

Wavin Factory site, Parsonage Way, Chippenham, Wiltshire.

An Archaeological Field Evaluation in Support of a Planning Application



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for

Ian Jewson Planning Ltd



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Front cover image: The east of the Site, looking south-east. © Context One Archaeological Services 2015

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Non-technical summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at the Wavin Factory site, Parsonage Way, Chippenham, Wiltshire (the 'Site') over five days between 21 and 25 September 2015. The project was commissioned by Ian Jewson Planning Ltd.

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 construction of a car park and storage area.

The initial stage of this programme of archaeological evaluation comprised a Desk-based Assessment (DBA) by COAS and a geophysical survey carried out by Stratascan (SUMO) with the aim of identifying the presence of any potential archaeological features. The DBA identified the presence of an earthwork feature in the centre of the Site and placed the Site firmly within an area of medieval agricultural activity. The geophysical survey confirmed the presence of both the earthwork feature and the medieval ridge-and-furrow ploughing in the east of the Site.

The evaluation comprised nine trenches positioned to target the anomalies identified through the DBA and geophysical survey. Two of the trenches produced archaeological evidence immediately below the subsoil, in the form of a compacted stone rubble layer possibly representing a rough floor and indicative of domestic and/or agricultural activity. Pottery recovered from the subsoil layer above dated the features to the late medieval/early post-medieval period and these findings correspond with the location of the known medieval agricultural landscape that forms the eastern extents of the Site, and also borders the Site to the north. Other features comprised silt-filled linears, a dark deposit and a small burned deposit. The remaining seven trenches were archaeologically sterile.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at the Wavin Factory site, Parsonage Way, Chippenham, Wiltshire (the Site) over five days between 21 and 25 September 2015. The results of the investigation will support a planning application for the construction of a car park and storage area (Wiltshire Council reference: 15/04763/FUL). The project was commissioned by Ian Jewson Planning Ltd.
- 1.2 The evaluation was requested by Wiltshire Council on the advice of Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS). In an email from Ms Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (County Archaeologist) to Mr Lee Burman (Wiltshire Council Case Officer) on 13 July 2015, Ms Pomeroy-Kellinger stated::

“The DBA and geophysical survey submitted with the application shows the presence of archaeological features. I am going to need further information in the form of a trial trenching evaluation prior to the determination of the application.”

- 1.3 The initial stage of this programme of archaeological evaluation comprised a Desk-based Assessment by COAS and a geophysical survey carried out by Stratascan (SUMO) with the aim of identifying the presence of any potential archaeological features. Areas of high archaeological potential were identified in the centre of the Site, with the Desk-based Assessment report concluding:

“This assessment has established that although there is no significant evidence for medieval or post-medieval settlement activity on the Site, there is a presence of medieval and Prehistoric settlement, funerary and agricultural activity in the vicinity. This heightens the possibility of a similar archaeological presence being preserved below the ground surface. The lack of previous development within the boundaries of the Site (since at least the 18th century) also suggests that any potential previously unidentified archaeological remains may be preserved below the plough-soil. An area of ridge-and-furrow and a possible enclosure feature identified during the walkover survey within the eastern field will also require further archaeological investigation before any potential development.” (Prestidge 2015)

The geophysical survey report confirmed the presence of the possible enclosure feature and concluded that:

“The survey conducted at Parsonage Way, Chippenham has identified a number of anomalies that probably relate to an enclosure feature identified during a walkover survey of the site. A number of weaker features appear around this, and possibly represent further cut features of archaeological origin although they could also be of natural or agricultural origin. Ridge and furrow was identified in the eastern field. These all confirm the findings of the desk based assessment, and are likely related to a past agricultural landscape.” (Slater 2015)

- 1.4 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) and the North Wiltshire Local Plan (Wiltshire Council 2011).
- 1.5 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 Ms. Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (County Archaeologist, WCAS) on 16 September 2015 prior to the commencement of any Site works.

2. Site location, topography and geology

- 2.1 The Site (centred on ST 92837 74765) covers approximately 5 hectares and is located c. 1.6km to the north-east of Chippenham town centre (**Figure 1**), directly north of the current Wavin Plastics factory site on Parsonage Way. The entrance track, wooded grounds, and house of Kilvert’s Parsonage border the Site to the north, with Maud Heath’s Causeway (the B4069 road) to the west and a small area of farmland and the Great Western Main Line railway to the west. Currently comprising two fields of pasture, the Site is abutted by farmland on three sides with the outskirts of Chippenham to the south. The topography is gently undulating, with the south-east of the Site

recorded at c. 70m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) rising to c. 75m aOD in the centre of the Site, and further rising to c. 79m aOD in the north-west.

- 2.2 According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 2015), the underlying geology is Sandstone, part of the Kellaways Sand member. There are no recorded superficial (drift) deposits. The soils are characterised by slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (<http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes>).

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 Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), formerly the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), (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. 240m of trenching, divided down into eight trenches measuring 1.60m wide. All the trenches measured 30m in length, equating to a c. 2% sample of the Site. The trenches were positioned to focus on the anomalies identified in the geophysical survey, and were distributed across the Site to cover all potential impact areas of the planned development (**Figure 2**). In the event, Trenches 1, 2 and 3 were shortened slightly due to the presence of underground services (to 20m, 25m and 27m respectively), Trench 5 was shortened to 20m due to overhead cables, and Trench 6 to 25m due to an established field boundary. To compensate for this it was agreed that a new trench would be excavated, namely Trench 9, which also served to evaluate the extent of the geophysical survey anomalies in the centre of the Site (**Figure 2**). All changes were agreed with Ms Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (County Archaeologist, WCAS) on Site.
- 3.3 A tracked machine fitted with a 1.50m 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 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 using a TopCon GRS-1 Global Positioning System, producing an accuracy of 1-2cm. 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 a descriptive format (see **section 5**).
- 3.7 Upon completion of the evaluation, all trenches were backfilled by machine and compacted.

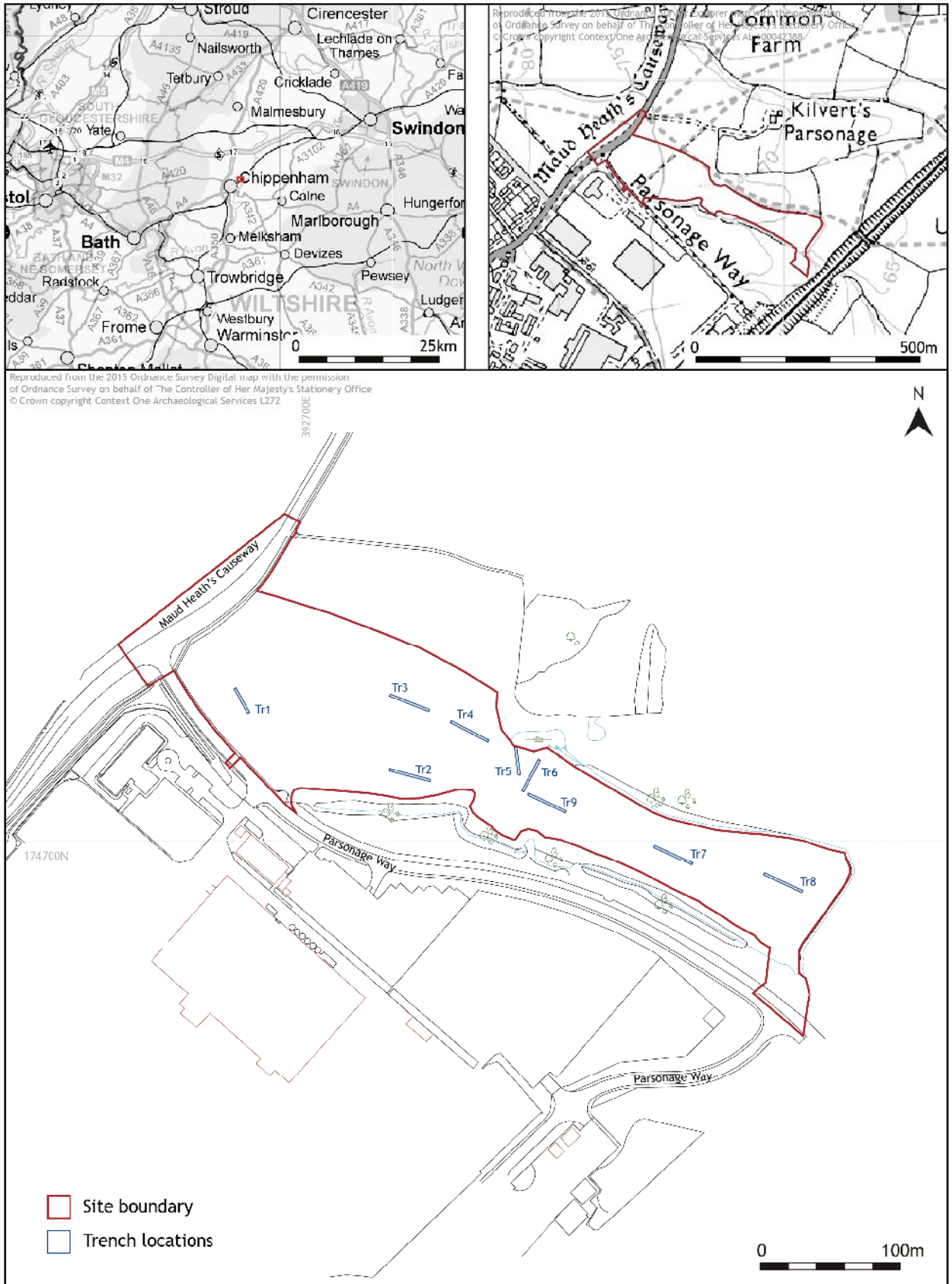


Figure 1. Site setting and location of evaluation trenches

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) (500) (600) (700) (800) (900)) measured 0.20m - 0.30m deep and comprised a dark brown silty sand, and this overlay 0.10m - 0.15m of light brown, soft subsoil ((101) (201) (301) (401) (501) (601) (701) (801) (901)). The natural comprised light brown/yellow sand with bands of gley and frequent manganese patches visible ((102) (202) (302) (402) (502) (602) (702) (802) (902)).
- Archaeological features and deposits**
- 4.4 Trenches 1 - 4 and 7 - 8 were found to be archaeologically sterile (**Plates 1 - 4 & 11 - 14**). A number of archaeological features were identified during the evaluation within Trenches 5 and 6 (**Figures 2 and 3; Plates 5 - 11**). The features were located directly beneath the subsoil (501) (601), cutting the underlying natural deposits (502) (602).
- 4.5 A stone rubble spread feature (503) crossed the centre of Trench 5 on an approximate east to west orientation (**Figures 2 & 3; Plates 5 & 6**). Measuring c. 4.50m in width, and crossing the entirety of the 1.60m trench (although not fully exposed), the spread comprised irregular and angular-shaped white/grey compacted stones. A number of pottery sherds, fragments of animal bone, glass fragments and a single iron object were recovered from the subsoil layer (501) directly overlying the feature.
- 4.6 Trench 6 contained a number of features (**Figures 2 & 3**) including a dark, silty deposit (603) (**Plate 10**) that was exposed across the centre of the trench. This deposit was fully exposed but not excavated, and appeared to overly some of the other features within the trench (**Plates 9 & 10**). Four linear features [604] [605] [606] [607] were also identified in the centre of the trench. Features [604] (**Plate 8**) and [605] (**Plate 9**) ran approximately east to west, and a sondage was excavated through both. They contained two fills, comprising compacted sandy silt (611) and grey clay (612) although no finds were identified. Features [606] and [607] were exposed but not excavated, as they mostly lay within the spread of the larger deposit (603). A stone rubble spread feature (608) (**Plate 9**) was also identified, crossing the centre of the trench on an approximate north-west to south-east alignment. Comprising a c. 4.5m wide strip of irregular and angular-shaped white/grey compacted stones, the feature is thought to be contemporary with the similar feature (503) identified within Trench 5 (**Plates 5 & 6**). A small burnt surface feature (609) was also exposed in the south-west corner of Trench 6 (**Plates 10 & 11**). Measuring c. 0.30m wide and c. 0.40m long, the dark feature was exposed but not excavated. A number of finds were recovered from the trench. These comprised pottery, fragments of animal bone and some iron objects and these were all discovered in the subsoil layer (601) directly above the stone rubble feature (608).
- 4.7 A number of disused land drains were identified within Trenches 1 - 4 (**Plates 1 - 4**) and a single unworked piece of flint was also recovered from the subsoil of Trench 4.



Plate 1. Trench 1 (from SW; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 2. Trench 2 (from SE; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 3. Trench 3 (from NW; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 4. Trench 4 (from SE; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 5. Trench 5 and feature (503) (from S; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 6. Rubble spread feature (503) in TR5 (from N; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 7. Trench 6 (from NE; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 8. Linear [604] in TR 6 (1m scale)



Plate 9. Rubble spread feature (608) with linear feature [605] above in TR6 (1m scale)



Plate 10. Deposit (603) and burnt deposit (609) seen in plan in TR6 (from NE; 1m scale)



Plate 11. Burnt deposit (609) in TR 6 (from NE; 1m scale)



Plate 12. Trench 7 (from N; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 13. Trench 8 (from NE; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 14. Trench 9 (from SE; 2 x 1m scales)

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 the Chippenham Museum and Heritage Centre. 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. A request will be made to the Site owner to transfer the title of all finds to the above Museum.
- 5.2 A moderate assemblage of finds were identified during the evaluation, all recovered from within the subsoil of Trenches 5 and 6. Each element of the assemblage is discussed separately below.

Analysis by Dr Clare Randall

Pottery

- 5.3 A total of 58 sherds of pottery were recovered from the subsoil (502) of Trench 5. This included two unglazed sherds of a sandy fabric, and ten green or grey glazed sherds with a fine sandy fabric, of possible medieval date. There were also 30 post-medieval grey/green and grey glazed earthenware sherds, including five rims of large jars. In addition, five unglazed post-medieval sherds were recovered, including three rim sherds of large jars. Two post-medieval stoneware sherds were also noted, one brown glazed and one grey glazed.
- 5.4 A total of 20 sherds were recovered from the subsoil (602) of Trench 6, mainly of medieval character. Six were grey/green glazed earthenware sherds, including a rim sherd of a jug. There were a further 13 unglazed sherds, six of fine sandy fabrics, and eight limestone tempered (?oolitic) sherds in which the temper has been weathered out. These sherds are also abraded. A single rim sherd is from a large jar with a strap handle, and is of late medieval type.
- 5.5 No further analysis is recommended for this assemblage.

Metal objects

- 5.6 A total of 10 iron objects recovered from the subsoil of Trench 5. These included at least nine nails, as well as an object with a linked ring concreted together and a number of unidentified objects. Five iron objects came from the subsoil of Trench 6, all of which are unidentified. None of the material is inconsistent with a post-medieval date. No further analysis is recommended.

Animal bone

- 5.7 Fifteen fragments of animal bone were recovered from the subsoil in Trench 5. The bone condition was average-good. The species represented were cattle (11 fragments) sheep/goat (1 tooth) and pig (1 tooth) and cattle-sized mammal (2 fragments). The majority of the cattle bone was from the limbs. Four fused epiphyses were present. No gnawing was observed, but there was indication of charring and deliberate fragmentation. A single fragment was measurable.
- 5.8 Nine fragments of animal bone were recovered from the subsoil of Trench 6. The bone condition was average-good. This consisted of four fragments of sheep/goat and six fragments of cattle. Two fragments showed evidence of dog gnawing. Four fragments included fused epiphyses and one fragment was measurable.
- 5.9 No further analysis is warranted but the condition of the material is indicative of good preservational conditions and a larger assemblage may provide a range of data.

Glass

- 5.10 Three fragments of post-medieval vessel glass came from the subsoil of Trench 5, one consistent with a small jar. No further analysis is recommended.

Flint

- 5.11 A single piece of unworked flint was recovered from the subsoil of Trench 6. No further analysis is recommended.

6. Discussion

- 6.1 Despite the high archaeological potential of the Site, the results of the evaluation were limited to a few late medieval/early post-medieval features within two of the nine trenches in the centre of the Site. These features did, however, correspond with the strong anomalies visible on the geophysical survey (Slater 2015), as well as with observations made during the walkover survey conducted during the desk-based assessment (Prestidge 2015).
- 6.2 A stone rubble spread feature was exposed within both Trenches 5 and 6 and its composition and compaction is indicative of a rough floor layer. The pottery recovered from the subsoil layer directly above the features dates the use of the surface from the late medieval through to the early post-medieval period and the presence of this small assemblage is indicative of domestic activity within the vicinity. The presence of butchered animal bone, some small glass fragments and iron objects within the same layer also likely represents a period of habitation or at least extended human presence. The location of the feature within an area of known medieval agricultural activity also raises the possibility of the floor layer forming part of an agricultural structure, and the rough nature of the feature may support this. The presence of a dark deposition layer and burnt feature within Trench 6, which may represent a pit, is also indicative of concentrated domestic or agricultural activity. Also within Trench 6, the linear features may represent boundaries or drainage gullies, as suggested by the silty fill and lack of finds within them. It is therefore considered that further features of the late medieval/early post-medieval period could be encountered during the proposed development groundworks in the direct vicinity of Trenches 5 and 6.
- 6.3 The surfaces of the archaeological features were located at minimum depths of c. 0.30m (Trench 5) and 0.40m (Trench 6) below the modern ground surface. It should therefore be anticipated that the surfaces of any potential further features, and especially any continuation of the stone rubble surface, may be quite shallow and would be impacted by foundation groundworks for the proposed stockyard development. Further archaeological investigation, in the form of a targeted excavation within the vicinity of Trenches 5 and 6, would offer a more complete interpretation of the features present on Site.

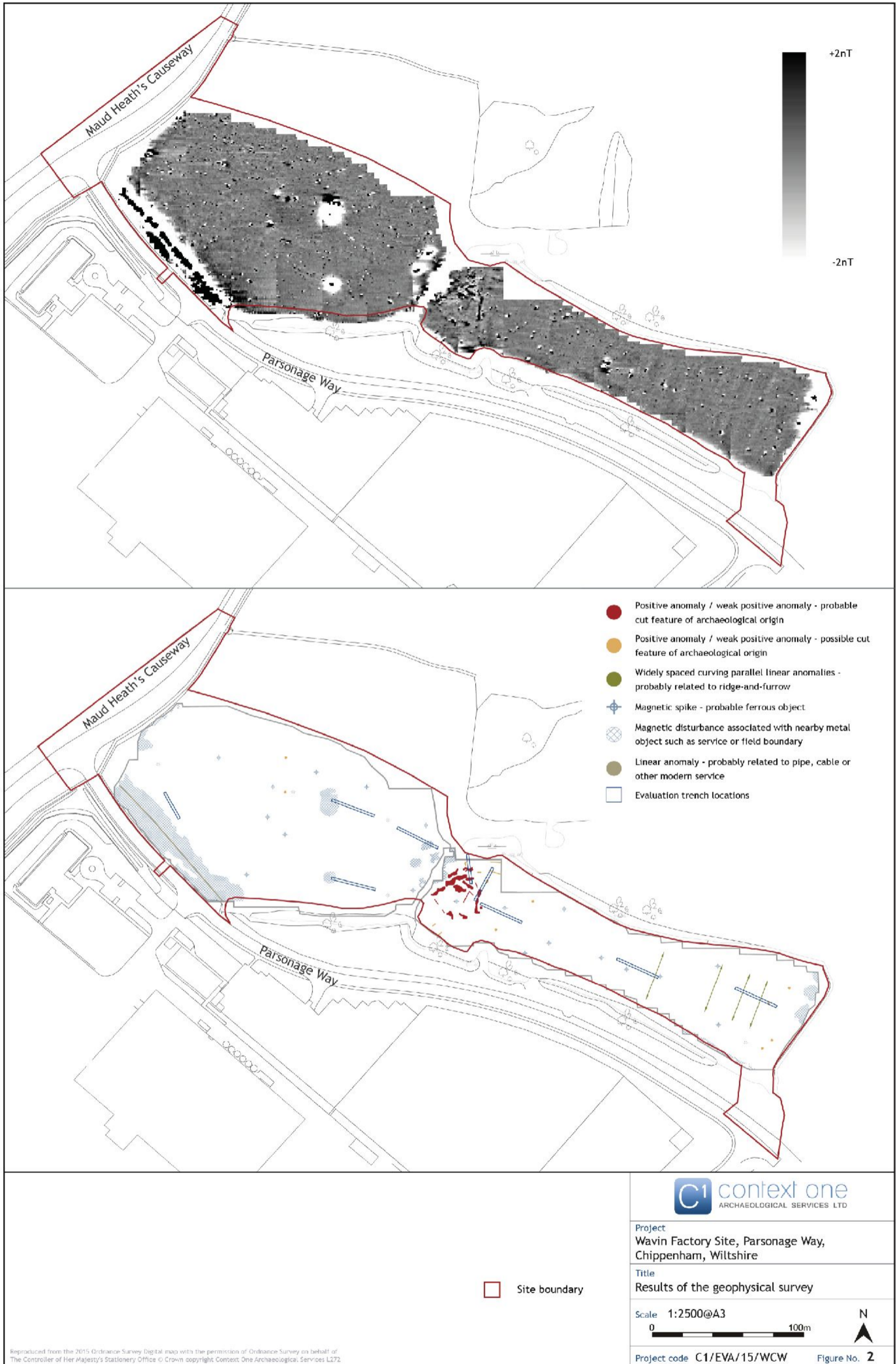


Figure 2. Results of geophysical survey and location of evaluation trenches

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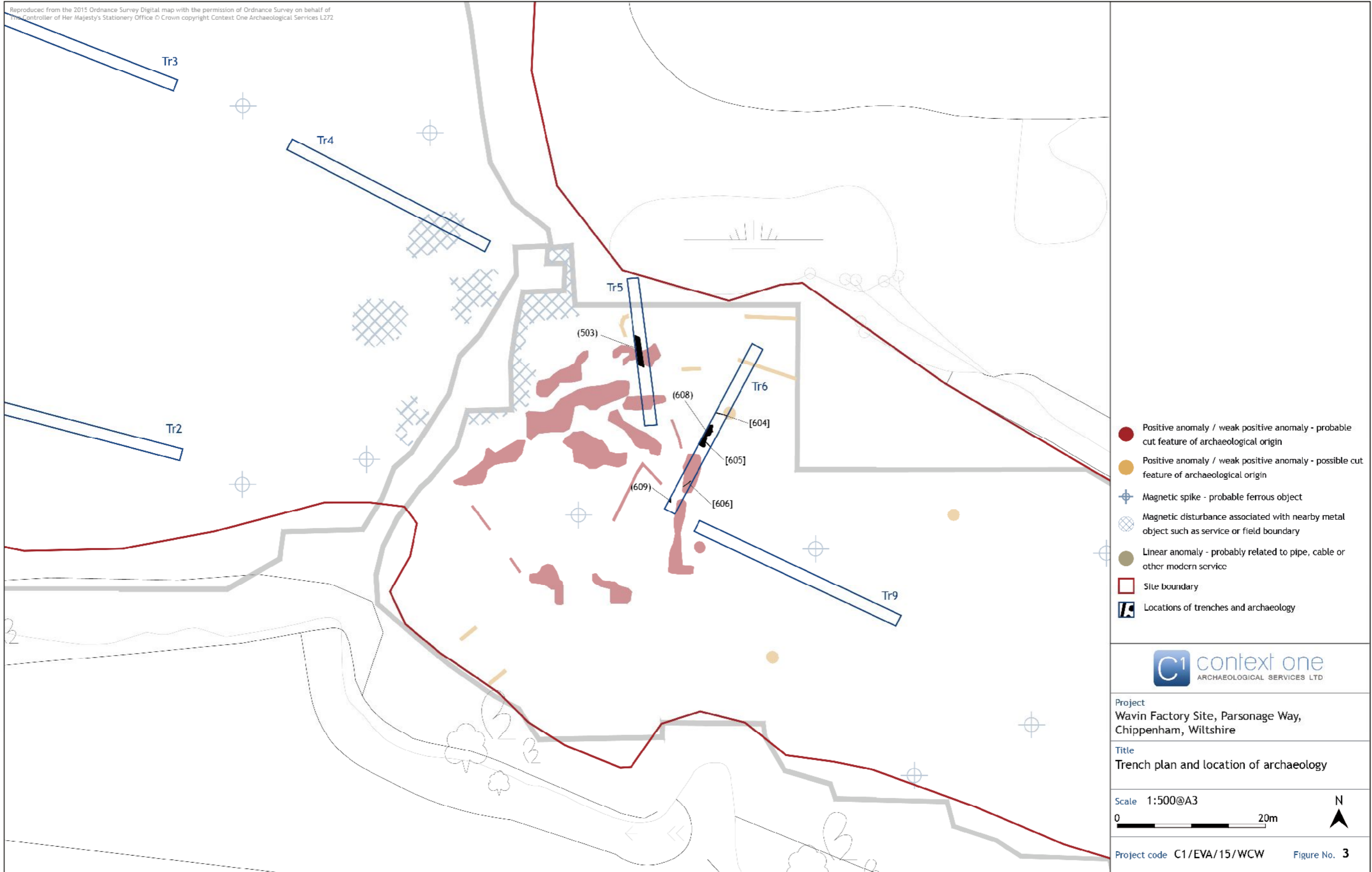


Figure 3. Location of archaeological features and geophysical survey anomalies

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	9	Paper
Feature sheets	2	Paper
Context summary	2	Paper
Sketch plan	1	Paper
Photographic register	2	Paper
Digital images	64	.JPG

- 7.3 The paper archive has been scanned as a number of files in .PDF format and will form part of the physical Site archive to be deposited with Chippenham Museum and Heritage Centre. 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 Chippenham Museum and Heritage Centre, 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:

Jonathan Chick, Graduate Planner, Ian Jewson Planning Ltd
 Paul Collins, Production Manager, Wavin Ltd
 Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Archaeology Service

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Appendix 1. Context summary

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION	EARLIER THAN	CONTEMP. WITH	LATER THAN
100	-	Horizon	Topsoil	Topsoil	-	-	101,102
101	-	Horizon	Subsoil	Subsoil	100	-	102
102	-	Horizon	Sand/gley	Natural	101	-	-
200	-	Horizon	Topsoil	Topsoil	-	-	201, 202
201	-	Horizon	Subsoil	Subsoil	200	-	202
202	-	Horizon	Sand/gley	Natural	201	-	-
300	-	Horizon	Topsoil	Topsoil	-	-	301, 302
301	-	Horizon	Subsoil	Subsoil	300	-	302
302	-	Horizon	Sand/gley	Natural	301	-	-
400	-	Horizon	Topsoil	Topsoil	-	-	401, 402
401	-	Horizon	Subsoil	Subsoil	400	-	402
402	-	Horizon	Sand/gley	Natural	401	-	-
500	-	Horizon	Topsoil	Topsoil	-	-	501, 502
501	-	Horizon	Subsoil	Subsoil	500	-	502
502	-	Horizon	Sand/gley	Natural	501	-	-
503	Med	Deposit	Stone rubble spread	Floor surface	500, 501	608	502
600	-	Horizon	Topsoil	Topsoil	-	-	601, 602
601	-	Horizon	Subsoil	Subsoil	600	-	602
602	-	Horizon	Sand/gley	Natural	601	-	-
603	Med	Deposit	Dark silt	Deposition layer	600, 601	-	602, 608
604	Med	Feature	Silt-filled linear	Linear - gully/drain	600, 601	-	602
605	Med	Feature	Silt-filled linear	Linear - gully/drain	600, 601	-	602
606	Med	Feature	Silt-filled linear	Linear - gully/drain	600, 601	-	602
607	Med	Feature	Silt-filled linear	Linear - gully/drain	600, 601	-	602
608	Med	Deposit	Stone rubble spread	Floor surface	600, 601, 603	503	602

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION	EARLIER THAN	CONTEMP. WITH	LATER THAN
609	Med	Deposit	Dark burnt feature	Burnt surface	600, 601	-	602
610	-	Cut	Cut of feature (605)	Linear gully/drain	600, 601, 611, 612	-	602
611	-	Fill	Silty sand	Fill of (610)	600, 601	-	610, 602
612	-	Fill	Grey clay	Fill of (610)	600, 601, 611	-	610, 611, 602
700	-	Horizon	Topsoil	Topsoil	-	-	701, 702
701	-	Horizon	Subsoil	Subsoil	700	-	702
702	-	Horizon	Sand/gley	Natural	700, 701	-	-
800	-	Horizon	Topsoil	Topsoil	-	-	801, 802
801	-	Horizon	Subsoil	Subsoil	800	-	802
802	-	Horizon	Sand/gley	Natural	800, 801	-	-
900	-	Horizon	Topsoil	Topsoil	-	-	901, 902
901	-	Horizon	Subsoil	Subsoil	900	-	902
902	-	Horizon	Sand/gley	Natural	900, 901	-	-