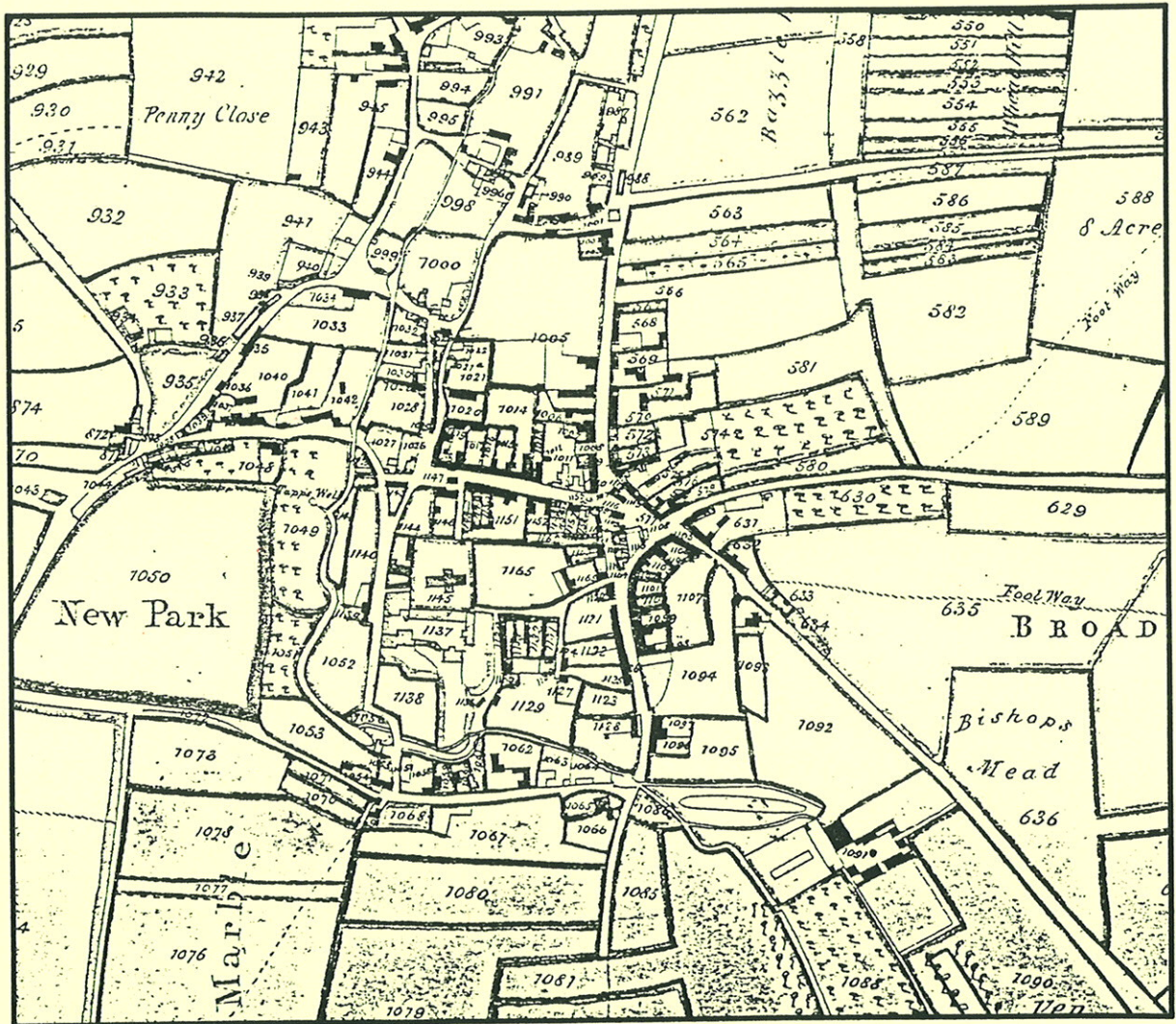


CHURCH STREET, MILBORNE PORT, SOMERSET

Archaeological Evaluation



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT



Church Street, Milborne Port, Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation

December 1991

Oxford Archaeological Unit

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SECTION 1 : THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was conducted by the Oxford Archaeological Unit on behalf of Beechcroft Ltd on the site of proposed development to the north of Church Street, Milborne Port, Somerset (County Monument No. 10388. NGR ST 667185 approx.). The site covers about 0.42 ha. It lies immediately east of the church of St John, which is well-known for its Saxo-Norman architectural components. The site had already been evaluated for its archaeological potential in September/October 1989 by the Trust for Wessex Archaeology, and a 'remarkable preservation' of 11th/12th century deposits was reported (see *Church Street, Milborne Port, Somerset; Archaeological Assessment*, by I Barnes, J Richards and S Tatler, Trust for Wessex Archaeology, October 1989, MS.). In the light of these findings, the present (second stage) evaluation was carried out specifically to assess the effect of a redesigned development scheme upon the archaeology. This report has been prepared by David Miles, Andrew Mudd and Cathy Underwood-Keevill (medieval pottery).

Scope of Evaluation

The second stage evaluation was undertaken as a complement to the 1989 findings. It had two limited objectives:

- i. to sample the site further, in particular towards the centre of the site (subject to the constraints posed by the existing land use), in order to give a more complete picture of the density of archaeological features;
- ii. to define the depth below modern ground level at which these archaeological deposits were encountered.

The excavation of these deposits was not part of the specification.

Given the circumscribed nature of the evaluation, it was not the intention to provide information sufficient for an understanding of the site's nature or development. Indeed, the interpretation and dating of the features encountered, in some cases, remained equivocal.

The work was undertaken with Scheduled Monument Consent granted by the Secretary of State for the Environment under the advice of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (English Heritage). It was carried out between November 25th and December 4th 1991.

Strategy

Five trenches were excavated using a JCB mechanical excavator equipped with a 5 foot (1.6 m) toothless bucket, (see Fig. 1 for trench layout; the trenches are numbered 9 to 13 to avoid confusion with the 1989 evaluation). Overburden was stripped off down to undisturbed archaeological deposits and the trenches were then cleaned by hand.

All the trenches were planned and archaeological features recorded. Features were not excavated, although small sondages were made in Trenches 9 and 11 in order to confirm

their presence. Additionally, in Trench 12, rubble layers were partly excavated by machine since it could not otherwise have been demonstrated that they were of a date to be considered archaeologically important.

Results

The results are presented in map form (Fig. 2) and the trench summaries are provided below. An inventory of the deposits encountered (excluding the obviously modern ones) is provided in Annexe 1. Levels are related to the bench-mark by the southern doorway of St John's Church.

Summary of Stratigraphy

A generalised summary of the site's stratigraphy is as follows:

- i. Topsoil: uncompacted dark grey-brown loam. Modern garden soil, encountered everywhere.
- ii. Subsoil: moderately compacted mid-brown to olive-grey clay-silt. Contained comparatively large quantities of 12th-13th century pottery, but also later medieval sherds. This layer was not present in Trenches 12 and 13, and the northern half of Trench 9. Where this layer did occur, it appeared to seal archaeological features.
- iii. Palaeo-soil: compacted mid-reddish brown clay-silt. It underlay the subsoil, but was present only in the extreme south of Trenches 10 and 11. It was cut by archaeological features. This layer was not excavated, but in view of its patchy distribution it is likely to be thin.
- iv. Natural bedded limestone. The weathered surface was flakey and partly decomposed to a gritty yellow clay.

Trench Summaries

Numbers in square brackets [] refer to individual context numbers. The depths are from the modern ground surface to the level of archaeological deposits.

TRENCH 9 (Fig. 5)

10 m long, 1.6 wide: depth N 0.68 m, S 0.42 m: orientated N-S.

The subsoil [9/2] was 0.18 m thick and only present in the southern half of the trench. In the northern half, 0.45 m of modern made ground [9/15] directly overlay bedrock except where it covered archaeological deposits [9/12] (a ditch), and [9/13], (which might be an earlier feature).

Nine potential archaeological features were encountered. All were thought to underlie the subsoil, but the closely similar nature of their fills makes this observation uncertain. In the northern part of the trench, the large ditch [9/12] produced 12th century pottery, and is likely to be the continuation of the ditch discovered in the 1989 evaluation (Trench 4 [053]). Pottery recovered from cleaning the surface of [9/4] and [9/8] also suggest a 12th century date for these features.

TRENCH 10

5 m long, 1.6 m wide: depth N 0.54 m, S 0.24 m: orientated N-S.

The subsoil [10/4] contained large quantities of early medieval pottery and animal bone. It sealed a large rubble-filled feature [10/5] whose dimensions were not recoverable within the limits of the trench. It might represent the backfill of a large robber-trench or perhaps a quarry. A post-hole [10/6] was also present.

TRENCH 11

5 m long, 1.6 m wide: depth N 0.32 m, S 0.34 m: orientated N-S.

Under the subsoil [11/2] (0.16-0.21 m thick) was uncovered a large feature [11/3] occupying the NE part of the trench. It is probably a ditch, or perhaps a complex of features. Its dimensions were not recoverable in the trench. 12/13th century pottery was collected from a small sondage.

TRENCH 12 (Figs. 3 & 4)

10 m long, 1.6 m wide: depth E 0.45, W 0.37: orientated E-W.

The subsoil was absent from this trench. Under the modern topsoil was 0.30-0.35 m of post-medieval rubble.

At the eastern end of the trench these layers overlay:

- i. The footings of a stone wall [12/14], running approximately N-S, with a clear W edge and an ill-defined E edge.
- ii. A layer of clean orange-brown clayey silt [12/7] containing late medieval pottery, sealing another stone structure [12/13] which ran ENE-WSW. This may also be the footings of a wall, with only the S edge defined. It may also incorporate a narrow drain with a row of limestone blocks and slabs forming a cover.

There is no clear relationship between the stone structures and they might be contemporaneous. They are both constructed from tightly-packed, though uncemented, limestone blocks. Those in [12/14] were roughly squared and generally more carefully laid.

To the west of wall [12/14] the remainder of the trench was occupied by two layers of tightly-packed limestone rubble within a matrix of greyish-brown clayey-silt [12/9] and [12/12]. These were separated by a similar, though less rubbly layer of sediment [12/10]. In the central 2 m of the trench (which is the only place where these layers were completely excavated) they were only 0.2 m thick, but their thickness elsewhere remains unknown. These layers may be interpreted as the backfills of robber-trenches, but within the relatively narrow confines of the excavation trench, the features which they fill cannot be defined. It is not known, therefore, whether they would represent the robbing of floors or walls.

Their relationship with the wall [12/14] is not clear. Layer [12/9] yielded exclusively early

medieval pottery, and it seems likely that it is related to an earlier phase of building, or other activity, than [12/14].

The rubble deposits [12/9] and [12/12] were cut by two large features filled with relatively clean greyish-brown clayey-silt ([12/8] and [12/11]). The latter produced post-medieval pottery.

TRENCH 13

6 m long, 4 m wide: depth NW 0.41 m, SW 0.48 m, SE 0.53 m, (NW disturbed): orientated E-W.

0.4-0.5 m of post-medieval disturbance directly overlay the natural limestone. The bedrock was also penetrated by two 'modern' disturbances - a pipe-trench running N-S across the trench, and a large quarry-pit occupying 7.5 sq m (31.25% of the trench) in the NE corner. This was filled with loose limestone rubble and contained 18th century pottery.

There were at least three features of probable archaeological significance cutting the bedrock. These features [13/3], [13/4] and [13/6] all appeared to be subcircular pits, filled with a similar dark brown clayey-silt, and they all produced medieval pottery from their surfaces.

Conclusion

The evaluation has confirmed the findings of the evaluation carried out by the Trust for Wessex Archaeology in 1989, that the site contains features of Saxo-Norman and medieval date. As suggested in the TWA report, these features seem to be denser around the periphery, but they are also present towards the centre of the site.

There is little stratigraphy surviving above the natural surface of the bedrock. It is generally limited to a single, and very patchy, horizon of buried soil which is cut by the archaeological features. This palaeo-soil underlay a subsoil which, though containing relatively large amounts of early medieval pottery, also contained fragments of later material, and must therefore be considered a 'disturbed' horizon. In the light of this the reference in the TWA report to "extensive horizontal stratigraphy" (ibid. para 2.2), is at best ambiguous, and in many cases cannot be taken to be a general characteristic of the site. Some stratigraphy was present, however, in Trench 12 (also found at the southern end of Trench 5), where there were shallow stratified deposits relating to the stone structure. This structure is clearly related to the cottages depicted on the enclosure map of 1817 (see Fig. 10). From the limited archaeological evidence obtained, it is probably of later medieval date.

The depth below modern ground surface of archaeological deposits was generally in the order of 0.3-0.5 m, but it was occasionally deeper or shallower (see individual trench summaries, and also Figs. 7 & 8). The areas of deepest overburden were in the N extremity of the site.

Although it can be noted (Annexe 1) that most of the pottery recovered is dated to the 12th-13th centuries, rather than earlier, a precise dating of archaeological features was not within the scope of the evaluation. Regarding the dating of the site, therefore, no further comment can be added to conclusions reached in the TWA report.

ANNEXE 1: INVENTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS

(Subsoil and obviously modern deposits excluded. P-H = post-hole, R-T = 'robber trench').

Trench/ Feature	Shape	Type	Length	Width	Findings	Date
9/3	circular	P-H?	0.3	0.2	-	?
9/4	oval	P-H?	0.35+	0.3	pot, bone	11/12th C
9/5	circular	P-H	0.3	0.28	-	?
9/6	circular	P-H	0.34	0.34	-	?
9/7	rectangular	P-H	0.28+	0.23	-	?
9/8	circular	pit	0.6	0.6	pot	11/12th C
9/9	circular	P-H	0.25	0.2	-	?
9/10	ovaloid	P-H?	0.26	0.2	-	?
9/12	linear	ditch	?	2.35	pot	12th C
9/13	?	?	?	?	-	12th C?
10/5	?	ditch?	?	1.5+	-	?
10/6	circular	P-H	0.36	0.36	-	?
11/3	linear	ditch?	?	1.2+	pot, iron	12/13th C?
11/4	square	P-H	0.32	0.3	-	modern?
11/5	?	pit	0.75	?	-	modern?
12/6	linear?	R-T?	?	1.1	-	?
12/7	?	layer	?	?	pot	late-med
12/8	?	pit	?	1.5+	-	post-med?
12/9	?	layer/R-T?	?	?	pot	13th C
12/10	?	layer/R-T?	?	?	-	13th C
12/11	?	pit	?	1.2+	pot, flint	post-med
12/12	?	layer/R-T?	?	?	-	13th C
12/13	linear?	wall/floor	?	1.2+	-	?
12/14	linear	wall	?	1.1	-	?
12/15	?	layer?	?	?	-	?
13/3	oval	pit	0.8	0.57	pot, bone, iron	14th C?
13/4	circular	pit	1.0	1.0	pot, bone	13th C?
13/6	?	pit	?	1.0	bone	13th C?
13/8	subrectangular?	quarry	3.0+	2.5+	pot	18th C

ANNEXE 2:

The Medieval Pottery from Church Street, Milborne Port, Somerset

A total of 100 sherds weighing 1.09 kg was recovered from assessment excavations by Oxford Archaeological Unit at Milborne Port. The pottery was analysed and fabric groups were isolated and any vessel forms reconstructed from the rim and decorated sherds present. This, however, was very limited due to the lack of diagnostic sherds.

The main fabric type present appears to be flinty/gravel fabric noted elsewhere at Milborne Port, (Morris, Internal report, Wessex Archaeology) and described as a 12th century type. A coarse flint and finer flint fabric types are present at Sherborne Castle (Harrison and Williams 1979) and at Ilchester (Pearson 1982) coded A and B at Sherborne and B at Ilchester. The fabric at Milborne Port can be described as a light grey to orange fabric with moderate to coarse red and grey angular flint and clear moderate sub-angular quartz. This has been dated from the 11th-12th century and continues into the 13th-14th centuries in a harder, less flint gritted wheel made form. The infolded thickened internally everted cooking pot rims in this fabric have been assigned to the 12th century. These are present in contexts 11/3, 12/9 and 10/4.

The oolitic limestone fabric, a very localised product found in ditch contexts elsewhere only seems to be present in small numbers as a residual element. One sherd has been identified from context 9/1 and a finer version is evident in context 9/4. This thick coarse limestone tempered fabric has been dated to the 10th/11th centuries by comparison with material from Bristol and other early sites in Somerset (Rahtz 1974, Watts and Rahtz 1985). Another early rim form in a gritty sandy fabric is present in context 12/9. This is a simple round topped, only slightly everted small cooking pot form, similar to that found in an early ditch deposit elsewhere at Milborne Port and also with parallels at Beckery and Glastonbury Tor, Somerset and probably of pre-Conquest date (Rahtz 1974).

The presence of fine sandy glazed and splashed glaze wares indicates the presence of 13th-14th century material. The sandy fabric types are found in nearly all the larger pottery contexts and suggests that the majority of these contexts are 13th-14th century in date: contexts 9/2, 10/4, 11/3, 12/7, 12/9, 13/3 and 13/4. Some of these have residual 12th century material in them.

The small amounts of pre-Conquest and larger proportions of post-Conquest material can be compared with the other assemblages recovered from Milborne Port in the excavations by Wessex Archaeology. Larger amounts of fine sandy glazed wares dating from the 12th/13th centuries onwards are present and it should be noted that the majority of the pre-Conquest ceramics are residual, this is in contrast to the earlier assessment assemblages. Unfortunately, the amounts present do not allow any further conclusions to be drawn as to the pre-Conquest ceramics. Further refinement may be possible in the dating of the flinty/gravel fabrics by examining hardness and changes in flint composition and manufacturing technique through time on a larger assemblage.

This site is important in that it complements pottery assemblages from sites in Dorset such as Sherborne Old Castle and could extend present knowledge of the distribution and types of pre-Conquest pottery.

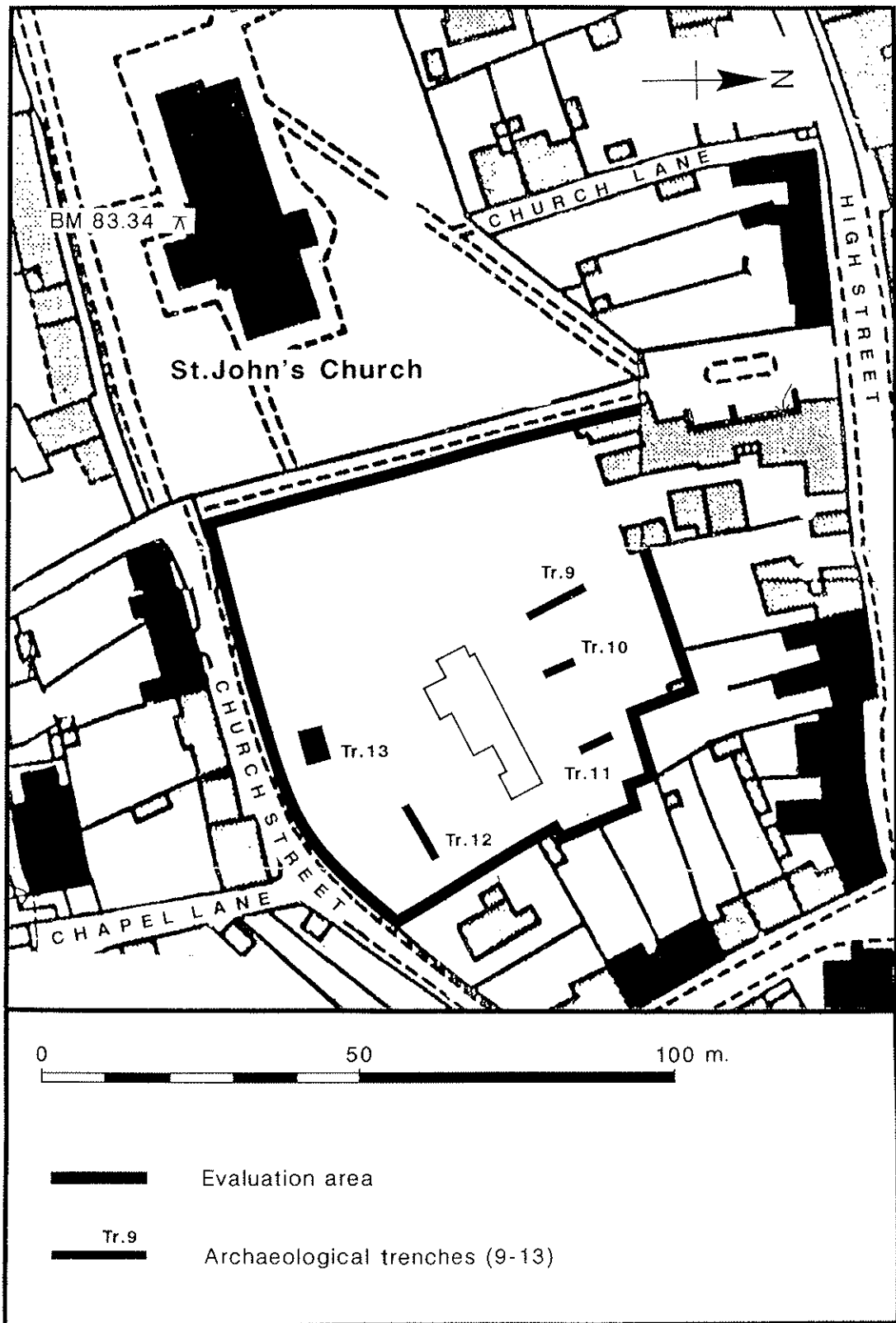
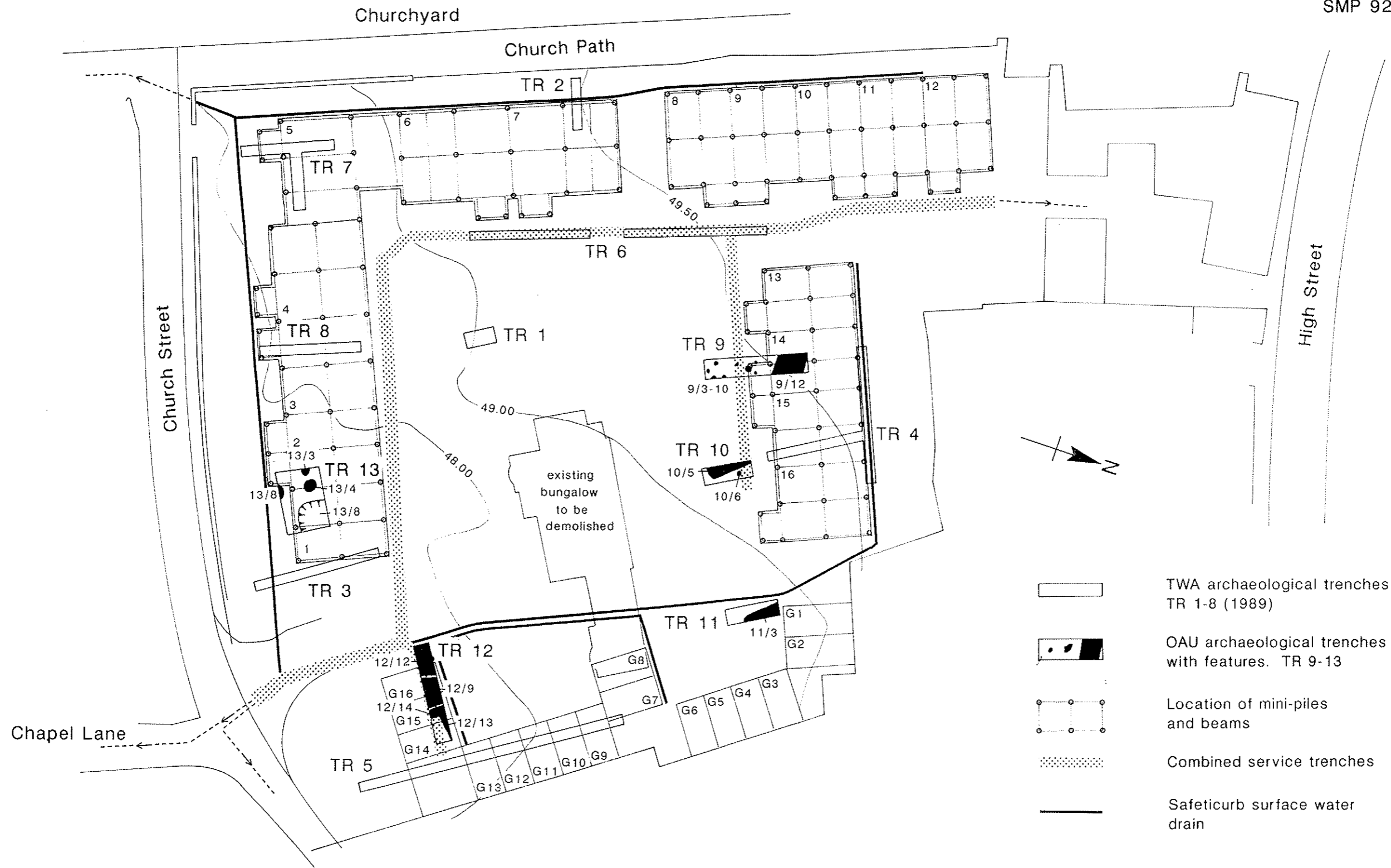


Fig. 1

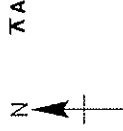
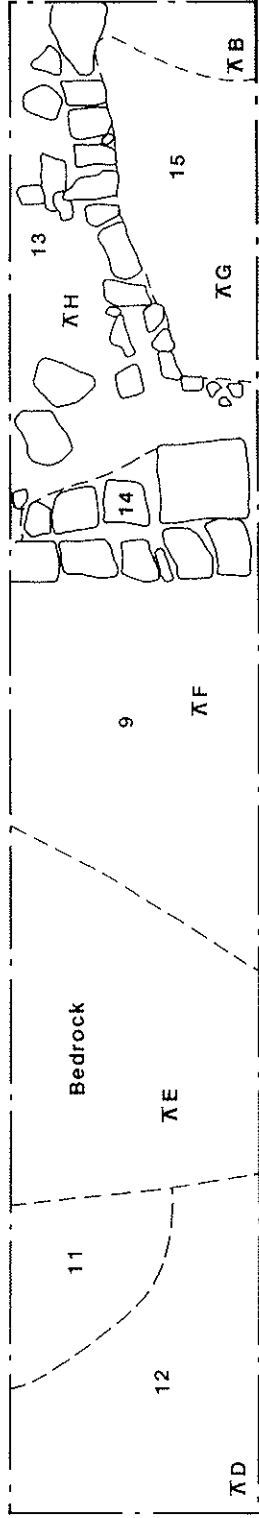


Based on Anthony Ward Partnership drawing BDL/3/1C



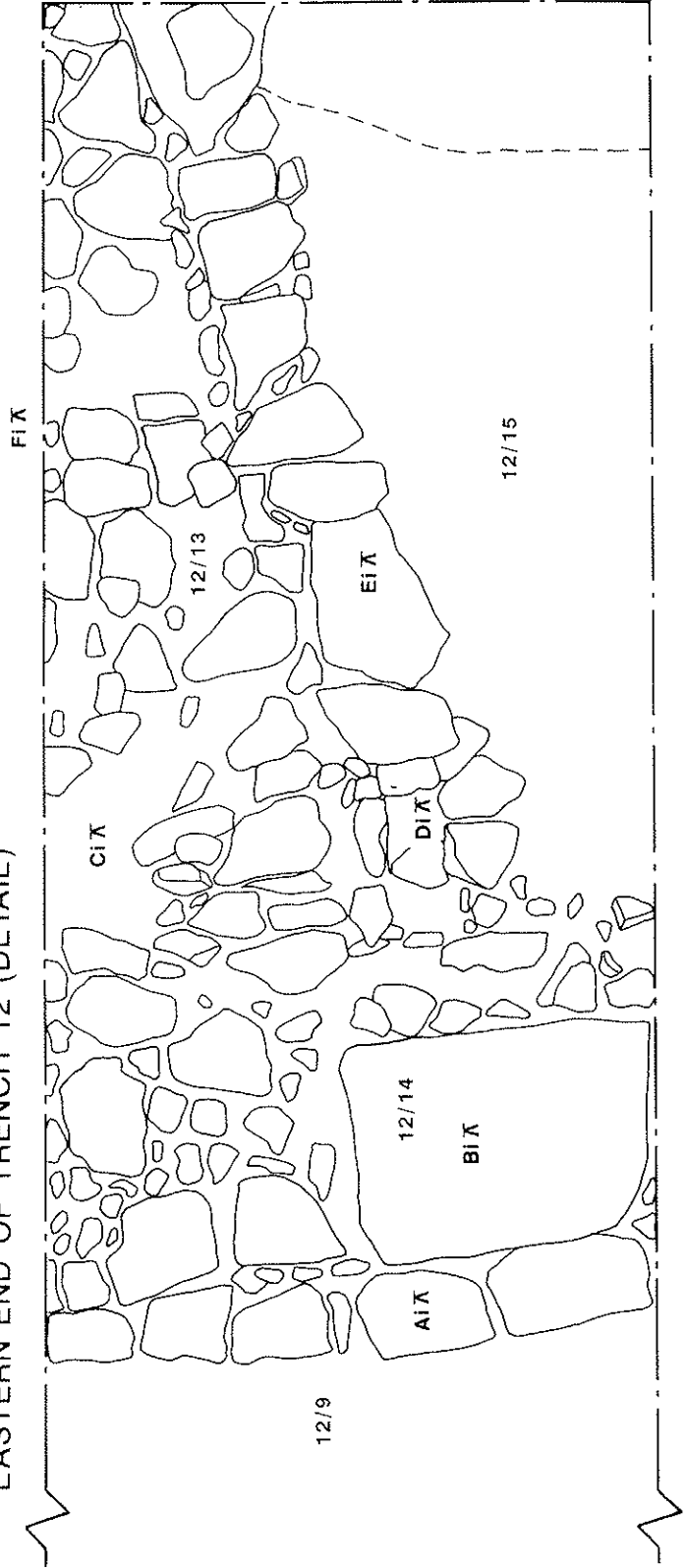
Fig. 2

TRENCH 12



LEVELS κ	
A	80.46
B	79.89
C	80.40
D	79.95
E	79.68
F	79.67
G	79.86
H	79.84

EASTERN END OF TRENCH 12 (DETAIL)



LEVELS κ	
Ai	79.75
Bi	79.84
Ci	79.86
Di	79.88
Ei	79.96
Fi	80.41

Fig. 3

SMP 91 Trench 12

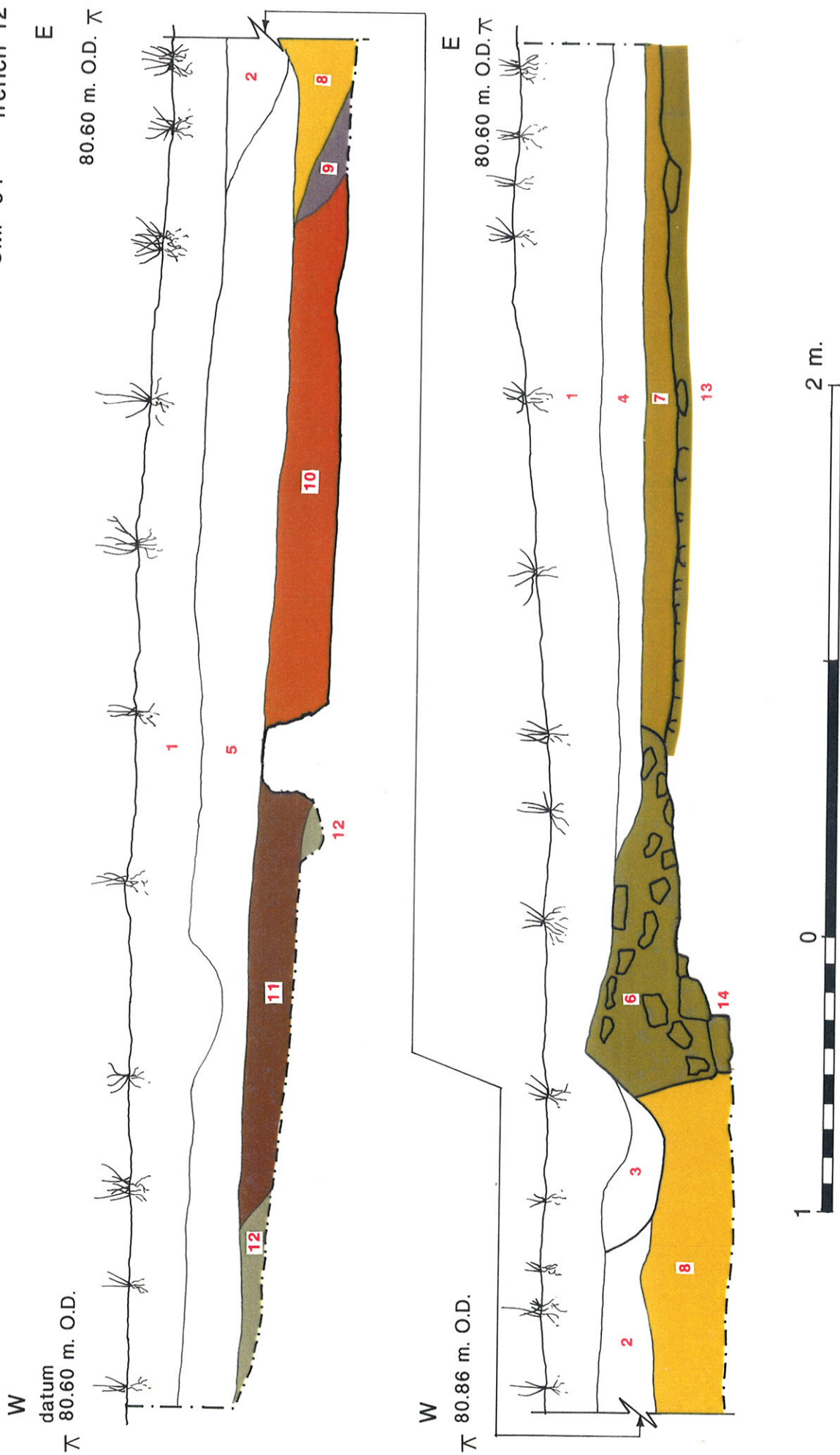


Fig. 4

SMP 91 Trench 9

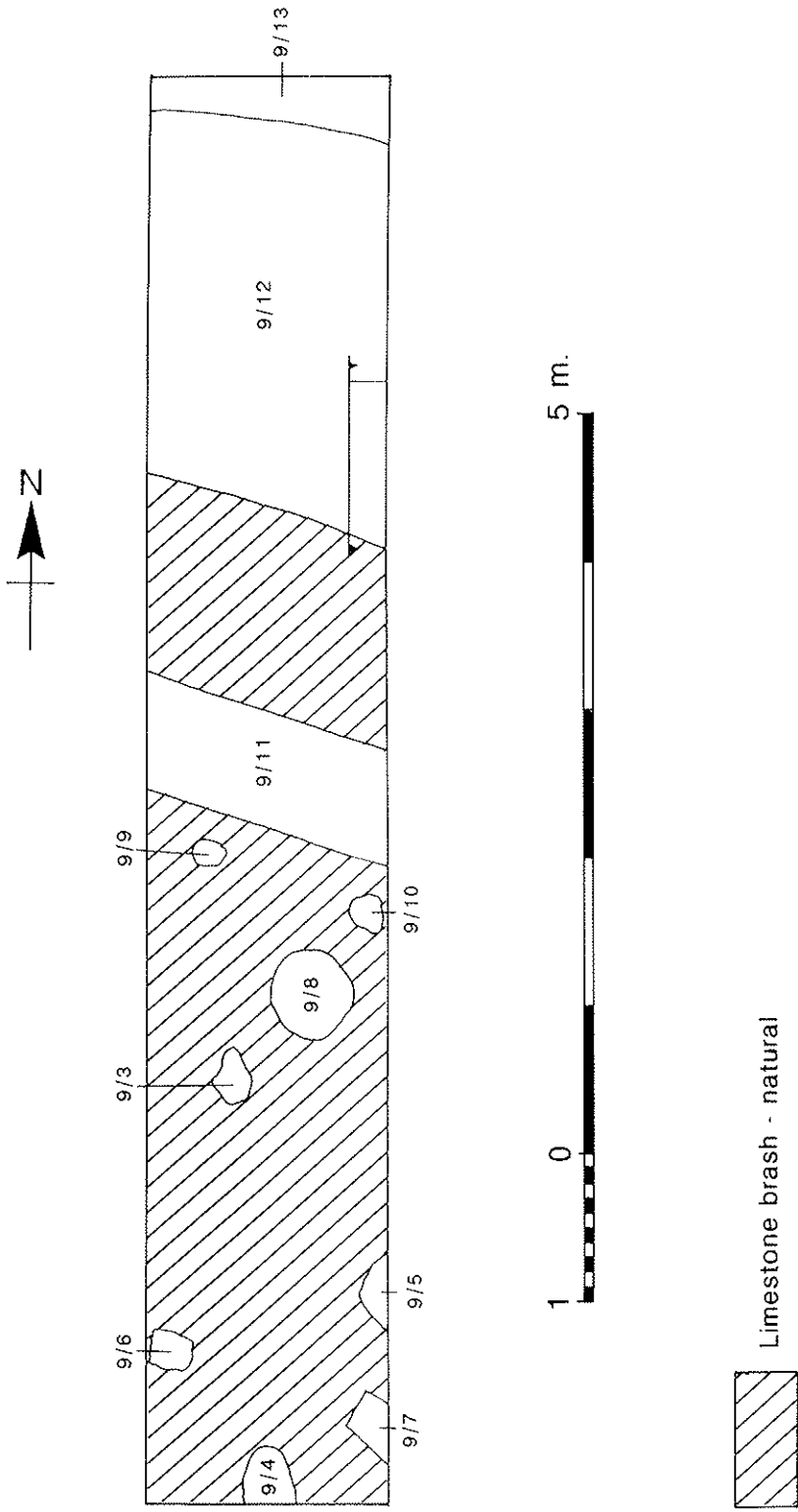


Fig. 5

DENSITY OF FEATURES; percentage of area covered by archaeological features, by 5m square extrapolated from evaluation trenches

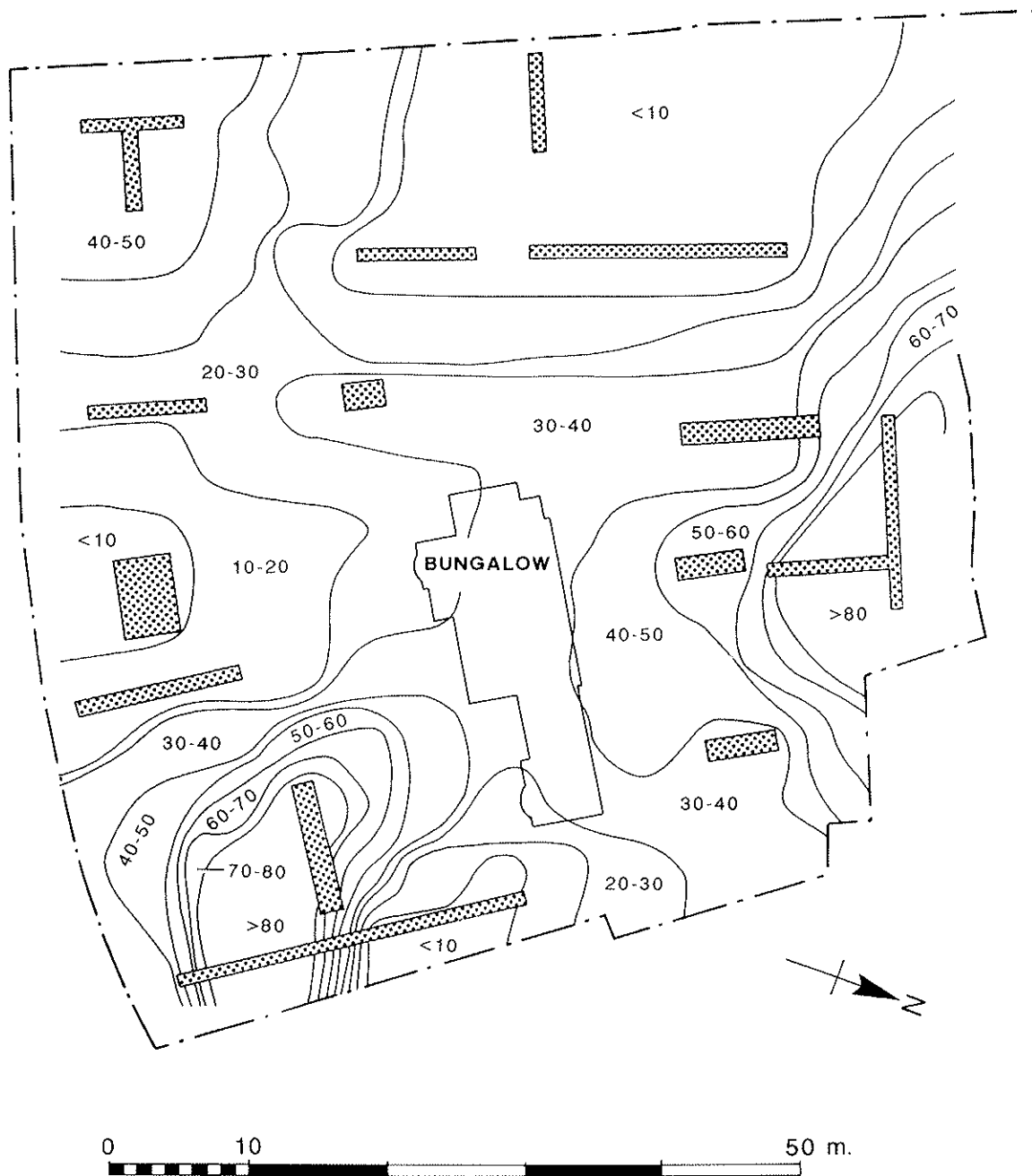


Fig. 6

Church Street, Milborne Port
Levels 1989 and 1991



● 0.86 Depth in metres below O.D. ground surface and location of transect

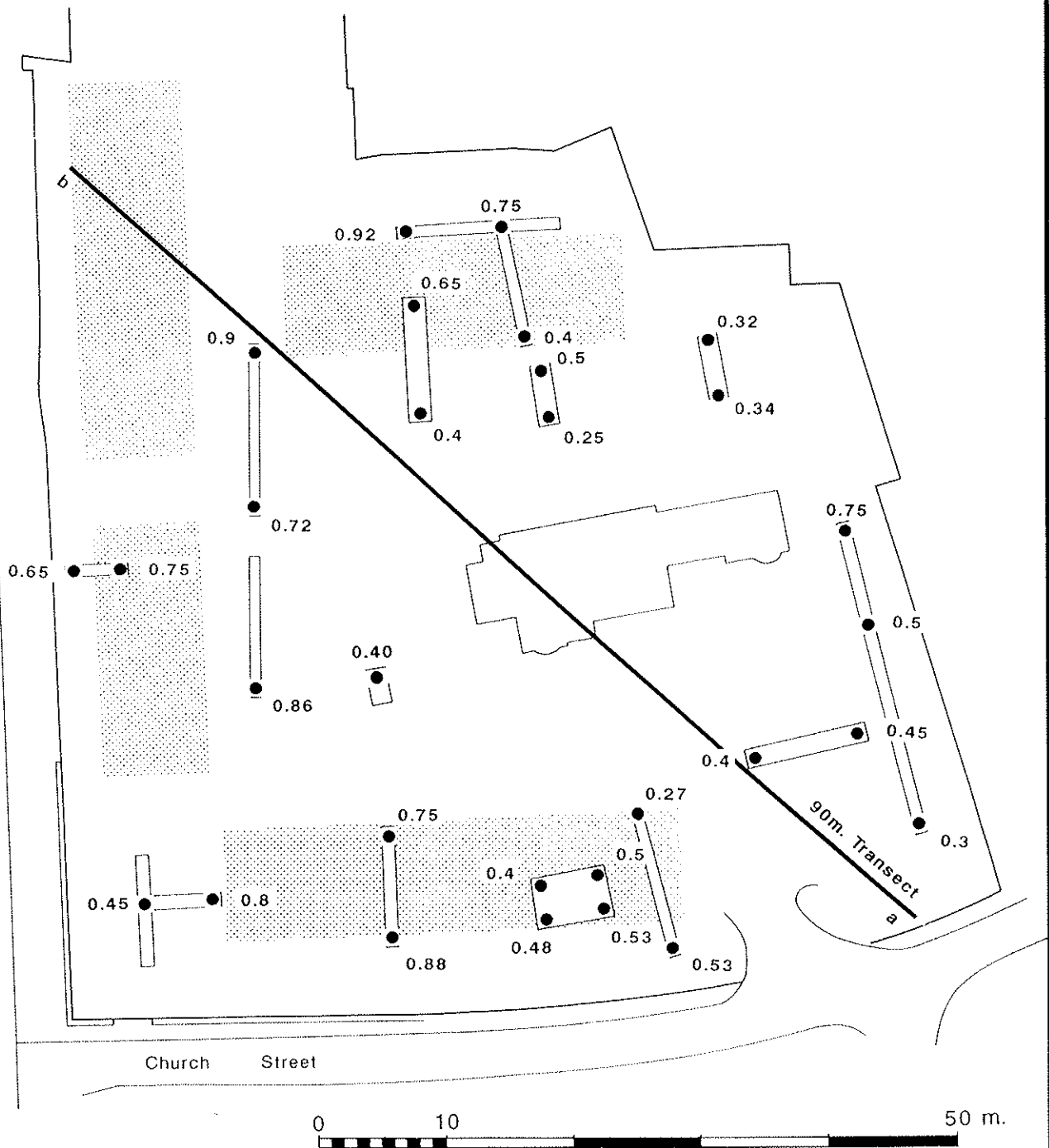
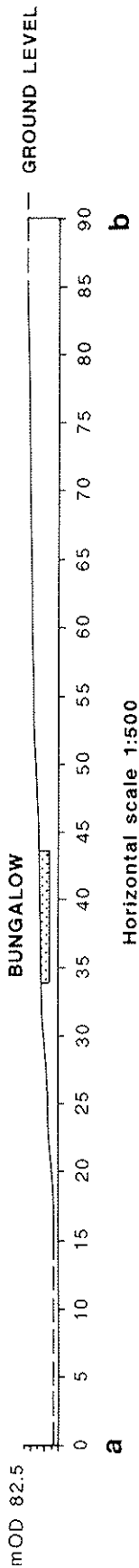


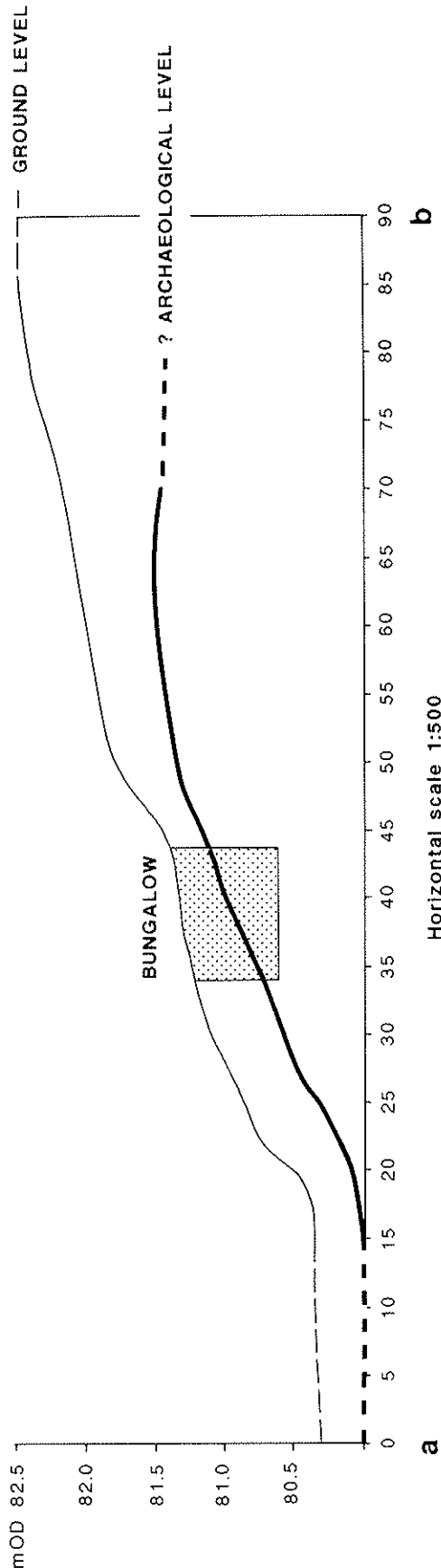
Fig. 7

Vertical
scale
1:500



MILBORNE PORT TRANSECT

Vertical
scale
1:50



(A and B represent the same transect)

Church street, Milborne Port
Somerset

Archaeological evaluation

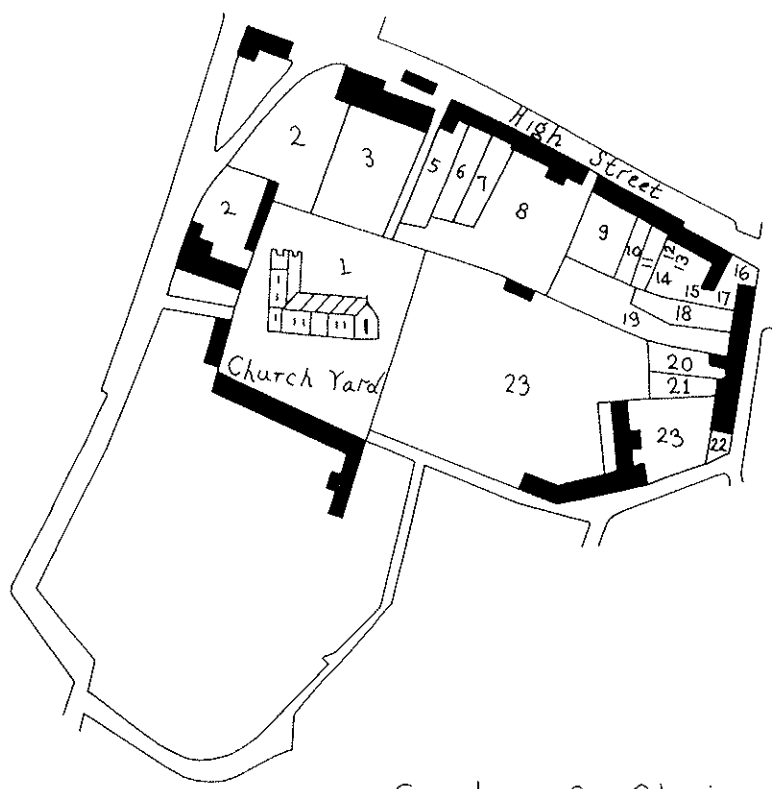


Dated features with stratified pottery

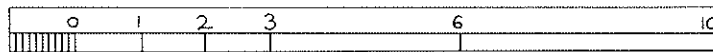
- 11th century
- 11th-12th century
- 12th century
- 13th-14th century
- post medieval/modern



Fig. 9



Scale of Chains

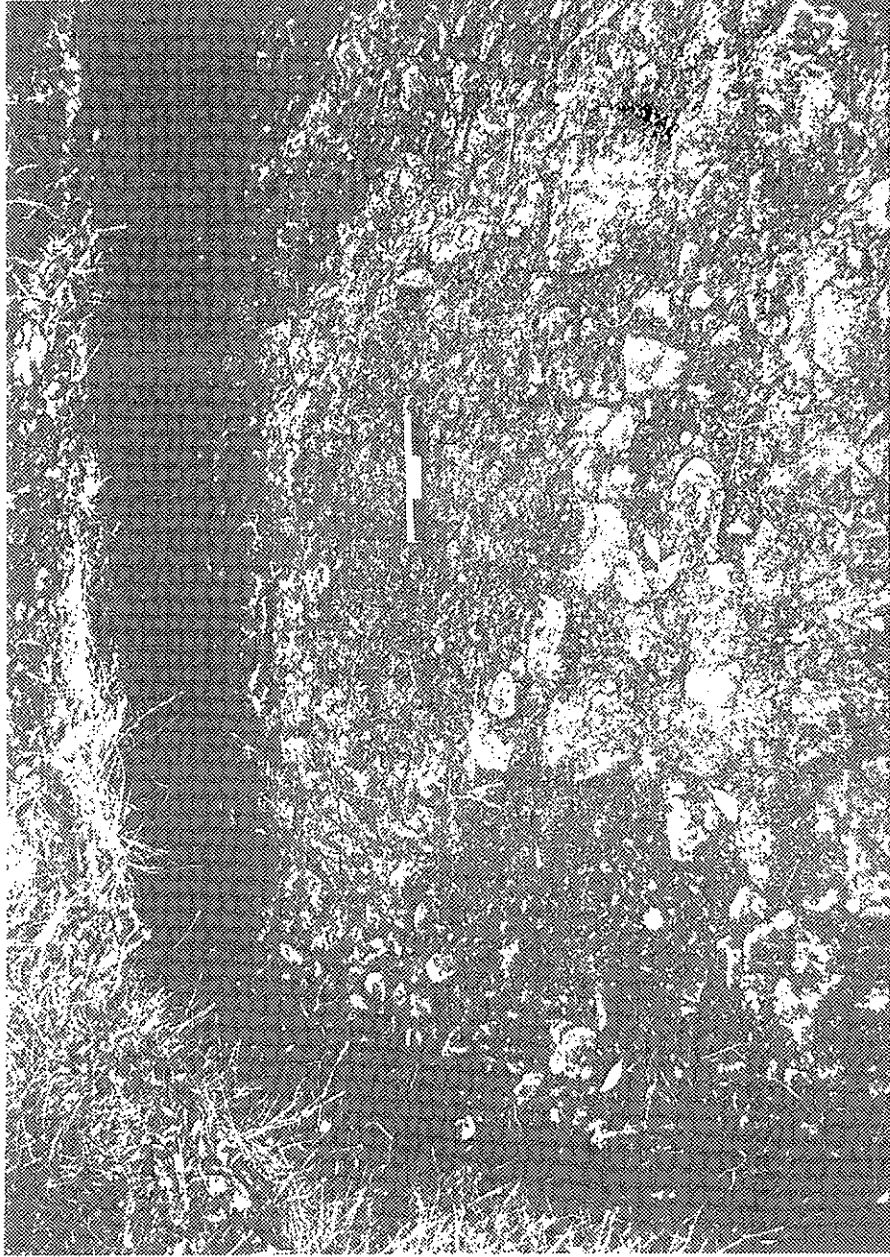


Detail of: Map of the Parish of Milborne Port after the Allotments and Exchanges under the Inclosure Acts having been effected 1817. Robert Page, Land Surveyor, Wimborne, Dorset.

Somerset Record Office, Ref: Q/RDE/137.



Trench 12 looking West towards St. John's Church



Trench 13 looking North. 12th-13th century pits cut into cornbrash

SECTION 2 - THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Since the discovery of archaeological features on the site in 1989 and their subsequent Scheduling, the developers have modified their proposed sheltered housing scheme to reduce its impact on the buried archaeology.

The purpose of this section is to clarify the impact of the proposed development in the light of the most recent evaluation.

The footprint of the proposed structures is set out in relation to the evaluation trenches on Figure 2. This also marks the position of necessary service trenches. A report, *Proposals for Foundations and Buried Service at Milborne Port, Somerset for Beechcroft Development Ltd*, has been produced and circulated by the Anthony Ward Partnership (Consulting Engineers), amended November 1990.

The Character and Importance of the Archaeological Deposits

The name 'Milborne Port' suggests that in the late Anglo-Saxon period the settlement functioned as a market centre. At the time of Domesday Book, it was the third town of Somerset with 56 burgesses. A royal manor and a mint is recorded (AD 997-1007) which moved to the hillfort of South Cadbury during the unsettled reign of Ethelred. The town also grew around a church which was probably established originally as a middle/late Saxon minster.

Although Milborne Port probably functioned as a town in the late Anglo-Saxon period, it is not one of the burhs which formed the interlocking defensive and economic system of Wessex at the period of Danish pressure. Little is known about the origins, growth and recession of the town in the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods, its topography or street plan.

The historic core of Milborne Port probably extends over approximately 8 hectares (Aston and Leech 1977, Map 38) (see Appendix 2). It is generally assumed that the origins of the town should be sought around the Parish Church of St John the Evangelist and the High Street and this is confirmed by the features located in the archaeological assessments.

For the most part the Church Street site has remained open and undeveloped since the medieval period. Traces of late/post-medieval structures and pits have been found along Church Street (Figs 9, 10), but the core of the site has largely remained undeveloped and has been used as gardens.

The site rises about 2 m from south (the Church Street frontage) to north. The overburden, above the archaeological deposits, is irregular (see Fig. 7), but is for the most part shallow, varying from 250 mm to 920 mm, with the maximum depth at the northern and western boundaries of the site (see Fig. 8, Section a-b).

Only in very limited areas (eg Trench 12) are there vertical stratified layers. For the most part the archaeology consists of discrete features such as pits, ditches and ?post-holes cut into limestone. These features are not very dense for an historic urban context (Fig. 6).

On an urban site it is unusual to find such shallow deposits with such scattered features, and there are comparatively large areas devoid of archaeological deposits altogether. (see plate 2). This area does not have the common characteristic of modern towns occupied since the 11th century, ie deeply stratified deposits and/or large numbers of inter-cutting features.

The pottery from both assessment exercises has recently been examined. Figure 9 shows those features whose date is reasonably clear from ceramic evidence. The earliest pottery is dated to the 11th century, though it is difficult to distinguish closely between the ceramics of that and the 12th century on the basis of a relatively small sample. The main Saxo-Norman features consist of a substantial and probably re-cut ditch on the northern area (Trenches 4, 9) which coincides approximately with a long-lived topographical boundary extending along the north side of the churchyard (see Fig. 10) and Map of 1781/2 on cover of report.

Saxo-Norman features were found in Trench 5, two rectangular pits about 1.0 m deep and a large ditch 2.6 m wide and 0.75 m deep. This ditch could be contemporary with that in Trench 4 to the north. Unfortunately, its character and purpose are unclear and it was not located in Trenches 3 and 13.

Other features of the Saxo-Norman period have been located (eg. Trench 3, 130), but they are not present in all the exploratory trenches and the character of the settlement in this area is not clear.

The TWA report of October 1989 referred to 'remarkable preservation' of 11th/12th century deposits. In the light of the further assessment trenches, this is a statement that needs to be qualified. The area contains discrete features of this period, but whether pre- or post-Norman Conquest is uncertain. It is rare to find an area within a town centre of this antiquity which has not been built over and much disturbed through the centuries. The use of the land as garden has, however, removed most of the vertical stratigraphy, and occupation/floor levels of the Saxo-Norman period probably do not survive to any considerable extent. The modern garden soil is 200-300 mm deep and generally overlies a post-medieval subsoil of varying thickness which seals the archaeological features. Limited areas of the site have been cut into by later buildings in the south-east, by a wartime shelter to the west, and probably by the modern bungalow. There is important evidence of carbonized biological material and animal bone, but the site is not waterlogged and environmental deposits are therefore not exceptionally well-preserved.

The site has been Scheduled because of the presumed significance of its Saxo-Norman deposits. Further assessment has not revealed its later archaeology itself to be of exceptional importance.

Original 19 Unit Development Proposal

The development proposal has evolved considerably in the last two years in response to the archaeological sensitivity of the site. The original proposal for 19 units with trench foundations cut through to solid limestone would have involved a total loss of deposits at about 23.01% of the site [see Table 1, line 3; based on OAU Impact Assessment plan, Nov. 1989, see Appendix 3]. The service trenches would have disturbed another 8.93% [Table 1, line 4]. Towards the north and east of the site, the zones of "marginal" impact, which

would also have been affected to some degree by wall foundations, have not been included in these calculations. These figures therefore represent an underestimate of the impact.

Mitigation Strategy: 16 Unit Scheme

The current proposal represents what is regarded by the developer as the minimum impact which can be achieved by a viable scheme of this nature. The number of housing units has been reduced from 19 to 16, and the proposal for a pool, soakaway and trees has been omitted.

1 Foundations

The proposed foundation is of small diameter mini piles of 200 mm diameter supporting slabs raised above the archaeological levels. A total of 136 piles would be augured 2 metres into the underlying limestone. The total area of the development is 4529 m². The total area of the piles is 4.27 m², or about a quarter of 1% of the footprint of the building (and about 0.1% of the site as a whole - Table 1, line 5).

Given the nature of the archaeological deposits, boreholes of this size 3 or 4 m apart would not represent a major disturbance.

The buildings would require no other foundations to penetrate archaeological deposits. suspended ground floor slabs (150 mm thick), sitting on concrete ground beams (400 mm thick) would be constructed above any archaeological levels. The heights of the top of the floor-slabs in relation to the existing ground level is given in Appendix 1. The depths of the top of the archaeological deposits are reasonably well-known (Fig. 7) varying from 0.25 m to 0.92 m below the modern ground surface. Even where these levels are shallowest, in front of Units 13-16, they are unlikely to be disturbed.

The main impact of the housing development is as the western (Church Path) side of the site where archaeological features were generally found to be sparse (see Fig. 6). They have already been disturbed by a wartime shelter, and possibly by modern garages.

2 Garages

The proposed garages along the eastern side of the site would sit upon concrete rafts no more than 350 mm thick (see drawing BDL/3/1C Section B-B). Their maximum penetration below ground level would be in the order of 350 mm (from Appendix 1 + AWP Drawing BDL/3/1C), so they are unlikely to impinge upon even the shallowest archaeological deposits in this area.

3 Access Road

The construction of the access road will involve building the ground level up above the existing surface (see Appendix 1) on a 400 mm thick base. This base might have to be deeper to secure a firm foundation, but in any event no more than the modern topsoil (200-300 mm) need be removed. All archaeological deposits lie beneath this level and are unlikely to be disturbed, even allowing for a degree of compaction of the underlying soil.

The access road will use the existing entrance to the site. This would not result in any

further disturbance to the archaeology at this point.

4 Surface Water Drainage

The surface water drainage channels will have a total length of about 203 m (in addition to these lengths incorporated within the Combined Services Trench - see below). They will serve both the road, and the downpipes from the housing units and garages. They will penetrate just 350 mm below the finished ground level (see AWP drawing BDL/3/1C, 'Safeticurb detail'), and will not impinge upon any archaeological deposits.

5 Combined Service and Drain Trench

The proposed Combined Service and Drain Trench (see Fig. 2) presents a greater problem for the archaeology of the site. It would be 1.2 m wide and 1.0 m deep, and run for 139 m on three sides of the courtyard with extensions north and south. This route avoids the known areas of the most dense archaeological deposits which lie towards the periphery of the site on its northern, eastern and southern sides. From Fig. 6 it can be seen that the density of archaeological features along this route is, on average, about 30%, and nowhere exceeds 60%.

Its effect upon the archaeology is mitigated to some extent by routing 28 m of it through Trench 6 of the evaluation, which is known to be virtually devoid of archaeological features, and in any case, has already been archaeologically recorded. The remaining 133.20 m² of the service trench represents an impact on 2.94% of the total site, a reduction of two-thirds over the original scheme [see Table 1, lines 4 and 6].

Further mitigation measures might be feasible. These include altering the cross-section of the service trench along its southern and western arms (between Units 3 and 12) where archaeological deposits lie between 0.72 and 0.9 m deep, so as to avoid impinging upon them altogether; and routing the service trench immediately inside the existing boundary walls where the archaeology might already have been disturbed by this construction.

The BT, electricity and water services would enter each housing unit at the front in shallow protective ducts. The foul drainage would run under the buildings in suspended hangers just below floor slab level. The precise gradient of the connection of these services is the Combined Service Trench has yet to be finalised, but would not involve excavations to a substantial depth. With an entry to each unit through the front ground beam, archaeological deposits are unlikely to be impinged upon (see AWP drawing BDL/3/1C Section A-A, and floor slab levels in Appendix 1).

6 Secretary's Office

An additional service trench for the secretary's office is under consideration. It would run for 11 m and could be routed largely along Trench 12 of the evaluation. It might not need to be deeper than 400 mm, thereby avoiding any significant impingement upon the archaeology. However, some vertical allowance may have to be made for routing it under the garages, and as a 'worst case', an additional impact of 13.20 m² may be unavoidable [Table 1, line 7].

7 Footpaths

The footpaths and patios will be raised to front door floor levels. This will avoid any impact upon the archaeology.

8 Landscaping

The landscaping of the development site should be made subject to the approval of the District Council and English Heritage. As a freeholder, Beechcroft Developments Ltd would have control both over the initial landscaping and any gardening works. From an archaeological point of view this type of unified control over works conducted on an important site can be seen as a positive benefit.

Conclusions

- 1 The effect of the Mitigation Strategy will be to reduce the overall impact of the development upon the archaeology of the site from in excess of 32% to about 3.4% [see Table 1]. This has been achieved by using mini-piles to support the housing units above archaeological levels; by revising the route of the services trenches; by using shallow surface drains; and by raising the garages and access road above archaeological levels.
- 2 The layout of the revised development proposal will minimise the disturbance to archaeological deposits. The main impact of the housing units will be on the northern and western sides of the site (Units 5-16). Here evaluation has shown the archaeological deposits to be the deepest, generally in the order of 500-900 mm below ground level (see Fig. 7 and Fig. 8 Section B). Along the western boundary of the site, archaeological deposits are also generally sparse (see Fig. 6).
- 3 The shallower deposits, which would be more sensitive to disturbance by development, lie towards the centre and eastern areas of the site. On the eastern side the proposed garages and access road will involve only superficial ground works. The garages are light structures without deep foundations. The access road will be raised above archaeological levels. Over the long term these constructions will seal the archaeological deposits from the likelihood of damage.
- 4 The central part of the site will be left open as a garden area. This will be controlled by Beechcroft Developments Ltd over the long term and will not be subjected to works which might damage the archaeology.

Archaeological Recording

The proposed building scheme's main impact on archaeological deposits would be as a result of the service trenches. These would be archaeologically excavated by hand and all features recorded to a standard agreed with English Heritage and the County Archaeologist. Artefacts and biological material would be collected, analysed and published with the site record to an agreed standard.

A watching brief would be maintained on the site in the early stages of construction to ensure that agreed levels of top soil removed are adhered to.

All finds and site archive would be deposited in an appropriate museum.

David Miles
Director, Oxford Archaeological Unit
22 June 1992

TABLE 1

Milborne Port:

Area and % of site affected by ground disturbances:

Total Area of site - 4529 m²

Archaeological Evaluation Requested by EH/SCC			
1	TWA trenches	126.8 m ²	2.80% of site
2	OAU trenches	72.0 m ²	1.59% of site
			Total 4.39%
Original Development Proposal			
3	Foundations of original scheme + pool in zone of lost deposits (OAU 1989)	1042 m ²	23.01%
4	Service trenches (drg. BDL/3/1 unrevised)	404.4 m ²	8.93%
			Total 31.94%
Revised Scheme for Development to Minimize Archaeological Impact			
5	Mini-piling scheme	4.2 m ²	0.09%
6	Revised services trenches (excluding Tr. 6)	133.20 m ²	2.94%
7	Additional Service trench extensions to Secretary's Office	13.20 m ²	0.29%
			Total 3.32%

Appendix 1

ESTIMATED IMPACT OF PROPOSALS ON GROUND SURFACE AT MILBORNE PORT

Dwellings	AV. Ground Level	Proposed Floor Level	Height above Ground Level	Est. Av. Height above Archaeology
Units 1 + 2	47.8	48.2	400 mm	900 mm
Units 3 + 4	48.6	48.7	100 mm	900 mm
Unit 5	48.6	48.9	300 mm	750 mm
Units 6 + 7	49.25	49.5	250 mm	1000 mm
Units 8 - 12	50.0	50.3	300 mm	1200 mm
Units 13 - 16	49.5	49.6	100 mm	800 mm
Front of Unit 16	49.0	49.6	350 mm	750 mm
Garages (revised proposals)				
1 - 2	49.0	49.35	250 mm	650 mm
3 - 6	48.75	49.25	500 mm	900 mm
7 - 8	48.5	48.95	450 mm	bungalow
9 - 13	48.0	48.3	300 mm	700 mm
14 - 16	47.75	48.0	250 mm	500 mm
Access Road		Proposed Road Level		
Adj Unit 16	49.0	49.35	350 mm	650 mm
Adj G8	48.5	48.75	250 mm	bungalow
Adj G 16	47.75	48.0	250 mm	650 mm

Sources: ADP Drawing 2349/PO1
Antony Ward Partnership Drawing BDL/3/1C
Oxford Archaeological Unit Report Dec 1991 Fig. 7

Notes:

- 1 ADP Drawing No PO1 shows a step between Garages 8 and 9 of 1.25 m from 49.2 m to 48 m. Garages 7 and 8 are about 1 m above ground level (48.2 m). It is proposed to follow ground levels more closely, by amending the drawings so that Garage 9 is raised from 48 m to 48.3 m, and Garages 10-16 are stepped down to 48 m to avoid archaeology, and Garages 7 and 8 are lowered to 48.95 m. Other ADP amendments required are to raise footpath and patio levels and to revise boundary wall facing Church Path (not Lane).
- 2 150 mm should be subtracted from floor levels to give level of underside of floor slab. Antony Ward's drawing BDL/3/1/Rev 3 will be amended to show service entry and foul drainage through ground beams, instead of under them.
- 3 Levels used by Antony Ward Partnership are 32.5 metres below Ordnance Datum, used by Oxford Archaeological Unit.

Appendix 2

HISTORY

18.1 The following facts are taken from various general works including Collinson 1791 and Savage 1954.

The Saxon Period

18.2 The importance of the town in the late Saxon period may originate from its being a royal manor and market centre as indicated in the name 'port', and by the presence of a mint between A.D. 997--1007. Although mints were often established in towns which could be defended this was probably not the case here, for in the troubled reign of Ethelred, Milborne Port's moneyers moved to the hillfort of South Cadbury. The town was also an important religious centre as is shown by the probable late Saxon minster church.

The Post-Conquest Town

18.3 Milborne Port was certainly a town in 1086. Domesday Book records that there were fifty-six burgesses and that there was a market paying 60 shillings. Other details include the presence of six mills. In John's reign a charter renewed the town's market and fair and gave the burgesses freedom from tolls and other dues throughout the Kingdom. In Edward I's reign the town sent burgesses to sit in three successive parliaments. An insight into the life of the fourteenth century town is given by the Lay Subsidy of 1324 which lists thirty taxable inhabitants including the following: Roberto Toucker (Tucker or Fuller), Roberto Degher, Johanne Degher (Dyers), Adam Taillour and Radulpho Taillour (Tailors), clear evidence of the importance of the cloth industry. In 1397 Richard II granted a charter for a weekly market and two annual fairs perhaps indicating that the earlier market and fairs had lapsed

18.4 From then until the present day Milborne Port has been overshadowed by its more prosperous neighbours – Sherborne, Yeovil and Wincanton. Its failure to profit from being on the main London to Exeter coaching road is not easily explained. In the early nineteenth century the town's decline was emphasised by its disenfranchisement as a 'rotten borough' in 1832.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

18.5 (Map 37) The following summary of the town's archaeological potential is based on documentary records, field survey and the topography of the town as seen on the earliest map available. Map 37 is based on the Enclosure Map of 1819 (SRO CR/137) with additional information from the map of 1781 2 (SRO DD/BR/U).

Pre-Saxon Occupation

18.6 Collinson records that sixty burials aligned north/south were found in the garden of Canon's Court adjoining the churchyard. North/south burials are common in the Romano-British period, and these could indicate a settlement of that date in the vicinity of the church. Archaeological investigation of this area would therefore be of very great interest.

The Saxon and Later Town

18.7 The Saxon town was probably centred around the church and may have extended north of the High Street. The only clue to the limits of the town is a continuous break of slope on the west and south sides where the ground falls steeply to the stream. The area of Saxon and later occupation on Map 37 is based on the assumption that the town would have extended as far as this steep slope but not down to the stream. The street pattern of the Saxon town cannot be easily discerned, although it may have been little different from the present day pattern. Without detailed archaeological and documentary research it is impossible to say how the town developed in the Norman and later periods. The little that is known of the town's history indicates a shrinkage rather than expansion in the present occupied area.

The Church of St. John the Evangelist

18.8 The earliest part of the present church dates from about the time of the Norman Conquest and its architectural style has been termed Saxo-Norman. Milborne Port was probably a minster church and the existing church is thus likely to have replaced an earlier Saxon church on the same site. The pattern of adjacent property boundaries indicates that the churchyard may once have been larger.

Market Place

18.9 The market place is shown on Map 37. Buildings, including the Town Hall which is of eighteenth century date, now partly occupy the site. Infilling of the market place may have been associated with the economic decline of the town.

Mills

18.10 Domesday Book records six mills but these may have been scattered throughout the parish which is one of the largest in East Somerset. None are shown on Map 37 and further archaeological fieldwork along the line of the stream could be most rewarding.

Industrial Archaeology

18.11 The town is notable for its gloving factories. Silas Dyke and Sons' Tannery dates in part from around 1800 while the brick built gloving factory was erected about 1850.

Other Buildings

18.12 The List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest was compiled in 1949. There are many buildings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries including the Guildhall and Pump House with reused doorways of the twelfth and fifteenth centuries respectively. The National Monuments Record's photographs of six buildings include interior and exterior views of Dyke and Sons Glove Factory and Tannery (1968).

The Fields

18.13 The 1781/2 map shows that surrounding the town were the open fields regularly laid out and divided into the narrow strips that often survive as ridge and furrow. Future research could relate the planned medieval (or earlier?) field system, the origins of which are unknown, to the topography of the Saxon and later town.

AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

18.14 The area of archaeological potential on Map 38 corresponds to the area of probable Saxon and medieval occupation shown on Map 37.

AREA DEVELOPED SINCE 1945

18.15 Map 38 shows that there has been very little recent development within the area of archaeological potential.

AREA TO BE DEVELOPED

18.16 Map 38 shows an assessment of future development. As there is no published policy map this is based on recent planning applications and a survey of empty or derelict land likely to be built on; it does not indicate that planning permission would be given for any areas so marked. The potentially available areas to the north and south of the church are of the first order of importance.

AREAS TO BE PRESERVED

18.17 There are proposals for a Conservation Area for Milborne Port, but no plans are yet published.

Listed Buildings

18.18 Eight items are listed Grade II in the town and 10 are listed Grade III; the latter have little real protection.

MILBORNE PORT

EARLY FEATURES



0 100 200m



churchyard



possible area of the Saxon and medieval town

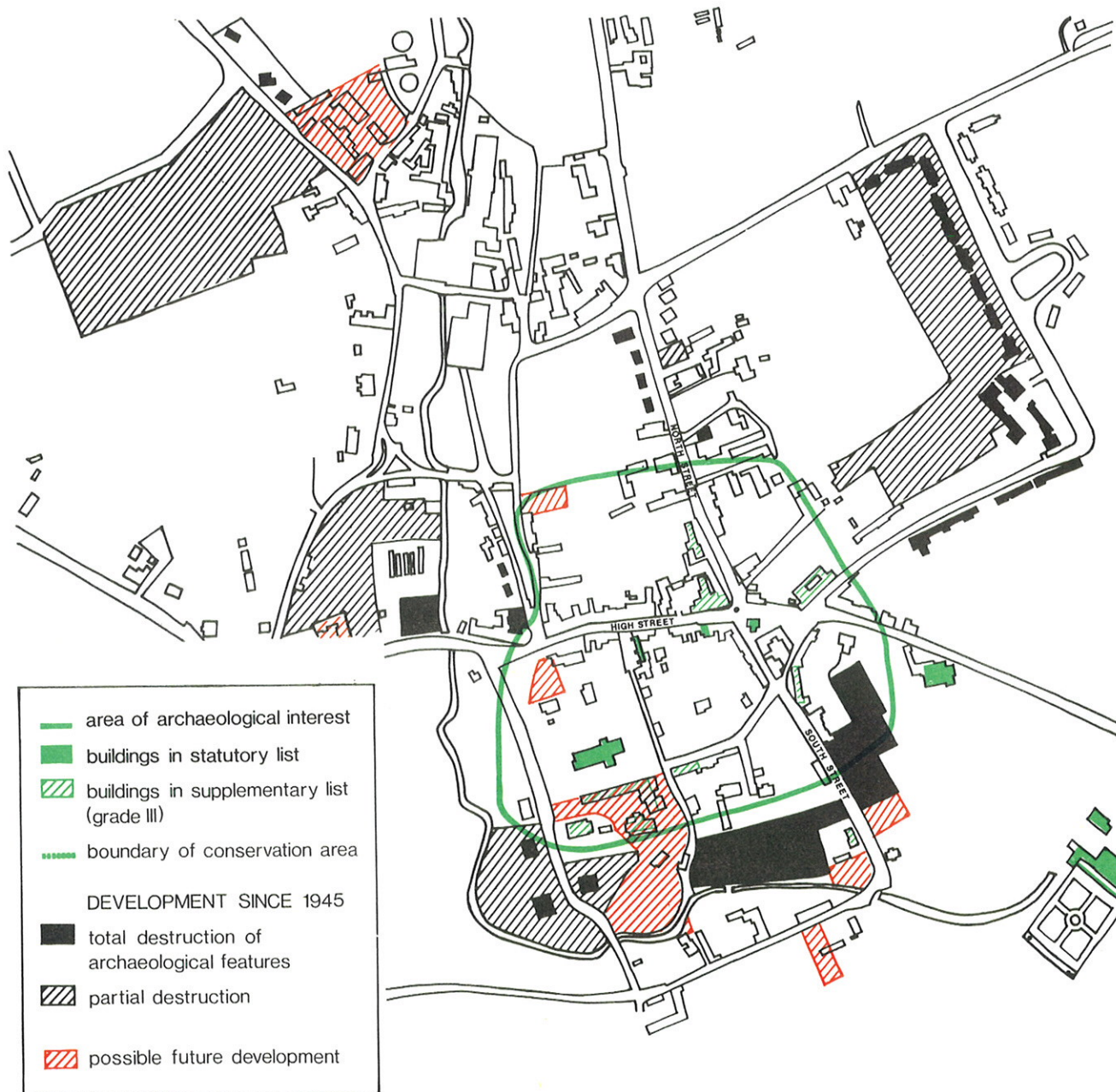
M

market

based on the 1819 map

MILBORNE PORT

THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENT



0 100 200m







Appendix 3

Milborne Port,
Somerset.



Archaeological Implications

-  Loss of deposits
-  Marginal impact
-  Deposits already disturbed
-  Assessment trenches

Oxford Archaeological Unit

Fig. 1



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