

Land Adjacent to 1 Westleaze Farm Cottages Mill Lane Swindon

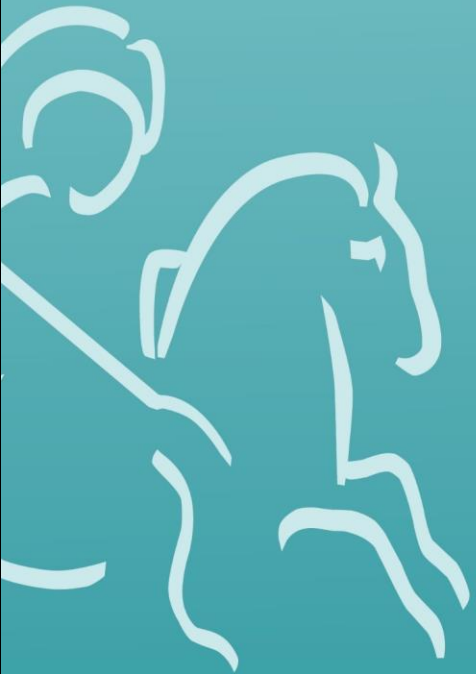
Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



for:
Mr and Mrs Phillips

CA Project: CR0599
CA Report: CR0599_1
SMAG Accession number: SWIMG:2021.1

September 2021



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Fig. 3 Photograph

SUMMARY

Project name:	Land Adjacent to 1 Westleaze Farm Cottages
Location:	Mill Lane, Swindon
NGR:	413930 183054
Type:	Archaeological Monitoring and Recording
Date:	5 July– 28 September 2021
Planning reference:	Swindon Borough Council ref: S/20/1153
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Swindon Museum and Art Gallery and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Accession Number:	SWIMG:2021.1
Site Code:	LWFC 20

Between July and September 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with a residential development on land adjacent to 1 Westleaze Farm Cottages, Mill Lane, Swindon.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed, and no artefactual material was recovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Between July and September 2021, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on land adjacent to 1 Westleaze Farm Cottages, Mill Lane, Swindon (centred at NGR: 413930 183054; Fig. 1). This watching brief was undertaken for Mr and Mrs Phillips.
- 1.2. Swindon Borough Council (SBC) has granted planning permission for residential development of the site (SBC planning ref: S/20/1153). Condition 10 of this planning permission required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI).
- 1.3. The scope of this programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was defined by Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Council), the archaeological advisor to SBC. The programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out in accordance with a WSI prepared by CA (2021) and approved by Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger.
- 1.4. The programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was also undertaken 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 development site was approximately 0.46ha in extent. It comprises the south-eastern corner of a single field of pasture. The field is bounded to the south-west by Mill Lane, to the south-east by the modern residence of Westleaze Stables, to the north-east by the River Ray and to the north-west by West Leaze Farm buildings and the Westleaze Cat Hotel cattery. The site lies at approximately 100m AOD, sloping down towards the River Ray.
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as mudstone of the Kimmeridge Clay Formation, formed in the Jurassic Period (BGS 2021). The natural substrate was recorded as comprising yellow and grey clays as across the area of monitored groundworks.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The site has previously been subject to a Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (CA 2019), Heritage Addendum (CA 2020), Geophysical Survey (SUMO 2020) and a walkover survey (CA 2019). The following is a summary of these results, supported by publicly obtainable information where pertinent.

Prehistoric

- 2.2. No prehistoric finds or features have been recorded within the proposed development area. Bronze Age pits have been recorded c.200m south-west of the site and a series of prehistoric features containing flint and pottery have also been identified c.400m south and c.600m east of site on Mill Lane (CA 2019).
- 2.3. A significant amount of Neolithic to Iron Age activity, as well as Roman finds, indicative of a multi-phase settlement has been recorded within a quarry in the Swindon suburb of Okus, approximately 560m north-east of site (CA 2019). This activity includes Neolithic pits and Bronze Age burials. A substantial Bronze Age/Early Iron Age ditch was also revealed during archaeological investigations c.900m west of site, and contained a small assemblage of pottery and flint alongside the remains of a prehistoric post-built structure (*ibid* 2019).

Roman

- 2.4. No finds or features of Roman date have been recorded within the current site although there is substantiated evidence of Roman farming and quarrying activity within the wider area and proximate to site (CA 2019).
- 2.5. The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain (RSRB) records a 'rural settlement at Mill Lane', c.200m south-east of site, as well as a small farm villa called 'Westlecote Farm' located c.615m east of site (CA 2019). Evidence for these settlements was recovered during extensive works conducted by Wessex Archaeology (2014). A section of Roman Road which may be associated with these settlements is also recorded c.680m east of site (CA 2019).

Medieval

- 2.6. The site lies within the historic parish of Wroughton, within the tithing or estate of Westlecot (CA 2019). The main occupation of the estate was arable agriculture. In the 13th century Westlecot was split into two holdings, of which Westcott, where the current site is located, was part of one. The estate went through a number of

ownerships during this period before it was endowed to a school, where it remained until 1919 (*ibid* 2019).

Scheduled Monument of West Leaze Deserted Medieval Village

- 2.7. The site lies adjacent to the *Scheduled Monument of West Leaze Deserted Medieval Village* (Fig. 2; National Heritage List for England ref. 1016361), a deserted medieval village once known as Westcott. It comprises eight hectares of visible earthworks consisting of house platforms, outbuildings, yards, tracks, holloways and extensive ridge and furrow cultivation. It is unusually enclosed by earthworks on three sides and bounded to the north by the river. The extent of the monument has been confirmed by documentary and cartographic evidence, and is a rare example of survival on the clay lands of Wiltshire (CA 2019).
- 2.8. The bulk of monument lies to the south-west of the proposed development area, however several ditches and a holloway or lane are located immediately west of the site, within the south-western corner of the same field in which the site is located (CA 2019). These closer remains are now fenced off by a post and wire fence, inclusive of a 5m buffer zone.
- 2.9. A series of Roman settlement features including ditches, pits and postholes, and a concentration of finds have been recorded within the south-east of monument (CA 2019). It is theorised that the Scheduled Monument may have earlier origins, although this is unsubstantiated due to the lack of archaeological works conducted within the monument (*ibid*).
- 2.10. The proposed development area is currently considered to lie outside of the eastern boundary earthwork of the village, within the arable open field or pasture (CA 2019). However, a publication by Wroughton History Group theorises that the manor house for the village may lie beneath the current West Leaze Farmhouse complex. A watching brief was conducted by CA (2010) at the former Westleaze Riding Stables immediately east of site and recorded no archaeological remains. It is unclear why the village was abandoned but it is postulated to be due to a demand for pastureland as the estate moved towards sheep and cattle farming.

Post-Medieval/Modern

- 2.11. The surrounding landscape of site was subject to significant change and subdivision associated with agricultural activity during the Post-medieval and modern periods. West Leaze Farm, north-west of site, undergoes expansion on a number of

occasions with the addition of multiple buildings. However, there is little alteration to the site itself which remains open farmland on historic mapping until the construction of Mill Lane visible on the 1942 map of site.

Geophysical Survey

- 2.12. SUMO (2020) conducted a magnetometer survey across the proposed development area and identified no definitive archaeological anomalies. Sinuous bands of natural magnetic enhancement, interpreted to be possible alluvial deposits, were identified close to the river, north of site as well as disturbance and an underground pipe of probable modern date (*ibid*).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objectives of the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording 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 a report setting out the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording results and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data;
- at the conclusion of the project, to compile a stable, ordered, accessible project archive

- 3.2. The specific objective of the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was to investigate and record any remains associated with the *Scheduled Monument of West Leaze Deserted Medieval Village* that may have extended into the development area.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The programme of archaeological monitoring and recording comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks associated with the proposed development. These works comprised ground reduction (Trench 1) and service trenches (Trenches 2–4; Fig. 2).
- 4.2. Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

-
- 4.3. CA will make arrangements with Swindon Museum and Art Gallery 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

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the results of the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A.
- 5.2. The general stratigraphic sequence recorded during the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was consistent throughout the observed groundworks. The natural geological substrate was revealed at an average depth of 0.4m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by an average of 0.1m of subsoil, which was in turn sealed by 0.3m of topsoil.
- 5.3. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed, and no artefactual material was recovered.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1. Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see *Archaeological Background*, above), the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The results of the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording indicate that archaeological remains associated with the *Scheduled Monument of West Leaze Deserted Medieval Village* do not extend to within the current site, and that it likely formed part of the agricultural landscape surrounding the medieval settlement.
- 6.2. The results of the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording corroborated the results of the preceding geophysical survey, which also did not identify any evidence for archaeological remains on the site.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken and this report written by Christopher Leonard. The report illustrations were prepared by Helena Munoz Mojado. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Alex Thomson.

8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2021 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer>, accessed 29
September 2021

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 *Former Westleaze Riding Centre, Mill Lane, Swindon: Archaeological Watching Brief*. CA report **10094**

CA 2019 *Mill Lane, West Leaze, Swindon: Heritage Desk-Based Assessment*. CA Report **CR0060_1**

CA 2021 *Land Adjacent to 1 Westleaze Farm Cottages, Mill Lane, Swindon: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*

SUMO 2020 *Land at Mill Lane, Westleaze, Swindon, Wiltshire*. SUMO Survey Report **16869**

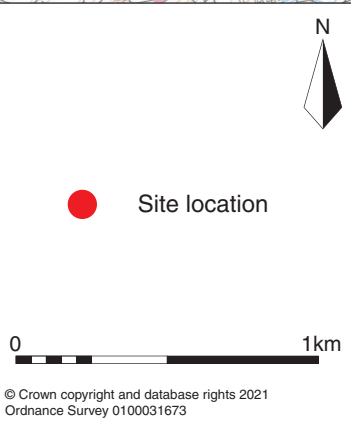
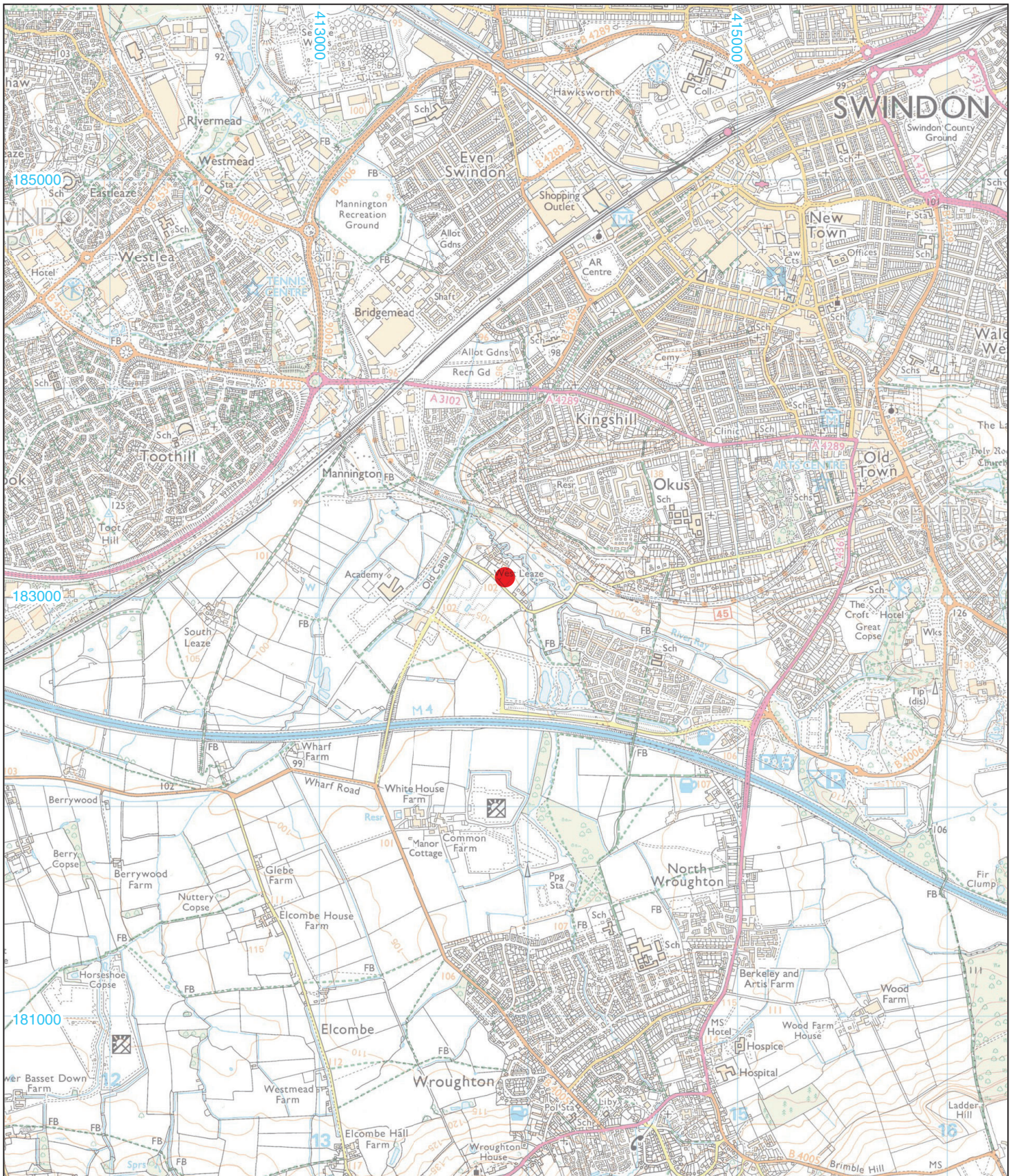
WA (Wessex Archaeology) 2014 *Wichelstowe Phase 1: Archaeological Evaluation Report*

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context No.	Type	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
1	100	layer	Topsoil	Dark brownish grey sandy silt	0.23
1	101	layer	Subsoil	Mid orange brown sandy silt	0.08
1	102	layer	Natural	Greyish yellow sandy clay	
2	200	layer	Topsoil	Same as 100	0.2
2	201	layer	Subsoil	Same as 101	0.05
2	202	layer	Natural	Same as 102	
3	300	layer	Topsoil	Same as 100	0.25
3	301	layer	Subsoil	Same as 101	0.1
3	302	layer	Natural	Same as 102	
4	400	layer	Topsoil	Same as 100	0.3
4	401	layer	Subsoil	Same as 101	0.1
4	402	layer	Natural	Same as 102	

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Land Adjacent to 1 Westleaze Farm Cottages, Mill Lane, Swindon	
Short description	<p>Between July and September 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with a residential development on land adjacent to 1 Westleaze Farm Cottages, Mill Lane, Swindon.</p> <p>No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed, and no artefactual material was recovered.</p>	
Project dates	5 July 2021, 27–28 September 2021	
Project type	Archaeological Monitoring and Recording (Watching Brief)	
Previous work	Desk-Based Assessment (CA 2019) and Addendum (2020) Geophysical Survey (SUMO 2020)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Mill Lane, Swindon	
Study area (m ² /ha)	0.46ha	
Site co-ordinates	413930 183054	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	N/A	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Alex Thomson	
Project Supervisor	Christopher Leonard	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Paper	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery/ SWIMG:2021.1	Context sheets
Digital	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery/ SWIMG:2021.1	Database, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2021 <i>Land Adjacent to 1 Westleaze Farm Cottages, Mill Lane, Swindon: Archaeological Monitoring and Recording</i> . CA typescript report CR0599_1		



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PROJECT TITLE
 Land Adjacent to 1 Westleaze Cottages,
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FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY	HMM	PROJECT NO.	CR0599	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	05/10/2021	1
APPROVED BY	AT	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	

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- Site boundary
- Observed groundwork
- Extent of Scheduled monument
- Earthwork



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PROJECT TITLE
 Land Adjacent to 1 Westleaze Cottages,
 Mill Lane, Swindon

FIGURE TITLE
 The site, showing location of
 monitored groundworks, Scheduled
 Monument and earthworks

<small>DRAWN BY</small>	<small>RW/HMM</small>	<small>PROJECT NO.</small>	<small>CR0599</small>	<small>FIGURE NO.</small>
<small>CHECKED BY</small>	<small>DJB</small>	<small>DATE</small>	<small>05/10/2021</small>	2
<small>APPROVED BY</small>	<small>AT</small>	<small>SCALE@A3</small>	<small>1:2,000</small>	



Area 1 during groundworks.



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PROJECT TITLE

Land Adjacent to 1 Westleaze Cottages,
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FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

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FIGURE NO.

3



Representative stratigraphy in Trench 3 (0.5m scale)



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PROJECT TITLE

Land Adjacent to 1 Westleaze Cottages,
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FIGURE TITLE

**Photograph: Representative
stratigraphy in Trench 3**

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FIGURE NO.

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