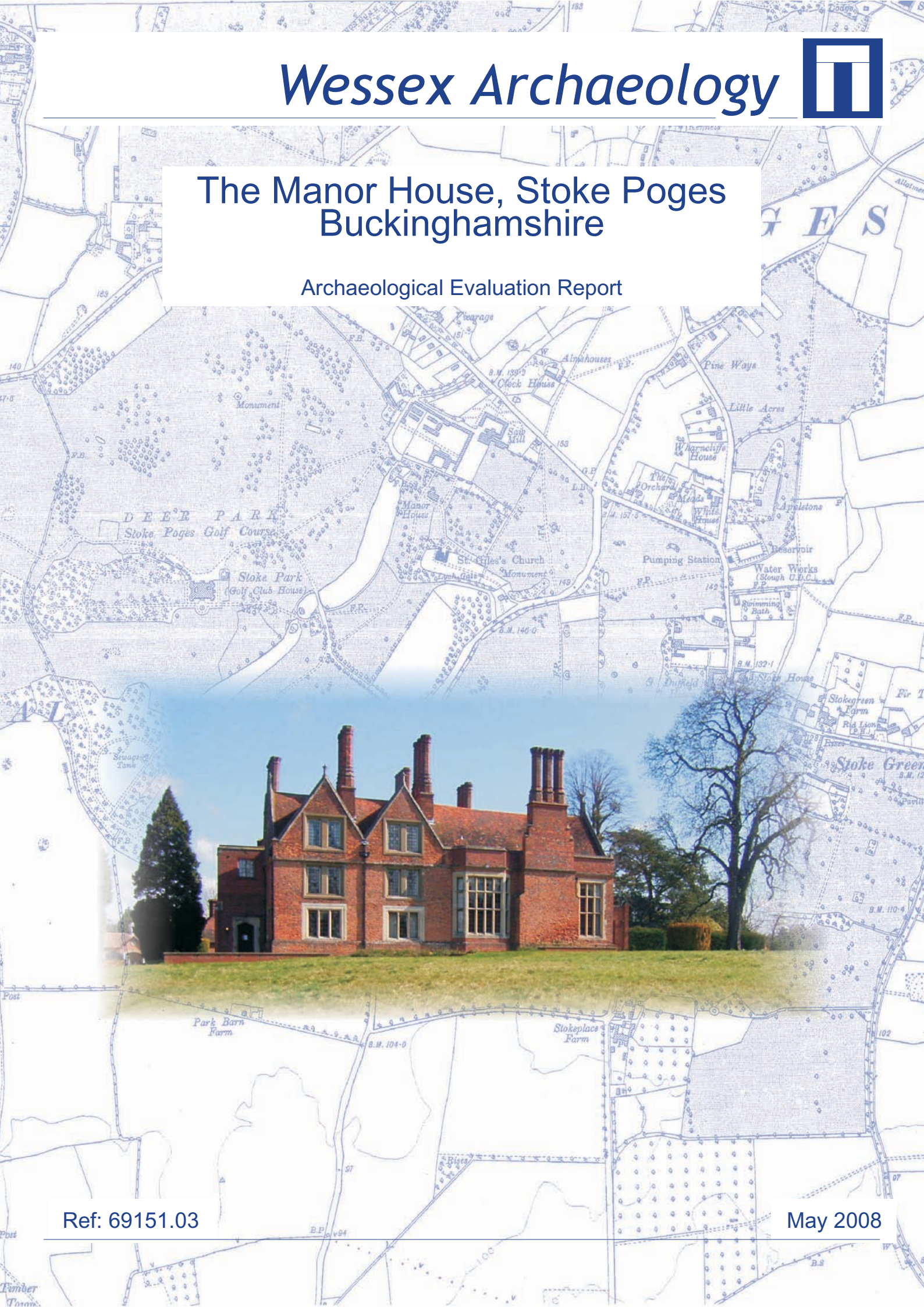




The Manor House, Stoke Poges Buckinghamshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report



**THE MANOR HOUSE
STOKE POGES, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Prepared on behalf of:

Simon Morray Jones Architects
Chartered Architect & Designers
21 Milsom Street
Bath
BA1 1DE

by:

Wessex Archaeology
Portway House
Old Sarum Park
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP4 6EB

Report 69151.03

May 2008

**THE MANOR HOUSE
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THE MANOR HOUSE STOKE POGES, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr. Robert Camping through his agents Simon Morray Jones Architects, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of proposed development on land at The Manor House, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, centred on NGR 497570 182880.

Subsequent to completion of an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (WA Heritage, 2008) and geophysical survey (WA 2008), an archaeological evaluation was undertaken in order to further inform the nature of the archaeological survival on the Site.

The evaluation comprised the excavation of seven trenches placed to the north and to the east of the present day Manor House. Although truncation and modern landscaping was noted in several trenches, evidence of late 17th century rebuilding work, a cobbled surface and post-medieval postholes were recorded. In addition, Trench 4 situated to the north-east of the house, revealed a substantial robbed out medieval or post-medieval garden or boundary brick wall and ditch.

No evidence of any northern extension to the 16th century Manor House was found within the evaluation trenches. A raised platform, noted on the south-western side of the existing building, suggests the original ground plan may have extended towards the south-west of the present building. A further return to the south-east would have given it an approximate Z-shaped outline.

**THE MANOR HOUSE
STOKE POGES, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Simon Morray Jones Architects who commissioned the project on behalf of Mr Robert Camping. David Radford of Buckinghamshire County Council monitored the work.

This fieldwork was carried out by David Godden and Oliver Spiers. Lorraine Mepham assessed the finds and advice on the brick was sought from Bob Davis. Will Foster prepared the figures and David Godden compiled this report. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.

THE MANOR HOUSE STOKE POGES, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr. Robert Camping through his agents Simon Morray Jones Architects, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of proposed development on land at The Manor House, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, centred on NGR 497570 182880 (hereafter 'the Site', **Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 Subsequent to completion of an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (WA Heritage, 2008) and geophysical survey (WA 2008), an archaeological evaluation was undertaken in order to further inform the nature of the archaeological survival on the Site.
- 1.1.3 Development proposals comprise the demolition of two 20th century buildings, renovation of the present Manor House building and construction of accommodation, leisure and service facilities in a basement to the rear of the building with associated landscaping of the surrounding grounds.
- 1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (WA 2008) and submitted to and approved by Buckinghamshire County Council, prior to fieldwork commencing.
- 1.1.5 The principal aim of the evaluation was to identify any archaeological remains which may be impacted by the proposed development, and to assess their nature, form and date. Within the stated aims, identification of remains of the former 16th century Manor House was a priority.

1.2 Site Location and Description

- 1.2.1 The Site is located to the north and east of The Manor House, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 497570 182880 (**Figure 1**), and lay within Stoke Park, a large landscaped parkland that has been used as a golf course since the early 20th century. The Site is approximately 0.4 hectares in area and was bounded by buildings and their associated grounds to the north and by parkland on the other sides.
- 1.2.2 The topography of the Site is generally flat, lying at an elevation of c. 46m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background to the Site is discussed in detail in the Desk-based Assessment (WAH, 2008) and is therefore only summarised below.

2.2 Background

- 2.2.1 A manor house was in existence on or near the Site in the early 14th century. A license to empark was issued to the manor in 1331 leading to the creation

of a substantial deer park that also included the church that lies 150m south of the Site.

- 2.2.2 A more substantial manor house was built on the Site in 1555. The precise form of the house is not known as no plans of it survive.
- 2.2.3 The deer park around the house was developed into landscaped parkland in the 16th and 17th centuries. It was remodelled in the mid 18th century by the landscape gardener Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.
- 2.2.4 In the late 18th century the present Stoke Park House was built 0.5km to the south-west. The Manor House was deemed ruinous at this time and mostly demolished. The part of the building that survives today was renovated to provide accommodation for estate staff.
- 2.2.5 Stoke Park became a golf course in 1908.
- 2.2.6 A small north wing was built onto the Manor House in the 20th century but was demolished in 1983. There followed the building of the present single-storey office extension attached to the north-east of the Manor House.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Health and Safety

- 3.1.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992. A Health and safety Risk assessment was produced by Wessex Archaeology prior to the commencement of the evaluation.

3.2 Fieldwork

- 3.2.1 A total of 7 trenches were excavated avoiding local obstructions such as modern drainage runs, large tree stumps and existing trees. Each trench was approximately 10m long with the exception of Trench 6 which was 5m in length. All trenches were positioned in close proximity to the Manor House in areas which would be impacted by the proposed development (**Figure 1**).
- 3.2.2 The trenches were excavated down to archaeological deposits or to the top of the undisturbed natural geology, whichever was encountered first, under constant archaeological supervision.
- 3.2.3 All trenches were opened by a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket.
- 3.2.4 Trench 4 was extended 3m as part of an agreed contingency towards the west to reveal the full section of robbed out wall **407**.
- 3.2.5 A sondage was hand dug adjacent to cobbled surface **104** in Trench 1. This was later extended so that the majority of **104**, along with make-up layer **110**, was removed and the natural gravel beneath was exposed. The excavated spoil was inspected for finds.
- 3.2.6 All features or potential features were investigated by hand.
- 3.2.7 The recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology *pro forma* recording sheets. A series of digital photographs were taken.
- 3.2.8 Trench locations were surveyed using a GPS SmartNet Rover and tied in the Ordnance Survey National Grid. This recorded the outlines of the trenches, the outlines of the features and the positions of each section.

- 3.2.9 Subsequent to completion of the archaeological investigations, the trenches were backfilled by machine.
- 3.2.10 The evaluation was undertaken on the 21st to 25th and the 30th of April 2008.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Soils and Geology

- 4.1.1 The natural stratigraphic sequence was not identified in any of the trenches. This reflected the various episodes of landscaping that had taken place on the Site since the medieval period.
- 4.1.2 The natural geology recorded was a mid brownish orange sandy gravel.

4.2 Archaeological Remains

Medieval / post-medieval features (1066-1799)

- 4.2.1 A large north-west to south-east aligned, slightly curving ditch **405** was identified in Trench 4 (**Figure 2**). The gravelly fill **406** contained little datable material; only a few small fragments of brick and a handmade iron nail were recovered. The ditch is likely to have been more than 3.50m wide, and at least 1.00m deep with a complex stepped profile and may have formed a boundary in the medieval deer park or perhaps the later landscape, although this is not evidenced in early cartography.
- 4.2.2 Ditch **405** was cut by a robbed out brick wall, **407**, at the west end of Trench 4. This substantial robber trench was aligned south-west to north-east, and was 0.70m wide and 0.50m deep. The wall had been constructed of frogless bricks and lime mortar. No complete example of the brick was recovered and no brick fragments were retained. One fragment of post-medieval glazed pottery was recovered from the crushed lime mortar and brick fill **408**, although this is more likely to date to the episode of demolition/robbing, rather than the construction of the wall itself. No evidence of an associated building was noted, which may indicate the feature relates to a walled garden or boundary.

Post-medieval features (1500-1799)

- 4.2.3 The cobbled surface **104**, positioned immediately to the north of the Manor House, was sitting on, and bedded into, a shallow deposit **108** (**Figure 3**). This had been laid on a thin deposit of used and broken peg tiles **109** which may have been utilised as a rough surface or simply built up during building works at the Manor House. Under the peg tile layer was a 0.6m thick make-up or dump layer **110**, which lay over the natural geology. This dump layer **110**, like the bedding layer **108** above, contained frequent fragments of pottery, clay pipe, early onion-shaped glass bottles and peg tile dating to the later 17th century. The cobbled surface **104** had a north-eastern edge 6.30m to the north-east of the Manor House wall and parallel with it. The cobbled surface was covered by sandy silt layer **103** that contained modern material.

Modern (1800-present)

- 4.2.4 Brick wall bases **105** and **106** were laid on 1.20m wide concrete footings (**Figure 3**). Both wall bases and the modern gully with drainpipe **107**, belonged to the small north wing that was built onto the house in the 20th century and demolished in 1983.
- 4.2.5 A larger cut **210** was noted in the southern edge of Trench 2. It was cut from just under the turf and was probably a planting pit in the garden.

- 4.2.6 The make-up or dump layers seen in Trenches 2 and 6 (**Figure 6**) are both of probable modern date; although dateable material was only recovered from layer **603** in Trench 6, the nature of both deposits was similar and likely to represent a single episode.

Undated

- 4.2.7 Postholes **204**, **206** and **208** in Trench 2 contained little dating evidence (**Figure 4**), although **204** contained occasional brick fragments and **206** contained occasional brick fragments and a fragment of limestone, possibly from a floor. This showed the postholes to post date an episode of nearby building. If it is assumed that this was the original 1555 Manor House, or rebuilding work associated with it, then the postholes must be post-medieval or later in date.
- 4.2.8 No dateable material was recovered from ditch **704** or the similarly aligned dump layer **702** in Trench 7, within the eastern part of the Site (**Figure 5**). Both features were aligned north to south. The dump layer **702**, which contained a proportion of crushed brick, lay directly beneath the turf and topsoil and it is likely to be of post-medieval or modern origin.
- 4.2.9 Make-up layers **302**, **303** and **304** in Trench 3 contained occasional brick fragments but nothing more closely dateable. They were probably of post-medieval or modern origin.

5 FINDS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A sample of the finds observed on the Site was retained for processing and comment, primarily for dating purposes. Most of these finds came from Trench 1, with a few from Trenches 2, 4 and 6. No datable finds were recovered from Trenches 3, 5 and 7. The assemblage is almost entirely of post-medieval date, with the exception of a single prehistoric worked flint flake and a few medieval roof tiles. No finds relating to the medieval manor were recovered.
- 5.1.2 The retained finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and the results are presented in Table 1.

5.2 Clay tobacco pipes

- 5.2.1 The most useful dating evidence is provided by the pottery and clay tobacco pipes. Datable clay pipe bowls were recovered from make-up layers **108**, **109** and **110** in Trench 1; two examples dated c.1660-80, eight examples dated c.1680-1710, and one example (from **110**) dated c.1700-40.

5.3 Pottery

- 5.3.1 The pottery from the make-up layers in Trench 1 is of comparable late 17th/early 18th century date and includes coarse redwares (some slipwares), white-firing Border wares from the Surrey/Hampshire border, Staffordshire-type slipwares, tinglazed earthenwares, German stonewares, porcelain and white saltglaze. One small sherd of pearlware (late 18th/early 19th century) from **108** could be intrusive here. Modern layer **603** produced coarse earthenwares (redware and Border ware) and English stoneware (late 17th or early 18th century). Fill **408** yielded only a single sherd of coarse redware, not closely dateable. In layer **103** the early post-medieval wares were augmented by factory-produced creamware and pearlware (mid 18th to early 19th century).

5.4 Glass

5.4.1 Bottle glass from the make-up layers comprises fragments of 'onion' bottle forms, falling within the date range of c.1650-1750.

5.5 Animal Bone

5.5.1 A small number of animal bones were recovered from the late 17th century make-up layer **110**. This comprised adult cow, adult sheep and juvenile pig in approximately equal proportions. Many of the bones showed butchery marks. The cows and pigs were noticeably large specimens. The bones were not retained.

5.6 Other finds

5.6.1 Other finds retained comprise ceramic roof tile and brick (including medieval roof tile redeposited in make-up layer **110**), oyster shell, animal bone, iron nails, a copper alloy washer (from **110**) and an iron chain (from **108**). A piece of building stone (oolitic limestone) was recovered from posthole **206**. None of these are closely datable; postholes **204**, **206** and **208**, and ditch **405**, therefore, remain of uncertain post-medieval date.

5.6.2 A used square undecorated floor tile fragment was recovered from **110**. It was approximately 150x150x30mm thick and was photographed but not retained.

Table 1: All retained finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

| Context | CBM | Clay Pipe | Glass | Pottery | Metal | Other Finds |
|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 103 | | | 1/1 | 20/194 | | |
| 108 | | 13/64 | 7/111 | 46/784 | 2 Fe | 2 shell; 2 animal bone |
| 109 | | 13/91 | 4/242 | 17/434 | | |
| 110 | 4/764 | 7/70 | 17/560 | 81/2078 | 1 Cu | |
| 205 | | | | | | 1 animal bone |
| 207 | 5/116 | | | | | 1 stone |
| 406 | 3/99 | | | | 1 Fe | 1 worked flint |
| 408 | | | | 1/14 | | |
| 603 | | | | 3/30 | | |
| | 12/979 | 33/225 | 29/914 | 168/3534 | 3 Fe; 1 Cu | |

CBM = ceramic building material; Cu = copper alloy; Fe = iron

5.7 Brick from robbed-out wall 407

5.7.1 Fragments of brick were recovered from **408**, the fill of robbed-out wall **407**. They were unfrogged in form, although none were complete enough to be positively dated. The use of unfrogged bricks continued into the 18th century, although locally made examples are recorded up to a century later. As no complete examples were recovered the brick fragments were not retained.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL

- 6.1.1 No features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 Evidence of extensive, albeit episodic, landscaping and levelling in the form of make-up and dump layers was noted in the majority of the trenches. The datable material recovered suggests the remodelling of the Site had occurred since at least the imparkment in the 14th century. Trenches 2 and 6 demonstrated the area to the north of the Manor House had been remodelled in recent times.
- 7.1.2 There is evidence of rebuilding work having taken place in the late 17th century when layer **110** was deposited just to the north of the house. A layer of used and broken peg tiles lay on top and this was used as a temporary surface until bedding layer **108** and cobbled surface **104** were laid down shortly afterwards. The cobbled surface may have originally extended from the wall of the house out to the north-east and supports the hypothesis in the Desk-based Assessment (WAH, 2008) that the extant building would have formed part of the original service wing of the house.
- 7.1.3 No traces of an associated building to the robbed out wall **407** was found and its alignment fits poorly with the proposed 1555 plan of the Manor House (WAH, 2008). Although it is possible it is associated with a medieval precursor, it is more likely to be attributed to the walled kitchen garden landscaped by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in 1765/6.
- 7.1.4 No evidence of a northern extension to the 1555 Manor House was found within the evaluation trenches. There was however, a straight-sided raised area that extended towards the south-west at right-angles from halfway along the south-western side of the existing building (**Plate 1**). This was 34m long before returning towards the south-east. The south-eastern corner of the existing building also showed several features indicative of internal walling. It would seem that the original ground plan of the 1555 Manor House may have extended towards the south-west before returning towards the south-east, suggesting an approximately Z-shaped plan (**Figure 6**).

8 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

- 8.1.1 The project archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum under accession number AYBCM:2008.31

8.2 Archive Storage

- 8.2.1 The project archive, consisting of

- One A4 file containing the paper records and drawings;
- A box of finds;
- Digital data (site photographs, survey data, word-processed files)

is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire under the project code 69151.

- 8.2.2 The project archive will be prepared following the 'Procedures for deposit of archaeological archives' with Buckinghamshire County Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Walker 1990; SMA 1995; Richards and Robinson 1998; Brown 2007).

8.3 Copyright

- 8.3.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. 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 shall be non-profit making, and conforms to the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003.

8.4 Security Copy

- 8.4.1 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 Monuments Record Centre (Swindon), a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records at the Museum, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology.

9 REFERENCES

Brown, D.H., 2007, *Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*, Archaeological Archives Forum

Richards, J. and Robinson, D., 2000, *Digital Archives from Excavation and Fieldwork: a guide to good practice*, Archaeology Data Service

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Walker, K., 1990, *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage*, UKIC Archaeology Section

10 TRENCH SUMMARY

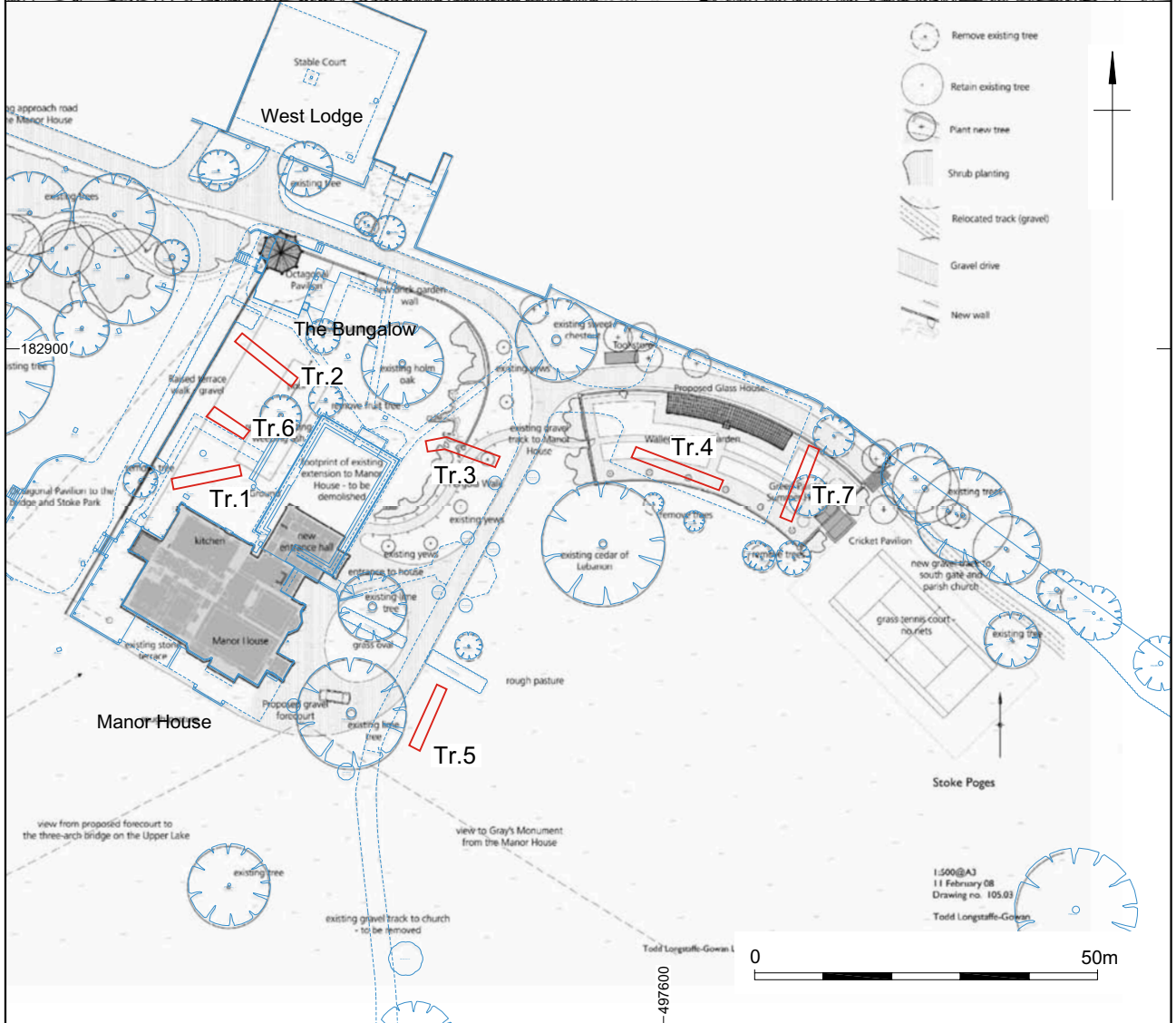
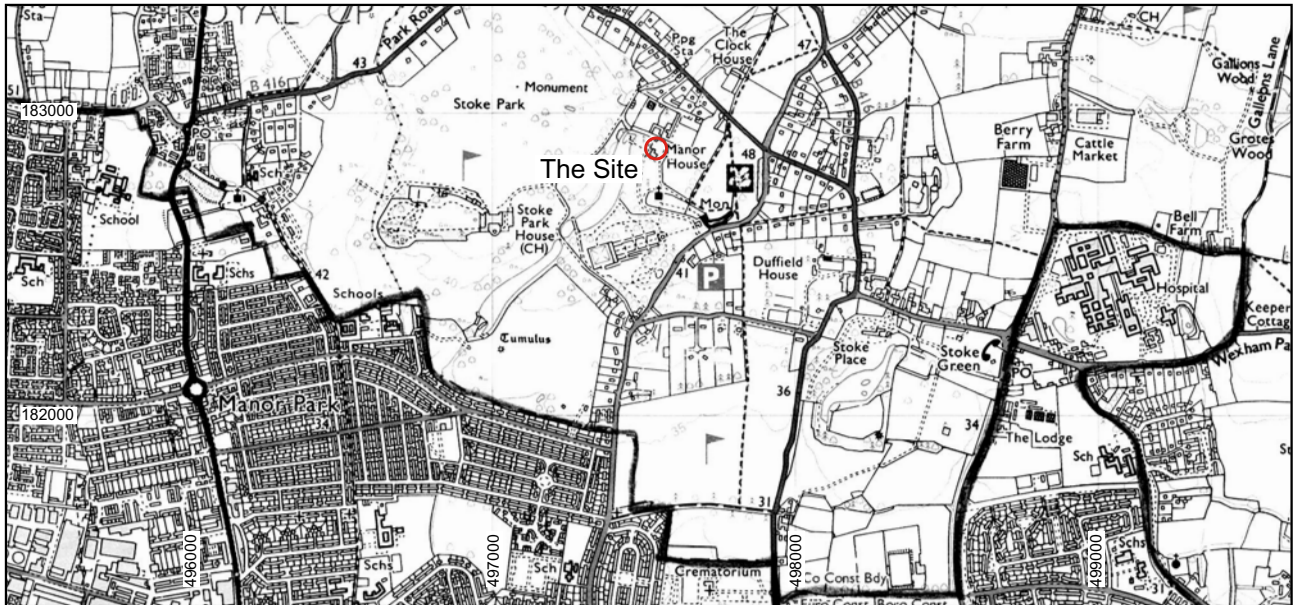
Trench 1 Dimensions 10 x 1.6 x 0.9m max depth
 Ground level 45.90m (W) 46.20m (E) aOD


| Context | Description | Depth (m) |
|---------|---|-------------|
| 101 | Turf and topsoil. | 0 – 0.30 |
| 102 | Modern layer. Dark grey silt with common gravel. Includes modern brick and tile fragments. | 0.30 – 0.40 |
| 103 | Modern layer. Dark greyish brown sandy silt including occasional brick and lime mortar fragments. | 0.40 – 0.45 |
| 104 | 17 th century cobbled surface. More than 2.2x2.2m in plan. Has a NE-SW aligned edge 6.3m from the NE wall of the Manor House. In use until probably the 19 th century. | 0.45-0.53 |
| 105 | Modern brick wall. Aligned NW-SE. Bricks were on a 1.2m wide concrete footing. From the 20 th century N wing. | 0.40+ |
| 106 | Modern brick wall. Aligned SW-NE. Bricks were on a 1.2m wide concrete footing. From the 20 th century N wing. | 0.40+ |
| 107 | Modern gully and attached drainpipe. Originally sited just outside wall 106. | |
| 108 | 17 th century make-up layer. Dark greyish brown sandy silt with patches of orangey natural. Included common gravel, pottery, glass and clay pipe. Levelling layer and bedding for cobbled surface 104. | 0.53-0.65 |
| 109 | 17 th century layer of used and broken peg tiles. Temporary surface prior to the laying of 104. | 0.65-0.67 |
| 110 | 17 th century make-up layer. Dark greyish brown silty sand with frequent gravel. Includes common pottery, glass and clay pipe. | 0.60-1.20 |
| 111 | Natural. Mid brownish orange sandy gravel. | 1.20+ |

Trench 2 Dimensions 10 x 1.6 x 1.0m max depth
 Ground level 45.30m (NW) 45.80m (SE) aOD

| Context | Description | Depth (m) |
|---------|---|-----------|
| 201 | Turf and topsoil. | 0-0.15 |
| 202 | Post-medieval or modern make-up layer. Dark grey sandy silt with common gravel. | 0.15-0.80 |
| 203 | Natural. Mid brownish orange sandy gravel. | 0.80+ |
| 204 | Cut of post-medieval or modern posthole. Sub-rectangular. 0.68x0.40x0.04m deep. | 0.80 |
| 205 | Fill of 204. Dark grey sandy silt including occasional brick fragments. | |

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| | and a narrow, concave base. | |
| 705 | Fill of 704. Mid yellowish grey sandy silt with occasional gravel. Noticeably sterile. No dateable material was recovered. | |



 Evaluation trench

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Site location and trench layout plan

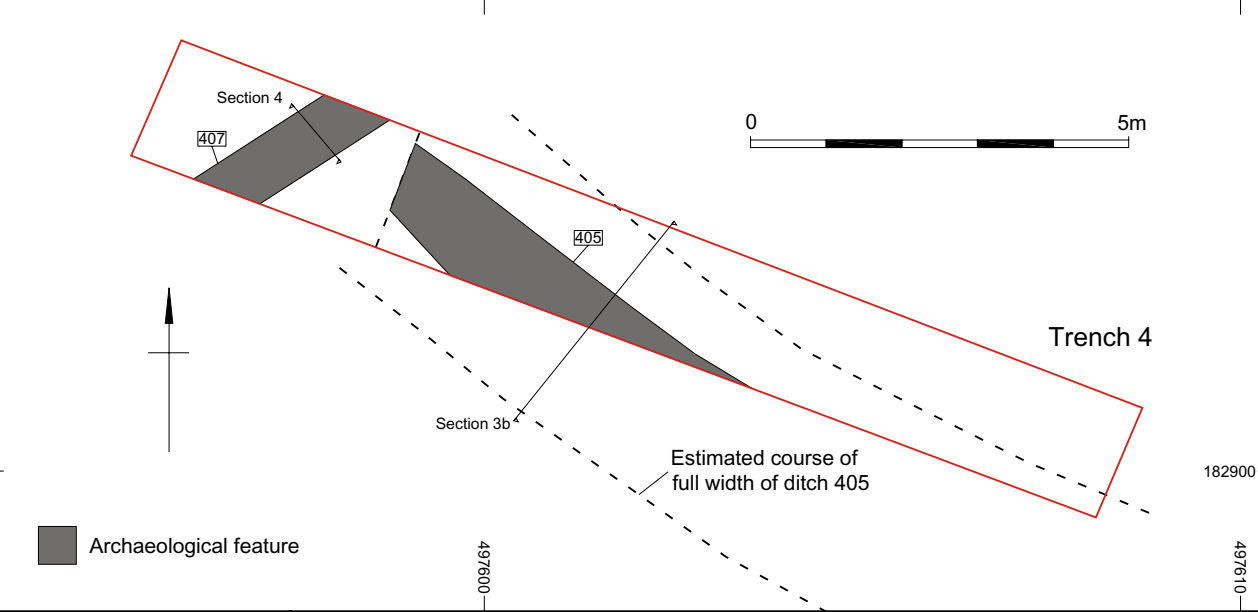
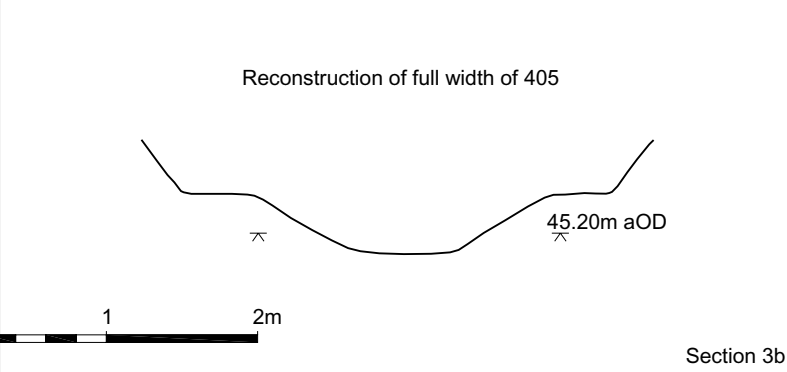
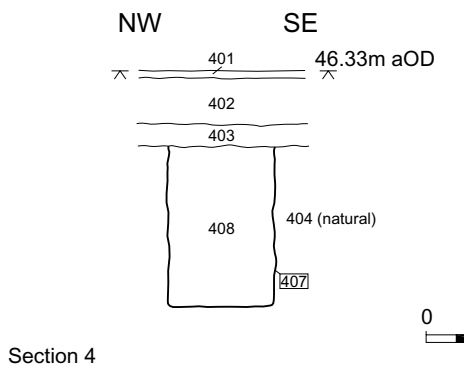
Figure 1



View looking east



Section through 407 looking north-east



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Features in Trench 4

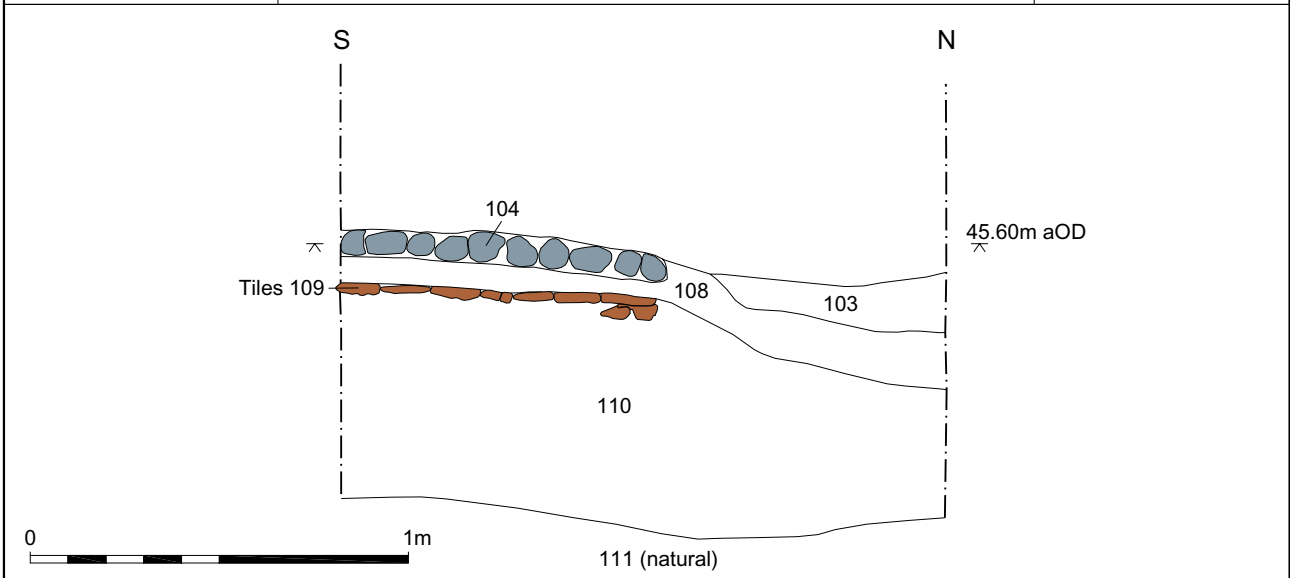
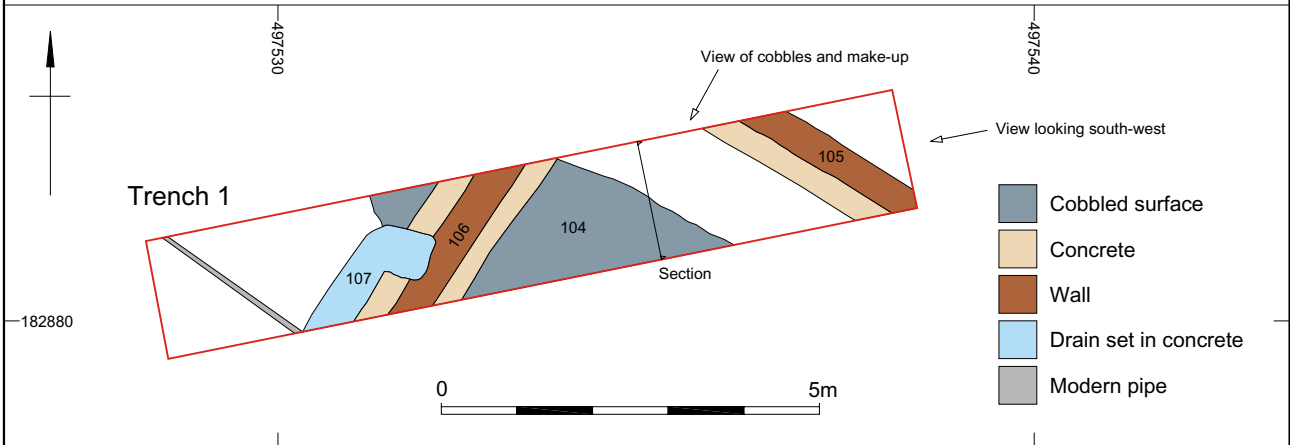
Figure 2



View looking south-west



View of cobbles and make-up



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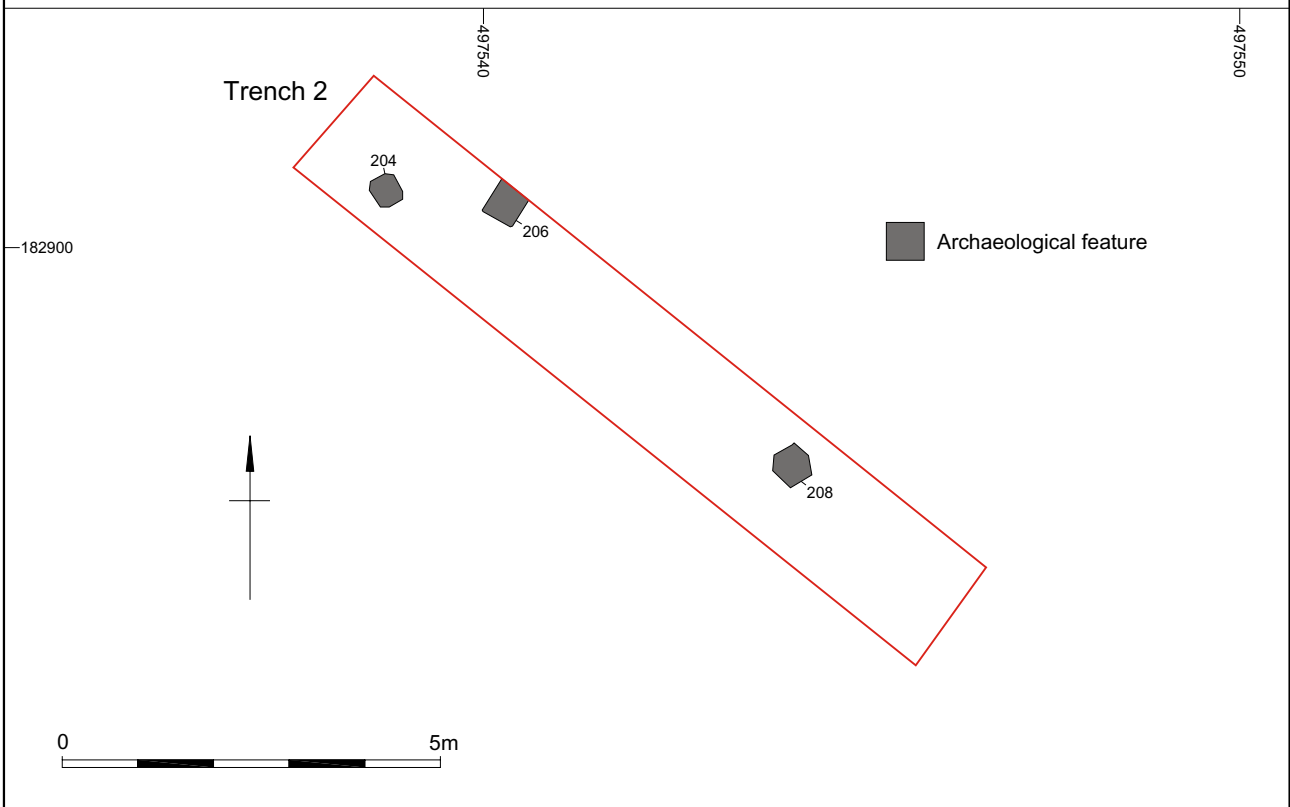
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Features in Trench 1

Figure 3



View looking south-east



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Features in Trench 2

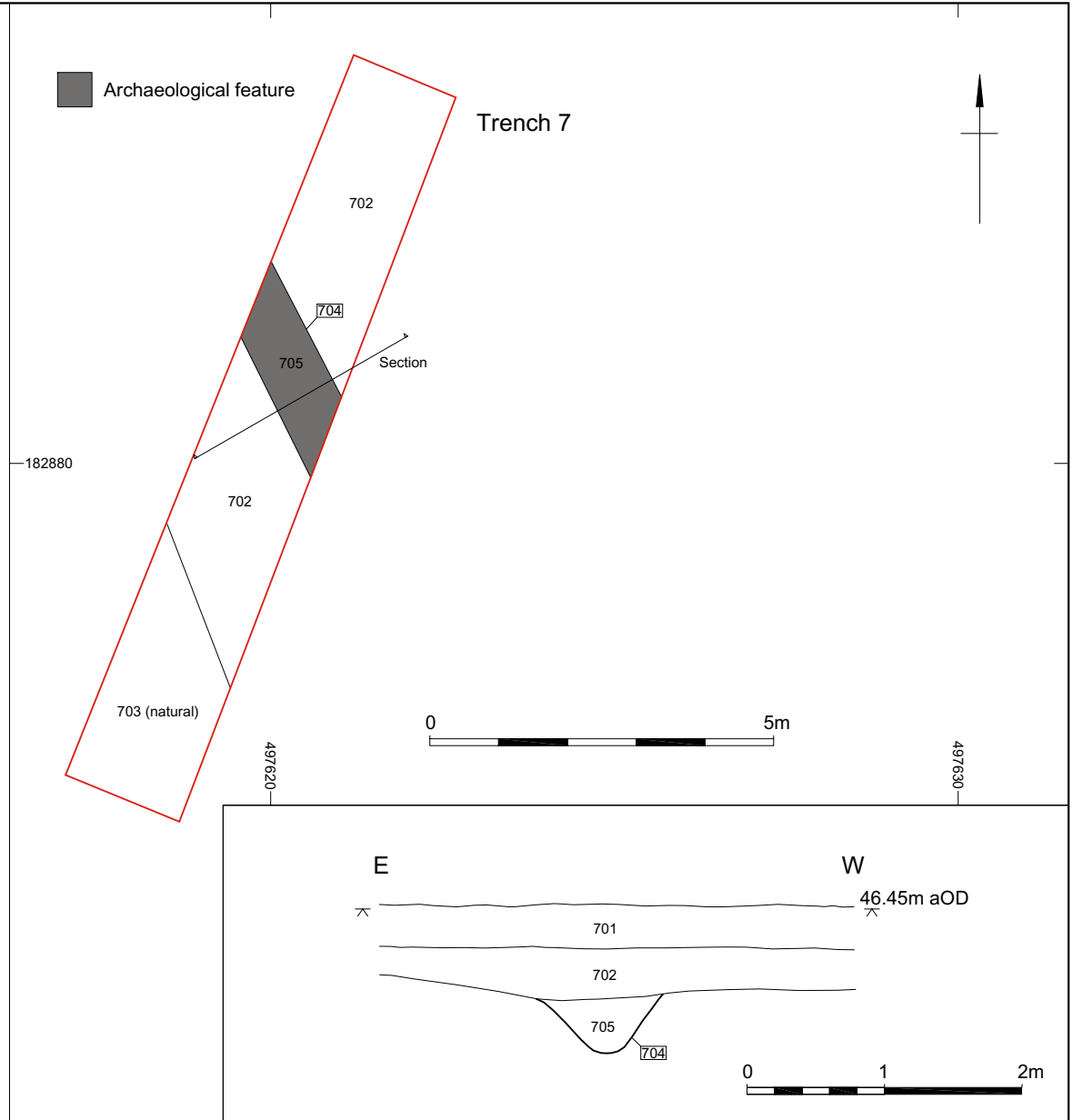
Figure 4



View looking south

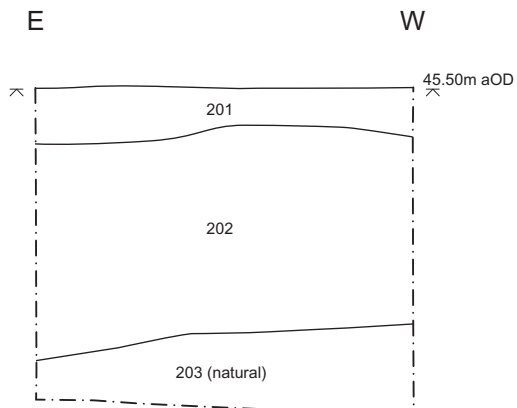


Section through 704 looking south-east

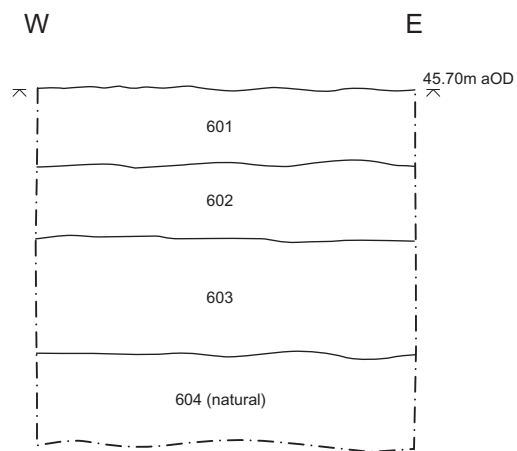


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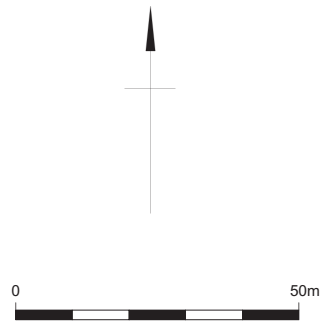
North facing representative section of Trench 2




North facing representative section of Trench 6



- The Site
- Proposed Basement
- Suggested extent of 1555 Manor House




| | | | | |
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Suggested original plan of 1555 Manor House

Figure 7



Plate 1: Manor House looking north-east. Note step in landscape

| | | | | |
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WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LTD.

Head Office: Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.

Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

London Office: Unit 701, The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY.

Tel: 020 7953 7494 Fax: 020 7953 7499 london-info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

