

# Hendover Farm, Skilgate, Somerset

An Archaeological Field Evaluation.



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# Hendover Farm, Skilgate, Somerset

## An archaeological field evaluation

for

Mr Douglas Ware

by



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**National Grid Reference:** centred on NGR SS 98794 27160

**Somerset County Museums Service Accession Number:** TTNCM 58/2011

**Somerset Historic Environment Service ref :** PRN 30439

**OASIS ref:** contexto1-111813

**West Somerset District Council Planning Application Reference:** 3/30/11/002  
(resubmission of 3/30/10/007)

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*Front cover image: Trench 2: view from the west. © Context One Archaeological Services 2011*

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## Non-Technical Summary

*Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological field evaluation in support of a planning application (Planning Reference Number: ) at Hendover Farm, Skilgate, Somerset (NGR SS 98794 27160), (hereafter referred to as the Site). The project was commissioned and funded by Mr Douglas Ware.*

*The request for the archaeological works was made by Mr Steve Membrey (Senior Historic Environment Officer, Somerset County Council (SCC)) following a consultation request from the Local Planning Authority (West Somerset District Council).*

*Excavation in all trenches revealed a similar horizontal sequence of deposits comprising topsoil overlying subsoil, overlying natural. No archaeological features/deposits were observed in any of the excavated trenches.*

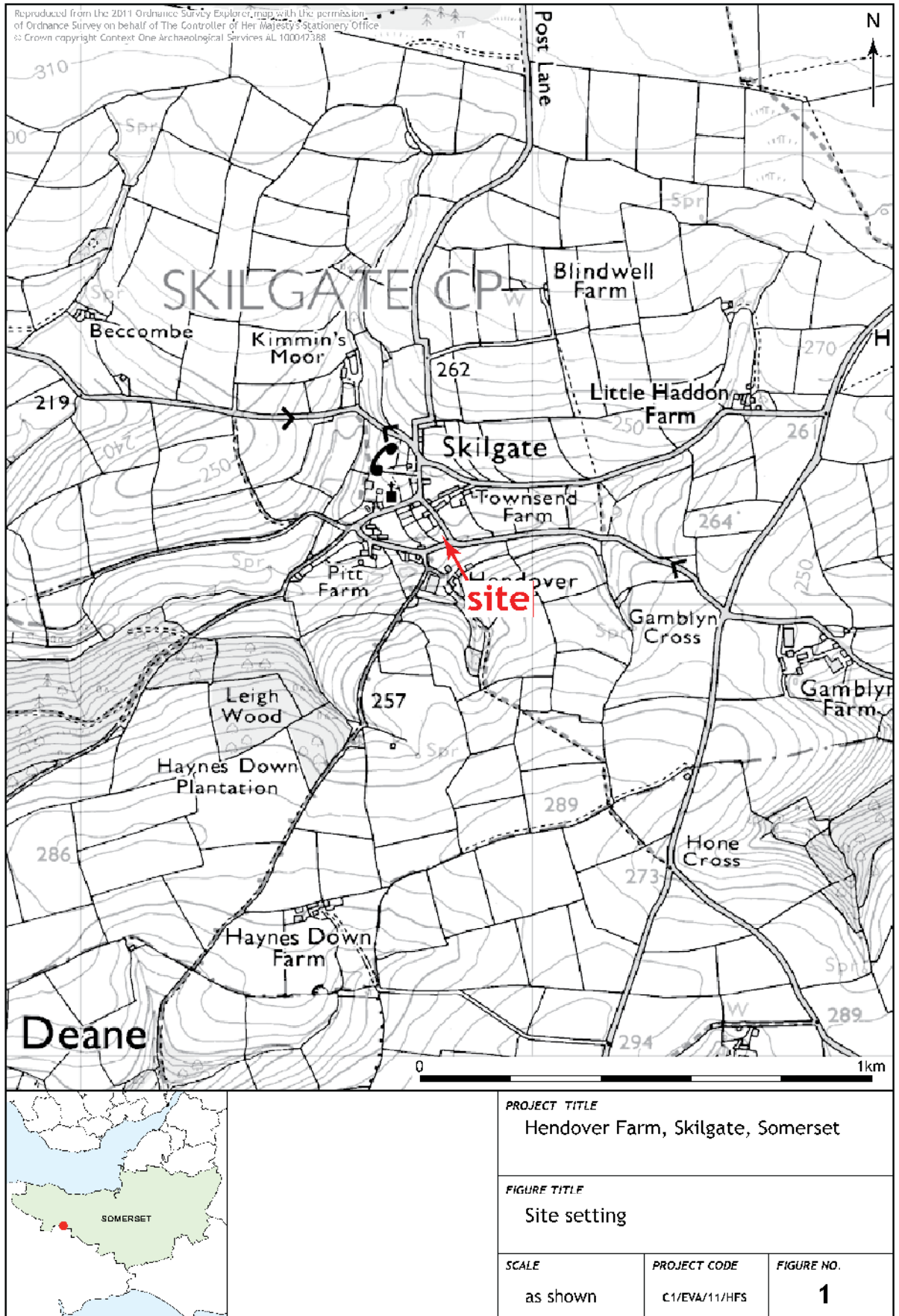
## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological field evaluation in support of a planning application at Hendover Farm, Skilgate, Somerset (NGR SS 98794 27160), (hereafter referred to as the Site). The project was commissioned and funded by Mr Douglas Ware.
- 1.2 The request for the archaeological works was made by Mr Steve Membrey (Senior Historic Environment Officer, Somerset County Council (SCC)) following a consultation request from the Local Planning Authority (West Somerset District Council) in connection with a planning application for the erection of agricultural workers dwelling (Planning Application Ref: 3/30/11/002).
- 1.3 Prior to the commencement of the archaeological fieldwork, COAS compiled a *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Field Evaluation: Hendover Farm, Skilgate, Somerset* (Milby 2011), which provided a strategy for the investigation. This was submitted to and approved by Mr Membrey prior to the commencement of the works.
- 1.4 The requirement for the archaeological work follows advice given by *Central Government as set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010)*; and the Local Development Framework Policy on Archaeology.
- 1.5 This report summarises the archaeological, topographical and geological setting of the Site, and presents the results of the field evaluation.

## 2. Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 2.1 The Site is located within the village of Skilgate, c. 200m to the south-west of the Church (**Figure 1**). Skilgate lies c. 24KM due west of Taunton in the County of Somerset. At the time of the evaluation the Site was lying fallow. The Site sits at c. 227m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 2.2 According to the British Geological Survey (2011), there is no superficial (drift) geology. The underlying solid geology over much of the Site comprises baggy sandstone formations; including sandstone, siltstone and mudstone.





### 3. Archaeological Background

- 3.1 The Somerset County Historic Environment Record (HER) lists several archaeological events within 500m of the Site; these are listed below in **Table 1**.

HER No	Entry	Description	NGR
31440	Church of St John	Formerly listed as Church of St John the Baptist, Skilgate Village. Listed grade II*	SS 9868 2723
31441	Churchyard Cross	Remains of churchyard cross in churchyard, about 2.5 m south-east of chancel, Church of St John, Skilgate Village. Listed grade: II	SS 9870 2723
31442	Rectory	The Old Rectory, Skilgate Village. Listed grade: II	SS 9877 2727
31443	Outbuilding	Outbuilding about 10 m west of The Old Rectory, Skilgate Village. Listed grade: II	SS 9875 2727
31444	Farmhouse	Townsend Farmhouse, Skilgate Village. Listed grade: II	SS 9884 2722
21811	Water meadow, Skilgate	Possible medieval or Post-medieval water meadows	SS 9878 2736, SS 9869 2715, SS 990 272
28033	Water meadow/earthwork	Water meadow system surviving as an earthwork	SS 986 274

Table 1: Archaeological events listed on the Somerset HER within 500m of the Site

### 4. Methodology

- 4.1 The field evaluation was carried out in accordance with the *Somerset County Council Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook* (2009) and the *Standards and Guidance for archaeological evaluation* published by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) in 1995 (revised 1999). COAS adhered to the *Code of Conduct* issued by the IfA in 1985 (revised 2000), and *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (1990, revised September 2000), at all times during the course of the investigation. Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on Site.

- 4.2 Mr Membery was kept informed of progress as the evaluation proceeded.

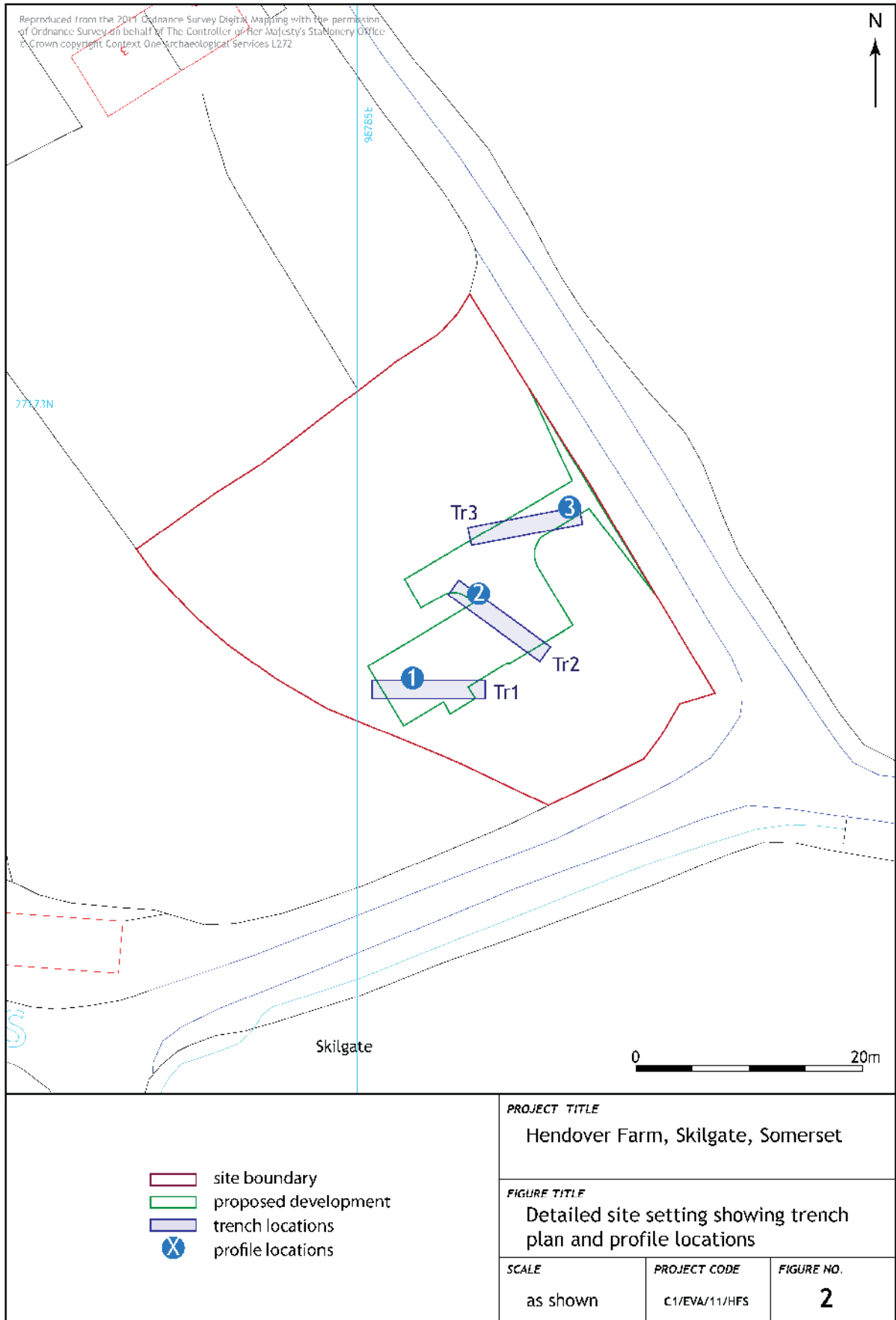
#### Field Evaluation

- 4.3 The field evaluation was carried out on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and comprised 3 machine and hand excavated trenches, each measuring 10m x 1.6m. The trenches were located so as to attain the best coverage across Site in relation to the proposed development area (**Figure 2**).
- 4.4 A tracked 360 degree machine equipped with a 1.60m wide toothless (grading) bucket was used to remove topsoil and subsoil under the supervision of COAS archaeological staff. Due to the absence of

archaeological deposits/features, machine excavation continued to natural geology. A representative section of each trench was cleaned using hand tools in order to fully characterise the deposit sequence. Selective hand cleaning was also used to aid the identification of any suspected archaeological features.

- 4.5 All deposits were recorded using standard COAS pro-forma recording sheets and a “Harris-Winchester matrix” diagram. Soil colours were recorded using a Munsell soil colour chart. A representative profile of the general deposit sequence in each trench was recorded using standard COAS evaluation trench sheets. A photographic record of the work was prepared and involved the sole use of digital images. This included photographs of each trench in plan, representative trench sections, and general working shots to illustrate the nature of the archaeological investigation.
- 4.6 All trenches were initially set out using a TopCon GRS-1 RTK GPS unit. Upon completion of the evaluation but prior to backfilling, the trenches were re-surveyed to record the location and altitude of the trenches relative to the National Grid and Ordnance Datum.
- 4.7 On conclusion of the archaeological field evaluation, all trenches were backfilled.





## 5. Results

- 5.1 In the text, context numbers for cuts appear in square brackets, e.g. [1004]; layer and fill numbers appear in standard brackets, e.g. (1002). Where a feature is discussed, it is referenced with its cut and associated fill numbers.

### Soil and Ground Conditions

- 5.2 The conditions on Site were good, with continuous bright sunshine throughout the course of the evaluation.

### Soil Sequence and Geology

- 5.3 The same simple sequence of sediments was recorded within all three trenches. This comprised reddish brown silt/clay/sand topsoil (100), (200), (300) overlying grey brown silt/clay/sand subsoil (101), (201), (301), which in turn overlay reddish brown clay/sand natural (102), (202), (302).

## 6. The Finds

- 6.1 No archaeological finds were recovered during the course of the evaluation.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1 Excavation in all trenches revealed a similar horizontal sequence of deposits comprising topsoil overlying subsoil, overlying natural. No archaeological features/deposits were observed in any of the excavated trenches.

## 8. Archive

- 8.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of 26 digital images in .jpg format and the written paper record including 3 evaluation trench sheets and a 2 page day record with Site methodology sheets. The archive will be prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992) / *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991). Arrangements will be made to deposit the paper archive with Somerset County Museums Service within 12 months following the submission of this report.

- 8.2 Copies of this report will be deposited in paper and electronic format with:

**Mr D Ware**  
Hendover Farm  
Skilgate  
Somerset

**Mr Steve Mambery**  
**Historic Environment Service**  
Somerset County Council  
Taunton Castle  
Castle Green  
Taunton  
TA1 4AA

## **9. Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Mr Chris Ware for his kind assistance throughout the course of this investigation and Mr Steve Membury (Senior Historic Environment Officer, SCC) for curatorial advice.

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