



11A Gloucester Road, Almondsbury, Bristol

Archaeological Watching Brief



Planning Ref: PT07/3464/O
Accession Number: tbc
Ref: 115530.01
July 2017



**11A Gloucester Road,
Almondsbury, Bristol**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Quality Assurance

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* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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Archaeological Watching Brief

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11A Gloucester Road, Almondsbury, Bristol

Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Heritage Planning Services Ltd. (hereafter 'the client') to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at 11a Gloucester Road, Almondsbury, Bristol, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 6360709 184118 (hereafter referred to as the 'Site'). The watching brief took place between 6th and 10th July 2017.

Archaeological monitoring of the groundworks revealed both historic and more modern landscaping had occurred, as well as revealing a spread of pale cream mortar, probably associated with the construction of the house to the west of the site, and a domestic rubbish filled pit of similar date (later 18th or 19th century). No features or finds predating the later post-medieval period were found.



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Archaeological Watching Brief

Acknowledgements

Wessex archaeology would like to thank Heritage Planning Services Limited for commissioning the work. The fieldwork was conducted by Tracey Smith who also wrote the report. The illustrations were prepared by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Bruce Eaton.



11A Gloucester Road, Almondsbury, Bristol

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Heritage Planning Services Ltd. (hereafter 'the client') to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at 11a Gloucester Road, Almondsbury, Bristol, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 6360709 184118, following planning permission for the erection of a single dwelling with associated structures.
- 1.1.2 The works comprised the archaeological monitoring of all below ground works including foundation trenches and service runs.
- 1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) had also been submitted and was approved by Paul Driscoll, Principle Archaeologist, South Gloucester County Council (WA 2017).

2 THE SITE

2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 The Site was previously occupied by a single garage with a pitched tiled roof, a gravel driveway and an assortment of garden trees and shrubs. It is bordered on its east and west sides by residential dwellings numbers 7 and 11, directly to its south by the A38 Gloucester Road and to the north by a copse of trees.
- 2.1.2 Ground level is relatively flat at a height of approximately 74 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 2.1.3 The British Geological Society record the Site as being located on the boundary between the Oxwich Head Limestone Formation, which formed 326 to 335 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period and just to the north of the Site the Mercia Mudstone Group which is Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 200 to 251 million years ago in the Triassic Period (BGS Viewer accessed the 09/01/2017).

2.2 Archaeological background

- 2.2.1 The archaeological and historical background presented in this section has been informed by the results returned from a search of the South Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record (SG HER), which was undertaken in January 2017.
- 2.2.3 There is currently little recorded evidence of prehistoric activity in the local vicinity, although the site of an Iron Age univallate hillfort known as Knole Park Camp, now destroyed by modern housing development, lies 1.2 km to the west of the Site.



- 2.2.4 A second phase of development was also identified, dating approximately from the mid 7th to mid 8th centuries, although the remains uncovered during the 1950s excavations do not suggest that the Anglo Saxon settlement was anything more than a village or farmstead (ibid. p184).
- 2.2.5 The A38 Gloucester Road, which borders the Site to the south, is believed to coincide with the route of a Roman road (SG HER ID 1462) linking Portus Abonae (in the Sea Mills area of Bristol) to Glevum (Gloucester). There are currently few other traces of Romano-British activity recorded in the surrounding area. However, excavations on the site of the former Hortham Hospital, approximately 1.1 km to the east, produced evidence of settlement activity during the later Iron Age and Romano-British periods.
- 2.2.6 Almondsbury was settled at least as far back as the late Saxon period, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Domesday survey of 1086. Little direct archaeological evidence relating to the Saxon and medieval settlement of Almondsbury has been recorded to date, possibly as a result of the limited extent of previous investigation in the area. However, notable exceptions include the Parish Church of St Mary (Grade I listed; List entry no.1128858), which has 12th century origins, and a possible moated site at Court Farm (SG HER ID 12980), both located over 300 m to the west of the Site. Extensive traces of ridge and furrow cultivation have also been identified from aerial photographs to the south and east of the Site.
- 2.2.7 Although not conclusively known, it is possible that the Site lay outside of the medieval core of the settlement, and did not become developed until the village expanded in the post-medieval period.
- 2.2.8 The first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1881 depicts the location of the Site as undeveloped land between buildings on the northern side of Gloucester Road, and to the south of 'Weavers Wood'. The map includes the label 'Post Office' in this location, although it is not clear which of the properties this refers to. Subsequent editions of Ordnance Survey mapping suggest that the Site remained relatively unchanged until the present day, being primarily used in the later 20th century as a garden and then for car parking.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 With due regard to the ClfA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014b), the principle aim of an archaeological watching brief is to record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices, and in compliance with the *Code of conduct* and other relevant by-laws of ClfA.
- 3.1.2 In furtherance of the project aim, the following objectives were defined:
- *To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works; including*
 - *To ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;*
 - *To confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;*

- *To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;*
- *To determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains; and*
- *To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.*
- *To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and*
- *To prepare a report on the results of the watching brief.*

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.2.1 A detailed description of the watching brief methodology is set out in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2017).
- 3.2.2 Reduction of the ground level across the site (levelling off to the same height as in the entranceway) was carried out using a toothless ditching bucket and under constant supervision by WA. Machine excavation then proceeded using a toothless bucket to excavate both the foundation trenches and a service trench to the required construction levels. Where practicable and without causing delay to the groundwork programme, investigations were carried out by WA staff.
- 3.2.3 A full graphic record was maintained. A full photographic record was maintained using digital cameras and any archaeological features and deposits were surveyed using hand equipment and scaled plans and related to Ordnance Survey datum.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

- 4.1.1 Detailed context descriptions are provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.1.2 A shallow trench was initially excavated along the eastern side of no. 7 Gloucester Road to allow for updated electricity and water services to be laid (**Figure 1**). This trench was 0.80 m wide and 8.50 m long northwest to southeast, with a 2.50 m angled trench at the northern end heading west to the side of the house. It varied in depth, averaging 0.60m but rising slightly at the south eastern end where the natural limestone rose in height (**Plate 1**).
- 4.1.3 Limestone bedding (104) was found to up-crop within the trench along its length but especially at its southeast end where it was only 0.16 m below ground surface (BGS). Overlaying this was a mid grey-yellow silt-clay with abundant small limestone fragments; a limestone 'brash' deposit (103) which was located at 0.26m BGS but did not appear in the south eastern end of the trench where the limestone up cropped.
- 4.1.4 Above the brash at 0.06 m BGS was a 0.20 m deep layer of dark grey-brown silty-loam, friable and dry in nature, with heavy bioturbation from both root and insect action (102). Over this was a layer of modern Type 1 gravel (101) laid to form hardstanding for car parking on the site. No archaeological finds or features were evident within the service trench.

- 4.1.5 The main foundation trenches formed an L shape with a porch at the south eastern end (**Figure 1**) and were on average 0.80 – 1 m wide, with a depth of 1m at the north-eastern side of site, stepping up to 0.60 m to the south-west.
- 4.1.6 Natural geology in the form of limestone bedrock (107) was up-cropping at various heights within the trenches, being generally higher at the southern end of the site than the northern, following the original slope of the land to the northwest. At its deepest point it was found to be 0.90 m BGS, rising to 0.20 m at its shallowest (**Plate 2**).
- 4.1.7 Natural subsoils were found to overlay the limestone and to be variable in type. At the north eastern side of site, a limestone ‘brash’, similar to 103 was recorded at 0.30 m BGS. This was a mid-yellow-brown silt-clay with abundant limestone fragments and tended to occur where the natural slope of the site was dipping downwards towards the northeast end of site. Towards the south eastern edge of site, this ‘brash’ appeared to disappear with an up-cropping of limestone, at which point a yellow slightly sandy silt-clay with occasional small limestone fragments was recorded (108) as overlaying the limestone at 0.23 m BGS (**Plate 3**). Both of these deposits showed evidence for root disturbance but were otherwise undisturbed with no archaeological inclusions.
- 4.1.8 A layer of less stone-filled subsoil (109) overlay both 106 and 108 across the site in varying places, being sporadic in its appearance as it grew closer to the surface of the site at the south eastern end. This was a reddish-yellow-brown slightly sandy silt-clay, moderately friable in nature, which contained no archaeological inclusions. It too had been subject to rooting and disturbance and possibly represented an interface deposit between topsoil and subsoils, with bioturbation creating a mixed horizon. It was found to be on average 0.24 m thick and to rise up at the southern end of site, where the previous overlying topsoil had been removed during site reduction and levelling in preparation for the groundwork.
- 4.1.9 In the north western corner of the foundation trenches, a layer of cream ‘buff’ coloured mortar with coal fragments, lime and occasional stone fragments (110) was found to overlay 109, possibly indicating a site truncation at that point associated with the construction of No. 7 Gloucester Road, or of part of it (**Plate 4**). No dating evidence was found from this layer however the mortar matched that still visible in the eastern wall of the building where not plastered over which would suggest it may relate to a construction horizon. The date of the house is uncertain, however the general outline of the building does not appear to have changed since the Tithe Map of 1860, the mortar suggesting a mid to late 18th century date. Overlying the mortar spread was a dark grey-brown layer of silty-loam topsoil (111), which contained frequent flecks of carbonised wood, ash and small stones. This had been deposited following the mortar spread so was a deliberate attempt to make up the ground level and probably to create a garden soil. It was not clear whether 105 was a more disturbed version of 111 or a completely different dumping event but the latter is the most likely suggestion.
- 4.1.10 In the south western corner of the site the southern foundation trench revealed a large pit of uncertain purpose, which ran below the limit of excavations so was not fully exposed (113). This had been backfilled by domestic refuse, including ash, small fragments of coal, carbonised wood, occasional animal bone, ceramic building material, roof tiles, glass and pottery sherds, of which five were dated and found to suggest a date of either the 18th or 19th century for backfilling (112).
- 4.1.11 In the southern foundation trench and due to the ground reduction and levelling, especially at the eastern end, 109 formed the uppermost deposit instead of a topsoil as found in other trenches. Elsewhere, 109 or any archaeological deposit was overlain by

the remains of a disturbed, re-dumped topsoil (105) which was 0.30 – 0.40 m thick, particularly at the northern end of the site where the ground would have sloped away. This greyish-brown silty-loam, containing ceramic building material, glass bottle fragments, and infrequent later 19th century white glazed pottery, showed signs of having been dug and re-deposited, with four mild steel bars attached to pieces of wooden sleeper being pulled up by the machine during the site reduction. These were of later 20th century date but didn't appear to relate to a specific use and were probably just dumped in an existing disturbed area.

- 4.1.12 Overlying the mortar spread of 110 was a dark grey-brown layer of silty-loam topsoil (111), which contained frequent flecks of carbonised wood, ash and small stones. This had been deposited following the mortar spread so was a deliberate attempt to make up the ground level and probably to create a garden soil. It was not clear whether 105 was a more disturbed version of 111 or a completely different dumping event but the former is the most likely suggestion. A layer of type 1 stone was removed from across the site as part of the ground reduction, which had previously sealed all topsoil deposits.

DISCUSSION

4.2 Summary

- 4.2.1 No finds or features pre-dating the existing houses to either side of the site were uncovered during the watching brief.
- 4.2.2 The dating of the pottery from pit 113 is suggestive of rubbish dumping associated with the occupation of No. 7 immediately to the east. Whether the pit was dug for this purpose or whether the refuse was simply being used to fill up an existing pit, possibly a small stone quarry pit for limestone is unknown. As there appears to have been minimal change to No.7 from the mapping, it is more likely the layer of mortar 110 occurred during its construction rather than from later demolition activity.
- 4.2.3 The disturbance to the topsoil across the site is likely to be later 20th century in date and fairly extensive and may be related to post war landscaping. The topsoil itself contained 19th century finds and may have originated as garden or horticultural soils.

5 FINDS

- 5.1.1 Five sherds of post-medieval/modern pottery were recovered during the watching brief, all from the fill (112) of pit 113 (**Appendix 2**).
- 5.1.2 The pottery includes three sherds of glazed post-medieval redware, a sherd of 18th-century Nottingham Stoneware and a very small chip of industrially-produced whiteware (late 18th/19th-century creamware or pearlware). The redware is likely to have been produced in one of the numerous post-medieval redware potteries in Somerset or Bristol. This ware type is not closely dateable and has a potential date range spanning the mid-16th to early 20th centuries.
- 5.1.3 The finds from pit 113, suggest that it was probably backfilled in the 18th or 19th century.

6 STORAGE AND CURATION

6.1 Preparation of Archive

- 6.1.1 The complete Site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard

conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the appropriate body, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; Brown 2011; ADS 2013; ClfA 2014c).

- 6.1.2 The Site archive will be prepared for long-term storage in accordance with current guidelines (e.g. Walker 1990; MGC 1994 etc.). The designated receiving museum will be Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. Until final deposition, the archive will be temporarily stored at the offices of WA West in Bristol under the project code. The archive comprises:

1 document case of paper records & A4 graphics

62 jpeg digital photographic images

- 6.1.3 All archive elements will be marked with the unique project code and WA will ensure that a full index (i.e. a summary of the contents) will be prepared, that will also form part of the archive.
- 6.1.4 A copy of the fieldwork report and ArcGIS Shapefiles of the watching brief area will, subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, be provided to the local Historic Environment Record and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.
- 6.1.5 The existing OASIS form (OASIS ID wessexar1-277383) will be completed and a pdf copy of the report will also be uploaded.

6.2 Discard policy

- 6.2.1 WA follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections* (SMA 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.
- 6.2.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993 and 1995; HE (formerly EH) 2011).

6.3 Security copy

- 6.3.1 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.

6.4 Copyright

- 6.4.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by WA Ltd under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. 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 shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.

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8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Contexts Table

| Context | Type | Description | Depth BGL. |
|---------|-------------|--|-------------------------|
| 101 | Layer | Modern type 1 gravel laid as hardstanding | 0.0–0.06 m |
| 102 | Deposit | Dark grey-brown silty-loam topsoil with lenses of ash, carbonised wood flecks, loose and friable | 0.06–0.26 m |
| 103 | Deposit | Subsoil: mid yellowish-grey silt-clay with limestone fragments, 'brash'. | 0.26–0.60 + m |
| 104 | Natural | Limestone bedrock, up-cropping across the site | 0.16–1 m + |
| 105 | Deposit | Disturbed topsoil, redeposited, mid brownish-grey, friable, silty-loam, common limestone fragments (BGL after site reduced and 101 removed) | 0.0–0.30 m |
| 106 | Deposit | Mid yellow-reddish-brown silt-clay with abundant small limestone fragments; 'brash'. Same as 103. | 0.50 – 0.90 m |
| 107 | Natural | Limestone bedrock, up-cropping across the site | 0.16–1 m + |
| 108 | Deposit | Yellow sandy silt-clay mix with common small limestone fragments, concentrated at southern end of site | 0.23–0.60 m variable |
| 109 | Deposit | Reddish-yellow brown silt-clay with occasional small limestone fragments, subsoil. | 0.20–0.40 m |
| 110 | Layer | Layer of 'buff' coloured lime mortar with occasional limestone fragments, possibly a construction spread from the building of No. 7 Gloucester Road. | 0.20–0.45 + m |
| 111 | Deposit | Very dark grey-brown silty-loam with common carbonised wood flecks, ash tips, similar to 102. May be origin of 105 which has become more disturbed and so mixed up. | 0.00 – 0.35 m |
| 112 | Fill of 113 | Friable loose ashy mid grey-brown silt containing ash lenses, carbonised wood flecks, mortar flecks, animal bone, pottery sherds, ceramic building material and roof tile fragments. Domestic rubbish dumping. | 0.00 – 0.60 m |
| 113 | Cut of pit | Steeply sloping sides of large pit, base not excavated as below the required construction level. 3.50 m in width within southern foundation trench, unknown length. | 0.00 – 0.60 m |



8.2 Appendix 2: OASIS Form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-277383

Project details

| | |
|--|---|
| Project name | 11A, Gloucester Rd, Almondsbury, Bristol: Archaeological Watching Brief |
| Short description of the project | Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Heritage Planning Services Ltd. (hereafter 'the client') to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at 11a Gloucester Road, Almondsbury, Bristol, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 6360709 184118 (hereafter referred to as the 'Site'). The watching brief took place between 6th and 10th July 2017. Archaeological monitoring of the groundworks revealed both historic and more modern landscaping had occurred, as well as revealing a spread of pale cream mortar, probably associated with the construction of the house to the west of the site, and a domestic rubbish filled pit of similar date (later 18th or 19th century). No features or finds predating the later post-medieval period were found. |
| Project dates | Start: 06-07-2017 End: 10-07-2017 |
| Previous/future work | No / No |
| Any associated project reference codes | 115530 - Sitecode |
| Type of project | Recording project |
| Current Land use | Residential 1 - General Residential |
| Monument type | PIT Post Medieval |
| Investigation type | ""Watching Brief"" |
| Prompt | Planning condition |

Project location

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Country | England |
| Site location | SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE ALMONDSBURY 11A, Gloucester Rd |
| Postcode | BS32 4HD |
| Site coordinates | ST 360682 184101 50.961017824892 -2.910436612186 50 57 39 N 002 54 37 W Point |

Project creators

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Name of Organisation | Wessex Archaeology |
| Project brief originator | South Gloucestershire Council |

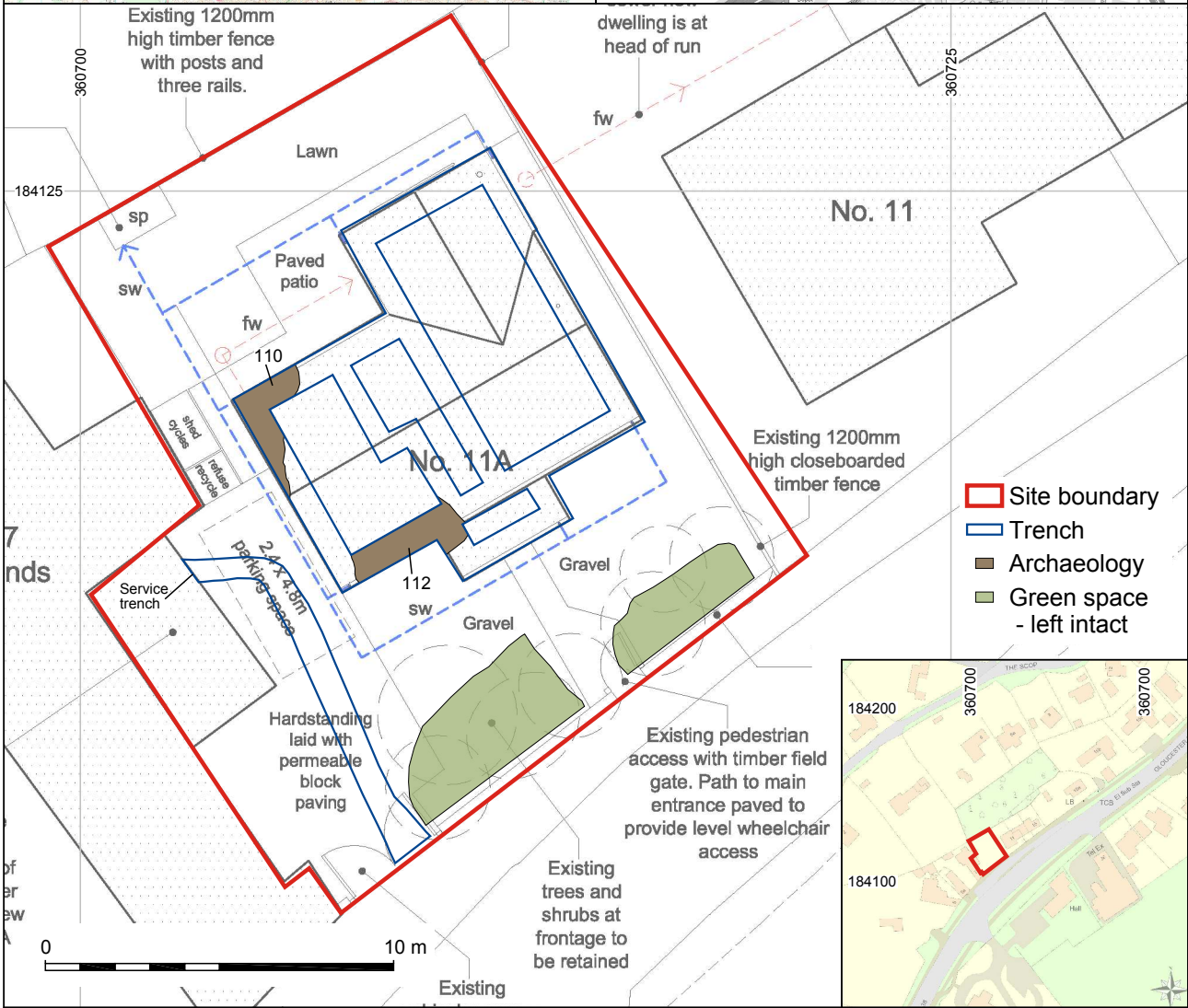
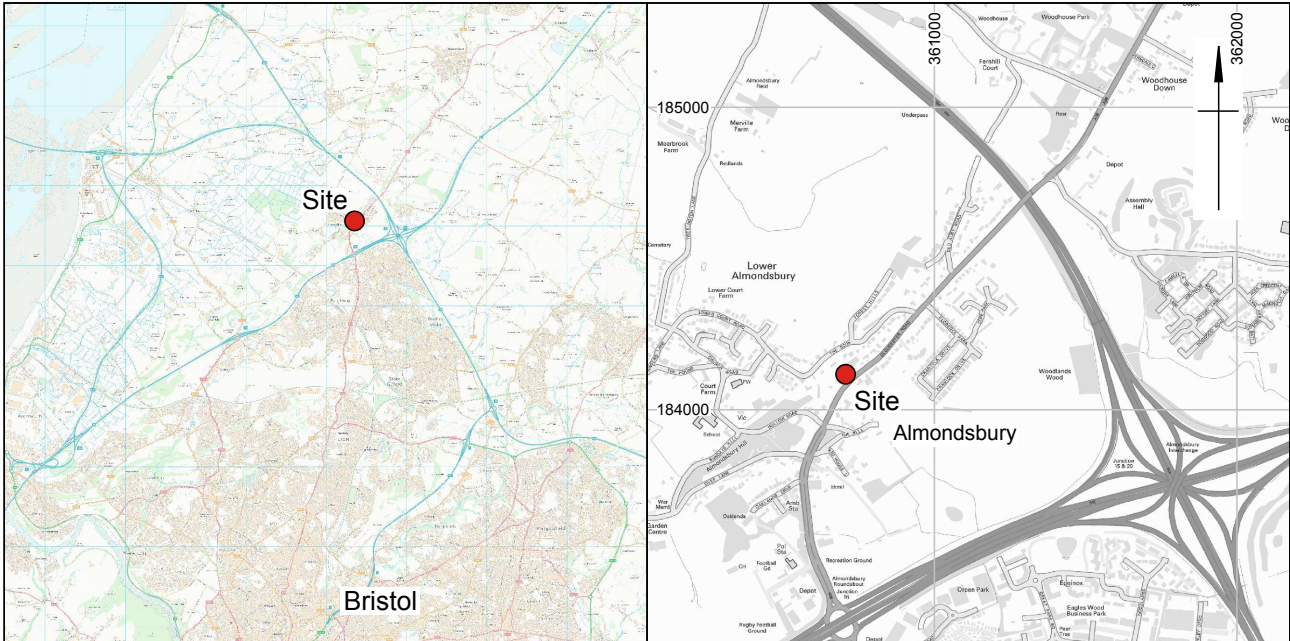



| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Project design originator | Wessex Archaeology |
| Project director/manager | Bruce Eaton |
| Project supervisor | Tracey Smith |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Consultant |
| Name of sponsor/funding body | Heritage Planning Services Ltd. |

Project bibliography 1

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
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| Other bibliographic details | 115530.02 |
| Date | 2017 |

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| Entered by | Bruce Eaton (b.eaton@wessexarch.co.uk) |
| Entered on | 17 July 2017 |



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Site location and proposed development plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: The service trench at the western side of site, looking south-west, 1 m scale



Plate 2: Limestone bedrock below subsoils in the northeast corner of the site, looking north-east, 1 m scale


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Plate 3: Yellow sandy clay-silt subsoils at the southern end of site, looking north-west, 0.5 m scale



Plate 4: Mortar layer 110 underlying 111 in the north-west corner of the foundations, looking north-east, 0.5 m scale



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Plate 5: Backfill of rubbish pit 113, looking northeast, 0.5 m scale

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|---|---|---|------------------|----|
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