

**Land off St George's Road
Semington
Wiltshire**

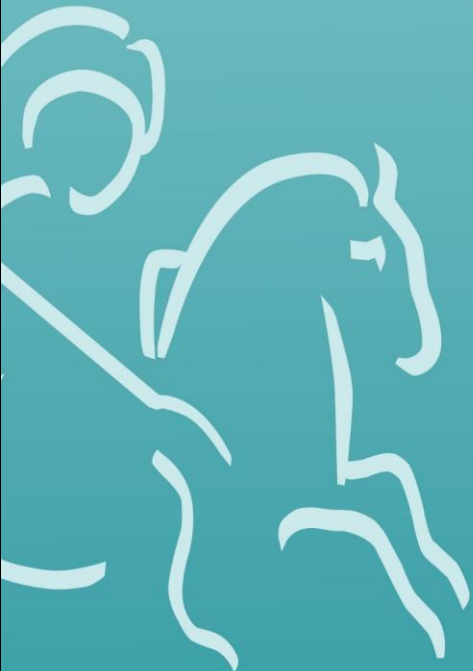
Archaeological Evaluation



for:
Newland Homes Ltd

CA Project: CR1063
CA Report: CR1063_1
WM Accession No.: DZSWS:10-2021

June 2022



Land off St George's Road Semington Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation

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Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	29 June 2022	Daniel Sausins	Alex Thomson	First Issue	-	Steven Sheldon

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SUMMARY

Project name:	Land off St George's Road
Location:	Semington, Wiltshire
NGR:	389478 160188
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	30 May – 1 June 2022
Planning reference:	Wiltshire Council ref: PL/2022/01367
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Wiltshire Museum and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Accession Number:	DZSWS:10-2021
Site Code:	GEOR 22

In May and June 2022, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire. A total of five trenches were excavated.

A pit of Middle Iron Age date was identified in a trench excavated the north-eastern part of the site, which potentially relates to Iron Age activity previously identified in the wider vicinity.

Evidence of medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow cultivation was recorded throughout the site, and field drains of modern date were also identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In May and June, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire (centred at NGR: 389478 160188; Fig. 1). This evaluation was undertaken for Newland Homes Ltd.
- 1.2. The evaluation results will inform a planning application for the residential development of the site, which will be made to Wiltshire Council (WC; planning ref: PL/2022/01367).
- 1.3. The scope of this evaluation was defined by Neil Adam, Assistant County Archaeologist, WC. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) prepared by CA (2022a) and approved by Neil Adam.
- 1.4. The evaluation was also undertaken in line with *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

The site

- 1.5. The proposed development site is approximately 0.65ha in extent, and currently comprises part of a pastoral field located on the southern edge of the village of Semington. It is bounded to the north by a residential development area and St George's Road beyond, to the east by residential properties, to the south by a field and to the west by the former St George's Hospital and further residential properties. The site lies at approximately 50m AOD, with the ground falling away gently towards Semington Brook to the south.
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site mapped as limestone of the Cornbrash Formation, formed during the Jurassic Period (BGS 2022). The natural geological substrate identified during the course of the evaluation consisted of limestone brash and sand.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. The site has previously been the subject of Heritage Impact Assessment (CA 2021) and geophysical survey (AS 2015). A Desk-Based Assessment (DBA; CA 2015), evaluation trenching (CA 2016) and archaeological excavation (CA 2022b) have also been undertaken on the site directly to the north. The following is a summary of information taken from these assessments.

Prehistoric and Roman

2.2. An archaeological evaluation, undertaken directly to the north of the site (CA 2016) identified a small number of archaeological features which corresponded to the results of a geophysical survey (AS 2015), including a number of undated features and a Bronze Age pit.

2.3. The earliest features identified during the subsequent excavation dated to the late prehistoric/Iron Age and were represented by the remains of a pair of large Iron Age enclosure ditches, with evidence for possible associated structures (CA 2022b). Occupational evidence within the excavation area included two terminating enclosure ditches, a possible ring gully and a four-post structure, as well as the remains of shallow pits and post holes. The artefacts retrieved from the excavated features were preliminarily dated to between the Middle Iron Age and the 1st century AD. A single sherd of residual Middle Neolithic pottery was also recovered from an Iron Age ditch. Two large pits located in the southern-most area of the excavation contained large quantities of animal bone and pottery, suggestive of possible domestic waste dumping associated with nearby domestic activity. Pottery recovered from the northernmost of these pits (identified during the preceding evaluation; CA 2016) was attributed to the Bronze Age, and as such, suggested a possible earlier phase of activity within the site (CA 2022b).

2.4. An archaeological evaluation undertaken c. 250m to the north-west of the site by Headland Archaeology identified probable structural remains of Iron Age date, with associated ditches and a possible midden deposit (HA 2017; Fig. 1). Features and recovered finds (pottery, burnt bone and lithics) suggested domestic occupation on the site and possible phases to the archaeological activity. A trackway or hollow way was also recorded with further undated ditches (ibid.)

2.5. Within the vicinity of the site, features observed as cropmarks on aerial photographs have been tentatively dated to the prehistoric period (CA 2015). These include a ring-

ditch, probably representing a Bronze Age burial mound, which has been recorded approximately 900m to the south of the site (Fig. 1). Within the wider surroundings of the site, evidence of Bronze Age occupation has been found in Trowbridge, c. 4km to the south-west (ibid.).

- 2.6. Potential Iron Age and Roman activity within the vicinity of the site is indicated by the presence of cropmarks of several rectilinear enclosures with associated linear ditches, which were observed at Fairfield, approximately 860m to the south-west of the site (CA 2015). In the wider landscape, enclosures dated to the Iron Age have been recorded at Paxcroft Farm, approximately 1.4km south-west of the site, with the Roman period represented by a field system recorded approximately 1.6km to the south-west (ibid.; Fig. 1).

Early Medieval and Medieval

- 2.7. Evidence for early medieval activity is limited in the vicinity of the site. However, a Saxon pit containing pottery of 5th to 8th century AD date, was revealed during evaluation trenching undertaken 200m to the east of the site (CA 2015). It is likely that Semington was located in the wider agricultural hinterland of Trowbridge during the medieval period, with ridge and furrow earthworks recorded in much of the surrounding landscape (ibid.).

- 2.8. The Church of St George (c. 420m to the north-east of the site) is first mentioned in a dedication of the late 15th century, with the nave and porch dating to this period (CA 2015).

- 2.9. Evidence for medieval ridge and furrow cultivation is recorded in the south-eastern part of the excavation undertaken directly to the north, and medieval quarrying was also found in the north-western part of the excavation area (CA 2022b).

Post-Medieval and Modern

- 2.10. The majority of the area around the site retained its rural character during the post-medieval period, with an out-farm of 19th-century date recorded approximately 100m to the south of the site (CA 2015). The 19th and early 20th-century maps of the site indicate that it remained in agricultural usage until modern residential development to the west of Semington.

- 2.11. A number of sites within the surrounding study area relate to the Second World War (CA 2015), and the area falls within the anti-invasion Stop-line of 1940, along

the Kennet and Avon Canal. A single feature associated with this activity is indicated along the northern boundary of the site. It comprises an anti-tank ditch, surrounding the village of Semington to the east, south, and west. This defensive earthwork would have run southwards from the Kennet and Avon Canal, and then alongside St George's Road and, further to the east, across farmland. The post-Second World War aerial photographs show a freshly infilled ditch running across the site, just to the south of its northern edge (ibid.).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objective of the evaluation was to provide further information on the likely archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation. This information will enable WC to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets within the site, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise conflict between heritage asset conservation and the development proposals, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).
- 3.2. The specific objective of the evaluation was to investigate anomalies identified by the preceding geophysical survey and to determine whether any archaeological activity, recorded to the north, continues into the current site.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of five trenches in the locations shown on the attached plan (Figs 2 and 3). This included the excavation of four trenches of 30m length and one trench of 20m length. All trenches measured 1.8m in width.
- 4.2. During the course of the evaluation, the trenches excavated varied from those agreed within the WSI (CA 2022a). Areas in the north and north-west of the site were obstructed by construction compounds and storage areas and Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 5 were therefore repositioned. Trench 4 was also shortened to 20m in length. All changes to the scope of trenching were undertaken with the agreement of Neil Adam.
- 4.3. The trenches were located to test geophysical anomalies and to provide a representative sample of the remainder of the site.

-
- 4.4. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS. Overburden was stripped from the trenches by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate, which was the level at which archaeological features were first encountered.
- 4.5. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.6. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential, but no deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 4.7. Artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.8. CA will make arrangements with Wiltshire Museum for the deposition of the project archive and, subject to agreement with the legal landowner(s), the artefact collection, under accession number DZSWS:10-2021. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (CIfA 2014; updated October 2020).
- 4.9. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A. Details of the artefactual material recovered from the site are given in Section 6 and Appendix B. Details of the recovered animal bone (palaeoenvironmental evidence) are given in Section 7 and Appendix C.
- 5.2. The general stratigraphic sequence recorded throughout the site was broadly uniform. The natural substrate was identified at a typical depth of 0.45m below present ground level (bpgl) in all of the excavated trenches and was overlain by c. 0.15m of silty-brash subsoil, which was in turn sealed by 0.3m of clay-silt topsoil.

-
- 5.3. A single archaeological feature was identified in Trench 5. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in the remaining trenches, except for evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation and modern field drains, which correlated broadly with trends recorded by the preceding geophysical survey. The geophysical anomalies targeted by Trenches 2 and 3 were found to relate to variations in the natural substrate within the excavated trenches.

Trench 5 (Fig. 4)

- 5.4. Pit 503 (Fig. 4, Section AA) was identified at the northern end of Trench 5, where it correlated to part of a discrete geophysical anomaly. It had a steeply sloping southern side and a concave base, measured at least 3m in length, 1.8m in width and 0.83m in depth, and contained two fills, 504 and 505. In total, 13 sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery, nine fragments of animal bone and a flint core were recovered fills 504 and 505. A flint flake was also recovered from the subsoil horizon with the trench.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1. Artefactual material, comprising pottery and flint, was recovered by hand from three deposits. The material is listed by context in Appendix B and further described below. The data was recorded directly to an Excel spreadsheet, from which Table 1 is taken. The artefacts have been recorded by deposit and sherd count, weight, and morphological characteristics. The recording undertaken is in accordance with the *CIfA finds Toolkit* (CIfA 2022).

Pottery

- 6.2. A total of 13 sherds (52g) were hand recovered from fill 504 of pit 503, identified in Trench 5. The majority of sherds recovered are in a handmade limestone tempered fabric (LT). Also recovered was one rim sherd from a small vessel with a slack profile and simple rim in a limestone and fossil shell tempered (LS) fabric. Middle Iron Age dating is suggested for this material, the fabrics and vessel form comparable with pottery recorded previously from the excavations undertaken directly to the north (CA 2022b).

Flint

- 6.3. Two pieces of worked flint (123g) were hand recovered from two deposits. The flint comprises a flake recorded from subsoil 501 and a core from fill 505 of pit 503. Pit 503 also produced Middle Iron Age pottery, so the flint is likely residual. Neither of

these pieces are chronologically diagnostic, so only broad prehistoric dating is possible.

7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Animal bone

- 7.1. Animal bone amounting to nine fragments (30g) was recovered from fills 504 and 505 of pit 503, identified in Trench 5. Artefactual material dating to the Middle Iron Age was also recovered from this feature (See Table 1, Appendix C). The bone was well preserved, making possible the identification of cattle (*Bos taurus*) from a partial mandible, distal humerus, proximal radius, and a proximal tibia. No cut or chop marks were observed but these bones are typical to deposits of butchery waste
- 7.2. The low recovery severely limits what can be said in terms of site economy and animal husbandry. However, cattle were a commonly exploited domestic animal during the Iron Age so its inclusion in an assemblage of this period is to be expected.

8. DISCUSSION

- 8.1. The archaeological evaluation demonstrated that there was generally a good correlation between the identified geophysical anomalies and the features revealed during the trenching; however, a number of the discrete positive responses identified by the geophysical survey were found to relate to variations in the natural substrate.
- 8.2. The evaluation identified one archaeological feature, in Trench 5. Pit 503 contained pottery of Middle Iron Age date, and is of a comparable form to a pit identified c. 30m to the north, suggesting that it represents contemporary activity to that recorded immediately to the north during the previous excavation (CA 2022b).. The recovered pottery and animal bone suggests a deposit of domestic waste, but no evidence for settlement activity of this period was identified.
- 8.3. Evidence of medieval to modern agricultural use of the site was identified through widespread evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation and modern field drainage. This further correlates to the results of the excavation immediately to the north which suggested much of the site had been in agricultural use during these periods.

9. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 9.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Sausins, assisted by Alistair Thomson and Louie Parfitt. This report was written by Daniel Sausins. The finds and biological evidence reports were written by Claire Collier and Andy Clarke, respectively. The report illustrations were prepared by Ryan Wilson. The project archive has been compiled by Daniel Sausins and prepared for deposition by Daniel Sausins. The project was managed for CA by Alex Thomson.

10. REFERENCES

- AS (Archaeological Surveys) 2015 *Land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire: Magnetometer Survey Report*. AS Ref. No. **630**
- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2022 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/> Accessed 22 June 2022
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 *Land South of St George's Road: Heritage Desk-Based Assessment*, CA Report No. **15257**
- CA 2016 *Land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation*, CA Report No. **16299**
- CA 2021 *St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire: Heritage Impact Assessment Addendum*, CA Report No. **CR0931_1**
- CA 2022a *Land off St George's Road (Phase 2), Semington, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*
- CA 2022b *Land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire: Archaeological Excavation*, CA Report No. **CR0639_1**
- ClfA 2021 *ClfA Finds reporting toolkit* <https://www.archaeologists.net/reporting-toolkit> (accessed June 2022)
- HA (Headland Archaeology) 2017 *Land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation*. HA Report No. **1232**

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty loam			0.16	
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow-brown silty clay with abundant limestone fragments			0.23	
1	102	Layer		Natural	Crushed limestone brash in a yellow sandy clay matrix with patches of blue-grey clay				
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty loam			0.21	
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow-brown silty clay with abundant limestone fragments			0.18	
2	202	Layer		Natural	Crushed limestone brash in a yellow sandy clay matrix with patches of blue-grey clay				
2	203	Cut		Tree-throw pit	Irregular in plan and profile. Cuts subsoil	>1.8	1.15	0.45	
2	204	Fill		Tree-throw pit fill	Mid brown-red clay silt and gravels	>1.8	1.15	0.45	
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty loam			0.22	
3	301	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow-brown silty clay with abundant limestone fragments			0.18	
3	302	Layer		Natural	Crushed limestone brash in a yellow sandy clay matrix with patches of dull yellow brown clay			0.14	
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey-black silty loam with occasional limestone fragment			0.31	
4	401	Layer		Subsoil	Mid (dull) yellow brown silty clay with abundant limestone fragments			0.31	
4	402	Layer		Natural	Limestone brash in a yellow sandy clay matrix				
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty loam			0.26	
5	501	Layer		Subsoil	Dark yellow brown silty clay with frequent limestone fragments				
5	502	Layer		Natural	Plated limestone and limestone brash in in light grey-yellow clay				
5	503	Cut		Pit	Sub circular in plan with step sides and concave base	>2.97	>1.8	0.83	
5	504	Fill	503	Primary Fill	Light grey-yellow silty clay with green and blue mottling	>1.0	>1.0	0.18	MIA
5	505	Fill	503	Secondary Fill	Dark orange-brown silty clay	>2.97	>1.8	0.65	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Table 1: The finds

Type	Category	Count	Weight(g)
Pottery	Prehistoric	13	52
Flint	Worked	2	123

Table 2: Finds concordance

Context	Material	fabric	Comments	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
501	Flint		flake	1	10	-
504	LPRE Pottery	LS	Fossil shell and limestone tempered,	1	6	MIA
	LPRE Pottery	LT	Limestone tempered, thick walled sherd	12	46	
505	Flint		core	1	112	-

APPENDIX C: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

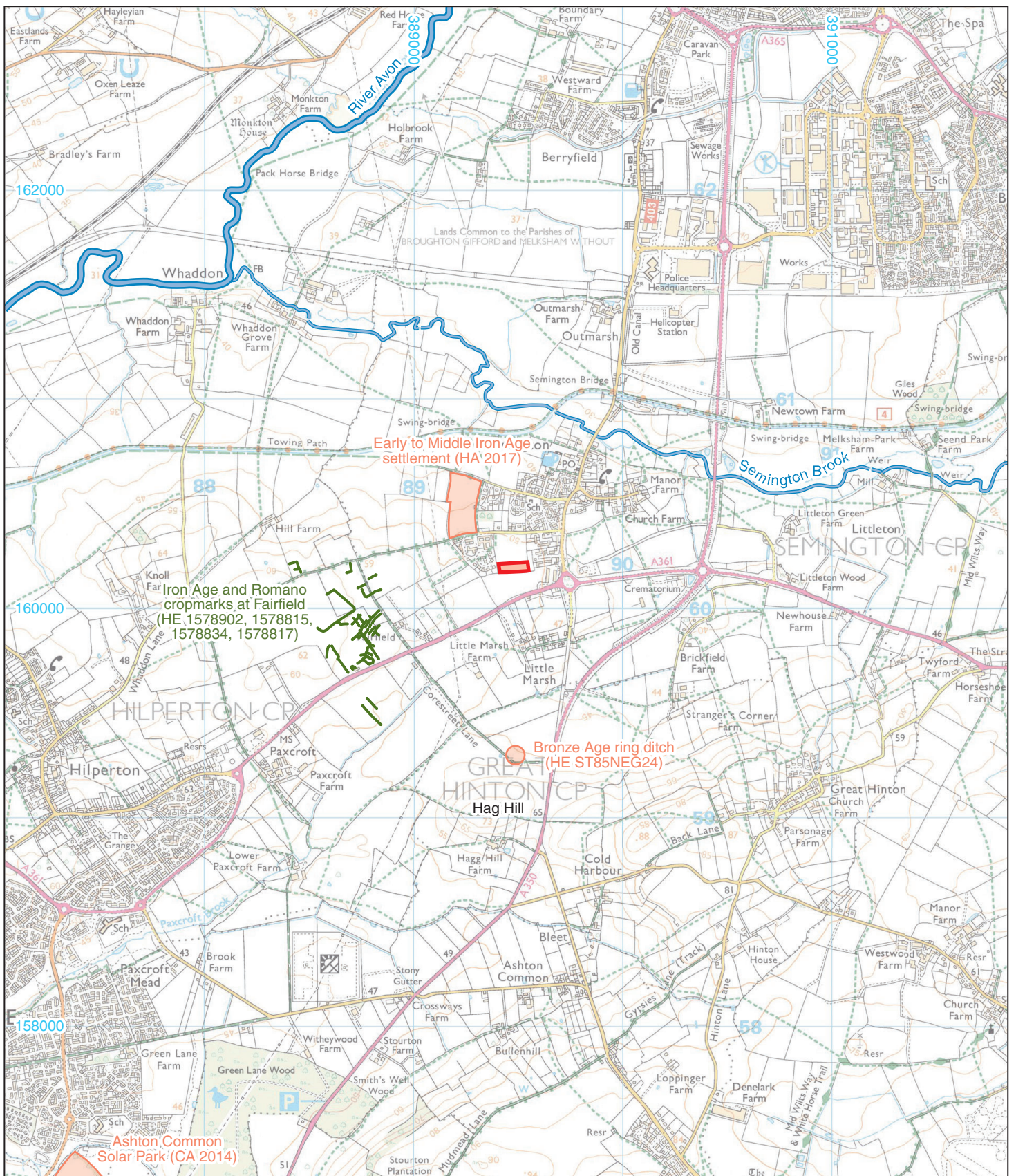
Table 1: Identified animal species by fragment count (NISP) and weight and context.





Cut	Fill	BOS	Ind	Total	Weight (g)
503	504		5	5	29
503	505		4	4	303
Total			4	5	9
Weight			303	29	332

BOS = cattle; Ind = indeterminate

APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire	
Short description	<p>In May and June 2022, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire. A total of five trenches were excavated.</p> <p>A pit of Middle Iron Age date was identified in a trench excavated the north-eastern part of the site, which potentially relates to Iron Age activity previously identified in the wider vicinity.</p> <p>Evidence of medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow cultivation was recorded throughout the site, and field drains of modern date were also identified.</p>	
Project dates	30 May – 1 June 2022	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	Desk-Based Assessment (CA 2015) Geophysical Survey (AS 2015) Heritage Impact Assessment (CA 2021)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire	
Study area (m ² /ha)	0.65ha	
Site co-ordinates	389478 160188	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	N/A	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Alex Thomson	
Project Supervisor	Daniel Sausins	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Wiltshire Museum (DZSWS:10-2021)	Pottery, animal bone, flint
Paper	Wiltshire Museum (DZSWS:10-2021)	Trench recording forms, site registers, context sheets, permatrace drawings,
Digital	Wiltshire Museum (DZSWS:10-2021)	Digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2022 <i>Land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> CA typescript report CR1063_1		



-  Site
-  Selected previous archaeological work
-  Cropmark
-  Watercourse



0 1km

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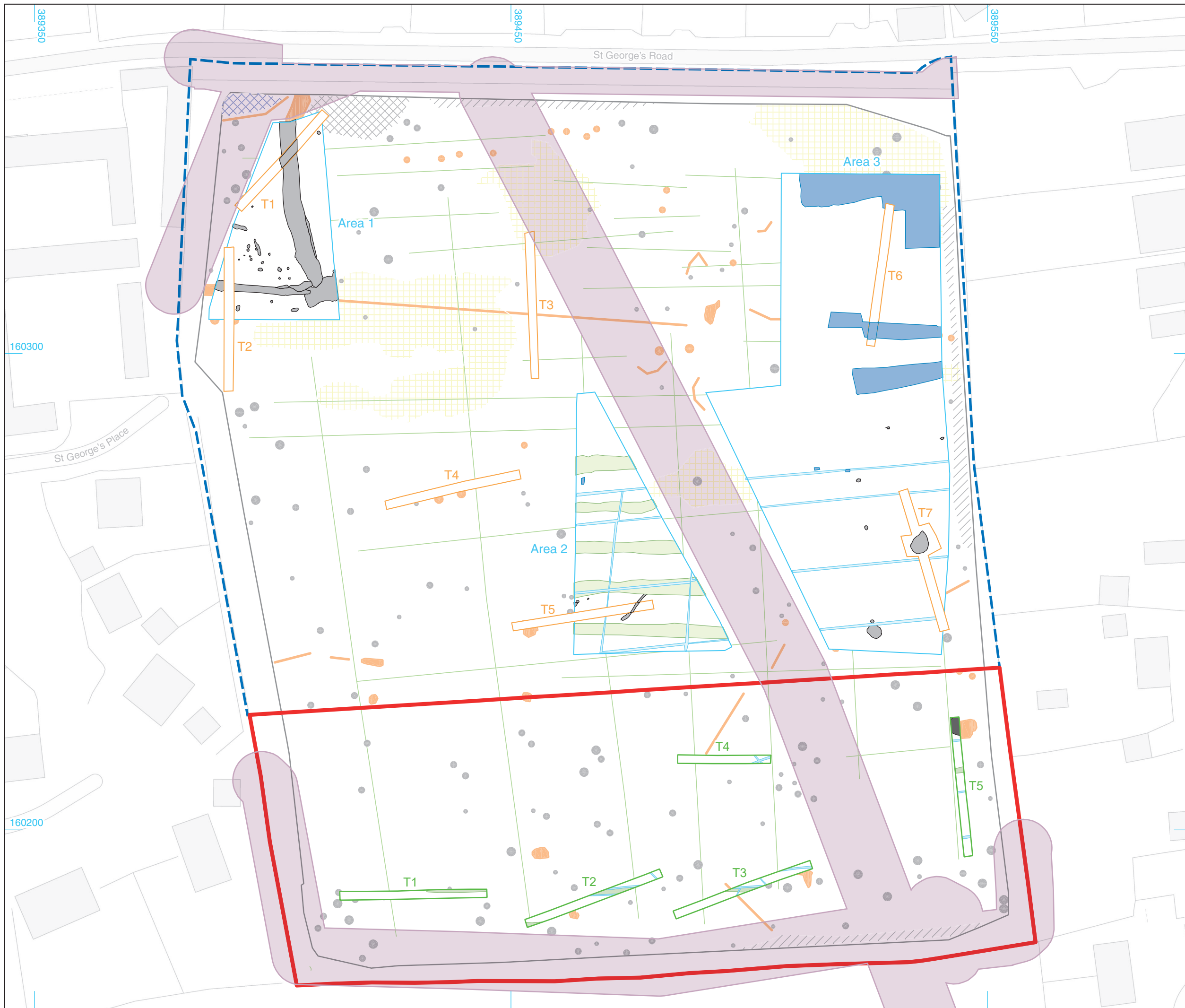
PROJECT TITLE

Land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

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- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature
- Furrow
- Drain
- Tree-throw
- Service buffer

- Previous works*
- Phase 1 site boundary
 - Evaluation trench (CA 2016)
 - Excavation area (CA 2022b)
 - Archaeological feature
 - Modern feature
 - Furrow
 - Drain

- Geophysical survey results (Archaeological Surveys Ltd, 2015)*
- Survey boundary
 - Positive linear anomaly (ditch-like)
 - Linear anomaly (agriculture)
 - Discrete positive response (pit-like)
 - Strong dipolar anomaly (ferrous object)
 - Magnetic disturbance



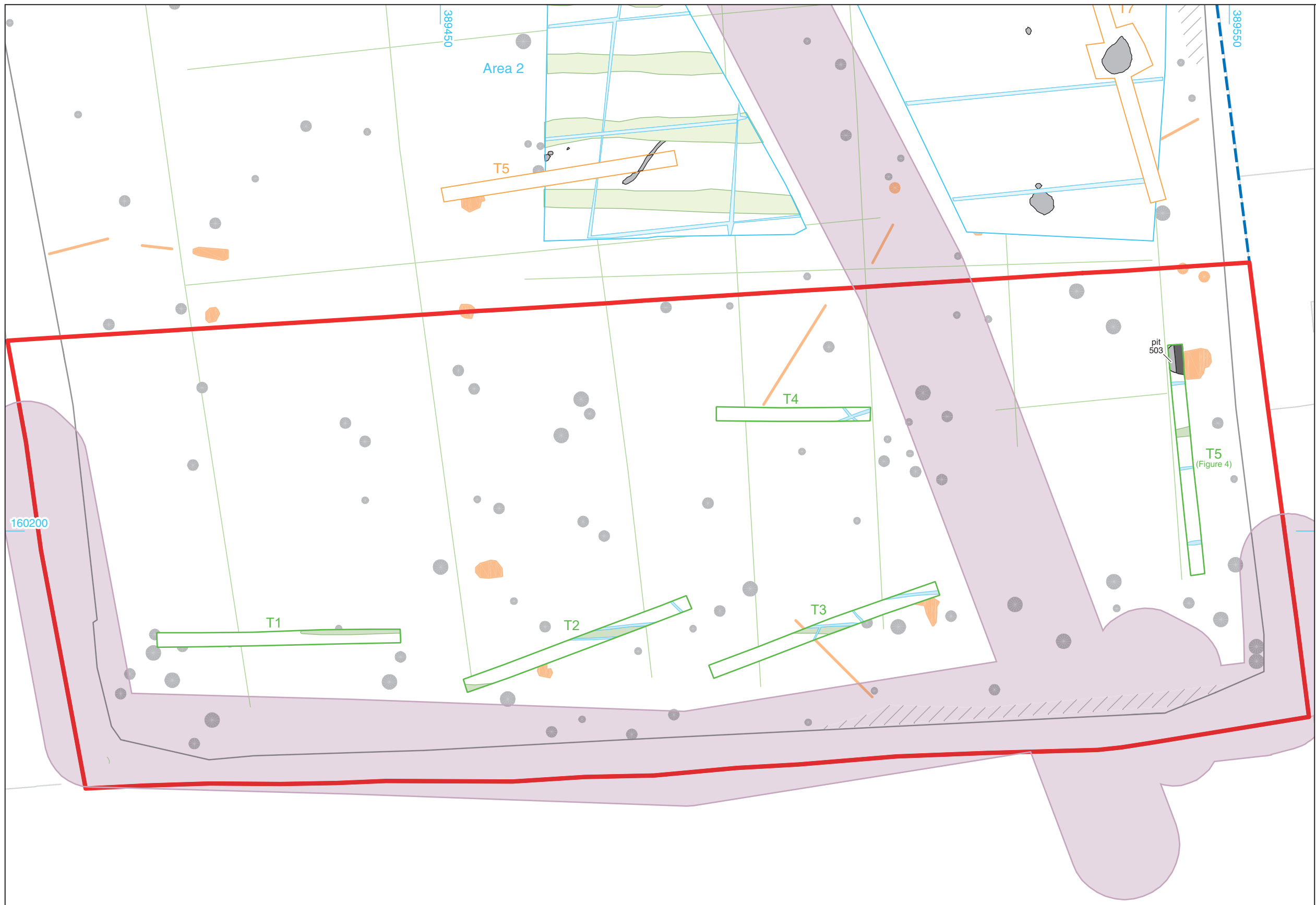
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PROJECT TITLE
 Land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE
 Trench location plan showing archaeological features, geophysical survey results and previous archaeological works

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- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature (excavated / unexcavated)
- Furrow
- Drain
- Tree-throw
- Service buffer

- Previous works*
- Phase 1 site boundary
 - Evaluation trench (CA 2016)
 - Excavation area (CA 2022b)
 - Archaeological feature
 - Furrow
 - Drain

- Geophysical survey results (Archaeological Surveys Ltd, 2015)*
- Survey boundary
 - Positive linear anomaly (ditch-like)
 - Linear anomaly (agriculture)
 - Discrete positive response (pit-like)
 - Magnetic disturbance
 - Strong dipolar anomaly (ferrous object)



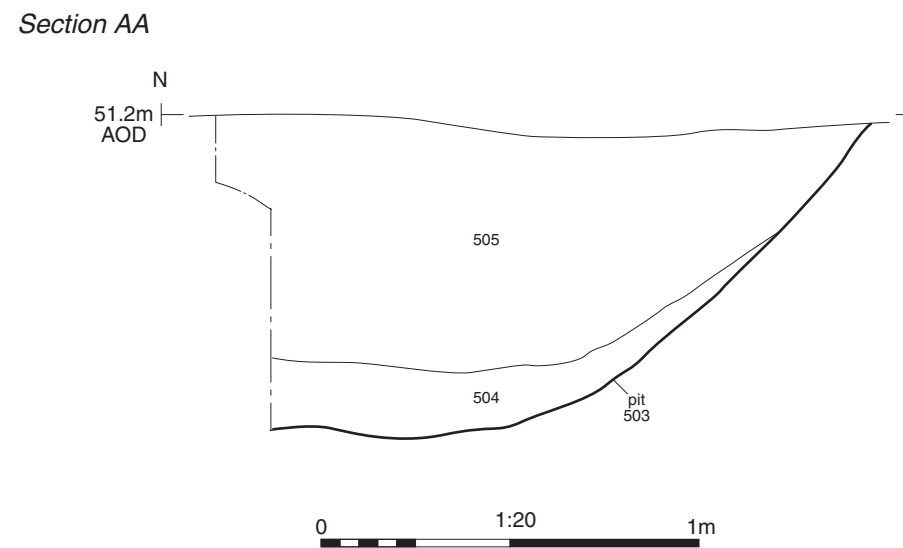
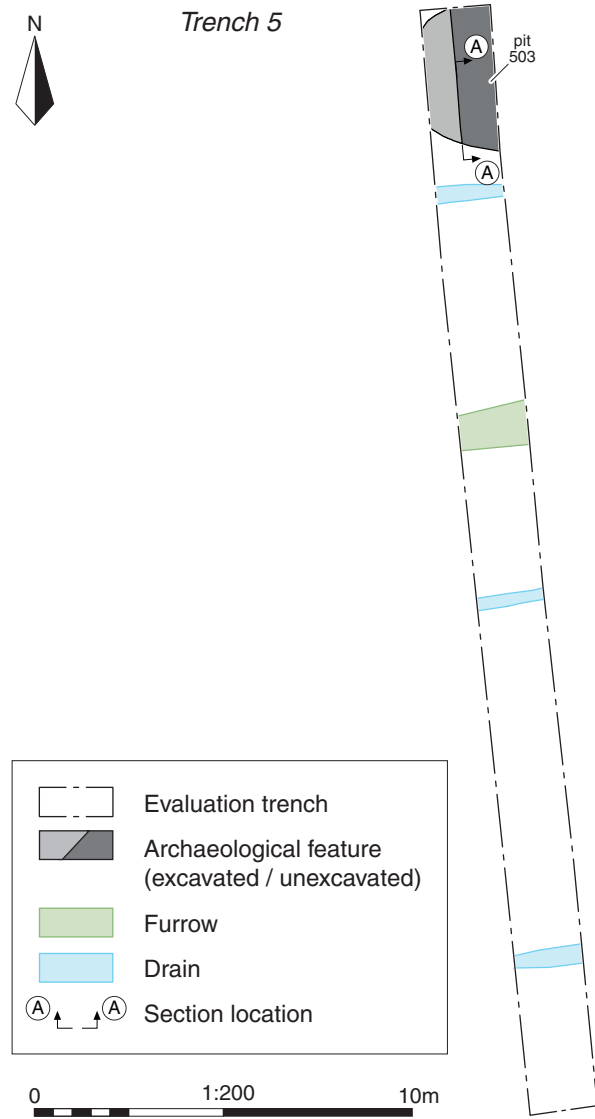
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PROJECT TITLE
 Land off St George's Road, Semington, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE
 Trench location plan showing archaeological features, previous works and geophysical survey results

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Pit 503, looking north-west (1m scale)



Pit 503, looking east (1m scale)


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PROJECT TITLE
 Land off St George's Road, Semington,
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FIGURE TITLE
 Trench 5: plan, section and
 photographs

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