

**FORMER WESTLEAZE RIDING CENTRE  
MILL LANE  
SWINDON**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

*For*

**MR PETER FIORE**


CA PROJECT: 3125  
CA REPORT: 10094

JULY 2010

FORMER WESTLEAZE RIDING CENTRE  
MILL LANE  
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

CA PROJECT: 3125  
CA REPORT: 10094

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date	6 July 2010
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date	19 July 2010
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signed	
date	22 July 2010
issue	01

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- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Fig. 2 The site, showing location of groundworks (1:1000)

## SUMMARY

**Project Name:** Former Westleaze Riding Centre  
**Location:** Mill Lane, Swindon  
**NGR:** SU 1365 8330  
**Type:** Watching Brief  
**Date:** 26–27 May and 17 June 2010  
**Planning Reference:** S/09/0406/SAC  
**Location of Archive:** To be deposited with Swindon Museum and Art Gallery  
**Site Code:** MLW 10

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the erection of a dwelling, stables and garage at the former Westleaze Riding Centre, Mill Lane, Swindon.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In May and June 2010 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Mr Peter Fiore at the former Westleaze Riding Centre, Mill Lane, Swindon (centred on NGR: SU 1365 8330; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil Condition 15 attached to a planning consent for the erection of a dwelling, stables and garage (Swindon Borough Council planning ref: S/09/0406/SAC). The condition was recommended by Ms Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, County Archaeologist for Wiltshire Council, the archaeological advisor to Swindon Borough Council. The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the development.

1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2010) and approved by Ms Pomeroy-Kellinger. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008), the *Statement of Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Wiltshire* (Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service 1995), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (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 Ms Pomeroy-Kellinger.

### **The site**

1.3 The site lies on the southern edge of Swindon, within agricultural land (Fig. 1). It is bounded to the north by the River Ray, to the east by a residential property, to the south by Mill Lane and to the west by pasture. The site lies at approximately 100m AOD, with a gentle fall of slope towards the River Ray.

1.4 The site comprises approximately 0.7ha and consists of a former riding school, including a manege and stables.

1.5 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Jurassic deposits of Kimmeridge Clay with Pleistocene and Recent Alluvium present towards the River Ray (BGS 1974). Blue-green clay was observed during the watching brief.

### **Archaeological background**

- 1.6 The development lies immediately beyond the boundary of Scheduled Monument 28962 (Medieval settlement and associated ridge and furrow, West Leaze). The monument comprises the main street of the settlement, defined by a deeply worn hollow way, on either side of which are raised platforms representing houses, outbuildings and cultivation plots. Excavations undertaken in 1988 revealed the platforms to be 0.4m above the natural ground level and, in all likelihood, to be constructed from material dug from the hollow way. The medieval settlement is surrounded to the south, east and west by extensive remains of ridge and furrow cultivation, although none is visible within the site itself (English Heritage Record of Scheduled Monuments; SAM 28962).

### **Methodology**

- 1.7 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2010). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising works in two areas, referred to hereafter as Trench 1 and Trench 2 (Fig. 2). Trench 1 comprised the footprint of the new dwelling whilst Trench 2 comprised the footprint of the new garage and stables. Within Trench 1 the ground level was partially reduced, following which foundation trenches were excavated. Within Trench 2, no initial ground reduction was required and the works consisted of the excavation of foundation trenches.
- 1.8 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.9 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with Swindon Museum and Art Gallery. 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 (FIG. 2)**

- 2.1 Both trenches contained a similar sequence of deposits, the earliest of which was the blue-green natural clay substrate, exposed at between 0.4m and 1m below the

present ground level. This was overlain by a series of dumped deposits containing modern debris, including brick and concrete rubble, plastic and metal scraps and crushed stone. Within Trench 1 these deposits were sealed by a thin topsoil layer which also contained modern concrete and brick rubble.

- 2.2 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of the spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered (see Appendix B).

### **3. DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above), the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The absence of preserved topsoil and subsoil deposits directly overlying the clay indicates that the site has been stripped previously to the top of the natural substrate and this may have truncated any archaeological remains that might have been present. Alternatively, it is possible that the village and associated ridge and furrow cultivation did not extend into the site, perhaps since the site's location adjacent to the river made it more suitable for use as a meadow.

### **4. CA PROJECT TEAM**

Fieldwork was undertaken by Jonathan Hart. This report was written by Jonathan Hart with illustrations prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by Jonathan Hart, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

### **5. REFERENCES**

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1974 *Geological Survey of England and Wales. Sheet 252: Swindon. Solid and Drift Edition, 1:63360 series*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 *Former Westleaze Riding Centre, Mill Lane, Swindon: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

**APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

## Trench 1

No.	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Spot-date
101	Layer	Topsoil: mid brown clay silt with modern debris (concrete, brick, roadstone)	0.05	-
102	Layer	Dumped layer: black sandy silt with ash lenses and modern debris (concrete and brick)	0.07	modern
103	Layer	Dumped layer: modern rubble (brick and stone fragments)	0.28	-
104	Layer	Natural: blue-green clay	-	-

## Trench 2

No.	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Spot-date
201	Layer	Demolition layer from former building: concrete rubble	0.2	-
202	Layer	Dumped layer: modern rubble (brick and stone fragments)	0.8m	-
203	Layer	Natural: blue-green clay	-	-

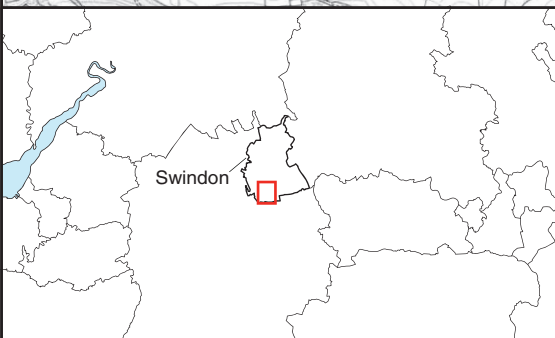
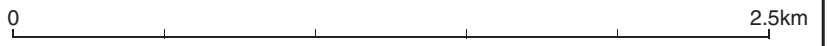
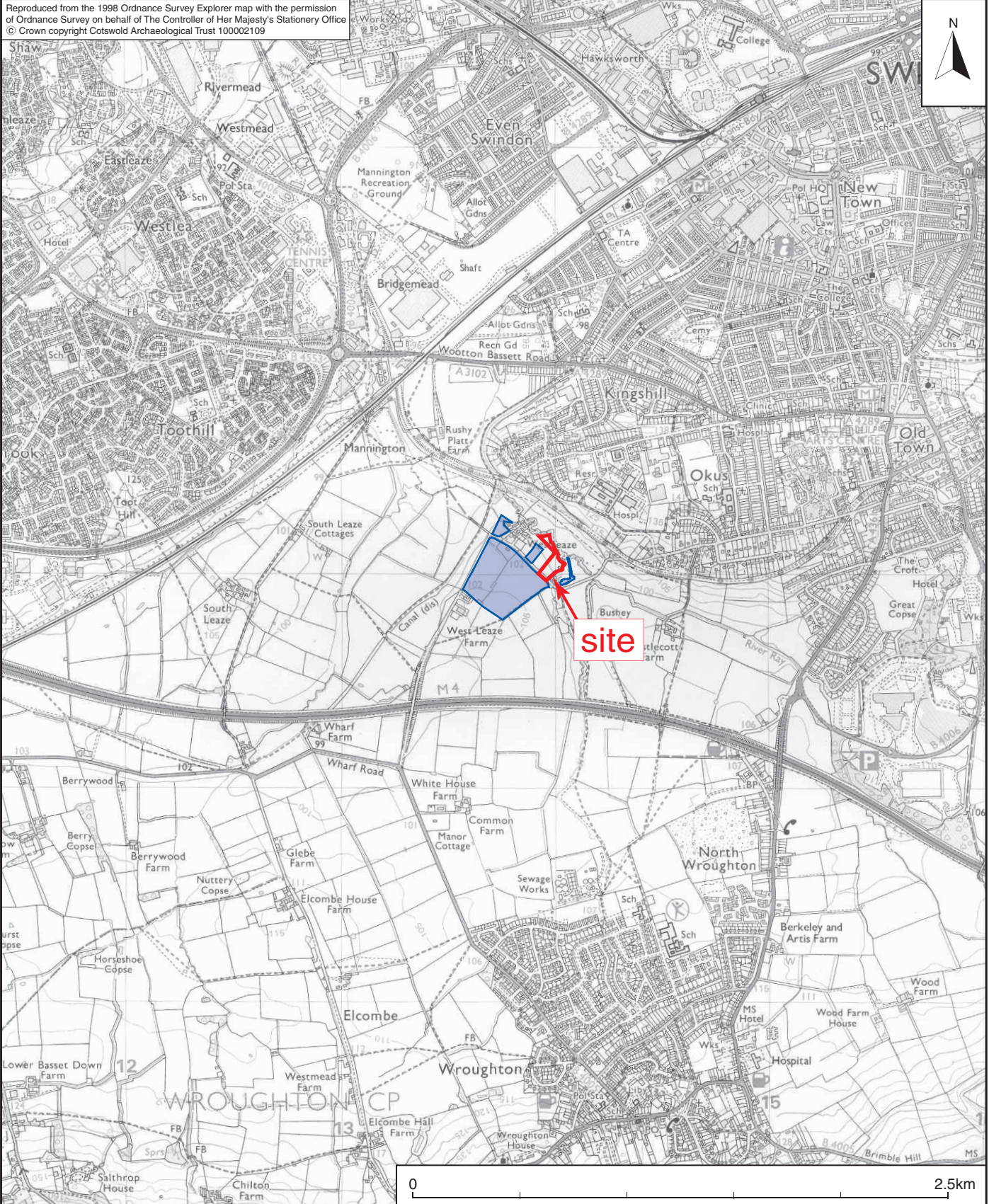
**APPENDIX B: THE FINDS BY ED MCSLOY**

Small quantities of modern finds comprising pottery/porcelain (1 sherd), window glass (1 fragment), clay tobacco pipe (1 fragment) and an iron object were recovered from deposit 102. A porcelain bowl sherd and a fragment of frosted window glass from this deposit suggest a modern (20th-century or later) date for its formation. A clay pipe stem fragment and a corroded iron ring may be earlier and re-deposited. None of this material will be retained.



**APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Former Westleaze Riding Centre, Mill Lane, Swindon: Archaeological Watching Brief	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the erection of a dwelling, stables and garage at the former Westleaze Riding Centre, Mill Lane, Swindon. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.	
Project dates	26-27 May and 17 June 2010	
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Former Westleaze Riding Centre, Mill Lane, Swindon	
Study area	0.7ha	
Site co-ordinates	SU 1365 8330	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Wiltshire Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Jonathan Hart	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	n/a	n/a
Paper	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery	Context records, plans
Digital	Swindon Museum and Art Gallery	Digital photos, digital report copy
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 <i>Former Westleaze Riding Centre, Mill Lane, Swindon: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA typescript report No. <b>10094</b>		



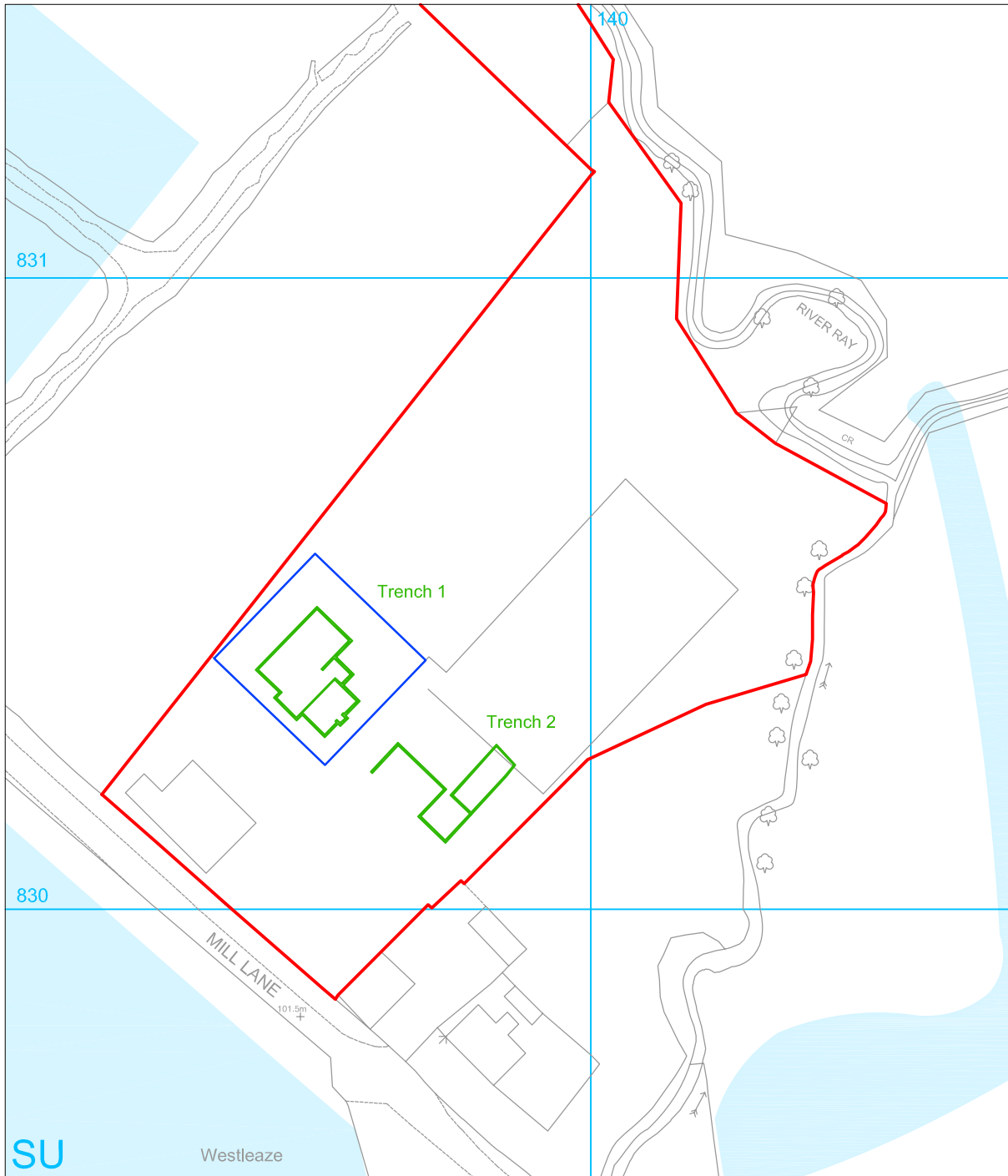
- site
- Scheduled Monument

**COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY**

**PROJECT TITLE**  
Former Westleaze Riding Centre  
Mill Lane, Swindon

**FIGURE TITLE**  
**Site location plan**

<b>DRAWN BY</b> LG	<b>SCALE</b> 1:25,000@A4	<b>PROJECT NO.</b> 3125	<b>FIGURE NO.</b> <b>1</b>
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- site
- foundation trench
- area of ground reduction
- Scheduled Monument



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Former Westleaze Riding Centre  
Mill Lane, Swindon

FIGURE TITLE

**The site, showing location of  
groundworks**

DRAWN BY

LG

SCALE

1:1000@A4

PROJECT NO.

3125

FIGURE NO.

**2**