



## Public Open Space (LOS16/MOS K) Tadpole Lane, Priory Vale Swindon, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (LOS16/MOS K), TADPOLE LANE,  
PRIORY VALE, SWINDON, WILTSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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**On behalf of**

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**PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (LOS16/MOS K), TADPOLE LANE, PRIORY VALE,  
SWINDON, WILTSHIRE**

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### **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

#### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by WYG Trench Farrow (the Client), on behalf of the North Swindon Development Company Limited, to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks on land located adjacent to Tadpole Lane, Priory Vale, Swindon, Wiltshire, hereafter referred to as 'the Site', centred on National Grid Reference NGR 4133 1898.

The Site lies approximately 2km to the west of Groundwell Ridge, a Scheduled Monument, which has been shown to contain significant and extensive archaeological remains. Trenched evaluation of the Site undertaken in 1998 and 2001 indicated the potential for the survival of prehistoric and Romano-British archaeological remains and finds within the Site.

The watching brief comprised constant archaeological supervision during topsoil and subsoil stripping to the top of the proposed formation level within two areas, a proposed play area (Area A) and footpath (Area B), totalling approximately 0.37ha. The top of the natural geology was exposed within the central section of the play area, while for the remainder of the two areas; the top of the formation level lay within subsoil or made ground deposits.

The watching brief found no evidence for *in situ* archaeological features. A small number of natural or recent features (an animal burrow and modern land drains) were noted where the stripping reached the top of the natural in Area A. The relatively shallow depth of the formation level in the outer part of the play area (Area A) and the footpath path (Area B) did not penetrate below subsoil/made ground deposits. A small quantity of residual Romano-British and medieval pottery sherds and animal bone was also recovered during subsoil stripping in Area A.

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SWINDON, WILTSHIRE****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by WYG Trench Farrow (the Client), on behalf of the North Swindon Development Company Limited and would like to thank Mike Christmas (Project Manager), David Trease (Site Manager) and their site staff for their help and assistance. Wessex Archaeology is also particularly grateful to Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Archaeology Service), who monitored the project, for her help and advice during the course of the project.

The project was managed by Andrew Manning on behalf of Wessex Archaeology. The archaeological watching brief was carried out by Jonathan Smith who also compiled the report. The finds were assessed by Lorraine Mephram and illustrations prepared by Kenneth Lymer.

## **PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (LOS16/MOS K), TADPOLE LANE, PRIORY VALE, SWINDON, WILTSHIRE**

### **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

##### **1.1 Project Background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by WYG Trench Farrow, on behalf of the North Swindon Development Company Limited, to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks on land located adjacent to Tadpole Lane, Priory Vale, Swindon, Wiltshire, hereafter referred to as 'the Site', centred on National Grid Reference NGR 4133 1898 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The work was carried out as part of the requirements of an existing archaeological condition attached to planning permission approval for the residential development at Haydon Wick (now referred to as Priory Vale).
- 1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Wessex Archaeology 2009) was prepared, submitted to, and approved by, the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service, before the commencement of fieldwork.
- 1.1.4 This report presents the results of the watching brief, which was undertaken between the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2009.

#### **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

##### **2.1 Location, Topography and Geology.**

- 2.1.1 The Site lay within a 3.5ha block of grassland at the northern edge of the Swindon area, bounded to the north and west by Tadpole Lane, to the south by Addinsell Road and to the east by Wyld Court.
- 2.1.2 The Site was approximately 117m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at its northern edge, descending to approximately 112.5m aOD at its southern extremity. The underlying geology of the Site lay at the interface of the Lower Corallian Rag and Oxford Clay (GSGB 1974).

#### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1.1 The Site was located approximately 2km from Groundwell Ridge, a Scheduled Monument, comprising a Romano-British villa complex, possible medieval occupation and landscaping covering a substantial area. In addition, previous archaeological investigations had recorded concentrations of Romano-British and medieval pottery and cropmarks within the general area of the Site (AC Archaeology 2001, 1).
- 3.1.2 Archaeological evaluation within the Site in 1998 (Wessex Archaeology 1998) had identified a small number of prehistoric and Romano-British features and finds in two separate areas lying at the northern and southern



edges of the Site. Additional trenching in 2001 did not identify any further archaeological features or enable a better definition of the archaeological potential, but did identify a number of areas of deep disturbance (AC Archaeology 2001).

## 4 AIMS

### 4.1 Watching Brief

4.1.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2009) were:

- To establish, the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains within the Site, and
- To mitigate any threat posed to the archaeological remains by the groundworks through preservation by record.

## 5 METHOD

### 5.1 Fieldwork

5.1.1 The separate removal of the topsoil and subsoil to the required formation level (between 0.30-0.50m below the top of the present ground surface) in Area A was carried out by a 360 degree tracked machine, under constant archaeological supervision, using a 0.80m wide toothless trenching bucket (Figure 2).

5.1.2 The groundworks in Area B, involved only the removal of approximately 0.30m depth of topsoil by a JCB using a 0.80m toothless trenching bucket, again under constant archaeological supervision.

5.1.3 All excavated material was routinely inspected for artefacts.

5.1.4 Recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system and included unique context numbers for all deposits. A photographic record, which included high resolution digital images, was maintained. The site was surveyed using a Leica 1200 Global Positioning System (GPS).

5.1.5 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (1999, revised 2001).

## 6 RESULTS

6.1.1 The soil sequence across the Site was generally consistent and comprised a topsoil of dark brown silty loam at a depth of between 0.28-0.30m below the present ground level. This lay above a reddish brown silty clay subsoil, approximately 0.20m in depth, which sealed the natural geology. A small amount of Romano-British and medieval pottery and animal bone was retrieved during subsoil stripping in Area A.

- 6.1.2 In Area B, for a majority of the length of the footpath, the topsoil overlaid a made ground deposit of builders' rubble of indeterminate depth, the subsoil only being revealed in the western end of the footpath.
- 6.1.3 No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the groundworks in either Area A or Area B. A possible feature was noted at the southern edge of the Area A, but subsequent investigation identified this feature as a modern animal burrow (**Figure 2**).
- 6.1.4 Four modern land drains (two containing clay drainage pipes and two containing gravel) were also recorded as crossing Area A. Three of these drains ran approximately northwest-southeast and one, east-west.

## 7 FINDS

- 7.1.1 A few finds were recovered from the subsoil in Area A (context 002). These comprised five sherds of pottery (82g) and three pieces of animal bone (7g). One of the pottery sherds is a coarse greyware of Romano-British date, while the remaining four are medieval. The latter are in coarse calcareous and flint-tempered fabrics typical of north Wiltshire, with a probable date range of 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century.

## 8 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING

- 8.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present within the Site and therefore no samples were taken.

## 9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1.1 Both the play area (Area A) and the footpath (Area B) lay within or immediately adjacent to areas previously identified in the Wessex Archaeology evaluation as containing good potential for the survival of archaeological remains.
- 9.1.2 The subsequent AC Archaeology evaluation was unable to identify any additional archaeological features, although it did identify areas of deep disturbance within the western part of the Site. The evaluation report (AC Archaeology 2001) concluded that it was likely that archaeological features and finds present were unlikely to survive extensively across the Site, or in any great intensity.
- 9.1.3 The results of the watching brief are in accordance with those from the AC evaluation. No evidence for new archaeological activity was found within the limited area stripped and further made ground deposits were identified within the northeastern part of the Site, indicating more evidence of substantial disturbance, across the Site. The small quantity of residual Romano-British and medieval pottery within the subsoil is consistent with material recovered from previous fieldwork.

## 10 ARCHIVE

- 10.1.1 The project archive, consisting of an A4 ringbinder, a collection of digital photographs and survey data is currently held at the offices of Wessex



Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire under the project code 71760.01. The archive will be deposited, in due course, with the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, Wiltshire.

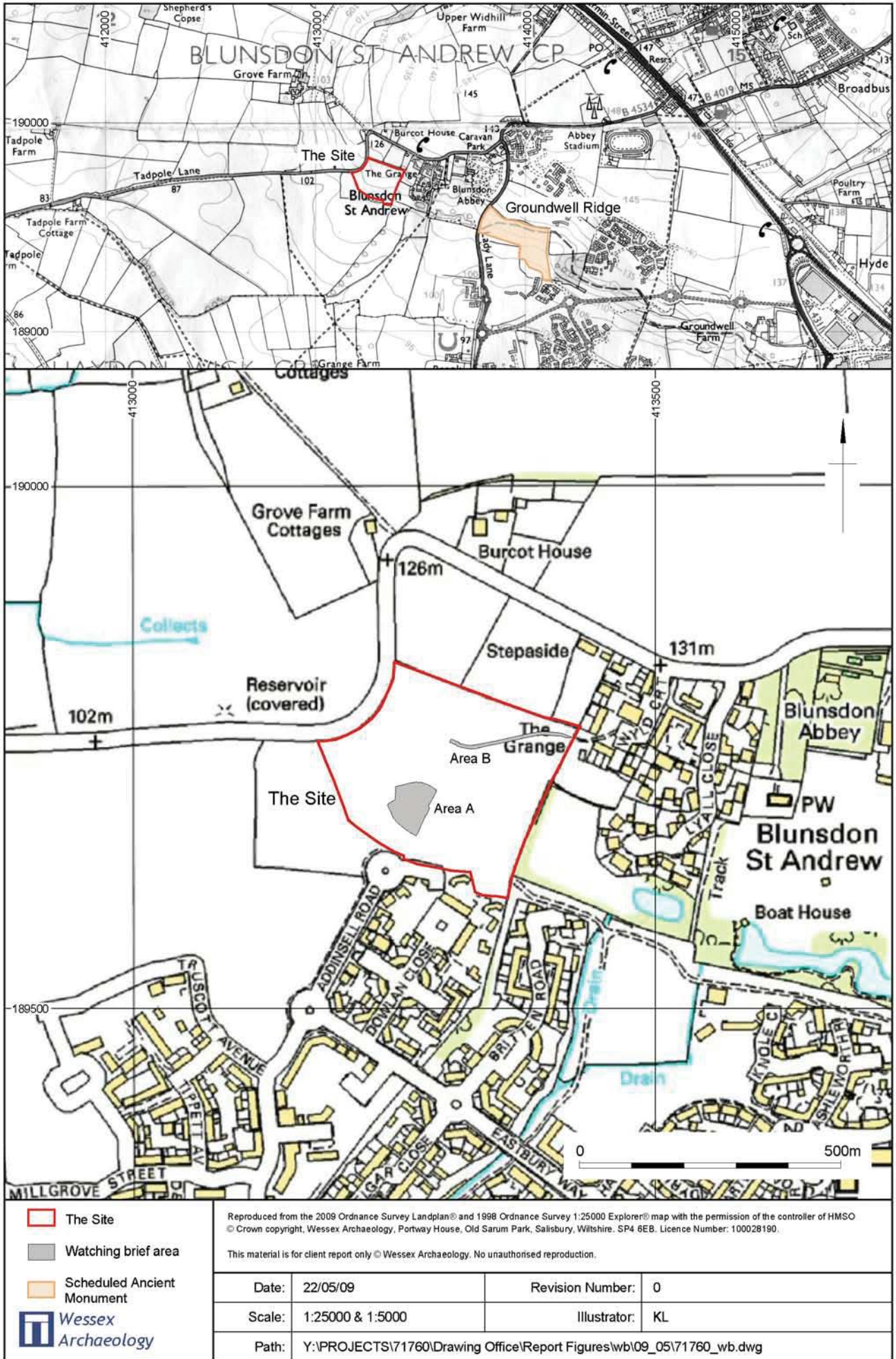
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AC Archaeology, 2001, A second-stage Archaeological Evaluation at Haydon Wick, Swindon, Unpublished Client Report Document 6001/1/0

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Site location plan

Figure 1

Figure removed  
due to copyright





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