



West Court, Finchampstead Berkshire

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording Report



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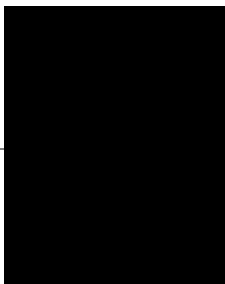
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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by ET Planning Ltd on behalf of Nirvana Spa Ltd to undertake Archaeological Monitoring and Recording (AMR) during the construction of a new swimming pool and associated patio area. The monitored works covered 0.02 ha (15.50 m by 14.00 m), centred on NGR 477236 163873, at West Court Retreat, Park Lane, Wokingham, and was undertaken between the 20 January and 23 January 2025.

The AMR works consisted of the monitoring of the ground reduction of the overall footprint of the proposed swimming pool, including the new patio terrace (15.50 m by 14.00 m) by 0.30 m to the upper interface of the made ground, and then the reduction of the actual pool (14.10 m by 8.40 m) to the level of the natural geology first (Fig. 2).

The AMR confirmed no presence of the Roman road, or associated contemporary features in the monitored area, suggesting that its projected route is further to the south. The AMR, however, did identify features which relate to the use of the site prior to, and during the construction and occupation of West Court. These features consisted of ditches, a pit, and four drains of various dates.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank ET Planning Ltd Limited for commissioning the Archaeological Monitoring and Recording works, in particular Emily Temple. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of the Archaeological Officer at Berkshire Archaeology, who monitored the project for Wokingham Borough Council, and to Sean Barley and the staff at Nirvana Spa and West Court Retreat for their cooperation and help on site.



West Court Finchampstead, Berkshire

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by ET Planning Ltd on behalf of Nirvana Spa Ltd ('the Client') to undertake Archaeological Monitoring and Recording (AMR) during the construction of a new swimming pool and patio area.
- 1.1.2 The proposed development comprised the creation of a new swimming pool and patio in a C-plan courtyard to the rear of West Court, a Grade II listed building (since 1967) ('the Site'). The swimming pool construction forms part of a wider redevelopment of West Court that will see the building converted into a 49-bedroom hotel (planning application 240428). The monitored works covered 0.02 ha (15.50 m by 14.00 m), centred on NGR 477236 163873, at West Court Retreat, Park Lane, Wokingham, RG40 4QJ (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.3 The AMR work was carried out as a condition of planning permission, granted by Wokingham Borough Council (242402). The following conditions were related to archaeology:

Condition 4 No development shall take place/commence until a programme of archaeological work, including a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to, and approved by, the local planning authority in writing. The WSI shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording*
- 2. The program for post investigation assessment*
- 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording*
- 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
- 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
- 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out in the WSI*

Reason: The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, particularly for, but not limited to, Roman remains. The potential impacts of the development can be mitigated through a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with national and local plan policy.

In view of the nature and scale of the development and the low likelihood of the potential archaeology, should it exist, meriting preservation in situ, an Archaeological Monitoring and Recording exercise in the form of a Watching Brief, on a controlled strip of the area, to the required depth for the development, is likely to represent an appropriate programme of works.

Condition 5 The Development shall take place in accordance with the WSI approved under condition 4. The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out

in the WSI approved under condition 4 and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, particularly for, but not limited to, Roman remains. The potential impacts of the development can be mitigated through a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with national and local plan policy.

In view of the nature and scale of the development and the low likelihood of the potential archaeology, should it exist, meriting preservation in situ, an Archaeological Monitoring and Recording exercise in the form of a Watching Brief, on a controlled strip of the area, to the required depth for the development, is likely to represent an appropriate programme of works.

1.1.4 The AMR was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2025). The Archaeological Officer at Berkshire Archaeology approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to the fieldwork.

1.1.5 The AMR works were undertaken between 20 January and 23 January 2025.

1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the AMR, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 The AMR works were located to the east of West Court, a Grade II listed building, situated 2.5 km to the north-west of Finchampstead, Berkshire. West Court is located within the Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location (SDL), adjacent to the southern settlement boundary and will remain in an area of green space (West Court SANG) following the development at Arborfield Garrison.

1.3.2 The location of the proposed swimming pool lies within a C-plan courtyard, currently comprising a patio and lawn. It is bounded by the buildings that make up West Court on three sides, with areas of landscaped gardens to the east. The gardens of West Court are bounded by agricultural land in all directions. The A327 (Reading Road) lies 700 m to the west with Park Lane approximately 300 m to the south-east. The West Court complex is accessed via an E-W orientated drive that is thought to follow the alignment of the Roman Road from Silchester to Staines (see 2.3.4 below).

1.3.3 Existing ground levels are approximately 52 m above Ordnance Datum (OD). The topography of the courtyard area was flat.

1.3.4 The natural geological substrate is mapped as sedimentary bedrock of London Clay Formation, and comprises clay, silt and sand (British Geological Survey 2025).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A summary of the archaeological and historical background to the Site is presented below. Relevant entry numbers from the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (BHER) and the

National Heritage List for England (NHLE) are included. Additional sources of information are referenced, as appropriate.

2.2 Designated heritage assets

- 2.2.1 West Court is a Grade II Listed Building (NHLE1118093). The formal listing states '*West Court, a former manor house with a C17 core and substantial additions and rebuilding in 1800, 1835, 1901 and 1964, latterly used as an officers' mess. The 1964 northern extensions, excluded from the listing, include a single-storey range with a very large dining room and ceremonial corridor and the adjoining three-storey bedroom wing and service accommodation.*'

2.3 Archaeological and historical context

Prehistoric (950,000 BC – AD 43)

- 2.3.1 Early prehistoric activity is limited to several finds spots in the local area. A Palaeolithic scraper was found alongside other later artefacts approximately 480 m to the south-west of the site although their exact location is somewhat uncertain. Additional Palaeolithic finds are known from the wider area such as a hand axe (MRM16393) found to the east of the site and a palaeolith from Banisters Farm (MWK8608), 845 m to the south-east (Wessex Archaeology 2019).
- 2.3.2 A large extant Bronze Age Bell barrow and barrow cemetery (NHLE1013244) lies 2.10 km to the east of the site. Closer to West Court, two Bronze Age burial urns (MWK1121) were found in the area of the drive some 470 m to the west and may indicate the presence of a cemetery (MOLA 2014). Excavations some 1.1 km to the north also investigated Bronze Age ditches and pits (MOLA 2016).
- 2.3.3 Evidence of Iron Age settlement, metal-working, and cultivation has also been identified within the vicinity of the proposed development, and some may have continued in the use into, or perhaps intermittently through, the Romano-British period. This may have been the case for a settlement at Whitehall Brick and Tile Works, Arborfield Green, 1.6 km north-west of the site, where occupation spanned the end of the 1st century to early 2nd century AD (Pine 2003).

Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)

- 2.3.4 The projected route of the Roman road from Silchester to Staines crosses the site from east to west (NHLE1016332; Fig. 1) The road, known as the Devils Highway and assigned number 4a in Ivan Margary's catalogue of Roman roads in Britain (Margary 1955), connected London to Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*) via a crossing of the River Thames at Staines (*Pontes*). From Silchester it continued south-west towards Old Sarum (*Sorbiodunum*), near Salisbury in Wiltshire (Margary 4b) and formed part of a longer route joining London to Exeter traditionally known as the Port Way (Margary 4).
- 2.3.5 Earlier excavations to the east of the site investigated the road at three locations. In 1974 two sections were cut across the road at Pond Field (SU 7840 6390) and exposed two successive road surfaces. The lower surface was 5.1–6.0 m wide, with the upper measuring 5.3–7.8 m wide; pottery dated to the late first and second centuries was also recovered (Wilson *et al.* 1975, 280). Further investigations were undertaken in Cottage Field, Wheatlands Manor (SU 7800 6390) in 1975, and again identified two successive road surfaces (Goodburn *et al.* 1976, 372). Subsequent work to the west of Wheatlands Manor (SU 7774 6390) found traces of road metalling, but auguring at West Court failed to find the road suggesting a diversion from the alignment (Frere *et al.* 1985, 312).

2.3.6 Recent geophysical survey and archaeological trial trench evaluation work ahead of development at Hogwood Farm (Wessex Archaeology 2018; 2019; Fig. 1) identified the road 440 m to the east of West Court. Here, the road was defined by a thick linear spread of mixed, poorly sorted sub-rounded and angular stone with a width of 5.70-8.00 m. The road surface was flanked by ditches to the north and south that varied from 0.60 m to 2.05 m wide and 0.25-0.65 m deep. Additional ditches and pits were found in the area close to the road and probably represent an area of roadside activity. Roadside settlement activity is also apparent 1 km further to the east at Wheatlands Manor where a series of rectangular buildings have been identified as cropmarks (NHLE1006968; Fig. 1).

2.3.7 In the wider landscape a number of Romano-British finds and settlements have been identified and include ditched enclosures, a possible villa, buildings, and iron working (Wessex Archaeology 2019). Similar evidence has been found during evaluation and excavations as part of Hogwood Farm development to the north of West Court, including a possible iron working site, settlement sites and ditches enclosures (*ibid.*)

Post-Roman to post-medieval (AD 410 – 1800)

2.3.8 The villages of Arborfield Cross and Finchampstead both have Saxon origins. Former field boundaries identified in the surrounding area are thought to be Saxon in date. During the medieval and post-medieval period, the Site formed part of the Parish of Finchampstead. It is likely that the site comprised agricultural land during this period.

2.3.9 The site of West Court has been occupied since the Middle Ages; in 1337 a mill works 7s 8d together with 105 acres of land was passed to Thomas Banister and his wife Amice (VCHS 1923). The earlier house was probably a moated site but was renovated and enlarged in the 17th-19th centuries, and the earliest parts of the present house date to the 17th century.

Modern (AD 1800 – present)

2.3.10 The house at West Court was requisitioned in 1941 by the War Department for use as a training establishment, it was subsequently bought by the War Department in 1950 and saw significant alterations and enlargement in 1964.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 The aims of the AMR, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2025), were to:

- allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of the development or other works;
- provide an opportunity, if needed, to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the allocated resources are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
- guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

3.2 General objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the AMR, also defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2025), were to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified works area;
- record and establish, within the constraints of the works, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains (a preservation by record);
- place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- make available information about the archaeological resource on the site by preparing a report on the results.

3.3 Site-specific objectives

3.3.1 Following consideration of the archaeological potential of the site and the regional research framework (Hey and Hind 2014), the site-specific objectives were to:

- examine evidence for remains of the Roman road that may exist within the site, does the road extend across the site and if so record and document its construction; and
- examine evidence for the remains of any associated roadside settlement.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2025) and in general compliance with ClfA standards and guidance (ClfA 2023a–b). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The AMR works consisted of the monitoring of the ground reduction of the overall footprint of the proposed swimming pool, including the new patio terrace (15.50 m by 14.00 m) by 0.30 m to the upper interface of the made ground, and then the reduction of the actual pool (14.10 m by 8.40 m) to the level of the natural geology first (Fig. 2).

4.2.2 The attending archaeologists monitored all mechanical excavations within the specified area. Where necessary, the surfaces of uncovered archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand to aid visual definition. A sample of archaeological features and deposits was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the project aims.

4.2.3 Spoil from machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, although those from features of modern date (20th century or later) were recorded on site and not retained.

Recording

4.2.4 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete record of excavated features and deposits was made, including plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally

1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections) and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.

- 4.2.5 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15 and OSGM15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.6 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Finds and environmental strategies

- 4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2025). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014a), *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011) and ClfA's (n.d. a) *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (Type 1: Description).

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 The Archaeological Officer at Berkshire Archaeology monitored the watching brief on behalf of the LPA. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with the Client and the Archaeological Officer at Berkshire Archaeology.

5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The AMR confirmed that there was no evidence of the Roman road or associated features within the footprint of the groundworks, although other features were encountered which relate to the use of the site prior to and after the construction of West Court. The following section presents the results of the AMR with archaeological features and deposits discussed in chronological order. Detailed descriptions of individual contexts are provided in the area summary table (Appendix 1).

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

- 5.2.1 The exposed soil sequence consisted of a 0.14 m thick topsoil deposit (101) which was modern in date, overlying a 0.18 m thick layer of made ground, 102, which consisted of a light brownish yellow silty sand and abundant quantities of sub-rounded to sub-angular flint gravels and modern clinker type materials which had been used as hard-core materials (Fig. 3).
- 5.2.2 Sealed by deposit 102 was a buried soil deposit (103), possibly the original topsoil or subsoil. This deposit had been heavily disturbed or re-worked. Generally, a dark greyish brown silty clay, but with patches of redeposited natural geology and soils, 103 was recorded as being 0.22 m thick and contained a mix of artefacts dating from post-medieval to modern periods. The natural geology (104) was identified under 103 and consisted of a mid-yellowish brown sandy clay (Fig. 4).

5.3 Archaeological results

- 5.3.1 Ditch 105 was located on the northern edge of the monitored area (Fig. 2) and aligned across the monitored area east to west. The feature measured 1.60 m wide and 0.11 m deep with moderate concave sides and a flat base (Fig. 5). A single sherd of medieval pottery dating to the 13th -14th century was recovered from the secondary fill of the feature (106) alongside other post-medieval pottery and a small piece of slag.
- 5.3.2 Parallel to 105 and at a spacing of approximately 5 m, another ditch 109, was located on the southern edge of the monitored works and was aligned east to west. Measuring at least 1.64 m wide and 0.34 m deep, 109 had steep straight sides and a flat to stepped base (Fig. 6). Three deliberate backfilling events were contained within 109; a buildup deposit consisting of demolition rubble within a pale bluish grey silty sand matrix (110), a small deposit on the northern edge of the ditch consisting of brick and glass bottle fragments which may have acted as a small foundation or drainage (111), and a final main deposit of a mid-brown to mid blue silty sandy clay (112; Fig. 7). All recovered material was post-medieval to modern in date.
- 5.3.3 Approximately halfway along the 105, a subcircular pit was seen to cut through its southern edge. Pit 107, measuring 0.46 m by 0.84 m and 0.09 m deep, had steep straight sides and an undulating base and contained a single dark brownish grey sandy silty clay deliberate backfill deposit (Fig. 6). Contained within the pit was the semi-articulated remains of a modern, improved breed of sheep.

5.4 Drainage features

- 5.4.1 Four drainage features were identified during the AMR works. Based on the artefactual material recovered, all are postmedieval to modern in date (Fig. 2).
- 5.4.2 The earliest drain, 119, was located in the northern half of the monitored area and ran in a general east to west alignment, with a gentle slope from the east down to the west, although it turned to the north-west midway and seemed to start to curve back to the west just before the western baulk (Fig. 8). Given the curving nature of 119 it is more likely that it was hand excavated rather than machine dug. The drain itself, 120, was constructed by using re-used roof peg tiles as a base, and red bricks with a semi-circle removed along their length to form the sides and top (Fig. 9).
- 5.4.3 The three other drains (113, 115 and 117) were all aligned on a NNE-SSW orientation and were seen to cut through drain 119. Drain 117, the most westerly of the three had vertical sides and a flat base and was recorded as being 0.31 m wide and 0.07 m deep. While no evidence of the actual drain was seen, it is likely that this had been removed by later truncation. While cutting 119, it seemed to be cut by ditch 109, which indicated that it was the earlier of the three drains.
- 5.4.4 Drain 115, the middle of the three, was more substantial measuring 0.72 m wide and 0.53 m deep. With straight steep sides and a flat base, the ceramic drain, constructed out of slightly curved tiles was still present, although it had been fully silted up and broken apart (Fig. 10). As opposed to 117, the cut for 115 was seen to cut both drain 119 and ditch 109, as well as the disturbed ground layer 103.
- 5.4.5 The final of the three drains, 113, was located at the eastern end of the monitored area and survived as being 0.40 m wide and 0.13 m deep. With vertical sides and a flat base, fragments of a modern drain were seen within the deliberate backfill of the drain.

6 FINDS EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 A total of 11 kg was recovered from nine contexts. The deposits that contained artefacts includes in the fills of drains and ditches. While the recovered finds range from medieval to modern, the bulk of the items are of post-medieval date. The older artefacts generally display higher levels of abrasion, although levels of wear are high overall. All the artefacts have been cleaned (apart from the iron object), with all finds being quantified by material type within each context. This information is presented in Table 1 below.

6.2 Pottery

- 6.2.1 The assemblage has been quantified by ware type within each context (count and weight in grammes). Where possible, the pottery has been described using common ware names that are well-known across the region. The level of recording corresponds with the 'basic record' put forward by nationally recognised standards (Barclay *et al.* 2016, section 2.4.5). The sherds are outlined by ware group and discussed below by date.
- 6.2.2 Only one piece of pottery can be dated to the medieval period. It is a small worn body sherd of Ashampstead type (Mephram and Heaton 1995), recovered from 105. The sherd is probably of 13-14th century date but is residual, occurring alongside post-medieval pieces.
- 6.2.3 The post-medieval pottery comprises red and white Surrey/Hampshire border wares (Pearce 1992), which were recovered from deposit 103, feature 105, drains 115, 117 and 119. The piece from drain 119 is a badly broken hooked style jar rim, while the fragment from drain 115 is a white firing cup or tyg handle. Two sherds from feature 109 (fill 111) occur in an iron-rich, slightly micaceous, sandy fabric with rare flint inclusions which has potential to derive from a source in the Kennet Valley. Mephram (1997, 65) notes that post-medieval pottery was being produced in the Inkpen area, and production there may extend into the 19th century. These sherds have potential to derive from that source or a similar but as yet unknown production centre in the area.

6.3 Ceramic Building Material

- 6.3.1 The ceramic building material includes semi-complete examples of both brick and tile. One brick from 109 measures 230 mm long, 110 mm wide and 58 mm thick. These dimensions, along with the lack of a frog, is consistent with manufacture during the 18th or 19th century (Ryan 1996, appendix I), although the production of this form of handmade brick continued into the early 20th century in some areas. A semi-cylindrical drain section extracted from drain 120 measures 245 mm in length, 153 mm in width and 75 mm in thickness. The piece is machine made and is therefore 19-20th century in date.
- 6.3.2 The other ceramic building material comprises two flat roof tiles and one very hard fired ridge tile fragment, from 105. The two flat roof tiles are semi-complete, with one comprising three adjoining fragments and exhibiting two peg holes on the upper portion. The peg holes measure 13 mm in diameter with a gap of 92 mm. The tile measures 156 mm wide, 14 mm thick with a length of over 150 mm. The second flat tile is formed of four pieces, shares similar dimensions to its peg holed counterpart, but displays no diagnostic elements indicating roof fixture method.



Table 1 Summary of Finds by Feature and Material Type (number/weight in grammes)

Feature/Interpretation	Cxt No	Animal Bone		Burnt Flint		Ceramic Building Material		Clay Tobacco Pipe		Glass		Iron Objects		Pottery		Marine Shell		Slag	
		No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt
Deposit 103	103			1	55			1	3	4	595			1	24				
Ditch 105	106	2	20							2	10			2	45	1	1	1	15
Pit 107	108	11	424							2	17								
Ditch 109	110					1	2270												
	111									10	2813			2	47				
Drain 115	116													1	6				
	118											2	19	1	12				
Construction Cut 119	120					8	4605												
	121													1	26				
Total by Material Type		13	444	1	55	9	6875	1	3	18	3435	2	19	8	160	1	1	1	15



6.4 Clay Tobacco Pipe

- 6.4.1 One plain clay stem fragment was collected from deposit 103. The piece occurs in a white firing clay and can be dated to the post-medieval period or later.

6.5 Stone

- 6.5.1 One piece of unworked burnt flint was collected from deposit 103. Burnt flint cannot be conclusively dated but is often used as a general indicator of prehistoric burning although it can be of any date, serving only as a potential marker for past human activity.

6.5.2 Slag

- 6.5.3 A single piece of iron slag was collected from feature 105. It is undiagnostic, small and worn.

6.6 Glass

- 6.6.1 The glass is entirely post-medieval in date and comprises free blown green coloured glass, with several diagnostic elements present. The majority of this material was recovered from the fills of 109, which contained ten basal fragments, representing at least eight mallet style bottles. These vessels can be dated to between 1730 and 1770 (Dumbrell 1983, 40-43), when the form changed to a more classic cylindrical style, similar to that still in use today. The wide diameter of the bases found here suggests these bottles belong within the earlier part of the date range.

- 6.6.2 Less diagnostic fragments include three refitting pieces (deposit 103) from a cylindrical form suggesting manufacture from 1740 to the mid-19th century (*ibid*, 91-114). One thin piece of free blown green glass from the fills of 105 is from a post-medieval or early modern window.

6.7 Metalwork

- 6.7.1 Two adjoining sections of a squared iron strap or buckle was collected from drain 117. The piece is likely to be post-medieval or later and measures 35 x 36 mm in size.

6.8 Animal Bone

- 6.8.1 The animal bones were assessed following current guidelines (Baker and Worley 2019). Two sheep/goat metapodials came from post-medieval furrow 105. Both are fragments of distal shaft. The left hindquarter (pelvis-ankle) from a large, improved breed of sheep came from modern pit 107.

6.9 Marine Shell

- 6.9.1 One broken fragment of an oyster valve was collected from furrow 105. It is small and largely undiagnostic.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 No archaeological deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered during the works

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Summary

- 8.1.1 The AMR found no trace of the continuation of the Roman road from Staines to Silchester, or associated contemporary features in the monitored area, suggesting that its projected route is further to the south. The AMR, however, did identify features which relate to the use of the site prior to, and during the construction and occupation of West Court. These features consisted of possible plough furrows, and four drains of various dates.

8.2 Discussion

- 8.2.1 No features dating to earlier than the late post medieval period was recorded during the monitoring, several of the features were clearly modern and are likely to be associated with later phases of landscaping associated with the gardens of West Court and later development of the Site by the military.
- 8.2.2 Features 105 and 109 potentially represent parallel ditches associated with landscaping associated with West Court manor due to their shared axis, however the marked difference in their fills may suggest that they are not contemporary or at least were not in-filled at the same date. It is not possible to speculate further on their potential function. The features were spaced at approximately 5 m from internal edge to internal edge. Where evidence for the Roman road was recorded during recent evaluation works to the east, the roadside ditches had a spacing of approximately 10 m (Wessex Archaeology 2019). This difference in spacing, together with the predominately post-medieval artefactual material recovered from the features, and the lack of any evidence of metallurgy between the features, means that these features are highly unlikely to represent truncated remains associated with the course of the road.
- 8.2.3 Whilst no evidence of the Roman road was uncovered, the monitored area was particularly flat and had been subject to various landscaping and levelling episodes as highlighted by the buried and reworked soil and made ground so it may be that evidence of this feature or contemporary features had been removed by subsequent activity, although this could not be tested further during this phase of works. It remains a possibility that the alignment is slightly to the south of the monitored area under the extant wing of the building.

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

- 9.1.1 The archive is currently held in the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. The site falls within an area where there is currently no collecting museum. Every effort will be made to identify a suitable repository for the archive resulting from the fieldwork, and if this is not possible, Wessex Archaeology will initiate discussions with the local planning authority in an attempt to resolve the issue. If no suitable repository is identified, Wessex Archaeology will continue to store the archive but may institute a charge to the Client for ongoing storage beyond a set period. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

9.2 Preparation of the archive

Physical archive

- 9.2.1 The physical archive will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (Brown 2011; ClfA 2014b; SMA 1995).

9.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 01 cardboard boxes or airtight plastic boxes of artefacts and ecofacts, ordered by material type
- 1 file/document case of paper records and A4 graphics

Digital archive

9.2.3 The digital archive, which comprises born-digital data (e.g., site records, survey data, databases and spreadsheets, photographs and reports), will be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository, in this instance the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), to ensure its long-term curation. Digital data will be prepared following ADS guidelines (ADS 2013 and online guidance) and accompanied by metadata.

9.3 Selection strategy

9.3.1 It is widely accepted that not all the records and materials (artefacts and ecofacts) collected or created during an archaeological project require preservation in perpetuity. These records and materials will be subject to selection to establish what will be retained for long-term curation, with the aim of ensuring that all elements selected for retention are appropriate to establish the significance of the project and support future research, outreach, engagement, display and learning activities (i.e., the retained archive should fulfil the requirements of both future researchers and the receiving museum).

9.3.2 The selection strategy, which details the project-specific selection process, is underpinned by national guidelines on selection and retention (Brown 2011, section 4) and generic selection policies (SMA 1993; Wessex Archaeology's internal selection policy) and follows ClfA's (n.d. b) *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives*. It should be agreed by all stakeholders (e.g., Wessex Archaeology's specialists, external specialists, local authority, museum) and fully documented in the project archive.

9.3.3 Project-specific proposals for selection are presented below. The proposals are based on recommendations by Wessex Archaeology's specialists and will be updated in line with any further comment by other stakeholders (e.g., museum, local authority), prior to deposition of the archive. Any material not selected for retention may be used for teaching or reference collections by Wessex Archaeology.

9.3.4 All the artefacts have been identified and recorded to an adequate level for the project archive. For this reason, no further examination of the material is considered necessary.

Storage and Curation:

- Pottery (8 sherds): The material ranges from medieval to post-medieval in date and occurs in relatively well-known and readily identifiable ware groups, bar the two examples, probably from the Kennet Valley. The landowner has expressed their wish to for the material to be returned.
- Ceramic Building Material (9 fragments): Brick and tile, all of post-medieval or later date. Return to landowner.
- Clay Tobacco Pipe (1 piece): One plain, undiagnostic and unmarked stem section. Return to landowner.

- Burnt flint (1 piece): unworked burnt flint. Return to landowner.
- Glass (18 shards): Post-medieval glass bottles, mostly fragmentary bases. Return to landowner.
- Metalwork (2 piece): Post-medieval or later buckle/strap. Heavily fragmented and oxidised. Return to landowner.
- Animal Bone (13 fragments): No future research potential. Return to landowner.
- Marine Shell (1 piece): Undiagnostic oyster shell fragment. Return to landowner.

9.4 Security copy

- 9.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g., Brown 2011), on completion of the project, a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file.

9.5 OASIS

- 9.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk>) has been initiated, with key fields completed (Appendix 2). A pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the Archaeological Officer at Berkshire Archaeology on behalf of the LPA. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.

10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The Client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.
- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER), where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

10.2 Third party data copyright

- 10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g., Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 AMR Summary

NGR coordinates and OD heights taken at centre of each area; depth bgl = below ground level

Area No 1		Length 15.50 m	Width 14.00 m	Depth 0.70 m
Easting 477236.22		Northing 163873.06		m OD 52.37
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
101		Topsoil	Mid brown silty sand. Friable.	0–0.14
102		Made ground	Hardcore deposit. Light brownish yellow silty sand. Abundant (90%) poorly sorted gravel. Friable.	0.14–0.32
103		Disturbance	Disturbed ground. Dark greyish brown silty clay. Moderate well sorted rounded stone (fine to coarse gravel). Contains broken bricks and tile, glass, burnt flint, clay pipe. Compact.	0.32–0.54
104		Natural	Mid yellowish-brown sandy clay. Rare well sorted rounded stones (medium to coarse gravel). Compact.	0.54+
105	106	Ditch	Linear aligned E-W with moderate, concave sides and a flat base. Length: 14.1 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth: 0.11 m.	0.11 deep
106	105	Secondary fill	Mid brownish grey sandy silty clay with rare well sorted surrounded flint (medium to coarse gravel)	0.11 thick
107	108	Pit	Sub-circular pit with steep, straight sides and an irregular / undulating base. Length: 0.46 m. Width: 0.84 m. Depth: 0.09 m.	0.09 deep
108	107	Deliberate backfill	Dark brownish grey sandy silty clay with sparse well sorted sub-rounded flint (medium to coarse gravel)	0.09 thick
109	110, 111, 112	Linear feature	Linear feature aligned E-W with steep, straight sides and an irregular / undulating base. Length: 14.10 m. Width: >1.64 m. Depth: 0.34 m.	0.34 deep
110	109	Deliberate backfill	Pale bluish grey silty sand	0.17 thick
111	109	Deliberate backfill	Mid greyish brown with silty sandy clay	0.21 thick



112	109	Deliberate backfill	Mid brown to mid blue silty sandy clay with sparse sub-angular to sub-rounded flint gravels (<0.04)	0.24 thick
113	114	Drain	Remnant of a modern drain running NE-SW for 7.60 m. 0.40m wide and 0.13m deep. Sections of storm drains seen in backfill. Vertical straight sides and a flat base.	0.13 deep
114	113	Deliberate backfill	Mid grey silty sandy clay mixed with redeposited natural. Deposited during removal of drain.	0.13 thick
115	116	Drain	Drain containing ceramic drain running NNE-SSW for 8.70 m. Possible relates to older period of the house. 0.72m wide and 0.53m deep. Straight steep sides and flat base.	0.53 deep
116	115	Deliberate backfill	Mid grey silty sandy clay with a core of pale grey yellow clay silt. Deposited after construction of the drain.	0.53 thick
117	118	Drain	Remnant of a probable drain running NNE-SSW 6.90 m. Cuts 105 but cut by 109. Vertical sides and flat base. 0.31m wide and 0.07m deep.	0.07 deep
118	117	Deliberate backfill	Mid grey silty sandy clay with flecks of redeposited natural. As no drain is present unsure if it is a remnant of the material put in during installation or removal.	0.07 thick
119	120, 121	Construction cut	Curvilinear construction cut aligned E-W with vertical, straight sides and a flat base. Length: >14.61 m. Width: 0.17 m. Depth: 0.10 m.	0.10 deep
120	119	Drain	Curvilinear drain aligned E-W with straight sides and a flat base. Constructed from brick and re-used roof peg tile. Maximum height: 0.10 m.	0.10 thick
121	119	Deliberate backfill	Mid to pale grey silty sandy clay	0.10 thick



Appendix 2 OASIS summary

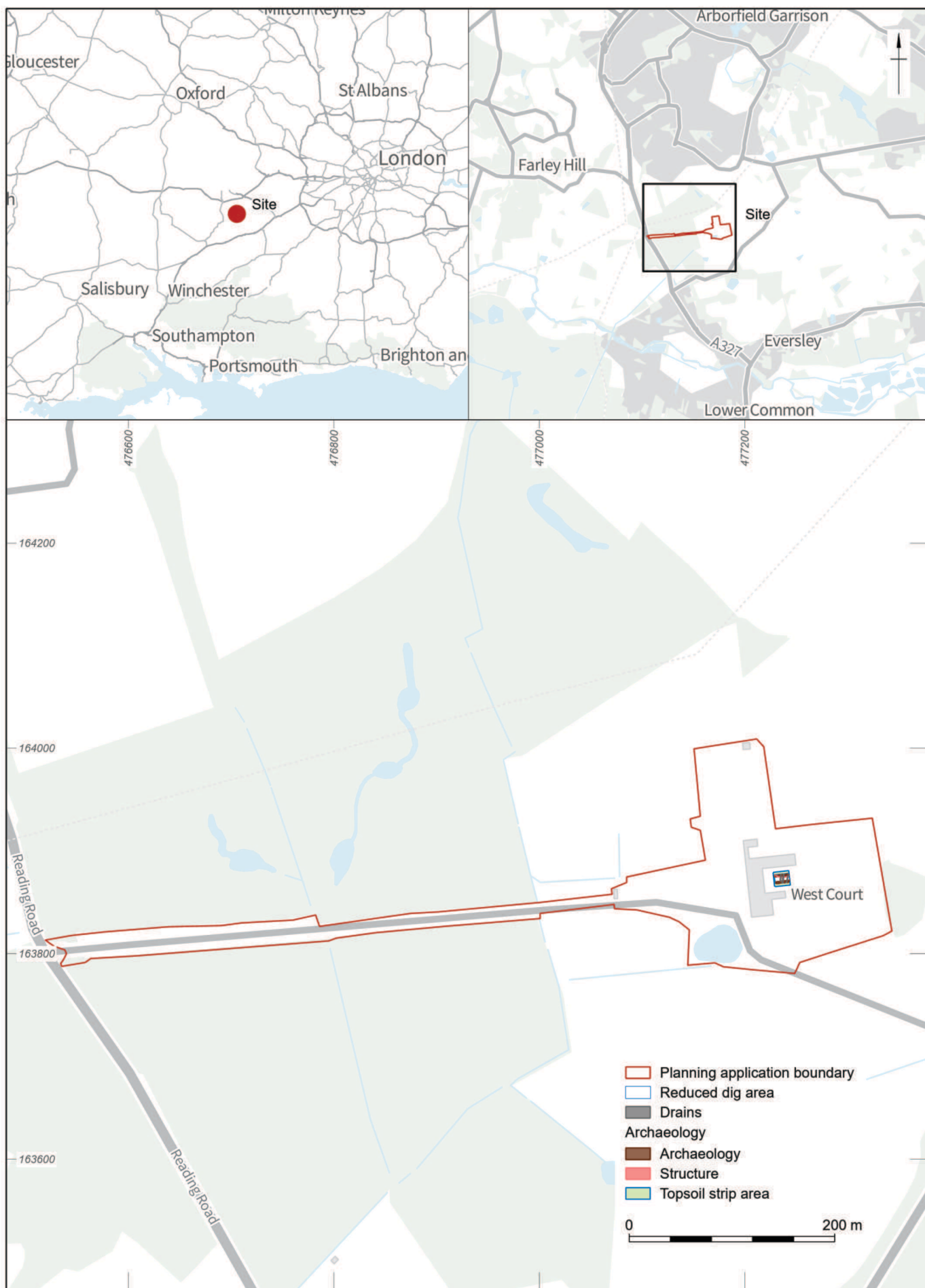
OASIS Summary for wessexar1-531204

OASIS ID (UID)	wessexar1-531204
Project Name	Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at West Court, Finchampstead, Berkshire
Sitename	West Court, Finchampstead, Berkshire
Sitecode	306430
Project Identifier(s)	306430
Activity type	Watching Brief
Planning Id	242402
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Wessex Archaeology
Project Dates	20-Jan-2025 - 23-Jan-2025
Location	West Court, Finchampstead, Berkshire NGR : SU 77236 63873 LL : 51.3686758386638, -0.891884072735438 12 Fig : 477236,163873
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Wokingham Local Authority District : Wokingham Parish : Finchampstead
Project Methodology	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by ET Planning LTD on behalf of Nirvana Spa Ltd to undertake archaeological monitoring and recording (AMR) during the construction of a new swimming pool and associated landscaping. The swimming pool also featured an area of hardstanding patio terrace connecting the main building with the swimming pool. The monitored works covered 0.02 ha (15.50 m by 14.00 m), centred on NGR 477236 163873, at West Court Retreat, Park Lane, Wokingham, and was undertaken between the 20 January and 23 January 2025. The AMR works consisted of the monitoring of the ground reduction of the overall footprint of the proposed swimming pool, including the new patio terrace (15.50 m by 14.00 m) by 0.30 m, and then the reduction of the actual pool (14.10 m by 8.40 m) to the top of the natural geology.



Project Results	No features dating to earlier than the late post medieval period was recorded during the monitoring, several of the features were clearly modern and are likely to be associated with later phases of landscaping associated with the gardens of West Court and later development of the Site by the military. Features 105 and 109 potentially represent parallel ditches associated with landscaping associated with West Court manor due to their shared axis, however the marked difference in their fills may suggest that they are not contemporary or at least were not in-filled at the same date. It is not possible to speculate further on their potential function. The features were spaced at approximately 5 m from internal edge to internal edge. Where evidence for the Roman road was recorded during recent evaluation works to the east, the roadside ditches had a spacing of approximately 10 m (Wessex Archaeology 2019). This difference in spacing, together with the predominately post-medieval artefactual material recovered from the features, and the lack of any evidence of metalling between the features, means that these features are highly unlikely to represent truncated remains associated with the course of the road. Whilst no evidence of the Roman road was uncovered, the monitored area was particularly flat and had been subject to various landscaping and levelling episodes as highlighted by the buried and reworked soil and made ground so it may be that evidence of this feature or contemporary features had been removed by subsequent activity, although this could not be tested further during this phase of works. It remains a possibility that the alignment is slightly to the south of the monitored area under the extant wing of the building.
Keywords	Ditch - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Rubbish Pit - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Drain - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Ceramic - UNCERTAIN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Bottle - UNCERTAIN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Brick - UNCERTAIN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Burnt Flint - UNCERTAIN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Clay Pipe (Smoking) - UNCERTAIN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus
Funder	Private or public corporation Nirvana Spa Ltd
HER	Berkshire Archaeology HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Will Smith
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Physical Archive, Documentary Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archives: no repository;

Report generated on: 11 Mar 2025, 09:43



Date: 12/02/2025 Created by: EG Revision: 0 Scale: 1:5,000 at A4

Figure 1: Site location plan



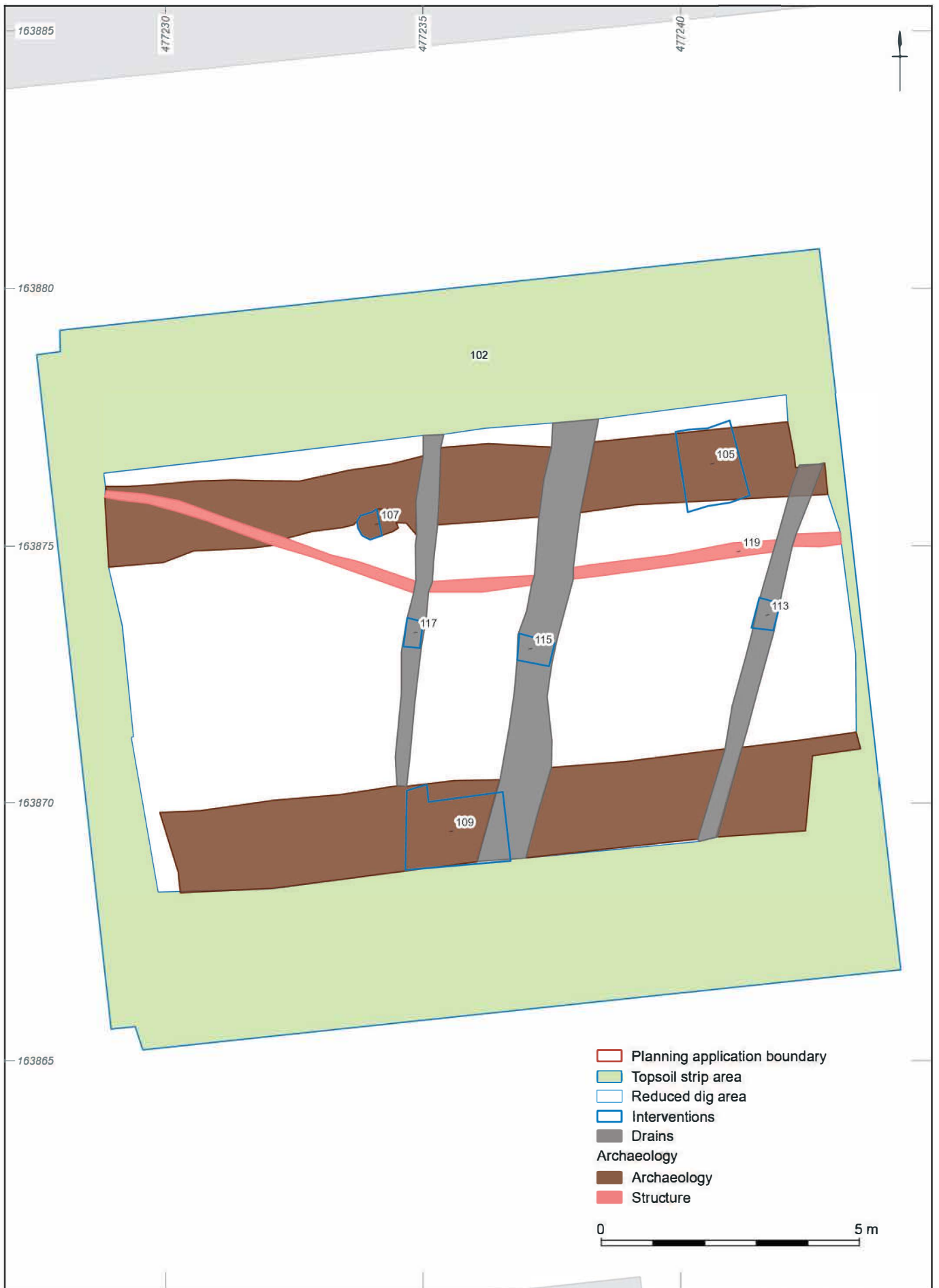




Figure 3: North facing representative section of excavation with ditch 109 (1 x 1 m)



Figure 4: Working shot - viewed from the west showing natural geology and archaeology (1 x 1 m, 1 x 2 m)



Figure 5: West facing section of ditch 105 (1 x 1 m)



Figure 6: Detailed view of animal bones in pit 107 from the west (1 x 0.20 m)

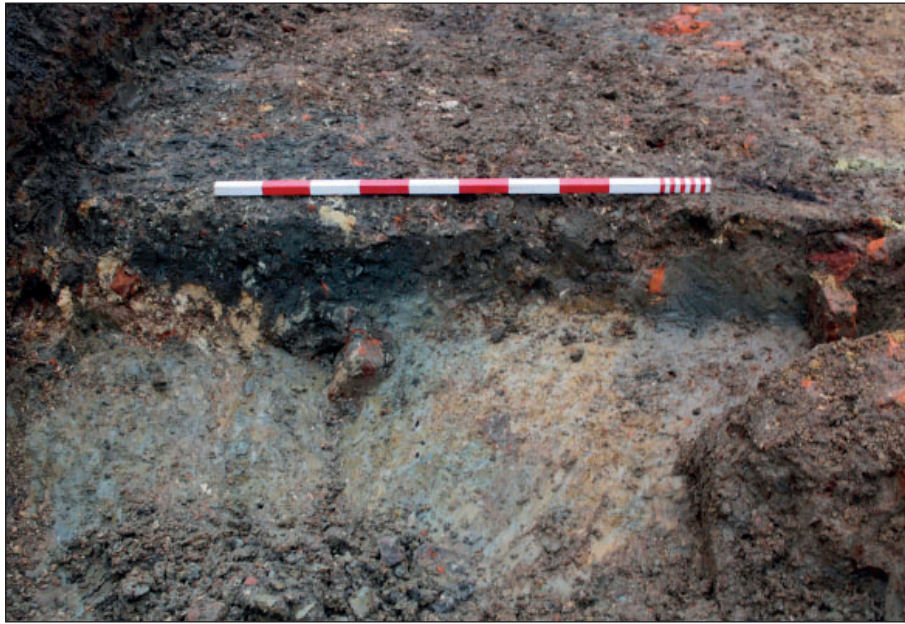


Figure 7: East facing section of ditch 109 (1 x 1 m)



Figure 8: Drain structure 120 viewed from the north-west (1 x 2 m)



Figure 9: Detailed view of drain structure 120 from the west
(1 x 0.15m, 1 x 0.50 m)



Figure 10: South-south-west facing section of drain 115 (1 x 0.50 m)



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