



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT
KNIGHTON FARM, NEVERAVON ROAD,
FIGHELDEAN, WILTSHIRE

NGR: SU1535 4563

NOVEMBER 2020

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a cable trench at the site of a scheduled medieval moat and settlement at Knighton Farm, Figheldean, Wiltshire. The excavations cut across the edge of the moat at a very oblique angle. The trench was also narrow and shallow and so any useful information regarding the construction of the moat or deposition was absent. Further to the west a compact deposit of unworked flint boulders deposited within a cut were identified. The limitations of the narrow excavated area made the interpretation of the feature uncertain, and the cut may have been a foundation cut backfilled with stone or

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site lies on the east side of Netheravon Road, Figheldean (NGR SU15354563). The underlying geology is Seaford Chalk Formation and it is situated at approximately 89m aOD.

1.2 Planning Background

Scheduled monument consent (S00226926) had been granted for re-routing of phone cable away from its existing route by Openreach across part of Knighton Farm Settlement and Moat, Wiltshire (Scheduled Monument No: SM 10134, HA 1010021). Conditions were attached to the consent. These included:

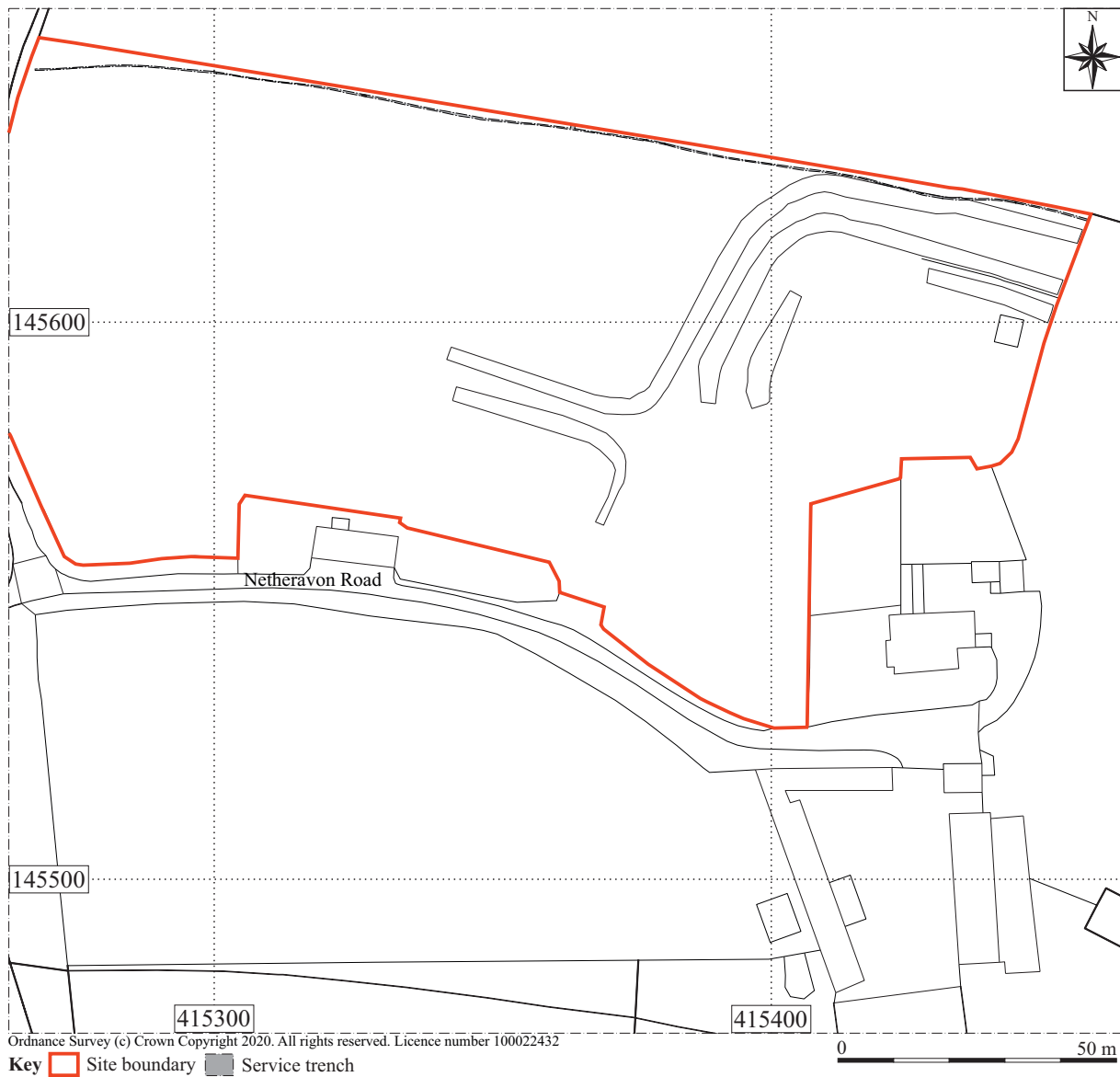
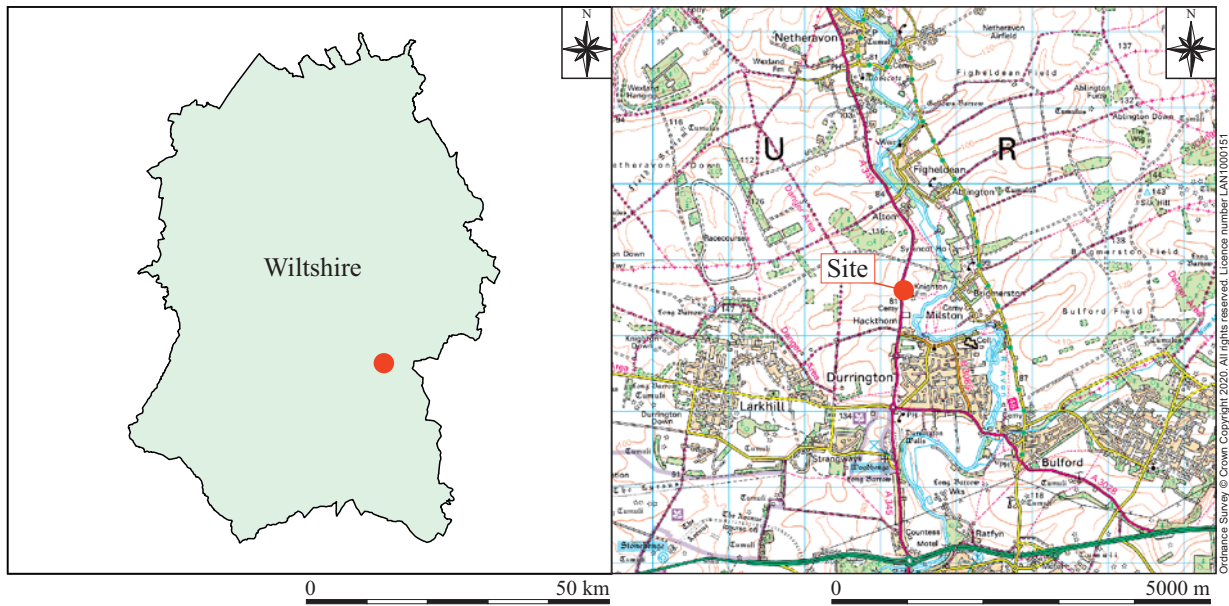
(f) No ground works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work during the development ('watching-brief') in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by Historic England.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The Historic England Entry includes the following:

The Knighton farm was first noted in the Domesday Book and as such is amongst the earliest moated sites to be recorded historically. With its standing earthworks and dry moat it is also an outstandingly well preserved and extensive example of its class.

A deserted medieval settlement and associated adjacent moat. The surviving areas are in good condition. 1 - An area of settlement formerly called "Knyghteton" meaning farm of the knights or serving men. The settlement remains consist of a series of levelled platforms on both sides of the trackway leading to the farm. (SU15454550) 2 - The surviving area of a moat now c.1.25m deep, to the north and west of the associated Knighton Farm settlement.



Key Site boundary Service trench
 Archaeological features

Figure 1: Site location

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To make a record of any archaeological remains that are encountered during the ground works.
- To aid the understanding of the scheduled monument.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Historic England. In order that the investigation supplied information of the required quality, the Standards and Guidance issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) was adhered to.

3.2 Methodology

An archaeological project officer was present on site during all excavation for the ground works. Archaeological deposits and features were recorded in plan before being excavated and recorded at an appropriate level. The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to moated site and medieval settlement.

4 RESULTS (Figures 2 and 3)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

Excavation of the service trench started in the east of the site on the north edge of the scheduled monument and worked its way up the hill towards the west. The trench was between 0.25m and 0.35m wide and 0.65m to 0.7m deep.

The lowest deposit encountered was a natural light yellowish brown chalky deposit and flint gravel (103) (Fig. 3, Sections 101 and 102). The deposit showed as a whiter chalk deposit in places and denser patches of flint cobbles were also observed. Upslope to the west the deposit became a more uniformly white chalk deposit with concentrations of flint boulders in places (108) (Fig. 3, Sections 104, 105, 106, 107 and 108).

Further towards the west beyond the moat was a deposit with a compact inclusion of flint boulders (109) deposited within a cut in the natural geology (Fig. 3 Section 104). The deposit consisted of mostly flint boulders within a mid-brown chalky silt loam. The cut 110 was poorly defined and was 0.4m deep and 0.65m to 1m wide. Though the deposit was compact it was not cemented. It is possible that the deposit may have

been a dug foundation for a wall or structure but the limitations of the narrowness of the trench made this difficult ascertain and it could be a dump of stone within a dug pit, none of the stone was worked.

Deposited above the natural in the east of the site was 0.3m thick mid to dark yellowish brown sandy loam (101) (Fig. 3, Section 100). It was similar in appearance to the topsoil and was identified as a possible late fill of the moat. However, it was overlain by a 0.1m thick deposit of white chalk and flint (102) which was identified as a possible deposit relating to the moat bank. It is possible that the redeposited natural chalk was deposited from the lowest excavations of the moat and overlay the buried soil of the upper ditch bank (101). Unfortunately the deposit was only observed for 2m along the trench as the steepness of the slope necessitated that the machine excavation diverged towards the south.

Further to the west as the excavation of the trench cut slightly into the west bank of the moat, a 0.5m thick, mid-yellowish brown sandy loam (106) was identified deposited above the natural geology (Fig. 3, Sections 102 and 103). This deposit was identified as subsoil. Although some of the deposit may have been redeposited from the excavation of the moat, no differentiation in the deposit was discernible. The deposit continued towards the west but became more diffuse and was not observed at one hundred metres from the east end of the service trench.

At the base of the slope to the west a 0.3m thick, mid to dark orange brown silty clay loam deposit was identified (107) (Fig. 3 Section 106). The deposit contained frequent stone inclusions and was identified as a colluvium deposit. The relationship between this deposit and deposit (106) was not clear. It continued towards the west becoming more diffuse with the overlying topsoil and was not observed in Section 105 or beyond.

The highest deposit observed in the east of the site was a 0.3m thick deposit of mid to dark brown silt loam topsoil (100) (Fig. 3 Section 100 and 101). Further towards the west bank of the moat, the topsoil deposit became a lighter mid-brown in colour (105) (Fig. 3, Sections 102 to 108). It became even lighter in colour where it overlay whiter chalk deposits upslope to the west. The deposit was 0.18m to 0.8m thick becoming thicker towards the top of the slope. A discernibly darker deposit of topsoil was observed above (105) which was between 0.06m and 0.12m thick (104) (Fig. 3 Sections 102 to 108). The deposit was not discernible in the far east of the excavations (Fig. 3 Sections 100 and 101).

5 FINDS

No finds were recovered from the excavations

6 DISCUSSION

The excavations were narrow and only slightly cut into the edge of the moat bank for a short distance of the excavations. A short stretch of the excavations did identify a thin deposit of chalk and stone above a buried soil horizon in the area of the moat bank but whilst it is possible that this was up caste material from the lowest

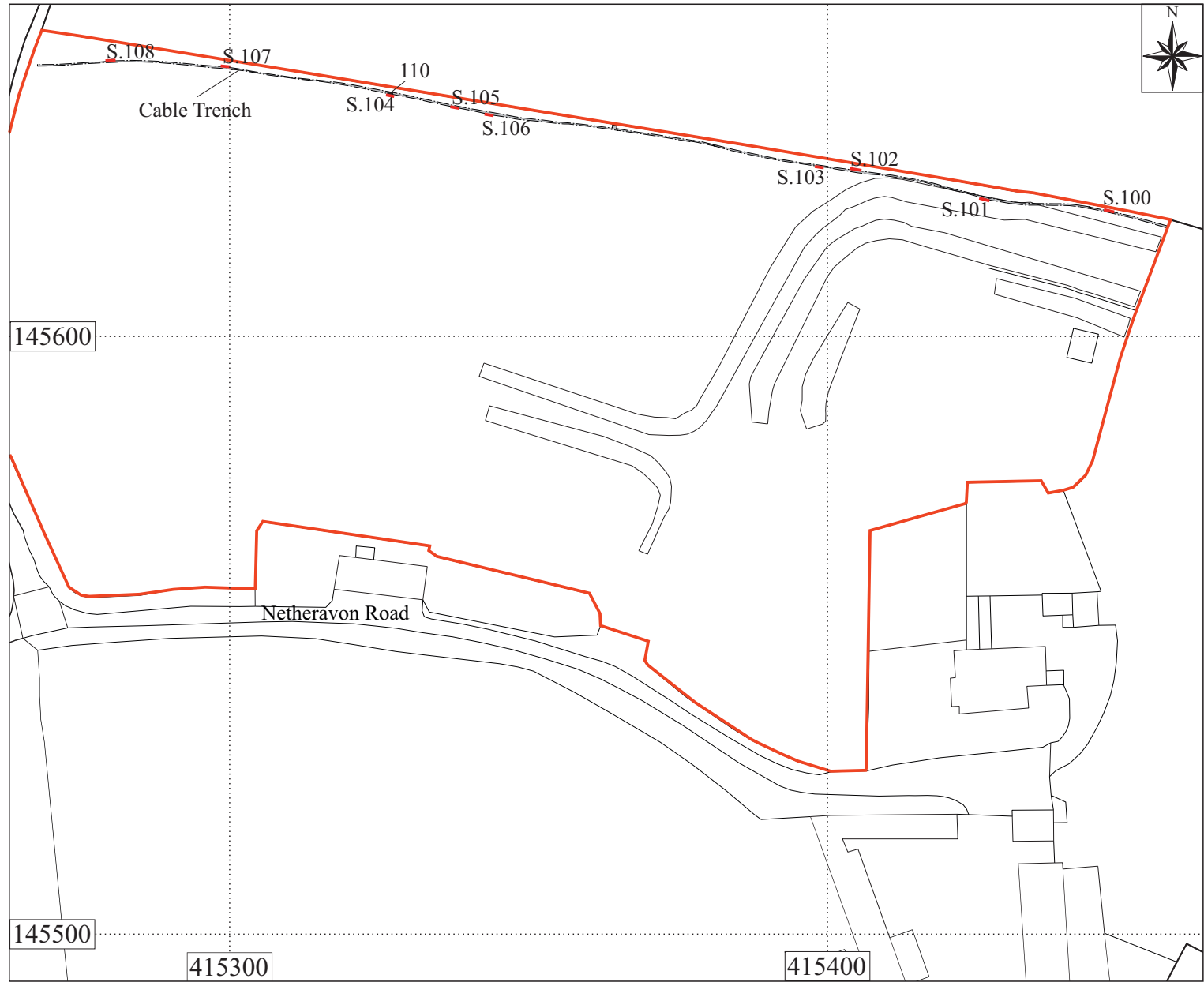


Figure 2: Site Plan

Key	Site boundary	Service trench	Section
	Archaeological features		

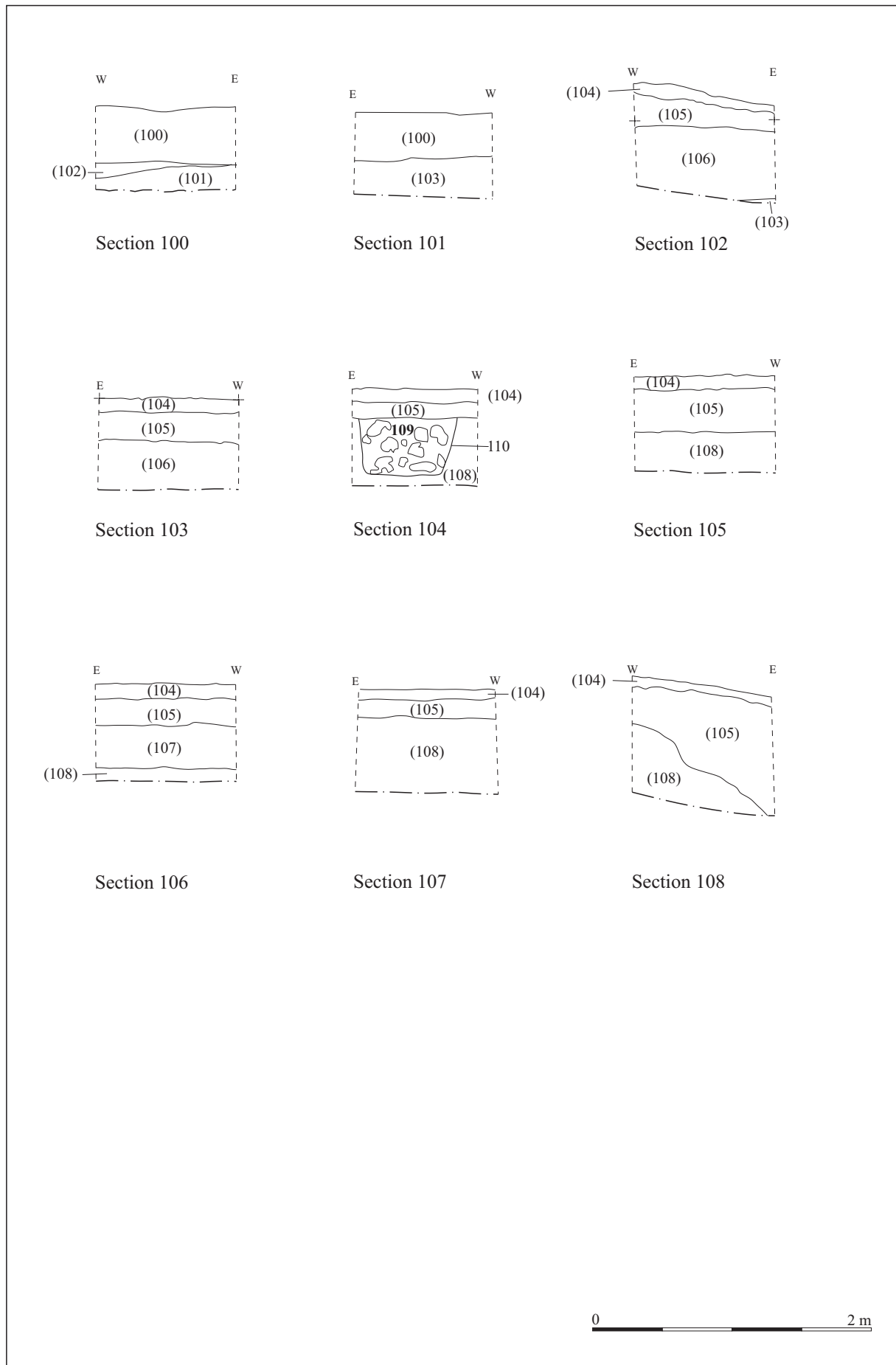


Figure 3: Sections

excavations of the moat ditch, the short distance that this was observed in the service trench section makes and the angle with which the deposit was had been cut by the excavations makes any such interpretation tenuous. The excavations diverged for a short stretch of the excavation in the east into the area of the moat. However, the depths of the excavation was shallow and nothing that could be identified as an early deposit within the moat was encountered. The excavations cut into the ditch bank further west where the moat turned towards the south. Here was observed subsoil deposits that were not observed further east within the service trench. There may have been some redepositing of this material during the construction of the moat but there was no differentiation in the deposit that could positively ascertain this interpretation. In short the excavations were too oblique, too narrow and shallow, and too far to the edge of the moat ditch to provide any useful information regarding the construction of the moat or information of the deposits of the moat.

Further towards the west beyond the moat was a deposit with a compact inclusion of flint boulders deposited within a cut in the natural geology. The deposit was compact though not cemented and none of the stone was worked. It is possible that the deposit a dug foundation backfilled with stone, perhaps for a wall or structure. However it is equally likely that the deposit was a pit filled with stone, the narrowness of the excavations made any interpretations uncertain.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief
Written scheme of investigation
The project report
The primary site record

Physical record

None

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Wiltshire Museum with Accession number DZSWS: 22-2020.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

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OASIS ID: johnmoor1-408447

Project details

Project name	Knighton Farm, Netheravon Road, Figcheldean
Short description of the project	John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a cable trench at the site of a scheduled medieval moat and settlement at Knighton Farm, Figcheldean, Wiltshire. The excavations cut across the edge of the moat at a very oblique angle. The trench was also narrow and shallow and so any useful information regarding the construction of the moat or deposition was absent. Further to the west a compact deposit of unworked flint boulders deposited within a cut were identified. The limitations of the narrow excavated area made the interpretation of the feature uncertain, and the cut may have been a foundation cut backfilled with stone or
Project dates	Start: 15-10-2020 End: 19-10-2020
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	FINR20 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	4323 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 5 - Character undetermined
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Monument type	MOAT Early Medieval
Monument type	DESERTED SETTLEMENT Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

Project location

Country England
Site location WILTSHIRE SALISBURY FIGHELDEAN Knighton Farm, Netheravon Road, Figcheldean
Postcode SP4 8AT
Study area 0 Square metres
Site coordinates SU 1535 4563 51.209152979818 -1.7802336733 51 12 32 N 001 46 48 W Point
Lat/Long Datum Unknown
Height OD / Depth Min: 89m Max: 89m

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