



**Wilton Autos, Wilton  
Wiltshire**

**Written Scheme of Investigation:  
Method Statement for an Archaeological Evaluation**

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Figure 1 Site outline and trench location

# Wilton Autos, Wilton Wiltshire

## Written Scheme of Investigation: Method Statement for an Archaeological Evaluation

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) has been commissioned by Archstone Lifestyle Homes Ltd, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of potential redevelopment on land at Wilton Autos, West Street, Wilton, Wiltshire (hereafter the Site, see **Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The evaluation is required by Salisbury District Council in support of the planning application (S/2007/1198) for the proposed construction of a series of 8 domestic dwellings with associated car parking at the site of Wilton Autos, 41-45 West Street, Wilton.

#### 1.2 Scope of Document

1.2.1 This Specification sets out the strategy and methodology by which Wessex Archaeology will implement the archaeological evaluation. In format and content it conforms with current best practice and to the guidance outlined in *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1999) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (as amended 1994).

1.2.2 It has been submitted to the Assistant Archaeologist Officer for Wiltshire County Council, the Archaeological Advisor acting on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, for approval prior to the commencement of the evaluation programme.

#### 1.3 Site location, topography and geology

1.3.1 The Site covers an area of approximately 0.09ha and comprises a sub-rectangular shaped plot located to the south of Netherwells Lane (**Fig. 1**). The Site is bounded to the north and west by houses and gardens, to the east by West Street, and to the south by Salisbury Demolition. The Site's centre is located at National Grid Reference (NGR) 409420 131370. The current land use is as vehicle repair and sales centre, and access to the Site is from Netherwell Lane.

1.3.2 The underlying geology of the Site comprises a spur of Valley Gravel overlying solid geology consisting of Cretaceous Upper Chalk (Ordnance Survey 1976).

1.3.3 The Site is relatively flat and situated at 55m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1.1 The archaeological evidence from Wilton has recently been collated and synthesised as part of the extensive survey of Wiltshire's towns (Wiltshire County Council 2002). The existence of prehistoric and Romano-British activity on the gravel island which Wilton occupies has been postulated, but little archaeological evidence has so far been uncovered (Andrews et al. 2000, 200). Haslam (1976) suggests that there may have been an early river crossing utilising the gravel island, but implies that a significant Romano-British settlement or presence is unlikely as the main road between Dorchester and Old Sarum crosses the Nadder approximately two kilometres east of Wilton.
- 2.1.2 The Saxon settlement of Wilton probably originated in the 5th or 6th century. The Saxons are known to have favoured this type of site, particularly for royal residences. The first documentary reference to Wilton dates to 838AD, in the form of a concordat between the King of Wessex and the Archbishop of Canterbury written at Kingston upon Thames and confirmed at Wilton (Haslam 1976). The confirmation of the document at Wilton shows the presence of the King of Wessex at Wilton, emphasising the importance of this settlement.
- 2.1.3 The status of Wilton as a royal seat during the 9th century is further indicated by the charter 854AD in which King Ethelwulf tithed his lands (Haslam 1976). This document was dated at Wilton, although the council was held at Winchester. This shows that Wilton remained important even though Winchester was becoming predominant as the administrative centre of Wessex. By the time of Alfred's reign in the later 9th century the importance of Wilton as a royal seat was on the wane and Winchester was the major town of the Kingdom.
- 2.1.4 During the 9th and 10th centuries Wilton was a stronghold comprising part of a chain of defensive centres or burhs created by Alfred and listed in the Burghal Hidage – a document drawn up in the 10th century by one of Alfred's immediate successors. West Street is likely to have originated as one of the principal streets within the burh. Wilton was also the principal mint for the shire in this period. After 1003, when the town was sacked by the Danes, the moneyers appear to have preferred the more defensible site at Old Sarum, although Wilton was not abandoned as a mint until 1250 (VCH 1962).
- 2.1.5 The Domesday survey records that the Borough of Wilton paid a substantial custom of £50. Eighteen burgesses under seven manors are recorded, paying 14s, 15d. In addition, two other manors held five houses in Wilton, paying 4s, 10d. The suburb of Ditchampton to the north-west (just beyond the Site) was held by the Bishop of Bayeux; it had a small agricultural assessment, but contained four mills. At the end of the 11th century the town possessed eight parish churches with an additional four in the suburbs, suggesting a considerable population. The presence in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries of a large Jewish community suggests both economic prosperity and a significant urban population with a cosmopolitan attitude (VCH 1962).

- 2.1.6 Wilton suffered a decline in importance in the 13th and 14th centuries, caused primarily by the establishment of the planned town of New Sarum (Salisbury) in 1219 and by the building of the Harnham bridge in 1244 (Haslam 1976, 51), and has seen limited development since. This has led to both its archaeological obscurity and archaeological potential. Relatively few disturbances have damaged the archaeological deposits within the town in the intervening centuries, but for the same reason recent development-led glimpses of the town's archaeology have been few.
- 2.1.7 Despite the significance of the town in the Late Saxon period, archaeological evidence is rare. However, evaluation of the St John's Hospital site (immediately to the north of the Site under consideration here) in the 1970s (Anon. 1971; Anon. 1972) and by Wessex Archaeology in 1993 (WA 1993), followed by an excavation and watching brief in 1996 and 1997 (WA 1996; WA 1997; Andrews et al. 2000), revealed a well-preserved and complex sequence through the Late Saxon burgh defences comprising a ditch and bank. The Late Saxon defences may have been modified during the 13th century, but there were very few other features of medieval or post-medieval date (Andrews et al. 2000, 189).
- 2.1.8 The evaluation undertaken, adjacent to the Site, at 35 West Street by Wessex Archaeology in January 2006 has indicated the presence of well-preserved medieval archaeological remains, sealed beneath approximately 1m of post-medieval / modern deposits. No Late Saxon deposits or finds were identified, although the Site lies within the area enclosed by the burgh defences.
- 2.1.9 The absence of Late Saxon remains may be explained by the small size of the test pits, but possibly also by the Site lying in a relatively peripheral location, close to the burh defences which ran south-west to north-east less than 50m to the north. The Site also lay almost 50m from West Street, well to the rear of any Late Saxon structures which may occupied the street frontage.
- 2.1.10 A few sherds of pottery assigned an 11th / 12th century date, all from Test Pit 1 but probably residual, may indicate early medieval activity in the vicinity, perhaps along West Street. Two areas containing possible medieval structures and occupation evidence were highlighted in Test Pits 1 and 4, in the north-east and central parts of the Site. Due to the limited areas exposed within the test pits it is difficult to positively determine the nature, density, extent and layout of the archaeological remains uncovered. However, a hearth or kiln, crucible fragments, metalworking debris and relatively large quantities of fired clay indicate copper alloy working and iron smithing of probable 13th century date. This is likely to represent craft / industrial activity within the backyard areas of one or more properties fronting West Street. Anecdotal evidence suggests a forge occupied part of the Site in the 17th century, and it is just possible that the association with metalworking spanned several hundred years. The existing building in the southernmost property on the street frontage, formerly an inn, is of apparent 18th or possibly 17th date.

- 2.1.11 Test Pits 3 and 5 revealed the approximate extent of a former stream channel thought to have run through the rear of the Site (**see Fig. 1**), probably infilled (and ? culverted) in the Post-medieval and modern periods. No Post-medieval structures or features were identified, perhaps again reflecting the limited extent of the test pits, but possibly also their distance from West Street. There is likely to have been considerable contraction of the town from its Anglo-Saxon and medieval heyday, a contraction also indicated by the paucity of later medieval and Post-medieval features at, for example, St John's Hospital (Andrews et al. 2000, 189) immediately to the north of the Site.
- 2.1.12 Following the evaluation, an excavation was undertaken in January 2007 by Wessex Archaeology on the Site. The excavation proved the absence of archaeological features within the Site. Its results suggest that the area formed part of an uninhabited flood plain until the canalisation of the former stream south-west of the Site. The excavation area had also been subject to limited 19<sup>th</sup> century disturbance.
- 2.1.13 A Watching Brief at 35 West Street, carried out by Wessex Archaeology in May 2007, revealed human remains on the Site. The bones were derived from a lime-filled pit in the part of the site adjacent to St John's hospital/priory (of medieval origin). This, along with severe pathologies on the bones, suggests they are of a medieval date (B.Buss *pers comm.*).

### **3 AIMS**

#### **3.1 General**

- 3.1.1 To determine or confirm the presence/absence and the general nature of any remains present.
- 3.1.2 To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence where development is proposed.

### **4 EVALUATION STRATEGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

- 4.1.1 The development footprint is to be subject to archaeological evaluation comprising two trenches (1No 10m x 1.8m and 1No 20m x 1.8m) as indicated on **Figure 1**.

#### **4.2 Fieldwork**

- 4.2.1 All works will be undertaken in accordance with the standards set out within the Specification.
- 4.2.2 All works will be conducted in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations (as amended 1994), excepting where they are superseded by statements made below.
- 4.2.3 All topsoil stripping will be undertaken under archaeological supervision. Care will be taken not to damage archaeological deposits through excessive use of mechanical excavation.

- 4.2.4 The evaluation trench will be stripped using a JCB mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket and under constant archaeological supervision. Machine excavation will proceed until the top of the archaeological levels, or the top of natural deposits, whichever is the higher.

### **4.3 Sampling Strategy**

- 4.3.1 The trenches will be laid out in general accordance with the pattern given in **Figure 1**. Minor adjustments to the layout may be required to take account of any on site constraints such as power lines. The trench location will be tied in to the Ordnance Survey.

- 4.3.2 Once the level of archaeological deposits has been exposed by machine, cleaning of the trench base will be undertaken by hand where necessary, and any archaeological features exposed will be excavated. Appropriate sampling of all archaeological features identified in the evaluation trench will be carried out by hand. The scope of the sampling will be agreed with WCC's Assistant Archaeologist.

### **4.4 Health and Safety**

- 4.4.1 Health and Safety considerations will be of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practices will override archaeological considerations at all times.

- 4.4.2 All work will be carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.

- 4.4.3 Wessex Archaeology will supply a copy of their Health and Safety Policy and a Risk Assessment to the Client before the commencement of any fieldwork. The Risk Assessment will have been read and understood by all staff attending the Site before any groundwork commences.

### **4.5 Service Location**

- 4.5.1 Before any fieldwork begins, statutory authorities will be consulted, where this has not already been done, for information regarding the presence of any below/above ground services. The Site will be walked over and inspected to visually identify, where possible, the location of above and below ground services.

- 4.5.2 All evaluation trench locations will be scanned before and during excavation with a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) to verify the absence of any live underground services.

### **4.6 Survey**

- 4.6.1 All evaluation trenches will be surveyed using a GPS and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.

#### **4.7 Depth of Excavation**

- 4.7.1 The general depth of the trench is not expected to exceed 1.2m, to comply with Health and Safety regulations. However, should excavation beyond this depth prove unavoidable, trench sides will be stepped or battered as appropriate.

#### **4.8 Recording**

- 4.8.1 All exposed archaeological deposits will be recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system.
- 4.8.2 A complete drawn record of excavated archaeological features and deposits will be compiled. This will include both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections), and with reference to a site grid tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels will be calculated and plans/sections will be annotated with OD heights.
- 4.8.3 A full photographic record will be maintained using both colour transparencies and black and white negatives (on 35 mm film). Digital photography will be employed as appropriate. The photographic record will illustrate both the detail and the general context of the principal features, finds excavated, and the site as a whole.

#### **4.9 Monitoring**

- 4.9.1 Wessex Archaeology will inform WCC of the commencement of fieldwork and the progress of the investigations on the Site. A minimum of one weeks notice will be provided prior to commencement.
- 4.9.2 Reasonable access to the Site will be arranged for representatives of WCC who may wish to make Site visits to inspect and monitor the archaeological investigations as they progress.
- 4.9.3 Variations to the WSI and Method Statement will be agreed in advance with representatives of the Client and WCC.

### **5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING**

#### **5.1 Finds**

- 5.1.1 Appropriate strategies for the recovery of artefacts and environmental samples will be devised and implemented by Wessex Archaeology's Finds and Environmental Specialists.
- 5.1.2 All artefacts from excavated contexts will be retained, except those from features or deposits of obviously modern date. In such circumstances, sufficient artefacts will be retained in order to elucidate the date and/or function of the feature or deposit. Material of undoubtedly modern date observed on the spoil heap of each trench would not be noted or retained.



- 5.1.3 All retained artefacts will, as a minimum, be washed, weighed, counted and identified. Any artefacts requiring conservation or specific storage conditions will be dealt with immediately in line with *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson & Neal 1998). Ironwork from stratified contexts will be X-rayed and stored in a stable environment along with other fragile and delicate material. The X-raying of objects and other conservation needs will be undertaken by the staff of the Wiltshire Museums and Library Service Conservation Consortium, Chippenham or other appropriate approved conservation centre. Suitable material, primarily the pottery, worked flint and non-ferrous metalwork, will be scanned to assess the date range of the relevant assemblages.
- 5.1.4 Assessment of all medieval and earlier artefacts will be made by appropriately qualified specialists who will be identified on request.
- 5.1.5 All artefacts recovered during the excavations on the Site are the property of the landowner. They are to be suitably bagged, bowed in accordance with the *United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Conservation Guidelines nos.2* and, on completion of the archaeological post-excavation programme, will be deposited with the appropriate Museum in Wiltshire.

## **5.2 Environmental Sampling**

- 5.2.1 Bulk environmental soil samples for plant macro fossils, small animal bones and other small artefacts will be taken from appropriate well sealed and dated/datable archaeological contexts.
- 5.2.2 The residues and sieved fractions of the bulk environmental soil samples will be recorded and retained with the project archive.
- 5.2.3 Samples for charred plant remains (charcoal and charred seeds etc) will be taken from well dated and sealed deposits to define presence and preservation to enable comments on any further sampling strategy to be made.
- 5.2.4 For charred material, bulk samples of up to 40 litres will be taken for processing by flotation (using Wessex Archaeology double tank internal weir flotation system and double processing methods).

## **5.3 Human Remains**

- 5.3.1 Wessex Archaeology has been advised as of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007 that the requirement for, 'issuing and conditions' attached to licences for the excavation of human remains is subject to legal review.
- 5.3.2 Until such time as the legal position has been clarified by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Wessex Archaeology will, in the event of discovery of any human remains, inform the Client, Local Authority's Archaeological Advisor, the Coroner, the Police and the MOJ via submission of an application form for the 'Archaeological / Accidental / Site Investigation Licence regarding the disturbance of human remains'.
- 5.3.3 The human remains will initially be left *in situ*, covered and protected. Where a licence for their excavation is issued by the MOJ, the requirements of that licence will be followed.

- 5.3.4 Where the MOJ is unable to issue a licence and it is reasonably determined that the remains are likely to be subject to further unavoidable disturbance or deterioration, Wessex Archaeology will advise the Client and the MOJ of their intention to excavate the remains with due decency and in accordance with the general conditions formerly attached licences issued for excavation of human remains under similar circumstances.

## **5.4 Treasure**

- 5.4.1 In the event of discovery of artefacts covered or potentially covered by The Treasure Act, their excavation and removal will be undertaken following notification of the Client and WCC.

## **6 REPORTING**

- 6.1.1 Following completion of the programme of archaeological recording, a detailed report will be prepared, even if there should be negative evidence.

- 6.1.2 Sufficient documentary research will be undertaken to place the results of the evaluation in their historic context.

- 6.1.3 The report will, as a minimum, include the following elements:

- A non technical summary
- The aims and methods used in the evaluation
- The results of the evaluation to include:
  - ⌚ detailed tabulated context data
  - ⌚ plans and section drawings at appropriate scales to locate the site, trenches and excavated deposits
  - ⌚ tabulation of all artefacts recovered from the trenches and listed by context and material type
  - ⌚ specialist reports
- A discussion/conclusion to include:
  - ⌚ the archaeological and environmental potential of the deposits
  - ⌚ the site's significance in its broader archaeological and landscape setting
  - ⌚ The location and size of archive

- 6.1.4 It is intended that a client report on the complete investigation will be prepared within four weeks of the completion of fieldwork, although the exact programme for the report preparation will be dependent on the nature of the findings and will be agreed with the Client at the time. Sufficient copies of the report will be supplied to allow distribution to WCC's Assistant Archaeologist as required.

- 6.1.5 Wessex Archaeology shall retain full copyright of the client report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the Client for the use of the report by the Client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the specification.
- 6.1.6 The information will be deposited within the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) maintained by Wiltshire County Council Libraries and Heritage Service where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or Development Control within the planning process.
- 6.1.7 If considered appropriate, a short report on the results of the programme of archaeological recording will be prepared for publication in an appropriate national journal.

## **7 ARCHIVE**

- 7.1.1 Before work commences arrangements will be made with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum for the deposition of the archive.
- 7.1.2 On completion of the report a cross-referenced and internally consistent archive will be produced. The primary archive, including copies of all photographs, will be deposited with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum no later than six months after completion of the work.
- 7.1.3 The completed project archive will be prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990).

## **8 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES**

- 8.1.1 Wessex Archaeology operates a Project Management system. Projects are assigned to individual managers who monitor their progress and quality, and control budgets from inception to completion, in all aspects including Health and Safety etc. Projects are managed in accordance with English Heritage guidelines outlined in the document *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991). At all stages the manager will carefully assess and monitor performance of staff and adherence to objectives, timetables and budgets, while the manager's performance is monitored in turn by the General Development Section Head who will ensure that the project meets Wessex Archaeology's quality standards and is adequately programmed and resourced within Wessex Archaeology's portfolio of project commitments. A formal written report is made to the Senior Management Group once a month by the General Development Section Head.
- 8.1.2 The work will be directed in the field by a Project Officer, who will normally be a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and a core member of Wessex Archaeology's staff. Overall project supervision and monitoring will be undertaken by a Project Manager based in Salisbury who will undertake monitoring visits if and when appropriate. Monitoring visits may also be undertaken by Wessex Archaeology's Health and Safety Co-ordinator.

- 8.1.3 The Wessex Archaeology is registered as an archaeological organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Wessex Archaeology endorses the *Code of Practice and the Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 8.1.4 All work will be carried out in line with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.

## **9 INSURANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **9.1 Policy and Risk Assessment**

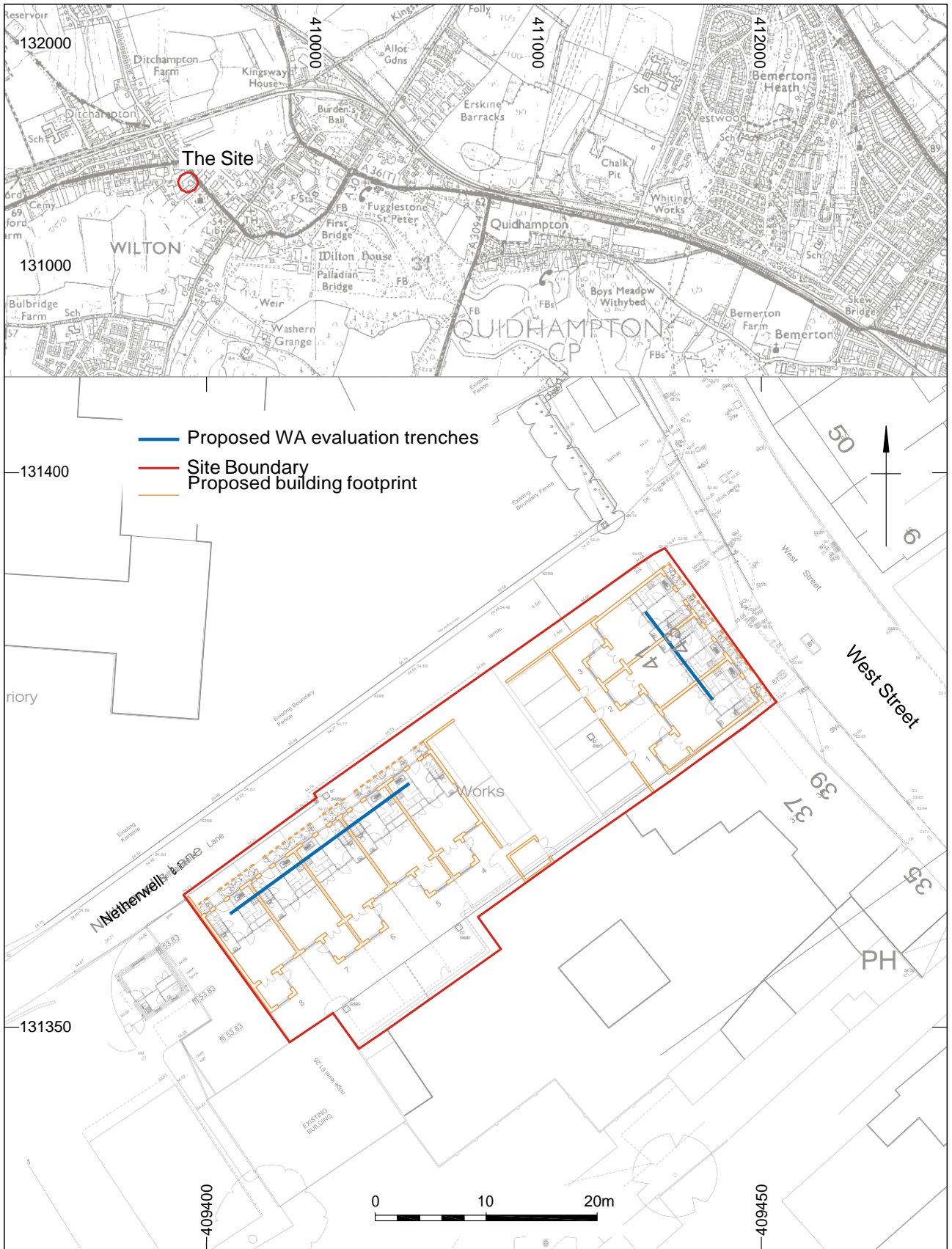
- 9.1.1 Health and safety considerations will be of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practises will override archaeological considerations at all times.
- 9.1.2 All work will be carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.
- 9.1.3 Wessex Archaeology will supply a copy of their Health and Safety Policy and a Risk Assessment to the Client before the commencement of any fieldwork. The Risk Assessment will have been read and understood by all staff attending the Site before any groundwork commences.
- 9.1.4 Wessex Archaeology has both public liability (£10,000,000) and professional indemnity insurance (£5,000,000).
- 9.1.5 Wessex Archaeology will ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992.

### **9.2 Programme**

- 9.2.1 The evaluation is currently scheduled to commence 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007.

## **10 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Wessex Archaeology 2006, 35 West Street, Wilton, Wiltshire.  
*Archaeological Excavation Report*. Ref 60511.02



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Site Outline and Trench location

Figure 1