



making sense of heritage

Netley Court, Netley Hampshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Eastleigh Borough Council Planning Ref: C/13/72388
WA ref: 101590.02
November 2013



**Netley Court, Netley
Hampshire**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by The Highwood Group to undertake a trial trench evaluation on land at the former Netley Court School, Victoria Road, Netley, Hampshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 445522 108422. The work is in advance of the renovation, conversion and extension of the school building to provide a 65-bed care home and nine assisted living apartments with communal facilities. The development will occur following the demolition of the existing outbuildings.

The works consisted of two archaeological evaluation trenches and two geoarchaeological test pits, targeted on the location of the proposed housing development. The work was undertaken on the 19th November 2013.

The archaeological works identified no evidence for archaeological remains, either features or finds, within the areas investigated on the site. Significant levels of modern truncation were noted in both the trenches and test pits, a likely result of groundworks associated with the construction of the school. No deposits with archaeological or palaeoenvironmental potential were noted in either of the geoarchaeological test pits, and no artefacts were found to be present.

Due to the negative results of the evaluation it is unlikely that the archaeological advisors for the Local Planning Authority will require any additional archaeological investigation.



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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank The Highwood Group for commissioning the work. Thanks are due to Hannah Fluck of Hampshire County Council who provided advice the work on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. Tim Coates of T M Coates JCB Hire is also thanked for his assistance.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Gareth Chaffey, with Nikki Mulhall. This report was compiled by Gareth Chaffey and the report illustrations were drawn by Ken Lymer, The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.



Netley Court, Netley Hampshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by The Highwood Group ('the Client'), to undertake a trial trench evaluation on land at the former Netley Court School, Victoria Road, Netley, Hampshire (hereafter 'the Site'), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 445522 108422 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 Outline planning consent (C/13/72388) was issued by Eastleigh Borough Council for the renovation, conversion and extension to the Netley Court School building to provide a 65-bed care home and nine assisted living apartments with communal facilities. The development will occur following the demolition of the existing outbuildings.
- 1.1.3 Following consultation with Hampshire County Council, the archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), an archaeological condition (28) was placed on the outline planning approval stating that a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was required. It was agreed that two evaluation trenches and two geoarchaeological test pits would represent a sufficient sample, positioned in areas most at risk from the proposed development.
- 1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the evaluation (WA 2013) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology and submitted to, and approved by, the Archaeological Advisor at Hampshire County Council (HCC) and subsequently the LPA, prior to the start of fieldwork. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologist's Standard Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (IfA 2008).
- 1.1.5 The fieldwork was undertaken on 19th November 2013.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site is located approximately 3km to the south-east of the centre of Southampton and 3km south-west of the M27, in the village of Netley. It is bounded by Victoria Road to the north-east, Southampton Water to the south-west and residential properties to the north-west and south-east (**Figure 1**). It is located within the Netley Abbey Conservation Area and measures 0.93ha.
- 1.2.2 Netley Court School closed in 2007 and has remained vacant since then. The Site currently includes the former school building, a Victorian cottage and a temporary classroom. The Site is generally flat and level, lying at an elevation of 9m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology of the Site comprises River Terrace Deposits overlying the Selsey Sand Formation (British Geological Survey, Sheet 330). The River Terrace Deposits are mapped as belonging to Terrace 2 of the Eastern Solent (dating from MIS 7; c. 200 kya;



Briant et al 2009). They generally comprise loose to dense orange brown to dark brown slightly clayey gravelly sand to sand and gravel, with soft clay pockets.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A detailed archaeological and historical background for the Site has been compiled and presented previously (WA 2013), and as such will not be repeated here.

2.1.2 In summary, no archaeological works have been undertaken within the Site, although a number of find spots have been recorded in the vicinity. These include isolated finds such as flint tools (palaeoliths) recovered from gravel terrace beds with a number of examples having been found near Netley. Very little archaeological evidence exists in the area for prehistoric to Romano-British activity.

2.1.3 The Cistercian abbey at Netley was founded in 1239 and is positioned approximately 500m to the north-east of the Site. The abbey was dissolved in 1536. To the west, Netley Castle is one of the Solent forts established by Henry VIII and positioned on the shores of Southampton Water.

2.1.4 The modern village of Netley was created in the mid-19th century with the construction of the main British Army hospital, begun in 1856 and positioned to the east of the Site. The village grew up around the hospital, which was demolished to make way for the Royal Victoria Country Park, and is Grade II listed.

3 AIMS AND METHODS

3.1 General aims and objectives

3.1.1 The WSI (WA 2013) set out the agreed aims of the trial trench and geoarchaeological evaluation and the methods by which these aims would be achieved.

3.1.2 The aims of the fieldwork were to:

- *Clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be impacted by development.*
- *Identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character and condition of any surviving remains within the Site.*
- *Assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.*
- *Produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation in sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made concerning the Site's archaeological potential.*

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 The evaluation was conducted according to the agreed WSI (WA 2013) and comprised the excavation of two trial trenches, each measuring 20m x 1.5m, and two geoarchaeological test pits, measuring 2m x 2m (see **Appendix 1** for details). All investigations were located within the footprint of the proposed development (**Figure 1**), to the north-west of the Site.



- 3.2.2 Prior to machining, the trench locations were scanned by WA using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT). The trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision using a wheeled backhoe excavator employing a toothless ditching bucket. The tarmac and subsequent deposits were stored separately to facilitate appropriate backfilling and consolidation of each trench following the completion of recording.
- 3.2.3 The location of Trench 2 was altered slightly due to the proximity of the on-site welfare units.
- 3.2.4 All archaeological features, horizons and natural deposits encountered in the evaluation were fully recorded on WA's *pro forma* record sheets.
- 3.2.5 A digital photographic record was kept. Particular attention was taken to record all access routes and trench locations to provide a full record of both the original and final condition of the fieldwork locations. Special attention was placed on the recording of the mechanical excavation, spoil handling and storage prior to, during and following the completion of the trial trenching and test pitting.
- 3.2.6 A full graphic record was kept. The site drawings were drawn at an appropriate scale, typically 1:10 for sections and 1:20 for plans.
- 3.2.7 Site survey was carried out using a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30 mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Natural deposits and soil sequences

- 4.1.1 Natural gravel deposits were encountered in all trenches, between 8.93m and 9.03m (aOD). Overall, natural deposits were located between 0.74m and 0.76m below the current ground surface.
- 4.1.2 The stratigraphic sequence of the Site was seen to be largely uniform, differing only in the depth of the layers (**Plates 2 and 4**). Severe modern truncation and disturbance was noted in both trenches, with made-ground deposits noted averaging 0.68m in depth. Characterised by several layers of dumped material, the deposits appear to be associated with the levelling and subsequent laying down of the tarmac playground associated with the school.

4.2 Archaeological features

- 4.2.1 No archaeological features were identified during the course of the fieldwork.

4.3 Geoarchaeological test pits

- 4.3.1 The sequences recorded in the test pits are described in the Appendix, and can be seen in **Plates 5 and 6**.
- 4.3.2 In both test pits made ground was recorded at the top of the sequence, formed of redeposited upcast gravels and topsoil layers, presumably used for levelling the site prior to development. This immediately underlay the tarmac surfacing of the modern playground.
- 4.3.3 Beneath the made ground (at 1m depth in TP1 and 1.5m in TP2), the upper gravel deposits were unbedded and mixed, almost certainly by cryoturbative activity over the last



few glacial periods. In TP2 the upper part of the gravels was discoloured with magnesium and iron staining, which are likely associated with the since-removed relatively modern podzolic soils which would have been present on the Site prior to development.

- 4.3.4 The gravels below this upper layer in both test pits were weakly bedded and deposited in a fluvial environment, with no evidence of stand-still phases, land surfaces or anything indicative of a layer which may have had increased archaeological or palaeoenvironmental potential.
- 4.3.5 At 2m depth the gravels became larger (up to cobble size in places) and densely packed, and proved very difficult to penetrate using the excavator with toothless bucket. Given that this exceeded the impact of development, the pits were curtailed at 2m.

5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

- 5.1.1 No artefacts were recovered during the course of the fieldwork.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 6.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the course of the fieldwork.

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1.1 The evaluation identified no evidence for archaeological remains, either features or finds, within the areas of investigated on the Site.
- 7.1.2 Observations during the evaluation show significant truncation of ground levels across the Site. The presence of high levels of modern made ground is likely to be associated with the construction of the original school.
- 7.1.3 The geoarchaeological test pits revealed the underlying gravel terrace deposits, the upper parts of which were somewhat mixed (presumably through cryoturbation), and below which weakly bedded fluvial sands and gravels were recorded. In both test pits no deposits with archaeological or palaeoenvironmental potential were noted, and no artefacts were found to be present.

8 STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

- 8.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with the local museum. The museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

8.2 Preparation of Archive

- 8.2.1 The complete archaeological evaluation archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; IfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).



8.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site code 101590, and a full index will be prepared. The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury under the project code 101590.

8.2.3 The physical archive comprises the following:

- *1 files/document case of paper records and A4 graphics*
- *Digital data (site photographs, drawings, Word and pdf files)*

8.3 Discard policy

8.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in Selection, Retention and Dispersal (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.

8.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2002).

8.4 Security Copy

8.4.1 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 REFERENCES

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10 APPENDICES

Trial Trenches

TRENCH 1			Machine excavated
Dimensions: 19.49m x 1.50m		Max. depth: 0.79m	Ground level: 9.00m aOD
Co-ordinates: 445499.641E 108448.506N			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
101	Layer	Tarmacadam: Modern playground surface	0-0.09
102	Layer	Made ground: Modern levelling/made ground deposits. Contains gravel and debris, with large quantities of brick noted at W end. Think, banded deposit formed by several dumping/levelling phases.	0.09-0.76
103	Layer	Natural: Natural gravel deposit with mid-grey brown clay in matrix, sub-angular flints. Most likely heavily truncated during construction of school/playground.	0.76+

TRENCH 2			Machine excavated
Dimensions: 19.47m x 1.50m		Max. depth: 0.79m	Ground level: 9.16m aOD
Co-ordinates: 445530.314E 108453.25N			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
201	Layer	Tarmacadam: Modern playground surface	0-0.15
202	Layer	Made ground: Series of made ground/modern levelling deposits, clearly dumped and rolled. Consists of gravel, sand and general redeposited topsoil forming several bands. Also contains brick fragments and other modern waste material.	0.15-0.35
203	Layer	Natural: Natural gravel deposit, light brown colour, high sand content in matrix. Possibly disturbed.	0.35+

Geoarchaeological test pits

TEST PIT 1		Machine excavated
Dimensions: 2.44m x 1.80m		
Co-ordinates: 445497.661E 108439.395N		
Depth (Mbg)	Sediment description	Interpretation
0.00-1.00	Tarmac and made ground, rubble, brick and ceramic pipe. Some roots visible. Layer of old tarmac/concrete at 1.00m	Made ground
1.00-1.50	5YR 4/4 reddish brown sandy gravel. Matrix supported and poorly sorted, rounded to sub-rounded. Clast size up to 5cm. A few roots visible. Clear diagonal boundary.	Upper gravel
1.50-2.00	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown sandy gravel. Matrix supported and poorly sorted, rounded to sub-rounded. Clast size up to 10cm. Slight horizontal bedding apparent. Layer of compacted large flints and gravels present at the bottom of the test pit.	Fluvial deposits. Weakly bedded gravels and sands.

TEST PIT 2		Machine excavated
Dimensions: 2.43m x 1.84m		
Co-ordinates: 445518.579E 108451.953N		
Depth (Mbg)	Sediment description	Interpretation
0.00-1.50	Tarmac and made ground, rubble, and brick, layered, with a patch of gravel 1m down ?redeposited.	Made ground, redeposited from site levelling and resurfacing.
1.50-2.00	2.5Y 5/2 greyish brown sandy gravel layer (approx. 20cm),	Weakly bedded gravels

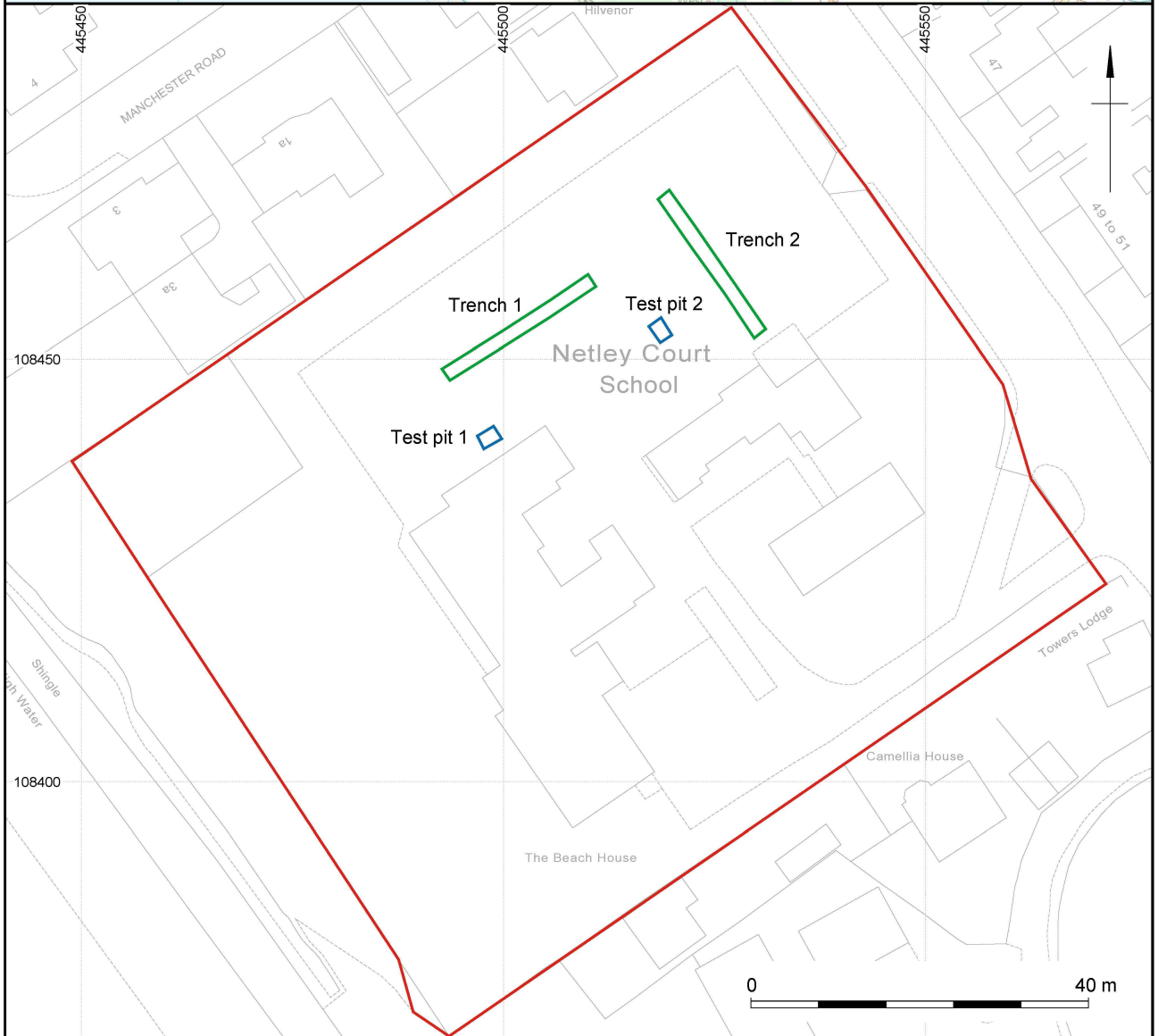
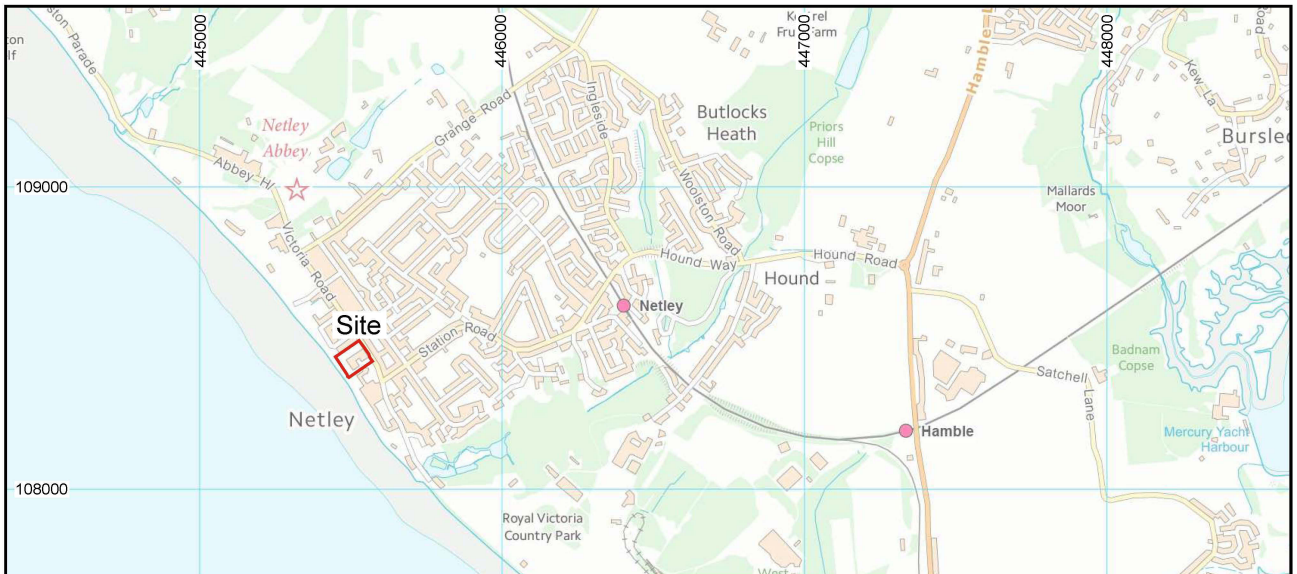



	<p>poorly sorted, rounded to sub-rounded clast size up to 4cm, upper 10cm is stained dark grey/black (c.f. podzolic Bs and possibly Bh horizon associated with modern land surface pre-playground) . This lies above 10YR 5/6 yellowish brown matrix supported sandy gravel, rounded to sub-rounded, iron stained, poorly sorted, slightly horizontally bedded, clast size up to 10cm. The bottom of the test pit is, as in test pit 1, made up of highly compacted large flints and gravels.</p>	<p>and sands; fluvial deposits.</p>
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Oasis Record Form

OASIS ID - wessexar1-166171

Versions				
View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	S.Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	4 December 2013
Completed sections in current version				
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	No	No	1/1
Validated sections in current version				
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1
File submission and form progress				
Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s		
Report release delay specified?	Yes	Release delay	Release into ADS library once signed off	
Images submitted?	No	Image filename/s		
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename		
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?		



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▭ Site ▭ Evaluation trench ▣ Test pit 	Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright 2013. All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2012. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.			
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	Scale:	1:25,000 & 1:800 @ A4	Illustrator:	LJC/KL
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Site, trench and test pit location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 1, view from south-west



Plate 2: North-west facing representative section –Trench 1



Plate 3: Trench 2, view from south-east



Plate 4: South-west facing representative section – Trench 2



Plate 5: Test pit 1, view from the north-west



Plate 6: Test pit 2, view from the south-east



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