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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**PROPOSED SYNTHETIC TURF SURFACE,  
ST ALBANS HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS,  
1-3 TOWNSEND AVENUE, ST ALBANS, HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING**

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING**

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski	
NGR: TL 1517 0780	Report No: 4964
District: St Albans	Site Code: AS 1789
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 6094
Signed:	Date: 9 October 2015

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- Trial trench evaluations*
- Geophysical surveys*
- Archaeological monitoring and recording*
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## **CONTENTS**

### ***OASIS SUMMARY SHEET***

#### ***SUMMARY***

- 1 INTRODUCTION**
- 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**
- 3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS**
- 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**
- 5 METHODOLOGY**
- 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS**
- 7 CONFIDENCE RATING**
- 8 DEPOSIT MODEL**
- 9 DISCUSSION**
- 10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

#### ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

#### ***BIBLIOGRAPHY***

#### ***APPENDICES***

- 1 CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE**
- 2 HER SUMMARY SHEET**

**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
<b>Project name</b>	<i>Proposed synthetic turf surface, St Albans High School for Girls, 1-3 Townsend Avenue, St Albans, Hertfordshire</i>		
<i>In June 2015 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at St Albans High School for Girls, 1-3 Townsend Avenue, St Albans, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1517 0780). The monitoring was commissioned by the school in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new all-weather synthetic surface.</i>			
<i>The site lies in the northern end of the historic core of St Albans. It is situated within the area designated as AS.R.25 on the Local Plan (including St Albans with Saxon Kingsbury, the Saxon and medieval town and Sopwell Nunnery). The site is situated right at the northern end of the historic medieval town, within the area demarcated by the town defensive ditch (the Tonman Ditch). The site had a potential mainly for medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.</i>			
<i>In the event the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds. The site was significantly affected by previous modern development.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	08, 09, 12 & 16/06/2015		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work (Y/N/?)	N
P. number	6094	Site code	AS 1789
Type of project	Archaeological Monitoring & Recording		
Site status	Within area AS.R.25		
Current land use	Open area between school buildings		
Planned development	New synthetic turf surface		
Main features (+dates)	-		
Significant finds (+dates)	-		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	Hertfordshire	St Albans	St Albans
HER/ SMR for area	Hertfordshire HER		
Post code (if known)	AL1 3SJ		
Area of site	c.300m <sup>2</sup>		
NGR	TL 1517 0780		
Height AOD (min/max)	c.121m AOD		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	Requirement of SADC		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Andrew Newton, Zbigniew Pozorski		
Funded by	St Albans High School for Girls		
Full title	Proposed synthetic turf surface, St Albans High School for Girls, 1-3 Townsend Avenue, St Albans, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Monitoring & Recording		
Authors	Pozorski, Z.		
Report no.	4964		
Date (of report)	October 2015		

**PROPOSED SYNTHETIC TURF SURFACE,  
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1-3 TOWNSEND AVENUE, ST ALBANS, HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING**

**SUMMARY**

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*In the event the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds. The site was significantly affected by previous modern development.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In June 2015 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at St Albans High School for Girls, 1-3 Townsend Avenue, St Albans, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1517 0780; Figs. 1 & 2). The monitoring was commissioned by the school in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new all-weather synthetic surface (St Albans City & District Council Planning Ref. 5/13/2567).

1.2 The monitoring was undertaken in accordance to requirement of St Albans City & District Council District Archaeologist (SADC), and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 19/12/2014), and approved by SADC. The project conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for An Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014), and the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The objectives of the project of archaeological monitoring and recording were:

- to ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect buried archaeological remains;
- to secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme; and
- to secure the analysis, interpretation, publication (if required), long-term conservation and storage of the project archive.

### *Planning policy context*

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings, scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

## **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

2.1 The site lies to the east of St Peter's Street and south of Townsend Avenue in the northern end of the historic core of St Albans (Fig. 1). It comprises the existing buildings and small open areas of St Albans High School for Girls. The new artificial surface is to be installed within area known as The Patch to the rear of Science Block (Fig. 20).

### 3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 St Albans lies just to the north of the River Ver, which flowing down to the city from the north-west turns south at this point to meet the Colne and eventually the Thames. As a result much of the city, including the present site, lies on a gentle slope downwards from the north-east to the south-west towards the river.

3.2 The site is situated on at a height of c.121m AOD. St Albans lies on a solid geology of Upper Cretaceous Upper Chalk (British Geological Survey 1978), which is overlain by flinty and chalky drift and possible alluvium associated with the River Ver. The soils of central St Albans are unsurveyed due to the urban nature of the area. Those in the surrounding area are of the Charity 2 Association, which are described as well-drained flinty fine silty soils in valley bottoms and calcareous fine silty soils over chalk or chalk rubble on valley sides (Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW) 1983). These may be found in the area to the south-west of the city. To the north the soils comprise those of the Hornbeam 3 association, which are deep fine loamy over clayey and clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils, while to the south and south-east may be found soils of the Batcombe association; these are described as fine silty over clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils (SSEW 1983).

### 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### *Prehistoric*

4.1 Prehistoric occupation of the St Albans area is well attested, particularly along the valley of the River Ver, which provided a rich source of subsistence. The earliest evidence of human activity in the wider area comprises a scatter of worked flints dating to the Mesolithic period. An extensive Iron Age settlement, known as *Verlamion*, is known to lie within Prae Wood approximately 2.8km to the south-west of the site, from which evidence for the minting of Tasciovanus and Cunobelin coins have been found (St Albans Archaeology & History website).

#### *Romano-British*

4.2 At its height, the Roman town of *Verulamium* consisted of the third largest settlement in Britain (Pevsner & Cherry 1997). It was founded in AD 50, yet reputedly destroyed by Queen Boudicca ten years later. It became one of Britain's largest Roman centres with a forum basilica complex (opened in AD 79), an amphitheatre and public bathhouses all situated to the south-west of modern St Albans, with the important communication route of Watling Street tunnning through the centre. There was no known fort in the town and the town walls were not built until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Much of *Verulamium* was destroyed by fire in AD 155. The remains of the town are known from over 80 hectares enclosed within 3<sup>rd</sup> century city walls. Extensive archaeological work has taken place within *Verulamium* and has revealed numerous remains including Romano-Celtic temples, theatre, kilns, sewers,



buildings, timber-framed shops, tiled floors, furnaces, cobbled tracks, roads and city walls (Pevsner & Cherry 1997; Niblett & Thompson 2005)

### *Anglo-Saxon*

4.3 By the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the Saxon town of St.Albans/*Verulamium* was known as *Watlingchester* or *Verulamchester* and was described by the historian Bede in AD 730 as containing the '*beautiful church worthy of Alban's martyrdom* (St Albans Archaeology & History website). The location of the Benedictine Abbey of St Alban was thought to have been the spot where the Christian martyr, Alban was executed in approximately 324 AD. St. Albans Abbey was founded in AD 793 by King Offa of Mercia, although the site lay within the manor of Kingsbury, which belonged to the Saxon kings and was bought by Alfric before he became abbot of St. Albans (Page 1902). The Kingsbury *burh* was possibly located to the north of the Abbey. Although the manor of Kingsbury was not listed in the Domesday Book of 1086, it is thought that the '*pond for fish*' listed in the town of St Albans' entry refers to Alfric's large fishpond known as '*Fischpol*' (Morris 1976; Page 1902). St Albans School, a public school which occupies a site to the west of the Abbey and which includes the 14th century Abbey Gateway, was founded in AD 948.

### *Medieval*

4.4 Medieval St Albans soon took up a form recognisable today with settlement moving across the River Ver from the Roman city to the Abbey precincts and spreading further away from there up the hill to the north and east. By 1086, the town of St Albans incorporated 10 hides, land for 16 ploughs, a park for woodland beasts and three mills valued at 40s and the town had its population of 500 people. In AD 1077, Paul of Caen, the first Norman Abbot, began rebuilding the Abbey of St Albans (St Albans Archaeology & History website). St. Peter's Street, High Street, Market Place, Holywell Street and Fishpool Street were probably all well established in roughly their present positions by the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The medieval period also saw the division of the town into four wards, roughly corresponding to the built-up areas of the four modern parishes of St Stephen, St Michael, St Peter and the Abbey of St Alban itself. These were each given a constable of the peace and two chief pledges to maintain order by Abbott Richard de Wallingford (1260 – 1291). By 1327 the boundaries of the borough had been formerly recorded although it is likely that they had already been determined well before then. The Priory was dissolved in 1539 and the Abbey Church became the parish church when it was bought by the local people in 1553 (Page 1902).

4.5 The medieval moated site of St Peter's Grange lies some 150m to the west on the site of the former bus station (Hertfordshire HER 9948; St Albans Urban Archaeological database UD Mon 679 Event 615). It also lies some 100m to the south of the churchyard of medieval St Peter's Church (UAD Mon 543) and the site of Hall Place (UAD Event 468).

4.6 Mapping evidence from the 1880s suggests the site was then enclosed

fields of Townsend Farm, but the site has a potential for earlier archaeological remains. Previous archaeological works carried out at the school in 2011 when a new music hall was built (Site Code SSG11) revealed a number of archaeological features including a ditch with High Medieval pottery sherds, undated pits, post holes and a large feature of unknown provenance. The ditch is not believed to have been large enough to form an element of The Grange.

### *Post-medieval & modern*

4.7 Post-medieval development of the town saw the construction of roads, specifically catering to the coaching trade, as St. Albans formed the first stop on the coaching route north from London. It accounts for town's numerous inns, many dating from Tudor times. Later development saw the steady expansion of various industries such as printing, engineering, clothing and hat manufacture, while the construction of the railway in 1858 allowed an increase in communication and trade. The Abbey Church was granted a Cathedral status and the town received a City charter in 1877. In the inter-war years it became a popular centre for the electronics industry. After the World War II the town expanded significantly as it took a part in the post-War redistribution of population out of London (St Albans Archaeology & History website).

## **5 METHODOLOGY**

5.1 The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of all groundworks, the inspection of the subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro-forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the excavated area was scanned by metal detector.

5.2 The principal element monitored was mechanically-excavated ground reduction within area of layout of the proposed new artificial surface (Fig. 2). The work comprised removal of the existing surface then ground reduction of c.0.20-0.30m within the whole designated area and a further reduction of c.0.50m depth within the central part of the area where a cellular infiltration system was to be located.

## **6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS**

6.1 Deposits located within area of excavation were recorded in sample section presented below.

<i>Sample section 1 (DP 5)</i> <i>Central part of the site, north-east corner, facing south-west</i> <i>0.00 = 120.75m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1001	Modern made ground. Mid grey, friable, sandy silt with frequent small CBM fragments and stones.
0.22 – 0.49m	L1002	Modern made ground. Light to mid brown, friable, clayey silt with frequent CBM fragments.
0.49m+	L1003	Natural mid brownish yellow, compact, silty clay.

<i>Sample section 2 (DP 6)</i> <i>South part of the site, facing north-east</i> <i>0.00 = 120.70m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.19m	L1001	Made ground. As above.
0.19 – 0.39m	L1002	Made ground. As above.
0.39m+	L1003	Natural silty clay. As above.

<i>Sample section 3 (DP 8)</i> <i>South-west part of the site, facing north-east</i> <i>0.00 = 120.70m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.21m	L1001	Made ground. As above.
0.21 – 0.43m	L1002	Made ground. As above.
0.43m+	L1003	Natural silty clay. As above.

6.2 Apart from deposits of modern made ground the monitoring revealed numerous modern (mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century) services and foundations (two concrete walls and one brick-constructed) of outbuilding of modern origin (Fig. 3).

## 7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds during the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording.

## 8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The site was commonly overlain by Topsoil L1000, a mid dark grey, soft, sandy silt (0.10 – 0.20m thick). The topsoil has been removed during the early stage of the groundworks. Below was modern made ground L1001 (0.15 – 0.25m thick) overlaying another deposit of modern made ground L1002 (0.20 – 0.30m thick).

8.2 The natural clay, L1003, was present at 0.65 – 0.80m below existing ground level and comprised a mid brownish yellow, compact, silty clay.

## **9 DISCUSSION**

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the medieval and post-medieval archaeology. It is located in the northern end of the historic core of St Albans within the area demarcated by the town defensive ditch (the Tonman Ditch).

9.2 In the event no archaeological features or finds were revealed. No indication of any previous development of the site was identified with an exception of the modern outbuilding or garage foundations and drainage. No residual finds were recovered.

9.3 The results of the investigation suggest the site was subject to extensive modern development which likely had a severe impact on any archaeological remains, if present. The highest impact probably was caused by the construction of the Science Block to the immediate south-west of the monitored area. Therefore it is unlikely the archaeological remains, if present, would have survived within the area of shallow ground reduction covering the majority of the site adjacent to standing modern structures.

## **10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Verulamium Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank St Albans High School for Girls for funding the project.

AS would also like to thank Bickerdike Allen Partners for their assistance.

AS would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the building contractor, S & C Slatter Ltd

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Simon West of St Albans City & District Council.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## APPENDIX 1      CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

<b>Records</b>	<b>Number</b>
Brief	N
Specification	N
Registers	2 (Context, Digital Photo)
Context Sheets	2
Site drawings A1	0
Site drawings A3	0
Site drawings A4	1
Site photographs b/w	0
Site photographs colour slides	0
Digital Photographs	9

## APPENDIX 2 HER SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site name and address:</b>	Proposed synthetic turf surface, St Albans High School for Girls, 1-3 Townsend Avenue, St Albans, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Monitoring & Recording
<b>County:</b> Herts	<b>District:</b> St Albans
<b>Village/Town:</b>	<b>Parish:</b> St Albans
<b>Planning application reference:</b>	St Albans City & District Council Planning Ref. 5/13/2567
<b>Client name/address/tel:</b>	St Albans High School for Girls
<b>Nature of application:</b>	Construction of new synthetic turf
<b>Present land use:</b>	Green yard
<b>Size of application area:</b> c.300m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated</b> c.300m <sup>2</sup>
<b>NGR (8 figures):</b>	TL 1517 0780
<b>Site Code:</b>	AS 1789
<b>Site director/Organization:</b>	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
<b>Type of work:</b>	Archaeological Monitoring & Recording
<b>Date of work:</b>	08-16/06/2015
<b>Location of finds/Curating museum:</b>	St Albans
<b>Related SMR Nos:</b>	<b>Periods represented:</b> None
<b>Relevant previous summaries/reports:</b> -	-
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>	<p>In June 2015 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at St Albans High School for Girls, 1-3 Townsend Avenue, St Albans, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1517 0780). The monitoring was commissioned by the school in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new all-weather synthetic surface.</p> <p>The site lies in the northern end of the historic core of St Albans. It is situated within the area designated as AS.R.25 on the Local Plan (including St Albans with Saxon Kingsbury, the Saxon and medieval town and Sopwell Nunnery). The site is situated right at the northern end of the historic medieval town, within the area demarcated by the town defensive ditch (the Tonman Ditch). The site had a potential mainly for medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.</p> <p>In the event the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds. The site was significantly affected by previous modern development.</p>
<b>Author of summary:</b> Z Pozorski	<b>Date of Summary:</b> October 2015

## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. The site. Looking west.



DP 2. Initial ground reduction. Looking south-east.



DP 3. Further ground reduction in the central area. Looking south-east.



DP 4. Works in the central part of the site. Looking east.



DP 5. Sample section 1. Looking north-east.



DP 6. Sample section 2. Looking south-west.





DP 7. South-west part of the excavation area. Looking west.



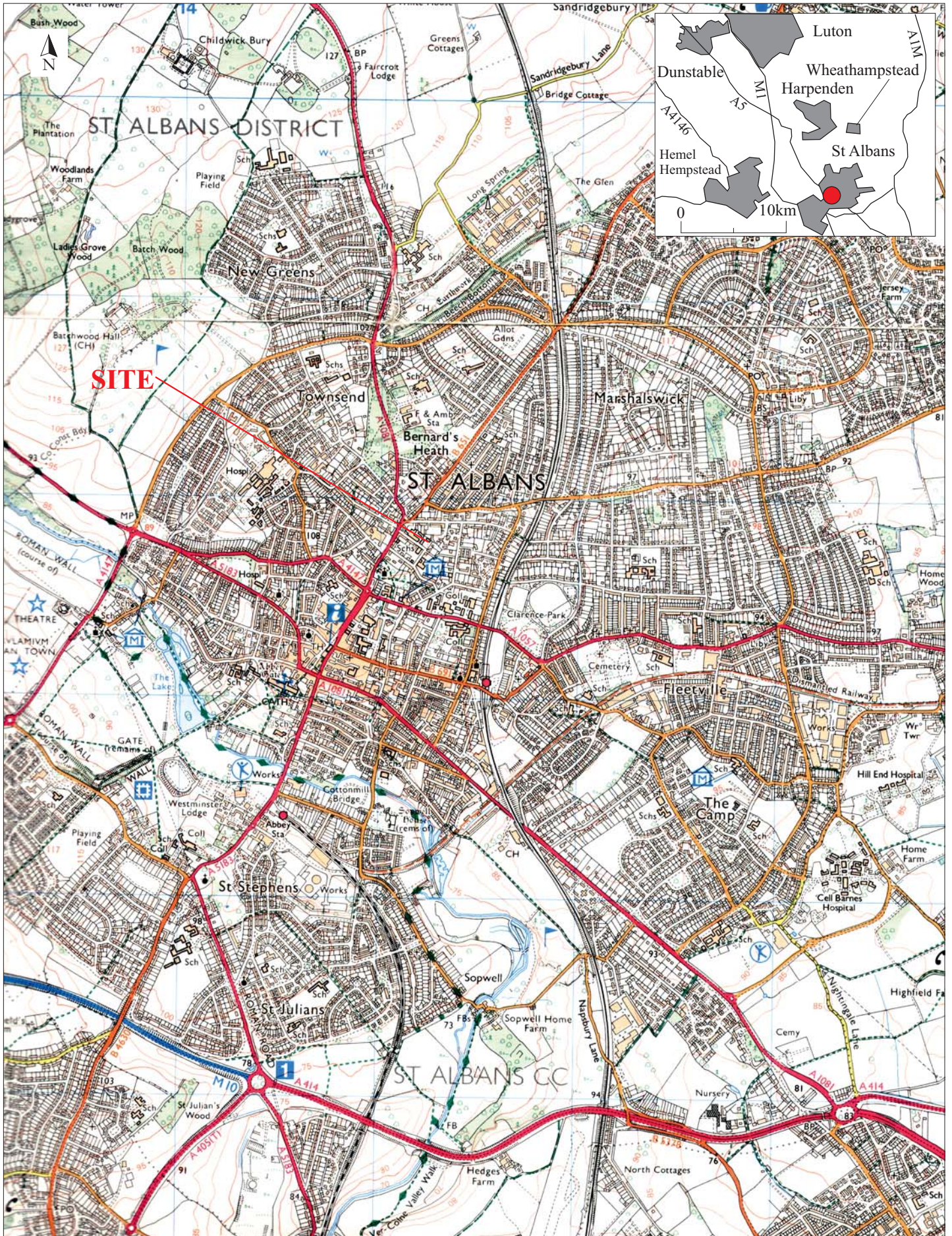
DP 8. Sample section 3. Looking south-west.



DP 9. North-west part of the area. Looking north-east.

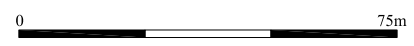
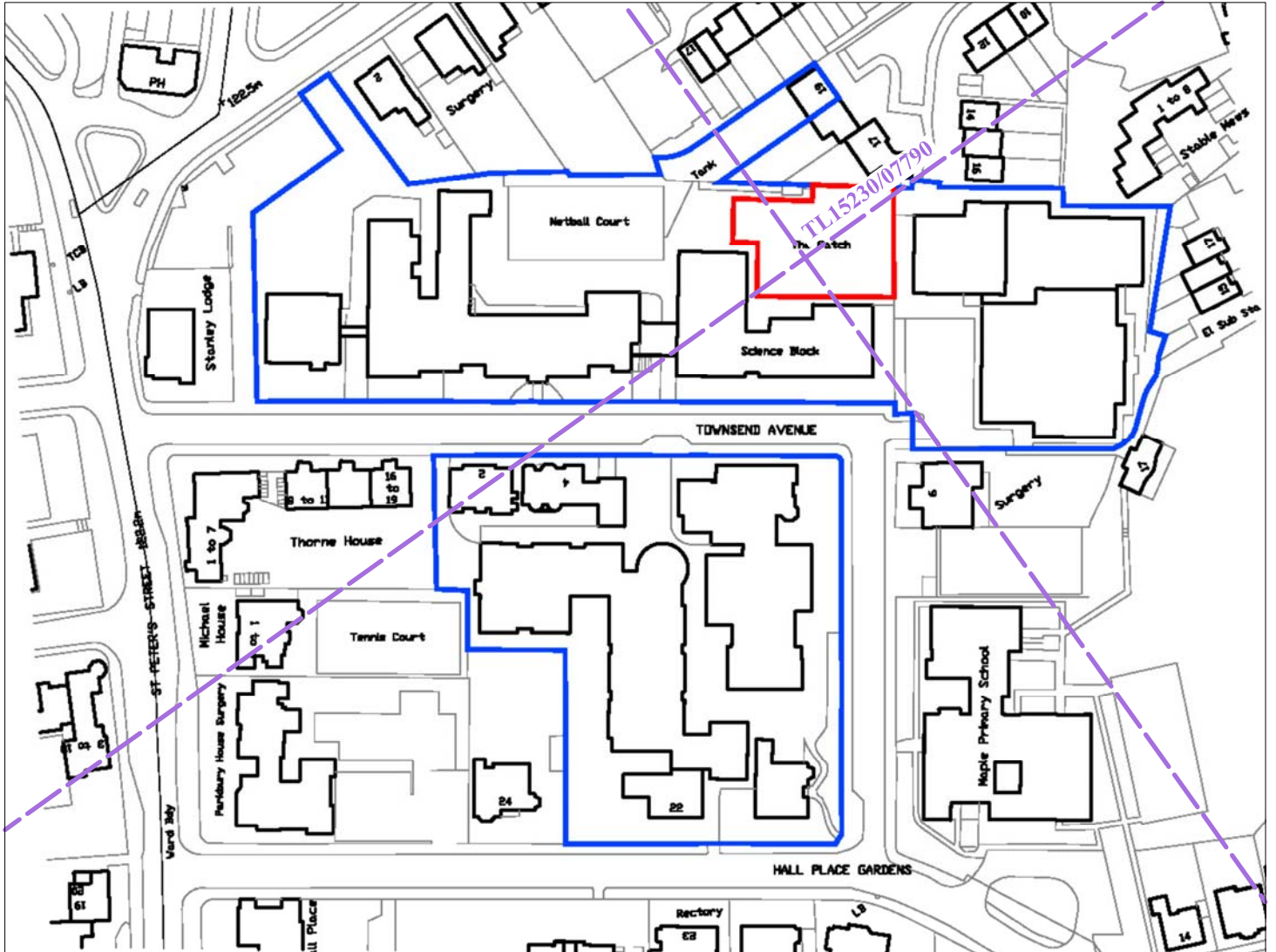


DP 10. North-east part of the area. Looking south-east.



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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4  
 St Albans School For Girls (P6094)



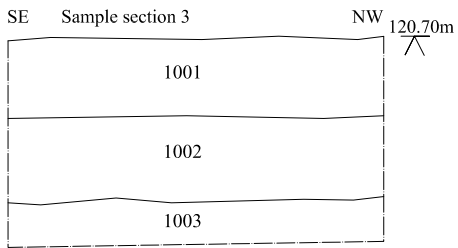
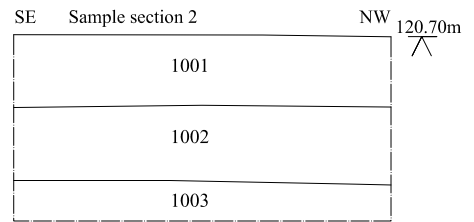
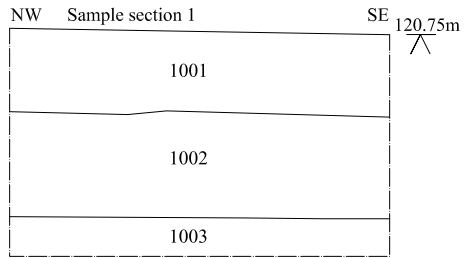
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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**

Scale 1:1500 at A4

St Albans High School For Girls (P6094)





<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
<b>Fig. 4 Sample sections</b>
Scale 1:20 at A4
St Albans High School For Girls (P6094)