

Land at Siston Kingswood South Gloucestershire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

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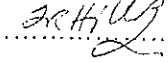
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John Samuels Archaeological Consultants

on behalf of

David Wilson Homes

Land at Siston, Kingswood, South Gloucestershire

NGR: ST 665 750

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SUMMARY

In June 2004, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation on land at Siston, Kingswood, South Gloucestershire (NGR ST 655 750) for John Samuels Archaeological Consultants on behalf of David Wilson Homes (South-West). The evaluation revealed evidence of possible 16th century or later coal mining activity in the form of pits filled with charcoal and coal-rich deposits and a single undated linear feature, probably a drainage ditch or field boundary. Undated field drains were also identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In June 2004, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation on land at Siston, Kingswood, South Gloucestershire for John Samuels Archaeological Consultants (JSAC) on behalf of David Wilson Homes (South West) in respect of a planning application for residential development (Planning Ref.: PK04/0559/RM).

1.1.2 A specification for archaeological works was produced by JSAC in line with a brief set by Gloucestershire County Archaeological Service (JSACb). The specification was approved by David Haigh, County Archaeologist for South Gloucestershire.

1.1.3 The development site is situated on land adjacent to the Avon Ring Road, centred on NGR ST 665 750 (Fig. 1). It is bordered to the north by Warmley Brook and to the east by the Bristol and Bath Railway Path and the Avon Ring Road, which also forms the site's southern boundary. The site is approximately 10.5 hectares in area.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is situated in the parish of Siston, lying at an average height of 65m OD, and forms an undulating plateau, sloping down to Warmley Brook to the north. The soils are fine loams and silts over clays of the Dale series, which overlies Carboniferous and Jurassic clays and shales (BGS Sheet 264 1979).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study, the results of which are presented below (JSAC 2004a). The site itself has produced no archaeological evidence though there are some known sites and locations with archaeological remains adjacent to the development site.

1.3.2 From the prehistoric period a double ditched 'L' enclosure of possible Iron Age date has been excavated to the west of the site. Significant evidence of Roman settlement in the general area of the site is known but this is concentrated well to the east of this site.

- 1.3.3 Siston is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, and coal working is recorded in the area in the Great Pipe Role of 1223. It then appears to have formed part of Siston Common in the period up to the nineteenth century.
- 1.3.4 During the post-medieval and industrial periods, it appears from field name evidence that coal mining activity took place on part of this site up to 1839, followed by a period of agricultural use.
- 1.3.5 A Geophysical Survey of the site was undertaken by GSB Prospection Ltd. in April 2004 for JSAC, and it concluded that in the northern part of the site high level responses could indicate mine-working activity (as documented) while to the south responses indicated field drains or possible features (GSB 2004).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Simon Johnson of John Samuels Archaeological Consultants and David Haigh, County Archaeologist for South Gloucestershire for their support and advice.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 The generic aims and objectives of the evaluation were:

- i. to determine the presence or otherwise of remains of archaeological interest
- ii. to characterise the site's archaeological potential in order to allow the Local Planning Authority to make an informed decision regarding its suitability for development.

- 2.1.2 This would be attained through the following:

- i. An assessment of the nature, date, density, extent, function and state of the preservation of archaeological remains.
- ii. By assessing their potential for answering questions about the development of land use and settlement in the locality.
- iii. Where remains were deemed of sufficient importance, in liaison with the County Archaeologist, to formulate a strategy designed to determine the best method by which these remains can be preserved *in situ* or by record.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The field evaluation comprised the excavation of five machine-dug trenches within the footprint of the proposed building. The trenches measured 50 m in length and were 2 m wide and were located within the areas highlighted by the geophysical survey (Fig. 2).

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 2 m wide toothless grading bucket.

Excavation proceeded to the top of the natural geology or to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

- 3.2.2 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and where possible to retrieve dating evidence. All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers. The trenches were planned at a scale of 1:100. Section drawings of features and sample sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All features, sections and trenches were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in OA's *Fieldwork Manual* (OAU 1992).

4 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Presentation summary

- 4.1.1 A general description of the soils, ground conditions, stratigraphic sequence and distribution of archaeological deposits is given below.
- 4.1.2 The empty trenches are listed in Appendix 1 but not otherwise described. Trenches containing features are described in detail. The trench descriptions are followed by a summary and discussion of the results. A table detailing individual contexts is given in Appendix 1.

4.2 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.2.1 The northern part of the site (Trenches 1 and 2) comprised a mid grey brown loam ploughsoil overlying a light grey brown clay silt subsoil. This deposit overlaid a mid-grey brown clay silt colluvium, which tapered out towards the higher ground at the eastern end of Trench 2.
- 4.2.2 Colluvium overlaid tenacious yellow brown natural clays, changing to red brown at the western end of Trench 2. Similar soils were revealed to the south in the area of Trenches 3, 4 and 5.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Trench Descriptions

Trench 1 and 2

- 5.1.1 Trenches 1 and 2 did not contain any features or deposits of archaeological significance and have not been described in detail. An overview of the stratigraphy can be seen above (4.2.1).

Trench 3

- 5.1.2 Trench 3 was excavated to a depth of 0.35 m and revealed at its base two pit features (304 and 307), at the eastern and western ends of the trench respectively. These were excavated to a depth of 0.7 m by means of a machine-dug sondage. Both these pits contained a similar fill of coal stained clay (303 and 306 - with organic rich seam 308 seen in plan), which was then capped by a redeposited natural clay (309 and

302). The charcoal-rich deposits (303, 308) were sampled for environmental remains (Appendix 2). No finds were recovered from either pit, both of which cut subsoil (301), which was in turn overlain by ploughsoil (300). Three field drains also cut through this trench aligned north-east to south-west.

Trench 4

- 5.1.3 Trench 4 was excavated to a depth of 0.5 m and revealed in its base three field drains (403) filled with clinker and modern ceramic building material. These cut both subsoil (405) and natural clay (401). A thin layer of possibly flood deposited silts was also seen below the subsoil (405) but provided no dating material.

Trench 5

- 5.1.4 Trench 5 was excavated to a depth of 0.4 m onto natural clay (504) and revealed at the east end a shallow undated ditch (503) running north-south. This feature was filled with a friable brown grey clay silt that appeared to be sealed by a patchy subsoil (501), which was overlain by ploughsoil (500). Three field drains were also present in this trench, all running north-east to the south-west and filled with post medieval ceramic building material and clinker.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 6.1.1 The evaluation revealed few features. The area around Trench 3, where two pits were observed, appears to corroborate the documentary evidence for coal mining activity here, based on the evidence of the environmental samples taken.
- 6.1.2 A sixteenth century but probably later date for these features is therefore likely, based on the documented history of the site (JSAC 2004). It is possible that more pits exist in the area of Trench 3, where an outcrop of coal may have been exploited in the post-medieval period.
- 6.1.3 At the east end of Trench 5 shallow ditch (503) was undated and is probably the remains of a truncated field boundary or drainage ditch. Little else can be said about the later history of the site - modern field drains point to a need to keep the land dry for farming purposes.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	CXT No	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	Date	Type
1							
	100	-	0.3	Ploughsoil	-	-	Layer
	101	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-	Layer
	102	-	0.2	Colluvium	-	-	Layer
	103	-	-	Natural	-	-	Layer
2							
	200	-	0.3	Ploughsoil	-	-	Layer
	201	-	0.2	Subsoil	-	-	Layer
	202	-	-	Natural	-	-	Layer
	203	-	0.16	Colluvium	-	-	Layer
	204	-	-	Natural	-	-	Layer
3							
	300	-	0.15	Ploughsoil	-	-	Layer
	301	-	0.06	Subsoil	-	-	Layer
	302	-	0.68	Pit Fill	-	-	Fill
	303	-	0.42	Pit Fill	-	-	Fill
	304	>4.5	>0.6	Pit	-	-	Cut
	305	-	-	Natural	-	-	Layer
	306	-	0.18	Pit Fill	-	-	Fill
	307	>8.0	>0.8	Pit	-	-	Cut
	308	1.2	-	Organic Pocket	-	-	Layer
	309	-	0.25	Pit Fill	-	-	Fill
4							
	400	-	0.4	Ploughsoil	-	-	Layer
	401	-	-	Natural	-	-	Layer
	402	-	0.31	Drain Fill	-	-	Fill
	403	0.46	0.31	Drain	-	-	Cut
	404	4.7	0.18	Silt Layer	-	-	Layer
	405	-	0.11	Subsoil	-	-	Layer
5							
	500	-	0.25	Ploughsoil	-	-	Layer
	501	-	0.1	Subsoil	-	-	Layer
	502	-	0.06	Ditch Fill	-	-	Fill
	503	0.48	0.06	Ditch Fill	-	-	Cut
	504	-	-	Natural	-	-	Layer

APPENDIX 2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Charred plant remains - Simon Dobinson

Two samples were taken during the evaluation for the recovery of charred plant remains from two undated locations within the same trench. The samples were processed using a modified Siraf-type machine, with the flot collected on a 250 μ m mesh. After air-drying, the flots were scanned for material under a binocular microscope at x10 and x20 magnification.

The flots varied in size but were similar in character. Wood charcoal, predominately <2mm, and coal were dominant in both flots, in which there were no other charred remains. The presence of coal in both the flots and residues is not unsurprising as the area has many post-medieval mines and it seems likely that this industrial activity is the source of the material, although an exact date can obviously not be attributed via the environmental evidence. There was no dating evidence in the sample residues and the sample flots are unsuitable for radiocarbon dating.

Table 1: Assessment Results

Feature Type	Ctx. No.	Sample No.	Vol. Processed (L)	Flot vol (ml)	Charcoal	Coal
Pit	303	1	10	260	+++	++++
Pit	308	2	10	100	+++	++++

+ 1-5 items ++ 6-25 items +++ 26-100 items ++++ >100 items

APPENDIX 3 REFERENCES

BGS, 1979 *Survey Sheet 264*

GSB Prospection Ltd 2004 *Geophysical Survey Report 2004/31. Land at Siston south Gloucestershire.*

John Samuels Archaeological Consultants, 2004a *A Desk-based Archaeological Assessment of land at Siston, South Gloucestershire, (JSAC 1132/04/01)*

John Samuels Archaeological Consultants, 2004b *Specification for Archaeological Works. Land at Siston, Kingswood, South Gloucestershire, (JSAC 1132/04/03)*

OAU, 1992 *Field Manual*, (ed. D. Wilkinson)

APPENDIX 4 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Land at Siston, South Gloucestershire

Site code: KISIS 04

Grid reference: ST 665 750

Type of evaluation: Five trial trenches (50 m x 2 m)

Date and duration of project: 28th-30th June 2004

Area of site: 10.5 ha

Summary of results: Two pits probably relating to coal mining activity during the post-medieval period and an undated ditch were identified, together with field drains. Ploughsoil sealed the subsoil overlying areas of colluvium, which overlay natural clays.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with an appropriate museum in due course.



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Trench location plan, showing geophysical survey areas by GSB Prospection Ltd.

Trench 3 Plan

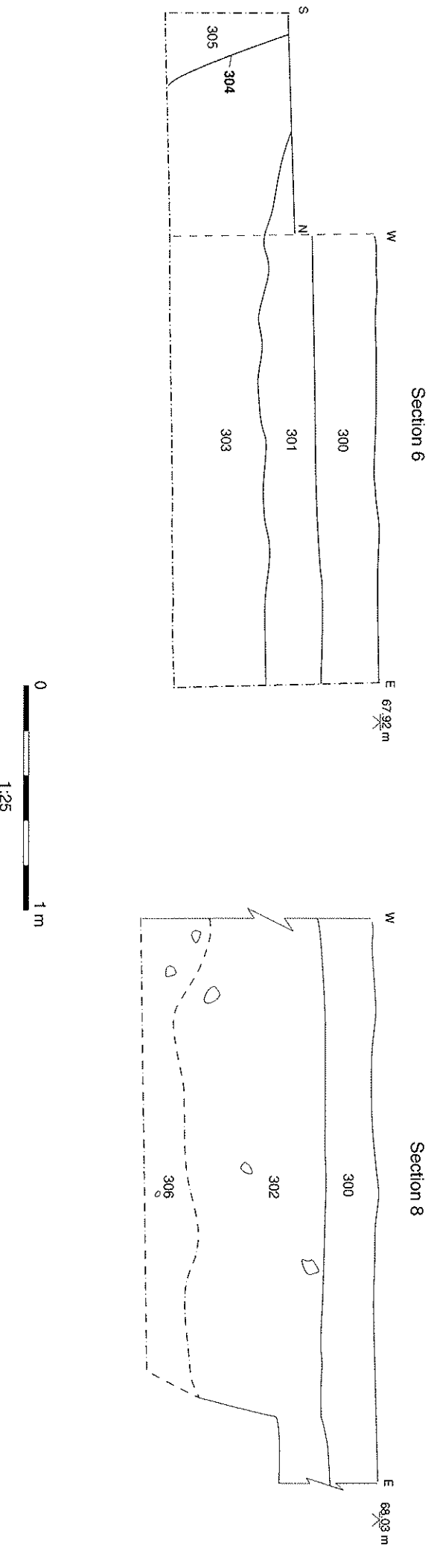
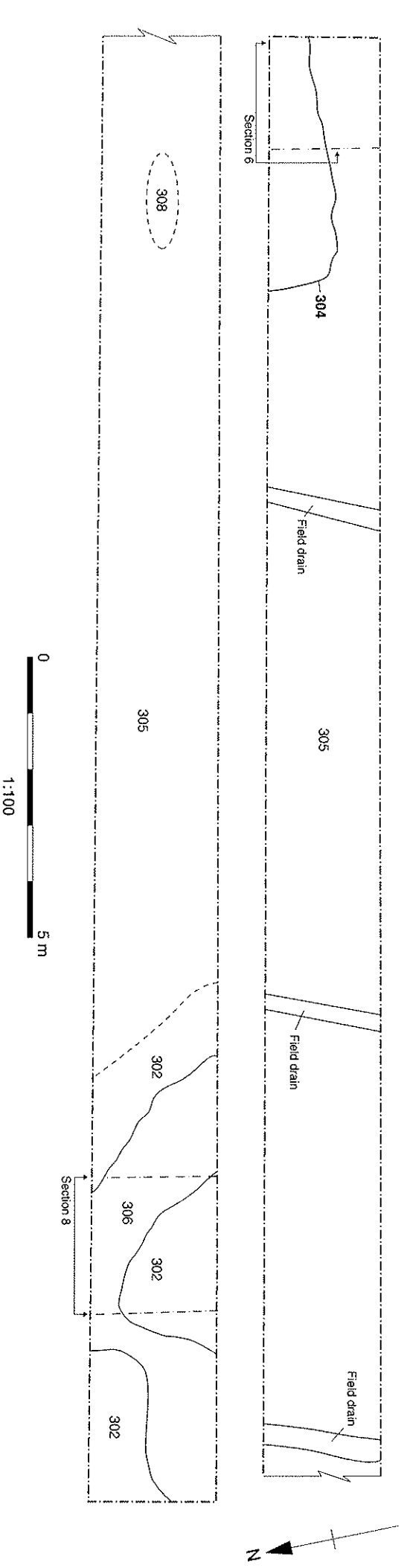
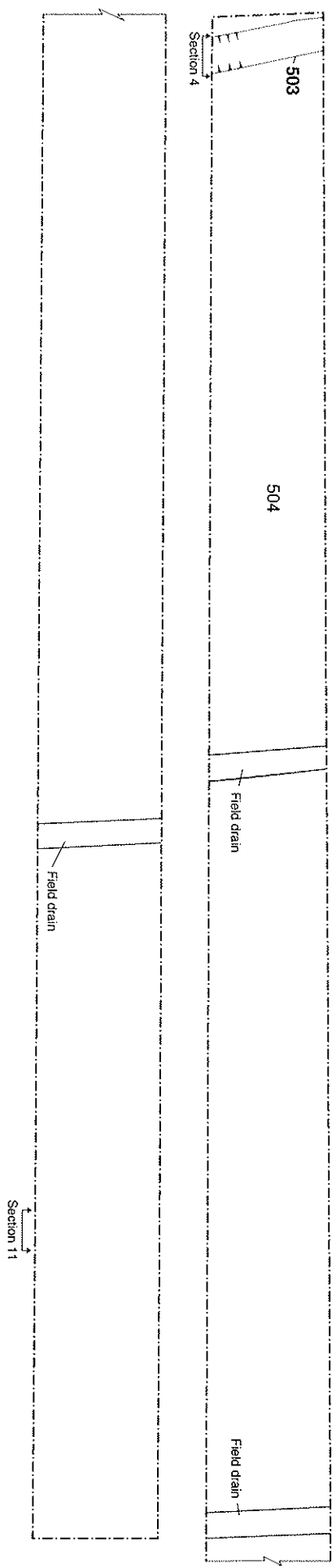
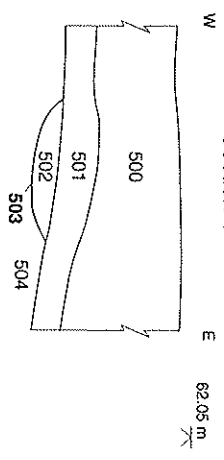


Figure 3: Trench 3, plan and sections

Trench 5 Plan



Section 4



Section 11

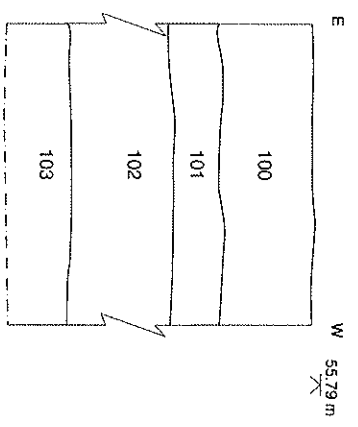


Figure 4: Trench 5, plan and sections



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