

The Hub, Marston Farm, South Marston Swindon, Wiltshire

Archaeological Summary Report for Phase 3 and 4 Works

Planning Application: S/OUT/14/0253/KICO
National Grid Reference Number: SU 19692 86555
AOC Project No: 33450
Date: December 2018



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

The Hub, Marston Farm, South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire

Archaeological Summary Report for Phase 3 and 4 Works

On Behalf of:	CgMs Consulting (Part of the RPS Group) Planning, Archaeology & Historic Buildings Consultants 140 London Wall, London EC2Y 5DN
National Grid Reference (NGR):	SU 19692 86555
AOC Project No:	33450
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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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1 Overview

- 1.1 The site of Marston Hub lies on the south side of the A420, east of the junction with the A419. This is close to the highest ground in the local area, with the topography dropping away southeastwards towards Dorcan Stream and the River Cole. The Site is close to the Scheduled Monument of *Durocornovium* Roman town at Nythe approximately 500 m to the south, alongside the Roman road between Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*) and Cirencester (*Corinium Dobunorum*).
- 1.2 Previous geophysical survey and trial trenching demonstrated the presence of a Roman settlement in the north-western part of the site, with enclosures or field systems extending to the south. These enclosures and field systems are dated primarily to the Roman period with a small number of features also producing pottery of a possible Late Iron Age date.
- 1.3 Subsequent work by Oxford Archaeology on a site access road recorded a mixture of later Roman, Saxon and post-medieval features.
- 1.4 The Phase 3 works consisted of five main areas of Strip Map and Record (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5 and 3.6), the excavation of the mound in 3.4, and six detailed excavation areas (3.2A, 3.2B, 3.2C, 3.2D, 3.3A and 3.3B). Phase 4 was composed of two areas, 4.1 and 4.2. These works were undertaken by AOC Archaeology between July and November 2018, following the LPA approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CgMs (2017 Rev D). The investigations revealed widespread use of the land in the Roman period and possibly Late Iron Age/Roman transitional period, with the archaeological features largely representing enclosures and field boundaries with possible sparse settlement. The archaeological finds and features became less dense towards the south of the site, towards the Dorcan Stream and River Cole and away from an area of preservation in situ to the north. The area of preservation in situ was defined after geophysical survey revealed complex archaeological features that represent settlement.
- 1.5 All archaeological works were monitored on a regular basis by CgMs (on behalf of the client) and Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS) on behalf of the LPA."

2 Summary of Results

- 2.1 Area 3.1 comprised an approximately rectilinear area in the north-west of site. Archaeological features were sparse in this area compared to the rest of site. Two large linear features were present in the eastern extent of the area, although were post-medieval in date. A small number of ditches and pits of Roman date were also present and an ephemeral semi-circular feature, possibly representing a type of shelter. A number of amorphous features were also present, although these were proven to be natural disturbances.
- 2.2 Area 3.2 comprised a long rectilinear area aligned north-south in the north-west area of site and was the busiest archaeologically area of the site. The predominant features were those of ditched enclosures, likely re-established a number of times and representing successive phases of activity. The clearest of the enclosure systems was comprised of a large ditch (recut on several occasions) running north-south with smaller ditches running in parallel and a number of east-west linear ditches joining them forming a series of smaller rectilinear enclosures. The northern most enclosure contained a circular shallow gully associated with a number of post holes and circular pits and likely represents a structure. This was excavated as detailed excavation area 3.2A. The south-east of 3.2 contained three large features with deposits of burnt residue and charcoal, and contained in situ stone linings which in one case, was a base of stone hardstanding. From comparison with similar features known

in the area these may be oven type features. These were excavated as detailed excavation areas 3.2C and 3.2D.

- 2.3 Area 3.3 was a large area in the south of site. A number of Roman boundary or enclosure ditches were present, although notably fewer than area 3.2 to the north. Located in an area on the north-east corner of the boundary with Area 3.2, were two curvilinear shaped ditches, notably different in form from the linear ditches characterising the majority of site. They produced ceramic finds of a Late Iron Age/Roman date. This was excavated as detailed excavation area 3.3A. Also in this area was another large feature containing a burnt charcoal rich deposit similar in form to the oven type features in Area 3.2. This was excavated as detailed excavation area 3.3B.
- 2.4 Area 3.4 was an area delineated around a circular mound feature identified and partially investigated by Oxford Archaeology. The feature consisted of a mounded deposit encircled by medium and large stones and produced Roman ceramic finds from the base of the mound deposits. The function of the feature remains unclear. The natural clay was exposed across the base and no archaeological features or cuts were present. A small number of ditch features were present in the vicinity of the mound, although it is not clear whether they are contemporary, associated, or represent unrelated field boundaries and enclosures.
- 2.5 Area 3.5 was located in the west of site and contained a number of Roman field boundary or enclosure ditches varying in size and survival. Running on an east-west alignment was a large field ditch which truncated the top of a larger natural channel, investigated initially by hand and then by way of a machine dug slot after agreement of WCAS and seen in section. Two degraded semi-circular ditches and associated postholes were also present and may represent vernacular shelters or structures.
- 2.6 Area 3.6 consisted of three separate areas in the south of site, situated on the locations of proposed attenuation ponds. These were archaeologically quiet reflecting the general reduction in archaeology density towards the southern boundary of site. A small number of small circular pits containing burnt fills were present. They may also be associated with the oven features known to be present on site.
- 2.7 Areas 4.1 and 4.2 were two narrow strips running north-south along the approximate length of site. These were again archaeologically quiet with the exception of occasional ephemeral ditch features.

3 Further Work

- 3.1 The features will be dated according to the finds, and stratigraphic relationships presented in order to reveal the sequence of activity on site. The results will be compared with the geophysical survey and the Oxford Archaeology excavations, as part of a post-excavation assessment.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 The archaeological investigations have been completed as specified in the WSI;
- 4.2 The LPA's Archaeological Adviser has confirmed that no further fieldwork is required to satisfy condition 21 of the outline consent, once this Summary has been received by WCAS and reviewed (see e-mail correspondence between CgMs and WCAS dated 10th October 2017).
- 4.3 No archaeology which would fetter the development of the Purchaser's proposed scheme has been discovered during these phase of fieldwork.

5 Bibliography

CgMs, 2017, Revised Written Scheme Of Investigation For An Archaeological Investigation (May 17th 2017)



Plate 1: Curvilinear structure and enclosure, excavation area 3.2A, looking west, 2m scale



Plate 2: Stone lined oven structure, excavation area 3.2C, looking north, 2m scale



Plate 3: Curvilinear enclosure ditches, excavation area 3.3A, looking east, 2m scale



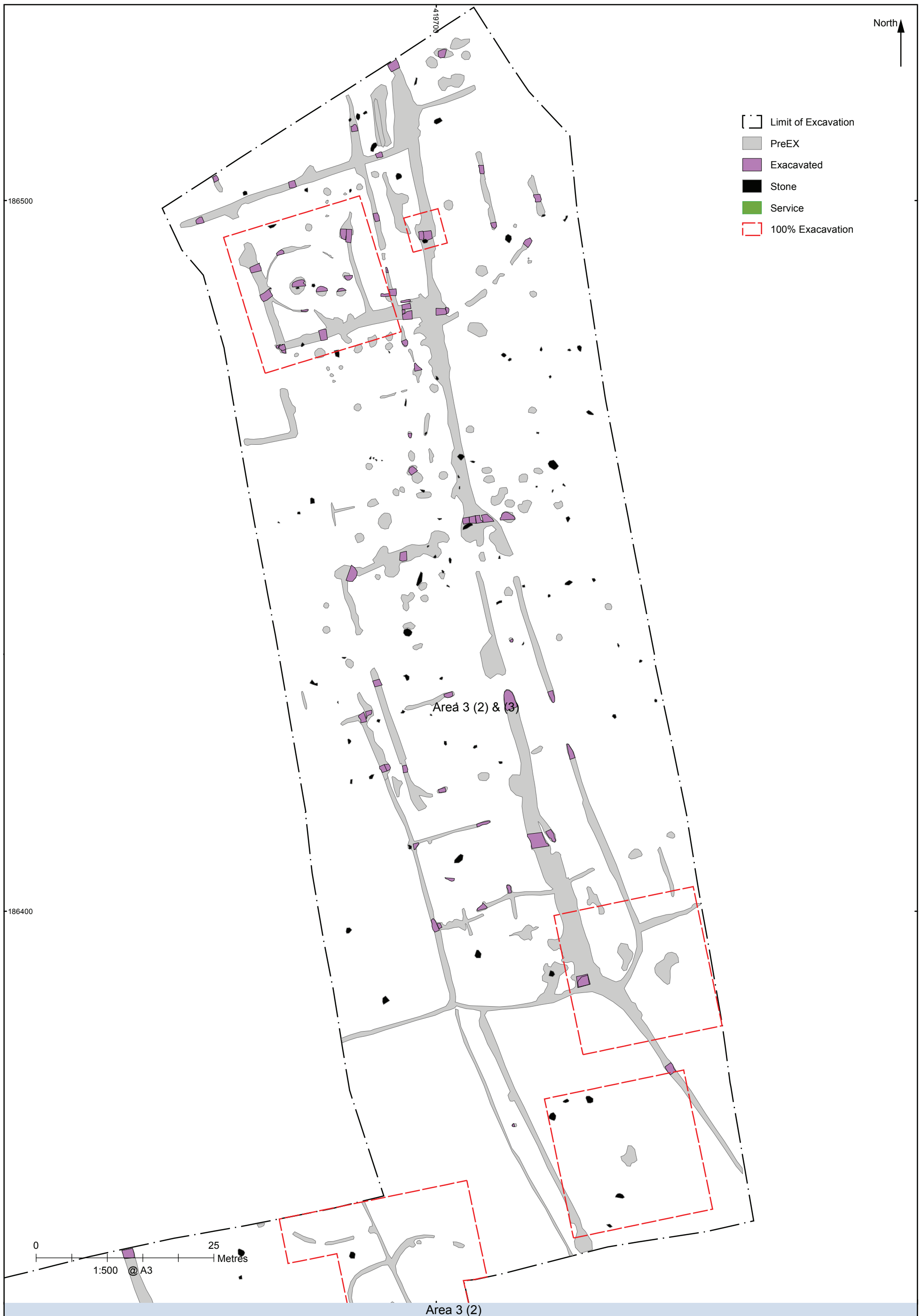
Plate 4: Oven feature, excavation area 3.3B, looking north, 2m scale



Plate 5: Area 3.4 showing mound feature and ditches, looking south-west, 2m scale



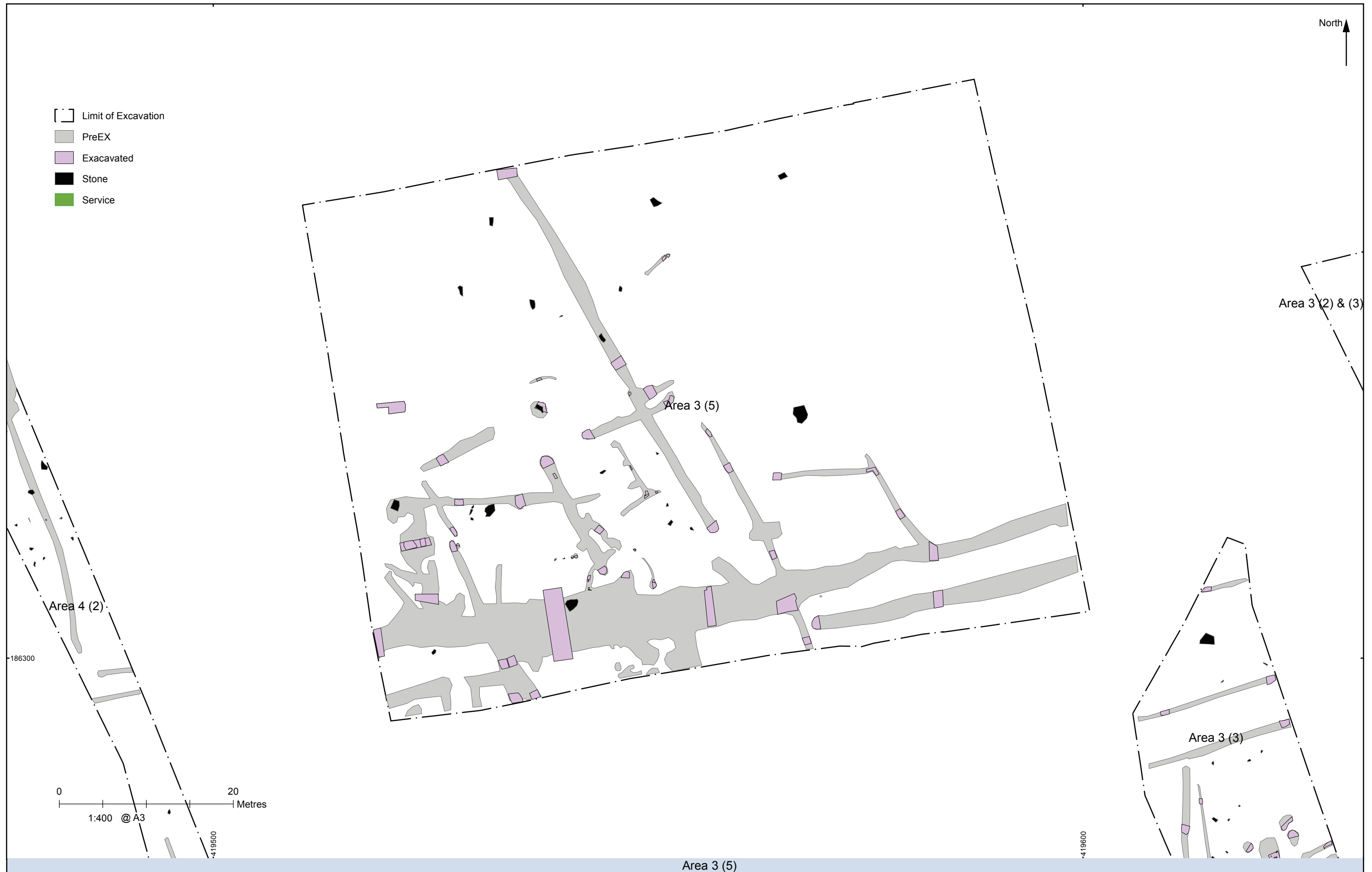








Areas 3 (4), 4 (1) and 4 (2)





Appendix 1 - E-mail of 10th October 2017 between CgMs and WCAS

Catherine Edwards

From: Pomeroy-Kellinger, Melanie <Melanie.Pomeroy-Kellinger@wiltshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 10 October 2018 17:20
To: Simon Blatherwick
Subject: [EXT] RE: Marston Hub Archaeology - discussions

Hi Simon. Thanks for this. This is all correct and agreed. All the best, Melanie

Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger BA MA MCifA
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From: Simon Blatherwick [mailto:BlatherwickS@rpsgroup.com]
Sent: 10 October 2018 17:06
To: Pomeroy-Kellinger, Melanie <Melanie.Pomeroy-Kellinger@wiltshire.gov.uk>
Subject: Marston Hub Archaeology - discussions

Dear Melanie

Further to our discussions on your site visits (particularly 7th September 2018) please find below a note of the conversations that we had regarding;

- The hammer-head;
- The eastern-most area of WSI Area 3 (6); and
- Approaches to discharging the planning condition.

The Hammer-head (see pdf 33450 Marston 4 V2)

As discussed the Landscaping that has taken place on the Phase 2 site has extended into the northern end of approved WSI Area 3(1) – see attached 'Figure 5 Excavation Plan 17.05.17 – Composite Plan. pdf' for the location of Area 3(1). We know from the works undertaken in the Phase 2 Strip Map and Sample (see attached '33566 Marston Hub Phase 2 Summary.pdf' previously issued to you 9th May 2018) that no archaeological remains were recorded to the immediate north of the 'hammer-head (see Figure 3 in the Marston Hub Phase 2 Summary). We also know that very few archaeological remains have been recorded within Area 3(1) during this current phase of archaeological works (see 33450 Marston 4 V2). The figure 33450 Marston 4 V2 also shows the 'overlap' between the proposed Area 3 (1) - shown as a dashed line – and the edge of the hammer-head and landscaping. This has resulted in Area 3 (1) being curtailed on its northern edge. With regard to the eastern edge of proposed Area 3(1) the presence of a mature hedgerow meant that AOC's machining edge to 3(1) comes 5 m short of the hedge line due to ecological reasons. No archaeological remains are shown to be extending to either the north of 3(1) or the east of that area so it is highly unlikely that archaeological remains are present in those area that we have not been able to get access to. We agreed that there would be no requirement to extend 3(1) further than it has already been machined / recorded.

The eastern-most area of WSI Area 3 (6)

The eastern-most area of Area 3(6) is now being addressed under Strip Map and Sample rather than Watching Brief as discussed with you and confirmed to you by e-mail on 28th August 2018. The eastern-most part of Area 3(6) extends out of the current site boundary, through existing mature hedgerow and into the adjacent field. As the results of the Strip Map and Sample in this part of Area 3(6) show no archaeological remains (plans not yet available but reviewed during your site visit of 7th September) we agreed that the Strip Map and Sample of this location should not extend through the hedgerow / no further than viewed on that site visit.

Approaches to discharging the planning condition

Planning Condition 21 for consent for the redevelopment of the site reads;

"No development shall commence on any phase or sub-phase, pursuant to Condition 4, until a written programme of archaeological investigation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The WSI(s) shall include on-site and off-site work including the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results. The approved programme of archaeological work shall be carried on in accordance with the approved details. "

The 'Revised Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Investigation dated 17th May 2017 reference: SB/19520/170517' has been approved by Swindon Borough Council (Application Number S/16/1225/KICO dated 17th August 2017). My understanding from our discussions is that once the archaeological fieldworks that are set out in the Revised WSI are completed to your satisfaction (circa October this year) that you will advise partial discharge of the planning condition. This will mean that there are no archaeological constraints to site development activity commencing. Archaeological fieldworks will also include the areas of additional detailed excavation we have discussed recently (plan not yet provided). For you to be able to advise complete discharge of the archaeological planning condition you will wait until you receive the post-excavation assessment (as outlined in 4.1 of the approved WSI) with proposals for publication (4.3 of the approved WSI) included. As discussed the post-excavation assessment is expected to be completed within 12 months of the completion of on-site fieldwork.

I trust that this accurately reflects our discussions and your understanding of them. Happy to discuss this on your next site visit. We should also agree how this is to be formally recorded so as to ensure that any Due Diligence on the site will be able to retrieve a record of or discussions / agreement.

Regards

Simon

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PLEASE NOTE THAT I AM ON ANNUAL LEAVE FROM 22/10 TO 25/10 INCLUSIVE

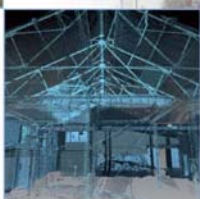
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