

**Land east of Salisbury Road,
Marlborough, Wiltshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for the Crown Estate**

by Steven Weaver
Thames Valley Archaeological
Services

Site Code SRM98/79

December 1998

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Report 98/79

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land east of Salisbury Road, Marlborough, Wiltshire (SU 1955068475). The work was commissioned by Mr Steven Smallman of Dreweatt Neate, 16–18 Market Place, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5AZ.

An outline planning application in respect of development land at the above address has been submitted to Kennet District Council by Messrs Dreweatt Neate on behalf of their client, The Crown Estate. This evaluation was carried out in support of the planning application and to a specification prepared by Mr Duncan Coe, Assistant Archaeologist for Wiltshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steven Weaver assisted by Andy Smith and Sarah Whittaker between November 25th and 30th, and on December 1st 1998. The site code is SRM98/79.

Location, Topography and Geology

The site is located on the east side of Salisbury Road, immediately south-east of Marlborough and south of the River Kennet (Fig 1). The development site comprises an area of approximately 6.38 hectares and is in a state of arable cultivation lying across a small combe which runs roughly east-west (Plate 1). It lies at an approximate height of 147 m above Ordnance Datum and according to the British Geological Survey (BGS 1979) lies on Upper Chalk. The underlying geology revealed during the evaluation consisted of Clay-with-Flints, chalk and colluvial deposits in a number of the trenches.

Archaeological Background

This part of Wiltshire is particularly rich in archaeological sites, positioned as it is on the flanks of the valley of the river Kennet. The area is especially noted for the large number of early Prehistoric monuments which include earthworks such as Wansdyke, which lies to the south. There is also an earthwork immediately to the east. A number of archaeological finds have been recorded in the vicinity of the development area including Iron Age and Roman pottery found in fields to the south and a brooch from an area only 200 m to the north. A 'Celtic' (Prehistoric/Roman) field system still survives to the south together with trackways and holloways of unknown date.

Objectives and Methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. This was to be achieved by digging 39 trenches 20 m long by 1.8 m wide, providing a total of 1404 square metres of trenching. These were dug using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and under continuous archaeological supervision. The configuration of the trenches was designed to give a full coverage of the site and to cross any extant earthworks (Fig 2). All trenches were to be excavated to the surface of the natural or the top of archaeological deposits, whichever was uppermost. Particular attention was to be paid to locating well-preserved deposits which might exist beneath any hillwash on the floor of the dry valley. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds and all certain or possible archaeological features and deposits hand-cleaned and sufficiently excavated to satisfy the terms of the brief.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

A total of 38 trenches were eventually excavated and these varied slightly in length from 17 m to 23.70 m , with one being only 14 m long due to the presence of overhead electric cables. A number of trenches contained possible features, two of which were posthole-sized, and others were larger silty clay or chalk patches. All were hand-cleaned and investigated. The two former were found to have been produced by the removal of large flint nodules by ploughing. The resultant holes had then become silted up. Three of the others, in Trenches 5, 22 and 26, were found to be services, and the remainder were geological in origin. In the majority of the trenches the stratigraphy was found to consist of topsoil overlying an orange-brown silty sandy clay subsoil onto chalk natural. However, nine trenches (3, 4, 11, 12, 16 (Plate 2), 17, 20, 24 and 25) were found to contain colluvial material, the result of hillwash. This was also present in the southern end of Trench 2 and the northern end of Trench 5. In Trenches 3 and 4 the colluvium was especially deep. Two finds of probable Roman pottery from the base of the colluvium in Trench 4 (Fig. 3) indicate that at least some of the hillwash deposits on the slopes of the dry valley have accumulated during or since Roman times. No archaeological features were found in any of the trenches but in Trenches 8, 9, 30 and 39 possible ploughmarks were present. It is also possible, however, that some of these were in fact caused by periglacial activity.

A number of artefacts were recovered, mainly from the spoilheaps, but in a few instances from the base of the trenches. These include a number of modern items from the backfill of the service trench in Trench 26 which have not been retained. Two sherds of pottery were retrieved from the base of Trench 4 and one from the spoil of Trench 19. The latter is late post-Medieval in date while the two from Trench 4 are likely to be from the Roman period.

In addition, and of more interest, are the collection of struck flints. Nearly all were recovered either from the base of the trenches or found during monitoring of the spoilheaps and number 66 in total. These are described below and catalogued in Appendix 2.

The Finds

Struck flint by Steve Ford

A small collection of 66 struck flints was recovered from the evaluation trenches including one item of dubious antiquity probably caused by modern ploughing. Two flakes came from the cut of a service trench. All of the pieces except one possible broken blade (narrow flake) were flakes. None of the flakes were chronologically distinctive and only a broad Prehistoric date (Neolithic to Bronze Age) can be suggested. The details of the struck flint are catalogued in Appendix 2.

Pottery by Steve Ford

Three sherds of pottery were found. A single sherd of late post-Medieval red ware with a yellow glaze was recovered from Trench 19. Two small sherds of flint/sand tempered pottery, one of which was a rim were found in Trench 4. Both the latter are likely to be of Roman date.

Conclusion

No archaeological features or deposits were identified on the site although a number of prehistoric struck flints and a few sherds of pottery of probable Roman date were recovered. All of these were retrieved from topsoil and subsoil contexts. Finds of struck flint are to be expected from a site such as this, for struck flint is ubiquitous on the flint bearing chalklands around Marlborough. The few sherds of pottery can most likely be explained as an accidental

product of the manuring of arable land away from settlement. The archaeological potential of the site is therefore considered to be low and it is consequently thought unlikely that any damage will be caused to archaeological deposits by the new development.

Arrangements have been made to deposit the finds (subject to consent for the transfer of ownership) and the site archive with Devizes Museum. A copy will be made available to the National Archaeological Record and also supplied to the Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record.

References

BGS, 1979, *British Geological Survey*, 1: 625000, South Sheet 3rd Edition Solid, Keyworth

PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Department of the Environment Planning Policy
Guidance Note 16, HMSO

Appendix 1: Trench Details

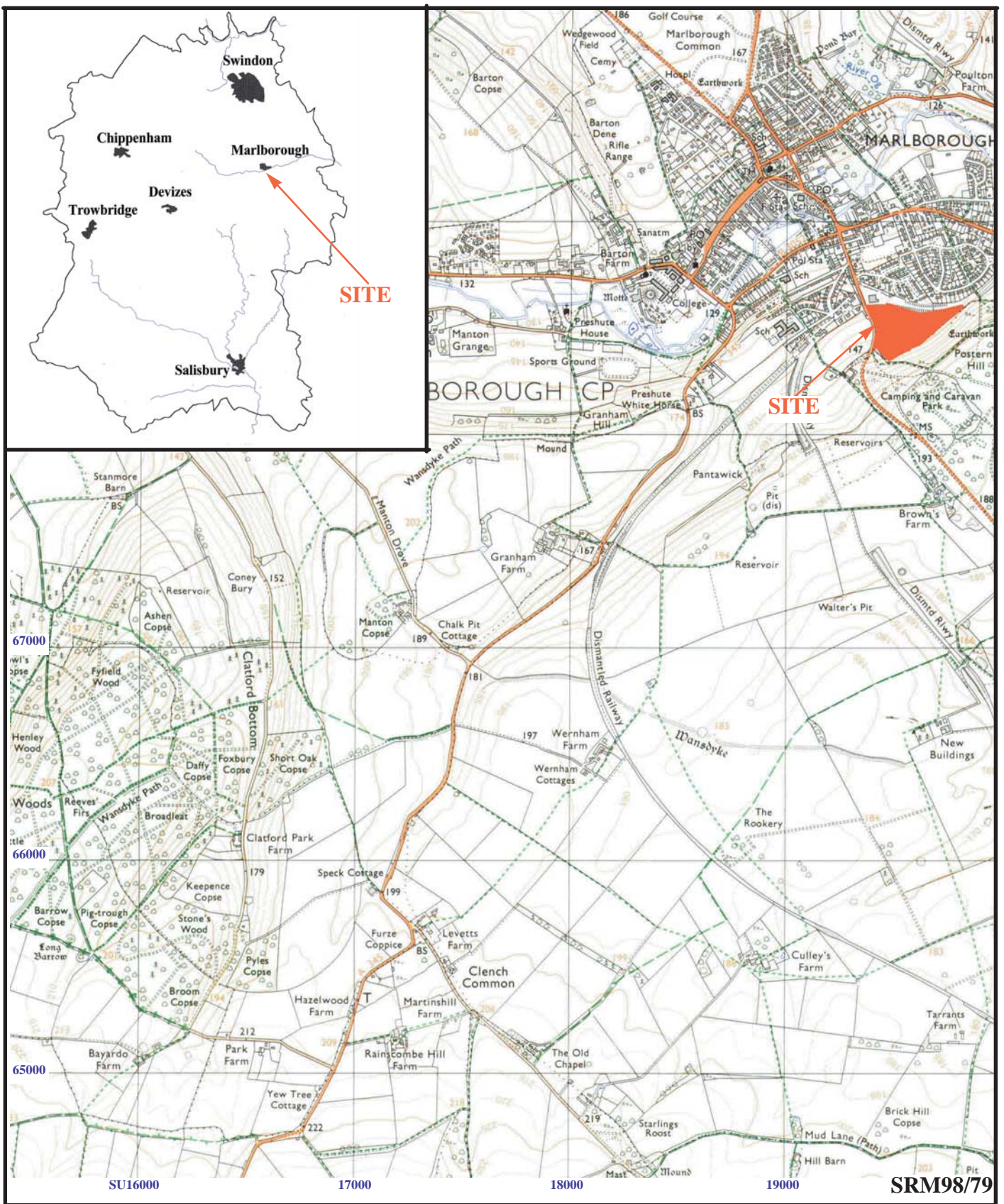
<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	20.10	1.8	0.33	0.27 m of topsoil over 0.06 m orange-brown silty sandy clay subsoil from 0 - 3.5 m, over 0.06 m clay with chalk from 3.5 - 20.10 m onto natural. Frequent flint inclusions. [Plate 1]
2	18.80	1.8	0.42	0.28 m of topsoil over 0.14 m orange-brown silty sandy clay subsoil onto natural. Frequent flint inclusions.
3	20.10	1.8	2.84 (S) 1.19 (N)	0.33 m of topsoil over 0.86 - 2.51 m orange-brown silty sandy clay (colluvium) onto natural. Occasional flint inclusions.
4	17.00	1.8	1.12 (S) 2.09 (N)	0.32 m of topsoil over 0.80 - 1.77 m orange-brown silty sandy clay (colluvium) onto natural.
5	18.65	1.8	0.40 (S) 0.80 (N)	0.36 m of topsoil over 0.44 m (max) rich brown silt (colluvium) at N. end. This onto natural. Possible pipe trench cut at 13.7 m.
6	20.20	1.8	0.57	0.32 m of topsoil over 0.16 m of orange-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural.
7	20.25	1.8	0.36	0.28 m of topsoil over 0.03 m of subsoil onto pale grey-brown silty chalk natural with flint inclusions.
8	21.00	1.8	0.33 (W) 0.62 (E)	0.28 m of topsoil over 0.09 m (average) of orange-brown silty clay subsoil onto silty chalk natural. Possible postholes at west end of trench. Possible plough marks.
9	20.33	1.8	0.28	0.23 m of topsoil over silty clay subsoil onto chalk natural with frequent flint inclusions. Plough marks.
10	21.74	1.8	0.33	0.24 m of topsoil over grey to orange-brown silty clay subsoil onto chalk natural with frequent flint inclusions
11	23.70	1.8	1.71 (W) 1.30 (E)	0.30 m of topsoil over 0.78 m orange-brown silty clay subsoil above thin chalk band 0.10 m thick over 0.22 - 0.53 m colluvium onto chalk natural with occasional flint inclusions.
12	21.00	1.8	0.62	0.38 m of topsoil over reddish-brown silty clay (colluvium) onto natural with frequent flint inclusions.
13	21.40	1.8	0.32	0.29 m of topsoil over 0.03 m dark reddish-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with frequent flint inclusions.
14	19.80	1.8	0.35	0.27 m of topsoil over 0.08 m silty clay subsoil onto clay/chalk natural with occasional flint inclusions.
15	20.40	1.8	0.35	Mottled patches of darker silty clay and chalk. 0.31 m of topsoil over 0.04 m reddish-brown silty clay onto chalk natural with occasional flint inclusions and pale silt patches.
16	19.60	1.8	1.08 (S)	0.26 m of topsoil over 0.58 - 0.82 m orange-brown silty clay 0.84 (N) (colluvium) onto natural with frequent flint inclusions. [Plate 2]
17	21.20	1.8	0.50	0.30 m of topsoil over 0.20 m orange-brown silty clay (colluvium) onto natural with frequent flint inclusions.
18	20.80	1.8	0.54	0.36 m of topsoil over 0.18 m reddish-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with frequent flint inclusions.
19	23.03	1.8	0.48	0.29 m of topsoil over 0.19 m orange-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with moderate flint inclusions.
20	20.25	1.8	0.96	0.33 m of topsoil over 0.63 m orange-brown silty clay (colluvium) onto natural with few flint inclusions.
21	19.23	1.8	0.32	0.28 m of topsoil over 0.04 m reddish-brown to orange gravelly silty sandy clay onto natural with frequent flint inclusions.

Appendix 1: Trench Details continued

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
22	20.80	1.8	0.38	0.33 m of topsoil over 0.05 m reddish-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with frequent flint inclusions. Chalk/flint filled band crosses trench between 10.10 m and 12.40 m. Probable service run.
23	14.00	1.8	0.35	0.27 m of topsoil over 0.08 m reddish-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with frequent flint inclusions.
24	20.02	1.8	0.76	0.32 m of topsoil over 0.44 m reddish-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with frequent flint inclusions.
25	20.00	1.8	0.67	0.27 m of topsoil over 0.20 m reddish-brown silty clay over 0.20 m colluvium onto natural.
26	19.80	1.8	0.30	0.24 m of topsoil over 0.06 m silty chalk from 0 m to 15.70 m and over 0.06 m reddish-brown silty clay from 15.70 m to end. Both onto natural with occasional flint inclusions.
27	21.10	1.8	0.33	0.24 m of topsoil over 0.09 m silty chalky subsoil from 0 m to 13.10 m and over 0.09 m reddish-brown silty clay natural from 13.10 m to end. Both onto natural with frequent flint inclusions and a chalk patch.
28	20.50	1.8	0.35	0.28 m of topsoil over 0.07 m orange-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with frequent flint inclusions. Silty chalk from 10 m to 20.50 m.
29	20.40	1.8	0.99	0.29 m of topsoil over 0.70 m reddish to orange-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with frequent flint inclusions
30	20.70	1.8	0.53	0.27 m of topsoil over 0.26 m of reddish-brown silty subsoil onto silty chalk natural with occasional flint inclusions. Patches of reddish-brown silty clay. Ploughmarks present.
31	21.00	1.8	0.43	0.28 m of topsoil over 0.15 m reddish-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with moderate flint inclusions. Silty chalk patch from 5.8 m to 10.9 m.
32	20.80	1.8	0.44	0.30 m of topsoil over 0.14 m silty chalk subsoil onto natural with moderate flint inclusions.
33	21.20	1.8	0.38	0.31 m of topsoil over 0.07 m reddish-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with frequent flint inclusions. Chalk band from 16.25 m to 18.10 m.
34	20.90	1.8	0.40	0.27 m of topsoil over 0.13 m silty chalky subsoil onto natural with moderate flint inclusions from S. end to 5.2 m. Diagonal stripes of darker silty chalk and reddish brown silty clay from 5.2 m to N. end.
35	20.40	1.8	0.39	0.25 m of topsoil over 0.14 m reddish-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with frequent flint inclusions. Patches of silty chalk.
36	23.00	1.8	0.33	0.26 m of topsoil over 0.07 m silty chalky subsoil onto natural with flint inclusions. Band of greyish-brown silty clay at northern end of trench. West side of south end of trench extended to examine possible feature.
37	20.50	1.8	0.42	0.29 m of topsoil over 0.13 m reddish-brown silty clay subsoil onto natural with frequent flint inclusions. Chalk patch between 17.08 m and 18.80 m.
38	-	-	-	Not excavated.
39	20.10	1.8	0.29	0.24 m of topsoil onto natural chalk and clay marl with flints. Ploughmarks running NE-SW.

Appendix 2: Catalogue of struck flint

<i>Trench No</i>	<i>Trench base (T) or spoil (S)</i>	<i>Distance along trench Origin at south or west</i>	<i>Description</i>
5	S	10–15 m	Broken flake, unpatinated
6	T	10–15 m	Intact flake
7	S	0–5 m	2 intact flakes
7	T	5–10 m	Intact flake
13	S	5–10 m	Intact flake
18	S	0–5 m	2 intact flakes
18	S	10–15 m	Intact flake
18	S	10–15 m	Intact flake
18	T	15–20 m	2 intact flakes, broken flake
20	S	10–15 m	Intact flake, unpatinated
21	S	0–5 m	Intact flake
21	S	5–10 m	Possible broken blade
21	T	10–15 m	Intact flake
22	S	5–10 m	Intact flake
22	S	10–15 m	Intact flake
22	service run	-	2 intact flakes
22	T	15–20 m	2 intact flakes
23	T	0–5 m	Intact flake
24	S	10–15 m	Intact flake, unpatinated
24	T	10–15 m	Intact flake, unpatinated - plough struck?
26	T	15–20 m	2 intact flakes, broken flake
27	T	0–5 m	2 intact flakes
27	T	10–15 m	2 intact flakes
27	S	15–20 m	Intact flake
28	T	0–5 m	Intact flake
28	S	0–5 m	Broken flake, 3 intact flakes
28	T	10–15 m	Intact flake
28	S	10–15 m	Intact flake
28	S	15–20 m	Intact flake, broken flake
29	T	10–15 m	Intact flake
30	S	10–15 m	Intact flake
31	T	0–5 m	Intact flake
31	T	5–10 m	Intact flake, broken flake
31	S	15–20 m	2 intact flakes
32	T	0–5 m	Intact flake
33	T	0–5 m	Intact flake
33	S	0–5 m	Intact flake, unpatinated; intact flake, patinated
33	T	5–10 m	Broken flake
33	S	5–10 m	Intact flake, broken flake
34	S	15–20 m	Intact flake
35	S	5–10 m	Intact flake, unpatinated
35	S	10–15 m	Intact flake, unpatinated
37	S	5–10 m	Intact flake
37	T	5–10 m	2 intact flakes
37	S	15–20 m	2 intact flakes
39	S	15–20 m	Intact flake



**Land East of Salisbury Road, Marlborough,
Wiltshire, 1998**

Figure 1. Location of site within Marlborough and Wiltshire.

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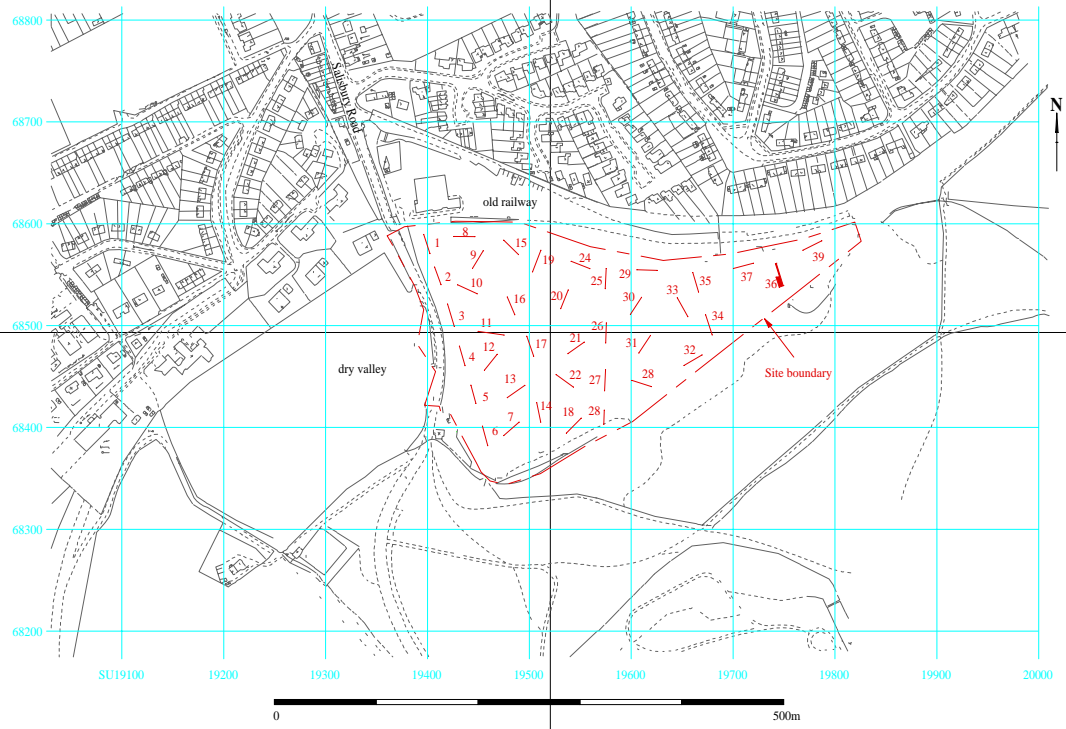


Figure 2. Location of site showing position of trenches.

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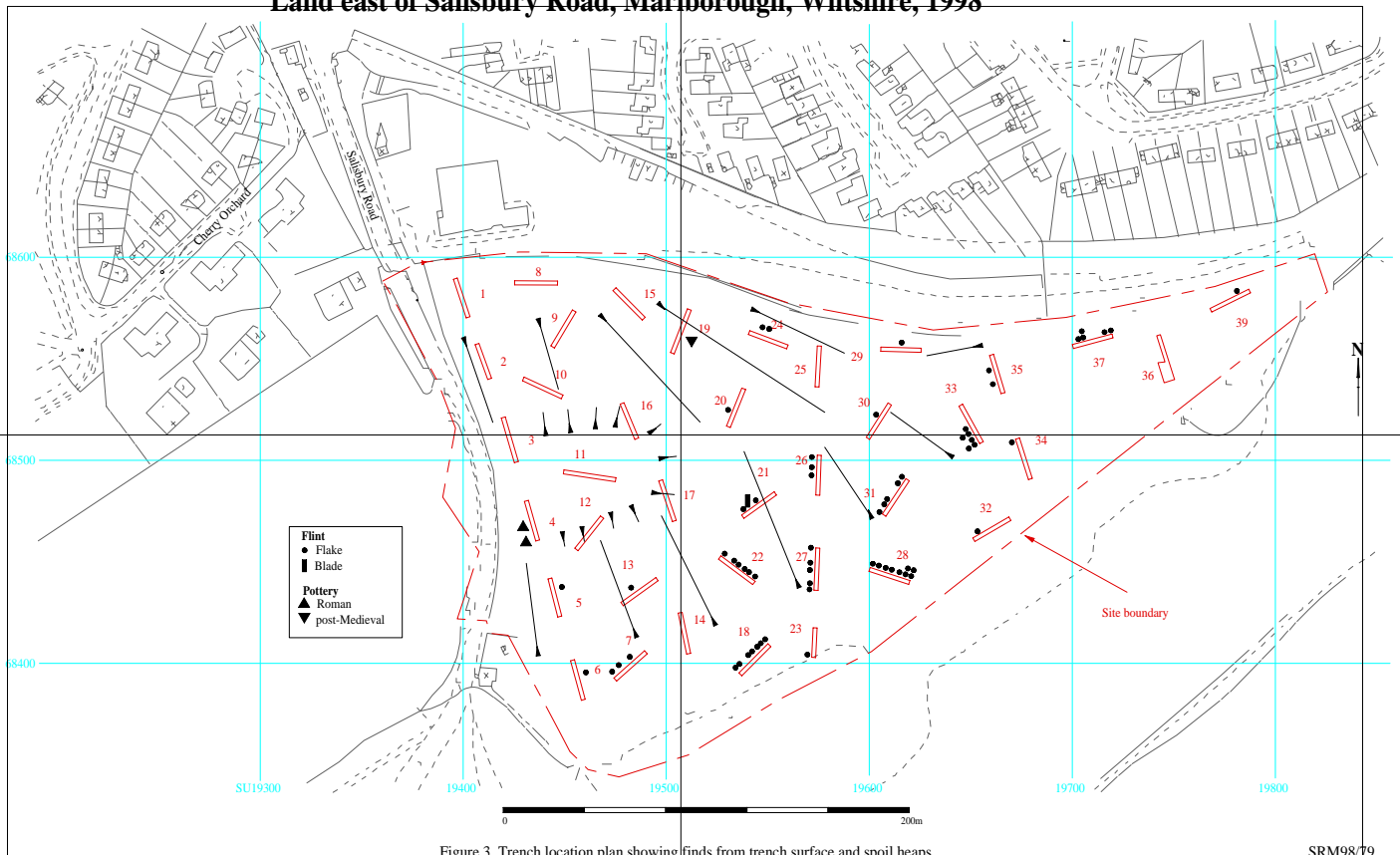


Figure 3. Trench location plan showing finds from trench surface and spoil heaps.

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Plate 1. General view of the site looking south from trench 1.



Plate 2. Representative section , Trench 16 looking west, scale: 1m.