



Dorset Visual Impact Provision

Surface Artefact Collection Survey

Interim Report – Fields 51, 126, 127

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Dorset Visual Impact Provision

Surface Artefact Collection Survey, Interim Report – Fields 51, 126 and 127

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Summary

In mid May 2018 Oxford Archaeology undertook a Surface Artefact Collection Survey of two fields within the route of the proposed Dorset Visual Impact Provision. A third field identified for survey was excluded due to ground conditions. These works form the first of a multistage survey programme.

An assemblage of worked flint is indicative of prehistoric activity and suggests the presence of further remains of this period with the route of the Proposed Project. In addition, CBM, coal and iron objects were recovered but are considered of little to no significance.

Acknowledgements

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by National Grid to undertake a Surface Artefact Collection Survey in advance of the Dorset Visual Impact Provision. The project aims to enhance designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) through the relocation of above-ground services below ground.
- 1.1.2 The work is being undertaken to inform the Planning Authority in support of the submission of a Planning Application (REF: WD/D/18/000047). Discussions between National Grid, their archaeological consultants RSK, Historic England (HE) and Dorset County Council (DCC) have established the scope of works required.
- 1.1.3 The Surface Artefact Collection Survey (SACS) forms one phase of a multi-stage programme of archaeological works. This staged approach is defined in the outline written scheme of investigation (WSI; RSK 2018). The outline WSI establishes the overall objectives of the archaeological works. These are to:
- Define the extent of the known, and identify any previously unknown archaeological remains that could be impacted during the course of the proposed project construction works;
 - Ensure appropriate mitigation measures are implemented to consist of either 'preservation *in situ*' or 'preservation by record' (excavation and recording) where the former is not feasible; and
 - Contribute to the body of knowledge on archaeological remains in the area.
- 1.1.4 The SACS is to be undertaken in multiple stages depending on agreement of access to fields along the route of the Proposed Project. This report is a short interim statement on the results of the first mobilisation which consisted of three fields, 51, 126 and 127 (Fig. 2). However, upon commencement of the survey it was apparent Field 51 was not suitable for survey at this time as the field had been allowed to go to pasture. The results of each phase of fieldwalking will be combined into a final report upon completion of the survey.
- 1.1.5 The works were undertaken in accordance with the written scheme of investigation produced by Oxford Archaeology (OA 2018).

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The route of the proposed project lies within the parishes of Winterbourne Abbas, Winterbourne Steepleton, Winterborne St Martin and Portesham (NGR SY 605913 to SY 638852; Fig. 1). It is approximately 8.8km in length and runs from a point north-west of Winterbourne Abbas, cutting across the A35 and south of Winterbourne Abbas in a south-easterly direction. It then turns slightly south, across the upper slopes of Corton Down on the South-East Dorset Escarpment, to lower ground south of Friar Waddon Hill.
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development consists of open chalk downland with medium to large arable fields bounded by low hedges and a few trees. There is little development

comprising dispersed farms and linear settlements associated with the A35 and B31590.

- 1.2.3 Field 51 is centred on SY 62151 89304, Field 126 SY 63625 86647 and Field 127 SY 63734 86440.
- 1.2.4 The geology of the area is mainly mapped as various chalk formations but at its southern end, in the Waddon area, it is likely to be limestone and mudstone. Field 51 is located on the White Chalk Subgroup formed approximately 66 to 100 million years ago. Field 126 on the Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations, formed approximately 72 to 90 million years ago, and Field 127 on Peveril Point Member, limestone and mudstone formed 139 to 145 million years ago (BGS Online).

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims and objectives

General

- 2.1.1 The general aim and objective of the SACS as defined in the outline WSI is to identify past land use and/or the potential presence of subsurface archaeological features and structures.

Specific aims and objectives

- 2.1.2 The specific aim of the SACS is to identify evidence of early prehistoric occupation which may now be contained represented only, or primarily, by material such as lithic scatters located within the plough soil.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Each field was divided into 10m transects. Transects were aligned to the ploughing regime to minimise the impact to the young crop within each field. Each transect was located using a GPS and marked with canes. The transects were walked to the limits of the proposed route, not to the field boundaries. Artefactual evidence was recovered from within a 0.5m-wide corridor either side of the transect centre line, equating to a 10% survey of the field.
- 2.2.2 All categories of artefactual material were hand collected from the surface of the ploughsoil. Each find was given a unique number to ensure that their locations can be identified and were placed in individual bags labelled with their identifying number. The location of each find spot was recorded using a GPS with sub-25mm accuracy.
- 2.2.3 A fieldwalking record sheet was filled in for each field recording what transects were walked, visibility, the conditions of the field surface and crop, the weather, the topography of the field and the collection personal.
- 2.2.4 All artefacts were cleaned and processed in accordance with the ClfA's Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials (ClfA Finds Group 2014). Finds were classified by material and artefact class and where possible, spot-dated to broad period categories. The finds were washed and bagged with their identifying code before being sorted by date and type into the following classes:
- prehistoric pottery
 - worked flint
 - burnt flint
 - Roman pottery
 - Roman tile
 - Saxon pottery
 - medieval pottery
 - post-medieval pottery
 - medieval/ post-medieval tile

- brick
- daub
- metal objects
- slag
- other

3 RESULTS

3.1 Ground conditions

3.1.1 Field 51 had gone to pasture and as such was excluded from the survey at this stage (Plate 1). Both Fields 126 and 127 had been ploughed within the last few weeks (the exact time frame is unknown) and had recently been seeded (Plates 2 and 3). The young crop, though starting to develop, did not obscure visibility. The survey was undertaken in dry and bright conditions.

3.2 Catalogue of recovered material

3.2.1 The artefacts recovered during this phase of fieldwalking are detailed in Table 1 below. Analysis of the flint recovered identified several pieces to be unworked, these are detailed in Table 2. The distribution with the SACS areas is shown in Figures 3-5.

Field	Small Find No.	Artefact Type	Notes
126	2	Flint	Flake
126	100	Flint	Scraper end
127	103	CBM	Post-medieval
127	104	Flint	Scraper end
127	105	Flint	Piercer
127	106	Iron Object	Nail
127	107	Coal	
127	108	Flint	Core Levallois flakes
127	109	Flint	Blade
127	300	CBM	Post-medieval
127	301	CBM	Post-medieval
127	302	CBM	Post-medieval
127	303	Iron Object	Ring fragment

Table 1 – Catalogue of artefacts recovered from Fields 126 and 127

Field	Small Find No.	Artefact Type
126	1	Flint – unworked
126	3	Flint – unworked
126	102	Flint – unworked
126	200	Flint – unworked
126	201	Flint – unworked
127	202	Flint – unworked
127	203	Flint – unworked
127	204	Flint – unworked

Table 2 – Catalogue of un-worked flint recovered from Fields 126 and 127

4 FINDS REPORTS

4.1 Flint

By Michael Donnelly

Introduction

- 4.1.1 The SACS brought to light a small assemblage of seven struck flints and seven natural fragments. The knapped material consisted largely of tools and a core. One flake was also present as was one blade form fashioned in Portland chert that was very probably a badly damaged edge tool. The tools and the core are diagnostically or morphologically early in date while the solitary unmodified flake was very probably later prehistoric in date. The recovered material suggests a span of time no less than the later Neolithic to later Bronze Age but the artefacts may actually belong to a wider date range encompassing all of the Neolithic period and perhaps even earlier.

Description

- 4.1.2 Field 126 contained seven flints, five of which were natural. The remaining two pieces comprised a typical later prehistoric flake with a squat profile and hard-hammer bulb alongside a near cortical platform and very basic form. The second flint was a quite fine end scrapper on a long regular flake of near blade proportions with a carefully executed convex retouched edge. This scraper is very probably early prehistoric in date and the closest parallels for its form date to the Neolithic period although an early Mesolithic date cannot be ruled out entirely.
- 4.1.3 Field 127 also had seven flints, but here only three were natural and four were genuine. One of the flints was another end scraper, but less well executed. There was also a very fine heavy piercer on a thin regular flake and another long, blade form in Portland chert that may have been a second piercer or awl. The degree of damage to this piece prevents a definite identification but the form is clearly early in date. Finally, there was a very large (154g) Levallois core that had been successfully worked around a lateral flaw to its top blank-producing face. While these cores can date to the Middle Palaeolithic period, they are also commonly found in later Neolithic assemblages and such a date is very probable for this example. These five flints constitute a very atypical assemblage, as does the total recovered assemblage.

Discussion

- 4.1.4 The flint assemblage is atypical as it comprises mostly very large pieces and is almost completely lacking in unmodified flake and blade blanks. Tools and cores tend to be overrepresented in topsoil or surface collections. There is some possibility that the fields in question encompass some area of selective prehistoric activity with structured deposition but the reality is that this unbalanced assemblage is very probably the result of recovery bias. Nevertheless, the tools and core are very genuine and identify a likely domestic focus dating to the early prehistoric period. One typically later prehistoric flake may simply be an outlier from an early assemblage. The bulk of the assemblage could all belong to the later Neolithic period but it is quite probable

that the flints belong to a number of ages, possibly spanning the early Mesolithic to later Bronze Age. Any further work here may well encounter significant flint-related archaeology such as *in situ* scatters, buried soil assemblages or artefact-rich pits or pit clusters.

Methodology

- 4.1.5 The artefacts were catalogued according to OA South's standard system of broad artefact/debitage type (Anderson-Whymark 2013; Bradley 1999), general condition noted and dating was attempted where possible. The assemblage was catalogued directly onto an Open Office spreadsheet. During the assessment additional information on condition (rolled, abraded, fresh and degree of cortication), and state of the artefact (burnt, broken, or visibly utilised) was also recorded. Retouched pieces were classified according to standard morphological descriptions (e.g. Bamford 1985, 72-7; Healy 1988, 48-9; Bradley 1999). Technological attribute analysis was initially undertaken and included the recording of butt and termination type (Inizan *et al.* 1999), flake type (Harding 1990), hammer mode (Onhuma and Bergman 1982), and the presence of platform edge abrasion.

Field	SF No.	Type	Sub-type	Notes	Date
126	2	Flake	distal trimming	Very squat hard-hammer flake, quite probably LPH in date	?LPH
126	100	End scraper	Distal trimming flake	Fine, regular convex end scraper on a long regular flake	Neo
126	-	Natural x 5			
127	104	End scraper	Distal trimming flake	Slightly atypical and partially damaged burnt end scraper	
127	105	Piercer	Inner flake	Fine piercer on regular inner flake, probably early in date	?EPH
127	108	Levallois core	Flakes	Quite fine, large (154g) Levallois core that has worked around a lateral flaw to produce good flakes	L Neo
127	109	Blade	Side trimming	Portland chert blade with damaged edges and possible awl/piercer distal projection	EPH
127	-	Natural x 3			

Table 3 – detailed catalogue of recovered flint

4.2 Ceramic building material

By John Cotter

Introduction

- 4.2.1 Four pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) weighing 116g were recovered from a single field (127). These have been assigned individual small finds (SF) numbers. The extremely poor and abraded condition of these pieces, coupled with their small size, makes it almost impossible to assign definite spot-dates, although one piece, at least,

is very probably post-medieval. Closer dating might be suggested by associated or nearby finds, or by comparison with local CBM fabric type-series collections. The small collection here has not been separately catalogued but is described in some detail below. No further work is recommended at this stage.

Description

Field 127 - SF103 Spot-date: Post-medieval?

- 4.2.2 Description: 1 piece of CBM (76g). A very abraded piece of thick tile showing a change of angle or a return. Maximum surviving length 73mm, max width 53mm, thickness 16-20mm. The upper side has a fairly smooth flat surface (or two surfaces) while the underside is rough and sanded. The angle formed by the two flattish 'wings' of the tile is quite low and slightly rounded. This, and the fabric, suggest it might be a post-medieval tile of some sort - possibly a gutter tile or land drain, or possibly from near the edge of a thick pantile (a type of post-medieval roofing tile)? The fabric has a pale orange-buff or orange-pink colour with a slightly redder core where thick and with occasional coarse lumps and streaks of a paler light brown/cream clay. It is quite soft and brick-like in density (like many post-medieval bricks) with a fine sandy fabric with occasional inclusions (up to 1mm) of milky quartz and grey-white flint/chert. It has very common pores or voids on the surface from the dissolving-out of fine calcareous inclusions, perhaps chalk?

Field 127 - SF300 Spot-date: Post-medieval?

- 4.2.3 Description: 1 piece of CBM (4g). A very abraded flattish piece of ?tile (max 11mm thick). Possibly retaining one surface. This has the same colour and fabric as the larger piece above (SF103) and may be of the same date. The fabric differs only in containing one or two small inclusions of thin white shell (up to 2mm across) and rare coarse inclusions of ironstone or a dark red-brown iron-rich compound.

Field 127 - SF301 Spot-date: Post-medieval

- 4.2.4 Description: 1 piece of CBM (16g). Abraded edge fragment from a thin flat tile (average thickness 7mm, max 10mm thick at the edge). Though abraded it retains most of its upper and lower (unsanded) surfaces. Light orange in colour and with a fine sandy fabric - quite similar to the other pieces here (see SF103). The fabric differs only in containing one or two inclusions of coarser thin white shell (up to 4mm across) but the fresh break shows abundant very fine inclusions of white chalk - some of them platy and probably derived from (?fossil) shell. This combination of features strongly suggest this is a post-medieval flat roof tile (eg. peg tile). Its thinness, and the fineness of its fabric, might refine the date to around the 18th-19th century rather than earlier.

Field 127 - SF302 Spot-date: Post-medieval?

- 4.2.5 Description: 1 piece of CBM (20g). A very abraded piece of brick/tile retaining one flat surface - showing it came from an object thicker than 27mm (brick?). This has the same colour and fabric as the larger piece above (SF103) and may be of the same date.

4.3 Metal objects

By Ian Scott

Introduction

- 4.3.1 Two metal objects were recovered during this phase of SACS. Neither object is closely datable.

Description

Field 127 – SF106

- 4.3.2 Description: Ring fragment. Approximately half of a plain iron ring. Probably harness or cart fitting. Not closely datable. D: 56mm.

Field 127 – SF303

- 4.3.3 Description: Tapered spike or nail. Probably a headless nail rectangular section. Probably complete L: 53mm.

4.4 Coal

By Geraldine Crann

Introduction

- 4.4.1 Two small fragments of coal were recovered as a single object. The coal is not datable.

Description

Field 127 – SF107

- 4.4.2 Description: 2 small fragments of coal, 4g total weight.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Interpretation and significance

- 5.1.1 The small assemblage of CBM, coal and iron objects is of little or no significance.
- 5.1.2 The assemblage of flints recovered is indicative of prehistoric activity which could all date to the late Neolithic, but is more likely to span a longer period from the late Mesolithic to the later Bronze Age. The assemblage suggests further work may uncover *in situ* flint scatters, buried soil assemblages or artefact-rich pits or pit clusters. This information supports the previously known potential within the route of the Proposed Project as defined in the Historic Environment Baseline Report (RSK 2017).
- 5.1.3 As this is the first phase of the SACS it is difficult to assess the potential indicated by the distribution of the recovered flints. Further phases of the survey will enable additional refinement to these results and will inform the appropriate use of additional investigative techniques, i.e. test pitting, trial trenching or strip, map and sample excavation.

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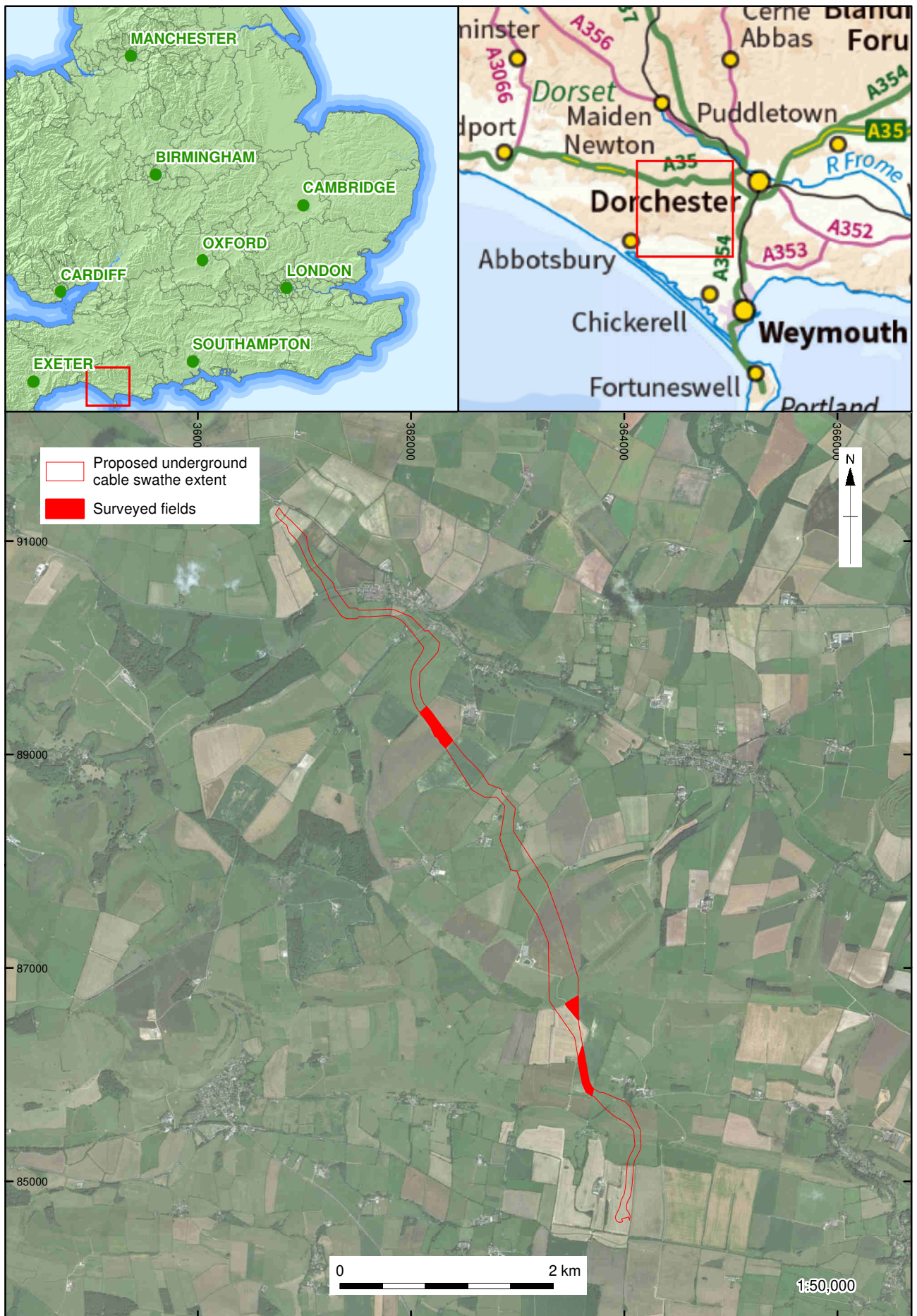
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APPENDIX B**SITE SUMMARY DETAILS**

Site name:	Dorset Visual Impact Provision
Site code:	DORIS18
Grid Reference	SY 62151 89304, SY 63625 86647 and SY 63734 86440
Type:	Surface Artefact Collection Survey
Date and duration:	2 days; 14/05/18 – 15/05/18
Area of Site	0.85 ha
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Dorset County Museum in due course.
Summary of Results:	<p>In mid May 2018 Oxford Archaeology undertook a Surface Artefact Collection Survey of two fields within the route of the proposed Dorset Visual Impact Provision. A third field identified for survey was excluded due to ground conditions. These works form the first of a multistage survey programme.</p> <p>An assemblage of worked flint is indicative of prehistoric activity and suggests the presence of further remains of this period with the route of the Proposed Project. In addition, CBM, coal and iron objects were recovered but are considered of little to no significance.</p>



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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Surface Artefact Collection Survey fields



Figure 3: All find spots

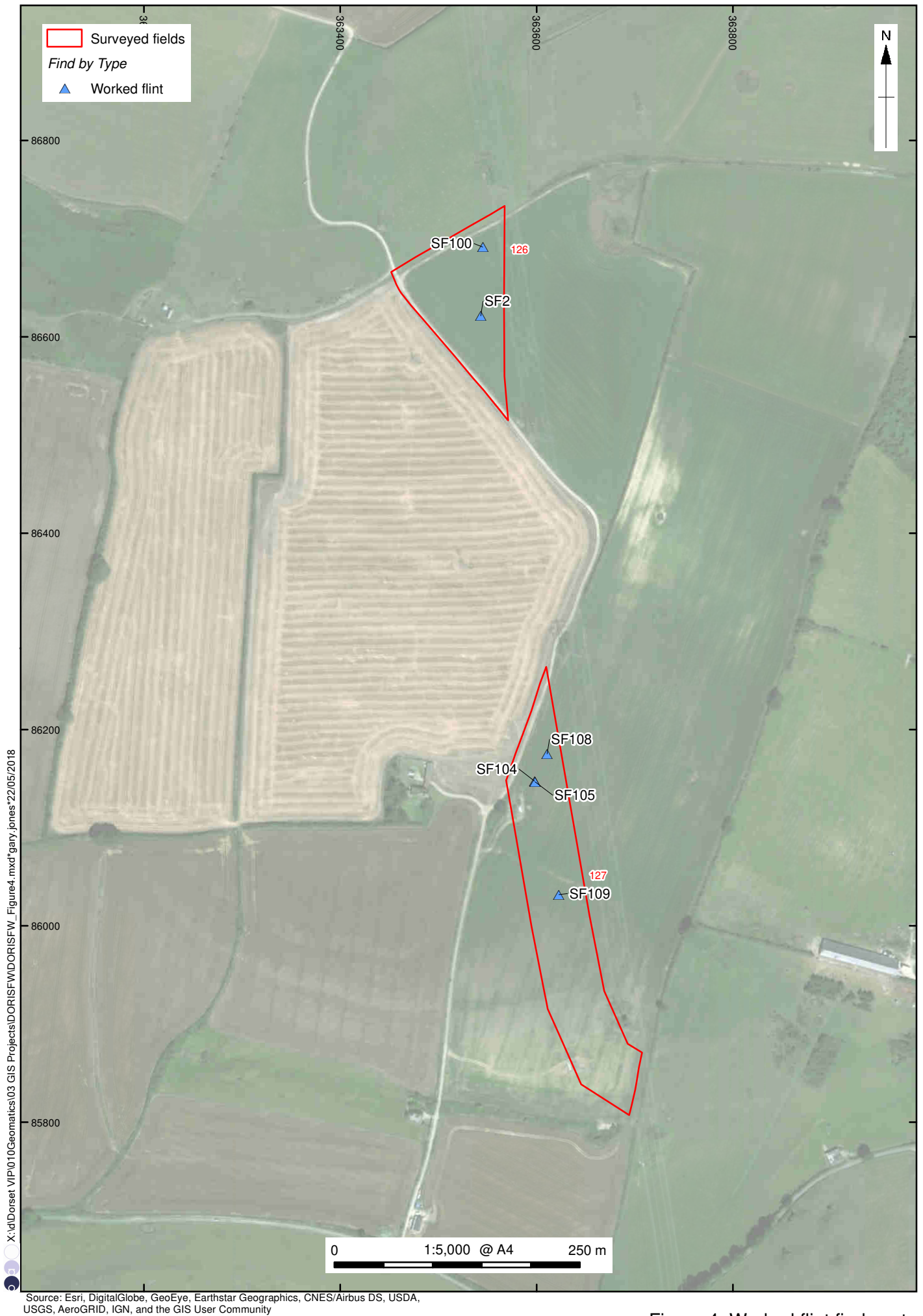


Figure 4: Worked flint find spots



Figure 5: CBM and iron object find spots



Plate 1: Field 51



Plate 2: Walking Field 126



Plate 3: Walking Field 127



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