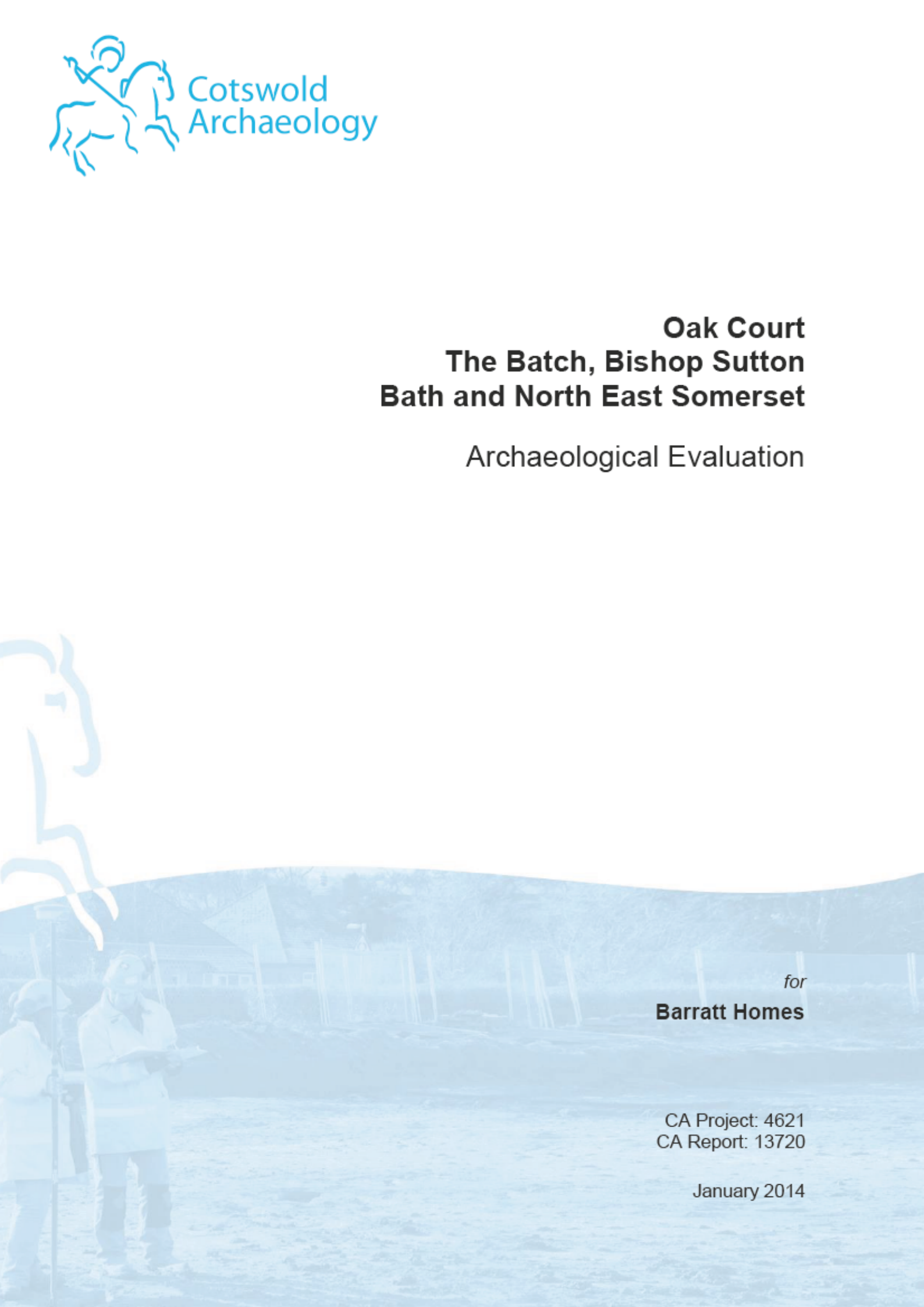


**Oak Court**  
**The Batch, Bishop Sutton**  
**Bath and North East Somerset**

Archaeological Evaluation



*for*  
**Barratt Homes**

CA Project: 4621  
CA Report: 13720

January 2014

Oak Court  
The Batch, Bishop Sutton  
Bath and North East Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 4621  
CA Report: 13720

prepared by	Sian Reynish, Project Supervisor
date	6 January 2014
checked by	Simon Cox, Head of Fieldwork
date	8 January 2014
approved by	Mark Collard, Head of Contracts
signed	
date	10 January 2014
issue	01

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Oak Court
<b>Location:</b>	The Batch, Bishop Sutton, Bath and North East Somerset
<b>NGR:</b>	ST 5887 5981
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	16-18 December 2013
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	12/0579
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with the Roman Baths Museum
<b>Accession Number:</b>	BATRM 2013.33
<b>Site Code:</b>	OCB 13

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in December 2013 at land at Oak Court, The Batch, Bishop Sutton, Bath and North East Somerset. Six trenches were excavated.

The evaluation revealed a north-east/south-west ditch across the centre of the field. It is likely this ditch relates to a local road that followed the same alignment and was first depicted in the 1840 tithe map and later seen as an earthwork on a 1946 aerial photograph. The alignment of the ditch compared to the tithe map and the aerial photograph seems to suggest the ditch may define the southern edge of the former road. A further three shallow ditches were identified within the south-west corner of the site, all of which were undated. Two of these ditches were slightly curved and form a single, continuous ditch.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In December 2013 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Barratt Homes at land at Oak Court, The Batch, Bishop Sutton, Bath and North East Somerset (centred on NGR: ST 5887 5981; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken as a condition (no. 9) attached to planning consent for the construction of residential properties which required *No development shall take place within the site until a programme of archaeological work has been implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority*. Richard Sermon, Senior Archaeological Officer, Bath and North East Somerset Council (BANESC), indicated that the archaeological works should consist of evaluation by trial trenching in the first instance, and a subsequent programme of archaeological mitigation if significant remains were encountered. This report presents the results of the trial trench evaluation. Should any further mitigation works be required by Mr Sermon a separate WSI will be produced.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)* produced by CA (2013a) and approved by Richard Sermon. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2009), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

### **The site**

- 1.3 The proposed development site is approximately 3.2 ha in area and is located at two fields to the north and south of the A368 on the east edge of the village of Bishop Sutton. The evaluation area encompasses only the southern field which comprises a single pasture field approximately 1.5 ha in area. The historic centre of the village lies approximately 140m to the west of the site. The site is within the modern parish of Stowey-Sutton an amalgamation of the manors of Bishop Sutton and Stowey. Historically the site was located within the manor of Bishop Sutton a part of the parish of Chew Magna.

- 1.4 The evaluation area is crossed by two public footpaths, crossing the field from the north-west to south-east and from the west to east. The north boundary with the A368 is marked by a high privet hedge and line of trees. The western boundary is with a narrow lane and is marked by a privet hedge at its northern end and a line of mature trees at its southern. To the south the boundary is with private gardens marked by a mixture of hedges, trees and fences. The eastern boundary is with a small wood and is marked by a low privet hedge.
- 1.5 The solid geology within the proposed development site comprises Mercia Mudstone (Keuper Marl), a sedimentary bedrock of sandstone, mudstone and halite formed during the Triassic period in a local environment dominated by hot deserts. There is no superficial geology recorded at the proposed development site (BGS 2013). The natural geological substrate revealed within the evaluation trenches consisted of a mid brownish red clay with patches of a light greyish yellow clay. The evaluation area slopes gently down to the north-east. The highest point, at the south-eastern end is at approximately 75m AOD. The land slopes into a broad valley, cut by a brook located approximately 400m north of the proposed development site. This brook flows from 'Barelegs Brake' on the Mendip scarp approximately 1km south-east of the site north towards Stowey Bottom before flowing west into Chew Valley Lake. The lake, the shores of which lie approximately 560m west of the proposed development site, is a reservoir constructed in the 1950s by the flooding of the valley of the River Chew. Approximately 500m to the south of the proposed development site is the bottom of the steep, heavily wooded northern scarp of the Mendip Hills, the broad limestone ridge that is the prominent landscape feature of the Mendip region.

### ***Archaeological background***

- 1.6 A desk-based assessment has been prepared for the site (CA 2013b). In summary, no archaeological remains from the prehistoric period are recorded from the vicinity of the site, although investigations within the wider area indicate human activity from the Palaeolithic through to the Iron Age, with settlement and funerary remains from the Neolithic period onwards. Several speculative Roman road routes cross the study area. One of these roads, a route thought to run from Bristol to Farrington Gurney, passes the proposed development site to the immediate west following the line of Bonhill Road and the lane called 'The Batch'. The other Roman road, also a speculative route, running from Bitton to Compton Martin, crosses approximately

500m north of the proposed development site. There are no other recorded Roman period archaeological remains within the vicinity, nor from the early medieval period. The layout of small regular fields across much of the area around the site, in particular to the west, suggests a medieval 'open field system' enclosed in the later medieval period, a common feature of the Chew Valley landscape. The northern field of the proposed development site may have been a part of a medieval open field system. The field's sinuous north boundary may formalise the S-shaped curve associated with medieval ploughing.

- 1.7 The site can be seen in an 18th-century map depicting the lands held by the manor of Bishop Sutton. The village is shown as a small cluster of buildings set around a green. The area occupied by the site is split between two fields divided by a local road. Following the late 18th or early 19th-century construction of a turnpike road (the modern A368) running through Bishop Sutton from east to west (first depicted in the 1840 tithe map), this local road appears to have become redundant and the boundaries of the southern field were rearranged.
- 1.8 The route of the redundant road runs across the centre of the southern field of the proposed development site. Earthworks remains of the road can be seen in a 1946 aerial photograph. A shallow hollow way, with a low scarp on the south side was seen in the field during a site visit (visible also on the aerial photograph shown on Figure 2). One of the two present-day public footpaths that run across the field roughly conforms to the route of the road. The 1946 aerial photograph shows an agricultural pattern of narrow rig evident in the southern end of the field. This area of straight narrow rig is bounded by the earthworks of the road suggesting that it dates from at least the 18th century when the road was in use.
- 1.9 The site is depicted in the tithe map, and in Ordnance Survey mapping until 1959, as larger than at present, encompassing the field to the east now occupied by woodland. The field is named as 'Summer Leaze' simply meaning grassland used in summer. Its use is noted in the tithe map apportionment as 'orchard and pasture.' The 1885 First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows the land only occupied by a line of trees that appear to follow the line of the older 18th-century road suggesting that by this time the field had gone out of use as an orchard. The field is depicted in arable use in 20th-century aerial photographs, the associated ploughing having removed all trace of the straight rig previously mentioned. The field was subdivided in the late 20th century, its present eastern boundary dating from the 1960s.

### **Archaeological objectives**

- 1.10 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2009). This information will enable the Bath and North East Somerset Council to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

### **Methodology**

- 1.11 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of six trenches within the southern field in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). Two of the trenches were targeted on the former local road of which the earthworks remains of the road can be seen in a 1946 aerial photograph. All trenches were 30m long and 1.8m wide, with Trench 6 being broken in the middle due to a footpath. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual* (2012).
- 1.12 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2013).
- 1.13 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003) and no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (1995).



- 1.14 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. The site archive will be deposited with the Roman Baths Museum guidelines under accession number BATRM 2013.33. The artefacts will not be retained. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-4)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.

- 2.2 A similar stratigraphic sequence was identified within all of the evaluation trenches. The natural geological substrate consisting of a mid brownish red clay with patches of a light greyish yellow clay was revealed at an average depth of 0.7m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by a mid yellowish-brown clayey silt colluvium/weathered natural at an average thickness of 0.18m in the southern area of the site (Trenches 2, 4, 5 and 6) where the site gradually sloped. This was in turn sealed by a mid reddish brown silty clay subsoil an average thickness of 0.28m and a mid greyish brown clayey silt topsoil an average thickness of 0.24m. All archaeological features were cut in to the natural substrate and covered by colluvium/weathered natural clay, with the exception of a ditch seen within Trenches 2 and 3 which cut the subsoil.

- 2.3 Trenches 1, 4 and 5 were all devoid of archaeological features.

### ***Trench 2 (Figs 2 & 3)***

- 2.4 A north-east/south-west ditch, 204, measuring 6.1m wide and 1.12m deep was identified, and continued through Trench 3 as ditch 303. This ditch is along the same alignment as a local road first depicted in the 1840 tithe map and later seen as an earthwork seen in a 1946 aerial photograph. The ditch cut the subsoil and contained a single fill 205 comprising a mid to dark reddish brown sandy clay with large lenses of re-deposited natural. Two sherds of blue transfer-printed refined whiteware, dating to after c. 1770, and one rimsherd from a modern flowerpot, were recovered from within fill 205, along with a fragment of post-medieval roof tile. It is likely the re-deposited natural clay within fill 205 came from a bank associated with the local

road, possibly situated on the northern edge of the ditch as a tip lines can be seen (Fig. 3). No evidence of road surfaces or wheel ruts was observed in association with the ditch to suggest whether the road consisted of a hollow way or metalled surface, and it seems possible these were removed when the bank was pushed back into the roadside ditch.

### **Trench 3 (Fig. 2)**

- 2.5 A continuation of the north-east/south-west ditch within Trench 2 was observed within Trench 3. Ditch 303 measured 7.62m wide and 1.1m deep and contained fill 304 from which a fragment of post-medieval roof tile was recovered. Fill 304 and the profile of ditch 303 was broadly similar to ditch 204 in Trench 2. No evidence of associated road surfaces was observed.

### **Trench 6 (Figs 2 & 4)**

- 2.6 Within the southern half of Trench 6 a slightly curved north-west/south-east ditch, 604, was identified. The ditch was shallow measuring 0.79m wide and 0.15m deep and contained undated fill 605. Within the northern half of Trench 6 ditch terminus 608 cut ditch 606. Slightly curved north-south ditch 606 measured approximately 0.48m wide and 0.3m deep and contained one fill 607, which was cut by ditch terminus 608. Ditch terminus 608 was aligned north/south, measured 0.9m wide and 0.26m deep and contained fill 609. Both ditches 604 and 606 were slightly curving and possessed similar profiles so it is possible they form part of the same ditch. No finds were recovered from either ditch.

### **The finds**

- 2.7 Finds recovered from evaluation include pottery and ceramic building material. The finds are of minimal archaeological significance and will not be retained.

#### *Pottery*

- 2.8 Two sherds of blue transfer-printed refined whiteware, dating to after c. 1770, and one rimsherd from a modern flowerpot were recovered from ditch fill 205.

#### *Ceramic building material*

- 2.9 Ditch fills 205 and 304 each produced one fragment of post-medieval roof tile.

### **3. DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 The evaluation revealed a north-east/south-west ditch across the centre of the field. It is likely this ditch relates to a local road that followed the same alignment, and was first depicted in the 1840 tithe map. This road became redundant following the late 18th or early 19th-century construction of a turnpike road (the modern A368) running through Bishop Sutton from east to west. The remains of the local road was later observed as an earthwork on a 1946 aerial photograph. Comparing the alignment of the ditch to the local road on the 1840 tithe map and the earthwork on the 1946 aerial photograph (Figure 2) it is likely that this was a roadside ditch to the south of the local road. The fill of the ditch contained large amounts of re-deposited natural clay, which seems to suggest that it was backfilled with a potential roadside embankment, levelled when the field was returned to agricultural use post 1946.
- 3.2 The evaluation also identified three shallow undated ditches within the south-west corner of the site. Two of these ditches were slightly curved and may form part of a single, continuous ditch. The function of these ditches is unknown. Their alignment is different to that of the post-medieval field system, but similar to that of the Roman road to the immediate west of the site. However, no Roman artefacts were identified anywhere within the trial trenches to suggest that the ditches represent contemporary activity.

### **4. CA PROJECT TEAM**

Fieldwork was undertaken by Sian Reynish, assisted by Jonathan Orellana, Alex Thomson and Christopher Watts. The report was written by Sian Reynish. The illustrations were prepared by Jonathan Bennett and the finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The archive has been compiled by Sian Reynish, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Simon Cox.

### **5. REFERENCES**

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2011 *Geology of Britain Viewer*  
[http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology\\_viewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html) Accessed 28  
October 2013

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013a *Oak Court, The Batch, Bishop Sutton: Written Scheme of  
Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013b *Oak Court, The Batch, Bishop Sutton: Archaeological  
Desk-Based Assessment*. CA Report No. **1234**



## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

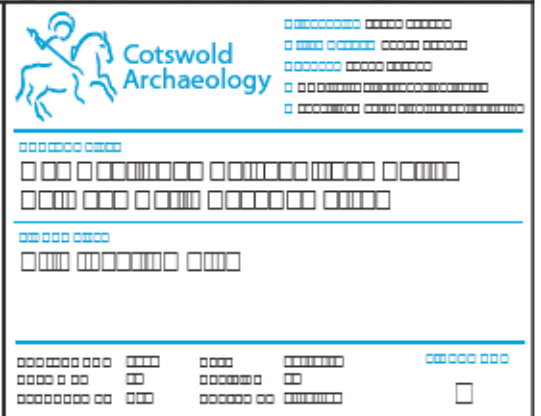
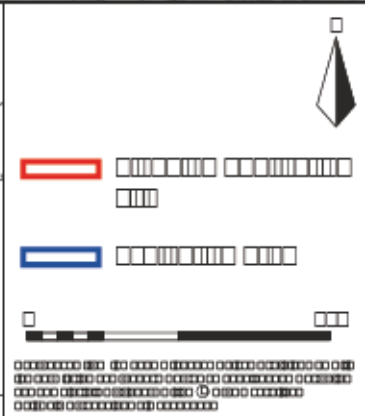
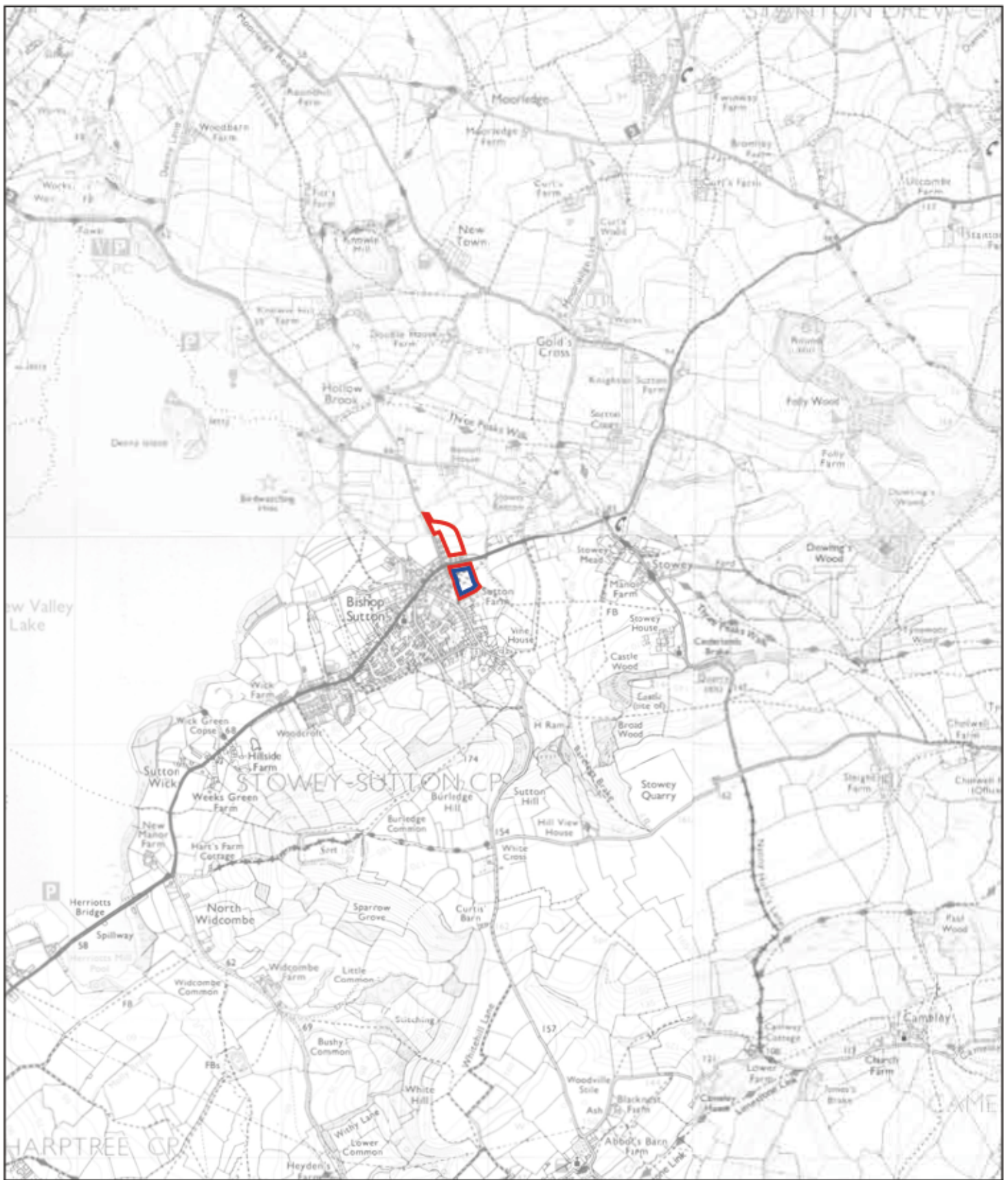
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100	Layer	Topsoil			0.23	
101	Layer	Subsoil			0.19	
102	Layer	Natural soil/strata				
200	Layer	Topsoil			0.13	
201	Layer	Subsoil			0.3	
202	Layer	Colluvium/weathered natural			0.22	
203	Layer	Natural soil/strata				
204	Cut	Cut, trackway	>1.7	6.1	1.12	
205	Fill	Sole f/o ditch 204	>1.7	6.1	1.12	
300	Layer	Topsoil			0.23	
301	Layer	Subsoil			0.25	
302	Layer	Natural soil/strata				
303	Cut	Cut, trackway	>1.7	8.05	1.1	
304	Fill	Sole f/o ditch 303	>1.7	8.05	1.1	
400	Layer	Topsoil			0.35	
401	Layer	Subsoil			0.4	
402	Layer	Colluvim/weathered natural			0.23	
403	Layer	Natural soil/strata				
500	Layer	Topsoil			0.25	
501	Layer	Subsoil			0.3	
502	Layer	Colluvium/weathered natural			0.18	
503	Layer	Natural soil/strata				
600	Layer	Topsoil			0.25	
601	Layer	Subsoil			0.25	
602	Layer	Colluvium/weathered natural			0.1	
603	Layer	Natural soil/strata				
604	Cut	Ditch (cut)	>2	0.79	0.15	
605	Fill	Sole f/o ditch 604	>2	0.79	0.15	
606	Cut	Ditch (cut)	>3.6	1.01	0.3	
607	Fill	Sole f/o ditch 606	>3.6	1.01	0.3	
608	Cut	Ditch (cut)	>4.12	0.9	0.26	
609	Fill	Sole f/o ditch 608	>4.12	0.9	0.26	

## APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

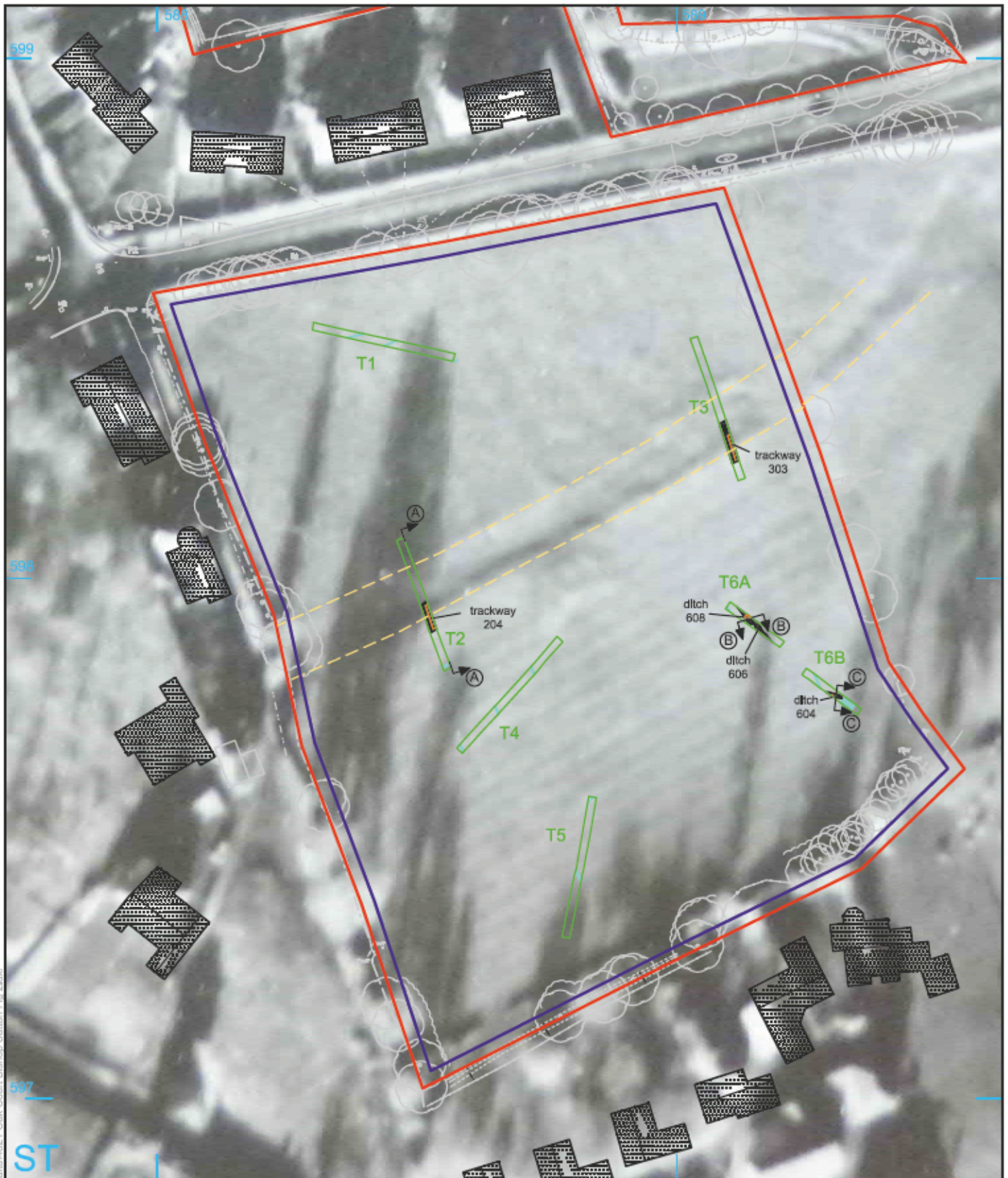
Context	Description	Count	Weight(g)	Spot-date
205	Post-medieval pottery: transfer-printed refined whiteware; flowerpot	3	54	Post-medieval/ modern
	Ceramic building material: tile	1	25	
304	Ceramic building material: tile	1	3	Post-medieval

## APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Oak Court, The Batch, Bishop Sutton, Bath and North East Somerset	
Short description (250 words maximum)	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in December 2013 at land at Oak Court, The Batch, Bishop Sutton, Bath and North East Somerset. Six trenches were excavated.</p> <p>The evaluation revealed a north-east/south-west ditch across the centre of the field. It is likely this ditch relates to a local road that followed the same alignment and was first depicted in the 1840 tithe map and later seen as an earthwork on a 1946 aerial photograph. The alignment of the ditch compared to the tithe map and the aerial photograph seems to suggest the ditch may define the southern edge of the former road. A further three shallow ditches were identified within the south-west corner of the site, all of which were undated. Two of these ditches were slightly curved and form a single, continuous ditch.</p>	
Project dates	16-18 December 2013	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Desk-Based Assessment, Cotswold Archaeology 2013	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Oak Court, The Batch, Bishop Sutton, Bath and North East Somerset	
Study area	1.5 ha	
Site co-ordinates	ST 5887 5981	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Bath and North East Somerset	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Simon Cox	
Project Supervisor	Sian Reynish	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	Trackway	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Not retained	Pottery
Paper	Roman Baths Museum	Trench sheets, context sheets, sections and digital photograph register
Digital	Roman Baths Museum	Digital plan and digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013 <i>Oak Court, The Batch, Bishop Sutton: Archaeological Evaluation</i>. CA typescript report 13720</p>		







Extract from a 1946 RAF aerial photograph (Copyright English Heritage ©)

- ▬ planning application site
- ▬ evaluation area
- ▬ evaluation trench
- ▬ archaeological feature
- ▬ modern
- - - former road



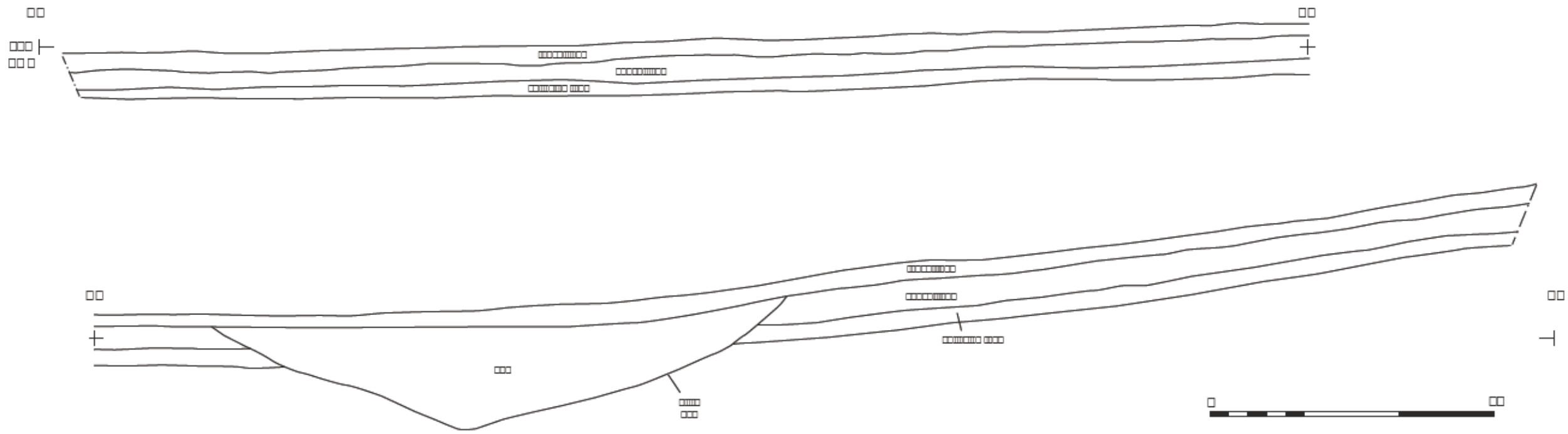
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 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk  
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE  
**Oak Court, The Batch, Bishop Sutton Bath and North East Somerset**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Trench location plan, showing archaeological features and aerial photograph**

PROJECT NO. 4621	DATE 06-01-214	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY JB	REVISION 00	<b>2</b>
APPROVED BY ATB	SCALE@A4 1:1000	

Trench 2, section AA



Trench 2, south-west facing section of ditch 204 (scales 1m)

**Cotswold Archaeology**

Legend:

- Horizontal lines: Topsoil
- Diagonal lines: Subsoil
- Vertical lines: Clay
- Stippled: Sand
- Small squares: Artifacts

Scale: 1m

