

The Old Forge
Limington Road
Limington
Yeovil
Somerset

An Archaeological Evaluation report

July 2017



The Old Forge
Limington Road
Limington
Yeovil
Somerset


for

C1 project code: C1/EVA/17/LYS

R. E. Pearce Properties Ltd

REPORT

Prepared by	Richard McConnell, Director
Date	13/07/17

Approved by	Cheryl Green, Post-excavation Manager
Signed	
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PROJECT DETAILS

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Scheduled Monument Consent ref.	N/A
Historic Environment Record ref.	37581
Collecting Museum	South West Heritage Trust
Museum accession code	TTNCM 51/2017
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Summary

Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out a field evaluation through trial trenching in July 2017 as part of an archaeological programme of works to satisfy a condition of granting outline planning permission for the construction of up to five dwellings at The Old Forge, Limington Road, Limington, Yeovil, Somerset. The project was commissioned by R. E. Pearce Properties Ltd.

There are no heritage assets on the Site itself although it is identified as generally being within the suspected boundary of the shrunken medieval village of Limington. The Site also partially lies within the Limington Conservation Area. Historic map regression assessment indicates that the eastern-most single storey building that is still extant on the Site had certainly been built by the middle of the 19th century and appears to have served as an agricultural building as part of 'Genges Farm'.

The archaeological evaluation comprised 2 trenches totalling 80m in length. A single feature was encountered and this comprised a v-shaped ditch, 2m wide and 0.95m deep discovered in trench 2. The ditch is likely to represent a former plot/field boundary which is ascribed to the medieval period based on stratigraphy and pottery evidence. A deposit of burnt material in the upper fills could be the result of an associated fence/hedge fire or simply refuse used as infill. The discovery adds modest evidence for known medieval activity in the village.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out a field evaluation through trial trenching on 03 to 06 July 2017 as part of an archaeological programme works to satisfy a condition of granting outline planning permission for the construction of up to five dwellings at The Old Forge, Limington Road, Limington, Yeovil, Somerset (the 'Site') (**Figure 1**). The project was commissioned by R. E. Pearce Properties Ltd.
- 1.2 The evaluation was required by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), South Somerset District Council (SSDC) on the advice of the county Historic Environment Service (HES), South West Heritage Trust (SWHT). Condition 11 of the Determination of Application for Planning Permission (Outline) dated 23 February 2017 stated:
- "No development hereby approved shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority.*
- Reason: In the interests of archaeology in accordance with Policy EQ3 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028) and Paragraph 141 of the NPPF."*
- 1.3 In the first instance, it was agreed with Mr Steven Membery (Senior Historic Environment Officer, SWHT) that this should take the form of an evaluation through trial trenching.
- 1.4 The evaluation comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which sets out the project strategy; trial trenching; post-excavation and report production (this document); and archive preparation and deposition.
- 1.5 The requirement follows advice by Central Government as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (DCLG 2012).

2. The Site

- 2.1 The Site (centred on NGR ST 54000 22463) covers c. 3,100 square metres and is located at the northern end of the village spine near the junction of Limington Road and Church Street. (**Figure 1**). The Site fronts Limington Road and is bounded on the western and northern sides by open fields, and adjacent to the properties known as 'Genges' and 'The Lodge' on the eastern flank. The Site is largely situated on level ground at an average height of c. 20m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The recorded geology for the Site is Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (undifferentiated). The superficial (drift) geology is recorded as Head - Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel (BGS, 2017). The soils are characterised as Freely draining lime-rich loamy soils (CSAIS, 2017). The Site is currently occupied by vacant industrial and office units with metalled yards/parking.
- 2.2 The county Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that 12 heritage assets have been recorded within a 500m radius of the Site. The table below provides brief details of these assets organised by period.

HER ref.	Description	Period
54154	Roman finds, Limington House, Limington	Roman
56894	Roman finds and earthworks, Limington	Roman
56893	Roman finds and earthworks, Limington	Roman
54159	Shrunken village, Limington	Medieval
54984	Ridge and furrow and enclosure, Limington	Medieval
54979	Enclosure, NW of Fairview Terrace, Limington	Medieval
54980	Enclosures, NE by N of Fairview Terrace, Limington	Medieval
54977	Earthworks, NW of Manor Farm, Limington	Medieval
54983	Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, Yeovilton	Medieval
54152	Church of St Mary and churchyard, Limington (Grade I Listed – 1056844)	Medieval
54160	Post-medieval finds, Lamb and Flag public house, Limington	Post-medieval
54157	Mill, NW of Limington	Post-medieval

- 2.3 There are no heritage assets on the Site itself although it is identified as generally being within the suspected boundary of the shrunken medieval village of Limington (**HER 54159**). The Site also partially lies within the Limington Conservation Area. Historic map regression assessment indicates that the eastern-most single storey building that is still extant on the Site had certainly been built by the middle of the 19th century and appears to have served as an agricultural building as part of 'Genges Farm'.
- 2.4 Most of the assets in the environs of the Site relate to listed buildings including the neighbouring 'Genges' (**HER 50198**) and 'Old Lodge' (**HER 50199**), both Grade II designated and dated to the mid-17th and late-18th centuries respectively. The parochial church (The Church of The Blessed Virgin Mary) is located just 180m south-east of the Site and is Grade I listed (**HER 54152**). The earliest surviving feature of the church is a late 13th century window in the nave. The church is adjacent to a Grade II listed rectory dating to the early 19th century and now a private residence (**HER 50178**). The earliest recorded archaeological evidence within the environs of the Site relates to the discovery of numerous Roman coins found during the construction of Limington House in the early 19th century (**HER 54154**). The house is c. 185m to the south-south-west of the Site and is reputed to have stood on the site of former 17th century building and an earlier manor. There has been a suggestion that stonework in the basement relates to a former Roman building but this has not been proven.

3. Archaeological aims and research objectives

3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological evaluation were to:

- identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during groundworks;
- determine the character of the archaeological remains, where present;
- recover environmental information, which may provide further information relating to the local historic environment of the area;
- provide sufficient information to enable further mitigation strategies to be determined, where appropriate

3.2 The research objectives were to:

- determine whether there was any evidence specifically relating to the former medieval settlement
- ascertain the presence, absence and character of any earlier activity on the Site

4. Methodology

- 4.1 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 1994, rev. 2001, 2008, 2014) and in accordance with the *Somerset County Council Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook* (2011). C1 adhered to the *Code of Conduct* of the CIfA (1985, rev. 2000, 2014), and *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (CIfA, 2014, rev. 2015) at all times. The fieldwork methodology is summarised below.
- 4.2 C1 gave notification of the commencement of the works to the HES, and arrangements were made for a representative to visit the Site and monitor archaeological fieldwork. On this occasion, a monitoring visit was not required. However, monitoring will continue until the deposition of the Site archive.
- 4.3 The archaeological evaluation comprised 2 trenches, Trench 1 (TR1) measured 50m long x 1.6m wide and Trench 2 (TR2) measured 30m long x 1.6m wide. The trenches were laid out according to a pre-defined trench plan (see **Figure 1**) using Ordnance Survey (OS) co-ordinates with a TopCon GRS1 GPS unit. TR2 was subsequently extended on the western and eastern flanks to cover an area of 241 square metres to investigate a linear feature (see **section 5** for details).
- 4.4 A JCB (JS130LC) 13 tonne slew equipped with a toothless (grading) bucket was used to remove topsoil/overburden under the constant supervision of COAS archaeological staff. Machine excavation

continued until archaeological features or natural geology was encountered, whichever was first. Spoil was mounded either side of each trench but no less than 1m from the trench edges, and was inspected for artefacts.

- 4.5 Once machine work had been completed, the trenches were examined and any suspected features/deposits were cleaned using hand tools. Core details of each trench was recorded on C1 *pro-forma* evaluation trench forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. This included logging a representative section of the trench to allow an understanding of the stratigraphy. A digital photograph of each trench in plan and representative section was taken in .jpg format.
- 4.6 Suspected archaeological features/deposits were first assessed to determine the level of investigation needed to characterise them satisfactorily. Once identified, features were excavated with the aim of producing at least one representative cross-section. All features/deposits were recorded using standard C1 *pro-forma* feature intervention recording forms and/or context forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. Stratigraphic relationships were recorded using a “Harris-Winchester matrix” diagram. Soil colours were logged using a Munsell soil colour chart. Features were drawn on dimensionally stable media at scales of 1:20 for plans and 1:10 for sections. All archaeological remains were levelled to Ordnance Datum directly with a TopCon GRS1 RTK GPS unit. A photographic record of the evaluation was carried out and involved the sole use of digital images. This included photographs illustrating in both detail, and general context, the principal features discovered. The photographic record also included working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

5. Results

- 5.1 The deposits and features encountered during the evaluation are tabulated and described in **Appendix 1**. In the summary below, context numbers for cuts are represented using the standard convention of square brackets, and pre-fixed with a staff number, e.g. [7-101]; layer and fill numbers are similarly displayed but enclosed by standard brackets, e.g. (7-102). Where a feature is discussed, it is referenced with its cut and associated fill number(s). Features are shortened to ‘F’ followed by a unique feature number, e.g. F1.
- 5.2 **Trench 1 (TR1)**
TR1 was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.00m and comprised a simple horizontal sequence of deposits (**Figure 1, Plate 1**). This included modern metalling (7-100) as part of the current yard surface mixed with topsoil up to 0.55m thick overlying subsoil (7-101), 0.25m in depth onto natural sandy clay (7-102) that was excavated up to 0.20m deep to check the integrity as a sterile sediment. No features were observed and no finds were recovered.
- 5.3 **Trench2 (TR2)**
TR2 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.95m and revealed a similar deposit sequence as TR1. A single linear feature (F1) was encountered at the base of the trench broadly aligned north to south (**Figure 2, Plates 2-4**). The feature first showed as a linear stain of burnt material (7-204) up to 0.95m wide and was suspected to be part of a former flue related to an industrial process. The trench was subsequently enlarged to ascertain its extent and the presence or absence of any associated remains. The trench extension showed the feature to be a slightly meandering isolated linear ditch cut in to the natural clay (7-202) at least 30m in length with a dump of burnt material along its length. Manual excavation of a section through the ditch (**Figure 2, Plate 4**) demonstrated that it was v-shaped and measured 2.00m wide and 0.95m deep. The ditch [7-206] comprised three distinct fills including a darkened gravelly silty clay (7-203) up to 0.07m thick and 0.90m wide, with a lining of charcoal-rich gravelly silty clay (7-204) just 0.03m thick, overlying a broader deposit of gravelly silty clay (7-205), 2.00m wide and up to 0.65m deep. A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from (7-203) and (7-205) and a single sherd of pottery was collected from (7-203).

6. The finds

6.1 A total of nine artefacts were recovered from the evaluation and comprised eight fragments of animal bone and one sherd of pottery. These were washed, air-dried and bagged. An assessment of the finds are discussed below.

6.2 POTTERY, by Richard McConnell

One body sherd of flint-tempered medieval pottery was recovered from (7-203).

6.3 ANIMAL BONE, by Clare Randall

A total of eight fragments of animal bone were recovered from two contexts. The condition was generally average to good. A single fragment of a right proximal femur of domestic fowl (chicken) came from ditch fill (7-203). Ditch fill (7-205) produced two fragments of cattle bone, single fragments of sheep/goat and pig, and three fragments of unidentified cattle-sized mammal bone (**Table 1**). This assemblage is too small to provide detailed information on subsistence or consumption, but is consistent with what might be expected in local medieval assemblages.

CONTEXT	SPECIES	ELEMENT	SIDE	% PRESENT	COMMENT
(7-203)	Chicken	Femur	R	30%	Adult appearance
(7-205)	Cattle	Metacarpal	R	80%	Adult, robust shape, canid gnawing to distal
(7-205)	Cattle	Metacarpal	-	40%	Porous, unfused to distal (< 24-30 months)
(7-205)	Sheep/goat	Metatarsal	R	60%	Adult
(7-205)	Pig	Mandible	L	40%	P3 in wear, Dp4 at stage d (juvenile)
(7-205)	Cattle-sized	Long bone shaft x 3	-	-	-

Table 1. Details of animal bone

6.4 The collected finds are unlikely to be of value to researchers and no further work is merited beyond their quantification and assessment in this report. It is recommended that the finds should be discarded.

7. Discussion

7.1 The evaluation produced one archaeological feature and this comprised a v-shaped linear ditch broadly orientated north to south measuring at least 30m long, 2.00m wide and 0.95m deep and cut into the natural clay. The ditch comprised three fills but was characterised by a charcoal stained upper fill with a burnt lining. A small assemblage of animal bones was found in the fills and comprised a typical spread of cattle, sheep/goat, pig and chicken. One of the cattle bones exhibited signs of canine gnawing. A single sherd of medieval pottery was found in the upper fill.

7.2 The ditch is likely to represent a former plot/field boundary which is ascribed to the medieval period based on stratigraphy and pottery evidence. A deposit of burnt material in the upper fills could be the result of an associated fence/hedge fire or simply refuse used as infill. The discovery adds modest evidence for known medieval activity in the village.

8. Archive and dissemination

8.1 The NPPF requires that an archaeological archive arising from development works is made publicly accessible (para. 141). The archive comprises two parts: the paper/digital archive; and the physical archive (artefact/ecofact assemblage).

Paper/digital archive

8.2 Where archaeological features/deposits have been recorded, the archive generated from this usually comprises site records, drawings and photographs either in paper format or born-digital data. On conclusion of a project this is normally transferred into the care of a trusted digital repository such as the county repository or Archaeology Data Service (ADS) as scanned paper records or native born-digital data.

- 8.3 In this case, the complexity of the archaeological features was limited and all relevant data has been incorporated into the assessment report. The digital archive will therefore be stored on the C1 cloud storage server or discarded.

Physical archive

- 8.4 The artefact/ecofact assemblage is the legal property of the landowner (excluding any items that fall under The Treasure Act 1996). However, it is usual practice for the landowner to transfer ownership of this assemblage to a receiving institution (usually a museum) once it has been fully assessed and/or analysed. Receiving institutions store the assemblage and make it publicly accessible.
- 8.5 In this case, it is not recommended that the artefact archive is suitable for additional research, and long-term curation in a museum would not be appropriate. Therefore, the landowner will be given the option to keep the assemblage or have it discarded on their behalf.

Dissemination: report

- 8.6 Copies of the report will be submitted to the following:
- client and/or agent
 - the HES so that it can be included as part of the county Historic Environment Record (HER)
 - the ADS, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>)

Dissemination: publication

- 8.7 The excavated heritage asset is of limited local significance. A summary will be provided for publication in the 'Somerset Archaeology' section of the county archaeological journal for 2018.

9. Bibliography

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First Aid for Finds.

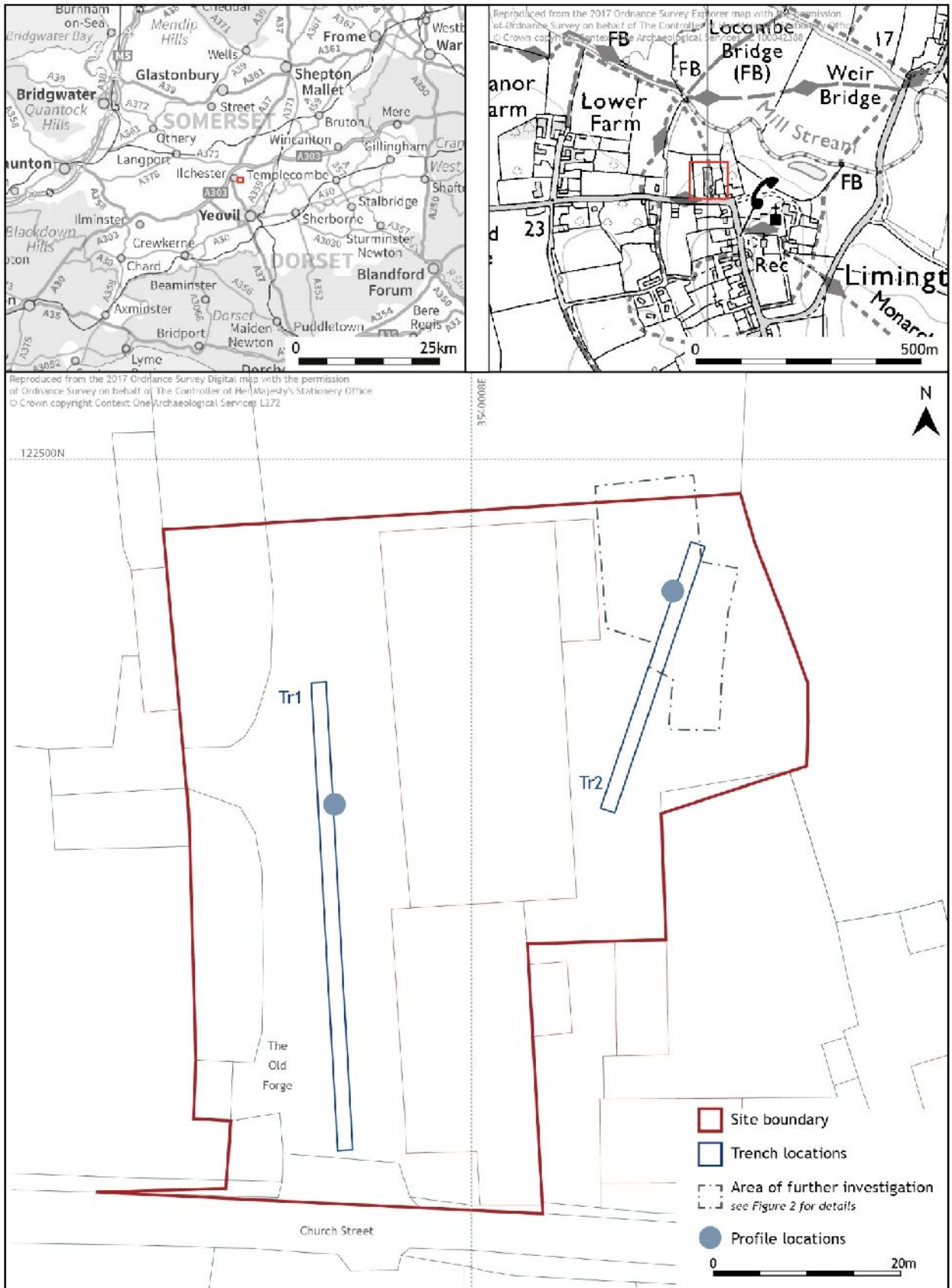


Figure 1. Site setting and proposed trench locations

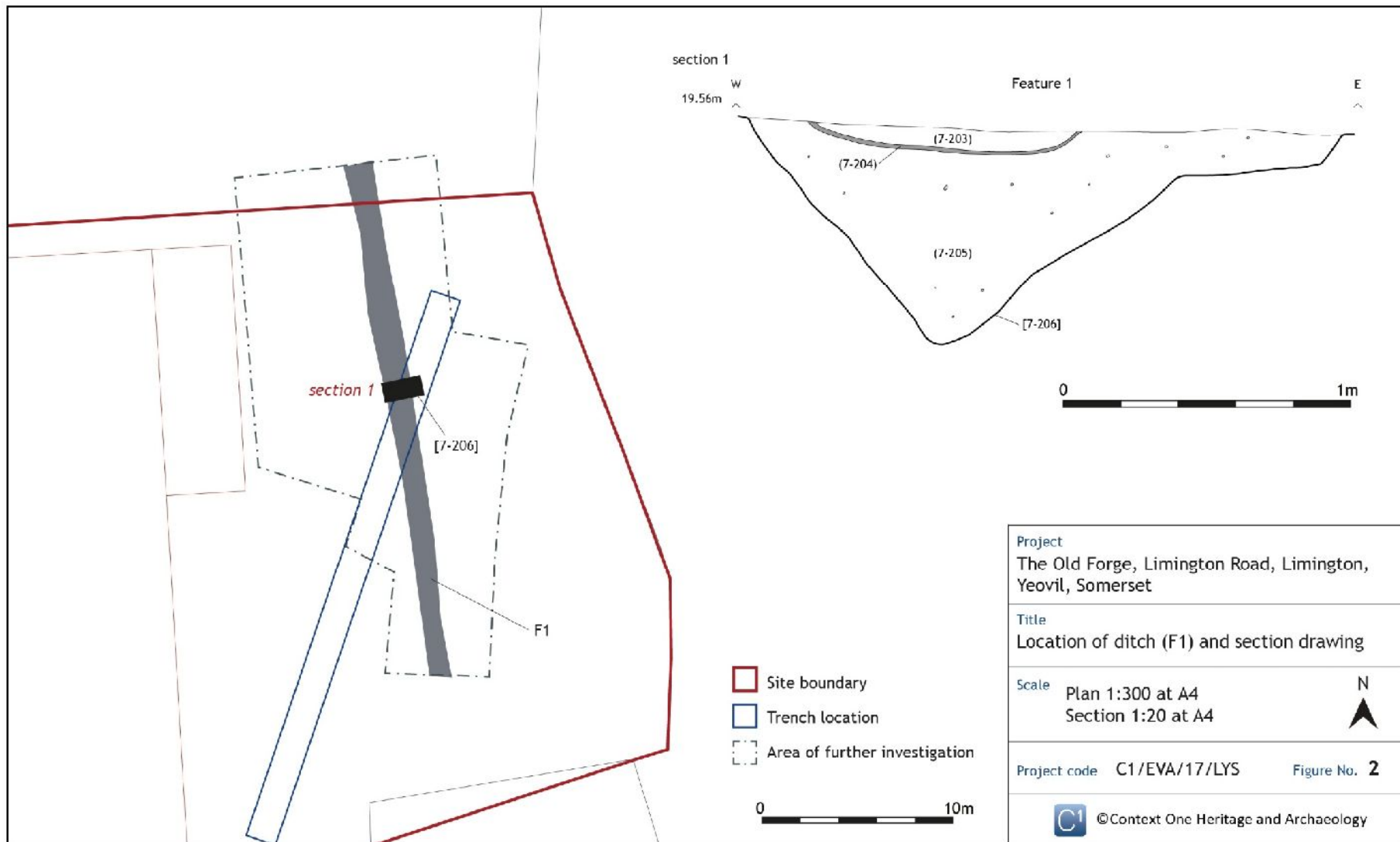


Figure 2. Location of ditch (F1) and section drawing



Plate 1. Trench 1 excavated (from NNE, 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 2. Trench 2 excavated (from NNE, 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 3. Line of ditch (F1) with excavated section in the background (from SSE, 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 4. Excavated section through ditch (F1) (from SSE, 1 x 2m scale)

Appendix 1: Context summary

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EARLIER THAN	CONTEMP. WITH	LATER THAN	LENGTH	WIDTH/DIAMETER	THICKNESS/DEPTH (m)
Trench 1- 50m long x 1.60m wide									
7-100	Modern	Layer	Hardcore/buried topsoil. A cemented grey (10YR 6/1) hardcore layer with frequent angular hardcore. Some buried topsoil matrix present	N/A	-	7-101	-	-	0.55
7-101	Natural	Layer	Subsoil. A compacted dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) sandy clay with moderate limestone fragments	7-100	-	7-102	-	-	0.25
7-102	Natural	Layer	Natural. A compacted yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) sandy clay with frequent angular limestone fragments	7-101	-	N/A	-	-	>0.20
Trench 2 - 30m long x 1.6m wide									
7-200	Modern	Layer	Hardcore. A cemented grey (10YR 6/1) hardcore layer with frequent angular hardcore.	N/A	-	7-201	-	-	0.50
7-201	Natural	Layer	Subsoil. A compacted dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) sandy clay with moderate limestone fragments	7-200	-	7-202	-	-	0.25
7-202	Natural	Layer	Natural. A compacted yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) sandy clay with frequent angular limestone fragments	7-201	-	N/A	-	-	>0.20
7-203		Fill	Ditch fill. A firm brown (10YR 5/3) silty clay with occasional angular gravel fragments	7-201	-	7-204	>30.00	0.90	0.07
7-204		Fill	Ditch fill. A firm black (10YR 2/1) silty clay with frequent charcoal and occasional angular gravel fragments	7-203	-	7-205	>30.00	0.95	0.03
7-205		Fill	Ditch fill. A firm dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) silty clay with occasional angular gravel fragments	7-204	-	7-206	>30.00	2.00	0.65
7-206		Cut	Ditch. Linear cut on a N-S alignment, with steep concave sides and pointed base	7-205	-	7-202	>30.00	2.00	0.75

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