

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Redlands Airfield, Wanborough,
Swindon, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Elspeth St John-Brooks

Site Code: RAS19/144

(SU 7810 7380)

Land at Redlands Airfield, Wanborough, Swindon, Wiltshire

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for ECUS Ltd**

by Elspeth St John-Brooks
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RAS19/144

June 2020

Summary

Site name: Redlands Airfield, Wanborough, Swindon

Grid reference: SU 42034 18467

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 30th July 2019 to 14th May 2020

Area of Site: c. 20ha

Project coordinator:

Site supervisor: Will Attard

Site code: RAS 19/144wb

Summary of results: Test geotechnical pits were dug to test for ground stability and evidence of contamination. These were archaeologically monitored but no deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were found.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Swindon Museum and Art Gallery or Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 26.06.20
	Steve Preston ✓ 26.06.20

Land at Redlands Airfield, Wanborough, Swindon An Archaeological Evaluation

by Elspeth St John-Brooks

Report 19/144

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Land at Redlands Airfield, Wanborough, Swindon (centred on NGR: SU 42034 184678; Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Paul White, Technical Quality & Head of Heritage at Ecus Ltd, Unit 1, Woodlands Business Village, Coronation Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4JX.

The development site was subject to geotechnical investigations aimed to determine the geological character, ground stability, and any contamination of the area. A previous evaluation had revealed prehistoric worked flints and feature suggesting Middle Iron Age occupation. The digging of test pits across the site was therefore to be monitored by an archaeologist. This is in accordance with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the Swindon Borough Council policies on archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Sanchez and Elspeth St. John-Brooks, between 30th July 2019 and 14th May 2020 and the site code is RAS19/144.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Swindon Museum and Art Gallery in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located northeast of Wanborough Road which is on the alignment of a major Roman road (Ermin Street) which runs adjacent to the airfield and farm. The area examined in this watching brief included fields and buildings associated with the farm and airfield and are located southeast of Covingham village and northeast of Wanborough village, west of Swindon (Fig. 2). At ground level the site gradually undulates east of the buildings and farmyard area, the bottom of the test pits in the fields have either a yellow-brown silt/clay or greyish/blue clay with infrequent limestone gravels. Around the buildings the test pits were largely shallow and often did not hit natural geology and were highly contaminated with modern debris, those that did go deep enough into the natural geology were (Appendix 1). The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as the West Walton Formation, Amptill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation (BGS 1997).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in an desk-based assessment (ECUS 2015), geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation was carried out in 2015 for the site (ECUS 2015; CU 2015; CA 2015)(Fig. 2). Both the results from the evaluation and geophysical survey identified a number of anomalies with potential rectilinear enclosures present These were dated from the Roman to medieval periods. In the centre of this area were two possibly three large late medieval pit or quarries. Mid-16th to 18th century ridge and furrow covered most of the site. In the evaluation trenches, a small quantity of Neolithic and Mesolithic worked flints were identified and limited evidence for Middle Iron Age occupation was found in two of the trenches.

Results

The 62 test pits monitored were distributed across most of the site area but mainly concentrated in the area of the buildings (Fig. 2) The test pits ranged from 0.75m-4.05m in length, 0.60m-0.90m in breadth and 0.40m-4.15m in depth. (Fig. 3; Pls 1 and 2) Details of dimensions and a description of stratigraphy in each pit are given in Appendix 1. The test pits around the buildings did not reach the natural geology and often showed modern intrusions. In all test pits both around the buildings and the fields no archaeological deposits or features were found nor artefacts observed.

Conclusion

The opening of the geotechnical test pits was observed by an archaeologist during this watching brief. No archaeological evidence was found in any of the test pits excavated .

References

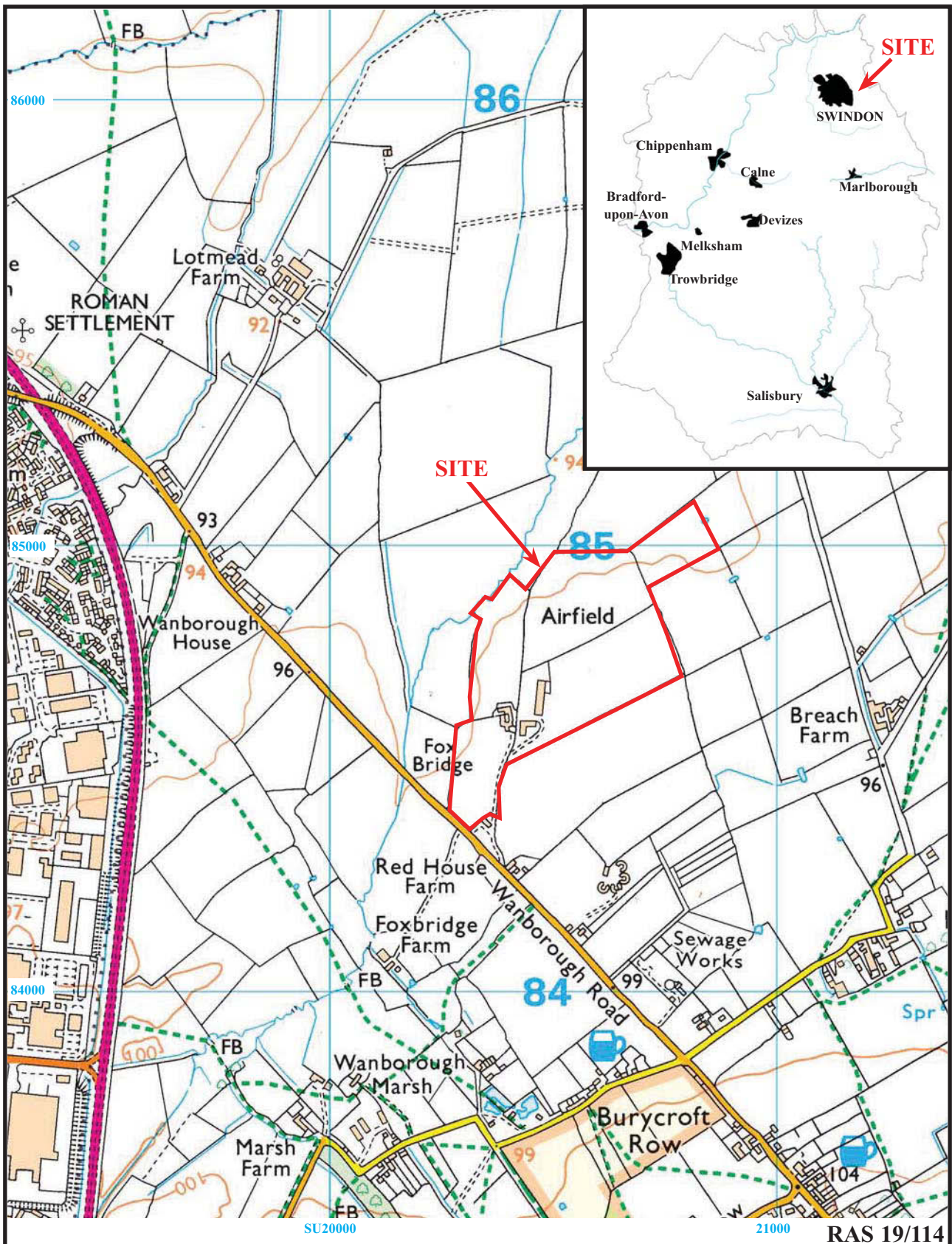
- BGS, 1997, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 252, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- CA 2015, Land at Redlands Airfield, Wanborough, Swindon, an archaeological evaluation, Cotswold Archaeology report 15665, Kemble
- CU 2015, 'Geophysical Survey of Land at Redlands Airfield, Wanborough, Swindon, Wiltshire, Cranfield University
- ECUS Ltd, 2015, 'Land at Redlands Airfield, Wanborough, Swindon - Heritage Assessment'
- NPPF, 2019, *National Planning Policy Framework (revised)*, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, London

APPENDIX 1: Geotechnical Test Pits details

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	3.1	0.65	2.7	0-0.22m Topsoil; 0.22-0.50m Subsoil; 0.50-0.97m Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 0.97-1.70m Light brownish grey silty clay; 1.70m+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels.
1 (STP)	2.3	0.65	2.2	0-0.20m Topsoil; 0.20-0.40m Mid greyish brown silty clay, very rooted (natural?); 0.40-1.00m Light brown clay (natural); 1.00m+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels.
2	2.4	0.65	1.9	0-0.25m Topsoil; 0.25-0.55m Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 0.55m+ Light yellowish brown clay (natural).
2 (STP)	2.25	0.65	2.2	0-0.20m Topsoil; 0.20-0.50m Mid yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 0.50-1.90m Light greyish brown clay (natural); 1.90m+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels.
3	3.2	0.65	2.9	0-0.18m Topsoil; 0.18-0.42m Subsoil; 0.42-0.90m Mid yellowish brown clay (natural); 0.90-1.80m Light brownish grey clay (natural); 1.80m+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels (natural).
3 (STP)	2.6	0.65	2.1	0-0.28m Topsoil; 0.28-0.52m Light greyish brown silty clay (natural); 0.52-0.1.50m Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 1.50m+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels (natural).
4	2.95	0.65	2.8	0-0.20m Topsoil; 0.20-0.42m Subsoil; 0.42-0.91m Mid yellowish brown clay (natural); 0.91- 1.40m Light greyish brown silty clay (natural); 1.40m+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels (natural).
5	2.95	0.65	2.8	0-0.30m Topsoil; 0.30-0.75m Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 0.75-1.50m Light brownish grey clay (natural); 1.50m+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels (natural). [Pl. 1]
6	3.4	0.65	3.1	0-0.32m Topsoil; 0.32-0.92m Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 0.92-2.60m Light brownish grey silty clay (natural); 2.60-2.90m Mid greyish brown sand (natural); 2.90m+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels (natural).
7	3.3	0.65	2	0-0.30m Topsoil; 0.30-0.95m Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 0.95-1.95m Light brownish grey silty clay (natural); 1.95+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels.
8	3.2	0.65	3	0-0.25m Topsoil; 0.25-0.53m Subsoil; 0.53-1.05m Mid yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 1.05-1.90m Mid brownish grey silty clay (natural); 1.90m+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels.
9	3.05	0.65	2.7	0-0.32m Topsoil; 0.32-0.95m Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 0.95-1.90m Mid brownish grey silty clay (natural); 1.90m+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels.
10	2.7	0.65	2.9	0-0.25m Topsoil; 0.25-0.1.90m Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 1.90m+ Mid greyish blue clay with limestone gravels (natural). Potential features identified as a tree throw in the SW corner of the test pit at 0.25m depth, highly rooted and irregular in shape
11	2.9	0.65	2.85	0-0.24m Topsoil; 0.24-0.45m Subsoil; 0.45m-0.90m Mid yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 0.90-1.75m Mid greyish brown silty clay (natural); 1.75m+ Mid greyish blue clay with sand and limestone gravels (natural).
12	2.3	0.65	0.7	0-0.40m Stock pile, plastic, tyres, etc; 0.40-0.55m buried soil; 0.55m+ Light yellowish brown clay (natural);
13	-	-	-	Dismissed. Concrete area, still in use by farmer
14	2.6	0.8	1.6	0-0.20m Construction gravel with tarmac and concrete fragments; 0.20-0.50m Rubble, made ground; 0.50-0.90m Dark greyish blue clay, made ground plastic, modern bricks; 0.90m+ Light yellowish brown clay (natural).
15	2.8	0.9	2.05	0-0.42m Made ground, dark grey clay silt with frequent medium/large sized concrete fragments; 0.42-0.90m Light greyish brown clay (natural); 0.90m+ Light yellowish brown clay (natural);
18	0.75	0.8	0.7	0-0.21m Tarmac; 0.21-0.44m Rubble, modern bricks, concrete, made ground; 0.44m+ Dark greyish brown, made ground.
19	0.8	0.7	0.7	0-0.24m Tarmac; 0.24-0.40m Rubble, modern bricks, concrete, made ground; 0.40m+ Dark greyish brown, made ground.
20	1.6	0.7	0.7	0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.42m Made ground and gravels with brick rubble; 0.42m+ Mid yellowish brown clay (natural).
21	1.6	0.7	0.55	0-0.12m Tarmac; 0.12-0.25m Made ground and gravels with brick rubble; 0.25m+ Dark blackish grey clay, potentially contaminated/organic natural?
23	2.2	0.75	1.1	0-0.31m Rubble, modern bricks, concrete, made ground; 0.31-0.62m Made ground, light brownish red sandy gravel, plastic and fabric; 0.62-1.03m Dark yellowish grey silty clay; 1.03m+ Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural).
24	2.45	0.65	1.3	0-0.43m Made ground, concrete fragments, modern bricks and gravels; 0.43m+ Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural).
25	3.75	0.7	3.4	0-0.30m Topsoil; 0.30-0.45m Subsoil; 0.45-3.10m Mid yellowish

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
				brown clay (natural); 3.10m+ Dark blackish grey mudstone (natural).
30	3.15	0.7	3.5	0-0.31m Topsoil; 0.31-0.45m Subsoil; 0.45m-3.05m Mid yellowish brown clay (natural); 3.05m+ Dark blackish grey mudstone.
31	-	-	-	Less than 1m depth, dug into modern mound, made up of modern debris, rubble, bricks, topsoil and subsoil, did not reach the natural. Mound likely created when the car park for the airfield was constructed.
32	-	-	-	Less than 1m depth, dug into modern mound, made up of modern debris, rubble, bricks, topsoil and subsoil, did not reach the natural. Mound likely created when the car park for the airfield was constructed.
33	-	-	-	Less than 1m depth, dug into modern mound, made up of modern debris, rubble, bricks, topsoil and subsoil, did not reach the natural. Mound likely created when the car park for the airfield was constructed.
34	-	-	-	Less than 1m depth, dug into modern mound, made up of modern debris, rubble, bricks, topsoil and subsoil, did not reach the natural. Mound likely created when the car park for the airfield was constructed.
35	3.70	0.65	3.1	0-0.51m Made ground, concrete fragments, modern bricks and gravels; 0.51m-1.59m Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 1.59m+ Mid brownish grey silty clay with fine gravels.
36	2.65	0.7	2.95	0-0.62m Made ground, tarmac, concrete fragments, modern bricks and gravels; 0.62m-2.11m Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural); 2.11m+ Dark brownish grey silty clay with limestone gravels. Land drain at 1.24m depth. No other features of interest
37	3.5	0.68	3.15	0-0.52m Made ground, tarmac, concrete fragments, modern bricks and gravels; 0.52m+ Light yellowish brown silty clay (natural).
38	3.1	0.65	1.85	0-0.20m Tarmac; 0.20-1.07m Dark blackish grey clay, possible made ground, contamination, modern; 1.07-1.85m Mid yellowish brown clay (natural); 1.85m+ Dark blackish grey clay (natural).
39	2.15	0.75	3.05	Different sections on either side of the test pit. SE face: 0-0.15m Tarmac; 0.15-0.45m Made ground with gravels; 0.45-1.40m Dark greyish green clay (natural); 1.40-2.51m Mid yellowish orange clay (natural); 2.51m+ Mid greyish brown clay (natural); NW face: 0-0.15m Tarmac; 0.15-0.45m Made ground; 0.45-2.52m Mid yellowish orange clay (natural); 2.52-3.07m Mid yellowish brown clay (natural); 3.07m+ Mid greyish brown clay. Two natural deposits with a clear and smooth boundary between. No archaeological features of interest
40	1.75	0.7	1	Different sections on either side of the test pit. SE face: 0-0.11m Tarmac; 0.11-0.52m Made ground with gravels; 0.52m+ Dark blackish green clay (natural); NW face: 0-0.11m Tarmac; 0.11-0.52 Made ground; 0.52m+ Mid yellowish brown clay (natural). Two natural deposits with a clear and smooth boundary between. No archaeological features of interest
41	1.95	0.8	1.7	0-0.14m Tarmac; 0.14-0.51m Made ground, modern bricks, gravel; 0.51-1.42m Dark greyish green clay; 1.42m+ Mid yellowish brown clay (natural).
42	1.9	0.75	1.1	0-0.17m Tarmac; 0.17-0.43m Made ground, modern bricks, gravel; 0.43m+ Dark blackish grey clay, made ground, organic/contamination.
43	4	0.67	3.1	0-0.31m Topsoil; 0.31-0.47m Subsoil; 0.47-2.05m Mid yellowish brown clay (natural); 2.05m+ Dark blackish grey mudstone with greenish patches (natural).
44	3.5	0.65	1.1	0-0.42m Topsoil; 0.42-0.55m Subsoil; 0.55m+ Mid yellowish brown clay (natural).
45	3.9	0.7	4.15	0-0.21m Topsoil; 0.21-0.45m Subsoil; 0.45-3.90m Mid yellowish brown clay (natural); 3.90m+ Dark blackish grey mudstone (natural).
46	2.95	0.65	1.05	0-0.45m Topsoil; 0.45-0.71m Subsoil; 0.71m+ Dark yellowish brown clay (natural). Over a mound, likely drainage ditch associated with the farm.
47	3.75	0.7	1.1	0-0.29m Topsoil; 0.29-0.35m Subsoil; 0.35m+ Mid yellowish brown clay (natural).
51	3	0.65	3.6	0-0.41m Topsoil; 0.41-0.52m Subsoil; 0.52-3.54m Mid yellowish brown clay (natural); 3.54m+ Dark blackish grey mudstone (natural).
52	4.05	0.65	1.15	0-0.29m Topsoil; 0.29-0.35m Subsoil; 0.35m+ Mid yellowish brown clay (natural).
53	-	-	-	-

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
54	3.15	0.61	1.05	0-0.31m Topsoil; 0.31-0.42m Subsoil; 0.42m+ Mid yellowish brown clay (natural).
55	3.15	0.7	1.25	0-0.21m Topsoil; 0.21-0.29m Subsoil; 0.29m+ Mid yellowish brown clay (natural).
56	3.55	0.65	1.15	0-0.18m Topsoil; 0.18-0.27m Subsoil; 0.27m+ Mid yellowish brown clay (natural).
57	3.05	0.7	3.1	0-0.24m Topsoil; 0.24-0.35m Subsoil; 3.09m+ Mid yellowish brown clay (natural).
58	1.65	0.65	1	0-0.41m Modern levelling, gravels; 0.41m+ Dark blackish grey clay, made ground, organic/contamination.
101	1.85	0.8	1.5	0-0.25m Tarmac; 0.25-1.31m Rubble, modern bricks, concrete, made ground; 1.31m+ Dark blackish grey clay, organic/contamination?
102	1.8	0.9	0.75	0-0.21m Tarmac; 0.21-0.41m Rubble, modern bricks, concrete, made ground; 0.41m+ Dark blackish grey clay, made ground.
103	2.15	0.7	0.5	0-0.14m Tarmac; 0.14m+ Dark blackish grey clay, made ground, organic/contamination.
104	1.05	0.9	0.8	0-0.23m Tarmac; 0.23-0.51m Rubble, modern bricks, concrete, made ground; 0.51m+ Dark greyish brown, made ground.
105	2.05	0.7	1	0-0.15m Tarmac; 0.15-0.53m Rubble, modern bricks, concrete, made ground; 0.53m+ Mid greyish yellow clay (natural). [Pl. 2]
106	-	-	-	only broke through the tarmac, less than 0.40m. Did not reach the natural
107	1.5	0.6	0.5	0-0.11m Tarmac; 0.11-0.29m Rubble, made ground; 0.29-0.47m Dark greyish brown; 0.47m+ Mid yellowish brown.
108	1.2	0.6	0.4	0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.29m Made ground, rubble and modern bricks; 0.29-0.41m Dark greyish brown clay, full of modern debris, made ground
109	-	-	-	only broke through the tarmac, less than 0.40m. Did not reach the natural

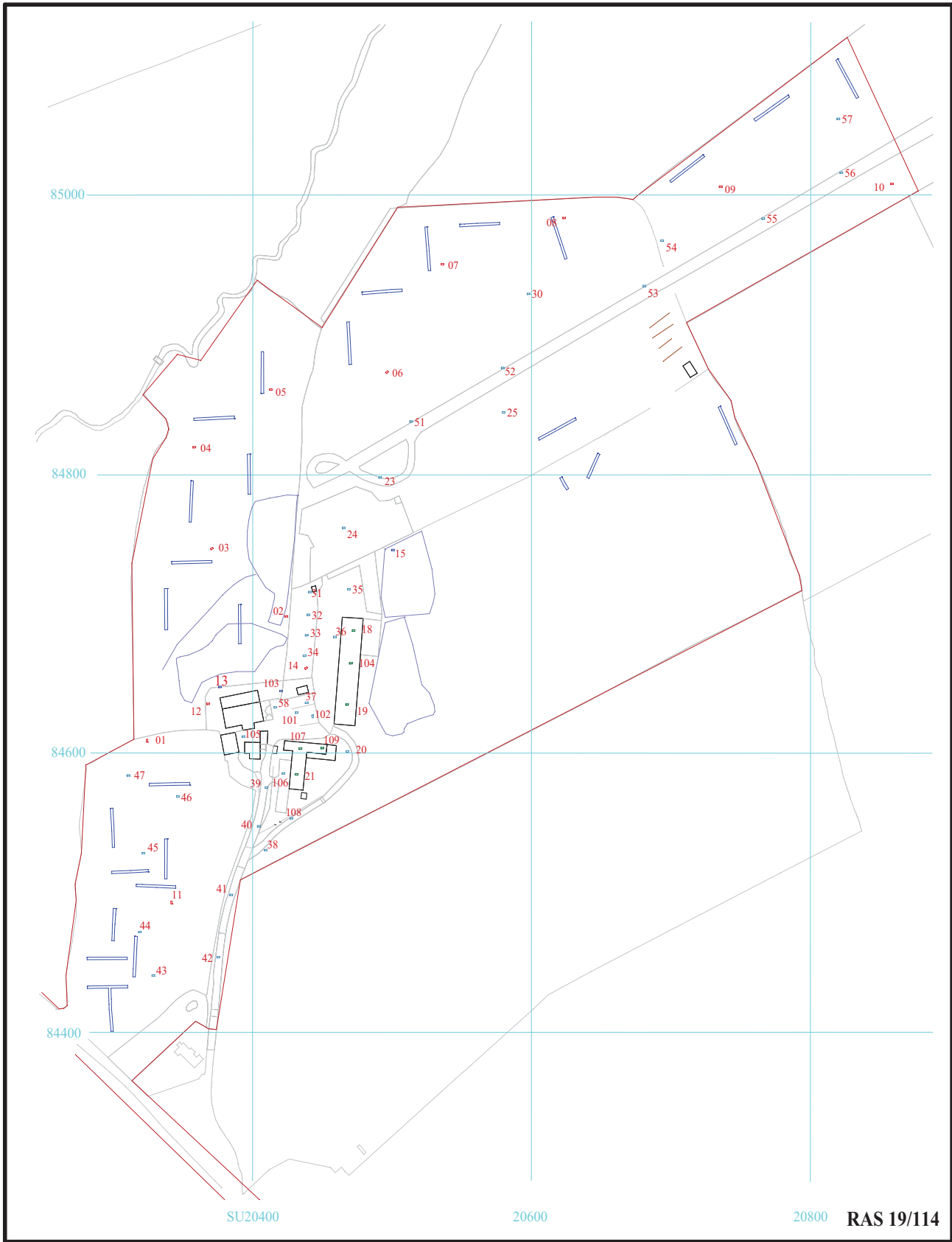


**Redlands Airfield, Wanborough,
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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to the Wanborough Road and in Wiltshire.

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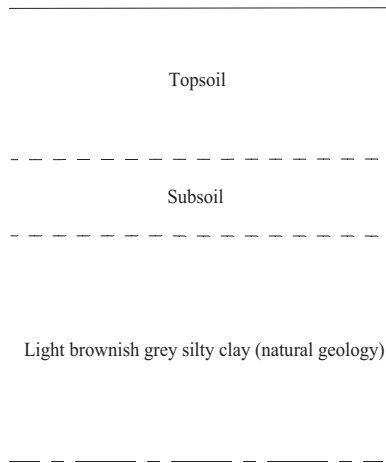
Figure 2. Locations of evaluation trenches and monitored test pits.



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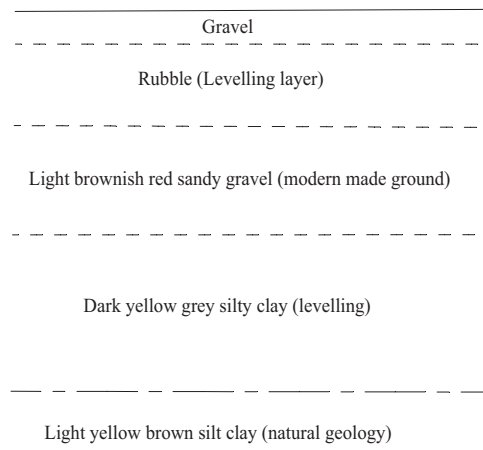
Test pit 6

94maOD



Test pit 23

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Figure 3. Test pit sections.





Plate 1. Geotechnical Test Pit 5



Plate 2. Geotechnical Test Pit 105

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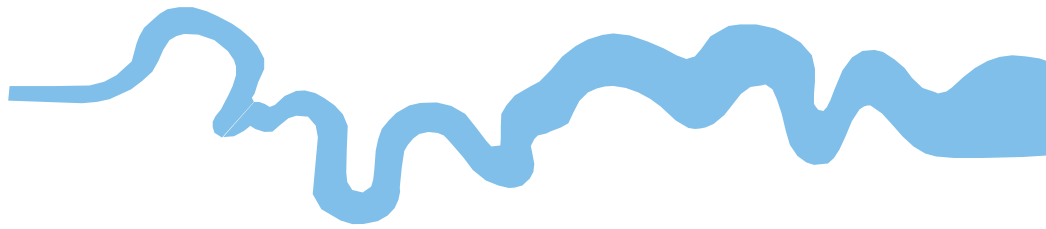
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Plates 1 and 2. Geotechnical Test Pits 5 and 105

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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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