

**LAND OFF NETTLETON ROAD
BURTON
WILTSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

For

MEADGATE HOMES

DRAFT REPORT

CA REPORT: 05161

OCTOBER 2005



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CA PROJECT: 2012
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SUMMARY

Site Name:	Land off Nettleton Road
Location:	Burton, Wiltshire
NGR:	ST 8172 7942
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	26-28 September 2005
Planning Reference:	05/00474/FUL
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Devizes Museum
Site Code:	NRB 05

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2005 at the request of Meadgate Homes on land off Nettleton Road, Burton, Wiltshire. The evaluation aimed to investigate the nature of a line of stones running alongside the lane known as Church Hill and thought by local residents to have once been a causeway. In compliance with an approved written scheme of investigation, and after consultation with Mr Roy Canham, County Archaeologist for Wiltshire County Council, four trenches were excavated across the putative causeway.

The evaluation confirmed the presence of a causeway alongside the east-west spur of the Church Hill lane. The causeway comprised several phases of stone surfacing approximately 2.6m wide, built onto a 4m wide bank of redeposited natural clay. Although only limited dating evidence was recovered, a 17th-century date for its construction appears likely, and the causeway seems likely to have been used until the construction of a dry-stone wall along its centre line in the 19th or 20th century. A possible early road surface extending beneath the modern lane was also identified and, although poorly dated, its construction and use appears to have been broadly contemporary with the causeway. The causeway survived along much of the east-west spur of the Church Hill lane, but had been damaged by root action and modern construction in places, and appeared to have been severely truncated or removed at the extreme south-western and south-eastern corners of the development area for the construction of a field entrance and now-demolished dwellings respectively.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2005 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Meadgate Homes at land off Nettleton Road, Burton, Wiltshire (centred on NGR: ST 1872 7942; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany a planning application for a residential development on the site (planning ref. 05/00474/FUL). In particular, the evaluation aimed to investigate a line of stones running parallel to the east-west spur of Church Hill and thought by local residents to have once been a causeway.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation produced by CA (2005) and approved by North Wiltshire District Council (NWDC) acting on the advice of Mr Roy Canham, County Archaeologist for Wiltshire County Council. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999), Wiltshire County Council's *Standards for Archaeological Excavation in Wiltshire* (CAS Wilts 1995) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects II* (English Heritage 1991). It was monitored by Mr Canham, including site visits on 27 and 28 September 2005.

The site

- 1.3 The proposed development comprises a triangle of rough grass, approximately 0.65ha in area, 50m to the east of St Mary's Church. It is bounded to the west by residential properties fronting onto a lane known as Church Hill, to the east by Nettleton Road and to the south by the east-west continuation of the Church Hill lane. The southern end of the site lies at c. 125m AOD and the land slopes down towards the By Brook c. 40m north of the site (Fig. 2).
- 1.4 The underlying geology of the area is mapped as clay interbedded with shelly limestone of the Forest Marble series of the Middle Jurassic geological era (BGS 1990).

Archaeological background

- 1.5 Archaeological interest in the site arises from a line of stones visible along the north side of the Church Hill lane where it forms the southern site boundary. According to local residents these stones formerly formed part of a causeway running alongside the lane. A site visit was made as part of a desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site which suggested that the stones might have been part of a natural outcrop of limestone bedrock (CA 2005a), however, the overgrown nature of the site made this conclusion tentative.
- 1.6 Recollections from local residents potentially identify the lane alongside which the possible causeway runs as the Church Way (Mrs Josephine Vercoe pers. comm.). The Church Way receives an early mention in a documentary reference of 1630, in respect of an encroachment of soil and stones onto it (WRO ref. X3/75). The same source contains a reference to an order for the Church Way to be repaired between the church and a field called White Hays in 1637. White Hays lies to the south-west of the church, and therefore the reference to Church Way need not necessarily imply that the causeway was a constructed feature at this time. The Church Way is not mentioned in Abbot Beere's 1518 Survey of Nettleton, and no direct reference to the existence of the causeway has been identified (WRO ref. X3/55). The earliest available map evidence suggests that there was a crossroads at the eastern end of the lane, which then continued eastwards, linking the settlement with the outlying fields (WRO ref. 777/10L).

Archaeological objectives

- 1.7 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the character, quality, date, significance and extent of the putative causeway. This information will assist NWDC in making an informed judgement on the likely impact upon the archaeological resource by the proposed development.

Methodology

- 1.8 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of four trenches. The trenches were placed at intervals along the possible causeway in order to define its extent. At the time of the evaluation, a drystone wall was present running along the mid-line of the possible causeway. Trenches 1, 3 and 4 extended from the edge of the Church Hill

lane to the drystone wall, whilst Trench 2 was extended beyond the wall into the field behind in order to define the full width of the possible causeway. In order to limit damage to the possible causeway, intrusive excavation was kept to a minimum. However in Trenches 1 and 2 limited excavation into the deposits associated with the feature was undertaken.

- 1.9 All trenches were excavated by hand. Where archaeological deposits were excavated, excavation was undertaken by hand in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 1: *Excavation Recording Manual* (1996).
- 1.10 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003), but no deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 3: *Treatment of Finds Immediately After Excavation* (1995).
- 1.11 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive (including artefacts) will be deposited with Devizes Museum.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-6)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively. Details of the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix 3.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

- 2.2 The earliest encountered deposit comprised layer 103, a compact layer of redeposited natural clay with limestone fragments from which 19th-century finds were recovered. This deposit appeared to have served as make-up for an overlying stone surface, 110. This surface comprised flat-laid limestone fragments which butted a line of larger stone slabs, 102, which may have formed a kerb to the surface and from which a post-medieval clay pipe stem was recovered.

- 2.3 A further stone surface, 108, was identified running alongside the base of the banked make-up 103, although the relationship between these two deposits remained unclear. This surface extended beneath the extant tarmac road surface and may have been a former road surface.

Trench 2 (Figs 4 & 7)

- 2.4 The earliest encountered deposit was natural clay substrate 211. This was overlain by a bank of compact redeposited clay, 209/213, which acted as make-up for the overlying stone surfaces. The earliest of these stone surfaces was 207, a compact layer of densely-packed flat-laid limestone fragments within a silty matrix. A residual sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from this deposit. This surface appeared to have been repaired with the insertion of a short length of pitched limestone fragments, perhaps indicating the line of a former wheel-rut. This surface and the repair were overlain by further stone surfaces, 212 and 206, from which two distinct groups of finds, dating to the late 17th to mid 18th century and 19th-century respectively, were recovered. A group of 15 sherds of late 17th to mid 18th-century pottery would appear to provide a good date for the construction of surface 212. These surfaces were far less compact than the earlier surface, although this may have been the result of the extensive root activity within the trench. Surface 206 butted a line of larger stone slabs, 204, which appeared to have acted as a kerb. The relationship between this kerb and the earliest surface was not apparent.

- 2.5 A further stone surface, 208, was identified running alongside the base of the banked make-up 209/213. This surface extended beneath the extant tarmac road surface and may have been a former road surface. Finds recovered from within this surface dated to the late 17th to 18th centuries. Although this surface appeared to overly make-up layer 209/213 this relationship remained tenuous. The remaining deposits were modern in date.

Trench 3 (Fig. 5)

- 2.6 The earliest encountered deposit was make-up layer 303, a bank of redeposited clay. It was overlain by stone surface 304 which comprised flat-laid limestone fragments. This surface had been heavily disturbed by tree roots, by the use of this area as a former site access (J. Vercoe pers. Comm.) and by the construction of drystone wall 302.

Trench 4 (Fig. 6)

- 2.7 The earliest encountered deposit was make-up layer 406, a bank of redeposited clay. It was overlain by stone surface 403 which comprised flat-laid limestone fragments and which appeared to have been heavily disturbed by tree roots.
- 2.8 A further stone surface, 407, was identified extending beneath the extant tarmac road surface and may itself have been a former road surface. Finds recovered from within this surface dated to the early 19th century. The remaining deposits were modern.

The Finds

- 2.9 Pottery, vessel glass and clay pipe stems were recovered from the make-up and surfaces of the possible causeway. All of these were post-medieval in date with the exception of a sherd of redeposited Roman pottery.
- 2.10 Along the possible causeway, 19th-century finds were recovered from the make-up layer in Trench 1 whilst the latest surface in Trench 2 contained both late 17th to mid 18th-century and 19th-century finds. The variation in these dates may be accounted for by the heavily disturbed nature of the possible causeway and by the likely existence of localised repairs of varying dates. Overall, an approximate 17th to 18th-century construction date for the possible causeway seems likely, with ongoing use into the 19th century and later.
- 2.11 Similarly, the possible former road surface identified below the Church Hill lane contained pottery ranging from the 17th to the 19th centuries, a variation in dates that is likely to reflect the long-lived nature of such features.

The Biological Evidence

- 2.12 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the course of the evaluation.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The evaluation clearly demonstrated that the feature reputed to have been a causeway was indeed a man-made structure. Although very disturbed in places, it appears to have taken the form of a limestone surface built onto a bank of redeposited natural clay and edged with substantial limestone slabs. The resulting stone surface was c. 2.6m wide sitting on top of a bank at least 4.3m wide and 0.65m high. The form of this feature accords well with one of the Oxford English Dictionary definitions of a causeway as being a raised path alongside a road. The evaluation also identified the presence of a former road surface, beneath the extant tarmac of the Church Hill lane, which appears to have been broadly contemporary with the causeway and which may have taken the form of a 'hollow way' running along the south side of the causeway.
- 3.2 Little intrusive excavation was undertaken into the fabric of the causeway and as a result any attempt to date its construction remains tentative. The Church Way lane and causeway are not mentioned in Abbot Beere's 1518 Survey of Nettleton (see *Archaeological Background* above) and this, taken with a complete lack of either securely stratified or residual medieval finds, seems to indicate a post-medieval date for the construction of the causeway. Furthermore, finds recovered from the construction of one of its surfaces (212) indicate that it is likely to date to the 17th to mid 18th centuries.

Conclusions

- 3.3 The evaluation has demonstrated that local residents' recollections of the stone feature as a causeway were probably correct, and has indicated a possible 17th to mid 18th-century date for its construction. The evaluation has also demonstrated that, east of the dwelling known as 'Mullions', the causeway survives for most of the length of the east-west line of the Church Hill lane, although it is truncated in places by modern construction and root activity. The visible extent of the stones forming the causeway at the time of the evaluation has been plotted onto Figure 2. Although still partially extant in Trench 3, the feature appears to have been heavily truncated in an area formerly occupied by buildings at the junction of the Church Hill lane with Nettleton Road in the south-eastern corner of the site. In addition, the causeway has clearly been truncated, if it existed, in the south-western corner of the site, during the formation of the present access into the field to the north.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by David Cudlip and Jonathan Hart, assisted by Darran Muddiman and Samantha Thoroughgood. This report was written by David Cudlip and Jonathan Hart with illustrations prepared by Elizabeth Gardner. The archive has been compiled by Jonathan Hart, and prepared for deposition by Ed McSloy. The project was managed for CA by Simon Cox.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1990 *Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) Solid and Drift 1:50,000 series Sheet 265: Bath*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2005a *Land off Nettleton Road, Burton, Wiltshire: Archaeological Desk-Bases Assessment*. CA typescript report **05127**

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2005b *Land off Nettleton Road, Burton, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*.

Documentary Sources

WRO ref. X3/75 (transcript of BL Add Mss 23151) Nettleton Manor Court Book, 1603-1662

WRO ref. X3/55 (photocopy of BL Harl Mss 3691) Abbot Beere's Survey of Nettleton, 1518

WRO ref. 777/10L 1802 Map of Nettleton

WRO = Wiltshire Records Office

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

101	Topsoil: mid grey-brown sandy silt.
102	?kerbstones: large flat-laid stone blocks within a green-grey clay silt matrix
103	Make-up layer: small angular limestone fragments within a green-grey clay silt matrix
104	Modern concrete post-setting for fence-post 105
105	Modern wooden fence-post
106	Modern drystone boundary wall
107	Modern make-up for tarmac road surface
108	Possible former road surface: closely-packed small limestone fragments within a mid-brown clay-silt matrix
109	Modern tarmac road surface
110	Stone surface: small to medium-sized limestone fragments within a green-grey silty clay matrix. Heavily disturbed by tree-roots

Trench 2

201	Topsoil: mid grey-brown sandy silt
202	Modern tarmac road surface
203	Modern drystone boundary wall
204	?kerbstone: large flat-laid stone block within a green-grey clay silt matrix
205	Pitched limestones: possible repair or wheel rut within surface 206
206	Stone surface: small to medium-sized limestone fragments within a green-grey silty clay matrix. Heavily disturbed by tree-roots
207	Stone surface underlying 205 & 206: small to medium-sized limestone fragments within a green-grey silty clay matrix. Heavily disturbed by tree-roots
208	Possible former road surface: closely-packed small limestone fragments within a mid-brown clay-silt matrix
209	Make-up: compact green-grey silty clay with occasional limestone fragments
210	Void context
211	Natural substrate: yellow-green clay
212	= 206
213	= 209

Trench 3

301	Topsoil: mid grey-brown sandy silt
302	Modern drystone boundary wall
303	Make-up: compact green-grey silty clay with occasional limestone fragments
304	Stone surface: small to medium-sized limestone fragments within a green-grey silty clay matrix. Heavily disturbed by tree-roots
305	Construction cut for 302
306	Modern tarmac road surface

Trench 4

401	Topsoil: mid grey-brown sandy silt
402	Modern drystone boundary wall
403	Stone surface: small to medium-sized limestone fragments within a green-grey silty clay matrix. Heavily disturbed by tree-roots
404	?kerbstones: large flat-laid stone blocks within a green-grey clay silt matrix
405	Modern tarmac road surface
406	Make-up: compact green-grey silty clay with occasional limestone fragments
407	Possible former road surface: closely-packed small limestone fragments within a mid-brown clay-silt matrix

APPENDIX 2: THE FINDS

Context	Description	Count	Wt (g)	Spot-date
102	Clay pipe: stem	1	1	Post-med+
103	Modern pottery: china, glazed and unglazed earthenware	8	81	C19+
	Ceramic Building Material: peg tile	2	17	
206	Post-medieval pottery: ?Bristol yellow slipware	1	9	C19+
	Modern pottery: china	1	3	
	Clay pipe: stem	1	7	
207	Roman pottery: North Wilts oxidised ware (abr.)	1	7	-
208	Post-medieval pottery: North Devon gravel-tempered ware	1	5	LC17-C18
212	Post-medieval pottery: South Somerset slip-decorated and plain glazed earthenware; Westerwald stoneware	15	184	LC17-MC18
	Post-medieval vessel glass: HLLA bottle glass	2	22	
	Animal bone	5	60	
401	Modern pottery: china	3	25	C19+
407	Post-medieval pottery: ?Bristol yellow slipware	1	1	eC19
	Ironworking slag: dense ?smelting	-	179	
	Cual coin: George III halfpenny dated 1806	1	-	

Small quantities of artefactual material comprising pottery, ceramic building material, glass and metal items were recovered.

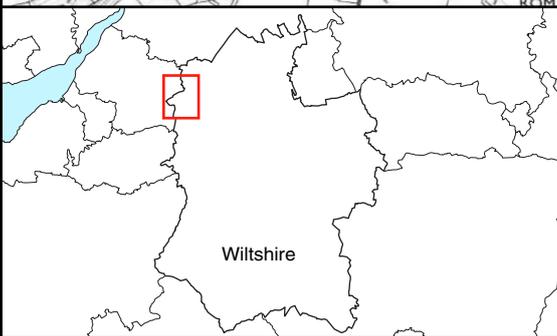
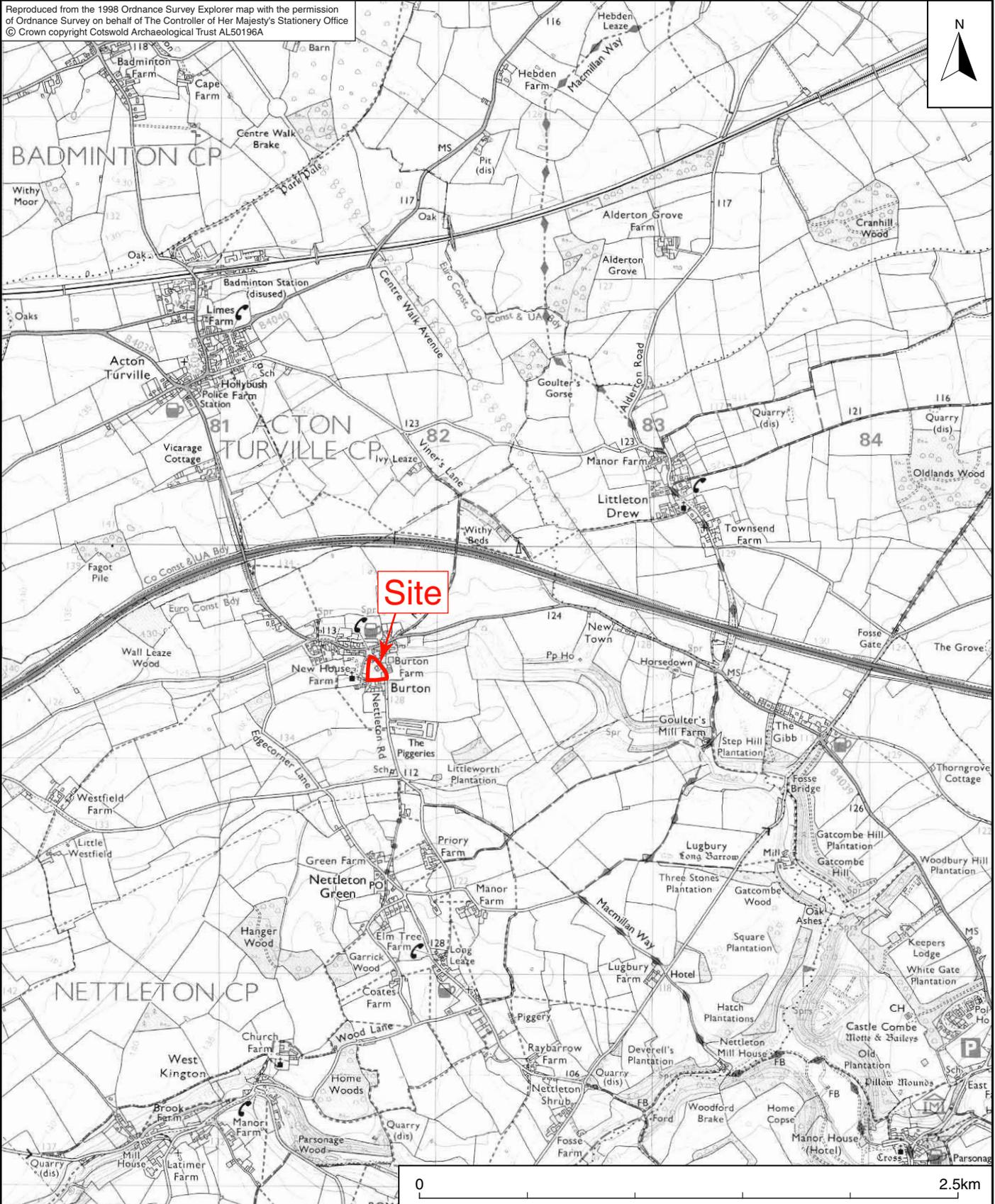
A single sherd of Roman pottery from layer 207 represents a redeposited find, coming as it does from a layer sealing a post-medieval dated deposit. The remainder of the pottery dates to the post-medieval period or later. That from layer 212 dates to the later 17th or early 18th century and includes several sherds from a South Somerset slipware bowl and a single sherd of a Westerwald stoneware vessel. A similar date, or extending to the later 18th century is likely for a North Devon gravel-tempered sherd from 208.

The remaining pottery and other finds are predominantly later in date, and include transfer-decorated china and 'flowerpot' fragments, probably dating to after c. 1850. A single coin, a halfpenny of George III dated 1806, was recovered from layer 407. Modern material (post-dating c. 1800) has been discarded.

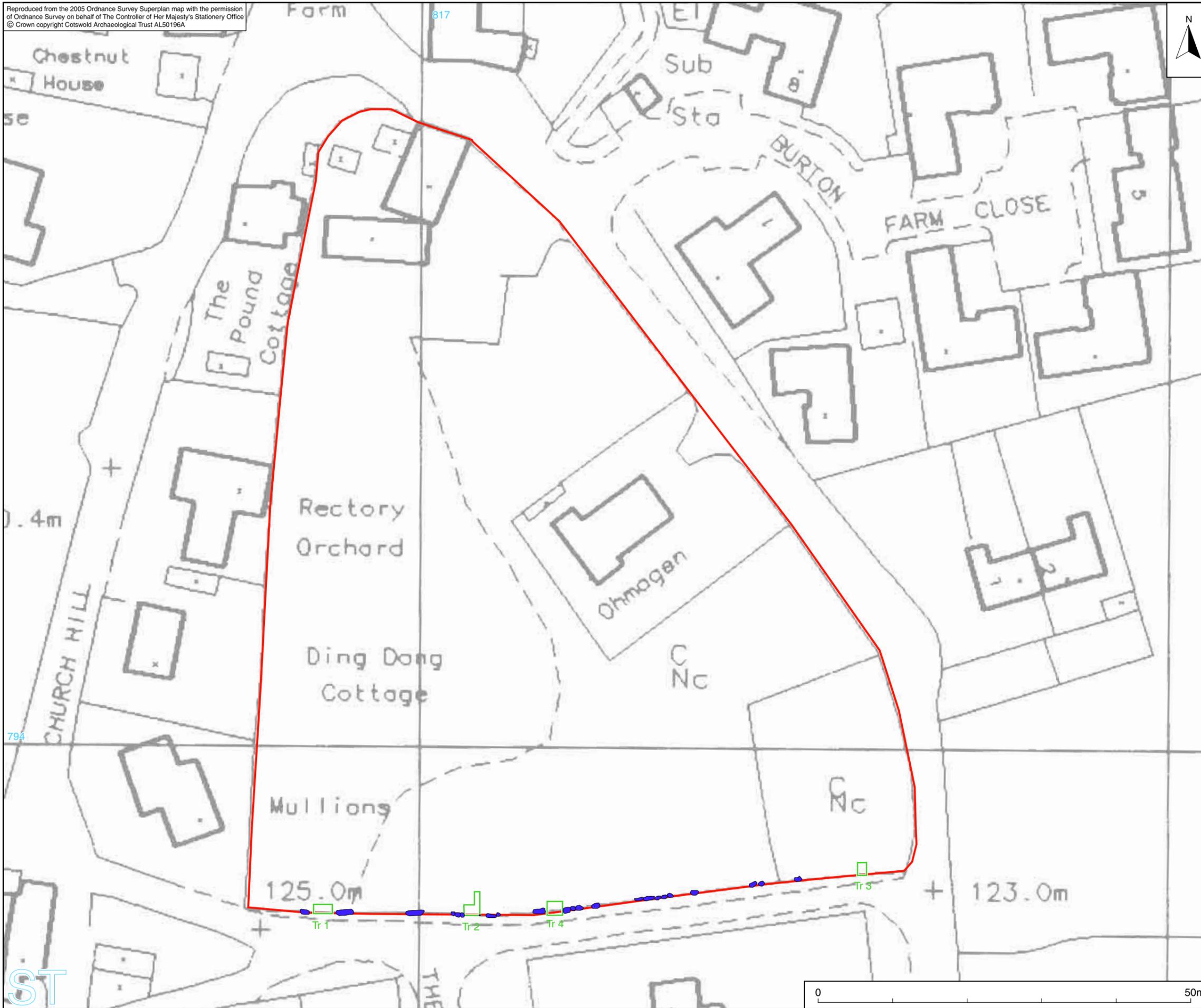
APPENDIX 3: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

Levels are expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), calculated using the benchmark located at St Mary's Church, Burton (125.32m AOD).

	Trench 1	Trench 2	Trench 3	Trench 4
Top of tarmac road surface	124.84m	124.33m	123.13m	124.14m
Top of causeway	125.21m	124.85m	123.49m	124.57m
Top of natural substrate	N/A	124.13m	N/A	N/A



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PROJECT TITLE Land off Nettleton Road, Burton, Wiltshire		
FIGURE TITLE Site location plan		
SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
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- site
- trench
- visible stone slab



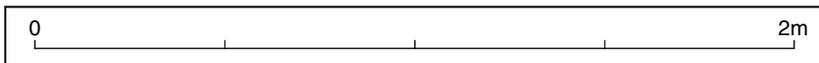
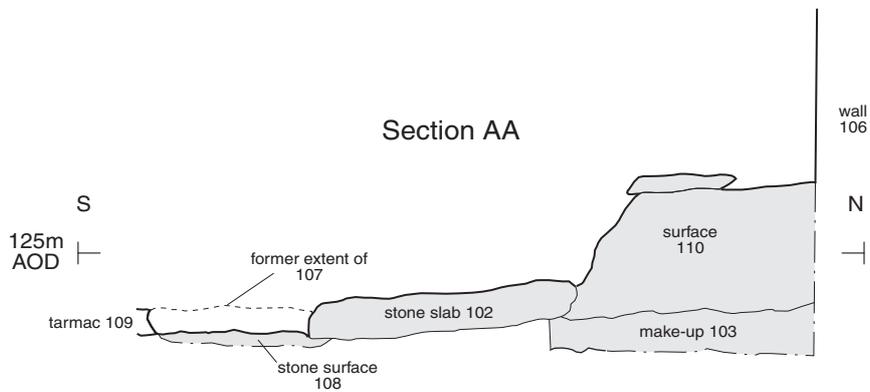
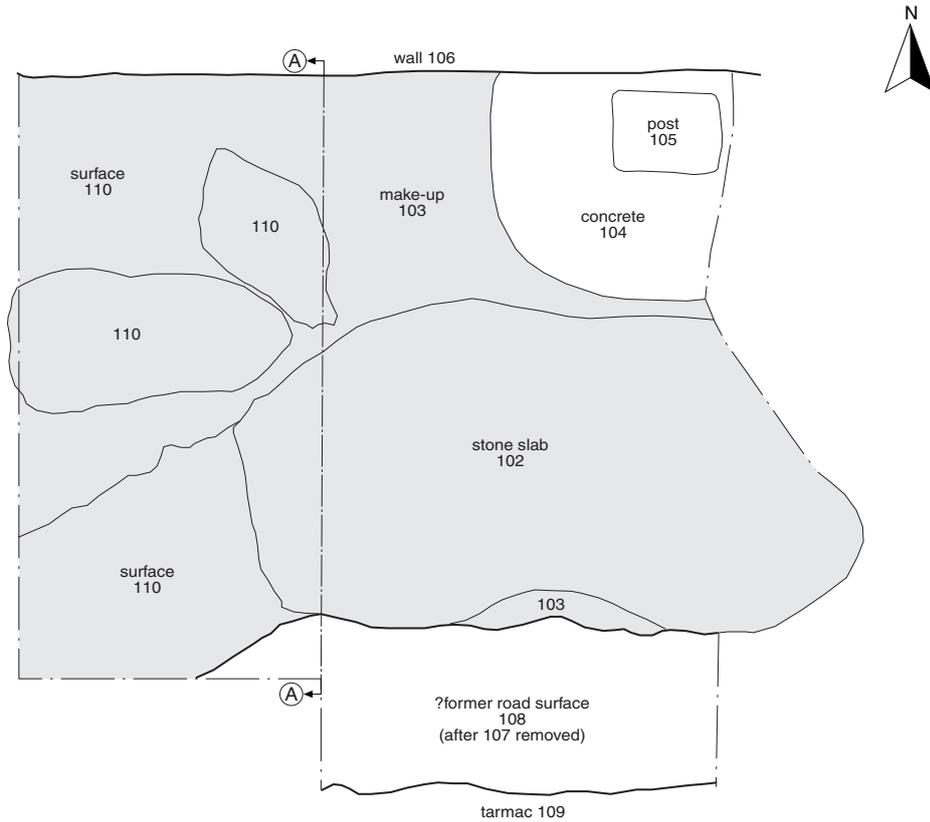
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Land off Nettleton Road, Burton,
Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE
**Trench location plan showing
visible stone slabs**

SCALE 1:500@A3	PROJECT NO. 2012	FIGURE NO. 2
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ST





causeway



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Land off Nettleton Road, Burton,
Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 1; plan and section

SCALE

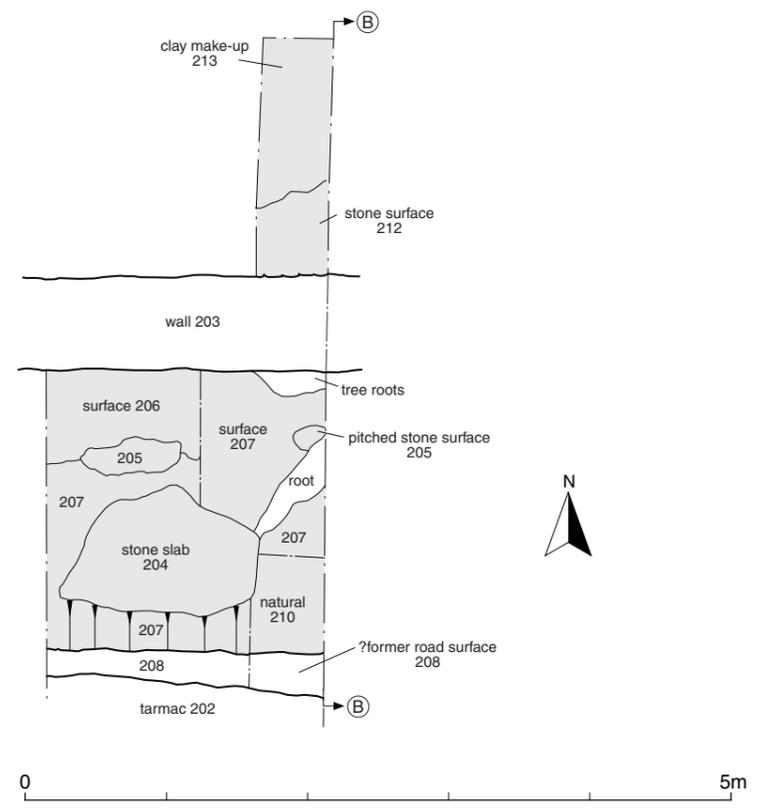
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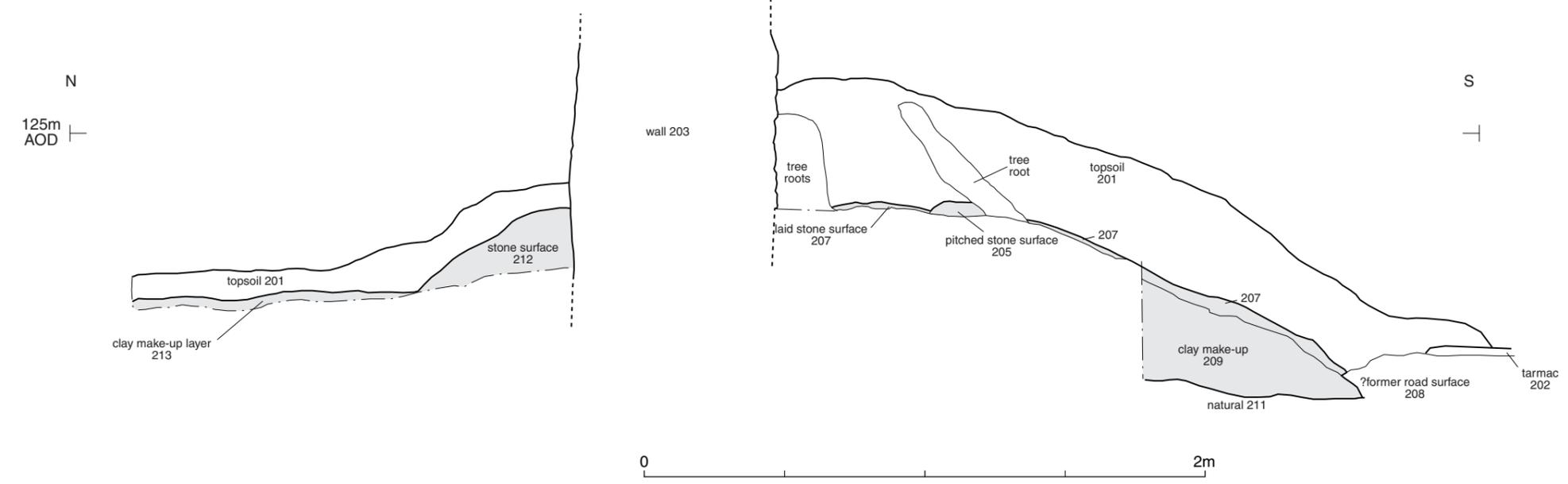
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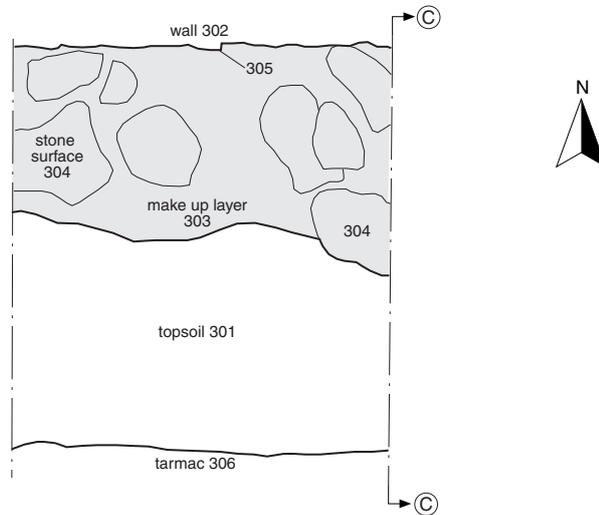
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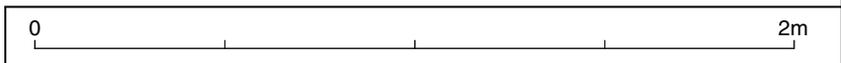
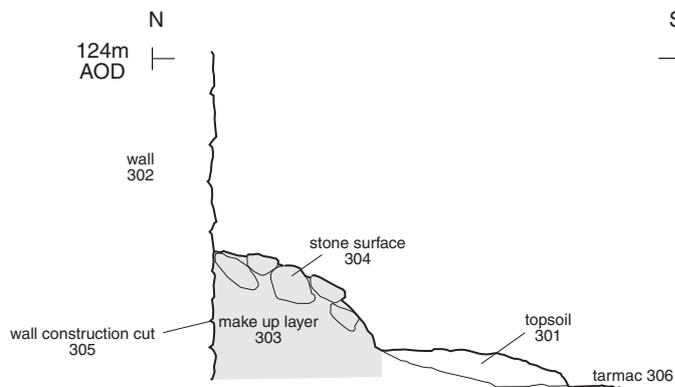
causeway

Section BB





Section CC



 causeway



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

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Land off Nettleton Road, Burton,
Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 3; plan and section

SCALE

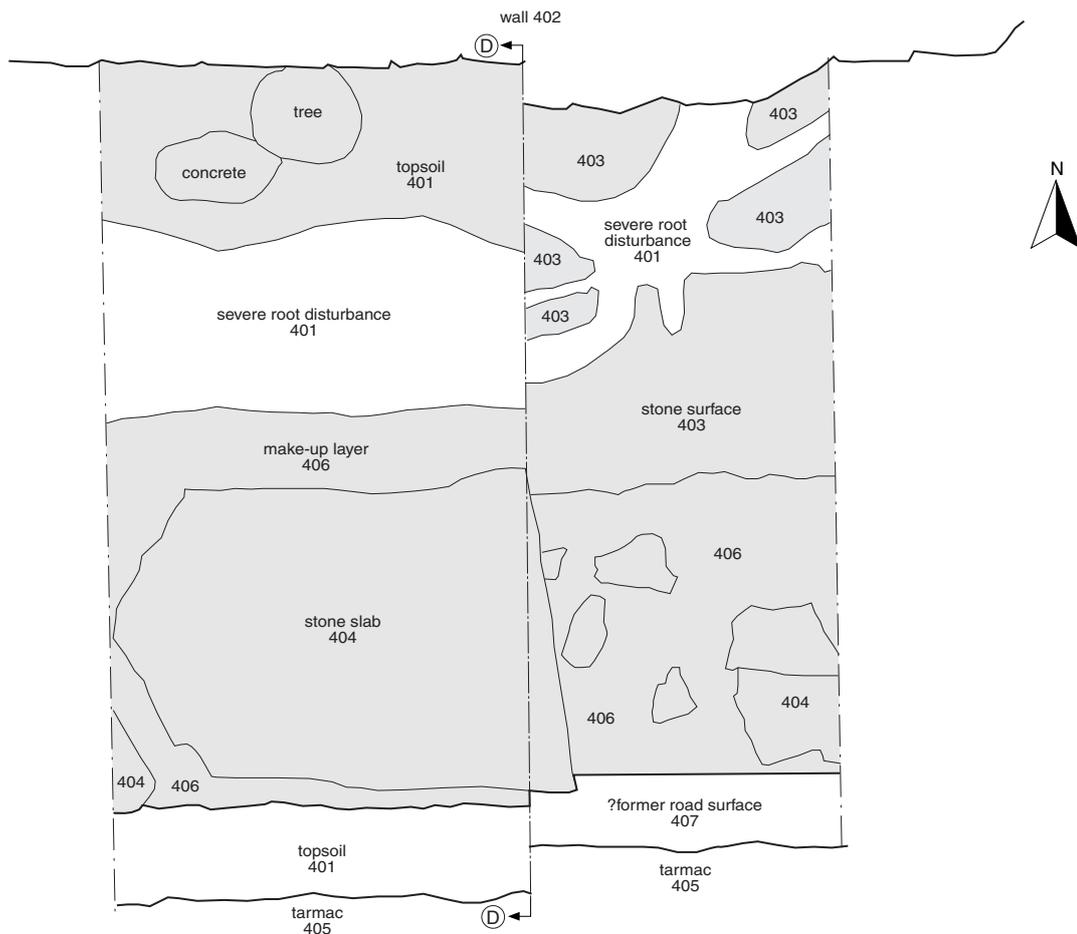
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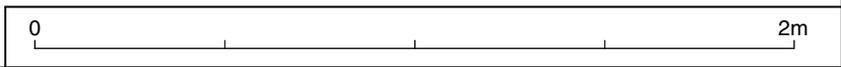
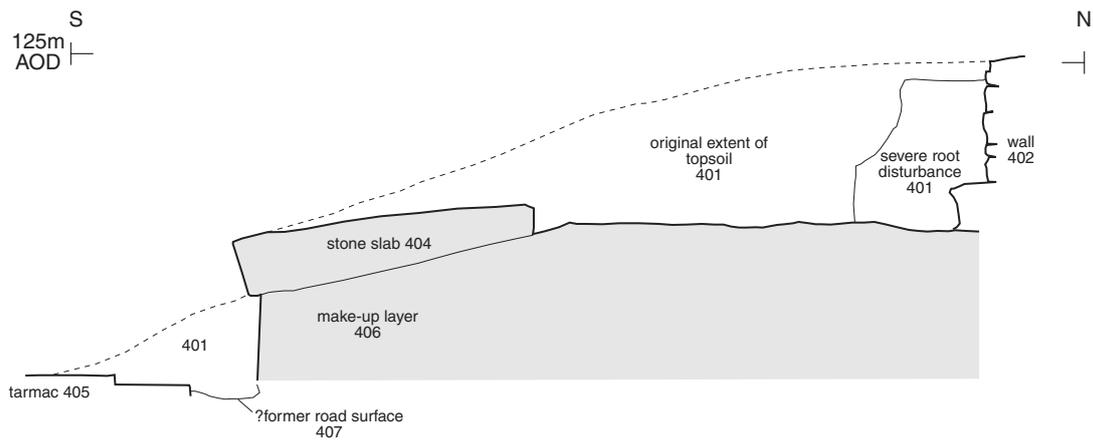
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FIGURE NO.

5



Section DD



causeway



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Land off Nettleton Road, Burton, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 4; plan and section

SCALE

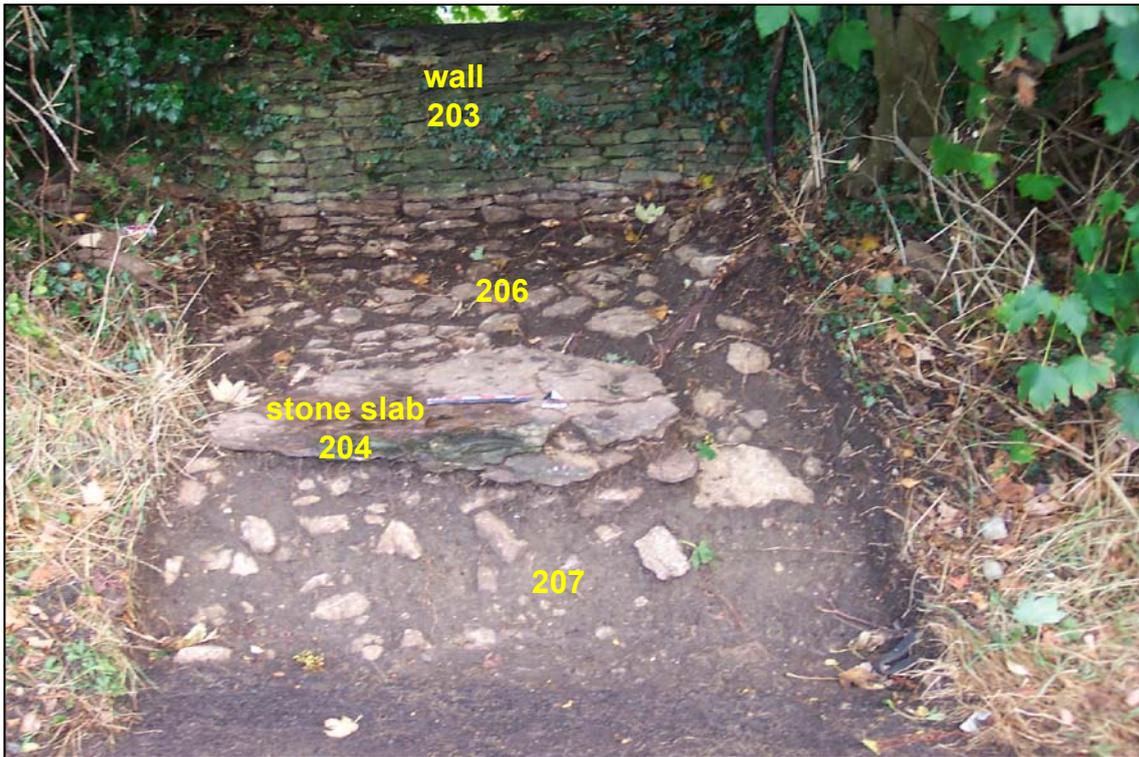
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FIGURE NO.

6



7

<p>7 Trench 2, looking North</p>	 COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY	
	<small>PROJECT TITLE</small> Land off Nettleton Road, Burton, Wiltshire	
	<small>FIGURE TITLE</small> Photograph	
	<small>SCALE</small> not to scale	<small>PROJECT NO.</small> 2012