

## Land Adjoining 120 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire

### Archaeological Evaluation Report



**LAND ADJOINING 120 FISHERTON STREET,  
SALISBURY,  
WILTSHIRE**

**Archaeological Evaluation Report**

Prepared on behalf of:  
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**Front cover - Trench 1 during evaluation**

**Back cover - The soil profile and overburden, Trench 2**

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**Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned Castleway Developments Ltd. to undertake a scheme of archaeological evaluation in advance of potential redevelopment of land at the rear of 120 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, centred at NGR 413945 130170.

The fieldwork was undertaken on 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

The development area is believed to lie within the settlement of Fisherton Anger which extended from Fisherton Mill northwards as far as the current location of the railway. Although recorded in the Domesday book of 1086 the settlement shifted after the founding of Salisbury in 1220, so that it became concentrated on what is now Fisherton Street, one of the main routes out of the city. The Dominican Friary was also located on Fisherton Street close to the mill.

Two trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development. An overburden of *c.* 0.5m was present and overlying a former soil and river gravel. Two post-medieval ditches were recorded in the southern half of the area and a small number of unabraded worked flints were recovered *ex situ*.

No archaeological features pre-dating the post-medieval period were identified.

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**Archaeological Evaluation Report**

**Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Mark Budgen of Castleway for commissioning the work. Wessex Archaeology would also like to acknowledge the help and assistance of Helena Cave-Penny of WCC Archaeology Service, who monitored the evaluation on behalf of Salisbury District Council.

The fieldwork was carried out by Patrice de Rijk and Jamie Wright. The report was prepared by Jamie Wright. The illustrations were prepared by Elizabeth James and the finds were assessed by Rachel Seager Smith. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Brigitte Buss.

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**Archaeological Evaluation Report**

**1 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

**1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by the Castleway Developments Ltd. ('the Client') to undertake a scheme of archaeological evaluation in advance of potential redevelopment of land at the rear of 120 Fisherton Street (centred at NGR 413945 130170, hereafter 'the Site', **Figure 1**).

1.1.2 Following a brief for the archaeological works prepared by Helena Cave-Penney from the Wiltshire County Council Archaeology Service (hereafter 'the Curator') a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (WA doc ref **65540.01**) and approved by the curator. This set out the methodology in detail and will not be reiterated in full here.

**1.2 Site location, use and geology**

1.2.1 The Site comprises an irregular parcel of land of approximately 1400m<sup>2</sup> which is currently used as car park and also houses some outbuildings (see **Figure 1**).

1.2.2 The Site borders the railway to the north. It is bounded to the east by Fisherton Mill, the Mill Yard and an office block at No. 108a Fisherton Street, and the Hayters Flats to the west. To the south, the Site is bounded by commercial properties No.112-120, Fisherton Street.

1.2.3 The Site lies in the valley of the Avon near its junction with the Nadder. The underlying Solid geology is Cretaceous Upper Chalk sealed by a Drift of Recent and Pleistocene Valley Gravels. Recent and Pleistocene Brickearth is mapped 0.5km to the west and north (BGS 1:50,000 Map Sheet 298, 1976). Alluvium is mapped in both the Avon and Nadder valleys (Quaternary Map of the United Kingdom, South, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1977). The Site is located on the flat valley floor at approximately 48m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

1.2.4 At the time of the evaluation, the surface of the Site was gravel. The terrain rises slightly from Fisherton Street to the Site, which was itself flat. Shrubs and brambles had self seeded near the northern edge of the Site.



## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Archaeological and Historical Background**

2.1.1 The settlement of Fisherton Anger is recorded in the Domesday Book at 1086, but its full extent is not known. It is believed that the settlement extended from Fisherton Mill northwards as far as the current location of the railway.

2.1.2 After the founding of the new city of Salisbury in 1220 it appears that the settlement at Fisherton shifted so that it became concentrated on what is now Fisherton Street, one of the main routes out of the city. The development of settlements along the routes in and out of towns was common in medieval times, where traders were keen to attract any passing trade. The Dominican Friary was also located on Fisherton Street close to the mill.

## **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

3.1.1 The aim of the evaluation is to elucidate the character, distribution, extent, importance and state of preservation of any archaeological remains within the Site, particularly those related to medieval or pre-medieval Site use.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Fieldwork**

4.1.1 The fieldwork was undertaken on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

4.1.2 Geotechnical augering was being undertaken during the evaluation, limiting the total length of trench that could be excavated. The actual trench dimensions excavated were 13.6m x 2m and 9.6m x 2m.

4.1.3 All trenches were stripped using a mechanical excavator, under constant archaeological supervision. All overburden was removed to the top of the natural geology or the top of the archaeological deposits, whichever was higher.

4.1.4 The locations of the trenches were recorded in relation to buildings, boundaries and other features shown on Ordnance Survey plans and a dumpy level was used to establish heights above sea level.

## **5 RESULTS**

### **5.1 Depositional Sequence**

5.1.1 Both trenches exposed the same sequence of deposits comprising 0.45m of overburden laid over a former topsoil on river gravels.

### *Modern overburden*

- 5.1.2 The overburden had a sharp, smooth boundary to the topsoil preserved beneath it, which appeared to have been marginally disturbed when the overburden was spread.
- 5.1.3 The footprint of a building was cut into the relic topsoil. The foundation for the walls was formed of rubble, including glazed ceramic pipe, set in hard concrete or cement. The walls were of 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century bricks. The interior of the building had a 0.3m thick clay floor while exterior to the building was a spread of cinders and gravel. Before excavation the walls had been truncated to the height of the clay floor layer.
- 5.1.4 Overlying the walls, the interior and exterior of the building was a 0.2m thick layer of gravel, probably spread in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when the area was used for car parking.

### *Soil*

- 5.1.5 The relic topsoil was between 0.25m and 0.30m deep. It had an irregular, gradual boundary with the gravels below. There was a suggestion of some worm sorting to this layer as the top 0.1m contained few, small flints while the base was more stony with larger flints. The sandy clay texture was similar to that of the highest layer of gravel and was presumably derived from it.

### *Gravel*

- 5.1.6 The river gravel was cut by ditches **104** and **107**. Greensand derived sand had a thickness of at least 0.2m and was overlain by a similar thickness of flint gravel. Sealing this was a sandy clay containing fewer rounded and sub-angular flints.

## **5.2 Archaeological features**

- 5.2.1 A ditch, **107**, and an adjacent re-cut, **104**, ran north-east to south-west and at an acute angle to Fisherton Street.
- 5.2.2 Ditch **107** was truncated along its southern side with a remaining width of 0.9m. It sloped at *c.* 45° with slight stepping, possibly the result of the differing geological deposits it was cut through. The base was rounded and situated *c.* 1.2m below the surface of the relic topsoil. The single fill, **106**, was similar to the relic topsoil and contained a sherd of post-medieval/modern pottery from near the top, against the edge of the cut.
- 5.2.3 Re-cut **104** had steeper sides and was deeper; it was not bottomed on Health and Safety grounds but the base of the ditch was at least 1.2m below the surface of the relic topsoil. The fill, **105**, a paler colour than fill **106**, contained more Greensand derived sand and appeared consist mainly of redeposited natural. A mixture of post-medieval and modern artefacts, including a clay pipe stem, was recovered.



5.2.4 The presence of a thin layer of sand overlying fill **106** and slumping lenses of sand in fill **105** suggested that material dug out of ditch **104** formed a bank over ditch **107**.

## 6 FINDS

6.1.1 A small quantity of finds was recovered during the evaluation, deriving from four contexts within the two trenches excavated. Some unstratified finds were also collected.

6.1.2 All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and the results are presented in **Table 1**.

6.1.3 Of most interest amongst this small assemblage is a group of worked flint, including flakes and blades in relatively fresh condition. With the possible exception of the unstratified material, all these could fit within a Late Mesolithic, or possibly early Neolithic, date range, and are likely not to have moved far from their original point of deposition.

6.1.4 Other finds comprise pottery (coarse earthenwares and modern refined ware), animal bone (cattle, domestic fowl and small bird), clay tobacco pipes, ironworking slag, oyster shell, roof tile and brick, and iron nails. With the exception of some fragments of medieval roof tile (unstratified, and residual in ditch recut 104), all these are demonstrably or probably of post-medieval date.

*Table 1: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)*

Context	Animal Bone	CBM	Worked Flint	Pottery	Other Finds
103			7/107		
105	29/171	6/136	4/83		3 clay pipe stems; 1 slag; 1 oyster shell; 3 iron nails
106				1/9	
202				1/7	
Unstrat.		1/16	4/30	1/35	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29/171</b>	<b>7/152</b>	<b>15/220</b>	<b>3/51</b>	

CBM = ceramic building material

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL

7.1.1 No features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

## 8 DISCUSSION

8.1.1 The evaluation has recorded the presence of a ditch that was subsequently recut. After the ditch was abandoned and possibly backfilled a brick-built building was constructed on apparently the same alignment. It is therefore

possible that the ditch was a property boundary and that in the later time a building was built along the edge of the property.

- 8.1.2 The Ordnance Survey map of 1887 (<http://www.old-maps.co.uk/oldmaps/landdisplay.jsp>) shows the Site as an open area with some trees. There is the suggestion of an east to west boundary on the southern edge of Site, although this seems further south than the two ditches identified in the evaluation.

## **9 CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1.1 No archaeological activity pre-dating the post-medieval period was identified during the evaluation, although potentially good preservation is indicated by the presence of a buried soil horizon below the modern overburden, indicating minimal modern truncation. No evidence for medieval occupation related to the settlement of Fisherton was identified.
- 9.1.2 The small quantity of worked flint recovered from feature fills and the trench overburden, is of some interest. Its relative fresh condition implies that the artefact, albeit *ex situ* may have derived from features of a Mesolithic/Neolithic date in the vicinity. Only few Mesolithic finds are known in Salisbury (Wymer 1977, 343); therefore any such features associated with this material would be of regional significance.

## **10 ARCHIVE**

- 10.1.1 The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology, under the site code reference **65540**. It is recommended that it is deposited with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, Salisbury, at a future date.

## **11 REFERENCES**

- Wessex Archaeology, 2007, *Land Adjoining 120 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire; Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*, Unpublished Client Rep. ref. 65540.01
- Wymer, J.J., 1977, *Gazetteer of Mesolithic Sites in England and Wales*, Council for British Archaeology Research Rep. **22**

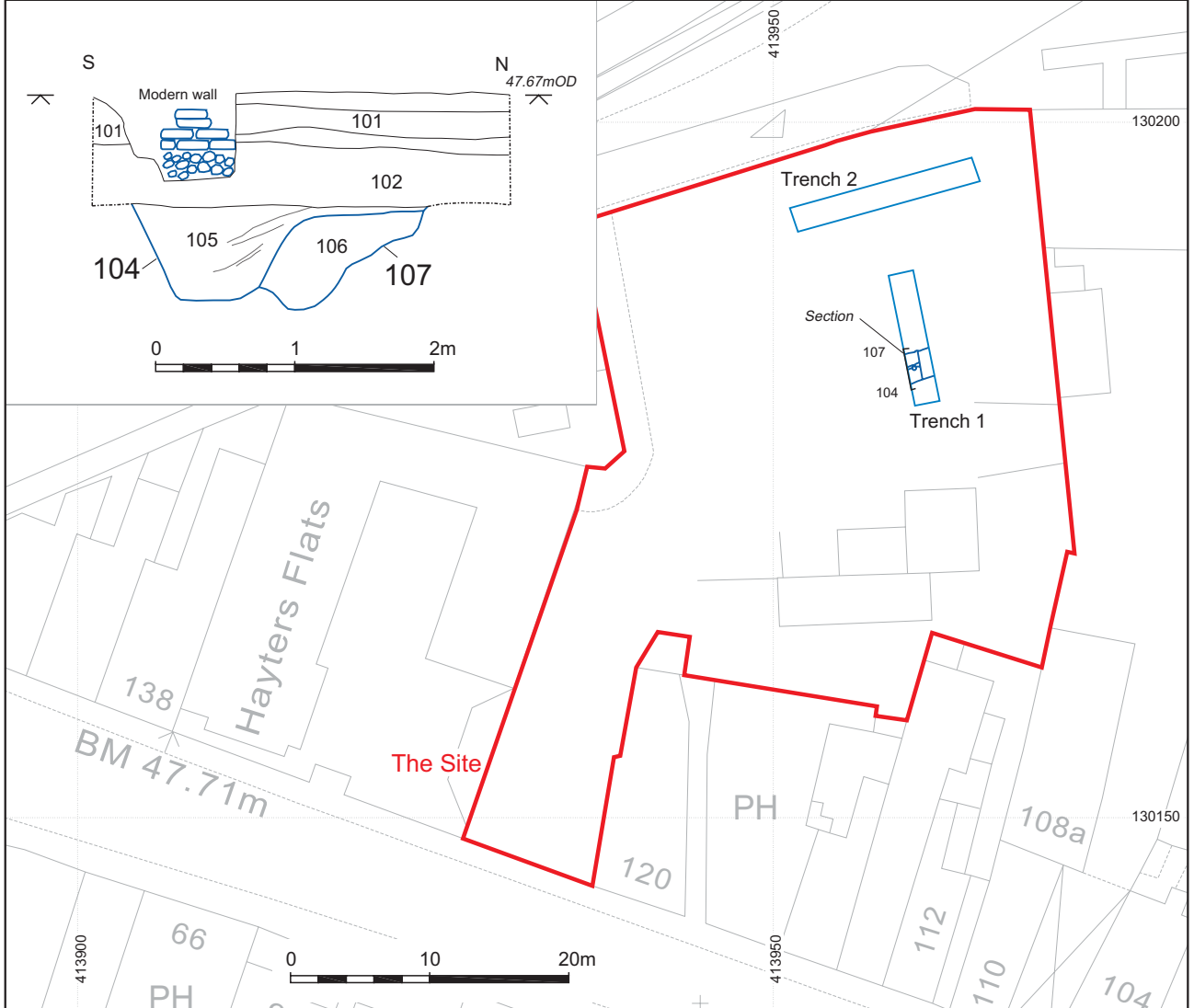
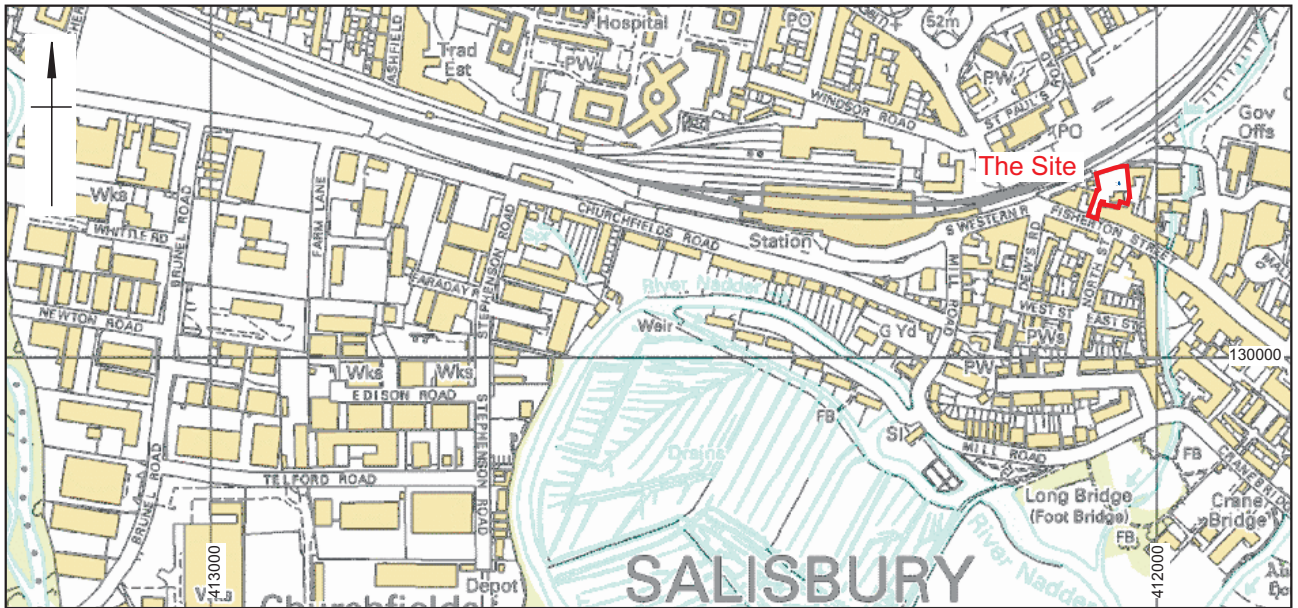
## Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

### TRENCH 1

NGR	413961.1, 130179.8, 47.7		413959.2, 130189.2, 47.7	
Dimensions	Length 9.65, Width 1.90, Max. depth 0.80 (m)			
Context	Description	Depth (m)		
101	<b>Overburden:</b> A mixture of layers of modern materials, mostly cinders and clay capped with 0.2m of gravel. To the N of a modern brick wall was a 0.3m thick clay floor layer.	0 – 0.45		
102	<b>Relic topsoil:</b> A dark greyish brown fine sandy clay containing common, sub-angular medium flint gravel and some brick fragments.	0.45 – 0.80		
103	<b>Natural:</b> A yellowish brown silty clay with sandy clay patches and few to common, medium to large, rounded and sub-angular flint inclusions. Where cut by ditch <b>104</b> this was seen to be c.0.2m deep and overlay an abundantly flint gravel layer of similar depth. Below was a Greensand derived sandy layer of unknown depth.	> 0.80		
104	<b>Ditch:</b> A 1.2m wide E to W aligned re-cut of <b>107</b> . Its edges were steep and straight. Due to Health and Safety it was not bottomed. This cut <b>106</b> .	0.80 - >1.50		
105	<b>Fill of 104:</b> A greyish brown silty clay containing much flint gravel. Intermittent lenses of greenish sand showed much of the fill came from the N.	0.80 - >1.50		
106	<b>Fill of 107:</b> A dark greyish brown silty clay containing common flint.	0.80 – 1.54		
107	<b>Ditch:</b> A estimated 1.9m wide E to W ditch, the S edge was removed by re-cut <b>104</b> , 0.6m to its S. The surviving edge sloped at 45° to a rounded base.	0.80 – 1.54		

### TRENCH 2

NGR	413964.6, 130196.6, 47.7		413951.5, 130193.00, 47.7	
Dimensions	Length 13.6, Width 1.8, Max. depth 0.96 (m)			
Context	Description	Depth (m)		
201	<b>Overburden:</b> Successive layers of cinders, clay and a final 0.2m thick layer of gravel.	0 – 0.45		
202	<b>Relic topsoil:</b> A grey fine sandy clay that became more gravelly with depth. The top 50mm was relatively stone free with few small sub-angular flints but near the base was common medium flint.	0.45 – c. 0.77		
203	<b>Natural:</b> A pale yellowish brown fine sandy clay with common rounded medium flints and some large rounded flint. A very stony band was present along the S edge of trench in E.	> c. 0.77		
	A 0.7m diameter possible test pit continued to N of the trench. It was filled with wet, sticky redeposited natural.			



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Site and trench locations and section across ditches 104 and 107

Figure 1



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