



Land adjacent to Bourne Hill Council Offices, Salisbury, Wiltshire

Report on an archaeological watching brief
of geotechnical trial pits



**LAND ADJACENT TO BOURNE HILL
COUNCIL OFFICES, SALISBURY, WILTSHIRE**

Report on an archaeological watching brief of geotechnical trial pits

Prepared on behalf of
**Legal & Property Services
Salisbury District Council
The Council House
Bourne Hill
Salisbury
SP 1 3UZ**

by
**Wessex Archaeology
Portway House
Old Sarum Park
Salisbury
SP4 6EB**

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Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Project background	1
1.2	Site location, topography and geology.....	1
1.3	Archaeological background	2
2	AIMS AND METHODS.....	2
3	RESULTS.....	3
3.2	Trial pit 2.....	3
3.3	Trial pit 3.....	3
3.4	Trial pit 4.....	3
3.5	Trial pit 6.....	3
3.6	Trial pit 7.....	3
4	FINDS	4
5	DISCUSSION.....	4
5.1	Archaeological significance.....	4
	REFERENCES.....	5

Appendix 1: Geotechnical trial pit summary

Figure 1: Location of geotechnical trial pits and previous evaluation trenches

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Salisbury District Council's Legal & Property Services to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the geotechnical site investigations on land adjacent to the Council Offices, Bourne Hill, Salisbury (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). The Council proposes to expand its offices on Bourne Hill to include land that is presently covered by a car park and a swimming pool.

An earlier desk-based assessment showed that the Site lies in the north-eastern corner of the medieval city, adjacent to the earth ramparts of the city's defences, part of which, to the east of the Site is a Scheduled Monument. The assessment also indicated the potential for deposits and features relating to the medieval St Edmund's College and its successors. A subsequent evaluation found no evidence of the defences, but did reveal structural remains relating to the College, indicating that the proposed development is likely to have significant archaeological impacts, particularly to the southern part of the Site.

Five geotechnical trial pits were hand-excavated by the geotechnical contractors in locations designed largely to inform development's engineering team, and the exposed deposits recorded archaeologically. The watching brief provided only limited additional information to supplement that provided by the evaluation, three of the trial pits revealing either no archaeological deposits or made ground. Apart from ceramic roof tiles of medieval date, there were no finds or features that could possibly be associated with the medieval St. Edmund's College. The only datable archaeological deposits were of post-medieval date, probably relating to an east-west aligned feature of unknown function recorded in an adjacent evaluation trench.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Salisbury District Council's Legal & Property Services.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Richard Greatorex. The watching brief was undertaken by Jon Martin Jonathan Smith. This report was compiled by Andrew Powell, and the figures prepared by Liz James.

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Report on an archaeological watching brief of geotechnical trial pits

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Salisbury District Council's Legal & Property Services to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the geotechnical site investigations on land adjacent to the Council Offices, Bourne Hill, Salisbury (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). The Council proposes to expand its offices on Bourne Hill to include land that is presently covered by a car park and a swimming pool. This will possibly involve the demolition of the Victorian and single storey extensions to the main building and the removal of some temporary portable buildings.
- 1.1.2 In September 2003, Wessex Archaeology undertook a desk-based assessment of the Site (Wessex Archaeology 2003) and subsequently, in July 2004, carried out an archaeological evaluation. The latter indicated that the proposed development is likely to have significant archaeological impacts on parts of the Site, particularly to the southern area (Wessex Archaeology 2004).
- 1.1.3 Following discussions with Helena Cave-Penney (Assistant Archaeologist of Wiltshire County Council Heritage Services) it was recommended that further archaeological fieldwork (including excavation and watching brief as appropriate) be undertaken in advance of development and during the initial phases of construction groundworks.
- 1.1.4 This recommendation is in keeping with provisions of the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979* (as amended), Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance, in particular PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment (1994) and PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning (1990), and local planning policies, including Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 policy HE2, and Salisbury District Local Plan 2003 policies CN20, CN21 and CN23.

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located on the north-eastern edge of the medieval City of Salisbury and covers an area of c. 1.5 hectares, centred on National Grid Reference 414730 130400 (**Fig. 1**). It is bounded by Bedwin Street and Bourne Hill to the south, the remains of the city ramparts and College Street to the east, the recreation ground to the north and the grounds of St Edmunds Church and a terrace of houses adjacent to Belle Vue road to the west. The Site comprises a mixture of grassland, mature trees, asphalt car park and buildings

- 1.2.2 The Site lies on predominantly flat or gently sloping ground at a height of *c.* 175-170m aOD (above Ordnance Datum). The ground slopes gently from north to south although it has been terraced, truncated and sculpted in places.
- 1.2.3 The underlying drift geology of the Site is the Higher Terrace Gravel of the Avon valley, lying above Upper Chalk of the Cretaceous Period (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 298). The soils within Salisbury are calcareous alluvial gley soils (Frome) and the surrounding countryside is composed of brown rendzina (Andover 1) and bands of typical brown calcareous earths (Coombe 1) (Soil Survey of England and Wales Sheet 6, 1983). The Site is near the confluence of the rivers Avon, Nadder and Wyle.

1.3 Archaeological background

- 1.3.1 The Site and its immediate surroundings are of high archaeological and historical potential, including important concentrations of redeposited Palaeolithic hand-axes and a rich, early Saxon inhumation cemetery, both lying to the east, although no evidence of either period was found during the evaluation.
- 1.3.2 The Site lies in the north-eastern corner of the medieval city, adjacent to the earth ramparts of the city's defences, particularly a slighted section in the vicinity of the College Street car park and swimming pool, although no firm evidence of these was found during the evaluation. An upstanding part of the defences immediately to the east of the Site is a Scheduled Monument (SM 736).
- 1.3.3 There is also a high potential of deposits and features relating to the medieval St Edmund's College and its successors. The college was founded in 1269 century to accommodate and support a community of priests serving the church of St Edmund's to the west. The evaluation revealed structural remains relating to the College in the southern part of the Site, but no medieval burials were located, suggesting that the churchyard had never extended into the northern and western parts of the Site. The present Grade II* Listed building was built in 1670 by the Wyndham family, with later additions and alterations, and surrounded by extensive parkland. Two adjacent walls demarcating the former College grounds are Grade II Listed.
- 1.3.4 Deposits and features of probable medieval date, relating to the horticultural and agricultural use of an open area, were identified during the evaluation in the gardens to the north of the Council House, and there was evidence of extensive post-medieval and modern landscaping in some parts of the Site.

2 AIMS AND METHODS

- 2.1.1 The aim of the watching brief was to increase the level of knowledge with regard to the survival of any archaeological remains that might be located adjacent to the Site, through the recording of a number of geo-technical trial pits required to establish the nature of the local geological strata. Observation of the site investigations provided an opportunity to assess levels of

archaeological survival in areas not previously investigated, and so augment the results of the archaeological evaluation.

2.1.2 Five trial pits were hand-excavated by the geotechnical contractors in locations designed largely to inform development's engineering team (**Fig. 1**). Trial pit 1 was not excavated.

2.1.3 The archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10, and a photographic record of the investigations was maintained.

3 RESULTS

3.1.1 The observations of the trial pits, described below, are summarised in **Appendix 1**.

3.2 Trial pit 2

3.2.1 Observation of this trial pit, revealing made ground above the natural chalk, confirmed that ground levels in Area B (Swimming Pool) had been considerably disturbed and modified as a result of cut and fill construction in the 1970s.

3.3 Trial pit 3

3.3.1 This trial pit indicated that the existing wall foundations in Area A (Bourne Hill Offices) sat upon a layer of sandstone (context 304). This is in contrast to the foundation of faced flint nodules, and brick-lined drain, revealed to the immediate south-east during the evaluation, possibly relating to the foundations of St. Edmunds College. The trial pit produced no datable evidence.

3.4 Trial pit 4

3.4.1 This trial pit was located in an area not previously investigated, but revealed only topsoil, subsoil and natural, with no archaeological deposits.

3.5 Trial pit 6

3.5.1 This trial pit was located immediately north of the existing Victorian extension at its most easterly extent, and it was hoped that it might reveal foundations associated with St. Edmunds College, as well as the level of landscaping and ground modification assumed to have taken place when the park around the house was created in the 17th century. The entire depth of the trial pit consisted of made ground.

3.6 Trial pit 7

3.6.1 This trial pit revealed deposits predominately of post-medieval date. The upper layers revealed a post-medieval brick pathway (702) and its mortar foundation (703), while the lower layers (706) and (707), containing post-

medieval pottery, tile, clay pipe, shell and animal bone, appeared to correspond to an undated east-west aligned feature of unknown function that had been exposed in an evaluation trench immediately to the east. A piece of worked flint in context 707 is assumed to be residual.

4 FINDS

- 4.1.1 Finds were recovered only from trial pit 7, from several contexts (**Table 1**). With the exception of the ceramic building material (CBM) which comprises fragments of medieval roof tiles, all of the finds recovered are demonstrably or probably of post-medieval date (17th to 20th century).

Context	Animal bone	CBM	Clay pipe	Bottle glass	Pottery	Oyster shell	Iron
702					2/88		
703					1/9		
704				6/349		1/27	1 object
706	1/1				1/79	1/23	
707		8/307	1/3		2/8	1/66	
Total	1/1	8/307	1/3	6/349	6/184	3/116	1 object

CBM = ceramic building material

Table 1: All finds by context (number/weight in grammes)

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Archaeological significance

- 5.1.1 The watching brief provided only limited additional information to supplement that provided by the earlier evaluation, three of the trial pits (2, 4 and 6) revealing either no archaeological deposits or made ground.
- 5.1.2 Apart from ceramic roof tiles of medieval date, there were no finds or features that could possibly be associated with the medieval St. Edmund's College.
- 5.1.3 The only datable archaeological deposits were of post-medieval date, probably relating to an east-west aligned feature of unknown function previously recorded in the adjacent evaluation trench.

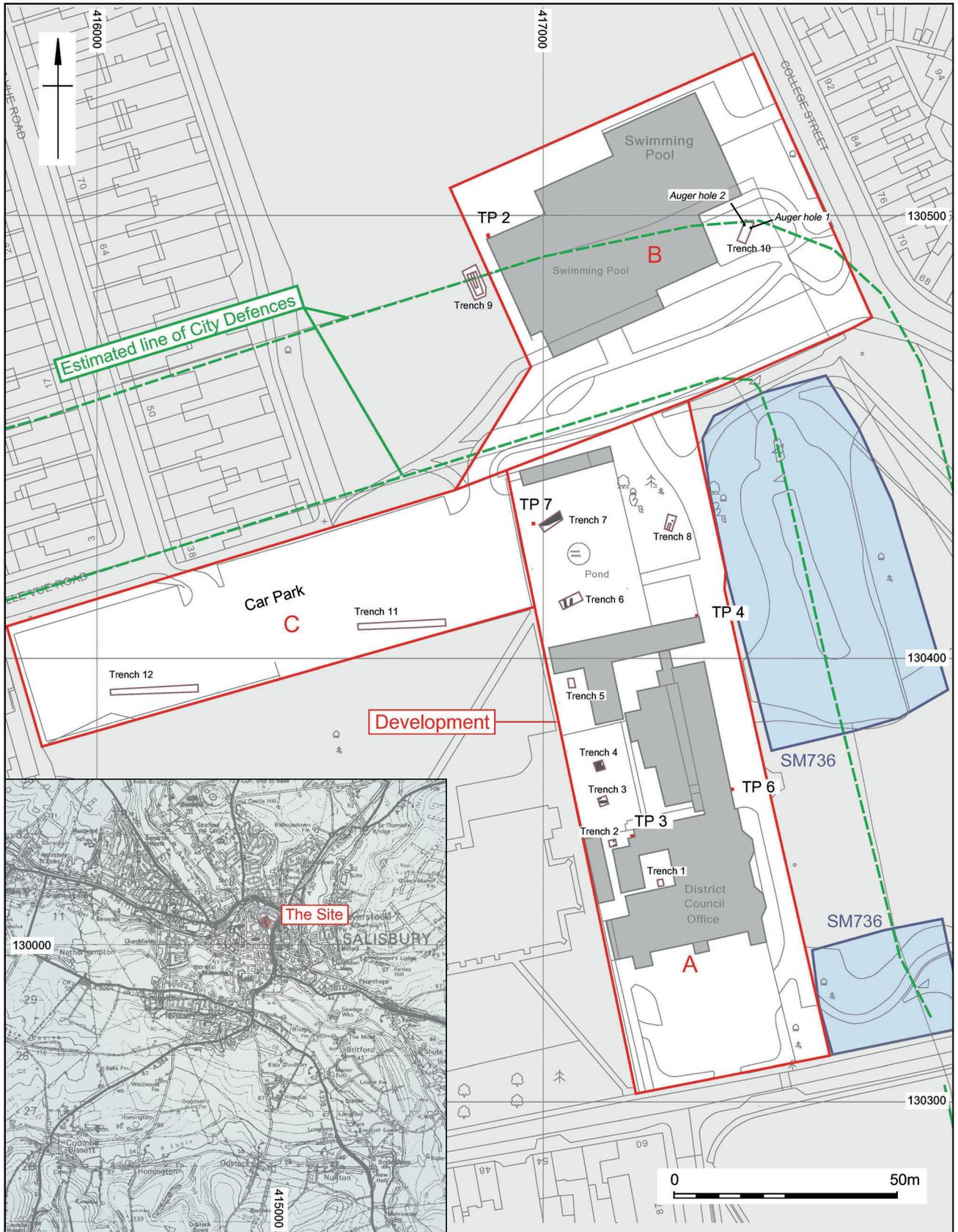
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APPENDIX 1: Geotechnical trial pit summary

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)
<i>Trial pit 2: length 0.80, width 0.40m, maximum depth 1.27m</i>			
201	Deposit	Turf and topsoil	0 – 0.10
202	Deposit	Made ground – rubble, brick	0.10 – 1.10
203	Deposit	Natural chalk	1.10 – 1.27
<i>Trial pit 3: length 0.35m, width 0.35m, maximum depth 1.50m</i>			
301	Deposit	Turf and topsoil	0 – 0.10
302	Deposit	Made ground – rubble	0.10 – 0.60
305	Deposit	Brick wall	0 – 0.62
306	Cut	Modern building foundations	0 – 0.74
304	Deposit	Sandstone layer	0.62 – 0.74
303	Deposit	Degraded chalk and clay natural	0.60 – 1.12
<i>Trial pit 4: length 0.35m, width 0.30m, maximum depth 1.50m</i>			
401	Deposit	Turf and topsoil	0 – 0.45
402	Deposit	Sandy clay subsoil	0.45 – 0.60
403	Deposit	Sandy clay with chalk and flint inclusions – natural	0.60 – 1.50
<i>Trial pit 6: length 0.60m, width 0.40m, maximum depth 0.80m</i>			
601	Deposit	Made ground – tarmac onto gravel onto rubble with dark greyish brown silty clay at bottom	0 – 0.05
<i>Trial pit 7: length 0.60m, width 0.52m, maximum depth 1.98m</i>			
701	Deposit	Turf and topsoil	0 – 0.11
702	Deposit	Modern brick layer, contained pottery sherd	0.11 – 0.23
703	Deposit	Grey mortar, contained willow pattern pottery on interface with deposit (704)	0.23 – 0.30
704	Deposit	Brick rubble, contained a broken glass bottle, shell and a heavily degraded metal object	0.30 – 0.50
709	Deposit	Layer of slate	0.50 – 0.53
705	Deposit	Layer of degraded chalk	0.53 – 0.62
706	Deposit	Dark brown silty clay with heavy root disturbance, contained shell, pottery and animal bone	0.62 – 0.83
707	Deposit	Light orangey brown silty clay with 1% charcoal inclusions, contained worked flint (residual), tile, shell, and clay pipe	0.83 – 1.05
708	Deposit	Light brown silty clay and degraded chalk – natural	1.05 – 1.98



Key Geotechnical trial pits WA evaluation trenches Area of Scheduled Monument 736 	Reproduced from the 1994 Ordnance survey 1: 50 000 Landranger® map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright, Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire. SP4 6EB. Licence Number:AL 100006861. Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright (2003). All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.			
	Date:	13/08/04	Revision Number:	1
	Scale:	1:1250	Illustrator:	MCL/LJC/SEJ
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Site location, showing Geotechnical Trial Pits and previous evaluation trenches

Figure 1



WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED.

Head Office: Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.

Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

London Office: Unit 701, The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY.

Tel: 020 7953 7494 Fax: 020 7953 7499 london-info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

