

**LAND OFF ASHLEY COOMBE,
WARMINSTER, WILTSHIRE**

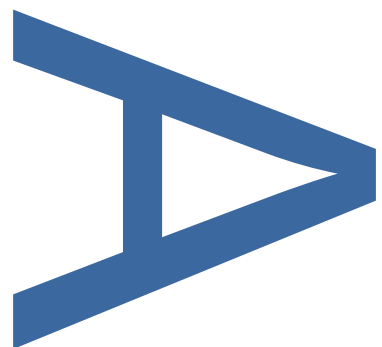
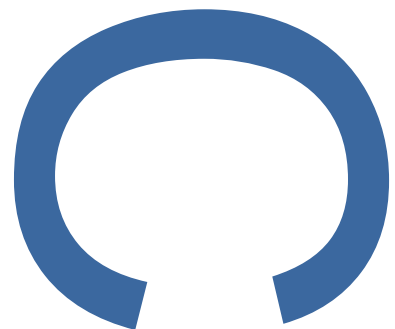
**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION REPORT**

PCA REPORT NO: R18567

SITE CODE: WACW26

ACCESSION NUMBER: DZSWS:20-2026

JULY 2026



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

LAND OFF ASHLEY COOMBE, WARMINSTER, WILTSHIRE: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Issue 1: Issued for Approval

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Planning Ref: PL/2025/10007

Central NGR: ST 87115 43593

Accession Number: DZSWS:20-2026

Site Code: WACW26

Commissioning Client: Landgag Heritage

Written by: Dominic McAtominey, BSc, PCA Winchester

Project Manager: Maisie Marshall, MRes, ACIfA, PCA Winchester

Contractor: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (Winchester)
5 Red Deer Court
Elm Road
Winchester
Hampshire SO22 5LX

Tel: 01962 849 549
E-mail: mmarshall@pre-construct.com
Web: www.pre-construct.com

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code		K11273
Text Prepared by:	Dominic McAtominey	25/06/26
Graphics Prepared by:	Joanna Nastaszyc	10/06/26
Graphics Checked by:	Mark Roughley	10/06/26
Project Manager:	Maisie Marshall	01/07/26

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) was commissioned by Landgage Heritage to undertake an archaeological evaluation on Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire.

The evaluation comprised the excavation of 22no 30m x 1.8m trenches targeting possible features revealed by geophysical survey. The array of trenches was intended to provide a 4% sample of the Site in order to establish its archaeological potential.

Archaeological features were recorded cut into natural geology in trenches; 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17 and 19. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the agreed WSI and has shown that the geophysics results were generally reliable to the south of the Site.

Trenches 7, 8, 9, 12 and 19 all contained evidence of the large curvilinear ditch, identified on the geophysical survey, and is thought to represent an enclosure ditch. With the exception of the cremation in Trench 5 all archaeological features seen on the Site were within this enclosure ditch.

The ring ditch identified in Trenches 11 and 17 could indicate the presence of a drip gully from a round house with smaller pits in Trench 17 possibly post holes for the house, given their proximity to the ring ditch. It is likely that the features found during the evaluation represent a small Iron Age enclosed settlement of local significance.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) was commissioned by Landgage Heritage to undertake an archaeological evaluation on Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire (hereafter 'the Site', centred ST 87115 43893; **Figure 1**). The Site is the subject of a proposed development of 77 dwellings, public open space, landscaping and sustainable urban drainage system, with vehicular access for which planning permission (Planning Reference PL/2025/10007) has been requested from the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Wiltshire County Council.
- 1.1.2 The evaluation forms part of a staged approach to understanding and addressing the archaeological implications of the proposed development and follows the advice of Neil Adam, Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service (WCAS). The archaeological evaluation was informed by earlier archaeological investigations of the study Site, including an Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (DBA, Landgage Heritage 2025) and a geophysical survey (Lefort Geophysics 2025).
- 1.1.3 The scope of the evaluation was agreed with WCAS (Landgage Heritage 2026, PCA 2026) and was intended to provide information toward understanding the archaeological implications of the proposed development in support of the planning application and determining the subsequent treatment of any archaeological remains found within it, in consultation with the ACA.
- 1.1.4 The evaluation comprised the excavation of 22no, 30m X 1.8m trenches which were excavated between the 27th April to 8th May 2026.
- 1.1.5 This document has been prepared in accordance with the *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standard for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2023) and the *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Universal Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2023), *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Assessment and Fieldwork in Wiltshire and Swindon Borough* (WCAS, 2025) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (Historic England 2015). PCA is a CIfA Registered Archaeological Organisation and is bound by its code of conduct.

1.2 Location, Topography and Geology

- 1.2.1 The Site occupies an area of 5.11 hectares (ha), and is currently arable fields bounded by further fields to the north and south, the residential area of Ashley Coombe to the west and arable fields and a water treatment plant to the east.
- 1.2.2 The site has a height above ordnance datum (aOD) of approximately 137.2m aOD over the southern and central area of the application site, which slopes downwards at the northern site boundary to approximately 122m aOD.

- 1.2.3 The underlying geology of the application site comprises of Shaftesbury Sandstone Member-Sandstone at the northern application site boundary, and Boyne Hollow Chert Member-Sandstone in the central and southern areas.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological potential of the Site was detailed in an Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment (HEDBA) prepared by Landgage Heritage and is not fully repeated here. The HEDBA gave the following summary of the Site's archaeological potential:

This assessment found that the study site has a known potential for the presence of Prehistoric below ground remains associated with the identified ring ditch and possibly the other enclosures in the recent geophysical survey. There is also a known potential for Post-Medieval and Modern remains to be present on the study site likely associated with former field boundaries and services.

This assessment has found that there is a general potential for Medieval below ground remains associated with agricultural activities and findspots.

There is a low potential for Roman and Saxon below ground remains based on the distance of activity recorded from the study site.

1.4 Geophysical Survey

- 1.4.1 A geophysical survey (Gradiometer) was conducted by Lefort Geophysics in 2025 which revealed several likely archaeological features particularly in the south of the Site. The geophysical survey report gave the following summary of the findings:

The survey area measures approximately 7.11ha and of this a total of 6.49ha has been covered by geophysical survey.

A clear settlement enclosure with at least one visible ring ditch inside was detected in the southern third of the dataset. Broad, shallow ditches or trackways cross the southern two thirds of the dataset and may run towards a former quarry. Other potential archaeological features include the fragmentary remains of an earlier field system.

The other responses detected include numerous agricultural features, geological variations, trends of uncertain origin and at least three modern services.

2 AIMS

2.1 Archaeological Evaluation

2.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation as stated in the Landgate Heritage Written Scheme of investigation (WSI) were:

- *Provide an understanding of the extent, nature and level of archaeological interest of the potential remains identified by the geophysical survey within the application site (Lefort, 2025). This will test the reliability of the results of the previous geophysical survey and will test the application site for the presence of additional, as yet undetected buried archaeological remains.*
- *To establish whether archaeological remains are present within the application site.*
- *To understand the extent, nature and significance of any archaeological features on the application site, and to consider their archaeological interest in light of local and regional archaeological frameworks.*
- *To generate an archive which will allow future research of the evidence to be undertaken if appropriate.*
- *To disseminate the results of the work in a format and manner proportionate to the significance of the findings.*

The evaluation may confirm or enhance understanding of known potential remains of local significance, which would result in public benefits to the local community and provide public relations benefits to the development.

In addition, it is possible that the evaluation works will uncover unexpected remains of archaeological interest, that require more specialist measures to fully assess in accordance with the objectives listed above. If this is the case, further methods, aims and objectives will be developed, in liaison with the ACA, the archaeology contractor and Landgate Heritage.

A report on the results of the evaluation will be prepared, which aims to identify the potential of the results and any further analysis and publication that is appropriate. The report will also provide sufficient information so that the requirements of the Local Planning Authority and their archaeological advisor are satisfied in keeping with current archaeological standard and guidance.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The following presents a summary of the evaluation results based upon the Site archive, which comprises a Site diary, trench recording sheets, drawings and digital photographs. A summary of recorded contexts is provided in a Trench Index in **Appendix 1** and a sample of photographs of the Trenches appear in **Appendix 2**. The archive is held at PCA's Winchester office under the site code **WACW26** and will in due course be deposited with Wiltshire Museum under the accession number **DZSWS:20-2026**.

3.2 Methodology

- 3.2.1 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken following the methodology that was detailed in the WSI and the Method Statement (PCA 2026), which was approved by the Local Planning Authority in advance of the commencement of works.
- 3.2.2 The evaluation comprised the excavation of 22no 30m x 1.8m trenches (**Figure 2, Plates 1 & 2**) targeting possible features revealed by geophysical survey. The array of trenches was intended to provide a 4% sample of the Site in order to establish its archaeological potential.
- 3.2.3 Archaeological features were recorded cut into natural geology in trenches; 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17 and 19 (**Figure 3**). Trenches 1 – 4, 6, 13 – 16, 18 and 20 – 22 were blank. Archaeological features were excavated by hand to define their extent, date and characteristics.

3.3 Summary of Deposition Sequence

- 3.3.1 The deposit sequence shown by the evaluation trenches was generally consistent across the Site, (**Figure 4, Plates 3 & 4**). Trenches revealed a range of natural geologies consisting of either a mid-orange brown, yellow brown or grey brown sandstone, orange brown, grey green or grey yellow clay with sandstone or greenish brown sand. Occasional instances of natural flint were noted. Natural geology was observed between 0.26m to 0.41m below ground level (BGL). Covering the natural was topsoil which was recorded as a mid to dark brown grey sandy clay with variable quantities of sandstone inclusions.

3.4 Archaeological Features (Figures 5 & 6)

- 3.4.1 The large linear geophysical anomaly in Trenches 4, 5, 13, 14 and 21 as well as a separate anomaly in Trench 20 were not identified as archaeological features and were investigated but found to be natural or geological in origin.
- 3.4.2 Trench 5 contained a single pit [504] which was a small and likely severely truncated cremation pit. The cremation pit was circular in shape measuring 0.25m in diameter and 0.05m in depth with steep concave sides and a concave base (**Plate 5**). Cremation fill (503) consisted of cremated human bone, light grey white ash and yellow brown clayey sand with inclusions of small flint, sandstone and charcoal fragments. Small fragments of copper alloy were recovered

from this context, along with burnt natural stone which is thought to be the result of cremation heat on natural underlying bedrock. No evidence of a cremation vessel was seen but two sherds of very abraded roman pottery were recovered from the pit but are thought to be intrusive.

- 3.4.3 Trench 7 contained two archaeological features which correlated with the geophysical survey. Ditch [703], was on a north - south alignment measured 3m wide, 0.5m deep with moderately steep concave sides, a flat base and contained a single mid grey orange clayey sand fill (704) with frequent sandstone inclusions. Pottery dated to 600-200BC and a small piece of copper alloy sheet were recovered from this context (**Plate 6**).
- 3.4.4 Ditch [705] was aligned northeast – southeast, measured 1.9m wide and 0.19m deep with moderately steep concave sides and a flat base. Ditch [705] contained a single fill (706) which consisted of a light-yellow brown silty clay with small to medium sandstone inclusions, no finds were recovered from this context.
- 3.4.5 Trench 8 contained three features; two pits and a single ditch, the ditch is thought to be a continuation of Ditch [703] in Trench 7.
- 3.4.6 Pit [803] was sub circular in plan measured 0.89m long, 0.75m wide and 0.30m deep with steep straight sides and a flat base (**Plate 7**).] contained a single fill (804) which consisted of a dark brown grey silty sand with frequent small to medium sandstone inclusions. Pit [805] was subcircular in shape measured 1.25m long, 1.20m wide and 0.54m deep with near vertical sides and a flat base (**Plate 8**). Pit [805] contained a single fill (806) which consisted of a mid-grey brown silty sand with frequent medium to large sandstone and small to medium charcoal inclusions. Pottery dated to 600-200BC was recovered from both pits with burnt flint and struck flint also recovered from (806).
- 3.4.7 Trench 9 contained a large ditch and a single small pit. Ditch [904] was aligned north – south, measured 2.56m wide and 0.86m deep with steep concave sides and concave to flat base (**Plate 9**). Ditch [904] contained a single fill (903) which consisted of a mid-grey brown sandy clay moderate small to large sandstone inclusions and sparse small charcoal and burnt clay inclusions. Pottery dated to 600-200BC, struck flint and fired clay were recovered from the fill. Ditch [904] is thought to be a continuation of Ditch [703] and the ditch seen in Trench 8.
- 3.4.8 Immediately to the west of ditch [904] was a small pit or possible posthole [906], sub oval in plan, measured 0.42m long, 0.29m wide and 0.24m deep with steep straight sides and a concave base. Feature [904] contained a single fill (905) which consisted of a dark grey brown silty clay with frequent small charcoal and sparse small sandstone inclusions. Pottery dated to 600-200BC was recovered; two sherds of very abraded Roman pottery were also recovered but are thought to be intrusive.
- 3.4.9 Trench 10 contained two pits [1005] and [1007]. Pit [1005] was circular, measured 1.15m in diameter and 0.6m deep with steep concave sides and a concave base (**Plate 10**). Pit [1005]

contained two fills, lower fill (1004) consisted of a dark brown grey silty sand and the upper fill (1003) consisted of mid brown grey sandy silt, both had frequent small to large sandstone and sparse small charcoal inclusions. Pottery dated to 450-200BC was recorded from both fills.

- 3.4.10 Pit [1007] was irregular in plan, measured 0.7m long, 0.66m wide and 0.3m deep with steep concave sides and a concave base. Pit [1007] contained a single fill (1006) which consisted of a dark brown grey silty sand with frequent small to medium sandstone small charcoal and fired clay inclusions.
- 3.4.11 Trench 11 contained two intercutting features Ditch [1104] and Pit [1106]. Ditch [1104], aligned north - south measured 0.28m wide and 0.24m deep with moderate concave sides and a concave base. Ditch [1104] contained a single fill (1103) which consisted of a mid-grey brown clayey sand with frequent sandstone inclusions. No finds were recovered from this context. Ditch [1104] is thought to be part of a ring ditch also seen in Trench 17.
- 3.4.12 Ditch [1104] was cut by pit [1106], sub circular in plan, measured 0.68m long, 0.55m wide and 0.31m deep with an undercut convex western edge and a flat base. Pit [1106] contained a single fill (1105) which consisted of a dark grey brown clayey sand mottled with large patches of charcoal with frequent sandstone inclusions. Pottery dated to 450-200BC was recovered from this context.
- 3.4.13 Trench 12 contained a large ditch and a single small pit. Ditch [1206] measured 2.05m wide and 0.3m deep with shallow concave sides and a flat base (**Plate 11**). Ditch [1206] contained a single fill (1205) which consisted of a mid-orange brown silty clay with small to medium sandstone inclusions. A single sherd of pottery with a 1150/1100-400/350BC date was recovered.
- 3.4.14 Pit [1204] was a small pit or possible posthole circular in plan, measured 0.4m in diameter and 0.38m deep with steep concave sides and a concave base. Pit [1204] contained a single fill (1203) which consisted of a dark reddish brown silty sand with frequent small to medium sandstone and small charcoal inclusions. Iron Age to Romano British pottery and a possible struck flint were recovered from this context.
- 3.4.15 Trench 17 contained two ditches and five pits. Ditches [1703] and [1713] are thought to be continuation of the ring ditch seen in Trench 11 and are on a northwest - southeast alignment and measured 1.21m wide and 0.17m deep and 0.55m wide and 0.25m deep respectively, with moderate concave sides and a concave base (**Plates 12**). Ditch [1703] contained a single fill (1704) which consisted of a mid-grey brown silty clay with common small to medium sandstone and sparse small charcoal inclusions. Ditch [1713] contained a single fill (1711) which consisted of a mid-grey orange clayey sand with moderate small sandstone and sparse small flint inclusions. Both Ditches contained pottery 450-200BC.

- 3.4.16 Below [1713] was a small concentration of fine gravel, this was investigated and considered to be natural.
- 3.4.17 Features [1705] and [1707] were intercutting small shallow pits. Pit [1705] was circular in plan measured 0.2m in diameter and 0.07m deep with shallow concave sides and a concave base. Pit [1705] was cut by feature [1707] sub oval in plan, measured 0.3m long, 0.28m wide and 0.25m deep with steep concave sides and a concave base. Both contained a single fill (1706) and (1708) which consisted of a mid-grey orange clayey silt with frequent large sandstone inclusions. It is thought that pit [1707] was a deeper recut of pit [1705] with the natural stone recovered from (1708) considered to be deliberate packing.
- 3.4.18 Pits [1709] and [1714] are both thought to be postholes, both were circular in plan, and measured, 0.32m in diameter and 0.15m deep and 0.4m in diameter and 0.15m deep respectively. Posthole [1709] had vertical sides and a flat base and [1714] steep concave sides and a concave base. Both contained a single fill (1710) & (1715) which consisted of a dark grey brown clayey sand with frequent sandstone and charcoal inclusions. Pit [1709] also contained single large piece of sandstone, thought to be a deliberate packing stone.
- 3.4.19 Pit [1716] was sub oval in plan, measured 1.6m long, 1.23m wide and 0.27m deep with shallow concave sides and a concave base (**Plate 13**). Pit [1716] contained a single fill (1717) which consisted of a mid-orange grey clayey silt with frequent sandstone inclusions.
- 3.4.20 Pottery dated to 450-200BC was recovered from all features in Trench 17 excluding pit [1705].
- 3.4.21 Trench 19 contained a single ditch [1904] aligned northwest - southeast, measured 1.35m wide and 0.25m deep with a concave eastern side, straight western side and a flat base. Ditch [1904] contained a single fill (1903) which consisted of a light grey brown silty sand with frequent small sandstone and charcoal inclusions. Pottery dated to 450-200BC was recovered.

3.5 Conclusion

- 3.5.1 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the agreed WSI and has shown that the geophysics results were generally reliable to the south of the Site.
- 3.5.2 Trenches 7, 8, 9, 12 and 19 all contained evidence of the large curvilinear ditch, identified on the geophysical survey, and is thought to represent an enclosure ditch. With the exception of the cremation in Trench 5 all archaeological features seen on the Site were within this enclosure ditch.
- 3.5.3 The ring ditch identified in Trenches 11 and 17 could indicate the presence of a drip gully from a round house with smaller pits in Trench 17 possibly post holes for the house, given their proximity to the ring ditch.
- 3.5.4 It is likely that the features found during the evaluation represent a small Iron Age enclosed settlement of local significance.

4 ARCHIVE PREPARATION AND DEPOSITION

4.1 The Site Archive

- 4.1.1 The Site archive, to include all project records and cultural material produced by the project, will be prepared in accordance with 'Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage' (UKIC 1990) and the Institute for Archaeologists 'Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives' (CIfA 2014). On completion of the project PCA will arrange for the archive to be deposited with Wiltshire Museum, Devizes under the accession number DZSWS:20-2026.

4.2 Copyright

- 4.2.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. Wiltshire Museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms to the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003. Further distribution and uses of the report either in its entirety or part thereof in paper or electronic form is prohibited without the prior consent of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.
- 4.2.2 The licence extends to the use of all documents arising from this project in all matters relating directly to the project, as well as for bona fide research purposes (which includes the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record).
- 4.2.3 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the content of this report. However, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd cannot accept any liability in respect of, or resulting from, errors, inaccuracies or omissions this report contains.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The evaluation was supervised by Dominic McAtomey with Site assistance from Edwin Whyatt, Oliver Farmer, Izzy Henderson, Anthony Matthews, Tom Squibb, Matthew Shugar and Declyn Williams. This report was prepared by Dominic McAtomey with graphics prepared by Joanna Nastaszyc. The project was managed for PCA by Maisie Marshall.

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Pre-Construct Archaeology, 2026, Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire: Method Statement for Archaeological Evaluation.

Appendix 1: Context Index

Trench	Context Number	Type	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m) BGL
1	101	Layer	Loose mid/dark grey sandy clay with sandstone pieces	Topsoil	0-0.31m
	102	Layer	Friable mid-orangey brown with sandstone pieces	Natural	0.31m+
2	201	Layer	Loose mid grey sandy clay with sandstone pieces	Topsoil	0-0.38m
	202	Layer	Loose mid greyish green clayey sand with sandstone pieces	Natural	0.38m+
3	301	Layer	Loose mid/dark grey brown sandy clay with sandstone pieces	Topsoil	0-0.4m
	302	Layer	Friable mid-grey green clayey sand with sandstone pieces	Natural	0.4m+
4	401	Layer	Loose mid/dark brown grey sandy clay with sandstone pieces	Topsoil	0-0.35m
	402	Layer	Mid grey green clay sand with sandstone pieces	Natural	0.35m+
5	501	Layer	Loose mid/dark brown grey sandy clay with sandstone pieces	Topsoil	0-0.39m
	502	Layer	Friable mid orangey brown sandy clay	Natural	0.39m+
	503	Fill	Loose light grey white ash mixed with mid yellow brown clayey sand with some small stones	Cremated remains, fill of [504]	-
	504	Cut	Circular pit with steep flat sides and a slightly concave base	Cut of small pit	-
6	601	Layer	Loose mid/dark brown grey sandy clay with sandstone pieces	Topsoil	0-0.35m
	602	Layer	Loose dark orangey brown sandstone pieces	Natural	0.35m+
7	701	Layer	Friable light greyish brown sandy clay with frequent small to medium sandstone inclusions	Topsoil	0-0.26m
	702	Layer	Friable mid-brownish orange sandy clay with occasional medium sandstone	Natural	0.26m+
	703	Cut	Linear ditch with moderately convex sides and a flat base. southwest to northeast orientation.	Cut of ditch	-
	704	Fill	Soft mid greyish orange brown clayey sand with frequent unsorted sandstone inclusions throughout fill	Fill of ditch [703]	-

	705	Cut	Linear with moderately steep concave sides and a flat base. Northeast to southwest orientation	Cut of ditch	-
	706	Fill	Soft light yellow brown silty clay with natural small to medium sized stones.	Fill of ditch [705]	-
8	801	Layer	Friable light greyish brown sandy clay with frequent small to medium sandstone inclusions	Topsoil	0-0.34m
	802	Layer	Friable mid greyish yellow clayey sand with frequent small to medium sandstone	Natural	0.34m+
	803	Cut	Sub-circular pit with steep sloping sides and a flat base	Cut of small pit	-
	804	Fill	Loose dark brown grey silty sand with frequent sandstone pieces of various size	Fill of small pit [803]	-
	805	Cut	Sub-circular pit with near vertical sides and a flat base	Cut of large pit	-
	806	Fill	Friable mid greyish brown silty sand with frequent medium to large sandstone pieces and charcoal flecks	Fill of large pit [805]	-
9	901	Layer	Friable mid-grey sandy clay	Topsoil	0-0.27
	902	Layer	Compact mid orange clay/mid green sand with sandstone rubble	Natural	0.27m+
	903	Fill	Friable mid greyish brown sandy clay. 30% sandstone gravel poorly sorted with few specks of charcoal and burnt clay throughout	Fill of linear ditch [904]	-
	904	Cut	Linear ditch with moderately sloped sides and concave base and north to south orientation	Cut of linear ditch	-
	905	Fill	Friable dark greyish brown silty clay with 10% poorly sorted sandstone rubble, and frequent charcoal throughout fill	Fill of posthole [906]	-
	906	Cut	Sub-oval pit with steep sides and a concave base	Cut of posthole	-
10	1001	Layer	Loose dark brownish grey sandy clay with sandstone inclusions	Topsoil	0-0.32m
	1002	Layer	Loose mid greenish brown sand with sandstone inclusions	Natural	0.32m+
	1003	Fill	Soft brownish grey sandy silt with frequent small to large local stone and infrequent charcoal flecks	Upper fill of pi [1005]	-
	1004	Fill	Soft dark brownish grey silty sand with frequent small to large local stone and frequent charcoal flecks	Lower fill of pit [1005]	-
	1005	Cut	Sub-circular pit wit steep concave sides and shallow concave base	Cut of pit	-

	1006	Fill	Soft dark brownish grey silty sand with frequent small to large local stone, charcoal flecks and burnt clay	Fill of posthole/pit [1007]	-
	1007	Cut	Irregular shaped pit with steep concave sides and a concave base	Cut of pit	-
11	1101	Layer	Mid grey brown sandy clay	Topsoil	0-0.35m
	1102	Layer	Light greyish brown silty clay with flint	Natural	0.35m+
	1103	Fill	Friable mid greyish brown clayey sand with frequent stone inclusions	Single fill of gully [1004]	-
	1104	Cut	Linear ditch with concave side, rounded base, and north-south orientation. Truncated by later pit [1106]	Cut of gully	-
	1105	Fill	Friable mottled dark greyish brown with large patches of blackish brown charcoal clayey sand. Very frequent charcoal and stone inclusions	Single fill of small pit [1106]	-
	1106	Cut	Circular pit with convex western edge with significant undercut. Eastern edge has uncertain edge to its truncation and heavy rooting throughout. Pit cut truncates gully [1104]	Cut of small pit	-
12	1201	Layer	Mid grey brown sandy clay	Topsoil	0-0.32m
	1202	Layer	Light grey brown silty clay	Natural	0.32m+
	1203	Fill	Soft dark reddish brown silty sand with frequent local stone and charcoal flecks	Fill of posthole [1204]	-
	1204	Cut	Sub-circular pit with steep concave sides and concave base	Cut of posthole	-
	1205	Fill	Firm mid orange brown silty clay with natural stone inclusions	Fill of possible linear [1206]	-
	1206	Cut	Linear ditch with moderately shallow concave side, a flat base, and an east to west orientation	Cut of possible linear	-
13	1301	Layer	Mid grey brown sandy clay	Topsoil	0-0.4m
	1302	Layer	Mid orange brown clayey silt	Natural	0.4m+
14	1401	Layer	Mid grey brown sandy clay	Topsoil	0-0.32m
	1402	Layer	Mid orange brown clayey silt	Natural	0.32m+
15	1501	Layer	Loose dark brownish grey sandy clay	Topsoil	0-0.32m
	1502	Layer	Loose mid orangey brown sandy clay with sandstone inclusions	Natural	0.32m+
16	1601	Layer	Loose dark brown sandy clay with sandstone inclusions	Topsoil	0-0.36m
	1602	Layer	Loose mid orangey brown sandy clay with sandstone inclusions	Natural	0.36m+

17	1701	Layer	Friable mid brown sandy clay with occasional small to medium sandstone inclusions	Topsoil	0-0.33m
	1702	Layer	Friable to form mid orangey brown sandy clay with infrequent small sandstone inclusions	Natural	0.33m+
	1703	Cut	Linear ditch with gradual concave sides and a slightly concave base. Northwest to southeast orientation	Cut of ditch	-
	1704	Fill	Friable mid brown silty clay with occasional medium sandstone and infrequent small charcoal	Fill of ditch [1704]	-
	1705	Cut	Circular pit with short, shallow sides and a concave base. Truncated by pit/posthole cut [1707]	Cut of possible posthole	-
	1706	Fill	Soft mid greyish orange sandy clay with no inclusions	Fill of possible posthole [1705]	-
	1707	Cut	Sub oval pit with steep sloping sides and a concave base. Truncates older small pit [1705]	Cut of posthole	-
	1708	Fill	Soft mid greyish orange clayey silt with frequent large stones	Fill of posthole [1707]	-
	1709	Cut	Sub-circular pit with near vertical sides and flat base	Cut of pit/posthole	-
	1710	Fill	Friable mid brown silty clay with one large sandstone inclusion noted	Fill of pit/posthole [1709]	-
	1711	Fill	Soft mid greyish orange clayey sand with occasional unsorted sandstone and occasional unsorted small angular flints	Fill of ditch [1713]	-
	1712	Layer	Loose mid greyish orange flint gravel composed of small to medium angular and rounded flints with soft clayey sand	Natural lens below cut of ditch [1713]	-
	1713	Cut	Linear ditch with steep sloping sides and concave base	Cut of ring gully ditch	-
	1714	Cut	Sub-circular pit with steep sides and concave base	Cut of posthole	-
	1715	Fill	Soft dark greyish brown silty sand with frequent medium sized sandstone and charcoal	Fill of posthole [1714]	-
	1716	Cut	Sub-oval pit with gentle sloping sides and slightly concave base	Cut of pit	-
	1717	Fill	Soft mid orangey grey clayey silt with frequent sandstone inclusions especially towards base of fill	Fill of pit [1716]	-
18	1801	Layer	Loose dark greyish brown sandy clay with sandstone inclusions	Topsoil	0-0.4m

	1802	Layer	Loose light yellowish brown sand with sandstone inclusions	Natural	0.4m+
19	1901	Layer	Mid grey brown sandy clay	Topsoil	0-0.27m
	1902	Layer	Light greyish brown silty clay	Natural	0.27m+
	1903	Fill	Soft light greyish brown silty sand with frequent local stone and charcoal flecks	Fill of linear ditch [1904]	-
	1904	Cut	Linear ditch with concave sides, a flat base and north to south orientation	Cut of ditch	-
20	2001	Layer	Mid grey brown sandy clay	Topsoil	0-0.24m
	2002	Layer	Mid orange brown clayey silt	Natural	0.24m+
21	2101	Layer	Mid grey brown sandy clay	Topsoil	0-0.31m
	2102	Layer	Mid orange brown clayey silt	Natural	0.31m+
22	2201	Layer	Loose dark brownish grey sandy clay with sandstone inclusions	Topsoil	0-0.41m
	2202	Layer	Loose light yellowish brown silty sand with sandstone inclusions	Natural	0.41m+

Appendix 2 : Plates



Plate 1. Trench 14 view to northwest, scale 1m



Plate 2. Trench 8, view to east, scale 1m



Plate 3. Trench 7, south facing representative section, scale 1m



Plate 4. Trench 15, south east facing representative section, scale 1m



Plate 5. Post excavation shot of cremation pit [504], scale 0.4m



Plate 6. South facing section of ditch [703], scale 1m



Plate 7. East facing section of pit [803], scale 0.5m



Plate 8. West facing section of pit [805], scale 1m



Plate 9. South facing section of ditch [904], scale 1m



Plate 10. Plan shot of Pit [1005], scale 1m



Plate 11. Northeast facing section of ditch [1206], scale 1m



Plate 12. Plan shot of Ditch [1703], scale 1m



Plate 13. Northeast facing section of pit [1716], scale 1m

Appendix 3: Lithics – Laura Desrosiers-Whalley

Introduction

The evaluation at Ashley Coombe, Warminster, resulted in the recovery of a very small assemblage of lithic material, totalling only 20 struck pieces and a small quantity of unworked burnt flint (43g total).

The worked flint assemblage was recorded following standard technological and typological classifications and largely follows the methodology of Inizan et al (1999) with modifications and additions as indicated in the text by the author. Retouched tools were classified following standard British works such as Healy (1988) and Bamford (1985). Measurements were taken following the methodology of Saville (1980).

Discussion

The majority of the assemblage comprised generic knapping debitage, including 11 pieces of microdebitage (flakes measuring <10mm in their maximum dimension) five flakes. The remaining four pieces were one blade fragment, one blade-like flake, one core and one retouched scraper (Table X). The condition of the pieces was generally good, with most only displaying minor edge chipping from post-depositional damage. One piece was heavily burnt, likely from discard into a hearth after knapping. The raw materials utilised for the manufacture of this assemblage was varied in hue, but was generally of the high quality 'glassy' type of flint found in the superficial geological substrates, which varies from dark grey to lighter browns and is often speckled or mottled.

Table 1: The struck lithic assemblage

Context	Cut no.	Feature	Trench	Sample	Type	Count	Weight (g)
806	805	Pit	8		Blade fragment	1	8
903	904	Ditch	9		Retouched	1	18
903	904	Ditch	9		Blade-like flake	1	15
903	904	Ditch	9		Flake	1	7
903	904	Ditch	9		Flake	2	3
905	906	Pit	9	2	Micro-debitage <10mm	4	1
1004	1005	Pit	10	3	Micro-debitage <10mm	7	1
1203	1204	Pit	12		Core	1	55
1205	1206	Ditch	12		Flake	1	5
1704	1705	Pit	17		Flake	1	31
Total:						20	144

The date range of the struck lithic assemblage was varied, with some pieces, derived from blade-based reduction strategies, originating as early as the Mesolithic to Early Neolithic period, and larger, thicker, less precise pieces perhaps originating from as late as the Bronze Age to Iron Age.

The scraper, from ditch [904], was likely Late Neolithic to Bronze Age in origin. The piece was formed on a short, thick flake, with dorsal scars removed from both the proximal and distal ends. The retouch was steep, located all the way along the right margin and around the distal end, forming a convex scraping end.

The sole core recovered from the site, from pit [1204], was small and irregularly worked, with some thermal scars as well as struck flake scars present. The flake scars were short and fairly poorly detached, only removed from one face; however, incipient hertzian cones on three faces suggest that direct percussive force was applied to multiple areas before flakes were successfully detached. The small size of the piece, and the irregularity of its working, makes it likely that it is from the later prehistoric periods, where such opportunistic strategies are more common; most likely, the later Neolithic to Bronze Age.

Unworked Burnt Flint

Only a very small quantity of burnt flint was recovered from this site, all from environmental samples from three different features (Table 2).

Table 2: The unworked burnt flint

Context	Cut no.	Feature	Trench	Sample	Burnt stone (no.)	Burnt stone (wt: g)	Colour	Cortex	Condition
806	805	Pit	8	1	5	1	Unknown	None	Heavily burnt- discarded
905	906	Pit	9	2	31	8	Unknown	None	Heavily burnt- discarded
1105	1106	Pit	11	4	8	34	Unknown	Rough	Heavily burnt- discarded
Total:					44	43			

Burnt flint is not inherently dateable, but is often recovered from prehistoric contexts. This is usually the result of incidental debris from ground-set hearths. That the material from this site is heavily burnt, to the point of complete discolouration and shattering, suggests it had been subject to sustained heat within such a feature; however, the small quantities present can shed little light on their origin. It is most likely that these pieces were originally heated as part of a hearth or similar feature, and were subsequently disturbed from their original context by later activity, resulting in their inclusion in later features as residual occurrences.

The burnt flint has been discarded in its entirety by the specialist.

Conclusion

All of the lithic material from this site was likely residual in later features and indicates a very small amount of knapping activity in the vicinity of the site, likely initially discarded incidentally.

Having been comprehensively catalogued (Appendix X) and described here, there is no further work required for this material. If more excavations are undertaken at the site, these pieces should be included alongside any further lithic material recovered.

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Appendix 4: Prehistoric Pottery - Lawrence Morgan-Shelbourne

Introduction

A medium-sized assemblage comprising 99 sherds (821g) of handmade prehistoric pottery was recovered from the evaluation. A further 31g of pottery was recovered as crumbs (<1g). The pottery derived from seventeen contexts, which related to various ditches and pits in trenches 7-12, 17 and 19. The site assemblage did not contain large quantities of diagnostic features, meaning the ability to assign sherds to specific ceramic traditions with confidence was restricted. These limitations meant that for many contexts, broad trends in fabric composition were relied upon to suggest a tradition designation, a necessary but unreliable method. These trends, as well as some of the few more diagnostic features present suggested that the ceramics as a group could be broadly assigned to an Early to Middle Iron Age date (as represented by Post Deverel-Rimbury Decorated Ware and 'proto-saucepan pot' tradition ceramics, which are characteristic of the Early Iron Age and earlier part of the Middle Iron Age respectively).

In some instances, context assemblages exhibited characteristics that were indicative of both of these traditions (although again, mainly through fabric compositions). Determining levels of residuality has not been possible due to the condition of the assemblage, as well as the inherent limitations of archaeological trenching. As such, it is plausible that these 'mixed' assemblages represent activity occurring in the transitional period covering the end of the Early Iron Age/earlier part of the Middle Iron Age, although this cannot be conclusively stated. Most of the remainder of the context assemblages were indicative of a date in the earlier part of the Middle Iron Age proper. Due to the general lack of diagnostic qualities of the site assemblage and the potential for the activity on the site to be continuous, all the prehistoric ceramics from the site are analysed together below.

The ceramics are in a stable condition. This report provides a quantified description of the assemblage with a brief discussion and assessment of potential for analysis.

Context	Cut	Trench	Category	SSFabric Code	Count	Weight (g)	Ceramic Tradition	Ceramic Context Date
704	703	7	Ditch	FLQU2; QU2; QU1	6	33	POST DEVEREL-RIMBURY/PROTO-SP; PROTO-SP	600-200BC
804	803	8	Pit	QU2; QU1	13	207	PROTO-SP; POST DEVEREL-RIMBURY DECORATED WARE	600-200BC
806	805	8	Pit	FLQU2; SH1; QU1; QU2; FLQU3	9	105	POST DEVEREL-RIMBURY/PROTO-SP; PROTO-SP	600-200BC
903	904	9	Ditch	FLQU1; QU2; QUFL1	31	111	POST DEVEREL-RIMBURY/PROTO-SP; PROTO-SP; POST DEVEREL-RIMBURY DECORATED WARE	600-200BC
905	906	9	Pit	QU1; QUFL1	6	16	PROTO-SP; POST DEVEREL-RIMBURY/PROTO-SP	600-200BC
1003	1005	10	Pit	QU2	1	27	PROTO-SP	450-200BC
1004	1005	10	Pit	SH1	0	0	PROTO-SP	450-200BC
1105	1106	11	Pit	QUFL1; QU1; QU2; QUFL2	11	73	POST DEVEREL-RIMBURY/PROTO-SP; PROTO-SP	600-200BC
1203	1204	12	Pit	SH1	1	5	PROTO-SP	450-200BC
1205	1206	12	Ditch	QU2	1	54	POST DEVEREL-RIMBURY	1150/1100-400/350BC
1704	1703	17	Ditch	QU2; QU1	3	31	PROTO-SP	450-200BC
1708	1708	17	Unknown	QU1	1	4	PROTO-SP	450-200BC
1710	1709	17	Pit	SH2	1	40	PROTO-SP	450-200BC
1711	1713	17	Ditch	SHQU1; QU1	4	13	PROTO-SP	450-200BC
1715	1714	17	Pit	QU1; QUFL1	3	37	PROTO-SP; POST DEVEREL-RIMBURY/PROTO-SP	600-200BC
1717	1716	17	Pit	QUVE1	4	39	PROTO-SP	450-200BC
1903	1904	19	Ditch	QU2	4	26	PROTO-SP	450-200BC
TOTAL					99	821		

Table 1: Pottery quantification by context (0 values=crumbs)

Methodology

All the pottery has been fully recorded following the recommendations laid out by the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (2010; Barclay *et. al.* 2016).

Fabric

Fabric types were devised on the composition of inclusions present, as well as their density and modal size. Fabric types are designated based on shorthand abbreviated codes, recorded as INCLUSIONTYPE-frequency-size in the catalogue to facilitate wider comparative analysis. These groups were then given site specific codes, i.e. FL1, QUFL2 in this report. In cases where the fabric recipe included more than one inclusion type, the more frequent inclusion is recorded first, i.e. fabric FLQU1 would have calcined flint as the dominant inclusion, with sand being the secondary inclusion. Where tertiary, incidental inclusions were intermittently present within sherds of a given fabric, or where unusual fabric qualities (outside the bounds of the code system) were notable, these are recorded in the longform fabric descriptions in the catalogue (i.e. 'incidental fossil shell'). It should be noted that the recording of incidental fabric qualities in this manner is for descriptive purposes only, i.e. a sand fabric with 'incidental fossil shell' should not be seen as analogous to a QUSH (sand with shell) fabric recipe for comparative purposes.

Each sherd was recorded individually; sherds weighing less than 1g were classified as crumbs and were recorded by context and weight in the catalogue but were not subject to further analysis. Where crumbs formed the only ceramics from a context, they are presented in Table 1 as a null, '0' value.

Class, form, surface treatments/decoration and miscellaneous characteristics

Sherd type was recorded in the catalogue using the convention R=rim, U=bodysherd, SH=shoulder and B=base, with the suffix 'D' being used to indicate the presence of decoration, i.e. RDU is a rim and body sherd with decoration on the rim, RDSHD a rim and shoulder sherd with decoration on the rim and shoulder etc. (further, less commonly used sherd codes are recorded in the 'key' section of the catalogue).

Manufacturing technology was also recorded (where apparent), evidence for surface treatment, decoration (technique, motif and location, expanded upon in the catalogue as required) and the presence of adaptation, repair, makers stamps, soot and/or residue.

All sherds recovered and recorded were subject to size analysis. Sherds less than 4cm in diameter were classified as 'small', sherds measuring 4-8cm were classified as 'medium' and sherds over 8cm in diameter were classified as 'large'.

Where possible rim and base diameters were measured, and surviving percentages noted (thereby allowing the Estimated Vessel Equivalent (EVE) to be calculated, if considered appropriate). Where possible, sherds were assigned to a ceramic tradition, based on their exhibited characteristics. Rim and base forms were described using a codified system (Brudenell 2012), with shoulder type also being

described using a generalised format in the catalogue (Appendix XXX). Rim and base sherds were then assigned vessel numbers.

In cases where a sherd or groups of refitting sherds retained suitable diagnostic characteristics (most commonly portions of the rim and shoulder or base) they were further classified. Where possible the vessels were assigned to a broad class (e.g. jar, bowl, cup). In less common instances vessels were then further assigned to form using a series appropriate to the applied ceramic tradition designation. This comprised the series devised by Brudenell (2012) for Post Deverel-Rimbury ceramics J.D. Hill (Hill & Horne 2003; Hill & Braddock 2006) for Later Iron Age ceramics. These forms were also equivalenced to the series from Battlesbury Hillfort (Every and Mephem 2008).

The site assemblage contained a minimum of six vessels, based on the six rims recovered and recorded.

Dating

Based on the recorded characteristics above, a suggested sherd date range was assigned to each sherd. The combined information about all the ceramics from each context was then used to suggest a ceramic date range for that context. For example, a context with five undiagnostic Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age ceramic tradition sherds, and one diagnostic Earlier Iron Age sherd could result in the whole context being assigned an Earlier Iron Age date range, if considered appropriate. It should be noted that most sherds do not exhibit diagnostic characteristics that enabled such a refined date range to be suggested, with such refined context dates often relying on the presence/absence of limited numbers of diagnostic sherds.

SSFabric Code	Shorthand Fabric Type	Longform Fabric Description
FLQU1	FL-RS-FVCQU-R-F	Rare to sparse, fine to very coarse calcined flint, rare, fine sand
FLQU2	FL-SM-FMQU-RS-F	Sparse to moderate, fine to moderate calcined flint, rare to sparse, fine sand
FLQU3	FL-MC-FMQU-RS-F	Moderate to common, fine to moderate calcined flint, rare to sparse, fine sand
QU1	QU-RS-F	Rare to sparse, fine sand
QU2	QU-SM-F	Sparse to moderate, fine sand
QUFL1	QU-RS-FFL-R-FC	Rare to sparse, fine sand, rare, fine to coarse calcined flint
QUFL2	QU-RS-FFL-R-CVC	Rare to sparse, fine sand, rare, coarse to very coarse calcined flint
QUVE1	QU-RS-FVE-R-FC	Rare to sparse, fine sand, rare, fine to coarse linear voids (organic)
SH1	SH-MC-FC	Moderate to common, fine to coarse voids (shell)
SH2	SH-CA-FVC	Common to abundant, fine to very coarse voids (shell)
SHQU1	SH-SM-FCQU-RS-F	Sparse to moderate, fine to coarse voids (shell), rare to sparse, fine sand

Table 2: Fabric table

Assemblage characteristics

Condition and depositional environment

Condition	Sherd Count	Sherd Count (%)
REFIRED	6	6.1
SEVERE	10	10.1
SEVERE; LEACHED	2	2.0
SIGNIFICANT	26	26.3
SIGNIFICANT; LEACHED	5	5.1
SLIGHT	17	17.2
SLIGHT; LEACHED	3	3.0
UNABRADED	30	30.3
TOTAL	99	100.0

Table 3: Assemblage condition

The assemblage had a low to moderate Minimum Sherd Weight (MSW) of 8.3g. This figure was reflected in the sherd condition, with unabraded sherds making up less than a third of the assemblage (Table 3).

No evidence of use-wear, repair or vessel adaptation were apparent within the assemblage, although residues were visible on a single sherd (comprising burnt food residue, from Ditch [1703].

The assemblage was almost evenly recovered from ditches and pits in a variety of trenches, although there was a clear focus for deposition in trenches 8 and 9, which produced over half the assemblage by Sherd Count (SC).

Assemblage characteristics

Fabric

SSFabric code	Sherd Count	Weight (g)	Sherd Count (%)	Weight (%)
FLQU1	7	42	7.1%	5.1
FLQU2	4	32	4.0%	3.9
FLQU3	1	40	1.0%	4.9
QU1	19	130	19.2%	15.8
QU2	49	390	49.5%	47.5
QUFL1	8	56	8.1%	6.8
QUFL2	1	34	1.0%	4.1
QUVE1	4	39	4.0%	4.8
SH1	2	10	2.0%	1.2
SH2	1	40	1.0%	4.9
SHQU1	3	8	3.0%	1.0
TOTAL	99	821	100.0%	100.0

Table 4: fabrics

The sherds in the tradition assemblage were relatively diverse in terms of fabric recipe, although sand as the sole inclusion was predominant (totalling 68.6% by SC). Fabrics using sand as the main, rather than sole inclusion were also present (13.1% by SC), most commonly with calcined flint as the secondary inclusion. Calcined flint was also used as the primary inclusion, although always combined with sand as the secondary inclusion (12.1% by SC). The remainder consisted of fabrics using shell as the sole or main inclusion, again with sand as the secondary inclusion (6% by SC) (Table 4).

Form, decoration and surface treatment

Diagnostic sherds were limited, with only six vessels being able to be identified. These were all represented by rims, with simple upright flat (Type 1; one example) or rounded (Type 2; three examples) types being the most common. The remainder comprised a single bead rim (Type 9) and a single flat, topped, externally expanded and rounded type (Type 5.2). Rim diameters ranged from 14-20cm, with a mean value of 17.1cm. Only four shoulder sherds were identified, three which were slack profiled with the exception being pronounced.

Of the diagnostic sherds, four could be assigned to vessel class, all of which were jars. These could all also be assigned further to form, with one example each of a jar with a rounded, slightly bulbous body and short upright rim (Brudenell Form A), a closed jar with a rounded body (Hill C), an open, ovoid, slack-shouldered vessel with no neck (Hill K) and a jar with a slack shoulder and tall, upright neck (Brudenell Form G4). Although relatively diverse, the first three of these forms can all be accommodated within the 'Bowl 5; Saucepan Pot Prototype' category at Battlesbury (Every and Mephram 2008, 53), whilst the latter is analogous to the 'Jar 1.2; Weakly Shouldered Jar' form (*Ibid.*).

Decoration was extremely rare, with only three sherds (from Pit [803] and Ditch [904]) exhibiting decorative applications. These comprised dragged fingertip/nail impressions on a rim exterior and two burnished horizontal grooves on a bodysherd (both from Ditch 904]), as well as a tool impressed circular dimple, on the pronounced shoulder sherd mentioned above. Surface treatment was slightly more common, at six sherds, in all instances being represented by smoothing or burnishing of the sherd surfaces.

Discussion

As touched upon in the introduction, assigning specific contexts to a conclusive ceramic tradition or period is problematic. Although this mainly relates to the small size and poor condition of most of the context assemblages, this also relates to the inconclusive or 'mixed' characteristics of much of the prehistoric ceramics.

For example, the dominance of sand fabrics can be well paralleled within both Early and Middle Iron Age ceramic phases at Battlesbury (Ceramic Phases (CP's) 2 and 3 (Every and Mephram 2008, 58-59)), although sandy fabrics peak at c. 79.1% in the 6th to mid-4th century CP 2. This is however skewed by the presence at Battlesbury of significant quantities of limestone tempered fabrics (which are present throughout but peak at 46.3% in the 4th-3rd century BC CP3), which are completely absent from Ashley

Coombe (*Ibid.*, Table 4.11, 59)). As a result, the relative abundance of sand fabrics at Ashley Coombe may not be as reliable a chronological indicator of an Early Iron Age date as they appear, as this factor may relate to specific clay sources used rather than chronology.

There was however a small, although significant quantity of fabrics containing calcined flint within the site assemblage. The use of calcined flint is strongly associated with Post Deverel-Rimbury ceramics (a tradition which has a Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age date range), although later assemblages of this tradition typically utilise sand fabrics to a greater extent (see Morris 2000, 166 and Timby 2001, 21-24). For example, at Battlesbury the Earlier Iron Age ceramic groups ranged from 22.5% in the Late Bronze Age to 4.8% by the end of the period (Every and Mephram 2008, Table 4.11, 59), when compared to the 12.1% present at Ashley Coombe.

The limited numbers of diagnostic sherds are similarly illustrative and demonstrate that the vessels are principally simple ovoid or slack shouldered jars. Most of the identified forms have undifferentiated profiles and could be broadly described as 'Saucepan Pots' (see Type PA in Cunliffe 1984), a tradition which is typical of the Middle Iron Age regionally. However, as discussed above one of these vessels is composed of a stereotypically 'early' calcined flint fabric. Within Middle Iron Age assemblages undecorated vessels are most characteristic of the earlier part of this period (equivalent to Ceramic Phases 4-5 at Danebury, there assigned a mid-4th-3rd century BC date). This is however not entirely conclusive, both due to the relatively small assemblage size and as the lack of decoration may relate to geographical, not chronological factors, with plain vessels potentially continuing in use throughout the Middle Iron Age.

As with the fabrics, there are some hints of an earlier bias for parts of the assemblage with the presence of a single pronounced shoulder (decorated with a tooled circular 'dimple') having closer affinities to the (Early Iron Age) regional Post Deverel-Rimbury Decorated Ware style (All Cannings Cross-Meon Hill style group (see Cunliffe 2005, Figures A:8 and A:9, 619-620). Similarly, the single weakly shouldered jar present is of a broad type that is more common within the Post Deverel-Rimbury assemblage at Battlesbury, rather than later ceramic phases (Every and Mephram 2008, Table 4.12, 60). The few other decorated sherds are less diagnostic, although techniques such as burnished grooves and fingertip impressions are again more typical of Earlier Iron Age traditions.

Due to these assemblage limitations and the 'mixed' nature of the characteristics present the ceramic dates assigned to specific contexts are generally quite broad, spanning the Early Iron Age and the earlier part of the Middle Iron Age. For similar reasons, ascertaining whether this mixing is conclusively a result of residuality/intrusivity has not been possible at this stage of work. The consistent presence of flint fabrics in multiple features, spread across the excavation area is however suggestive that these sherds are probably not residual. Due to this, although a relatively wide c. 600-200BC date range can be generally applied, the traits presented by the assemblage as a whole (especially the identifiable forms) are more characteristic of a date in the earlier part of the Middle Iron Age, potentially overlapping with the Early Iron Age.

Recommendations

The results of this report should be revised at any further levels of reporting (if undertaken) to include site phasing or grouping. The results of this report should also be fully incorporated into the results of any future archaeological work on the site. In the event of future intrusive work, the prehistoric ceramics should be reassessed to the whole site assemblage in order to refine the ceramic chronology.

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Appendix 5: Roman Pottery – Iza Jamar Anderle

A total of four small, severely abraded Roman pottery fragments (weighing 3g), which belong to two individual vessels, were found during the evaluation. The sherds are undiagnostic and produced in unsourced fabrics, and could only be assigned a broad Romano-British date.

The sherds were intrusive in two features dated to the Bronze Age to Late Iron Age. Two fragments produced in a coarse sandy greyware were recovered from cremation [504] in Trench 5, while two coarse sandy oxidised ware fragments with traces of a red slip were found within posthole [906] in Trench 9.

Overall, the pottery evidence indicates a very low level of Roman activity. Due to the severe levels of abrasion and the undiagnostic nature of the sherds, the assemblage is of very limited interpretative value.

Appendix 1: Pottery catalogue

Key: B = base, RB = Romano-British, U = undiagnostic body sherd.

Fabric codes: CSGW = coarse sandy grey ware, CSOX = coarse sandy oxidised ware

Context	Cut	Trench	Sample	Feature	Ceramic Era	Fabric	Fabric Description	Form	Sherd type	Count	Weight (g)	Context Date
503	504	5	5	Cremation	RB	CSGW	dark grey, freq. quartz	Fragment	U	2	2	AD40-410
905	906	9		Posthole	RB	CSOX	orange/brown, freq. quartz, red slip?	Fragment	U	2	1	AD40-410

Appendix 6: Metal Finds – Gary Taylor

Metal finds recovered during investigations at Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire (WACW26), are reported, below.

The finds were examined and recorded in accordance with ClfA guidelines (2020) during June 2026.

Introduction

Three metal items, together weighing a total of 0.9g, were recovered.

Results

Table 1: the metals

Context	Material	Description	No.	Wt(g)	Context date
503	Copper alloy	Small lump with pin-like projection, 7mm long, possible pin head but not identified	1	0.2	
	Copper alloy	Sheet, 15mm across; small fragment of cremated bone adhering to concave face. Not identified	1	0.6	
704	Copper alloy	Sheet, 9mm across; not identified	1	0.1	
TOTALS			3	0.9	

Provenance

The metal items were recovered from pit fill (503) and ditch fill (704).

Discussion

Three small fragments of copper alloy were recovered. None are clearly identifiable though one piece, retrieved from (503) may be the head of a pin. A small sheet fragment was found in the same context and these two pieces are likely to be associated, or perhaps parts of a single object. Another small piece of sheet was recovered from (704).

Potential and Recommendations

The metal finds are unidentifiable and of negligible potential. No further work is required though the material should be retained for long-term archive storage.

References

ClfA, 2020 *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*

Abbreviations

ClfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

No. Number

Wt(g) Weight (grams)

Appendix 7: Possible Industrial Debris– Gary Taylor

Possible industrial debris recovered during investigations at Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire (WACW26), is reported, below.

The finds were examined and recorded in accordance with ClfA guidelines (2020) during June 2026.

Introduction

Small quantities of possible industrial finds were recovered, almost all by environmental sampling. Most of the material occurred in context assemblages that comprised of numerous small pieces. In consequence, all context groups were weighed, to the nearest 0.1g, but not counted. In total, less than 215g of material was retrieved.

Results

Context	Sample No.	Description	Wt(g)	Context date
905	2	Mixed material, including crushed iron slag (too small to ascertain type but possibly smithing); clinker/cinder; natural ironstone. About half the assemblage is magnetic, the remainder not	0.5	
1004	3	Probably crushed iron smithing slag, all magnetic	0.1	
		Hammerscale flakes, numerous, all magnetic	1.7	
1105	4	Mixed material, including cinders/clinker, possible crushed iron smithing slag, a little natural ironstone. About half the assemblage is magnetic, the remainder not	1.9	
1715	6	Possible iron smithing slag (single piece), magnetic	0.4	
1717		Probable natural ironstone	209.9	
TOTALS			214.5	

Table 1: the potential industrial debris,

Provenance

The items were recovered from posthole fill (905), pit fills (1004, 1105, 1717), and posthole or pit fill (1715).

Discussion

A mixed assemblage of possible industrial debris was collected. Amongst this were small amounts of slag, for the most part probably crushed iron smithing debris. In addition, there is a moderate amount of hammerscale, less than 2g by weight but estimated to be probably in excess of 100 flakes. This microslag is typically produced during iron smithing (Historic England 2015, 35). Although not especially abundant the hammerscale, all of which was recovered from a single context, pit fill (1004), probably reflects the dumping of the iron smithing residue in the pit.

A single large piece of probable natural ironstone was found. Small quantities of natural ironstone grit were also recovered. Clinker/cinder is also present.

Potential and Recommendations

The possible industrial residues are of limited-moderate potential. They provide minor indications of iron smithing on (or very close to) the site, though the quantities of debris suggest that the industrial activity was a one-off or occasional activity. However, the industrial processes are of unclear date.

No further work is required, and the material can be discarded.

References

ClfA, 2020 *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*

Historic England, 2015 *Archaeometallurgy Guidelines for Best Practise* (new ed)

Abbreviations

ClfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

No. Number

Wt(g) Weight (grams)

Appendix 8: Miscellaneous Finds– Gary Taylor

Artefacts recovered during investigations at Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire (WACW26), are reported, below.

The finds were examined and recorded in accordance with ClfA guidelines (2020) during June 2026.

Introduction

A few very small pieces of light material, probably organic matter, were recovered. These did not register a weight on electronic scales that measure to a minimum of 0.01g.

Results

Table 1: The Metal Finds

Context	Sample No.	Material	Description	No.	Wt(g)	Context date
1004	3	Organic matter, unidentified	Minute pieces of possible leather or plant matter	3	<0.01	

Provenance

The items were recovered from the fill (1004) of a pit [1005].

Discussion

Very small pieces of organic matter, perhaps leather or vegetation, were retrieved. These would only be potentially recognizable under extreme magnification and, consequently, were not identified.

Potential and Recommendations

The other finds are, because of their very small size, unidentified. As a result, they are of no-negligible potential. No further work is required, and the material can be discarded.

References

ClfA, 2020 *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*

Abbreviations

ClfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

No. Number

Wt(g) Weight (grams)

Appendix 9: Stone – Kevin Hayward

Introduction and Methodology

A moderate sized stone assemblage (45 examples 10152g) from an evaluation at the site of Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire WACW26 were examined by Dr Kevin Hayward during May 2026 for PCA (West) - to determine their petrological character and if possible, assign a geological source. Essentially it is to establish evidence for Roman and Iron Age occupation on a Trench-by-Trench basis

The items were examined in hand specimen in good light with the use of a hand lens (Gowlland x10). Treatment of dilute Hydrochloric acid determined whether the rock had a calcareous composition. An accompanying word catalogue (WACW26stone.xls) lists by context, the different types of materials, and their geological source in detail.

Local and Regional Geological Setting

The underlying solid geology consists very hard Boyne Valley Chert from the Upper Greensand forming a higher topography, Progressively younger chalk units including the oldest West Marlbury chalky marl to middle and Upper chalk units e.g. Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation crop out over the surrounding area. Apart from the Boyne Valley Chert and Flint only suitable as rubblestone material, the local stone is far too soft to be worked into dimension stone or into quern and whetstone.

Results - The Stone 45 examples 10152g

Petrological and Functional review

Two different rock types were identified from the excavations their geological character, source, quantity distribution and function are summarised below (Table 1). This includes material provisionally identified as fired clay or ceramic building material. All are local stone types.

Local stone types

All the stone site from this site can simply be considered either natural bedrock from the underlying Boyne Valley Chert or from the nearby Upper Chalk (West Marlbury Chalky marl). None has been worked although much of it is burnt. The largest quantity (nearly half) 4.8kg came fill [1717] of Iron Age Pit [1716] located in roundhouse and include cracked burnt examples of stone suggesting pot boilers. Pot boilers are superheated stone used to raise the temperature of water in cooking or craft production.

Local acquisition of materials for use as heated stone (pot boilers) is considered more a prehistoric practice, where availability of materials takes precedence over quality of stone.

Table 1 WACW26 Stone geological character, source, quantity and function

Rock Type	Geological Type and source	Quantity	Use WACW26
3120a Boyne Valley Chert very hard pale grey fine cherty glauconitic sandstone from chert grading to more open textured pale brown sandstone Example from (1903) had infaunal fossil burrows typical of this formation.	Boyne Valley Chert underlying Upper Greensand (Boyne Hollow Chert Member)	18 examples 7890g	Cremation heat on natural underlying bedrock Trench 5 cremated remains in the fill (503) of Bronze Age to Late Iron Age pit [504] Trench 17 Natural fill [1717] of Iron Age Pit [1716] located in roundhouse 2.8kg including blocks 17cm x 11cm x 4.5cm Trench 19 Natural fill (1903) of Bronze Age to Late Iron Age linear ditch [1904] large 5kg block 26cm x 22cm x 13cm
3120b Marl pale lime low density green marl burnt pink with inoceramid bivalve fragments	West Marlbury Chalky Marl Upper Cretaceous (Cenomanian) within 1-2km of site	27 examples 2262g	Pot Boiler cracked burnt rock Trench 8 Bronze Age to Late Iron Age fill (806) of large pit [805] Trench 9 single fill (904) of Iron Age ditch [903] largest concentration 2kg Trench 17 fill (1717) of Iron Age Pit [1716] with blocks up 15cm x 13cm x 6cm

Distribution and Trench summary

Trench 5 9 examples 79g

Context	Fabric	Material	Size	Date range of material		Latest dated material		Spot date	Spot date mortar
503	3120a	Burnt cremated remains of local Boyne Valley Chert	9	1500bc	AD400	1500bc	AD400	1500bc-AD400	No mortar

The focus of Trench 5 is a small collection of burnt Boyne Valley chert fragments in the fill (503) of Bronze Age to Late Iron Age pit [504]

Trench 8 10 examples 241g

Context	Fabric	Material	Size	Date range of material		Latest dated material		Spot date	Spot date mortar
806	3120a	Burnt West Marlbury Chalky Marl possible pot boiler	10	1500bc	AD400	1500bc	AD400	1500bc-AD400	No mortar

A small group of pot boiler fragments in West Marlbury Chalky Marl were recovered from Bronze Age to Late Iron Age fill (806) of large pit [805] in Trench 8.

Trench 9 5 examples 64g

Context	Fabric	Material	Size	Date range of material		Latest dated material		Spot date	Spot date mortar
903	3120b	Burnt West Marlbury Chalky Marl possible pot boiler	5	1500bc	AD400	1500bc	AD400	1500bc-AD400	No mortar

Further pot boiler fragments in West Marlbury Chalky Marl were recovered from the single fill (904) of Iron Age ditch [903] in Trench 9.

Trench 17 20 examples 4768g

Context	Fabric	Material	Size	Date range of material		Latest dated material		Spot date	Spot date mortar
1717	3120a; 3120b	Natural Boyne Valley Chert and burnt West Marlbury Chalky Marl possible pot boiler	20	1500bc	AD400	1500bc	AD400	1500bc-AD400	No mortar

By far the largest concentration in terms of number of fragments (20) and variety of materials (3120a; 3120b) are a 4.8kg group of natural and (burnt)pot boiler fragments up to 17cm across from Trench 17. These were recovered from the natural fill [1717] of Iron Age Pit [1716] located in the roundhouse Trench 19 1 example 5000g

Context	Fabric	Material	Size	Date range of material		Latest dated material		Spot date	Spot date mortar
1903	3120a	Natural boyne valley chert fragment 5kg	1					Natural	No mortar

A large (5kg – 26cm x 22cm x 13cm) natural block of Boyne Valley Chert with worm burrows from the fill (1903) of Bronze Age to Late Iron Age linear ditch [1904] represents the total sum from Trench 19. Previously identified as worked the unusual shape of the rock is merely due the effect of fossil worm burrows

Concluding Remarks

Hand specimen examination of this moderately sized unworked stone assemblage from land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire WACW26 has only been able to identify local stone types from the underlying and surrounding bedrock, Recovered from the fills of a series of Bronze Age to Iron Age pits and ditches in Trenches 5, 8, 9, 17 and 19 they are at best burnt and cracked and probably represent either cremated bedrock (503) in Trench 5 or pot boilers, superheated stones such as those in a pit from an Iron Age roundhouse Trench 17 (1717) used to raise the temperature of water for use in cooking or craft activities.

Local acquisition of materials for use as heated stone (pot boilers) is considered more a prehistoric practice, where availability of materials takes precedence over quality of stone. .

All the above material should be discarded as it merely consists of local unworked bedrock (Boyne Valley Chert) and marl (West Marlbury Marly Chalk).

Appendix 10: Human Bone – Petra Ivanova

Introduction

During the archaeological evaluation at Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire, a pit [504] containing cremated human remains in association with pyre debris was identified in Trench 5.

Methodology

The cremated human remains were excavated and recorded in accordance with updated ClfA guidelines (Mitchell and Brickley 2017). The cremated bone deposits from the pit were wet-sieved through a 0.5mm mesh, after which the residue was passed through a stack of 10mm, 5mm and 2mm sieves. All bone fragments $\geq 2\text{mm}$ were then sorted and analysed. The $< 2\text{mm}$ residue was scanned and retained, with identifiable bone and artefacts extracted. Fragments smaller than 2mm were examined for identifiable elements but were excluded from the total cremation weight.

The identifiable cremated human and faunal remains were initially separated. Bone fragments were refitted where possible to aid identification of skeletal elements. Identifiable fragments (skull, axial and appendicular skeleton, and unidentifiable limb bone and long bone fragments) were recorded, along with the level of fragmentation and oxidation, illustrated by variations in colour from unburnt buff to fully oxidised white. The degree of fragmentation of the cremated bone was classified according to the proportion of fragments greater than 10mm in size, as low ($\geq 67\%$), moderate (34-66%), and high ($\leq 33\%$).

General methods used in the osteological evaluation of the skeletal material follow Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994) and Brickley and McKinley (2004). Age at death was estimated based on morphological changes of the auricular surface (Buckberry and Chamberlain 2002), cranial thickness, and cranial suture closure (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994).

The age categories are represented in Table 1.

AGE	YEARS
Infant	0-3 years
Child	3-12 years
Immature	<12 years
Adolescent	12-20 years
Adult	>20 years
Young Adult	20-35 years
Middle Adult	35-50 years
Old Adult	50+ years

Table 1: After Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994.

Results

Pit [504]

Adolescent/Young Adult

This was a truncated pit, located in the central part of Trench 5. The pit contained the unurned cremated remains of an adolescent/young adult individual of indeterminate sex. The cremated human bone was intermixed with a substantial quantity of cremated faunal remains, charcoal, burnt stone, and fragments

of pottery and copper-alloy. The contents of the pit suggest that it represents redeposited pyre debris or another secondary cremation-related deposit.



Plate 1: Pit [504].

Condition and weight of the bone

The bone fragments were dispersed across the surface of the pit, indicating disturbance and loss of the original deposit. The bone was fully calcined, exhibiting a white coloration indicative of pyre temperatures exceeding approximately 650°C (Bonucci and Graziani 1975, 531; Devlin and Herrmann 2015, 121). The overall weight of the cremated bone is summarised in Table 2.

Cut No.	Context No.	Spit No.	Sample No.	≥10mm fraction (g/%)	≥5mm fraction	≥2mm fraction	Total weight of the cremated bone
504	503	1	<5>	287g (52.6%)	167g (30.6%)	92g (16.8%)	546g (100%)
				Total ≥10mm 287g (52.6%)	Total ≥5mm 167g (30.6%)	Total ≥2mm 92g (16.8%)	

Table 2: Weight of the cremated bone in pit [504].

In general, the degree of fragmentation was moderate, with 52.6% (287g) of fragments exceeding 10mm in size (Table 2). The largest human bone fragment was a cranial fragment measuring 43mm. Several fragments exhibited heat-induced fissuring (transverse and oblique), as well as turquoise staining, indicative of contact with a copper-alloy object.

At least 90g (16.5%) of faunal remains were recovered from the ≥10mm fraction. However, the high degree of calcination and overall fragmentation suggests that additional faunal material may be present within the smaller size fractions (<10mm) but is not readily distinguishable.

Context No.	Cut No.	Spit No.	Sample No.	Fraction	Identifiable bone fragments
503	504	1	<5>	≥10mm	8x cranial fragment (1x parietal bone; 1x zygomatic process); 4x rib fragment; 1x acetabulum; 1x auricular surface; 1x distal part of a phalanx; 1x distal phalanx- incomplete; 1x vertebral body fragment; 10+ unidentifiable limb bone shaft; 1x femoral head fragment; 1x iliac frag.;
503	504	1	<5>	≥5mm	10+ unidentifiable limb bone shaft

Table 3: Identifiable bone fragments in pit [504].

Palaeodemography

Age at death was estimated using morphological changes of the auricular surface, cranial fragment thickness (5mm), cranial suture closure (score 0= open) (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994, 34), and overall bone size. The auricular surface was finely granular, with evidence of transverse organization, and minimal macro- and microporosity, suggesting a younger individual (Buckberry and Chamberlain 2002). Based on this evidence, the individual is interpreted as an adolescent or young adult.

Discussion

The assemblage recovered from the pit, comprising cremated human and faunal remains, charcoal, burnt stone, and pottery and copper-alloy fragments, is consistent with redeposited pyre material rather than a formal burial. Pyre debris typically comprises fuel ash (mainly charcoal), burnt clay, burnt flint, burnt stone, fuel ash slag, cremated bone, and fragments of pyre goods (McKinley 1997a, 137; McKinley 2000, 41). Pyre debris may be deposited in a range of feature types (McKinley 2004, 10), including existing natural features and those specifically excavated for this purpose, known as pyre debris dumps (McKinley 1997b, 57).

Due to the truncation of the pit and the fragmented, highly calcined nature of the assemblage, the full quantity of human and faunal remains could not be determined. Faunal remains may represent material associated with funerary ritual, as animal remains could be included as offerings within cremation rites and deposited on the pyre alongside the deceased (McKinley 1997b, 74). The presence of pyre debris within this feature may indicate that cremation activity occurred at or near the site (McKinley 2000, 41; Robinson 2007, 19).

Both human and faunal material was well cremated, with white bone coloration indicating full calcination. This reflects efficient oxidation during cremation, consistent with pyre temperatures exceeding c. 650°C (Bonucci and Graziani 1975, 531; Devlin and Herrmann 2015, 121).

The transverse and oblique fissures identified on the human bone fragments are consistent with the dehydration of green (fleshed) bone resulting from heat exposure during the cremation process (Binford 1963; Buikstra and Swegle 1989; Whyte 2001; Curtin 2008, 223; Ward and Tayles 2015, 389).

Conclusion

The site yielded a truncated pit containing a mixed assemblage of cremated human and faunal remains, together with copper-alloy and pottery fragments, and burnt material, including charcoal and stone. The composition of the assemblage strongly suggests secondary deposition of pyre debris from a cremation-related context rather than a formal burial. The cremated human remains represent a single individual, an adolescent or young adult of indeterminate sex.

Further recommendations

It is recommended that the bone be re-examined should further archaeological work be carried out on site and additional human remains be encountered. It is also recommended that the faunal remains be analysed in greater detail. A bone sample should also be submitted for radiocarbon (¹⁴C) dating to provide secure dating for this feature.

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Appendix 11: Enviromental – Bronagh Rae-Quinn

Introduction

A total of six environmental samples were taken across six evaluation trenches at Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire. The samples were taken from a variety of features, five of which were provisionally dated to the Iron Age/Roman period, and one which was undated.

This report summarises the results of the environmental assessment of the samples, aiming to determine the environmental potential of the organic material recovered. That is, its state of preservation and respective quantitative and qualitative ratios, to assess whether further environmental analysis is required.

Methodology

Sampling strategy

The processing strategy followed procedures as stated in the written scheme of investigation (Brown, 2026), with environmental samples being taken to further the understanding of the archaeological remains on the site.

Processing

All six of the environmental samples (totalling 79 litres in volume) were processed by a trained member of staff using a modified Siraf-type flotation system (Williams, 1973). Material produced by the flotation process was collected using a 300µm (micron) mesh for the light fraction (flot), and a 1mm mesh for the heavy residue (retent). The retent was air-dried, sieved at 1mm, 2mm and 4mm fractions, and sorted by a trained member of staff, to extract artefacts and ecofacts.

Assessment

Flots were scanned by the author under a UltraZOOM-3 binocular microscope at 7X-63X magnification. The prevalence/abundance of environmental material (and other inclusions such as intrusive organic matter and archaeological material) was quantified using a standard non-linear scale: where '1' indicates rare occurrence (1–10 items), '2' indicates occasional occurrence (11–30 items), '3' indicates frequent occurrence (31–100 items); and '4', indicates abundance (>100 items).

An additional recording system has been implemented to record the preservation of cereal grains (*=poorly preserved, **=moderately well preserved, ***=well preserved).

The identification of archaeobotanical seeds and grains etc. were undertaken using the author's botanical reference collection, and standard references (Cappers et al., 2012; Cappers and Neef, 2012; Jacomet, 2006). Nomenclature for plant macrofossils is taken from Stace (2014). Identifications of gastropods were made with reference to Kerney (1999) and Cameron and Riley (2008).

All retent and flot residues were scanned with a magnet to ascertain if micro-slags/ferro-magnetic residue (such as hammerscale) was present.

All finds and human bone have been passed on to the appropriate specialists for more detailed identification. Where struck flint has been recorded within the retent, this is a provisional identification made by a non-specialist member of staff and will be more accurately reported on by an appropriate

specialist. For further detail on any of this material detailed in this assessment report please see the appropriate specialist report.

The Assemblage

The flots varied in volume from 11 – 68ml and contained relatively little environmental material other than a small number of charred seeds, and grains.

Modern intrusive seeds were present in all six of the samples, and in variable quantities. Intrusion of modern seeds can be expected on sites with shallow ploughsoils or that have been occupied over a long period of time (Pelling et al., 2015) and should not affect interpretations or the dating of a site. Where the modern seeds were present, their quantity was noted, but they were not identified. Modern intrusive material also includes rootlets, insect eggs/larvae, and the blind/agate snail (*Cecilioides acicula*), which has been presumed intrusive due to its burrowing nature (Kerney, 1999).

Results are presented in Table 2 at the end of this report.

Phased Distribution

Iron Age/Roman

Most of the samples taken were provisionally dated to the Iron Age/Roman period. The flots varied in size from 11-68ml and contained large quantities of modern plant material and seeds.

Sample number	Context number	Deposit information	Feature type	Feature number
1	806	Fill	Pit	[805]
2	905	Fill	Pit	[906]
3	1004	Lower fill	Pit	[1005]
4	1105	Fill	Pit	[1106]
6	1715	Fill	Posthole	[1714]

Table 1, Sample information

Charcoal was present in all five of the Iron Age/Roman samples, with only two containing diagnostic >10mmØ fragments: Samples <4> and <6>. However, the diagnostic fragments were only present in rare (≤10) counts, which renders them statistically insignificant overall (i.e. <50 fragments).

Other charred plant macrofossils were present in rare (typically single) counts within all five of the Iron Age/Roman samples, consisting of grains of barley (*Hordeum* sp.), indeterminate cereal grains, mustard type seeds (*Brassica/Sinapis* sp.), knotgrass seeds (*Polygonum* sp.), and tubers of false-oat grass (*Arrhenatherum* sp.). A possible grass (*Poaceae*) seed and fragments of hazel (*Corylus avellana* L.) were recovered from the retent of Sample <4>.

Terrestrial gastropods were only identified in Sample <3>, where frequent (31-100) counts of the presumed intrusive blind snail, and occasional (11-30) counts of unidentified juvenile snails were recorded.

Artefacts and ecofacts within the retent were present in typically rare/occasional counts, with only three examples of material in frequent or abundant (>100) counts. Material recovered included slag and building stone in four samples, burnt flint, potsherds, and mortar fragments in three samples,

indeterminate shell fragments, CBM, and struck flint in two samples, and indeterminate burnt bone fragments, unidentified shells, and hammerstone in one sample each.

Undated

A single sample was taken from a feature that remained undated at the time of writing this report; Sample <5> from the fill of cremation [504]. The flot was the smallest of the sample-set, measuring only 10ml in volume. Besides intrusive material, only small quantities of undiagnostic charcoal and frequent <2mm bone fragments were recorded in the flot. While charcoal was recorded in the retent, no diagnostic >10mmØ were recovered.

Unsurprisingly, given the features' nature as a cremation, fragments of burnt and unburnt bone fragments were recorded in abundant and frequent counts respectively. The only other materials recovered from the retent of Sample <5> were frequent counts of mortar, and rare counts of potsherds.

Discussion

Overall, the environmental remains recovered from Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire were minimal, likely representing residual material. Pelling et al. (2015) suggest that "on sites with low densities of remains, with few items per litre of deposit, assemblages are more likely to include intrusive material derived from later land management practices...or residual material which has been reworked", the latter of which is most likely of this assemblage. However, it should be noted that all of the material recorded was charred, with no waterlogging or mineralisation recorded, which could show preservation biases in the archaeological record. Cranfield University (2026) records the soil type as being "freely draining slightly acid loamy soils", which is conducive to the preservation of charred plant remains and charcoal, phytoliths, pollen, and diatoms, but not other environmental materials. This likely explains the minimal quantities of shell and diagnostic bones within the assemblage.

While charred plant macrofossils are present in five of the six samples, they were only ever in rare counts of each taxa. This suggests that the material is residual, and of little interpretative value overall. Similarly, no conclusions can be drawn from the artefacts and ecofacts recovered from the retents.

Recommendations

- While a single charred cereal grain is typically sufficient for radiocarbon dating, the likely residual nature of the grains from Sample <3> make them less reliable for providing an accurate date for the context they were recovered from – only a Terminus Post Quem (TPQ) could be ascertained (Bayliss and Marshall, 2022).
- While there are two samples - <4> and <6> - with (albeit statistically insignificant) amounts of possibly diagnostic charcoal, they are inadvisable for radiocarbon dating. This is due to the likely residual nature of the charcoal fragments, their likelihood of being reworked (potentially over several centuries), and the "old-wood effect", whereby charcoal from long-lived trees such as oak can give inaccurate dates (Bayliss and Marshall, 2022). Anthracological work could be undertaken to ascertain the wood type and therefore its viability for radiocarbon dating, but as the material is statistically insignificant overall, this is not recommended. As with the grains, the

best that could be gleaned from the dating of this material would be a TPQ.

- The hazel nutshell fragments (from Sample <4> could be used for radiocarbon dating if required – their single season of growth makes for a good C14 sample, however, their low quantities suggest residuality, which again makes them only suitable for a TPQ.
- If further works occur, provisions should be made for an appropriate sampling strategy to be undertaken, along with any required scientific analysis, which should be undertaken in line with the site WSI and Historic England guidance (Historic England, 2025).
- The material should be kept for the foreseeable future. If no further phases of work are to be undertaken, then the material may be discarded.

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Table 2 – Environmental results

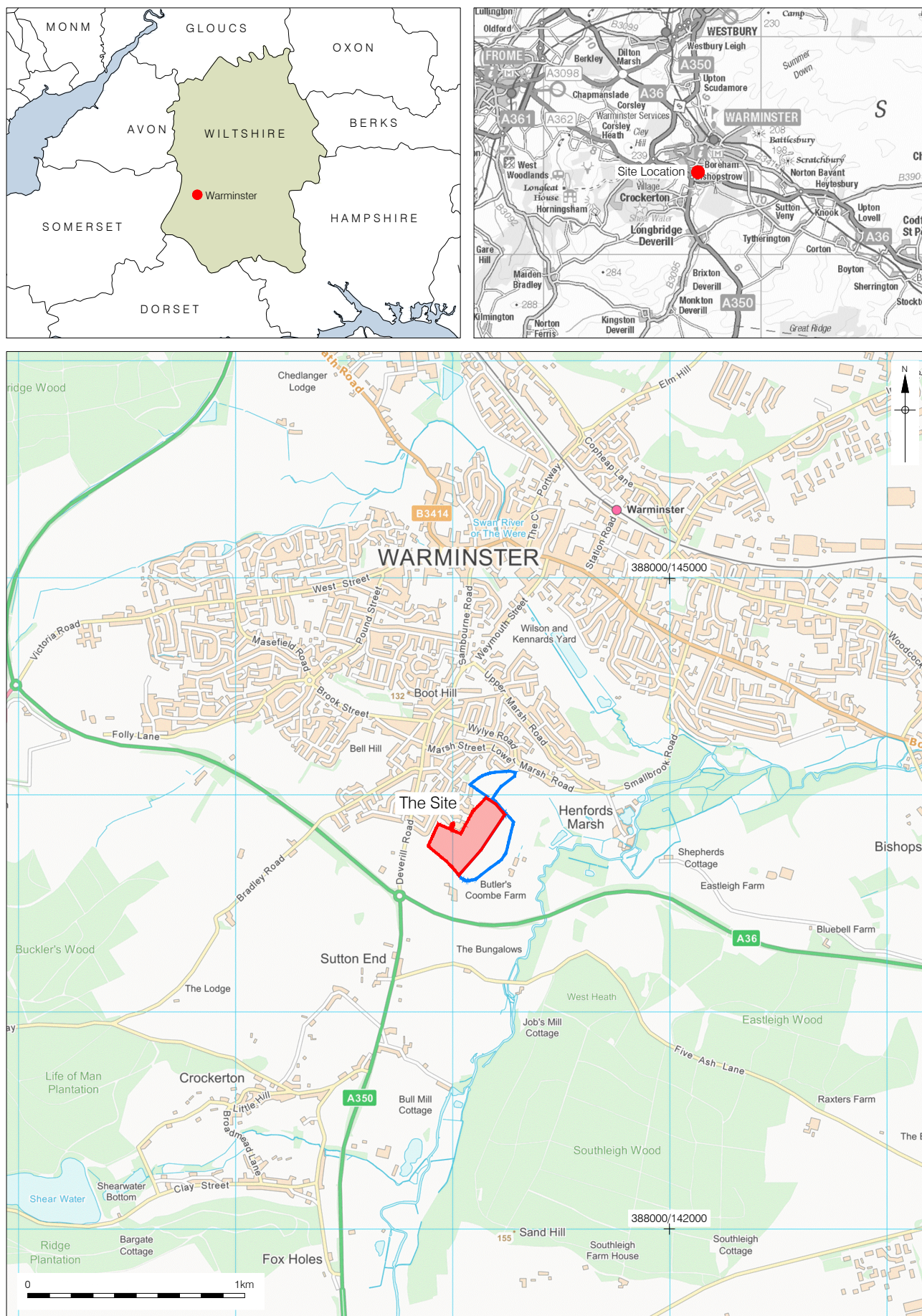
Phase	Iron Age/Roman					Undated
Area	T8	T9	T10	T11	T17	T5
Sample	1	2	3	4	6	5
Context	806	905	1004	1105	1715	503
Deposit type	Fill	Fill	Lower fill	Fill	Fill	Fill
Feature information	Pit [805]	Pit [906]	Pit [1005]	Pit [1106]	Posthole [1714]	Cremation [504]
Sample volume (liters)	10	16	20	20	10	3
Flot volume (ml)	18	24	11	68	64	10
Flot						
Charcoal						
Charcoal >10mm				1		
Charcoal 4-10mm	1			1	1	
Charcoal 2 - 4 mm	3	3	1	3	2	1
Charcoal <2 mm	4	4	3	4	4	4
Carbonised Plant Macrofossils/Ecofacts						
Cereals	Common name					
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	Barley (grain)					
Indeterminate carbonised cereals			1*			
Seeds						
<i>Brassica/Sinapis</i> sp.	Mustards					
<i>Polygonum</i> sp.	1	1cf		1	1	
Other						
<i>Arrhenatherum</i> sp.	False-oat grass (tuber)					
Bone fragments (<2mm)						3
Non-carbonised Plant Macrofossils/Ecofacts						
Modern insect eggs/larvae						
Modern intrusive seeds	1	3	2	2	1	3
Modern plant material (rootlets, leaves etc.)	3	3	3	4	4	2
Mollusc						
<i>Cecilioides acicula</i>	Blind/agate snail					
Unidentified juvenile molluscs			2			
Retent						
Charcoal						
Charcoal >10mm				1	1	
Charcoal 4-10mm	2	1	2	3	2	1
Charcoal 2 - 4 mm	3	2	2	3	3	2
Charcoal <2 mm	4	2	2	2	4	3
Carbonised Plant Macrofossils/Ecofacts						
Cereals	Common name					
Indeterminate carbonised cereals				1*		
Seeds						
Poaceae	Grass					
				1cf		
Other						
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	Hazel (nutshell fragments)					
				1		
Bone						
Fragments						
Burnt fragments				1		4
Shell						
Terrestrial/freshwater						
Fragments	1				1	
Building material						
Mortar			1	1	1	3
Stone		1	3	4	1	
CBM	1				1	
Finds						
Pottery		2		2	1	1
Flint						
Burnt flint	1	2		1		
Struck flint		1	1			
Industrial residue						
Slag		1	1	2	1	
Hammerscale			3			
KEY: 1 (rare, 1-10 specimens), 2 (occasional, 11-30 specimens), 3 (frequent, 31-100 specimens), 4 (abundant, 100+ specimens) * poor preservation, **moderate preservation, *** good preservation, cf uncertain identification						

Appendix 12 : OASIS Report

OASIS ID (UID)	preconst1-543992
Project Name	Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire: An Archaeological Evaluation
Sitename	Ashley Coombe
Sitecode	WACW26
Project Identifier(s)	Land off Ashley Coombe
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	PL/2025/10007
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Pre application
Organisation Responsible for work	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project Dates	27-Apr-2026 - 08-May-2026
Location	Ashley Coombe NGR: ST 87115 43593 LL: 51.19141163321311, -2.185761822913329 12 Fig: 387115,143593
Administrative Areas	Country: England County/Local Authority: Wiltshire Local Authority District: Wiltshire Parish: Warminster
Project Methodology	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) was commissioned by Landgage Heritage to undertake an archaeological evaluation on Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire. The evaluation comprised the excavation of 22no 30m x 1.8m trenches targeting possible features revealed by geophysical survey. The array of trenches was intended to provide a 4% sample of the Site in order to establish its archaeological potential.

Project Results	Archaeological features were recorded cut into natural geology in trenches; 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17 and 19. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the agreed WSI and has shown that the geophysics results were generally reliable to the south of the Site. Trenches 7, 8, 9, 12 and 19 all contained evidence of the large curvilinear ditch, identified on the geophysical survey, and is thought to represent an enclosure ditch. With the exception of the cremation in Trench 5 all archaeological features seen on the Site were within this enclosure ditch. The ring ditch identified in Trenches 11 and 17 could indicate the presence of a drip gully from a round house with smaller pits in Trench 17 possibly post holes for the house, given their proximity to the ring ditch. It is likely that the features found during the evaluation represent a small Iron Age enclosed settlement of local significance.
Funder	Private or public corporation Landgage Heritage
HER	Wiltshire and Swindon HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Maisie Marshall
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Physical Archive, Documentary Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with Wiltshire Museum;

Report generated on: 01-07-2026:1713



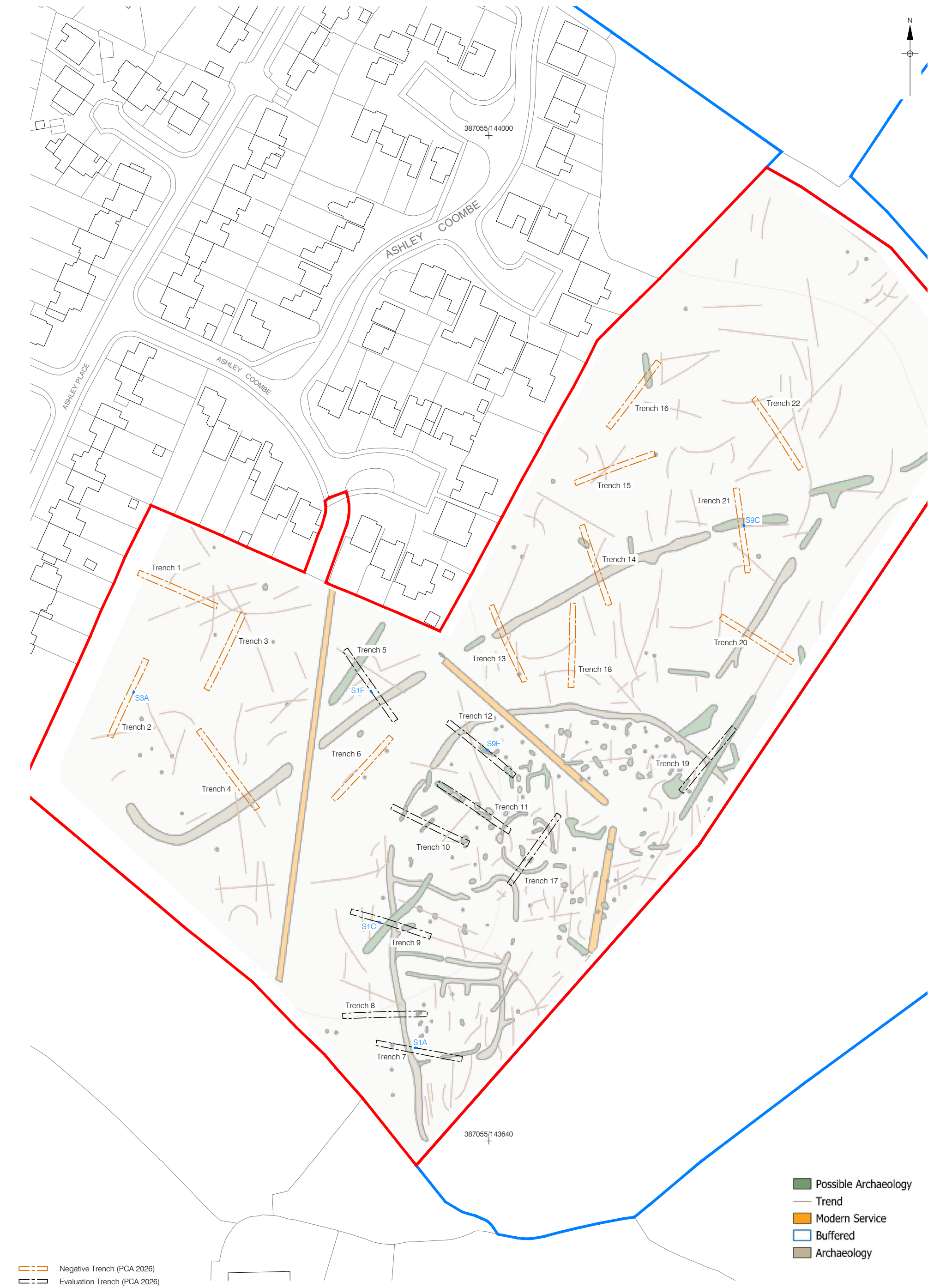
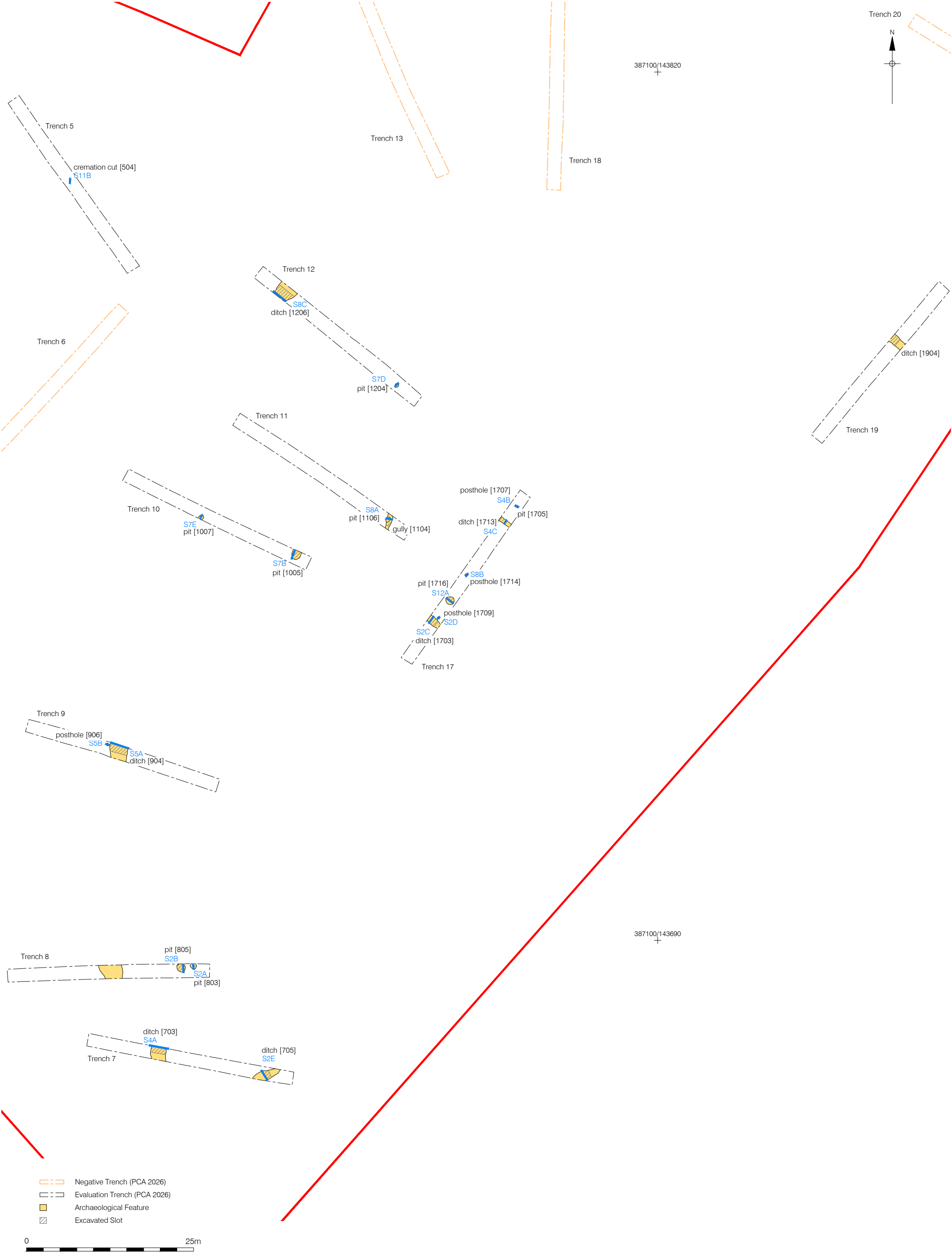
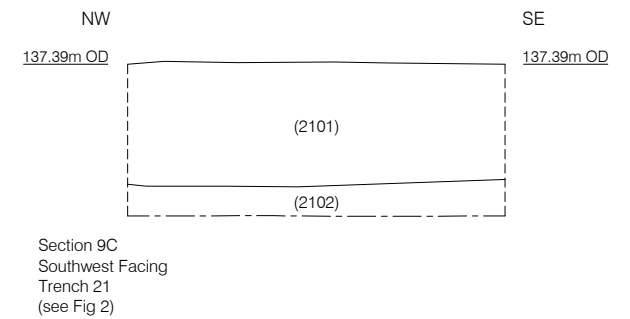
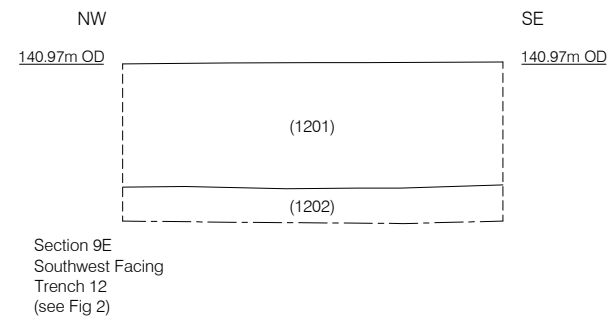
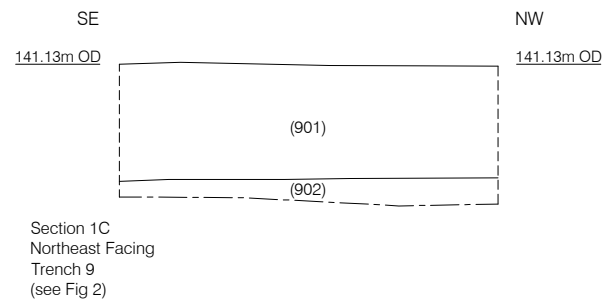
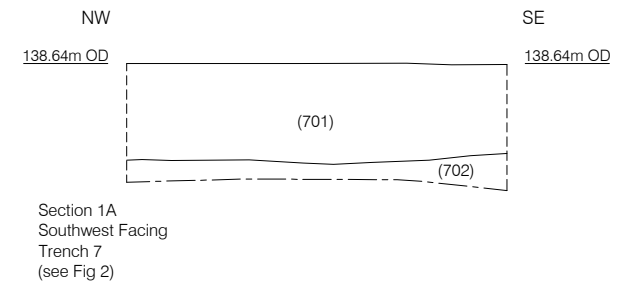
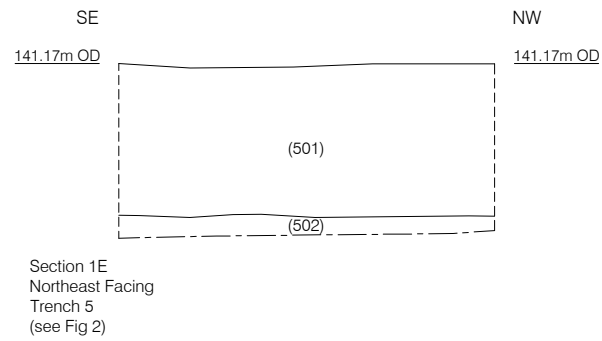
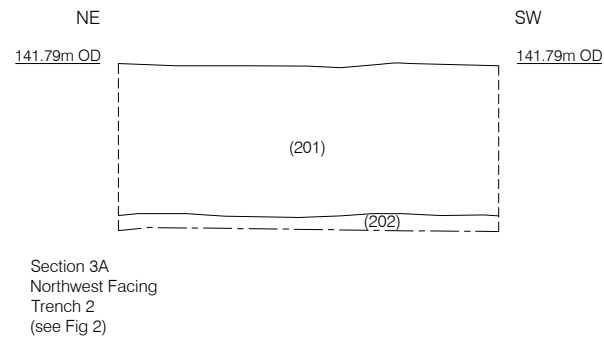
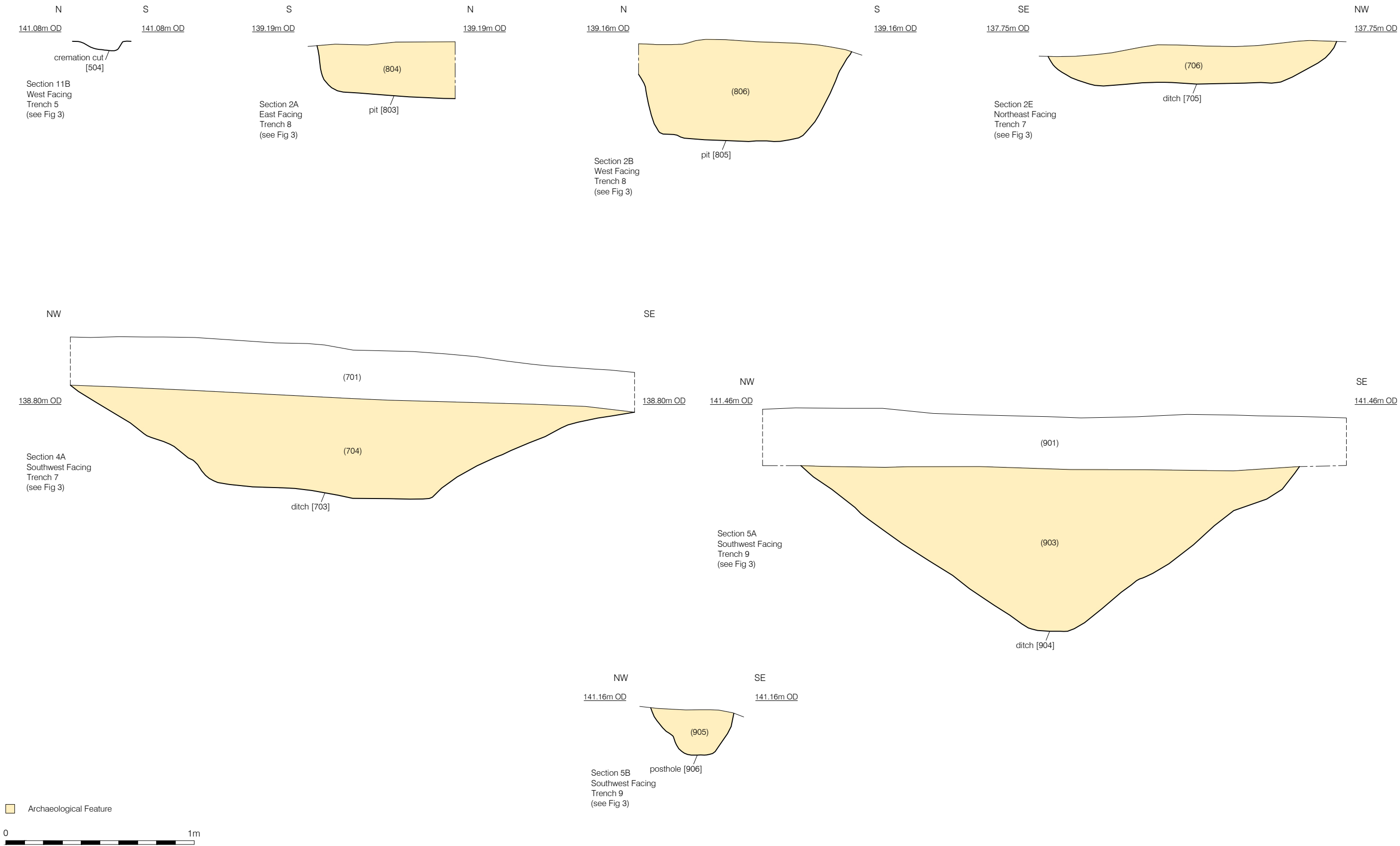
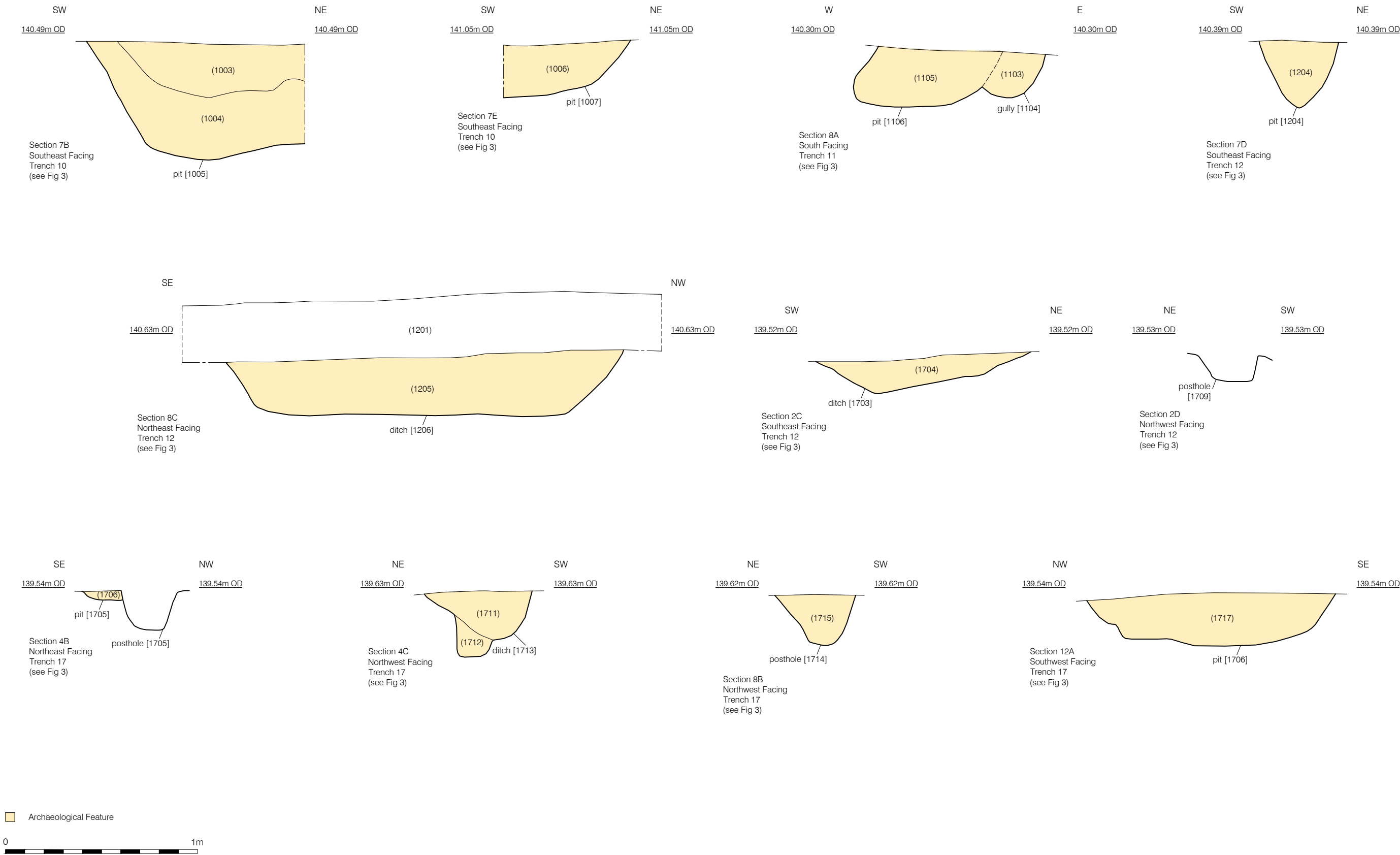


Figure 2
Detailed Site Plan with Representative Section Locations
overlay on the Geophysical Survey Results
1:1,250 at A3











PCA CAMBRIDGE

THE GRANARY, RECTORY FARM
BREWERY ROAD, PAMPISFORD
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 3EN

t: 01223 845 522

e: cambridge@pre-construct.com

PCA DURHAM

THE ROPE WORKS, BROADWOOD VIEW
CHESTER-LE-STREET
DURHAM DH3 3AF

t: 0191 377 1111

e: durham@pre-construct.com

PCA LONDON

UNIT 54, BROCKLEY CROSS BUSINESS CENTRE
96 ENDWELL ROAD, BROCKLEY
LONDON SE4 2PD

t: 020 7732 3925

e: london@pre-construct.com

PCA NEWARK

16 LONDON ROAD
NEWARK
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NG24 1TW

t: 01636 370410

e: newark@pre-construct.com

PCA NORWICH

QUARRY WORKS, DEREHAM ROAD
HONINGHAM
NORWICH NR9 5AP

T: 01223 845522

e: cambridge@pre-construct.com

PCA WARWICK

2 PLESTOWES BARN
HAREWAY LANE, BARFORD
WARWICKSHIRE CV35 8DD

t: 01926 485490

e: warwick@pre-construct.com

PCA WINCHESTER

5 RED DEER COURT, ELM ROAD
WINCHESTER
HAMPSHIRE SO22 5LX

t: 01962 849 549

e: winchester@pre-construct.com

