

# Rhonehurst Stables Upper Lambourn West Berkshire

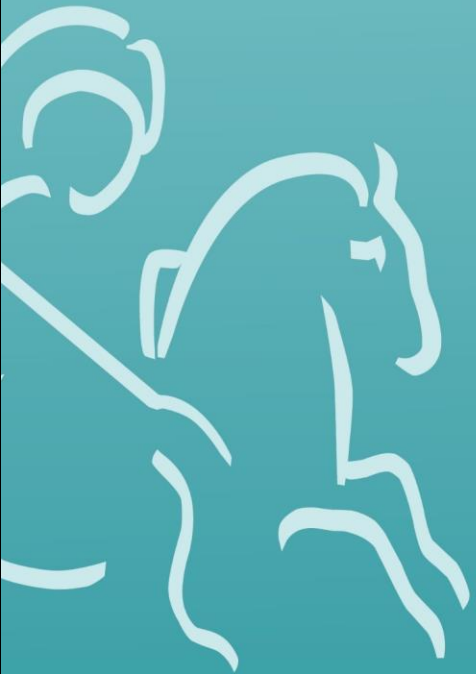
*Archaeological Watching Brief*



for:  
Kernon Countryside Consultants

CA Project: AN0383  
CA Report: AN0383\_1

August 2021



# Rhonehurst Stables Upper Lambourn West Berkshire

## *Archaeological Watching Brief*

CA Project: AN0383  
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Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	24.08.2021	Adam Howard	Tony Brown	Internal review	General edit	Richard Greatorex

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project name:</b>	Rhonehurst Stables
<b>Location:</b>	Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire
<b>NGR:</b>	431760, 180366
<b>Type:</b>	Watching Brief
<b>Date:</b>	02 to 05 August 2021
<b>Planning reference:</b>	21/01181/FUL
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with West Berkshire Museum and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
<b>Accession Number:</b>	NEBYM:2021.21
<b>Site Code:</b>	RSUL21

In August 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a manège at Rhonehurst Stables, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire.

The area was monitored to the top of the chalk geology during stripping of topsoil and subsoil. Two circular features, a pit and a large posthole, were recorded. The posthole was situated equidistant between two standing overhead cable pylons. It is probable that the posthole is the site of a former pylon. No archaeological remains or dateable material were recovered.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In August 2021, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Rhonehurst Stables, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire (centred at NGR: 431760, 180366; Fig. 1). This watching brief was undertaken for Kernon Countryside Consultants.
- 1.2. West Berkshire Council has granted outline planning permission for the construction of a manège at Rhonehurst Stables (planning ref: 21/01181/FUL). Consideration for the archaeological potential of the site has been given through the wording of Condition 9, attached to the granted planning permission:

*Condition 9*

*No site works shall take place within the application area until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall incorporate and be undertaken in accordance with the approved statement.*

- 1.3. The scope of this watching brief was defined by Sarah Orr (Senior Archaeologist, Planning and Management Advice), the archaeological advisor to West Berkshire Council, in email correspondence dated 14 July 2021. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2021) and approved by Sarah Orr.
- 1.4. The watching brief was also in line with, *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (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 1.1ha in extent. It lies at the end of an unnamed road which runs north-east from Upper Lambourn High Street. The site currently comprises a green pasture field enclosed by hedgerows. The village of

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Upper Lambourn defines the south and west boundaries of the field while the northern and eastern boundaries are bordered by pasture fields. The site lies on a slight, west facing slope, from approximately 146m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the eastern corner to c. 140m aOD at the western corner.

- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as New Pit Chalk Formation, having formed approximately 90 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period (BGS 2021). The bedrock geology across the site is mapped as being overlain by clay, silt, sand and gravel Head deposits, having formed during the Quaternary Period.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. A search radius of 1.5km from the site was conducted using the Archaeological Data Service (ADS 2021) and the Heritage Gateway (HG 2021).
- 2.2. Numerous barrows are situated c. 3-3.3km north from the site, forming the Seven Barrows cemetery group (in actual fact comprising up to 32 such monuments). Approximately 1.4 km to the south-east of the site is a possible further Bronze Age barrow cemetery, which is visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs. The barrows may form part of a larger barrow cemetery which appears to consist of a group of barrows which are situated along the sides of a dry valley which extends north-east from Lambourn village (ADS 2021). A *tumulus* is recorded on Ordnance Survey mapping c. 370m to the west of the site, possibly representing a further barrow.
- 2.3. Correspondence with the archaeological advisor revealed that a Middle Bronze Age fire pit was encountered during a recent evaluation at Whitehouse Farm, c. 500m south of the site. Three Romano-British burials have previously been excavated within the vicinity of Upper Lambourn. The route of Ermine Street, between Speen and Cirencester, runs within c. 3.7km to the south-west of the site. A villa and rural settlement have been identified at Maddie Farm, c. 2-3km to the north-west.
- 2.4. A possible prehistoric or Roman circular enclosure and ditched boundaries are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs, 690m south-east of the site. The enclosure has a diameter of 13m and could be the remains of a hut circle (Monument Number 1302986). More widely within the area of the Lambourn Downs, numerous sites of prehistoric and Romano-British have been identified,

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including the route of the Ridgeway – a conjectured prehistoric, long-distance trackway.

- 2.5. Lambourn developed as an important site during the early medieval period, having been mentioned in the wills of Alfred the Great and Aethelred, and even mentioned as a minster site during the reign of Canute, although no further evidence is available to support this. Upper Lambourn likely developed as a satellite hamlet near to the principal settlement of Lambourn Hundred and was held as a separate manor during the medieval period. Approximately 550m to the south-east of the site, an archaeological watching brief was conducted while monitoring groundworks. The watching brief recorded three pits: one of 12th century and another possibly of 10th century date (Ford, S. 2001).
- 2.6. Upper Lambourn experienced little development prior to the mid-late 20th century, when the settlement became a centre of equestrian activities, including stables and riding schools.

### **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; and
  - 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. Upper Lambourn lies in an archaeologically rich area, particularly for the later prehistoric and Roman period and the settlement of Upper Lambourn itself is of early medieval date. The watching brief was intended to investigate and record any archaeological remains which are exposed by the proposed development groundworks

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1. The watching brief comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks associated with the proposed development. These works

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comprised the machine excavation of the development area (Fig. 2), to the top of the chalk geology or any archaeological features, whichever was encountered first.

- 4.2. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential and no deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 4.3. CA has arranged with West Berkshire Museum (NEBYM:2021.21) 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 October 2020).
- 4.4. 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.

## 5. RESULTS (FIGURES 2 - 4)

- 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. The natural geological substrate (**102**) was comprised of a light white, tabular chalk (Fig. 3) and was revealed at a depth of between 0.2m to 0.48m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by loose, light grey, silt/clay colluvium (**103** - on the southern and western sides only), with a maximum thickness of 0.2m. The colluvium was capped by 0.17m of subsoil (**101**) - a firm, light/grey, silt/clay. The site was sealed by 0.11m of topsoil (**100**), which consisted of a loose, light/grey, silt/clay.
- 5.3. Two features were observed, a pit and posthole, located slightly to the south-east of the centre of the excavated area (Area 1).

### Area 1 (Figure 4)

- 5.4. Pit **106** was circular in plan, measuring 0.7m in diameter and 0.19m deep. It had steep concave sides and roughly flat base. It was filled by a single fill; a firm, mid-brown/grey silt/clay **105**.

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- 5.5. Posthole **106** was circular in plan, measuring 0.8m in diameter and 0.45m deep. It had asymmetrical sides with an almost vertical, straight side to the south-west and gradual, straight side to the north-east. The base was formed by a shallow concavity. It was filled by a single fill; a firm, mid-grey, silt/clay **107**. No artefacts or other dateable evidence were recovered from either feature or from the wider excavated area.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1. Two features were encountered, neither of which produced any finds or dateable material. They appear on the alignment of a series of wooden pylons carrying an overhead cable and were roughly in equidistant between the standing pylons. It is probable that these are modern features, one or both relating to the placement of a former further pylon.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Adam Howard. This report was written by Adam Howard and report illustrations prepared by Ryan Wilson. The project archive was compiled and prepared for deposition by Richard Paxford. The project was managed for CA by Tony Brown.

## 8. REFERENCES

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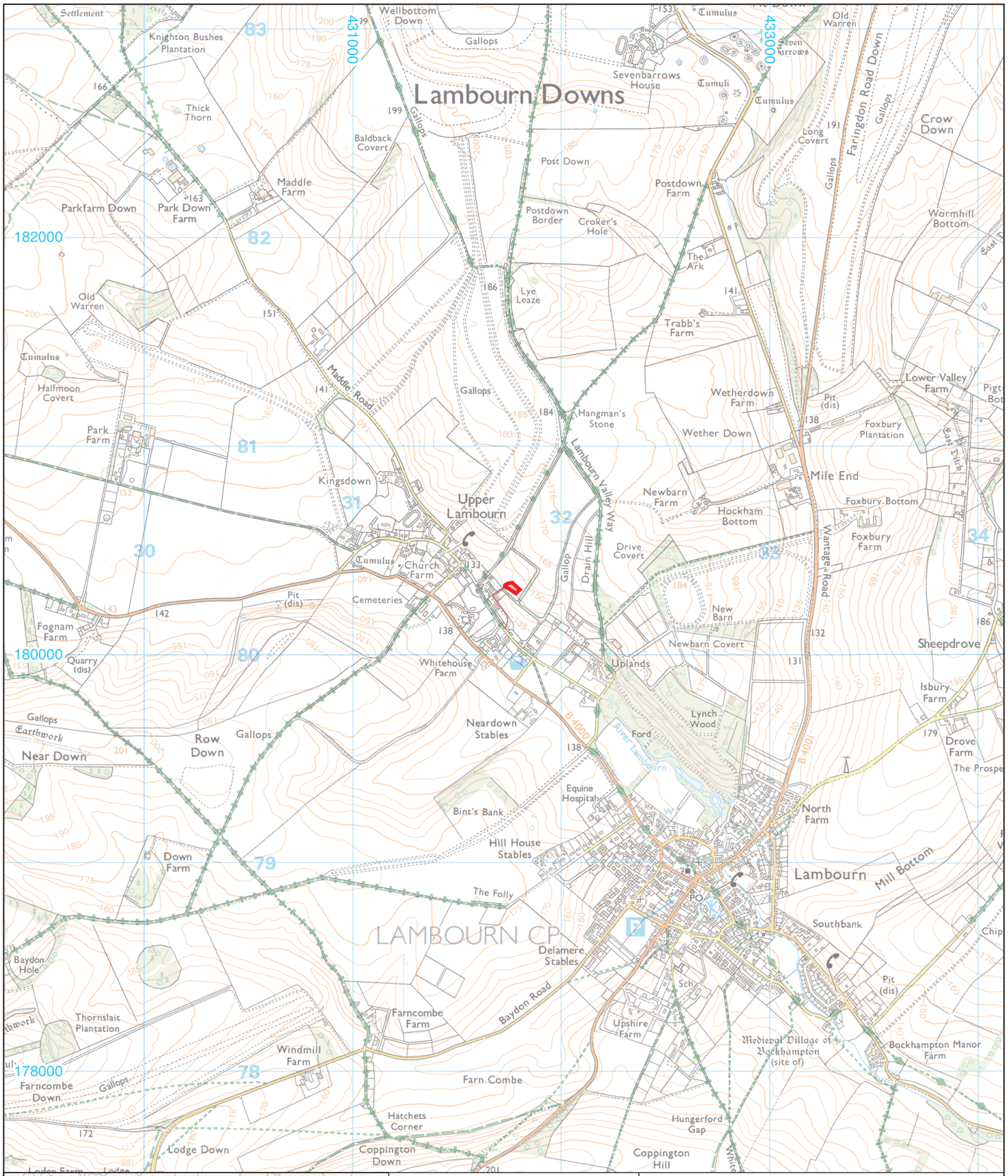
## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Light grey silty clay, loose	>50	>30	0-0.11
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Light brownish grey silty clay, loose	>50	>30	0.11-0.28
1	102	Layer		Geology	Light white chalk	>50	>30	0.48+
1	103	Layer		Colluvium	Light brown silty clay, loose	>20	>5	0.28-0.48
1	104	Cut		Shallow pit	Circular in plan, steep concave sides and an uneven flat base	0.7	0.7	0.19
1	105	Fill	104	Natural silting	Mid brownish grey silty clay, firm	0.7	0.7	0.19
1	106	Cut		Posthole	Circular in plan vertical straight side on SW and gradual straight side on NE to a shallow concave base	0.8	0.8	0.45
1	107	Fill	106	Natural silting	Mid grey silty clay, firm	0.8	0.8	0.45



## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Rhonehurst Stables, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire	
Short description	<p>In August 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a manège at Rhonehurst Stables, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire.</p> <p>The area was monitored to the top of the chalk geology during the topsoil and subsoil strip two circular features. A pit and large posthole were recorded. The posthole likely sited an overhead cable pylon, as noted nearby on a similar alignment. No archaeological artefacts or other features were encountered.</p>	
Project dates	02 to 05 August 2021	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Rhonehurst Stables, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire	
Study area (m <sup>2</sup> /ha)	1.1ha	
Site co-ordinates	431760, 180366	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Sarah Orr	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Tony Brown	
Project Supervisor	Adam Howard	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	Modern pit and posthole	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	<b>Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content</b>
Physical	N/A	N/A
Paper	West Berkshire Museum NEBYM:2021.21	Context sheets, section drawing trench sheet
Digital	West Berkshire Museum NEBYM:2021.21	Database, digital photos, survey data
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology. 2021. <i>Rhonehurst Stables, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report <b>AN0383_1</b>		



 Site boundary



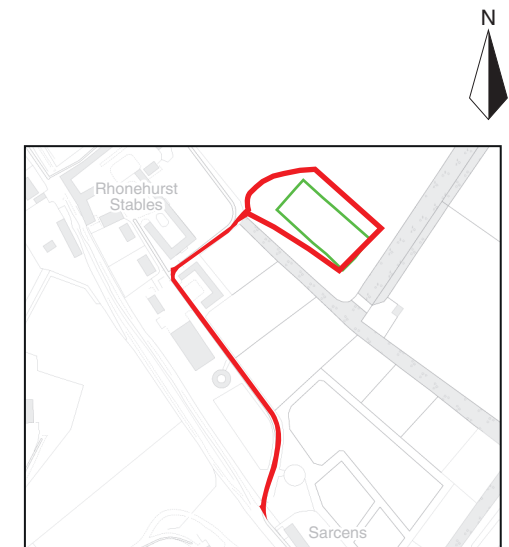
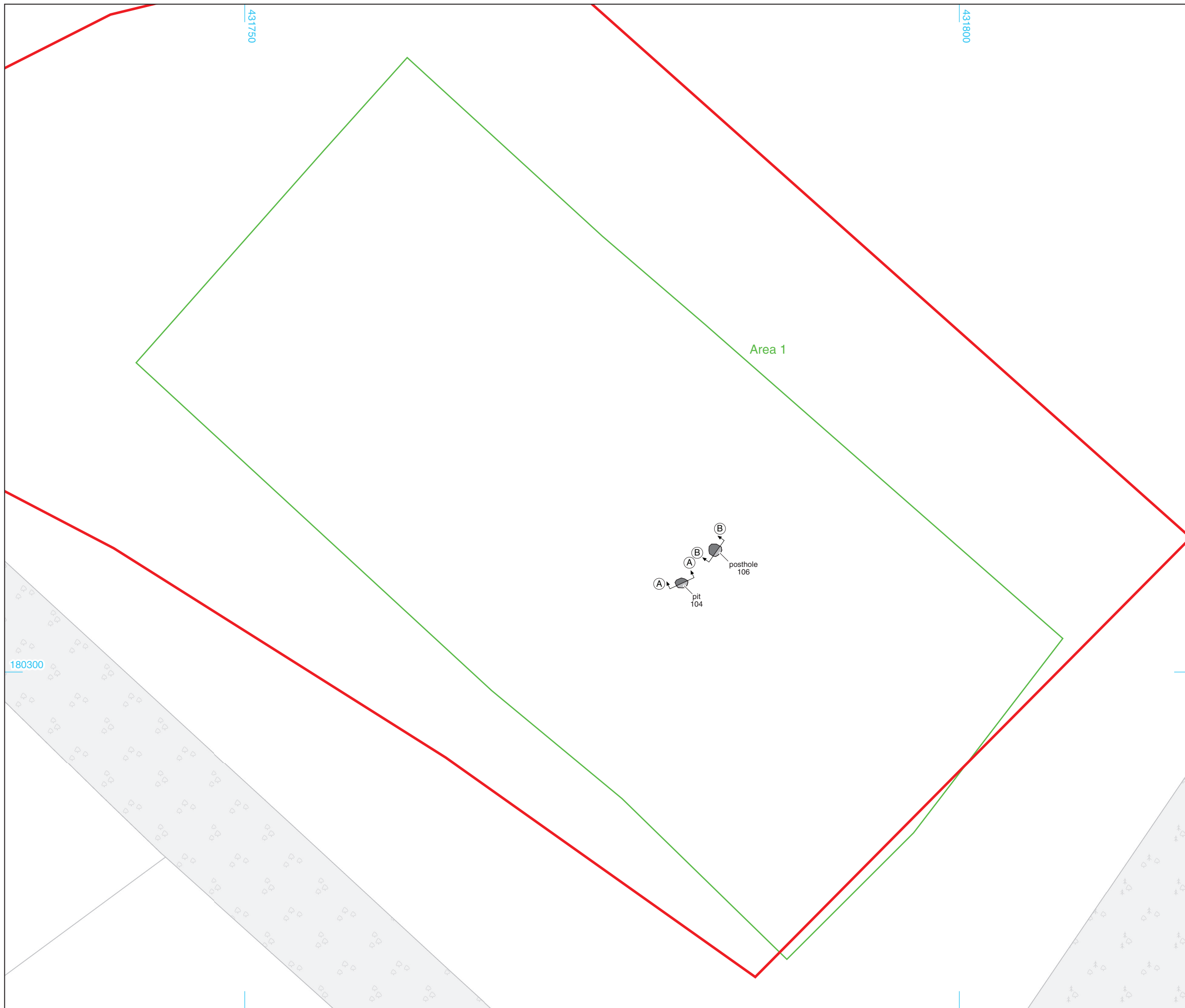
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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Rhonehurst Stables, Upper Lambourn,  
 West Berkshire

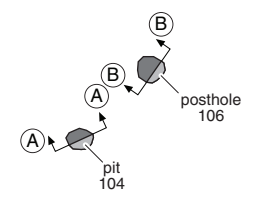
**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

<b>DRAWN BY</b> RW	<b>PROJECT NO.</b> AN0383	<b>FIGURE NO.</b> 1
<b>CHECKED BY</b> DJB	<b>DATE</b> 10/08/2021	
<b>APPROVED BY</b> AH	<b>SCALE@A4</b> 1:25,000	

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-  Site boundary
-  Monitored excavation area
-  Archaeological feature (excavated / unexcavated)
-  Section location



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Rhonehurst Stables, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 The site, showing monitored groundworks and features

<b>DRAWN BY</b>	<b>RW</b>	<b>PROJECT NO.</b>	<b>AN0383</b>	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
<b>CHECKED BY</b>	<b>DJB</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>10/08/2021</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	<b>AH</b>	<b>SCALE@A3</b>	<b>1:250</b>	





Strip of Area 1, looking north



Strip of Area 1, looking north-east (1m scales)



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FIGURE TITLE

Working photographs of Area 1

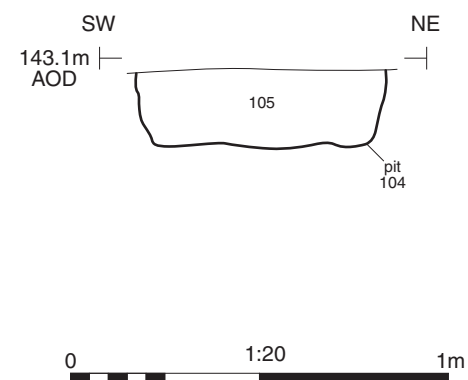
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 CHECKED BY DJB DATE 10/08/2021  
 APPROVED BY AH SCALE@A4 NA

FIGURE NO.

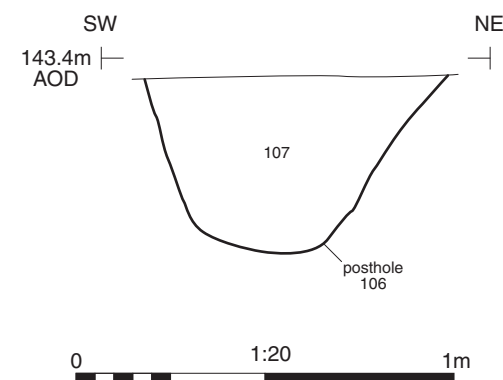
3



Section AA



Section BB



Pit 104, looking north (0.4m scale)



Posthole 106, looking north-west (0.4m scale)


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PROJECT TITLE  
**Rhonehurst Stables, Upper Lambourn,  
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FIGURE TITLE  
**Area 1 features: sections and  
 photographs**

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	AN0383	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	10/08/2021	
APPROVED BY	AH	SCALE@A3	1:20	<b>4</b>



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