



making sense of heritage

Former Royal Mail Sorting Office, Wick Lane, Christchurch, Dorset

Archaeological Evaluation



Ref: 103010.03
August 2014



**FORMER ROYAL MAIL SORTING OFFICE, WICK LANE,
CHRISTCHURCH, DORSET**

Report of Archaeological Evaluation Trial Trenches

Prepared for:

Libra Homes
PO Box 2346
Christchurch,
Dorset

Prepared by:

Wessex Archaeology
Portway House,
Old Sarum Park,
Salisbury, Wilts
SP4 6EB

www.wessexarch.co.uk

August 2014


Report Ref: 103010.03

Christchurch Borough Council Planning Refs.: 08/10/0492 & 08/10/0493



Quality Assurance

Project Code	103010	Accession Code		Client Ref.	
Planning Application Ref.	08/10/0492 & 08/10/0493	Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)	415866, 092662		

Version	Status*	Prepared by	Checked and Approved By	Approver's Signature	Date
v01		PH	AK		31/07/2014
File:					
File:					
File:					

* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

DISCLAIMER

THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT WAS DESIGNED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A REPORT TO AN INDIVIDUAL CLIENT AND WAS PREPARED SOLELY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THAT CLIENT. THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT DOES NOT NECESSARILY STAND ON ITS OWN AND IS NOT INTENDED TO NOR SHOULD IT BE RELIED UPON BY ANY THIRD PARTY. TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY WILL NOT BE LIABLE BY REASON OF BREACH OF CONTRACT NEGLIGENCE OR OTHERWISE FOR ANY LOSS OR DAMAGE (WHETHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL) OCCASIONED TO ANY PERSON ACTING OR OMITTING TO ACT OR REFRAINING FROM ACTING IN RELIANCE UPON THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT ARISING FROM OR CONNECTED WITH ANY ERROR OR OMISSION IN THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THE REPORT. LOSS OR DAMAGE AS REFERRED TO ABOVE SHALL BE DEEMED TO INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, ANY LOSS OF PROFITS OR ANTICIPATED PROFITS DAMAGE TO REPUTATION OR GOODWILL LOSS OF BUSINESS OR ANTICIPATED BUSINESS DAMAGES COSTS EXPENSES INCURRED OR PAYABLE TO ANY THIRD PARTY (IN ALL CASES WHETHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL) OR ANY OTHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL LOSS OR DAMAGE.



FORMER ROYAL MAIL SORTING OFFICE, WICK LANE, CHRISTCHURCH, DORSET

Report of Archaeological Evaluation Trial Trenches

Contents

Summary	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
1 INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1 Project background	5
1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology.....	6
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	6
2.2 Recent investigations in the area.....	6
3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	7
4 METHODOLOGY.....	7
4.1 Introduction	7
4.2 Fieldwork.....	7
4.3 Evaluation Methodology	8
4.4 Monitoring	8
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS.....	9
5.1 Introduction	9
5.2 Trench 3.....	9
5.3 Trench 4.....	9
5.4 Trench 5.....	9
5.5 Trench 6.....	10
6 FINDS	11
7 DISCUSSION.....	12
8 PUBLICATION.....	13
9 STORAGE AND CURATION	13
9.1 Museum	13
9.2 Preparation of Archive.....	13
9.3 Discard policy.....	14
9.4 Copyright.....	14
9.5 Security Copy.....	14



10	REFERENCES.....	14
11	APPENDIX 1: TRENCH TABLES (PHASE II AND III).....	16

Figures

- Figure 1: Site location and plan
- Figure 2: Ditch 620; cuts 608 and 611

Plates

- Plate 1: Trench 3 from the south-east
- Plate 2: Trench 4 from the south-east
- Plate 3: Trench 4 from the south-west



FORMER ROYAL MAIL SORTING OFFICE, WICK LANE, CHRISTCHURCH, DORSET

Report of Archaeological Evaluation Trial Trenches

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Libra Homes to undertake Phases II and III of a phased programme of archaeological evaluation, on the site of the former Post Office Sorting Office, Wick Lane, Christchurch. The work was considered necessary to evaluate the presence, survival, distribution and archaeological value of deposits and features across the entire Site and to assess the threat that redevelopment for mixed commercial and residential use might have on the archaeological resource. The site lay in the core of the Anglo-Saxon and medieval town of Christchurch.

Phase I of the work (AAL 2010b), involved the excavation of two trenches on the anticipated line of a medieval ditch, previously recorded in 1983 (Harding 1984), and which was projected to cross the western end of the Site. Phase II of the work comprised three machine-excavated trenches which were dug across the eastern part of the Site. These trenches demonstrated that the Site had been truncated extensively by the construction of an 18th-19th- century brewery. No archaeological features survived.

The Phase III single evaluation trench was intended to re-examine the possibility that one of the two ditches found in the Phase I trenching could be equated with the medieval ditch. This additional trench confirmed that the upper parts of the stratigraphic sequence had been truncated but concluded that the medieval ditch recorded in 1983 was on the same alignment and of the same date as the more easterly of the two Phase I ditches, albeit with slight variations in profile.



FORMER ROYAL MAIL SORTING OFFICE, WICK LANE, CHRISTCHURCH, DORSET

Report of Archaeological Evaluation Trial Trenches

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Libra Homes for commissioning the work and particularly Andrew Rance, Principal Contractor for his help and assistance during the course of the work. Thanks are also due to Steve Wallis, County Archaeologist for Dorset County Council who requested the work and approved all stages of the project.

The Phase II and III trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Phil Harding assisted by Ray Kennedy in Phase II and Dave Murdie in Phase III. The report was compiled by Phil Harding with comments on the finds by Lorraine Mephram. The illustrations were prepared by Nancy Dixon.

The fieldwork was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andy King.



FORMER ROYAL MAIL SORTING OFFICE, WICK LANE, CHRISTCHURCH, DORSET

Report of Archaeological Evaluation Trial Trenches

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Libra Homes, (the Client) to undertake two phases of archaeological field evaluation (Phases II and III) at the Former Royal Mail Sorting Office, 71D Wick Lane, Christchurch, Dorset (hereafter the 'Site') centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 415866, 092662 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 Planning permission was granted (8/10/0492 & 8/10/0493) by Christchurch Borough Council (CBC) for the demolition of the former Royal Mail Sorting Office and a boundary wall off Wick Lane, and the erection of a mixed-use development including houses, flats, retail and office premises with associated parking, on condition that a programme of archaeological work was undertaken.
- 1.1.3 The Site lies within the historic Saxon and medieval core of Christchurch and is therefore an area of considerable archaeological interest. The County Archaeologist at Dorset County Council advised CBC that a phased programme of archaeological evaluation within the Site was essential to assess the archaeological potential of the Site. The results of the evaluation would provide information to guide the need and scope of further archaeological mitigation prior to or during construction.
- 1.1.4 An archaeological desk-based assessment (AAL 2010a) was completed which confirmed the archaeological potential of the Site. An initial Phase I archaeological evaluation comprising two machine-dug trenches (AAL 2010b) was undertaken in an area of car parking, in the south-western half of the Site, prior to the demolition of the Sorting Office.
- 1.1.5 Apart from evaluating the overall archaeological potential of this part of the Site these trenches were specifically concerned with locating and confirming the presence of an early medieval ditch (Harding 1984) the line of which was projected to pass through the western part of the Site.
- 1.1.6 Trench 1 of the Phase 1 evaluation identified two ditches, neither of which was considered to be sufficiently substantial to provide an effective defensive barrier, although the ditch recorded as context 123 was located on the expected alignment. Trench 2 produced no archaeological deposits or features.
- 1.1.7 Additional archaeological evaluation (Phase II) was requested to evaluate the archaeological potential of the remaining areas of the Site following demolition of the building.
- 1.1.8 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was drawn up by Wessex Archaeology (WA 2011) which set out the strategy and methodology by which Wessex Archaeology



intended to implement the archaeological evaluation. This document was submitted to and approved by the County Archaeologist at DCC prior to fieldwork commencing.

- 1.1.9 Following the completion of the Phase II evaluation in February 2014 the County Archaeologist requested a further trench (Phase III) to resolve whether the presence and line of the medieval ditch in the west part of the Site could be proven beyond doubt. This was to be the final phase of evaluation and took place in July 2014.

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 1.2.1 The Site comprised the former Royal Mail Sorting Offices that occupied a tongue of land bordered by Wick Lane to the north-west and Regents Way to the north-east and south-east. This area is immediately to the west of the core of the historic settlement (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 The Site lies at approximately 4.0m above Ordnance Datum (aOD)
- 1.2.3 The natural geology comprises a basal deposit of yellow Branksome Sand that is mottled with orange and grey silt and is capped by superficial Pleistocene sand and river gravel terrace deposits.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 An archaeological and historical background to the Site has been presented in a Desk-Based Assessment (AAI 2010a) and was summarised in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2011).
- 2.1.2 These documents demonstrated that there was likely to be only limited evidence for prehistoric or Romano-British activity on the Site or in the immediate vicinity.
- 2.1.3 The greatest potential lay in the fact that the Site was situated within the boundaries of the Anglo-Saxon burgh, which covered approximately 13 hectares, and its medieval successor. The nucleus of the early settlement was centred on the medieval priory, the location of which is thought to have been determined by an earlier Saxon church, and the castle (constructed around 1100AD) situated c. 100m to the east of the Site.
- 2.1.4 As with other Saxon burghs the settlement was surrounded by a V-shaped ditch, the line of which has been traced in numerous excavations, with a turf-covered inner defensive bank.
- 2.1.5 Prior to the construction of the Post Office and an adjacent arcade and shops in the 1960s, the Site was occupied by 'Square House', a town house that was probably built around 1776 by John Cook, (White, unpublished). The site also included Christchurch Brewery, a series of buildings to the north of the dwelling and to its rear, along Wick Lane and across the Site. The brewery continued in use into the 19th and possibly 20th century.

2.2 Recent investigations in the area

- 2.2.1 Excavations by the Wessex Archaeological Committee (WAC), now Wessex Archaeology, between 1981 and 1983 recorded (Harding 1984) a flat-bottomed ditch (W43), that was aligned NW-SE on the north side of Regent Way. A hand-excavated trench, approximately 50m north of the Site, demonstrated that the ditch measured approximately 4.5m wide and 1.4m deep. Early medieval (12th-13th century) pottery was recovered from the basal fills.



- 2.2.2 This trench confirmed the presence of a large boundary ditch that was first identified in two machine-dug trenches (W42) located approximately 60 m to the NW of W43. The ditch, which ran parallel to the line of the Anglo-Saxon burgh defences, was regarded as marking a retraction of the medieval town from its Saxon boundary. The projected line of the ditch passed through the west edge of the Site.
- 2.2.3 The Phase 1 evaluation (AAI 2010b), within the western half of the Site comprised two machine-dug trenches approximately 10 m long. Trench 1 was positioned to confirm the line of the medieval ditch recorded by WAC (Harding 1984). The work identified two boundary features [123 and 117], both running perpendicular to Wick Lane, on the anticipated line of the medieval ditch. Ditch 123 was a shallow feature with a concave base and appeared to have been recut; the other [117] extended from the SW end of the trench and could not be totally exposed in plan. Neither of these individual components appeared to be of a similar size and shape to the medieval boundary ditch. Pottery ranged from the medieval to post-medieval periods.
- 2.2.4 The evaluation report concluded that the line of the medieval ditch could not be confirmed in the Site. A pit identified in Trench 1 was dated to the 15th or 16th century.
- 2.2.5 Foundations associated with the former brewery buildings were identified in Trench 2. No other archaeological features were identified.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The Phase II archaeological field evaluation (Trenches 3-5) set out to:
- Clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be threatened by development.
 - Identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site.
 - Assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.
 - Produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation in sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made concerning the Site's archaeological potential.
- 3.1.2 The Phase III evaluation (Trench 6) set out to resolve conclusively whether the line of the medieval ditch could be traced across the west part of the Site.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The WSI (WA 2011) detailed the methodology to be implemented by Wessex Archaeology in undertaking the work, including measures to consider Health and Safety, service location, and depth of excavation. In addition methodologies for the selection, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were included including procedures for the reporting of human remains and treasure.
- 4.1.2 This methodology was adopted for the subsequent work undertaken in Phase III.

4.2 Fieldwork



- 4.2.1 Following demolition and the breaking out of the raft foundation, three trenches (Trenches 3-5) were positioned within the eastern half of the Site. These machine excavated slots were intended to provide a comprehensive assessment of the archaeological potential of those areas at risk by the redevelopment. Two trenches (Trenches 3 and 5) each measuring 15m x 1.8m and a third trench (Trench 4) measuring 9m x 1.8m were excavated under constant archaeological supervision.
- 4.2.2 Trench 6 in Phase III measured 10m x 2m.
- 4.2.3 The trenches were laid out using GPS technology (**Figure 1**) and related to the Ordnance Survey.
- 4.2.4 The trial trenches were excavated using a tracked 360° excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Machine excavation continued to a point at which the natural deposits could be confirmed with certainty or to the top of archaeological levels, whichever was higher.
- 4.2.5 Trenches completed to the satisfaction of the Client and the County Archaeologist were backfilled using the excavated material and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

4.3 Evaluation Methodology

- 4.3.1 Once the level of archaeological deposits had been exposed by machine, the bases of the trenches were cleaned by hand where necessary and appropriate sampling of archaeological features undertaken, in controlled, hand-excavated sections. The scope of the sampling was agreed with the Client and County Archaeologist.
- 4.3.2 All exposed archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system. This system ensures that all excavated archaeological features and deposits are planned and recorded at appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections), and referenced to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and levelled to the Ordnance Datum (OD).
- 4.3.3 A full digital photographic record was maintained during the evaluation including trench record photographs and general views to place the Site and work in its local context.

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 Wessex Archaeology maintained contact with the County Archaeologist throughout, from the commencement of fieldwork to its conclusion and ensured that reasonable access to the Site could be arranged for the purpose of monitoring the archaeological investigations as they progressed.



5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Three trenches were excavated during the Phase II evaluation. These trenches were numbered 3-5 to avoid confusion with Trenches 1 and 2, which comprised Phase I of the evaluation.

5.2 Trench 3

5.2.1 This trench was aligned NNW-SSE on the NW side of the Site, parallel with and approximately 18m NE of Trench 2.

5.2.2 The trench, which measured 15m in length, extended from the boundary wall of the former Sorting Office across the central part of the Site. This location was intended to cross the site of two buildings, one square and the other, an elongated structure; the latter listed on an auction document of 1854 as a cellar of the Christchurch Brewery.

5.2.3 Excavation showed that the stratigraphic sequence comprised 0.30m of demolition rubble and made-up ground (301) that directly overlay orange-brown sand and matrix-supported, well sorted, horizontally bedded, sub angular and rounded fluvial gravel (302). The contact surface of these two units was clear and there was no indication of either natural topsoil horizon or subsoil.

5.2.4 Towards the SE end of trench 3 two brick walls were noted, aligned NE-SW and approximately 5m apart. The two walls were separated by a stone-paved floor which was laid directly onto the surface of the natural gravel.

5.2.5 These wall lines correspond exactly with those shown on the 1854 auction document as being the cellar of the brewery. No traces of the square building to the NW were seen.

5.3 Trench 4

5.3.1 This trench was also aligned NW-SE and measured 9m long at the east end of the Site.

5.3.2 The machined section revealed an identical sequence to that seen in Trench 3, where overburden (401), approximately 0.30m thick, directly overlay a truncated surface of undisturbed sandy fluvial gravel (402). Two brick wall foundations were truncated by the machine.

5.3.3 A shallow, wall-foundation was noted to be contemporary in construction to the stone floor seen in Trench 3, which formed part of the brewery cellar. The position of the wall in Trench 4 coincided with the plotted location of the SE wall of a second range of buildings which formed part of a second cellar of the brewery, to the NE of that found in Trench 3.

5.3.4 A more substantial concrete wall foundation was located to the SE of the brewery wall. This foundation which was cut into the natural gravel probably formed part of the recently demolished Sorting Office.

5.3.5 No other features or deposits of archaeological character were observed.

5.4 Trench 5

5.4.1 A trench, measuring 15m long, was aligned NE-SW and parallel to Wick Lane, approximately 7m from the street frontage. This location provided an opportunity to



examine the potential survival of archaeological deposits and features related to occupation fronting onto Wick Lane.

- 5.4.2 The results of the evaluation replicated the results seen in the other two trenches with a surface layer of made-up ground (501) overlying fluvial sand and gravel (402 and 403). The undisturbed nature of the fluvial gravel was confirmed by the presence of a sand bed (402), which capped the gravel. This bed, which measured 0.10m thick, comprised horizontally bedded sand with alternate laminae of silt.
- 5.4.3 No archaeological features or deposits were present.

5.5 Trench 6

- 5.5.1 This trench represented additional work requested by the County Archaeologist to resolve the issue of the medieval ditch and meet the requirements of the Planning Consent.
- 5.5.2 The trench measured 10m long and 1.8m wide and was aligned NE to SW approximately 5m NE of Trench 1, and off-set 3m to the NE to allow for the postulated line of the medieval ditch being wrongly projected. This strategy provided not only supplementary coverage of the Site that could be added to the results from Trench 1 but also the opportunity to reassess the results of Trench 1.
- 5.5.3 The excavation confirmed that nothing survived of the natural topsoil or subsoil deposits. The surface deposits comprised from 0.80 – 1m of overburden (601), some of which, primarily broken drink bottles, could be related directly to the brewery.
- 5.5.4 The contact between the overburden and the underlying geology was, as seen in all other trenches, sharp, indicating that the upper parts of the geological sequence had been truncated. The overburden lay directly onto a thin veneer of fluvial gravel (610) but elsewhere lay directly onto the basal Branksome Sand (609).
- 5.5.5 The excavation revealed evidence of a linear ditch [Gp 620], orientated NW-SE and aligned directly onto ditch 123 identified in the Phase 1 evaluation. This feature was also excavated by machine due to water-logging and a modern intrusion that contained fragments of tarmac, which was present in the centre of the feature.
- 5.5.6 Ditch [Gp 620] was cut to a level of approximately 1.86m aOD. The profiles in the opposing sections of the trench were markedly different. Ditch 608 on the SE side measured 2.85m across and 0.70m deep with moderately regular sides that sloped down to a concave base. This profile was similar to that seen in ditch [123] in evaluation trench 1.
- 5.5.7 The profile of the ditch [611] in the opposing section measured 2.70m wide and 0.80m deep with moderately sloping sides. The lower part of the ditch slope on the eastern side was formed by a marked step that descended to a flat base, approximately 1.30m across. This profile is strongly reminiscent of that recorded by Harding (1984, fig. 20).
- 5.5.8 The ditch fills were similar in both sections and demonstrated a sequence of natural silting. The impermeable character of the Branksome Sand has determined that the lower parts of the sedimentary sequence may well have been deposited under water logged conditions.
- 5.5.9 The basal angles of the ditch profile were filled with deposits of clean orange-brown fluvial gravel (606, 607, 613, 614), which, although poorly sorted, preserved traces of individual tip lines. The quantity of material was consistently greater (606, 613) on the NE side. Most



of this material probably derived from the west facing weathering cone of the ditch with sediment supplied from the veneer of fluvial gravel that caps the Branksome Sand. Additional material may have originated from the former bank. The upper parts of these primary fills were darker, possibly incorporating sand that had migrated down from the secondary fills. A sherd of pottery from the tubular spout of an early medieval spouted pitcher was found in the base of the ditch (613).

- 5.5.10 The central part of the primary ditch deposits in 611 comprised dark sand (612). A similar dark sandy deposit filling the central part of the ditch was recorded by Harding (1984) which was considered to indicate that the ditch had been recut; however the sand in Trench 6 clearly interdigitated with the gravel on either side. This suggests that rather than showing two separate events the sequence represents a slowing of the silting process with material derived from the sand of the fluvial gravel with some input from the Branksome Sand.
- 5.5.11 The secondary (605, 604 in 608; 615 in 611), and tertiary (602, 603 in 608; 616, 617 in 611) ditch fills in both sections were dominated by grey sandy silt. These deposits were poorly defined but showed varying quantities of flint gravel, as well as slight variations in texture and colour. Both sections contained a layer of stone-free, dark grey/black silt (604, 615) which may represent a phase of stabilisation.
- 5.5.12 The deposits in both sections also showed a slight bias of material derived from the east side. This probably originated from a bank, although there was nothing to indicate that the bank had been backfilled deliberately.
- 5.5.13 None of the numerous sections that have now been excavated through the ditch provide any strong indication that the ditch was maintained, cleaned out or recut on a regular basis.
- 5.5.14 To the west of the ditch was a pit [619], possibly one of many which seem to be consistently found on this side of the ditch. This stands in contrast to the surface of the gravel on the east side where there are no features at all, which probably relates to the location of the former bank.

6 FINDS

- 6.1.1 Finds recovered were restricted to two sherds of pottery and one piece of animal bone. No additional bulk samples for environmental analysis were taken to supplement those processed in the Phase I evaluation (AAL 2010b).
- 6.1.2 One pottery sherd came from layer 613, at the base of the ditch. This is a small sherd, but is diagnostic, belonging to the tubular spout of an early medieval spouted pitcher. The fabric is a hard, medium-grained sandy fabric of a type found widely across east Dorset and south-east Wiltshire, from Poole Harbour to Salisbury. This ware has a lengthy currency, from at least the late 11th century through to at least the early 14th century and possibly beyond; there is one known source, at the Laverstock production centre outside Salisbury, operating from the mid 13th to early 14th century (Musty *et al.* 1969; Musty *et al.* 2001). The tripod pitchers can, however, be narrowed down within this range. Several well stratified (late 11th/early 12th century) examples are known from Old Sarum (Stone and Charlton 1935, fig. 5, nos. 17-9, 22, 25, 29, 31), but none were found in the mid to late 12th-century pits at Laverstock. Given this evidence, the dating of comparable vessels from Poole as late 12th or early 13th century seems rather late, but is supported by comparable evidence from Southampton (Brown 1992). Examples previously found in



Christchurch are dated as 11th to 12th century (Thomson *et al.* 1983, fig. 23, nos. 112-3). This sherd, then, could be as late as early 13th century, but a date within the 12th century seems on balance more likely.

- 6.1.3 The second sherd (from layer 616) is in the same fabric type, but is an undiagnostic body sherd, and so cannot be confidently dated more closely within the overall date range of late 11th to early 14th century, although the likelihood is that it belongs to the 12th or 13th century.
- 6.1.4 The piece of animal bone, which came from layer 613, is a cattle tooth.

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1.1 The phased archaeological evaluation undertaken at the former Royal Mail Sorting Office was designed to evaluate the presence, survival, distribution and archaeological value of deposits and features across the entire Site and to assess the threat that redevelopment might have on this archaeological resource.
- 7.1.2 In addition, this was an opportunity to confirm whether a medieval ditch, formerly located in 1983 (Harding 1984), and projected to cross the western end of the Site, could be traced. An initial phase of evaluation (AAL 2010b) located two ditches on the anticipated line. Both features were considered to be insubstantial and unlikely to equate with the medieval ditch, which was considered to be sufficiently important in the story of Christchurch that an additional phase of trenching was merited to resolve the issue.
- 7.1.3 Widely-spaced trenching across the east part of the Site, Trenches 3, 4 and 5, demonstrated that this area had been truncated extensively by post medieval development, possibly linked to the construction of the brewery. This had not only removed all traces of topsoil, subsoil, medieval and earlier archaeological deposits but also the upper parts of the fluvial gravel. Excavation of trench W43 (Harding 1984) indicates that the original topsoil/subsoil accumulation may have been up to 1m thick.
- 7.1.4 The topographic survey has confirmed that surface truncation was greater in the west part of the Site. The truncated surface of the fluvial gravel in the areas of Trench 3, 4 and 5 was reached at approximately 3.6m a OD; however the gravel surface in the Phase I and III trenches was found at approximately 2.7m a OD. To some extent this can be attributed to the natural fall in the natural ground level which drops both from E-W and also more noticeably from N-S. The level of the fluvial sand and gravel occurred at approximately 4.22 and 4m OD in W42 and W43 (Harding 1984) respectively.
- 7.1.5 When these topographic considerations are taken into account it is possible to relate these data to the archaeological evidence for the medieval ditch. Ditch 123 of the Phase I evaluation (AAL 2010b) and ditch 608 of the Phase III work are undoubtedly the same feature with comparable concave ditch profiles. However the profile of ditch 611, on the north side of Trench 6, has a flat base and a marked 'step' near the base on the east side, identical to that recorded in W43 (Harding 1984).
- 7.1.6 The sedimentary sequence in ditch 611 is also identical to that in W43, most notably the sandy deposit that separates the primary tips of gravel. This was considered (Harding 1984) to represent a phase during which the ditch was recut, although the results of the recent evaluation trench have cast doubt on this interpretation.
- 7.1.7 The artefact assemblages, most notably the pottery, are also identical.



- 7.1.8 It seems safe to conclude that the ditch 123 identified in the Phase I evaluation and ditch 620 in the Phase III evaluation trenching are associated with the ditch identified in 1983. However no further information was found to clarify details of feature 117 of the Phase I evaluation, which was also thought to be a ditch. The reduction in the overall dimensions of ditch 123/620 can be attributed to the level of truncation of the overlying deposits.
- 7.1.9 It is also possible that Phase I evaluation trench was located near a terminus respecting Wick Lane, as it approached the burgh from the west.
- 7.1.10 The possible continuation of the ditch beyond Wick Lane is less certain; it is possible that the line of the ditch continued and was either influenced, or was influenced by, the alignment of Quay Road.
- 7.1.11 The pottery assemblage is all of early medieval date, suggesting that the ditch may have been cut as early as the 12th century, speculatively connected with events at Christchurch Castle. Possible candidates may relate to hostilities during the conflict between Stephen and Matilda in 1147 or the construction of the stone keep in 1160.
- 7.1.12 The series of excavations (Harding 1984, AAL 2010b) and the most recent examination that have now been undertaken have consistently produced relatively scant traces of archaeological features on the internal, eastern edge of the ditch. This probably relates to the position of the bank. In contrast all phases of work have produced features to the west.

8 PUBLICATION

- 8.1.1 The results of the fieldwork will be published at least to summary level, within one year of completion of all phases of fieldwork in an appropriate local journal, which in this case should be a short note in the *Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society Proceedings* (DNHAS) Other forms of publication (e.g. 'popular publication', electronic media/Internet) may be employed where appropriate.

9 STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

- 9.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Dorset County Museum. Transfer of title of the finds to the Museum will be sought from the landowner.

9.2 Preparation of Archive

- 9.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Dorset Museum Service, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; IfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the site code (**103010**), and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:
- 1 airtight plastic box with two pottery sherds and an animal tooth



- 1file of paper records & A3/A4 graphics

9.3 Discard policy

- 9.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the dispersal of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis.
- 9.3.2 All finds will be recorded to an appropriate archive level before discard, and discard will be fully documented in the project archive.

9.4 Copyright

- 9.4.1 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 recipient 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-profitmaking, and conforms with the *Copyright and Related Rights* regulations 2003.

9.5 Security Copy

- 9.5.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. 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.

10 REFERENCES

- AAI, 2010a *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: Former Royal Mail Sorting Office Off Wick Lane in Christchurch, Dorset*, Allen Archaeology Limited, unpublished client report.
- AAI, 2010b *Archaeological Evaluation Report: Former Trial Trenching at the Former Royal Mail Sorting Office, Wick Lane, Christchurch, Dorset*, Allen Archaeology Limited, unpublished client report.
- Brown, D.H., 1992. A note on the tripod pitchers, in I.P. Horsey, *Excavations in Poole 1973–1983, Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc. Monogr.* 10, 102-106
- Harding, P., 1984. The 1983 excavations: Wick Lane Access Road and Regent Cinema. in Davies, S.M. 'Excavations at Christchurch, Dorset, 1981 to 1983', *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.* 105 (1983), 53-5
- Musty, J., Algar, D.J. and Ewence, P.F., 1969. The medieval pottery kilns at Laverstock, near Salisbury, Wiltshire, *Archaeologia* 102, 83-150
- Musty, J., with Algar, D., Gerrard, C. and Hadley, J., 2001, Pottery, tile and brick, in P. Saunders (ed.), *Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum Medieval Catalogue Part 3*, Salisbury, 132-212
- Stone, J.F.S. and Charlton, J., 1935, Trial excavations in the east suburb of Old Sarum, *Antiq. J.* 15, 174-92



Thomson, R.G., Barton, K.J. and Jarvis, K.S., The pottery, in K.S. Jarvis, Excavations in Christchurch 1969-1980, *Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc. Monogr.* 5, 53-68

Wessex Archaeology, 2011, *Former Royal Mail Sorting Office, Wick Lane, Christchurch, Dorset. Written Scheme of Investigation: Method Statement for an Archaeological Evaluation.* unpublished client report ref. 79830.01



11 APPENDIX 1: TRENCH TABLES (PHASE II AND III)

Trench 1		
Context	Description	Interpretation
Part of Phase 1 excavated by Allen Archaeology		

Trench 2		
Context	Description	Interpretation
Part of Phase 1 excavated by Allen Archaeology		

Trench 3		
Length 15m Width 1.80m Depth 0.70m		
Context	Description	Interpretation
301	Layer.	Made ground
302	Layer. Orange-brown matrix supported gravel. Well sorted and horizontally bedded. Frequent small sub-angular and sub rounded flint gravel	Pleistocene river sand and gravel

Trench 4		
Length 10m Width 1.80 m Depth 0.80 m		
Context	Description	Interpretation
401	Layer	Made ground
402	Layer. Light yellow sandy gravel. Well sorted and horizontally bedded. Frequent small sub-angular and sub rounded flint gravel	Pleistocene river sand and gravel

Table 5		
Length 15m Width 1.80m Depth 1.0m		
Context	Description	Interpretation
501	Layer.	Made ground
502	Layer. Bedded sand with occasional silt laminates	Pleistocene river sand and gravel

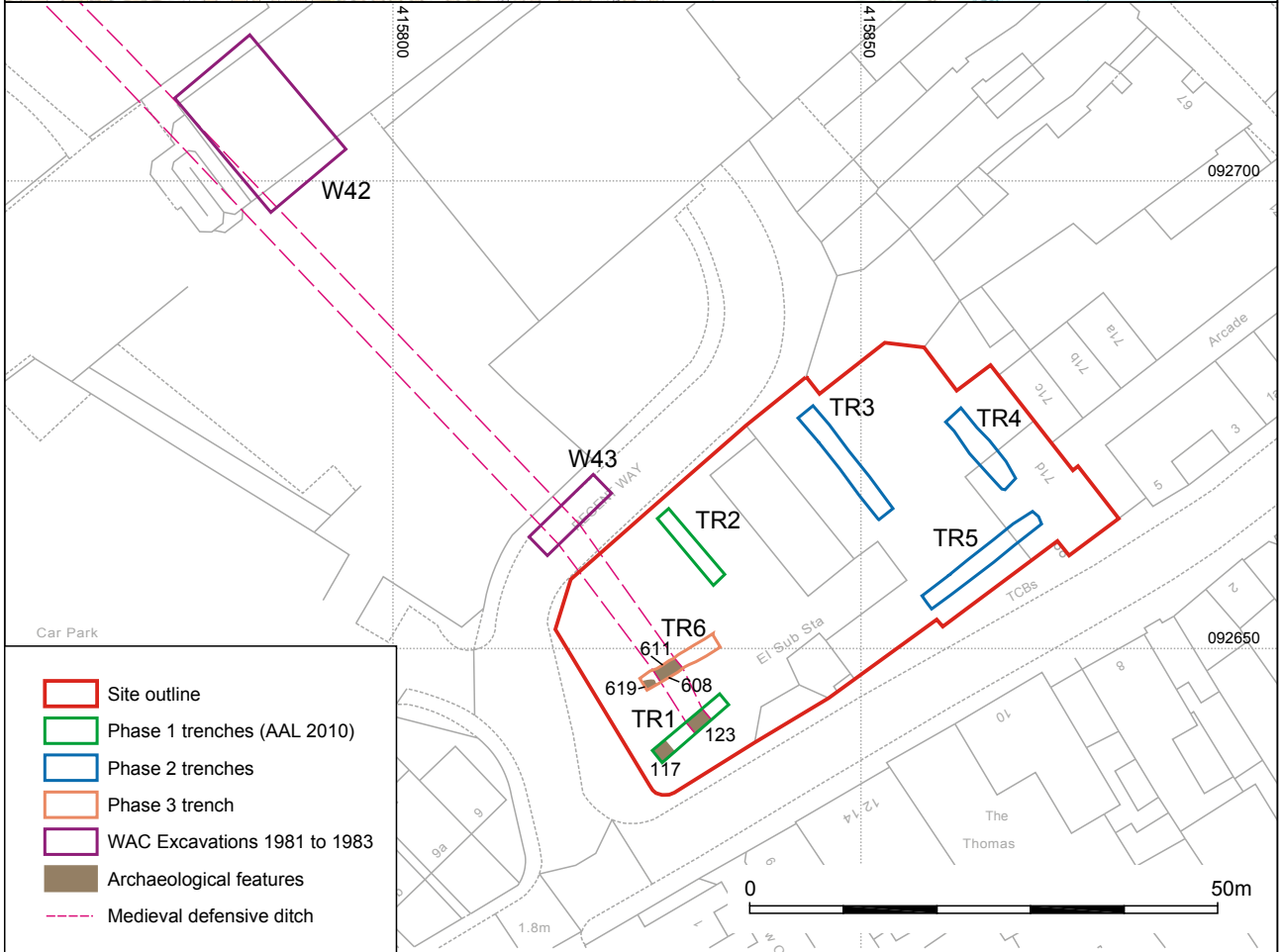
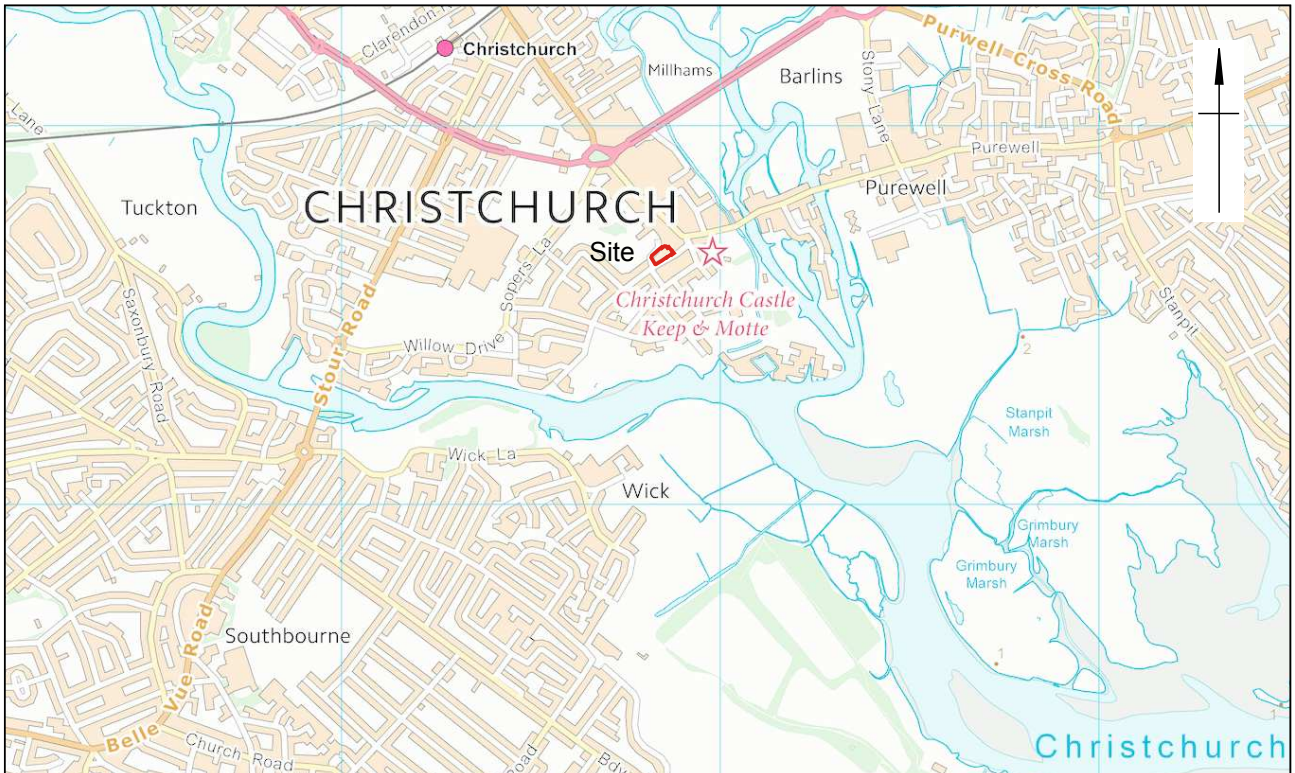


503	Layer. Yellow matrix supported sand and gravel. Well sorted and horizontally bedded. Frequent small sub-angular and sub rounded flint gravel	Pleistocene river sand and gravel
-----	--	-----------------------------------

Table 6		
Length 10m Width 1.80m Depth 1.60m (max)		
Context	Description	Interpretation
601	Layer Black sandy silt with brick, bottle glass and sub angular flint gravel. Clear truncation surface with underlying natural gravel.	Overburden. Debris from the brewery and Post Office
602	Fill. Very dark grey sandy silt with common flint gravel 0.05m and frequent charcoal flecks.	Tertiary ditch fill
603	Fill. Light grey-brown sandy silt with frequent flint gravel >0.03m and rare charcoal flecks. Frequent gravel, especially along east edge, possibly derived from bank	Tertiary ditch fill
604	Fill. Light grey sandy silt with occasional flint gravel >0.02m. Possibly sorted horizon	Ditch fill ?stabilisation
605	Fill. Dark grey-brown mottled green sandy silt with common flint gravel >0.02m with occasional charcoal flecks	Secondary ditch fill
606	Fill. Dark yellow-brown sandy gravel on east edge of ditch floor	Primary ditch fill
607	Fill. Dark yellow-brown sandy gravel on west edge of ditch floor	Primary ditch fill
608	Cut. Linear ditch aligned N-S with moderate, regular sides and concave base. 2.85m wide and 0.72m deep.	Early medieval ditch
609	Layer. Yellow mottled strong orange and grey silt	Branksome Sand
610	Layer Strong orange matrix supported coarse-fine sandy gravel with poorly sorted sub rounded flint gravels	Pleistocene river sand and gravel
611	Cut. Linear ditch aligned N-S with flat base and moderately sloping sides	Early medieval ditch
612	Fill. Dark grey sand and sandy silt. Occupies central core of primary fill. Sand derived from Pleistocene gravels. Interdigitates with gravel on either side.	Primary ditch fill
613	Fill. Yellow-grey sand and gravel with fine-medium sub angular flints on east side of ditch base. Poorly defined tip lines. More accentuated than mirror deposit on west.	Primary ditch fill
614	Fill. Yellow-grey sand and gravel with fine-medium sub angular flints on east side of ditch base. Clean fresh gravel at base. Poorly defined tip lines. Less accentuated than mirror deposit	Primary ditch fill



	on east	
615	Fill. Black silt with isolated sub angular flints <0.10m. Mainly confined to east side of ditch	Possible stabilisation horizon.
616	Fill. Dark grey mottled grey-green silt/silty sand with rare sub rounded flint gravel <0.05m.	Secondary ditch fill
617	Fill. Dark grey sandy silt with sub angular flint gravel <0.10m which is more prevalent in central weathering cone. Clear contact with 601	Tertiary ditch fill
618	Fill. Black sandy silt with very rare small flint gravel <0.02m. Unexcavated, water logged.	Pit fill
619	Cut. Corner of angular pit with vertical sides extending from SW corner of trench. Area exposed covered 1.20 x 0.65m	Possible cess pit, undated
620	Group. Number allocated to 608 and 611	Early medieval ditch



Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright (year) All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449.
 Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2012.
 This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.

Date:	31/07/2014	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:20,000 & 1:800	Illustrator:	ND
Path:	X:\PROJECTS\103010\Graphics_Office\Rep figs\Eval\2014_07_31\103010_eval.dwg		

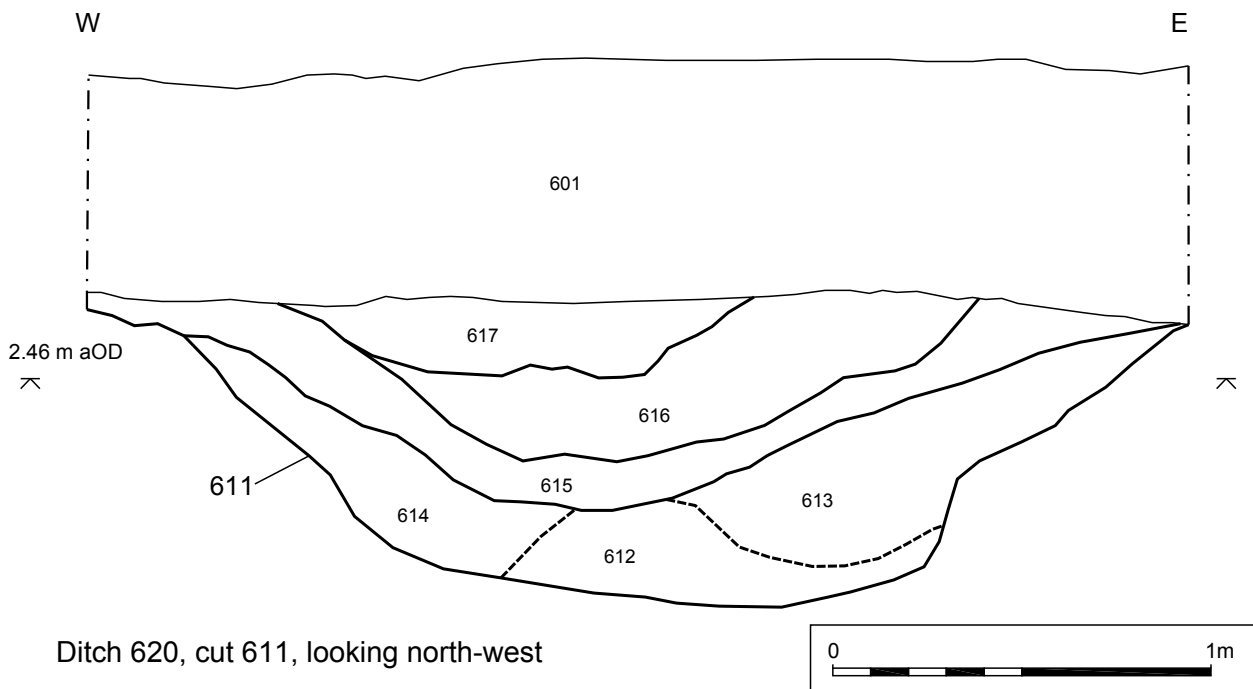


Site location and plan

Figure 1



Plate 4: Ditch 620, cut 608, looking south-east



Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright (year) All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449.
 Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2012.
 This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.

Date:	31/07/2014	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:20,000 & 1:800	Illustrator:	ND
Path:	X:\PROJECTS\103010\Graphics_Office\Rep figs\Eval\2014_07_31\103010_eval.dwg		





Plate 1: Trench 3 from the south-east



Plate 2: Trench 4 from the south-east



Plate 3: Trench 4 from the south-west

Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright (year) All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449.
 Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2012.
 This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.



Date:	31/07/2014	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:20,000 & 1:800	Illustrator:	ND
Path:	X:\PROJECTS\103010\Graphics_Office\Rep figs\Eval\2014_07_31\103010_eval.dwg		



salisbury rochester sheffield edinburgh



Wessex Archaeology Ltd registered office Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB
Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk



Wessex Archaeology Ltd is a company limited by guarantee registered in England, company number 1712772. It is also a Charity registered in England and Wales, number 287786; and in Scotland, Scottish Charity number SC042630. Our registered office is at Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.