

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING
AT
SAINTBURY CROSS FARM,
SAINTBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Tom Vaughan

Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

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Project 2504
Report 1252

Archaeological monitoring at Saintbury Cross Farm, Saintbury, Gloucestershire

Tom Vaughan

Background information

<i>Client</i>	K	ingsvale Homes Ltd
<i>Site address</i>		Saintbury Cross Farm, Saintbury, Broadway, Gloucestershire
<i>National Grid reference</i>	S	O 411714 240220
<i>Sites and Monuments Record reference</i>		Not available
<i>Planning authority reference</i>	C	otswold District Council CD.8696/F and CD.8696/H
<i>Brief</i>		GCC 2004
<i>Project design</i>	H	EAS 2004
<i>Project parameters</i>	I	FA 1999

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on site.

Archaeological and historical background

Saintbury Cross Farm lies 0.6km to the north of the small village of Saintbury, on the southeast corner of the crossroads with the B4632 road between Willersey and Weston-sub-Edge. The site is situated immediately below the Cotswold escarpment, at *c* 73m AOD, on the south-eastern edge of the floodplain of the River Avon. Evidence of Neolithic settlement has been identified within the parish (Darvill 1987, 71 and 84) and a Bronze Age round barrow is located on the edge of the escarpment (Saville 1984, 132).

The village is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as *Suineberie*, thought to mean ‘Sæwine’s fortified place’, derived from the Old English personal noun and *burh* - a possible reference to earthworks located near to St Nicholas’ church and Buckle Street (Smith 1964-5, 256). A semi-oval bank with an adjacent stream to the east of the farm are thought to represent the remains of a short mill race (GSMR 2801). At Saintbury Camp (also known as Castle Bank), on the hill to the south, further earthworks have been identified which represent medieval or later boundaries and settlement remains (*ibid.*). Medieval settlement activity has also been hypothesised at Lower farm, Middle Hill Farm and within the vicinity of the crossroads (GSMR 6883). The stone cross with octagonal shaft located on the crossroads, after which the farm is named, is of 15th century date, although with mid 19th century alterations (GSMR 371). The parish church, located in the village, contains early Norman doorways in the nave and a typical 13th/14th century Cotswold’s spire (Verrey 1970, 24 and 384).

Saintbury was described in 1868 as ‘...a parish in the upper division of Kiftsgate hundred, county Gloucester, 2 miles W. of Chipping-Campden, its post town, and 7 from Evesham. The surface is diversified with hills and valleys, and in the latter are some rich meadows. The village, which is of small extent, is chiefly agricultural. It was designated Suineberie, after King Sweyne, who had a camp at Castle Bank, communicating with a larger one upon the summit of the same hill in the adjoining parish of Willersley. The living is a rectory in the diocese of Gloucester and Bristol, value £415. The church is dedicated to St. Nicholas. The parochial charities produce about £6 per annum.’ (National Gazetteer 1868).

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1880 depicts the farmhouse, the three barns and the general layout of the surrounding farmyard as it exists at present. In the 20th century, a number of additional

buildings were constructed, which are to be demolished (along with Barn C) during the present development.

Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to locate any archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date and type. The brief indicated the deposits of medieval date were to be anticipated.

Methods

General specification for watching brief	CAS 1995
Sources consulted	Gloucestershire SMR
Dates of fieldwork	20 th May - 17 th November 2004
Areas of deposits observed	Indicated on Fig. 2
Dimensions of excavated areas observed	Foundations
w	length 24m
de	width 0.70m
S	depth 0.78-0.90m
w	ervices length 1.80-31.50m
de	width 0.65-1.60m
R	depth 0.58-0.80m
w	oads/floors length 6.50-32.50m
de	width 3.50-20m
	depth 0.32-0.80m

Access to or visibility of structure

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken after machine excavation using a JCB with a toothed bucket. The exposed surfaces were generally sufficiently clean to observe only very well differentiated archaeological deposits and horizons. Any less clear may have not been identified.

Statement of confidence

A number of the trenches were only monitored some time after excavation, while others had already been partially backfilled. In addition a number of areas were only stripped into the topsoil level, such that there was only very minimal exposure of the surface of the natural matrix across the site. Thus the degree of confidence with which the aims of the project can be argued to have been achieved is only moderate.

Deposit description

Barn C foundation: Trench 1

Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (below ground level)
1000	Compact dark brown silty clay with frequent roots. Occasional charcoal flecks.	Topsoil	0.00-0.18m
1001	Compact blue grey clay/alluvium with 10% charcoal flecks, 2-5% rubble and concrete.	Alluvial deposit - former pond?	0.16-0.64m
1002	Compact yellow grey clay.	Natural	0.48m +
1003	Mixed dark brown silty loam and grey/yellow clay with 10% brick rubble.	Building foundation	0.00m +

Farmhouse service: Trenches 2a and 2b

Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (below ground level)
2000	Compact dark brown silty clay with frequent roots. Occasional charcoal flecks.	Topsoil	0.00-0.30m
2001	Compact mid yellow grey sandy silt loam with 5% charcoal flecks and 1% brick and tile.	Subsoil	0.30-0.60m
2002	Compact fawn yellow clay with occasional limestone frags	Natural	0.60m +

Farmhouse patio strip: Area 3

Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (below ground level)
3000	Compact fawn yellow clay with occasional brick and limestone frags.	Redeposited clay	0.00-0.12m
3001	Compact dark brown silty clay with frequent roots. Occasional charcoal flecks, brick and limestone frags.	Top/subsoil	0.10-0.45m
3002	Compact fawn yellow clay with occasional limestone frags	Natural	0.25m +

Barn B service: Trench 4

Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (below ground level)
4000	Light grey concrete.	Modern yard surface	0.00-0.20m
4001	Compact dark brown silty clay with frequent roots. Occasional charcoal flecks, brick and limestone frags.	Top/subsoil	0.10-0.45m
4002	Compact greyish yellow clay.	Natural	0.27m +

Barn A service: Trench 5

Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (below ground level)
5000	Compact fawn yellow clay with occasional brick frags and limestone gravel. Only obs. to east of barn.	Redeposited clay	0.00-0.12m
5001	Large sub-angular limestone blocks. Only obs. to east of barn. Part of former Barn C.	Foundation/floor	0.12-0.30m
5002	Compact green grey clay.	Natural	0.25m +
5003	Compact dark brown silty clay. Occasional roots, charcoal flecks, brick and limestone frags. Only obs. to north and east of barn.	Top/subsoil	0.00-0.25m

Farmhouse lawn strip Area 6

Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (below ground level)
6000	Compact dark brown silty clay. Turfed. Occasional charcoal flecks, brick and limestone frags.	Topsoil	0.00-0.32m +

Drive strip: Area 7

Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (below ground level)
7000	Compact dark brown silty clay. Turfed. Occasional charcoal flecks, brick and limestone frags.	Topsoil	0.00-0.50m +
7001	Mixed layer of dark brown silty clay and limestone fragments. Within 7000. Only obs. to north end of strip.	Hardcore	0.20m +

Car park strip: Area 8

Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (below ground level)
8000	Compact dark brown silty clay. Turfed. Frequent modern brick and concrete frags.	Topsoil	0.00-0.45m
8001	Compact mid yellowish brown silty clay. Turfed. Occasional charcoal flecks, brick and limestone frags.	Subsoil	0.30m +

Discussion

The natural matrix was only observed in five of the eight excavated areas, where it comprised clay with occasional limestone fragments. These areas were all around the existing farmhouse buildings. Elsewhere the excavation was not undertaken to sufficient depth.

A developed topsoil-subsoil-natural sequence was noted to the south and west of the Farmhouse, south of Barn B, north and east of Barn C. A thick alluvial clay was recorded in the foundation trenches on the site of the demolished Barn C. It has been tentatively suggested to represent the site of a former pond, although it seems unlikely given its proximity to the farmhouse and the subsequent choice of this spot to build the aforesaid barn. No finds were retrieved, although brick and concrete rubble was noted.

No foundations or surfaces were observed predating the existing buildings. The rough course of large limestone blocks observed in the western leg of Trench 5 may represent the floor or foundation of the former Barn C.

Thus no archaeological deposits, horizons or artefacts were observed predating the post-medieval/modern period.

Conclusions

Although the circumstances surrounding this project were not optimal, it is considered that there are no archaeologically significant remains within the site, and no structures or horizons predate the present farm buildings and associated activity.

Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Kingsvale Homes Ltd at Saintbury Cross Farm, Saintbury, Gloucestershire (NGR SO 411714 240220; GSMR ref. n/a). The natural matrix was only observed in five of the eight excavated areas. Elsewhere the excavation was not undertaken to sufficient depth. A full stratigraphic soil sequence was noted adjacent to the farmhouse and barns. A band of alluvial clay below a demolished barn has been tentatively suggested to represent the site of a former pond, although this seems unlikely. No foundations or surfaces were observed predating the existing buildings, nor any archaeological deposits, horizons or artefacts predating the post-medieval/modern period.

Archive

Fieldwork progress records AS2		3
Photographic records AS3		2
Trench record sheets AS41		8
Digital photographs	42	
Computer disks		1

The project archive is intended to be placed at: Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum

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Acknowledgements

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Plate1: Barn C foundation: Trench 1, east section



Plate 2: Farmhouse service: Trench 2a, north section



Plate 3: Farmhouse service: Trench 2b, view east



Plate 4: Farmhouse patio strip: Area 3, view north-west



Plate 5: Barn B service: Trench 4, south of barn, view east



Plate 6: Barn A service: Trench 5, west of barn, view south



Plate 7: Barn A service: Trench 5, east of barn, view south



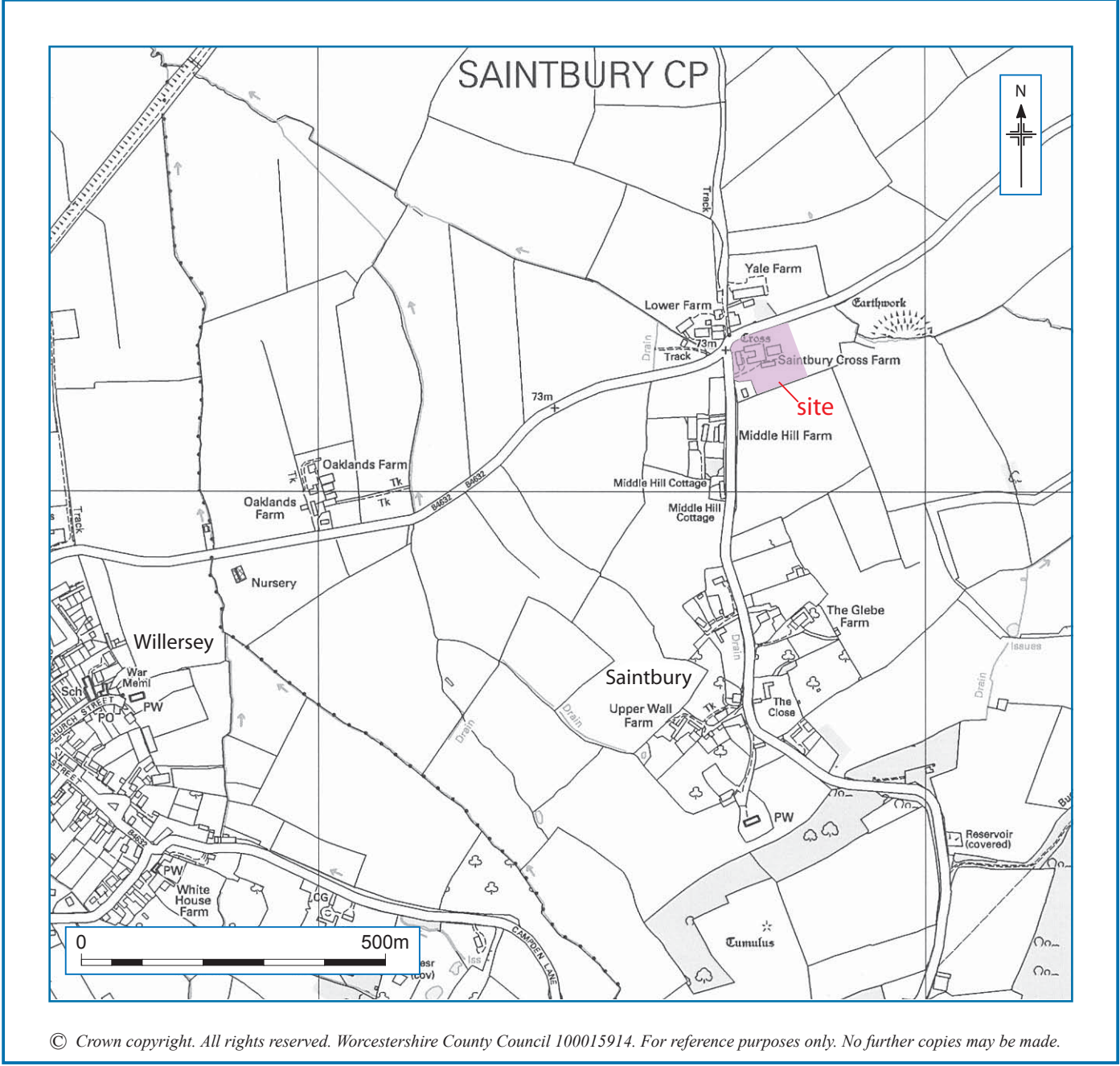
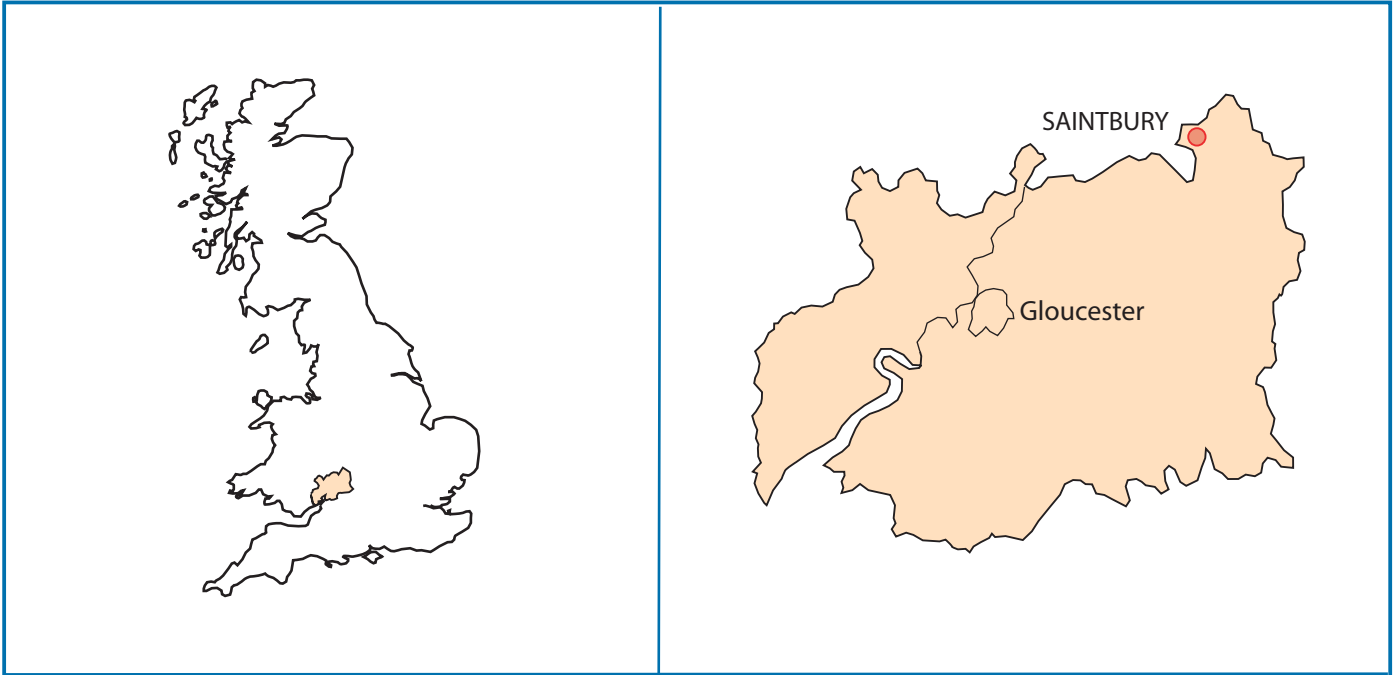
Plate 8: Farmhouse lawn strip: Area 6, view south-east



Plate 9: Drive strip: Area 7, view south-west



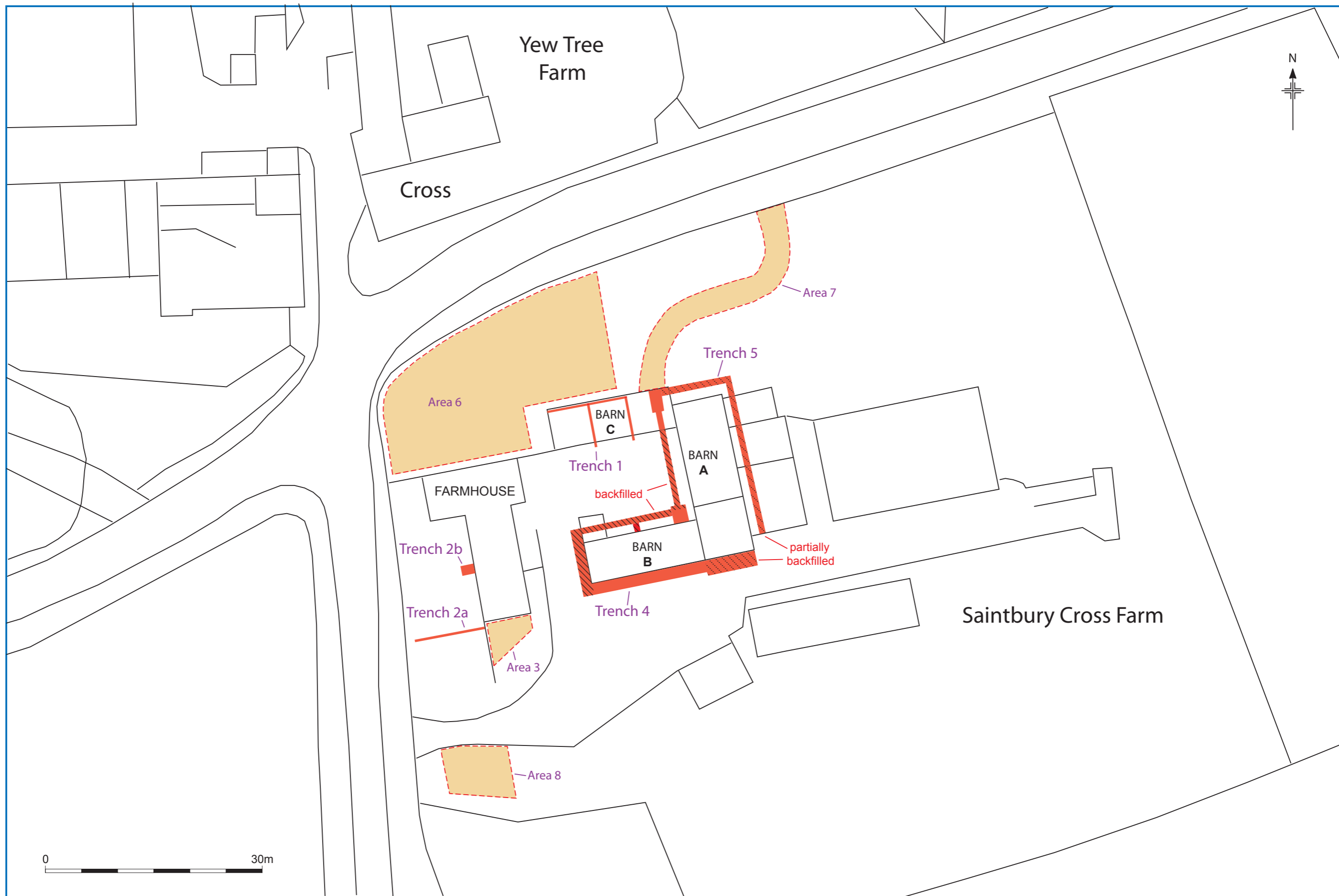
Plate 9: Car park strip: Area 8, view south-west



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Location of the site.

Figure 1



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Location of trenches and areas observed

Figure 2