

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H W E S T

**Land to the rear of 10 The Square,
Wiveliscombe, Somerset**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Weale

Site Code: SWS12/68

(ST 0805 2780)

**Land to the rear of 10 The Square,
Wiveliscombe, Somerset**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mike and Sally Darvill

by Andrew Weale

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code WSW 12/68

May 2012

Summary

Site name: Land to the rear of 10 The Square, Wiveliscombe, Somerset

Grid reference: ST 0806 2775

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 16th–17th May 2012

Project manager: Andrew Weale

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: WSW 12/68

Area of site: c 0.038ha

Summary of results: The evaluation has recorded a small volume of archaeological deposits comprising a small pit tentatively dated to the medieval period, a small collection of pottery of 17th-19th century date and two undated abutting walls. The site is considered to have moderate archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Taunton and will be deposited with Somerset County Museum Service in due course, with accession code TTN CM 27/2012 and HER number 43786.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 07.06.12
	Steve Preston ✓ 07.06.12

Land to the rear of 10 The Square, Wiveliscombe, Somerset An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Weale

Report 12/68

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Land to the rear of 10 The Square, Wiveliscombe, Somerset (ST 0806 2775) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Gavin Woodford of Woodford Architecture and Interiors, 15 North Street, Ashburton, Devon, TQ13 7QH on behalf of Mike and Sally Darvill of 10 The Square, Wiveliscombe, Somerset.

A planning consent (49/11/0045) has been granted by Taunton Deane Borough Council to construct a new house on a c. 038 ha parcel of land behind 10 The Square. The consent gained is subject to a condition (4) relating to archaeology, requiring the implementation of a program of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the local planning authority.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010) and the Borough Council's Policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Robert Croft, Senior Historic Environment Officer of Somerset County Council Historic Environment Service, the archaeological advisers to the Borough Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale and Aiji Castle from 16th to 17th of May 2012 and the site code is WSW 12/68. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, South West, Taunton and will be deposited with Taunton County Museum, with accession code TTN CM 27/2012 and HER 43786.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located near the centre of the small town of Wiveliscombe which lies in the Brendon Hills to the west of Taunton (Fig. 1). The site is within the back garden of 10 The Square which fronts on to the site of the old market place within the core of the historic town. The site is bounded to the west by a road and footpath, to the south by a car park, to the east by a range of buildings and a garden and to the north by 10 The Square (Fig. 2). The site is currently under grass with small trees and shrubs at the sides and an area of gravel. It slopes down from north to south with a large terrace mid-way along the site also sloping down north to south and is approximately 122m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north and 121m aOD in the south. The underlying

geology is mapped as Permian Wiveliscombe Sandstones (BGS 1984), and a mixture of red sands and silts with fragments of sandstone was observed within the trenches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the core of the medieval town. To the east of the town lies the site of The Castle, a large Iron Age hill fort, with the site of a small Roman fort to the south-east of the town. Wiveliscombe was an Anglo-Saxon royal manor that was granted by King Edward to the Bishopric of Bath and Wells before the Norman Conquest (Gathercole 2003). No mention is made of an urban settlement in Domesday Book of AD 1086, where the manor is described paying geld for 15 hides and had land for 36 ploughs, with a mill, 34 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 80 acres of woodland. This was a huge area, which was inhabited by only 19 villagers (heads of households) and 6 slaves. Nine of the hides were held from the Bishop by three knights (Williams and Martin 2002).

The first time an urban settlement is mentioned is in a Papal Bull of 1179. The Anglo-Saxon settlement is thought to be around the site of a possible Minster church (Aston and Leech 1977) in the location of the later Bishops' manor and Palace to the south and east of the site (Gathercole 2003). It was not until 1284/5 that the Bishops acquired a grant for a weekly market and annual fair. The town is referred to as a borough in 1301 and burgesses are referred to in 1309–29. The town grows up to the north of the Bishop's Palace. The Bishop's Palace was the main focus of the town, being built in the 13th century and in use until the mid 16th century (Gathercole 2003). By the late 17th century it was in a ruinous state and a workhouse was built within the grounds in the 18th century. The site lies behind the medieval and later market place and would appear to be within the backlands of any medieval and later settlement.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or which would better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and

to determine if there are Saxon, Medieval or Post Medieval deposits present on the site.

It was proposed to dig two trenches, each 1.6m wide and 10m long, together with a pit for geotechnical investigation. Topsoil and any other overburden was removed by a 360° tracked mini-digger machine. A toothless ditching bucket was used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, under constant archaeological supervision. Excavation of exposed archaeological features was to be carried out by hand. Stripped areas and spoilheaps were to be scanned by metal detector and by eye for artefacts.

Results

Due to constraints with access to the site only a $\frac{3}{4}$ tonne machine could be used and the width of the trenches was reduced to 1.10m. The length of both trenches was reduced due to the presence on site of a tree protection area to the south (Fig. 3). The position of the engineers' test pit was moved to examine the junction of two walls forming the eastern boundary of the site. The trenches varied from 6.60m to 7.10 long, from 0.56m to 1.25m deep and from 1.10m to 1.20m wide. A list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1 and a list of features investigated forms Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 5, Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned south to north, was 7.10m long and was 0.56m deep at the southern end and 1.25m deep at the northern end. The trench was excavated through an area of terracing running west to east. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.50m of topsoil which in the northern end of the trench overlaid a layer of modern made ground (57) which contained modern brick, slate fragments and modern plastic sheeting and bags (not collected) and was a maximum of 0.30m thick. This layer lensed out towards the south. Beneath the made ground was a buried topsoil up to 0.30m thick which also contained modern brick and slate (not collected). Beneath the buried topsoil was 0.15m of subsoil over a red brown sandy silt natural geology. A test pit was excavated into the natural geology to a depth of 0.15m to confirm that correct horizon had been reached.

Trench 2 (Figs 3, 4 and 5; Pls 2 and 3)

Trench 2 was aligned south to north, was 6.60m long and was 0.70m deep at the southern end and 0.90m deep at the northern end. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil beneath which was pit 3 which was over 4m across and occupied the full width of the trench. It was a maximum of 0.45m deep but did not penetrate the full depth of the subsoil. Pit 3 was filled with a dark grey silt (55) that contained a high proportion of modern pottery, brick, glass and metal. The pottery consisted of blue and white transfer-printed pottery, salt glazed pottery, white

glazed white wares, yellow glazed cream wares; the glass included some moulded bottles. All of these finds are dated to the 19th or early 20th centuries and were retained on site. The subsoil which was a maximum of 0.30m thick contained three sherds of early post-medieval pottery. Beneath the subsoil was Pit 4 which was oval in plan, 0.80m long, 0.56m wide, 0.14m deep and was filled with a dark red grey silty sand (56) which contained a single sherd of medieval pottery of 12th century date, a single oyster shell, one fragment of ceramic building material, one fragment of slag and a fragment of slate. Pit 4 was cut into the red brown silty sand natural geology.

Test Pit 1 (Figs 3 and 5; Pl. 4)

Test Pit 1 was aligned south to north, 1.00m long, 0.40m wide and a maximum of 1.25m deep and was machine excavated. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil beneath which was a modern ceramic pipe running along the western edge of the test pit. The pipe cut through the western edges of construction cuts 1 and 2. Cut 1 was over 0.20m and 0.58m deep and contained a dark grey loam (58). Within construction cut 1 was wall 52 which was built from random uncoursed fair-faced sandstone blocks that appeared to return from north to south towards the east to form a corner. The stone was rough coursed and mortared with a mid red sandy mixture, which was now soft. Construction cut 2 was over 0.20m wide and up to 1.25m deep and contained a dark grey loam (59: similar to 58) and was cut into the underlying natural geology. Within construction cut 2 was wall 53 which was built from random uncoursed fair-faced sandstone blocks. A harder more Lime-rich mortar was used as bonding material. Wall 53 butted up to wall 52, but the base of wall 53 was stepped out from the edge of wall 52. No dateable artefacts were recovered from Test Pit 1.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 4 sherds with a total weight of 38g. It was all medieval or later date. The following fabric types were noted:

PHG: **Proto-Ham Green Ware**, 12th century (Vince unpub.). Abundant medium to coarse sand, mainly up to 0.7mm across but with sandstone fragments up to 1.0mm across. 1 sherd, 15g Pit 4 (56)

GRE: **Glazed Red Earthenware**, 16th – 19th century (Brears 1969). Fine sandy earthenware, usually with an orange- brown or green glaze, occurring in a range of utilitarian forms. Such 'country pottery' was first made in the 16th century, and in some areas continued in use until the 19th century. 1 sherd, 5g.

FSW. **Frechen Stoneware**, AD1550-1700. Hard, grey fabric with a mottled, brown salt-glaze (Gaimster 1997). 1 sherd, 4g

NDG: **North Devon Gravel-tempered ware**. 16th–19th century (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 467). Moderate to dense sub-angular quartz up to 2mm. Forms and decoration as GRE. 1 sherds, 14g.

The sherd of PHG came from F4 context 56, and appears securely stratified. The rest of the assemblage was from the subsoil in Trench 2, and indicates activity in the 16th century.

Ceramic Building Material by Andrew Weale

A single fragment (11g) of ceramic building material was recovered from Pit 4 Fill 56. It could not be identified as either brick or tile.

Shell by Andrew Weale

A single oyster shell (3) was recovered from Pit 4 Fill 56.

Slag by Andrew Weale

A single fragment of slag (28g) was recovered from Pit 4 Fill 56.

Slate by Andrew Weale

A single fragment of slate (3g) was recovered from Pit 4 Fill 56. It appeared to be from a locally occurring outcrop.

Conclusion

The evaluation revealed that parts of the site in the area of Trench 1 had been landscaped fairly recently, but the landscaping seemed to have comprised ‘fill’ rather than ‘cut’ as the underlying subsoil or natural geology was not impacted. Most of Trench 2 was occupied by what appeared to be a large modern (19th or early 20th century) rubbish pit but this was of relatively shallow depth and did not fully penetrate the subsoil. Beneath the subsoil towards the southern end of Trench 2 was a small pit that contained a single sherd of medieval pottery and is tentatively dated to this period. Pottery from the 16th-19th centuries was recovered from the subsoil in Trench 2.

In conclusion the evaluation suggests that there are some finds and deposits of archaeological interest on the site but that this archaeological activity is low density. The engineer’s test pit against the upstanding walls has indicated the sequence of construction but neither can be directly dated.

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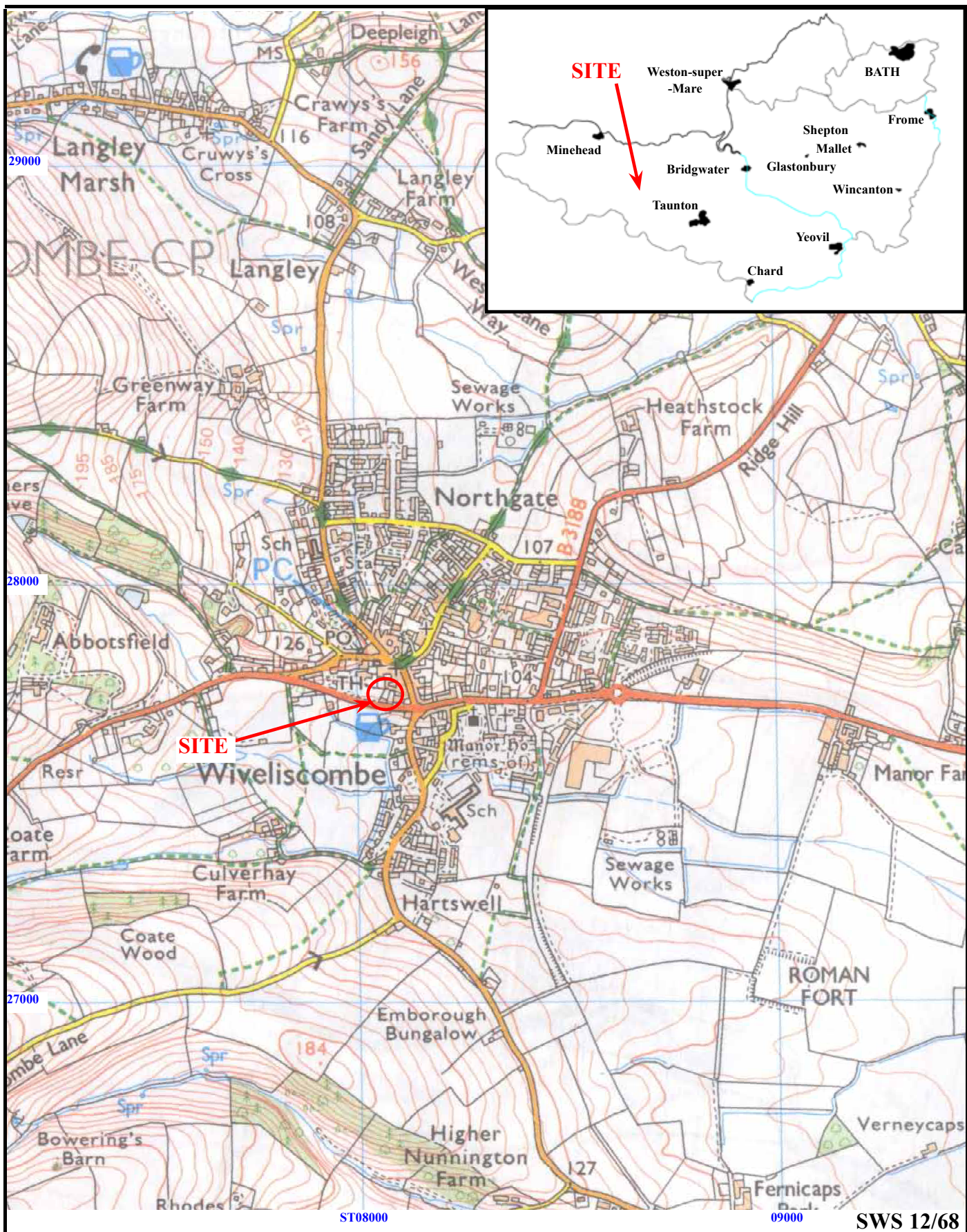
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at South or West end

<i>Trench/Test Pit</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	7.10	1.20-1.10	South 0.65 North 1.25	0-0.5m topsoil, 0.5-0.80m made ground, 0.80-1.10m buried topsoil, 1.10-1.25m subsoil 1.25m+ brown red sandy silt natural geology. [PI. 1]
2	6.60	1.10	South 0.70 North 0.90	0-0.35m topsoil, 0.35-0.65m subsoil 0.65m+ brown red silty sand natural geology. Pits 3 and 4 [PIs 2 and 3]
TP	1.00	0.40	1.25	0-0.65m topsoil, 0.65-0.95m subsoil, 0.40m+ brown red silty sand natural geology. Construction Cut 1, Construction Cut 2, Wall 52, Wall 53 [PI. 4]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

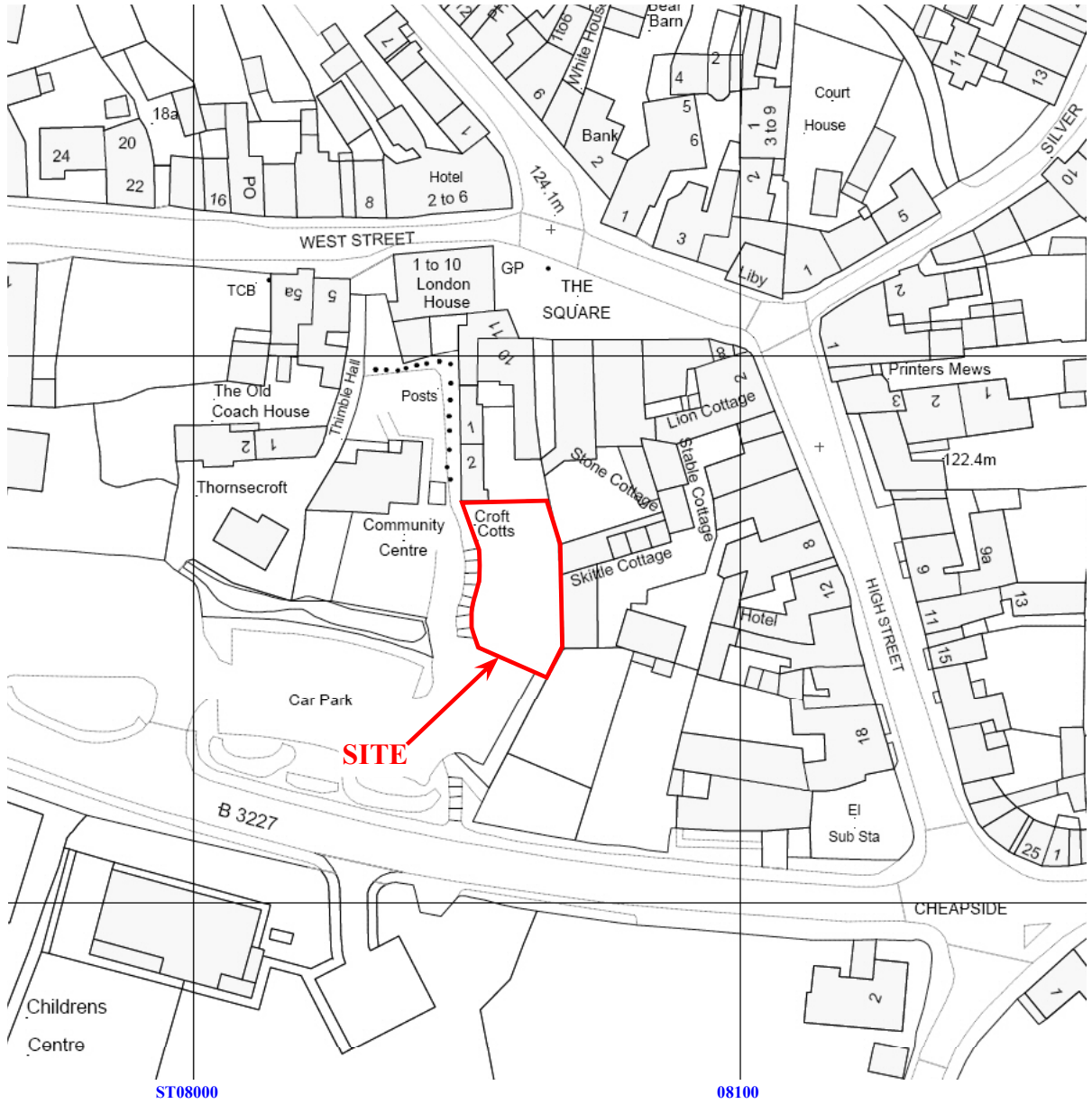
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1		57	Made ground	Modern	Plastic
2		51	Subsoil	16th-19th century	Pottery
TP1	1	52, 58	Wall construction	Undated	None
TP1	2	53, 59	Wall construction	Undated	None
2	3	55	Rubbish Pit	Modern	Pottery, Glass
2	4	56	Pit	Medieval, 12th century or later	Pottery



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Figure 1. Location of site within Wiveliscombe and Somerset.

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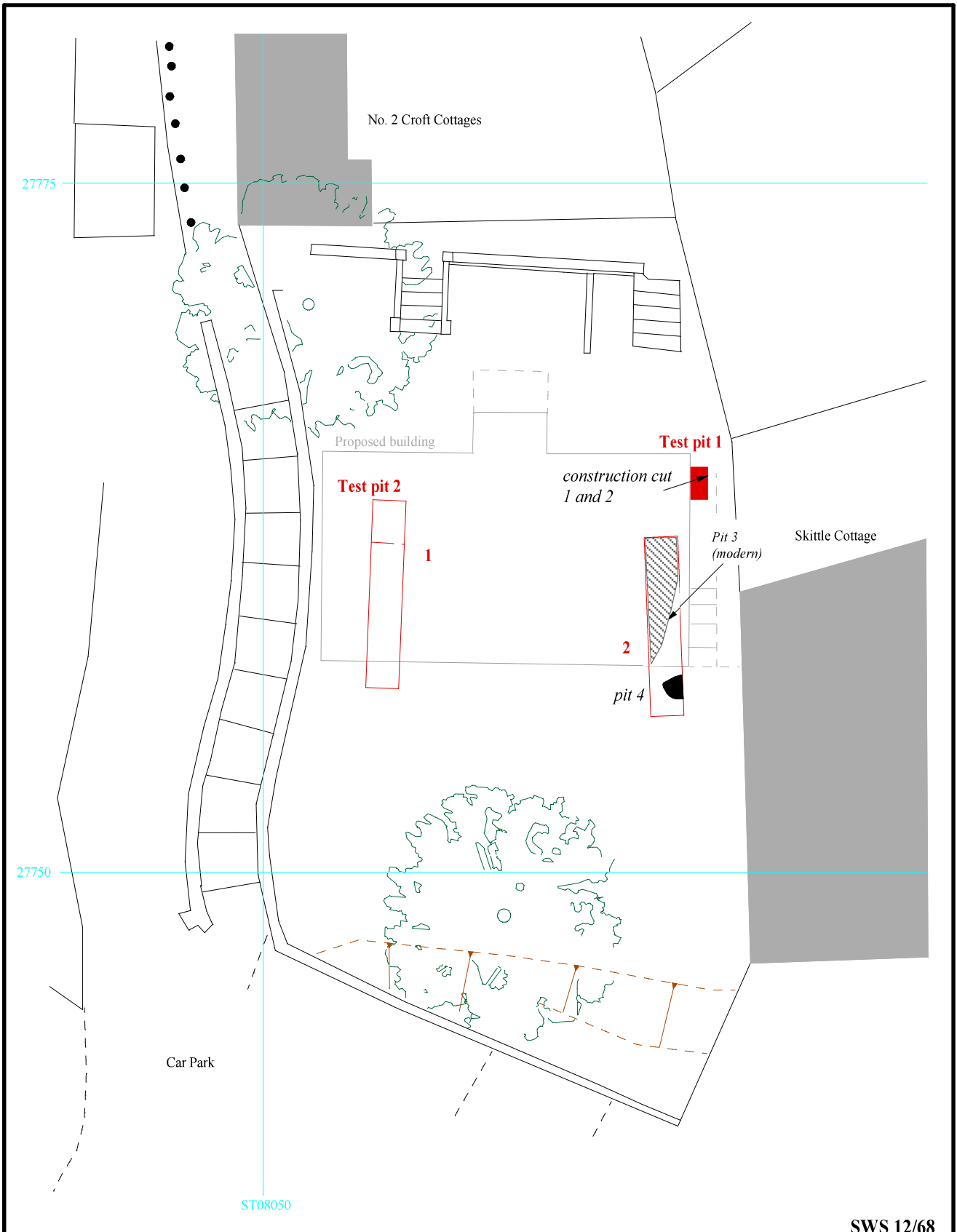
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off The Square.

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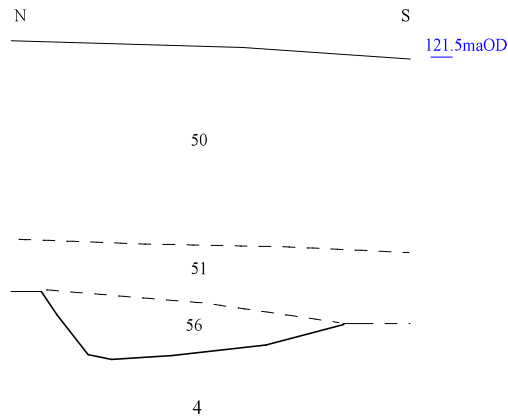
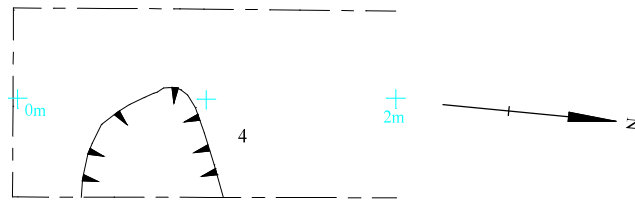
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

0 10m

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Trench 2

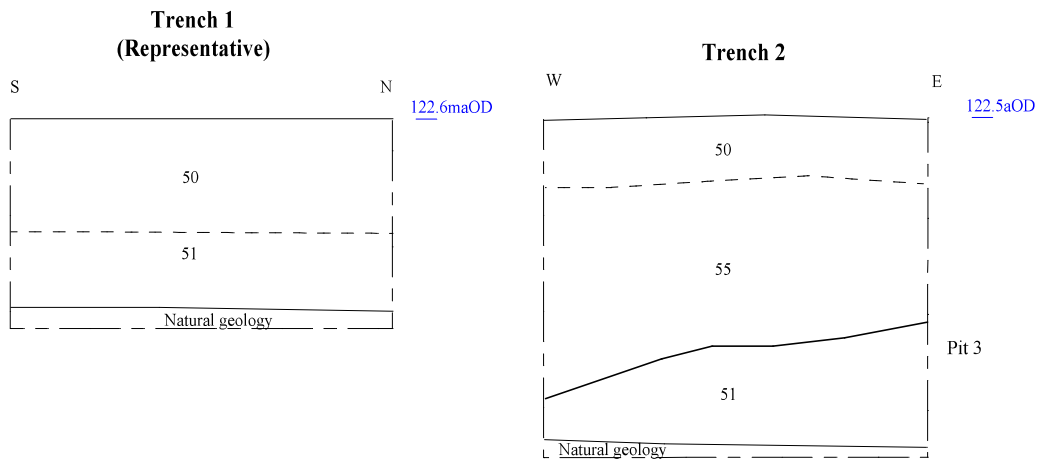
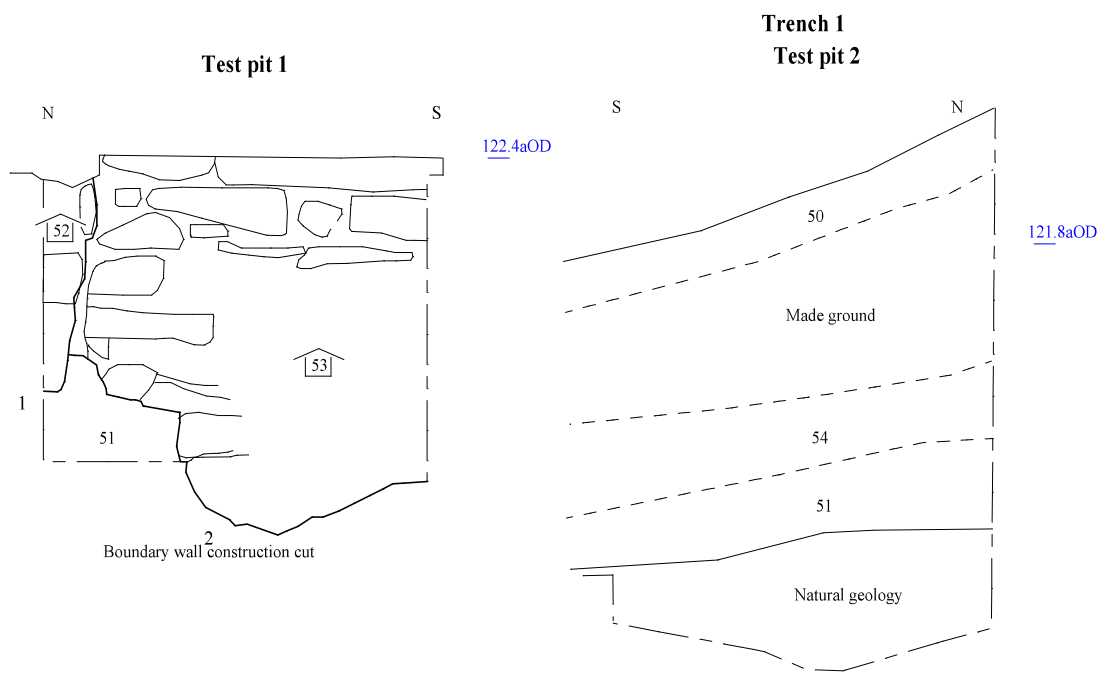


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Figure 4. Plan of Pit 4 in Trench 2.

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Figure 5. Other sections.





Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north, Scales: 2m and 0.5m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 2, pit 4, looking east, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Test pit 1, construction cuts 1 and 2 looking east, Scale: 1m.

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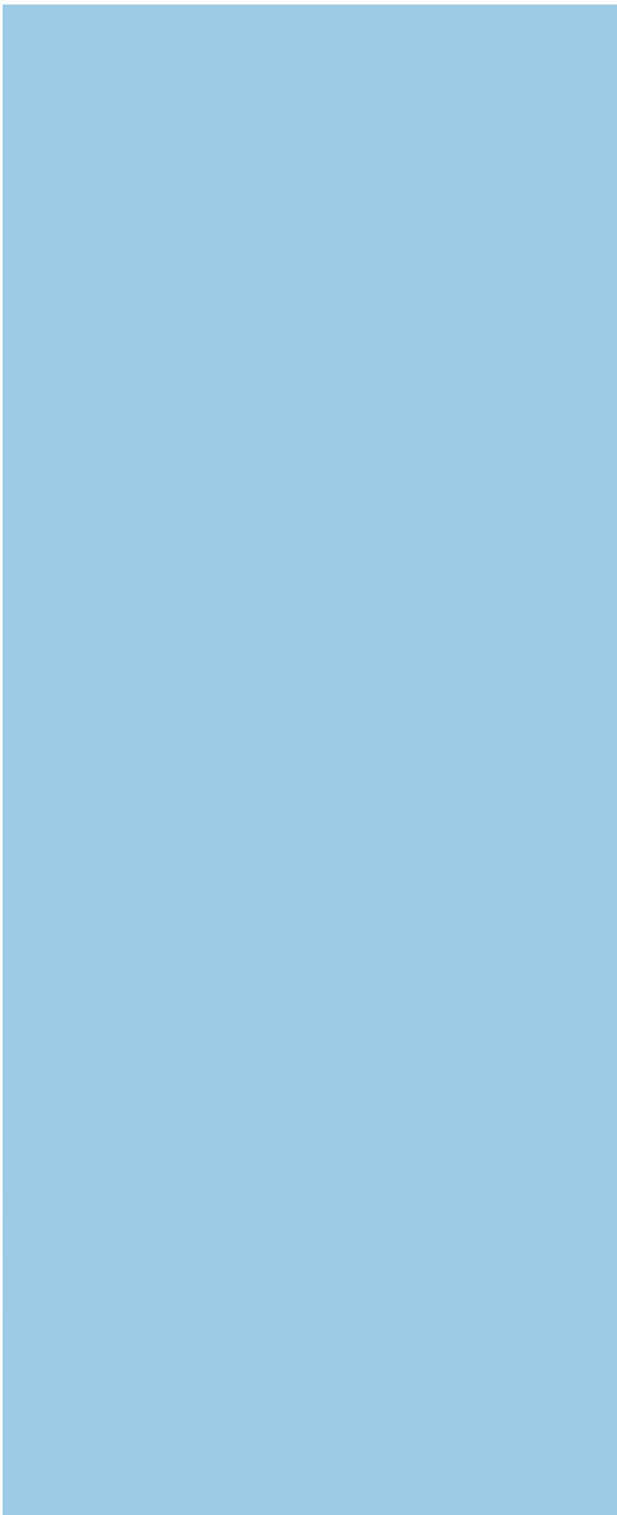
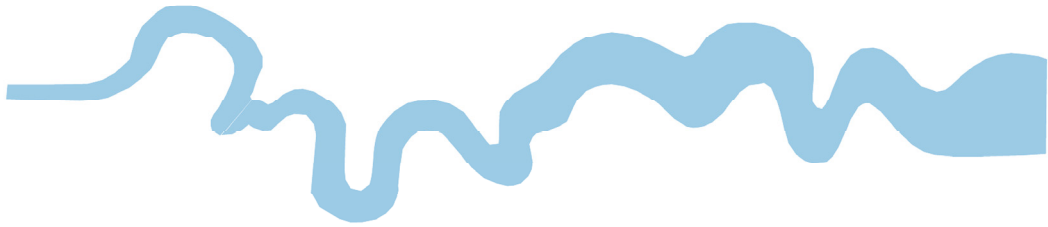
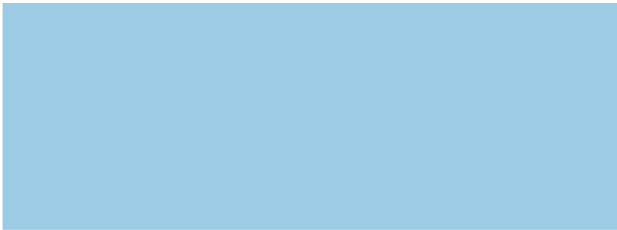
Plates 3 and 4.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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