



## **Report on a Programme of Archaeological Works at Lower Manor Farm, Ashmansworth, Hampshire**

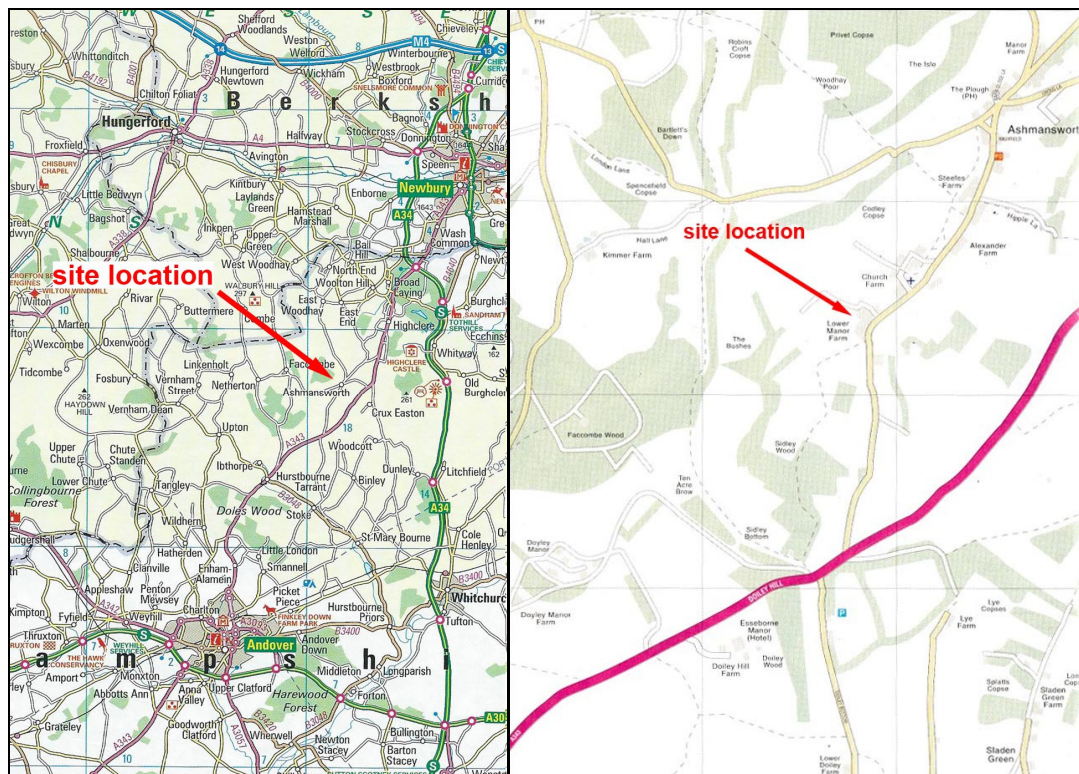
January 2018

## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

***This document sets out the results from a programme of archaeological works carried out by West Sussex Archaeology Ltd at Lower Manor Farm, Ashmansworth, Hampshire. The landowner had received planning permission to construct a tennis court, with a condition attached requiring archaeological work due to its position within an Area of High Archaeological Potential, relating to the shrunken medieval village of Ashmansworth.***

***The archaeological work, which consisted of the excavation of two archaeological trial trenches, was carried out in September 2017. No archaeological remains or artefacts were recovered.***

## PROJECT BACKGROUND



**Figure 1** Site location. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

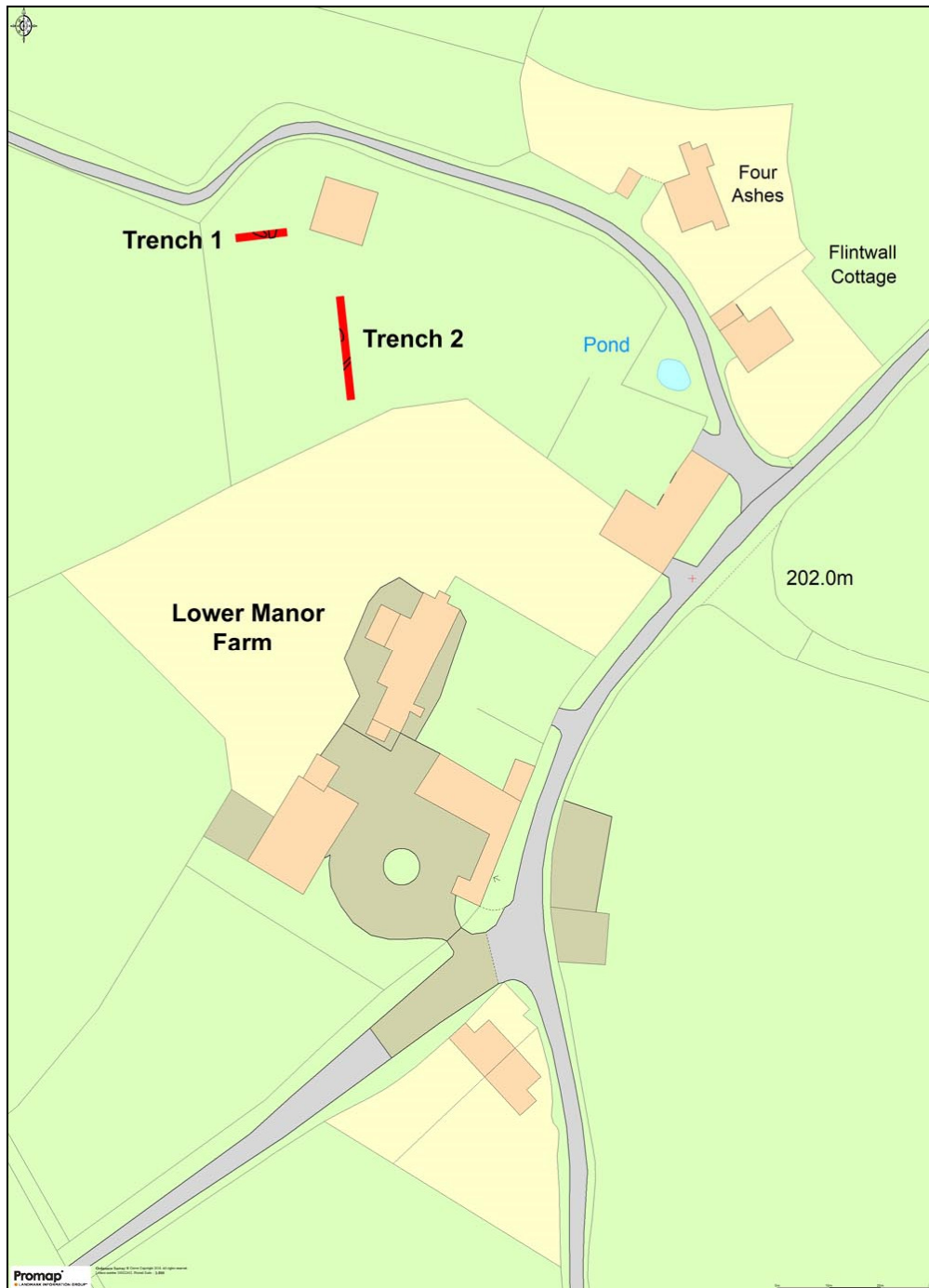
1. Lower Manor Farm is located at the south-west end of the village of Ashmansworth, between the towns of Andover and Newbury, in Hampshire (see Fig.1). The Farm is situated on the south-west end of a ridge of high ground which falls away sharply in all directions save the north-east. The site of the proposed tennis court is c.35m to the north-west of the farmhouse, sitting at 205m aOD, and centred at OS grid reference SU4084 5643. The underlying geology of the site is the Seaford Chalk Formation overlain by clay with flints and Head deposits.
2. The landowner had received planning permission from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for the construction of a tennis court (16/02384/FUL). Condition 5 of that permission states that: "No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) that sets out the methodology for an archaeological watching brief of the ground works associated with the proposed development to ensure that any archaeological remains encountered are recognized, characterised and recorded. Provision should also be made for the public dissemination of any results and the WSI should satisfy the Local Planning Authority that the scheme is sustainable under the terms of National Planning Policy Framework."

3. West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. was appointed by the landowner to write and submit the Written Scheme of Investigation required by Condition 5, which set out the methodology used in order to fulfil the terms of that condition (WSA 2016). This report details the results of the ensuing archaeological work and, in the light of its negative results, is submitted to fulfil the requirements of the condition. The archaeological work consisted of two trial trenches excavated on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017 by George Anelay of WSA. The project archive, which consists solely of paperwork, with the landowner's permission, will be deposited with Hampshire County Council's Museum Service.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

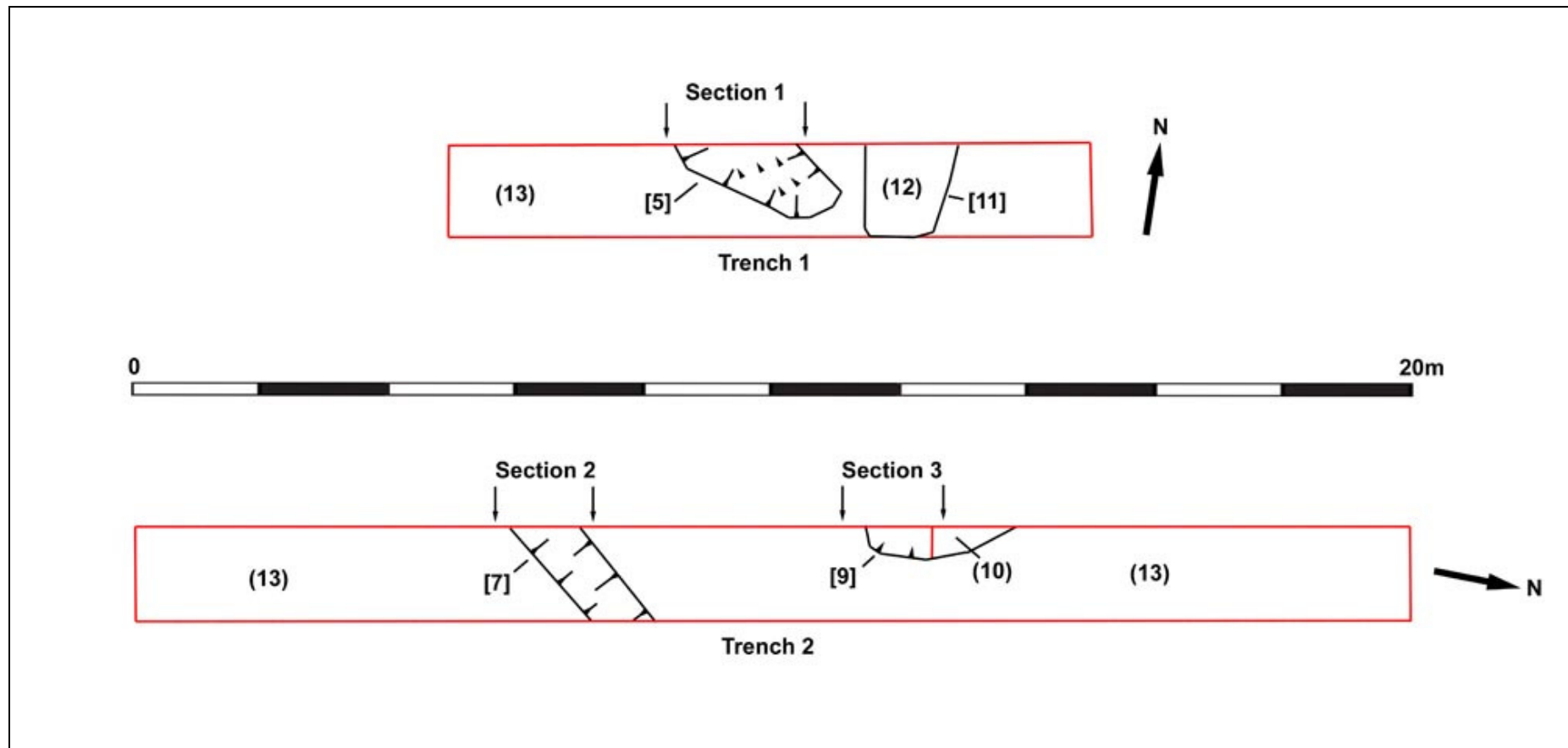
1. The site of the proposed tennis court is located within an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP) within what could be the limits of the shrunken medieval village of Ashmansworth. There is evidence from the 1840 Ashmansworth Tithe map that there were buildings once located immediately to the east of the site, although these have disappeared by the date of the 1895 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey mapping. The Site then appears to have remained as open ground through the 20th century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>. In the light of this evidence, it is possible that as yet unrecorded sub-surface remains of buildings dating from the medieval and post-medieval phases of the village exist within the site.

## RESULTS

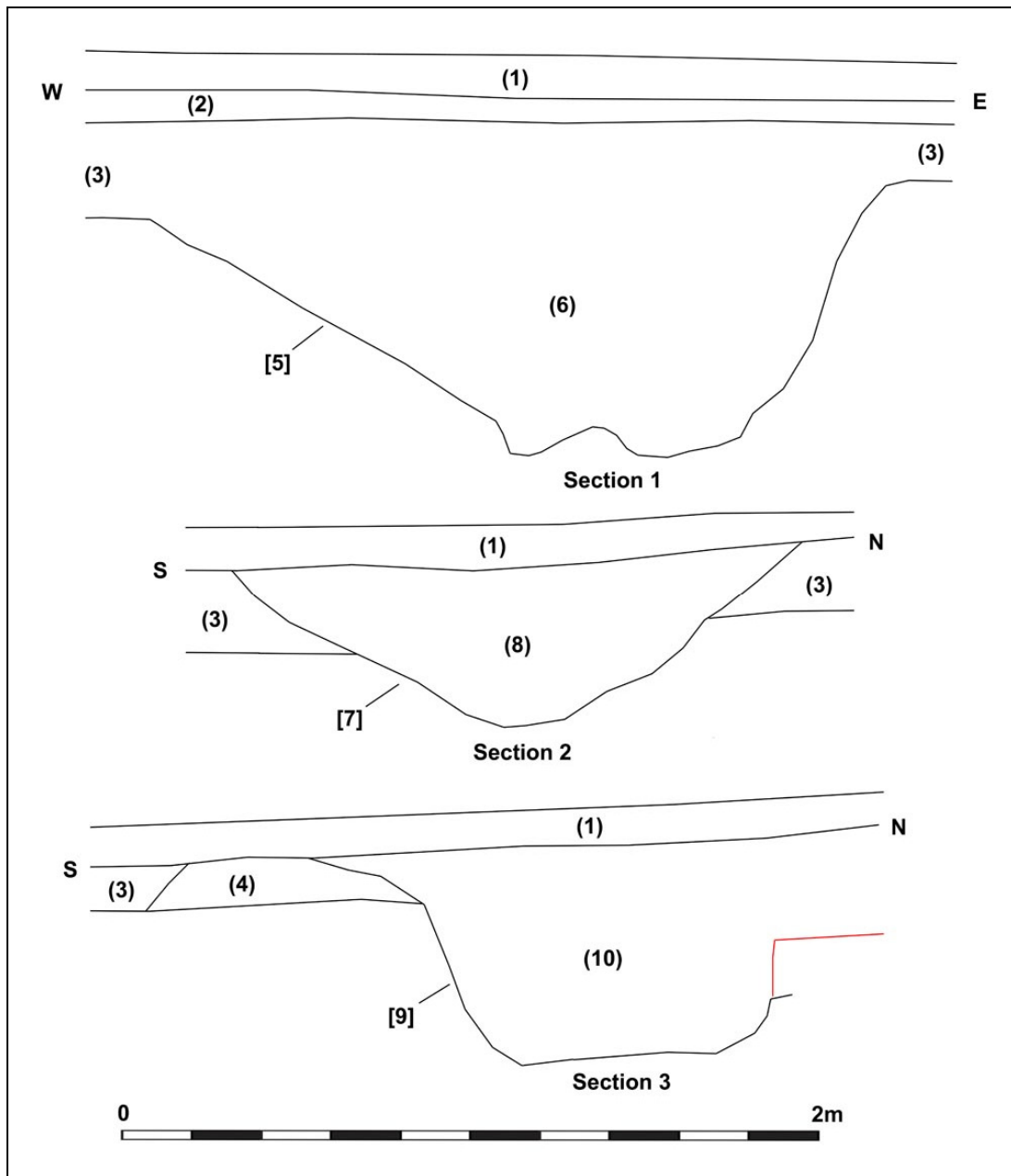


**Figure 2** Trench plan

1. Two archaeological trial trenches were excavated on the site of the proposed tennis court, Trench 1 being 10m long and 1.5m wide, and Trench 2 being 20m long and 1.5m wide (see Fig.2). Trench 1 was positioned at the closest point to the track to the north, in case buildings associated with the medieval village had extended along its length, while Trench 2 was located at the closest point to a series of buildings now demolished, but visible on the 1840 Tithe map.



**Figure 3** Trench Plans



**Figure 4** Sections

2. The deposits within each trench were broadly similar, underlying the current turf was a layer of dark brown topsoil (1), c.0.1m thick. Beneath this layer was a subsoil of smooth grey/brown clay-silt (3), up to c.0.25m thick, containing frequent flint, overlying the natural red/brown clay-with-flints. In Trench 1 a layer of gravelly silt (2), c.0.07m thick and containing occasional tile and brick fragments, lay beneath the topsoil and above the underlying subsoil. This is almost certainly associated with a trackway visible running east-west in this location on late 19<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Survey mapping.
3. Trench 1 contained two pits, the western of which [5] was c.2.1m wide, at least 1.5m long and c.0.75m deep. Its fill (6) was indistinguishable from the subsoil (3), and contained no artefacts. Its irregular shape



suggests that it is most likely to be an old tree-throw. To the east of this was a modern machine-dug pit [11], cut through the subsoil, c.1.5m wide east-west, over 1.5m long and over 1m deep. It had been backfilled with modern building rubble (12).



**Figure 5** Trench 1, looking north-west, with Pit [11] in the foreground



**Figure 6** Pit [5] in Trench 1, looking north



4. Trench 2 contained a pit and a small ditch or gully. The pit [9] was c.2.3m long, over 0.6m wide and c.0.5m deep. Its fill (10) was indistinguishable from the subsoil (3). On its south side it was bordered by a layer of disturbed natural clay (4), possibly the remains of upcast, supporting the identification of this as another historic tree-throw. The ditch to the south [7] was c.0.85m wide and 0.45m deep. It had been cut through the subsoil (3), suggesting a comparatively late date, and was filled with a smooth grey brown clay-silt (8), with a slightly lower flint and clay content than the surrounding subsoil. Its orientation, being parallel to a boundary to the south, suggests it might have been an historic field drain. Neither feature in Trench 2 contained any artefacts.



**Figure 7** Trench 2, looking north





**Figure 8** Ditch/gully [7] in Trench 2, looking south-west



**Figure 9** Pit [9] in Trench 2, looking west

## CONCLUSION

1. The lack of any features or pre-modern artefacts in either trench, save the two probable tree-throws [5] & [9] and the late small ditch/gully [7], suggests that remains associated with the shrunken village of Ashmansworth are unlikely to lie within the vicinity of the proposed tennis court. It is perhaps more probable that such remains, should they extend this far south from the church, lie closer to the road.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

West Sussex Archaeology Ltd 2016 ***Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Works at Lower Manor Farm, Ashmansworth, Hampshire*** Unpublished