

Land at South Marston Hotel
South Marston
Swindon
Wiltshire
Archaeological Evaluation



for
Turnkey Design Partnership

on behalf of
Mr P Cripps

CA Project: 5767
CA Report: 16116

March 2016



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A	24 March 2016	Peter Busby	Ian Barnes	Internal review	Client Comment	Cliff Bateman

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Land at South Marston Hotel
Location:	South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire
NGR:	SU 1950 8765
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	29 February to 1 March 2016
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Swindon Museum and Art Gallery
Site Code:	SMHO 16

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in February and March 2016 at South Marston Hotel, South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire. A total of three trenches were excavated.

All trenches were noted to contain undated ditches and furrows which broadly accorded with field boundaries illustrated on late 20th-century mapping.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February and March 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Turnkey Design Partnership, on behalf of Mr P Cripps, at South Marston Hotel, South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire (centred at NGR: SU 1950 8765; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to support a planning application that is being submitted to Swindon Borough Council (SBC) for the development of the site. The archaeological works were recommended by Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council the archaeological advisor to Swindon Borough Council (SBC).
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016) and approved by Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). It was monitored by Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger.

The site

- 1.3 The site is approximately 2.5ha in extent, and is situated to the south of South Marston village. It comprises a hotel complex (at the eastern extent) and surrounding car parking/green landscaping set within a rectangular parcel of land.
- 1.4 The site is bounded to the north-east by Old Vicarage Lane, an un-metalled trackway to the south-east boundary and in all other directions by agricultural land.
- 1.5 The underlying bedrock geology of the area comprises Ampthill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation (undifferentiated) of the Jurassic era. No superficial deposits are recorded within the site (BGS 2016). A natural substrate comprising clay was encountered in the base of all trenches.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The archaeological background to the application area has previously been detailed in a Heritage Desk-based Assessment (CA 2015a). The following is a summary of that assessment

- 2.2 Geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation has been completed in areas surrounding the site (CA 2015b and 2015c). This work identified foci of prehistoric and Roman activity approximately 500m to the east and 400m south-west of the current site. However, geophysical survey and trial trenching immediately to the south did not identify any anomalies of potential prehistoric or Roman date adjacent to the current site (see Trenches 29 -30 and 33-5 in CA 2015b and Trenches 36-7 in CA 2015c).
- 2.3 The site most probably formed part of the agricultural hinterland to the settlement of South Marston in the medieval period, and remained in agricultural use through the post-medieval period (CA 2015a).
- 2.4 The site is first depicted in detail on the 1840 Tithe map for Highworth. At this time, it occupied part of a single agricultural field recorded as The Leaze and Road (pasture) in the accompanying Tithe Apportionment Register. No buildings or other features of note are depicted within the site, although the trackway which runs along the southern boundary of the site is depicted (*ibid.*).
- 2.5 The hotel complex located within the site incorporates a late-19th century former Vicarage. While much of the façade is extant, the building has been much-altered by its incorporation into the hotel complex in the 1980s (*ibid.*).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). This information will enable SBC 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 three trenches (Trench 1: 20m long by 3.1m wide, Trench 2: 30m long by 2m wide and Trench 3: 20m long by 2m wide), in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The trenches were set out using tapes in the locations agreed in the WSI (CA 2016) to avoid trees and OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica and surveyed using Leica GPS in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual* after excavation.
- 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. Trench 1 was widened during its excavation from 2m to 3.1m to allow the trench to be steeped due to the depth of natural substrate. 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*, but 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 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 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 & 3)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.
- 5.2 A broadly similar stratigraphy was recorded throughout the site. The natural substrate, which was encountered at a depth of 0.8 to 1.6m below present ground

level (bpgl), comprised blue-grey clay. It was overlain by subsoil, most probably a silty clay relict plough soil (typically between 0.3 and 0.48m thick), that was in turn sealed by a 0.35m to 1m thick layer of made ground, which consisted of modern mixed clay and builder's rubble. In Trenches 1 and 2 this was in turn sealed by a 0.14m thick topsoil.

- 5.3 Furrows were identified in all three trenches. Precise orientations for the furrows could not be defined, though they were broadly orientated north-east/south-west in Trench 3, and north-west/south-east in Trenches 1 and 2. Their fills were identical to the overlying relict plough soil. No further features were identified in Trench 3.

Trench 1

- 5.4 Close to the northern extent of Trench 1 the terminus of north/south orientated ditch 106 was revealed sealed beneath relict plough soil 103 (Fig. 3, section AA and photograph). It was broadly parallel to the furrows identified immediately to the west and had a clear rounded northern buttend. It contained clay fill 105, from which four very small, abraded sherds of Iron Age pottery were retrieved along with an undated flint flake.

Trench 2

- 5.5 In the western extent of Trench 2 two undated, parallel north/south orientated ditches (205 and 207) were identified sealed below relict plough soil 203. These ditches were not parallel to the furrows identified in Trenches 2 and 3. They both contained similar clay fills, 206 and 208 respectively. Ditch 205 was clearly defined (Fig. 3, section BB and photograph), whilst ditch 207 was more ephemeral and faded out within the confines of the trench.
- 5.6 To the east of the ditches was an irregular depression with gently sloping sides, containing undated clay layer 209. Its clean, homogenous nature suggests that this deposit is a remnant of relict soil predating the relict plough soil 203

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1 Artefactual material recovered during the evaluation is listed in Appendix B and discussed further below.

Pottery

- 6.2 A total of 4 sherds (5.3g) of Iron Age date were recorded from fill 105 of ditch 106. The pottery is abraded and highly fragmented with a mean sherd weight of 1.3g. The sherds are all of a fine micaceous fabric and are of a probable local source.

Lithics

- 6.3 One piece of worked flint, weighing 1.4g, was recovered from fill 105 of ditch 106. The flake has no diagnostic features that could indicate date or function.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The relict plough soil and the underlying features were relatively well preserved below a substantial dump of modern made ground, the latter most probably associated with renovation/building works within the hotel grounds during the late 20th century (see Fig 3, photo of southern bulk of Trench 1).
- 7.2 The ditches and furrows in all trenches are of broadly southwest-northeast alignment, which accords with the general layout of fields illustrated on the 1886 Ordnance Survey map. If these features are related to the same field system, then it is likely that the four very small, abraded sherds of Iron Age pottery and the undated flint flake from ditch 106 are residual in latter medieval/post-medieval features. The relict soil layer 209 in Trench 2 appears to be an isolated remnant of a soil filling a hollow, possibly relating to planting also illustrated on the 1886 map.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Peter Busby, assisted by Juan Moreno and Christopher Watts. The report was written by Peter Busby. The finds report was written by Katie Marsden. The illustrations were prepared by Sam O'Leary. The archive has been compiled by Peter Busby, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman. □



9. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2016 *Geology of Britain Viewer* http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 2 March 2016

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 *Land at South Marston Hotel, Swindon, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

CA 2015a *South Marston Hotel, Swindon, Wiltshire; Heritage Desk-based Assessment* CA typescript report

CA 2015b *Land at South Marston and Rowborough, Swindon, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation*. CA typescript report **15280**

CA 2015c *Land at South Marston and Rowborough, Swindon, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation*. CA typescript report **15699**



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

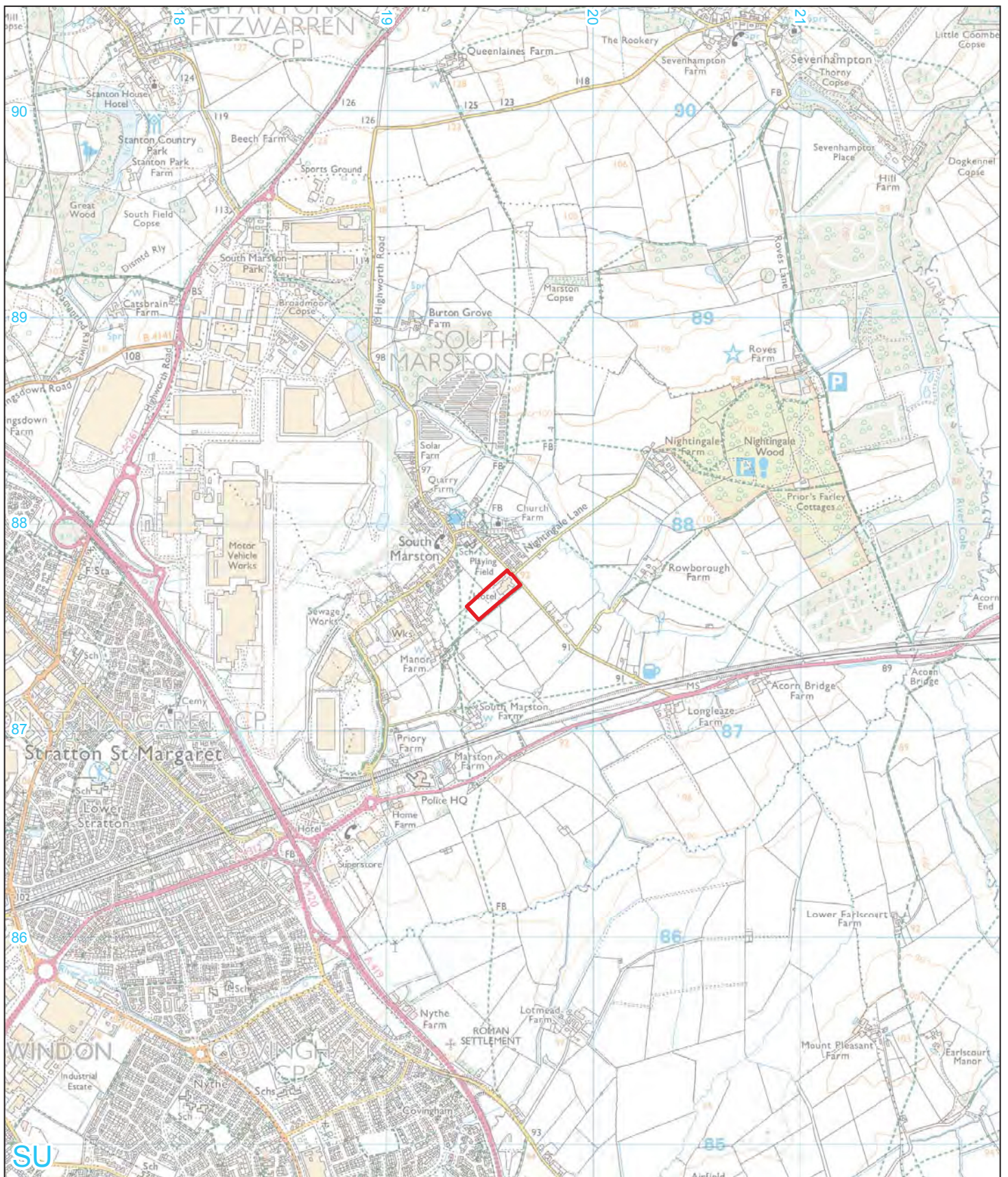
Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
1	101	Layer		Topsoil	Yellow brown silt clay	>20	>3.1	0.15	
1	102	Layer		Made ground	Layers of silt clay (various colours) with large amounts of modern building rubble, plastic etc.	>20	>3.1	1	
1	103	Layer		Relict plough soil	Dark black grey silt clay	>20	>3.1	0.45	
1	104	Layer		Natural	Yellow/blue grey clay	>20	>3.1	>0.1	
1	105	Fill	106	Ditch fill	Dark grey clay	>1.1'	0.66	0.3	IA
1	106	Cut		Ditch	N/S orientated linear in plan with a rounded northern end, moderately sloping sides and rounded base	>1.1'	0.66	0.3	
2	201	Layer		Topsoil	As 101	>30	>2	0.13	
2	202	Layer		Made ground	Light yellow brown silt clay with large amounts of modern building rubble, plastic etc	>30	>2	0.35	
2	203	Layer		Relict plough soil	Dark grey brown silt clay with 1% gravel	>30	>2	0.3	
2	204	Layer		Natural	As 104	>30	>2	>0.3	
2	205	Cut		Ditch	N/S orientated linear in plan with moderately sloping sides and slightly rounded base	>2.7	0.68	0.31	
2	206	Fill	206	Ditch fill	Brown grey silt clay	>2.7	0.68	0.31	
2	207	Cut		Ditch	N/S orientated linear in plan with a tapered N end that fades out, moderately sloping sides and slightly rounded base	>2.33	0.6	0.2	
2	208	Fill	207	Ditch fill	As 206	>2.33	0.6	0.2	
2	209	Layer		Relict soil	Brown grey clay	5.36	>2	0.35	
3	301	Layer		Made ground	As 202	>20	>2	0.78	
3	302	Layer		Relict plough soil	As 203	>20	>2	0.28	
3	303	Layer		Natural	As 104	>20	>2	>0.12	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Class	Description	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Spot-date
105	Iron Age pottery	fine micaceous	4	5.3	IA
	Worked flint	flake	1	1.4	

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land at South Marston Hotel	
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in February-March 2016 at South Marston Hotel, South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire. A total of three trenches were excavated. Three undated north/south ditches were identified along with three furrows on the same alignment. In the south of the site further furrows on a different alignment were identified.	
Project dates	29 February-1 March 2015	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	Heritage desk-based assessment	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	2.5ha	
Site co-ordinates	SU 1950 8765	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator		
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Peter Busby	
MONUMENT TYPE		
None		
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
None		
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery	Ceramics and flint
Paper	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery	Context and trench sheets, drawings
Digital	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery	Digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 Land at South Marston Hotel, South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire: <i>Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 16116		



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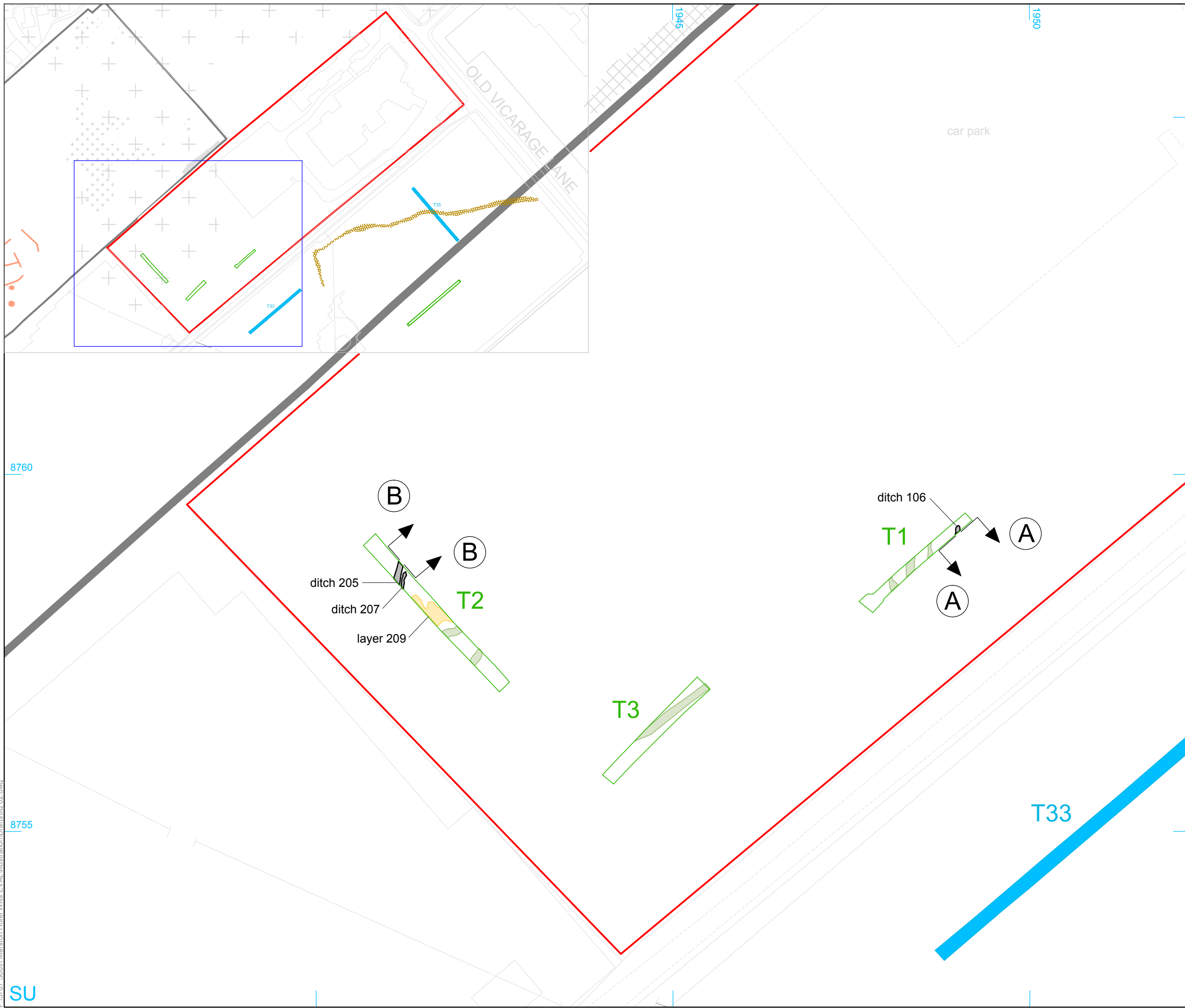
PROJECT TITLE
 Land at South Marston Hotel
 South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan



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CHECKED BY	LM	DATE	10/03/2016	
APPROVED BY	CE	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	1



- site boundary
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- layer/deposit
- furrow
- B B section location
- previous evaluation (CA 2015b)
- possible track identified as a geophysical anomaly (CA 2015b)



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PROJECT TITLE
Land at South Marston Hotel
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FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan, showing identified features and previous archaeological works

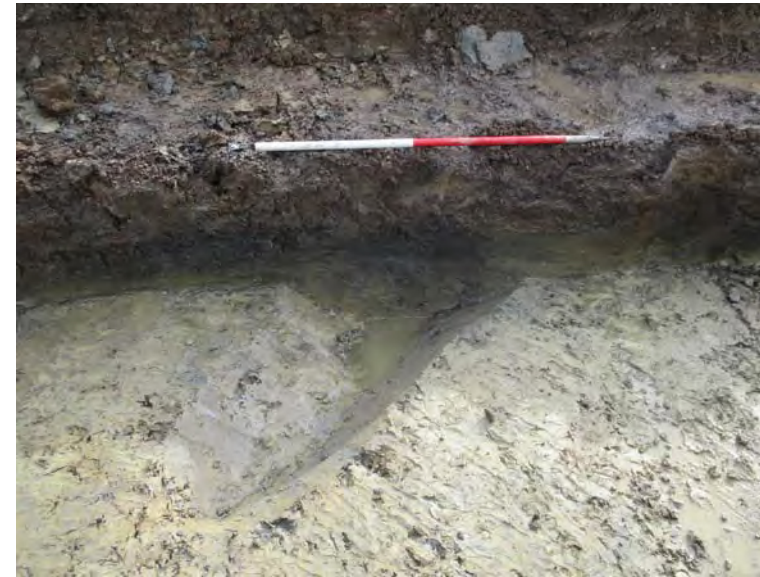
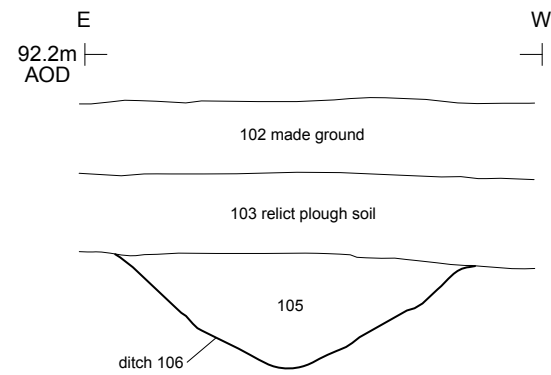
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APPROVED BY	CB	SCALE@A3	1:500 (inset 1:2500)		2

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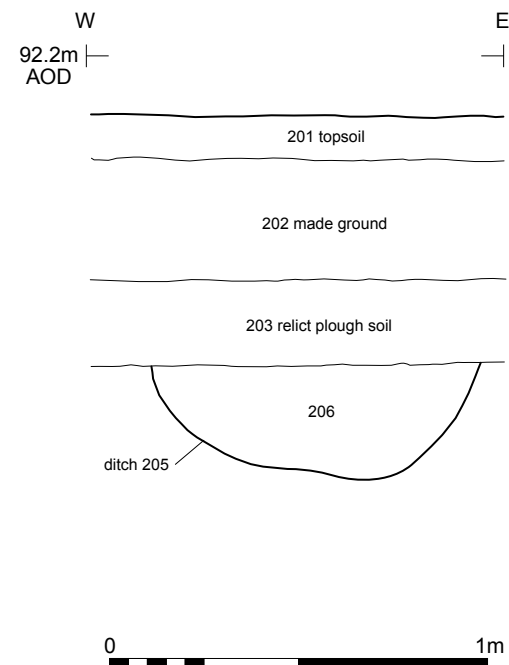


Section AA



Ditch 106 facing south-east (scale 1m)

Section BB



Ditch 205 facing north-east (scale 1m)



North-east facing baulk of Trench 1, looking south-west (scale 1m)


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PROJECT TITLE
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FIGURE TITLE
Sections and photographs

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