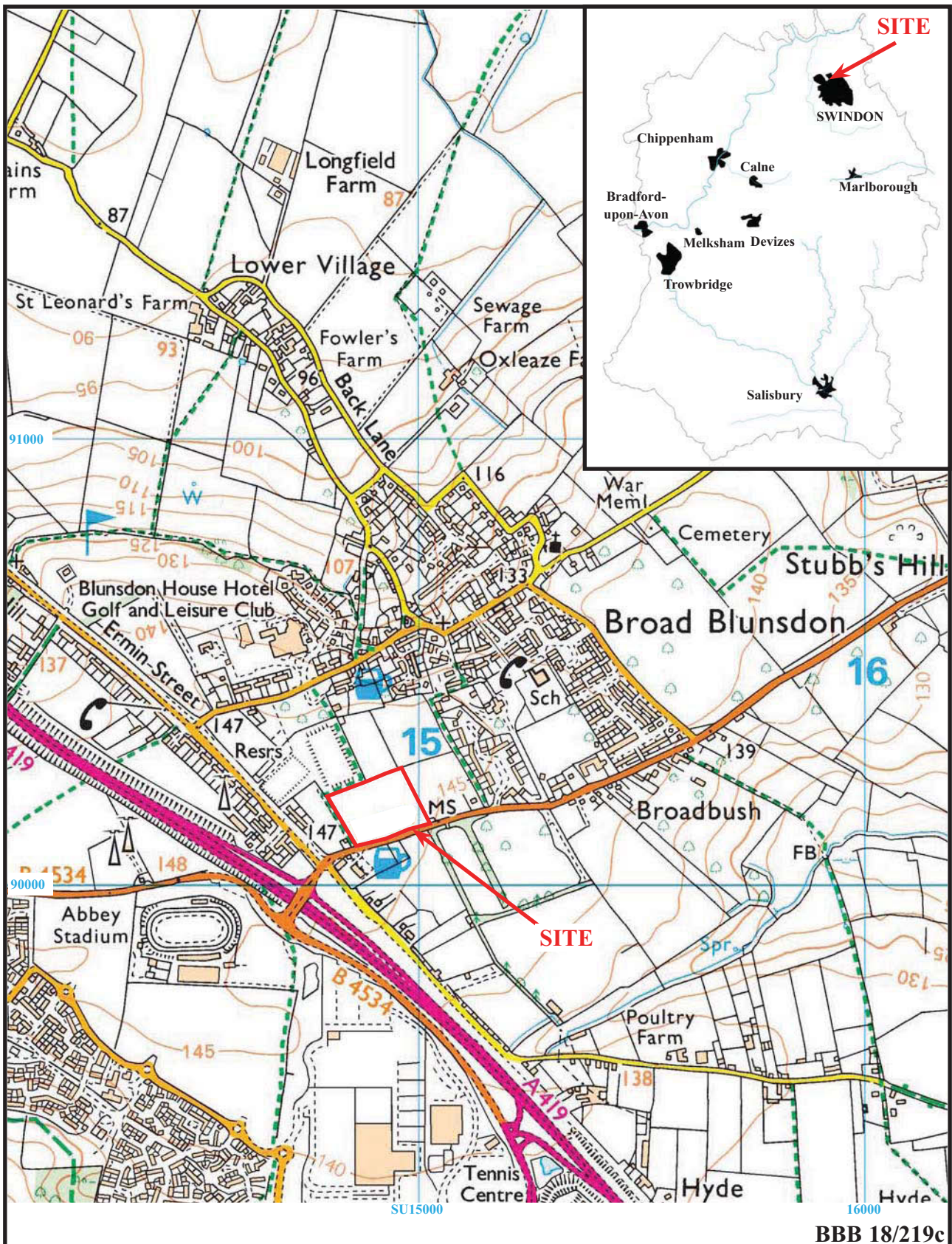
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	26.20	1.80	0.39	0-0.18m topsoil; 0.18m-0.39m subsoil; 0.39m+ limestone and silty clay natural geology.
2	26.10	1.80	0.32	0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16m-0.32m subsoil; 0.32m+limestone and silty clay natural geology. Furrow 5. <b>[Pl. 1]</b>
3	26.00	1.80	0.32	0-0.14m topsoil; 0.14m-0.32m subsoil; 0.32m+ limestone and silty clay natural geology.
4	24.80	1.80	0.30	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13m-0.30m subsoil; 0.30m+ limestone and silty clay natural geology.
5	26.80	1.80	0.26	0-0.12m topsoil; 0.12m-0.26m subsoil; 0.26m= limestone and silty clay natural geology.
6	26.80	1.80	0.31	0-0.14m topsoil; 0.14m-0.31m subsoil; 0.31m+ limestone and silty clay natural geology. Gullies 3 and 4. <b>[Pls 2, 4 and 5]</b>
7	25.00	1.80	0.32	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15m-0.32m subsoil; 0.32m+ limestone and silty clay natural geology. Gullies 1 and 2. <b>[Pl. 3]</b>
8	26.00	1.80	0.26	0-0.11m topsoil; 0.11m-0.26m subsoil; 0.26m+ limestone and silty clay natural geology. Gully 6.
9	25.00	1.80	0.28	0-0.10m topsoil; 0.10m-0.28m subsoil; 0.28m+ limestone and silty clay natural geology.
10	26.00	1.80	0.35	0-0.14m topsoil; 0.14m-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ limestone and silty clay natural geology.
11	27.10	1.80	0.38	0-0.12m topsoil; 0.12m-0.38m subsoil; 0.38m+ limestone and silty clay natural geology.

**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	5	54	Furrow	-	-
6	3	52	Gully	-	-
6	4	53	Gully	-	-
7	1	50	Gully	-	-
7	2	51	Gully	-	-
8	6	55	Gully	-	-

**APPENDIX 3: Inventory of animal bone**

Cut	Deposit	No. frags	Wt (g)	Large	Medium	Comments
2	51	2	42	2	-	vertebral fragments
3	52	1	10	-	1	unidentified long bone shaft fragment
4	53	1	30	1	-	fragment of carpal/tarsal

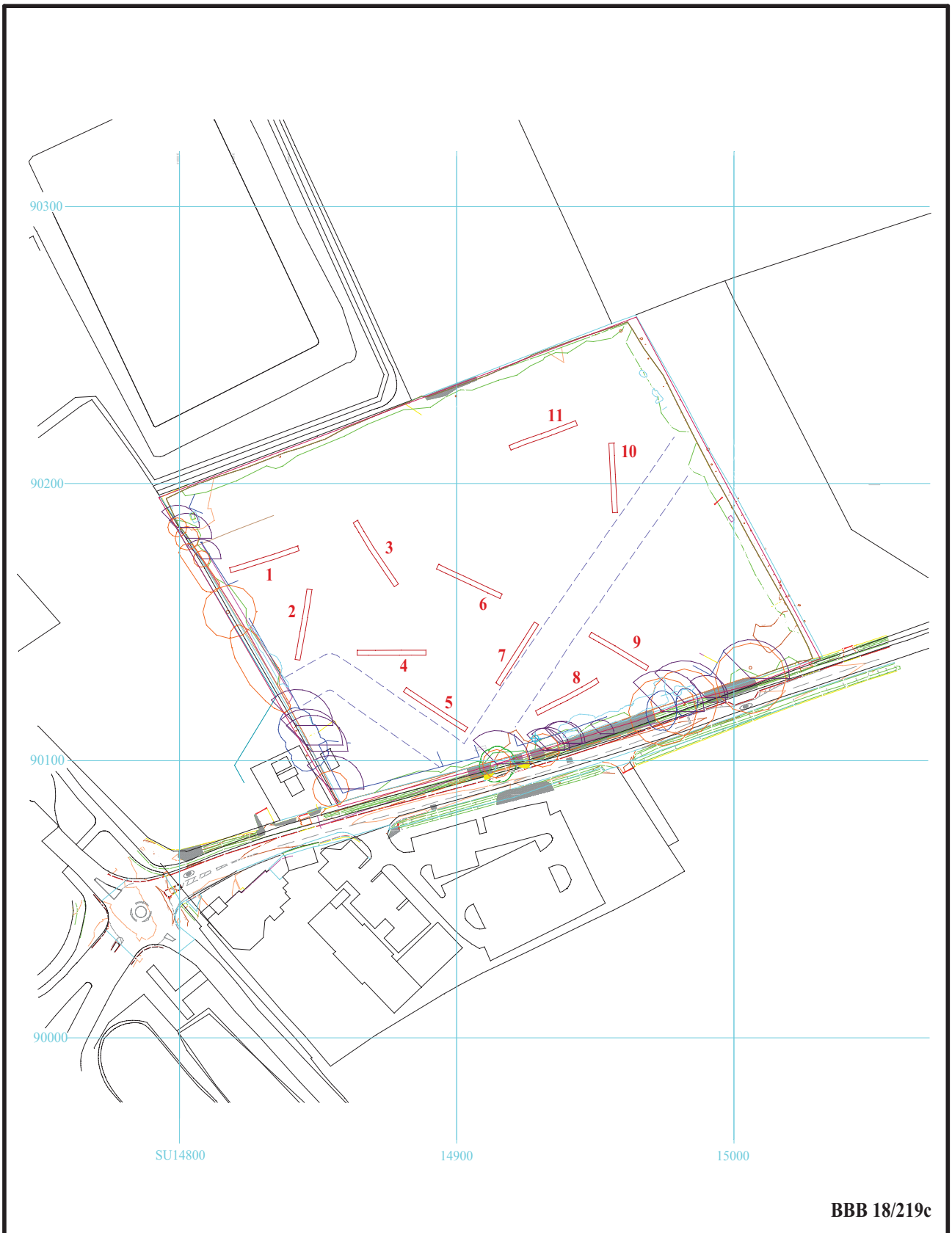


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Figure 1. Location of site within Broad Blunsdon and Wiltshire.

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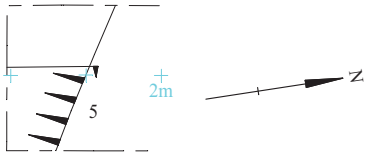
Figure 2. Location of trenches.



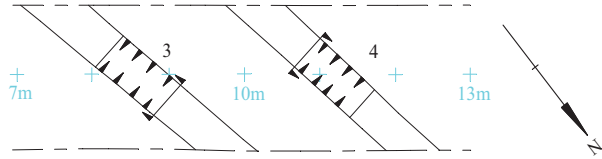
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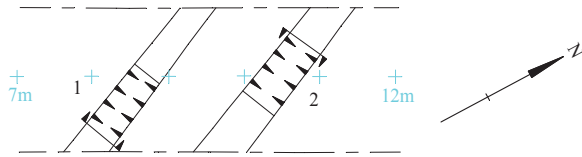
Trench 2



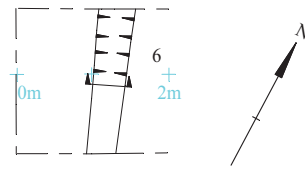
Trench 6



Trench 7



Trench 8



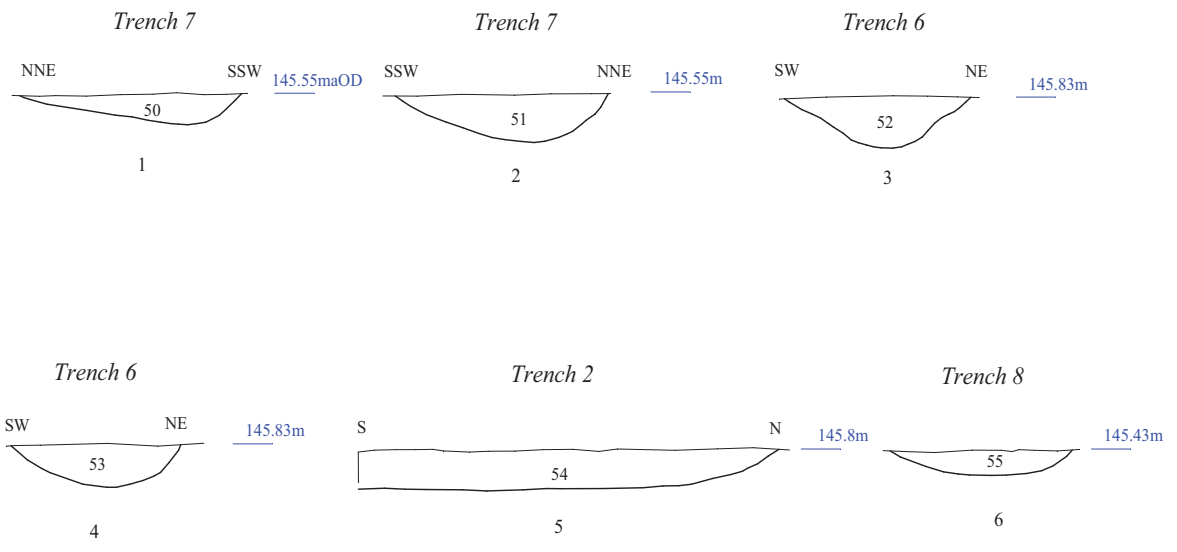
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Figure 3. Detail of trenches.



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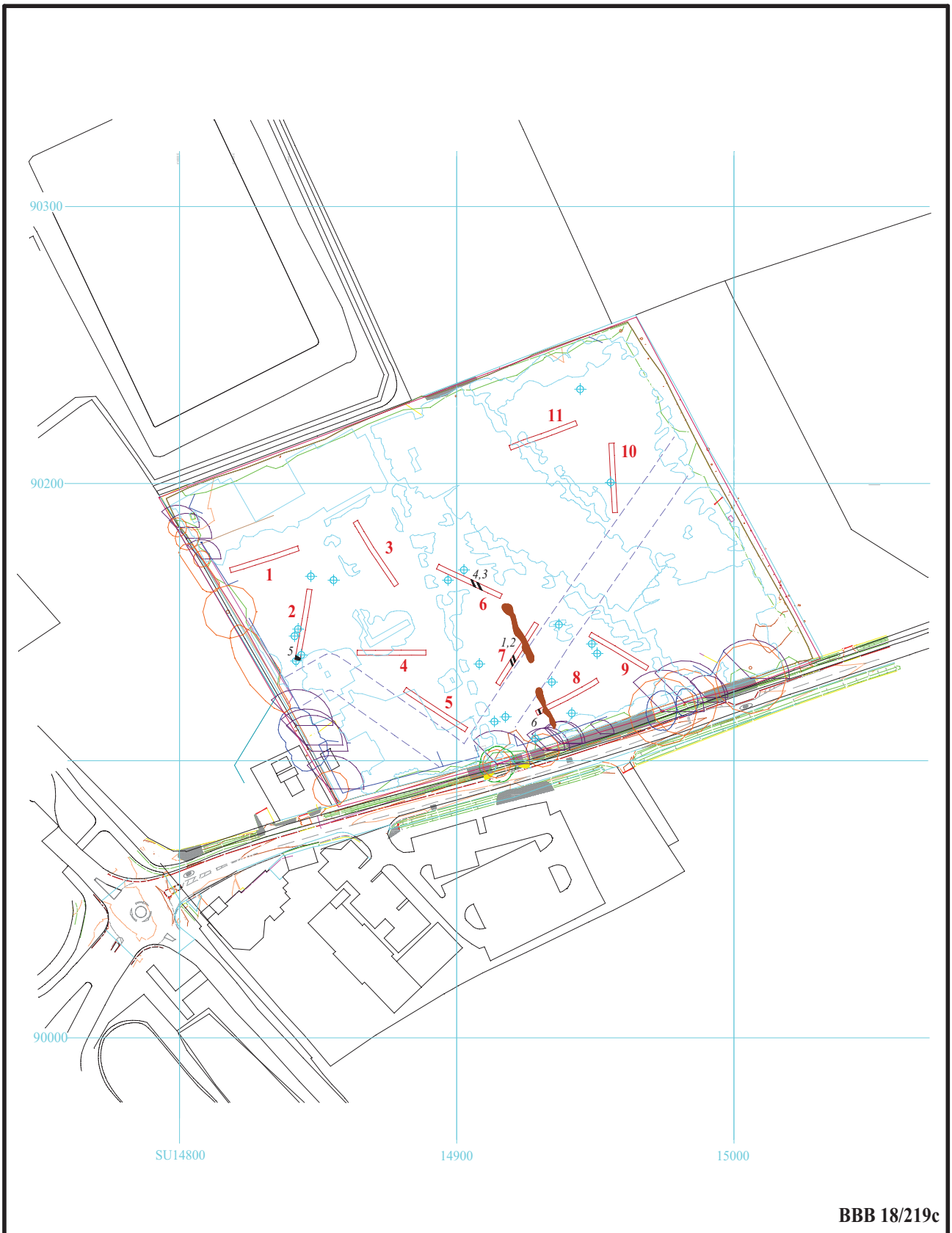


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Figure 4. Sections.





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Figure 5. Location of features compared to magnetic geophysical anomalies.



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Plate 1. Trench 2, looking north-north-east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m; vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 6, looking north-west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m; vertical 0.3m.

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 7, looking north-east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m; vertical 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 6, gully 3, looking north-west,  
Scales: 0.3m and 0.1m.



Plate 5. Trench 6, gully 4, looking north-west,  
Scales: 0.3m and 0.1m.

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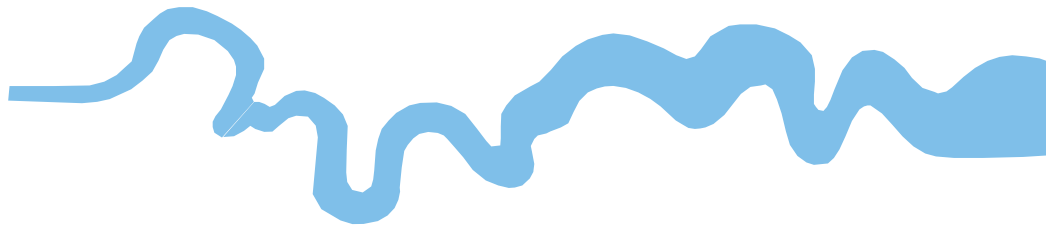
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Plates 3 - 5.**

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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 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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