

T H A M E S      V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Sir Frederic Osborn School, Hems Lane, Panshanger,  
Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by James McNicoll-Norbury**

**Site Code: FOWG11/07**

**(TL 2560 1295)**

**Sir Frederic Osborn School, Hems Lane, Panshanger,  
Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Crest Nicholson South**

by James McNicoll-Norbury  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code FOWG 11/07

**November 2013**

## Summary

**Site name:** Sir Frederic Osborn School, Hens Lane, Panshanger, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire

**Grid reference:** TL 2560 1295

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 12th – 13th November 2013

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James McNicoll-Norbury

**Site code:** FOWG 11/07

**Area of site:** 1.3ha

**Summary of results:** The evaluation did not reveal any deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest and it is concluded that the site has no archaeological potential.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Letchworth Museum in due course.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 21.11.13 Steve Preston ✓ 21.11.13
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**Sir Frederic Osborn School, Hems Lane, Panshanger,  
Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire  
An Archaeological Evaluation**

by James McNicoll-Norbury

**Report 11/07b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at the Sir Frederic Osborn School, Hems Lane, Panshanger, Welwyn Garden City (TL 2560 1295) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mark Bewsey of Crest Nicholson South, Crest House, Pycroft Road, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 9GN.

Outline planning permission (N6/20060923/OP) has been gained from Welwyn Hatfield District Council to develop a sports hall, all-weather sports pitch and an area of housing at the site, followed by detailed consent for the residential element of the proposal (N6/2012/282/DE). The outline consent is subject to a condition (10) relating to archaeology. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site field evaluation is required as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District Council's policy on archaeology in order to draw up a scheme to mitigate the impacts of development on archaeology if necessary. This report concerns the area to be developed for residential purposes.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Andy Instone of the Historic Environment Unit, Hertfordshire County Council, the archaeological advisers to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Steve Crabb between 12th and 13th November 2013 and the site code is FOWG 11/07. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Letchworth Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located in the grounds of Sir Frederic Osborn School in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire (Fig. 2). To the north-west is Hems Lane and to the south-west Black Fan Road, the school itself stands on the eastern boundary of the development. The site was previously in use as a school playing field with tennis courts at the northern end of the site and is generally flat. The natural geology is described as Glacial Gravels (BGS 1978) and a yellow-brown sandy gravel was observed in all trenches. The site lies at a height of 80m above Ordnance Datum. The development area covers around 1.3 ha (Fig. 2).

## **Archaeological background**

The background archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment for the project (Wallis and Preston 2011). In summary, the site is in a designated Area of Archaeological Significance, based on the proximity of a late Iron Age cemetery and settlement, and probably also Roman settlement. More broadly, Welwyn lies in an area of considerable Bronze Age potential, based on cropmark evidence. In the Roman period the major road from St Albans to Colchester passed through the original village of Welwyn (north of the Garden City), with a small settlement including a cemetery alongside it. There is potential for either of these settlements to extend onto the site. Not far to the west is the site of an Iron Age burial which has become a type-site for the period ('Welwyn-type graves'). Saxon and medieval Welwyn is thought to have occupied much the same area as the Roman settlement. There is also generalized potential for remains of any period, simply from the size of the development area.

Previous fieldwork on various parts of the overall development site (three geophysical surveys, a borehole survey, two phases of trial trenching and a watching brief) had failed to locate any features of archaeological significance (KRA 2003; Hunn 2004; Hancock 2004; Crank 2005).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The aims of the evaluation are to determine the presence/ absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date, state of preservation and importance of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation in-situ, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to provide sufficient information to enable an appropriate mitigation strategy to be produced if necessary.

Thirteen trenches were to be dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a ditching bucket at lengths of 25m totalling *c.* 4% of the total area of the site. Machine excavation of the trenches was to be under the supervision of a suitably qualified archaeologist and any deposits of interest were to be excavated by hand.

## Results

The 13 trenches were dug as intended and ranged in length from 24.95m to 27.0m and in depth from 0.07m to 0.56m. (Fig. 3, Pls 1-8). A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

The stratigraphy for most of the trenches was very similar. Typically up to 0.2m of topsoil (stripped of grass) overlay up to 0.2m of brown sandy silt with gravel pieces which was a subsoil, where present. Below this was sandy gravel natural geology (Fig. 4).

Prior to work commencing on the site, the former tennis courts had been stripped of overburden (Fig. 3) with some disturbance of the natural geology recorded.

No archaeological deposits were recorded nor artefacts recovered from any of the evaluation trenches.

## Conclusion

Despite being in an area of archaeological significance the evaluation did not reveal any archaeological deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest on the site. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

## References

- BGS, 1978, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 239, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Crank, N A, 2005, 'Archaeological Evaluation: Sir Frederic Osborn School, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire', ASC unpubl rep 723/FOS/01, Milton Keynes
- Hancock, A, 2004, 'Geophysical Survey: Sir Frederic Osborn School, Welwyn Garden City, Herts', ASC unpubl rep, Milton Keynes
- Hunn, J R, 2004, 'Archaeological Assessment: Sir Frederic Osborn School, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire' ASC unpubl rep 533/FOS/2, Milton Keynes
- KRA, 2003, 'Geoenvironmental Investigation at Sir Frederic Osborne School, Hems Lane, Panshanger, Welwyn Garden City, Herts', Ken Rush Associates, rep N2769, Braintree
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Wallis, S and Preston, S, 2011, 'Sir Frederic Osborn School, Panshanger, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire: An archaeological desk-based assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 11/07, Reading

**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

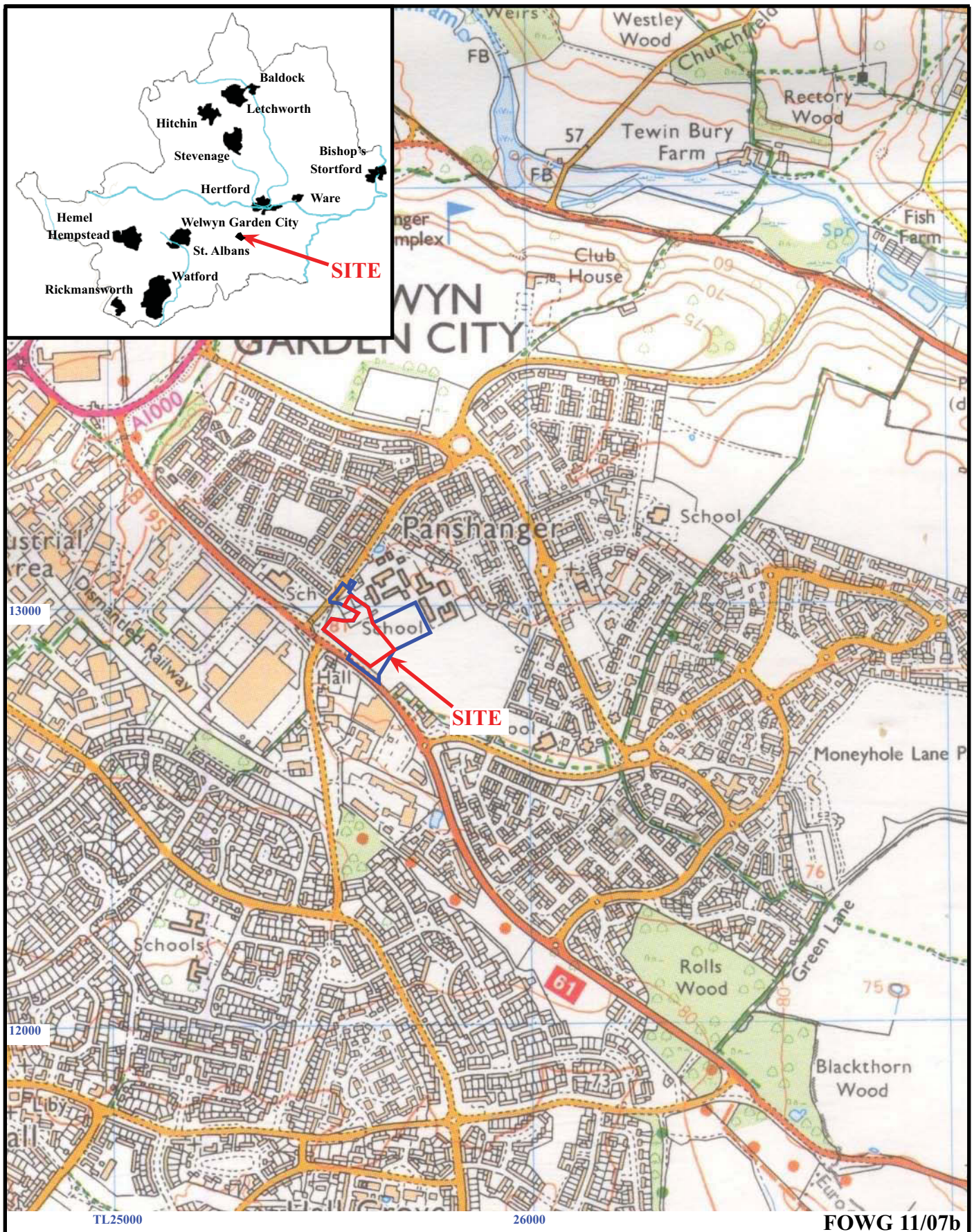
0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	25.2	1.6	0.36	0-0.20m grey brown sandy silt (topsoil); 0.20-0.30m brown sandy silt with gravels (subsoil); 0.30m+ yellow/brown sandy gravels (Natural geology) <b>[PL. 1]</b>
2	25.6	1.6	0.35	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15-0.34m subsoil; 0.34m+ natural geology
3	25.6	1.6	0.56	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.51m subsoil; 0.51m+ natural geology
4	25.0	1.6	0.40	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.38m subsoil; 0.38m+ natural geology <b>[PL. 2]</b>
5	26.0	1.6	0.35	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.33m subsoil; 0.33m+ natural geology <b>[PL. 3]</b>
6	25.5	1.6	0.43	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ natural geology <b>[PL. 4]</b>
7	25.0	1.6	0.54	0-0.29m topsoil; 0.29-0.50m subsoil; 0.50m+ natural geology
8	27.0	1.6	0.35	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15-0.32m subsoil; 0.32m+ natural geology <b>[PL. 5]</b>
9	26.0	1.6	0.30	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-0.27m subsoil; 0.27m+ natural geology <b>[PL. 6]</b>
10	25.5	1.6	0.25	0-0.10m topsoil; 0.10-0.22m subsoil; 0.22m+ natural geology
11	26.1	1.6	0.46	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ natural geology <b>[PL. 7]</b>
12	24.95	1.6	0.08	0-0.08m disturbed natural; 0.08m+ natural geology <b>[PL. 8]</b>
13	26.1	1.6	0.07	0-0.07m disturbed natural; 0.07m+ natural geology

**APPENDIX 2: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET**

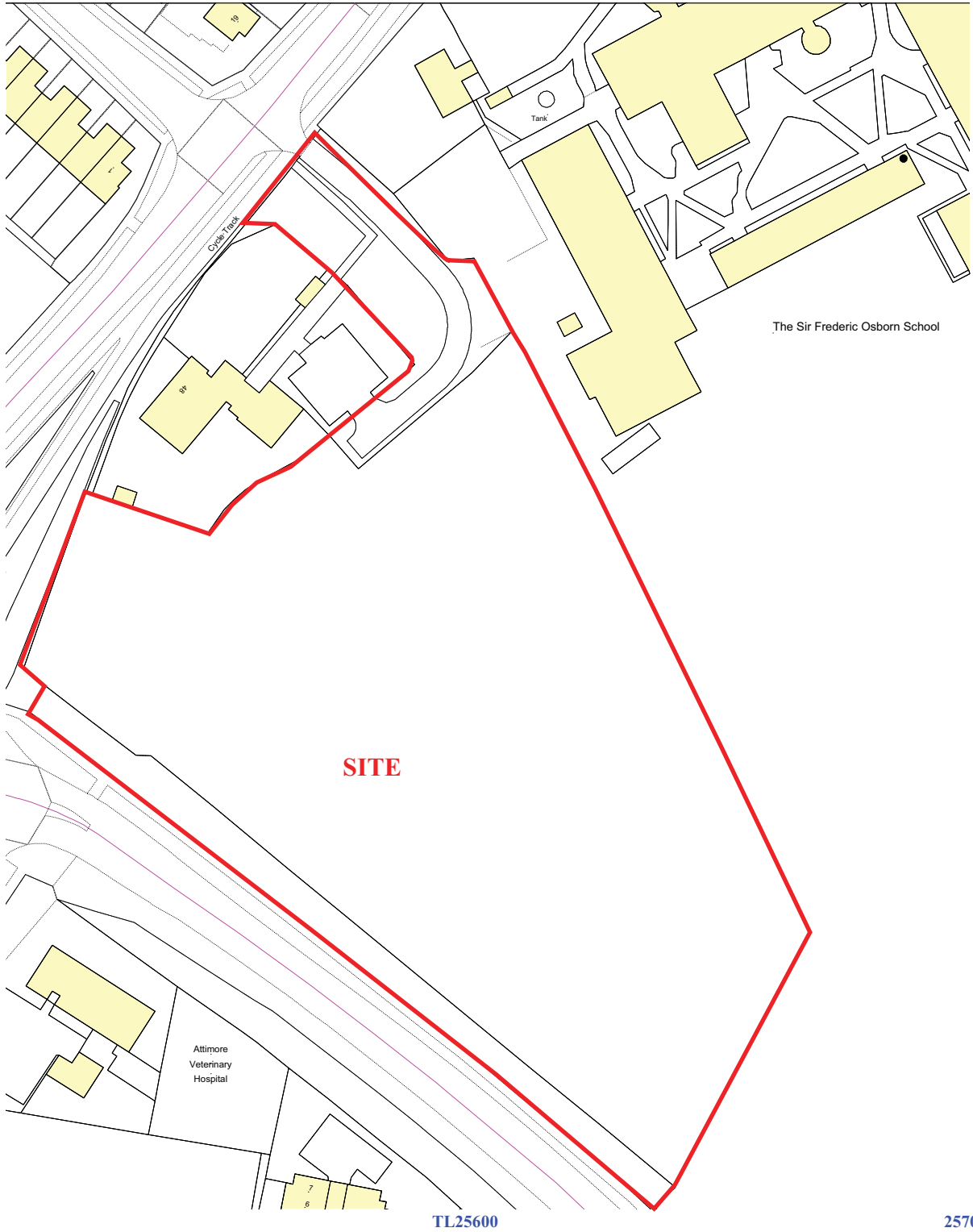
<b>Site name and address:</b> Sir Frederic Osborn School, Hems Lane, Panshanger, Welwyn Garden City		
<b>County:</b> Hertfordshire	<b>District:</b> Welwyn Hatfield	
<b>Village/Town:</b> Welwyn Garden City	<b>Parish:</b> Panshanger	
<b>Planning application reference:</b> N6/20060923/OP; N6/2012/282/DE		
<b>Client name, address, and tel. no.:</b> Crest Nicholson South, Crest House, Pycroft Road, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 9GN		
<b>Nature of application:</b> Residential		
<b>Present land use:</b> Playing field		
<b>Size of application area:</b> 1.3ha	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 1.3ha	
<b>NGR (to 8 figures):</b> TL 2560 1295		
<b>Site code (if applicable):</b> FOWG 11/07		
<b>Site director/Organization:</b> James McNicoll-Norbury, Thames Valley Archaeological Services		
<b>Type of work:</b> Evaluation		
<b>Date of work:</b> 12th – 13th November 2013	<b>Start:</b> 12th November 2013	<b>Finish:</b> 13th November 2013
<b>Location of finds &amp; site archive/Curating museum:</b> Letchworth Museum		
<b>Related HER Nos:</b>	<b>Periods represented:</b> nil	
<b>Relevant previous summaries/reports</b> Crank, N A, 2005, 'Archaeological Evaluation: Sir Frederic Osborn School, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire', ASC unpubl rep 723/FOS/01, Milton Keynes Hancock, A, 2004, 'Geophysical Survey: Sir Frederic Osborn School, Welwyn Garden City, Herts', ASC unpubl rep, Milton Keynes Hunn, J R, 2004, 'Archaeological Assessment: Sir Frederic Osborn School, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire' ASC unpubl rep 533/FOS/2, Milton Keynes KRA, 2003, 'Geoenvironmental Investigation at Sir Frederic Osborne School, Hems Lane, Panshanger, Welwyn Garden City, Herts', Ken Rush Associates, rep N2769, Braintree Wallis, S and Preston, S, 2011, 'Sir Frederic Osborn School, Panshanger, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire: An archaeological desk-based assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 11/07, Reading		
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> No archaeological deposits were revealed during the evaluation and no finds recovered.		
<b>Author of summary:</b> James McNicoll-Norbury	<b>Date of summary:</b> 20.11.2013	





**Sir Frederic Osborn School, Hems Lane, Panshanger,  
 Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, 2013  
 Archaeological Evaluation (Residential area)**  
 Figure 1. Location of site within Welwyn Garden City  
 and Hertfordshire.

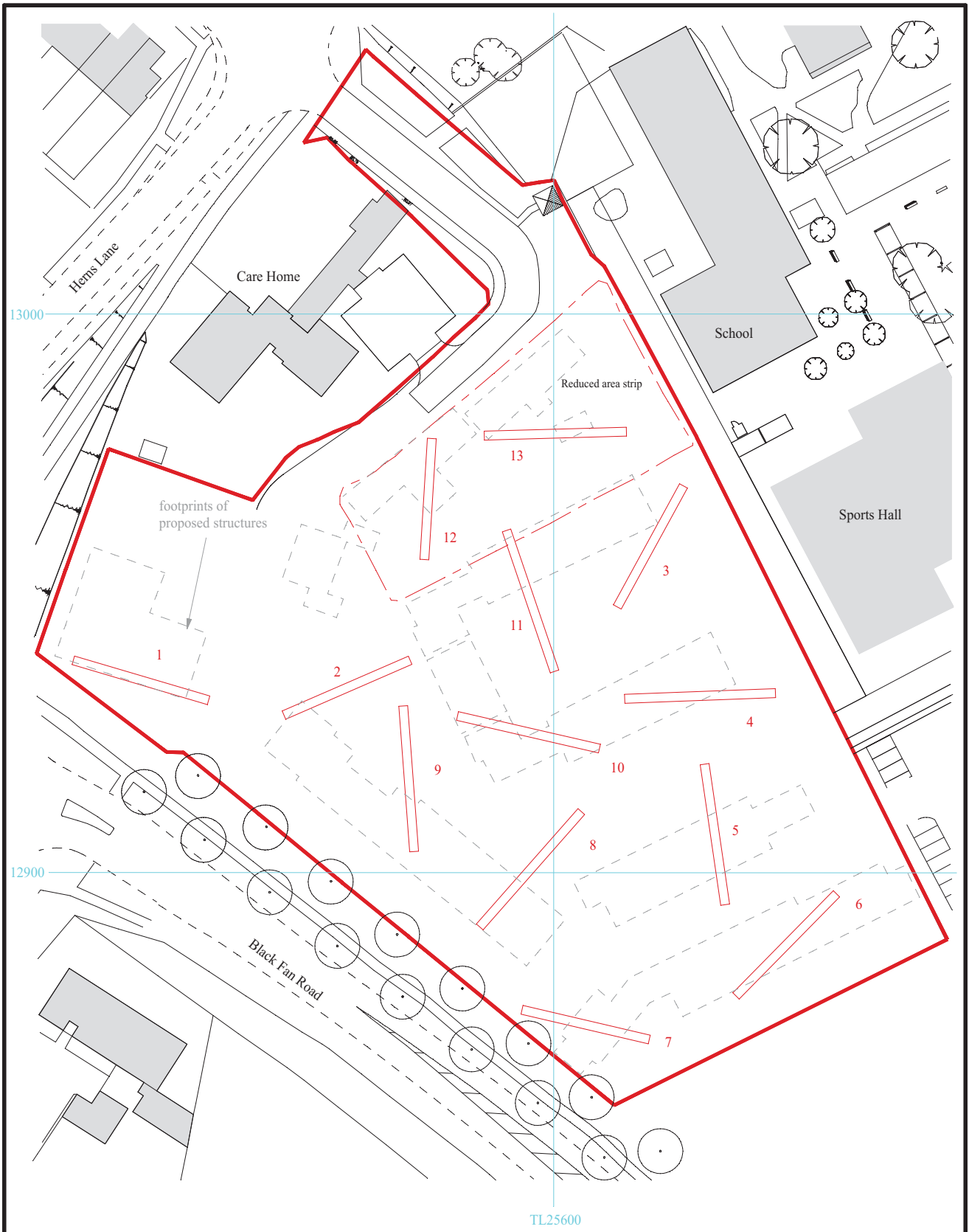
Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 182 at 1:12500  
 Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880



FOWG 11/07b

**Sir Frederic Osborn School, Herts Lane, Panshanger,  
 Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire**  
 Archaeological Evaluation  
 Figure 2. Location of site.





FOWG 11/07b

**Sir Frederic Osborn School, Herns Lane  
Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, 2013  
Archaeological Evaluation**

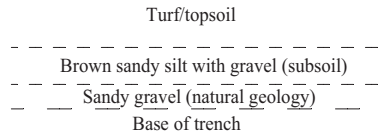
Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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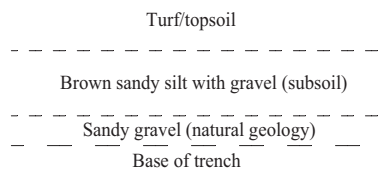
**Trench 1**

80.2m aOD



**Trench 8**

80.4m



FOWG 11/07b

**Sir Frederic Osborn School, Herts Lane  
Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, 2013  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north west,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 4, looking east,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 3. Trench 5, looking north,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 6, looking north east,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, 2013  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Plates 1 - 4.

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Plate 5. Trench 8, looking north east,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 6. Trench 9, looking north,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 7. Trench 11, looking north,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 8. Trench 12, looking north,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

**FOWG 11/07b**

**Sir Frederic Osborn School, Herts Lane,  
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Archaeological Evaluation**

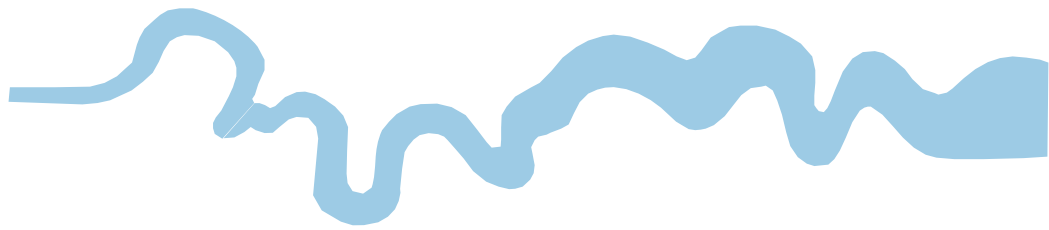
Plates 5 - 8.

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## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC





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