CW182: Church Street, Durrington, Wiltshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief Assessment Report

context one
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD

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for

Wessex Water plc

by

Brickfield Offices, Maperton, Wincanton, Somerset. BA9 8EG.
T: 01963 824696
F: 07092 259858
E: mail@contextone.co.uk
W: www.contextone.co.uk

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COAS Team:
Project Director: Richard McConnell
Fieldwork Manager: Stuart Milby
Post-Excavation Manager: Cheryl Green
Fieldwork: Luke Jarvis, Holly Rodgers
Report: Richard Tabor
Graphics: Tara Fairclough

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Front cover image: Site setting showing All Saint's Church and war memorial. © Context One Archaeological Services 2013

Contents

Illustrations

Plates

Non-technical Summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks relating to the construction of a new section of sewer, with associated inspection chambers at Church Street, Durrington, Wiltshire (from NGR SU 15638 44856 to SU 15725 44872). The work took place over 16 days in February and March 2013. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc under a Term Agreement contract with COAS.

The work was requested by Ms Clare King (Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Archaeology Service), following a consultation request from Ms Rebecca Howell (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water). Ms King noted that Durrington is 'known to have been settled since at least the Saxon period' and that there are 'significant prehistoric and Roman remains in the area'.

The investigation identified a substantial boundary ditch. Although no dateable artefacts were recovered from the fills, the orientation suggests that it predated the 12th century church and its form might imply a Neolithic, Early Bronze Age or medieval date. Two phases of re-cutting were evident indicating the significance of the feature as a long term boundary. The ditch appears to have been truncated during preparation of the modern road surface.

No other archaeological features or deposits were identified and no finds were observed or collected.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks relating to the construction of a new section of sewer, with associated inspection chambers at Church Street, Durrington, Wiltshire, SP4 8AL (hereafter referred to as the Site). The work took place over 16 days from 6 February to 20 March 2013. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc under a Term Agreement contract with COAS.

1.2 The work was requested by Ms Clare King (Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS)), following a consultation request from Ms Rebecca Howell (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water). In a consultation email dated 24 May 2012 Ms King stated that:

> *"The works lie right in the historic centre of Durrington, which is known to have been settled since at least the Saxon period. In addition, the nearby works at MOD Durrington have demonstrated that there are significant prehistoric and Roman remains in the area, including Neolithic monuments and Bronze Age burials.*
>
> *Given the above, there is a high potential for the works to encounter very important archaeological remains. However, given their location, there is also likely to have been some previous disturbance undertaken. I would therefore recommend that an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken on the works, in order to identify and record and remains that might be revealed."*

1.3 At the request of Ms King, COAS issued a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (Milby 2012), which provided a strategy for the archaeological works. This was submitted to and approved by Ms King prior to the commencement of the watching brief. Ms King was kept fully informed of progress on site as the investigation proceeded. In this instance, it was not deemed necessary to carry out a site monitoring visit.

1.4 This assessment report summarises the topographical and geological setting of the site, and presents the results of the watching brief.

2. Site Location, Topography and Geology

2.1 Durrington is a south Wiltshire town situated *c*. 3km north-north-west of Amesbury and *c*. 14km north of Salisbury, Wiltshire. The Site is located on the north side of the town west to east pipeline which constituted the Site lay on the north side of the town on a gentle, north-facing, slope above the River Avon. It extended over a distance totalling *c*. 100m from immediately south of the junction of the High Street and Church Street (SU 15638 44856) to a driveway off the south side of Church Street (SU 15725 44872). The pipeline route was bounded by the grounds of the Church of All Saints on the south side and by substantial residential plots and houses to the north.

2.2 The underlying geology consists of Seaford Formation Cretaceous sedimentary chalk (BGS 2013). The soils in this area are characterised by free-draining, lime-rich loams of moderate fertility (NSRI 2013).

3. Methodology

Wessex Water Methodology

3.1 A wheeled 360 degree 'rubber duck' type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket excavated *c*. 100m of a *c*. 0.80m wide pipe trench of variable depth. Larger areas of up to 2m^2 were opened where necessary to gain access to the inspection chambers.

PROJECT TITLE: B0404: Larkhill Road, Durrington, Wiltshire		
FIGURE TITLE: Site setting		
SCALE: as shown	PROJECT CODE: C1/WBF/12/CSD	FIGURE NO.: 1

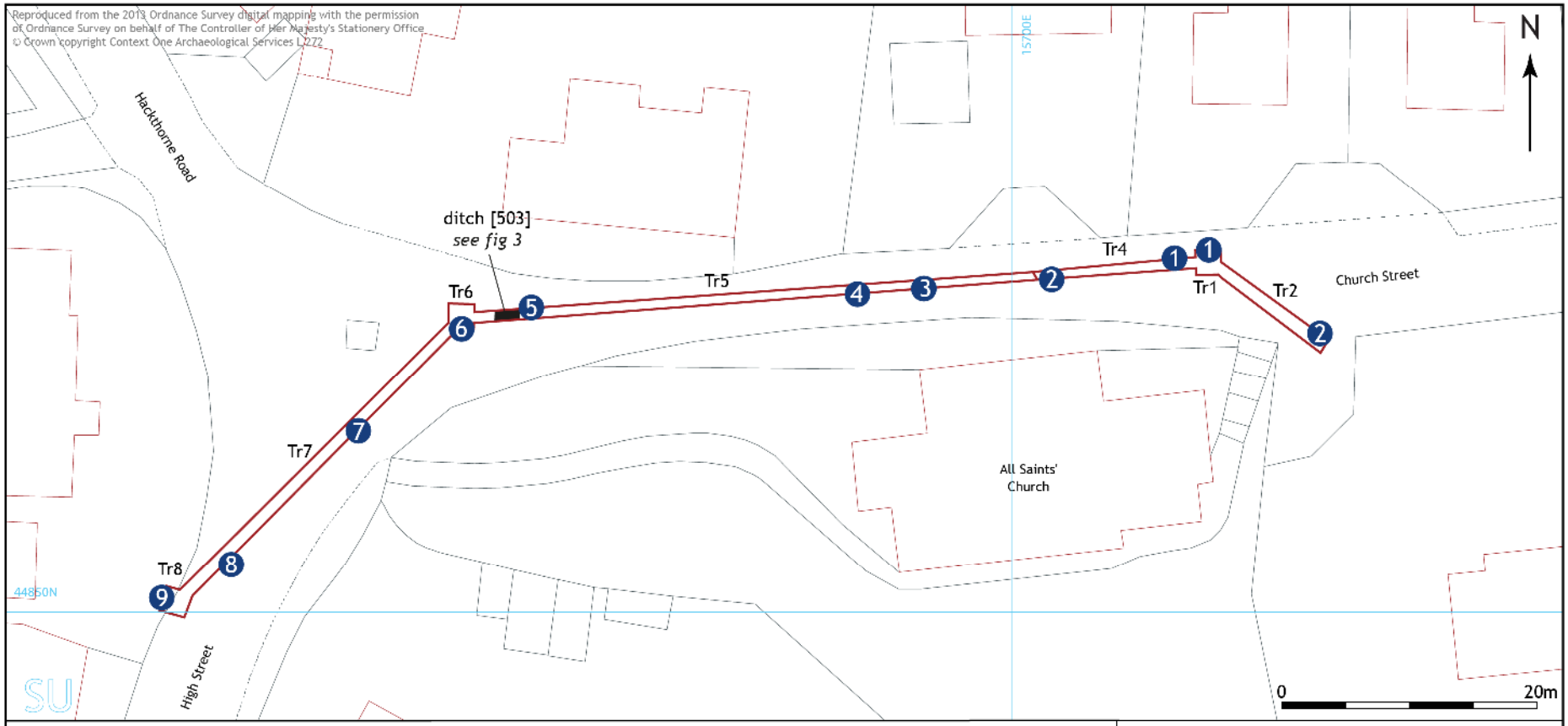

Reproduced from the 2013 Ordnance Survey digital mapping with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright Context One Archaeological Services L272
N
Hackthorne Road
ditch [503]
see fig 3
Tr1
Tr2
Tr4
Tr5
Tr6
Tr7
Tr8
Church Street
All Saints' Church
High Street
SU
44850N
15700E
0
20m
Locations of groundworks
TrX Trench number
X Locations of profiles
PROJECT TITLE
CW182: Church Street, Durrington, Wiltshire
FIGURE TITLE
Detailed site setting showing profile locations and ditch
SCALE
as shown
PROJECT CODE
C1/WBF/12/CSD
FIGURE NO.
2

Plate 1. View of Church Street (from E end of pipeline route)

Archaeological Methodology

3.2 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire* (County Archaeological Service (CAS), Wiltshire County Council Libraries Museums and Arts, 1995) and with the codes, standards and guidelines set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, rev. 2012; 1990, rev. 2008; 1994, rev. 2008) at all times during the course of the investigation. Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.

3.3 The machine excavation along the route of the pipeline was carried out under the supervision of COAS field staff. For the purposes of archaeological recording, all areas exposed through development excavations were systematically scanned for features/deposits. The single feature identified was recorded on COAS pro-forma context sheets with stratigraphic relationships recorded using a "Harris-Winchester matrix" diagram and a section drawn on stable film at a scale of 1:10. COAS *pro-forma* profile sheets were used to show the deposit sequence and depths across the Site. These were annotated to define the depths of each observed deposit. In addition, context forms summarise the character of each layer with entry fields for the profile locations and photographic references. The frequency with which profile sections were recorded was based entirely on any variation of the deposit sequence or depth of exposure.

3.4 A photographic record of the fieldwork comprised digital images in .jpg format. As a minimum, the record included shots of the feature, each profile section, the site setting and development works.

3.5 The location, extent and altitude of the archaeological work, feature and deposits were mapped relative to the National Grid and Ordnance Datum using a TopCon GRS-1 Global Positioning System receiving real-time calibrations to produce accuracies of 1-2cm and a dumpy level.

4. Results

4.1 The weather was mostly dry but included overcast periods with some showers and snow during the early stages of the fieldwork.

4.2 The deposits and features encountered during fieldwork are listed and described in **Appendix 1**. In the text, context numbers for cuts appear in square brackets, e.g. [503]; layer and fill numbers appear in standard brackets, e.g. (102). Where a feature is discussed, it is referenced with its cut and associated fill numbers.

Soil Sequence and Geology

4.3 The only archaeological feature was a roughly north to south, *c*. 2m wide and *c*. 1m deep, U-profiled linear ditch [503] which, after the fairly rapid formation of primary silts (504) and (505) (**Figure 3**; **Plate 7**) had been filled slowly with silty chalk (506), probably indicative of a period of cultivation. The ditch had been re-cut on two occasions, [510] and [509]. The darker brown, clayey character of the fill (507) of the first re-cut suggests a phase of soil enrichment due either to manuring or nearby stock-holding. The fill (508) of the second re-cut was similar to that within the primary cut.

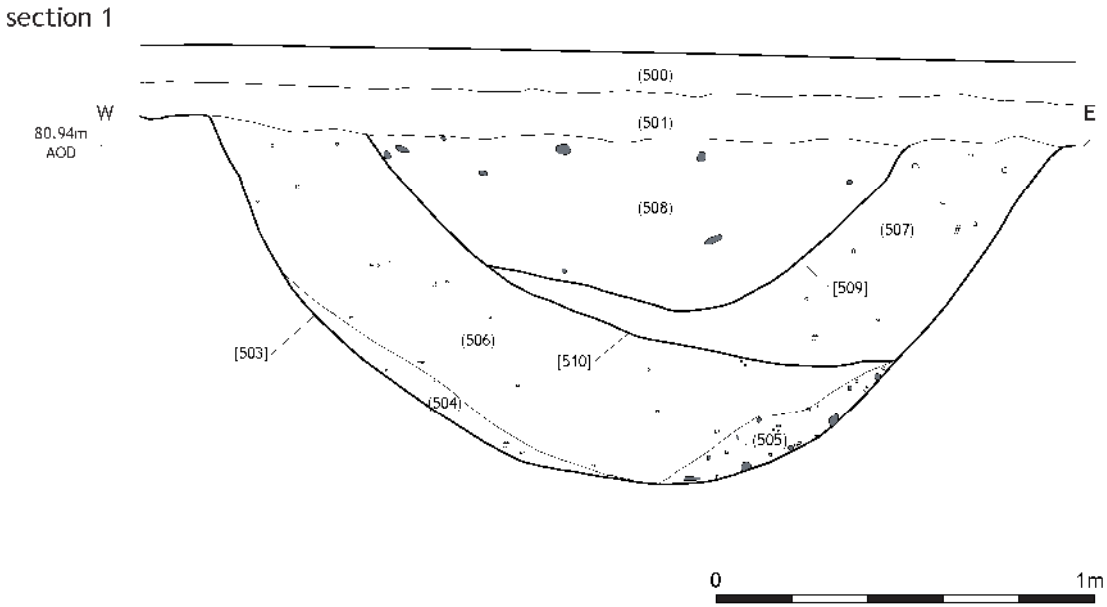
4.4 The modern tarmac road surface, (100) to (800) was 0.10 to 0.20m deep and in places incorporated a thin make-up layer. At the east end of the Site the road directly overlay dark red bricks, (101) and (201) (**Plate 2**), interpreted as either an early surface or, more probably, a form of levelling. There was notable variation in the character of the road make-up layers from east to west. In Trench 4, midway along the route, very clean chalk (403) had been used to fill a depression (**Plate 3**) and a deep bed of scalpings (501) had been deposited close to the west end (**Plate 4**).

4.5 The character of the superficial deposits over the solid chalk geology also varied. At the east end a probable colluvium of degraded chalk included a moderate amount of fresh flints (102) (**Plate 2**) but these became progressively fewer further east (404) (**Plate 3**). Very gravelly layers occurring close to and beyond the junction with the High Street were probable Quaternary Head Deposits (**Plates 5** – **7**).

4.6 No artefacts were observed or recorded.

5. Discussion

5.1 The well-defined linear ditch is likely to be of some antiquity. The *c*. 2m width indicates that it was a substantial boundary of some significance, indicating that the ditch was originally deeper than 1m and that the upper part has been truncated by later activity. The ditch was only observed in section following machine excavation therefore limiting the conclusions that can be drawn and in the absence of any finds no firm dating evidence was forthcoming. However, its north to south orientation clearly indicates that it predates the use of Church Street as a route and probably the foundation of the church itself, which has stood since the early 12th century (Crowley et al. 1995). The ditch's broad U-profile is more characteristic of a Neolithic, Early Bronze Age or earlier medieval date as opposed to Middle Bronze Age to Romano-British. The clearance of slowly-formed silts from the ditch indicated by two phases of re-cutting suggests that it remained a significant boundary over a long period.



Flint

Chalk

Charcoal

(000) deposit/fill number

[000] cut number

XX.Xm AOD — height above ordnance datum (AOD)

PROJECT TITLE

CW182: Church Street, Durrington, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE

Section of ditch [503]

SCALE	*PROJECT CODE*	*FIGURE NO.*
as shown	C1/WBF/12/CSD	3

Plate 2. Tr1 profile (from S; 1m scale)

Plate 3. Tr4, profile 2 (from S; 1m scale)

Plate 4. Tr5 profile 4 (from N; 1m scale)

Plate 5. Tr7, profile 7 (from S; 1m scale)

Plate 6. Tr8, (from W; 1m scale)

Plate 7. Tr5, ditch [503] (from S; 1m scale)

6. Archive

6.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of the written paper record of six context sheets, nine COAS *pro forma* profile log sheets and related registers, 138 digital images in .jpg format and one section on stable drawing film. The archive will be prepared to comply with the appropriate current national guidelines (UKIC 1984, 1990; MGC 1992; EH 1991). Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with Wiltshire Heritage Museum within 12 months following the submission of this report.

6.2 Copies of the Watching Brief report will be deposited with:

Wessex Water plc
Claverton Down Road
Claverton Down
Bath
BA2 7WW

Wiltshire Archaeology Service
Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre
Cocklebury Road
Chippenham
Wiltshire
SN15 3QN

7. COAS Acknowledgements

7.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Ms Rebecca Howell (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc) for her kind assistance throughout the course of the investigation and Ms Clare King (Assistant Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Council) for curatorial advice.

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Appendix 1. Context Summary

Context no.	Period	Type	Description	Earlier than	Contemp. with	Later than	Length	Width/ Diameter	Thickness/ Depth
Trench 1									
100	Modern	Layer	Road surface. Tarmac			101	*c.* 2m	*c.*2m	0.10m
101	Modern	Layer	Brick layer. Thinly mortared single course of dark red (2.5YR 3/6) bricks (<.20m). Either earlier road surface or bedding for modern road occurring exclusively in north and east profiles, appearing flat and smooth in latter	100		102	*c.* 2m	*c.*2m	<0.15
102	Geology	Layer	Colluvium. Very pale brown (10YR 8/2) compacted chalk including moderate pieces of flint (<0.10m)	101		103	*c.* 2m	*c.*2m	<0.50m
103	Geology	Layer	Natural. Very pale brown (10YR 8/3) compacted chalk including moderate pieces of flint (<0.35m)	102			*c.* 2m	*c.*2m	>0.65m
Trench 2									
200	Modern	Layer	Road surface. Tarmac			201	c. 12m	c. 1.2m	0.20m
201	Modern	Layer	Brick layer. Thinly mortared single course of dark red (2.5YR 3/6) bricks (<.20m). Either earlier road surface or bedding for modern road occurring exclusively in north and east profiles, appearing flat and smooth in latter	200		102	c. 12m	c. 1.2m	<0.15
202	Geology	Layer	Colluvium. Very pale brown (10YR 8/2) compacted chalk including intermittent pieces of flint (<0.10m)	201		203	c. 12m	c. 1.2m	<0.45m
203	Geology	Layer	Natural. Very pale brown (10YR 8/3) compacted chalk including sparse to moderate pieces of flint (<0.35m)	202			c. 12m	c. 1.2m	>1.5m
Trench 3									
300	Modern	Layer	Road surface. Tarmac			301	c. 1.20m	c. 0.60m	0.10m
301	Modern	Layer	Road bedding. Mixed chalk and gravel (<0.03m)	300		303	c. 1.20m	c. 0.60m	0.10m
302	Unknown	Layer	Make-up. Compacted sandy clay including gritty to gravelly stones (<0.02m)	303			c. 1.20m	c. 0.60m	0.40m

Context no.	Period	Type	Description	Earlier than	Contemp. with	Later than	Length	Width/ Diameter	Thickness/ Depth
303	Modern	Fill	Water pipe trench fill. Light olive brown (2.5Y 5/3) compacted clayey silt including small pieces of angular gravel (<0.07m) covering an iron pipe	301		302	c. 1.20m	c. 0.60m	
Trench 4									
400	Modern	Layer	Road surface. Tarmac			401	c. 15m	0.80m	0.10m
401	Modern	Layer	Brick layer. Thinly mortared single course of dark red (2.5YR 3/6) bricks (<.20m).	401		402, 403	c. 15m	0.80m	0.20m
402	Modern	Layer	Make-up deposit. Off-white compacted chalk including sparse to frequent pieces of flint (<0.25m)	401		(401)	c. 15m	0.80m	1.28m
403	Modern	Deposit	Make-up deposit. Pinkish off-white, cemented chalk including sparse fragments of flint (<0.20m). Possibly natural.	401			c. 15m	0.80m	<0.28m
404	Geology?	Deposit	Colluvium. Mid-green brown friable to compact clay including frequent flint fragments (<0.10m) and patches of chalk. Possibly natural.	403		405	c. 15m	0.80m	<0.40m
405	Geology	Deposit	Natural. Pinkish off-white, cemented chalk including sparse fragments of flint (<0.20m). Possibly natural.	404			c. 15m	0.80m	0.50m exc
Trench 5									
500	Modern	Layer	Road surface. Tarmac			501	c. 15m	0.80m	0.10m
501	Modern	Layer	Road make-up . Mottled grey cemented clay	500		502	c. 47m	0.80m	0.30m
502	Geology	Layer	Head deposit? Off-white compacted chalk including moderate pieces of flint (<0.25m)	503			c. 47m	0.80m	1.10m
503	Undated	Cut	Ditch cut. Roughly north to south U-profiled linear cut	504, 505		502	0.80m exc	2.23m	1.03m
504	Undated	Fill	Primary silt [503]. Dark brown friable to firm clay silt including rare flecks of chalk	506		503	0.80m exc	<0.95m	<0.49m

Context no.	Period	Type	Description	Earlier than	Contemp. with	Later than	Length	Width/ Diameter	Thickness/ Depth
505	Undated	Fill	Primary silt [503]. Light yellow silty chalk including abundant pieces of flint (<0.15m)	506		503	0.80m exc	0.61m	<0.34m
506	Undated	Fill	Fill ditch [503]. Light brownish yellow silty chalk including abundant pieces of chalk	510		504, 505	0.80m exc	1.77	1.03m
507	Undated	Fill	Fill ditch re-cut [510]. Dark brown friable to firm clay silt	509		510	0.80m exc	1.49m	0.57m
508	Undated	Fill	Fill ditch re-cut [509]. Light brownish yellow silty chalk including abundant pieces of chalk and pieces of flint (<0.15m)	501		509	0.80m exc	1.42m	0.46m
509	Undated	Cut	Ditch re-cut. Roughly north to south U-profiled linear cut	508		507	0.80m exc	1.42m	0.46m
510	Undated	Cut	Ditch re-cut. Roughly north to south U-profiled linear cut	507		506	0.80m exc	1.84m	0.57m
Trench 6									
600	Modern	Layer	Road surface. Tarmac over make-up. Variable thickness			601	c. 1.60m	1.60m	<0.20m
601	Geology	layer	Natural. Mid brownish orange silty sand including fragments of chalk and sparse pieces of flint (<0.20m)	600		602	c. 1.60m	1.60m	<0.32m
602	Unknown	layer	Natural. White, soft to firm, fine grained chalk	601			c. 1.60m	1.60m	<1.90m
Trench 7									
700	Modern	Layer	Road surface. Tarmac over make-up. Variable thickness			701	c. 12m	0.80m	<0.18m
701	Geology	Layer	Head deposit? Mid brownish orange silty sand including fragments of chalk and sparse pieces of flint (<0.20m)	700		702	c. 12m	0.80m	<1.00m
702	Geology	Layer	Natural. White, soft to firm, fine grained chalk	701`			c. 12m	0.80m	0.70m exc
703	Geology?	Layer	Subsoil. White, soft to firm chalk including sparse fragments of flint	705		704	c. 12m	0.80m	0.12m exc

Context no.	Period	Type	Description	Earlier than	Contemp. with	Later than	Length	Width/ Diameter	Thickness/ Depth
			(<0.10m). Possibly natural.						
704	Geology	Layer	Head deposit? Mid brownish orange silty sand including fragments of chalk and sparse pieces of flint (<0.20m)	703			c. 12m	0.80m	1.68m
705	Modern	Fill	Pipe trench fill. Pipe and mixed overlying backfill	700		703			0.80m exc
Trench 8									
800	Modern	Layer	Road surface. Tarmac over make-up. Variable thickness			801	c. 2m	c. 2m	<0.50m
801	Geology	Layer	Head deposit? Off-white, compacted, chalk mottled with orangey brown silty sand including frequent fragments of flint (<0.20m)	800		802	c. 2m	c. 2m	<0.95m
802	Geology	Layer	Natural. White, soft to firm, fine grained chalk	801			c. 2m	c. 2m	0.70m exc