

Parish Plan Development, Kingston Deverill, Wiltshire.

Archaeological Field Evaluation in Support of a Planning Application



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for

BTA Architects

by



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Non-technical summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 45 Whitepits, Kingston Deverill, Wiltshire (the 'Site') over three days between 15 and 17 June 2015. The project was commissioned by BTA Architects and funded by Linnick Developments.

The evaluation was requested by Wiltshire Council on the advice of Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS) in support of a possible planning application for the development of eight new dwelling houses.

The Site is considered to be of high archaeological potential. Occupying ground directly adjacent to the River Wylde, a number of extant and ploughed-out Bronze Age barrows are located within the environs of the Site, one of which (lying within the boundary of St. Mary's Church) has statutory protection as a Scheduled Monument. Kingston Deverill was recorded as 'Devrel' in AD1086 but may have earlier origins and earthwork remains of medieval settlement have been recorded around the village.

The evaluation comprised four trenches positioned to target the footprints of the proposed residential development. Two of the trenches produced archaeological evidence immediately below the topsoil, in the form of a ditch and a ditch terminal or pit both yielding a very small assemblage of pottery sherds. These were dated to the late Iron Age/early Roman period, and are indicative of domestic and/or agricultural activity within the vicinity of the Site during that period. The remaining two trenches were archaeologically sterile.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 45 Whitepits, Kingston Deverill, Wiltshire (the 'Site') over three days between 15 and 17 June 2015. The results of the investigation will support a possible planning application for the proposed development of eight new dwelling houses (Wiltshire Council reference: 14/09717/PREAPP). The project was commissioned by BTA Architects and funded by Linnick Developments.
- 1.2 The evaluation was requested by Wiltshire Council on the advice of Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS). In a letter from Ms Alison Hall (Senior Planning Officer) to BTA Architects dated 10 November 2014, the relevant planning considerations for redevelopment were outlined, including pre-application consultee comments relating to archaeology which stated:

"The Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record show that the proposed development area (PDA) has high potential for archaeological remains to be present. To the east and north-west of the PDA are the remains of Bronze Age barrows; the eastern one lying within St. Mary's Church is nationally protected as a Scheduled Monument (national ref. 1010404). Kingston Deverill was recorded as 'Devrel' in AD1086 but may have earlier origins and earthwork remains of medieval settlement have been recorded around the village.

Due to the potential for heritage assets with archaeological interest to be present within the proposed development site, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (in particular policies 128 and 129), they consider that field evaluation will be required and the results made available prior to determination of any formal application. This information will inform their advice on the impact of the proposal on heritage assets with archaeological interest."

- 1.3 The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out in paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).
- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy; field evaluation through trial trenching; post-excavation work and report production; and project data archiving. The WSI was approved by Miss Rachel Foster (Assistant Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Council) on 3 June 2015 prior to the commencement of any Site works.

2. Site location, topography and geology

- 2.1 The Site (centred on NGR ST 84351 37111) formed part of a study area covering 0.535 hectares and was located to the west of the village of Kingston Deverill, c. 8.5km south-west of Warminster (**Figure 1**). The Site occupied pasture fields c. 50m north of the River Wylye, with a slight north-west to south-east slope leading up from the river. The Site sits at a height of c. 137m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the northern end, gently sloping down to c. 134 aOD at the southern end.
- 2.2 The underlying geology is Zag Chalk Formation - Chalk and the drift geology is Head - Clay, Silt, Sand And Gravel (British Geological Survey website 2015). The Site is characterised by freely draining lime-rich loamy soils (<http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes>).

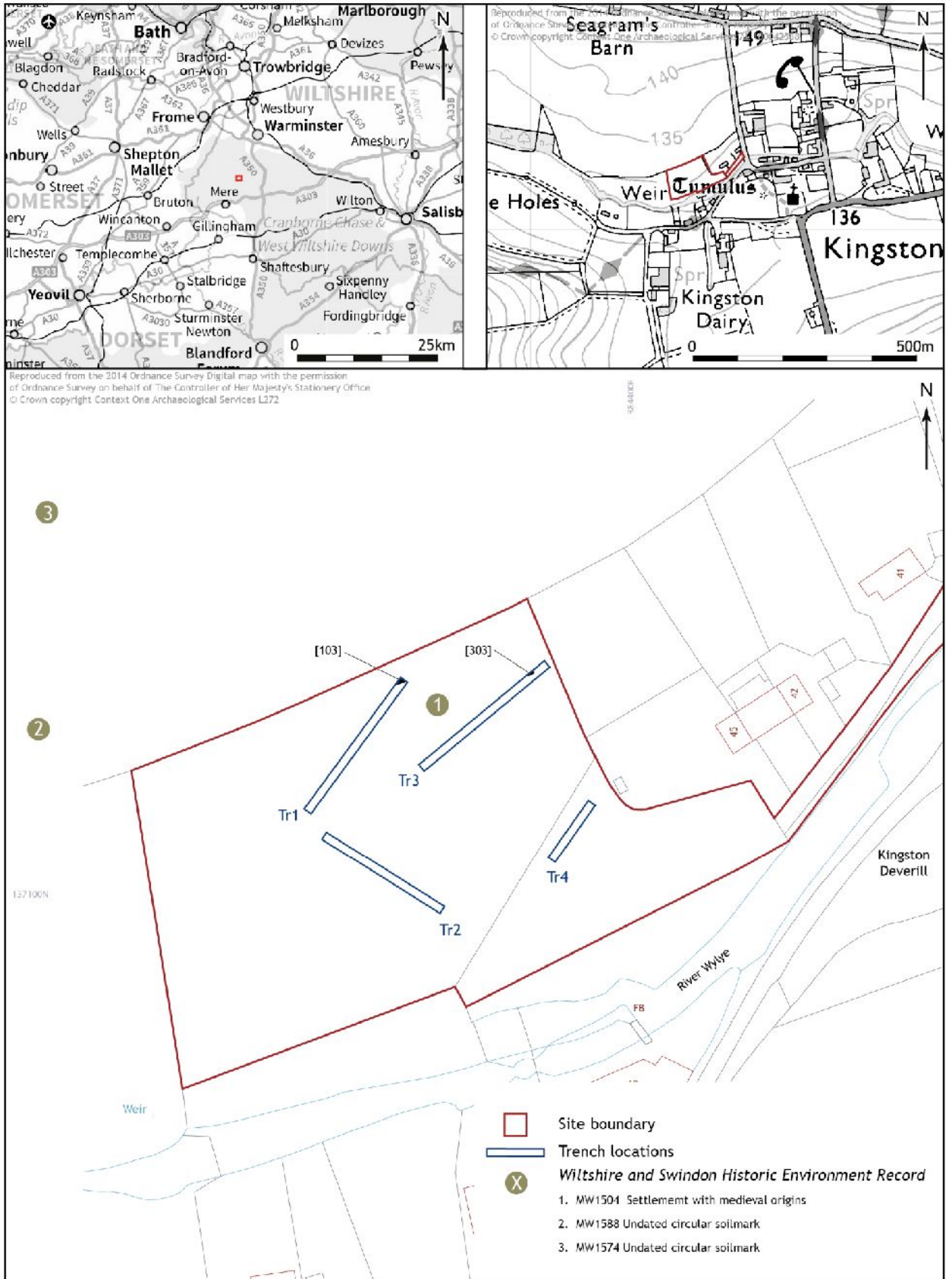


Figure 1. Site setting, location of evaluation trenches & recorded heritage assets

3. Methodology

Archaeological methodology

- 3.1 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the codes, standards and guidelines set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, rev. 2012; 1990, rev. 2008; 1994, rev. 2001). Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on Site.
- 3.2 The evaluation strategy initially comprised c. 130m of trenching, divided down into four trenches measuring 1.80m wide. Trenches 1 and 2 measured 35m in length while Trenches 3 and 4 were supposed to measure 30m in length, equating to c. 2% sample of the Site. The trenches were positioned to cover the footprint of all eight of the planned dwellings and numbered 1 - 4. In the event, Trench 4 was shortened in size to c. 15m to avoid an established farm track and mains service in the south-eastern area of the Site, while Trench 3 was extended to 35m in length (**Figure 1**).
- 3.3 A tracked machine fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless grading bucket was used to remove topsoil/ploughsoil and continued until archaeological features or natural geology was encountered, whichever was first.
- 3.4 In the absence of archaeological features and deposits, a representative section was then recorded to define the sequence of deposits using COAS *pro forma* evaluation trench sheets in digital and paper format. A digital photograph was also taken of each section as well as the long axis of each trench. All photographs included an appropriate scale.
- 3.5 Any archaeological remains encountered were sampled by manual excavation to establish stratigraphic relationships, recover sufficient artefacts to establish 'absolute' dates, and to determine feature/deposit morphology and character. All features/deposits were recorded using standard COAS *pro-forma* recording sheets in digital format. Stratigraphic relationships were recorded using a "Harris-Winchester matrix" diagram. Soil colours were logged using a Munsell soil colour chart. The location, extent and altitude of archaeological features and deposits were mapped relative to the National Grid and Ordnance Datum. A Temporary Bench Mark (TBM) was established on Site for this purpose, with the level taken from a bench mark reading of 135.360 on the south side of St Mary's church. A digital photographic record was made of individual features as well as working shots to illustrate the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.
- 3.6 Artefacts collected from archaeological features/deposits were bagged using a combination of site code and context numbers. All finds from the Site were retained for processing in preparation for further analysis and archiving. Specialist reports of the artefact assemblage were compiled using both descriptive and tabular formats (see **section 5**).
- 3.7 Upon completion of the evaluation, all trenches were backfilled by machine and compacted.

4. Results

- 4.1 The evaluation was predominantly carried out during a spell of dry weather. None of the trenches encountered rising groundwater.
- 4.2 In the text, context numbers appear in standard brackets, e.g. (1002) and feature cuts appear as square brackets, e.g. [1001], the first number relating to the trench number.
- 4.3 **Soil Sequence and geology**
The topsoil ((100) (200) (300) (400)) measured 0.20m - 0.25m deep and comprised soft, silty clay with chalk and flint inclusions, and this overlay c. 0.10m deep clayey subsoil ((101) (201) (301) (401)). The natural comprised compacted lumpy chalk with some flint inclusions ((102) (202) (302) (402)).

Archaeological features and deposits

- 4.4 Two archaeological features were identified during the evaluation within Trenches 1 and 3 (**Plates 1 & 4**) while Trenches 2 and 4 were found to be archaeologically sterile (**Plates 3 & 6**). Both features were sealed beneath the topsoil (100) (300) and cut the underlying subsoil (101) (301) together with the underlying natural deposits (102) (302).
- 4.5 A linear feature [103] crossed the north-west corner of Trench 1 (**Plate 2**) from west-north-west to east-south-east, with concave sides and an undulating base which sloped more steeply towards the centre of the feature (**Figure 2, Plan 1 & Section 1**). Measuring c. 0.45m deep (although the full depth was not reached), the linear crossed the trench for a distance of c. 2.50m and measured 1.25m wide (the full width was not exposed within the trench). A single pottery sherd and piece of burnt flint were recovered from the soft silt/clay fill (104). A sondage was taken through this feature (**Plate 2; Figure 2, Section 2**).
- 4.6 Feature [303] was located towards the north-west end of Trench 3, extending from the north-west section by 0.54m (**Plate 5**). It was sub-circular in plan, either representing the terminal end of a ditch or a pit (**Figure 2, Plan 2**). The feature measured c. 1.55m wide in section (although if this were a linear it crossed the trench at an oblique angle and is probably narrower) and c. 0.65m deep. The upper part of the edges were straight and steeply sloping, becoming slightly concave and sloping more gently, before once again sloping more steeply towards the base (**Figure 2, Section 3**). Seven pottery sherds and a single piece of slag were identified within the single fill of silty clay (304).
- 4.7 Amorphous areas of disturbance were also identified within Trenches 1 and 3, likely the result of tree throws.



Plate 1. Trench 1 (from SW; 2m scale)



Plate 2. Sondage through feature [103] (from S; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 3. Trench 2 (from SE; 2m scale)



Plate 4. Trench 3 (from SW; 2m scale)



Plate 5. Section through base of cut feature [303], TR 3 (from NE; 1m scale)



Plate 6. Trench 4 (from SW; 2m scale)

5. The finds

5.1 All finds recovered from the evaluation were washed and, where necessary, will be marked with an accession number issued by Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum. The finds were separated into artefact types and quantified by context number, quantity and weight in grams. Any bulk finds such as post-medieval and modern brick, tile and slate were noted but not collected. The finds are discussed separately below and, where appropriate, presented as tabular data. A request will be made to the site owner to transfer the title of all finds to the above Museum.

5.2 A very small assemblage of finds were identified during the evaluation. Each element of the assemblage is discussed separately below and presented as tabular data with, where appropriate, weight in grams.

Pottery, by Rachel Hall

5.3 A total of eight sherds weighing 56g, were recovered from two contexts from the evaluation (see **Table 1**). The assemblage ranges in date from the Late Iron Age to Early Romano-British. The sherds are all in an abraded condition ranging from fair to poor with an average sherd size of 7g.

Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British

5.4 The small assemblage was identified as Late Iron Age/ Early Romano-British in date due to their form and fabric. The fabric is sandy with sparse calcareous (shell fragments) and rare Iron Oxides inclusions. The matrix is micaceous. The sherds were recovered from layers (104) and (304). With the exception of a base sherd, they are all abraded body sherds. The plain nature of the small group, along with being handmade and having sandwich firing, dates the group to the Late Iron Age/ Early Romano-British period.

5.5 A single abraded body sherd of Black Burnished ware was also recovered from layer (304).

5.6 No further work is necessary on this assemblage.

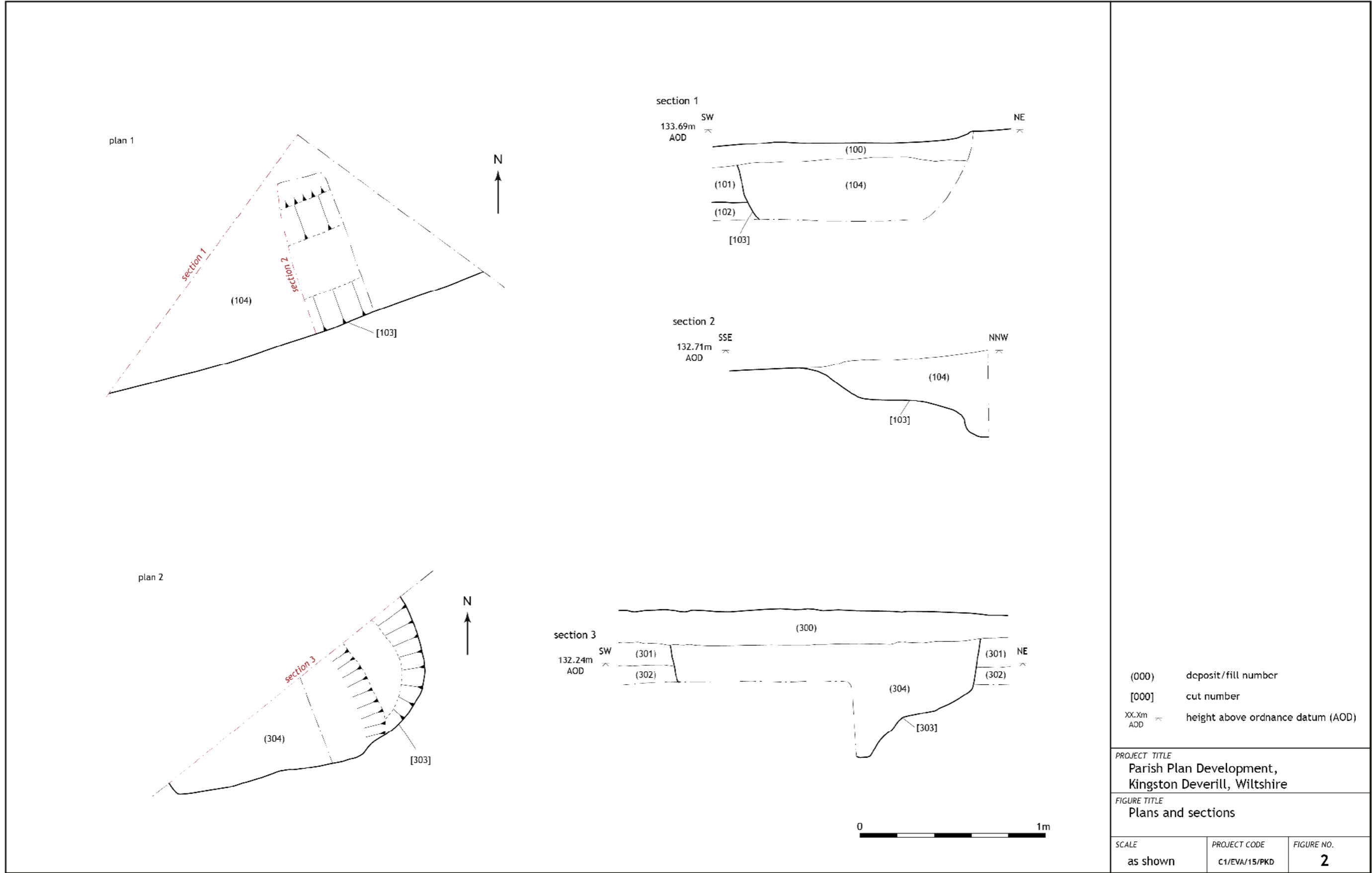


Figure 2. Plans and sections

Table 1. Pottery by context

Context	Fabric	Date	Number	Weight (g)
104	Sandy	LIRB	1	2
304	Sandy	LIRB	6	51
304	BBW	ERB	1	3
TOTAL			8	56

Other finds, by COAS

- 5.7 One piece of iron-working slag (weight 70g) was recovered from context (304) and a single fragment of unworked burnt flint (weight 15g) was recovered from context (104).

6. Discussion

- 6.1 Despite the high archaeological potential of the Site, the results of the evaluation were limited to two late Iron Age/early Roman features within two of the four trenches in the north-eastern area of the Site. One of these features was a ditch and likely relates to field boundaries perhaps forming part of a late Iron Age/early Roman agricultural landscape. The other feature may represent the terminal end of a further ditch or a pit. Located immediately below the modern topsoil, it is likely that the features had been truncated. The presence of a very small pottery assemblage within the fills of the cut features is indicative of domestic activity within the vicinity. It is therefore considered that further features of the late Iron Age/early Roman period could be encountered during the proposed development groundworks.
- 6.2 The surfaces of the two archaeological features were located at minimum depths of 0.24m (Trench 1) and 0.30m (Trench 3) below the modern ground surface. These translate into aOD heights of 133.39m and 132.34m respectively, with the excavated depths revealing that the features extended to 132.94m and 131.69m aOD. It should therefore be anticipated that the surfaces of any potential further features may be quite shallow and would be impacted by foundation groundworks for the proposed residential development.

7. Archive

- 7.1 An ordered and integrated site archive has been prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 2001) and *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992) / *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991).
- 7.2 The project archive is currently held by COAS and consists of the following:

Item	Number	Format
Evaluation trench sheets	3	Paper
Evaluation trench sheets	4	Pdf
Context sheets	4	Paper
Drawings	2	Permatrace
Digital images	22	.JPG

- 7.3 The paper archive has been scanned as a single file in .PDF format and will form part of the physical Site archive to be deposited with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum. The finds will be temporarily stored at the offices of Context One. It is anticipated that these will be combined with any additional artefacts/ecofacts recovered from any further phases of archaeological mitigation works and either deposited as a single assemblage with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, subject to their agreement and prevailing deposition guidelines, or returned to the landowner.

- 7.4 Copies of this report will be deposited with the client/agent and included as part of the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record. A digital copy of the report will also be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations - <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>). The OASIS entry will also be completed to include details of the archive contents.

8. COAS acknowledgements

- 8.1 We would like to thank the following for their contribution to the successful completion of this project:

Tony Nicklin, Linnick Developments
David Sharp, BTA Architects
Rachel Foster, Assistant Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Archaeology Service

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