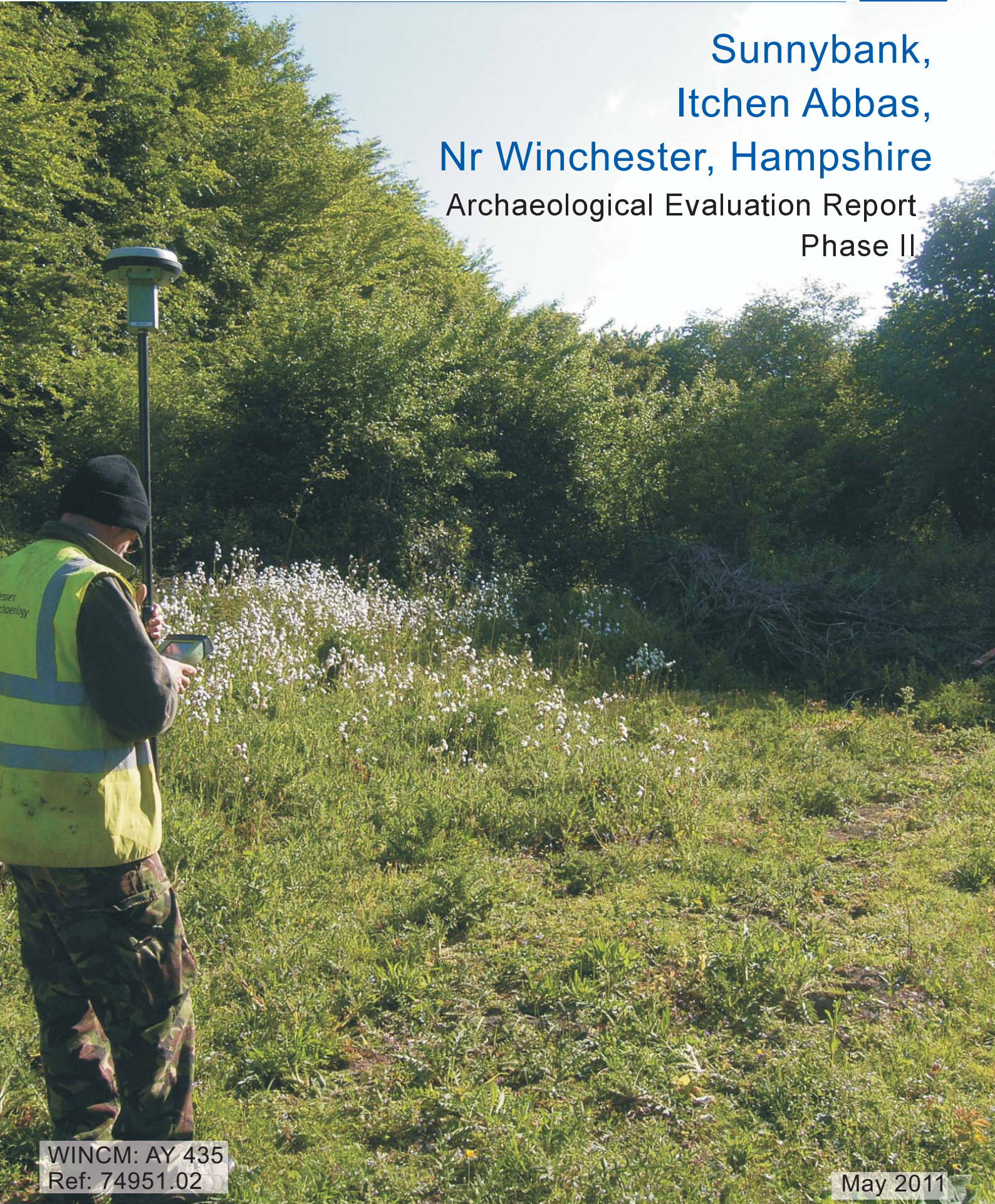




Sunnybank,
Itchen Abbas,
Nr Winchester, Hampshire
Archaeological Evaluation Report
Phase II





Sunnybank, Itchen Abbas, Nr Winchester, Hampshire.

Archaeological Evaluation Report (Phase II)

WINCM: AY 435

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**Sunnybank, Itchen Abbas,
Nr Winchester, Hampshire.**

Archaeological Evaluation Report (Phase II)

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Plate 4: South-west facing 1m representative section of Trench 9.

Sunnybank, Itchen Abbas, Nr Winchester, Hampshire.

Archaeological Evaluation Report (Phase II)

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by F. Swinscoe, executor for the estate of Miss J Edmonds, through their agent Turley Associates, to carry out an archaeological evaluation at land to the rear of Sunnybank, Itchen Abbas, near Winchester, Hampshire, centred on (NGR 453640 132920), hereafter 'the Site'. The work was required by the Winchester City Council Historic Environment Officer, prior to the submission of a planning application for a residential development.

An earlier archaeological evaluation (Phase I) in 2010 in the western half of the Site revealed archaeological features of Bronze Age, Romano-British and Saxon date. A substantial feature interpreted as a possible Bronze Age pond barrow measuring nearly 30m in diameter was identified in all four trenches and a number of north-south aligned inhumation graves, one containing a cremation vessel were found on the western side of the barrow and thought to be Romano-British in date.

The Phase II evaluation comprising the mechanical excavation of 5 trenches investigated the eastern half of the Site and revealed that the extensive archaeological remains identified in the 2010 evaluation, did not extend to the eastern limits of the Site. No archaeological features were present.

The absence of archaeology in the eastern half of the proposed development area is consistent with the results from earlier evaluations to the north of the Site, which revealed that the eastern area was largely devoid of features.

Sunnybank, Itchen Abbas, Nr Winchester, Hampshire.

Archaeological Evaluation Report (Phase II)

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Fenella and Guy Swinscoe and their agents Turley Associates, who commissioned the work. Wessex Archaeology would also like to acknowledge the advice of Tracey Matthews, Historic Environment Officer (HEO), to Winchester City Council who monitored the work on behalf of the local authority.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Thompson and Darryl Freer. This report was prepared by Steve Thompson with report illustrations undertaken by Elizabeth James.

The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.

Sunnybank, Itchen Abbas, Nr Winchester, Hampshire.

Archaeological Evaluation Report (Phase II)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by F. Swinscoe, executor for the estate of Miss J Edmonds, through their agent Turley Associates, to carry out an archaeological evaluation at land to the rear of Sunnybank, Itchen Abbas, near Winchester, Hants, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 453640 132920, hereafter 'the Site'. The work was required by the Winchester City Council HEO, prior to the submission of a planning application for a residential development.

1.1.2 An earlier archaeological evaluation (Phase I), (WA, 2010) in the western half of the Site revealed archaeological features of Bronze Age, Romano-British and Saxon date. A substantial feature interpreted as a possible Bronze Age pond barrow nearly 30m in diameter was identified in all four trenches and a number of north-south aligned inhumation graves, one containing a cremation vessel were found on the western side of the barrow and thought to be Romano-British in date.

1.1.3 The remains identified are considered of importance and could constrain development proposals in the western half of the Site. In order to inform the development proposals, the Historic Environment Officer (HEO) advised that a second phase of evaluation (Phase II) in the eastern part of the Site be undertaken and should comprise the excavation of 5 trenches.

1.1.4 A Project Design (WA 2011) set out the methodology for the field evaluation. It was prepared in accordance with standards and guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists and '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*' (MoRPHE), (English Heritage, 2006).

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site (**Figure 1**) measures approximately 0.5ha, and contains the house 'Sunnybank' in the southern part of the Site. To the north-west, a higher, rectangular open area measuring 120m by 25m is positioned. The western half of this area has been subject to an earlier evaluation (WA, 2010).

1.2.2 The area investigated in this programme of works measured approximately 32m by 18m and covered an area of 0.057 hectares and was centred on NGR 453680, 132941. The land slopes from north to south from 56.68m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 55.79m aOD (a drop of 0.89m) towards the River Itchen.

1.2.3 The B3047 road lies to the south of the Site and Little Hayes Lane runs to the east of the Site. To the north lies the playing field of Itchen Abbas Primary School and a meadow. The latter, thought to contain the greater part of the known Late Romano-British and Saxon cemetery, lies south of, and was excluded from, a housing development built in the 1990s, in order to preserve the cemetery *in situ*.

1.2.4 The Site lies on a raised spur of free draining Upper Cretaceous Chalk overlooking the flood plain of the River Itchen to the south. The Site is currently open and grassed, with small trees and scrub.

1.3 Archaeological Background and Previous Work

1.3.1 The Site lies some 7km east of the City of Winchester, within the historic village of Itchen Abbas, which lies on the northern side of the River Itchen valley. The Site lies in an area of known archaeological and historic monuments, sites and findspots dating from the prehistoric to the medieval and post-medieval periods. The following sections provide a summary of information relevant to the Site contained in the Historic Environment Record held by Winchester City Council's HEO.

1.3.2 Evidence for use of the Itchen Valley landscape by early farmers in the Neolithic period (4,000 – 2,400 BC) is relatively sparse but includes a penannular ditch discovered in 1994 during a watching brief carried out to the north of the Site during house building close to Little Hayes Lane. This discovery demonstrates the long use of the Site and may be taken to indicate that features of a similar date could survive in the vicinity of the Site.

1.3.3 The 1994 watching brief also recorded features of probably late Bronze Age date (2,400 – 700 BC), a period which is otherwise represented in the landscape by funerary monuments, notably a group of barrows recorded on a chalk ridge 4.5km to the north-east. Later Bronze Age settlement has been recorded to the west at Winnall Down and it is considered that the Itchen Valley was by this time and into the Iron Age (700 BC – AD 43) settled and farmed relatively intensely. The Iron Age Hillfort at St Catherine's Hill near Winchester and the Iron Age enclosure at Oram's Arbour in Winchester represent a focus of economic, social and political organisation in the Itchen Valley that is otherwise represented by widespread evidence of settlement. However, close to the Site Iron Age finds are sparse but include a gold Stater of Verica from Close to Avington House and Iron Age pottery near Yavington Farm.

1.3.4 The main focus of Romano-British (AD 43 – 410) activity in the area was the town of *Venta Belgarum* (Winchester). A number of Roman *villas* are recorded within or close to the Itchen Valley and some appear to have developed from earlier Iron Age farmsteads, such as at Kingsworthy to the west of the Site.

1.3.5 The cemetery to the north of, and partially within the Site, appears to have been in use from the Late Roman period. At least one burial typical of the period has so far been confirmed, although further north-south aligned burials were identified during the 2010 evaluation undertaken within the Site. The later use of the cemetery in the early Saxon period has also been

demonstrated to the north. An account of the earliest discovery and subsequent investigation of the cemetery is provided below.

The Late Roman and Saxon cemetery

- 1.3.6 The cemetery was discovered in 1984 by workmen installing a gas main alongside the eastern boundary of the primary school playing field to the north of the Site. Machinery forming the gas main trench was halted and was found to be entangled by an iron object subsequently identified as a sword by staff of the Winchester Museums Service.
- 1.3.7 A limited investigation of the gas main trench identified that the sword had come from a grave which was then entirely excavated and found to also contain other grave goods datable to the mid/late 5th century AD, including an iron socketed spearhead, iron knife, bronze chape and two bronze belt fittings. A further nineteen graves were identified along the gas main trench, but not investigated. All the graves were aligned east-west.
- 1.3.8 Winchester Museums Service staff returned to the playing field in 1986 and, in a targeted excavation close to the previous discovery, investigated two graves. One, aligned north-south, contained a burial accompanied by grave goods of typically Late Roman date, including a coin and hobnails, while the other, aligned east-west, had been plough damaged and contained a burial which appeared to have been tightly bound but otherwise contained no datable finds.
- 1.3.9 In 1991 a proposal to develop the Little Hayes estate led to an archaeological evaluation of the paddock immediately east of the school playing field and north of the Site. Over 60 graves and a small number of cremation burials were recorded, but none excavated. The graves were arranged in discernible rows and at least one was contained within a circular enclosure. The cremations were also identified as lying within small enclosures.
- 1.3.10 The evaluation demonstrated that the cemetery extended east of the initial gas main discoveries and although it was possible to estimate both its northern and eastern limits the southern extent could not be confirmed. Graves were recorded close to the southern boundary of the paddock and have been confirmed during the Phase I (WA, 2010) evaluation (see below). Subsequent geophysical survey of the paddock carried out in 1992 did not elucidate further the extent or content of the cemetery.
- 1.3.11 The proposed development of the Little Hayes estate was eventually consented, but excluded the extent of the cemetery within the paddock, effectively protecting it. However, given the close proximity of the consented development area to the cemetery, two areas were the subject of open area excavation flanking the northern and eastern limits of the cemetery. No graves were found although a penannular enclosure of apparently Neolithic date and a scatter of features of possible late Bronze Age date were found to the east of the cemetery.
- 1.3.12 In 1994, a requirement to install a septic tank within the protected area of the former paddock led to the discovery of a single grave, which was excavated by the Winchester Museums Service. The grave contained the burial of an

infant accompanied by a globular vessel thought to date to the period AD425-475.

- 1.3.13 In 2001 the proposed construction of a classroom building within the primary school, to the north of the gas main discoveries and west of the paddock evaluation, led to an evaluation carried out by Southern Archaeological Services. The evaluation was restricted to the excavation of six test pits on the positions of proposed pad foundations. Although no graves were found, it is not possible to conclude that the area of the classroom lies beyond the extent of the cemetery.
- 1.3.14 In 2008 Hampshire County Council commissioned Wessex Archaeology (WA 2008) to conduct a watching brief during installation of a multi-use games area within the primary school playing field. Located west of the gas main discoveries, the watching brief recorded no graves in an area of stripped chalk, although other features including pits and a posthole, all undated, were found. The apparent absence of graves may suggest that the western extent of the cemetery lies between the area watched and the previous gas main discoveries.

2010 evaluation

- 1.3.15 An archaeological evaluation at Sunnybank, Itchen Abbas, in connection with proposals to develop the Site for housing was undertaken in 2010. Four trenches were machine excavated and revealed archaeological features of Bronze Age, Romano-British and Saxon date.
- 1.3.16 A substantial feature interpreted as a possible Bronze Age pond barrow nearly 30m in diameter was revealed in all four trenches (**Figure 1**). This feature was partially investigated in order to characterise its form and deposits. Three north-south aligned inhumation graves, one containing a cremation vessel, and all almost certainly of Romano-British date, were found close to the western side of the barrow in Trench 1. Also in Trench 1, three cut features were found inside the western edge of the barrow, all filled with coarse chalk rubble; these were not fully investigated, although there is a possibility that these are funerary in nature, given their location. A posthole was also recorded close to these features. One definite and two possible inhumation graves all probably aligned east to west were found close to the southern side of the barrow, in Trench 2.
- 1.3.17 Evidence from Trench 3 and from north of the Site possibly indicates that the eastern extent of the Site has lower archaeological potential. Beyond the pond barrow in Trench 3, two tree throws and four small circular features were recorded and were considered to be either root disturbance or possible postholes. None were excavated as part of the evaluation.
- 1.3.18 The cemetery is well preserved and an important archaeological monument. It can be compared with other cemeteries in the Itchen Valley containing burials of Late Roman and/or Saxon date such as those at Lankhills in Winchester (Clarke, 1979), Winnall (Meaney and Hawkes, 1970) and Kingsworthy (Hawkes and Grainger, 2003) Although only a few graves within the cemetery have been fully investigated its chronological development would appear to span the period of transition between the Late Roman and Saxon periods.

2 AIMS

2.1 Archaeological Evaluation

2.1.1 The aim of the evaluation was to determine the location, extent, character, condition and potential significance of archaeological remains on the Site that may be threatened by the proposed development. The results of the evaluation are set out in this report, which aims to:

- Assess existing and proposed impacts on the archaeological potential of the Site;
- Inform decisions concerning the future treatment of the Site's archaeological potential in light of development proposals;
- Consider the results of the evaluation in light of the archaeological potential of the Site to contribute to current local, regional and wider archaeological research objectives.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of five trial trenches (numbered **5-9**) arranged to establish, primarily, if further archaeological features extend into the eastern half of the Site (**Figure 1**). The trenches measured approximately 10m by 1.6m. The location of each trench was agreed by the HEO prior to the commencement of works however several trench locations were subsequently adjusted as a result of Site conditions.

3.1.2 The trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless bucket, under the supervision of Wessex Archaeology. Mechanical excavation continued in spits through topsoil and subsoil down to the uppermost archaeological features or natural deposits, whichever was highest. Upcast from the evaluation trenches was positioned to the side of the trench and scanned for artefacts.

3.1.3 The trenches were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system and under the **WINCM Site Code AY 435**. A representative section and profile of each trench was drawn at 1:10 and an overall Site plan prepared.

3.1.4 All trenches were mapped using a using a Leica GNSS GPS survey system and tied in to the Ordnance Survey in order to provide an accurate planned record of the results of the evaluation.

3.1.5 A photographic record was maintained utilising black and white film and colour slide images. A digital photographic record was also maintained. The record included detailed trench shots and their location and context, along with a series of more general site shots.

3.1.6 On completion the trenches were backfilled. The evaluation was carried out on the 12th and 13th May 2011.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following section provides a summary of the results of the evaluation, based on the Site archive. Trench and context descriptions are contained within **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Site-Wide Stratigraphy

4.2.1 The stratigraphic nature of the deposits was generally consistent across the Site, with similar deposits and depths of material observed within Trenches **5-9**.

4.2.2 The Site was sealed by 0.24m-0.34m of topsoil recorded as **501, 601, 701, 801** and **901**. The topsoil increased in depth towards the southern limit of the Site, due to the slope and movement of material. In all trenches except Trench **5**, the topsoil overlay a colluvium/hillwash deposit, recorded as **602, 702, 802** and **902** which increased in thickness from 0.10m at the northern extent of the Site to 0.39m towards the southern limit, due to the slope.

4.2.3 In Trench **5** the topsoil sealed the natural chalk geology **502**. In Trenches **6-9**, the colluvium/hillwash sealed the natural geology, recorded as **603, 703, 803** and **903**.

4.2.4 No archaeological features or finds identified from Trenches **5-9**.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1.1 The evaluation was successful in identifying that the complex of multi-period archaeological features identified in the 2010 evaluation (WA 2010) did not extend to the eastern limits of the Site. The absence of features in this eastern area was consistent with the pattern of archaeological remains revealed in the 1991 evaluation to the north of the Site and east of the Itchen Abbas Primary School (as discussed in Section **1.3**).

5.1.2 As shown in **Figure 1**, the 1991, 2010 and 2011 evaluations suggest that there is a distinct zone of archaeological features concentrated to the western and central area of the Site (and the area to the north) with clear areas devoid of archaeology towards the eastern limit of the land to the rear of Sunnybank.

6 ARCHIVE

6.1.1 Following completion of the evaluation the Site archive will be prepared to the relevant standards set out in 'Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment' (MoRPHE), English Heritage (2006), and required by the Winchester Museums Service. It is anticipated that the archive will be deposited with the latter, but at present it is held at the Salisbury office of Wessex Archaeology under the site code WINCM:AY435 (Wessex Archaeology project code 74951).

7 COPYRIGHT

7.1 Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

- 7.1.1 The Trust for Wessex Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. Excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of the report by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the specification. Any document produced to meet planning requirements may be copied for planning purposes by the Local Planning Authority.
- 7.1.2 A licence will also be granted to the Winchester HEO (which includes the Winchester City UAD/Historic Environment Record), for the use of all documents arising from this project in all matters relating directly to the project, as well as for bona fide research purposes.

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Appendix 1: Trench Summaries

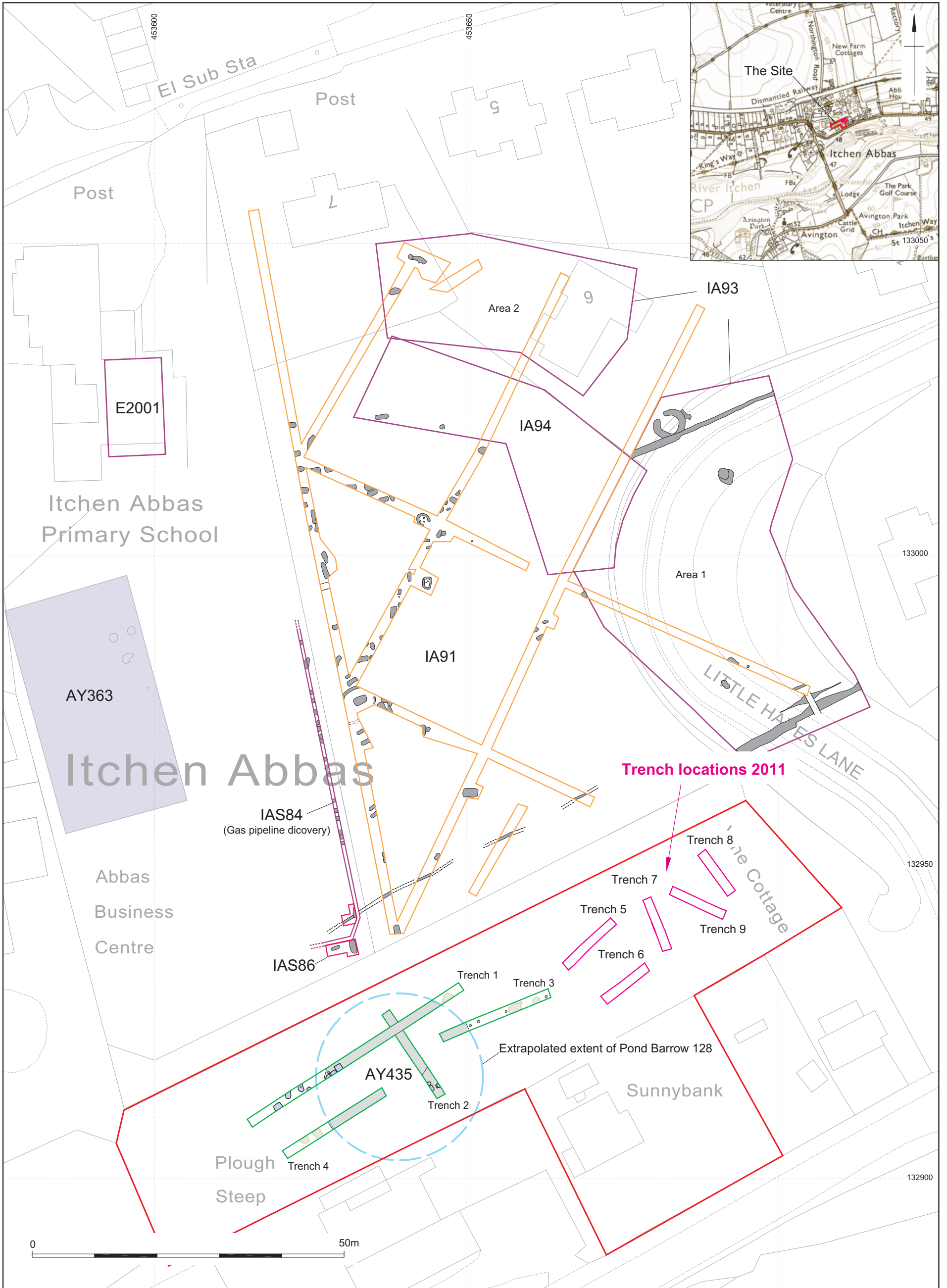
Trench 5		Centre-line Coordinates	453665.93, 132934.06 453673.63, 132941.31
Dimensions: 10m x 1.55m	Max Depth: 0.35m	Ground Surface m aOD	SW 56.46 – NE 56.78m
Context	Description		Depth (bgl)
501	Topsoil	Current topsoil of area of scrub land. Very loose mid grey brown silty loam, heavily bioturbated, recent roots, overlies natural 502.	0-0.33m
502	Natural	Natural chalk geology with occasional small flint nodules <0.02m and large blocks <0.10m. Heavily disturbed by recent root action, no evidence of overlying colluvium/hillwash. No archaeology.	0.33m+

Trench 6		Centre-line Coordinates	453672.10, 132928.63 453679.00, 132933.97
Dimensions: 10m x 1.55m	Max Depth: 0.44m	Ground Surface	SW 55.59 – 55.72m
Context	Description		Depth (bgl)
601	Topsoil	Current topsoil of area of scrub. Mid greyish brown silty loam occasional small flints. Heavily bioturbated.	0-0.24m
602	Layer	Colluvium/hillwash layer, pale brown clayey silt with occasional sub angular flints <0.03m and common bioturbation, clear horizon onto chalk.	0.24-0.44m
603	Natural	Natural chalk geology with occasional flint nodules <0.15m. No archaeology	0.44m+

Trench 7		Centre-line Coordinates	453678.96, 132944.93 453682.22, 132936.68
Dimensions: 10m x 1.55m	Max Depth: 0.64m	Ground Surface	NW 56.68 – NE 55.78
Context	Description		Depth (bgl)
701	Topsoil	Current topsoil of area of scrub, light grey brown silty loam, heavily bioturbated.	0-0.24m
702	Layer	Colluvium/hillwash material, light pale yellow brown silty clay deposit thickens from 0.10m thick at the northern end of trench to 0.39m at the southern, sloping down hill to the River Itchen.	0.24-0.63m
703	Natural	Natural chalk geology	0.63m+

Trench 8		Centre-line Coordinates	453687.76, 132952.34 453692.53, 132945.78
Dimensions: 10M X 1.55M	Max Depth: 0.56M	Ground Surface	NW 56.58 – SE 55.72
Context	Description		Depth (bgl)
801	Topsoil	Current topsoil of area of scrub, mid greyish brown clayed silt with occasional sub angular flints and abundant bioturbation.	0-0.22m
802	Layer	Colluvium/hillwash material, pale brown clay silt with occasional sub angular flints.	0.22-0.42m
803	Natural	Natural chalk geology with common flints nodules <0.15m	0.42m+

Trench 9		Centre-line Coordinates	453682.86, 132946.23 453691.41, 132942.30
Dimensions: 10m x 1.55.	Max Depth: 0.66m	Ground Surface	NW 56.59 – 55.70m
Context	Description		Depth (bgl)
901	Topsoil	Current topsoil of area of scrub land, mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional flints 0.03m	0-0.34m
902	Layer	Colluvium/hillwash material, pale brown clayey silt with occasional small sub angular flints 0.04m and common bioturbation, clear horizon onto 903	0.34-0.54m
903	Natural	Natural chalk geology	0.54m+



2010 Evaluation trench	Excavation trench	<small>Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright 2010. All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</small>	
1991 Evaluation trench	MUGA watching brief		
2011 Evaluation trench	Watching brief	Date: 17/05/11	Revision Number: 1
		Scale: 1:600 @ A3	Illustrator: SEJ/LJC/SEJ
		Path: Y:\PROJECTS\174951\Drawing Office\Report Figs\Eval\11_05_17\174951_eval.dwg	

Site and trench locations in relation to previous archaeological investigations

Figure 1



Plate 1: Plan of Trench 5 from the south-west



Plate 3: Plan of Trench 9 from the south-east



Plate 2: North-west facing 1m representative section of Trench 5.



Plate 4: South-west facing 1m representative section of Trench 9



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