



Land at Willow Drive Durrington, Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report





**LAND AT WILLOW DRIVE
DURRINGTON
WILTSHIRE**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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June 2012

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE	85300	ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	N/A	NGR		415541 144554	

VERSION	STATUS*	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FILE
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* I= Internal Draft E= External Draft F= Final

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned on behalf of Sims and Co. (Builders) Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land located at Willow Drive, Durrington, Wiltshire.

The proposed development comprises the construction of two new houses with garages and access to Willow Drive. The Site is currently a small vacant plot comprising rough grassland, which was formerly used as a builder's yard and is located within an area known to contain significant early and later prehistoric and Romano-British remains.

No archaeological features or deposits were identified during the fieldwork, although two pieces of struck flint of a likely Neolithic date were recovered, together with modern material, from below a buried topsoil layer, sealed by made ground deposits. The quantity of these artefactual remains was so limited that the potential for encountering further archaeological features within the Site is considered to be low.

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Ellis Finniss Consultants on behalf of the Client, Sims and Co. (Builders) Ltd and Wessex Archaeology is grateful in this regard.

Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Clare King of Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service for her assistance.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Manning. The report was compiled by Stephen Beach and Andrew Manning. The illustrations were prepared by Kenneth Lymer.

The fieldwork was directed by Stephen Beach with the assistance of Darryl Freer.

**LAND AT WILLOW DRIVE
DURRINGTON
WILTSHIRE**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned on behalf of Sims and Co. (Builders) Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land located at Willow Drive, Durrington, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference NGR 415541 144554 (**Figure 1**) hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.
- 1.1.2 The proposed development comprises the construction of two new houses with garages and access to Willow Drive. The Site is currently a vacant plot comprising rough grassland, which was formerly used as a builder's yard.
- 1.1.3 An application for full planning permission (**S/2004/505**) was made in 2004 and granted, however no construction was undertaken within the permitted duration of the planning approval.
- 1.1.4 In November 2010, a revised application for full planning permission was submitted (**S/2010/1793/FULL**). This application was refused on the grounds that no archaeological assessment had been carried out on the Site to gauge the likely archaeological potential or the possible impact of the proposed development on any buried archaeological remains.
- 1.1.5 Accordingly, it was proposed to carry out an archaeological evaluation of the Site, the results of which would be used to inform the scope and nature of any subsequent archaeological mitigation, if required.
- 1.1.6 A Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological evaluation was prepared and submitted to, and subsequently approved by, Wiltshire Council Archaeological Service in advance of the evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2012).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is currently a vacant plot of c. 530m², formerly used as a builder yard and now rough grassland.
- 1.2.2 The Site is located within the recently constructed Pinckneys housing estate in the northwest corner of the village of Durrington, which lies within a notable bend in the River Avon at the base of the Avon Valley, with high ground to the east and west. Geological maps indicate that the underlying geology comprises Upper Chalk deposits.
- 1.2.3 The Site is situated at a height of approximately 80m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 There is considerable evidence for prehistoric activity across much of Salisbury Plain, including funerary monuments, settlements and field systems. The village of Durrington lies within the Avon Valley which forms a key north-south transit route across the Plain, and is consequently a focus of this activity. Accordingly, the general area around Durrington is surrounded by a significant prehistoric landscape.
- 2.1.2 In the immediate vicinity of Durrington are two very significant Neolithic monuments; the great henge at Durrington Walls (Wainwright and Longworth 1971) and Woodhenge. Evidence of contemporary activity including flint working and quarrying has been found to the north of these monuments (Cleal *et al* 2004). Also to the north of the Durrington Walls henge is a monument known as the Packway Enclosure; this appears to be a settlement site of Bronze Age or Iron Age date. Considerable evidence for Iron Age activity was also recovered from within the henge itself.
- 2.1.3 North of Durrington village, a large Iron Age settlement enclosure is situated just above the western edge of the floodplain enclosure (Graham and Newman 1993; McKinley 1999), and a Romano-British villa is also located within the enclosure.
- 2.1.4 The Site lies in the northwest corner of modern Durrington, which was recorded in the Domesday Book as two estates in 1086, although very little physical evidence for the possible Anglo-Saxon origins of the village has ever been found. The two manors; East End and West End originally formed two separate groups, each with a main north-south street and the village church between these two streets at the northern end of the village. The Site lies also immediately adjacent to the western street, now called the High Street (Wessex Archaeology 2004).
- 2.1.5 Within the immediate vicinity of the Site on Willow Drive, no formal archaeological assessment or excavation was undertaken during the construction of the Pinckneys housing estate. However the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (WHER) records two documented sites. The first of these is a possible Bronze Age barrow site (**WHER SE601**) noted by the Ordnance Survey in the late 1960s although no confirmation or investigation of this possible feature was undertaken. The second site is the former site of Pinckney Farm (**WHER SE457**), a former farmstead with documented medieval origins, which fronted onto the High Street (Wessex Archaeology 2012).
- 2.1.6 Approximately 100m to the north of the Site is the 5ha site occupied by the former MoD estate offices from 1904 to 2010. In 2004 a desk-based assessment was prepared for this area (Wessex Archaeology 2004) and the available part of this site was subsequently archaeologically trial trenched in 2006.
- 2.1.7 The evaluation was only able to assess approximately a third of the total site area due to site constraints but did reveal a significant quantity of archaeological features and finds within the northern part of the MoD site,

which strongly suggested the presence of a large Late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement (Wessex Archaeology 2006).

- 2.1.8 Approximately 100m to the north of the Site a Late Iron Age and early and late Romano-British settlement was identified in the area previously occupied by the former MoD estate offices. This settlement clearly extended across the northern and eastern parts of the MoD site and extended beyond the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. The settlement was enclosed with a considerable ditch, up to 8m in width and 4.5m in depth. In addition to these remains, Bronze Age cremated human remains within a vessel was also found in the western part of the site (Wessex Archaeology 2011).
- 2.1.9 A programme of excavation and other mitigation started as soon as the evaluation was completed and is still on-going. The excavation has also identified significant evidence for Late Neolithic ritual activity that was centred round a number of natural solution hollows and at least two pit/post monuments which ran approximately east-west and north-south across the site. As well as the extensive remains of the enclosed Iron Age/Romano-British settlement, part of a north-south running section of a Roman road was found in the eastern half of the site and which clearly extended beyond the southern boundary of the site.
- 2.1.10 Although, no archaeological work has been carried out within or in the immediate vicinity of the Site, the archaeological work at the former MoD site clearly indicates a medium-high potential for prehistoric or Romano-British features within the general area.
- 2.1.11 The Site lies approximately 60m to the west of the High Street, which formed part of the historic core of medieval and later Durrington. The eastern section of the MoD excavations contained land/plot boundaries with isolated post-medieval farming activity at least 50m to the west of the High Street. Accordingly, there is the potential for medieval or later features associated with buildings fronting onto the High Street within the Site.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The aims and objectives of the trial trench evaluation, in line with the Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Field Evaluation (IfA 2008), were to;
- To locate, identify and to investigate and record the presence/absence of archaeological features or deposits, and if significant archaeological features or deposits were located, then the evaluation would establish, where possible, the extent, date, character, relationship, condition and significance of these archaeological features, artefacts and deposits within the area impacted.
 - To establish any relationship between the archaeological features and known settlement along the High Street and within the MoD site.

- To inform the scope and nature of any requirements for potential future mitigation.

3.1.2 In particular, the evaluation will aim to establish;

- The relationship between the archaeological features and known settlement along the High Street and within the MoD site.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1.1 Following discussions with Wiltshire Council Archaeological Service (WCAS), it was proposed to excavate two trenches, each approximately 10m by 1.6m, which were targeted on the locations of the two new dwellings and comprised an approximate 6% sample by area of the Site (**Figure 1**).

4.1.2 The evaluation trenches were accurately located before excavation using GPS survey equipment.

4.1.3 The excavation of the evaluation trenches was carried out by mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket in discrete 0.20 spits, under constant supervision by Wessex Archaeology. Excavation ceased at the *in-situ* natural geology.

4.1.4 Topsoil and subsoil/overburden deposits were stored separately and scanned for artefacts.

4.1.5 All features and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's standard methods and *pro forma* recording system, with all features and deposits being assigned a unique number. A full graphic record was maintained. Plans and sections of all archaeological features were produced at a scale of 1:20 and 1:10, where appropriate.

4.1.6 The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels were calculated, with plans and sections annotated with OD heights. A full photographic record was maintained, using digital cameras of 12.1 megapixels resolution, and colour transparencies and black and white negatives on 35mm film.

4.1.7 All artefacts were retained from excavated contexts unless they were of modern origin, in which case a written note was kept in the context record.

4.1.8 Provision for full access of the Site was made for monitoring by WCAS during the fieldwork.

5 FIELDWORK RESULTS

- 5.1.1 Brief soil and stratigraphic descriptions including a NGR grid reference for the location of each sequence can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 5.1.2 No *in-situ* archaeological features were observed within the Site.
- 5.1.3 The stratigraphic sequence encountered within both evaluation trenches was essentially identical.
- 5.1.4 Natural geology (contexts **106** and **206**) comprising clay, clay with flints and chalk deposits were encountered at an average depth of 0.71m below ground level (B.G.L), between 82.58m and 82.40m aOD.
- 5.1.5 A remnant buried topsoil horizon (**104** and **204**) between 0.06m and 0.09m thick was found to be overlying the natural geology. This horizon was first encountered between 82.61m and 82.71m aOD.
- 5.1.6 The topsoil horizon (**104** and **204**) was separated from the natural geology by a narrow interface layer (**105** and **205**), which was between 0.07m and 0.12m thick. This interface was derived from the natural geology (parent material), but found to contain very limited quantities of worked flint. These artefacts were exclusively identified within the upper surface of the interface layer, and were originally deposited within the topsoil horizon, having migrated down the stratigraphic sequence due to worm sorting, or other similar natural taphonomic process.
- 5.1.7 The remnant buried topsoil horizon was overlain by modern made ground (**103** and **203**), between 0.27m and 0.30m thick, which contained elements of modern builders rubble and was capped by a intermittent layer of broken hardstanding. This is considered to be the remains of the modern builder yard situated on the Site.
- 5.1.8 The made ground was in turn overlain by re-deposited subsoil (**102** and **202**) and re-deposited topsoil (**101** and **201**).

6 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

6.1 Finds

- 6.1.1 Two pieces of struck flint were recovered from the narrow interface (**105** and **205**) lying between the natural geology and the buried topsoil horizon.
- 6.1.2 One piece (from **105**) is a small tertiary flake with semi-abrupt inverse retouch on the left margin and damage opposite. The other piece (from **205**) is a large secondary core preparation or trimming flake with most margins retouched or spontaneously retouched.
- 6.1.3 Neither piece is chronologically distinctive, although neither would be out of place in a later Neolithic assemblage.
- 6.1.4 In addition to the struck flint, two possible fragments of pottery sherds were also recovered from the narrow interface (**105** and **205**). However, on

specialist examination, this material appeared to be modern building material and was discarded.

6.2 Environmental samples

- 6.2.1 No archaeological deposits or features suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the course of the fieldwork. Accordingly, no environmental samples were taken.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 The Site at Willow Drive lies within an area of high archaeological significance. This significance is not only related to the high density of prehistoric monuments and other features within the Durrington area, but is also due to its proximity to the nearby later prehistoric and Romano-British settlement at the former MoD site, which lies approximately 100m to the north of the Site.
- 7.1.2 The observed stratigraphic sequence in both trenches confirms the landowner's account of the plot being used as a builder's yard/works compound, the surface of which appears to have been laid and built-up without any stripping or deep truncation of the original ground surface. However, some intrusive modern material has penetrated into the original sub-soil.
- 7.1.3 Due to the lack of modern deep truncation, the Site has demonstrated that it does contain the potential for the survival of archaeological features and deposits, if they were present. However, the evaluation did not uncover any archaeological features or deposits and recovered only a very small quantity of prehistoric struck flint. No later prehistoric or Romano-British material was found.
- 7.1.4 The flint was not present in quantities great enough to suggest a concentration of activity, *i.e.* settlement, within the Site and is likely to comprise broad background material relating to the generally high level of prehistoric activity within the broader Durrington area.

8 ARCHIVE

8.1 Preparation and Deposition

- 8.1.1 On completion of the fieldwork, the site archive was prepared in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Walker 1990; SMA 1995). The archive includes all artefacts and records collected and produced in the course of the work.
- 8.1.2 All archive elements are marked with the site code (**85300**), and a full index has been prepared. The archive comprises the following:
- 1 A4 File
 - Photographs

-
- 8.1.3 The site archive will be prepared for long-term storage in accordance with the documents Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage (Walker 1990) and Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections; Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993).
- 8.1.4 The project archive will be held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire. In due course the archive will be deposited with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum under the project code **85300**.
- 8.1.5 It is hoped that, with the landowner's permission, the finds can be deposited with the rest of the archive.
- 8.1.6 The complete site archive, which will include paper records and photographic records, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Wiltshire Museum Service, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Walker 1990; SMA 1995).

8.2 Copyright

- 8.2.1 Wessex Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it will provide an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification or Design.
- 8.2.2 Wessex Archaeology will assign copyright to the client upon written request but retains the right to be identified as the author of all project documentation and reports as defined in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (Chapter IV, s.79).
- 8.2.3 Wessex Archaeology will also grant licence to the relevant museum for the use of the Trust's archives.

8.3 Security Copy

- 8.3.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National Archaeological Record (English Heritage), a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology. Alternatively, the security copy may be in the form of a pdf file.

9 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY TABLE

Trial No.	Trench	1	NGR	NW	415536 144558	SE	415545 144554
Length (m)			Width (m)			Max. Depth (m) (Below Ground Level @ 83.24m aOD)	
10.13			1.72			0.80	
Context No.	Soil Description						Depth (m) (B.G.L)
101	Topsoil – Mid brown loose silty clay with very sparse inclusions of small sub-angular stone and flint, and common bioturbation						0-0.14
102	Subsoil – Mid to pale brown compact silty clay with very sparse inclusions of small sub-angular stone and flint and rare bioturbation						0.14-0.26
103	Modern Made Ground – Capped by a layer of broken hard-standing – A mixture of subsoil derived material and builders rubble						0.26-0.53
104	Possible Buried Topsoil – Mid to dark brown compact silty clay with rare inclusions of rounded stone and flint						0.53-0.59
105	Interface Layer – Interface between 104 and 105 - very diffuse and found to contain background quantities of archaeological material						0.59-0.66
106	Natural – Pale brown silty clay with sparse inclusions of rounded flint pebbles and cobbles.						0.66→

Trial No.	Trench	2	NGR	NE	415547 144552	SW	415542 144542
Length (m)			Width (m)			Max. Depth (m) (Below Ground Level @ 83.16m aOD)	
9.87			1.78			0.90	
Context No.	Soil Description						Depth (m) (B.G.L)
201	Topsoil – Mid brown loose silty clay with very sparse inclusions of small sub-angular stone and flint, and common bioturbation						0-0.14
202	Subsoil – Mid to pale brown compact silty clay with very sparse inclusions of small sub-angular stone and flint and rare bioturbation						0.14-0.25
203	Modern Made Ground – Capped by a layer of broken hard-standing – A mixture of subsoil derived material and builders rubble						0.25-0.55
204	Possible Buried Topsoil – Mid to dark brown compact silty clay with rare inclusions of rounded stone and flint						0.55-0.64
205	Interface Layer – Interface between 104 and 105 - very diffuse and found to contain background quantities of archaeological material						0.64-0.76
206	Natural – Pale brown silty clay and chalk with sparse inclusions of rounded flint pebbles and cobbles within the clay.						0.76→

APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: wessexar1-128405

Project details

Project name Willow Drive, Durrington, Wiltshire

Short description of the project Wessex Archaeology was commissioned on behalf of Sims and Co. (Builders) Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land located at Willow Drive, Durrington, Wiltshire. The proposed development comprises the construction of two new houses with garages and access to Willow Drive. The Site is currently a small vacant plot formerly used as a builder yard and now rough grassland which is located within an area known to contain significant early and later prehistoric and Romano-British remains. No archaeological features or deposits were identified during the fieldwork, although two pieces of struck flint of a likely Neolithic date were recovered, together with modern material, from below a buried topsoil layer, sealed by made ground deposits. The type of recovered material is consistent with the known However, the quantity of these artefactual remains was so limited that the presence of further archaeological remains within the site itself is considered to be unlikely.

Project dates Start: 25-05-2012 End: 25-05-2012

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes 85300 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds WORKED FLINT Late Prehistoric

Methods & techniques "Targeted Trenches"

Development type Housing estate

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Position in the planning process Pre-application

Project location

Country England

Site location WILTSHIRE SALISBURY DURRINGTON Willow Drive

Postcode SP4 8AD

Study area 0 Hectares

Site coordinates SU 155 445 51 -1 51 11 56 N 001 46 41 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 80.00m Max: 81.00m

Project creators

Name of Wessex Archaeology
Organisation
Project brief Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District
originator Archaeologist)
Project design Wessex Archaeology
originator
Project A Manning
director/manager
Project supervisor S Beach
Type of Developer
sponsor/funding
body
Name of Sims and Co
sponsor/funding
body

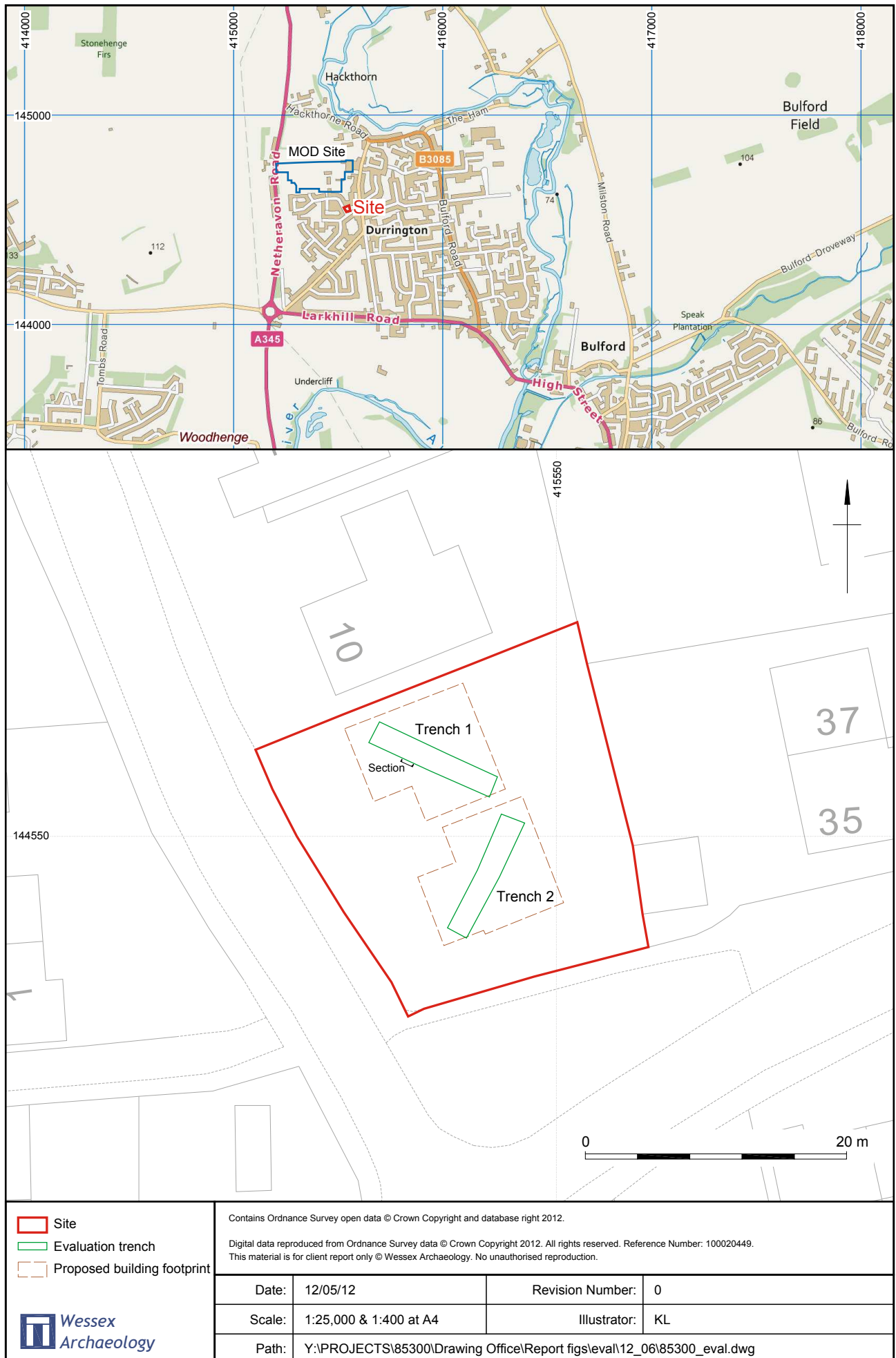
Project archives

Physical Archive Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
recipient
Physical Contents "Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Media "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
available
Paper Media "Context sheet", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General
available Notes", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

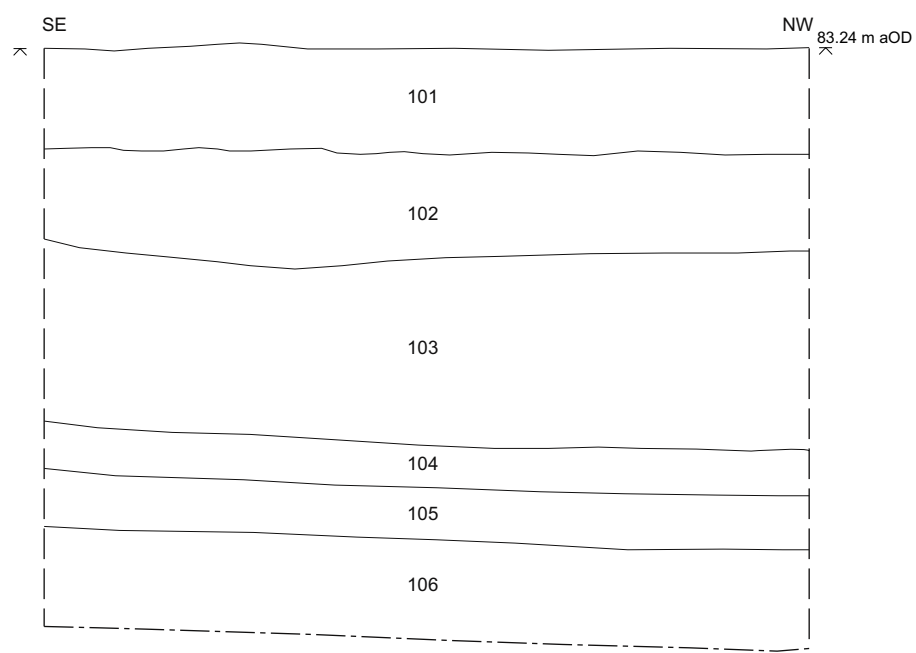
Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Publication type
Title land at Willow Drive, Durrington, Wiltshire: Archaeological
Evaluation Report
Author(s)/Editor(s) Beach, S and Manning, A
Other bibliographic 85300.02
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Date 2012
Issuer or publisher Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or Salisbury
publication
Description Standard illustrated soft back client report

Entered by Andrew Manning (a.manning@wessexarch.co.uk)
Entered on 14 June 2012



Site location and trench plan

Figure 1



North-east facing section of Trench 1



Plate 1: North-east facing section of Trench 1



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Plate 2: Trench 1, view from south-east



Plate 3: Trench 2, view from north-east

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