

Archaeological evaluation at
171 Evendons Lane
Wokingham
Berkshire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Boutique Care Homes

September 2025



Find out more online:
www.explorethepast.co.uk



171 EVENDONS LANE WOKINGHAM BERKSHIRE

Archaeological evaluation report



Explore
the Past

©Worcestershire County Council

Worcestershire Archaeology
Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service
The Hive
Sawmill Walk
The Butts
Worcester
WR1 3PD

SITE INFORMATION

Site name:	171 Evendons Lane, Wokingham, Berkshire
Local planning authority:	Wokingham Borough Council
Planning reference:	231351
Central NGR:	SU 79871 66957
Commissioning client:	Boutique Care Homes
Client project reference:	794-PLN-HER-01428
WA project number:	P6928
WA report number:	3353
Oasis reference:	fieldsec1-536943

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL

Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	10/09/2025	M. Nicholson	Draft V1	R Lotherington
1.1	10.10.2025	R. Lotherington	Final	R. Lotherington

This report is confidential to the client. Worcestershire Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability to any third party to whom this report, or any part of it, is made known. Any such party relies upon this report entirely at their own risk. No part of this report may be reproduced by any means without permission.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	2
REPORT	3
1 INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Background to the project	3
1.2 Site location, topography, and geology.....	3
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	3
2.1 Introduction	3
2.1.1 Prehistoric (Palaeolithic-Iron Age, c. 500,000 BC - AD 43)	3
2.1.2 Roman (AD 43–410)	4
2.1.3 Early Medieval and Medieval (AD 410–1485).....	4
2.1.4 Post-Medieval and Modern (AD 1485–Present).....	4
3 PROJECT AIMS	4
4 PROJECT METHODOLOGY	5
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS	6
5.1 Introduction	6
5.2 Trench descriptions.....	6
5.2.1 Blank Trenches.....	6
5.2.2 Natural Deposits.....	6
5.2.3 Modern	6
6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE	6
7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE	6
8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	6
9 PROJECT PERSONNEL	7
10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	7
11 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	7

FIGURES

PLATES

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

Archaeological evaluation at 171 Evendons Lane, Wokingham, Berkshire

By Michael Nicholson

Illustrations by Abbie Horton

Summary

Between 8th August and 9th September 2025, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) at 171 Evendons Lane, Wokingham, Berkshire, (NGR SU 79871 66957). The project comprised the excavation of 7no. evaluation trenches across a mixture of grassed fields, hardstanding and tarmac associated with small, out of use commercial units and was commissioned by Boutique Care Homes (the Client). The project was undertaken in support of a proposed care home development scheme with associated earthworks, infrastructure, open spaces and landscape enhancements. The Archaeology Officer at Berkshire Archaeology (the Curator) considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon sub-surface heritage assets preserved within the development area and requested a phase of evaluation trenching to be undertaken in order to determine the date, preservation and significance of any archaeological remains preserved on the Site in accordance with paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Accordingly, planning permission for the development was granted during November 2024, subject to a programme of archaeological works (Planning Number: 231351) in accordance with the advice provided by the Curator.

The archaeological evaluation was intended to comprise the excavation of 7no. evaluation trenches, 5no. measuring 25m x 1.8m and 2no. measuring 20m x 1.8m, across the Site to assess archaeological potential. However, reference to utility plans, received prior to deployment, indicated the presence of a large number of active utilities bisecting the intended trench locations. The results of the utility searches were confirmed following deployment on the Site and revealed extensive active service interference over the location of Trenches 1 and 4. Trench 7, located within a courtyard within the centre of the Site was excavated at both the northern and southern trench margins but produced large quantities of asbestos contaminant material (ACM) within a modern made ground deposit immediately below the modern concrete surface level. Accordingly, excavation of Trenches 1, 4 and 7 was abandoned due to health and safety considerations.

The remaining trenches, which were excavated, (Trenches 2, 3, 5 and 6) were devoid of any finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance. Ground conditions were suitable in all excavated trenches to identify the presence or absence of archaeological remains, and it is considered that the lack of features and deposits has provided a reliable characterisation of the archaeological potential on the Site as a whole. The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

Between 8th August and 9th September 2025, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) at 171 Evendons Lane, Wokingham, Berkshire, (NGR SU 79871 66957). The project comprised the excavation of 7no. evaluation trenches across a mixture of grassed fields, hardstanding and tarmac associated with small, out of use commercial units and was commissioned by Propco Wokingham Ltd (the Client), in support of a proposed care home development scheme with associated earthworks, infrastructure, open spaces and landscape enhancements. The Archaeology Officer at Berkshire Archaeology (the Curator) considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon sub-surface heritage assets preserved within the development area and requested a phase of evaluation trenching to be undertaken in order to determine the date, preservation and significance of any archaeological remains preserved on the Site in accordance with paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Accordingly, planning permission for the development was granted during November 2024, subject to a programme of archaeological works (Planning Number: 231351) in accordance with the advice provided by the Curator.

The scope of the archaeological works are outlined within a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which was prepared RPS Consulting Services Ltd (WA 2025) and approved by the Curator. The evaluation also conformed to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2023a) and *Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2023b).

1.2 Site location, topography, and geology

The Site is located within a largely rural landscape, c. 2km south-west of Wokingham town centre. The Site comprises a mix of grassed fields and small, disused commercial units with associated hardstanding and tarmac. It is bounded by fields to the north, light residential units to the west, Evendons Lane and a golf course to the south, and Blagrove Lane to the east. The Site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 79871 66957.

The overall area occupied by the Site measures c.0.78 hectares (ha) and is located within an overarchingly flat topography lying at heights measuring between 63m and 65m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

The underlying geology comprises sands of the Bagshot Formation. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS, 2025 Geology of Britain viewer, accessed 10th September 2025)

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Introduction

It is beyond the scope of this report to exhaustively recreate a full historical background of Wokingham and the surrounding area. Therefore, the archaeological and historical background is limited to the Site and those portions of the surrounding area which provide archaeological and historical context sufficient to inform the archaeological works.

2.1.1 Prehistoric (Palaeolithic-Iron Age, c. 500,000 BC - AD 43)

Evidence for prehistoric activity within the immediate vicinity of the Site is limited. A single Palaeolithic hand axe was found at a brick kiln in Barkham to the northwest, and a small assemblage of Mesolithic

flintwork (including blades, a rejuvenator core and scraper) was recovered from Folly Thatch Cottage, also to the northwest.

Later prehistoric activity is indicated by undated ditches and gullies with residual Neolithic and Bronze Age flintwork at Rooks Farm, southwest of the Site. Further undated features at the same location may represent elements of a Bronze Age to Iron Age field system and boundary ditches, though these appear to reflect dispersed agricultural use rather than intensive settlement. Evidence of substantial Iron Age activity 850m to the north of the Site in the form of industrial furnaces at Folly Court has also been identified. Additional finds from the wider area include a Bronze Age burnt mound at Barkham Square and a Bronze Age palstave axe from Church Farm.

Overall, while prehistoric remains are present within the surrounding landscape, evidence suggests activity was intermittent and agricultural in character, with low potential for intensive occupation within the Site itself.

2.1.2 Roman (AD 43–410)

Undated postholes and ditches northwest of the Site are considered likely to represent Roman settlement activity. Wider evidence is largely limited to Roman pottery sherds recovered through fieldwalking during the Barkham Survey in the 1990s. As with the later prehistoric period, activity in the Roman era appears to have been dispersed and agricultural, with no evidence for dense settlement within the Site.

2.1.3 Early Medieval and Medieval (AD 410–1485)

The village of Barkham, c.0.5km northwest of the Site, has early medieval origins, first recorded as Beorchamme/Beorcham in AD 952 and listed in Domesday Book. Pottery of early medieval date has been recovered locally, including two sherds from Barkham Ride, while medieval finds include 12th–14th century pottery from a pit at the Well House, Barkham.

A moated site with an associated enclosure lies adjacent to St James' Church, Barkham, and is the only Scheduled Monument in the wider area. Probable ridge and furrow were also identified south of the Site. The evidence suggests the Site itself formed part of the agricultural hinterland of Barkham during this period, with low potential for settlement remains but possible agricultural features.

Wokingham, located around 2km northeast of the Site, takes its name from the Saxon meaning "Wocca's People's Home". Wocca was a Saxon leader whose followers farmed much of the surrounding land, although their main settlement was at Woking in Surrey.

In 1219 Wokingham was granted its market charter, and by the 14th century the town had developed around Rose Street, Peach Street, Denmark Street, Market Place, High Street, Broad Street, and The Terrace.

Wokingham was also noted for its medieval bell foundry. The industry was established in the town by the 14th century, with a bell produced at Wokingham being donated to Dorchester Abbey sometime before 1383.

2.1.4 Post-Medieval and Modern (AD 1485–Present)

Reference to the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey mapping, published during the later 19th century, indicates that the Site was occupied by small farming plots and remained largely undeveloped until the construction of the light commercial units presently extant within the south-east portion of the development area.

3 Project aims

The aims and scope of the project are to undertake sufficient fieldwork to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits beyond reasonable doubt;

- identify their location, nature date and preservation;
- assess their significance;
- assess the likely impact of the proposed development.

The evaluation only assessed heritage assets of Archaeological interest. The project did not include consideration of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas or historic hedgerows.

During the course of the project reference will be made to the *South West Archaeological Research Framework; Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (Webster, C, J (ed) 2007) in order to address specific regional research questions where applicable.

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by RPS Consulting Services Ltd (RPS 2025) and complimented by a Method Statement produced by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2025). Fieldwork was undertaken between the 8th and 10th September 2025.

The archaeological evaluation was intended to comprise the excavation of 7no. evaluation trenches, 5no. measuring 25m x 1.8m and 2no. measuring 20m x 1.8m, across the Site to assess archaeological potential. However, reference to utility plans, received prior to deployment, indicated the presence of a large number of active utilities bisecting the intended trench locations. The results of the utility searches were confirmed following deployment on the Site and revealed extensive active service interference over the location of Trenches 1 and 4. Trench 7, located within a courtyard in the centre of the Site was excavated at both the northern and southern trench margins but produced large quantities of asbestos contaminant material (ACM) within a modern made ground deposit immediately below the modern concrete surface level. Accordingly, excavation of Trenches 1, 4 and 7 was abandoned due to health and safety considerations. Trenches 2, 3, and 6 were bisected by buried services and subsequently divided into two parts, labelled 'a' and 'b'.

During excavation, deposits considered not to be archaeologically significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator, equipped with a toothless bucket. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected, and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were surveyed using a GNSS device with an accuracy limit set at <0.04m. On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken through a combination of structural, artefactual and environmental evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. There are currently no receiving museums in Berkshire, accordingly Worcestershire Archaeology will retain the physical archive until the situation is rectified. The evaluation report will however be uploaded to the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Introduction

The trenches and their deposits are shown in Figure 2 and Plates 1 - 10. The trench and context inventory are presented in Appendix 1. Depths of deposits are expressed as below ground level (BGL) and in metres above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

A context summary table of the depositional sequence encountered in the evaluation trenches is presented in Appendix 1: Context Inventory, which provides a synthesis of the presence/absence of archaeology in each of the trenches. These results should be considered in association with Figure 2 and Plates 1- 10.

5.2 Trench descriptions

5.2.1 Blank Trenches

All excavated trenches (Trenches 2, 3, 5 and 6) were devoid of any archaeological features and deposits, as illustrated in Figure 2. The trenches contained a natural substrate overlain by superimposed subsoil and topsoil with turf mat.

5.2.2 Natural Deposits

The natural substrate was characterised by yellow and blue clays towards the east which transitioned into a yellow clay with pockets of sand and gravels to the west. The natural substrate was identified at an average depth of 0.41m below present ground level (BGL) and sealed by superimposed subsoil and topsoil deposits.

5.2.3 Modern

Trench 3 (3a and 3b)

(Plates 3 - 6)

Trench 3 was sited within the eastern limits of the Site across an asphalt and concrete access road and carpark. Localised dumps of modern bricks were identified within superimposed deposits forming the base deposit for the current tarmac/concrete surface and are evidence of previous 20th century demolition activity on the Site prior to the construction of the current commercial unit buildings. This demolition activity almost certainly forms part of the same demolition activity that resulted in the discovery of asbestos containing material (ACM) within Trench 4. This demolition activity overlay a petrochemical contaminated redeposited natural layer which sealed the natural substrate.

6 Artefactual evidence

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no artefacts were identified which were considered to be suitable for analysis.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). Following discussion with the WA Senior Environmental Archaeologist it was considered that none of the deposits revealed were suitable for environmental analysis.

8 Discussion and conclusion

The archaeological evaluation at Evendons Lane, Wokingham, was undertaken to assess the potential for buried archaeological remains within the proposed development area. No prior geophysical survey had been carried out, and the evaluation trenches were not positioned to target identified anomalies of archaeological potential. Their placement was also heavily constrained by the

presence of existing services across the Site. Further restrictions were encountered in the central portion of the Site, where unknown underground services and buried asbestos deposits prevented excavation. While these factors inevitably limit the completeness of the results, the overall validity of the evaluation is considered to have been only marginally reduced.

Across the remainder of the Site, the trenches revealed no significant archaeological features or deposits. The general absence of remains may, in part, reflect horizontal truncation caused by prolonged agricultural activity in the modern period and subsequent 20th-century development. Ridge and furrow cultivation, a common feature of the surrounding landscape, was not observed in any of the excavated trenches. Their absence suggests that such remains may have been eroded, removed through later land use, or survive only within the subsoil. The latter interpretation remains tentative given the lack of visible furrow profiles in any trench sections.

Despite localised excavation constraints, the methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been met. Ground conditions were suitable in all excavated trenches to identify the presence or absence of archaeological remains, and it is considered that the lack of features and deposits has provided a reliable characterisation of the archaeological potential on the Site as a whole. The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Michael Nicholson, PCIfA, assisted by Mark Potter from Worcestershire Archaeology.

The project was managed by Rupert Lotherington, MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Michael Nicholson. Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text.

10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for the successful conclusion of the project: Propco Wokingham Ltd for commissioning the project and Tom Duck, Development Director at Boutique Car Homes for their help and support. The project was monitored by Linden Ellicott, Archaeology Officer at Berkshire Archaeology and Worcestershire Archaeology would also like to thank them for their advice and guidance.

11 Bibliography

AAF, 2011 *Archaeological archives: a guide to the best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. Archaeological Archives Forum

Association for Environmental Archaeology, 1995 *Environmental archaeology and archaeological evaluations: recommendations concerning the environmental component of archaeological evaluations in England*. Working Papers of the Association for Environmental Archaeology **2**

BGS, 2025 Geology of Britain viewer. Available: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>
Accessed: 22nd September 2025

ClfA, 2014 *Standard and guidance: for collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, published December 2014

ClfA, 2014 *Standard and guidance: for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, published December 2014, updated 5 June 2020

ClfA 2023a *Standard for archaeological field evaluation*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, published December 2023

ClfA 2023b *Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, published December 2023

English Heritage, 2011 Environmental archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation. English Heritage, Centre for Archaeology Guidelines

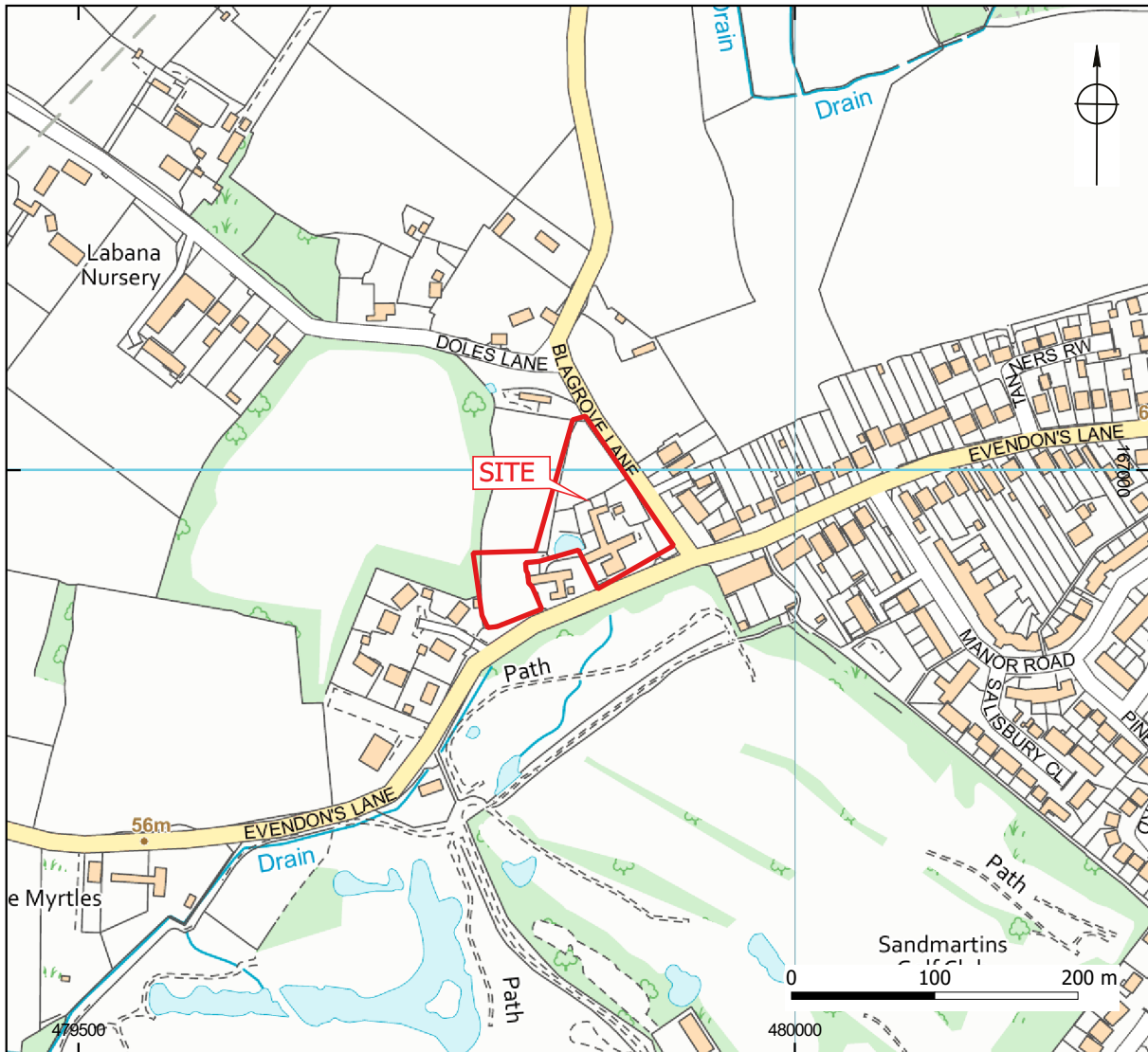
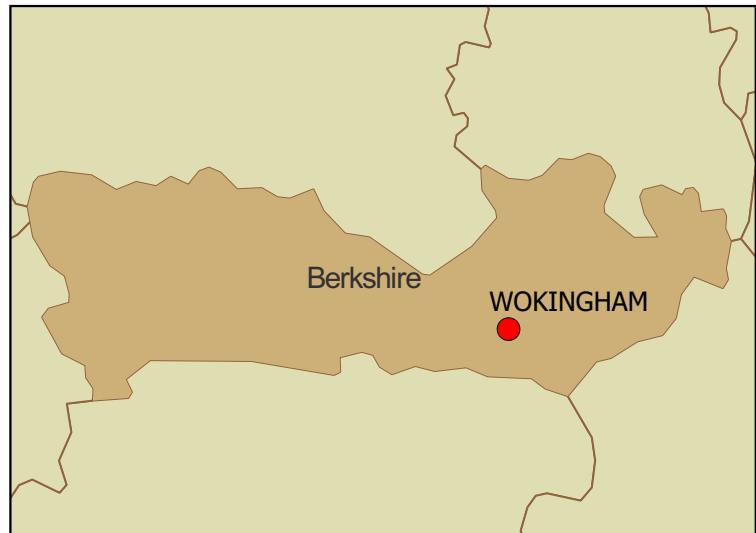
SMA, 1993 *Selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological collections*. Society of Museum Archaeologists

WA, 2012 *Manual of service practice, recording manual, Worcestershire Archaeology* Unpubl report **1842**. Worcestershire County Council

Webster, C.J. 2008. *South West Archaeological Research Framework; Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*. Somerset County Council.

Wright, N, 2025, *171 Evendons Lane, Wokingham, RG41 4EH: Written Scheme of Investigation*, RPS Group

Figures

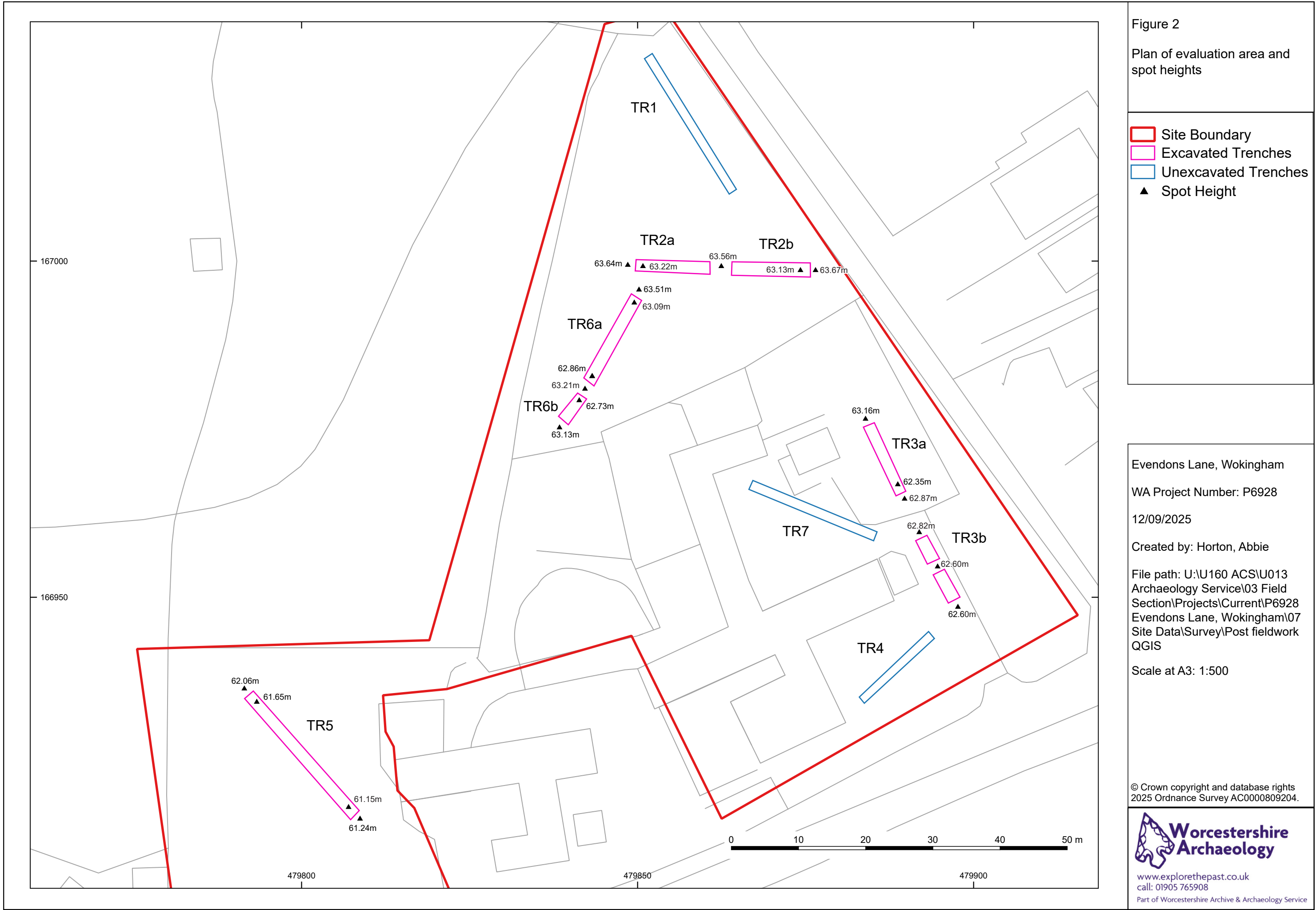


© Crown copyright and database rights 2025 Ordnance Survey AC0000809204
WA Project Number: P6928

scale at A4: 1:5,000

Worcestershire Archaeology
www.explorethepast.co.uk
call: 01905 765908
Part of Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service

Figure 1: Location of the site



Plates



Plate 1: Trench 2 (west end) looking east (Scale 2 x 1m).



Plate 2: Trench 2 (east end) looking east (Scale 2 x 1m).



Plate 3: Trench 3a looking south (Scale = 2 x 1m).



Plate 4: West facing section through Trench 3a (Scale = 1 x 1m).



Plate 5: Trench 3b looking south (Scale = 2 x 1m).

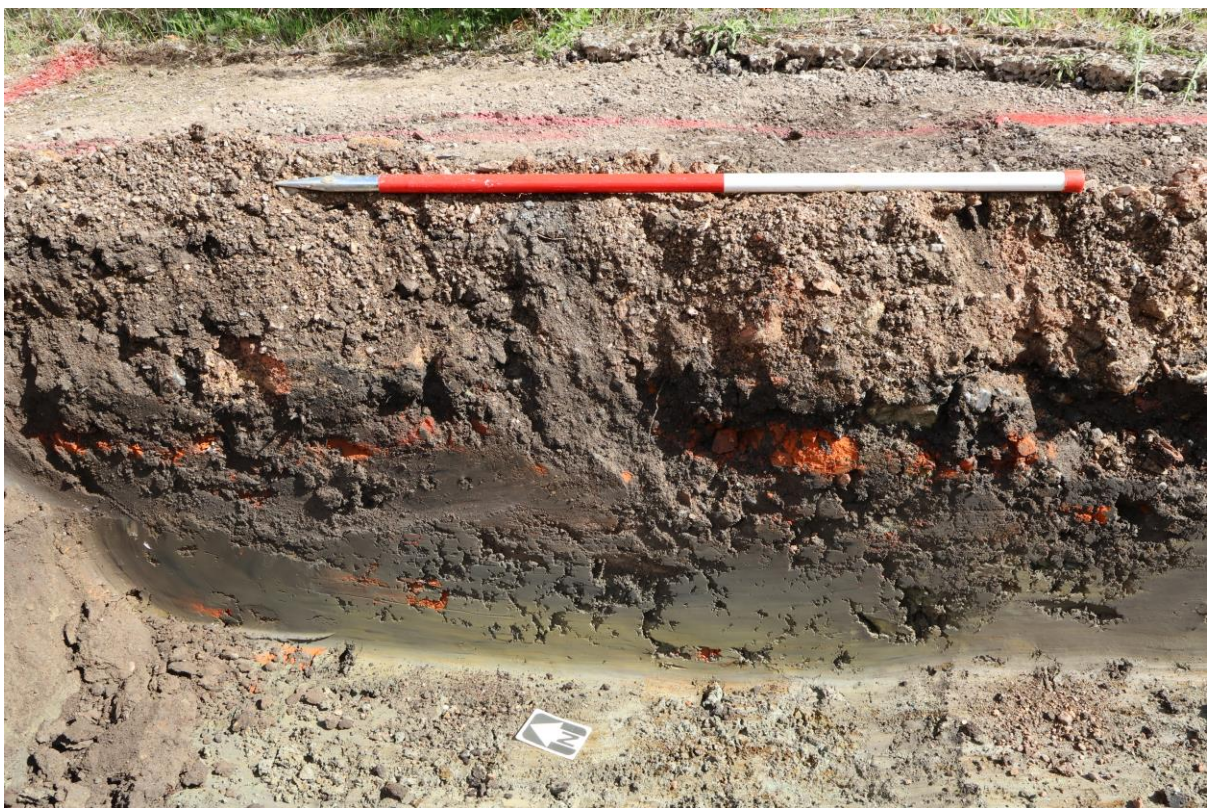


Plate 6: West facing section through Trench 3b (Scale = 1 x 1m).



Plate 7: Trench 5 looking southeast (Scale = 2 x 1m).



Plate 8: Southwest facing section through Trench 5 (Scale = 1 x 1m).



Plate 9: Trench 6 (north end) looking southwest (Scale = 2 x 1m).



Plate 10: Trench 6 (south end) looking southwest (Scale = 2 x 1m)

Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

Trench 2a

Length (m):11.45

Width (m): 1.8

Orientation: E-W

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Height/depth	Deposit description
200a	Deposit	Topsoil	0.13 (avg.)	Colour: greyish brown. Compaction: dry, soft. Composition: silty sand.
201a	Deposit	Subsoil	0.15 (avg.)	Colour: greyish brown. Compaction: dry, soft. Composition: silty sand.
202a	Deposit	Natural		Colour: brownish yellow. Compaction: dry, firm. Composition: clay.

Trench 2b

Length (m):11.92

Width (m): 1.8

Orientation: E-W

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Height/depth	Deposit description
200b	Deposit	Topsoil	0.14 (avg.)	Colour: greyish brown. Compaction: dry, soft. Composition: silty sand.
201b	Deposit	Subsoil	0.15 (avg.)	Colour: greyish brown. Compaction: dry, cemented. Composition: silty sand.
202b	Deposit	Natural		Colour: brownish yellow. Compaction: dry, firm. Composition: clay.

Trench 3a

Length (m):11.28

Width (m): 1.8

Orientation: NW-SE

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Height/depth	Deposit description
300a	Deposit	Asphalt	0.08 (avg.)	Colour: grey. Compaction: dry, cemented. Composition: asphalt.
301a	Deposit	levelling	0.09 (avg.)	Colour: light grey. Compaction: dry, cemented. Composition: stone.
302a	Deposit	Demolition	0.35 (avg.)	Colour: reddish brown. Compaction: dry, firm. Composition: silty clay with brick fragments
303a	Deposit	Subsoil	0.22	Colour: dark brown. Compaction: dry, firm. Composition: clay
304a	Deposit	Natural		Colour: light blue. Composition: dry, firm. Composition: Clay

Trench 3b

Length (m):8.79

Width (m): 1.8

Orientation: NW-SE

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Height/depth	Deposit description
---------	--------------	--------------	--------------	---------------------

300b	Deposit	Concrete	0.15 (avg.)	Colour: grey. Compaction: dry, cemented. Composition: asphalt.
301b	Deposit	levelling	0.35 (avg.)	Colour: light grey. Compaction: dry, cemented. Composition: stone.
302b	Deposit	Subsoil	0.22 (avg.)	Colour: dark brown. Compaction: dry, firm. Composition: clay.
303b	Deposit	Natural		Colour: light blue. Composition: dry, firm. Composition: Clay

Trench 5

Length (m):24.89 Width (m): 1.8 Orientation: NW-SE

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Height/depth	Deposit description
500	Deposit	Topsoil	0.12 (avg.)	Colour: greyish brown. Compaction: dry, soft. Composition: silty sand.
501	Deposit	Subsoil	0.15 (avg.)	Colour: greyish brown. Compaction: dry, soft. Composition: silty sand.
502	Deposit	Natural		Colour: yellowish brown. Compaction: dry, firm. Composition: silty clay with gravel.

Trench 6a

Length (m):15.11 Width (m): 1.8 Orientation: NE-SW

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Height/depth	Deposit description
600a	Deposit	Topsoil	0.15 (avg.)	Colour: greyish brown. Compaction: dry, soft. Composition: silty clay.
601a	Deposit	Subsoil	0.13 (avg.)	Colour: greyish brown. Compaction: dry, soft. Composition: silty clay.
602a	Deposit	Natural		Colour: reddish brown. Compaction: dry, firm. Composition: silty clay with gravels.

Trench 6b

Length (m):4.63 Width (m): 1.8 Orientation: NE-SW

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Height/depth	Deposit description
600b	Deposit	Topsoil	0.15 (avg.)	Colour: greyish brown. Compaction: dry, soft. Composition: silty clay.
601b	Deposit	Subsoil	0.13 (avg.)	Colour: greyish brown. Compaction: dry, cemented. Composition: silty clay.
602b	Deposit	Natural		Colour: reddish brown. Compaction: dry, firm. Composition: silty clay with gravels