

New Sports Hall,  
Bishop Wordsworth's School,  
11, The Close, Salisbury

Archaeological Evaluation

Ref: 50595.02

*March 2002*

**NEW SPORTS HALL, BISHOP WORDSWORTHS SCHOOL  
11 THE CLOSE, SALISBURY**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**Prepared for:**  
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Figure 2 – Trench location plan and section

Plate 1 – Trench viewed from the east

Plate 2 – Wall **014** viewed from the south

*Cover photo: evaluation trench viewed from the east*

## **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bishop Wordsworth's School, The Close, Salisbury, to carry out an archaeological evaluation north of the school swimming pool at NGR SU 41446 12947.

The evaluation was required by the local planning authority, Salisbury District Council, acting on the advice of the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) of Wiltshire County Council, to provide information concerning the impact of the proposed new sports hall on potential archaeological remains.

Bishop Wordsworth's School is located on the eastern side of the precinct of Salisbury Cathedral, within the walled medieval Close.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken between Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> March and Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2002 and consisted of a single machine dug trench 20m in length and 2m wide.

The evaluation revealed a series of wall foundations the position and alignment of which correspond to those recorded on a 1962 plan of the Bishop's Stables, which were built in 1843. A small quantity of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century artefacts was recovered from soil deposits between the walls, as well as a possible construction layer for the stables. No other period archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were recorded within the trench.

Medieval deposits have been recorded in earlier archaeological works immediately to the south and a short distance to the north of the evaluation trench. The absence of medieval deposits or artefacts within the evaluation trench suggests that prior to the construction of the Bishop's Stables the immediate area was heavily truncated.

### **Acknowledgements**

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Bishop Wordsworth's School and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Mr. Clive Barnett and Jennie Chapman (Bishop Wordsworth's School) for their assistance during the course of the project.

Acknowledgement is also due to Ms Helena Cave-Penney (Assistant County Archaeologist Wiltshire County Council) and Mr Tim Tatton Brown (Salisbury Cathedral Archaeological Consultant) for their helpful comments and information on earlier archaeological works in the area.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Chris Ellis and Paul McCulloch. The fieldwork was directed by Bob Davis with the assistance of Gary Whale. This report was compiled by Bob Davis. The finds were assessed by Lorraine Mephram. The illustrations were prepared by Linda Coleman.

# **NEW SPORTS HALL, BISHOP WORDSWORTH'S SCHOOL 11 THE CLOSE, SALISBURY**

## **Archaeological Evaluation**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Project Background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bishop Wordsworth's School, The Close, Salisbury, to carry out an archaeological evaluation north of the school swimming pool at NGR SU 41446 12947, hereafter referred to as the Site. The archaeological evaluation was carried out in respect of proposals for a new sports hall on the Site of the pool and an area immediately to the north.
- 1.1.2 The evaluation was required by the local planning authority, Salisbury District Council, acting on the advice of the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) of Wiltshire County Council, to provide information concerning the impact of the proposed new sports hall on potential archaeological remains. The CAO had issued a brief for the work setting out the background and required methodology of the evaluation.
- 1.1.3 The evaluation fieldwork was carried out between Monday 25<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2002.

#### **1.2 The Site**

- 1.2.1 Bishop Wordsworth's School is located on the eastern side of the precinct of Salisbury Cathedral, within the walled medieval Close (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 The Site lies in the southwest corner of the school grounds and is an open area immediately north of the existing swimming pool, a tarmac surfaced currently used as a play area. The Site lies at approximately 45m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Natural deposits on the Site comprise alluvial gravels.

#### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

- 1.3.1 In the later medieval period (AD 1400-1500) the Site of the School was occupied by four plots of land fronting Bishop's Walk and extending to Exeter Street at the rear (RCHME 1993). The northernmost plot was occupied by the Canonry of Simonsbury. The eastern parts of the two northern plots are now part of the school grounds, the western parts being taken up by the buildings and gardens of nos. 5, 6, & 7 The Close (RCHME 1993). The southernmost plots were probably also the sites of canonries for which no documentary evidence has survived. The southernmost of these extends as far south as the Palace Gate and within this plot a coach-house and stables associated with the Bishop's Palace were constructed in 1843 (RCHME 1993, 72). These buildings were demolished in 1965. The existing

swimming pool is located in the area of the former courtyard of the Bishop's Stables, south of the former coach-house.

- 1.3.2 In 1963, prior to the construction of the School swimming pool, members of the School Archaeological Society undertook trial excavations in the area just south of the stables (WAM 1963, 452). The excavations revealed river silt with gravel at a depth of 4ft 4inches (1.32m). A series of layers were recorded above this layer including a floor of chalk rubble covered in places with flint cobbling, a ditch 2ft 6inches wide (0.76m) and three postholes. Pottery collected dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Later deposits suggest periodic flooding as well as dumping of domestic refuse (WAM 1963).
- 1.3.3 In 1994 Wessex Archaeology carried out an evaluation of the School site, which included trenches and test pits north of the swimming pool, close to the location of the proposed evaluation trench (Wessex Archaeology 1994). In Trench 8 of these earlier works a 0.55m wide wall footing built of roughly shaped flints bonded by loose mortar depth, was recorded at a depth of 0.4m. The footing was aligned east-west along the trench, before turning to the south (**Figure 1**) and was interpreted as a 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century wall (on material and construction details alone) although no dating evidence was recovered. It has been suggested that the footing may represent a boundary wall pre-dating the construction of the Cathedral in 1198.
- 1.3.4 The proposed evaluation trench was located within the 'footprint' of the proposed new sports hall to potentially reveal more evidence of the medieval building indicated by the earlier trench.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Aims and Objectives**

- 2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were (within the limits of the specified techniques and trench layout) to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, condition, character, quality, location and date of archaeological features within the proposed development area.
- 2.1.2 The objectives of the evaluation were:
  - To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present
  - To determine or confirm the approximate date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence
  - To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains
  - To determine the degree of complexity of horizontal or vertical stratigraphy present
  - To determine the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present
  - To determine the potential of the Site to provide palaeo-environmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

## **2.2 Methods**

- 2.2.1 The fieldwork strategy comprised a single machine-excavated trench measuring 20m x 2m. The position of the trench was predetermined prior to the fieldwork and was approved by the CAO, Wiltshire County Council.
- 2.2.2 The trench was marked out on Site prior to excavation, using offsets from existing structures with measuring tapes.
- 2.2.3 The trench was excavated with a 5 ton tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, operating under constant archaeological supervision. The tarmac and modern overburden were removed in a series of shallow spits down to the top of *in situ* geological deposits or to the top of archaeological deposits, whichever was encountered first.
- 2.2.4 All features requiring clarification were cleaned by hand and recorded in plan and/or section at an appropriate scale.
- 2.2.5 The levels of features and layers were related to Ordnance Datum using a dumpy level.
- 2.2.6 All deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro-forma* record sheets and a continuous unique numbering sequence. A representative section of the trench was recorded at an appropriate scale. A photographic record consisting of monochrome prints and colour transparencies was compiled.
- 2.2.7 Following completion of investigation and recording, the trench was backfilled with excavated material and the surface reinstated with tarmac.

## **3 RESULTS**

### **3.1 Introduction**

- 3.1.1 A detailed description of the features and deposits recorded within the trench can be found in **Appendix 1** of this report. The trench location is shown on **Figure 1**. A summary, presented below, addresses the principal aims of the evaluation and primarily those concerned with establishing the presence, date and condition of archaeological deposits.

### **3.2 Walls**

- 3.2.1 The trench was excavated on an east-west alignment. Below 0.24m of tarmac and modern rubble a series of walls was found. Located at the east end of the trench were walls **019** and **016** (**Figure 2**). The walls were 0.50m wide and were comprised of coursed roughly dressed limestone with a brick top course. The wall footings were aligned north-south with north and south ends lying beyond the limit of the trench.



- 3.2.2 Wall **014** was aligned east-west and was situated partly under the north section of the trench. This wall comprised coursed elements including mostly reused Portlandian limestone of the Upper Jurassic from the Tisbury/Chilmark area, and Hurdcott stone blocks, a form of Upper Greensand. It was founded on several courses of loosely packed flints.
- 3.2.3 Wall **013** was aligned north-south across the trench and was 0.5m wide. It comprised coursed ashlar limestone blocks with a single step at the base increasing the width to 0.58m. Roof tile had been used to level some of the bed joints. The north and south ends of the wall lay outside the limit of the trench.
- 3.2.4 There was some evidence of phasing within the series of walls at the east end of the trench. Wall **014** was built up against wall **013** creating a straight joint between them. In turn wall **016** was built against wall **014** a straight joint was also recorded between them.
- 3.2.5 Wall **008** was aligned north-south across the trench and was 0.5m wide. It comprised mainly coursed ashlar limestone blocks with the occasional use of chalk blocks. This wall had a two stepped foundation giving a full width at its base of 0.7m. The north and south ends of the wall lay beyond the limit of the trench.

### **3.3 Deposits**

- 3.3.1 Below the overburden and tarmac layers a sequence of garden soils was recorded. Layer **009** was a dark grey coarse silt. This overlay layer **010**, a slightly browner coarse silt. The layers were well-sorted, with a large quantity of artefacts present including pottery, clay pipe fragments, ceramic building material (CBM) and glass fragments.
- 3.3.2 The soil layers were built up against the foundations of the walls; fragments of tile were found upright against the very base of the footings. There were no wall foundation ditches present in any of the trench sections.
- 3.3.3 Beneath the layers of soil was a layer made up of fragments of tile in a very loose 'pea-gravel' matrix (**011**, **012**). It comprised a 0.12m thick deposit. This laid directly on the natural silty gravel alluvium (**020**), which was recorded in the base of two small test pits excavated against walls **008** and **013**, and between walls **013** and **016**.

## **4 FINDS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

- 4.1.1 A representative sample of finds was retrieved from contexts **009** and **010**, all of post-Medieval date. This comprises pottery (15 sherds), animal bone (2 fragments), vessel glass (4 fragments), ceramic building material (2 fragments) and clay pipe (13 fragments). This small group can probably be dated almost entirely to the late 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## **4.2 Pottery**

- 4.2.1 The pottery includes Verwood type earthenwares from east Dorset, English salt glazed stonewares, tinglazed earthenwares, porcelain and creamware. The earthenwares cannot be closely dated although are likely to be of 18<sup>th</sup> century or later date. All the other wares could fall within a date range of mid 17<sup>th</sup> to mid/late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the latest being creamware, which was produced from the 1750s.

## **4.3 Clay pipes/ceramic objects**

- 4.3.1 The clay pipes include the stamped products of W. Sayer (early 18<sup>th</sup> century, possibly working at West Wellow in Hampshire); either Philip or John Richman (late 17<sup>th</sup> century, East Woodhay in north Hampshire); Thomas Hunt (c.1685+, Marlborough); and Thomas Smith (late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century, Salisbury). There are also three pipe bowls, all from spurred pipes of late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century type. A pipeclay wig curler was also recovered.

## **4.4 Ceramic Building Material (CBM)**

- 4.4.1 The two fragments of CBM comprise one small glazed floor tile (40 mm square) and a fragment of glazed roof tile, the latter probably of medieval date.

## **4.5 Glass**

- 4.5.1 The vessel glass comprises fragments of green wine bottle (mid 17<sup>th</sup> century or later) and one wine glass stem with a hollow knop (late 17<sup>th</sup> century).

## **5 ARCHIVE**

- 5.1.1 The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury, under project reference **50595**. The contents of the archive are listed in **Appendix 2**.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1 Summary**

- 6.1.1 The evaluation has revealed the presence of structures and deposits of post-medieval date within the Site. The identified structures consist of stone and brick wall foundations that conform to the ground plan of the Bishop's Stables building, built in 1843 and demolished in 1965.
- 6.1.2 No archaeological dating evidence was found earlier than the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Given that medieval deposits had been found to the north and south of the Site it is unusual that no medieval deposits, features or artefacts were recorded during the evaluation.

- 6.1.3 The construction of the stable block and carriage house was built from a cleared area on top of natural gravels. If any earlier archaeological deposits existed they were probably removed during levelling of the Site. The layer of broken tiles found across the central part of the carriage house area, directly on top of natural alluvium, may be evidence of a construction layer.
- 6.1.4 The soils excavated between the walls were probably earlier garden soils within this part of the Cathedral Close, used to infill between the walls after construction. They contained a large quantity of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century artefacts perhaps deposited during manuring of the gardens. The soil may have been brought to the Site to act as levelling prior to the floors of the stable block being laid.
- 6.1.5 The evaluation has identified the post-medieval deposits as a clear marker for archaeological activity, and the location of the trench has allowed the extent of this horizon to be mapped. Given that the deposits found occur to a depth of 0.75m (44.09m aOD), it may be suggested that, were any evidence of medieval or earlier activity to survive on the Site, this would have been found by the evaluation trench.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Wessex Archaeology 1994, *Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury, Wiltshire: Archaeological field evaluation*. Unpublished client report W690a.

J.W.Musty, 1963, *Excavations near the Bishop's Stables, Cathedral Close, Salisbury*, Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine 58, 452-3.

## APPENDIX 1: Trench summary table

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DIMENSIONS	LEVEL (m aOD)	FINDS
001	TARMAC	Thickness 0.05m	Top east 44.96 Top west 45.10	-
002	Overburden or rammed surface for tarmac	Max thickness 0.30m	-	-
003	Rammed rubble layer, levelling medium for tarmac	Max thickness 0.10m	-	-
004	Possible crudely built foundation. A jumble of semi coursed brick and limestone blocks. At west end	Max thickness 0.30m	-	-
005	A possible re-deposited garden soil. Very dark grey gritty silt. Compact	Max thickness 0.10m	-	CBM, clay pipe, glass frags. Not kept
006	Dark brown soil layer, possibly re-deposited garden soil. Compact.	Max thickness 0.40m	-	CBM, clay pipe, potsherds glass frags. Not kept
007	Concrete pad or block at west end of trench. Possibly 19 <sup>th</sup> century and part of stable block foundations	Max depth not established	Top 44.86	-
008	Stone wall. North south axis. Stepped footing x2. Part of 1843 stable block foundation.	Max depth recorded 0.66m	Top 44.78	-
009	Possible re-deposited garden soil. Very dark grey gritty silt, compact.	Max thickness 0.30m	-	CBM, clay pipe, bottle glass, tile potsherds. Kept for dating
010	Dark brown soil, possibly re-deposited. Gritty sandy silt compact	Max thickness 0.34m	-	CBM, clay pipe, potsherds, glass frags. Kept for dating
011	Thin layer overlying natural gravel. Contained broken tiles within a loose gritty matrix. Possibly a construction layer	Max thickness 0.12m	-	Tiles not kept
012	Same as 011	-	-	-

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DIMENSIONS	LEVEL (m aOD)	FINDS
013	Stone wall. North south axis. Stepped footing x2 on west side only. A tile course used in construction. Part of 1843 stable block foundation. Abutted by 014	Max depth recorded 0.65m	Top 44.80	-
014	Stone wall. East west axis butts 103. Built off a flint foundation 015 it contains greensand stone blocks. Part of 1843 stable block foundations.	Max depth 0.40	Top 44.77	-
015	Flint foundation r wall 014. Flints not bedded into mortar but are loosely packed.	Max thickness 0.20m	-	-
016	Stone and brick wall. North south axis. Abutts 014. There is a straight joint between the two lower down. The top layer of bricks has been tied across both walls. Part of 1843 stable block foundations.	Max depth recorded 0.70m	Top 44.79	-
017	Cut for ceramic drain trench. Unexcavated	-	-	-
018	Concrete capping to protect ceramic drain pipe	-	-	-
019	Stone and brick wall. North south axis. Lower part built from stone with brick laid flat on top two courses end to end. Part of 1843 stable block foundations.	Max depth recorded 0.44m	Top 44.80	-
020	Underlying alluvial deposit of a light bluey grey sandy silty gravel.	Unexcavated	Top 44.09 and 44.11	-

## APPENDIX 2: ARCHIVE INDEX

File No.	NAR Cat	7.1 Details	Format	No. Sheets
1	-	Index to Archive	A4	1
1	A	Client Report	A4	11
1	-	Project Specification	A4	8
1	B	Day book (photocopy)	A4	3
1	B	Trial trench records	A4	1
1	B	Context Records	A4	20
1	B	Graphics Register	A4	1
1	B	Levels (photocopy)	A4	2
1	D	Photographic Register	A4	4
1	B	Site Graphics	A1	2
1	-	B+W Negatives	35mm	60
1	-	Colour slides	35mm	60
<b>FINDS</b>	<b>Not retained</b>			