

T V A S



SOUTH WEST

**WPD asset reconfiguration, Box Road, Cam,
Dursley, Gloucestershire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Piotr Wróbel

Site Code: ABC19/170

(SO 7531 0183)

WPD asset reconfiguration, Box Road, Cam, Dursley, Gloucestershire

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
For Craig Green Property Services Ltd**

by Piotr Wróbel

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code ABC 19/170

August 2020

Summary

Site name: WPD asset reconfiguration, Box Road, Cam, Dursley, Gloucestershire

Grid reference: SO 7531 0183

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 19th November 2019 – 18th July 2020

Project manager: Agata Socha-Paszkiewicz

Site supervisor: Piotr Wróbel

Site code: ABC 19/170

Area of site: A single 586m long and 0.7m wide trench was observed

Summary of results: The watching brief monitored excavation of the cable trench as part of reconfiguration of the overhead power lines ahead of a large residential development. The trench revealed three lengths of ditch of mid to late Roman date (2nd to 4th century) and one undated linear feature which correlated well with Roman field system uncovered to the west of the trench during recent archaeological excavation.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS South West, Taunton and will be deposited at the Museum in Park, Stroud in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 20.08.20
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WPD asset reconfiguration, Box Road, Cam, Dursley, Gloucestershire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Piotr Wróbel

Report 19/170

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Millfields, Box Road, Cam, Dursley, Gloucestershire (SO 7531 0183) (Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Simon Green, for Craig Green Property Services, Honey Cottage 2, The Row, Bussage, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL6 8AZ on behalf of Western Power Distribution.

Planning permission S.18/1820/REM has been granted by Stroud District Council for residential development. As part of this development, Western Power Distribution (WPD) agreed to reconfigure existing overhead electricity lines serving the nearby Coaley Substation. Included in this reconfiguration was a new underground 11kV cable to run north from the substation, along the River Cam to the north-east corner of the development (Fig. 2). As the groundworks were to be carried out in an area of confirmed high archaeological potential, a watching brief during the work has been requested by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeologist, as archaeological adviser to Stroud District Council. This is in accordance to the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the District Council's policies on archaeology.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Piotr Wróbel and Nick Dawson in stages between 19th November 2019 and 18th July 2020 and the site code is ABC 19/170. The archive is presently held at TVAS South West, Taunton and will be deposited at the Museum in Park, Stroud in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within a rural grassland landscape north of the village of Cam, Gloucestershire, in the valley of the river Cam. The observed trench ran through the flood-plain to the north-west of the river and to the south-east of the residential development construction site. The environs of the trench was generally flat but sloping gradually from 30m above Ordnance datum (aOD) on the highest (southernmost) point to 23m aOD at the northern end. The underlying geology is mapped as Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation but with alluvium present (BGS 2017).

Archaeological background

The wider overall development site was subject to two desk-based assessments (CAT 2002 and CA 2015), two geophysical surveys (AS 2009; Stratascan 2015) and three archaeological evaluations (CA 2002, 2009 and 2016) and a series of excavations (Dawson, in prep). The desk-based assessments highlighted later prehistoric and Roman occupation and activity within the locality. The geophysical survey identified a concentration of linear, curvilinear and discrete anomalies the majority of which were adjacent to the River Cam. The subsequent evaluations indicated archaeological remains survived towards the eastern extent of the site, which reflected the results of the preceding geophysical survey. The south-east part of the site, particularly against the flood plain of the River Cam, was characterized by a series of rectilinear enclosures and linear boundaries suggesting agricultural or rural activity, majority of which were dated from the late Iron Age to Roman period. The level of artefact recovery suggested a moderate level of post deposition disturbance, also consistent with agricultural activity. Remaining features identified comprised furrows and field boundaries relating to medieval or later agriculture. The excavation carried out by TVAS in 2019 and 2020 confirmed the presence, date and character of most of the archaeological features unearthed on site as anticipated from the geophysical survey and evaluation results; however, the excavation of the site has taken an extra importance by the discovery of a Roman villa in the south-east extent of the site (Dawson, in prep.).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the project were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This was to involve the archaeological monitoring of areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any overburden stripping, landscaping work or groundworks associated with site amenities.

Results

The monitored cable trench was machine excavated around the SE corner of the wider development site and along its eastern perimeter, except for a short section where it cut through the area of 2019/2020 excavation (Figs 2 and 3). It was broadly aligned SW-NE, 586m long, 0.7m wide and 1.2–1.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10–0.15m of dark grey brown topsoil (50) above *c.*0.20m of light reddish brown subsoil (51) above 0.10m at south to 0.70m at north, light grey alluvium (52) above dark grey mudstone – the natural geology (Fig. 4; Pls 1, 2 and 5).

Three sherds of pottery of late Roman (3rd to 4th century) date and one sherd of decorated ware of Post Medieval (18th century+) date were recovered from the alluvium in the northern portion of the trench.

Beneath the alluvium and cutting natural geology were three ditches and one less readily interpreted, undated feature.

Ditch 1 (Figs 3 and 4, Pl. 3)

The ditch was aligned NW – SE. It was 1.6m wide, 0.75m deep and contained two deposits. A mid grey brown silty clay (58) with moderate small stone and gravel above dark grey brown silty clay (53) with occasional charcoal and small stone which produced nine sherds of pottery of late Roman (3rd to 4th century date) and one fragment of Roman roofing tile (*tegula*). The ditch corresponded well and was very likely a continuation of a ditch recorded during 2019/2020 excavation.

Ditch 2 (Figs 3 and 4, Pl. 4)

The ditch was aligned NNE - SSW and a 12.5m length of it was recorded within the trench. It was 1.3m wide and 0.65m deep and contained two deposits. A dark grey brown silty clay (55) with some small stone and charcoal, which contained one sherd of Central Gaulish samian pottery of mid Roman (2nd century) date, was sealed by mid grey brown silty clay (54) with some gravel and small stones but no datable artefacts.

Feature 3 (Figs. 3 and 4)

The linear feature was recorded in southern portion of the observed trench and was only visible in the south baulk section. It was 1.23 m wide and 0.28 m deep and contained single deposit (56) of grey black silty clay with occasional charcoal but no datable artefacts. It may have been a pit or the north terminus of a ditch continuing south.

Ditch 4 (Figs 3 and 4)

The ditch was aligned NW - SE. It was 0.8 m wide and 0.3 deep and contained single deposit (57) of black to grey/brown silty clay with occasional charcoal but no finds. As with ditch 1, it corresponded well with one of the ditches recorded during 2019/2020 excavation. Indeed ditches 1 and 4 are probably part of the same feature, the ditch which enclosed the site of the Roman villa.

Finds

Pottery and Ceramic Building Material by Jane Timby

The watching brief produced a small assemblage of 19 sherds of pottery weighing 205.5 g and a single fragment of tile. The assemblage was recovered from four defined contexts two of which are feature fills. The pottery was sorted into fabrics and quantified by sherd count and weight. Freshly broken sherds were counted as single

pieces. Named, traded wares are coded using the National Roman fabric series (Tomber and Dore 1998) and the other wares coded in a similar manner. The data is summarised in Table 2 along with the likely production dates.

The group is very small but is typical of an assemblage from the locality dating to the later Roman period. The main fabrics present are Dorset black burnished wares (DOR BB1) from Poole Harbour, Dorset and Lower Severn Valley micaceous sandy wares (LSW RE) for which a source in the Oldbury-on-Severn area is likely. There is a single sherd of imported Central Gaulish (Lezoux) samian (LEZ SA) and a possible abraded sherd of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware (OXF RS).

There is a one post-medieval sherd from a slip-decorated plate or bowl probably from the Newent area from horizon (52).

The one fragment of tile from ditch 1 (53) weighs 28 g and is from a Roman roofing tile (*tegula*).

The assemblage is too small to draw many conclusions other than it is typical of a late Roman settlement in this area and one clearly in receipt of traded tableware.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

Ten fragments of animal bone were recovered, all from ditch 1 (53), weighing 98g. Preservation was poor, with frequent damage and erosion of the cortical bone surface noted. Extensive fragmentation was also present.

A minimum of two animals were present: one cow, and one pig. The cow was represented by a single fragment of left distal humerus. Dental evidence suggested the presence of at least one pig (mandibular fragment with *in situ* premolar, as well as a canine (tusk), and incisor). The other fragments were unidentifiable. Evidence of butchery practices, in the form of two, transverse, linear cut marks, was observed on a midshaft portion of an unidentified long bone fragment.

Conclusion

The watching brief has successfully recorded archaeological features continuing east from the area excavated in 2019. Their location, dimensions, and finds show they are mostly (if not all) part of the late Roman (3rd - 4th century AD) settlement which included the villa. The orientation of ditches 1 and 4 indicated that they are continuations of ditches 10019 and 10052 from the site to the west. This suggests, unsurprisingly, that the villa complex extended down to the river. All were preserved below an alluvial layer (52).

Other than the Roman evidence just one small piece of post-medieval pottery was found in alluvial

layer 52. Its presence is possibly connected with occupation of Halmore Mill, located 80m east of this findspot. That building was a part of the cloth industry developing in the Dursley area from 16th to early 19th century.

References

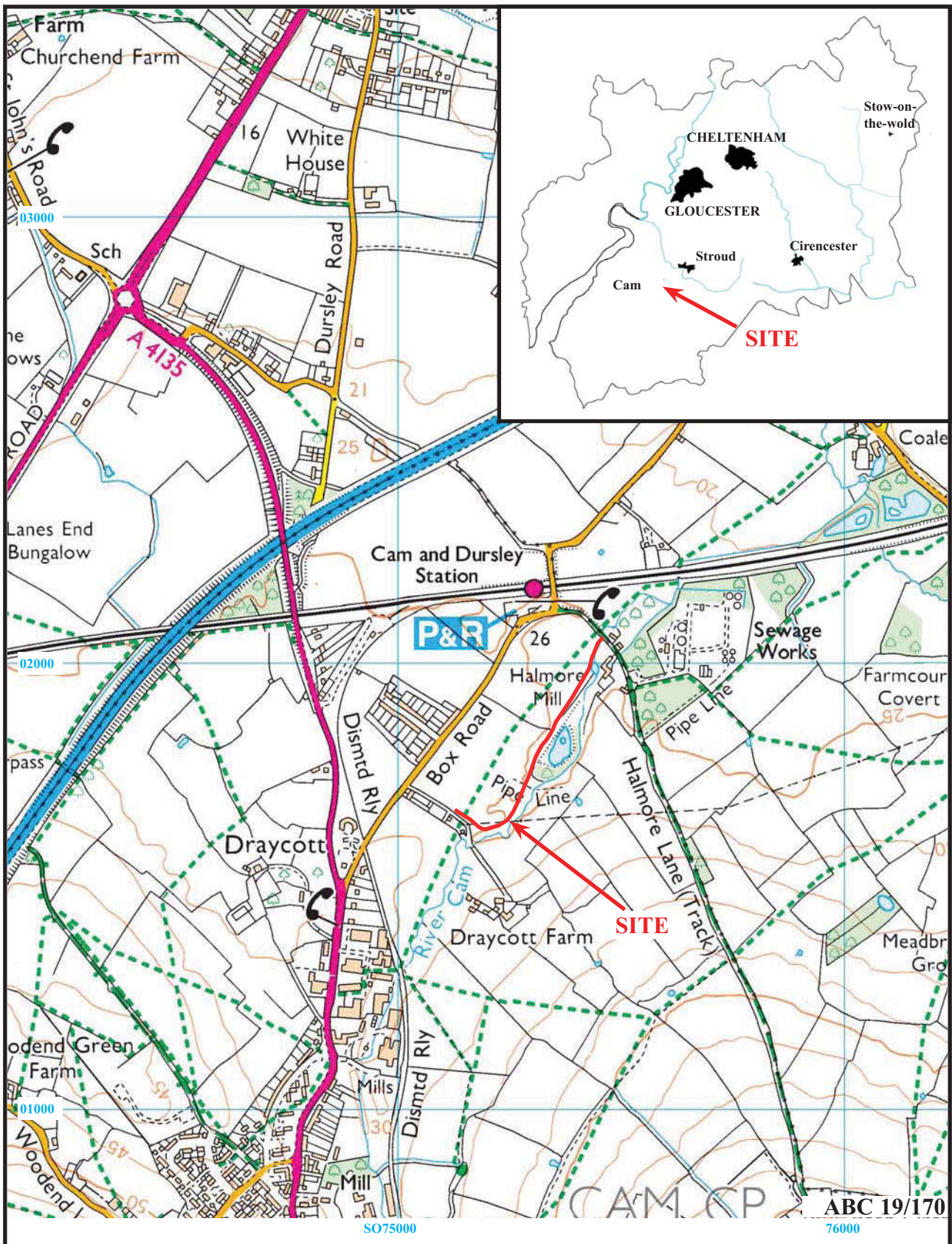
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Appendix 1: Feature details

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	53, 58	Ditch	Late Roman (3rd-4th century)	Pottery
2	54, 55	Ditch	Mid Roman (2nd century)	Pottery
3	56	?feature	Undated	
4	57	Ditch	Roman	Association

Appendix 2: Pottery details and dates

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Date</i>
	50	LSVRE	Lower Severn Valley micaceous grey ware		10	1		Roman (C3-C4)
	52	PMSLIP	post-med slip decorated ware		7	1		post-med (18th+)
	52	DORBB1	Dorset black burnished ware		16	1		Roman (C3-C4)
	52	LSVRE	Lower Severn Valley micaceous grey ware		4	2		Roman (C3-C4)
	52	OXFRS?	Oxfordshire colour-coat		0.5	1		Roman (mid C3-C4)
1	53	CBM	ceramic building material	tegula	28	1		Roman
1	53	LSVRE	Lower Severn Valley micaceous grey ware		85	6		Roman (C3-C4)
1	53	DORBB1	Dorset black burnished ware	jar	46	3	1	Roman (C3-C4)
1	53	DORBB1	Dorset black burnished ware	jar	30		2	Roman (C3-C4)
2	55	LEZSA*	Central Gaulish (Lezoux) samian		7	1		Roman (C2)

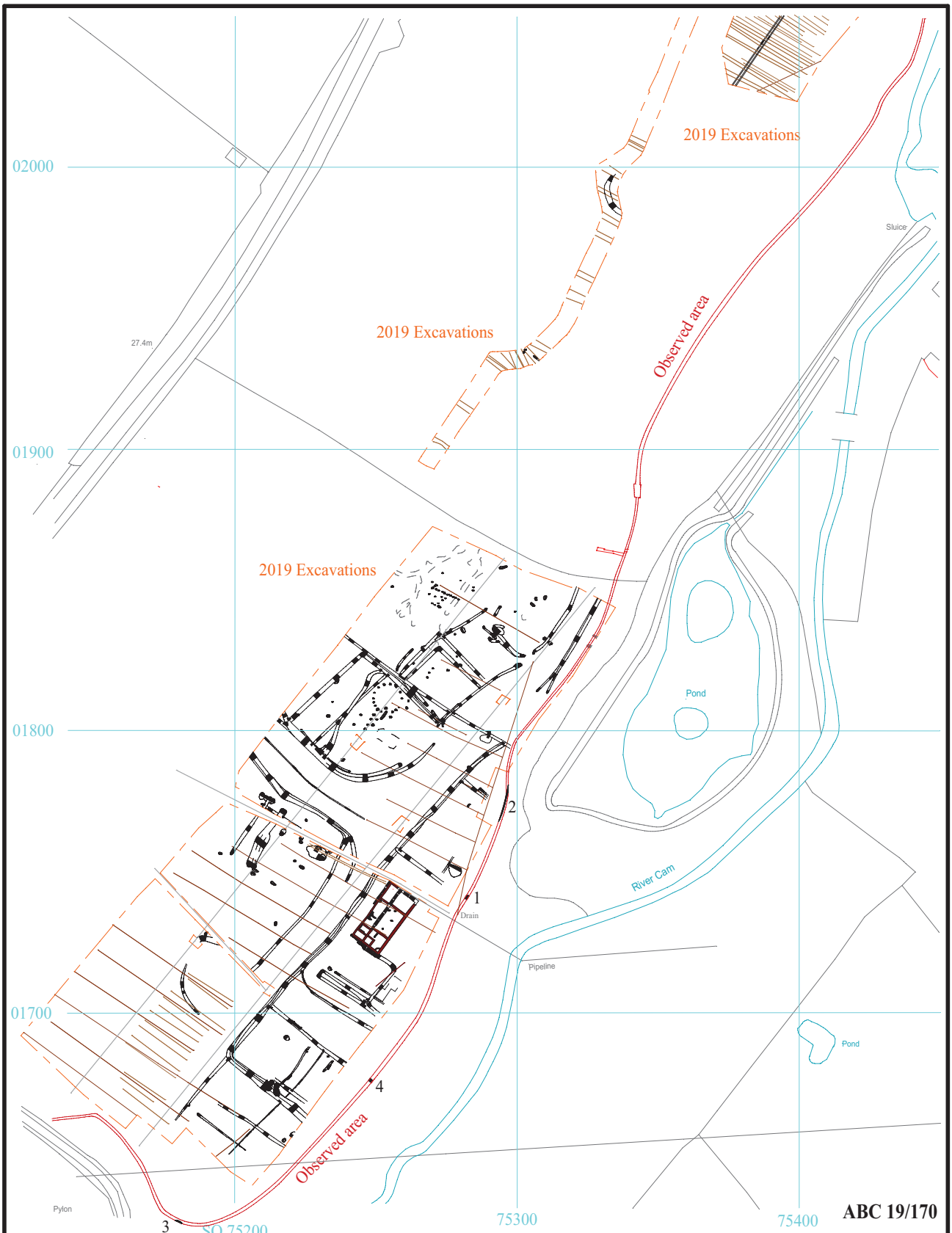


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Figure 1. Location of site within Cam and Gloucestershire.

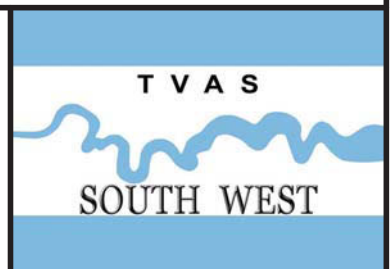
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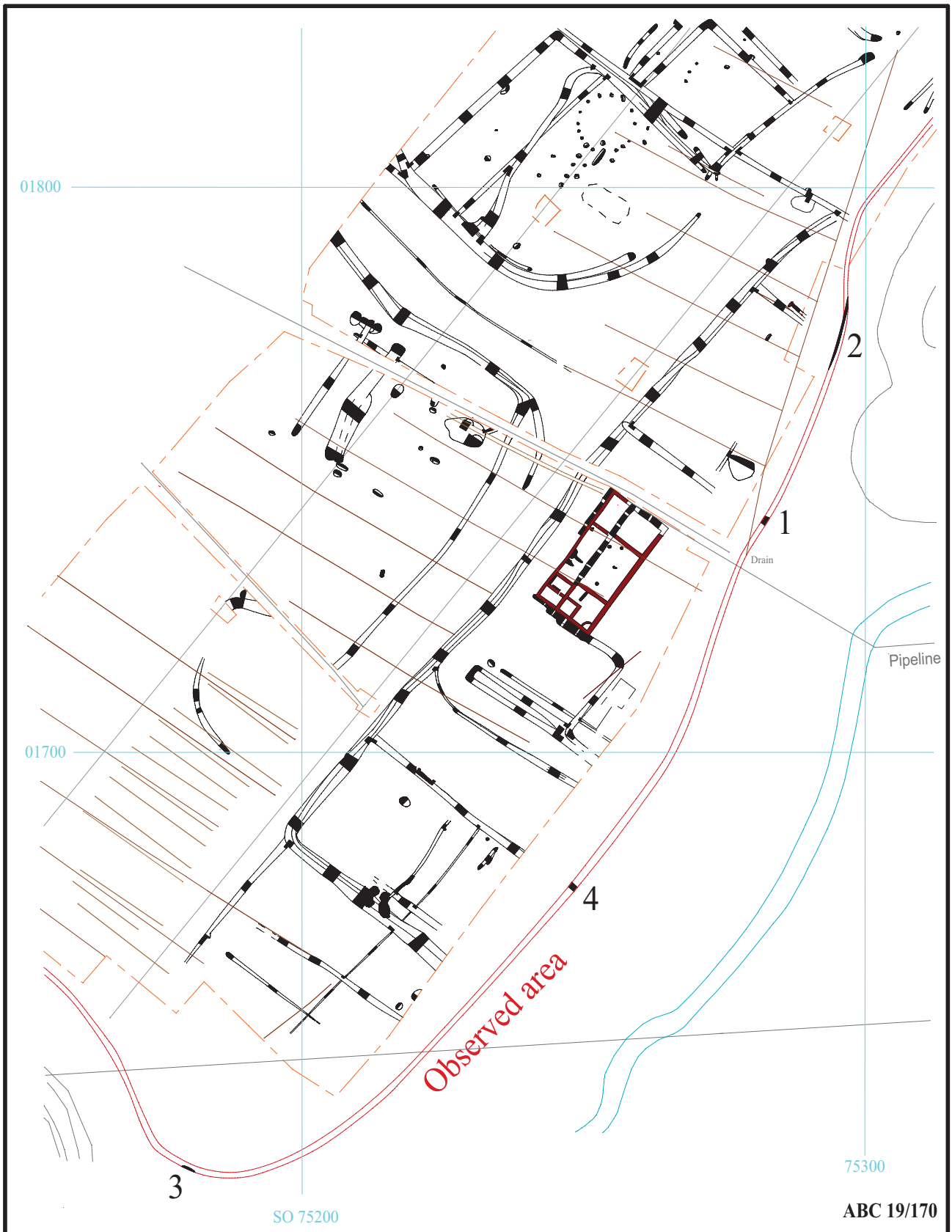




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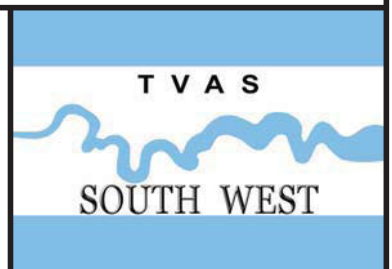
Figure 2. Site plan.

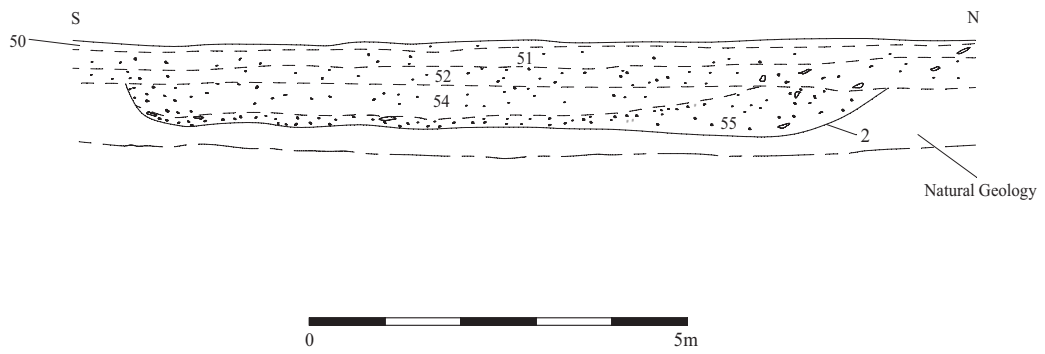
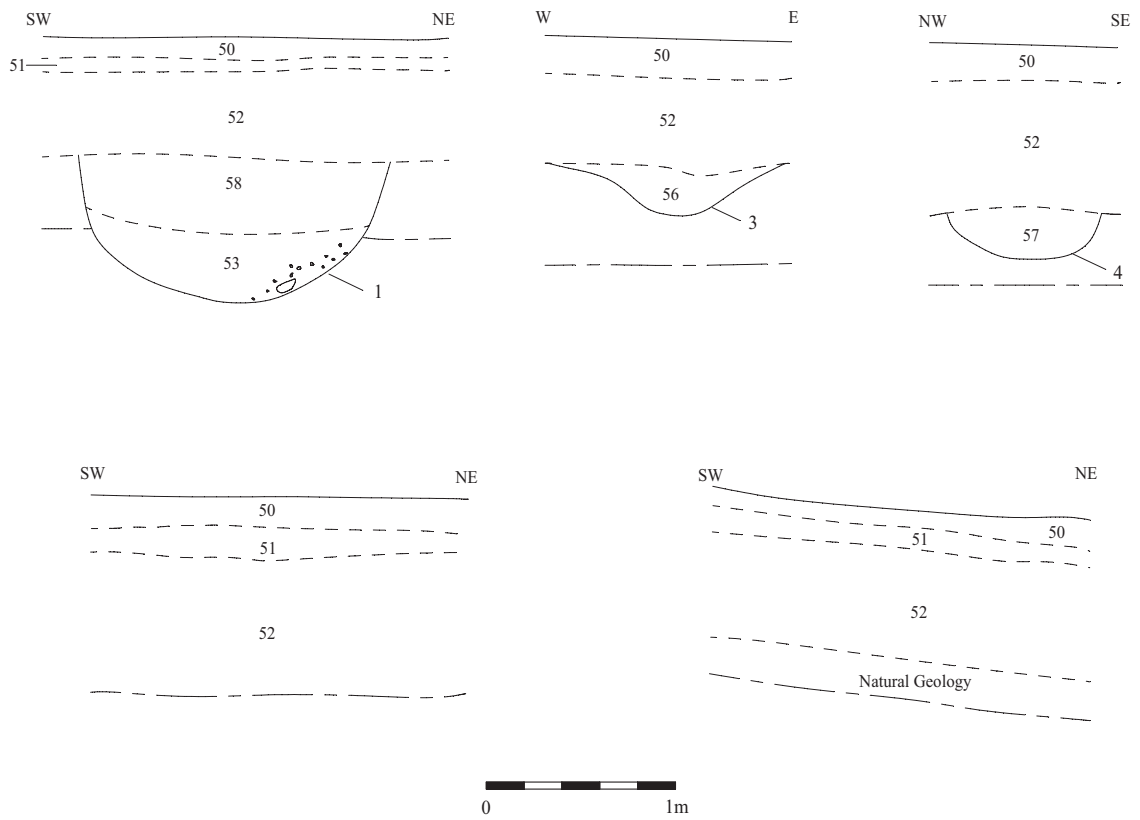




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Figure 3. Detailed site plan.





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Figure 4. Representative section.





Plate 1. Trench in North part of the project., looking NW.
Scales; 2m, 1m.



Plate 2. Trench in South part of the project, looking NW.
Scales: 2 x 2m.



Plate 3. Ditch 1, from above, north roughly to top.
Scales: 2m, 0.5m.



Plate 4. Ditch 2, looking NW. Scales; 2 x 2m



Plate 5. Trench with crossed previous electric line, looking North West. Scales: 2 x 2m.



Plate 6. Ground works in North part of the project.

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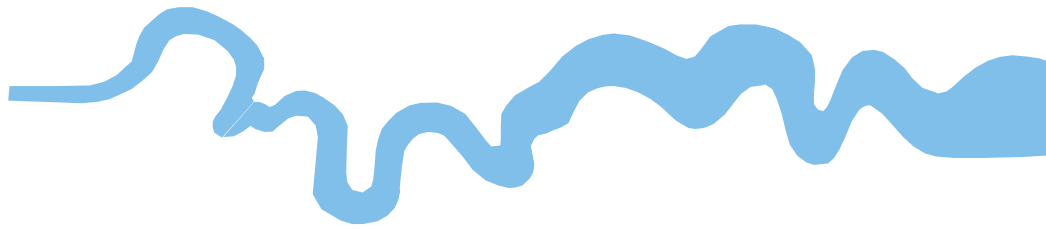
Plates 1 to 6.



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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