

THE RECTORY CORONATION ROAD BLEADON NORTH SOMERSET

Results of a Desk-Based Assessment and Evaluation Trenching



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 170928

The Rectory, Coronation Road, Bleadon, North Somerset

Results of a Desk-Based Assessment and Evaluation Trenching

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Report Version FINAL
19th October 2017

Work undertaken by SWARCH for Michael Hancock of Benjamin and Beauchamp Architects
On behalf of Paul Toseland of the Diocese of Bath and Wells

Summary

South West Archaeology Ltd. was asked to undertake a desk-based study and archaeological evaluation trenching in the garden of The Rectory, Coronation Road, Bleadon, North Somerset. The proposal for the site is for the construction of a single dwelling. The site lies at the southern end of the present Rectory Garden on the west of Coronation Road, in close proximity to the parish church and the historic core of the medieval village.

Given the evidence from the known archaeology and standing historic buildings in the immediate vicinity it would appear that the Rectory gardens have medium to high archaeological potential. The gardens appear to have remained open throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, but the re-building of the Rectory to the north and subdivision of the former gardens and construction of Rochester House in the 1970s will have caused substantial changes in the sites immediate vicinity.

The evaluation trenching trenches revealed that the site had been significantly landscaped, with the ground terraced and then raised. There is limited archaeological potential and it therefore seems unnecessary for any further archaeological works for this proposed development.



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Location:	Bleadon Rectory
Parish:	Bleadon
District:	North Somerset
County:	Somerset
NGR:	ST 34059 56933
Planning no.	17/P/1182/PRE (Pre-Application)
SWARCH ref.	BBRC17

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Michael Hancock of Benjamin and Beauchamp Architects (the Agent) on behalf of Paul Toseland of the Diocese of Bath and Wells (the Client) to undertake a desk-based assessment and evaluation trenching in the garden of the Rectory, Bleadon, North Somerset ahead of a planning application for a proposed residential development. This work was undertaken in accordance with ClfA best practice.

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The proposed site lies on the northern side of the River Axe, on the south west slopes of Bleadon Hill, to the south west of Weston-Super-Mare. Bleadon Rectory is located opposite the Church of St Peter and St Paul, on the west side of Coronation Road, the main road running through Bleadon (Figure 1). The site lies at c. 10m AOD.

The soils of this area are the shallow and well drained loamy soils over limestone of the Crwbin association (SSEW 1983) overlying the mudstone and halite stones of the Mercia Mudstone Group (BGS 2107).

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bleadon is a village and parish in the historic hundred of Winterstoke, approximately 6.5km south of Weston-super-Mare. It was recorded in Domesday as *Bledone*, which means 'the coloured hill' and belonged to the Bishop of Winchester. Although the current rectory occupies a plot identified on historic Ordnance Survey maps as 'the Rectory', the building is not the original having been rebuilt in the late 1970s or early 1980s.

1.4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The proposed development site lies in close proximity to a number of undesignated assets and archaeological remains identified on the North Somerset HER, although limited archaeological work has been carried out in the surrounding area. Archaeological Evaluation carried out in 1996/7 at Whitegate farm revealed Bronze Age and Medieval remains (MNS2844). The site is opposite the Grade I Listed church of St Peter and St Paul and Grade II Listed village cross. A Grade II listed village well lies to the south-east of the site.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

This work was undertaken in accordance with recognised best practice; the desk-based assessment follows the guidance outlined in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (Cifa 2014a) and *Understanding Place: historic area assessments in a planning and development context* (English Heritage 2012).

The evaluation trenching was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design (PD) (Balmond 2014) drawn up in accordance with Cifa guidelines (2014b) and North Somerset Council policy (2016).

The archaeological evaluation took place on the 10th October 2017. Two evaluation trenches, each 1.2m wide and totalling 21m in length were opened by a tracked mechanical excavator to the depth of *in situ* weathered natural using a toothless grading bucket. Exposed archaeological deposits were excavated by hand and in accordance with the PD and CIFA guidelines.

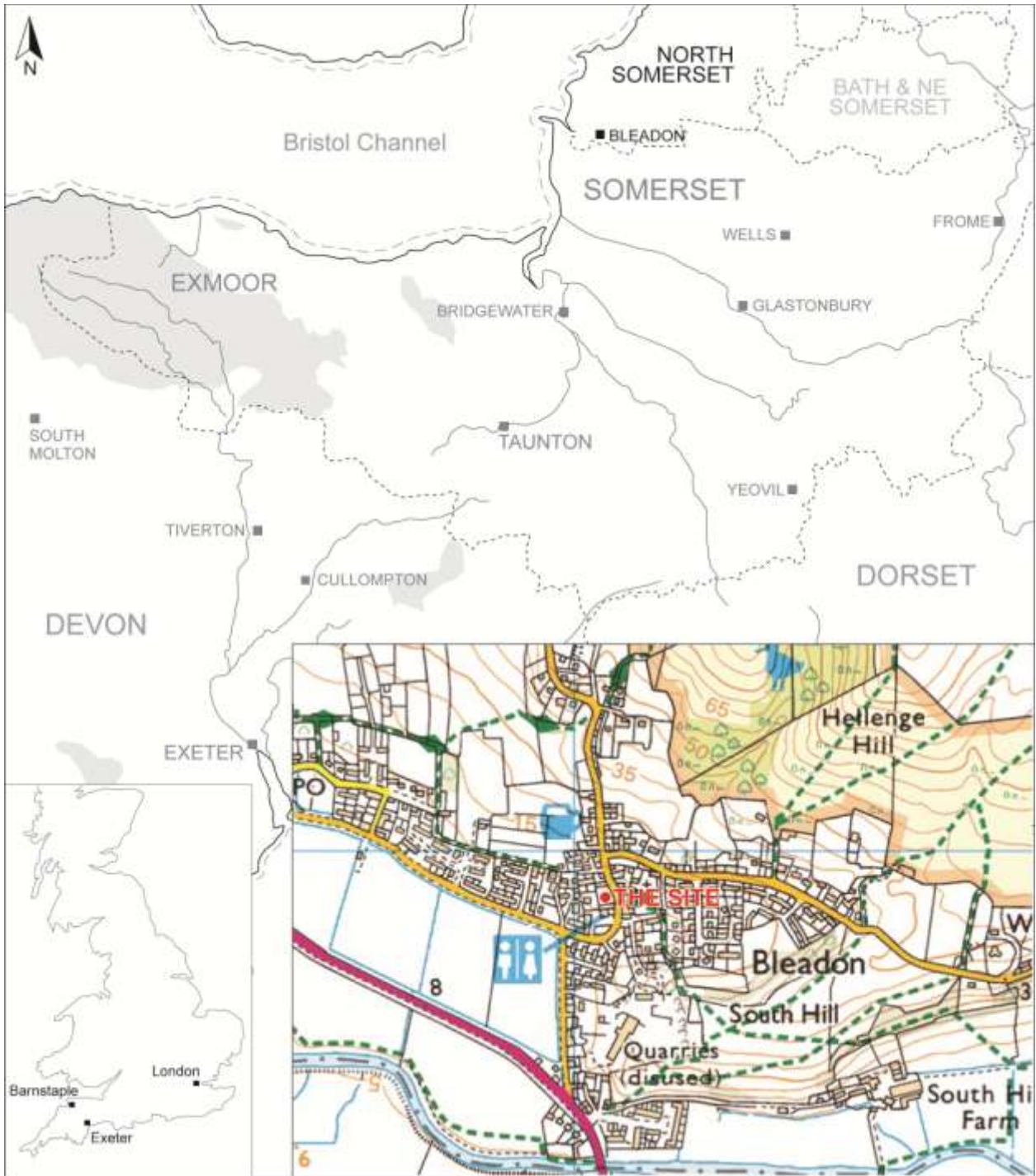


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION (THE SITE IS INDICATED).

2.0 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

2.1 DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

Bleadon is a village and parish in the historic hundred of Winterstoke. It was recorded in Domesday as *Bledone*, which means ‘the coloured hill’, most likely relating to the outcrops of limestone on Bleadon Hill, on the slopes of which Bleadon sits (Watts 2007). A charter of 956 records the granting of Bleadon to Aethelwold and another is a grant to Winchester Old Minster by King Edgar, although this is considered potentially spurious (Aston and Costen 2007). It appears that much of Bleadon was granted to Winchester at around this time (*Ibid*). At Domesday Bleadon was held by the Bishop of Winchester and was for the substance of the monks. It was recorded as paying geld (tax) for 15 hides (the land which could support one household). A limited number of documentary sources exist in the Somerset Archives, including the Glebe terriers for Bleadon 1571-1636, which describe the Parsonage house and lands (D\D/rg/69) and a map of the Manor of Bleadon dated to 1658 (T\PH\sfy/1).

2.2 CARTOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT

2.2.1 1791 ENCLOSURE MAP BY WILLIAM WHITE

The earliest detailed map of relevance is an enclosure map by William White, dated to 1791 (SHC ref: Q/RDE/22). A copy was not made for the purposes of this report, but three buildings appear to have been depicted in the approximate location of the present Rectory.

2.2.2 THE 1843 BLEADON TITHE MAP

The Bleadon tithe map of 1843 (see Figure 2) depicts a clear mixture of field patterns, with strip fields visible to the east of the settlement and to the north-west, adjoining the settlement at Purn. The land just north of the River Axe is recorded in the tithe apportionment as a wharf, with a pub known as the Ship and Castle located adjacent to the wharf. A series of small houses and fields are visible from the centre of Bleadon leading down the eastern side of the road to the wharf.

The rectory was lived in at this date by the Reverend David Williams (1792-1850), who was a well-known and occasionally controversial local geologist and palaeontologist. Reverend Williams was very actively engaged in the debate regarding the dating of the Devonian sequence, and also a collector of fossils and geological specimens (University of Bristol 2017). The rectory was supposedly constructed for him in 1821, having formerly positioned elsewhere in the village (*Ibid*).

The Rectory is depicted along with some associated buildings fronting onto Rectory Lane, presumably a coach house and stables. The garden extended further to the west at this date and a small building is shown to the east of the site flanking Coronation Road.

Plot No	Landowner	Occupier	Name	Cultivation
160	Revd David Williams	Revd David Williams	House and Garden	-
158	Revd David Williams	Revd David Williams	Shrubbery	Shrubbery
157	Joseph Wollen	John Podger	House and Garden	-

TABLE 1: EXTRACT FROM THE 1841 TITHE APPORTIONMENT, THE LAND PARCELS CONTAINING THE SITE ARE INDICATED IN RED



FIGURE 2: EXCERPT FROM THE 1843 BLEADON TITHE MAP. THE LAND PARCEL CONTAINING THE SITE IS INDICATED (TNA).

2.2.3 HISTORIC ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS

The Ordnance Survey First Edition Map of 1884 shows a subdivision of part of larger garden plot depicted on the tithe map, in the location of the approximate current boundary. Both parts still appear to have been linked at the northern end and to belong to the Rectory. A garden path is visible running around the outside edges of both gardens, but it is not clear if the garden was terraced into platforms by this time.

The Rectory building is a different shape to the current rectory and more complicated than shown on the tithe map. It appears to have been extended to the north after the tithe map (and Rev. Williams). The associated structures fronting onto Rectory Lane have also been altered by this date, as they form one conjoined range fronting onto the road, rather than an L-shaped arrangement, in fact the southern part of the western building which fronts Rectory Lane appears to have been removed by this date. The western parts of these buildings may have been in a separate ownership by this date as there are no gates depicted linking the now separated yard/garden in which it is located to the Rectory's ownership, although a gate is depicted on later maps. The small building shown within the gardens adjoining Coronation Road is no longer depicted.



FIGURE 3: EXTRACT FROM THE FIRST EDITION OS 25 INCH MAP OF 1884, THE SITE IS INDICATED.

The Ordnance Survey Second Edition map of 1902 shows little change to the site from the first edition although extensions have been added to the south-western and south-eastern sides of the rectory. The structure on the south-west side appears to be a glasshouse or conservatory. The garden paths and mostly not depicted, with the exception of a drive(?) and (presumably paved) path/patio to the immediate south of the rectory. To the immediate south of the rectory garden, the house owned at the time of the tithe by Joseph Wollen, had been demolished by 1902.



FIGURE 4: EXTRACT FROM THE SECOND EDITION OS MAP OF 1902, THE SITE IS INDICATED

Little change appears to have occurred to Bleadon Rectory between the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1902 and the 1936 revised edition. No further extensions have been added to the Rectory and the gardens all appear to have remained within the same ownership. The 1936 map does show that the Smithy to the south of the site had been demolished and replaced by a *Club* (now The Coronation Hall), with the former plots to the south re-arranged as part of these changes.



FIGURE 5: EXTRACT FROM THE 1936 REVISED 25 INCH OS MAP, THE SITE IS INDICATED.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The proposed development site lies in close proximity to a number of undesignated assets and archaeological remains identified on the North Somerset HER, although limited archaeological work has been carried out in the surrounding area. Archaeological Evaluation carried out in 1996/7 at Whitegate farm revealed Bronze Age and Medieval remains (MNS2844). The site is opposite the Grade I Listed church of St Peter and St Paul and Grade II Listed village cross. A Grade II listed village well lies to the south east of the site.

3.1.1 PREHISTORIC TO EARLY MEDIEVAL 4000BC – AD1065

The North Somerset HER records a number of prehistoric features within 1km of the proposed site. This includes prehistoric field systems (MNS38; MNS43; MNS26; MNS28), Bronze Age enclosures to the south east of Bleadon (MNS1484) and flint scatters to the north of the settlement (MNS31; MNS36; MNS35). Evaluation Trenching at Whitegate Farm uncovered evidence for Bronze Age occupation. This included pits containing inhumation burials (MNS2844). A prehistoric burial is recorded at Toms Cottage, although no further details are given (MNS 8334). Pleistocene remains are recorded from caves at Little Down Quarries (MNS40) and Purn Hill Quarry (MNS37).

A number of Roman features are also recorded on the HER. These include coin hoards and single coin finds (MNS39; MNS8873; MNS34). An early medieval manor is recorded at Bleadon, granted to Aethelwold by King Eadwig/Edgar (MNS1548) and the description of the manor mentions a church stead on the boundary. The earliest remains within the present church is a Norman fort (MNS1549).

3.1.2 MEDIEVAL AD1066 - AD1540

A number of medieval features are recorded in the North Somerset HER. This includes find spots of medieval pottery (MNS776) and a grade II listed churchyard cross (MNS42). The Grade I listed church of St Peter and St Paul is predominantly fifteenth century, with a fourteenth century chancel, nave and west tower. The chancel was shortened in 1859 (MNS41). The remains of a medieval building were encountered at Whitegate Farm along with a series of ditches and gullies thought to be the boundaries of a series of small house tenements or enclosures. A possible track leading into Bleadon was also encountered (MNS8368).

3.1.3 POST-MEDIEVAL AND MODERN AD1540 – PRESENT

Almost 100 features dating to the post medieval period are identified on the North Somerset HER. These are largely marking the locations of buildings of post medieval date. A number of Pillow Mounds are recorded to the south east of the village, overlying ridge and furrow although some are potentially residual field boundaries or mining spoil (MNS1083). Lead mining is recorded to the north of the settlement on Hellenge Hill (MNS1264). Mulberry House was previously the Rectory, before the construction of a Rectory in the current site in 1821 (MNS3425). Three blacksmiths are recorded in close proximity to the site (MNS6192; MNS6193; MNS8361). A grade II listed village well is located just south of the proposed site (MNS8362). And the Grade II listed Hillside Farmhouse is located north of the site, on Celtic Way.

A world war two air raid shelter with blast wall is identified to the north of the Rectory, on the north-west corner of the Queens Arms (MNS7747) and 8 anti tank concrete cubes are recorded to the east of the settlement of Bleadon (MNS7063). A spitfire crash site is located at Shiplate Court Farm (MNS4650) and a WW2 mobile searchlight unit was sited of Roman Road, north of Bleadon

(MNS3862). Home Guard trenches are recorded in woodland at Purn Hill, west of Bleadon (MNS2562).

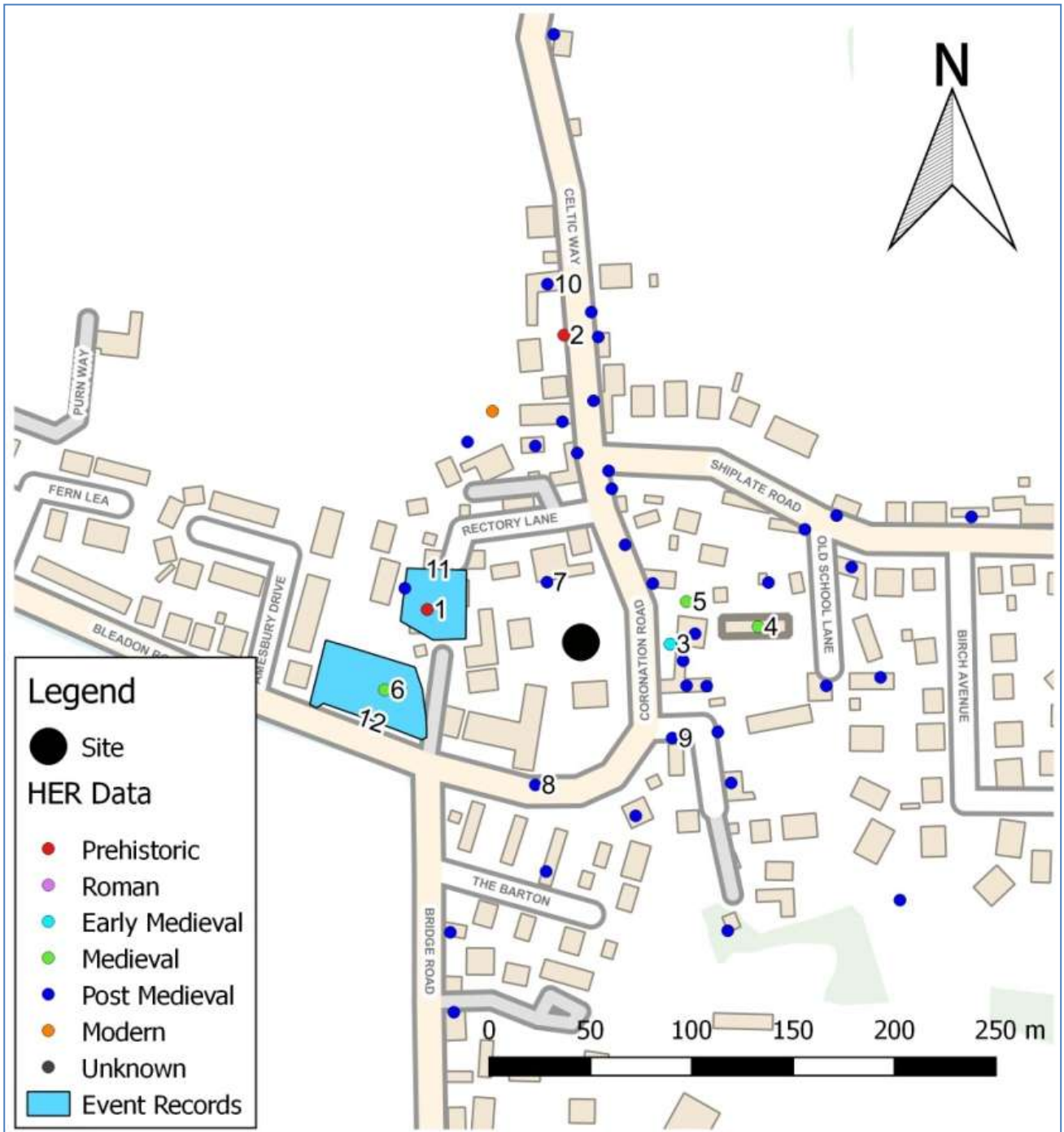


FIGURE 6: MAP OF HERITAGE ASSETS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE SITE (DATA SUPPLIED BY NORTH SOMERSET HER)

THE RECTORY, CORONATION ROAD, BLEADON, NORTH SOMERSET

No.	HER No.	Name	Record	Description
1	MNS2844	Prehistoric Occupation and Burials	Excavation	Evaluation Trenching at Whitegate Farm uncovered evidence from the late prehistoric, medieval and modern periods. Prehistoric activity related to a group of pits, ditches and postholes. Pottery indicated these were of late Bronze Age date. One pit contained a human skull. Human bones were found in two other pits
2	MNS8334	Prehistoric Burial	Documentary	The HER records a prehistoric burial at this site. It is unclear where this information comes from and the sources given relate to the building at this site (Toms Cottage), it is therefore possible that this record is erroneous.
3	MNS1548	Manor House?	Documentary	A manor is recorded in a surviving charter of 956, with the boundaries delineated. It was granted by King Eadwig to Aethelwold then in 1053 to Winchester Cathedral.
3	MNS1549	Saxon Church	Documentary	The 956 description of the manor mentions a church stead on the boundary. It is therefore likely a Saxon church predated the current church, the earliest part of which is the Norman font.
4	MNS41	St Peters Church	Extant Building	Church of St Peter and St Paul. The chancel, nave and west tower date to the 14 th century while the remainder is mainly 15 th century. GRADE I Listed
5	MNS42	Churchyard Cross	Structure	The cross, now in the road was formerly located in the churchyard. It has a 14 th century socket, 17-18 th century shaft and modern finial. A 15 th century cross head is preserved in the church (although possibly not part of the churchyard cross). GRADE II Listed
6	MNS8368	Medieval Building Remains at Whitegate Farm	Excavation	Evaluation trenching at Whitegate Farm uncovered evidence for medieval settlement including beam slots, post holes, a hearth and foundation trench of a dry stone wall. Pottery, bone, metal work and worked stone objects were found in association with the structures.
7	MNS8390	Group of three buildings at Coronation Road	Documentary	Group of three buildings recorded at this location. The source is an enclosure map of c.1800.
8	MNS6192	Site of Smithy at Village Hall	Documentary	A smithy is recorded at this location on the Bleadon Tithe Map, still depicted on 1902 2 nd Edition Map.
9	MNS8362	Village Well	Structure	A 19 th century limestone and cast iron well. GRADE II listed.
10	MNS1727	Hillside Farmhouse	Extant Building	Cross passage and three rooms. Raised to form two storey house. Possibly a longhouse, converted to full house in 17 th century. GRADE II Listed
11	ENS857	Evaluation Trenching at Whitegate Farm	Evaluation	Evaluation trenching prior to new housing development revealed extensive Iron Age activity represented by a series of pits, two of which contained crouched inhumation burials. A second stage revealed pottery of late Bronze Age date along with a group of pits, ditches and postholes. One pit contained a human skull. Human bones were found in two other pits. A ditch, which crossed the southern half of the site on a northeast-southwest alignment, appeared to represent a phase of medieval agricultural activity on the site. Evidence of post-medieval and modern activity associated with the use of the site as a farmyard, was represented by two phases of masonry foundations relating to a partially demolished barn, by a range of pits, postholes, and recent masonry and concrete foundations.
12	ENS875	Trial Excavations at a site at Whitegate Farm	Evaluation	In 2002 seven trial trenches were excavated in a paddock to the south of Whitegate Farm, Bleadon. Although no prehistoric features were encountered, despite an earlier investigation in the area in 1997 suggesting there would be, there were substantial medieval remains of settlement activity. Features included postholes, slots and a foundation trench for a limestone wall and artefacts included pottery, animal bone, metalwork and worked stone objects.

TABLE 2: HER DATA, SUPPLIED BY NORTH SOMERSET HER.

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL SUMMARY

Given the evidence from the known archaeology and standing historic buildings in the immediate vicinity it would appear that the Rectory gardens have medium to high archaeological potential. The gardens appear to have remained open throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, but the rebuilding of the Rectory to the north and subdivision of the former gardens and construction of Rochester House in the 1970s may have caused substantial changes in the sites immediate vicinity. In order to determine the extent, character and date of any archaeological deposits a programme of evaluation trenching was agreed in consultation with Cat Lodge Archaeologist for North Somerset District Council.

4.0 EVALUATION TRENCHING

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Two evaluation trenches (totalling 21m in length) were excavated by a machine fitted with a 0.95m wide toothless bucket (Figure 7). All works were under the supervision of the Archaeologist and Ecologist.

4.2 DEPOSIT MODEL

The trenches revealed a relatively consistent stratigraphy of modern topsoil (100) of dark brown fine silt-clay (0.15m thick), which overlies a layer of mixed stone and brick rubble and re-deposited natural (101), which varied in thickness from 0.35-0.2m, getting thinner to the north and east. The rubble layer (101) overlies a c.0.3m thick layer of clean soft mid-brown slightly clayey-silt (102), which contained rare small sub-angular stones, but was relatively clean. Deposit (102) may represent a buried topsoil horizon. Deposit (102) overlies a thin and mixed layer (up to 0.08m thick) of dark grey ash (104), which contained abundant animal bones (mostly cattle and pig), which petered out to the north and west. Deposit (104) produced a large number of finds, many of which were not retained but included the remains of several saucepans, glass and animal bones of late Victorian/ early 20th century character. This deposit overlies a thin clean yellow-brown silt loam (103) with occasional/rare small sub-angular stones. This directly overlies the natural, compact yellow clay with occasional sub-angular stones.

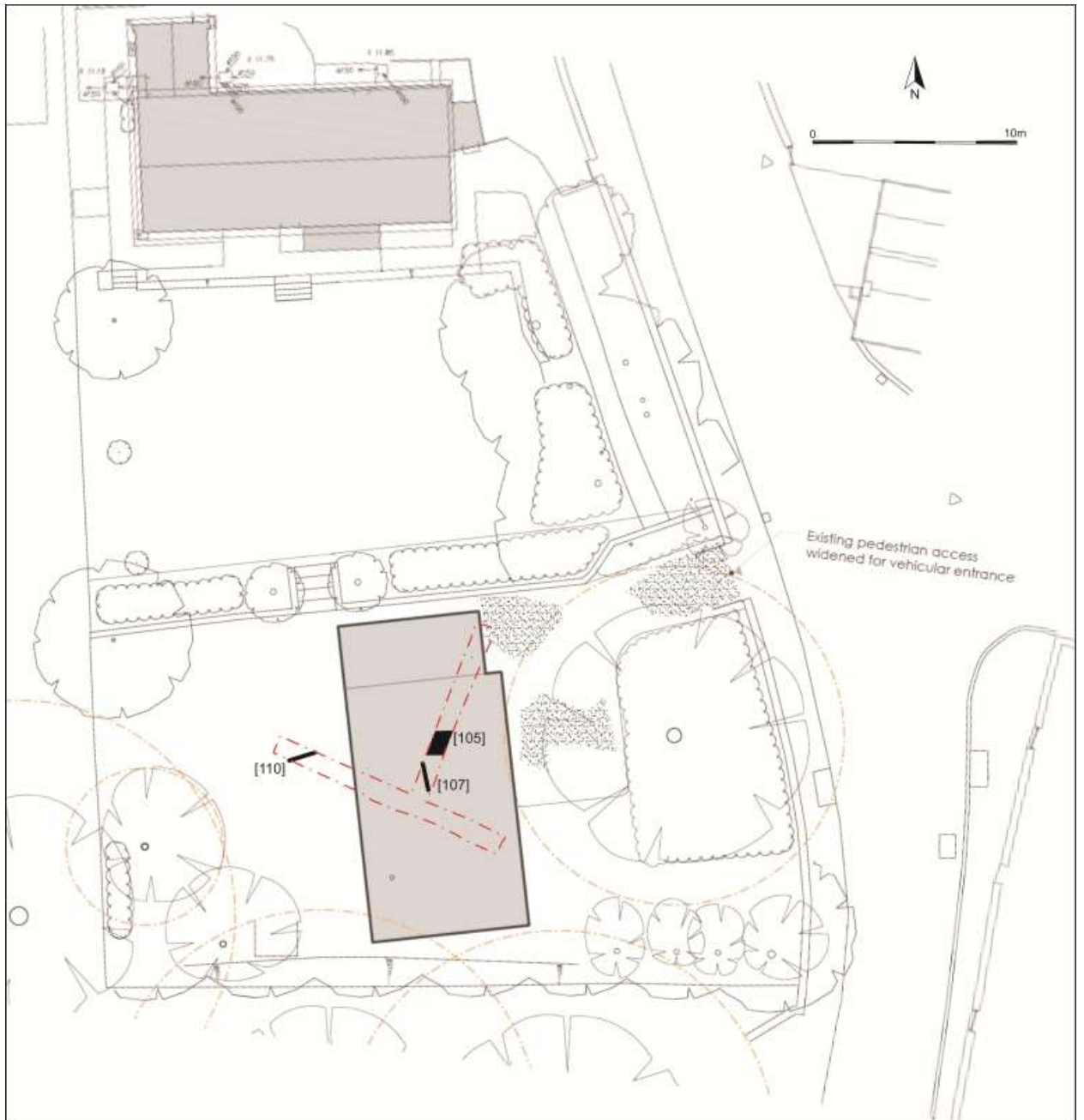


FIGURE 7: TRENCH PLAN, SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE TRENCHES OVER THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FOOTPRINT.

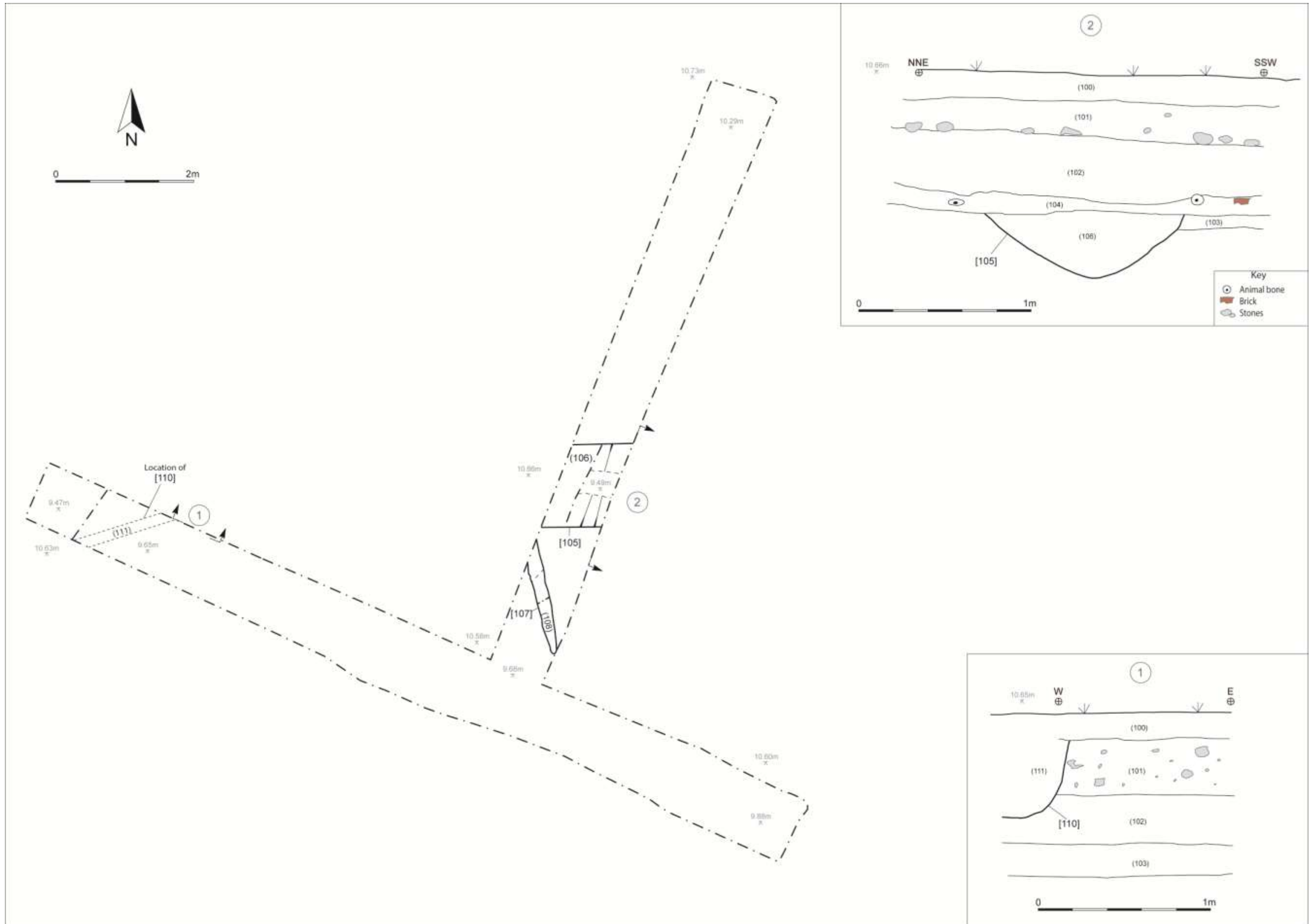


FIGURE 8: DETAILED TRENCH PLAN AND SECTIONS. ALL LEVELS ARE ABOVE ORDNANCE DATUM.

4.3 FEATURES

Three features were noted within the evaluation trenches, although these all cut from high up in the stratigraphic sequence, and probably all related to 19th to 20th century drainage or garden features (see Figure 8).

Ditch [105], was 1.25m wide and 0.22m deep with gently sloping sides and concaved based, orientated east-west (Figure 9). It was filled with a dark grey silt-clay (106) with common to occasional sub-angular stones. Ditch [105] cut through deposit (103).

Gully [107] was a 0.3m wide and 0.05m deep with gently concaved profile running north-south. It petered out to the south, and was filled by a dark grey silt-clay (108) with rare sub-angular stones. Gully [107] also cut through deposit [103].

Ditch [110], was a 0.42m wide and 0.25m deep vertical sided cut with concaved base, orientated north-east to south-west. It was filled by dark grey loose gritty silt (111) with common to abundant ash, brick and white refined earthenwares. Ditch [110] cut deposit (101).



FIGURE 9: DITCH [105], VIEWED FROM THE WEST (1M SCALE).

4.4 FINDS

The finds assemblage is largely dated to the late 19th century, based upon the various glass bottles recovered from deposits (102) and (104). All animal bones and corroded saucepans etc. were left on site.

Some earlier materials were recovered, including 1x sherd of 17th century Bristol/Staffordshire yellow slipware, and pieces of 17th-18th century ridge tile, including part of a foliate ridge crown, which were mixed with roof slate and modern white refined earthenwares within modern drain [110].

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

Given the evidence from the known archaeology and standing historic buildings in the immediate vicinity it would appear that the Rectory gardens have medium to high archaeological potential. The gardens appear to have remained open throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, but the re-building of the Rectory to the north and subdivision of the former gardens and construction of Rochester House in the 1970s have caused substantial changes in the sites immediate vicinity.

The evaluation trenching trenches revealed that the site had been significantly landscaped, with the ground terraced and then raised, mostly likely in the late 19th or early 20th century. There is limited archaeological potential and it seems unnecessary for any further archaeological works to be required for this proposed development.

6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES

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Somerset Heritage Centre

'A Plan of the New Inclosures within the Manor of Bleadon in the county of Somerset - as divided and allotted by virtue of an act of parliament passed in the year of our Lord 1788' map by William White, dated 1791 (SHC ref: Q/RDE/22).

APPENDIX 1: FINDS CONCORDANCE

Context	Pottery			Glass			CBM			Clay Pipe			Other			Date
	No.	Weight (g)	Detail	No.	Weight (g)	Detail	No.	Weight (g)	Detail	No.	Weight (g)	Detail	No.	Weight (g)	Detail	
(104)	9	1827	Stoneware jars, 3x complete, 6x sherds	10x complete/ largely complete bottles	2934	Some manufacturers identifiable, 3x Patersons Glasgow ESS Camp Coffee & Chicory (c.1876-1890); 1x wine/spirit bottle of W & A Gilbey Ltd (c.1893-1910); 1x Clear glass bottle for E. Norman Pharmacist Weston Super Mare (c.1890-1910)				2	6	stem	1	66	square (sardine?) tin, black residue inside, labelled MEDIUM outside	Late 19 th Century-early 20 th Century
(102)	1	141	ointment jar "TOOGOOD PATENT LONDON" (1840s-1860s)													Late 19 th Century-early 20 th Century
	6	104	Industrial slipwares				1	935	brick				1	308	Iron slag	
	6	919	North Devon Gravel Free One redware with pale yellow slip													
	4	545	flowerpot													
(111)	1	20	Bristol/staffordshire yellow slipware				1	410	foliate ridge crown							20 th Century
							1	2261	roof tile							
	3	20	Industrial slipwares				1	383	roof tile? Redware, blackened interior, ribbed on lip							



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