

LAND AT THE FORTY, CRICKLADE, WILTSHIRE

(Centred on NGR SU 0944 9310 & SU 0962 9304)

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

Wiltshire Council planning reference PL/2023/10331

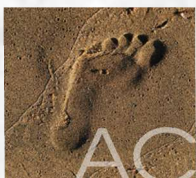
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George Gandham

With contributions from:
Naomi Payne and Charlotte Coles

On behalf of:
Hannick Homes and Developments Ltd

Report No: ACA0406/2/2

Date: October 2025



AC archaeology

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(Centred on NGR SU 0944 9310 & SU 0962 9304)

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

Wiltshire Council outline planning reference PL/2023/10331

Client	Hannick Homes and Developments Ltd via Landgage Heritage
Report Number	ACA0406/2/2
Date	28 October 2025
Status	Revision 2 – following client comments
Report Author	George Gandham
Contributions	Naomi Payne and Charlotte Coles
Checked by	John Valentin
Approved by	John Valentin

Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by Landgage Heritage on behalf of Hannick Homes and Developments Ltd and managed for AC archaeology by Laurence Vinnels. The site works were carried out by George Gandham, Rohan Ramoutar and Daniel Manktelow, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Nina Kleinzeller. The advice of Tim Harvard, Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council, is gratefully acknowledged.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during September and October 2025 over two parcels of land at The Forty, Cricklade, Wiltshire (centred on SU 0944 9310 & SU 0962 9304). The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of 15 trenches totaling 450m in length, with each trench being 2m wide. These were positioned to target anomalies identified by a previous geophysical survey, as well as in what were thought to be 'blank' areas.

There was little in the way of archaeology present on the site and only a small quantity of artefacts was recovered. The expected evidence for medieval ridge and furrow cultivation was present, while two small isolated pits were undated. Finds recovered were medieval or post-medieval date and are likely to relate to historic manuring of the fields. There was no indication for the continuation of Roman or medieval settlement into the site, as identified previously on adjacent land.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during September and October 2025 over two parcels of land at The Forty, Cricklade, Wiltshire (centred on SU 0944 9310 & SU 0962 9304). The evaluation was commissioned by Landgage Heritage on behalf of Hannick Homes and Developments Ltd and was required by Wiltshire Council to provide accompanying information for an Outline Planning Application (with all matters reserved except access) for up to 49 dwellings, associated works, and provision of a cemetery, following consultation with their Assistant County Archaeologist.
- 1.2 The site comprises two parcels of land (Plates 1 and 2). The eastern parcel consists of two agricultural fields and the western parcel part of a wider agricultural field. It is located on the current southwest extent of Cricklade on generally level ground at a height of approximately 81m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying solid geology comprises Jurassic mudstone of the Oxford Clay Formation. There are no superficial deposits recorded (British Geological Survey 2025).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site has been the subject of a Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (Winterburn and Bedford 2023) and a geophysical survey (Donaldson and Sabin 2024). The historic environment desk-based assessment has reviewed the data held by the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and has determined that a single record is located within the site. This consists of medieval pottery recovered during archaeological work associated with the installation of a pipeline (Smith and Cox 1986).
- 2.2 Within the surrounding landscape a series of previous archaeological investigations has been carried out. Adjacent to the eastern parcel two geophysical surveys were undertaken which identified extensive evidence for medieval ridge and furrow, as well as multiple structures situated on low platforms subdivided by linear anomalies and surrounded by channels or ditches (Winterburn and Bedford 2023). A subsequent excavation was carried out by Wessex Archaeology which recorded two main periods of archaeology comprising a Romano-British field boundary ditch and pits, and a group of late medieval to post-medieval features and structures. The Romano-British ditch had evidence for a being re-cut and the range and quantity of domestic finds indicated there was a settlement within the immediate vicinity (Wakeham 2021).
- 2.3 Further records held by the HER within the vicinity of the site comprise Romano-British pottery found 65m south of the western parcel (Wiltshire HER ref: MWI8332), placename evidence for a medieval settlement known as 'The Forty' mapped 110m east of the site (Wiltshire HER ref: MWI9571), and medieval ridge and furrow across the site itself (Winterburn and Bedford 2023).

- 2.4 The earlier geophysical survey identified evidence for ridge and furrow across the entire survey area, as well a number of linear anomalies of uncertain origin (Donaldson and Sabin 2024). Within the eastern parcel a number of curvilinear anomalies was also identified, however, it was noted that these may represent the former location of animal feeders.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The main aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site, with particular reference to anomalies identified by the geophysical survey and the possibility of Roman or medieval settlement being present. The results of the work, as set out in this report, will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent mitigation that may be required should planning consent be obtained.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design prepared by AC archaeology (Vinnels 2025) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2023) and *Universal Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2023). The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of 15 trenches totaling 450m in length, with each trench being 2m wide.
- 4.2 All trenches were located with a Leica Net rover GPS accurate to 1cm. The removal of overlying soils within the trenches was undertaken in 20cm spits (maximum) under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.
- 4.3 All features and deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2* (revised August 2012). Detailed sections and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50, while all site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 **Introduction** (*Example plans and sections of furrows and tree throw, Fig. 2 and Fig. 3c-d*)
All trenches exposed natural subsoil, which varied across the site but was largely a mid-greyish yellow firm clay with occasional gravel inclusions. The natural subsoil was present at a depth of between 0.21m and 0.48m below ground levels and was overlain in most cases by agricultural topsoil, with an agricultural subsoil only present in Trench 4. Many of the trenches contained agricultural furrows that corresponded in most instances with those interpreted by the geophysical survey. These were investigated in trenches 4, 8 and 11 and measured between 0.44m to 1.36m wide, 90mm to 0.3m deep and tended to have moderately sloping sides to a rounded base. Example plans and sections of these are included on Fig. 2 and Fig. 3c-d. Two sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from fill 406 of furrow F405 and a pig tooth from fill 1103 of furrow F1102. Trench 4 also exposed an irregular undercutting probable tree throw (403) at its northwestern end. This corresponded with a geophysical anomaly and contained a single dark brownish grey firm silty clay from which no finds were recovered.

5.2 Cut archaeological features were present in only two of the 15 trenches (Trenches 9 and 12) and are described in detail below. Tabulated context descriptions for all trenches, including the negative ones, are provided in Appendix 1. Context numbers are prefixed by the relevant trench number (e.g. 100 for Trench 1, 200 for Trench 2 etc.).

5.3 Trench 9 (*Detailed plan Fig. 3a and section Fig. 3b; Plates 3-4*)

This trench was located in the central part of the eastern parcel of the site, was 30m long and aligned approximately northeast-southwest. It was positioned across three furrows which were exposed beneath the topsoil and targeted a circular anomaly at its southwest end. Natural subsoil (context 901) was present at a depth of 0.28m below ground surface and was overlain by topsoil (900). The trench contained a sub-oval pit (F902) at its southwest end, which is likely to correspond with the geophysical survey anomaly. No finds were recovered from the trench.

Pit F902

This was sub-oval in plan measuring 0.84m long, 0.66m wide and 0.12m deep, with moderately sloping sides to a rounded, slightly undulating base. It had a single fill (903) composed of dark yellowish firm clay loam with occasional charcoal inclusions and flecks of red clay.

5.4 Trench 12 (*Detailed plan Fig. 3e and section Fig. 3f; Plates 5-6*)

This trench was located at the eastern edge of the eastern parcel of the site, was 30m long and aligned northwest-southeast. It was positioned in a blank area interpreted from the results of the geophysical survey. Natural subsoil (context 1201) was present at a depth of 0.24m below ground surface and was overlain by topsoil only (1200). The trench contained one pit (F1202). No finds were recovered from the trench.

Pit F1202

This was small and shallow located within the southeast part of the trench, measuring 0.36m in diameter by 0.06m deep, with steep shallow rounded sides to a rounded base. It had a single fill (1203) composed of dark brown grey silty clay loam with frequent charcoal inclusions.

6. THE FINDS by Naomi Payne and Charlotte Coles

6.1 All finds recovered have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They have been quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage examined to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. The collection of finds, most of which came from topsoil contexts, is summarised in Table 1 below. This is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Level 1 type (descriptive) report as per their online guidance *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* to provide information on the finds and their dating.

Table 1. Summary of finds by context (weights in grams)

Context	Context description	Medieval pottery		Post-medieval pottery/CBM		Animal bone	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
406	Fill of furrow F405			2	16		
500	Trench 5 topsoil	1	48				
800	Trench 8 topsoil	1	38			2	2
1000	Trench 10 topsoil			2	71		
1100	Trench 11 topsoil	1	1				
1103	Fill of furrow F1102					1	4
1500	Trench 15 topsoil	2	65				
Totals		5	152	4	87	3	6

6.2 Medieval pottery by Naomi Payne

In total, five sherds (152g) of medieval pottery were recovered from topsoil contexts in Trenches 5, 8, 11 and 15. Four of the sherds (from Trenches 5, 8 and 15) represent three Minety ware vessels. All three vessels are jars with sharply out-turned rims. The rim from Trench 8 has a slightly expanded, square outer edge, that from Trench 5 is narrowed with an external groove and part of an applied clay strip just below the rim and the third (two joining sherds from Trench 15) is even more narrowed towards the edge, with a triangular profile and a faint groove just below the edge. There are small splashes of green lead glaze on the top of the latter rim, probably the result of being fired alongside glazed vessels. The final piece of medieval pottery is a small fragment of a decorative element from a glazed redware vessel, probably a jug. It is crescent shaped with short incised diagonal lines around the edge.

6.3 Post-medieval pottery/ceramic building material by Naomi Payne

Four pieces (87g) of post-medieval ceramics were recovered from two contexts in Trench 4 and 10. There are two joining sherds from the base angle of an uncertain 17th or 18th century redware vessel from fill 406 of furrow F406, and two body sherds from the topsoil in Trench 10. One of these is externally glazed and quite thick-walled (10mm) and could perhaps be from a curved ridge tile.

6.4 Animal bone by Charlotte Coles

A total of three pieces (6g) of animal bone was recovered from two contexts in Trenches 8 and 11. These comprise a pig incisor from fill 1103 of furrow F1102 and two unidentifiable pieces from Trench 8 topsoil.

7. COMMENTS

7.1 The evaluation has identified little of archaeological interest, with what was present mainly relating to agricultural use. There was a number of furrows relating to medieval ridge and furrow cultivation and only a small quantity of medieval and post-medieval finds recovered. These would be consistent with historic manuring of the fields. Two small pits were present in Trench 9 and 12, but both were undated and in isolation. There was no indication, in the form of features or finds, for any continuation of Roman or medieval settlement as previously identified adjacent to the site.

7.2 There was reasonable correlation between the trench results and the geophysical survey interpretation, with the ridge and furrow cultivation clearly present where expected, while pit F902 and tree throw F403 were also identified as discrete anomalies.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

8.1 The finds, digital and paper archive will initially be stored at the offices of AC archaeology in Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon under the unique project code **ACA0406** and the accession number **DZSWS:44-2025** issued by the Wiltshire Heritage Museum, Devizes. It will be held until it is known if further archaeological work is required on the site.

8.2 Details of the project will be submitted to the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations). The OASIS number for this project is **536633**.

8.3 Assuming no further investigations are required, this report represents the archive for the project.

9. SOURCES CONSULTED

AC archaeology, 2012, *General site recording manual version 2*.

British Geological Survey, 2025, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>.

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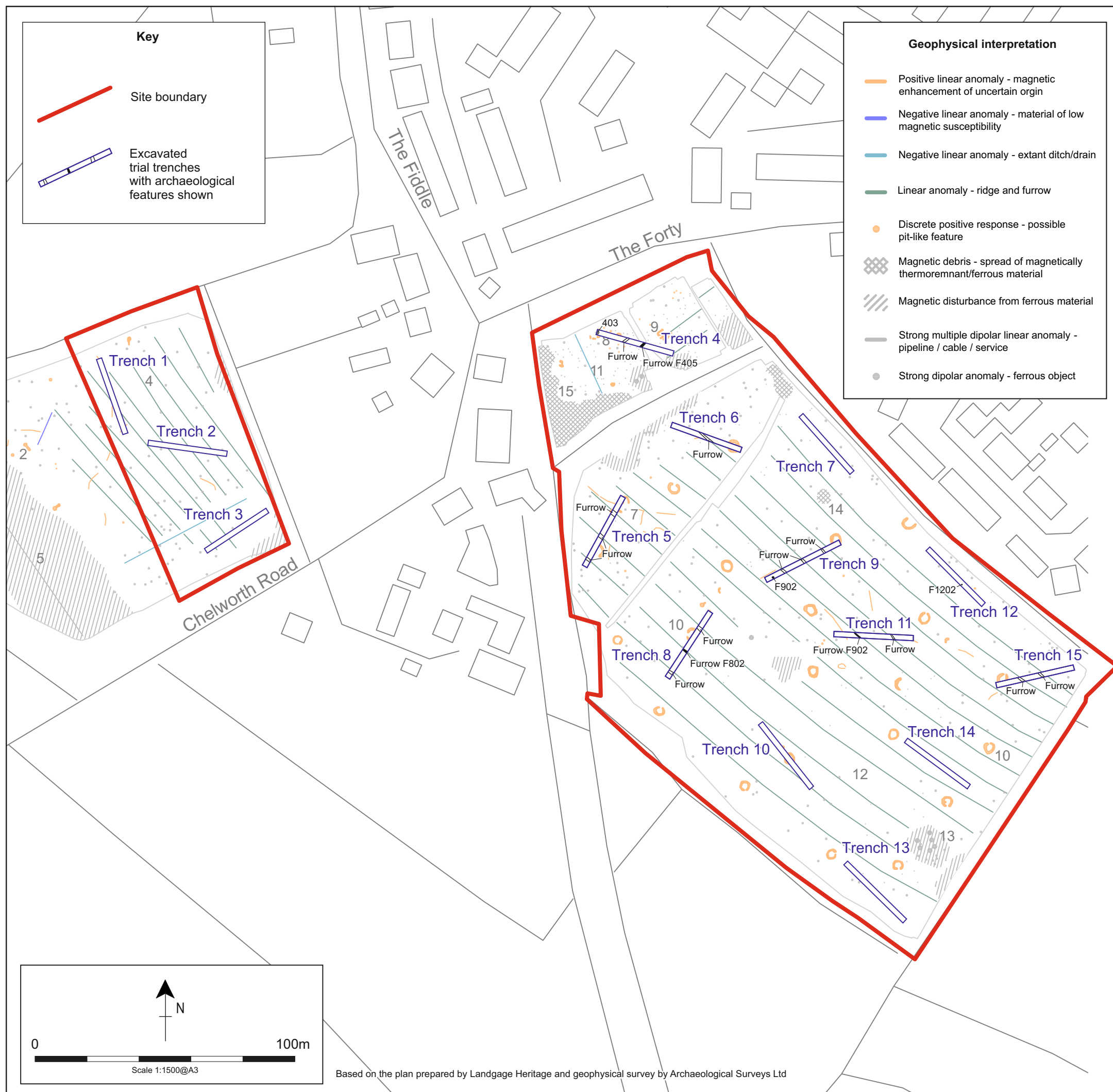
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PROJECT

Land at The Forty, Cricklade, Wiltshire

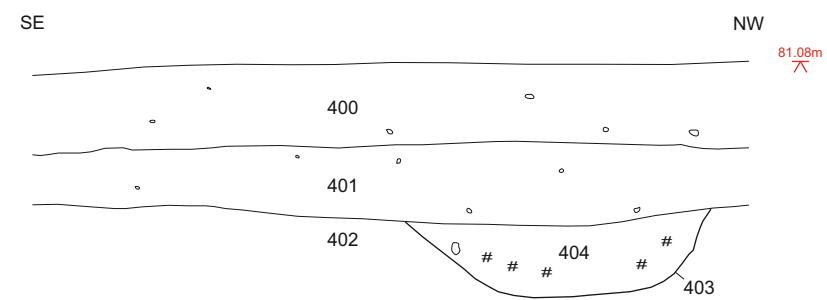
Fig. 1: Location of site and trenches, with recorded archaeological features shown in relation to the geophysical survey interpretation



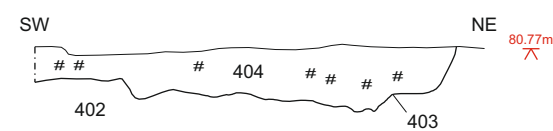
a) Trench 4, plan



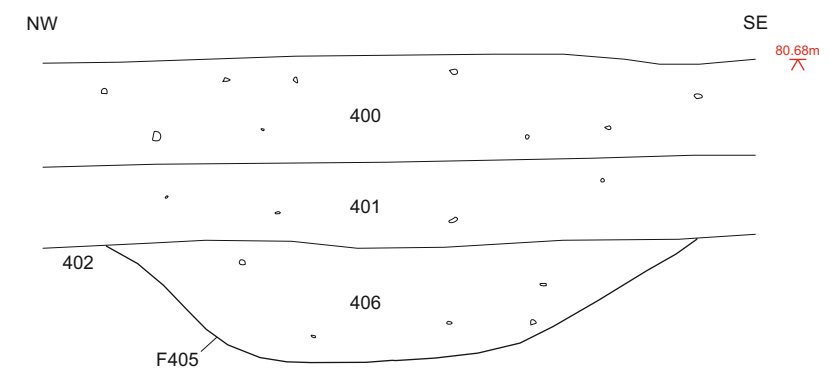
b) Section of tree throw 403



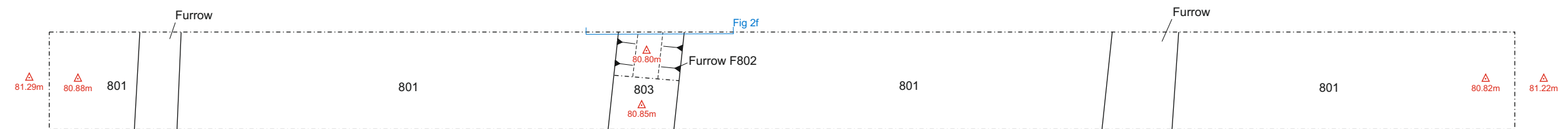
c) Section of tree throw 403



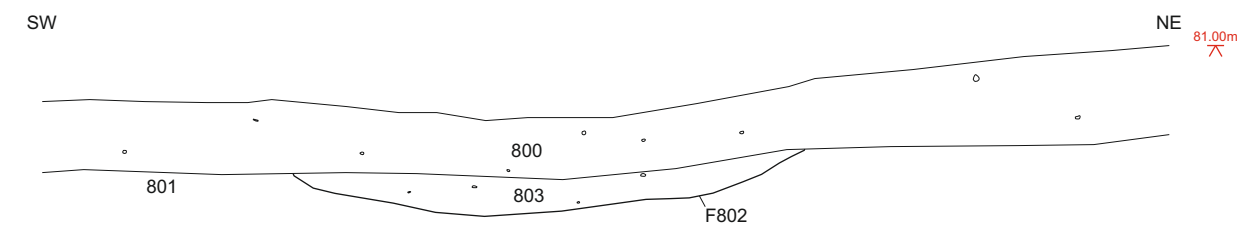
d) Section of plough furrow F405



e) Trench 8, plan



f) Section of plough furrow F802



PROJECT
Land at The Forty, Cricklade, Wiltshire

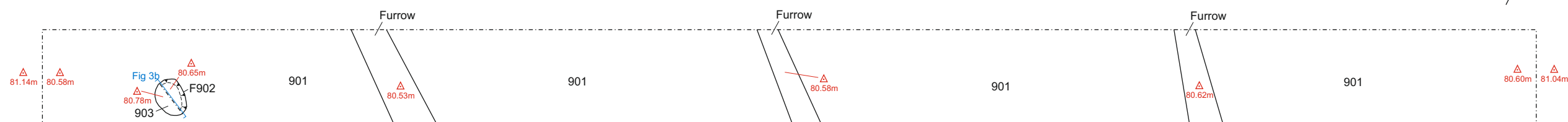
TITLE
Fig. 2: Trenches 4 and 8, plans and sections

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Plans

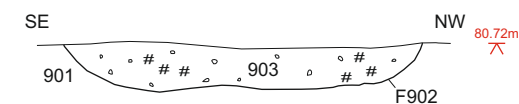
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Scale 1:20@A3
Sections



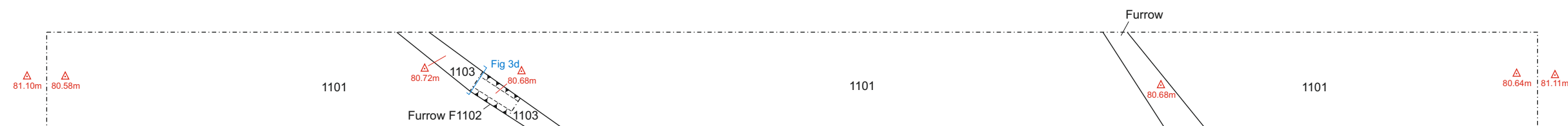
a) Trench 9, plan



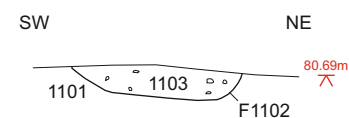
b) Section of pit F902



c) Trench 11, plan



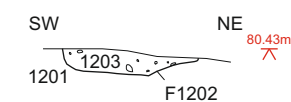
d) Section of plough furrow F1102



e) Trench 12, plan



f) Section of pit F1202



PROJECT

Land at The Forty, Cricklade, Wiltshire

TITLE

Fig. 3: Trenches 9, 11 and 12, plans and sections

0 5m
Scale 1:100@A3
Plans

0 1m
Scale 1:20@A3
Sections





Plate 1: Western parcel of land, with Trench 2 in the foreground and Trench 1 beyond, looking northwest



Plate 2: Eastern parcel of land, with Trench 9 left, Trench 11 right and Trench 12 centre alongside hedgeline, looking east



Plate 3: Trench 9, section of pit F902, looking southwest (0.5m scale)



Plate 4: General view of Trench 9, looking southwest (1m scale)



Plate 5: Trench 9, pit F1202, looking north (0.3m scale)



Plate 6: General view of Trench 12, looking northwest (0.3m scale)

Appendix 1

Tabulated context descriptions by trench

APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 1		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment N-S
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
100	Mid greyish brown friable clay loam	0-0.28m	Topsoil	
101	Mid yellowish grey firm clay with abundant gravels and pebbles	0.28m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 2		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
200	Mid greyish brown friable clay loam	0-0.29m	Topsoil	
201	Mid yellowish grey firm clay with abundant gravels and pebbles	0.29m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 3		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
300	Mid greyish brown friable clay loam	0-0.3m	Topsoil	
301	Mid yellowish grey firm clay with abundant gravels and pebbles	0.3m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 4		Length 30m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
400	Mid greyish brown friable clay loam	0-0.28m	Topsoil	
401	Mid brownish grey firm silt clay loam	0.28-0.48m	Agricultural subsoil	
402	Variations of mid greyish yellow and red yellowish brown firm clay with occasional chalk and gravel inclusions	0.48m+	Natural subsoil	
403	Irregular curvilinear feature measuring 0.82m wide by 0.42m deep with irregular moderately sloping sides to an irregular base	0.48-0.9m	Tree throw/ root disturbance	
404	Dark brownish grey firm silty clay	0.48-0.9m	Fill of 403	
F405	Linear feature aligned NE-SW measuring 1.1m wide by 0.3m deep with moderately sloping sides to a rounded base	0.48-0.78m	Plough furrow	
406	Mid reddish brown mottled greyish brown firm silt clay	0.48-0.78m	Fill of F405	

Trench 5		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
500	Mid greyish brown friable clay loam	0-0.28m	Topsoil	
501	Mid greyish yellow firm clay	0.28m+	Natural subsoil	

b.g.s. = below ground surface

APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 6		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
600	Mid greyish brown friable clay loam	0-0.25m	Topsoil	
601	Mid greyish yellow firm clay	0.25m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 7		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
700	Mid greyish brown friable clay loam	0-0.21m	Topsoil	
701	Mid greyish yellow firm clay	0.21m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 8		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
800	Mid greyish brown friable clay loam	0-0.25m	Topsoil	
801	Mid greyish yellow firm clay	0.25m+	Natural subsoil	
F802	Linear feature aligned NW-SE measuring 1.36m wide by 0.16m deep with shallow rounded sides to a rounded base	0.25-0.41m	Plough furrow	
803	Mid reddish brown mottled greyish brown firm silt clay	0.25-0.41m	Fill of F802	

Trench 9		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
900	Mid greyish brown firm clay loam	0-0.28m	Topsoil	
901	Mid greyish yellow firm clay	0.28m+	Natural subsoil	
F902	Sub-oval feature in plan measuring 0.84m long, 0.66m wide and 0.12m deep with steep shallow rounded sloping sides to a rounded base	0.28-0.40m	Cut of pit	
903	Dark yellowish grey clay loam with occasional charcoal inclusions	0.28-0.40m	Fill of pit F902	

Trench 10		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
1000	Mid greyish brown firm clay loam	0-0.27m	Topsoil	
1001	Mid greyish yellow firm clay	0.27m+	Natural subsoil	

b.g.s. = below ground surface

APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 11		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
1100	Mid greyish brown firm clay loam	0-0.24m	Topsoil	
1101	Mid greyish yellow firm clay	0.24m+	Natural subsoil	
F1102	Linear feature aligned NW-SE measuring 0.44m wide by 90mm deep with shallow moderately sloping sides to rounded base	0.24-0.33m	Plough furrow	
1103	Light brownish grey silty clay loam	0.24-0.33m	Fill of F1102	

Trench 12		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
1200	Mid greyish brown firm clay loam	0-0.24m	Topsoil	
1201	Mid greyish yellow firm clay	0.24m+	Natural subsoil	
F1202	Sub-circular feature in plan measuring 0.36m in diameter	0.24-0.3m	Cut of pit	
1203	Dark brownish grey silty clay loam	0.24-0.3m	Fill of F1202	

Trench 13		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
1300	Mid greyish brown firm clay loam	0-0.26m	Topsoil	
1301	Mid greyish yellow firm clay	0.26m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 14		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
1400	Mid greyish brown firm clay loam	0-0.24m	Topsoil	
1401	Mid greyish yellow firm clay	0.24m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 15		Length 30m	Width 2m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s.	Interpretation	
1500	Mid greyish brown firm clay loam	0-0.21m	Topsoil	
1501	Mid greyish yellow firm clay	0.21m+	Natural subsoil	

b.g.s. = below ground surface

Appendix 2

OASIS form

Appendix 2 OASIS form

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Land at The Forty, Cricklade, Wiltshire	
Short description	An archaeological trench evaluation on two separate parcels of land at The Forty, Cricklade, Wiltshire comprised the machine excavation of 15 trenches totaling 450m in length. These targeted anomalies interpreted from a previous geophysical survey. There was little in the way of archaeology present on the site and only a small quantity of artefacts was recovered. The expected evidence for medieval ridge and furrow cultivation was present, while two small isolated pits were undated. Finds recovered were medieval or post-medieval date and are likely to relate to historic manuring of the fields. There was no indication for the continuation of Roman or medieval settlement into the site, as identified previously on adjacent land.	
Project dates	23 September – 3 October 2025	
Project type	Archaeological trench evaluation	
Previous work	Geophysical magnetometer survey	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Cricklade, Wiltshire	
Study area (m ² /ha)	c.3.5 hectares	
Site co-ordinates	SU 0944 9310 & SU 0962 9304	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	AC archaeology	
Project design (WSI) originator	AC archaeology	
Project Manager	Laurence Vinnels	
Project Officer	George Gandham	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum)	Content:
Physical	Not retained	N/A
Paper	Not retained	N/A
Digital	OASIS report uploaded	Report pdf
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
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