

**Glebe Land  
Falfield  
South Gloucestershire**

*Archaeological Evaluation*



*for:*  
Pegasus Group

*on behalf of:*  
Cotswold Homes Ltd

CA Project: CR1373  
CA Report: CR1373\_1

June 2023



# Glebe Land Falfield South Gloucestershire

## *Archaeological Evaluation*

CA Project: CR1373  
CA Report: CR1373\_1

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## CONTENTS

SUMMARY .....	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	4
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
4. METHODOLOGY .....	5
5. RESULTS.....	6
6. THE FINDS .....	7
7. THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE .....	8
8. DISCUSSION.....	8
9. CA PROJECT TEAM.....	9
10. REFERENCES.....	9
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS .....	10
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS.....	11
APPENDIX C: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE.....	11
APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM .....	12

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan, showing archaeological features (1:500)
- Fig. 3 Trench 3: plan (1:200), section (1:20) and photograph
- Fig. 4 Trench 4: plan (1:200) and photograph
- Fig. 5 Trench 4: sections (1:20) and photographs

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project name:</b>	Glebe Land
<b>Location:</b>	Falfield, South Gloucestershire
<b>NGR:</b>	368323 193417
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	3-4 April 2023
<b>Planning reference:</b>	SGC: P22/04061/F
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
<b>Site Code:</b>	GLF23

In April 2023, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at Glebe Land, Falfield, South Gloucestershire. A total of six trenches were excavated.

The evaluation identified a single linear feature of possible medieval date and two undated pits in the central and south-western part of the site, one of which contained an environmental assemblage potentially indicative of nearby settlement activity.

No further features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In April 2023, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Glebe Land, Falfield, South Gloucestershire (centred at NGR: 368323 193417; Fig. 1). This evaluation was undertaken for Pegasus Group, who were acting on behalf of Cotswold Homes Ltd.
- 1.2. The evaluation results will inform a planning application for residential development of the site, which has been made to South Gloucestershire Council (SGC; planning ref: P22/04061/F).
- 1.3. The evaluation was requested by Paul Driscoll, Archaeology and Historic Environment Officer, SGC, and the trench plan was designed by Pegasus Group. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2023) and approved by Paul Driscoll.
- 1.4. The evaluation was also undertaken in line with *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

### The site

- 1.5. The proposed development site is approximately 0.86ha in extent. It lies on the western side of the A38, Bristol Road, on the northern outskirts of Falfield. The site currently comprises a single agricultural field and is bounded to the north, south and west by residential development, and to the east by Bristol Road. The site lies at approximately 30m AOD and is broadly level.
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is predominantly mapped as mudstone, with sandstone at its northern extent, both of the Tortworth Beds, which formed in the Silurian Period (BGS 2023). The natural geological substrate identified during the course of the evaluation consisted of mixed clays and mudstone.

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## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The site has previously been subject to a Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (PG 2021), the results of which are summarised below.

### Prehistoric and Roman

- 2.2. The earliest recorded evidence of activity in the vicinity of the site is in the form of a chance find in the 1960s of a Neolithic polished flint axehead from a garden in Falfield, c. 200m south-west of the site. A scatter of possible Iron Age or Romano-British pottery sherds is recorded c. 900m to the north of the site.
- 2.3. The conjectured route of the Roman road between Sea Mills and Gloucester follows the line of the modern A38, immediately to the east of the site, although this has not been corroborated through excavation.
- 2.4. A possible Roman settlement was recorded c. 900m north-east of the site during an excavation in association with the construction of the M5 motorway, in 1970. Finds included the probable remains of a building platform, stone slabs, and sherds of pottery dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Further finds of Roman pottery have been recorded along the route of the M5, including at Whitfield, c. 900m to the south of the site.

### Early medieval and medieval

- 2.5. The site of a possible deserted medieval settlement was recorded during construction of the M5 motorway, c. 300m south-east of the site; the remains were described as 'ploughed out earthworks'.
- 2.6. Early medieval origins are ascribed to Heneage Court, located between 300m and 800m north-east of the site, although recorded fabric and finds have been dated to the 17th century or later. Remains of hollow ways and lynchets have been recorded at Tortworth Court, c. 950m to the east of the site.
- 2.7. Ridge and furrow earthworks are visible on historic aerial photographs and have been identified through evaluation in the vicinity of the site, including in the areas immediately to the north and west of the site. Buried furrows containing sherds of 12th to 13th-century pottery were recorded c. 30m to the north of the site during evaluation trenching in 2016, along with former field boundaries and isolated undated features.



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### Post-medieval and modern

- 2.8. The site lay within the agricultural hinterland of nearby settlements in the post-medieval period, with Falfield lying to the south and the post-medieval Heneage Farm between 100m and 250m to the north of the site. A former mill and quarry site is located c. 200m to the south-east of the site and the sites of toll houses associated with the turnpike road, now the A38, are located c. 80m to the south and c. 240m to the north-east.
- 2.9. The site itself is depicted as a single agricultural field on the 1839 Tithe Map for the Parish of Thornbury. Its layout remained the same on the First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) Map of 1881 and on subsequent OS mapping, with the exception of a short-lived structure that was erected at the southern boundary of the site around the turn of the 20th century.

## 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objective of the evaluation was to provide further information on the likely archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation. This information will enable SGC to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets within the site, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise conflict between heritage asset conservation and the development proposals, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

## 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of six trenches, each measuring 25m in length by 1.8m in width, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The trenches were located to provide a representative sample of the site.
- 4.2. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS. Overburden was stripped from the trenches by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate, which was the level at which archaeological features were first encountered.

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- 4.3. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.4. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential, and a sample was taken in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*.
- 4.5. Artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.6. CA will make arrangements with Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives for the deposition of the project archive and, subject to agreement with the legal landowner(s), the artefact collection. The archive will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).
- 4.7. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A. Details of the artefactual material recovered from the site are given in Section 6 and Appendix B. Details of the environmental samples (palaeoenvironmental evidence) are given in Section 7 and Appendix C.
- 5.2. The stratigraphic sequence recorded during the course of the evaluation was broadly uniform. The natural substrate was encountered within all trenches, comprising of mixed clays and mudstone. In Trenches 2-6, this was sealed by an alluvial clay deposit, measuring between 0.13m and 0.24m in thickness. This deposit, along with the natural substrate in Trench 1, were overlain by between 0.1m and 0.27m of silty-clay subsoil, which was in turn sealed by between 0.17m and 0.33m of silty-sand topsoil.
- 5.3. Archaeological features were identified in Trenches 3 and 4, where they were all sealed by the alluvial clay horizon. No further archaeological features or deposits were identified within the remaining trenches, except for an area of modern disturbance recorded in Trench 1.



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### Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

- 5.4. Linear feature 304 (Fig. 3, Section AA) was identified in the centre of Trench 3. It measured 0.82m in width and 0.08m in depth and was aligned broadly north/south. It contained greyish-blue silty clay fill 305, from which a single sherd of abraded pottery, datable to the 11th to early 14th centuries, was recovered.

### Trench 4 (Figs 4 and 5)

- 5.5. Sub-ovoid pit 404 (Fig. 5, Section BB) was recorded towards the western end of Trench 4, measuring 1.32m in length, 0.61m in width and 0.23m in depth. It contained brownish-grey silty clay fill 405, which remained undated.
- 5.6. Pit 406 (Fig. 5, Section CC) was partially exposed towards the eastern end of Trench 4. It measured 1.74m in length, at least 0.87m in width and 0.38m in depth and contained blueish-grey silty clay fill 407, from which no finds were recovered. Following the palaeoenvironmental analysis of a sample taken from fill 407 (Sample 1) a large quantity of charcoal pieces and a fragment of hazelnut were recovered. The material is likely representative of a deposit of hearth waste, possibly associated with domestic activity of unknown date.

## 6. THE FINDS

- 6.1. Artefactual material, comprising a single sherd of pottery, was recovered by hand from one deposit. Recording of this material was undertaken directly to an Excel spreadsheet, from which Appendix B, Table 1 is taken. The artefacts have been recorded by deposit and fragment/item count, weight, type and morphological characteristics according to each find category. The recording undertaken is in accordance with the *ClfA finds Toolkit* (ClfA 2021).

### Pottery

- 6.2. A single unfeatured pottery sherd (3g) in a handmade vesicular, quartz-tempered fabric, was recovered from linear feature 304 (fill 305). The sherd is abraded and the calcareous/soft rock inclusions are leached, probably as the result of the burial environment.
- 6.3. Broad dating across the 11th to early 14th centuries is possible for this small sherd, based on its fabric and sherd thickness, it probably falling within the (Cotswolds type) oolitic limestone-tempered tradition.

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## 7. THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 7.1. A bulk sample (20 litres of soil) was taken from fill 407 of undated pit 406 Trench 4. It was taken to evaluate the preservation of paleoenvironmental remains and with the intention of recovering environmental evidence of industrial or domestic activity on the site. It was also hoped that it might assist with the dating of these features.
- 7.2. The sample was processed by standard flotation procedures using a 0.25mm mesh for the flot and a 0.5mm mesh for the residue. The dried flot was scanned using a binocular microscope and the presence of any charred plant remains or ecofacts are noted in Table 1. Preliminary identifications of plant macrofossils are noted in Table 1, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997) for plants.

### Trench 4

- 7.3. The flot of Sample 1 was moderately large in size. The sample contained a large quantity of well-preserved charcoal pieces, some of which were round wood. This sample also contained a single fragment of hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) shell. This material appears to represent a small deposit of hearth waste. The presence of the nutshell suggests that this material could possibly represent waste material from a domestic hearth. The hazelnut fragment is insufficient to suggest a specific date for this feature. Tentatively, the paleoenvironmental material recovered from Sample 1 suggests that there could have been settlement activity, possibly domestic in nature, in the vicinity of Trench 4.

## 8. DISCUSSION

- 8.1. The evaluation identified a linear feature of possible medieval date and two undated pits within the central and south-western part of the site. The linear feature, located in Trench 3, lay on a broadly similar alignment to the historic boundaries of the field, and likely relates to agricultural activity within the site.
- 8.2. Palaeoenvironmental evidence recovered from one of the two pits, recorded in Trench 4, was indicative of possible domestic or other activity of unknown date in the vicinity of the site. Given the limited scope of the evaluation trenching it is not possible to make further interpretation of the features at this time.

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## 9. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 9.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Louie Parfitt, assisted by Julian Collinson, Horatio Wilson and Rory Calvert. This report was written by Louie Parfitt. The finds report was written by Claire Collier-Jones and the palaeoenvironmental evidence report by Charlotte Molloy. The report illustrations were prepared by Krissy Moore. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young and Christian Day.

## 10. REFERENCES

- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2023 *BGS Geology Viewer* <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/bgs-geology-viewer/> Accessed 18 May 2023
- ClfA 2021 *ClfA Finds reporting toolkit* <https://www.archaeologists.net/reporting-toolkit> (accessed 18 May 2023)
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2023 *Glebe Land, Falfield, South Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*
- PG (Pegasus Group) 2021 *Land Off Selman Drive, Falfield, South Gloucestershire: Heritage Desk Based Assessment* Report No. **P21-2988**
- Stace, C. 1997 *New Flora of the British Isles*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press Books

## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty sand with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.33	
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow grey silt clay with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.11	
1	102	Layer		Natural	Mixed yellow and blue clays with mudstone banding	>25	>1.8	-	
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty sand with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.25	
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow grey silt clay with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.25	
2	202	Layer		Natural	Mixed yellow and blue clays with mudstone banding	>25	>1.8	0.27	
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty sand with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.27	
3	301	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow grey silt clay with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.2	
3	302	Layer		Natural	Mixed yellow and blue clays with mudstone banding	>25	>1.8	-	
3	303	Layer		Alluvium	Mid blue grey clay	>25	>1.8	0.13	
3	304	Cut		Linear feature	N/S aligned linear with gently sloping sides and a concave base	>1.8	0.82	0.08	
3	305	Fill	304	Fill of linear feature	Light grey blue silty clay with small sub-angular stone inclusions	>1.8	0.82	0.08	C11-14
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty sand with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.24	
4	401	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow grey silt clay with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.14	
4	402	Layer		Natural	Mixed yellow and blue clays with mudstone banding	>25	>1.8	-	
4	403	Layer		Alluvium	Mid blue grey clay	>25	>1.8	0.21	
4	404	Cut		Pit	Sub-oval pit with moderately sloping sides and an irregular base	1.32	0.61	0.23	
4	405	Fill	404	Fill of pit	Dark brownish grey silty clay with small mudstone inclusions	1.32	0.61	0.23	
4	406	Cut		Pit	Sub-circular pit with moderate sloping sides and a flat base	1.74	>0.87	0.38	
4	407	Fill	406	Fill of pit	Light blueish grey silty clay with charcoal and mudstone inclusions	1.74	>0.87	0.38	
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty sand with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.17	
5	501	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow grey silt clay with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.1	
5	502	Layer		Alluvium	Mid blue grey clay	>25	>1.8	0.24	
5	503	Layer		Natural	Mixed yellow and blue clays with mudstone banding	>25	>1.8	-	
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty sand with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.33	
6	601	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow grey silt clay with mudstone inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.11	
6	602	Layer		Natural	Mixed yellow and blue clays with mudstone banding	>25	>1.8	-	
6	603	Layer		Alluvium	Mid blue grey clay	>25	>1.8	0.16	

## APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

**Table 1:** Finds Concordance

Context	Material	Fabric Code	Description	Ct.	Wt. (g)	Spot-date
305	Pottery	QZLS	Vesicular, quartz-tempered	1	3	C11-C13/EC14

## APPENDIX C: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

**Table 2:** Assessment of the paleoenvironmental remains.

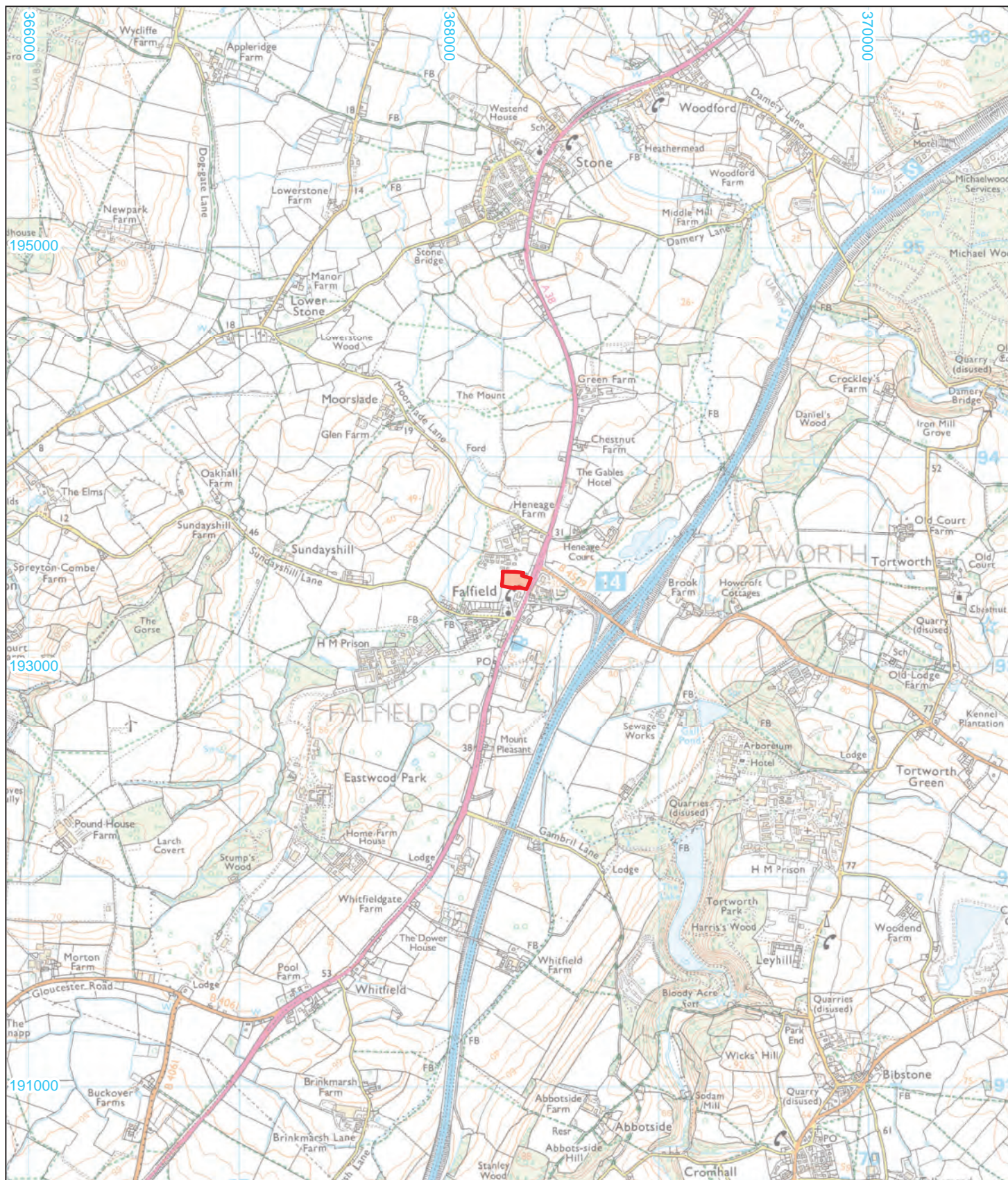
Cut	Context	Sample	Vol (L)	Flot Size (ml)	Roots %	Grain	Chaff	Charred	Charred Other Notes	Charcoal > 4/2mm	Other
<b>Trench 4 Undated pit</b>											
406	407	1	20	145	10	-	-	*	<i>Corylus avellana</i> shell frag (1)	****/****	-

Key: \* = 1–4 items; \*\* = 5–19 items; \*\*\* = 20–49 items; \*\*\*\* = 50–99 items; \*\*\*\*\* = >100 items

## APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Glebe Land	
Short description	<p>In April 2023, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at Glebe Land, Falfield, South Gloucestershire. A total of six trenches were excavated.</p> <p>The evaluation identified a single linear feature of medieval date and two undated pits in the central and south-western part of the site, one of which contained an environmental assemblage indicative of nearby settlement activity.</p> <p>No further features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified.</p>	
Project dates	3-4 April 2023	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Heritage Desk Based Assessment (Pegasus Group 2021)	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Glebe Land, Falfield, South Gloucestershire	
Study area (m <sup>2</sup> /ha)	0.86ha	
Site co-ordinates	368323 193417	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	N/A	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young and Christian Day	
Project Supervisor	Louie Parfitt	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Intended final location of archive</b>	<b>Content</b>
Physical	Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives	Pottery
Paper	Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives	Recording sheets and registers
Digital	Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives	Digital photos, survey data etc
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2023 <i>Glebe Land, Falfield, South Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> CA typescript report <b>CR1373_1</b>		





 Site boundary

0 1km

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PROJECT TITLE

Glebe Land, Falfield, South Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

DRAWN BY KM  
CHECKED BY DJB  
APPROVED BY CD  
PROJECT NO. CR1373  
DATE 20/04/2023  
SCALE @A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1





- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature (excavated/unexcavated)
- Modern
- Field drain
- Section location



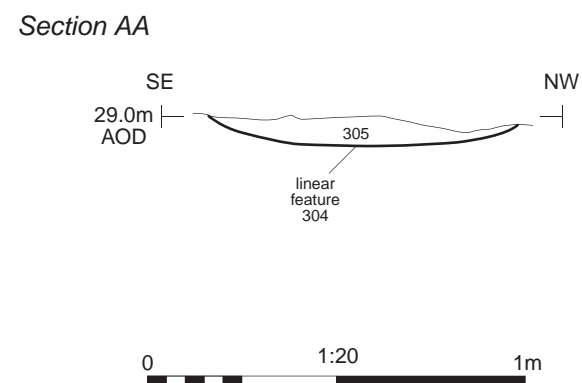
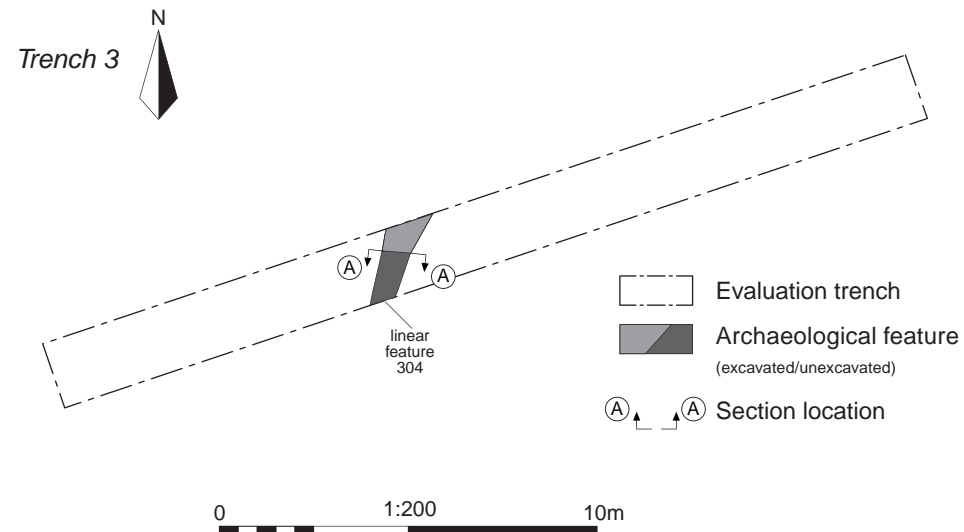
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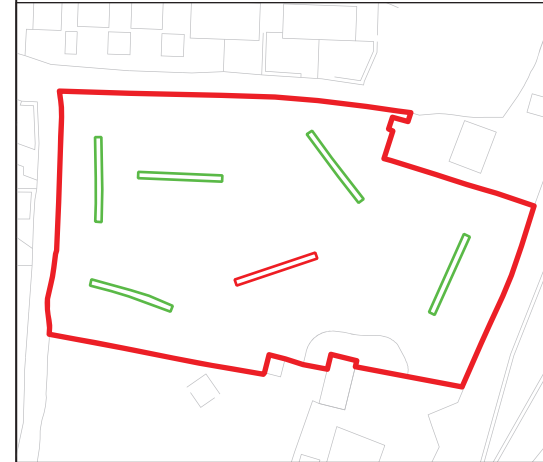
PROJECT TITLE  
Glebe Land, Falfield, South Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE  
Trench location plan, showing archaeological features

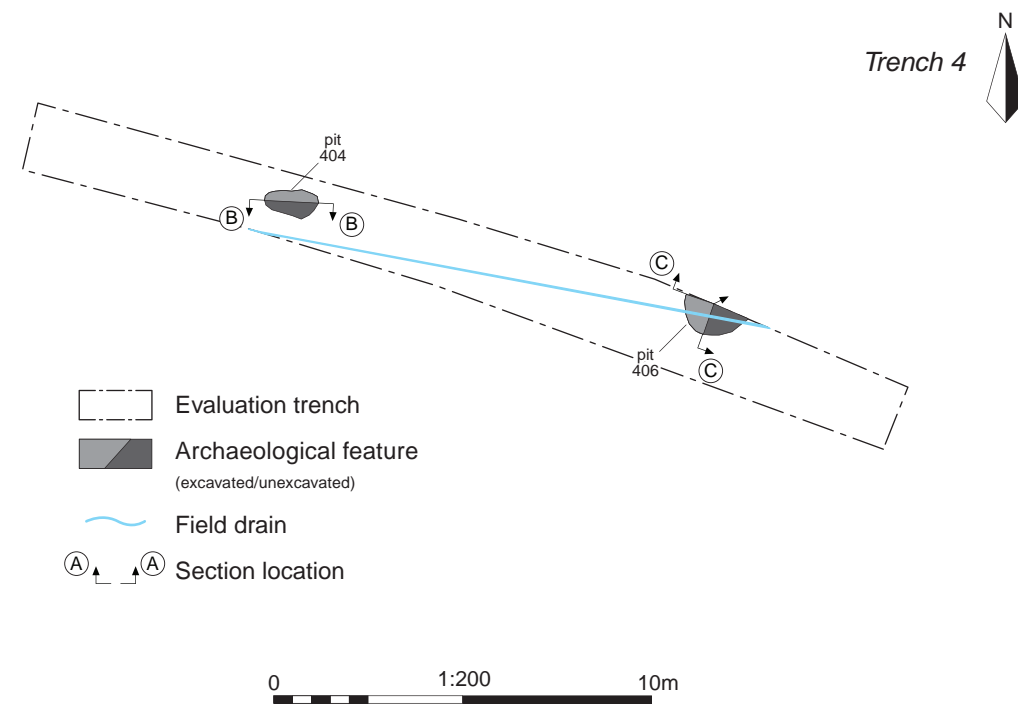
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CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	05/05/2023	2
APPROVED BY	CD	SCALE@A3	1:500	



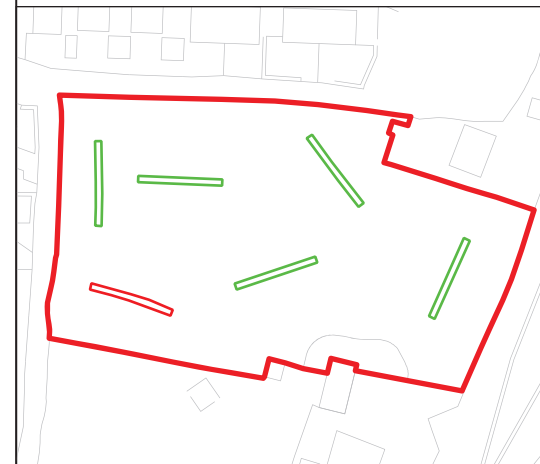
Trench 3, looking south-west (1m scales)





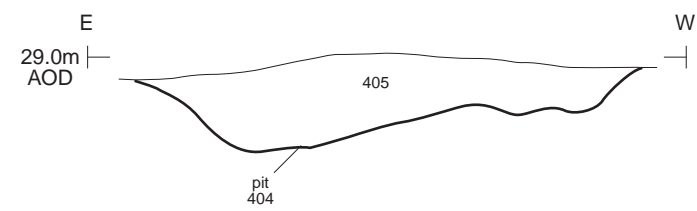


Trench 4, looking south-east (1m scales)



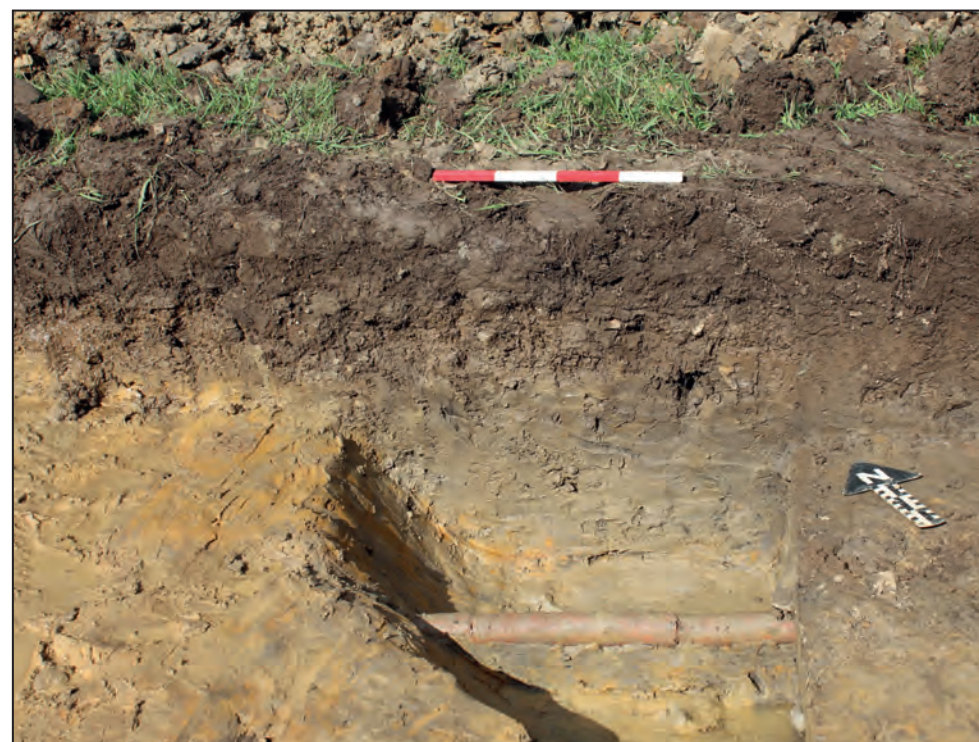
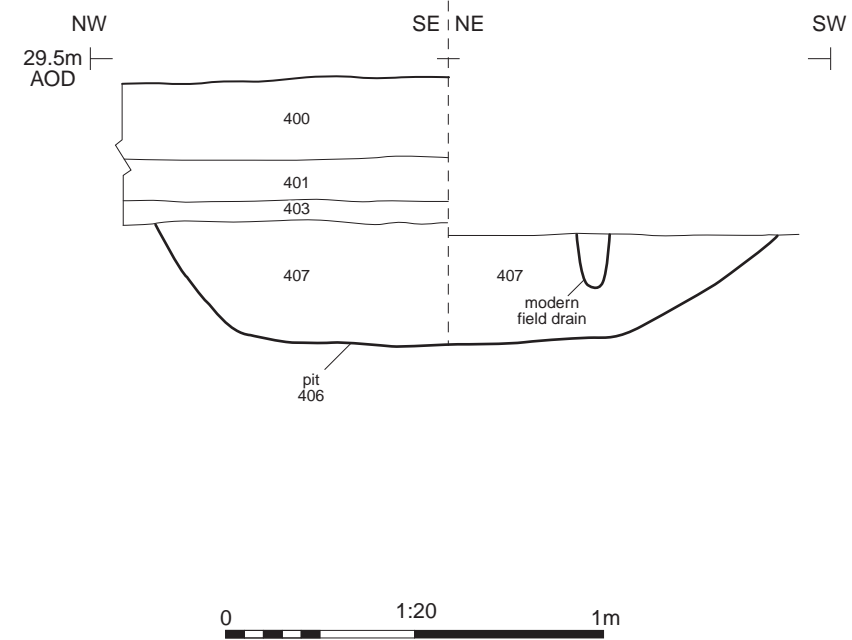


Section BB



Pit 404, looking south (1m scale)

Section CC



Pit 406, looking north-east (0.4m scale)

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