Cotswold Archaeology

Land at Keypoint Thornhill Road South Marston Swindon

Archaeological Evaluation

for
Pegasus Planning Group

on behalf of
Rolton Kilbride Ltd

CA Project: 5998
CA Report: 16454

August 2016

Andover Cirencester Exeter Milton Keynes

Land at Keypoint
Thornhill Road
South Marston
Swindon

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 5998
CA Report: 16454

Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	25/08/2016	D.Sausins	Ian Barnes	Internal review	Client comment	

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

SUMMARY

Project Name:	Land at Keypoint, Thornhill Road
Location:	South Marston, Swindon
NGR:	SU 18563 86811
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	9-10 August 2016
Planning Reference:	Swindon Borough Council ref: S/16/1055
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Swindon Museum & Art Gallery
Accession Number:	SWIMG:2016.41
Site Code:	KEY 16

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2016 at Keypoint, Thornhill Road, South Marston, Swindon. A total of six trenches were excavated.

Modern disturbance was identified in all trenches. A tree throw, from which sherds of Iron Age pottery, a flint flake and animal bone was recovered, was identified in the south of site.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Pegasus Planning Group, on behalf of Rolton Kilbride Ltd, at land at Keypoint, Thornhill Road, South Marston, Swindon (centred on NGR: SU 18563 86811; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany a planning application made to Swindon Borough Council (SBC; planning reference S/16/1055) for the erection of a renewable energy centre with associated plant, infrastructure, warehouse and vehicular access. It was recommended by Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council), the archaeological advisor to SBC.

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

The site

1.3 The proposed development is approximately 3.29ha in extent, and comprises part of a large field under meadow. It is bounded to the south by the Great Western Railway, to the east and north by an unnamed service road (which runs to the sewage works to the north) and to the west by a small area of agricultural land, beyond which lies the A419. The site is broadly level at approximately 103m AOD, falling to 101m AOD at the northern extent of the site.

1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Ampthill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation (undifferentiated) – Mudstone of the Jurassic Period. No superficial deposits are noted (BGS 2016). The natural substrate comprising clay was identified during the evaluation.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 A Desk-Based Assessment (DBA; CA 2016b) and geophysical survey (PCG 2016) have been completed for the site. The results of these assessments are briefly summarised below.

2.2 The site is located within a landscape of well documented probable later-prehistoric and Roman activity and settlement. Archaeological investigation undertaken *c.*450m to the east of the site recorded a complex of features, likely to be of Iron Age/Romano-British date. An undated round barrow, tentatively attributed to the Late Neolithic/Bronze Age period, is located approximately 960m south-east of site and Mesolithic flint knapping debris approximately 570m to the south of site (CA 2016b).

2.4 The site of a Roman Town, designated as a Scheduled Monument (Ref 1004684), is located approximately 830m south of site. Ermin Street Roman road passes *c.*400m south-west of the site at its nearest point. An associated roadside Roman town (*c.*850m south of the site) is generally interpreted to be *Durocornovium*: this settlement is noted to have been occupied from the mid-1st century, though reached its peak in the period AD 244-367.

2.5 The village of South Marston (*c.*1km to the north-east of the site) is medieval in origin. The environs of the site are known to contain evidence of ridge and furrow and house platforms. During the evaluation undertaken at the Honda Works *c.*860m north of the site, at least three human skeletons of medieval date were recorded along with undated features comprising a pit and three ditches.

2.6 A *Highworth Circle* is recorded approximately 540m south of site. This is a feature type typically interpreted as prehistoric, hengiform enclosures or as a form of medieval stock management.

2.7 On the Stratton St Margaret Enclosure Map (dated 1796) the site is depicted across four fields. By the 19th century the two central fields have been amalgamated into one.

2.8 Aerial photographs of the site dated to between 1998 and 2002 show considerable disturbance within both the north and south of site . The geophysical survey (PCG 2016) identified this modern disturbance, but did not detect any archaeological activity.

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 the 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 six trenches, each measuring 30m in length and 2m in width, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). 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 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 under accession number SWIMG:2016.41, 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 The natural substrate consisted of clay with gravel inclusions and was typically revealed at 0.4m below present ground level (bpgl). Evidence of modern disturbance was observed in all trenches. Marks associated with toothed machine buckets, wheel ruts (both tyre and cleated tracks) and wooden planks were all identified disturbing natural substrate. These were overlain by approximately 0.3m of modern made ground, which was in turn sealed by 0.1m of vegetation. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified within Trenches 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6.

5.2 Tree-throw 402 was partially exposed, and was noted to be irregular in plan and profile indicative of such features. It measured at least 2m in diameter and 0.2m in depth. It contained silt fill 403 from which, 36 sherds of Iron Age pottery, worked flint and animal bone was recovered.

6. THE FINDS

6.1 Artefactual material from evaluation was hand-recovered from one tree throw fill. The recovered material dates to the prehistoric period. Quantities of the artefact types recorded are given in Appendix B. The pottery has been recorded according to sherd count/weight per fabric.

Pottery: Late prehistoric

6.2 Pottery from this date range was retrieved from fill 403 of tree throw 402. The pottery comprises a total of 36 unfeatured bodysherds (202g) in fine and medium quartz-tempered fabrics (QZF, QZ). In the absence of decoration or identifiable form, these sherds are dated to the Iron Age on the basis of fabric and firing characteristics. This small assemblage has been well broken up; the average sherd weight of 6g reflects this. In terms of surface preservation and edge abrasion, condition ranges from poor/moderate (for the coarser fabric) to moderate/good (for the finer fabric).

Lithics

6.3 Fill 403 of tree throw 402 produced a redeposited, retouched flake of good quality . The left hand side of the distal dorsal edge featured very fine, nibbled retouch. This is not a diagnostic tool and is, therefore, of broad prehistoric date.

7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Animal Bone

7.1 Animal bones amounting to 25 fragments (100g) were recovered from fill 403 of tree throw 402. The material was highly fragmented and poorly preserved, rendering 72% of the bone unidentifiable to species. However, it was possible to confirm the presence of cattle (*Bos taurus*), sheep/goat (*Ovis aries*/*Capra hircus*) and horse (*Equus callabas*), each identified from loose molar teeth. These species have been commonly exploited as domestic animals since the Late Bronze Age (Baker and Worley, 2014), and as such their presence is to be expected. But due to the low recovery of identifiable fragments, no further inference can be drawn beyond species identification.

8. DISCUSSION

8.1 The evaluation identified extensive modern disturbance across the site, consistent with the results of the preceding geophysical survey and aerial photography (see archaeological background).

8.2 A range of prehistoric material was recovered from a tree-throw in the south of site. However, the machine and tyre marks observed upon natural substrate surface suggest significant truncation occurred during the process of removal of the original topsoil/subsoil horizons and subsequent deposition of made ground. As such, there are a number of factors which indicate archaeological asset survival is likely to be limited, rather than supporting that activity did not extend into the site.

9. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Sausins, assisted by Gary Baddeley and Noel Boothroyd. The report was written by Daniel Sausins. The finds and biological

evidence reports were written by Jacky Sommerville and Andrew Clarke respectively. The illustrations were prepared by Sam O'Leary. The archive has been compiled by Daniel Sausins, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young and Ian Barnes.

10. REFERENCES

Baker, P. and Worley, F. 2014 *Animal bones and archaeology: Guidelines for best practice* Swindon, English Heritage

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2016 *Geology of Britain Viewer* http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 1 August 2016

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016a *Land at Keypoint, Thornhill Road, South Marston, Swindon: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

CA 2016b *Renewable Energy Centre, Keypoint, Swindon: Heritage Assessment.*

Pre-Construct Geophysics (PCG) 2016 *Archaeological Geophysical Survey: Renewable Energy Centre, Keypoint, Swindon*

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Vegetation	Mid brown loamy clay			0.05	
1	101	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid-light yellow-white silt clay				
2	200	Layer		Vegetation	Mid brown loamy clay			0.04	
2	201	Layer		Made ground	Stone scalping's and yellow-blue silt clay			0.2	
2	202	Layer		Made ground	Dark blue-grey clay with patches of orange sandy clay with brick			0.45	
2	203	Layer		Natural substrate	Light-mid brown-orange sandy clay with dark blue-grey clay				
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loamy clay			0.15	
3	301	Layer		Made ground	Orange-brown clay	15.4		0.3	
3	302	Layer		Natural substrate	Yellow brown with light grey brown clay				
3	303	Layer		Made ground	Yellow-brown sand and gravel	14.6		0.4	
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy silt clay			0.22	
4	401	Layer		Made ground	Yellow-brown clay			0.15	
4	402	Cut		Tree-throw	Irregular in plan and profile	>2.0	>1.2	0.2	
4	403	Fill	402	Tree-throw fill	Mid-dark brown-grey with red-brown streaks sandy silt clay	>2.0	>1.2	0.2	
4	404	Layer		Natural substrate	Light yellow brown and grey-brown clay with gravel				
5	500	Layer		Vegetation	Mid brown loamy clay			0.05	
5	501	Layer		Made ground	Loose mid grey-brown with orange mottling clay silt			0.4	
5	502	Layer		Natural substrate	Light-mid brown-orange sandy clay with dark blue-grey clay				
6	600	Layer		Vegetation	Mid brown loamy clay			0.04	
6	601	Layer		Made ground	Stone scalping's and grey brown clay silt	>8.0		0.5	
6	602	Layer		Made ground	Loose mid grey-brown with orange mottling clay silt	>22.0		0.4	
6	603	Layer		Natural substrate	Light-mid brown-orange sandy clay with dark blue-grey clay				

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Table 1: Concordance of pottery.

Context	Category	Description	Fabric Code	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
403	Late prehistoric pottery Late prehistoric pottery Worked flint Fired clay Burnt stone	Fine quartz-tempered fabric Quartz-tempered fabric Flake	QZF QZ	10 26 1 3 1	107 95 23 2 13	IA

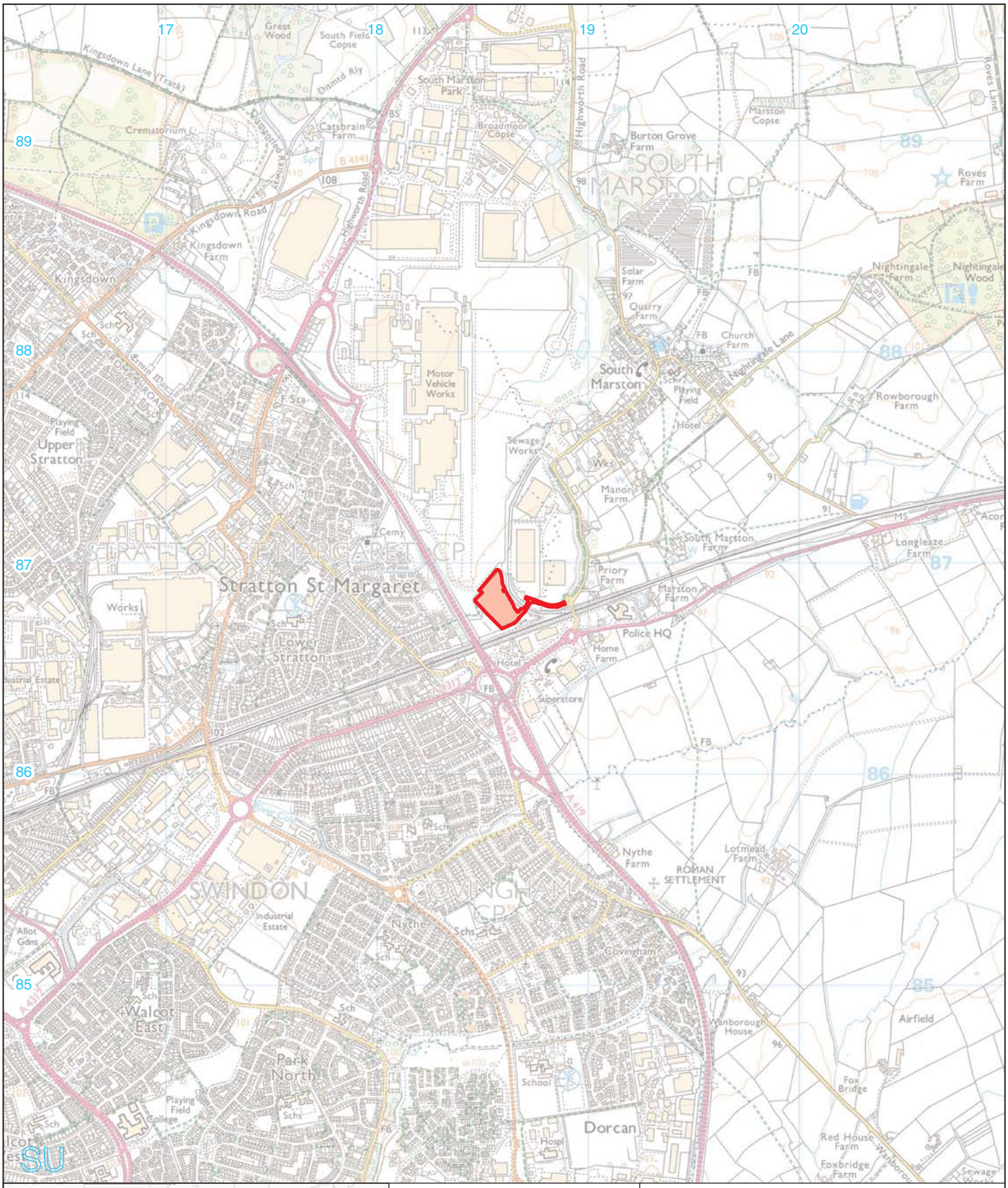
Table 2: Identified animal species by fragment count (NISP) and weight and context.

Cut	Fill	BOS	O/C	EQ	Ind	Total	Weight (g)
402	403	3	1	3	18	25	100
Total		**3**	**1**	**3**	**18**	**25**	
Weight		**15**	**3**	**53**	**29**	**100**	

BOS = cattle; O/C = sheep/goat; EQ = horse; Ind = indeterminate

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land at Keypoint, Thornhill Road, South Marston, Swindon	
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2016 at Keypoint, Thornhill Road, South Marston, Swindon. A total of six trenches were excavated. Modern disturbance was identified in all trenches. A tree throw pit, from which, sherds of Iron Age pottery, one a flint flake and animal bone was recovered, was identified in the south of the site. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed	
Project dates	9 – 10 August 2016	
Project type	Field Evaluation	
Previous work	Desk Based Assessment; Cotswold Archaeology 2016 Geophysical Survey; Pre-Construct Geophysics 2016	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Thornhill Road, South Marston, Swindon	
Study area (M^2/ha)	3.29ha	
Site co-ordinates	SU 18563 86811	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	n/a	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young/ Ian Barnes	
Project Supervisor	Daniel Sausins	
MONUMENT TYPE	none	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	none	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery SWIMG:2016.41	Ceramics, animal bone, flint
Paper	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery SWIMG:2016.41	Context sheets, trench sheets, photo registers, section drawing
Digital	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery SWIMG:2016.41	Database, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 *Land at Keypoint, Thornhill Road, South Marston, Swindon: Archaeological Evaluation*. CA typescript report **16454**		



N

0 1km

Cotswold Archaeology

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

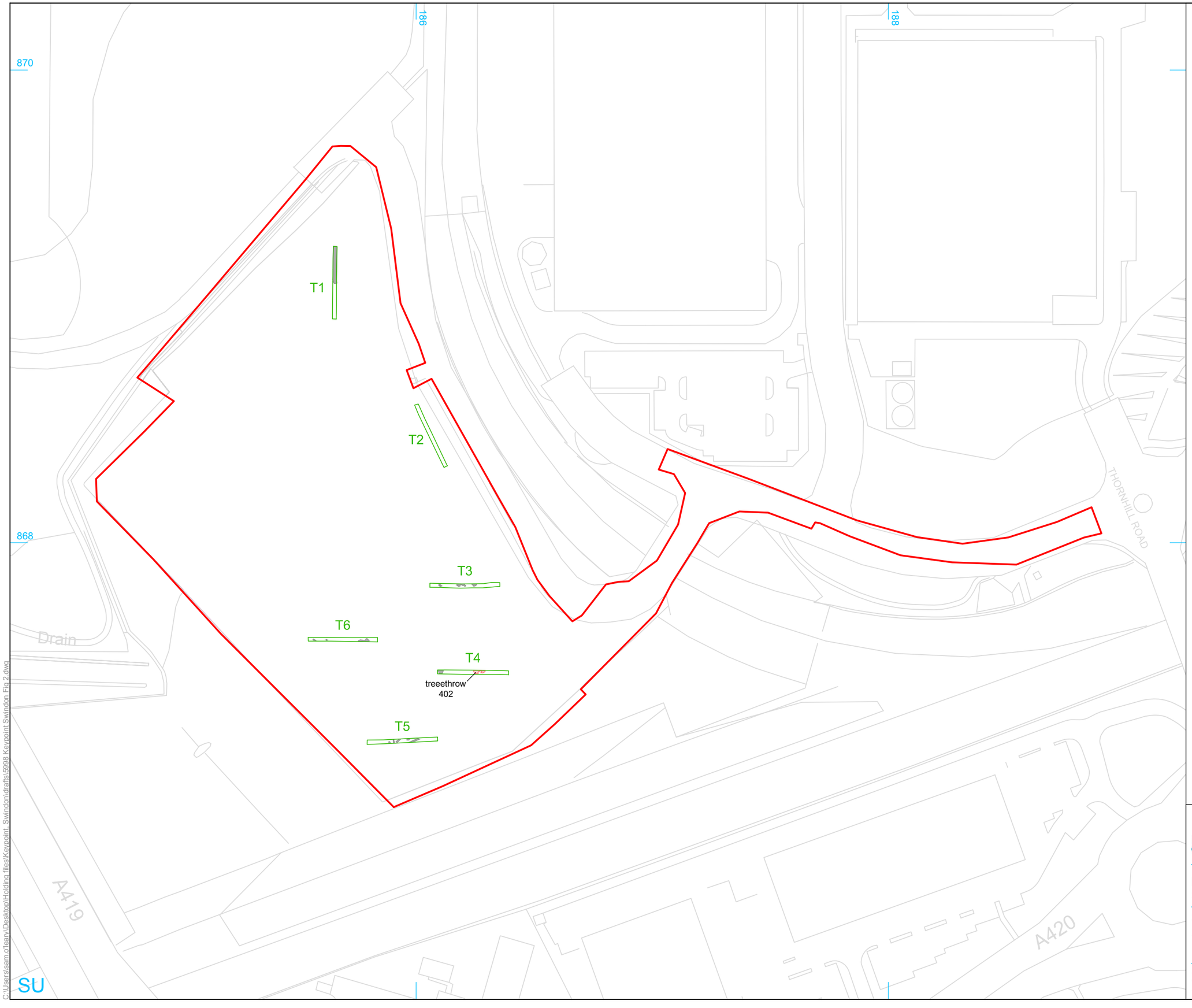
PROJECT TITLE

Land at Keypoint, Thornhill Road
South Marston, Swindon

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

DRAWN BY	**SO**	*PROJECT NO.*	**5998**	*FIGURE NO.*
CHECKED BY	**LM**	*DATE*	**12/08/2016**	**1**
APPROVED BY	**RY**	*SCALE@A4*	**1:25,000**	



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

PROJECT TITLE
Land at Keypoint, Thornhill Road
South Marston, Swindon

FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan showing treethrow 402

DRAWN BY	SO	PROJECT NO.	5998	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	LM	DATE	12/08/2016	2
APPROVED BY	RY	SCALE@A3	1:1,500	

C:\Users\sam.oteam\Desktop\Holding files\Keypoint, Swindon\drafts\5998 Keypoint Swindon Fig 2.dwg

Tyre marks on natural, looking north (scale 1m)

Treethrow 402 pre-excavation, looking west (scales 1m)

Section through treethrow 402, looking north (scale 1m)

Cotswold Archaeology

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

PROJECT TITLE

Land at Keypoint, Thornhill Road
South Marston, Swindon

FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

DRAWN BY	**SO**	*PROJECT NO.*	**5998**	*FIGURE NO.*
CHECKED BY	**LM**	*DATE*	**12/08/2016**	**3**
APPROVED BY	**RY**			

Cotswold Archaeology

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

e: enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk