

Community Hall, Market Lavington, Wiltshire

Archaeological Excavation Report



**COMMUNITY HALL
MARKET LAVINGTON
WILTSHIRE**

Archaeological Excavation Report

Prepared for

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by the Market Lavington Community Hall Management Trust to undertake an archaeological excavation of land at the village green, Market Lavington, Wiltshire, centred on NGR 401310 154120. A planning application has been submitted for the construction of a Community Hall, however to fund this development part of the green is to be sold off to a developer for the construction of housing. It is within the latter area that the excavation took place. This archaeological work was undertaken as a staged mitigation approach. Although no brief was issued, Wiltshire County Council's Archaeology Section, archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority, recommended that initial archaeological works comprise an area extension to a trial trench excavated in 1995, equating to an area measuring 30 x 10m. The fieldwork was undertaken between 20th and 24th March 2006.

Only two indisputably archaeological features were encountered during the excavation. These comprised a very irregular ditch, possibly representing a field boundary, of probable Saxon date in the south-west of the excavation area and a very substantial ditch of medieval date that continued beyond the north-eastern limit of excavation. The massive size of the medieval ditch, approximately 3.8m wide and 1.2m deep, suggests that this feature is likely to represent a substantial and important land or property division, possibly a settlement boundary, or a substantial moat around a contemporary building. The 1995 evaluation of this area identified the remains of a medieval masonry structure in the north-east of the village green, immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the churchyard, which could be associated with this feature. A small area of probable tree root disturbance, associated with a small assemblage of residual finds, was also sample excavated and recorded.

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Acknowledgements

The archaeological excavation was commissioned by the Market Lavington Community Hall Management Trust, through their Chairman, Mr P Furminger. The fieldwork was monitored by Sue Farr of Wiltshire County Archaeological Service and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank her for the help and advice that she provided.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Peter Reeves. The fieldwork was directed by Vaughan Birbeck, with the assistance of Lee Newton and Naomi Hall. This report was compiled by Vaughan Birbeck with Lorraine Mephram (finds) and the illustrations were prepared by Liz James.

COMMUNITY HALL MARKET LAVINGTON WILTSHIRE

Archaeological Excavation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by the Market Lavington Community Hall Management Trust, through their Chairman, Mr P Furminger, to undertake an archaeological excavation of land at the village green, Market Lavington, Wiltshire (hereafter, 'the Site'), centred on NGR 401310 154120. The fieldwork was undertaken between 20th and 24th March 2006.

1.1.2 The Site is approximately 2ha in extent and located on the village green to the west of St Mary's Church. The roughly rectangular shape of land is bounded to the north by St Mary's Road, to the west by Grove Road and to the south by Church Road. The land, formerly part of Grove Farm, is rough grassland (**Figure 1**).

1.1.3 A planning application has been submitted for the construction of a Community Hall, however to fund this development part of the green is to be sold off to a developer for the construction of housing. It is within the latter area that the excavation took place. This archaeological work was undertaken as a staged mitigation approach. The results will determine whether further archaeological intervention is required.

1.1.4 Although no brief has been issued, Wiltshire County Council's Archaeology Section, archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority, has recommended that initial archaeological works comprise an area extension to a trial trench excavated in 1995 (Wessex Archaeology 1995, Trench 3), equating to an area measuring 30 x 10m.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The Site lies on Upper Greensand, made up of sand and sandstone deposits (BGS 1959 sheet 282).

1.2.2 The site slopes from the north-east at around 90m aOD to the south-west (c. 84m aOD). The Site was the location of the former Grove Farm, farmhouse and associated outbuildings, all now demolished, the area of proposed investigation is within rough pasture.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

1.3.1 The Proposed Development Area lies within an area of archaeological interest. To the north of the Site, excavations in 1991 recorded a small Roman building associated with a large number of Romano-British coins and ceramic fine wares indicating a high status for the area (Williams and Newman forthcoming). The excavations also yielded 32 burials dated to the Saxon

period, and a single Saxon burial was found to the south west of the Site during construction of the modern housing estate. The previous archaeological evaluation on the Site (Wessex Archaeology 1995), undertaken in 1995, uncovered Saxon features, possibly post holes, containing organic tempered pottery.

- 1.3.2 The excavations to the north (1991) suggested a reorganisation of the village (then town) in the twelfth century, possibly caused by the granting of a Market Charter. It is probable that the town was reorganised again in the fourteenth century. The Site is located adjacent to the Saxon centre and one of the principal medieval trade routes into Market Lavington and therefore the potential for significant remains from either period was regarded as high.
- 1.3.4 The archaeological officer, Wiltshire County Council, Museum and Libraries Service, requested an area extension around the three postholes uncovered in Trench 3 during the 1995 evaluation. A single sherd of organic tempered Saxon pottery dating to the c. 6/7th century AD was recovered from one of these postholes. None of the postholes were fully excavated and the features were interpreted as either part of a fence line or part of a timber post building.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objective of the evaluation was to establish within the constraints of the area opened the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition, and depth of any surviving remains within the Site.
- 2.2 The evaluation area will clarify the potential impact upon the archaeological resource of the proposed development and seek to aid in the establishment of a mitigation strategy which takes into account both the quality of the archaeology and the engineering requirements of the developer. The results of the area investigation will determine whether further excavation is required in the development area or whether a Watching Brief could be maintained throughout ground works.
- 2.3 The extension to Trench 3 sought to determine whether the three postholes discovered in 1995 form part of a fence line or whether they form part of a timber post building.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The Site was investigated through the extension of trial trench 3, excavated in 1995. The original trench measured 20m x 2m and was orientated roughly north south. An area measuring 30m x 10m was machine stripped in the vicinity of the southern end of the trench. It was originally intended that the excavation area be centred on the 1995 trench, however, the exact location was altered to avoid mature trees immediately to the south-west of the original position. All features within this area were fully excavated and recorded. All work was conducted in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (1994, revised, 2001).

- 3.2 The area was excavated using a JCB equipped with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoil was visually inspected for artefacts. Machine excavation continued down to the first recognisable archaeological horizon, which coincided with the surface of the natural strata. Further excavation of archaeological features or deposits was then undertaken by hand as appropriate. Excavation was undertaken as specified in the *Standards* documents, and was sufficient to resolve the principal aims of the evaluation.
- 3.3 All exposed archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system. A complete drawn record of excavated archaeological features and deposits was compiled. This included both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections), and with reference to a site grid tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels was calculated and plans/sections were annotated with OD heights.
- 3.4 A full photographic record was maintained using both colour transparencies and black and white negatives (on 35 mm film). Digital photography was also employed as appropriate. The photographic record illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features, finds excavated, and the site as a whole.
- 3.5 Finds were treated in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (1994, revised, 2001).
- 3.6 All artefacts were retained from excavated contexts, except features or deposits of undoubtedly modern date. In these circumstances sufficient artefacts were only retained to elucidate the date and function of the feature or deposit. The excavated spoil was examined for artefacts and these were retained and recorded. Material of undoubtedly modern date was noted but not retained. All artefacts were as a minimum, washed, marked, counted, weighed and identified.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Only two indisputably archaeological features were encountered during the excavation (**Figure 2**). These comprised a very irregular ditch of probable Saxon date in the south-west of the excavation area and a very substantial ditch of medieval date that continued beyond the north-eastern limit of excavation. A small area of probable tree root disturbance, associated with a small assemblage of Saxon finds was also sample excavated and recorded. The three postholes suggested by the previous evaluation were found to be irregular hollows within the ditch to the south west of the area. The results of the archaeological evaluation are detailed below by period. A full description of all archaeological contexts is retained in the site archive, currently held at

the offices of Wessex Archaeology under the project code 62570: a summary catalogue of contexts recorded is provided in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 The Soil Sequence

4.2.1 The natural substrata (**102**) comprised weathered greyish green sand, oxidising to a slightly greenish grey colour, deposits of the Upper Greensand formation with an outcrop of solid sandstone in the south-western end of the area. Within the trench the surface of this deposit lay at between **88.48m OD** in the south-west of the site and **90.24m OD** in the north-east.

4.2.2 The Greensand natural was cut by three features, two ditches and a possible root disturbance and was overlain by a mixed deposit of very dark olive grey silty sand loam subsoil (**101**) with sparse local stone inclusions, on average approximately 0.35m thick. The components appear to indicate that this deposit was formed of a mixture of redeposited natural sand and topsoil. Earlier environmental analysis of this deposit (Wessex Archaeology 1995) suggest that this is not a normal pedogenic (soil) horizon. It displays pedogenesis, but is essentially an anthropogenic horizon, possibly a midden deposit. The only material noted within this deposit during its machine removal comprised small fragments of animal bone and very rare small fragments of ceramic building material. The subsoil deposit was sealed below the modern topsoil (**100**), which comprised a c. 0.30m thick deposit of very dark greyish brown sandy loam.

4.3 Saxon

4.3.1 A single, very irregular approximately north-south aligned ditch (**Group 109**), between 0.80m and 1.30m wide and 0.15m and 0.40m deep with very irregular sides and base, was traced for approximately 10.50m across the excavation area. The very irregular form of this feature was probably due to its cutting through an outcrop of solid sandstone for much of its length within the excavation area. Where examined a little away from the stone outcrop, the ditch was a more regular “V” shaped profile, although still a little irregular. This feature was examined with three hand excavated interventions (**103**, **105** and **112**), comprising approximately 41.5% of its length within the Site.

4.3.2 The single dark olive grey sandy loam fill (**104**, **106** and **113**) was fairly homogeneous across the entire length of the ditch and was very difficult to distinguish from the overlying subsoil deposit (**101**). A very small, abraded assemblage of pottery, comprising a single sherd of Romano-British coarse greyware and three sherds of early/middle Saxon organic-tempered ware, was recovered from the fills of this feature, along with a moderate assemblage of animal bone, including horse, pig, sheep/goat and cattle, with one domestic fowl.

4.4 Medieval

4.4.1 In the north-eastern end of the excavation area, and continuing beyond the north-west limit of excavation, was a substantial ditch (**Group 117**), aligned approximately north-south. This was traced for approximately 11m within the Site and a subsequent machine dug extension to the trench showed that this was approximately 3.80m wide. This was examined with a single, 1.75m long

intervention (**107**) across the western side of the ditch. This showed that it was 1.20m deep and that the western side was steeply sloping with straight sides and a flat base. The basal fill (**116**) comprised a dark greyish green very fine sandy silt, probably the result of periodic silting during the life of the ditch. The upper fill (**108**) comprised a very dark olive grey fine, sandy loam and was very difficult to distinguish from the overlying subsoil deposit (**101**) and may have been the result of a deliberate backfilling of this feature.

- 4.4.2 The upper fill (**108**) produced one residual Saxon sherd alongside a small group of medieval sherds, including coarsewares of both Laverstock and West Wiltshire type, of 12th or 13th century date, and a moderate assemblage of animal bone. Only animal bone was recovered from the basal fill (**116**).

4.5 Other Features

- 4.5.1 The only other features encountered comprised modern intrusions, caused by the removal of an overhead electricity pylon, remains of the 1995 evaluation trench and a very diffuse, irregular feature (**114**) in the centre of the excavation area. This was approximately 2.40m long, 1.80m wide and up to 0.10m deep with very shallow, irregular sides and irregular base. The irregularity of this feature suggests a disturbance caused by tree roots rather than an anthropogenic origin. A small assemblage of Saxon and medieval pottery was recovered from the single olive grey sandy loam fill (**115**). The fill of this feature was cut by a small sub-circular feature (**110**), approximately 0.35m in diameter and 0.17m deep with moderately steep, concave sides and a concave base. While this feature may represent a small post hole, it could equally have been formed by root action pulling material into the natural substrata. A small assemblage of animal bone, oyster shell and burnt flint was recovered during hand excavation of the single fill (**111**).

5 FINDS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The trial trench produced a small quantity of finds, consisting largely of animal bone, with other material types occurring much more sparsely. Dating evidence (pottery and ceramic building material) indicate a date range of Romano-British to post-medieval, with an emphasis on the medieval period.
- 5.1.2 All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and the results are presented in **Table 1**.

5.2 Pottery

- 5.2.1 Pottery from ditch **109** (fills **104**, **106**, **113**) comprises one Romano-British coarse greyware and three sherds of early/middle Saxon organic-tempered ware. Ditch **107** (upper fill **108**) produced one residual Saxon sherd alongside a small group of medieval sherds, including coarsewares of both Laverstock and West Wiltshire type (12th/13th century). Two sherds, one Saxon organic-tempered and one medieval West Wiltshire type, came from feature **114** (fill **115**). The four sherds from topsoil **100** comprised two medieval Kennet Valley type coarsewares (12th/13th century) and two early post-medieval redwares.

5.3 Animal Bone

5.3.1 The largest group of animal bone came from ditch **107** (fill **108**) and, unsurprisingly, includes the widest range of species – horse, pig, sheep/goat and cattle, with one domestic fowl. Bone from other contexts consists largely of sheep/goat and cattle, with some pig (ditch **109**, feature **114**) and one bird (feature **114**). Bone from feature **110** is unidentifiable to species. The bone is mostly in good condition, with the exception of the fragments from feature **114**, which are noticeably more abraded.

5.4 Other Finds

5.4.1 Other finds comprise one worked flint flake, one piece of burnt, unworked flint (unknown date), one medieval ceramic roof (ridge) tile, one oyster shell and one piece of worked sandstone (unknown date and function).

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

CBM = ceramic building material

Context	Animal Bone	RB Pottery	Saxon Pottery	Medieval Pottery	Post-med Pottery	Other Finds
100				2/16	2/36	1 worked flint; 1 CBM
104	10/35		2/10			
106	16/60		1/7			
108	209/1804		1/3	21/203		1 stone
111	7/7					1 oyster shell; 1 burnt flint
113	82/329	1/6				
115	20/68		1/4	1/3		
116	7/89					
TOTAL	351/2392	1/6	5/24	24/222	2/36	

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The earliest evidence of human activity recovered during this evaluation/excavation comprised a single piece of worked flint, likely to be of prehistoric date, recovered from the present topsoil during machine excavation. The earlier excavations, to the north-east, also recovered evidence of prehistoric activity, ranging in date from Mesolithic to Iron Age, though this was also limited to a background scatter of lithic material and a few sherds of prehistoric pottery, recovered from later features and deposits (Williams and Newman forthcoming). Evidence for Romano-British activity in the immediate area is similarly scanty, comprising a single sherd of Romano-British coarse greyware recovered from the fill (**113**) of an intervention across a Saxon ditch (group **109**), where it was residual. The earlier excavations located a small structure and a few pits of Romano-British date and aerial

photographic evidence suggests a possible villa to the north-west of the present site. Unfortunately, if this villa does exist, then it now lies beneath a part of the housing development, undertaken before 1990, in this area (Williams and Newman forthcoming).

- 6.2 The very irregular form of the early – mid Saxon ditch (group **109**) in the south-west of the excavation area was probably due to the difficulty of cutting the feature through the natural outcrop of stone within the substrata in this area. Only a very small assemblage of finds was recovered from the fills of this ditch, suggesting that it was located in an area peripheral to the core of the settlement, which the 1990 excavations suggest was to the north and north-east of the church. It therefore seems likely that ditch **109** represents a small field or boundary ditch, beyond the Saxon settlement. The dearth of associated features, the small size of the finds assemblages recovered from this feature, and the Saxon material recovered from later features and deposits, suggest that they may have originated from a general manuring in the area rather than settlement activity in the immediate vicinity. The postholes identified during the previous evaluation could not be located as individual features, rather, they and other patches could be identified as denser concentrations of darker fill within the fill of the meandering linear feature.
- 6.3 The massive size of the medieval ditch in the north-east of the excavation area suggests that this feature is likely to represent a substantial and important land or property division, possibly a settlement boundary, or a substantial moat around a contemporary building. The 1995 evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 1995) identified the remains of a medieval masonry structure in the north-east of the village green, immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the churchyard, which may be of significance. A fragment of decorated medieval ridge tile was recovered from the present topsoil (**100**) during topsoil stripping. The tile could be associated with a nearby building, its quality indicates a relatively high status. It is of note that both documentary and archaeological evidence suggest a wide-scale reorganisation of the settlement in the late 12th and 13th centuries. Prior to this, settlement probably clustered around the church and focused on the main east-west route through the area, which may have been of Saxon origin. To the east of the church was added a planned settlement, of likely 13th century date, with market and fair grants being obtained in the mid 13th century. The parish church of St. Mary was rebuilt in this period and has a chancel and nave of probable 13th century date (Williams and Newman forthcoming). The scarce dating evidence recovered from the fills of ditch **117** indicates that this probably fell out of use in the 12th or 13th century and its disuse may be associated with the reorganisation of the settlement around this time.
- 6.4 Both of the archaeological features recorded were sealed below the dark olive grey silty sand loam subsoil (**101**). Environmental analysis of this deposit during the 1995 evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 1995) suggested that this was not a normal pedogenic (soil) horizon; although it displays pedogenesis, it is essentially an anthropogenic (humanly derived) horizon, similar to the midden/occupation deposit that overlay the Saxon features recorded during the 1990 excavations. The stratigraphic position of this deposit, above the fills of

the Saxon and medieval features, suggests a later medieval, post-medieval or modern date.

- 6.5 The proposed development, subject to the final design layout, will impact upon both of the archaeological features recorded during this phase of evaluation/excavation. However, the presence of a soft filled linear feature, 1.2m deep and 3.8m wide may require a realignment of the proposed developments north eastern elevation or a reconsideration of foundation options. A raft foundation in this area would preserve the ditch in situ.
- 6.6 Further hand excavation of the medieval ditch might clarify its form and may enhance the dating, function and interpretation of this feature, as might further excavation of the Saxon ditch. Both features, whilst being of local importance in terms of the lay-out and function of the Saxon and medieval settlements, appear to have been peripheral to the main core of settlement.

REFERENCES

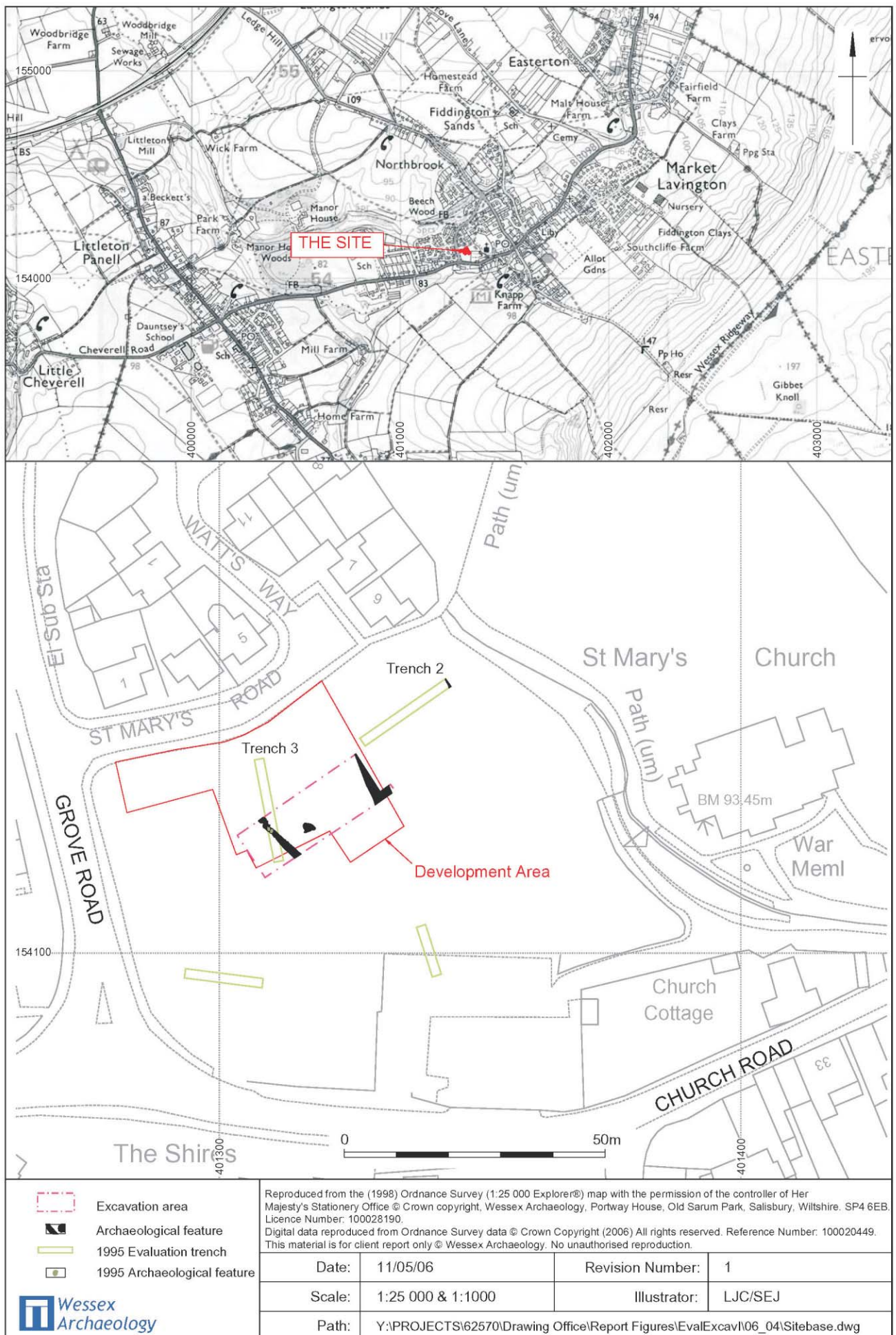
Wessex Archaeology 1995 *Grove Farm, Market Lavington, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation*. Unpublished Client Report ref. 39162, Salisbury.

Williams, P. and Newman, R. (forthcoming), Excavations at Grove Farm, Market Lavington, Wiltshire, 1986-1990, The Development of a Roman, Saxon and Medieval Settlement, Wessex Archaeol. Rep.

APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of Context Descriptions

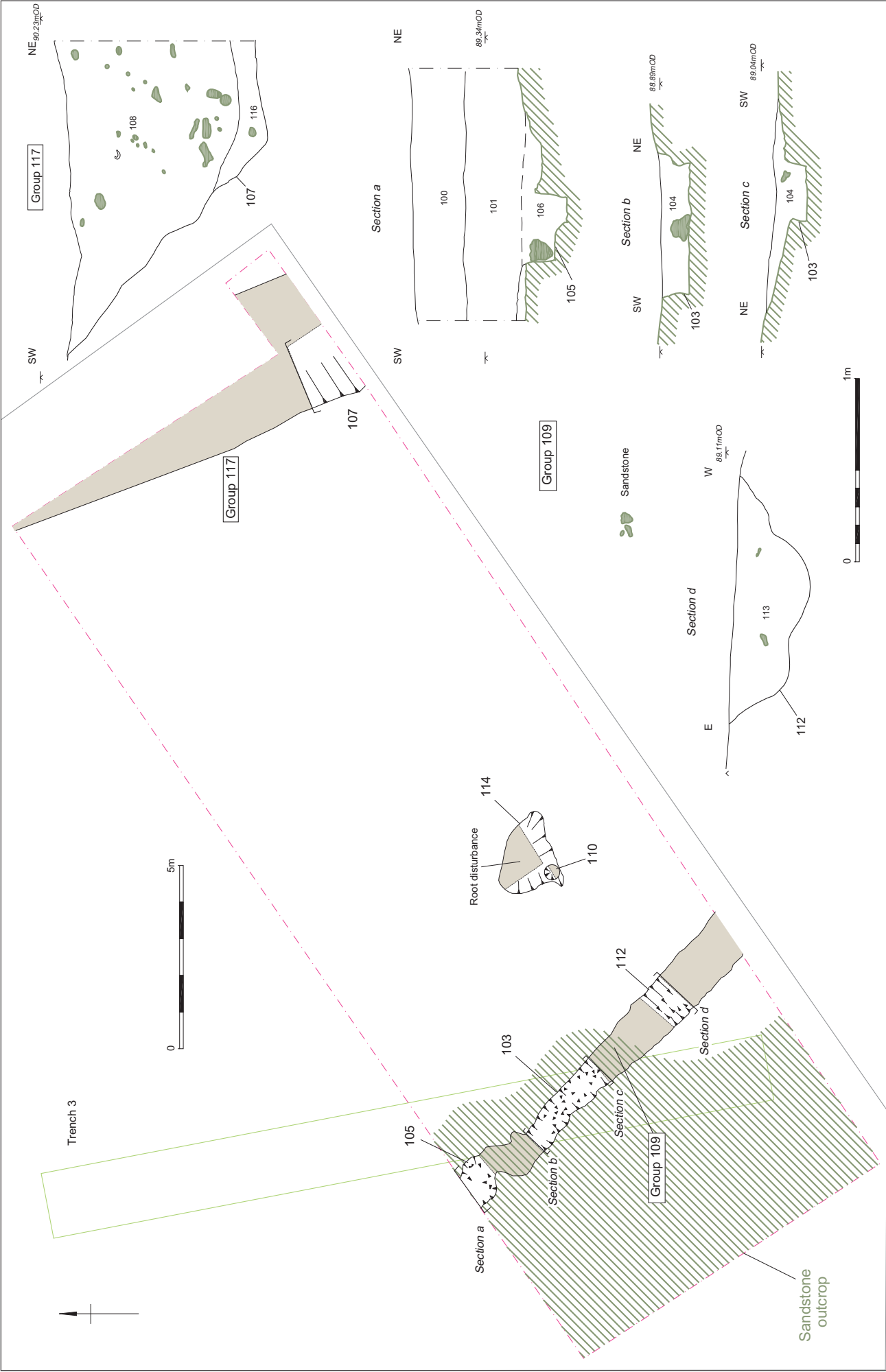
Context No.	Description	Depth (average)	Finds
100	Very dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil and present turf-line. Ground level at between 88.95m aOD in the south-west of the site and 91.14m aOD in the north-east.	0.30m	Modern finds (plastic, glass, transfer printed pottery etc.) noted but not retained. Small quantity of medieval and post-medieval pottery recovered during machine stripping
101	Very dark olive grey silty sand loam subsoil with sparse local stone inclusions.	0.30-0.65m	Sparse animal bone fragments and post-medieval brick and tile noted during machining, but not retained.
102	Mid-light green (oxidising to greenish grey) sand. Weathered natural greensand substrata. Outcrop of local stone noted within this deposit in the western end of the site. Surface of deposit at between 88.48m aOD in the south-west of the site and 90.24m aOD in the north-east.	0.65m+	None
103	Slot across ditch 109, 2.70m long, up to 1.20m wide and 0.20m deep with very irregular sides and base, probably due to the difficulty of digging through the local stone outcrop in this area of the site. Filled with 104.	0.65-0.85m (max)	None
104	Dark olive grey sandy loam fill of slot 103. Very difficult to distinguish between this deposit and the overlying subsoil (101)	0.65-0.85m (max)	Sparse charcoal noted. Saxon pottery and animal bone fragments recovered during hand excavation.
105	Slot across ditch 109, 0.75m long, up to 0.95m wide and 0.25m deep with very irregular sides and base, probably due to the difficulty of digging through the local stone outcrop in this area of the site. Filled with 106.	0.65-0.90m	None
106	Dark olive grey sandy loam fill of slot 105. Very difficult to distinguish between this deposit and the overlying subsoil (101)	0.65-0.90m	Sparse charcoal noted. Saxon pottery and animal bone fragments recovered during hand excavation.
107	Slot through the substantial, approximately north-south aligned, ditch (117) in the eastern end of the site, 1.75m long. As the eastern side of this feature lay beyond the limit of excavation, the slot was only across the western 1.75m of the full width, which later machine investigation showed to be approximately 3.80m wide. The ditch was traced for c. 11m across the site. The ditch was 1.20m deep with steeply sloping, straight sides and a flat base. Filled with 108 and 116.	0.65-1.85m	None
108	Very dark olive grey fine, sandy loam, upper fill of ditch 107.	0.65-1.60m	Animal bone fragments and Saxon

			and medieval pottery recovered during hand excavation.
109	Group number for approximately north-south ditch, traced for c. 10.50m across the site. Investigated by interventions 103, 105 and 112.	0.65-1.05m (max)	None
110	Small sub-circular feature cutting through root disturbed area (114) towards centre of site, approximately 0.35m in diameter and 0.17m deep with moderately steep, concave sides and a concave base. While this feature may represent a small post hole, it could equally have been formed by root action pulling material into the natural substrata. Filled with 111.	0.65-0.82m	None
111	Mid olive grey sandy loam fill of feature 110.	0.65-0.82m	Sparse shell, and animal bone fragments recovered. Rare charcoal flecks also noted.
112	Slot across ditch 109, 0.75m long, up to 1.40m wide and 0.40m deep with moderately steep, slightly irregular sides and irregular base. Filled with 113.	0.65-1.05m	None
113	Mid-dark olive grey sandy loam fill of slot 112 with sparse local stone inclusions.	0.65-1.05m	Sparse charcoal noted. Romano-British pottery and animal bone fragments recovered during hand excavation.
114	Very diffuse, irregular feature, approximately 2.40m long, 1.80m wide and up to 0.10m deep with very shallow, irregular sides and irregular base. The irregularity of this feature suggests a disturbance caused by tree roots rather than an anthropogenic origin. Filled with 115, cut by possible feature 110.	0.65-0.75m	None
115	Mid olive grey sandy loam fill of feature 114.	0.65-0.75m	Sparse animal bone fragments and Saxon and medieval pottery recovered. Rare charcoal flecks also noted.
116	Dark greyish green very fine sandy silt. Basal fill of ditch 107.	1.60-1.85m	Small animal bone fragments recovered during hand excavation.
117	Group number for large north-south ditch in east of site. Investigated by slot 107.		None



Site location and excavation area

Figure 1



<p>This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</p>	Date: 11/05/06		Revision Number: 0
	Scale: Plan @ 1:100, Sections @ 1:20		Illustrator: SEJ
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All features plan and selected sections across Groups 109 and 117

Figure 2



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