



Croft Sports Centre Swindon, Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report





CROFT SPORTS CENTRE, SWINDON

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Swindon Capita Partnership to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development at land situated adjacent to the Croft Sport Centre, Hesketh Crescent, Swindon.

Following consultation with the Swindon Borough Council (SBC) Archaeological Adviser, and in line with PPG16 requirements, an archaeological evaluation was required in order to provide further information regarding the archaeological potential and inform the nature of any surviving archaeology on the Site.

The Site covers an area of approximately 0.8 hectares, immediately to the north of the Croft Sports Centre, a council-run sports facility in the Old Town area of Swindon.

Two machine excavated trenches were dug within the proposed development area. No archaeological features were identified in either of these trenches and no artefacts were recovered from the excavated soils.

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Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Swindon Capita Partnership and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Peter Richardson in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Melanie Pomeroy, SBC Archaeological Adviser.

The evaluation was carried out by Bob Davis assisted by Piotr Orczewski. This report was compiled by Bob Davis and the illustrations prepared by Ken Lymer and the project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.

CROFT SPORTS CENTRE, SWINDON

Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Swindon Capita Partnership to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development at land situated adjacent to the Croft Sport Centre, Hesketh Crescent, Swindon (hereafter the Site, see **Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 Following consultation with the Swindon Borough Council (SBC) Archaeological Adviser, and in line with PPG16 requirements, an archaeological evaluation was required in order to provide further information regarding the archaeological potential and inform the nature of any surviving archaeology on the Site.
- 1.1.3 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Wessex Archaeology 2009), which was agreed in advance of the fieldwork by the SBC Archaeological Adviser. All works were carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the '*Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire*' (Archaeology Service, Wiltshire County Council 1995) and in the Institute For Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008).
- 1.1.4 The evaluation fieldwork took place between 27th and 28th May 2009.
- 1.1.5 This report sets out the results of the evaluation.
- ##### 1.2 The Site, location and geology
- 1.2.1 The Site covers an area of approximately 0.8 hectares, immediately to the north of the Croft Sports Centre, a council-run sports facility in the Old Town area of Swindon. It is centred on NGR 415616, 183171.
- 1.2.2 The Site is bounded on the west, south and north by houses and to the east by houses and a hotel and currently comprises a garden area with some small trees and shrubs. The extension is positioned in the north-east corner of the Site, facing Hesketh Crescent (**Figure1**).
- 1.2.3 The underlying solid geology comprises Kimmeridge clay (Geological Map of Great Britain, 1:50,000, Sheet 252).
- 1.2.4 The Site lies at an elevation of approximately 122.5m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) although there is a fall of some 5m from Hesketh Crescent to the Sports Centre buildings.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 A brief search for archaeological and historical sites within a 1km radius of the Site via the Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record website (<http://localview.wiltshire.gov.uk/smr/InTheArea.aspx>) indicates the presence of 25 sites, predominantly of a prehistoric and Romano-British date.
- 2.1.2 Worked flints of Neolithic date have been discovered to the north-east of the Site at Penfold Nurseries and flint tools, including blades and scrapers along with Neolithic pottery was identified during excavations in the Market Square, Old Town to the north of the Site.
- 2.1.3 Further evidence of prehistoric activity is known to the east of the Market Square where a Bronze Age burial, with a dagger, knife and polished stone wrist guard was identified. Further burials have also been excavated to the south of Westlecot Road East, where three crouched inhumations were recorded and at Bouverie Avenue, 4 urns containing 2 cremations were excavated in the 1930s. A further crouched inhumation was discovered at Evelyn Street 300m to the north east of the Site and although undated, contained flint flakes in the grave fill.
- 2.1.4 At Grovelands to the north-west of the Site, an Iron Age pit, containing pottery sherds, including a bead-rim bowl were recorded.
- 2.1.5 Further burials have been recorded in the vicinity and date to the Romano-British period. To the north-west of the Site, at Westlecot Road Bridge, an inhumation was exposed during the excavation of a large rubbish pit. In addition, several isolated finds have also been reported in the vicinity including two coins, one at Winifred Street and the other at Marlborough Road and a hoard of 22 antoniniani (AD259-273) was discovered in the early 1990s at Lawns Nursery.
- 2.1.6 In 1978 a Saxon inhumation burial was found during excavations at Evelyn Street, approximately 150m to the north of the Site and contained a spearhead, knife and sherds of Saxon pottery. Further Saxon pottery sherds have been found at Penfold Nurseries to the north-east.
- 2.1.7 There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Site.

3 EVALUATION AIMS

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to determine or confirm the presence/absence and the general nature of any remains present.
- 3.1.2 A further aim was to determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence where development is proposed.

4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following methodology was proposed in order to meet the aims of the evaluation. All works were undertaken in accordance with the standards set out within the WSI and the requirements of the client and the SBC Archaeological Adviser. All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the guidance and standards outlined in the Institute For Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (as amended 2008).

4.2 Fieldwork

4.2.1 A total of two trenches were excavated (**Trench 1** and **Trench 2, Figure 1**) by mechanical excavator under archaeological conditions. Both trenches were at least 1.80m wide and 10m long. The trenches were positioned to the pattern given within the footprint of the proposed buildings using a DGPS (Differential Global Positioning System).

4.3 Health and safety

4.3.1 All work was carried out in accordance with Health and Safety at work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety regulations 1992 and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation and regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.

4.3.2 Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork a Risk Assessment was produced. All staff involved in works signed and complied with this document.

4.4 Service Location

4.4.1 Prior to and during excavation, the trenches were scanned to verify the absence of any underground services using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT). Although this method did not identify any buried services a modern service trench was identified during machine excavation. This feature was avoided and remained unexcavated.

4.5 Survey

4.5.1 Trial trenches were laid out in advance and in general accordance with the pattern given in **Figure 1** and surveyed using DGPS (Differential Global Positioning System), to an accuracy of ± 20 mm.

4.5.2 All trenches were excavated by a wheeled JCB excavator under constant archaeological supervision. All machining was carried out using a 1.8m wide toothless bucket in discrete level spits of approximately 0.10m maximum depth. Topsoil and underlying deposits of soil were stored adjacent to the trenches in preparation for reinstatement. All trial trenches were machined to the upper surface of archaeological features and/or underlying geology (Kimmeridge Clay) whichever was encountered first.

4.5.3 The trial trenches were fenced with plastic netlon fencing.

4.5.4 On the completion of the trenches to the satisfaction of the client and the SBC Archaeological Adviser, the trenches were backfilled using the excavated material in the order in which they were excavated and left level and compacted by the machine. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

4.6 Depth of Excavation

4.6.1 Neither of the trenches exceeded 1.2m in depth and therefore required no stepping or battering in profile.

4.7 Recording

4.7.1 Written recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology *pro-forma* recording sheets. Representative soil profile sections of trial trenches were drawn at a scale of 1:10. The location of the trenches was surveyed using a DGPS.

4.7.2 A unique number was issued for each feature and deposit, relating to the trench in which it was found.

4.7.3 A photographic record was produced consisting of 35mm monochrome prints and transparencies. Digital images were also taken to support general site recording.

4.8 Finds

4.8.1 No artefacts were recovered from the excavation.

5 EVALUATION RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 No archaeological features were found in either trench and no artefacts were recovered from the excavated material. Detailed trench summaries are contained in the **Appendix**.

5.2 Stratigraphy

5.2.1 The general soil sequence encountered across the Site was consistent and comprised dark grey clay silt topsoil overlying the natural geology of Kimmeridge Clay. Although the topsoil varied in depth it was not to a significant degree. The underlying natural geology of Kimmeridge Clay was identified in both of the trenches (**Plates 1 – 4**).

5.3 Archaeological Remains

5.3.1 No archaeological features were found in either **Trench 1** or **Trench 2**. Within Trench 1 a modern service trench was identified crossing the trench from east to west (**Figure 1**). The fill of this feature contained wood, metal, bricks, wire and modern glass.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1.1 The trial trench evaluation did not identify any archaeological remains within the surveyed area.

-
- 6.1.2 Despite the archaeological potential, the absence of any artefactual evidence within the topsoil indicates a lack of occupational evidence in the immediate vicinity of the Site.

7 PROJECT ARCHIVE

- 7.1.1 The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury under the project reference 71810. The contents of the archive are listed in Appendix 2.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Institute For Archaeologists 1994 (revised 2008). *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*.

Wessex Archaeology 2009, *Croft Sports Centre Swindon Wiltshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Field Evaluation*.

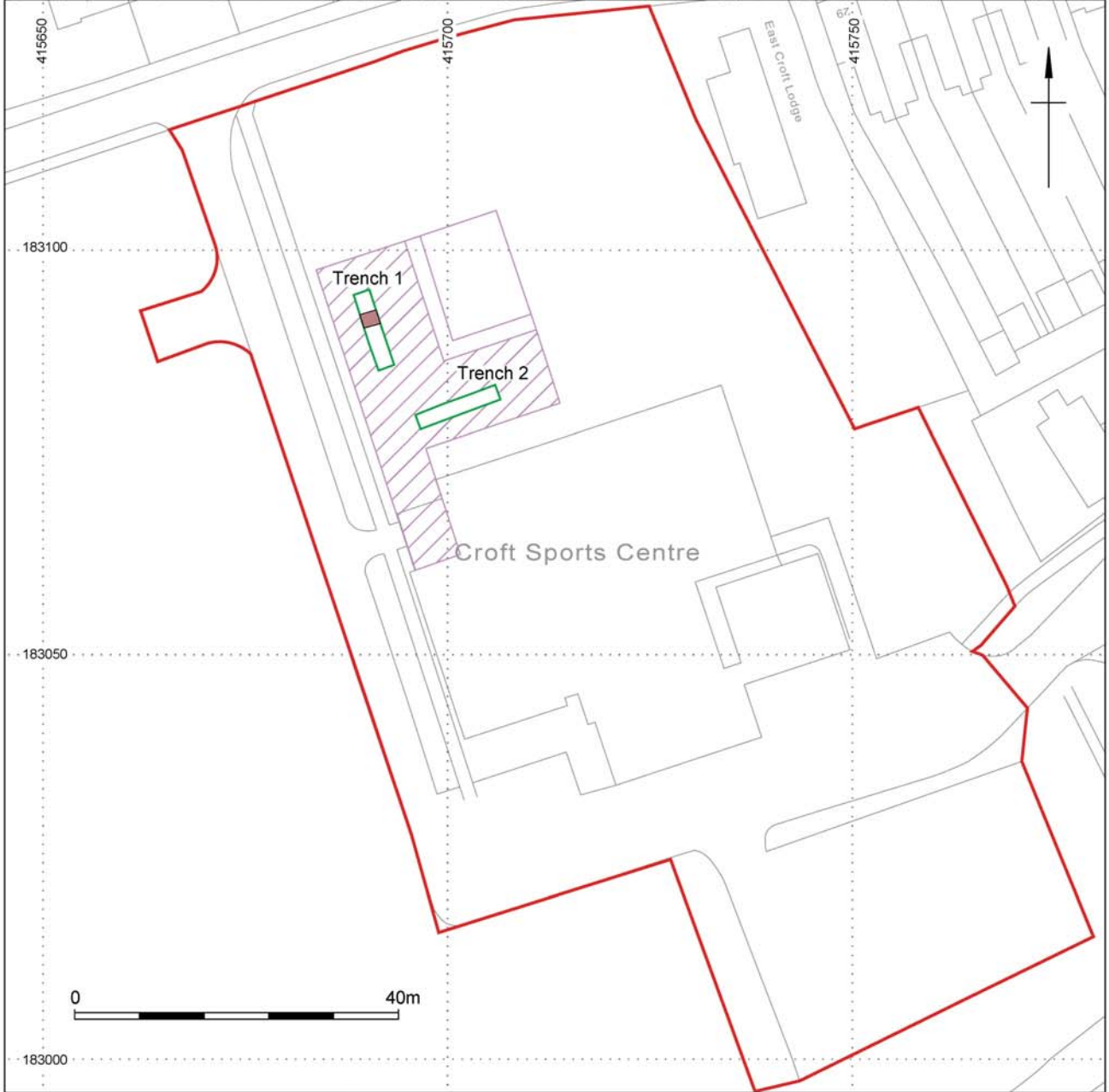
APPENDIX 1: EVALUATION TRENCH SUMMARIES

| Evaluation Trench 1 | | Max Depth: 0.40m Ground Level (m aOD): 122.90m | Length: 10m | Width:1.90M |
|---------------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Context | Type | Description | | Depth (m) |
| 101 | layer | Topsoil: dark grey brown silty loam with very rare inclusions including stone and occasional charcoal, clear interface onto.. | | 0-0.35m |
| 102 | layer | Natural: pale yellowish with bluish grey hue. Fine clay/sand texture with manganese staining/flecking | | 0.35-base of trench, 0.60m |

| Evaluation Trench 2 | | Max Depth: 0.33m Ground Level(m aOD): 122.15m | Length: 10m | Width:1.90m |
|---------------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Context | Type | Description | | Depth (m) |
| 201 | layer | Topsoil: dark grey brown silty loam with very rare inclusions including stone and occasional charcoal, clear interface onto.. | | 0-0.30m |
| 202 | layer | Natural: pale yellowish with bluish grey hue. Fine clay/sand texture with manganese staining/flecking | | 0.30-base of trench,0.54m |

APPENDIX 2: ARCHIVE INDEX

| File No. | NAR Cat | Detail | Format | No. Sheets |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------|------------|
| 1 | - | Index to Archive | A4 | 1 |
| 1 | A | Client Report | A4 | 1 |
| 1 | - | Project Specification | A4 | 1 |
| 1 | B | Day book (photocopy) | A4 | - |
| 1 | B | Trial trench records | A4 | 2 |
| 1 | B | Context Records | A4 | - |
| 1 | B | Graphics Register | A4 | - |
| 1 | B | Levels (photocopy) | A4 | - |
| 1 | D | Photographic Register | A4 | 3 |
| 1 | B | Site Graphics | A1 | 1 |
| 1 | - | B+W Negatives | 35mm | 13 |
| 1 | - | Colour slides | 35mm | 13 |
| FINDS | None | | | |



- The Site
- Proposed development
- Evaluation trench
- Modern service trench



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Site and evaluation trench location

Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 1 viewed from south



Plate 2: Trench 1 typical soil sequence

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Plate 3: Trench 2 viewed from west



Plate 4: Trench 2 typical soil sequence

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