

**Marsh Farm
Hilperton
Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

for
Hilperton PV


CA Project: 5082
CA Report: 15055

February 2015

Marsh Farm
Hilperton
Wiltshire

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CA Project: 5082
CA Report: 15055

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date	2 February 2015
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date	3 February 2015
approved by	Mark Collard, Head of Contracts
signed	
date	3 February 2015
issue	01

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Land at Marsh Farm
Location: Hilperton, Wiltshire
NGR: ST 8680 6079
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 15-18 December 2014, 5-9 January 2015
Planning Reference: 14/00592/FUL
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Wiltshire Heritage Centre
Site Code: HIL14

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during the construction of a solar farm, groundworks being observed within two areas noted as being archaeologically sensitive following earlier archaeological evaluation of the site. A buried soil, ten ditches and a posthole were recorded, some of which contained pottery dating to the Roman period. Most of the features revealed appear likely to relate to a Roman settlement identified during the preceding evaluation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2014 and January 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the request of Hilperton PV at Marsh Farm, Hilperton, Wiltshire, (centred on NGR 8680 6079 ST; Fig. 1). Although no planning conditions were imposed relating to archaeology, Hilperton PV agreed to use “concrete shoes” to mount panels in archaeological sensitive areas and to fund an archaeological watching brief where trench excavation for cables was required within those areas.

1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2014b) and approved by Rachel Foster, Assistant County Archaeologist (ACA), Wiltshire Council. The fieldwork also followed the *standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2009), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager’s Guide* (EH 2006).

The site

1.3 The proposed development area comprises two large fields formerly under arable cultivation. The southern, smaller, field is bounded on three sides by hedgerow boundaries whilst its southern boundary is formed by the Kennet and Avon Canal. The northern, larger field is bounded to the north by the River Avon, to the west by a substantial drainage ditch and to the south and east by existing field boundaries. (Fig.1). The site lies at approximately 35m AOD, is generally flat, and covers approximately 22.7ha of agricultural land.

1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Kellaways Formation with mudstone and sand of the Jurassic Era (BGS 2015). The superficial deposits are mapped as River Terrace deposits, sand and gravel, of the Quaternary Period.

Archaeological background

- 1.5 The site has been the subject of a desk-based Assessment (DBA; CA 2013) a geophysical (AOC 2014) and an archaeological evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology (CA 2014a), the results of which are summarised below.

Prehistoric

- 1.6 Residual worked Mesolithic flints, found during excavation at Blacklands in Staverton, approximately 1km to the south-west of the site, and Mesolithic and Neolithic worked flints found during fieldwalking for the Staverton Embankment Rising Main Diversion suggest at least a low level of Mesolithic background activity in the local landscape. No other Neolithic activity is noted within the local area.
- 1.7 The cropmark of a probable ring-ditch has been recorded from an aerial photograph on the hill beside Knoll Farm, approximately 700m to the south-east of the site. A further cropmark, identified 200m to the east of this as a low mound on a lidar survey, could also represent a barrow mound denuded by ploughing. Field name evidence suggests a mound possibly dating from the Bronze Age may have once existed in the northern field. Pottery broadly dated from the Early Bronze Age to Early Iron Age was also identified from Trench 4 of the evaluation (CA 2014a)

Roman

- 1.8 An intensification of the Iron Age settlement was recorded at Blacklands in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. This took the form of ditched plots with roundhouses constructed in the corner of the plots with the finds assemblage suggesting typical domestic activity and large amounts of locally made pottery, loom weights and evidence for small-scale ironworking. An archaeological watching brief and an archaeological evaluation undertaken adjacent to the Blacklands site demonstrated the continuation of the Roman field plots beyond the excavated area. No other Roman remains are known within 1km of the site. Further to this, the earlier evaluation of the present development site identified a probable agricultural settlement and metal-working activities concentrated mainly within two areas (CA 2014a)

Post medieval

- 1.9 Activity within the site during this period appears limited to quarrying in the northern and western areas of the site (CA 2014a).

Archaeological objectives

1.10 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- to observe the groundworks for cable trenches within the areas deemed of archaeological significance, and record any archaeological features as set out in 1.12 below.
- at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

Methodology

1.11 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2014b). An archaeologist was present during those intrusive groundworks conducted within the archaeologically sensitive areas as shown on Figure 2.

1.12 Where archaeological deposits were encountered, written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2013). Trenches and associated contexts were numbered in sequence commencing with Trench 10, the numbering system following on from that used in the CA evaluation in order to avoid duplication of numbers.

1.13 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Wiltshire Heritage Centre along with the site archive. 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 2-5)

2.1 Four trenches were excavated (Trenches 10, 11, 12 and 13) totalling approximately 480m in length.

- 2.2 The natural geological substrate consisting of a mix of sandy clay and gravels was revealed at within the trenches at an average depth of 0.4m below present ground level. This was overlain by a sandy clay subsoil, averaging 0.2m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by 0.2m of a sandy clay topsoil. No features of archaeological significance were encountered within Trench 13.

Trench 10

- 2.3 Trench 10 revealed four shallow ditches, 1005, 1007, 1009 and 1012. None of these provided dating evidence, but 1005 and 1007 were both sealed by subsoil 1001. Both of these ditches are of similar profile, with moderately sloping concave sides and both approximately 1.2m wide. Ditches 1009 and 1012 were both cutting 1001 and therefore assumed to be modern. Ditch 1007 correlated with the geophysical survey results depicting a rectangular enclosure, whilst ditch 1009 correlated with the line of a possible former field boundary (Fig. 3; AOC 2014). However, the continuation of the enclosure ditch, as shown on the geophysical survey and revealed in evaluation Trench 1, could not be seen to the north of ditch 1007.

Trench 11

- 2.4 Trench 11 contained a 0.3m wide post hole 1106 that was later cut by a relatively steep-sided ditch 1104 (Section AA, Fig. 5). To the south of these, ditch 1110 was recorded. The fill of this 2.4m wide ditch, 1109, provided no dating evidence, but was subsequently cut by a possible ditch or pit 1108 (Section BB, Fig. 5). The fill of this feature, 1107, produced four sherds of North Wiltshire oxidised ware, dating broadly to the Roman period. Ditches 1108 and 1110 roughly correlated with the geophysical survey results, but 1104 and 1106 were not detected by that survey (Fig. 4; AOC 2014). Other elements of the Roman enclosure depicted by the geophysical survey and recorded during the evaluation could not be seen during the watching brief.

Trench 12

- 2.5 Within Trench 12 four ditches were recorded. The earliest feature was a small ditch 1209, the fill of which, 1208, produced Black-burnished ware dated to the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. This ditch was sealed by a buried soil, 1210, and this in turn was cut by both ditch 1206 and 1212 (Sections CC and DD, Fig. 5). There was little similarity between these ditches, although they appeared to demarcate the eastern and western extent of the buried soil 1210. Ditch 1206 appeared to have two fills, 1207

and 1205, with 1205 producing a variety of pottery dating to the 2nd to 3rd centuries AD. The fill of ditch 1212 also produced pottery from the Roman period. Although the ditches have been recorded as cutting the buried soil 1210, the horizon clarity between the fills of the ditches and the buried soil was far from clear, and it is possible that the fills 1207 and 1211 and the buried soil 1210 were roughly contemporary in their formation. To the east of these features ditch 1204 produced no datable material, and although seemingly substantial in size was very ill-defined. Ditches 1206, 1209 and 1212 roughly correlated with the geophysical survey results, while ditch 1204 was not depicted on that survey (Fig. 4; AOC 2014). Again, other elements of the Roman enclosure depicted by the geophysical survey and recorded during the evaluation could not be seen during the watching brief.

Finds

- 2.6 Finds recovered include pottery and fired clay. Codings for Roman fabrics, where possible, correspond to those defined in the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Appendix B; Tomber and Dore 1998).
- 2.7 *Pottery: Roman*
Ditch 1206 secondary fill 1205 produced a base sherd from a vessel in central Gaulish Samian (LEZ SA), which was exported to Britain between c. AD 120 and 200 (Webster 1996, 3).
- 2.8 A total of three sherds of Dorset Black-burnished ware (DOR BB1) was recorded in ditch 1206 fill 1205, and ditch 1209 fill 1208. Black-burnished ware was produced near Poole in Dorset and when found outside the county it typically dates to the 2nd to 4th centuries AD (Davies *et al.* 1994, 107). Identifiable forms are an everted rim jar from ditch 1209 fill 1208 and two (Seager Smith and Davies) Type 20 plain rim dishes from ditch 1206 fill 1205. The latter date to the late 2nd to 4th centuries AD (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 232–3).
- 2.9 Pottery of broad Roman date comprises eight sherds of greyware from three deposits (see Appendix B), five sherds in a black-firing, sand tempered fabric and nine unfeathered bodysherds in oxidised fabrics. The latter includes five sherds of North Wiltshire oxidised ware from pit/ditch 1108 fill 1107 and ditch 1206 fill 1205. Forms represented in the black sandy fabric are an everted rim jar and a vessel with a bead rim.

Faunal remains

- 2.10 Four fragments of animal bone (7g) were recovered from pit/ditch 1108 fill 1107 which could not be identified beyond the level of cow-sized mammal (Appendix B).

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Due to the constrained nature of the excavated trenches, coupled with water ingress, identification and detailed observation of archaeological remains was difficult. However, the results do fit broadly with those of the preceding evaluation (CA 2014a). Whilst no further prehistoric activity was identified, the watching brief supports the conclusion of the evaluation that remains of a farmstead-like settlement of Roman date are present within the two areas identified for archaeological monitoring. This is supported by the domestic nature of the pottery found within ditch fills 1107, 1205, 1208 and 1211, all of which point towards a probable 2nd to 3rd-century AD date, and ditches that could be interpreted as forming parts of internal enclosures within the settlement, or boundaries and field systems around it. The presence of a buried soil both sealing, and apparently cut by, ditches containing Roman pottery suggests some longevity and phasing of this activity, although the precise nature of that phasing could not be established, given the limited extent of observations and constraints noted above.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Jay Wood and Peter Searle. The report was written by Peter Searle. The illustrations were prepared by Jon Bennett. The finds were assessed by Jacky Sommerville and Andy Clarke. The archive has been compiled by Peter Searle, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Simon Cox.

5. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 10

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
10	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown sandy clay			0.2	modern
10	1001	Layer		Subsoil	Light grey brown silty clay			0.2	
10	1002	Layer		Natural	Light orange yellow gravel				
10	1003	Layer		Natural	Dark orange grey sandy clay				
10	1004	Layer		Natural	Mid grey stone/sand mix				
10	1005	Cut		Ditch	NW-SE aligned enclosure ditch	1.1	1.25	0.28	
10	1006	Fill	1005	Ditch fill	Mid red grey brown sandy clay	1.1	1.25	0.28	
10	1007	Cut		Ditch	E-W aligned boundary ditch	>0.7	1.28	0.28	
10	1008	Fill	1007	Ditch fill	Dark yellow brown sandy clay	>0.7	1.28	0.28	
10	1009	Cut		Ditch	E-W aligned boundary ditch	>0.7	2.26	0.37	Modern
10	1010	Fill	1009	Ditch fill	Dark grey brown clay silt	>0.7	2.14	0.27	Modern
10	1011	Fill	1009	Ditch fill	Mid yellow grey sandy clay	>0.7	1.32	0.19	Modern
10	1012	Cut		Ditch	E-W aligned boundary ditch	>0.7	1.13	0.22	Modern
10	1013	Fill	1012	Ditch fill	Dark grey brown clay silt	>0.7	0.82	0.12	Modern
10	1014	Fill	1012	Ditch fill	Dark red grey sandy clay	>0.7	1.13	0.17	Modern

Trench 11

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
11	1100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown sandy clay			0.25	modern
11	1101	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow grey sandy clay			0.2	
11	1102	Layer		Natural	Light yellow brown sandy clay and mid red brown sandy gravel				
11	1103	Fill	1104	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown sand silt	>0.9	0.74	0.25	
11	1104	Cut		Ditch	NW-SE aligned boundary ditch	>0.9	0.74	0.25	
11	1105	Fill	1106	Posthole fill	Mid yellow grey brown sandy clay	0.3	>0.1	>0.27	
11	1106	Cut		Posthole	Circular, vertically-sided posthole	0.3	>0.1	>0.27	
11	1107	Fill	1108	Pit or ditch fill	Pit or ditch fill	>0.7	1.3	0.25	RB
11	1108	Cut		Pit or ditch	Irregular pit or ditch cutting (1109)	>0.7	1.3	0.25	RB
11	1109	Fill	1110	Ditch fill	Mid grey yellow brown sandy clay	>0.7	2.4	>0.25	
11	1110	Cut		Ditch	E-W aligned boundary ditch	>0.7	2.4	>0.25	

Trench 12

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
12	1200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown sand clay			0.2	modern
12	1201	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow grey silt sand			0.1	
12	1202	Layer		Natural	Mid grey yellow sand clay				
12	1203	Fill	1204	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown sand clay	>0.7	1.55	>0.35	
12	1204	Cut		Ditch	N-S aligned boundary ditch	>0.7	1.55	>0.35	
12	1205	Fill	1206	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown sandy clay	>0.7	5.1	>0.3	

12	1206	Cut		Ditch	N-S aligned boundary ditch	>0.7	5.84	>0.3	
12	1207	Fill	1206	Ditch fill	Dark grey brown silt clay	>0.7	0.74	0.24	
12	1208	Fill	1209	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown sandy clay	>0.7	0.87	0.17	RB
12	1209	Cut		Ditch	N-S aligned boundary ditch	>0.7	0.87	0.17	RB
12	1210	Dep		Buried soil	Mid red brown sandy clay		>0.7	0.2	
12	1211	Fill	1212	Ditch fill	Mid yellow brown grey sandy clay	>0.7	1.6	0.28	RB
12	1212	Cut		Ditch	N-S aligned boundary ditch	>0.7	1.6	0.28	RB

Trench 13

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
13	1300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown sand clay			0.27	modern
13	1301	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow grey brown sand clay			0.23	
13	1302	Layer		Natural	Mid yellow brown sand clay and red brown sand gravel				

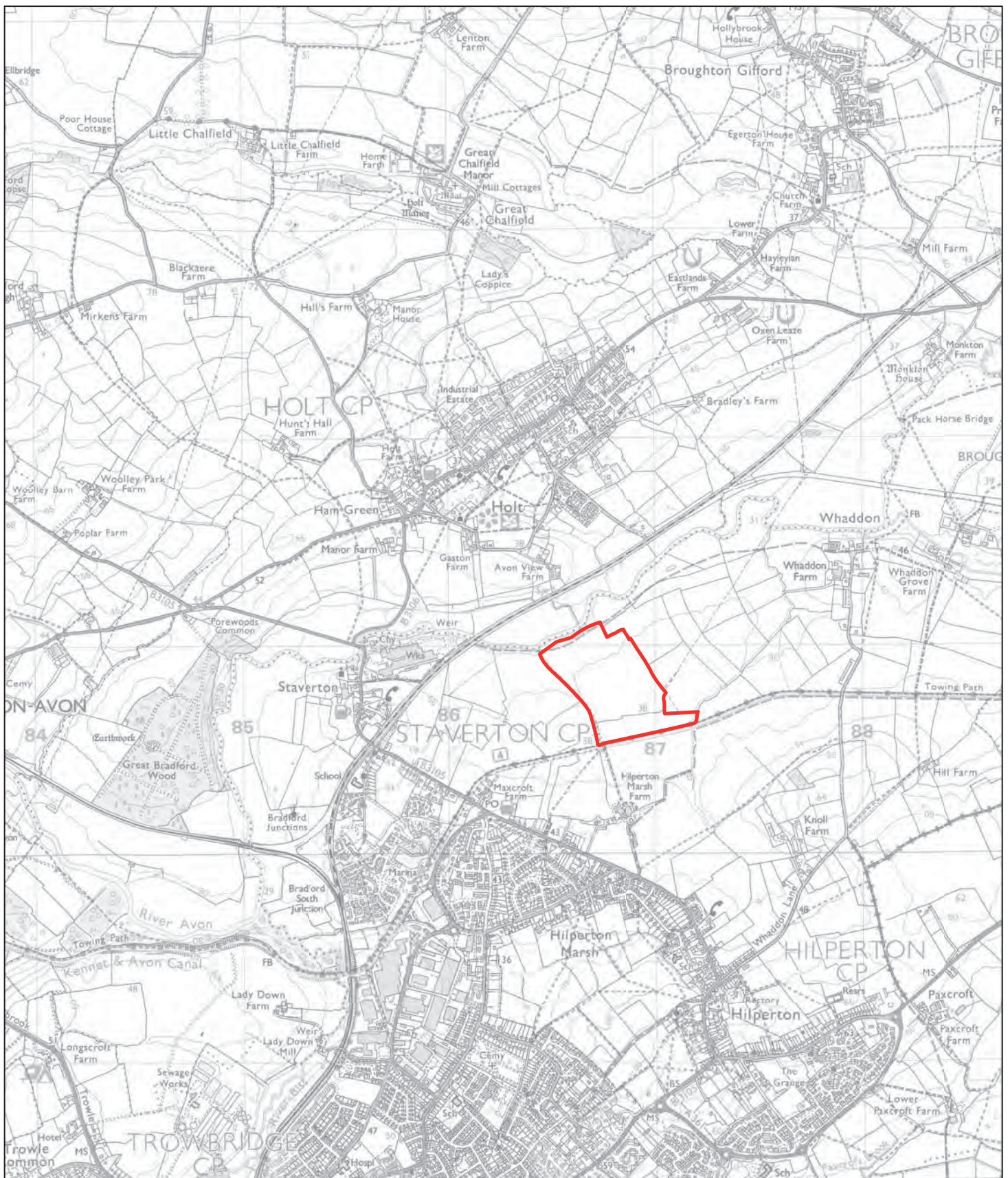
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Table 1: Finds concordance

Context	Description	Count	Weight(g)	Spot-date
1103	Fired clay	4	34	-
1107	Roman pottery: oxidised fabric	4	17	RB
	Animal bone: cow-size mammal	4	7	
1205	Roman pottery: samian; Dorset Black-burnished ware; greyware; black-firing, sand-tempered fabric; oxidised fabric	18	141	LC2-C3
1208	Roman pottery: Dorset Black-burnished ware; greyware	2	9	C2-C4
1211	Roman pottery: greyware	2	17	RB

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land at Marsh Farm, Hilperton, Wiltshire.	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during the construction of a solar farm, groundworks being observed within two areas noted as being archaeologically sensitive following earlier archaeological evaluation of the site. A buried soil, ten ditches and a posthole were recorded, some of which contained pottery dating to the Roman period. Most of the features revealed appear likely to relate to a Roman settlement identified during the preceding evaluation.	
Project dates	15-18 December 2014, 5-9 January 2015	
Project type	Archaeological Watching Brief	
Previous work	Desk-based Assessment (CA 2013), Geophysical Survey (AOC 2014), Archaeological Evaluation (CA 2014)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Marsh Farm, Hilperton, Wiltshire.	
Study area (M ² /ha)	22.7ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	ST 8680 6079	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	N/A	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Simon Cox	
Project Supervisor	Jay Wood, Peter Searle	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Wiltshire Heritage Centre	Pottery, animal bone ceramic building material
Paper	Wiltshire Heritage Centre	Recording sheets, permatrace drawings
Digital	Wiltshire Heritage Centre	CAD site plan, digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) <i>Marsh Farm, Hilperton, Wiltshire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report 15055		



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PROJECT TITLE

Land at Marsh Farm, Hilpertons, Wiltshire

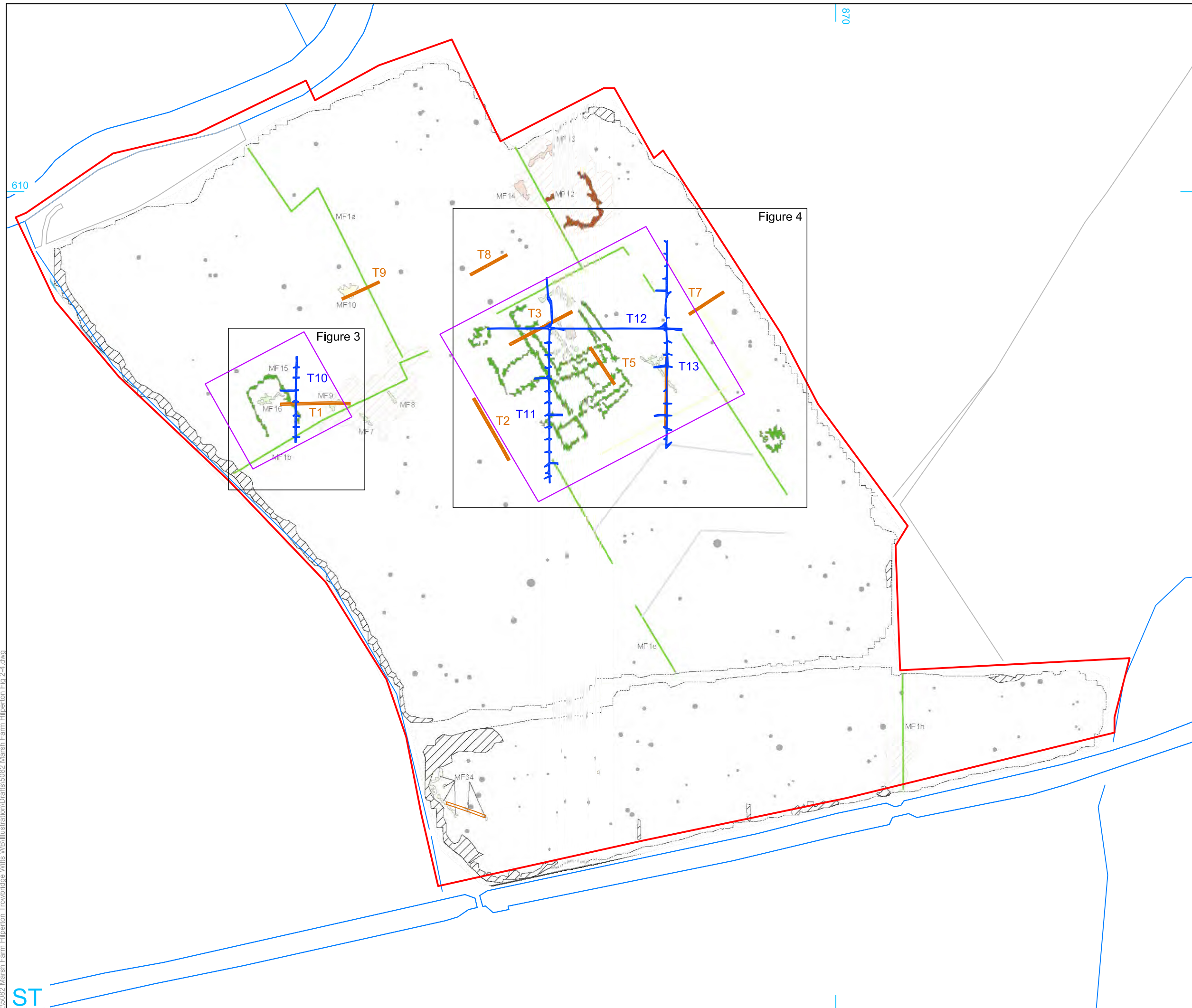
FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan



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- site boundary
- areas subject to archaeological monitoring
- area of observed groundworks
- previous evaluation trench

Geophysical survey results

- Linear trend (field boundary)
- Linear trend (field boundary?)
- Linear trend (drain?)
- Linear trend (archaeological)
- Disturbed area (archaeological)
- Linear trend (archaeological?)
- Disturbed area (archaeological?)
- Area of disturbance (archaeological?)
- Possible archaeology
- Disturbed area (modern)
- Isolated dipolar anomaly
- Survey area

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PROJECT TITLE
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FIGURE TITLE
 Trench location plan showing geophysical survey results and previous evaluation trenches

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ST

988

MF 15

TR10

MF 9

MF 16

Tr1

ditch 1007

ditch 1012

ditch 1009

MF 1b

608

ST

Geophysical survey results

- Linear trend (field boundary)
- Linear trend (field boundary?)
- Linear trend (drain?)
- Linear trend (archaeological)
- Disturbed area (archaeological)
- Linear trend (archaeological?)
- Disturbed area (archaeological?)
- Area of disturbance (archaeological?)
- Possible archaeology
- Disturbed area (modern)
- Isolated dipolar anomaly
- Survey area

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- site boundary
- area of observed groundworks
- previous evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- previously recorded feature



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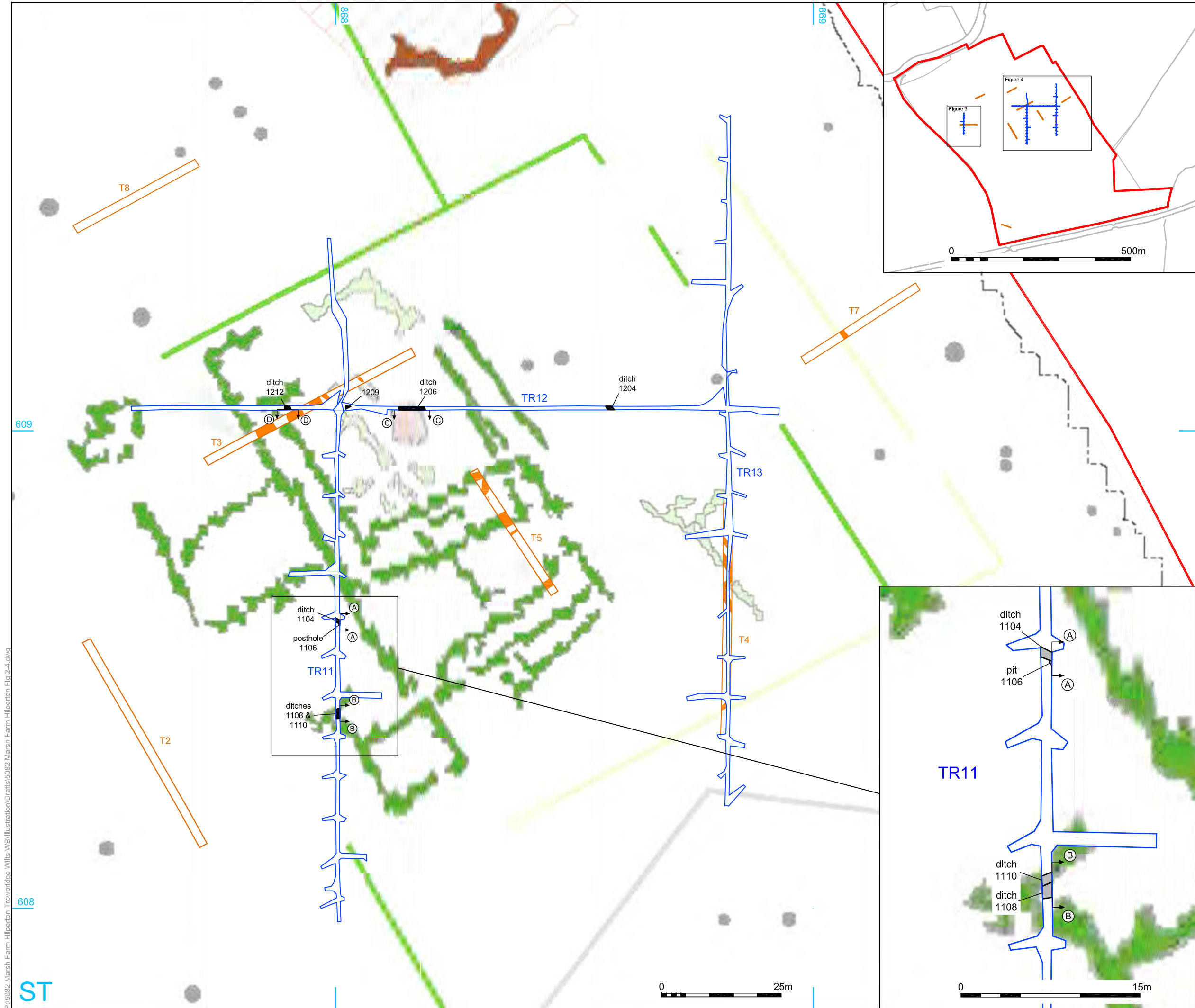
FIGURE TITLE
The site, showing western areas of observed groundworks, geophysical survey results and previous evaluation trenches



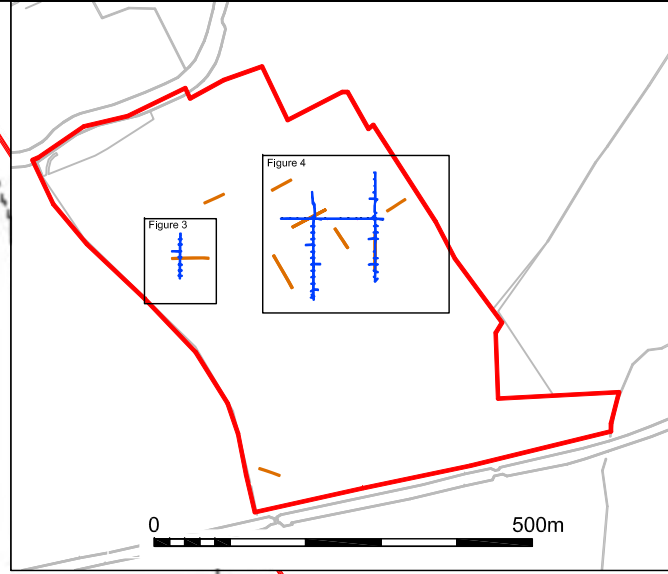
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FIGURE NO.

3



- ▭ site boundary
- ▭ area of observed groundworks
- ▭ previous evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- previously recorded feature



Geophysical survey results

- Linear trend (field boundary)
- Linear trend (field boundary?)
- Linear trend (drain?)
- Linear trend (archaeological)
- Disturbed area (archaeological)
- Linear trend (archaeological?)
- Disturbed area (archaeological?)
- Area of disturbance (archaeological?)
- Possible archaeology
- Disturbed area (modern)
- Isolated dipolar anomaly
- Survey area

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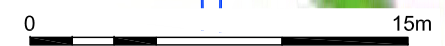
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 Land at Marsh Farm, Hilperton, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE
 The site, showing eastern areas of observed groundworks, geophysical survey results and previous evaluation trenches

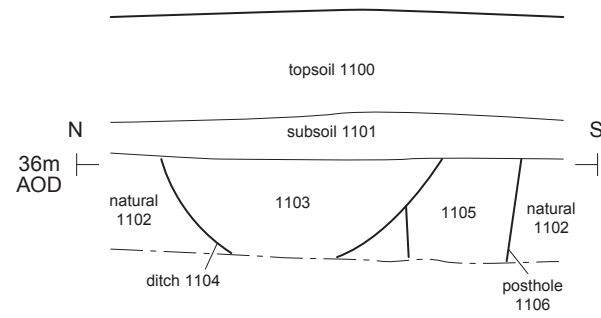
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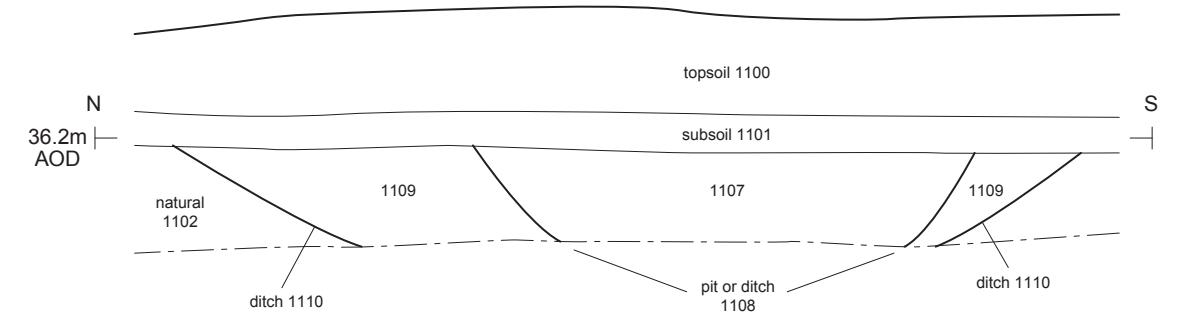


Section AA

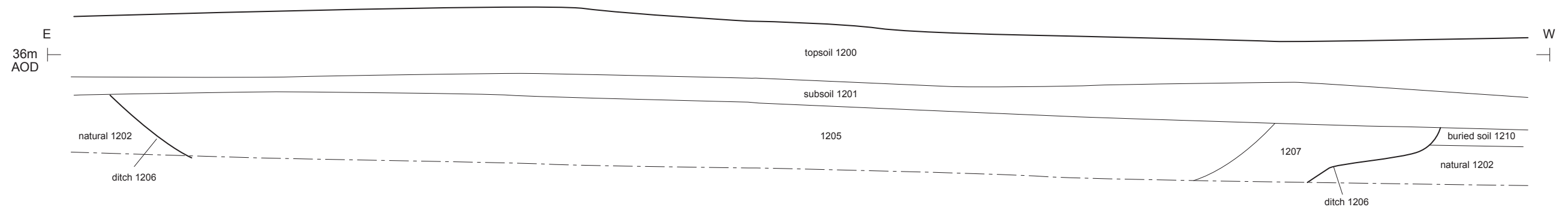


Trench 11: ditch 1104 and posthole 1106, looking east (scale 0.3m)

Section BB

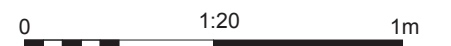
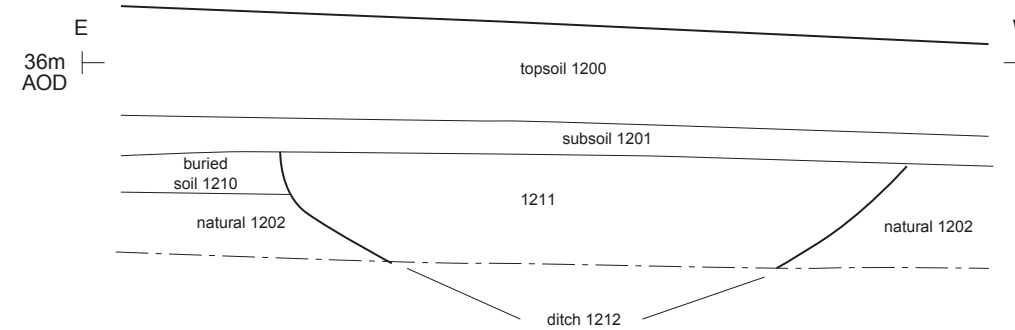


Section CC



Trench 12: ditch 1206, looking south-west (scale 1m)

Section DD



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PROJECT TITLE
 Land at Marsh Farm, Hilperton, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE
Trenches 11 and 12: sections and photographs

DRAWN BY AO/LJH PROJECT NO. 5082 FIGURE NO.
 CHECKED BY JB DATE 28-01-2015
 APPROVED BY SC SCALE@A3 1:20 **5**