



Land at South Pavenhill Farm Purton Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation



for: Castlewood Properties Ventures

CA Project: CR0903 CA Report: CR0903_1 WM Accession No.: DZSWS:65-2021

December 2021





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CONTENTS

SUMMA	
1.	INTRODUCTION
2.	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND4
3.	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES7
4.	METHODOLOGY7
5.	RESULTS8
6.	THE FINDS9
7.	DISCUSSION9
8.	CA PROJECT TEAM10
9.	REFERENCES10
APPENI	DIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS11
APPENI	DIX B: THE FINDS12
APPENI	DIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM12

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan showing archaeological features and geophysical survey results (1:2,000 & 1:500)
- Fig. 3 Trench 2: section (1:20) and photograph
- Fig. 4 Trench 8: section (1:20) and photograph

SUMMARY

Project name:	Land at South Pavenhill Farm
Location:	Purton, Wiltshire
NGR:	407745 187355
Туре:	Evaluation
Date:	15-18 November 2021
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Wiltshire Museum and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Accession Number:	DZSWS:65-2021
Site Code:	SPFP21

In November 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at South Pavenhill Farm, Purton, Wiltshire. A total of 10 trenches were excavated.

The evaluation identified two former field boundary ditches of post-medieval date, which correlate with boundaries shown on historic mapping.

1. INTRODUCTION

- In November 2021, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at South Pavenhill Farm, Purton, Wiltshire (centred at NGR: 407745 187355; Fig. 1). This evaluation was undertaken for Castlewood Properties Ventures.
- 1.2. The evaluation results will inform a planning application for residential development of the site, which will be made to Wiltshire Council (WC).
- 1.3. The scope of this evaluation was defined by Neil Adam, Assistant County Archaeologist, WC. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) prepared by CA (2021a) and approved by Neil Adams.
- 1.4. The evaluation was also undertaken in line with Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation (ClfA 2014; updated October 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 5.1ha in extent and is situated on the south-western edge of the village of Purton. A total of 2.3ha of the site have been allocated for residential development. The site currently comprises a large irregularly shaped agricultural field, bounded by Pavenhill Road to the north, by the residential properties of Ringsbury Close to the east, and on all other sides by agricultural land. The site lies at approximately 136m AOD, and slopes steeply downwards to the west, beyond the site's boundary.
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as limestone of the Stanford Formation, formed during the Jurassic Period (BGS 2021). The natural geological substrate identified during the course of the evaluation consisted of limestone brash.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. The site has previously been subject to a Desk-Based Assessment (DBA; CA 2021b) and geophysical survey (MS 2021). The following is a summary of these reports.

Prehistoric

- 2.2. A number of prehistoric features are recorded within the environs of Purton, with the Upper Thames Vales, in which the Site is located, acting as a key transit route within this period (CA 2021b). Archaeological remains from the early prehistoric period are scarce within the wider landscape and known remains largely comprise lithic scatters and cropmarks representative of transient occupation identified within floodplains and the Thames gravels found in low-lying areas (ibid.). Within the later prehistoric period, a more established permanent presence is noted in the Upper Thames Vales, attested by settlement sites and field systems continuing from the Late Bronze Age.
- 2.3. An Iron Age Hillfort is located c. 200m south of the site and is known as Ringsbury Camp (CA 2021b). It is a multivallate hillfort and occupies an area of high elevation with commanding views over the valley to the west. Hillforts were in many cases preceded by and developed from early palisaded and hilltop enclosures. Whilst no early features have been identified at Ringsbury Camp, the presence of Neolithic flint tools suggests an earlier presence (ibid.). No settlement remains have yet been identified either within or in close proximity to this hillfort. This may be as a result of a lack of intrusive investigation, or given the size of the hillfort, it is likely that an associated settlement was located at a lower elevation with this hillfort forming a defensive structure. Indeed, a second Iron Age hillfort is located at Bury Hill (NHL ref: 1018125), c. 3 km north-west of the site, suggesting an intervening landscape which experienced activity within the later prehistoric period. Later settlement remains attributed to the Roman period may also have origins in the Iron Age period.
- 2.4. Additional Iron Age finds within the study area include a bronze coin c. 190m east of the site, pottery sherds found amongst Roman material c. 300m east of the site, and a coin recorded as part of the Portable Antiquities Scheme c. 820m west of the site (CA 2021b).

Roman

- 2.5. During the Roman period, the wider landscape appears to have been relatively well settled with a pattern of rural settlements dominated through enclosures largely distributed along Roman roads (Allen et al. 2015).
- 2.6. Within Purton, in part of the modern industrial estate of Dogridge, a Roman rural settlement has been identified through a number of investigations (CA 2021b). In 1975 an excavation in Purton uncovered four Romano-British kilns c. 300m east of the site, as well as two isolated postholes which may indicate the presence of two further kilns. A scatter of 2nd to 4th-century pottery sherds were located in proximity to these kilns. In 1989, an excavation occurred at Northview Hospital which uncovered a walled Roman cemetery c. 700m east of the site (ibid).
- 2.7. Further excavations have also identified Roman settlements, and excavations at 6 Battlewell, c. 200m east of the site, in 2011 and 2014 uncovered building remains, pits, gullies, a furnace, post-holes, a drying oven and an additional kiln (CA 2021b). Evaluation in 2016 at Willis Way to the south of the identified cemetery identified additional building remains, pits and ditches c. 700m east of the site. A ditch and pottery sherds were also identified at Restrop Road c. 600 and 650m east of the site, respectively (ibid.).
- 2.8. These features identify a Roman industrial settlement to the east of the site with artefactual evidence indicating occupation between AD 2nd-4th centuries (CA 2021b). The limits to the settlement have not been identified and thus there is a high potential for the settlements to extend further west into the current site. It is also likely that the settlement was surrounded, at least in part, by agricultural land which supported the local population.

Early medieval and medieval

2.9. From the 7th century AD Purton was controlled by the Abbot of Malmesbury, with reference to a village of 'Piriton', 'Periton', 'Puriton' and 'Pirton' recorded in the charters of the Malmesbury Abbey in AD 600s (CA 2021b). Evidence of a Saxon cemetery has been idented in the eastern extent of Purton at The Fox, c. 2.4km east of the site. It is likely that during this period settlement shifted from the Dogridge area to the east near The Fox. During this period the parish was located on the border of Wessex and placenames such as 'Restrop', 'Battlewell', 'Battlefield'

and 'Battle Lake' indicate a potential battle location, however, no physical evidence of this has been identified to date.

- 2.10. During the medieval period the historic parish of Purton comprised both monastic lands associated with the Abbey at Malmesbury and part of the Royal Forest of Braydon (CA 2021b). The medieval village was built around the parish church, manor, and tithe barn, located c. 1.8km east of the site. By the 13th Century, Malmesbury Abbey had lease out a substantial part of its manor which then further fragmented to form separate distinct smaller manors with their own demesne. In the study area this included separate settlements at Pavenhill c. 410m north of the site; Restrop c. 200m to the south-east; Coombefield c. 450m south; and Bagbury Farm c. 800m south-east (ibid.).
- 2.11. Medieval settlements were commonly associated with open-field systems which were worked in strips/selions (CA 2021b). A field known as Battlefield or Beccewelle, was recorded in c. 1250 as lying north of Ringsbury and extending to Dogridge and as having been farmed by tenants of both Restrop and Pavenhill. Evidence for strip cultivation is shown in the 1744 map of the Parish of Purton and the 1839 Tithe Map of Purton records plot 929, which forms the majority of the Site, as 'allotment in Battlefield' indicating that the site formed a part of this medieval open field. No evidence of medieval ridge and furrow has been identified within the site; however, it is feasible that subsurface remnants of medieval ridge and furrow survive (ibid.).

Post-medieval and modern

2.12. During the post-medieval period, Purton expanded to the north and west along Station Road and High Street (CA 2021b). In the 19th century this development accelerated following the construction of the Gloucester branch of the great Western Railway in the 1840s, which provided increased access to the village. The 19th century saw development on either side of Pavenhill between the junction with Hoggs Lane and the turning to Upper Pavenhill; by the 1970s this development included modern infill and the residential development at Dogridge south of Pavenhill road. This residential estate forms the eastern boundary of the site (ibid.).

Geophysical Survey

2.13. A geophysical survey of the site was conducted in 2021 (MS 2021). Anomalies suggestive of possible archaeological activity was identified within the southern part

of the survey area, in the form of a linear ditch feature. Anomalies relating to the prolonged agricultural utilisation of the landscape were evident across the survey area as former field boundaries, and modern ploughing trends. Several anomalies have been classified as 'Undetermined'; these are strongly enhanced, discrete anomalies of an uncertain origin. The impact of modern activity on the survey area has caused some disturbance in the magnetic data, as an underground service cuts through a possible archaeological feature.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objective of the evaluation was to provide further information on the likely archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation. This information will enable Wiltshire Council to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets within the site, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise conflict between heritage asset conservation and the development proposals, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).
- 3.2. The specific objective of the evaluation was to investigate the anomalies of archaeological potential recorded by the geophysical survey (MS 2021).

4. **METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1. The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of 10 trenches, each measuring 50m in length and 1.8m in width, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). This represents a 4% sample of the 2.3ha development area.
- 4.2. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS. Overburden was stripped from the trenches by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate, which was the level at which archaeological features were first encountered
- 4.3. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual
- 4.4. 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. No deposits were identified that required sampling.

- 4.5. Artefacts were processed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation.
- 4.6. CA will make arrangements with Wiltshire Museum for the deposition of the project archive and, subject to agreement with the legal landowner(s), the artefact collection, under accession number DZSWS:65-2021. 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* (CIfA 2014; updated October 2020).
- 4.7. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. **RESULTS**

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A. Details of the artefactual material recovered from the site are given in Section 6 and Appendix B.
- 5.2. A broadly similar stratigraphy was recorded across the site. The limestone brash natural substrate was encountered at an average depth of 0.45m below present ground level (bpgl), and was generally overlain by clay-silt subsoil, measuring an average thickness of 0.25m, which was sealed by c. 0.25m of topsoil.
- 5.3. Overall, there was a fair level of correlation between the recorded features and the anomalies identified during the preceding geophysical survey, with features recorded in Trenches 2, 3, 8 and 9.

Trenches 2 & 3 (Fig. 3)

5.4. Ditches 202 (Fig. 3, Section AA) and 303 were identified in Trenches 2 and 3. The ditch was aligned east/west, measured up to 0.97m in width, 0.28m in depth and contained a single fill, from which 17 sherds of earthenware pottery of 16th to 18th-century date and a fragment of clay tobacco pipe were recovered. The ditch correlated to a linear geophysical anomaly and a field boundary depicted on the 1744 Parish mapping.

Trenches 8 & 9 (Fig. 4)

5.5. Ditches 803 (Fig. 4, Section BB) and 903 were identified in Trenches 8 and 9, running on an east/west alignment and correlating to a linear geophysical anomaly and a field boundary depicted on historic cartographic sources until the 1840s. It measured up to 1.3m in width, at least 0.88m in depth and contained two undated fills.

6. THE FINDS

6.1. Artefactual material was hand-recovered from two ditch fills. The recovered material dates to the post-medieval period. The pottery has been recorded according to sherd count/weight per fabric (Appendix B) and the pottery fabric code has been devised for the purpose of this report.

Pottery

6.2. Fill 203 of ditch 202 produced 17 sherds (187g) from a single, incomplete vessel. This pottery presents in a glazed earthenware fabric (GRE) of uncertain source, which dates to the 16th to 18th centuries.

Other finds

6.3. A fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem, broadly datable to the late 16th to 19th centuries, was recorded from fill 304 of ditch 303.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1. The archaeological evaluation demonstrated that there was a good correlation between the identified archaeological features, the geophysical survey results and the locations of former field boundaries depicted on historic mapping.
- 7.2. The ditches identified in Trenches 2, 3, 8 and 9 correlate to boundaries depicted on historic cartographic sources, and likely represent former land-divisions of post-medieval date, with the recovered dating evidence corroborating this interpretation.
- 7.3. No archaeological features were found to correlate to the locations of the uncertain/undetermined geophysical anomalies, and it is likely that these relate to variations in the underlying geology.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

8.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Kinga Werner, assisted by Alistair Thomson, Annabel Johns, and Sam Bateman. This report was written by Kinga Werner. The finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The report illustrations were prepared by Krissy Moore. The project archive has been compiled by Kinga Werner and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Alex Thomson.

9. **REFERENCES**

- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2021 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <u>https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/</u>Accessed 18 November 2021
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2021a Land at South Pavenhill Farm, Purton, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation
- CA 2021b South Pavenhill Farm, Purton, Wiltshire: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, CA report no. **CR0769_1**
- MS (Magnitude Surveys) 2021 Geophysical Survey Report of South Pavenhill Farm, Purton, MS ref: MSSU1077

Trench	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/ thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Grey-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.3	
1	101	Layer		Natural Substrate	Limestone brash, clay and gravel	>50	>1.8		
1	102	Cut		Treethrow	Irregular cut	1.44	1.44	0.27	
1	103	Fill	102	Fill of treethrow	Light orange-red silt	1.44	1.44	0.27	
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Grey-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.36	
2	201	Layer		Natural Substrate	Limestone brash, clay and gravel	>50	>1.8		
2	202	Cut		Ditch	E/W linear ditch with rounded base		0.91	0.28	C16–C18
2	203	Fill	202	Fill of ditch	Grey-brown clay-silt		0.91	0.28	
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Grey-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.25	
3	301	Layer		Subsoil	Yellow-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.24	
3	302	Layer		Natural Substrate	Limestone brash, clay and gravel	>50	>1.8		
3	303	Cut		Ditch	E/W linear ditch with rounded base		0.97	0.28	C16–C19
3	304	Fill	303	Fill of ditch	Grey-brown clay-silt		0.97	0.28	
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Grey-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.43	
4	401	Layer		Natural Substrate	Limestone brash, clay and gravel	>50	>1.8		
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Grey-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.2	
5	501	Layer		Subsoil	Yellow-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.17	
5	502	Layer		Natural Substrate	Limestone brash, clay and gravel	>50	>1.8		
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Grey-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8		
6	601	Layer		Natural Substrate	Limestone brash, clay and gravel	>50	>1.8		
6	602	Cut		Treethrow	Irregular cut	2.3	1.8	0.4	
6	603	Fill	602	Fill of treethrow	Light red-brown silt	2.3	1.8	0.4	
7	700	Layer		Topsoil	Grey-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.37	
7	701	Layer		Natural Substrate	Limestone brash, clay and gravel	>50	>1.8		
8	800	Layer		Topsoil	Grey-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.2	
8	801	Layer		Subsoil	Yellow-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.4	
8	802	Layer		Natural Substrate	Limestone brash, clay and gravel	>50	>1.8		
8	803	Cut		Ditch	E/W linear ditch. Partially excavated.		1.3	>0.88	
8	804	Fill	803	Fill of ditch	Light yellow-grey silty-clay		1.3	0.65	
8	805	Fill	803	Fill of ditch	Dark yellow-grey silty-clay		0.93	>0.23	
9	900	Layer		Topsoil	Grey-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.2	
9	901	Layer		Subsoil	Yellow-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.4	
9	902	Layer		Natural Substrate	Limestone brash, clay and gravel	>50	>1.8		
9	903	Cut		Ditch	E/W linear ditch. Partially excavated.		0.92	>0.65	
9	904	Fill	903	Fill of ditch	Light yellow-grey silty-clay		0.92	>0.65	
10	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Grey-brown clay-silt	>50	>1.8	0.31	
10	1001	Layer		Natural Substrate	Limestone brash, clay and gravel	>50	>1.8		

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

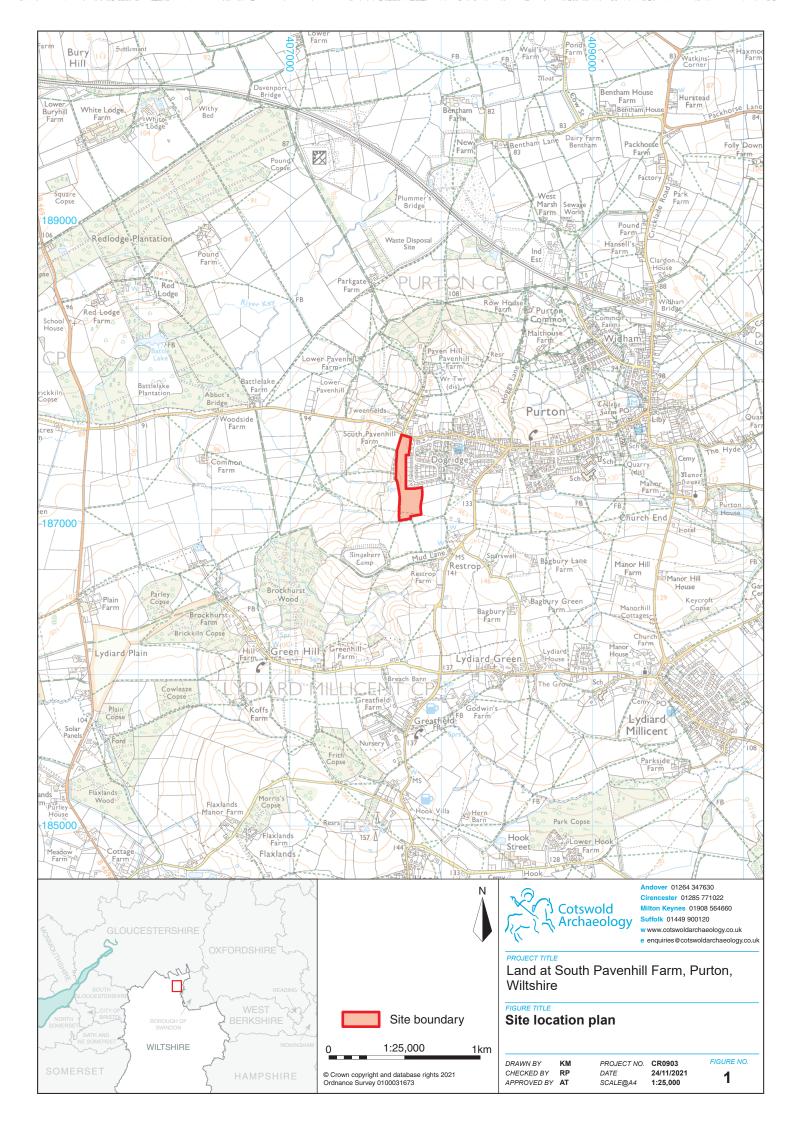
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

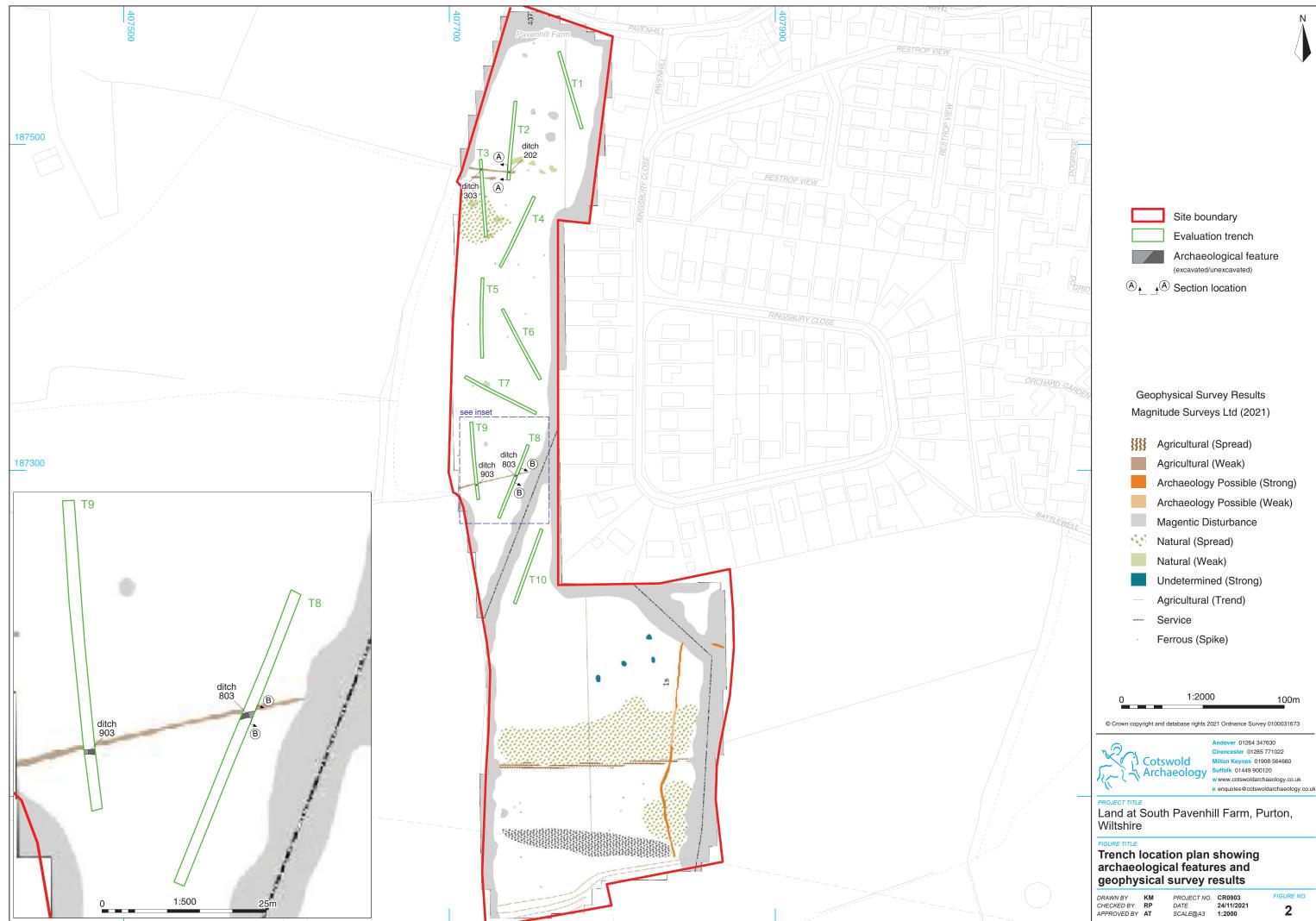
Table	1:	Finds	concordance
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Context	Category	Description	Fabric	Count	Weight	Spot-date
203	Post-medieval pottery	Glazed earthenware	GRE	17	187	MC16-C18
304	Clay tobacco pipe	Stem		1	5	LC16-LC19

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

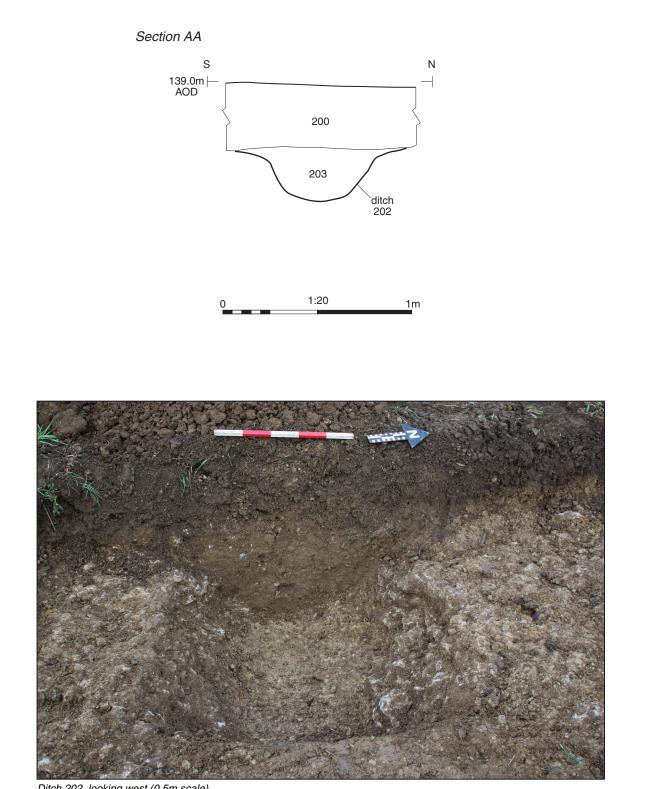
PROJECT DETAILS						
Project name	Land at South Pavenhill Farm, Purton,	Niltshire				
		In November, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological				
	evaluation on land at South Pavenhill F	arm, Purton, Wiltshire. A				
	total of 10 trenches were excavated.					
Short description						
	The evaluation identified two former field					
	medieval date, which correlate with bou	ndaries shown on historic				
	mapping.					
Project dates	15-18 November 2021					
Project type	Field evaluation					
Previous work	Desk-Based Assessment (CA 2021)					
	Geophysical Survey (Magnitude 2021)					
Future work	Unknown					
PROJECT LOCATION						
Site location	Land to the south of Pavenhill Farm, Pu	Land to the south of Pavenhill Farm, Purton, Wiltshire				
Study area (m²/ha)	5.1ha	5.1ha				
Site co-ordinates	407745 187355	407745 187355				
PROJECT CREATORS						
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology					
Project brief originator	N/A	N/A				
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology					
Project Manager	Alex Thomson					
Project Supervisor	Kinga Werner					
MONUMENT TYPE	None					
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None					
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive	Content				
Physical	Wiltshire Museum - DZSWS:65-2021	Ceramics, etc				
Paper	Wiltshire Museum - DZSWS:65-2021	Context sheets, matrices etc				
Digital	Wiltshire Museum - DZSWS:65-2021 Database, digital photos etc					
BIBLIOGRAPHY						
Cotswold Archaeology 2021 Land at S typescript report CR0903_1	South Pavenhill Farm, Purton, Wiltshire: Archaed	ological Evaluation CA				







Agricultural (Spread)
Agricultural (Weak)
Archaeology Possible (Strong)
Archaeology Possible (Weak)
Magentic Disturbance
Natural (Spread)
Natural (Weak)
Undetermined (Strong)
 Agricultural (Trend)
 Service
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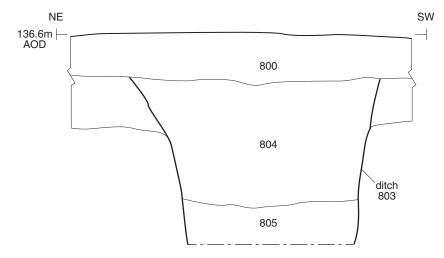
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CHECKED BY	RP	DATE	24/11/2021	3
APPROVED BY	AT	SCALE@A4	1:20	



Ditch 803, looking south-east (1m scale)









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PROJECT TITLE Land at South Pavenhill Farm, Purton, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE Trench 8: section and photograph

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FIGURE NO. 4



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