

**ALDI RDC,
SOUTH MARSTON**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

NGR: SU 1801 8857

**Report No. 511
September 2006**

Quality Assurance

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with AMS's Quality Procedures (BS EN ISO 9001: 2000)

Author: Roy King

Date: September 2006

Approved: Clare King

QA Checked: Diana Mayer

This report has been compiled with all reasonable skill care and attention to detail within the terms of the project as specified by the client and within the general terms and conditions of Archaeological Management Services Ltd trading as Foundations Archaeology. This report is confidential to the client . AMS Ltd accepts no responsibility whatsoever to third parties to whom this report or any part thereof is made known. Any such party relies on this report at their own risk. . Copyright of this document is retained by AMS Ltd, but unlimited licence to reproduce it in whole or part is granted to the client and/or their agents and/or assignees on payment of invoice.

CONTENTS

Summary

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Site Location
- 3 Project and Archaeological Background
- 4 Aims
- 5 Methodology
- 6 Results
- 7 Discussion
- 8 References
- 9 Acknowledgements

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1 Site Location
- Figure 2 Trench Locations
- Figure 3 Trench 14 Plan and Sections
- Figure 4 Trench 18 Plan and Sections

SUMMARY

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation relating to land adjacent to the Aldi RDC, South Marston in the Borough of Swindon (NGR: SU 1801 8857). The evaluation was undertaken in order to ascertain the likely potential of the site for the presence and survival of archaeological deposits.

The site falls within an area of archaeological potential; extensive remains of Iron Age and Romano-British date have been previously discovered to the north, west and south of the site.

The results of the evaluation have demonstrated that the site contains evidence for a Medieval/early Post-medieval agricultural landscape in the form of furrows and a probable dewpond.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A proposal has been submitted for the redevelopment of land for an extension to the Aldi RDC at South Marston in the Borough of Swindon centred at NGR: SU 1801 8857. In accordance with the principals of Planning Policy Guidance note, Archaeology and Planning (PPG16) a programme of archaeological works has been requested, of which archaeological evaluation comprised the second stage in ascertaining the archaeological potential of the area. The works were commissioned by Aldi Stores Limited.
- 1.2 The evaluation works were undertaken in accordance with a project design (Foundations Archaeology 2006) agreed with the County Archaeological Service, acting as archaeological advisors to the Borough of Swindon. The project design was prepared in accordance with a brief and in accordance with the general requirements set out by the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (1994, revised 2001) and *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Evaluation in Wiltshire* (County Archaeological Service 1995).

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is located within a industrial estate on the outskirts of Swindon (figures 1 and 2). It consists of an area bounded to the west by Highworth Road, to the south and east by the Honda car plant and to the north by the existing RDC. At the time of the evaluation the study area comprised waste ground, partly buried beneath deep spoil bunds, which were still being removed during the archaeological works.
- 2.2 The geology of the study area consists of limestone brash with clay patches.

3 PROJECT AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site is located within an area of archaeological potential; extensive remains of Iron Age and Romano-British date have been previously discovered to the north, west and south of the site.
- 3.2 It is currently proposed to construct an extension to the existing RDC at the site.

4 AIMS

- 4.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.
- 4.2 In particular the project sought to identify evidence for Iron Age and Roman activity and to test the extent of the medieval settlement. This in no way prejudiced the works against the recovery of artefacts and features from other periods.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The method statement specified the excavation of nineteen 30m by 1.6m trenches within the study area. Due to on-site constraints the trench locations had to be amended slightly. The final trench locations were approved by Roy Canham acting as the archaeological advisor to Swindon Borough Council and Liz Smith of Swindon Borough Council. The trench locations are illustrated on Figure 2.
- 5.2 Topsoil and non-significant overburden was removed through use of a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket to the top of archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. All site recording was undertaken in accordance with Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3 (Excavation Manual).
- 5.3 Upon completion of the works, the trenches were subsequently backfilled.

6 RESULTS

- 6.1 **Trench 1** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned east-west. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.25m (111.92m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a thin light grey brown plastic clay subsoil layer (102) up to 0.12m thick. This layer survived only in the central part of the trench and was sealed in turn beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (101) up to 0.31m thick. A series of north-south aligned furrow bases were present in the eastern half of the trench. No other archaeological features were present within this trench.

- 6.2 **Trench 2** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned northwest-southeast. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.45m (111.89m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a thin interface layer of degraded brash and clay (203) up to 0.10m thick, beneath a mid yellow brown plastic clay subsoil layer (202) up to 0.23m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a mid brown sandy clay topsoil (201) up to 0.19m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench.
- 6.3 **Trench 3** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned northeast-southwest. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash at an average depth of 0.29m (111.58m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a thin interface layer of degraded brash and clay (303) up to 0.11m thick, beneath a mid yellow brown plastic clay subsoil layer (302) up to 0.17m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (301) up to 0.19m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench.
- 6.4 **Trench 4** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned approximately east-west. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.33m (111.31m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a thin interface layer of degraded brash and clay (404) up to 0.15m thick, beneath a mid grey green plastic clay subsoil layer (403) up to 0.10m thick, which was present only in the western end of the trench. This layer and (404) across the remainder of the trench, was sealed beneath a dark grey/black layer of made ground comprising clay and brick rubble (402) up to 0.15m thick. This was in turn overlain by a thin sandy clay topsoil (401) up to 0.07m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench, although two roughly north-south aligned furrow bases were identified.
- 6.5 **Trench 5** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned northeast-southwest. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.45m (111.29m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a layer of degraded brash and clay (502) up to 0.34m thick, beneath a layer of black clay (501), up to 0.24m thick. Both (501) and (502) disappeared at 15m from the northeastern end of the trench to be replaced by a layer of dark grey clay made ground (504) up to 0.25m thick, beneath a limestone block hardcore layer (503) up to 0.13m thick. This layer was sealed beneath a remnant tarmac surface (505) up to 0.11m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench.
- 6.6 **Trench 6** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned east-west. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.28m (111.31m OD) from

the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a thin interface layer of degraded brash and clay (603) up to 0.10m thick, beneath an orange brown plastic clay subsoil layer (602) up to 0.16m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a mid brown sandy clay topsoil (601) up to 0.20m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench, although a series of broad shallow furrows, spaced approximately 2.5m apart, were present on a north-south alignment.

- 6.7 **Trench 7** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned north-south. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.28m (111.59m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a thin interface layer of degraded brash and clay (703) up to 0.12m thick, beneath a mid yellow brown plastic clay subsoil layer (702) up to 0.12m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a mid brown sandy clay topsoil (701) up to 0.19m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench, although a single broad shallow furrow was present on a roughly northeast-southwest alignment in the southern part of the trench.
- 6.8 **Trench 8** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned north northeast-south southwest. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.27m (111.68m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a yellow brown plastic clay subsoil layer (802) up to 0.17m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a mid brown sandy clay topsoil (801) up to 0.17m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench, although a series of broad shallow furrows, spaced approximately 5m apart, were present on a northwest-southeast alignment.
- 6.9 **Trench 9** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned east-west. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.24m (111.18m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a thin interface layer of degraded brash and clay (902) up to 0.10m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (901) up to 0.18m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench.
- 6.10 **Trench 10** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned north-south. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.42m (111.12m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a yellow brown plastic clay subsoil layer (1002) up to 0.25m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (1001) up to 0.30m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench.
- 6.11 **Trench 11** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned north-south. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone

brush with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.50m (110.60m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a yellow brown plastic clay subsoil layer (1102) up to 0.45m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (1101) up to 0.34m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench.

- 6.12 **Trench 12** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned east-west. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brush with patches of yellow clays at a depth of 0.22m (110.61m OD) at the western end, dipping to 0.66m (110.21m OD) at the eastern end from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a patchy interface layer of degraded brush and clay (1202) up to 0.15m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (1201) up to 0.66m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench, although a north-south aligned furrow was present at the northern end of the trench.
- 6.13 **Trench 13** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned north-south. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brush with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.36m (111.05m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a patchy interface layer of degraded brush and clay (1302) up to 0.26m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (1301) up to 0.27m thick. No archaeological features were present within this trench, although a modern east-west aligned linear feature was present within the central part of the trench.
- 6.14 **Trench 14** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned north-south. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brush with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.45m (110.53m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a layer of mid grey clay with limestone fragments (1402) up to 0.44m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (1401) up to 0.22m thick. A single archaeological feature was present within this trench. The trench was therefore extended to reveal the majority of the feature (Figure 3).
- 6.15 Feature [1403] comprised a sub-oval cut measuring at least 9m in diameter by 0.33m deep with shallow sloping sides and a gently rounded base. It contained a mid brown silt clay with rare limestone flecks (1404) from which no finds were recovered.
- 6.16 **Trench 15** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned northeast-southwest. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brush with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.23m (111.09m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (1501) up to 0.26m thick. Two

archaeological features, in the form of parallel north-south aligned furrows, were present within this trench.

- 6.17 **Trench 16** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned east-west. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.16m (111.01m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (1601) up to 0.26m thick. A series of parallel north-south aligned furrows were present within this trench.
- 6.18 **Trench 17** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned northeast-southwest. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.15m (111.21m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (1701) up to 0.19m thick. Two parallel north-south aligned furrows were present within this trench.
- 6.19 **Trench 18** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned east-west. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.29m (111.38m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a layer of mid yellow grey clay with limestone fragments (1802) up to 0.11m thick. This layer was sealed in turn beneath a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (1801) up to 0.28m thick. A single archaeological feature was present within this trench.
- 6.20 Feature [1803] comprised a small sub-circular posthole. It measured 0.31m diameter by 0.08m deep with steep sides and a flat base. It contained a soft mid grey brown clay fill (1804) from which no finds were recovered (Figure 4).
- 6.21 **Trench 19** measured 30m long by 1.8m wide and was aligned east-west. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of limestone brash with patches of yellow clays at an average depth of 0.16m (111.32m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural was sealed beneath a yellow brown subsoil (1902) up to 0.10m thick, which was present only at the western end of the trench. It was sealed in turn by a dark brown sandy clay topsoil (1601) up to 0.26m thick, which was present throughout the trench. A series of parallel north-south aligned furrows was present within this trench.

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The results of the evaluation have demonstrated that the site contains archaeologically features relating to a Medieval/Post-medieval agricultural landscape.

- 7.2 Two discrete features were identified in Trenches 14 and 18 respectively, in the form of a large negative feature and a post hole. No dating evidence was recovered from either feature, but it is likely that the feature in Trench 14 represents a dew pond. The posthole in Trench 18 was cut through the subsoil and may be of relatively modern origin.
- 7.3 A series of linear features were identified in Trenches 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 17 and 19, all of which were tested by excavation. Dating evidence was only recovered from two of these furrows [1608] and [1903], which gave dates of 16th-17th century and 13th-14th century respectively. The dating evidence and the profiles strongly suggest that these features represent Medieval/early Post-medieval furrow bases rather than WWII anti-glider ditches, which might also have been expected in proximity to the former airbase.
- 7.4 A small finds assemblage was recovered during the course of this evaluation. This comprised four small sherds of Minety ware, a single sherd of Ashton Keynes ware and two small, undiagnostic, fragments of ceramic building material.
- 7.5 The results of the archaeological evaluation indicate that there are no features which will require preservation *in situ*. The results suggest that the earliest use of the site which has left a mark in the archaeological record is as agricultural land during the medieval and early post-medieval periods. A probable dew pond, which is likely to represent an element of the agricultural landscape was also present, as well as a probably modern post hole.
- 7.6 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology and will be deposited with Swindon Museum in due course. An OASIS form will be completed and submitted and a short note will be submitted for publication in the Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine.

8 REFERENCES

Foundations Archaeology 2006 *Land at the Aldi RDC, South Marston, Archaeological Evaluation: Specification* Unpublished report

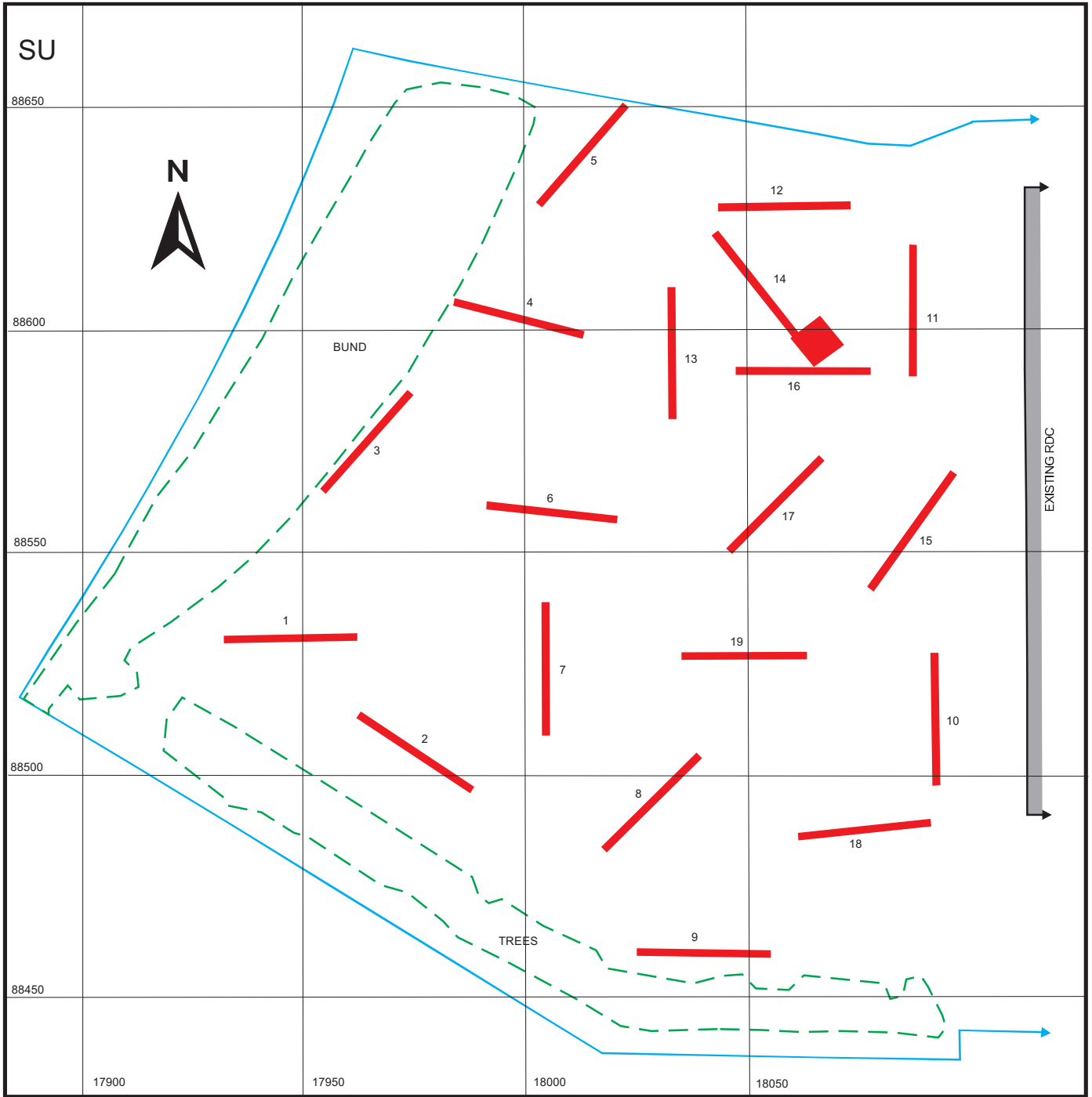
Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994, revised 2001 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*

Wiltshire County Council 1995 *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire*

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Aldi RDC, South Marston: Archaeological Evaluation

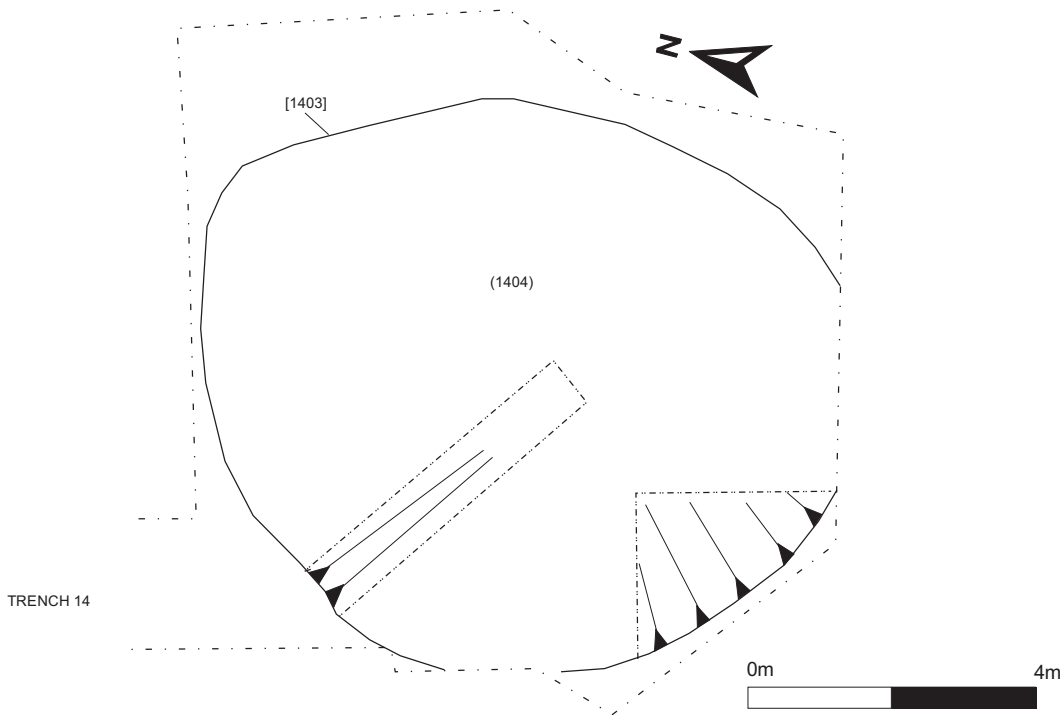
Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Aldi Stores Limited, Geoffrey Walkiden of Achammer-Tritthart & Partner, Peter Lawson of Robert Turley Associates, the Kelston Sparks Group, Roy Canham of Wiltshire County Council and Liz Smith of Swindon Borough Council



KEY	
	SITE BOUNDARY
	AREAS UNAVAILABLE FOR EVALUATION
	EVALUATION TRENCHES
	PROPOSED EVALUATION TRENCH
	AREA AVAILABLE FOR SITE REDUCTION

FIGURE 2: Trench Locations

PLAN OF [1403]



SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [1403]

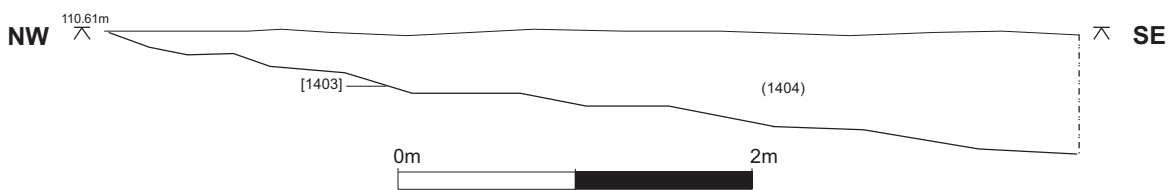
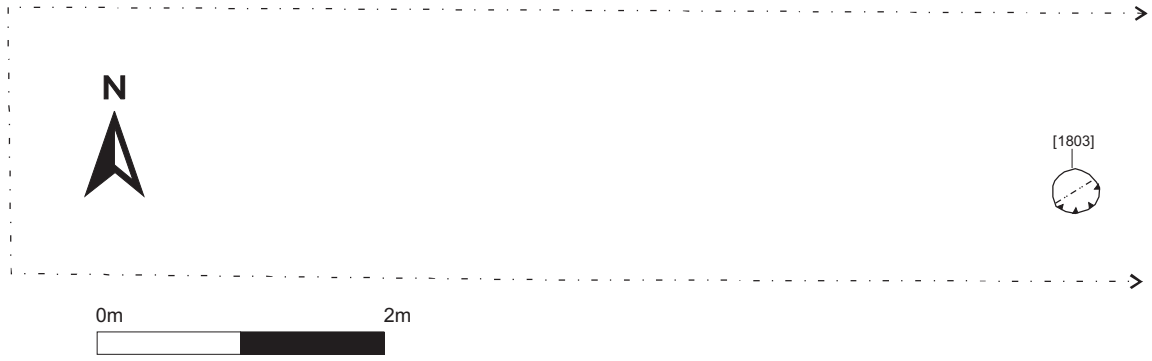


FIGURE 3: Trench 14

PLAN OF TRENCH 18



NORTHWEST FACING SECTION [1803]

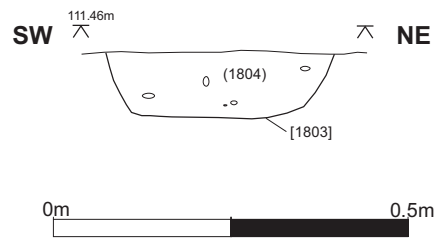


FIGURE 4: Trench 14