

**NAAS COURT FARM
LYDNEY
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

For

SAVILLS

CA PROJECT: 2587
CA REPORT: 08095


JUNE 2008



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|-------------|---|
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| issue | 01 |

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Naas Court Farm
Location: Lydney, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire
NGR: SO 6494 0211
Type: Evaluation
Date: 7-8 May 2008
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Dean Heritage Centre
Site Code: NAS 08

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in May 2008 at the request of Savills at Naas Court Farm, Lydney. Eight trenches were excavated. Previous documentary research has shown that the farm was formerly a medieval manor. At least one of the stone barns that comprise the modern farm may have 14th-century origins. The compact arrangement of the buildings and the presence of linear ponds to the north and east of the buildings have been used to suggest that the manor was moated.

Two undated features were encountered; a possible quarry pit and a stone culvert. No evidence for a moat was encountered. It is possible that a moat never existed at the site or that it was located further away from the farm buildings on at least its southern and western sides. No medieval surfaces or other features were recorded within the barns.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In May 2008 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Savills at Naas Court Farm, Lydney (centred on NGR: SO 6494 0211; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken prior to the submission of a planning application to Forest of Dean District Council (FDDC) for the refurbishment of an existing farmhouse and the conversion of stone barns, one of probable 14th-century origin, to create six residential units. The proposed works will also include the construction of a new access road and associated parking facilities.
- 1.2 The archaeological evaluation was recommended by Mr Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), the archaeological advisor to FDDC. It was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2008) and approved by Mr Parry. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (2001), the *Statement of Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Gloucestershire* (GCC 1995) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991). It was monitored by Mr Parry, including a site visit on 7 May 2008.

The site

- 1.3 The site lies south-east of Lydney close to the west bank of the river Severn (Fig. 1) and is situated at approximately 22m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).
- 1.4 The site is approximately 0.5ha in area, and is currently occupied by Grade II listed farm buildings arranged around a central courtyard. The site is bounded to the east by Naas Lane and to the north, south and west by grassed fields.
- 1.5 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Second Terrace Gravel of the Pleistocene Era (IGS 1974). The geology encountered comprised of heavily compacted red clay, with rare patches of gravel.

Archaeological background

- 1.6 The farm buildings have been the subject of a historical and structural survey (Rodwell 2006). This report states that the farm was formerly a medieval manor. It was a Domesday manor, held at the time of the survey in 1086 by the king and in 1066 by Earl Harold. The Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record (GSMR) records the farm buildings as comprising a manor house (now farmhouse) of 15th-century date, but with substantial 19th and 20th-century modifications (GSMR 12682), a barn and cart shed of 18th or 19th-century date (GSMR 12683) and a barn, possibly 14th century but much altered (GSMR 12684). A hall and buildings were recorded on the manor of Naas in 1443, probably at the site of Naas Court (Rodwell 2006, 1). The farmhouse at Naas Court contains one late 15th-century window and may be a late medieval chamber block (*ibid.*, 9) and could be the hall referred to in the documentary evidence. As the farm buildings have a compact arrangement and there are linear ponds to the north and east of the buildings, it has been suggested that the medieval manor was moated.
- 1.7 A desk-based assessment was undertaken for the land around Naas Court Farm in October 2002 (BaRAS 2002). The historical information for the area indicated continuous agricultural occupation of the area since the later Anglo-Saxon period. Naas Lane is in places a hollow way up to 2m deep leading to the site of a late medieval hamlet and manor house that may have replaced an earlier Anglo-Saxon settlement (GSMR 22125). Possible medieval and/or post-medieval boundaries and ridge and furrow are visible to the south of Naas Court as earthworks on aerial photographs. Earthwork mounds and platforms can also be seen, but their function is not clear and they may be the result of quarrying and dumping (GSMR 4085).
- 1.8 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in connection with a proposal to turn the land around Naas Court into a golf course. Sixty-five trenches were excavated. No finds or features of archaeological significance were recorded in 45 of the trenches. The limited archaeological deposits represented mainly agricultural and land management features dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods. The medieval features included a number of ditches containing 11th to 13th century Forest of Dean ware pottery and a hollow which is marked as a pond on the 1839 tithe map for the area. Post-medieval features included a number of ditches and a stone lined culvert. Modern features

included a trackway. A number of trenches contained undated features including ditches, a track and a posthole (CA 2004, 3).

Archaeological objectives

- 1.9 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the character, quality, date and extent of any archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site. This information will assist FDDC in making an informed judgement clarifying whether any remains are of sufficient importance to warrant consideration for preservation *in situ*, or alternatively form the basis of mitigation measures that may seek to limit damage to significant remains.
- 1.10 Specific aims of the evaluation included:
- To determine the presence and location of a possible medieval/post-medieval moat surrounding the site (trenches 1 – 3)
 - To determine the presence of medieval floors or other features within the buildings with possible medieval origins (trenches 5 – 8) and farmyard (trench 4)

Methodology

- 1.11 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of eight trenches (four measuring 10m long by 1.6m wide and four measuring 2m by 2m); in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The four 10m long trenches were located within grassed fields to the east and west of the farm, whilst the others were situated within the farm buildings.
- 1.12 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.13 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* (2003). No deposits were identified that required sampling. Several sherds of china dating to the 19th or 20th century were recovered

along with several fragments of modern brick. This artefactual material is considered of minimal archaeological significance and was discarded.

- 1.14 The archive from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. The site archive will be deposited with the Dean Heritage Centre. 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.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-3)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts Appendices A. Details of the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix B.
- 2.2 Archaeological features were only encountered in trenches 1 and 2.

Trench 1

- 2.3 The earliest deposit encountered was compact red clay 108. It contained rare patches of gravel and was interpreted as the natural undisturbed substrate. Overlying this was red silty clay 102, which contained rare patches of gravel. It is likely that layer 102 represented weathered natural.
- 2.4 Cut through the top of 102 was east/west aligned stone culvert 107. It comprised two parallel lines of mortared stones and was capped by relatively large, flat stones. It is possible that it was associated with a drainage ditch to the west. The culvert was sealed by a layer of brown silty clay 101. Deposit 101 contained frequent small-medium sized stones and rare fragments of modern pottery. Cut through the top of 101 was modern service trench 103. Brown silty clay topsoil 100 overlay 101.

Trench 2

- 2.5 The earliest deposit encountered was compact red clay 202. It contained rare patches of gravel and was interpreted as the natural undisturbed substrate.

Overlying this was light orangey red silty clay 205, which contained rare patches of gravel. It is likely that layer 205 represented weathered natural.

- 2.6 Cut through the top of 205 was an irregular-shaped feature 203, which was not fully exposed (Fig. 3). This feature was only partly visible in the corner of the trench and is probably a pit, although it may represent the terminus of a ditch. It was filled by reddish brown silty clay, with rare medium-large stone inclusions 204. No artefacts were retrieved from fill 204 so it remained undated. The clean nature of the fill suggests it may have been a quarry pit, used to extract clay. The sterile nature of the fill would discount its interpretation as a rubbish pit.
- 2.7 Overlying fill 204 was brown silty clay subsoil 201. Cut through the top of this subsoil was a field drain. Brown silty clay topsoil 200 overlay the field drain.

Trench 3

- 2.8 No significant archaeological features were recorded in trench 3. The earliest deposit encountered was compact red clay 303. It contained rare patches of gravel and was interpreted as the natural undisturbed substrate. Overlying this was light orangey red silty clay 302, which contained rare patches of gravel. It is likely that layer 302 represented weathered natural. A dark brown layer of mixed ash and clinker 301 overlay 302. It contained fragments of modern red brick. Brown silty clay topsoil 300 overlay 301.

Trench 4

- 2.9 No significant archaeological features were recorded in trench 4. A compact and red clay 403 was the earliest deposit encountered and was interpreted as the natural undisturbed substrate. Overlying this was orangey red silty clay 402, which contained rare patches of gravel. It is likely that layer 402 represented weathered natural. A grey silty clay and stone rubble deposit 401 overlay 402 and represents the modern hardcore farmyard surface. Overlying 401 was brown silty clay topsoil 400.

Trenches 5 to 8

- 2.10 No archaeological features were recorded within these four trenches. The earliest deposit encountered was a light red clay, with rare gravel patches and bluey grey clay striations. A sondage excavated in trench 7 demonstrated that it was at least 1.13m in depth. This heavily compacted clay was interpreted as the undisturbed natural substrate. Overlying the natural clay in trenches 5, 6 and 7 was an organic deposit, which formed the current surfaces in the barns. In trench 8 a randomly laid cobble surface was bedded directly on to the compacted clay.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Archaeological features were only encountered within trenches 1 and 2. The irregular-shaped feature in trench 2 is probably a quarry pit, although it could represent the terminus of a ditch. The east/west aligned stone culvert in trench 1 is undated.
- 3.2 Documentary research has suggested that as the farm buildings have a compact arrangement and there are linear ponds to the north and east of the buildings, that the medieval manor was moated. No evidence for a moat surrounding Naas Court Farm was found during the evaluation. It is possible that a moat never existed at the site or that it was located further away from the farm buildings on at least its southern and western sides.
- 3.3 The second specific aim of the fieldwork was to investigate whether any original floors or other features survived within barns with possible medieval origins or in the farmyard. No evidence for such floors or features was found. The shallow depth of modern organic material within the barns could suggest that they were originally clay floored and that these surfaces have been periodically cleared away and renewed.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Neil Wright, assisted by Jon Webster, Charlie Jones and Vicky Rees. The report was written by Neil Wright. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by Neil Wright, and

prepared for deposition by Kathryn Price. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

5. REFERENCES

- BaRAS (Bristol and Region Archaeological Services) 2002 *Archaeological Desktop Study of land at Naas Court Farm, Lydney, Gloucestershire*, Typescript Report No. **1087/2002**
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2004 *Naas Court Farm, Lydney, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation*, Typescript Report No. **04179**
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 *Naas Farm, Lydney, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*
- IGS (Institute of Geological Sciences) 1974 *Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), Sheet 233: Monmouth*
- Rodwell, K.A. 2006 *Naas Court Farm, Lydney, Gloucestershire: A Report on the History and Structural Development of the Farm Buildings*, unpublished typescript report for Savills

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-----------|--|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 100 | Layer | Topsoil | | | 0.18 | |
| 101 | Deposit | Stone rubble dumping | | | 0.10 | PM |
| 109 | Fill | Secondary construction fill of culvert 107 | | | 0.18 | |
| 110 | Fill | Primary construction backfill of culvert 107 | | | 0.24 | |
| 107 | Structure | Stone culvert | <1.6 | 1.00 | <0.17 | |
| 106 | Fill | Silting of stone culvert 107 | | | 0.04 | |
| 105 | Cut | Construction cut for culvert 107 | <1.6 | 1.00 | <0.35 | |
| 103 | Cut | Construction cut for modern service trench | <3.4 | 0.55 | <0.95 | |
| 104 | Fill | Fill of modern service trench | | | <0.95 | |
| 102 | Layer | Mixed clay and gravel | | | 0.2 | |
| 108 | Layer | Natural clay | | | <0.25 | |

Trench 2

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 200 | Layer | Topsoil | | | 0.3 | |
| 201 | Layer | Subsoil | | | 0.28 | |
| 204 | Fill | Fill of 203. Rare medium-large stones | | | 0.46 | |
| 203 | Cut | Sub-circular feature | <1.05 | <0.65 | 0.46 | |
| 205 | Layer | Mixed clay and gravel | | | 0.31 | |
| 202 | Layer | Natural clay | | | 0.15 | |

Trench 3

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|-----------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 300 | Layer | Topsoil | | | 0.2 | |
| 301 | Layer | Burnt gravel spread | | | 0.20 | PM |
| 302 | Layer | Mixed clay and gravel | | | 0.15 | |
| 303 | Layer | Natural clay | | | >0.05 | |

Trench 4

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|-----------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 400 | Layer | Topsoil | | | 0.19 | |
| 401 | Layer | Stone rubble dumping | | | 0.22 | PM |
| 402 | Layer | Mixed clay and gravel | | | 0.14 | |
| 403 | Layer | Natural clay | | | >0.05 | |

Trench 5

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|--|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 500 | Layer | Compacted organic build-up within barn | | | 0.51 | PM |
| 501 | Layer | Natural clay | | | >0.08 | |

Trench 6

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 600 | Layer | Organic build-up within barn | | | 0.11 | PM |
| 601 | Layer | Natural clay | | | >0.17 | |

Trench 7

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 700 | Layer | Organic build-up within barn | | | 0.03 | PM |
| 701 | Layer | Natural clay | | | >1.13 | |

Trench 8

| No. | Type | Description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|-------|-----------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 800 | Layer | Stone cobbled surface | | | 0.22 | PM |
| 801 | Layer | Natural clay | | | >0.13 | |

APPENDIX B: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), calculated using the bench mark located on the eastern barn at 22.50m AOD.

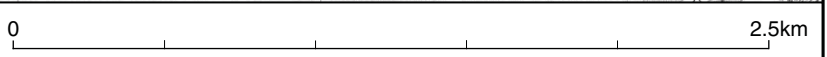
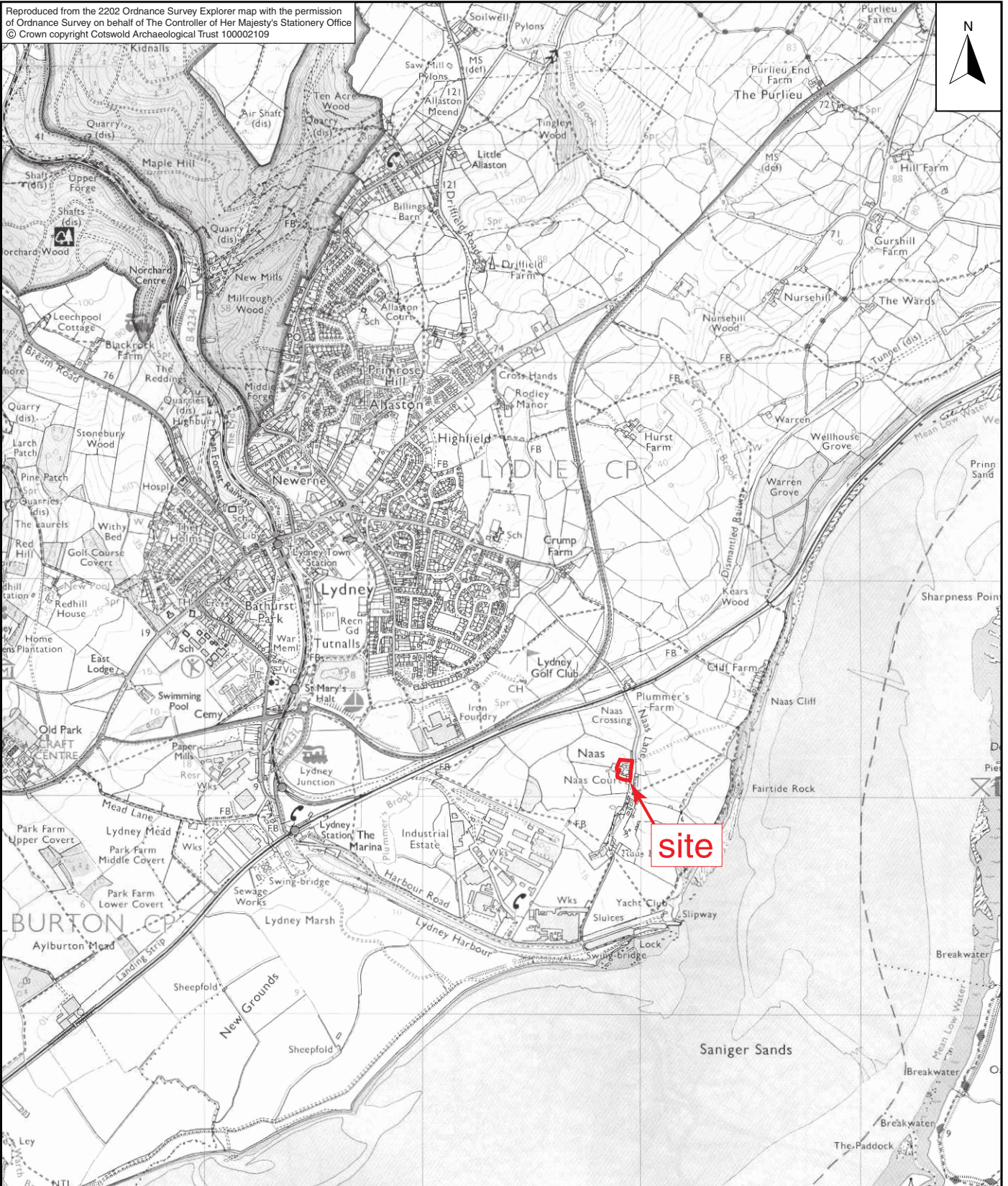
| | Trench 1 | Trench 2 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Current ground level | (21.60m) | (20.76m) |
| Top of archaeological deposits | 0.27m (21.33m) | 0.69m (20.07m) |
| Limit of excavation | 0.64m (20.96m) | 1.19m (19.57m) |


Upper figures are depth below modern ground level; lower figures in parentheses are metres AOD.

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM



| PROJECT DETAILS | | |
|--|--|--|
| Project Name | Naas Court Farm, Lydney, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation | |
| Short description (250 words maximum) | <p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in May 2008 at the request of Savills at Naas Court Farm, Lydney. Eight trenches were excavated. Previous documentary research has shown that the farm was formerly a medieval manor. At least one of the stone barns that comprise the modern farm may have 14th-century origins. The compact arrangement of the buildings and the presence of linear ponds to the north and east of the buildings have been used to suggest that the manor was moated.</p> <p>Two undated features were encountered; a possible quarry pit and a stone culvert. No evidence for a moat was encountered. It is possible that a moat never existed at the site or that it was located further away from the farm buildings on at least its southern and western sides. No medieval surfaces or other features were recorded within the barns.</p> | |
| Project dates | 7– 8 May 2008 | |
| Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc) | Evaluation | |
| Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc) | <i>Rodwell, K A (2006) Naas Court Farm, Lydney, Gloucestershire: A Report on the History and Structural Development of the Farm Buildings</i> | |
| Future work | Unknown | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | |
| Site Location | Naas Court Farm, Lydney, Gloucestershire | |
| Study area (M ² /ha) | 0.5ha | |
| Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference) | SO 6494 0211 | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | |
| Name of organisation | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project Brief originator | Gloucestershire County Council | |
| Project Design (WSI) originator | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project Manager | Richard Young | |
| Project Supervisor | Neil Wright | |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | |
| | Intended final location of archive | Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc) |
| Physical | n/a | n/a |
| Paper | Dean Heritage Centre | Pro forma recording sheets, plans and sections |
| Digital | Dean Heritage Centre | Photographs |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | |
| CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 <i>Naas Court Farm, Lydney, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> , Typescript Report No. 08095 | | |

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|  COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY | | | |
| PROJECT TITLE Naas Court Farm, Lydney Gloucestershire | | | |
| FIGURE TITLE Site location plan | | | |
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-  site
-  evaluation trench



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Naas Court Farm, Lydney
Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench location plan

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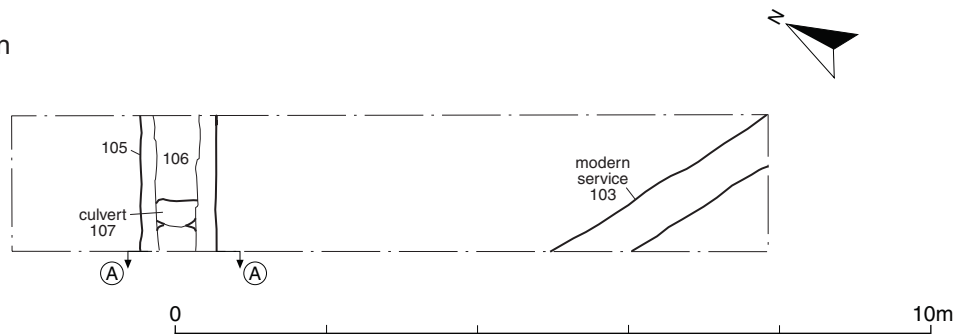
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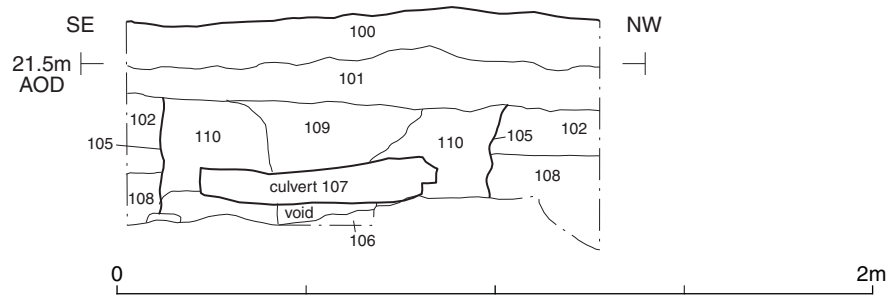
FIGURE NO.

2

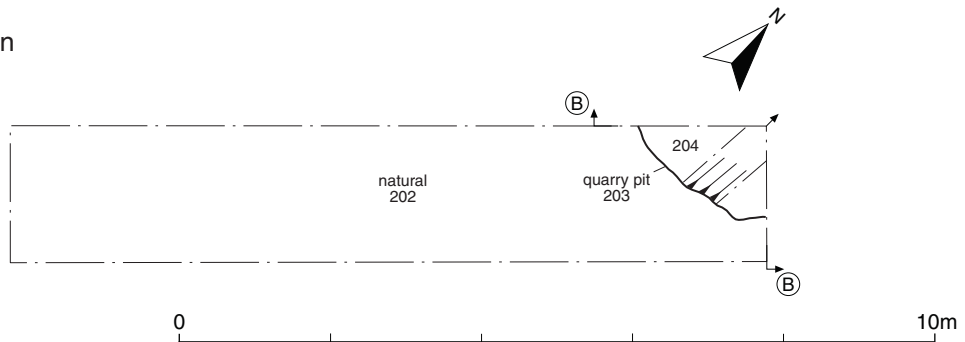
Trench 1; plan



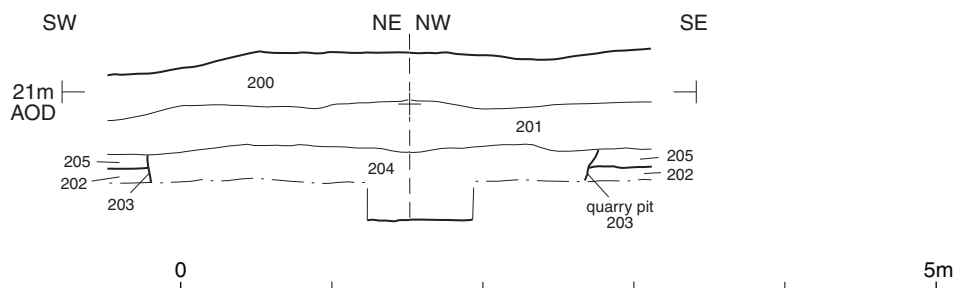
Trench 1; section



Trench 2; plan



Trench 2; section



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Naas Court Farm, Lydney
Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE

**Trenches 1 and 2;
Plans and sections**

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FIGURE NO.

3