# Specification for Archaeological Monitoring & Recording on Land to the South of Stert, Devizes, Wiltshire.

**Prepared for Mr. Andrew Watton of Bourne Valley Associates Ltd. on behalf of his clients - Mr. & Mrs. Elderfield**

**National Grid Reference: SU 0315 5897**
**Planning Reference: 20/08044/FUL**
**Accession Number: DZSWS 21-2021**

**Prepared by Neville Hall, Freelance Field Archaeologist & Consultant**

**January 2024**

## S. Non-technical summary

*S1* *A scheme of works comprising archaeological monitoring and recording is required during the groundworks pertaining to the erection of a new stable block on land to the south of Stert, Devizes, Wiltshire.*

*S2* *This proposed development, which is situated within a green field, is considered to be located within an area of high archaeological potential. Byde Farm, nearby and to the west is a farmstead of medieval origin with associated earthworks. A second farmstead at Fullaway Farm has also medieval origins and is situated to the north-east. It is considered highly likely that archaeological activity and finds associated with these medieval farmsteads may well be encountered on this development site. The specific objectives of the project will therefore be to record any archaeological features, deposits, structures and finds associated with this potential medieval settlement activity.*

*S3* *The archaeological monitoring will be undertaken during the groundworks stage of development, which will comprise the excavation of the foundations for the new stable block. Any archaeological features, structures and/or deposits will be recorded in writing, graphically and photographically.*

*S4* *On the completion of the monitoring, a report will be produced detailing the results of the archaeological investigation. The report will consist of a narrative supported by illustrations and photographs.*

## 1. Site location and description [Figures 1 and 2]

1.1 The development site is situated on a north-west facing slope within a day valley and an undulating upland area of the Wiltshire Downs at National Grid Reference SU 0315 5897 and at a height of approximately 90mAOD. The modern settlement of Stert is located within the modern civil parish of the same name and in the unitary county authority of Wiltshire.

1.2 The development site is situated on clayey and fine loamy soils of the Denchworth Series, which have developed on Upper Greensands and Gaults of the Lower Cretaceous.

## 2. Planning background [Figures 3-4]

2.1 A planning application (Reference: 20/08044/FUL) for the proposed erection of a new stable block on land to the south of Stert, Devizes, Wiltshire has been submitted to and granted consent by Wiltshire County Council, the Local Planning Authority. However, as the proposed development site is situated within a perceived area of high archaeological potential, an archaeological condition (No. 3) was attached to the granting of the planning consent, which stated that:

*No intrusive groundworks related to the proposed development shall commence within the redline of the proposed development until:*

*i) 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*

*ii) The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.*

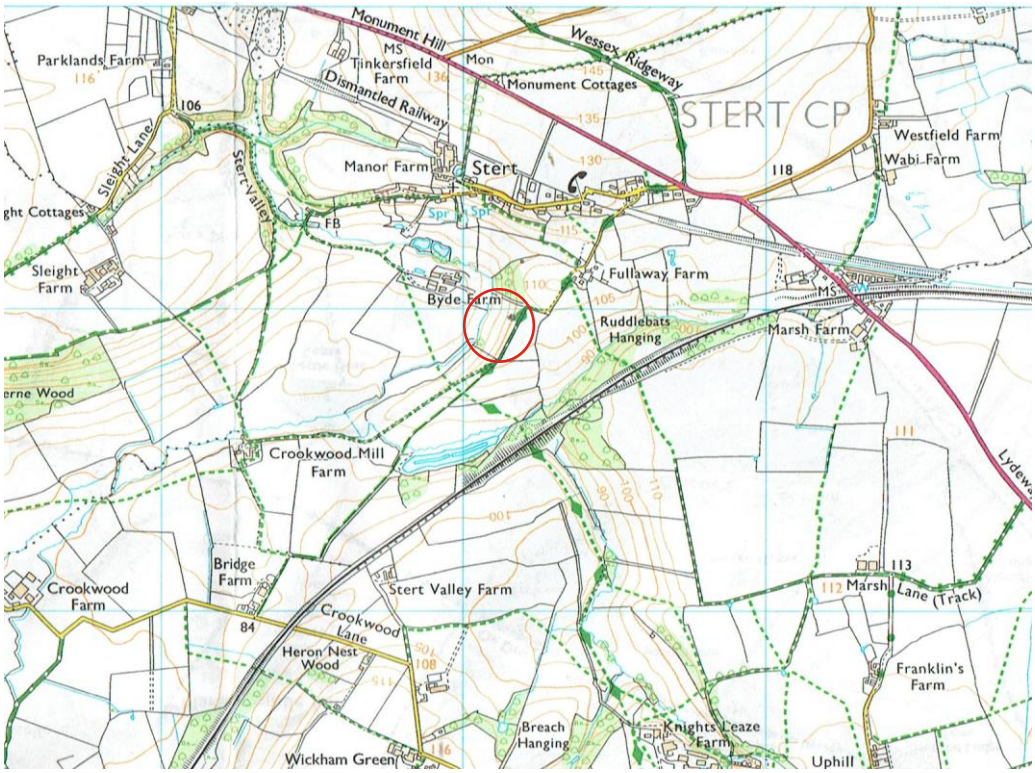



**Figure 1:** Site location at a scale of 1:25,000. The area of the proposal site is shown in red. (O.S. copyright licence number 100048723)

2.2 It is understood that archaeological monitoring and recording would constitute such a programme of archaeological work and was deemed to be the most appropriate method of recording any archaeological remains that may be affected by this proposed development.

2.3 In response to this condition, Neville Hall has been commissioned by the applicants to prepare a written scheme of investigation for the archaeological monitoring and recording.

2.4 This document comprises a Specification or a written scheme of investigation for archaeological monitoring and recording, which is to be maintained during the groundworks pertaining to the erection of the new stable block. This document will be submitted to the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service for approval/agreement prior to the commencement of the site archaeological monitoring.

## 3. Historical and Archaeological Background

3.1 A search of the Wiltshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) was conducted within a 0.5km radius of the development site. The National Heritage List of England of Historic England (NHL) was also consulted for scheduled monuments and listed buildings and other designated sites within the vicinity of the development site.

3.2 Stert is a settlement with medieval origins (HER MWI17420 - SU05NW460). The earliest documentary reference to this settlement dates from the Domesday Survey of AD1086, when it is referred to as *Sterte*. The place name itself has a topographical derivation and takes its name from the Old English *steort* or 'a projecting piece of land'.

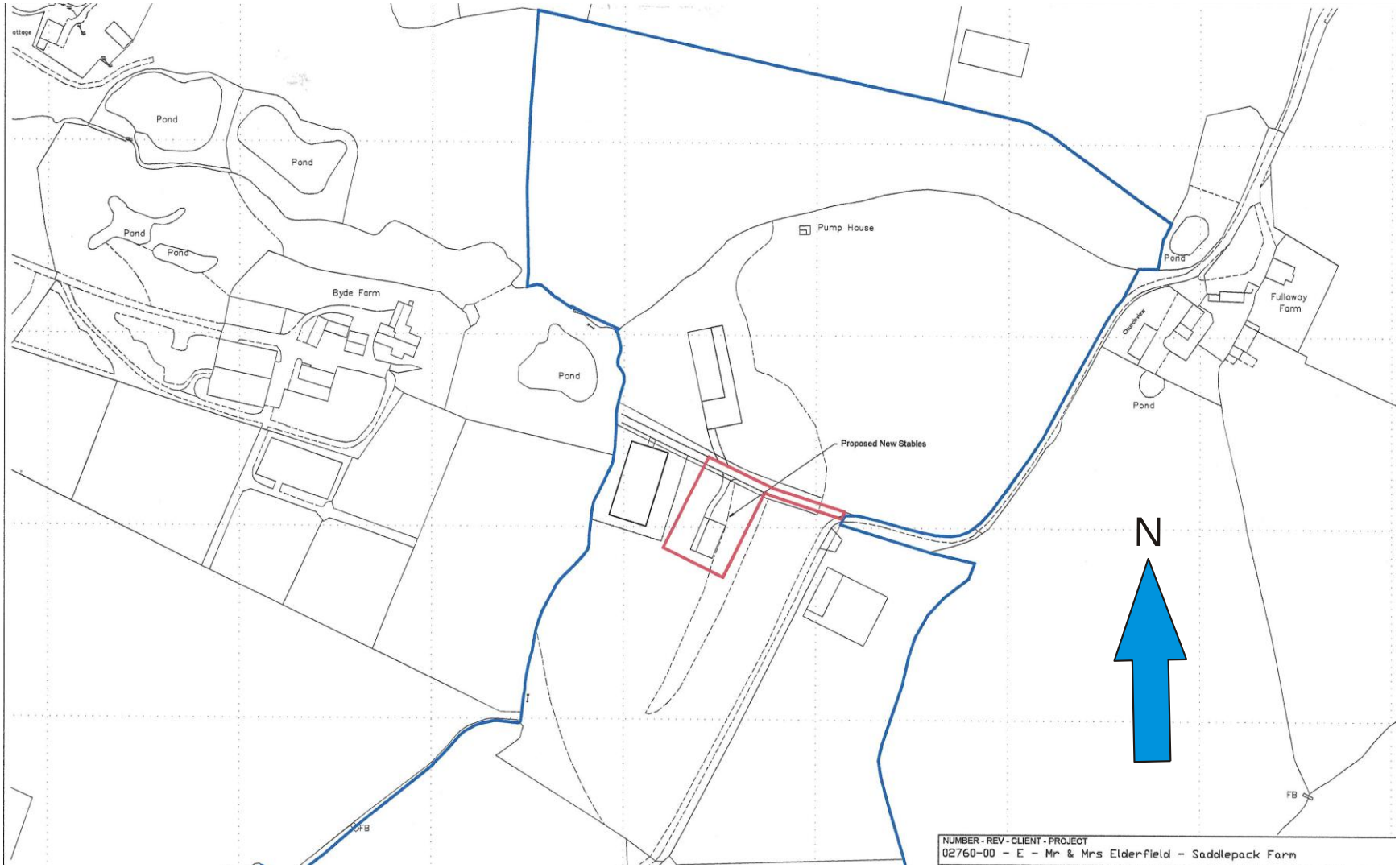



**Figure 2:** Plan showing the site location at an original scale of 1:1,250 at A2, (extract from Architects plan)

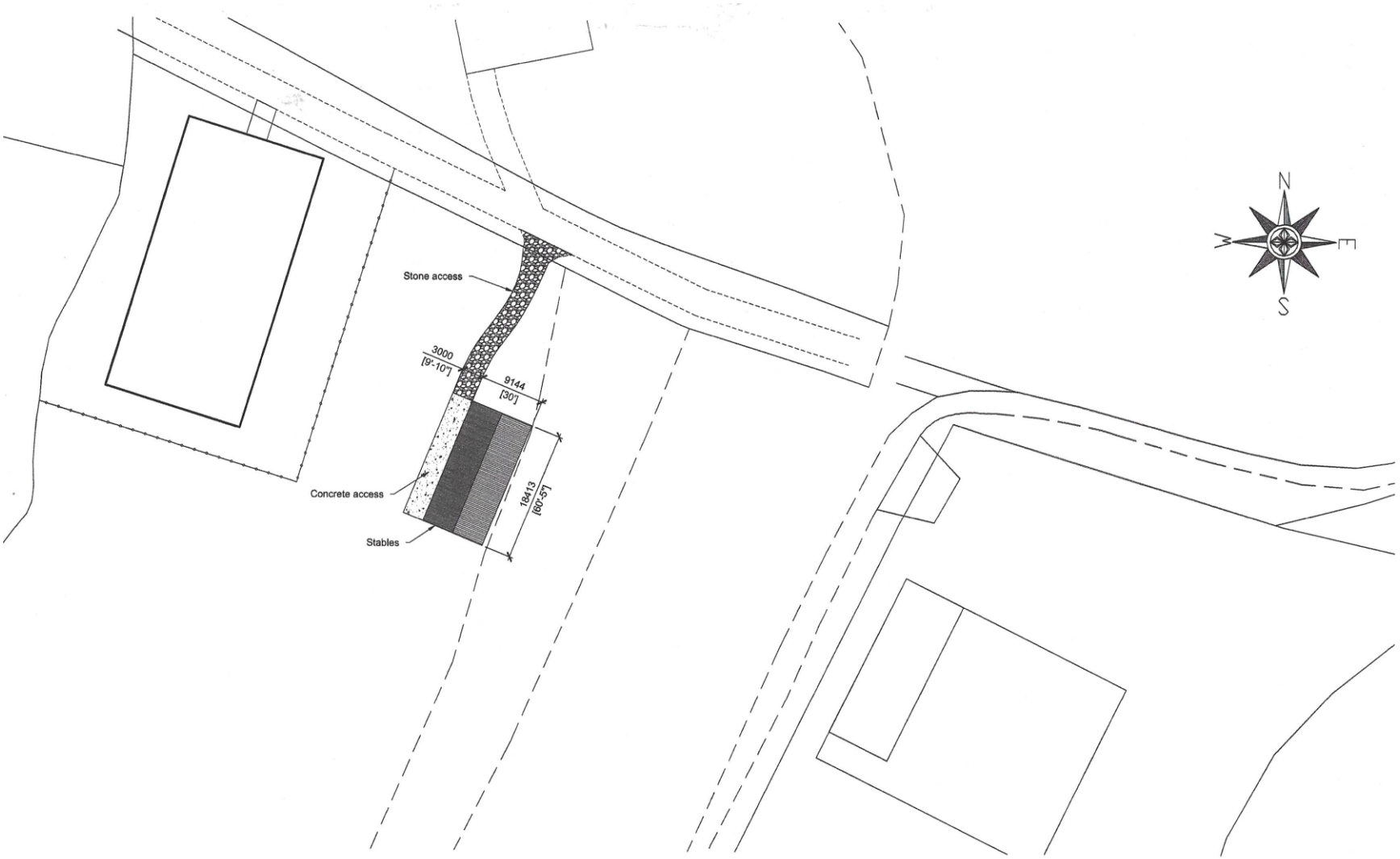



**Figure 3:** Block plan showing the proposed layout of the development site at an original scale of 1:500 at A3, (extract from Architects plan)

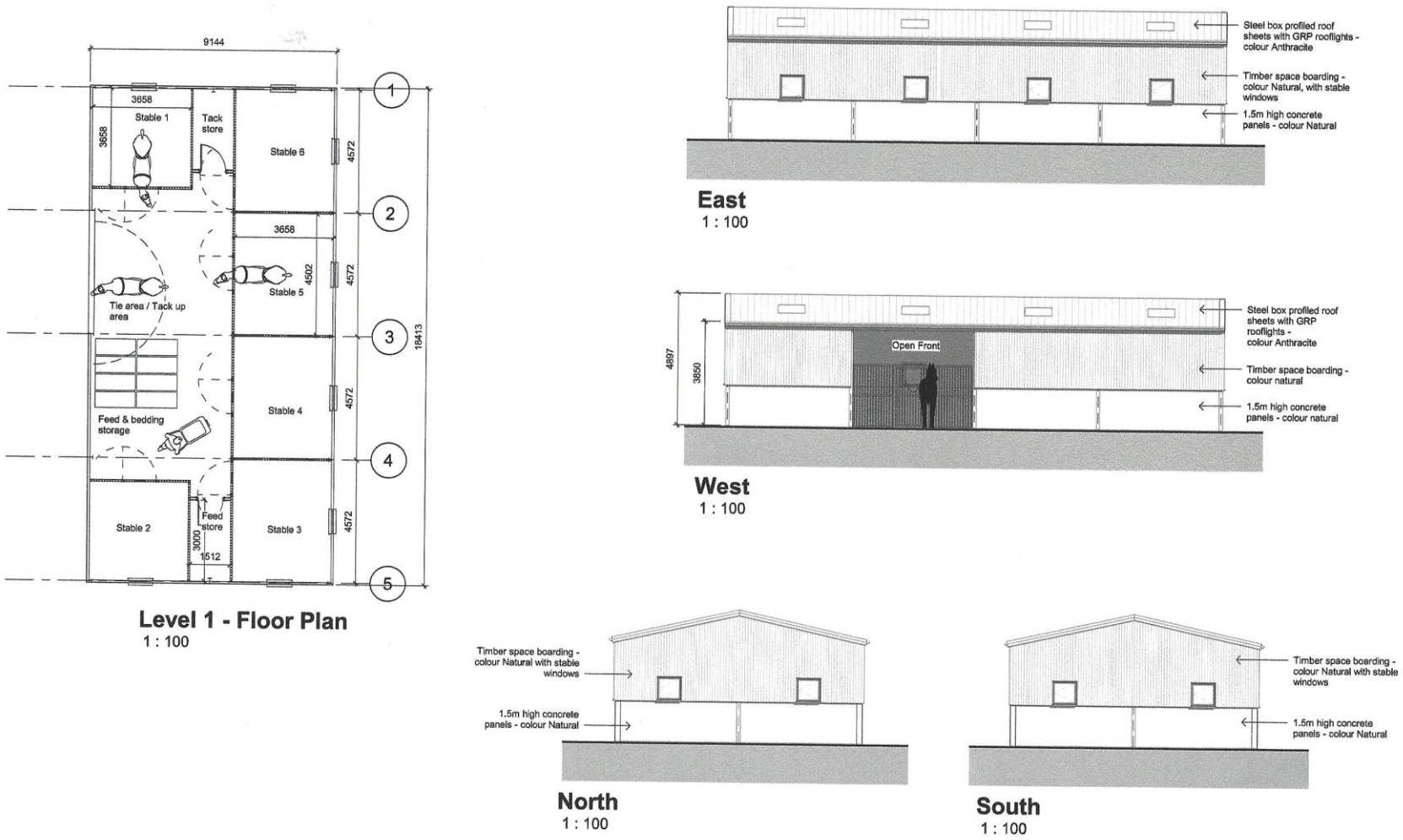



**Figure 4:** Plans of the proposed layout and elevations of the development site at original scales of 1:100 at A2, (extracts from Architects plan)s

3.3 Byde Farm to the west of this development site is a farmstead that has medieval origins (HER MWI17419 - SU05NW459). Earthworks around this farmstead are visible on aerial photographs.

3.4 Fullaway Farm to the north-east of this development site is a farmstead with medieval origins (HER MEW17422 - SU05NW462). There is a documentary reference of AD1327 to this farmstead as *Foleweye*.

3.5 Vale Cottage on Mill Lane, Stert is a Grade II listed 16th to early 17th century cottage with 20th century additions (HER DWI1359, NHL 1365972).

3.6 A Grade II listed barn at Manor Cottage, Village Centre, Street is of mid-late 17th century origin (HER DWI1363, NHL 1285882).

3.7 Vine Cottage on Mill Lane, Stert is a Grade II listed 17th century cottage (HER DWI1358, NHL 1194028).

3.8 Barn Cottage, Mill Lane, Stert is a Grade II listed 17th century or later cottage (HER DWI1357, NHL 1033728).

3.9 Bitham Cottage in the Village Centre, Stert, is a Grade II listed 17th century house (HER DWI1364, NHL 1035670).

3.10 Manor Farmhouse in the Village Centre, Stert is a Grade II listed 17th and late 18th century farmhouse (HER DWI1362, NHL 1364705).

3.11 Manor Farm at Stert is a partially extant 17th century farmstead of a regular courtyard plan (HER MWI69372). The courtyard is of a 'U-plan with additional detached elements to the main plan. The farmhouse is set away from the yard. The farmstead is within a village location. There has been a significant loss of traditional buildings. Large modern sheds have been identified on the site of the farmstead and may have removed or obscured historic buildings.

3.12 Manor Cottage at Stert is a partially extent 17th century farmstead of a loose courtyard plan (HER MWI69373). Two sides of the loose courtyard are formed by working agricultural buildings with additional detached elements to the main plan. The farmhouse is detached from the yard. The farmstead is within a village location. There has been a partial loss of traditional buildings.

3.13 A Grade II listed chest tomb known as the Berry and Associated Monument in the churchyard of the parish church of St James in Stert dates from the 18th century (HER DWI1361, NHL 1285880).

3.14 The site of a post-medieval water mill and pond of Witchly Mill occurs to the north-west of Byde Farm (HER MWI7466 - SU05NW626). The earthwork remains of this site are visible on aerial photographs including a leat. The site was used as a flour mill in 1843 and was disused by 1886 when the pond was named 'old mill pond' on the O.S. map of 1886.

3.15 The parish church of St James in Stert is Grade II listed and was constructed in 1846 (HER DWI1360, NHL 1035669).The church consists of a nave with a north aisle, a lean-to vestry, a south porch and a chancel. A 19th century bell turret is on the west gable.

3.16 Fullaway Farm at Stert is a partially extant 19th century farmstead of a loose courtyard plan (HER MWI69400). Three sides of the loose courtyard are formed by working agricultural buildings. The farmhouse is set away from the yard. There has been a partial loss of traditional buildings.

3.17 Byde Farm at Stert is a partially extant 19th century farmstead of a regular courtyard plan (HER MWI69371). The farm buildings are dispersed across multiple yards The farmhouse is attached to the agricultural range. There has been a significant loss of traditional buildings.

3.18 The site of a WWII searchlight battery is located to the north-east of Fullaway Farm (HER MWI31856).

3.19 Copies of manuscript and published Ordnance Survey maps were obtained from the online National Library of Scotland. The earliest map consulted comprised an extract from the First Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S. map of 1886. This map shows the development site within its current boundaries. The northern site boundary is formed by a trackway that extends westwards to the Byde Farm complex.

3.20 This same layout of the proposed development site is repeated on the subsequent Second Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S. map of 1901, on the Third Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S. map of 1924, on the Provisional Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S. map of 1939 and on the 1:2,500 scale O.S. map of 1982.

3.21 **Figure 2** shows the current ;layout of the development site.

## 4. Aims and objectives of the project

4.1 The aims of the project are the archaeological monitoring of the site groundworks during the construction stage of development, which will comprise the mechanical excavation of the foundations for the new stable block.

4.2 The objectives of the project are:

To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the area of the development site.

To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.

To allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits.

4.3 This proposed development, which is situated within a green field, is considered to be located within an area of high archaeological potential. Byde Farm, nearby and to the west is a farmstead of medieval origin with associated earthworks. A second farmstead at Fullaway Farm has also medieval origins and is situated to the north-east. It is considered highly likely that archaeological activity and finds associated with these medieval farmsteads may well be encountered on this development site. The specific objectives of the project will therefore be to record any archaeological features, deposits, structures and finds associated with this potential medieval settlement activity.

## 5. General Procedures for Archaeological Monitoring

5.1 Neville Hall will be undertaking the archaeological monitoring and shall take full responsibility for the setting out of the project and for the adequacy, stability and safety of site operations and methods of archaeological monitoring.

5.2 Prior to the start of the monitoring, the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service will be provided with (if required) the CVs of the staff involved in the project.

5.3 Prior to the commencement of the monitoring, a provisional accession number will be obtained from the Wiltshire Museum at Devizes and consultations will take place with the Curator of Archaeology regarding archive preparation standards. This will be obtained and thence detailed in this written scheme of investigation document, prior to its approval by WCAS.

5.4 A copy of the approved written scheme of investigation shall be issued to the monitoring archaeologist. This document will be kept on site at all times.

5.5 During all groundworks, ample opportunity will be afforded to the monitoring archaeologist to undertake manual investigation and recording of all archaeological features, deposits etc that may require detailed investigation.

5.6 Where appropriate, a programme of sampling of archaeological contexts will be carried out for subsequent analysis.

5.7 A summary A4 report shall be compiled within 15 days of the completion of the site monitoring. Subsequently a full written report on the results of the monitoring will be completed. Copies of this report will be submitted to the Wiltshire County Historic Environment Record via the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service, to the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service, as well as an archive copy to the Curator of the Wiltshire Museum at Devizes as the designated museum. This report will be available and in the public domain after an appropriate period.

5.8 All site works and post-excavation work will be carried out according to the Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists (CHIfA) standards, and to Appendix 2 of the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage).

5.9 All work will be undertaken following all statutory Health and Safety requirements and legislation in operation at the time of the monitoring.

5.10 Neville Hall will liaise with other archaeological contractors which have carried out previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity to ensure that this monitoring work is in accordance with previous studies in this area (with particular regard to the ceramic fabric sequence).

5.11 In addition to the site monitoring, sufficient time and resources will be made available to elucidate initial findings. Allied to this there will be further contingencies made available for all post excavation costs incurred (including artefactual and environmental material). Resources in terms of monitoring have been estimated at up to nine man days fieldwork/site attendance and up to four person days for post-excavation work including reporting and specialist's analysis.

## 6. Site Specific Monitoring Methodology

6.1 The Proposed Development Site Methodology will comprise:

The mechanical excavation of the foundations and services for the new stable block. These mechanical excavations will be undertaken using a toothless bucket, if possible.

6.2 The archaeological monitoring will be undertaken during the groundworks phase of development, and will include the continual monitoring of any topsoil stripping, of the excavations of foundations and service trenches, and of any other ground disturbance.

6.3 The fieldwork will be undertaken by Neville Hall. Additional personnel may be appointed if required.

6.4 The archaeological monitoring will be under the supervision of the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service.

6.5 Stripped areas and trench sections will be continually observed to identify any archaeological features and/or deposits which may be exposed.

6.6 The site contractor shall allow the monitoring archaeologist at all times access to record all identified archaeological features, deposits etc. and to generate an adequate and comprehensive record of monitoring procedures.

6.7 All identified archaeological features, structures and deposits will be cleaned and recorded in a manner compatible with that used elsewhere in the County.

6.8 Written descriptions detailing the nature of all identified archaeological features, structures and/or deposits encountered will be compiled on pro-forma context record sheets. Sample recording sheets, finds recording sheets, sample registers and a photographic register will also be used.

6.9 All archaeological contexts revealed during the monitoring will be planned in relation to the site plan. This site plan will be referenced to a copy of an Ordnance Survey base map of not smaller than 1:1,250 scale. Section drawings at a scale of 1:10 will be made of any archaeological features identified in the course of the groundworks (this will include all features half-sectioned), including representative sections of trenches at appropriate intervals. These will be related to the site plan drawing at a scale of 1:50, which may also record archaeological features and/or deposits identified. Any significant archaeological features in plan will also be recorded at a scale of 1:20.

6.10 Throughout the site archaeological monitoring a digital photographic record will be compiled, and will comprise an overview of the site prior to work starting, and during as well as after completion of the work, and will include any excavated features, sections and other relevant details that aid interpretation.

6.11 Archaeological excavation may require work by mattock, pick and shovel; these will only be used for the removal of homogenous deposits. These techniques will not be used to remove complex or sensitive archaeology.

6.12 A proportion of archaeological features, structures or deposits, will be excavated (for guidance approximately 50%), the proportion may vary in consultation with the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service. The amount of archaeological context excavated will vary with type: at least 25% of each large discrete feature e.g. a pit will be excavated, and 50% of each small discrete feature e.g. a posthole with a minimum of 10% for each linear feature. The proportion of each archaeological feature excavated will be sufficient to obtain a representative picture of the date and function of the feature.

6.13 Particular care will be taken not to damage any areas containing significant remains of potential national importance which may merit preservation *in situ*, even if obscuring underlying archaeological features. Such areas will be protected from the weather and other forms of deterioration. A sufficient sample of these areas will be investigated to assess their character and quality, without compromising the policy of preservation *in situ*.

6.14 The Wiltshire County Archaeology Service will be notified at the earliest opportunity of any archaeological contexts considered worthy of preservation *in situ*. No construction work will proceed until the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service has commented on the significance of observed contexts.

6.15 A random sampling strategy [to gather a statistically viable sample] will be used to sample all intrusive features excavated which are considered to be relatively undisturbed. In some instances purposive sampling will also be implemented. The samples taken will ideally be of a minimum of 40 litres, and these will be sieved using a flotation tank [screen sieving to 1mm and with a flot screen of 250μm]. The residues produced will be air-dried, sorted and assessed as part of the post-excavation phase. It is understood that this sampling strategy is based on am monitoring and recording condition. In the event of significant archaeology being exposed consultation with the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service will take place to revise/modify sampling procedures.

6.16 Should human remains be encountered, they will be left *in situ*, and only excavated if absolutely necessary. Proper respect will be accorded to these remains, which will be cleaned to allow positive identification and then covered and protected *in situ*. Should removal be required, the appropriate Ministry of Justice Licence will be obtained prior to the removal of the remains. In addition, any remains will be reported to WCAS, to the local Environmental Health Department, coroner and the police will be informed, where appropriate.

6.17 Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled for further analysis. All relevant finds will be ordered into an archive. Most modern material will not be retained, although notes will be made of the appropriate context. An appropriate sample of materials such as ceramic building materials will be made.

6.18 Any and all artefacts found during the monitoring and thought to come under the provisions of the *Treasure Act* (1996), will be removed from the site to a secure location, and will be promptly reported to WCAS, to the local Finds Liaison Officer, and to the appropriate coroner's office, the Wiltshire Museum at Devizes and the applicant. The report provided shall outline the date and circumstances of discovery, the identity of the finder and the location of the find.

6.19 A Risk Assessment will be prepared for the site prior to the archaeological monitoring, and all relevant Health and Safety regulations will be complied with during its implementation. Safety helmets, footwear and 'high visibility' jackets will be used by all personnel where necessary.

6.20 Full compliance will also be made with *Construction [Design and Management] Regulations* 1994 and with the *Construction [Health, Safety & Welfare] Regulations* 1996.

6.21 A metal detector will be used both on the spoil heap and over the monitored areas to facilitate the collection of metal finds.

6.22 The position of the proposed new stable block will be plotted in relation to existing site boundaries with the use of measuring tapes and offsets.

## 7. Monitoring arrangements

7.1 Provision will be made for the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service to monitor the works during the fieldwork stage and any other aspect of the archaeological project as required including the post fieldwork analysis and report preparation stages of the project.

7.2 A minimum of two weeks' notice will be given to the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service of the start date of works on the site.

7.3 All aspects of the archaeological programme will be undertaken in accordance with this written scheme of investigation.

7.4 Any variation to the project programme in terms of works or recording on or off site will be fully discussed and agreed with the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service.

7.5 Arrangements will be made for the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service for access to the site to undertake monitoring visits, and such visits will be accounted for in the final report preparation.

7.6 The Wiltshire County Archaeology Service shall be kept fully informed of any unexpected or unforeseen discoveries made during the course of the archaeological monitoring and recording programme.

## 8. Post-fieldwork methodology

8.1 Immediately following the completion of the fieldwork, all of the written, drawn and photographic records produced by the archaeological monitoring will be quantified, checked, ordered, indexed, labelled (where appropriate) and catalogued to compile a distinctive site archive. It will also contain a site matrix and a site summary. This will be consistent with the principles established in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP), (English Heritage, 1991) and with particular reference to Appendix 3 of the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (English Heritage, 2007).

8.2 For archival purposes, all digital photographic images will be reproduced on archive quality photographic paper by a professional laboratory and will additionally be stored as .tiff images on archival quality DVD/CD.

8.3 All finds recovered during the fieldwork will be washed, marked and packaged according to the deposit from which there were recovered. They will also be ordered into (and form part of) the site archive.

8.4 An assessment of significant finds will be made in light of general site information.

8.5 A basic level of conservation will be provided for finds liable to deterioration, and on deposition of these finds at the Wiltshire Museum at Devizes, a full record of their treatment will be provided.

8.6 Any finds requiring specialist treatment and/or conservation will be sent to the Museum of London.

8.7 The site archive will be examined to enable the determination of various phases of activity on the site (if appropriate).

8.8 Relevant finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.

8.9 Any environmental soil samples taken during the course of this archaeological monitoring and recording, will be sent to Archaeological Solutions Ltd at Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, for post-excavation processing analysis and reporting. This reporting will be included in the final project report (if appropriate).

## 9. Archive preparation and deposition

9.1 The archive will be deposited at the Wiltshire Museum at Devizes as the designated museum.

9.2 The documentation and records generated by the archaeological monitoring will be sorted and ordered in the format acceptable to the Wiltshire Museum at Devizes, and to their standards and requirements.

9.3 All artefacts/ecofacts will be deposited at the Museum with the landowner's permission, in accordance with the terms of the *Treasure Act* (1996). The Museum will be consulted regarding the nature of the archive to be presented. Prior to this they will be securely stored.

9.4 Finds will be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with the UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines and the Rescue publication *First Aid for Finds* (1987), with all small finds boxed together, separate from bulk sample.

9.5 A unique accession number will be obtained from the Wiltshire Museum at Devizes for the site archive.

## 10. Reporting procedures

10.1 A report detailing the findings of the archaeological monitoring will be completed within two months after the finalisation of the fieldwork. Any delays will be related to the relevant authorities.

10.2 The report will consist of:

A title page, with project name and location, national grid reference, planning reference, accession number, client name, author and date;

A contents page listing report sections, illustrations and appendices;

A non-technical summary of the results of the monitoring;

An introduction, site description and location;

Planning background to the project;

A section on the archaeological and historical background to the project;

A description of the methodology used in the project;

A section describing the results of the monitoring;

A section on the discussion and results of the project including a consideration of the findings of the project in a local and regional context;

A consideration of the effectiveness of the project methodology and a confidence rating of the results;

Illustrations including plans showing monitored areas, all archaeological features and sections thereof (including trench sections); and

Appendices comprising appropriate photographs of the site and of specific and significant archaeological features and representative sections, a list of contexts, and any specialist reports on finds from the site.

10.3 An electronic copy of the report will be deposited with the OASIS project (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/index.cfm.

## 11. Publication and dissemination

11.1 Copies of the final report will be deposited with the applicant, the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (on behalf of the local planning authority), the planning department of Wiltshire County Council, the Wiltshire Museum at Devizes and with the Wiltshire County Heritage Environment Record (via the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service) (including a digital copy). A further hard copy of the report will also be lodged with the Wiltshire County Heritage Environment Record.

11.2 A note will be placed in the 'Proceedings of the Wiltshire Historical and Archaeological Society' describing the results.

11.3 Should the results of the archaeological investigation merit it, a note will also be placed in appropriate national journals e.g. *Medieval Archaeology.*

## 12. Other factors (including contingency)

12.1 In the event of the discovery of any unexpected remains of archaeological importance, or of any changed circumstances, it is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to inform the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service.

12.2 Where important archaeological remains are discovered and deemed to merit further investigation, additional financial resources may be required to provide an appropriate level of investigation, recording and analysis.

12.3 Any additional financial contingency requirement for additional fieldwork or post-excavation analysis outside the scope of the proposed scheme of works will only be activated following full consultation with the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service and the client.

## 13. Variations to the proposed scheme

13.1 Variations to the proposed scheme will only be made following written confirmation with the archaeological curator.

## 14. Resources

14.1 The monitoring will be undertaken by Neville Hall using standard archaeological field techniques.

14.2 Post-excavation analysis will be undertaken by Neville Hall and where available specialist analysis from:-

| | |
|---|---|
| Luke Barber | Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon Medieval and Post-medieval ceramics |
| Andy Peachey | Environmental |
| Malin Holst | Osteoarchaeology |

14.3 Small finds requiring conservation will be conserved by the Museum of London.

14.4 Recognised specialists will be sought in the event that other data are retrieved in the course of the monitoring.

## 15. Insurance statement

15.1 Public indemnity of £2,000,000 and private indemnity insurance of £250.000 with Towergate Insurance.

## 16. Copyright

16.1 Prior to deposition of the site archive, copyright will remain that of the author. Licence will be given to the client to present any reports, copyright of the author, to the planning authority in good faith of satisfactory settlement of account. Written permission/licence will also be given to the Wiltshire at Devizes and the Wiltshire County Historic Environment Record via the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service, for the reproduction of specific material for planning, educational, academic/bona fide research purposes, with due acknowledgment to the copyholder.

## 17. Ownership

17.1 It will be asked of the client, at the outset, that the ownership of any portable objects discovered in the course of the monitoring be donated along with the archive.