

**NEW INN,
MARDEN,
WILTSHIRE**

NGR: SU 089 577

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
NI00**

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on 21st August 2000 on land in the grounds of the New Inn, Marden, near Devizes by Foundations Archaeology. The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of one 'T' shaped trench totalling 15 metres, the main stem being 10 metres in length, and 1.6 metres in width, and two test pits, each 2 metres x 2 metres, placed in the footprints of the proposed buildings.

No archaeological features were identified during the course of the project.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in August 2000 on land at Marden, near Devizes (SU 089577), on behalf of Wadworth & Company Ltd, Devizes, represented by Chris Sault.
- 1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in response to a proposal to erect a new garage and an extension to the inn's main building. The work took place in the existing 'beer-garden' at the rear of the New Inn. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance the principals of Planning Policy Guidance note 16, Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The project was undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994). The code of conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists was adhered to throughout.
- 1.3 The original brief called for one test pit in the footprint of the proposed garage development. However, the location of the garage was under dispute at the time of the evaluation therefore two possible locations were archaeologically tested.
- 1.4 The Project Design was devised in accordance with a brief (SC/MJU/008C065.br) from Stephanie Chettle of Wiltshire County Council and also approved by Stephanie Chettle.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The New Inn lies immediately adjacent to the earthworks representing the original mediaeval village of Marden. The earthworks survive up to 1 metre high and are preserved as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (AM565).
- 2.2 The village of Marden is situated in the Vale of Pewsey and typifies the long, narrow parishes of the northern scarp of Salisbury Plain. The settlement has an early documented origin and was first recorded as Meredene in AD 941. It became a small contributor of Swanborough Hundred in 1334 and the settlement has always remained modest, with a peak of 247 inhabitants in 1871, but had reduced to 90 by 1971.
- 2.3 The nucleus of the village centres around the 12th century church and the New Inn, a late 19th century building, stands just to the north-east. The earliest house still remaining is a 17th century timber-framed cottage north-east of the church, but the majority of the standing buildings date to the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 2.4 Evidence of Roman settlement exists immediately to the south of the scheduled monument and archaeological work was carried out by Colt Hoare during the 19th century and by Meyrick in 1951. Prehistoric pottery has also

been recovered from the area and evidence of early Iron Age settlement has been found in the north-east corner of the parish.

- 2.5 The development provided an excellent opportunity to improve the understanding of mediaeval settlement at Marden as the known archaeological and historical resource is rich. In addition, the situation of the study area lies very close to an ancient monument which suggested that unrecognised mediaeval settlement features might exist.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
 - ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;
 - iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 One 'T' shaped trench, which totalled 15 metres in length, the main stem being 10 metres long, and 1.6 metres in width, and two test pits which both measured 2 metres by 2 metres were excavated. The trench and test pits were placed so as to fall within the footprints' of the proposed developments. The Trench and Test Pits locations are illustrated on Figure 2.
- 4.2 Deposits of topsoil and non-significant overburden were removed to the top of archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through use of a JCB mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket. Thereafter cleaning and excavation was conducted by hand.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The 'T' shaped trench [100] was excavated to a depth of between 0.47m and 0.72 metres, the gentle slope running downhill to the north-west. At which depth the natural substrate of mid green-grey sand with occasional, large sandstone inclusions, the natural Greensands of the area, was reached. Overlying the natural deposits was 0.22m to 0.45m of dark green-grey clay loam sand subsoil, (102), which had the appearance of disturbed natural. Overlying (102) was 0.30m on average of a dark brown/black clay loam sand turf and topsoil with occasional chalk flecks and frequent charcoal and brick streaks, (101). The trench was situated on top of a natural terracing observed in the area of the garden. Natural deposits were reached at between 102.21m and 102.84m AOD.
- 5.2 The natural substrate was reached at a depth of 0.42m in Test Pit 1, [200], and 0.62m in Test Pit 2, [300]. However, the natural deposits were a soft, black clay sand, an alluvium deposited by a tributary of the River Avon which was situated only 30m to the north-east of the test-pits. The stratigraphy of the pits was a layer of made ground, 0.30m deep in [200] and 0.52m deep in [300], which consisted of re-deposited Greensands with frequent modern brick and charcoal inclusions which was overlaid by a turf and topsoil layer, identical to (101), 0.11m in depth on average. In pit [300] the north-western edge abutted the carpark therefore the turf and topsoil layer was replaced with a hardcore layer of 0.43m in depth. Natural deposits were reached at between 101.31m and 101.40m AOD.
- 5.3 No archaeological features were identified within either the trench or test-pits.
- 5.4 The layer of made-ground present in section in the test-pits was due to the significantly lower topographical situation of the eastern part of the garden. The natural ground level would have had to be raised substantially to prevent the flooding of the property because, as testified by the alluvial deposit, the area lies within the floodplain of the river. The post-mediaeval inclusions in the made-ground layer suggested the immediate area was only occupied within the last 100-150 years, and it likely coincided with the erection of the New Inn itself. Any earlier occupation of the area would have had to be situated on the floodplain and its associated terraces, an undesirable location for occupation due to the waterlogged condition of the ground. This conclusion is supported by the present state of the ground on the opposite side of the river which has remained as marshland. Therefore, it is unlikely that any archaeologically significant deposits or features would have ever existed.

6 DISCUSSION

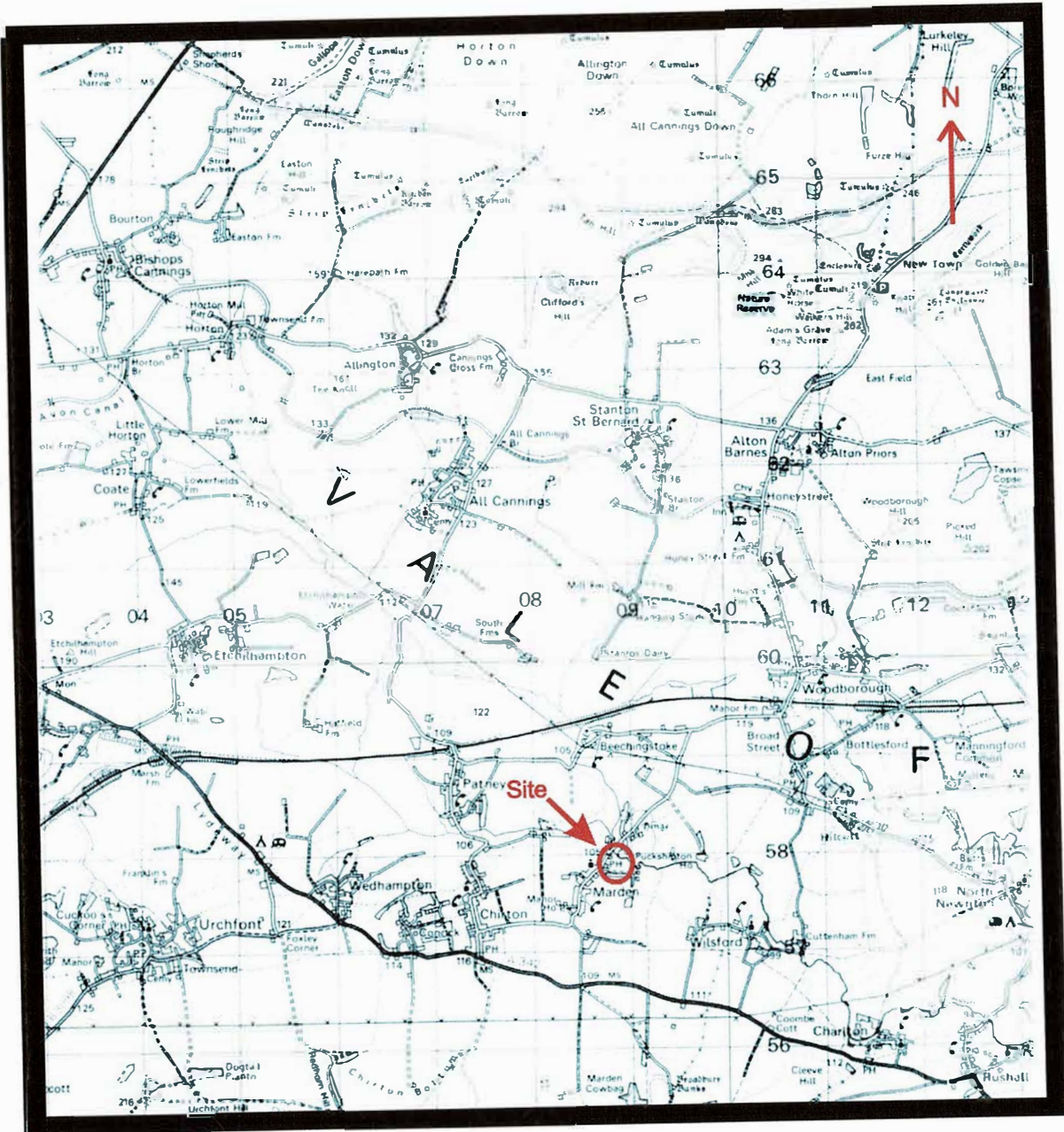
- 6.1 The evaluation identified no areas of significant archaeological interest. The brick inclusions in the layer of made-ground demonstrate that the modification to the ground level near the river dated to the late post-

mediaeval, and more specifically to the late 19th century when the New Inn and much of the village was developed.

- 6.2 The absence of archaeological remains or features in the lower part of the beer-garden and also on the natural river terraces in the upper part of the garden can be attributed to waterlogged conditions in the area of the floodplain. As a result of undesirable condition of the ground for occupation the potential of the study area may be considered low and the proposed development is unlikely to disturb archaeological deposits or features.

7 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Chris Sault and Wadworth & Company Ltd, Devizes and also Stephanie Chettle for their co-operation during the course of this project.



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Figure 1: Site Location

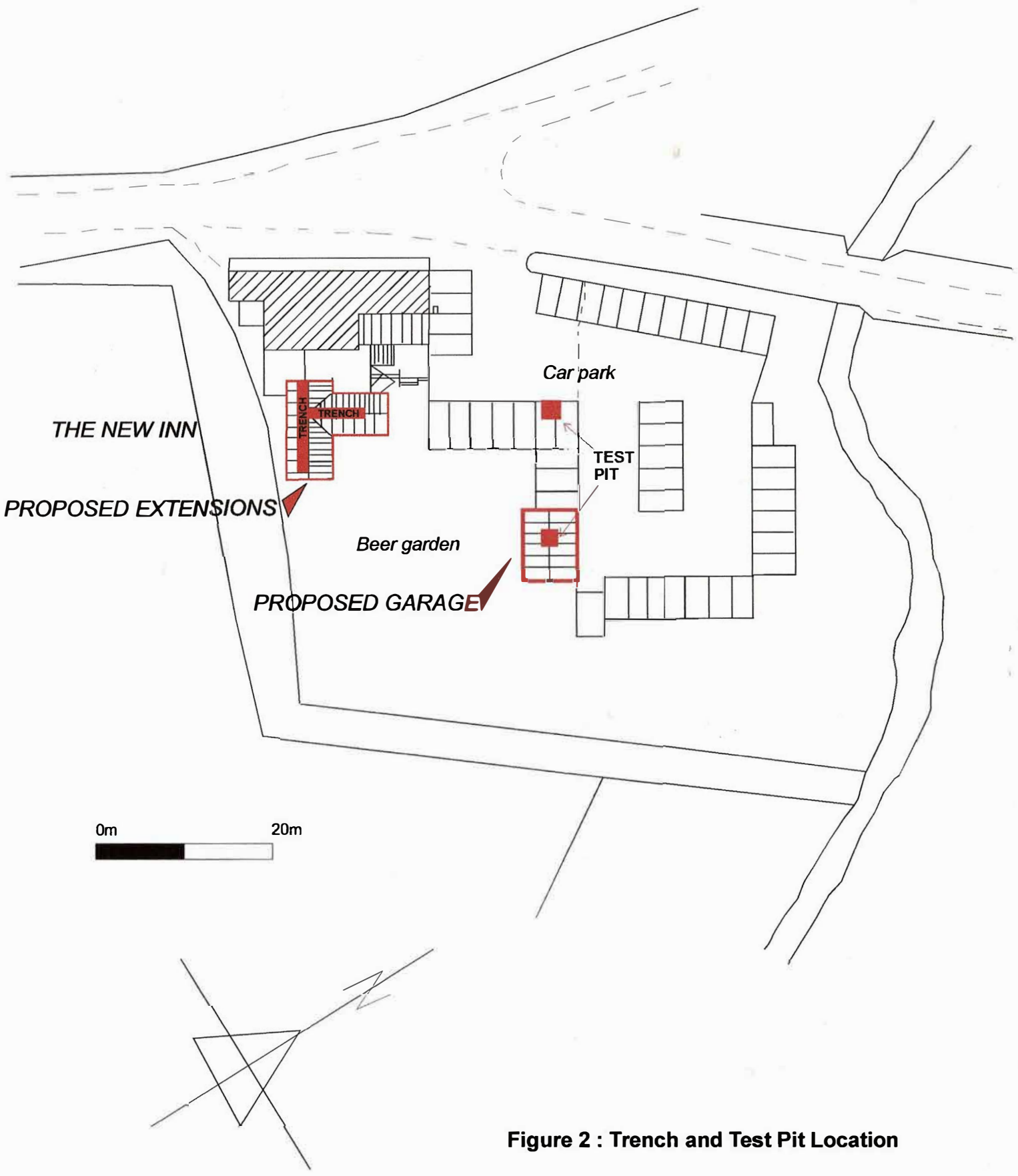


Figure 2 : Trench and Test Pit Location