

E7616:
Great Chalfield Manor
Melksham
Wiltshire

Archaeological Monitoring
and Recording Report

May 2019





**E7616: Great Chalfield Manor
Melksham
Wiltshire**

for

C1 project code: C1/AMR/19/CMW

Wessex Water plc

REPORT

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Approved by	Richard McConnell
Signed	
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PROJECT DETAILS

Wessex Water Scheme ref.	E7616
Planning Application ref.	N/A
Local Planning Authority	N/A
Scheduled Monument Consent ref.	N/A
Historic Environment Record ref.	N/A
Collecting Museum	Wiltshire Museum (Devizes)
Museum accession code	N/A
OASIS reference	contexto1-343829

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Summary

Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) was instructed to carry out archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with the installation of a below ground electrical supply cable at Great Chalfield Manor, Melksham, Wiltshire. The project was commissioned by Wessex Water plc (WW) under a Term Agreement with C1.

The monitoring and recording was requested by the county Historic Environment Service (HES), Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS). The electricity cable runs adjacent to, and partially within the Registered Park and Garden of Great Chalfield Manor, a medieval manor with Saxon origins. Chalfield Manor is a National Trust property.

Despite some potential for archaeological remains, no features and/or deposits were encountered and no finds observed. This is perhaps not surprising given the very limited nature of both the groundworks and superficial impact of the excavations.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) was instructed to carry out archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with the installation of a below ground electrical supply cable at Great Chalfield Manor, Melksham, Wiltshire (the 'Site') (**Figure 1**). The project was commissioned by Wessex Water plc (WW) under a Term Agreement with C1.
- 1.2 The monitoring and recording was requested by the county Historic Environment Service (HES), Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS). In a reply to an email consultation request from Ms Sarah Milne, Environmental Scientist, WW on 13 March 2018, Ms Rachel Foster, Assistant County Archaeologist, WCAS stated:

*“The Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record Great Chalfield Manor is a Registered Park and Garden (National ref. 1001232) and includes 7 Listed Buildings:-
 GREAT CHALFIELD MANOR – National ref. 1250902 (Grade I)
 STABLES AT GREAT CHALFIELD MANOR – National ref. 1250903 (Grade II)
 UNIDENTIFIED MONUMENT IN THE CHURCHYARD ABOUT 0.5 METRES SOUTH OF TROPNELL CHAPEL OF CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS – National ref. 1251100 (Grade II)
 UNIDENTIFIED MONUMENT IN THE CHURCHYARD ABOUT 2 METRES NORTH OF NAVE OF CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS – National ref. 1250905 (Grade II)
 WALLS ON SOUTH SIDE OF MOAT IN FRONT OF MANOR AND CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS – National ref. 1263049 (Grade II)
 GAZEBO ON EAST SIDE OF GARDEN AT GREAT CHALFIELD MANOR – National ref. 1251020 (Grade II)
 BARN AT GREAT CHALFIELD MANOR – 1263048 (Grade I)
 The Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record states Great Chalfield is a settlement with Saxon origins.”*

- 1.3 The majority of the groundworks fell just within the south-east corner of the Registered Park and Garden with the remaining excavations along the adjacent roadside verge.
- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which sets out the project strategy (Fairclough and McConnell 2019); archaeological monitoring and recording; post-excavation and report production (this document); and archive preparation and deposition.
- 1.5 The requirement follows advice by Central Government as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (DCLG 2018).

2. The Site

- 2.1 The electrical supply cable trench (centred on NGR 386100 163100) covered a linear distance of c. 50m and was located towards the south-east corner of the Grade II listed Park and Garden of Great Chalfield Manor, which, itself is c. 4km west of Melksham. The cable ran for c. 5m south-east from an existing sewerage plant in the north at an adjacent property, beneath a boundary wall where a small kiosk will be constructed before turning south for c. 3.30m towards the road. The trench continued south-west along the roadside verge for c. 24m before turning west beneath the boundary wall once again. This section terminated at an existing kiosk c. 15m away and included a spur running north-west for approximately 15m (**Figure 1**). The trench was situated on land that is c. 50m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The recorded geology for the Site is Cornbrash Formation - Limestone (BGS 2019). The soils are characterised as shallow lime-rich soils over chalk or limestone (CSAIS 2019).
- 2.2 A large portion of the cable trench was located within the boundary of the Grade II Listed Park and Garden of Great Chalfield Manor (**Historic Environment (HE) ref. 1001232**). Great Chalfield contains a number of Listed Buildings including the medieval Great Chalfield Manor (**HE ref. 1250902**) and Barn at Great Chalfield Manor (**HE ref. 1263048**), both Grade I Listed. The county Historic Environment Record (HER) records several heritage assets relating to this medieval manorial landscape including two areas of ridge and furrow (**HER ref.**

MW174102 and **HER ref. MW174103**) located to the east and west of the manor respectively; a water management system (**HER ref. MW174861**) recorded to the north-east; and a mill pond (**HER ref, MW174101**) is noted to the west. The manor itself is thought to have Saxon origins (**HER ref. ST86SE401**). The HER lists several entries in the vicinity of the Site providing evidence that Great Chalfield's medieval landscape sits within an older prehistoric setting. Three Bronze Age round barrows (**HER refs. ST86SE969, MW173494** and **MW174857**) are recorded to the south-west, north-west and north of the manor while a possible Neolithic barrow (**HER ref. ST86WSE646**) is noted to the south-east.

3. Archaeological aims and research objectives

3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological monitoring were to:

- identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during groundworks;
- determine the character of the archaeological remains, where present;
- recover environmental information, which may provide further information relating to the local historic environment of the area;
- provide sufficient information to enable further mitigation strategies to be determined, where appropriate.

3.2 The research objectives were to:

- determine whether there was any evidence specifically relating to the Saxon origins and later medieval activity at Great Chalfield Manor;
- determine whether there was any evidence relating to an earlier prehistoric landscape

4. Methodology

4.1 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (December 2014) and in accordance with the *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995). C1 adhered to the *Code of Conduct* of the CIfA (1985, rev. 2000, 2014), and *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (CIfA, 2014, rev. 2015) at all times. The fieldwork methodology is summarised below.

4.2 C1 gave notification of the commencement of the works to the HES, but it was not deemed necessary for a representative to visit the Site to monitor archaeological fieldwork. Monitoring will continue until the deposition of the Site archive.

4.3 Prior to the commencement of Site works, the excavation methodology was agreed between those responsible for carrying out the groundworks and C1 to ensure that all parties were aware of the monitoring requirements.

4.4 An archaeologist was on Site to monitor both machine and hand excavated trenches with the aim of identifying and recording any archaeological features/deposits/finds present. Mechanical excavation was carried out with a machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket.

4.5 By default, core details of the deposit sequence across the Site was recorded on C1 *pro-forma* profile forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. The frequency with which profiles were recorded was based entirely on variation of the deposit sequence. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts. Manual excavation was not required.

4.6 A photographic record of the monitoring and recording was carried out and involved the sole use of digital images. The photographic record also included working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

5. Results

- 5.1 In accordance with standard archaeological practice, each deposit recorded during the investigation was given a unique context number and is shown in standard brackets, e.g. (100). Deposit colours were matched on Site against a Munsell soil colour chart and described against the relevant hue and reference, e.g. brownish yellow (10YR 3/1). Details of all the recorded deposits have been tabulated in **Appendix 1** and are summarised below.
- 5.2 A single profile representing the general deposit sequence was taken in the main cable trench (**Figure 1; Plate 1; Appendix 1**). This comprised topsoil consisting of a dark grey (10YR 4/1) soft silty clay with sparse angular limestone fragments (<0.05m), 0.20m deep. Lenses of mortar were also noted. This overlaid a subsoil of grey (10YR 5/1) compacted silty clay with common angular limestone fragments (<0.10m), more than 0.40m deep. Within the Registered Park and Garden, at the southern end of the scheme, the topsoil was observed in a narrow hand dug section of the cable trench leading to the existing kiosk (**Plate 2**). This consisted of black (10YR 2/1) soft silty clay with sparse angular limestone fragments (<0.05m), more than 0.20m deep. It had all the characteristics of a garden soil.
- 5.3 No archaeological features or deposits were observed and no finds were collected.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

- 6.1 Despite the proximity to Great Chalfield Manor, its associated buildings and other medieval features in the immediate area, no archaeological features or deposits were observed. The narrowness of the cable trench and its limited impact depth, particularly within the garden itself, may account for this rather than an absence of archaeological remains. For the same reason, the accumulation of modern deposits along the roadside verge and the shallow depth of excavation here prevented an adequate assessment of the sub-surface potential.

7. Archive

- 7.1 The NPPF requires that an archaeological archive arising from development works is made publicly accessible (para. 199). The archive usually comprises two parts: the paper/digital archive including site records and images; and the artefact/ecofact assemblage.

Paper/digital archive

- 7.2 As no archaeological evidence was encountered, all relevant data has been incorporated into this report and the paper/digital archive will be stored on the C1 cloud storage server or discarded.

Physical archive

- 7.3 As no artefacts or ecofacts were collected there is no physical archive to deposit.

Dissemination: report

- 7.4 Copies of this report will be submitted to the following:

- Wessex Water plc
- National Trust HBSMR
- National Trust Heritage Records Online
- the HES so that it can be included as part of the county Historic Environment Record (HER)
- the ADS, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>)

Dissemination: publication

- 7.5 By default, a short entry will be prepared for publication in the summary section of the next county archaeological journal or equivalent periodical.

8. References

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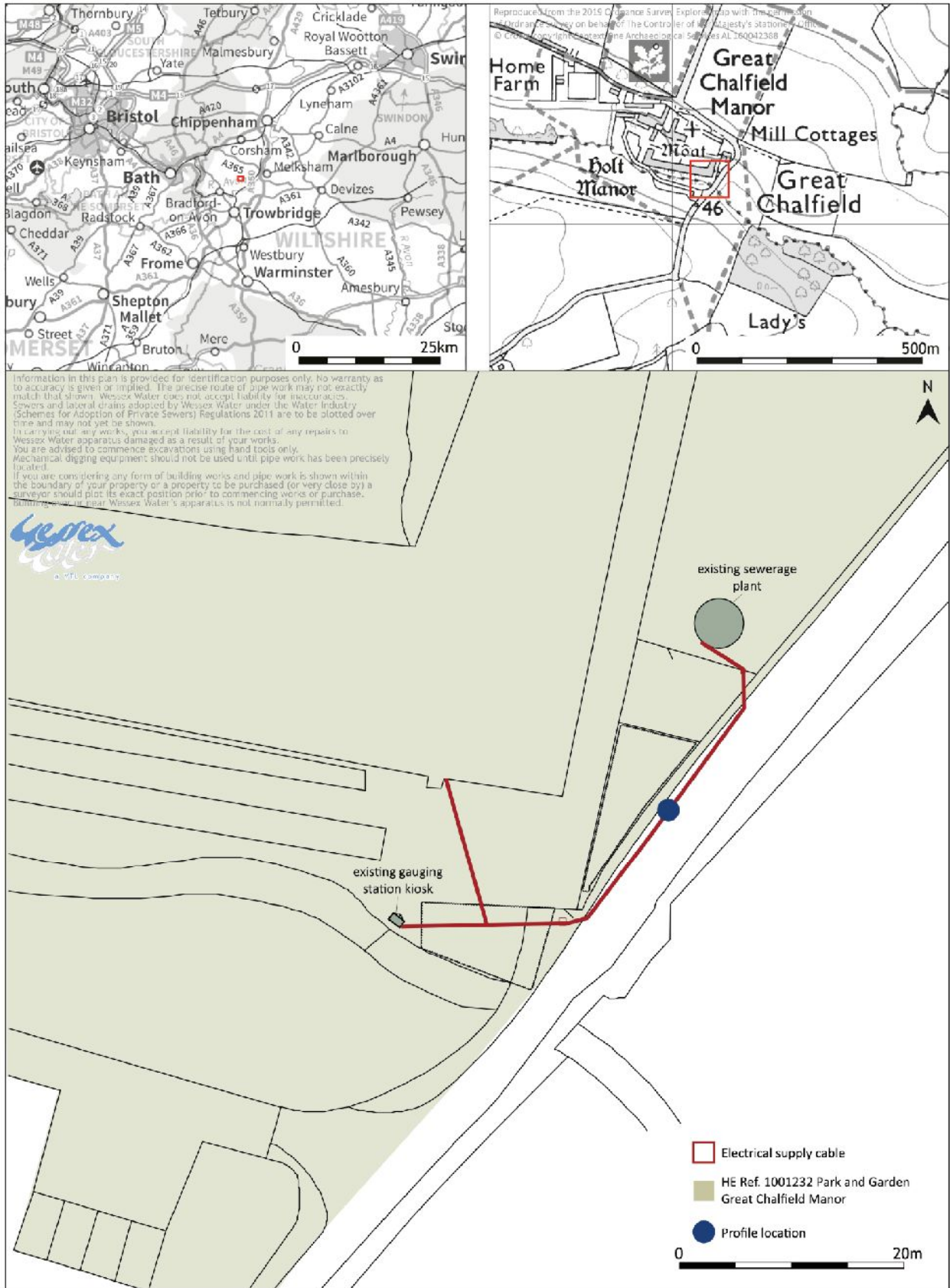


Figure 1. Site setting showing electrical supply cable route and profile location



Plate 1. Profile 1 (facing NW; 1m scale)



Plate 2. Trench to existing kiosk (facing W)

Appendix 1: Context summary

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EARLIER THAN	CONTEMP. WITH	LATER THAN	LENGTH	WIDTH/DIAMETER	THICKNESS/DEPTH (m)
Profile 1									
100	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Dark grey (10YR 4/1) soft silty clay with sparse (5%) angular limestone fragments <0.05m. Also contains mortar lenses.	NA		101	Trench	Trench	0.20m
101	Modern	Layer	Subsoil. Grey (10YR 5/1) compacted silty clay with common (20%) angular limestone fragments <0.10m.	100		NA	Trench	Trench	>0.40m
Trench to kiosk (single layer observed, rather than profile)									
103	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Black (10YR 2/1) soft silty clay with sparse (5%) angular limestone fragments <0.05m.	NA		NA	Trench	Trench	>0.20m



context one
HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGY



Looking after the past, today...