

LAND AT HIGH VIEW, IDMISTON, WILTSHIRE

(NGR SU 19207 36597)

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

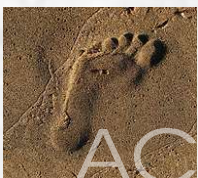
Wiltshire Council planning reference PL/2025/04645
(Condition 9)

Prepared by:
Laurence Vinnels

On behalf of:
DCLI builders

Report No: ACA0497/2/0

Date: April 2026



archaeology

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Approved by	Laurence Vinnels

Acknowledgements

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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC Archaeology and Heritage 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 and Heritage during March 2026 on land at High View, Idmiston, Wiltshire (NGR SU 19207 36597). The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of one trench measuring 30m in length and 1.5m wide. The trench was positioned to determine if the projected route of the Roman Road from Salisbury to Silchester (The Portway) extended through the site.

The evaluation recorded a single ditch. This was undated but corresponded with a former field boundary depicted on the 1844 Idmiston Parish tithe map. No evidence for the route of the Roman road was exposed and no pre-modern finds were recovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC Archaeology and Heritage during March 2026 on land at High View, Idmiston, Wiltshire (NGR SU 19207 36597). The evaluation formed a stage in a programme of archaeological work required by Wiltshire Council as Condition 9 of planning reference PL/2025/04645. The scope of the work was agreed in consultation with the Wiltshire Council Assistant County Archaeologist.
- 1.2 The site is located on the current northeast extent of Porton and approximately 800m south of Idmiston. It comprises a single plot, currently occupied by two dwellings, with associated driveway and gardens bounded by agricultural fields to the north and east, a farm access track to the south, and Idmiston Road to the west. It is situated on generally level ground at a height of 81m above Ordnance Datum within an area that has been terraced into a moderately steep incline that slopes downwards to the west. The underlying solid geology comprises Cretaceous chalk of the Seaford Chalk Formation. There are no superficial deposits recorded (British Geological Survey Online Viewer 2026).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is located to the northeast of the Porton Conservation area and the historic core of Porton. The church of St Nicholas was constructed in the late 19th century on the site of the 14th century chapel of St Nicholas (Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER) ref. SU13NE455). Approximately 150m west of the site is the location of a possible Neolithic flint mine, which was later used as a quarry for flint and chalk in the 19th and 20th centuries. Several pieces of worked flint tools have been recovered from the quarry site, including two thumb-nail scrapers and a fabricator (HER ref. SU13NE103). The 1844 Idmiston Parish tithe map depicts two wider strip fields located in the west of the site and extending to the north and south.
- 2.2 Immediately to the southeast of the site a programme of archaeological work, comprising a desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation was carried out by Wessex Archaeology (Freer 2016). The key archaeological potential was the putative route of The Portway, the Salisbury to Silchester Roman road, which is mapped by the Ordnance Survey as passing through the area in which the Wessex Archaeology investigations took place. The geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation recorded a number of former field boundaries of 19th century date, earlier ridge and furrow, and the location of a 20th century railway siding associated with The Experimental Station at Porton Down. The evaluation included a number of trenches along the line of the Roman road shown on the Ordnance Survey maps but found no evidence for this or any associated finds or features; it was suggested that the route may lie to the northwest along the line of a later road depicted on the Idmiston Parish tithe map.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character, date and significance of any archaeological features, deposits and finds within the site. This is with particular reference to the potential for the route of the Salisbury to Silchester Roman road to be located within the site. 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 as a second stage of fieldwork.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design prepared by AC Archaeology and Heritage (Vinnells 2026), the Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Assessment and Fieldwork in Wiltshire and Swindon Borough* (2025) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' 2023 documents, *Standard for Archaeological Field Evaluation* and *Universal Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. The work comprised the machine excavation of one trench 30m in length and 1.5m wide. The location of the trench is shown on Figure 1 and was positioned to provide good coverage across the site.
- 4.2 The trench was located with a Leica Net rover GPS accurate to 10mm. The removal of soils within the trench 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 and Heritage *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 2014). Detailed sections and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20, while all site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction (Plan Fig. 1; Plate 1)

The trench was located in the centre of the site, measured 30m long and aligned northwest-southeast. Natural subsoil (context 102), which comprised light greyish white chalk, was present at a depth of 0.4m below the existing ground surface. It was overlain by two modern made ground deposits (101 and 105), beneath modern gravel driveway (106) and topsoil (100). Consistent with the topography more generally on the site, the trench demonstrated that the site had been terraced into the hillside to the east. A single linear feature comprising a ditch (F103) was present. Tabulated context descriptions for the trench is provided in Appendix 1. No pre-modern finds were recovered.

5.2 Ditch F103 (Detailed plan Fig. 2a; Section Fig. 2b; Plate 2)

This was aligned northeast to southwest and measured 1.14m wide and 0.05m deep with gradual rounded sides and flat base. It contained a single fill (104) composed of mid reddish brown silty clay loam.

6. COMMENTS (Fig. 3)

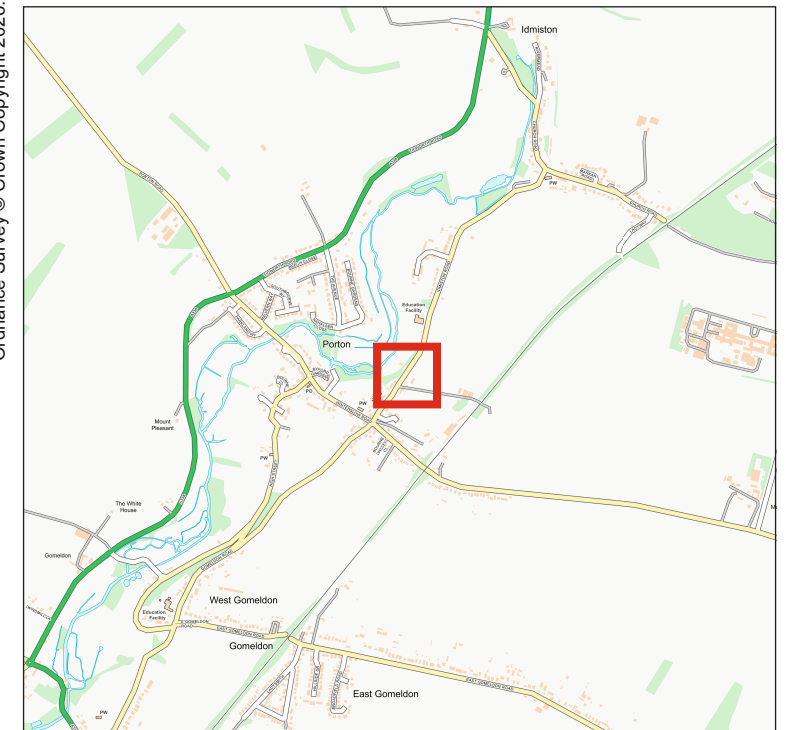
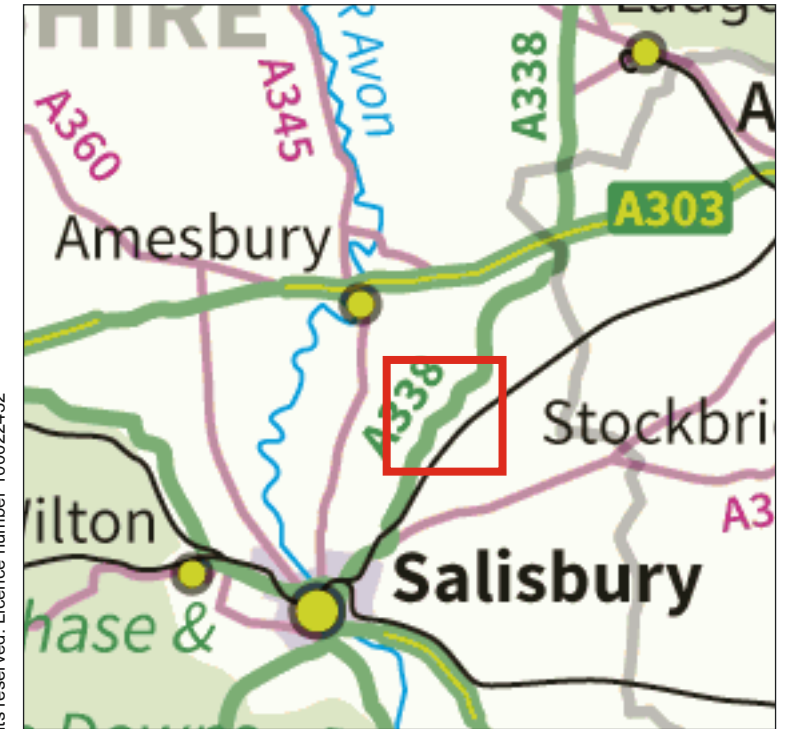
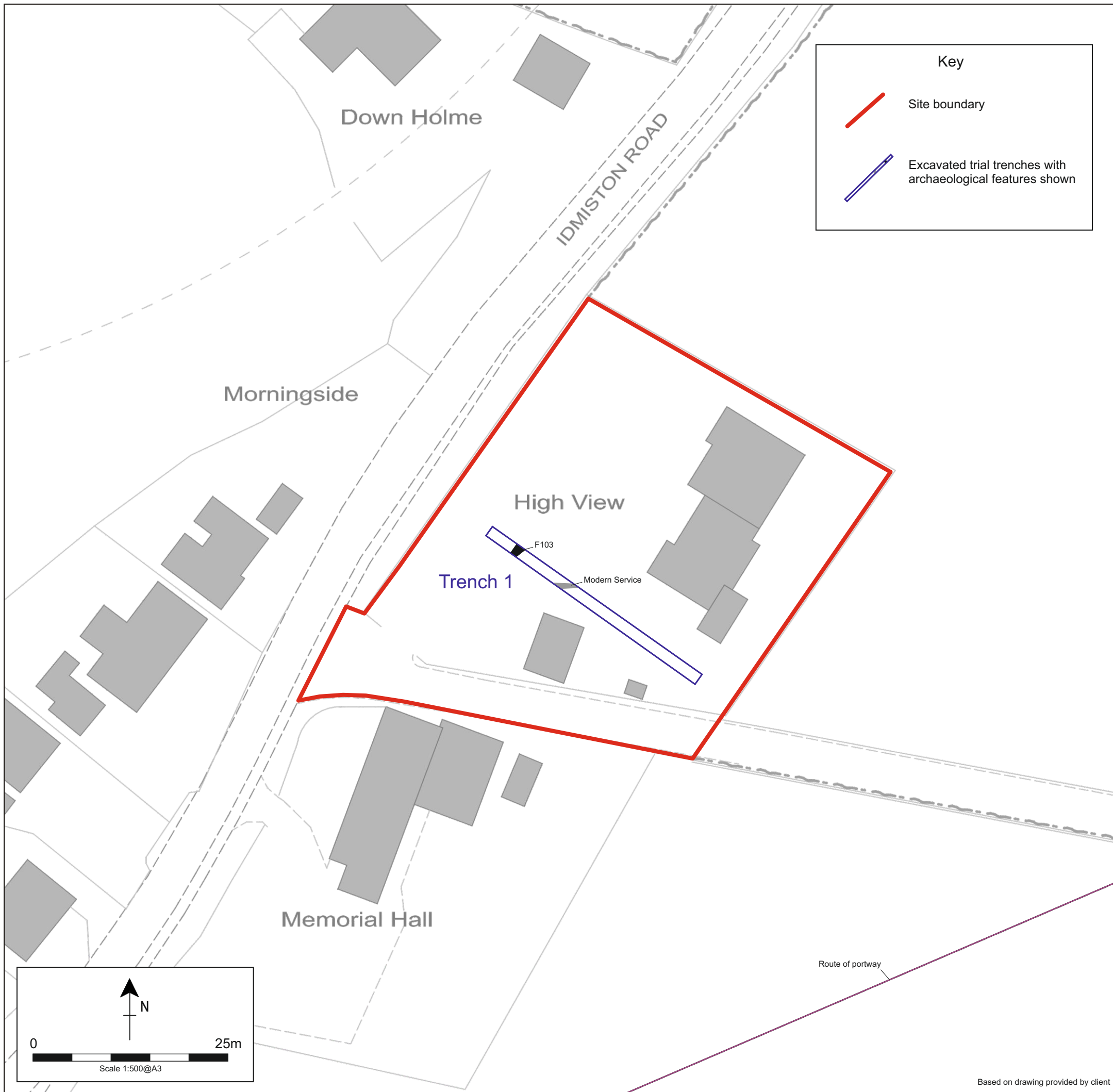
- 6.1 The evaluation recorded a single undated ditch. Although undated, its position corresponds with a former field boundary depicted on the 1844 Idmiston Parish tithe map (Fig. 3). This was removed prior to the 1877 First-Edition Ordnance Survey map. The ditch is therefore of likely medieval to post-medieval origin.
- 6.2 No evidence that could be associated with the suspected Salisbury to Silchester Roman road was exposed, and no pre-modern finds were recovered as residual material from the modern overlying made ground and soil layers. Although no evidence for the route was exposed, the extent of modern terracing evident would have removed any potential for shallow archaeological remains, especially in the east of the site where the depth of the terracing is greater.

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 7.1 The finds, paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC Archaeology and Heritage, at 2-4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ under the unique project code of **ACA0489** and an accession number **TSM-AN37** issued from the Salisbury Museum, Salisbury. It will be held until it is known if any further archaeological work on the site is required.
- 7.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed using the unique identifier **540470**, which will include a digital copy of the approved version of this report.

8. SOURCES CONSULTED

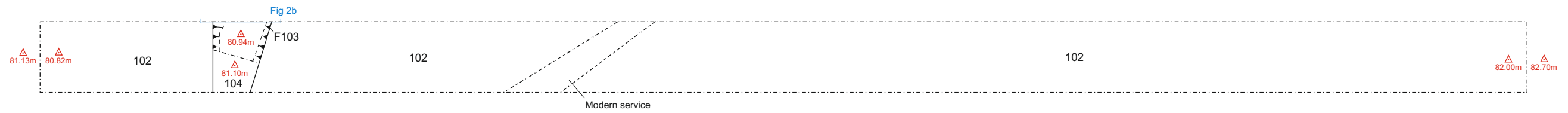
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Vinnels, L. 2026, *Land at High View, Idmiston, Wiltshire: Project Design for a programme of archaeological work*. Unpublished AC Archaeology and Heritage document reference ACA0497/1/0.
Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record, Accessed April 2026, <https://services.wiltshire.gov.uk/HistoryEnvRecord/Home/Index>.



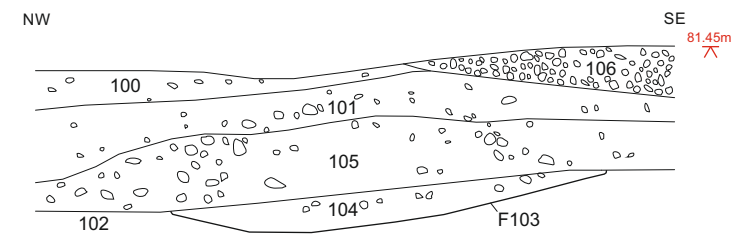
PROJECT
Land at High View, Idmiston, Wiltshire

TITLE
Fig. 1: Location of site and excavated trench showing archaeological feature in relation to the existing site plan

a) Plan of Trench 1



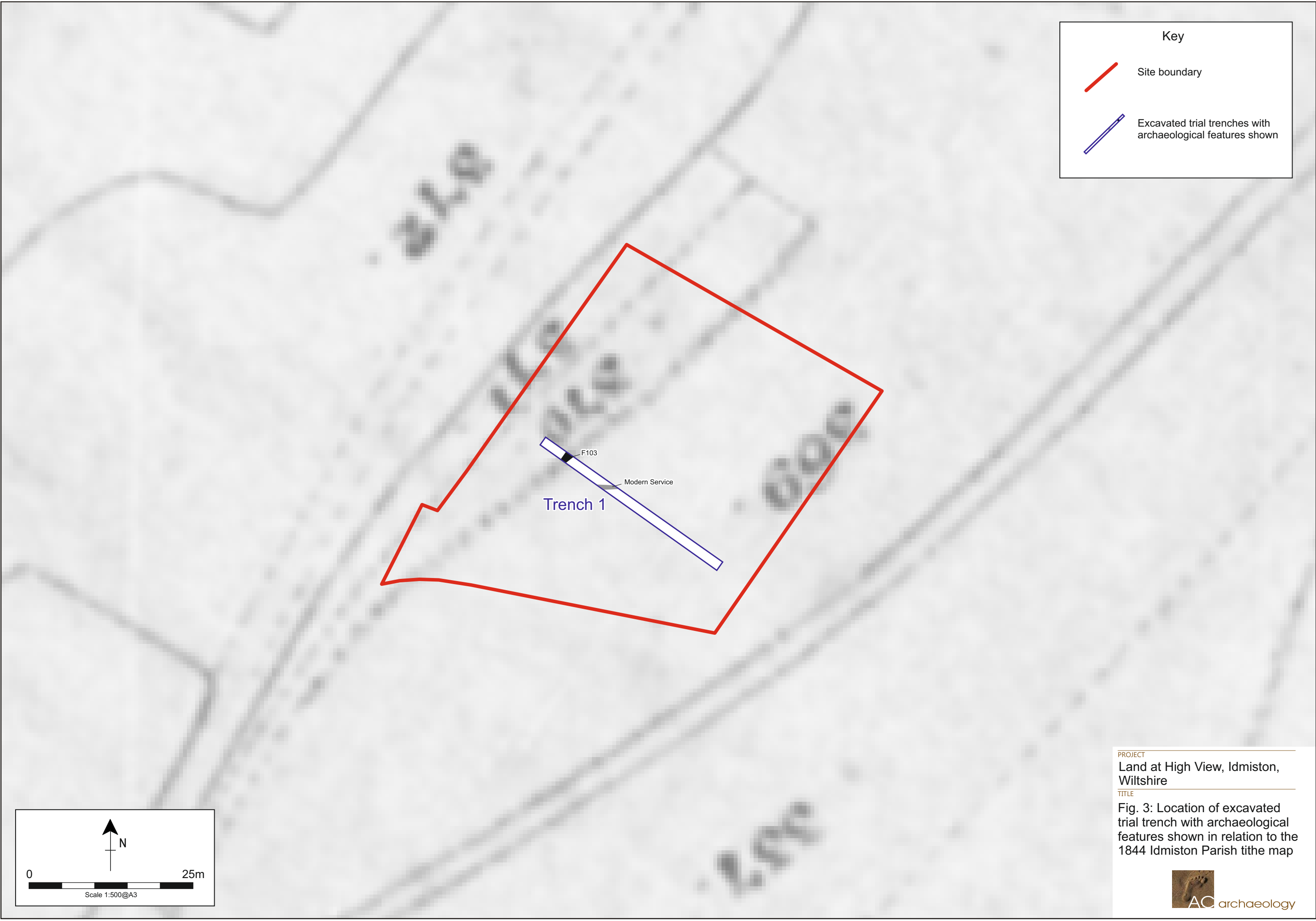
b) Section of ditch F103



PROJECT
Land at High View, Idmiston,
Wiltshire
TITLE
Fig. 2: Trench 1, plan and
section

0 5m
Scale 1:100@A3
Plan

0 1m
Scale 1:20@A3
Sections



Key



Site boundary



Excavated trial trenches with
archaeological features shown

F103

Modern Service

Trench 1

PROJECT

Land at High View, Idmiston,
Wiltshire

TITLE

Fig. 3: Location of excavated
trial trench with archaeological
features shown in relation to the
1844 Idmiston Parish tithe map



archaeology



Plate 1: Trench 1, general view with ditch F103 in foreground, looking southeast (1m scale)



Plate 2: Trench 1, ditch F103, looking northeast (1m scale)

Appendix 1

Tabulated context descriptions by trench



APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 1		Length 30m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
100	Mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.1m	Topsoil	
101	Mid reddish brown silty clay loam	0.1-0.3m	Made ground	
102	Light greyish white chalk	0.4m+	Natural Bedrock	
F103	Linear feature aligned NE-SW, measuring 1.14m wide and 0.05m deep with gradual rounded sides and flat base	0.4-0.45m	Cut of Ditch	
104	Mid reddish brown silty clay loam	0.4-0.45m	Fill of ditch F103	
105	Mid reddish brown silty clay	0.3-0.4m	Made ground	
106	Mid greyish pink gravel	0-0.12m	Modern gravel drive	

b.g.s = below ground surface

Appendix 2

OASIS form

APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Land at High View, Idmiston, Wiltshire	
Short description	An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC Archaeology and Heritage during March 2026 on land at High View, Idmiston, Wiltshire (NGR SU 19207 36597). The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of one trench measuring 30m in length and 1.5m wide. The trench was positioned to determine if the projected route of the Roman Road from Salisbury to Silchester (The Portway) extended through the site. The evaluation recorded a single ditch. This was undated but corresponded with a former field boundary depicted on the 1844 Idmiston Parish tithe map. No evidence for the route of the Roman road was exposed and no pre-modern finds were recovered.	
Project dates	26 March 2026	
Project type	Archaeological trench evaluation	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Idmiston, Wiltshire	
Study area (m ² /ha)	c.0.5 hectares	
Site co-ordinates	SU 19207 36597	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	AC Archaeology and Heritage	
Project design (WSI) originator	AC Archaeology and Heritage	
Project Manager	Laurence Vinnels	
Project Officer	Sean O'Regan	
MONUMENT TYPE		
	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum)	Content:
Physical	The Salisbury Museum, Devizes	None
Paper	The Salisbury Museum, Salisbury	Context sheets, graphics and registers
Digital	OASIS report uploaded	Report pdf, digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Vinnels, L. 2026. <i>Land at High View, Idmiston, Wiltshire: Results of an archaeological trench evaluation</i>. Unpublished AC Archaeology and Heritage report, ref. ACA0497/2/0.		

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