

**7 Wanborough Road, Stratton St Margaret,  
Swindon, Wiltshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for Bower Mapson Ltd**

by Sian Anthony

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WRS04/01

**January 2004**

## Summary

**Site name:** 7 Wanborough Road, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, Wiltshire

**Grid reference:** SU18480 86280

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 14th January 2004

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Sian Anthony

**Site code:** WRS 04/01

**Area of site:** c. 1.6 ha

**Summary of results:** Two modern postholes were located

**Monuments identified:** None

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Swindon Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ xx.xx.03 Steve Preston ✓ 21.01.04
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# **7 Wanborough Road, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, Wiltshire An Archaeological Evaluation**

by Sian Anthony

**Report WRS04/01**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 7 Wanborough Road, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, Wiltshire (SU 18480 86280) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Peter Mapson, of Bower Mapson Limited, Willow House, 7, The Avenue, Stanton Fitzwarren, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 7SE.

The importance of the site, being adjacent to the Roman road Ermin Street, has been highlighted by Mr Roy Canham, the County Archaeologist of Wiltshire County Council. Development of the site for residential housing and ancillary buildings is under consideration and an evaluation has been requested prior to determination of the application.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the County's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr R. Canham, County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sian Anthony and Danielle Colls on the 14th January 2004, the site code is WRS04/01.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Swindon Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located to the east of Swindon town centre, in Stratton St Margaret. It is an irregular but roughly rectangular piece of land that used to form part of Stratton Park House gardens and orchard, and the lodge for the house stands at the western side of site. The course of Ermin Street (now Wanborough Street) bounds the site to the west, while to the south is Stratton Park House. The site is flat at c. 101.5m above Ordnance Datum but with some small amount of landscaping sloping down towards Stratton Park House to the south-east. Underlying geology consists of Kimmeridge Clay (BGS 1974), this was confirmed in the trenches, with a light brown silty clay being observed.

## **Archaeological background**

There is a high level of Roman activity in this area. The Roman town of Wanborough (?*Durocornovium*) is only c. 500m to the north of this site, and Roman villas are also found along the route of the road close to this area. Ermin Street which was the route between Gloucester, Winchester and Silchester, bounds the site to the west although it is possible that the original course of the road may be slightly distorted in this area (Margary 1973). Due to Roman custom it is also common for burials to be located on the outskirts of towns alongside main roads.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. The specific research aims of this project are;

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
- b) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- c) To determine if there are archaeological deposits representing Roman suburb settlement relating to the Roman town that lies to the north of the site.
- d) To determine if any Roman burial grounds are present.
- e) To determine the line of the Roman road (Ermin Street).

The methodology consists of four trenches (Fig. 3) excavated by a JCB-type machine with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. The trenches were located across the main footings of the proposed buildings, and all were to be 10m long and 1.6m wide. Spoilheaps were to be monitored and all possible features hand cleaned and excavated.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. A list of features is given in Appendix 2.

## **Results**

### Trench stratigraphy (Plate 1)

Three trenches (1, 2 and 4) consisted of very similar stratigraphy, with turf and topsoil of between 0.18m and 0.28m overlying a horizon of mid brown silty clay onto undisturbed light brown Kimmeridge clay. Tree root activity was frequent (the site was previously an orchard) and a field drain was located aligned east-west in

Trench 4. Small amounts of slate, red brick and clinker were recovered from the subsoil and surface of the undisturbed clay and from the tree root features.

### Trench 3 (Plate 2)

This trench was located closest to Wanborough Road. The south-west end consisted of a thick layer (0.6m) of mixed topsoil, plant material and occasional pieces of modern willow pattern and white pottery, glass and slate. This lay over a light brown silty clay that contained pieces of red brick (0.15m), onto light brown undisturbed clay with occasional sub-angular pebbles. Depth reached 0.95m however the depth of natural rose up towards the east where depth reached only 0.42m, similar to the other trenches excavated. Stratigraphy consisted of turf and topsoil (0.22m) onto mid brown subsoil (0.08m) onto undisturbed Kimmeridge clay. A field drain was located aligned north-south near to the south western end, in the fill of this was a sherd of modern flowerpot (not retained).

Two postholes were located in the middle of the trench (Fig. 4); posthole 1 was 0.21m in diameter and 0.16m deep with a curved base and a mid brown fill with charcoal flecks. A corroded iron nail was recovered from the fill. Posthole 2 was 0.32m in diameter and 0.16m deep with a curved base with a similar fill to 1. Pieces of clinker and a lump of corrosion product were recovered from the fill.

## **Finds**

Small numbers of finds were recovered from Trenches 1, 2 and 3: a piece of modern red tile and clinker from tree activity from Trench 1, a corroded iron nail and modern slate from the surface of the disturbed natural from Trench 2 and a piece of moulded decorative tile from Trench 3. These finds were not retained except the corroded nails. The ceramic recovered from the field drain located in Trench 3 was identified as 19th century or later and was not retained.

## **Conclusion**

The evaluation has located only two features, both postholes in Trench 3. One has been dated as modern from clinker retrieved from the fill, the other is inconclusively dated, containing only a corroded iron nail. The evaluation has been unsuccessful in locating any archaeological deposits relating to the Roman road or associated activity.

## **References**

BGS, 1974, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 252, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth

Margary, I D, 1973, *Roman Roads in Britain* (3rd Edition), London

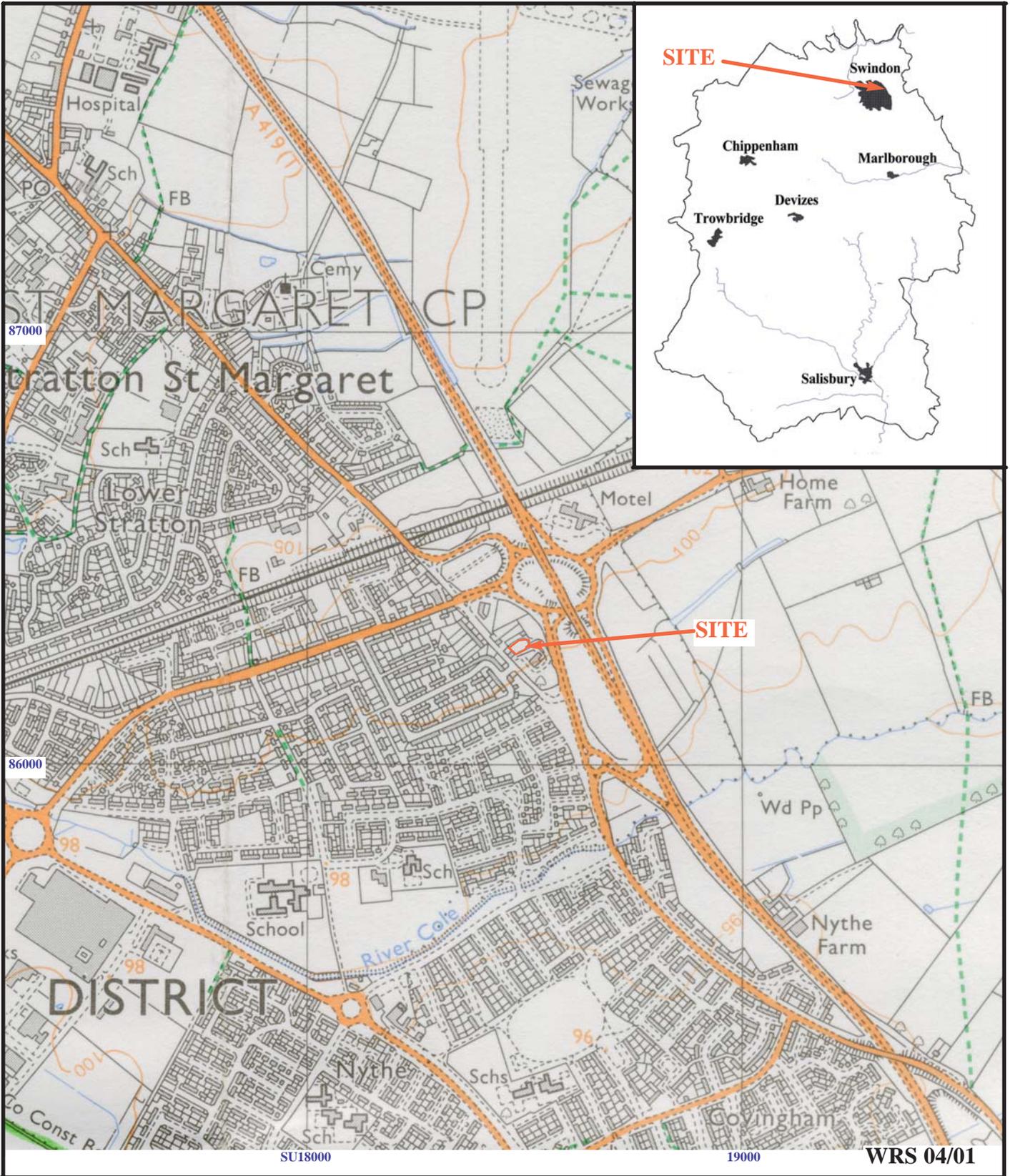
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**  
 0m at south or west end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	10.2	1.6	0.42	0-0.2m turf and topsoil onto 0.2-0.35m mid brown silty clay, onto undisturbed light brown clay. Tree root activity investigated at northern end. Piece of tile from tree root channel.
2	10.82	1.6	0.6	0-0.28m turf and topsoil onto 0.28-0.495m dark brown humic silty clay, onto undisturbed light brown clay. Tree root activity.
3	15.1	1.6	SW – 0.95 NE –0.42	South west end: 0-0.6m turf and mixed redeposited topsoil onto 0.6-0.75m light brown silty clay, North east end: 0-0.22m turf and topsoil, onto 0.22-0.3m subsoil, onto undisturbed light brown clay. Field drain, two postholes.
4	11.64	1.6	0.64	0-0.18m turf and topsoil onto 0.18-0.5m light brown silty clay with occasional red brick and slate inclusions, onto undisturbed light brown clay. Field drain.

## APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
3	1	52	Posthole	Modern	Corroded iron object
3	2	53	Posthole	Unknown	Clinker, corroded iron object



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Figure 1. Location of site within Swindon and Wiltshire.

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Figure 2. Plan of the site on Wanborough Road.  
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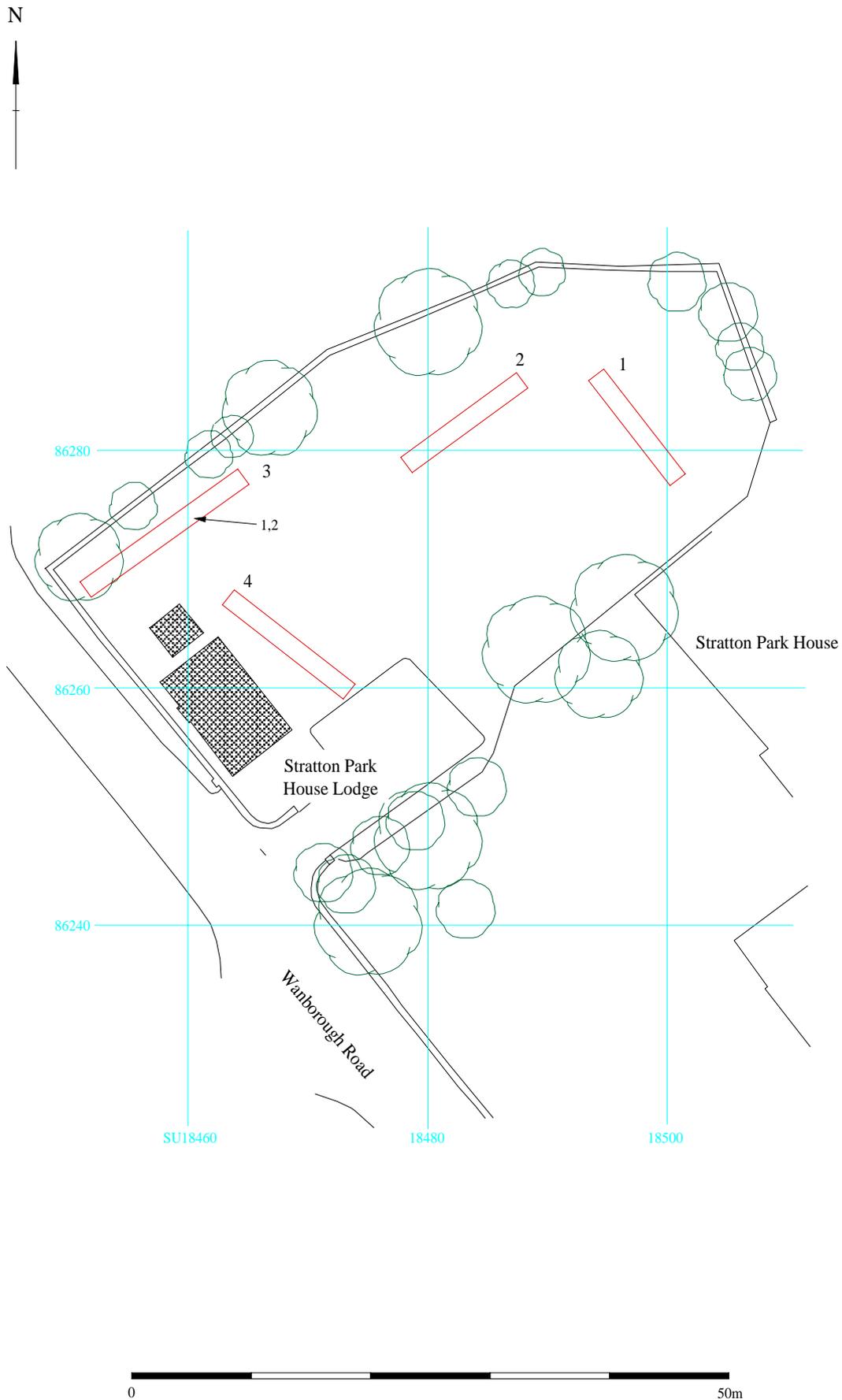


Figure 3. Detailed location of trenches.

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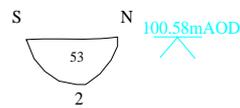
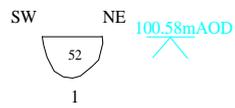
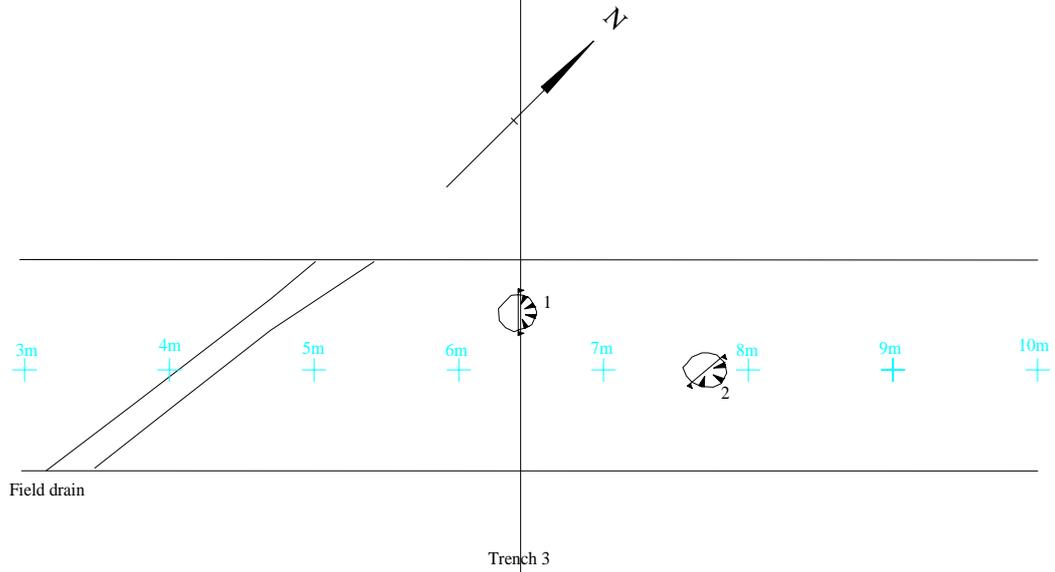


Figure 4. Plan and sections of features in Trench 4.



Plate 1. Trench 4 looking south east, horizontal scales 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 3 looking south west, horizontal scales 2m and 1m.