

**Car Park Extension
The Great Western Hospital
Marlborough Road
Swindon
Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Great Western Hospitals NHS
Foundations Trust

CA Project: 5842
CA Report: 16369

September 2016



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The Great Western Hospital
Marlborough Road
Swindon
Wiltshire

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Car Park Extension, The Great Western Hospital
Location: Marlborough Road, Swindon, Wiltshire
NGR: SU 19185 82328
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 13 May to 1 July 2016
Planning Reference: S/15/1914/CICA
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Swindon Museum and Art Gallery
Site Code: GWH16

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the extension of an existing staff car parking area at The Great Western Hospital, Marlborough Road, Swindon, Wiltshire.

Two pits, both of which contained pottery of late prehistoric date, were identified in the northern half of the development area.

A group of four small pits/postholes, one of which contained a worked flint flake of prehistoric date, were identified in the south-western corner of the stripped area and may be associated with Middle Bronze Age settlement activity previously identified to the north-east.

Three ditches, one of which contained a worked flint flake of prehistoric date, were partially exposed towards the south-eastern corner of the stripped area. The function of these features remains unclear.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between May and July 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundations Trust at The Great Western Hospital, Marlborough Road, Swindon, Wiltshire (centred on NGR: SU 19185 82328; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to planning consent for the extension of an existing staff car parking area (Swindon Borough Council (SBC), Planning ref: S/15/1914/CICA, condition 7).
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016) that was approved by Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council (WC), the archaeological advisor to SBC. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014).

The site

- 1.3 The development area is approximately 0.8ha in extent, and comprises an area of grassland within the north-eastern corner of the wider hospital site. The site is bounded to the north by the A4259, to the east by the A419 and to the south and west by existing car parks and hospital buildings. The site lies at approximately 115m AOD, with the ground level dropping away gradually to the east.
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Gault Formation Mudstone of the Cretaceous Period. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2016). The natural substrate, comprising compact orange yellow sand clay with occasional flint nodules, was identified throughout the area subject to ground reduction.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Archaeological interest in the site arises from a number of prehistoric and Roman sites identified within its immediate vicinity.
- 2.2 The site is bordered to the east by the line of a Roman Road which appears to run on a similar route to the present A419, and adjoins Ermin Street to the north. The *agger*

(embankment) of the road is known to have survived into the mid-20th century, when it was observed running north from the Commonhead junction (Highways Agency 2004).

- 2.3 The wider Great Western Hospital site has been subject to a number of archaeological investigations (Fig. 2). The following represents a summary of the results from these works.

1999 Evaluation (CAT1999)

- 2.4 A total of six evaluation trenches, one of which (Trench 1) lay partially within the current development site, were excavated in 1999. The remaining trenches were located immediately to the south and west of the current development area.
- 2.5 A pit, identified at the south-eastern end of Trench 4, was found to contain quantities of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery and a concentrated layer of charcoal, overlain by fired clay fragments and fire-cracked flint. This material was interpreted as debris from a pottery kiln. Three shallow pits, containing pottery of Roman date, were also identified in Trench 4. These features were interpreted as representing peripheral activity associated with a Romano-British farmstead, previously identified by geophysical survey and excavation prior to the construction of the Great Western Hospital Building itself (Samuels 1999).
- 2.6 Two shallow undated features, possibly representing severely truncated pits, were identified in the southern half of Trench 1 (i.e. outside of the current development area). No further archaeological features or deposits were identified by the evaluation.

2002 Evaluation (Foundations Archaeology 2002)

- 2.7 A total of seven trenches were excavated in 2002 prior to the construction of a park and ride car park. Two of these seven trenches (T2 and T4) partially extended in to the current development area.
- 2.8 A number of shallow pits and ditches of Middle Bronze Age date were recorded towards the southern end of Trench 2 (i.e. outside of the current development area) and in Trench 3. These features were interpreted as being indicative of domestic occupation/settlement of the site.

- 2.8 A number of Roman features were identified in Trenches 4, 5 and 6 and these were interpreted as being further peripheral features associated with the Romano-British farmstead previously identified to the west. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in Trench 1.

2003 Strip, map and Record Survey (Foundations Archaeology 2003)

- 2.9 An archaeological strip, map and record exercise was subsequently undertaken during the construction of the park and ride car park. A number of shallow linear features, interpreted as the remains of a derelict drainage system, were identified towards the southern edge of the stripped area. These features remained undated.

2006 Evaluation and Strip and Record Survey (Wessex Archaeology 2006)

- 2.10 A total of five evaluation trenches were excavated prior to the construction of a car park associated with the Great Western Hospital, immediately to the south of the current site. The evaluation was followed by a programme of archaeological monitoring during topsoil stripping of the area.
- 2.11 A shallow ditch, containing large quantities of charcoal, and a pit containing two worked flints of Neolithic date were recorded in Trench 3 of the evaluation. A further shallow undated ditch was identified in Trench 2. No further archaeological features were recorded in Trenches 1, 4 or 5 or during the subsequent topsoil stripping in the area.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
- 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.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2016). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising ground reduction prior to the construction of the car park (Figs 2 and 3). Non-archaeologically significant deposits were removed by the contactors under archaeological supervision. Where mechanical excavators were used, these were equipped with a toothless bucket.
- 4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 The archive and artefacts from the watching brief are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, 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.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the results of the watching brief; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.
- 5.2 The natural substrate, 102, comprising compact orange yellow sand clay with occasional flint nodules, was revealed across the stripped area at a typical depth of 0.28m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by silt clay subsoil, averaging 0.15m in thickness, which was in turn overlain by topsoil. A number of modern land drains were identified in the northern half of the stripped area
- 5.3 A group of four shallow pits/postholes, 103, 105, 107 (Fig. 4, sections AA, BB, and CC) and 109 (not illustrated), were identified in the south-western part of the stripped area. All had concave bases and were of similar size, ranging between 0.32m-0.4m in diameter and 0.05m-0.11m in depth, and contained similar dark silt clay fills. A single worked flint flake was recovered from the fill of pit/posthole 103.

- 5.4 Ditches 120 and 123 (Fig. 4, sections DD, EE and FF) were partially exposed in the south-eastern corner of the stripped area. Irregular, slightly curving ditch 120 measured a maximum of 0.64m in width and 0.27m in depth. It had an irregular profile and a generally concave base. It contained two distinct fills, 121 and 122. The primary fill, 121, contained a single worked flint flake. Ditch 120 was cut by north-west/south-east aligned ditch 123. Ditch 123 had a shallow open 'U'-shaped profile, measured a maximum of 0.7m in width and 0.12m in depth, and contained a single undated fill, 124. To the north, north-west/south-east aligned ditch 129 was identified. It had a shallow, irregular profile and contained a single undated fill, 130.
- 5.5 Two small pits, 141 and 144, were identified in the northern half of the stripped area. Pit 141 (Fig. 4, section HH) was sub-circular in plan, measured 0.56m in diameter and 0.2m in depth and had steeply sloping sides and a flat base. It contained two fills, 142 and 143. Its earliest fill, 142, contained a worked flint flake and a fragment of burnt flint. Its latest fill, 143, contained nine sherds of late prehistoric pottery. Shallow, sub-oval pit 144 (Fig. 4, section II) measured 0.35m in width and 0.1m in depth. It contained a single fill, 145, from which a single sherd of late prehistoric pottery was recovered.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1 Artefactual material recovered from the watching brief is listed in Appendix B and is discussed further below.

Pottery

- 6.2 A total of 14 sherds of pottery (23g), dating to the late prehistoric period, were recorded from three deposits (appendix B). All of the recovered material consists of small body or base sherds. The suggested dating is consequently broad and based on fabrics and firing characteristics. Five sherds of a handmade, flint-tempered fabric were recorded from subsoil 101 and pit 144 (fill 145). The sherds are undecorated and of indeterminate form, although the fragment from pit 144 (fill 145) has a flat base. A total of nine unfeatured sherds of a handmade, vesicular quartz-tempered fabric were recorded from pit 141 (fill 143).

Other finds

- 6.3 A total of three items of worked flint (10g), all flakes, and one fragment of burnt flint (2g) were recorded from three deposits (pit/posthole fill 104, pit fill 121 and pit fill 142). The flint is of a dark brown colour with cortex remaining on the flakes from ditch 120 (fill 121) and pit 141 (fill 142).

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The watching brief has identified a small number of archaeological features within the area subject to groundworks. A fully comprehensive understanding of the features encountered cannot be achieved, primarily due to their limited exposure and isolated nature within the stripped area. This is compounded by the general paucity of finds recovered from these features and the broad date-range for the material recovered.
- 7.2 Pits 141 and 144, located in the northern half of the stripped area, both contained pottery of late prehistoric date. The isolated nature of these pits coupled with lack of definitively contemporary features identified, either within the stripped area or during previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity, makes a clear interpretation of their function impossible.
- 7.3 Ditches 120, 123 and 129 were partially exposed towards the south-eastern corner of the stripped area. A single worked flint flake was recovered from ditch 120 and suggests a prehistoric date for this feature. It is possible that ditches 123 and 129 are at least broadly contemporary. Prehistoric (Bronze Age) settlement activity, comprising a concentration of shallow pits and ditches, has previously been identified c. 50m to the north-west of these features (see *archaeological background* above) and it is possible that ditches 120, 123 and 129 are associated with this activity. However, the limited quantity of artefactual material recovered from these ditches suggests they are set away from any focus of settlement, and are perhaps more likely to be associated with agricultural activity.
- 7.4 A group of four small pits/postholes, 103, 105, 107 and 109, were identified in the south-western part of the stripped area and are suggestive of settlement/occupation. A worked flint flake, recovered from the fill of pit/posthole 103, suggests a possible prehistoric date for this activity. It remains possible that these features are

associated with either the Middle Bronze Age settlement activity previously identified to the north-east or with Neolithic activity previously identified to the south (see *archaeological background* above). However, the paucity of secure dating evidence from these features frustrates our ability to ascribe them to either phase of activity with any degree of certainty.

- 7.5 Despite the current sites proximity to a number of previously identified Roman features/sites (see *archaeological background* above), no evidence of definitively Roman activity was identified within the area of observed groundworks.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Alison Roberts and Sara-Jayne Boughton. The report was written by Sara-Jayne Boughton. The finds report was written by Katie Marsden. The illustrations were prepared by Sam O'Leary. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Steven Sheldon.

9. REFERENCES

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CA 2016 *Car Park Extension, The Great Western Hospital, Marlborough Road, Swindon, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silt clay			0.1	
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown silt clay			0.15	
1	102	Layer		Natural substrate	Mottled orange yellow sand clay with occasional flint nodules			>0.1	
1	103	Cut		Pit/posthole	Sub-circular, gradually sloping sides, concave base	0.4	0.2	0.11	
1	104	Fill	103	Single fill of pit/posthole 103	Mid orange brown clay silt with occasional rounded pebble inclusions	0.4	0.2	0.11	
1	105	Cut		Pit/posthole	Sub-circular, gently sloping sides, concave base	0.37	0.17	0.09	
1	106	Fill	105	Single fill of pit/posthole 105	Mid orange brown clay silt	0.37	0.17	0.09	
1	107	Cut		Pit/posthole	Sub-circular, gently sloping sides, concave base	0.32	0.16	0.05	
1	108	Fill	107	Single fill of pit/posthole 107	Mid orange brown clay silt	0.32	0.16	0.05	
1	109	Cut		Pit/posthole	Sub-oval, very shallow, truncated?	0.36	0.14	0.02	
1	110	Fill	109	Single fill of pit/posthole 109	Mid orange brown clay silt	0.36	0.14		
1	111	Deposit		Modern make-up/levelling	Mid brown grey silt sand with abundant plastic and modern concrete inclusions			0.6	
1	112	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	113	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	114	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	115	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	116	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	117	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	118	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	119	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	120	Cut		Ditch	Curving ditch, broadly NW/SE aligned, irregular profile	>1.15	0.64	0.27	
1	121	Fill	120	1st fill of ditch 120	Mid grey orange silt clay with occasional charcoal fleck inclusions	>1.15	0.62	0.19	
1	122	Fill	120	2nd fill of ditch 120	Sterile mid orange brown silt clay	>1.15	0.64	0.13	
1	123	Cut		Ditch	NW/SE aligned, shallow irregular profile	>0.7	0.7	0.12	
1	124	Fill	123	Single fill of ditch 123	Mid blue grey silt clay with occasional small rounded pebble inclusions	>0.7	0.7	0.12	
1	125	Cut		Bioturbation	Highly irregular tree-throw pit	>0.79	>0.3	>0.3	
1	126	Fill	125	Fill of 125	Sterile mid blue grey clay silt with frequent tree roots	>0.79	>0.3	>0.3	
1	127	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	128	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	129	Cut		Ditch	NW/SE aligned, shallow irregular profile	>1	0.62	0.05	
1	130	Fill	129	Single fill of ditch 129	Sterile mid light orange brown silt clay	>1	0.62	0.05	
1	131	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	132	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	133	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	134	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	135	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	136	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	137	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	138	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	139	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	

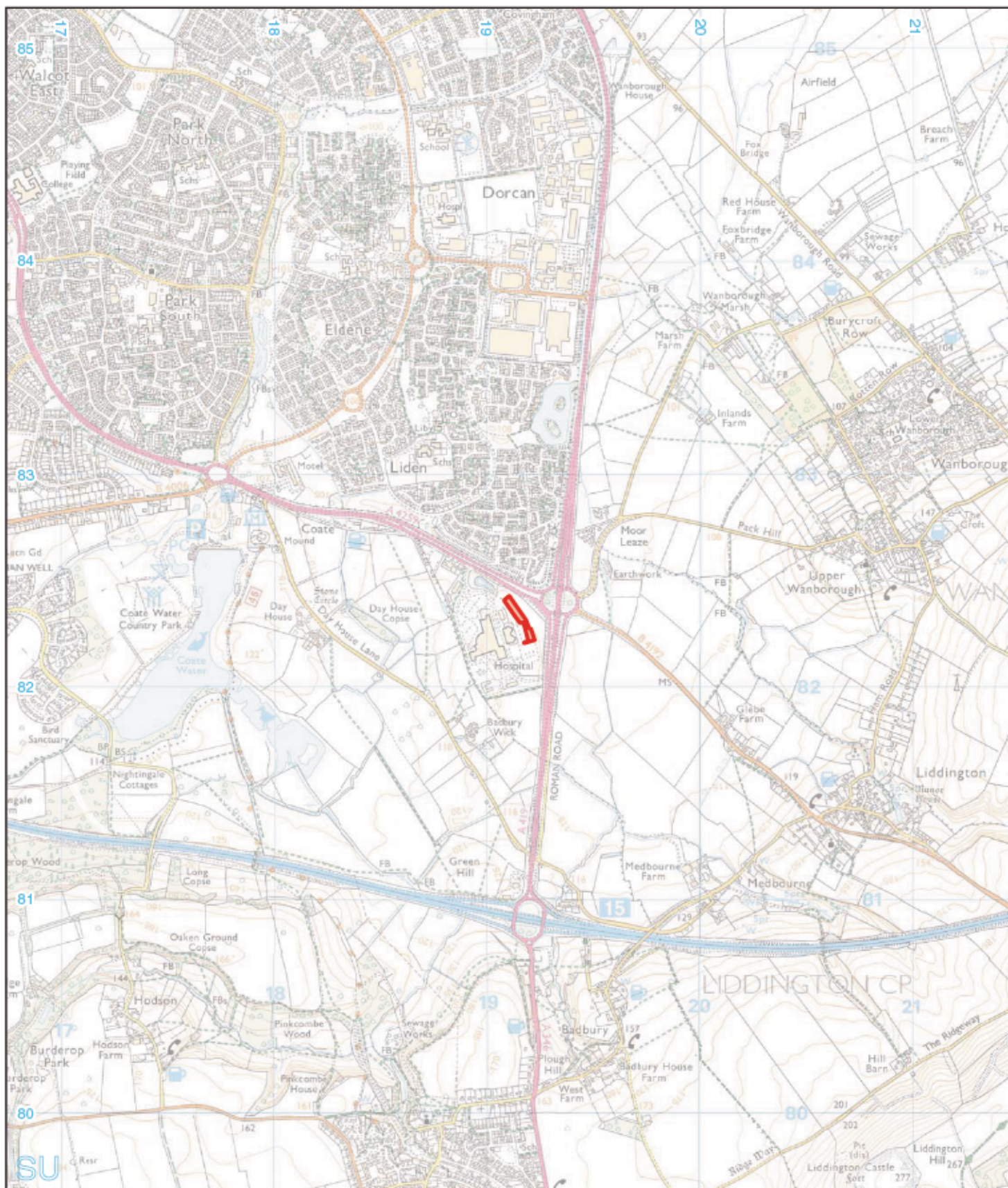
1	140	Void		Void	Void	-	-	-	
1	141	Cut		Pit	Sub-circular, steeply sloping sides, flat base	>0.33	0.56	0.2	
1	142	Fill	141	1st fill of pit 141	Mid light orange blue silt clay	>0.33	0.46	0.1	
1	143	Fill	141	2nd fill of pit 141	Mid orange grey silt clay with rare charcoal fleck inclusions	>0.33	0.56	0.12	LPRE
1	144	Cut		Pit	Shallow, irregular pit. Gently sloping sides and irregular base	1.18	0.35	0.1	
1	145	Fill	144	Single fill of pit 144	Mid dark orange grey silt clay with occasional charcoal flecks and rare small rounded pebble inclusions	1.18	0.35	0.1	LPRE

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Class	Description	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Spot-date
101	Prehistoric pottery	Fl	4	9	Pre
104	Flint		1	2	
121	Flint		1	2	
142	Flint		1	6	
	Burnt flint		1	2	
143	Prehistoric pottery	VES Qz	9	7	LPre
145	Prehistoric pottery	Fl	1	7	LPre

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Car Park Extension, The Great Western Hospital	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the extension of an existing staff car parking area at The Great Western Hospital, Marlborough Road, Swindon, Wiltshire.</p> <p>Two pits, both of which contained pottery of late prehistoric date, were identified in the northern half of the development area.</p> <p>A group of four small pits/postholes, one of which contained a worked flint flake of prehistoric date, were identified in the south-western corner of the stripped area and may be associated with Middle Bronze Age settlement activity previously identified to the north-east.</p> <p>Three ditches, one of which contained a worked flint flake of prehistoric date, were partially exposed towards the south-eastern corner of the stripped area. The function of these features remains unclear. However, they are likely to relate to agricultural land management or division.</p>	
Project dates	13 May to 14 July 2016	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	Field Evaluations (CAT 1999 and Foundations Archaeology 2002)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Marlborough Road, Swindon, Wiltshire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	0.8ha	
Site co-ordinates	SU 1918 8232	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Steven Sheldon	
Project Supervisor	Alison Roberts and Sara-Jayne Boughton	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery	Pottery, flint
Paper	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery	Trench sheets, context sheets, photographic registers, section drawings
Digital	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery	Digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 <i>Car Park Extension, The Great Western Hospital, Marlborough Road, Swindon, Wiltshire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report 16369		



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PROJECT TITLE

**Car-Park, The Great Western Hospital
 Marlborough Road, Swindon, Wiltshire**

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

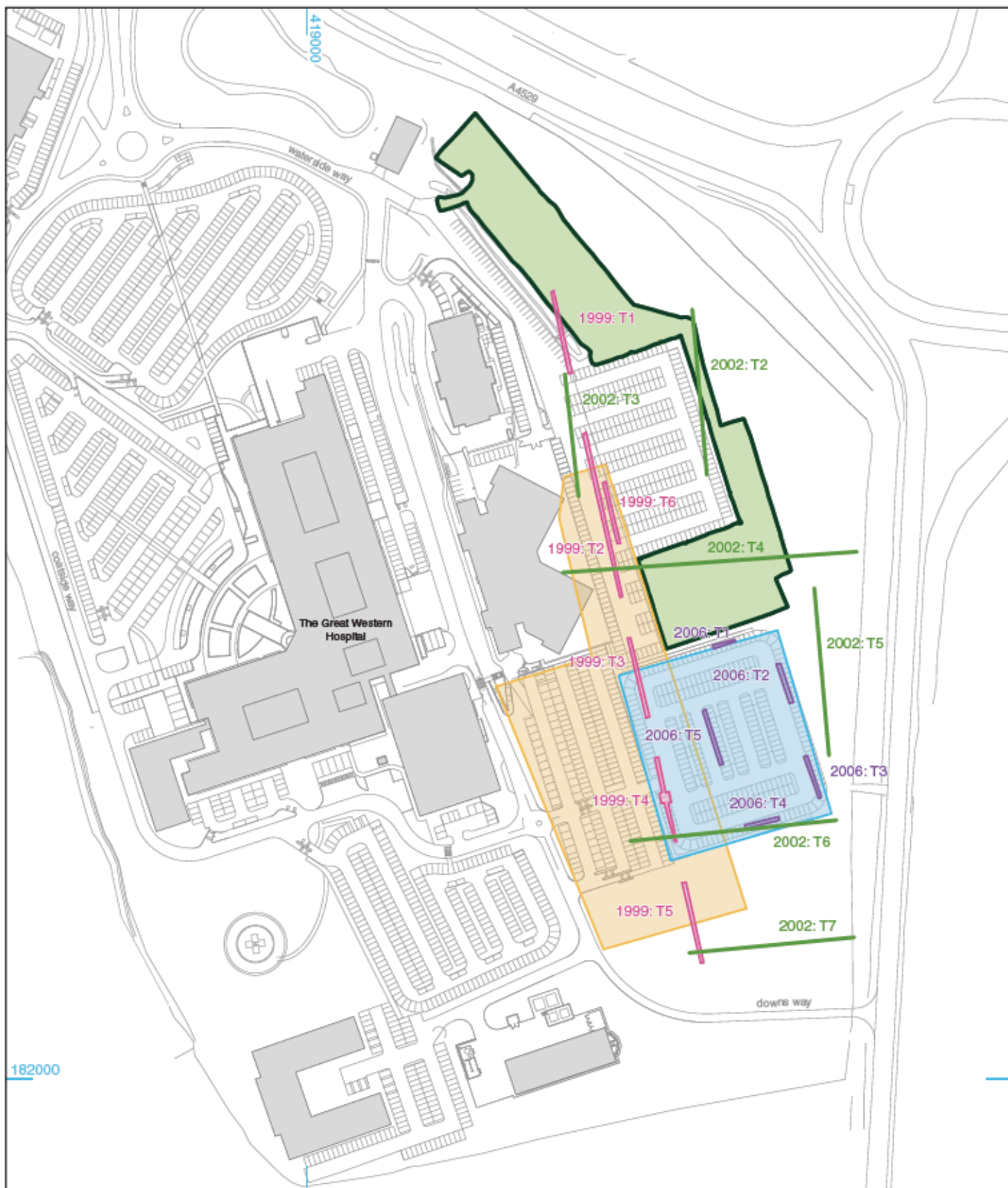
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 CHECKED BY LM
 APPROVED BY SS

PROJECT NO. 5842
 DATE 15/07/2016
 SCALE: A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.
1



- area of observed groundworks
- evaluation trench (CAT 1999)
- evaluation trench (Foundations Archaeology 2002)
- strip, map and survey area (Foundations Archaeology 2003)
- strip, map and survey area (Wessex Archaeology 2006)
- evaluation trench (Wessex Archaeology 2006)



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PROJECT TITLE

Car-Park, The Great Western Hospital
 Marlborough Road, Swindon, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE

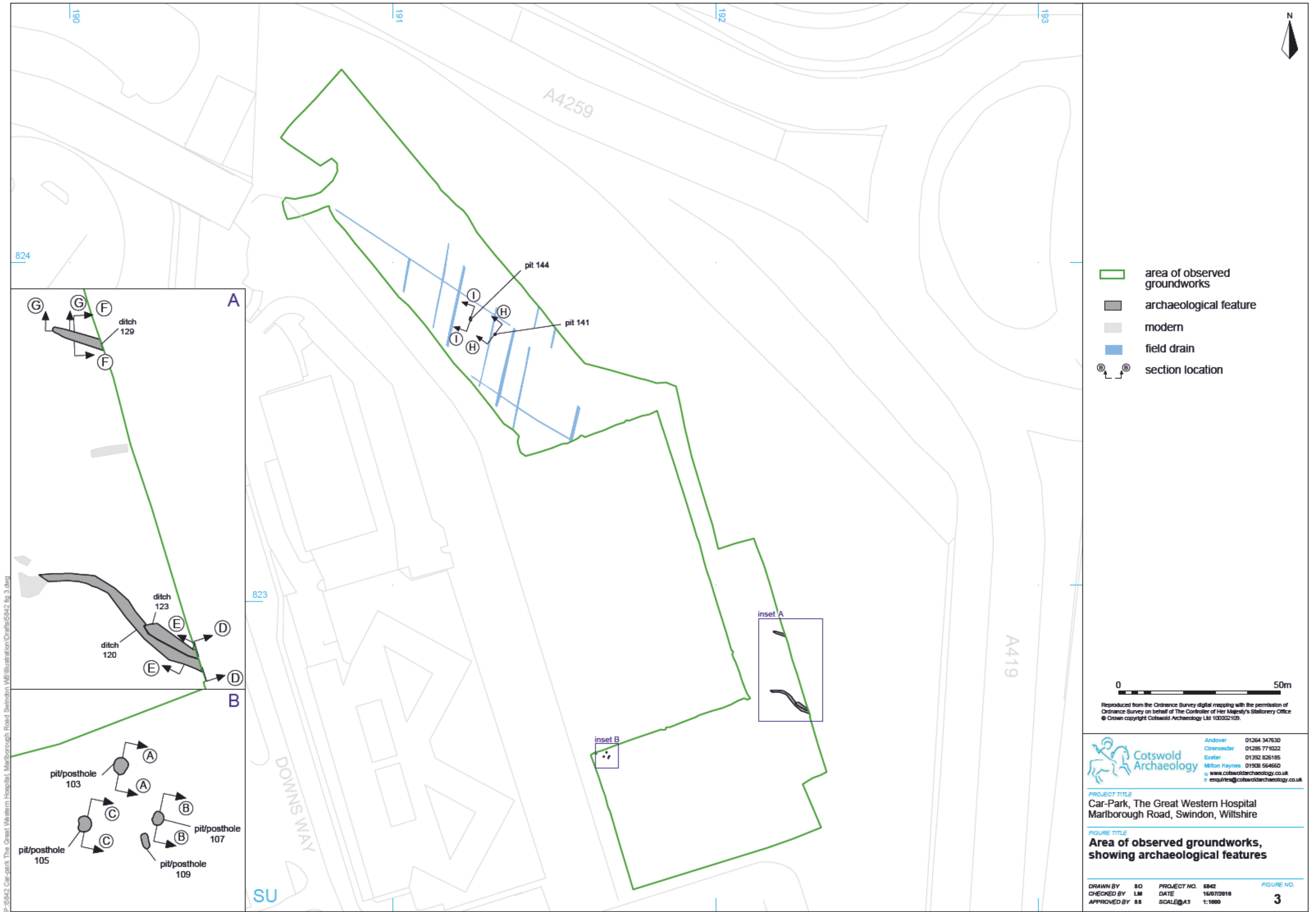
**Area of observed groundworks,
 showing previous archaeological
 works**

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 PROJECT NO. 5842
 DATE 03/08/2016
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FIGURE NO.

2

0 100m



P:\5842 Car-park The Great Western Hospital, Marlborough Road Swindon W6\Illustration\Drafts\5842 fig 3.dwg

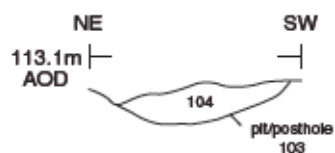
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PROJECT TITLE
Car-Park, The Great Western Hospital
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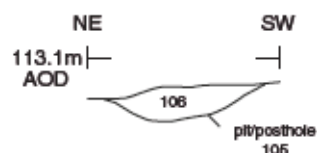
FIGURE TITLE
Area of observed groundworks,
showing archaeological features

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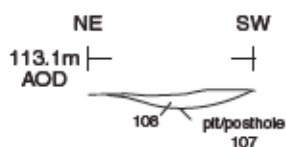
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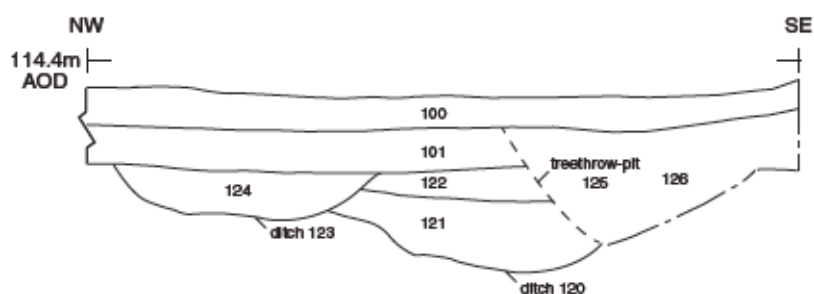
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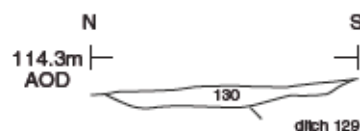
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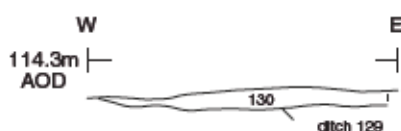
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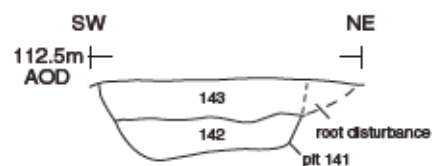
Section FF



Section GG



Section HH



Section II



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PROJECT TITLE

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 Marlborough Road, Swindon, Wiltshire

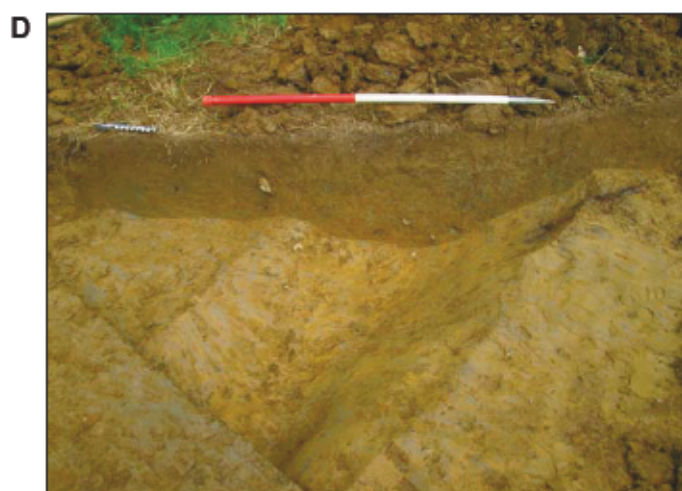
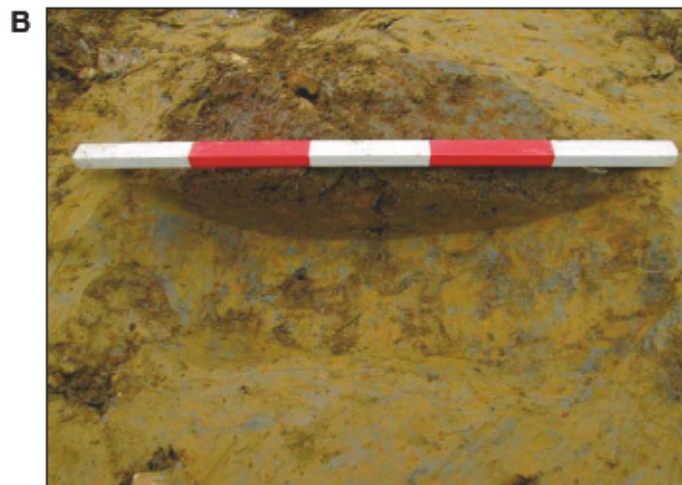
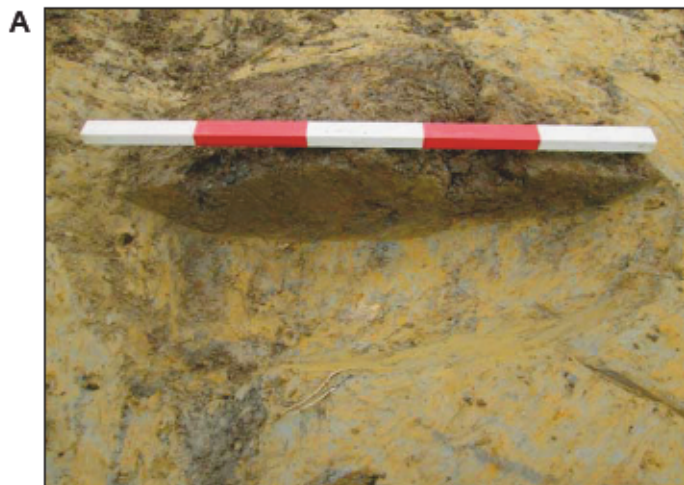
FIGURE TITLE

Sections

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FIGURE NO.

4



- A Pit/Posthole 103, looking south-east (scale 0.5m)**
- B Pit/Posthole 105, looking south-east (scale 0.5m)**
- C Ditches 120 and 123, looking north-west (scale 1m)**
- D Ditches 120 and 123, looking north-east (scale 1m)**
- E Ditch 129, looking north (scale 0.5m)**
- F Pit 141, looking north-west (scale 0.5m)**



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PROJECT TITLE

Car-Park, The Great Western Hospital
 Marlborough Road, Swindon, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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FIGURE NO.

5

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