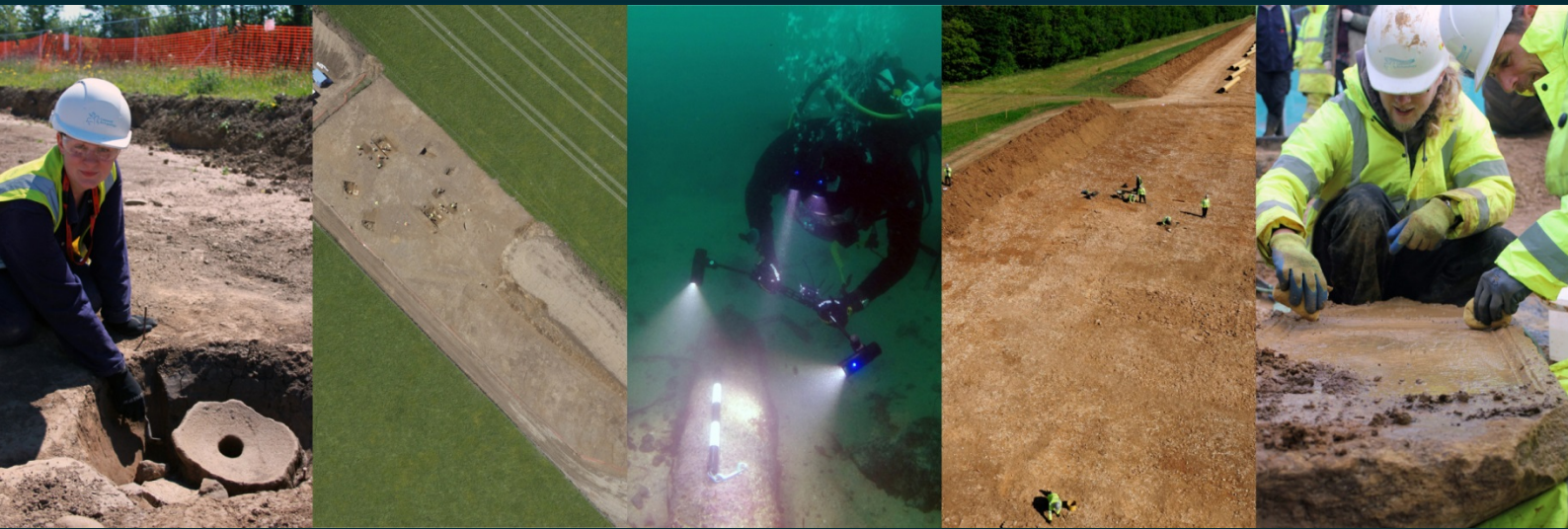


Northfield Farm
Somerton
Somerset



for
Bovis Homes

CA Project: 880036
CA Report: 15673

September 2015



Northfield Farm
Somerton
Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 880036
CA Report: 15673



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Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	25 September 2015	Jonathan Orellana		Internal review		Laurent Coleman

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Northfield Farm
Location:	Somerton, Somerset
NGR:	ST 4805 2880
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	2-3 September 2015
Planning Reference:	South Somerset District Council 10/03704/FUL
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Somerset County Museum
Site Code:	NOR 15

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2015 at Northfield Farm, Somerton, Somerset. A total of seven trenches were excavated.

No archaeological remains were identified in any of the excavated trenches. A modern field drain was noted in the northern part of the site.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Bovis Homes at Northfield Farm, Somerton, Somerset (centred on NGR: ST 4805 2880; Fig. 1). Planning permission for residential development of the site was granted by South Somerset District Council (SSDC) (ref: SSDC 10/03704/FUL), conditional on a programme of archaeological work.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2015) and approved by Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer, South West Heritage Trust (archaeological advisor to SSDC). The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), 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 area is approximately 4ha, and comprises farm buildings and fields under pasture. It is located at the north-western edge of the town of Somerton, and the topography of the site is generally level (45m AOD).
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Blue Lias and Charmouth Mudstone formation of the Jurassic and Triassic Periods (BGS 2015). Limestone bedrock with bands/patches of clay was encountered in all trenches.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site has been subject to archaeological desk-based assessment (CA 2010) and geophysical survey (PCG 2011). The following is a summary of these investigations.
- 2.2 No prehistoric activity is recorded within the site, and little evidence of prehistoric activity has been identified in Somerton. Undated cropmarks at Brockle Hill, c. 400m to the north-east of the site, and Little Moors Furlong, c. 500 to the south-west, are potentially prehistoric, but this remains unproven (CA 2010).

- 2.3 The site lies in the hinterland of the Roman town of Ilchester, an area of the county considered to have been densely occupied in the Roman period. Three sites and two findspots of Roman date are recorded in the vicinity of the site, although there is no evidence of Roman activity within the site itself (CA 2010).
- 2.4 A Roman villa is recorded at Bancombe Hill, c. 700m to the north-west of the site. Coalt Hoare's 1831 illustration of Samuel Hesell's notes on the Pitney Pavement (discovered in 1828) marks a villa in this location. The site was excavated by R. H. Leech in 1968 following the discovery of dressed stone in the ploughsoil. The excavations uncovered building foundations along with Roman pottery and roofing tiles. Casual finds in the vicinity of the villa included loom weights, a weaving comb and a coin of Gordian III. In 1993, geophysical survey confirmed the presence of a probable Roman villa and identified a concentration of associated archaeological features (CA 2010).
- 2.5 A series of small enclosures, identified on aerial photographs, are located c. 600m to the south of the site. Evaluation recovered evidence which dated these features to the Roman period. Burnt daub and domestic rubbish, recovered during the evaluation, may suggest the presence of a settlement in the vicinity. Features included a drystone wall with palisade slot and a Roman burial (CA 2010).
- 2.6 Cropmarks identified as a Roman enclosure, roundhouse and linear features, are located c. 250m to the north of the site. Fieldwalking in this area recovered Roman pottery. Casual finds recorded elsewhere in the vicinity of the site include a bronze coin of Constantine II dated to AD 308-377, c. 400m to the north-east of the site, and a Roman brooch of 2nd-century type, c. 100m to the south of the site (CA 2010).
- 2.7 Visible ruins of a Saxon royal residence at St Cleers, c. 450m to the south of the site, were recorded in the 16th century and St Cleer's farm complex was established by 1336. Evaluation in the area in 1992 recorded a stone wall and floor as well as a number of ditches, pits and post holes associated with 10th to 13th-century pottery. A subsequent watching brief recorded medieval pottery. Evaluation at St Cleer's lodge, adjacent to St Cleers Farm, recovered 13th-century pottery but no associated structures. An area of ridge and furrow earthworks at Little Moors Furlong potentially dates to the medieval period (CA 2010).

- 2.8 A geophysical survey of the site was undertaken by Pre-Construct Geophysics Ltd in February 2011. The survey identified only limited traces of potential archaeological remains, in the form of possible ditches in the central part of the site and a number of potential pits adjacent to the north-east boundary. The survey also recorded residual traces of a recently removed boundary and probable ridge and furrow earthworks (PCG 2011).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation are 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 *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). This information will enable the South Somerset District 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).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 7 trenches in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). All trenches were 1.8m in width; 5 trenches were 30m in length and 2 trenches were 15m in length. 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*.
- 4.2 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*.
- 4.3 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 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*.

- 4.4 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. The site archive will be deposited with Somerset County Museum. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-3)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendix A.
- 5.2 Natural bedrock was typically encountered at a depth of 0.3m below present ground level (bpgl) in all the excavated trenches. This was overlain by 0.15m of subsoil which was in turn sealed by 0.15m of topsoil.
- 5.3 All the trenches were devoid of archaeological features and no artefactual material was recovered from any of the excavated trenches. A modern east/west aligned stone drain was noted cutting through the subsoil at the north-eastern end of Trench 6. The drain did not correlate with any anomaly from the preceding geophysical survey.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the site (see archaeological background above) the evaluation identified no archaeological remains in any of the excavated trenches. The complete absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that structural remains associated with the Roman activity known in the vicinity of the site do not extend to the north-west of the town of Somerton.
- 6.2 The anomalies identified towards the centre of the site by the preceding geophysical survey, which were interpreted as possible ditches, were not found to be archaeological in origin. It is likely that the nature of the natural substrate which

comprised limestone bedrock interspersed with bands of clay may account for a number of the geophysical anomalies.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Jonathan Orellana, assisted by Jerry Austin. The report was written by Jonathan Orellana. The illustrations were prepared by Aleksandra Osinska. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Laurent Coleman.

8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2015 *Geology of Britain Viewer* http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 9 July 2015

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 *Northfield Farm, Somerton, Somerset: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*, CA Report No. **10070**

CA 2015 *Northfield Farm, Somerton, Somerset: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Pre-Construct Geophysics 2011 *Northfield Farm, Somerton, Somerset: Geophysical Survey*



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer	topsoil	dark blackish grey sandy silt	>30	>1.7	0.12	
1	101	Layer	subsoil	dark greyish brown sandy clay	>30	>1.7	0.14	
1	102	Layer	natural substrate	light grey limestone with patches of brown clay	>30	>1.7		
2	2	Layer	topsoil	dark blackish grey sandy silt	>30	>1.7	0.14	
2	2	Layer	subsoil	dark greyish brown sandy clay	>30	>1.7	0.1	
2	2	Layer	natural substrate	light grey limestone with patches of brown clay	>30	>1.7		
3	3	Layer	topsoil	dark blackish grey sandy silt	>15	>1.7	0.12	
3	3	Layer	subsoil	dark greyish brown sandy clay	>15	>1.7	0.15	
3	3	Layer	natural substrate	light grey limestone with patches of brown clay	>15	>1.7		
4	4	Layer	topsoil	dark blackish grey sandy silt	>30	>1.7	0.12	
4	4	Layer	subsoil	dark greyish brown sandy clay	>30	>1.7	0.14	
4	4	Layer	natural substrate	light grey limestone with patches of brown clay	>30	>1.7		
5	5	Layer	topsoil	dark blackish grey sandy silt	>15	>1.7	0.15	
5	5	Layer	subsoil	dark greyish brown sandy clay	>15	>1.7	0.13	
5	5	Layer	natural substrate	light grey limestone with patches of brown clay	>15	>1.7		
6	6	Layer	topsoil	dark blackish grey sandy silt	>30	>1.7	0.18	
6	6	Layer	subsoil	dark greyish brown sandy clay	>30	>1.7	0.15	
6	6	Layer	natural substrate	light grey limestone with patches of brown clay	>30	>1.7		
7	7	Layer	topsoil	dark blackish grey sandy silt	>30	>1.7	0.1	
7	7	Layer	subsoil	dark greyish brown sandy clay	>30	>1.7	0.18	
7	7	Layer	natural substrate	light grey limestone with patches of brown clay	>30	>1.7		

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Northfield Farm, Somerton	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2015 at Northfield Farm, Somerton, Somerset. A total of seven trenches were excavated.</p> <p>No archaeological remains were identified in any of the excavated trenches. A modern field drain was noted in the northern part of the site.</p>	
Project dates	2-3 September 2015	
Project type	Field Evaluation	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	Geophysical survey: Pre-Construct Geophysics 2011	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Northfield Farm, Somerton, Somerset	
Study area (M ² /ha)	4ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	ST 4805 2880	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator		
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Laurent Coleman	
Project Supervisor	Jonathan Orellana	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	
Physical	Somerset County Museum	
Paper	Somerset County Museum	Trench sheets, photo registers etc
Digital	Somerset County Museum	Survey data, digital photos etc
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 <i>Northfield Farm, Somerton, Somerset: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 15673		

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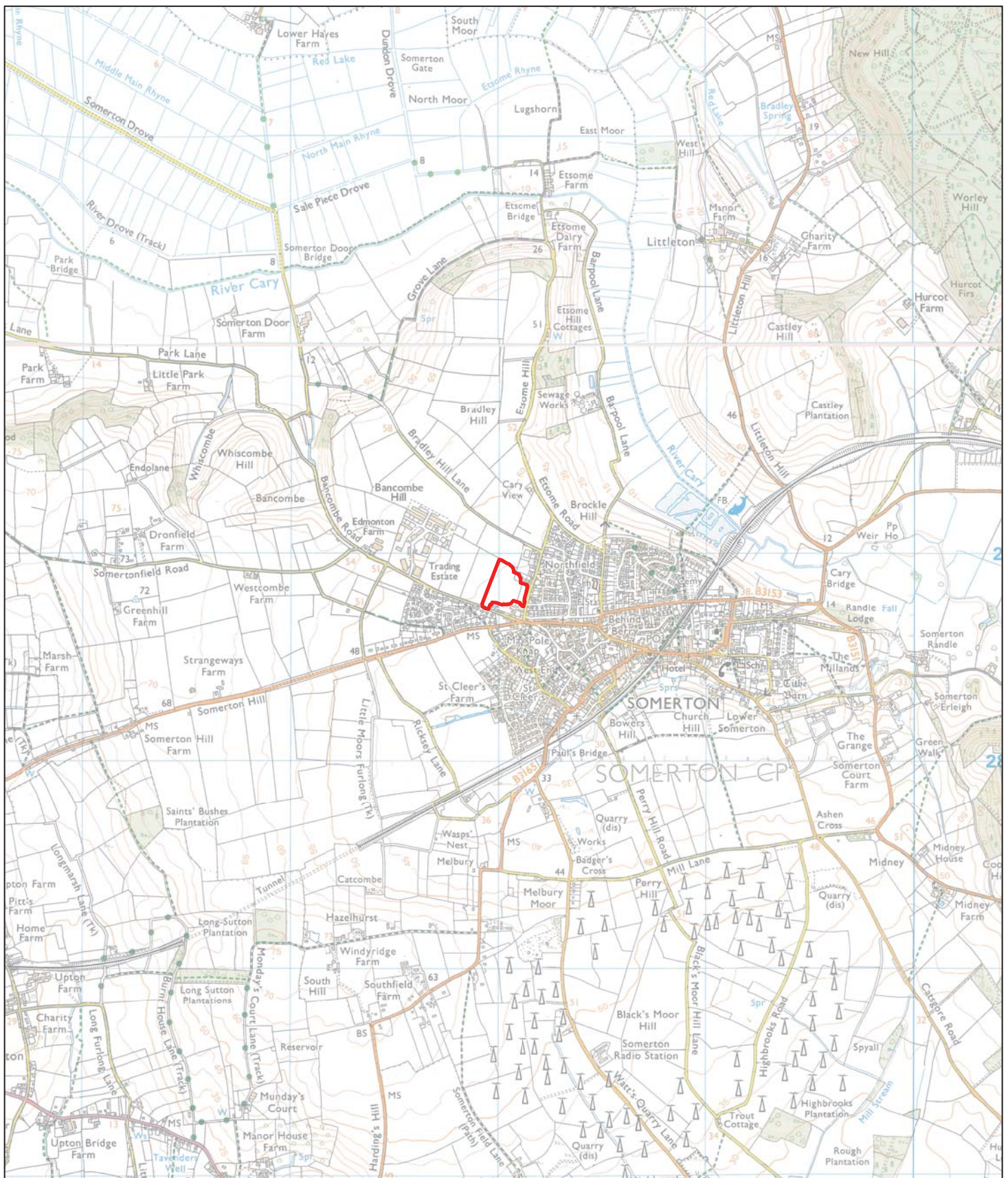
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PROJECT TITLE
 Northfield Farm, Somerton
 Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

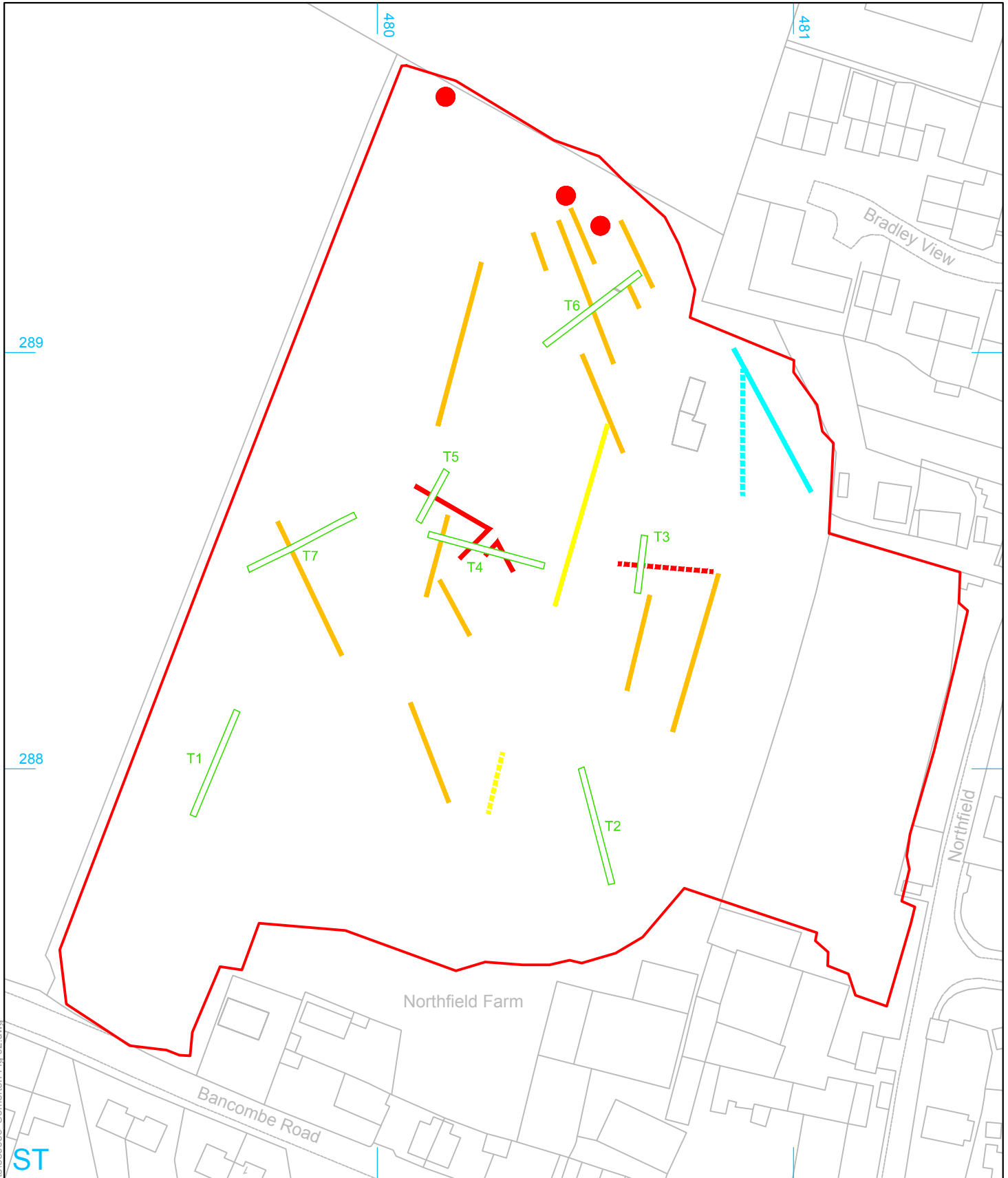
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FIGURE NO.

1



Geophysics Key
(Pre-construct Geophysics 2011)

- site boundary
- evaluation trench
- field drain
- Potential ditch
- Potential pit
- Boundary (1803)
- Potential cultivation (possible ridge and furrow)
- Potential buried service



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PROJECT TITLE
 Northfield Farm, Somerton
 Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
 Trench location plan, showing
 geophysical survey results

DRAWN BY	AO	PROJECT NO.	880036	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	LM/DJB	DATE	11/09/2015	2
APPROVED BY	LECC	SCALE@A3	1:1000	

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3



4

- 3 Trench 3, looking north (1m scales)
- 4 Trench 4, looking north-west (1m scales)



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PROJECT TITLE

Northfield Farm, Somerton
 Somerset

FIGURE TITLE

Trenches 3 & 4: photographs

DRAWN BY	AO	PROJECT NO.	880036	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	LM/DJB	DATE	12/09/2015	3 & 4
APPROVED BY	LECC	SCALE@A4	N/A	