

**CATTLE MARKET
MARKET ROAD
PLYMPTON, DEVON**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Westbury Homes (Holdings) Limited to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation of the former Cattle Market site, Market Road, Plympton, Devon. This area is subject to redevelopment proposals and lies within an archaeologically sensitive area, adjacent to the known remains of Plympton Priory, part of which comprises a Scheduled Monument (No.24847). The Site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 253610 056244.

The archaeological evaluation, consisting of five machine-excavated trial trenches, was undertaken between the 23rd and 29th July 2003.

Natural geological deposits were reached in only two of the trenches (Trenches 4 and 6), the remaining trenches contained alluvial deposits to the maximum depth of 1.20m. The only cut features were found in Trenches 4 and 5, both of which proved to be modern in date.

The sequence of deposition was fairly homogenous throughout, with alluvial deposits forming the bulk of the strata in the machine trenches, sometimes interleaved with thin sandy layers. The depth of the alluvial deposits found in the trenches indicates that this area formed part of the foreshore of the Tory Brook. The Medieval quayside may lie further to the east, beyond the limits of the Site, most probably under or just beyond the present line of Market Road.

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Westbury Homes (Holdings) Ltd, and Wessex Archaeology gratefully acknowledges their assistance, in particular Ian Jewson. Wessex Archaeology would also like to acknowledge the assistance and co-operation of Mr. Mike Daniells, Historic Environment Co-ordinator to Plymouth City Council.

Fieldwork was carried out by Rachel Every, John Crisp, Cat McHarg and Steve George. This report was compiled by Nicholas A. Wells. Finds analysis was undertaken by Rachel Seager Smith and Lorraine Mephram. The illustrations were produced by Karen Nichols and the project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Rob Armour Chelu.

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Westbury Homes (Holdings) Limited to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation of the former Cattle Market site, Market Road, Plympton, Devon (hereafter ‘the Site’), centred on NGR 253610 056244. This area is subject to redevelopment proposals and lies within an archaeologically sensitive area, adjacent to the known remains of Plympton Priory, part of which comprises a Scheduled Monument (No.24847) under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as designated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
- 1.1.2 After consultation with Mike Daniells, Historic Environment Co-ordinator to Plymouth City Council (the Local Planning Authority), a rapid desk-based assessment and Project Design was prepared by Wessex Archaeology. This document (Wessex Archaeology 2003) detailed the potential for archaeological remains on the Site and outlined the evaluation methodology and standards appropriate to site of this nature and sensitivity. The project Design was submitted to, and approved by Plymouth City Council prior to the commencement of archaeological works.
- 1.1.3 The archaeological evaluation, consisting of five machine-excavated trial trenches, was undertaken between the 23rd and 29th July 2003.

1.2 Site Location, Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The Site is approximately square in shape, some 0.84 hectares in extent and situated on the floor of the east-west aligned valley of the Tory Brook. It is bounded to the north by the Church of England Primary School, to the south by an electricity sub-station and Potters Way, to the east by Market Road and to the west by open ground (**Figure 1**). It is centred on NGR 253610 056244.
- 1.2.2 The Cattle Market site lies on generally level ground with an elevation of *c.*6m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The area surrounding it is developed land occupied by domestic and retail property. The underlying geology of the Site comprises estuarine sands and clay silts above Middle Devonian slate (‘shallot’).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 There is very little documentary or archaeological data related directly to the area of the former Cattle Market, the bulk of the available data referring to the adjacent Priory site. The archaeological background has been detailed within the rapid desk-based assessment and Project Design (Wessex Archaeology 2003), however a brief summary is presented below.

2.2 Prehistoric and Roman

2.2.1 While there is widespread evidence for prehistoric activity in the environs of Plympton, represented by the earthworks at Borrington Camp, located 3km to the north, and Lyneham Wood (also known as ‘Waste Berry’), situated 4km to the south-east (both of Iron Age date), no prehistoric findspots have been recorded within Plympton itself.

2.2.2 Similarly, evidence for the Roman period is notably lacking in Plympton, the only find recorded being five Roman coins found within the site of the former Priory.

2.3 Saxon and Medieval

2.3.1 A Saxon Minster dedicated to St. Peter is recorded as existing in Plympton by AD904, probably built before AD900 (Stevens 1973). By 1086 it held land at Colebrook, Wembury, Eggbuckland and Hoo (all relatively close to Plympton) and comprised a Dean and four prebendaries (Gaskill-Brown 1987). It is very likely that the Saxon Minster occupied the site of the later Augustinian Priory. No trace of its structure was found during excavations in 1957-58 (Ledger 1959), although two possible Saxon burials were recorded.

2.3.2 In 1121 Warelwast, Bishop of Exeter disbanded the Saxon Minster (due, at least in part, to the fact that the canons ‘*wold not leve their concubines*’). In its place, he established an Augustinian Priory (‘*Priory of Black Canons*’) dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul and endowed by the then Earl of Devon, Walter de Valletort and other benefactors. The first Prior, appointed by Warelwast in 1121 was Prior Ralph. The Priory Church was rebuilt in 1176, the work commissioned by the newly appointed Prior Martin. The Church stood for four centuries, until the Dissolution (Oliver 1846).

2.3.3 By the end of the 14th century, a substantial village (Plympton St. Mary) had grown up on Priory lands at the Ridgeway. It is possible that this settlement may have been planned and deliberately laid out by the Priory (Beresford 1967). In 1311, the Church of St. Mary was built just to the north of the Priory to serve the parishioners of this growing community.

2.3.4 The Priory became one of the largest and wealthiest Augustinian houses in England. As well as lands in south and west Devon, it held two dependant cells at Marsh Barton, Exeter and St. Anthony-in-Roseland, Cornwall. One of its most significant holdings at this time was the manor of Sutton, which became the Borough of Plymouth in 1439.

2.3.5 A variety of Medieval findspots occur in the vicinity of the Site, including two Medieval coins and a cross, located 500m north-east, called the ‘Torry-Brook’ cross.

2.4 Post-medieval

- 2.4.1 At the Dissolution, the last Prior of Plympton, John Howe, along with the nineteen remaining canons, surrendered the Priory to the King in February 1539. The Priory and its estates were valued at £912 12s 8¾d and the property appears to be largely the same as that recorded in the 12th century. The site was leased in 1541 to Sir Phillip Champernowne who immediately sold many of the buildings on for demolition to William Strode of Newnham.
- 2.4.2 Over the next 30 years the priory was partially demolished, the stonework being sold to contractors building elsewhere in Plympton. The former Priory site and lands remained in the ownership of the Champernowne family until 1638 when they were sold to John Fownes of Whitleigh and subsequently to the Luttrells of Dunster Castle in Somerset.
- 2.4.3 On the western edge of the Priory site, running north-south along the present course of Market Road, (thus forming the eastern perimeter of the Cattle Market site), a substantial stone wall with traces of steps leading down was reported by Brooking-Rowe during building works undertaken in 1876 and 1885 (Gaskill-Brown 1987).
- 2.4.4 Brooking-Rowe described his findings as '*...a broad stone wall...discovered at a depth of 0.6m below ground level, and towards its southern end there were stone steps and piers of a landing stage on its seaward (western) side*'. This has been interpreted as a 'sea wall', constructed to protect the Priory from flooding from the tidal inlet thought to exist to the west of the Priory, now possibly directly below the former Cattle Market.
- 2.4.5 To the north-east of the Site, just south of St. Mary's Church, is the site of the Civil War defences of the former Royalist Headquarters at Plympton. The entrenchments are dated to between 1643 and 1644, finally being abandoned in January 1646.

2.5 Cartographic Sources

- 2.5.1 Cartographic evidence in Gardner's map of 1784 depicts the eastern half of the Site as being (at least, partially) covered with trees. It is unclear whether this represents remnant natural woodland, plantation or orchard. The Parish Tithe map of 1841 shows the Site to form part of a large field, bounded to the north by the as yet un-canalised Tory Brook.
- 2.5.2 The first edition Ordnance Survey map shows the area of the Site as open fields with scattered trees. It is unclear exactly when the Cattle Market was first built on the Site, but by 1913 (third edition Ordnance Survey), a group of buildings comprising the Cattle Market is shown to the south of the school. These buildings have been added to by the 1933 edition, with the addition of the Cattle Market Club.

3 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and Objectives

- 3.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to establish within the constraints of the evaluation sampling strategy (see **Methodology** below) the presence, absence, location and depth of any surviving archaeological remains within the Site.
- 3.1.2 In particular the evaluation was designed to clarify the impact upon the archaeological resource of any proposed development, and seek to aid in the establishment of a design solution which takes into account both the nature of any archaeological deposits present, and the engineering requirements of the developer.
- 3.1.3 The evaluation methodology was to, at all times, seek to minimise intrusion into significant archaeological deposits, with a view to preserving *in situ* any archaeological remains within the Site.

3.2 Methodology

- 3.2.1 Before excavation began, the statutory bodies were consulted as to the location of subsurface services within the area of the Site. In addition the trench locations were scanned with a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) to verify their existence. These services are illustrated in **Figure 1**.
- 3.2.2 The fieldwork strategy comprised the machine excavation of six trenches within the Cattle Market area. The location of standing buildings and issues with access required that the 5% sample outlined in the brief (issued by Plymouth City Council) be reduced. Furthermore the location of subsurface services necessitated a quite drastic change to the trench layout. **Figure 1** illustrates the layout of the evaluation trenches as excavated.
- 3.2.3 In total five trenches were excavated - **Trench 2** was omitted due to the close proximity of the subsurface services, while **Trenches 1, 4 and 6** were shortened to 10m, 15m, and 16m respectively for the same reason. Overall, the five excavated trenches equate to 168.91m²; a sample of 2% of the total development area.
- 3.2.4 All trenches were located in relation to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum.
- 3.2.5 Excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision using a JCB equipped with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. All trenches were excavated in spits either to natural deposits or archaeological horizons, whichever was encountered first.
- 3.2.6 All archaeological features, horizons and natural deposits encountered were fully recorded on Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's guidelines for fieldwork recording (Wessex Archaeology 1994). A full photographic (both 35mm black and white prints and colour transparencies, and digital) and graphic record was kept, the site drawings drawn at an appropriate scale, typically 1:10 for sections and 1:20 for plans.
- 3.2.7 Provision was made for bulk sampling from appropriate archaeological deposits for artefactual, economic and environmental data. The overburden was scanned for artefacts.

3.2.8 All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulation 1992, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time. A copy of the Wessex Archaeology Risk Assessment was sent to Westbury Homes Ltd prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

4 RESULTS

4.1.1 The results set out in this report represent a synthesis of the principal archaeological horizons investigated. Although a number of contexts were identified and recorded, only two cut features were present in the evaluation trenches (**417** in **Trench 4** and **506** in **Trench 5**), both of which were of modern origin. A summary of the deposits can be found in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Archaeological Horizons

4.2.1 Natural geological deposits were reached in only two of the trenches (**Trench 4** and **6**) – the remaining trenches containing alluvial deposits to the maximum depth of 1.20m. The only cut features were found in **Trenches 4** and **5 (417 & 506)**, both being modern in date.

4.2.2 The sequence of deposition was fairly homogenous throughout with alluvial deposits forming the bulk of the strata in the machine trenches, sometimes interleaved with thin sandy layers. **Table 1** summarises this sequence;

Table 1: Generalised Sequence of Deposits

| Depth Below Ground Level | Description |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 0 – 0.10m | Tarmac surfacing. |
| 0.10 – 0.42m | Rubble hardcore. |
| 0.42 – 0.52m | Alluvial layer. |
| 0.52 – 0.58m | Coarse sand and clay layer. |
| 0.58 – 0.94m | Alluvial layers. |
| 0.94 – 1.04m | Sand layer |
| 1.04 – 1.13m | Alluvial layers |
| 1.13 – 1.17m | Fine sand layer. |
| 1.17 – 1.29m | Alluvial layers |
| 1.29m→ | Coarse sands (natural) |

4.2.3 Finds were retrieved from alluvial layer **406** (in **Trench 4**), and deposits 305 (Trench 3) and 503 (Trench 5). These are described in the following section.

5 FINDS

- 5.1.1 A small quantity of finds was recovered, deriving from contexts in three of the evaluation trenches (**Trenches 3, 4 and 5**). Finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and this information is summarised in **Table 1**.

Table 2: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

| Context | Description | Animal Bone | Clay Pipe | Glass | Post-medieval Pottery |
|---------|-----------------|--------------|------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 305 | Levelling layer | | | 2/1059 | 7/92 |
| 406 | Alluvium | | 1/8 | | 5/66 |
| 503 | Levelling layer | 2/220 | | | 3/23 |
| | TOTAL | 2/220 | 1/8 | 3/1092 | 15/181 |

- 5.1.2 All finds are demonstrably or probably of post-medieval date. The glass comprises two complete modern bottles. The pottery includes modern industrial wares (contexts 305 and 503) as well as earlier post-medieval wares (17th/18th century) from context 406 (Donyatt-type sgraffito ware, North Devon gravel-tempered ware and Staffordshire white salt glaze).

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Interpretation of Results

- 6.1.1 The depth of the alluvial deposits found in the trenches indicates that this area formed part of the foreshore of the Tory Brook. It is also clear that the natural sands are rising from west to east – from 4.73m aOD in Trench 4 to 5.20m aOD in Trench 6. The deposits in the trenches represent relatively late incidences of tidal deposition, both slow (alluvial) and faster (sand).
- 6.1.2 It certainly seems that the Medieval quayside may lie further to the east, most probably under or just beyond the present line of Market Street.

7 PROJECT ARCHIVE

- 7.1.1 The archive of this trial trench evaluation is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under the site code 53646. In due course it will be deposited with the Plymouth City Museum. It is recommended that the finds assemblage is subjected to selective discard before deposition, in agreement with the museum.

- 7.1.2 The archive consists of;

- A copy of this report
- A copy of the project design
- The day book
- Trench record and context sheets
- Graphics index and drawings
- Photographic index, black and white contact sheets and colour slides
- Levels and survey data
- Finds data

- Finds

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Appendix 1: Trench Summaries

(All depths are below Ground Level)

The order in which the deposits are listed reflects their stratigraphical position, except where noted.

* = layer containing finds

| Trench 1 | | Max Depth: 1.35m | Length: 9.7m | Width: 1.9m |
|-----------------|-----------|--|-----------------------|-------------|
| Co-ordinates: | | 253566.0 E 056222.0 N | 253556.8 E 056223.9 N | |
| Ground Level: | | 5.95m aOD | 6m aOD | |
| No. | Type | Description | Depth | |
| 104 | Tarmac | Modern tarmac surface | 0-0.09m | |
| 103 | Hard Core | Light grey gravels, modern hardcore made-up ground | 0.09-0.16m | |
| 102 | Hard Core | Pinkish gravels, modern hardcore made-up ground | 0.16-0.76m | |
| 101 | Alluvium | Dark blue-grey, clay silt, no coarse components. | 0.76-1.20m | |

| Trench 3 | | Max Depth: 1.5m | Length: 25m | Width: 1.8m |
|-----------------|----------------|--|---------------------|-------------|
| Co-ordinates: | | 253594.4 E 056251.3 N | 253586 E 056227.8 N | |
| Ground Level: | | 6m aOD | 6.05m aOD | |
| No. | Type | Description | Depth | |
| 301 | Tarmac | Modern Tarmac surface | 0-0.05m | |
| 302 | Hard Core | Grey pea gravel, well sorted, made-up ground | 0.05-0.11m | |
| 303 | Tarmac | Previous ground surface | 0.11-0.15m | |
| 304 | Hard Core | Grey pea gravel, well sorted, made-up ground for previous ground surface | 0.15-0.26m | |
| 305* | Rubble | Orange brown angular sandstone, moderately well sorted rubble | 0.26-0.29m | |
| 306 | Gravel | Dark grey pea gravel, well sorted, made-up ground | 0.29-0.41m | |
| 307 | Rubble | Yellowish grey angular stones, moderately well sorted, made-up ground | 0.41-0.59m | |
| 308 | Gravel | Dark grey pea gravel, well sorted, made-up ground | 0.59-0.71m | |
| 309 | Alluvial Layer | Greyish brown, clay silt, no inclusions | 0.71 – 1.20m | |

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------------|
| Trench 4 | Max Depth: 1.2m | Length: 15m | Width: 1.8m |
| Co-ordinates: | 253609.2 E 056258.6 N | 253594.8 E 056262.7 N | |
| Ground Level: | 6.03m aOD | 6.07m aOD | |
| No. | Type | Description | Depth |
| 401 | Tarmac | Tarmac surfacing | 0-0.10m |
| 402 | HardCore | Dark tar & rubble make-up layer | 0.10-0.29m |
| 403 | Rubble | Slate levelling deposit, no soil matrix | 0.29-0.42m |

Cut Features/ Archaeological Horizons

| | | | |
|------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 416 | Rubble fill | Modern rubble fill of BT cable trench | |
| 417 | Modern Feature | Cut of BT cable trench running NE/SW | |

| | | | |
|-------------|------------------|---|------------|
| 404 | Alluvial Layer | Dark greyish brown clayey silt, rare sand inclusions | 0.42-0.52m |
| 405 | Sand | Coarse sand & clay layer | 0.52-0.58m |
| 406* | Alluvial Layer | Dark brownish grey clayey silt with occasional small sand & natural slate inclusions. Substantial deposit with sharp, vertical boundary with (407) to east. Some post medieval pot recovered. | 0.58-0.94m |
| 407 | Alluvial Layer?? | Mid reddish brown clayey silt with rare sand inclusions. Forms sharp, vertical boundary with grey alluvium to west & south. Looked circular in plan when first encountered. | 0.58-0.94m |
| 408 | Sand | Mid reddish orange sand very similar to natural sand. | 0.94-1.04m |
| 409 | Alluvial Layer | Mid brownish grey with rare sand & mica flecks | 1.04-1.10m |
| 410 | Alluvial Layer | Mid brownish grey clay layer with frequent coarse sand inclusions | 1.10-1.13m |
| 415 | Alluvial Layer | Dark Brownish grey silty clay with moderate sand & mica inclusions. Practically identical to (412) | 1.11-1.16m |
| 411 | Sand | Very light, almost white, fine sand layer | 1.13-1.17m |
| 412 | Alluvial Layer | Dark brownish grey silty clay with rare sand & mica flecks. Practically identical to (415) | 1.17-1.25m |
| 413 | Alluvial Layer | Light grey silty clay with frequent coarse sand inclusions. Immediately above natural sand. | 1.25-1.29m |
| 414 | Natural Sand | Fairly coarse with mixed patches of grey & red/orange sand NATURAL | 1.29m→ |

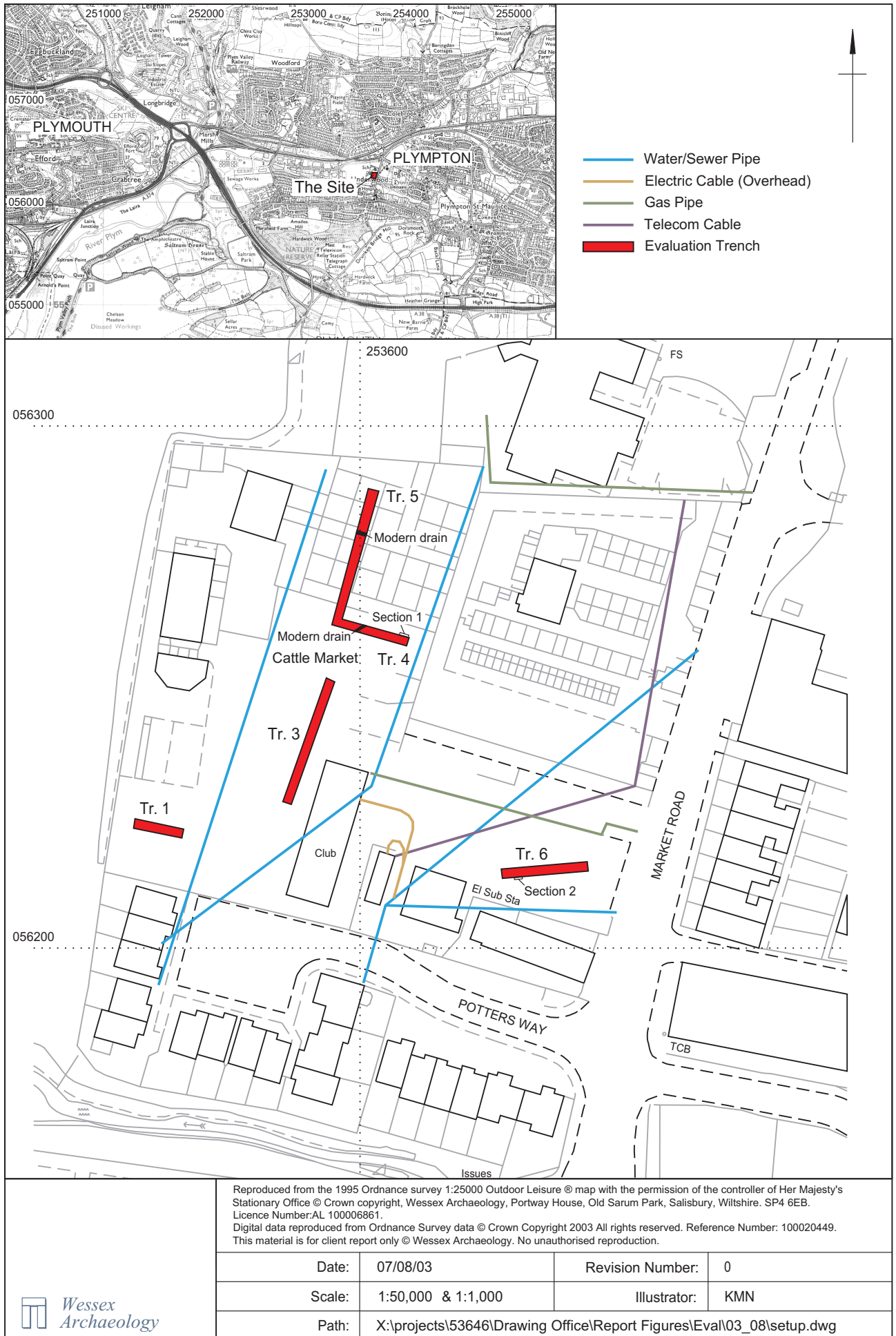
| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Trench 5 | Max Depth: 0.60m | Length: 27.30m | Width: 1.8m |
| Co-ordinates: | 253602.6 E 056287.7 N | 253595.4 E 056261.7 N | |
| Ground Level: | 6.1m aOD | 5.95m aOD | |
| No. | Type | Description | Depth |
| 501 | Concrete | Concrete surfacing for cattle pens | 0-0.15m |

Cut Features/ Archaeological Horizons

| | | | |
|------------|-------------|--|--|
| 507 | Rubble fill | Modern rubble fill of drainage ditch | |
| 506 | Modern Cut | Cut of modern drainage feature probably associated with cattle pens, running E/W. Cuts (502) | |

| | | | |
|-------------|------------------|---|-------------|
| 502 | Modern layer | Red clay & rubble make up layer | 0.15-0.23m |
| 503* | Modern layer | Dark burnt tar & gravel levelling deposit | 0.23-0.44m |
| 504 | Natural Alluvium | Red/orange sandy silt with mica flecks, golden in places. Occasional lenses/areas of greyer silt & sand. Existed mainly to north of trench. | 0.44m- |
| 505 | Natural Alluvium | Dark grey clayey silt with occasional mica flecks & coarse sand grains. Much darker & slightly more clayey than (504). Existed to south of trench | 0.44-1.20m- |

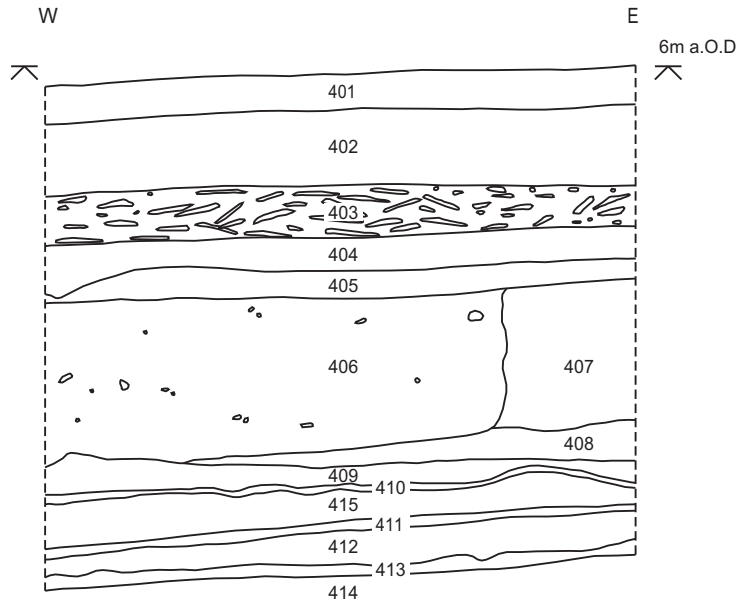
| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--|-------------|
| Trench 6 | Max Depth: 1.2m | Length: 16.3m | Width: 1.8m |
| Co-ordinates: | 253643.6 E 056215.7 N | 253627.2 E 056214.2 N | |
| Ground Level: | 5.94m aOD | 5.95m aOD | |
| No. | Type | Description | Depth |
| 606 | Tarmac | Modern tarmac | 0-0.03m |
| 605 | Hard Core | Modern crushed stone hard core | 0.03-0.10m |
| 604 | Hard Core | Modern local stone & cement hard core | 0.10-0.44m |
| 603 | Alluvial Layer | Dark bluish grey pure clayey silts, gradual silting, sparse small sub rounded stones | 0.44-0.55m |
| 602 | Sand | Dark orange brown mixed silty sands with rare coarse & small sub rounded stones & slate | 0.55-0.78m |
| 601 | Natural Sand | Natural sands at base of test pit. Some Fe mineralization & occasional patches of silty clay | 0.75-0.78m |



Site and trench location plan, including service data

Figure 1

Trench 4 Section 1



Trench 6 Section 2

