WILTSHIRE POLICE HEADQUARTERS,
LONDON ROAD,
DEVIZES,
WILTSHIRE.

NGR: SU 0111 6198

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

October 2023
Report No. 1599

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

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Accession Code: DZSWS:65-2022



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CONTENTS

Summary

Glossary of Archaeological Terms and Abbreviations

1 INTRODUCTION

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

3 AIMS

4 METHODOLOGY

5 RESULTS

6 CONCLUSION

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Finds List

FIGURE LIST

Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Site Plan

Figure 3: [103] Plan, Section and Photographs

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SUMMARY

Between 14th November 2022 to 19th April 2023 Foundations Archaeology undertook archaeological monitoring and recording at Wiltshire Police Headquarters, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 0111 6198). The project was commissioned by Martin Brown of Tetra Tech Ltd on behalf of Wiltshire Police.

The project comprised monitoring during the excavation of groundworks associated with the construction of a modular storage building at Wiltshire Police Headquarters, Devizes.

The monitoring identified a single Post-medieval pit; most likely a truncated rubbish pit, within the footprint of the new build. There was no surviving evidence for the previously identified linear cropmark within the excavated area.

With the exception of a single sherd of 12th to 14th century Medieval pottery, no further archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within the site area.

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GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between AD 1066 and AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms, this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (aOD above Ordnance Datum).

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-medieval

The period between AD 1500 and AD 1900.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43, traditionally sub divided into; *Palaeolithic* – c. 500,000 BC to c. 12,000 BC; *Mesolithic* – c. 12,000 BC to c. 4,500 BC; *Neolithic* – c. 4,500 BC to c. 2,000 BC; *Bronze Age* – c. 2,000 BC to c. 800 BC; *Iron Age* – c. 800 BC to AD 43.

Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report presents the findings of the archaeological monitoring and recording undertaken by Foundations Archaeology between 14th November 2022 to 19th April 2023 at Wiltshire Police Headquarters, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 0111 6198). The project was commissioned by Martin Brown of Tetra Tech Ltd on behalf of Wiltshire Police.

1.2 The works were conducted in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2022), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014) and *Standards for Field Evaluation and Assessment in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995).

1.3 The code of conduct of the CIfA was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Planning Permission (Reference **PL/2022/04413**) was granted the erection of a modular storage building at Wiltshire Police Headquarters, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire In accordance with the principles of NPPF (2019), a condition (Condition 3) for archaeological monitoring and recording was attached to the planning permission.

2.2 The study area is on the northeast edge of Devizes. The site comprises an area of former playing fields and a disused tennis court approximately 2.2ha in size. The site is bounded to the northeast and northwest by residential housing, to the southeast by London Road and to the southwest Quakers Road and the Police Headquarters.

2.3 Within the site area an east-west aligned linear cropmark has been identified on historic aerial photographs for a linear boundary which has been interpreted as part of a Medieval/Post-medieval field system (https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/aerial-archaeology-mapping-explorer/). A GPR survey was undertaken across the area by Warner Surveys Utility Mapping Ltd in September 2022, but it failed to show anything characteristically archaeological in nature.

2.4 An Archaeological and Heritage Desk-Based Assessment was prepared for the northern site area by Tetra Tech Ltd in February 2021. This assessment provides a background for the general site area and the results are summarised below.

2.4.1 The site is known to include archaeological assets, in the form of the linear earthwork of Medieval or later date. In addition, the results of archaeological evaluation on the adjacent development has shown potential, albeit low, for archaeological remains to be present. This includes potential for Prehistoric remains based on evidence from the adjacent Quakers Walk development,

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most likely in the form of Mesolithic artefacts, as well as material relating to the Battle of Roundway Down. Both of which are considered to be of moderate (regional) significance. The most significant, known asset to be affected by the proposed development however is the linear earthwork. The majority of the monument will be retained in-situ but there will be impacts that will afford opportunity for investigation to date and characterise it.

2.4.2 The first depiction of the aforementioned linear earthwork is on the 1886 first edition OS map where it appears to form the southern boundary of the eastern end of Roundway Park. However, the feature does not extend as a feature on the map beyond the western boundary of the site, where it terminates against a north-south aligned field boundary. Also noted on the first edition map is a well in the southeast of the study area. The well is not recorded on the Tithe Map for Roundway, but near to this location, close to the southeastern edge of the site is a building within plot 57, along with two smaller buildings nearby.

2.5 As part of the above works to the north a magnetometer survey was undertaken by Archaeological Surveys Ltd. in July 2021. This survey revealed a number of geophysical anomalies located in the southeastern part of the survey area which could be associated with the formerly mapped building mentioned above and its surrounding environs. Positive linear anomalies in the northern part of the site could be associated with formerly mapped boundary features, but this is not certain. A small number of positive linear and discrete responses have been located in the northern part of the site, but they lack a coherent morphology which prevents confident interpretation as former cut features. Modern magnetic debris and disturbance were also encountered, including a number of buried services. A metal detecting survey was also carried out by Archaeological Surveys Ltd, but no significant artefacts were identified.

2.6 A topographical survey by Wessex Archaeology was also undertaken in July 2021 across the extant earthworks within Parkfield.

2.7 In October 2021, Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation within open land between Quakers Road and Parkside. The evaluation identified the presence of a substantial ditch and bank with Medieval origins, which correlated with the bank previously recorded on the 1st edition OS map. Also present were in-situ chalk walls for a former building; most likely of late Post-medieval date, along with significant late Post-medieval/Modern disturbance in the southeastern side of the site which might be linked to the demolition of the former buildings in this area. On the edge of Trench 8, also in the southeast corner of the site, was a chalk and stone built well which is likewise marked on the 1st edition OS map.

2.8 According to the British Geology Viewer (https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/) the bedrock geology across the site area comprises *Upper Greensand Formation - Sandstone, Glauconitic.* No superficial deposits are recorded.

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2.9 The site therefore contained the potential for archaeological features and deposits, predominately dating from the Medieval and Post-medieval periods. This did not prejudice the works against evidence relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

3.1 The aims of the archaeological monitoring and recording were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits, in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary.

3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i/ to record prior to their destruction archaeological deposits within the monitored areas, and date these where possible;

ii/ to attempt to characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present within the monitored areas;

iii/ to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;

iv/ to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The monitoring comprised a number of phases of work. The first phase was to monitor the excavation of ground investigation pits. The second phase comprised a topsoil strip across the footprint of the new build. The third phase was for the excavation of a trench for services and concrete bases for the ramp. All excavations were subject to archaeological monitoring and are shown in Figure 2. The groundworks were carried out by use a 360° mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All excavations were subject to constant archaeological observation.

4.2 All archaeological excavation and recording was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

4.2.1 Spoil heaps were scanned visually and by metal detector. Modern detritus was noted, but not retained.

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4.2.2 The location and height above Ordnance Datum of the monitored excavations was recorded by use of a high precision GPS. The related *Shape File* data will form part of the site archive.

5 RESULTS

5.1 *Ground Investigation (GI) pits*

5.1.1 A total of eight pits were excavated across the development area, as shown on Figure 2, with two additional test pits excavated within the footprint of the later service trench. These test pits ranged in size from 0.3m by 0.3m, to 1.1m by 2m and varied in depth from 0.6m to 2m deep. The stratigraphic sequence in all the pits was the same, the natural substrates were a mid brown grey sand with clay patches at a depth of between 0.23m to 0.45m (average 133.73m aOD) below the existing ground surface, with the slightly deeper overburden present to the south of the site area. This was sealed by a mid grey brown silt sand subsoil (102) upto 0.3m thick, which was in turn sealed by a very slightly darker mid grey brown silt sand topsoil (101) up to 0.2m thick.

5.1.2 No finds, features or deposits were present within any of the investigated GI pits.

5.2 *Site strip*

5.2.1 Due to the very thin top and subsoils present within the footprint of the area, following the initial strip, it was clear that the natural deposits were exposed across the majority of the site area, with the exception of the southern edge of the site. Therefore in order to avoid further archaeological monitoring during the excavation of the footings, the southern site area (approximately 3m wide) was reduced a further 0.1m to fully expose the natural substrates.

5.2.2 The stratigraphic sequence was similar to that identified in the GI pits, with slightly deeper subsoil to the south.

5.2.3 A single archaeological feature was present within the stripped area (see Figure 2 and 3). Feature [103] was a roughly sub-oval discrete pit which was sealed by the subsoil and cut the natural substrates, with a maximum length of 0.7m, width of 0.5m and depth of 0.12m. The feature had uneven undulating edges and base and contained a mid grey clay sand fill (104) which yielded a large quantity of Post-medieval pottery, including imported German stoneware, CBM, glass and animal bone.

5.2.4 A single sherd of 12th to 14th century pottery was recovered from the spoil during the site strip. A quantity of Modern material was identified but not retained from both the top and subsoils.

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5.3 *Service trench*

5.3.1 A single trench was excavated approximately 1m southwest of the new modular building (see Figure 2). The trench was roughly orientated northwest-southeast for a length of 35m. The trench was 0.4m wide and approximately 0.3m deep. The natural substrates were not exposed during this phase of works and no archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The archaeological monitoring has identified the presence of a single Post-medieval pit; most likely a truncated rubbish pit, within the footprint of the new build. There was no surviving evidence for the previously identified linear cropmark within the excavated area.

6.2 With the exception of a single sherd of 12th to 14th century Medieval pottery, no further archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within the site area.

6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology but will be deposited in due course with *Wiltshire Museum* under Accession Code DZSWS:65-2022. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Neil Adam of Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service, Martin Brown and Ellie Crew of Tetra Tech Ltd, along with the staff at Wiltshire Headquarters and the groundstaff for their help during the course of the project.

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APPENDIX 1: Finds List

Context Number	Pottery		CBM		Animal Bone		Glass		Coal	
	Quantity	Weight (g)	Quantity	Weight (g)	Quantity	Weight (g)	Quantity	Weight (g)	Quantity	Weight (g)
104	13	129	16	533	27+	54	3	12	1	3
U/S	1	12								

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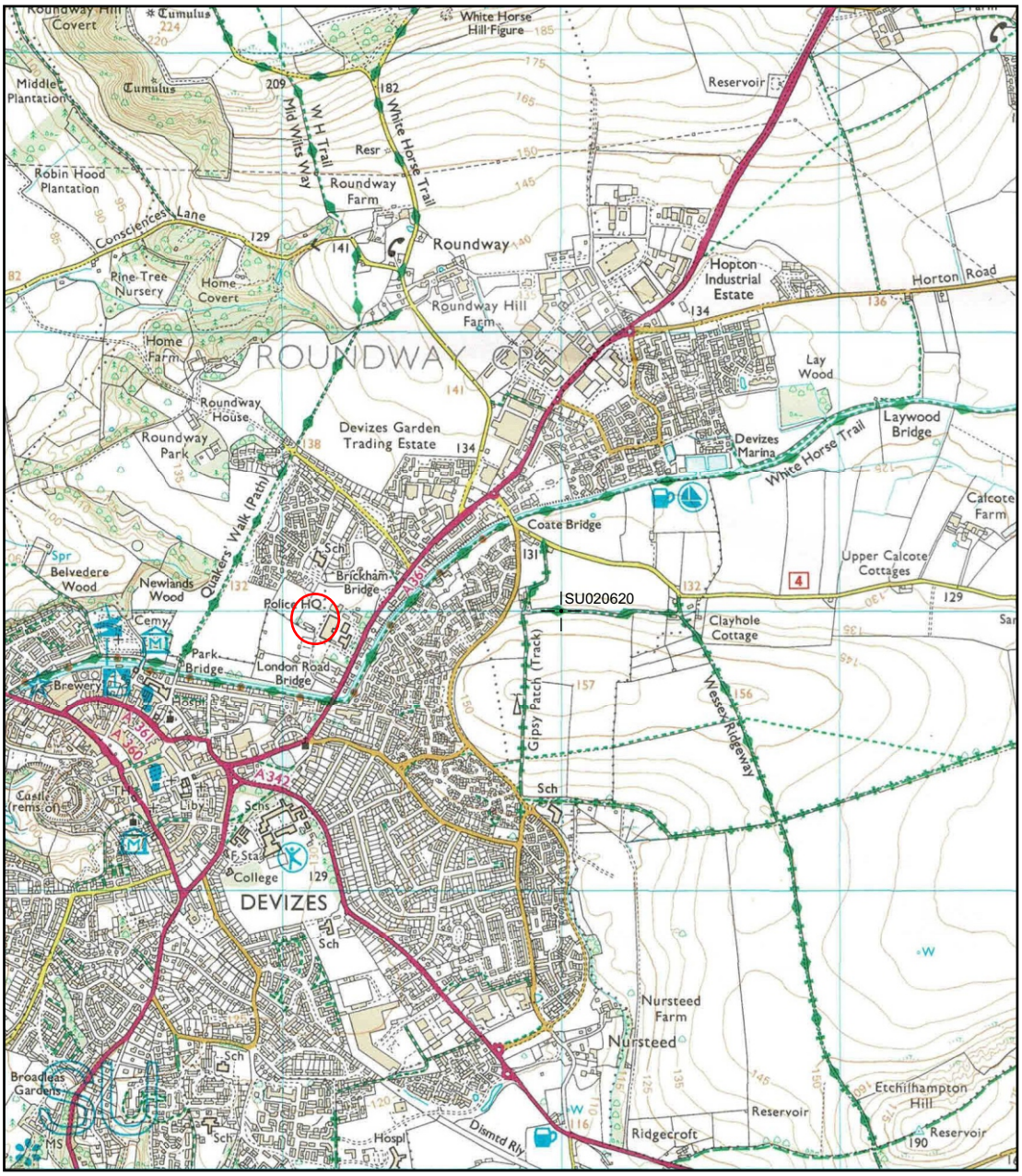

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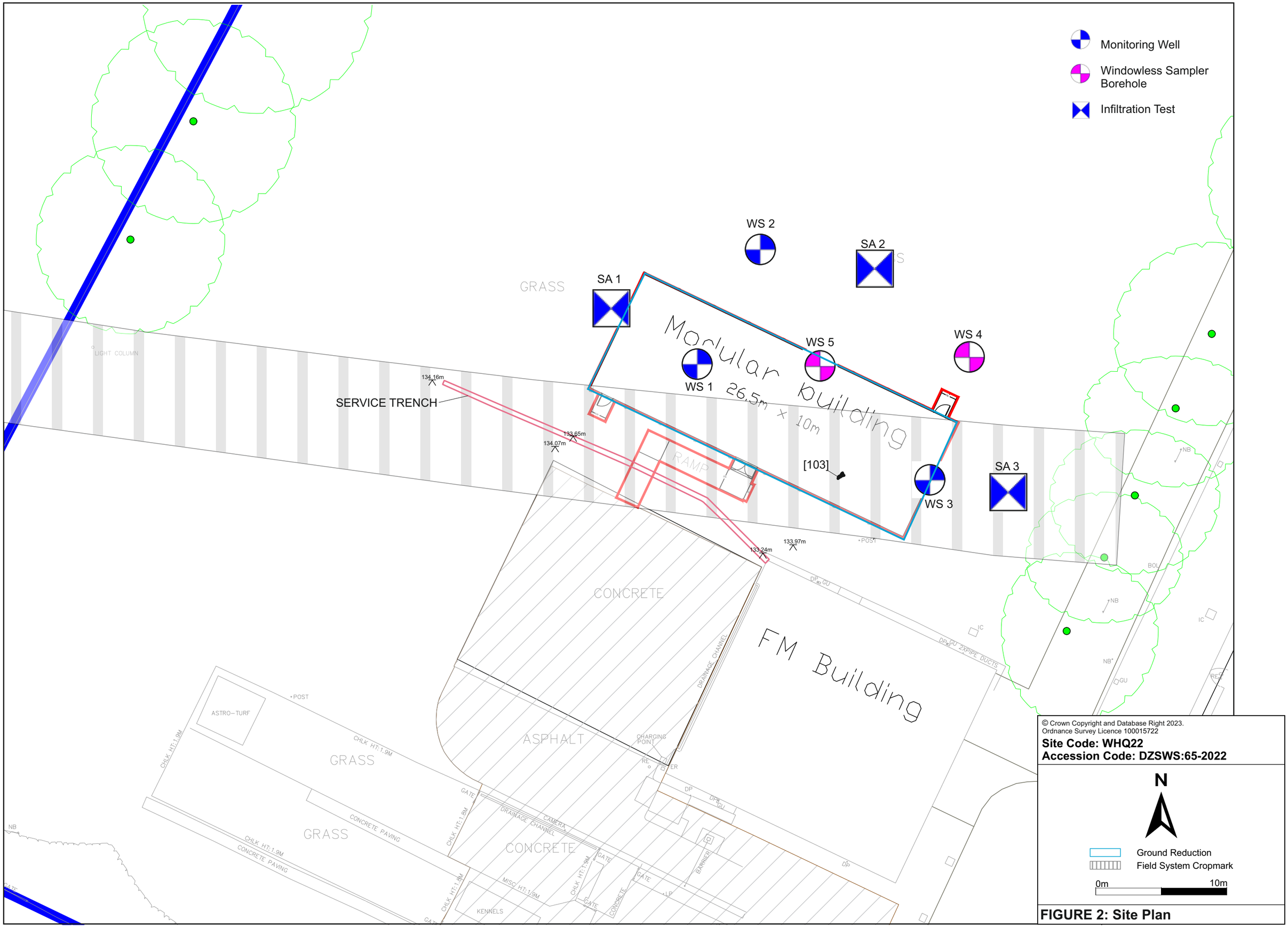
Ordnance Survey Licence 100015722

Site Code: WHQ22
Accession Code: DZSWS:65-2022

N

0 1km

FIGURE 1: Site Location



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Site Code: WHQ22
Accession Code: DZSWS:65-2022

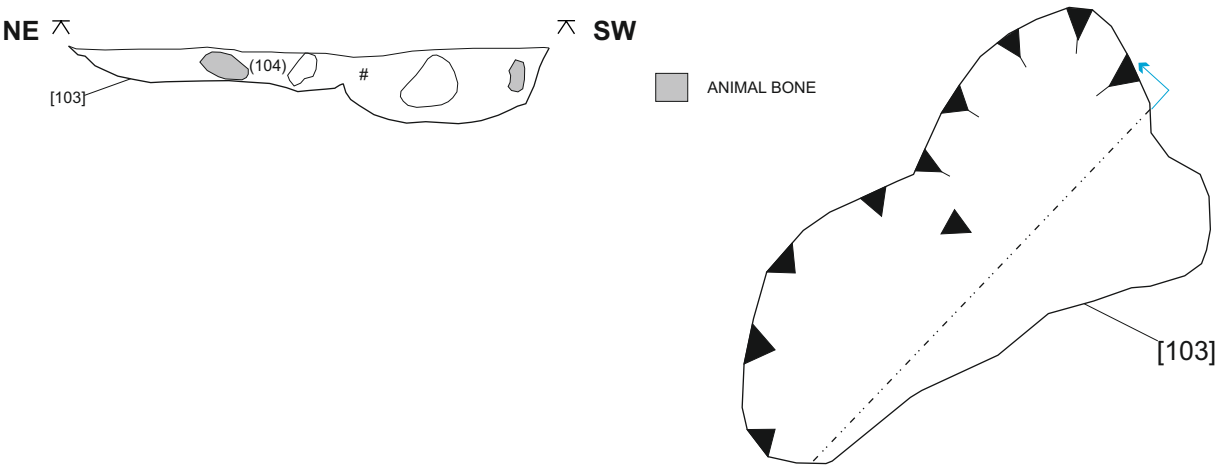
N

Ground Reduction
Field System Cropmark

0m 10m

FIGURE 2: Site Plan

SOUTHEAST FACING SECTION [103]





Feature [103]. Pre-excavation



Feature [103]. Pre-excavation Detail



Feature [103]. Post-excavation

Site Code: WHQ22
Accession Code: DZSWS:65-2022

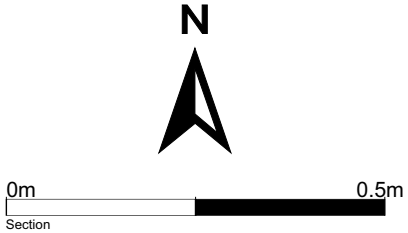


FIGURE 3: [103] Plan, Section & Photographs