



Melksham Campus Development, Melksham, Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Wiltshire Council to carry out a six trench evaluation at the Melksham Campus Development, Melksham, Wiltshire which covers a 5.6 hectare plot near the centre of Melksham, centred on National Grid Reference 390233 163530.

This second phase of evaluation followed on from a Desk-based Assessment and Geophysical Survey in 2012 and a first phase of evaluation trenching in 2013, all conducted by Wessex Archaeology. Due to the time lapse the original planning application has been superseded and this phase of work will now inform the proposed revised planning application for the Site.

Only five of the six trenches were accessible. The evaluation was successful in locating seven archaeological features, of which two have been dated, a pit to the Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age and a second pit is dated as Romano-British. Two linears, corresponding with linear anomalies on the geophysical survey, were also excavated as were three undated pits. One of the undated pits is likely to be archaeological in origin, the other two cut the subsoil and are unlikely to be of archaeological interest. Finds indicate isolated Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age or Middle Iron Age and Romano-British activity within the site and possibly within the wider vicinity

The evaluation was carried out over three days between the 11th – 13th June 2018.

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The fieldwork was directed by Rachel Williams, with the assistance of Robin Whitman. This report was written by Rachel Williams and edited by Damian De Rosa. The project was managed by Damian De Rosa on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.



MELKSHAM CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT - EVAL

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Wiltshire Council, to undertake an archaeological evaluation within a 5.6 ha parcel of land located around Melksham House, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6ES, centred on NGR 390233 163530 (**Fig. 1**).
- 1.1.2 The client is proposing to submit an application for the redevelopment of the site, which will principally see the construction of new sports facilities building on the site of the former Melksham Town FC football pitch, the upgrading of existing sports facilities (tennis courts), construction of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), demolition of an existing building behind the assembly hall, and associated infrastructure works including the construction of new parking areas and upgrading/resurfacing of existing parking areas. The proposal also includes for an extension to the existing cemetery on the western side of the proposed development area (Planning permission granted 15/06652/FUL with no further archaeological works required).
- 1.1.3 The proposed application will if approved supersede the previous approved application for the site (Ref: 14/00726/FUL) and represents a scaling back of the original proposals in terms of the extent of the development.
- 1.1.4 A Desk-Based Assessment and geophysical survey (WA 2012) were undertaken prior to and to inform the previous application. These established there was an archaeological interest within the Site, defined as the potential for the presence of buried archaeological remains potentially relating to the medieval and later development of Melksham and to agricultural activity. The geophysical survey also confirmed the presence of associated archaeological features across the Site.
- 1.1.5 A trial trench evaluation (WA 2013) of the site was then undertaken to target the results of the geophysical survey and to further understand the archaeological potential of the site. Due to on-site restrictions only five of the proposed seven trenches could be investigated at the time. The trenches identified a number of archaeological features potentially relating to the use of the site in the medieval period. These consisted of a number of ditches, gullies and pits, suggesting possible domestic and agricultural activity from the 12th to the 14th century.
- 1.1.6 Following consultation with the Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service (WCAS), the archaeological advisors to Wiltshire Council, the local planning authority (LPA) in regard of the current proposals and to target the main impacts of the proposed development it was agreed that the evaluation would comprise the excavation, investigation and recording of 6 trial trenches, each measuring 20 m by 1.8 m. As well as targeting the main development impacts the evaluation targeted the results of the previously undertaken geophysical survey (WA 2012). It was agreed that areas of the development, which will see minimal impact (e.g. resurfacing of tennis courts) and areas that are still in public use and/or inaccessible (e.g. car parking areas) would not form part of the archaeological evaluation, but may



require archaeological mitigation secured by planning condition should the application be approved.

1.1.7 This evaluation is part of a staged approach in determining the archaeological potential of the site, and follows on from the DBA and geophysical survey (WA 2012) and trial trench evaluation (WA 2013)

1.1.8 The evaluation comprising five trial trenches was undertaken 11th – 13th June 2018.

1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description of the results of the evaluation, to interpret the results within a local, regional or wider archaeological context and assess whether the aims of the evaluation have been met.

1.2.2 The presented results will provide further information on the archaeological resource that may be impacted by the proposed development and facilitate an informed decision with regard to the requirement for, and methods of, any further archaeological mitigation.

1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 The whole Site comprises a sub-rectangular plot of land measuring approximately 5.62 ha. It is located in the centre of Melksham, to the west of the Market Place, and lies within the Melksham Conservation Area. It is occupied by a number of sports fields, along with extant buildings, car parks and lawns. The eastern part of the Site is centred upon the Grade II Listed Melksham House, with further buildings located to the north and south. The remainder of the Site comprises a pond, bowling greens, tennis courts, pitches for football, rugby and cricket, the former Melksham Town FC football pitch, formal parkland and surfaced car parks. The evaluation trenches were located in the former Melksham Town FC ground and on a practise rugby pitch.

1.3.2 Existing ground levels are 38 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

1.3.3 The underlying geology of the Site comprises mudstone of the Jurassic Oxford Clay Formation, which is overlain by Quaternary River Terrace Deposits of sand and gravel (British Geological Survey online viewer).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background was assessed in a prior desk-based assessment (DBA: WA 2012), which considered the recorded historic environment resource within a 500 m study area of the proposed development. A summary of the results is presented below, with relevant entry numbers from the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) included. Additional sources of information are referenced, as appropriate.

2.1.2 The DBA also included the results of a geophysical survey undertaken at the site by Wessex Archaeology. An archaeological evaluation (WA 2013) was subsequently undertaken of the site to target the results of the geophysical survey, although due to on-site restrictions not all the proposed trenches could be excavated.

2.2 Previous investigations related to the proposed development

Geophysical Survey (2013)

- 2.2.1 A gradiometer survey was undertaken within the Site (WA 2012) and identified anomalies of possible archaeological interest, along with a number of modern services (**Figure 1**).
- 2.2.2 Within the northern part of Area A (the current cricket pitch), a series of linear ditches oriented north-west to south-east and north-east to south-west, approximately parallel with the northern and western boundaries, were observed. This complex comprised rectilinear anomalies (4000, 4001, 4002 and 4003) which are of archaeological origin and are interpreted as an enclosure or a field system. Further linear and pit-like responses (4004 and 4005) are seen within the enclosures, however, they are weaker and less distinct.
- 2.2.3 In the southern portion of Area A, rectilinear anomalies 4009, 4010 and 4011 may indicate a network of small enclosures or field systems. It is unclear whether they are associated with the more definite ditches further north and their form is somewhat narrower. It is possible that responses at 4012 are associated with 4009 to 4011, although their interpretation is hampered by the extensive magnetic disturbance nearby.
- 2.2.4 Two linear bands of increased magnetic response 4013 and 4014 are distinct from the general magnetic disturbance at the southern extent of Area A. Oriented parallel to the southern boundary of the Site, they are consistent with modern intrusion; it is possible that 4013 is associated with a service, whereas 4014 may relate to an access track.
- 2.2.5 Areas B and C were dominated by strong magnetic disturbance. Only small windows of coherent data, 4016 and 4017, are visible.
- 2.2.6 The dataset from Area D is similar in character to those from B and C, with a small area of data (4018) less affected by the magnetic disturbance. Four probable modern services, 4019 to 4022, are oriented approximately north-northeast to south-southwest, although their function is unclear.
- 2.2.7 Area E is similarly disturbed, with modern service 4023 extending east to west across the survey area. A possible curvilinear anomaly 4024 may be of archaeological interest, although this interpretation is tentative due to the presence of extensive magnetic disturbance.
- 2.2.8 Within Area F, a series of rectilinear anomalies 4025 are consistent with ditches and may represent part of a field system or enclosures. Isolated anomalies 4026 lie close by, although within a region of magnetic disturbance. A number of pit-like responses 4027 are seen in the eastern part of Area F, where the magnetic background is markedly quieter. A linear band of increased magnetic response 4028 across the centre of the survey area is consistent with a modern service, although it lacks characteristic dipolar responses.
- 2.2.9 Strong magnetic disturbance is seen throughout each of the survey areas, ranging from small discrete ferrous responses to extended regions masking any other anomalies. The majority of this disturbance relates directly to the extant features within the survey areas, e.g. sports equipment within the playing fields and tennis courts and covered stands around Melksham Town Football Club.

Evaluation (2013)

- 2.2.10 Only five of the proposed seven trenches were excavated during this stage of the fieldwork. Trenches 2 and 3 were not opened as this part of the Site was in use at the time of the

fieldwork (**Figure 1**). It is proposed that the location of trench 3 will however, be investigated as part of the current investigations subject to there being no obstacles to excavation.

- 2.2.11 In all five trenches the archaeology was preserved beneath a fairly substantial depth of overburden.
- 2.2.12 Trench 1 - Beneath deep modern and buried soil deposits a shallow east-south-east – west-north-west aligned ditch was recorded. At the south-eastern end of the trench were two shallow, criss-crossing gullies which may be the base of field drains. All these were undated.
- 2.2.13 Within Trench 4, two pits were identified. The most southerly of these, was a steep sided flat based feature with a number of deposits, including two distinct lenses of charcoal rich material and is most likely a storage or refuse pit. The other pit in contrast was much wider but shallower with a more concave profile with two secondary deposits. Both pits produced a number of fragments of animal bone but no dateable material.
- 2.2.14 Trench 5 was situated over a north-east to south-west aligned geophysical anomaly. This confirmed that this was a wide but relatively shallow ditch. This feature remained undated though the geophysical survey suggests it may be related to the rectilinear enclosure seen further to the south.
- 2.2.15 Within both Trenches 6 and 7 was a buried medieval soil. The archaeology in these trenches could be seen to cut the base of this deposit suggesting they are largely contemporary. Pottery recovered from both the buried soil and the features suggest activity in the 12th to 14th century.
- 2.2.16 Trenches 6 and 7 were in close proximity to each other and two shallow parallel north-east – south-west gullies were observed in both trenches. Equally, potential gully terminus. These two parallel and possibly discontinuous gullies are suggestive of a former field boundary. Finds recovered from suggest a potential 13th-14th century date for the activity.
- 2.2.17 At the eastern end of Trench 6 was an area of angular stone rubble which may be related to demolition or tumble from a nearby structure.
- 2.2.18 A large steep sided pit was located within Trench 7. This feature, which had a diameter of 1.5m was over 0.75m in depth. Its size and vertical profile suggested it was a large storage pit or possibly a well. Both animal bone and pottery was recovered from this feature including a number a glazed 13th or 14th century sherds.

2.3 Archaeological and historical context

- 2.3.1 There is evidence for human activity within the vicinity of the Site from the Palaeolithic period onwards. Two Palaeolithic flakes have been recovered from the River Avon gravels. A large flake with retouch along one edge has been retrieved during the bypass bridge construction, c. 140m to the north-west of the Site (McMahon 2004) and a second flake is recorded further down the river, c. 220m to the north-west.
- 2.3.2 Although there is no evidence for Mesolithic activity within the vicinity, a number of palaeochannels (old river channels) were excavated during several investigations undertaken nearby (WA 2003 and 2009). The remains of the palaeochannels indicate the River Avon formed a large braided dynamic river system, with a number of tributary streams at this time.



- 2.3.3 There is little indication within the Site for Neolithic and Bronze Age activity, however, Neolithic Peterborough ware pottery was identified c. 180m to the north and north-west of the Site and an assemblage of metalwork comprising socketed spearheads of Bronze Age date were recovered approximately 190m to the north-west during the bypass bridge construction (Mcmahon 2004).
- 2.3.4 There is similarly sparse evidence for Romano-British activity in Melksham or its environs. The recorded finds comprise pottery retrieved during the bridge construction, c. 170m to the north of the Site and two sherds of pottery excavated at Church Walk, c. 100m to the north.
- 2.3.5 Although there is similarly limited evidence for Saxon activity, it has been suggested that the present church might have been built on site of a former, wooden structure (Wiltshire Council 2011). Residual Saxon pottery has also been retrieved during investigations to the north of the Site (WA 2009).
- 2.3.6 The later settlement developed alongside the north-south aligned High Street and Bank Street, from Market Place in the south to the River Avon in the north. The eastern edge of the Site, immediately to the west of Market Place, is thought to have been located within the medieval core of Melksham (Mcmahon 2004).
- 2.3.7 St Michael's Church is situated c. 30m to the north of the Site and although the earliest surviving elements of the building date to the 12th century, the majority of the structure dates to the 14th and 15th centuries (*ibid.*).
- 2.3.8 Rectory Manor, c. 15m to the north of the Site, formed part of the early medieval estate belong to Rumbold the priest, which developed into an agricultural estate, of which a 15th century tithe barn is documented. The extent of the manor is unknown; however, its proximity indicates that it might have extended into the northern part of the Site.
- 2.3.9 Melksham was granted market and fair rights in 1219 and a second grant was issued in 1250 (Mcmahon 2004). The markets would have been held in Market Place, immediately to the east of the Site.
- 2.3.10 During the early post-medieval period, Melksham was subject to limited growth and the construction of Melksham House within the Site is considered to be one of the chief developments during that period (Mcmahon 2004). Melksham House is situated within the north-eastern part of the Site and was designed within parkland forming its immediate setting. A 17th century date for the house is mentioned (Wiltshire Council 2011), although the surviving structure is thought to be of early 18th century date. The remainder of the Site retained its rural character in the post-medieval period.
- 2.3.11 The early editions of Ordnance Survey mapping (1886, and 1900-1901) illustrate in detail Melksham House and the late 19th century layout of the grounds. The Listed Building was surrounded by a park to the west, north and east and by outbuildings, glasshouses and a pond to the south. The park comprised alignments of trees arranged alongside alleys and two of the alleyways leading to the gates to the north and east are still extant. Some of the other park alleyways are preserved as boundaries between the tennis courts and the bowling green. The pond, although poorly maintained, is still extant, as are some of the outbuildings situated to the east of the pond. Another pond was situated to the west of the Site, in the area of the present rugby pitch.
- 2.3.12 Melksham House and surrounding land was acquired after the First World War by Cooper Tires (formerly Avon Rubber Company) and converted into a Sports and Social Club. Soon



after the opening, the leisure facility was damaged by fire and the reconstruction of Melksham House comprised new extensions (DKA 2012). The football and cricket grounds are first shown on the 1924 edition of Ordnance Survey map, which also illustrates the 1920s additions to Melksham House. The subsequent editions (1936, 1942 and later) depict additional playing fields, ancillary buildings and modern extensions to Melksham House.

- 2.3.13 Within the northern part of the Site, an undated inhumation burial has been recovered during gravel extraction on the site of a former Palace House orchard. Due to the proximity of the burial to St Michael's Church, a prolonged tradition of the use of this area for funerary/sacral purposes, which may have originated in the pre-Christian period, has been suggested.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General aims

- 3.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2018) and in compliance with the ClfA' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a), were:

- To provide information about the archaeological potential of the site; and
- To inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.

3.2 General objectives

- 3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the evaluation were:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified area;
- To establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;
- To place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- To make available information about the archaeological resource within the site by reporting on the results of the evaluation.

3.3 Site-specific objectives

- 3.3.1 Following consideration of the archaeological potential of the site, the site-specific objectives defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2018) were to:

- To test the results of the geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2012);
- To see if any further medieval activity can be identified in the more southern parts of the site.



4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methods set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2018) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The trench locations were set out using GPS survey equipment, in the approximate positions as those proposed in the WSI, though trenches 10 and 11 were accidentally excavated on the wrong alignments and Trench 13 (located in the area of the proposed cemetery extension) was inaccessible and therefore not excavated (**Fig. 1**).

4.2.2 Five trial trenches, each measuring between 15 - 25 m in length and 1.6 m wide, were excavated in level spits using a 360° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under the constant supervision and instruction of the monitoring archaeologist. As the bucket supplied with the plant was smaller than the 1.8 m width stipulated by the WSI the trenches were lengthened to ensure a similar percentage sample was obtained. Machine excavation proceeded until either the archaeological horizon or the natural geology was exposed.

4.2.3 Where necessary, the base of the trench/surface of archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand. A sample of archaeological features and deposits identified was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the evaluation.

4.2.4 Spoil derived from both machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Where found, artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, although those from features of modern date (19th century or later) were recorded on site and not retained.

4.2.5 Trenches completed to the satisfaction of the client and WCAS were backfilled using excavated materials in the order in which they were excavated, and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

Recording

4.2.6 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete drawn record of excavated features and deposits was made including both plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections), and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD: Newlyn) heights of all principal features were calculated, and levels added to plans and section drawings.

4.2.7 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSGM15 and OSTN15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.

4.2.8 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies

4.3.1 Appropriate strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2018). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

4.4 Monitoring

4.4.1 WCAS, on behalf of the LPA, monitored the watching brief. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with both the client and the WCAS.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 All of the five excavated trial trenches contained archaeological features and deposits, indicating archaeological remains are present and linear features and large pits correspond to anomalies indicated by the geophysical survey (**Fig. 1**).

5.1.2 The uncovered features comprising of ditches, and pits which represent two main periods of activity: Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age and Romano-British, though several features remain of uncertain date. Stratigraphically two of the features are likely to be late post-medieval or modern in date as they cut the subsoil.

5.1.3 The following section presents the results of the evaluation with archaeological features and deposits discussed by period.

5.1.4 Detailed descriptions of individual contexts are provided in the trench summary tables (**Appendix 1**). **Figure 1** shows location of the trenches together with the preceding geophysical survey results (Wessex Archaeology 2012) **Figure 2** shows all the archaeological features recorded with the trenches.

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

5.2.1 The overburden in both Area A and Area F was consistent with the recent use of the areas as sports pitches. Both areas had between 0.25 – 0.56 m of turf covered topsoil which was generally a friable dark grey loam with very few inclusions, it is possible that some of this topsoil has been imported to raise and level the surface of the pitches and to improve the quality of the soils for the turf. The subsoil was between 0.20 – 0.30 m thick and comprised a dark grey sandy clay with rare sandstone fragments (**Plate 1**). The natural was an orange brown sandy clay with patches of fine grit, in Trench 8 three large slabs of sandstone were recorded within the natural deposit, these may have been dumped in and covered over as no obvious cut or related features were recorded with them, or may be part of the superficial river terrace deposit (**Plate 2**).

5.3 Late Bronze Age (1100 – 700 BC) – Early Iron Age (700 – 40 BC)

5.3.1 Sub-circular Pit 907 had steep concave sides and a concave base and measured 0.44 m diameter, 0.20 m deep, this Pit contained a single homogeneous fill (**Plate 3**).



5.4 Romano-British (43 – 410 AD)

- 5.4.1 Pit 1104 (0.44 x 0.52 x 0.18 m) was rectangular in shape with steep straight sides and a flat base (**Plate 4**).

5.5 Uncertain date

- 5.5.1 Two undated northwest – southeast aligned linears were recorded as 1004 and 1204. These were both recorded by the geophysical survey as anomalies 4025 and 4010. Both linears had a similar profile with steep straight sides and flat bases. Ditch 1004 measuring 0.82 m wide and 0.33 m deep (**Plate 5**). Ditch 1204 measured 0.84 m wide and 0.35 m deep (**Plate 6**).
- 5.5.2 Pit 904 contained two undated fills. This pit extended out from beneath the baulk of the trench, the recorded dimensions were 1.22 m long x 0.96 wide x 0.56 m deep (**Plate 7**).
- 5.5.3 Two large pits 1006 and 1106 were slotted using the mechanical excavator to try to evaluate their archaeological potential, both appeared to cut the subsoil. Pit 1006 measured 3.6 m long and 1.2 m deep and contained two fills, this Pit appeared to have steep straight sides and a concave base, (**Plate 8**). Pit 1106 measured 5.13 m long and 0.70 m deep with shallow concave sides and a concave base (**Plate 9**). Both pits covered the width of the trench, however the geophysical survey results show them corresponding with possible pit like features. Due to health and safety considerations it was not possible to fully record either of these features.
- 5.5.4 Tree-throw hole 804 had irregular concave sides and a concave base, it extended from the baulk and measured 1.7 x 0.86 x 0.4 m (**Plate 10**).

6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Only small quantities of artefacts were recovered during this stage of the evaluation (just less than 2.3 kg overall), with only animal bone occurring in any quantity (1.9 kg). Very few of the items are in any way chronologically diagnostic, but in contrast to the medieval assemblage recovered during the 2013 evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2013), the pottery and flint attest to later prehistoric and Roman activity in the area.
- 6.1.2 All the finds have been quantified (number and weight of pieces) by material type within each context; this information has been summarised in Table 1. The assemblage generally survives in good condition, but the paucity of chronologically diagnostic materials has hampered dating.

Table 1 Finds by material type (number of pieces/weight in grammes)

			Animal bone	Clay pipe	Fired clay	Flint	Pottery	Slag	Total
Trench	Feature	Layer	No/Wt	No/Wt	No/Wt	No/Wt	No/Wt	No/Wt	No/Wt
8	Subsoil	0802	21/147			2/14			23/161
9	Pit 904	0905	67/627		5/17	4/7	1/5	8/210	85/866
	Pit 907	0908			1/16	1/11	3/67		5/94
10	Topsoil	1001		1/1					1/1
	Ditch 1004	1005	2/180						2/180
	Pit 1006	1007	9/698						9/698
		1008	10/141						10/141
11	Pit 1104	1105	3/101				3/31		6/132
	Pit 1106	1107					2/4		2/4
12	Ditch 1204	1205	1/2			1/18			2/20
Total:			113/1896	1/1	6/33	8/50	9/107	8/210	145/2297

6.2 Flint

6.2.1 A single struck flint flake was found in pit 907. This unpatinated piece is made from high quality grey/black flint with a chalky cortex and survives in mint condition. Although not closely datable, the character of this piece would not be out of place in a Late Bronze Age or Iron Age assemblage, broadly commensurate with the date of the three sherds of pottery from this feature.

6.2.2 The other pieces are all small, unworked fragments of poor-quality flint gravel. As flint does not occur naturally in the Melksham area, the presence of these pieces is considered noteworthy, although the condition of this material suggests that it was probably introduced by natural fluvial activity or brought to the site as aggregate. However, as these pieces have no further research potential, they have been discarded.

6.3 Pottery

6.3.1 The three sherds of pottery from pit 907 all occur in a leached, vesicular fabric which probably originally contained calcareous inclusions. One piece is a simple, unelaborated upright rim from a fine, well-made, hard-fired bowl or cup with a faceted shoulder probably of Early or Middle Iron Age date (5th – 3rd centuries BC). The other two sherds, both plain bodies, derive from a larger, softer, thicker-walled vessel, probably a jar likely to be of similar date.

6.3.2 The other six sherds are of Romano-British date (1st – 4th century AD). The body sherds of south-east Dorset Black Burnished ware (pit 1106, one piece, 1g), sandy greywares (pit 904 - one piece, 5g and pit 1104 - one piece, 3g) and unsourced oxidised wares (pits 1104 - one piece, 2g and 1106 - one piece, 3g) cannot be more closely dated. However, a rim from a wide-mouthed, upright-necked jar/bowl (pit 1104; Brook et al 2018, type 8, fig. 3.6, 11), probably made in the vicinity of Beanacre, on the north-eastern edge of Melksham during the 2nd – 3rd centuries AD date, may indicate a date for the infilling of this feature.



6.4 Animal bone

- 6.4.1 A total of 113 fragments (1.896 kg) of animal bone came from five cut features in Trenches 9 to 12, and from subsoil in Trench 8. This is a raw fragment count and once conjoins are considered, the total falls to just 25 fragments. The identifiable bones are all from domestic species and include cattle, horse, sheep/goat and pig.
- 6.4.2 The assemblage has been rapidly scanned and the following information quantified where applicable: species, skeletal element, preservation condition, fusion and tooth ageing data, butchery marks, metrical data, gnawing, burning, surface condition, pathology and non-metric traits. This information was directly recorded into a relational database (in MS Access) and cross-referenced with relevant contextual information and is summarised in Table 2

Table 2 Quantity and provenance of the identifiable animal bones

Species	Subsoil Tr.8	Pit 904	Ditch 1004	Pit 1006	Pit 1105	Ditch 1204	Total
cattle	1	1	-	2	1	-	5
sheep/goat	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
pig	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
horse	-	2	1	2	-	-	5
Total identified	1	5	1	4	1	-	12

- 6.4.3 Pit 904 contained the ankle (astragalus and tarsals) and foot (metatarsal) bones from a horse affected by the inflammatory joint disease commonly referred to as spavin. The tarsal bones have fused together and onto the adjacent metatarsal, while the astragalus is unaffected. A severe case such as this undoubtedly resulted in lameness. The remaining bones from this feature include a piece of cattle pelvis and mandibles from a 6-8 years old sheep/goat and a female pig (or sow).
- 6.4.4 A small number of identified bones came from pit 1006. They include a horse femur and humerus, and a cattle radius and scapula. Filleting marks are evident on the scapula blade. Identified bones also came from subsoil 802 (cattle humerus), ditch 1004 (horse pelvis) and pit 1105 (cattle horn core).

6.5 Other finds

- 6.5.1 These include small quantities (**Table 1**) of fired clay probably of structural origin and likely to be of Iron Age (pit 907; in a buff, almost inclusion-free fabric) or Roman (pit 904; variably fired sand and iron oxide-tempered fabrics) date. Similar fabrics have been noted elsewhere in the town (e.g. Brook 2018, 221). The undiagnostic iron smithing slag fragments from pit 904 are also likely to be of Roman date and are suggestive of small-scale iron working or repair in the vicinity. The only other artefact, a small abraded fragment from a plain clay tobacco pipe stem of Post-medieval or modern date, came from the topsoil of trench 10.

6.6 Conservation

- 6.6.1 No immediate conservation requirements were noted in the field. During assessment, none of the finds were identified as being of unstable material types or as being in an unstable condition, so no further conservation treatment is considered necessary.

6.7 Potential

- 6.7.1 None of the finds are of particular intrinsic interest. Together, the flint, pottery and animal bone indicate Early-Middle Iron Age and Romano-British settlement and animal husbandry in the immediate vicinity, while the good condition of all the finds suggests that they had not moved far, or often, from their original point(s) of deposition. This highlights the potential for the survival of other well-preserved, well-stratified archaeological remains in the immediate vicinity, but, given the small size of the assemblage, there is little potential for further, more detailed, analysis of any of the finds.

6.8 Recommendations

- 6.8.1 The assemblage has been recorded to a fairly detailed level as part of this assessment and does not warrant any further work. However, if the results of this fieldwork are to be published in any way, comments based on this report should be included.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 A bulk sample taken from a pit of uncertain chronology was processed and assessed for the presence of environmental evidence. The 38-litre sample was processed by standard flotation methods on a Syraf-type flotation tank; the flot retained on a 0.25 mm mesh, the residue fractionated into 4 mm and 1 mm fractions and dried. The coarse fraction (>4 mm) was sorted with the naked eye, weighed and discarded, 25% of the smaller fraction of the residue (>4 mm <1 mm) was sorted under the microscope. The flots were scanned using a stereo incident light microscopy (Leica MS5 microscope) at magnifications of up to x40 for the identification of environmental remains. Different bioturbation indicators were considered, including the percentage of roots, the abundance of modern seeds and the presence of mycorrhizal fungi sclerotia (e.g. *Cenococcum geophilum*) and animal remains, such as earthworm eggs and insects. The preservation and nature of the charred plant and wood charcoal remains, as well as the presence of other environmental remains was recorded.

- 7.1.2 Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997). Abundance of remains is qualitatively quantified (A*** = exceptional, A** = 100+, A* = 30-99, A = >10, B = 9-5, C = <5) as an estimation of the minimum number of individuals and not the number of remains per taxa.

1.1 Results

- 7.1.3 The flots was large (**Table 3**) but there were high numbers of roots and some insects and modern seeds that may be indicative of stratigraphic movement and the possibility of contamination by later intrusive elements. Charred plant remains were rare and restricted to a wild grass (*Poaceae*) grain and two fragments of indeterminate material. Wood charcoal from mature charcoal, a great proportion of it iron coated, was noted in a moderate quantity.

7.1.4 Discussion and Further potential

- 7.1.5 The assemblages recovered so far have little potential and require no further analysis. Unfortunately, the evidence recovered does not help to clarify the chronology nor the nature of the feature, although material suitable for radiocarbon dating could be extracted should this be necessary.



8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Summary

8.1.1 The evaluation was successful in recording seven archaeological features and a single tree-throw hole. The linear features and larger pits were all successfully identified by the 2012 geophysical survey. The two small discrete features (which contained the datable finds) clearly indicate the potential for further archaeological remains to be present within the Site.

8.2 Discussion

8.2.1 The datable features recorded by the evaluation are considerably earlier than the medieval features recorded during the 2013 phase of evaluation. Only two features were securely dated; Pit 907 to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age and Pit 1104 is Romano-British in date. Both of these are discrete features with no obvious purpose or function. However, they may indicate a low level prehistoric and Romano-British activity in the area, this follows the general pattern for the area (see above section 2.3).

8.2.2 Although undated neither of the two linears (1004 and 1204) recorded by the evaluation are present on any of the historic maps. It is likely therefore that they pre-date the post medieval period and the geophysical survey suggests that a broader pattern of field boundary systems survives, however the majority of the field boundary system is not going to be impacted on by the proposed development.

8.2.3 Of the undated pits Pit 904 is very similar to Pit 408 excavated in the first phase of evaluation. Although neither of the pits has been dated both had lenses of charcoal and dumps of burnt material within them, however the environmental sample processed from Pit 904 had little potential for further analysis. Neither pit was fully exposed both had steep – vertical sides and flattish bases. Pit 904 showed as geophysical anomaly of potential archaeology, Pit 408 was in an area of increased magnetic response and therefore not picked out.

8.2.4 The two large undated pits (1006 and 1106) contained dumps of animal bone including horse and cow. Given the proximity of the Site to the centre of Melksham it is possible that this area was used to dump the carcasses of ill and diseased animals, the animal bone was recovered in small patches within the pits, although none appeared to be articulated. As the Site became the location for Melksham Town Football Club in the early 1920's (Wessex Archaeology 2012) these remains are likely to be post-medieval or early modern in date as they cut the subsoil and therefore stratigraphically an earlier date is unlikely.

8.2.5 The residual finds within pits 904 and 1106 are indicative of Romano-British activity taking place within the vicinity.

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

9.1.1 The archive resulting from the evaluation is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. The site falls within the collecting area of Devizes Museum. The museum is not currently accepting archaeological archives. Every effort will be made to identify a suitable repository for the archive resulting from the fieldwork, and if this is not possible, Wessex Archaeology will initiate discussions with the local planning authority in an attempt to resolve the issue.



9.2 Preparation of the archive

9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Devizes Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the **site/accession code**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 1 cardboard boxes or airtight plastic boxes of artefacts and ecofacts, ordered by material type;
- 1 files/document cases of paper records and A3/A4 graphics;

9.3 Selection policy

9.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4). In accordance with these, and any specific guidance prepared by the museum, a process of selection and retention will be followed so that only those artefacts or ecofacts that are considered to have potential for future study will be retained. The selection policy will be agreed with the museum, and is fully documented in the project archive.

9.4 Security copy

9.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, 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.

9.5 OASIS

9.5.1 An OASIS online record (<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>) has been initiated, with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.

10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.



10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

10.2 Third party data copyright

10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Trench summaries

NGR coordinates and OD heights taken at centre of each trench; depth bgl = below ground level

Trench 8		26.1 m x 1.6 m		NGR 390259 163506	38.7 m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description		Depth bgl (m)
801	Layer		Topsoil - Dark grey friable loamy sand with rare fine fragments of sandstone and CBM. Covered with long grass, fine rooting throughout the top 0.10 m. Loose with a clear horizon with 802.		0.00–0.56
802	Layer		Subsoil - Mid orange brown friable sandy clay loam with occasional medium gravels and stones. Moderately loose with a clear horizon with 803.		0.56 – 0.77
803	Layer		Natural - Orange/ brown sandy clay with irregular patches of gravel in mid grey brown clay. Three large slabs of sandstone were recorded in the north-western part of the trench.		0.77 +
804	Tree throw		Sub circular tree-throw hole measuring 1.7 m x 0.40 m, with steep concave sides and an uneven base only partially visible. Contained a single fill.		0.62 – 1.02
805	Natural Feature	804	Mid orange/ brown sandy clay. Compact with no inclusions. Slightly diffuse and uncertain horizon with 803. The gradual erosion of surrounding soils in to a hollow left by a tree-throw.		0.62 – 1.02

Trench 9		14.3 m x 1.6 m		NGR 390242 163500	38.0 m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description		Depth bgl (m)
901	Layer		Topsoil - Dark grey friable loamy sand with rare fine fragments of sandstone and CBM. Covered with long grass, fine rooting throughout the top 0.10 m. Loose with a clear horizon with 902.		0.00–0.45
902	Layer		Subsoil - Mid orange brown friable sandy clay loam with occasional medium gravels and stones. Moderately loose with a clear horizon with 903.		0.45 – 0.64
903	Layer		Natural - Orange/ brown sandy clay with irregular patches of gravel in mid grey brown clay		0.64 +
904	Pit		Sub-circular pit partially located under the baulk of the trench. 0.96 m long x 0.56 m deep with steep straight sides and a concave base. Contained two fills.		0.53 – 1.21
905	Secondary fill	904	Dark greyish brown silty clay with common angular sandstone cobbles. Charcoal flecking throughout. Finds included animal bone, pottery and fired clay.		0.53 – 1.15
906	Primary fill	904	Light greyish brown clay with common fine gravel inclusions.		1.15 – 1.21
907	Pit		Sub-circular pit with steep concave sides and a concave base. Measured 0.44 m diameter, 0.20 m deep. Contained a single fill.		0.52 0 0.70
908	Secondary fill	907	Mid greyish brown silty clay with rare small inclusions of sandstone. Contained pottery, animal bone and burnt clay.		0.52 0 0.70

Trench 10		19.1 m x 1.6 m		NGR 390206 163535	36.6 m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description		Depth bgl (m)
1001	Layer		Topsoil - Dark grey friable sandy clay with a lens of sandstone fragments 0.10 m thick at 0.40 m. Moderately loose with a diffuse uncertain horizon with 1002.		0.00–0.56
1002	Layer		Subsoil - Dark brown plastic sandy clay with rare sandstone fragments. Undulating horizon with 1003.		0.56 – 0.84
1003	Layer		Natural - Mid brown sandy clay with patches of grit and gravel.		0.84 +



1004	Ditch		Northwest - southeast aligned linear with steep, straight sides and a flat base. Contained a single fill.	0.84 – 1.17
1005	Secondary fill	1004	Dark brown plastic sandy clay with sparse grit and rare sandstone cobble inclusions. Moderately loose with a distinct horizon.	0.84 – 1.17
1006	Pit		This pit goes across the entire trench width. 3.6 m long, 1.2 m deep. Appears to cut the subsoil. Machine excavated, appears to have moderate straight sides and a concave base.	0.60 – 1.80
1007	Secondary fill	1006	Mid greyish brown plastic silty clay. Waterlogged at the base. 0.75 m thick	1.05 – 1.80
1008	Deliberate backfill	1006	Very dark greyish brown friable sandy clay with sparse fragments of sandstone, chalk and gravels. 0.45 m thick	0.60 – 1.05

Trench 11	21.2 m x 1.6 m		NGR 390200 163515	38.6 m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description	Depth bgl (m)
1101	Layer		Topsoil- dark greyish brown friable sandy clay, moderately loose. Turf covered with fine rooting. Rare sandstone fragments in the lower 0.15 m. Uncertain horizon with 1102.	0.00 – 0.50
1102	Layer		Subsoil - Very dark grey friable sandy clay with rare sandstone fragments. Undulating horizon with 1103.	0.50 – 0.72
1103	Layer		Natural - Mid brown sandy clay with patches of grit	0.72 +
1104	Pit		Small rectangular pit with steep straight sides and a flat base. Filled with 1104. Cut 1103.	0.72 – 0.90
1105	Fill	1104	Mid grey sandy clay with rare gravel inclusions. Moderately compacted with a distinct horizon with 1103.	0.72 – 0.90
1106	Pit		Large pit, cuts 1102 with straight sides and a shallow undulating base.	0.50 – 1.20
1107	Deliberate backfill	1106	Mid - dark grey silty clay with brick and stone inclusions.	0.50 – 1.20

Trench 12	18.7 m x 1.6 m		NGR 390159 163569	38.3 m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description	Depth bgl (m)
1201	Layer		Topsoil - Dark greyish brown sandy loam with very rare subangular gravel cobbles. Turf covered with fine rooting throughout the top 0.10 m. Moderately loose with a diffuse uncertain horizon with 1202.	0.00–0.25
1202	Layer		Subsoil - Dark greyish brown friable sandy clay with rare subangular gravel cobbles. Moderately loose with an undulating horizon with 1203.	0.25 – 0.45
1203	Layer		Natural- Mid brown plastic sandy clay with rare subangular gravels and patches of fine grit.	0.45 +
1204	Cut		Northwest - southeast aligned linear with steep straight sides and a flat base. 0.84 m wide x 0.34 m deep. Contained a single fill.	0.54 – 0.89
1205	Secondary fill	1204	Dark brown sandy clay with rare flint gravels. Moderately compact with a distinct horizon.	0.54 – 0.89



Appendix 2 Environmental data

Table 1: Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

Feature	Context	Sample	Vol (l)	Flot (ml)	Sub-sample	Bioturbation proxies	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Charred Other Notes	Charcoal > 4/2mm	Charcoal	Other	Comments (Preservation)
904	905	1	38	250	25% residue	90%, C, I, E	-	-	-	C	Poaceae, indet.	10 ml	Mature	-	Poor, iron coated

Key: A*** = exceptional, A** = 100+, A* = 30-99, A = >10, B = 9-5, C = <5; Bioturbation proxies: Roots (%), Uncharred seeds (scale of abundance), F = mycorrhizal fungi sclerotia, E = earthworm eggs, I = insects; Sab/f/c = small animal/fish bones/charred faecal pellets, Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs, Moll-f = aquatic molluscs, Moll-m = marine molluscs; Analysis: C = charcoal, P = plant, M = molluscs, C14 = radiocarbon



Appendix 3 OASIS Form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-322156

Project details

Project name	Melksham Campus Development, Melksham, Wiltshire
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Wiltshire Council to carry out a six trench evaluation at the Melksham Campus Development, Melksham, Wiltshire which covers a 5.6 hectare plot near the centre of Melksham, centred on National Grid Reference 390233 163530. This evaluation followed on from a Desk-based Assessment and Geophysical Survey in 2012 and a first phase of evaluation trenching in 2013, all conducted by Wessex Archaeology. Due to the time lapse the original planning application has been superseded and this phase of work will now inform the proposed planning application for the Site. Only 5 of the six trenches were accessible. The evaluation was successful in locating seven archaeological features, of which two have been dated, a pit to the Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age and a second pit is dated as Romano-British. Two linears, corresponding with linear anomalies on the geophysical survey, were also excavated as were three undated pits. One of the undated pits is likely to be archaeological in origin, the other two cut the subsoil and are unlikely to be of archaeological interest. Residual finds indicate Romano-British activity within the vicinity. The evaluation was carried out over three days between the 11th - 13th June 2018.
Project dates	Start: 11-06-2018 End: 13-06-2018
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	100581 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Monument type	PIT Late Prehistoric
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Significant Finds	POT Roman
Significant Finds	POT Late Iron Age
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Uncertain
Significant Finds	SLAG Uncertain
Significant Finds	WORKED FLINT Late Prehistoric
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition



Position in the planning process Pre-application

Project location

Country England
Site location WILTSHIRE WEST WILTSHIRE MELKSHAM Melksham Campus Development, Melksham, Wiltshire
Postcode SN12 6ES
Study area 5.6 Hectares
Site coordinates ST 90233 90233 51.61037355989 -2.141063583943 51 36 37 N 002 08 27 W Point
Height OD / Depth Min: 37m Max: 38m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator Wessex Archaeology
Project design originator Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager Damian De Rosa
Project supervisor Rachel Williams
Type of sponsor/funding body County Council
Name of sponsor/funding body Wiltshire Council

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Devizes Museum
Physical Contents "Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Metal", "Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient Devizes Museum
Digital Media available "Database", "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient Devizes Museum
Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Notebook - Excavation", " Research", " General Notes", "Plan", "Section", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

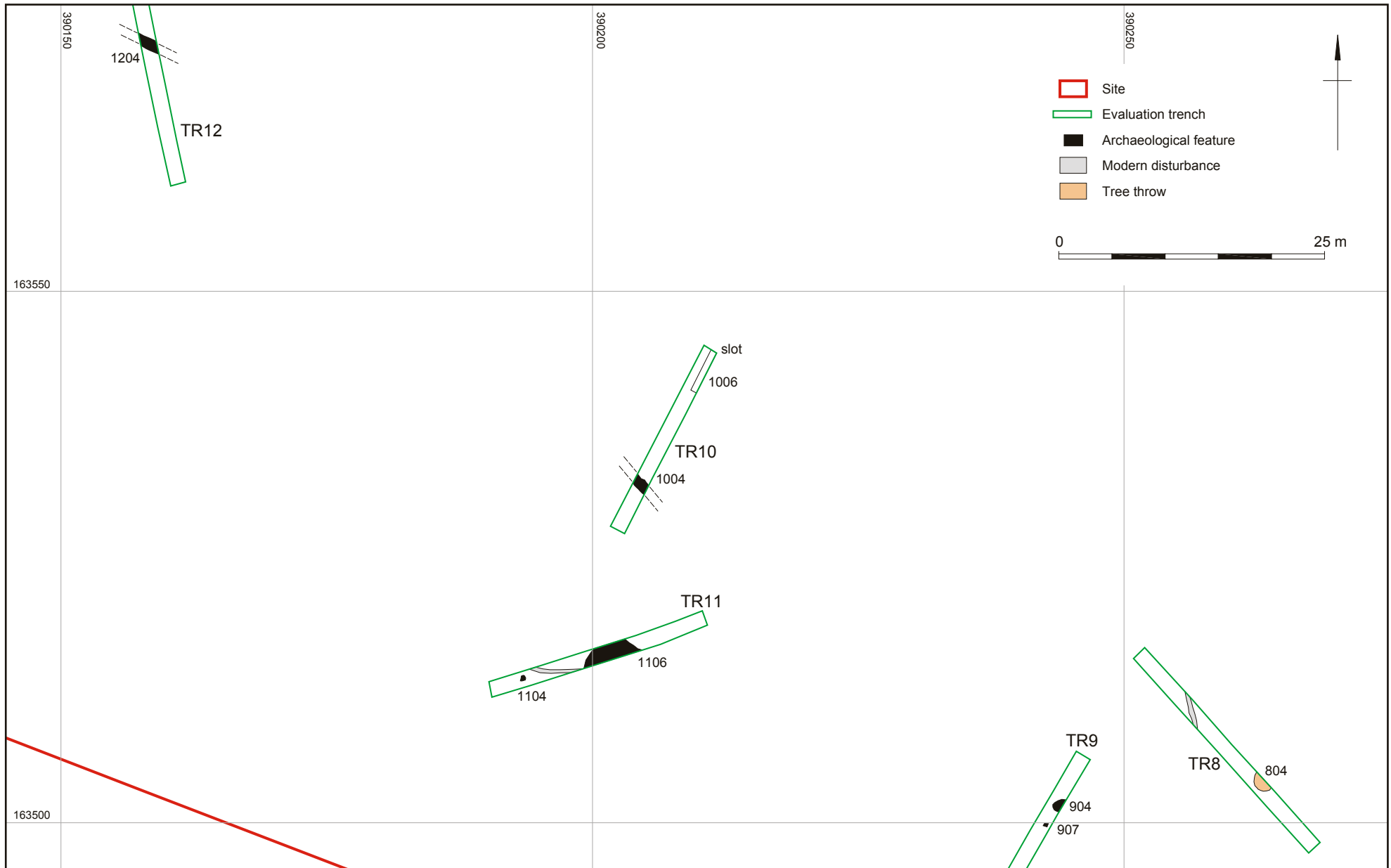



Title	Melksham Campus Development, Melksham, Wiltshire Archaeological Evaluation Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Williams, R.
Other bibliographic details	110581.03
Date	2018
Issuer or publisher	Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Salisbury
Description	WA standard A4 format with Figures and plates



Location of Site, evaluation trenches and geophysical survey results

Figure 1



 Coordinate system: OSGB36 (OSTN15/OSGM15) This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.	Date:	13/07/2018	Revision Number:	0
	Scale:	1:500 at A4	Illustrator:	KL
	Path:	X:\PROJECTS\100581\Graphics_Office\Rep figs\eval\2018_07_06\Fig02.dwg		

Detail of 2018 evaluation trenches

Figure 2



Plate 1: Southeast facing representative section Trench 9. Scale is 1 m



Plate 2: Deposit of Sandstone blocks in Trench 8. Scale is 1 m



Plate 3: North facing section of Pit 907. Scale is 0.2 m



Plate 4: East facing section of Pit 1104. Scale is 0.5 m



Plate 5: Northwest facing section of Ditch 1004. Scale is 0.5 m



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Scale:	n/a	Layout:	KL
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Plate 6: Southeast facing section of Ditch 1204. Scale is 1 m



Plate 7: Oblique view of Pit 904. Scale is 0.5 m



Plate 8: Oblique view of Pit 1006, taken from the southwest. Scale is 2 m



Plate 9: Oblique view of Pit 1006, taken from the northwest. Scale is 2 m



Plate 10: Southeast facing section of tree-throw hole 804. Scale is 1 m



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