

New public conveniences, West Central Car Park, Devizes, Wiltshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Kennet District Council

by Andrew Weale

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WCD 06/01

August 2007

Summary

Site name: New public conveniences, West Central Car Park, Devizes, Wiltshire

Grid reference: SU 0015 6155

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 20th January 2006–15th January 2007

Project manager: Jo Pine

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale and Stephen Hammond

Site code: WCD06/01

Summary of results: The outer bailey ditch of the castle was located and partially examined other gullies were observed along with various post-medieval structures such as cellars and wells. A small number of pottery finds of medieval and post-medieval date were recovered.

Monuments identified: Outer bailey ditch of castle

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Devizes Museum in due course.

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Report 06/01

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at the site of new public conveniences, West Central Car Park, New Park Street, Devizes, Wiltshire, Wiltshire (SU 0015 6155) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jack Legge of Dreweatt Neate, St James House, 4 Little London Court, Old Town, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 3HY on behalf of Kennett District Council Environment and Amenity Services, Kennett House, Sergeant Rogers Way, Hopton Park Industrial Estate, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 2ET.

Planning consent (K/52720/R3) has been granted for the construction of a new public convenience at the above location. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological works, in this case taking the form of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Sue Farr, Assistant Archaeologist for Wiltshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Hammond and Andrew Weale between 20th January 2006 and 15th January 2007 and the site code is WCD 06/01.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Devizes Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the centre of Devizes. It comprises an irregular parcel of land currently in use as a car park and lies to the rear of buildings fronting onto New Park Street to the north-east, the Market Place to the south-west and The Brittox to the south-east (Fig. 2). The Kennet and Avon Canal lies only a few hundred metres north of the site, which is at a height of c.130m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as upper greensand (BGS 1985) and this was observed on site.

Archaeological background

The site lies within the historic core of the town of Devizes. There is no mention of Devizes in Domesday Book and the origins of the town are related to the presence of the castle, whose above ground remains stand only 100m or so south of the site. The castle was imposed on the division between the Bishop's manors of Potterne and Bishops Cannings, the name Devizes appears to refer to this, from *le Diviseses* in Old French meaning 'the boundaries' or *ad divisas*, ('on the boundaries') in Latin (Haslam 1976). The castle was rebuilt c. 1120 by Bishop Roger to replace one mentioned as burnt in 1113. The town was formed around the outworks of the castle, resulting in the semi-circular street pattern still evident in the town (Haslam 1976) (Fig. 1). The West Central Car Park site lies on or close to the projected line of the outer castle bailey ditch, the position of which was confirmed by a field evaluation some 75m to the west of the site (Saunders 1999) (Fig. 2), and north-west of the suggested barbican at The Brittox which appears to be a corruption of the Old French *Bretasche*, 'a place defended with stockades' (Haslam 1976).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular the digging of geotechnical test pits, any ground reduction, and the digging of foundation trenches and service runs.

Results

The fieldwork took place in two episodes; An initial phase of work in January 2006 examined the digging of geotechnical test pits, dug in order to determine the most appropriate foundation design. The second phase of work took place during the groundworks for the new building itself in January 2007.

Geotechnical test pits

Two test pits were dug by machine in the positions shown in Figure 3, and cleaned by hand.

Test Pit 1

Test Pit 1 was 4.1m long, 0.6m wide and 1.67m deep, with a 2m wide, 2m long and 2m deep extension at the southern end. The stratigraphy within Test Pit 1 was 0.08m of Tarmac above 0.33m of scalpins (hardcore) (Fig 4). Beneath the scalpins was deposit 50, a friable mid greyish green silty sand, over 2.5m long and 0.25m deep, which was the upper fill of ditch 1. Beneath 50 was lower fill 51, a loose mid to dark greyish green silty sand,

with occasional fragments of mortar, chalk and ceramic building material as well as very occasional charcoal flecks. This deposit (51) was 4.2m wide (extending beyond the south western edge of the test pit) and 1.40m deep as dug, it was not bottomed. Ditch 1 appeared to linear in plan with stepped sides, sloping approximately 60° with a gradual break of slope to a sharp step which sloped down approximately 75°, the break of slope at the base and the base were not seen. Ditch 1 was over 4.40m wide with the southern edge not seen and over 1.67m deep (not bottomed).

Ditch 1 cut ditch or gully 2, linear in plan and 'U' shaped in profile with sides sloping at approximately 60° with a sharp break of slope and a flat base. The cut was 0.70m wide and up to 0.50m deep, it extended across the test pit.. It was filled by 52, a friable mid brownish green silty sand with occasional chalk and ceramic building material fragments together with very occasional charcoal flecks.

The relationship between ditch 2 and shallow ditch or gully 3 could not be seen in Test Pit 1. Deposit 53 appeared to be the same as deposit 52 but formed the fill of cut 3. Cut 3 was linear in plan with a moderate break of slope at the top gently sloping sides of approximately 30°, a gradual break of slope to a flat base. It was 0.90m wide, 0.28m deep and extended across the trench. Below features 2 and 3 was the greensand natural. Ground water was encountered in the base of Test Pit 1.

Test Pit 2

Test Pit 2 was 2.00m long and 0.60m wide and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy within Test Pit 1 was 0.08m of Tarmac above 0.33m of scalpins (hardcore) directly above the natural greensand.

The foundation trenches

The proposed location of the foundation is shown in Figure 3, however due to the ground conditions and the presence of fractured water pipes; the sides of the trenches in the shaded area were prone to collapse, requiring increasing the size of the trenches. The unstable nature of the trench edges made it impossible to measure the width of the trenches accurately.

A similar sequence of stratigraphy, as in Test Pit 1, was observed along the southern foundation trenches. A section was hand cleaned in the north-west corner, after the base of the trench had been stabilized with concrete. The stratigraphy was 0.10m of Tarmac, above 0.29m of scalpins (hardcore), above foundation trench 4. This cut (4) was at least 1.7m wide and 0.51m deep it could be observed to extend approximately 3m to the south-east, with two fills (54 and 56) (Fig. 4). Upper fill (54) was friable dark greenish grey silty sand with occasional fragments of sandstone, crushed mortar and flecks of charcoal, 0.11m deep, while 56 appeared to be the remains of a wall or footing. It was a friable mid greyish green silty sand, with large pieces of sandstone up to 0.20m by

0.10m by 0.05m together with what appeared to be handmade bricks 0.21m by 0.08m by 0.05m. Due to the unstable nature of the edge of the section together with an overhang of up to 0.50m of Tarmac, none of the stone or bricks were removed from the section. The stone fragments and brick formed a rough horizontal line within 56 from 0.70m to 0.80m beneath the surface of the Tarmac. Under the line of stone and brick was an intermittent 0.01m thick lens of brown silty sand with fragments of crushed mortar.

Construction trench 4 cut deposit (55), a friable dark greenish grey silt with occasional small fragments of sandstone crushed mortar and very occasional charcoal flecks, at least 2.1m long, 0.13m thick and was observed to extend at least 8m to the south east. This sealed features 5, 6 and 7.

Ditch 5 was the same as ditch 1 in test pit one and appears to be the inner bailey ditch of the castle and here was observed to be at least 3.5m wide, approximately 4.8m to base from top of Tarmac and could be followed for 12m across the site. Fill 57 a loose mid to dark greyish green silty sand with very occasional crushed mortar, fragments of ceramic building material and chalk and charcoal flecks, was the same as deposit 51 seen in Test Pit 1. Ditch 1=5 cut deposit 58.

Also beneath deposit 55 gully 7 was 0.32m wide, 0.31m deep and was observed for 4.5m to the south-east. It appeared to be the same as gully 2 and cut the fill (58) of feature 6. Its single fill (59) was a friable mid to dark brownish green silty sand with very occasional ceramic building material fragments and charcoal flecks, similar if not identical to 52.

Cut by both 5 and 7, shallow ditch or gully 6 was filled with a friable mid brownish green silty sand with occasional chalk and ceramic building material fragments together with very occasional charcoal flecks (58=53). It was 1.5m wide 0.58m deep and was observed to extend 4.5m to the south east, Ditch 6 appeared to be the same as ditch 3 in Test Pit 1.

From the south-eastern corner of the foundation trenches the remains of brick-built vaulted cellars were observed (Fig. 3), which extended for approximately 9m, to the north-west. The cellars were formed of three double brick piers and single brick vault, the top of which was 0.11m below Tarmac; the cellars were approximately 2.5m deep. The north-eastern ends of the cellars were blocked by non-cemented brick which collapsed into the foundation trench. The cellars were filled with a very loose dark brown to black silty sand which was very unstable and also prone to collapse. The alignment of the north-eastern end of the cellars was parallel to the north-eastern end of The Shambles to the south of the site and not parallel to the north-eastern boundary of 38 to 42 The Market Place to the south. The cellars had cut away the south-western half of ditch 5.

In the northern corner of the north-eastern foundation trench, a brick capped well was observed. The well head (60) consisted of a mortared brick lining, 6 courses deep, with a cap of brick, mortar and concrete 3 courses thick. Due to the unstable nature of the well the dimensions had to be estimated to 2.00m long and 1.80m wide. Beneath the brick lining the well appeared to have been lined with wooden planks, but this could not be confirmed due to its unstable nature. The cut for the well 8 was approximately rectangular in plan and was excavated by machine to approximately 2.5m. The well was filled with (61), a mixture of black silty sand, organic material, cast iron, transfer print pottery, and glass bottles (some of which were from the local brewery, Wadworth's, with cork and bakelite caps).

In the eastern foundation trench in the area with the junction with one of the NW–SE aligned trenches, a second brick capped well was observed. The well head consisted of 7 courses of double thickness, mortared brick lining, with the remains of a single brick thick vaulted cap. The brick lining and vaulted cap had collapsed into the top of the backfilled well, as well as falling away from the edge of the cut (9). The lining beneath the brick cap could not be seen. The cut (9) appeared to be rectangular in plan approximately 2.20m long and 2.00m wide. The well was filled with 62, a similar material to 61, a mixture of black silty sand, organic material, iron, brick and mortar rubble, blue and white pottery, and glass bottles from the local brewery (see 61). In addition, 62 had a malodorous smell and appeared to be contaminated with oil.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 14 sherds with a total weight of 275g. A range of medieval and later material was noted, as follows:

NEWA/B: **Newbury-type A/B wares**. late 11th – early 15th century (Mephram 1997, 51-2). Flint, sand and shell tempered wares, probably manufactured in the Savernake Forest (Mephram 1997, 65). It has a wide distribution throughout Berkshire, northern Hampshire and Oxfordshire (Mephram 1997, fig. 29). 4 sherds, 50g.

ASH: **Ashampstead ware**, 12th – 14th century (Mephram and Heaton, 1995). Sandy ware, the main products of the kiln being jars and highly decorated glazed jugs, the latter often having painted geometric slip designs. Sandy glazed wares such as this are very common throughout central southern England from the early medieval period onwards, and other sources, yet to be discovered, were making such pottery. 3 sherds, 21g.

GS: . **German Stonewares**. AD1480+. A range of hard, grey, salt-glazed fabrics produced at numerous sites in the Rhineland and beyond (cf. Gaimster 1997). 1 sherd, 54g.

BORD: **Border Ware, 1550-1700** (Pearce 1992). Generic term for the late 15th/early 16th century pottery industry of the Hampshire/Surrey border area. The range of fabrics comprised fine, sandy whitewares with an off-white to buff fabric and with yellow, green olive or brown glaze, and fine redwares with clear green to olive or brown glaze. The manufacture of whitewares ceased during the 18th century. Produced a wide range of late medieval and early post-medieval vessel types. 1 sherds, 109g.

GRE: **Red Earthenware**, 16th – 19th century. Fine sandy earthenware, usually with a 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. There is a known Wiltshire source at Crockerton (McCarty and Brooks 1988, 459). 4 sherds, 34g.

CRM: **Creamware.** c 1740-1880. A cream-coloured earthenware, made from a calcinated flint clay (e.g. Jennings 1981, 227), and with a lead glaze, resulting in a rich cream colour. Range of tableware forms. 1 sherd, 7g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. All the medieval material was redeposited in post-medieval features.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A moderate amount of animal bone was retrieved from three contexts. A total of 68 fragments of bone were analysed, weighing 2465g (Appendix 3). The remains were well preserved, although fragmented and occasionally demonstrated surface damage caused by root activity. Considering the site as a whole, the remains of two cows were present, as two left distal tibiae were present: one from 1 (50), and the other from 5 (57). No other skeletal elements were duplicated. The only evidence of butchery cut-marks were observed on the left distal tibia and a couple of rib shafts from 1 (50).

Burnt Bone by Ceri Falys

A single piece of unidentifiable brown-black burnt bone (7g) was recovered from context 5 (57).

Conclusion

The watching brief was successful in locating archaeological deposits of relevance to the castle defences and the early development of the town. The castle was a multiple bailey type and the projected line of the outer bailey outwork forms the rear of the Market Places properties (north-east side) (Haslam 1976, 19 and fig. 6). The site extended north-east beyond the boundaries of the rear of the Market Place properties and the ditch located in geotechnical Test Pit 1 and the foundation trenches closely matches the projected line of the castle bailey indicated by Haslam (1976), and as previously excavated (Saunders 1999, 2 and fig. 3). Dating evidence from this investigation was sparse, and given the circumstances of recovery, perhaps inevitably, somewhat mixed. More or less equal quantities of medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered from the ditch most likely to be part of the castle defences, all from upper fills; and the ditch was not bottomed in this investigation. It is certainly not impossible that so massive a ditch was still at least partly open and able to receive 16th- to 18th-century finds into its top fill; given the unstable nature of the area, it is just as likely these finds are a result of later contamination.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Feature details

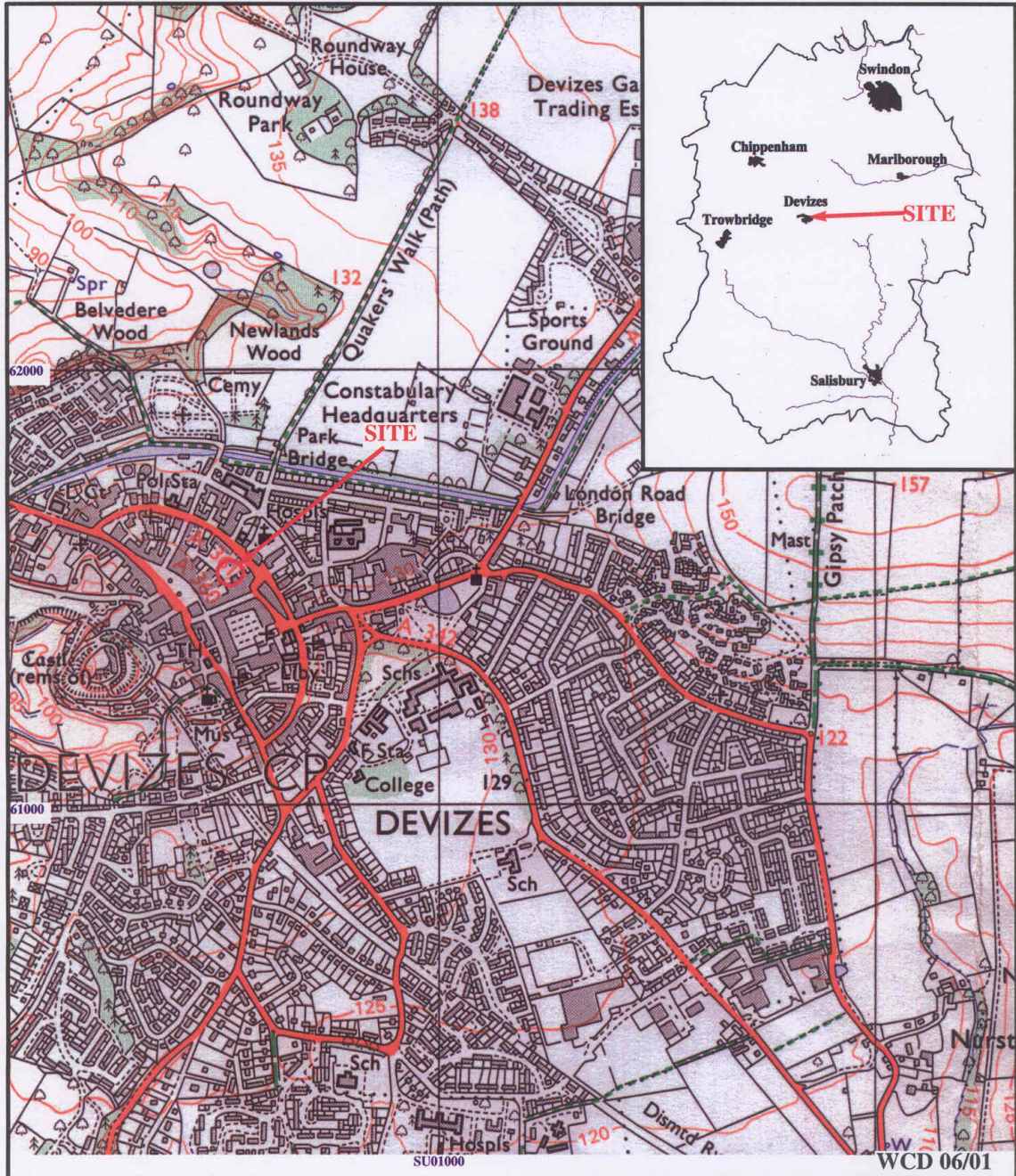
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
	55	Deposit		
1	50, 51	Ditch = 5	16th century or later	Pottery
2	52	Gully = 7		
3	53	Ditch = 6		
4	54, 56	Construction cut/foundation	18th century or later	Pottery
5	57	Ditch = 1	16th century or later	Pottery
6	58	Ditch = 3		
7	59	Gully = 2		
8	60, 61	Well		
9	62	Well		

APPENDIX 2: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>NEWA/B</i>		<i>ASH</i>		<i>GS</i>		<i>BORD</i>		<i>GRE</i>		<i>CRM</i>		<i>Date (century AD)</i>
		<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	
1	50			2	15	1	54			3	25			Mid 16th
4	56	2	43	1	6							1	7	Mid 18th
5	57	2	7					1	109	1	9			Mid 16th
	Total	4	50	3	21	1	54	1	109	4	34	1	7	

APPENDIX 3: Animal bone: number of identifiable fragments per species, and minimum number of individuals (MNI) per context.

<i>Context</i>		<i>Total Frags</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>Species (No. Frags/MNI)</i>			
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill</i>			<i>Horse</i>	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Sheep/Goat</i>	<i>Cat</i>
1	50	18	1149	7/1	2/1	3/1	-
5	57	38	1301	-	4/1	4/1	1
6	68	2	15	1/1	-	-	-
Total Frags		68	2465	8	6	7	1



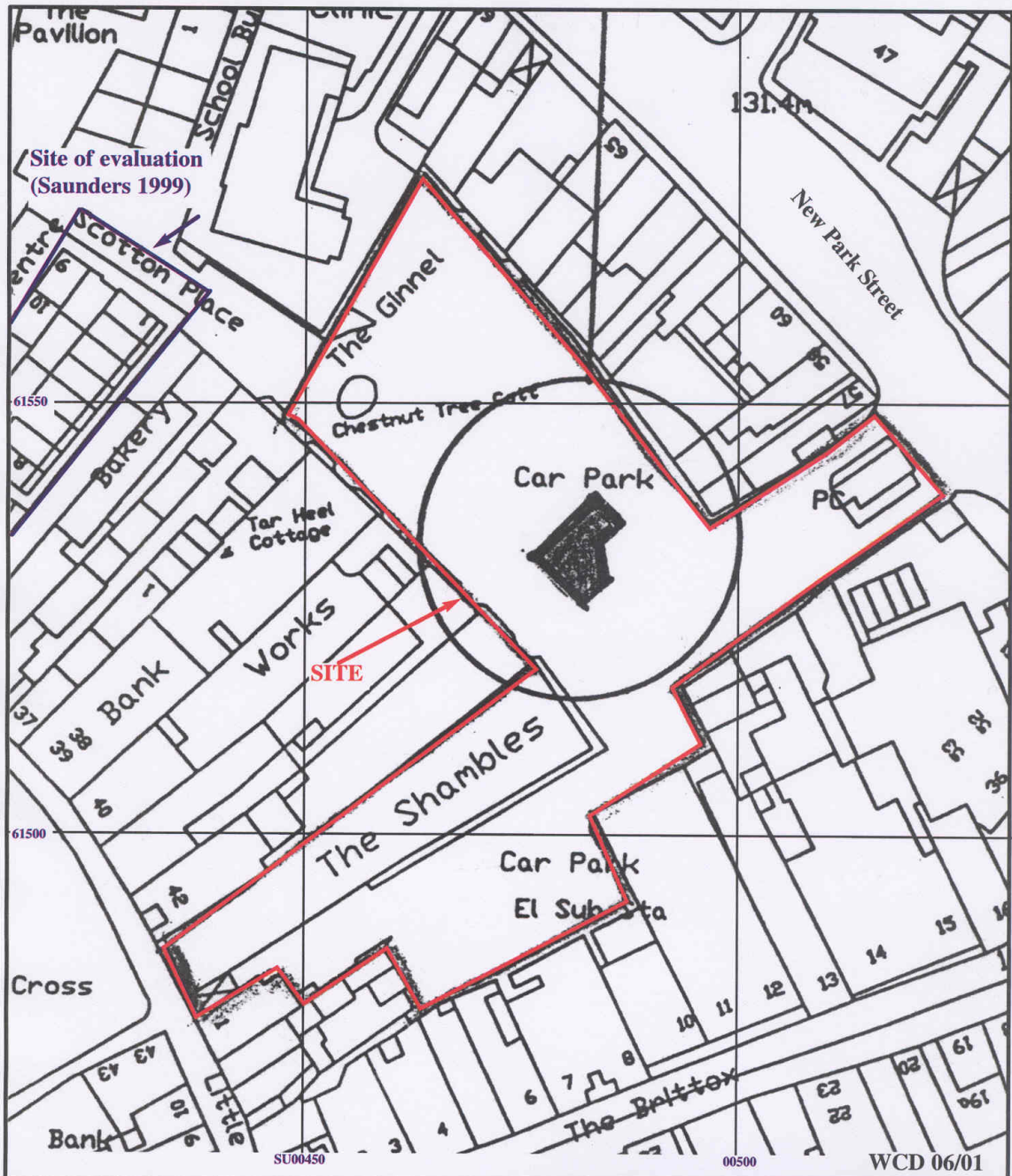
**New public conveniences, West Central Car Park,
Devizes, Wiltshire, 2006
Archaeological watching brief.**

Figure 1. Location of site within Devizes and
Wiltshire.

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THAMES VALLEY

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 Archaeological watching brief.

Figure 2. Detailed location of site on New Park Street.

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New public conveniences, West Central Car Park, Devizes, Wiltshire, 2006

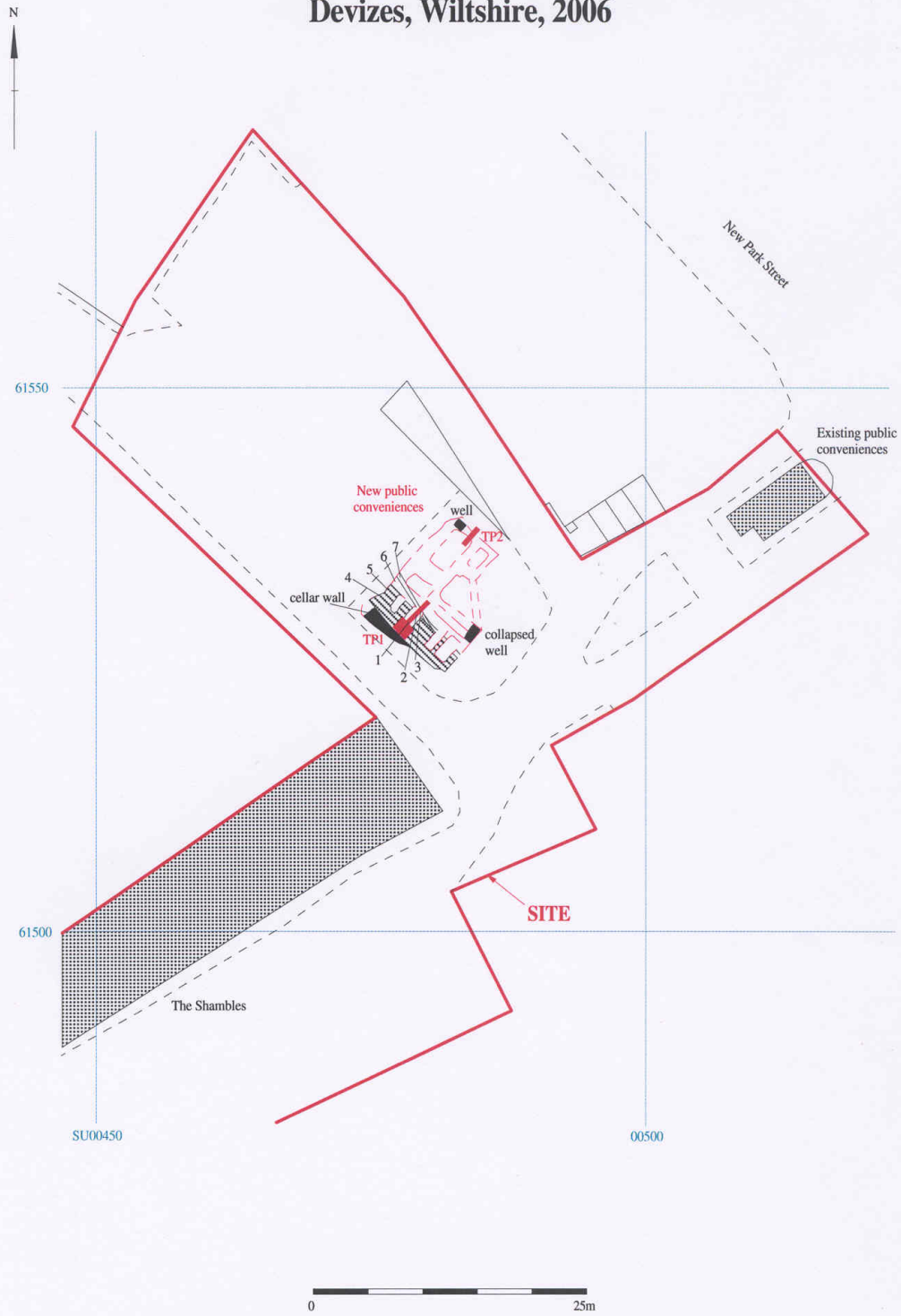


Figure 3. Areas observed during the watching brief.

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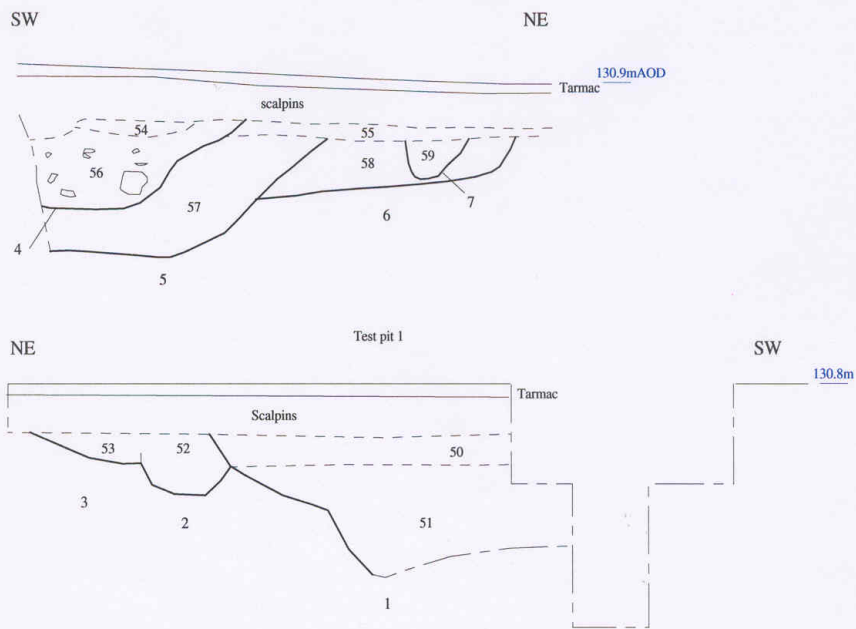


Figure 4. Sections

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