



The Manor, Upavon Wiltshire

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by the site owner to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the installation of a new swimming pool. The monitored works covered an area 12m by 7m, at The Manor, Upavon, SN9 6EB.

The watching brief was carried out as a condition of planning permission, granted by Wiltshire Council, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) (20/05851/FUL), on 16th November 2020. The following condition relating to archaeology:

No archaeological features or finds were encountered despite being in an area rich in multi-period remains.

The stratigraphic evidence confirmed that the area of the swimming pool footprint was subject to significant alteration, not least the introduction of large amounts of topsoil material in the creation of a paddock for horses.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank the owner for commissioning the archaeological watching brief. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Assistant County Archaeologist who monitored the project for Wiltshire Council, and to Paul Johns of Spruce Pools for their cooperation and help on site. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Bill Moffat with the graphics compiled by Rob Goller



The Manor, Upavon

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by the site owner to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the installation of a new swimming pool. The monitored works covered an area 12m by 7m, centred on NGR 413615 154870, at The Manor, Upavon, SN9 6EB (**Fig. 1**).

1.1.2 The watching brief was carried out as a condition of planning permission, granted by Wiltshire Council, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) (20/05851/FUL), on 16th November 2020. The following condition relating to archaeology:

Condition 3: No development shall commence within the area indicated on the submitted Block Plan until: a) A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include onsite work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and b) The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details. REASON: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest.

1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodology and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2020). The Assistant County Archaeologist with responsibility for this area of the county approved the WSI, on behalf of the LPA, prior to fieldwork commencing. The watching brief was undertaken 26 January 2021.

1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 Upavon lies between the Vale of Pewsey and Salisbury Plain, at the confluence of the Western and Eastern Avons. To its north is open, rolling greensand country reaching west to Devizes and eastward beyond Pewsey to Hungerford and Newbury. To the south the Avon runs between headlands of high chalk towards Salisbury and the sea.

1.3.2 The modern village is a broad rectangle situated north of an elaborate junction between the A342 and A345 and runs from the northeast toe of Rushall Down to water meadows and the Avon itself. The Manor occupies the south-east corner of the village core and consists of the manor house, its courtyard buildings, a duck pond and gardens leading down to the river. The pool site is located immediately adjacent to a potting shed, approximately 10 m east of the Manor House



1.3.3 Existing ground levels 91.44aOD.

1.3.4 The underlying bedrock geology is chalk (Zig-Zag formation) but the site and most of the village is situated on alluvial gravels and clays of the River Avon. (British Geological Survey online viewer accessed December 2020).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Upavon sits in a rich archaeological landscape somewhat dominated by Prehistoric survival, in which the development of the villages is as yet only broadly understood. The village itself has not been the subject of any specific study and sources consulted for this document have been restricted to those publicly available online, specifically the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE).

2.2 Archaeological and historical context

2.2.1 Prehistoric activity is well represented in the parish although there are few finds from within the village itself. The Iron Age hillfort of Casterley Camp sits on the skyline 2 km to the southwest and the hills east of the river and around the former airfield are crammed with small Iron Age settlements, hilltop enclosures and field systems. An Iron Age fibula and a possible earring (MWI13352) were recovered at the site of Upavon Farm. This former farmstead lies 175 m to the west of the site, on the south side of the village.

2.2.2 Many of the settlements east of the river, and at Casterley Camp have extensive Romano-British components and there is a wide, but thin scatter of roman material from the village and its environs. From the Manor itself there is the hint of a scattered hoard including a collection of late Iron Age and Roman coins and a brooch (MWI13373/MWI13893). This findspot is recorded in the southeast corner of the gardens of the Manor, approximately 50 to 60m to the southeast of the pool.

2.2.3 While pre-medieval activity is comparatively poorly represented within the village, this may largely be due to its being masked by the relatively intense activity during the medieval period. Recorded in the Domesday book as Oppavrene, Upavon had become, in 1086, a possession of the Abbey of St Wandrille (France) and was of high value in comparison to its size. There are believed to have been two mills in the village and it appears that a large proportion of the surrounding estates belonged to the King. By the thirteenth century there was a market, a substantial church and a Benedictine priory of the Abbey of St Wandrille. The Site lies almost immediately south of these foundations and it is likely that the present Manor occupies the same site or location as the Manor begun in 1204 (Wiltshire Community History online, accessed 4/12/2020).

2.2.4 Although the village continued to flourish throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, by the end of the sixteenth century it had lost the religious community, its association with royalty and had been brought "rather low". The Manor was built in the fifteenth century and added to over the subsequent three hundred years with its last major adaptation being the eighteenth-century rear wing which now contains the kitchen. It is situated in the northeast corner of a courtyard surrounded by medieval farm buildings.

2.2.5 Thus, the site lies within the curtilage of a medieval village with at least Saxon origins set in an archaeologically rich landscape. The works may provide useful information about the medieval village in general and the foundation of the existing Manor in particular. With the



hoard location nearby, there is also the possibility that the site may contain remains from the prehistoric and roman antecedents to the modern settlement.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2020) and as defined in the ClfA *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), were to:

- allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of the development or other works;
- provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
- guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the objectives of the watching brief, also defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2020), were to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified works area;
- record and establish, within the constraints of the works, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains (a preservation by record);
- place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- make available information about the archaeological resource on the site by preparing a report on the results of the watching brief.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2020) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The watching archaeologist monitored all mechanical excavations within the specified area (Labelled TR1). Initial excavations started in the NW corner of the pool footprint where live services were encountered (sewerage and electricity) so the client moved the footprint



eastward to avoid these. This initial investigation also uncovered evidence of the building rubble previously communicated as possibly being present.

- 4.2.2 After the footprint of the swimming pool was excavated to the natural geological horizon at 0.70m bgl and recorded, further observations were conducted as they continued to their formation depth of 2m bgl. This ceased very quickly due to the presence of ground water at only <0.10m from the current excavated level. The client decided at that point the construction of the swimming pool would be built up from current level and not to a depth of 2m bgl as previously suggested.
- 4.2.3 Spoil from machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, although those from features of modern date (19th century or later) were recorded on site and not retained.

Recording

- 4.2.4 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete record of excavated features and deposits was made, including plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections) and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.
- 4.2.5 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15 and OSGM15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.6 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Finds and environmental strategies

- 4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2020). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 The Assistant County Archaeologist with responsibility for this area of the county monitored the watching brief on behalf of the LPA. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with the client and the Assistant County Archaeologist.

5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 No archaeological features were revealed during the excavations. The remains of three modern brick packed posts being the only features uncovered. Prior to the excavation commencing the Client communicated that the entire field had been subject to significant



alteration for the purpose of creating a horse paddock. The area of the pool was also the location of a dump of building rubble associated with an extension to the existing dwelling with a large hedge and bush also being present. With this in mind the following sequence was observed;

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

5.2.1 A c.0.10m thick layer of turf was observed overlying a c0.60m thick deposit of dark brown loam topsoil (101), with occasional sub rounded/angular flints <0.07m and common rooting. The horizon to the natural geology was relatively diffuse. **FIG2**

5.2.2 The natural geology (102) encountered in the western part of the site consisted of grey clay with common chalk flecks and common occasional sub rounded/angular flints <0.08m. in the eastern part of the site a yellowish clayey sand was encountered with abundant chalk flecks and occasional sub rounded/angular flints <0.07m. The interface between these two differing natural geological formations was broadly aligned N-S, parallel with the river Avon and as such have been interpreted as natural river terrace deposits. PLATE2

6 FINDS EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 No finds were recovered or retained

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 No environmental samples were taken

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Summary

8.1.1 No archaeological remains were uncovered despite the wealth of multi-period remains in the area as detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2020). The substantial topsoil deposit would appear to confirm the client's belief that significant remodelling of the entire field had taken place for the purpose of creating a paddock for horses. Despite this, natural alluvial river deposits can sometimes provide evidence of prehistoric activity but not in this case.

8.2 Discussion

8.2.1 Although no archaeological features or finds were encountered during the works the presence of archaeological remains in the vicinity cannot be discounted and any future works in the area would merit attention.

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

9.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. Devizes Museum has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under the accession code DZSWS: 03-2021. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.



9.2 Preparation of the archive

- 9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Devizes Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the DZSWS: 03-2021, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:
- 1 files/document cases of paper records and A3/A4 graphics;

9.3 Selection policy

- 9.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4). In accordance with these, and any specific guidance prepared by the museum, a process of selection and retention will be followed so that only those artefacts or ecofacts that are considered to have potential for future study will be retained. The selection policy will be agreed with the museum, and is fully documented in the project archive.
- 9.3.2 In this instance, the following categories were selected to not be retained: Modern Building rubble, modern Ceramic Building Material.

9.4 Security copy

- 9.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

9.5 OASIS

- 9.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>) has been initiated, with key fields completed. A.pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the Assistant County Archaeologist with responsibility for this area of the county on behalf of the LPA. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.

10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*. In some instances, certain regional museums may



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- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

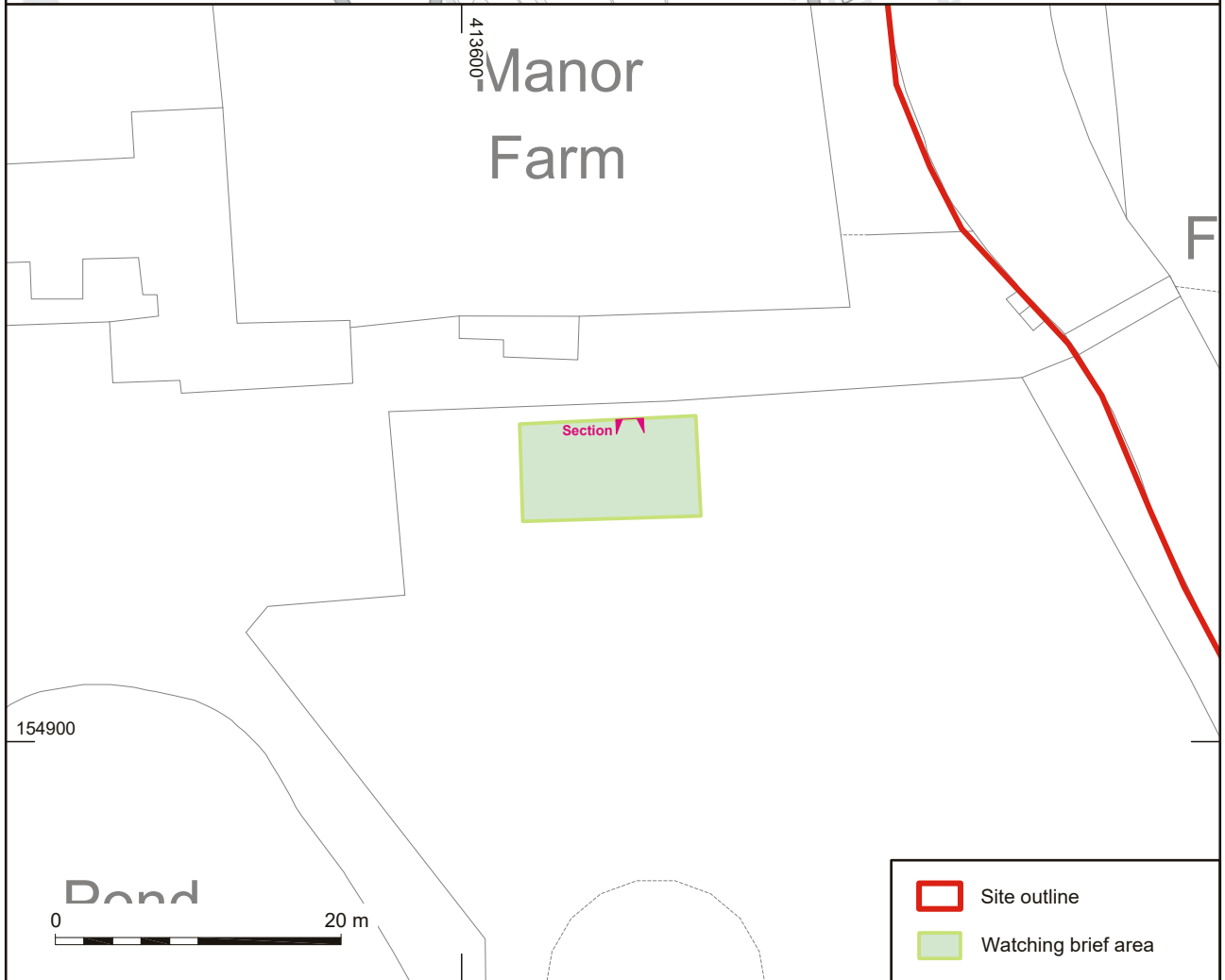
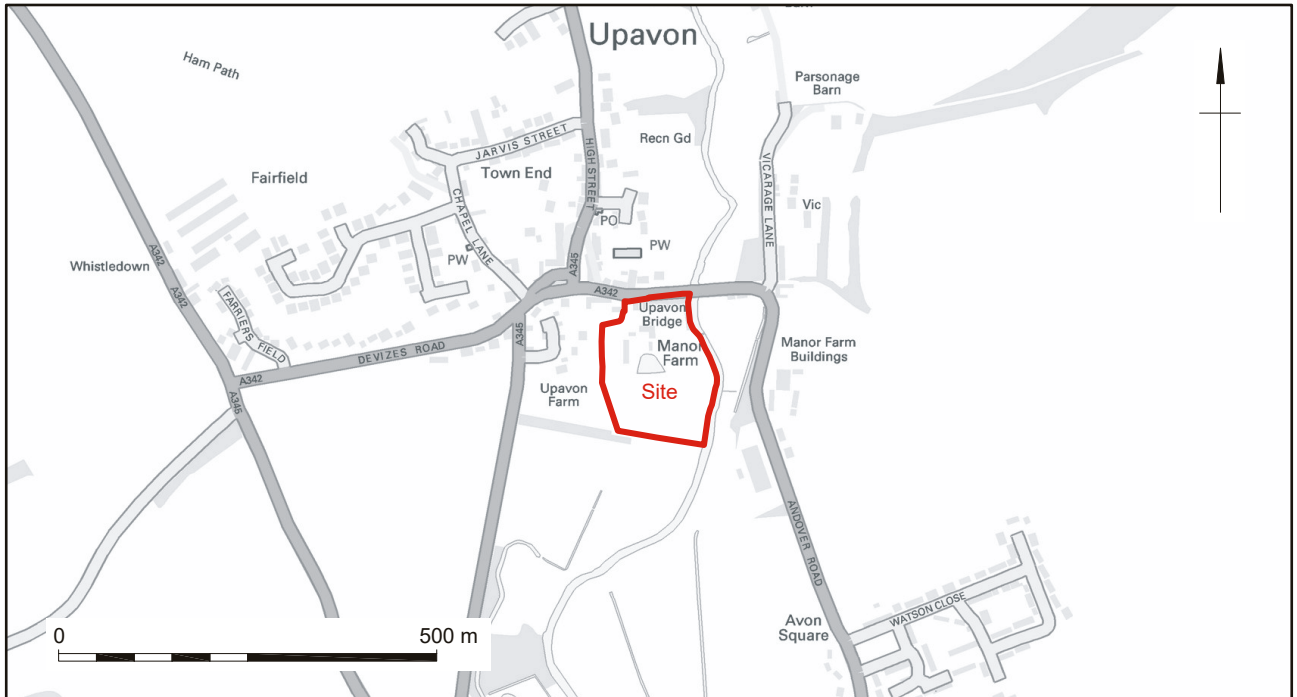
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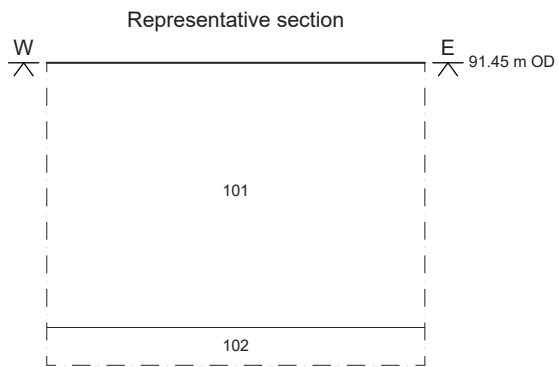
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Site location plan

Figure 1



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Plate 1: Excavated area from the south-east showing natural river terrace deposits

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