



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION WORKS**

**AT**

**LAND AT SHOWELL FARM**

**(Now referred to as SOUTHPOINT),**

**PATTERDOWN ROAD, CHIPPENHAM**

**FOR STAGE 3 TEST PITTING**

**NGR ST 907711 (CENTRED)**

**JUNE 2022**

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out part of the archaeological mitigation works at the Land at Showell Farm, Patterdown Road, Chippenham, Wiltshire (NGR ST 908811 centred). The purpose of these mitigation works were to investigate two areas of suspected flint scatters. The works comprised the hand-excavation of 46 test pits across the two areas for the purpose of recovering lithics. These works were required due to the construction of an employment development, including car parking and associated landscaping. The worked flint found during the excavations has been dated from the later Mesolithic period but the interpretative value of the assemblage is limited. The two areas of suspected flint scatters were not observed in situ and had been affected by ploughing of the field.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The development site is located to the south of Chippenham, immediately east of the main railway line, with the A350 (West Cepen Way) on the south boundary and the B4528 running from that northwards to Chippenham forming the eastern and northern boundaries (NGR ST 907711 centred). The site lies between 54-55m AOD. The underlying geology across the southern half of the site is mapped as Cornbrash, with Kellaway Clay to the north.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Wiltshire Council granted planning permission for the erection of Employment Development comprising 50,000sqm incorporating Class B1(b), Class B1(c), B2 with Ancillary B1(a), B8 & Ancillary B1(a) Uses Including Means of Access, Car Parking, Servicing, Associated Landscaping & Works (N/13/00308/OUT). Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area a condition was attached to the permission requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the course of building operations or construction works on the site.

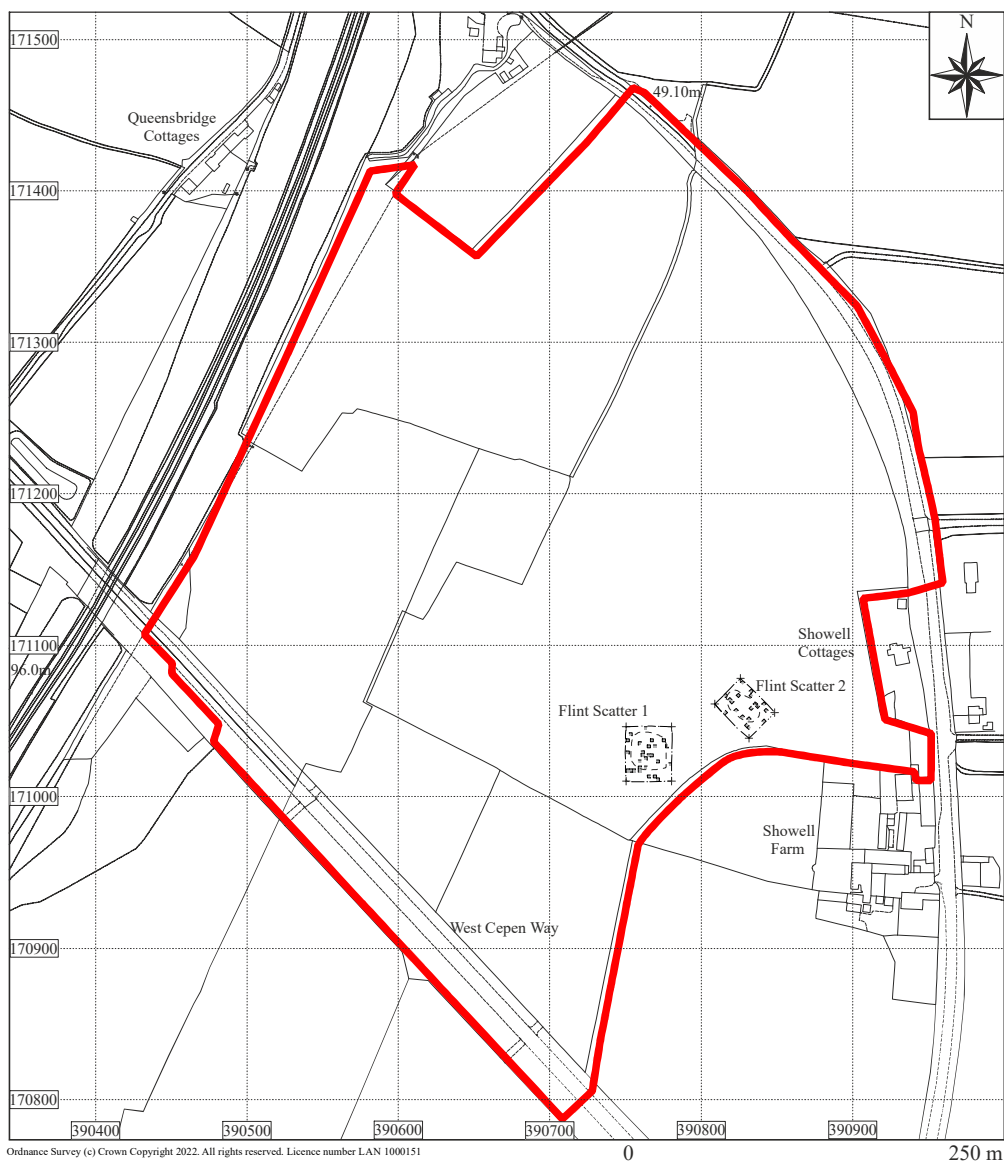
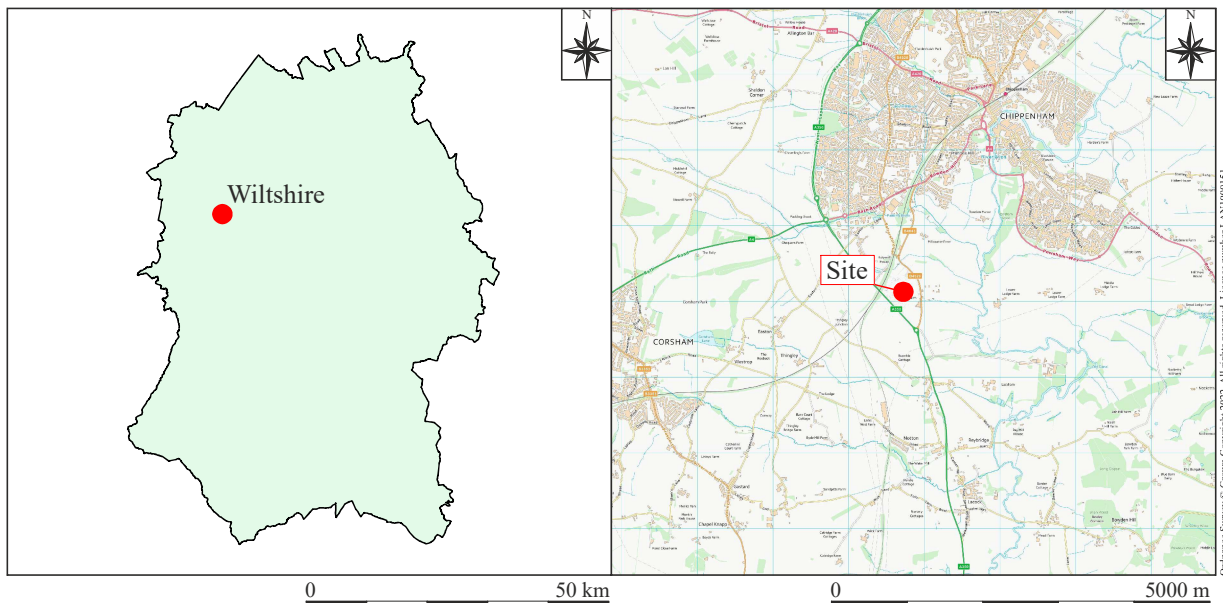
No development shall commence within the site until:

- a) A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and
- b) The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The following summary of the previous work undertaken on the site is taken from Young and Hancock's *Early Bronze Age ring ditches and Romano British agriculture at Showell Farm, Chippenham: Excavations in 1999* which provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of the archaeology encountered (Young and Hancock 2006, p.10-50).



Key  Site boundary  Excavated Areas

Figure 1: Site location

Several phases of archaeological investigation have been undertaken on the site since 1998, the first being an archaeological desk based assessment that accompanied the initial planning application (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.10). This document identified that there was potential for archaeological remains to be located within the site, based on the known archaeology of the wider area. Following this report a 30 trench evaluation was carried out in order to further establish the archaeological potential of the site. The evaluation demonstrated that there were two areas of interest; Area A located in the centre of the site and Area B located in the northwest of the site; four trenches in the northeast of the site, located beyond the current site boundary, were excavated at a later date due to access problems. This became Area C (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.12).

### **Area A**

A grid of 28 test pits, each 25m apart, was excavated over an area measuring 120m in length by 80m in width in order to determine the nature of two flint scatters recorded during the evaluation.

Each test pit was excavated down to the underlying geology, typically a depth of c. 0.25m, and 20% of the excavated material from each test pit was sieved. A total of 37 worked flints were recovered as a result of the sieving, though no archaeological features or deposits were recorded. The majority of the flint dated to the Mesolithic and, given the lack of any associated features, is considered to be evidence of a short term hunting camp (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.12).

### **Area B**

An area of c. 8100 m<sup>2</sup> was subject to excavation. Topsoil and colluvium had resulted in a higher level of preservation in the northwest of the trench, where 0.5m of overburden was present above the archaeology; this dropped to 0.25m towards the southeast where the site lay on a slight rise. Prior evaluation had established that archaeological features only survived where they had been cut into the natural geology.

Activity dating to two periods was recorded; these were the Early Bronze Age (2460 – 2030 BC) and the Early Roman (mid-1<sup>st</sup> century to late 2<sup>nd</sup>/early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD) (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.12).

#### *Phase 1: Early Bronze Age (2460 BC – 2030 BC)*

Two ring ditches, labelled 1 and 2, were recorded. Of these ring ditch 1 was the best preserved; this was sub-circular, with an internal diameter of c. 10.5m and a northeast-facing entrance 1.3m in width. The ditches were U-shaped and measured c. 0.4m in width by 0.1m in depth. Early Bronze Age Beaker pottery, a Neolithic leaf shaped arrowhead and a human heel bone were recovered from the primary fill of the ditch while two separate radiocarbon dates were obtained, giving dates of 2460-2140 cal BC and 2300-2030 cal BC. The second ring ditch, ring ditch 2, was undated, though had been truncated by later features. This had an internal diameter of c. 7m; the ditches, c.0.3m in width and 0.2 to 0.04m in depth, had a steeper profile than those of ring ditch 1 and showed evidence of at least 1 recut (Young and Hancocks 2006, pp 12-14).

Initially interpreted as roundhouses, these features have subsequently been interpreted as ritual or funerary monuments due to the assemblage recovered from the fill of ring ditch 1; the location of the monuments and lack of domestic activity perhaps lends support to this (CAT 1999, Young and Hancocks 2006, p.45).

### *Phase 2: Early Roman*

There was significantly more evidence for Early Roman activity within the excavated area. This activity was sub-divided into five phases on the basis of stratigraphic relationships, fill characteristics, form and artefactual analysis (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.15). Artefactual evidence, supported by radiocarbon dating, indicates activity commenced in c. 50 to 100 AD, continuing until the site was abandoned in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The ceramic assemblage was relatively low status, while the concentration of ceramic building material across the area of excavation perhaps indicates that the focus of the settlement was located beyond the site boundary to the northwest; the excavated remains therefore appear to represent the organised agricultural landscape associated with such a settlement. Evidence of both stock management and cereal processing was recorded, demonstrating a mixed economy (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.46).

#### *Phase 2a c. AD 50-140/150*

This phase comprised a series of shallow gullies on a northwest – southeast alignment. These were up to 1m in width and had shallow U-shaped profiles; their function is unclear, however the semi-regular layout perhaps indicates that they were boundary markers separating small agricultural plots. Several of these gullies extended out of the area of excavation to the north, east and west. Associated features included small, less regular gullies, pits and a crouched inhumation. An AMS date from the burial provided a Late Iron Age/Early Roman date of 170 cal BC to 60 cal AD (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.15).

#### *Phase 2b c. AD 50-140/150*

An alignment of three linear gullies truncated several gullies of phase 2a; these linear gullies had a slightly different alignment and form to those of the earlier phase. The interpretation of this phase is uncertain however it is evident from the alignment of the features that this was not part of the earlier field system (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.15-17).

#### *Phase 2c c. AD 140/150-200/210*

A ditch was seen to truncate three gullies belonging to phase 2a and the later gullies of phase 2b; this ditch had a maximum width of 2.3m and was aligned northeast-southwest, extending beyond the area of excavation to the northeast. Associated with the ditch were a series of pits and postholes that extended to the northwest from its northern side. Charred plant remains recovered from one of these contained a high concentration of chaff and weed seeds relative to the number of cereal grains, indicating the presence of cereal processing waste. The layout of these features was thought to indicate activity occurring within an enclosure, the southern boundary of which was demarcated by the ditch (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.17-20).

### *Phase 2d*

This phase is represented by the creation of a field system and trackway defined by ditches more substantial and regular in form than those encountered previously. This phase could not be separated from phase 2c on the basis of artefactual evidence, however there is a clear stratigraphic definition. Spatially the most notable aspect of this phase was a ditched trackway that ran on an east-west alignment across the area of excavation; this trackway was defined by two ditches c. 8m apart that were up to 2.5m wide and 0.8m in depth. Ditches extended perpendicular to the trackway from both its north and south side and further ditches ran perpendicular to these, parallel to the trackway. As such the land on either side of the trackway had been divided into a series of rectilinear enclosures. The ditches of the trackway and field system extended beyond the limit of the excavation on all sides. Within these enclosures several discrete features were identified, including gullies, shallow pits, a well and a drying oven. An inhumation and two cremations were also found, however these were undated and thus may have belonged to an earlier phase (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.17-20).

### *Phase 2e*

The last phase of activity dating to the Roman period was the addition of a second trackway, again assigned a different phase based on stratigraphic evidence; this was located on the western side of the excavated area and extended north from the earlier trackway. The trackway was formed through the use of an existing ditch and the construction of a new ditch to the west. The trackway extended beyond the area of excavation to the north. A waterhole was dug to the west of the new trackway ditch, which may have replaced the former well (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.21).

The artefactual evidence recovered from the features of phases 2c, d and e demonstrates that occupation is likely to have ended during the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD but prior to c. AD 240 due to the lack of common Late Roman wares such as Oxfordshire colour-coated wares, while two brooches recovered are likely to date to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.21).

### **Area C**

This area is located to the northwest of the current site boundary. Four evaluation trenches were opened, of which two contained archaeological features. The interpretation and phasing of these was limited by the restricted area of excavation, however it is evident that the activity seen in Area B extends north into this area. Several gullies were recorded in trench 1 that were similar in form to those associated with phase 2a of the Area B, perhaps suggesting that the system of boundaries associated with this phase extended north. A north-south gully recorded in the trench may belong to the field system of phase 2d. In trench 2 a ditch, ditch terminus and an alignment of postholes were recorded; artefactual evidence recovered from this ditch dates to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> or early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.21).

### **Archaeological Background: Wider Landscape**

A search of the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record was made with a radius of 500m from the site's boundary in order to place the archaeology previously encountered within the site in the context of the wider landscape. The results are listed in chronological order.



**Neolithic**

Sherds of pottery and worked flint dating to the Late Neolithic were found in a curved ditch during an evaluation at Showell Nurseries in 1991, 600m east of the sites western boundary.

**Bronze Age**

Bronze Age roundhouses, sherds of pottery, including Beaker pottery, and worked flint were recorded during the same evaluation at Showell Nurseries.

**Iron Age**

A ditch and pit containing Iron Age pottery were also recorded during archaeological evaluation at Showell Nurseries.

Approximately 230m northwest of the site a shallow pit containing Iron Age pottery was recorded during an evaluation in 2017.

**Prehistoric**

A series of eight possible ring ditches have been identified within the site from an RAF aerial photograph dating to 1949. These are clustered towards the northern end of the site near excavation Area B. Evaluation trenches excavated in this area did not record any evidence of these; in particular trench 12 which was excavated in the proposed location of three of these features. However, two ring ditches were recorded during excavation in Area B, as discussed above.

A 2017 geophysical survey and subsequent evaluation to the west of Showell Nurseries recorded a ring ditch of probable prehistoric date. Worked flint was recovered from the fill of the ditch, though a specific date could not be established. This was located adjacent to a larger undated ring ditch while the fragment of another ring ditch was located approximately 30m north.

Flint fragments were found on the western boundary of the site during archaeological evaluation of the route of the A350; two serrated flint blades were also found approximately 250m southeast of the site.

**Roman (Romano-British)**

Evidence of Romano-British occupation was recorded during an evaluation at Showell Nurseries. Features recorded included ditches, gullies and pits dating to the late 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD. In this area the cropmarks of an extensive rectilinear field system has been identified through aerial photography; the remains encountered are therefore likely to be part of this system. At least two phases are evident based on their differing alignment and fragments of further ditches, likely to be part of the same system, are seen to the north-west of the nursery. To the north of the field system are the cropmarks of a probable settlement. These features appear morphologically similar to those recorded within the site and share a similar alignment to the field system of phase 2d.

Six sherds of Romano-British pottery were found approximately 250m south of the site.

**Medieval**

Extensive areas of ridge and furrow are visible as slight earthworks on LIDAR and aerial photographs within the site itself and to the north, to the east and west of the site.

A medieval gully was recorded through the 1991 evaluation at Showell Nurseries.

**Post-medieval**

A former post-medieval field boundary is visible as an earthwork on LIDAR immediately south of the site.

Showell Farm, located immediately southeast of the site boundary, is a partially extant 17<sup>th</sup> century farmstead; the farm buildings are laid out in a regular courtyard plan. Listed buildings associated with the farmstead include Showell Farmhouse, a barn and a granary.

**Undated**

Numerous undated pits, ditches and gullies were recorded during archaeological evaluation undertaken across several fields to the north of the railway line, between 100 to 600m from the site. Some of the ditches identified appeared to be on the same alignment as the extant field boundaries, suggesting a post-medieval date.

An undated ditch, gullies and postholes were recorded during a 2017 evaluation at Showell Nurseries, approximately 120m east of the site. These were found in association with three probable prehistoric ring ditches and so may be contemporary with these or the later Romano-British field system known to be present in the area.

Geophysical survey undertaken to the east of Showell Nurseries recorded a series of anomalies likely to represent ditches; due to their location these are most probably part of the Romano-British field system recorded to the west.

A series of undated linear and curvilinear features are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs approximately 330m southwest of the site and a possible rectangular enclosure is visible as a cropmark in fields 450m west.

A geophysical survey of the site has been undertaken. A detailed magnetometer survey was conducted over approximately 18 ha of land at Showell Farm, Chippenham. A partial rectilinear enclosure with internal pit-like responses was detected in the west of the site, along with other ditches and linear trends that correspond in location with features identified through previous archaeological investigation. Linear trends across the site could represent a wider field system, though their exact origin remains unclear. Old field boundaries, ridge and furrow plus areas of modern disturbance and natural variation were also present in the data.

Two flint scatters were found during the earlier evaluation work. A grid of 28 test pits, each 25m apart, was excavated over an area measuring 120m in length by 80m in width in order to determine the nature of two flint scatters recorded during the evaluation. Each test pit was excavated down to the underlying geology, typically a depth of c. 0.25m, and 20% of the excavated material from each test pit was sieved. A total of 37 worked flints were recovered as a result of the sieving, though no archaeological features or deposits were recorded. The majority of the flint dated to

the Mesolithic and, given the lack of any associated features, is considered to be evidence of a short term hunting camp (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.12).

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Detailed Method Statement were as follows:

- To carry out hand dug test pitting of the two flint scatters in order to characterise, date and establish the type of activity. A further aim will be to compare and contrast the two areas. This comparison would include the density and type of lithics in each area.
- Are the lithics present in the two areas just waste flakes or rejected (substandard) tools which would indicate knapping sites? This is unlikely given the lack of flint sources in the immediate areas. Alternatively are the lithics tools which could indicate the type of activities carried out in these areas. The earlier work suggested a short-term hunting camp.
- To attempt to establish if each area was used for a one-off seasonal activity or much longer duration.
- To enable detailed analysis of the lithics where possible to include refit analysis and micro-wear analysis of tools.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Detailed Method Statement agreed with Wiltshire Council's County Archaeologist.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020).

### **3.2 Methodology**

Two areas of potential flint scatters were identified during evaluation trenching that took place in 1999 (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.10-50). These areas will be subsequently identified as Square 1 and Square 2. Both areas were situated in the south-eastern extent of the site. Square 1 was the south-western-most area which measured 36m by 30m. It was orientated north to south. The existing grass and roots was initially removed via careful machine stripping to expose the ploughsoil deposit below. A total of 27, 2m by 2m test pits were chosen at random throughout the Square 1 area and were excavated down to the natural geology. The total thickness of the ploughsoil deposit was up to 0.35m and the natural geology layer was observed to exceed 0.05m in depth.

Square 2 was situated 32m to the north-east of Square 1. Square 2 measured 24m by 32m and was orientated north-west by south-east. It was treated through the same methods as Square 1, whereby the grass and root horizon was carefully removed to

expose the underlying ploughsoil. A total of 19, 2m by 2m test pits were excavated into the ploughsoil, down to the natural geology. Within Square 2, the maximum depth of the ploughsoil was 0.40m and the geology layer exceeded 0.05m also.

A total of 20% of each test pit was sieved using a 5mm sieve in order to recover lithics. The remaining 80%, although not sieved, was carefully excavated by hand, and hand sorted, to retrieve additional lithics.

Where archaeological horizons were encountered they were cleaned by hand and excavated appropriately. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced. The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods.

## **4 RESULTS**

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.

### **4.1 Square 1**

Square 1 which targeted potential flint scatter 1 was located in the south-east of the site area and measured 36m by 30m. A total of 27, 2m by 2m test pits were excavated into the ploughsoil deposit. The earliest recorded deposit was a compact, mid yellowish-brown sandy-silt limestone (03) (Figure 2; Plates 1 and 2) It contained inclusions of widespread small to large-sized limestone pieces. Deposit (03) was observed throughout the full extent of the Square 1 area as well as each of the 27 test pits. The thickness of deposit (03) exceeded 0.05m. The deposit was identified as being the Cornbrash geology layer.

Overlying deposit (03) was a friable, dark-brown silty-clay (02) (Figure 2; Plates 1 and 2). It contained inclusions of frequent small to large-sized limestone pieces as well as frequent gravels. Deposit (02) was observed throughout the full extent of the Square 1 excavation area and it had a maximum thickness of 0.35m. Deposit (02) was the layer of ploughsoil which was targeted for test-pitting and lithic retrieval. The 27 test pits excavated within Square 1 were chosen at random, and were numbered: 07, 32, 61, 69, 73, 80, 98, 100, 104, 121, 126, 141, 143, 144, 157, 170, 176, 195, 200, 202, 211, 212, 213, 215, 248, 250 and 266. The test pit excavations within Square 1 uncovered 45 pieces of worked flint. Other finds from Deposit (02) included a piece of modern earthenware pipe, a piece of a post-medieval brick fragment, post-medieval pottery, animal bone and modern glass fragments.

The latest recorded deposit within the Square 1 excavation area was a loose to friable, mid to dark-brown clayey-silt (01) (Figure 2). It contained frequent rooting. It was observed throughout the full extent of the Square 1 area and had a thickness that varied between 0.15m and 0.22m. Deposit (01) was the existing topsoil layer, which was removed via machine stripping to uncover the ploughsoil deposit (02) below.

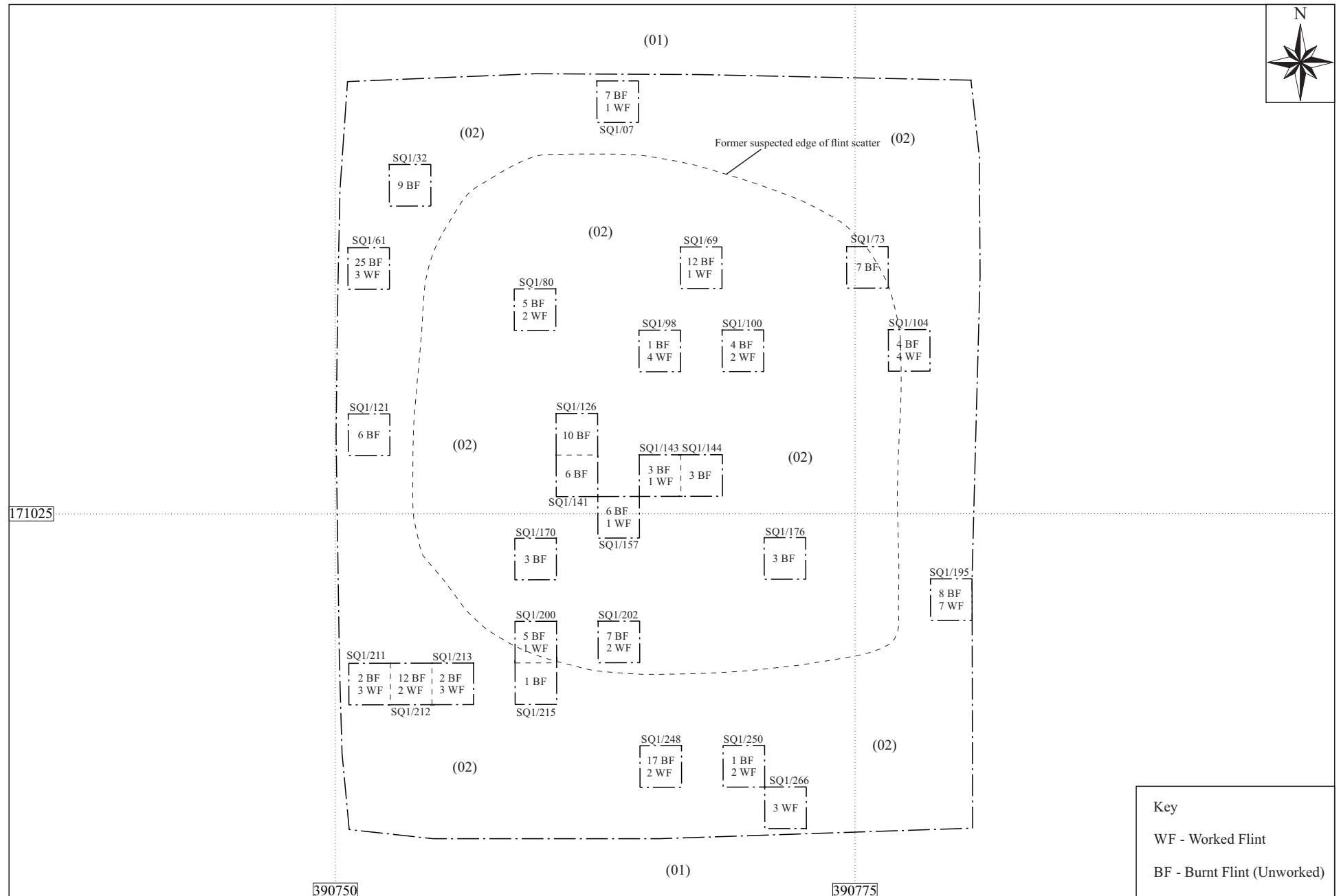


Figure 2: Plan of excavated Test Pits within Square 1



Plate 1: Square 1, Test Pit 104. Looking north.



Plate 2: Square 1, Test Pit 144. Looking north.

#### 4.2 Square 2

Square 2 targeted potential flint scatter 2 in the south-east corner of the site and was located 32m to the north-east of Square 1. Square 2 measured 24m by 32m. A total of 19, 2m by 2m test pits were excavated into the ploughsoil deposit. The earliest recorded deposit was a firm, mid to light brownish-yellow silty-clay which was less than 10% silt (05) (Figure 3; Plates 3 and 4). It was observed throughout the full extent of the Square 2 excavation area and was subsequently observed within each test pit excavation. It had a thickness exceeding 0.05m. Deposit (05) was identified as

being a natural clay geology, noticeable different to the Cornbrash limestone geology (03) within Square 1 to the south-west.



Plate 3: Square 2, Test Pit 118. Looking north-west.

Overlying deposit (05) was a deposit of friable, mid orangey-brown silty-clay (04) (Figure 3; Plates 3 and 4). It contained infrequent small to medium sized limestone pieces. Deposit (04) had a maximum thickness of 0.40m and was observed throughout the Square 2 area. This deposit was identified as being the ploughsoil layer, similar to deposit (02) within Square 1. However, deposit (04) contained fewer limestone pieces than deposit (02) and so was identified as being a different deposit. The 19 test pits excavated within Square 2 were chosen at random, just as in Square 1, and were numbered: 5, 24, 29, 41, 44, 49, 72, 76, 83, 112, 116, 118, 130, 137, 144, 147, 159, 167 and 188. The suspected edge of the possible flint scatter appeared to go through test pits 5, 118 and 130. The test pit excavations within Square 2 uncovered a total of 24 pieces of worked flint. Other finds from deposit (04) include post-medieval pottery, animal bone, modern glass and modern metalwork.

The latest recorded deposit within Square 2 was a loose to friable, mid to dark-brown clayey-silt (01) (Figure 3). It contained frequent rooting. Deposit (01) was observed throughout the full extent of Square 2 as well as Square 1 to the south-west and measured between 0.15m and 0.22m in thickness. Deposit (01) was the existing topsoil layer.

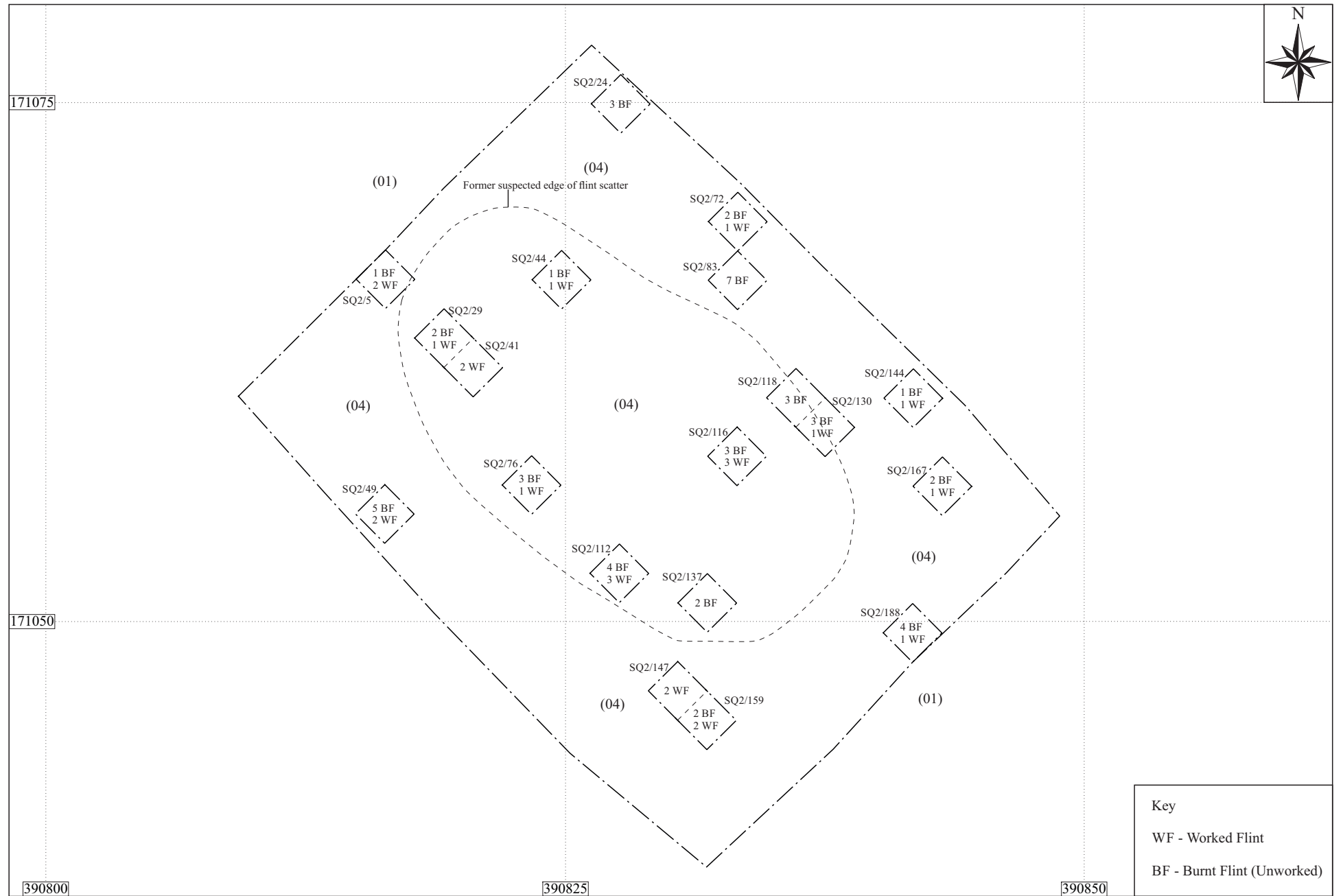


Figure 3: Plan of excavated Test Pits within Square 2

Plan 0 10 m





Plate 4: Square 2, Test Pit 130. Looking south-east (SE of TP 118).

### 4.3 Reliability of Results

The reliability of the results is considered to be good. The excavation took place over a consecutive two-week period, with sunny to overcast weather throughout. This provided a good horizon for the ploughsoil and natural deposits. Furthermore, the dry weather was optimal for the onsite sieving of the spoil material.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Flint by Rebecca Devaney

#### Introduction and quantification

A total of 69 pieces of worked flint (weighing 112g) and 225 pieces of burnt unworked flint (weighing 447g) were recovered from 46 test pits within two squares at Land at Showell Farm (*Table 1*). The only chronologically diagnostic piece is a probable later Mesolithic microlith however technological characteristics seen within the debitage supports this date. The worked flint was recovered from 18 test pits within Square 1 (44 pieces with an average of 2.4 flints per test pit) and 15 test pits within Square 2 (24 pieces with an average of 1.6 flints per test pit); one additional item was unstratified. The quantity and distribution of flint indicates a low-density spread across the excavated area.

*Table 1. Summary of flint by category and square*

Flint category	Square 1 Total	Square 2 Total	Total weight (g)
Flake	21	17	91
Blade	2	1	5

Bladelet	10	1	1
Blade-like flake	5	1	11
Irregular waste	-	1	1
Chip	4	2	0
Microlith	1	-	0
Retouched blade	1	-	2
Notched blade	-	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>112</b>
<i>Burnt unworked flint</i>	177	48	447

### Methodology

The worked flint was catalogued according to a standard debitage, core or tool type (as published by Butler 2005). Information about burning, breaks, condition, raw material and technology (as published by Inizan 1999) was recorded and, where possible, dating was attempted. In addition, burnt unworked flint was quantified by count and weight. Flint recovered from sieved samples was recorded in the same way.

### Assessment of assemblage

The debitage includes both flakes and blades (including bladelets and blade-like flakes). Around one third of the blades exhibit dorsal blade scars indicative of planned blade production, which suggests a Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic date for the assemblage. The bladelet from TP 250 in Square 1 has a distal break and a potential deliberate notch on the proximal right side, reminiscent of microlith production. The relatively high proportion of bladelets also supports a Mesolithic date and a potential focus on microlith production.

The microlith, from TP 195 in Square 1, is similar to Jacobi's type 5, a probable later Mesolithic type (Jacobi 1978). It has direct retouch on the left edge, a point at the distal end and a proximal break. The remaining portion measures 19mm long and 5mm wide. The retouched blade, from TP 212 in Square 1, is a blade-like blank with dorsal blade scars and a distal break. It has minimal bifacial edge retouch which creates a point at the proximal end. It may have been destined to perform a projectile or piercing function but was discarded before completion. The notched blade, from TP 29 in Square 2, has a proximal break and a potential deliberate notch on the left edge. Its function is unclear. The retouched tools are typologically and technologically consistent with the debitage and supports the suggested Mesolithic date for the assemblage.

The burnt unworked flint was recovered in varying quantities (up to 25 pieces in TP 61) from 42 test pits (26 in Square 1 and 17 in Square 2). The burnt material is all relatively small, with an average weight of just 1.98g per piece. Burnt unworked flint could have been created by accidental burning at any point in the past but can also be associated with cremations, hearths and kilns, and larger pieces may have been used as pot boilers or hot stones (Shepherd 1972, 173-174 & 177-178).

The condition of the worked flint is relatively good, with around two thirds of the assemblage (40 pieces, 63% excluding chips) remaining in a fresh condition with the rest suffering slight to moderate post-depositional damage, such as chips to vulnerable

unretouched edges. Surface alteration in the form of cortication is present on around three quarters of the assemblage (47 pieces, 75% excluding chips) and forms a heavy white cortication in around half of the instances, indicating exposure to weathering processes. 33 pieces (52% excluding chips) are broken, and just three pieces (5%) are burnt.

## Discussion

The worked flint from Land at Showell Farm dates from the later Mesolithic. This is based on both typological and technological evidence including the chronologically diagnostic microlith and evidence for planned blade production, with a focus on bladelets. The worked flint forms a low density spread across the excavated area suggesting a background scatter of human activity in these areas. The small size of the flint assemblages limits the interpretative value of the material but its significance lies in its demonstration of human activity in the area during the Mesolithic.

## 5.2 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The post-Roman pottery assemblage comprised 13 sherds with a total weight of 82g. It was all post-medieval, and all occurred in the plough-soil and is thus effectively unstratified. The following fabric types were noted:

**EST: English Stoneware**, 1680-1750 (Mountford 1971). 1 sherd, 5g.

**MOD: Miscellaneous 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century wares**. 7 sherds, 52g.

**PMR: Glazed Red Earthenware**, mid 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century (Brears 1969). 2 sherds, 10g.

**STSL: Staffordshire/Bristol-type Slipware**, mid 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century (Barker 2021). 1 sherd, 1g.

**VER: Verwood Ware**, mid 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century (Draper 2002). 2 sherds, 14g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 2. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region.

A small, undateable fragment of a clay tobacco pipe bowl occurred in Square 2 TP 83

Table 2: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type.

Sq	TP	PMR		VER		STSL		EST		MOD	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
1	69					1	1				
1	141									1	1
1	144									1	4
1	157	1	5								
1	213	1	5								
2	24			1	8					2	2
2	72									2	44
2	83			1	6						
2	116							1	5		
2	159									1	1
	Total	2	10	2	14	1	1	1	5	7	52

### 5.3 Ceramic Building Material *by Simona Denis*

Two fragments of Ceramic Building Material were recovered during the excavations at Showell Farm.

The item collected from Test Pit 144 (Square 1) was a fragment of salt-glazed earthenware pipe weighing 83.96g; this impervious type of pipe was introduced in 1846, and its use rapidly spread across Britain during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (McComish 2015).

A fragment of brick weighing 380g was found in Test Pit 116 (Square 1). The object preserved its complete thickness, measuring 70mm, and was made of a dark red, gritty fabric with occasional small to medium-sized inclusions. The brick fragment was tentatively dated to the Post-Medieval period.

It is not recommended to retain the ceramic building material due to their very limited potential for further analysis.

### 5.4 Animal Bone *by Simona Denis*

A very small amount of animal bone was retrieved from two of the Test Pits. The three items, only one of which was completely preserved, weighed 1.19g in total; they all originated from very small mammals, possibly rodents.

Test Pit 141 (Square 1) contained a complete rodent femur, weighing 0.42g, and a fragment of scapula, weighing 0.28g, while a possible partial radius, weighing 0.49g, was collected from Test Pit 147 (Square 2).

### 5.5 Other Finds *by Simona Denis*

#### *Glass*

A very limited assemblage of 9 glass fragments, of a combined weight of 9.17g, was collected from the Test Pits; these included window and vessel glass. With the exception of the two items found in test pits 83 (Square 2) and 144 (Square 1), all of the material was positively dated to the Modern period.

Test Pit No.	Square No.	Type	Description	No. of Items	Weight (g)	Date
49	2	Window glass	Aqua float glass fragment	1	0.84	Modern
69	1	Vessel	Curved clear glass fragment	1	1.35	
76	2	Window glass	Aqua float glass fragment	1	0.55	
		Vessel	Curved light blue glass fragment	1	0.74	
83	2	Vessel	Deteriorated curved glass fragment	1	3.22	Post-Medieval
98	1	Window glass	Clear float glass fragment	1	0.8	Modern

116	2	?Bottle	Amber glass fragment	1	0.61	
126	1	Window glass	Clear float glass fragment	1	0.76	Modern
144	1	Window glass	Green glass fragment	1	0.3	Post-Medieval
<b>Total</b>				<b>9</b>	<b>9.17</b>	

Table 3: Glass occurrence by Test Pit and type

The glass assemblage is not recommended for retention, due to its fragmentary state and extremely limited potential for further analysis.

### *Metalwork*

Test Pit 76 (Square 2) contained a fragment of modern knife blade, comprising the bolster and heel, weighing 6.57g; a partial 'Made in England' incision was observed on the blade.

One fragmentary, extremely oxidised nail was found in Test Pit 83 (Square 2); it weighed 2.52g and had a rectangular shank and a flat head. The point was not preserved. Nails with rectangular cross-section are generally dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Chervenka 2002).

A single slag was recovered from Test Pit 170 (Square 1); it weighed 9.43g and was tentatively identified as tap slag (Historic England 2018).

The metalwork is not recommended for retention due to its poor state of preservation and limited potential for further analysis.

### *Coke*

Two fragments of coke, weighing 4.42 and 1.25g respectively, were found in Test Pits 213 (Square 1) and 215 (Square 1). Derived from coal, coke is a fuel with high carbon content used in Britain from the Late Medieval period.

The coke fragments are not recommended for retention due to the very limited potential for further analysis.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

The Test Pit excavations within the areas of two suspected flint scatters aimed to characterise, date and establish the type of activity that may have taken place. A total of 46 Test Pits were excavated, 27 within Square 1 and 19 within Square 2, of flint scatter 1 and 2 respectively. The flint assemblage that was recovered was a low-density spread across both of the excavated areas. A total of 45 worked flint pieces were recovered from 19 Test Pits within Square 1 and 24 worked pieces were recovered from 15 Test Pits within Square 2.

The flint assemblage has been dated from the later Mesolithic period and has also been determined to have been a background scatter of human activity. Due to the small size of the flint assemblage, the activity which may have taken place at this site area is unclear, and the interpretative value of the material is limited. It is also unclear

if the site area was active over a long period, or whether it was a short-term activity. The flint assemblage does prove that human activity existed on this site during the Mesolithic period.

The flint scatters were found during an evaluation (CAT 1999). The lithic scatters were located on the ploughsoil surface. No further areas of flints were noted on the top of the ploughsoil at the time of the work or within the evaluation trenches excavated. The test pitting for flint recovery found only ploughsoil above the natural substrate. Grass was present on top of the ploughsoil at the time of the test pitting. This work confirmed that later Mesolithic activity had been in these general locations. Ploughing since 1999 and prior to the field becoming pasture had further spread the scatters based on the results of the test pitting. It is unlikely that further areas of Mesolithic activity are present within the site given the results of the evaluation and the location where the two scatters appear to lie on the boundary between the limestone Brash and the Kellaway clay.

Other post-medial and modern material, including pottery, animal bone, glass, metalwork and ceramic building material were also observed throughout the Test Pit excavations within the two ploughsoil deposits. These finds were intrusive and were not within any archaeological features. No other archaeological features or artefacts were uncovered.

## 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

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

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# Summary for johnmoor1-507735

OASIS ID (UID)	johnmoor1-507735
Project Name	Land at Showell Farm, Chippenham
Sitename	Land at Showell Farm, Chippenham
Activity type	Test Pit
Project Identifier(s)	CHPR20, 4197, N/13/00308/OUT
Planning Id	N/13/00308/OUT
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	John Moore Heritage Services
Project Dates	19-Apr-2022 - 29-Apr-2022
Location	Land at Showell Farm, Chippenham NGR : ST 90693 71200 LL : 51.4397163469648, -2.13529140617214 12 Fig : 390693,171200
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Wiltshire District : Wiltshire Parish : Chippenham
Project Methodology	<p>Two areas of potential flint scatters were identified during evaluation trenching that took place in 1999 (Young and Hancocks 2006, p.10-50). These areas will be subsequently identified as Square 1 and Square 2. Both areas were situated in the south-eastern extent of the site. Square 1 was the south-western-most area which measured 36m by 30m. It was orientated north to south. The topsoil layer was initially removed via careful machine stripping to expose the ploughsoil deposit below. The varying thickness of the topsoil was between 0.15m and 0.22m. A total of 27, 2m by 2m test pits were chosen at random throughout the Square 1 area and were excavated down to the natural geology. The total thickness of the ploughsoil deposit was 0.35m and the natural geology layer was observed to exceed 0.05m in depth.</p> <p>Square 2 was situated 32m to the north-east of Square 1. Square 2 measured 24m by 32m and was orientated north-west by south-east. It was treated through the same methods as Square 1, whereby the topsoil was carefully removed to expose the underlying ploughsoil. Within Square 2 the topsoil deposit varied between 0.15m and 0.20m. A total of 19, 2m by 2m test pits were excavated into the ploughsoil, down to the natural geology. Within Square 2, the maximum depth of the ploughsoil was 0.40m and the geology layer exceeded 0.05m also.</p> <p>A total of 20% of each test pit was sieved using a 5mm sieve in order to recover lithics. The remaining 80%, although not sieved, was carefully excavated by hand, and hand sorted, to retrieve additional lithics.</p> <p>Where archaeological horizons were encountered they were cleaned by hand and excavated appropriately. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced. The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods.</p>



Project Results	<p>The Test Pit excavations within the areas of two suspected flint scatters aimed to characterise, date and establish the type of activity that may have taken place. A total of 46 Test Pits were excavated, 27 within Square 1 and 19 within Square 2, of flint scatter 1 and 2 respectively. The flint assemblage that was recovered was a low-density spread across both of the excavated areas. A total of 45 worked flint pieces were recovered from 19 Test Pits within Square 1 and 24 worked pieces were recovered from 15 Test Pits within Square 2.</p> <p>The flint assemblage has been dated from the later Mesolithic period and has also been determined to have been a background scatter of human activity. The areas of proposed flint scatters were not observed in situ during the excavation of the Test Pits, and were likely affected by further ploughing in the subsequent years following the initial evaluation. Due to the small size of the flint assemblage, the activity which may have taken place at this site area is unclear, and the interpretative value of the material is limited. It is also unclear if the site area was active over a long period, or whether it was a short-term activity. The flint assemblage does prove that human activity existed on this site during the Mesolithic period.</p> <p>Other post-medial and modern material, including pottery, animal bone, glass, metalwork and CBM were also observed throughout the Test Pit excavations within the two ploughsoil deposits. These finds were intrusive and were not within any archaeological features. No other archaeological features or artefacts were uncovered.</p>
Keywords	<p>Worked Object - MESOLITHIC - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Burnt Flint - MESOLITHIC - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Sherd - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Brick - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Drain Pipe - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Animal Remains - UNCERTAIN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Metal Working Debris - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Knife - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Nail - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p>
Funder	
HER	
Person Responsible for work	Christopher, Whitehead
HER Identifiers	
Archives	