

**LAND AT BRIDGEMEAD
AVEBURY
WILTSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

MR AND MRS FRY


CA PROJECT: 3069
CA REPORT: 10050

MARCH 2010

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date	29 March 2010
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date	31 March 2010
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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	2
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-4)	6
3. DISCUSSION.....	8
4. CA PROJECT TEAM	9
5. REFERENCES	10
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS	11
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS	12
APPENDIX E: OASIS REPORT FORM.....	13

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan, showing archaeological features (1:1000)
- Fig. 3 Trench 4; plan and sections (1:50 and 1:20)
- Fig. 4 Trench 5; plan and sections (1:50 and 1:20)

SUMMARY

Project Name: Land at Bridgemead
Location: Avebury, Wiltshire
NGR: SU 0985 6988
Type: Evaluation
Date: 18-22 March 2010
Location of Archive: To be deposited with the Alexander Keiller Museum, Avebury
Site Code: BMA 10

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in March 2010 at the request of Mr and Mrs Fry on land at Bridgemead, Avebury, Wiltshire. Two trenches were excavated.

The evaluation revealed the probable continuation of a ditch associated with a possible Prehistoric or Romano-British trackway observed during a previous phase of evaluation. Two ditches of 12th to 13th-century date and one ditch of probable 12th to 13th-century date were also identified. Taken with the results of two previous evaluations, the later features suggest the presence of a burgage plot fronting onto what is now the High Street with land divisions to the rear.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In March 2010 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Mr and Mrs Fry at land at Bridgemead, Avebury, Wiltshire (centred on NGR: SU 0985 6988; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany a planning application being submitted for residential development of the site.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out at the request of David Vaughan, Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council (WC), archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority. It was undertaken in accordance with a *Brief for Geophysical Survey and Evaluation* issued by Mr Vaughan (WC 2010) and with a subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2010) and approved by Mr Vaughan. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008), *the Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation* (WC Archaeology Service 1995), *Management of Archaeological Projects II* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006). It was monitored by Mr Vaughan, including a site visit on 19 March 2010.

The site

- 1.3 The proposed development area encloses an area of approximately 0.4ha and is currently occupied by three buildings; a 20th-century bungalow and two associated outbuildings. A tarmac driveway lies between the two outbuildings and incorporates a small gravelled area to its west (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 155m AOD and is relatively flat.
- 1.4 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Lower Chalk of the Upper Cretaceous (BGS 1974) with Terrace 1 River Gravels deposited by the Winterbourne overlying the chalk across the site. The Terrace 1 deposits are overlain in the western half of the site by late Devensian and Flandrian Stage River Alluvium originating from the Winterbourne (CA 2004). The natural substrate was encountered within both trenches during the evaluation.

Archaeological background

- 1.5 A Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) of the site has been undertaken (CA 2004). The site falls within the Avebury World Heritage Site, it does not lie within a Scheduled Monument. It is however, subject to several policies regarding heritage and development defined by the Kennet Local Plan and the Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan. The results of the DBA are summarized below.
- 1.6 It is likely that the course of the recently re-discovered Neolithic Beckhampton Avenue ran on the line of, or very close to, the southern boundary of the site. The antiquarian William Stukeley depicts three sarsen stones within the site plot and, whilst the reliability of this account is not certain, there is potential for associated stones or stone settings to survive at these locations. There is also the potential for associated Neolithic or earlier Bronze Age features within the site. The plots running along the High Street were probably established as components of the later 9th or 10th-century *burh*, and there is also potential for currently unrecorded settlement or other features of these dates. Deposits of river alluvium deposited within the Holocene (the last c. 11,500 years) are recorded within the site and probably become increasingly thick towards the west of the site, and may seal any such remains.
- 1.7 An archaeological evaluation of the site was undertaken by CA in January 2007 (CA 2007). Two trenches were excavated across the proposed development area (Fig. 2). The evaluation identified the presence of a possible Romano-British trackway. A ditch and postholes likely to have been associated with the medieval settlement at Avebury were also identified and indicate that the medieval burgage plots extended as far west as the site. The archaeological features were sealed by buried subsoil and topsoil deposits which were themselves overlain by between 0.77m and 1.13m of modern deposits. Subsequently a further evaluation was carried out in January 2008, when two undated, but probably medieval postholes were identified along with a medieval pit and a medieval ditch likely to have formed part of a western continuation of the Anglo-Saxon and later High Street (Fig. 2). Taken with the results of the earlier evaluation, these features suggest the presence of a burgage plot fronting onto this street (CA 2008).
- 1.8 Subsequently, a geophysical survey consisting of magnetometer and earth resistance survey, was carried out in February 2010 by Archaeological Surveys

Limited as per the works specified in the *Brief*. Earth resistance data revealed a number of high and low resistance anomalies across the site (AS 2010). Discrete zones of high resistance are considered as uncertain in origin although some could potentially indicate large buried objects (e.g. sarsen stone); however, ground make-up, garden features and other forms of relatively recent disturbance may account for the anomalies. More widespread zones of high resistance located close to mature trees may have been caused by sheltering effects and moisture uptake. Several low resistance linear anomalies could potentially indicate moisture retentive soil within cut features although they may also be associated with former garden features. The magnetometer data were highly disturbed by magnetic debris indicating the presence of many buried ferrous objects in the garden. Ordnance Survey mapping from 1889 indicates that the site is in the vicinity of a smithy which may have been the origin of the ferrous material. It is also possible that it relates to modern material that has been incorporated into ground make-up or from the demolition of structures (sheds, outbuildings etc). The disturbance may obscure weaker magnetic anomalies and the data are considered ineffective for indicating the archaeological potential of the site.

Archaeological objectives

- 1.9 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the application area. This information will clarify whether any remains are of sufficient importance to warrant consideration for preservation *in situ* or alternative mitigation measures and will assist Wiltshire Council in making an informed judgement on the significance of the archaeological resource, and the likely impact upon it of the proposed development.

Methodology

- 1.10 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of two trenches (nos. 4 and 5, measuring 15m by 1.6m and 10.2m by 1.6m respectively) (Fig. 2). The trenches were located across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling but outside the footprint of the existing house. They represented a c. 10% sample of the footprint of the proposed building. Trench 4 was moved 0.5m to the south-west to avoid tree roots at the north-eastern end, whilst a live service was detected at the southern end of Trench 5 and the trench was shortened accordingly.

- 1.11 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).
- 1.12 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) and no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 3: *Treatment of Finds Immediately After Excavation* (1995).
- 1.13 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with the Alexander Keiller Museum, along with the site archive. 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 2-4)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts, and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 & 3)

- 2.2 The earliest context recorded in Trench 4 was chalk geological substrate 409 at a depth of c. 1.1m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by buried subsoil layer 405. This was cut by south-west/north-east aligned ditch 406, the primary fill (408) of which contained abundant natural flint fragments and two possible struck flakes. Secondary fill 407 contained common natural flint fragments. Fill 407 was covered by modern rubble deposit 416 which contained large fragments of sarsen stone ($\leq 0.8\text{m}$ in length). North-east/south-west aligned ditch 413 at the north oedn of the trench, cut buried subsoil 405 and contained homogeneous fill 410, dated to the 12th or 13th-century by two sherds of pottery. This ditch was re-cut

by ditch 412 which contained a fill 411 rich in natural flint inclusions. This re-cut was sealed by buried topsoil 404, which was truncated by modern cut 415 containing rubble fill 414. This was overlain by make-up layers 403 and 402 respectively which were sealed by topsoil 401.

Trench 5 (Figs 2 & 4)

- 2.3 Trench 5 followed a similar sequence to Trench 4; natural chalk 504 was overlain by buried subsoil 503 which was cut by ditches 505 and 517, both of which had been re-cut. Ditch 505 lay on an east/west alignment and contained chalk-rich basal fill 507 and secondary fill 506 which contained a single sherd of 12th to 13th-century pottery, three residual undiagnostic struck flint flakes and quantities of animal bone. This ditch was re-cut by ditch 508 which contained basal fill 510 and secondary fill 509, which included common flecks of charcoal, quantities of animal bone and four sherds of pottery dated to the 12th or 13th-century. A single sherd of Romano-British Oxfordshire ware was considered to be residual. Ditch 517 contained undated fill 516 and was cut by ditch 515, which contained undated fills 514, 513 and 512 respectively. Fill 513 contained six fragments of animal bone.

The Finds and Palaeoenvironmental Evidence

- 2.4 Quantities of pottery, animal bone, worked flint and iron nail, and mollusc shell were recovered from four separate deposits (Appendix B).
- 2.5 Prehistoric worked flint comprising three un-retouched tertiary flakes, was present as residual material from (medieval) ditch fill 506. A further two possible flakes were identified among large quantities of unworked flint from ditch fill 408. In the absence of secondary working, close dating for any of the worked flint is not possible.
- 2.6 One sherd of Roman pottery was recovered as a residual find from medieval deposit 509. It is identifiable as Oxfordshire red-slipped ware, dateable to the mid 3rd to 4th centuries AD.
- 2.7 Pottery with medieval forms was recovered from fills 411, 506 and 509. A single fabric, a flint and limestone-tempered coarseware type, was identified, comparable to Newbury B/Kennet Valley type wares common from the area and dateable to the

12th to 13th/early 14th centuries. Rimsherds from deposits 506 and 411 derive from jar/cooking pot forms.

- 2.8 Animal bone was recovered from two deposits of medieval date and one undated deposit. The species identified were; cattle, sheep/goat, pig and dog. More fragmented specimens were classified by size with cow-sized and sheep-sized categories present. The animal bone from ditch fills 506 and 509 exhibited signs of butchery and also showed surface damage from plant roots.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Both trenches contained intrusive modern disturbance, probably associated with the construction of the existing buildings and their associated services. This modern disturbance sealed buried subsoil layer 405/503 which was overlaying the natural chalk. All archaeological features were cutting this buried subsoil, therefore it is possible they were truncated by the works characterised by these modern deposits. The high resistance anomalies on the geophysical survey targeted by both trenches corresponded to modern dumped material associated with the modern activity on the site.
- 3.2 The alignment of ditch 406 appears to correspond to ditch 211 observed during the 2007 evaluation, which was tentatively dated to the Romano-British period based on the evidence of parallel ditch 108 containing a single abraded sherd of Romano-British pottery. Ditch 406 is one of the few features encountered during the latest evaluation that does not have a re-cut, suggesting that it was not visible or in use in the later 12th or 13th-century landscape. The 2007 report characterised the two parallel ditches as possible drainage either side of a Roman trackway, or, if unrelated, ditch 211 (and therefore 406) could have functioned as a field boundary. As ditch 211 contained three worked flints it is quite possible that ditches 406 and 211 are actually prehistoric in date. As ditch 108 contained only a single abraded sherd of Romano-British pottery it is possible that this feature is also prehistoric in date and by extension so is the possible trackway.
- 3.3 A single sherd of Romano-British pottery was retrieved from fill 509 of re-cut 508 however this fill also contained four sherds of pottery dateable to the 12th or 13th-

century. The upper fill of the primary ditch cut also contained 12th to 13th-century pottery, therefore the Romano-British sherd can be considered residual.

- 3.4 Pottery dating to the 12th or 13th-century was recovered from three deposits, two of which comprised the upper fills of ditches. The lack of later material suggests that this pottery was not residual. Only a single sherd of 12th to 13th-century pottery was recovered from fill 506, which means that the primary ditch 505 could have been earlier in date and the medieval pottery is intrusive from a later re-cut.
- 3.5 While ditches 515 and 517 did not contain any artefactual material, the similar fills suggests they could have been part of the same group of medieval features identified in the 2007 and 2008 evaluations.
- 3.6 The ditch 317 observed during the 2008 works was located close to the projected position of a possible Anglo-Saxon burh division and was interpreted as a drainage ditch associated with this division (CA 2008). The ditch 106 referred to in the 2007 report ran parallel to the medieval High Street and was interpreted as a property boundary associated with a medieval burgage plot fronting on to the high street. Ditches 515 and 517 are on the same alignment as this ditch and probably form a continuation of this boundary system. It is possible that ditches 413/412 and 505/508 form further subdivisions of these medieval plots, with the presence of re-cuts attesting to the maintenance of these boundaries.
- 3.7 The archaeological features identified in both trenches were sealed by a series of modern make-up deposits probably dating to the construction of the existing dwelling in the second half of the 20th century.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Mark Brett, assisted by Diarmuid O'Seaneachain. The report was written by Rebecca Riley, assisted by Mark Brett. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by Rebecca Riley, and prepared for deposition by Jon Hart. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

5. REFERENCES

- AS (Archaeological Surveys) 2010 *Bridgemoor, Avebury, Wiltshire: Magnetometry and Earth Resistance Survey*. AS Report No. **316**
- BGS (British Geological Survey) 1974 Solid and Drift Edition, Sheet 266 (1: 50,000)
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2004 *Land at Bridgemoor, Avebury, Wiltshire: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*, CA Report No. **04033**
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2007 *Land at Bridgemoor, Avebury, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation* CA Typescript report no. **07015**
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 *Land at Bridgemoor, Avebury, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation* CA Typescript report no. **08009**
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 *Land at Bridgemoor, Avebury, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*
- WC (Wiltshire Council) 2010 *Land at Bridgemoor, Avebury, Wiltshire: Brief for Geophysical Survey and Evaluation*

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 4

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
401	Layer	Topsoil	-	-	0.15	Modern
402	Layer	Make-up layer	-	-	0.31	Modern
403	Layer	Make-up layer containing re-deposited white chalk	-	-	0.17	Modern
404	Layer	Buried topsoil: dark brown/black clay silt	-	-	0.18	-
405	Layer	Buried subsoil: mid brown silt clay	-	-	0.3	-
406	Cut	Cut of linear ditch aligned SSW/NNE	>2.77	0.74	0.28	-
407	Fill	Secondary fill of 406: mid yellow-brown silty clay, common flint and occasional chalk inclusions	>2.77	0.62	0.11	-
408	Fill	Primary fill of 406: light yellow-brown silt clay with abundant white chalk grit and ~30% flint inclusions	>2.77	0.74	0.18	-
409	Layer	Natural substrate: white chalk	-	-	-	-
410	Fill	Fill of 413: mid grey-brown silt clay, occ. charcoal flecks, 5% grit/gravel, abundant chalk flecking	>0.56	>0.43	0.42	C12-C13
411	Fill	Fill of 412: mid whitish-grey silt clay, abundant chalk flecks, 5% grit/gravel	>0.31	>0.2	0.44	-
412	Cut	Cut of ditch/pit, possibly on NE/SW alignment	>0.31	>0.2	0.44	-
413	Cut	Cut of ditch/pit truncated by 415, NE/SW	>0.56	>0.43	0.42	-
414	Fill	Modern rubble fill of 415 (concrete and red brick)	>1.6	>3.75	>0.47	Modern
415	Cut	Cut of modern ditch, NW/SE alignment	>1.6	>3.75	>0.47	Modern
416	Deposit	Modern rubble (concrete and red brick), contained large fragments (c. 0.8m in length) of sarsen stone	>1.6	-	-	Modern

Trench 5

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
500	Layer	Topsoil	-	-	0.38	Modern
501	Layer	Subsoil: chalk-rich mid grey-brown clay silt, frequent small gravels, CBM and small flecks of charcoal	-	-	0.2	Modern
502	Layer	Make-up/levelling deposit: modern dumped material	-	-	0.2	Modern
503	Layer	Buried subsoil: light orange-brown clay silt, occ. Charcoal flecks and small gravels/grit	-	-	0.2	-
504	Layer	Natural substrate: white chalk	-	-	0.91 exp.	-
505	Cut	Cut of ditch, E/W aligned	>1.6	>1.96	1.06	-
506	Fill	Secondary fill of 505: light brown clay silt, frequent chalk lumps, occ. flecks/small pieces of charcoal	>1.6	0.93	0.89	C12-C13
507	Fill	Primary fill of 505: light brown clay-silt, very frequent chalk inclusions	>1.6	0.48	0.18	-
508	Cut	Re-cut of ditch 505, E/W aligned	>1.6	>1.13	≥0.82	-
509	Fill	Secondary fill of 509: dark grey-brown clay silt, occ. chalk and very frequent charcoal flecks/small lumps	>1.6	>1.13	0.66	C12-C13
510	Fill	Primary/ lower fill of 508: mid grey-brown clay silt, frequent chalk and charcoal flecks-small pieces	>1.6	0.24	0.2	-
512	Fill	Tertiary fill of cut 515: blackish-grey silt clay with occasional chalk flecking	-	0.61	0.1	-
513	Fill	Secondary fill of 515: mid brown-grey silt clay, very common chalk flecking and small-large pieces	-	0.78	0.34	-
514	Fill	Primary fill of 515: mid yellow-brown-grey silt clay, occ. chalk and charcoal flecks, 5% grit	-	0.63	0.16	-
515	Cut	Re-cut of E/W or NW/SE aligned ditch	-	0.78	0.6	-
516	Fill	Fill of ditch 517: mid brownish-grey silt clay, very common charcoal lumps and flecks, common chalk	>1.6	≥0.33	0.17	-
517	Cut	Cut of E/W aligned ditch	>1.6	≥0.33	0.17	-

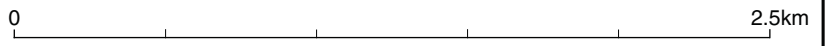
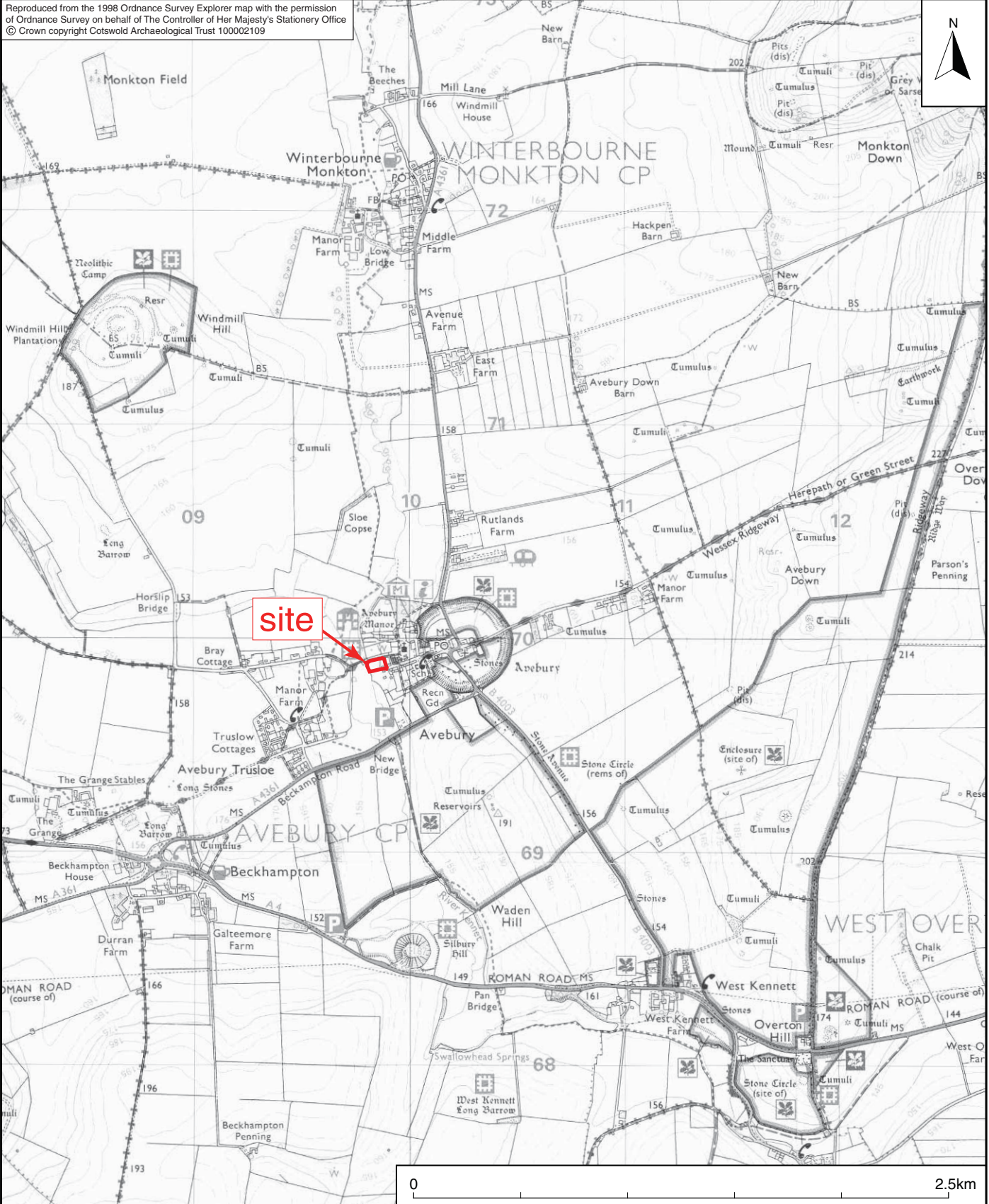
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS


Context	Artefacts material	Description	Ct.	Wt.	Date
408	Worked flint:	flake	2	3	-
411	Medieval pottery:	flint and limestone-tempered fabric	2	13	C12-C13
	Fe object:	nail	1	5	
506	Animal bone	cattle, sheep/goat, dog, cow-sized, sheep-sized; butchered	16	207	C12-C13
	Medieval pottery:	fine flint and limestone-tempered fabric	1	82	
	Charcoal:	wood charcoal	14	1	
	Shell:	Land snail	2	5	
	Worked flint:	Flakes, broken flake	3	7	
509	Animal bone:	Cattle, pig, cow-sized; butchered	3	13	C12-C13
	Medieval pottery:	Flint and limestone-tempered fabric	4	79	
	Roman pottery:	Oxfordshire red-slipped ware	1	6	
513	Animal bone	Sheep/goat, cow-sized	6	125	

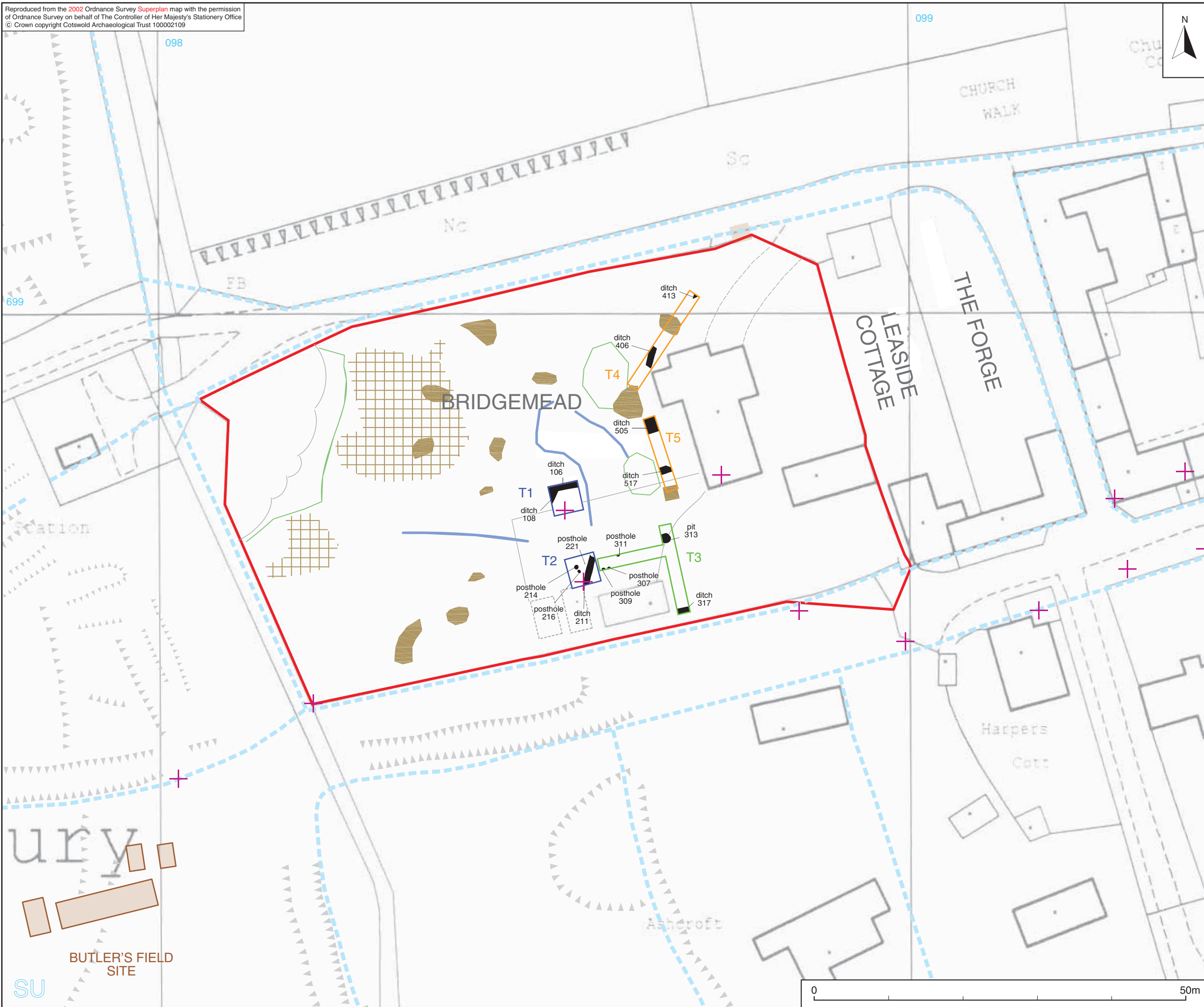
APPENDIX E: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land at Bridgemead, Avebury, Wiltshire	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in March 2010 at the request of Mr and Mrs Fry on land at Bridgemead, Avebury, Wiltshire. Two trenches were excavated.</p> <p>The evaluation revealed the probable continuation of a ditch associated with a possible Prehistoric or Romano-British trackway observed during a previous phase of evaluation. Two ditches of 12th to 13th-century date and one ditch of probable 12th to 13th-century date were also identified. Taken with the results of two previous evaluations, the later features suggest the presence of a burgage plot fronting onto what is now the High Street with land divisions to the rear.</p>	
Project dates	18-22 March	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Desk-Based Assessment (CA 2004) Archaeological Evaluation (CA 2007) Archaeological Evaluation (CA 2008) Magnetometry and Earth Resistance Survey (AS 2010)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Land at Bridgemead, Avebury, Wiltshire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	0.4ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SU 0985 6988	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Wiltshire Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Mark Brett	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Alexander Keiller Museum, Avebury	Ceramics, animal bone, flint
Paper	Alexander Keiller Museum, Avebury	Trench sheets, context sheets, photograph registers, levels register, original site drawings, black and white contact prints
Digital	Alexander Keiller Museum, Avebury	Database, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 <i>Land at Bridgemead, Avebury, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> CA Typescript report no. 10050		

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 COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY			
PROJECT TITLE Land at Bridgemead, Avebury Wiltshire			
FIGURE TITLE Site location plan			
DRAWN BY	SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
LG	1:25,000@A4	3069	1



- Site
- evaluation trench showing archaeological features
- evaluation trench (CA 2008)
- evaluation trench (CA 2007)
- + potential location of Beckhampton Avenue stone
- previous archaeological investigation
- ▲▲▲ earthworks recorded by RCHME
- potential early medieval burh divisions

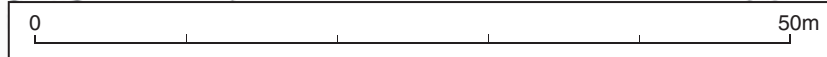
- Low resistance linear anomaly of uncertain origin - cut feature/ moisture retentive soil?
- High resistance discrete anomaly of uncertain origin
- High resistance area of uncertain origin

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE
Land at Bridgemead, Avebury
Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE
**Trench location plan, showing
archaeological features**

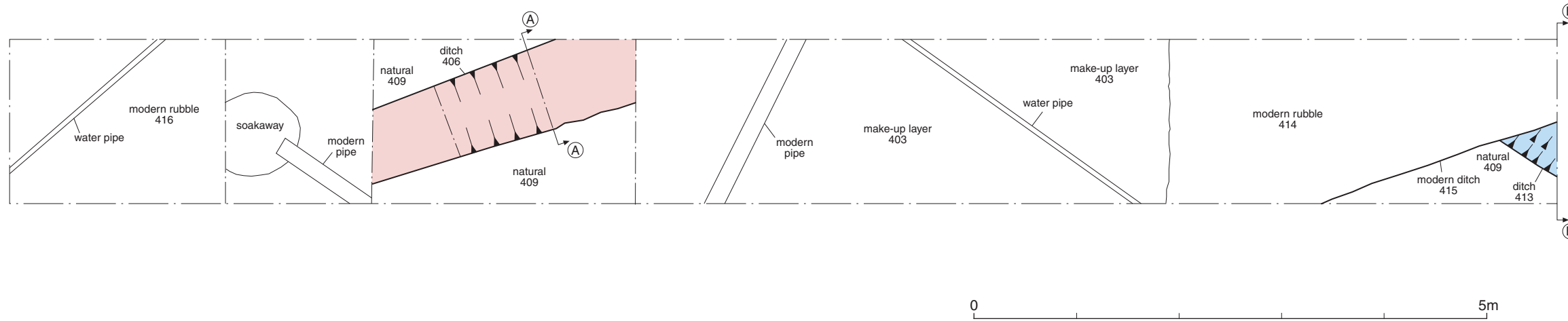
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BUTLER'S FIELD SITE

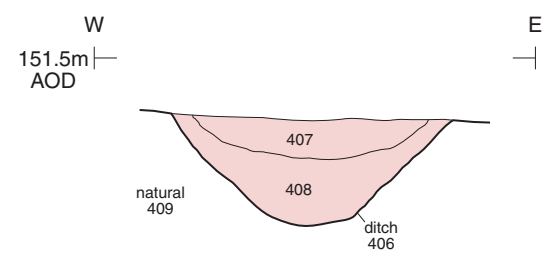
SU

Trench 4; plan

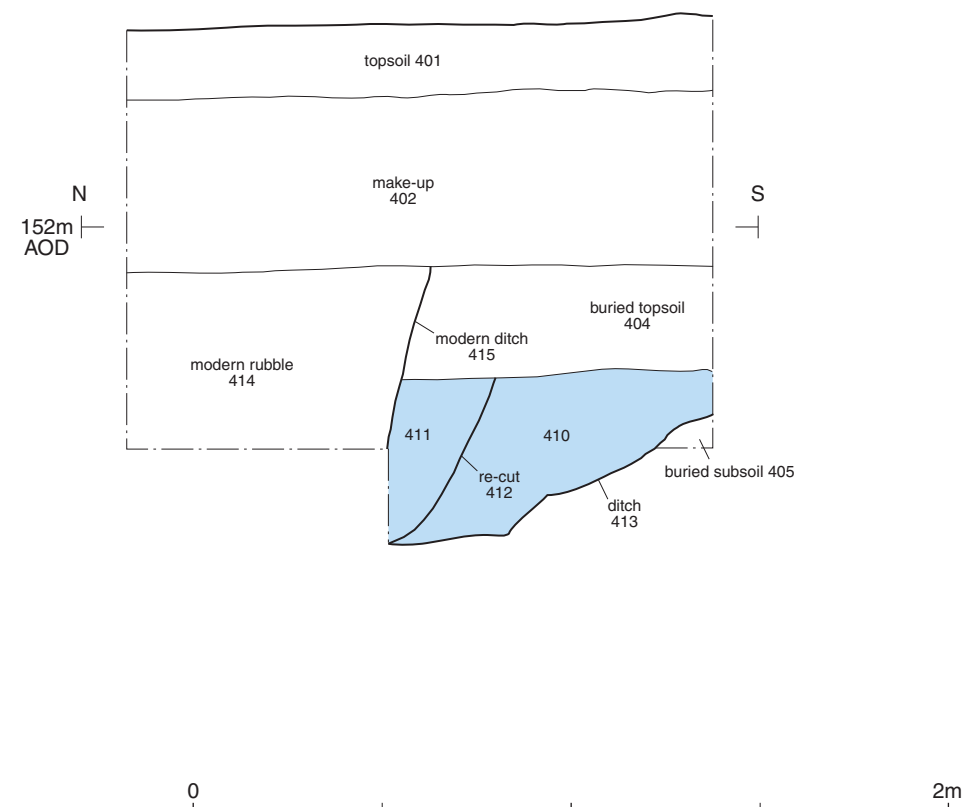


- ?prehistoric feature
- medieval feature

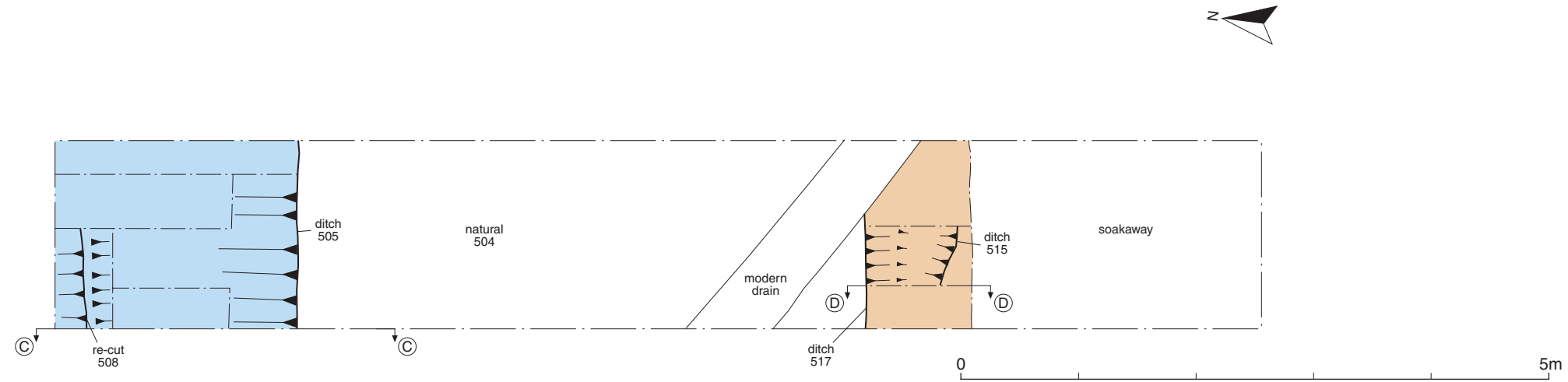
Trench 4; section AA



Trench 4; section BB

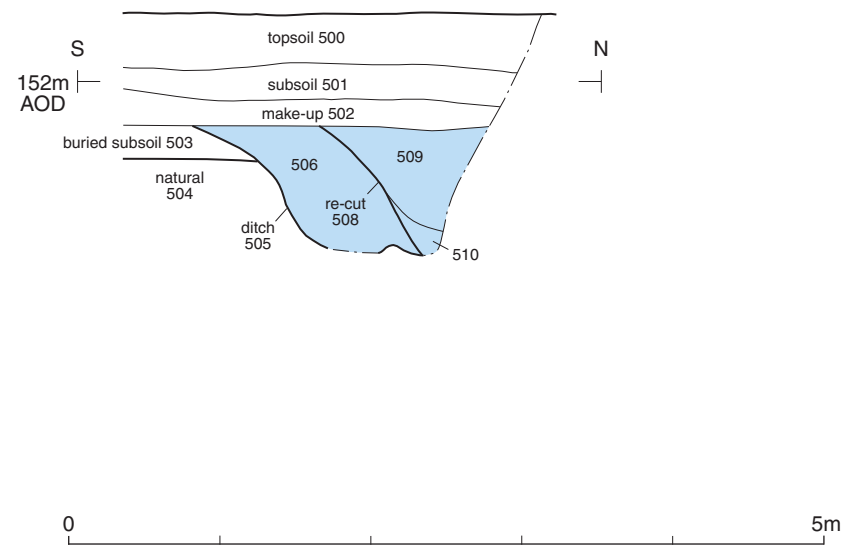


Trench 5; plan



- medieval feature
- undated feature

Trench 5; section CC



Trench 5; section DD

