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# Avington Manor, Avington Hungerford, West Berkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



West Berkshire Council Planning Application Ref: 14/02284/HOUSE  
Accession code: NEBYM: 2015.53  
Ref: 106860.03  
July 2015



**Avington Manor, Avington  
Hungerford, West Berkshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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**July 2015**

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## Quality Assurance

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<b>Planning Application Ref.</b>	14/02284/HOUSE	<b>Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)</b>	437089 168063		

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

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# Avington Manor, Avington Hungerford, West Berkshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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# **Avington Manor, Avington Hungerford, West Berkshire**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Charles Knowles Design acting on behalf of Mr Pete Czernin to undertake an archaeological watching brief during development at the Grade II Listed 18<sup>th</sup> century Avington Manor, Avington, Hungerford, West Berkshire, (NGR 437089 168063). The house was constructed upon and partially includes elements of an earlier 16<sup>th</sup> century structure. The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of excavated foundation trenches for a new extension and a cable trench to connect the manor house and associated buildings to a new biomass heating system. The fieldwork was undertaken between June and July 2015.

The watching brief identified a single small stone wall potentially associated with the foundation of the manor though this could not be proved and a number of brick built walls associated with post-medieval or modern out-buildings not identified on historic mapping. Below-ground structural remains were identified during the excavation of the foundation trenches and are likely to represent an earlier phase of building prior to the 1970s extension. A brick lined well was also recorded. No further archaeological investigation is recommended on the site.



# **Avington Manor, Avington Hungerford, West Berkshire**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

### **Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by Charles Knowles Design on behalf of Pete Czernin. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Nick Hiscocks (R Moulding & Co), Nick Manuel (Nick Manuel Biomass) and Tony Dance (Timms Eida Associates) for all their assistance on site. We also acknowledge the advice of Alex Godden (West Berkshire Council Archaeologist).

The watching brief was undertaken by Mike Dinwiddy, John Powell, Simon Flaherty and Tom Blencowe. This report was written and compiled by Tom Blencowe. The finds were assessed by Lorraine Mepham and the illustrations were prepared by Karen Nichols. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Gareth Chaffey.



# Avington Manor, Avington Hungerford, West Berkshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.2 Project Background

- 1.2.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Charles Knowles Design acting on behalf of Mr Pete Czernin, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during development at Avington Manor, Avington, Hungerford, West Berkshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 437089 168063 (hereafter 'the Site') (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 Conditional planning permission (14/02284/HOUSE) was granted for the demolition of the existing 1970's additions and replacement with single storey additions, pool house alterations and the excavation of a biomass service trench.
- 1.2.3 Due to the nature of the Site, the Archaeological Officer of West Berkshire Council (WBC) recommended that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during all intrusive groundworks with the following archaeological condition attached to the planning approval requiring that;

*No development/site works/development shall take place within the application area until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall incorporate and be undertaken in accordance with the approved statement.*

*Reason: To ensure that any significant archaeological remains that are found are adequately recorded.*

- 1.2.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the watching brief (WA 2015) was prepared by WA and submitted to, and approved by, the County Archaeologist at WBC prior to the start of the fieldwork. The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2014a).
- 1.2.5 Accordingly a watching brief was carried out intermittently between the 3<sup>rd</sup> June – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015 during the excavation of foundation trenches and the biomass trench.

#### 1.3 The Site

- 1.3.1 The Site is located 50 m north of the River Kennet within the hamlet of Avington, 3 km east of Hungerford, Berkshire.
- 1.3.2 The redevelopment primarily focused on the 1970's additions to the north elevation of the Grade II Listed 18<sup>th</sup> century house but also included the installation of a biomass heating boiler requiring buried pipes to connect the system to the buildings.



- 1.3.3 The ground surface was generally level at an approximate height above Ordnance Datum (aOD) of 95 m. The underlying geology consisted of the Seaford Chalk formation overlain by Sand and Gravel of the Upper Beenham Grange Gravel (British Geological Survey).

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.2 Historical background**

- 2.2.1 The Domesday survey of 1086 recorded an 'estate associated with Afa' at Avington and the presence of a nearby 12<sup>th</sup> century church suggests that a small village or settlement may have existed in the vicinity of the Site.
- 2.1.2 Avington Manor is a Grade II listed 18<sup>th</sup> century house, built on the site of and incorporating some elements of an earlier 16<sup>th</sup> century manor house that burnt down in 1769, including a series of Grade II Listed Tudor garden walls to the north of the main house.
- 2.1.3 As such, it was possible that archaeological deposits related to the medieval period may have existed within and around the house. While the majority of the proposed development was designed to take place within the footprint of existing buildings (where any surviving archaeology would have already been severely disturbed) the works proposed to extend the existing driveway, as well as extend the new build outside of the existing footprint impacted areas relatively undisturbed and thus had the potential to contain archaeological deposits.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Aims and objectives**

- 3.1.1 The objective of the watching brief was to record, as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, nature, character and relationships of any surviving archaeological remains observed during the excavation of the foundations for the new extension and biomass trench.

### **3.2 Fieldwork methodology**

- 3.2.1 The full detailed methodology of the archaeological works was set out in a WSI (WA 2015) but is summarised below.
- 3.2.2 A continuous archaeological presence was maintained during the excavation of the foundation trenches for the extension and the biomass service trench. Due to Health and Safety considerations no access could be gained to the foundation trenches and as such, all observations were made from a safe distance at ground surface.
- 3.2.3 Although access was possible to the biomass service trench the narrow nature of the trench restricted photographic recording to high angled shots instead of true sections.
- 3.2.4 All deposits of significance were recorded using WA's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts.
- 3.2.5 A full photographic record was compiled using digital images. The record illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features, finds excavated, and the site as a whole. Digital images have been subject to a managed quality control and curation process which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and ensures the long term accessibility of the image set.



- 3.2.6 Site survey was carried out using a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30 mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.
- 3.2.7 The unique project code **106860** and accession code **NEBYM: 2015.53** were allocated to the Site, and used on all records and finds.

## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

### 4.1 Natural deposits and soil sequences

- 4.1.1 The soil sequences varied across the site. The foundation trenches highlight the extent of disturbance around the manor house, with multiple phases of post-medieval construction and subsequent demolition creating an accumulation of associated debris sealing the river terrace gravels. This indicates any former archaeological deposits have been severely truncated.
- 4.1.2 The biomass service trench showed a similar pattern with sterile top and sub-soils preserved in areas devoid of existing constructions. Further proof of truncation was noted close to buildings where layers of made ground and levelling layers of Type 1 aggregate were observed, in places right down to the chalk bedrock.

### 4.2 Foundation trenches

- 4.2.1 The groundworks for the new extension encompassed an area measuring approximately 30 m by 15 m and covered an area slightly larger than the footprint of the previous extension (**Figure 2**). Due to the underlying geology (river terrace gravel deposits) the foundations were required to be much deeper than originally planned and were generally between 1.5 - 2.0 m in depth. This meant that the trenches were not safe for access, therefore all recording and observation was undertaken from the trench top.
- 4.2.2 Groundworks commenced with a dig to reduce the previous floor surface of the extension and surrounding flower beds. During this phase of activity numerous redundant footings and services were encountered (**Plate 1**). Beneath this overburden a quantity of post-medieval refuse was discovered with the material derived from a spread as opposed to formal feature.
- 4.2.3 A below-ground plant room extended away from the manor house in a north-easterly direction and had been exposed by demolition of the 1970s extension at the start of the watching brief. Possible subterranean features either side of the plant room were suggested by recesses in the walls of this plant room. These recesses appeared to be deliberate constructions formed with lintels but subsequently bricked up (**Plate 2**). During the reduce dig, it was thought possible that voids would be discovered behind the bricked up recesses (under the 1970s floor) potentially revealing a closed off cellar space. No such structures were encountered and it is thought that the recesses may have in fact been a later alteration made to accommodate (or allow ventilation around) bulky machinery in an otherwise confined space.
- 4.2.4 Well **1016** was discovered approximately 1.5 m from the north-east corner of the manor house. Brick lined and descending to a depth of approximately 6 m, this feature was formerly connected to the manor as evidenced by redundant steel pipes and is assumed to have provided water directly to the manor (**Plate 3**). The shaft was constructed with half bonded red brick and showed a gradual corbel, narrowing slightly from base to top. The brickwork was stacked and not mortared except the uppermost four courses. The



structure was capped with a neatly dressed circular capstone which incorporated a steel lifting eye for access.

4.2.5 No archaeological features were recorded within the foundation trenches/made ground.

### 4.3 Biomass service trench

4.3.1 The biomass service trench consisted of a single trench 0.45 m wide by 1.15 m deep and approximately 320 m in length. The trench was opened to facilitate the burial of services related to supplying heat primarily to the manor house as well as the ancillary buildings and tenanted properties of the estate. As such, numerous spurs from the main trench to these buildings were required.

4.3.2 During these works many modern services were encountered. These were found to be relatively shallow and without the expected sand or gravel backfill. As a result extra attention was taken and all services were exposed by hand digging methods.

4.3.3 During the excavation of this trench a total of four brick and two stone built structures were encountered and recorded. Structure **1004** (located in the rear garden of Property 3 **Figure 2**), consisted of two courses of frogged, red bricks laid in English Bond with a pale grey cement mortar on a broadly north-south alignment (**Plate 4**). Approximately 1 m was exposed.

4.3.4 Structure **1006** was found on an east-west alignment and consisted of roughly hewn blocks and large cobbles of stone. Only surviving as a single course, this structure was built on made ground layer **1007** which consisted of redeposited natural gravel and rubble (**Plate 5**).

4.3.5 Structure **1009** was a south-west to north-east aligned brick built feature similar in appearance to **1004**, consisting of two courses of frogged red bricks laid in English Bond with a pale yellowy grey cement mortar. Although heavily disturbed and damaged this structure appeared to have been built directly onto the natural geology **1003** and was overlain by a modern layer of Type 1 and a tarmac surface (**Plate 6**).

4.3.6 Structure **1010** was potentially the oldest feature encountered during the groundworks phase. Located to the north-western side of the manor house it consisted of a 0.25m wide compacted flint and chalk footing observed 0.40 m below current ground level (**Plate 7**). The wall potentially formed part of a building separating inside and out as indicated from the differentiated deposits either side of the wall. A dark greyish-brown silty loam was recorded on the northern side of the feature, with natural mid brown flint gravel to the south. The wall was sealed by modern layers including the current pea gravel path surface. It should be noted that further disturbance was observed in the area as evidenced by electrical services in the trench.

4.3.7 Though no true date for the wall could be ascertained due to the lack of associated finds, an earlier date – potentially contemporary with the foundation of the manor may be inferred from construction materials; the use of flint and chalk not brick.

4.3.8 Structure **1013** was identified at the south-west of the manor. Similar to **1004** and **1009**, this feature was constructed of modern, frogged red brick, half bonded with pale yellowish-grey cement mortar.

4.3.9 Structure **1014** was observed at the base of the trench at the south-eastern corner of the manor. This feature appeared to be a floor surface or path constructed with red bricks laid



in a half bond fashion, butted against each other with no pointing. The bricks were bordered with dressed stone. As this structure was observed at the required depth of the trench, it was effectively preserved *in situ* and not disturbed for the purposes of recording.

- 4.3.10 Structure **1015**; a brick vaulted structure approximately 2 m in diameter was located approximately 20 m south of the manor house under the lawn (**Plate 8**). The biomass service trench cut through this structure, interpreted as a soak-away on the southern side.

## 5 FINDS

- 5.1.1 Finds were collected from topsoil and subsoil contexts, primarily for dating purposes. These included pottery, vessel glass and roof tile. The pottery and glass provide the best chronological evidence, and can be dated from late 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century. The pottery included three complete stoneware vessels (small preserve jar from Skeys of Tamworth, ink bottle, blacking/polish bottle), as well as sherds of further stoneware, creamware, pearlware and whiteware vessels. The glass included one complete Bovril jar, an almost complete small bottle in clear glass, a wine glass base, and three necks from green wine bottles. These finds have not been retained.

## 6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 6.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was present within the monitored areas.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 Although the watching brief was successful in meeting the aims and objectives established in the WSI, no features or finds could be definitively dated to the medieval period. The single east–west aligned flint and chalk built wall **1010**, was clearly constructed in a different method to the other revealed structures and therefore an earlier construction date is possible but not confirmed.
- 7.1.2 Conversations with estate staff and occupants of the tenanted cottages suggest that the modern red brick structures (**1004**, **1009** and **1013**) encountered in the biomass service trench have their origins in peripheral service buildings such as tool sheds and a toilet block, although no definite date for construction or demolition can be derived from this.
- 7.1.3 The presence of concrete from multiple phases of construction and demolition serves to highlight the level disturbance in the area immediately surrounding the manor house.
- 7.1.4 Structurally unsafe, recording opportunities were limited with regard structure **1015**. A number of ceramic lands drains were observed in the vicinity and the brickwork had been stained by damp to an even level around the internal circumference. These factors suggest that this feature is soakaway, albeit grander in scale and construction than may otherwise be expected.

## 8 STORAGE AND CURATION

### 8.1 Museum

It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with West Berkshire Museum, Newbury. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, under the accession code **NEBYM: 2015.53**. Deposition of any finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.



## 8.2 Preparation of Archive

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 West Berkshire Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014b; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

- 8.2.1 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators Forms. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the HER. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive), a copy of which is provided in **Appendix 2**.
- 8.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the **106860/ NEBYM: 2015.53**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:

- 1 files/document cases of paper records & A3/A4 graphics

## 8.3 Discard Policy

WA follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive. The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2002).

## 8.4 Security Copy

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.

## 8.5 Copyright

- 7.6.1 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*.
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## 9 REFERENCES

ADS 2013, *Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice*, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice



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## 11 APPENDIX 1: STRATIGRAPHIC SUMMARIES

bgl: Below Ground Level  
brl: Below Reduced Level

Biomass Service Trench			
Context	Description	Depth (m)	
1001	Layer	Top soil. Mid brown, loam with soft, loose garden lawn.	0.1 bgl
1002	Layer	Subsoil. Mid brown, sandy loam with pockets of clay.	0.1 - 0.8 bgl
1003	Layer	Natural. Gravels, very poorly sorted rounded flint pebbles and pea grit. Considerable variation in depth, undulating from 0.2 – 0.8	0.8+ bgl
1004	Structure	Brick structure. Frogged red brick laid in English bond with pale grey sand and cement mortar	-
1005	Layer	Made ground. Mid yellow-brown sandy clay with common to abundant sub angular flints $\leq 160\text{mm } \varnothing$ . Above wall <b>1006</b>	0 – 0.4m bgl
1006	Structure	Mixture of flint and greensand, roughly squared/hewn blocks and large cobbles/boulders.	0.4m+ bgl
1007	Layer	Made ground. Mid reddish yellow sandy clay with common cub angular flint gravels $\leq 160\text{mm } \varnothing$ . Wall 1006 built on this layer.	?
1008	Layer	Made ground. Mid brown silty clay with very common modern debris (CBM, metal and plastic) throughout.	0.1 – 0.55m bgl
1009	Structure	Wall footing constructed with red frogged bricks, roughly half bonded with pale yellow-grey cement mortar.	0.4 – 0.55m bgl
1010	Structure	Wall footing constructed with compacted flint stones	0.4m+ bgl
1011	Layer	Mid/dark brown silty clay loam with rare chalk flecking throughout.	0.3m+ bgl
1012	Layer	Made ground/paved surface	0 – 0.3m bgl
1013	Structure	Brick footing	
1014	Structure	Paved surface of red brick and dressed stone.	1.1m bgl
1015	Structure	Vaulted brick soakaway.	0.4m bgl

Foundation Trenches			
Context	Description	Depth (m)	
1016	Structure	Brick lined well shaft sunk through <b>1018</b> and <b>1019</b> .	6m+ brl
1017	Layer	Overburden. Heavily disturbed layer containing multiple phases of construction/demolition and associated services. Very common modern debris (CBM, glass metal, plastic etc.) throughout. Depth varies considerably across area.	0 – 0.5m+ bgl
1018	Layer	River terrace deposits, Beenham gravels. Sub angular flint gravel $\leq 100\text{mm } \varnothing$ with occasional, rounded flint boulders $\leq 400\text{mm } \varnothing$ . Also pockets of light brown fine silty clay throughout.	0.5 – 1.5m bgl
1019	Layer	Natural bedrock geology of the Seaford Chalk Formation.	1.5+ brl



## 12 APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: wessexar1-218437

### Project details

Project name	Avington Manor, Avington Hungerford, West Berkshire Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Charles Knowles Desgin acting on behalf of Mr Pete Czernin to undertake an archaeological watching brief during development at the Grade II Listed 18th century Avington Manor, Avington, Hungerford, West Berkshire, (NGR 437089 168063). The house was constructed upon and partially includes elements of an earlier 16th century structure. The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of excavated foundation trenches for a new extension and a cable trench to connect the manor house and associated buildings to a new biomass heating system. The fieldwork was undertaken between June and July 2015. The watching brief identified a single small stone wall potentially associated with the foundation of the manor though this could not be proved and a number of brick built walls associated with post-medieval or modern out-buildings not identified on historic mapping. Below-ground structural remains were identified during the excavation of the foundation trenches and are likely to represent an earlier phase of building prior to the 1970s extension. A brick lined well was also recorded. No further archaeological investigation is recommended on the site.
Project dates	Start: 01-06-2015 End: 21-07-2015
Previous/future work	Not known / No
Any associated project reference codes	14/02284/HOUSE - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	NEBYM: 2015.53 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	106860 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	WALL Medieval
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Monument type	WELL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Modern
Significant Finds	GLASS Modern
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	BERKSHIRE WEST BERKSHIRE HUNGERFORD Avington Manor



Postcode	RG170UL
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	SU 437089 168063 50.9484854453 -1.37772289211 50 56 54 N 001 22 39 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 94.00m Max: 95.00m

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	West Berkshire Council
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Gareth Chaffey
Project supervisor	Tom Blencowe
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Charles Knowles Design

#### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	West Berkshire Museum, Newbury
Digital Archive ID	NEBYM: 2015.53
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Database", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	West Newbury Museum, Berkshire
Paper Archive ID	NEBYM: 2015.53
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Drawing", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey", "Unpublished Text", "Unspecified Archive"

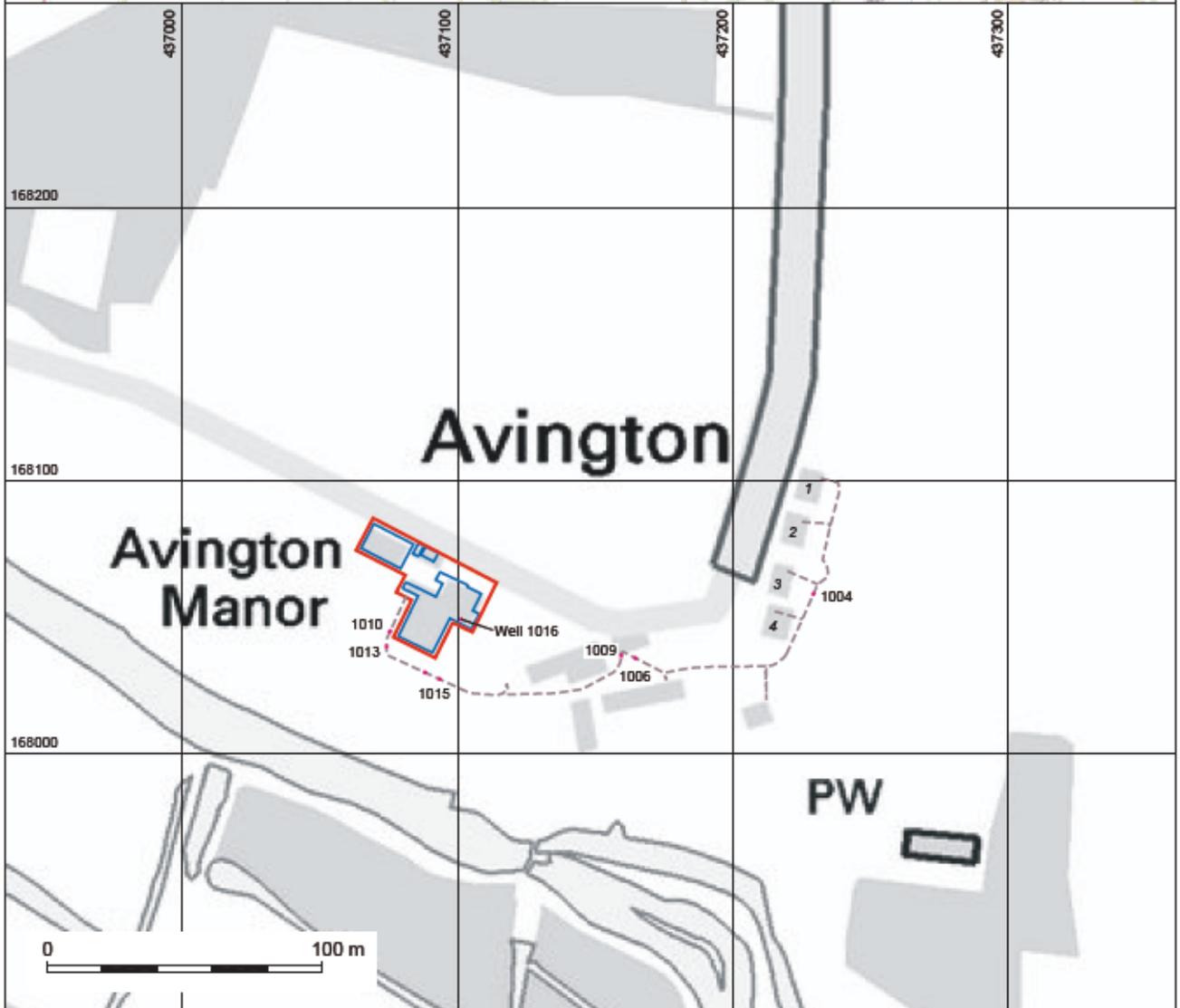
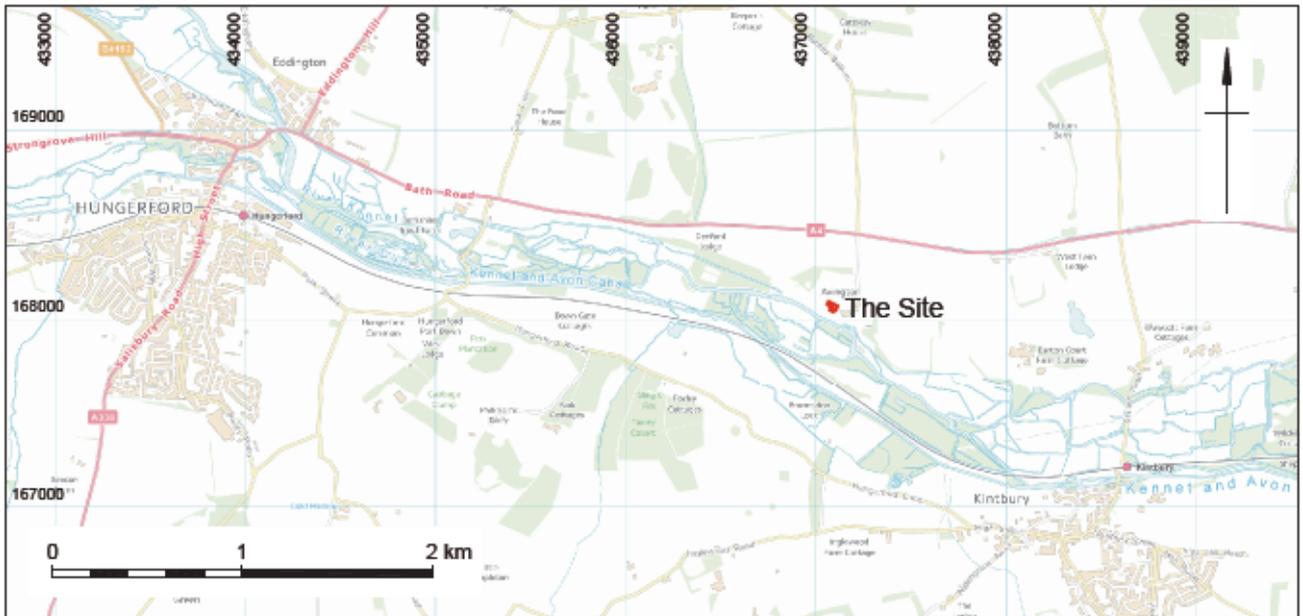
#### Project bibliography 1

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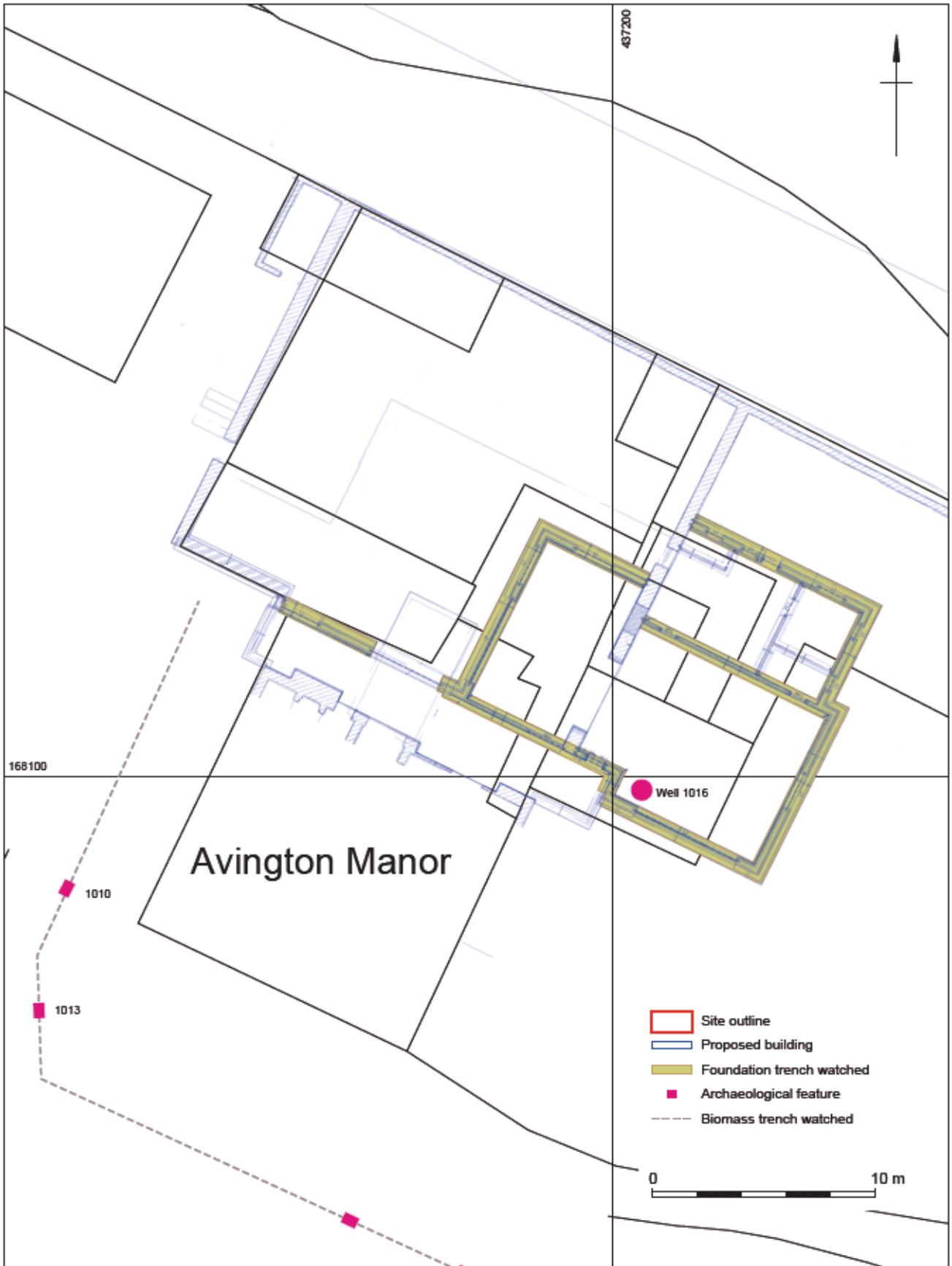
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Site location map and plan

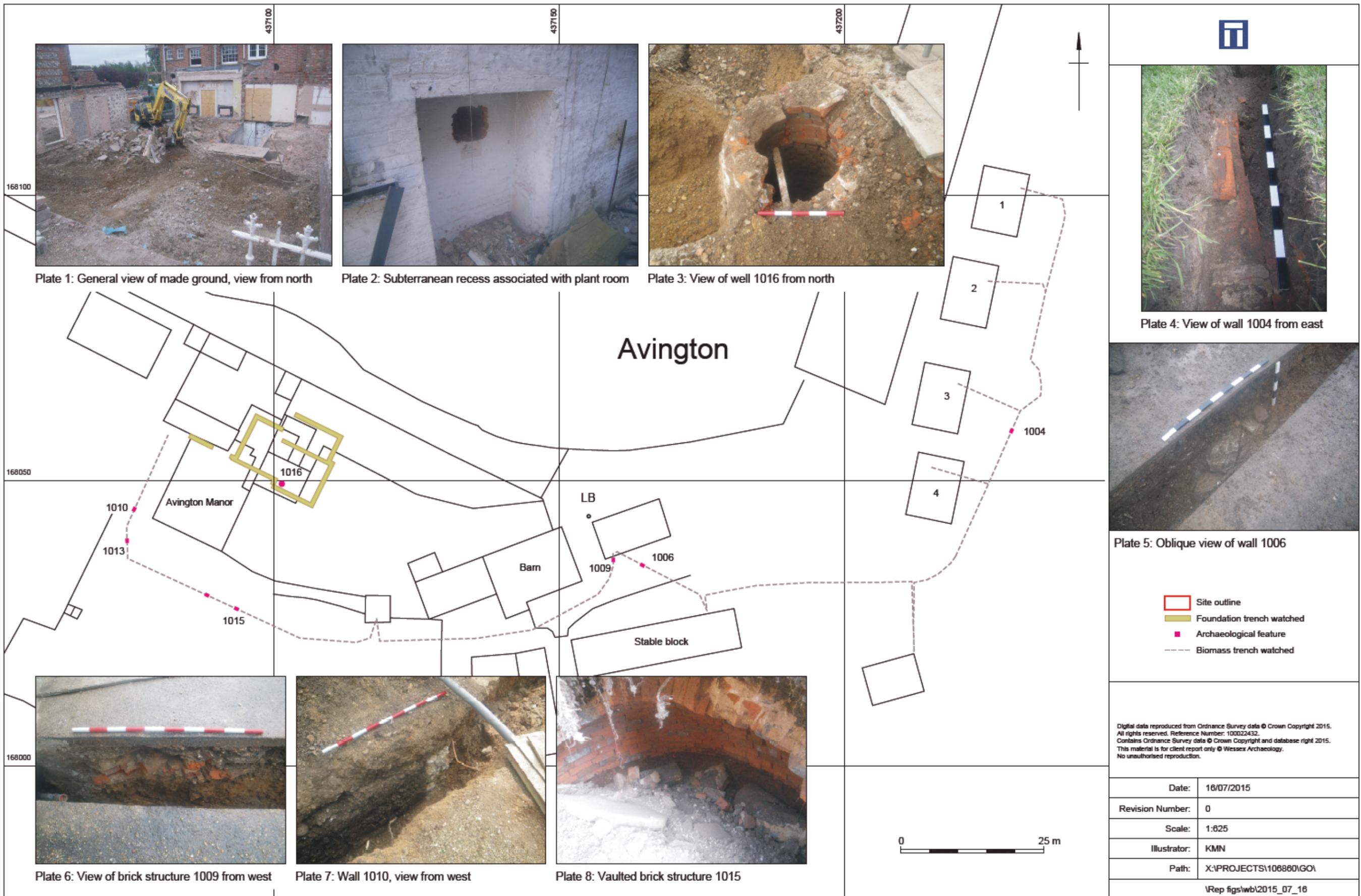
Figure 1



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Watching brief area over proposed development

Figure 2



Watching brief location and features: Biomass trench

Figure 2



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