



# Selborne Road Alton Hampshire

Archaeological Evaluation

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## **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by EDP, on behalf of Highwood Homes Ltd, to undertake an archaeological evaluation, to fulfil the planning condition requirements attached to the development of the Site. The Site comprised a 0.89-hectare parcel of land, located in Selborne Road, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1LE (centred on NGR 471218 138231).

The works consisted of the excavation of four evaluation trenches, which did not reveal any archaeological features or deposits.

## **Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank EDP, on behalf of Highwood Homes Ltd, for commissioning the archaeological evaluation. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Hampshire County Council Archaeologist, who monitored the project for East Hampshire District Council.



# Selborne Road, Alton

## Archaeological Evaluation

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project and planning background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology has been commissioned by Highwood Homes Ltd ('the client') to produce a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for a proposed archaeological evaluation of a 0.89 ha parcel of land located in Selborne Road, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1LE. The evaluation area is centred on NGR 471218 138231 (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 The proposed development comprises a 67-bed purpose-built care home (Use Class C2) and 28 no. apartments (Use Class C3) providing 100% Affordable, age restricted, sheltered accommodation and electricity sub-station. The development also includes associated access, parking, landscaping, sustainable drainage, structures, and other works.
- 1.1.3 All works were undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed in order to undertake the evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2023). Hampshire County Council Archaeologist approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing.
- 1.1.4 The evaluation comprised 4 trial trenches concentrated on the eastern portion of the site, in an approximately 0.5 ha area (3.5 % sample). The northern and western portion of the site has been previously quarried during the late post-medieval period, and any archaeological remains are likely to have been destroyed. The evaluation was undertaken in these areas on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May.

#### 1.2 Scope of the report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description of the results of the evaluation, to interpret the results within a local, regional or wider archaeological context and assess whether the aims of the evaluation have been met.
- 1.2.2 The presented results will provide further information on the archaeological resource that may be impacted by the proposed development and facilitate an informed decision with regard to the requirement for, and methods of, any further archaeological mitigation.

#### 1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The proposed evaluation area is located in a parcel of land on the southern edge of the town of Alton. The site is bound by Winchester Road to the north and west, Selborne Road to the east and Lavant Stream to the south. The site is currently scrubland although it appears to have been disturbed by quarrying in the western portion and ploughing across the site. Further farmland and the A31 lie to the south..
- 1.3.2 Existing ground levels slope from 107 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the east to 111 m aOD in the west.

- 1.3.3 The bedrock geology is Zig Zag Chalk Formation - Chalk. Sedimentary bedrock formed between 100.5 and 93.9 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. With a superficial deposit of Head - Clay, silt, sand and gravel. Sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 2.588 million years ago and the present during the Quaternary period. (British Geological Survey 2023).

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background was assessed in a prior Archaeological and Heritage Assessment (EDP 2022). The archaeological and historical background within a 1 km study area is summarised below, with relevant entry numbers from the Hampshire Historic Environment Record (HHER) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) included. Additional sources of information are referenced, as appropriate.

### **2.2 Previous investigations**

- 2.2.1 Successive archaeological works of a magnetometry survey (Archaeological Services WYAS, 2013), trial trench evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2020a), excavation and watching brief (Wessex Archaeology 2020b) were carried out 100 m east of the site on the other side of Selborne Road, prior to a housing development.
- 2.2.2 The trial trench evaluation uncovered a concentration of seven postholes and two possible pit features were recorded within the north-eastern edge of the development and were dated to the Late Bronze Age/Iron Age periods. Most of the features found during the evaluation consisted of modern postholes and traces of the post-medieval lynchets, which had been identified in the preceding magnetometry survey. The modern features have been interpreted as being possibly related to structures relating to temporary World War Two structures.
- 2.2.3 The excavation identified the remains of a circular post-built structure, probably a roundhouse, with associated pits and postholes. Late Bronze Age pottery was recovered from several of the features, along with small amounts of animal bone, fired clay, worked flint and charred plant remains. The watching brief observed a set of modern (likely mid-20th century) sub-rectangular, flat-bottomed pits that were probably the remains of shallow building foundations, similar to those recorded in this location during the evaluation. Whilst it remains possible that the structures were associated with military activity during the second world war.

### **2.3 Archaeological and historical context**

#### *Prehistoric (970,000 BC–AD 43)*

- 2.3.1 Excavations on the site of Amery House, to the south of the church, recovered worked flint of Mesolithic and Bronze Age date (Bowden et al 1988, 62).
- 2.3.2 An assemblage of worked flint implements were recovered near Will Hall Farm: comprising of a large flake, a punch or hammer, a small triangular pick, a fine borer and a number of scrapers.
- 2.3.3 A Bronze Age triangular arrowhead was recovered from the garden of 69 Whitedown Estate. Two sherds (noted as stray finds) from Middle Bronze Age cinerary urns were found at 'The Butts' Alton in the 19th century (HHER 17102).



- 2.3.4 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by (Cotswold Archaeology 2019) at Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital, Alton, 700 m west of the site. Three pits of probable Iron Age date were identified, including a probable grain storage pit of 'beehive' profile. Trench 14B contained evidence of a dumped burnt deposit, CBM, modern wood fragments, along with two intrusive sherds of prehistoric pottery and worked flint.
- 2.3.5 A pair of Iron Age brooches, recovered from a site in the area of the public gardens and Westbrooke Road, 1 km north of the site, may have been associated with a burial. Near Bolle Road, 700 m north of the site, an inscribed Iron Age gold stater of Verica was recovered.
- Romano-British (AD 43–410)*
- 2.3.6 A Roman road (HHER 34398) is projected crossing the study area from south-west to north-east along a route from Winchester to London, with the projection running along the northern edge of The Butts, 160 m from the site.
- 2.3.7 A probable villa 900 m north-west of the site was identified by the finding of flue tiles, roof tiles and pottery.
- 2.3.8 Within the town of Alton, Romano-British material has been recovered from several sites. Pottery and ditches have been recorded from around the area of the church, at the southern end of the High Street, and within the public gardens, evidence for Romano-British settlement has been recovered. A small cemetery was also located on the eastern side of High Street near the site of the Methodist Church.
- 2.3.9 A fourth century coin, possibly of Constantine I, is recorded as having been found at 'The Butts' (HER 28078). Other coins were found at locations that are distant from the site, such as 650m to the north where a gold slater of Verica was recorded (HHER 17129) and 740m to the north where a 3rd century coin of Claudius was found in a garden (HHER 17109).
- Anglo-Saxon – Medieval (AD 410–1500)*
- 2.3.10 Two phases of archaeological investigation uncovered a Saxon cemetery dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Century (HHER 17135), during the construction of a housing estate at Mount Pleasant Road, 700 m north-east of the site. Whilst the southern, eastern, and western boundaries of the cemetery have been located during archaeological excavations, the northern boundary remains unknown. A total of 72 inhumation burials and 75 or 76 cremations were excavated.
- 2.3.11 the archaeological remains of a Anglo-Saxon great hall were recorded during archaeological excavations at Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital (HHER 71632).
- 2.3.12 The town of Alton developed as a settlement located at a junction of major roads and a crossing of the River Wey and probably evolved from earlier Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlements. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century Alton was well-established as a market town with charters for markets and fairs and by the 15<sup>th</sup> century had a Guildhall.
- 2.3.13 The other settlement in the study area, Chawton, also dates from the medieval period, having been established as a Norman manor. The site is located within the historic parish of Chawton and so, during the medieval period, probably represented part of the wider agricultural hinterland of the village and therefore there is the potential for ridge and furrow or other agricultural features within the site.

*Post-Medieval–Modern (AD 1500–present)*

- 2.3.14 Historic mapping indicates there has been no change to the field boundaries in the late post-medieval or modern periods. The mapping illustrates the gravel quarry expanded across the western portion of the site as well as to the north of the site.
- 2.3.15 Second World War defensive features are present at the roadside just to the north of the northern part of the site (HER 70455). Whilst the HER records only a single anti-tank block, one larger anti-tank block and three smaller ‘dragons teeth’ tank defences are actually present.

### 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1 General aims

- 3.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2023) and in compliance with the ClfA *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a), were to:
- provide information about the archaeological potential of the site; and
  - inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.

#### 3.2 General objectives

- 3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the evaluation were to:
- determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified area;
  - establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;
  - place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
  - make available information about the archaeological resource within the site by reporting on the results of the evaluation.

### 4 METHODS

#### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methods set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2023) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

#### 4.2 Fieldwork methods

*General*

- 4.2.1 The trench locations were set out using a Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), in the approximate positions proposed in the WSI, although trenches 1 and 2 had to be slightly moved to the north east because of a possible service signal picked up by the Cat and Genny (Fig. 1).



- 4.2.2 4 trial trenches, each measuring approximately 25 m in length and 1.6m wide, were excavated in level spits using a 360° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under the constant supervision and instruction of the monitoring archaeologist. Machine excavation proceeded until either the archaeological horizon or the natural geology was exposed.
- 4.2.3 Where necessary, the base of the trench/surface of archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand.
- 4.2.4 Spoil from machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, although those from features of modern date (19th century or later) were recorded on site and not retained.
- 4.2.5 Trenches completed to the satisfaction of the client and the Hampshire County Council Archaeologist were backfilled using excavated materials in the order in which they were excavated, and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

#### *Recording*

- 4.2.6 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete record of excavated features and deposits was made, including plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections) and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.
- 4.2.7 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15 and OSGM15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.8 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 16 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

### **4.3 Finds and environmental strategies**

- 4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2023). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b), *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011), and ClfA's *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (Type 2: Appraisal).

### **4.4 Monitoring**

- 4.4.1 The Hampshire County Council Archaeologist monitored the evaluation on behalf of the LPA.



## **5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE**

### **5.1 Introduction**

5.1.1 The excavation of the trial trenches revealed a stratigraphical sequence including modern made ground overlying the natural geology. No archaeological features were present within any of the evaluation trenches (Figure 1).

### **5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits**

5.2.1 The natural geology (203, 302) in Trenches 2 and 3 was encountered between 0.15m and 0.19m below ground level (bgl). It consisted of flint gravels in yellow brown clay silt. Overlying the natural was a grey brown, slightly sandy clay silt topsoil (201 and 301). The topsoil was consistent across all 4 Trenches. The only feature observed was a tree throw (202) within trench 2. No archaeological features were observed.

5.2.2 The same natural geology (103) was observed within Trench 1, encountered at a depth of 0.35m (bgl). This was overlain by a 10cm thick layer of compact, crushed ceramic building material brick (102). This layer is mostly associated with the construction of the road to the immediately north of Trench 1. Above the crushed brick lay 0.15m of topsoil (101). No archaeological features were observed.

5.2.3 The natural geology (404) within Trench 4, consisted of a light brown silty loam with abundant sub-angular cobbles and pebbles. It was encountered at a depth of 0.7m (bgl). Overlying the natural was a 0.57m thick layer of disturbed natural (403) it was very similar to the natural but contained sparse sub-angular cobbles and pebbles. The disturbed natural was overlain by a 10cm thick layer of modern made ground (403), in the southern half of the trench. Possibly a levelling layer associated with former quarrying. Above the made ground was 0.13m of topsoil (401). No archaeological features were observed.

## **6 FINDS EVIDENCE**

6.1.1 No Artefactual material was recovered during the evaluation.

## **7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

7.1.1 No soil samples were taken during the evaluation.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

### **8.1 Summary and Discussion**

8.1.1 The evaluation trenches excavated on the site uncovered no archaeological remains, despite the potential of the surrounding landscape, which contains archaeological sites ranging from the Bronze Age to the Second World War.

8.1.2 The modern made ground and disturbed natural in the southern portion of Trench 4 is most likely associated with the former quarrying activity known to have taken place within the western and northern parts of the development site.

## **9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION**

### **9.1 Museum**

9.1.1 The archive resulting from the evaluation is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. Hampshire Cultural Trust has agreed in principle to accept the

archive on completion of the project, under the accession code A2023.13. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

## 9.2 Preparation of the archive

### *Physical archive*

9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records and graphics, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Hampshire Cultural Trust, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Brown 2011; ClfA 2014c; SMA 1995).

9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the **accession code**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 01 files/document cases of paper records

### *Digital archive*

9.2.3 The digital archive generated by the project, which comprises born-digital data (e.g., site records, survey data, photographs and reports), will be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository, in this instance the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), to ensure its long-term curation. Digital data will be prepared following ADS guidelines (ADS 2013 and online guidance) and accompanied by metadata.

## 9.3 Selection strategy

9.3.1 It is widely accepted that not all the records and materials (artefacts and ecofacts) collected or created during the course of an archaeological project require preservation in perpetuity. These records and materials will be subject to selection in order to establish what will be retained for long-term curation, with the aim of ensuring that all elements selected to be retained are appropriate to establish the significance of the project and support future research, outreach, engagement, display and learning activities, i.e., the retained archive should fulfil the requirements of both future researchers and the receiving Museum.

9.3.2 The selection strategy, which details the project-specific selection process, is underpinned by national guidelines on selection and retention (Brown 2011, section 4) and generic selection policies (SMA 1993; Wessex Archaeology's internal selection policy) and follows ClfA's *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives*. It should be agreed by all stakeholders (Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists, external specialists, local authority, museum) and fully documented in the project archive.

9.3.3 In this instance, given the relatively low level of finds recovery, the selection process has been deferred until after the fieldwork stage was completed. Project-specific proposals for selection are presented below. These proposals are based on recommendations by Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists and will be updated in line with any further comment by other stakeholders (museum, local authority). The selection strategy will be fully documented in the project archive.

9.3.4 Any material not selected for retention may be used for teaching or reference collections by Wessex Archaeology.

9.3.5 Given the very limited results of the fieldwork, it is considered that the site conforms to the definition of a 'sterile project' (i.e., one that produces nothing of evidential value), according to the *ClfA Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives (archaeological archives from*

*sterile projects*). It is therefore recommended that only selected digital data are deposited with ADS, an approach commensurate with the scale and significance of the project. Deposition will involve the uploading of the site report via OASIS only.

## **9.4 Security copy**

- 9.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g., Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

## **9.5 OASIS**

- 9.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk>) has been initiated, with key fields completed (Appendix 2). A .pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the Hampshire County Council Archaeologist on behalf of the LPA. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.

## **10 COPYRIGHT**

### **10.1 Archive and report copyright**

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.
- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER), where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

### **10.2 Third party data copyright**

- 10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g., Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Trench summaries

NGR coordinates and OD heights taken at centre of each trench; depth bgl = below ground level

Trench No 1		Length 22 m	Width 1.80 m	Depth 0.38 m
Easting 471223.20		Northing 138255.65		m OD 107.45
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
101		Topsoil	Grey brown slightly sandy clay silt with common flint gravel inclusions	0 – 0.15
102		modern compacted layer of crushed cbm	Prob connected to construction of road immediately to north of trench	0.15 – 0.35
103		Natural	Flint gravels in yellow brown clay silt	0.35+

Trench No 2		Length 25 m	Width 1.80 m	Depth 0.40 m
Easting 471227.65		Northing 138245.10		m OD 107.20
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
201		Topsoil	Grey brown slightly sandy clay silt with few flint gravel inclusions	0 – 0.15
202		Tree Throw	Investigated then abandoned as natural feature. not further recorded. 1.2m in diameter. filled with yellow brown clay silt.	0.15 – 0.30
203		Natural	Flint gravels in yellow brown clay silt.	0.15+

Trench No 3		Length 25 m	Width 1.80 m	Depth 0.40 m
Easting 471201.10		Northing 138227.20		m OD 108.10
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
301		Topsoil	Slightly sandy clay silt. grey brown with few flint gravel inclusions	0 – 0.19
302		Natural	Flint gravels in a yellow brown clay silt.	0.19+

Trench No 4		Length 25 m	Width 1.60 m	Depth 0.70 m
Easting 471182.30		Northing 138223.30		m OD 108.65.
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
401		Topsoil	Dark brown silty loam with rare angular pebbles. thin layer of topsoil on top of area stripped for quarrying	0–0.13
402		Made ground	Dark brown silty loam contains moderate sub-angular cobbles and pebbles. contains rare pieces of plastic and other modern artefacts. dump of topsoil to level ground after quarrying	0.13–0.53
403		Disturbance	Disturbed natural. light brown silty loam with sparse sub-angular cobbles and pebbles. Diffuse border with natural below.	0.13–0.70
404		Natural	Light brown silty loam. abundant sub-angular cobbles and pebbles.	0.70+

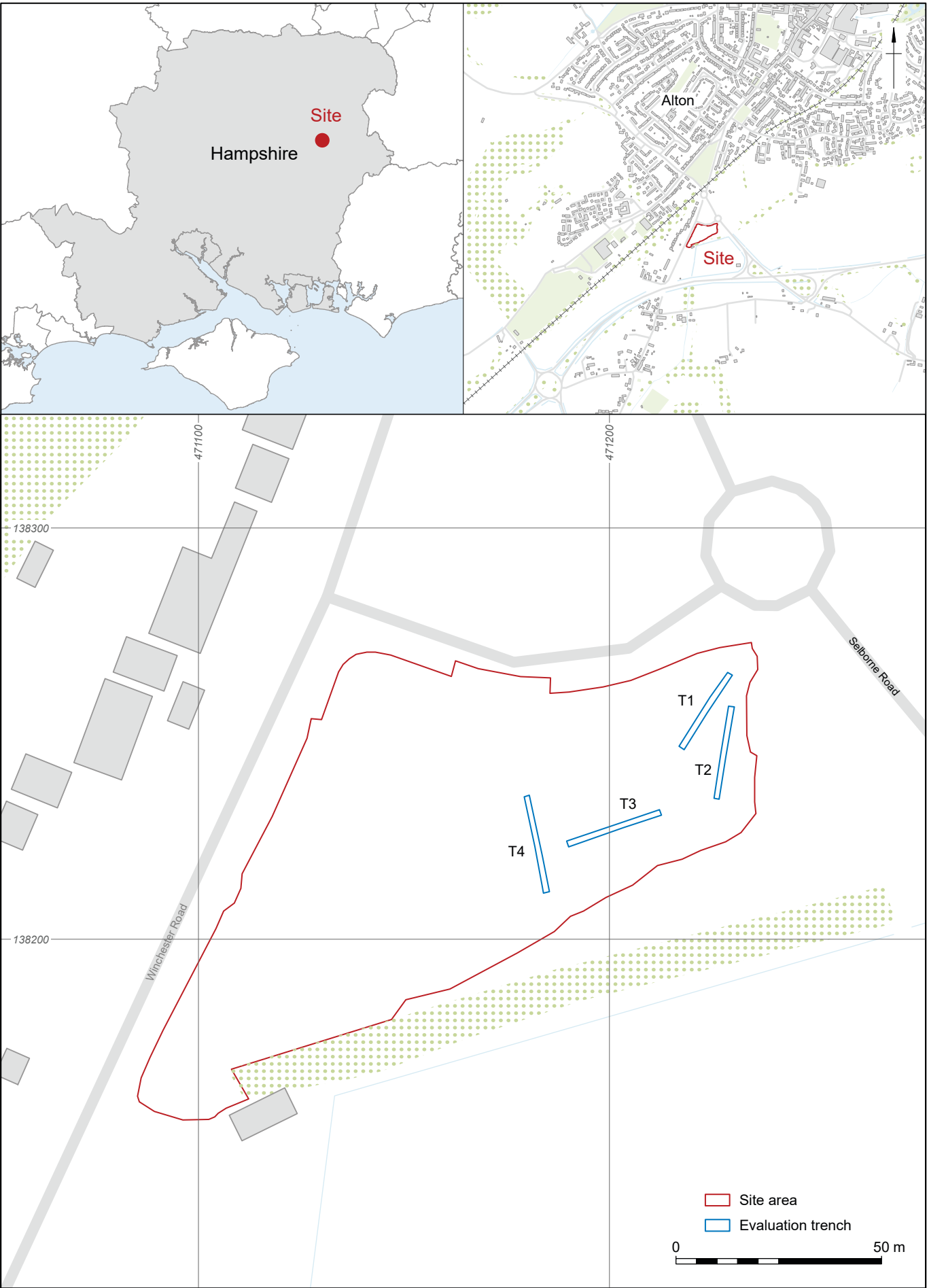




## Appendix OASIS summary

# Summary for wessexar1-515884

OASIS ID (UID)	wessexar1-515884
Project Name	Evaluation at Selborne Road
Sitename	Selborne Road
Activity type	Evaluation
Project Identifier(s)	Selborne Road, Alton Archaeological Evaluation
Planning Id	59484
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Between application and determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Wessex Archaeology
Project Dates	04-May-2023 - 05-May-2023
Location	Selborne Road NGR : SU 71218 38231 LL : 51.1389288896507, -0.983413543707317 12 Fig : 471218,138231
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Hampshire District : East Hampshire Parish : Alton
Project Methodology	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by EDP, on behalf of Highwood Homes Ltd, to undertake an archaeological evaluation, to fulfil the planning condition requirements attached to the development of the Site. The Site comprised a 0.89-hectare parcel of land, located in Selborne Road, Alton, Hampshire. The works consisted of the excavation of four evaluation trenches each measuring c. 25m x 1.8m.
Project Results	The works consisted of the excavation of four evaluation trenches, which did not reveal any archaeological features or deposits
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Hampshire Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record (AHBR) - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Kathryn, Brook
HER Identifiers	
Archives	



Coordinate system: OSGB 1936 British National Grid  
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Date: 24/05/2023    Created by: JD    Revision: 0    Scale: 1:1,250 at A4

Figure 1: Site location and trench plan





Figure 2: General shot Trench 1 view from the southeast (scales 2m and 1m)



Figure 3: Northwest facing representative section of trench 1 (scale 1m)





Figure 4: General shot Trench 2 view from the south (scales 2m and 1m)



Figure 5: East facing representative section of trench 2 (scale 1m)





Figure 6: General shot Trench 3 view from the east (scales 2m and 1m)



Figure 7: North facing representative section of Trench 3 (scale 1m)





Figure 8: General shot Trench 4 view from the north (scales 2m and 1m)



Figure 9: East facing representative section of trench 4 (scale 1m)



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