



making sense of heritage

# A340 Roadworks Basingstoke, Hampshire

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Report



Ref: 111310.02  
November 2015



**A340 Roadworks  
Basingstoke, Hampshire**

**Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Report**

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Quality Assurance

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# A340 Roadworks Basingstoke, Hampshire

## Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Report

### Contents

Summary.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Project background.....	1
1.2 The Site.....	2
1.3 Archaeological and Historical background.....	2
<b>2 AIMS AND METHODS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Aims and objectives.....	4
2.2 Fieldwork methodology and recording.....	5
<b>3 RESULTS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	5
3.2 Area 1 (Area of archaeological potential).....	6
3.3 Areas 2, 3 and 4.....	6
3.4 Finds.....	6
3.5 Environmental sampling.....	6
<b>4 DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1 Conclusion.....	6
<b>5 ARCHIVE.....</b>	<b>7</b>
5.1 Preparation and deposition.....	7
<b>6 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: OASIS SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>9</b>

### Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan showing Strip, map and record areas

Figure 2: Strip, map and record areas showing plan and section of pit 3

### Plates

Front Cover: Site working shot

Plate 1: South-east facing section of pit 3

Plate 2: North-west facing shot of stripped Area 1

Plate 3: North-east facing representative section, Area 3

Plate 4: South-east facing shot of stripped Area 4



# **A340 Roadworks Basingstoke, Hampshire**

## **Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Report**

### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Dyer & Butler Ltd to carry out an archaeological strip, map and record exercise during roadworks focused on the A340 Aldermaston Road and Priestly Road area, Basingstoke, Hampshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 462340, 154013.

The works related to the dualling of the A340 between Priestley Road and Park Prewett Road, upgrading the signals at Priestley Road and providing a new signalised junction at Park Prewett Road. These works lay close to a notable concentration of Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement and funerary activity located at Marnell Park and Merton Rise, a short distance to the east, which with other information indicated a potential high archaeological potential for the site.

Hampshire County Council provided a brief for the work, which set out an area of archaeological importance, within which all groundworks below 200mm depth should be monitored. Archaeological monitoring was undertaken between 26th and 28th October 2015, within four areas of the site impacted by the permitted works and which appeared to be relatively undisturbed by previous road construction activity.

The strip, map and record exercise identified very little evidence of human activity within the Site. A single shallow, undated pit containing no dateable finds was the only archaeological feature identified within the Site. No other significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed. Accordingly, pit recorded within the Site is likely to be of prehistoric date, and perhaps represents an area of outlying activity associated with the Marnell Park settlement activity.



# **A340 Roadworks Basingstoke, Hampshire**

## **Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Report**

### **Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Dyer & Butler Ltd., and the assistance and co-operation of Ashley Smith and Nathan Kimber (Dyer and Butler Ltd.) is gratefully acknowledged. The project was monitored by David Hopkins, Principle Archaeologist for Hampshire County Council (HCC).

The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Manning. The strip, map and record fieldwork was undertaken by Benjamin Cullen and the reporting by Chloe Hunnisett. The illustrations were prepared by Rob Goller.



# A340 Roadworks Basingstoke, Hampshire

## Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Dyer & Butler Ltd. (hereafter 'the Client') to undertake an archaeological strip, map and record (SMR) during roadworks focused on the A340 Aldermaston Road and Priestly Road area, Basingstoke, Hampshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 462340, 154013 (hereafter the Site) (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 These works include the dualling of the A340 between Priestley Road and Park Prewett Road, upgrading the signals at Priestley Road and providing a new signalised junction at Park Prewett Road. Additional works include drainage, surfacing and other improvement works.

1.1.3 The proposed roadworks were permitted development and accordingly Hampshire County Council (HCC) was consulted and, based on previous investigations in the immediate area, highlighted the high archaeological potential of the area. The following clauses were included within the specification for the works (provided by HCC):

*(i) In order to mitigate the impact of the proposed carriageway construction works on any archaeological deposits that might be present, the Contractor shall undertake an archaeological strip, map and record on the area indicated below to run immediately ahead of groundworks, but with sufficient time to enable the recording of any archaeological deposits.*

*(ii) Area for strip map and record shall be restricted to the north quadrant of the 'triangle site' within the proposed highway boundary fence. If topsoil is to be removed outside the proposed highway boundary fence, then these excavations may also have an impact on archaeological features and should therefore be part of the monitoring process.*

*(iii) This area will not need archaeological monitoring provided that the excavation of topsoil does not exceed the topsoil depth or 200mm whichever is greater. Anything below 200mm is a risk to unidentified archaeology.*

*(iv) Should the Contractor propose to locate the compound within Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council land to the north of 'triangle' site, then the compound area shall be stripped of topsoil, which shall be stored for reuse to reinstate the area. A geogrid with geotextile such as Tensar SS20 (G) shall be placed on the subgrade prior to placing any hard core or other granular fill on which compound is to be established. The compound area shall be reinstated in accordance with Appendix 1/7, 2 (f).*

*(v) This work must be incorporated into the overall works programme and undertaken prior to any other works in that area.*

- 1.1.4 The Area of Archaeological Potential as indicated in point (i) is indicated on **Figure 2**.
- 1.1.5 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the work was prepared by WA (Wessex Archaeology 2015), setting out the strategy and methodology for the archaeological SMR, conforming with current best practice and to the guidance (outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* ('MoRPHE', Historic England 2015) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and guidance: archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014b)), was submitted to and approved by the Planning Archaeologist at Hampshire County Council (HCC) prior to commencement of the ground-works.

## 1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site comprises an irregular, elongated parcel of land of roughly 0.9 ha, focused on the Aldermaston Road (A340) and Priestly Road junction on the northern outskirts of Basingstoke (**Figure 1**). The Site lies on the verges of, and is therefore separated by, the A340 carriageway. For the purposes of the SMR the Site has been divided into Areas 1 – 4 (**Figure 2**). Areas 1 and 2 lie on the south-western side of the A340, and Area 3 lies to the north of this, on the other side of Priestly Road. Area 4 lies on the north-eastern side of the A340 carriageway. Area 1 corresponds to the Area of Archaeological Importance identified by HCC (section 1.1.3; **Figure 2**).
- 1.2.2 The Site lies between 120–110 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), sloping gently down from the north to the south. The underlying geology is mapped as the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation with no superficial deposits recorded (British Geological Survey website).

## 1.3 Archaeological and Historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the Site was detailed within the WSI (WA 2015), and is summarised below. The information discussed below has been informed by a search of the Hampshire Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record (HAHBR), online sources and WA's in-house collections. Relevant entry numbers from the HAHBR are included where appropriate and illustrated on **Figure 1**.

### ***Designated Heritage Assets***

- 1.3.2 Consultation of Historic England data sets has confirmed there are no designated heritage assets located within the Site.
- 1.3.3 Only a single Grade II Listed Building lies within a 1 km radius of the Site, comprising a barn at Prewitt Farm, c. 500 m east of the Site (Historic England List Entry 1339726).
- 1.3.4 The nearest Scheduled Monuments are located just over 1 km south-west of the Site. These comprise Winklebury Camp, and Iron Age hillfort (Historic England List Entry 1003559) and a Site revealed by air photography at Catern crossroads (Historic England List Entry 1001855).
- 1.3.5 Park Prewett Conservation Area lies to the west of the Site, with its western boundary extending to within 50 m of the Site. The Conservation Area comprises the Park Prewett Mental Hospital asylum building complex and grounds (Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council 2004).



### ***Previous Studies***

- 1.3.6 A programme of archaeological fieldwork was undertaken at Merton Rise and Marnel Park, in close proximity to the Site, between 2004-2008, in advance of housing development. Work on the sites included desk-based assessment, geophysical survey, aerial photography plotting and field walking. This was followed by several phases of trial trench evaluation, and the excavation of three areas at Merton Rise, and an additional three at Marnel Park, totalling 59 ha (Wright, Powell and Barclay 2009). Evidence of human activity and occupation from the Neolithic to the Romano-British periods was identified (see section 1.3.10).

### ***Archaeological and Historical development***

#### ***Prehistoric***

- 1.3.7 The Site lies within an area of known prehistoric activity with a number of finds of prehistoric struck flint recorded in the vicinity of the Site (HAHBR 33559, 35994, 36001, 36002). Although often not closely diagnostic this seems to indicate activity within the Neolithic and Bronze Age. These periods are associated with the establishment of farming and permanent settlement.
- 1.3.8 Within the works area, an archaeological evaluation on Aldermaston Road located a possible prehistoric ditch and two pits containing struck flint (HAHBR 42722). Later evaluation immediately to the north of this found gullies, a pit and a posthole (HAHBR 57901; TVAS 2007). Although these later features were undated, they indicate further activity in the works area.
- 1.3.9 An extensive area of archaeological investigations lies to the north-east of the Site, including the new housing development off Merton Rise. These investigations, which comprised field walking, geophysical survey, evaluation and excavation, found evidence for late prehistoric, Iron Age and Romano-British activity and occupation in the area (HAHBR 57323; Wright, Powell and Barclay 2009). An extensive boundary ditch or 'Wessex Linear' thought to reflecting later Bronze Age land divisions associated with pastoral agriculture, was identified to the east of the Site. 'Wessex Linear' ditches and associated banks may have functioned not only as agricultural boundaries but also served as symbolic, perhaps territorial markers in the landscape (Bradley, Entwistle and Raymond 1994). The linear feature is aligned approximately east to west, but the projected line of this feature runs just to the north of the Site.
- 1.3.10 A sherd of Middle to Late Bronze Age pottery and possible Mesolithic or early Neolithic worked flints, indicate some earlier prehistoric activity adjacent to the Site.
- 1.3.11 Immediately to the north-east of the Site two ring ditches have been identified as cropmarks from aerial photographs (**Figure 1**; HAHBR 36286 and 36287). While the date and nature of these has not been confirmed by archaeological investigation their form suggests they may be the remnants of round barrows; burial mounds typically dating from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age.

#### ***Iron Age and Romano-British***

- 1.3.12 To the north-east of the Site lies a cropmark feature identified as a possible banjo enclosure (**Figure 1**; HAHBR 36285). A scatter of Iron Age and Roman pottery was also discovered during fieldwalking in this area (HAHBR 35996). Banjo enclosures date from the Iron Age with some sites indicating use into the Romano-British period, excavated examples suggests that they are high status occupation sites (English Heritage 2011a).



- 1.3.13 As well as evidence for Iron Age and Romano-British enclosed settlement in the area of Sherbourne Road, more immediately adjacent to the Site investigations found evidence for a Roman trackway and chalk quarry pits (Wright, Powell and Barclay 2009).
- 1.3.14 In the wider area lies the Iron Age hillfort at Winklebury Camp, c. 1.2 km to the south-west of the Site, which is a Scheduled Monument (list entry 1003559) and the projected course of the Roman road is marked to the north-west of the Site (Figure 1).

Medieval, post-medieval and modern

- 1.3.15 The Site lies beyond the historic core of Basingstoke, though Sherborne St John, which lies around 1km to the north of the Site (**Figure 1**), is also recorded in the 1086 Domesday Survey as a large settlement of 40 households. It is likely that during the medieval and post-medieval period that the Site lay within the agricultural hinterland of these two settlements. A medieval deer park is also known to have been situated within this area with the eastern extent thought to lie somewhere in the vicinity of the western edge of the works area (HAHBR 42720); however it should be noted that no evidence for this was found during recent archaeological evaluations (HAHBR 42722, 57901; TVAS 2007).
- 1.3.16 Park Prewett Farm is known to date from at least the 18th century as the farmhouse (HAHBR 51219) and Grade II Listed barn date from this time. The first edition 1872 Ordnance Survey map shows the Site as lying either side of Aldermaston Road. The land to the south-west has been divided up into fields focusing on Park Prewett Farm while that to the north-east appears relatively unenclosed. Little alteration can be seen on successive 19th and early 20th century mapping until the 1932 edition when Park Prewett Mental Hospital is constructed to the west of the Site. This area has been designated a Conservation Area comprising the asylum building complex and grounds (Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council 2004). Further development of the area occurs during the latter part of the 20th century with the expansion of the Basingstoke and development of the Basingstoke District Hospital.

## 2 AIMS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Aims and objectives

2.1.1 The aims of the archaeological SMR were to:

- *Examine the archaeological resource within the Site, including clarifying the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains;*
- *Identify, within the constraints of the works, the date, character and condition of any surviving remains within the Site;*
- *Assess and interpret the results; and produce statements of potential and recommendations for further work, if appropriate*
- *Produce a report which will present the results of the works*
- *Place any remains, if present, within their historic context.*



## 2.2 Fieldwork methodology and recording

- 2.2.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the WSI (WA 2015), which sets out the detailed methodology for the fieldwork.
- 2.2.2 All features and deposits were recorded using WA's standard methods and pro forma recording system, with all features and deposits being assigned a unique number. A full graphic record was maintained. Plans and sections were produced at a scale of 1:20 and 1:10, where appropriate. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels were calculated, with plans and sections annotated with OD heights. The location of features were accurately surveyed by GPS and tied into the OS National Grid.
- 2.2.3 A full photographic record was maintained using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. This illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features and the Site as a whole. Digital images will be subject to managed quality control and curation processes which will embed appropriate metadata within the image and ensure long term accessibility of the image set.
- 2.2.4 All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, except those from features or deposits of obviously modern date. In such circumstances, sufficient artefacts were retained in order to elucidate the date and/or function of the feature or deposit. Material of undoubtedly modern date was noted but not retained.
- 2.2.5 All artefacts were, as a minimum, be washed, weighed, counted and identified. Any artefacts requiring conservation or specific storage conditions were dealt with immediately in line with First Aid for Finds (Leigh et al. 1998). Ironwork from stratified contexts was X-rayed and stored in a stable environment along with other fragile and delicate material. The X-raying of objects and other conservation needs were undertaken either by the staff of the Wiltshire Museums and Library Service Conservation Consortium or by WA's in-house conservator.
- 2.2.6 WA follows the guidelines set out in the document Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections (SMA 1993) with regard to the retention of artefacts and samples. This allows for the discard of selected artefact categories and sample products which are not considered to warrant further analysis.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The SMR fieldwork was undertaken over three days between the 26th and 28th October 2015.
- 3.1.2 Upon arrival at Site, it became apparent that although Area 1 (the Area of the main Archaeological Potential identified by HCC; **Figure 2**) remained untouched, topsoil had already been removed from some other areas of the Site, and in addition, the ground level had been reduced by up to 1 m below ground level (BGL). These areas were archaeologically investigated and ground levels and excavation checked for features. The areas subject to such truncation are shown on **Figure 2**.
- 3.1.3 Machine excavation of Area 1 (area of archaeological potential) was undertaken under direct and constant archaeological monitoring.



### 3.2 Area 1 (Area of archaeological potential)

- 3.2.1 Area 1 comprised a sub-rectangular area measuring approximately 740 m<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.2.2 Six tree throw hollows were revealed within Area 1, all of which were mattock tested to confirm their natural origin (**Plate 2**).
- 3.2.3 A backfilled archaeological trial trench, oriented north-north-west to south-south-east, was observed within the stripped area, and almost certainly represents a trench from the 2007 trial trench evaluation by TVAS (TVAS 2007).
- 3.2.4 The soil sequence observed within Area 1 comprised 0.4 m of very dark grey-brown silty clay loam topsoil. This overlay natural chalk, which occurred at c. 0.4 m BGL. The chalk was degraded but compact, and formed a distinct horizon.
- 3.2.5 A single archaeological feature was identified within Area 1, comprising a small pit. (Pit **3**) was a shallow, sub-oval pit measuring 0.94 m wide and 0.27 m deep (**Figure 2**). The pit had steep to moderate concave sides and a flat base. It was filled with a single fill (4), a dark grey-brown silty clay (**Plate 1**). The homogenous fill contained common chalk and flint fragments, as well as rare charcoal flecks. It was identified as a deliberate backfill based on the large size of the flint inclusions. The function of the pit remains uncertain, but perhaps represents a small rubbish pit. No other finds were recovered from the fill, and the pit therefore remains undated.

### 3.3 Areas 2, 3 and 4

- 3.3.1 With the exception of the truncated areas (**Figure 2**), topsoil stripping was monitored within Areas 2, 3 and 4 (**Plate 4**). Modern disturbance was identified within Area 3 in the north of the Site. The soil sequence observed across the Site was very similar to that recorded within Area 1 (**Plate 3**).
- 3.3.2 No archaeological features or finds were identified within these areas of the Site.

### 3.4 Finds

- 3.4.1 No finds of pre-modern date were recovered during the fieldwork.

### 3.5 Environmental sampling

- 3.5.1 Since no firmly dated archaeological features were observed, no environmental samples were taken.

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Conclusion

- 4.1.1 The archaeological investigation identified very little evidence of significant human activity within the Site, with only a single archaeological feature identified. Pit **3** comprised a shallow, undated pit with no finds recovered. However the known archaeological resource in the Site's immediate vicinity can provide some context for the interpretation of the features.



- 4.1.2 The 2007 trial trench evaluation (TVAS 2007), located partially within and adjacent to the Site, identified a small number of features which again were undated, however the presence of struck flint within the fills of those pits indicated a likely prehistoric date.
- 4.1.3 Based on the high concentration of Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement activity located a short distance to the east, the features from the TVAS evaluation were interpreted as being of prehistoric date, and perhaps representing areas of outlying activity associated with the Marnell Park settlement. The pit recorded within the current Site can therefore tentatively be interpreted in the same light, and thus is considered likely to be of prehistoric date and to be associated with the low density of outlier activity at the fringes at the known focus of settlement, previously identified by the WA excavation (Wright, Powell and Barclay 2009).

## **5 ARCHIVE**

### **5.1 Preparation and deposition**

- 5.1.1 The project archive will be deposited in due course with Hampshire Cultural Trust (formerly Hampshire Museums Service).
- 5.1.2 The complete Site archive, which includes paper records, photographic records, and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Hampshire Cultural Trust (formerly Hampshire Museums Service), and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013)
- 5.1.3 The complete Site archive is currently held at the WA offices in Salisbury under the WA project code 111310.

### **5.2 Security copy**

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.

## **6 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## On-line sources

<http://domesdaymap.co.uk/> - Domesday Book Information

<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/> - Previous archaeological work

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/> - History of Denchworth (Victory County Histories)



## APPENDIX 1: OASIS SUMMARY

### OASIS ID: wessexar1-235544

#### Project details

Project name	A340 roadworks, Basingstoke, Hampshire
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Dyer and Butler Ltd to carry out an archaeological strip, map and record exercise during roadworks focused on the A340 Aldermaston Road and Priestly Road area, Basingstoke, Hampshire. The strip, map and record exercise identified very little evidence of human activity within the Site. A single shallow, undated pit containing no dateable finds was the only archaeological feature identified within the Site. No other significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed. Accordingly, pit recorded within the Site is likely to be of prehistoric date, and perhaps represents an area of outlying activity associated with the Marnell Park settlement activity.
Project dates	Start: 26-10-2015 End: 28-10-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	111310 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	HAMPSHIRE BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE BASINGSTOKE A340, Park Prewett interchange
Postcode	RG24 9XW
Study area	0.9 Hectares
Site coordinates	SU 62298 54016 51.281365268796 -1.106672753566 51 16 52 N 001 06 24 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 110m Max: 120m

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Hampshire County Council
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology



Project supervisor	Ben Cullen
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Hampshire County Council

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#### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Hampshire Cultural Trust
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Spreadsheets", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Hampshire Cultural Trust
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

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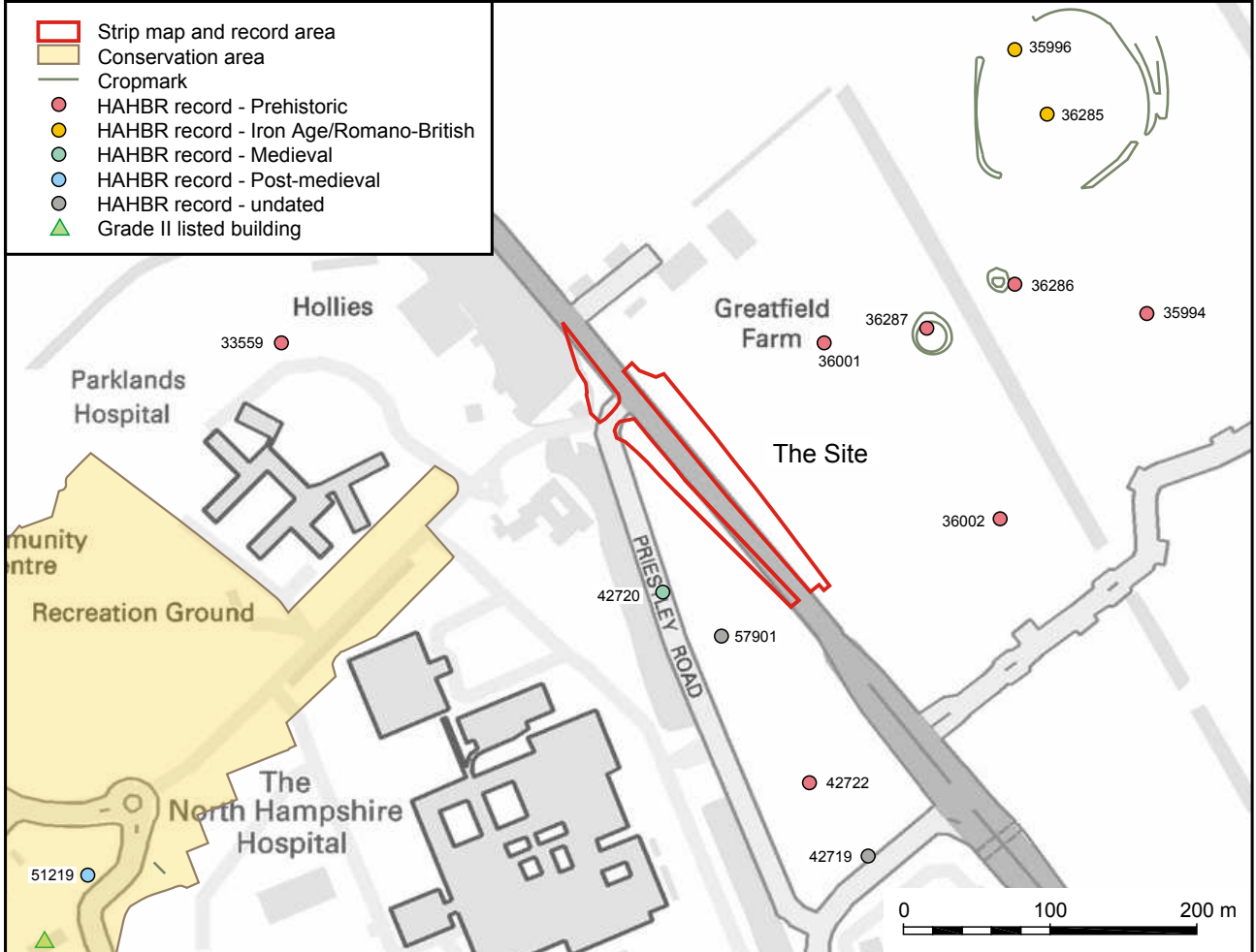
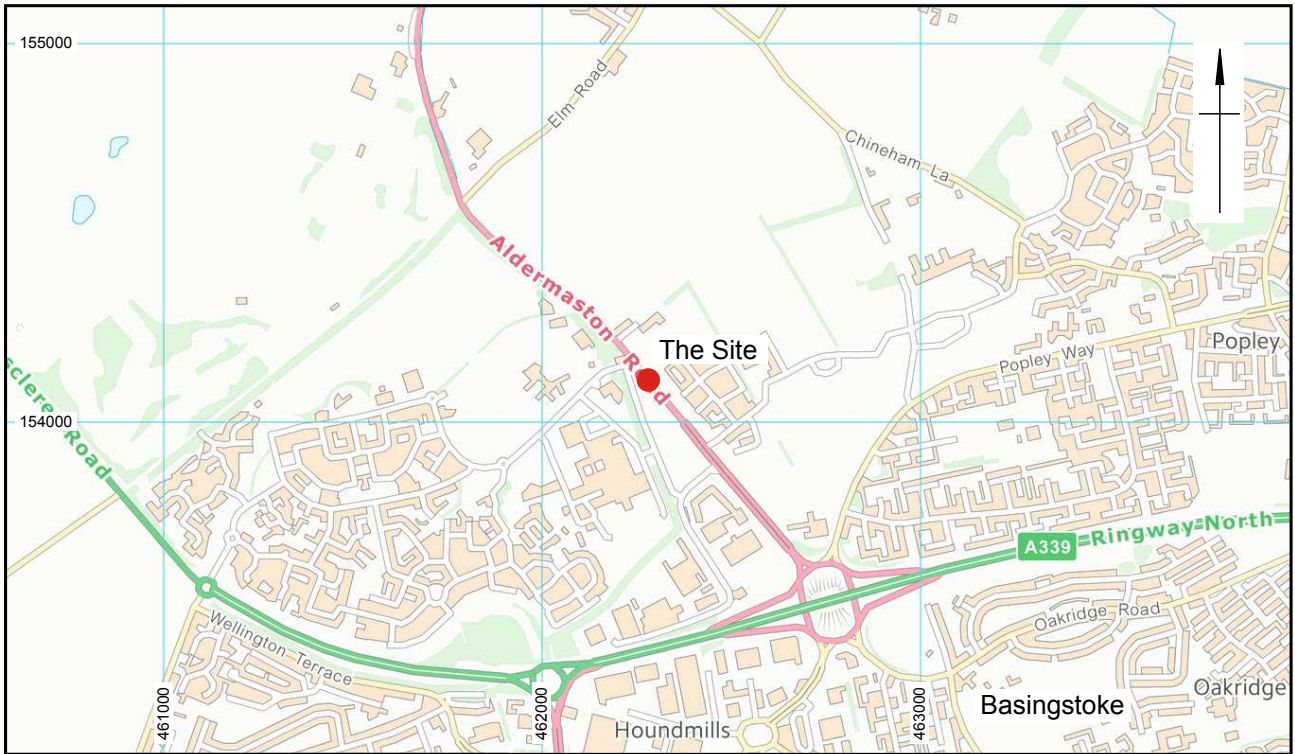
#### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	A340 Roadworks, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Archaeological strip, map and Record Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Hunnisett, C
Other bibliographic details	111310.02
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Salisbury
Description	Standard softback illustrated strip, map and record report c. 13 pages

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Entered by	Andrew Manning (a.manning@wessexarch.co.uk)
Entered on	23 December 2015

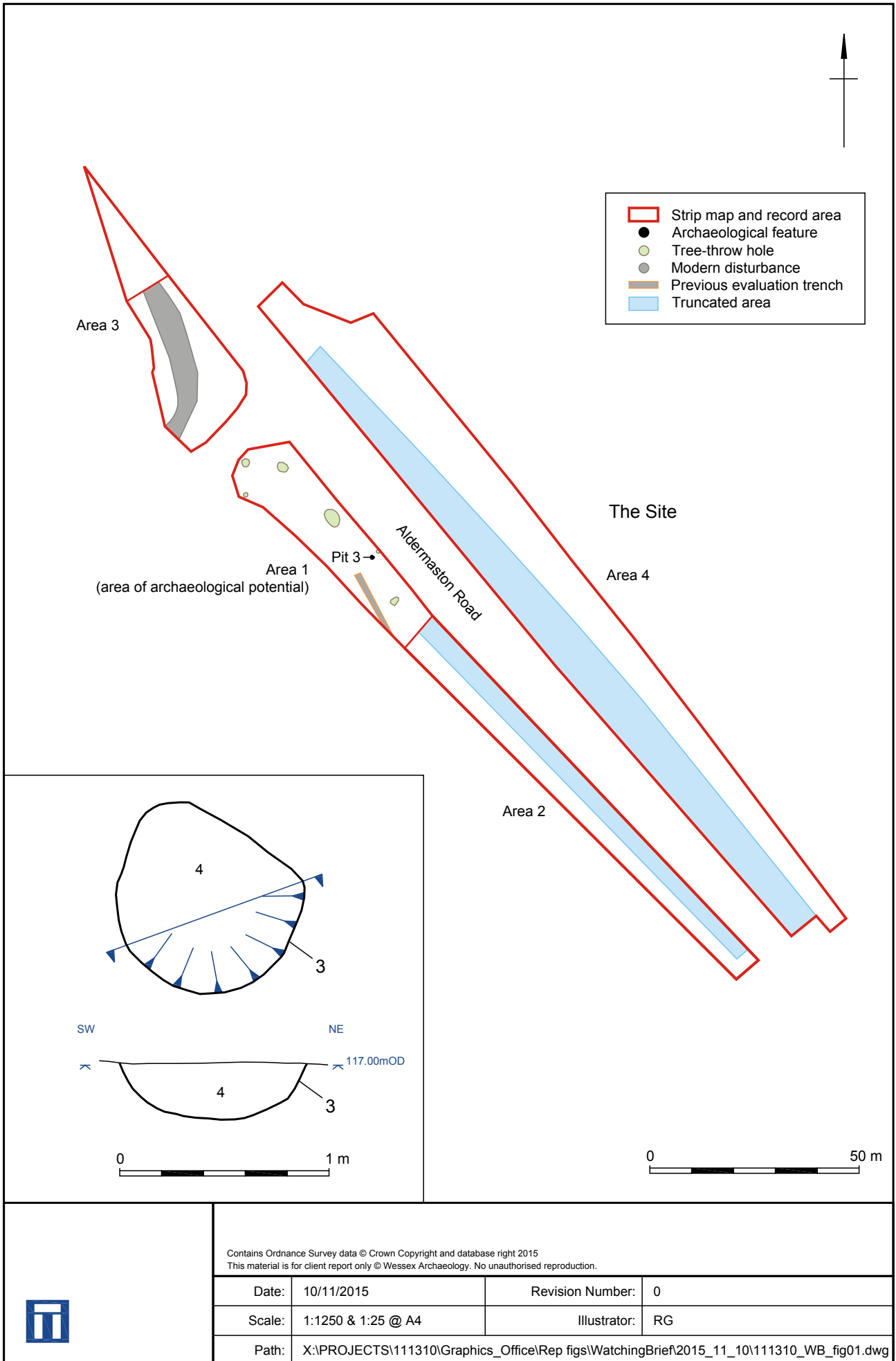





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Site location plan showing Strip, map and record areas

Figure 1



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Strip, map and record areas showing plan and section of pit 3

Figure 2



Plate 1: South-east facing section of pit 3



Plate 2: North-west facing shot of stripped Area 1



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Plate 3: North-east facing representative section, Area 3



Plate 4: South-east facing shot of stripped Area 4

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