

**Land at Lower Severalls Farm
Crewkerne
Somerset**

Archaeological Excavation

for

Sigma Solar Ltd

Planning Application No: 14/03128/FUL

SHES Accession Number: TTNCM 90/2014

SHER number: 32631

CA Project: 770141
CA Report No.: 14559

November 2014

Land at Lower Severalls Farm Crewkerne Somerset

Archaeological Excavation

CA Project: 770141
CA Report: 14559

prepared by	Oliver Good, Project Leader
date	24 November 2014
checked by	Damian De Rosa, Project Manager
date	5 December 2014
approved by	Richard Greatorex Principal Fieldwork Manager
signed	
date	8 December 2014
issue	01

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Cirencester Building 11 Kemble Enterprise Park Kemble, Cirencester Gloucestershire, GL7 6BQ t. 01285 771022 f. 01285 771033	Milton Keynes 41 Burners Lane South Kiln Farm Milton Keynes MK11 3HA t. 01908 564660	Andover Stanley House Walworth Road Andover, Hampshire SP10 5LH t. 01264 347630
e. enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk		

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Land at Lower Severalls Farm
Location:	Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne Somerset
NGR:	SP 345520,111515
Type:	Excavation
Date:	10 th to the 17 th of November 2014
Planning Reference:	14/03128/FUL
Location of Archive:	Taunton Museum
Accession Number:	TTNCM 90/2014
SHER Number:	32631
Site Code:	LOWS 14

An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in November 2014 at Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne. The area of excavation measured 30m x 30m square and was targeted on archaeology recorded during a trial trench evaluation carried out in September 2014 at the site

The excavation revealed four gullies and one ditch, several of which were identified during the evaluation. The evaluation had also identified a spread of dark material thought to be part of a possible Holloway. The excavation was able to show that this was not archaeological and is possibly a result of modern farming activity within the area. Two of the gullies were running parallel to each other and probably form part of a field boundary or delineate a former track way. The other identified gullies and ditches are likely to be part of a former field system. Although undated it is possible that the features date to the later prehistoric period and at the very most based on their alignments clearly pre-date the post-medieval/modern field boundaries of the present day.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In November 2014 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological excavation for Sigma Solar Ltd at Lower Severalls Farm (centred on NGR: 345520, 111515; Fig. 1). Planning Permission 14/03128/FUL has been granted by South Somerset District Council, the local planning authority (LPA) for the Installation of a 10.80MWp solar farm and associated infrastructure.

1.2 Planning Condition 17 of the Planning Permission required that:

No development hereby approved shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure appropriate investigation of archaeological remains in accordance with advice in the NPPF

1.3 In order to inform the archaeological potential of the site a desk-based assessment (CA 2014a), geophysical survey (WYAS 2014) and trial trench evaluation (CA 2014b) were undertaken. Following completion of the evaluation, which revealed archaeological remains on the site, it was recommended by Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer (SHEO) at Somerset County Council, the archaeological advisor to the LPA that a programme of archaeological excavation secured by condition (17) should be undertaken.

1.4 Following consultation with the SHEO it was agreed that an excavation area measuring 30m x 30m centred on archaeological remains revealed in Trench 6 should be undertaken.

1.5 The excavation was undertaken to assess the overall presence, survival and potential of archaeological remains and to further characterise and identify the nature and extent of the archaeological features recorded within Trench 6 of the evaluation.

- 1.6 The excavation was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) (CA 2014c) produced by Cotswold Archaeology and approved by Steven Membery. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation* (IfA 2009), and the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006), Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook (SCC 2011) and other relevant standards or guidance contained within Appendix B.

The site

- 1.7 The proposed development site (Figure 1) is approximately 30ha and is located within a rural location, c. 1km north-east of the town of Crewkerne, c. 1km south of the village of Merriott, and over 1km north-west of the village of Haselbury Plucknett.
- 1.8 The area of archaeological excavation (Figures 2 and 3) measured 30m x 30m (900m²) and was targeted on the archaeological features revealed with in evaluation Trench 6.
- 1.9 The site is relatively flat rising towards the west. Within the site it rises from c.38m AOD to 65m AOD, the highest point is within the northern part of the site. To the west of the site the topography continues to rise to 95m AOD, forming a hill between Crewkerne and the site. To the east of the site there is a small river valley, along the River Parrett, before the topography rises once again to the east of the river valley. The excavation area lies at a height of c.38.50m aOD.
- 1.10 The site is located within an area of alternating bands of geology, on a north-east, south-west orientation. These consist of bands of mudstone, Fuller's Earth Formation, and limestone, Inferior Oolite Group. These are sedimentary bedrocks which formed during the Jurassic Period when the local environment was dominated by shallow seas (BSG).
- 1.11 There are no superficial deposits recorded across the site or across the study area. The majority of the site is covered by lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage.

- 1.12 Within Trench 6 the natural geology was seen to lie at a height of c.38.20m aOD and was overlain by subsoil up to 0.10m thick. This was overlain by the topsoil which was c.0.20m thick.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Desk-based assessment

- 2.1 A desk-based assessment (DBA) was undertaken (CA 2014a), which set out the archaeological and historical background of the site. A very brief summary of this is presented below and the DBA should be consulted for more specific detail:
- 2.2 Traditions of single burial (inhumation and cremation) are intimately linked to the widespread appearance of round barrows and round cairns at the beginning of the Bronze Age. They are mainly concentrated on Mendip, Exmoor and the Quantock Hills, in addition to a small group from the Blackdown Hills. No such funerary monuments have been previously recorded within the site or the study area. Residual worked flint of Neolithic and Bronze Age date, indicative of early prehistoric activity in the area, was recovered during evaluations carried out c. 730m south-west of the site.
- 2.3 A late Iron Age settlement is recorded c. 730m southwest of the site. Geophysical survey followed by trial trench evaluation revealed evidence of settlement activity from the late Iron Age and early Roman period. The site is located within an area recorded by the Somerset Historic Landscape Characterisation project as anciently enclosed land, modified in the 17th to 19th century. It is therefore likely that the site has been utilised as agricultural land since at least the Iron Age.
- 2.4 Crewkerne, which is located c. 1km south-west of the site, originated in at least the early-medieval period, as its first historical reference dates to the 9th century. It was already a place of some significance at this time, as a royal estate with one of the 'Ministers' that were mother churches of extensive surrounding regions. The estates covered the area of the site, with its boundaries clearly marked by the river Axe in the south and the river Parrett on the east, and less obviously by streams in the north, one of which virtually touched the village of Merriott.

- 2.5 In the later 16th century the fields around Crewkerne were known as north, south, and east, evidence of some reorganisation to the medieval fields surrounding the town. The east field was the largest of the three, and the Severalls estate, later Lower Severalls (where the site is located), was created within the east field area in the 17th century.
- 2.6 The sites location within the area of Crewkerne's east field, and the fact that the post-medieval field name suggests the presence of fields within this area during the medieval period, suggests that the site has been utilised as agricultural land since at least the medieval period, and throughout the post-medieval period. Lower Severalls Farm was built in the 18th century, and traces of avenues suggest that this house was a superior residence. A map of Lower Severalls Farm dating to 1834, demonstrates the importance of this farm during the post-medieval period, and that the majority of the site was utilised as pastoral land at this time.

Geophysical Survey

- 2.7 A geophysical survey of the site was undertaken (PCG 2014 Figure 2) and indicated a number of anomalies of possible or probable archaeological origin. The survey has indicated anomalies of former field boundaries and possible enclosures likely to predate the medieval period. A number of circular anomalies were evident in particular a strong negative circular anomaly.

Archaeological Evaluation

- 2.8 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology (CA 2014b) in September 2014 comprising the excavation of 24 no trial trenches targeted on the results of the geophysical survey (Figure 2).
- 2.9 The evaluation was able to identify a number of the geophysical anomalies as ditches, which were likely to be part of a former pre-historic field system. A very small amount of worked flint and a single sherd of prehistoric pottery was recovered from them. A number of the targeted trenches were also unable to identify the indicated anomalies and were archaeologically sterile or the anomalies were found to be geological in origin. In Trench 6 five undated archaeological features were recorded comprising of four ditches, a possible Holloway and a dark spread deposit below the subsoil. One of these features had been indicated in the geophysical survey, but other features recorded within the trench had not been indicated as anomalies and it is possible that they were being masked by the spread deposit.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES

3.1 The main objectives and aims of the archaeological mitigation were to:

- record the nature of the main stratigraphic units encountered
- assess the overall presence, survival and potential of structural and industrial remains
- assess the overall presence, survival and potential of archaeological features that may provide an indication of previous agricultural practises pre-dating the post-medieval and historically documented field system and boundaries.
- assess the overall presence, survival, condition, and potential of artefactual and ecofactual remains
- further characterise and identify the nature and extent of the archaeological features recorded within Trench 6

4. METHODOLOGY

Fieldwork

- 4.1 The archaeological excavation was undertaken within the 30m x 30m area shown on the attached plans (Figures 2 and 3). The Excavation area was set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using a Leica 1200 series SmartRover GPS, and scanned for live services by trained staff using CAT and Genny equipment in accordance with the Cotswold Archaeology *Safe System of Work for avoiding underground services*. The final excavation area was surveyed using a Leica 1200 series SmartRover GPS.
- 4.2 Initially works comprised of the mechanical removal of non-archaeologically significant soils, under constant archaeological supervision, using a toothless ditching bucket. Hand-cleaning of the stripped surface, to better define any identified archaeological deposits/features, was undertaken where necessary. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision and ceased when the first archaeological horizon or natural substrate was revealed (whichever was encountered first). All archaeological features were recorded in plan using a Leica 1200 series SmartRover GPS.
- 4.3 All archaeological features revealed were planned and recorded in accordance with Technical Manual 1 *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (CA 2013). Each context was

recorded on a pro-forma context sheet by written and measured description; principal deposits were recorded by drawn plans (scale 1:20 or 1:50, or electronically using Leica 1200 series GPS or Total Station (TST) as appropriate) and drawn sections (scale 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate). Where detailed feature planning is undertaken using GPS/TST this will be carried out in accordance with Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual* (CA 2012). Photographs (digital colour) were taken as appropriate. All finds and samples were bagged separately and related to the context record. All artefacts were recovered and retained for processing and analysis in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (CA 1995).

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-4)

Soil Profile

- 5.1 The soil profile revealed within the excavation area identified the natural geology comprising mid brown to mid orange brown clay (Mudstone) at a depth of 0.53m below ground level. This was overlain by a subsoil c.0.38m in depth comprising light orange brown silty clay. The subsoil was overlain by c.0.20m of topsoil and turf.

Archaeological features

- 5.2 The excavation revealed the presence of four gullies and one ditch. Two of the gullies (**6015** and **6022**) ran parallel to each other in the western part of the Site. Gully **6015** was located in the south-western corner of the site on a north-south alignment, it contained dark to mid greyish brown silty clay **6016**, which did not produce any artefacts and it measured 19.2m in length, 0.45m in width and 0.14m in depth (Section AA). Gully **6022** lay parallel to gully **6015** located 2.6m to the east, it ran for 30.19m on a north-south alignment and measured 0.57m in width and 0.27m in depth (Section BB). It did not produce any artefacts from its mid brown with yellow mottling and silty clay fill (**6006**). Gully **6022** was previously identified within Trench 6 during the evaluation stage as gully **606**, which also failed to identify any dateable material (CA 2014c).
- 5.3 Gully **6024** terminated within the site and was located just to the east of gully **6022**. It ran for 4.7m north before being truncated by gully **6022** and measured 0.21m wide and 0.22m deep. No dateable material was recovered from Gully **6024**, which was identified and recorded as gully **603** during the evaluation (CA 2014c).

- 5.4 In the south western corner of the site gully **6013** ran out of the western trench edge on a southwest-northeast alignment, it was truncated by gullies **6015** and **6022** and Gully **6013** measured 8.9m in length, 0.80 in width and 0.07m in depth, and was filled by a mid to light greyish brown silty clay **6014**. Gully **6013** may be a continuation of gully/ditch 613 previously recorded during the evaluation (CA 2013c). However, gully 6013 was so shallow and ephemeral that the previously recorded gully 613 could not be reidentified and there was clearly no continuation of this feature to the north east.
- 5.4 In the south-eastern corner of the site, ditch **6019/6023** ran out of the southern trench edge on a broad north-south alignment. In plan the ditch was slightly irregular but approximately linear in plan and ran for 9.7m before terminating. It measured 0.96m in width and 0.39m in maximum depth (Section CC), but was very shallow at its terminal north end. No dateable artefacts or cultural material was recovered from its excavated fills **6020** and **6021**. The alignment of ditch **6019/6023** lies at a right angle to gully **6013** and the two features may be associated although no direct stratigraphic or dateable relationship can be established between them.
- 5.5 A spread of dark organic material (**614**) had previously been identified in the evaluation as a possible Holloway. This could not however be established during the course of the excavation. It is likely that the spread of material is a more recent event. The present farmer/landowner related that a former employee on the land had within the last fifty years put down large quantities of brushwood within the area of the excavation in regard of drainage works.

6. FINDS AND PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL

- 6.1 No artefacts were identified or recovered during the course of the archaeological work.
- 6.2 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the course of the archaeological work.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The excavation identified several of the features found during the evaluation and was able to confirm that the dark spread of material thought to be a possible Holloway was in fact a layer of material likely to be associated with modern farming activity. The excavation found two parallel gullies running across the western part of site which appeared to form part of a field boundary, trackway or possibly a hedgerow. Although they are undated it seems likely that they may be related to the field systems found across site in the evaluation (CA, 2014). The remaining features were undated but are also possibly part of field systems pre-dating the modern day field boundaries likely to date to the pre historic period. No further significant archaeology was recorded during the course of the excavation.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 8.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Project Leader Oliver Good, assisted by Jeremy Clutterbuck and Steve Bush. The report was written by Oliver Good. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Damian De Rosa.

9. ARCHIVE

- 9.1 The fully indexed and ordered archive and artefacts including the paper and digital archive and data from the excavation and evaluation will be prepared for deposition with the Taunton Castle Museum under the accession code 90/2014. A summary of information from the project will also be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain. A summary of the results will be prepared as a note for inclusion in the yearly round up of archaeological work undertaken within the journal *The Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*.

10. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2011 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html

Cotswold Archaeology 2014a: *Land at Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne, Somerset Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. CA Report No. 14215. CA Project No. 770094

Cotswold Archaeology 2014b: *Land at Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne, Somerset Archaeological Evaluation*. CA Report No. 14416. CA Project No. 770124

Cotswold Archaeology 2014c: *Land at Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne, Somerset Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Excavation*. CA Project No. 770141

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English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects* (second edition). London: English Heritage

English Heritage 2006. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*. London: English Heritage

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Somerset County Council, 2011. *Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook*

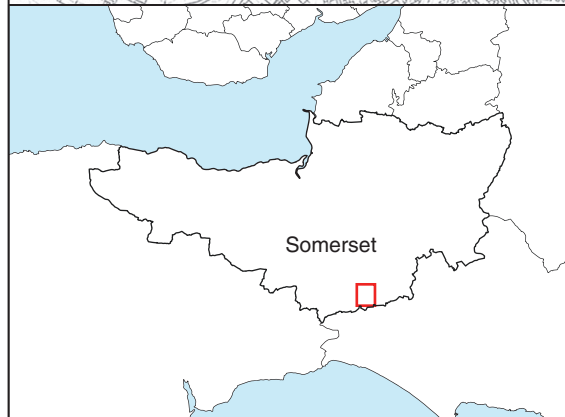
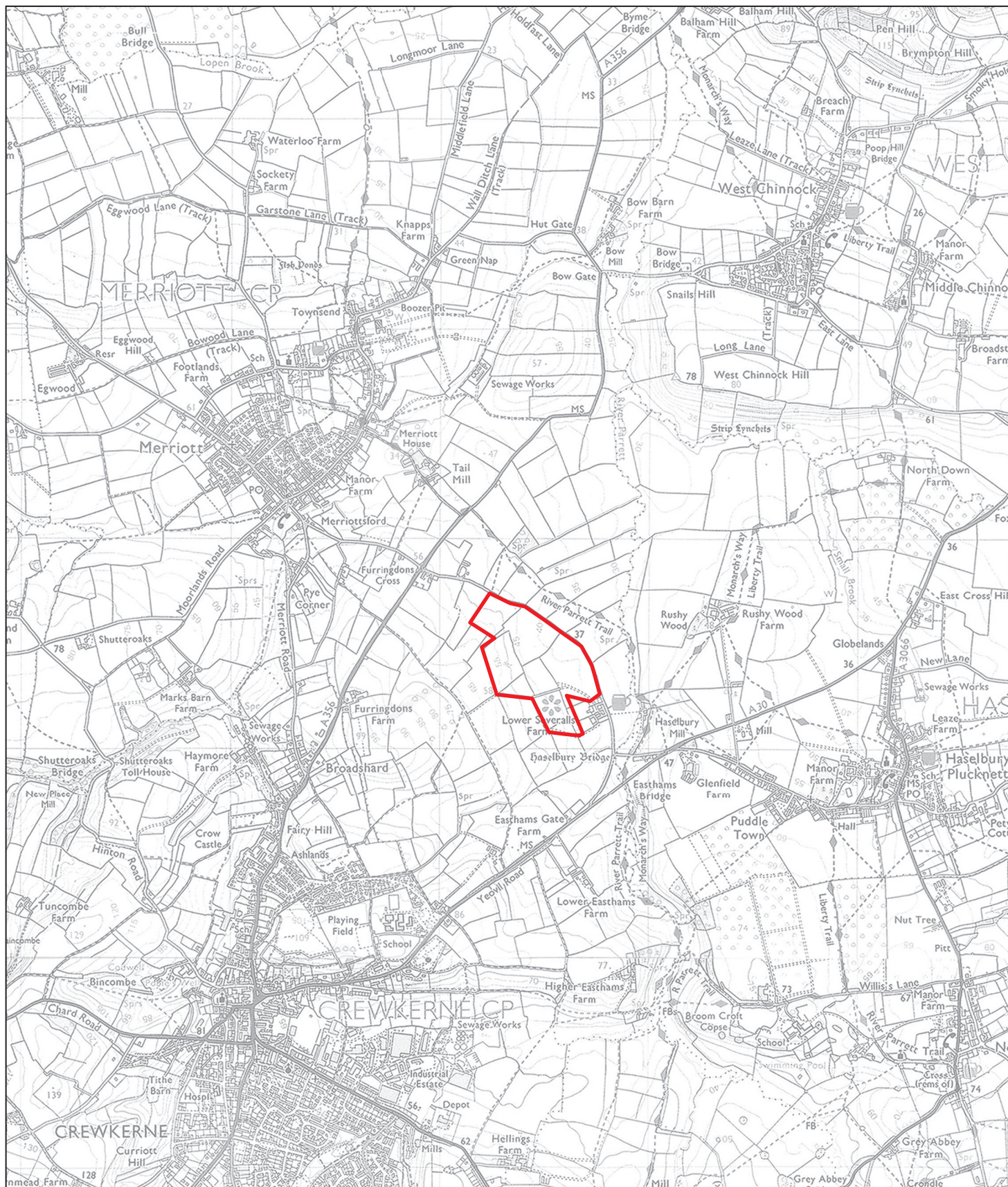
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Type	Fill of	Context Interpretation	Context Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth / thickness (m)	Spot-date
6000	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown clay silt	30	30	0.25	
6001	Layer		Subsoil	Light orangey brown silty clay	30	30	0.38	
6002	Layer		Natural	Mid brown clay to mid orangey brown clay	30	30	>0.38	
6003	Cut		Gully	Cut of steep concave shaped gully	0.6	0.4	0.17	
6004	Fill	6003	Secondary Fill	Mid to light brown with bluish grey patches and yellow mottling silty clay	0.6	0.4	0.17	
6005	Cut		Gully	Cut of steep concave shaped gully	1	0.5	0.23	
6006	Fill	6005	Secondary Fill	Mid brown with yellow mottling and silty clay	1	0.5	0.23	
6007	Cut		Gully	Steep concave shaped gully	1	0.57	0.27	
6008	Fill	6007	Secondary Fill	Mid brown with yellow mottling silty clay	1	0.57	0.27	
6009	Cut		Gully	Steep concave shaped gully	1	0.25	0.07	
6010	Fill	6010	Secondary Fill	Mid brown with yellow mottling silty clay	1	0.25	0.07	
6011	Cut		Gully	Steep concave shaped gully (Group 6022)	0.76	0.28	0.3	
6012	Fill	6011	Secondary Fill	Mid to dark greyish brown silty clay	0.76	0.28	0.3	
6013	Cut		Gully	Gentle concave shaped gully	0.46	0.25	0.07	
6014	Fill	6014	Secondary Fill	Mid to light greyish brown silty clay	0.46	0.25	0.07	
6015	Cut		Gully	Moderately concave shaped gully	19.2	0.45	0.14	
6016	Fill	6015	Secondary Fill	Dark to mid greyish brown silty clay	1	0.45	0.14	
6017	Cut		Ditch Terminus	Moderately concave shaped gully	1	0.3	0.16	
6018	Fill	6017	Secondary Fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay	1	0.3	0.16	
6019	Cut		Ditch	Steep to moderately convex shaped gully	1	0.96	0.39	
6020	Fill	6019	Secondary Fill	Dark greyish brown silty clay	1	0.8	0.22	
6021	Fill	6019	Primary Fill	Light greyish brown silty clay	1	0.47	0.16	
6022	Set		Gully	Gully which includes [6005] [6007] [6011]	30.19	0.57	0.27	
6023	Set		Ditch	Ditch which includes [6017] [6019]	9.7	0.96	0.39	
6024	Set		Gully	Gully which includes [6003] [6009]	4.7	0.21	0.22	

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land at Lower Severalls Farm	
Short description (250 words maximum)	<p>An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in November 2014 at Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne. The area of excavation measured 30m x 30m square and was targeted on archaeology recorded during a trial trench evaluation carried out in September 2014 at the site</p> <p>The excavation revealed four gullies and one ditch, several of which were identified during the evaluation. The evaluation had also identified a spread of dark material thought to be part of a possible Holloway. The excavation was able to show that this was not archaeological and is possibly a result of modern farming activity within the area. Two of the gullies were running parallel to each other and probably form part of a field boundary or delineate a former track way. The other identified gullies and ditches are likely to be part of a former field system. Although undated it is possible that the features date to the later prehistoric period and at the very most based on their alignments clearly pre-date the post-medieval/modern field boundaries of the present day.</p>	
Project dates	10 th to the 17 th of November 2014	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Excavation	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	<p>Cotswold Archaeology 2014: <i>Land at Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne, Somerset Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment</i>. CA Report No. 14215. CA Project No. 770094</p> <p>Cotswold Archaeology 2014: Land at Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne, Somerset Archaeological Evaluation. CA Report No. 14416. CA Project No. 770124</p> <p>Cotswold Archaeology 2014: Land at Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne, Somerset Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Excavation. CA Project No. 770141</p>	
Future work	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne	
Study area (M ² /ha)	900m ²	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	345520, 111515	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator		
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Damian De Rosa	
Project Supervisor	Oliver Good	
MONUMENT TYPE	Ditch – Undated Gully – Undated	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)

Physical	Taunton Castle Museum TTNCM 90/2014	None
Paper	Taunton Castle Museum TTNCM 90/2014	Context sheets, plans, notes, WSI
Digital	Taunton Castle Museum TTNCM 90/2014 and Somerset HER 32631	Database, digital photos, survey data Report
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2014: Land at Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne, Somerset Archaeological Excavation. CA Report No. 14559. CA Project No. 770141		



0 1km

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**Cotswold
Archaeology**

Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 218320
Andover 01264 347630
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

**Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne
Somerset**

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

PROJECT NO. 770141 DATE 27/11/2014
DRAWN BY LJH REVISION 01
APPROVED BY JB SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1



- site
- evaluation trench
- exclusion zone
- excavation area

Geophysical survey results
(PCG 2014)

- potential ditch
- recent field boundary
(historic maps)
- suggested recent boundary
- service
- known marl pit
- potential pit

0 150m

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enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

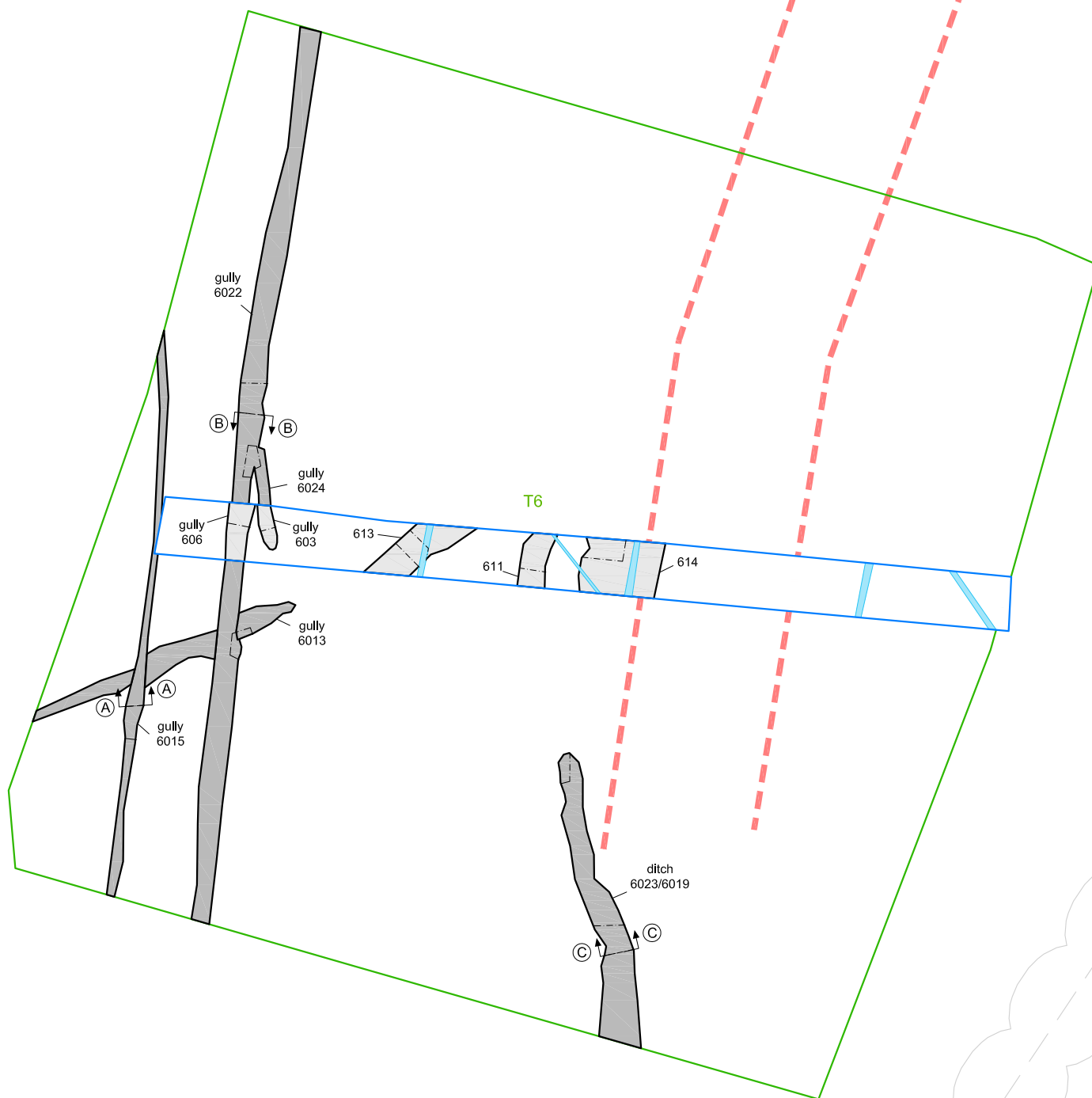
PROJECT TITLE

Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne
Somerset

FIGURE TITLE

Site plan with excavation area,
evaluation trenches and geophysical
interpretation

PROJECT NO.	770141	DATE	27-11-2014	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY	LJH	REVISION	01	2
APPROVED BY	JB	SCALE@A3	1:3000	



- site
- excavation area
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature (evaluation)
- archaeological feature (excavation)
- modern

Geophysical survey results (PCG 2014)

- potential ditch
- recent field boundary (historic maps)
- service
- potential pit



0 10m



Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 218320
Andover 01264 347630
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE

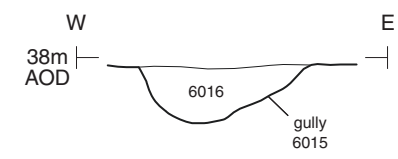
Plan of excavated area with evaluation trench 6 and geophysical interpretation

PROJECT NO. 770141 DATE 02-12-2014
DRAWN BY LJH REVISION 01
APPROVED BY JB SCALE@A4 1:200

FIGURE NO.

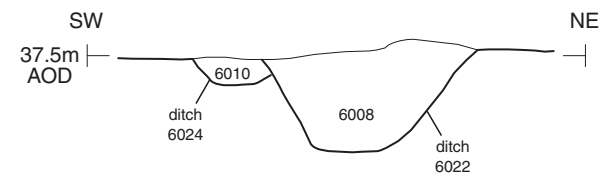
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Section AA



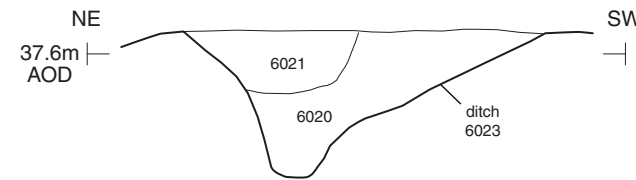
Gully 6015, looking north (scale 0.2m)

Section BB



Ditches 6024 and 6022, looking south (scale 1m)

Section CC



Ditch 6023, looking south-east (scale 1m)





Cotswold Archaeology
Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Andover 01264 347630
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
Lower Severalls Farm, Crewkerne,
Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
Sections and photographs