



Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre, St Albans, Hertfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report





**WESTMINSTER LODGE LEISURE CENTRE,
ST ALBANS, HERTFORDSHIRE**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by St Albans City and District Council (the Client) to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation in advance of development at Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre, St Albans, Hertfordshire (hereafter “the Site”), centred on National Grid Reference 514345, 20649.

The evaluation comprised the excavation of twelve trenches positioned across the Site to the east, west and south of the existing Leisure Centre buildings. Five trenches, Trenches 5 to 8 and 12 were excavated in the week beginning 4th January 2010, before extreme weather conditions temporarily halted fieldwork. The remaining seven trenches, Trenches 1 to 4 and 9 to 11 were excavated from the 19th to 21st January 2010. Due to a number of on-Site constraints several of the trenches were moved from their original positions or shortened. Trenches were moved in order to prevent damaging tree roots, to avoid underground services and away from the remnants of large concrete foundations.

Archaeological features were revealed in five of the twelve trenches excavated. The archaeological remains appear to be concentrated in the north eastern area of the Site with nothing revealed in the southern and western areas. All the trenches contained layers of made ground that were obviously modern in Trenches 1-4. Trenches 7-11 contained one or more archaeological features, Trenches 1-4 and 12 were blank. The features comprised ditches, pits and the remains of flint and mortar walls.

A roughly east to west aligned ditch was recorded in Trenches 7, 8 and 9. A section dug through the ditch produced moderate quantities of Roman pottery dating from the late 1st to the 4th century AD. The base of a flint and mortar wall and associated features was recorded at the junction of Trenches 9 and 10 in the north east of the Site. The wall appears to have been truncated by a later ditch feature. The remains of a flint and mortar wall cut through by a modern pipe trench were recorded at the eastern end of Trench 10. This feature was previously recorded during mitigation works in advance of the construction of a gas main (Heritage Network, 2007) and both walls appear to be on a similar alignment.

The wall and associated features were cleaned, photographed and recorded but were not fully excavated. Roman pottery, Ceramic Building Material (CBM), animal bone, shell and opus signinum was retrieved from the surface of the features. Medieval pottery was recovered from the layer overlying the Roman remains.

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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology is grateful to St Albans City and District Council who commissioned this project and particular thanks are due to Julie Simpson, the Project Manager for Leisure Facilities. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Simon West (District Archaeologist) for his advice and support.

The field work was directed by Jon Martin with the assistance of Sian Reynolds and Damien Campbell-Bell.

The report was written by Jon Martin. The illustrations were prepared by Rob Goller and the finds were assessed by Rachel Seager-Smith. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Damian De Rosa.

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by St Albans City and District Council (the Client) to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation in advance of development at Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre, St Albans, Hertfordshire (hereafter “the Site”), centred on National Grid Reference 514345, 206490 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 In November 2006, the Council decided that a new high quality leisure facility should replace the ageing Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre in St Albans. The proposed new leisure development will be relocated to a site adjacent to the existing centre. The design for the new leisure centre will include a 25m pool, 17m learner pool, fitness suite with 200 stations, two exercise studios, a climbing wall, a four court sports hall, a crèche and soft play area and a dedicated youth facility. In addition the new leisure centre will also offer a full-scale Spa experience and a standalone Cafe / bistro development.
- 1.1.3 The design will form the basis of a planning application which is due to be submitted to the Council at the start of 2010. Construction work is proposed to begin in November 2010 and the new leisure centre is due to open in spring 2012. It is anticipated that the existing Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre will remain open for business until then when it will be closed and later demolished
- 1.1.4 An archaeological brief was prepared by the District Archaeologist outlining the methods by which an archaeological evaluation of the Site should be undertaken. The archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with the methods detailed in the brief and the subsequent Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Wessex Archaeology (WA 2009).
- 1.1.5 All archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with the relevant legislation, published standards, accepted industry practice, national guidelines and codes of practice appropriate with particular reference to:
- *Appendix 2 of English Heritage’s MAP2 publication;*
 - *Institute for Archaeologists documents and guidelines, and;*
 - *ALGAO Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (East Anglian Archaeology occasional paper 14, 2003)*

1.2 The Site, location and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site covers an area approximately 3.75Ha in size and is located on the first and possible second terrace, overlooking the River Ver to the north. The proposed Site lies adjacent to the existing leisure centre and is bordered to the east by the A5183 – Holywell Hill. The Site lies to the south east of the Roman city of Verulamium and to the south of the City of St Albans.
- 1.2.2 The Site is generally flat with a general fall in levels from 80m to 82m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the west to 77m aOD in the east.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology has been identified as River Gravel overlying Upper Chalk (BGS sheet 239).

1.3 Archaeological and historical Background

- 1.3.1 The Site lies to the north of the line of Roman Watling Street, which runs in to the London Gate of Roman Verulamium to the north west of the Site. Late Iron Age and Roman remains were recorded in the 1960s to the north west of the Site, close to, and beneath the area of the running track prior to its construction (E Anthony. 1968). The recorded remains included pottery kilns (HHER 6808) and Late Iron Age and Roman (1st to 3rd century) cremation and inhumation burials (HHER 6740 and 6741) lying to the north of the Watling Street and outside the London Gate.
- 1.3.2 In 1968 a substantial Roman masonry building was found at the foot of Holywell Hill (HHER Number 13674, St Albans Urban Archaeological Database Event 290, Monument 501 and Niblett and Thompson 2005), within the carriageway of the road immediately to the north east of the Site (**Figure 1**) and some 500m east of the Roman town. This has been tentatively identified as a watermill, apparently largely because of its position, and the substantial nature of the footings, which are more than 1m wide. Its position relative to the river in the Roman period, however, has never been established, and its identification as a mill remains hypothetical. The building could equally well have been a substantial suburban house, or an extramural temple. In July 2007, parts of this building were further observed during an evaluation for service renewal on the corner of the access road (Mud Lane) to the leisure centre and Holywell Hill (HN 2007). The building appeared to be just beyond the alluvium which demarcated the extent of the floodplain. The finds included Roman brick and roof tile, some flint with mortar attached, and a few 1st-2nd century potsherds.
- 1.3.3 The remains of foundations and a surviving single wooden hut belonging to a WW2 POW transit camp are located within the area of the evaluation.

2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Objectives of the Investigation

- 2.1.1 The overall objectives of the investigation were to establish the nature, extent and state of preservation of any surviving archaeological remains that will be affected by the development.

- 2.1.2 The aim of this report is to provide evidence on which an informed decision can be made concerning the need for and scope of an appropriate mitigation strategy in advance of the proposed development.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of twelve up to 20m x 2m trenches positioned across the Site to the east, west and south of the existing Leisure Centre buildings (**Figure 1**).

- 3.1.2 The evaluation methodology was devised in order to meet the aims and objectives of the evaluation. All works were carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists Standards and guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (Revised 2008) and ALGAO *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (East Anglian Archaeology occasional paper 14, 2003)

3.2 Health and Safety

- 3.2.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety (H&S) at Work Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety regulations 1992. A H&S Risk Assessment was produced by Wessex Archaeology prior to the commencement of the fieldwork

3.3 Service Location and Tree Canopies

- 3.3.1 Prior to machine excavation, utility plans provided by the Client were consulted and the trench locations were scanned by Wessex Archaeology using a cable tracing device. The position of all detected services was marked on the ground. The trenches were not excavated in areas where services were located by the cable scan.

- 3.3.2 No trench was located or excavated within the canopy of a tree.

3.4 Mechanical Excavation

- 3.4.1 All overburden (topsoil and subsoil) was carefully removed by mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Topsoil and modern overburden was removed in a series of level spits to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or natural geology, whichever was encountered first. Particular care was taken to ensure that archaeological deposits were not damaged through excessive use of machine excavation.

- 3.4.2 In order to comply with Health and Safety requirements, all trenches that were required to be left open overnight were secured by means of Nettleton Fencing. Generally trenches were backfilled on the same day as opening. None of the trenches were greater than 1.20m in depth.

- 3.4.3 Spoil was stockpiled at a safe distance from the trench edge, separated into topsoil and subsoil. Fencing was used to demarcate investigations highlighted as being a high risk to staff and/or members of the public. Signs informing the public of the ongoing works were placed at all main access points.

3.5 Excavation

- 3.5.1 Each trench was cleaned by hand where appropriate and planned prior to any hand-excavation. Pre-modern stratified deposits were excavated by hand. A representative section, not less than 1m in length, of deposits through each trench from ground surface to the top of the natural geology was recorded.
- 3.5.2 Exposed archaeological horizons were cleaned by hand where required for the definition of archaeological remains. Sufficient of the features located were investigated by hand in order to fulfil the aims of the evaluation.
- 3.5.3 Complex stratigraphy, structures and discrete features were excavated to a minimum requirement to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation, in accordance with a sampling strategy developed on Site in consultation with the District Archaeologist.
- 3.5.4 Care was taken not to compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits that might be better excavated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

3.6 Recording

- 3.6.1 All recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording sheets and recording system, details of which can be made available on request.
- 3.6.2 Full written, drawn and photographic records were made of each trench, even where no archaeological remains were identified. A complete drawn record of excavated and archaeological features and deposits was compiled. This included both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections).
- 3.6.3 The spot height of all principal features and levels was calculated in metres relative to Ordnance Datum, correct to two decimal places. Plans, sections and elevations were annotated with spot heights as appropriate.
- 3.6.4 Trench locations and all recorded archaeological features revealed were surveyed using a GPS and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.
- 3.6.5 A full photographic record was maintained using both colour transparencies and black and white negatives (on 35mm film). Digital photography was used additionally for all photography of significant features, finds, deposits and general Site working. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and the general context of the principal features and finds excavated and the Site as a whole. The photographic record includes photographs and transparencies of archaeological features, appropriate groups of features and structures.

3.7 Reinstatement

- 3.7.1 Following investigation and recording, and following approval from the District Archaeologist, the trenches were backfilled with the excavated spoil. No further consolidation or reinstatement was undertaken. However it was ensured that the reinstated surface was firmly compacted and levelled. The

Client had made previous arrangements for the reinstatement of the tarmac surface in Trench 3 after the excavation and backfilling of all reusable material.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of twelve trenches positioned across the Site to the east, west and south of the existing Leisure Centre buildings. Five trenches, Trenches 5 to 8 and 12, located on the eastern area of the Site were excavated in the week beginning 4th January 2010, before extreme weather conditions temporarily halted fieldwork. The remaining seven trenches, Trenches 1 to 4 and 9 to 11 were excavated from the 19th to 21st January 2010.

4.1.2 Due to a number of on Site constraints several of the trenches were moved from their original positions or shortened. Trenches were moved in order to prevent damaging tree roots, to avoid identified underground services and away from the remnants of large concrete foundations (probably dating from the POW transit camp).

4.1.3 Archaeological features were recorded in five trenches, Trenches 7 to 11 which were located in the north eastern area of the Site. The remaining seven trenches (1-6 and 12) revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

4.2 Natural deposits and Soil sequence

4.2.1 The soil sequence varied across the Site. The topsoil was less than 0.15m thick in the western areas of the Site, and 0.20-0.30m thick over the eastern areas. It comprised a dark greyish brown silty loam or silty clay. Beneath this was one or more layers of modern made ground, comprising a greyish brown silty clay mixed with natural gravels and modern construction debris; brick, rubble, concrete and crushed tarmac. To the west of the Site the soil element in the made ground was more clayey with greater concentrations of modern debris.

4.2.2 In the north east of the Site the soils contained less modern debris and had a greater humic content. The layers below the topsoil(s) appear to be a mix of alluvial deposits and 'garden' soils that have built up since the Romano – British occupation of the Site.

4.2.3 The natural consisted of yellowish brown/orange brown silty clay mixed with varying amounts of yellowish brown/orange brown sand and gravel. In areas the gravel component comprised 80% of the natural layer. It was revealed 0.55-0.90m below ground level.

4.3 Trenches

4.3.1 **Trench 1 (Figure 1)** was situated on the western edge of the Site, adjacent to the running track and was orientated from north to south. It measured 16.50m long by 1.60m wide with a maximum depth of 0.75m. Beneath the topsoil were at least three distinct layers of made ground comprising soil, gravel, chalk, brick, concrete, tarmac and rubble. The made ground was

very solidly compacted as a result of which the natural geology was not revealed in Trench 1, but was considered to most probably mirror the depth at which natural was uncovered in a sondage in Trench 2. No archaeological features or remains were recorded.

- 4.3.2 **Trench 2 (Figure 1)** was located c.10m to the east of Trench 1 and was aligned from north east to south west. It measured 20.90m long by 1.60m wide with an average depth of 0.70m. The soil sequence was very similar to Trench 1 with four layers of heavily compacted made ground beneath a thin layer of topsoil. At the northern end of the trench a sondage was excavated through the compacted ground, using a mechanical breaker, to a depth of 1.20m. The natural geology was reached at a depth of 1.05m and consisted of yellowish brown sandy gravel. No archaeological remains were present.
- 4.3.3 **Trench 3 (Figure 1)** was positioned in a car park to the west of the main leisure centre building. It measured 20.20m long by 1.57m wide with a maximum depth of 0.93m. A mechanical breaker was used to remove the tarmac and the underlying layer of concrete. Below the concrete were two layers of made ground comprising soil, gravel, brick, concrete, tarmac and rubble. As in Trenches 1 and 2 the made ground was extremely compacted. The natural was pale greyish brown sandy clay, encountered c. 0.65m below ground level. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.
- 4.3.4 Situated immediately to the south west of the main building, **Trench 4 (Figure 1)** measured 18.40m long by 1.55m wide with a depth of 1.05m and was aligned from north east to south west. The topsoil overlay made ground below which was a pale brown silty clay with gravel inclusions. The natural was pale orange brown clay with frequent gravel inclusions. A disused modern ceramic pipe and iron pipe were recorded at the southern end of the trench. No archaeological features were recorded.
- 4.3.5 Positioned to the east of the main building **Trench 5 (Figure 1)** was 19.60m long by 1.94m wide with a depth of 1.10m. It was aligned from approximately from north to south. The topsoil layer measured 0.34m deep and contained modern debris; it overlay pale greyish brown clay loam with gravel inclusions. The natural was pale brown clay loam with abundant gravel inclusions. There were no archaeological features or finds.
- 4.3.6 **Trench 6 (Figure 1)** was positioned towards the north east corner of the Site and was orientated approximately from north to south. It measured 20.00m long by 1.90m wide with a depth of up to 0.85m. The soil sequence was very similar to Trench 5 with a deep layer of topsoil containing modern debris. The natural was reached 0.55m below ground level. No archaeological features or deposits were present.
- 4.3.7 Located to the east of Trench 6, **Trench 7 (Figures 1 and 2)** was orientated approximately north to south and measured 19.20m long by 1.70m wide with a maximum depth of 0.97m. The trench was moved to the north from its original position to avoid damage to tree roots.
- 4.3.8 An east-west aligned ditch (**7004**) was excavated at the northern end of the trench; this feature continued to the east and was recorded in Trench 8. The ditch was visible 0.50-0.60m below ground level, overlain by topsoil and a

gravel layer (**7002**); Ditch **7004** measured 2.65m wide with a depth of 1.15m. The recorded section (**Figure 3**) revealed a regularly shaped feature with moderately sloping sides and at least four fills (**7005 to 7008**) which produced quantities of Ceramic Building Material (CBM) and pottery dating to the Roman period. The finds recovered date from the late 1st /early 2nd century AD through to the 4th century AD and included greyware, whiteware and samian. Three pieces of struck flint were recovered from fill **7005**. Although the base of the ditch was revealed, the ditch could not be fully excavated within the confines of the trench due to the adverse weather conditions.

- 4.3.9 **Trench 8 (Figures 1 and 2)** was aligned just off west to east and measured 10.90m long, 1.70m wide with a maximum depth of 1.15m. An east to west aligned ditch (**8005**) was visible in the base of the trench and in the north facing trench section. The ditch appears to be a continuation of ditch **7004** recorded in Trench 7. Fragments of CBM were recovered from the surface of the feature. Pottery dated to the 13/14th century was recovered from the base of an alluvial layer (**8003**) overlying the ditch.
- 4.3.10 **Trenches 9 and 10** were located in the north west corner of the Site and were positioned in an L shaped configuration (**Figures 1 and 2**). Trench 9 was aligned approximately north east to south west and Trench 10 (**Plate 1**) approximately north west to south east. Both trenches were shortened to avoid tree roots and below ground services. Trench 9 measured 11.90m long with a maximum depth of 1.10m; Trench 10 measured 18.40m long with a maximum depth of 1.20m. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded 0.80- 0.90m below ground level.
- 4.3.11 **Trench 9 (Figures 1 and 2)** revealed a north west to south east orientated ditch (**9007**) that measured 1.80m wide. The fill (**9008**) contained CBM, animal bone, fragments of opus signinum and Roman pottery that comprised three sherds of Roman greyware and one sherd of samian. A small slot cut across the ditch revealed *in situ* articulated cattle bone. The alignment of the feature is similar to the alignment of the ditch (**7004** and **8005**) recorded in Trenches 7 and 8 and may be a continuation of this feature (**Figure 2**).
- 4.3.12 The base of a flint and mortar wall (**10010**) was recorded at the junction of **Trenches 9 and 10 (Figure 2 and Plates 1 and 2)**. The feature extended from the north west corner of the trench for a distance of 1.10m and executed a 90 degree turn, to form a corner, before terminating on a north west-south east alignment after a distance of 2.60m. The wall appears to have been truncated by a large pit/ditch feature (**10017**) which remains undated. A possible robber trench (**10018**) was visible adjacent to the southern edge of the wall (**Figure 2**).
- 4.3.13 A layer of flint cobbles/ wall material (**10022**) overlay the northern edge of the wall (**10010**) and continued beyond the section to the north. This layer was not dated. Quantities of pottery, CBM, animal bone and shell were recovered from the "subsoil" (**10023**) which overlay the wall, robber trench, cobbles and ditch. Layer **10023** was similar to layers encountered in adjacent trenches and appears to be alluvial in origin. It contained forty one sherds of medieval pottery dating to the 12th-14th century.

- 4.3.14 The remains of a flint and mortar wall (**10009**) were recorded 5.00m from the eastern end of Trench 10. The wall was aligned from north east to south west, and was cut through by a modern pipe trench (**10007**). This feature was previously recorded during evaluation works in advance of the construction of a gas main (Heritage Network, 2007, feature [16]) and appears to be on the same alignment to wall **10010**. The two features appear to form the north west to south east orientated southern wall and limit of a rectangular building with ditch **9007** running parallel and adjacent to the southern end of the structure.
- 4.3.15 A possible ditch (**10011**) was recorded towards the centre of Trench 10. It measured 2.10m wide and was aligned from north east to south west. Small quantities of Roman pottery, including three sherds of fine greyware, were recovered from the surface of the feature. A sub-circular pit or possible ditch terminus (**10015**) was visible to the east of ditch **10011**; the feature continued beyond the south section of the trench and was not dated.
- 4.3.16 **Trench 11 (Figures 1 and 2)** was located to the east of the leisure centre building and was moved to the north to avoid a concrete slab and shortened to avoid tree roots and underground services. It measured 11.90m long by 1.70m wide with a maximum depth of 1.10m and was orientated from north east to south west. Two features were recorded; a possible ditch terminus (**11005**) and a sub-circular pit (**11007**) (**Plates 3 and 4**). Ditch terminus **11005** was orientated approximately south east to north west, measured 0.60m wide and was visible c.0.90m below ground level. Two sherds of medieval sandy ware pottery, CBM and animal bone was recovered from the surface of the feature.
- 4.3.17 Pit **11007** measured 1.90m wide and was revealed c.0.90m below the ground surface. Fragments of CBM were recovered from the surface of the upper fill (**11008**). The features were planned and photographed but were not excavated, following consultation with the District Archaeologist (see paragraph 3.5.4).
- 4.3.18 **Trench 12 (Figure 1 and Plate 6)** was positioned in the south east corner of the Site and was aligned from north west to south east. It measured 19.30m long by 1.80m wide with a maximum depth of 1.15m. Greyish brown silty loam topsoil overlay two sequences of made ground and a layer of alluvial soil overlying the natural gravel and clay. No archaeological remains or features were recorded

5 FINDS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Finds were treated in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Excavation* (revised 2008), the UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines "*Conservation Guideline No 2*" and the Museums and Galleries Commissions "*Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (1991)" excepting where they are superseded by statements made below.
- 5.1.2 All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, except those from features or deposits of obviously modern date. No finds will, however, be

discarded without the prior approval of the District Archaeologist. In such circumstances, sufficient artefacts were retained in order to elucidate the date and/or function of the feature or deposit.

- 5.1.3 All retained artefacts were, as a minimum, washed, weighed, counted and identified. Any artefacts requiring conservation or specific storage conditions were dealt with immediately in line with *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson & Neal 1998).

5.2 Finds

- 5.2.1 In addition to a piece of unstratified pottery found during the evaluation, small quantities of finds, predominantly of Romano-British and medieval date, were recovered from 13 of the excavated contexts. After cleaning, all the finds were quantified by material type within each context (**Table 1**) and visually scanned to establish the range of types present, their condition and potential date range. Where possible (e.g. pottery and ceramic building material), spot-dates were also recorded for each context. The finds data for all stages of fieldwork are currently held in a single Access database.

Table 1: Finds totals by material type and context (number/weight in grammes)

Context	Material type:				
	Animal bone	CBM	Pottery	Metalwork	Other materials
07005			Roman: 10/104		Burnt flint: 1/22 Flint: 3/9
07006			Roman: 1/115		
07007			Roman: 9/51	Iron: 1/21	
08002		8/3678			
08003			medieval: 2/5		
08004				Iron: 1/3	Burnt flint: 1/23
09008		10/25	Roman: 4/53		
10006	2/7	10/1341			
10012	3/136	3/489	Roman: 7/51		
10013		3/1505			
10023	8/93	8/387	Roman: 2/56 medieval: 42/358	Iron: 1/4 Cu al: 1/1	Shell: 3/20
11006	2/104	1/454	medieval: 2/35		
11008		5/370			
u/s eval			Roman: 1/7		
Total:	15/340	48/8249	Roman: 34/437 medieval: 46/398	Iron: 3/28 Cu al: 1/1	Burnt flint: 2/45 Flint: 3/9 Shell: 3/20

5.3 Worked and Burnt Flint

- 5.3.1 The earliest material consisted of three struck flint flakes, probably of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date, surviving in good, fresh condition, and two pieces of burnt flint. Although residual in the contexts in which they were found (**7005** and **8004**), these items are indicative of prehistoric activity in the vicinity.

5.4 Pottery

- 5.4.1 The pottery provided the primary dating evidence for the Site; the range of ware types present is shown in **Table 2**. The Romano-British material is dominated by coarsewares, most from local, Verulamium-region sources, although imported samian, fine whiteware sherds, probably from a butt beaker, and one piece of unassigned British colour-coated ware were also recognised. The five rims and other diagnostic sherds indicate that this small assemblage spans the entire Roman period (1st – 4th centuries AD) and its range is encompassed by the far greater quantities of material found in other parts of the Roman town (e.g. Wilson 1972; 1984)
- 5.4.2 The medieval wares were also dominated by local sandy wares; rims from at least two jugs were included among the sherds from context **10023**; while slightly sagging base sherds from this context and **11006** indicate the presence of jar forms. Glazed jug sherds in slightly finer sandy fabrics were also found in context **10023**. Although one slightly earlier (11th-12th century AD) body sherd in a shell and sand tempered fabric was included in context **10023**, all the other pieces indicated a 12th – 13th century AD date. The whiteware glazed jug sherd from **8003** is probably of 13th – 14th century date while the thin-walled, green-glazed Border ware sherd dates from the mid 14th century AD onwards.

Table 2: Pottery totals by ware type

Ware type	No.	Wt.
<i>Romano-British:</i>		
greyware	17	329
oxidised ware	6	46
fine greyware	3	18
samian	2	13
fine whiteware	2	9
calcareous ware	2	9
Verulamium region whiteware	1	10
unassigned colour-coat	1	3
<i>subtotal:</i>	34	437
<i>Medieval:</i>		
sandy wares	41	363
fine, glazed sandy wares	2	23
shell and sand tempered	1	7
whiteware	1	3
Border ware	1	2
<i>subtotal:</i>	46	398
Overall total	80	835

5.5 Ceramic Building Material

- 5.5.1 The ceramic building material included Roman roof tile (tegula and imbrex), brick and one piece possibly from a box-flue tile (context **8002**). No complete lengths or widths survive but the thickness (c.30-35mm) of the brick

fragments suggests that they are from the smaller, thinner types (bessalis, lydion and pedalis) mostly used in hypocausts and as lacing/bonding courses in walls (Brodribb 1987). Three pieces, including one with glaze on its upper surface, are from roof tiles of medieval or later date (contexts **10023** and **11008**)

5.6 Other finds

- 5.6.1 The small quantity of animal bone and the three oyster shells are likely to represent food remains. A hand-made iron nail with a flat, round head and a square-sectioned tapering shank was recovered from context **7007**; the other pieces of iron are also likely to derive from nails but are too small and fragmentary to be identified with complete confidence. As highly functional items such as nails undergo relatively little typological change through time, the date of these pieces is uncertain; all could be of Roman or medieval date. The copper alloy dressmaker's pin/needle shank fragment from context **10023** is, however, likely to be of medieval or later date.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL

- 6.1.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the course of the evaluation.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Discussion of results

- 7.1.1 Archaeological features were revealed in five of the twelve trenches excavated. The archaeological remains are concentrated in the north eastern area of the Site. No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered in the southern and western areas, where substantial amounts of modern overburden were revealed to be directly overlying the natural geology. This is more than likely associated with the construction of the existing leisure centre and/or running track facilities.
- 7.1.2 All the trenches contained layers of made ground, these were more obviously modern in Trenches 1-4. Layers comprising a mix of humic soil and gravel were present below the modern made ground in Trenches 5-12. This layer appears to be anthropogenic in origin and contained Roman and medieval pottery. The features recorded in Trenches 7-11 were revealed below this layer and were cut into the alluvial gravel and clay. Archaeological features were revealed at a depth of 0.55-0.80m below ground level.
- 7.1.3 The evaluation has revealed evidence of flint and mortar building foundations dating to the Romano-British period (Trenches 9 and 10) in addition to re-locating Roman building remains recorded in 2007 HN 2007). The two features appear to form the southern wall, aligned north west to south east, of a rectangular building, possibly associated with Roman building remains uncovered in 1968 within the carriageway of Holywell Hill to the north east of the Site. The north west to south east aligned ditch (**7004**, **8005** and **9007**) runs parallel and adjacent to the southern end of the structure and appears to respect its alignment. The ditch appears to be contemporary with the building and may be a boundary ditch defining the southern extent of the masonry Roman buildings. Dating evidence from

Trench 7 indicates that the ditch may have been first established in the 1st or 2nd century and had been recut at a later date. The ditch would appear to have gone out of use by the late 3rd to 4th century. If the ditch is associated with the building this may provide an indication of how long the structure remained standing or in use. It has been suggested that the building could be a mill and that this ditch may have functioned as a leat (Simon West - pers. Comm.)

- 7.1.4 Two further ditches and a pit in Trench 10 could represent later phases of activity during the Romano-British period or possible medieval utilisation of the Site. Pit/ditch **10017** truncates the wall foundations along with ditch **10011** and possibly pit **10015**, indicating later phases of activity at the Site. The Roman building was sealed by a layer (**10023**) containing a good quantity of 13th to 14th century medieval pottery, further indicating the possibility of fairly extensive activity dating to this period being present within or on the periphery of the Site. This is further shown by the possible ditch revealed in Trench 11 and the subsoil in Trench 8 from which medieval pottery was recovered.

8 ARCHIVE

8.1 Preparation and deposition

- 8.1.1 The project archive will be prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990). The paper archive comprises a ring-bound file containing, a Site 'day book', trench record sheets, photographic register and *Written Scheme of Investigation*.
- 8.1.2 The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office building in Salisbury under the WA project code 73320 and Site Code **WLC10**. The completed archive, which will include all paperwork and finds, will on completion of all fieldwork and post excavation reporting, ultimately be deposited for permanent storage at the Verulamium Museum, where it will be deposited under the Site Code **WLC10**.

8.2 Copyright

- 8.2.1 In accordance with clause 4.2 of Wessex Archaeology's Terms and Conditions of Contracts, copyright of the commissioned report and other project documents is assigned to the Client (St Albans City and District Council). Wessex Archaeology retains the right to be identified as the author of all project documentation and reports as defined in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (Chapter IV, s.79).

8.3 Security Copy

- 8.3.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National Monuments Record Centre (Swindon), a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records at the Museum, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology.

9 REFERENCES

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10 APPENDIX 1 TRENCH SUMMARY TABLES

Trench 1	Ground Level 79.87m aOD	Dimensions(m): 16.50 x 1.60 Max. depth(m): 0.75
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1001	Topsoil mid greyish brown sandy clay	0-0.10m
1002	Made ground, pale yellowish brown sandy clay, flint inclusions	0.10-0.15m
1003	Made ground, greyish sandy clay, flints, brick, tarmac, concrete fragments	0.15-0.30m
1004	Made ground, yellowish brown silty clay, flints	0.30-0.60m
1005	Made ground, compacted mid brown clay with flints, modern CBM.	0.60m+

Trench 2	Ground Level 80.06m aOD	Dimensions(m): 20.90 x 1.60 Max. depth(m): 1.20
Context	Description	Depth (m)
2001	Topsoil mid greyish brown sandy clay, flints, modern debris, rubble etc	0-0.10m
2002	Made ground, mid grey sandy clay, flints, modern debris, rubble etc	0.10m-0.50m
2003	Made ground, yellowish brown sandy clay, flints	0.50-0.60m
2004	Made ground, dark grey sandy clay, flints, CBM, chalk fragments	0.60-0.70m
2005	Made ground, compacted mid brown silty clay with flints, modern debris	0.70-1.05m
2006	Natural, reddish brown/ yellowish brown sandy gravel	1.05m+

Trench 3	Ground Level 80.84m aOD	Dimensions(m): 20.10 x 1.57 Max. depth(m): 0.93
Context	Description	Depth (m)
3001	Tarmac	0-0.13m
3002	Yellowish brown sand and gravel	0.13-0.46
3003	Greyish brown compacted clay, concrete, brick, rubble	0.46-0.67m
3004	Pale orange brown compacted clay, concrete etc, visible towards southern end of trench	0.59-0.67m
3005	Pale brown sandy clay, flint, modern debris.	0.67+
3006	Natural, reddish brown clay and gravel, visible at southern end of trench	0.67m+

Trench 4	Ground Level 82.07m aOD	Dimensions(m): 18.40 x 1.55 Max. depth(m): 1.05
Context	Description	Depth (m)
4001	Topsoil mid greyish brown clayey silt, flints	0-0.16m
4002	Subsoil, light greyish brown firm silty clay with flints	0.16-0.28m
4003	Tarmac	0.28-0.50m
4004	Fill of pipe trench 4007, light brown firm silty clay with 20% sub-angular/sub-rounded flint inclusions <70mm	0.5-0.72m
4005	Natural – firm light orangey brown clay <5% inclusions angular stone <10mm	0.72m+
4006	Natural – firm light orangey brown clay. 60% flint/stone sub-angular/sub-rounded inclusions<100mm. Located at northern end of trench for 6.5m	
4007	Cut of clay pipe trench. Cuts 4003 & 4005. Filled by 4004. Iron pipe in situ	
4008	Cut of metal pipe trench cuts 4005. Filled with redeposited material from trench.	0.5m

Trench 5	Ground Level 79.20m aOD	Dimensions(m): Max. depth(m):
Context	Description	Depth (m)
5001	Topsoil. Dark greyish brown, friable silt loam. Under 1% inclusions of sub angular <7mm pebble. Turf overlying modern rubble in patches	0.0-0.34m
5002	Subsoil. Light greyish brown friable clay loam. “0% inclusions of subangular/rounded <10mm flint/chert. Some modern CBM found near base of context	0.34-0.78m
5003	Natural – Pale brown friable clay loam. Higher clay content than 5002. 80% inclusions of subangular/rounded flint/chert. Streaks of reddish brown soil towards northern end of trench.	0.78m+

Trench 6	Ground Level 79m aOD	Dimensions(m): Max. depth(m):
Context	Description	Depth (m)
6001	Topsoil – Dark grey brown, loose silty clay. <1% subangular/rounded flints<7mm. Turf overlying.	0.0-0.20m
6002	Subsoil – Dark grey brown with increased pale brown components from natural. Loose silty clay. 30% subangular/rounded flints <10mm. Post-medieval material noted in places.	0.20-0.55m
6003	Natural – pale brown clay silt matrix river terrace gravels (gravel content 70%)	0.55m+

Trench 7	Ground Level 78m aOD	Dimensions(m): Max. depth(m):
Context	Description	Depth (m)
7001	Topsoil – Dark greyish brown friable silt loam. Under 5% inclusions. Angular flint/chert <7MM. Turf overlying	0.0-0.20m
7002.	Subsoil – light greyish brown friable silty clay loam. 30% inclusions subangular/rounded <10mm flint/chert. Small inclusions of CBM found at southern end of trench	0.20-0.67m
7003	Natural – Light orangey brown friable clay loam – higher clay content than 7002. 70% inclusions – subangular/rounded <15mm flint/chert	0.67m+
7004	Ditch. E to W aligned with moderate/straight regular sides and concave to flat base. Runs roughly parallel to the course of the River Ver c150m to the north and marks the change from the sandy gravels to the south and the clay silts to the north. Securely dated to the RB period from pottery within the Fills 7005 to 7008	
7005	Primary fill of 7004. Mid brown yellow, clay sand with 60% rounded and subangular flints (<9mm)	
7006	Lower secondary fill of 7004. Mid brown grey sandy loam with 20% rounded and subangular flints<9mm. Very similar in composition to fill 7007 which overlies 7006, but with more charcoal and coarse components. A number of RB roofing tiles present in fill possibly indicating/from building to east.	
7007	Secondary fill of 7004. mid brown gray sandy loam with 15% rounded/subangular flints <90mm	
7008	Upper fill of ditch 7004 – mid grey brown clay silt with <1% rounded/subangular flints (<30mm)	

Trench 8	Ground Level 77.80m aOD	Dimensions(m): Max. depth(m):
Context	Description	Depth (m)
8001	Topsoil – Dark greyish brown friable silt loam. Under 1% inclusions subangular/rounded flint/chert. Turf overlying	0.0-0.28m
8002	Subsoil – light greyish brown friable silty clay loam. 20% inclusions subangular/rounded <5mm flint/chert.	0.28-0.68m
8003	Natural – Orange brown friable clay. 20% inclusions of subangular/rounded flint/chert <10mm	0.68m+
8004	Fill of Ditch 8005 – Unexcavated. Mid grey brown friable clay loam with 5% sub angular/rounded flints <7mm	0.68m+
8005	Cut of E to W aligned Roman ditch – continuation of 7004	0.68m+

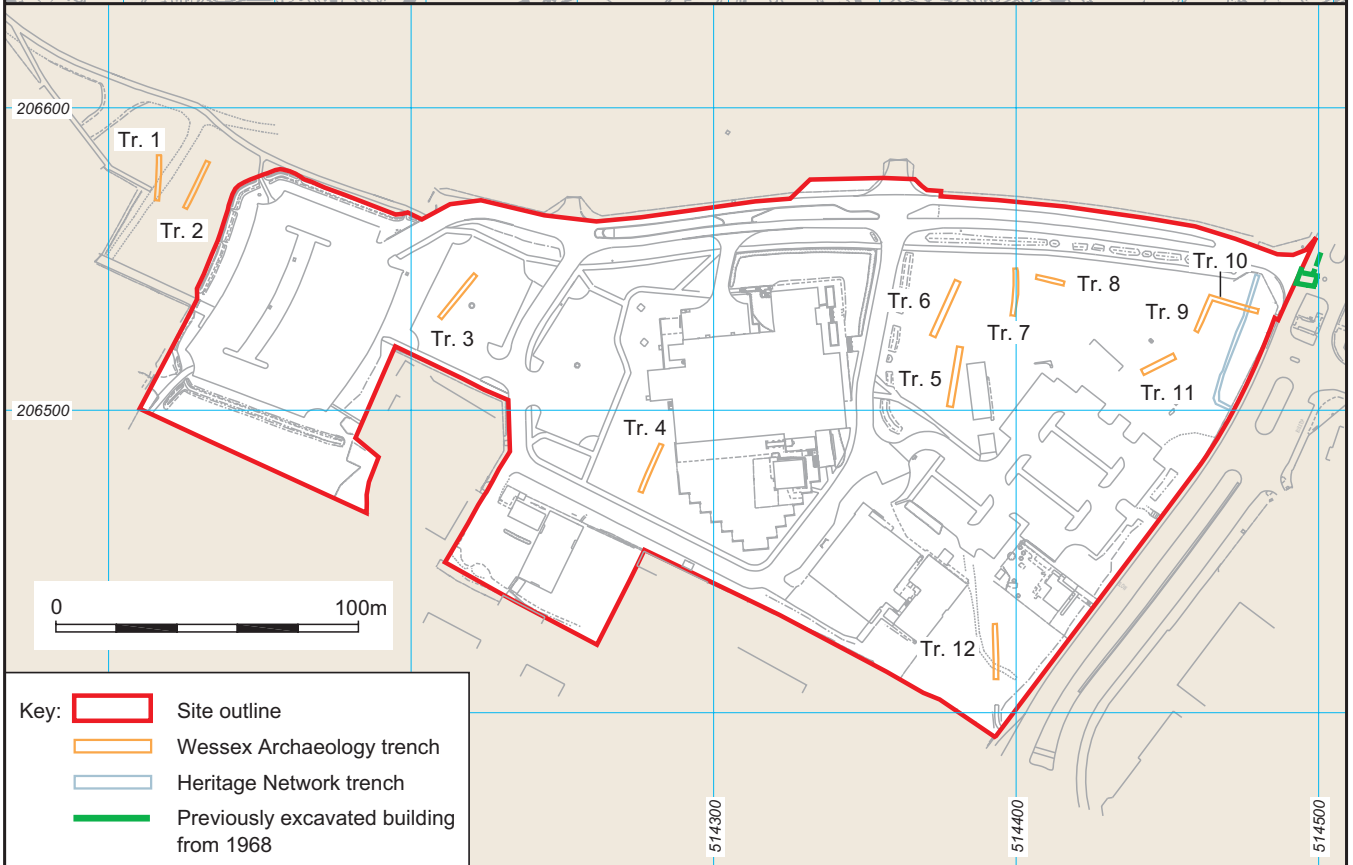
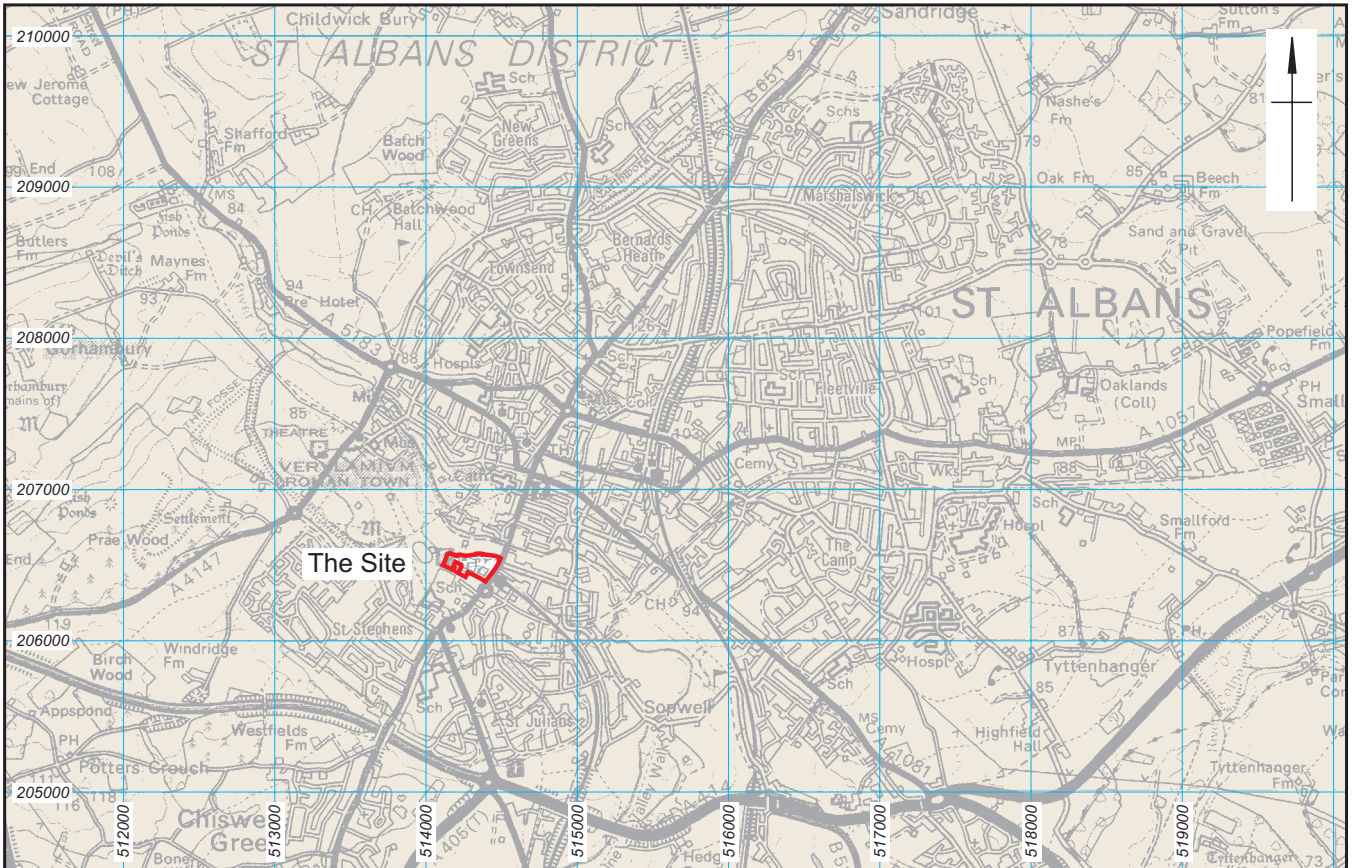
Trench 9	Ground Level 77.20m aOD	Dimensions(m): Max. depth(m):
Context	Description	Depth (m)
9001	Topsoil – Mid greyish brown loose sandy silt with 20% subrounded/-angular stone inclusions <20mm	0.0-0.35m
9002	Subsoil – light greyish brown friable silty clay. 10% subangular stone inclusions <20mm	0.35-0.55m
9003	Flint layer – possibly related to wall 10010. Compact concentration of flint within loose light greyish brown silty clay.	0.55-0.80m
9004	Natural – mid orangey brown friable clay. 30% flint inclusions angular <50mm at S end of trench.	0.80m+
9005	Natural – mid orangey brown friable clay. 70% flint inclusions subangular <200mm. In centre of trench	0.90m+
9006	Natural – mid orangey brown firm clay 40% flint inclusions subangular/-rounded <50mm towards N end of trench.	0.87m+
9007	Cut of ditch. Continuation (?) of 7004 & 8005. Cuts 9006	0.92m+
9008	Fill of 9007. Light greyish brown friable clayey silt. 30% stone/flint inclusions <50mm subrounded/-angular. Articulated cow bones found in slot dug across southern edge – left in situ	0.92m+

Trench 10	Ground Level 77.10m aOD	Dimensions(m): Max. depth(m):
Context	Description	Depth (m)
10001	Topsoil. Mid greyish brown friable silty loam. 60% inclusions of flint/stone <120mm small amounts of modern CBM	0.0-0.23m
10002	Tarmac laid directly on top of 10003.	0.23-0.33m
10003	Building rubble. Light brownish yellow friable/loose silty sand. Mostly made up of modern CBM and concrete rubble. Pieces of modern wood and glass	0.33-0.54m
10004	Tarmac present in E part of trench below 10003	0.54-0.61m
10005	Subsoil – mid greyish brown firm silt. Possibly alluvial deposits from flooding. 5% stone inclusions <5mm subrounded.	0.61-0.67m
10006	Subsoil – light greyish brown loose clayey silt. 60% stone flint inclusions rounded/subangular. CBM present.	0.67-1.05m
10007	Pipe trench cut filled with 10008	
10008	Fill of 10008. Mid greyish brown silty loam with flint stone inclusions, some tarmac and CBM	
10009	Crushed mortar deposit. Possible remains of Roman wall. Runs N to S across trench. Light whitish yellow mortar intermixed with patches of mid greyish brown silty loam.	1.12m+

10010	Remains of the corner of a heavily robbed/truncated flint and mortar wall dating to RB period. Aligned NEE to SWW. Constructed of rounded partially dressed irregular coursed flint cobbles (<200mm) set in a yellow/white mortar.	0.80m
10011	Cut through 10013	1.15m+
10012	Fill of 10011 – Light greyish brown loose clayey silt. 60% stone flint inclusions subangular/subrounded. Some Roman CBM present. Possibly same as 10006	1.15m+
10013	Natural – mid brownish yellow loose sandy clay. 70% stone flint inclusions – subangular/subrounded <20mm	1.20m+
10014	Fill of 10015. Mid grey brown loose silty clay with 70% stone/flint inclusions <20mm	1.22m+
10015	?Pit. Cuts 10013	1.22m+
10016	Fill of Pit 10017 – Unexcavated. Mid brown gray friable sandy clay with % sub rounded/-angular flints (<50mm). contains CBM, RB pottery, animal bone and frequent charcoal	
10017	Large pit which post dates RB wall 10010. Filled with 10016 – Unexcavated.	
10018	Cut of robber trench running along southern edge of wall 10010. relatively consistent width of 0.20m to west bulging out to 0.50m where it terminates (truncated) to the east	
10019	Fill of 10018. Dark brown grey friable sandy clay with very rare sub angular flints (<90mm) and rare yellow/white mortar CBM and charcoal.	
10020	Fill of pit 10017? Mid grey brown friable sandy clay with very rare sub rounded flint <10mm and rare mortar flecks and CBM	
10021	?Pit – unexcavated. Subcircular. Flint cobble (10022) filled pit overlying wall 10010. Possibly associated with destruction of RB building	
10022	Fill of 10021. Dark grey brown, loose sandy clay with 50% (very frequent) rounded flint cobbles/nodules. Also contains CBM, mortar, animal bone, pottery and charcoal.	
10023	Subsoil – Artefact rich subsoil overlying features at western end of trench. Contains medieval pottery.	0.60-0.75m
10024	Mortar rich layer adjacent to wall 10010 – mid brown, sandy clay with 1% sub rounded/-angular flint <50mm and occasional mortar flecks/fragments and CBM	

Trench 11	Ground Level 77.75m aOD	Dimensions(m): Max. depth(m):
Context	Description	Depth (m)
11001	Topsoil. Thin layer of dark greyish brown silty loam	0.0-0.05m
11002	Made ground of crushed tarmac, soil and modern brick	0.05-0.25m
11003	Colluvium? Gravel with silty loam, greyish brown	0.25-0.85m
11004	Natural – orange brown silty clay with gravel	0.85m+
11005	Cut for possible ditch terminus – not excavated. Surface finds collected	0.95m
11006	Fill of 11005. Mid greyish brown silty clay with gravel and some chalk	0.95m
11007	Cut for possible subcircular pit - not excavated. Surface finds collected	0.95m
11008	Fill of 11007. Mid greyish brown silty clay with gravel	0.95m

Trench 12	Ground Level 80.30m aOD	Dimensions(m): Max. depth(m):
Context	Description	Depth (m)
12001	Topsoil – Greyish brown silty loam, gravel inclusions	0.0-0.24m
12002	Redeposited gravel and clay, mostly gravel	0.24-0.48m
12003	Gravel, crushed tarmac, builders debris, made up layer	0.48-0.62m
12004	Subsoil – greyish brown silty loam with gravel	0.62-1.10m
12005	Natural gravel with orange brown silty clay, rare large flint nodules.	1.10m+



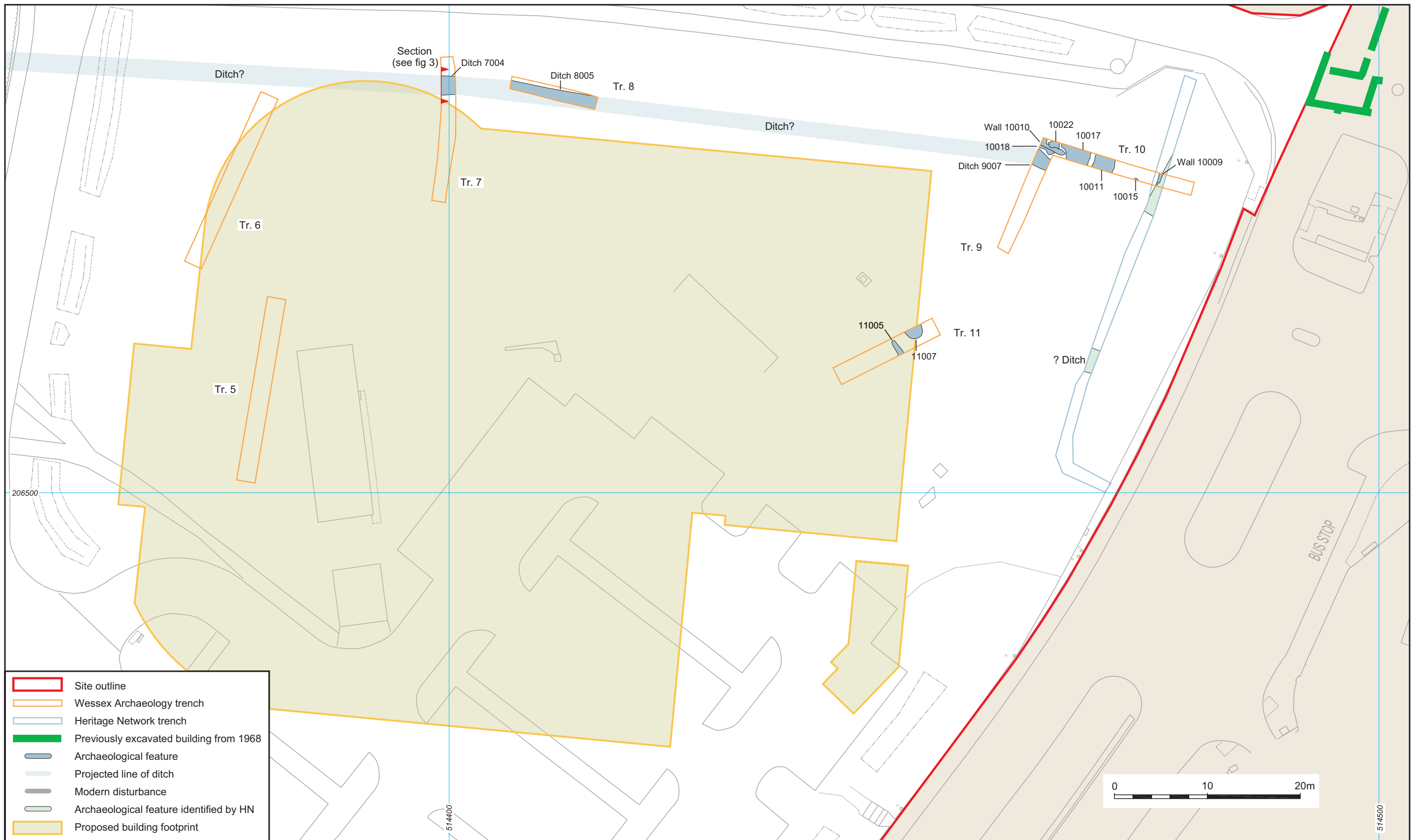
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Site and trench location plan

Figure 1



- Site outline
- Wessex Archaeology trench
- Heritage Network trench
- Previously excavated building from 1968
- Archaeological feature
- Projected line of ditch
- Modern disturbance
- Archaeological feature identified by HN
- Proposed building footprint



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Archaeological features in Trenches 7 - 11

Figure 2



Plate 1: Overall view of Trench 10 from the west



Plate 2: Flint and mortar wall (10010), Trench 10, from the west


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Plate 3: Ditch (11005) and pit (11007), Trench 11, from the north east



Plate 4: Pit (11007), Trench 11, from the east



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Plate 5: Trench 2 from the north



Plate 6: Trench 12 from the south east

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