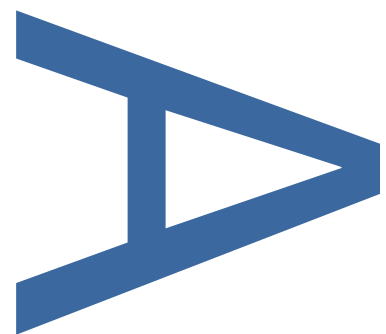
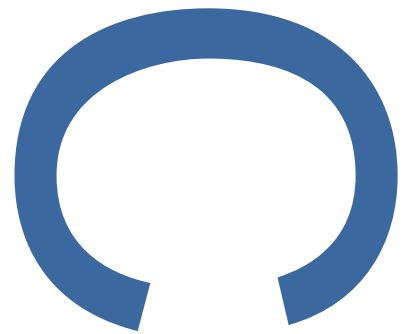


**OAKLANDS COLLEGE  
SMALLFORD CAMPUS,  
HATFIELD ROAD,  
ST ALBANS,  
HERTODFRDshire**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF**

**SITE CODE: HOCC19**

**JULY 2019**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY**


## DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

Oaklands College Smallford Campus, Hatfield Road, St Albans,  
Hertfordshire, AL4 0JA

Type of project

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code			K5636
	Name	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	Z Pozorski		31.07.2019
Graphics Prepared by:	M Roughley		27.07.2019
Graphics Checked by:	M Roughley		30.07.2019
Project Manager Sign-off:	Z Pozorski		31.07.2019

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved
1	01.08.2019	ZP	PM

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**OAKLANDS COLLEGE SMALLFORD CAMPUS, HATFIELD ROAD, ST ALBANS,  
HERTFORDSHIRE, AL4 0JA  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

---

**SITE CODE:** HOCC19

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:** ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL

**PLANNING REFERENCE:** 5/2013/2589

**CENTRAL NGR:** TL 18221 07809

**WRITTEN BY:** ZBIGNIEW POZORSKI  
PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

**PROJECT MANAGER:** ZBIGNIEW POZORSKI  
PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

**COMMISSIONING CLIENT:** CGMS HERITAGE, NOW RPS CONSULTING

**VERSION:** 2.0 WITH RPS CONSULTING COMMENTS

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**July 2019**

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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at Oaklands College Smallford Campus, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL4 0JA. The site is located within the campus and is centred at National Grid Reference TL 18221 07809.
- 1.2 The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019.
- 1.3 The earliest deposit on the site, encountered in Area A, was a light to mid yellow, firm, silty clay present at c. 0.20 – 0.40m below existing ground level. Natural clay was overlain by modern made ground across the majority of the study site.
- 1.4 High concentration of asbestos was found within the made ground and access to those parts of the site was restricted.
- 1.5 The archaeological monitoring confirmed the extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and established that the potential for any archaeological remains to survive at the study site was poor.
- 1.6 The archaeological watching brief demonstrated that no archaeological features or horizons were present within the monitored parts of the site.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at Oaklands College Smallford Campus, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL4 0JA (Figure 1). The site is located within the campus and is centred at National Grid Reference TL 18221 07809.
- 2.2 Planning permission was granted for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site including residential and college developments (St Albans City & District Council Ref. 5/2013/2589).
- 2.3 The monitoring was carried out between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019.
- 2.4 The site had a potential for archaeological remains of Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and Romano-British date. Several archaeological investigations in proximity of the site revealed remains dated to those periods.
- 2.5 The investigation was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited under the supervision of Sandy Pullen and Lawrence Morgan-Shelbourne, and the project management of Zbigniew Pozorski. The archaeological work was commissioned by CgMs Heritage, now RPS Consulting, part of RPS Group Plc.
- 2.6 The site archive was identified using the unique site code HOCC19. The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will, upon completion of the project, be deposited with the St Albans Museum under that code.
- 2.7 All works were undertaken in accordance with the following documents:
- *Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation for A Watching Brief. Oaklands College Smallford Campus, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts* (CgMs Heritage 2018)
  - *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003)
  - *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2015)
  - *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014).
  - *Fieldwork Induction Manual: Operations Manual*, Taylor, J & Brown, G. 2009, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Planning permission was granted for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site to provide new and refurbished college buildings, enabling residential development of 348 dwellings, car parking, associated access and landscaping, including demolition of existing buildings following (St Albans City & District Council Ref. 5/2013/2589).
- 3.2 The archaeological conditions (6 & 24) within the appeal decision stipulated:
- 6. No development involved in the College development shall take place on site until the applicant, or their agent or successors in title, has agreed an archaeological watching brief in accordance with a specification which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The watching brief shall be implemented as agreed therein.*
- 24. No development involved in Residential development shall take place on site until the applicant, or their agent or successors in title, has agreed an archaeological watching brief in accordance with a specification which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The watching brief shall be implemented as agreed therein.*
- 3.3 In advance of the project a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by CgMs Heritage (2018) and approved by the St Albans District Archaeologist.

## **4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

- 4.1 As outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; CgMs Heritage 2018), the archaeological work was designed to determine the presence or absence of surviving deposits and features at the site and, if present, to investigate and record them.
- 4.2 The investigation also sought to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions, and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival.
- 4.3 The following site-specific research priorities were also outlined:
- To establish the presence or otherwise of activity dating to any archaeological period. Can the period and type of activity be defined? How does this relate to similar activity occurring in proximity to the study site?
  - Provide sufficient information to, if appropriate, construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.



## **5 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

### 5.1 Geology

5.1.1 According to the British Geological Survey of England and Wales (BGS), the local geology consists of Lewes Nodular and Seaford Chalk Formation overlain by superficial deposits of the Lowestoft Formation, comprising chalky till together with glacial sands, gravels, silts and clays.

### 5.2 Topography

5.2.1 The site is situated on a naturally inclined south to north slope at heights between c. 89mOD (above Ordnance Datum) in the north, and c. 96m OD at the southernmost part of the site.

5.2.2 There are no watercourses or bodies of standing water within the site and nearby.

## **6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 6.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site was detailed in WSI for the project (CgMs 2018).
- 6.2 Several phases of previous archaeological evaluation work have been undertaken at Oaklands College.
- 6.3 In 1998, 35 linear trenches (between 10m and 50m in length) and 87 test pits (5 x 5m) were opened to the north and east of the site, with 4 trenches opened to the southwest. This investigation revealed Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age activity of pits and ditches to the north of the College. A Romano-British rectangular enclosure and a medieval boundary to the north-east of the site. Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age activity of pits and ditches were located at the south of the site, adjacent to the Hatfield Road, and possibly evidence of a Romano-British farmstead, just to the north-west (BCAS 1998).
- 6.4 The second evaluation (TVAS 2007) comprised 64 trenches (between 24 and 37m in length) opened directly east of the College area. The trenches revealed a low number of archaeological features and recovered a small number of artefacts of which only 10 struck flints were of archaeological interest. None of the features were dated, however, a speculative prehistoric date is assumed.
- 6.5 A third phase of evaluation was undertaken in 2009 and targeted at specific impacts relating to previous redevelopment proposals. The results were largely negative (Albion Archaeology 2009).
- 6.6 A fourth evaluation undertaken in June 2011 revealed ephemeral late prehistoric features to the south of the site, but no remains to the east (TVAS 2011a). A subsequent watching brief (TVAS 2011b) did not reveal archaeological remains. These remains were tentatively given a Bronze Age date and were assumed to have been significantly truncated by ploughing activity.
- 6.7 The last phase of archaeological works was undertaken in 2012 within the south-eastern limits of the study site (TVAS, 2012). The evaluation only revealed Victorian or modern activity along with deposition of made ground. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were observed. As the only previous works taken place within the boundaries of the current proposed development, the archaeological and stratigraphic results of this phase are most likely to represent those across the similarly previously developed site.
- 6.8 Metal detector surveys within the vicinity of the college have encountered Roman artefacts, a Byzantine coin and a Palaeolithic flint implement (West, 2016).

## 7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 7.1 The proposed methodology of the archaeological work was detailed in the site-specific Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs 2018) and comprised the archaeological monitoring of targeted areas of previously undisturbed ground to determine the potential for archaeological evidence to survive.
- 7.2 Archaeological monitoring mainly focused on the north-western part of the study site (Fig. 2)
- 7.3 Excavation was principally performed using a 14-ton excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket (Area A) and a bulldozer with a front toothless blade (Area B). The excavations in both areas were archaeologically monitored by PCA staff.
- 7.4 Most demolition works, including the removal of existing foundations and removal of topsoil were undertaken in 2018, before archaeological monitoring commenced.
- 7.5 During the watching brief a high concentration of asbestos was found within the made ground and access to the monitoring Area A (Figure 2) was restricted.
- 7.6 Asbestos was found in other areas of site as well and specialist remediation works were required.
- 7.7 The site had been a subject to past redevelopment and recent demolition and enabling works, which are believed to have had a negative archaeological impact. As the result the archaeological investigation was significantly restricted although it is thought the majority of the enabling and demolition works did not affect the underlying deposits.
- 7.8 The archaeological monitoring confirmed the extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and established that the potential for any archaeological remains to survive at the study site was poor.
- 7.9 Following this, consultations between RPS Consulting and St Albans District Archaeologist took place and it was agreed that the watching brief will cease due to a prospect of remaining works not affecting deposits with potential archaeological remains. Health & safety issues were also considered.
- 7.10 All recording systems adopted during the investigation were fully compatible with those most widely used elsewhere in Hertfordshire; presented in PCAs *Operations Manual 1* (Taylor, 2009). Individual descriptions of all archaeological and geological deposits were entered onto pro-forma recording sheets. All plans were recorded on polyester based drawing film, the plans of the ground reduction being at a scale 1:50. A digital photographic record was maintained during the works.
- 7.11 The complete archive produced during the monitoring exercise, comprising written, drawn and photographic records, will be deposited with the St Albans Museum under the allocated site code HOCC19.

## **8 THE MONITORING RESULTS**

- 8.1 The earliest deposit encountered in Area A (Figure 2; Plate 1) was light to mid yellow, firm, silty clay [1] thought to belong to the Lowestoft Formation deposits. The clay was present at c. 0.20 – 0.40m below existing ground level.
- 8.2 Above the clay was modern made ground [2] consisting of grey and brown silty sand with moderate CBM fragments and debris. Subsoil was only observed between the glasshouses in the north-west of the study site.
- 8.3 No archaeological features or finds were recorded during the monitoring.
- 8.4 Substantial quantities of asbestos were found during site works that needed special remediation. It is believed that material containing asbestos was disposed of at the study site in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **9 CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 The archaeological monitoring confirmed the extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and established that the potential for any archaeological remains to survive at the study site was poor.
- 9.2 The archaeological watching brief demonstrated that no archaeological features or horizons were present within the monitored parts of the site.

## 10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 10.1 Pre-Construct would like to thank Manca Petric of RPS Consulting for commissioning the work. We also thank Simon West, the St Albans District Archaeologist for his input and advice to the project.
- 10.2 The author would also like to thank Sandy Pullen and Lawrence Morgan-Shelbourne for archaeological supervision of the works and Mark Roughley for the illustrations.

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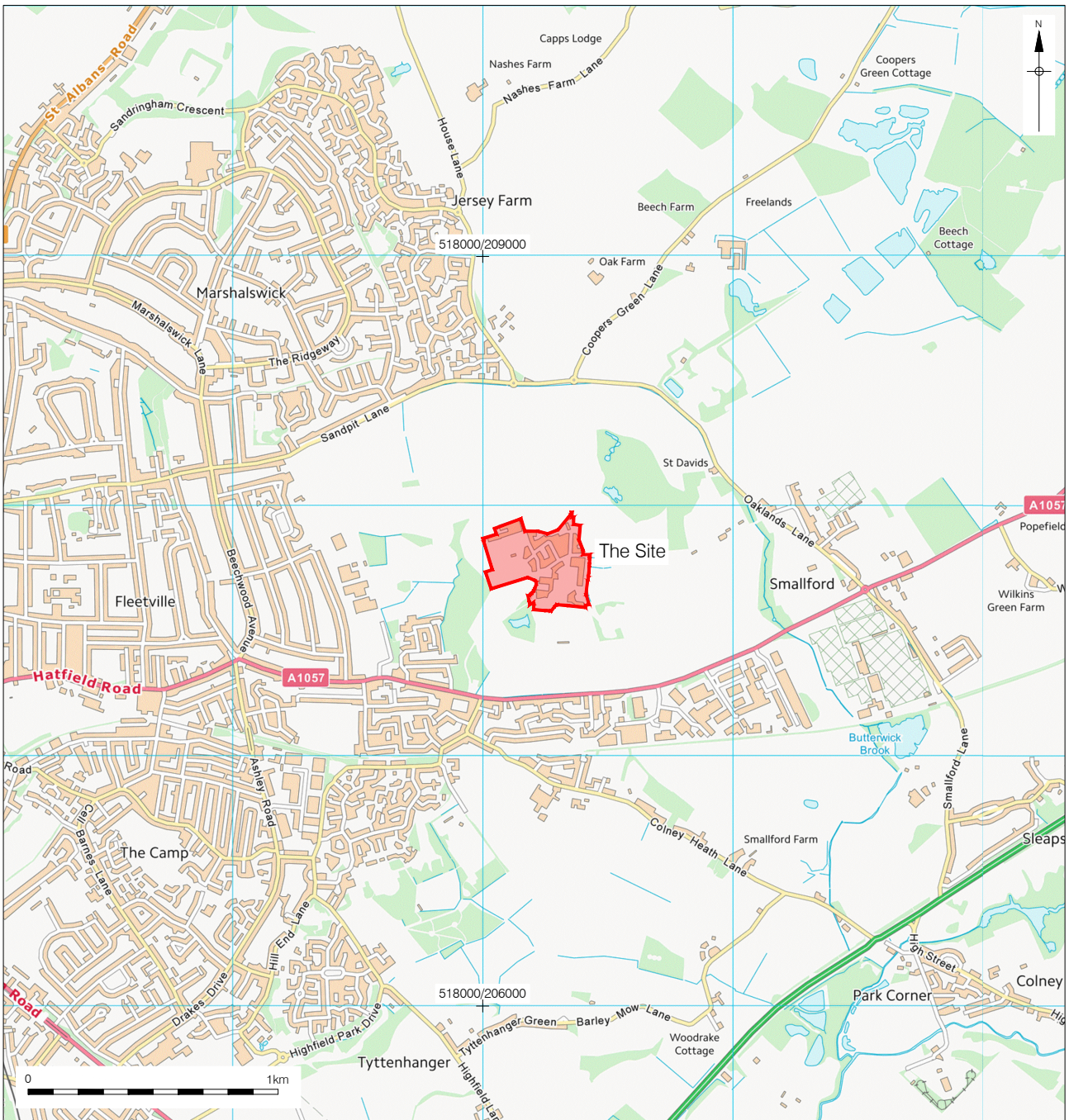
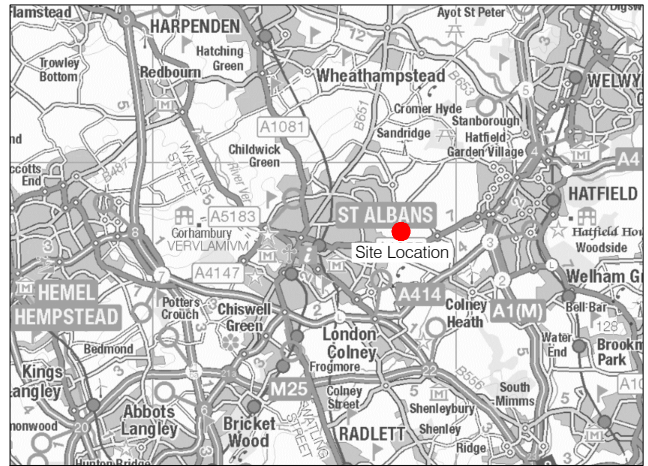
## PLATES



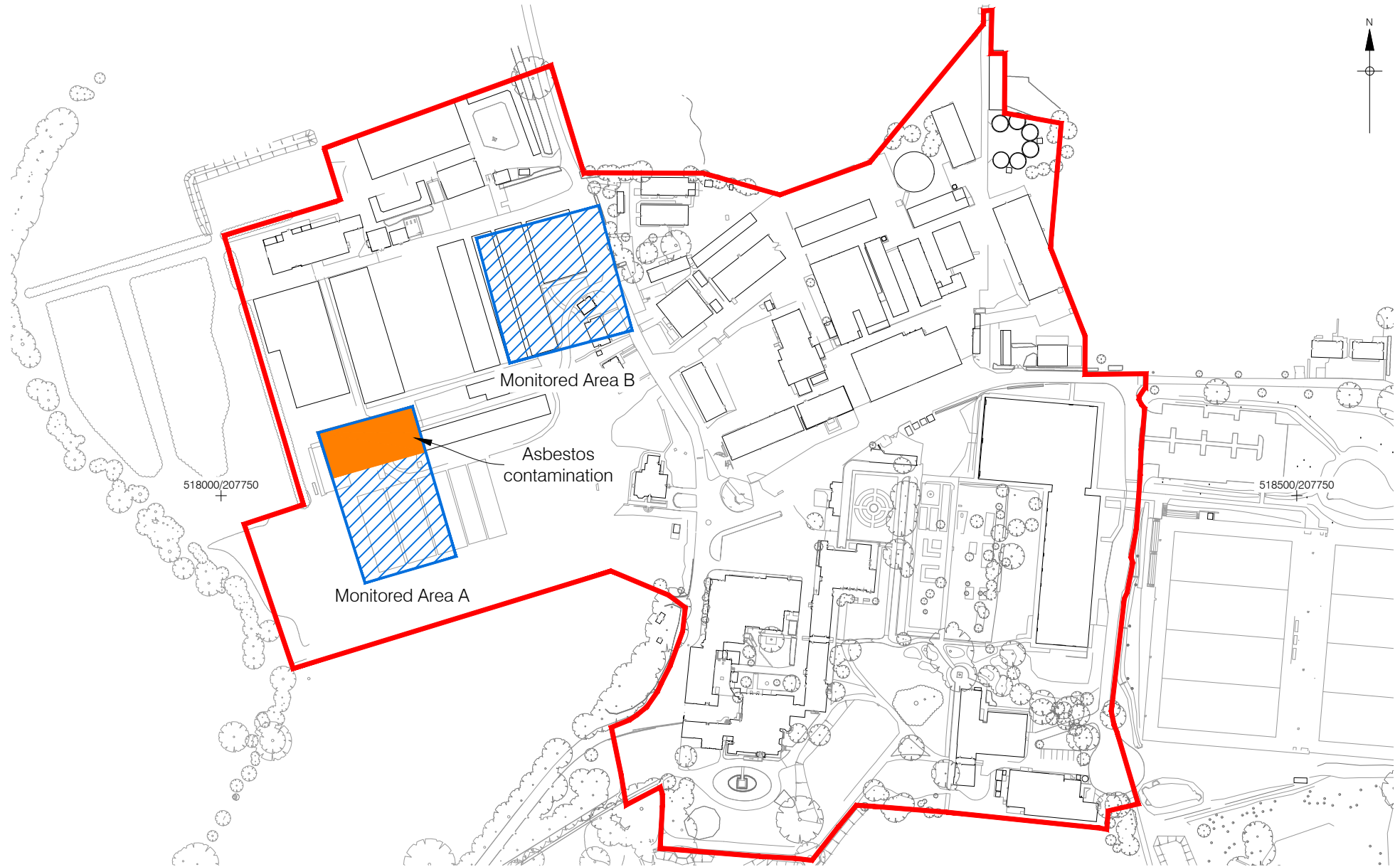
**Plate 1: Monitoring Area A during excavation, looking north-east.**



**Plate 2: Monitoring Area B, ground reduction, looking north-west.**



Topographic survey supplied by the client.



0 100m

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26/07/19 MR

Figure 2  
Detailed Site Location showing Areas Monitored  
1:2,500 at A4



## APPENDIX 1: OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: preconst1-361709**

### Project details

Project name	Oaklands College Smallford Campus, St Albans, Hertfordshire
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at Oaklands College Smallford Campus, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL4 0JA. The site is located within the campus and is centred at National Grid Reference TL 18221 07809. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered. The natural clay was present directly below modern made ground at 0.20m - 0.40m below existing ground level.
Project dates	Start: 03-07-2019 End: 11-07-2019
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	HOCC19 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Residential 2 - Institutional and communal accommodation
Monument type	NONE None
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

---

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE ST ALBANS COLNEY HEATH Oaklands College Smallford Campus, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL4 0JA
Postcode	AL4 0JA
Study area	1000 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 18221 07809 51.756012769938 -0.287001853712 51 45 21 N 000 17 13 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 89m Max: 96m

---

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	St Albans District Council
Project design originator	CgMs Heritage
Project director/manager	Zbigniew Pozorski
Project supervisor	Alexander Pullen
Type of sponsor/funding body	Consultancy
Name of sponsor/funding body	CgMs/RPS

---

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	St Albans Museum
Digital Archive recipient	St Albans Museum
Digital Media available	"Text"
Paper Archive recipient	St Albans Museum
Paper Media available	"Photograph","Plan","Report","Context sheet","Drawing"

---

Entered by	Zbigniew Pozorski (zpozorski@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	31 July 2019

## APPENDIX 2: HERTFORDSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:  Oaklands College Smallford Campus, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL4 0JA		
County: Hertfordshire	District: St Albans	
Village/Town: Smallford	Parish: Colney Heath	
Planning application reference: 5/2013/2589		
HER Enquiry reference:		
Nature of application: Residential and educational redevelopment		
Present land use: College campus		
Size of application area: c. 12000m <sup>2</sup>	Size of area investigated: c. 1000m <sup>2</sup>	
NGR (to 8 figures minimum): TL 18221 07809		
Site code (if applicable): HOCC19		
Contractor: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd		
Type of work: Archaeological Watching Brief		
Date of work:	Start: 03/07/2019	Finish: 11/07/2019
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: St Albans Museum		
Related HER Nos:	Periods represented: modern	
Relevant previous summaries/reports n/a		
Summary of fieldwork results:  The substantial part of the groundworks consisting of topsoil strip in various locations throughout the site had been carried out before the monitoring commenced. During the monitoring high concentrations of asbestos have been found in the made ground deposits additionally inhibiting archaeologist's ability to investigate the area.  The natural clay was present directly below modern made ground at 0.20m – 0.40m below existing ground level. Most of the works consisted of a ground reduction carried out by a bulldozer. The reduction did not reveal other deposits than the made ground.  No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.		
Author of summary: Z Pozorski	Date of summary: 30/07/2019	

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