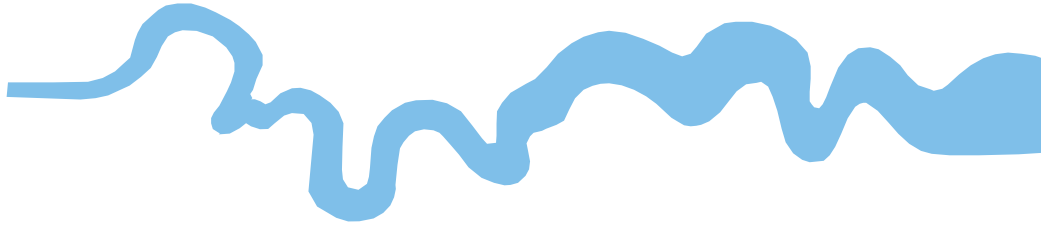


T V A S



SOUTH WEST

**Midsomer House Farm, East Compton Road,
East Compton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Agata Socha-Paszkwicz

Site Code: MHF19/136

(ST 6125 4117)

**Midsomer House Farm, East Compton Road,
East Compton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Armour Heritage

by Agata Socha-Paszkiewicz

TVAS South West

Site Code MHF19/136

November 2019

Summary

Site name: Midsomer House Farm, East Compton Road, East Compton, Shepton Mallet

Grid reference: ST 6125 4117

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 4th to 11th September 2019

Project manager: Agata Socha-Paszkiewicz

Site supervisor: Agata Socha-Paszkiewicz

Site code: MHF 19/136

Area of site: 0.11ha

Summary of results: The watching brief monitored stripping of the area to be occupied by planned tourism development. The stripped areas revealed only one length of a modern gully and a recent waste pit but nothing of archaeological interest.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS South West, Taunton and will be deposited with Somerset Museum Service under accession number TTNCM/872019.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 29.11.19 Steve Preston ✓ 29.11.19

Midsomer House Farm, East Compton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Agata Socha-Paszkwicz

Report 19/136

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Midsomer House Farm, East Compton Road, East Compton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sue Farr of Armour Heritage, Greystone Cottage, Trudoxhill, Frome, BA11 5DP, on behalf of the client.

Planning permission (18/1867/FUL) has been granted by Mendip District Council for a tourism development of six self-contained lodges and associated infrastructure, subject to a condition (Condition 12) that a programme of archaeological works is undertaken. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2018) and the Council's policies on archaeology. The Senior Historic Environment Officer at the South West Heritage Trust, the archaeological adviser to the District Council, has indicated that the site lies in an area of archaeological potential and that a archaeological watching brief is required during the initial stages of the development. The field investigation was carried out to a specification (Farr 2019) approved by the archaeological adviser to the Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Agata Socha-Paszkwicz between 4th and 11th September 2019 and the site code is MHF 19/136.

The archive is presently held at TVAS South West, Taunton and will be deposited with Somerset Museum Service under accession number TTNCM/872019 in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the south side of the A361 road between Pilton and Shepton Mallet and on the edge of the Somerset Levels, in the rural location of East Compton, one of four hamlets of the civil Parish of Pilton (Fig. 1). It is positioned within the grounds of the Midsomer House Farm, to the south-east of the existing farm house and garden, enclosed only to the east by established hedgerows and surrounded by open pasture fields elsewhere (Fig. 2). The area of site is relatively flat (Pl. 1) and lies at a height of approximately 135m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with the ground beyond sloping steeply down to the south into a stream valley. The underlying geology is mapped as Lias-Group – Mudstone, Siltstone, Limestone and Sandstone. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2017).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in the written scheme of investigation (Farr 2019). In summary, a series of lynchets and field systems have been identified from aerial photographs in several locations nearby, one of which (HER 23935) clips the site's southernmost extent. With no ground investigation undertaken; their date remains uncertain but some may be prehistoric in origin. Despite limited evidence for past activity immediately around the site, it lies broadly in the vicinity of the prehistoric settlement and Roman town at Shepton Mallet and just to the west of the Fosse Way Roman road. To the south of site, at Pylle, an extensive buried prehistoric and Roman landscape, including settlement, has been identified in a similar topographical location.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was the monitoring of all groundworks associated with the initial stages of the development.

Specific aims of the project are:

- to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains;
- to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;
- to confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains;
- to determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
- to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains and;
- to determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present

Results

Groundworks comprised the removal of turf and topsoil down to natural geology to be occupied by the five lodges and the driveway connecting the lodges with the East Compton Road (Fig. 2). Due to the absence of archaeological finds or features within these initial groundworks, further monitoring of the service trenches to be excavated along and across driveway and stripping for the car park to the east of the lodges was deemed unnecessary with agreement of Senior Historic Environment Officer at the South West Heritage Trust.

Driveway (Trench 6) (Fig. 2, Pls 2, 3 and 4)

The c. 389 long and 4.3m wide driveway (Pl. 2) was stripped of turf and topsoil down to the top of the natural geology. The depth of removed deposits varied from 0.05m at north to c. 0.20m at south. At some 16m from the East Compton Road was waste pit 1 (pl. 3). This was rectangular in plan, 3.14m by 2.19m. It was filled with coal, modern slag and glass debris in dark grey clay matrix (52) which was recorded in plan but left unexcavated, finds were not retained.

Some 34m further to the south from waste pit 1 was gully 2 (Pl. 4). It was aligned roughly N-S parallel to the existing field boundary. The gully was c.23m long, 0.30m wide and 0.06m deep. It was filled with dark brown silty clay (53) with frequent white lias debris. No datable artefacts were recovered from the excavated slot but modern bricks fragments and coal debris could be observed on the surface along its length (not retained).

Lodges' footprints (Trenches 1 to 5) (Fig. 2, Pls 5 and 6)

The footprints of the five lodges were stripped of turf and topsoil down to the top of the natural geology. Trenches 1 and 3 to 5 were 12.60m long and 7.07m wide; Trench 2 was 14.3m long and 6.80m wide, all were c. 0.15m deep. The trenches revealed no features or finds of archaeological interest; some modern bricks, coal and Tarmac debris could be observed in topsoil but were not retained.

Conclusion

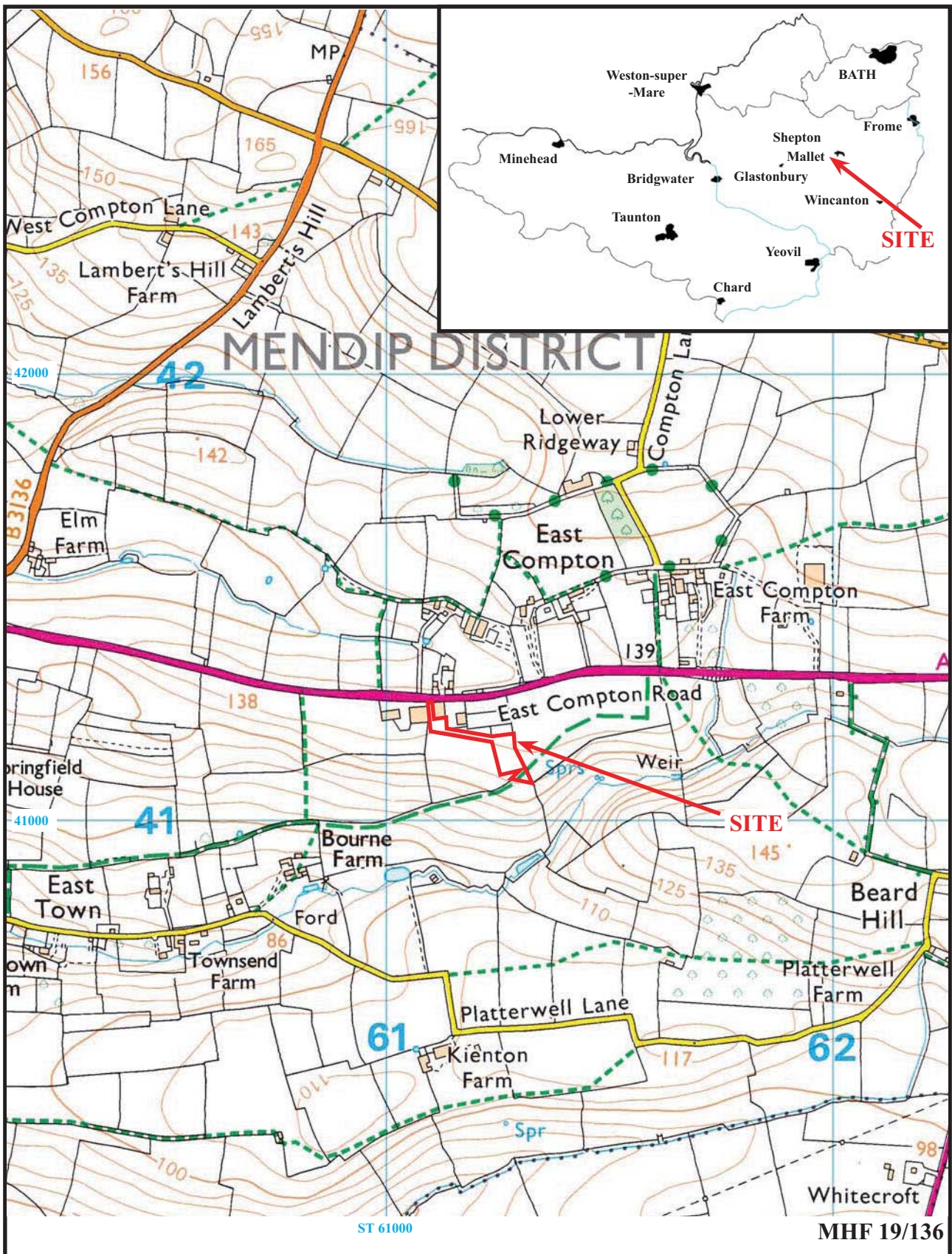
The watching brief revealed only one length of the gully of modern date and a pit which was clearly filled with recent waste. No features or finds of archaeological interest were encountered.

References

- BGS, 2017, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 296, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
Farr, S, 2019, 'Midsomer House Farm, East Compton, Road, East Compton, Shepton Mallet, BA4 4HR: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief', Armour Heritage Ltd WSI AH892, Frome
NPPF, 2018, *National Planning Policy Framework* (revised), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London

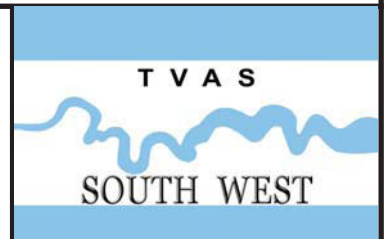
APPENDIX 1: Feature details

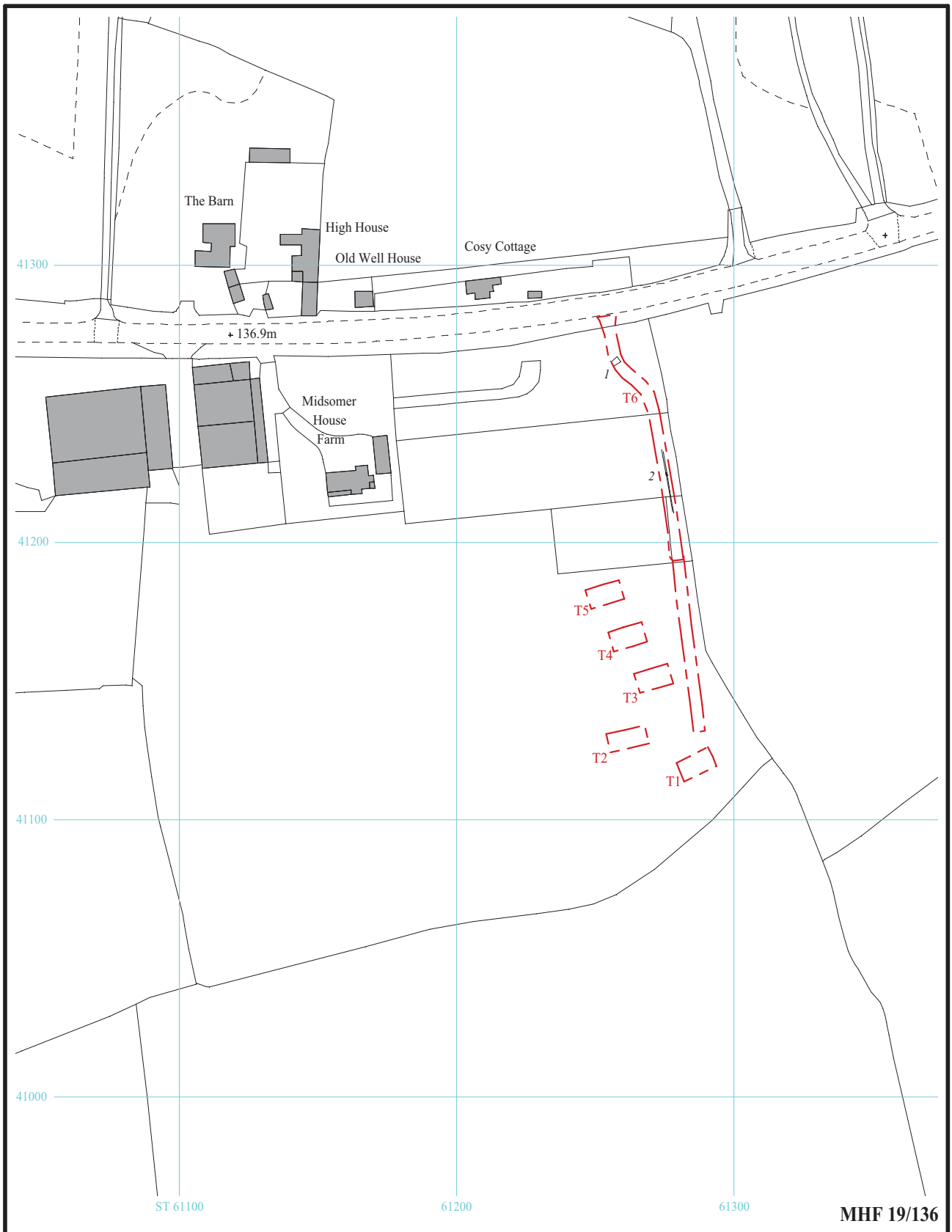
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	52	Waste Pit	Recent	Tarmac
2	53	Gully	Modern	Modern brick



Midsomer House Farm, East Compton Road
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Archaeological Watching Brief
 Figure 1. Location of site within East Compton and Somerset.

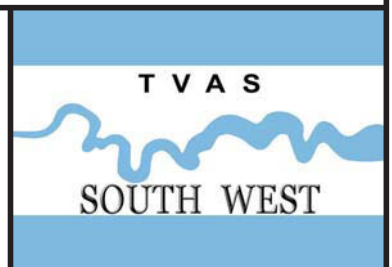
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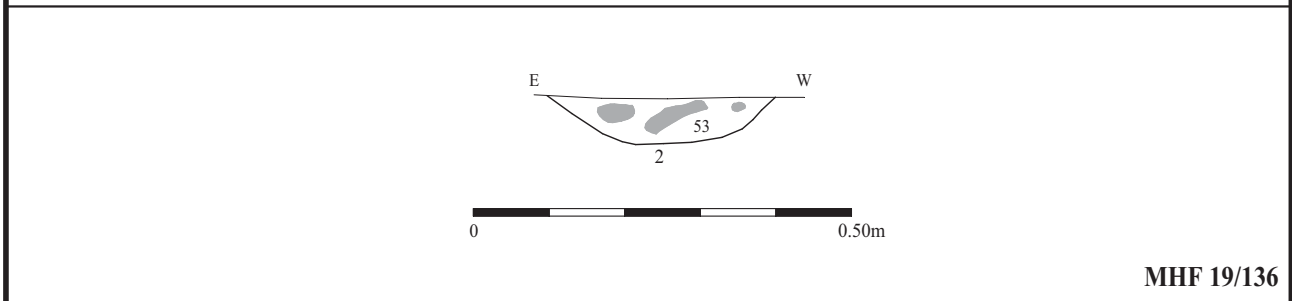
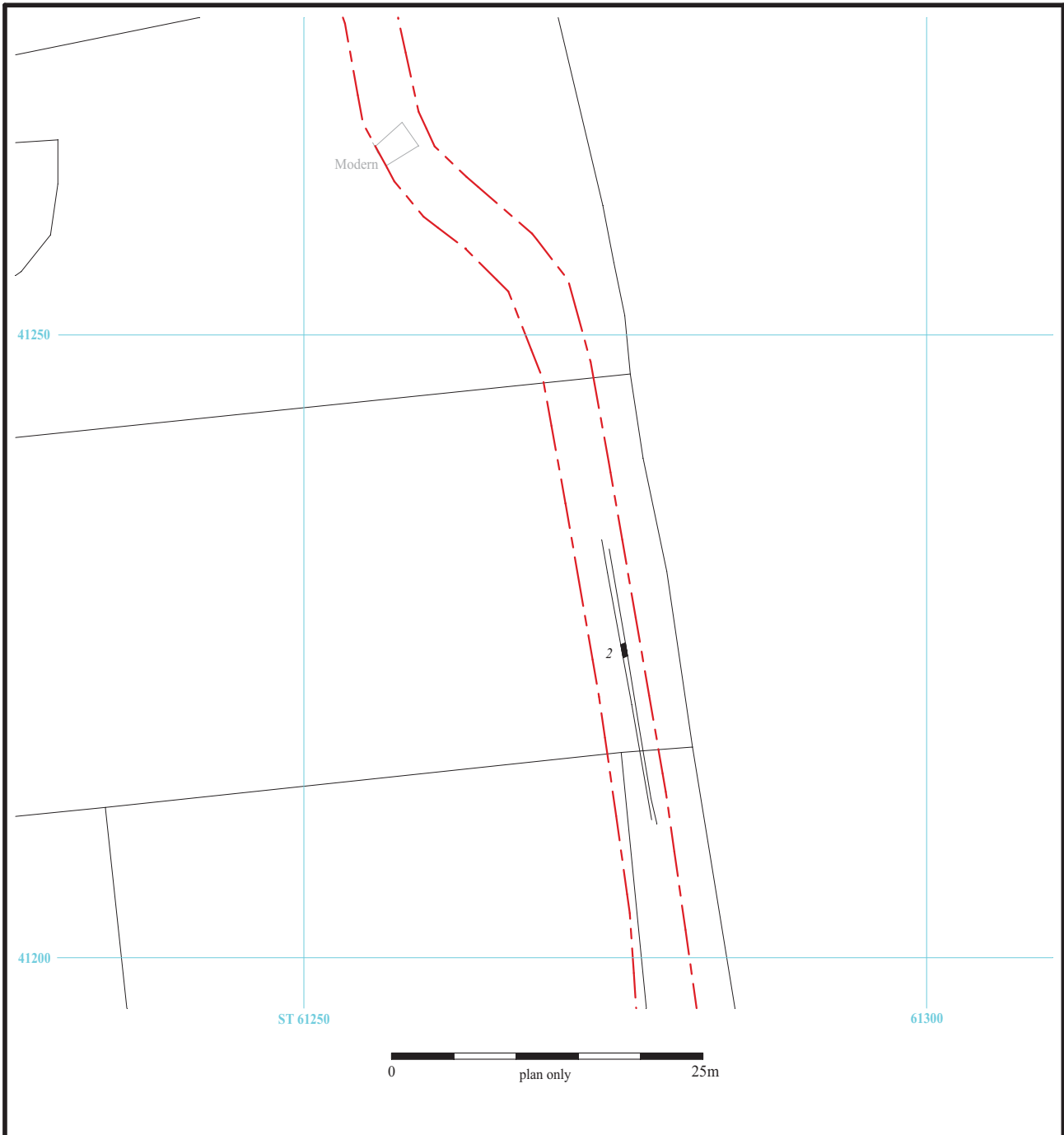




**Midsomer House Farm, East Compton,
Shepton Mallet, Somerset 2019
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Figure 2. Site plan.





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**Midsomer House Farm, East Compton,
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Figure 3. Detail plan (top) and section (bottom).

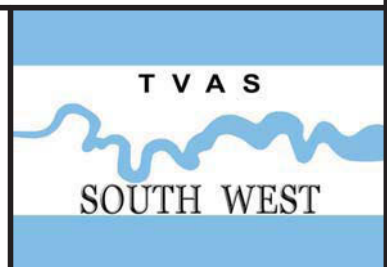




Plate 1. Site view, looking NW



Plate 2. Driveway Road, looking N, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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**Midsomer House Farm, East Compton Road,
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Plates 1 and 2.





Plate 3. Waste pit 1, looking S, Scale: 2m



Plate 4. Gully 2, looking S, Scales: 0.30m and 0.10m.



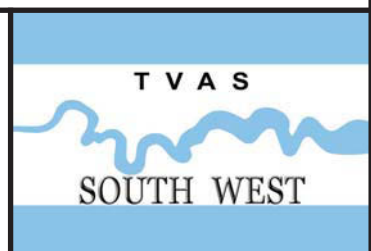
Plate 5. Trench 2, looking SE, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 6. Trench 5, looking E, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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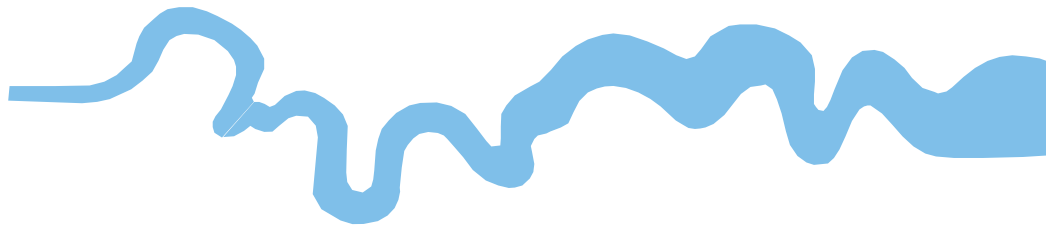
**Midsomer House Farm, East Compton Road
East Compton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, 2019
Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 3 to 6.**



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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