

Land off Whiteway View Stratton, Cirencester Gloucestershire

Archaeological Evaluation



for
W Risby Ltd

CA Project: 5878
CA Report: 16423

August 2016



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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Land off Whiteway View
Location:	Stratton, Cirencester, Gloucestershire
NGR:	SP 01972 03299
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	26-27 July 2016
Planning Reference:	Cotswolds District Council 15/03279/OUT
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Corinium Museum
Site Code:	WWV 16

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in July 2016 at Whiteway View, Stratton, Cirencester, Gloucestershire. A total of four trenches was excavated.

A small carrier leat associated with adjacent extant water-meadows, two quarry pits, three postholes and a modern animal burial were identified. The northern paddock may have been subjected to quarrying in the late 20th century.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In July 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for W Risby Ltd on land off Whiteway View, Stratton, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (centred at NGR: SP 0197 0329; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken in support of a forthcoming planning application to Cotswold District Council following comments received on a previously withdrawn application (CDC; ref: 15/03279/OUT). The archaeological works were recommended by Charles Parry, the archaeological advisor to CDC.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016a) and approved by Charles Parry. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014). It was monitored by Charles Parry.

The site

1.3 The proposed development area is approximately 0.5ha in extent and comprises open grass and scrub land on the western bank of the River Churn. The site is bounded to the north and west by residential developments, to the east by the River Churn and to the south by open land forming part of the floodplain of the Churn. The site lies at approximately 113m AOD, on flat ground.

1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Forest Marble Formation Limestone of the Jurassic Period, overlain by superficial Quaternary River Terrace Deposits (BGS 2016). The natural substrate encountered during the evaluation comprised gravel.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The application area has been subject to a Heritage Environment Desk-Based Assessment (CgMs 2015). The assessment established that no archaeological heritage assets of the highest significance (designated or nationally important) are currently recorded within the site. It also noted that there are no previously recorded non-designated heritage assets within the application area (ibid.).

- 2.2 Although recent excavations have shown that the Churn Valley was occupied in the prehistoric period (Biddulph and Welsh 2011), there is a lack of known prehistoric activity in the area immediately surrounding the site. The nearest known prehistoric monuments are a possible burial mound 950m west of the site (GHER 4948) and cropmarks showing an enclosure and trackway 950m to the south-west (GHER 33211 and 33141). A recent evaluation on land off Bowling Green Lane, 250m south-east of the current site, identified small quantities of Late Iron Age pottery that was probably residual in later features (CA 2016b).
- 2.3 The site is located 500m to the north of the Roman town of *Corinium* and 350m from a major contemporary road, Ermin Street, linking the settlement with Gloucester. The area surrounding the application area most probably formed part of the agricultural hinterland of *Corinium*, characterised by smaller settlements and farmland. A burial dating to the Roman period was excavated during development at St John's Close, 100m north-west of the site (GCCAS 2007) and Roman features have also previously been identified 250m south of the site (CA 2003). A linear ditch, possibly a Roman aqueduct linking the springs at Stratton with *Corinium*, was excavated at Bowling Green Lane (CA 2016b).
- 2.4 The site is likely to have comprised agricultural land between the settlements of Cirencester and Stratton throughout the Saxon and medieval periods, until the construction of Stratton Mill, immediately to the north of the site. The extant mill dates to the 18th century but is known to have replaced an earlier, probably medieval, mill building. Although the later mill is thought to have been built directly on top of its predecessor, the precise location of the earlier building is not known. An archaeological watching brief at Stratton Mill revealed an undated ditch, as well as a post-medieval leat channel (CA 2007). A post-medieval ditch was also identified during evaluation trenching immediately west of the current site (GCCAS 2003).
- 2.5 Much of the floodplain of the River Churn in the immediate area is characterised by the remains of bed-work water meadows. These were constructed from the 17th century onwards and comprise a series of narrow land parcels that are irrigated by drainage ditches fed by the river. Extant earthworks associated with these meadows are visible on both banks of the river immediately to the south and east of the site.

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* (CIfA 2014). This information will enable CDC 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 four trenches in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). With the approval of Charles Parry the location and length of the trenches was varied from that shown in the WSI due to the presence of Japanese Knotweed and the depth of modern overburden (Trenches 3 and 4), suspected asbestos (Trench 3), and live services and a public footpath (Trench 1). Trench 1 was 17.5m long, Trench 2 was 28m long, Trench 3 was 6m long and Trench 4 was 10m long, all measured 2m in width. The trenches were set out to best avoid the constraints of the site and then located 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. The exception being Trench 3 which was abandoned when suspected asbestos was identified in the modern rubble overburden. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*, with the exception of Trenches 3 and 4 where the trenches were over 2m deep and were cut through unstable deposits. In those trenches, observations and recording was made from the sides of the trench.

- 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 identified artefacts were dated to the 20th century and were not retained.
- 4.4 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble prior to deposition with the Corinium Museum, Cirencester. 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 There was a marked difference in the identified stratigraphic sequence between the northern and southern fields. The natural gravels were encountered at a depth 0.4m below present ground level (bpgl; 113.1 AOD) in the southern field (Trenches 1 and 2) and at 3m bpgl (110.99m AOD) in Trench 4 (northern field). In Trenches 1 and 2, the gravel was overlain by a 0.26m thick silty clay, which in turn was sealed by up to 0.2m of topsoil.
- 5.3 In Trench 4, the natural gravel was overlain by c. 0.35m of light yellow brown gravelly clay, 4004, which in turn was overlain by 0.35m thick silty clay 4003. These soils were sealed by possible relict topsoil 4002, which was subsequently sealed by 2.1m of modern building rubble.
- 5.4 The only artefacts recovered during the current works were modern, consisting of plastic, 20th-century ceramics and builders waste from the modern dumping in Trenches 3 and 4 and 20th-century ceramics from the topsoil in Trenches 1 and 2. None of this material was retained.

Trench 1 (Figs. 2 & 3)

- 5.5 Trench 1 was divided into two parts by a public footpath that was located in a shallow north/south aligned earthwork associated with either the water meadows or

a former course of the smaller leat associated with Stratton Mill. The western extent of the trench was located across a further north/south orientated earthwork, 1010, sited on the crest of a water-meadow bed. It was 0.52m wide, 0.16m deep and contained a single dark grey brown clay fill, 1009 from which no artefacts were recovered (Fig. 3). To the east, modern animal burial 1014 was identified. Both features cut through the subsoil and were sealed by topsoil (Figs 2 & 3).

- 5.6 The eastern extent of the trench was located on flat ground outwith the water-meadow earthworks and to the west of a large mill leat associated with Stratton Mill (Fig. 2). Three undated postholes, 104, 106 and 108, were identified sealed by subsoil 1001. All were circular in plan and measured between 0.28m and 0.45m in diameter and up to 0.09m deep. They contained similar grey brown fills and formed no obvious pattern (see Fig. 2 for locations and extent).

Trench 2 (Figs 2 & 3)

- 5.7 Two sub-circular quarry pits, 2007 and 2009, were identified in the centre of the Trench 2 cutting the natural gravels and sealed by subsoil (Fig. 2).
- 5.8 Quarry pit 2007 was at least 3.2m wide, 0.93m deep and had well defined vertical sides and a flat base (Fig. 3; section AA and photograph). It contained four fills, 2003 to 2006 inclusive, the earliest of which, 2006, consisted of silty clay. The lack of gravel in this primary deposit suggests that the feature was most probably deliberately infilled before gravel could erode from the sides. Overlying fills 2005 and 2004 comprised re-deposited gravels and loose voided limestone rubble respectively, suggestive of intentional backfill deposits. The final fill in the sequence, 2003, comprised a silty clay comparable to the overlying subsoil that most probably represents the natural infilling of the quarry depression.
- 5.9 Pit 2007 was cut at its northern extent by pit 2009. The latter measured at least 2.6m in diameter and was in turn cut by a modern water pipe. Given the size and shape of pits, 2007 and 2009, it seems likely that they are gravel pits.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2)

- 5.10 North-west/south-east orientated ditch 3003 was observed cutting relict topsoil 3001 at a depth of 2.4m bpgl, sealed by modern building rubble 3000. It was not possible to investigate this feature further due to the depth of the trench and poor stability of its sides.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The earliest features identified were three shallow postholes and two gravel pits located in Trenches 1 and 2, all of which remained artefactually undated but were sealed by subsoil. All of these features lay between extant earthworks associated with the water meadows and a former leat leading from Stratton Mill.
- 6.2 The water-meadows to the west of the River Churn survive as well defined earthworks comprising main carrier leats, smaller carriers running along the crests of the beds, and drains and bottom carriers to take the water away. Cutting the subsoil in Trench 1 was earthwork 1010 that formed one of the north/south orientated small carrier leats that previously delivered water across the surface of the water-meadow. Immediately to the east, the line of the current footpath followed a linear depression along the eastern edge of the same water-meadow system, although the possibility that it forms a relict course associated with the smaller leat leading from Stratton Mill cannot be discounted (see Fig. 2). No evidence to date the water-meadow system was recovered.
- 6.3 Two leats associated with Stratton Mill survive within the site, but due to the presence of trees, stone walls and Japanese Knotweed it was not possible to investigate either. A small mill leat runs along the western and southern boundaries of the northern paddock with a larger leat forming the eastern boundary of the site. Both are depicted on historic mapping.
- 6.4 There is a pronounced difference, in excess of 2.4m, at which the natural gravel was encountered between the northern and southern fields. This indicates the presence of a large depression downstream, and to the south, of Stratton Mill. As no organic rich deposits were exposed sealing the natural gravels in Trench 4, it seems unlikely that the feature is representative of a former pond or water course, rather it is interpreted as further evidence for gravel extraction. Quarrying is depicted in the immediate area on historic cartographic sources, although no evidence has been noted for quarrying activity in this location, nor for the possible ditch identified cutting the relict topsoil within the feature.
- 6.5 The northern field also contained extensive deposits of modern building waste that had infilled the redundant quarry and raised the modern ground surface approximately 0.5m above that identified to the south. The possibility that the

quarrying activity & the modern dumping are broadly contemporary, and certainly later 20th century in origin, should not be overlooked.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Peter Busby, assisted by Greg Crees and Peter Searle. The report was written by Peter Busby. The illustrations were prepared by Daniel Bashford. 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.

8. REFERENCES

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GCCAS 2007 *An Archaeological Excavation at 9 St Johns Close, Stratton, Gloucestershire.*

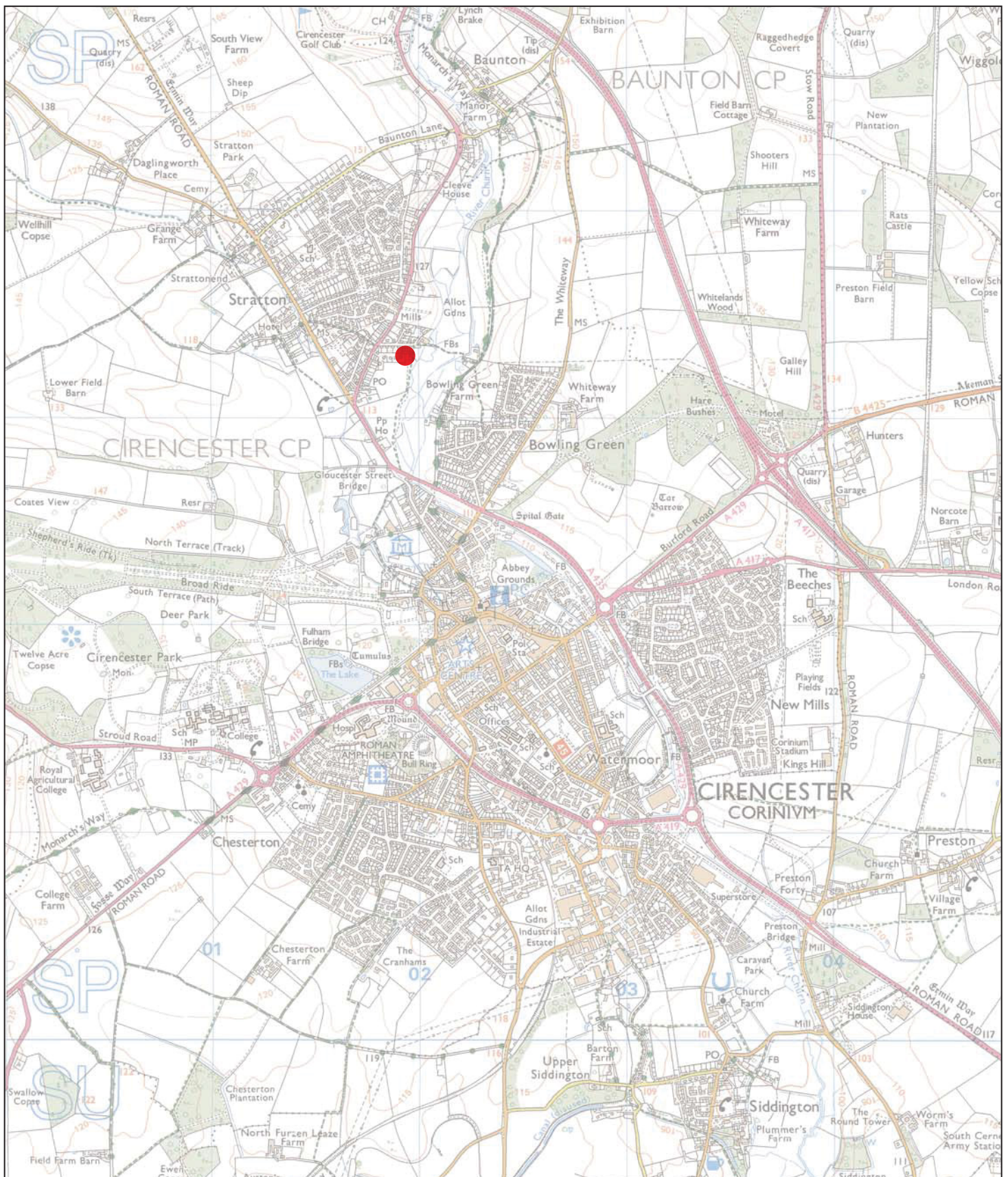


APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
1	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Grey brown clay silt	>17.4	>1.8	0.14
1	1001	Layer		Subsoil	Orange brown clay silt with 5% gravel	>17.4	>1.8	0.26
1	1002	Layer		Natural	Yellow brown sandy limestone gravel	>17.4	>1.8	>0.25
1	1003	Fill	1004	Posthole fill	Grey brown silt sand	-	0.3	0.02
1	1004	Cut		Posthole	Circular in plan with shallow sides and concave base	-	0.3	0.02
1	1005	Fill	1006	Posthole fill	As 1003	-	0.28	0.02
1	1006	Cut		Posthole	As 1004	-	0.28	0.02
1	1007	Fill	1008	Posthole fill	As 1003	-	0.45	0.09
1	1008	Cut		Posthole	As 1004	-	0.45	0.09
1	1009	Fill	1010	Small carrier fill	Dark grey brown clay silt with 1% charcoal flecks	>2	0.52	0.16
1	1010	Cut		Small carrier	N/S linear in plan with moderate sloping sides and rounded base	>2	0.52	0.16
1	1011	Fill	1012	Foul drain fill	-			
1	1012	Cut		Foul drain	N/S linear in plan, not excavated			
1	1013	Fill	1014	Animal burial fill	Yellow grey/brown clay silt with 10% animal bone	1.8	>0.51	>0.25
1	1014	Cut		Animal burial fill	Sub-circular in plan, not excavated	1.8	>0.51	>0.25
2	2000	Layer		Topsoil	As 1000	>28	>1.8	0.14
2	2001	Layer		Subsoil	As 1001	>28	>1.8	0.26
2	2002	Layer		Natural	As 1003	>28	>1.8	>0.93
2	2003	Fill	2007	Upper quarry pit fill	Grey brown silt clay with 5% gravel	2.83	>1.8	>0.18
2	2004	Fill	2007	3 rd quarry pit fill	Voided, orange brown silt clay with 50% angular limestone stones/boulders	>1.8	>0.88	>0.41
2	2005	Fill	2007	2 nd quarry pit fill	Light/mid orange brown clay silt gravel	>1.05	>0.72	0.82
2	2006	Fill	2007	1st quarry pit fill	Dark grey brown silt clay	>1.8	>0.72	0.14
2	2007	Cut		Quarry pit	Sub-circular in plan with vertical sides and flat base	3.18	>1.8	0.93
2	2008	Fill	2009	Quarry pit fill	As 2003	2.6	>1.2	-
2	2009	Cut		Quarry pit fill	Sub-circular in plan, not excavated	2.6	>1.2	-
3	3000	Layer		Dump	Mixed deposit brown/yellow silt clay with 25% assorted builders waste including plastic, rubble, asbestos	>6	>2	1.65
3	3001	Layer		Subsoil	Brown yellow sand clay	>6	>2	>0.25
3	3002	Fill	3003	Linear fill	Dark black brown silt clay	>2	>0.6	-
3	3003	Cut		Linear	NW/SE liner in plan, only surface excavated by machine	>2	>0.6	-
4	4000	Layer		Dump	Mixed yellow/grey/blackish brown silt clay with 25% assorted builders waste including plastic and electric wire	>10	>2	1.8
4	4001	Layer		Dump	Brown yellow limestone brash	>10	>2	0.3
4	4002	Layer		Possible relict topsoil	Grey brown clay silt	>10	>2	0.2
4	4003	Layer		Soil	Light yellow brown silt clay	>10	>2	0.35
4	4004	Layer		Soil	Light yellow brown slightly gravelly silt clay	>10	>2	0.35
4	4005	Layer		Natural	Yellow gravel	>10	>2	-

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land off Whiteway View	
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in July 2016 at Whiteway View, Stratton, Cirencester, Gloucestershire. A total of four trenches was excavated. A small carrier leat from a bedwork water-meadow, two quarry pits, three postholes and a modern animal burial were identified. The northern paddock may have been subjected to quarrying in the late 20th century.	
Project dates	26-27 July 2016	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	Not known	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Stratton, Cirencester, Gloucestershire	
Study area	0.52ha	
Site co-ordinates	SP 01972 03299	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	none	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Peter Busby	
MONUMENT TYPE		
	Water Meadow	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical		None
Paper	Corinium Museum	Context and trench sheets, drawings
Digital	Corinium Museum	Digital photos and drawings
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 <i>Land off Whiteway View, Stratton, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 16423		



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 826185
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

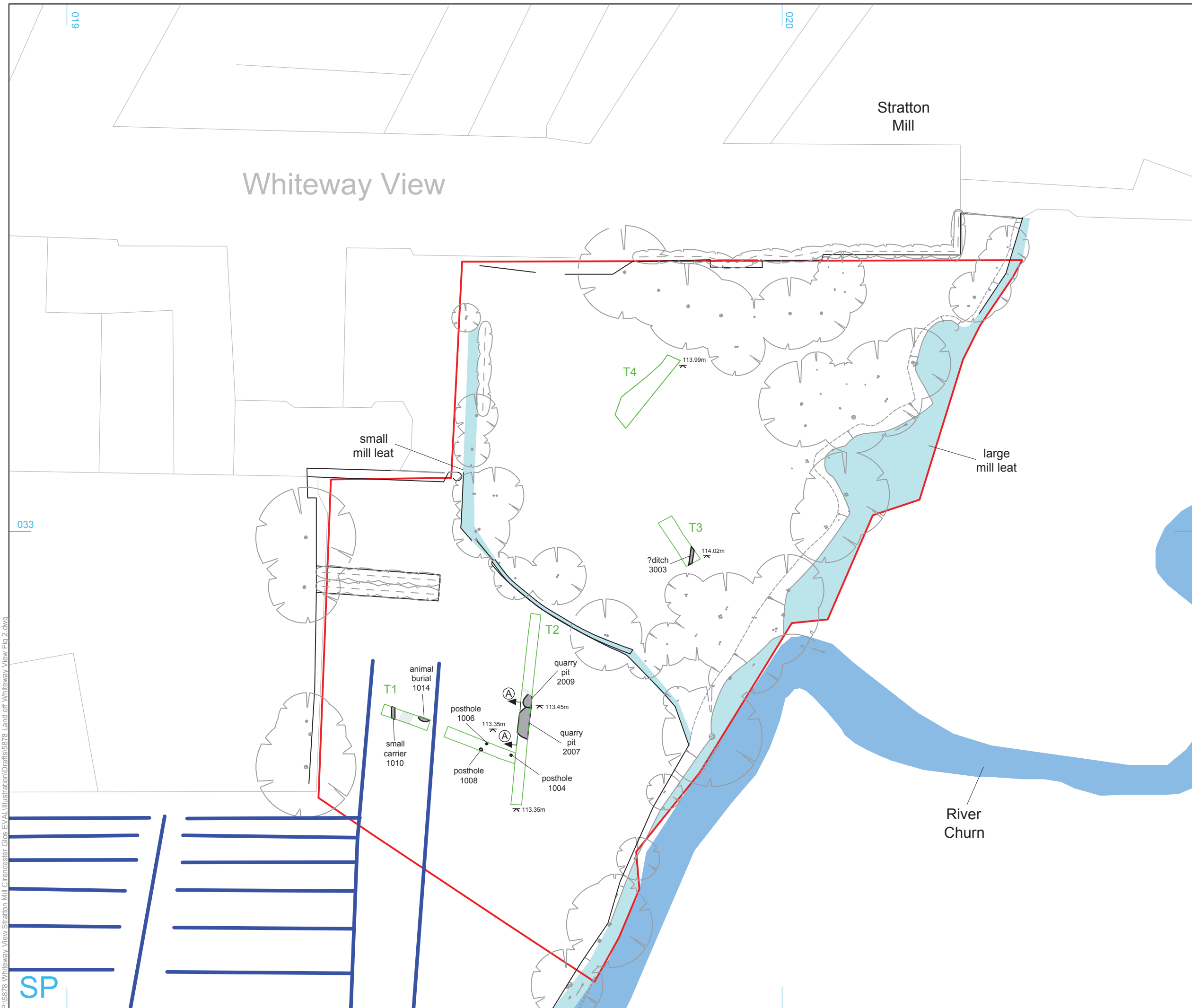
PROJECT TITLE
 Land of Whitway View, Stratton
 Cirencester, Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

0 1km

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CHECKED BY	LM	DATE	02-08-2016	
APPROVED BY	PB	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	1



- site boundary
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- modern
- leat
- water meadow earthworks after CgMs 2015)



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Cotswold Archaeology
 Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 826185
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

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 Land off Whiteway View, Stratton
 Cirencester, Gloucester

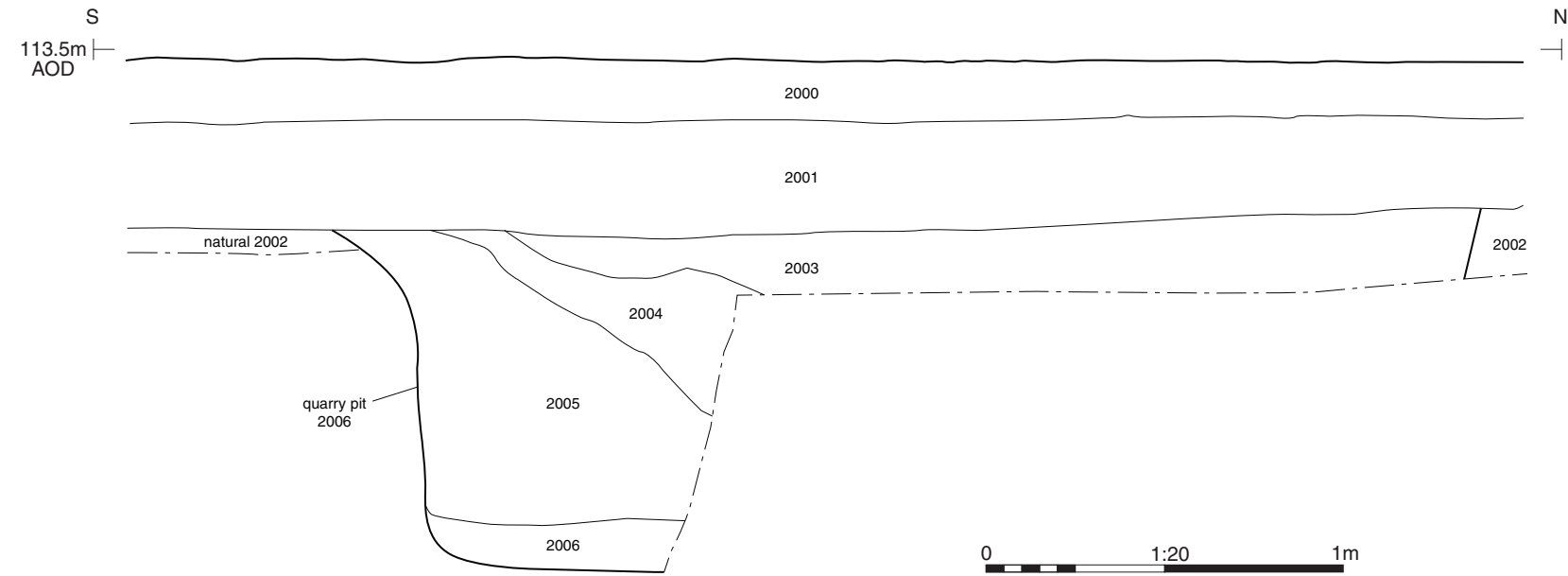
FIGURE TITLE
 Trench location plan showing
 identified archaeological features

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APPROVED BY	PB	SCALE@A3	1:500	

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SP

Section AA



East-facing section through quarry pit 2007 (scale 1m)



North-west-facing section through small carrier 1010 (scale 1m)



The northern end of Trench 4, facing north-east (scale 1m)


Cotswold Archaeology
 Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 826185
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
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 Cirencester, Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE
Trench 2: section and photograph
Trenches 1 and 4: photograph

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CHECKED BY	LM	DATE	02-08-2016	3
APPROVED BY	PB	SCALE	A3 1:20	

Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Kemble Enterprise Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Exeter Office

Unit 53
Basepoint Business Centre
Yeoford Way
Marsh Barton Trading Estate
Exeter
EX2 8LB

t: 01392 826185

Milton Keynes Office

41 Burners Lane South
Kiln Farm
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK11 3HA

t: 01908 564660

