

# Proposed new dwelling and detached garage, High Trees, Winterbourne Earls, Wiltshire

## Results of archaeological trench evaluation

NGR: SU 17286 34348

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archaeology

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# PROPOSED NEW DWELLING AND DETACHED GARAGE, HIGH TREES, WINTERBOURNE EARLS, WILTSHIRE: RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRENCH EVALUATION

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## SUMMARY

*An archaeological evaluation, consisting of a single 15m metre long trench, was undertaken by AC archaeology Ltd. in the grounds of High Trees, Winterbourne Earls, Wiltshire, during January 2016. The investigation was undertaken in support of a planning application for a proposed new dwelling and detached garage. The evaluation revealed evidence that the immediate area of the proposed development had been built up during the modern period. A single sherd of late 19th century Verwood ware and a small quantity of fragmentary animal bone were present in the trench, but not retained.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation in advance of a proposed new development comprising the erection of a new dwelling and detached garage in the grounds of High Trees, Winterbourne Earls, Wiltshire, (NGR SU 17286 34348). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The trench evaluation was undertaken following consultation with the Wiltshire Council Assistant County Archaeologist (hereafter WCACA), to provide supporting information for the proposed residential development on the site (Application no. 15/10456/OUT). The site lies immediately to the west of the A338 in the rear garden of a detached property, also in the possession of the applicant (Plate 2).
- 1.3 The geology on the site comprises chalk of the Seaford Formation, formed during the Cretaceous Period, with superficial Head deposits comprising clay, sand and gravels. The site lies at around 58m OD.

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The application area lies within an area of known archaeological potential, where undated archaeological remains have been found. This comprised a ditch terminal and pit of unknown origin discovered at Tanners Yard immediately north of the proposed development (Wessex Archaeology 1995 MWI11015). A Romano-British coin was found further to the north at Orchard Cottage (MWI10894).

### **3 OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1** The trench evaluation was undertaken to determine, as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present on the site, as dictated by current best practice.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1** The trench evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology Ltd. (Robinson, 2016), which was submitted to, and approved by, the WCACA prior to commencement of the works.
- 4.2** The evaluation comprised the excavation of a single trench each measuring 15 x 1.0m within the footprint of the proposed new dwelling.
- 4.3** All soil removal was undertaken under the control and direction of the Site Archaeologist. Turf and topsoil was removed by a mechanical excavator, using a wide toothless bucket, and stored alongside each trench, separated from any subsoil as necessary. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.
- 4.4** All trenches were recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's General Site Recording Manual, Version 2 (2012). Detailed sections or plans were produced at 1:50. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.
- 4.5** The archive has been prepared using the site code ACW865 and is currently stored at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd. (Wiltshire).

### **5. RESULTS**

#### **Trench 1 (Plate 1)**

- 5.1** The trench was aligned northeast to southwest and located on a flat garden area lain to turf. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.25m revealing a superficial deposit of degraded chalk (104). Cutting into the chalk was a number of natural regular edges indicating that the deposit had been subject to periodic episodes of weathering. Uniformly infilling these areas of weathering and partly forming a layer across the trench was a colluvial deposit (103) of mid brown clay containing occasional small flint nodules. Sealing this was a 0.15m thick light grey brown silt (106) which in turn was sealed by 0.10m of dark brown silt clay (102) containing abundant small flint fragments and clinker. These would appear to represent a form of localised consolidation developed from the Post-medieval to modern periods. Directly above was a 0.25m thick deposit of silty clay (105) and above this a further layer of lightly compacted silty clay (101) measuring 0.30m in depth. Both subsoil deposits were fairly uniform in their associated coarse components containing occasional to moderate amounts of chalk flecking to fragments and fire waste. A single rim sherd of Verwood ceramic along with



a small assemblage of animal bone fragments was retrieved from deposit (101). Both of these layers appear to represent imported soils, utilised as a horticultural/garden subsoil. Above layer (101) is a 0.30m thick dark grey brown silty clay representing the present topsoil/turfline.

**Table 1: Trench 1 general depositional sequence**

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
100	0 – 300mm	Dark grey-brown silty clay. Friable, with occasional chalk flecking	Turfline/topsoil - present ground surface
101	300-600mm	Mid-dark grey-brown silty clay. Friable, with Occasional to moderate chalk flecking to fragments and fire waste	Imported horticultural/garden subsoil partly derived from waste material
102	850-950mm	Dark brown, silt clay with abundant small flint fragments and clinker	Imported soil utilised as a consolidation layer
103	600-800mm	Mid brown, clay. Stiff with occasional flint nodules	Collivium
104	1150-1250mm+	Light yellowish brown chalk with occasional medium sized flint nodules	Superficial substrata
105	600-850mm	Mid brown to grey hue silty clay. Lightly compacted with Occasional to moderate chalk flecking to fragments and fire waste	Imported horticultural/garden subsoil partly derived from waste material
106	950-1100mm	Light grey brown silt. Lightly compacted with very occasional chalk flecking and fragments	Imported soil utilised as a consolidation layer

## 6. COMMENT

6.1 The evaluation has established that the immediate area of the trench forms an artificial land surface built up sometime from the very late 19th century to mid-20th century and is represented by a sequence of imported deposits measuring up to 1.10m deep. The creation of this is prominently derived from the associated landscaping of the area prior to and during the construction of the present c.1950s detached property. Initially the original ground surface appears to have been partially truncated prior to being built up as evidenced by the lack of any historic subsoil/topsoil associated with the naturally derived colluvium and superficial substrata. The initial imported layers consist of slight bands of consolidation possibly used, in part, as primary levelling with subsequent deposits appearing to be part derived from late 19th/ early 20th century waste material forming the present 0.55m thick horticultural/garden subsoil. No evidence for pre-modern activity was encountered during the evaluation.

## 7. REFERENCES

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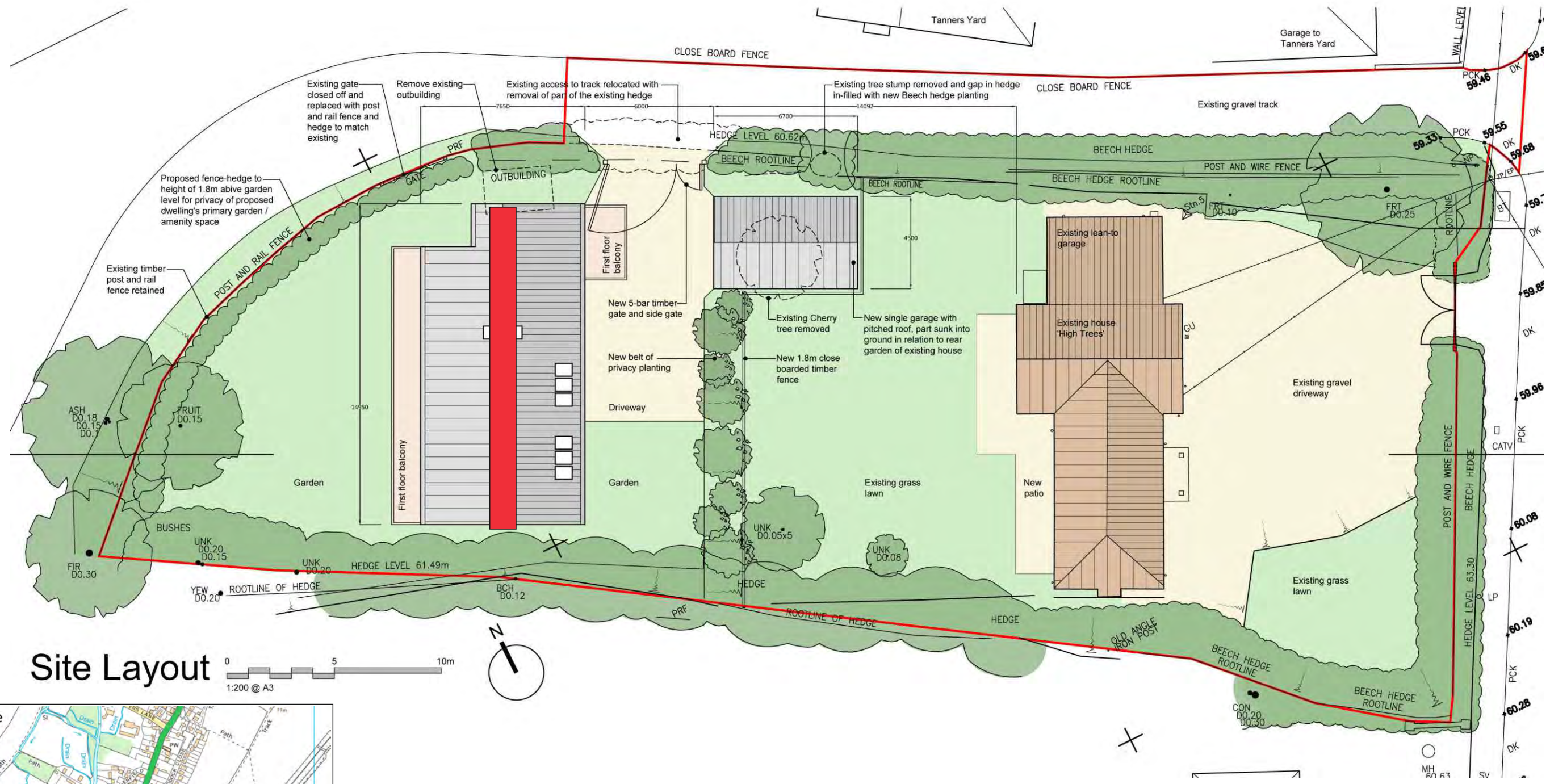
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# Site Layout

a) Site location



b) Proposed trench layout

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Fig. 1: Site and trench location





Plate 1:  
General view of Trench 1 from the southwest (scale 1m)



Plate 2: View of trench with present detached property 'High Trees' to the rear (viewed from the west)

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