

Batts Combe Quarry, Warrens Hill Cheddar Somerset

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Hanson UK

CA Project: 880151
CA Report: 16545

January 2017



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Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)

Fig. 2 The site showing location of observed groundworks (1:2000)



SUMMARY

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Project Name: | Batts Combe Quarry |
| Location: | Warrens Hill, Cheddar, Somerset |
| NGR: | ST 4703 5549 |
| Type: | Watching Brief |
| Date: | 19 – 28 September 2016 |
| Planning Reference: | Somerset County Council ref: 1/17/15/059 |
| Location of Archive: | To be deposited with the Somerset Museum Service |
| Accession Number: | TTNCM 107/2016 |
| Site Code: | BCQ 16 |

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the extension of the quarry waste tip at Batts Combe Quarry, Warrens Hill, Cheddar, Somerset.

While no features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, bodysherds of Early to Middle Bronze Age pottery and worked flint dating from the Mesolithic to the Early Bronze Age were recovered from the subsoil.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Hanson UK at Batts Combe Quarry, Warrens Hill, Cheddar (centred on NGR: ST 4703 5549; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil Condition 23 attached to the planning consent for an extension to a quarry waste tip, as submitted to Somerset County Council (SCC; Planning ref: 1/17/04/059).
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016) and approved by Steve Membury, Senior Historic Environment Officer, South West Heritage Trust (the archaeological advisor to SCC). The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014).

The site

- 1.3 The proposed development area is 8ha in extent, and comprises pasture to the north-east of the current quarry area, itself set c2km to the north of Cheddar. The site lies at approximately 255m AOD at its north-eastern extent, sloping to 245m AOD at its south-western extent.
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Burrington Oolite Subgroup – Limestone of the Carboniferous Period. No superficial deposits were noted (BGS 2016). The natural clay substrate was exposed across the area of observed groundworks.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site has not been subject to previous archaeological assessment. As such, the following is a summary of evidence from the Somerset Historic Environment Record and other pertinent evidence sources.
- 2.2 Several programmes of fieldwalking around Piney Sleight Farm, centred approximately 700m to the east of the site, have identified flint scatters; that located immediately to the east of the site appears to be of Neolithic date (PRN 11582). Late Bronze Age and/or Early Iron Age funerary activity may be represented by a group

of possible burial mounds: PRNs 10403-7 is located less than 250m to the south-west of the site

- 2.3 Earthworks located approximately 500m to the south-west of the site (PRN 11116) are indicative of a field system. Given that the earthworks respect three possible barrows of likely Bronze Age date and are on a different orientation to known post-medieval field boundaries, they have been tentatively dated to the medieval period.
- 2.4 The ruins of Milkway Barn on the eastern boundary of the site of the site, historically known as 'Milk Whey Farm', suggests a link to Galfridus de Melway who is known to have lived in Somerset in the early 13th century.
- 2.5 The Somerset HER and Ordnance Survey mapping characterise the area as having been subject to numerous quarry pits; the majority being dated to the post-medieval/modern period. An aerial photograph dated to 2006 shows that the site had been tracked over, either exposing deposits below the topsoil or spreading such materials from a nearby area of excavation.

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 stripping of topsoil and subsoil within the area of the proposed quarry waste tip extension (see Fig. 2 for location and extent).

- 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 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 Somerset Museum Service under accession number TTNCM 107/2016, 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 (FIG 2)

- 5.1 The natural geological, clay substrate 102 was revealed a typical depth of 0.6m below present ground level. This was overlain by clay subsoil 101, typically 0.3m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by the existing topsoil 100.
- 5.2 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the stripping. However, 26 bodysherds of Early to Middle Bronze Age pottery and five worked flints dating from the Mesolithic to the Early Bronze Age were recovered from the subsoil. Cleaning by hand of both the subsoil and natural substrate within the vicinity of where the pottery was recovered revealed no archaeological features.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1 Artefactual material from watching brief was hand-recovered from the subsoil, and dates to the early 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: recording also included inspection for evidence for use in the form of carbonised/other residues.

Pottery

- 6.2 A total of 26 unfeathered, grog-tempered fabric bodysherds weighing 209g were recovered from subsoil 101. All appeared to derive from the lower portion of a single, jar-proportioned form. The fabric was relatively thick-walled (c. 13mm) and

friable: the breaks were not abraded significantly, and refitting was easily achieved. Internal carbonised (burnt food) residues were noted on eight sherds. In the absence of rimsherds or decoration, this pottery is dated to the Early to Middle Bronze Age on the basis of fabric, firing characteristics and sherd thickness. It may derive from a Collared Urn (c. 2200–1500 BC) or related Early Bronze Age style of the period, or perhaps from the Middle Bronze Age Deverel-Rimbury tradition, c. 1700-1150 BC (Needham 1996).

Lithics

- 6.3 Subsoil 101 produced five worked flints (38g): one retouched tool, one core and three flakes. One of the debitage items was a core rejuvenation flake, indicative of a flint reduction technique in use during the Mesolithic and Early Neolithic periods. The core was a small, worked out multiplatform type which had been used to produce flakes: this type was most common during the Neolithic (Malone 2001, 217). The retouched tool was a thumbnail scraper, a type characteristic of the Early Bronze Age. It was roughly oval in plan and measured 30 x 25mm. It featured moderately invasive, abrupt to semi abrupt retouch around c. 70% of its perimeter. The remainder were undiagnostic.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above), the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The lack of evidence for truncation during observations suggests that, had archaeological assets been present, they would have been readily observed during the observations.

- 7.2 However, the recovery of prehistoric pottery (representing a single vessel in good condition) suggests a level of activity in the vicinity which cannot be defined on the basis of the current archaeological results.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Havard and Greg Crees. The report was written by Tim Havard assisted by Sian Reynish. The finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The illustrations were prepared by Sam O’Leary. The archive has been

compiled by Tim Havard, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ian Barnes.

9. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2015 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 3 October 2016

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 *Batts Combe Quarry, Warrens Hill, Cheddar, Somerset: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Malone, C. 2001. *Neolithic Britain and Ireland*. Stroud. Tempus

Needham, S. 1996 'Chronology and periodisation in the British Bronze Age'. *Acta Archaeologica* **67**, 121–40.



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

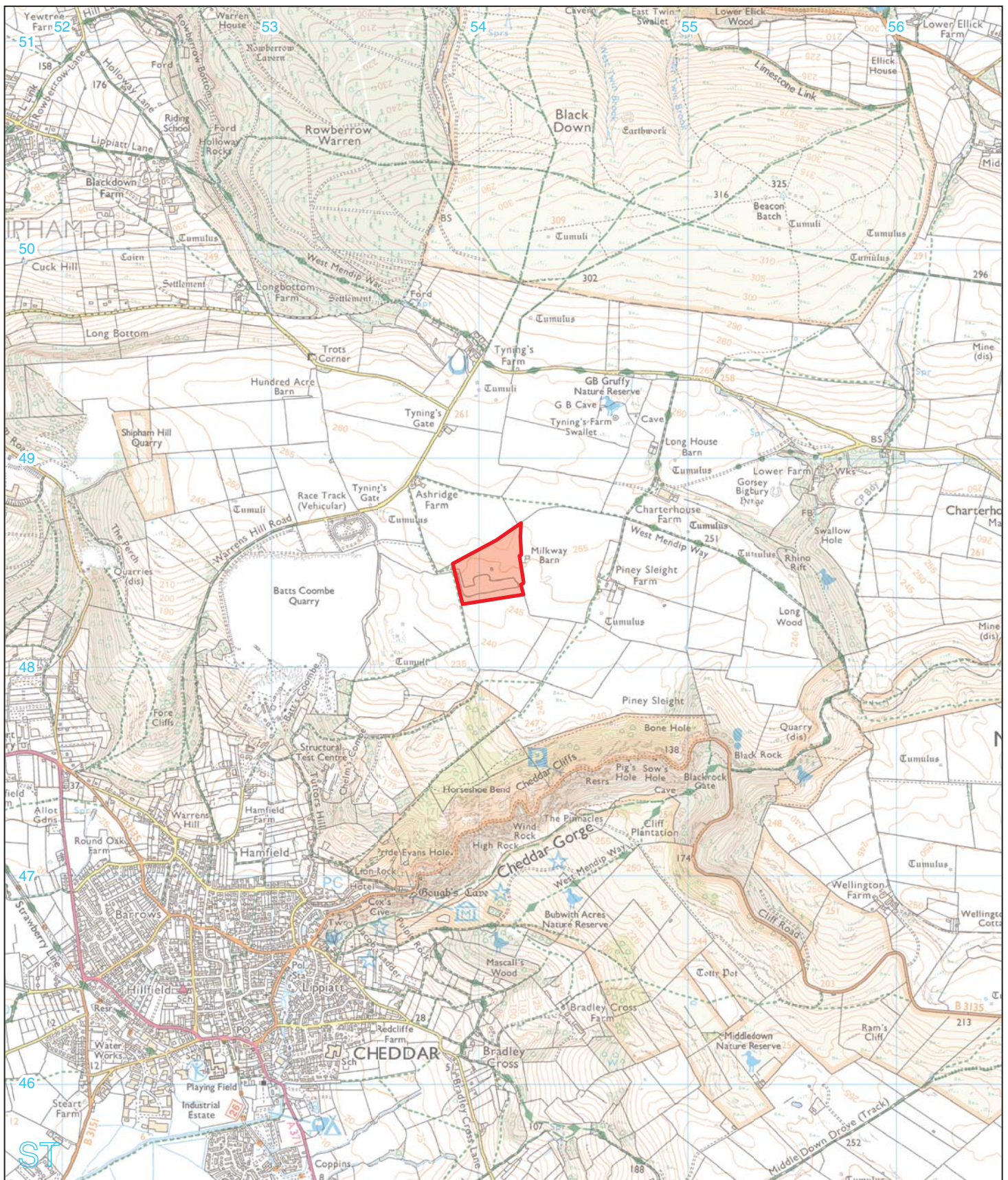
| Trench No. | Context No. | Type | Fill of | Context interpretation | Description | L (m) | W (m) | Depth /thickness (m) | Spot-date |
|------------|-------------|-------|---------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|-------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 100 | Layer | | topsoil | mid grey brown silty clay | >50 | >50 | 0.3 | |
| 1 | 101 | Layer | | subsoil | light brown yellow silty clay | >50 | >50 | 0.3 | |
| 1 | 102 | Layer | | natural substrate | light pink brown clay | >50 | >50 | >0.1 | |

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

| Context | Category | Description | Fabric Code | Count | Weight (g) | Spot-date |
|----------------|---|--|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 101 | Early prehistoric pottery Worked flint | Grog-tempered fabric Thumbnail scraper, core, flakes | GR | 26 5 | 209 38 | EBA-MBA |

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

| PROJECT DETAILS | | |
|--|--|------------------------|
| Project Name | Batts Combe Quarry, Warrens Hill, Cheddar, Somerset: Archaeological Watching Brief | |
| Short description | <p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the extension of the quarry waste tip at Batts Combe Quarry, Warrens Hill, Cheddar, Somerset.</p> <p>No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks. Although recovered from the subsoil were twenty-six bodysherds of Early to Middle Bronze Age pottery, forming the lower portion of a single vessel, and five worked flints (one retouched tool, one core and three flakes) dating from the Mesolithic to the Early Bronze Age.</p> | |
| Project dates | 19 – 28 September 2016 | |
| Project type | Watching brief | |
| Previous work | None | |
| Future work | Unknown | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | |
| Site Location | Batts Coombe Quarry, Warrens Hill, Cheddar, Somerset | |
| Study area (M ² /ha) | 8ha | |
| Site co-ordinates | ST 4703 5549 | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | |
| Name of organisation | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project Brief originator | N/A | |
| Project Design (WSI) originator | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project Manager | Ian Barnes | |
| Project Supervisor | Tim Havard and Greg Crees | |
| MONUMENT TYPE | | |
| None | | |
| SIGNIFICANT FINDS | | |
| None | | |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | |
| | Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.) | Content |
| Physical | Somerset Museums Service: TTNCM 107/2016 | Flint, ceramics |
| Paper | Somerset Museums Service: TTNCM 107/2016 | Trench recording sheet |
| Digital | Somerset Museums Service: TTNCM 107/2016 | Digital photos |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | |
| CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 <i>Batts Combe Quarry, Warrens Hill, Cheddar, Somerset: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 16545 | | |



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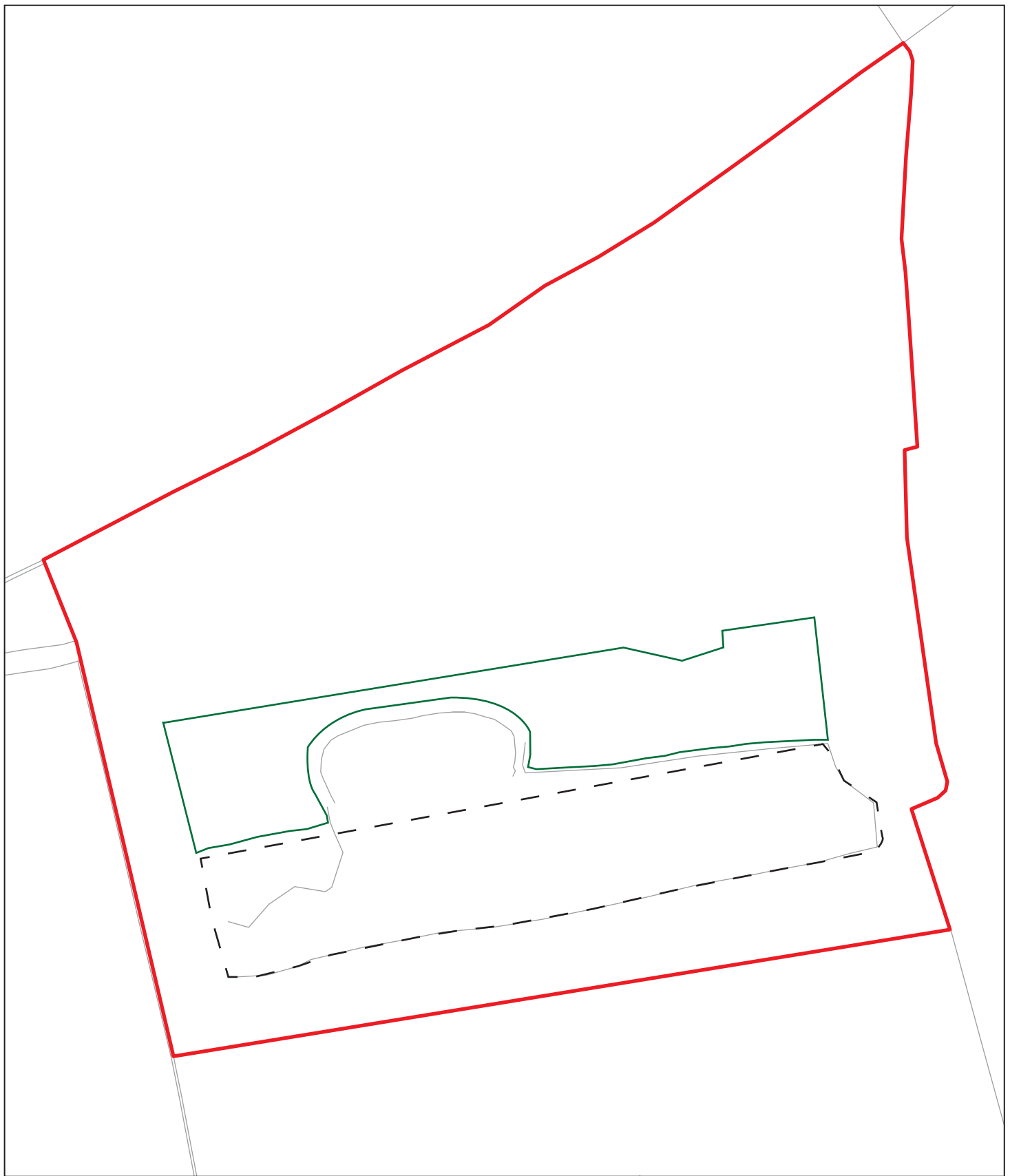
PROJECT TITLE
 Batts Combe Quarry, Warrens Hill
 Cheddar, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

0 1km

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- site boundary
- observed groundworks
- soil placement area



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**Batts Combe Quarry, Warrens Hill
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FIGURE TITLE

**The site showing location of observed
groundworks**

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| <i>CHECKED BY</i> | DJB | <i>DATE</i> | 25/11/2016 | 2 |
| <i>APPROVED BY</i> | IB | <i>SCALE@A4</i> | 1:2,000 | |

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