

# Rowdeford School Site Rowde Wiltshire

## *Archaeological Watching Brief*



*for:*  
Wilmot Dixon

CA Project: AN0210  
CA Report: AN0210\_1

Wiltshire Museum Notification: DZSWS: 34-202

September 2020



**Rowdeford School Site**  
**Rowde**  
**Wiltshire**  
*Archaeological Watching Brief*

CA Project: AN0210  
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<b>Cirencester</b> Building 11 Kemble Enterprise Park Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6BQ  t. 01285 771 022	<b>Milton Keynes</b> Unit 8, The IO Centre Fingle Drive Stonebridge Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK13 0AT  t. 01908 564 660	<b>Andover</b> Stanley House Walworth Road Andover Hampshire SP10 5LH  t. 01264 347 630	<b>Exeter</b> Unit 1, Clyst Units Cofton Road Marsh Barton Exeter EX2 8QW  t. 01392 573 970	<b>Suffolk</b> Unit 5, Plot 11 Maitland Road Lion Barn Industrial Estate Needham Market Suffolk IP6 8NZ  t. 01449 900 120
<a href="mailto:e.enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk">e.enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk</a>				

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Figure 1: Site Location Plan

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## SUMMARY

**Project name:** Rowdeford School, Rowde, Wiltshire  
**Location:** Rowdeford School, Rowde, Wiltshire  
**NGR:** 397685 163374  
**Type:** Watching brief  
**Date:** 16–17 September 2020  
**Location of Archive:** To be deposited with Wiltshire Museum Devizes and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)  
**Site Code:** ROSS20

In September 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with geotechnical pits at Rowdeford School, Rowde, Wiltshire.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no artefacts pre-dating the modern period were recovered.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In September 2020, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Rowdeford School, Rowde, Wiltshire centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 397685 163374 (see Figure 1). This watching brief was undertaken for Wilmot Dixon.
- 1.2. An application will be made to Wiltshire Council (WC) for the proposed development which will comprise the construction of a new campus school for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, which will incorporate the existing buildings on the Site with some reconfiguration, and significant new build elements.
- 1.3. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2019) and approved by Michal Cepak.
- 1.4. The watching brief was also in line with *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014; updated June 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

### The site

- 1.5. The proposed development site is approximately 3.4ha in extent. It lies on the northern side of Big Road, on the western outskirts of Newton. The site currently comprises a collection of buildings forming a school. To the west the site is bounded by St Edith's Marsh road (A342). The north, south and east are bounded by agricultural farmland with and lightly wooded areas. The site lies at approximately 77m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as Lower Greensand Group - 1.6. Sandstone. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 101 to 126 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period (BGS 2020).

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## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The archaeological background given below is a summary of a Heritage 2.1. Assessment of the site by CA (2020)

### Prehistoric & Roman

- 2.2. Unlike other parts of Wiltshire, the area to the north of Rowde holds very little recorded evidence pertaining to prehistoric activity. The sole evidence held by the Wiltshire HER comprises the findspot of an Iron Age Atrebatic coin of Tincommius, recorded c. 930m to the north-east of the Site. A further Iron Age coin, a silver Durotrigic stater, is recorded by the Portable Antiquities Service as having been recovered from the wider environs of Rowde in 1937 (PAS ref: CCI-731031). No exact location for this findspot is known. Within the wider landscape lies the Iron Age univallate hillfort of Oliver's Camp and two Bronze Age bowl barrows, c. 2.3km north-east from the Site on Roundway Down (List UID: 1005709)
- 2.3. The Site is situated within the drainage basin of the River Avon system, at the confluence of two minor tributaries forming the southern and western boundaries of the Site. As described above, deposits of alluvium mark these watercourses, which have the potential to contain palaeo-environmental evidence of archaeological interest.
- 2.4. Little Roman evidence has been encountered within the study area and none which is suggestive of prolonged activity or occupation during the period. Areas of settlement within the wider landscape include those at Brickley Lane, Devizes, c. 4.7km south-east from the Site, Mother Anthony's Well, c. 1.7km to the north-east, and at Bromham villa, c. 2.7km to the north. The Roman road classified by I.D. Margary as road 53 (Margary 1973) traversed north Wiltshire linking Calleva Atrabatum (Silchester), with Aqua Sulis (Bath) passing within c. 3.6km north from the Site.
- 2.5. Within the study area, Roman evidence is comprised of chance artefactual findspots, principally within the environs of Rowde. Finds from the north-west part of Rowde, c. 300-600m south from the Site, comprise a coin of Crispus (AD 317-26), a coin of Constantius II (AD 337-61) and blue glass fragment from a finger ring. Furthermore, an unspecified quantity of Romano-British pottery sherds was recovered dispersed throughout a field c. 500m south-east from the Site.

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- 2.6. Several groupings of cropmarks have been identified from aerial photographs throughout the study area, suggestive of fragments of field systems and small enclosures. These features have not been subjected to intrusive investigation however, it is possible that they may relate to piecemeal later prehistoric (Bronze Age or Iron Age), or even Roman, rural settlement and land management.
- 2.7. Furthermore, recent geophysical survey within across the northern part of the Site has identified several linear, curvilinear and discrete anomalies which do not correlate to known field boundaries or tracks illustrated by post-medieval and modern mapping. It is possible that these features relate to later prehistoric and/or Roman period rural settlement and land management. Of note are several incomplete circular forms identified within the north-west part of the Site which may represent the ring gullies of roundhouse features. Evidence of possible industrial activity within the Site is suggested by a series of pit-like features that may represent mineral extraction within the south-west part of the survey area and an area of localised burning in the north-east corner.
- 2.8. It is feasible therefore, that prehistoric and/or Roman period remains are situated within the Site, however, no definitive evidence is currently available with which to define periods of occupation and the nature of any activity. It is also possible, although unlikely, that features identified by the LiDAR survey may relate to prehistoric or Roman period activity. In addition, paleo-environmental evidence may be present in alluvial deposits closer to the bounding watercourses.

#### **Early medieval and medieval**

- 2.9. The settlement in Rowde is likely to have early medieval origins, as a manor of Rowde is recorded as being held by Alfred of Marlborough in the 1086 Domesday Survey (VCH 1953). The settlement is recorded as 28 households along with two mills (Open Domesday 2020), presumably concentrated along the present A342 'Devizes Road', c. 500m south of the Site. By 1187, Rowde had become part of the Crown demesne and from 1217 was recorded as part of the bailiwick of the constable of Devizes Castle (VCH 1953).
- 2.10. The sole archaeological evidence confirmed as medieval and recorded within the study area comprises a circular mirror case encountered slightly to the south of Rowde in 1980. A series of undated cropmarks or earthworks identified from aerial

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photography surveys, c. 420-830m south-east of the Site, have been interpreted as remains of settlement activity. This could indicate that the medieval settlement extended further north than currently hypothesised, although these remains may alternatively represent later prehistoric or Roman settlement. The extent of medieval Rowde conjectured by the WHER places the 15th century Grade II\* Listed Church of St Matthew at the western extent of the settlement. This would have acted as a focal point for activity within the village and had a centralised location. The later date and western location could imply that there was a change in the positioning of the village, possibly to the south-west, during the late medieval period.

- 2.11. Further medieval settlements have been identified within the study area based on place names, including St Edith's Marsh, c. 650m north of the Site, Clinghill, c. 750m west of the Site, and Wick Farm, c. 600-900m to the south-west
- 2.12. Recent geophysical survey across the northern part of the Site did not record any evidence of certain medieval date, however, a series of parallel anomalies identified within the north-east part of the Site may represent remnants of ridge and furrow earthworks.
- 2.13. These features are typical of medieval or post-medieval cultivation and suggest that the Site likely lay, in part, within the agricultural hinterland of Rowde during the medieval period. It is also feasible that other undated features identified by the geophysical survey may date to the medieval period, relating to hitherto unrecognised activity during this period within the Site, such as earlier origins of the later manor house.
- 2.14. The landscape surrounding the Site remained primarily agricultural in character, comprising a mixture of small irregular fields and pockets of woodland, throughout the post-medieval and modern periods. Enclosure occurred during the early 17th century (VCH 1953). A number of extant and former farmsteads of 19th century (or potentially earlier) date have been identified within the study area by the Wiltshire & Swindon Farmsteads & Landscape Project (2014).

### **Geophysical Survey**

- 2.15. A magnetometer survey of the northern parts of the Site was undertaken by Archaeological Surveys in July 2020 (AS 2020). The results comprised a



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widespread assortment of linear, rectilinear, curvilinear and discrete responses, largely of uncertain origin. Some responses detected at the eastern boundary are suggestive of localised burning.

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1. The general objectives of the watching brief were:

- to monitor the development groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits/features thus revealed;
- at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated project archive and a report setting out the watching brief results and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

3.2. The specific objective of the watching brief is to investigate and record any remains associated with the archaeological anomalies recorded within the Geophysical (AS 2020) and LIDAR survey (EA) which are exposed by the proposed development groundworks..

### 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. The watching brief comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all geo-technical test pitting within the site

4.2. Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.3. No deposits were identified that required sampling.

4.4. CA will make arrangements with Wiltshire Museum Devizes for the deposition of the project archive. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated June 2020).

4.5. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

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## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the watching brief results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A.
- 5.2. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1. 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 absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that archaeological remains either do not extend as far as or were not exposed by the development groundworks.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Francesco Catanzaro. This report was written by Ray Kennedy. The project archive has been compiled by Zoe Emery, and prepared for deposition by Richard Paxford. The project was managed for CA by Ray Kennedy.

## 8. REFERENCES

- British Geological Survey, 2020, *Geology of Britain Viewer*  
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the County of Wiltshire Vol. 7 (VCH)
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- Survay Margary, I.D. 1973. Roman Roads in Britain.

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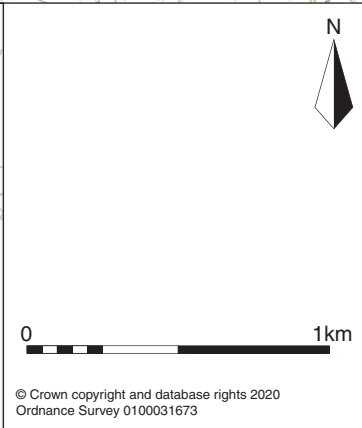
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2019 *National Planning  
Policy Framework*


## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown sand	1.8	0.5	0.15
1	101	Layer		Natural	Light reddish brown silty sand with moderate sandstone inclusions	1.8	0.5	0.25
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown sand	2	0.45	0.15
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown silty sand with moderate sandstone inclusions	2	0.45	0.28
2	202	Layer		Natural	Mid red brown sand	2	0.45	0.2
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown sand	1.76	0.5	0.35
3	301	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown silty sand with moderate sandstone inclusions	1.76	0.5	0.35
3	302	Layer		Alluvium	Mid grey sandy clay	1.76	0.5	0.5
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown sand	1.8	0.5	0.2
4	401	Layer		Natural	Mid reddish brown sand with moderate sandstone inclusions	1.8	0.5	0.15
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown sand	1.7	0.5	0.25
5	501	Layer		Natural	Light reddish brown silty sand with moderate sandstone inclusions	1.7	0.5	0.2
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown sand	1.7	0.5	0.25
6	601	Layer		Natural	Light reddish brown silty sand with moderate sandstone inclusions	1.7	0.5	0.1
7	700	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown sand	1.75	0.5	0.28
7	701	Layer		Redeposited natural	Backfill of Quarry pit	1.75	0.5	0.1
8	800	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown sand	1.9	0.5	0.25
8	801	Layer		Natural	Light reddish brown silty sand with moderate sandstone inclusions	1.9	0.5	0.12
9	900	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown sand	1.8	0.5	0.25
9	901	Layer		Natural	Light reddish brown silty sand with moderate sandstone inclusions	1.8	0.5	0.15
10	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown sand	1.9	0.5	0.35
10	1001	Layer		Natural	Mid brown clayey sand with iron panning	1.9	0.5	0.15
11	1100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown sand	1.9	0.5	0.25
11	1101	Layer		Natural	Light reddish brown silty sand with moderate sandstone inclusions	1.9	0.5	0.12

## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Rowdeford School, Rowde, Wiltshire	
Short description	In September 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with geotechnical pits at Rowdeford School, Rowde, Wiltshire. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.	
Project dates	16-17 September 2020	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	CA, 2020, Heritage Statement	
Future work	Evaluation	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Rowdeford School, Rowde, Wiltshire	
Study area (m <sup>2</sup> /ha)		
Site co-ordinates	397685 163374	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator		
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Ray Kennedy	
Project Supervisor	Francesco Catanzaro	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical	<b>Wiltshire Museum Devizes</b>	
Paper		Context sheets, matrices etc
Digital		Database, digital photos etc
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2020 <i>Rowdeford School, Rowde, Wiltshire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA typescript report <b>AN0210_1</b>		





**Cotswold  
Archaeology**

Andover 01264 347630  
 Cirencester 01285 771022  
 Exeter 01392 573970  
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660  
 Suffolk 01449 900120

[www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)  
[enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)

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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Rowde School, Rowde, Wiltshire

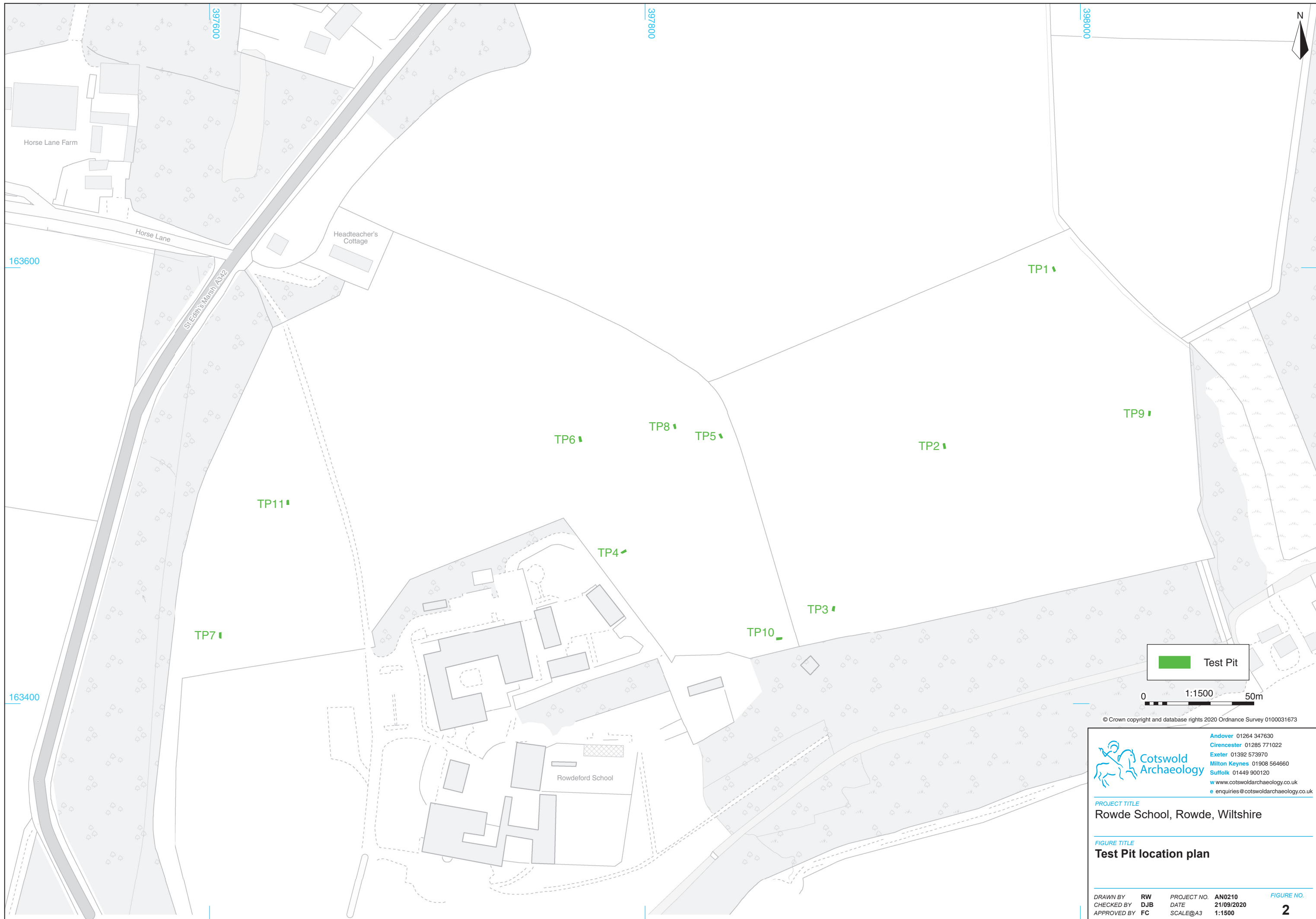
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**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

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CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	21/09/2020	
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 Test Pit

0 1:1500 50m

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 Andover 01264 347630  
 Cirencester 01285 771022  
 Exeter 01392 573970  
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660  
 Suffolk 01449 900120  
[www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)  
[enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)

PROJECT TITLE  
**Rowde School, Rowde, Wiltshire**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Test Pit location plan**

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Test Pit 1, looking west (1m scale)



Test Pit 5, looking north-east (1m scale)



Test Pit 8, looking south-east (1m scale)



Test Pit 10, looking north-west (1m scale)


**Cotswold Archaeology**  
 Andover 01264 347630  
 Cirencester 01285 771022  
 Exeter 01392 573970  
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660  
 Suffolk 01449 900120  
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk  
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE  
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FIGURE TITLE  
 Photographs

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#### **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 1, Clyst Units  
Cofton Road  
Marsh Barton  
Exeter  
EX2 8QW

t: 01392 573970

#### **Milton Keynes Office**

Unit 8 - The IO Centre  
Fingle Drive, Stonebridge  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire  
MK13 0AT

t: 01908 564660

#### **Suffolk Office**

Unit 5, Plot 11, Maitland Road  
Lion Barn Industrial Estate  
Needham Market  
Suffolk  
IP6 8NZ

t: 01449 900120

e: [enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)

