

Ravenscroft, Chalk Hill, Shrewton, Wiltshire.

An Archaeological Field Evaluation.



Ravenscroft, Chalk Hill, Shrewton, Wiltshire.

A programme of Archaeological Field Evaluation

for

Archidraft Design

On behalf of

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by



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Non-technical summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Field Evaluation through trial trenching at Ravenscroft, Chalk Hill, Shrewton, Wiltshire, on 6 October 2015. The project was commissioned by Archidraft Design on behalf of their client, Ms Susan MacKinnon.

The evaluation was advised by Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS) in support of a planning application for residential development of the Site (Wiltshire Council planning reference: 15/07843/FUL). The Site lies within the historic core of Netton, a hamlet that dates back to at least the medieval period, and was later absorbed within the Shrewton urban area.

Despite this, there was no visible archaeological evidence for medieval activity, although two post-holes were identified, along with a small number of ephemeral features, likely of natural or agricultural origin. No finds were observed or collected during the course of the evaluation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Field Evaluation through trial trenching at Ravenscroft, Chalk Hill, Shrewton, Wiltshire (the 'Site'), on 6 October 2015. The project was commissioned by Archidraft Design on behalf of their client, Ms Susan MacKinnon.
- 1.2 The Field Evaluation was advised by Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS) in support of a planning application for residential development of the Site comprising two new detached dwellings with associated parking and access (Wiltshire Council planning application ref. 15/07843/FUL). The requirement followed advice by Central Government as set out in paragraph 128 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).
- 1.3 In an email from Ms Clare King (Assistant County Archaeologist) to Mr Andrew Bidwell (Wiltshire Council Senior Planning Officer) on 14 August 2015, Ms King stated:

"This site is of archaeological interest as it lies within the historic core of Netton, which dates back to at least the medieval period."
- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy; an archaeological evaluation; post-excavation and report production; and archive deposition. The WSI was approved by Ms King on 1 October 2015 prior to the commencement of any Site works.

2. Site location and topography

- 2.1 The Site (centred on NGR SU 07040 43464) covers c. 0.11ha, and is located c. 500m south-east of the centre of the village of Shrewton, adjoining the A360 road to the east, Chalk Hill to the south and with residential developments bordering the Site to the west and north (**Figure 1**). At the time of the evaluation, the Site comprised a garden area to the rear of Ravenscroft house.

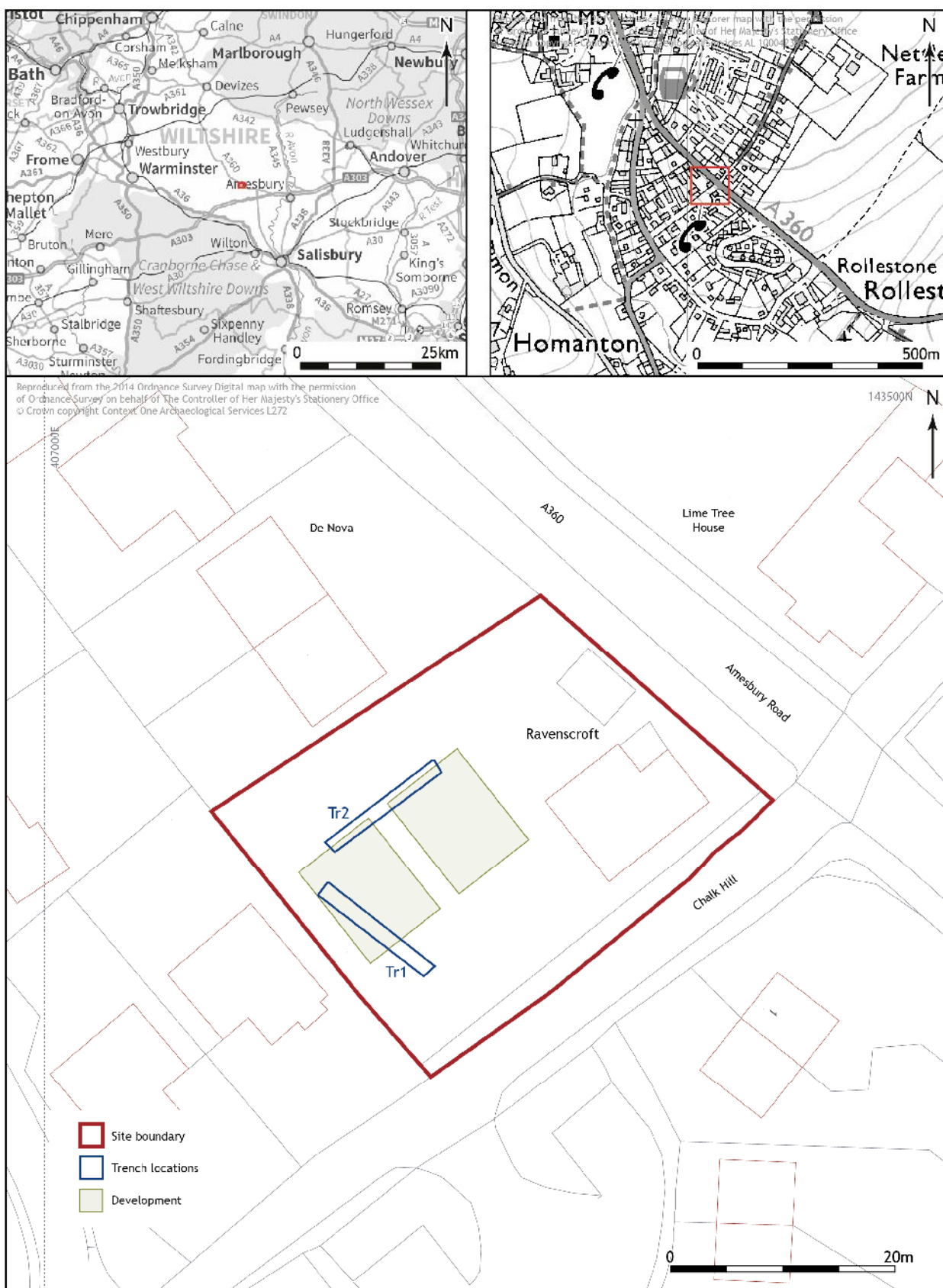


Figure 1. Site setting

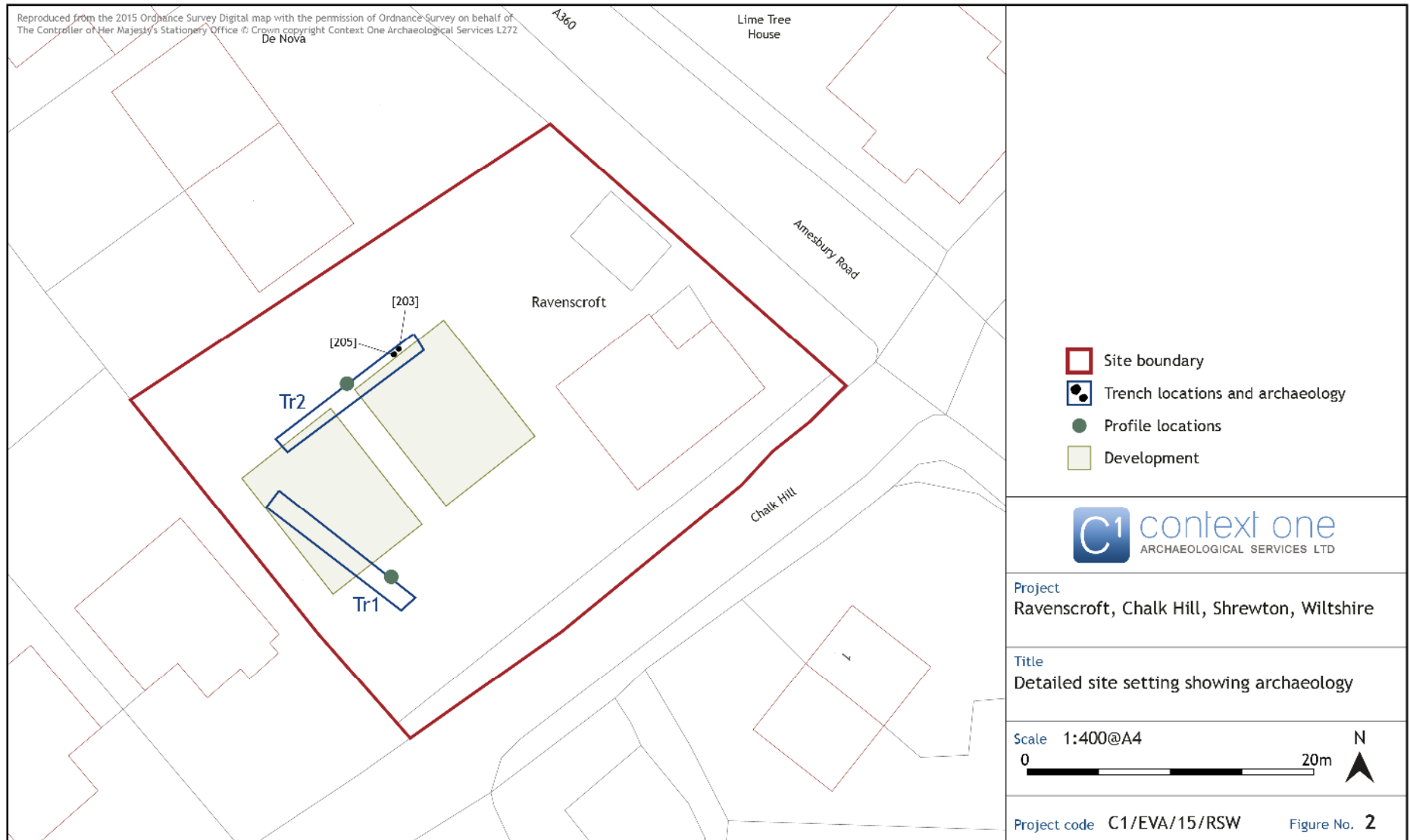


Figure 2. Detailed site setting showing archaeology and profile locations

3. Methodology

- 3.1 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire* issued by Wiltshire County Council in 1995, and the codes, standards and guidelines set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, rev. 2012; 1990, rev. 2008; 1994, rev. 2008). Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.
- 3.2 The archaeological evaluation comprised a total of 29m of trial trenching equating to 4% of the proposal development site. This was divided down into 2 trenches both measuring 14.5m long x 1.6m wide. The trenches were positioned over both of the proposed residential plots, although on site constraints (vegetation and access) meant that the trenches couldn't be wholly positioned over the proposed plots (**Figure 1**). The Location of the Trenches was mapped relative to the National Grid and Ordinance Datum using a TopCon GRS-1 Global Positioning System, producing an accuracy of 1-2cm.
- 3.3 A tracked machine fitted with a 1.2m wide toothless grading bucket was used to remove topsoil and continued in horizontal spits until archaeological features or natural geology was encountered, whichever was first. Once machine work had been completed, all faces of each trench were examined and, where necessary, cleaned using hand tools. A section of one long face of each trench was cleaned by hand to allow an understanding of the Site stratigraphy. Manual excavation then commenced to further investigate any possible archaeological features.
- 3.4 In the absence of archaeological features and deposits, a representative section of the trench was recorded to define the sequence of deposits using COAS *pro forma* evaluation trench sheets. A digital photograph was also taken of each section as well as the long axis of each trench. All photographs included an appropriate scale.
- 3.5 Any archaeological remains encountered were sampled by manual excavation to establish stratigraphic relationships, recover sufficient artefacts to establish 'absolute' dates, and to determine feature/deposit morphology and character. All features/deposits were recorded using standard COAS *pro forma* recording sheets in digital format. Stratigraphic relationships were recorded using a "Harris-Winchester matrix" diagram. Soil colours were logged using a Munsell soil colour chart. The location, extent and altitude of archaeological features and deposits were mapped relative to the National Grid and Ordinance Datum using a TopCon GRS-1 Global Positioning System, producing an accuracy of 1-2cm. A digital photographic record was made of each trench, each profile section, individual features as well as working shots to illustrate the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.
- 3.6 Upon completion of the evaluation, both trenches were backfilled by machine and compacted.

4. Results

- 4.1 The deposits and features encountered during fieldwork are described. In the text, context numbers for cuts appear in square brackets, e.g. [1004]; layer and fill numbers appear in standard brackets, e.g. (1002).

Soil Sequence and geology

- 4.2 The topsoil comprised a dark brown organic layer, with roots throughout (101), (201) measuring 0.25m deep overlying a light brown silty clay subsoil (102), (202) measuring 0.20 - 0.25m deep and containing redeposited chalk and flint. The subsoil covered the chalk natural (103), (203) at a depth of between 0.45m and 0.50m below the ground surface (**Plates 2 & 5**).

Archaeological features and deposits

- 4.3 No archaeological features were identified within Trench 1 although two shallow linear features [104] [105] (excavated to no more than 0.02m deep) were recorded towards the north-eastern end (**Plates 1 & 3**) along with an amorphous feature [103] likely the result of a tree throw. Two shallow (0.10m and 0.08m deep respectively) post-holes [203] [205] were identified towards the north-western end of Trench 2 (**Plates 4, 6 & 7**).



Plate 1. Trench 1 (from SE; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 2. Trench 1 profile (from SE; 1m scale)



Plate 3. Linear feature [104] within Trench 1 (from SE; 1m scale)



Plate 4. Trench 2 with post-holes [203] and [205] in the foreground (from NW; 2 x 1m scale)



Plate 5. Trench 2 profile (from SW; 1m scale)



Plate 6. Post-hole [203] (from SE; 0.20m scale)



Plate 7. Post-hole [205] (from SE; 0.20m scale)

5. The finds

- 5.1 No finds were observed or collected during the evaluation, although post-medieval brick was observed within the fill (206) of post-hole cut [205] (Plate 7).

6. Discussion

- 6.1 Despite the potential for discovering medieval occupation on the Site, the evaluation did not reveal any evidence of activity dating to this period. No significant archaeology was identified within Trench 1 where activity was limited to two undated shallow linear features and an amorphous feature which was likely the result of a tree throw. The linear features were cut directly in to the natural chalk. Two shallow post-holes were identified in Trench 2. These were also cut in to the natural chalk, and the southern-most post-hole contained a small amount of post-medieval brick. These features therefore likely represent a low level of background post-medieval activity probably stemming from the use of the Site as agricultural land in the 19th century, and later as a domestic garden.

7. Archive

7.1 An ordered and integrated site archive has been prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 2001) and *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992) / *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991).

7.2 The project archive is currently held by COAS and consists of the following:

Item	Number	Format
Evaluation trench sheets	2	Paper
Feature sheets	2	Paper
Context summary	1	Paper
Digital images	22	.JPG
Photographic Register	1	Paper

7.3 The paper archive has been scanned as a single file in .PDF format and will form part of the physical Site archive to be deposited with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

7.4 Copies of this report will be deposited with the client/agent and included as part of the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record. A digital copy of the report will also be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations - <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>). The OASIS entry will also be completed to include details of the archive contents.

8. COAS acknowledgements

8.1 COAS would like to thank the following for their contribution to the successful completion of this project:

Susan MacKinnon, Client
 Jacky Frampton, Archidraft Design
 Clare King, Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Council
 Andy Stainer, A. Stainer Buildings & Groundworks Contractor

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